

**THE *marzēah* IN THE PROPHETIC LITERATURE:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ALLUSIONS
IN LIGHT OF THE EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE**

by

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ABSTRACT

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THE *marzēah* IN THE PROPHETIC LITERATURE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE REFERENCES AND POSSIBLE ALLUSIONS IN LIGHT OF THE EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

The word *marzēah* occurs in epigraphic and literary contexts from a variety of locations in the ancient Near East encompassing a period of three thousand years. These references indicate the *marzēah* played an important social, political and economic role in the ancient semitic world. It is surprising, therefore, that the word only occurs twice in the Bible, at Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5. As a result, in recent years scholars have claimed a number of texts, mostly within the prophetic literature, allude to the *marzēah* without using the word itself. This is done on different grounds in each case, which begs the question whether there are fundamental elements of the *marzēah* that should be present before such texts can be considered allusions to the *marzēah*.

This study addresses that methodological issue by examining all of the extra-biblical *marzēah* references in order to identify features consistently present throughout the *marzēah*'s history. There are three constitutive features of a *marzēah*: (1) drinking, (2) by members of the upper class, (3) in a religious context. With these as the necessary criteria for a *marzēah*, the two prophetic references to a *marzēah* are examined, as well as ten possible allusions. The end result is that the *marzēah* in the prophetic literature encompasses more than the word itself, although not as extensively as some have suggested. At the same time, the allusions in particular now have a more certain foundation that was previously the case.

**To my parents,
John and Rita McLaughlin:**

**With love,
For their love**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAAS	<i>Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Ed. David Noel Freedman et al.; 6 vols.; New York/London/Toronto: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AcOr	<i>Acta Orientalia</i>
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
ALASPM	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . 3rd. ed.; ed. J. B. Pritchard; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
Anton	<i>Antonianum</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARET	Archivi reali di Ebla: Testi
AS	Akkadica Supplementum
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BARev	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles Briggs. <i>The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic</i> . Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979.
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BFCT	Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . 4th. ed.; ed. K. Elliger, W. Rudolph et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990.
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibLeb	<i>Bibel und Leben</i>
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BRS	Biblical Resource Series
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft von Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Ed. I. E. Gelb, T. Jacobsen, B. Landsberger and A. L. Oppenheim; Chicago, 1956—.
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament

CAT	<i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places.</i> ALASPM 8; ed. Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and J. Sanmartín; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995.
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CFTL	Clark's Foreign Theological Library
CIS	<i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament
CRAIBL	<i>Comptes rendues de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
CT	Cahier théologique
DDD	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (DDD).</i> Ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst; New York: E. J. Brill, 1995.
EA	<i>Die El-Amarna Tafeln.</i> Ed. Jürgen Alexander Knudtzon; VB 2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1910-15.
EBib	Études bibliques
EI	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
EvT	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FO	<i>Folia Orientalia</i>
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.</i> Ed. E. Kautzsch; 2nd. Eng. ed. rev. A. E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910.
HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
Hen	<i>Henoch</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IB	<i>The Interpreter's Bible.</i> 12 vols.; ed. G. A. Buttrick, et al.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1956.
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JA	<i>Journal asiatique</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.</i> 2d ed.; 2 vols.; ed. Herbert Donner and W. Röllig. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966.
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament

KHAT	Kürzer Hand-kommentar zum Alten Testament
KTU	<i>Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit.</i> Ed. Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and J. Sanmartín; AOAT 24; Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon und Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976.
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LBI	Library of Biblical Interpretation
LXX	Septuagint
MEE	Materiali epigrafica di Ebla
MGWJ	<i>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>
MIO	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung</i>
MRS	Mission de Ras Shamra
MT	Masoretic Text
MVAG	<i>Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft</i>
NAB	<i>New American Bible</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	<i>New English Bible</i>
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NJBC	<i>The New Jerome Biblical Commentary.</i> Eds. Raymond F. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Raymond E. Murphy; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990.
NRSV	<i>New Revised Standard Bible</i>
OBO	Orbis biblicus orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
OrAnt	<i>Oriens antiquus</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTMS	Old Testament Message Series
OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PA	Palestina antiqua
PFAT	Palästinische Forschungen zur Archäologie und Topographie
PIBA	<i>Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association</i>
PLO	Porta linguarum orientalium
PRU	<i>Le Palais royal d'Ugarit.</i> 6 vols.; ed. Claude F. A. Schaeffer et al.; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1955-70.
PSBA	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i>
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
RA	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBR	<i>Recherche Biblique e Religiose</i>
REJ	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
RESB	<i>Revue des Études Sémitiques et Babyloniaca</i>
Revsém	<i>Revue sémitique</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RIDA	<i>Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité</i>
RES	<i>Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique</i>
RSO	Ras Shamra - Ougarit
RSV	<i>Revised Standard Version</i>
SBA	Studies in Biblical Archaeology
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Studies

SBLSP	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBLSS	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Series</i>
SBLWAW	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World</i>
SBOT	<i>The Sacred Books of the Old Testament</i>
SEA	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</i>
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
SHR	<i>Studies in the History of Religions</i>
SOTSMS	<i>Society of Old Testament Studies Monograph Series</i>
SWBA	<i>Social World of Biblical Antiquity</i>
TDNT	Gerhard Kittel, <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . 10 vols.; Eng. trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964-76.
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . 8 vols. to date; ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974—.
ThT	<i>Theologisch Tijdschrift</i>
TM	<i>Tell Mardikh (Ebla)</i>
TSJTSA	<i>Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America</i>
TTZ	<i>Trier theologische Zeitschrift</i>
TWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Ed G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973—.
UBL	<i>Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UUA	<i>Uppsala universitets årsskrift</i>
VB	<i>Vorderasiatisches Bibliothek</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplements</i>
WBC	<i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>
WMANT	<i>Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament</i>
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
ZAH	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebraistik</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

INTRODUCTION

The word *marzēah*¹ occurs in literary and epigraphic references spanning three thousand years and a number of locations. Such texts range from Ebla in the third millennium BCE to Madeba in the 6th century CE, with intervening attestations in Ugarit, Emar, the trans-Jordan, Phoenicia, Elephantine, Nabatea, Palmyra and in rabbinic literature.² The word also occurs twice in the biblical literature, at Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5. Much of this material was considered by David Bryan twenty-five years ago.³ Nonetheless, a fresh examination of the material would be beneficial for a variety of reasons:

1) Scholarly interest in the *marzēah* in general and individual texts in particular remains high,⁴ and reconsideration of the material as a whole in light of such more restricted studies published since Bryan's work will contribute to this ongoing research.

¹The word is vocalized differently from place to place, and at Ugarit even has a different final letter in some texts (see further in chapter 1). For the sake of uniformity and simplicity, I will use this transliteration of the Hebrew spelling (מַרְזְעָה) to indicate the word and its referents in general, but will present the individual spellings when discussing the various texts.

²Against including *ma-ar-ša-ú* from El Amarna (EA 120:21) see W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) 199n11.

³D. B. Bryan, "Texts Relating to the *Marzeah*: A Study of an Ancient Semitic Institution" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1973).

⁴Cf. the bibliography. Two recent publications include a return to *KTU* 1.114 by one of its early commentators and a study of the *marzēah* in relationship to other aspects of religious life at Ugarit. See K. J. Cathcart, "Ilu, Yarihu and the One with the Two Horns and a Tail," *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (UBL 12; eds. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 1-7 and cf. K. J. Cathcart and W. G. E. Watson, "Weathering a Wake: A Cure for Carousal. A Revised Translation of *Ugaritica V* Text 1," *PIBA* 4 (1980) 35-58; D. Pardee, "*Marzihu*, *Kispu*, and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult: A Minimalist View," *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (UBL 12; eds. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 273-87.

2) Additional extra-biblical instances of the word *marzēah* have come to light since Bryan's study.⁵ While none of these alters the substance of his work, they do confirm some aspects and develop others and should be taken into account in order to develop the fullest possible picture of the *marzēah*.

3) The most important reason for a new examination of the *marzēah* is that the frame of reference has changed. Since Bryan only dealt with occurrences of the word itself, the biblical *marzēah* constituted a minor part of his study. However, in the last quarter-century, a number of scholars have suggested various biblical texts, mostly in the prophetic literature, allude to a *marzēah* without using the word itself.⁶ Thus, Amos 2:7b-8; 4:1; Hos 4:17-19; 9:1-6; Isa 5:11-12; 28:1-4; 28:7-8; 56:9-57:13; Ezek 8:7-13; 39:17-20 have all been interpreted in terms of biblical and extra-biblical *marzēah* references.⁷ This entails a significant expansion beyond the scope of Bryan's dissertation, so considering possible allusions as well will result in a more extensive, and therefore more comprehensive, picture of the *marzēah* in general, and within the prophetic literature in particular.

⁵These include references from Ebla and Emar, *KTU* 4.399 from Ugarit, a trans-Jordanian text, a Phoenician drinking bowl and a Palmyrene contract.

⁶Henceforth, I use the word "reference" to indicate an instance where the word *marzēah* actually appears, and "allusion" for texts that involve a *marzēah* but do not contain the word itself.

⁷The proponents of the various proposals are identified in Chapters 2-6 as each is considered in turn, along with the two biblical references in Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5; see Chapters 3 and 4 respectively for reasons against considering Hos 7:3-7 and Isa 65:4. In addition to the prophetic texts, Cavalletti views Ps 78:15 as comparable to El's drinking at Ugarit (*KTU* 1.114), Pope interprets the entire Song of Songs as a *marzēah*, and Jackson seems to suggest a *marzēah* forms the background to Wisd 1:16; see S. Cavalletti, "Il dio ebbro di vino," *RBR* 15 (1981) 135-36; M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), *passim*, but especially pp. 210-29; J. J. Jackson, "Style in Isaiah 28 and a Drinking Bout of the Gods (RS 24.258)," *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (PTMS 1; eds. J. J. Jackson and M. Kessler; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974) 97.

The purpose of the present study is to evaluate these various proposed *marzēah* allusions. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to establish some basic criteria by which such proposals can be evaluated. The proposals have been advanced on a variety of grounds and usually in isolation from each other. Virtually all, however, entail a synchronic reading of the extra-biblical evidence, which does not allow for differences from place to place or development over the centuries, and often involves reading features of later *marzēahs* into earlier ones. Yet, as Jonas C. Greenfield notes, “it would be methodologically wrong to assume a static institution, nonchanging and uninfluenced by the social, ethnic and political structure of the societies in which it flourished and not reflecting the influences of surrounding cultures and changing economic conditions.”⁸ This means features present only in late attestations of the *marzēah* could simply be late developments that were not characteristic of earlier *marzēahs*. But, one can still assume some continuity over the millennia with respect to the *marzēah*’s basic nature. In an effort to obtain a greater degree of certainty with respect to *marzēah* allusions, I propose to focus on that continuity. By identifying elements of the *marzēah* that are attested in both early and late instances, it will be possible to establish a minimalistic but fairly certain collection of *marzēah* allusions.

The first step is an examination of the extra-biblical *marzēah* references, including the new data that has appeared. That is the focus of the first chapter. My analysis of the material is guided by three principles. First, I only consider occurrences of the word *marzēah* itself. While there may be *marzēah* allusions in extra-biblical

⁸J. C. Greenfield, “The *Marzeah* as a Social Institution,” *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten Vorderasien* (eds. J. Harmatta and G. Komoróczy; Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976) 455; cf. his admission that, “we have . . . read back into the *mrzh* at Ugarit some of the . . . features of the later *mrzh*” (ibid.).

literature as well,⁹ by establishing the constitutive features of the *marzēah* from explicit references alone, the criteria for evaluating biblical allusions will have a much higher degree of certainty. Similarly, although there are undoubtedly cross-cultural parallels, such as the Greek *thiasos* and *symposium*, these will not be considered either, so as to ensure that the criteria reflect only the *marzēah* as it was known in the semitic world.

This relates to the second principle by which the extra-biblical references will be evaluated: my approach to those texts and inscriptions is “minimalistic.” That is to say, I focus on the direct evidence from each successive attestation, accepting only what is explicit in the texts themselves. In doing so, I reject information from later *marzēahs* or from non-*marzēah* contexts that is not clearly reflected in the text itself. While this runs the risk of overlooking some subtle nuances, for the purpose of this study that risk is outweighed by the end result, namely identification of the essential elements of all *marzēahs*. Put succinctly, minimalism will establish the minimal features of any and all *marzēahs*, which should also be reflected in proposed allusions.

Third, the extra-biblical material will be grouped both geographically and chronologically. References with a common geographic provenance will be treated in relationship to one another; since such references can be dated within a relatively short time-frame relative to the *marzēah*'s three-thousand year history,¹⁰ it is less likely they

⁹E.g., the funerary liturgy in *KTU* 1.161 is related to a *marzēah* banquet by M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, “Neue Studien zu den Ritualtexten aus Ugarit (II) - Nr. 6 - Epigraphische und inhaltliche Probleme in *KTU* 1.161,” *UF* 15 (1983) 23. References that require major restoration are also not considered (except where the term occurs undamaged in the immediate context). This excludes, for example, the restoration at *KTU* 1.IV.4 in J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978) 39; M. S. Smith, “The Baal Cycle,” *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (SBLWAW 9; ed. S. B. Parker; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 88 and at *KTU* 1.22.II.2 by K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (AOAT 219; Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon and Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986) 176; T. J. Lewis, “The Rapiuma,” *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (SBLWAW 9; ed. S. B. Parker; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 201. Apart from the relative merits of such proposals, without the term in the surrounding lines such texts will affect the certainty for which I am aiming.

¹⁰The biggest span is about two hundred years with respect to both Phoenician and Palmyrene references.

will display radical change in the nature of a *marzēah* in that place. At the same time, there is very little chronological overlap between references from different places, which means the evidence from the various locations can be treated successively in relation to other places in a roughly chronological order. Thus, distinctions can be made where necessary between *marzēahs* in different places and at earlier and later stages of the *marzēah*'s overall history.

Once the constitutive features of the *marzēah* have been established, the successive chapters will consider the *marzēah* in individual prophetic books. This will include both the references in Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5 and an evaluation of all proposed allusions using the minimal criteria from Chapter 1. The prophetic literature provides an appropriate body of material for this study. To begin with, the only two instances of the word *marzēah* in the Bible occur in prophetic books, and the majority of the proposed allusion are also found there,¹¹ so it makes sense to combine the latter with the former. While the prophetic literature is not monolithic, the various books do have some commonalities which enable one to speak in general terms of a shared "tradition," within which common themes and concerns appear; as such it would not be surprising to find the *marzēah* reflected elsewhere in the prophetic literature beyond the two instances of the word itself. Finally, the prophetic books in question are traditionally dated to a period of about two to three centuries, which happens to coincide with a major chronological gap in the extra-biblical attestations.¹²

Analysis of the prophetic references and allusions to the *marzēah* will also be minimalistic and chronological.¹³ The former element is especially important in

¹¹Cf. n. 7 above.

¹²With the exception of the trans-Jordanian text all of the extra-biblical *marzēah* references can be dated either before Amos or after Ezekiel.

¹³Although for the sake of convenience, Isa 56:9–57:13 will be included with the other Isaiah texts.

dealing with allusions, which must be established on the basis of an individual text's content. Therefore, care will be taken not to read *marzēah* elements into possible allusions when such elements cannot be supported from the specific text or its context.

In one sense, the chronological aspect is more difficult to establish, due to the uncertain dating of the prophetic books themselves. It is widely recognized that the dates given in the opening verses of the various prophetic books, and in the headings of many oracles, are later editorial additions. Although they may be an accurate indication of the general period of composition, some scholars have emphasized the redactional nature of the prophetic books and argued that most of their content also stems from a much later date.¹⁴ But since the *marzēah* is clearly attested prior to the prophetic period (and in one instance at the same time in the trans-Jordan) there is no reason to assume the *marzēah* references and allusions are necessarily late. Yet at the same time, *marzēahs* endured after this time elsewhere in the semitic world, so it may also have continued in post-exilic Judah, and later influence cannot be ruled out either.

Fortunately, this study does not require an exact date for any of the texts considered. The goal is to develop a *rough* chronology of the prophetic references and allusions, both in relationship to each other and to the extra-biblical references. To that end, some consideration must be given to the date of the relevant texts, but for the task at hand it is sufficient to establish a *relative* dating in relationship to the other prophetic texts. Therefore, I assume the traditional chronology of the biblical prophets as an initial, working hypothesis, and treat the various texts in the order of that chronology. In the course of that analysis, if it is determined that a text does contain a *marzēah*

¹⁴For this approach to Isaiah see O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (OTL; 2nd ed., revised and completely rewritten; trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983); for Jeremiah see R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); W. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Vol. I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah 1-XXV* (ICC 20; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986); *idem*, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Vol. II: Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI-LII* (ICC 20; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996).

allusion (or, obviously, a direct reference in Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5) the date will then be addressed.¹⁵ At that point I will look at whether the text's content reflects what is known about the context and setting of that particular prophet. In other words, is a particular *marzēah* reference or allusion consistent with the traditional time of that prophet's ministry? If so, that establishes a plausible date by which to relate it to the other texts in other prophetic books.

The issue of consistency raises the matter of editorial additions. The focus of this study is not the editorial history of various texts but whether they allude to a *marzēah*; as such I do not intend to present a full redaction-critical analysis of any of the texts which will be studied in the following chapters.¹⁶ Nevertheless, redactional considerations cannot be dismissed if the aim is to determine whether the earlier text alluded to a *marzēah*. Specifically, if constitutive elements of a *marzēah* are only present as a later addition, then it is not a constitutive component of the original text, thereby invalidating the proposed allusion. In keeping with this, when discussing individual texts, only those deletions that directly affect the issue of a *marzēah* allusion will be considered at any length.

Once the *marzēah* references and allusions in the prophetic literature have been determined, it will be possible to draw some conclusions concerning the extent of the *marzēah* during the prophetic period, its nature as it appears in the prophetic literature, the attitude of the individual prophets to it, and possible developments during that period of time and in relationship to the extra-biblical evidence. But first, the texts themselves must be considered, so I turn now to that task.

¹⁵Since texts that are determined not to allude to a *marzēah* are irrelevant to the latter's chronology, their dating is also irrelevant to my purpose and will not be discussed.

¹⁶Such treatments can be found to varying extents in most commentaries, and in monographs dedicated to that purpose. For a recent example regarding Amos see D. U. Rottzoll, *Studien zur Redaktion und Komposition des Amosbuchs* (BZAW 243; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996).

CHAPTER 1

THE EXTRA-BIBLICAL *marzēah*

In this chapter all of the extra-biblical references to the *marzēah* will be examined according to the principles outlined in the Introduction. In an effort to establish the context for the *marzēah* in the prophetic literature, I group the extra-biblical references into those which can be dated before and after the prophetic use of the term. The individual *marzēah* references in each half are grouped according to their time and place of origin, and the results from each half will be summarized separately. This enables the features of the pre-biblical *marzēah*, which forms the primary background for the prophetic references and allusions, to be established in isolation from the post-biblical *marzēah*. In the final section of the chapter, I draw conclusions as to constitutive features of the *marzēah* throughout its history, in order to establish criteria by which to evaluate the *marzēah* in the prophets.

The Pre-Biblical marzēah

Ebla

The word *marzēah* has been identified in two texts from Ebla, dating to the second half of the third millennium.¹ In one, dresses are given to three different women “on the occasion of the *marzēah* in the month of *i-SI*” (*in ud mar-za-u₉ itu-i-SI*).² In the second text, three garments are given to “Dudasa, superintendent of the

¹For recent discussions of Ebla and the texts found there, including issues of dating, see G. Pettinato, *Ebla: A New Look at History* (trans. C. F. Richardson; Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); R. D. Biggs, “Ebla Texts,” *ABD* 2.263–70.

²The text is *TM* 75.G.1372, published as “Testo 46” in G. Pettinato, *Testi amministrativi della biblioteca L. 2769* (MEE 2; Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, 1980) 309. The quoted portion is found on lines rev. I 1–3; this translation is based on Pettinato’s Italian rendering. On this text see also M. J. Dahood, “The Minor Prophets and Ebla,” *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (eds. C. L. Meyers and M. O’Connor; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 54; *idem*, “Love and Death at Ebla and Their Biblical Reflections,” *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (eds. J. H. Marks and R. M. Good; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987) 99; A. Archi, “Cult of the Ancestors and Tutelary God at Ebla,” *Fucus: A Semitic/Afrasian Gathering in Remembrance of Albert Ehrman* (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 58; ed. Y. L. Arbeitman; Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins

marzēah” (*Du-da-sa ugula mar-za-u9*).³ Given the administrative nature of these texts it is difficult to determine much with any certainty. In the first text the word *marzēah* seems to refer to an event of some sort, but it is not clear whether a *marzēah* occurred every month, and this text refers to the one in the month of *i-SI*, or if there is no intrinsic connection between the *marzēah* and the month mentioned. The “superintendent” in the second one is almost certainly the predecessor of the *marzēah* leader (*rb/𐎒𐎗*) mentioned at Ugarit, Nabatea and Palmyra, but there is not enough context to indicate whether here *marzēah* refers to an event, as in the first text, or a group, as in the later references mentioning a leader. In any case, in both texts the *marzēah* seems to be an appropriate time for giving clothing.

Ugarit

The word *marzēah* occurs in nine texts from Ugarit dating to ca. 1400 BCE.⁴ Four are in Akkadian and five in Ugaritic; seven are legal texts and two are mythological. For convenience, I group them by the language of composition.

Publishing Company, 1988) 103n2; B. B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 22.

³*TM* 75.G.1443 XI.1–3, published in A. Archi, *Testi amministrativi: assegnazioni di tessuti (archivio L. 2769)* (ARET I; Roma: Missione archeologica italiana in Siria, 1985) 31. See also Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 22; the translation given here is his.

⁴On the Ugarit texts in general see D. Pardee and P. Bordreuil, “Ugarit: Texts and Literature,” *ABD* 6.706–21. This dating is established on p. 706.

*Akkadian Texts*RS 14.16⁵

In RS 14.16 the phrase, “the men of the *marzēah*” (^{awilê} p^l*ma-ar-zi-ḫi*) occurs after a lacuna at the beginning of the line. This is indicative of the tablet’s fragmentary condition, which makes it difficult to determine exactly what is at issue in the text. The list of witnesses (perhaps as many as fourteen) at the end, however, indicates it is a juridical document of some sort while the monetary sum (a *līm* of silver) in line 14 suggests a financial matter. Whether the text is a contract, a legal suit, or something else is not clear.

The lack of any substantial context prevents definitive statements concerning this *marzēah*’s nature or function, but some observations are possible. First, a definable group of people, the “men of the *marzēah*,” is treated as a recognizable collective entity under the law. Second, the amount of money involved⁶ indicates the group was involved in significant financial matters. Third, these dealings, combined with the number of witnesses, suggests this *marzēah* was an important group in Ugarit.

RS 15.88⁷

This text is a royal document issued over the seal of King Niqmepa, son of Niqmadu. It confirms the eternal ownership of a “house of the men of the *marzēah*”

⁵The text is transliterated, with commentary, in C. Virolleaud, “Six textes de Ras Shamra provenant de la XIV^e campagne (1950),” *Syria* 28 (1951) 173–79. Cf. the discussion in D. B. Bryan, “Texts Relating to the *Marzēah*: A Study of an Ancient Semitic Institution” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1973) 144–47.

⁶Virolleaud, “Six Textes,” 177, valued a *līm* at 10,000 shekels and was followed by P. D. Miller, Jr., “The *MRZḪ* Text,” *The Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets* (AnOr 48; ed. L. R. Fisher; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971) 44; Bryan, “Texts,” 147, 208; Greenfield, “Social Institution,” 452. Lewis reduces this amount to 1000 shekels on the basis of the *CAD*; see T. J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 81n5.

⁷For transliteration and French translation see *PRU* III, 88. Cf. Bryan, “Texts,” 148–52.

(*bît* ^{amilM}*mar-za-i*; line 4) by them and their “descendants” (*mârî*^M*-šū-nu*; lines 6–7) as inviolable. Again, the text says nothing directly concerning this *marzēah*, yet some information can still be gleaned from it. Since the term probably refers to a group rather than a place,⁸ the text confirms that a *marzēah* was a legally recognized collective that could own property. Its social importance, or at least that of its members, is implied by the fact they obtained royal recognition of their property rights.⁹

A second point to consider is the extension of those property rights to the *mârî*^M*-šū-nu* forever. On the surface, this means “a member’s ownership in the society’s holdings was passed on to his sons,”¹⁰ but some unarticulated presuppositions underlie this interpretation. Unless the prerequisites and personal qualifications for membership were hereditary, the *marzēah* ran the risk of group property being owned in part by someone unsuited, or even unwilling, to be a member. Moreover, if an individual had no offspring, or at least no male offspring, how would his share of the assets be handled? The *marzēah*’s political importance in this text indicates these and comparable scenarios could engender serious economic and legal difficulties. Thus, I suggest that *mârî*^M*-šū-nu* does not refer to biological progeny, but to subsequent members of the association.¹¹

⁸Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 83n16, argues that, “the phrase . . . ‘the house of the men of the *marzēah*’ . . . would be redundant if *marzēah* were an architectural entity.” This is not conclusive, since the men could have lived together separately from their meeting place, with the latter being the *marzēah* proper. But without evidence of quasi-monastic lifestyles at Ugarit, the more plausible conclusion is that *bît* refers to a building owned and used as a gathering place by the members of a *marzēah* association. Contrast Bryan, “Texts,” 209–10, who argues the word *marzēah* indicates either the house itself or a specific part thereof.

⁹Greenfield, “Social Institution,” 453; J.-M. de Tarragon, *Le culte à Ugarit d’après les textes de la pratique en cunéiformes alphabétiques* (CahRB 19; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1980) 147.

¹⁰Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 83.

¹¹See CAD 10.I.315; see further in n. 15.

RS 15.70¹²

Although RS 15.70 is numerically prior to RS 15.88, its ascription to King Ammištamru, son of Niqmepa,¹³ indicates it is a later text. It states that the *amilrâbišu* (a royal official?) has taken over the “house of the men of the *marzēah* of Šatrana” (line 4) and given them Ibramuzi’s house in its place. The text duplicates the phrase from the preceding text (but with the spelling *mar-ze-i* and the added association with the god Šatrana¹⁴), and repeats the reference to the men and their descendants from RS 15.88.6–7 in lines 10–11 and 15–17. Thus, this text supports the conclusions drawn above concerning property ownership and its preservation by the *marzēah* members, while adding the information that a *marzēah* could be connected with, or even dedicated to, a particular deity, perhaps recognizing him or her as its patron.¹⁵

The identical vocabulary in RS 15.70 and 15.88 raises the question whether both texts deal with the same *marzēah*. If so, both the king’s involvement in an underling’s dealings and the need to reimburse the loss in RS 15.70 would be explained by his predecessor’s decree. If they are distinct, the need to compensate this particular *marzēah* for the alienation of its property increases its social and political importance. This reimbursement’s full significance is highlighted by the lack of comparable recompense, either in kind or in money, to Ibramuzi for the house he has lost.¹⁶

¹²Transliteration and a French translation of the text are given in *PRU* III, 130. See also the discussion in Bryan, “Texts,” 153–55.

¹³This is probably Ammištamru IV and the king in RS 15.88 is probably his father, Niqmepa VI. For a discussion of dynastic succession at Ugarit on the basis of *KTU* 1.113 see K. A. Kitchen, “The King List of Ugarit,” *UF* 9 (1977) 131–42.

¹⁴The determinative for a god is missing, but it is present in RS 16.157.5 (transliteration and French translation in *PRU* III, 83–84). On this deity see the works cited in O. Eissfeldt, “Kultvereine in Ugarit,” *Ugaritica* VI (MRS 17; ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer; Paris: Geuthner, 1969) 191n23.

¹⁵This has interesting implications for the nuance of the term *mār^M-šū-nu*. On one hand, lack of devotion to the god in question could render a member’s son both unsuitable for and undesirous of membership. On the other hand, the religious context a divine patron provides might point to *marzēah* initiates as the “spiritual” children of the “men of the *marzēah*.”

¹⁶This is even more significant if he is the same Ibramuzi who is called the king’s “servant”

RS 18.01¹⁷

The final Akkadian text to consider is an international document bearing the seal of Padiya, the King of Siyannu, in which a vineyard dedicated to the Hurrian Ishtar in the village of Šuksi is divided between the “men of the *marzēah* of (the village of) Ari,” and the “men of the *marzēah* of (the village of) Siyannu.” Royal involvement in this case cannot be attributed to their importance *per se*, since the text’s focus is the resolution of a border dispute that only incidentally involves them.¹⁸ Nonetheless, we do learn that *marzēahs* could be attached to particular geographical locations, and more than one could exist in relatively close proximity.¹⁹ Furthermore, there is yet another reference to *marzēah* members and property. Here that property has a double significance: a vineyard suggests wine consumption may have played a role in the *marzēah*’s activities while the vineyard’s dedication to a particular deity is (indirect) evidence a *marzēah* could have a divine patron.²⁰

and given another’s property in RS 16.189 (*PRU* III, 90–1) and whose own property is declared inviolable in RS 16.285 (*PRU* III, 106–07), both times by Niqmepa. There is no indication in RS 15.70 that he is a *nayyālu* (“defaulter”); on this term see M. Heltzer, *The Rural Community in Ancient Ugarit* (Weisbaden: Reichert, 1976) 52–57.

¹⁷Transliteration and French translation in *PRU* IV, 230. Cf. Bryan, “Texts,” 155–57.

¹⁸Cf. the division of Šuksi between the kings of Ugarit and Siyannu in RS 17.123 (*PRU* IV, 230–31). Ari appears in a number of administrative texts listing Ugaritic villages.

¹⁹Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 84, suggests there might be only one *marzēah* per city.

²⁰Eissfeldt, “Kultvereine,” 192, is uncertain whether Ishtar was the patron of both *marzēahs*.

*Alphabetic Texts*²¹

Two Fragmentary Texts: *KTU* 4.399 and 4.642

KTU 4.399²² seems to be a registry of fields and an enumeration of their produce.²³ Our term appears in line 8 in the phrase *bn.mrzḥ*. This is comparable to the Akkadian phrase ^{amil}*mar-za-i* (and its variants), referring to one or more of the *marzēah*'s members.²⁴ It probably indicates the fields' owners.

The greatest concentration of the term *marzēah* in a single Ugaritic text is in *KTU* 4.642.²⁵ Unfortunately, the tablet is very badly damaged, but the word *marzēah* is present or reconstructed a total of five times; four are on successive lines, with an intervening line between the first reference and those four.²⁶ The tablet's advanced state of disrepair provides minimal context from which to clarify the word's meaning, but two points can be determined. First, Otto Eissfeldt suggests restoring a *t* after each

²¹The alphabetic (Ugaritic) texts will be cited according to their *KTU* number and transliteration, unless otherwise noted. For the sigla used see p. XV of that volume; publication information for the individual texts can be found at the end of that volume.

²²This text is not discussed by Bryan.

²³There are references to fields (*šd*) in lines 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19 and to olive trees (*zt*) in 7; *šir* in lines 11 (and 13?) literally means "flesh" but is probably used metaphorically in the sense of "produce" of the fields, as in *KTU* 4.282.5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14 (note the numbers in that text as well). Various numbers are present in lines 4 (*ḥmš*), 6 (*lṣn.ṛh; ṣlṣ*), 7 (*šb*), 9 (*ṣn.ṣr*) and 10 (*lajrb*).

²⁴The *bn* could be either a singular or a construct plural, i.e. either "son" or "sons of the *marzēah*." The classic case of "son" meaning "member of a group" is the biblical "sons of the prophets": e.g., 1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 7, 15, etc.

²⁵This text is discussed in Bryan, "Texts," 138–39.

²⁶The word appears in full in each of lines 4–6, in the first two instances preceded by *ll*(*) and followed by a word divider plus *ṛn*. Line 6 has nothing before the first word divider and only has *ṛ** after the second one; the missing *n* can be supplied from the preceding two lines, and by comparison with *lzh.ṛn* in lines 2 and 7. Moreover, the similarity among all of these lines supports restoration of *mr* at the beginning of the gap in lines 2 and 7.

occurrence of $\text{'}n$.²⁷ The resultant *mrzḥ.ḥn[t]* translates as “the *marzēah* of Anat,” providing another instance of a *marzēah* with a divine patron. Secondly, the only variation in what remains of the tablet is line 3, which refers to a vineyard’s produce (*šir.šd.kr[m]*). The context suggests a relationship between the vineyard and the *marzēah* of Anat, and the obvious one is that the latter owns the former.²⁸ This constitutes another example of a *marzēah* owning property, and the fact this property is a vineyard, the source of wine, should not be overlooked.

*KTU 3.9*²⁹

This text is a legal document drawn up before two witnesses. The first line contains only the word *marzēah*, even though there is ample room for the next word (the one-sign relative particle *d*) and part of the next word;³⁰ it is separated from what follows by a solid line. Lines 2–4 specify that this particular *marzēah* is the one “which Šamūmānu established in his house,” after which another solid line occurs. Thus, these four lines introduce, in general and then specific terms, what is at issue in the following lines.³¹ Exactly what does follow is disputed, however, with scholars divided as to whether this is a contract establishing the *marzēah* and spelling out the obligations and rights of those involved, or a legal suit between those same parties.

²⁷O. Eissfeldt, “Etymologische und archäologische Erklärung alttestamentlicher Wörter,” *OrAnt* 5 (1966) 175; *idem*, “Kultvereine,” 192. This proposal’s widespread acceptance is exemplified by its restoration in *KTU* in all five instances.

²⁸Eissfeldt, “Etymologische,” 175; *idem*, “Kultvereine,” 192. Pope supports this from the phrase “the field(s) of the gods, the field(s) of Aṭirat and *ḥmy**” in *KTU* 1.23.13,28, where *ḥmy* is taken as an epithet of Anat; see M. H. Pope, “A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,” *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of W. F. Stinespring* (ed. J. M. Efrid; Durham: Duke University Press, 1972) 192.

²⁹Cf. the discussion in Bryan, “Texts,” 136–39.

³⁰The scribe does divide a single word over lines 6–7.

³¹Miller, “The *MRZH* Text,” 43; R. E. Friedman, “The *MRZH* Tablet from Ugarit,” *Maarav* 2 (1979–1980) 192.

Since some points of this debate are relevant to the nature of this *marzēah*, they will be examined, but it is beyond the scope of this study to resolve every detail.

Proponents of the lawsuit interpretation point to the word *rb* in line 2 of the reverse, which they take as a verb cognate with the Hebrew verb *רָבַח*, meaning “to conduct a lawsuit.” They argue that if this were a substantive designating Šamūmānu as the leader the construct chain *rb mrzḥ* would be present.³² Two points can be made in response. First, the text indicates at the outset that it is concerned specifically with a *marzēah*, so a reference simply to “the leader” would naturally be taken as referring to the leader of that *marzēah*,³³ especially since the designated individual is the one who established the *marzēah* in the first place. Second, nothing in the text’s format or structure requires interpreting it as a legal suit.³⁴ On the other hand, the opening lines indicate the central issue is Šamūmānu’s establishment of a *marzēah* in his house. If this were a legal controversy we would expect some indication at the outset.³⁵ Since there is none, it is better to take *rb* as a noun rather than a verb, which results in a nominal clause designating Šamūmānu as the one in charge of the *marzēah*.

The question remains whether *marzēah* here refers to a place or an association. The fact it is established inside Šamūmānu’s residence does not rule out the former possibility, since the term could refer to a specific part of the house set aside

³²M. J. Dahood, “Additional Notes on the *MRZH* Text,” *The Claremont Ras Shamra Texts* (AnOr 48; ed. L. R. Fisher; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971) 54. He builds on a suggestion by Miller, “The *MRZH* Text,” 41, and is followed by B. Halpern, “A Landlord-Tenant Dispute at Ugarit?” *Maarav* 2 (1979–80) 131, 133.

³³Friedman, “The *MRZH* Tablet,” 197–98.

³⁴Dahood and Halpern appeal to the witnesses at the end as indicative of court proceedings (M. J. Dahood, “Additional Notes,” 54; Halpern, “Dispute?” 140), but we would expect to find them in a contractual document as well, especially in light of the money mentioned in the text (cf. n. 39 below).

³⁵For example, “The lawsuit against Šamūmānu by the *marzēah* set up in his house.”

as a meeting room.³⁶ However, the introduction to a contract should give some indication of the parties involved, namely the collective known as a *marzēah* (represented later in the text by the 2nd person plural address in line 6 and the phrase *mt.mrzḥ*) and Šamūmānu himself.³⁷ Also, the designation of Šamūmānu as *rb* makes more sense with respect to a group than to a place. Therefore, this *marzēah* is an association for which Šamūmānu provides a portion of his house as a meeting place.³⁸

A final point to note is the amount of money involved. In obv. 6–10 Šamūmānu promises to pay “fifty silver (shekels)” if he evicts the *marzēah* from his house. This amount probably refers to either a deposit or the full rent received for the use of his house, which he agrees to forfeit if he breaks the lease. The reverse contains the other side of the bargain, stipulating that Šamūmānu cannot be challenged for summary payment of this money, an action tantamount to the tenants breaking the lease. The text concludes with the statement that the deposit was made, as witnessed by two individuals.³⁹

To summarize, in this text the term *marzēah* refers to a voluntary association, initiated at some point in time,⁴⁰ and requiring money for its institution and/or maintenance. Also, in addition to having specific members, as in other texts, a

³⁶M. J. Dahood, “Additional Notes,” 52.

³⁷Friedman, “The MRZH Tablet,” 192.

³⁸Thus Fenton translates *ibsn* as “dining complex”; see T. L. Fenton, “The Claremont ‘MRZH’ Tablet, Its Text and Meaning,” *UF* 9 (1977) 72–73; cf. Miller, “The MRZH Text,” 43.

³⁹Translating *tqlm.yš* as “they paid the shekels” with Friedman, “The MRZH Tablet,” 203, who notes, “we would expect a statement in the witnessed tablet that such lease payment was paid.” Miller, “The MRZH Text,” 42, 44, following Albright, takes *tqlm* as a dual, interpreting this as a fine levied against anyone who might challenge Šamūmānu; see also M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, “Der Vertrag eines MRZH-Klubs in Ugarit. Zum Verständnis von KTU 3.9,” *UF* 14 (1982) 75. Halpern and Friedman both call for consistency with respect to the text’s monetary references; see Halpern, “Dispute?” 133; Friedman, “The MRZH Tablet,” 199.

⁴⁰Obviously, both a group and its use of a particular meeting place must have had starting points, but these could have been in the distant past with no alteration in living memory.

marzēah could have a designated leader, although there is insufficient information here to determine the exact nature of that role.⁴¹

KTU 1.114⁴²

With this tablet we move from legal affairs to mythology. The text deals with a banquet given by El, to which he invites an unspecified number of other gods. A *marzēah* is mentioned in line 15 as the object of the phrase, “El is sitting in his *marzēah*.” Since the preceding poetic line (spanning lines 14–15 of the tablet) also begins with, “El is sitting,”⁴³ one expects some insight into the term’s meaning from the corresponding parallel line, but the tablet is damaged at precisely that point. The word parallel to *marzēah* begins with an *a*, but commentators have differed as to what can be read of the preceding and following signs, where and how extensive any lacunae are, and how to fill in those gaps. For instance, Virolleaud identified the second sign as a *ṯ*, restored *rt* immediately afterwards and read the line as *yṯb.il.[b(?)] aṯ[rt]* (“. . . le Dieu s’assied à côté (?) de Aše[rat]”).⁴⁴ Marvin Pope altered this slightly, restoring a final *h* rather than a *t* to produce *aṯ[rh]* (“his shrine”) as the parallel term to

⁴¹Possibilities include a business manager, chairperson at meetings, etc.

⁴²In addition to the initial publication and discussion in C. Virolleaud, “Les nouveaux textes mythologiques et liturgiques de Ras Shamra (XXIV^e campagne, 1961),” *Ugaritica* V (MRS 16; ed. C. F. A. Schaeffer et al.; Paris: Geuthner, 1968) 545–51 and the transliteration in *KTU*, see more recently D. Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24^e campagne (1961)* (RSO IV; Mémoire n^o 77; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988) 13–74; T. J. Lewis, “El’s Divine Feast,” *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (SBLWAW 9; ed. S. B. Parker; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 193–96. See also the discussion in Bryan, “Texts,” 123–36.

⁴³*yṯb.i*!**, the same words as in line 15 but in the reverse order.

⁴⁴Virolleaud, “Les Nouveaux Textes Mythologiques,” 547; followed by H. P. Rüger, “Zu RS 24.258,” *UF* 1 (1969) 205. Virolleaud’s hesitant reading of a *b* before the word in question differs from the *k* in the transcription by Liliane Courtois published with his essay. The editors of *KTU* read *w*!** before the *a* and found traces of both the *ṯ* and an *r* afterwards; they transcribed as *aṯ*r*[t .j]*. In a separate article they fill the gap with a space plus *ym*, an epithet of Aṯirat, and translate, “Es sitzen El und auch Aṯira[t Jam]”; see M. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartín, “Der Stichometrische Aufbau von RS 24.258 (= Ug. 5, S. 545 NR. 1),” *UF* 7 (1976) 110, 112.

marzēah.⁴⁵ De Moor initially read *wb[n] aī[r].* at the damaged spot, which he rendered as “(but) Ilu and the sons of Aīratu remained seated.”⁴⁶ Finally, Dietrich and Loretz read *yṭb i*!* w*!* aī*r*[bnh]* and translated “El sitzt da und wacht nicht über seine Söhne.”⁴⁷

All of these proposals can now be rejected in light of Dennis Pardee’s reading of *kr aškrh* at the relevant point, based on a direct examination of the tablet.⁴⁸ Although his translation as “il rassemble [sa] beuv[rie]” fits the context⁴⁹ and provides an acceptable parallel to the word *marzēah*, he admits it is not absolutely certain. He appeals to 2 Kgs 6:23 and the south-Arabian root *krw* in support of the first word and its translation, but admits there is no Semitic parallel for the precise form of

⁴⁵Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 190; he appealed to the word’s presence in the Rephaim texts in close proximity to the word *mrz*, which most commentators take as an alternative form of *mrzh* (cf. n. 68). Pope is followed by B. Margalit, “The Ugaritic Feast of the Drunken Gods: Another Look at RS 24.258 (KTU 1.114),” *Maarav* 2 (1979–80) 98–99; E. T. Mullen, Jr., *The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (HSM 24; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980) 266. This replaces Margalit’s earlier reading of *yṭb.il.ks!a.ībth*; see B. Margulis, “A New Ugaritic Farce (RS 24.252),” *UF* 2 (1970) 136; cf. Bryan, “Texts,” 133.

⁴⁶J. C. de Moor, “Studies in the New Alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra,” *UF* 1 (1969) 168, 172; followed by K. J. Cathcart and W. G. E. Watson, “Weathering a Wake: A Cure for Carousal. A Revised Translation of *Ugaritica V* Text 1,” *PIBA* 4 (1980) 37. De Moor and Cathcart both subsequently abandoned this reading (see notes 51 and 48 respectively).

⁴⁷M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, “Neue Studien zu den Ritualtexten aus Ugarit (I). Ein Forschungsbericht,” *UF* 13 (1981) 90. This replaces their reading in *KTU* and an earlier article (see n. 44).

⁴⁸First suggested in D. Pardee, “Ugaritic,” *AfO* 28 (1981–82) 267n36; see further *idem*, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 17–18. He is followed by K. J. Cathcart, “Ilu, Yariḥu and the One with the Two Horns and a Tail,” *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (UBL 12; eds. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 5; compare in n. 46. In contrast, the second half of the poetic line is left blank in Lewis, “El’s Divine Feast,” 195.

⁴⁹It is more appropriate than “[El] calls to order his drinking feast” offered in his initial article. Although that is consistent with the preceding disruption by some of the guests, it does not make sense that El would make the effort to restore order only to leave almost immediately after.

the second word, which he derives from the root *škr*. As a result, he acknowledges his interpretation of it as a noun meaning “drinking feast” must remain tentative.⁵⁰

Instead of Pardee’s reading, de Moor restored a final *r*, and identified the resultant *aškr* with the hallucinogenic plant henbane.⁵¹ The word appears elsewhere at Ugarit,⁵² but still presents many problems in this text. For instance, de Moor also reads *kb* rather than Pardee’s *kr* before this word,⁵³ and his rendering, “as with henbane,” is grammatically problematic.⁵⁴ Also, henbane provides a poor parallel to his subsequent, “Ilu is sitting with his society,”⁵⁵ and this sudden and solitary reference to drugs, even if only a simile, is inconsistent with the statement immediately following that El’s primary activity is drinking to the point of intoxication.⁵⁶ On the other hand, intoxication is completely consistent with a “drinking party.”

⁵⁰Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 55. 2 Kgs 6:23 reads “He prepared a great feast for them” (וַיִּכְרֶה לָהֶם כֶּבֶד גָּדוֹלָה); he notes the Arabic root’s connections with hunting and the reference to game (*mšd/šd*) in the first line of this text.

⁵¹J. C. de Moor, “Henbane and KTU 1.114,” *UF* 16 (1984) 355.

⁵²RS 17.120, line 244; this is acknowledged by Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 55. Cathcart, “Ilu,” 5, calls de Moor’s proposal “interesting” but opts for Pardee’s reading.

⁵³In a note added just before the volume’s final printing Pardee indicates *kbt* is also a possible reading based on what is left of the damaged signs (Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 18n8), but that would make little sense (“like a house?” “like a daughter?”) in either Pardee’s or de Moor’s interpretation.

⁵⁴His subsequent translation as, “Ilu is sitting as if he is on the henbane drug” goes well beyond this. Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 55n245, notes that in de Moor’s reading (found on his p. 356) the preposition *b* indicates instrument or accompaniment, but the transitive verb *yṯb* does not normally take such complements. In fact, the construction *yṯb b* is idiomatic in Ugaritic, always referring to a place; see D. Pardee, “The Preposition in Ugaritic,” *UF* 7 (1975) 352; 8 (1976) 245; M. H. Pope, “Notes on the Rephaim Texts from Ugarit,” *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 19; ed. M. de Jong Ellis; Hamden: Archon Books, 1977) 170.

⁵⁵de Moor, “Henbane,” 356. Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 55n245, also notes that his own restored *-h* provides a better syntactic parallel with the same pronoun in *mrzhh* (line 15)

⁵⁶Line 16; cf. lines 3–4.

Thus, despite his own reservations, Pardee's reading is superior on both epigraphic and contextual grounds. As such, the parallel to "his *marzēah*" is "his drinking feast." Pardee's translation of *kr* as "rassemble" seems to understand the "drinking feast" in terms of the participants rather than the elements of the party itself,⁵⁷ but elsewhere in the volume he indicates the opposite.⁵⁸ The former is consistent with the word *marzēah* elsewhere at Ugarit, where it means a group, but the idiom *yṯb b* requires the indirect object ("his *marzēah*") refer to a place rather than an association.⁵⁹ But a drinking party is not a place, so it is best to read the two lines as successive rather than precisely parallel: El hosts a group of drinkers while sitting in his *marzēah*.⁶⁰

Virolleaud took the statement that "El went to his house" (*il.hl*k.l bth*, line 17) as evidence the *marzēah* location was distinct from El's "house,"⁶¹ but there is no indication that he left the latter after inviting the gods there in lines 1–4.⁶² Moreover, the description of El's activity in the *marzēah* (line 16) is identical to his earlier exhortation to drink at the feast he was having in his house. It seems more likely,

⁵⁷Cathcart, "Ilu," 5, renders Pardee's reading as "he invites his drinking companions."

⁵⁸E.g., he says the sense of *kr* is "'offrir . . .' ou 'inviter à un festin'" (Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 54) and later comments that El "convie encore à une beuverie" (p. 73). His earlier translation as "[El] calls to order his drinking feast" (Pardee, "Ugaritic," 267n36), could be understood either way.

⁵⁹See n. 54 above.

⁶⁰Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 54, translates the last term as "son festin-*mrzḥ*," preserving a more exact parallel with the preceding line.

⁶¹C. Virolleaud, "Les nouveaux textes mythologiques et liturgiques de Ras Shamra," *CRAIBL* (1962) 112; *idem*, "Les nouveaux textes mythologiques," 550; see also Pope, "Divine Banquet," 194; Cathcart, "Ilu," 2.

⁶²Miller, "The *MRZH* Text," 43. Klaas Spronk distinguishes between the feast in line 1 and the *marzēah* in line 15 but without supporting arguments; see K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (AOAT 219; Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon and Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986) 200. Against Spronk, note the identical activity in lines 3–4 and 16; see also concerning Pardee in n. 63 below.

therefore, that the *marzēah* was located in a specific part of his palace set aside for the purpose, and line 17 simply indicates he retired to his personal quarters.⁶³

Two other points about this *marzēah* can be made briefly. First, El's primary activity in his *marzēah* is drinking until inebriated, which is also the main reason he invited the gods in the first place.⁶⁴ El is so successful in this endeavour that he has to be helped from the room and wallows in his own waste.⁶⁵ In other words, in this text the *marzēah* is a place dedicated to the consumption of alcohol. Secondly, since the text projects human activity into the divine realm, by virtue of his presidency in the divine *marzēah*, El probably functions as the patron of its human counterpart.⁶⁶

⁶³de Moor, "Studies," 172; Dietrich and Loretz, "Neue Studien I," 95; cf. the translation as "El (then) departs to his domicile / He retires to his quarter," in Margulis, "Farce," 133. The different terms paralleled with *bt* in lines 1–2 and 17–18 (*qrb hkl* and *h̄zr* respectively) indicates just such a distinction within El's "house." This would be analogous to *KTU* 3.9, wherein Šamūmānu provides part of his house as a meeting place for the *marzēah* association (see the discussion of this text on pp. 17–20 above).

Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 57–59, also considers the *marzēah* part of El's palace, but distinguishes it from the location of the feast in lines 1–13. However, in both places drinking to the point of "satiety" (*šb*) and "drunkenness" (*škr*) occurs, which argues against Pardee's view.

⁶⁴El does invites them to "eat and drink" (lines 2–3) but the emphasis is on drinking, and doing so to the point of "satiety" and "drunkenness" (*tšm.y (yn) ʿd šbʿ tr̄. ʿd*.š*k*r**, lines 3–4; note the almost identical wording predicated of El in line 16).

⁶⁵Xella argues El is too far away to be the subject of *ylšn* at the end of line 20 and connects "his excrement and urine" to the mysterious figure *h̄by* mentioned in the preceding lines; see P. Xella, "Un antecedente eblaita del 'demone' ugaritico *h̄by*?" *SEL* 3 (1986) 23n6; followed by Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 64; Cathcart, "Ilu," 5. However, El is mentioned in the next two lines, and placing him in his own excretions is consistent with the text's emphasis on drunkenness. This traditional interpretation of the lines is presented most recently in Lewis, "El's Divine Feast," 195.

⁶⁶Eissfeldt, "Kultvereine," 193; Miller, "The *MRZH* Text," 45; Pope, "Divine Banquet," 201–202; C. E. L'Heureux, *Rank Among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba'al and the Repha'im* (HSM 21; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979) 219; de Tarragon, *Le Culte*, 145; Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 55–56. Margalit, "Another Look," 119–20, also correlates the earthly and divine realms but emphasizes El's role as the divine *marzēah* leader rather than the earthly *marzēah*'s patron.

KTU 1.21.Π⁶⁷

In this text El invites the Rephaim to “my *mrz'*,” which is probably a variant of the spelling *mrzḥ* found in the passages already examined.⁶⁸ Pardee rejects this on literary and philological grounds,⁶⁹ but the vocabulary shared with KTU 1.114,⁷⁰ suggests a comparable content in the two texts. The text must be used with caution, however, not only because of the variant spelling⁷¹ but especially because the tablet is damaged and all instances of the term involve a degree of restoration.⁷²

Despite the text's fragmentary state, it is possible to get a general sense of the context. El issues an invitation to the Rephaim, mentioning three different destinations in sequence: a house (*bt*), a palace (*hkl*), and a shrine (*atr*). The pronominal suffixes attached to these words indicate the third is a specification of the

⁶⁷For the most recent presentations of the Rephaim texts (KTU 1.20–22) see W. T. Pitard, “A New Edition of the Rāpiūma Texts; KTU 1.20–22,” *BASOR* 285 (February 1992) 33–77; T. J. Lewis, “Toward a Literary Translation of the Rapiuma Texts,” *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (UBL 12; eds. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 115–149; *idem*, “The Rapiuma,” *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (SBLWAW 9; ed. S. B. Parker; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 196–205; this text is found on pp. 199–200 of the latter work. Cf. the discussion in Bryan, “Texts,” 140–44.

⁶⁸Following the suggestion of Eissfeldt, “Kultvereine,” 194–95, who refers to the different spellings in the Akkadian texts discussed above; see further L'Heureux, *Rank*, 142n43.

⁶⁹Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 176n48; *idem*, “Marziḥu, Kispu, and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult: A Minimalist View,” *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (UBL 12; eds. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 278n6; see also Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 65–66.

⁷⁰Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 87, notes the repetition of *bt*, *bqrb hkl* and *ṣḥ* in connection with a *marzēah*. Comparable activity and terminology in the two texts is also noted by L'Heureux, *Rank*, 142; Margalit, “Another Look,” 100; Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 266–67.

⁷¹See Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 82n7 and the references in n. 69 above.

⁷²The word occurs in lines 1 and 5; since *lk.bry* after the *y* in line 9 is duplicated in line 1 after *m*(?)rz'y*, restoration of the term in line 9 is probable. El is designated the speaker in line 8, but some emend this to Danel; see the discussion on pp. 56–59. On the Rephaim see n. 191.

first two: “house” and “palace” consistently have a first person singular suffix attached, while “shrine” has the third, masculine singular suffix. This means an invitation is issued to “my house/palace” and specifically to “its (i.e., the house’s or palace’s) shrine.”⁷³ The word *mrzʿ* appears at the beginning and end of this sequence. Since *bt* and *hkl* function as parallel terms in Ugaritic poetry,⁷⁴ they should be linked, which suggests the words *mrzʿ* and *atr* also correspond.⁷⁵ In other words, the house’s “shrine” refers to El’s *marzēah*. The result is that, as in KTU 1.114, the *marzēah* designates a specific portion of El’s house/palace.

Emar

The word *marzēah* is also reflected in a ritual calendar from the Syrian city of Emar, dating from the 13th century BCE,⁷⁶ although the reading is disputed at one point. According to Daniel Fleming, the “*marzēah* men” (*lú.mešmar-za-ḥu*) bring gifts to the gods, but in the text’s original publication Daniel Arnaud had read *lú.meš ninda!* (*za-ri*), “Les hommes du pain-*zariu*,” at the relevant point.⁷⁷ Fleming’s more recent reading fits the context, since this section of the text deals with “the month of the

⁷³Lewis, “The Rapiuma,” *passim*, attributes the third invitation to a narrator, and translates “his shrine” throughout; since “he” is El, the difference is slight.

⁷⁴M. J. Dahood, “Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs,” *Ras Shamra Parallels I: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible* (AnOr 49; ed. L. Fisher; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972) 153.

⁷⁵Margalit, “Another Look,” 102, considers the two terms a fixed pair, but this is dependent on reading *atr* in KTU 1.114.15, which is no longer tenable in light of Pardee’s collation.

⁷⁶On the city, the texts and the dating, see J.-C. Margueron, “Emar,” *ABD* 2.488-90.

⁷⁷Emar 466.91-95; see D. Arnaud, *Recherches au pays d’Aštata. Emar VI.3: textes sumériens et accadiens* (Synthèse 18; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1986) 422, 424; D. E. Fleming, *The Installation of Baal’s High Priest at Emar: A Window on Ancient Syrian Religion* (HSS 42; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 269, 270; *idem*, “More Help From Syria: Introducing Emar to Biblical Study,” *BA* 58 (1995) 146. See also Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 126.

marzēah” (*iti-mar-za-ḥa-ni*),⁷⁸ and approximates the designation for *marzēah* members in the later Akkadian texts from Ugarit. This indicates a definable group of men associated with the *marzēah*. At the same time, the month name in line 85 suggests the *marzēah* occurred yearly and was important enough to have a month named after it.

Summary

We cannot assume complete uniformity in the pre-biblical *marzēah*, especially since there is so little information available from Ebla and Emar. Nonetheless, it is possible to paint a composite picture as long as one remembers that not every feature was present in all instances. At Ebla the word refers to both a group and a feast, but only the former is in evidence at Emar. At Ugarit, with the exception of the mythological texts, where the word refers to a place, *marzēah* refers to an association, with a single individual as its chief; terminology comparable to that used of the general membership and the leader at Ugarit occurs at Emar and Ebla respectively. At Ugarit this group often had a specific deity as its patron, engaged in financial transactions and usually owned property; houses⁷⁹ and vineyards are mentioned most frequently. The repeated reference to vineyards, as well as the content of *KTU* 1.114, suggests consumption of alcohol in copious quantities, perhaps as part of a larger feast, was a major element of the group’s gatherings.

⁷⁸Both authors agree on this reading at line 85; see Arnaud, *Emar VI.3*, 422; Fleming, *Installation*, 269, 270. Arnaud simply transliterates the word in his translation (p. 424).

⁷⁹For the possible identification of an actual *marzēah* house at Ugarit see M. Yon, “The Temple of the Rhytons at Ugarit,” *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (UBL 12; eds. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 405–16, especially p. 416; followed by Pardee, “*Marziḥu*,” 280. The building is neither a temple nor a house; both Yon and Pardee suggest the stepped platform could have held an image of a *marzēah*’s divine patron. The building at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud is identified as a *marzēah* house by M. H. Pope, “Le *MRZH* à l’Ugarit et ailleurs,” *AAAS* 29–30 (1979–1980) 142. One is also claimed for Dura-Europos in the 2nd Century CE by Comte R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les tessères et les monnaies de Palmyre: un art, une culture et une philosophie grecs dans les moules d’une cité et d’une religion sémitiques* (Inventaire Des Collections Du Cabinet Des Médailles de la Bibliothèque Nationale; Paris: Éditions E. du Boccard, 1962) 467–68.

The Post-biblical marzēah

Trans-Jordan

The first reference to consider in this section is, properly speaking, not post-biblical but contemporary with the prophetic literature. In a trans-Jordanian (probably Moabite) papyrus, the gods assure Sara' that "the *marzēah*, the millstones and the house belong to you" (לך המרזח והרחין והבית), and that Yiš'a' has renounced any claim.⁸⁰ The reference to the *marzēah* in sequence with types of property suggests it is "an architectural entity,"⁸¹ possibly a *marzēah* house.⁸² Since the text seems to confirm ownership of *marzēah* property, Sara' may be a leader in whose name group possessions were held. Finally, the deities may be connected to Sara' more than the *marzēah* itself, but his association with the latter provides an indirect link between this *marzēah* and the gods.

Elephantine

In an ostracon from this 5th century BCE Jewish military colony in Egypt, a certain Ito informs Haggai he has spoken with Ashian concerning money in relationship to a *marzēah*, and that Ashian has agreed to pay it to either Haggai or Igdal.⁸³ Porten considers Ito the *marzēah* leader who has requested that Ashian pay his share of the

⁸⁰The text is published in P. Bordreuil and D. Pardee, "Le papyrus du *marzēah*," *Sem* 38 (1990) 49–68, pl. VII-X. They date it to the late seventh to early sixth century BCE (p. 61); for the language involved see their pp. 62–63. This article appeared well after Bryan's dissertation.

⁸¹Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 89.

⁸²Bordreuil and Pardee, "Papyrus," 56, suggest a portion of a building on analogy with *KTU* 3.9. This is possible but not certain.

⁸³Ostracon Cairo Museum 35468a, first published in A. H. Sayce, "An Aramaic Ostracon from Elephantine," *PSBA* 31 (1909) 154–55; however, he read the relevant portion as מלל מר and translated "about the price of the myrrh, 3 a(rdebs)". For the corrected reading see M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* (New York: Stechert, 1902–1915) 3.119–21; B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) 179, 184; P. Grelot, *Documentes araméens d'Égypte: introduction, traduction, présentation* (LAPÖ; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1972) 371–73. See also Bryan, "Texts," 168–69.

cost for “a banquet in memory of a late member” to Haggai, the treasurer, or another official, namely Igdal.⁸⁴ Nothing in the text indicates such leadership roles, but they do fit the context. The role of treasurer would be more secure if *ksp mrzḥ* is translated as “the *marzēah*’s money” rather than “money for the *marzēah*.”⁸⁵ In that case, it does not refer to individual dues but to the association’s common fund, and Ashian is being relieved, or has resigned, his position as financial overseer and the position is being transferred to Haggai. In either case, money played a role in the administration of the Elephantine *marzēah*, which had some form of official leadership, and by extension a general membership.

Phoenicia

A *marzēah* is mentioned in three Phoenician contexts. The first is a bronze drinking bowl found in Lebanon, measuring seven inches across and one-and-a-half inches deep, dated to the early fourth century BCE.⁸⁶ A dedicatory inscription reads “2 cups we offer to the *marzēah* of Šamaš” (קבעם ן אנחן ערבת למרוח שמש).⁸⁷ This reflects a couple of elements encountered at Ugarit, namely alcohol consumption in a ritual context and the *marzēah*’s dedication to a deity, in this case to Šamaš. The *marzēah* here could be a group, in which case the bowl is simply given to them, but most take the inscription to mean the drinking bowl is dedicated for use during some

⁸⁴Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 184. His assumption that the *marzēah* is a funerary association will be address in this chapter’s conclusion.

⁸⁵Thus, Eissfeldt, “Etymologische,” 168. This possibility is also raised by both Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, 3.120–21 and Miller, “The *MRZH* Text,” 48, but neither reaches a definite conclusion.

⁸⁶Published in N. Avigad and J. C. Greenfield, “A Bronze *phialē* with a Phoenician Dedicatory Inscription,” *IEJ* 32 (1982) 118–28; for the dating on epigraphic grounds see their discussion on p. 121. This article appeared after Bryan’s work.

⁸⁷Transposing the two vertical lines, representing the number two, from after the second word to after the first, the objects being enumerated; see Avigad and Greenfield, “A Bronze *phialē*,” 121.

activity, such as a drinking party. Furthermore, Avigad and Greenfield argue on the basis of the feminine form of עֹרְבַת (“offer”) that women could attend a *marzēah* as well as males.⁸⁸ Whether they did so together is not specified.

The second Phoenician text is the Marseilles Tariff, two stone blocks discovered near the French city in 1845.⁸⁹ However, the type of stone is similar to that found at Carthage, and epigraphic considerations confirm that provenance for the inscription;⁹⁰ it is usually dated to the end of the third century BCE.⁹¹ The tariff lists payments due to the priests of the temple of Ba‘al-Zaphon in connection with sacrifices. Line 15 exempts the poor from such requirements, while line 16 mentions four other groups: clans (כל מזרח), families (כל שפוח) *marzēahs* (כל מרוח אלם) and every (group of) men who sacrifice (כל אדם אש יזבח).⁹² A. van den Branden takes the first three terms as participles enumerating cultic functionaries who are also exempt because of their profession,⁹³ but the plural אדם in the final phrase indicates they are collectives.

⁸⁸Avigad and Greenfield, “A Bronze *phiale*,” 124.

⁸⁹*KAI* 69; the text can be found in vol. I, p. 15 and a German translation and commentary in vol II, p. 83–87; for an English translation see *ANET*, 656–57. See also Bryan, “Texts,” 158–63.

⁹⁰B. Peckham, “Phoenicia and the Religion of Israel: The Epigraphic Evidence,” *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and D. S. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 83.

⁹¹E.g., in *KAI* vol. II, p. 83; *ANET*, p. 502; Peckham dates it earlier, to ca. 325 BCE; see B. Peckham, “Phoenicia,” 94n50; J. B. Peckham, *The Development of the Late Phoenician Scripts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) 100, 211, 217.

⁹²For this translation of the first two terms see G. A. Cooke, *Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903) 121.

⁹³A. van den Branden, “Notes phéniciennes,” *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 13 (1956) 94–95; he translates מרוח as, “one who serves at the feast.”

Moreover, the text's structure⁹⁴ and the summary statement in line 17 that such people shall pay the prescribed fee calls for a contrastive rather than successive reading of lines 15-16. In other words, the Tariff spells out the financial obligations of individuals, while those of the groups mentioned in line 16 are contained elsewhere.

Thus, the third phrase refers to a *marzēah* association.⁹⁵ A clue concerning the group's membership is found in the phrase's final word, םלל (literally, "gods"). Both *KAI* and *ANET* take it as a general reference to Ba'al-Zaphon, who is mentioned at the beginning of the text, but Février claims that in Phoenician the plural refers to the nobility (thus, "the *marzēah* of the nobles").⁹⁶ While the plural does not not always have this sense,⁹⁷ Février's appeal to *KAI* 19.2 for the meaning "nobles" is correct. Three contextual considerations favour that meaning as well. First of all, it is unlikely that a *marzēah* dedicated specifically to Ba'al-Zaphon would be mentioned in a list of more general religious duties, or that they would need those duties spelled out for them. Secondly, a non-religious meaning provides a better parallel with the preceding secular social groups. Finally, the contrast with the poor, mentioned in the preceding line, supports a reference to the upper class. Therefore, in this text the word *marzēah*

⁹⁴Up to this point the text has specified the fees for specific types of sacrifice, with each type introduced by either ן or ל, and line 15, mentioning the poor, also follows this pattern. Beginning with line 16, however, the prepositions are missing and the precise fees are not specified; instead the reader is referred in lines 17 and 18 to another written document, line 20 indicates the penalty if a priest accepts a different fee than what is set out, and line 21 deals with people who refuse to pay. See also the comments of Bryan, "Texts," 160.

⁹⁵Bryan, "Texts," 161.

⁹⁶J. G. Février, *La religion des palmyréniens* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1931) 208; Miller, "The *MRZH* Text," 45n7, suggests םלל may "be read as 'ellm 'rams,' i.e. leaders, chieftains" rather than "gods," which yields the same nuance as Février's proposal. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 89n40, discounts this because of the *marzēah*'s frequent link with deities elsewhere (Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 181, also relates םלל to a deity), but it is just as often linked to the upper class. Bryan, "Texts," 213, thinks the plural points to more than one *marzēah* in the city, but in that case the first term should be plural, not the second.

⁹⁷Note the phrase בלל אלל ("house of the gods" = "temple") in the Pireaus inscription, discussed below.

refers to an upper-class group which was expected to meet certain financial obligations in the religious sphere.

The final Phoenician text is the Piraeus inscription, an eight-line Phoenician text with two lines in Greek, dealing with the presentation of a gold crown to Shemaba'al and the erection of a stele commemorating the event on "the fourth day of the *marzēah* (ביום לריוח)".⁹⁸ The opening lines date the inscription to "the 14th year of the people of Sidon"; the Sidonian era began in 111 BCE, which means the inscription is from 97 or 96 BCE.⁹⁹ Peckham holds that Shemaba'al was a past leader of the *marzēah* who was being honoured by its members.¹⁰⁰ However, it is the assembled Sidonians (צדנמ בנאספת, line 1), not *marzēah* members, who decide to honour him, and they do so because he built the courtyard of the temple and fulfilled all his related duties (כ בן אית חצר בת אלם ופעל אית כל אש עלתי משרת), lines 4–5). This is consistent with the erection of a memorial stele in the same lines by "the people who are leaders over the temple" (האדמם אש נשאם לן על בת אלם) and Shemaba'al's designation as "leader of the community over the temple" (נשא הגו על בת אלם, line 2).¹⁰¹ Thus, there is nothing to indicate Shemaba'al played a role in the *marzēah*

⁹⁸KAI 60; see vol. I, p. 13 for the text and vol. II, pp. 73–74 for the German translation and commentary. An English translation and commentary is given in Cooke, *Textbook*, 94–99. It is discussed in Bryan, "Texts," 163–67.

⁹⁹Donner and Röllig argue the formation of the Greek letters points to a date in the second half of the 3rd Century BCE, as does the reference to Persian currency (דרכנמ, darics); see KAI II, 73. However, as they acknowledge, this may be a scribal error for Greek *δραχμῶν*, which appears in line 6 (דרכמנמ). Nonetheless they are followed by Greenfield, "Social Institution," 454n17; my dating follows J. B. Peckham, *Late Phoenician Scripts*, 78.

¹⁰⁰Peckham, "Phoenicia," 83, 94n51.

¹⁰¹B. Peckham, "Phoenicia," 94n51, considers him the *marzēah*'s representative to the temple, but the preposition על is more naturally translated as "over" (with the sense "responsible for") rather than "to" or "at" as required by Peckham's proposal; for the latter we would expect ל. On the two prepositions see the discussions in S. Segert, *A Grammar of Phoenician and Punic* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1976) §§56.22; R. S. Tomback, *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon of the Phoenician and Punic Languages* (SBLDS 32; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) 153–54, 242–43.

itself. At the same time, the points noted above, along with the concluding Greek reference to the concerned parties as “the community of the Sidonians” (Τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Σιδωνίων) and “Diopeithan, the Sidonian” (Διοπεΐθην Σιδώνιον, Διοπεΐθην being the rough equivalent of Shemaba‘al), also militate against Peckham’s assertion that the text “distinguishes between citizens and members of the association (*hšdnyw/gw*).”¹⁰² In other words, there is no direct link between the content of the inscription and the reference to a *marzēah* in the opening line.

Nonetheless, four points can be drawn with a fair amount of certainty from the inscription. First, since it mentions “the fourth day of the *marzēah*,” the word here cannot refer to a group as it does elsewhere. It is apparently some kind of celebration, and in light of the role feasting played in earlier *marzēahs*, I suggest such a meaning here. Second, this feast spanned at least four days. Third, the unqualified reference to “the *marzēah* in the 14th year . . .,” with the assumption no further specification is necessary for the reader to establish the precise date, implies there was only one such celebration in a given year,¹⁰³ perhaps at the New Year Festival. Fourth, the *marzēah* was considered a suitably prestigious occasion for conferring public honours, such as the presentation of a gold crown to Shemaba‘al.¹⁰⁴

Nabatea

The Nabatean evidence includes a brief memorial inscription from Petra and some fragmentary references from ‘Avdat. The former consists of the statement, “May ‘Obaidu son of Waqihel and his companions, the *marzēah* of ‘Obodas the god, be

¹⁰²B. Peckham, “Phoenicia,” 94n51.

¹⁰³KAI II, 73; Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 181; B. Peckham, “Phoenicia,” 94n54.

¹⁰⁴Greenfield, “Social Institution,” 454; see also Février, *La religion des palmyréniens*, 202; Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 181.

remembered” (דכיר עבדו בר וקיהאל וחברוהי מרוח עבדת אלהא).¹⁰⁵ The inscription is quite straightforward, confirming *marzēah* elements encountered previously. The term itself is in apposition to “‘Obaidu and his companions,” yet another instance of an identifiable membership with one individual, probably the leader, singled out. This *marzēah* also has a specific deity as its patron, the divinized dead king ‘Obadas.¹⁰⁶

References to the *marzēah* also occur at ‘Avdat, in fragmentary inscriptions on the side of four large stone trough-shaped objects.¹⁰⁷ A four-line partial inscription on one mentions “X, son(s) of Y” (the names are damaged), a damaged gap, and then a fuller reference to what Negev read as “the son(s) of Saruta”; immediately prior to the latter he reconstructed “and his companions” (thus, [וחברוהי] בני סרותא).¹⁰⁸ This is then followed by the specification that they are “the *marzēah* of Dushara, the god of Gaia” (דנא מרוח דושרא אלה גאיא).¹⁰⁹ The same term on the side of two of the other objects¹¹⁰ supports the reconstructed וחברוהי, in which case the singular masculine

¹⁰⁵First published, with discussion, in G. Dalman, *Neue Petra-Forschungen und der heilige Felsen von Jerusalem* (PFAT 2; Leipzig: J. C. Heinrich, 1912) 92–94; see also Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, 3.278. Dalman read “son of Zikka” and Lidzbarski left it blank; it was corrected to “Waqihel” on the basis of a closer inspection of the inscription by R. Savignac, “Chronique: notes de voyage de Suez au Sinaï et à Pétra,” *RB* 10 (1913) 440. Cf. the discussion in Bryan, “Texts,” 198–99.

¹⁰⁶He is generally identified as ‘Obadas I, e.g., by J. Starcky, “Pétra et la Nabatène,” *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 7 (eds. L. Pirot, A. Robert, H. Cazelles and A. Feuillet; Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1966) vol. 7, cols. 906, 1015; Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 181; J. Teixidor, “Bulletin d’épigraphie sémitique,” *Syria* 48 (1971) 458. However, Eissfeldt, “Etymologische,” 169, suggests ‘Obadas II and ‘Obadas III is proposed by J. Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1930–1932) 1.6, 2.125; du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères*, 467. Any of these would place the inscription in the First Century BCE. His possible significance for a funerary aspect to this *marzēah* will be considered in the conclusion.

¹⁰⁷See A. Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions from ‘Avdat (Oboda) I” *IEJ* 13 (1961) 131–33, for a description of these objects and their physical context. See also Bryan, “Texts,” 199–207.

¹⁰⁸A. Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions from ‘Avdat (Oboda) II” *IEJ* 13 (1963) 113–14.

¹⁰⁹Published as Inscription #10 in Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions II,” 113–17. Dushara was the national deity of the Nabateans as well as the patron of various localities.

¹¹⁰Negev’s inscriptions 8 and 9, followed in the latter by “sons of Saruta” as well; see Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions I,” 135, 137.

suffix points to a singular subject and his companions. We have seen this formula before, most recently at Petra, referring to a *marzēah*'s leader and members. This in turn supports emendation of Saruta (סרומא) to *marzēah* (מרומא) in both cases.¹¹¹ The following reading results: “. . . X, son of Y and his companions, the members of the *marzēah*, that is, the *marzēah* of Dushara, the god of Gaia.” Thus, in this inscription the word *marzēah* denotes a group with a leader and members who together are linked with a patron deity.

This *marzēah*'s divine patron gives some insight into the group's activities. In Nabatean religion, Dushara is equated with the Greek god Dionysus,¹¹² and the latter's associations with intoxication suggests heavy drinking played a role in the association. This hypothesis is reinforced by the purpose of the stone objects themselves. According to Negev, the inscription on each of the four begins with the phrase, “this סכרא,” which he linked with irrigation systems unearthed in the area, and translated “this dam.”¹¹³ At the same time he connected the stone troughs with the *marzēah*, proposing they were libation altars used at the dam's dedication.¹¹⁴ However, Naveh corrected Negev's otherwise unattested סכרא to מדרא, suggesting the

¹¹¹With Starcky, “Pétra et la Nabatène,” 919, 1014; J. Naveh, “Some Notes on Nabatean Inscriptions from ‘Avdat” *IEJ* 17 (1967) 188. Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions I,” 137, admits the name Saruta is unknown in the extant Nabatean sources; this also supports the correction, as does Negev's misreading of a 𐤃 as a 𐤄 elsewhere in the inscription (see Naveh, “Some Notes,” 187).

¹¹²G. Dalman, *Petra und seine Felsheiligtümer* (PFAT 1; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908) 50; Starcky, “Pétra et la Nabatène,” 990; O. Eissfeldt, “Neue Belege für nabatäische Kultgenossenschaften,” *MIO* 15 (1969) 225.

¹¹³Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions I,” 131–33.

¹¹⁴Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions II,” 114; he had earlier linked them to repeated rites praying for rain (Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions I,” 133), but the dating of inscriptions 8 and 9 to specific years makes a dedication in a single year the more likely possibility.

word identified the objects as some type of receptacle for liquid.¹¹⁵ Eissfeldt further clarified their purpose when he proposed reading מִדִּים, from the root מִדַּ (‘‘to measure’’) and interpreted the objects as stone troughs used to serve wine.¹¹⁶ This explains the large cup mark in the bottom of each,¹¹⁷ and is consistent with wine’s role in *marzēahs* in general and in this one in particular through its dedication to Dushara/Dionysus. Furthermore, the size of the objects indicates significant amounts of wine would have been used.¹¹⁸

A few other points may be made briefly by comparing this inscription (No. 10) with Nos. 7–9. First, inscriptions 8 and 10 are both dated to ‘‘the 18th year of Rab’el, who brought life and deliverance to his people,’’ but the former also mentions an individual, different from the one in #10, and his companions.¹¹⁹ Therefore, specification of the *marzēah*’s patron in #10 may reflect a desire to distinguish it from at least one other *marzēah* in the vicinity. Second, #7 contains the title for a *marzēah*

¹¹⁵Naveh, ‘‘Some Notes,’’ 187–88; he shows the first letter is a מ and the next two could be either a ך or a ך. Negev’s assertion that, ‘‘The absence of the noun סכר׳א in the Nabatean Inscriptions hitherto discovered may indicate that farming in arid lands had not been practiced by the Nabateans until then’’ (Negev, ‘‘Nabatean Inscriptions II,’’ 117), is special pleading.

¹¹⁶Eissfeldt, ‘‘Neue Belege,’’ 233–35; he also notes the remains of vineyards and wine presses in the vicinity of ‘Avdat on p. 224; Bryan compares Hebrew ך׳ (‘‘cauldrons’’) and the phrase ך׳ ך׳׳ at Palmyra; see Bryan, ‘‘Texts,’’ 174, 204 and further on p. 42 below.

¹¹⁷See the description in Negev, ‘‘Nabatean Inscriptions I,’’ 132.

¹¹⁸Negev gives the dimensions of the sides of various troughs as follows: 7a - 90 cm. X 75 cm.; 7b - 190 cm. X 95 cm.; 8 (inscribed area only) - 63 cm. X 46 cm.; 9b - 56 cm. X 45 cm.; 10 - 132 cm. X 80 cm.; see Negev, ‘‘Nabatean Inscriptions I,’’ 133, 134, 135, 137; Negev, ‘‘Nabatean Inscriptions II,’’ 113.

¹¹⁹Whether one reads ‘‘Garmo built’’ (בנא גרמו; Negev, ‘‘Nabatean Inscriptions I,’’ 135), or ‘‘son of Adarmo’’ (בן אדרמו; Naveh, ‘‘Some Notes,’’ 188), in #8, either must be distinguished from the fragmentary name in #10, which has the letters ך׳ immediately before ‘‘his companions.’’ The expected identification of ‘‘his companions’’ as ‘‘members of the *marzēah*’’ is obliterated in #8, but its presence in inscriptions 9 and 10 (according to Naveh’s corrected reading; see n. 111) supports its restoration in #8.

leader, רב מרוחא.¹²⁰ Finally, we learn from #7 that the stone objects were “dedicated” (קרב), and in light of the similar wording in #10 the term should probably be restored there as well,¹²¹ reinforcing that *marzēah*’s religious connection.

To summarize, there may have been more than one *marzēah* in operation at ‘Avdat at the same time. At least one had a recognizable leader and membership, a patron deity and drank wine in abundance from “dedicated” drinking troughs.

Palmyra

References to the *marzēah* at Palmyra fall into two categories: tesserae and inscriptions. The term occurs on nine of over twelve hundred tesserae (terra-cotta coins) dating from the First to Third Centuries CE, and probably employed as tokens of admission to banquets.¹²² Six contain a name followed by the usual title for a *marzēah*’s leader (רב מרוחא),¹²³ one refers to an individual’s presidency of a *marzēah* (ברבנות מרוחא),¹²⁴ another mentions the members (בני מרוחא)¹²⁵ and the final one uses the term absolutely in reference to “the *marzēah* of Be’eltak and Tayma’, day 5”

¹²⁰Following Naveh, “Some Notes,” 188, against Negev’s “this house” (דנה דרתא; Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions I,” 134); Negev admits his second term is unattested in Nabatean inscriptions.

¹²¹Against the restoration of בנא (“built”) in Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions II,” 114; it is restored in #8 by Naveh, “Some Notes,” 188.

¹²²H. Seyrig, “Les tessères palmyréniennes et le banquet rituel,” *Memorial Lagrange* (Cinquantenaire de L’École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jerusalem (15 novembre 1890 - 15 novembre 1940); ed. L. Vincent; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1940) 55; du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères*, 21. Most of the tesserae are published in H. Ingholt, S. Henri and J. Starcky, *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre* (Institute Française d’Archéologie de Beyrouth, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 58; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1955); unless otherwise noted references to the tesserae will be to this volume by number alone. For a comprehensive discussion of the tesserae in general see du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères*; for their relationship to the *marzēah* cf. Bryan, “Texts,” 220–25.

¹²³Nos. 27, 30–33, 35; No. 32 is the only one of the nine dated, to 132/133 C.E.

¹²⁴No. 34; the leader, Shalman Yarhibōla Malkou Aabai, is also named in No. 31.

¹²⁵No. 301.

(מרוזח בעלתך ותימע יום 5).¹²⁶ As with the Piraeus inscription, the mention of “day 5” means this particular *marzēah* must be a feast lasting a number of days and dedicated to the deities named, rather than a group devoted to them.¹²⁷ This raises the possibility of the same nuance for the other tesserae, but while such a meaning is plausible for the first two phrases,¹²⁸ it is more likely that בני in the third phrase designates members of a group rather than participants in a feast. As such, I prefer to retain the denotations for (א) מרוזח רב/בני found in earlier attestations¹²⁹ and interpret *marzēah* in the three composite phrases as referring to one or more *marzēah* associations.

The first seven tesserae depict a priest on the other side and Nos. 27, 33–35 also have some form of the individual’s name there.¹³⁰ This suggests the image depicts the leader and, by extension, that such leadership was an honour worthy of publication; in fact, a major purpose of the Palmyrene *marzēah* may have been bestowal of this honour.¹³¹ With the exception of No. 34,¹³² in these seven the priest is reclining

¹²⁶C. Dunant, “Nouvelles tessères de Palmyre,” *Syria* 36 (1959) No. 12. Her translation as “thiase, à ton autel, et Taima, jour 5^e” is awkward; cf. n. 127.

¹²⁷The second name is identified with a member or even the leader of the *marzēah* by du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères*, 364–67, while Milik takes it as a diminutive derived from בני תימרזח, a group associated elsewhere with the goddess Be’eltak and once identified as priests; see J. T. Milik, *Recherches d’épigraphie proche-orientale I: Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiasés sémitiques à l’époque romaine* (Institute Française d’Archéologie de Beyrouth, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 92; Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1972) 111, 219; cf. J. Cantineau, “Textes palmyréniens provenant de la fouille du temple de Bél,” *Syria* 12 (1931) No. 12 (pp. 132–33); Ingholt, Henri and Starcky, *Recueil Des Tessères*, No. 66. However, a reference to two deities is more likely than a combination of divine and human individuals.

¹²⁸I.e., “leader/during the leadership of the *marzēah*-feast.”

¹²⁹See especially n. 24 and p. 18.

¹³⁰No. 27 contains the name in full, with only “the priests of Bel” on the front, while Nos. 33–35 present a shortened form of the full name given on the front.

¹³¹Bryan, “Texts,” 221–22.

¹³²On which see p. 45 below.

beneath a vine and in No. 33 he is also holding a cup, pointing once again to the significance of wine for the *marzēah*. Since No. 27 also has the phrase “the priests of Bel” on the front, it is likely the other six should be similarly linked and that Bel is the patron of a *marzēah* made up (primarily) of his priests.¹³³ At the same time, other gods are also mentioned on *marzēah* tesserae. No. 33 depicts Pan, the second line of No. 301 is probably to be restored as “[Ne]bo” while its opposite side depicts a nude Apollo, and in Dunant, No. 12 the *marzēah* is identified as that of Be‘eltak and Tayma³. Thus, *marzēahs* dedicated to other deities co-existed with Bel’s.¹³⁴

However, unless a *marzēah* was the only type of banquet celebrated at Palmyra, in the absence of a more explicit designation it would be wrong to identify every tesserae mentioning “Bel’s priests” with the *marzēah*.¹³⁵ In fact, consideration of all twenty tesserae bearing that designation provides strong reasons not to do so.¹³⁶ Half of them (which I will call Group A), also show a reclining priest plus a name on the other side,¹³⁷ and the parallels with the tesserae discussed in the preceding paragraph suggest the individual depicted is being honoured. The other ten (Group B) contain a variety of iconographic motifs, but only two are accompanied by names.¹³⁸ This second group lacks the banqueting motif, proving in and of itself that not all tesserae with the inscription “the priests of Bel” need necessarily be linked with banquets in general, never mind the *marzēah* in particular. At the same time, whether

¹³³Note, however, that No. 33 bears the face of Pan.

¹³⁴See further on p. 43.

¹³⁵*Contra* du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères*, 468–70 and *passim*.

¹³⁶Of those twenty, only one (#27) has the word *marzēah* on it. The following discussion is dependent on Bryan, “Texts,” 222–24.

¹³⁷Nos. 10, 12–14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 27, 29.

¹³⁸Nos. 11, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24–26, 28; the first two contain the names.

the honour bestowed in Group A is because of a role in a *marzēah* or even during the course of one is an open question. Henri Seyrig has published a Greek inscription dealing with a boy's consecration to the Palmyrene priesthood, and suggested just such an event would be an appropriate occasion on which to acknowledge an individual by issuing a tesserae depicting him as the honoured member of a banquet.¹³⁹ Although that could occur as part of a *marzēah*, there is no indication this was the case. In sum, although a *marzēah* comprising the priests of Bel was an important one at Palmyra, this is not the only type of banquet with which they were associated, and for my purposes the discussion above of only those tesserae specifying a *marzēah* is sufficient.

The *marzēah* also figures in a number of inscriptions from Palmyra. The earliest is a contract regulating various aspects of a *marzēah* association.¹⁴⁰ Teixidor dates it to the beginning of the Common Era, but greater precision is impossible due to the text's fragmentary nature.¹⁴¹ After a reference to the priests of Belastor and Ba'alshamem (line 2), the text mentions "the member of the *marzēah* who will be at their head for the sacrifice" (. . . גברא די מרזח די יהא ברשהון למקל[ותא] . . . ; lines 3–4) being elected (line 5) and paying three Tyrian shekels to the group treasury (line 6). The third person plural pronominal suffix ("their head") confirms that the term *marzēah* refers to a group, and that the surrounding context refers to the selection of their leader. Teixidor thinks the money is in return for the honour of the leadership

¹³⁹H. Seyrig, "Antiquités syriennes: 37 - Postes romains sur la route de Médine; 38 - Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre," *Syria* 22 (1941) 267–70; cf. tessera No. 887, which has 2 columns (a temple?) a priest's cap (imposed during the consecration?) and a name (noted by Bryan, "Texts," 223).

¹⁴⁰The text plus preliminary discussion was presented in J. Teixidor, "Le thiase de Bêlastor et de Beelshamên d'après une inscription récemment découverte à Palmyre," *CRAIBL* (1981) 306–14. This appeared after Bryan's dissertation.

¹⁴¹Line 1 breaks off after the number 300, which corresponds to 11 BCE, but Teixidor, "Le Thiase," 306, dates it later, although not precisely, on paleographic grounds.

role¹⁴² but it may be meant to fund the banquet mentioned in line 14. Lines 8–11 appear to outline responsibilities incumbent upon other members¹⁴³ and specifies that a fine be paid if they do not live up to their duties. A “banquet hall” (אדרונא) plays a major role as the place where the contract is to be deposited (line 7), the oaths of office are taken (line 11) and, of course, the banquet itself is held (line 14).

Seven other inscriptions from Palmyra also deal with the *marzēah*, but since they have been known and discussed for some years, the details can be presented in summary form. An altar inscription, dated to 29 CE, states it has been “constructed by the members of the *marzēah* (בני מרוחא) for their gods, Aglibol and Malakbel,” after which nine names, presumably of those members, occur.¹⁴⁴ In 118 CE a statue of Zebida was erected by the senate “on the occasion of his presidency of the *marzēah* (ברבנות מרוחות) of the priests of Bel.”¹⁴⁵ The form במרוחותה appears in an inscription from 193 CE; the text is fragmentary, but appears to refer to Maliku’s elevation by the Emperor to the leadership of the *marzēah* of the priests of Bel.¹⁴⁶ The phrase ברבנות

¹⁴²Teixidor, “Le Thiase,” 310.

¹⁴³Since the text is broken it is not possible to identify any specific role beyond that of treasurer in line 9: דִּי יְהוּא אַהִיד עַל דְּהַבָּא - “the one who is elected over the treasury”; for this rendering of דְּהַבָּא see Teixidor, “Le Thiase,” 311.

¹⁴⁴See E. Littmann, “Deux inscriptions religieuses de Palmyre, le dieu אלקום,” *JA* 9e Sér 18 (1901) 374–81, with corrections in C. Clermont-Ganneau, “Note sur les deux inscriptions religieuses de Palmyre publiées par M. E. Littmann,” *JA* 9e Sér 18 (1901) 521–25. The text is also presented in Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, 1.343–45; Cooke, *Textbook*, 302–03; *CIS* 2, §3980. Cf. Bryan, “Texts,” 195–97.

¹⁴⁵Published in M. Sobernheim, “Palmryenische Inschriften,” *MVAG* 10/2 (1905) 30, plate 4. He read the statue as being erected by Zebida’s daughter, but this was corrected and the reference to his presidency of the *marzēah* established by C. Clermont-Ganneau, “Épigraphie palmyrénienne,” *JA* 10e Sér 5 (1905) 394–95; see also J.-B. Chabot, “Séance du 10 novembre,” *CRAIBL* (1911) 670. The text is also in Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, 2.281–82; *RES* §2129; *CIS* 2, §3919. See also Bryan, “Texts,” 192–93.

¹⁴⁶Published in Cantineau, “Textes,” 119–20, fig. 3; see also J. Cantineau, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre 9: Le sanctuaire de Bēl* (Publications du Musée National Syrien de Damas 1; Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1933) §26 (pp. 38–39); Bryan, “Texts,” 190–92. The restoration of “the priests of Bel” in the Aramiac portion is assured from the Greek.

מרוחות is applied to Shalma, son of Maliku, in a text from 203 CE which mentions three emperors,¹⁴⁷ and is also found on a stone erected in 243 CE “on the occasion of the leadership of the *marzēah* by Yarḥai Agrippa” who “served the gods and presided over the distribution for the whole year.”¹⁴⁸ That inscription goes on to describe how Yarḥai provided the priests with aged wine from his own house, rather than foreign wine, throughout that year and concludes by mentioning those who served under him: a scribe (כתובא), a chef (די הוי על בת דודא - “who is over the cauldron house”) and a wine steward (ממוגנא), each identified by name, plus some anonymous “helpers” (מסיענא). Finally, מרוחות ברבנות occurs in two inscriptions from 272 CE dealing with Senator Ḥaddudan’s *marzēah* leadership.¹⁴⁹

The terms in these inscriptions duplicate those used in connection with *marzēahs* elsewhere, confirming an identifiable membership (at least nine in one case)

¹⁴⁷Sobernheim, “Inchriften,” 66–68; Clermont-Ganneau, “Épigraphie,” 405–407; for the text see also Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, 2.303–305; *CIS* 2, #3970 and Tab 16. See too, the discussion in Bryan, “Texts,” 193–95.

¹⁴⁸See H. Ingholt, “Les thiasés à Palmyre d’après une inscription inédite,” *CRAIBL* (1925) 355–62; H. Ingholt, “Un nouveau thiasé à Palmyre,” *Syria* 7 (1926) 128–41, pl. 34; *An Aramaic Handbook* (PLO 10; ed. F. Rosenthal; Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967) I/1.42–43; Bryan, “Texts,” 170–76. יתב על קסמא in lines 3–4 was translated as “présidé la divination” in Ingholt, “Un Nouveau Thiasé,” 132, 141, but the last word’s meaning of “distribution” in Arabic fits the context (see immediately below) better; cf. Milik, *Recherches I*, 279–81.

¹⁴⁹The first is clearly dated to 272, and acknowledges the role of the custodians of Bel’s temple; for the inscription see J. Cantineau, “Inscriptions palmryéniennes,” *RA* 27 (1930) 45–48; Cantineau, “Textes,” 117–19; Cantineau, *Le Sanctuaire*, 40–41; *An Aramaic Handbook*, I/1.43; cf. Bryan, “Texts,” 176–85. The second, published in M. Gawlikowski, “Inscriptions de Palmyre,” *Syria* 48 (1971) 412–21, pl. 23, (see also Bryan, “Texts,” 185–90), is dated by him to the following year, but there is a gap immediately after the month. Gawlikowski’s reconstruction of the date is dependent on his hypothesis that Ḥaddudan is being praised because “he aided [the troops of] Caesar Aurelius” (see his p. 420), but the gap after “aided” could just as well be filled with “[Palmyra against] Caesar Aurelius” (thus Bryan, “Texts,” 187). This would be more in keeping with the previous inscription’s praise of individuals for their protection of the temple of Bel, on which see Comte R. du Mesnil du Buisson, “Le service de garde dans le temple de Bêl à Palmyre,” *RESB* (1945) 76–84. In short, nothing in the second text requires a date a full year later than the first one. Similarly, Gawlikowski’s restoration of “members of the *marzēah* (בני מרוח)” on the supposed basis of the earlier text (pp. 420–21) is also without foundation in either inscription.

and a leader.¹⁵⁰ The *marzēah* contract and the Yarḥai inscription provide additional details. The masculine גברא, used for the individuals in the contract, *may* indicate a gender-exclusive membership,¹⁵¹ but the election of the leader and lesser functionaries in that *marzēah* points to an otherwise democratic and voluntary institution. The existence of officers in both the contract and the Yarḥai inscription points to well-organized groups, while the length of Yarḥai's presidency and the related wine distribution indicates his office was an annual one and that his *marzēah*, at least, met over the course of the year rather than just once during that time.

Three of the inscriptions mention different patron deities: Bel is mentioned on the Zebida statue and the Greek portion of the Shalma inscription, while the altar inscription was done by devotees of Aglibol and Malakbel. Together with the diversity reflected in the tesserae,¹⁵² this implies more than one *marzēah* existed in the city, although a comparison of the numerous references to Bel with solitary references to other divine patrons indicates the *marzēah* of Bel is the most significant of them all.¹⁵³

The frequent references to priests in both the tesserae and the inscriptions raises the question whether the Palmyrene *marzēah* was an association of priests and/or dedicated primarily to ritual worship. Teixidor argues for a lay membership in the *marzēah* contract, distinct from the clergy mentioned in line 2, with the latter serving

¹⁵⁰Against taking *marzēah* in these references as referring to a banquet, see p. 38.

¹⁵¹Thus Teixidor, "Le Thiase," 312. Although the term has to be supplied at the end of line 3 it is present in lines 5, 12, 14, 16.

¹⁵²See p. 39.

¹⁵³The assertions that all *marzēahs* in the city had Bel as the principle patron and any others were the additional patrons of individual meetings (see du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères*, 470, 472 and *passim*; Milik, *Recherches I*, 110 and *passim*), goes far beyond the evidence of both types of references; the same applies to Milik's view that the leader of the priests' *marzēah* was also the leader of all of them (*ibid.*). If the references to the "symposium of Aglibol and Malakbel" published by J. Starcky, "Autour d'une dédicace palmyrénienne à Šadrafa et à Du'anat" *Syria* 26 (1949) 60–61, are to be equated with a *marzēah* (the inscriptions are in Greek only, so it is impossible to be certain on the matter) they may indicate a greater significance for the *marzēah* of those deities as well.

only as spiritual guides and ritual functionaries when needed.¹⁵⁴ However, although the inscription's broken state prevents certainty, the phrase "those from among them" (אנש מנהון) at the beginning of line 3 seems to relate the priests to the following material dealing with the *marzēah*. Similarly, since Yarḥai "presided over the distribution for a whole year" and served quality wine to the priests for the same time period, his *marzēah* also seems to comprise primarily priests. On the other hand, there is no reason the functionaries associated with Yarḥai must be priests.

More importantly, it is not certain that all *marzēah* leaders at Palmyra, who would be expected to play a leading role during *marzēah* activity, were priests. Two inscriptions seem to imply the leader fulfilled priestly duties, but other explanations are possible. The *marzēah* contract specifies an individual "who will be at their head for the sacrifice" (די יהי ברשהון למקלנותא) (line 4), but this could simply mean he will preside at the banquet rather than play a liturgical role.¹⁵⁵ In the same way, since the Yarḥai inscription focuses on his distribution of wine rather than any cultic actions,¹⁵⁶ the statement that he "served the gods" may simply refer to his piety. It is also worth comparing the two Ḥaddudan inscriptions with those mentioning Maliku and Shalma. The latter two contain Greek parallels in which the *marzēah* leader is designated "high priest and symposiarch" (ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ συμποσιάρχος). Unfortunately, the Ḥaddudan inscription is monolingual, but it is significant that he is identified as a Senator rather than by any priestly title. This parallels the Greek inscription honouring the Procurator Septimus Vorod, as the "συμποσιάρχος of the priests of Bel," with the word

¹⁵⁴Teixidor, "Le Thiase," 312.

¹⁵⁵Pace Teixidor, "Le Thiase," 310.

¹⁵⁶See n. 148 on the translation of מנאק.

ἀρχιερεὺς notably absent.¹⁵⁷ Thus, it is possible the unnamed leader in the contract as well as Yarḥai and Ḥaddudan were all laity rather than priests.

In addition, there is no conclusive evidence that *marzēah* leaders who were priests performed priestly functions as part of their position. The six tesserae mentioning a *marzēah* leader (רב מרזחא) also depict a priest,¹⁵⁸ but neither they, nor the bilingual Maliku and Shalma inscriptions identifying the latter as high priests, give any indication of ritual activity. This only leaves a single tessera (No. 34), in which a priest is shown offering incense. However, this particular tessera lacks the banquet motif and emphasizes his term of office rather than his position.¹⁵⁹ As such, the depiction of an explicitly sacerdotal function might be attributed more to his priesthood than to his role within the *marzēah*.¹⁶⁰

To summarize, while the *marzēah* comprising Bel's priests was the most important one at Palmyra, it is possible there were others in the city whose membership and/or leader were not cultic functionaries. Moreover, even when the leader was a priest, this leadership was distinct from his clerical state. Thus, the only real indication of a ritual component for the Palmyrene *marzēah* comes from the altar inscription. The nine members of a *marzēah* made the altar for their gods, Aglibol and Malakbel, but the former are not designated priests, nor does the inscription state whether the altar was for use during their gatherings, although that is possible. In any case, this single, inconclusive inscription does not outweigh the silence in the other Palmyrene *marzēah* references. I am not denying that rituals may have been performed in connection with

¹⁵⁷See CIS, §4485; the few extant Aramaic letters shed no light on the text.

¹⁵⁸Nos. 27, 30–33, 35.

¹⁵⁹Its phrase, “during the presidency of the *marzēah*” (רבנות מרזחא) is unique among the *marzēah* tesserae; in contrast, the same individual is simply called a *marzēah* leader on No. 31, which displays banqueting rather than cultic imagery on the reverse.

¹⁶⁰Bryan, “Texts,” 221.

the *marzēah* here or elsewhere, only highlighting that such activity was not emphasized, which suggests the *marzēah*'s primary purpose was other than worship.

What little evidence exists of other activities points to the role of alcohol. The centrality of the banquet hall in the *marzēah* contract¹⁶¹ illustrates the importance of feasting while Yarḥai's provisioning indicates that wine was consumed. The latter is reinforced by the banqueting iconography and the depiction of a goddess with grapes¹⁶² on the tesserae. Thus, lacking any indication of other activities, I tentatively conclude that banqueting in general, and drinking in particular, played a significant role in the Palymra *marzēah*.

Rabbinic Literature

The obvious place to begin an examination of the *marzēah* in the rabbinic¹⁶³ tradition is texts which utilize either of the two biblical references. Unfortunately, the Targums to Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5, where the Hebrew term מַרְזֵחַ occurs, simply use the Aramaic equivalent, מַרְזַח. Nonetheless there are allusions to those texts elsewhere in the Rabbinic Literature. Commenting on Amos 6:7, *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 5:3 equates the *marzēah* with the Maioumas, a feast characterized by such excess the Roman authorities tried to ban it.¹⁶⁴ In *Bab. Mo'ed Qaṭan* 28b, Mar Zutra

¹⁶¹See p. 41.

¹⁶²Dunant, "Nouvelles tessères," No. 12.

¹⁶³For ease of reference, I use "rabbinic" to refer to all Jewish material from the early centuries of the Common Era, without prejudice as to the actual authorship.

¹⁶⁴This identification is also found in *Midrash Numbers Rabbah* 10:3 and *Midrash Tanhuma* 8 with respect to Amos 6:4. A full discussion of the Maioumas is beyond the scope of this study, but see the standard dictionary articles such as W. Drexler, "Maioumas," *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* 2:2 (ed. W. H. Roscher; Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1894–1897; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965) 2:2, cols. 2286–2288; K. Preisendenz, "Maioumas," *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft: Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von George Wissowa unter Mitwirkung zahlreicher Fachgenossen* 14:1 (ed. W. Kroll; Stuttgart: Metzler, 1928) 14:1, cols. 610–12; and more recently, R. M. Good, "The Carthaginian MAYUMAS," *SEL* 3 (1986) 99–114. On the feast in rabbinic literature as a whole see J. Perles, *Etymologische Studien zur Kund der rabbinischen Sprache und Altertümer* (Breslau: Schletter, 1871) 96–100; J. Perles, "Miscellen zur rabbinischen Sprach- und Altertumskunde," *MGWJ* 21 (1872) 251–54. A convenient summary of the Maioumas and

alludes to the same verse to explain the custom of a mourner occupying the head place at a funerary meal: “He who is bitter and distraught will be chief among those who stretch themselves.” However, this is a classic example of midrashic word-play adapted to the point under discussion¹⁶⁵ and of limited value for determining the *marzēah*’s nature at that time. Finally, in *Bab. Ketubah* 69ab Mar Uqba appeals to Jer 16:5 to support his definition of the *marzēah* as “mourning” (מאי מרזיחא אבל).¹⁶⁶

Another relevant rabbinic tradition is connected with the incident of Ba‘al-Peor at Shittim.¹⁶⁷ In Num 25:2 the Moabites “invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods,” and both Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Sifre Numbers 131 add that this occurred “in their *marzēahs*” (במרזיחיהון). It is uncertain whether this is a feast held by a *marzēah* association or the buildings in which they were held; however, in the preceding chapter different words are used for the edifices they construct, which suggests a *marzēah* banquet is intended here. Marvin Pope seeks to clarify the banquet’s nature on the basis of Ps 106:28, which states the Israelites “attached themselves to Baal-Peor / they ate the sacrifices of the dead” (וַיֹּאכְלוּ וּבָחִי מֵתִים). For Pope, this is evidence the feasts of Num 25:2 “are explicitly identified as funeral feasts.”¹⁶⁸ While Pope is correct in his assessment of

its relationship to the *marzēah* can be found in Bryan, “Texts,” 34–67; he thinks the reference to it here is a scribal error derived from רימוסיא (“common”) but acknowledges there must have been a plausible connection between the two for the mistake to have occurred (see his pp. 28–32, 67).

¹⁶⁵Reading שר for MT טר and dividing מרזח into two words, מר רזח (“bitter and distraught”).

¹⁶⁶This is followed by a repetition of Mar Zutra’s word-play.

¹⁶⁷See also the discussion in Bryan, “Texts,” 74–112.

¹⁶⁸M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 217.

the Psalm,¹⁶⁹ neither the Targum nor Sifre share the Psalmist's perspective on the incident. Although the meal is a sacral one linked with the Moabite gods, there is no indication in the MT, the Targum or Sifre these were deified ancestors, for instance. In fact, in the rabbinic texts, the deities are secondary to other aspects of the *marzēah*, as Balaam's advice to Balak in Pseudo-Jonathan Num 24:14 shows. He suggests the Israelites can be overcome if the Moabites set up taverns (פּוֹנְדִיקִין, cf. Greek *πανδοκεῖν*) in which abundant food and drink will lead to drunkenness, making the Israelites susceptible to seductive women who can lead them into apostasy. In other words, in the rabbinic texts the most important feature of this *marzēah* is drinking that leads to lasciviousness and culminates in idolatrous worship.¹⁷⁰

In the remaining rabbinic uses of *marzēah*, it designates a meal contrasted with mourning. In *Jer. Berakot* 6a, Rabbi Zeira orders his disciples not to mourn him one day and hold a *marzēah* the next.¹⁷¹ Similarly, *Qohelet Rabbah* 7:4 denounces Nabal for having a *marzēah* (עִישָׁה לוֹ מְרִיזָהּ) while the nation mourns Samuel, and nearly identical wording is used in *Esther Rabbah* 1:10 and 3:3 when Ahasuerus and Vashti host feasts (*Esth* 1:2–9) despite the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

To summarize, then, with the exception of instances dependent on *Jer* 16:5 the rabbinic tradition understands the *marzēah* to be a celebratory drinking feast which, at least in some cases, is characterized by its excesses.

¹⁶⁹Older scholarship interpreted the Psalm to mean “lifeless idols,” but this requires an unattested connotation for מַתִּים, which is, on the other hand, paralleled with אֱלֹהִים in *KTU* 6.6.47–48; *Isa* 8:19–20; cf. *2 Sam* 28:13; thus Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 167; see also M. J. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 17A; New York: Doubleday, 1970) 73–74 and the references in Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 265n567.

¹⁷⁰A causal connection between the incident and wine can also be found in *Midrash Tanhuma*, extrapolating from *Gen* 9:27.

¹⁷¹*Marzēah* here is translated as a “Trauermahle” by O. Eissfeldt, “מְרִיזָהּ und מְרִיזָהּ ‘Kultmahlgenossenschaft’ im spätjüdischen Schrifttum,” *Kleine Schriften zum Alten Testament* 5 (eds. R. Sellheim and F. Maass; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973) 5.139; see also Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 184, but the emphasis in the succeeding lines is clearly on celebratory drinking.

The Madeba Map

The latest epigraphic attestation of the *marzēah* is in the 6th Century CE mosaic map of the Middle East found on the floor of a Byzantine Church in Madeba, Jordan.¹⁷² A building to the east of the Dead Sea is labelled, “*marzēah* house, also (known as) the Maioumas” (BHTOMAPΣEA H K(AI) / MAIOTMAΣ). This is usually connected with the incident of Ba‘al-Peor at Shittim.¹⁷³ Bryan discounts the connection, noting the location is not quite correct and arguing that since the building resembles a theatre and pool it is meant to represent the site of a contemporary Maioumas near Madeba itself.¹⁷⁴ However, the map consistently depicts sites connected with biblical events, and the one in Num 25:2 is a far better candidate for this location than either the Samaritan *marzēah* denounced by Amos or the Jerusalem *marzēah* house mentioned in Jer 16:5.¹⁷⁵ In any case, the connection of the *marzēah* with a specific building remains, as does its association with the Maioumas feast, most likely under the influence of *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 5:3 and *Numbers Rabbah* 10:3.

Summary

There is a high degree of continuity in the post-biblical *marzēah* references. In most locations the term refers to an association organized under an identifiable

¹⁷²On the map in general see M. Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map with Introduction and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1954); H. Donner and H. Cüppers, *Die Mosaikkarte von Madaba* (Abhandlungen des deutschen Palästinavereins; Tafelband; Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977); H. Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba: An Introductory Guide* (PA 7; Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1992).

¹⁷³The connection was first made by A. Büchler, “Une localité énigmatique mentionnée sur la mosaïque de Madaba,” *REJ* 42 (1901) 125–28, and is accepted by most scholars.

¹⁷⁴Bryan, “Texts,” 113–19.

¹⁷⁵The dislocation of the site may be the result of the artist’s desire to shift such a negative episode away from the vicinity of Madeba itself; see R. T. O’Callaghan, “Madaba (Carte de),” *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 5 (eds. L. Pirot, A. Robert and H. Cazelles; Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1957) vol. 5, col. 677.

leader, with other officials designated at Palmyra and perhaps at Elephantine. The *marzēah* is connected with property in the Moabite inscription, the Palmyrene contract and the Madeba Map, and in every location except Elephantine and Madeba it is explicitly linked with one or more deities. References and allusions to drinking are another common feature. Finally, there is evidence of development in the word's meaning, from a group of individuals who hold a banquet to the banquet itself. In two of the three Phoenician references, *marzēah* designates a feast rather than a group, both meanings can be found on the Palmyrene tesserae, and in the rabbinic material it refers exclusively to a feast. At the beginning of the shift, this was almost certainly a case of an activity deriving its name from those who performed it, i.e., the *marzēah* feast was celebrated by *marzēah* members. The rabbinic texts do not indicate whether the *marzēah* groups themselves had ceased and only the memory of their parties remained.

Conclusions: The Constitutive Features of the marzēah

The task at this point is to draw some conclusions as to the *marzēah*'s essential nature in the ancient world on the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter. This will provide a context for evaluating the *marzēah* in the prophetic literature, particularly allusions that do not use the word itself. In doing so, I emphasize points of continuity between the pre- and post-biblical *marzēah* references in an effort to identify features that are consistently present in most instances, and especially in both early and late attestations. If a feature is only present in later attestations, I will assume it is an innovation introduced around the time it is first mentioned in connection with a *marzēah*. While such characteristics may have been present earlier, I resist retrojecting them onto prior *marzēahs* without direct textual evidence. On the other hand, if an element is not mentioned in a particular instance yet is consistently present in earlier attestations, that does not necessarily mean it is not characteristic of that particular *marzēah*; it may simply be that a text focuses on other

matters. That probability is even greater when a missing element is regularly present both before and after a single attestation. An example of the former is the rabbinic material, which makes no reference to a *marzēah* leader (רב מרזח) since it is concerned with negative aspects of the *marzēah* feast, while Elephantine presents the latter case. Ito is not so designated, but in light of the term's use at Ebla, Ugarit, Nabatea, and Palmyra, that is a legitimate interpretation of his role as presented in the inscription, which is more concerned with the proper transfer of funds than individual titles.

From this perspective three elements are consistently present in *marzēah* references over three millennia, and can be taken as constitutive features of the *marzēah* association and its gatherings: a definable, upper-class membership, a religious connection, and alcohol. A fourth element, a funerary connection, is often claimed as an essential aspect of the *marzēah*, but the evidence does not support that view. In what follows I justify inclusion of the first three and rejection of the last.

A Definable Upper-Class Membership

There is no doubt the *marzēah* was a significant institution in the ancient semitic world. Its existence over three millennia in a variety of locations is, in itself, testimony to its importance, as is the determination of public dates simply by reference to a *marzēah* as early as Emar and as late as the Piraeus inscription. Similarly, the *marzēah* was considered a suitable context for bestowing honours at Ebla, Sidon, and Palmyra. Finally, a *marzēah*'s financial dealings are confirmed by a large number of witnesses in one Ugaritic text and attract the attention of the king in another, while the Senate and even Emperors were involved at Palmyra.

The high degree of prestige accorded the *marzēah* throughout its history is due primarily to the social standing of its membership. The earliest indication of the *marzēah* members' elite status comes from Ugarit. A full analysis of Ugarit's social

organization is beyond the scope of this study,¹⁷⁶ but a general sense of the *marzēah*'s place in its social structure can be derived from the locations where the tablets referring to it were found.¹⁷⁷ Not only is Ugarit the capital of a larger kingdom, but the tablets were discovered in either royal and temple archives or the private collections of obviously wealthy individuals. It is reasonable to assume legal documents reflect the concerns and ideology of those who kept them, while reinforcement and outright legitimation of one's lifestyle provides an even stronger motivation for preserving the mythological texts. Simply put, the sites where the various *marzēah* tablets were excavated favour situating the *marzēah* itself among the upper levels of society.

This is confirmed by details in the tablets themselves. The buildings and vineyards owned by Ugaritic *marzēah* associations point to financial means beyond those of the average peasant or day-labourer. So too with the amounts of money mentioned in connection with the *marzēah*. The figure of 1000 shekels occurs in RS 14.16, although its precise relationship to the *marzēah* is unclear, but the sum of 50 silver shekels in *KTU* 3.9 is more certain. Miller dismisses this as, "not a very large sum when compared with other transactions involving a *marziḥ* at Ugarit,"¹⁷⁸ but that

¹⁷⁶Preliminary general discussions can be found in P. C. Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983) 26–43; A. H. Curtis, *Ugarit (Ras Shamra)* (Cities of the Biblical World; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985) 49–65; see further A. F. Rainey, "The Social Stratification of Ugarit" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1962). For treatments of more specific aspects see Heltzer, *The Rural Community*; *idem*, *Goods, Prices and the Organization of Trade in Ugarit (Marketing and Transportation in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second [sic] Half of the II Millenium [sic] BCE* (Weisbaden: Reichert, 1978); *idem*, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit (Royal Service-Systems, Taxes, Royal Economy, Army and Administration)* (Weisbaden: Reichert, 1982); for cautionary comments on the use of the second volume by Heltzer cited see Pardee, "Ugaritic," 270–72.

¹⁷⁷For a convenient discussion of the texts' provenance see M. Yon, "Ugarit: History and Archaeology," *ABD* 6.695–706, especially p. 695.

¹⁷⁸Miller, "The *MRZH* Text," 40, following Hillers.

amount of money would purchase between five and ten bulls, or as many as seventy-five sheep.¹⁷⁹ This also puts the *marzēah*'s social setting among the Ugaritic elite.

Similar features can be found in subsequent *marzēah* references. Buildings are linked to the *marzēah* in the trans-Jordanian inscription, the contract from Palmyra and the Madeba Map. Money plays a role at Elephantine and in the Palmyrene contract, and the four and five day *marzēah* feasts mentioned in the Piraeus inscription and the Be'elatak tessera¹⁸⁰ would have required great financial resources, as would the wine consumption which seems to be characteristic of the *marzēah*.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, in the Marseilles Tariff a *marzēah* is explicitly identified with the nobility, while at Palmyra, the only time social roles are specified they are priests and a senator, both of which are members of the elite.

Finally, the consistent terminology for the members and their leader points to an organized and easily identifiable group. The Palmyrene *marzēah* dedicated to Aglibol and Malakbel had nine members, and the co-existence of more than one *marzēah* at both Ugarit and Palmyra shows the group was not all-inclusive. When this is combined with the preceding discussion of social standing, it is clear the *marzēah* association comprised a subsection of the upper-class in the majority of known cases.

¹⁷⁹Cf. Heltzer, *Goods*, 21; R. R. Stieglitz, "Commodity Prices at Ugarit," *JAOS* 99 (1979) 16, 23. Two points help put this into perspective. Administrative texts from Ugarit list individual households owning anywhere between none and three bulls, and as many as sixty sheep (see Heltzer, *The Rural Community*, 84-88, for texts and discussion). The mention of only a few heads of households per village, and at times only one, suggests these are not comprehensive enumerations of entire villages but rather census lists of the leading (by virtue of their wealth) citizens of each. Secondly, although the amounts may not represent an entire year's levy, whole villages sometimes paid as little as twenty shekels in taxes (Heltzer, *The Rural Community*, 34). Thus the amounts of money required of a *marzēah*'s members would exceed the capacity of the average peasant.

¹⁸⁰No. 301; if "day five" is meant for admission on that specific day then those in attendance would have varied during the course of the feast, which may imply a large banquet as well.

¹⁸¹See further on pp. 54-55.

A Religious Connection

The *marzēah*'s religious aspect can be easily established on the basis of the consistent association with one or more deities. The *marzēah* members bring offerings to the gods at Emar, while at Ugarit, El himself hosts a *marzēah*, and in other texts *marzēahs* are associated with Šatrana, the "Hurrian" Ishtar and probably 'Anat. Gods are mentioned in the trans-Jordanian text, the Phoenician drinking bowl refers to "the *marzēah* of Shamash," the gods 'Obadas and Dushara are mentioned in Nabatean contexts and at least ten different deities are linked to various *marzēahs* at Palmyra.¹⁸² Moreover, the drinking bowl is "offered" and the 'Avdat drinking troughs are "dedicated"; both suggest that they were used in a religious context. But at the same time there is no direct reference to rituals being performed during a *marzēah*.¹⁸³ So while the various deities are best interpreted as divine patrons, worship of these patrons does not seem to be the primary purpose of the *marzēahs* dedicated to them. Thus, while the *marzēah* and its gathering was religious, in the sense that it was connected with a patron deity or deities, it was not cultic.

Alcohol

Alcohol consumption is the only activity regularly connected to the *marzēah*. The clearest example is at Ugarit, where El hosts a *marzēah* for the other gods during which they and he "drink wine to satiety, new wine to drunkenness"; El imbibes so

¹⁸²Bel is the most frequently mentioned, but various *marzēahs* are also linked to Belastor and Ba'alshamem, Aglibol and Malakbel, Pan, Nebo, Appolo, Be'elatek and Tayma.

¹⁸³The funerary liturgy in *KTU* 1.161 was related to a *marzēah* banquet by M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, "Neue Studien zu den Ritualtexten aus Ugarit (II) - Nr. 6 - Epigraphische und inhaltliche Probleme in *KTU* 1.161," *UF* 15 (1983) 23. In the absence of the term itself, however, nothing connects that text to a *marzēah*; cf. L'Heureux, *Rank*, 192; B. Margalit, *A Matter of "Life" and "Death": A Study of the Baal-Mot Epic (CTA 4-5-6)* (AOAT 206; Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon and Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980) 199; Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 102n278. *KTU* 1.161 is often associated with the Mesopotamian *kispum* ritual (see the discussion and references in Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 102-105), but the latter is to be distinguished from the *marzēah* (see p. 56 below). See also pp. 44-46 concerning the Palmyrene *marzēah*.

much he has to be helped from the room and ultimately collapses in his own bodily excretions. Most subsequent *marzēahs* are also linked with alcohol in some way. The Phoenician drinking bowl and the serving troughs at ‘Avdat both reflect the role wine played in the *marzēah*. Furthermore, the ‘Avdat troughs were found near vineyards, and vineyards are also included in two listings of property owned by Ugaritic *marzēah* members. The identification of the Nabatean god Dushara, a *marzēah* patron, with Dionysus is also consistent with an emphasis on drinking. At Palmyra one text refers to quality wine being dispensed regularly under the supervision of a wine steward, and the tesserae include depictions of grape vines and wine cups. The *marzēah* leader’s designation as a *συμποσιάρχος* in two bilingual inscriptions from Palmyra is also significant in light of the *symposium*’s connections with drinking. Finally, in the rabbinic literature the *marzēah* is explicitly linked to drunkenness at Baal-Peor and, along with the Madeba Map, equated with the Maioumas, whose excesses included drinking. Thus, the common identification of heavy drinking as a constitutive feature of the *marzēah* is correct.¹⁸⁴

Non-Funerary

The *marzēah* is often considered to be, in essence, a funerary banquet connected to the cult of the dead. The strongest statement is by Marvin Pope: “Despite unfounded scepticism in some quarters, there is scant reason to doubt that the West Semitic *marzēah* was a feast for and with the departed ancestors”¹⁸⁵ Although

¹⁸⁴See most recently, Pardee, “*Marziḥu*,” 278: “The only constant in the documentation regarding the *marziḥu* . . . is the consumption of wine.” Contrast Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 63–64.

¹⁸⁵M. H. Pope, “The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit,” *Ugarit in Retrospect* (ed. G. D. Young; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 176.

recent scholarship has tended to reject this view,¹⁸⁶ it still has its proponents and so must be considered, if only to exclude it as an essential aspect of the *marzēah*.

On a general level, the *marzēah* is frequently identified as the West Semitic equivalent of the Mesopotamian *kispum*, a meal at which food and drink were ritualistically shared with deceased ancestors.¹⁸⁷ However, it was shown above that indications of ritual are virtually non-existent in the extra-biblical *marzēah* references,¹⁸⁸ and this includes feeding the dead. As such, there is no basis for equating the two terms.¹⁸⁹

At the same time, there is little evidence of any other funerary concerns in the *marzēah* references. For instance, the Ebla and Emar texts both deal with other matters. Similarly, the legal documents from Ugarit neither affirm nor deny the *marzēah*'s association with the cult of the dead, but are simply silent as to its precise purpose.¹⁹⁰ This leaves the two Ugaritic mythological texts to consider.

Some scholars find a funerary connection for the *marzēah* in the Rephaim texts (*KTU* 1.20–22) on the basis of a posited link between them and the Aqhat story (*KTU* 1.17–19), specifically as the lost ending of the latter. Under this interpretation, in *KTU* 1.21.II, Danel invites the Rephaim to a *marzēah*, and since the latter are

¹⁸⁶See, e.g., Bryan, *Texas, passim*; L'Heureux, *Rank*, 206–12, 218–21; H.-J. Fabry, “מְרִיחַ Marzēah,” *TWAT* 5.11–16; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 80–94; Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 54–57, 176–77; J. L. McLaughlin, “The *marzēah* at Ugarit: A Textual and Contextual Study,” *UF* 23 (1991) 274–80; Pardee, “*Marzihu*,” 277–79; Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, *passim*.

¹⁸⁷See, e.g., J. C. Greenfield, “Une rite religieux araméen et ses parallèles,” *RB* 80 (1973) 46–52, especially pp. 48–49; Pope, “*Le MRZH*,” 143; *idem*, “The Cult of the Dead,” 176; Archi, “Cult of the Ancestors,” 104. On the *kispum* itself see A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (kispum) im alten Mesopotamien* (AOAT 216; Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon and Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985).

¹⁸⁸See n. 183.

¹⁸⁹See also Pardee, “*Marzihu*,” 277; Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, *passim*.

¹⁹⁰Halpern, “Dispute?” 135–36, raises the possibility that in *KTU* 3.9.rev.3 the word *mt* might be a reference to the dead (thus, “let not the *mrzh* bemoan its dead”) but he rejects the idea.

elsewhere connected with mourning rituals,¹⁹¹ that *marzēah* is considered a mourning banquet in honour of Danel's dead son Aqhat.¹⁹² The designation of El as the speaker in *KTU* 1.21.II.8 is a problem for this proposal, but its proponents emend the line to conform with *KTU* 1.20.II.7, where Danel is the subject of the same verb.¹⁹³ The only author to provide arguments in support of the change is Klaas Spronk. He notes the almost identical wording in both *KTU* 1.20.II.5 and 1.21.II.6–7 (the *mrz^c* text),¹⁹⁴ which leads one to expect *yⁿ.dnil* to follow in both texts as well. Therefore, he argues the letters *dn* were omitted before *il* in 1.21.II.8 by *homoioteleuton*.¹⁹⁵ Once *yⁿ.dnil* is restored in the second text, making Danel the speaker, the first person pronominal suffixes attached to *mrz^c* in lines 1, 5 and 9¹⁹⁶ refer to him. The end result would be that Danel invites the Rephaim to his *marzēah*.

There are problems with Spronk's argument, however. To begin with, the *homoioteleuton* at *KTU* 1.19.II.12 to which he appeals is not a good parallel to this text. The former involves two identical letters rather than just one (it reads *ydn il*

¹⁹¹Note especially their invocation in *KTU* 1.161. On the Rephaim at Ugarit, including their relationship to the biblical רֵפְאִים, compare the discussions in J. C. de Moor, "Rāpi'ūma — Rephaim," *ZAW* 88 (1976) 323–45; L'Heureux, *Rank*, 111–223; A. Cooper, "Divine Names and Epithets in the Ugaritic Texts," *Ras Shamra Parallels III: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible* (AnOr 51; ed. S. Rummel; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1981) 460–67; S. Talmon, "Biblical *rēpā'im* and Ugaritic *Rpu'i(m)*," *Biblical and Other Studies in Honor of Robert Gordis* (HAR 7; ed. R. Aharoni; Columbus: Ohio State University, 1983) 235–49; Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 71–93, 267–73.

¹⁹²Pope, "Divine Banquet," 192; *idem*, "Notes," 166; Margalit, "Another Look," 100; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 87.

¹⁹³Pope, "Divine Banquet," 192; *idem*, *Song of Songs*, 219; *idem*, "The Cult of the Dead," 174; Margalit, "Another Look," 100.

¹⁹⁴The restoration of a three day journey in the differently damaged texts is assured from *KTU* 1.14.IV.31–34: *ilkn ym.w in.a*hr špš*m.b t*!t ym*[gy.]l*.

¹⁹⁵Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife*, 169n6. He appeals to *KTU* 1.19.II.12 in support of the *homoioteleuton*.

¹⁹⁶Cf. n. 72.

whereas our text has *y'n.il*). It is easy to understand how a scribe could omit *dn* immediately after the exact same two letters, but that is not the same as omitting *dn* after *'n*. Also, our text contains a word divider, which separated *y'n* from the supposedly lost *dn* and would have further decreased the chance of a mistake. Finally, the context for the former *requires* that the subject be Danel, whereas in the latter that is precisely the question at issue.

Secondly, *KTU* 1.20.II.5 and 1.21.II.6–7 are not identical. Although the references to a three day journey are similar in both texts, the subjects of the verbs *hlk* and *mgy* are different, as is the destination. In *KTU* 1.21.II an individual (note the first person verb forms) informs the Rephaim he will travel to and arrive at “my house” and “my palace,” and the only plausible subject for these verbs is the speaker in line 8. On the other hand, in *KTU* 1.20.II the Rephaim (mentioned in line 6; note also the third person plural verbs) travel to “threshing floors” (*grnt*) and “plantations” (*mṯ't*). At the same time, although Danel is the subject of *y'n* in the next line, what follows differs from *KTU* 1.21.II. There the speaker repeats the invitation to “my *marzēah*,” but in *KTU* 1.20.II the verb is succeeded by a (restored) epithet of Danel¹⁹⁷ plus another parallel line before Danel actually speaks, at which point his words also differ. But rather than speak of “my *marzēah*” in “my house/palace” and “its place” as the speaker in *KTU* 1.21.II does, in *KTU* 1.20.II Danel states that the Rephaim have arrived at the “plantations” and the “threshing floors.” In short, in the latter text Danel does not travel and neither repeats nor confirms an invitation to a *marzēah*.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷The restoration of *mt.rpi* is assured by the presence of its “standard parallel,” (the phrase is from Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife*, 168; he gives no indication in his transliteration of a lacuna at that point in the text, however [see his p. 165]) *mt hrmy**, in the next line.

¹⁹⁸Danel’s words are damaged, but what is present consists of a straight-forward acknowledgement of the Rephaim’s arrival. There is an oblique reference to eating in the subsequent fragmentary lines, but no reference to a *marzēah*. L’Heureux, *Rank*, 136–37, sees Danel’s role as that of an attendant at the ancient equivalent of a parking lot, since the “plantations/threshing floors” are the only area large enough to receive the Rephaim’s chariots.

In sum, Spronk's argument for emending *KTU* 1.21.II.8 is weak on both text-critical and literary grounds. His explanation for a putative scribal error is not convincing, and despite points of contact, significant divergences between the two texts point to different speakers in *KTU* 1.20.II.7 and 1.21.II.8. Therefore, El should be retained in the latter.¹⁹⁹ This eliminates any explicit relationship between Danel in 1.20.II and the *marzēah* mentioned in 1.21.II, which in turn removes the primary reason for associating the two tablets with the story of Aqhat. In other words, Danel's presence in *KTU* 1.20.II may be completely unrelated to the Aqhat legend, and without that connection it is debatable whether the Rephaim's involvement, by itself, is adequate grounds for a funerary aspect to the *marzēah* in *KTU* 1.21.II. Despite their chthonic connections,²⁰⁰ that is only part of their role in Ugaritic mythology. Their appellation as *ilnym* shows they constitute part of the divine realm,²⁰¹ so it is not unreasonable they would be invited to a feast hosted by the head of the Ugaritic pantheon.²⁰²

This brings us to *KTU* 1.114. Marvin Pope points to a number of places where he thinks the text reflects funerary matters, but only one has any support from other Ugaritic texts, and that one is weak. Lines 4–5 read *y'db.yrh gbh*; Pope took the word *yrh* as a verb cognate with Arabic *wariḥ* and *raḥḥ* and Akkadian *reḥū*, which relate to moisture, connected *gbh* with moist parts of the body, and referred the whole

¹⁹⁹Thus Eissfeldt, "Kultvereine," 193; L'Heureux, *Rank*, 142; Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 266–67.

²⁰⁰See n. 191.

²⁰¹Thus Mullen, who considers *rpum* and *ilnym* to be fixed pairs, as does Dahood; see Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 262; M. J. Dahood, "Parallel Pairs," 342.

²⁰²Mullen equates both the Rephaim Texts and *KTU* 1.114 with the annual meeting of the divine council, which was preceded by great feasting and drinking; see Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 265–67 and especially the references to banquets in the Ugaritic texts he provides in n. 250. Note also the comparable language in this text and *KTU* 1.114 (cf. n. 70 above).

line to the “ancient and widespread custom” of consuming fluid from the deceased, here presumably on the part of El.²⁰³ *KTU* 1.96 *might* support this view, but the meaning of that text is disputed.²⁰⁴ In any case, Pope’s reading of two juxtaposed but uncoordinated verbs (*yʿdb.yrh*) is without parallel in the text and requires an unanticipated and therefore confusing nuance for the fare being consumed. As a result, his proposal has not been followed and virtually all commentators see the moon-god Yariḥ at this point.²⁰⁵

The rest of Pope’s specific suggestions involve reading evidence from later material and geographically disparate practices into this text. For example, he compares the “wild game” (*šd*, line 1) served at El’s meal with the Aramaic cognate *šūdnītā*, which “is applied in rabbinic usage to the tasty dish served to mourners as the funeral meal.”²⁰⁶ Similarly, he links *qš* in l. 2 with the Syriac *qēšā* and rabbinic *qēšāšā*; the former is used in connection with the Christian Eucharist (thereby evoking the death and resurrection of Jesus) and the latter is “a designation of a ceremonial meal for occasions both sad and joyful.”²⁰⁷ But the Ugaritic terms themselves never

²⁰³Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 179–80.

²⁰⁴According to Pope (and others), in *KTU* 1.96.1–5 ‘Anat eats the flesh and drinks the blood of “her brother” (Baʿal). However, Lewis has shown that the first word in the text is *ʿnn* not *ʿnr*, and suggested the tablet is an incantation against the “(Evil) Eye”; see T. J. Lewis, “The Disappearance of the Goddess Anat: The 1995 West Semitic Research Project on Ugaritic Epigraphy,” *BA* 59 (1996) 115–21. For the text and discussion of the interpretational difficulties (including a possible emendation from *ʿnn* to *ʿnr*) see M. S. Smith, “*CAT* 1.96,” *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (SBLWAW 9; ed. S. B. Parker; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 224–28.

²⁰⁵The sole exception appears to be Virolleaud, who left *yrh gbh* untranslated but suggested it was the name of the feast: “mois complete”; see Virolleaud, “Les nouveaux textes mythologiques,” 547, 549. Pope explicitly rejects seeing the lunar deity here (Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 179).

²⁰⁶Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 175. In fairness to Pope, he does not explicitly connect the two, but the implication is obvious from his discussion of the two terms in sequence. He also associates both with “venison” (his translation of the Ugaritic term) and notes Isaac’s desire for the same on his death bed (Gen 27:1–4), as well as the midrashic identification of that event as a mourning meal for Abraham’s death.

²⁰⁷Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 177; note the two possible settings.

have funerary associations,²⁰⁸ and since straightforward references to a specific type of meat and the meal at which it is served are consistent with the context, there is no need to give the words connotations from more than a millennium later.

There are comparable problems with two of Pope's other suggestions concerning this text. In line 8 someone strikes someone else under the table, which Pope interprets in light of mourning rituals meant to drive away ghosts practiced by Russian Lapps and New Guinea tribes.²⁰⁹ But apart from the problematic chronological and geographic distance between Ugarit and these modern practices, not to mention why the gods would want to scare away other spirits, line 8 is not a matter of indiscriminate striking. Most commentators derive *ylmn* from the root *hlm*, in which case it must be parsed as a third masculine singular plus the third singular pronominal suffix *n*. As such, the text describes a specific individual, namely Yariḥ,²¹⁰ being struck, not an anti-ghost technique. Similarly, Pope presents a fascinating survey of canines in various cultic settings, especially funerary ones, in connection with the

²⁰⁸For example, compare *šd* at KTU 1.17.V.39; 1.22.I.11; 4.408.5 and *qš* at KTU 1.4.III.42; 1.6.II.11; 1.147.12. See also the philological analysis of the two terms in Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 27–35.

²⁰⁹Pope, "Divine Banquet," 181. He also took *yqtqt* in line 5 as a 3rd masc. plural, associated it with Mishnaic and Talmudic *qīšqēš* ("knock, strike, clap"), and drew another parallel with such incantational beating ("Divine Banquet," 172, 180). Cf. the criticism of this correlation by Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 85.

²¹⁰Pope's translation, "he / they knocked with staff under the table" (Pope, "Divine Banquet," 180), does not account for the suffix. In Lewis, "The Rapiuma," 194, Yariḥ is the subject of the verbs in lines 6–8; he prepares food "for the god he knows" and strikes "the god he does not know." However, if "the god" is the object of the verb "to know" (*ydʿ*) in both instances, the additional indication of an object through the pronominal suffix *n* attached to both is extremely awkward (for the introduction of an extra *n* before a suffixed pronoun attached to a verb see S. Segert, *A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language with Selected Texts and Glossary* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984] §51.13; for a similar duplication of the *n* in this text see *yʿmsn.nn* in line 18 and *ngšnn* in line 19). Moreover, in Lewis' translation, Yariḥ is functioning as the chef for the feast, but in the very next lines, Aštarte and Anat prepare food for him (the verb is the same, *ʿdb*) with no apparent explanation for the role reversal. It is more likely, therefore, that "the god" is the subject of lines 6–8 and Yariḥ is indicated by the pronominal suffixes. The result is that Yariḥ is struck by "the god who does not know him" (so also Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 44–45).

reference to a dog in l. 12.²¹¹ On a methodological level, L'Heureux correctly objects that "all the comparative material in the world cannot of itself prove that this specific dog is associated with funerary rites."²¹² An even more telling point, however, is that there is no actual dog in this text. Rather, in line 5 *Yariḥ* is compared to a dog (*km. [klb]*) and line 12 is a metaphorical insult.²¹³ As a result, canine connections with mourning are irrelevant to this text.

Thus, none of Pope's specific funerary connections in *KTU* 1.114 withstand scrutiny, and without them his general assertions in that regard lose their force. For instance, he argues the tablet reflects "a human affair in which it was deemed proper or obligatory to drink to excess," noting that "mourning was such an occasion,"²¹⁴ but weddings, births, military victories and especially the passing of the New Year are other situations when alcohol can be, and is, consumed to excess.²¹⁵ Similarly, he

²¹¹Pope, "Divine Banquet," 183–89; *idem*, *Song of Songs*, 210–14. Pope follows Hillers' reading of *hn.lm.klb* in place of the original transcription of *pn.lmgr lb*, which is widely accepted; see D. R. Hillers, "Some Books Recently Received (Cont.)," *BASOR* 198 (April 1970) 46. The difference between *p* and *h* and between *r* and *k* is a matter of one and two horizontal wedges respectively; the *g* is probably an oversized word divider (thus, A. F. Rainey, "The Ugaritic Texts in Ugaritica 5," *JAOS* 94 [1974] 186). Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 52–53, retains the initial *pn* but accepts the rest of Hiller's emendation. The resulting *klb* ("dog") provides a fitting parallel for *inr* ("cur") and coheres with the restoration of *klb* in the lacuna of line 5 suggested by S. E. Loewenstamm, "Eine lehrhafte ugaritische Trinkburleske," *UF* 1 (1969) 72, 74, and followed by most scholars. *KTU* indicates traces of all three letters but Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 17, only found traces of the first and last.

²¹²L'Heureux, *Rank*, 211; seconded by Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 85.

²¹³See n. 211 for the restoration of *klb*. Loewenstamm's article appeared after Pope's had been completed (see Pope, "Divine Banquet," 170n2). Because the comparative *km* is absent from line 12, Pardee thinks *Yariḥ* actually becomes a dog in this text (see the discussion in Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 39–42; on p. 73 he comments, "*Yariḥu* . . . ayant pris la forme du chien . . ."). However, the fact that *Yariḥ* is called a dog, or even treated like one by other gods (see lines 6–8), does not mean he has the physical characteristics of one. *Yariḥ* is acting like a dog under the table and the gods play along, so the porter refers to him accordingly. His remark is all the more disparaging precisely because the comparative particle is dropped. (*Decorum* prevents me from listing in print some of the modern insults in which individuals are identified with, rather than compared to, various animals and parts of their anatomy.)

²¹⁴Pope, "Divine Banquet," 178.

²¹⁵Cf. n. 202 above.

suggests this may be a wake for Baal, since “he is not among the few named,”²¹⁶ yet this very paucity of divine names actually argues against Pope’s position. A stronger case could be made if there were a fuller listing of the Ugaritic pantheon, but as it stands Baal’s omission here could be a coincidence.²¹⁷

To summarize, the cumulative effect of Pope’s evidence for a connection between this *marzēah* and mourning rites collapses under closer scrutiny. None of the specific elements he proposes can be supported from the text, and his more general arguments are not conclusive. In keeping with Pope’s own admission that “there are no explicit references to the funeral character of the . . . banquet,”²¹⁸ the text is unable to bear the interpretive weight he places upon it.

The non-funerary nature of this *marzēah* is reinforced by the character and larger context of the text. The final three lines, a prescription for a hangover,²¹⁹ should be taken into account when interpreting the mythological section. The two parts are separated by a single line, but their purposeful juxtaposition²²⁰ constitutes an incantation and accompanying medicinal remedy.²²¹ This means the central concern of the tablet as a whole is the consumption of alcohol, its effects when taken in excess, and a remedy for the attendant discomfort. It has nothing to do with death and/or

²¹⁶Pope, “The Cult of the Dead,” 178; cf. *idem*, “Divine Banquet,” 179–80. Miller, “The MRZH Text,” 47n1, cites a similar opinion held by Albright.

²¹⁷Similarly, Baal’s absence from “The Birth of the Beautiful Gods” (*KTU* 1.23) does not make El’s sexual activity a mourning rite nor the references to wine at the beginning and end a wake.

²¹⁸Pope, *Song of Songs*, 219.

²¹⁹Loewenstamm, “Trinkburleske,” 77; Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 170, 198–201; Margalit, “Another Look,” 112–18.

²²⁰As indicated by the empty space afterwards on the reverse (de Moor, “Studies,” 168).

²²¹de Moor, “Studies,” 168; Bryan, “Texts,” 136; Dietrich, Loretz and Sanmartín, “Stichometrische Aufbau,” 114; Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife*, 200; Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 73–74. Barstad argues that the entire tablet is a “medical text”; see H. M. Barstad, “Festmahl und Übersättigung. Der ‘Sitz im Leben’ von RS 24.258,” *AcOr* 39 (1978) 23–30.

mourning rituals.²²² This does not mean that mourners could not attend a *marzēah* and become similarly afflicted, but the Ugaritic *marzēah* was not a mourning meal

Funerary elements are lacking in the majority of the post-biblical *marzēah* references as well. Almost all display no concern for the dead or mourning, which is unusual if that were a major purpose of the *marzēah*. Porten identified the Elephantine *marzēah* as a “funerary association,” but only on the basis of later *marzēahs*.²²³ Du Mesnil du Buisson defined the *marzēah* at Palmyra as an “association religieuse dont le but était d’assurer le salut à des membres et d’accomplir les rites appropriés, après leur décès.”²²⁴ In support of this claim he interprets the celestial imagery on some tesserae as the realm of the blessed, and vegetative iconography on others as symbolic of regeneration in the after-life. However, the rites to which he alludes are not mentioned in any Palmyrene *marzēah* references, and most of the tesserae he describes are not explicitly connected to a *marzēah*.²²⁵ Furthermore, the astral imagery also evokes the realm of the gods, a fitting association for tesserae connected with priests, and the botanical depictions could just as easily symbolize health and well-being in the here and now.²²⁶

²²²The statement that “El fell down like the dead / El is like those who go down to the earth” (lines 21–22) notwithstanding. Although he disagrees with him, in discussing Pope’s funerary associations for the text L’Heureux states, “the completely drunken stupor evidenced in the behaviour of El *can be* understood as an *Ersatz*-experience of death designed to establish community with the deceased and create the experience that the ordeal of death has been faced and overcome”; see L’Heureux, *Rank*, 211, (my italics for “can be”); cf. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife*, 200, who accepts this view. On the other hand, this comparative phrase may have no greater connection with the cult of the dead than the contemporary English colloquialisms, “fall down dead-drunk” or “dead to the world.”

²²³Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 179–86.

²²⁴See du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères*, 467; see also *passim*, especially pp. 473–74.

²²⁵Cf. pp. 39–40 above.

²²⁶See further the critique of du Mesnil du Buisson in Bryan, “Texts,” 220–25.

Nonetheless, there are a few possible funerary connections in later *marzēahs*. Lewis suggests the Phoenician drinking bowl may be relevant in light of Šamaš' connections with the underworld.²²⁷ The patron of the Nabatean *marzēah* at Petra is a divinized king, and some think the main purpose of that *marzēah* is to honour him in a form of ancestor worship.²²⁸ Bryan dismisses this completely by stressing 'Obadas' current divine status as the reason for his patronage,²²⁹ but his prior human existence sets him apart from other deities linked with earlier *marzēahs*, and cannot be ignored or glossed over.²³⁰ Nonetheless, other *marzēahs* show little interest in ritual or worship,²³¹ and this inscription deals with the memory of the *marzēah*'s leader and members, not its patron. As such, the specific deity being invoked may be coincidental after all. Finally, a few rabbinic texts link the *marzēah* with mourning, but they are dependent on the prior connection in Jer 16:5 and must also be balanced by other rabbinic texts where the *marzēah* and mourning are explicitly contrasted.

In summary, although many have claimed the *marzēah* is a mourning banquet, only the Phoenician drinking bowl, the *marzēah* of the deified King 'Obadas at Petra and some rabbinic texts support such an association. None is conclusive and the earliest is from the 4th century BCE, with the other two occurring centuries later.

²²⁷Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 90, see also his pp. 35–46. His discussion is restricted to mythological texts from Ugarit and Mesopotamia. Thus can be supplemented by the brief survey of the limited evidence concerning Šamaš in Phoenician contexts, including some possible funerary connections, in Avigad and Greenfield, "A Bronze *phialē*," 126–27. Castatini thinks the inscription refers to libations for the dead by the *marzēah* of Šamaš; see A. Castatini, "Una nuova iscrizione fenicia e la 'Coppa di Yahweh'," *Studi in onore di Edda Bresciani* (ed. S. F. Bondi et al.; Pisa: Giardini, 1985) 111–18. This requires reading 𐤓𐤕𐤍 for the original 𐤓𐤕𐤍, but the latter is to be preferred (see Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 136n18).

²²⁸See the references to Porten, Eissfeldt and du Mesnil du Buisson in n. 106.

²²⁹Bryan, "Texts," 226; he is followed by L'Heureux, *Rank*, 209.

²³⁰See the criticism of Bryan and L'Heureux in Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 90–91.

²³¹See n. 183.

The most one can conclude from this is that some late, individual *marzēahs* may have developed funerary aspects, but the extra-biblical *marzēah* as a whole was not, by nature, a funerary association or mourning banquet. Contrary to Pope's assertion, scepticism over the *marzēah*'s link to the cult of the dead is not "unfounded."

In conclusion, upper-class drunkenness with a religious connection are the only features that are consistently present throughout the history of the *marzēah*. Those three features, therefore, constitute the basic criteria by which the *marzēah* in the prophetic literature, especially allusions that do not use the word, should be evaluated. That is the task of the following chapters, each of which will consider references and possible allusions to the *marzēah*²³² in different prophetic books. During the course of that examination, I will be specially attentive for antecedents to elements so far only attested in later references to the *marzēah*.

²³²In light of the eventual overlap in meaning, henceforth I use the word *marzēah* as a general term of reference, encompassing both the association and its feasts. When the evidence permits, I will be more specific.

CHAPTER 2

THE *marzēah* IN AMOS

One of two biblical references to the *marzēah* occurs in Amos 6:7.¹ In addition, Hans Barstad has argued that two other passages in the book of Amos reflect the *marzēah* without using the term. First, he finds the content of Amos 2:8 and 6:4–6 comparable, and identifies the “girl” in 2:7b as a *marzēah* hostess.² Second, he considers Amos 4:1 a *marzēah* allusion because of the similar form and content there and in Amos 6:4–6.³

It is logical to begin discussion of the *marzēah* in the book of Amos with Amos 6:1, 3–7. Not only does the word itself occur in v. 7, but Barstad’s proposals concerning Amos 2:7b–8 and 4:1 are based in part upon their similarity to the first passage. Once the features of the *marzēah* in Amos 6 are established, those proposals can be evaluated on the basis of that text and the basic criteria developed in chapter 1. Unlike Barstad, however, I will consider Amos 4:1 before 2:7b–8 because it is more closely linked to Amos 6 in terms of form and the overall structure of the book.

Amos 6:1, 3–7

The word *marzēah* in Amos 6:7 occurs in the judgment section of a woe oracle.⁴ That judgment is predicated upon the accusation in the preceding verses. In order to fully understand what the author meant by a *marzēah* it is necessary to establish the extent and content of those verses.

¹Amos 6:1–7, with the relevant versional and rabbinic evidence, is discussed in D. B. Bryan, “Texts Relating to the *Marzeah*: A Study of an Ancient Semitic Institution” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1973) 13–34. On the term’s meaning in this passage see p. 84 below.

²H. M. Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos: Studies in the Preaching of Am 2,7B–8; 4,1–13; 5,1–27; 6,4–7; 8,14* (VTSup 34; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984) 11–36, especially pp. 34–36.

³*Ibid.*, 42.

⁴On the woe form see pp. 77–83.

The Text

הוֹי הַשְּׂאֲנָנִים בְּצִיּוֹן	1 a	Alas, you who are secure on Zion,
וְהַבְּטָחִים בְּהַר שָׁמְרוֹן	b	you ⁸ confident ⁹ ones on Mount Samaria,
נְקֻבֵי רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם	c	notables ¹⁰ of the first of the nations,
וּבָאוּ לָהֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל ⁷	d	the house of Israel comes to you. ¹¹

⁵C. C. Torrey, "On the Text of Am 5:25; 6:1,2; 7:2," *JBL* 13 (1894) 62–63, emended this to the imperative נִקְּפ, which he derived from נִקְּפ II, "go around, make a circuit." However, the root נִקְּ is supported by Symmachus (*οἱ ὠρομασμέροι*), Theodotian (*οἱ ἐπεκλήθησαν*) and the Vulgate (*optimates*), and should be retained; Harper's suggestion that the LXX's ἀπετρούγησας should be changed to ἀπετρούγησαν would provide even more support for the MT; see W. R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Amos and Hosea* (ICC 18; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912) 141. The MT root is read as an imperative by A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912) 5.243–44; J. J. M. Roberts, "Amos 6:1–7," *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson* (JSOTSup 37; eds. J. T. Butler, E. W. Conrad and B. C. Ollenburger; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985) 157. Their connection of v. 1 with the secondary v. 2 argues against this (on v. 2 see pp. 72–73 below).

⁶Holladay sees a break-up of the "stereotyped phrase," "the first fruits of the harvest" (רֵאשִׁית תְּבֹאָה) between 1c and d, and emends these two words to תְּבֹאָה לֶחֶם ("harvest of bread/food"); see W. L. Holladay, "Amos VI 1b β : a Suggested Solution," *VT* 22 (1972) 108; on p. 110 he offers the "idiomatic" translation: "the cream of the crop." On the break-up of composite phrases see M. J. Dahood and T. Penar, "The Grammar of the Psalter," *Psalms III: 101–150. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 17A; New York: Doubleday, 1970) 413–14; W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 328–32. Holladay acknowledges minor problems with his proposal (e.g., the otherwise unattested misreading of ת for ו and the *scriptio defectiva* of תְּבֹאָה; see his pp. 108–09), but more serious is whether this is even a "stereotyped phrase." It only occurs at Prov 3:9 and Jer 2:3, and the two words are divided by קָלִי in the former (they are separated by references to grain, wine, oil and honey at 2 Chr 31:5). Moreover, those examples split between a literal (Prov 3:9) and metaphorical (Jer 2:3) use of the phrase. Such limited and equivocal use is insufficient evidence of a "stereotyped phrase."

⁷The line is emended to וְכַאלֹהִים (הֵמָּה) בְּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל ("[they are] like gods in the house of Israel") by S. Oettli, *Amos und Hosea. Zwei Zeugen gegen die Anwendung der Evolutionstheorie die Religion Israels* (BFCT 5; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1901) 72, who also suggests וּבְצֻלֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל ("Lords of the House of Israel"). The former proposal is followed by E. Würthwein, "Amos-Studien," *ZAW* 62 (1950) 43; V. Maag, *Text, Wortschaft und Begriffswelt des Buches Amos* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951) 37; R. Fey, *Amos und Jesaja: Abhängigkeit und Eigenständigkeit des Jesaja* (WMANT 12; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1963) 11; W. Rudolph, *Joel - Amos - Obadja - Jona* (KAT; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus; Gerd Mohn, 1971) 216; *BHS*. This radical alteration of the MT is without textual support, and reads an elevated self-importance on the part of the elite into 1d. So too Morgenstern's emendation (following Proksch) to וְכַאלֹהִים הֵם לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל; "they are gods to the house of Israel"; see J. Morgenstern, "Amos Studies IV: The Addresses of Amos — Text and Commentary," *HUCA* 32 (1961) 325. K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten erklärt* (KHAT 13; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1904) 199, suggests וּבְכַאלֹהִי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל ("and in the gods of the house of Israel") as a continuation of 1b, but since the rest of the passage deals with self-assurance, I understand the ו in both 1a and b to be locative, with most commentators (cf. p. 84).

⁸For the article plus a participle as a vocative see GKC §126e–f; R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (2d ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) §89; B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) §13.5.2. The

הַמְנַדִּים לְיוֹם רָע	3 a	You, excluding ¹² the evil day,
וְהַגִּישׁוֹן שְׂבַת חָמָס	b	you bring near a rule of violence.
הַשֹּׁכְבִים עַל־מִטּוֹת שֵׁן	4 a	You, lying on beds of ivory,
וְסֹרְחִים עַל־עֲרֻשׂוֹתָם	b	sprawling on your ¹³ couches,
וְאֹכְלִים כְּרִים מִצֹּאן	c	eating lambs from the flock,
וְעֹגְלִים מִתּוֹךְ מְרֻבֵּק	d	and calves from the fattening stall;
הַפְּרָטִים עַל־פִּי הַנָּבֶל	5 a	singing ¹⁴ to the sound of the lute,

participles in this passage are taken as vocatives by W. Janzen, *Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle* (BZAW 125; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1972) 22–23; D. R. Hillers, “*Hôy* and *Hôy*-Oracles: A Neglected Syntactical Aspect,” *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (eds. C. L. Meyers and M. O’Connor; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 185–88; Roberts, “Amos 6:1–7,” 156, 163n8; F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York/London/Toronto: Doubleday, 1989) 556.

⁹For הַבְּטָחִים as “confident” see Job 6:20; 11:18; 40:23; Prov 28:1; etc.

¹⁰The basic meaning of the root נָקַב is “to pierce,” which can serve as the means of designating something or someone (see BDB 666; cf. Arabic *naqib* [“chief, leader”]). Objects of the Hebrew verb in the latter sense include wages (Gen 30:28) and a name (נִקְבוּ בְשֵׁמוֹתָם): Num 1:17; 1 Chr 12:32; 16:41; 2 Chr 28:15; 31:19; cf. Isa 62:2; Ezra 8:20. Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV,” 325, inserts שָׁ between the participle and this phrase; cf. Symmachus and Theodotion. By extension, someone who has been so designated has been set apart or noted, hence the translation of the plural passive participle here as “notables.” Cf. the discussion in H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos* (Hermeneia; ed. S. D. McBride; trans. W. Janzen; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) 274.

¹¹For a third person pronoun referring to an earlier vocative, and therefore requiring translation as “your,” see D. R. Hillers, “*Hôy* and *Hôy*-Oracles,” 186–87; Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §4.7d.

¹²הַמְנַדִּים is a pi’el participle from the root נָדָה; it’s only other occurrence in Isa 66:5 confirms the translation as “excluding”; cf. BDB 622.

¹³See n. 11.

¹⁴The Vulgate translates the *hapax legomenon* הַפְּרָטִים as “those who sing” (*qui canitis*); for a plausible etymology of the Hebrew see J. Montgomery, “Notes from the Samaritan: The Root פָּרַט — Amos 6:5,” *JBL* 25 (1906) 51–52; he refers to M. Heidenheim, *Bibliotheca Samaritana* (Leipzig: Schulze, 1885) 2.110 and is followed by S. Daiches, “Amos VI.5,” *ExpTim* 26 (1914–15) 521–22; Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 127. The word is translated as “chant” without comment by R. Vuilleumier-Bessard, *La tradition cultuelle d’Israël dans la prophétie d’Amos et d’Osée* (CT 45; Neuchatel, Switzerland: Éditions Delachaux & Niestlé, 1960) 13; M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 214.

וְהִשְׁבּוּ ¹⁵ לָהֶם כְּלִי־שִׁיר	b	they compose on instruments of music;
הַשֹּׁתִים בְּמִזְרְקֵי יַיִן	6 a	drinking from bowls of wine,
וְרֹאשֵׁי־שָׂמָנִים יִמָּשְׁחוּ	b	they anoint with finest oils,
וְלֹא נִחְלוּ עַל־שִׁבְרֵי יוֹסֵף	c	but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
לְכֵן עֲתָה יִגְלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ גּוֹלִים	7 a	Therefore, now they will be exiled, the first of the exiles,
וְסֹר מְרִזַּח סְרוּחֵיהֶם ¹⁶	b	and the sprawler's <i>marzēah</i> shall cease. ¹⁷

This text reproduces the MT, with the exception of two deletions. Neither verse 2 nor the reference to David in 5b affect the understanding of the *marzēah* in this passage, but since the former involves a substantial deletion, some comment is in

¹⁵In the MT the line begins with “like David,” but his association with music is often challenged as a post-exilic idea, originating with the Chronicler; the *plene* spelling of the name supports that conclusion. Thus the phrase is deleted by J. L. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969) 113 note a; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 272–73, 276; G. Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkauft, Baschankühen und Rechtsverkehren: die Sozialkritik des Amosbuches in historisch-kritischer, sozialgeschichtlicher und archäologischer Perspektive* (BBB 74; Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1989) 232–233; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 552, 563, 564. Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV,” 324, claims the name is “superfluous” and “seriously disturbs the meter.” Elhorst divides כְּדָוִד as כָּד וְדָוִד but his translation as “Pitcher and hand they clap . . .” requires an unacceptable meaning for וְהִשְׁבּוּ; see H. J. Elhorst, “Amos 6 5,” *ZAW* 35 (1915) 63. Weiser’s reading of הַיָּדָר for הַיָּדָד and לְשִׁיר for כְּלִי־שִׁיר requires too much of a textual change; see A. Weiser, *Die Prophetie des Amos* (BZAW 53; Giessen: A. Topelmann, 1929) 240–41. The deletion does not substantially affect the passage.

¹⁶The LXX’s *καὶ ἐξαρθήσεται χρημετισμὸς ἰσραὴλ ἐξ Ἐφραϊμ* (“and the horses’ neighing is taken from Ephraim”) has read סוּסִים for MT סְרוּחֵיהֶם and derived מְרִזַּח from the root רוּזַח, “cry out”; see BDB 931; O. Eissfeldt, “Etymologische und archäologische Erklärung alttestamentlicher Wörter,” *OrAnt* 5 (1966) 166–71. Eissfeldt’s attempt to distinguish the biblical and extra-biblical *marzēahs* on the basis of homonymous but separate roots has not been accepted; cf., e.g., O. Loretz, “Ugaritisch-biblisch *mrzḥ* ‘Kultmahl, Kultverein’ in Jer 16,5 und Am 6,7. Bemerkungen zur Geschichte des Totenkultes in Israel,” *Künder des Wortes. Beiträge zur Theologie der Propheten: Joseph Schreiner zum 60. Geburtstag* (eds. L. Ruppert, P. Weimar and E. Zenger; Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1982) 87–93]. In any case, the mention of Ephraim is clearly a gloss, making Bryan’s emendation of the MT to וְסֹר מְרִזַּח שָׂרִים מֵאֶפְרַיִם (“the leaders’ *marzēah* has departed from Ephraim”) unnecessary and unsupportable, *contra* Bryan, “Texts,” 18–20; see also H.-J. Fabry, “מְרִזַּח *marzēah*,” *TWAT* 5.14.

¹⁷The repetition of מ, ר, ה, and the sibilants ס and ז has given rise to a number of creative, alliterative translations, including, “Da verlernen das Lärmen die Lümmel” in B. Duhm, “Anmerkungen zu den Zwölf Propheten I: Buch Amos,” *ZAW* 31 (1911) 1–18; “Da schwindet des Schwadronieren der Schwelger” in Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 215, (cf. “Dann ist es aus mit Saus und Braus” [p. 221]); “Suppressed is the sprawlers’ spree” in Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 273; “[Then will the] sound of their singing cease” in S. N. Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel: A New Interpretation* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990) 66; “Spent will be the sprawlers’ spree” in S. M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; ed. F. M. Cross; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 199 (he comments, “Their wining shall give way to whining” [p. 210]); and “Aus ist das Gelage der Ausgelassenen” in E. Blum, “‘Amos’ in Jerusalem: Beobachtungen zu Am 6,1–7,” *Hen* 16 (1994) 27. My more literal rendition highlights the word *marzēah* itself.

order.¹⁸ The extensive debate over the verse's authenticity revolves around the intended perspective, which is then used to establish the date. If the verse is meant as a warning, the cities would have been conquered, but if it quotes the Samaritan elite encouraging the populace to compare Samaria's superiority, then the cities would still be independent. Since Calneh (Akkadian Kullani) and Hamath (both located in Syria) were conquered by Tiglatpileser III in 738 BCE, who also subdued Philistia, and thus Gath, in 734 BCE,¹⁹ the first scenario points to a time after the traditional date for Amos²⁰ while the second permits a date during his ministry.²¹

This scholarly divergence illustrates the impossibility of certitude concerning the verse's precise historical reference or the intention behind it,²² and it is not possible

¹⁸On the deletion of "like David" see n. 15.

¹⁹On the individual cities see S. A. Meier, "Calneh," *ABD* 1.823-34; M.-L. Buhl, "Hamath," *ABD* 3.33-36; J. D. Seger, "Gath," *ABD* 2.908-09.

²⁰Thus, Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 144-46; A. S. Kapelrud, *Central Ideas in Amos* (Oslo: W. Nygaard, 1956) 59; Fey, *Amos und Jesaja*, 11n2; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 275; G. H. Wittenberg, "Amos 6:1-7: 'They Dismiss the Day of Disaster but You Bring Near the Rule of Violence'," *JTSA* 58 (March 1987) 58; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkäufeln*, 226-29, 243; Blum, "Am 6,1-7," 31-34; D. U. Rottzoll, *Studien zur Redaktion und Komposition des Amosbuchs* (BZAW 243; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996) 155-56. Paul objects that by then Israel would have been an Assyrian vassal as well, and such a warning would have been irrelevant. He dates the verse to a period of Israelite peace and prosperity, and relates the conquests of Calneh and Hamath to Shalmaneser III's claims of victory in 858 BCE and 853 BCE respectively, and for Gath suggests either its defeat by Hazael ca. 815 BCE (2 Kgs 12:18) or its destruction by Uzziah of Judah ca. 760 BCE (2 Chr 26:6); see Paul, *Amos*, 202-04; see also M. Bič, *Das Buch Amos* (Berlin: Evangelische-Verlagsanstalt, 1969) 130; E. Hammershaimb, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary* (trans. J. Sturdy; New York: Schocken Books, 1970) 97-98; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 558; G. V. Smith, *Amos: A Commentary* (LBI; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989) 201-02; on Gath see also M. Haran, "The Rise and Decline of the Empire of Jeroboam Ben Joash," *VT* 17 (1967) 269n1.

²¹E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT 12; 2nd ed.; Leipzig: Deichert, 1929) 242; Maag, *Text*, 39; Mays, *Amos*, 115. However, unlike elsewhere in Amos, the verse is not marked as a quotation (see Blum, "Am 6,1-7," 31; in his n. 31 he contrasts Amos 6:2 with Amos 5:14; 6:13; 8:5; 9:10; see also 2:12; 3:9; 4:1; 8:14. More difficult is that by Amos' time Gath had been subdued by the Judean King Uzziah (Mays, *Amos*, 115). The reference to Gath is deleted by A. Weiser, *Das Buch der zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (ATD 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949) 176; Morgenstern, "Amos Studies IV," 326; Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 216, but such minor surgery is no more acceptable in principle than deleting the entire verse.

²²Cf. Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 219.

to determine the verse's status on that basis. Instead, literary considerations, namely how well the verse is integrated into the larger unit, are more useful. Various arguments for unity have been made,²³ but none demonstrate v. 2's originality, only its dependence on v. 1: v. 2 requires v. 1 to make sense, but the reverse is not true. The larger unit's meaning would not be impaired if v. 2 were absent, and, in fact, v. 3 flows quite naturally from v. 1. Also, the unit itself is a "woe oracle," characterized primarily by participles,²⁴ whereas v. 2 uses imperatives and questions, which are otherwise absent from the passage.²⁵ Thus, v. 2 is most likely a later insertion.

Establishing the Unit

Since some scholars use other parts of the chapter to interpret elements of the *marzēah* in this passage, it is necessary to establish its limits as the primary interpretive context. The starting point is easily determined: the concluding formula אָמַר יְהוָה ("says Yahweh"), reinforced by the cultic phrase, אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ ("God of Hosts is his name") marks Amos 5:27 as the end of the preceding unit, and the initial הִנֵּה of 6:1 introduces a new section. A few scholars extend the unit to the end of the chapter,²⁶

²³E.g., Davies, Smith, Wood and Snyman think "these nations" refers to Zion and Samaria in 1a-b (this requires switching the pronouns on the last two words of v. 2), Snyman and Wood note the proper names in both verses, and Wood feels "they go" in 1d leads naturally into the verbs of motion in v. 2. See G. H. Davies, "Amos — the Prophet of Re-Union: An Essay in Honour of the Eightieth Birthday of Professor Aubrey R. Johnson, F.B.A.," *ExpTim* 92 (1981) 200; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 202n60; J. R. Wood, "Amos: Prophecy as a Performing Art and Its Transformation in Book Culture" (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael's College, 1993) 77, 78, 79 and her p. 78n65; S. D. Snyman, "'Violence' in Amos 3,10 and 6,3," *ETL* 71 (1995) 40.

²⁴See p. 78.

²⁵The argument here is not based upon the impossibility of direct address in a "woe oracle" (see n. 8 for taking the participles as vocatives) but the grammatical means of expressing it.

²⁶Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 127, calls the chapter "a coherent unity"; J. H. Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988) 182, describes it as "a well structured and integrated whole"; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 198, considers it "a fairly unified whole." Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel*, 76, suggests 6:1–10 is a unit, but admits, "The first seven verses of chapter 6 are a complex literary unit nicely knit together"

but the majority end it at v. 7. A number of factors support this view. The phrase לָמָּה עַתָּה (“Therefore, now”) in 6:7 introduces an announcement of judgment, and it is unlikely that it would extend for eight verses. Moreover, the divine oath in v. 8 (נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ; “The Lord Yahweh swears by himself”) introduces a new line of thought.²⁷ Similarly, the rest of the chapter bears little connection with vv. 1–7,²⁸ and most commentators divide vv. 8–14 into smaller units separate from the earlier verses.²⁹ Rhetorical features in Amos 6:1, 3–7, absent from the succeeding verses, also support taking it as a unit. The frequent use of participles, often with the definite article, unifies the passage, as do various lexical links. These include סָרְחָיִים, repeated in vv. 4b and 7b, the paranomasia between שָׁבַת and שָׁבַר in 3b and 6c,³⁰ and the repetition of the root שָׂא in 1c, 6b and 7a. Moreover, in vv. 1 and 7 this forms an inclusion marking the beginning and end of the unit.

Within those boundaries, however, some part of almost every verse has been challenged as secondary to the original unit. If all such proposals were accepted, all that would be left as the “original” oracle would be “Alas” from 1a, plus vv. 1b, 4 and 6a. As indicated in the introductory chapter, it is not my intention to present a detailed

²⁷Hayes, *Amos*, 182, 187, explains the oath as a confirmation of the preceding verses, but acknowledges the rest of the verse is concerned with the Samaria’s entire population, not just the elite as in the preceding verses. Some reinforce the separation between vv. 7 and 8 by transferring נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ (“utterance of Yahweh, God of Hosts”) to the end of v. 7 (see Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 150; Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV,” 324; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 273, 279; Roberts, “Amos 6:1–7,” 161–62), but that destroys the inclusion of v. 8 with the same words in v. 14.

²⁸Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel*, 65, 66, identifies the house in v. 9 as the *marzēah* house known from Ugarit and Jer 16:5, but the emphasis in vv. 9–10 is death as a result of war, not exile as in v. 7.

²⁹Among recent major commentaries, Wolff divides them as vv. 8–11,12,13–14 (*Joel and Amos*, 179–90), Andersen and Freedman as vv. 8–10,11–13,14 (*Amos*, 569–90) and Paul as vv. 8–11,12–14 (*Amos*, 213–21). G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 198, attempts to unify the chapter under the rubric of “a common concern for the nation’s false security,” but that characterization is appropriate to practically all of the book of Amos, to say nothing of other prophets.

³⁰See M. D. Carroll, *Contexts for Amos: Prophetic Poetics in Latin American Perspective* (JSOTSup 132; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 262; Snyman, “‘Violence,’” 40.

redaction-critical analysis of this or any of the passages that will be considered.³¹ Although notice will be taken of some proposals when discussing the passage as a whole, for my purposes it is sufficient to note that the text given above is consistent with what is known of the *marzēah* and of the accepted time of Amos' ministry.³²

Still, one proposed deletion must be considered because of its implication for the following discussion. Jacques Vermeylen and Gunter Fleischer consider all of v. 7 secondary for slightly different reasons.³³ This would mean the attitudes and actions described in vv. 1, 3–6 were not identified with a *marzēah* by the original author, but at the same time, their content is such that a later editor did. If that is the case, Amos 6:1, 3–6 might fall into the category of a *marzēah* allusion rather than a direct reference, in which case the criteria developed in Chapter 1 could be applied.

This proposal should be rejected however. Vermeylen claims vv. 8–11 are the original conclusion to Amos 6:1, 3–6, in which case v. 7 must be secondary. Similarly, Fleischer deletes v. 7 because he finds nothing in the preceding verses to justify the punishment announced in v. 7, rejecting two of the main proposals in this regard: social injustice or pagan worship. He finds no evidence of non-Yahwistic cultic activity, and claims the passage describes luxury, not injustice. Since prosperity was considered a sign of divine blessing, that alone would not elicit the punishment of

³¹Although I do not agree with all of his conclusions, a thorough recent effort in this regard concerning Amos 6:1–7 can be found in Rottzoll, *Studien*, 153–68.

³²On the content see pp. 83–93; for the dating see pp. 99–100.

³³J. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique: Isaïe I-XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1978) 563–64; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkäufem*, 237–40; the latter is followed by Rottzoll, *Studien*, 162–63. Oswald Loretz initially took the entire verse as redactional, but later accepted 7b as original; cf. Loretz, “Kultmahl,” 90; *idem*, “Marziḥu im ugaritischen und biblischen Ahnenkult: zu Ps 23; 133; Am 6,1–7 und Jer 16,5.8,” *Mesopotamica - Ugaritica - Biblica: Festschrift für Kurt Bergerhof zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres am 7. Mai 1992* (AOAT 232; eds. M. Dietrich and O. Loretz; Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon and Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993) 136–37.

exile.³⁴ In addition, Vermeylen notes that the word *marzēah* only occurs one other time, in a later text (Jer 16:5), and that the verb מַרְזַח is only applied to humans in Amos 6:4, 7; for him, the different orthography in the two verses “montre bien le procédé d’emprunt.”³⁵ Therefore, both Vermeylen and Fleischer suggest v. 7 was added at the same time as 6c,³⁶ and corresponds with it alone.

The reason for judgment in this passage will be discussed in greater detail below.³⁷ For now, while I agree Amos does not oppose the *marzēah* for cultic reasons, Fleischer’s position entails deleting virtually all references to both injustice and the cult. Moreover, he fails to consider the injustice underlying the text. Even though there is little *explicit* mention of injustice in 6:1, 3–7 (once 3b and 6c have been deleted³⁸), one of Amos’ central concerns is the social inequities that had developed because of the elite’s economic and judicial exploitation of the poor (see, e.g., Amos 2:6–8; 5:7, 10–12, 24; 8:4–6). The luxurious lifestyle enjoyed by the upper-class was only possible because of their injustice against the lower class. Thus, there is a connection between the prophet’s description of the elite and the announced judgment, even if it is not as explicit as Fleischer would like. Furthermore, this conceptual coherence is reinforced in the lexical links between vv. 1, 3–6 and 7.³⁹ Finally, on a

³⁴He also wonders whether “exile” indicates knowledge of Israel’s fate after the fact, but does not give an answer (see Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkäufern*, 240); Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isāie*, 564, considers it clear evidence of deuteronomistic editing. But since any astute observer of Assyrian foreign policy would realize exile was a very real possibility, a general reference to exile is not out of place. It should also be noted that this is far less specific than, for instance, “exile beyond Damascus” in Amos 5:27. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 151, suggests the latter destination actually points to deportations by the kingdom of Urartu prior to and contemporary with Amos.

³⁵Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isāie*, 564.

³⁶Cf. in n. 88 below.

³⁷See pp. 95–98.

³⁸On the interpretation of these verses see pp. 85–86 below.

³⁹See p. 74.

form-critical level, the woe oracle is a subset of the Judgment Against the Nation, and as such an announcement of judgment is to be expected.⁴⁰ However, Vermeulen's proposed judgment section (vv. 8-11) does not cohere as well with vv. 1, 3-6 as does v. 7: vv. 8-11 focus on a house, which does not appear in vv. 1, 3-6 at all.⁴¹ At the same time, Vermeulen's supposedly later vocabulary is not convincing. In light of the extensive early use of the word *marzēah* outside of the Bible, there is no reason Amos 6:7 must be dependent on Jer 16:5 for the term, or the reverse for that matter; both could simply reflect their contemporary situations. Similarly, although there is no easy explanation for the different orthography of מַרְזָחִים/מַרְזָחִים, if it results from redactional activity, why did the editor not either copy exactly or conform the original to his spelling?⁴² Since there are numerous indications that v. 7 is integral to the passage, this one disputable point is insufficient reason to delete it. Thus, the connection of the attitudes and actions in Amos 6:1, 3-6 with a *marzēah* is original to the passage.

The Form

The opening word (וְהִי) marks this passage as a woe oracle.⁴³ Because internal features of this form as well as its *Sitz im Leben* have a bearing on the discussion of this and other texts⁴⁴, some consideration will be given to it.

⁴⁰C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. H. C. White; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1967) 190, 192; the "woes" of Isaiah 5 and 28 regularly include an announcement of punishment introduced by לָמָּה.

⁴¹Cf. p. 74.

⁴²The very fact that he would have felt able to add to the text shows he did not consider it "sacrosanct," and therefore could have altered the word in v. 4.

⁴³The form's traditional terminology is retained in the following discussion, even though I translate the word as "alas" (cf. p. 83 below).

⁴⁴See the subsequent discussion of Amos 4:1, and of Isa 5:11-13; 28:1-4 in Chapter 4.

The word וָיָה occurs 51 times in the First Testament,⁴⁵ all but once (1 Kgs 13:30) in the prophetic literature. Of the remaining occurrences, thirty-one times the word is followed immediately by a negative characterization of a group or individual, usually by means of a participle, although occasionally a noun or even an adjective appears.⁴⁶ The latter is the case with Amos 6:1a, although the subsequent participles carry on the characterization begun in v. 1, and are governed by the opening וָיָה .⁴⁷

Although the word is almost exclusive to the prophets, there has been debate whether the form was developed by them or taken over from another setting. If it is original to the prophets, since Amos is the first to use it he might have invented it. Thus it is necessary to consider the form's original *Sitz im Leben*.

The earliest proposal was by Mowinckel, who saw the pronouncement of "woe" as "a formal variety of the curse."⁴⁸ However, since his main concern was the blessing and cursing Psalms, and it was left to Westermann to develop the proposal in

⁴⁵Traditional terminology for the two main divisions of the Bible is problematic and has general hermeneutic implications. "Old Testament" connotes "antiquated," "outdated" and even "replaced" for some. "Hebrew Bible" is popular in many circles, but designating the material by its (primary) language of composition does not take into account the Aramaic portions of Daniel and the extensive scholarly use of ancient versions in other languages, to say nothing of the second part of the Bible, which still tends to be called the "New Testament." It also does not incorporate the deuterocanonical books, some written exclusively in Greek, which Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians consider scriptural. Similarly, "Jewish Bible/Scripture" is unacceptable to Christians, for whom the first part is also canonical. Thus, as an uneasy compromise I use First and Second Testament for the two main divisions of the biblical literature (this coincides with the editorial policy of the *Biblical Theology Bulletin*).

⁴⁶In addition, the "woe" is applied directly to someone through a preposition 4 times: Jer 50:27; Ezek 13:3 [לְ]; Jer 48:1 [לְ]; Ezek 13:18 [לְ]. Twice וָיָה is followed by a name: Isa 10:5; 29:1. In 8 instances it seems to function as an interjection, 4x with a negative connotation (Isa 1:24; 17:12; Jer 30:7; 47:6) and 4x (all in later texts) as a call for attention (Isa 55:1; Zech 2:10 [2x], 11). Finally, it occurs in a funerary lament 6 times: 1 Kgs 13:30; Jer 22:18 (4x); 34:5. This breakdown is dependent on the statistics of Christof Hardmeier presented in Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 242–43n108; cf. Wolff's own breakdown on p. 242 and the discussion by G. Wanke, " וָיָה und וָיָה " *ZAW* 78 (1966) 216.

⁴⁷Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 559; Paul, *Amos*, 204.

⁴⁸S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (The Biblical Seminar 14; trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 2.50; he discusses the curse in general on pp. 48–50. He first proposed this correlation in S. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* (Kristiania: Jacob Dybwad, 1922) 119.

greater detail.⁴⁹ In particular, Westermann notes the comparable structure (an introductory word [הוֹי or אָרַר] plus a participle) in both the prophetic woes and the curses, and draws a parallel between the curses clustered in Deut 27:15–26 and the prophetic woe sequences.⁵⁰ He concludes, therefore, that, “not only the form but also the content of the prophetic woe originated with the curse”⁵¹ If so, by pronouncing a woe/curse the prophet would bring about what he proclaims.⁵²

A closer examination of the woes and curses argues against dependence, however. In the curses, the participle is singular, whereas the prophetic woes developed from predominately plural participles in earlier texts to singular participles in later texts.⁵³ Secondly, little significance should be attached to sequences of either the woes or the curses. The latter are clearly linked because of their initial word⁵⁴ and that is the most likely explanation for the woe sequences as well.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the woes

⁴⁹Westermann, *Basic Forms*, 190–98.

⁵⁰Westermann, *Basic Forms*, 193. Woe sequences are found in Isa 5:8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22; 28:1; 29:1, 15; 30:1, 31:1 and Hab 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19. In Amos, woe oracles begin in 5:18 and 6:1; another was first reconstructed in 5:7 by G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets. Vol. I: Amos, Hosea, Micah* (The Expositors Bible, 8th Series; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1896); he is followed by most commentators. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 461–62, identify 19 participial statements in the book (6 within 6:1–6 and including 5:7) as “woes,” thereby rendering the actual word הוֹי irrelevant.

⁵¹Westermann, *Basic Forms*, 198.

⁵²On the inherent efficacy of the prophetic pronouncements see A. F. Key, “The Magical Background of Is 6:9–13,” *JBL* 86 (1967) 198–204. A discussion of “performative language” in general can be found in J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁵³Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 243 and n. 108. Cf. R. E. Clements, “The Form and Character of Prophetic Woe Oracles,” *Semitics* 8 (1982) 22.

⁵⁴Although there is some general similarity of content (e.g., vv. 20–23 deal with forbidden sexual relations, namely, “anyone who lies” with his father’s wife, an animal, his sister or his mother-in-law), most of the curses in Deut 27:15–26 have little relationship among them, and even vv. 20–23 are probably juxtaposed simply because of the repeated “anyone who lies with”

⁵⁵R. J. Clifford, “The Use of הוֹי in the Prophets,” *CBQ* 28 (1966) 459.

and curses do not share any common content.⁵⁶ Finally, the early pre-exilic prophets never utter curses,⁵⁷ so it is less likely they would employ a derivative form.

A second view situates the prophetic woe oracles within clan wisdom. This was first suggested by Gerstenberger, and has since been vigorously advanced by H. W. Wolff.⁵⁸ Gerstenberger's starting point is the impersonal tenor of the woes, which he describes as "general and timeless indictments of historically unspecified evildoers."⁵⁹ Secondly, the woes share a concern for social justice and drunkenness with the wisdom tradition.⁶⁰ This leads Gerstenberger to see הוֹי as the opposite of אֲשֶׁרִי ("happy"), a common wisdom term.⁶¹ Just as אֲשֶׁרִי introduced actions and attitudes acceptable in the established village wisdom, so too descriptions of what was unacceptable began with הוֹי. Since such wisdom statements were rooted in the positive and negative consequences of various actions, the prophetic use would be understood primarily in terms of cause and effect, namely, that "woe" will eventually come to those who perform the described negative actions.

However, no direct correlation between הוֹי and אֲשֶׁרִי, or between הוֹי and wisdom in general, exists in the First Testament; with one exception, הוֹי is found only in the prophetic books. Gerstenberger can only point to two places where the concepts

⁵⁶E. S. Gerstenberger, "The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets," *JBL* 81 (1962) 258–60.

⁵⁷J. G. Williams, "The Alas-Oracles of the Eighth Century Prophets," *HUCA* 38 (1967) 84.

⁵⁸Gerstenberger, "Woe-Oracles," 249–63; H. W. Wolff, *Amos the Prophet: The Man and His Background* (ed. J. Reumann; trans. F. R. McCurley; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973) 17–34; *idem*, *Joel and Amos*, 94, 243–45. They are followed by Clements, "Prophetic Woe Oracles," 24–25.

⁵⁹Gerstenberger, "Woe-Oracles," 252; see also Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 94; J. G. Williams, "Alas-Oracles," 82n19.

⁶⁰Gerstenberger, "Woe-Oracles," 254–58; see also Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 244, 245.

⁶¹Gerstenberger, "Woe-Oracles," 260–61; see also Wolff, *Amos the Prophet*, 25–29.

“happy” and “woe” occur together, and both require emendation.⁶² Even though these textual changes are commonly accepted, the counterpoint to אֶשְׂרִי in both instances is not הוֹי, but אֹי, and Wanke has shown on syntactical grounds that the two words are to be distinguished.⁶³ As for Gerstenberger’s other points, although the prophetic woes might appear “timeless” and “historically unspecified” to us, that does not mean they were to those who first heard them.⁶⁴ An audience did not need to hear a regnal year announced every time a prophet spoke to know he was talking about specific groups and times. It would have been clear to Amos’ contemporaries who “the confident on Mount Samaria” were, especially since the participles in this passage constitute direct address.⁶⁵ As for the concern about social justice and drunkenness, these are not unique to a wisdom setting, but are part of a shared social system, and should not be equated exclusively with any one group or tradition.⁶⁶

Because neither curses nor clan wisdom provide convincing pre-prophetic backgrounds for the woe saying, scholars eventually focused attention on the lone instance of הוֹי outside of the prophetic literature. In 1 Kgs 13:30 the word is used

⁶²From אָמַר to אֶשְׂרִי in Isa 3:10–11 and from אֵי to אֹי in Qoh 10:16–17; see Gerstenberger, “Woe-Oracles,” 261.

⁶³Wanke, “אֹי und הוֹי,” 215–16. אֹי occurs 25 times, 22x with the preposition לְ, 19x with a personal pronoun or suffix and often with a reason for the exclamation. Contrast the distribution of הוֹי presented in n. 46. The former is best translated as “woe to me/you/him (because) . . .” while the latter should be rendered as “Alas!” (see p. 83 below).

⁶⁴See also the criticism in Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, 21, 41n3, that Gerstenberger’s understanding of the woe oracle is valid only if over half of the word’s occurrences are excluded from consideration.

⁶⁵See n. 8 above.

⁶⁶Matters of justice fall within the realm of the judiciary, for instance. For a common background for law and wisdom see J.-P. Audet, “Origines comparées de la double tradition de la loi et de la sagesse dans le Proche-Orient ancien,” *Actes Internationales Orientalisteskongresses (Moscow) I* (1960) 1.352–57. See also the warnings about casting too wide a net in the search for wisdom influence in J. L. Crenshaw, “Method in Determining Wisdom Influence Upon ‘Historical’ Literature,” *JBL* 88 (1969) 129–42; cf. Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, 24.

during a funerary lament over the “man of God” from Judah. The same setting is found in Jer 22:18, where Jeremiah announces the traditional lament (הָיָה is mentioned four times in the verse) will not be spoken when King Jehoiakim is buried, and in Jer 34:5, where it is denied to King Zedekiah. All three passages contain the verb נָפַד (“lament”), which indicates funerary lamentation was the original *Sitz im Leben* for a proclamation of הָיָה.⁶⁷

This is significant for how the speaker and the audience would have understood the prophetic woe cry, and for the translation of הָיָה. A woe oracle mourns those whose actions are described after the opening הָיָה.⁶⁸ This is especially the case with Amos, who, as the first prophet to use the woe form is the closest to its funerary origins⁶⁹ and the expectations those origins would create in his audience. In other

⁶⁷This was first proposed, apparently independently, by Clifford, “HÔY,” 458–64 and Wanke, “הָיָה und אָיִ,” 215–18. See also H.-J. Kraus, “הָיָה als prophetische Leichenklage über das eigene Volk im 8. Jahrhundert,” *ZAW* 85 (1973) 15–46; H.-J. Zobel, “הָיָה hōy,” *IDOT* 3.361–62; and especially Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, 3–19 and Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, 2.503–52, both of whom develop it in great detail, with comparative material from surrounding semitic cultures. Note also the double cry of הָיָה in the context of funeral lament in Amos 5:16–17, immediately before the הָיָה of 5:18.

Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 243, links funerary lamentation with clan wisdom through the extended family, noting along the way Jer 9:16, where professional mourners are called “wise [women]” (הַחֲכָמוֹת). But in a village, mourning was done by virtually every one, and especially by relatives, “wise” or not (Kraus, “הָיָה,” 19); in contrast, Jeremiah operated in the southern capital, Jerusalem. Moreover, in Jer 9:16 the root חָכַם denotes professional skill or expertise. If the words “wisdom” or “wise” are sufficient to indicate the wisdom tradition, then the latter includes artisans (Exod 35:31–36:1), tailors (Exod 28:3), scribes (Jer 8:8), sailors (Ps 107:27), shipbuilders (Ezek 27:8–9), warfare (Prov. 21:22, Isa 10:13), commerce (Ezek 28:4–5) and sorcery (Isa 47:9–13; cf. the Babylonian magicians in Daniel); in other words, everybody. Wolff’s proposal defines “wisdom” so broadly as to be useless (cf. n. 66 above). In any case, even Wolff is forced to admit, “. . . the הָיָה of Amos resonates much more strongly with the unnerving tone of the cry of funerary lamentation than is the case in our postulated pedagogical wisdom sayings.” (Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 245; emphasis added).

⁶⁸Clifford, “HÔY,” 460–61; J. G. Williams, “Alas-Oracles,” 87; J. G. Williams, “Irony and Lament: Clues to Prophetic Consciousness,” *Semeia* 8 (1977) 55; Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, *passim*; K. Koch, *The Prophets, Vol. I: The Assyrian Period* (trans. M. Kohl; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 44; Wittenberg, “Amos 6:1–7,” 59; H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (Continental Commentaries; trans. T. H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 196; Zobel, “הָיָה hōy,” 3.363–64. Note especially Kraus’ statement: “Das vom Profeten angeprangerte Verhalten trägt den Tod in sich . . .” (Kraus, “הָיָה,” 44).

⁶⁹See Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, 84.

words, in using the woe form Amos laments the impending fate of those he is describing in vv. 1, 3–6, in anticipation of their punishment announced in v. 7. Koch's formulation is especially apt: "Amos . . . publishes the people's obituary in advance."⁷⁰ Secondly, in the three verses with an explicit funerary context, the syntax in all six instances of the word consists of **וַיִּה** plus direct address to the dead individual.⁷¹ As such, Williams' suggested translation of **וַיִּה** as "Alas!" rather than the traditional "Woe"⁷² seems more appropriate, in that it retains the element of direct address while counteracting a tendency to expand the simple cry of "Woe" into "Woe to," for which there are no textual grounds and which sounds too much like a curse.⁷³

Discussion

Amos 6:1, 3–7 easily divides into three parts on the basis of content. Verses 1 and 3a describe the elite's attitude in terms of themselves, while 3b and 6c indicate the implications of that attitude for others. Verses 4–6b describe the actions stemming from that attitude, and together vv. 1, 3–6 constitute a divine accusation against the Samarian upper class. Finally, v. 7 announces the punishment for the sins described in the preceding verses: they will be taken into exile and their *marzēah* will end. It is not

⁷⁰Koch, *The Prophets I*, 47. See also Clifford, "HŌY," 464; Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, 48–49. Kraus, "וַיִּה," 27, considers the unexpected **וַיִּה** in v. 7 as further evidence that, as far as Amos is concerned, their death sentence is a present reality. Wolff and Paul consider it imminent; see Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 277; Paul, *Amos*, 210. Weisman considers this use of the woe form satirical as well; see Z. Weisman, *Political Satire in the Bible* (SBLSS 32; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 83–84, 88–89.

⁷¹Note also the Greek addition at 1 Kgs 12:24 (LXX 3 Kings 12:24m): *Ὀὐαὶ κύριε* = **וַיִּה** **אֲדָרָא** (cf. Jer 22:18; 34:5).

⁷²J. G. Williams, "Alas-Oracles," 75.

⁷³At Amos 6:1, the *RSV* and the *NAB* translate as "Woe to . . .," the *NEB* renders "Woe betide . . ." and the *NJB* reads "Disaster for those . . ." The *NRSV*'s "Alas for those . . ." is an improvement over the *RSV*. On the woe's possible development into a curse in the later prophetic literature see Clifford, "HŌY," 461–64; Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, 27–34.

In 3b the focus shifts to the effect their attitude has on others. In contrast to their efforts to exclude the evil day, they bring near **טָבַחַת**. The correct understanding of this phrase revolves around the first word. If it is a substantive derived from the verb **טָבַחַח**, it means “cessation,”⁷⁹ but this does not fit the context very well. Rudolph’s rendition as “ein gewaltsames Ende”⁸⁰ is more appropriate, but does not fit the word’s nuance elsewhere as “inactivity” rather than “termination.” Reider’s derivation from the Arabic *watbat* (“assault”)⁸¹ also fits, but is unparalleled in the First Testament.⁸² A number of emendations have also been proposed,⁸³ but none have any textual or versional support. However, the Vulgate does read *solio iniquitatis* (“throne of iniquity”). This suggests **טָבַחַח** is the infinitive construct of **טָבַחַח**, which means “sit, dwell,” and by extension, “rule, reign.”⁸⁴

The second word (**טָבַחַח**) refers primarily to physical violence, but can also denote general wrongdoing, almost always by the powerful against the poor and weak.⁸⁵ Linked with **טָבַחַח** (as derived from **טָבַחַח**) it either refers to injustice at the place

⁷⁹BDB 992. See Exod 21:19; Prov 20:2; cf. Isa 30:7.

⁸⁰Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 216.

⁸¹J. Reider, “Etymological Studies in Biblical Hebrew,” *VT* 2 (1952) 122.

⁸²Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 272; Paul, *Amos*, 205.

⁸³**טָבַחַח** (“destruction and violence”) was proposed by W. Nowack, *Die Kleinen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* (HAT 3; 3rd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922); Weiser, *Propheten*, 175. Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 200, changed it to **טָבַחַח** (“devastation and violence”; cf. Amos 3:10. **טָבַחַח** (“A year of violence”) is suggested by Maag, *Text*, 37–38; S. Amsler, “Amos,” *Osée Joël Amos Abdias Jonas* (CAT 11a; 2nd ed.; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1982) 218n3; Kraus, “הרי,” 26. *BHS* suggests all three possibilities.

⁸⁴BDB 442. Cf. J. Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* (4th ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963) 85, first proposed in the 3rd ed. of 1898. He is followed by, *inter alia*, Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 146; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 272; Hayes, *Amos*, 185; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 562; Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 206; Snyman, “‘Violence,’” 46.

⁸⁵BDB 329; it occurs as part of the common phrase **טָבַחַח** in Amos 3:10. Cf. the discussions of Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 194; Paul, *Amos*, 117.

where they sat in judgment (cf. v. 1d) or to the effect of that injustice.⁸⁶ Whatever the precise nuance, the lexical link with **טַחַן** in Amos 3:10, combined with the antithetical parallelism in Amos 6:3, indicates their actions affect the nation's internal situation.⁸⁷

This is further explicated by their lack of concern "over the ruin of Joseph" in 6c. This line is often interpreted in political terms,⁸⁸ but nothing in the phrase itself or the larger passage requires a political interpretation; it can just as easily point to the dissolution of covenantal bonds between the rich and the poor, against which the entire book of Amos protests.⁸⁹ This is consistent with their complacent self-indulgence in the preceding verses, and the paranomasia between **שָׁבַר** and **שָׁבַר** linking vv. 3b and 6c⁹⁰ also supports an internal, social interpretation of the latter line.

⁸⁶I have translated it as "rule of violence" in an attempt to capture both possibilities.

⁸⁷Contra Hayes, *Amos*, 185–86, who understands Amos 6:3 as an invasion by an anti-Assyrian coalition. G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 203, also relates it to foreign attack. It is linked to internal oppression by Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 146; Mays, *Amos*, 116; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 275; Wittenberg, "Amos 6:1–7," 62–63; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 203; Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 208, 212. The disintegration of internal social bonds during this period because of the shift to latifundialization is discussed by R. B. Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets: Composition and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 24–39; W. Schottroff, "The Prophet Amos: A Socio-Historical Assessment of His Ministry," *The God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretations of the Bible* (eds. W. Schottroff and W. Stegemann; trans. M. J. O'Connell; Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984) 33–40; I. Jaruzelska, "Social Structure in the Kingdom of Israel in the Eighth Century B.C. as Reflected in the Book of Amos," *FO* 29 (1992–93) 91–117.

⁸⁸Two proposals date the line after the traditional period of Amos' ministry. It is related to the northern leaders' lack of concern for the nation's internal political strife in the years immediately prior to the Assyrian conquest by Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 273–74, 277; Wittenberg, "Amos 6:1–7," 67; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkaufen*, 233–34. In contrast, J. M. Ward, *Amos and Isaiah: Prophets of the Word of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969) 82–83; Roberts, "Amos 6:1–7," 160–61; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkaufen*, 234, 243; Wood, "Amos," 79, 81, 83, 85; Blum, "Am 6,1–7," 34–35; Rottzoll, *Studien*, 160–61, 164, interpret it as the south's rejection of the north afterwards. Explanations attributing the line to Amos include earlier internal political strife (Hayes, *Amos*, 187), imminent external attack (G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 205) and an allusion to the division of the kingdom after Solomon (Hammershaimb, *Amos*, 101–02).

⁸⁹Thus Mays, *Amos*, 117; B. Vawter, *Amos, Hosea, Micah, with an Introduction to Classical Prophecy* (OTMS 7; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1981) 61; Koch, *The Prophets I*, 50; R. Martin-Achard and S. P. Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis: A Commentary on the Books of Amos and Lamentation* (ITC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984) 48; Paul, *Amos*, 209.

⁹⁰See n. 30

Following this, v. 7 announces an ironic reversal of the situation denounced in vv. 1, 3–6: those who considered themselves the elite of “the first of the nations” will be “the first of the exiles,”⁹¹ bringing to an end their sprawling *marzēah*. This reversal indicates the preceding lines deal with the attitudes and actions of *marzēah* members during their feast. As such, vv. 4–6b in particular constitute a description of an actual *marzēah* feast. The content of those verses corresponds to what is known about the *marzēah* from extra-biblical materials, including all three of the constitutive elements identified in Chapter 1.

First, this *marzēah* involves a specific upper-class group. Their identification as “the notables of the first of the nations” in 1c is confirmed by various indications of wealth in vv. 4–6b. For instance, they recline on ivory-inlaid beds⁹² eating the choicest meats. Meat was not part of the average diet, and thus a luxury,⁹³ and the types of meat mentioned in 4c-d are of the highest quality; the phrase “calves from the

⁹¹Note the punning reversal of fortune and paranomasia of the second word in ראשית הַגְּוִיִּים and ראש גְּלוּיִם.

⁹²The “ivory beds” (מְרִיטֵי) of v. 4a are not made completely of ivory, but contain ivory inlays and ornamentation. See P. J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah — an Archaeological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988) 139; this is specified in the Targum. On ivory in the ancient world see R. D. Barnett, *Ancient Ivories in the Middle East* (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, 1982); H. Shanks, “Ancient Ivory: The Story of Wealth, Decadence, and Beauty,” *BAR* 11/5 (1985) 40–53; King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 139–49; for Samaria in particular see J. W. Crowfoot and G. M. Crowfoot, *Early Ivories from Samaria* (Samaria-Sebaste 2; London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1938); K. Kenyon, *Royal Cities of the Old Testament* (London: Barric & Jenkins, 1971) 71–89. For the possible identification of Phoenician ivory-inlaid *marzēah* beds see R. D. Barnett, *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories, with Other Examples of Ancient Near Eastern Ivories in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1957) 131n4; *idem*, “Assurbanipal’s Feast,” *EI* 18 (1985) 3*.

⁹³T. H. Sutcliffe, *The Book of Amos* (London: SPCK, 1939) 50; R. S. Cripps, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos: The Text of the Revised Version Edited with Introduction, Notes and Excursuses* (2d ed.; foreword by R. H. Kennett; London: SPCK, 1955) 206; Mays, *Amos*, 116; H. McKeating, *The Books of Amos, Hosea and Micah* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) 49–50; M. Fendler, “Zur Sozialkritik des Amos: Versuch einer wirtschafts- und sozialgeschichtlichen Interpretation alttestamentlicher Texte,” *EvT* 33 (1973) 45; Schottruff, “The Prophet Amos,” 35; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 563.

middle of the fattening stall” (מִרְבֵּק)⁹⁴ is especially indicative of their affluence. They wash this down with “bowls”⁹⁵ (rather than the usual cups) of wine, which suggests large amounts were consumed.⁹⁶ This and the “finest oils”⁹⁷ for anointing also

⁹⁴The final word means “tying place” (cf. Arabic *rabaqa*, “tie up”) and refers to stalls in which livestock were confined to be fattened without developing tough muscle by moving around. See BDB 918; Maag, *Text*, 167–68; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 276; King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 149–51; Paul, *Amos*, 206. The phrase מִרְבֵּק־לֵגָלְעָלְעָל also occurs literally in 1 Sam 28:24, and is used figuratively of the restored people of Israel (Mal 3:30) and of Egyptian mercenaries (Jer 46:21). Appealing to an Egyptian sarcophagus relief showing a cow being milked with a calf tied to her front leg, Weippert suggests the word refers to a practice by which a calf, unable to reach its mother’s udders, is weaned by a farmer and taken while still very young, and therefore the meat tender; see H. Weippert, “Amos: Seine Bilder und ihr Milieu,” *Beiträge zur prophetischen Bildsprache in Israel und Assyrien* (OBO 64; eds. H. Weippert, K. Seybold and M. Weippert; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985) 8–9. This requires an unusual temporal, rather than locative, meaning for מִרְבֵּק, however. In any case, the essential point remains the same.

⁹⁵The מִרְבֵּקִים in v. 6 are sacred vessels used in sprinkling rites (see King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 157–58). The 31 other occurrences of the term in the First Testament are in a cultic context; see especially Exod 24:6.) As such they would have been wide and probably shallow, (King, p. 158, suggests a diameter of up to eighteen inches). The Targum calls it a silver *pylwynn*, a loan word from the Greek *phiale*; see K. J. Cathcart and R. P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets: Translated, with a Critical Apparatus, and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 14; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989) 88n8. Barnett, “Assurbanipal’s Feast,” 6*_n30, also connects the two terms. This calls to mind the Phoenician *phiale* dedicated to the *marzēah* of Šamaš, measuring seven inches across and one-and-a-half inches deep (see the discussion in Chapter 1). Thus the translation as “bowls.”

The LXX read τὸν διωλισμένον οἶνον (“strained wine”), reflecting a possible Hebrew *Vorlage* מִרְבֵּקִי (cf. Isa 25:6). Dahmen feels this provides a better parallel with the choice meats in v. 4 and the “finest oil” in the next line; see U. Dahmen, “Zur Text- und Literarkritik von Amos 6:6a,” *BN* 31 (1986) 7–10; he is followed (with emendation to מִרְבֵּקִי) by Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkaufen*, 234–36; see already Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV,” 323, who refers to Proksch. However, since the *marzēah* is a religious feast, and the verse contains numerous other religious allusions the MT should be retained (see further on pp. 89–93).

⁹⁶Thus Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 149; Driver, *Joel and Amos*, 198; B. Thorogood, *A Guide to the Book of Amos with Theme Discussions on Judgment, Social Justice, Priest and Prophet* (Theological Education Fund Study Guides 4; London: SPCK, 1971) 69; Fendler, “Sozialkritik,” 45; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 276; B. Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority* (SWBA 1; Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983) 122; J. A. Soggin, *The Prophet Amos: A Translation and Commentary* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1987) 103, 105; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 205; Paul, *Amos*, 122. In contrast, Hammershaimb, *Amos*, 101; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 564; J. Jeremias, *Der Prophet Amos* (ATD 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995) 88 and possibly Kraus, “יִהְיֶה,” 27, think the issue is the misuse of cultic items. Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 127n5, simply says the bowl’s size isn’t the point while King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 158, says it could be either. Cf. below concerning their “sprawling.”

⁹⁷As in v. 1, תִּשְׂאֵל refers to importance or quality, not time, yielding the translation “the finest oils.” On the production of “the finest oil” see L. E. Stager, “The Finest Olive Oil in Samaria,” *JSS* 28 (1983) 241–45; King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 159–61.

indicate the participants enjoyed significant financial standing.

Second, drunkenness during the feast is also reflected in this passage. The amount of wine consumed has just been noted, and its effect is conveyed by the word **סרוּחִים** in 4b and 7b. The verb **סָרַח** means “go free, be unrestrained, overrun, exceed.”⁹⁸ Elsewhere it is always used of objects which can hang loose, such as curtains (Exod 26:12, 13), vines (Ezek 17:6) and turbans (Ezek 23:15). Used only here of humans, their physical position reflects both their mental attitude (vv. 1, 3) and their wine consumption (v. 6).

Third, there are numerous indications this is a religious banquet, beginning with the opening specification of the feast’s location as “on Zion.” This is a radical departure from the usual understandings of this line, so some justification of that assertion is required, beginning with the inadequacy of the traditional interpretations.

Many reject the reference to Zion in Amos 6:1 on the assumption that Amos’ words were directed to the north only,⁹⁹ and deal with the word by removing it, either by deletion,¹⁰⁰ emendation,¹⁰¹ or the “restoration” of a word more closely

⁹⁸BDB 710.

⁹⁹In itself, Oettli’s question is still valid almost a century later: “Why should not Amos, a Judean, be allowed to touch on his own homeland?”; see Oettli, *Amos und Hosea*, 72; contrast the sustained and intriguing defense of a northern origin for Amos in Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel, passim*; cf. also Kraus, “**הַי**,” 28. However, the lack of consensus as to the answer is illustrated by comparing Paul, *Amos*, 200, who agrees with Oettli, and Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 269, who does not. Most think Amos didn’t address the south, but the opposite view is held by Martin-Achard and Re’emi, *God’s People in Crisis*, 48; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 199–200; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos, passim*. Hayes, *Amos*, 182–83, thinks the reference to Zion reflects its status as a vassal to Israel.

¹⁰⁰Simply deleting “Zion” would disturb the parallelism with the following line, but that difficulty is avoided by deleting the entire line yet retaining the initial **הַי**; thus Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 198; he is followed by Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 269; Wittenberg, “Amos 6:1–7,” 67; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkaufert*, 226, 243; Loretz, “*Marzihu*,” 132, 134–35; Blum, “Am 6,1–7,” 29, 34; Rottzoll, *Studien*, 154–55, 158.

¹⁰¹Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, 5.243 and the BHS suggest **בְּגִאוֹן** (“in pride”); cf. Maag, *Text*, 37, who specifies it as “their pride” (**בְּגִאוֹנָם**). Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 215, proposed **בְּצִרְוֹן** (“in the fortress”); cf. Zech 9:12. **בְּצִיֹן** (“in Ijon”) is offered by W. von Soden, “Zu Einigen Ortsbenennungen bei Amos und Micha,” *ZAH* 3 (1990) 214–16; cf. 1 Kgs 15:20; 2 Kgs 15:29; cf. the critique in Loretz, “*Marzihu*,” 137–38. The word is revocalized as **בְּצִיָּב** (“in the rock; from the Arabic *ṣuwwa*) by P. Riessler, *Der Kleinen Propheten oder das Zwölfprophetenbuch nach dem Urtext übersetzt und erklärt*

corresponding to Samaria.¹⁰² However, these are all hypothetical and require significant deviation from the MT, but there is no text-critical support for any reading other than Zion. Yet even when Zion is retained, there is little agreement as to the line's interpretation. Some consider the whole passage a post-Amos composition indicating Samaria's fate awaits Judah as well.¹⁰³ The supposedly later historical references in v. 2 and in the phrase "the ruin of Joseph" (v. 6) are claimed as supporting evidence, but if v. 2 is secondary¹⁰⁴ and "the ruin of Joseph" refers to societal breakdown rather than military conquest¹⁰⁵ then those arguments are moot. More importantly, one would expect a clearer indication of a southern audience, but nothing else in the passage points in that direction. Finally, the address v. 1b to those who are "confident . . . on Mount Samaria" points to a date before any calamity.

Weiser and Bič also relate Zion to Jerusalem, but as the object of the northerners' attitude. Weiser renders $\text{הַשְׂאֲנַנִּים בְּצִיּוֹן}$ as "those who are proud of Zion,"

(Rottenburg: Bader, 1911) 85, 87.

¹⁰²"In Tirzah" (בְּתִרְצָה) was proposed by T. K. Cheyne, "Gleanings in Biblical Criticism and Geography," *JQR* 10 (1898) 573, who is followed by Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 141; K. Budde, "Zu Text und Auslegung des Buches Amos," *JBL* 43 (1924) 121-23. Vawter, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 60, suggests "in Bethel" (בְּבֵית אֵל). It was changed to "in the [capital] city" (בְּצִיּוֹן) by E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT 12; 1st ed.; Leipzig: Deichert, 1922) 198; in the 2nd (1929) and 3rd (1930) editions he retained "Zion." "In Joseph" (בְּיוֹסֵף) is read by H. L. Ginsberg, *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism* (TSJTS 24; New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982) 31. Morgenstern, "Amos Studies IV," 325; Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets*, 13, simply state that an unknown reference originally stood here.

¹⁰³Thus, e.g., Ward, *Amos and Isaiah*, 82-83; Wood, "Amos," 80-81. Cf. Roberts, "Amos 6:1-7," 159-61, who attributes it to Amos but extends his ministry well past Jeroboam's death. Jeremias takes all of Amos 5-6 as post-Amos; see J. Jeremias, "Amos 3 — 6: From the Oral Word to the Text" (trans. S. A. Irvine), *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (eds. G. M. Tucker, D. L. Petersen and R. R. Wilson; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 217-29; he is followed by Snyman, "'Violence,'" 44. In contrast, Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 107, considers chaps. 3-6 to be the nucleus of Amos' preaching. Although various deletions are proposed, some portion of Amos 6:1-7 is attributed to Amos by virtually all commentators, as well as in Rottzoll's recent redactional study (see Rottzoll, *Studien*, 153-68).

¹⁰⁴See pp. 72-73 above.

¹⁰⁵See p. 86 above.

which he relates to the north's conquest of Jerusalem in the early 8th century.¹⁰⁶ However, as Wolff points out, “ןאָׁשׁ never means ‘proud of,’ but rather ‘carefree, secure.’”¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, Bič thinks the words mean the elite of Samaria do not care about Zion (“sie seien *in bezug* auf Zion sorglos gewesen,” italics in the original), reflecting their belief that the northern manifestation of Yahweh is satisfied with them, and they have nothing to fear from the Yahweh of Zion who sent Amos.¹⁰⁸ This seems dependent on the LXX, which reads οὐαὶ τοῖς ἐξουθενούσι Σιών (“those who detest Zion”), perhaps reading the root אָׁשׁ by metathesis. But the LXX drops the prepositional *beth* from “Zion,” and the entire construction suggests the Greek translator also had difficulty with a reference to Zion (Jerusalem) here.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the repetition of אָׁשׁ and בְּחַחֲתָ in Isa 32:9 and 11 in the same order with roughly the same nuances support retaining the former here.

In contrast, Andersen and Freedman think representatives of the southern elite were present in Samaria for an important feast, perhaps a wake for a member of the royal or priestly classes.¹¹⁰ However, not only is there no other indication Amos is addressing southerners, but those Judahites would also be subject to the threatened exile, a punishment the south did not experience until one hundred and eighty years

¹⁰⁶Weiser, *Amos*, 229–31; cf. 2 Kgs 14:11–14

¹⁰⁷Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 269; it is derived from the verb אָׁשׁ which means to “be at ease or at peace, rest securely” (BDB 983).

¹⁰⁸Bič, *Amos*, 129; see Amos 1:2.

¹⁰⁹Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 270.

¹¹⁰Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 552. Whether or not this *marzēah* has funerary connections is discussed on pp. 94–95 below.

after Amos. Most importantly, the “secure” are “in/on Zion,” which means they could not even be in the northern kingdom if Zion refers to Jerusalem.¹¹¹

Since there are problems with the traditional understandings of the term, I follow Fohrer’s proposal that Zion here is “a technical expression for the situation of the capital; Samaria is the ‘Zion’ of the Northern Kingdom.”¹¹² Since he did not present arguments in support of this proposal, it has been criticized and rejected by most scholars.¹¹³ However, there is evidence he may be correct. In Ps 48:3 Zion is described as “the extremities of the north” (יִרְבֵּתֵי צָפוֹן). This is unusual in light of its association with Judah in v. 12, and is best explained as an echo of Zion’s mythological origins as the holy mountain of the gods.¹¹⁴ In most texts Zion’s mythological setting has been transposed to the site of the Jerusalem temple as the place where God has “made his name to dwell,” but such a restrictive view of the divine locus is a later deuteronomistic invention which an earlier northern audience would not share. For them, Yahweh dwelt in the northern temples, including in Samaria. Moreover, if Sion (יְסִיֹן) is a variant spelling of Zion, then Deut 4:48 identifies it as Mount Hermon.¹¹⁵ These examples, although admittedly few, counter Wolff’s objection that for Zion to refer to anywhere other than Jerusalem “would constitute a singular exception.”¹¹⁶

¹¹¹Although they do not comment on the first line, Andersen and Freedman think Samaria is the focus of trust in the second line (Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 553), but nothing in the subsequent lines supports that view. I consider the ז in both lines as locative; see p. 84 above.

¹¹²G. Fohrer, “Zion-Jerusalem in the Old Testament,” *TDNT* 7.295.

¹¹³Exceptions are Lang, *Monotheism*, 121; Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel*, 33–34, 91. The latter traces the proposal to J. P. Peters, *The Psalms as Liturgies* (New York: Macmillan, 1922) 210.

¹¹⁴Note especially Ba’al’s home on Mt. Zaphon in the Ugaritic literature. See further R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM 4; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

¹¹⁵Cf. Ps 133:3; in Deut 3:9 Siryon (יְסִיֹן) is given as the Sidonian name for Mt. Hermon (cf. Ps 29:6), but there is no textual-critical basis for emending Deut 4:48.

¹¹⁶Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 269.

Moreover, the reference to Mount Samaria in the singular in Amos 6:1b distinguishes it from the plural “mountains of Samaria” in 3:9.¹¹⁷ This suggests a special significance in 6:1b, to which Zion provides an appropriate parallel.¹¹⁸

In short, the self-confident and secure nobility convene their *marzēah* in a place with religious connections, namely “Mount Samaria,” the “Zion” of the north. Various aspects of Amos 6:4–6b are consistent with and reinforce the probability of a religious context for this *marzēah*. It was noted earlier that their drinking “bowls” are elsewhere mentioned exclusively in cultic contexts.¹¹⁹ Second, the verb מָשַׁח is normally used of religious anointing.¹²⁰ Third, according to King, the נָבֵל (“lute”) mentioned in 5a was “ordinarily reserved for a religious function.”¹²¹ Finally, in light of the constellation of other religious elements in the passage, the meat in 4c-d may have been offered in sacrifice¹²² and the songs may even have been religious ones.¹²³

Thus, the constitutive features of a *marzēah* are present in Amos 6:1, 3–7. In contrast, two elements commonly seen in connection with the extra-biblical *marzēah*

¹¹⁷The LXX’s singular (τὸ ὄρος) incorrectly conforms that verse to the singular in Amos 4:1 and 6:1. The Targum and the Vulgate both reflect the plural in Amos 3:9.

¹¹⁸Since the other terms in lines 1a-b are roughly synonymous, Zion and Mount Samaria should be as well. The latter specifies which “Zion” is intended.

¹¹⁹See n. 95.

¹²⁰Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 150; Mays, *Amos*, 116; Kraus, “הָרִי,” 27n50; Paul, *Amos*, 208. In contrast, מָשַׁח is usually used for secular anointing.

¹²¹King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 154. See also Vuilleumier-Bessard, *La Tradition Cultuelle*, 87.

¹²²Kraus, “הָרִי,” 26–27; B. Peckham, “Phoenicia and the Religion of Israel: The Epigraphic Evidence,” *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and D. S. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 95n58; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 563, 567; Wood, “Amos,” 82; Jeremias, *Amos*, 88. Cf. “your fattened animals” (מְרִיאֵיכֶם; Amos 5:22).

¹²³Vuilleumier-Bessard, *La Tradition Cultuelle*, 87; Kraus, “הָרִי,” 27; Koch, *The Prophets I*, 53. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 567, suggest the temple and court musicians may have been present.

are not mentioned in this text: the *marzēah* leader and the *marzēah* house. Some consider the house mentioned in Amos 6:9–10 to be the latter,¹²⁴ but those verses are from a separate unit describing the effects of divine judgment; there is nothing to connect them with 6:1, 3–7.¹²⁵

Many consider this particular *marzēah* a funerary banquet, but that is simply asserted on the basis of their presupposition concerning the nature of all *marzēahs*, rather than argued on the basis of evidence.¹²⁶ However, since there is no indication of funerary elements in the earlier *marzēahs* at Ebla, Emar and Ugarit, evidence of it here is required. Some point to the funerary language of vv. 9–10,¹²⁷ but it was noted above that those verses are not related to this passage. Others claim 6c indicates this *marzēah* should have been a mourning banquet in which they would “grieve over the ruin of Joseph,”¹²⁸ but this too is rooted in a prior understanding of the *marzēah*’s nature and purpose. By itself, the line simply establishes a contrast between their attitude, described in vv. 1 and 3 and embodied in vv. 4–6b, and what that attitude should be. Any funerary associations in 6c are supplied by the interpreter, not the text.

¹²⁴See, e.g., n. 28.

¹²⁵See the discussion of the passage’s limits on pp. 73–74 above.

¹²⁶Thus, e.g., A. Neher, *Amos: contribution à l’étude du prophétisme* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1950) 107–08; Bič, *Amos*, 134; Wittenberg, “Amos 6:1–7,” 59.

¹²⁷See J. C. Greenfield, “The *Marzeah* as a Social Institution,” *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten Vorderasien* (eds. J. Harmatta and G. Komoróczy; Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976) 453; King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 139; but contrast P. J. King, “Using Archaeology to Interpret a Biblical Text — The *marzēah* Amos Denounces,” *BAR* 14/4 (July/August 1988) 37.

¹²⁸Peckham, “Phoenicia,” 95n58; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 567, 568; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 203, 206; E. F. Beach, “The Samaria Ivories, *Marzeah* and Biblical Texts,” *BA* 55 (1992) 136.

Some also appeal to the funerary associations of the “woman at the window” motif from the Samarian ivories (and elsewhere).¹²⁹ Unfortunately, we have no information as to what, if anything, may have been on those specific ivory inlays mentioned in 4a; any suggestions in that regard can only be speculation. On the other hand, we do know that abstention from using oil was a mourning custom in ancient Israel, so its use here argues against this *marzēah* being a funerary banquet.¹³⁰

Since the reason for Amos’ denunciation and rejection of this *marzēah* would most likely be reflected in allusions elsewhere in the book, it is worth considering the matter. Scholars are divided as to the reason for Amos’ opposition, with suggestions including cultic matters, immorality and injustice.

There are two opinions as to the precise cultic aspect the prophet opposes. The first sees the *marzēah* as a non-Israelite institution associated with pagan deities.¹³¹ Some claim the ivory inlays contained idolatrous images,¹³² but that cannot be verified. Barstad points to Amos 5:26 and 8:14 as evidence that “polemics against foreign deities play a major role in the preaching of Amos.”¹³³ However, those verses provide shaky ground for Barstad’s position: the former is often deleted as a later addition and the

¹²⁹Barnett, “Assurbanipal’s Feast,” 1*-6*, especially p. 3; E. Gubel, “À propos du *marzeah* d’Assurbanipal,” *Reflets des deux fleuves: volume de mélanges offerts à André Finet* (AS 6; eds. M. Lebeau and P. Talon; Leuven: Peeters, 1989) 47–53; King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 146–48; Beach, “The Samaria Ivories,” 130–39.

¹³⁰H. E. W. Fosbroke, “The Book of Amos: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB* 6.824; Paul, *Amos*, 209. Even Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 567, admit this would be unusual in a mourning feast.

¹³¹The strongest arguments are found in Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 127–42, especially p. 141. He was anticipated by H. Gressmann, “H KOINONIA TON ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ,” *ZNW* 20 (1921) 229–30; Bič, *Amos*, 132 and is followed by Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel*, 67; Blum, “Am 6,1–7,” 27n12; Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 210.

¹³²E.g., Vuilleumier-Bessard, *La Tradition Cultuelle*, 40. See also Bič, *Amos*, 132; King, “Using Archaeology,” 40.

¹³³Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 141n96. He does not specify the deity involved here, but Bič, *Amos*, 132, as well as Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 210, suggest Ba‘al is the *marzēah*’s patron.

latter, if not secondary, at least requires revocalization of the MT מִשְׁחָה (“the guilt/sin [of Samaria]”) to מִשְׁחָה in order to produce a reference to the goddess Ashima.¹³⁴ More importantly, *contra* Barstad, those verses do *not* reflect a major concern in the book. Even Barstad acknowledges the issue is not Yahweh’s replacement with other gods but their worship alongside him, which he understands as the syncretistic introduction of foreign gods.¹³⁵ This is not the place for a full-scale discussion of monotheism, but there is evidence it is a late development and that prior to the exile mainstream Yahwism was polytheistic.¹³⁶ With respect to the book of Amos in particular, apart from 5:26 and 8:14, there is no indication of any opposition to syncretism. Two examples immediately prior to 6:1, 3–7 support this conclusion. Amos 5:18–20, although critical of a cultic concept, focuses on the Yahweh cult. Those verses seek to correct the people’s improper understanding of the Day of Yahweh, but it is *Yahweh’s* Day which they await. Moreover, divine statements in Amos 5:21–23 such as “*I reject*”, “*I do not accept*”, “*I do not look at*” and “*remove from me*” indicate the rejected cultic actions were directed to Yahweh.

The same conclusion would be reached from a close examination of other cultic passages in the book, such as 4:4–5, but that is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say, if the northern cult was syncretistic there should be some reflection of that in such passages, but there is none. Although other deities probably were

¹³⁴2 Kgs 17:30 narrates the introduction of Ashima’s (note the spelling there: אַשִׁמָּה) cult by Hamathites resettled in Samaria by the Assyrians. Barstad’s discussion of Amos 5:26 and 8:14 and the literature he cites (Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 118–26, 143–201), should now be supplemented by Paul, *Amos*, 194–98 and 268–70; Rottzoll, *Studien*, 189–92 and 266–69. Reading Asherah (אַשְׁרָת) in 8:14 (thus Maag, *Text*, 55–56), requires both revocalization and alteration of the consonantal text.

¹³⁵Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, *passim*.

¹³⁶See M. S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities of Canaan* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990) especially pp. 145–60. For the wide-spread pre-exilic worship of Asherah see in particular S. M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (SBLMS 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

worshipped alongside Yahweh during Amos' time, the *only* places in the book of Amos this elicits an objection are Amos 5:26 and the revocalized 8:14. At the very least, this means polemics against foreign gods are not a *major* concern of the prophet; at the most, it suggests the former verse is, indeed, secondary and the latter should not be emended to introduce what is foreign to Amos' own concerns.

This does not mean the *marzēah* in Amos 6 could not have a patron other than Yahweh, but that is not the reason for the prophet's opposition. Since there is no clear reference to other deities in the preceding verses,¹³⁷ some suggest Yahweh himself was the patron. If so, the objection to the *marzēah* might lie in the association of Israel's god with a Canaanite institution.¹³⁸ But since this runs counter to Israel's own Canaanite origins, others look to some other cultic aspect of this *marzēah* to justify Amos' condemnation.¹³⁹ The use of the cultic מִן־קִיּוֹם as over-sized wine glasses is considered blasphemous by some,¹⁴⁰ while Bič suggests the animals were the first of the flock and belonged completely to Yahweh.¹⁴¹ Either view requires a degree of eisegesis, however, since there is no other indication Amos is objecting to the perversion of pure worship of Yahweh.

¹³⁷Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkauft*, 238; M. E. Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire: A Socio-Historical Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 89; B. B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 146.

¹³⁸Thus Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, 89. Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkauft*, 239, argues the *marzēah* was permissible within Yahwism.

¹³⁹Soggin, *The Prophet Amos*, 105, is uncertain whether the issue is syncretism or profanation of Yahwistic practices.

¹⁴⁰See the references in n. 96.

¹⁴¹Bič, *Amos*, 132. See also Jeremias, *Amos*, 88.

A second proposal is that Amos objects to the *marzēah* because of immorality. Vuilleumeier-Bessard finds a reference to orgies in v. 4,¹⁴² Freedman suggests they were singing “naughty” songs¹⁴³ and Loretz castigates them for their generally “lascivious conduct” (*laszive Verhalten*).¹⁴⁴ The Targum and Talmud support this view, but that says more about what the rabbis thought concerning their own contemporary *marzēahs* than its nature centuries earlier.¹⁴⁵ Taken in its own context, the passage describes inebriated sprawling rather than sexual misconduct.

Both the cultic and moral interpretations ignore the clear indication of the prophet’s concern in 6c: they are unconcerned about the situation confronting the nation (which he calls Joseph). It is their attitude he finds objectionable, an attitude embodied in their drunken feast. He does not oppose the feast itself, but the disposition it expresses. I argued above that “the ruin of Joseph” refers to the breakdown of the covenantal bonds that should have united the various social levels of the nation.¹⁴⁶ Instead, the Samaritan elite exploited their fellow Israelites. The prophet condemns their lack of concern in 6b, which elicits punishment in v. 7. In short, he does not just oppose their luxurious lifestyle, but that lifestyle at the expense of, and with indifference to, the poor.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴²Vuilleumier-Bessard, *La Tradition Cultuelle*, 44. See also F. Briquel-Chatonnet, *Studia Phoenicia XII: Les relations entre les cités de la côte phénicienne et les royaumes d’Israël et de Juda* (OLA 46; Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek/Uitgeverij Peeters, 1992) 332.

¹⁴³D. N. Freedman, “But Did King David Invent Musical Instruments?” *BRev* 1/2 (1985) 51. He suggests they were “scurrilous, obscene or blasphemous, and possibly all three.”

¹⁴⁴Loretz, “‘Kultmahl,’” 91.

¹⁴⁵See in chapter 1 under “Rabbinic Literature.” Pope’s effort to establish the *marzēah* as essentially licentious, here and elsewhere, is also dependent on later rabbinic, christian and pagan literature; see M. H. Pope, “A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,” *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of W. F. Stinespring* (ed. J. M. Efrid; Durham: Duke University Press, 1972) 184–89; *idem*, *Song of Songs*, 211–14.

¹⁴⁶See p. 86.

¹⁴⁷See further the discussions of Fendler, “Sozialkritik,” 45–46; H. B. Huffmon, “The Social Role of Amos’ Message,” *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E.*

Dating the Text

The prophet Amos is the first biblical prophet whose words were written down and collected into a book.¹⁴⁸ However, that book as we now have it does not derive from Amos himself. His words were probably collected by others, and that very process involves editorial choices; moreover, the book as a whole, including Amos 6:1, 3–7, has undergone subsequent redactional development as well.¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, only a few scholars deny all of this passage to Amos; rather, almost all trace at least some of it to the prophet himself.¹⁵⁰ The archaeological evidence supports the latter view. The emergence of an upper-class around the time of Amos' ministry is indicated by excavations in the northern kingdom, which reveal fairly uniform buildings prior to that time were replaced by a cluster of large, luxurious homes in one part of a city and smaller, poorer dwellings elsewhere.¹⁵¹ Similarly, details in this passage such as the elite's ivory-inlaid beds and the production of luxury items like oil and wine are also consistent with the archaeological record for the capital, Samaria.¹⁵²

Mendenhall (eds. H. B. Huffman, F. A. Spina and A. R. W. Green; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 114; Schottruff, "The Prophet Amos," 34–35; R. Bohlen, "Zur Sozialkritik des Propheten Amos," *TTZ* 95 (1986) 282–301; Wittenberg, "Amos 6:1–7," 62–65.

¹⁴⁸Most date Amos' ministry to around 760 BCE. Those who diverge from the consensus generally do so by only a couple of decades. E.g., Rottzoll, *Studien*, 16–18, dates the prophet's words to ca. 780 BCE; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos, passim*, suggest ca. 780–770 BCE; Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets*, 19–24, places Amos' ministry after the death of Jeroboam; Roberts, "Amos 6:1–7," 158–59, argues Amos began during Jeroboam's reign but continued well past his death.

¹⁴⁹A detailed redactional analysis of the entire book can be found in Rottzoll, *Studien*; he treats Amos 6:1–7 on pp. 153–68.

¹⁵⁰See n. 103.

¹⁵¹See the discussions in J. W. Crowfoot, K. Kenyon and E. L. Sukenik, *The Buildings at Samaria* (Samaria-Sebaste 1; London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1942); R. De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York/Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1961) 1.72–74; A. Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000 — 586 B.C.E.* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 411–15.

¹⁵²On ivory see n. 92 above. A. Parrot notes the reference in the Samarian ostraca to oil and wine as taxes to support the royal court; see A. Parrot, *Samaria, the Capital of the Kingdom of Israel* (SBA 7; trans. S. R. Hooke; London: SCM Press, 1958) 75; see also Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel*, 56n23, 65. The ostraca themselves are published in G. A. Reisner, *Israelite Ostraca from Samaria* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1924). For a discussion of the oil's quality see Stager, "The Finest Olive Oil," 241–45.

In short, the situation described in Amos 6:1, 3–7 is consistent with the known state of affairs in the northern kingdom, ca. 760 BCE, and the passage probably dates from around that time. As such, the reference to the *marzēah* in Amos 6:7 is the earliest explicit mention in the prophets (vs. Jer 16:5, at least 150 years later). At the same time, it ante-dates possible allusions in Hosea and Isaiah by a few decades.¹⁵³

Amos 4:1

Having established the nature of the *marzēah* at the time of Amos, and his attitude toward it, the next step is to evaluate possible *marzēah* allusions elsewhere in the book. The preceding discussion of 6:1, 3–7 provides a basis for analyzing Amos 2:7b–8 and 4:1, supplemented by the criteria derived from the extra-biblical evidence.

I begin with Amos 4:1 because it is more closely related to Amos 6:1, 3–7 in terms of structure and content than Amos 2:7b–8. First of all, Amos 4:1–3 and 6:1–7 are associated in the structural arrangement of the whole book. Rottzoll identifies a concentric “ring structure” by which an editor has organized the book’s contents, within which 4:1–3 and 6:1(2)3–7 balance each other.¹⁵⁴ Secondly, their relative position in this editorial structure is probably based on their initial composition in light of each other. This can be seen from individual points of contact between the two passages. Both describe the elite oppressing the poor, mention drinking and refer to a divine mountain (Bashan¹⁵⁵ and Zion) followed by a parallel specification of the

¹⁵³See in Chapters 3 and 4.

¹⁵⁴Rottzoll, *Studien*, 152; he presents a chart showing the concentric structure of the entire book on p. 3. Rottzoll builds upon the work of de Waard with respect to chapter 5 and Lust concerning 4:1–6:7; see J. de Waard, “The Chiastic Structure of Amos V:1–17,” *VT* 27 (1977) 170–77; J. Lust, “Remarks on the Redaction of Amos V 4–6, 14–15,” *OTS* 21 (1981) 129–54.

¹⁵⁵See further on p. 109 below.

audience's location as "on Mount Samaria" (בְּהַר שָׁמְרוֹן).¹⁵⁶ Also, both passages use participles to express the two groups' actions. The woe form requires them in 6:1, 3–6, but there is no such formal requirement in 4:1,¹⁵⁷ which suggests they are used in 4:1 purposely in order to emphasize the connection with 6:1, 3–6. Finally, in both units the punishment is exile (Amos 4:2–3 and 6:7).¹⁵⁸

Hans Barstad was the first person to suggest the *marzēah* as the background for this verse. Beginning from the expectation that a prophet who addressed the same audience repeatedly would treat the same topic more than once, he notes "great similarities both with regard to form and content" between Amos 4:1 and 6:4–6.¹⁵⁹ These include wine, which he finds suggestive of a meal, oppression, which points to the upper class, and the religious connotations of the phrase, "cows of Bashan." The first step in evaluating his proposal is to establish the text of Amos 4:1.

¹⁵⁶The singular "mountain" sets these two instances apart from Amos 3:9, where the plural refers to the surrounding area (cf. n. 117), and the references to "Samaria" alone in 3:12 and 8:14.

¹⁵⁷Nine examples of the Judgment Against the Nation form are presented in Westermann, *Basic Forms*, 174–75. One is Amos 4:1–2, and Mic 2:1–4 begins with הוֹי and is therefore more properly classified as a woe oracle. In five of the remaining seven, finite verbs dominate for the people's actions, with participles occurring only after other verb forms (see Hos 2:5–7; Isa 8:6–8; 30:12–14; Mic 3:1–2, 4; Jer 5:10–14). The two exceptions are Mic 3:9–12 and Jer 7:16–18, 20; the latter is governed by a command for the prophet to observe their actions at that moment.

¹⁵⁸With the exception of Hayes, *Amos*, 141, virtually all commentators take Amos 4:2–3 as describing exile, although they differ on the exact translation and interpretation of the admittedly difficult lines. For a recent review of the issues see Paul, *Amos*, 130–36; on the terminology in v. 2 see also Rottzoll, *Studien*, 146–50.

¹⁵⁹Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 42; Amos 4:1 is also associated with the *marzēah* by Peckham, "Phoenicia," 83, 94n57. The two passages are linked, with varying degrees of detail but without specifying Amos 4:1 as a *marzēah*, by, *inter alia*, Mays, *Amos*, 71; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 207; J.-L. Vesco, "Amos de Téqoa, défenseur de l'homme," *RB* 87 (1980) 496; Koch, *The Prophets I*, 47; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 421; Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 127, 128. Amos 4:1–3 is placed immediately after 6:4–7 by Morgenstern, "Amos Studies IV," 311–12, 324.

The Text

שְׁמַעוּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה	1 a Hear this word
פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן	b you cows of Bashan
אֲשֶׁר בְּהַר שַׁמְרוֹן	c who are on Mount Samaria,
הַעֲשֹׂקוֹת דְּלִים	d oppressing the poor,
הַרְצֹצוֹת אֲבִיוֹנִים	e crushing the needy
הָאֹמְרוֹת לְאֲדֹנֵיהֶם	f saying to your ¹⁶⁰ lords,
הַבִּיאָה וְנִשְׁתֶּה	g “Bring, so that we can drink!”

The Hebrew text above duplicates the MT exactly. There are some translational difficulties, however, which must be addressed. To begin with, there is a significant lack of gender agreement in the verse. The opening verb is a masculine plural imperative, but is followed by a feminine plural substantive (1b) and three feminine plural participles (1d-f). Introduced by the article, these participles are vocatives,¹⁶¹ continuing the direct address initiated in 1a. But the third participle is followed by an indirect object consisting of a plural noun with a masculine plural suffix (אֲדֹנֵיהֶם, literally “their lords”). All of this raises questions concerning the gender, and by extension the identity, of those addressed, as does the succession of two masculine and one feminine suffixes in the next verse. Many eliminate the problem by changing the masculine suffixes to the feminine,¹⁶² but without any text-critical or versional support. A second approach relates the masculine suffix in line f to the plural masculine nouns in lines d and e, yielding a reference to the “lords” of the “poor” and

¹⁶⁰See n. 11.

¹⁶¹See n. 8.

¹⁶²E.g., M. Löhr, *Untersuchungen zum Buch Amos* (BZAW 4; Giessen: J. Ricker, 1901) 9, 13; Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 179; Nowack, *Propheten*, 133; Weiser, *Propheten*, 156; Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV,” 324; Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 78; T. H. Robinson and F. Horst, *Die zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (HAT 1; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964) 14, 84.

the “needy.”¹⁶³ But while possible, this does not account for the masculine imperative at the beginning of the verse.

A fairly straightforward solution is at hand with the recognition of some peculiarities of grammar and syntax in biblical Hebrew. The masculine imperative addressing females can be explained on three principles: the tendency to avoid 2nd person plural feminine verbs,¹⁶⁴ the preference for a masculine verb in the initial position of a sentence,¹⁶⁵ and the use of masculine imperatives elsewhere to address females.¹⁶⁶ This leaves the masculine pronominal suffix in 1f, which can also be explained by the substitution of a masculine pronoun where a feminine one is expected.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, since it refers to the vocative participles, the pronoun continues the direct address and should be translated as “your.”¹⁶⁸ Thus, the grammatical irregularities can be explained in such a way that females in a relationship with the “lords” of 1f are addressed throughout.

Line g contains another grammatical anomaly: the plural “lords” are addressed with a singular imperative. Some consider “lords” a plural of majesty

¹⁶³Bič, *Amos*, 85; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkauftern*, 82; Rottzoll, *Studien*, 144. Fleischer points out the “lords” could still be in a relationship with the women, but that the emphasis is on the former’s connection with the “poor” and “needy.”

¹⁶⁴R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, §234. Cf. Ruth 1:8; Joel 2:22.

¹⁶⁵GKC §145o-p; Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §6.6c and the biblical texts cited by both.

¹⁶⁶GKC §110k; cf. Judg 4:20; Isa 23:1; Mic 1:13; Zech 13:7.

¹⁶⁷GKC §135o; cf., e.g., Gen 31:9; 32:16; 41:23, etc. The principle applies to the masculine suffixes in v. 2 as well. Contrast Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 421, who suggest the mixture of gender references there is complementary, indicating both halves of the population are addressed.

¹⁶⁸See n. 11.

referring to the king¹⁶⁹ or a single deity,¹⁷⁰ but the command to bring something for the women to drink argues for a less exalted status. The LXX, Syriac and Vulgate all render the imperative as plural, but modern commentators tend to take it as distributive, indicating the address of each female to her “lord.”¹⁷¹

Although *ḥ̄w̄t* here is commonly translated as “husband,” the usual word is *ḥ̄w̄t*.¹⁷² The use of *ḥ̄w̄t* suggests some special significance for the word in this verse. In addition to the plural of majesty, mentioned above, foreigners,¹⁷³ the owners of concubines¹⁷⁴ and a plurality of pagan deities¹⁷⁵ have all been proposed. The first proposal is linked to Bič’s view that the women are engaged in cultic prostitution during a Canaanite New Year’s celebration, but there is no evidence cultic prostitution was ever practiced in ancient Israel.¹⁷⁶ As for the last proposal, the subsequent command is as inappropriate directed to many gods as to one. This might also be the case for concubines addressing their paramours, although for my purpose the distinction between them and actual wives is minimal. Nonetheless, in light of the

¹⁶⁹Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 88; contrast his p. 86.

¹⁷⁰Neher, *Amos*, 83, says it is Baʿal; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 422, indicate it could refer to either Baʿal or Yahweh.

¹⁷¹E.g., Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV,” 324; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 203; Paul, *Amos*, 129; Wood, “Amos,” 61n34. Cf. “each woman straight ahead” in v. 3 (Wood, p. 64).

¹⁷²The only clear instance of *ḥ̄w̄t* meaning “husband” is Gen 18:12.

¹⁷³Bič, *Amos*, 85.

¹⁷⁴G. J. Botterweck, “‘Sie verkaufen den Unschuldigen um Geld.’ Zur sozialen Kritik des Propheten Amos,” *BibLeb* 12 (1971) 221, 222. Cf. Judg 19:26.

¹⁷⁵J. D. W. Watts, “A Critical Analysis of Amos 4:1ff,” *Society of Biblical Literature Proceedings* 2 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972) 496; Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 41, 47.

¹⁷⁶See the discussions of Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 26–33; K. van der Toorn, “Prostitution [Heb *Zenūt*, *Zenūnim*, *Taznūt*]: Cultic Prostitution,” *ABD* 5.510–13, and the literature van der Toorn cites.

parallels between 4:1–3 and 6:1, 3–7,¹⁷⁷ where males are addressed with masculine plural participles, it is likely the females in 4:1 are the social equals of the “lords.” In that case, the unusual term for “husband” may be intended to enhance the contrast with their true Lord, Yahweh, who speaks in v. 2,¹⁷⁸ or just to highlight their elite status.

Establishing the Unit

One proposed deletion from Amos 4:1 must be considered. John D. W. Watts has challenged the authenticity of lines c-e in v. 1, arguing the original oracle consisted of an address to “cows of Bashan, saying to their lords, / ‘Come, let us drink.’”¹⁷⁹ This would remove the reference to “Mount Samaria” and the oppression of the poor as an indication of the social status of those being addressed. Since both indicate a connection between Amos 4:1 and 6:1, 3–7, and the addressees’ elite status is a constitutive element of the *marzēah*, Watts’ proposal requires a response.

Watts deletes line c on the grounds that a Samaria speech is out of place between two Bethel speeches.¹⁸⁰ This argument depends upon the final form of the book of Amos for its relevance, but that form is the result of editorial arrangement, and the position of Amos 4:1 is not because it shares a common audience with the surrounding passages.¹⁸¹ Watts also drops lines d and e as a later reinterpretation in terms of social justice. He notes the verb *רָשַׁע* (“oppress”) is not found elsewhere in Amos, while *רָצַח* (“crush”) only occurs at Amos 3:9 but is characteristic of later

¹⁷⁷See pp. 100–101.

¹⁷⁸Bič, *Amos*, 86; Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 41; Paul, *Amos*, 129.

¹⁷⁹Watts, “Amos 4:1ff,” 494.

¹⁸⁰Watts, “Amos 4:1ff,” 493. Bethel is named in Amos 3:14 and 4:4.

¹⁸¹See pp. 100–101 above; cf. p. 111 below concerning Barstad.

literature, and claims, “The entire phrase is more stereotyped than the colorful language Amos usually employs to support attacks on privileged injustice.”¹⁸² Thus, Watts himself recognizes that social justice is central to Amos’ pronouncements, and even notes that the terms “poor” and “needy” occur together elsewhere in Amos’ authentic speeches,¹⁸³ always in the context of such oppression by the elite. At the same time, while any characterization of a passage’s “tenor” is necessarily subjective, I find the startling bovine metaphor with which the passage begins, as well as the sense of ongoing¹⁸⁴ and immediate action conveyed by the participial forms of the verbs to be “colourful.” All of this argues in favour of the lines’ authenticity, and suggests the common pairing of “oppress” and “crush” in later literature¹⁸⁵ may be dependent upon first being linked by Amos here.

Discussion

Having established the textual integrity of Amos 4:1, it remains to consider whether it alludes to the *marzēah*. As noted earlier, Barstad suggested it did on the basis of similarities with Amos 6:4–6, including wine, upper-class oppression of the poor and a religious context in both passages.¹⁸⁶ These three points roughly correspond to the three consistent elements of a *marzēah* established in Chapter 1.

Barstad finds a religious context for the verse in the phrase “cows of Bashan,” which he considers an allusion to involvement with the Ba‘al cult. He appeals to the use of פָּרָה (“cow”) in Hos 4:16 and Jer 2:24 for Israelites worshipping

¹⁸²Watts, “Amos 4:1ff,” 493–94.

¹⁸³Watts, “Amos 4:1ff,” 493. The terms occur together in Amos 2:6–7; 5:11–12 and 8:6; the latter is also found in Amos 8:4.

¹⁸⁴Paul, *Amos*, 129.

¹⁸⁵See the references in Watts, “Amos 4:1ff,” 494n16.

¹⁸⁶See p. 101 above.

other gods,¹⁸⁷ and notes the cow's mythological connections with fertility in the ancient near East.¹⁸⁸ Barstad's understanding of the phrase does not survive scrutiny, however. The general lack of polemic against other gods in Amos has already been noted,¹⁸⁹ and the same observation applies to this verse in particular. Secondly, in Hos 4:16 it is the adjective "stubborn" (סַרְרָה) that points to worship of other gods, not the noun פָּרָה.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, the adjective is absent from Jer 2:24, and the idea of rebelliousness is only present if אַרְיָה ("wild ass") is read.¹⁹¹ In other words, the word "cow" is only connected with apostasy or syncretism in Hos 4:16, and there that connotation is conveyed by the adjective modifying the noun, not the noun itself. This does not justify a negative connotation to the phrase "cows of Bashan" in Amos 4:1.

As for the mythological associations of cows, all of Barstad's examples deal with either a goddess represented by a cow (Hathor, Isis, Anat) or a god (Sin, Ba'al, the Hittite moon-god) mating with one. Even if these divine associations can be legitimately applied to humans who are described metaphorically, nothing indicates the prophet would have understood them negatively. Cultic issues do not appear in either the accusation (1d-g)¹⁹² or the following announcement of punishment (vv. 2–3).

¹⁸⁷Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 43. In an earlier article he linked Amos 4:1 with cultic prostitution as part of the Ba'al cult, rather than a Ba'alistic *marzēah*; see H. M. Barstad, "Die Basankühe in Amos 4:1," *VT* 25 (1975) 295. This verse had already been associated with the worship of Ba'al, but not the *marzēah*, by Neher, *Amos*, 82–85; Vuilleumier-Bessard, *La Tradition Cultuelle*, 43; Bič, *Amos*, 82–84; Watts, "Amos 4:1ff," 496, 498.

¹⁸⁸Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 44–47.

¹⁸⁹See pp. 96–97 above.

¹⁹⁰Cf. the discussion of Hos 4:16–19 in Chapter 3.

¹⁹¹This alternative reading fits the context better, and is reflected in the vocalization as פָּרָה in the Leningrad Codex (*BHS*). It is also the reading of many Hebrew manuscripts, the Vulgate, Syriac, Targum, most English translations and the commentators.

¹⁹²The erroneous interpretation of "their Lords" in 1f as a reference to foreign deities was dealt with above; see pp. 104–105. On the form of Amos 4:1–3 see n. 206.

But despite the inadequacies of Barstad's interpretation, the phrase "cows of Bashan" does have religious connotations. Klaus Koch suggests the women, "imagined themselves to be the worshipers of the mighty bull of Samaria (Hos. 8.5f), a North Israelite manifestation of Yahweh."¹⁹³ Jacobs supports this by appealing to the Kuntillet 'Ajrūd inscription mentioning "Yahweh of Samaria and his ʾšrh" above two bovine figures.¹⁹⁴ This is suggestive, but since it is not certain the inscription and the drawings are connected, inconclusive.¹⁹⁵ More probative is Yahweh's identification with El in ancient Israel, including his assumption of El's bull imagery.¹⁹⁶ As a result, female worshipers of Bull Yahweh could be considered "cows."

This religious interpretation of the "cows" is supported by religious associations for Bashan itself. In Ps 68:17, the "mountain of Bashan" is rebuked for its

¹⁹³Koch, *The Prophets I*, 46.

¹⁹⁴P. E. Jacobs, "'Cows of Bashan' — a Note on the Interpretation of Amos 4:1," *JBL* 104 (1985) 109–110.

¹⁹⁵On the Kuntillet 'Ajrūd texts, including the relationship between the inscription and the pictures as well as the proper understanding of the final word, see Z. Meshel, "Kuntillet 'Ajrūd (M.R. 094954)," *ABD* 4.103–09; to the literature on Asherah cited there add: R. J. Petley, *Asherah, Goddess of Israel* (American University Studies, Series 7: Theology and Religion 74; Frankfurt am Main/Bern/New York: Peter Lang, 1990); M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, "*Jahwe und seine Aschera*": *Anthropomorphes Kultbild in Mesopotamien, Ugarit und Israels - Das biblische Bilderverbot* (UBL; Ugarit-Verlag, 1992); S. A. Wiggins, *A Reassessment of "Asherah": A Study According to the Textual Sources of the First Two Millennia B.C.E.* (AOAT 235; Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon und Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993); J. M. Hadley, "Yahweh and 'His Asherah': Archaeological and Textual Evidence for the Cult of the Goddess," *Ein Gott allein? JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer Monotheismus im Kontext der israelitischen und altorientalischen Religionsgeschichte* (OBO 139; eds. W. Dietrich and M. A. Klopfenstein; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1994) 235–68; C. Frevel, *Aschera und der Ausschließlichkeitsanspruch YHWHs: Beiträge zu literarischen, religionsgeschichtlichen und ikonographischen Aspekten der Ascheradiskussion* (BBB 94; Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1995); T. Binger, *Asherah: Goddess in Ugarit, Israel and the Old Testament* (JSOTSup 232; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

¹⁹⁶See especially *KTU* 14.IV.168–69, where the human king Keret sacrifices to "Bull, his father El [*tr.abh.il*]"; see also "the bull (MT אֲבִיר) of Jacob" in Gen 49:24; Isa 49:26; 60:16; Ps 132:2, 5 [cf. Isa 1:24]; cf. Jeroboam I's return to bull iconography at Dan and Bethel rather than the cherubim of the Jerusalem temple, on which, see, conveniently, W. I. Toews, *Monarchy and Religious Institution in Israel Under Jeroboam I* (SBLMS 47; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993). The Masoretic pointing of אֲבִיר without a *dagesh* in the second letter may reflect a later attempt to divorce the title from the bull imagery of the Northern Israelite cult and possible confusion with that of Ba'al.

envy over Yahweh's chosen dwelling place, presumably Zion/Jerusalem. The reference to the *mountain* of Bashan, a region better known for its flat pasture land, is unique in the First Testament, and in the poem's mythological context suggests a connection with the mountain of the gods.¹⁹⁷ In light of this, its designation as הַר־אֱלֹהִים (v. 16; note the *maqqîp*) should probably be translated literally as "mountain of (the) gods" (cf. the *NJB*'s "A mountain of God"), rather than the *NRSV*'s "mighty mountain." As a result, both substantives in the phrase "the cows of Bashan" have religious connections, which establishes a necessary component of the *marzēah* in v. 1.

The phrase also provides evidence of the upper-class status of the addressees. The feminine "cows," along with the subsequent feminine participles, indicate they are women, and in light of Bashan's reputation for fertile fields and sleek, well-fed cattle, most take them to be the upper-class ladies of the northern capital, Samaria.¹⁹⁸ There are only two dissenting opinions. A few suggest men are addressed as females in order to denigrate them,¹⁹⁹ but apart from whether or not the subtlety involved would be lost on Amos' audience, if that were the intention the feminine form should be maintained throughout this and the next verse, even at the expense of violating the grammatical tendencies in the other direction noted earlier.

¹⁹⁷Cf. Ps 68:23 and the discussion of this Psalm in Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 38.

¹⁹⁸Whether it was meant as a compliment or an insult is tangential to my concerns, although the overwhelming majority consider it to be the former. On Bashan itself see J. C. Slayton, "Bashan (PLACE) [Heb Bāshān]," *ABD* 1.623–624. Salomon Speier sees a double-entendre ("ein üppig gebautes Mädchen") here on the basis of the Arabic *baṭne/baṭane*; see S. Speier, "Bermerkungen zu Amos," *VT* 3 (1953) 306–07, followed by Botterweck, "'Sie Verkaufen,'" 22.

¹⁹⁹E.g., Neher, *Amos*, 82; Watts, "Amos 4:1ff," 496; Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 124, 128. Andersen and Freedman can't seem to decide if this is the point, but eventually indicate it is; cf. *Amos*, 416, 417 and 421. On p. 420 they suggest the issue may be women acting like men.

The second contrary proposal comes from Barstad, who views the phrase, “as including *all* inhabitants of the northern capital, rather than referring to some separate group among them.”²⁰⁰ He supports this with five arguments: (1) the other biblical references to Bashan do not support taking Amos 4:1 as a “simile” [*sic*] for the looks or status of the Samaritan female elite, (2) there are no biblical or ancient near-eastern parallels where women are compared with cows, (3) the rest of chapter 4 deals with the entire nation, (4) as do the surrounding chapters and (5) Amos 3:1; 4:1 and 5:1 all begin with “hear this word,” and since 3:1 and 5:1 are addressed to the nation as a whole, then 4:1 should also be taken as an inclusive, gender-neutral address.²⁰¹

A number of points can be made against Barstad’s interpretation of the phrase. On a general level, it is at odds with his own view that the oppression of the poor and needy indicates the addressees in Amos 4:1 are the elite;²⁰² this means his inclusive understanding of “the cows of Bashan” leads to the improbable conclusion that only the elite lived in the city. But more specifically, Barstad’s individual arguments are not convincing. First, he himself acknowledges 1b plays upon Bashan’s status as “desirable,”²⁰³ in which case Bashan does provide the basis for a metaphor conveying beauty and quality. Secondly, while it is true women are not compared to cows elsewhere, animal names were commonly used to refer to important members of society.²⁰⁴ Bashan’s bulls in particular were considered superior,²⁰⁵ but to call the

²⁰⁰Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 40, (italics in the original).

²⁰¹Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 38–41.

²⁰²*Ibid.*, 42.

²⁰³*Ibid.*, 39.

²⁰⁴p. D. Miller, Jr., “Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew,” *UF* 2 (1970) 177–86.

²⁰⁵See Ezek 39:18; Ps 22:12; cf. Deut 32:14.

women “bulls” would suggest males, especially in light of the opening masculine imperative. As the female counterpart, “cows” would be more appropriate for the leading women of Samaria. Third, Amos 4:1–3 constitutes a self-contained unit separate from the rest of the chapter,²⁰⁶ which owes its position to a later editor. Similarly, in his last two points Barstad improperly determines the addressees from the editorial arrangement of the prophet’s sayings, which was done on other grounds than identical audiences.²⁰⁷ Moreover, the introductions in 3:1 and 5:1 are not identical. The first addresses “the people of Israel” while the second is aimed at “the house of Israel,” and the source of “this word” is different in each: Amos 3:1 says “which the Lord has spoken against you” while 5:1 has “which I have raised against you.” In fact, these two similar but distinct formulas may have introduced independent sections at one point in the compositional history of the book.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, unlike 3:1 and 5:1, in Amos 4:1 the source of “this word” is not indicated. As such, it has more in common with 6:1, with its initial cry of *יִי* followed immediately by the identification of a specific subset of the nation, also in the capital Samaria, than with the other two calls to “hear this word.”

Therefore, rather than the uniform addressees Barstad claims for chapters 3–5, the initial verses in each of chapters 3–6 alternate between a general and a specific audience. In Amos 4:1 certain women in the capital are called “cows of Bashan.” The metaphor suggests quality and even superiority, which points to the female elite as the prophet’s intended audience. Their social status is confirmed by their equality with the

²⁰⁶Amos 4:1–3 is a classic example of the Judgment Against the Nation Speech (on the form in general see Westermann, *Basic Forms*, 169–76; for this passage see his p. 174). Verse 1 constitutes the call for attention (1a-c) and the accusation (1d-g), while vv. 2–3 contain the announcement of judgment. Amos 4:3 ends with “utterance of Yahweh,” while v. 4 initiates a call to worship, setting what follows apart from 4:1–3 both formally and in terms of content.

²⁰⁷See p. 100–101.

²⁰⁸Jeremias, “Amos 3 — 6,” 217–29.

“lords”²⁰⁹ and their ability to oppress the poor and crush the needy, while their gender is reinforced by the link with Amos 6. Amos 4:1(-3) and 6:1, 3-7 are two sides of the same coin, describing the actions of the leading women and men of Samaria during a single banquet.²¹⁰

The third constitutive element of the *marzēah* is the consumption of large amounts of alcohol, usually culminating in drunkenness. Barstad points to “the importance of the wine” in Amos 4:1,²¹¹ but 1g doesn’t actually mention wine, only drinking. However, this might be explained by the demands of the animal metaphor²¹² as well as the need for poetic balance in terms of length. The connections between 4:1-3 and 6:1, 3-7²¹³ suggest that is the case: since the same scene is described in both passages, the reference to drinking in 4:1g probably involves wine, as in Amos 6:6a. However, wine would have been part of most upper-class meals, so if Amos 4:1 reflects a *marzēah*, there should be some indication that wine was consumed in large amounts. The use of participles suggest it was: the three feminine participles convey ongoing action, such that in 1f the women address their husbands more than once.²¹⁴ Thus, the command for their husbands to “bring, so that we can drink,” was uttered, and presumably obeyed, a number of times. Therefore, significant amounts were probably drunk, just as in Amos 6:6a. This probability is reinforced by the fact that

²⁰⁹See p. 105 above.

²¹⁰Rottzoll, *Studien*, 3, titles the two passages, “Gegen die Frauen Samarias” and “Gegen die Männer Samarias” respectively. On the compositional relationship between the two passages see pp. 100-101 above.

²¹¹Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 42.

²¹²I.e., cows don’t normally drink wine; see Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 129.

²¹³Again, see pp. 100-101.

²¹⁴Paul, *Amos*, 129, calls them “nagging.”

only drinking is mentioned in 4:1g, but not the banquet where the drinking occurred,²¹⁵ thereby emphasizing the drinking aspect.

To summarize, the essential elements of a *marzēah* are present in Amos 4:1, either explicitly or as illuminated by its companion piece in Amos 6, even if not in the way Barstad envisions. Amos 4:1 alludes to a religious celebration by the Samarian elite which included the consumption of large amounts of wine. The prophet does not explicitly identify it as a *marzēah* because that is not his primary concern. Instead, he focuses on the injustice described in 4:1d-e which, as in chapter 6, create the economic conditions that allow them the luxury to participate in a *marzēah* in the first place.

Dating the Text

The relative date of Amos 4:1 is linked to that of its companion piece, Amos 6:1, 3–7, and requires little additional justification. As with the latter text, the allusion in Amos 4:1 to upper-class exploitation of the lower class in order to enjoy a luxurious lifestyle is consistent with the traditional date of the prophet Amos. Thus, this passage probably dates to ca. 760 BCE as well, which would also place it earlier than those to be considered in the following chapters.

Amos 2:7c-8

The main proponent of the *marzēah* in these verses is Hans Barstad once again, who notes similar content here and in Amos 4:1; 6:1, 3–7, and argues that the “girl” in 7c is a *marzēah* hostess.²¹⁶ In order to evaluate his understanding of its content, the text itself must first be established.

²¹⁵Fosbroke, “Amos,” 801, points out that the very word “feast” (הַחֲצוּטָה) is derived from the verb used here. Similarly, Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 86, indicates the women’s activity would have included eating as well as drinking.

²¹⁶Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 11–36, especially pp. 34–36. He is followed by Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, 89–90. The passage has also been connected with Amos 4:1 and/or 6:1, 3–7, primarily because of the shared reference to wine, but without necessarily linking it to a *marzēah*, by Vuilleumier-Bessard, *La Tradition Cultuelle*, 44; Lang, *Monotheism*, 122; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 168; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 86.

The Text

7c	a man and his father "go to" the girl,	וְהָיָה כִּי יֵלֵךְ הַיָּתוּם לְבַיְתָא דְּאִמְהַתּוֹ
d	so that my holy name is profaned; ²¹⁹	וְשֵׁם יְהוָה לֹא יִפְרָא
8a	they stretch out seized garments ²²⁰	וְהִנֵּה מְצֻטְּעֵי בְּגָדֵיהֶם
b	beside every altar, ²²¹	בְּכָל מִזְבֵּחַ
c	and they drink exacted wine	וְהִנֵּה שׂוֹמְרֵי יַיִן
d	in the house of their God ²²²	בְּבֵית יְהוָה

The only divergence from the MT is the deletion of the preposition *by* at the

beginning of 8a. The verbal form *hō*? at the end of the line is an *hiphil* of *hā*?; since

the latter is always used transitively elsewhere, the preposition is anomalous. Some

solve the problem by treating the verb as a reflexive,²²³ others consider *hō*? here a

217 Harper alters *hō*? to *hō*? and translates the line as, "a man and his judge deal according to the agreement," indicating the corruption of justice through bribery; see Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 51, 53; a similar understanding of *hō*? (literally, "father") is suggested by Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 77. But this interpretation of *hō*? cannot be supported from the biblical texts Harper cites on p. 53: 2 Kgs 6:21 and 13:14 are addressed to Elishah as a spiritual father, Jer 17:10 is irrelevant and Gen 45:8 involves a high government official, not an ordinary judge (cf. Isa 22:20). Further, his appeal to the verbs *hō*? and *hō*? together in Amos 3:3 is beside the point, since they have no juridical significance there. The sexual connotations of *hō*? *hō*? also argue against his emendation; see further on p. 119.

218 Deletion *hō*? at the beginning of the line with the LXX; see further below.

219 This line is rejected as a priestly addition referring to cultic matters, not social justice, by Morgenstern, "Amos Studies IV," 315; Fendler, "Sozialkritik," 42n30; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkaufen*, 79; Kottzoll, *Studien*, 64–65. See, however, the discussion on pp. 115–116 below.

220 Perhaps as an offering of some sort, or to display what they have seized.

221 The references to cultic sites here and in 8d are deleted as additions that do not fit the context by Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 168; Duham, "Amos," 3; Würthwein, "Amos-Studien," 45n72; Fendler, "Sozialkritik," 35n6; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 134; Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets*, 71–72; Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkaufen*, 43–44. But the interconnection of justice and proper worship builds upon 7d, and occurs elsewhere in Amos' prophecies (see Amos 4:4–5; 5:21–24, the previously examined *marzāh* texts [4:1 and 6:1,3–7] and the expansion of 2:6–7 in 8:4–6. As such, the phrases are entirely appropriate here.

222 For the translation of *hō*? as a singular see n. 245.

223 M. J. Dahood, "To Pawn One's Cloak," *Bib* 42 (1961) 364; Paul, *Amos*, 86.

conjunction meaning “because,”²²⁴ and many simply delete it.²²⁵ The unlikelihood that the upper class would recline on the inferior garments of the poor²²⁶ argues against the first suggestion. The second two yield the same sense, i.e., that they “spread out the garments” rather than lay themselves upon them, but the preposition is deleted by the LXX, which produces a more balanced length in comparison with the parallel in 8c.

Establishing the Unit

This passage is part of the Oracle against Israel in Amos 2:6–16,²²⁷ in which vv. 6–8 comprise the initial accusation against Israel. However, Barstad separates vv. 6–7b and 7c–8 because of a perceived transition from social justice to religious polemics; this is based on his view that the phrase “to profane my holy name” in 7d is primarily cultic and refers only to 7c.²²⁸ Yet 6–7b and 7c–8 are lexically linked by the repetition of *ḥṣ* in 7b and 8a, which suggests the content of the two sections may be more closely connected than Barstad thinks.

Since his cultic interpretation of 7c as referring to a *marzēah* hostess is part of his identification of vv. 7c–8 as a *marzēah* allusion, it will be considered in detail below. For now, I will only note that his view of “so that my holy name is profaned” is too restrictive. The phrase occurs in connection with social justice in Jer 34:16,

²²⁴Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 52; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 319.

²²⁵Löhr, *Untersuchungen*, 6; E. Baumann, *Der Aufbau der Amos Reden* (BZAW 7; Giessen, 1903) 32; Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 168; Nowack, *Propheten*, 127; Weiser, *Amos*, 92; Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV,” 316; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 134.

²²⁶Dahood, “To Pawn One’s Cloak,” 364; Fendler, “Sozialkritik,” 36; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 320.

²²⁷It concludes the Oracles Against the Nations in Amos 1–2. For a recent survey of the form’s history see Paul, *Amos*, 7–11, and the references cited there. On the oracles in Amos see especially J. Barton, *Amos’ Oracles Against the Nations: A Study of Amos 1:3 — 2:5* (SOTSMS 6; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

²²⁸See Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 16 and 19–21. In contrast, the phrase is related to all of vv. 6–7 by Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 143; Paul, *Amos*, 83.

when the Jerusalemites revoke the liberation of their slaves after a siege is lifted.²²⁹ Although that text is later than Amos 2:7, it is roughly contemporary with, or perhaps a bit earlier than, the cultic uses in Ezekiel and Leviticus. The nuance of justice in Jer 34:16, contrary to the contemporary cultic one, suggests a precedence such as this Amos text.²³⁰ In the context of the Oracle Against Israel, the actions described in Amos 2:6–7 are violations of covenantal bonds rooted in God’s involvement in their history (vv. 9–13). As such, the exploitation of the poor and needy, who enjoy special protection from God, constitutes a rejection of the divine plan for their society, which could be considered a profanation of God’s holy name.²³¹ Moreover, although v. 8 does include cultic references (“beside every altar” and “in the house of their God”), they are connected with matters of exploitation, namely the “seized garments” and “exacted wine.”²³²

To summarize, the theme of social justice predominates throughout Amos 2:6–8 as the primary focus of the prophet’s critique.²³³ As such, vv. 7c-8 should not be interpreted in isolation from vv. 6–7b. But when the two sections are linked, Barstad’s proposed *marzēah* allusion in Amos 2:7c-8 appears uncertain.

²²⁹See also Lev 19:20 where it is used of false oaths sworn in Yahweh’s name.

²³⁰Cf. H. Gese, “Komposition bei Amos,” *Congress Volume: Vienna* (VTSup 32; ed. J. Emerton; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981) 92n55.

²³¹See further Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 51; M. A. Beek, “The Religious Background of Amos ii 6–8,” *OTS* 5 (1948) 137; Würthwein, “Amos-Studien,” 45; Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 143–44; Paul, *Amos*, 83; W. Dommershausen, הלל *hll* I; חול *chol*; חליל *chalil*, *TDOT* 3.410–12. Cf. Lev 22:32 where the phrase is linked to breaking God’s commandments.

²³²See further on pp. 120–121 below.

²³³Cf. Beek, “Religious Background,” 136–37.

Discussion

Barstad's identification of a *marzēah* allusion in Amos 2:7c-8 is based on two factors. First, he notes the combination of the upper class oppressing the poor and drinking wine at a religious feast, elements also found in the other two *marzēah* texts in Amos (4:1 and 6:1, 3-7).²³⁴ Second, he identifies the "girl" in 7c as a *marzēah* hostess.²³⁵ Upper-class drinking in a religious context approximates the basic elements of a *marzēah*, but his second point has not yet been encountered in this study. As such it requires more substantial consideration, and I will consider it first.

Barstad's characterization of the female in Amos 2:7c as a *marzēah* hostess is predicated on eliminating the usual proposals concerning her identity. After surveying the usage of מַרְזֵאָה, Barstad identifies three nuances beyond its basic meaning of a young female: a virgin, a young married woman and a servant girl.²³⁶ Second, he considers "a man and his father" a general description indicating a common occurrence.²³⁷ Arguing that ongoing violation of contemporary sexual mores concerning the first two types of females would not have been tolerated by Israelite society,²³⁸ he concludes the "girl" must be a servant. But since he only finds biblical opposition to sex with a servant if the servant belongs to someone else, he concludes the line is not concerned with a moral infraction.²³⁹ He finds confirmation for this in 7d, which according to

²³⁴Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 34-35.

²³⁵*Ibid.*, 35-36.

²³⁶*Ibid.*, 17-18 and the biblical texts he cites there.

²³⁷Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 18; the phrase had already been placed on a par with going to a movie by N. H. Snaitch, *Amos, Hosea and Micah* (Epworth Preacher's Commentaries; London: The Epworth Press, 1956) 19. מִן is taken as distributive by Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 318; Bovati and Meynet, *Amos*, 76. Anderson and Freedman also consider the addition of "his father" as expressing distribution in time, such that the action had been going on for some time, as does Paul, *Amos*, 82.

²³⁸Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 18-19.

²³⁹*Ibid.*, 19.

his survey is used primarily in cultic contexts, and frequently in connection with non-Yahwistic cults and/or deities.²⁴⁰ He rules out a reference to cultic prostitution²⁴¹ on two grounds: the lack of evidence for such an institution in ancient Israel²⁴² and his view that *לֹא יָלֵךְ* does not refer to sexual activity.²⁴³ As a result, the men's involvement with the woman must be non-sexual cultic activity, which, when linked with the other elements in v. 8 suggests a *marzēah*. So Barstad hypothesizes that she is the hostess at such an event.²⁴⁴

However, a female *marzēah* hostess is unattested for the *marzēah* elsewhere. The closest parallel would be the *marzēah* leader (*rb mrzh*) mentioned at Ugarit, Nabatea and Palmyra, but in the extant references that position is always held by a male. Amos 2:7c *might* indicate an otherwise unknown aspect of the *marzēah*, or even an innovation originating around the time of Amos, although the complete silence on

²⁴⁰Ibid., 19–21.

²⁴¹Contra Driver, *Joel and Amos*, 153; E. A. Edghill, *The Book of Amos, with Notes* (Westminster Commentaries; 2nd ed.; ed and introd. by G. A. Cooke; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1926) 22; Weiser, *Amos*, 91–93; N. H. Snaith, *The Book of Amos* (London: The Epworth Press, 1945–46) 19; Weiser, *Propheten*, 141–42; Neher, *Amos*, 55, 76; T. H. Robinson, *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel* (3d ed.; London: Duckworth, 1953) 65; Cripps, *Amos*, 142; H.-J. Kraus, “Die prophetische Botschaft gegen das soziale Unrecht Israels,” *EvT* 15 (1955) 298; Fosbroke, “Amos,” 787; Dahood, “‘To Pawn One’s Cloak,’” 365; Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 72–73; Bič, *Amos*, 57; Ward, *Amos and Isaiah*, 135–37; Thorogood, *Amos*, 23; Soggin, *The Prophet Amos*, 87; King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 101. Against them it should be noted that neither the word for a secular prostitute (*הַזְנָיָה*) nor a so-called cultic prostitute (*הַזְנָיָה הַקְּדוּשָׁה*) is used here (Fosbroke explains the absence of the latter as an attempt to strip the prostitution of any religious significance).

²⁴²See n. 176 above.

²⁴³Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 33. Contrast p. 119 below.

²⁴⁴Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 35–36. He is followed by Bohlen, “Sozialkritik,” 287. Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets*, 35–36, suggests she is an alewife who functions as a pawnbroker and also links the passage to the *marzēah*; he is followed with respect to her occupation, but without explicitly connecting this to the *marzēah*, by M. Silver, *Prophets and Markets: The Political Economy of Ancient Israel* (Social Dimensions of Economics; Boston/The Hague/London: Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing, 1983) 66; Jaruzelska, “Social Structure,” 96.

the matter elsewhere would require some explanation. On the other hand, problems with much of Barstad's argument call his conclusion into question.

In the first place, he thinks the prophet objects to a *marzēah* here because it is a Canaanite, non-Yahwistic feast.²⁴⁵ But non-Yahwistic polemics are not characteristic of Amos, and there is no indication he considered the *marzēah* itself incompatible with Yahweh.²⁴⁶ Secondly, Barstad's rejection of any sexual connotation for the phrase לְהַלְךְ אֶל must now be reconsidered in light of Akkadian and Aramaic examples where the cognate expressions mean exactly that.²⁴⁷ Since Barstad is correct in his assessment of cultic prostitution in ancient Israel, the "girl" must be one of the three nuances of נְעִרָה he identifies. His rejection of either a virgin or a married woman is dependent on the men's action being common yet unobjectionable, but the two do not necessarily coincide. The very fact that laws against adultery and deflowering virgins existed indicates they were not isolated actions. But be that as it

²⁴⁵Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 35, 36; cf. his p. 15n18. This in keeping with the thrust of his entire monograph. אֱלֹהֵיהֶם in 8d is also translated "their gods" in reference to foreign deities by Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 50; Edghill, *Amos*, 22; Neher, *Amos*, 55; Hammershaimb, *Amos*, 49; Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, 94. But the plural אֱלֹהֵים is commonly used of Yahweh as a *de facto* singular, and in the absence of religious polemic in the book of Amos, there is no reason the phrase cannot be translated in the singular as "their God." Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 318, 321, take "the girl" in 7c to be their god, whom they identify as Ashima from Amos 8:14. Lang, *Monotheism*, 122, proposes the clan's patron deity, who may or may not be Yahweh.

²⁴⁶See pp. 96-97.

²⁴⁷S. M. Paul, "Two Cognate Semitic Terms for Mating and Copulation," *VT* 32 (1982) 492-94; Paul, *Amos*, 82. A similar interpretation is held, of necessity, by all those who view 7c as referring either to cultic prostitution (see n. 241) or abuse of a servant (see notes 248 and 255). The usual idiom is לְהַלְךְ אֶל , which suggests the alternative formulation was chosen to indicate something of significance. Paul, *Amos*, 82, suggests this was to echo הָלְכוּ אֲבוֹתָם ("their fathers went") in Amos 2:4 while Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkauftern*, 68-69, argues that לְהַלְךְ אֶל applies to permissible sex (as defined by that society) whereas לְהַלְךְ אֶל indicates illegitimate sexual actions.

may, most take the girl to be servant, and reference is made to Exod 21:7–11, which directs a man who designates a slave for his son to treat her as his daughter-in-law.²⁴⁸

However, the term there is **אָמָה**, not **בְּעֻרָה**. This leads Wolff to postulate a scenario in which a young man has impregnated a “marriageable girl” and become engaged, after which his father has sex with her, in effect violating the laws of consanguinity as in Lev 18:15; 20:12.²⁴⁹ But the surrounding verses all deal with social and economic justice. This is clear in vv. 6–7b, but requires some elaboration for v. 8. The passive participle **מְבֻלֵּי**, modifying **בְּגָדִים** in 8b, is generally understood as something pledged in surety for a loan, but biblical and extra-biblical evidence indicates the root word actually refers to the seizure of items when loans were defaulted.²⁵⁰ Similarly, **צְנוּשִׁים** in 8c often refers to compensation for an injury, either physical or to one’s reputation.²⁵¹ But in 2 Kgs 23:33 it is used of tribute exacted by Pharaoh, and a similar nuance of tribute or taxation underlies the LXX and Targum at

²⁴⁸See, e.g., Beek, “Religious Background,” 135–37; Würthwein, “Amos-Studien,” 45–46; R. Bach, “Gottesrecht und weltliches Recht in der Verkündigung des Propheten Amos,” *Festschrift für Gunther Dehn* (ed. W. Schneemelcher; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1957) 30–33; Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 142–43; Vesco, “Amos de Têqoa,” 491–92; Martin-Achard and Re’emi, *God’s People in Crisis*, 22; J. A. Dearman, *Property Rights in the Eighth-Century Prophets: The Conflict and Its Background* (SBLDS 106; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 23.

²⁴⁹H. W. Wolff, *Die Stunde des Amos: Prophetie und Protest* (München: Christopher Kaiser Verlag, 1969) 61; *idem*, *Joel and Amos*, 167.

²⁵⁰J. Milgrom, “The Missing Thief in Leviticus 5:20ff,” *RIDA*³ 22 (1975) 77–81. See also the discussion in Paul, *Amos*, 83–86, and the literature he cites.

²⁵¹E.g., Exod 21:22; Deut 22:19. The compensation was paid to the offended party, however that was defined (e.g., in Deut 22:19 compensation for slandering a virgin goes to her father as the offended party, in keeping with that society’s patriarchal orientation), and some think the indictment here is because such funds were misdirected; see Driver, *Joel and Amos*, 154; Wolff, *Die Stunde Des Amos*, 61; *idem*, *Joel and Amos*, 168; Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 145; Hayes, *Amos*, 114; Paul, *Amos*, 86–88; Wood, “Amos,” 49. Rudolph, *Joel - Amos*, 139, also considers the word as an abstract noun, referring to those who have been fined; cf. Beek, “Religious Background,” 134: “the wine of those condemned.”

1 Kings 10:15 and is reflected in the cognate usage.²⁵² This provides a better parallel with “seized garment” than “compensation.”²⁵³

Thus, since the surrounding verses all deal with the exploitation of the lower class, 7c should be interpreted in terms of the girl’s subservient status rather than her marital eligibility.²⁵⁴ But she is not designated a “slave,” and the best interpretation is Fleischer’s, who identifies her as a free servant forced into sexual actions in addition to her designated household duties.²⁵⁵ As a result, Barstad’s identification of the girl as a *marzēah* hostess cannot be sustained. The “girl” can be explained in terms consistent with the term’s normal meaning and its immediate context, so hypothesizing an unprecedented role is not necessary.

But that does not automatically rule out an allusion to a *marzēah* in these verses, especially v. 8. As noted earlier, the main elements of that banquet *appear* to be present, but in reality one is missing. The oppression of the poor suggests the upper-class,²⁵⁶ and the reference to the “poor” (אֲדָמָה) and “needy” (אֲבִיָּוִן) in Amos 2:6e-7a, as in 4:1, is also suggestive. But while it may indicate the same social class is exploited in both cases, it does not guarantee this was done by the exact same group in the same context. In particular, the cultic sites in 8b and d may indicate temple

²⁵²For the pre-biblical parallels see Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 15n19; for later Phoenician tariffs see R. S. Tomback, *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon of the Phoenician and Punic Languages* (SBLDS 32; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) 253; a Palmyrene parallel is presented in D. R. Hillers, “Palmyrene Aramaic Inscriptions and the Old Testament, Especially Amos 2:8,” *ZAH* 8 (1995) 60-1.

²⁵³Regardless of whether the “exacted wine” refers to wine bought with such funds, as suggested by Dearman, *Property Rights*, 24, or to payment in kind (thus Mays, *Amos*, 47; Hayes, *Amos*, 114. Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel*, 56n23, 65, points to the frequent mention of wine in the Samaria Ostraca), is uncertain, but Amos 5:11 supports the latter.

²⁵⁴Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkauftern*, 68; Paul, *Amos*, 82-83.

²⁵⁵For a full discussion see Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkauftern*, 61-69. See also Vawter, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 41-42; G. V. Smith, *Amos*, 85.

²⁵⁶But contrast the reservations concerning the high social standing of the oppressors in Fendler, “Sozialkritik,” 49-52.

functionaries, a specific subset of the elite, are involved,²⁵⁷ which would distinguish this group from the Samaritan women of Amos 4:1. These sites also establish a clear religious context for the activity, which included wine (8c). But unlike Amos 4:1 and 6:1, 3–7 there is no indication the drinking here was in any way excessive.²⁵⁸ Without concrete evidence they drink to excess in Amos 2:8, as is characteristic of the *marzēah*, that verse cannot be confidently classified as alluding to a *marzēah*.

Summary

Amos 6:7 is the earliest biblical reference to the *marzēah*. The preceding verses (Amos 6:1, 3–6) show the *marzēah* Amos knew was comparable to those encountered elsewhere. Samaria's upper class celebrated a religious feast that was characterized by, among other things, drunkenness, but with no evidence of any funerary associations. At the same time, in that passage Amos does not oppose the *marzēah* itself but the attitude to which it gave expression, one in which the members "are not grieved by the ruin of Joseph." In other words, the prophet denounces the social inequities of Israel, and to the extent the *marzēah* practices such injustice it too is condemned to exile. What Amos would have thought about it in a more egalitarian society, if it could exist in such a context, is unknown.

Amos 4:1 alludes to the Samaritan *marzēah* without using the term. The verse is part of a three-verse unit which was paralleled with 6:1(2)3–7 in the final editorial structure of the book because of internal similarities between the two passages in terms of both form and content. The offenses for which the female and male

²⁵⁷Suggested to me by John S. Kloppenborg. Barstad, *Religious Polemics*, 34, argues the altars are private shrines, but the singular "house of their God" indicates a specific temple.

²⁵⁸*Contra* Hammershaimb, *Amos*, 49; Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets*, 38, neither of whom provides any arguments in support of their assertion (although Coote specifies it is drinking at a *marzēah*). Paul, *Amos*, 79, claims the imperfect verbs in vv. 7–8 indicate ongoing actions (see also Fleischer, *Von Menschen verkalüfern*, 72), but as evidence of duration over time, not intensity at a specific time. Contrast the use of participles in Amos 4:1 and 6:6.

audiences are condemned are expressed in both passages through participles and in each case the punishment they receive is exile. Furthermore, both describe excessive wine consumption by the elite in a religious context. Thus the two passages address the members of a single *marzēah* according to their gender.

In contrast, although there are points of contact with those two *marzēah* texts, Amos 2:7c-8 does not meet all of the criteria for a *marzēah* allusion. Although Barstad's identification of the girl in 7c as a *marzēah* hostess was rejected, many of the elements of the *marzēah* were present: members of the upper class drink wine in a religious context. But it is not certain large amounts of wine were drunk, so Amos 2:7c-8 cannot be confidently accepted as a *marzēah* allusion.

CHAPTER 3

THE *marzēah* IN HOSEA?

The prophet Hosea is commonly thought to have preached in the northern kingdom of Israel during the years prior to the Assyrian conquest in 722/721 BCE. As Amos' younger contemporary, preaching in the same geographic area, it would not be surprising to find the *marzēah* reflected in Hosea's oracles as well. However, the word does not occur in the book of Hosea, which therefore did not figure in Bryan's dissertation. Nor has it received much attention as a source of possible *marzēah* allusions. Prior to 1995, two proposals were advanced, both very much in passing. Brian Peckham listed possible *marzēah* elements in Hos 9:1–6,¹ and Anderson and Freedman mentioned Hos 7:3–7 as a text "which may be placed alongside" Amos 6:4–6.² Then, in a 1995 article, Frédéric Gangloff and Jean-Claude Haelewyck argued that Hos 4:17–19 deals with a *marzēah* in honour of the goddess Anat.³

Of these proposals, only the first and third will be treated in this chapter. Andersen and Freedman did not elaborate on their suggestion, but one can easily see that Hos 7:3–7 is not germane to the topic at hand. It deals with the king's assassination by poison wine, but there is no indication more than one drink was involved, or that this occurred during a religious drinking feast of the elite. Therefore,

¹B. Peckham, "Phoenicia and the Religion of Israel: The Epigraphic Evidence," *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and D. S. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 95n59.

²F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York/London/Toronto: Doubleday, 1989) 562; cf. D. N. Freedman, "But Did King David Invent Musical Instruments?" *BRev* 1/2 (1985) 51. There is no mention of this in their earlier Hosea commentary: F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24; New York/London/Toronto: Doubleday, 1980).

³F. Gangloff and J.-C. Haelewyck, "Osée 4,17–19: un marzeah en l'honneur de la déesse 'Anat" *ETL* 71 (1995) 470–82. Grace Emmerson had earlier suggested an unidentified fertility goddess as the background to this passage, but without the *marzēah* connection; see G. I. Emmerson, "A Fertility Goddess in Hosea IV 17–19?" *VT* 24 (1974) 492–97.

that text can be excluded from further consideration. I will consider the two remaining texts according to their location in the prophetic book.

Hos 4:16–17

Although others had already linked Hos 4:16–19 with Isaiah 28, which contains possible allusions to the *marzēah*,⁴ Gangloff and Haelewyck were the first to suggest a direct connection between the former text and a *marzēah*. However, they simply note “les trois termes qui évoquent un cercle restreint d’individus (cf. חִבּוּר) étendus (cf. הַנְּחִילוּ) et s’adonnant à une sorte de banquet (cf. סַבְּאָם),” followed by a survey of extra-biblical and biblical *marzēah* references.⁵ They do not directly correlate this text with features of particular *marzēahs* or even establish some minimal correspondence with the *marzēah* in general, but simply assert Hos 4:16–19 alludes to a *marzēah*. In what follows, I hope to rectify that shortcoming by establishing that the basic elements of the *marzēah* identified in Chapter 1 are present here as well. But since I think their identification of a specific group reclining is incorrect it is first necessary to establish the text’s wording as well as its context.

The Text

כִּי כִפְּרָה סִרְרָה	16	a	Truly, like a stubborn heifer,
סִרְרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל		b	Israel is stubborn.
צִתָּהּ יִרְעֶם יְהוָה		c	Can Yahweh now feed them
כְּכֶבֶשׂ בְּמִרְחֵב		d	like a lamb in a broad pasture? ⁶

⁴See H. McKeating, *The Books of Amos, Hosea and Micah* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) 102; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 378. Neither explicitly identify the latter as a *marzēah*. Isaiah 28 will be considered in the next chapter.

⁵Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 375–78; the quotation is from p. 375. They point 17b as *הַנְּחִילוּ* (p. 374), an *hiphil* I of נָחַן, and seem to attribute the sense “he rests himself.” I derive the verb from *hiphil* II of the same root. They begin with v. 17, but see p. 130 below.

⁶For 16c-d as a question see n. 36.

<p>חִבּוֹר עֲצָבִים אֲפָרִים הִנָּחִיל⁷ סָר סְבָאִם הַזָּנָה הַזָּנֹו אָהֵב אֶהְבֹּו⁸ קָלוֹן מְגָנָיָהּ צָרַר רוּחַ אוֹתָהּ בְּכַנְפֶיהָ וַיִּבְשׂוּ מִזְבְּחוֹתָם</p>	<p>17 a Ephraim is a companion of idols, b he has set up⁹ for himself¹⁰</p> <p>18 a When¹¹ their liquor is gone,¹² they fornicate greatly b they deeply love the dishonour of her shields.</p> <p>19 a A wind will enclose her in her wings, b and they shall be ashamed of their sacrifices.</p>
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These verses have been the object of numerous contradictory and mutually exclusive emendations. Gangloff and Haelewyck survey more than eighty proposed “corrections” to the eighteen words of vv. 17–19,¹³ but for Andersen and Freedman, the emendations, “are a tribute to scholarly ingenuity but leave serious questions about the validity of the changes and the intention of the original author.”¹⁴ Few of the

⁷The MT vocalizes as הִנָּחִיל; see further below.

⁸The MT reads אָהֵב הֵב; cf. below.

⁹The LXX’s ἔθηκον suggests this nuance for *hiphil* Π of נָחַן here. It is used for the erection of shrines to foreign gods in 2 Kgs 17:29, where the LXX also translates ἔθηκον; see Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 497. The *hiphil* of the verb is used in connection with the Ark of Yahweh in 1 Sam 6:18 and of items to be deposited in the temple in Exod 16:33, 34; Lev 16:23; 1 Kgs 8:9; Ezek 42:13; see also Josh 4:3, 8.

¹⁰Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 496–97, suggests on the basis of the LXX that a reference to a deity or idol has dropped out of the MT at this point. See also n. 38 and p. 138.

¹¹This line’s verbs are considered sequential by W. R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Amos and Hosea* (ICC 18; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912) 265; H. W. Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Hermeneia; trans. G. Stansell; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974) 91; Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 497; G. I. Davies, *Hosea* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992) 132; A. A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997) 169. Cf. GKC §164b.

¹²For this meaning of סָר see Amos 6:7.

¹³Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 371–74; this does not include possible deletions. See also the discussion in D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament. 3. Ezéchiel, Daniel et les Douze Prophètes* (OBO 50; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992) 512–17. Most of the emendations are also considered, and at points adopted, by Macintosh, *Hosea*, 167–74.

¹⁴Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 373.

proposed changes directly affect the issue of a *marzēah* allusion in this text, but the relevant ones will be noted as the discussion progresses.

The text above preserves the MT in all but two places, only one of which alters the consonantal text. The Masoretes pointed 17b as a *hiphil* imperative (יִלְחֹץ), which in itself is acceptable Hebrew, but “leave him alone” is problematic here on two points. First, all other instances of this construction occur in the context of direct speech,¹⁵ but here it would be the only imperative in a succession of indicative verbs. Second, there is no indication in the passage of any addressee for an imperative.¹⁶ Therefore, I repoint the verb as an *hiphil* perfect, with the LXX and most commentators.¹⁷ Even in its possibly truncated form in the MT¹⁸ this provides a better parallel with 17a, in terms of both grammar and content, than the MT’s imperative.

Gangloff and Haelewyck vocalize 17b differently,¹⁹ but contrary to their assertion, their understanding of the line has no bearing on whether the passage alludes to a *marzēah*. For them, in 17b the text “passe à l’idée de repos,”²⁰ which they consider one of three indicators of a *marzēah* here, but the posture of those involved is

¹⁵See Exod 32:10; 2 Sam 16:11; 2 Kgs 23:18.

¹⁶The proposed audiences are all hypothetical. Wolff, *Hosea*, 91, suggests the prophet turned to his disciples, but the imperative is in the singular not the plural (although a “corporate personality” is possible here; see H. Balz-Cochois, *Gomer: Der Höhenkult Israels im Selbstverständnis der Volksfrömmigkeit. Untersuchungen zu Hosea 4,1–5,7* [Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe XXIII: Theologie 191; Frankfurt am Main/Bern: Peter Lang, 1982] 34). However, Hosea’s disciples are not mentioned elsewhere in the entire chapter. Jerome, K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton erklärt* (KHAT 13; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1904) 45; J. M. Ward, *Hosea: A Theological Commentary* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 80, think the command is addressed to Judah, but v. 15 is separate from this passage (cf. pp. 130–131 below).

¹⁷See those listed in Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 371n12; other emendations are listed in their notes 13–20; cf. their vocalization in n. 5. For the pointing without the medial *yod* see 1 Kgs 8:9.

¹⁸Cf. n. 10.

¹⁹See n. 5.

²⁰Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 375.

irrelevant. Granted, some *marzēah* references indicate people sat, reclined or even sprawled, but they do the same at other gatherings as well. As such, rejecting their vocalization does not affect the possibility of a *marzēah* in this passage while, on the other hand, my rendering of the line creates a better parallel with v. 17a and lends support to the necessary cultic aspect of a *marzēah*.²¹

In 18b, the MT reads אָהֲבוּ הָבוּ, but the second word's meaning is problematic.²² Since it is not represented in the LXX or Peshitta some simply delete it.²³ Others combine it with the preceding word as a *pe'alal* form, with an intensive meaning.²⁴ However, the preceding הִזְנֶה הִזְנֶה and Symmachus' ἠγάπησαν ἀγάπην suggests the emendation to אָהֲבוּ אָהֲבוּ.²⁵ The resulting infinitive absolute plus finite verb of the same root has a "strengthening" effect in both lines of v. 18.²⁶

²¹Cf. p. 138 below.

²²W. Rudolph, *Hosea* (KAT 13; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Gerd Mohn, 1966) 108, takes it as a masculine plural imperative of אָהֲבוּ; together the two words would mean, "They love, [the command] 'give!'" This is not supported by the versions and produces a strained meaning.

²³Thus GKC §55e; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 263; I. Willi-Plein, *Vorformen der Schriftexegese innerhalb des Alten Testaments: Untersuchungen zum literarischen Werden der auf Amos, Hosea und Micha zurückgehenden Bücher im hebräischen Zwölfprophetenbuch* (BZAW 123; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971) 138.

²⁴I.e., אָהֲבוּ אָהֲבוּ; see, e.g., Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, 45; H. S. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Problems der alttestamentlichen Textkritik* (UUÅ 6; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1935) 35; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 379; M. Nissinen, *Prophetie, Redaktion und Fortschreibung im Hoseabuch: Studien zum Werdegang eines Prophetenbuches im Lichte von Hos 4 und 11* (AOAT 231; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991) 124; M.-T. Wacker, *Figurationen des weiblichen im Hosea-Buch* (HBS 8; Freiburg: Herder, 1996) 265; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 169.

²⁵Following M. T. Houtsma, "Bijdrage tot de kritiek en verklaring van Hosea," *ThT* 9 (1875) 59; Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, 45; B. Duhm, "Anmerkungen zu den Zwölf Propheten II: Buch Hosea," *ZAW* 31 (1911) 22; A. Weiser, *Das Buch der zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (ATD 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949) 49; Wolff, *Hosea*, 73; J. L. Mays, *Hosea: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969) 76; Emmerson, "Fertility Goddess?" 494; Balz-Cochois, *Gomer*, 35; J. Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea* (ATD 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983) 64; Davies, *Hosea*, 133.

²⁶GKC §§1131-r; R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (2d ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) §205; B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) §§35.21a, 35.3.1b.

Establishing the Unit

I also disagree with Gangloff and Haelewyck concerning the extent of the passage, while they say nothing of its larger context. There is virtually unanimous scholarly agreement that the unit ends at v. 19: Hos 5:1 initiates a new section with a direct address to the priests, in contrast to the third person description of the entire nation (Israel/Ephraim) in the preceding verses. Gangloff and Haelewyck begin the unit at v. 17, dismissing the wordplay among סַרְרָה, סָרָר (v. 16), סָר (v. 18) and סָרָרָר (v. 19) as the reason why v. 16 was redactionally linked to vv. 17–19.²⁷ But this creates a problem as to v. 16's original context, since it is separate from the preceding verses (see below). Moreover, they fail to recognize the consonantal paranomasia between מֵרַחֵב and חֲבוּר, linking vv. 16 and 17, and ignore the *inclusio* effected by סָרָר and סָרָרָר. Therefore, v. 16 should be included as part of the unit.

Some scholars extend the starting point to v. 15,²⁸ but the reference to Judah and the similarity to Amos 5:5 cause others to consider that verse secondary.²⁹ More importantly, even if v. 15 does stem from Hosea, it is formulated as direct, divine speech like the preceding verses, whereas v. 16 switches to third-person

²⁷Gangloff and Haelewyck, "Osée 4,17–19," 370n3. The same demarcation is apparently held by Emmerson, "Fertility Goddess?" 492–97.

²⁸E.g., E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT 12; 2nd ed.; Leipzig: Deichert, 1929) 60; W. Rudolph, "Hosea 4,15–19," *Gottes Wort und Gottes Land: Hans-Wilhelm Hertzberg zum 70. Geburtstag am 16. Januar 1965 dargebracht von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern* (ed. H. G. Reventlow; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 193, 197; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 112; J. M. Ward, *Hosea*, 80; Mays, *Hosea*, 76–77; B. C. Birch, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997) 15–19. Good begins a new poem at 14e; see E. M. Good, "The Composition of Hosea," *SEA* 31 (1966) 35.

²⁹E.g., Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 44; Duhm, "Hosea," 21; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 262; K. Budde, "Zu Text und Auslegung des Buches Hosea," *JBL* 45 (1926) 289; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 71; G. A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea: A Redactional Critical Investigation* (SBLDS 102; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 270 and, most recently, Macintosh, *Hosea*, 162.

description.³⁰ The latter continues to the end of v. 19, leading most commentators to consider vv. 16 and 19 the outer limits of a prophetic oration.³¹ This is confirmed by the paranomastic inclusion of סָרַר and צָרַר.

Within those limits, various parts of the passage have been deleted as redactional insertions by different scholars. The most extreme proposal is by Gale Yee, for whom the only parts of the entire chapter stemming from Hosea are vv. 4 (minus כִּהֵן), 5b, 12bA, קָלוֹן מִגְּנִיָּה from 18b, and 19a; the rest is attributed to one of two redactors.³² But even those who only delete portions of Hos 4:16–19 do not agree with either Yee or each other.³³ On the other hand, most scholars consider the entire passage to be Hosea's own composition. Such disagreements make consensus on the matter unlikely, especially since the same textual data can be used to support contradictory conclusions. For instance, Andersen and Freedman see the interplay of consonants between מֵרַחֵב and חֲבוֹר as an indication 16d and 17a come from the same author, while for Yee it is evidence her 2nd redactor has artificially linked his composition (16d) to the text he inherited (17a).³⁴ Similarly, different interpretations

³⁰Wolff, *Hosea*, 90, accounts for the transition by postulating an intervening objection by the people, but this lacks textual support.

³¹Thus, Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 45; Duhm, "Hosea," 21; Wolff, *Hosea*, 90; C. Hauret, *Amos et Osée* (Verbum Salutis, Ancien Testament 5; Paris: Beauchesne, 1970) 180–82; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 136; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 373; E. Jacob, "Osée," *Osée Joël Amos Abdias Jonas* (CAT 11a; 2nd ed.; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1982) 44; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 71; Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 118; Davies, *Hosea*, 131; Wacker, *Figurationen*, 264–68; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 166.

³²Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 160–69, 262–72. She dates these redactors to the reign of Josiah and the exilic period.

³³For example, even prior to Yee's monograph, 16b was considered a gloss by both Marti and Willi-Plein, but Marti considered 17a secondary and 17b original while the reverse was held by Willi-Plein (see Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 45; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 137); Yee disagrees with both concerning v. 17, which she attributes to her two different redactors (see below). In contrast to all three of them, Nissinen considers vv 16 and 19 to be the original text, with vv. 17–18 a later insertion explaining the chronologically earlier verses; see Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 118–28, 228.

³⁴Cf. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 374; Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 169. Yee attributes 17a to her first redactor.

are put on the same material. For instance, to some the positive tone of Hos 4:16c-d is a clear indication those lines are a later addition proclaiming that the situation of the preceding lines has changed.³⁵ Most, however, view the lines as a question calling for a negative answer, reinforcing the negative evaluation of Israel in 16a-b.³⁶

Despite such divergent opinions, the passage is consistent with Hosea's authentic message. Wolff dates the harlotry motif as a metaphor for Israel's involvement with other gods to the early period of Hosea's ministry, and notes that the political upheaval following the death of Jeroboam II is not reflected in this text, which also supports a date early in Hosea's prophetic career.³⁷ Putting the matter negatively, nothing in these verses requires a date after the time of Hosea,³⁸ so the passage can be retained intact.

³⁵Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, 45; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 137; Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 168.

³⁶Among older commentators this view is represented by Duhm, "Hosea," 21; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 264; Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch*², 61; J. Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* (4th ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963) 112. It continues to dominate in more recent scholarship, as evidenced by Wolff, *Hosea*, 91; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 107; Mays, *Hosea*, 76; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 72; Davies, *Hosea*, 131; G. Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert: Metaphors, Models and Themes in Hosea 4-14* (ConBOT 43; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996) 64; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 165, 166. At first glance the construction הַיְיָ . . . יְיָ might suggest cause and effect ("because . . . now"), but a statement that Yahweh will care for Israel *because* it is stubborn is highly unlikely. For the indication of a question by "the natural emphasis upon the words," rather than a distinct interrogative marker, see GKC §150a (Hos 4:16 is listed as an example); Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, §542; see also Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §31.4f. None of this requires accepting Wolff's claim that "when this was first written down, there was still knowledge of the speech's inflection" (Wolff, *Hosea*, 91).

³⁷Wolff, *Hosea*, 76.

³⁸The issue of 16c-d has already been dealt with. Willi-Plein and Yee also take v. 17b as a later addition meant to soften the harshness of the surrounding lines (Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 137; Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 168; Yee translates as "but he [Yahweh] will provide rest for him"). This derives the verb from *hiphil* I of הָנַח rather than *hiphil* II, as is usually done. The LXX's ἔθηκεν supports the latter (see also n. 9), as does the Masorettes' (incorrect) pointing as an imperative from *hiphil* II.

The reference to a "broad space" (16d) and the supposed cessation of sacrifice (19b) are seen as evidence of deportation after the Assyrian conquest by Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 119, 223; in addition to Nissinen [p. 119], the wind in 19a is taken as a symbol for foreign conquerors by Jeremias, *Hosea*, 73; Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 67. However, בְּרִיחַ always has a positive connotation (Rudolph, *Hosea*, 107). Moreover, 19b speaks of the nation being ashamed of their sacrifices, not the latter's termination, and in 19a the wind affects "her," not "them."

At the same time, although Hos 4:16–19 is a self-contained unit, its relationship to the rest of the chapter should not be ignored. A number of links, both thematic and lexical, support interpreting the former in conjunction with the latter. The image of idolatry as harlotry dominates the chapter, the motif of drunkenness occurs in vv. 11 and 18 and the reference to idols in v. 17 echoes v. 12. In addition to these general parallels, a number of words from the first part of the chapter are repeated in vv. 16–19: קָלָקָל is found in both vv. 7 and 18, the root זָנָה occurs 8 times in vv. 10–15 and twice in v. 18, חָרַר is found in vv. 12 and 19 and the root זָנָה appears in vv. 13, 14 and 19. The frequent and often abrupt changes in speaker and addressee indicate the chapter is not a single, unified composition, but rather a collection of separate oracles. Nonetheless, the majority of recent scholars agree that they reflect Hosea’s authentic message, even if not a verbatim report of his actual words.³⁹

The chapter has a unifying organizational principle as well. Running through individual sections and the chapter as a whole is the idea that the actions and fates of the priests⁴⁰ and the people are intertwined. This principle is succinctly articulated in v. 9: “like people, like priest.” Thus, in v. 6 the people’s lack of knowledge is blamed on the priest’s own rejection of knowledge, and both priests and people lack understanding in vv. 11 and 14. Similarly, the priests and the people fornicate, forsaking Yahweh/their God (vv. 10 and 12). The correlation between priests and

³⁹See especially the discussions in Mays, *Hosea*, 15–17; Wolff, *Hosea*, 74–76; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 57–65; Davies, *Hosea*, 110–13 and most recently Macintosh, *Hosea*, lxxii: “[Hosea’s] words are reflected predominantly in chapters 4 and 5:1–7” The extreme skepticism concerning the chapter’s authenticity expressed by Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, *passim*, is only shared by a minority of contemporary scholars.

⁴⁰A single priest is addressed in v. 4. Most consider him to be a chief priest, if not the High Priest, but the vocative is taken as a collective by Macintosh, *Hosea*, 135; the basic point is unaffected. Verse 7 switches to third person plurals, indicating the larger priestly class. On the basis of v. 6, Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 342–44, think this indicates the High Priest’s actual children, but חָנָנִים there is better understood as indicating members of a guild (cf. the “sons of the prophets in 1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 7, 15; etc.) than biological descendants. The priests are in view until v. 12, when “my [Yahweh’s] people” are introduced.

people is also in effect between the earlier verses and vv. 16–19. For instance, the people’s fornication in v. 18 echoes that of the priests from v. 10 and their drinking in v. 18 also reflects the priests’ actions in v. 11.

To summarize, the connections among the parts, combined with the chapter’s organizational principle, suggests these oracles, although delivered individually, stem from the same approximate time.⁴¹ As such, the rest of Hosea 4 provides the larger context for analyzing vv. 16–19 as a *marzēah* allusion.

Discussion

Gangloff and Haelewyck identify Hos 4:17–19 as a *marzēah* allusion on the basis of references to a specific group of individuals reclining at a banquet.⁴² This is inadequate grounds for a *marzēah* allusion, however. Their understanding of v. 17b in terms of “reclining” has already been rejected, and in any case is irrelevant to the essential characteristics of the *marzēah*.⁴³ More importantly, the passage does not refer to a specific group of people, but rather the entire nation of Israel/Ephraim. This only leaves the reference to drinking, which is insufficient by itself to establish an allusion to the *marzēah*. Nonetheless, the passage does reflect the three constitutive elements of a *marzēah* established in Chapter 1. Drinking in a religious context is easily identified in the text, and the reference to the whole nation can be explained in a manner consistent with the *marzēah*’s usually restricted upper-class membership.

⁴¹Argued most strongly by Wolff, *Hosea*, 75–76. See also Balz-Cochois, *Gomer*, 40, 45, 68–69; Davies, *Hosea*, 111–12.

⁴²See p. 126 above.

⁴³See pp. 128–129.

The religious element is immediately evident in the references to “idols” (עֲצָבִים) in 17a and “their sacrifices” in 19b.⁴⁴ In addition, Emmerson has argued the 3rd feminine singular suffixes in vv. 18b-19a refer to an unspecified goddess, whom Gangloff and Haelewyck subsequently identified as Anat.⁴⁵ The suffix occurs in references to “her shields” (מִגְדָּיֶיהָ), “her” (אֲתָהּ) and “her/its wings” (כַּנְפֵּיהָ). At first glance these are problematic, since there is no appropriate antecedent in the immediate passage or the chapter as a whole. The only feminine noun in the passage is the metaphorical description of Israel as a “stubborn heifer” (פָּרָה, v. 16a), and some have proposed that as the pronouns’ referent.⁴⁶ Others look beyond the chapter and refer the suffixes to the adulterous woman of Hosea 1-3 as a symbol of the nation.⁴⁷ But both proposals ignore the many intervening masculine forms (both verbs and suffixes), for Israel/Ephraim,⁴⁸ and do not explain why a cow or an adulteress would have a shield or wings.⁴⁹

⁴⁴A feminine plural of עֲצָבִים does not occur elsewhere, and most commentators emend it to מִזְבְּחֵיהֶם (“their altars”) on the basis of haplography of the initial ע, following Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 112, (the 1st ed. appeared in 1892) and the LXX, Syriac and Targum. The MT is supported by the Vulgate’s *a sacrificiis suis* and is explained as a northern dialectical variant by Nyberg, *Studien*, 35; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 109; Mays, *Hosea*, 78; Davies, *Hosea*, 135; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 173. Either reading entails a religious connection, but “sacrificial meals” are more consistent with a *marzēah* than “altars.”

⁴⁵Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 492-97; Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17-19,” 378-80.

⁴⁶J. M. Ward, “The Message of Hosea,” *Int* 23 (1969) 81; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 139; Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 118. The feminine suffixes are considered collectives referring to Israel by Wacker, *Figurationen*, 266; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 170, 173; for the feminine singular suffix as a collective see GKC §135p. They are given a “neutral” meaning by Rudolph, *Hosea*, 108.

⁴⁷Thus Budde, “Hosea,” 295; Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 265; Yee identifies this image in Hos 4:12 as well. Balz-Cochois, *Gomer*, 26, debates whether the suffixes may refer to “the whore” Israel, but in the end emends them to masculine plurals. Budde, “Hosea,” 295, 296, also relates them to 17b, which he emends to יְהִיָּתָו (“his inheritance”).

⁴⁸Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 493.

⁴⁹This is usually resolved by emending the problem away; see further below.

In the absence of a clear antecedent for the feminine suffixes, the best way to clarify their point of reference is by examining the words to which they are attached, with the expectation that whatever or whoever they refer to is consistent with the words they modify. The 3rd feminine suffix first appears in מִגְּנֵיָהּ (“her shields,” 18a), but is often changed to a 3rd masculine plural, while the root word is emended to תְּאֵנָה. The line then reads, “They love dishonour more than their pride,” with “pride” referring to Yahweh. But although the root’s emendation can be supported from the LXX’s ἐκ φρουράγματος, this alteration should not be accepted too quickly. Wellhausen argues that “glory” (קְבוֹד) is a better antonym to “dishonour” (קְלָוָה) than “pride,”⁵⁰ and it is certainly a more appropriate term for Yahweh, the proposed antithesis to “dishonour” in the sentence. Moreover, the feminine suffix remains in the best LXX manuscripts,⁵¹ and is confirmed by אֲתָנָה in 19a. The latter is itself often emended to אֲתָנָה, but in the absence of manuscript support and against much of the versional evidence.⁵² Moreover, a correlation between a female and military gear (“her shields”) constitutes a more difficult reading than “her glory,” so if such a connection can be established the MT should be retained. In short, it is preferable to retain these two feminine suffixes.⁵³ This leaves the third instance of the suffix: “her/its wings” (כַּנְּפֵיהָ) in v.

⁵⁰Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 112, followed by Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 45; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 139. Cf. Hos 4:7.

⁵¹The phrase is qualified by αὐτῶν (“their”) in A Q*, whereas B Q^A reads αὐτῆς; as both the older (B) and more difficult reading, the latter is to be preferred.

⁵²E.g., Aquila reads “her” (αὐτῆς) while the LXX’s σὺ εἶ (= הָאֵל) confirms the MT’s final ה, and the consonants of the direct object marker, minus the vowel letter. See also *eam* in the Vulgate.

⁵³Note the comment by Emerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 493: “there is the difficulty of explaining how two plural forms consistent with the context, and only two, were corrupted to the difficult feminine singular apart from the influence of another such form in the immediate context.”

19a. The pronoun's antecedent there is often thought to be the feminine "wind"⁵⁴ at the beginning of the line, but unless "her" (הָאִשָּׁה) in the middle of 19a is changed to "them," which is problematic,⁵⁵ "she" remains unidentified.

In light of these difficulties, it is simpler to refer all of the suffixes to a single female antecedent who has a shield and wings. These features, combined with the reference to idols earlier in the text, suggests this female is a deity. Simply put, is there a winged semitic goddess associated with warfare? The goddess Anat fits the description. For instance, in the Ugaritic tablets, Anat is the goddess most frequently connected with warfare.⁵⁶ Her often gruesome military exploits are well known,⁵⁷ and, according to Gangloff and Haelewyck, she is the only ancient semitic female deity

⁵⁴הָאִשָּׁה can be either masculine or feminine; although the latter predominates, the masculine verb הָרַחַק might suggest otherwise here. If so, the suffix on "wings" cannot refer to the wind. However, a feminine subject can take a masculine verb when the verb precedes the subject (see GKC §145o-p; Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §6.6c and the references cited by both). As such, the issue of emendation does not arise for most scholars in this instance. For the few exceptions see the references in Gangloff and Haelewyck, "Osée 4,17-19," 374nn77-81; of the five changes listed, only one involves a third masculine singular referring to a masculine "wind."

⁵⁵See n. 52.

⁵⁶Although they antedate Hosea by over five centuries, the Ugarit tablets provide the geographically closest semitic mythological texts, and as such are an appropriate place to look for a deity alluded to in Israel. For a detailed discussion of Anat herself see N. H. Walls, *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth* (SBLDS 135; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). See also W. A. Maier, III, "Anath (DIETY) [Heb 'ānāt אַנַּת]," *ABD* 225-27; P. L. Day, "Anat אַנַּת," *DDD* cols. 62-77.

⁵⁷The most (in)famous text describes her wading through the blood of battle up to her thighs, with the heads and hands of her enemies strapped to her waist; see *KTU* 1.3.II.3-III.2. The most recent English translation is in M. S. Smith, "The Baal Cycle," *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (SBLWAW 9; ed. S. B. Parker; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 107-09. On the passage itself see Walls, *Anat*, 163-66; M. S. Smith, "Anat's Warfare Cannibalism and the West Semitic Ban," *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup 190; eds. S. W. Holloway and L. K. Handy; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995) 368-86; J. B. Lloyd, "Anat and the Double Massacre of *KTU* 1.3 ii," *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (UBL 12; eds. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 151-65. For parallels with the Hindu goddess Kali see M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 608.

depicted with a shield,⁵⁸ and the only winged female deity in the semitic pantheon.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, Eidevall objects to relating the feminine suffixes to any goddess because there is no explicit reference to one in the passage.⁶⁰ It is questionable whether an explicit mention is necessary, however: people devoted to a winged goddess equipped with a shield would surely recognize an allusion to her. Moreover, the LXX may contain a trace of such an antecedent in 17b. The Greek reads ἔθηκεν ἑαυτῷ σκάνδαλα, and Emerson suggests the final word may be an interpretive substitute for a goddess' name or epithet, with the latter now lost from the MT.⁶¹ She admits the LXX may only reflect the translator's attempt to make sense of a difficult line, but the restoration of another word would provide better balance with the preceding line, in terms of both length and semantic parallelism.⁶²

Furthermore, a goddess, named or otherwise, is a preferable antecedent for the three feminine suffixes in 18b-19a for four reasons. First, this removes the perceived need to change the suffixes. Second, it renders unnecessary all emendations and alternative meanings for the consonants ןן in 18b, most of which were prompted by the need to produce something more consistent with the altered suffixes.⁶³ Third, a

⁵⁸Gangloff and Haelewyck, "Osée 4,17-19," 378-79. See also Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 376.

⁵⁹See Gangloff and Haelewyck, "Osée 4,17-19," 379-80 and their references. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 376, combine lines 18b-19a as "her shielding wings."

⁶⁰Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 66.

⁶¹Emmerson, "Fertility Goddess?" 496-97. Cf. n. 10 above.

⁶²Since it is not essential to either the line or the passage, the English translation presented earlier simply indicates the possibility that something is missing from the line. Cf. n. 10.

⁶³The emendation to ןן was considered above. Nyberg, *Studien*, 32-35, revocalized ןן as ןן ("from her gardens") and read ןן as "her sign"; this suggests Asherah's frequent association with trees and gardens; see also Hos 4:13. The connection had already been raised, but with the suffix emended to a masculine plural, by H. Torczyner, "Dunkle Bibelstellen," *Vom Alten Testament. Festschrift K. Marti* (BZAW 41; ed. K. Budde; Giessen, 1925) 277; see also Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 46; for 19th C. proponents see Gangloff and Haelewyck, "Osée 4,17-19," 373nn52-53 and 55.

Three alternative meanings for ןן ("shield") have been proposed. First, since the

winged goddess yields a better sense than if the wings belonged to the wind. Rendering the line as “The wind will enclose her in her (own) wings” more clearly connotes a sense of confinement, indicating she has been made powerless by restricting her means of locomotion.⁶⁴ Fourth, this establishes a unifying rhetorical structure in vv. 18–19. Verse 18a deals with the people’s actions while 19b describes their future attitude. Similarly, in 18b “her shields” are the object of their love while in 19a “her wings” receive the effect of the wind’s efforts. In other words, the two verses create a mirror pattern in which v. 18 describes the people’s actions in connection with the goddess, while v. 19 describes her future fate first and then the people’s reaction.⁶⁵

To summarize, since the feminine suffixes in 18b–19a should be retained, they are best interpreted as alluding to a goddess, and the evidence supports identifying

underlying verb כָּסָה means “cover, surround, protect” (BDB 171), Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 127, opts for a literal “cover,” and Macintosh, *Hosea*, 170–71, following Morag, relates it to the marriage canopy (הַכַּסָּיִת). The word was understood figuratively of the leaders by the Targum, the Vulgate and by Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 265; Jacob, “Osée,” 44n1; cf. Ps 47:10; 84:10 89:19 (“Shield” can serve as an epithet of Yahweh [see Ps 3:4; 18:2, 31, 36; etc., and especially Gen 15:1], but such a nuance would be incomprehensible here). Second, relying on the Arabic adjective *māğīn*, G. R. Driver proposed the meaning, “shameless, insolent”; see G. R. Driver, “Studies in the Vocabulary of the Old Testament VI,” *JTS* 34 (1933) 383–84. This is adopted by, e.g., Wolff, *Hosea*, 73, 91; J. M. Ward, *Hosea*, 81; Mays, *Hosea*, 78; Balz-Cochois, *Gomer*, 36; Davies, *Hosea*, 134. Similarly, an abstract noun meaning “insolence, wantonness” is proposed by J. J. Glück, “Some Semantic Complexities in the Book of Hosea,” *Die O.T. Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika: Studies on the Books of Hosea and Amos* (Pretoria: Potchefstroom Herald, 1966) 57; he is followed by Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 495. Third, Rudolph, *Hosea*, 108, following Rabin, proposes the meaning, “gift.”

While each of these suggestions has some merit, it is preferable to adopt the plain meaning of the text rather than an emended text or a secondary or derived meaning.

⁶⁴Andersen and Freedman reprint אָתָּה as אֵתָּה , take Yahweh as the subject of the verb, and translate the line as, “He has restrained the spirit of [her] appetites in [her] wings”; see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 376; followed by Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 265. A masculine subject for כָּסָה is unnecessary (see n. 54), but it is worth noting they too envision a winged goddess here.

כָּסָה can be used metaphorically for the skirt of a garment (BDB 489; cf. Deut 23:1; Ruth 3:9; Ezek 16:8, etc.). In light of Syrian representations of a goddess holding her skirt open, Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 496, takes the line as “an ironic reversal of the seductive enticements of the goddess” (for the Syrian representations see the references in her n. 5). Gangloff and Haelwuyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 379–80, consider either interpretation of “wings” possible. I prefer the literal meaning, with a secondary metaphorical allusion possible in light of the sexual content of v. 18.

⁶⁵See Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 495.

her as Anat.⁶⁶ As a result, if this passage alludes to a *marzēah*, she should be understood as its patron.⁶⁷ However, for this passage to be a *marzēah* allusion, it must show evidence of a definable upper-class group consuming large amounts of alcohol.

The latter is easily seen in the phrase **סֵר טִבְאִים** (“their liquor is gone”) in 18a.⁶⁸ The noun denotes strong drink, and the cognate verb refers to drinking in excess.⁶⁹ Most relevant to this text is the use of the participle for habitual drinkers at Prov 23:20, 21 and at Deut 21:20, where parents label their drunkard son “stubborn” (**סֹרֵר**).⁷⁰ By emphasizing that their drink is now gone, the verb **טָרַח** suggests that significant amounts were consumed.⁷¹

⁶⁶Thus Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 325–26, 376; Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 378–80. Emmerson suggested an unidentified fertility goddess and Davies proposes Asherah (Emmerson, “Fertility Goddess?” 496–97; Davies, *Hosea*, 133; see also Nyberg, *Studien*, 32–35). Although Asherah is mostly commonly associated with fertility motifs, that realm (vs. simple sexual license) is not completely foreign to Anat; see Walls, *Anat*, 166–74.

⁶⁷This would not be an innovation, since she is probably linked with a *marzēah* at Ugarit; see the discussion of *KTU* 4.642 in Chapter 1. This establishes a precedent, not a direct connection.

⁶⁸The popularity of Houtsma’s emendation to **סֵר טִבְאִים** (“a band of drunkards”; see Houtsma, “Bijdrage,” 60; Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 112; Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 45; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 262; Duhm, “Hosea,” 21; Budde, “Hosea,” 295; Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch*², 61; J. M. Ward, *Hosea*, 81; *BHS*; the *RSV* [contrast the *NRSV*]; the *NEB*; the *JB*; for other emendations see Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 371nn22–29), has waned in recent years. Although the change is consistent with a *marzēah*, the MT’s *ר in the first word is confirmed by the versions, Symmachus and Aquila (see below); keeping the MT also preserves the paranomasia with **סֹרֵר**, **טָרַח** (v. 16), and **טָרַח** (v. 19). The MT is retained by, *inter alia*, Nyberg, *Studien*, 33–34; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 108; Wolff, *Hosea*, 91; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 378–79; Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 124–26; Balz-Cochois, *Gomer*, 34–35; Davies, *Hosea*, 132–33; Wacker, *Figurationen*, 265; the *NRSV*; the *NAB*; cf. Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 138. For I. Zolli, “Hosea 4 17–18,” *ZAW* 15 (1938) 175, **טָרַח** means “putrid.”

⁶⁹See BDB 684–85; cf. Isa 56:12.

⁷⁰The adjective also appears in Hos 4:16; the participle denotes drunkards at Ezek 23:42; Nah 1:10 as well.

⁷¹Although **טָרַח** occurs with the same nuance in Amos 6:7, I am not convinced a direct correlation can be drawn between the cessation of the *marzēah* there and the end of their alcohol here (pace Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 125). In Amos the verb is connected to the future exile of the *marzēah* members, whereas here it simply indicates their current liquor supply is exhausted. Nonetheless, the fact the verb only has this meaning in these two places is suggestive.

However, this passage does not deal with a specific portion of the upper class. Despite the assertion by Gangloff and Haelewyck that this was “une association regroupant l’élite d’Ephraïm,”⁷² the text addresses Ephraim as a whole (17a), and the earlier reference to Israel (16b) confirms that the entire nation is meant.⁷³ But if the whole nation was involved, the passage lacks the restricted membership characteristic of the extra-biblical *marzēah*.

Nonetheless, two points suggest that a connection with the *marzēah* association should not be discounted too hastily. The first is in 17a, where Ephraim is called a “companion (חֲבֵר) of idols.”⁷⁴ This is an unusual construction: when humans are the subject of the root consonants חֲבַר, it almost always refers to association with other people.⁷⁵ Moreover, since Ephraim is a designation for the entire nation, חֲבֵר has the force of a collective here, i.e., “companions” or “a company.” If the combined phrase is an elliptical reference to Ephraim as “a company (associated with) idols,”⁷⁶ it points to an identifiable group. In light of the drinking mentioned elsewhere in the passage, this might reflect “the men of the *marzēah*” known from the

⁷²Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 380.

⁷³In Hosea, especially when the two terms are paralleled, “Ephraim” tends to serve as a geographic designation for the northern kingdom while “Israel” indicates the people, especially in relationship to Yahweh. See Wolff, *Hosea*, 164; Jacob, “Osée,” 67; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 338 and the texts they cite.

⁷⁴The verb חֲבַר means “to unit, join,” and the *qal* passive participle (construct) here means “one united/joined with,” i.e., a companion. It is altered to either חֲבֵר or חֲבֵרָה by Duhm, “Hosea,” 21; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 264; Budde, “Hosea,” 294; Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 112; cf. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 377–78. Since this does not change the essential meaning, I retain the MT with, *inter alia*, Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 45; Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch*², 61; Wolff, *Hosea*, 72; Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 122; Davies, *Hosea*, 132; Wacker, *Figurationen*, 264.

⁷⁵By way of contrast, it denotes those who cast (combine?) spells in Deut 18:11 (see also Isa 47:9, 11) and snake charmers in Ps 58:6. The only other exception is Isa 44:11, where “[an idol’s] companions” may have the same nuance as proposed here.

⁷⁶Cf. Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 122 (“[Eine] Gemeinschaft mit den Götzenbildern”) and Rudolph, *Hosea*, 106 (“In der Gesellschaft von Götzen ist Israel [sic]”).

extra-biblical references. That possibility is strengthened by the later use of חֲבֵר in reference to the “companions” of Obaidu who comprise a *marzēah* at Petra.⁷⁷ Hos 4:17a may even represent the first use of the root in connection with a *marzēah*.

The second factor to consider is the treatment of מְבָאֵם רָע by ancient translators. The Targum and Vulgate both rendered the second word as “feast.”⁷⁸ More importantly, both Aquila and Symmachus identified it as a “symposium,” which is the Greek term used to render *marzēah* in bilingual inscriptions from Palmyra. Aquila, apparently reading רָע rather than רָע (as did the Targum), even translated the resulting phrase as ἄρχων συμποσίου ἀντῶν (“leaders of their symposium”); the first two words are the plural equivalent of συμποσίαρχος, used to translate רַב מְרִזְהָא רַב (“*marzēah* leader”) at Palmyra.⁷⁹

Since a basic principle of this study has been that information from later *marzēahs* should not be read into earlier ones, I do not claim these parallels are decisive. But the later connotations of חֲבֵר are suggestive, and Aquila’s and Symmachus’ translations show that they saw the contemporary Greek equivalent of a *marzēah* in the word מְבָאֵם. If they could, so too might Hosea and his audience recognize their own contemporary *marzēah* here. The passage does refer to intemperate drinking in a religious context, so the only major characteristic missing is the restriction of the participants to a definable portion of the elite. The points noted in

⁷⁷See the discussion of the Nabatean *marzēah* in Chapter 1.

⁷⁸שִׁירֵי אֵל and *convivium* respectively. It is absent from the Peshitta and the LXX reads ἠρέτισεν Χαναανίους (“he has chosen the Canaanites”). The verb may be a corruption of ἠρέθισε, which points to the adjective רָע, derived from רָעָר rather than the MT’s perfect from רָע; cf. Jerome’s *provocavit* and Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 262. As for the noun, Zolli suggests the translator read מְבָאֵם (“drunkards”) and connected this with an understanding of the Canaanites (פְּנִצְיָי) as those who “stagger” (צָנַע) or are “subdued” (cf. צָנַע) by drink; see Zolli, “Hosea 4 17–18,” 175. William Irwin has suggested to me the LXX may have understood the Hebrew to mean Ephraim had “turned aside” with respect to their banquets, which was expressed as choosing the Canaanites (and their form of feasting).

⁷⁹See in Chapter 1.

the preceding paragraphs do not negate that fact, but they raise the possibility Hosea may have had the *marzēah* in mind when formulating the oracle.

In fact, when Hos 4:16–19 is read in the context of the entire chapter, the nation's involvement in a *marzēah* could be seen as an imitation of their leader's *marzēah*. I argued earlier that, although Hosea 4 comprises separate oracles, they were delivered around the same time, and that the chapter draws significant parallels between the actions of the priests in the first part and those of the people in the second half.⁸⁰ In the words of Francis Landy, "Priest and people are mirror images of each other."⁸¹ It is unlikely the entire nation, to a person, engaged in the deeds described in vv. 17–18, but in keeping with the principle of "like people, like priest" Hosea speaks as if they did. The priests have fornicated, numbed themselves with drink, and turned away from Yahweh towards dishonour. In imitation, the people dishonour themselves by forming a group dedicated to the goddess Anat and marked by excessive drinking. While the large number of participants means this is not a *marzēah* in the precise sense, the prophet has described the people's actions in terms of one. They are imitating the priests, who formed part of the Samaritan elite, and some of whom may even have participated in the northern *marzēah* Amos condemned.⁸² In the prophet's mind, the actions of a significant part of the population is no different from that of a smaller part of the upper class, and it seems that he used features of a *marzēah* to convey that point.

On the other hand, this passage contains an element not present in other instances of the *marzēah*, namely, sexual license.⁸³ Gangloff and Haelewyck think this

⁸⁰See pp. 133-134.

⁸¹F. Landy, *Hosea* (Readings: A New Biblical Commentary; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995) 66. See also Balz-Cochois, *Gomer*, 68–69; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 72.

⁸²See especially the discussion of Amos 6:1, 3–7 in chapter 2.

⁸³Marvin Pope considers this to be a basic part of the *marzēah*, but his evidence is from later sources not directly related to the *marzēah*; see Pope, *Song of Songs*, 210–19.

reflects later deuteronomistic influence,⁸⁴ but it is integral to the entire chapter. As such, it might provide evidence of a libidinous element to the *marzēah* Hosea encountered, but it is not certain the sexual license occurs during the *marzēah* itself. With many scholars, I take the verbs in v. 18a as sequential,⁸⁵ but even if they are concurrent, and the sex occurs simultaneously with the cessation of liquor, the fact remains that fornication only occurs after the drinking has ended. Since a primary aspect of the *marzēah* elsewhere is drinking, and sexual license is unattested in connection with any other *marzēah*, it seems best to separate the two.

Two remaining points can be treated briefly, namely the prophet's attitude toward this *marzēah*, and the reason for it. It is obvious from the passage that Hosea does not approve of it, but unlike in Amos 6, this opposition is not provoked by the injustice reflected in the Samarian *marzēah*. That is not to say the situation had changed significantly since Amos' condemnation, only that Hosea's main concern lies elsewhere. His primary objection is to this *marzēah*'s connection with deities other than Yahweh, in keeping with his general attitude towards what he considers idolatry.⁸⁶ Whether a *marzēah* is also reflected in Hos 9:1–6 remains to be seen.

Hosea 9:1–6

The second text to consider is Hos 9:1–6, which Brian Peckham identifies as a “symposium” (= *marzēah*) comparable to that described in Amos 6:4–7. In his words, “Hosea describes a festival of mourning for the dead that features drinking wine

⁸⁴Gangloff and Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19,” 380. They also attribute the “idols” motif to the same source, but it in fact reflects the opinion of the prophet (see below).

⁸⁵See n. 11.

⁸⁶For Hosea as an initiator of the “Yahweh-alone” movement see M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (2d ed.; London: SCM Press, 1987) 31–32; B. Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority* (SWBA 1; Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983) 30–33. On the movement in general see Smith, pp. 11–42; Lang, pp. 13–59.

(Hos 9:1–4). It is a day of Yahweh (Hos 9:5), a time of death and burial (Hos 9:6) that money cannot divert (Hos 9:6).⁸⁷ This statement will be examined in light of the biblical text and the criteria established from extra-biblical *marzēahs*. A Hebrew text with English translation is presented first to facilitate the analysis.

The Text

אֶל־תִּשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל	1 a	Do not rejoice, O Israel!
אֶל־תִּגְלֹל ⁸⁸ כְּעַמִּים	b	Do not exult like the peoples!
כִּי זָנִיתָ מֵעַל אֱלֹהֶיךָ	c	For you have fornicated against your God, ⁹⁰
אָהַבְתָּ אֶת־נָוֶן	d	you have loved a prostitute's pay
עַל כָּל־גִּרְנוֹת דָּגָן	e	on all the threshing floors of grain.
גִּרְוֹן וְיִקָּב לֹא יִרְעֶם	2a	Threshing floor and vat shall not befriend them, ⁹¹
וְתִירוֹשׁ יִכָּחֵשׁ בָּהּ	b	and new wine shall fail her. ⁹²
לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוָה	3a	They shall not dwell in the land of Yahweh.
וְשָׁב אֶפְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם	b	Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
וּבְאֶשׁוּר טָמֵא יֹאכְלוּ	c	and in Assyria they shall eat unclean food.
לֹא יִסְכוּ לַיהוָה יַיִן	4a	They shall not pour out wine to Yahweh
וְלֹא יֵצְרְבוּ־לוֹ ⁸⁹ זִבְחֵיהֶם	b	and they shall not bring their sacrifices to him.

⁸⁷Peckham, "Phoenicia," 95n59.

⁸⁸In place of the MT's אֶל־גִּיל.

⁸⁹The verb is vocalized יֵצְרְבוּ in the MT.

⁹⁰The sense is that their fornication leads them away from God.

⁹¹יִרְעֶם derives from רָעַה II ("associate with, befriend"); cf. Nyberg, *Studien*, 68; Wolff, *Hosea*, 149; H. Utzschneider, *Hosea Prophet vor dem Ende: Zum Verhältnis von Geschichte und Institution in der alttestamentlichen Prophetie* (OBO 31; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980) 155; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 112; Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 141. The LXX (οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτούς) apparently read the verb יָדָע ("know"); it is followed by Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 70; Duhm, "Hosea," 29; Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch*², 91; Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 122; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 170; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 172. The Targum, Peshitta and Vulgate all reflect רָעַה II ("graze, feed"), while Macintosh, *Hosea*, 340, suggests רָעַה III ("attend to"). However, רָעַה II fits the context best: "associate with" provides a better parallel with זָנַהּ and אָהַב in v. 1 (Utzschneider, *Hosea*, 155), and negated, it constitutes a more appropriate contrast with those verbs and a better parallel with the following line. In any case, none of the proposed nuances affect the issue of a *marzēah* allusion in the passage.

⁹²"Her" refers to the harlotrous nation.

כָּל־אֲכָלָיו יִטְמָאוּ	c (They will be) ⁹⁴ like mourners' bread for them:
כִּי־לִהְמוֹם לְנַפְשָׁם	d all who eat it shall be defiled,
לֹא יָבֹא בֵּית יְהוָה	e for their bread shall be for their (own) throats:
מֵה־תַּעֲשׂוּ לְיוֹם מוֹעֵד	f it shall not come to the house of Yahweh.
וּלְיוֹם חַג־יְהוָה	5a What will you do on the day of assembly,
כִּי־הִנֵּה הֵלְכוּ מִשָּׂד	b and on the day of the festival of Yahweh?
מִצְרַיִם תִּקְבְּצֵם	6a For even if ⁹⁵ they escape destruction,
מִן־תִּקְבְּרֵם	b Egypt shall gather them, ⁹⁶
מִחֲמַד לְכֶסֶפָם ⁹³	c Memphis shall bury them.
קָמוֹשׁ יִרְשָׁם	d The best of their "silver" ⁹⁷ —
חֹרֶן בְּאֹהֲלֵיהֶם	e Nettles shall dispossess them,
	f thorns shall be in their tents.

⁹³This line has been the object of numerous emendations. מִחֲמַדֵי כֶסֶפָם ("their precious things of silver") is proposed by Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 123; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 326. Following the LXX's Μαχμάς, Duhm emends the first word to מַכְמָס ("Aufbewahrungsort"), which yields "depository for their silver" (Duhm, "Hosea," 29). The same word is changed to מַעֲמַד ("pedestal"), and "silver" is identified as "idols" (cf. n. 97 below) by J. M. Ward, *Hosea*, 157, 160. Marti and Sellin alter the first word to מִחֲמַדֵיָהֶם and delete the second as a gloss. Marti translates the word as "their valuables/jewelry" ("ihre Kostbarkeiten/Kleinodien") while Sellin prefers "their sanctuaries" ("ihre Heiligtümer"; cf. Lam 1:10; Ezek 24:21; Joel 4:5; Hag 2:17; 2 Chr 36:19); see Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 71–72; Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch*², 91, 94. For discussion of these and even more extensive emendations, plus the versional evidence, see Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle* 3, 563–64; for the versions see also Macintosh, *Hosea*, 350–51. See further n. 97 below.

⁹⁴Taking "their sacrifices" (זִבְחֵיהֶם) as the double-duty subject of lines b and c, with Wacker, *Figurationen*, 162.

⁹⁵For הִנֵּה initiating conditional statements see BDB 244; Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, §513; cf. Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §40.2.1.d. The conditional nature of this line is not clarified until 6c; cf. n. 96.

⁹⁶By itself, this line seems to indicate protection, but 6c shows it is the reverse: Egypt will "gather them" to their ancestors.

⁹⁷The Hebrew in this line is obscure; for various emendations see n. 93. Rudolph, *Hosea*, 170, 172, on the basis of G. R. Driver, "Babylonian and Hebrew Notes," *WO* 2 (1954) 26, gives the root חָסַם the meaning "shame, disillusionment" here (cf. Zeph 2:1), and translates "Was sie begehrten, wird ihnen zur Enttäuschung werden" (the "desired thing" is Egypt); see also Mays, *Hosea*, 125; Davies, *Hosea*, 219–20. According to Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle* 3, 564, Driver was anticipated by Michaelis. Macintosh, *Hosea*, 348, 350, renders the phrase as "the proud glory pertaining to their silver," which he interprets as Israel's trust in tribute paid to Egypt. However, since all but one reference to silver in Hosea is directly connected to idols (Hos 2:10; 8:4; 13:2; the only other instance of the word is Hos 3:2, where Hosea buys an adulteress [Gomer?], for fifteen silver shekels, but even this is related to worship of other gods), the line should be interpreted accordingly; see Wolff, *Hosea*, 156; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 531; Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle* 3, 564. Thus, I take the line as a periphrastic genitive with *lamed* (cf. GKC §130a; Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §9.7a-b) and interpret it as a superlative, with Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 514. This results in a balance between the two halves of v. 6: lines a-c deal with the peoples' death and d-f with their idols' gradual "eviction."

The text above diverges from the MT twice. In line 1b, rather than the MT's אֶל־גִּיל ("to exultation") I emend to אֶל־תְּגִל with the LXX, Targum, Syriac, Vulgate, and the majority of scholars.⁹⁸ The change creates a better parallel with line a, and is more consistent with the verbs תִּמְצַח and גִּיל as a fixed pair.⁹⁹ The result does not significantly alter the meaning.

In 4b the verb was pointed as יִצְרִי by the Masoretes, who understood צָרַח III ("be pleasing"), as did the versions. While this provides an acceptable meaning, the cognate languages give evidence of the meaning "to enter" for this root as well.¹⁰⁰ Pointing it as a (negated) *hiphil* yields "they will not bring (their sacrifices)," which is a more precise parallel to the preceding "they will not pour out wine."¹⁰¹ In either case the reference to "sacrifices" remains.

Establishing the Unit

There is general agreement that the larger unit for this passage comprises Hos 9:1–9.¹⁰² Although there are redactional links between those verses and the

⁹⁸Macintosh, *Hosea*, 337, is a rare exception; cf. the ambivalence of Jacob, "Osée," 66. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 325, deletes the phrase as a gloss on 1a; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 171, deletes לְגִיל.

⁹⁹See P. Humbert, "Laetari et exultare dans le vocabulaire religieux de l'Ancien Testament," *RHPR* 22 (1942) 185–214. For their pairing in Ugaritic see W. Kuhnigk, *Nordwestsemitische Studien zum Hoseabuch* (BibOr 27; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974) 110.

¹⁰⁰For discussion and examples see G. R. Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Minor Prophets I," *JTS* 39 (1939) 158–59; G. R. Driver, *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (ed. H. H. Rowley; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950) 64–65; M. J. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 17A; New York: Doubleday, 1970) 47; Kuhnigk, *Hoseabuch*, 115; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 526.

¹⁰¹In addition to those mentioned (minus Dahood) in n. 100, the change here is adopted by J. Mauchline, "The Book of Hosea," *IB* 6.657; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 172; Mays, *Hosea*, 124; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 172; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 112. The emendation to יִצְרִי by older scholars such as Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 123; Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 71; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 328, is not necessary.

¹⁰²See the commentaries.

surrounding material, Hosea 8 and 9:10ff constitute divine speech, whereas Hos 9:1–9 is prophetic speech referring to God in the third person. But at the same time, vv. 1–6 deal with the prophet’s announcement concerning the fall harvest festival while vv. 7–9 reflect his interaction with the people on the basis of that message. Since vv. 1–6 contain the possible allusions to the *marzēah*, only they have been reproduced above, and the following discussion will be restricted to those verses.

Within those limits, vv. 4–5 are often taken as a later addition reflecting cultic centralization under Josiah.¹⁰³ However, “Yahweh’s house” in Hos 8:1 and 9:15 cannot mean the Jerusalem temple, and the parallel with 9:3a suggests the phrase refers to the land,¹⁰⁴ and thus is to be retained.

Discussion

Peckham’s characterization of this text as a *marzēah* (symposium) is linked to his understanding of the *marzēah* as a funerary banquet.¹⁰⁵ For Peckham, it alludes to the *marzēah* because v. 6 is “a time of death and burial” and vv. 1–4 describe “a festival of mourning for the dead.”¹⁰⁶ However, there is no evidence of a funerary connection for earlier *marzēahs*, and minimal links afterwards.¹⁰⁷ This does not mean

¹⁰³Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 71; Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch*², 93; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 176; Wolff, *Hosea*, 150; Mays, *Hosea*, 127; Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 172; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 116n13; Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 199; T. Naumann, *Hoseas Erben: Strukturen der Nachinterpretation im Buch Hosea* (BWANT 131; Stuttgart/Berlin/Cologne: Kohlhammer, 1991) 81–83; Wacker, *Figurationen*, 162; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 345.

¹⁰⁴Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 528, note the phrase תֵּיִן לְבֵיתֵינוּ (“sheep fold of the house”) in Ps 68:13 and the Akkadian reference to rural temple land as *bit-ilant* (CAD B:287). Wellhausen and Harper take it as a reference to any “temple” or “place” (respectively) dedicated to Yahweh (Wellhausen, *Propheten*, 123; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 329). J. M. Ward, *Hosea*, 164, identifies the phrase with Yahweh’s people and also retains it.

¹⁰⁵Peckham, “Phoenicia,” 83.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 95n59.

¹⁰⁷See chapters 1 and 2, *passim*. Hos 4:16–19 does not reflect mourning practices either.

such a connection is impossible here *a priori*, but the practices Peckham names are not contemporary with Hosea in any case. Granted, v. 6 mentions burial, while v. 4c begins with the phrase, “like mourners’ bread” (כֶּלֶם אוֹנִים).¹⁰⁸ But Hos 9:1–6 reflects the Judgment Against the Nation form:¹⁰⁹ v. 1 contains a call to attention plus the accusation, while the rest of the passage constitutes the punishment which will follow. As such, only v. 1 reflects the situation at the time the oracle was delivered, while vv. 2–6 indicate the future fate of the nation. Moreover, v. 4c is not a statement of reality, but rather a simile comparing their future sacrifices with mourners’ food. Because they will be separated from “the land of Yahweh” they will not be able to offer sacrifice to Yahweh and, devoid of cultic significance, their sacrifices will serve only to satisfy their hunger, just like food rendered impure by proximity to death.¹¹⁰ In short, there is only one reference to death in this passage (v. 6), and that is linked to Israel’s future punishment, not the practice of Hosea’s contemporaries.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, the lack of a funerary connection does not automatically rule out a *marzēah* allusion here. However, in order to determine whether a non-funerary *marzēah* constitutes the background to this passage the criteria established in the first chapter must be applied. In other words, does this text reflect excessive alcohol consumption by the elite within a religious context? But before that question can be

¹⁰⁸Andersen and Freedman consider the MT’s initial preposition an assertive ׀ and take אוֹנִים as the plural of אֵל (‘‘wickedness’’); understanding the latter as ‘‘idols,’’ they translate, ‘‘Indeed, the food of idols is theirs’’; see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 514, 526–27. However, vv. 3–5 do not contrast the worship of Yahweh and other deities, but describe the cessation of Yahwistic worship when the people are in foreign lands (cf. further in n. 110). The preservation of the MT and the traditional rendering of the phrase is more fitting in this context.

¹⁰⁹On the form see C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. H. C. White; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1967) 169–76.

¹¹⁰Cf. Deut 26:14. Hos 9:3–5 reflects the early notion that Yahweh is linked with the land of Israel, and cannot be properly worshipped outside of it. Cf. 1 Sam 26:19; 2 Kgs 5:17; Ps 137:4.

¹¹¹Hos 9:4c lacks a verb, but the surrounding lines establish a future orientation.

answered, the situation Hosea addressed in this text must be reconstructed. That can be done in two ways, on the basis of the form-critical considerations noted above. First, the call to attention and the accusation in v. 1 give direct evidence of the nation's activity. Secondly, this can be supplemented by the pronouncement of judgment in vv. 2–6. Specifically, if certain actions are eliminated as part of the future punishment, it is likely they were practiced by Hosea's contemporaries.

On this basis, only one of the criteria for a *marzēah* allusion is present here, namely the religious connection. The verbs נָמַץ and לַיָּא in v. 1 are cultic terms,¹¹² while the judgment section speaks of wine libations (4a), sacrifices (4b), the “day of assembly” (5a) and the “festival of Yahweh” (5b).¹¹³ There is some indication of non-yahwistic elements in this worship, such as the harlotry motif Hosea uses for unacceptable worship and the associations of לַיָּא with Canaanite practices.¹¹⁴ But on the other hand, Yahweh is mentioned four times in vv. 3–5, while “Israel” in v. 1 is associated with Yahweh's cultic community.¹¹⁵ It seems, therefore, that the passage describes a form of yahwistic worship that includes aspects unacceptable to Hosea.

Nevertheless, there is insufficient evidence in the passage of extensive drinking by a specific portion of the upper class. “New wine” is mentioned in 2b and libations of wine in 4a, but there is no indication of excess. More importantly, the text

¹¹²Humbert, “Laetari et Exultare,” 185–214.

¹¹³Probably the fall harvest festival of Sukkoth; it is given this designation at Lev. 23:39; Judg 21:19. This is consistent with the harvest imagery in vv. 1d–2b (understanding the “prostitute's pay” as the harvest, which they have not attributed to Yahweh, thus leading to the harlotry motif).

¹¹⁴On the latter see Humbert, “Laetari et Exultare,” 185–214; D. W. Harvey, “Rejoice Not, O Israel,” *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (eds. B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962) 115–27. Cf. Hos 10:5 and Rudolph, *Hosea*, 171; Wolff, *Hosea*, 153; Utzschneider, *Hosea*, 178; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 522; Jeremias, *Hosea*, 115; Landy, *Hosea*, 112; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 337. Some see a reference to Dagon, the god of grain, in 1e (e.g., J. M. Ward, *Hosea*, 159, 163; Kuhnigk, *Hoseabuch*, 112); Kuhnigk also takes Tirosh as a divine name and emends 2a to read “Victor” and “Thunder,” Ugaritic titles for Ba'al.

¹¹⁵See n. 73.

deals with the entire nation, identified as Israel in v. 1a and Ephraim in 3b. But unlike Hos 4:16–19, the context does not reflect the principle of “like priest, like people.” Rather than the nation imitating the activities of the leaders, as in the earlier passage, this text deals with the fall harvest festival, which would have normally included the majority of the people. Moreover, the two passages stem from different points in Hosea’s ministry,¹¹⁶ so without something in Hos 9:1–6 to show the prophet was thinking in those terms, the restrictive nature of the *marzēah* is neither present nor imitated.

Since the two points covered in the preceding paragraph are constitutive elements of the *marzēah* throughout its history, their absence here is decisive. Without any indication that large amounts of alcohol were consumed by a recognizable and restricted group, Hos 9:1–6 must be rejected as an allusion to the *marzēah*.

Summary

In this chapter, Hos 4:16–19 and 9:1–6 were considered as possible allusions to the *marzēah*. The first provided clear evidence of drinking within an explicitly religious connection. Although this was done by the entire nation, Hosea’s interpretive principle in the chapter indicates he envisioned their actions as an imitation of the priests, who constitute a recognizable group among the elite. After the alcohol was consumed they engage in promiscuous sex, but this was not so much a part of their *marzēah*-like actions as a supplemental to them. Attributing the passage to Hosea himself¹¹⁷ would date this *marzēah* allusion slightly after Amos 4:1 and 6:1, 3–7.

¹¹⁶Hos 4:16–19 is generally dated to late in the reign of Jeroboam II, while 9:1–6 post-dates the Assyrian invasion of 733 BCE. See, for example, the discussions of Wolff, *Hosea*, 75–76 and 153; Davies, *Hosea*, 112 and 211–12.

¹¹⁷See p. 132–133 and n. 116.

In contrast, the only thing Hos 9:1–6 has in common with a *marzēah* is the religious references. The passage deals with the entire nation engaged in an activity proper to them rather than to a small portion thereof. Thus, this is not a case of the general populace imitating their leaders. In addition, the element of excessive drinking cannot be established from the text. Therefore, Hos 9:1-6 does not meet the minimum criteria for a *marzēah* allusion.

CHAPTER 4

THE *marzēah* IN ISAIAH?

Four Isaiah texts have been proposed as *marzēah* allusions: Isa 5:11–13; 28:1–4; 28:7–8 and 56:9–57:3.¹ All deal with drunkenness; the similarity to Amos 6:1, 3–7 is commonly noted, and other arguments presented for each Isaiah passage as well. No one has explicitly identified Isa 5:11–13 as a *marzēah* allusion, but Richard Fey has argued that Isaiah relied on the Amos passage in composing Isa 5:11–13.² Bernhard A. Asen connects Isa 28:1–4 with a *marzēah* on the basis of the references to drunkenness, flowers and oil.³ Some scholars find parallels between Isa 28:7–8 and El’s *marzēah* at Ugarit,⁴ with a few also noting funerary elements in the surrounding context.⁵ Finally, Jared Jackson points to the reference to beds in Amos 6:4 and Isa 57:7–8.⁶ Each passage and the accompanying arguments will be considered in turn.

¹Since the word *marzēah* does not appear in the book of Isaiah, the latter was not considered in Bryan’s dissertation. Heider implies that Isa 65:4 describes a *marzēah* feast (G. C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek: A Reassessment* [JSOTSup 43; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985] 389), but there is no mention of alcohol in the text and, as Heider notes, it describes a “nation” and a “people,” not just the elite. For these reasons, Isa 65:4 can be excluded from future consideration.

²R. Fey, *Amos und Jesaja: Abhängigkeit und Eigenständigkeit des Jesaja* (WMANT 12; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1963) 10–22.

³B. A. Asen, “The Garlands of Ephraim: Isaiah 28:1–6 and the *marzēah*,” *JSOT* 71 (September 1996) 73–87. Isa 28:1–4 are also called a *marzēah* by J. J. Jackson, “Style in Isaiah 28 and a Drinking Bout of the Gods (RS 24.258),” *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (PTMS 1; eds. J. J. Jackson and M. Kessler; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974) 97. He too mentions the garland, but provides no arguments for his designation or a connection between flowers and the *marzēah*.

⁴M. H. Pope, “A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,” *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of W. F. Stinespring* (ed. J. M. Efrid; Durham: Duke University Press, 1972) 196; *idem*, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 217; *idem*, “The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit,” *Ugarit in Retrospect* (ed. G. D. Young; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 178; Jackson, “Style,” 94–95; R. B. Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets: Composition and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 38; B. Halpern, “‘The Excremental Vision’: The Doomed Priests of Doom in Isaiah 28,” *HAR* 10 (1987) 118; Asen, “Garlands,” 76.

⁵Halpern, “‘The Excremental Vision,’” 118–19; K. van der Toorn, “Echoes of Judaeon Necromancy in Isaiah 28:7–22,” *ZAW* 100 (1988) 213; M. A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39, with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996) 367, 369, 371.

⁶Jackson, “Style,” 96.

Isa 5:11–13

As noted above, although most critics note similar content here and in various portions of Amos 6:1, 3–7, one of the two explicit *marzēah* texts in the Bible, no one has directly identified Isa 5:11–13 as a *marzēah* allusion. However, if Fey is correct concerning the latter’s literary dependence on the Amos passage, it may be addressing the same situation, namely a *marzēah*. Since Fey’s proposal is built upon lexical and structural aspects of the two texts, it is important to establish the wording and extent of the Isaiah passage⁷ before considering the details of his argument and its relevance for a *marzēah* allusion in Isa 5:11–13.

The Text

הוֹי מְשַׁכְּמִי בַבֶּקֶר	11	a	Alas, you who rise early in the morning
שָׁכַר יְרֹדְפוֹ		b	in pursuit of strong drink,
מְאַחֲרִי ⁸ בַּנֶּשֶׁף		c	who linger in the evening,
יַיִן יְדַלִּיקֵם ⁹		d	(with) wine inflaming them.
וְהָיָה ¹⁰ כְּנֹר וְנָבֶל	12	a	Whose feast ¹¹ consists of lyre and lute,

⁷Amos 6:1, 3–7 has already been presented in Chapter 2.

⁸The addition of הוֹי at the beginning of this line by O. Procksch, *Jesaja I übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT 9; Leipzig: Deichert, 1930) 91, is without textual or versional support, and unnecessary, since the הוֹי at the beginning of v. 11 governs the succeeding lines.

⁹This is emended to יְדַלִּיקֵן by Kissane, who translates “they pursue”; see E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah: Translated from a Critically Revised Hebrew Text with Commentary* (Rev. ed.; Dublin: Richview, 1960) 54, 55, 57. However, the *hiphil* of דָּלַק does not bear this meaning (H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* [Continental Commentaries; trans. T. H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991] 190); H. L. Ginsberg, “Some Emendations in Isaiah,” *JBL* 69 (1950) 52–53, avoids this objection by emending to יְדַלִּיקֵן. Although the meaning fits the parallelism, the MT prepares for the lack of comprehension in 12c–d; see J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986) 155n3.

¹⁰Emended to הוֹי by R. B. Y. Scott, “Isaiah Chapters 1–39: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB* 200. This incorrectly shifts the lament’s address from the individuals to their actions. See also n. 8.

¹¹For the singular with a ’ (in line b of the Hebrew) see GKC §93ss; F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (4th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1890) 126–27; K. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja erklärt* (KHAT 10; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1900) 56; G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah. Vol. I: Introduction and Commentary on I–XXVII* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912) 93; E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965) 209n13.

- תָּף וְחִלְלִיל וְיִין¹² מִשְׁתֵּיהֶם¹³
 וְאֵת פְּעַל יְהוָה לֹא יִבְיטוּ
 וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו לֹא יֵאָדוּ
 לְכֵן גָּלָה עַמִּי מִבְּלִי־דַעַת 13 a Therefore my people are exiled without knowledge;
 וּכְבוֹדוֹ מִתִּי¹⁴ רָעַב b its nobles¹⁵ are dying of hunger,
 וְהַמוֹנוֹ צָחָה צָמָא c and its multitude is parched with thirst.

Apart from a minor revocalization in 13b, this text duplicates the MT. The Masoretic pointing as מְתֵי רָעַב (“men of hunger”) gives an acceptable meaning, but is not a good parallel to 13c, where the word “parched” (צָחָה) indicates the deprivation’s effect. The first word is often emended to מְיָ (“exhausted [from hunger]”),¹⁶ but although this provides a better parallel, it is without manuscript or versional support. The adopted reading (a construct plural participle from מָתַ) enjoys both.¹⁷ It also

¹²This is changed to בִּין (“during [their feast]”) by W. Caspari, “Hebräisch בִּין temporal,” *OLZ* 16 (1913) 337–341. He is followed by E. Jacob, *Esāe 1–12* (CAT 8a; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1987) 85; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 191. However, a reference to wine is consistent with the enumeration of a banquet’s elements (cf. Isa 24:7–9; Amos 6:4–6).

¹³Emendation to either מְשַׁעְתָּם (“their interests”) with Ginsberg, “Some Emendations,” 52, or מְמַמְתָּם (“their scheming”) with G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja Bd. 1: Kap. 1–23* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare; 2nd ed.; Zürich/Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag, 1966) 81, is unnecessary, since the MT makes perfect sense and neither change has textual or versional support.

¹⁴In place of the MT’s מְתֵי; cf. below.

¹⁵A case of the abstract (literally, “its nobility”) for the concrete.

¹⁶E.g., by T. K. Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah: A New Translation with Commentary and Appendices* (4th ed., rev.; New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1886) 1.32, 2.138; Marti, *Jesaja*, 57; B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja übersetzt und erklärt* (HAT 3; 4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922) 58; Fohrer, *Jesaja 1*, 81; O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (OTL; 2nd ed., revised and completely rewritten; trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983) 94n7; J. D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* (WBC 24; Waco: Word Books, 1985) 59; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 191. The proposal can be traced to F. Hitzig, *Der Prophet Jesaja, übersetzt und ausgelegt* (Heidelberg, 1833).

¹⁷It is found in two manuscripts (see *BHS*) and was read by the LXX, Targum, Vulgate and Syriac. This reading is adopted by Gray, *Isaiah 1*, 92, 93; Kissane, *Isaiah*, 54, 55; Jacob, *Esāe 1–12*, 83 and most modern English translations. The MT is retained by Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 127; Young, *Isaiah*, 205; D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament. 2. Isaie, Jérémie, Lamentations* (OBO 50; Fribourg; Göttingen: Editions Universitaires; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) 33–34; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 156.

indicates the effect of the hunger, while the reduced intensity in the next line highlights the shift from the nobles (the principle recipients of the punishment) to the general populace.¹⁸ The repointing does not affect the essential meaning of the line or the issue of a *marzēah* allusion in the passage.

Establishing the Unit

The opening cry of “alas” (אֵי) marks the unit’s starting point. Since the same word occurs in v. 18, a few consider vv. 11–17 as the basic unit.¹⁹ There are problems with that delineation, however. The word “therefore” (לְכֵן) occurs in both vv. 13 and 14,²⁰ corresponding to a switch from masculine addressees in vv. 11–13 to 3rd feminine singular pronouns in v. 14.²¹ A double announcement of judgment is not impossible, but the switch from the city’s inhabitants to the city itself indicates vv. 11–13 and 14–17 should be separated. Structural features support this conclusion. The judgment in v. 13 is an ironic reversal of the failings described in vv. 11–12, which creates a mirror structure: their carousing (11–12b) and unawareness of God’s activity (12c-d) results in exile “without knowledge” (13a) and the negation of their carousing

¹⁸See also on p. 163.

¹⁹Thus, e.g., Young, *Isaiah*, 205; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 61. Verses 8–17 are combined by Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 155–62; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 124–25. Isa 5:11–30 + 10:1–6 (minus 5:24c–25 and 10:4b) are considered a (probably) Isaianic exposition of the Vineyard Song in 5:1–7 by M. C. A. Korpel, “Structural Analysis as a Tool for Redaction Criticism: The Example of Isaiah 5 and 10.1–6,” *JSOT* 69 (March 1996) 53–71. See also C. E. L’Heureux, “The Redactional History of Isaiah 5:1—10:4,” *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup 31; eds. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 99–119.

²⁰The second is absent from the LXX, but confirmed by the Vulgate and Syriac. A missing verse, introduced by אֵי, to which the second “therefore” would respond, is proposed by Gray, *Isaiah I*, 92; Procksch, *Jesaja I*, 91, 94.

²¹Verses 11–12 contain masculine plural participles and finite verbs; v. 13 contains 3rd masculine singular pronouns, referring to the collective “my people.” The feminine pronouns in v. 14a–b refer to Sheol, but those in 14c–d are generally understood to indicate the city Jerusalem.

(13b-c).²² This pattern turns the verses in upon themselves, and is duplicated in vv. 14–17.²³ Thus, the majority of critics consider vv. 14–17 an expansion of the primary proclamation of judgment in v. 13.²⁴

Within the boundaries of Isa 5:11–13, a few deletions have been proposed. Various portions of line 12 have been deleted for reasons of metre,²⁵ but all parts of the line are normal components of an ancient feast.²⁶ More significantly, Otto Kaiser would remove v. 12 as a “later eschatological interpretation” and v. 13 as an “historicizing” one.²⁷ Since Fey relies on both verses in establishing dependence on Amos, their deletion would negate some of his arguments. However, both are intricately linked with v. 11 in the mirror pattern as an ironic reversal of the condemned action. At the same time, the basic structure of a Judgment Oracle in terms of a condemnation and announcement of judgment²⁸ supports the retention of vv. 12 and 13 as original parts of the oracle.

²²R. B. Chisholm, Jr., “Structure, Style, and the Prophetic Message: An Analysis of Isaiah 5:8–30,” *BSac* 143 (1986) 52. This feature’s importance is highlighted by comparison with Amos 6:1, 3–7, where the judgment section is also an ironic reversal of their situation, but without a mirror pattern.

²³Sheol eats (v. 14), the self-exalted are humbled (v. 15), Yahweh is exalted (v. 16), sheep eat (v. 17); see Chisholm, “Isaiah 5:8–30,” 52.

²⁴There are exceptions: in addition to the views presented in n. 19 above, Kissane, *Isaiah*, 56–57, links vv. 13–14 while transposing vv. 15–17 after v. 10; vv. 13–14 are considered a subunit by Korpel, “Structural Analysis,” 58; R. B. Y. Scott, “Isaiah 1–39,” 200–201, considers vv. 14–16 “out of place,” with v. 17 as the completion of v. 13; and Hayes and Irvine think vv. 13–17 “expound upon and develop the claim of verse 12b,” although the content shifts from exile in v. 13 to an earthquake in vv. 14–17 (J. H. Hayes and S. A. Irvine, *Isaiah the Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987] 104). Vv. 14 and 17 (with vv. 15–16 a later addition) are considered the original conclusion to vv. 11–12 by R. Porath, *Die Sozialkritik im Jesajabuch: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Analyse* (Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe XXIII: Theologie 503; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994) 113–16.

²⁵E.g., “tambourine and flute” is rejected by Duhm, *Jesaia*, 58; “and wine” is omitted by Ginsberg, “Some Emendations,” 52; Procksch, *Jesaia I*, 91, drops “and wine (is) their feast.”

²⁶Cf. Isa 24:7–9; Amos 6:4–6.

²⁷See Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12*, 97, 98, 104, 106, 108–09; he dates both redactions to the exilic period or later. Verse 13 (only) is also considered later by Porath, *Sozialkritik*, 113–16, 137.

²⁸C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. H. C. White; Louisville:

Discussion

As a woe oracle,²⁹ Isa 5:11–13 laments the inescapable death of drunken banqueters. Their geographical location is not specified, but they are generally considered Judahites. An exception is Marvin Sweeney, who thinks the prophet is addressing the south but describing the inhabitants of the north.³⁰ Their identity is important because of the reference to a northern *marzēah* in Amos 6:7, and the allusion to one at the time of Hosea (Hos 4:16–19). If Isaiah is describing a scene in northern Israel, that increases the possibility he is alluding to the same situation as his predecessors.³¹ Sweeney's proposal is tenuous, however. Since participles within a woe oracle function as vocatives,³² Isaiah is directing the lament at the feast's participants, and while he could have addressed northern drinkers from a distance, the text does not demand that conclusion.³³ Since Sweeney admits the text is ambiguous,³⁴ judgment should be withheld, and any allusion to a *marzēah* established on grounds other than an uncertain geographical location.

Although not in itself conclusive, Fey's proposal that Isa 5:11–13 is based upon Amos 6 would support a *marzēah* allusion in this text.³⁵ Both passages contain an accusation, introduced by אִי (‘‘alas’’), which is followed by a relatively shorter

Westminster/John Knox Press, 1967) 169–76.

²⁹See the discussion of this form in Chapter 2.

³⁰Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 130–31.

³¹Especially in light of the probable dependence of Isa 5:11–13 on Amos 6:1, 3–7 (see further on pp. 159–161).

³²See the discussion in chapter 2.

³³*Contra* Sweeney's claim that the kind of land-grabbing described in the companion woe of Isa 5:8–10 was not practiced in Judah at this time, see H. Bardtke, ‘‘Die Latifundien in Juda während der zweiten Hälfte des achten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. (zum Verständnis von Jes 5, 8–10),’’ *Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer* (ed. A. Caquot; Paris: Librairie Adrien Maisonneuve, 1971) 235–54.

³⁴Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 131.

³⁵For a detailed presentation of the following, see Fey, *Amos und Jesaja*, 10–22.

announcement of judgment, introduced by לָכֵן (“therefore”). In both instances the accusation alternates between participial and finite verb forms, and is formulated with a lengthy description of what they have done (Amos 6:1, 3–6b; Isa 5:11–12b) followed by brief statement of what they have not done (Amos 6:6c; Isa 5:12c-d). Finally, in both, the threat of exile constitutes an ironic reversal of their situation: in Amos the “first of the nations” will be the first exiles, while in Isaiah those who drink at feasts will suffer hunger and thirst.

The only significant objection to Fey’s proposal is advanced by Eryl W. Davies,³⁶ who attributes the similar form and content to the shared use of the woe form in addressing a similar cultural, social and religious situation. He also discounts the threat of exile as too common in the prophets to be significant, and notes that “my people” (אֱמִי) and “without knowledge” (בְּלִי יָדָעַת) are absent from the Amos text.³⁷ Davies is correct that the basic structure and the verb forms are due to the woe form, and that the common general content might reflect a similar situation encountered by both prophets. The detailed structure and shared vocabulary cannot be as easily dismissed, however. The extreme imbalance in length between the accusation and the judgment sections of Amos 6:1, 3–7 and Isa 5:11–13 is unparalleled in other woe oracles.³⁸ The formulation of the accusation as a long statement of their actions plus a

³⁶See E. W. Davies, *Prophecy and Ethics: Isaiah and the Ethical Traditions of Israel* (JSOTSup 16; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981) 38.

³⁷Although they occur together in Hos 4:6 as part of the larger context for the *marzēah* allusion in Hos 4:16–19, in the absence of other lexical contacts between the latter and Isa 5:11–13 dependence in either direction cannot be established.

³⁸The elements are not clearly defined in Amos 5:18–20, but the accusation appears to encompass v. 18a–b with vv. 18c–20 comprising the judgment section. In the woe series of Habakkuk 2, the judgment portion is always longer: cf. Hab 2:6 and 7–8, 9 and 10–11, 12 and 13–14, 15 and 16–17. In Isaiah, a cry of woe plus an accusation is found without a subsequent pronouncement of judgment at Isa 5:18–19, 20 and 21; apart from Isa 5:11–13, elsewhere in the book the accusation section is either shorter (see Isa 5:8 and 9–10; 28:1 and 2–4; 29:1 and 2–4; 31:1 and 2–3) or roughly equal to the judgment proclamation (see Isa 5:22–23 and 24; 10:1–2 and 3–4 and 29:15–16, 20–21 and 17–19).

short statement of their inaction is also rare in the prophetic woes,³⁹ and judgment as an ironic reversal is not a necessary feature either.⁴⁰ As for vocabulary, although exile is a frequent threat in the prophetic literature, Fey's point is that Isaiah only uses the verb נָלַץ in the *qal*, as in Amos 6:7, here in v. 13.⁴¹ Finally, Fey acknowledges that both "my people" and "without knowledge" are not paralleled in Amos 6:1, 3–7, but takes this as evidence of development by Isaiah, similar to the latter's elaboration of Amos' "instruments of music" (5b) as "lyre and lute, tambourine and flute."⁴²

Thus, Davies' objections are not conclusive, and Isa 5:11–13 may indeed be dependent on Amos 6:1, 3–7.⁴³ But that does not necessarily mean Isaiah was addressing members of a *marzēah*; he could have adapted his predecessor's message to a similar yet distinct context. Therefore, whether this passage alludes to a *marzēah* must be established on the basis of the *marzēah* elements identified in Chapter 1.

³⁹Of all the examples listed in n. 38, it occurs only at Isa 30:1–2 and 31:1.

⁴⁰It is absent from Isa 5:22–24; 29:1–4; 31:1–3; Hab 2:12–14, and only minimally present in Isa 29:15–21.

⁴¹Fey, *Amos und Jesaja*, 15. It does occur in the *qal* at Isa 24:11 and 49:24, but neither is from Isaiah himself.

⁴²Fey, *Amos und Jesaja*, 14–16.

⁴³The wisdom tradition has also been suggested as a source for Isa 5:11; see Marti, *Jesaja*, 56; J. Fichtner, "Isaiah Among the Wise," *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (ed. J. L. Crenshaw; New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1976) 429–39; J. W. Whedbee, *Isaiah and Wisdom* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971) 98–100; Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12*, 101; J. Jensen, *Isaiah 1–39* (OTMS 8; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984) 80; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 61; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 201; Porath, *Sozialkritik*, 129. Prov 23:29–35 reflects on the negative effects of wine, and Qoh 10:16–17 specifically laments early morning feasts by the rulers. Other wisdom texts which view alcohol negatively, or at least with reserve, include Prov. 20:1; 21:17; 31:4–5; Sir 18:33; 19:2; 31:25–30. Some influence is likely (note especially the parallel between "those who linger after wine" in Prov. 23:30 and Isa 5:11c–d, as well as the vocal similarity between יָאֵץ in Prov 23:29 and the opening יָאֵץ in Isa 5:11 [but for the distinction between the two terms see G. Wanke, "יָאֵץ und יָאֵץ," *ZAW* 78 (1966) 215–18]), yet this is not a simple case of copying. By presenting the ideas in a divine speech with a pronouncement of judgment, rather than a riddle followed by an appeal to common sense as in Proverbs 23, Isaiah has transformed the wisdom *topos* (see further Fey, *Amos und Jesaja*, 10; Fohrer, *Jesaja 1*, 82). Ultimately, only Isa 5:11 can be linked to the wisdom tradition, and that verse only in a radically altered form. As such, the formulation and content of Isa 5:11–13 as a whole owe more to Amos than to wisdom precursors.

One of those three constitutive components is unquestionably present in Isa 5:11–13. Both “wine” (יַיִן; 11d, 12b) and strong drink (שִׁכָּר; 11b) are mentioned, with a clear indication they are consumed in large quantities: their imbibing “inflames” them (11d), making them unaware of divine action (12c-d; cf. 13a). Moreover, the references to “morning” and “evening” (11a and c) are the poles of a *merismus* encompassing the intervening time as well. As such, v. 11 describes an all-day drinking feast, during which the participants drink enough to cloud their senses.

A second *marzēah* component is the involvement of a definable, upper-class group. The announcement of punishment against the “nobles” in 13b is suggestive in this regard, but its probative value is limited by the surrounding lines. They indicate the punishment will be experienced by God’s people (13a), of which the nobles are one part and “its multitude” (רַב־מִנוֹ; 13c) is another.⁴⁴ Since the judgment in v. 13 is a reversal of the actions in vv. 11–12, its application to the entire population seems to argue against the restriction of vv. 11–12 to the nobles. Nonetheless, the content of vv. 11–12 suggests the nobles are, in fact, the agents there. Many scholars think this woe continues the address in Isa 5:8–10,⁴⁵ in which the wealthy are condemned for their land-grabbing practices. That cannot be proven, but even if vv. 11–13 stem from a different time,⁴⁶ a comparable group with both the resources and the leisure to

⁴⁴In contrast to virtually all other commentators, Gerald T. Sheppard takes lines b and c as roughly synonymous, and interprets “its nobility” as a reference to the lowly, “who should be held in high esteem”; see G. T. Sheppard, “Isaiah 1–39,” *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (ed. J. L. Mays, et al.; San Francisco: Harper, 1988) 553. However, the surrounding verses and parallel woes in this chapter all deal with the upper class, which makes his reading unlikely.

⁴⁵Cf., e.g., the discussions of Marti, *Jesaja*, 56; Kissane, *Isaiah*, 53; J. Mauchline, *Isaiah 1–39: Confidence in God* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM Press, 1962) 83; Jensen, *Isaiah 1–39*, 76; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 159; Chisholm, “Isaiah 5:8–30,” 51; Jacob, *Esate 1–12*, 88; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 124–25. In the Targum there is a link between the “field of oppression” in v. 8 and the “wine of oppression” in v. 11.

⁴⁶Korpel, “Structural Analysis,” 56–57, attributes the location of vv. 8–10 to a redactor, but thinks they are probably Isaian nonetheless.

engage in all-day drinking bouts is envisioned. It would seem, therefore, that Isaiah has expanded the judgment section to indicate the true impact of conquest and exile: the reality is that, in the language of modern military obscurantism, there will be “collateral damage.” In the theatre of human affairs not even God can limit punishment to a “surgical strike” against the leaders.

But even though the passage describes members of the upper-class consuming large amounts of alcohol, there is no indication of the third component, i.e., a religious context for their actions.⁴⁷ Granted, wine can be used in religious situations,⁴⁸ but that is not its exclusive setting. Thus, although the religious and secular spheres of life were not separate in the ancient world, without evidence to the contrary it is best to consider this passage as describing a primarily non-religious feast. That would explain why the prophet did not duplicate the word *marzēah* from Amos 6:7. Since he was not describing a true *marzēah* he substituted the general term “feast” (מִשְׁתֵּה) in v. 12b.

Isa 28:1–4

A second possible *marzēah* allusion is Isa 28:1–4. Not only does it share a concern for drunkenness with Amos 6:1, 3–7, but Asen has claimed the references to flowers and oil in connection with this drunkenness are indicative of a *marzēah*. Once the text has been established, his evaluation of its content can be examined.

⁴⁷The reference to the lute (for its cultic associations see P. J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah — an Archaeological Commentary* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988] 154), is not enough to establish this as a religious feast, unlike in Amos 6:5a where it is in sequence with other religious items and actions.

⁴⁸See Jacob, *Esaię 1–12*, 88; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 200 and the biblical and Ugaritic (respectively) texts they cite. Note that both reject any religious connection for this passage.

The Text

<p>הוֹי צִטְרַת גְּאֹת שְׁכָרֵי אֶפְרַיִם רִצִּיץ נִבֵּל צְבִי תִפְאַרְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עַל-רֹאשׁ גֵּיאִ⁴⁹ שְׁמָנִים הַלּוּמֵי יַיִן</p>	<p>1 a Alas, proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, b and the fading garland,⁵⁰ the beauty of its glory, c which is on the head of the fertile valley, d of those overcome with wine!⁵¹</p>
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⁴⁹This is emended to גֵּיאִ ("proud [of fat things]") by J. Halévy, *RevSém* 21 (1913) 5; L. Rost, "Zu Jesaja 28:1ff," *ZAW* 12 (1935) 292; cf. now 1QIs^a. Driver accepts the emendation, but renders as "streaming with oils"; see G. R. Driver, "'Another Little Drink' — Isaiah 28:1–22," *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas on His Retirement from the Regius Professorship of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, 1968* (eds. P. R. Ackroyd and B. Lindars; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968) 48–49. In support of the MT, Irwin argues lines b–d each develop a phrase from line a. Thus, 1b elaborates "proud crown," 1c refers to Samaria as the capital of "Ephraim," and 1d expands upon "drunkards." For a full discussion see W. H. Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33: Translation with Philological Notes* (BibOr 30; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977) 6; see also the discussion of this word in Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle* 2, 196–98. Asen's acceptance of Driver's interpretation (see Asen, "Garlands," 82–83) weakens, but does not in itself completely invalidate his proposed *marzēah* allusion in this text.

⁵⁰The parallel "crown" in 1a suggests רִצִּיץ may be a diadem comparable to the gold object in the front of the high priest's turban (see Exod 28:36; 39:30; Lev 8:9), but the phrase רִצִּיץ נִבֵּל ("the flower fades") in Isa 40:7,8 points to flora here as well; nonetheless, the parallel suggests the nuance "garland" (Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 4). This vegetative imagery anticipates the fertile valley in the next line, and a wilting flower is an even better metaphor for impermanence than tarnished metal; it also sets up the ironic reversal of 4c–e (for the garland and the fig in v. 4c as images of transitoriness see W. H. Irwin, "Isaiah 24–39," *NJBC* 245). This argues against the meaning "young shoot, sprig" for the consonants נִבֵּל, proposed on the basis of Akkadian, Aramaic and Arabic cognates by Driver, "'Another Little Drink,'" 48; see also the criticism of Driver by Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 4n2.

⁵¹This line's apparent grammatical dependence on גֵּיאִ שְׁמָנִים, which is in the absolute state, has long been considered problematic. The LXX reads the line as a vocative, it is moved after 1a by Kissane, *Isaiah*, 303 and R. B. Y. Scott, "Isaiah 1–39," 314, and is delete as a gloss by E. Vogt, "Das Prophetenwort Jes 28,1–4 und das Ende der Königsstadt Samaria," *Homenaje a Juan Prado: Miscelanea de Estudios Biblicos y Hebraicos* (eds. L. A. Verdes and E. J. A. Hernandez; Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1975) 114. Procksch, *Jesaja I*, 347, inserts קִצְצֹתָ ("like a crown . . .") at the beginning of 1d while "the fertile valley" is deleted by G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja, Bd. 2: Kap. 24–39* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare; 2nd ed.; Zürich/Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag, 1967) 43; O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (OTL; trans. R. A. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) 236 note a; H. Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39: das Buch, der Prophet und seine Botschaft* (BKAT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982) 1042. None of the modern proposals has textual or versional support. The deletions can be rejected on the basis of the integrity of each line to the verse as a whole (see n. 49). Moreover, the syntax is not impossible. Similar constructions are listed in Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 436; Young, *Isaiah*, 264n2 (but cf. GKC §128c), while a construct form (רִצִּיץ) plus an enclitic *mem* is proposed by H. D. Hummel, "Enclitic *Mem* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *JBL* 76 (1957) 98. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 507, takes "which is upon the head of . . ." from 1c as doing double-duty for this line as well. This preserves the dual adornments of the city and its leaders from 1a–b (although his appeal to GKC §128a [his n. 25] is not to the point, since the Grammar deals with a series of true genitives).

הִנֵּה חֶזֶק וְאַמֶּץ לַיהוָה ⁵²	2a See, Yahweh has one who is mighty and strong;
כְּזֶרֶם בָּרָד שֶׁעַר קָטֵב	b like a storm of hail, a devastating ⁵⁸ tempest,
כְּזֶרֶם מַיִם כְּבִירִים שֹׁטְפִים	c like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters;
הִנִּיחַ לָאָרֶץ בְּיַד	d he will hurl to the earth with his hand.
בְּרַגְלֵיהֶם תִּרְמַסְנָה ⁵³	3a Trampled under foot will be
עֲטֹרַת גְּאוֹת שְׂכוֹרֵי אֶפְרַיִם	b the proud garland of the drunkards of Ephraim.
וְהַיָּתֵה צִיצֵת גִּבְלֵי צְבִי תִפְאַרְתּוֹ	4a And the fading flower, the beauty of its glory,
אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשׁ גִּיא שְׂמֹנִים	b which is on the head of the fertile valley,
כְּבִכּוּרָה ⁵⁴ בְּטָרֵם קִיץ	c will be like a first-ripe fig before the summer:
אֲשֶׁר יִרְאֶה ⁵⁵ הַרְאָה אוֹתָהּ	d when the observer sees it,
בְּעוֹדָה בְּכַפּוֹ ⁵⁶ יִבְלַעְנָה ⁵⁷	e as soon as it's in his hand, he swallows it

This text departs from the MT at three points, none of which affects the basic meaning or the issue of a *marzēah* allusion in the passage. First, since it is more likely a circumlocution was substituted for the divine name than the reverse, לַיהוָה is read at the end of 2a with 1QIs^a, against the MT's לְאֹדְנִי.⁵⁹ Second, the MT's תִּרְמַסְנָה in 3a is

⁵²In place of the MT's לְאֹדְנִי; see below.

⁵³The MT reads תִּרְמַסְנָה; see below.

⁵⁴The MT reads כְּבִכּוּרָה; see below.

⁵⁵Changed to יִאָרֵה ("he plucks") by Kissane, *Isaiah*, 303; Driver, "Another Little Drink," 50; cf. also R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980) 225; Driver appeals to the LXX and Houbigant (unavailable to me). The MT yields a greater sense of immediacy appropriate to the threatened punishment.

⁵⁶Vogt, followed by Loretz, emends to בְּכַפָּה ("on a branch"); see Vogt, "Jes 28,1-4," 119; O. Loretz, "Das Prophetenwort über das Ende der Königsstadt Samaria (Jes 28,1-4)," *UF* 9 (1977) 363. While Vogt is correct that eating directly from the tree is a more immediate image, it detracts from the emphasis on the agent found elsewhere in 4d-e (cf. n. 57) and the semantic interplay with יָד in v. 2nd (on which see D. L. Petersen, "Isaiah 28: A Redaction Critical Study," *SBLSP* 17 [1979] 106).

⁵⁷Divided as יִבְלַעְנָה ("its bloom will wither") by Driver, "Another Little Drink," 50; he cites M. Scott, *Textual Discoveries in Proverbs, Psalms and Isaiah* (London: S.P.C.K., 1927) 197-98. However, the MT's image of active rather than passive consumption fits better with the context of judgment by the divine agent initiated in v. 2. See also n. 55 above.

⁵⁸Fohrer, *Jesaja* 2, 43; Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 8, see the demon Qeteb here (cf. Deut 32:24; Hos 13:14; Ps 91:6); the latter understands it as a superlative (see his n. 16 for literature).

⁵⁹The latter may have been substituted in order to enhance the alliteration in the line.

a 3rd feminine plural *niphal*, while the subject (in the next line) is singular. Pointing it as a singular with an energetic ending was proposed at least as early as Delitzsch and is followed by most scholars.⁶⁰ Third, the MT has a *mappîq* in the final consonant of כְּבֹרָהּ (thus, “its early fig”) but a simple ה is read by Aquila, Theodotian, the Vulgate, the Targum, the Peshitta and most modern authors and translations.

Establishing the Unit

The unit’s starting point is indicated by the initial הוֹי, but the end is not as immediately obvious. Since a new geographical location, namely Jerusalem, is not mentioned until v. 14, some treat vv. 1–13 as a unity dealing with Samaria,⁶¹ but this view can be rejected on a number grounds. To begin with, Isa 28:5–6 should be separated from the surrounding verses. “In that day” suggests a new unit, and despite some shared vocabulary with vv. 1–4 (עֲטָרָה, צִבְיָה and תִּפְאֶרֶת) the point of reference is completely different.⁶² At the same time, there are no lexical links between vv. 5–6 and what follows, and the ideas of justice and battle introduced in v. 6 do not carry over into the following verses either. Finally, the tone and content shift from the condemnation of drunkenness in vv. 1–4 and 7–8 to Yahweh’s future presence in vv.

⁶⁰See Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 436–47. In contrast, Kissane, *Isaiah*, 303, changes כ on the preceding word to the article and points the verb as a 3rd feminine plural *qal* (but cf. his p. 304). Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 502n3, takes the following line as a collective. Vogt, followed by Loretz, emends to a 3rd masculine (prophetic) perfect, with v. 2 providing the subject; see Vogt, “Jes 28,1–4,” 116, 118; Loretz, “Jes 28,1–4,” 362.

⁶¹See Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 362; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 506; Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, 322; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 367–68. Francis Landy ends the unit with v. 8; see F. Landy, “Tracing the Voice of the Other: Isaiah 28 and the Covenant with Death,” *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 143; eds. J. C. Exum and D. J. A. Clines; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 149n25. Although they accept a shift from Ephraim to Jerusalem at v. 7, the entire chapter is treated as a single poem from Isaiah by Kissane, *Isaiah*, 298–309; Young, *Isaiah*, 262–94.

⁶²The “crown,” “garland” and “glory” are related to the capital of Ephraim and its leaders in vv. 1–4 while they describe Yahweh in vv. 5–6. Further, the latter deal with his relationship with “his people,” who are never mentioned in the earlier verses. For the formal differences between the two sections see p. 167 below.

5–6. In short, vv. 5–6 are intrusive between vv. 4 and 7, and are rejected as a later addition by the majority of critics.⁶³

At the same time, vv. 7–13 should be disassociated from vv. 1–4, despite the shared drunkenness motif and the apparent link created by “these also” at the beginning of v. 7. Only four terms from vv. 1–4 are repeated in the later verses, with three of them clustered in v. 7, and not all are as significant as first appears. The verb נָחַת occurs in vv. 2 and 12, but the sentiments are completely opposite: “he will cast down” vs. “give rest” respectively. The verb “swallow” (שָׁלַט) occurs in vv. 4 and 7, but the objects are different (a first-ripe fig and the drinkers). The repetition of the consonants שָׁכַר in “drunkards” (vv. 1, 3) and “strong drink” (v. 7 [3x]) is closer, but only “wine” is used identically in vv. 1 and 7 [2x]. In short, the shared vocabulary operates more on the level of catch-word association than as part of an organic unity. As such, “these also” is most likely a redactional link.⁶⁴ Form-critical considerations support this conclusion. The opening הִנֵּה marks what follows as a “woe-oracle,” with v. 1 constituting the accusation and vv. 2–4 announcing punishment. While not impossible, the addition of a salvation oracle (vv. 5–6) and/or the resumption of the accusation (7–8) would be unusual. It is simpler to take Isa 28:1–4 as a self contained unit.

Numerous deletions from those verses have been proposed, but only those relevant to whether the passage is a *marzēah* allusion will be considered here. The portions of the text which bear directly on that issue are the references to being “overcome with wine” in 1d, and the double mention of “drunkards” in 1a and 3b and

⁶³With the exception of those listed in n. 61.

⁶⁴Again, the exceptions to this consensus view are listed in n. 61. Fohrer, *Jesaja 2*, 44–45, thinks Isa 28:1–4 was originally part of the Oracles Against the Nations collection (Isaiah 13–23) but moved here because of the drunkenness motif in 28:7–8; he is followed by Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1046; see also Halpern, “The Excremental Vision,” 112, 114. This does not rule out the connection having been made by Isaiah himself, as suggested by Procksch, *Jesaja I*, 353; W. L. Holladay, *Isaiah: Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1978) 59. Cf. Jackson, “Style,” 90, who takes the phrase as anticipatory rather than reflective.

flowers in 1b and 4a. All of these have been challenged as secondary by one scholar or another. For instance, Vogt considers 1d a gloss on 1a,⁶⁵ while Kissane and Loretz omit 1b-c.⁶⁶ However, the integrity of the entire verse has already been established, ruling out deletion of these lines.⁶⁷ Similarly, v. 3b is considered a gloss on 3a by Loretz,⁶⁸ and 4a (and b) is deleted by Vogt and Loretz,⁶⁹ yet, both 3b and 4a(-b) are essential to the ironic reversal of the situation lamented in the accusation:⁷⁰ the “proud crown” (1a) will be trampled underfoot (3a-b) while the fading garland (1b) will be consumed as greedily as a first-ripe fruit (4c-e). Thus, the questioned lines should be retained. It remains to be seen whether they allude to a *marzēah*.

Discussion

The similar content in Isa 28:1–4 and Amos 6:1,3–7 is often noted, and Fey also considers Isa 28:1–4 dependent on the Amos text.⁷¹ His case for direct use by

⁶⁵Vogt, “Jes 28,1–4,” 114.

⁶⁶Kissane, *Isaiah*, 304; Loretz, “Jes 28,1–4,” 362. The former considers them an interpolation from 4a-b while Loretz thinks they are a gloss on “proud crown” in 1a. He also deletes 4a-b (see n. 69 below).

⁶⁷See n. 49 above.

⁶⁸Loretz, “Jes 28,1–4,” 363.

⁶⁹Vogt, “Jes 28,1–4,” 117–18; Loretz, “Jes 28,1–4,” 363. Vogt retains the supposed “doublet” in 1a and 3b. Only Loretz omits both instances of a repeated phrase, i.e., 1b-c and 4a-b.

⁷⁰That this was done by repeating phrases verbatim may just as easily be evidence of pedestrian style as of editorial activity. In any case, at least one of 1b or 4a is retained by all commentators except Loretz, who never explains why 4a-b, a supposed gloss on 3b, exactly reproduces 1b-c, which he considers a separate gloss on part of 1a.

⁷¹Fey, *Amos und Jesaja*, 82.

Isaiah is not as strong as in the earlier text,⁷² but Amos 6:1, 3–7 and Isa 28:1–4 are both woe oracles aimed at Samaritan drinkers. Yet, as with Isa 5:11–13, that does not mean this passage describes a *marzēah* rather than a “secular” drinking party. A firmer basis than this shared concern about drinking is required.

Asen has sought to establish just such a firm connection between Isa 28:1–4 and the *marzēah*, based on the combination of drunkenness, flowers and oil.⁷³ However, there are serious problems with Asen’s proposal. In the first place, his discussion of oil in this text is dependent on Driver’s emendation and interpretation of 1c and 4b, which was rejected above.⁷⁴ As a result, only the association of flowers and drunkenness remains as a possible indicator of a *marzēah* in this text. Drinking is an essential component of any *marzēah*, and intoxication is indicated here by the designations “drunkards of Ephraim” (שִׁכְרֵי אֶפְרַיִם; 1a, 3b) and “those overcome by wine” (1d). Similarly, flowers are mentioned in 1b and 4a, and vegetative imagery is also present in 4c. But the presence of flowers at a drinking party does not make it a *marzēah*. Much of Asen’s article is devoted to establishing a connection between flowers and the *marzēah*, but in my opinion that attempt is unsuccessful. He surveys

⁷²He compares the Samaritans’ self-importance in Amos 6:1 (“the notables of the first of the nations”) with the “proud crown” in Isa 28:1a and 3b, as well as the antithetical parallelism of Amos 6:3 (“O you who put far away the evil day // but bring near the reign of violence”) with Isa 28:1–2, but these are general parallels that do not require dependence. Fey also notes the similarity between אֶשְׁרָאֵל in Amos 6:6b and אֶשְׁרָאֵל אֶשְׁרָאֵל in Isa 28:1c, 4b; at first glance this does seem indicative of literary dependence, but the similarity is more apparent than real. In Amos 6:6b אֶשְׁרָאֵל is used abstractly in the sense of “finest” and אֶשְׁרָאֵל refers to real oil, whereas in Isa 28:1c, 4b the former is used concretely (albeit metaphorically) of the city that sits above the valley and the latter is used abstractly with the sense of “fatness” and thus “fertility.” Moreover, significant structural patterns in Amos 6:1, 3–7 and Isa 5:11–13 are either reversed or absent from Isa 28:1–4. For instance, rather than a lengthy accusation followed by a short announcement of judgment (Amos 6:1, 3–6; Isa 5:11–12), the opposite is found in Isa 28:1 and 2–4 respectively. In addition, the accusation’s formulation as a lengthy statement of their actions plus a short statement of their inaction (Amos 6:1, 3–6b and 6c; Isa 5:11–12b and 12c-d), as well as the formulaic “therefore” introducing the judgment section, are both missing from Isa 28:1–4. On the uniqueness of these features see notes 38–40.

⁷³See n. 3 above.

⁷⁴See n. 49 above and cf. Asen, “Garlands,” 82–84.

the widespread association of flowers and banquets in the ancient world,⁷⁵ but with the possible exception of the Greek *symposium* nothing connects those banquets with a *marzēah*. Asen even admits that El's *marzēah* (KTU 1.114) does not mention flowers.⁷⁶ In short, the combination of flowers and drunkenness does not indicate a *marzēah*: ultimately, Asen is only able to show that flowers were a common feature of ancient banquets in general, especially upper-class ones. Granted, some of those feasts involved drunkenness, but no one would claim the *marzēah* is the only ancient gathering at which the participants got drunk. Furthermore, if neither flowers nor drunkenness alone is sufficient indication of a *marzēah*, neither is their combination.

Thus, it is necessary to employ the criteria for a *marzēah* allusion used earlier: upper-class drunkenness with a religious connection. This can be done quite quickly. Their intoxication has been considered above, and there are indications that the "drunkards" are members of the top stratum of society. In addition to the financial resources necessary for ongoing and/or recurrent intoxication,⁷⁷ flower garlands were a luxury not commonly worn by the poor.⁷⁸ However, there is no indication of a religious context for this activity,⁷⁹ and without a religious link for these verses, the

⁷⁵Asen, "Garlands," 74–79.

⁷⁶Asen, "Garlands," 76. His appeal to a relief described by Pope, "Divine Banquet," 189, fig. 4; *idem*, *Song of Songs*, 215, fig. 4, is invalid because the image derives from Corinth not Ugarit, and there is nothing to link it to the *marzēah* in any case.

⁷⁷As indicated by the use of participles in 1a and 1d.

⁷⁸See J. Goody, *The Culture of Flowers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 10, cited in Asen, "Garlands," 75.

⁷⁹A point acknowledged by Asen, "Garlands," 82. Although various links have been proposed, they are only possibilities at best and conjectures at worst. A possible allusion to the high priest's head gear has already been ruled out (cf. n. 50), and the same reasoning applies to the *ṣṣ* worn by Ba'al (Anat V AB, on which see U. Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath: Canaanite Epics of the Patriarchal Age* [Texts, Hebrew Translation, Commentary and Introduction] [trans. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971] 94, 95, 135; M. H. Pope and J. H. Tigay, "A Description of Baal," *UF* 3 [1971] 126). A. S. Herbert, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 162, suggests the garland alludes to a fertility deity's devotees, but such an association is not developed in the passage.

text cannot be considered a *marzēah* allusion with any certainty. Put succinctly, there is nothing in Isa 28:1–4 to distinguish it from upper-class drunkenness in general, and therefore nothing to mark it as describing a *marzēah*.

Isa 28:7–8

The third Isaiah text to consider is Isa 28:7–8. Although they are part of a larger unit encompassing vv. 7–22, because the reference to drinking in vv. 7–8 is the primary basis for a possible *marzēah* allusion, the discussion will focus on those two verses. Drunkenness, combined with perceived similarities to the Ugaritic description of El’s *marzēah* and possible connections with the cult of the dead, are the main reasons this text has been identified as a *marzēah* allusion. As a point of reference, a Hebrew text and English translation will be presented first.

The Text

בִּינָן שָׁגוּ	7 a With wine they reel, ⁸¹
וּבְשִׁכָּר תָּעוּ	b with strong drink they stagger; ⁸²
כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא שָׁגוּ בְשִׁכָּר ⁸⁰	c priest and prophet ⁸³ reel with strong drink,

⁸⁰Deleted by Procksch, *Jesaia I*, 352, with the LXX. The word is part of a mirror pattern in 7a-d (wine:strong drink::strong drink:wine) and should be retained.

⁸¹Appealing to the Arabic *sajā* I, Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 51, proposes the meaning, “was wrapped up in, addicted to,” for the verb הָגַשׁ here and in lines c and f. Yet the traditional meaning “go astray” is quite acceptable here; that it results from intoxication suggests the rendering “reel.” See further in n. 82.

⁸²The meaning “cackled, croaked, guffawed” is proposed by Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 51–52, 62, on the basis of the Arabic *tagiya*; he translates “bawl” here and in 7e. Yet he acknowledges תָּעוּ is used of drunkenness at Isa 19:13,14 (p. 52; in addition, Job 12:24–25; Hos 4:11–12 are noted by Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 15), and the nuance “stagger” is most appropriate for the effects of intoxication. Also, Irwin points out that Driver’s proposal yields divergent meanings for הָגַשׁ (see n. 81 above) and תָּעוּ, which elsewhere are synonymous; see Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 16.

⁸³Despite the singular nouns many translate in the plural without comment. The plural verbs, especially in reference to the separate roles of prophet and priest (lines f and g) confirm that the verse as a whole is concerned with more than one of each. The single priest and prophet are best understood as representative members of their respective religious guilds.

נבִלְעוּ מִן־הַיַּיִן	d they are swallowed up ⁸⁴ by wine,
תָּעוּ מִן־הַשֵּׂכָר	e they stagger with strong drink;
שָׁגוּ בְּרֹאֵה	f they reel while seeing, ⁸⁵
פָּקְדוּ פְּלִילִיָּה	g they stumble ⁸⁶ while ⁸⁷ giving judgment. ⁸⁸

⁸⁴Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 52, claims this phrase “means nothing,” and proposes “overcome” on the basis of the Arabic *balaga* and the Syriac *bla*ʿ. Most modern English versions translate as “confused” or something similar, from *עָלָה* II. Yet, “swallowed by” is an ironically appropriate way of indicating the alcohol’s effect here: what they swallowed has in fact swallowed them; cf. Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 16; J. C. Exum, “Whom Will He Teach Knowledge? A Literary Approach to Isaiah 28,” *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* (JSOTSup 19; eds. D. J. A. Clines, D. M. Gunn and A. J. Hauser; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982) 119; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 510; P. D. Miscall, *Isaiah* (Readings: A New Biblical Commentary; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 74.

⁸⁵Driver considers the verb “to see” inappropriate in the context of drinking, and explains the consonants as a substantive derived from the verb *רָוַה*, “drink one’s fill”; see G. R. Driver, “Studies in the Vocabulary of the Old Testament VII,” *JTS* 35 (1935) 151–53; Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 52; see also Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 18; on this root see C. S. Rodd, “Modern Issues in Biblical Study: Rediscovered Hebrew Meanings,” *ExpTim* 71 (1959–1960) 131; D. W. Thomas, “A Consideration of Isaiah LIII in the Light of Recent Textual and Philological Study,” *ETL* 44 (1968) 85–86; M. J. Dahood, *Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1963) 23; *idem*, *Psalms I: 1–50. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 17; New York: Doubleday, 1968) 206; *idem*, *Psalms II: 51–100. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 17; 3rd ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1968) 78. However, a vision is an appropriate experience for the prophet mentioned in 7b (thus Petersen, “Isaiah 28,” 120n21). It also provides a good parallel to the priest’s “judgment” in the next line (see further in n. 88) and anticipates the “message” in 9b (on the oracular nuance of *שָׁמַרְצָה* see van der Toorn, “Judaean Necromancy,” 213–15). The prophet (*נָבִיא*) and the seer (*רֹאֵה*) are equated in 1 Sam 9:9.

⁸⁶Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 53, rejects this meaning for the root *פָּיק*, arguing on the basis of cognate languages for the nuance “hiccupped.” This provides a poor parallel with “reel” in the preceding line, however, as does Irwin’s “brim over,” derived from a root meaning “to flow” (see Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 18–19). Both proposals are also dependent on accepting non-traditional meanings for *פְּלִילִיָּה*; see further in n. 88.

⁸⁷The temporal preposition from *בְּרֹאֵה* in the preceding line does double-duty here.

⁸⁸In light of the Arabic *falla*, Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 53, argues for the meaning “frenzy,” while Irwin derives the word from a root *פָּלַל* cognate with Arabic *bill* (“soak, moisten”) and translates as “booze” (Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 19–20). Both proposals are inseparable from their proponents’ different understandings of the preceding verb, which were rejected in n. 86. As with the preceding line, the traditional translation as “judgment” is consistent with priestly activity (cf. n. 85) and anticipates the phrase, “teach knowledge” in 9a (for the revelatory character of this knowledge see Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 21; *idem*, “Isaiah 24–39,” 245; Halpern, “‘The Excremental Vision,’” 114n9; “teaching/instruction” and “knowledge” are considered priestly prerogatives in, e.g., Jer 18:18; Hos 4:6; Mal 2:7). The result is a mirror pattern in which the functionaries mentioned in 7c are followed by their actual functions in the reverse order in 7f–g, i.e., priest:prophet::seeing:judgment; cf. G. Stansell, *Micah and Isaiah: A Form and Tradition Historical Comparison* (SBLDS 85; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 86n77.

כִּי כָּל־שִׁלְחָנוֹת מְלֹאוֹ קִיא 8a Indeed, every table is full of vomit;
צֹאֵה⁸⁹ בְּלִי מְקוֹם b excrement, with no (clean) place.

Except for the deletion of the redactional “these also” at the beginning of v. 7,⁹⁰ this duplicates the MT exactly. Although a number of variant translations have been proposed for this text, they have all been rejected in favour of the more traditional understanding of the words.⁹¹

Establishing The Unit

As mentioned above, Isa 28:7–8 is part of a larger unit. Since the latter provides important context for interpreting those two verses, the extent of that context must be determined. The disjuncture with the preceding verses⁹² establishes v. 7 as the starting point, but opinions differ as to where the unit ends. The parable of the farmer in vv. 23–29 is formally distinct from what precedes it, but not all treat vv. 7–22 as a single unit. Francis Landy, for instance, emphasizes the syntactical break between vv. 8 and 9, and does not see any thematic or lexical links between vv. 7–8 and 9–13.⁹³

⁸⁹The MT accent includes צֹאֵה with the preceding line, but its shift to this line creates a more balanced line and better parallelism. The modern English translations and most critics make this change; exceptions include Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 503n11, who retains the MT stichometry and translates “filthy vomit,” and Marvin Pope, who moves קִיא here as well; see Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 196; *idem*, *Song of Songs*, 217; *idem*, “The Cult of the Dead,” 178. *Pace* both, the separation of the two terms establishes a chiasm in the two lines; a location is followed by something expelled from the body in 8a, while the reverse order occurs in 8b.

⁹⁰See p. 167 above.

⁹¹See the preceding footnotes.

⁹²See pp. 166–67 above.

⁹³Landy, “Isaiah 28,” 149n25; cf. A. van Selms, “Isaiah 28:9–13: An Attempt to Give a New Interpretation,” *ZAW* 85 (1973) 332. That Landy incorrectly, in my view, considers vv. 1–8 a unit does not automatically rule out a break after v. 8. The result would be a unit consisting simply of vv. 7–8; Marti and Duhm consider those verses an introduction added later by Isaiah to link vv. 1–4 and 9–13; see Marti, *Jesaja*, 204; Duhm, *Jesaia*, 197.

Verse 8 does coincide with the end of a sentence, but this is not sufficient grounds for a complete break with what follows, especially since Landy is incorrect concerning the absence of links between vv. 7–8 and the following verses. The connection between the prophetic and priestly functions in 7f-g and “knowledge” and “message” in 9a-b has already been noted,⁹⁴ while the repeated consonants ס and פ in v. 10 echo in reverse order the initial letters of סִפֵּי (“vomit”) and פִּסְפִּי (“excrement”) from v. 8.⁹⁵ Nor is the transition between vv. 8 and 9 as abrupt as Landy suggests. Granted, vv. 7–8 describe a specific scene, the details of which are not repeated in what follows, but there is no indication of a new speaker or addressees in v. 9.⁹⁶

Since there is little basis for a sharp break after v. 8, most scholars continue the unit to at least v. 13. At first glance, the second “therefore” at the beginning of v. 14, coming after the same word in v. 13, seems to coincide with a shift from the priests and prophets to the “rulers of this people in Jerusalem” (14b). However, the parallel term “scoffers” ($\text{לְצַוֵּי לִשְׂרָפִים}$) points to a nuance of speech rather than governance for מְשֻׁלֵּי ,⁹⁷ echoing the verbal associations of the words “teach” and “instruct” in 9a-b.

⁹⁴See notes 85 and 88.

⁹⁵R. H. Kennett, *Ancient Hebrew Social Life and Custom as Indicated in Law, Narrative and Metaphor* (The Schweich Lectures on Biblical Archaeology, 1931; London: Oxford University Press, 1931) 12; Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 55; Driver does not seem to know of Kennett’s work. Verse 10 is considered vulgar variants of the words in v. 8 by M. Görg, “Jesaja als ‘Kinderlehrer?’ Beobachtungen zur Sprache und Semantik in Jes 28,10(13),” *BN* 29 (1985) 12–16. The significance of the verse will be considered further below.

⁹⁶Verse 9 is often considered the words of Isaiah’s opponents, but the usual indicators of a quotation are lacking. Against starting an oracle with a quotation see R. F. Melugin, “The Conventional and the Creative in Isaiah’s Judgement Oracles,” *CBQ* 36 (1974) 305; J. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l’apocalyptique: Isaïe I-XXXV, miroir d’un demi-millénaire d’expérience religieuse en Israël* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1978) 390n1.

⁹⁷A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912) 4.100, translates it as “epigrammatists” and Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 248, renders “proverb-makers”; see also Procksch, *Jesaja I*, 360; Vermeylen, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 391; Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1064; A. C. Stewart, “The Covenant with Death in Isaiah 28,” *ExpTim* 100 (1989) 376. A play on both meanings is suggested by Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 25; Exum, “Isaiah 28,” 124. Van der Toorn, “Judaean Necromancy,” 200–201, retains the meaning “rulers” but relates it to the influence of priests and prophets rather than political leaders. They are considered royal advisers by J. P. Floß, “Biblische Theologie als Sprecherin der ‘Gefährlichen Erinnerung’ dargestellt an Jes 28,7–12,” *BN* 54 (1990) 72.

As such, v. 14 may not constitute as clear a shift in addressees as is often thought. Nothing in vv. 14–22 requires a political interpretation, and therefore an address to rulers. For instance, although the “covenant with Death/Sheol” in vv. 15 and 18 is often interpreted as an alliance with Egypt,⁹⁸ the surrounding verses do not support that view. The use of the term “Zion” for Jerusalem in v. 16 suggests a concern with religious matters in this section, and many commentators think vv. 15 and 18 deal with the worship of Mot, the Canaanite god of death,⁹⁹ which in turn points to the priests’ and prophets’ sphere of activity rather than political leaders. Thus, the general content of vv. 14–22 indicates a connection between them and vv. 7–13.

This is reinforced by lexical, structural and developmental links between the two passages. Although “this people” in vv. 11 and 14 and *לְךָ* in vv. 10, 13 and 17 might be attributed to catch-word linking, other repeated vocabulary cannot be as easily dismissed. For instance, *הַמְרִיעָה* is used of a revelatory message and preceded by a *hiphil* form of *בָּרַךְ* in vv. 9 and 19, while *הַחַיָּה/חַיָּה* in vv. 15 and 18 semantically echoes

⁹⁸Thus, e.g., Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 442; Marti, *Jesaja*, 207; Exum, “Isaiah 28,” 125; Jensen, *Isaiah 1–39*, 219; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 369; Irwin, “Isaiah 24–39,” 246; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 366–67. The treaty partner is identified as Assyria by B. B. Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 160. Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, 326, interpret the phrase in terms of Judah’s support for Israel against Assyria.

⁹⁹See Procksch, *Jesaja I*, 360; R. B. Y. Scott, “Isaiah 1–39,” 317; Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 57; Herbert, *Isaiah*, 163; Jackson, “Style,” 97–98; Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 26; Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1064; Halpern, “‘The Excremental Vision,’” 117, 119; van der Toorn, “Judaean Necromancy,” 202–03; Stewart, “The Covenant with Death,” 376; C. R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39* (Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 210. Eichrodt thinks it is Osiris, while Vermeylen envisions both Mot and Osiris (referred to as “Sheol”); see W. Eichrodt, *Der Herr der Geschichte: Jesaja 13–23 und 28–39* (Die Botschaft Des Alten Testaments: Erläuterungen Alttestamentlicher Schriften 17; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1967) 128–29; Vermeylen, *Du Prophète Isale*, 393n1, 395n2. Whether one or two deities, both authors envision divine witness(es) to a human treaty, but there is no treaty in the passage. Verses 15 and 18 are seen simply as hyperbolic metaphors for the leaders’ confidence they will escape destruction by Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 1.165–66; Kissane, *Isaiah*, 306; Young, *Isaiah*, 282; Fohrer, *Jesaja 2*, 59–60; Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 58; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 251, but the surrounding religious connections suggest otherwise.

הִרְאָה (“seeing”) from v. 7f.¹⁰⁰ Such terminology also points to the religious realm, and therefore to the priests and prophets of vv. 7–13. This is reinforced by the organizational structure of vv. 7–22, which Jared Jackson has shown to be a mirror pattern hinging upon vv. 13 and 14,¹⁰¹ as well as the passage’s developmental structure, which builds upon the gradual resolution of initial ambiguity. For instance, since the first two lines in v. 7 lack explicit subjects, we do not learn who is being described until line c. Similarly, it is not revealed until 7f-g that their drunkenness occurs during, and affects, their official duties.¹⁰² The same pattern of clarification is also at work in the larger unit: their location in Jerusalem is not specified until v. 14 and the identity of “he” in v. 10–12 is delayed until Mot is mentioned in v. 15.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰The LXX (*συνθήκη*) and the Vulgate (*pactum*) both understood these terms as comparable in meaning to “covenant.” While this fits the parallelism, the basic meaning of the Hebrew is “vision.” Köhler emends to רָצוּן and Driver explains the versions by deriving the Hebrew words from the same root as חָמַץ (“breast”) on analogy with the South-Arabic *ḥdyt*, “agreement”; see L. Köhler, “Zu Jes 28,15a und 18b,” *ZAW* 48 (1930) 227–28; Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 58. But neither approach is necessary, since the idea of “agreement” can be derived from the basic semantic field of “seeing,” as shown on the basis of Akkadian *naplusu* (“look favourably on”; cf. Exod 2:24–25) by M. Weinfeld, “Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and Its Influence on the West,” *JAOS* 93 (1973) 196n87; he also notes (p. 196) the word רָצוּן with this connotation in a letter from Elephantine; see also Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1065. Since the covenant is with a deity, the term חָמַץ was probably chosen for the interplay between the agreement itself and its mediation through a vision.

¹⁰¹See Jackson, “Style,” 93, for the details. I would make a minor adjustment to Jackson’s analysis that does not alter the end result. He identifies vv. 9 and 15 as quotations of the drunkards and scoffers respectively, but I view the former as continuing Isaiah’s words. None the less, the “he” in v. 9 refers to the source of their revelation (see van der Toorn, “Judaean Necromancy,” 205), which corresponds to Mot in v. 15 (see further below). Thus the structural pattern can be retained, and with it the interconnection of vv. 7–22.

¹⁰²The primary force of the preposition in 7f, which also governs 7g, is temporal, but a secondary meaning is that they also “go astray” in how they perform their specific roles.

¹⁰³On the delayed identifications in the larger unit (but not within v. 7) see the discussions by Petersen, “Isaiah 28,” 117; Exum, “Isaiah 28,” 109–10 and 118 and especially W. A. M. Beuken, “Isaiah 28: Is It Only Schismatics That Drink Heavily? Beyond the Synchronic Versus Diachronic Controversy,” *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis: Papers Read at the Ninth Joint Meeting of Het Oudtestamentisch Wetgezelsschap in Nederland en België and the Society for Old Testament Study, Held at Kampen, 1994* (OTS 34; ed. J. C. de Moor; Leiden/New York/Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1995) 31–37.

The end result is that Isa 28:7–22 is an integrated unit which forms the interpretative context for vv. 7–8. Since the latter verses are most relevant to the *marzēah*, only they have been reproduced above, but other portions of the larger unit will shed light on the interpretation of those two verses.¹⁰⁴

It remains to consider proposed deletions from Isa 28:7–8 that would eliminate possible *marzēah* elements. For instance, instead of just “these also,” all of 7a-b is considered a redactional link by some.¹⁰⁵ In contrast, Kissane considers 7a-b original, with 7c-g a gloss on the first two lines.¹⁰⁶ These excisions are predicated on the repetitiveness of the verse, which is considered a sign of editorial activity. That repetitiveness may, however, reflect the poet’s artistry: the repetition of ideas, combined with the alteration of verbs, nouns and prepositions and the shifts in rhythm, reflect the impaired yet garrulous speech, and the stumbling gait, of the drunkards.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the individual lines are structurally integrated into the verse. For instance, in 7a-d the words “wine” and “strong drink” are repeated in reverse order, forming a unifying mirror pattern. By itself, this could be attributed to an editor, but 7a-b seems an excessively long redactional link; the same result could be achieved by simply adding **וְגַם** (“and even”) to the beginning of 7c. Furthermore, the verbs in 7a-d

¹⁰⁴Some critics who consider vv. 7–13 and 14–22 separate units still date them to the same period and consider them addressed to the same audience. Thus, e.g., Marti, *Jesaja*, 207; Procksch, *Jesaja I*, 360; Kissane, *Isaiah*, 299; see also Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1068–69; Halpern, “The Excremental Vision,” 112; van der Toorn, “Judaean Necromancy,” 199; Stewart, “The Covenant with Death,” 376. As such, the interpretive significance of the latter portion remains.

¹⁰⁵Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 246–47; Vermeylen, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 390; Petersen, “Isaiah 28,” 108–09; Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1056.

¹⁰⁶Kissane, *Isaiah*, 303, 305. Lines 7e–g are rejected by Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 247–48.

¹⁰⁷Over one hundred years ago, Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 439, commented: “The language imitates the tottering and stumbling of the toppers” The alteration of verbs and nouns is noted by Exum, “Isaiah 28,” 119, and the role of the rhythm by Landy, “Isaiah 28,” 152; both link them to drunken staggering. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 510, also comments that the repetition of verbs and objects “seems to imitate the stumblings and giggings of the drunk.” None of them recognize the mimetic function of the shifting prepositions or the parallel between the repetitions and drunken verbosity.

combine with those in the rest of the verse to form a concentric pattern on the basis of sound: lines a-c contain two-syllable *qal* perfect verbs with the vowels *â* and *û*, while in the central line d, נִבְלָעוּ is a *niphal*, and therefore longer and with different initial vowels sounds.¹⁰⁸ Finally, since each line of v. 7 contributes to the developmental pattern of both the verse and the larger unit,¹⁰⁹ they should all be retained, together with v. 8, as original parts of the larger unit.

Discussion

Isa 28:7–8 has been identified as a *marzēah* allusion for three reasons. First, there is the drunkenness motif shared with Amos 6:1, 3–7. Second, the mention of vomit and excrement in v. 8 reminds some of El collapsing in his own excretions after hosting a *marzēah*.¹¹⁰ Third, the “covenant with Death” in vv. 15 and 18 is often taken to reflect a connection between the *marzēah* and the cult of the dead.¹¹¹

None of these factors, either individually or in combination, is conclusive, though. To begin with, comparable content does not necessarily mean identical situations are being described. A shared focus on drunkenness does not, by itself, mean Isaiah is describing a *marzēah*, as Amos did, any more than lack of control over one’s bodily functions is evidence of similar situations, much less continuity, in Isa 28:7–8 and *KTU* 1.114. With respect to the latter two texts in particular, at least five hundred years passed between Ugarit’s destruction (and the loss of the tablet) and this Isaian oracle. Moreover, the similarity between El’s drunken collapse and v. 8 is not

¹⁰⁸Jackson, “Style,” 90. Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 14, also notes an A:B:A pattern in the first three verbs (נִבְלָעוּ, יָצְאוּ, נִשְׁבְּעוּ).

¹⁰⁹See p. 176.

¹¹⁰See the references in n. 4. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 369, mentions El’s indecorous posture but does not connect it with v. 8. Cf. the discussion of *KTU* 1.114 in chapter 2.

¹¹¹See n. 5.

as close as suggested. Not only is the location of the expelled material and of the main character(s) in relationship to it different in the two texts (only El sits in it), but only one of two items is comparable (excrement), and even then different terms are used.¹¹²

At the same time, it is illegitimate to pronounce this passage a *marzēah* allusion on the basis of references to Mot, the God of the underworld, only. Since there is no evidence of a necessary connection between the *marzēah* and the cult of the dead prior to this time,¹¹³ that cannot be used to establish this text as a *marzēah*. This does not mean a connection between a *marzēah* and the cult of the dead in Isa 28:7–8 is impossible. It is obvious from vv. 15 and 18 that the larger unit deals with Mot, and therefore has funerary associations, but whether it also deals with the *marzēah* must be established on other grounds. I return, therefore, to the criteria of upper-class drunkenness in a religious context.

Each of these elements is easily detected in Isa 28:7–8. For instance, v. 7 describes the immediate physical effect of excessive alcohol consumption while v. 8 deals with subsequent vomiting and diarrhea, and the verb forms suggest this was not an isolated occurrence.¹¹⁴ Secondly, “priest and prophet” are mentioned in 7c, and the juxtaposition of these two functionaries suggests the prophets are cultic ones attached to

¹¹²Both texts allude to excrement, but the vocabulary is different: *hri'* and מִרְאָה; these occur as the first term at Ugarit but the second in Isa 28:8. Also, the Ugaritic text refers to urine (*mt*) while Isa 28:8 has vomit (מִקִּי) as the other term. In *KTU* 1.114 the material is on the floor but in Isaiah the vomit, at least, is on the table, and though the priests and prophets are most likely surrounded by the excrement, there is no indication they are wallowing in it like El. Pope seeks a closer connection between the two texts by emending מִרְאָה in v. 7f to מִחֶרֶם, matching the Ugaritic text, and by suggesting a now lost term indicating human liquid waste, comparable to Ugaritic *mt*, underlying מִלִּיִּיָּה in 7g; see Pope, “Divine Banquet,” 196; *idem*, *Song of Songs*, 217. But *contra* Pope, those terms in Isa 28:7f-g are neither “meaningless” nor “bizarre.” They indicate the functions of the priest and prophet mentioned in 7c and anticipate the revelatory terms in v. 9a-b. As such, there is no reason to emend them.

¹¹³See the discussion in the three preceding chapters.

¹¹⁴Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 439, thought the perfect verbs “intimate that drunkenness has become the habit of the bearers of these offices”; see also Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 503n9. The *plene* spelling of the substantive “vomit” (מִקִּי) only occurs in connection with drunkenness (here and at Isa 19:14; Jer 48:26); see Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1057; cf. Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 19.

the temple alongside the priests. As such, the protagonists here are a definable group among the elite of Jerusalem. Thirdly, their corresponding duties are mentioned in 7f and g (“seeing” and “judgment”), confirming a religious context for their drunken party: intoxication coincides with the performance of their religious duties.¹¹⁵

In sum, Isa 28:7–8 reflects the basic elements of a *marzēah*. But further information about the religious component of this particular *marzēah* can be derived from the larger context of those verses. Specifically, in v. 15 they acknowledge making a pact with Mot, the god of death. Assuming this “covenant with Death” was either initiated or celebrated during their *marzēah*, Mot would be its patron deity.¹¹⁶

This can be supported from vv 9–11. Those verses encompass a famous *crux interpretum* which has elicited a variety of explanations. Verse 10 has been interpreted as the drunken ramblings of the priests and prophets,¹¹⁷ their comparison of Isaiah’s message to a child’s alphabet lesson,¹¹⁸ the reduction of that message to a monotonously repeated exhortation,¹¹⁹ or Assyrian commands addressed to exiles

¹¹⁵Whether this banquet was essentially sacrificial (thus Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 1.164; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 244; Herbert, *Isaiah*, 162; Jensen, *Isaiah 1–39*, 216; Floß, “Jes 28,7–12,” 71), is not specified. *Contra* E. A. Leslie, *Isaiah: Chronologically Arranged, Translated and Interpreted* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1963) 83; Fohrer, *Jesaja 2*, 51, the table in 8a is not necessarily a sacrificial one.

¹¹⁶“Lie” and “deceit” in the latter part of the verse are taken as disguised references to Chemosh and Milcom by van der Toorn, “Judaean Necromancy,” 203–04. In contrast, Irwin, *Isaiah 28 — 33*, 28, capitalizes the words as alternative names for Death (Mot) and Sheol, while Scott thinks they simply indicate the illusory power of other gods (R. B. Y. Scott, “Isaiah 1–39,” 317). Van der Toorn’s proposal is speculative, and in light of the chthonic connections of those deities, would not shift the primary locus of the *marzēah*’s divine patron anyway.

¹¹⁷Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 1.165; Driver, “‘Another Little Drink,’” 55–57; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 363; E. W. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah* (OBT 27; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 125; V. Tanghe, “Dichtung und Ekel in Jes xxviii 7–13,” *VT* 43 (1993) 236–39, 245–46.

¹¹⁸E.g., W. W. Hallo, “Isaiah 28:9–13 and the Ugaritic Abecedaries,” *JBL* 77 (1958) 324–38; G. Pfeifer, “Entwöhnung und Entwöhnungsfest im Alten Testament: der Schlüssel zu Jesaja 28,7–13?” *ZAW* 84 (1972) 341–47.

¹¹⁹I.e., “Command upon command, command upon command, rule upon rule, rule upon rule, here a little, there a little.” Thus, e.g., Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 1.164–65; Kissane, *Isaiah*, 306; Young, *Isaiah*, 276–77; Eichrodt, *Der Herr der Geschichte*, 124; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 512.

leaving the destroyed city.¹²⁰ But none of these fully integrate the verse with both what precedes and follows.¹²¹ Most require a new speaker in v. 9 in order to make sense, only the third proposal reflects the revelatory terminology of v. 9, and none takes Mot's connection with the feast into account. But without any indication of a speaker other than Isaiah in v. 9, what follows should relate to the activities of the priest and prophet in v. 7, which means "he" in v. 9 must indicate the source of their revelation. Some consider this to be Yahweh,¹²² but "his" word is contrasted with Yahweh's in v. 13. More directly, since Mot is their patron, he is the more probable source of a revelation. Thus, I think Karel van der Toorn is correct when he suggests the syllables in v. 10 are a slightly deformed reproduction of that revelation.¹²³ This produces an interpretation that fits the larger unit's context and is consistent with its development from ambiguity to greater clarity: after denouncing their *marzēah*, in which religious functionaries receive revelations while in a state of inebriation (vv. 7–8), Isaiah mocks the means through which that revelation is expressed (vv. 9–12), contrasts it with Yahweh's clear revelation (v. 13), explicitly denounces the source of their message, namely Mot (vv. 14–15), and announces Yahweh's "cornerstone," which will obliterate the "covenant with death" (vv. 16–22).

¹²⁰"Go out! Let him go out! Go out! Let him go out! Wait! Let him wait! Wait! Let him wait! Servant, listen! Servant, listen!" See van Selms, "Isaiah 28:9–13," 332–39.

¹²¹Cf. the critique of Halpern, "'The Excremental Vision,'" 112–13. Van Selms completely divorces vv 9–13 from vv. 7–8.

¹²²E.g., Petersen, "Isaiah 28," 109; Exum, "Isaiah 28," 120; Halpern, "'The Excremental Vision,'" 114.

¹²³Van der Toorn, "Judaean Necromancy," 205–12; he builds upon the earlier suggestion of S. Daiches, "Isaiah and Spiritualism," *The Jewish Chronicle Supplement* (July 1921) 6. Van der Toorn points to connections between birds, revelations, and the dead in the ancient Near East in general, and the specific comparison of ghosts' voices to "chirping" in Isa 8:19; 29:4 to support his view that v. 10 indicates necromantic messages which imitate bird calls.

In conclusion, vv. 7–8 reflect the basic elements of a *marzēah*, namely a definable portion of the elite getting drunk in an explicitly religious context. At the same time, the larger context presents the first clear connection between a *marzēah* and the cult of the dead.¹²⁴ This latter point is significant for the historical development of the institution. As such, some brief comments on the text’s relative date are in order.

Dating the Text

The Isaianic origin of the larger unit in general, and vv. 7–8 in particular, is not in doubt. Although individual lines are occasionally deleted, no one denies the core of the passage to the prophet himself.¹²⁵ The general consensus is that this text dates from shortly before 700 BCE,¹²⁶ which places it after the references and allusions by Amos and Hosea and before those to be examined in the following chapters.

Isa 56:9–57:13

The final text to consider in this chapter is Isa 56:9–57:13. Jared Jackson has linked this passage with Amos 6:1–7 on the basis of the drinking and the reference to “beds” in both places, and characterizes Isa 57:8 in particular as “a *mrzḥ*, where behind closed doors a memorial for absent members is held.”¹²⁷

This proposal can be dealt with much more quickly than previous ones because of fundamental flaws in Jackson’s argument. First, while a funerary context for a *marzēah* is not impossible here, especially in light of the preceding discussion of

¹²⁴In addition to the necromantic consultation of Mot already noted, the “bed” and “covering” in v. 20 are taken as a funeral bed and shroud by Halpern, “‘The Excremental Vision,’” 117; see also Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 371. This would be further confirmation of the funerary nature of this *marzēah*, but contrast Beuken, “Isaiah 28,” 27, who considers v. 20 an unconnected proverb.

¹²⁵See the commentaries. Deletions from vv. 7–8 were considered and rejected above.

¹²⁶The scholarship on the passage’s dating is conveniently summarized by Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1056–57.

¹²⁷Jackson, “Style,” 96.

Isa 28:7–8,¹²⁸ the only dead in this passage are children (v. 5), who are unlikely members of a *marzēah* association. Secondly, the beds' purposes are different in the two passages: in Amos 6 they indicate where the *marzēah* members sprawl while in Isa 57:7–8 it refers to the place the prostitute practices her trade.¹²⁹ Thirdly, and most importantly, Jackson fails to take into account the major division in the passage at 57:3, which separates the drinking from the beds and the funerary language.¹³⁰

The precise compositional structure of Isa 56:9–57:13 is disputed,¹³¹ but there is widespread recognition that **וְכַּתְּמָה** (“but as for you”) in Isa 57:3 initiates a new section.¹³² Hanson claims the word provides the transition in an hybrid salvation-judgment form, but still concludes that “56:9–57:2 was originally an independent

¹²⁸Jackson, “Style,” 96n87, draws a parallel between **תִּיָּהּ** in Isa 57:8 and the word **תַּחֲתָי** parallel to **תִּיָּהּ**, used to designate the covenant/agreement with Mot/Sheol in Isa 28:18 (cf. Isa 28:15 as well); the connection is also noted by T. J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 150; since “you cut” at the beginning of 57:8 is probably an elliptical reference to “cutting a covenant” (thus, e.g., J. L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 20; Garden City: Doubleday, 1968] 157) this interpretation of **תִּיָּהּ** is plausible. Jackson treated the preceding **וְ** as a verb (he refers to A. Fitzgerald, “Hebrew *yd* = ‘Love’ and ‘Beloved’,” *CBQ* 29 [1967] 368–74, for support; cf. **אָהַבְתָּ**, “you loved” immediately before) and translated “(you) loved the pact.”

¹²⁹Verses 7–13 consist of 2nd singular feminine verbs and pronouns, referring to the personified prostitute mother of those addressed in vv. 3–6. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 149–50, followed by S. Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 153–54, sees a combined reference to her bed and a grave (“bed” has the latter meaning in v. 2), but that too distinguishes these beds from those in Amos 6. In contrast, Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 258, argues for just a bed on the basis of the harlotry imagery in Isa 57:7–8.

¹³⁰In light of this disjuncture I do not present the entire text as with other passages, since when it came to “establishing the unit” the two halves would be separated and the discussion ended.

¹³¹E.g., McKenzie considers 56:9–57:2 and 57:3–13 two unconnected units, Westermann (following Ewald and Volz) identifies four separate units (56:9–12; 57:1–2, 3–6, 7–13) and Whybray divides it into three (56:9–12; 57:1–2, 3–13); see McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 153–59, especially p. 158; C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary* (OTL; trans. D. M. G. Stalker; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969) 301–02; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975) 200.

¹³²Even Oswalt, who considers the whole passage a unit, subdivides it at 57:3; see J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998) 467.

composition, representing an attack on the leaders of the community by the prophetic group, and that someone within that same group later expanded that composition with the addition of 57:3–13.”¹³³ The separation of these two sections is confirmed by the lack of thematic continuity between them. Isa 56:9–57:2 attacks the community’s leaders¹³⁴ for drunken self-centredness that fails to consider the plight of the righteous. In contrast, although Isa 57:3–13 may deal with these same leaders,¹³⁵ those verses focus on cultic aberrations. Also, the only vocabulary shared by the two sections is the word “bed” (מִטָּה), but it has different nuances in each: a grave and a harlot’s bed.¹³⁶ Thus, Ackerman is correct in identifying it as a *Stichwort* which “binds the two units together but, because of its different meanings, indicates the independence of each stanza.”¹³⁷

As a result, even though the three basic *marzēah* elements are present in the larger passage, they do not all occur together in either half. For instance, the leaders

¹³³P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) 188–89. He sees the word effecting the same transition at Isa 65:11, 13, 14.

¹³⁴“Watchmen” is used of prophets at Jer 6:17; Ezek 3:17; Hab 2:1, but most extend the meaning to include other leaders as well. Hanson and Oswalt both see a three-fold reference to priests, prophets and civic leaders, albeit on slightly different grounds; cf. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 196; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 469.

¹³⁵Most think this section also deals with the leaders, but it is addressed to the whole community by Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 2.66; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 302. Similarly, Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 200, identifies “two distinct groups of people . . . , the leaders of the community (56:9–12) and idolators (57:3–13a).”

¹³⁶See n. 129. I agree with Schmidt that the primary meaning in vv. 7–8 is a (figurative) prostitute’s bed, but in light of the death language in the surrounding verse I would not rule out a play on the meaning “grave” as well (cf. Prov 2:16–17, cited by Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 158; cf. the references in his n. 104).

¹³⁷Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 101n1.

are described in 56:10–11,¹³⁸ and their¹³⁹ drinking in v. 12 is consistent with a *marzēah*: “strong drink” (מַרְזֵאָה) was consumed in Isa 28:7 as well, the verb מָצַח connotes excessiveness,¹⁴⁰ and the second half of the verse implies this activity was ongoing. But there is no indication in those verses that the drinking occurred in a religious context. Similarly, while the second half of the passage describes religious activity,¹⁴¹ there is no reference to drinking, and it is not even clear the leaders are being addressed.¹⁴² In short, nothing in the larger text connects the drinking in the first half and the religious practices condemned in the second half. Thus, even if Hanson is correct that the first half was expanded by the same authorial group,¹⁴³ this is not a case of a subsequent clarification that the first half alludes to a *marzēah*. Since the two parts have not been integrated to any extent, even if the same group is being denounced in both parts, it is because of two distinct practices. This indicates that Isa 56:9–57:13 does not allude to a *marzēah*, either before or after the fact.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸See n. 134.

¹³⁹The opening words in v. 12 are from a single speaker (“Come, let me get [הַיַּיִן] wine”), but the following phrase (“let us guzzle strong drink”) indicates more than one person is involved. The Vulgate, the Targum, the Peshitta and 1QIs^a all change the singular to the plural, but the individual may simply be a representative who orders for the group.

¹⁴⁰Three of its five other occurrences are in conjunction with מְלַח (“glutton”): Deut 21:20; Prov 23:21, 30; see also Ezek 23:42; Nah 1:10 and the noun מַצָּח in Hos 4:18.

¹⁴¹Since the passage does not allude to a *marzēah*, the precise nature of this that activity is secondary to my purpose, but it is clear from v. 5 that child sacrifice is involved. Recent proposals concerning the rest of the passage include those of Schmidt, who interprets the sexual language in terms of harlotry as a metaphor for idolatrous child sacrifice, Lewis, who views it as a metaphor for a necromantic cult of the dead, and Ackerman, who finds three cults intertwined in vv. 3–13: child sacrifice, fertility rites and the cult of the dead; cf. Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 258–59; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 145–58; Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 117–63, especially pp. 154–62.

¹⁴²Cf. n. 135 above.

¹⁴³See n. 133 above.

¹⁴⁴Also, all of Isa 56:12 is absent from the LXX; for Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 143n50, this is “a sure sign that we are dealing with a later addition.” While not conclusive (it is present in the other versions and at Qumran), it cautions against giving too much weight to the verse in terms of an allusion. At the same time, even if the verse was added in imitation of Isa 28:7–8, as Lewis thinks, the lack of integration with the second half still argues against a *marzēah* here.

Summary

Four Isaiah texts have been considered as possible *marzēah* allusions, but only one can be accepted with any confidence. First, Isa 5:11–13 adapts Amos 6:1, 3–7 to a different situation. Although the text describes drunkenness by members of the upper-class, this did not occur in a religious context. Thus, Isaiah identified the episode as a “feast” (מִשְׁכָּל) rather than the more specific *marzēah* banquet.

Similarly, like Amos 6:1, 3–7, Isa 28:1–4 denounces the drunken Samarian elite. But despite the similar audience, the two texts do not address an identical situation. Asen’s attempt to link the latter to the *marzēah* through the participants’ use of flowers proved unsuccessful, and the passage does not include all of the basic elements of a *marzēah*. Specifically, it lacks a religious connection, without which the text may reflect nothing more than another example of general upper-class excess.

In contrast, Isa 28:7–8 (and what follows) does reflect the elements necessary for a *marzēah* allusion. Those verses attack the priests and prophets, members of the religious hierarchy. The excessiveness of their drunkenness while performing religious functions is clear in v. 7, and culminates in the description in v. 8 of vomit and excrement spread around the room. The subsequent verses indicate the divine patron of their *marzēah* is Mot, the god of the underworld, and that during the feast the priest and prophet receive revelatory messages from him. This has great importance for the *marzēah*’s history. Isa 28:7–22 is the first instance of a *marzēah* text that also exhibits an explicit link with the cult of the dead. As such it sets a precedent, but not a requirement, for subsequent instances of a *marzēah*. Since this particular one was a means for contacting the realm of the dead, the possibility that later ones might be as well is increased. But that possibility should not be mistaken for a necessity. Funerary elements alone cannot establish a passage as a *marzēah* allusion. Religious drunkenness by a definable portion of the elite remain essential characteristics of a *marzēah*, and subsequent texts will still have to be evaluated on the basis of those criteria.

Finally, the references to leaders drinking in Isa 56:10–12 and religious activity in 57:3–13 occur in distinct sections of a larger passage which exhibits no integral connection between the two parts. As such there is no religious context for the drinking, which excludes it from classification as an assured *marzēah* allusion.

CHAPTER 5

THE *marzēah* IN JEREMIAH

This chapter deals with Jer 16:5, one of two explicit biblical references to a *marzēah*¹ (the other being Amos 6:7). On the other hand, no one has proposed any *marzēah* allusions in the book of Jeremiah. Therefore, the following discussion will elaborate the main points of Jer 16:5 within its context and clarify the nature of this particular *marzēah*. But first, the verse and its context will be established.

Jer 16:5-9

The Text

כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־בָבֶלֶת וְאֵל־תְּלָף לְסֹפֹד וְאֵל־תִּגַּד לָהֶם כִּי־אֶסְפְּתִי אֶת־שְׁלוֹמֵי מֵאֵת הָעַם־הַזֶּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֶת־הַחֹסֵד וְאֶת־הַרְחָמִים (6) וַיִּמְתּוּ גְדֹלִים וְקִטְנִים בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת לֹא יִקְבְּרוּ³ וְלֹא־יִסְפְּדוּ לָהֶם וְלֹא יִתְגַּדְדוּ וְלֹא יִקְרַח לָהֶם (7) וְלֹא־יִפְרְסוּ לָחֶם⁴ עַל־אֲבָל⁵ לְנַחְמוֹ⁶ עַל־מֵת

¹As such, the verse was discussed in D. B. Bryan, "Texts Relating to the *Marzeah*: A Study of an Ancient Semitic Institution" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1973) 69–71.

²The initial כִּי is absent from the LXX and deleted by W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 467, 468. He argues it does not begin a motivation clause like the word's other occurrences at vv. 3, 5b, and especially v. 9. But the word may be intended to highlight the transition from vv. 1–4; thus F. Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia übersetzt und erklärt* (KHAT 13; 2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907) 95, who translates as "denn also . . ." Other translations in the same vein include "weiter" by P. Volz, *Der Prophet Jeremia übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT 10; 2nd ed.; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928) 178; "further" by J. Bright, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965) 107; "weiter . . . also" by A. Weiser, *Das Buch Jeremia* (ATD 21; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966) 136; and "ferner . . . also" by W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (HAT 12; 3rd ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968) 92]). See also p. 195 below.

³Pointed as a *qal* by Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 467, who is followed by J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980) 400n7. They note that the subject of the following verbs is the survivors, not the dead, but the survivors' actions are directed to the dead; the focus does not shift to concern for survivors, specifically, a "mourner" (cf. p. 191 below) until v. 7. This verb occurs as a *niphal* in v. 4 as well.

⁴Instead of לָחֶם in the MT; see the discussion on p. 191.

⁵The MT vocalizes as אֲבָל; see p. 191.

⁶The suffix is deleted by K. H. Cornhill, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text Arranged in Chronological Order, with Notes* (SBOT 11; trans. C. Johnston; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1895) 58–59, but it fits the sense of the passage and is repeated three more times in the verse (one involves emendation; see p. 191 below) .

לַכֹּהֵן 6 וְאֵלֶּיךָ יָבֹאוּ כִּי־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ
 וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ (9) וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ

Further, thus says Yahweh: Do not enter the *marzāh* house; do not go to lament and do not grieve for them. For I have taken away my peace from this people, (Yahweh's utterance), my steadfast love and mercy. (6) Great and small will die in this land. They will not be buried, and no one will lament for them; no one will gash himself or make himself bald for them. (7) They will not break bread for the mourner, to comfort him for the dead. They will not give him the cup of consolation to drink for his father or his mother. (8) You shall not enter the drinking house to sit with them, to eat and drink. (9) For thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to banish from this place, in your days and before your eyes, the sound of mirth and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

As is often the case in the book of Jeremiah, the LXX for this passage is shorter than the MT. The only substantial portion is 5b-6a (אֲנִי־אֶמְצָאֶנִּי, וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לְבַרְכֵךָ).

but it does not contain anything of significance concerning this *marzāh* that is not duplicated elsewhere in the text,¹⁰ nor does "for them" at the end of v. 6 or "(Yahweh) of hosts" in v. 9 affect the passage as a whole. However, since v. 6a prepares for what follows, Janzen concludes the MT represents the original text, with a line having fallen out of the LXX's Vorlage.¹¹

⁷The MT reads אֲנִי־אֶמְצָאֶנִּי; see p. 191.

⁸Changed to אֲנִי־אֶמְצָאֶנִּי by Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 467, and O. Lorez, "Marzāh im ugaritischen und biblischen Ahnenkult: zu Ps 23; 133; Am 6,1-7 und Jer 16,5,8," *Mesopotamica - Ugaritica - Biblica: Festschrift für Kurt Bergerhof zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres am 7. Mai 1992* (AOAT 232; eds. M. Dietrich and O. Lorez; Kevlaer: Verlag Butzon and Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993) 139n85. This provides a better parallel with v. 5, but a different negative here may be meant to highlight a distinction between the two verses; cf pp. 193-195 below.

⁹In place of אֲנִי־אֶמְצָאֶנִּי in the MT; cf. p. 191.

¹⁰The mourning practices listed in vv. 6b-7 provide the same funerary connection as the references to death and burial in 6a.

¹¹J. G. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (HSM 6; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) 98; see also L. Stulman, *The Other Text of Jeremiah: A Reconstruction of the Hebrew Text Underlying the Greek Version of the Prose Sections of Jeremiah with English Translation* (Lanham/New York/London: University Press of America, 1985) 30-33; L. Stulman, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah: A Redescription of the Correspondences with Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-Critical Research* (SBLDS 83; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 67-70. "For them" at the end of v. 6 is consistent with the same words earlier in the verse.

Four changes have been made to the MT.¹² The phrase **וְלֹא יִפְרְסוּ לָהֶם** (“They will not break for them for mourning”) at the start of v. 7 is obviously damaged. Changing **לָהֶם** to **לָהֶן** yields a smoother first half of the phrase,¹³ while repointing **אֲנֵל** as **אֲנֵל** (“mourner”; cf. the Vulgate’s *lugenti*) provides a referent for the masculine singular pronouns later in the verse. Granted, the second of those singular pronouns is achieved by emending **אֹתָם** to **אֹתָן** with the LXX, but the plural pronoun is inconsistent with the singular ones later in the verse. Finally, the command not to sit “them” (**אֹתָם**) in v. 8 is problematic, but this is resolved if one accepts the variant reading of **אִתָּם** (“with them”) found in some manuscripts and the LXX (*μετ’ αὐτῶν*).

Establishing the Unit

It was suggested above that v. 5 initiates an elaboration of the preceding verses,¹⁴ and Holladay points to a number of thematic and linguistic repetitions in support of combining vv. 2–9.¹⁵ Jer 16:1 introduces a new word from the Lord, but the verse is absent from the LXX, leading Carroll to conclude it is a later addition

¹²For a convenient summary of the textual witnesses, history of scholarship and modern translational choices for the first three see D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament. 2. Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations* (OBO 50; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) 602–05.

¹³The change is accepted by virtually all scholars. The two words are very similar in appearance, and **לָהֶן** is found in a few Hebrew manuscripts. Cornhill, *Jeremiah*, 59, suggests both words were originally present, and different ones dropped out of the MT and the LXX’s *Vorlage*, but the LXX apparently read both words (*ἄpros . . . αὐτῶν*), as did the Vulgate (*inter eos . . . panem*).

¹⁴See n. 2 above.

¹⁵Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 467–68; see also Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 400nn6, 9, 11. Both portions contain prohibitions addressed to an individual, each of which is followed by motivations introduced by **כִּי**. The first two motivations are linked by the failure to “bury” and “lament” (vv. 4 and 6), which occurs “in this land” (**בְּאֶרֶץ הַיְזָאת**; vv. 3 and 6), while the first and third begin with “For thus says Yahweh...” (**כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**; vv. 3 and 9; v. 5a has **נְאֻם יְהוָה** [“Yahweh’s utterance”] instead) and refer to “this place” (**מְקוֹם הַזֶּה**). Finally, the prohibition of marriage in v. 2 is echoed in the wedding imagery of v. 9, and “mother(s)” and “father(s)” are mentioned in reverse order in vv. 3 and 7, as are “lament” and “bury” in vv. 4 and 6. The result is a mirror structure unifying vv. 2–9.

meant to change the following address from the people to the prophet.¹⁶ However, the second person singular masculine verb and pronouns in v. 2 (פִּקֵּן אֲלֵי and אֲנִי [2x]) are echoed in vv. 5a and 8a, indicating that an individual is addressed throughout even though the fate of the populace is described in vv. 3–4, 5b–7, 9. In any case, the content of Jer 16:(1)2–9 is sufficiently distinctive from chapter 15 for the two to be separated for the purposes of interpretation.¹⁷

Some scholars extend the unit to encompass vv. 10–13,¹⁸ but those verses do not share any vocabulary with the preceding ones.¹⁹ Moreover, the address shifts from an individual to the larger community, and the various prohibitions of vv. 2–9 do not figure in vv. 10–13. As a result, most interpreters treat vv. 10–13 as a later interpretation of the anti-social behaviour called for in vv. 2–9.²⁰ Thus, Jer 16:5–9 is a subsection of a larger unit, namely Jer 16:1–9. But since the earlier verses do not add anything of substance to the issue of the *marzēah* beyond what is already in vv. 5–9, the analysis will focus on the latter verses.

¹⁶R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986) 338–39. See further on pp. 198–199 below.

¹⁷Jer 15:19–21 is a combined rebuke and reassurance to the prophet in response to the complaint of Jer 15:15–18. The former promises Yahweh's deliverance from "this people" while Jer 16:2–9 commands separation from them. Rudolph's suggestion that the latter passage was placed here as an illustration of the loneliness of Jer 15:17 is probably correct (see Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 93; he is followed by most commentators). In addition, the "sword and famine" theme in 14:11–18; 15:2 and 16:4 is noted by Bright, *Jeremiah*, 112, while Carroll and Kelley point to the "mother motif" in 15:8–9,10 and 16:3; see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 338; P. C. Craigie, P. H. Kelley and J. F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25* (WBC 26; Dallas: Word Books, 1991) 215.

¹⁸E.g., Volz, *Jeremia*, 177–82; J. P. Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 945–46; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 112; Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 93–95. Cf. Weiser, *Jeremia*, 139.

¹⁹Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 467. He also claims vv. 10–13 do not exhibit the characteristics of "rhythmic prose" (*Kunstprosa*) he identifies in vv. 2–9. See also H. Weippert, *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches* (BZAW 132; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973) 166–69.

²⁰See the convenient summary of scholarship by W. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Vol. I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I–XXV* (ICC 20; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986) 369.

It is widely recognized that those verses have been the object of editorial activity. Two redactional proposals in particular have implications for this study: Oswald Loretz offers a truncated form of v. 7²¹ and H.-J. Fabry considers all but vv. 1, 5 and 8 to be secondary.²² Since either suggestion, if accepted, drastically affects the nature of the *marzēah* in this passage, they will be considered in conjunction with the analysis of the text itself.²³

Discussion

Jer 16:5 refers to a *marzēah* house (בֵּית מַרְזָח), an institution already encountered in the material from Ugarit and still known as late as the 6th century CE.²⁴ The extra-biblical material indicates that the *marzēah* house was owned by an identifiable upper-class group and was the location for the *marzēah* feast itself, and there is nothing to indicate a different context here. Whatever else can be determined about this specific *marzēah* house depends on its connection with the following verses.

The relationship between the *marzēah* house in v. 5 and the “drinking house” in v. 8 is central to the proper interpretation of this passage. If they are the same, a link with more than “social drinking” exists, but if they are distinct then vv. 8–9 have little bearing on the meaning of vv. 5–7, except by way of contrast. Scholarly opinion

²¹O. Loretz, “Ugaritisch-biblisch *mrzḥ* ‘Kultmahl, Kultverein’ in Jer 16,5 und Am 6,7. Bemerkungen zur Geschichte des Totenkultes in Israel,” *Künder des Wortes. Beiträge zur Theologie der Propheten: Joseph Schreiner zum 60. Geburtstag* (eds. L. Ruppert, P. Weimar and E. Zenger; Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1982) 89.

²²H.-J. Fabry, “בֵּית מַרְזָח *marzēah*,” *TWAT* 5.15.

²³See pp. 195-197 below

²⁴The Akkadian phrase *bīṭ amilM_{mar-za-i/mar-ze-i}* (“house of the men of the *marzēah*”) occurs in RS 15.70 and RS 15.88, and BHTOMAPΣEA is found on the Madaba Map. See Chapter 1 for discussion of those instances, as well as for other buildings linked to *marzēahs* in *KTU* 1.21.1–9; 1.114.15–17; 3.9, the Trans-Jordanian text and the Palmyrene contract.

diverges as to the relationship between the two buildings.²⁵ At first glance, the parallels between vv. 5–7 and 8–9 seem to support linking the two “houses.” Both sections begin with a command not to enter one or the other type of house, followed by a reason for the prohibition rooted in God’s imminent action. But in fact, a new command and motivation actually suggests something new is introduced,²⁶ which is confirmed by the variations between the two sections. In v. 5 the negated verb comes before the reference to the house, while the order is reversed in v. 8; this, combined with the disjunctive *waw* at the beginning of v. 8 indicates a new topic.²⁷ This is supported by the use of different negatives (לֹא and אַל) and the divergent content of the

²⁵They are considered synonymous by Bright, *Jeremiah*, 110–11; B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) 181; Bryan, “Texts,” 69; M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 216, 222; *idem*, “Le MRZH à l’Ugarit et ailleurs,” *AAAS* 29–30 (1979–1980) 141; *idem*, “The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit,” *Ugarit in Retrospect* (ed. G. D. Young; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 176; T. J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 89, 138–39; S. Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 72; D. R. Jones, *Jeremiah* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992) 231; P. J. King, *Jeremiah: An Archaeological Companion* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 141; Loretz, “Marziḥu,” 139–40; F. Gangloff and J.-C. Haelewyck, “Osée 4,17–19: un marzeah en l’honneur de la déesse ‘Anat” *ETL* 71 (1995) 378; Fabry, “מַרְזִיחַ marzēah,” 5.15. The Vulgate translates both terms as *domum convivii* (“house of banqueting”).

The two houses are distinguished by K. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Jeremiah* (CFTL; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880) 1.268; Giesebrecht, *Jeremia*, 94; Volz, *Jeremia*, 179; O. Eissfeldt, “Etymologische und archäologische Erklärung alttestamentlicher Wörter,” *OrAnt* 5 (1966) 171; Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 406; L. Boadt, *Jeremiah 1–25* (OTMS 9; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1982) 124; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 340; McKane, *Jeremiah I*, 365, 367; W. Brueggemann, *To Pluck up, to Tear Down: A Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah 1–25* (ITC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988) 145; Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 217; B. B. Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 247. Most of the latter link the “drinking house” with a wedding; cf. vv. 2, 9 and Judg 10:14, 19. Separate terms are used for the two in the LXX, the Peshitta and the Targum.

For Holladay, *Jeremiah I*, 470, “the question must remain open”; cf. his pp. 468, 471–72.

²⁶Holladay, *Jeremiah I*, 470.

²⁷The word order is noted by Holladay, *Jeremiah I*, 470; for the syntax involved see R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (2nd ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) §573. On the disjunctive *waw* see T. O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1971) §132; B. K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) §39.2.3.

two motivations, namely funerary and marriage imagery.²⁸ Finally, the structure of the larger passage also argues against identifying the two “houses.” Marriage is forbidden in v. 2 because the future will entail widespread, unlamented death (vv. 3–4). The marriage and death motifs are then developed in reverse order, with vv. 5–7 picking up the lack of burial and lamentation from v. 4 and v. 8–9 echoing the marriage imagery from v. 2. All of these factors indicate vv. 5–7 and 8–9 deal with different topics: death and marriage.²⁹

This leaves vv. 5b–7 as the primary interpretive context for the *marzēah* reference in 5a. Within those verses, Oswald Loretz finds the transition from sudden death, with no time for mourning in v. 6, to leisurely mourning (“friedlichen Trauer”) in v. 7 too sudden to be original.³⁰ Instead, he proposes the original wording of v. 7 was, “Und man wird da ‘Brot’ für sie nicht brechen und man wird ihnen nicht zu trinken geben den Trostbecher.” Having stripped the verse of supposed secondary material, he explains breaking bread and the cup of consolation as sacrifices on behalf of the dead, and interprets the *marzēah* as a ritual feeding of the dead with those sacrifices. There are problems with Loretz’s proposal, however. A minor difficulty is that his translation includes both “bread” and “for them,” whereas there is only one word in the MT.³¹ More significantly, if there were no time for mourning then there would be no time for sacrifices either. Furthermore, v. 6 indicates no one will lament

²⁸Pope and Holladay seek to counter the latter point by appealing to rabbinic traditions in which the dead are referred to as bride and groom; see Pope, *Song of Songs*, 216; *idem*, “The Cult of the Dead,” 177; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 470. Apart from the difficulties inherent in using material from centuries later, this does not negate the disjunctive *waw* in v. 8 or the obvious difference between lament (v. 7) and “mirth and . . . gladness” (v. 9).

²⁹The contrast is clearly reflected later in Qoh 7:2, where “drinking house” is in opposition to the “mourning house” (בֵּית־אֵכָל לְבַת־אֵכָל).

³⁰Loretz, “‘Kultmahl,’” 89.

³¹There is no indication he follows Cornhill in viewing both as original (see n. 13 above).

the dead or perform the mourning rituals of gashing and shaving oneself for them, so having someone feed the dead in v. 7 would run contrary to the point of v. 6. On the other hand, as it stands, v. 7 continues the perspective of v. 6: not only will the usual customs with respect to the dead not be observed (v. 6), but neither will the traditional efforts to comfort the survivors take place (v. 7). In other words, Loretz's suggestion creates problems where none existed, and v. 7 should be retained intact.³²

A more radical proposal comes from H.-J. Fabry, who suggests a three-stage development in the text. In his view, the oldest text consisted of vv. 1, 5 and 8; this was later supplemented with vv. 2, 6–7, after which the Deuteronomists inserted 3–4, 9. Having thus isolated what he considers the original text, he takes the commands not to lament and grieve in 5b-c as antithetical to the surrounding commands not to go (to celebrate) to the *marzēah*/feasting house. Thus, what little funerary language is original is also antithetical to the *marzēah*.³³ Fabry relies upon, but goes well beyond, Thiel's redactional analysis of the passage.³⁴ At the same time, Fabry's proposal destroys the carefully balanced mirror structure of the larger passage. It is easier to envision that structure arising from a single hand than from the consecutive efforts of three individuals working separately. Finally, as was shown above,³⁵ within that structure the *marzēah* house and the feasting house are antithetical, not synonymous as

³²The role of the words "father" and "mother," which Loretz would delete, in the mirror structure of the larger unit (cf. n. 15 above), supports this decision.

³³Fabry, "מַרְזֵאָה *marzēah*," 5.15. The same proposal is found in Gangloff and Haelewyck, "Osée 4,17–19," 378, who incorrectly attribute the redactional analysis to Thiel (their n. 107; cf. n. 34 below). Loretz, "*Marzihu*," 140, accepts Fabry's redactional analysis but retains funerary associations for this *marzēah*.

³⁴She considers vv. 1–3a, 4a, 5–8,9 (minus "in your days and before your eyes") the earliest text, with only 3b and 4b as deuteronomistic additions; see W. Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1–25* (WMANT 41; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973) 195–98, 201.

³⁵See pp. 193–195.

Fabry claims. In sum, his proposal is not convincing, and vv. 6–7 can and should be related to the *marzēah* house in 5a.

Thus, vv. 5b–7 constitute the main source for more information about that *marzēah* house. Drinking and ritual actions are mentioned in those verses, but they do not provide definitive evidence of the excessive drinking in a religious context encountered in previous *marzēahs*. Pope points to rabbinic restriction of the cup of consolation to ten servings as evidence of drunkenness,³⁶ but without evidence that custom existed at the time of this text the use of such later material is problematic. In any case, the focus here is on comforting the mourner, not drunkenness. So too, with the self-laceration and shaving mentioned in v. 6. These actions are forbidden in Deut 14:1–2, with the implication they are part of non-Yahwistic practices³⁷ but there is no hint of disapproval in the Jeremiah text.³⁸ In any case, while the biblical evidence indicates these rituals may occur within an organized cultic context, that is not necessarily the case. As a result, there is no certain evidence of either excessive drinking or a religious connection for this particular *marzēah*. This is not to say they were not part of this *marzēah*, only that they are not central to the passage. In light of their connection with *marzēahs* before and after the period reflected here, the author may have thought it unnecessary to mention them, since the term itself was used.

³⁶Pope, *Song of Songs*, 216.

³⁷Thus Bright, *Jeremiah*, 110; Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 405–06; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 339–40; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 101; Jones, *Jeremiah*, 231; see also Lev 19:27–28; 21:5. Contrast n. 38.

³⁸Hyatt, “Jeremiah,” 946; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 471; Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 217; Jones, *Jeremiah*, 231. The claim that they “are forbidden here because they are a tacit acknowledgements of the gods and spirits of other cults . . .” (Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 339), is speculative. That these actions were widely practiced is reflected in Isa 3:24; 15:2–3; 22:12; Jer 7:29; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37; Ezek 7:18; Amos 8:10; Mic 1:16; Job 1:20; Ezra 9:13. Ritual baldness is actually called for by Yahweh in Jer 7:29; Isa 22:12; Mic 1:16) and in Jer 41:5 yahwistic worshipers appear gashed and shaven after the death of Gedaliah. Schmidt surveys biblical, Ugaritic and Mesopotamian texts dealing with both actions and concludes the negative attitude of the legal texts is a late development; see Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 166–78, especially p. 176.

On the other hand, the passage does provide another instance of a funerary connection for a *marzēah*, subsequent to Isa 28:7–8. Since the various mourning rituals in Jer 16:6b–7 are mentioned after the *marzēah* house, the best conclusion is that they would normally occur within that building, just as the “drinking house” was a normal place for the joyous sounds of a wedding. In this passage the *marzēah*’s funerary connection appears as a natural one which requires no justification from the prophet. Thus, while it may not be an intrinsic connection,³⁹ and therefore a constituent part of all subsequent *marzēahs*, the fact it is taken for granted that a *marzēah* house was a place in which one might mourn the dead does suggest it was a common one at this time. The translation history of Jer 16:5 indicates the connection often, but not always, endured.⁴⁰

Dating the Text

It is difficult to establish a precise date for this text. Since v. 1 is absent from the LXX and v. 10 refers to an individual telling “this people all these words,” Carroll thinks the individual in vv. 2–9 is a literary creation, representing the exilic community’s concerns.⁴¹ As such, the passage would post-date Jeremiah’s prophetic

³⁹Bryan argues the funerary aspects of this *marzēah* are accidental, but he does acknowledge the connection (see Bryan, “Texts,” 69–70).

⁴⁰Josephus described it as a “house where one celebrates funerary banquets (*οικον ενθα επιτελουσι περιδειπνα*), the Peshitta translated “house of sorrow” (*byt mrqwdt*) and *Bab. Ketubah* 69ab uses Jer 16:5 to support the definition of *marzēah* as “mourning” (*מָאֵי מְרַח אַבְל*). In contrast, though, Aquila renders it simply as *οἶκον ἐστιάσεως* (“banqueting house”) and Symmachus translates *οἶκον ἐταιρίας* (“house of brotherhood”). The LXX occupies the middle ground by rendering *בֵּית מְרַח* as *θίασος*, a voluntary association which sometimes celebrated a memorial meal for deceased members, although that was not its only *raison d’être*; see further J. S. Kloppenborg, “Collegia and *Thiasoi*: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership,” *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (eds. J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson; London; New York: Routledge Press, 1997) 17, 20–22.

⁴¹Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 338–41. A similar approach is taken by McKane, *Jeremiah I*, 366–67. On the communal interpretation of the “I” in the book of Jeremiah in general see H. G. Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1963).

ministry. But Carroll himself indicates the placement of vv. 10–13 is redactional,⁴² in which case those verses cannot be used to establish either the intention or provenance of vv. 1–9.⁴³ In contrast, while acknowledging the evidence of editorial activity, many commentators link the passage's underlying content to Jeremiah himself.⁴⁴ The prohibition of marriage would have greatest relevance and symbolic value if given earlier rather than later in the prophet's career,⁴⁵ although most avoid suggesting anything more precise.⁴⁶

The period between a possible Jeremianic origin for the nucleus of this passage and the exilic redaction into its final form by the Deuteronomists would be about 75 years (ca. 625–550 BCE). In terms of establishing the *marzēah*'s chronological development in the prophetic literature, this would place the passage after those already considered in Chapters 2–4 and roughly contemporary with the Ezekiel texts to be considered in the next chapter.

⁴²Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 342; so too, McKane, *Jeremiah I*, 369, and most commentators.

⁴³See also the succinct critique of Carroll in Jones, *Jeremiah*, 228.

⁴⁴B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (KHAT 11; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1901) 138; Giesebrecht, *Jeremia*, 94; A. Condamin, *Le livre de Jérémie: traduction et commentaire* (EBib; 3me. éd.; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1936) 146; S. Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (Kristiania: Jacob Dybwad, 1914) 20, 39–40; E. A. Leslie, *Jeremiah: Chronologically Arranged, Translated and Interpreted* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954) 88; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 112; Thiel, *Jeremia 1–25*, 198, 201; Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 407; R. E. Clements, *Jeremiah* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988) 102. Holladay appears to attribute the whole passage to Jeremiah, without any editorial activity; see Holladay, *Jeremiah I*, 467–72. As evidence of editorial influence, Thiel notes the long-winded, repetitive prose style, deuteronomistic expressions and parallels to other editorial passages; for details see Thiel, *Jeremia 1–25*, 195; see also Stulman, *Prose Sermons*, 69–70.

⁴⁵Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 216; Jones, *Jeremiah*, 229. The element of sacrifice is less if one has already gone unmarried for a long time, or been married and widowed.

⁴⁶An exception is Holladay, *Jeremiah I*, 468, who dates the passage to “December 601 or early in 600.”

Summary

The use of the actual term makes Jer 16:5 one of only two direct references to the *marzēah* in the Bible. The verse mentions a *marzēah* house, which points to a wealthy social setting. Although the following verses allude to drinking and mourning rituals, neither drunkenness nor a religious setting for the lamentation are emphasized. On the other hand, in this text the *marzēah* house is clearly located within a funerary setting. The connection is both more self-evident and more naturally asserted than was the case with the only other funerary *marzēah* encountered thus far, at Isa 28:7–8. At the same time, the *marzēah* house and the activities associated with it are not opposed in Jer 16:5 because of this or any other aspect of its nature. It is simply rejected along with other funerary practices as inappropriate, due to the extensive death that awaits the people of Judah.

CHAPTER 6

THE *marzēah* IN EZEKIEL?

Two passages in Ezekiel have been proposed as *marzēah* allusions.¹ First, Susan Ackerman has argued that Ezek 8:7–13 reflects *marzēah* features encountered elsewhere, including a restricted aristocratic membership with a designated leader, a physical location dedicated to the group’s purposes, and royal approval.² Second, in Ezek 39:19 Yahweh invites the birds and animals to feast on the corpses of Gog’s army “to satiety” and to “drink . . . to drunkenness”; identical language in *KTU* 1.114.3–4, 16 has led Brian Irwin to suggest that Ezek 39:17–20 also reflects the *marzēah* feast.³

Ezek 8:7–13

Ackerman’s proposal for a *marzēah* allusion here is based on the similarity between elements of Ezek 8:7–13 and features of the extra-biblical *marzēah*. Since her proposal hinges on her understanding of the word *שֶׁקֶץ* in v. 10 as “unclean food,” the text and its context must be established before those similarities can be evaluated.

The Text

וַיָּבֵא אֹתִי אֶל־פֶּתַח הַחֲצַר וְאֶרְאֶה וְהִנֵּה חֹרֵי־אֶתֶד בְּקִיר (8) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בְּנֵי־אָדָם חֲתֹרֵ־נָא בְּקִיר
וְאֶחָתֶר בְּקִיר וְהִנֵּה פֶתַח אֶתֶד (9) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בֵּא וְרֵאֵה אֶת־הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת⁴ אֲשֶׁר הֵם עֹשִׂים פֹּה (10)

¹Since the word *marzēah* does not appear in Ezekiel, Bryan did not consider that book.

²S. Ackerman, “A *MARZĒAH* in Ezekiel 8:7–13?” *HTR* 82 (1989) 267–81. This material subsequently appeared, slightly revised, in S. Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 38, 41–44, 53–55, 67–79; the following discussion will refer to the latter.

³B. P. Irwin, “Molek Imagery and the Slaughter of Gog in Ezekiel 38 and 39,” *JSOT* 65 (March 1995) 108–09 and his n. 40. Earlier, Marvin Pope had noted the parallels as a “literary cliché”; see M. H. Pope, “Notes on the Rephaim Texts from Ugarit,” *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 19; ed. M. de Jong Ellis; Hamden: Archon Books, 1977) 175.

⁴The MT calls the abominations “evil” (הַרְעוֹת) but the LXX lacks the word here (see also at 6:11) and in v. 17. Most scholars delete it as superfluous, an exception being D. I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997) 288n27.

תוצבות גדלות אשר־המה עשים

And he brought me to the entrance of the court; I looked, and there was a hole in the wall. (8) Then he said to me, "Mortal, dig through the wall"; and when I dug through the wall, there was an entrance. (9) He said to me, "Go in, and see the abominations that they are committing here." (10) So I went in and looked; there was every kind of detestable thing, all the idols of the house of Israel, engraved¹¹ upon the wall. (11) Seventy of the elders of the house of Israel (Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, was standing among them) stood before them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the incense smoke was ascending. (12) Then he said to me, "Mortal, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his room of images? For they say, 'Yahweh does not see, Yahweh has forsaken the land.'" (13) He also said to me, "You will see still greater abominations that they are committing."

The Masoretic and Greek versions of this text differ at a number of points. Most are minor variations that do not significantly affect the passage's meaning, and have been treated in the footnotes.¹² A more substantial difference is the second half of v. 7 (וְאֶרְאֶה . . . בְּקִיר) and both instances of בְּקִיר ("in/through the wall") in v. 8, all of which are lacking from the LXX. However, the wall might be reflected in the LXX at the end of v. 10, where "upon it" (ἐπ' αὐτοῦ) occurs in place of the MT's "upon the wall" (עַל־הַקִּיר). There is no antecedent for the pronoun in the LXX, although "wall" would be an appropriate one. Thus, the shorter LXX version of vv. 7b-8 may simply reflect confusion by the translator.¹³ In any case, the difference in meaning is slight. In both versions the prophet is instructed to dig,¹⁴ with the MT clarifying that he is to

¹¹Taking מְחֻקָּה as a nominal predicate, with A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912) 5.26; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 219.

¹²See notes 4-10 above.

¹³Thus G. R. Driver, "Ezekiel: Linguistic and Textual Problems," *Bib 35* (1954) 149-50. Since the text describes a visionary experience we should not expect the same clarity as with a direct observation of the events; see further, Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 169; I. M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (VTSup 56; Leiden; New York; Köln: E. J. Brill, 1994) 67-68; Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 289.

¹⁴Balla, following V. Herntrich, *Ezekielprobleme* (BZAW 61; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933), (unavailable to me), emends the root חתר in v. 8 to הפר. See Balla, "Ezechiel 8, 1-9, 11; 11, 24-25," 8n11; Balla in turn is followed by Fohrer, *Hauptprobleme*, 59, 174; *idem*, *Ezechiel*, 49; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 108 note 1, 125; Carley, *Ezekiel*, 54. Balla explains the divergence in the two texts as follows: חפר means both "dig" and "look closely," and the second sense was meant here. Thus, Ezekiel is instructed to look closely, after which he sees a concealed door and enters. The LXX misunderstood the word with the first meaning and incorrectly rendered it with the verb ὀφύσσω. The Hebrew tradition

dig into the wall, enlarging an already existing hole. In the LXX he would presumably dig down, but in either scenario, the prophet gains access to the site clandestinely.¹⁵ Since there is no significant change in meaning, I prefer to retain the MT for the reasons given in n. 14.

The text given above matches Ackerman's, except that we differ concerning the word "darkness" in v. 12.¹⁶ More significantly, we diverge drastically concerning the word $\Upsilon\text{P}\text{Q}$, which is central to whether there is a *marzēah* allusion in this text. But before addressing that matter, the limits of the text need to be considered.

Establishing the Unit

Ezekiel 8–11 describes a visionary experience in which the prophet sees the sins of the Jerusalemites and their punishment,¹⁷ and Ezek 8:7–13 depicts one of four

misunderstood the word in the same way, and over time the root $\text{ח}\text{ת}\text{ר}$ replaced $\text{ח}\text{פ}\text{ר}$, and the other words missing from the LXX were gradually added, perhaps under the influence of Ezek 12:5, 7, 12.

This proposal removes all the difficulties, but only by postulating complex textual histories in the Hebrew and Greek for which there is no manuscript support. On the other hand, there are good reasons for retaining the MT. In addition to the principle of *lectio difficilior* and the possible reflection of "wall" in the LXX's $\epsilon\pi' \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (noted above), the verb $\text{ח}\text{ת}\text{ר}$, with its connotations of breaking into a location (BDB 369b; the cognate noun $\text{ח}\text{ת}\text{ר}\text{ו}\text{ת}$ means "burglary" [see Exod 22:1; Jer 2:34]), is quite appropriate to the context of entering a restricted site; see D. J. Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 85–86; M. Dijkstra, "Goddess, Gods, Men and Women in Ezekiel 8," *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkeliën Van Dijk-Hemmes* (BIS 18; eds. B. Becking and M. Dijkstra; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996) 94n37. Halperin's sexual interpretation does not negate the cogency of his linguistic analysis. Job 1:13 and Ezekiel 12 are exceptions to this meaning of the verb; this argues against any influence here from Ezekiel 12:5, 7, 12.

¹⁵That would also be the case with the emendation rejected in n. 14.

¹⁶As argued in n. 8, its connotations are present elsewhere in the text anyway.

¹⁷The possible secondary nature of chapters 9–11 is irrelevant to this study; see the commentaries and Balla, "Ezechiel 8, 1–9, 11; 11, 24–25," 1–11. Contrast M. Greenberg, "The Vision of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8–11: A Holistic Interpretation," *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God's Control of Human Events, Presented to Lou H. Silberman* (eds. J. L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel; New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1980) 143–64; *idem*, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 195–205; J. Becker, "Ez 8–11 als einheitliche Komposition in einem pseudepigraphischen Ezechielbuch," *Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation* (BETL 74; ed. J. Lust; Leuven: University Press, 1986) 136–50.

“abominations” the prophet sees. The four scenes share a common structural pattern,¹⁸ and some have tried to interpret them as part of a single ritual.¹⁹ However, Cogan attributes a “disjointed, catalogue quality” to the four vignettes and Ackerman notes the scattered locations for each as arguments against a unified rite.²⁰ Apart from Ezekiel’s role as observer and the repeated statement that the next abomination will be greater than the last (vv. 6, 13, 15; cf. v. 17), the scenes are not integrated with each other. In particular, the sins and sinners are different in each, with no indication of continuity, interaction or overlap. Thus, Ezek 8:7–13 is a self-contained passage within that sequence, and can be analyzed independently of the other three “abominations.”

Within vv. 7–13, various deletions have been proposed. Most are based on the LXX and were dealt with when establishing the text itself.²¹ However, two proposed deletions have implications for a possible *marzēah* allusion in this text and must be considered. First, Ackerman takes the references to the seventy elders of Israel in vv. 11 and 12 as evidence of the social and political stature of the participants,

¹⁸Although not all are present in every instance, five elements can be identified: (1) the prophet is taken to a site, (2) ordered to look, (3) the exclamation “behold” is followed by a description of specific sins and sinners, (4) the prophet is called “Mortal” and asked if he has seen, and (5) he is told he will see even worse things; see F. Horst, “Exilsgemeinde und Jerusalem in Ez viii-xi: Eine literarische Untersuchung,” *VT* 3 (1953) 342–44.

¹⁹The earliest proposal was a celebration for Adonis, suggested by H. A. C. Haevernick, *Commentar über den Propheten Ezechiel* (Erlangen: C. Heyder, 1843); it is discussed by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 237. The conclusion of the summer solstice was suggested by H. G. May, “The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh,” *JBL* 56 (1937) 309–21. M. Nobile, “Lo sfondo culturale di Ez 8–11,” *Anton* 58 (1983) 185–200 also sees a solar festival here. Gaster interpreted Ezekiel 8 as a fall harvest ritual outlined in *KTU* 1.23; see T. H. Gaster, “Ezekiel and the Mysteries,” *JBL* 60 (1941) 289–310, especially pp. 289–97; cf. Dijkstra, “Ezekiel 8,” 113–14. Ezekiel 8 is related to a son’s obligations to a father outlined in the story of Aqhat (see *KTU* 1.17.25–34 and parallels) by Y. Avishur, “The ‘Duties of the Son’ in the ‘Story of Aqhat’ and Ezekiel’s Prophecy on Idolatry (Ch. 8),” *UF* 17 (1986) 49–60. None of these has found much acceptance; for a critique of Gaster in particular see W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956) 165–68.

²⁰M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974) 86n116; Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 53–55.

²¹See notes 4–10.

and by extension, of their activity, but a few authors delete one or both instances of the word “elders.”²² They do not present arguments in support of the deletions, however, but simply label them explanatory glosses. Yet without the specification as “elders,” the number seventy (v. 11) seems arbitrary, while with it the seventy men serve a representative role comparable to that in Exod 24:1, 9; Num 11:16, 24–25. Without any text-critical basis for deleting it, and especially in light of its presence in the usually shorter LXX version of this passage at both places, the word “elders” should be retained.

Secondly, Ackerman considers Jaazaniah, who stands in the midst of the seventy elders, to be the leader of the *marzēah*,²³ but that entire clause is deleted as a later addition by some scholars because it disturbs the flow of the Hebrew in v. 11.²⁴ However, as Block astutely observes, “...if smoothness were a test of authenticity, most parenthetical clauses would be eliminated.”²⁵ Furthermore, there is no manuscript evidence for dropping this phrase either, and the LXX’s minor change actually supports its authenticity.²⁶ Therefore, it has been kept, and the text given at the beginning will be the basis of the following discussion.

²²Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 71, 76. Both references are deleted by Balla, “Ezekiel 8, 1–9, 11; 11, 24–25,” 8n14 and 15; Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 49; the second instance is dropped by Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 108 note q. Ackerman does not seem to be aware of their proposals

²³Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 76.

²⁴Balla, “Ezekiel 8, 1–9, 11; 11, 24–25,” 8n14; Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 49; Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 82; Carley, *Ezekiel*, 55; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 220; Pohlmann, *Hesekiel 1–19*, 139n650.

²⁵Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 288n30; see also Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 127; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 121. Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 93–94, solves the problem by rearranging the verse. Other instances of parenthetical statements interrupting the “flow” include Gen 13:7; 29:16; 1 Sam 1:9; see further, T. O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1971) §132; B. K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) §39.2.3.

²⁶The LXX drops the plural participle “standing,” producing the reading, “And seventy elders of the house of Israel (and Jaazaniah stood among them) before them.” This creates its own problems, but does indicate awareness of some difficulty with the Hebrew; most importantly, that the Greek contains the clause but fails to improve the syntax more argues for its originality in the MT.

Discussion

Ackerman's claim that Ezek 8:7–13 describes a *marzēah* is based on her identification of parallels between this text and features known from the explicit biblical and extra-biblical *marzēah* references. In her view, the passage describes the Jerusalem aristocracy (the seventy elders), with a recognizable leader (Jaazaniah), worshipping images at a banquet in a room dedicated to that purpose within the palace-temple complex.²⁷ The points of contact with the earlier Ugaritic *marzēah* in particular are obvious: the seventy elders correspond to the “men of the *marzēah*,” Jaazaniah is the *rb mrzḥ*, the room is the equivalent of the *marzēah* house, the idols represent the patron deities of the *marzēah* and the physical location of the room indicates royal approval.²⁸ At the same time, two of the three criteria used throughout this study are clearly present. For instance, even if the number seventy is purely symbolic, as many suggest, it is obviously meant to indicate that those so identified serve a representative role as Jerusalem's leading citizens.²⁹ Similarly, the idols point to religious activity, which is reinforced by the nuance of “worship” for the phrase “stand before” in v. 11.³⁰

Ackerman's proposal runs into difficulty, however, when it comes to the third criteria, i.e., drunken feasting. She recognizes the centrality of this element when she states, “It is clear that the *marzēah* centered around feasting and *especially around drinking*.”³¹ But not only is there no reference to drinking in the passage, it does not even deal with feasting. Ackerman argues that elsewhere the term *ṣṣṣ* always refers

²⁷See Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 67–79, especially pp. 68–71, 76–77.

²⁸See Chapter 1 for these elements at Ugarit in RS 15.70; 15:88; 1801; *KTU* 4.399; 3.9; 1.114; 1.21, and in various combinations in the post-biblical evidence as well.

²⁹See p. 207.

³⁰See especially Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 220, and the biblical references he cites.

³¹Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 72, emphasis added.

to unclean food, and stripped of the secondary phrase “image of a creeping thing and animal” does here as well;³² on that basis she sees a banquet consisting of unclean food in v. 10. But Ackerman’s absolutism concerning the denotation of *ṣṣ* is not quite accurate. The word actually refers to hybrid animals that are forbidden as food *because* they are detestable.³³ In Lev 7:21 mere contact with things that are *ṣṣ* renders one ritually unfit to eat sacrificial food (cf. Lev 11:24–25), while in Lev 11:11 their dead carcasses, which few would venture to eat, are labeled *ṣṣ*. In other words, *ṣṣ* refers to the essential nature of such things, not their status as food; it is the former that makes them unsuitable as the latter.

Lest I be accused of being overly subtle on this issue, three points should be noted. First, Ezekiel is capable of criticizing unacceptable dining much more directly.³⁴ Second, the focus in the rest of the passage is on the religious activity, with no indication that a banquet is taking place.³⁵ Third, this is the only time *ṣṣ* occurs in the book of Ezekiel, whereas the comparable *ṣṣ* occurs eight times.³⁶ It makes sense, therefore, to interpret the solitary instance of the former term as a variant of the preferred usage in the book of Ezekiel, describing what the prophet perceives as cultic

³²Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 69–71. Cf. n. 5 above.

³³See Lev 11:10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 23, 41, 42; cf. Isa 66:17.

³⁴Dijkstra, “Ezekiel 8,” 95; see Ezek 18:6, 11, 15; 22:9.

³⁵Cf. Dijkstra, “Ezekiel 8,” 96–97.

³⁶This accounts for 35% of the word’s total occurrences in the First Testament. Significantly, in Ezekiel they are evenly split between references to an “abomination” (*ṣṣ*; Ezek 5:11; 7:20; 11:18, 21; cf. Ezek 8:9, 13) and an idol (*ṣṣ*; Ezek 20:7, 8, 30–31; 37:23; cf. Ezek 8:10). The word also refers to unacceptable cultic activities in Deut 29:16; 1 Kgs 11:5, 7 (2x); 2 Kgs 23:13 (2x), 24; Isa 66:3; Jer 4:1; 7:30//32:34; 13:27; 16:18; Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:1; Hos 9:10; 2 Chr 15:8. See also Nah 3:6; Zech 9:7.

aberrations, rather than with a derived meaning of “unclean food” for רָצוּץ .³⁷ If this is done, the banquet disappears, and all that is left is a reference to idol worship.³⁸ But if there is no banquet in this passage, then the only possible evidence of drunkenness is also gone. Simply put, nothing in this passage connects the idol worship with a *marzēah*, and Ackerman’s proposal must be rejected.

One other aspect of this passage supports rejecting Ezek 8:7–13 as a *marzēah* allusion. Virtually all commentators agree the passage deals with a hidden room and therefore a secret ritual.³⁹ The other three abominations in the chapter are open, public actions, but in this case the prophet can only observe what is going on by digging his way into the location. Ackerman suggests this is because he is not a member of the *marzēah*,⁴⁰ but the visionary aspects of the text suggests otherwise. Ezek 8:3 suggests

³⁷Some emend it to the plural רָצוּצִים with the Targum; see K. H. Cornhill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* (Leipzig, 1886); C. H. Toy, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (SBOT 12; New York: Dodd, Mead, 1899); these scholars are cited in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 219. It is simpler to take the word here as a collective noun. Dijkstra, “Ezekiel 8,” 96, draws an analogy with the offering of incense to Nehushtan (2 Kgs 18:4), a cultic snake that would be “detestable” on the basis of Lev 11:41–42.

³⁸A precise identification of the deities involved is secondary to my purpose. Scholarly opinion diverges between an Egyptian and a Babylonian background for the deities in question, with the attendant political ramifications of their cult being practiced in Israel. The former is argued by Keil, *Ezekiel*, I.121; Bertholet, *Hesekiel*, 31,32; J. Ziegler, *Ezekiel* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1948) 29; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 123–25; Carley, *Ezekiel*, 55; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 241; Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 134; J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990) 55; Duguid, *Ezekiel*, 113; Pohlmann, *Hesekiel 1–19*, 139; for the latter view see Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 94; Fohrer, *Hauptprobleme*, 175; Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 51; Albright, *Archaeology*, 166–67; H. L. Ellison, *Ezekiel: The Man and His Message* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1956) 42–43; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 169–70). The arguments are based upon the secondary designation of the images as “creeping things and animals.” Even if this is a correct interpretation of רָצוּץ (Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 81; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 240–41; *contra* Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 69–70), the only thing that can be said for certain is that since the elders think Yahweh has abandoned the land (v. 12), they are appealing to other deities in this passage.

³⁹See Keil, *Ezekiel*, I.119; Herrmann, *Ezekiel*, 60; Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 93; Ellison, *Ezekiel*, 43; Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 80–81; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 124; R. M. Hals, *Ezekiel* (FOTL 19; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988) 52; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 143; Duguid, *Ezekiel*, 112. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 169, points to the nuance of “hiding place” for $\text{חַי$ (v. 7) at 1 Sam 14:11; Job 30:6 in support of his statement, “a secret meeting place is meant.” Ackerman allows for that possibility at least: “...the cult Ezekiel envisions in vv. 1–12 is private, *perhaps even secret*.” (see Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 69, emphasis added).

⁴⁰Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 69.

Ezekiel was not physically present in Jerusalem,⁴¹ and there is no indication he was observed at any time in chapter 8. With respect to vv. 7–13 especially, if he can only gain entrance to the *marzēah* clandestinely, then the participants' lack of reaction to his presence is surprising, to say the least. This confirms that his transference from Babylon to Israel is presented as being outside the normal realm of human experience, in which case there is no reason he could not have entered through the front door undetected. Thus, rather than reflecting his lack of credentials, Ezekiel's alternative mode of entrance is more likely meant to emphasize the secretive nature of the ritual. But although the *marzēah* is a private and at times exclusive institution, there is no indication from any place or time in its history that it was a secret one.⁴² Nor is there any reason it should be here. The other "abominations" describe the public worship of other deities, thereby ruling out non-yahwistic divine patrons as a reason for the secrecy, and Ackerman's suggestion that the room's location indicates royal approval⁴³ also argues against a secret *marzēah*. In short, the secretive nature of the religious activity being practiced in Ezek 8:7–13,⁴⁴ as well as the absence of drinking in the passage, argue against it being a *marzēah*.

⁴¹He experiences the following scenes in a "divine vision"; see the discussions of Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 168; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 53; Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 280. For interpretations of Israelite prophecy in light of similar "soul travel" (the phrase is Blenkinsopp's) experiences in other cultures, especially shamanism, see J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963) 1–137; R. R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 21–88; T. W. Overholt, *Prophecy in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Sourcebook for Biblical Researchers* (SBL SBS 17; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); see also I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (2d ed.; London; New York: Routledge Press, 1989).

⁴²The *marzēah*'s widespread attestation alone would argue against a secret institution, as does the granting of official approval, its use as a reference point in dating other events, etc. (see in Chapter 1, *passim*). Moreover, none of the biblical instances of the *marzēah* were secretive; see especially Jer 16:5, which is roughly contemporary with Ezekiel 8.

⁴³Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 71.

⁴⁴The reason for the secrecy is not immediately apparent, and any proposal in this regard would be highly speculative. In any case, my point here does not require identifying the reason, only that such secrecy is inconsistent with the nature of the *marzēah*.

Ezek 39:17–20

In *KTU* 1.114.3–4, El invites the gods to a feast where they “drink (*tšm*) wine to satiety (*šb*), new wine to drunkenness (*škr*),” and he does the same in line 16. Similarly, in Ezek 39:19, after Gog’s army is destroyed Yahweh invites birds and animals to a sacrificial feast where they will “eat fat to satiety (*שְׂבַעָה*) and drink (*וּשְׁתִיתֶם*) blood to drunkenness (*שְׁכָרוֹן*).”⁴⁵ For Brian Irwin this repetition of vocabulary from El’s *marzēah* “opens up the possibility that the Ezekiel passage constitutes an additional OT reference to the *Marzeah* banquet.”⁴⁶ Since the focus of his article lies elsewhere, this statement is not developed, but it is worth further consideration. Although three vocabulary items from a text that was buried six centuries earlier are not enough to establish an allusion to the *marzēah*, the fundamental content of the two texts is also comparable, and I will argue the Ezekiel passage alludes to the mythological tradition in general, rather than the Ugaritic text itself.

The Text

וְאַתָּה בֶן־אָדָם⁴⁷ אָמַר לְצִפּוֹר כָּל־כַּנָּף וּלְכָל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה הִקְבִצוּ וּבֵאוּ הָאֲסוּפוֹ מִסָּבִיב עַל־זִבְחֵי אֲשֶׁר אָנִי זֹבֵחַ לָכֶם וּזְבַח גְּדוֹל עַל הָרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲכַלְתֶּם בָּשָׂר וּשְׁתִיתֶם דָּם (18) בָּשָׂר גְּבוּרִים תֹּאכְלוּ וְדַם־נְשִׂאֵי הָאָרֶץ תִּשְׁתּוּ אֵילִים כָּרִים וְעִתּוּדִים פָּרִים מְרִיאֵי בָשָׂן כָּלֶם (19) וְאֲכַלְתֶּם־חֵלֶב לְשִׁבְעָה וּשְׁתִיתֶם דָּם לְשְׁכָרוֹן מִזִּבְחֵי אֲשֶׁר־זִבַּחְתִּי לָכֶם (20) וּשְׂבַעְתֶּם עַל־שְׁלַחְנֵי סוֹס וְרֶכֶב גְּבוּר וְכָל־אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה נָאֵם יְהוָה

As for you, mortal, say to the birds of every kind and to all the wild animals, “Thus

⁴⁵Note too the root זבח, cognate with *dbh* used in *KTU* 1.114.1. The Ugaritic gods also eat, but different verbs are used for eating there (*tlhmn*) and here (אכל). In any case, the emphasis in the Ugaritic text is on drinking, especially in the parallel in line 16.

⁴⁶Irwin, “Molek Imagery,” 109n40. See also his pp. 108–09 and Pope, “Notes,” 175.

⁴⁷Transposing יהוה (אֲדָנִי) to after הַשָּׂדֶה, where it directly introduces the actual message, but deleting אֲדָנִי as superfluous. See the LXX and most commentators for both changes, but cf. the ambivalence concerning the expanded version of the divine name in W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48* (Hermeneia; trans. J. D. Martin; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 293, 294 versus 556–62.

⁴⁸Deleting אֲדָנִי with the LXX.

says Yahweh: ‘Assemble and come, gather from all around to my sacrifice that I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. Eat⁴⁹ flesh and drink blood; (18) the flesh of the mighty, eat, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth: rams, lambs and goats, bulls, fatlings of Bashan⁵⁰ — all of them. (19) Eat fat to satiety and drink blood to drunkenness at my sacrifice that I am sacrificing for you. (20) Be filled at my table with horse and chariot horse,⁵¹ with the mighty and all kinds of soldiers’ (utterance of Yahweh).”

This passage does not present any significant text-critical problems, either in terms of emendation or deletion.⁵² Most importantly, the words “satiety” (שֶׂבִיעָה), “(you will) drink” (שָׁתִיתֶם) and “drunkenness” (שִׁכְרוֹן), which were the initial basis for proposing a *marzēah* allusion here, are an assured part of the text.

Establishing the Unit

Ezek 39:17–20 opens and closes with a messenger formula, and this plus its content sets it apart from the immediately surrounding verses. The preceding verses describe the burial of Gog’s army while the following section explains Israel’s exile and

⁴⁹The 2nd person perfects and imperfects continue the force of the preceding imperatives; cf. Lambdin, *Biblical Hebrew*, §107; Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §32.2.2.

⁵⁰The use of animal names for leaders was common in the ancient semitic world; see P. D. Miller, Jr., “Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew,” *UF* 2 (1970) 177–86. The Targum abandons the metaphor completely: “...princes of the earth, *kings, rulers, and governors* all of them *mighty men, rich in possessions*”; this translation is taken from S. H. D. Levey, *The Targum of Ezekiel: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 13; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987) 108.

⁵¹The word רֶכֶב usually means “chariot,” but that makes for a strange menu item, even for birds and wild animals. The word is revocalized as רֹכֵב (“rider”) by Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 294; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 517; the *BHS*; and apparently by Keil, *Ezekiel*, II.173; see also the *NAB*, the *NEB*; the *NRSV*. In a few instances, רֶכֶב itself can simply mean “rider” (e.g., 2 Kgs 7:14; Isa 21:7, 9; 22:6 [but cf. BDB 939 concerning the last three]), but it can also be a metonymy for the horses pulling the chariots (see 2 Sam 8:4 // 1 Chr 18:4); the latter view is taken by Herrmann, *Ezekiel*, 242; Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 422; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 294; L. C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* (WBC 29; Dallas: Word Books, 1990) 202; the *NJB*. Although either of the latter understandings of רֶכֶב eliminates the need for an emendation, the last provides a more “balanced diet” (two servings of animals and two of humans) and is followed here.

⁵²Cody claims all of the sacrificial language is secondary, and that the text merely describes carrion eaters in the aftermath of the preceding carnage, but he provides no supporting evidence or argumentation; see A. Cody, *Ezekiel, with an Excursus on Old Testament Priesthood* (OTMS 11; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984) 189. Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 293, considers v. 17b a condensed, and probably secondary, version of 18a; the primary content would remain even if the former were deleted.

describes its subsequent restoration. At the same time, the idea of birds and animals feasting on Gog's fallen soldiers "on the mountains of Israel" is anticipated in v. 4. Some think the description of Israelites burying Gog's horde and disposing of their weapons is a later addition that interrupts the flow of the passage and even renders the feast of vv. 17–20 impossible.⁵³ However, if the chapter is not read as a strict chronological sequence, the intervening verses may be little more than a digression.⁵⁴ In any case, what is important is that the feeding mentioned in v. 4 is described in vv. 17–20 as a sacrificial feast for animals and birds hosted by Yahweh.

Discussion

As indicated above, Ezek 39:17–20 has been identified as a *marzēah* allusion on the basis of vocabulary shared with El's *marzēah* at Ugarit, specifically, the repetition of "drink," "satiety" and "drunkenness."⁵⁵ This contrasts with the usual interpretation of the passage in terms of holy war and divine warrior motifs.⁵⁶ For instance, Cook notes that in her infamous battle scene, Anat waded through the blood of battle "until she was sated."⁵⁷ Similarly, the association of blood and Yahweh's

⁵³Herrmann, *Ezekiel*, 251; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 521; Carley, *Ezekiel*, 265; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 298, 308; Hals, *Ezekiel*, 281; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 203.

⁵⁴Keil, *Ezekiel*, II.176, thinks this scene is described last for effect. Cf. H. G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 6.281.

⁵⁵See p. 212.

⁵⁶On the holy war traditions compare G. von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (trans & ed M. J. Dawn; introd by B. C. Ollenburger, bibliography by J. E. Sanderson; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991) and S.-M. Kang, *Divine War in the Ancient Near East* (BZAW 177; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989); for the divine warrior see P. D. Miller, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). Most interpreters do not seem to be aware of the lexical parallels with El's *marzēah*. S. L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 89n19, quotes *KTU* 1.114.3–4, but only to contrast the Ugaritic gods' drinking with Yahweh's sobriety; he makes nothing of the shared vocabulary.

⁵⁷*KTU* 1.3.2.29, using the root *šbʿ* as well. See Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 89; cf. May, "Ezekiel," 281.

sword being sated in Isa 34:5–7 and Jer 46:10 is frequently adduced as a parallel to the Ezekiel text.⁵⁸ Finally, Ezek 39:17–20 is linked to the destruction of Gog’s army, which itself draws heavily upon the holy war and divine warrior traditions.⁵⁹

However, the connection between those traditions and Ezek 39:17–20 is not as close as it appears. In the first place, although Yahweh’s feast is contingent upon Gog’s defeat, it is distinct from that event. The change in content coincides with a shift in the recipient of the divine address: throughout chapters 38–39 the prophet has spoken to Gog, but in 39:17 he addresses birds and animals. Thus, the passage itself has no military associations, but deals only with a subsequent feast. Secondly, the textual parallels are fairly superficial. For instance, Anat’s satiety is not related to anything she ingests; rather, she is “sated with fighting” (*tšbʿ tmthš*). She does not drink the blood, nor does she become drunk. Similarly, the parallel with the other biblical texts breaks down upon closer inspection. In Jer 46:10, Yahweh’s sword “eats” and becomes “sated,” using the same verbs (*לָכַל* and *עָבַר*) as Ezek 39:19, but it only becomes “saturated” (*רִוְתָהּ*) with blood. Isa 34:5–7 does not even share any of the significant vocabulary from Ezek 39:19, speaking only of Yahweh’s sword being “filled” (*מָלְאָהּ*) with blood in v. 6.⁶⁰ In other words, although Yahweh’s sword metaphorically drinks blood, it does not become drunk. In fact, Ezek 39:19 is the only

⁵⁸Both are noted by Keil, *Ezekiel*, II.176; H. Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* (FRLANT 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1905) 139; Herrmann, *Ezechiel*, 250; Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 421; May, “Ezekiel,” 6.281; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 309. Isa 34:5–7 only is mentioned by Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 89 and Jer 46:10 only by Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 208.

⁵⁹See Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 88–91 and the biblical references he cites.

⁶⁰Although this might have a nuance comparable to “sated,” the use of a different word is important for the point at hand. Similarly, while the parallel line does say the sword “has engorged itself with fat (*חֵלֶב*),” the verb there is *שָׂבַע*, not *עָבַר*.

place in the entire Bible where blood causes drunkenness.⁶¹ All of this suggests something other than holy war traditions is involved in the passage.

In contrast to those militaristic traditions, the description of El's *marzēah* from Ugarit provides a more suitable background for Ezek 39:17–20. Two points support using the former to illustrate the latter. First, the occurrence of three central words⁶² in both texts establishes more points of contact than with any of the holy war texts considered above. Secondly, the parallels go beyond repeated vocabulary to encompass significantly similar content as well: in both texts a deity invites guests to a meal in order to get drunk. The guests are different, since having other gods at Yahweh's banquet would give them a legitimacy at odds with the rest of the book of Ezekiel, but otherwise the basic content and purpose remains the same. Simply put, the common vocabulary and content point to El's *marzēah* as the primary background for Ezek 39:17–20.

However, the only known copy of *KTU* 1.114 was buried when Ugarit was destroyed ca. 1200, about six hundred years before the traditional time of Ezekiel's prophetic call. This makes direct literary dependence on that text by Ezek 39:17–20 implausible, if not impossible. But the interpretive value of the Ugaritic text does not depend upon the Ezekiel author using the text itself, but rather his use of the traditions

⁶¹ *Contra* Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 89, Isa 63:1–6; Joel 4:13 [Eng 3:13]; Rev 14:19–20; 19:15 do not speak of “intoxicating blood.” Those texts use the image of crushing grapes as a symbol for divine wrath, with blood as the metaphorical counterpart to grape juice. In each case the emphasis is on the destructive connotations of crushing grapes, not the effect of any wine that might be produced later, and none of those texts make any reference to drinking, and especially not to drunkenness.

BDB 924, cites Isa 34:5 and 7 as its only examples of the meaning “be intoxicated” for *ḥḥ*; in the latter verse it is directly linked with blood and is in the former by analogy with v. 6. However, since in v. 7 it is paralleled with “their soil will be engorged with fat” (cf. v. 6), a more natural translation for the line is, “Their land will be saturated with blood.” Unless a known intoxicant is consumed, the normal meaning of “drink one's fill, be saturated” for this verb should be retained; this holds for Isa 34:5 (the parallel in v. 6 uses the verb “be full”) and Jer 46:10 as well.

⁶² *ḏbh* can also be included, although it is peripheral to the Ugaritic text's central motif.

it contains. It would be sufficient if the idea of a god extending an invitation to get drunk survived independently of the Ugaritic text, and was adapted into the Ezekiel passage as we have it.⁶³

Two aspects of the passage suggest that is, in fact, what happened. In itself, most of the passage is neither surprising nor without parallel in the First Testament. For instance, Yahweh calls upon birds of prey and wild animals to devour his “heritage” Israel, in Jer 12:9. References to satiety and drinking at a banquet are not unexpected either, and those words alone could be explained as coincidental. However, this is the only place animals are invited to partake of a sacrificial feast,⁶⁴ and, as has been noted, Ezek 39:19 is unique in having blood as an intoxicant. Moreover, Isa 34:5,7 and Jer 46:10 show that the root הָרַךְ is an established parallel to the root עָרַץ , without the connotations of drunkenness,⁶⁵ and would be even more suitable in relationship to drinking by non-humans. But instead, the author uses the root שָׁכַר , thereby establishing drunkenness as a primary purpose for the feast itself. I think this was intentional, because he wanted to make Yahweh’s banquet for the

⁶³The genre of the passage is relevant to this matter. The nature of the feast, as well as its connection with the preceding Gog and Magog material, establishes points of contact with proto-apocalyptic; on the genre of Ezekiel 38–39, including 39:17–20, see especially B. Erling, “Ezekiel 38–39 and the Origins of Jewish Apocalyptic,” *Ex Orbe Religionum* (SHR; ed. G. Widengren; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972) 1.104–114; Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 85–97. This is significant because of the tendency within the apocalyptic tradition to reinterpret ancient material; on this point see further J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (BRS; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998) 17–19; note especially his comments on p. 19 concerning the indirect reuse of Ugaritic material in the book of Daniel. In the same way, Rev 20:7–10 uses the material from Ezekiel 38–39, but reinterprets Gog and Magog as Satan’s army, while Rev 19:17–21 is based on Ezek 39:17–20 itself. Similarly, the defeat of Satan in the form of a seven-headed dragon (Rev 12:3, 9; cf. the “beast” in Rev 13:1; 17:3) draws upon Yahweh overcoming Leviathan in Isa 27:1 (see also Ps 74:14; Job 26:13), which in turn is based upon Ba’al’s conquest of Lītānū in the Ugaritic mythology (*KTU* 1.5.I.1; cf. Anat’s claim to have done the same in *KTU* 1.3.III.40–42). Such examples could be greatly multiplied. For comparable reinterpretations of older traditions by non-biblical millenarian groups see the references cited in Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 28n34.

⁶⁴Herrmann, *Ezekiel*, 251.

⁶⁵See also Jer 31:14; Lam 3:15.

animals conform to the tradition of a deity inviting guests to a meal with the express purpose of getting drunk. Moreover, Jer 16:5 shows the *marzēah* itself endured to approximately this time within the biblical record, and well beyond in non-biblical references. Therefore, both the author and his audience would probably have understood the scene in Ezek 39:17–20 in terms of that well-known institution.

But even if this reconstruction of the text's tradition-historical background is accepted, in the absence of the term itself it is appropriate to evaluate the passage according to the criteria used previously for identifying *marzēah* allusions. Two of the requisite *marzēah* elements are clearly represented, i.e., drunkenness in a religious setting. Verse 19 explicitly identifies drunkenness as one purpose for the feast, and since Yahweh extends an invitation to "my sacrifice," the feast has religious connotations; Yahweh could even be understood as its patron deity. But there is no indication here of the third constitutive element of the *marzēah*, namely, upper-class participation in the debauchery. However, their absence can be easily explained on the basis of the feast's menu. Since Gog's fallen army is the main course, having human guests would entail cannibalism, so the birds of the air and the beasts of the field are invited instead.⁶⁶ But this results in two things not found elsewhere in the biblical literature: animals are invited to a sacrificial feast and blood intoxicates. I suggest their combination in a single text is not accidental, but rather a conscious adaptation to *marzēah* traditions. In the same vein, the variation from its usual upper-class nature can be attributed to the literary requirements of this particular allusion. As such, it does not outweigh the arguments presented above for interpreting this passage in terms of the mythological tradition of a divine *marzēah*.

⁶⁶This also avoids concern over the prohibition of blood to humans and the restriction of the fat and blood from a sacrifice to Yahweh; see, e.g., Gen 9:4; Lev 3:16–17; 17:10–14; Ezek 44:7, 15. There is also an ironic reversal in having these aristocrats (cf. n. 50) as the meal itself rather than guests at it (suggested to me by William H. Irwin). If the author is playing on funerary connections for the *marzēah* as in Jer 16:5, the irony would be even greater: rather than a *marzēah* feast to mourn their passing, they are served at a celebratory *marzēah*. However, in the absence of explicit funerary language here, that must remain a tantalizing possibility.

Dating the Text

The question of the passage's date is linked to its relationship to the preceding material. Yet because of the difficulties involved in identifying a possible historical identity for Gog, and therefore a time-frame for the events connected with him, agreement on even a general date is probably impossible.⁶⁷ Hals' advice concerning chapters 38–39 is applicable to this particular section as well: "The problems which confront us in this unusual passage are far more responsibly handled in the present, limited state of our knowledge by restricting ourselves to facing them than by speculative attempts at their resolution."⁶⁸ Thus I only offer a tentative and relative date for the passage, in relationship to the others considered previously. In that respect, Ezek 39:17–20 is later than all of the other biblical instances of the *marzēah*, with the possible exception of Jer 16:5, which itself cannot be dated with certainty. However, the apocalyptic-like elements in the Ezekiel passage⁶⁹ suggest that it occupies a place further along in the development of biblical traditions, and therefore is more likely to be the latest of the *marzēah* texts considered in this study

Summary

In this chapter I evaluated two possible *marzēah* allusions, but only accepted one. Despite Ackerman's arguments that Ezek 8:7–13 reflects the features of a *marzēah*, it lacks a central element of that institution: excessive drinking. Ackerman's interpretation of this passage is ultimately dependent on her view that the word רָצוּץ always means "unclean food" and that therefore the text describes a banquet. But the

⁶⁷For instance, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 302–04, argues for a date close to Ezekiel himself, Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 520–21, suggests the early post-exilic period, and Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 421, points to the Persian or Hellenistic period.

⁶⁸Hals, *Ezekiel*, 285.

⁶⁹See n. 63 above.

word actually refers to the essential nature of “detestable” things; it is their basic nature that renders them unsuitable as food. Moreover, מִרְזָאָה occurs only here in Ezekiel, while the cognate מִרְזָאָה is found eight times, always in connection with “abominations” or idols, but never with food. Reading the first Hebrew term in light of the second eliminates any basis for a banquet in the passage, and with it, any grounds for a *marzēah* allusion. Ezek 8:7–13 simply describes the prophet’s revulsion at the sight of a secret ritual in Jerusalem, whose very secretive nature also argues against it being a *marzēah*.

On the other hand, Ezek 39:17–20 draws upon mythological *marzēah* traditions to describe the birds and animals feasting on the bodies of Gog’s soldiers. I propose that although the Ugaritic text describing El’s *marzēah* was buried until a few decades ago, the underlying concept of a deity inviting guests to a banquet at which they get drunk survived independently. In Ezek 39:17–20, the food for the feast made it impossible for the author to have upper-class humans participate, as in a normal *marzēah*, and he substituted carrion eaters. Nevertheless, it is identified as a sacrificial feast hosted by Yahweh, and the author describes the birds and animals getting “drunk” on blood, rather than using a more neutral term, semantically parallel to “satiety,” for the consumption of liquid. The result is that two elements unique in the First Testament are combined in a single text: non-humans are the guests at a sacrificial feast where blood causes drunkenness. I think this reflects the author’s efforts to evoke essential elements of a *marzēah*. Combined with the echoes of the divine *marzēah* tradition from Ugarit, the unique elements in the text more than compensate for the non-aristocratic status of the guests, which was necessitated by the exigencies of the text itself. In short, Ezek 39:17–20 does allude to a *marzēah*.

CONCLUSION

Literary and epigraphic references to the *marzēah* occur in a variety of geographical locations over a span of three thousand years. It is surprising, therefore, that such a widespread and long-lasting institution is only mentioned twice in the biblical literature, at Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5. Consequently, a number of scholars have suggested various texts in the First Testament are allusions that refer to the *marzēah* without using the word itself. However, those proposals are offered on a number of different grounds, which begs the question whether there are fundamental aspects of the *marzēah* that should be present before a text that does not use the term can justifiably be classified as an allusion.

In response, an examination of all extra-biblical references identified three elements that are present in both early and late attestations of the *marzēah*, namely: (1) excessive alcohol consumption (2) by members of the upper class (3) in a religious context. Inasmuch as these features are characteristic of the *marzēah* throughout its history in the semitic world, they can be considered constitutive aspects of the *marzēah*, and therefore used as fundamental criteria for evaluating proposed *marzēah* allusions in the prophetic literature. Using these three features as the minimum requirements for any *marzēah* allusion resulted in the identification of a restricted but more certain *corpus* of *marzēah* texts in the prophetic literature than had previously been established.

Thus, the preceding study has shown that the *marzēah* is more prevalent in the prophetic literature than the two instances of the word itself would suggest, although it is not as extensive as some scholars have proposed. In addition to the explicit references at Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5, ten possible allusions to the *marzēah* were considered in the preceding chapters, of which only four have been accepted as definitely alluding to the *marzēah*: Amos 4:1; Hos 4:16–19; Isa 28:7–8(22) and Ezek

39:17–20. While this might seem like a meagre result from the preceding pages, it should be remembered that it derives from very minimalistic criteria and methodology. The *marzēah* may actually figure more extensively in the prophetic literature than these six references and allusions, but they constitute a solid starting point that can serve as the basis for evaluating other possibilities.

Together with the references in Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5, those four allusions fill a gap in the history of the *marzēah*. The prophetic works in question have traditionally been dated between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE, and with the exception of the trans-Jordanian papyrus, all of the extra-biblical *marzēah* references occur either before or after that period. The two prophetic references provided some information about the *marzēah* in that interval, which can now be supplemented by the allusions. In particular, the relative chronology of the prophetic references and allusions allows one to see both continuity and development with respect to the *marzēah* during that period and as well as in relationship to the earlier and later extra-biblical references.

On the one hand, the *marzēah*'s nature in the prophetic literature is consistent with the extra-biblical literature. In Amos 6:7 the word probably refers to an association of upper-class individuals who celebrated religious feasts characterized by excessive drinking. The mention of a *marzēah* house in Jer 16:5 reflects a similar economic context; on the other hand, the text does not emphasize drinking, although this may be because the focus is on mourning rituals. The allusions in Amos 4:1; Hos 4:16–19; Isa 26:7–8; and Ezek 39:17–20 all reflect the basic elements of upper-class drinking in a religious context (allowing for an adaptation with respect to the participants in Ezek 39:17–20). At the same time there is evidence of some innovation in the prophetic period. Although many consider the *marzēah* to be essentially funerary in nature, Isa 28:7–8(22) is the earliest instance in the biblical and extra-

biblical references and allusions where such a connection can be established for a *marzēah* text. A century-and-a-half later, a funerary context seems commonplace in Jer 16:5, so such an association for the *marzēah* may have actually begun in the late 8th century BCE. Still, as Ezek 39:17–20 and the post-biblical references show, that is only one possible context for the *marzēah*.

At the same time, there is no uniform prophetic attitude towards the *marzēah*. Amos, Hosea and Isaiah all view it negatively, but for different reasons. For Amos, the *marzēah* association and its feasts reflect the societal injustice of northern Israel in the mid-Eighth Century BCE, but in Hos 4:16–19 the issue is that a particular *marzēah* has Anat as its patron. On the other hand, in Isa 28:7–8 the issue seems to be two-fold: religious figures are drunk while performing their duties, and they also acknowledge a divine patron other than Yahweh. In contrast, later prophets do not directly oppose the *marzēah* itself. In Jer 16:5, the *marzēah* house is simply listed as a place where one might enact mourning rituals, but it is not denounced for that reason or even in itself. Rather, the point there is that the coming destruction will be so great that the usual mourning customs, including those occurring in the *marzēah* house, are to be abandoned. In contrast, Ezek 39:17–20 uses the *marzēah* traditions positively, with Yahweh as the host of a *marzēah* feast celebrating the defeat of Israel's enemies. Thus, one can not speak of a unified "prophetic attitude" towards the *marzēah*; instead, their response to the *marzēah* is determined by their own social, economic and religious context. This in itself confirms the stance taken in this study against a uniform perspective on the *marzēah*, either in the Bible or outside.

There is still room for further study of the *marzēah*. For instance, although Greek parallels such as the *thiasos* and *symposium* were excluded from the present study, they are a legitimate field of investigation that will surely shed light on the *marzēah* itself. Similarly, possible biblical allusions outside the prophetic literature

have been proposed,¹ and the criteria developed in this work can provide a basis for evaluating such suggestions. Finally, the possible continuation of the *marzēah* into the Second Testament has yet to be considered. Tentative connections between the *marzēah* and the early christian eucharist have been suggested, but none have been developed in any detail.² Unfortunately, that too is a topic for another study.

To conclude, the *marzēah* in the prophetic literature encompasses more than the word itself. Other texts allude to the *marzēah* as well, and need to be considered in determining its nature. It is my hope that the present study contributes to that scholarly enterprise.

¹See the Introduction, n. 7.

²A correlation with St. Paul's condemnation of the rich getting drunk before the Lord's Supper (see especially 1 Cor 11:21–22) has been suggested by M. H. Pope, "A Divine Banquet at Ugarit," *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of W. F. Stinespring* (ed. J. M. Efrid; Durham: Duke University Press, 1972) 202; *idem*, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 220. Similarly, a link between the *marzēah* and 1 Cor 10:18–21 has been proposed by H. Gressmann, "H KOINONIA TON ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ," *ZNW* 20 (1921) 224–30; M. H. Pope, "The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit," *Ugarit in Retrospect* (ed. G. D. Young; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 178. For a link between the eucharist and the Greek *thiasos* (used to translate "*marzēah* house" in the LXX at Jer 16:5) see C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in the New Testament* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961) 28.

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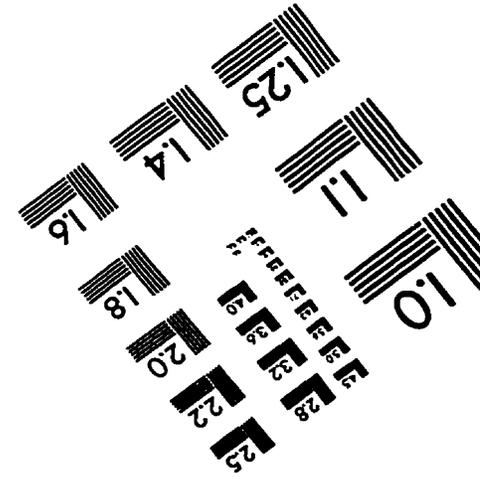
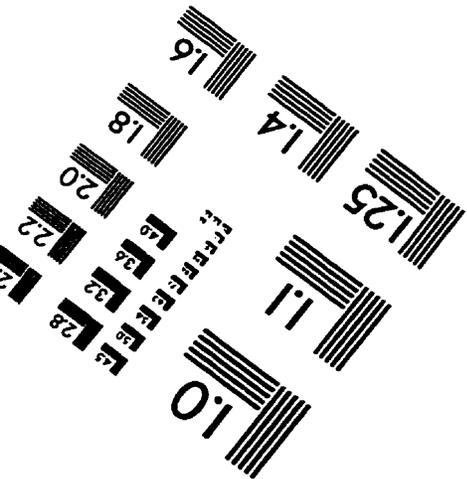
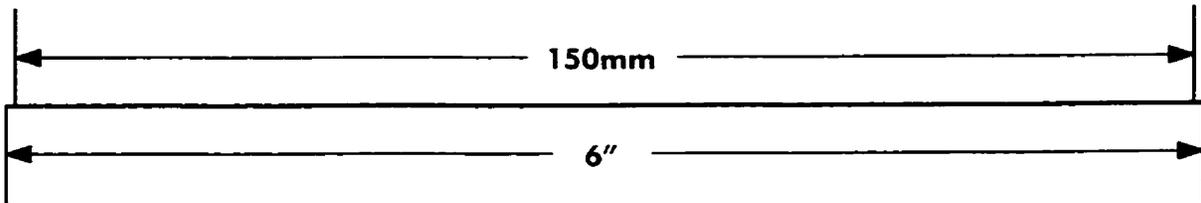
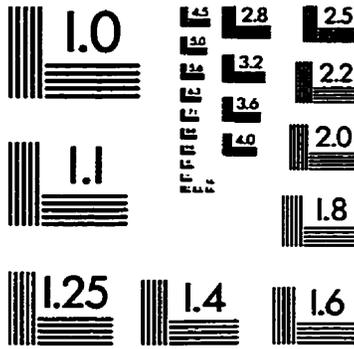
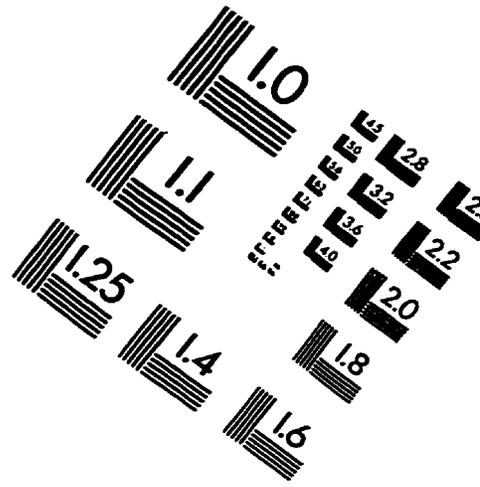
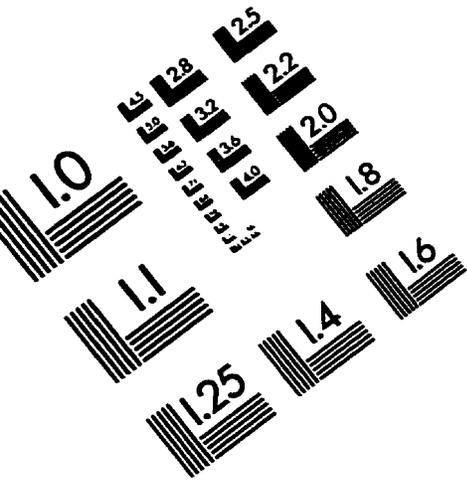
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