Prophecy, propaganda or both? A rereading of Hosea 1-3

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PROPHECY, PROPAGANDA OR BOTH?
A REREADING OF HOSEA 1-3

By

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Principal Supervisor

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Research Thesis Submitted for the Fulfilment of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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March 2015
ABSTRACT

Scholars agree that the prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible contain writings associated with Israel’s prophets. They concur that the growth of the books involves preservation and collection of materials relating to prophetic speeches and activities, reflecting as well as commenting on these materials, and updating them through a process of redaction as events unfold. The purpose of each stage of growth was to make the prophetic speeches and activities applicable to a new situation. This manner of growth, however, presents an interpretive issue. The redaction of prophecies within the context of a book bearing the name of a prophet gives the impression that the redaction derives from the prophet as Yahweh’s spokesperson. With the book of Hosea, scholars argue that the aim of the redaction is to explain the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE and to give encouragement to those in exile. The redaction presenting itself as the word of Yahweh about an impending disaster for the northern kingdom to the prophet suggests it seeks to achieve more than simply explaining the disaster or giving encouragement. Despite many monographs and journal articles treating the redaction in the book of Hosea at length, no investigation has scrutinised the motivation behind the prophecies in Hosea in presenting themselves as the sayings of the prophet Hosea. This study aims to fill the gap in Hoseanic scholarship by offering an extensive review of Hosea 1–3 through the lens of propaganda. It seeks to explore the possibility that the goal of the redaction in these chapters is to persuade the people in the defunct northern kingdom of Israel to adopt a way of thinking and acting that best represent the aspiration of Yahweh. This study hopes to determine whether Hosea 1–3 comprises prophecy, propaganda or both.
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

This research proposal is the Candidate’s own work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in this or any other institution.

To the best of the candidate’s knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Lawrence Pang
March 2015
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis completes a journey that began with an interest in the Christian Scripture that has developed into a labour of love for the Hebrew Bible. I am indebted to many people who have inspired, guided and supported me on this journey.

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I owe the greatest debt to my family. Michael, Gabriel and Holly have patiently watched and endured their father’s preoccupation with his interest in the Hebrew Bible. Elma, my wife, has sacrificed much of her own time and energy so that I may pursue my study. I am eternally grateful for her generous and loving companionship.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>Anchor Bible Dictionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANET</td>
<td>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Biblical Archaeologist</td>
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<td>BAR</td>
<td>Biblical Archaeology Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
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<td>BibInt</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation</td>
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<td>BibInt</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWANT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>Biblische Zeitschrift</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>The Context of Scripture</td>
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<td>CBR</td>
<td>Currents in Biblical Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDD</td>
<td>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBD</td>
<td>Eerdmans Bible Dictionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>FemTh</td>
<td>Feminist Theology</td>
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<td>FidesH</td>
<td>Fides et Historia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gregorianum</td>
<td>Gregorianum</td>
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<tr>
<td>History and Theory</td>
<td>History and Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>HALOT</td>
<td>Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamic Studies</td>
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<td>JAOS</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JAS</td>
<td>Journal of Archaeological Science</td>
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<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>JBQ</td>
<td>Jewish Bible Quarterly</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal for Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
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<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
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<td>Review and Expositor</td>
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<td>Semeia</td>
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<td>SJOT</td>
<td>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td>Studia theologica</td>
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<td>TLOT</td>
<td>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>TWOT</td>
<td>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>TynBul</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
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<td>UF</td>
<td>Ugarit-Forschungen</td>
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<td>VT</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum</td>
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<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

The superscription in Hosea 1:1 asserts that the book contains Yahweh’s word to the prophet Hosea, the son of Beeri. It maintains that Yahweh had communicated with Hosea during the reigns of Uzziah (785–760 BCE), Jotham (759–744 BCE), Ahaz (743–728 BCE) and Hezekiah (727–699 BCE) of Judah, and Jeroboam II (788–748 BCE) of Israel. The assertion in the superscript, it seems, has led several early Church Fathers like Theodoret of Cyrus (393–457 BCE) and Cyril of Alexander (376–444 BCE) to conclude that Hosea was divinely inspired to predict the fate of the northern kingdom.

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1 Many scholars consider the superscription a title for Hosea 1–3 and the entire book. These include James L. Mays, Hosea (London: SCM, 1969), 20; Henry McKeating, The Books of Amos, Hosea, Micah (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 73; cf. the argument that the superscription in Isa 1:1 attributes the entire book that was written over the course of four hundred years or more to the vision of the eighth century prophet, Isaiah son of Amoz. Marvin A. Sweeney, The Prophetic Literature (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 46.

2 The placement of the superscription at the head of the book suggests that its author wants the sayings in the book to be read as Yahweh’s word to Hosea. Thus, it has been argued that “the heading is more than a mere name for the book; the final redactor states in it his theological understanding of the work so that it will be properly read and understood. The book as a whole is the ‘the word of Yahweh,’ the message of God to Israel.” Mays, Hosea, 20; the above chronology of the kings’ reigns is based on John H. Hayes and Paul K. Hooker, A New Chronology for the Kings of Israel and Judah and Its Implication for Biblical History and Literature (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988); other major studies of the chronologies of the kings of Israel and Judah include Edward Richard Thiele, The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983); William Hamilton Barnes, Studies in the chronology of the divided monarchy of Israel (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991); Gershon Galil, The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah (Leiden Brill, 1996); M Christine Tetley, The Reconstructed Dhronology of the Divided Kingdom (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005).
of Israel to frighten the people into repentance and thus avoid divine punishment.\textsuperscript{3} However, with the rise of historical criticism, interpreters are more critical about the origin and nature of the material in the book and so are less inclined to express the confident views of the Fathers of the Church.\textsuperscript{4} Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, for example, in her redaction analysis of the book has argued that nothing in Hosea 1–3 relates to the prophet himself.\textsuperscript{5} Her view is that these chapters comprise theological statements written to account for the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE.\textsuperscript{6} Between the two extreme positions of the aforementioned Church Fathers and Rudnig-Zelt is a range of views that assign some prophecies to Hosea and some to redactors.\textsuperscript{7} A fuller discussion on the range of existing theories about the authorship of prophecies in Hosea 1–3 will follow in the later chapters of this study. The main task in these chapters would be to identify those prophecies that do not originate in Hosea and the purpose of these prophecies that have found their way into the book through the redaction process. The insertion of these prophecies within the context of speeches by the prophet himself gives rise to an


\textsuperscript{6} Rudnig-Zelt, \textit{Hoseastudien}, 94.

interpretive issue for a prophetic text like Hosea 1–3. Before elaborating on this issue, a short detour is necessary to establish terms that will be used to distinguish prophecies that belong to the prophet Hosea from the work of redactors.

1.1. Terminology

According to Paul Redditt, a prophet is an intermediary between God and the Israelis/Judeans who develops the concept of monotheism and contends that an ongoing relationship with God depended on their proper moral action. In simpler terms, Jack Lundbom argues that the preeminent feature of a prophet is that he or she has been enlisted as “Yahweh’s voice to individuals, to Israel, and to nations of the world.” The call narratives in Jeremiah 1:4–19, Isaiah 6:1–13 and Amos 7:14–15, for example, attest to Yahweh’s instruction to the enlisted prophets to speak on his behalf.

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10 Although important components of call narratives are missing in Amos 7:14–15, such as objection from the one being called, reassurances by Yahweh and giving of a sign, the narrative is thought to describe the beginning of Amos’ ministry to the northern kingdom. Cf. James L. Mays, *Amos* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox 1969), 138; Bruce Birch, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos* (1st ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 241.
The call narratives authenticate the prophets as bearers of Yahweh’s message.  

11 A clear disagreement raged through the 1990s about who the ‘prophets’ were and what is meant by ‘prophecy.’ The collection of articles in Philip R. Davies, ed., The Prophets: A Sheffield Reader (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) testifies to the sharp bipolar division among scholars—those who view the biblical prophets as genuine historical figures against those who consider them as literary constructs of later canonical community. A. Graeme Auld, “Prophets Through the Looking Glass: Between Writings and Moses,” *JSOT* 27 (1983): 3-23, here 7 argues, “It is only after the exile that such figures became termed ‘prophet.’” Robert P. Carroll, “Poets not Prophets A Response to ‘Prophets Through the Looking Glass,’” *JSOT* 27 (1983): 25-31, here 25 argues that the individuals traditionally known as prophets should not regarded as prophets. Instead, “They were certainly poets, probably intellectuals, and possibly ideologues.” Yet Carroll does not seem to deny that there were ‘prophets’ in ancient Israel. According to Thomas W. Overholt, “It is Difficult to Read,” *JSOT* 48 (1990): 51-54, figures like Amos and Jeremiah were real prophets and that the books attributed to them reflect the activities of these prophets. Responding to Auld and Carroll, Hans M. Barstad, “No Prophets? Recent Developments in Biblical Prophetic Research and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy,” *JSOT* 57 (1993): 39-60, here 46, 52 argues that they tend to be too theoretical and take little or no heed of what is actually found in the biblical texts and to relate it to the phenomenon of biblical and ancient Near Eastern prophecy. While Barstad agrees with Carroll that the book of Jeremiah has fairly little to do with the historical Jeremiah, it does not detract from the fact that the phenomenological description in Jeremiah largely corresponds to what is found elsewhere in the Bible and the ancient Near East. He argues, “The fact that the biblical prophets are not identical with the historical prophets of ancient Israel (in the same way as the religion of the Hebrew Bible is not identical with the religion of ancient Israel), which entails that the latter have to be reconstructed, does not mean that we cannot know anything about ancient Israelite prophecy (or religion).” He further argues that the prophecies were written down at a very early stage and later collected. The debate that raged in the 1990s seems to continue into the next century. Martii Nissinen, “How Prophecy Became Literature,” *JSOT* 19 (2005): 153-172 notes that prophetic texts are still often read as products of individuals rather than products of societies. Yet scribal activities have led to the development of the spoken “original” prophecies as a literary genre. Nissinen defines prophecy as “a process of divine-human communication, in which the prophet is the mediator between the divine and human worlds, transmitting divine messages to human recipients.” However, the process of divine-human communication is not a one-way communication—from the deity to the recipients through the prophet. Prophecy, Nissinen argues, should be considered a form of social communication in which the whole or a fraction of the community participates. Had it not been the case, “prophecy would never have become literature.” He further argues that it is because of the scribal activities of the canonical community that we have some knowledge of prophecy in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. He, however, thinks that it is impracticable to separate the “genuine” words of the prophets in view of the temporal distance and scribal contribution to the prophetic texts. “Some prophetic books, like Jonah and Malachi, are probably not at all related to any historical personalities.” The on-going scholarly debate about who the ‘prophets’ were—whether
of this basic understanding, this study will use the term *Hoseanic* to refer to those prophecies that Hosea himself conveys in his capacity as Yahweh’s prophet. Although no call narrative has been preserved for the prophet Hosea, scholars do not doubt his appointment as Yahweh’s spokesperson to the northern kingdom of Israel. Jochen Vollmer maintains that the report of Hosea’s marriage to Gomer in Hosea 1 has replaced the call narrative.\(^{12}\) According to Joseph Jensen, Hosea’s awareness of Yahweh’s boundless love for Israel, which his marriage to and love for a promiscuous wife symbolise, forms his call to the prophetic ministry.\(^{13}\) Christopher Seitz shares Vollmer and Jensen’s interpretations although his explanation is less precise in that he designates the opening chapters of the book as Hosea’s call narrative.\(^{14}\) In Grace Emmerson’s view, “Neither ch. 1 nor ch. 3 is to be understood as a ‘call narrative.’” She argues that Hosea is already Yahweh’s appointed prophet and spokesperson to the nation when they were historical persons or the creation of the scribes within the canonical community—and what is meant by ‘prophecy,’ or its purpose, has implication for the present investigation. The investigation into the possibility of the presence of black prophecy in Hosea 1–3 that is prophecy that presents itself as belonging to the prophet when it actually derives from a person or group not connected to the prophet may support those who view the biblical prophets as literary constructs of later canonical community. On the other hand, investigation may not be able to produce conclusive evidence to show that the biblical prophets, and in particular Hosea, were not flesh-and-blood prophets.


Yahweh enjoins him to perform the symbolic action that Hosea 1 describes. Thus, despite the lack of a call narrative and consensus regarding the exact nature of his call, scholars do not doubt Hosea’s appointment as Yahweh’s spokesperson. Moreover, Hosea 1:1 asserts that Hosea is Yahweh’s spokesperson and Yahweh had communicated with the prophet “in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel.”

The assertion in Hosea 1:1 implies the prophet had conveyed Yahweh’s displeasure with Israel (e.g. Hos 1:2c) and predictions regarding its future (e.g. Hos 1:4–6; 2:1–3). Some critics have argued that traditional Christian interpretation has overstressed Yahweh’s word to the prophet for the future at the expense of the moral condemnation in the divine communication. On this issue, Julius Wellhausen and Bernhard Duhm have shown that a concern for morality is at the heart of the prophetic message. A prophet, according to them, is primarily a forthteller rather than a foreteller. Scholars in more recent times are less inclined to emphasise one role over the other. According to Robert Carroll, “Many of the prophecies criticising the


17 Barton, Isaiah 1–39, 45.

community included threats and warnings that associated the corruption of society with the impending doom announced.”¹⁹ The predictive element, he adds, is part of the social analysis.²⁰ Likewise, Lundbom is not keen on distinguishing between forthtelling and foretelling. The prophet’s message, he argues, comprises both censures of current social and political ills (forthtelling), and predictions about the future (foretelling).²¹ Similarly, John Goldingay and David Russell view forthtelling and foretelling as integral to the role of a prophet in conveying Yahweh’s message to the community.²²

In view of the foregoing discussion, this study will include both foretelling and forthtelling aspects of the prophet’s proclamations in the term *Hoseanic prophecies*.

The full implication of foretelling and forthtelling will become clearer as the current study on Hosea 1–3 unfolds. What is relevant for now is that this study will use the term *non-Hoseanic* to refer to those prophecies that do not foretell a future event even though they may appear to be serving that purpose. These non-Hoseanic prophecies are the work of redactors who probably added them after the fall of Samaria.²³ They do not foretell the fate of Samaria and perhaps they seek to achieve

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more than to explain its fall (forthtell). The next section will show the implication of inserting non-Hoseanic prophecies in Hosea 1–3. It will propose how this study aims to address the issue and uncover the motivation for their insertion.

1.2. Non-Hoseanic Prophecy: Nature and Purpose

Many scholars have argued that Hosea 1:5, 7; 2:1–3 and 3:5 are non-Hoseanic prophecies. According to them, these texts are editorial prophetic expansions of Deuteronomistic origin. They were appended to the Hoseanic prophecies after the retirement of the prophet and fall of Samaria in 722 BCE. The insertion of these non-Hoseanic prophecies among the Hoseanic sayings in Hosea 1–3 gives the impression they are prophecies that Yahweh has commanded the prophet to proclaim to the Israelis.

24 It has been argued that “. . . the manuscripts of the prophetic traditions are centuries younger than the events discussed in those traditions. All such documents may represent post eventum statements and we have no controls by which we could guarantee that any predictive oracle was given before the events to which it referred. There is a fair amount of evidence in the literature of the Ancient Near East for the genre of vaticinia ex eventu ‘predictions after the event.’” Carroll, Prophecy, 34.

25 See discussion below.

Although scholars have shed much light on these non-Hoseanic prophecies from a redaction-critical perspective, no question has been raised about their purpose, based on their inclusion among other Hoseanic prophecies. The possibility that the non-Hoseanic prophecies seek to achieve more than just to account for the fall of Samaria or to give encouragement to the exiles remains unexplored. Hans Walter Wolff’s interpretation of Hosea 1:7 is an example. He has interpreted the verse as a late Judean redaction that reflects Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 701 BCE (2 Kgs 18:13–19:37). However, he has not attempted to investigate the redactor’s intention in inserting this non-Hoseanic prophecy between Hosea 1:6 and 1:8 that was written by Hosea’s disciple to describe events in the early period of their master’s ministry. Likewise, A. A. Macintosh has regarded Hosea 1:7 as a reflection on the deliverance of Judah from that same Assyrian threat in 701 BCE. He argues that it “was added to Hosea’s prophecy after that prophecy had found its way to the Southern Kingdom and had been there appropriated.” The updating of the Hoseanic prophecy in the south, in his view, “constitutes the beginning of an important element in Judean faith, namely that Yahweh’s election of his chosen people was narrowed to Judah following his rejection

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27 Yee’s work is an intensive study of the redaction and composition of the book of Hosea. She does not take the traditional methodological approach in that she begins her investigation with the final redacted shape of the book and works her way backwards to the earlier stages of the tradition. The final shape of the book, she argues, is the work of an exilic redactor. Before the final revision, a Judean redactor had revised the first written tradition of the Hoseanic prophecies. A collector who was probably an Israelian and a disciple of Hosea compiled the sayings of the prophet. Hosea himself, she argues, is responsible for the earliest tradition. Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 127.


of the Northern Kingdom.”

Like Wolff, Macintosh has stopped short of questioning the implicit attribution of Hosea 1:7 to the prophet Hosea by the redactor and his (or her/their) intention for the verse and choice for its location in Hosea 1.

The attribution of the Deuteronomistic and non-Hoseanic prophecies in Hosea 1–3 to the prophet, commonly understood as 1:5, 7; 2:1–3 and 3:5, may be classified as pseudepigraphy. Its purpose was probably to give these non-Hoseanic prophecies an authoritative standing. Nonetheless, it is false attribution of authorship. This study will take up this issue in a later chapter but for now, it may be said that the false attribution of work to an author seems to be an ancient literary norm.

This convention, especially when it involves placing non original work beside authentic material, is a perfect ‘seedbed’ for propagating a particular line of thinking by latching on to the authority of another person or group. Such a phenomenon blurs the line between the contributions of a real and a pseudonymous author. This literary issue is reflected in John Dearman’s analysis of Hosea 1:5:

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30 This understanding of the transfer of Yahweh's election, he argues, is likely to belong to a period immediately following Josiah's reform in 621 BCE. Macintosh further argues that preferred status of Judah did not surface suddenly during the reform of Josiah but was a preexisting thought (which Hos 1:7 reflects) dating to around 650–620 BCE. Macintosh, Hosea, 25, 26.


32 ‘Pseudepigraphy’ refers to a work that bears the name of reputable personnel to give the work an authoritative standing. James H. Charlesworth, “Pseudepymity and Pseudepigraphy,” ABD 5:540–541.

33 For example, the Davidic Psalms, the Proverbs of Solomon, and the letters (for example, Hebrews, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles) that were incorrectly attributed to Paul. For a list of pseudepigraphical documents, see James H. Charlesworth, “Pseudepigrapha, OT,” ABD 5:538–540.
Some scholars have opined 1:5 is an editorial addition to the original prophecy of judgment on the house of Jehu and an attempt to extend the language of judgment more broadly to the nation itself. If so, it could be that Hosea added the comment sometime after Zechariah’s death to account for the stripping away of Israelite territory by Tiglathpileser III in 734–732 (2 Kgs. 15:29). If 1:5 is an editorial addition to an earlier prophecy, it could also be the work of an editor at some point after the death of Hosea, perhaps taking into account the fall of Israel to the Assyrians.34

The above issue arising from pseudepigraphy or false attribution of authorship has direct implication for interpreting the prophecies in Hosea 1–3. The obscurity of authorship in these chapters meant that the ancient audience would have had difficulty in distinguishing non-Hoseanic prophecies from those spoken by Hosea.35 In this circumstance, it is possible the non-Hoseanic prophecies were taken at face value—as oracles originating in Hosea. There was no obvious reason to question their origin let alone investigate the motive for inserting the non-Hoseanic prophecies in Hosea 1–3. In contrast, this study hopes to uncover the non-Hoseanic prophecies in these chapters and scrutinise them for the possibility that they were inserted for a purpose beyond explaining the fall of Samaria or giving encouragement to those in exile.

1.3. Non-Hoseanic Prophecy as Black Prophecy and Propaganda

In view of the task stated above, this study proposes an alternative term for the non-Hoseanic prophecies it seeks to scrutinise. The alternative term, substituting the


35 The fact that scholars continue to debate on redaction issue in the book of Hosea seems to support the view that it was probably difficult to distinguish Hoseanic from non-Hoseanic prophecies. See discussion below concerning these debates.
term non-Hoseanic with another label to identify the redactions in Hosea 1–3, serves a twofold purpose. It reflects the fresh approach in this study to probe the non-Hoseanic prophecies for what they really are—prophecies that present themselves as originating in the prophet when they belong to a redactor. Stemming from this, the new term also reflects the task to explore the precise purpose of the non-Hoseanic prophecies. The term to denote this kind of prophecy is black prophecy.

The adjective black in this proposed term is adapted from Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell’s use of the term to describe a discrete type of propaganda that originates in a false source, which they label as black propaganda.36 Emerging from their thought about origin, this research seeks to investigate whether it is justifiable to read certain prophecies in Hosea 1–3 as black prophecies—prophecies that purport to belong to Hosea. For example, Hosea 1:7 would be considered as black prophecy if found to be the work of a Deuteromistic redactor rather than an oracle originating in Hosea. Placed in the context of prophetic utterances assigned to Hosea (cf. Hos 1:1), the Deuteronomistic origin of Hosea 1:7 becomes obscured and as a result can be mistaken as belonging to the prophet himself. A critical reading of the Judean bias in Hosea 1:7 also suggests that it serves to propagate Judah’s special relationship with Yahweh (contra Hos 1:5). Based on this observation, this study seeks to investigate if

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36 Pending a fuller discussion, these authors consider propaganda to be a subcategory of persuasion. According to them, black propaganda also spreads lies, fabrications, and deception. However, it is not implied here that black prophecy possesses these qualities. Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion (3rd; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999), 13; the term black propaganda (also known as covert propaganda) also appears in Jacques Ellul, Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1965), 15.
other black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 have also been formulated as propaganda imbued with a Deuteronomistic bias to promote Judean religious and nationalistic ideals.\textsuperscript{37} It is hoped that this study will contribute to ongoing Hoseanic scholarship by giving special attention to the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3, which have the potential to be misinterpreted by its ancient audience as prophecies belonging to Hosea. This study will fill a gap in Hoseanic scholarship relating to the possibility that the black prophecy contains a function beyond explaining the fall of Samaria or providing encouragement.

Hosea 1–3 has been chosen as the text for studying the concept of black prophecy because no attempt has been made to relate the redaction in Hosea 1–3 to what could be called black prophecies.\textsuperscript{38} Instead, there has been an overwhelming focus in Hoseanic scholarship on redaction and metaphorical matters. The “critical obsession” with the metaphor of maritial infidelity in Hosea 1–2 has been to explain how it functions to highlight the sin of apostasy that the Israelis commit against Yahweh,

\textsuperscript{37} Deuteronomic theological emphases include the struggle against idolatry, centralisation of the cult, election, exodus, conquests themes, monotheistic ideal, observance of the law, loyalty to the covenant, inheritance of the land, retribution and material motivation, fulfilment of prophecy, election of David and his dynasty, and distrust of anything foreign. Moshe Weinfeld, \textit{Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School} (Oxford: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 1.

and for which they will be punished. While this understanding of the purpose of the marriage metaphor is valid, this study proposes that the marriage metaphor is also potentially a black prophecy, which raises the possibility of the use of metaphor for propagandistic ends.

On this issue of a possible relationship between metaphor and propaganda, Nicholas O’Shaughnessy’s view is noteworthy. According to him, propaganda has a rhetorical component that has been a critical part of the propagandist’s armoury since the beginning of recorded history. More significantly, he argues, “Great rhetoric is

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primarily metaphorical.”

Citing a passage from Raymond Gibbs’ work on figurative expression, O'Shaughnessy explains how “[m]etaphors defamiliarise the familiar to reorient thinking.” He further argues that metaphor is a means for a propagandist to secure a certain goal:

Potentially metaphors can fracture existing paradigms of thought and introduce new ones because their vividness assaults our attention and lives on in our memory, and in this way they are special, since subverting existing and often culturally determined ideologies is the hardest thing for a propagandist to do.

The proposal that the marriage metaphor in Hosea is employed in the service of propaganda finds further support in an inaugural lecture given by Athalya Brenner. Although her discussion focuses primarily on Jeremiah 2; 3:1–3; and 5:7–8, her view on the relationship between metaphor and propaganda is still useful. In the aforementioned texts as well as in Hosea and Ezekiel, Israel and Judah (or Samaria and Jerusalem) are portrayed as a faithless wife and a zônāh. Alternatively, Yahweh is the metaphoric male counterpart and the faithful husband who is deeply affected by the wife’s sexual misconduct. In sum, Brenner argues that the husband-wife metaphor

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41 O'Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 70.


43 O'Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 72.


functions as a vehicle for propaganda to portray Yahweh’s estranged relationship with the target audience of Jeremiah. Brenner highlights several assumptions as to why the husband-wife metaphor is chosen as a vehicle for propaganda. These include:

1. The attractiveness of sexual metaphor in sustaining interest; applicability to life situation;

2. The speaker and audience’s recognition of female sexual behaviour as potentially deviant even when unprovoked by a male partner;

3. Potential to evoke emotional response;

4. Potential audience alignment with the speaker;

5. The ability of the metaphor to produce guilt and shame in the audience that will put an end to illicit religious and political alliances in Judah and Jerusalem.

It should become obvious that the points Brenner raises about the husband-wife metaphor are also relevant to the marriage metaphor in Hosea 1–3. The latter, which this research hopes to show, is a piece of propaganda to paint the Israelis as having committed the sin of apostasy against Yahweh. The propaganda culminates in an overarching propaganda with a Deuteronomistic goal to promote the nationalistic and religious ideals of sole allegiance to Yahweh and the Davidic king in Jerusalem.

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47 Brenner, "Prophetic Propaganda," 89.
1.4. The Unity of Hosea 1–3

The task of uncovering the proposed propaganda in the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 is complicated by several issues concerning the integrity of these chapters. These may be summed up in several questions:

1. What is the relationship between the so-called autobiographical chapter 3 and the third person biography about Hosea’s marital life in chapter 1?48

2. How should the difference in genre between the prose material of Hosea 1 and 3, and the poetic material of Hosea 2 be accounted for?

3. What about the difference between the prose (vv. 1–3, 18–22) and poetic (vv. 4–17, 23–25) materials within Hosea 2 itself?

A careful reading of these introductory chapters seems to point toward multiple authorships with different perspectives and emphases concerning the marriage metaphor.49 Hosea 1 speaks only about the crisis in Hosea’s household and by metaphorical extension, the crisis in the northern kingdom which stems from Yahweh’s threat to punish both citizens and their land for the sin of apostasy. On the other hand, Hosea 2 depicts both the crest and nadir of the nation’s relationship with Yahweh, with a special focus on the fate of the land itself. The chapter begins with (vv. 1–3) and ends on (vv. 16–25) hopeful prophecies of restoration and reconciliation respectively and

48 It has been argued that the first person account in Hos 3:1–5 is an indication that it is meant to be read as a “memorabile” or autobiography. Wolff, Hosea, 57.

49 See also the discussion on disparity in Hos 1–3 and attempts to solve this issue in Yee, Composition and Tradition, 52–54.
they frame the poetic vv. 4–15 which presupposes a period of hardship. Finally, Hosea 3 speaks of Yahweh’s magnanimous gesture to the Israelis despite their unfaithfulness. It manifests itself as an instruction to the prophet to “go love a woman, a lover of another and an adulterer” (v. 1), thus putting an end to his (and the nation’s) marital crisis.

Despite the apparent disunity as sketched above, Francis Andersen and David Freedman have argued that “the book of Hosea is not a mere hodgepodge.”\textsuperscript{50} The subtleties and intricacies in the book, they add, meant that extreme caution must be exercised in dealing with the materials where patterns are not discernible.\textsuperscript{51} However, this latter view casts some doubt about the integrity of the book.

Perhaps the unity of Hosea 1–3 resides in the purpose of these first three chapters. In this respect, some scholars have suggested that Hosea 1–3 functions as a type of prologue and the interpretive key for assessing the rest of the book of Hosea.\textsuperscript{52} As a prologue, James Mays argues:

\begin{quote}
It serves as a kind of introduction to the book. The collector set out to bring together all the material which seemed to him to deal with the relation between Hosea’s life, particularly his marriage and children, and his prophecy. He had the autobiographical unit (3.1–5) written by Hosea and the composition in 2.2–15 already at hand. He gathered the salvation oracles in 2.16–23 because they
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{51} Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 66.

contained themes which fit the marriage-children scheme. Lacking a historical introduction for the whole he probably composed 1.2–6, 8f. himself. He then arranged this material so that messages of punishment and salvation alternate (1.2–9 and 1.10–2.1; 2.2–15 and 2.16–23) and set the autobiographical unit which combines both themes at the conclusion.53

As for the view that Hosea 1–3 is the interpretive key for the rest of the book, Andersen and Freedman propose that the personal material in Hosea 1 (vv. 2b–9), 2 and 3 “helps to make the significance of the discourse in Hosea 4–14 more meaningful.”54

Ronald Clements has acknowledged the problem of disunity in Hosea 1–3, based on questions like those posed above, but he also recognises a common thread that holds together the disparate parts of these chapters.55 The unity, he suggests, is found in the message of hope, which forms the overall framework for the prophecies in Hosea 1–3.56 In these chapters, the “prophecies which were originally threatening in tone and content have been supplemented by prophecies which are full of hope and reassurance.”57


54 Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 123; see also the warning about the attempt to reconstruct Hosea’s married life to provide an interpretive key to the book in E Ball, "Hosea," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* 2:761–767.


Clements’ view is supported by Mays and Wolff’s observation of a movement from messages of threat and punishment to prophecies of salvation in Hosea 1–3. This movement, in their view, has shaped a similar thematic movement from oracles of threat to salvation in Hosea 4–11 and 12–14.⁵⁸ Although the hopeful framework does largely resolve the issue of literary and thematic diversity in Hosea 1–3, it is not the only solution. The attempt to identify the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 and probe their motive may show that propaganda can also hold Hosea 1–3 together.

The following chapter on methodology will expand on the ideas presented so far and will further explain the purpose and contour of this research. It will include a literature survey of works relating to propaganda. Based on the information gathered, research will seek to establish whether the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 exhibit characteristics that are typical of propaganda.

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2. METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this research, as outlined in the preceding chapter, is to investigate if certain prophecies in Hosea 1–3 should be read as black prophecies and, collectively, as propaganda. It should be pointed out that black prophecy and propaganda are distinct but can be viewed as related categories, like two sides of a coin. Black prophecy denotes ‘type’ and refers to the non-Hoseanic prophecies that only appear to belong to the prophet but in actuality are the works of a redactor. On the flipside, propaganda denotes ‘function’ and refers to a possible undeclared purpose and persuasion in the black prophecies. It has already been suggested in the introductory chapter that the propaganda, if it exists, is imbued with a Deuteronomistic bias to promote Judean nationalistic and religious ideals. Specifically, the propaganda seems to be targeted at the Israelians and seeks to persuade them, following the demise of the northern kingdom as recompense for their religious infidelity, to demonstrate their allegiance to Yahweh through worship in the Jerusalem temple.¹ The propaganda, it seems, also seeks to convince the Israelians to show loyalty to a Davidic king like

¹ I am indebted to Sweeney’s reading of the book of Hosea. Although he argues that Hosea is directed to a Judean audience even though the prophet’s oracles were originally delivered in the north, his analysis has sparked much thought in this study. Marvin A. Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," in Perspectives on Biblical Hebrew: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures Volumes 1–4 (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; New Jersey: First Gorgias, 2006), 91; "Jerusalem’s Temple as not the place where God dwelt but merely the place where God’s name dwelt. It is God’s name rather than the Deity itself that was to be found in Jerusalem." Leslie J. Hoppe, The Holy City: Jerusalem in the Theology of the Old Testament (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 44.
Hezekiah whose effort in promoting the sole worship of Yahweh has secured, for him and Jerusalem, the blessing of Yahweh (2 Kgs 19:32–37). Based on this idea, the research will restrict its investigation of text relating to the period before the end of monarchy in 587 BCE.

It is hoped that this research will provide a fresh lens to read those prophecies that present themselves as original prophetic speeches but are really the works of a redactor (or redactors) and to scrutinise them for possible propagandistic function. It must, however, be emphasised from the outset that this study does not consider propaganda as something pejorative. On the contrary, a piece of propaganda can be well intentioned or at least thought to be so. The propaganda in Hosea 1–3, if it exists, may actually be believed to reflect the aspiration of Yahweh and in that sense is considered by its originator to be well intentioned.

2.2 Research Design

The investigation in this study will involve two primary and related steps. The first step is to identify the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 and the second is to explore and probe the black prophecies for possible propagandistic intention. These two steps will also entail the subsidiary task of exploring the metaphors in the black prophecies including their cultural and historical background.

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From the perspective of redaction, the scholarly proposal that Hosea 1–3 is a literary work with a long history of development is an important consideration for this study. Thus, the first step in this research will engage the past contributions to Hoseanic scholarship in redaction criticism and the implication associated with the growth of the book of Hosea through the process of redaction. This will be the focus of the next chapter in providing a more comprehensive discussion of the growth of Hosea 1–3 within the overall development of the book of Hosea.

Regarding the subsidiary task identified above, this research will engage scholarly studies on the marriage metaphor in Hosea 1–3. The common interpretation for the metaphor of marital infidelity in Hosea 1–2 is that it functions to accentuate the Israelis’ sin of apostasy. This interpretation has been highlighted in the introductory chapter and it has been proposed that the metaphor is a black prophecy used in the service of propaganda.

Finally, it should be pointed out here that the central aim of this research is not to conduct a study on redaction and metaphor per se but an exploration into the possibility of the presence of black prophecies and propaganda in Hosea 1–3. Ultimately, it seeks to determine the nature of the propaganda in the black prophecies, if it exists at all, and specifically what the propaganda aims to achieve and to whom it is directed.

2.3 Literature Survey: Propaganda

Pursuant to the ultimate task of determining the nature and purpose of the propaganda behind the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3, it is important to survey recent
scholarship on propaganda, in both the biblical and non-biblical/religious fields. From the information gleaned concerning the nature and function of propaganda—what it is, what it hopes to achieve and how it goes about achieving it—an identification of the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 and exploration of the propaganda behind these prophecies can be undertaken. The following presents some of the more significant data concerning the nature and function of propaganda.

2.3.1 Defining Propaganda

A survey of non-religious scholarship dealing with propaganda shows that the materials in this field of study are vast and wide-ranging. In contrast, books and articles discussing propaganda in the Hebrew Bible are significantly fewer in numbers. A brief discussion on propaganda by Mario Liverani appears in 1992 in the Anchor Bible Dictionary. Rex Mason’s book on Propaganda and Subversion in the Old Testament, which appears later, seems to be the only monograph devoted to a general study of propaganda in the Hebrew Bible. According to Eric Siebert, many scholars simply ignore propaganda altogether or think it inappropriate to read the Hebrew Bible from

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3 This is evident in the bibliographies in major works like Ellul, Propaganda, 315–320; Jowett and O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 369-394; O'Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 245–255.


this perspective. He notes that this attitude is especially true among many evangelical and conservative scholars who espouse high views of biblical inspiration and worry that admitting propagandistic intentions in the Bible necessarily erodes its authority. The problem with this line of thinking, in Siebert’s view, is in equating propaganda to “intentional falsification.” In contrast, several scholars, Seibert observes, “have found propaganda a useful optic through which to understand the meaning of certain biblical passages.” He adds that “. . . while disagreements will remain about whether this or that particular passage was intended to be a piece of political and/or religious propaganda, there is no reason to dismiss such possibilities from the outset.” This denial seems to stem from the common preconceived notion that all propaganda is immoral. The test of the morality of a particular instance of propaganda is perhaps in what it aims to achieve and how it goes about achieving that aim. It is hoped that the following literature survey will shed light on these issues. It will begin with a scan of some non-religious works on propaganda followed by a review of discussions on the same topic in the Hebrew Bible.

According to Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, the term propaganda first


7 Seibert, Subversive Scribes, 7.

8 Seibert, Subversive Scribes, 7.

9 Seibert, Subversive Scribes, 8.

10 Seibert, Subversive Scribes, 9.
occurred in 1622 when Pope Gregory XV established the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fidei for propagating the faith of the Roman Catholic Church in response to Protestantism. As a result of this initiative,

the word propaganda . . . took on negative meaning in Protestant countries but a positive connotation (similar to education or preaching) in Catholic areas . . . the term propaganda did not see widespread use until the beginning of the twentieth century when it was used to describe persuasion tactics employed during World War One and those later used by totalitarian regimes.  

Thus, the use of propaganda by the Roman Catholic Church to promote and cultivate the faith of its members began to take on negative connotations on a wider scale. It became associated with “lies, distortion, deceit, manipulation, mind control, psychological warfare, brainwashing, and palaver.” It is also thought that “propaganda consists mainly of ‘tall stories,’ disseminated by means of lies.”  

Notwithstanding the Roman Catholic use of the term propaganda identified above, the phenomenon itself can hardly be described as an innovation belonging to that period. The survey below of the use of propaganda in biblical and extra-biblical literatures indicates that propaganda existed from ancient times. In this regard, Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Minister for Propaganda, made a noteworthy observation about the presence of propaganda in much literature as the deliberate and systematic manipulation of information:

11Pratkanis and Aronson's work is cited without original italics ("propaganda" and "education or preaching") in O'Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 14; for original work, see Anthony R. Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, The Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion (New York: Freeman, 1991), 8.


13Italics his. Ellul, Propaganda, x.
Enemy countries keep on talking as though we had discovered propaganda, or at least made it into the devil’s tool which many people consider it to be. But propaganda exists in all countries and under all forms of government as long as facts have to be conveyed to the public. Even *The Times*, the most democratic paper in the world, makes propaganda in that it deliberately gives prominence to certain facts, emphasises the importance of others by writing leaders or commentaries about them, and only handles others marginally or not at all. In so acting, *The Times* observes the basic principle of propaganda in that it does not reproduce facts objectively but coloured subjectively through selection and the method of presentation.\(^\text{14}\)

The observation that manipulation is a feature of propaganda is also found in a definition by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis inspired by Harold Lasswell:

Propaganda is the expression of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influencing the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulation.\(^\text{15}\)

Therefore, propaganda is not a simple call to action but an attempt to cause a person or group to act in accordance with the aspiration of the propagandist. Jacques Ellul echoes this view when he asserts that all propaganda seeks to lead people into action and conformity.\(^\text{16}\) His book, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*,

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\(^{15}\) Cited in Ellul, *Propaganda*, xi–xii.

\(^{16}\) Ellul, *Propaganda*, xiii.
appears to be the classic text on propaganda. His work is invariably cited in other works on the same topic. According to Ellul, the function of propaganda is the conversion of some line of thinking. He further proposes that propaganda does not seek only to invade the whole of the human person, to lead the person to adopt a mystical attitude and reach him or her through all possible psychological channels, but to influence all people. He adds, “It must produce quasi-unanimity, and the opposing faction must become negligible, or in any case cease to be vocal.” The impression given in the early pages of Ellul’s work is that propaganda is oppressive. However, he also cites examples in which propaganda can be used by those being oppressed, namely by an accused in his defence trial or in a struggle against totalitarian rule.

In *Literature and Propaganda*, A. P. Foulkes raises the point about how “most people claim the ability both to recognize and to resist propaganda.” In response to this group of people, he suggests that “[w]hat they fail to see is that the interests they perceive as being attacked by inimical propaganda may themselves be the product of propagandistic processes far more subtle than the ones employed by the ‘other side.’”

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The success of propaganda, he also argues, depends on its covertness: “its real power lies in its capacity to conceal itself.” Another important and relevant insight that Foulkes highlights relates to his discussion of Richard Taylor’s work on propaganda in film. According to Taylor, the defining characteristic of propaganda is the existence of a propagandist, which means if a link cannot be established between the propagandist and his or her audience, then there is no basis to speak of propaganda.

In *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Jowett and O’Donnell explain the relationship between propaganda and its audience. They begin by explaining that propaganda is a subcategory of persuasion and is persuasion on a one-to-many basis. According to them, “Propaganda is a form of communication that attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.” Propaganda seeks to promote the objectives of the propagandist, which may not be in the best interest of the propagandee. In contrast, “Persuasion is interactive and attempts to satisfy the needs


24 Foulkes, *Literature*, 9; Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 21; the link between propagandist and audience is discussed by Whitelam in relation to 1 Samuel 9 – 1 Kings 2. According to him, the narrative about King David’s rise to power is a political propaganda. Corresponding to Taylor’s view above, he has identified the propagandist as the Davidic royal bureaucracy and his audience as the court and privileged class who formed the greatest threat to the throne of David. Keith W. Whitelam, "The Defence of David," *JSOT* 29 (1984): 61–87.


of both persuader and persuadee.” 28 When a persuasion is successful, the persuadee reacts with a statement such as “I never saw it that way before,” which fulfils the needs of the persuader to enlighten the persuadee. 29 Since both persuader and persuadee stand to have their needs fulfilled, persuasion, they argue, is more mutually satisfying than propaganda. 30

Focusing on the communication process, Jowett and O’Donnell define propaganda as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.” 31 Of the elements in this definition (deliberate, systematic, attempt, shaping perception, manipulate cognitions and achieve a response) they consider “achieve a response” the key defining characteristic of propaganda. In their view, “the one who benefits from the audience’s response, if the response is the desired one, is the propagandist and not necessarily the members of the audience.” 32

Jowett and O’Donnell break down propaganda into three different types—white, grey and black—based on an acknowledgement of its source and accuracy of

29 Jowett and O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 27.
information. An example of a white propaganda, according to Jowett and O’Donnell, is what a listener hears on Radio Moscow and Voice of America (VOA) during peacetime. White propaganda, they add, attempts to build credibility with the audience, which can become useful at some point in the future.

The second type of propaganda Jowett and O’Donnell have identified is black propaganda. According to them, “black propaganda is credited to a false source and spreads lies, fabrications, and deceptions.” Jowett and O’Donnell’s understanding of the relationship between black propaganda and its source has strong affinity with some prophecies in Hosea 1–3 that present themselves as belonging to Yahweh/Hosea but in actuality are prophecies belonging to another source. This research contends that these prophecies are propagandistic and on this basis, has adapted Jowett and O’Donnell’s notion of black propaganda (insofar as it relates to a false source) to explore and explain the nature of the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3.

To illustrate the idea of black propaganda, Jowett and O’Donnell describe the attempt of a turncoat Frenchman by the name of Paul Ferdonnet in making radio

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34 Jowett and O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 12.
35 Jowett and O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 12.
broadcasts from Stuttgart to weaken the morale of the French soldiers serving on the Maginot Line between 1939 and 1940. In his broadcasts, Ferdonnet sympathises with the battle condition of the French soldiers and tells them about the luxurious life their officers were enjoying in Paris, and about how the French soldiers were deceived into fighting England’s war.\(^{37}\) According to Jowett and O’Donnell, the soldiers listened to Ferdonnet because they found him to be more entertaining than the broadcasts from their own radio stations. This example shows how both the content and the strategies of communicating the content are important if a certain desired outcome is to be achieved. On this point, Jowett and O'Donnell argue:

> The success or failure of black propaganda depends on the receiver’s willingness to accept the credibility of the source and the content of the message. Care has to be taken to place the sources and messages within a social, cultural, and political framework of the target audience. If the sender misunderstands the audience and therefore designs a message that does not fit, black propaganda may appear suspicious and fail.\(^{38}\)

Jowett and O’Donnell also describe black propaganda as disinformation because it is covert and uses false information and distorted stories that are passed off as real and from credible sources.\(^{39}\) On this issue of credibility, they argue, “The propagandist is very likely to appear as a persuader with a stated purpose that seems to satisfy mutual needs. In reality, the propagandist wants to promote his or her own

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interests or those of an organisation . . . .”\textsuperscript{40} Thus, in Jowett and O’Donnell’s view, concealment of origin and (real) purpose are important considerations if the propagandist is to achieve the desired objectives and goals.\textsuperscript{41}

The last type of propaganda that Jowett and O’Donnell have identified is grey propaganda. According to them, grey propaganda “is somewhere between white and black propaganda. With this kind of propaganda, the source may or may not be correctly identified, and the accuracy of the information is uncertain.”\textsuperscript{42} Jowett and O’Donnell cite the ‘Bay of Pigs’ invasion in Cuba in 1961 as an example of grey propaganda. According to them, the VOA engages in grey propaganda when it denied any US involvement in the CIA-backed activity to topple the communist government of Fidel Castro.\textsuperscript{43} Grey propaganda, in their view, is also used to embarrass an enemy or competitor as can be seen in the attempt by Radio Moscow to take advantage of the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy to derogate the United States.\textsuperscript{44}

Turning to religion, Jowett and O’Donnell consider it an effective vehicle for

\textsuperscript{40} Jowett and O'Donnell, \textit{Propaganda and Persuasion}, 42.
\textsuperscript{41} Jowett and O'Donnell, \textit{Propaganda and Persuasion}, 42.
\textsuperscript{44} Jowett and O'Donnell, \textit{Propaganda and Persuasion}, 15.
promoting a propagandist’s social or political purposes.\textsuperscript{45} They raise the example of the use of the Shinto religion by the Japanese Military, at the start of the “Chinese-Japanese War” (1894–1895), to garner support for their expansionist policies:

In the name of this Shinto cult of supra nationalism, the emperor cult (worshiping of the emperor as a living god) was artificially devised, and a course in \textit{shushin} (moral teaching) was made the basis of compulsory education for all. In this way, Shinto was manipulated by the militarists and jingoistic nationalists as the spiritual weapon for mobilizing the entire nation to guard the safety and prosperity of the emperor’s throne. Japanese soldiers were sent into battle, propagandized in the belief that they were fighting “for the emperor!”\textsuperscript{46}

Another important study for consideration is O’Shaughnessy’s work entitled \textit{Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction}. He begins his section on propaganda by noting a lack of consensus about its meaning.\textsuperscript{47} He considers propaganda to be a social phenomenon. Bob Franklin, who O’Shaughnessy cites in his study, claims that no agreed uncontroversial criterion exists for distinguishing propaganda from information.\textsuperscript{48} Jones, whose view also appears in O’Shaughnessy’s study, is inclined to think that propaganda and the institution-bound transmission of information are indistinguishable. According to him, “What in marketing is ‘selling’, in school is ‘teaching’, in the church is ‘proselytising’, in politics is ‘propagandising’,

\begin{itemize}
  \item It appears that religion is also being exploited as a vehicle for propagandistic end in Hos 1–3. However, this notion needs to be substantiated through research. Investigation must also seek to identify the source and nature of the propaganda.
  \item O'Shaughnessy, \textit{Politics and Propaganda}, 13.
  \item O'Shaughnessy, \textit{Politics and Propaganda}, 14, 35–36.
\end{itemize}
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in the military is ‘indoctrinating.’”

The essence of propaganda, O’Shaughnessy explains, is primarily emotional and not rational persuasion. Propaganda seeks out our emotional sensitivities at their deepest with associations both compelling and even irrational. He illustrates this point with an example of a common catchphrase. “A land without people for a people without a land” was a vision, a bewitching slogan, for the early Zionist pioneers to summon a reality that did not exist before its rhetorical promulgation.

Propaganda, O’Shaughnessy adds, is sometimes used erroneously for persuasion. The former, he argues, is a distinctive form of advocacy. In this regard, O’Shaughnessy shares Jowett and O’Donnell’s view of a difference between the two in terms of purpose. According to him, “propaganda is more specific than ‘communication’, a word which refers to any transmission of information without judgement as to whether this transmission is biased, hyperbolic or deceitful.” On this issue, O’Shaughnessy cites Philip Taylor’s argument that self-interest is the core feature of propaganda:

Propaganda uses communication to convey a message, an idea, or an ideology that is designed to serve the self-interest of the person or persons doing the communicating . . . Propaganda is designed in the first place to serve the


50 O’Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 16.

51 O’Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 17.

52 O’Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 17–18.
interests of its source.53

Thus, Taylor, like many others, argues that propaganda is manipulative because it seeks to persuade others to conform to a certain way of thinking and acting. This is also true of O’Shaughnessy who argues that all propaganda is manipulative and it is meaningless to speak of a non-manipulative propaganda, which would make the term propaganda conceptually redundant.54 Yet Taylor argues that propaganda “itself is neither sinister nor evil. It is really no more than the organization of methods designed to persuade people to think and behave in a certain way . . .”55 Value judgments about propaganda being a ‘good’ or ‘bad' thing, he also argues, should be directed at the cause being advocated or the regime conducting it rather than at the process itself.56 The upshot of Taylor’s view is that one should not prejudge ‘self-interest’ with negative connotation.

O’Shaughnessy also discusses about the (unpredictable) outcome of propaganda in his study. Even though his discussion relates to propaganda in films, it is still applicable to propaganda in literary works. He suggests that there is no one single way of interpreting the message in a film. Therefore, it may not always produce the desired

53 O’Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 18; see also Philip M. Taylor, Munitions of the Mind: War Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Nuclear Age (Glasgow: Patrick Stephens, 1990), 14.

54 O’Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 18.

55 Taylor, Munitions of the Mind: War Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Nuclear Age, 11.

effect. “Responses—how people choose to interpret material—may diverge from what the producers intended or what logic would anticipate.”

The audience may not find a film thought provoking or may go away with a reading that is not intended by its producers.

Turning to propaganda in biblical scholarship, Brenner’s discussion of the marriage metaphor as a vehicle for propaganda in the book of Jeremiah does not offer her reader a formal definition of propaganda. The opening statement of her paper, “On Prophetic Propaganda and the Politics of Love,” however, provides some clues about her understanding of the term and they echo the views in the non-religious works surveyed above. The Hebrew Bible, she notes, is a political document. It contains the ideologies of specific interest groups. It is used for achieving political ends and it exercises fundamental influences over believers. In sum, the husband-wife metaphor in the book of Jeremiah, she argues, is an instance of propaganda whose aim is to “produce guilt and shame in the audience through the rejection of the metaphorized female.” She further argues that “[t]his new consciousness will put an end to the illicit (from the speaker’s perspective) religious and political alliances in Judah and Jerusalem.” Her views echo the viewpoints in the non-religious works about the use of religion for propagandistic ends and the use of propaganda to shape perceptions and

57 The appeal to reason, he argues, is also a propaganda strategy. O'Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 17, 25.

58 O'Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda, 26–27.


60 Brenner, "Prophetic Propaganda," 89.

61 Brenner, "Prophetic Propaganda," 89.
manipulate cognitions to produce a desired effect in the propagandee.

In *Propaganda and Subversion in the Old Testament*, Mason begins his explanation of the term propaganda by noting its use by the Roman Catholic Church in promoting the Catholic faith in foreign countries. In that context, propaganda serves to present “a particular case in such a way as to gain assent to it and acceptance of it by others.”\(^6^2\) He also notes how *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term propaganda as “any association, systematic scheme, or concerted movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice.”\(^6^3\) In addition, he provides a number of other definitions but finds their meaning too broad. Propaganda, he subsequently argues, is more than mere expression of a personal belief or opinion; it has the element of self-interest.\(^6^4\) In support of his view, he quotes a statement by Frederic Bartlett:

Practically everybody agrees that propaganda must be defined by reference to its aims. These aims can, in fact, be stated simply. Propaganda is an attempt to influence opinion and conduct—in such a manner that the persons who adopt the opinion and behaviour indicated do so without themselves making any definite search for reasons.\(^6^5\)

Mason stresses the two important elements in Bartlett’s understanding of

\(^6^2\) Mason, *Propaganda*, 170.

\(^6^3\) Mason, *Propaganda*, 170.

\(^6^4\) Taylor also considers self-interest to be the core feature of a propaganda. His view is cited in O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda*, 18.

propaganda that sets it apart from argument or attempt to convince. The first element is “aim” which, in Mason’s view, contains some degree of self-interest and the second element is the attempt to “bypass, or at least powerfully to influence, the self-conscious reasoning powers of the individuals addressed.”\textsuperscript{66} Propaganda, Mason adds, may also be called “a ‘pre-programming’ of the human mind so as to elicit the answer which suits the ends of those using it.”\textsuperscript{67} These understandings by Bartlett and Mason indicate that a well-constructed propaganda has the potential to influence in such a way that the propagandee does not question the propaganda. Instead, the propagandee is likely to act in conformance with it.

Mason also points to Whitelam’s article, \textit{The Defence of David}, which stresses the importance of identifying the target audience (or propagandee) of a particular work of propaganda. Although Mason agrees with Whitelam on this issue, he does not agree that propaganda needs to be congruent with the “fundamental beliefs and hope of the society which the propagandist shares” with his audience.\textsuperscript{68} In Mason’s view, there are instances where the aim of the propagandists is to encourage others to adopt a new political or religious outlook, one that the propagandists claim for themselves or their group.\textsuperscript{69}

In his final discussion on propaganda, Mason mentions how most political

\textsuperscript{66} Mason, \textit{Propaganda}, 171.

\textsuperscript{67} Mason, \textit{Propaganda}, 172.

\textsuperscript{68} Mason, \textit{Propaganda}, 172; Whitelam, "David," 67.

\textsuperscript{69} Mason, \textit{Propaganda}, 172.
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powers in the ancient Near East, including Israel and Judah, have used religion to bolster their power claim, and how religion and politics are so closely wedded in a piece of propaganda that “they are virtually not distinguishable.”\(^7\) As to the ethicality in this method of mixing politics and religion in propaganda, Mason offers this view in relation to *The Defence of David*:

Not all the political power or religious truth claimed in propaganda was totally false or invalid or without benefit to anyone else. Nevertheless, while its claims may have contained truth, questions must arise about the manner in which it asserts those truths.\(^7\)

The above literature survey has yielded many insights about the meaning of propaganda, which may be summarised as follows:

1. Propaganda seeks to influence the opinions or actions of individuals or groups for predetermined ends.\(^7\)

2. The success of propaganda depends on its covertness.\(^7\)

3. There is no propaganda if a link cannot be established between the propagandist and his/her/their target audience.\(^7\)

\(^7\) Mason, *Propaganda*, 173.

\(^7\) Mason, *Propaganda*, 173.

\(^7\) Ellul, *Propaganda*, xii, 11.

\(^7\) Foulkes, *Literature*, 3.

4. Propaganda is “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”

5. Propaganda relies on emotional rather than rational persuasion.

6. ‘Self-interest’ is a core feature of propaganda. However, one should not prejudge ‘self-interest’ with negative connotation.

7. Propaganda attempts to “bypass, or at least powerfully to influence, the self-conscious reasoning powers of the individuals addressed.”

It remains to be seen as to how many of the above characteristics of propaganda are reflected in Hosea 1–3. If found to be present, they would support the proposal for the presence of propaganda in these chapters. Investigation, however, must be preceded by an additional literature survey about the presence and use of propaganda elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, which would show whether the propaganda in Hosea 1–3, if it exists, is an isolated phenomenon.

2.3.2 Propaganda in the Hebrew Bible

In *The Apology of David*, P. Kyle McCarter offers a detailed analysis of the rise of King David in 1 Samuel 16 to 2 Samuel 5. In his study, he notes that the pericope

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76 O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda*, 16.


had not been given due focus in the past and it is only recently that scholars began to pay attention to it. 1 Samuel 16 to 2 Samuel 5, he argues, is not an originally independent and unified narrative, as previously thought, but a composite work containing several Deuteronomistic expansions. The history of David’s rise, McCarter further argues, is to be dated to the reign of King David himself. It is an apology, “a piece of royal propaganda,” to show “that David’s accession to the throne was lawful and that the events leading up to his proclamation as king over all Israel were guided by the will of the god of Israel.” According to McCarter, the history of David’s rise functions to defend several charges of wrongdoing against David to show his innocence. They include allegations that David had sought to advance himself at Saul’s expense, that he was a deserter, an outlaw and a Philistine mercenary, and that he had a hand in the death of Saul, Abner and Ishbaal.

In a related study, Whitelam considers The Defence of David, in 1 Samuel 9 to 1 Kings 2 in relation to its target audience. His approach stands in contrast to McCarter’s analysis, which focuses on David himself. Whitelam argues that previous discussions of the Davidic propaganda have “not specified the intended audience or operated on the unargued assumption that it must have been aimed at the population in

According to Whitelam, “the Defence of David focuses closely upon the court and the privileged class.” He argues that this group of people, not the peasantry, poses a real threat to the Davidic throne. In terms of purpose, Whitelam shares McCarter’s view about Yahweh’s role in David’s rise. The propaganda by the Davidic royal bureaucracy, Whitelam proposes, projects the king’s rise to the throne as the will of Yahweh (1 Sam 16:14, 18). It also seeks to “deny any charge of blood guilt against David” for the death of his rivals, an argument which McCarter also raises in his own analysis. However, Whitelam argues that the propaganda challenges and warns the court officials and the elite class of the fate of those who stand between David or his successor and his throne. Whitelam’s analysis offers two important features about the propaganda in the narrative about David’s rise. The first feature is that the royal propaganda was directed at a well-defined group of political dissenters as opposed to influencing the public at large which stands in contrast to Ellul’s view that propaganda is aimed at a mass of people. The second feature (which McCarter shares) is that religion is used as a vehicle for propaganda. According to that propaganda, any attempt

84 Whitelam, "David," 64–65; it has been argued that “if we cannot establish a link between the propagandist and his or her audience, then we cannot speak of ‘propaganda.’” Taylor, Film Propaganda: Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, 21; Taylor’s work is cited in Foulkes, Literature, 9.

85 Whitelam, "David," 76.

86 Whitelam, "David," 77.


88 Whitelam, "David," 73–76, here 73.

89 Whitelam, "David," 77.

90 Ellul, Propaganda, 11.
to protest against the throne of David is an expression of rebellion against Yahweh.

In *Cui Bono?—History in the Service of Political Nationalism: The Deuteronomistic History as Political Propaganda*, Frank Frick begins his discussion on propaganda in the Deuteronomistic history with an explanation of *Cui Bono*. The Latin phrase, according to Frick, was coined by the Roman diplomat, politician and ethicist Marcus Cicero and it means, “Who would profit from this,” or literally, “For whom for good.” According to Frick, it is common for a government to engage in propaganda in its dealing with the people under its authority. He argues that a government typically camouflages their shortcomings by engaging in efforts to “massage” or “put a spin” on the information disseminated to the public. Turning to the politics of the ancient Near East, Frick argues that “ruling elites have consistently sought to maintain their power through persuasion and propaganda.” Citing Liverani’s work, he writes,

One type of propaganda in the ancient Near East is illustrated by the royal inscriptions of the New Kingdom in Egypt and of imperial Assyria, which . . . “reveal all the biased deformations typical of propaganda in all times: only the successes are reported, and never the losses or defeats; ‘our’ reasons are always good, while those of the enemies are wicked; the king who is the author of the text constitutes the apex (in glory, bravery, power, justice, and the gods’ favor)


92 Frick, "Cui Bono," 79.


94 Frick, "Cui Bono," 80.
in the course of history for his own country and for the empire world.”95

Frick considers the Deuteronomistic history a species of propaganda and a product of a period of social upheaval.96 On this latter point, he shares Whitelam’s view that “one of the most fertile areas for the propagandist is a time of social upheaval.”97 The notable lack of language relating to the issue of poverty in the Deuteronomistic history, Frick argues, shows that the Deuteronomistic historian intended to distance himself “from the issues of socioeconomic injustice and were not concerned with criticizing the government’s role in creating and fostering systemic poverty and inequity.”98 The historian, in his view, rejects the prophetic contention that both Israel and Judah were destroyed, at least in part, because they mistreated the poor. Instead, the collapse of the northern and southern kingdoms is attributed to the failure of kingship and cultic abuses.99

In another work on propaganda in the Deuteronomistic history, Gary Knoppers explains how Solomon’s prayer in 1 Kings 8, during the dedication of the Jerusalem temple, serves the Deuteronomistic historian’s pre-exilic program to promote the unity


96 Frick, "Cui Bono," 81.

97 Whitelam, "David," 67.

98 Frick, "Cui Bono," 81.

99 Frick, "Cui Bono," 86.
of his state by arguing that the temple is central to the fate of his people. Knoppers suggests that the religious reform of Hezekiah in the eighth century and of Josiah in the seventh century to eradicate rival places of worship while promoting the Jerusalem temple as the cult centre must have been met with some resistance. He attributes it to economic, social, political and religious reasons. It is against this background, Knoppers argues, that “the Deuteronomist makes a literary effort to convince his audience of the temple’s intrinsic value and its centrality to his people’s fate.” The trust in a tight connection between kingship, temple and Jerusalem is demonstrated by Hezekiah. When an Assyrian assault threatens the survival of the southern kingdom, he travels to the temple to pray (2 Kgs 19:14–19). Yahweh responds by delivering the king and city out from the grip of the Assyrian forces. As for Josiah’s reform, the Deuteronomist underscores the need for the people of his time to show the same kind of enthusiastic endorsement of the temple displayed during the reign of Solomon. Besides bolstering the idea that propaganda is a tool that is constantly employed by the Deuteronomistic historian, Knoppers also shows how one tradition (Solomon’s prayer during the dedication of the Jerusalem temple) can be used to construct and strengthen a piece of propaganda for different time periods (Hezekiah and Josiah’s reigns).

As mentioned earlier, Mason’s book, Propaganda and Subversion in the Old

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Testament, appears to be the only monograph devoted to a general study of propaganda in the Hebrew Bible. Mason’s overarching task is to show how propaganda and subversion operate to introduce new and/or overturn pre-existing systems of ideologies. The insights he provides are expansive. It suffices to highlight a few pertinent insights to illustrate the character and pervasive use of propaganda in the Hebrew Bible.

Mason begins with an examination of propaganda in several ancient Near Eastern texts. Thereafter, he discusses Yahweh’s call to Abraham in Genesis 12. The call, according to Mason, is Yahweh’s answer to the chaos portrayed in the primeval history in Genesis 1–11. The command to Abraham to inhabit a land of Yahweh’s choice, in Mason’s view, is an instance of propaganda that seeks to explain and justify the special place of Israel in the divine order of things and their divine right to the land of Canaan. This ‘future’ occupation of the land of Canaan is reinforced by the prophecy in Genesis 15:1–16, which, according to Mason, is another use of propaganda to justify why a piece of land should be taken from one group and given to another:

Here, of course, is another instance of vaticinium ex eventu, a prophecy after the event. And here is just the kind of political propaganda which we have encountered elsewhere in the ancient Near East. The land belongs to one racial group because it has been allotted to them by God, and if that appears a bit rough on its previous owners, it is quite all right because they are so wicked that they deserve the fate which has befallen them.

105 Mason, Propaganda, 1–21.

106 Mason, Propaganda, 32.

107 Italics his. Mason, Propaganda, 33.
Turning to the Deuteronomistic historian’s portrayal of “David’s rise to power” in 1 Samuel 16:14–2 Samuel 5:10, Mason finds the account to be “markedly ‘anti-Saul’ and ‘pro-David.’”¹⁰⁸ The Deuteronomistic historian contrasts Saul’s utter failure as king with David’s success and paints David’s rise to power as the working out of the will of God.¹⁰⁹ In a closing remark on this episode, which echoes the views of McCarter and Whitelam, he explains the use of religion as a persuasive tool for political ends:

The history as we have it is political propaganda of exactly the type to be encountered throughout the ancient Near East. Opponents are always evil and so have incurred the judgement of God. All successes of the victorious candidate are evidence of the favour and power of the god. People are to be subject to his authority as they would be to God.¹¹⁰

With regard to the prophetic literature, Mason examines, among other passages, Amos 9:9–15. This passage expresses hope for a future beyond judgment. Some scholars, he notes, have questioned the originality of this passage.¹¹¹ Mason agrees with their view because he finds it difficult to imagine that Amos would have tried to comfort the Israelis by assuring them that sometime in the future they would return to a Davidic king (9:11–12).¹¹² Amos’ polemic against the Israelis, he argues, is unlike those of the Deuteronomists, “who believed that their true evil was that they had

¹⁰⁸ Mason, Propaganda, 38.
¹⁰⁹ Mason, Propaganda, 42.
¹¹⁰ Mason, Propaganda, 42.
¹¹¹ Mason, Propaganda, 107.
¹¹² Mason, Propaganda, 107.
abandoned the Davidic line and the Jerusalem temple.”¹¹³ In contrast, Amos’ polemic concerns the perpetration of social injustices, which argues against the originality of Amos 9:9–15.¹¹⁴

Interpretations pertaining to the oracles of Hosea and their dominant focus on the apostasy of the Israelis are, however, more complex.¹¹⁵ Concerning the calls to repentance in Hosea (e.g. 14:1–8), Mason notes how others have assigned them to the Deuteronomistic redactors in the south. He thinks it is impossible to ascertain what derives from Hosea himself and what the products of redaction are.¹¹⁶ Although his concept of the leadership of the northern kingdom was subversive in that God has considered the kings, priests and prophets and their office as unworthy and profane, Hosea, Mason argues, does not seem to share Amos’ contention that God’s judgment was final and that their covenant relationship was over.¹¹⁷ On this basis, Mason is willing to assign the calls to repentance to Hosea despite indications suggesting otherwise. As such, he has not explored these oracles for possible propaganda. It would be helpful to know Mason’s view on, say, Hosea 14:1 (“Return! O Israel, to Yahweh your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity”). This verse, which

¹¹³ Mason, Propaganda, 107.

¹¹⁴ Amos’ concern, he argues, is “Not where or how they worship but how they act is his criterion.” Mason, Propaganda, 107.

¹¹⁵ Mason, Propaganda, 109–110.

¹¹⁶ Mason, Propaganda, 112.

¹¹⁷ He, however, does not explain the contrasting analysis about Amos and Hosea in relation to the symbolic name ‘Lo-ammi’ in Hosea 1:9, which points to the finality of God’s judgment. Mason, Propaganda, 112.
Prophecy, Propaganda or Both? A Rereading of Hosea 1–3

presupposes the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, has been deemed by some scholars to be non-Hoseanic.\textsuperscript{118} Since the consensus view is that the prophet had withdrawn from public ministry before the fall of Samaria and, therefore, could not have made the appeal to the Israelis, it would be interesting to know whether the call to repentance in Hosea 14:1 has propagandistic undertone.\textsuperscript{119} In this respect, the following survey pays particular attention to some recent works on propaganda in the prophetic literature.

2.3.3 Propaganda in the Prophetic Literature

In his study, Jesper Høgenhaven investigates the role of prophetic oracles in relation to political decisions made by kings and their counsellors.\textsuperscript{120} He begins by explaining, citing examples from 1 Kings 20:13–14 and 22:5ff, how kings often seek the advice of a prophet before embarking on a major political project.\textsuperscript{121} These texts, Høgenhaven argues, exhibit tendencies characteristic of the Deuteronomistic history in which the preoccupation is to demonstrate the continual failure of the Israelites to obey the commands of Yahweh, which culminates in the eventual catastrophe for Israel.\textsuperscript{122} Next, he focuses on the oracles of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The oldest strata of these oracles,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} See discussion below concerning Hosea’s retirement from public ministry.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Høgenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda," 126–127.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Høgenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda," 127.
\end{itemize}
he argues, come from times of extraordinary political crises for the kingdom of Judah, namely the threat of Assyrian and Babylonian imperialism. Thus, he shares the views of Whitelam and Frick who also consider a period of crisis to be an excellent seedbed for propaganda. The oracles of Isaiah, which receive most of Høgenhaven’s exegetical effort, comprise both “pro-Assyrian” and “anti-Assyrian” oracles. The former speaks of the Assyrian forces as Yahweh’s instrument to which Judah should submit whereas the latter denounces the Assyrians as Yahweh’s enemies and predicts their defeat. He further argues that the “pro-Assyrian” oracles belong to the time of King Ahaz while the “anti-Assyrian” oracles originate in the period of Hezekiah. The point Høgenhaven wishes to make is that the oracles of Isaiah reflect a controversy concerning the policy of the Judean court toward Assyria. Seen in this light, the oracles of Isaiah serve to advocate one line of political conduct while condemning the other. Turning to three Isaiah texts, 30:1–7 (which comprises two separate oracles, 30:1–5 and 30:6–7); 31:1–3 and 8:11–15, Høgenhaven examines the way reasoning and arguments in these oracles are structured and the relationship between the structure and the oracles as political propaganda.

According to Høgenhaven, Isaiah 30:1–5 is generally accepted as belonging to the reign of Hezekiah and denounces the policy of entering into an alliance with Egypt

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124 Høgenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda," 129.
125 Høgenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda," 129.
against the Assyrians. This text, he argues, has two stages, the first depicting the relationship between the king and the court of Judah and Yahweh (v.1), and the second describing the activity at the political level (v.2), namely making an alliance with Egypt without the consent of Yahweh which demonstrates their insubordination toward Yahweh. This alliance is characterised as “wrong” or “bad” and is doomed to fail because it goes against the will of Yahweh. Close parallels to this line of thinking, according to Høgenhaven, are found in Assyrian royal inscriptions. They describe Assyria’s enemies who join forces in rebellion against Assyrian hegemony as lacking proper relations with the divine. Høgenhaven goes on to discuss Isaiah 30:6–7; 31:1–3 and 8:11–15 along the line of his argument in Isaiah 30:1–5. In summary, he regards these texts as propaganda that communicates opposing viewpoints to the official royal position. These oppositional viewpoints, Høgenhaven argues, are probably the work of the exilic or post-exilic redactors rather than the activity of the eighth century prophet. As for the motivation of these redactors, Høgenhaven writes:

They produced literature, not as employees of a court or a royal dynasty to be vindicated and glorified. The collapse of Israel and Judah lay behind them, demonstrating, in the eyes of those men with whom we are here concerned, that the »official« [sic] policy of the Israelite and Judean kings led to disaster, and that the prophets of the past were right exactly when they attacked and criticised the »official« [sic] line.

126 Høgenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda," 133.
129 Høgenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda," 141.
130 Høgenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda," 141.
Brenner’s work on prophetic propaganda has been briefly discussed in the introduction to this study. It suffices to reiterate her view that the husband-wife metaphor in Jeremiah 2; 3:1–3 and 5:7–8 operates as a vehicle for propaganda to depict the Judeans’ illicit political and religious alliances as sins of apostasy against Yahweh.131 Her view on the use of propaganda to convey a particular line of thinking resembles the thoughts of McCarter, Whitelam, Mason and Høgenhaven.

Goran Eidevall’s study on the images of Judah’s enemies in the book of Isaiah is a recent study on prophecy and propaganda in the prophetic literature.132 His exegetical analyses focus on selected passages in the book of Isaiah. His exegesis is important as it shows how a prophecy can be used to promote a certain line of thought, which is the basic function of any propaganda. His treatment of Isaiah 5:26–30 is of particular interest. He classifies this pericope as announcement which comprises a description of an approaching enemy in vv. 26–28, a lion metaphor in v. 29 and an eschatological vision of a state in desolation in v. 30.133 Concerning the historical background of Isaiah 5:26–30, Eidevall notes that the reader is not told about the identity of the enemy except that “someone will summon the military forces of an unnamed ‘nation from afar’, presumably in order to launch an attack against some other nation.”134 According to him, almost all commentators assign the Syro-Ephraimite

133 Eidevall, Propaganda, 23.
134 Eidevall, Propaganda, 26.
crisis to this pericope given its proximity to Isaiah 7:1–8:8 which deals with that crisis, as well as the connection between the preceding oracle in Isaiah 5:25 and the indictments against the neighbouring state of Israel in 9:7–20. On this basis, according to Eidevall, most commentators have opted for this interpretation of Isaiah 5:26–30: “The Assyrians are approaching. Their army will attack Israel (and/or Judah), on YHWH’s command.”135 This interpretation is plausible, according to Eidevall, if Isaiah 5:26–30 is read in light of Assyrian political and military dominance in the eighth century. The lion metaphor in Isaiah 5:30 would fit very well into this reading since it was used by Assyrian rulers to project themselves and their armies as invincible. In Eidevall’s view, Isaiah probably appropriated the imperial propaganda for use in his own prophecy. According to him, the prophet has given it a pro-Judean twist: “If the anonymous agent in v. 26a, the one who gives the signal of attack, is to be identified with YHWH (and who else could it be?), then Assyria is virtually reduced to a marionette in the hands of Judah’s national deity.”136 Eidevall argues that its purpose was probably to reassure the people and the leaders of Judah within the context of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, assuming that it was directed against Judah’s prime enemy in this conflict: Israel.137 However, Eidevall adds, the same propaganda was probably re-used as a threat directed against Judah after the fall of Samaria.138 The distinguishing feature of Eidevall’s analysis is that he has demonstrated how a piece of (imperial)

135 Eidevall, Propaganda, 26.
136 Eidevall, Propaganda, 26.
137 Eidevall, Propaganda, 27.
138 Eidevall, Propaganda, 27.
propaganda can be turned into a prophetic counter-propaganda or new propaganda. The latter observation is also discernible in his analysis of Isaiah 31:8–9. According to him, the clause in v. 9 (“the rock that passed away in terror”) is a counter-propaganda. The clause paints a caricature of Ashur, the national deity of Assyria, who has become powerless from fear of Yahweh. It reverses the propaganda that appears in Assyrian inscriptions in which the national deity of Assyria is often lauded for its military prowess.

2.3.4 Review: Propaganda in the Hebrew Bible and Prophetic Literature

A review of the above literature survey on propaganda in the Hebrew Bible and prophetic literature will draw together the important insights. This research hopes to bring these insights to bear on the exploration of the possibility of propaganda in Hosea 1–3.

The key insight in Mason’s work on Propaganda and Subversion in the Old Testament is that propaganda operates to introduce a new system of ideologies and/or to overturn a pre-existing one. Thus, he stresses the aim of propaganda to influence opinion and conduct. McCarter, Whitelam, Brenner and Høgenhaven have also

\[\text{139} \text{ Eidevall, Propaganda, 64.}\]


\[\text{141} \text{Mason, Propaganda, 171.}\]
underlined this point in their respective works on propaganda in the Hebrew Bible. What is interesting is that none of these scholars has viewed propaganda as repulsive even though the topic of self-interest features in their discussion on propaganda.\textsuperscript{142} These scholars also consider a period of social and political upheavals as a situation conducive for the deployment of propaganda to quell conflicting positions that arise during such a period by influencing the adoption of one of these positions.\textsuperscript{143}

Whitelam’s study which focuses on the target audience is also important for this study. He emphasises that propaganda “cannot be divorced from the audience addressed.”\textsuperscript{144} His view echoes Foulkes’ argument: “if we cannot establish a link between the propagandist and his or her audience, then we cannot speak of ‘propaganda.’”\textsuperscript{145} Hence, one of the tasks in this study will be to identify the target audience of the proposed propaganda in Hosea 1–3.

Two other insights are significant and should be taken into consideration in this study. These involve the use of Yahweh’s name to add weight to a particular piece of propaganda and conversion of one propaganda into a counter-propaganda.\textsuperscript{146}

The literature survey has also corroborated several intuitions about propaganda,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{142} Mason, \textit{Propaganda}, 171; Frick, "Cui Bono," 79.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Cf. the review of Høgenhaven’s work in the literature survey above.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Whitelam, "David," 66.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Foulkes, \textit{Literature}, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Cf. review of McCarter, Whitelam and Mason’s analyses of the history of the rise of David and Eidevall’s work above.
\end{itemize}
namely the Deuteronomistic historian’s penchant for propaganda, the use of tradition in propaganda, a close connection between politics, religion and propaganda, and propaganda as a means of promoting a particular line of thinking. This study hopes to determine if these and the characteristics of propaganda identified in the literature survey are present in Hosea 1–3. Toward this end, the following section outlines the contour this research will take.

2.4 Contour of Research

The first aim of this research is to identify the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 and investigate whether they function as propaganda. Once the possibility of propaganda is identified, the research will attempt to determine the nature of the propaganda. As mentioned earlier, it will take advantage of achievements in the field of redaction criticism and metaphorical studies pertaining to the book of Hosea. As previously emphasised, the focus of this study is not on redaction and metaphor but prophecy and propaganda. In this respect, the research will take the following shape from here onwards.

Chapter 3 will begin with a short introduction that addresses the issue of authorship and provenance of the prophecies in Hosea 1 and the implication associated with the inclusion of non-Hoseanic prophecies. This chapter seeks to identify these non-Hoseanic prophecies and explain why they should be read as black prophecies. It will also examine these black prophecies against the proposal that they constitute a piece of propaganda of Judean and Deuteronomistic origin. This study proposes that the

147 These intuitions are mine.
propaganda is aimed at engendering, in the consciousness of the Israelis, Yahweh’s rejection of Israel as opposed to Judah’s special relationship with Yahweh. Chapters 5 and 6 will examine whether this propaganda constitutes a part of an overarching propaganda in Hosea 1–3. Is it possible that Hosea 1–3 is aimed at convincing the Israelis in the defunct northern kingdom, after its demise in 722 BCE, to accept the fact that their kings were ultimately responsible for the disaster? The fundamental fault is in their failure to foster the Israelis’ allegiance to Yahweh. In contrast, a Davidic king like Hezekiah has been blessed by Yahweh because he has promoted the Judeans’ exclusive allegiance to Yahweh. The deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 BCE from the brink of disaster affirms Yahweh’s delight for Hezekiah. On this basis, there is a compelling reason for the Israelis to demonstrate their allegiance to a Davidic king like Hezekiah and to Yahweh, through worship in Jerusalem, as a way of securing divine blessing for themselves.

Chapter 4 will also discuss the issue of authorship and implication concerning the inclusion of non-Hoseanic prophecies in Hosea 2. It will examine existing theories about the background relating to the prophecies in Hosea 2, followed by offering a new perspective on authorship and historical background. Hosea 2, it hopes to show, is retrospective rather than predictive. It looks back on, instead of forward to, the siege of Samaria, the destruction of agriculture in the land and the disruption of Israel’s worship life as Yahweh’s recompense for an apostate nation. It hopes to show that Hosea 2 is black prophecy. It will then examine the black prophecy for characteristics of propaganda.

Chapter 5 will explore the theme of restoration in Hosea 3. This theme has been
the single preoccupation of scholarly debate relating to the call of Yahweh to the man to enter into a loving relationship with an adulterous woman. Through a re-examination of Hosea 3, it endeavours to show that the chapter is not an autobiography by the prophet. It proposes that the hopeful outlook in Hosea 3 ought to be read as black prophecy. In addition, this chapter will examine Hosea 3 for characteristics of propaganda in light of Hosea 1 and 2. It will investigate the possibility that the propaganda in Hosea 3 is aimed at a reunification of the Israelis living in the defunct kingdom of Israel and the people of Judah through the centralisation of Yahweh worship in Jerusalem.

Chapter 6 will examine possible background for the propaganda in Hosea 3. It will also analyse the similarity between the propaganda in Hosea 3 and portrayal of Hezekiah’s reform in the Deuteronomistic history. Hezekiah’s reform, according to the Deuteronomistic historian, has secured for Jerusalem the blessing of Yahweh, which is seen as an endorsement of his reform program. This portrayal of Hezekiah stands in stark contrast to those of the kings of the northern kingdom who are condemned for not having taken positive steps to promote the exclusive worship of Yahweh. Their failure to do so has contributed to the demise of the northern kingdom in 722 BCE.

Chapter 7 will summarise the research finding concerning the presence of black prophecies in Hosea 1–3. The thesis that they function as propaganda would have already emerged. The propaganda is likely to be the work of a Judean and Deuteronomistic propagandist and its target audience is the Israelis in the defunct northern kingdom. Its ultimate aim is to bring about a desired response from the Israelis in view of the fall of Samaria, namely that they renew their political and
religious allegiance to a Davidic king and to Yahweh in Jerusalem.
3. PROPHECY AND PROPAGANDA IN HOSEA 1

3.1 Introduction

Scholarly discussion about the opening chapter of the book of Hosea revolves around two overlapping major issues. The first issue concerns the Israelis’ infidelity to Yahweh, which is conveyed through the metaphor of Hosea’s marriage to Gomer, and the birth and naming of the three children (Hos 1:2–9). The second issue covers the authorship and provenance of Yahweh’s speech to the prophet. Despite much debate on this second issue, the emergence of new discussions in recent years suggests it is far from settled.

The issue of authorship and provenance has significant implications for interpreting the prophecies in Hosea 1 since scholars have long agreed that not all (or more recently, perhaps none) of the prophecies can be attributed to the prophet himself. Their analysis gives rise to two related questions. Do the non-Hoseanic prophecies

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1 This method of portrayal is akin to a system of metaphor in which the tenor (here, “Israelites” or “Yahweh”) is understood and experienced in terms of the vehicle (here, “a wife” or “a husband” respectively). Metaphor may be defined as the “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.” George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5; the terms tenor and vehicle are metaphorical terms introduced by I. A. Richards. M. H. Abrams and G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Massachusetts: Wadsworth 2011), 131.


reflect the word of Yahweh to Hosea? How much of these prophecies actually contain the self-interest of their composer? These questions have already been alluded to in the preceding chapters in this study, in relation to the claim that Hosea 1–3 contains black prophecies—those presenting themselves as prophecies originating in Hosea when they really belong to a redactor who inserted them after the fall of Samaria. This study proposes that they form a piece of propaganda that seeks to promote pro-Judean interest. Therefore, it must take up the issue of authorship and provenance pertaining to Hosea 1 within the broader context of the book of Hosea as literature written and edited over a period. This will preface the task to advance the claims concerning the presence of black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 and their role as pro-Judean propaganda. Specifically, this chapter hopes to show that the black prophecies in Hosea 1 were added at a later stage of the development of the book in response to recent events in the life of Israel and Judah. It will then explore their contribution to the proposed propaganda in Hosea 1–3.

3.2 Existing Theories and Issues

3.2.1 Hosea 1 as Literary Work

Andersen and Freedman’s commentary on Hosea captures the character of the book in two titles that appear at the head of a section dedicated to the discussion about its composition: “Hosea as Literature” and “Literary History.” Based on similar

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4 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 52–57; as written text, the book shows a great deal of sophistication. "It is the book that claims to be, and was composed to be treated as, an authoritative writing for its readership-that is, as "scripture." Ehud Ben Zvi, Hosea (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 4.
prophetic books attributed to his contemporaries, they argue that Hosea is not a record of the historical activities of the prophet. The book is a collection of texts that reflects how groups of people utilise the oracles of Hosea as the hermeneutical lens for assessing and responding to their own prevailing state of affairs.⁵

Hosea, according to Andersen and Freedman, is an anthology comprising both narrative (mainly in chapter 1–3) and oracular material (chapters 2 and 4–14). It is comparable to books associated with contemporary prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Micah. Unlike later prophets who provide contents for their books and may have had a hand in their compilation, the same cannot be said of Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Micah.⁶ The collecting, preserving, organising and editing of the surviving materials was probably done by some disciples or group of followers of these prophets. Andersen and Freedman suggest that this treatment of the surviving materials was motivated by the presumption that the prophetic message would become important materials for reflection at a future time.⁷ According to them, when a threat materialises “and events came to pass as predicted, the standing of the prophets was enhanced.”⁸ Thus, their prophecy in retrospect took on a new and ominous force when it is later applied to a

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⁶ Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 52.

⁷ Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 52.

⁸ Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 53; for other factors affecting the status of the prophet, see Carroll, Prophecy, 40–45.
new crisis. Andersen and Freedman highlight, for example, the threat that hung over the southern kingdom of Judah in the wake of the collapse of the northern kingdom. Judah’s own survival in the eighth century appeared bleak in the face of an Assyrian threat that had become more powerful and dangerous. Confronted with this precarious outlook, the words of the prophets took on special significance and impact. The view that the prophetic words can have special significance in a later situation will be taken up again later in this study when it explores the nature and purpose of Hosea 1:5 and 1:7.

Concerning the initial compilation of the eighth century prophetic oracles, Andersen and Freedman believe compilation occurred in the early seventh century as a rallying point against the reign of Manasseh (687–642 BCE). While his reign brought peace, stability and prosperity, the price Manasseh paid was considered too high since it involved submission to Assyria and its gods, and the subordination and contamination of Yahweh worship in the Jerusalem temple. Manasseh’s capitulation effectively overturned the foreign policy and religious reform of Hezekiah his father and predecessor. In the eyes of the Deuteronomistic historian, Manasseh was never forgiven for his heinous defections by the reformers from the days of Hezekiah who held fast to

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9 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 53.
10 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 53.
11 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 53.
the words of the eighth century prophets. Andersen and Freedman argue that it is in this state of decline that the prophetic message finds renewed applicability:

If the prophetic denunciation of the kings and priests of the eighth century had been vindicated by the destruction of Israel, and the devastation of Judah, how much more did they apply to the arch-apostate and idolater, Manasseh! The message which had failed to save Israel might yet bring Judah to repentance, and a timely change of kings might bring to the throne someone who was, like Hezekiah, a faithful reformer.13

That “someone” was Josiah and his reform, Andersen and Freedman suggest, is an offshoot of the effort of the compilers to preserve in literary form the prophetic messages of the eighth century:

All the warnings and hopes, perseverance and promises, found fulfilment in Josiah and the reform associated with the eighteen year of his reign (ca. 622/21). The centralization of worship in Jerusalem, and the corresponding destruction of the high places and their pagan cultic practices . . . purified religion in Judah at a stroke. The program of the Deuteronomists and the classical prophets was carried out on a national scale, by a king as dedicated to the service of Yahweh and the Mosiac revelation . . . as his grandfather Manasseh had been to the gods of Assyria and Canaan, and the abominable practices associated with their worship.14

Josiah’s reform, however, did not last. It ended after his death at Megiddo in 610 BCE (2 Kgs 23:29). The report that Jehoahaz who reigned after him “did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh” (2 Kgs 23:32) indicates that the rot had returned. The crisis came to a head in 587 BCE when Israel’s fate confronted the southern kingdom of Judah.


The besieged city of Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Babylonians who deported a significant portion of the city’s citizenry (Jer 39:1–10). In the captivity in Babylon, there arose a need to revise the prophetic oracles to include a message of courage and of hope for the exiles. With this understanding, Andersen and Freedman conclude that the prophetic books, including Hosea, received their final written update during the Babylonian exile.  

The notable feature of Andersen and Freedman’s analysis of the literary history of Hosea is that preservation, compilation and editing of the prophetic message occur at three critical moments or nadirs in Israel and Judah’s history. These are the fall of the northern kingdom, the heinous reign of Manasseh and the fall of the southern kingdom and deportation of its people to Babylon. In each of these situations, revision was made to the received tradition of Hosea’s speech to meet new demands.

From Macintosh’s perspective, the literary feature of the book of Hosea is found in its attempt to explain the ‘why’ behind the decline of the northern kingdom of Israel and its significance for Judah rather than to relate the historical events leading to Israel’s fall in 722 BCE. He cites the absence of particular indications of Northern or Ephraimite dialectal speech, explicit reports of the prophet engaging in conversation or

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dialogue with anyone and report of words spoken to the prophet by his contemporaries (with the likely exception of Hosea 9:7) as evidence of the book’s lack of interest in historical re-construction. Thus, he argues that the book of Hosea is strikingly different from works associated with his peers, Amos and Isaiah. Those books contain “explicit reports of the prophets’ dialogues with their contemporaries as well as equally explicit records that these prophets were called to address their contemporaries in sermons and speeches prompted by Yahweh.”

Regarding Hosea 1 and 3, Macintosh argues that they contain personal reports about the prophet’s marital life to set forth the parallel relationship between Yahweh and the kingdom of Israel. As for the remaining chapters of the book, Macintosh divides them into two broad literary genres: the prophet’s public proclamation, which appears predominantly in chapters 2 and 4–8, and his meditations, which come primarily in chapters 9–14. Of the former, he writes:

It is unlikely, however, that these passages contain accurate transcriptions (as of a stenographer) of the prophet’s ipsissima verba. Examination of the language and style has prompted the conclusion that we are confronted with what is a literary endeavour. That is to say that when Hosea (or a scribe) sat down to write an account of the oracles which he had spoken he produced something different viz. a literary work in the literary language of the North.

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17 Macintosh, Hosea, lxv–lxvi.
18 Macintosh, Hosea, lxv.
19 Macintosh, Hosea, lxvi.
20 Italics his. Macintosh, Hosea, lxvi.
Yet, inasmuch as the book is a literary composition consisting of a blend of the prophet’s public oracles and meditations, Macintosh says, “there can be no doubt that Hosea himself was its author and composer.”21

Macintosh, however, does not rule out the possibility that Hosea “was assisted by a personal scribe or that his endeavour was promoted by some redactional activity.”22 He also does not exclude the possibility that Hosea had revealed the totality of his thoughts to a circle of disciples.23 Macintosh believes that the book of Hosea was completed before ending up in Judah at or after the final collapse of Samaria in 722/721 BCE.24

The redactions in the book of Hosea, according to Macintosh, occur over a period of about two centuries with the bulk of them appearing around the seventh century.25 He lists the redactions in Hosea as:26

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1. Hosea 1:7, which is a late seventh century addition that contrasts Yahweh’s act of saving Judah with Israel’s fall.27

2. “David their king” and “in the days to come” in Hosea 3:5 as either late seventh century or possibly post-exilic glosses.

3. The condemnation in Hosea 4:5 of priest, prophet and people, the latter mirroring the mother figure of chapter 2. This verse belongs to the post-exilic period.

4. Modification of the prophet’s word in Hosea 4:15 dating to about the late eighth/early seventh century wherein Judah is warned about becoming guilty like Israel.

5. A gloss, similar in date to item 4, which was added to the end of Hosea 5:5 to assert that Judah is as guilty as Ephraim.

6. Hosea 6:11a belonging to late seventh century which extends the prophet’s condemnation to Judah.

7. Hosea 6:11b which was added after 6:11a and is to be dated to the exile. It turns the whole verse to a prophecy of weal for Judah.

8. The concluding exilic verse in Hosea 9:4 (“for their food shall serve merely to satisfy their appetite; it will not come into Yahweh’s house”) which elucidates the rest of Hosea’s word in the verse.

27 Contra the view that it makes more sense to date the verse earlier. Hos 1:7, it is argued, was part of an editorial framework given the book of Hosea when it was brought down to Judah in the aftermath of the fall of Samaria. William M. Schniedewind, "Jerusalem, the Late Judahite Monarchy, and the Composition of the Biblical Texts," in Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: the First Temple Period (eds. Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killebrew; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 375–393.


11. The reference to “Judah” in Hosea 12:1 which describes the former in better light in comparison to Ephraim. It dates to the late eighth/seventh century.

12. The replacement of “Israel” by “Judah” in Hosea 12:3 in the late eighth/seventh century.

13. The addition of the superscript in Hosea 1:1 and epilogue in Hosea 14:10 in the exilic or post-exilic era.

The above redactions, Macintosh argues, correspond to the stages of the development of the book. His overview of its development demonstrates how changing circumstances over that period influence the growth of the book. He highlights, for example, how Hosea, in the last days of Samaria, drew out the implications of Yahweh’s speech to him, how his disciples later supplemented the meditations of their master and how the Judean redactors of the seventh century modified the work that had ended up in Judah to meet their own particular needs.28

In summary, Macintosh’s view about the literary character of the book of Hosea echoes Andersen and Freedman’s proposal concerning the preservation and revision of the oracles of Hosea to meet the need of a future time. Like Andersen and Freedman,

Macintosh also describes how the fall of Samaria has vindicated Hosea’s indictment of the northern kingdom for sins connected with idolatry and unfaithfulness, and how it has authenticated his prophecy of doom.²⁹ Hence, Hosea’s message becomes for the Yahwists of Judah a paradigm they can use in their own fight against a similar evil in the south.³⁰ In Macintosh’s view, Hosea’s message for Israel was not all gloom and doom. It also incorporates “the irrepressible hope for the future and the unquenchable faith in the goodness of Yahweh” which the Yahwists appropriated for Judah following the demise of the northern kingdom.³¹ “If Ephraim had failed to live up to its true vocation, Judah now had the chance to do so. Hosea’s writing, then, authenticated by history, were redirected to a new situation.”³²

However, Judah failed to heed the words of Hosea. In 587 BCE, Jerusalem suffered the same fate as Samaria—it fell, albeit under the weight of a Babylonian military siege. Following Jerusalem’s capitulation to King Nebuchadrezzar, a portion of Jerusalem’s population was sent into exile (2 Kgs 25:1–21; Jer 52:1–30). It was in exile, according to Macintosh, that the book of Hosea receives its penultimate update to meet the needs of the exiles. The final revision, in his view, coincides with the restoration of the Judeans to their homeland in the post-exilic era.³³ In sum, what had been prophecies associated with Hosea, and targeted at the Israelis around the fall of

Samaria, became prophecies for different groups of people at different times to be applied to their particular contexts. The re-application involved a process of redaction so that the prophecies of Hosea continued to speak to their own situation.

The issue with the aforementioned method of updating the received text is that it presents the redactions as originating in the prophet. Without doubt, some modern literary critics would label this method of revision as deceitful and unprincipled. Yet, the literary technique of invoking the name of an authoritative figure was a common and acceptable technique in biblical times. Nevertheless, the inspiration and thinking behind the process of redaction must be examined. With respect to Hosea 1, the crux of the matter is how much of the original prophecy has been preserved in the revision and how much of the revision actually reflects the self-interest of its redactor.

A short survey of the debate on the topic of authorship of the prophecies in Hosea 1 will draw out these questions relating to the process of revising the Hoseanic prophecies to make them applicable to changing contexts. A later section will endeavour to explain the relationship between this method of revision and the claim that black prophecies exist in the book of Hosea.

3.2.2 Hosea 1: The Prophecies of the Prophet

Andersen and Freedman’s view on the subject of authorship and provenance for

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34 James H. Charlesworth, “Pseudepigrapha, OT,” *ABD* 5:537–540
Hosea 1 typifies one end of the debate on this topic. According to them, Hosea 1 (together with Hosea 2 and 3) was composed by a disciple or follower who was close to the prophet and had access to his family history.\textsuperscript{35} The prophet’s experience of his marriage and the birth of the children are decisive moments expressing how Yahweh experiences the Israelis.\textsuperscript{36}

Although Andersen and Freedman acknowledge the possibility of editorial changes and additions within the first three chapters of Hosea, they do not appear to have given it full consideration despite justifications to do so.\textsuperscript{37} Concerning Hosea 1:7, for example, Andersen and Freedman give no indication that someone other than a disciple or follower of the prophet might have composed the verse even though its Judean bias points to such a prospect.\textsuperscript{38} The consensus is that this verse \textit{does not} come from Hosea or his disciple or follower but derives from a Judean redactor beyond the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE.\textsuperscript{39} William Harper’s argument for the non-Hosean origin and late dating of Hosea 1:7 continues to echo in recent scholarship. The reasons he gives are: “(1) it occasions an interruption in the description of the prophet’s


\textsuperscript{36} Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 58.

\textsuperscript{37} Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 58.


\textsuperscript{39} The terms \textit{redactor} and \textit{editor} are used synonymously in this study. They refer to an individual who makes changes/supplementations to an original literary work and in the process alters the character of the original, and in this regard he/she may be considered the author of the literary work at that stage of its development; Stuart, \textit{Hosea-Jonah}, 31.
domestic history, and its connection with Yahweh and Israel; (2) the phrase ‘Yahweh their God’ does not occur in pre-Deuteronomic literature; (3) other verses relating to Judah are suspicious; (4) it reflects the deliverance of Judah in Sennacherib’s time (701 B.C.).”

Douglas Stuart has noted in his commentary that many commentators often raise reasons like those above to support their argument for regarding Hosea 1:7 as an interpolation. Stuart, however, has argued against this interpretation on the grounds that the verse is congruous with the rest of the chapter. Overall, Stuart agrees with Andersen and Freedman where his view about the authorship of Hosea 1 is concerned. While he acknowledges the possibility of an editor having a hand in the chapter, he does not appear to be enthusiastic about it. Not only is this evident in his interpretation of Hosea 1:7, it is also displayed in his analysis of Hosea 1:5. This verse, Stuart notes, has been often argued to be an interpolation because it uses “Israel” instead of “house of Israel” in Hosea 1:4. The observation that “Israel” is used thirty-one times in Hosea compared to only five usages of “house of Israel” has led him to question the


41 He, however, does not explicitly refer to Harper’s work. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 31.


argument.\textsuperscript{44} However, he has failed to show that all the usages of “Israel” in Hosea are original. Leonhard Rost’s analysis has demonstrated that only twenty-seven out of the thirty-one occurrences of “Israel” are genuine, that is they were once uttered by Hosea.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, it is still possible that Hosea 1:5 is non-Hoseanic.

Since scholars have not provided sufficient evidence to show that all the prophecies in Hosea 1 derive from the prophet himself, the claim concerning the presence of black prophecies remains a possibility. The fact that the above scholars themselves have acknowledged the possibility of editorial revision within Hosea 1 does warrant further investigation into the above claim. In particular, the majority view that Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 are non-Hoseanic bears out the need for a closer examination of Hosea 1.

3.2.3 Hosea 1: The Work of a Redactor

In a recent study, Rudnig-Zelt has not only argued that the oracles in Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 are not connected with the prophet, she has also assigned the whole of Hosea 1 to a Judean redactor from a late post-exilic era. Thus, she positions herself at the other end of the debate spectrum concerning authorship and provenance. She disagrees with the theory that Hosea’s student wrote Hosea 1:2b–9, which in her opinion has lost its

\textsuperscript{44} Stuart, \textit{Hosea-Jonah}, 30; cf. counter-proposal by Yee, \textit{Composition and Tradition}, 64–65.

appeal since the 1980s. A similar tendency, she suggests, is happening with the adoption of an early date for its composition. Rudnig-Zelt concurs with the majority of scholars who have interpreted Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 as addendum or “Nichtrag.” Her assessment that Hos 1:8 and 9 are also late is, however, uncommon. These, she argues, were added to Hosea 1:2b–4, 6 that was written in the post-exilic period. Hosea 1:2b–4, 6, she adds, forms the core layer “Grundschicht” in Hosea 1–3. It is written under Deuteronomistic influence and it relies particularly on the texts of Isaiah and Ezekiel. She further argues that Hosea 1:2b–4, 6 is heavily theologised. In her view, the redactor uses a theological dogma “Theologoumena” that was designed to deal with Judah’s fall in 587 BCE to explain the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE. She concludes that it contains no historical information about Hosea’s marriage and the birth of the children. The report is in reality a vaticinium ex eventu to justify Yahweh’s merciless judgment on the northern kingdom.

Several implications arise from Rudnig-Zelt’s interpretation and they reinforce


47 “V.7 ist mit der überwiegenden Mehrheit der Forschung als Nachtrag einzustufen . . . In V.5 hat die Forschung zu Recht einen weiteren Nachtrag verschlagn.” Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 86.

48 Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 86.

49 Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 98.

50 Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 94.

51 Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 94, 99.
the need to investigate the claim about the presence of black prophecies in Hosea 1 including the possibility that they function as propaganda. The implications are:

1. If Hosea 1 (vv. 2b–4, 6 as core material, vv. 5, 7, 8, 9 as addenda) is the work of a late post-exilic author/editor, then it is categorically misleading to state that it contains words that “the Lord said to Hosea” (v. 2b).

2. By the same token, the report of Yahweh’s instructions to Hosea in vv. 2bα, 4a, 6bβ and 9a needs to be reconsidered since Hosea 1 does not contain any historical data relating to the marital life of Hosea. It follows that the explanations for the symbolic actions in vv. 2bβ, 4b, 5, 6bβ–7, 9b must also be reassessed in view of the proposal that they are the product of a late post-exilic author/editor (written no less than two centuries after the fall of Samaria). Given that the author/editor has attributed the prophecies in Hosea 1 to the prophet, it is possible that they aim to achieve more than to provide a “Theologoumena” to explain the fall of Samaria.

3. Since Hosea 1:2 has identified the prophecies in Hosea 1 as Yahweh’s speech to Hosea, there is a strong possibility that its intended audience had read it as such and had not considered the prospect that someone else from a different period might be responsible for its composition. For them, Hosea 1 contains Yahweh’s prediction associated with the marital life of Hosea from the early period of his ministry in the eighth century.

4. The use of the “Theologoumena” that was designed to deal with the destruction of Judah in 587 BCE to explain the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE (Hos 1:2b–4, 6) warrants a scrutiny of the prophecies in Hosea 1 to establish whether it reflects the aspiration of Yahweh/Hosea or its Judean author.
5. If Hosea 1:2b–4, 6 is really the “Grundschicht” to which was added Hosea 1:5, 7, 8 and 9, then the revision clearly reflects a Judean bias. Its ultimate persuasion, it seems, is to contrast the fate of the north with that of the south, namely that events in history have testified to the fact that Israel was punished and rejected by Yahweh (Hos 1:5, 8, 9) whereas Judah has been saved (Hos 1:7). On this basis alone, Hosea 1 can be considered a piece of propaganda. What needs to be established is the kind of response it hopes to elicit from its intended audience.

In summary, Yahweh’s instructions to Hosea to perform several symbolic acts in Hosea 1:2bα, 4a, 6a and 9a, and Yahweh’s explanations of their meanings in Hosea 1:2bβ, 4b, 5, 6bβ–7, 9b, based on Rudnig-Zelt’s interpretation, are not as they appear. These are presented as historical events that point to the fall of Samaria because of Israel’s apostasy, when they are actually retrospective explanation of the collapse of the northern kingdom. On this basis, there is justification to categorise them as black prophecies, namely those that present themselves as Yahweh’s words to the prophet when they really derive from another source (an author/editor from a late post-exilic era).

Regarding the “Theologoumena” that was designed to deal with the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem in 587 BCE, there is a very fine line between this dogma and its re-use in Hosea 1 by the post-exilic author to explain the demise of the northern kingdom in 722 BCE. In essence, both exhibit characteristics of propaganda. Both seek to gain the assent of their respective audiences that losing their land was punishment
for their lack of loyalty to Yahweh.\textsuperscript{52} With the northern kingdom, Yahweh’s intention had been revealed to Hosea (1:1–9) and no action had been taken to avert the punishment.

The above viewpoint is accentuated when the “Grundschicht” in Hosea 1:2b–4, 6 is viewed in light of the supplementary materials in Hosea 1:5, 7, 8, 9. The supplementation has changed the original character of the “Grundschicht,” which describes Yahweh’s intention to punish Israel for apostasy. In the combined form, Hosea 1 seeks to persuade its intended audience to compare and contrast the fate of Israel with that of Judah. Events in history have demonstrated that Israel was punished and rejected by Yahweh (2 Kgs 17:5–9; cf. Hos 1:5, 8, 9) while Judah has been saved (2 Kgs 19:35–37; cf. Hos 1:7). In essence, these contrasting events serve to propagate the idea of Judah’s special relationship with Yahweh.

What the above discussion shows is that the claims that Hosea 1 contains black prophecies, and that these operate as pro-Judean propaganda, are not invalidated despite Rudnig-Zelt’s interpretation that the whole of Hosea 1 belongs a post-exilic redactor. On the contrary, it warrants and strengthens the proposal to scrutinise Hosea 1 for the presence of black prophecy and propaganda.

\textsuperscript{52} Cf. Ellul, \textit{Propaganda}, 11.
3.2.4 Hosea 1: A Composite Work and Its Implication

Mays believes that the marriage and birth narrative in Hosea 1 reports the real historical events that occurred during the early years of Hosea’s prophetic ministry.\(^53\) According to him, “the very character of prophetic symbolism requires that the divine word be actualized in a representative event.”\(^54\) He, however, points out that the narrative itself, written in laconic and matter-of-fact style is kerygmatic, not biographical.\(^55\) It is written by a disciple or a contemporary who has intimate knowledge of the troubled marital life of Hosea.\(^56\) He argues that the narrative of Hosea’s marriage to a promiscuous woman is used to illustrate Yahweh’s relation with Israel and Israel’s sin of apostasy. Mays argues that Israel had embraced the fertility cult of the Canaanite religion.\(^57\) Seeking to distinguish Yahweh’s harsh judgment against apostate Israel that manifested itself in the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE from the divine intervention that resulted in the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib’s army in 701 BCE, an editor added Hosea 1:7 to 1:6. Mays suggests that Hosea 1:7 was appended sometime after 701 BCE but before the fall of Jerusalem at the start of the sixth century.\(^58\)

\(^{53}\) Mays, Hosea, 23–24.

\(^{54}\) Mays, Hosea, 23.

\(^{55}\) Mays, Hosea, 23.

\(^{56}\) Mays, Hosea, 24.

\(^{57}\) Mays, Hosea, 25; cf. arguments against the sacred prostitution hypothesis in Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 122–133; see also Christine Bucher’s argument cited in Timothy D. Finlay, The Birth Report Genre in the Hebrew Bible (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 191.

\(^{58}\) Mays, Hosea, 29.
Wolff discerns three layers in the growth of Hosea 1. Hosea 1:2–4, 6, 8–9 is written in “conscious retrospect” by a disciple and a contemporary of Hosea during the reign of Jeroboam II (747–746 BCE).59 Hosea 1:5, in his view, is an independent oracle of Hosea that is secondarily inserted into the older narrative and is, therefore, not a part of the original context.60 Wolff argues that the verse cannot be a vaticinium ex eventu which was later inserted in its current position, being related either to the judgment upon of the house of Jehu or to the final catastrophe of the southern kingdom.61 Instead, Hosea 1:5 is best understood in terms of the turbulent events of 733 BCE, when the Jezreel Valley was lost to Tiglath-pileser.62 Like Mays, Wolff considers Hosea 1:7 to be a parenthetic note by which the author urges his reader to contrast the threat in Hosea 1:4 and 1:9 with the promise of deliverance from harm in Hosea 1:7. While he cannot confidently relate Hosea 1:7 to the time of Jerusalem’s deliverance from Sennacherib in 701 BCE with certainty, Wolff asserts that it was composed and inserted by a Judean redactor before the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE.63

Yee follows the majority of scholars in ascribing Hosea 1:2–4, 6abA, 8–9 to a collector who had created the first written account of the oracles of Hosea. This collector was probably a disciple of Hosea who wrote after the fall of the northern

59 Wolff, Hosea, 11–12.
60 Wolff, Hosea, 19.
61 Wolff, Hosea, 19.
62 Wolff, Hosea, 19.
63 Wolff, Hosea, 20–21.
kingdom in 722/721 BCE, perhaps during the time of Hezekiah’s reform. She assigns Hosea 1:1, 5, 6B–7 to a final redactor who had revised the work of the collector for his own situation in the exile. Following Duhm and Wolff, she considers Hosea 1:6bB to be part of 1:7 instead of 1:6abA. She translates Hosea 1:6bB–7 as “I will surely forgive (i.e. the house of Israel) and upon the house of Judah I will have compassion. And I will save them by YHWH their God. I will not save them by bow, sword, weapons of war, horses or horsemen.” Of the redactor’s method of re-applying Hosea 1:6abA, a prophecy associated with the prophet Hosea, to Judah’s situation in exile by supplementing it with Hosea 1:6bB–7, Yee writes:

In reaction to the negativity of his received text, “I will never again have compassion upon the house of Israel” (1:6abA), the redactor announces on YHWH’s behalf, “I will surely forgive them” e.g. the northern kingdom of Israel. Furthermore, he states that the southern kingdom, the house of Judah will also be the object of divine compassion (rhm). While his received text originally prophesied the withdrawal of divine compassion from the North, the redactor reverses this threat against the North by stating that YHWH will surely forgive Israel. He then applies the compassion which YHWH will again extend to the house of Israel to the southern kingdom of Judah as well.

Yee does not explain the basis for the redactor’s revision of the received text. It is unclear whether the redaction is based on knowledge of Yahweh’s word to Hosea or simply a conviction about Yahweh’s benevolence for Israel and Judah (“the redactor


65 Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 129.

66 Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 67.

67 Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 66.

announces on YHWH’s behalf”). Nonetheless, the supplementary prophecy in Hosea 1:6b–7 presents itself as the actual word of Yahweh to Hosea concerning the divine intention to show compassion for Judah and Israel. For this reason, Hosea 1:6b–7 should be considered as black prophecy. Yet, that is not to say that it does not reflect Yahweh’s aspiration.

Macintosh, along with many scholars but unlike Yee, has not assigned Hosea 1:6b to a Judean redactor. He has translated the verse as, “Indeed I will annihilate them [i.e. the house of Israel] completely.”69 As for Hosea 1:7, he argues that it was appended to the oracles of Hosea after they were appropriated by the Yahwistic circles in Judah to affirm the integrity of Yahweh’s relationship with the southern kingdom: “Yahweh’s election of his chosen people was narrowed to Judah following his rejection of the Northern Kingdom.”70 On this point, Macintosh considers the views of Ibn Ezra and Kimchi as “substantially correct.” These Jewish scholars argue that Hosea 1:7 reflects “the events of 701/700 BC when, in apparently miraculous circumstances and with no military endeavour on Judah’s part, the army of Sennacherib withdrew from the siege of Jerusalem . . .” The verse, according to Macintosh, was probably inserted well before 587 BCE.71


70 Macintosh, Hosea, 25.

3.2.5 Summary

Despite differences in interpretation over the precise nature of the authorship and provenance of the prophecies in Hosea 1, there is considerable agreement that Hosea 1:7 is a late Judaean interpolation. In contrast, disagreement exists for Hosea 1:5. Some scholars attribute the verse to the prophet Hosea while others interpret it as a secondary text. For example, Yee assigns it to the same redactor of Hosea 1:7 and dates it to the period of the Babylonian exile. Far more radical is the proposal by Rudnig-Zelt that Hosea 1 was composed in its entirety by the Deuteronomistic circles in the post-exilic period. She argues that Hosea 1:5 (and vv. 7, 8, and 9) was added to Hosea 1:2b–4, 6 to explain the fall of Samaria.

The above views, positing Hosea 1:5 and 1:7, or perhaps the whole of Hosea 1, as belonging to an era far removed from the world that was responsible for producing the surrounding text, raise a question that has been ignored in Hoseanic scholarship. The question relates to the response of the target audience of the non-Hoseanic prophecies—those written in the name of the prophet Hosea but in actuality they belong to another person or group. It has been suggested that these prophecies were taken at face value and read as the word of Yahweh to the prophet Hosea. Although modern biblical critics have identified these prophecies as the work of a redactor from a different era and setting, no question has been raised about the redactor’s literary method of not clarifying their real origin and intention. Whether the redaction is limited to two verses (Hos 1:5, 7), or seen as something more pervasive (Hosea 1), it will be
argued that it was made primarily to serve the self-interest of its redactor. Rudnig-Zelt, as mentioned, has proposed that the entire first chapter of the book of Hosea was composed by a post-exilic author. In her view, the basic prophecy in Hosea 1:2b–4, 6 serves to explain the decline of the northern kingdom (Hos 1:4) in the form of a “vaticinium ex eventu” as a merciless judgment of Yahweh (Hos 1:6). This explanation, however, suffers from the fact that Judah itself had experienced the same fate as its northern neighbour in 587 BCE. In the face of the final conquest of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 39:1), Hosea 1:7, in which Yahweh promises compassion and salvation to Judah, falters as a polemic against Israel. Its proposed composition in the post-exilic period to pronounce Israel guilty as charged (Hos 1:2, 5) ultimately backfires on Judah. This raises the question whether there could have been another use for Hosea 1:7, one that takes into account its appearance as a Hoseanic prophecy.

In view of the lack of attention given to those prophecies in Hosea 1 that present themselves as Hoseanic, the following section aims to review them to uncover their real origin and intention. This aim is the overarching burden of this study for there are other

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72 Insofar as the material he/she adds to the oracles of Hosea, the “redactor” can also be considered an “author” in that the redactor has produced a ‘new’ piece of work.

73 “Sie erklären den Untergang des nördlichen Teilstaats (1,4) in der Art eines vaticinium ex eventu als erbarmungsloses Gericht Jahwes (1,6) . . .” Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 94.

prophecies in Hosea 2 and 3 that seem to be written purely in the name of Hosea. The objective for scrutinising these prophecies is to uncover, as far as possible, the underlying motive or self-interest of their author.

3.3 New Perspective

The book of Hosea 1 begins with a superscription that reads.\textsuperscript{75}

The word of Yahweh that came to Hosea son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, the king of Israel.\textsuperscript{76}

Although this superscription appears at the head of the book, it is not an indication of its place at the starting point within the developmental history of the book. Whereas past scholars have endeavoured to separate Hosea 1:1 into early Hoseanic and late non-Hoseanic elements, there is less inclination to do likewise in recent years.\textsuperscript{77}

Mays, for instance, has pointed to the similarity between Hosea 1:1 and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75}Scholars have used different terminologies (superscription, title, statement, heading, or a combination of these) to describe Hos 1:1. Harper, \textit{Amos and Hosea}, 201; Mays, \textit{Amos}, 20; McKeating, \textit{The Books of Amos, Hosea, Micah}, 73; Wolff, \textit{Hosea}, 3; Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 142; Stuart, \textit{Hosea-Jonah}, 20; Yee, \textit{Composition and Tradition}, 55; Macintosh, \textit{Hosea}, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{76}All English translations of the Masoretic Text are mine, with the exception of quote taken from particular scholars.
\item \textsuperscript{77}For a brief review of the attempt by past scholars, see footnote in Harper, \textit{Amos and Hosea}, 204–205.
\end{itemize}
Prophecy and Propaganda in Hosea 1

Zephaniah 1:1, Micah 1:1, Joel 1:1, Jonah 1:1, Jeremiah 1:1–2, Ezekiel 1:3 as an indication that Hosea 1:1 derives from the same group that was responsible for prophetic superscripts during the exilic and post-exilic period.78 Mays’ view is shared by scholars like Wolff, Stuart, Yee, Birch and Macintosh.79 In contrast, Andersen and Freedman’s analysis of the similarities among the titles of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, and a lack of coherence between them and Jeremiah 1:1 and Zephaniah 1:1 has led them to conclude that it is:

... unlikely that this editorial work [Hos 1:1] was carried out late in the seventh century or early in the sixth century, and still less likely that it is the work of editors during or after the Babylonian Exile. Such activity should rather be assigned to the period defined by the data in the titles within living memory of the men concerned.80

The chronological sequence in Hosea 1:1 suggests that the earliest date for its composition is after the coronation of Hezekiah as king of Judah, which happened either in 729 or 715 BCE.81 However, it is also possible, or more likely, that Hosea 1:1 was composed sometime after the reign of King Hezekiah. This would be around 700 or 686 BCE since Hezekiah reigned for twenty-nine years and died at the end of his kingship according to the data in 2 Kings 18:2, 20:1–21, 2 Chronicles 29:1 and Isaiah 38:1–2.

78 Mays, Hosea, 20.

79 Wolff, Hosea, 4; Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 20; Yee, Composition and Tradition, 57; Birch, Hosea, Joel, and Amos, 18; Macintosh, Hosea, 3.

80 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 145–147, here 147.

81 See discussion below regarding the discrepancy surrounding the first regnal year of King Hezekiah; the list of the name of the Israelian kings in Hos 1:1 is incomplete in that the northern contemporaries of Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah are omitted. Their omission from the kings list is discussed in most commentaries on the book of Hosea. For example, Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 147–149.
On this basis, Yahweh’s word to Hosea would have ceased around one of these dates.

Yet, nothing in the book of Hosea points to the prophet’s activity after 722 BCE. The consensus among scholars is that Hosea retired before the fall of Samaria. This raises doubt about the accuracy of the information in Hosea 1:1, especially if Hezekiah actually reigned between 715 to 686 BCE. Can a prophecy between this period be considered “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea . . . in the days of . . . Hezekiah” (Hos 1:1)? If not, how then should this kind of prophecy be classified? What was the attitude of the target audience toward this kind of (non-Hoseanic) prophecy? What role and objective does it serve? Does it preserve the interest of Yahweh and Hosea or does it serve a different interest? These questions call for a closer look at the superscription in Hosea 1:1.

### 3.3.1 Assertion in Hosea 1:1

דבר־יהוה אשר היה אל־הושע בימי יזרעאל

Hosea 1:1 is both a report and a statement. Its opening clause reports the advent of Yahweh’s speech to Hosea: דבר־יהוה אשר יהוה אל־הושע. This clause recapitulates the direct or reported speeches in Hosea 1:2 (תחלת דבר־יהוה בהושע ויאמר יהוה אל־הושע יקרעיוו אל יהוה ויאמר לו קרא שמה לא רחמה).
and 1:9 (ויאמר כֵּרַם לָהֵן שְׁמֵהָ יָמִי).

The editor of Hosea 1:1 synchronises the advent of Yahweh’s speech to Hosea with the reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah. This synchronism marks the cessation of the divine communication to the prophet at the point when Manasseh took over the reign from Hezekiah.

The editor of Hosea 1:1 also establishes from the outset that the book of Hosea contains “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea son of Beeri.” The use of דָּבָר “word” in Hosea 1:1 with, and before, the perfect verbs דָּבַר “spoke” and אמר “said” in the reported speeches in Hosea 1: 2, 4, 6, 9 reinforces the reader’s perception that Hosea 1 contains “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea.” In this regard, Yahweh’s instruction to Hosea to give ominous names to each of the children and explanation for those names (Hos 1:4–5, 6–7, 8–9) takes on particular and dramatic significance when

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82 Cf. Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," 93–94. He has identified the “anonymous narrator” of Hos 1:1 with the narrator at two other key points of the book. He argues that the first time this “anonymous narrator” 'reappears' to address the reader is in Hos 1: –2:3. The reappearance occurs in (1) Hos 1:2a, “the beginning of YHWH’s speaking to Hosea” and (2) the narrative indicators of YHWH’s speeches to the prophet and the prophet's subsequent actions throughout the balance of the pericope. These indicators are found in several places: (a) Hos 1:2bα, “and YHWH said to Hosea,” (b) 1:3–4αα, “and he went and he took Gomer bat Diblaim and she conceived and she bore a son to him, and YHWH said to him,” (c) Hos 1:6αβ, “and she conceived again and she bore a daughter, and he said to him,” and (d) Hos 1:8–9αα, “and she weaned Lo Ruhamah and she conceived and she bore a son, and he said.” The second time that the narrator reappears is in Hos 14:10; see also Yee, Composition and Tradition, 55–57.

83 It has been proposed that Manasseh was co-regent with Hezekiah in the last ten years (696–686 BCE) of the latter's reign. The editor of Hos 1:1 either has no knowledge of the co-regency, has omitted it for some unknown reasons, or the co-regency never existed. Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 176–177.

84 So also Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," 94.
read through the editor’s retrospective lens. This latter understanding is based on the earlier suggestion that Hosea 1:1 was probably composed after the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah, which occurred in 700 or 686 BCE. Given this scenario, Hosea 1:1 does not introduce the reader to a preview of the end of the northern kingdom (Hos 1:2–9) but a hindsight perspective of its collapse at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BCE. It is also possible that it has in view Sennacherib’s aborted attempt to seize Jerusalem in 701 BCE (Hos 1:7; cf. 2 Kgs 19:29–37).

The above proposal concerning Hosea 1:1’s role in establishing Hosea 1 as Yahweh’s word to the prophet is shared by many scholars. In fact, some scholars consider the assertion in Hosea 1:1 as applicable to the entire book of Hosea. For example, Mays argues:

The heading is more than a mere name for the book; the final redactor states in it his theological understanding of the work so that it will be properly read and understood. The book as a whole is ‘the word of Yahweh,’ the message of the God of Israel.

Mays’ proposal that Hosea 1:1 contains the editor’s theological assertion that the whole of Hosea be understood as the authoritative “word of Yahweh” to Israel is shared by Wolff. According to Wolff, the significance of Hosea 1:1 lies in the three ways by which its editor characterises Hosea’s prophetic sayings and narratives in

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relation to their origin. Foremost of these is the assertion that the collection of sayings and narratives is to be read as “God’s Word.”\(^{87}\) Second, is the notion that this Word of God is conveyed “through this man Hosea.”\(^{88}\) Lastly, the divine communication “is addressed to a particular time in history, namely in the decades preceding the collapse of the state of Israel.”\(^{89}\) Thus, Wolff underscores not only the editor’s view that the prophecies in Hosea is “God’s Word” but also the particularity of their occurrence, that is, it came (only) to Hosea and it came (only) during the reigns of the kings whose names appear in Hosea 1:1.

Macintosh concurs with Wolff about the particularity of Yahweh’s word to Hosea. The strength of Macintosh’s thought lies in his explanation about the sole appearance of the name of Hosea’s father, Beeri, in Hosea 1:1 and nowhere else in the book.\(^{90}\) He begins by highlighting that this phenomenon is a motif in other prophetic texts (Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, Jonah, Zechariah and Haggai).\(^{91}\) This observation has led Macintosh to conclude that “the authors of these superscriptions had access to independent information or to written titles which they chose to discard in favour of their own compositions.”\(^{92}\) Based on the belief that the latter is the case, he

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87 Wolff, Hosea, 6.
88 Wolff, Hosea, 6.
89 Wolff, Hosea, 6.
90 Macintosh, Hosea, 4–5.
91 Macintosh, Hosea, 1, 4.
92 Macintosh, Hosea, 4.
ventures to suggest that the written title that was discarded by the author of Hosea 1:1 was probably “the words of Hosea, son of Beeri,” similar to those that appear in Amos 1:1 and Jer 1:1.\textsuperscript{93} As for the author’s decision for discarding this title (“the words of Hosea, son Beeri”) and replacing it with the current one in Hosea 1:1 (“the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea, son of Beeri . . .”), Macintosh argues:

The author of 1.1 wishes to make the point that the importance of Hosea’s oracles lies in their testimony to the word of God. That word is indicative both of his nature and will. The circumstances of its coming are set forth in the description of particular prophets and of the times in which they lived. Thus, here as elsewhere, the word of God is mediated through a particular person and at a particular time and place. It is not arbitrary or purposeless in its coming; it is no timeless myth even though its origin is transcendent. It is perceived in a concrete historical situation.\textsuperscript{94}

Thus, Macintosh corroborates Wolff’s viewpoint about Hosea 1:1 in that the superscript seeks to establish the prophecies in the book as “God’s word” to Hosea and they address the Israelians in a particular context, namely “in the decades preceding the collapse of the state of Israel.”\textsuperscript{95}

Mays, Wolff and Macintosh’s viewpoints about the purpose of Hosea 1:1 is recapitulated in Dearman’s recent commentary on Hosea. The superscription in Hosea 1:1, he says, marks Hosea as a prophetic book with two sources. The first is Yahweh

\textsuperscript{93} Macintosh, \textit{Hosea}, 4.

\textsuperscript{94} Macintosh, \textit{Hosea}, 4–5.

\textsuperscript{95} Wolff, \textit{Hosea}, 6.
who initiates communication with Hosea and the second is Hosea himself who re-
communicates Yahweh’s revelation. Although “the term ‘prophet’ is not used to
identify Hosea, he is described as the recipient of the Lord’s word, which indicates his
prophetic status.” According to Dearman, the primary audience of Hosea is the
Israelians. As for the focus on the Judean kings in Hosea 1:1 rather than the Israeli-
kings even though Hosea’s primary audience is the Israelis, Dearman attributes it to
the southern context in which the book was edited and preserved. In sum, Hosea 1:1
asserts both the divine and prophetic origin of the oracles in the book and situates them
to the period between the limits of the reigns of the specified kings of Judah and Israel.
To the discerning reader, the kings list in Hosea 1:1 provides more than a context for
the prophecies in the book of Hosea—it points to its underlying Judean interest.

The primary aim of the editor of the superscription in Hosea 1:1, as the above
seeks to show, is to establish from the outset that the oracles in Hosea 1 are the “word
of Yahweh” to the prophet and the context for Yahweh’s communication. It suppresses
any tendency to doubt the oracles as “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea.”
Regarding Hosea 1:7, for example, the superscription seeks to influence its ancient
reader concerning its Hoseanic origin and suppresses the kind of argument that modern
scholars have raised. Mays, for example, has argued that it is non-Hoseanic and was
probably added after Sennacherib’s attack on Jerusalem in 701 BCE, but before the fall
of Jerusalem at the beginning of the sixth century.

96 Dearman, *Hosea*, 77.
97 Dearman, *Hosea*, 79.
The invocation of Hosea’s name in Hosea 1:1 to give the book an authoritative standing, however, is not unique. This literary feature also appears in other prophetic texts, some more explicitly (Jer 1:1; Ezek 1:1–3; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zeph 1:1; Zech 1:1) than others (Isa 1:1, Amos 1:1; Obad 1:1; Malachi 1:1; Nah 1:1). Yet, this literary method of invoking Hosea’s name is problematic because not everything in the book can be classified as “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea.”

The above literary technique is comparable to pseudepigraphy or “the incorrect attribution of authorship to famous persons.” Pseudepigraphy, James Charlesworth argues, is mostly associated with writings of early Judaism between 250 BCE to 200 CE and was the “norm for writing in biblically inspired groups.” According to Charlesworth, evidences of this phenomenon of false attribution of a piece of work to a famous person exist in the Hebrew Bible:

. . . some books in the OT are pseudepigraphical in the strict sense even though the term is not employed to describe them; for example, the Psalms were not composed by David, Proverbs was not created by Solomon, and Isaiah 40–66 was not written by the 8th-century prophet Isaiah.

From a present-day standpoint, this phenomenon of pseudepigraphy is likely to give rise to descriptors like falsehood, fraudulence, misrepresentation and deceit.


Invoking without basis the name of a reputable person to give a work an authoritative standing raises questions about the trustworthiness of the work. It may also be asked if such a pseudepigraphical technique is liable to abuse in that untruths or at least half-truths may be passed off as views originating in an authoritative person for gaining assent to a particular line of thinking. On this issue, Charlesworth argues that pseudepigraphy does not aim to deceive:

The Pseudepigrapha poses a perplexing problem for many readers: Why did the authors of these writings attribute them falsely to other persons? These authors did not attempt to deceive the reader. They, like the authors of the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, the Wisdom of Solomon, and the additions to Isaiah, attempted to write authoritatively in the name of an influential biblical person.102

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102 James H. Charlesworth, “Pseudepigrapha, OT,” *ABD* 5:537–540; cf. the following viewpoint by Marinus De Jonge, ed., *Outside the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2. “In a difficult period in the life of the people or of a group within Israel, pseudepigraphy served to transmit guidance from authoritative figures in the past. It is assumed that what is true and relevant in the present time, must have been true and relevant from of old. The heroes of the past must have experienced and taught much more than what is handed down in those writings which have gradually become authoritative. The essence of pseudepigraphy is not the false attribution of writings to people who have nothing to do with them, but the keen awareness of some sort of ongoing revelation and of the task of continuous reinterpretation of the truth and wisdom transmitted in God's history with his people.”; in another related study on the phenomenon of pseudepigraphy at Qumran, involving texts or portions of texts which are placed into the mouth of ancient figures, three categories of pseudepigraphy have been proposed: authoritative, convenient and decorative. Citing works from the Enoch literature, Charlesworth shows that authoritative pseudepigraphy includes prophecies placed in the mouth of ancient patriarchs or prophets to make them more convincing. Convenient pseudepigraphy is a weaker form of authoritative pseudepigraphy and it involves using the names of well-known figures to inculcate morals and values in a society. Decorative pseudepigraphy is used in the retelling and expansion of biblical stories by putting created speech into the mouths of characters to make the narration process easier and more vivid. Concerning the ethical question behind the phenomenon of putting words into another person's mouth, these authors argue: “It is clear that during the later Second Temple period the technique of pseudepigraphy was frequently employed. Yet, we cannot be certain whether pseudepigraphy functioned as a convention whose audience knew that the words were not those of the ancient writer but of a contemporary or whether they were 'fooled' by the pseudonymous attribution.
While it is difficult to ascertain the motivation of the pseudepigrapher or reaction of the ancient reader of a pseudeographical work, it can be said with confidence that a work attributed to an authoritative person has a greater potential to influence than a work by an unknown person or a person of questionable character or intention. This situation could also be said of the book of Hosea. Its attribution to the prophet has influenced the perception of its target audience regarding the reliability of the oracles in Hosea 1 as the “word of Yahweh that came to Hosea.” Rudnig-Zelt’s proposal that the entire Hosea 1 belongs to the late post-exilic period or Mays’ argument that the prophecy in Hosea 1:7 is not “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea” but the composition of an editor from the exilic/post-exilic era is unlikely to have been raised by its ancient reader.\textsuperscript{103} The term black prophecy has been used several times to denote this kind of prophecy. It has been defined as a prophecy that presents itself as originating in a prophet/Yahweh, but is actually the work of another person or group. This brings to mind the question raised in relation to black prophecy, specifically whether it represents the aspiration of Yahweh and Hosea or the interest of its into accepting the document as one of genuine antiquity. Perhaps at different times, in different places, in different circles, pseudepigraphy had different implications. In instances where pseudepigraphy may have been an accepted method of composition, the use of the term 'pseudepigraphy' by modern scholars may nevertheless carry a pejorative overtone, since 'pseudo-' tends to mean 'non genuine.' This development reflects a modern attitude concerning the morality or appropriateness of writers adopting the voices of others, despite the fact that no such stigma may be attached to the genre in antiquity.” Esther G. Chazon, et al., \textit{Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls} (Leiden: Brill 1999), 1–10.

\textsuperscript{103} The view that Hos 1:7 does not belong to the prophet is held by many scholars. For example, Mays, \textit{Hosea}, 29; Yee, \textit{Composition and Tradition}, 66.
composer. The following section examines this question in relation to the prophecies in Hosea 1:2–9.

3.3.2 Narrative in Hosea 1:2–9

The primary objective of Hosea 1:1 is to assert that the prophecies in Hosea 1:2–9, are “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea” during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah, and Jeroboam II of Israel. The passage provides a formal report of Yahweh’s speech to Hosea and of the prophet’s marriage to an unfaithful Gomer as a metaphor for, and a way of drawing attention to the Israelians’ failure to maintain due allegiance to Yahweh. It also reports Yahweh’s intention to punish Israel for abandoning Yahweh. The clauses Hosea 1:2ab, which introduce Hosea 1:2–9, make a claim to Hoseanic origin in identifying Yahweh as the initiator and Hosea as recipient of the divine oracles that ensues. However, Hosea 1:2a, תחלת דבר־יהוה בהושּׁעַ, is grammatically awkward. As a link to the preceding verse, Hosea 1:1 (דבר־יהוה אֲשֶׁר היה אל־הושּׁעַ), and the following clause, Hosea 1:2b (ויאמר יהוה אל־הושּׁעַ), it clumsily repeats the names of Yahweh and Hosea, and Yahweh’s action of initiating communication with Hosea.

On this issue, Wolff has argued that Hosea 1:1a, “The word of Yahweh that came to Hosea son of Beeri,” and Hosea 1:1b, “in the reign of Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel,” originally may have been a part of Hosea 1:2a, “when Yahweh first spoke to Hosea.” These verses, Wolff argues, form the original superscription for Hosea 1:2b–
9. Wolff also argues that Hosea 1:2a, “when Yahweh first spoke to Hosea,” should be read as “in the beginning,” despite the absence of a preposition. His explanation, however, requires the removal of the words תחלת דברי יהוה הבושת which is a contentious way of arguing away the problem of the clumsy repetition of the names of Yahweh and Hosea on either side of Hosea 1:2a. Macintosh’s view about Hosea 1:2 supports this assessment.

According to Macintosh, the repetition of Yahweh and Hosea’s names in Hosea 1:2 is not a problematic issue. He does not see a need to disassociate Hosea 1:2a from 1:2b on the grounds that the latter should have used pronouns for “Yahweh” and “Hosea.” Concerning Wolff’s proposal above, he argues that there is no instance when the Hebrew noun תחלת “beginning” is used in a superscription to prophetic material. Macintosh considers Wolff’s so-called original superscription (“in the beginning of Yahweh speaking to Hosea son of Beeri in the days of Jeroboam”) otiose. He is not convinced by Wolff’s argument that “beginning” gives this superscription a relative sense in that it introduces Hosea 1:2b–9 as an account of Yahweh’s command to Hosea to marry during the time of Jeroboam II. תחלת, in Macintosh’s view, carries an absolute sense and denotes “the beginning” of Yahweh’s speech to Hosea.

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105 Wolff, Hosea, 12.
106 Macintosh, Hosea, 7.
107 Macintosh, Hosea, 7, 10; cf. the view that בראשׁית “beginning” in Gen 1:1 (albeit not the same word תחלת in Hos 1:2a) is used in an absolute temporal sense rather than relatively. Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1–15 (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 13–14.
Macintosh argues that “if a redactor of Hosea’s words expressly wished to ‘begin his account of God’s revelation to Hosea by relating how, in Jeroboam’s time and at Yahweh’s command, he married . . .’ . . . that is no reason to question a grammatical connection with the following main verb in 2b “he said (this).” 108 In support of his own position that the repetition of the names of Yahweh and Hosea is not a problem, he cites an “exact parallel” in Exodus 6:28–29 where the repetition of the two proper names, Yahweh and Moses, is found. 109 Based on this observation, Macintosh argues that there is no problem to be resolved in Hosea 1:2ab since the repetition of names is not unique to Hosea.

Yee explains that the clumsy repetition of the names of Yahweh and Hosea on three occasions (Hos 1:1aA, 2a, 2b) is the result of an exilic redactor prefixing his own heading (Hos 1:1) to the material he had received. 110 On this point, she follows the interpretation of scholars like Marti, Duhm, Harper, Wolff and Mays. 111 The material that the final redactor received, Yee further argues, is introduced by התחלת דבר־יהוה בהושע “When Yahweh first spoke to Hosea” (Hos 1:2a). Hosea 1:2b that contains the

108 Macintosh, Hosea, 10.

109 Macintosh, Hosea, 7. Only Exod 6:28 is cited in his explanation. The repetition of the names of Yahweh and Moses actually occurs over vv. 28–29 where the Hebrew paragraph marker ¶ separates the repetitions in the MT. V. 29, therefore, begins a new line in a new paragraph; Exod 6:28–29 is translated in the NRSV as “On the day when the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, he said to him . . .” It is an attempt to smoothen the reading of the two verses; Christo H. J. Van der Merwe, et al., Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 48.

110 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 56.

111 See her footnote for these and other references. Yee, Composition and Tradition, 56.
subsequent repetition “Yahweh said to Hosea” is, in her opinion, the beginning of the actual report of Yahweh’s revelation to the prophet in Hosea 1:2b–9. Of the latter, she has attributed Hos 1:2–4, 6abA and 8–9 to a “collector” who has preserved the word of Yahweh to the prophet and Hosea 1:5, 6bB–7 to a final exilic redactor. Since the redaction does not belong to Hosea even though it appears to be from the prophet himself, it would be considered as black prophecy according to the definition in this study. Yet, the redaction does not appear to be markedly different from the word of Yahweh to Hosea which the “collector” has preserved (Hos 1:2–4, 6abA, 8–9). Rudnig-Zelt, as discussed earlier, has a far more radical approach to Hosea 1:2–9 in that she has assigned Hosea 1:2b–9 (as core text) and Hosea 1: 5, 7, 8–9 (as later addition) to the post-exilic era. According to this understanding, the entire Hosea 1:2b–9 is, therefore, black prophecy.

In view of the diverse interpretations above, one possible way to distinguish the black prophecies from the potentially Hoseanic oracles in Hosea 1:2–9 is to use the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE as a point of reference. Thus, black prophecies would be those prophecies that can be reasonably dated to a time after the fall of Samaria. The use of the fall of Samaria as a gauge for black prophecies is not an arbitrary decision but one that is well supported by the observation that nothing in the book of Hosea reflects the prophet’s experience of the fall of Samaria. The reason for this, scholars

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113 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 112–115, 127–128.
propose, is that the prophetic activity of Hosea had ceased before Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 722 BCE. Had his ministry extended beyond the fall, one would expect to find some strong statements about his warnings of the impending fall now that it has been fulfilled. None, however, seems to be available in the book. Hence, Mays says that “[t]he prophetic career began during the prosperous and peaceful years of Jeroboam II and closed as the history of the northern state of Israel moved toward its tragic finale.”114 Nothing of the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, in Mays’ view, is reflected in the sayings of Hosea.115

Yet, Hosea 14:1–2 seems to suggest that Hosea was active right up to the final days of Samaria. However, Mays argues that Hosea 14:1 (“Samaria shall bear her guilt . . . By the sword they shall fall . . .”) foretells rather than reflects the horrific siege of the city following Hoshea’s rebellion against Assyria.116 With Hosea 14:2, he assigns it to a collector of the prophet’s sayings and sets it in the “final months of northern kingdom’s defeat by Shalmaneser V.”117 His assessment that Hosea 14:1 predicts rather than reflects Samaria’s fall is supported by Yee. In her view, the verse contains Hosea’s word concerning the future: “YHWH will bring destruction, because she has rebelled against her God (14:1).”118 In contrast, Yee assigns Hosea 14:2 to the final exilic

114 Mays, Hosea, 3.
115 Mays, Hosea, 5.
116 Mays, Hosea, 179, 183.
117 Mays, Hosea, 185.
118 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 304.
redactor R2.\textsuperscript{119} Dwight Daniels, however, disagrees with her interpretation. He argues that Hosea 12–14 contains the oracles of the prophet that were set to writing around the collapse of Samaria:

\dots Hos. 12–14 preserves Hosea’s oracles spoken during the course of events initiated by Hoshea ben Elah’s overture to Egypt in a hopeless attempt to rid himself of his Assyrian overlord (2Kgs 17:4). Hosea refers to this event in 12:2(1)b and thereby establishes the setting of the collection as a whole. In the final complex the deportations have apparently begun (14:3[2]) and Samaria, if it has not already fallen, is certainly about to (14:2[1]). The collection may then have been composed shortly after the fall of Samaria in 722, perhaps even during the siege.\textsuperscript{120}

Dearman thinks that the summons to repentance in Hosea 14:2 (“Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God . . .”) was made before the fall of Samaria. His view is based on the understanding that the preceding verse (Hos 14:1) provides the backdrop for the summons, which he suggests anticipates rather than reflects back on the event of the fall.\textsuperscript{121} Yet, the perfect verb לֶתַּכ שׁ in Hosea 14:2b (“. . . for you have stumbled in your iniquity”) counter-suggests that the prophet’s appeal to the Israelites to return to Yahweh was made after, rather than before, the collapse of Samaria.

Regarding the activities of the prophet around the time of the fall of Samaria, Mays thinks that it is conceivable that Hosea had sought refuge in Judah during the final

\textsuperscript{119} Yee, Composition and Tradition, 313.

\textsuperscript{120} Daniels, Hosea and Salvation History, 29.

\textsuperscript{121} Dearman, Hosea, 333, 336.
months of Israel’s existence.\textsuperscript{122} Wolff is even bolder in maintaining that Hosea had indeed been driven to the southern border by Shalmaneser V’s attack on Samaria.\textsuperscript{123} It was there that the prophet speaks in unambiguous terms about the recent devastation of the city: “Samaria must bear their guilt, for she has rebelled against her God.”\textsuperscript{124} Macintosh insists there is no sure way of knowing if Hosea had survived the end of Israel. One can only speculate about it, he argues, and as such, Wolff’s claim is nothing more than speculation.\textsuperscript{125}

In view of an overwhelming agreement that Hosea had retired before the collapse of Samaria in 722 BCE and the lack of counter-evidence, the latter event can be a point of reference for assessing black prophecies in Hosea. Admittedly, there will be a margin of error in using 722 BCE as a reference point since it is impossible to pinpoint the exact year in which Hosea ceased to be Yahweh’s prophet. This basic methodology for assessing black prophecies may be graphically presented as follows:

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\textsuperscript{122} Mays, \textit{Hosea}, 15, 16, here 16.

\textsuperscript{123} Wolff, \textit{Hosea}, 210–211, 224; it was already suggested in the patristic period that Hosea went to Judah in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Samaria. Eugen J Pentiuc's work (\textit{Long-Suffering Love: A Commentary on Hosea with Patristic Annotations} [Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2002], 6) is cited in Dearman, \textit{Hosea}, 7.

\textsuperscript{124} Wolff, \textit{Hosea}, 222, 229; contra "Samaria has become guilty for she rebelled against her God." Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 626, 641.

\textsuperscript{125} Macintosh, \textit{Hosea}, lxx.
Hosea 1:2a introduces the report of Yahweh’s word to Hosea (Hos 1:2–9) with the phrase תחלת דבר־יהוה בהושע. This Hebrew phrase does not explicitly identify the date of the beginning of Yahweh’s revelation to the prophet. It simply locates Yahweh’s word to Hosea, as indicated by Hosea 1:2b, to or near the start of Yahweh’s communication with Hosea. The essence of this initial communication comprises Yahweh’s commands to the prophet to לך קח־לך אשׁת זנונים וילדי זנונים, to give ominous names to the children that were born, and Yahweh’s explanations for those commands. Insofar as Hosea 1:2b–9 is a report of an initial communication from Yahweh to Hosea, the prophecies it contains are represented as Hoseanic in origin. They were delivered to the prophet before the fall of Samaria. However, these prophecies must not be taken at face value. They must be subjected to further scrutiny to determine if they are indeed Hoseanic. One must examine the likelihood of the occurrence of Yahweh’s command to Hosea to perform the symbolic acts of marriage and the naming of the children at the initial stage of Hosea’s ministry, before 722/721 BCE. If proven doubtful, then the claim

126 It has been argued that the beginning of Yahweh’s revelation to Hosea coincided with the time of the prophet’s marriage. Macintosh, Hosea, 10; cf. the understanding that “Hosea’s activity as messenger begins, to be sure, with the reception of Yahweh’s commands concerning himself.” Wolff, Hosea, 13.
in Hosea 1:2ab is likely to be false. It would also suggest that the content in the report about Yahweh’s command to Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman to highlight Israel’s infidelity to Yahweh is probably black prophecy.

One is inclined to think that for Hosea’s marriage to Gomer, together with the birth/naming of the three children, to be a credible means of highlighting Israel’s apostasy, Yahweh must have actually given those commands to Hosea. It would also demand that Hosea complied with Yahweh’s command to לך קח־לך אשת זנונים וילדי זנונים (Hos 1:2c). Moreover, these events must have been made public if the message in the symbolic act is to achieve its objective of warning the northern kingdom of Israel of an inevitable and disastrous outcome for their sin of apostasy. These thoughts are reflected in Macintosh’s statement that Hosea’s marriage is “an outward sign or representation of the relationship between God and his people . . . it is the means by which God began to communicate to Hosea his message to the nation.” The only way Hosea’s marriage to a promiscuous woman can become a “sign” or “means” for God’s communication or rhetoric to the nation is for it to become public knowledge. It cannot be an effective “sign” if it remains private unless one treats his marriage and the birth/naming of the children as magical rites done in secret to bring about Israel’s downfall as a recompense for Yahweh’s displeasure with the nation’s infidelity.

127 Macintosh, Hosea, 9.

128 Robert P. Carroll “sees a clear link between prophetic drama and magic . . . Carroll holds that prophetic dramas ‘belong to an epistemological framework where divination and incantation represent power transmitted through words and gestures . . . These are not just actions which illustrate words with gestures but are part of the creation of the thing itself—they make things happen. The performed action, accompanied by the ritualized words and gestures, is causal.’ He considers the prophet to be the true agent of the 'magic.' Walther Zimmerli, on the other hand, holds that Yahweh himself
In his study of the sign-acts in the prophetic texts of Jeremiah and Ezekiel as rhetorical nonverbal communication, Kelvin Friebel has made a convincing case against those who hold the view that symbolic actions contain within themselves an inherent efficacy analogous to magical rites. Accordingly, these rites when performed actually set in motion the events described. He has strongly countered with the proposal that “the purpose and function of the sign-acts are to be found in the inherent need and desire to communicate effectively, rather than in the context of magical ritual.” In summary, sign-acts, in his view, are “‘rhetorical’ communication devices.”

Friebel has devised a set of indicators for evaluating the actuality of the performance of the sign-acts by these prophets in compliance with Yahweh’s command. He uses the term *sign-act* in his study instead of the conventional term *symbolic act* because sign-act is more in line with *sign* and *symbol* as used in communicative theory. It also allows him to include nonverbal behaviours like bodily movements, gestures and paralanguage in his study. The indicators Friebel has


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developed to establish the actuality of Jeremiah and Ezekiel’s sign-acts can be used to investigate the reality of Hosea’s marriage and the naming of his children. If it can be ascertained the events were carried out in compliance to Yahweh’s wishes, then there is reasonable cause to date these events to the early years of his prophetic ministry. It would also be reasonable to categorise the prophecies associated with these events as Hoseanic. The indicators Friebel uses for studying Jeremiah and Ezekiel’s sign-acts are: (1) statements of the actions’ execution; (2) the notations of the presence of eyewitnesses; (3) verbal audience responses which indicate a viewed performance; and (4) the application of the nomenclature sign (םופת, אות) to the actions.¹³¹

For a start, nothing in Hosea 1:2–9 points to the presence of an eyewitness or a verbal audience response to Hosea’s marriage or the birth and naming of any of the children, unless one considers the reporter of this text an eyewitness and, his report, a verbal response to the events in question. The (eyewitness?) report, however, does not confirm Hosea’s compliance with Yahweh’s command to give ominous names to the children. It has to be inferred based on the report of his earlier compliance, without fuss, to Yahweh’s instruction to him to marry a woman who is prone to promiscuity. On this point, Friebel has argued that the lack of a statement of the action being carried out should not be construed as proof that an action was not performed. On the other hand, Friebel has also acknowledged that statements confirming a prophet’s compliance to a divine command to carry out an action are not sufficient by themselves to express actual performances; they must be corroborated by other indicators.¹³² However, Hosea 1:2–

9 does not offer much by way of corroborating indicators. Supporting statements by an eyewitness or evidence of an audience verbal response, other than the person of the reporter and his report, is lacking. Also lacking is the use of the nomenclature sign in the report to describe Hosea’s marriage or the naming of his children as sign. The use of the nomenclature sign, Friebel argues, is important for evaluating the actuality of the performance of an act because it denotes something to be perceived by the senses. The presence of the nomenclature is, therefore, a good indication that the action was performed. Yet, there are certain actions in Ezekiel (clapping, stamping the feet in 6:11; trembling and quivering in 12:18; wailing, striking the thigh, clapping in 21:17–22) for which no explicit indicator exists to attest their actual performance. These actions, however, are assessed by Friebel as activities that were actually performed by the prophet. These actions of Ezekiel, he reasons, “were common nonverbal gestures and expressions whose actual performance need not be questioned.” However, Hosea’s marriage to a promiscuous woman and the giving of ominous names to the children can hardly be considered “common nonverbal gestures,” which means their actual performance needs to be substantiated by indicators. In summary, when Friebel’s indicators are applied to Hosea 1:2–9 to evaluate the actuality of the reported events it describes, the finding is inconclusive. Further investigation, therefore, is needed.

In his study about *The Birth Report Genre in the Hebrew Bible*, Timothy Finlay has defended the historicity of Hosea’s marriage and the birth and naming of the

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children. To the objection that Yahweh could not have commanded anyone to break the moral law by marrying a fornicator or prostitute, thus pointing to an ahistorical event, Finlay has argued that there is no such command in the Torah prohibiting a non-Priest from marrying such a woman.\textsuperscript{135} In response to the proposal that Hosea is unlikely to have agreed to marry a fornicator or prostitute, Finlay cites the argument raised by others, namely that Gomer became promiscuous after the marriage, not before. Alternatively, Finlay suggests that Hosea felt compelled to act according to Yahweh’s wishes because a prophet must be willing to do even the most unpleasant things.\textsuperscript{136} As for the objection raised in relation to the giving of ominous names to the children when parents are more likely to give their children positive name, Finlay has offered an interesting solution. It is possible, he says, that all the names were originally positive but were subsequently renamed and reinterpreted in light of the nation’s apostasy.\textsuperscript{137} Finlay is convinced that the birth and naming events in Hosea 1 did actually occur:

\ldots the wide variety of reports of prophetic symbolic actions makes it very likely that the prophets performed some actions which symbolized their message to the nation as a whole; and the variety of birth reports where a parent gives a child a name with a meaning relating to personal circumstances makes it likely that this reflects an actual practice in ancient Israel. It should not be surprising, therefore, if prophets did adapt a common practice and make the name of a child a symbol of a prophetic message to the nation.\textsuperscript{138}  

Many scholars think that Hosea 1:2–9 contains a historical core that reflects the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[135] Finlay, \textit{Birth Report}, 192.
\item[137] Finlay, \textit{Birth Report}, 193.
\item[138] He also makes reference to the naming event in Isa 6–8. Finlay, \textit{Birth Report}, 194.
\end{footnotes}
marital life of Hosea. However, they do not view Hosea’s life as the primary focus of Hosea 1:2–9. For example, Francis North argues that Hosea actually marries a good woman. The description that Gomer was a prostitute, in his view, was added later to symbolise apostate Israel.\(^{139}\) Similarly, Mays says, “The story reports the real . . . The interest is not in Hosea and the experiences of his life . . . The narrative is kerygmatic, not biographical.”\(^ {140}\) Yet, he argues that Hosea had actually married a sacred prostitute in the cult of Baal.\(^ {141}\) In contrast, Wolff argues that Gomer was one of the many Israeli women who had participated in the bridal rites of the Canaanites by consecrating her womb to the fertility deities through sexual intercourse with strangers in the temple.\(^ {142}\) However, Brad Kelle disagrees with Mays and Wolff’s arguments because there is little real evidence to substantiate both the practice of sacred prostitution to insure the fertility of the land and “the ritual defloration of virgins” in ancient Israel.\(^ {143}\) With regard to the basic issue of Hosea’s marriage, Macintosh himself does not doubt its historicity. The marriage, he argues, marks the beginning of Yahweh’s message.\(^ {144}\) He also assigns possible dates for the birth and naming of the children: Jezreel (Hos 1:4), a couple of years before the assassination of Zechariah in 747 BCE; Lo-Ruhamah, in the period between 747–740 BCE; Lo-Ammi in the early part


\(^{140}\) Mays, Hosea, 23.

\(^{141}\) Mays, Hosea, 26.

\(^{142}\) Wolff, Hosea, xxii.

\(^{143}\) Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 123–137, here 132.

\(^{144}\) Macintosh, Hosea, 11.
Likewise, Bruce Birch does not doubt that Hosea 1 describes an actual marriage event. His position is reflected in his argument against the claims of some early Church Fathers that the story is allegorical which, in his view, “is not supported by the straightforward reporting of the prophet’s life. The story is narrated as events in Hosea’s actual life.” Marvin Sweeney seems to agree with Birch’s position. The marriage and the birth and naming of the children as symbolic act is a form of drama the prophet acts out to represent the actions or intentions of Yahweh in the world.

Feminist scholars have found the portrayal of Hosea’s marriage to be problematic. Julia O’Brien’s view represents the main feminist concern about the use of Hosea’s marriage as a metaphor for Yahweh’s disciplinary action against Israel—it has a tendency to undergird domestic abuse. No feminist critic, however, appears to have classified this text of terror as fictional. For example, Tristanne Connolly says, “a main problem to attack when dealing with Hosea is, in chs. 1–2, how easy is it to

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145 Macintosh, *Hosea*. 15, 18, 23, 29
146 Birch, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 19.
remember that this is a metaphor?" However, the marriage metaphor, in her view, uses a real situation—Hosea’s marriage to a promiscuous wife—to depict Yahweh’s relationship with Israel. Like Birch, Carole Fontaine notes the scandalous nature of Yahweh’s command to Hosea to wed a woman of harlotry is so inconceivable that scholars have attempted to give an allegorical meaning the event. She also disagrees with this line of thinking because there is little reason to allegorise the report of Hosea’s marriage. The family, she adds, is an acceptable arena for symbolic actions in the other prophets. She also ventures to say that Hosea’s marriage was probably an interesting topic for gossip in eighth century Israel.

Rudnig-Zelt’s view stands in stark contrast to those highlighted above. Her position is that there is no historical data relating to the marriage of Hosea to be found in Hosea 1:2b–4, 6. Interpretation appears to have come in full circle in Rudnig-Zelt because critics in the past have also taken an ahistorical approach to the portrayal of Hosea’s marriage. Alice Keefe explains the rationale for their interpretation:

Prior to the era of modern biblical scholarship, most Jewish and Christian commentators found it unthinkable that Yahweh would have commanded his

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151 Connolly, "Metaphor and Abuse," 56.


prophet to have married a woman so sullied by sexual sins and sought to resolve the appearance of divine and prophetic impropriety by arguing that the command and the marriage should be read as allegorical—enacted in a dream or a vision, not in the flesh and blood.\textsuperscript{154}

The sixteenth century French theologian, John Calvin, for example, was one of those theologians who proposed that Hosea’s marriage be understood as a visionary experience. Calvin, Keefe believes, “was obviously disturbed by the thought of this woman coming straight from a brothel into Hosea’s bed, for she was not ‘an unchaste woman only,’ but a woman ‘who has exposed herself to all . . . not once nor twice, nor to a few men, but to all.’”\textsuperscript{155} Keefe also cites the work of the medieval Jewish exegete Abraham Ibn Ezra. Like Calvin, Ibn Ezra had found it “inconceivable” that God should command Hosea to marry such a woman. He, therefore, proposes that God’s command and the marriage could only have happened in a vision or a dream.\textsuperscript{156} Other Jewish commentators even dispensed with the ‘dream’ or ‘vision’ solution. Keefe cites the \textit{Targum of the Minor Prophets} as an example where commentators have removed all reference to Hosea’s marriage to Gomer:

\begin{quote}
Go speak a prophecy against the inhabitants of the idolatrous city, who continue to sin . . . So he went and prophesied concerning them that, if they repented, they would be forgiven; but if not, they would fall as the leaves of a fig-tree fall.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

Despite much argument from both ends, the debate surrounding the historicity

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\textsuperscript{154} Keefe, \textit{Woman’s Body}, 38.
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\textsuperscript{155} Keefe, \textit{Woman’s Body}, 38.
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\textsuperscript{156} Keefe, \textit{Woman’s Body}, 38–39.
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\textsuperscript{157} Keefe, \textit{Woman’s Body}, 39.
\end{flushright}
of Hosea’s marriage to Gomer and the birth and naming of the children remains unsettled. In summary, the arguments for the historicity of the report in Hosea 1:2–9 are strong but are not conclusive for lack of certain evidence. Scholars who have taken issue with the morality of Hosea’s marital relationship with Gomer have not refuted the possibility of an actual eighth century marriage. Scholars, who have difficulty coming to terms with an inconceivable marriage and who have resorted to the ‘dream’ and/or ‘vision’ interpretation as a way of arguing away the difficulty, have raised a questionable argument from silence. Nothing in Hosea 1:2–9 suggests Yahweh’s command and Hosea’s marriage occurs in a dream or vision (cf. Amos 7:1, 4, 7). While it cannot be denied that Hosea 1:2b–4, 6 reflects a theology explaining the collapse of the northern kingdom of Israel, as Rudnig-Zelt has argued, it is a different matter altogether to conclude, without clear and explicit evident, that no historical data about Hosea’s marriage to Gomer exists in this passage.158

Yet, what if no historical data is present in Hosea 1:2–9. Does that not mean all subsequent analysis about the propaganda in Hosea 1 is flawed? That need not be the case. According to Ellul, propaganda need not rely on whole truth or fact; it also thrives on half-truth and limited truth.159 Perhaps untruth is one of the tools at the disposal of a propagandist, which may be far more effective than half-truth. Adolf Hitler’s propaganda minister, Goebbels himself, “claimed that outrageous charges evoke more

158 Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 98.
belief than milder statements that merely twist the truth slightly.” Jowett and O'Donnell cite an example why propaganda can also be a “big lie”:

Written by Czar Nicholas II’s secret police in 1903, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion portrayed Jews as demonic schemers. The 24 chapters or protocols claimed to be the real minutes of a secret council of Jews discussing its plot for world domination. First serialized in part in a Russian newspaper, the Protocols were released publicly in 1905 at a time when, as part of a propaganda campaign, Russia sought to incite anti-semitism. They were also used in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 to encourage widespread slaughter of Jews and were circulated widely by conspiracy theorists even after they were exposed as forgery in 1921. Hitler cited the Protocols in Mein Kampf, and they permeated Nazi propaganda.

Thus, Jowett and O'Donnell has argued that “propaganda . . . runs the gamut from truth to deception . . . The means may vary from mild slanting of information to outright deception, but the ends are always predetermined to favour the propagandist.”

Notwithstanding the aforementioned views, it is possible that there is a historical core in Hosea 1:2–9 involving Yahweh’s instruction to the prophet to marry, to have children and to give them ominous names upon their birth. Granted that this is the case, Yahweh’s word to Hosea concerning these events probably occurred during the early years of Hosea’s prophetic ministry and reign of Jeroboam II. On this basis, the reported speech which begins with תחלת דבר־יהוה בהושׁע (Hos 1:2ab) and which introduces Yahweh’s instruction to the prophet to marry and to give

160 Bogart’s work is cited by Jowett and O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 18.
163 Cf. the view that the “first command to Hosea cannot have been given later than 751 . . . ” Wolff, Hosea, 13.
ominous names to the children upon their birth may be counted as Hoseanic prophecy. The following section will attempt to determine whether Yahweh’s explanations in Hosea 1:2d, 4b–5, 6b, 7, 9b match Yahweh’s word to Hosea to marry and to give ominous names to the children or whether there are conflicts between Yahweh’s explanations and the commands given to Hosea. The finding will help to establish the nature of the divine explanation in Hosea 1.

3.3.3 Yahweh’s Explanation in Hosea 1:2–9

In Hosea 1:2c, Yahweh commands Hosea to לְךָ קָחְךָ אַשָּׁתׇת זָנוּנִים וְיִלְדוּתָן זָנוּנִים and in Hosea 1:2d Yahweh follows with an explanation for the divine directive: עַל־זָנִית תָּזֵן הָאָרֶץ מִאַחֲרֵי יהוה. What kind of woman is referred to by אַשָּׁתׇת זָנוּנִים and what is the status of the יִלְדוּתָן זָנוּנִים? Phyllis Bird has argued persuasively that the woman in question is not זוֹנָה "prostitute" but a "woman of loose sexual morals, whose promiscuous nature is exhibited in her ‘fornications’ (זָנוּנָים)."164 Her reasoning stems from the basic meaning of the Hebrew root זנה. This root word as expressed through the verb זוּנָה means ‘‘to engage in sexual relations outside of or apart from marriage,’ activity that is normally understood as illicit.”165 The Hebrew noun זוֹנָה “prostitute,” she adds, derives from the verb זוּנָה, not the reverse, and refers to a special type of the sexual activity denoted by the verb זוּנָה.166 Thus, by Hebrew conception, a prostitute is ‘‘essentially’’ a professional

164 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 80; so also Wolff, Hosea, 13.
165 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 76.
166 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 78.
or habitual fornicator, a promiscuous or unchaste woman, whose role and profession are defined by her sexual activity with men to whom she is not married.” Bird has also argued that the use of the abstract plural noun ז֧נוּנִים “fornications” signifies the woman’s sexual promiscuity as habitual; it is not an indication of the circumstance of her profession. Connolly, however, has questioned Bird’s interpretation because there is no evidence to suggest that the woman’s sexual promiscuity is indeed a “habitual behaviour.” Bird finds support for her interpretation in the repeated use of the noun ז֧נוּנִים to characterise both the woman/wife and the children. Regarding the application of the noun ז֧נוּנִים to the children, Bird suggests “that the author intended to claim for the children the same nature as their mother.” She thinks that it is also possible to read ילֶדֵי ז֧נוּנִים as “children [born] of promiscuity.”

This latter interpretation by Bird appears to be the plain sense in the Hebrew expression אֲשֶׁר ז֧נוּנִים וּיְלֵֽדֵי ז֧נוּנִים in Hosea 1:2c. Thus, Yahweh commands Hosea to marry a woman who is promiscuous and to have children that are the product (or proof) of her promiscuous activity. The emphasis on her promiscuous activity serves to accentuate Israel’s apostasy. Two reasons argue for this emphasis. The first is found in Bird’s argument that the meaning in the Hebrew verb זָנַה be understood as the starting

168 Connolly, "Metaphor and Abuse," 57.
169 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 80.
170 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 80.
171 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 80.
point for the characterisation of the woman in Hos 1:2c. There, she is defined by her inclination to engage in illicit sexual relations outside of marriage.\(^{172}\) The second reason appears in Yahweh’s explanation in Hosea 1:2d. This explanation, זנה תזנה הארץ מאחרי יהוה, comes after Yahweh’s command to Hosea, but preceded by the Hebrew word כ. The word כ, therefore, makes a metaphorical link between the kind of woman Hosea is to marry—אשׁת זנונים וילדי זנונים—(Hos 1:2c) and the explanation for Yahweh’s choice of woman for Hosea—זנה תזנה הארץ מאחרי יהוה—(Hos 1:2d). Hence, the emphasis on the woman’s promiscuous activity in Hosea 1:2c becomes the vehicle for highlighting the land’s apostasy against Yahweh in Hosea 1:2d. The land’s apostasy then becomes the basis for Yahweh’s command to Hosea to give ominous names to the children in Hosea 1:3–9 as a signal of the inevitable doom that awaits the land. The identity of ארץ which has forsaken Yahweh, however, is not explicitly defined in Hosea 1:2d. Notwithstanding this, discovering its identity can assist in detecting non-matching elements, and possibly black prophecy within Hosea 1:2–9. With this understanding, the next section attempts to determine the identity of ארץ in Hosea 1:2d.

The term ארץ is used twenty times in Hosea as a common noun to designate a portion of the earth’s solid surface, which has a particular identity when it is distinguished by boundaries or ownership.\(^{173}\) On nine occasions, ארץ appears alongside

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\(^{172}\) Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 76.

\(^{173}\) Definition based on *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 2003); cf. the definition of ארץ as “ground,” “earth,” “territory,” and “country” in אֶרֶץ, “earth, land,” in TLOT 172–173.
another grammatical word which gives another grammatical word which gives אֶרֶץ a distinct identity. In this group, אֶרֶץ appears seven times in construct with another proper noun to give it a distinctive character: אֶרֶץ מצרים (Hos 2:17; 7:16; 11:5; 12:10; 13:4); אֶרֶץ יהודה (Hos 9:3); אֶרֶץ מצרים (Hos 11:11). On two occasions, it is used with another word to describe a parched and inhospitable piece of land. In Hosea 2:5, אֶרֶץ is used with an adjective, אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן, and in Hosea 13:5, it appears with another noun, אֶרֶץ תֶּלֶת הַבָּרוֹר. In all the above instances, אֶרֶץ refers to a piece of land with a distinctive character.

In eleven occurrences (Hos 1:2; 2:2, 20, 23, 24, 25; twice in 4:1, 3; 6:3; 10:1), אֶרֶץ is used without a modifying grammatical word. Hence, in Hosea 1:2, אֶרֶץ simply denotes a portion of the earth’s solid surface. No distinguishing information is provided. As an inanimate entity, the action of the land in abandoning Yahweh is compared to the promiscuous behaviour of a female spouse (Hos 1:2cd): לְךָ כִּי־זָנוּת תִּקְנֶה אֶרֶץ מֵאֲחֵרִי יְהוָה. The comparison depicts the land as having engaged in illicit sexual relations outside of marriage. While Gomer is clearly identified as the promiscuous woman/wife (Hos 1:3), the identity of אֶרֶץ in Hosea 1:2d remains ambiguous. This is also the case with the other ten verses (Hos 2:2, 20, 23, 24, 25; twice in 4:1, 3; 6:3; 10:1) in which the term אֶרֶץ appears. However, the identity of אֶרֶץ in each of those occurrences may be inferred through the context of its surrounding texts as the following paragraphs seek to show.

In Hosea 2:20b, Yahweh promises to break the bow, the sword and war

174 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 76.
from the אֲרֵץ. However, the identity of אֲרֵץ in this verse is unclear. A comparison with the term אֱדֹם “ground/earth” which appears (once in Hosea) in the preceding clause (Hos 2:20a) strongly suggests that אֲרֵץ has a specific meaning.  

It probably refers to the northern kingdom of Israel when read in light of the context in Hosea 2:20b (in which war is envisaged and that which Yahweh promises to גָּבֹר “break” or “end”; cf. Hos 1:5) and Hosea 23–24 (which envisages the return of economic activity to the land).  

In Hosea 4:1αβ, אֲרֵץ also appears with no clarifying word. Its identity may be inferred through Hosea 4:1α:  

v 1α Hear the word of Yahweh, O Sons of Israel (בניישראל)  
v 1αβ for Yahweh has a case against the inhabitants of the land (יושֵׁבֶת הָאֲרֵץ)  

Therefore, אֲרֵץ in v. 1αβ must surely refer to Israel since it parallels בניישראל in v. 1α. Moreover, it is most unlikely for Yahweh to issue a command to the Israelis to hear only to tell them of Yahweh’s intention to indict the inhabitants of an unknown land. Similarly, אֲרֵץ in the subsequent verses Hosea 4:1β and 4:3 can only mean  

175 Italics in Hos 2:20b mine: “I will make a covenant with them on that day with the wild animals of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground.”  

176 The next chapter in this study will explain the imagery in Hos 2:23–24 in greater detail; cf. the view that from Hos 2:4 onwards, Israel and its surrounding land is spoken symbolically as a woman. Martin J. Buss, The Prophetic Word of Hosea: A Morphological Study (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 34; see also the understanding that “Israel is called the ‘land’” in Hos 1:2. C. Hassell Bullock, An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 100.
“Israel” because they extend the thoughts in Hosea 4:1aα and 4:1aβ. On this basis, Hosea 4:1bβ and Hosea 4:3 refer to the lack of knowledge of God and point to imminent mourning in the land of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Regarding הָעָרֶץ in Hosea 1:2d, which Yahweh accuses of turning its back to him by engaging in activities akin to spousal sexual impropriety, most commentators interpret it as a reference to the nation and the inhabitants of Israel. Harper’s view represents this group: “The land represents the inhabitants and is used in the narrower sense of Israel, excluding Judah.”177 This understanding may be found, for example, in Wolff’s interesting reflection on Hosea 1:2: “. . . does Yahweh direct Hosea to a woman who is imbued with the spirit of a faithless people, who is a ‘worshipper of Baal,’ and thus require Hosea to marry any woman from among rebellious Israel?”178 Wolff’s description of “a faithless people” and a “rebellious Israel” echoes Yahweh’s charge in Hosea 1:2d about a land that has acted like a promiscuous spouse and has turned away from following Yahweh. Wolff does not seem to have in mind a comprehensive Israel that is inclusive of Judah when he thinks about the lack of difficulty Hosea must have had in finding a woman that fits Yahweh’s description of the kind of woman he is to marry.179

177 Harper, Amos and Hosea, 210; others include Mays, Hosea, 25; Macintosh, Hosea, 8; Yee, "Materialist Analysis," 345–383; Dearman, Hosea, 90.

178 Wolff, Hosea, 13–14; Ibn Ezra offers a similar view. His work is cited in Macintosh, Hosea, 9.

179 The works of Osiander and Coppens are cited in Wolff, Hosea, 14.
Contrasting the above views is Andersen and Freedman’s interpretation for יָרָע. They have argued that יָרָע is a comprehensive designation and “Judah as well as Israel (Ephraim) is included in the term.” Several observations, however, argue against their interpretation. Some of these have already appeared in the above paragraph in which יָרָע is argued as denoting the northern kingdom of Israel.

Since Yahweh’s judgment relates to the guilt of יָרָע concerning its illicit promiscuous activity, Yahweh’s response can only be negative in outlook. This is evident in Yahweh’s command to Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman and to give ominous names to the children (Hos 1:4a, 6a, 9a) as a signal of the imminent divine wrath. Yahweh’s negative attitude toward Israel is affirmed in the explanations in Hosea 1:4b–5, 6b, 9b. A contradictory tone, however, appears in Hosea 1:7. It is the only verse in Hosea 1:2–9 where Yahweh does not offer a negative response. There Yahweh exalts Judah and promises it military protection. Yahweh’s attitude in Hosea 1:7 conflicts with the divine judgment in Hosea 1:2d. If both Israel and Judah are guilty of metaphorical promiscuous activities, why does Yahweh exempt Judah from punishment without explanation? Yahweh’s attitude toward Judah is, therefore, incomprehensible in light of the offence (cf. Hos 2:4–6). On this basis, it is unlikely that יָרָע in Hosea 1:2d includes both Israel and Judah.

Insofar as it is יָרָע that is found guilty of being disloyal to Yahweh, this has to be a metonym for a nation and its inhabitants with many scholars such as those

highlighted above agreeing on this point. The names of the children and Yahweh’s explanation for these names strongly argue that Yahweh’s charge is directed at the Israelis. Nowhere is Judah implicated in the impending doom associated with the ominous names. In Hosea 1:4a, the name Hosea is commanded to give to the first-born is יִזְרֵעֶל “Jezreel,” which translates as “God sows,” and is associated with either the town Jezreel or the valley of Jezreel in the kingdom of Israel. The name itself is phonetically similar to ישָׂרֵאֵל “Israel,” the focus of Yahweh’s threat. It is explicated in the instruction to Hosea to name the child יִזְרֵעֶל: “. . . for in a while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel and I will put an end to the kingship of the house of Israel” (Hos 1:4). Yahweh then supplements this threat with another in Hos 1:5: “And on that day, I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.” Scholars are almost unanimous in reading the breaking of Israel’s bow as a reference to the destruction of Israel’s military power. Genesis 49:24, 1 Samuel 2:4 and Jeremiah 49:35 are sometimes cited as examples to support the reading of “bow” as a reference to “military power or might.” It will soon become clear that Hosea 1:5 is *vaticinium ex eventu* and unlikely to belong to the prophet.

The name לא רחמה “Lo-Ruhamah” is the name Hosea is commanded to give to

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the second child and for which Yahweh explains: “for I will no longer accept the House of Israel or honour them” (Hos 1:6). Nowhere does the name לא רחמה incorporate a positive element, yet in Hosea 1:7, Yahweh is reported to have uttered a hopeful speech that exalts Judah by applying the reversal of the name לא רחמה and guaranteeing it military assistance. Coupled with the earlier assessment that Yahweh’s hospitable sentiment toward Judah in Hosea 1:7 is incongruent with Yahweh’s negative attitude in Hosea 1:2d, it may be concluded that Hosea 1:7 is not an original part of Yahweh’s explanation for the name לא רחמה in Hosea 1:6. Moreover, it operates as a counter-statement to Hosea 1:6, namely that Judah, unlike Israel, enjoys a special relationship with Yahweh because Yahweh will come to Judah’s aid in a time of military crisis.

Like Hosea 1:7, Judah does not feature in the name לא תמי” in Hosea 1:8–9. Yahweh’s explanation for the choice of לא תמי as a name for the youngest child in Hosea 1:9 is “for you are not my people and I am not I AM to you”. The name and the explanation should be understood as a sole reference to the Israelis because this is how it is understood in Hosea 2:1 where the reference לא אתי“You are Not My People” appears with בני ישראל”people of Israel”. The latter reference clearly refers to the Israelis alone because, in Hosea 2:2, “the people of Israel” is explicitly distinct from the “people of Judah.”

184 Reading כי נשה את אתי לה אלה, Reading כי נשה את אתי לה אלה, סיכו as “lift up one’s head” and to respect the presence of another; cf. Ward's translation (“to show them any favour at all”) cited in Mays, Hosea, 22.

185 See discussion below for reading Hos 1:7 against a military setting.
In conclusion, all the evidences suggest that the term “land” in Hosea 1:2d does not include Judah. Yahweh’s judgment against the “land” for disloyalty and the threat of impending doom is directed solely at the northern kingdom of Israel and its people, the Israelians. This is how Roman Vielhauer understands it. He argues that Hosea 1 deals with the prophet’s three children and that their ominous names threaten the northern kingdom with total demise. On the basis of the evidence presented, the reference to Judah in Hosea 1:7 is probably an insertion and a reflection from a later time; it does not count as the word of Yahweh to Hosea (cf. Hos 1:2ab). Likewise, Hosea 1:5 appears to be a late composition based on the explanation below. The implication of including verses 5 and 7 in Hosea 1:2–9 is that they become the word of Yahweh to Hosea. With the masking of its true source and its presentation as the authoritative word of Yahweh to Hosea, Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 may be considered as black prophecies. The following further substantiates this claim and explores the purpose of Hosea 1:5 and 1:7.

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186 It has been argued that “in the external references to peoples and kingdoms of Palestine, there is no evidence that ‘Israel’ ever refers to Judah or the Judahites; rather ‘Judah’, ‘Jews’, and similar designations are always used until the Christian era.” Lester L. Grabbe, "Israel's Historical Reality after the Exile," in The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times (eds. Bob Becking and M.C. Annette Korpel; Leiden: Brill 1999), 10–14, here 13.


188 The composition of Hos 1:5 will be taken up in a later discussion.
3.3.4 Black Prophecy and Propaganda in Hosea 1:5 and 1:7

As highlighted previously, scholars are almost unanimous in reading the breaking of Israel’s bow in Hosea 1:5 as the destruction of Israel’s military power citing Genesis 49:24, 1 Samuel 2:4 and Jeremiah 49:35 as evidence to substantiate the correlation between bow and military power. Hence, the breaking of Israel’s bow in Hosea 1:5 means putting an end to its military capability and this is envisaged to occur in the valley of Jezreel, the fertile region surrounded by Galilee in the north, Samaria in the south, the Kishon valley in the west and the Jordan valley in the east. The valley of Jezreel figures prominently in 2 Kings 9:1–10:11. It reports Jehu’s coup against Joram, which ended in the latter’s death. It also recounts Jehu’s role in the death of Joram’s mother Jezebel and the beheading of the remaining descendants of Ahab. The passage ends on the note that “Jehu struck down all who were left of the house of Ahab, all his leaders, all those who know him, and his priests, until he left him no survivor.”

Thus, when Yahweh commands the prophet to name the eldest child Jezreel and states the reason for the choice of the name in Hosea 1:4a—“for in a while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel”—Yahweh makes plain the divine intention. This involves putting an end to the house of Jehu just as Jehu himself had put an end to the house of Ahab. Yahweh’s prophecy was fulfilled when Shallum killed Zechariah

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190 2 Kgs 10:11.
191 Hos 1:4a
and reigned in his place around 745 BCE (2 Kgs 15:10–12). Wolff reads the events in Hosea 1:4a (the demise of the house of Jehu) and 1:4b (the end of the institution of kingship of the nation of Israel, which is designated by the term ברית ישראֵל and represented by its people) as concurrent events. The demise of the house of Jehu also spells the end of kingship in the northern kingdom.\textsuperscript{192} Macintosh offers a contrasting interpretation arguing that Hos 1:4b has in mind the termination of the whole establishment of the state, not just the end of the “exercise of kingship,” which materialises with the demise of the Jehu dynasty.\textsuperscript{193}

Perhaps there is another way to interpret the complex issue of whether Yahweh’s promise of an end to ממלכות refers to the end of the institution of kingship in Israel or the end of the kingdom of Israel itself. It is possible to regard Hosea 1:4a, “I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel,” as Yahweh’s indication of the starting point and Hosea 1:4b, “I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel,” as Yahweh’s indication of the end of the demise of kingship in and kingdom of Israel. On this basis, the start point to which Hosea 1:4a refers would be the punishment of the house of Jehu represented by the death of Zechariah (745 BCE), the son of Jeroboam II and the last king of the Jehu dynasty. As for the end point to which Hosea 1:4b refers, this would coincide with the imprisonment of Hoshea (725 BCE), the last of the kings of Israel, by Shalmaneser V (2 Kgs 17:4), which marks the end of the institution of

\textsuperscript{192} Wolff, \textit{Hosea}, 19; so also Mays, \textit{Hosea}, 28.

\textsuperscript{193} Macintosh, \textit{Hosea}, 14, 18.
kingship in Israel.\textsuperscript{194} It also marks the end of the kingdom of Israel because, after the capture of Hoshea, “the king of Assyria came up against all the land; and he came up against Samaria and besieged it for three years” (2 Kgs 17:5) until 722/721 BCE when the city capitulated to Sargon II.\textsuperscript{195}

Insofar as Hosea 1:4a reflects the end of the Jehu dynasty, which occurs around 745 BCE, the prophecy may be attributed to Hosea as the recipient of Yahweh’s explanation for the ominous name of Jezreel. The prophet himself may have re-communicated Yahweh’s explanation in Hos 1:4b assuming it does reflect the imprisonment of Hoshea in 725 BCE as a sign of an end to kingship in Israel and imminent demise of the northern kingdom of Israel itself.

As for the reference in Hosea 1:5 to a day when the bow of Israel will be broken in the valley of Jezreel, several scholars have linked this verse to Tiglath-pileser’s military campaign in the region in 733 BCE. Wolff, for example, argues that the destruction of Israel’s military strength and fighting potential, which the breaking of Israel’s bow signifies, is “best understood in terms of the turbulent events of 733, when

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{194} Tadmor raises the possibility that “a king whose name was unrecorded neither in the Bible nor in the Assyrian Inscriptions reigned until 722 or 720.” His work is cited in a footnote in Miller and Hayes, \textit{History}, 387.
\item \textsuperscript{195} Cf. the proposal that Hos 1:4 “spells out the consequences of the fall of Jehu’s dynasty; that fall, with the consequent weakening of the state, will lead to the destruction of Israel’s military capability; that, in turn, to the demise of the kingdom in the face of the growing Assyrian world power.” Macintosh, \textit{Hosea}, 19; Miller and Hayes, \textit{History}, 386–387.
\end{itemize}
the Valley of Jezreel was in fact lost to Tiglath-pileser III.”¹⁹⁶ In his reconstruction of Tiglath-pileser’s incursion, Martin Noth suggests that the Assyrian king “seem[s] to have crushed the State of Israel.”¹⁹⁷ However, it should be pointed out that Tiglath-pileser’s devastation of Israel was not complete since he had spared the city of Samaria and the rebel King Pekah. The fact that Hoshea himself, who had killed Pekah, could revolt against the Assyrian throne (2 Kgs 15:27–31; 17:1–4) strongly argues that the destruction of Israel by Assyria in 733 BCE was limited and that Tiglath-pileser did not actually “break the bow of Israel” (Hos 1:5). This viewpoint is echoed in James Miller and John Hayes’ assessment of the outcome of the Assyrian incursion in 733 BCE: “Israel . . . does not seem to have suffered severely from Tiglath-pileser III’s campaign, although some Israelites were apparently deported.”¹⁹⁸

In view of the above opinions on Hosea 1:5, it appears that the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE provides a better background for the symbolic expression “break the bow of Israel.” The event would mark the end of Israel—politically and militarily. As to why the “valley of Jezreel” is mentioned in Hosea 1:5 and not Samaria, if the fall of the city is to be understood as the background for the expression, several answers are possible:

1. The expression “valley of Jezreel” links Hosea 1:5 to 1:4, specifically to Yahweh’s preference for the name “Jezreel” and, therefore, is the preferred term of reference

¹⁹⁶ Wolff, Hosea, 19.
¹⁹⁸ Miller and Hayes, History, 382.
2. The expression “valley of Jezreel” is a more meaningful symbolism since many great battles have been fought in the region. On this basis, it has become the “veritable battleground for Palestine” or “a kind of byword for ‘decisive battle’ alongside ‘Midian’ in Isaiah 9:3 and 10:26 and Psalm 83:10.”

3. A combination of the answers in (1) and (2).

As for the provenance of Hos 1:5, some scholars read the verse as a prophecy uttered by Hosea as an announcement of the imminent catastrophe. Others interpret it as a vaticinium ex eventu. The formula היה ביום ההוא, according to these other scholars, does not introduce the prophet’s vision of a future event but is an indication that the verse is a late insertion—as a comment about the fall of Samaria from hindsight—by a redactor. Yee, for example, has adopted this understanding. She, however, does not consider Yahweh’s intention to “break the bow of Israel” as a signal to bring an end to Israel but “the ending of war and the inauguration of peace” in

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200 Mays, Hosea, 28; it has been argued that Hos 1:5 is an announcement of the Assyrian incursion into Israel by Tiglath-pileser during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis in 733 BCE. Wolff, Hosea, 19.
Israel.\textsuperscript{201} An exilic redactor, she argues, has overturned Yahweh’s threat of an end to the rule of the house of Israel, signified by the name Jezreel in Hosea 1:4, and has replaced it with the promise of peace for the “valley of Jezreel” (Hos 1:5).\textsuperscript{202} Thus, in her view, “the tempering of the threat of extermination in 1:5 anticipates the redactor’s development of the peace theme in 2:20.”\textsuperscript{203} Rudnig-Zelt also reads Hosea 1:5 as a late insertion based on the formula \(והיה ביום ההוא\) but, contrary to Yee, “Jezreel” in Hosea 1:5 has far more grievous connotation in that it is the place of judgment whereas, in Hosea 1:4, it is only the place of guilt.\textsuperscript{204}

3.3.5 Assyrian War Testimony and Propaganda in Hosea 1:5

Hosea 1:5, this study proposes, shares a common authorship with Hosea 1:7. These texts were probably inserted after Sennacherib’s aborted campaign against Jerusalem in 701 BCE (2 Kgs 19:35–37). They do not constitute the word of Yahweh to Hosea based on the understanding that the prophet had retired before the collapse of Samaria in 722 BCE. Instead they are black prophecies and, together, they seek to contrast the demise of the northern kingdom and, therefore, its rejection by Yahweh (Hos 1:5), with Judah’s military success (Hos 1:7), which their author claims is a sure

\textsuperscript{201} Yee, \textit{Composition and Tradition}, 65; Yee’s understanding is based on the work of Nahum M. Waldman, ”The Breaking of the Bow,” \textit{JQR} 69 (1978): 82–88.

\textsuperscript{202} Yee, \textit{Composition and Tradition}, 65.

\textsuperscript{203} Yee, \textit{Composition and Tradition}, 65.

\textsuperscript{204} „In V.5 hat die Forschung zu Recht einen weiteren Nachtrag verschlagt. Obwohl der Vers durch die Verwendung des Qinametrums auf den Grundbestand von Hos 1 abgestimmt ist, zeigt die Einleitung mit \(והיה ביום ההוא\), daß ein jüngerer Kommentar vorliegt. Nicht zuletzt wechselt die Bedeutung von ”Jesreel” gegenüber 1,4. Jesreel ist in 1,4 Ort der Schuld, hier der Ort des Gerichts.” Rudnig-Zelt, \textit{Hoseastudien}, 86.
sign of its preferred status before Yahweh.

The expression “break the bow of Israel” in Hosea 1:5 points to an Assyrian destruction of Israel’s military strength and best reflects the capture of Samaria by Sargon II in 722/721 BCE. Nahum Waldman explains that the expression ‘to break the bow’ in Akkadian signifies destroying the military power of an enemy. He cites, among others, the testimony of Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE): “Ishtar, the lady of battle and war, who loves my priesthood, stood by my side, broke their bow, and scattered their battle-formations.”\(^{205}\) The credit that Esarhaddon gives to Ishtar for his military success is a noteworthy feature in his testimony. This feature is also present in the curse formulae in the treaties that Waldman cites: “May Astarte break (?) your bow in a fierce battle” and “May Ishtar, lady of battle and war, smash your bow in a stiff battle.”\(^{206}\) In these curses, Esarhaddon invokes the power of a deity to inflict military harm on a vassal

\(^{205}\) Waldman, "The Breaking of the Bow," 82.

\(^{206}\) Waldman, "The Breaking of the Bow," 82; “Astarte” is the feminine form of the masculine “Athtar” or “Ashtar” which occurs as the name of the Akkadian goddess Istar. Nicholas Wyatt, "Astarte," in Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (eds. Bob. Becking, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 109–114; Chapman argues that curse formulae involving the breaking of bow are also curses of feminisation. She cites, as an example, an Assyrian loyalty oath or adê in Assyrian in which the vassal king, Mati’-iu, and his soldiers are cursed with the loss of their bow and, with it, their masculinity, and thus, have become like women: If Mati’-iu sins against this treaty with Aššur-nerari, king of Assyria, may Mati’-iu become a prostitute, his soldiers women, may they receive [a gift] in the square of their cities like any prostitute . . . may Ištar, the goddess of men, the lady of women, take away their bow, bring them to shame, and make them bitterly weep: "Woe, we have sinned against the treaty of Aššur-nerari, king of Assyria. Cynthia R. Chapman, The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 20–59, here cited 49, 58; Chapman's argument above is also found in Harold H. Dressler, "Is the bow of Aqhat a Symbol of Virility: Ugaritic uzr and Joel 1:13.," UF 7 (1975): 217–225.
king in the event he rebels against the Assyrian throne.

As for Shalmaneser V (727–722 BCE) who initiated the siege against Samaria that led to the downfall of the kingdom of Israel, no testimony of his has been discovered. However, the Babylonian Chronicle provides some information about the siege he started: “on 27th Tèbet Shalmaneser (V) ascended the throne in Assyria and Babylonia. He shattered Samaria (šá-ma-ra-ʾ-in).” The fall of Samaria itself appears to have happened near the beginning of the reign of Sargon II.

In an inscription on the plasterwork of the doors of Sargon II’s palace in Khorsabad, known as Pavé des Portes, the carving identifies Sargon as the “conqueror of Samaria (Samir-i-na) and of the entire (country of) Israel (Bît-Ḫu-um-ri-a).” Another inscription on a palace wall bears his testimony of the outcome of his war against Samaria:

I besieged and conquered Samaria (Sa-me-ri-na), led away as booty 27,290 inhabitants of it. I formed from among them a contingent of 50 chariots and made remaining (inhabitants) assumed their (social positions). I installed over them an officer of mine and imposed upon them the tribute of the former king.

On a clay fragment discovered in excavations around Nimrud, Sargon describes

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the nature of Samaria’s rebellion and attributes the success of his war against Samaria to the strength that his gods have given to him:

[The inhabitants of Samaria, who agreed with a king hostile to me, not to do service and not to bring tribute to Aššur and who did battle, I fought against them with the power of the great gods, my lords. I counted as spoil 27, 280 people, together with their chariots, and gods, in which they trusted. I formed a unit with 200 of their chariots for my royal force. I settled the rest of them in the midst of Assyria. I repopulated Samaria more than before. I brought into it people from countries conquered by my hands. I appointed my eunuch as governor over them. And I counted them as Assyrians.]

Although Sargon does not use the expression “break the bow” in his testimony of the military success that the gods have given him, broken bows were probably part of the battle landscape in the aftermath of the devastating war he had waged against Israel and Samaria. This scenario is found in Cynthia Chapman’s study of Assyrian warfare in which she describes the battle, siege and deportation scenes found in Assyrian palace reliefs:

. . . the siege scenes depict the removed or broken bows and the crouching postures of enemy males. The Assyrian king and his army are always depicted with their bows either drawn in active battle or carried upright in scenes of deportation following the battle. The enemies’ bows, on the other hand, are copiously depicted strewn all over the battlefield, broken, and abandoned next to the vanquished.

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210 “Nimrud Prisms D & E,” translated by K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (COS 2.118D:295–296); it has been argued, “In the Neo-Assyrian Empire gods - i.e. their images [as the spoils of war] - were regularly deported. To the vanquished this was a religious humiliation. The gods in which they had trusted appeared to be less protecting than they had hoped. The removal of these gods was related to the introduction of the cult of the Assyrian gods. Becking, Samaria, 31; Sargon also attributes other military success to divine intervention. “Sargon II (721–705): The Fall of Samaria,” translated by D. D. Luckenbill (ANET, 284–287).
to corpses.211

According to Chapman, the palace reliefs function as “visual curses” and as graphic reminders to visiting dignitaries of the horrible outcome in the event they become disloyal to the Assyrian king.212 Chapman also uses the term “visual taunt” to describe these palace reliefs.213 In essence, the palace reliefs are vehicles for Assyrian propaganda. Their purpose is to instil in visiting vassal kings the consequences of rebelling against the Assyrian throne.

3.3.6 Deuteronomistic Influence in Hosea 1:5

The siege scene that Chapman describes above is probably the image undergirding the expression “break the bow of Israel” in Hosea 1:5. It reflects the battle landscape following Assyria’s decisive war against the northern kingdom which ended with the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE. Sargon’s testimony above, concerning the state of affairs after the capture of Samaria, finds an echo in 2 Kings 17:4–6:

And the king of Assyria found treachery in Hoshea; he had sent messengers to King So of Egypt, and he did not offer tribute to the king of Assyria, like previous years. And the king of Assyria arrested him and put him in prison. Then the king of Assyria marched against all the land; he marched against Samaria and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria. He deported the Israelites to Assyria and he settled them in Halah, on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of Media.

In 2 Kings 17:7–18, the Deuteronomistic historian explains the fall of Samaria. It occurred because the Israelis had sinned against Yahweh their God. They had worshipped other gods and had built for themselves high places of worship. They made offerings in all the high places and went after false idols. As a result, Yahweh became angry at Israel and removed them from Yahweh’s presence. The Deuteronomist stresses in verse 18 that “none was left but Judah alone.”\(^{214}\) The explanation in 2 Kings 17:7–18, which attributes the success of Sargon’s siege against Samaria and the downfall of the northern kingdom of Israel to Yahweh stands in stark contrast to Sargon’s testimony inscribed on one of the clay fragments discovered in Nimrud. According to the inscription, Sargon claims he fought against the people of Samaria “with the power of the great gods, my lords” and won.\(^{215}\) For the Deuteronomistic historian, Sargon’s claim his gods were responsible for the fall of the northern kingdom is inconceivable and impossible. Only Yahweh has the power to bring about Samaria’s collapse. The ‘fact’ that Yahweh had prophesied the military destruction of Israel in Hosea 1:5 (“On that day, I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel”) and the fact of its fulfilment debunks the Assyrians’ accounts which claimed their gods were responsible for Israel’s downfall. Certainly, the Assyrians played a significant role in Israel’s downfall but, according to the Deuteronomist, they were merely Yahweh’s instrument to bring the prophecy to fulfilment.

\(^{214}\) Italics mine.

Thus, the Deuteronomist’s counter-claim or counter-propaganda in 2 Kings 17:7–18, that it was Yahweh (especially 2 Kgs 17:18), not Sargon’s gods, who had empowered the Assyrians to bring about Israel’s demise, finds an echo in Hosea 1:5 that prophesies Yahweh’s role in Israel’s collapse. By itself, Hosea 1:5 identifies the collapse of the northern kingdom as the result of the Israelis’ infidelity to Yahweh (Hos 1:2) and Yahweh’s role in bringing about the end of the kingdom. However, when Hosea 1:5 is read in light of Hosea 1:7, its function is to accentuate Hosea 1:7, which reflects the Deuteronomist’s perception of Judah’s special relationship with Yahweh.

On that day, *I will break the bow of Israel* in the valley of Jezreel (Hos 1:5).216

But *I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them* by the Lord their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by riders (Hos 1:7).217

By contrasting Yahweh’s role in bringing about Israel’s destruction in Hosea 1:5 and Yahweh’s role in saving Judah from military harm and ruin in Hosea 1:7, the Deuteronomist emphasises Yahweh’s preference for Judah. Thus, the contrast seeks to instil in the Israelis the ‘fact’ of its rejection by Yahweh (cf. Hos 1:9) *and* of Yahweh’s benevolence toward Judah, which from the Deuteronomist’s point of view points to the southern kingdom’s special relationship with Yahweh. This idea about the use of contrasting viewpoints in Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 to convey the Deuteronomistic perception is supported by Waldman’s observation about the use of the expression “to

216 Italics mine.

217 Italics mine.
break the bow” to signify the destruction of the military power of an enemy. According to him, the two themes of breaking the weapons/military destruction and the ending of war/inauguration of peace and security are combined in biblical passages whereas they are kept distinct in Akkadian sources.\textsuperscript{218} He cites Hosea 2:20b as a biblical example in which the two themes are combined: “I will banish the bow, sword, and war from the land and I will let them lie down in safety.”\textsuperscript{219} Based on Waldman’s understanding, it may be argued that the two themes are also found in Hosea 1:5 (“break the bow of Israel” that signifies its military destruction) and Hosea 1:7 (Yahweh’s role in ending a military threat/war against Judah) even though they are not combined like the examples he raises. Perhaps the two themes in Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 exist together at the point of their conception. It occurs when their author seeks to contrast the collapse of the northern kingdom of Israel (Hos 1:5) with Judah’s ‘victory’ over its enemy (Hos 1:7) as a way of propagating the notion of Yahweh’s preference for Judah over Israel or Judah’s special relationship with Yahweh. The contrasting themes in Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 echo the thought process of comparing and contrasting the fate of Israel with Judah in 2 Kings 17:7–18. It reports the evil deed of Hoshea, his imprisonment by King Shalmaneser and the subsequent capture of Samaria by the Assyrian army and deportation of the Israelis. In the mind of the Deuteronomistic historian, these events happened because of the apostasy of the Israelis, who had failed to heed the warning of Yahweh’s prophets. The report then closes with a final assessment (2 Kgs 17:18):

\textsuperscript{218} Waldman, "The Breaking of the Bow," 84.

\textsuperscript{219} Waldman, "The Breaking of the Bow," 84–86.
“And Yahweh was angry with Israel and removed them from his presence; none was left except the tribe of Judah alone.”

The contrasting Deuteronomistic viewpoints about Israel and Judah in 2 Kings 17:18 find an unmistakable echo in Hosea 1:5 and 1:7. Therefore, it may be concluded that both Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 belong to a Deuteronomistic author with a Judean bias. The following sections will explore the propaganda in Hosea 1:7 and its Deuteronomistic influence.

3.3.7 Assyrian War Testimony and Propaganda in Hosea 1:7

Hosea 1:7 is often interpreted as the work of a redactor. In verse 7a, Yahweh promises to show compassion on the house of Judah and offer it assistance in a crisis of some sort. The references to “bow,” “sword,” “war,” “horses” and “riders” in verse 7b suggest that the crisis involves a military threat of some sort. Yet, the verse points to Yahweh’s assistance to Judah without the involvement of military force:

וַיָּעַשׁ הָעָם בְּכֶ֣שֶׁת בְּבֵיתָ֣הוּ וְבֵֽיתָּהוּ בְּבֵיתָ֣הוּ בְּבַֽעַר בְּמַֽחֲצֵה בְּבַֽעַר בְּמַֽחֲצֵה בְּבַֽעַר בְּמַֽחֲצֵה.

The portrayal in Hosea 1:7b of Yahweh’s assistance to Judah without the use of military force is thought by many scholars to reflect Yahweh’s involvement in Sennacherib’s failed invasion of Jerusalem in 701 BCE. 2 Kings 19:35–37 provides the narrative of the sudden death of one hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers during the night, which forces the Assyrian king to withdraw his army and end the siege.

220 Italics mine.

221 See discussion above.

222 Mays, Hosea, 29; Wolff, Hosea, 21; Macintosh, Hosea, 25.
Assyrian inscriptions that bear Sennacherib’s testimony, however, paint a different outcome.

Sennacherib’s version of the Assyrian war against Judah and Jerusalem is inscribed on a clay prism that was discovered at Nineveh. The inscription describes his military success. Nothing is mentioned about the huge number of Assyrian war casualties that 2 Kings 19:35–37 records:

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth-) ramps, and battering-rams brought (thus) near (to the walls) (combined with) the attack by foot soldiers, (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered (them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city’s gate. His towns which I had plundered, I took away from his country and gave them (over) to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza. Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased the tribute and the katrû-presents (due) to me (as his) overlord which I imposed (later) upon him beyond the former tribute, to be delivered annually. Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship had overwhelmed and whose irregular and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal residence, in order to strengthen (it), had deserted him, did send me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones, antimony, large cuts of red stone, couches (inlaid) with ivory, nîmedu-chairs (inlaid) with ivory, elephant-hides, ebony-wood, boxwood (and) all kinds of valuable treasures, his (own) daughters, concubines, male and female musicians. In order to deliver the tribute and to

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223 This narrative will be discussed in detail, in conjunction with the attempt to explore the presence of black prophecy in Hos 3.
do obeisance as a slave he sent his (personal) messenger.\textsuperscript{224}

In his testimony, Sennacherib, like Sargon, attributes the capture of Hezekiah to “the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship.” In an earlier part of the inscription, Sennacherib uses the same expression to describe the capture of territories belonging to Luli, the king of Sidon. According to Sennacherib, “The awe-inspiring splendor of the ‘Weapon’ of Ashur, my lord, overwhelmed his strong cities (such as) Great Sidon, Bit-Zitti, Zaribtu, Mahalliha, Ushu (i.e. the mainland settlement of Tyre), Akzib (and) Akko . . . “\textsuperscript{225} The so-called Rassam Cylinder also bears witness to Sennacherib’s testimonies, including the credit he gives to Ashur for his success over Luli and Hezekiah.\textsuperscript{226} Sennacherib’s military success against Jerusalem and Hezekiah is also engraved in a relief located at a most prominent position in a suite of rooms in his palace at Nineveh.\textsuperscript{227} Based on Chapman’s study, the relief probably serves as Sennacherib’s propaganda for his visitors rather than for commemorating the capture of Jerusalem. Its primary function is to convey to its audience the power of Ashur and the consequence of rebelling against Assyrian rule.

\textsuperscript{224} Italics mine. “Sennacherib (704–681),” translated by H. Winckler and D. D. Luckenbill (ANET, 287–288); cf. the view that the “cage” was not made by Assyrian troops laying siege to the city. It was formed by the conquered Judean cities as well as the conquered areas from Phoenicia in the north to Edom in the south. Ingrid Hjelm, "The Hezekiah Narrative as a Foundation Myth for Jerusalem's Rise to Sovereignty," Islamic studies 40 (2001): 661–674.

\textsuperscript{225} Here the word “lord” is used instead of “lordship” in the earlier part of his testimony. “Sennacherib (704–681),” translated by H. Winckler and D. D. Luckenbill (ANET, 287).

\textsuperscript{226} “Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem,” translated by Mordechai Cogan (COS 2.119B:302–303.

\textsuperscript{227} “Sennacherib - Lachish Relief Inscription,” Mordechai Cogan (COS 2.119D:304.)
3.3.8 Deuteronomistic Influence in Hosea 1:7

Read in light of Sennacherib’s testimony of his war against Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Kings 19:35–37 appears to be a counter-propaganda. Its purpose is to depict Sennacherib as victim rather than victor. Yahweh, the passage asserts, is responsible for Sennacherib’s failed attempt to capture Jerusalem. According to the Deuteronomistic historian, Yahweh’s victory over Sennacherib’s army was won by some inexplicable power of Yahweh that does not involve military might. The same scenario concerning Yahweh’s goodwill toward Judah is found in Hosea 1:7. In that verse, Yahweh assures Judah of his compassion and prophesies, through Hosea, his intention to deliver them out of a military crisis. Yahweh, however, assures Judah that he “will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by riders.” To the extent that Hosea 1:7 refers to Sennacherib’s war against Jerusalem in 701 BCE, which evidence seems to suggest, it cannot be “Yahweh’s word to Hosea” because Hosea had retired from his public ministry before the fall of Samaria. On this basis, Hosea 1:7 is likely to be the work of a redactor who writes with hindsight and shares the viewpoints of the Deuteronomistic historian, the composer of 2 Kings 19:35–39.

Yahweh’s role in Judah’s victory over Sennacherib’s army in 2 Kings 19:35–39, the preceding paragraph argues, is a counter-propaganda against the Assyrian king’s war testimony. In similar fashion, Yahweh’s promise of aid to Judah in Hosea 1:7 within the same background of an assault by Sennacherib operates predominantly as a Judean and Deuteronomistic propaganda. It portrays Yahweh’s preference for Judah.228

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228 Cf. bias is argued to be a typical feature of propaganda. Frick, "Cui Bono," 79–80.
The divine preference for Judah in contrast to the harsh rejection of Israel (Hos 1:5) is also highlighted in 2 Kings 17:18: “Therefore Yahweh was angry with Israel and removed them from his presence; none was left except the tribe of Judah alone.” The portrayal of Yahweh’s attitude toward the two nations in 2 Kings 17:18 and 19:35–39 corresponds to, and underscores the striking difference between Yahweh’s attitudes in Hosea 1:7 and 1:5. The contrasting attitude of Yahweh impinges on the minds of the Israelis as they contemplate Yahweh’s kindness toward Judah as opposed to Yahweh’s rejection of them.²²⁹ Their experience of the fall of Samaria would suggest to them that Judah has a special place in Yahweh’s heart. Although controversy surrounds the historicity of Sennacherib’s failed invasion of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 19:35–39, ‘historicity’ is not a linchpin for the success of the propaganda.²³⁰ Propaganda, as previously proposed, does not rely solely on fact. Half-truths, limited truths or even untruths are all tools at the disposal of a propagandist. From this perspective, Hosea 1:7, viewed in light of Hosea 1:5, presents a strong piece of propaganda that conveys Judah’s special relationship with Yahweh. The propaganda in these verses is made more persuasive as they are presented as Yahweh’s words to Hosea (1:1, 2, 4, 6). However, the representation ought not to be viewed as deceptive for their author believes that the events in 722 and 701 BCE, which Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 alludes to, are manifestations of God’s action in history. These events constitute an irrefutable proof for the Deuteronomist that Judah enjoys a special relationship with Yahweh.

²²⁹ Cf. the proposal that the function of propaganda is to convert a particular line of thinking. Ellul, Propaganda, 11.

²³⁰ The issue of historicity of Sennacherib’s failed invasion will be taken up in a later section of this study.
In view of the above proposal about the black prophecies in Hosea 1:5 and 1:7, it is possible that Hosea 1–3, as a whole, seeks to present an even more radical view of the Deuteronomist. It seems that the black prophecies in Hosea 1–3 are aimed at convincing the Israelis in the defunct northern kingdom to give assent to the idea that their kings have failed in their religious and political duty to promote their allegiance to Yahweh and, as a result, the nation has been punished by Yahweh. In contrast, a Davidic king like Hezekiah promoted the Judeans’ allegiance to Yahweh and Yahweh saved Jerusalem from destruction (2 Kgs 19:35–39). Therefore, there is compelling reason for the Israelis to show their allegiance to a Davidic king, and Yahweh in Jerusalem, to secure divine blessing for themselves. The following investigation hopes to establish whether this reading is justifiable.
4. PROPHECY AND PROPAGANDA IN HOSEA 2

4.1 Introduction

Scholarly viewpoints about the composition of Hosea 2 span a wide spectrum. The perspective at one end of the spectrum is that the bulk of the prophecies in Hosea 2 belong to the prophet.¹ The opposing viewpoint is that most of the prophecies, if not all, are non-Hosean. They were composed and inserted after the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE.² Since Hosea 2 contains prophecies that are not original to the prophet himself but are the works of a later redactor, or redactors, they would be considered black prophecies according to the definition in this study. The presence of black prophecies, therefore, raises the possibility they were inserted to promote the interest of the redactor. In view of this possibility, this chapter aims to determine the extent of black prophecies in Hosea 2 and explore their purpose.

¹ Those who interpret the bulk of Hos 2 as Hoseanic prophecies include: Mays, Hosea, 36, 47; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 117–118, 199; Charles Conroy, (review of Horacio Simian-Yofre, "El desierto de los dioses." Teología e historia en el libro de Oseas ), Gregorianum 87 (1994): 157–160. The post-Hosean material, according to Simian-Yofre, is found only in (a) 2:18–25; 13:1–9; 14:2–10; (b) seven of the fifteen Judah-references in 1:1, 7; 4:15; 5:5; 6:11a; 8:14; 12:3), and the mention of King David in 3:5; (c) a number of isolated lines, especially within 4:16–19 and 11:10–11. He also argues that Hosea’s discourses were delivered between the end of the reign of Jeroboam II and the early part of Menahem’s reign, which stands in stark contrast to the majority view that Hosea withdrew from public ministry close to the fall of Samaria.

² For example, Yee, Composition and Tradition, 315; Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 73–99.
4.2 Existing Theories and Issues

4.2.1 Redaction

As already highlighted, several scholars have argued that most of the prophecies in Hosea 2 derive from the prophet. According to Mays, the present form of the book created by an editor or group working in Judah in the years after the fall of Samaria contains very little material that did not originate in Hosea.³ With Hosea 2:1–2, he thinks that even “[i]f it does not derive from Hosea, it must have come from his period and the circles sympathetic to his prophecy.”⁴ Its current position at the beginning of Hosea 2 is the work of the arranger of Hosea 1–3 and reflects his design of alternating the themes of judgment and salvation.⁵ Hosea 2:3, he adds, is the contribution of this arranger while Hosea 2:4–17 belongs to the prophet.⁶ Mays also argues that there is no reasonable basis for doubting the Hoseanic origin of Hosea 2:18–25 since these verses make a connection with Hosea 2:4–17.⁷

Stuart shares Mays’ interpretation that most of the prophecies in the book derive

³ Mays, Hosea, 16.
⁴ Mays, Hosea, 31.
⁵ He also uses the terms “collector” and “compiler” to describe the arranger. Mays, Hosea, 15.
⁶ Mays, Hosea, 16.
⁷ Mays, Hosea, 47.
from Hosea himself. His argument is that “[o]ne consistently finds in Hosea the sorts of things one could only expect to find as transcriptions of the preaching of an orthodox northern prophet from the latter half of the eighth century B.C.”

8 He reads Hosea 2:1–3 as Hoseanic rather than late non-Hoseanic.9 According to him, some who have taken עלו מן-הארץ in Hosea 2:2 “as referring to a return from exile have dated the passage as exilic, but on the basis of a bias against the authenticity of predictive prophecy.”

10 He also suggests that Hosea 2:4–17 reflects a time of economic prosperity in Israel. The passage contrasts the existing abundance at the time of delivery of the prophecy with a future deprivation (Hos 2:5, 7, 10, 11, 15). Stuart situates that thriving economic condition in the early period of Hosea’s ministry and the final “golden” years of the reign of Jeroboam II before Tiglath-pileser devastated the northern kingdom in 733 BCE. It is possible, he adds, that Hosea 2:4–17 contains separate oracles of Hosea, which were combined by the prophet to make it a single allegorical passage. Hosea 2:4–17, he thinks, is unlikely to be non-Hoseanic because it is hard “to imagine that an editor could have been responsible for so complex and interwoven an allegory, with its many subtle connections to other parts of the book.”

11 As for the composition of Hosea 2:18–25, Stuart agrees with Mays’ interpretation. The close connection between Hosea 2:18–25

8 Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 14.

9 Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 37.

10 Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 37; Harper, Wellhausen and Jeremias, for example, have interpreted עלו מן-הארץ as a reference to a return from the exile, therefore reading it retrospectively. See Davies, Hosea, 62; Yee, Composition and Tradition, 73. The latter points to קבץ in Hos 2:2 which is often used in descriptions of restoration after the exile (e.g. Deut 30:3; Isa 11:12; Jer 23:3; 29:14; 32:37; Ezek 28:25; 37:21–22; Zech 10:8).

11 Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 46.
and Hosea 2:4–17 suggests to him that a late dating is unlikely. He situates this passage to the period after Tiglath-pileser’s defeat of the northern kingdom around 733 BCE. He adds that the portrayal of the agricultural prosperity in Hos 2:18–25 is only a memory. In sum, he treats this passage as Hoseanic.\(^\text{12}\)

Likewise, Macintosh argues that Hosea 2:1–25 goes back to Hosea himself. He views the final form of Hosea 2:1–3 as the work of a redactor. However, he argues that the verses are consistent with the perspective of the prophet concerning God’s mercy prevailing over his judgment. He dates the passage to the period between Tiglath-pileser’s subjugation of a large part of the northern kingdom in 733 BCE and the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE.\(^\text{13}\) The reference to Judah in Hosea 2:2 does not pose a problem for Macintosh. The verse belongs to Hosea who uses the oracle of a reunification of the people of Judah and the people of Israel to contrast the enmity between the two states at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite War, which the prophet regarded as Yahweh’s recompense for their sinfulness.\(^\text{14}\) As for the parable of the wronged husband in Hosea 2:4–25, Macintosh argues that it was originally proclaimed by Hosea at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite War (733 BCE).\(^\text{15}\) Subsequently, he wrote up his public oracle in light of events in his own life, “for by then Gomer’s adulterous behaviour had mirrored precisely the unfaithfulness of Ephraim.”\(^\text{16}\)


\(^{13}\) Macintosh, *Hosea*, 35.


\(^{16}\) Macintosh, *Hosea*, lxxiii.
Contrasting with the above arguments are views that numerous prophecies in Hosea 2 belong to redactors after the time of the prophet and were written in entirely different circumstances. Harper is one of those scholars who have argued along this line. In his view, the prophecies in Hosea 2:1–3, 8–9, 16–18, 20–25 are “unquestionably from exilic times” because they are:

. . . entirely inconsistent with Hosea’s point of view, and directly contradict the representations which are fundamental in his preaching; nor can it be shown that they are spoken, either, to a different audience (viz. the faithful for their encouragement), or at a later time in Hosea’s ministry.\(^\text{17}\)

Along with the aforementioned verses, Harper has also argued that Hosea 2:4b, 6, 12 are additions inserted by another author.\(^\text{18}\) According to Harper, the Hoseanic prophecies are only those of threat and judgment and are present in Hosea 2:4–7, 10–14, 15 and 19.\(^\text{19}\)

In contrast, Wolff has attributed more prophecies to Hosea. Whereas Harper has assigned Hosea 2:1–3 to an exilic author, Wolff has argued that these verses contain oracles by the prophet himself and were originally placed after Hosea 2:25. It was moved to its current position by the same editor who compiled Hosea 1.\(^\text{20}\)

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17, in his view, probably goes back to the prophet as well. He based his analysis on the understanding that it is unlikely that later editors could have created such a unified kerygmatic piece from older rhetorical units. 21 The only non-Hoseanic prophecies, Wolff argues, are found in Hosea 2:18–25. The expression ‘‘on that day’’ in Hosea 2:18, 20, 23 points to an era of salvation as the goal of the Hoseanic oracle of threat in Hosea 2:4–17, and on this basis, he suggests, one may be inclined to attribute Hosea 2:18–25 to the prophet. 22 However, literary evidences in Hosea 2:18–25 have led him to conclude that the passage is non-Hoseanic. 23 Wolff ascribes the authorship of this passage to the redactor of Hosea 1:2–6, 8–9. 24

Yee’s work represents the most detailed redaction analysis of the book of Hosea. Through her research, she has assigned Hosea 2:4aA, 4b–5, 7b, 12 to the prophet and Hosea 2:4aB, 6–7a, 18aBb, 21–22a to a “collector,” a disciple of Hosea who had preserved in writing the oracles of his master. 25 Hosea 2:10a, 11, 13–15a, she argues,

21 Wolff, Hosea, 33.

22 Wolff, Hosea, 47.

23 The evidences include: (1) the use of the plural לְהִמָּם “for them” in Hos 2:20 interrupts the connection of Hos 2:18–19 and 2:21–22 (2) the difference in the positioning of יָמִי הָאֵיבָן in Hos 2:20 compared to Hos 2:18 and 2:23 (3) the difference between the concept of covenant and covenant partners in Hos 2:20 and, 6:7 and 8:1 (4) “Jezreel,” “Without—Mercy,” and “Not—My—People” are no longer spoken of as Hosea’s children, as in Hos 1, and (5) the theme of the unfaithful wife in Hos 2:4–17, which still echoes in Hos 2:18–19 and 2:21–22, no longer appears in Hos 2:23–25. Wolff, Hosea, 47–48.

24 The redactor was responsible for inserting Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 into Hosea 1:2–4, 6, 8–9. Wolff, Hosea, 12, 48.

25 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 99–100, 307, 315.
belong to a Judean redactor (“R1”) who appears to have been steeped in Deuteronomistic ideology and shows affinities with the historian who wrote the first edition of the Deuteronomistic history during the time of Josiah and viewed the fall of the northern kingdom as the result of the sin of Jeroboam. According to Yee, R1 maintains that the central sanctuary for the nation is the one in Jerusalem (Hos 8:1; cf. 9:15) and protests against pilgrimages to northern sanctuaries such as Bethel and Gilgal (Hos 4:15; 9:15). In Yee’s analysis, a final Deuteronomistic redactor (“R2”) added new materials, Hosea 2:1–3, 8–9, 10b, 15b–18aA, 19–20, 22b–25, to the Hoseanic prophecies and those of the collector/disciple and R1, to make them applicable to R2’s own situation in exile.

In her recent study on redactions in the book of Hosea, Rudnig-Zelt has argued that the prophecies in Hosea 2 do not belong to the prophet or his disciples of the eighth century BCE. She argues that Hosea 2:1–3 is a supplementary passage from the Hellenistic period and a theological response to the announcement of disaster in Hosea 1. She further argues that the verses “developed gradually and go back to different hands. Hosea 2:1 is the oldest,” followed by 2:2 and 2:3. To summarise, she dates

26 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 129, 309.
27 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 308, 315.
28 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 129, 315.
29 Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 77–79.
30 " . . . daß 2,1–3 sukzessive entstanden sind und auf verschiedene Hände zurückgehen. Hos 2,1 is der älteste Vers in 2,1–3." Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 78.
these texts later than Yee who has assigned them to the exilic period.\textsuperscript{31} As for Hosea 2:4–25, Rudnig-Zelt contends that the passage is a subsequent interpretation of Hosea’s marriage and the naming of his children in Hosea 1.\textsuperscript{32} According to her, the passage is a late redactional layer serving as a transition between Hosea 1 and Hosea 4–14 and is to be dated to a time after 587 BCE.\textsuperscript{33}

Graham Davies is also of the opinion that Hosea 2:1–3 is non-Hoseanic. His argument is that “their language and thought are much closer to the situation and thinking of the Babylonian Exile.”\textsuperscript{34} In his view, “the people of Israel” in Hosea 2:1 refers to “all-Israel” unlike “the house of Israel” in Hosea 1:4, 6 and it looks forward to the fulfilment of the ancient promise to the patriarchs (cf. Deut 4:30–31).\textsuperscript{35} The priority given to “the people of Judah” in Hosea 2:2 also suggests to Davies that the verse is unlikely to have been derived from Hosea himself. Comparison with the priority given to the names of the Judean kings in Hosea 1:1 indicates to him that Hosea 2:2 belongs to a Judean origin.\textsuperscript{36} Emmerson, however, disagrees with this interpretation. According to her, “The fact that the people of Judah are mentioned before the people of Israel in

\textsuperscript{31} Yee, \textit{Composition and Tradition}, 315; contra Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 207.

\textsuperscript{32}“Hinter Hos 1 muß 2,4–25 als nachträgliche Deutung der Erzählung von der Ehe des Propheten so wie von seinen drei Kindern mit Unheilsnamen eingestuft werden.” Rudnig-Zelt, \textit{Hoseastudien}, 80.

\textsuperscript{33} Rudnig-Zelt, \textit{Hoseastudien}, 80–81.

\textsuperscript{34} Davies, \textit{Hosea}, 60.

\textsuperscript{35} Davies, \textit{Hosea}, 60.

\textsuperscript{36} Davies, \textit{Hosea}, 61.
v. 2 is insufficient to warrant the view that it must come from Judean circles.”

The vision of a reunification of the two states, she argues, is consistent with Hosea’s outlook although it is possible the order in which the names appear has been influenced by Judean hands. She further argues that the term ראשׁ used to express the reunification also points to a northern origin for Hosea 2:2. ראשׁ, she argues, echoes the terminology used of pre-monarchic leaders (Num 14:4; Judg 11:8) and is associated with the tribes of Israel (1 Sam 15:17). The contrast between the use of ראשׁ in Hosea 2:2 and the royal terminology in Ezek 37:22 (ומלך אחד יהיה לכלם מלך), she adds, further suggests that Hosea 2:2 belongs to the eighth century Hosea.

Rost, on the other hand, has argued that the reference to the appointment of ראשׁ “one head” to rule over the people of Judah and people of Israel in Hosea 2:2 points to a late rather than an early composition.

[H]e believes that a roš, “head,” stood over the Bēt ‘Āb after the exilic period, whereas before the Exile, a zaqēn, “elder,” was over a Mišp̄hā [sic] (clan?) . . . Rost points out that the term roš is used in the Hexateuch only nineteen times other than in the P source, but twenty times in P alone, and no less than sixty times in the post-exilic literature. The heads of the post-exilic Bēt ’Ābōt, said Rost, were these rošim, because the literature seems to drop the office of

37 Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 98.

38 Granted that she is correct, the revised form of Hos 2:2 would still be considered non-Hoseanic and it may be argued that it actually encapsulates and projects the aspiration of its Judean redactor rather than Hosea’s. Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 98.

39 Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 97.

40 Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 97.
Rost’s argument is supported by the use of the verb קבץ (to gather) in Hosea 2:2 that presupposes a time when the peoples of Judah and Israel were already scattered in exile. Perhaps, some form of gathering had already taken place, which would explain the revoking of Hosea 1:9 and 1:6 in Hosea 2:3, in plural form: אמרו לאחים טמי ולחלותים רמה. In light of the foregoing and earlier scholarly views, Hosea 2:1–3 appears to be a late text, perhaps composed and inserted in the post-exilic period. As such, Hosea 2:1–3 will not be taken up in the subsequent investigation since it is does fall within the scope of the investigation of this study to relate propaganda to a time before the end of monarchy in Judah in 587 BCE.

Based on those scholars who have argued for the existence of non-Hosean prophecies in Hosea 2, it seems reasonable to suggest that their assessment raises fundamental terminological and interpretive issues concerning those prophecies. The issue is that the inclusion of non-Hoseanic prophecies in the prophetic text bearing the name of Hosea gives the impression that these were uttered by Hosea himself when they are really the works of redactors from later periods and contexts. These non-Hoseanic prophecies in Hosea 2 are black prophecies according to the terminology used in this study. It is possible that these black prophecies were taken at face value and


42 Moreover, Hos 2:1 which presupposes a population decline already points to Israel’s fall and exile.
serious questions about their real origin were never raised by their intended audience. It is also possible that the audience had assumed that they contained the aspiration of Yahweh and Hosea without the redactors identifying himself or his aspiration. However, the redactor’s aspiration may well coincide with those of Hosea and Yahweh. Nevertheless, distinction must be made between their aspirations. This would necessitate an exploration of the extent and purpose of the black prophecies in Hosea 2 beginning with a sketch of the existing proposals relating to the historical backdrop for the metaphors in Hosea 2.

4.2.2 Metaphor

In his monograph on Hosea 2, Kelle discusses the objection to attempts seeking to draw a relationship between prophetic speeches and historical events. Roy Melugin, for example, has identified three “forms of doubt”: “1) historical reconstructions often go beyond the available evidence, 2) the recovery of the past from written texts may be epistemologically impossible, and 3) the language of the text itself resists historical investigation because of its metaphorical character.” 43 Kelle also cites similar objections by Duane Garrett, Marti Nissinen and Renita Weems. The latter has echoed Melugin’s doubt: “A fundamental feature of poetry is its metaphorical nature; and the fact that it is metaphorical, in many instances, mitigates against one’s ability to adduce

43 His views are cited in Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 6; for original views, see Roy F. Melugin, “Prophetic Books and the Problem of Historical Reconstruction,” in Prophets and Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Gene M Tucker (ed. Stephen Breck Reid; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 64.
Prophecy, Propaganda or Both? A Rereading of Hosea 1–3

However, Andersen and Freedman’s study of the density of the prose particles נָבָא, נָא and (the definite article) ה in Hosea 2 has shown that the chapter is “out of the poetry sector entirely and belongs solidly with standard prose.” Nevertheless, some metaphorical poetic speeches are present in Hosea 2. Still, it may be argued that a metaphor does give a sense of reality because the abstract and unfamiliar idea (the tenor) in a metaphor is expressed in terms of another, which is familiar, and concrete (the vehicle). On this issue, Maurice Mandelbaum’s explanatory historical discourse and Phillip Stambovsky’s proposal about the function of metaphor in historiography offer some support. According to Mandelbaum, explanatory history is present when a historian “already knows (or believes that he [sic] knows) what has in fact happened. In such a case he [sic] starts from a fact taken as present and seeks to trace back its causes—that is, to establish what was responsible for its having happened.” In other words, the historian traces back events from the present toward the past. In applying Mandelbaum’s idea to his own study, Stambovsky explains that a metaphor operates heuristically in explanatory history to facilitate the


45 In standard prose, the frequency of prose particles is 15% or more of all words, while in poetry it is 5% or lower. Hos 2 exhibits a frequency of 15.1%, according to Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 60, 62.

46 Italics theirs. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5.


comprehension of the reasoning historians appeal to as they explain what they know (or believe that they know) has happened.\textsuperscript{50} He cites the example of Thomas Kuhn’s use of the \textit{revolution} metaphor in the formulation of his historical understanding of scientific advancement involving “the scientific community’s rejection of some time-honored scientific theory in favour of another incompatible with it.”\textsuperscript{51} Revolution is an appropriate metaphor to convey the situation with scientific advancement since it “denotes ‘a complete overthrow of the established government . . . by those who were previously subject to . . . [and] a forcible substitution of a new ruler or form of government.’”\textsuperscript{52} Thus, it would seem that a metaphor could provide a sense of history. It is with this justification that this study will seek to explore the possible scenarios behind the metaphors in Hosea 2:4–25. It will be argued that this passage belongs to the category of explanatory history that involves a tracing back of events to account for the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel.

The above-proposed line of investigation is further supported by James Trotter’s work that explores the connection between prophetic speeches and historical events. He offers a reading of the final form of Hosea within the specific socio-historical context of the early Achaemenid period (ca. 539–516 B.C.E) in Yehud. Trotter’s work suggests it is legitimate to offer an interpretation of the oracles in Hosea 2 within the historical

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{50} Stambovsky, "Metaphor and Historical Understanding," 126.
\textsuperscript{52} Stambovsky, "Metaphor and Historical Understanding," 126.
\end{flushright}
context of the eighth-century BCE. His perspective on redactional material and the context in which it emerges is particularly important for the current study to relate non-Hoseanic or black prophecies to specific historical contexts:

It is not only the redactional additions which can be interpreted in relation to their socio-historical setting of production but also each distinct redactional product composed of the pre-existing text, any alterations to or deletions from the pre-existing text, and all additions to that text.

Trotter’s methodological proposal also forms the basis for Kelle’s investigation of the prophetic speeches in Hosea 2. According to Kelle, these should be understood as Hosea’s theological commentary on the political affairs of Samaria around the time of the close of the Syro-Ephraimitic war. The language of violence against the wife in Hosea 2, he argues, is a metaphor for Tiglath-pileser’s military action against Samaria. Based on Kelle’s application of Trotter’s proposal, it is, therefore, also legitimate to offer a reading of Hosea 2 within the redactor’s historical setting (possibly seventh century) even though the non-Hoseanic prophecies themselves may reflect the fall of Samaria in the eighth century BCE (in anticipation of what is to follow).

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54 Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 11.


57 Contra the proposal that links Hos 2 to the political affairs in Samaria around the time of the close of the Syro-Ephraimitic war (731–730 BCE). Kelle, *Metaphor and Rhetoric*, 20.
Many scholars do not consider the metaphors in Hosea 2 as mere ornamental language and have linked sections of the chapter to the prosperous years of King Jeroboam II (ca. 788–748 BCE). According to Yosef Green, “more than 20 years before the destruction of Samaria, the state is enjoying a period of prosperity attributed to the successful reign of Jeroboam II.”\(^{58}\) Noth refers to the period of economic boon in the northern kingdom’s history as “a kind of Golden Age.”\(^{59}\)

The focus on agricultural prosperity in Hosea 2:7, 10 and a confident cult in Hosea 2:13, 15 have led Mays to conclude that Hosea 2:4–17 “must have been delivered in the earliest phase of Hosea’s ministry during the final years of Jeroboam II.”\(^{60}\) The reference to an abundance of silver in Hosea 2:10b, according to Mays, also points to the economic prosperity during Jeroboam’s reign when trade flourished to the benefit of the urban classes (cf. Amos 6:4–6; 8:4–6).\(^{61}\) Likewise, Andersen and Freedman relate the lavish gifting of gold and silver to Baal in Hosea 2:10b to the affluence in the northern kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II.\(^{62}\) Wolff has also linked the reference to silver and gold in Hosea 2:10b to “the flourishing economy of Jeroboam II’s reign.”\(^{63}\) Moreover, he has argued that Hosea 2:4–17 presupposes “a thriving economic situation


\(^{59}\) Noth, *The History of Israel*, 250.

\(^{60}\) Mays, *Hosea*, 36.


in Israel” and since disturbances in foreign relations and domestic affairs are not reflected in these verses, they are to be dated to the last years of Jeroboam’s reign.64

According to Morris Silver, a number of trade-related factors contributed to Israel’s thriving economy during this period:

Israel’s control over the fertile plains of Bashan was a boon to agriculture. Agricultural surplus was used in payment of imported goods and for government support. International commerce was an important source of income for Israel and Judah. Phoenicia provided Israel with luxury items such as ivory; Israel in turn traded grain, olive oil, and wine with Phoenicia. At the same time, Israel supplied Egypt with olive oil and wine.65

On the political front, Macintosh has argued that the prosperity of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II can be attributed to a weak Damascus in the north.66 Hosea 2:7, 10, he also argues, points to Israel’s agricultural and economic success. Additionally, the exuberant and lavish cultic worship, feasting, drinking and sexual licence in Hosea 2:13, 15 bear testimony to Israel’s prosperous agriculture and economy.67 Similarly, for Stuart, Hosea 2:4–17 attests to “an economic prosperity in Israel, as future deprivation is contrasted to present abundance (vv. 5, 7, 10, 11, 15)”.68

64 Wolff, Hosea, 33.
67 Macintosh, Hosea, lxxxiv.
68 Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 46.
In contrast, he argues that the portrayal of agricultural prosperity in Hosea 2:18–25 is but a memory of the ‘golden’ era before Tiglath-pileser III defeated the northern kingdom (733 BCE) in settling the Syro-Ephraimite war.69

For the above mentioned scholars, the prophecies in Hosea 2:4–17 do not simply reflect the state of economy in the time of Jeroboam II. The prophecies, according to them, originate in that period. Hence, for Wolff, Hosea 2:10a reminds Israel to acknowledge Yahweh’s role as the true benefactor of its abundant crop as it enjoys the divine blessing. This, he argues, is achieved by its careful selection of words: “Since these commodities come directly from Yahweh they are not called bread, wine, and oil—the humanly processed goods—but ‘grain, new wine, and olive oil.’”70 In the same manner, Hosea 2:10b reminds Israel that the gold and silver it enjoys are also gifts from Yahweh.

Like Wolff, Yee has argued that Hosea 2:10a revises the list of natural products in Hosea 2:7b.71 However, she does not consider Hosea 2:10a to be an authentic prophecy of Hosea but is the contribution of the Judean redactor R1 who uses it to condemn Israel for not acknowledging Yahweh as the real provider of its good fortune.72 In similar fashion, her investigation has shown that Hosea 2:15a is not an

69 As a salvation oracle, he adds, it envisions Israel’s return to opulence. Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 57.

70 Wolff, Hosea, 37.

71 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 118.

72 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 118, 127.
oracle by the prophet about a “confident cult” during the prosperous reign of King Jeroboam II as Mays has suggested. Instead, Hosea 2:15a is a later redaction by R1 that functions as a judgment oracle against Yahweh’s “wife, Israel, because of her cultic faithlessness in running after her baalim-lovers.” Although Yee has argued for a later historical provenance for Hosea 2:15a (the period of R1), she is not suggesting that the verse does not reflect a time when Israel was a thriving nation. The references to agricultural products of the land in Hosea 2:10a and the manner in which the Israelians deck themselves with jewellery and ornaments to participate in the sacrificial worship on the “days of the Baals” in Hosea 2:15a strongly suggest that there was a time in Israel when its agriculture was profitable and its citizens were rather well off.

Admittedly, it is difficult to ascertain the exact historical circumstances behind the above-mentioned oracles. The pattern of cause and effect in these verses—והיא לא ידעה (Hos 2:10a) . . . ופקדתי עליה (Hos 2:15a)—compels one to treat them as Hosea’s “predictive prophecy” of future punishment for Israel for its failure to acknowledge Yahweh, the true benefactor of its abundant crop. Yet, they could well be the creative work of a later redactor as Yee and others have suggested. Rudnig-Zelt, for example, has corroborated Yee’s interpretation in classifying “Hos 2:4–25 as subsequent interpretation of the story of the marriage of the prophet and the giving of evil names

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73 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 83; cf. Mays, Hosea, 36.

74 Gold and silver apparently were not native to Canaan but were obtained in exchange for agricultural products. Davies, Hosea, 74; so also Macintosh, Hosea, 56.

75 Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 37.
to his three children.”76 Hosea 2:4–25, she maintains, provides additional evidence to the judgment in Hosea 1:2b that “the land whores away from Yahweh.”77

In view of the contrasting arguments concerning the prophecies in Hosea 2, it is necessary to revisit and scrutinise Hosea 2:4–25 for clues to the historical background as envisaged by its author. Specifically, the examination hopes to determine whether Hosea 2:4–25 refers to a time before Israel’s thriving economy was disrupted by Tiglath-pileser’s defeat of Israel in 733 BCE or a later time when Israel was no longer an affluent state. In the latter scenario, Yahweh’s threat to put an end to Israel’s joy and festivities (Hos 2:13, 15) and to destroy its vines and fig trees (Hos 2:14; cf. 2:11) would have already been fulfilled. The passage, therefore, provides the reason for the devastation to both land and people (Hos 2:5–6). In this respect, the nation had been punished for attributing its well-being to its “lovers” (Hos 2:7) or, in other words, for its failure to acknowledge Yahweh as the sole provider of its sustenance and wealth (Hos 2:7, 10). If examination shows that the above scenario is plausible, then Hos 2:4–25 is not a “predictive prophecy” of Hosea but a retrospective statement about the devastation of the nation and its resources.


77 “. . . das Land hure von Jahwe weg.” Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 80.
4.3 New Perspective

4.3.1 Context(s) behind Hosea 2:4–25

This section will examine Hosea 2:4–25 for clues that might help to establish the possible historical event(s) behind the prophecies in this passage more clearly. It is hoped that, as a result, the examination will also provide clues to the extent of black prophecies and their purpose in the passage.

For a start, scholars have usually read Hosea 2:4α (ריבו באמכם ריבו) as Hosea’s command to his children to charge their mother with marital infidelity. Her actions, according to Harper, have brought shame and disgrace upon the children who are tasked to pressure their mother “to put away her whoredoms from her face” (Hos 2:4bα). Mays offers the same interpretation for Hosea 2:4a in that Hosea summons the children to bring a complaint against their mother. According to Mays, “The children are the individual members of Israel, which is represented by the mother as a corporate person.” In similar fashion, Wolff argues that “the children are drawn to the father’s side against the mother.” This interpretation, he says, is awkward because the Israelis are asked to take sides against Israel given both mother and children are

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metaphorically portrayed as Israel.\textsuperscript{81} The reason Hosea does not remonstrate against Gomer directly, according to Andersen and Freedman, is that the indirect approach resembles the detachment of Yahweh, who speaks to his people only through the prophets. “If Hosea spoke personally to his wife, it would be difficult to see the whole speech [Hos 2:4–25] as applying equally to his Israelite listeners.”\textsuperscript{82} Sensing this interpretation may not be adequate, they add, “If something more is required, the task assigned to the children could arise from the fact that the parents are separated.”\textsuperscript{83}

All the above interpretations, however, are problematic from a grammatical viewpoint. If Hosea is indeed the one who addresses his children, why does he use the second-person pronoun in Hosea 2:4αα to speak to his children (ריבר באמכם ריבר) whereas in Hosea 2:6αβ (ואת־בניה לא ארחם כי־בני זנונים המה) he refers to them in third person. In Harper’s view, Hosea 2:6 is an interpretation from a later time that gives witness to the plight of the Israelians following the devastation of the land (cf. Hos 2:5).\textsuperscript{84} Based on Mays’ interpretation, the grammatical shift between Hosea 2:4αα and

\textsuperscript{81} Wolff, \textit{Hosea}, 33; cf. the argument: “The search for a clear set of allegorical correspondents to assign to the parts of the metaphor ends in frustration as it is based upon the faulty premise that the trope is an allegory, rather than a complex metaphor, which draws upon a set of symbolic associations tied up with the intertwining images of woman, children, land and nation.” Keefe, \textit{Woman’s Body}, 22.

\textsuperscript{82} Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 220.

\textsuperscript{83} They argued that the statement “She is not my wife and I am not her husband” is not a divorce formula. It means, “We are no longer living together as husband and wife.” Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 220.

\textsuperscript{84} He also observes a similar grammatical shift between Hos 2:4αα and 2:7αβ. The shift, in his view, is not an issue in that the latter gives the reason for the punishment threatened in Hos 2:5. Harper, \textit{Amos and Hosea}, 228.
2:6αα reflects the children’s failure to respond to the father’s summons to join him in his dispute against their mother.85 Macintosh offers a similar perspective on the issue in proposing that Yahweh is represented in Hosea 2:6αα as musing in soliloquy on the children’s inevitable fate after the initial plea to them in Hosea 2:4αα to remonstrate with their mother.86 Yee also considers Yahweh’s attitudes in these verses puzzling. Yahweh’s instruction to the children to appeal to their mother in Hosea 2:4αα seems incompatible with Yahweh’s lack of compassion on them in Hosea 2:6αα.87 Her preferred interpretation that Hosea 2:6 be read as an original saying of Hosea after Hosea 2:4αβ ("She is not my wife and I am not her husband"), however, does not fully resolve the confusing attitudes of Yahweh toward the children.88

The basic problem in interpreting Hosea 2:4, it seems, is the influence Hosea 1 has on the reading of this verse. Hosea 1 compels one to treat this verse as an address by Hosea to his children, to urge them to join him in his disputation with their mother. The difficulty with this reading is that the children would be too young to take their mother to task unless one assumes a considerable passage of time has passed between the events in Hosea 2:4 and of the birth of his children in Hosea 1. One way to resolve this issue is to treat Hosea 2:4 as a figurative speech by Hosea to express his frustration with Gomer rather than an actual instruction to the children.

87 Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 108.
88 Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 108.
A less convoluted and more meaningful way to interpret Hosea 2:4 is to read it as Yahweh’s opening address to an unnamed audience in a soliloquy that expands Yahweh’s reproachful protest against and judgment on the land and nation of Israel, represented by the wife and children in Hosea 1:2–9. Yahweh’s frame of mind is captured by the Hebrew phrase in Hosea 2:4: ריבו באמכם ריבו “Remonstrate, remonstrate with your mother.” However, it is argued here that Hosea 2:4 originates in a redactor, not the prophet. This claim needs to be investigated. Research might show that Hosea 2:5–25 is also the work of a redactor.

As shown earlier, scholars agree that Hosea’s public prophetic ministry ended before the collapse of Samaria in 722 BCE. This understanding has implications for interpreting the prophecies in Hosea 2:4–25. His retirement before the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE meant the passage ought to be read as a prediction of future punishment and restoration for the northern kingdom. Yet, it will be shown that the imageries of punishment bear striking resemblance to tactics typically used by the Assyrians’ in dealing with its enemies in wartime. The striking resemblance would suggest the imageries in Hosea 2:4–25 hark back to events surrounding the Assyrians conquest in 722 rather than predict their occurrence. While it may be argued that Hosea knew of the war tactics used by the Assyrians and had prophesied about Israel’s impending fall based on typical Assyrian war strategies, the striking resemblance suggests the passage more likely describes, rather than predicts, the fall of the kingdom of Israel. This view is supported by D. Brent Sandy’s analysis of the pronouncements of prophecies and accounts of their fulfilment in the former prophets.

89 Macintosh, Hosea, 39.
Reading the pronouncements in light of their fulfilment, Sandy argues that the already fulfilled prophecies demonstrate the pronouncements made before fulfils were done without precision. His analysis leads him to conclude that the predictions “demonstrate a pattern of translucence rather than transparency.” Sandy argues that the intent of prophesying was not to give precise and specific information about the future but to prosecute with power. While Hosea 2:4–25 contains forceful condemnation of Israel’s infidelity (vv. 4b, 6–7, 10, 15), the passage also shows a striking resemblance to events associated with the Assyrians’ devastation of Samaria. On this basis, perhaps Hosea 2:4–25 looks back, instead of forward, to the fall of the north and research seems to bear out this view.

After the opening address and statement of protest in Hosea 2:4α, Yahweh’s soliloquy recounts the divine appeal to the wife to “set aside her promiscuity from her face and her adultery from between her breasts” (Hos 2:4b). This appeal harks back to, and expands on, Hosea 1:2 where the wife, portrayed as או אשת or a “promiscuous wife,” is a metaphor for the land of Israel who will surely turn away from Yahweh. That Hosea 2:4 is an elaboration of Hosea 1:2 is made certain by

90 Sandy, Plowshares, 136–137, 146.
91 “Translucent” denotes prophecies that are unclear with regard to the details of how judgment will occur whereas "transparent" denotes prophecies in which the fact of judgment on sinfulness is clear. Sandy, Plowshares, 139, 146.
92 Sandy, Plowshares, 146.
93 For a discussion of the distinction between זנה "promiscuity" and נאף "adultery," see Bird, “To Play the Harlot,” 89.
the added use of נָאִף "adultery" to describe the wife. The term, according to Bird, is reserved for a married woman who is deemed to have engaged in extramarital sexual intercourse. 94 Hosea 2:6–7 further expands Hosea 1:2 in designating Yahweh’s metaphorical children as ילדי זנונים. Yahweh, the metaphorical father, mulls over their fate: “I will not have pity on her children because they are children of promiscuity. For their mother has acted promiscuously; she who conceived them has behaved shamefully.”

Many scholars agree that mother/wife and children in Hosea 2 are metaphors for the land and people of Israel. 95 Kelle, however, has argued against relating wife to the people Israel because “the personification of a people as a wife of a god finds no parallel in any ancient Near Eastern literature.” 96 He adds, citing the work of John Schmitt, that “[t]he term 'Israel’ names a people, and names of a people, unlike names of countries, are masculine.” 97

Kelle also argues against the identification of wife/mother as a metaphor for

94 Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 77.

95 Mays, Hosea, 39; Wolff, Hosea, 34; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 168; Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 81; Davies, Hosea, 52; Nelly Stienstra, YHWH is the Husband of His people: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation (Kampen: Pharos, 1993), 102; Sherwood, The Prostitute, 134–138; Macintosh, Hosea, 8–9; Abma, Bonds of Love, 119–120; Baumann, Love and Violence, 94; Yee, Children of Eve, 103; Francis Landy, Hosea (2nd ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 103.

96 Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 83.

land. The primary evidence for taking wife/mother to be the land comes from Hosea 1:2 but the relationship between Hosea 1:2 and 2:1–25, he argues, is unclear. He asserts, “One should not assume that the prophetic oracle in Hos 2 and the biographical material in Hos 1 have the same rhetorical situation or metaphorical references at work throughout.”98 However, investigation (below) shows that Hosea 2 shares the same rhetorical situation as Hosea 1, which the previous chapter has identified as propagandistic in character. Regarding the question of the metaphorical horizon, the proposal that Hosea 2 is an expansion of Hosea 1 is a preliminary attempt at sketching their commonality. This will be elaborated below. In the meantime, it must be mentioned that Kelle has listed two other difficulties in linking wife/mother to land:

. . . the physical punishments in Hos 2:4–9 (e.g. making into a wilderness or wasteland) specifically appear in the Hebrew Bible as metaphorical descriptions of the destruction of cities not lands (Isa 51:3, 17–23; Jer 6:2–8; Ezek 26:7–21; Mic 1:1–9). Even the texts that seem to personify the land as a woman never portray the land as the wife of Yahweh.”99

The examples from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Micah Kelle raises do testify to the destruction of cities not lands. Yet, the descriptions of the withdrawal of grain and wine (cf. Hos 2:9) and laying waste of vines and fig trees (cf. Hos 2:14) appear with the portrayal of land destructions in Joel 1:5–12. On this basis, it is possible Hosea 2 contains descriptions of destruction to both land and city. This possibility will be elaborated below.

98 The concept of "rhetorical situation" is based on the assumption that, since rhetoric attempts to persuade, it originates within and presupposes a certain situation. Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 24, 84.

99 Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 84–85.
Kelle’s final contention is that there is no biblical tradition to support the portrayal of land as wife of Yahweh. He cites as evidence Isaiah 62:4–5, “[F]or the LORD delights in you (f.sg), and your (f.sg) land shall be married,” which seemingly portrays the land as married to Yahweh. According to him, “The context and parallelism of this passage make clear, however, that it is the feminine city Zion that is being ‘married’ and not the land itself.”

To bolster his interpretation, he cites Schmitt’s argument that the term land in such contexts refers specifically to the land surrounding a capital city, which was thought to belong to the capital city. Yet, Schmitt’s argument seems to suggest that land and city are distinct entities and both are being ‘married.’ The argument that only cities be considered as wife of Yahweh is perhaps too rigid, like the argument that Israel should not be taken as Yahweh’s wife. That one should not completely rule out these links is also suggested by the identification of Israel as Yahweh’s wife in Jeremiah 3:8. In view of the foregoing, the rest of this section will attempt to show that the metaphorical threat of punishment against the wife in Hosea 2 reflects actual destructive actions against the land and people of Israel.

Hosea 2 exhibits an artistic structure that moves from call for reform in Hosea 2:4 and oracle of threat in Hosea 2:5–6 to evidence of wrongdoing in Hosea 2:7 to punishment in Hosea 2:8–15 and finally, rehabilitation in Hosea 2:16–25. As pointed


102 See Keefe's comment in the previous footnote concerning the problem in assigning strict allegorical correspondents to parts of a metaphor.
out earlier, the phrase ריבו באמכם ריב in Hosea 2:4 is cast as Yahweh’s opening speech to an unnamed audience and is followed by an urgent request to the wife to “set aside her promiscuity from her face and her adultery from between her breasts.” The Hebrew conjunction פֶּן that introduces the oracle of threat in Hosea 2:5–6 serves to express a warning. If the wife does not reform herself then the oracle of threat becomes an oracle of punishment awaiting fulfilment. Hosea 2:5 which begins the oracle of threat contains an explicit transition to ‘land of Israel’ as ‘wife.’

The reference to stripping in this verse has often been taken as a punishment that the offended husband can impose on an adulterous wife (Jer 13:22, 26–27; Ezek 16:37–40), either before or in place of the death penalty (Lev 20:20; Deut 22:22). This interpretation has enraged most feminist critics. They take issue with the portrayal of Yahweh as an abusive husband and Israel as the abused wife. The feminists’ concern, which centres on the use of demeaning images and language for the wife figure, may be best summed up in this statement by O’Brien concerning the patriarchal framework that underpins the metaphor:

The ideology that undergirds domestic abuse is so familiar, so real, so contemporary, that to gloss over it is an obscene thing to do — equivalent to overlooking how the value systems of racism or heterosexism expose themselves in the language many people speak.

103 Mays, Hosea, 39; Macintosh, Hosea, 43.
105 For example, Abma, Bonds of Love; Baumann, Love and Violence; Graetz, "God is to Israel as Husband is to Wife."
O’Brien’s concern is real but a fuller discussion of this ethical issue is beyond the current investigation. Notwithstanding this, the following section hopes to show that the physical action portrayed in Hosea 2 reflects destructive action against the land and people of Israel rather than the wife herself.\(^{107}\)

The reference to stripping and exposure in Hosea 2:5a which parallels the reference to “wilderness,” “parched land,” and “thirst” in Hosea 2:5b affirms that the intended action is directed at the land of Israel rather than the wife. Significantly, the wife figure recedes into the background from this point forward.\(^ {108}\)

The word מדבר “wilderness” describes an uninhabited (Deut 32:10; Job 38:26; Prov 21:19; Jer 9:1) and inhabitable place. It is “often described negatively as without grapes, fountains, pools of water, rivers, pleasant places.”\(^ {109}\) Thus, Hosea 2:5 speaks of the future deprivation of the sustenance to preserve human life in the land of Israel. The condition will arise if no action is taken to reform its promiscuous ways. This possibility is signalled by the conjunctive פֶּן at the head of Hosea 2:5

\(^{107}\) Nonetheless, there is no denial that Hos 2 can be potentially harmful to women.

\(^{108}\) The confusion arising from the convergence of the metaphor of "wife/mother" and "her children" in the single entity of the "Israelites," Keefe argues, is a perceived problem which stems from a misconception about the nature of metaphor. According to her, "The search for a clear set of allegorical correspondents to assign to the parts of the metaphor ends in frustration as it is based upon the faulty premise that the trope is an allegory, rather than a complex metaphor, which draws upon a set of symbolic associations tied up with the intertwining images of woman, children, land and nation." Keefe, Woman’s Body, 22.

The use of *desert/wilderness* in Akkadian texts provides support and further insight for the above interpretation of Hosea 2:5. There the term does not refer to a place to which one is taken but a condition into which something is turned.\(^{110}\) A Nimrud letter, for example, uses “desert” (*mu-da-bi-ri*) to describe a post-war condition: “the towns . . . are . . . desert (*mu-da-bi-ri*)”\(^ {111}\). Read in light of the Akkadian usage, Yahweh’s threat to kill by “thirst” (*והמתיה בצמא*) does not mean to cause death by depriving water to a human person but by transforming Israel into a parched land in which death inevitably occurs because of dehydration (e.g. Exod 17:3) and lack of other forms of sustenance. However, that does not mean Israel actually becomes a desert but rather, as will be shown, the destruction of its vegetation as part of a military action makes the land *like* a desert. The forceful removal of the vegetation in the land, specifically its vines, fig and olive trees, is the imagery underpinning the metaphorical stripping of the wife. These crops form a part of the main source of livelihood but only after much improvement to the land:

Topographically and geologically, the land of Israel is mostly hilly and rocky. In addition, large parts of the country are arid or semiarid. All these harsh conditions forced the Israelites to develop special ways to overcome the environment constraints. Part of the adaptation to these inhospitable conditions was the adoption and popularization of methods heretofore not used on a large scale. These include forest clearing, new tracts of land became available in the hill country. This, in addition to constructing terraces on the hilly slopes to create leveled plots of land, opened the central part of the country to settlement in areas that were previously either unsettled or hardly occupied.\(^ {112}\)

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During the monarchic period, commercial farming became a major element of the overall agricultural activity in Israel and domestic and international trade brought wealth to the nation.\textsuperscript{113} Israel’s prosperity reaches a high point during the reign of Jeroboam II “aided by friendship with Assyria and participation in the Assyrian economic realm.”\textsuperscript{114} This prosperous economic landscape forms the backdrop for Yahweh’s threat to reverse the situation in Hosea 2:5 and in Hosea 2:7, Yahweh provides the rationale for the impending action.

The basic evidence Yahweh wishes to bring against the land is its act of promiscuity. Since an inanimate land cannot be promiscuous as such, a literary device is used to convey Yahweh’s message. Thus, wife/mother becomes the victim of a metaphor to portray the land as an unfaithful entity and the Israelis (the people of the land) as her children who were conceived through her shameful act (Hos 2:7a).\textsuperscript{115} This metaphorical portrayal is clearly an expansion of the metaphor in Hosea 1:2. In that verse, Hosea is commanded by Yahweh to take a promiscuous wife and to have children of promiscuity. Hosea 1:3a indicates that he complies with Yahweh’s command. There is, however, no concrete evidence in Hosea 1:2–9 and 2:7a to conclude that the children were conceived outside of marriage.\textsuperscript{116} Nonetheless, Hosea 2:7a has elaborated on Hosea 1:2–9 in such a way as to introduce a presupposition into it by assuming Hosea’s wife has indeed conceived her children through her extramarital relations.


\textsuperscript{114} Miller and Hayes, \textit{History}, 353.

\textsuperscript{115} Weems, "Victim of Violence," 97.

\textsuperscript{116} Macintosh, \textit{Hosea}, 14, 21, 27.
Hosea 2:7 produces the wife’s confession as concrete evidence of her unfaithfulness: “I will go after my lovers who provide my bread and water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.” This confession is an expansion of Hosea 1:2. In it, Yahweh declares “for the land will surely turn away from Yahweh in promiscuity” whereas, in Hosea 2:7, the wife confesses “I will go after my lovers.” The emphasis is on the shift in the action of turning away from Yahweh in Hosea 1:2 to the action of going after the lovers in Hosea 2:7.

Hosea 2:7 also stresses the wife’s reason for going after her lovers. In her view, they have provided her with bread, water, wool, flax, oil and drink. The word שׁקוי “drink,” unlike מים “water,” refers to the irrigation of the ground by rainwater (Gen 2:6, 10; Deut 11:10), which is described in Psalm 104:13 as the personal activity of Yahweh.\(^\text{117}\) Thus, by metaphorical extension, the land has also given voice to the belief that the fertility of the ground and the products it has yielded are to be attributed to the lovers who are identified in Hosea 2:15 as the Baals.\(^\text{118}\) The offerings that the Israelis bring to the various manifestations of Baal on the appointed days (Hos 2:15) reinforce the belief that the Canaanite deity has been the driving force behind the fecundity of the


4.3.2 The Siege

The evidence for Israel’s infidelity in Hosea 2:7 is the basis for the oracle of punishment in Hosea 2:8–15. The passage appears to describe two forms of punishment (possibly three). They are introduced by the word בָּלַכְתָּם “therefore” in Hosea 2:8 and 2:11. The first punishment relates to Yahweh’s plan to “hedge up her way with thorns and to build a wall against her so that she cannot find them” (Hos 2:8). This verse has spawned various interpretations.

According to Mays, “Israel will be shut up by a woven hedge of thorns, blocked from the way she goes with a wall of piled-up stones.” However, the verse does not mean Israel will be literally barred from the Baal shrines. Instead, it speaks of the failure of the ritual in the shrines to yield the desired result (cf. Hos 2:13). Hosea 2:8, according to Wolff, is allegorical. Yahweh’s threat to block the path of his unfaithful wife with a wall of thorns or a stone embankment meant Israel’s inaccessibility to the Baal sanctuaries when the land becomes a total wilderness. Andersen and Freedman offer a similar interpretation in that Hosea’s action to prevent his wife from reaching

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120 כְּן, HALOT 530.
her lovers is an analogy for Yahweh’s effort to “prevent his apostate people from making their usual pilgrimages to the Baal shrines.”\textsuperscript{124} The path to the shrines, according to them, will be rendered impassable by thorns and briers.\textsuperscript{125} Davies, on the other hand, argues that Hosea 2:8 does not specify the exact nature of Yahweh’s threat to bar Israel’s access to the other gods. It, however, does suggest to him that “Hosea expected some specific disaster to befall the sanctuaries” and he points to the references to the destruction of the calf of Samaria in Hosea 8:5 and altar and pillars in Hosea 10:2 as evidences of that expectation.\textsuperscript{126}

According to Paul Kruger, Hosea 2:8 has a “multiplicity of meaning.”\textsuperscript{127} The first is to read the verse against the overall marriage metaphor in Hosea 2, which shows the husband’s attempt to restrict the adulterous movement of his wife.\textsuperscript{128} The verse can also be read as part of a political metaphor in that the restriction it describes relates to the harsh consequences of war against Samaria.\textsuperscript{129} It could also point to action against

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{124} Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 236–237.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Andersen and Freedman, \textit{Hosea}, 237.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Davies, \textit{Hosea}, 72.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Paul Kruger, "'I Will Hedge Her Way with Thornbushes' (Hosea 2, 8): Another Example of Literary Multiplicity?,'" \textit{BZ} 43 (1999): 92–99.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Kruger, "'I Will Hedge Her Way','" 93–94.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Kruger, "'I Will Hedge Her Way','" 97.
\end{enumerate}
Israel as a whole. The third way of interpreting Hosea 2:8, according to Kruger, is to read it as a part of the religious-mythological metaphor. Thus, Yahweh’s intention of "hedging in her path with thorns" signals a resolve to restrict the wife/Israel’s cultic movements and blocking access to high places of worship. Finally, Hosea 2:8 may be read with the other images used to describe the people of Israel, for example, a stubborn cow in 4:1 or a fickle bird in 7:11–13. Kruger cites the work of W. R. W. Gardner who connects Hosea 2:8 with real situations in the ancient Near East: “It is very common in the East to put thorns and branches of thorn trees along the sides of fields by which sheep are driven to pasture so that they may not wander in.”

Regarding Kruger’s second proposal to read Hosea 2:8 as a political metaphor, Kelle has argued that the blockade imagery in the verse depicts the siege of Samaria. He maintains that the imagery in Yahweh’s statement that he will “wall-in her wall” (וגדרתי את־גדרה) is particularly revealing. The noun גדר, which includes a third-person feminine singular suffix, denotes a wall “pertaining to” or “around” her. Citing examples from Isaiah 5:5 and Psalm 80:13, he notes that the term גדר occasionally

130 He cites Stuart’s work (Hosea-Jonah, 49) in this regard: “The possible contexts for the restrictive action are the increasing Assyrian domination of the north following Tiglath-pileser’s first western campaign in 748 BCE, the destruction of Samaria in 722, the exile and the subsequent subjugation to other nations thereafter.” Kruger, "I Will Hedge Her Way," 95–97.


134 Translation his. Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 240.

135 Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 240.
indicates a heaped-up rampart of stone used as a fence to mark the boundaries for vineyards. Based on this usage, he says Yahweh’s intention in Hosea 2:8 appears to be agricultural in character that Yahweh plans to build a protective hedge around his wife, one resembling a small stonewall around a vineyard used at times to restrict movement (cf. Job 3:23; 19:8 and Prov 15:19). However, Kelle also observes that גדר is used in Micah 7:11 and Ezra 9:9 to denote a city wall and it suggests to him that the imagery in Hosea 2:8 reflects a siege wall around a city:

The text presents an option in which Yahweh could “wall-in” Samaria’s wall in the manner of a second wall built around a target city’s own wall in the midst of a siege. For example, the Assyrian king Sennacherib states that he shut up Hezekiah “like a bird in a cage” by surrounding the city of Jerusalem with earthwork. In a description even closer to the imagery of 2:8, the stela of Zakkur, king of Hamath describes a siege on the city by saying, “and they raised a wall higher than the wall of Hazrach . . .” Lamentations 3:7–9 also forms a close parallel to the language of Hos 2:8: “He has built a wall (גדר) around me so that I cannot escape . . . he has walled-in my ways (גדר דרכי) with stones and made my paths crooked.” Rather than repeating the verb גדר, Hos 2:8 employs the synonym שע (“to hedge”).

His rhetorical-historical analysis of the prophet’s oracle has led him to conclude that Hosea 2:8 “originally served the prophet’s attempt to address the city Samaria’s situation near the end of Tiglath-pileser’s campaign in 731 B.C.E.” However, it appears that Tiglath-pileser’s campaign did not involve an attack on Samaria itself.

136 Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 240.
It is, therefore, unclear how the siege imagery in Hosea 2:8 fits in with Kelle’s proposal about its historical background. According to Mays, Tiglath-pileser had ravaged the land of Israel and deported much of its population during the Syro-Ephraimite war (2 Kgs 15:27–30) but apparently, the Assyrian king did not attack Samaria itself.\footnote{Mays, \textit{Hosea}, 4; Noth, \textit{The History of Israel}, 260–261; Miller and Hayes, \textit{History}, 382–383; John H. Hayes, \textit{Interpreting Ancient Israelite History, Prophecy, and Law} (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 136.} In connection with the Syro-Ephraimite war, Tiglath-pileser’s Calah Annals 23 describes his siege on Damascus for forty-five days during which time he had confined Rezin the Damascene “like a bird in a cage.” It also describes the extensive cutting down of Rezin’s gardens and orchards without sparing a single one of them. In contrast, the descriptions of his campaign against Israel in Annals 18 and 24 only describe devastation to sixteen districts of Israel and deportation of its people to Assyria. There is no mention of a siege against the city or destruction of agriculture.\footnote{“Tiglath-pileser III (2.117),” translated by K. Lawson Younger (COS 2:284–286).} It is possible that the reason Tiglath-pileser did not destroy Israel’s agriculture was to leave King Hoshea, whom he helped to install as king over the northern kingdom, with the means to pay Assyrian tribute.\footnote{For Tiglath-pileser’s testimony about his role in the enthronement of Hoshea, see “Tiglath-pileser III (744–727): Campaigns against Syria and Palestine,” translated by D. D. Luckenbill (\textit{ANET}, 282–284).}

In light of the foregoing discussion, the imagery in Hosea 2:8 seems to fit Shalmaneser V’s war against Samaria better. According to 2 Kings 18:9, Shalmaneser marched against Samaria in the seventh year of Hoshea’s reign and initiated a siege
against it. The event probably occurred sometime after his accession in the month of Tebet in 727 BCE and the arrest and imprisonment of Hoshea for his failure to pay Assyrian tribute (2 Kgs 18:9). In the ninth year of Hoshea’s rule, after a three-year siege, the city of Samaria fell into the hands of Shalmaneser’s successor, Sargon II (721–705 BCE). Assyrian inscription bears testimony to Sargon’s achievement: “I besieged and conquered Samaria (Sa-me-ri-na), led away as booty 27,290 inhabitants of it.”

In addition to the above testimony about Sargon’s siege against Samaria and the discussion in the preceding chapter about Chapman’s study of Assyrian siege warfare, other Assyrian textual and iconographic sources also testify to the use of siege tactics by Assyrian forces. In a broken text, Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BCE) mentions the use of siege engines, presumably, to bring down the wall or gate of a fortified city. Assurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) testifies to the use of tunnels, battering rams and siege towers in his capture of the besieged city of Kaprabu in the land of Bīt Adini.

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144 Miller and Hayes, History, 387; Lester L. Grabbe, Ancient Israel: What Do We Know And How Do We Know It (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 135–136.


147 Hasel, Military Practice, 53.
Essarhaddon himself had placed Balu, the king of Tyre, under siege for revolt.  

Sennacherib in a testimony of his war against Judah during the reign of Hezekiah describes the siege of forty-six of the king’s fortified cities. Iconographic evidences show that battering rams were a major element of siege warfare during the reign of Ashurnasirpal III, Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II and Sennacherib. These were used “to destroy the city wall by forcing the rams through the stone or brick or by undermining the wall and disassembling it stone by stone.” Siege ramps were built against the city wall to transport the rams, mounted on heavy six-wheeled vehicles, next to the wall. Sennacherib had built such a ramp at Lachish during his war against Judah in 701 BCE and reliefs show that it was “covered with tree trunks” to provide a smooth platform for the battering rams. It remains to be explored whether any correlation exists between the lining of siege ramps with wood and the Assyrian practice of destroying the vegetation of the conquered land, such as the cutting down of Rezin’s gardens and orchards by Tiglath-pileser III or the laying waste of vines and fig trees in Hosea 2:14.

The purpose of the siege in Hosea 2:8, it seems, is to force Israel to repent and to turn back to Yahweh (cf. Hos 2:9). Yahweh hopes that the siege will compel Israel to echo the wife’s speech in Hosea 2:9b: “I will go and return to my first husband for I

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was better then than now.” The change of heart, if it occurs, will reverse her confession in Hosea 2:7b: “I will go after my lovers.” Her reason for going after her lovers is that they were her source of bread, water, wool, flax, oil and drink. Hence, it makes sense to read the comparative clause “better then [when Israel was faithful to Yahweh] than now” in Hosea 2:9b as a response by the inhabitants of the city of Samaria in a state of deprivation during a prolonged three-year siege (cf. Deut 28:47–57; Jer 14:18; 21:9). It is easy to imagine this response of regret after an extended period in the besieged city without proper supplies of food, water and other essential materials (cf. Num 11:4–6; 20:2–5).153

The imagery of blockade and siege in Hosea 2:8–9 is followed by a reiteration in Hosea 2:10 (cf. Hos 2:7b) of the wife’s failure to acknowledge Yahweh as the source of all material blessings. Yahweh is disappointed that “she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and the silver that I lavished on her and gold that they used for Baal.” Careful examination shows that the imagery of blockage and siege in Hosea 2:8–9 is framed by the references to the produce of the land in Hosea 2:10 and Hosea 2:7b. This artistic structure obliges one to read Hosea 2:8–9 in light of Hosea 2:7b and 2:10, and vice versa, and to conclude that the punishment is the

153 “The imposition of a blockade on a city is intended to cut it off from supplies of food, water and war materiel (weapons, ammunition, fortification materials, medical supplies and the like), as well as to prevent the entrance of reinforcements and relief and the evacuation of the non-combatant population, whose presence in the city hampers its ability to withstand attack. The effect of a blockade is cumulative, so it must be continuous and generally extended in time (with the exception of cutting off water supply, which is rapid in impact . . .)” Israel Eph‘al, The City Besieged: Siege and Its Manifestations in the Ancient Near East (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 35, 40, 57–68, here 35.
consequence of the failure to acknowledge Yahweh as the true provider of Israel’s well-being. Hosea 2:10 makes an abrupt shift from “she” to “they” and does not explain who had used the silver and gold for Baal since “they” can refer to the Israelis (Hos 8:3–4) or artisans (Hos 13:2).\footnote{For archaeological evidence of a calf image of the Baal with traces of silver coating, see Richard S. Hess, \textit{Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey} (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 155–157.} The use of the plural verb form “they” and the singular “Baal” in Hosea 2:10 compared to the feminine singular “her” and plural “Baals” in Hosea 2:15, 19 has led some scholars to suggest that the former verse is the work of an interpreter.\footnote{Mays, \textit{Hosea}, 41; Wolff, \textit{Hosea}, 37; contra Davies, \textit{Hosea}, 74–75.} The correspondence between the accusation relating to the misuse of the precious metals in Hosea 2:10 and several Deuteronomistic exhortations about idolatrous images of gold and silver suggests that the interpreter has a Deuteronomistic orientation. Deuteronomy 29:16, for instance, speaks of the detestable things (שׁקוץ) of silver and gold other nations have in their possession. Deuteronomy 7:21 forbids anyone from coveting the silver and gold that were used for casting images of the gods of the Canaanites when they are disposed of by fire since they are abominable and abhorrent to Yahweh.

The artistic structure in Hosea 2:7–10 that portrays the wife’s ignorance of the source of her sustenance (Hos 2:7, 10) also accentuates Israel’s confusion concerning the actual provider of its agricultural blessing. The clauses “she says” in Hosea 2:7 and “she did not know” in Hosea 2:10 emphasise the wife’s ignorance. Yet, ignorance does not mean innocence. Therefore, the wife’s ignorance in Hosea 2:10 implicates Israel’s
failure to acknowledge Yahweh as the sole cause of the land’s generous yield. According to Mays, “The trilogy of ‘grain, and wine and oil’ [Hos 2:10] is a traditional and stereotyped formula for the land’s bounty.”\(^{156}\) Deuteronomy 7:13 attributes “the produce of your soil, your new grain and wine and oil” to Yahweh’s blessing on the land. Moreover, Deuteronomy 11:13 states that it is Yahweh who has provided “the early rain and the late” to nourish the land so that it may yield grain and wine and oil. These Deuteronomic verses assert in unambiguous terms that Yahweh is the cause behind the land’s bounty. On this basis, Deuteronomy 26:1–11 underlines the need to offer the first fruits of the land to Yahweh at harvest time as a way of acknowledging Yahweh as the sole cause of the land’s yield. Deuteronomy 11:16–17, however, stipulates Yahweh’s condition for maintaining the fertility of the land:

> Take care lest you will be lured into turning away to serve other gods and to bow down in worship to them. Then the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you and he will hold back the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce, and you will soon perish from the good land which Yahweh is giving you.

In contrast, Deuteronomy 28:51–52 warns of a different punishment should Israel show infidelity to Yahweh. It describes punishment by enemy forces descending upon the land. They will come at Yahweh’s behest and will devour both “the fruit of the livestock and the fruit of the ground until you are destroyed, leaving you neither grain, wine, or oil . . .” and will lay siege to all the towns of the land.

The word אכל “devour” which describes the enemy’s action against the land in Deuteronomy 28:51 does not refer to human consumption but great and irreparable physical damage to Israel’s agriculture.¹⁵⁸

4.3.3 The Destruction of Agriculture

The second form of punishment in Hosea 2:11–15, like the first by siege in Hosea 2:8–10, is introduced by the word לכן “therefore.”¹⁵⁹ The passage mirrors the descriptions of divine action against the land in Deuteronomy 11:16–17 and 28:51–52. These Deuteronomistic texts describe the end of grain, wine and oil supplies and the action of enemies in laying siege on all the towns of the land. In Deuteronomy 11:16–17, the end occurs because of drought whereas in Deuteronomy 28:51–52 they perish because of an enemy’s destructive action. However, in both situations, Yahweh authorises the actions against Israel. Likewise, in Hosea 2:11: “Therefore I will take back my grain in its time, and my new wine in its season, and I remove my wool and my flax which were to cover her nakedness.”

Several scholars understand Yahweh’s oracle of punishment in Hosea 2:11 as reflecting the custom of withdrawing material support for an unfaithful wife.¹⁶⁰ Wolff’s

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¹⁵⁹ Hos 2:13–15 is discussed in the next section on the disruption of Israel’s worship.

interpretation echoes the understanding of this group of scholars: “The woman who
‘humiliates her husband’ is cast out with no means of support.” Thus, Hosea 2:11 (“I
will remove my wool and my flax which were to cover her nakedness”) belongs with
the imagery of confiscating the wife’s clothing in Hosea 2:5a (“I will strip her naked
and expose her as in the day she was born”). As a metaphor for the end of the land’s
bounty or fertility, the real purpose of Hosea 2:11 is to portray Israel in a parched
condition, a desert according to Hosea 2:5b. This imagery would coincide with
Deuteronomy 11:16–17 wherein Yahweh holds back the heavens so no rain falls to
nourish the ground and, thus, causes the failure of crops in the land.

It is also possible that the imagery of the withdrawal of crops in Hosea 2:11
refers to another scenario, namely their deliberate destruction by enemy forces in a war
setting (cf. Joel 1:6–7). Assyrian iconographic sources support this reading. They
indicate that the destruction of agricultural support system is one of the most
devasting tactics that the Assyrian army employed during or following a siege. According to Jeremy Smoak, “Assyrian textual sources are also littered with
descriptions of the Assyrians chopping down trees, orchards, vineyards, and other
agricultural produce of their enemies.” He cites Shalmaneser III’s boast in the Suḫu
Annals as an example: “We will go and attack the houses of Suhu [sic]; we will seize

161 Wolff, Hosea, 37.


his cities of the steppe; and we will cut down their fruit trees.”164 In the Nimrud Monolith, Shalmaneser also boasts: “Ahuni, son of Adini . . . I shut up in his city, carried off the crops of his (fields), cut down his orchards.”165 Sargon II himself offers the following testimony of the destruction of vegetation and the capture of Ulhu:

Into Ulhu, the store-city of Ursa I entered triumphantly; to the palace, his royal abode, I marched victoriously. The mighty wall, which was made of stone from the lofty mountain, with iron axes and iron hoes, I smashed like a pot and leveled it to the ground . . . Into his pleasant gardens, the adornments of his city which were overflowing with fruit and wine . . . came tumbling down . . . His great trees, the adornment of his palace, I cut down like millet (?) [sic], and destroyed the city of his glory, and his province I brought to shame. The trunks of all those trees, which I had cut down, I gathered together, heaped them in a pile and burned them with fire. Their abundant crops, which (in) garden and marsh were immeasurable, I tore up by the root and did not leave an ear to remember the destruction.166

Past studies, according to Smoak, have argued that the destruction of trees and vegetation enabled the Assyrians to build siege equipment during a prolonged siege or to feed the Assyrian army (cf. Deut 28:51–52). Sennacherib’s reliefs, at Nineveh, show that wood may have been used to line siege ramps to provide a smooth platform for transporting battering rams to the city wall.167 Some studies have also argued that the destruction of agriculture was used to punish a rebellious vassal.168 Other studies have

167 Hasel, Military Practice, 57.
168 Cf. the parallelism in Jer 6:6ab (italics mine): “Cut down her trees/cast up a siege ramp against Jerusalem//This is the city that must be punished/there is nothing but oppression within her.”
argued that the descriptions of the destruction were attempts to conceal the fact that the Assyrians were actually unsuccessful in taking a city and that the description is a face-saving device for the Assyrians. According to Smoak, this ‘face-saving’ description appears in the annals of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II. His examination of these inscriptions shows that “the destruction of vegetation was directed toward rural populations who had fled to the cities for protection.” The destruction partially serves to conceal the failure of the Assyrians to capture the city. Yet, other campaign narratives and iconography juxtapose the destruction of vegetation with the destruction and looting of the city and the deportation of the city’s elite. If these constitute the real Assyrian strategy, then Hosea 2:11 actually describes the destruction of vegetation around the time of a siege, which according to the earlier argument, is portrayed in Hosea 2:8.

The iconography in Sennacherib’s southwest palace at Nineveh brings clarity to the issue about the Assyrian destruction of vegetation. In a scene depicting the siege of the city of Dilbat, Assyrian soldiers are portrayed as cutting down date palms while


171 Smoak, "Assyrian Siege," 86; this reading seems to be supported by the proposal that most of the commodities and goods that were sold in ancient Israelite city and town markets were produced by the rural inhabitants. Borowski, Daily Life, 56.

172 Smoak, "Assyrian Siege," 86.

others remove spoils from the conquered city. These palms are depicted outside the city walls. In another scene depicting the capture of the principal cities of Babylon, Assyrian soldiers are portrayed as cutting down palm trees both outside and inside the city walls. These depictions indicate that the destruction actually coincides with the capture of a city. According to Michael Hasel’s iconographic study of the siege scenes and destructions of vegetation, the latter event occurs only “after a city has been conquered and the enemy is vanquished.” This sequence of events in the iconography, he argues, confirms his earlier finding of a similar sequence in the textual sources. On this basis, he concludes that trees could not have been used in the construction of siege works, battering rams and other major siege machines. Smoak disagrees with Hasel’s interpretation of the order of events. He argues that the iconographic scenes are “meant as a visual curse of sorts rather than a realistic


175 Hasel, Military Practice, 74.

176 Hasel, Military Practice, 75–76, here 76.

177 Hasel, Military Practice, 76.

178 Hasel, Military Practice, 76; cf. “The cutting down of trees causes long-term damage that lasts for many years (unlike the destruction of fields, which is limited to one year only). From these descriptions, it appears that the purpose of cutting down trees was not to leave the enemy’s land in desolation as an end in itself, but can be seen as another method to pressure and break the defenders’ spirits (like the impalement of people in the presence of their relatives in the city and on the wall). Hence, it seems plausible to assume that this act was not carried out all at once, but done piecemeal, over an extended period, in order to increase the pressure on the besieged and to force them into negotiations and surrender.” Eph’al, City Besieged, 54.
sequencing of events.” 179 They depict various curses found in Assyrian treaties that threatened rebellious vassal states with the materialisation of these curses.180 The debate, as it stands, appears unsettled. Yet, the absence of a consensus on the precise timing of the destruction of vegetation in relation to the capture of a city has no serious impact on the current investigation. 181 The view that destruction of vegetation commonly occurs with Assyrian siege warfare and capture of an enemy city suffices to provide a strong support for the above interpretation of Hosea 2:11 and 2:8–9. The imageries of the withdrawal of agricultural products in Hosea 2:11 and the erection of blockade in Hosea 2:8–9, it has been argued, reflect events associated with real destruction of a land’s produce and siege respectively. The historical context for the concurrent events is most likely the invasion of Samaria by Shalmaneser V and Sargon II between 725 and 722 BCE.

The word אֹרְפָּה, which introduces a response, and the imperative גָלָה in the phrase “Now I will uncover her shame” in Hosea 2:12 (cf. Hos 2:7) reiterate the portrayal in Hosea 2:11 of a forceful removal of the land’s vegetation that normally covers the ground on which they grow. Hosea 2:12 also forms Yahweh’s taunt against the wife

180 Smoak, "Assyrian Siege," 89.
181 It is possible that there was no complete destruction of Israel’s agriculture. "The Assyrians had good economic reasons not to devastate the rich, oil-producing area." Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Sacred Texts (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 221; see also Miller and Hayes, History, 368; Gary N. Knoppers, "In Search of Post-Exilic Israel: Samaria After the Fall of the Northern Kingdom," in In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar (ed. John Day; London: T & T Clark 2004), 166, 171.
and her paramours and by metaphorical extension Israel and its “lovers,” for their inability to “save [נָצִיל] her out of my hand.” A similar taunt appears in Deuteronomy 32:39. There Yahweh mocks the impotent gods of the nations: “See now that I, even I, am he; and there is no god besides me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal and no one can deliver [נָצִיל] from my hand.” Similarly in Jeremiah 2:28, Yahweh taunts the Canaanite gods for their inability to save (ישוע) Judah in its hour of calamity. The Canaanite deities are idols created by their worshippers and incapable of saving them. The polemic appears in Hosea 2:12 as Yahweh’s deliberation on the inability of Israel’s “lovers,” the Baal s (cf. Hos 2:15), to reverse the destruction to the vegetation in the land (cf. Yahweh’s ability in Hos 2:23–24).

4.3.4 The Disruption of Israel’s Worship

The focus on destruction of vegetation in Hosea 2:12 reappears in Hosea 2:14: “I will lay waste her vines and fig trees . . .” The intervening Hosea 2:13 describes the end of Israel’s joy, festivals, new moons and Sabbaths and is repeated in Hosea 2:15. These four verses form a tight parallel structure based on the framework of destruction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hos 2:12</td>
<td>Uncovering of the land and absence of a rescuer (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hos 2:13</td>
<td>End of Israel’s joy, festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hos 2:14</td>
<td>Laying waste of vines and fig trees, which animals will devour (a’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hos 2:15</td>
<td>End of Israel’s festival days and of offering to the Baals (b’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ‘destruction’ framework in Hosea 2:12–15 is underscored by clauses that stress Yahweh’s resolve to punish: "ואישׁ לא־יצילנה מידי" (Hos 2:12), "והשׁבתי" (Hos 2:13), "והשׁמתי" (Hos 2:14), "ופקדתי" (Hos 2:15). Whereas the destruction in Hosea 2:12 and 2:14 refer to the devastation of land vegetation, the actions in Hosea 2:13 and 2:15 relate to the termination of worship services and sacrifices. Although Hosea 2:12, 14 and Hosea 2:13, 15 represent two distinct forms of destruction, a tight relationship exists between them. The envisaged devastation of agriculture (Hos 2:12, 14), when fulfilled, will end Israel’s religious festivities (Hos 2:13, 15) which were celebrated in thanksgiving for the fertility of the land. The juxtaposition of “שׁבת” in Hosea 2:13 and “ימי הבעלים” in Hosea 2:15 suggests that the action that is being contemplated in these verses relates to the practice of syncretic worship in the northern kingdom of Israel—the mixing of days of obligation to Yahweh and the festival days of the Baals. Sargon II’s inscription on the Nimrud prism which recounts the removal of “the gods, in which they trusted, as spoil” following his capture of Samaria, according to C J Gad, is “doubtless interesting evidence for the polytheism of Israel.”182 The underlying issue behind Israel’s involvement in this form of worship is that it demonstrates to Yahweh that Israel was unfaithful in the same way that a promiscuous wife is unfaithful to her husband (cf. Hos 1:2). In sum, Hosea 2:13 and 2:15 probably reflect a third form of punishment against Israel for disloyalty to Yahweh—Yahweh’s action to put an end to Baal-worship (Hos 2:15) and legitimate worship (Hos 2:13) in the northern kingdom.

In light of the above reading, Yahweh’s punitive action against Israel’s syncretic

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182 C. J. Gad’s work (Iraq 16 [1954], 181) is cited in Becking, Samaria, 28–31.
worship in Hosea 2:13 and 2:15 probably refers to damage to the Bethel sanctuary during the last days of Samaria.\textsuperscript{183} Yahweh’s wrathful tone in these verses mirrors the Deuteronomistic historian’s unremitting condemnation of Jeroboam I’s establishment of Bethel and Dan, as rival sanctuaries to the Jerusalem temple, in which he installed the golden calves and erected high places of worship (1 Kgs 12:29–31).\textsuperscript{184} Jeroboam’s declaration to the Israelis after the installation of the calves blurs the distinction between them and Yahweh: “Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kgs 12:28). In the mind of the historian, “Jeroboam’s actions were rank apostasy.”\textsuperscript{185} Bull images were traditional Canaanite symbols of power and fertility and were associated with Baal the storm god.\textsuperscript{186} Israel’s worship of the golden calves were condemned because it challenges Yahweh’s position as the God of Israel (cf. Hos 1:2; 2:18, 25b) and sole provider of Israel’s well-being (cf. Hos 2:10).

Based on scholarly interpretation of entries in the Babylonian Chronicles, the only Akkadian source which gives an account of Shalmaneser’s reign, the Assyrian king ravaged Samaria before his fifth and final regnal year (722/721 BCE).\textsuperscript{187} According

\textsuperscript{183} “The Assyrian apparently destroyed Bethel in 722–721 B.C.E.” King, Amos, Hosea, Micah, 40.


\textsuperscript{185} Miller and Hayes, History, 275.


to John Hayes and Jeffrey Kuan, Shalmaneser’s action against Samaria began in the first half of his second regnal year (Nisan 725–Nisan 724) which includes the arrest of Hoshea.\footnote{Hayes and Kuan, "Final Years of Samaria," 161–182.} Shalmaneser’s ravaging of the capital city also included the punitive action against Bethel including the looting of the royal sanctuary.\footnote{Hayes and Kuan, "Final Years of Samaria," 163; cf. Sargon II's testimony about taking "the gods . . . as spoil" as part of his conquest of Samaria. Becking, Samaria, 29.} Hosea 10:13–15 probably reflects Shalmaneser’s “vicious destruction of Beth Arbel, his actions against Bethel, and the silencing of the Israelite king [Hoshea].”\footnote{Hayes and Kuan, "Final Years of Samaria," 164; for a discussion on "Shalman" and "Beth Arbel," see Wolff, Hosea, 188.} Hayes and Kuan argue against those who read \(\text{בית־אל} \) in v. 15 as “O house of Israel” following the LXX. In their view, “Beth is textually the best authenticated reading and also the most difficult.”\footnote{Hayes and Kuan, "Final Years of Samaria," 164; similarly Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 571–573; Yee, Composition and Tradition, 213; Macintosh, Hosea, 431–434; Dearman, Hosea, 273; contra Mays, Hosea, 148; Wolff, Hosea, 181; Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 131.} They cite Hosea 3:4 as further support for their interpretation. The verse (“Surely many days the children of Israel shall dwell without king and without prince and without sacrifice and without pillar and ephod and teraphim”), they argue, presupposes the arrest of Hoshea and looting of the Bethel sanctuary.\footnote{English translation of Hos 3:4 theirs. Hayes and Kuan, "Final Years of Samaria," 164.}

In the same vein, Davies notes how recent commentators follow the LXX in reading \(\text{עשׂה לכם בית־אל} \) (Hos 10:15) as a reference to a future punishment (“it shall be...
done”) upon the house of Israel. Davis, however, argues that the verb עשׂה most naturally refers to the past and it speaks of “Bethel” rather than the house of Israel. He translates ככה עשׂה לכם בית־אל as “Thus has Bethel done to you” or “Thus he [i.e. God] has done to you, O Bethel.”\(^{193}\) This clause in the MT, he further explains, appears to be a comment added after the occurrence of the event. It was added to point out how the city and shrine of Bethel were indeed destroyed as a fulfilment of Hosea’s threat (cf. Hos 10:8). In contrast, he adds, the LXX reading, which in fact has “I will do . . .” and not “it shall be done,” seeks to generalise the saying by making it to apply to the whole people (house of Israel), while also rendering it as a future threat in closer conformity with the rest of the passage.\(^{194}\)

As for the city of Dan, 2 Kings 15:29 indicates that it was devastated by Tiglath-pileser III in 732 BCE.\(^{195}\) Material remains suggest that it probably recovered from the disaster and continued to prosper until the Babylonian conquest.\(^{196}\) It is possible that Hosea 2:15 refers to the devastation of Dan by Tiglath-pileser and not the destruction and looting of the sanctuary at Bethel as proposed earlier but this scenario is unlikely. This interpretation would mean assigning one context to Hosea 2:15 (devastation of Dan in 732 BCE) and another to Hosea 2:8–9 (siege of Samaria between 725–722 BCE).

\(^{193}\)Text in square brackets his. Davies, *Hosea*, 249.

\(^{194}\)Davies, *Hosea*, 249.


4.3.5 Punishment as Prerequisite for Rehabilitation and Restoration

The reference to the termination of Israel’s festival days of the Baals in Hosea 2:15 ends in the final judgment: “She went after her lovers, and she forgot me.” The entire section of text on reform (Hos 2:4), oracle of threat (Hos 2:5–6), and evidence of wrongdoing (Hos 2:7) and punishment (Hos 2:8–15) has been tending toward the singular judgment of gross infidelity against the northern kingdom of Israel in Hosea 2:15. The following verse Hosea 2:16 marks a sudden thematic shift. Macintosh observes that: “The soliloquy continues but the mood changes abruptly from punishment and coercion to coercion through love.”197 Davies echoes Macintosh’s view noting that the word לכם that begins the verse connects with Yahweh’s statement about Israel’s guilt in Hosea 2:15. Yahweh’s statement, however, does not deal with corrective measures or outright punishment but is a tender word of love geared toward a fresh beginning.198 Yet, Hosea 2:16 and 2:17 seem to form a part of Hosea 2:4–15 given that the word לכם, which introduces Hos 2:16, also introduces Hosea 2:8 and 2:11. Although Hosea 2:16–17 does not have the same sinister outlook as Hosea 2:15, it is still grim because of Yahweh’s intention to “bring her into the wilderness.” It is, however, not a return to the days of Israel’s wandering in the wilderness after its exit from the land of Egypt. The sense in Hosea 2:16 echoes Yahweh’s threat in Hosea 2:3 “to turn her into a wilderness,” which reflects the condition of the land after the destruction of its vegetation as a part of Assyria’s war effort against Israel. Thus, the

197 Macintosh, Hosea, 69.
198 Davies, Hosea, 78.
sense in Hosea 2:16 is not that Yahweh will take the metaphorical wife into the wilderness as such but, rather to turn her into one. Assyria is simply Yahweh’s tool to bring destruction to Israel so change can occur. It is only after turning the land into a wilderness that Yahweh can begin the process of rehabilitation or restoration of the land (cf. Isa 5:1–7; 27:2–4). This understanding is reflected in Hosea 2:17 “And I will give her vineyards from there [מִשָּׂם]” in which “there” refers to “wilderness” in Hosea 2:16. The Hebrew conjunctive ו “and” at the beginning of Hosea 2:17 (omitted in some English bibles like NRSV, JPS Tanakh) stresses the thought process in Hosea 2:16–17. Restoration of agriculture, it highlights, can only happen after Yahweh’s chastising action against the land (“Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. And I will give her vineyards from there [מִשָּׂם]”). When restoration occurs, Israel will respond (הָעָנָה הָעָנָה) as it did when it exited from the land of Egypt (Hos 2:17b), travelled from there and followed Yahweh (contra Hos 1:2), through the wilderness, into the bountiful land of Canaan.

Hosea 2:18–25 forms the rest of the oracle of rehabilitation. Unlike the preceding oracle in Hosea 2:16–17, this passage is entirely hopeful in outlook. Yahweh will no longer be confused with the Baals (Hos 2:18–19). Threat posed by land and air


200 Cf. the view that Hos 2:17 does not speak of giving vineyards but that it refers typologically to Yahweh’s promise to give to the Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey, as in Exod 3:7–8, 17. Davies, *Hosea*, 79; concerning the Valley of Achor from an archaeological perspective, see King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 26–27.

201 Cf. “That הענה implies both an answer and a 'following after' is indicated by the next word 'there' (בָּא) which syntactically presupposes a constructio prae gnans, (as in 1:2b; 2:20b, and 3:5b), i.e., a verb of motion is implied: ‘she answers and follows after’ = ‘she follows willingly.’” Wolff, *Hosea*, 43; contra Davies, *Hosea*, 81.
creatures will be removed (Hos 2:20a) and war will end (Hos 2:20b). Divine-human relationship will be renewed (Hos 2:21–22, 25) and the land’s bounty will be restored (Hos 2:23; contra Deut 11:16–17). The hopeful outlook in Hosea 2:18–25 is punctuated by the expression "And on that day" in verses 18, 20, 23. The only other place where the expression appears is in Hosea 1:5. Scholars have argued that the expression is a redaction to elucidate the new era. Andersen and Freedman have argued for a significant connection between Hosea 1:5 and 2:20:

Not only is the eschatological formula bayyôm hahû’, “in that day,” used in both passages, showing that the time frame is the same, but the phrase šbr qâšt, “to break the bow,” also appears. The balancing of perfect and imperfect forms of šbr (wšbrty in 1:5 and šbrw in 2:20) indicates the bonding of the two passages. In 1:5 the “breaking of the bow of Israel” represents a final defeat and destruction of the army of the army of Israel in the Jezreel Valley, whereas in 2:20 the breaking of the bow and other implements of war ushers in the new age of security and bliss.²⁰²

Wolff has noted a broader connection between Hosea 2:18–25 and Hosea 1:1–6, 8–9 based on the expression וְהָיָה בְּיָמֵי הַהָוָא which has led him to suggest that the two passages belong to the same redactor.²⁰³ Although it is possible to date it to the time of Tiglath-pileser’s devastation of the northern kingdom in 733 BCE, he argues that the reign of Shalmaneser that begins in 727 BCE would be a more probable setting for its composition.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 282.
²⁰³ Wolff, Hosea, 47–49.
²⁰⁴ Wolff, Hosea, 48.
Yee, however, has assigned Hosea 2:18–25 to an exilic redactor except for Hosea 2:18aBb (“You will call me ‘my husband.’ And you will never again call me ‘my Baal.’”) and Hosea 2:21–22a (“I shall betroth you to me forever. I shall betroth you to me with righteousness and with justice with love and with compassion. I shall betroth you to me in faithfulness”).

She finds similar lines of thinking between Hosea 2:19 and the exilic text, Zechariah 13:2: “And on that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more.”

In the mind of the exilic redactor, Yee argues, the period of chastisement in exile, the road to conversion and renewal of covenantal dialogue necessarily entail the elimination of any vestiges of idolatry. The redactor’s thinking, she adds, is in line with the authors of the book of Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic history wherein the transgression of covenant was defined chiefly in terms of forgetting Yahweh in the sin of idolatry.

Careful reading shows that the hopeful outlook in Hosea 2:18–25, particularly the reference to the restoration of the fertility of the land, echoes Amos 9:14–15:

I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and they will rebuild cities and inhabit them. And they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them upon their land, and they shall not be removed again from the land which I have given them, says Yahweh your God.

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205 Translations hers. Yee, Composition and Tradition, 84, 87, 127.

206 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 85.

207 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 85.
Amos 9:14–15, according to Jeremy Smoak, radically reverses the curse in Amos 5:11 and is triggered by the ambitious political reform of Hezekiah after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel. William Schniedewind, he notes, has proposed that the verses “were added when the book of Amos received its final form in the Hezekian period.” Schniedewind’s interpretation reads the reformulation of the curse (Amos 5:11) in Amos 9:14–15 as part of the political intentions of Hezekiah in the late eighth century to restore the former “golden age” of David and Solomon. The key to this interpretation, Smoak argues, rests on the meaning of the expression שֵׁבַתָּי שֵׁבָתָה “restoring the fortunes” in Amos 9:14. This expression, he argues, is also found in extra-biblical inscriptions wherein one of their central connotations involves the restoration of a dynasty’s former territory. In Smoak’s view, “the promise of ‘restoring the fortunes,’ accompanied by a reversed form of the curse, functioned as propaganda that envisioned the restoration of the northern territory to the Davidic dynasty.”


210 Cf. the argument that the expression of hope of a future beyond judgment in Amos 9:9–15 is the work of a Deuteronomistic redactor. This is based on the idea that it is unlikely Amos himself would have offered an assurance which includes a return to a Davidic king (Hos 9:11–12). Mason, *Propaganda*, 107.

211 Translation his. Smoak, "Building Houses," 27.

212 Smoak, "Building Houses," 27.

Although Hosea 2:18–25 does not specifically refer to the restoration of Israel’s fortunes as in Amos 9:14, the emphases on reform (Hos 2:18, 19) and the return of her vineyards (Hos 2:17) point toward that goal. Moreover, Hosea 2:18–25 clearly reverses the threat and curses in Hosea 1:4–6, 8–9 and 2:4–17. Therefore, based on Smoak and Schniedewind’s interpretation above, it is possible that Hezekiah’s radical reform in the late eighth century is the background for Hosea 2:18–25 (and 2:4–17). Relating to this point, Dearman has proposed that the penultimate stage of the development of the book of Hosea may have taken place in Judah, triggered by the reform of Hezekiah:

We should reckon . . . with the possibility that the book (as opposed to the earlier [oral?] [sic] presentations by the prophet) originated in the aftermath of Samaria’s fall and was produced in Judah by refugees from the Assyrian onslaught. Public dissemination of Hosea’s prophecies would provide confirmation that Israel’s political demise was an act of YHWH’s judgment. It is certainly to Judah that we should look for an early written collection of Hosea’s prophecies, even if not the first one, and in Judah also for the subsequent preserving of them. Hezekiah’s resurgent and reforming policies in Judah offer a plausible context for the collecting of prophetic oracles and national traditions.  

Dearman’s proposal and the earlier suggestion that Hosea 2:18–25 (and 2:4–17) relates to Hezekiah’s reform will be explored in the research chapters that follow, especially regarding its purpose.

4.3.6 Hosea 2 as Black Prophecy

The term Hoseanic is used in this study to describe those prophecies that the prophet had uttered during his ministry in the northern kingdom. In contrast, the term

non-Hoseanic is used to denote prophecies belonging to redactors. Scholars, as shown earlier, have argued that some prophecies in Hosea 2 are the works of later redactors.\textsuperscript{215} The question that arises is what these redactors hope to achieve with the redaction. Like the previous discussion on Hosea 1, the appearance of redactions in Hosea 2 as the prophet’s judgment against an apostate nation and prediction of disaster suggests that the redactors seek to achieve more than to provide a theological account for the fall of Samaria and/or provide encouragement for the exiles.

It has been earlier argued that the opening address in Hosea 2:4a is not Hosea’s instruction to his children to take sides with him against their mother. Instead, it is cast as Yahweh’s address to an unknown audience or, more precisely, as Yahweh’s soliloquy about events in the northern kingdom. The events that Hosea 2 portrays or presupposes include a siege (Hos 2:8–9), the destruction of agriculture (Hos 2:5, 11–12, 14, 16–17aa, 23–24), the disruption or termination of sacrificial worship (Hos 2:13, 15) and war (Hos 2:20). It has been argued that the portrayal of the siege event in Hosea 2:8–9 refers to the siege of Samaria that King Shalmaneser initiated in 725 BCE. The fall of Samaria itself occurred either during the reign of Shalmaneser (727–722) or that of his successor, Sargon II (721–705).\textsuperscript{216} It has also been argued that the depictions of

\textsuperscript{215}For example Harper (Hos 2:4b, 6, 12), Wolff (Hos 2:18–25), Yee (Hos 2: 2–3, 8–9, 10, 11, 13–18aB, 19–20, 22b–25), Macintosh (Hos 2:1–3) and Rudnig-Zelt (Hos 2:1–25). See earlier survey about the interpretations of these scholars.

\textsuperscript{216}Both Shalmaneser V and Sargon II claimed to have captured Samaria. Grabbe, \textit{Ancient Israel: What Do We Know And How Do We Know It}, 135–136; those who assign the actual fall of Samaria to Sargon II include, Noth, \textit{The History of Israel}, 262; Finkelstein and Silberman, \textit{Bible Unearthed}, 217–220; Miller and Hayes, \textit{History}, 387–388; contra the argument that Samaria fell in Shalmaneser’s time, but was re-captured by Sargon II in 720 BCE. Becking, \textit{Samaria}, 33–39; see also Hayes and Kuan, “Final Years of Samaria,” 179–181.
destruction to agriculture (Hos 2:5, 11–12, 14, 16–17aa, 23–24) reflect a wartime scenario. Specifically, they refer to the devastation of the land vegetation as a part of the Assyrian war effort against Israel and Samaria. It is, however, uncertain as to whether the devastation occurred before or after the siege of Samaria even though, from a literary perspective, the descriptions of vegetation follow the siege imagery in Hosea 2. What really matters is that the references to devastation in those verses (Hos 2:5, 11–12, 14, 16–17aa, 23–24) support the argument that Hosea 2:8–9 depicts a historical siege. As previously explained, studies have shown that siege and destruction of vegetation are two common and concurrent tactics that the Assyrian army uses against its enemies during wartime. The third event portrayed in Hosea 2:4–25 is the disruption or termination of sacrificial worship in verses 13 and 15. It is possible that these verses refer to the destruction of Bethel during Shalmaneser’s invasion of Israel (cf. Hos 10:15). Finally, Hosea 2:20 describes the cessation of war (וקשׁת וחרב וメディア אשׁבור מן־הארץ והשׁכבתים לבטח) in the land of Israel. 217 Here the cessation of war signified by the breaking of sword and bow matches and reverses the description in Hosea 1:5. 218 From this perspective, the cessation of war in Hosea 2:20 coincides with the end of Israel’s military might. The event referenced is probably the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE.

If the foregoing interpretation is correct, it is unlikely that Hosea could have uttered the “predictive prophecy” in Hosea 2:4–25. It is doubtful that he could have

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217 It has been argued that Hos 2:20 does not announce “a cosmic kingdom of peace that includes the entire heathen world” but the land in which the people of Israel lived. For a fuller analysis of the word “land” in Hosea, see Wolff, Hosea, 51.

218 As suggested, the end of Israel's military might in Hos 1:5 corresponds to the context in Amos 5:11 and Zeph 1:13 in which “the horror of invasions is seen specifically in terms of the resulting plunder and damage to crops and property.” Macintosh, Hosea, 82.
anticipated future events with such precision—the siege of Samaria (Hos 2:8–9), the destruction of agriculture (Hos 2:5, 11–12, 14, 16–17aa, 23–24), the disruption or termination of sacrificial worship as a result of damage to the sanctuary at Bethel (Hos 2:13, 15). This observation suggests that the passage recounts Yahweh’s actions against Israel that resulted in its collapse. Israel’s failure to reform (Hos 2:4) has led to punitive action against it (Hos 2:5–15) which is a necessary step in the process of restoring Israel’s relationship with Yahweh (Hos 2:16–25). In view of this interpretation, Hosea 2:4–25 may be considered a black prophecy. The prophecy appears to have been uttered by Hosea who has been commissioned by Yahweh to speak about Israel’s future. However, in reality, it belongs to a redactor who seeks to speak from Yahweh’s perspective after the fall of Samaria.

4.3.7 Deuteronomistic Influence in the Black Prophecy

As to the characteristic of the redactor of the black prophecy in Hosea 2, evidence suggests that the redactor is “steeped in deuteronomistic ideology.”219 There is a strong correspondence between the condemnation of Israel’s ‘affairs’ with the Baals in Hosea 2 (especially verses 4–7, 15) and the Deuteronomistic historian’s pervasive condemnation of Jeroboam I’s installation of the golden calves and high places of worship in Dan and Bethel which is deemed to have led the Israelians into sin.220 In accounting for the fall of Samaria, the historian has pinned the entire blame on Jeroboam:

219 Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 308.

Jeroboam drove Israel from following Yahweh and to commit great sin, and the Israelites persisted in all the sins which Jeroboam had committed; they did not depart from them until Yahweh removed Israel from his sight, as he had foretold through all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their land to Assyria until this day (2 Kgs 17:21b–23).

The Deuteronomistic thinking in Hosea 2:15 is particularly striking in that the censure against Israel’s sacrifices to the Baals echoes the condemnation of Baal worship in the book of Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic History.²²¹

The mocking of the inability of the “lovers/baals” to come to Israel’s aid in time of Yahweh’s punishment (Hos 2:12) also mirrors Yahweh’s taunt in Deuteronomy 32:37–39 (cf. Jer 2:28). The similarity between the expressions לא יבוא מציון and לא יבוא לאריאב in Deuteronomy 32:39 and לא יבוא מציון in Hosea 2:12 is a clear indication that the authors of these verses shared a common understanding about the incompetence of the other gods. Moreover, Hosea 2:19 “For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall not be mentioned again by name” echoes the sentiment in Deuteronomy 12:3: “Break down their altars, destroy their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire, and cut down the images of their gods, wiping out their name from that place.” The notion of “knowing” Yahweh in Hosea 2:10 and 2:22b, as Yee has explained, “. . . is the favourite of the deuteronomist as the opposite of the ‘forgetting of YHWH.’”²²² The “knowledge of God,” she adds, also has strong connection with the Deuteronomistic concept of covenant, as with the portrayal of a marital union between

²²¹ For example, Deut 4:3; Judg 2:11, 13; 3:7; 8:33; 1 Kgs 22:54; 2 Kgs 3:2; 17:16; Yee, Composition and Tradition, 119.

²²² She cites examples in Deut 4:39; 7:9; 8:5–11; 9:3; 6–7. Yee, Composition and Tradition, 88, 118, here 88.
Yahweh and Israel. Additionally, on the subject of לֹא חָשָׂךְ “forgetting” Yahweh, Wolff finds a strong connection between Hosea 2:15b (“She went after her lovers and she forgot me, says Yahweh”) and Deuteronomy 6:4; 8:19 (“If you do forget Yahweh your God and follow other gods to serve them or bow down to them, I warn you this day that you shall surely perish”).

The portrayal of the destruction of land agriculture in Hosea 2 also exhibits strong Deuteronomistic thinking. The intention to destroy Israel’s grain and wine resources, wool, flax, vines and fig trees in Hosea 2:11, 14 clearly reflects the stipulation in Deuteronomy 11:16–17 about Yahweh’s condition for maintaining the fertility of the land:

Take care lest you will be lured into turning away to serve other gods and to bow down in worship to them. Then the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you and he will hold back the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce, and you will soon perish from the good land which Yahweh is giving you.

Finally, Wolff has argued that the three-word formula “grain, new wine, olive oil” in Hosea 2:10 belongs to the vocabulary of Deuteronomy (7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 223 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 88; for an opposing view concerning covenant theology in Hosea, see Else K. Holt, Prophesying the Past: The Use of Israel’s History in the Book of Hosea (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 53–54. 224 Translations of Hos 2:15b and Deut 8:19 are mine; Wolff, Hosea, 40.)
As for the hopeful outlook in the remaining verses 18–25 (including the element of repentance in verses 17b–18) which comes after the oracles pertaining to Israel’s sinful behaviour (Hos 2:4–7) and punishment (Hos 2:8–15), they too are consistent with Deuteronomistic thinking (cf. the motif of sin, punishment, repentance and deliverance in Judg 2:11–23). The strength of the cumulative evidence affirms that the black prophecy in Hosea 2 is “steeped in deuteronomistic ideology.” There the redactor contemplates the events that have overtaken the northern kingdom from a Deuteronomistic viewpoint.

4.3.8 Hosea 2 as Propaganda

What remains to be investigated from here onwards is the purpose of the black prophecy in Hosea 2. Since these prophecies do not originate in Hosea but are the deliberations of a Deuteronomistic redactor that were committed to writing after the fact of the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE, they are not Hosea’s forecast of future

225 According to him, the three-word formula is "new evidence for Hosea’s close connection with those groups of Levites who formed an opposition party in the Northern Kingdom, groups to which Deuteronomy ultimately may be traced." Wolff, *Hosea*, 37.

punishment for Israel’s sin of apostasy. Moreover, the appearance of the deliberations as the prophecies of Hosea suggests that its purpose is not simply to account for Israel’s sin and the demise of the northern kingdom of Israel as the outworking of Yahweh’s displeasure. It is argued here that by assuming Hoseanic origin, the black prophecies aim to gain the Israelians’ assent to the reason for the disaster in the northern kingdom. The Deuteronomistic redactor is fully convinced that Israel’s flirtation with other gods is the root cause of Yahweh’s displeasure with the nation. The redactor believes that it is only through the acknowledgment of guilt that hopes for the future become a possibility for Israel. Understood in this way, it may now be proposed that the black prophecies in Hosea 2 actually constitute a piece of propaganda. Its intention, as earlier stated, is to persuade the Israelians into giving assent to the idea that the root cause of Yahweh’s punishment for the northern kingdom is its flirtation with other gods. Its goal is to lead them into a confession of sin and repentance (Hos 2:17–18) so that restoration can follow (Hos 2:23–25).

Given the foregoing understanding of the purpose of the propaganda in Hosea 2, it is important to reiterate some fundamental understandings of propaganda examined earlier which will show the coherence between the latter and the proposed propaganda in Hosea 2. According to Ellul, the basic purpose of propaganda is to bring about a desired change:

Propaganda is the expression of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influencing the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulation.227

227 Ellul, Propaganda, xi–xii.
Many scholars share his view that propaganda seeks to lead people into action and conformity.\textsuperscript{228} In Old Testament studies, scholars like McCarter, Whitelam, Høgenhaven, Frick and Mason have argued that many biblical texts are actually propaganda that were used for political gains.\textsuperscript{229} Brenner’s view that the husband-wife metaphor in Jeremiah 2; 3:1–3; and 5:7–8 operates as a “propaganda vehicle” to depict the Judean’s sins of apostasy against Yahweh further supports Ellul’s view. It also bolsters the view expressed above about the purpose and goal of the propaganda in Hosea 2, namely to convince the Israelis of their role in the fall of Samaria and the need to make a break with the past through acknowledgment of guilt and repentance.\textsuperscript{230}

According to Foulkes, covery is an essential ingredient for the success of a propaganda: “its real power lies in its capacity to conceal itself.”\textsuperscript{231} For the Deuteronomistic redactor, the fall of Samaria has demonstrated beyond any doubt that Israel’s flirtation with other gods is its root cause and there is no better way to put this fact across to the Israelis than to convey it in the name of the prophet Hosea. In this way, the message has a power to bring about repentance. Had it been simply a third-


\textsuperscript{229} McCarter, ”The Apology of David,” 489–504; Whitelam, ”David,” 61–87; Høgenhaven, ”Prophecy and Propaganda,” 125–141; Frick, ”Cui Bono,” 79–92; Mason, \textit{Propaganda}, 22–89.

\textsuperscript{230} Brenner, ”Prophetic Propaganda,” 87–89.

party argument about cause and effect, it can be safely assumed that Israel’s assent to the reason for the demise of the northern kingdom and the need for repentance would be less forthcoming. The ultimate aim of the redactor is to bring about Israel’s repentance: “Therefore I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness and I will speak to her tenderly . . . There she shall respond . . .” (Hosea 2:18–19).²³² Israel’s penitent response will inaugurate a time of security as war ends in the land. This end is signified by the phrase לקשׁת וחרב ומלחמה אשׁבור מן־הארץ in Hosea 2:20b and the disuse of the names of the Baals (Hos 2:19), which is probably a reference to damages to or loss of the Baal images through looting during wartime. Regarding the term אָרֶץ in Hosea 2:20b, the previous chapter has already explained that it refers to the land of Israel. That chapter also highlights the arguments of scholars to relate the breaking of the bow (קשׁת) to the destruction of a nation’s military might, which effectively means an end to war. Understood in this light, the reference to the breaking of bow and sword in Hosea 2:20bα points to the cessation of war. This reading is affirmed by the clause (Hos 2:20bβ) that follows: “[I will break . . .] war from the land.”

However, it is unclear as to whose bow and sword Yahweh will break to bring about an end to war (Hos 2:20b). Will the end of war coincide with the destruction of the military might of Israel, its enemy, or both? According to Hosea 2:14, Yahweh will send for wild animals to devour the vines and fig trees after their destruction. In

²³² It has been argued that “There she shall respond” constitutes a part of an ancient Israelite marriage formula. In Hos 2:17b, it is the response of Israel, the bride. Mordechai A. Friedman, "Israel's Response in Hosea 2: 17b: You Are My Husband"," *JBL* 99 (1980): 199–204.
contrast, Yahweh will make a covenant with the wild animals of the field, birds of the air and creeping things of the ground (וכתרי להם ברית) in Hosea 2:20a so that re-cultivation of the land can occur (Hos 2:22–23a). Thus, Hosea 2:20a reverses the scenario in Hosea 2:14. The latter portrays a war situation whereas the former depicts the end of war following Yahweh’s covenant with the land and air creatures. The cessation of war will enable Israel to dwell in the land, free from any further harm to property and humans (Hos 2:20c). Yet, Hosea 2:14 and 2:20a suggest that war has already devastated the land of Israel, particularly its agriculture, and has dealt a blow to Israel’s military capacity. Based on this reading, Hosea 2:20 probably refers to the cessation of war after it had caused much damage to Israel’s land and had incapacitated its military effectiveness. However, the setback portends a positive outcome for Israel. In Hosea 2:23–25, Yahweh promises divine blessing for Israel after the end of war. Yahweh’s speech is punctuated by the words ענה and אמר and it promises the restoration of fecundity to the land (Hos 2:23:25a) and Israel’s relationship with Yahweh (Hos 2:25b; cf. Hos 1:4–9; 2:6).

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233 According to Hillers, “the language of covenant with wild animals reverses a common curse or threat in ancient Near Eastern treaties, several of which say that wild animals will come upon a land as punishment. The statement ‘I will banish (אשבו ר) the bow and sword and warfare’ resembles another common curse in ancient Near Eastern treaties that a god will ‘break a man's weapons, usually the bow.’” Cited in Kelle, Metaphor and Rhetoric, 277; Delbert R. Hillers, Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets (vol. 16; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), 54–56, 60.

234 Cf. “if the balance of nature [that is, Yahweh's covenant with the land and air creatures in Hos 2:20a] is ordered for Israel's benefit, then the other scourge with which she was threatened, viz. invasion by hostile neighbours, is also to be removed by the God who alone can control them . . . Yahweh will smash the weapons of such invaders and rid the land of their menace . . .” Explanation in square brackets is mine. Macintosh, Hosea, 82.
In conclusion, the propaganda in Hosea 2 conveys the idea that Israel’s punishment is for its own benefit. The punishment is an opportunity for Israel to repent and re-align its loyalty to Yahweh. The view that a time of upheaval is a fruitful scenario for a propagandist is particularly instructive for understanding Hosea 2. This idea also calls for further investigation to determine whether something more is expected from the Israelis given the redactor’s Deuteronomistic orientation especially regarding Jeroboam’s scheme to frustrate the Israelis’ loyalty to Jerusalem. Would the collapse of the northern kingdom motivate the redactor-propagandist to consider ways to address that concern? The following chapter, in its analysis of Hosea 3, will explore this question.

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235 Cf. the interpretation that Hos 2:4–14:9 is ultimately directed to a Judean reading audience in order to lead that audience to conclude that Yahweh has punished the people and leaders of northern Israel for abandonment of Yahweh and is an appeal to them to return to Yahweh through the house of Judah/David and the Jerusalem temple. Sweeney, "A Form-Critical Rereading of Hosea," 91–106.

236 Frick, "Cui Bono," 81.
5. PROPHECY AND PROPAGANDA IN HOSEA 3

5.1 Introduction

Within the history of interpretation of Hosea 3, the single preoccupation of scholars has been with the theme of hope of restoration. A brief survey of this history will demonstrate the range of interpretive and conflicting positions regarding this broad and tenacious theme. Despite much debate, there appears to be no consensus concerning the origin and provenance of the salvation oracle in Hosea 3, and its relationship to Hosea 1. Of particular interest for the current investigation is the disagreement concerning the reference to “David their king” in Hosea 3:5b. Some scholars argue that it belongs to Hosea while others interpret it as a supplement of non-Hoseanic origin. Emerging from this is the lack of consensus on the purpose of Hosea 3:5, the climax of Yahweh’s salvation oracle in Hosea 3. If the reference “David their king” is non-Hoseanic, the question is what Hosea 3:5 (or Hosea 3 if the entire chapter does not originate in Hosea) seeks to achieve. The aim here is to re-examine and offer a fresh perspective of the prophecy of restoration in Hosea 3, in light of the earlier proposal about the presence of black prophecies and propaganda in Hosea 1 and 2. Black prophecy and propaganda, it has been suggested, are like two sides of a coin. Thus, the black prophecy in Hosea 3 would seek to convince the Israelis of Judah’s special relationship with Yahweh and the aim of the propaganda would be to persuade them that their apostasy is the root cause for the collapse of the northern kingdom. Its ultimate goal is to lead them to a confession of guilt and repentance. A key aspect of the re-
examination of Hosea 3 will involve an attempt to establish whether it also contains black prophecies that function as propaganda.

The salvation oracle in Hosea 3 constitutes the epilogue to the first division of the book of Hosea (chapters 1–3). It balances and reverses the prophecy of gloom and doom in Hosea 1.¹ Read in light of Hosea 1, the first person narrative in Hosea 3 gives the impression that the prophet himself is its narrator and author.² Not all scholars agree with this perception.

In his early commentary, Harper has argued that Hosea 3:5 is an addition to the original oracle of the prophet in Hosea 3:1–4.³ Harper identifies the author of Hosea 3:5 as a reader from a time at the conclusion of Israel’s period of seclusion. This reader upon realising that Israel’s return was the next step in the manifestation of the divine grace added Hosea 3:5 to the sayings of the prophet in Hosea 3:1–4. The restorative return to “David their king,” according to Harper, is not a return to a king of the Davidic

¹ The words “And the Lord said to me again” in Hos 3:1 presupppose a previous narrative. It has been argued that the phenomenon of a second command/act occurs in other symbolic stories. “In each case, the second scene constitutes a contrast to the earlier on, specifically the reversal of a preceding outlook. The first person pronoun in 3 1ff shows that the original author of this section still had available to him the first-person form of the story concerning the marriage with a harlot.” Buss, Prophetic Word of Hosea, 57–58.

² Cf. Wolff, Hosea, xxix, 57; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 292; contra Yee, Composition and Tradition, 57–58; see also the proposal that 'hope' passages in Hosea comprise divine and prophetic speeches. Hos 3:4–5, written in non-divine style, is a secondary text. It reflects the tradition of the seer or singer. "[I]t represents a somewhat artificial situation, in which a revered prophet of the past (Hosea) is believed to speak to the later situation.” Buss, Prophetic Word of Hosea, 70.

³ Harper, Amos and Hosea, clx.
dynasty but “the Messianic king, the second David.” Harper contends that passages with messianic allusions are “entirely inconsistent with Hosea’s point of view.” He based his assessment on the idea that Hosea’s prophecy of impending doom precludes any possibility of hope and, therefore, a passage like Hosea 3:5 is to be treated as secondary. Harper, however, has not explained the relationship between the reader-author of Hosea 3:5 and the prophet. Neither has he discussed the reader-author’s literary style of inserting the salvation oracle (Hos 3:5), in the prophet’s name, within the context of the Hoseanic prophecies in Hosea 3 (and Hosea 1–2).

According to Wolff, the first person narrative in Hosea 3 should be read as a reference to a real and historical event. The event centres on God’s command to Hosea to perform the symbolic act of reuniting with Gomer (Hos 3:1) and to which he complies (Hos 3:2). Wolff, however, considers the phrases “David their king” and “in the latter days” in Hosea 3:5 as non-Hoseanic. These, he argues, are additions made


5 It is unclear whether his understanding of the post-exilic dating for ”in the end of days” is applicable to the whole of Hos 3:5 or only to the reference of a trembling return to Yahweh. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 223–224.


8 Wolff, *Hosea*, 57.

9 Contra Emmerson, *Judean Perspective*, 101–113. See also the discussion below concerning the phrase באחרית הימים that is often translated as “in the latter days.”
Prophecy, Propaganda or Both? A Rereading of Hosea 1–3

by a Judean redactor and his assessment is shared by other scholars like Mays, Birch and Macintosh. Wolff finds it improbable that the phrase “David their king” should come between two clauses with Yahweh as the object of the verbs בְּקַשׁ in Hosea 3:5b and פָּדָּה in Hosea 3:5c. The syntactical construction in Hosea 3:5bc meant that בְּקַשׁ has two objects (“Yahweh” and “David their king”) as opposed to a single object (“Yahweh”) for פָּדָּה. This discrepancy suggests to Wolff that “David their king” is a non-Hoseanic addition in Hosea 3:5. The only other place outside Hosea 3:5 where “David their king” appears in apposition to “Yahweh their God” is in Jeremiah 30:9. On this basis, he argues, that “David their king” originates in Judaic messianic eschatology. Similarly, Wolff argues for a Judaic origin of the phrase "in the latter days" based on their use in Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Jeremiah 23:30; 30:24; Ezekiel 38:16. Despite his attention to detail, Wolff has not questioned the insertion of the non-Hoseanic phrases (“David their king” and “in the latter days”) within the context of a first person report by the prophet. He has not explored their purpose in relation to other prophecies that he has ascribed to Hosea. Likewise, Mays has not discussed how “David their king” and “in the latter days” should be understood in light of the surrounding Hoseanic prophecies despite agreeing


11 Wolff, Hosea, 57; Macintosh, Hosea, 110.

12 Wolff, Hosea, 63; it seems most commentators consider Jer 30:9 a late insertion. Gerald L. Keown, Jeremiah 26–52 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 92.

13 Wolff, Hosea, 63.

14 Wolff, Hosea, 63.
with Wolff that these phrases are probably late additions by a Judean redactor.\textsuperscript{15}

Emmerson has rejected Wolff’s argument that “David their king” is a problematic second object for the verb בָּקַשׁ because בָּקַשׁ refers properly to seeking Yahweh (Hos 3:5a). For evidence against his argument, she cites Hosea 2:9 where בָּקַשׁ is used not with Yahweh but with the woman’s search of her lovers. More significantly, Emmerson cites 2 Samuel 3:17 where the verb בָּקַשׁ is used with the object King David (הָיוּם בָּקְשִׁים אַחֲרֵי מִלְךָ).\textsuperscript{16} She also rejects Wolff’s argument that the phrase “David their king” has its origin in Judaic messianic eschatology based on Jeremiah 30:9 wherein the reference to David appears alongside “Yahweh their God.” Her counter-argument is that “[t]he book of Jeremiah contains many echoes and reminiscences of Hosea, and it is, in any event, always hazardous to try to establish in which direction dependence lies.”\textsuperscript{17} Concerning the phrase בָּקַשׁ (Hos 3:5d), Emmerson argues that it does not denote a developed eschatology like in the book of Daniel. It simply signifies the future forming a parallel to אחר (Hos 3:5a).\textsuperscript{18} Emmerson further dismisses the idea that “David their king” in Hosea 3:5 is a Judean redaction on the grounds that it is chiastically connected to the prophet’s speech in Hosea 3:4. According to her, “Israel’s deprivation will consist in the loss of the institutions of her political and religious life; her restoration will embrace the return to true religion (“to

\textsuperscript{15} In an earlier section of his commentary, he notes that “the hand of the Judahistic redactors is evident at several places” of the book. Mays, \textit{Hosea}, 15, 60.

\textsuperscript{16} Emmerson, \textit{Judean Perspective}, 103.

\textsuperscript{17} Emmerson, \textit{Judean Perspective}, 104.

\textsuperscript{18} Emmerson, \textit{Judean Perspective}, 104.
Yahweh her God’) and to stable government (‘to David her king’).”¹⁹ Thus, she rejects the notion that the reference to “David their king” is an addition expressing Judean nationalistic aspirations. Yet, she acknowledges the difficulty of associating the reference with Hosea as “it may rightly be queried whether he could have expressed it openly without incurring the charge of treason while Israel existed as an independent nation.”²⁰ She cautiously entertains Robert Gordis’ proposition of assigning the saying to Hosea but dating it after the fall of the northern kingdom. The problem with this interpretation, she notes, is the absence of any indication that Hosea continued to minister to the Israelis after the disaster of 721 BCE.²¹ After a lengthy analysis, she concludes that, “we ought not too readily to assume that the reference to ‘David their king’ must be due to Judean influence. It is arguable that it belongs to the primary stratum of the material.”²²

More recently, Macintosh following Mays and Wolff has assigned “David their king” and באחרית הימים “in the days to come” to a Judean redactor and dated them to the late seventh century (at the earliest) or possibly the post-exilic period.²³ Corroborating Wolff’s position, he argues that בקשת originates in cultic usage and its technical cultic sense is not used elsewhere with a second object following Yahweh as the first (Hos

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¹⁹ Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 103.

²⁰ Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 102.

²¹ Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 105.

²² Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 113.

²³ Macintosh, Hosea, lxxi.
3:5). Thus, he rejects Emmerson’s counter-argument against Wolff. He claims that her reasoning based on evidence in 2 Samuel 3:17 is irrelevant to the debate because יִשֵּׁר has a non-cultic usage in that verse.24 Concerning the purpose of the two secondary phrases, Macintosh proposes that they serve “to give longer perspective to Hosea’s words and to enable the promise contained in them to find its fulfilment in the Southern Kingdom after the fall of the North in 722/1 BC.”25 One notable difference, however, separates Macintosh’s analysis and those of Wolff and Mays and it concerns the origin and actual author of Hosea 3:5. Although Hosea 3:1–3 does not report a final restoration, the punishment and discipline it describes, Macintosh argues, must surely serve the implicit goal of restitution. Since Hosea 3:4 parallels the punishment of Hosea 3:1–3, the former must also have as its implied goal the eventual reinstatement of Israel’s political and cultic structure. In Macintosh’s view, Hosea 3:5 explicitly elucidates the final restoration envisaged in Hosea 3:1–4 and that “its contents go back to Hosea himself but that they were committed to writing by his disciple, the author of chapter 1 and the editor of his work.”26 Macintosh adds that Hosea’s hope for the future emerges out of his realistic and honest appraisal of the deep crisis in his personal situation (Hos 3:1–3) and country (Hos 3:4).27 That nadir in the history of the northern kingdom is its downfall at the hand of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II of Assyria in 722/721 BCE. In this respect, nothing in the book of Hosea suggests that the prophet’s


ministry extended to the fall of the Samaria or that he had witnessed its conquest.²⁸ Had it been otherwise, it is unlikely he would have remained silent after having uttered strong words of warning to the Israelis. If Hosea had indeed retired before the catastrophic event, the message of hope in Hosea 3 could not possibly have come from him. If he had uttered it before the fateful event as a prediction, as Macintosh suggests, would such a message not soften his prophecy of impending doom and diminish the chance for repentance (cf. Hos 6:1–3)? It probably would have.

In his recent commentary, Dearman notes that several scholars have argued that the reference to “David their king” in Hosea 3:5 is “the contribution of a Judean editor, updating, as it were, Hosea’s predictions of Israel’s future.” According to him, the interpretation makes a certain amount of sense since there is little evidence in Hosea to suggest that the prophet has a pro-Judean perspective.²⁹ Where it exists, it has been assigned to a Judean editor, which he argues is circular reasoning.³⁰ In view of the lack of sufficient evidence, Dearman says that one cannot conclude that the reference to a Davidic ruler could not have originated in Hosea himself.

. . . we must ask if a reference to a future Davidic ruler in Hosea, which is a frequent theme elsewhere in prophetic literature, could originate only from a southern or Judean perspective. The answer to that question is surely no, even if a Judean editorial origin is favored. It is possible that the phrase David their king has a precise setting in the reign of Hezekiah, who sought to recapture the glory years of the united monarchy. In any case, in the final composition of 3:5 David is an elaboration on the prophecy that Israel and Judah shall have “one

²⁸ Contra Wolff, Hosea, 210–211.
²⁹ Dearman, Hosea, 140.
³⁰ Dearman, Hosea, 140.
head” (1:11).³¹

Dearman’s proposal that “David their king has a precise setting in the reign of Hezekiah who sought to recapture the glory years of the united monarchy” is worthy of attention. However, he has not elaborated on this issue, especially the implication arising from the insertion of the reference among the sayings of the prophet. This chapter hopes to establish a link between Hosea 3:5 and the reign of King Hezekiah in exploring the presence of black prophecy in Hosea 3.

Returning to the question about the origin of Hosea 3, the argument that it is an autobiography based on its first person style does not stand up to critical scrutiny. If the ‘I’ is not explicitly identified as Hosea (Hos 3:2, 3), one should not assume that the speaker is the prophet himself. While it is unlikely that Hosea would use his own name when speaking about himself, it is puzzling as to why he does not name Gomer as the woman whom Yahweh has commanded him to love. Additionally, if Gomer’s name is nowhere to be found in the chapter, one cannot conclude that the “me” in Hosea 3:1 refers to Hosea himself. If Hosea is indeed “me” (Hos 3:1), why is he commanded to “love a wife” and not “love your wife” since marital reunion appears to be the goal of Hosea 3:1–3?³² These questions caution against reading Hosea 3 as the prophet’s

³¹ Dearman, *Hosea*, 140.

³²“Whether or not ‘the children of Israel' in our chapter 3 refers to the collectivity of Israel and Judah, or simply to northern Israel, as in 2.2, is . . . ambiguous.” Landy, *Hosea*, 51; since נאף is used with נאף, the former must be translated as "wife," not "woman." Sexual intercourse by a woman who is not married would be designated by the term זנה. Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 76–77; it has been argued that since Hosea 3:1 has in mind the prophet's marriage in Hos 1, it is therefore a mistake to ask why an indefinite expression "a woman" is used in Hos 3:1 and why "your wife" is not. Yet, this question is appropriate. In Hos 1:2, Hosea is asked to "take (marry) for yourself a
autobiography. Francis Landy, for example, has found it difficult to attribute Hosea 3 to the prophet. He argues:

If Hosea did write his autobiography, why is only this snatch cited? Why does it intervene between the establishment of the cosmic covenant in ch. 2 and its reversal at the beginning of ch. 4? And why, above all, is it so clumsy? The story in ch. 1, if rudimentary, is clear, its attached oracles on the whole poetically well-constructed; ch. 3, with its interminable sentences, its repetitiousness, and its grammatical incoherence in v. 3, would scarcely seem to come from the same person. It is as if good writing comes from the editor, while the poet, when left to his own devices, produces a jarring, asyndetic narrative. 33

Yee herself does not find the first person style in Hosea 3 a strong argument to prove that the passage is an autobiography. The use of first person, in her view, could be a literary or rhetorical device. She adds, “if we were to take all first person narrations at face value, we would be in a difficult position in maintaining the authenticity of the ‘I am’ sayings in John’s gospel and the Isis aretalogies, as well as the animal discourses in Aesop’s fable!” 34 The switch from the third person (Hos 1:2b) to the first person (Hos 3:1), she further argues, is a deliberate change by the final Judean and exilic

wife" and the indefinite expression is used because no definite woman is identified in this verse. However, when he actually marries someone, this person becomes his wife. Hence in Hos 2:4 (which the reader is expected to read in light of Hosea’s marriage), the personal suffix appears: "your mother" "my wife." Based on this understanding, it is not inappropriate to expect the command in Hos 3:1 to read " . . . Go, love your wife . . . " Macintosh, Hosea, 96.

33 Landy, Hosea, 47.

34 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 58.
redactor (R2) of the book of Hosea. Her investigation has led her to assign chapter 3 in its entirety to R2, who exhibits a Deuteronomistic orientation. Her argument is based on R2’s usage of Deuteronomistic terminologies in the chapter: the reunion of Judah and Israel under Davidic dominion, the notion of God’s love for his people and the references “turning to other gods” and “latter days.” Hosea 3:1–5, she says, resolves the analogous marital relationship between Yahweh and Israel in Hosea 2 on a note of hope. Following a period of chastisement in exile without leadership or cult, Israel will repent of its unfaithfulness and will be restored to the land, have its leadership returned and its covenantal relationship with Yahweh re-established.

Yee’s argument for the exilic dating of Hosea 3 based on its use of Deuteronomistic terminologies is not convincing for some scholars. The question that may be asked is whether the Deuteronomistic terms in Hosea 3 could have originated in the first Judean redactor (R1) who, according to Yee, is “very steeped in deuteronomistic ideology” and shared a similar Deuteronomistic outlook with DTR1.52

35 According to her, there are four contributors to the book of Hosea, the prophet himself, the collector, the first Judean redactor (R1) and the final and exilic redactor (R2). Yee, Composition and Tradition, 57–58, 305–317.

36 She notes that "a large number of scholars consider the whole unit, 3:1–5, an exilic or post-exilic interpretation of Hosea's marriage." Yee, Composition and Tradition, 57–58, 127–130, 308–309.

37 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 58.

38 Yee, Composition and Tradition, 63.

the author of the pre-exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic History.\textsuperscript{40} This latter view warrants a closer examination especially in view of Frank Moore Cross’ proposal relating to Martin Noth’s original thesis of a Deuteronomistic history spanning the books of Deuteronomy to 2 Kings.

Cross has argued for a pre-exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr\textsuperscript{1}) which was “written in the era of Josiah as a programmatic document of his reform and of his revival of the Davidic state,” and an exilic edition (Dtr\textsuperscript{2}) that was completed about 550 BCE. The latter constitutes an update to the previous edition by adding a chronicle of events subsequent to Josiah’s reign and a sermon to the Judean exiles.\textsuperscript{41} The Deuteronomistic historian, he argues, contrasted two themes in the pre-exilic edition: that of Jeroboam’s sin of establishing idolatrous shrines in Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:26–33) with the faithfulness of Josiah who cleansed the Jerusalem sanctuary founded by David and brought an end to Jeroboam’s shrine at Bethel.\textsuperscript{42} According to Cross, the Deuteromistic history may be regarded as propaganda and it “speaks to the North, calling to Israel to return to Judah and to Yahweh’s sole legitimate shrine in Jerusalem, asserting the claims of the ancient Davidic monarchy upon all Israel.”\textsuperscript{43} In

\textsuperscript{40} Yee, Composition and Tradition, 308–309.

\textsuperscript{41} Cross, Canaanite Myth, 287, 293–309.

\textsuperscript{42} Cross, Canaanite Myth, 279–284; Dan appears to have been destroyed by the time of Josiah’s reform (cf. Hos 8:5). Jules Gomes, The Sanctuary of Bethel and the Configuration of Israelite Identity (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 170; it seems that only the golden calf at Bethel continues to be worshipped during Hoshea’s time. Erik Eynikel, The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 87.

\textsuperscript{43} Cross, Canaanite Myth, 284.
view of Cross’s proposal concerning Dtr¹, Yee’s argument—that Hosea 3 belongs to the final exilic redactor (R2) who longs for the reunion of Judah and Israel under Davidic dominion—should be reconsidered. Granted that Hosea 3 is exilic, as Yee has argued, one wonders how reassuring its message of a hopeful return would be for the Israelis given Judah’s own crisis in exile. If the message of hope includes the return of the Judean exiles, it would seem doubtful that the salvation oracle would be uplifting for them when the reconstitution of the former northern kingdom of Israel remains seriously out of sight.⁴⁴ Is it possible that the Judean and Deuteronomistic redactor has a purpose for Hosea 3 that extends beyond the provision of a message of hope?

The above brief survey of the history of interpretation of Hosea 3 shows that there has been an active scholarly discussion about the issue of authorship and theme of restoration in Hosea 3, particularly the pro-Judean reference to “David their king” in verse 5. Weaknesses are apparent when the major positions of these scholars are viewed against one another. These scholarly positions may be categorised into three groups. The first of these comprises those who have argued that the references to “David their king” and “in the latter days” belong to the prophet.⁴⁵ Their arguments are called into question by a second group of scholars who have argued that the references to “David

⁴⁴ It is argued that "the name 'Israel' had ceased independent existence following the Assyrian conquest of 721 BC, but the ideals of 'Israel' will have been held to have continued in the southern kingdom of Judah." H. G. M. Williamson, "The Concept of Israel in Transition," in The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives (ed. Ronald E. Clements; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 142; see also Grabbe, "Israel's Historical Reality after the Exile," 12–13; cf. Grabbe, "Israel's Historical Reality after the Exile," 1014.

⁴⁵ For example, Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 113; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 307–309; Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 67–68; Macintosh, Hosea, 111.
their king” and “בראשית והימים” are non-Hoseanic. The latter group of scholars, however, have not explored the implications of their obscure origin and motivation for their inclusion. Nor have they considered how their target readers would have perceived the insertion. For those who have interpreted the whole of Hosea 3 as a secondary and an exilic text, the major effort has been to demonstrate its restorative character and literary dependence on Hosea 1–2. A serious consideration of the possibility that the prophecy in Hosea 3 expresses the self-interest of its Judean redactor is lacking. This self-interest may or may not reflect the aspiration of Yahweh and Hosea, is lacking

In light of the foregoing observation, the aim here is to advance a fresh perspective of the nature of the oracle of hope and restoration in Hosea 3. It hopes to show that Hosea 3 is the literary work of a Deuteronomistic redactor after the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE. Based on terminology adopted in this study, Hosea 3 is, therefore, black prophecy. It will investigate the possibility that Hosea 3 is a piece of propaganda aimed at highlighting the achievement of King Hezekiah’s (727–699 BCE) religious reform. His reform provides the background for the Deuteronomistic author of Hosea 3 to promote the reunification of the people of Israel with the people of Judah and the


47 For example, Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 315; Rudnig-Zelt, *Hoseastudien*, 76–77.

48 It is possible that the propaganda relates to the reign of Josiah (641–610 BCE). This possibility will be taken up in the ‘Conclusion’ chapter of this study.
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centralisation of worship in Jerusalem.

5.2 Existing Theories and Issues

5.2.1 Hosea 3 as Literary Work

Wolff, as discussed earlier, has classified Hosea 3 as the prophet’s autobiography. Macintosh largely agrees with Wolff attributing the writing of Hosea 3:1–4 to the prophet himself. The passage, according to Macintosh, describes the events in Hosea’s personal life and those of the northern kingdom. As for the composition of Hosea 3:5, he attributes it to Hosea’s disciple, who “set forth the substance of his master’s faith.” Thus, according to these scholars, Hosea 3 relates factual events by the prophet about Yahweh’s command to him to love again a wife who is or was a paramour’s lover and an adulteress (Hos 3:1ab), and his compliance with the divine instruction (Hos 3:2). However, this understanding does not appear to stand up to Friebel’s criteria that were used earlier to gauge the factuality of the marriage and naming events in Hosea 1.

In comparison to Hosea 1:2b, Yahweh’s command in Hosea 3:1b seems more ludicrous and unreasonable. Therefore, it is unlikely to be met with the compliance of the unnamed man (Hos 3:2; henceforth “man”). In Hosea 1:2b, Hosea is asked to marry

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50 With the exception of "David their king" and "in the days to come" in Hos 3:5, which he reckons are later insertion by a Judean redactor. Macintosh, *Hosea*, 111–112.

a woman who is only potentially promiscuous, not one who is already licentious, whereas in Hosea 3:1ab Yahweh’s instruction demands that the man loves (אהבה) and arguably (see below), to marry (מארות) a wife who is “a paramour’s lover and an adulteress” (Hos 3:1c). It is hard to imagine that the man would agree to resume his relationship with his wife knowing that she had been unfaithful to him and had violated the integrity and purity of his household through sexual contact with another man (or other men). Moreover, Deuteronomy 24:1–4 (cf. Jer 3:1) forbids a man from renewing relationship with his wife whom he had previously divorced (Hos 2:4–5a, 10a).

Concerning the criterion of the noticeability of performance, there is no indication that the man’s compliance, if it did happen, had been observed by a third party. The lack of an affirmation of his compliance (cf. Hos 1:3), not to mention the omission of the identities of the man and woman, and their eventual reunion, argues

52 “The household provided the social pattern within which Israelite sexuality was understood and interpreted; it was the background against which sexuality acquired meaning. Israelite culture valued the whole body, and in the same way, the household was considered closest to ideal when it was whole. The boundaries of the whole household were to be observed and protected. Sexuality was to exist within the household, not to violate its borders.” Moreover, “the culture assumes that a woman begins life in a state of purity but can acquire an impurity through sexual contact. Impurity is perhaps best understood here as something that is appropriate in one context but has been removed to a new setting where it is not appropriate. Through sexual contact women receive into themselves the male fluids that are appropriate to the man’s household. A woman who enters a household carrying within her the fluids of another household is guilty of impurity.” Jon L. Berquist, Controlling Corporeality: The Body and the Household in Ancient Israel (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 63–89, here 65, 67.

against its actualisation.⁵⁴

An analysis of Hosea 3 in relation to Hosea 1 in the following section will show that the former does not relate an actual occurrence. Evidence indicates that Hosea 3 is a creative piece of literary work whose purpose is to convey meaning and ideas. It does not recount events in the life of the prophet. This does not mean that Hosea 3 is purely fictional and has no historical value at all. On the contrary, in order for the meaning and idea in Hosea 3 to be effectively communicated and accurately understood, its author would have grounded Hosea 3 in the historical-cultural context of the time.⁵⁵ This historical-cultural context, which is vital for the message in Hosea 3, will become clearer in due course.⁵⁶ As a literary work, Hosea 3 is written in response to events in the life of Israel and Judah, and in light of Hosea 1. It is not an autobiography nor is it the work of a person or persons close to the prophet. It is written by a Judean with a Deuteronomistic outlook after the fall of Samaria. Thus, Hosea 3 is a black prophecy according to the terminology used in this study. By assuming its place in a text attributed to the prophet, Hosea 3 appears to belong to the prophet and as such was probably read as the word of Yahweh to the prophet by its intended audience. In terms


⁵⁵ For example, ‘household’ is seen as “the primary lens through which to view the character and activity of God, the identity and self-understanding of Israel in its relationship to God, the value and meaning of the land as nahālāh God gives to Israel, and Israel’s relationship to the nations.” Leo Perdue, et al., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox 1997), 225–226; for a discussion on metaphor and cultural coherence, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 23–24.

⁵⁶ Cf. the approach of "New literary criticism," in which one does not consult archaeology, sociology, or source criticism in order to understand the imaginative world created by the literary works in the Bible but rather the language and forms used, the structure created, and the literary movement developed within a particular piece of work. Bergant and Karris, *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, 32.
of genre, this chapter hopes to show that Hosea 3, in addition to being black prophecy, is propaganda that seeks to highlight the achievement and benefit of the religious reform of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:35–37; Isa 37:36–38; 2 Chr 32:20–23) against the backdrop of the fall of Samaria. Its ultimate goal is to promote Judean nationalistic and religious ideals.

5.3 New Perspective

5.3.1 Influence of Hosea 1 on Hosea 3

The table below displays correspondence between Hosea 3 and Hosea 1 in terms of literary style and content, which on closer examination reveals the former to be a carefully crafted literary expansion of the latter.57

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hosea 1</th>
<th>Hosea 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 2a Address</td>
<td>v. 1a Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יאמר יהוה אל־הושע</td>
<td>יאמר יהוה אלי עוד</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>תקח לך אשה זנונים</td>
<td>אהבת אשה רע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וילדי זנונים</td>
<td>ומנאפת</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 2b Divine Command</td>
<td>v. 1b Divine Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לך הקהל אהבת נוים וילדי נוים</td>
<td>לך הבירה אש ו&gt;--ננים נ בהם R ש---ו---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57 Cf. the proposal of “obvious literary contacts between Hos 1 and 3” by Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 59–64.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>v. 2c</th>
<th>Divine Explanation</th>
<th>v. 1c</th>
<th>Divine Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>כי־זנה תזנה הארץ מפאתוריה יוהה</td>
<td>Каеь-ле пе-ле арар Мп-пепория пе-ле</td>
<td>הו מפין אל-לא-לאים אתרים</td>
<td>Вое пип эл-елайим атерим</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 3</td>
<td>Compliance Statement</td>
<td>v. 2</td>
<td>Compliance Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ויולק יות אתרנירים בתרדבלימ</td>
<td>Ви-олук йот а-тэрониров батердаблим</td>
<td>וכסף וחמר שערים ולתך</td>
<td>Вешер-фун-хамар шери ше-гер и варех</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 3</td>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td>v. 2</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וכל אלה יוהב חכםBush וכתוב</td>
<td>Волел элай йоамб кимпс и вувто</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 4</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>vv. 4–6, 8–9</td>
<td>Final Oracle (Punishment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>כי יימ רב מתעב בן ישראל</td>
<td>Ки-имм раб матамб бен йизраэль</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 5</td>
<td>Final Oracle (Restorative)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 3 ויאמר יהוה אליה קרא שמו ירמאל</td>
<td>Ви-амер йоамб ал-лй крэ шмо йермаэл</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>רואר יהוה אליל קרן שמן ופטיאל</td>
<td>Рэ-лер йоамб алль кран шман в-петайл</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וידעו מען פקטור אתרימי</td>
<td>Удую марун пектуар а-тэрыми</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וירණלעלגבייה יוהו גשבייה</td>
<td>Вернг-елгеби йоам-гшеби</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ממלכון ביט ירמאל</td>
<td>Моллкон бит йермаэл</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

...
By replacing the prophet’s name in Hosea 1:2a with a first person suffix in Hosea 3:1a (‘Address’), the third person report of a marriage event in Hosea 1 becomes a report by a person intimately connected with a later reconciliatory event in Hosea 3. The divine command to the prophet in Hosea 1:2b to לך קח־ך אשת זנונים וילדי זנונים is changed to לך אהב־אשׁה אהבת רע ומנאפת in Hosea 3:1b. While they both begin with the imperative לך “Go”, the subsequent imperatives that describe the kernels of the respective divine commands are fundamentally different. In Hosea 1:2b, Yahweh instructs Hosea to take i.e. to marry (ךָ־לְחָק) whereas in Hosea 3:1b the command is to love (אהבה). 58 The object of the imperative verb “to marry” in Hosea 1:2b is a woman of promiscuous orientation (אשׁת זנונים) which is reinforced by the kind of children she will conceive (יִלְדֵי זָנִים). In contrast, the object of the imperative verb “to love” in Hosea 3:1b is a paramour’s lover (אהבה דָּרָה) and an adulteress (מנאפת). Since a woman is deemed to have committed adultery if she is found to have engaged in sexual affair with a man other than her husband, the labelling of the wife in Hosea 3:1b as “a paramour’s lover” and an “adulteress” is, therefore, a deliberate expansion on Hosea 1:2b (cf. Hos 2:4–7; 4:1–19). 59 The intervening Hebrew word וְדָעֵד “again” between ‘Address’ in

58 “Leodך,” HALOT 534; for a discussion about the correlation between לְכָה and "to marry," see Berquist, Controlling Corporeality, 61–62.

59 "As a general term for extramarital sexual intercourse, znḥ is limited in its primary usage to female subjects, since it is only for women that marriage is the primary determinant of legal status and obligation. While male sexual activity is judged by the status of the female partner and is prohibited, or penalized, only when it violates the recognized marital rights of another male, female sexual activity is judged according to the woman's marital status. In Israel's moral code, a woman's sexuality was understood to belong to her husband alone, for whom it must be reserved in anticipation of marriage as well as in marriage bond. Violation of a husband's sexual rights, the most serious of sexual offenses, is signified by the term nʾp 'adultery'; all other instances of sexual intercourse apart from marriage are designated by the term znḥ." Bird, "To Play the
Hosea 3:1a and ‘Divine Command’ in Hosea 3:1b serves as an additional literary and contextual link between Hosea 1 and 3. More significantly, this Hebrew word עוד identifies that which follows (Hos 3:1b) as the additional word of Yahweh. However, the uncertainty about whether precedence should be given to the disjunctive (separating) accent יָהַ֑תְיַבָּה marking עוד or the disjunctive accent רָבְּהַ֑יָּא marking אלהי has apparently resulted in two streams of translation.\(^6\) Mays, Yee, Andersen and Freedman, for example, have opted for “And the Lord said to me again (עוד), ‘Go . . .’”\(^6\) In contrast, Wolff, Macintosh and Landy prefer “And the Lord said to me, ‘Again (עוד) Go . . .’”\(^6\) According to Macintosh, “there is little real distinction between the notice of a renewed command and notice that the substance of the command is renewed.”\(^6\) What is more significant is that Hosea 3:1 represents a new instruction by Yahweh to establish a relationship with “a wife, a paramour’s lover and an adulteress” (cf. Hos 2:4–5).

The ‘Divine Explanation’ in Hosea 1:2c and 3:1c both begin with a preposition, כִי “for” and כְּ “like” respectively. The statement that follows כִי in Hosea 1:2c indict
the “land” for wooing other gods. Its allurement to these other gods is signified by the word זנה that denotes the attraction as illicit. Thus, the behaviour of the “land” mirrors the promiscuous inclination of Gomer (Hos 1:2b). Contrasting the action of the “land” in Hosea 1:2c, the statement that follows ג in Hosea 3:1c has Yahweh wooing the “sons of Israel” despite their turning to other gods. Yahweh’s action manifests his command to the man to love his unfaithful wife (Hos 3:1b). The wooing by Yahweh in Hosea 3:1c is underpinned by the word'email' which denotes a love that is both faithful and steadfast (cf. Hos 11:1). Its objective is to draw the “sons of Israel” away from the other gods. Thus, the kind of love that is signified by עב in Hosea 3:1c is markedly different from the illicit love denoted by the word זנה in Hosea 1:2c. Therefore, Hosea 3:1c is clearly a literary expansion of Hosea 1:2c.

The next structural component in the above table is the corresponding ‘Compliance Statement’ in Hosea 3:2 and Hosea 1:3. In the latter, Hosea complies with Yahweh’s instruction to wed a promiscuous wife (Hos 1:2b) and marries (קח־לך) Gomer. Hosea 1:3, however, does not actually describe Gomer as promiscuous; it is only by inference (Hos 1:2b) that she is assumed to be. In Hosea 3:2, the man also complies (cf. Hos 1:3) with Yahweh’s instruction by going off to “purchase her” (ואכרה לי). The suffix “her” points explicitly to the female character in Hosea 3:1b, that is “a

64 Bird, "To Play the Harlot." 76.
65 "אהב," HALOT 17–18.
66 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 297.
67 "זנה," HALOT 275; Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 76.
68 "כרה," HALOT 497.
wife [who is] a paramour’s lover and an adulteress’” (Hos 3:1b). It will be argued that Hosea 3:2 depicts the payment of a bride price as part of a betrothal/marriage process and, on this basis, corresponds to the marriage event in Hosea 1:3. For Macintosh, the interpretation of betrothal with the intention to marry raises two questions:

Why should a husband [Hosea] make a payment for recognition of an ownership which was his by right? Secondly, on the (unlikely, cf. 2.4, EV 2) view that he had divorced Gomer but now wished to take her back, such a practice is condemned explicitly by Deut 24.1ff and Jer 3.1 as well as by later talmudic law.69

These questions arise because Hosea is taken as the narrator in Hosea 3:1 and to whom Yahweh issues the command to “love.” Since it has been established that there is no conclusive justification that the prophet is the ‘I’ in Hosea 3, Macintosh’s first reservation seems redundant. It is hoped that it will become increasingly clear that the man in Hosea 3:1 is not the historical prophet as such but a literary character who subsequently marries the “woman, a paramour’s lover and an adulteress” (Hos 3:2). In this situation, there is no real violation of Deuteronomy 24:1–4 or Jeremiah 3:1.70

Andersen and Freedman, however, deem it “unlikely that Hosea 3:2 records a betrothal,” preferring instead the redemption of a wife from slavery.71 Like Andersen and Freedman, other scholars have also identified the purchased woman (ואכרה) in


70 For a debate on whether biblical prophets were genuine historical or literary figures, see Davies, The Prophets, 22–84.

71 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 299.
Hosea 3:2 as a former wife (cf. Deut 25:1–4) or slave, or a prostitute. Yet, betrothal imagery cannot be ruled out. If both the root metaphor in Hosea 1 (vv. 2b and 3) and Hosea 2 (vv. 4, 5a, 18, 21–22) refer to marriage, is it improbable or surprising that Hosea 3:2 should incorporate the metaphor of betrothal, which forms the initial stage of a marriage process? Perhaps not.

According to Harper and Wolff’s calculation, the entire purchase price for the woman in Hosea 3:2 amounts to thirty shekels which is the price tag for a slave based on the evidence in Exod 21:32 (cf. Lev 27:4). In contrast, the bride price for a virgin bride (בתולה) is supposedly fifty shekels of silver (Deut 22:29). Based on these evidences, the purchase of a female slave is the preferred interpretation for Hosea 3:2. Yet, in Genesis 37:28, Joseph was sold into slavery for twenty shekels of silver which calls into question the accuracy of the evidence in Exodus 21:32 and the view that כרה in Hosea 3:2 refers to the purchase of a slave.

Other evidence also warns against ruling out a betrothal/marriage imagery for Hosea 3:2 based on the notion that thirty shekels of silver contradicts the customary bride price in Deuteronomy 22:29. This text, which deals with forcible rape, implies


73 Harper, Amos and Hosea, 219; Wolff, Hosea, 61; so also Macintosh, Hosea, 99.

74 Similarly, Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 300.

75 For example, Mays, Hosea, 57–58; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 299; Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 66.
that the bride price for a virgin is fifty shekels of silver.  

The question is whether such a bride price would remain unchanged if the girl is no longer a virgin. Evidence in a Nuzi text suggests that bride price depends on a woman’s sexuality:

Declaration with Kuni-ašu, daughter of Ḫut-tešup, made in front of these witnesses: “In the past, Akam-mušni married [me] off and took 40 shekels of silver for me from my husband, but now Akam-mušni and my husband are [both] dead, and now [as to] myself, Akkiya, son of Ḫut-tešup, seized me in the street as his sister and took the authority [of brother] over a sister for me. He will marry me off and taken 10 shekels of šurampašḫu silver from my [future] husband.

According to the above Nuzi record, the bride price for Kuni-ašu’s second marriage has been reduced from 40 shekels to 10 shekels of silver. Katarzyna Grosz cites two possible reasons for the reduction, that she is no longer a virgin or has proven herself barren with her first husband.  

In another Elephantine text, an Aramean by the name of Ananiah is recorded to have approached Zakkur and have asked for his sister’s hand in marriage. Apparently, an agreement was reached and Ananiah paid Zakkur the sum of “1 karsh of silver” as the bride price for Yehoyishma, a former slave girl.  

Regarding this issue, some scholars have detected a sense of bargaining or trading in


the verb כרה in Hosea 3:2 which suggests that bride price is not a fixed sum.  

Further evidence from the Hebrew Bible may be adduced to bolster the argument that bride price is a variable sum that is dependent on existing circumstances. Genesis 24, for example, describes how Abraham’s servant secures Rebekah’s hand in marriage for Isaac at a price of an unknown amount of silver and gold jewellery, and garments, excluding that which he has already put on Rebekah—a gold nose-ring weighing half a shekel and two bracelets of ten gold shekels. Jacob himself, according to Genesis 29, has to pay a bride price to the value of the cumulative wage for seven years of labour for each of Laban’s daughter, Leah and Rachel. In 1 Samuel 18:17–19, Saul who offers to marry off his elder daughter Merab to David seeks only the latter’s valour in battle. When this attempt fell through, Saul re-offers Michal to David, this time through a servant and for which “the king desires no bride price [מהר] except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines” (1 Sam 18:20–27). Perdue has cited the above example and a further one from Genesis 34:12 and he argues that bride price varies, depending on the social status of the husband’s household and the amount set by the woman’s father.  

Considering these examples together, therefore, strongly cautions against dismissing a marriage or betrothal imagery in Hosea 3:2 even though the total value of thirty shekels of silver in Hosea 3:2 does not correspond to the bride price of fifty shekels of silver in Deuteronomy 22:29. Neither should the imagery be rejected on the assumption that it relates more accurately to the purchase of a female slave (cf. Exod 21:32). Additionally, Hosea 3:3 reinforces the proposal that Hosea 3:2 refers to a

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80 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 298–299; Wolff, Hosea, 61.

Hosea 3:3 is an ‘Elaboration’ on Hosea 3:2 in which the man demands that the woman remains chaste for many days. His request mirrors a husband’s prerogative in a real life marriage arrangement. Once betrothed, the woman is considered legally married and is, therefore, to remain chaste until the marriage arrangement can be consummated. Her father is under obligation, by virtue of the bride price paid by the prospective husband, to ensure that she remains a virgin until she is transferred to her new husband’s household (Deut 22:13–21). Although the description of a transfer of the bride to her new husband’s household is absent in Hosea 3:3, Hosea 3:5 alludes to this stage of the marital process. This will be discussed after the following attempt to explain the imagery and meaning of the betrothed’s obligation to chastity in Hosea 3:3.

The description of a compulsory period of chastity in Hosea 3:3 is a metaphor for the nation’s period of isolation in Hosea 3:4 (‘Explanation’). During this period, the nation will be “without king and without official, without sacrificial feast and without pillar, without ephod and teraphim.” The Hebrew word כִּי that begins Hosea 3:4 clarifies that the female figure spoken of until now (Hos 3:1b, 2–3) is a metaphor for the Israelis. Like the female figure in Hosea 3:3 who is under obligation to remain chaste for many days until her transfer to her new household, now in Hosea 3:4 “the

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sons of Israel” are called to do the same pending their own transfer to a new household (see below). The forced chastity for the Israelis is described in Hosea 3:4 in terms of the deprivation of king, official, sacrificial feast, pillar, ephod and teraphim. These elements of Israel’s politics and cultic life embody the national adulterous mentality (Hos 2:15; 4:12–13a; 7:3–4; 10:1–2). Their deprivation mirrors the obligation of a real life bride to remain chaste before she joins her new husband.

Hosea 3:4, therefore, sets the backdrop for the restorative ‘Final Oracle’ in Hosea 3:5 as the climatic verse of the chapter and a reversal of the ‘Final Oracle’ of punishment in Hosea 1:4–6, 8–9. Just as a real life bride would move to her new husband’s household at an appropriate time, the Israelis will (re)join a ‘new’ household (the house of Judah, signified by the reference to “David”) in the days to come. Hosea 3:5 describes this process: “Afterward [אחר] the sons of Israel will return to the Lord their God and David their king and they will come trembling [פחד] to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.” Like a wife who is required by custom to show loyalty to her new husband upon her transfer to his household, Hosea 3:5 urges the Israelis to show their allegiance to “David their king” of the house of Judah after a compulsory period of isolation of “many days” (Hos 3:3, 4).

The foregoing analysis shows that Hosea 3 is a carefully crafted non-Hoseanic

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83 According to Ibn Ezra, כרה ("to purchase") in Hos 3:2 is actually נכר ("to recognise") and it denotes the legal transfer of a person from one sphere of authority to another. Macintosh, Hosea, 100.

84 Cf. “When a woman joined her husband’s household, obedience to her birth parents was transferred to the husband’s head of the household.” Perdue, et al., Families in Ancient Israel, 190.
literary expansion of Hosea 1. In line with the terminology used in this study, it is a black prophecy. It is creative and imaginative, and seeks to communicate a message of reunification, albeit with a twist. The man in Hosea 3:1ab, 2, it has been shown, is a literary character who is commanded to love and marry a wife who is a known paramour’s lover and an adulteress. From Hosea 3:4 onwards, this wife ‘figure’ is identified by the Hebrew word כִי as the sons of Israel, who after a period of deprivation, will return to “Yahweh their God” and “David their king” (Hos 3:5). In essence, Hosea 3:5 prophesies a return from idolatrous (Hos 1:2c) to orthodox Yahweh worship and from a defunct northern governance (Hos 1:4) to a Davidic one. It mirrors the action of a betrothed, who after a period of sexual chastity is required to join her new husband at an appropriate time. The black prophecy in Hosea 3, subsequent investigation hopes to show, is probably a piece of propaganda that originates in a Deuteronomistic Judean redactor. It is possible that this propaganda seeks to highlight the achievement and benefit of the religious reform of King Hezekiah (727–699 BCE) to promote the reunification of the Israelis to the people of Judah and their loyalty to Yahweh.

5.3.2 Hosea 3 as Propaganda

The first step toward establishing Hosea 3 as propaganda has been accomplished by showing its literary dependence on Hosea 1. The next step is to elaborate on the nature of the propaganda in Hosea 3.

Hosea 3:1b identifies the wife figure as a paramour’s lover (אָשֶׁר אֱהַבָּה רָע) and an adulteress (וֹמָנָפָה). The term confirms that אשה refers to a wife and not simply a woman since נאפת “adultery” can only be applied to a woman who is married and is
found to be guilty of engaging in extramarital sexual relation. This is in contrast to זנה that is reserved for any unmarried woman who engages in casual sexual intercourse. According to Anthony Phillips, a man has a right to divorce his adulterous wife and expel her (cf. Deut 24:3, Isa 50:1) and her illegitimate children, if any, from his household. The expulsion, he argues, also incorporates a humiliating action against the wife:

Where the ground for the divorce was the wife’s adultery, then as Hos. ii 5 indicates a further ritual was performed. This consisted of stripping off the wife’s clothes and driving her from the home naked. It was not simply undertaken to indicate that the husband was no longer responsible for the wife’s maintenance, which was always the case whenever there was divorce, but rather to brand the wife a shameless person. She was no ordinary divorcée, but someone who had given herself to another. Indeed she was no better than a common prostitute, and was therefore treated as such. As Hosea puts it, her lewdness is to be exposed for her lovers to see (ii 12).

Following her expulsion, the adulterous woman would normally return to her father’s house. Hosea 3:2, however, does not indicate where or under what circumstance the man betrothed the adulterous woman. What is more important for the redactor is to show the man’s compliance with Yahweh’s command (Hos 3:1ab) by paying a bride price to take the woman to be his wife (Hos 3:2). On this basis, he can demand that she remains chaste “for many days” (Hos 3:3) until he formally takes her into his household. From Hosea 3:3 onwards, the prophecy in Hosea 3 takes a turn. As mentioned previously, the Hebrew word כִי that begins Hosea 3:4 clarifies that the

85 See footnote above for further detail.
woman figure spoken of until now (Hos 3:1b, 2–3) refers to the Israelis. Like a betrothed woman who is obliged to remain chaste until her transfer from her father’s house to her new husband’s household, “the sons of Israel” are compelled, not by choice but by circumstance (Hos 3:4), to do the same pending their own metaphorical transfer to their ‘matrimonial home.’ It is at this point that the propaganda in Hosea 3 comes to the fore. However, something more must be said about Hosea 3:4 if the character of this propaganda in Hosea 3 is to be properly understood. This is also especially important when considering, at a later stage, the possible scenario for the application of the propaganda in Hosea 3.

Hosea 3:4 concerns the deprivation of the Israelites: כי ימים רבים ישׁבו בני ישראל אין מלך ואין שׂר ואין זבח ואין מצבה ואין אפוד ותרפים. This prophecy images the collapse of the political and cultic foundations of the northern kingdom. These include the royal institution of king (cf. Hos 5:1; 7:7; 8:10; 10:3, 7, 15; 13:10, 11) and prince or royal official (cf. Hos 7:16; 8:10; 13:10), the cult associated with sacrificial feast (cf. Hos 4:19; 6:6; 8:13) and sacred pillars (Hos 10:1, 2), and cultic objects of Ephod and Teraphim.89

Superficially, the prophecy in Hosea 3:4 conjures an image associated with exile and this is how Macintosh, Yee and Stuart, for example, have perceived the reference

to the loss of leadership and cult.\textsuperscript{90} The paronomasia or wordplay between the verbs in יִשְׁבַּיִת “they will remain” (Hos 3:4) and יִשְׁבָּה “they will return” (Hos 3:5) seems to reinforce the idea of an exile for Yee and Stuart since it points toward a restorative movement of the Israelis from exile to their homeland. Thus, these scholars interpret Hosea 3:4 in terms of an exile in a foreign land (cf. 2 Kgs 17:5–6). Yet, strictly speaking, there is nothing in Hosea 3:4 that points explicitly to an exile in a foreign land. It simply states that the Israelites will remain without leadership and cult for many days. It is possible that Hosea 3:4 refers to the situation of the remnants in the land of the northern kingdom, living as it were in exile albeit in their own (former) territory.\textsuperscript{91} In fact, the betrothal imagery in Hosea 3:3, which is a metaphor for Hosea 3:4, demands this latter interpretation. Just as the betrothed is to remain chaste in her father’s house, and nowhere else, deprived of all sexual activity, so shall the Israelites be deprived of their political leadership, cult and cultic objects in their own land. When Hosea 3:4 is interpreted as a reference to an exile in another country, the character of the metaphor in Hosea 3:3 and the custom on which that metaphor is based is altered. Thus, a betrothed woman no longer serves out her betrothal obligation in her father’s house but elsewhere. The implication is that the preceding interpretation undermines the character of the metaphor in Hosea 3:3 and the custom in which it is rooted. An objection to this claim, however, may be raised on the premise that it is possible that Hosea 3:3 intentionally adopts a counter-cultural understanding for the metaphor and a


\textsuperscript{91} This interpretation is possible according to Mays, \textit{Hosea}, 59; cf. "In v. 4 it seems as if Israel remains in the land, in v. 5 that they come back from exile." Landy, \textit{Hosea}, 50.
corresponding symbolic meaning for Hosea 3:4. Yet, Raymond Westbrook’s response to Andersen and Freedman’s interpretation of Hosea 2:4–22, as demonstrated below, indicates that the counter-cultural view is improbable.\(^92\)

Hosea 2:4–22, according to Andersen and Freedman, does not reflect a divorce event. The passage, they argue, is not consistent with biblical law of adultery because adultery was a capital crime with no possibility of pardon.\(^93\) Additionally, the husband’s exhortations to and continued dealings with the wife after pronouncement of divorce (Hos 2:4) demonstrates that divorce has not taken place.\(^94\) They also argue that Hosea 2:16–22 provides an implausible description of marriage or remarriage after divorce: “Hos. 2:16–22 requires miraculous transformation into a first marriage ‘as in the time of her youth’ (v. 17). Here we go beyond realities.”\(^95\) Westbrook, however, disagrees with their reasoning. He argues that the imagery in the passage is neither farfetched nor inappropriate:

If God’s relationship with Israel is to be explained by a metaphor drawing upon the everyday life of the audience then that metaphor, to be effective, must reflect accurately the reality known to the audience. If the narrator were to invent the legal rules on which the metaphor is based, it would cease to be a valid metaphor.\(^96\)


\(^94\) Westbrook, "Adultery," 577; see also Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 221.

\(^95\) Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 222.

\(^96\) Westbrook, "Adultery," 577; see also the view of Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 19.
If indeed a metaphor is based on concocted legal rules or social customs, not only will the metaphor cease to be valid, the meaning it seeks to communicate will also become incomprehensible. Although Westbrook’s view pertains to Hosea 2:16–22, it is still relevant to Hosea 3:4. It has been argued that Hosea 3:4 does not refer to an exile in a foreign land but to the situation of the remnants in the defunct northern kingdom based on the metaphor in Hosea 3:3 and its social underpinning. In terms of experience, the life alluded to in Hosea 3:4 is still exilic in character because the land of the northern kingdom after the fall of Samaria no longer belongs to the Israelis. Instead, it has become a province of Assyria after its conquest in 722 BCE.97

With the character of the exile in Hosea 3:4 firmly established, the proposal that Hosea 3 is a piece of propaganda can now be developed. Structurally, Hosea 3:1–4, particularly verse 4, paves the way for Hosea 3:5, the kernel of the propaganda in Hosea 3.

The Israelis, according to Hosea 3:4, are to remain deprived of their political and cult structure for “many days” while serving out their exile in a land that was formerly theirs but is now a province of Assyria. The oracle in Hosea 3:5 images a time when “afterwards (אחר) the sons of Israel will return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king, and come trembling to Yahweh and his goodness in the latter days.” The only other place where “Yahweh their God” is juxtaposed with “David their king” is in Jeremiah 30:9. There the prophecy envisages a return to Yahweh and David “on that day” (והיה ביום ההוא), namely at the end of a period of bondage and exile (Jer 30:8).

97 Miller and Hayes, History, 388.
Though Hosea 3:5 incorporates both the references (“Yahweh their God” and “David their king”) within a similar exilic context (cf. Hos 3:4), there is no explicit mention of an end to exile. It simply prophesies that “afterwards the Israelites shall return (שׁוב) and seek (בקשׁ) Yahweh their God and David their king.” The call for a return to “David their king” is curious. As highlighted earlier, the reference is widely held to be of Judean origin. Its inclusion in the salvation oracle of Hosea 3:5 proclaims a divine programme for a return of the Israelis to Davidic governance. It seeks to promote a reunification of the Israelis to the Judeans, an interpretation that coheres with the social custom behind the metaphor in Hosea 3:3, namely the eventual movement of a betrothed from her father’s house to her new husband’s household. The juxtaposition of “Yahweh their God” and “David their king” also points to a call for a return to Yahweh worship in Jerusalem.

As a salvation oracle, Hosea 3:5 is a response to and a reversal of the punishment oracle in Hosea 1:4–6, 8–9. The latter culminates in Yahweh’s rejection of the Israelis through the expression in verse 9bα: “אתם לא עמי” You are not my people.” In contrast, Hosea 3:5 seeks to overturn the estranged relation, that Hosea 1:9bα describes, through the divine command to the man in Hosea 3:1: לִךְ אָהַב־אֱשֶׁתֶּךָ אֲהַבַּת רֵעַ וּמְאָפָת כָּאָהָכַת יהוה את־בני ישראל. However, Yahweh’s offer in Hosea 3:5 is conditional upon a change of heart.

In Hosea 2, the promiscuous wife is characterised with an irresistible and rebellious

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99 Additionally, “return” can mean “the return to God in the sense of repentance, new awakening, a restored relationship with the one and only true God.” Simundson, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*, 35.
urge (Hos 2:7) to seek her paramours (וָבְקשׁתָם). In response, her husband (Yahweh) promises to erect a blockade of thorns and stonewall in her (Israel) path (לָכָנָנוּ שֵׁךְ אֶת־דַּרְכֶּךָ בָּסִירֵי וְגַדרְתָּ אֶת־גַּכְרָה; Hos 2:8) hoping the experience may persuade her to return to her first husband (ואֲשׁוֹבָה אֶל־אִישּׁׁיָּהוּ; Hos 2:9). The blockade, however, has commonly been understood as a depiction of an attempt to frustrate her access to “Baal” worship (Hos 2:10). The preceding chapter has established that the blockade refers to a siege against the city of Samaria symbolising Yahweh’s disciplinary action toward the northern kingdom.

Second Kings 17:5–6 describes the Assyrian siege against Samaria. According to the Deuteronomistic historian, Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria for three years before finally taking it and deporting its people around 722/721 B.C.E. In Gershon Galil’s view, Shalmaneser did not witness the fall of Samaria because he died a few months after the commencement of the siege in the summer of 722. Revolts erupted throughout the Assyrian empire following Sargon II’s accession to the throne and Assyrian troops had to be reshuffled to deal with the insurgency. Thus, the Assyrian siege on Samaria is thought to be of limited scope and might have ended up as a blockade. It probably includes the interruption of water supply to the city, which was one of the war tactics adopted by the Assyrian army. In the second year of Sargon II’s

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100 For example, Mays, *Hosea*, 40; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 237; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 51; for a discussion of the political undertone in the verb "love" and noun "lover," see Thompson, "Israel's Lovers," 475–481.

101 “One of the more significant shifts that accompanied the increasing Assyrian presence in the Levant during the eighth century was the shift from open-field battle to siege warfare.” Smoak, "Assyrian Siege," 84.
Prophecy and Propaganda in Hosea 3

reign, the city finally fell.\textsuperscript{102} The siege against Samaria and its ensuing exile in the land (cf. Hos 3:4) appear to be the background for Hosea 3:5. It looks to a time when the Israelis will return (ישׁבו) and seek (ובקשׁו) Yahweh in repentance. However, the prophecy, which includes the element of a return to “David their king,” is bold. It seems unlikely that Hosea “could have expressed it openly without the charge of treason while Israel existed as an independent nation.”\textsuperscript{103} It is hard to imagine that a northerner would speak about hope for the Israelis in terms of Davidic governance over a reunified kingdom of some sort even when his country is in dire straits.\textsuperscript{104}

Nonetheless, a return to Yahweh and a Davidic kingship as envisioned in Hosea 3:5, if it happens, would bring to fruition the fear of King Jeroboam I (931/930–909 BCE).\textsuperscript{105} It will also overturn the measure he took to preserve his kingship:

\begin{quote}
And Jeroboam said to himself, “Now the kingdom will return to the house of Judah. If this people continues to offer sacrifices in the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem, the heart of this people will turn back to their masters, to King Rehoboam of Judah.” So the king took counsel and he made two calves of gold. He said to the people, “You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough, behold your gods, O Israel, who have brought you up from the land of Egypt.” And he set one in Bethel and the other in Dan (1 Kgs 12:26–29).
\end{quote}

Jeroboam’s measure is fundamentally political in that he was trying to protect

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\textsuperscript{102} For a fuller discussion of the last years of the kingdom of Israel and the fall of Samaria, see Galil, \textit{Chronology}, 83–97.
\textsuperscript{103} Emmerson, \textit{Judean Perspective}, 102.
\textsuperscript{104} Emmerson, \textit{Judean Perspective}, 101–102.
\textsuperscript{105} Galil, \textit{Chronology}, Appendix A.
\end{flushright}
his northern interest following the civil war and the breakup of the united monarchy (1 Kgs 12:1–24). The installation of a calf in the shrine of Dan along the northern border of Israel and another in Bethel along the southern border is a pragmatic, even ingenious, solution to a political problem. Perhaps Jeroboam had no idolatrous intention. As Simon DeVries postulates, it is not good enough that Dan and Bethel are legitimate Yahweh shrines; they each needed a sacred object to signify Yahweh’s presence to draw the Israelis to these shrines.106 As far as the Deuteronomistic historian is concerned, Jeroboam had used religion as a means to an (political) end. Thus, it seems that the real purpose of 1 Kings 12:26–29 is to condemn (or propagandise) the establishment of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel as utterly sinful and idolatrous. More significantly, the historian considers Jeroboam “to be completely responsible for the behaviour of his people, as the frequent reference to the ‘sin(s) of Jeroboam son of Nebat which he caused Israel to sin’ demonstrates.”107

Jason Bray, however, has questioned the historical accuracy of Kings’ account of the making of the two calves by Jeroboam I and their establishment at Dan and Bethel. Bray suggests that there might not have been a new statue of a calf at Dan but the gilding of a pre-existing one “because a gilded statue would have been felt more


suitable for a royal shrine.” As for Bethel, “the use of ‘bull of Jacob’ (אביר יעקב) as a cult-title for Yahweh may suggest that the bull image was not an innovation there either, since there is a link between Jacob and Bethel.” Bray’s final opinion is that there is a clear desire by the Deuteronomistic historian to smear the legitimacy of the shrines at Dan and Bethel by portraying them as innovations of a heretical king.

Bray’s assessment is probably correct. In 1 Kings 12:28, Jeroboam uses the same words that the idolatrous Exodus generation used at Sinai (Exod 32:4) when he presents the two golden calves to the people:

(1 Kgs 12:28)

(Exod 32:4)

Superficially, the only difference between the speeches concern the use of אלה in Exodus 32:4 and הנה in 1 Kings 12:28. Closer examination, however, reveals a more interesting contrast. In the Exodus report of the people’s response to the display of the one calf image made from all the gold earrings they contributed, the plural form of the verbעלה “brought” is used to denote the representative role they play in the deliverance of the people from the land of Egypt. The same plural verb (ךָוּהֶעֱל “they brought you”) is used in Jeroboam’s speech in 1 Kings 12:28 to describe Yahweh’s (which the calves

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109 Bray, *Sacred Dan*, 70.

110 Bray, *Sacred Dan*, 70.
signify) saving action for Israel in connection with the exodus event. According to Bray, “The most natural solution is that a common Deuteronomistic redactor of both passages sought to make this parallel more explicit by using the plural form in both Exodus and Kings, the plural form being more natural in Kings.”111 If this is correct, then the account in Kings is essentially a covert move to malign Jeroboam I by associating him with the “arch-apostasy” of the Exodus generation.112 A further attempt to malign Jeroboam appears after the unveiling of the calves in 1 Kings 12:32. It reports the appointment of a festival in the north to coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles in Judah (1 Kgs 12:32). It was another ingenious political move by Jeroboam to deter the northerners from making pilgrimages to Jerusalem. More significantly, it mirrors Aaron’s appointment of a festival to Yahweh after the making of the golden calf (Exod 32:5–6).113

Hence, what Hosea 3:5 ultimately seeks to do is to overturn Jeroboam I’s primary objective for the golden calves. Their installation at Dan and Bethel was designed to stop the Israelis, who were once part of the united people of God, from returning to worship in Jerusalem and showing loyalty to King Rehoboam of Judah (1 Kgs 12:26–29). The religious and political return of the Israelis to “Yahweh their God and David their king,” if it occurs, will undo Jeroboam’s scheme, which his successors maintain. Their return would amount to a reunification of the two kingdoms

111 Bray, Sacred Dan, 65.

112 Michael Fishbane, Haftarot (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 400; similarly DeVries, 1 Kings, 162–163.

113 For an explanation as to why Jeroboam chooses the fifteen day of eighth month and not the seventh month (Num 29:12–39), see DeVries, 1 Kings, 163.
with a common government and centre of worship, which in a real sense is a return to the days of David and Solomon.

On the timing of the fulfilment of Hosea 3:5, Emmerson has argued that the phrase בָּאֵרַת הָיוֹם does not necessarily denote the developed eschatology as in the book of Daniel (Dan 12:13). She argues that the phrase forms a parallel with אחר, which appears at the beginning of the verse, and "signifies merely the future." 114 Macintosh, however, disagrees with Emmerson’s view about the parallelism between בָּאֵרַת הָיוֹם and אחר. The clause בָּאֵרַת הָיוֹם, he argues, is a concluding addition by "a highly skilled redactor" and is used in connection with eschatology. 115 According to Andersen and Freedman, the emphasis in בָּאֵרַת הָיוֹם "at the end of the age" is on fulfilment rather than on termination of time. 116 They express doubt about the phrase’s eschatological character, citing examples from Genesis 49:1 and Numbers 24:14 where בָּאֵרַת הָיוֹם simply refers to “a future portentous time.” 117 Andersen and Freedman add that the associations of אחרית are almost entirely positive, for example, achterית is used with תָּכֹה “hope” in Jeremiah 29:11; 31:17 and שלום in Psalm 37:37. They also cite Job 42:12 in which achterית refers to “the good time in the future when everything is put right.” 118 Donald Gowan seems to share Andersen and Freedman’s view of

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114 Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 104.
115 Macintosh, Hosea, 111 fn 43.
116 Translation theirs. J. Carmignac’s work is cited by Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 308.
117 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 308.
118 Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 308.
Although the word literally means “doctrine of the end,” the OT does not speak of the end of the world, of time, or of history. It promises the end of sin (Jer. 33:8), of war (Mic. 4:3), of human infirmity (Isa. 35:5–11:6a). One of the distinctive features of these hopes is their sense of the radical wrongness of the present world and the conviction that radical changes, to make things right, will indeed occur “in that day,” that is, at some time known only to God.  

The use of אחרית (eschatology) with Yahweh’s goodness in Hosea 3:5 also points to a positive time in the future. Yahweh’s goodness has generally been understood as a reference to the produce of the land (cf. Hos 2:10, 17, 24). The prophecy that the Israelis shall approach Yahweh and his goodness with trembling, not so much out of fear but joy, is clearly an expansion of Hosea 2:8–9. There the husband plans a blockade around his wife (a siege imagery) to prevent her from accessing her lovers. He hopes that the frustrating experience (Hos 2:9) will persuade her that it would be best to return to her first husband. He wishes she would come to the realisation that life with her first husband is better than with her paramours (Hos 2:9). From this perspective, the Israelis’ trembling approach to Yahweh rather than the produce of the land. This would be fulfilled “in the latter days” following the Israelis’ return to Yahweh after a period of living in deprivation. What remains to be done in the subsequent chapter is to explain the likely scenario for the application of propaganda of Hosea 3. In this regard, a period after the fall of Samaria and reign of


King Hezekiah seems to be the most appropriate context.

One final and crucial issue however, must be addressed before the discussion on the application of Hosea 3 as propaganda. It concerns the credibility of the argument that Hosea 3 is propaganda which hinges on the presence of a propagandist. At first glance, there appears to be no sign of his or her presence. Yet, one should not expect them to show their presence for a propagandist must conceal their presence if the propaganda they devise is to be persuasive. On this aspect of propaganda, the above examination of Jeroboam’s scheme in 1 Kings 12:26–29 has already alluded to the way the Deuteronomistic propagandist undermines, without revealing his or her involvement, the reputation of Jeroboam I by associating his action with the idolatrous behaviour of the Exodus generation.

A further support for the above view is found in McCarter’s work on the presence of an elusive propagandist working behind the text to deliberately and systematically shape perceptions, to manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers his or her desired intent.\footnote{Jowett and O’Donnell, \textit{Propaganda and Persuasion}, 6.} In \textit{Apology of David}, McCarter argues that the purpose of 1 Samuel 16:14 to 2 Samuel 5:10 is to defend David’s rise to the throne as lawful and the events leading up to his proclamation as king over all Israel as being guided by the will of Yahweh. Concerning its composition, he thinks that the history of David’s rise, in its earliest formulation, dates to the reign
of David himself.\(^{123}\) The apologetic narrative seeks to address actual or possible charges against David during his lifetime. To the charge that David had advanced himself at court at Saul’s expense, the narrator shows that the former arrives at Saul’s request (1 Sam 16:19–22) and was completely loyal to Saul in helping to advance the latter’s cause (cf. 1 Sam 19:4–5). Moreover, David did not seek Michal’s hand in marriage to advance his own position. On the contrary, Saul himself had voluntarily offered Michal to him which he rejects because he deems himself to be unworthy (1 Sam 18:23).\(^{124}\) The narrator also seeks to parry accusations against David for being a deserter, an outlaw and a Philistine mercenary. In 1 Samuel 19:9–17, he shows that David did not abandon Saul but was forced to leave because Saul had threatened to harm him. Thus, he was not an outlaw; he was merely fleeing from Saul. In the same context, the narrator explains how David was forced to serve in the army of the Philistines (1 Sam 27:1).\(^{125}\) To the charge that David was involved in the death of Saul when the latter fought against the Philistines, the narrator demonstrates that David was not part of the force (1 Sam 29:11) that fought the fateful battle on Mount Gilboa (1 Sam 31:1–13).\(^{126}\) The narrator also shows that David played no role in Abner and Ishbaal’s death. Abner’s quarrel with Joab, David’s commander-in-chief (2 Sam 2:12–32, 3:22–30) resulted in the former’s death and David himself was unaware of Joab’s deceitful killing of Abner.

\(^{123}\) 1 Sam 16:14–2 to 2 Sam 5:10, it is argued, is an old and more or less unified composition, with a number of prophetic and Deuteronomistic additions. Dennis J. McCarthy, "Hosea 12 2: Covenant by Oil," VT 14 (1964): 215–221.


(2 Sam 3:26). 2 Samuel 3:28 describes how David declared his innocence when he learnt of Abner’s death. Subsequently, he pronounced a curse on the house of Joab (2 Sam 3:29) and led the people in mourning. David fasted for the day and the people were convinced “that it had not been the king’s will to kill Abner, the son of Ner” (2 Sam 3:31–37). As for the death of Ishbaal, 2 Samuel also defends David’ innocence. The crime was carried out by Baanah and Rechab, both Benjaminites, (2 Sam 4:2–3), hoping their action would gain David’s favour by bringing to him the head of Ishbaal, the son of Saul (2 Sam 4:5–8). David, however, was not impressed and he sentenced both of them to death (2 Sam 4:9–12a).

McCarter has convincingly demonstrated the apologetic character of 1 Samuel 16:14 to 2 Sam 5:10. In his view, the narrative is politically motivated. It is a propaganda to show that David’s accession to the throne is entirely lawful and free of guilt. The narrative has been carefully crafted to shape the audience’s perception about David by blurring the line between fact and propaganda. Part of that strategy demands that the narrator remains out of sight, hidden behind the text for a large part of the narrative:

This case for the defense [of David] is made by relating the events in question [the charges against David] in a way intended to allay all suspicions, and though the author becomes quite explicit at times, as in his report of Abner’s


129 He demonstrates how the defence of David in 1 Sam 16:14–2 Sam 5:10 is vastly similar to a Hittite royal propaganda which also seeks to legitimate the accession of Hattushilish. McCarter, "The Apology of David," 497–499.
death [three times the narrator emphasises that Abner left David “in peace” (2 Sam 3:21b, 22, 23)], he does not permit himself to step out from behind his narrative and comment directly on the issue at hand.\footnote{Clarifications in square brackets mine. McCarter, "The Apology of David," 499, 501.}

According to Jowett and O’Donnell, “a propagandist does not want his or her or its identity known.”\footnote{Jowett and O’Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 42.} They explain why this strategy is important for a propagandist:

Identity concealment is often necessary for the propagandist to achieve desired objectives and goals. The propagandist seeks to control the flow of information, manage public opinion, and manipulate behavioral patterns. These are the kinds of objectives that might not be achieved if the true intent were known or if the real source were revealed.\footnote{Jowett and O’Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 42.}

Jowett and O’Donnell classify the form of propaganda that uses concealment as its basic strategy as “black propaganda.” This kind of propaganda stands in stark contrast to “white propaganda” in which the source of the propaganda is correctly identified and it portrays the propagandist in morally positive light with the best of intention for the audience.\footnote{Jowett and O’Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 12–13.} In contrast, “black propaganda is credited to a false source and spreads lies, fabrications, and deceptions.”\footnote{Jowett and O’Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, 13–15.} In this respect, its construction must be methodical and well considered:

Care has to be taken to place the sources and messages within a social, cultural,
and political framework of the target audience. If the sender misunderstands the audience and therefore designs a message that does not fit, black propaganda may appear suspicious and tends to fail.\(^{135}\)

Jowett and O’Donnell’s idea of identity concealment and false attribution of authorship resonates, to a certain degree, with what has been said earlier about the black prophecy in Hosea 3. Although the propagandist does not reveal himself or herself or acknowledge his role in Hosea 3, he or she writes with the conviction that the sayings attributed to Hosea reflect the views and desire of Yahweh. Nonetheless, Hosea 3 is black prophecy. Its strategic appearance in the book gives the impression that it is both the speech of the prophet and the definitive word of Yahweh. Yet, from the propagandist’s viewpoint, the sayings are not “lies, fabrications, and deceptions” since they reflect Yahweh’s aspiration. On this basis, the Israelians should give assent to Yahweh’s wish reflected in Hosea 3.

Unquestionably, the propagandist in Hosea 3 has made his or her presence less apparent than the narrator of the above Samuel text. Nevertheless, he or she ‘lurks’ behind the text. The reference to “David their king” in Hosea 3:5 is a giveaway of the propagandist’s presence. His or her ultimate objective is to promote the reunification of the Israelis and the Judeans under a Davidic governance (Hos 3:4–5) based on the metaphor of a union between a husband and his bride (Hos 3:1–3). Like the propagandist who has blurred the line between fact and propaganda to defend David’s rise in 1 Samuel 16:14 to 2 Sam 5:10, or the attempt to smear Jeroboam I’s reputation in 1 Kings 12:26–29, the redactor of Hosea 3 has obfuscated the distinction

between prophecy and propaganda. What appears on the surface is prophecy. By claiming Hoseanic status, the black prophecy in Hosea 3 becomes the speech of the prophet and is read as and believed to be the definitive word of Yahweh. To this end, the propagandist has shrewdly remained out of view lest he or she compromise the perception of Hosea 3 as Yahweh’s oracle through the prophet and Yahweh’s wish for the Israelis.

Taken as a whole, the above argument for Hosea 3 as a black prophecy and propaganda strongly favours a southern context for its composition. The next step in the investigation will be to consider the possibility of relating Hosea 3 to a time after the fall of Samaria and the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah.
6. SETTING AND PROPAGANDA IN HOSEA 3

6.1 New Perspective

The preceding examination has shown that Hosea 3 is not the prophet's autobiography. Instead, it is a literary expansion of Hosea 1 by a Judean and Deuteronomistic redactor. More significantly, it is a black prophecy which, by definition, is a prophecy that presents itself as originating in the prophet Hosea, when it belongs to a redactor. It has also been argued that the black prophecy in Hosea 3 is also propaganda seeking to promote Deuteronomistic and Judean nationalistic and religious ideals. It will become increasingly clear that it coheres with the Deuteronomistic historian’s prejudice against the northern monarchs for their role in hindering sole allegiance to Yahweh and the Davidic king in Jerusalem in the pre-exilic edition of the books of Kings. According to the historian’s assessment, Yahweh has shown his displeasure for the ways of the northern kings through the Assyrian conquest of Samaria (2 Kgs 17:1–18). In the eyes of the Deuteronomistic historian, all the northern kings contributed to the demise of the northern kingdom.

As for the Judean kings, several of them have been given mixed reports by the Deuteronomistic historian (1 Kgs 15:11–15; 22:43–44; 2 Kgs 12:3–4; 14:3–4; 15:3–4, 34–35). Unlike the northern kings who were measured against Jeroboam I, the southern monarchs were evaluated against David. In particular, the historian considers Hezekiah and Josiah as good kings because they took positive steps to promote exclusive
allegiance to Yahweh through cultic reform. Favourable events within their respective reigns demonstrated that Yahweh was delighted with their piety and reform.¹ In contrast, the fall of Samaria clearly showed that Yahweh was grossly displeased with the Israelis and their kings. Samaria’s fall, therefore, presents itself as an excellent case for the Deuteronomistic historian to propagate the benefit of exclusive Yahweh worship to the remnants in the north and gain their assent to it as a means of securing Yahweh’s future blessing. However, their assent must entail a radical break from their past. They are to turn away from the illicit worship founded by Jeroboam I and maintained by his successors and return to the sole and legitimate worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem and a Davidic king that promotes this divine choice (Deut 12:1–7).

The interpretation of a return to a Davidic king (Hos 3:4–5), as previously explained, coheres with social norm that grounds the metaphor in Hosea 3:3, namely the eventual movement of a bride from her father’s house to her new husband’s household. Upon joining the new household, she will come under her husband’s authority and is now obliged to redirect her allegiance to him.² Correspondingly, Hosea 3:5 envisages a time when the Israelis will redirect their allegiance to a Davidic king.³


³ Cf. Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 103.
The juxtaposition of “David their king” and “Yahweh their God” also points to a ‘new’ allegiance to the temple in Jerusalem. This ‘new’ allegiance does not mean a loyalty that will occur for the first time. Instead, it represents an event in which the Israelis will make a radical break from a past allegiance that has landed them in a deep crisis—the fall of Samaria and living in what is now a province of Assyria—and to give allegiance anew to a Davidic king and Yahweh in Jerusalem. The fulfilment of Hosea 3:5 will undo what King Jeroboam I had done to prevent the Israelis from making pilgrimages to the temple in Jerusalem for fear that “the kingdom will return to the house of David” (1 Kgs 12:26). The Deuteronomistic historian’s condemnation of Jeroboam’s scheme is clearly displayed in 1 Kings 12:26–29, 32, which has been described in chapter 5 of this study. It has been shown that the aforementioned text from Kings is a Deuteronomistic propaganda to malign Jeroboam by associating him with the idolatrous Exodus generation.

In view of the above analysis, the current investigation seeks to establish a correspondence between the propaganda in Hosea 3 and the Deuteronomistic propaganda in the pre-exilic edition of the books of Kings. There the historian shows a deep concern for non-exclusive worship of Yahweh and its political and religious ramifications. Closely connected to this analysis is the observation that Hosea 3 is consistent with the Deuteronomistic historian’s commendatory view about the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:1–8) especially his religious program to promote exclusive worship of Yahweh. Hezekiah’s reform, in the historian’s view, had been vindicated by the

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4 It has also been previously suggested that the reference to the Davidic king is not to be understood eschatologically. Emmerson, Judean Perspective, 103.
deliverance of Jerusalem (2 Kings 18–19; 2 Chronicles 29–32; Isaiah 36–37) which stands in stark contrast to the actions of the northern kings that ultimately led to the fall of Samaria.\(^5\) The following section will further explore the relationship between the propaganda in Hosea 3 and reform of Hezekiah beginning with a review of the chronological issues relating to his reign. The importance of the review is in its implication in connection with the attempt to explore the synchronism between Hezekiah’s reign, Hosea’s ministry and the fall of Samaria.

6.2 The Chronological Problem of the Reign of King Hezekiah

Despite much debate, the chronology of the reign of King Hezekiah remains a contentious issue.\(^6\) The following discussion is not an attempt to resolve the

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\(^5\) Cf. this proposal: "It is possible that the phrase David their king has a precise setting in the reign of Hezekiah, who sought to recapture the glory years of the united monarchy." Dearman, *Hosea*, 140; from the perspective of the Chronicler, Hosea 3 seems to have fulfilled itself during Hezekiah's reign. This is true insofar that it was during his rule that the Israelites responded favourably to the king's programme of religious reform (2 Kgs 18:1–6). In this respect, some scholars who have defended the historicity of Hezekiah's reform as reported by the Chronicler are: Frederick L. Moriarty, "The Chronicler's Account of Hezekiah's Reform," *CBQ* 27 (1965): 399–406; Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Hezekiah's Reform and the Deuteronomistic Tradition," *HTR* 72 (1979): 23–44.

longstanding impasse but seeks to establish a background for the proposed propaganda in Hosea 3 and its deployment.

The aforementioned task is complicated by incompatible information pertaining to the reign of King Hezekiah. Extra-biblical sources provide one set of chronological data about Hezekiah’s reign. According to Galil, “If we were to possess only the extra-Biblical sources, we would assume that Hezekiah reigned for at least 13 years (713–701), that he was crowned after 734, and that he died before 677/6.”⁷ This information, in his view, is not at variance with the biblical data in 2 Kings 18:2 that records twenty-nine years for the reign of King Hezekiah.

The biblical texts themselves give conflicting data for dating the reign of Hezekiah. 2 Kings 18:1, 9–10 dates Hezekiah’s reign in relation to King Hoshea of Israel and the fall of Samaria (722/721 BCE) while 2 Kings 18:13 associates it with Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah (701 BCE). Opinions are divided about which of these dates is more accurate. It will be shown that the irreconcilable difference in chronologies that these biblical texts attest to does not weaken the argument here to relate the propaganda in Hosea 3 to Hezekiah’s reign. The fall of Samaria, which is a motivating factor for the propaganda, remains relevant regardless of which is the more accurate of the two sets of biblical data. The following reviews the information in these two sets of data.

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⁷ Galil, *Chronology*, 98.
6.2.1 Chronology According to 2 Kings 18:1, 9–10

The synchronism in 2 Kings 18:1 of the start of Hezekiah’s reign with the third regnal year of Hoshea and, again, in 2 Kings 18:9–10 of Hezekiah’s fourth regnal year with Hoshea’s seventh regnal year provide one set of data for Hezekiah. If Hoshea’s reign begins in 732/731 BCE, Hezekiah would have ascended to the throne in 729/728 BCE and would have ruled until 699/698 BCE based on a twenty-nine year reign (2 Kgs 18:2). The reliability of 2 Kings 18:1, 9–10 and its surrounding context in providing chronological information however, appears questionable in view of the heavy Deuteronomistic propaganda to contrast the events during the reign of Hezekiah (vv. 3–8) with those of Hoshea’s time (vv. 9–12). In 2 Kings 18:1–8, Hezekiah is portrayed from the outset as a righteous king like David. Besides removing the high places (במות) and breaking the pillars (מצבת), he is reported to have kept the commandments that Yahweh had commanded Moses, and for which he was blessed with military success over the Assyrians and Philistines. Second Kings 18:9–12 (cf. 2 Kgs 17:5–14), on the other hand, depicts the fall of Samaria in the final years of Hoshea following a three year siege by King Shalmaneser of Assyria. This catastrophe is reported to have come about because of King Hoshea and the Israelis’ failure to obey the voice of Yahweh and all that Yahweh had commanded through Moses. Despite the clear intention by the Deuteronomistic historian to use the aforementioned texts to propagate Hezekiah’s effort to promote exclusive worship of Yahweh as praiseworthy and the fall of Samaria

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8 See discussion by Galil, Chronology, 98–107; cf. the interpretation surrounding Tigalath-pilesrer’s inscription which assigns Hoshea’s first regnal year to the fall of 730. Miller and Hayes, History, 383; see also Becking, Samaria, 19.
during Hoshea’s reign as deplorable, scholars seem to have no hesitation in using the information in 2 Kings 18:1, 9–10 for dating the reign of King Hezekiah.

In his historical and archaeological study of *The Fall of Samaria* in relation to the data in 2 Kings 17:5–6 and 18:1, 9–10, Bob Becking arrives at a chronology for Hezekiah similar to that of the foregoing analysis.⁹ He argues that Hezekiah ascended the throne sometime between autumn 730 and autumn 729 BCE albeit as a co-regent with his father Ahaz. It was only upon the death of Ahaz in the following year (autumn 729–autumn 728) that Hezekiah began his sole regency.¹⁰ This set of chronologies, however, clashes with the data in 2 Kings 18:13 which records Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign. If one follows the data in 2 Kings 18:1, 9–10, Hezekiah’s fourteenth year would be 715/714 BCE which is incompatible with the date for Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 701 BCE.¹¹ Becking’s response to this incompatibility is that “the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah” does not relate to Sennacherib’s invasion in 701 BCE as indicated in 2 Kings 18:13.¹² Instead the “fourteenth year” refers to an earlier Assyrian campaign against Jerusalem in 715 BCE to secure the payment of tribute.¹³ Allan Jenkins has earlier argued along the same line in that 2 Kings 18:13 relates a campaign by Sargon II to suppress a revolt led by Ashdod

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¹⁰ Becking, *Samaria*, 53.

¹¹ Becking, *Samaria*, 54.


¹³ Assyrian inscriptions are cited in support of Sargon’s campaign in 715 BCE. Becking, *Samaria*, 54–55.
in the years 714–712 BCE. Apparently, Judah was implicated in this revolt by the Philistine city. This event, he argues, “was later re-interpreted in light of Hezekiah’s humiliation by Sennacherib and the narrow escape of Jerusalem in 701 BCE.”

Miller and Hayes have also assigned an early period, 727 and 699 BCE, for the reign of Hezekiah. These dates are worked backward from the certain event of the first Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in 597 and the length of the regnal years assigned to Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:2. Miller and Hayes suggest that the difficulty in reconciling the above dates for Hezekiah’s reign with the data in 2 Kings 18:13 should be ignored. The occurrence of Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 701 BCE in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign, described by that verse, is inaccurate and a result of a misunderstanding by its editor. The editor, they argue, has assumed that Hezekiah’s illness and the promise of an additional fifteen years of life (2 Kgs 20:1–11) coincided with Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 701 BCE. Since Hezekiah reigned for twenty-nine years (2 Kgs 18:2), the editor thinks Sennacherib’s invasion must have occurred in the fourteenth year of the king’s reign (2 Kgs 18:13).

Galil, after examining the problematic issues surrounding the dating of Hezekiah’s reign, argues that the key for resolving the chronological problem of the

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15 Jenkins, "Hezekiah," 298.

16 Miller and Hayes, *History*, 403.

king’s reign is to be found in the date relating to the siege of Samaria. He concludes: “The siege probably began in year 4 of Hezekiah and was completed in his sixth year (≈720 BCE). Hezekiah was crowned in 726 and reigned 29 years until 697/6.”  

In summary, the understanding that Hezekiah’s reign began in early 720s BCE means that the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE and Sennacherib’s invasion in 701 BCE occurred during his time. This scenario would be favourable for the attempt to link the proposed propaganda in Hosea 3 to King Hezekiah’s reign based on the notion that these two events are crucial for promoting the ideal of sole allegiance to Yahweh.

6.2.2 Chronology According to 2 Kings 18:13

The chronological data in 2 Kings 18:13, which synchronises Hezekiah’s fourteenth regnal year with Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, contradicts the information in 2 Kings 18:1, 9–10. Since Sennacherib’s invasion occurred in 701 BCE, Hezekiah must have been crowned as king in 715 BCE. This date, however, breaks the

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18 Galil, Chronology, 104; for a proposal that Samaria was conquered twice, once by Shalmaneser in 722 and followed by Sargon in 720, see Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, II Kings (Garden City: Doubleday, 1988), 195–201; see also Becking, Samaria, 53–56; for the theory that there were three Assyrian campaigns against Israel between the years 727/6 and 720, see Nadav Na'am, “The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 BC),” Pontificio istituto biblico 71 (1990): 206–255.

synchronism between the reigns of Hezekiah and Hoshea in 2 Kings 18:1, 9–10.\textsuperscript{20} It also means that the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE could not have occurred during Hezekiah’s reign.\textsuperscript{21} Yet, it is hard to imagine that the author of 2 Kings 18:9–10 did not realise that Hezekiah was not the king of Judah when Israel ceased to exist as an independent political entity. If Hezekiah was indeed enthroned in 715 BCE, the synchronism between the prophetic ministry of Hosea and Hezekiah according to Hosea 1:1 also becomes problematic. Since nothing in the book of Hosea points to the prophet’s experience of the fall of Samaria or his activity in the subsequent years, it would mean that Hosea’s ministry was not contemporaneous with Hezekiah’s reign (contra Hos 1:1). Wolff, however, argues that Hosea witnessed Israel’s fall from the vicinity of the Judean border. He disagrees with dating the beginning of Hezekiah’s reign to 715 BCE: “Since we have no knowledge of Hosea’s sayings after the fall of the Northern Kingdom (Samaria fell in the spring of 721), Hos 1:1 does not support the year 715.”\textsuperscript{22} Hence, Wolff rejects the idea that Hezekiah’s reign began in 715 BCE on the grounds that the synchronism between Hezekiah and the prophet in Hosea 1:1 is

\textsuperscript{20} Scholars who hold this view include Thiele and Tadmor. See Galil, Chronology, 101.

\textsuperscript{21} For discussions about Israel's last years, see Becking, Samaria, 1–118; Galil, Chronology, 83–94; Miller and Hayes, History, 374–391.

\textsuperscript{22} Wolff, Hosea, 6, 210–211.
In contrast, Edward Thiele has argued against the early 720s dating of Hezekiah’s first regnal year because it conflicts with the data in 2 Chronicles 29:3, 17; 30:2, 13, 15. These texts describe one of Hezekiah’s first acts in his first year as king of Judah. He is reported to have opened and repaired the temple (2 Chr 29:3, 17), and proclaimed a solemn Passover to be observed on the fourteenth day of the second month (2 Chr 30:2, 13, 15). Thiele argues that 2 Chronicles 30, which begins with a waw converseive, is a continuation of 2 Chronicles 29 and therefore the second act of re-instituting the Passover also occurs in the first year of Hezekiah’s reign. This second act involves an invitation to the Passover that was sent not only to the places in Judah but also to Ephraim and Manasseh, and even to Zebulun, a former domain of the northern kingdom (2 Chr 30:1, 6, 10). Thiele argues that “when Joash repaired the temple during the period of the divided kingdom, there was no record of invitations having been sent to Israel, but only to Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chr 24:5, 9).” This, according to him, is a clear indication that Israel had ceased to exist when Hezekiah sent his invitation to the Israelis in the north. Had it not been the case, it would not have been possible for the envoys of Judah to pass through the territory of Israel. In sum, Thiele argues that Hezekiah could not have been king before the fall of Israel.

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Mordecai Cogan, on the other hand, has argued against the historicity of the Chronicler’s dating of Hezekiah’s first acts as king of Judah. Its sole purpose, he says, is to stress “that Hezekiah cared for the Temple and its affairs from the first day as king.”27

Thiele further strengthens his argument against an early dating for the reign of Hezekiah by citing as evidence the Hebrew Bible’s silence on any contact between Hezekiah and Hoshea. The lack of communication between these kings suggests to him that they were not contemporaneous. This he says is “unusual, for all through the records of the divided kingdoms we find constant references to the contacts between the contemporaneous rulers of Judah and Israel” albeit with the exception of Azariah/Uzziah.28 Thiele, however, admits that such an argument from silence does not prove that Israel had ceased to exist as a nation by the time Hezekiah began his reign. Neither does it prove that Hezekiah was not a contemporary of Hoshea. In sum, the information in 2 Chronicles 29:3, 17; 30:2, 13, 15 continues to lend support to his argument against an early date for Hezekiah’s first regnal year since it has not been conclusively proven that the data in these texts are counterfactual.29

27 Cogan's work ("Tendentious Chronology in the Book of Chronicles," Zion 45 [1980], 165–172) is cited in Galil, Chronology, 102; it is not clear whether the "first year and first month" in 2 Chr 29:3 refers to Hezekiah's first official year as king (postdating) or the first month after the death of his father (antedating). Mordechai Cogan, "Chronicler's Use of Chronology," in Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism (eds. Jeffrey H Tigay and Richard Elliot Friedman; Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 201–203.

28 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 168–169.

29 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 169.
It seems more scholars prefer to date the start of Hezekiah’s reign to 715 BCE in accordance with 2 Kings 18:13. Its synchronism with the firm date of Sennacherib’s invasion in 701 BCE appears to be the determining factor in their consideration. If 715 BCE is indeed the year Hezekiah was made the king of Judah, then the demise of the northern kingdom in 722/721 BCE could not have occurred during his reign. However, that does not mean the redactor of Hosea 3 is unable to use that catastrophic event to contrast the deliverance of Jerusalem (701 BCE) in Hezekiah’s time to mount a propaganda campaign against the north. The contrasting fate of the fall of Samaria, which the Deuteronomistic historian attributes to the failure of its kings to promote exclusive allegiance to Yahweh, and the survival of Jerusalem in the face of possible annihilation by Sennacherib, which the historian attributes to Hezekiah’s reform (2 Kgs 19:35–37), provides an excellent rhetorical impetus for the propaganda in Hosea 3.

6.3 Hosea 3 and the Reign of Hezekiah

Regarding Hosea 3, the previous analysis strongly suggests that it was composed after the fall of Samaria. It has also been proposed that Hosea 3 is propaganda to promote allegiance to Yahweh in Jerusalem and reunification of the Israelis to the people of Judah under a Davidic governance. It is possible that the propaganda is based on Hezekiah’s reform program to centralise worship in Jerusalem and the benefit it secured for the southern kingdom. Although it is plausible that Hezekiah’s reign began in the early 720s BCE, it is unlikely that his reform program predates the fall of Samaria. It is also improbable that Hosea 3 was composed while the northern monarchy was still

30 Apart from Thiele, others who prefer this later date of Hezekiah's ascension include John Gray, I & II Kings (SCM press, 1970), 228; Cogan and Tadmor, II Kings, 673.
in existence as will be shown.

In Hosea 3:3, the prospective husband reminds his betrothed of her obligation to chastity in view of the bride price he had paid to secure the marriage (Hos 3:2). The Hebrew word כִי beginning Hosea 3:4 indicates that the betrothed in Hosea 3:3 refers metaphorically to the Israelis. Like its metaphorical counterpart, the betrothed who is to remain chaste pending transfer to her new husband’s household, the Israelis shall be subjected to a similar experience for “many days” during which they shall be deprived of all political and cult structure (Hos 3:4). Commonly, this verse has been assumed to reflect the life of the Israelis in exile in a foreign land (cf. 2 Kgs 17:5–6). Yet, nothing in Hos 3:4 points explicitly to such a situation. There is no mention of exile (cf. 2 Kgs 17:6) nor is there a reference to bondage (cf. Jer 30:9). The text, as previously highlighted, simply states that the Israelis shall remain without leadership or cult for many days. It seems superfluous for the verse to describe the deprived existence in such detail (כִי יָמִים רֹבִים ישֹׁבַ.backward יִשְרָאֵל אין מלך ואין שֹׂר אין זָבָח אין מָצוּת וּאֵין א֫֫ודּ וּתְרַפִּים) if its context is clearly an exile in a foreign land. It would seem more reasonable to relate the deprivation of politics and cult to the situation of the remnants in the land of the defunct northern kingdom that has become a province of Assyria following its conquest. Whereas king and official, sacrifice and pillar, ephod and teraphim were once integral to the land and the Israeli way of life, now the remnants, those who were not deported to Halah, Habor and the cities of Medes (2 Kgs 17:6b;
18:11) will need to live without the familiar political and cult elements.\(^{31}\)

The above analysis, however, is only reasonable if the people in the northern kingdom were not completely deported and replaced by migrants from the other Assyrian territories. The following discussion beginning with the book of Amos suggests that the defunct northern kingdom continued to be inhabited by Israelis even after the fall of Samaria.

6.3.1 Empty Land Hypothesis

Jason Radine dates the composition of the earliest level of the book of Amos to a time after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel.\(^{32}\) The book, he argues, is retrospective and seeks to exonerate Yahweh for the Assyrian conquest of Israel.\(^{33}\) Schniedewind, he notes, has proposed a Hezekian date for the final form of Amos who

\(^{31}\) Evidence suggests that the deportation is historical. Evidence from Assyrian sources connects the area of Ḥalaḥḫu (Halah) with three persons bearing West-Semitic names and the attestation of the presence of Israelites in the province of Guzana (Gozan) indirectly supports the biblical account of the deportation. Other data also point to a substantial Israeli presence in the Assyrian Military. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 340; see also Becking, *Samaria*, 61–94.


\(^{33}\) The retrospective character of the book of Amos means that it is “essentially pseudepigraphical; that is writing attributed to a figure (real or imagined) from the past.” He cites the work of Möller who suggests that the superscription sets Amos’s career before the fall of the northern kingdom, which demonstrates the authenticity of his prophecies. Thus, “the book demonstrates that Yahweh gave Israel fair warning well in advance of the Assyrian invasions, and thus Israel’s total demise was no fault of Yahweh’s nor did it show any weakness on his part.” Radine, *Amos*, 54.
has contextualised it to the absorption of northern refugees in the rapidly expanding Jerusalem of the late eighth century. In Radine’s view, there was great upheaval and radical change at the time of the conquest of Samaria: a military defeat with catastrophic casualties (Amos 5:3), fleeing soldiers (Amos 2:14–16), massive destruction of important religious and political establishments (Amos 3:14–15; 7:9), and the destruction of Samaria and its inhabitants (Amos 6:8) and deportation (Amos 4:2–3; 5:5; 6:7; 7:17; 9:4). In 2 Kings 17:18, the Deuteronomic historian has painted a bleak picture of an empty land after its conquest at Yahweh’s behest: “And Yahweh was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight; none was left but the tribe of Judah alone.” This summary assessment is made in conjunction with a long list of charges against its kings and people for rejecting the commandments of Yahweh by continuing to embrace the sinful ways of King Jeroboam I (2 Kgs 17:7–17, 21–23). According to Knoppers, “most scholars recognize the accusations levelled at the Israelites in 2 Kings 17.7–41 as Deuteronomic propaganda, many have nonetheless agreed with the basic picture the passage presents of a radical metamorphosis in the land [sic].”

The inscription bearing the testimony of Sargon II, however, contradicts the ‘empty land’ scenario in 2 Kings 17:18. Instead of a land emptied of its people, the

34 Radine, *Amos*, 76; see also Schniedewind, "Jerusalem," 390–391.


36 Emphasis mine.

37 Knoppers, "Samaria After the Fall," 150–151.
inscription testifies to the continued presence of Israelis in the land following its conquest by the Assyrian king: “I besieged and conquered Samaria (Sa-me-ri-na), led away as booty 27,290 inhabitants of it. I formed from among them a contingent of 50 chariots and made remaining (inhabitants) assume their (social) positions.”

Karel van der Toorn estimates that “out of every hundred Israelites, no more than five were actually deported.” The estimated five percent reduction in the Israeli population means that a large part of the populace remained in the land.

In his discussion about the archaeological and epigraphical evidence connected with the demise of the northern kingdom, Knoppers thinks that both extremists have overstated their claims concerning the condition in the north after its conquest. At one end of the spectrum, the maximalists have put forward a case for an empty land following the Assyrian conquest. At the other end, the minimalists have argued that there was no radical discontinuity with the past and that the deportation involves only a small portion of the elite in the major urban centres. Knoppers argues that life in the north after the Assyrian campaigns is more complex than the maximalist or minimalist view:

Analysis of the material remains from the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh suggests a mixed picture. Some sites were either destroyed and abandoned during the late eighth century or evince long occupation gaps. A

38 “Sargon II (721–705): The Fall of Samaria,” translated by F. H. Weissbach (ANET, 284–285); "their (social) position" refers to the former lifestyles and occupations of the Israelites who were not deported. On this issue, see Miller and Hayes, History, 388.

39 Van der Toorn, Family Religion, 340.

40 Knoppers, "Samaria After the Fall," 153.
few locations, showing no traces of destruction, evince continuity in occupation. Other sites including Megiddo and Samaria itself, show only limited or minimal signs of destruction. Yet other sites evince destruction and some rebuilding. Archaeological surveys indicate a process of significant depopulation in the late eighth century. Historically, one may associate these developments with the western campaigns of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, which overthrew the Israelite state and transformed Samaria into an Assyrian province.41

Of the population in the north, he argues that the picture is just as complicated:

What one finds in the hills of Samaria is not so much the replacement of one local population by a foreign population, but rather the diminution of one local population by a foreign population. Wholesale abandonment does not occur as in parts of Galilee and Gilead, but significant depopulation does occur. Among the causes of such a decline, one may list death by war, disease, and starvation, forced deportations to other lands, and migrants to other areas, including south to Judah . . . Some Israelites were deported to other locations in the Assyrian empire, but others survived the Assyrian onslaughts and remained in the land.42

In sum, Knoppers argues for “an enduring, but significantly reduced, Israelite presence in the land” following the Assyrian onslaughts and deportations.43

Proposals from an economic viewpoint also support the idea of a continued Israeli presence in the land after its conquest. Scholars have argued that economic recovery following its disruption by the Assyrian war had been swift and may be attributed to the economic policy of the Assyrians for the territory they captured. Unlike

41 Knoppers, "Samaria After the Fall," 170.

42 Knoppers, "Samaria After the Fall," 170.

the Babylonians, the Assyrians did not leave any captured territory in its devastated condition nor did they let its economy go to rot. Instead, they sought to “return the areas to normalcy and to restore their economic base so that the provinces not only would be self-sustaining but also could be a source of benefit for the Assyrian homeland.”

The Assyrians, Ephraim Stern argues, made the indigenous Israelians return to their work, assisted by the resettled foreigners, to maximise the resources of the land. This apparently brought new growth and prosperity to the region, far better than Judah did after the Babylonian invasion in the sixth century.

Although the introduction of foreigners to supplement the diminished indigenous population was made on economic grounds, politics was probably also a primary consideration. According to Miller and Hayes, “One of the goals of deportation, in addition to punishment for rebellion, was to remove those in leadership and thus to lessen the likelihood of nationalistic uprisings in the future.”

2 Kings 17:24 testifies to the implant of foreigners from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim. Inscription on clay prisms discovered at Nimrud bearing the testimony of Sargon II provides support for the biblical account of the introduction of foreigners:

[The inhabitants of Samerina, who agreed [and plotted] with a king [hostile to] me, not to do service and not to bring tribute [to Ashur] and who did battle, I fought against them with the power of the great gods, my lords. I counted as spoil 27,280 people, together with their chariots, and gods, in which they trusted. I formed a unit with 200 of [their] chariots for my royal force. I settled

44 Miller and Hayes, History, 368.

45 Stern’s work is cited in Knoppers, "Samaria After the Fall," 171.

46 Miller and Hayes, History, 389.
the rest of them in the midst of Assyria. I repopulated Samerina more than before. I brought into it people from countries conquered by my hands. I appointed my eunuch as governor over them. And I counted them as Assyrians.47

The above testimony, unlike the earlier inscription, does not indicate the state of affairs in the northern kingdom before the repopulation of Samaria by foreigners. However, some biblical texts show that no complete depopulation of the land occurred after the devastating conquest in 722 BCE (contra 2 Kgs 17:18). Therefore, it is possible that Hosea 3 is addressed to the remnant in the defunct northern kingdom in their deprived condition (Hos 3:4) rather than the exilic communities in the foreign territories (2 Kgs 17:6). 2 Chronicles 30, for example, reports King Hezekiah’s plan to nationalise the celebration of the Passover in the second month in Jerusalem.48 This attempt, Thiele argues, occurs in the first month of the first year of Hezekiah’s reign (2 Chr 29:3) which began in 715 BCE.49 His plan to nationalise the Passover in Jerusalem, “a possibility blocked since the time of Jeroboam I,” involves the dispatch of letters of invitation not only to the Judeans but also to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh in the north (2 Chr 30:1, 6, 10).50 The letter that urges their return to Yahweh identifies these Israelians as “the remnants of you who escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria” (2 Chr 30:6).


48 The delay in the celebration of the Passover, it has been argued, was to re-align the calendars of the northern kingdom and Judah. The synchronism has been disrupted since the time of Jeroboam I in his effort to retain the northerners’ allegiance to him rather than to Jerusalem. Shemaryahu Talmon, "Divergencies in Calendar - Reckoning in Ephraim and Judah," VT 8 (1958): 48–74.

49 See above for Thiele's main line of argument.

The above interpretation, however, is not without problems in that some scholars have argued that Hezekiah’s reform in 2 Chronicles 30 is an anachronism. They view the reform as a Deuteronomistic innovation at the time of King Josiah (640–609 BCE).51 Second Chronicles 30 is thought to have borrowed the Deuteronomistic historian’s account of Josiah’s instruction for Passover celebration in 2 Kings 23:21–23 to fashion Hezekiah in Josiah’s image.52 Furthermore, the claim by the historian that no such observance of the Passover had been held by any king of Israel or Judah prior to Josiah (2 Kgs 23:22; cf. 2 Chr 35:18) makes the Chronicler’s account of Hezekiah’s Passover celebration and invitation historically dubious.53 Other scholars have defended the basic historicity of the Chronicler’s account of the event, including the participation in the Passover celebration in the second month by Israelis from the north.54

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54 It is argued that reform effort must not be limited to Josiah’s reform in view of a whole succession of prophetic activity to summon kings to faithful observance of Yahweh covenants. For example, Micah’s warning to Hezekiah in Mic 3:9–12 and Jer 26:16–19. Reforms during the reign of Asa, Josiah and Jehu further suggest that Hezekiah’s reform should not be written off as historically inaccurate. The fall of the northern kingdom probably gave him the impetus to take reform actions if Judah was to avoid the same fate. The fact that the Chronicler recorded Hezekiah’s celebration of the Passover in the second month “when he could just as easily have put it in the first as in the case of Josiah’s Passover” (2 Chr 35:1) further suggests that Hezekiah did carry out a reform in his time. Moriarty, "The Chronicler's Account of Hezekiah's Reform," 401–406, here 405; see also the discussion surrounding Hezekiah's reform in the second month by Simeon Chavel, "The Second Passover, Pilgrimage, and the Centralized Cult," *HTR* 102 (2009): 1–24; it is also argued that the lack of bias by the
Jeremiah 3:6–18, as the following discussion will show, further suggests that the Israelis continue to inhabit the land of the former northern kingdom after its conquest by the Assyrians in 722 BCE. The implication is that it is possible to argue that Hosea 3 is directed at the remnants in the defunct kingdom of Israel with the aim to convince them to show exclusive loyalty to Yahweh and the Davidic king in Jerusalem. Jeremiah 3:6–18 is a composite unit of three sets of oracles (vv. 6–11, 12–13, 14–18). Jeremiah 3:6–11 describes the sin and punishment of Israel, and the indictment of Judah for its failure to learn from Israel’s mistake, which makes the southern kingdom more culpable of apostasy. With that judgment, Jeremiah 3:12–13 reports Yahweh’s instruction to proclaim a message of hope to the remnant of the former northern kingdom on the proviso they express remorse for their apostasy:

“Go, and proclaim these words to the north [צפונה], and say,

‘Return apostate Israel,’

Oracle of Yahweh.

‘I will no longer disregard you,

priestly Chronicler in acknowledging the rural priesthood in Hezekiah time (e.g. 2 Chr 31:15–19) supports the historicity of his reform program. Rosenbaum, "Hezekiah's Reform and the Deuteronomistic Tradition," 23–44.


56 Cf. the view that Jeremiah originally uses the word "Israel" in v. 12 to refer to the whole nation and not just the northern Israelites in exile. Ernest W. Nicholson, Jeremiah 1–25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 46.
for I am merciful,’

Oracle of Yahweh.

‘I will not bear a grudge forever.

Only acknowledge your guilt,

that you have rebelled against Yahweh your God,

and scattered your ways among strangers under every green tree

and have not obeyed my voice,’

Oracle of Yahweh.”

Jeremiah 3:14a continues with another summon to apostate (שׁובב) Israel and Judah to return (שׁוב) which is followed by the divine promise in Jeremiah 3:14b to restore the Israelis and Judeans to Zion.57 Thereafter, they will be given רעים “shepherds” (Jer 3:15a) or “kings” (cf. Jer 10:21, 22:22; 2 Sam 5:2; Ps 78:70–72; Isa 44:28; Ezek 34:1–10) whose preoccupation is to promote sole allegiance to Yahweh and who will govern (רע) with knowledge and understanding (Jer 3:15b).

The instruction to proclaim Yahweh’s word “to the north” (צפונית) in Jeremiah 3:12 refers to the Israelis living in the former kingdom of Israel (contra Jer 3:8; 2 Kgs 17:6). It is most unlikely that the proclamation “to the north” refers to an announcement to the Israelis in the cities of Assyria where they were deported after the fall of Samaria. Not only would be it be difficult to gain access to the exiles in the Assyrian cities (2 Kgs 17:6), the proclamation, if made, would certainly be construed as sedition.

57 Concerning the possibility of Deuteronomistic influence in Jer 3:14, see Thompson, Jeremiah, 78–81; cf. the view that Jer 3:14–15 constitutes an address to Judah. Craigie, et al., Jeremiah 1–25, 60.
and, thus, would carry with it the risk of a political retaliation by the Assyrians.

John Thompson, however, seems to think that the divine address was directed to the Israelis living in foreign exile.\(^{58}\) Peter Craigie, on the other hand, disagrees with Thompson’s view regarding both the addressee of the invitation to repentance in Jeremiah 3:14 and promise of restoration of good governance in Jeremiah 3:15:

The northern focus does not necessarily imply an address to those in exile from the Northern Kingdom; more probably, one may suppose that a part of Jeremiah’s ministry was exercised in the territory that formerly belonged to the northern state, but came under the control of Judah in Josiah’s time (2 Kgs 23:15–20) with the decline of the Assyrian power.\(^{59}\)

Clements seems to agree with Craigie’s interpretation. He argues that Jeremiah 3:12–14 contains “an impassioned appeal to the survivors of Ephraim to ‘return.”’\(^{60}\) While “return” (שׁוב) may denote an inner repudiation of past disloyalty and a genuine turning back to God in repentance of heart, he argues that it also “conveys a sense of the returning in political allegiance to one government and nationhood under the rule of Jerusalem.”\(^{61}\)

In sum, both Craigie and Clements support the proposal that the oracle of Hosea

\(^{58}\) Thompson, Jeremiah, 199.

\(^{59}\) This statement about an Israeli presence in the north in Josiah's time presupposes a similar state of affairs in Hezekiah's time for the Israelis could not have suddenly appeared on the scene. Craigie, et al., Jeremiah 1–25, 57, 60.

\(^{60}\) Clements, Jeremiah, 34–35.

\(^{61}\) Clements, Jeremiah, 35.
3 addresses the Israelis living in the defunct kingdom in the north. The purpose of the oracle, it seems, is to provoke them to return to Yahweh and a Davidic king in the south after having spent many days of political and cult deprivation after the fall of Samaria. This interpretation about the return has been argued from the perspective of Hosea 3:3. Just as the betrothed in Hosea 3:3 is to remain chaste in her father’s house, and nowhere else during the interim period before she joins her new husband, so shall the Israelis remain in ‘their’ land deprived of all political and cult elements. The deprivation will last “many days” (Hos 3:4) but a time will come, as Hosea 3:5a prophesies, when “the sons of Israel will return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king.”

6.3.2 Deuteronomistic Influence in Hosea 3

Since the former kingdom of Israel was not completely depopulated after the fall of Samaria, as the earlier analysis shows, it can now be said with greater plausibility that the propaganda of a return to Yahweh and a Davidic king in Jerusalem in Hosea 3 is directed at the Israelis in the defunct northern kingdom. The next section will endeavour to explain the Deuteronomistic influence in Hosea 3 and a revisit of Jeremiah 3:6–18 will provide a helpful starting point.

Within Jeremiah 3:6–18, verses 6a and 11a record the prophet’s personal declaration that the passage contains Yahweh’s speech to him (“And Yahweh said to me”) concerning the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Many scholars, however, have

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interpreted this passage as secondary material inserted by a Deuteronomistic editor. Jeremiah 3:6–18, they argue, shares stylistic, linguistic and thematic similarities with the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history. The insertion of Jeremiah 3:6–18 into the prophetic text that bears the name of the prophet, coupled with the use of the formula, “And Yahweh said to me” in verses 6a and 11a, has effectively elevated its status. The identity of its Deuteronomistic editor has receded into the background and Jeremiah 3:6–18 has become the authoritative word of Yahweh to Jeremiah. Therefore, based on the terminology used in this research, Jeremiah 3:6–18 is a black prophecy.

A careful reading of Jeremiah 3:6–18 also suggests that this passage is a piece of propaganda and it serves the interest of its Deuteronomistic editor. The structure in the passage further suggests that the Deuteronomistic editor strongly believes that it expresses Yahweh’s aspiration for the people of Israel and Judah after the fall of Samaria and Jerusalem in 722 and 587 BCE respectively. The logical sequence in the structure of Jeremiah 3:6–18 reflects his conviction. It begins with Yahweh’s judgment oracle in verses 6–11, followed by an invitation to repentance in verses 12–14 and Yahweh’s promise of the eventual restoration of the Israelis and Judeans to Jerusalem and the appointment of a Davidic shepherd-king to rule over them in Jeremiah 3:15–18.

The Deuteronomistic aspiration for the Israelis in the defunct kingdom in the

63 For example, Nicholson, Jeremiah 1–25, 43–45; Clements, Jeremiah, 34; Robert P. Carroll, Jeremiah (New York: T & T Clark 2004), 24.
north, namely their repentance in Jeremiah 3:12–13 and restoration to Zion in Jeremiah 3:14b–15 bears striking resemblance to Yahweh’s desire expressed in Hosea 3.\(^64\) In Hosea 3, Yahweh speaks about a period of deprivation, which provides an opportunity for reflection and repentance (Hos 3:4), and a return to “Yahweh their God and David their king” (Hos 3:5). The primary objective of the Deuteronomistic editors, given that Jeremiah 3:6–18 and Hosea 3 derive from a time after the fall of Jerusalem and Samaria respectively, is not to explain the fall of these capital cities. Instead, they seek to persuade their audience to respond in ways that will be pleasing to Yahweh to secure future blessings for themselves.

The Deuteronomistic persuasion in Hosea 3 becomes more prominent and meaningful when read in light of the propaganda in the pre-exilic edition of the books of Kings, which will be reviewed in the next section. The pervasive topic in these books relates to the Deuteronomistic historian’s concern about Israel’s break in allegiance to Yahweh and the problems associated with popular piety in the במות (bėmāṯ in singular), commonly translated as “high places” (1 Kgs 12:25–33). The Deuteronomistic historian condemns the deviant worship practice in the במות and considers it a principal cause of the apostasy of the Israelis and eventual collapse of the northern (and southern) kingdoms.

\(^64\) According to Jer 3:6, the invitation of repentance and promise of restoration “in the days of Josiah” seems to coincide with the political and religious development during his reign. It includes the decline of Assyria as a military superpower following the fall of Nineveh in 612 BCE and Josiah’s scheme to centralise the cult of Yahweh in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:1–27, 2 Chr 34:1–35:19). Miller and Hayes, *History*, 360; Clements has argued that Josiah's reform extends beyond the religious realm: “when Assyrian imperial control over Judah had lapsed, Josiah, strongly backed by ardent national feeling in Judah, had endeavored to reclaim a significant part of the old Northern Kingdom.” Clements, *Jeremiah*, 34; this political dimension of Josiah's reform has also been argued by Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 199.
The historian’s quest for a solution to the arch-problem of the בָּבִיל materialises in Hezekiah’s reform program. The program which involves the removal of the בָּבִיל (2 Kgs 18:3–4) and its positive political outcome (2 Kgs 19:35–37) became the justification for a propaganda campaign against the בָּבִיל. The goal of the propaganda is to subvert the people’s piety in these בָּבִיל which is seen as a first step for the people’s spiritual and physical return to Yahweh—the latter through a return to worship in the divinely appointed Jerusalem temple (Deut 12:5). The Deuteronomistic propaganda to promote exclusive allegiance to Yahweh in Jerusalem is also a push for the political reunification of Israel and Judah under a Davidic king. It will reverse Jeroboam I’s subversion of the Israelis’ allegiance to the Davidic king and Jerusalem temple (1 Kgs 12:25–33).

In light of the above understanding, the fall of Samaria provides an excellent setting for promoting the peril of infidelity to Yahweh or benefit of complete loyalty to Yahweh (cf. 2 Kgs 19:35–37). Hosea 3, which ultimately seeks to convince the Israelis to “return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king” (Hos 3:5a), coheres with the viewpoint of the Deuteronomistic historian. Hosea 3 was probably composed in the pre-exilic period by the historian or someone or group who sympathises with the historian’s viewpoint. The reference to a return to a Davidic king in Hosea 3:4–5 supports a pre-exilic date for Hosea 3.65 The verses presuppose that the fall of the Judean monarchy had not occurred, which means that Hosea 3 must have

65 An exception is the phrase בָּאָרֶץ הָיְמֵים "in the latter days" in Hos 3:5. It is possible that this phrase derives from an exilic editor and serves to update the prophecy-propaganda to reflect the fall of Jerusalem and collapse of the Davidic kingship in 587 BCE.
been composed before 587 BCE. The fall of Jerusalem in that year seems to have assigned the Davidic throne to a permanent place in history and it would be meaningless to push for a return to a Davidic king (cf. Hos 3:5). A post-exilic composition of Hosea 3 is also highly improbable because a civil government rather than a Davidic king administered the Persian province of Yehud after the resettlement of the exiles to the land (Ezra 4:1–3; Neh 2:1–8; contra Hos 3:5). As a pre-exilic composition, Hosea 3 coheres with the Deuteronomistic thinking in the pre-exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic history especially regarding Hezekiah’s reform and achievement in eradicating the בֵּית הַמְּרֹא א (high places). To fully appreciate the coherence and persuasion in Hosea 3, it is necessary to take a crucial (but somewhat lengthy) detour to understand the propaganda in 1 and 2 Kings.

6.3.3 Deuteronomistic Propaganda in the Pre-Exilic Edition of Kings

As highlighted before, Cross has argued for a pre-exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic history that “was written in the era of Josiah as a programmatic document of his reform and revival of the Davidic state.” Iain Provan has also dated the pre-exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic history to the early part of Josiah’s reign and, in his view, it presents Hezekiah, not Josiah, as the ideal king. The historian shows high regard for Hezekiah and his role in the removal of the בֵּית הַמְּרֹא א “high places” in

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66 Cross, Canaanite Myth, 287, 293–309.

Judah: “He removed the high places, broke down the pillars, and cut down the sacred pole . . . there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him or among those who were before him” (2 Kgs 18:4–5).

Biblical texts in the books of Kings describe במות as some kind of shrine that were נבנה “built” (for example 1 Kgs 11:7; 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:9; Jer 7:31) or "made” (for example 2 Kgs 23:15; Ezek 16:6) by people. Some texts also describe them as capable of being נחרץ “torn down” (for example 2 Kgs 23:8; 2 Chr 31:1) or "burnt” (for example 2 Kgs 23:15) or וסור “removed” (for example 1 Kgs 15:14; 2 Kgs 12:4). The במות are associated with בית "building” (for example 1 Kgs 13:32), such that devotees could enter into them to offer sacrifices (for example 1 Sam 9:12; 1 Kgs 3:2) on the altar within (for example 1 Kgs 3:4). במות are also associated with a kind of “hall” לשכון in which a sacrificial meal is consumed (1 Sam 9:22). Biblical texts also attest to the appointment of priests to preside over the sacrificial ritual in the במות (for example 1 Kg 12:32; 13:2).68

Several scholars, reflecting on evidence in the Septuagint, have interpreted a במות as an open-air altar or a platform (for example, Menahem Haran) constructed out of stone and used for cultic rites (for example, Patrick Vaughan), and located out in the countryside on a mountain peak (for example, Julius Wellhausen).69 John Emerton, citing 1 Kings 14:23, 2 Kgs 16:4 and especially 2 Kings 17:9–11, supports this rural


setting. He locates the open-air בֵּית וָהֵל “on every high hill and under every green tree.” Lisbeth Fried, on the other hand, argues for an urban setting, in that the biblical בֵּית refers to a sanctuary complex located in a city.

Fried also argues that the Hebrew בֵּית has cognates in both Ugaritic and Akkadian languages. The Ugaritic bmt means “side” or “flank” while the Akkadian bamtu and bamâtu means “flank” and “open country, plain” (always in the plural) respectively. According to Fried, the Akkadian expression bamâtu ša šadî corresponds to the Hebrew clause בֵּית וָהֵל in Deuteronomy 32:13, Isaiah 58:14, Amos 4:13, Micah 1:3 and Job 9:8. Unlike the Ugaritic and Akkadian references, the Hebrew usage has a cultic sense, which Fried attributes to the understanding that מַלְיָה יָהָウェָה refers to places where Yahweh treads and, therefore, where Yahweh can be found and worshipped. The question that arises is why the books of Kings would castigate


71 Fried, "High Places," 439–441; cf. the assessment that high places of worship were located outside a city wall. Biran, "The High Places of Biblical Dan," 148–155; cf. the proposal that the high places were erected between the inner and outer gates of a city. Emerton, "High Places," 455–467.

72 For a discussion about בֵּית from the perspective of etymology and archaeology, and its construction and location, see W. Boyd Barrick, "High Place," *ABD* 3:196–200.


the monarchs and people of Israel and Judah for its use. Alternatively, why does the Deuteronomistic historian praise Hezekiah and Josiah for the removal and destruction of the במות? Biblical texts in the books of Kings suggest that the problem with these high places of worship was that they promoted disloyalty to Yahweh. These במות, which house images of other deities, stand in the way of the people’s undivided loyalty to Yahweh in the Jerusalem temple. Thus, the Deuteronomistic historian condemns the במות and it forms the basis for the propaganda to promote the Deuteronomistic ideal of cult centralisation in the Jerusalem temple. According to the historian, the temple is the only place where Yahweh ought to be worshipped (Deuteronomy 12, particularly verses 5, 13 and 18). To this end, the kings of Israel and Judah have an instrumental


77 Hezekiah: 2 Kgs 18:4, 22; Josiah: 2 Kgs 23:5, 8, 9, 13, 15, 19, 20.

78 In the days after the construction of the temple by Solomon, worship associated with the high places was synonymous with idolatry, since approved sacrificial worship of Yahweh could only be carried out at the temple. Thus, “in the rest of the Books of Kings, a king’s attitude toward the high places will be one of the criteria on which the narrator judges him: if he attempts to destroy them, he is good, if he leaves them alone, he is mediocre; if he worships there, he is evil to the core.” Jerome T. Walsh, 1 Kings (David W. Cotter; Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), 72.

79 Cf. “What gave Jerusalem its significance in the Deuteronomistic History was the Temple. Deuteronomy’s program of centralizing Israel’s sacrificial worship in the one place designated by God is designated in Deuteronomistic literature by explicit reference to Jerusalem and its Temple.” Hoppe, Holy City, 48.

80 The book of Deuteronomy presents itself as Yahweh’s will to the people through Moses before his death. It has been argued that the author of Deuteronomy, in putting his speech into the mouth of Moses, purposely avoided mentioning concrete names and objects such as Jerusalem, the city, the house, David, bamōt, Baal, and Ashtoreth, which might sound anachronistic. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School, 6; Hoppe, Holy City, 45.
role to play in promoting loyalty to the Jerusalem temple. Those who did not promote cult centralisation had been overtaken by political crisis and were condemned as bad kings while those who did had averted political calamity and were praised as good kings.\footnote{See previous note; it has been argued that the Deuteronomistic history is anti-monarchic given its widespread critique of the kings of Israel and Judah for their part in causing the collapse of the northern and southern kingdoms. Martin Noth, \textit{The Deuteronomistic History} (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 63–74; yet, the Deuteronomistic history continually lauds David and holds to a future hope based on the promise of a perpetual house of David. Gerhard Von Rad, \textit{Studies in Deuteronomy} (London: SCM, 1953), 74–91; for a proposal concerning the themes of judgment and hope in the two editions of the Deuteronomistic history, see Cross, \textit{Canaanite Myth}, 274–289.}

The following elaborates this view of the Deuteronomistic historian.

In 1 Kings 1–11, the historian gives praises to King Solomon with one hand and he takes them away with the other.\footnote{Many scholars have attributed the dichotomous views of Solomon in 1 Kgs 1–11, namely as a highly successful king and one condemned for his role in the split of the kingdom to the double redaction of the Deuteronomistic history - an anti-monarchic (exilic) version and a pro-monarchic (pre-exilic) version. In contrast, Sweeney argues that the dichotomous views in the Josianic (pre-exilic) edition of the Deuteronomistic history presents “Solomon as a foil to Josiah, as Solomon causes the fundamental problems within the kingdoms of Israel and Judah that Josiah attempts to set aright.” Moreover, it is argued that the Deuteronomistic history is propagandistic in that it condemns Solomon in relation to Josiah's policy to attract the people of the former northern kingdom of Israel back to Davidic rule. Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History," \textit{JBL} 114 (1995): 607–622; for a response to Sweeney’s methodology and finding, see David A. Glatt-Gilad, "The Deuteronomistic Critique of Solomon: A Response to Marvin A. Sweeney," \textit{JBL} 116, no. 4 (1997): 75–101; for an anti-monarchic view of the Deuteronomistic history's critique of the kings of Israel and Judah for the roles they play in causing the collapse of the northern and southern kingdoms, see Noth, \textit{The Deuteronomistic History}, 63–74; for a discussion of the themes of judgment and hope in the two editions of the Deuteronomistic history, see Cross, \textit{Canaanite Myth}, 287–289; the view about how 'good and bad kings' are judged according to the laws about exclusive worship of Yahweh and the validity of the Jerusalem temple as the sole place where Yahweh may be legitimately worshipped is also expressed (citing Jeroboam I as the archetypical 'bad' king and Josiah the 'good' king) in Mason, \textit{Propaganda}, 79.} In 1 Kings 3:3a, he shows high regard for the king.
because “Solomon loved Yahweh.” According to Volkmar Fritz, “‘To love God’ is the main principle of Deuteronomistic theology; this love has to be understood as sole and complete loyalty to Yahweh to the exclusion of worship of any foreign gods.”

In the eyes of the historian, there has been none like Solomon nor will there be anyone in the future who will measure up to him (1 Kgs 3:12). For this reason Yahweh has endowed him with moral discernment, wisdom, riches and honour (1 Kgs 3:12–13). The historian even exonerates Solomon for wrongdoings associated with the people’s continual sacrificial offering in the בְּמֹסָר in 1 Kings 3:2: “for no house in the name of Yahweh had been built up to that day.”

The phrase “up to that day” links 1 Kings 3:2 to the preceding verse 1 about his marriage to the Pharaoh’s daughter so that there is absolutely no doubt about Solomon’s loyalty to Yahweh prior to the building of the temple to Yahweh and prior to his marriage as a means for him to preserve “national security.”

Fritz has noted that this focus on the political issue in the introductory 1 Kings 3:1 appears to be out of character with the normal bias of the historian toward cultic matters. Perhaps, the historian wishes to emphasise that Solomon’s imprudent trade-off (1 Kgs 3:1)—a foreign wife for “national security”—had eventually led him to turn his heart away from Yahweh and to other gods (1 Kgs 11:1–11). Thus, 1 Kings

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84 As for Solomon’s own sacrifice at the בְּמֹסָר (1 Kgs 3:3b), the narrative has exonerated his action through the portrayal of Yahweh's speech to Solomon in his dream at Gibeon and his subsequent reparative offerings before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh (indicating that the temple has indeed not been built or completed).

85 Cf. the view that the בְּמֹסָר in 1 Kgs 3:2 has its antecedent in 1 Kgs 2:46b which introduces 1 Kgs 3. Thus, 1 Kgs 2:46b and 1 Kgs 3:2 provide the rationale for the people's sacrifice at the בְּמֹסָר, namely that the temple is not yet built, see Marvin A. Sweeney, I & II Kings (Louisville: Westminster John Knox 2007), 78.

86 Fritz, 1 & 2 Kings, 34.
3:1–2 serves as a crucial introductory rhetoric in the historian’s propaganda to paint Solomon as a bad king. The overall assessment is that he has failed to promote the ideal of exclusive allegiance to Yahweh and Yahweh has punished him by splitting his kingdom in two soon after his death (1 Kgs 11:9–11).

Solomon’s marriage to Pharaoh’s daughter (1 Kgs 3:1), according to the historian, is the catalyst for Solomon’s trouble with Yahweh. It opens the ‘floodgate’ for more marriages between the king and other foreign women (1 Kgs 11:1–2). These marriages led to the building of במות to house the gods of these wives, which draw the condemnation of the Deuteronomistic historian (1 Kgs 11:4–8). The national security that Solomon had hoped to acquire through political marriages brought trouble rather than peace and stability. Political enemies confronted Solomon from without (1 Kgs 11:14–23) and rebellion threatened the unity of the kingdom from within (1 Kgs 12:26–40). The historian attributes both events of unrest to Yahweh’s displeasure with the king. Solomon’s only consolation is that he was spared the misery of having to witness the split of the kingdom in his lifetime (1 Kgs 12:1–24). The historian considers the break-up a major setback in Israelite history. It is a clear sign of Yahweh’s displeasure with Solomon: “Because they have abandoned me; they have bowed down in worship

87 Cf. the prohibition against an Israelite king marrying foreign wives because they will turn the king’s heart from Yahweh in Deut 17:17a.

to Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, to Chemosh the god of Moab, and to Milcom the god of the Ammonites” (1 Kgs 11:31–33, here verse 33). Instead of fostering the people’s allegiance to the temple he had built, Solomon has caused them to forsake Yahweh through the proliferation of the במות during his reign.

Although the historian holds Solomon accountable for the split of the kingdom, he also blames the people for the catastrophe. The use of the plural pronoun in 1 Kings 11:33a suggests that the historian also holds the people responsible for Yahweh’s action against the kingdom: “they have abandoned me . . . they have bowed down in worship to Ashtoreth.” “They” refers to the people who worship in the במות when “they” should only be offering sacrifices in the house of Yahweh after it has been built (cf. 1 Kgs 3:2). “They” are, therefore, as culpable as Solomon is for the split of the united monarchy. However, only ten tribes of the north are affected by Yahweh’s decision because והשבט חאחד יהיה־לו “one tribe [Judah] will remain his [Solomon’s]” (1 Kgs 11:32). This divine preferential option for Judah (cf. 2 Kgs 8:18–19; Hos 1:7) based on the doctrine of the inviolability of the city of David forms the backbone of the

89 The LXX reads “he has” rather than “they have” (as in the Masoretic Text והשבט חאחד יהיה־לו). cf. DeVries, 1 Kings, 146.

90 Italics mine. Following the MT.

91 Clarification in square brackets mine.

92 "In his [the Deuteronomistic historian] time Benjamin (the twelfth [tribe]) had long since been absorbed into the nation (hence tribe) of Judah." Explanation in square bracket mine. DeVries, 1 Kings, 151.
Deuteronomistic propaganda for cult centralisation.⁹³ To put it differently, the divine preferential option for Judah provides the impetus for the historian to pursue his program to centralise the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem!

In sum, the Deuteronomistic historian has painted Solomon a bad king for he has failed in his primary duty to promote “sole and complete loyalty to Yahweh to the exclusion of worship of any foreign gods” (cf. 1 Kgs 11:33).⁹⁴ Had he done what is right in Yahweh’s sight, the ten tribes would not have been carved out from his kingdom and given to Jeroboam ben Nebat (1 Kgs 11:31). The fact that it happened is a testimony of Yahweh’s displeasure with Solomon for failing to foster the people’s exclusive allegiance to Yahweh and the Jerusalem temple.

Although Solomon has been portrayed as a bad king who was responsible for the split of the once united kingdom, Jeroboam draws a harsher critique from the historian. Jeroboam is criticised for putting in place a scheme in the northern kingdom that hinders the Israelis’ allegiance to Yahweh in the Jerusalem temple. The installation of the golden calves and erection of עגלות in Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:29–31) near the northern and southern borders of the kingdom of Israel by Jeroboam dissuades the Israelis from going up to Jerusalem to worship in the temple. Jeroboam’s scheme also frustrates the possibility of a renewed loyalty to the Davidic rule. The historian considers his scheme a grievous sin against Yahweh. He holds him

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⁹³ For discussion on the centrality of Jerusalem in the Deuteronomistic Tradition, see Hoppe, Holy City, 43–56.

⁹⁴ Fritz, 1 & 2 Kings, 34.
“to be completely responsible for the behaviour of his people, as the frequent reference to the ‘sin(s) of Jeroboam son of Nebat which he caused Israel to sin’ demonstrates.”

The previous chapter has already outlined the historian’s covert propaganda against Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12:26–29, 32. It suffices to add that the propaganda against Jeroboam pervades the books of Kings in that his sin against Yahweh has become the yardstick for evaluating other kings. Jeroboam’s action became the basic criterion for assessing a bad king—one who frustrates the people’s attempt to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem. Thus, the indictment against Jeroboam for having caused Israel to sin (1 Kgs 14:16) forms a part of the charge for the kings that followed in his footsteps (e.g. against Nadab in 1 Kgs 15:26 and Baasha in 1 Kgs 15:34).

The Deuteronomistic historian’s deep concern for the rival shrines in the north, particularly his revulsion for the בֵּיתֵי-בֹאֲרָת, permeates the books of Kings. The first of these is found in 1 Kings 13:1–10. As Jeroboam makes an offering on the altar at the Bethel shrine, a prophet from Judah curses the altar (1 Kgs 13:1–2) and prophesies its future destruction and desecration (1 Kgs 13:3). The full impact of the prophet’s word is


97 In his analysis of Virgil’s classical work Aeneid, Mason argues that some prophecies are not what they claim to be: “Such ‘prophecies’, purporting to ‘predict’ events which have already happened are known as ‘prophecies after the event’ (or vaticinia ex eventu . . .) . . .” His analysis, he says, is based on many years of studying and teaching the Old Testament. In his view, "the purpose of some of the Old Testament literature and the devices it uses to achieve that purpose struck many echoing chords with The Aeneid. There also the reign of a particular line of kings, the right of a certain people to occupy a specific city and a land with clearly defined borders, are all claimed to have their roots in very early, even 'prehistoric' times. These will all be the result of divine choice and divine sanction, a purpose which is evident in the way the history of the people of Israel

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realised in 2 Kings 23:15–18 when it reports the subsequent destruction and defilement of the altar and במות by Josiah, and Josiah’s discovery of the prophecy that had predicted its fate. That prophecy has not only foretold the altar’s destruction, it has also justified Josiah’s punitive action. Concerning the opening verses in 1 Kings 13:1–2, Ernst Würthwein has argued that the threat of the man of God from Judah was originally directed against Jeroboam himself. It was only later that the Deuteronomistic historian changes this older word of Yahweh in favour of a threat to destroy the Bethel altar that will be fulfilled under Josiah (2 Kgs 23:19–20). If Würthwein is correct, as Fritz claims, then 1 Kings 13:1–2 is a clear testimony of the historian’s deep-seated revulsion for rival shrines and במות.

The historian’s obsessive hatred for Jeroboam and Bethel is reinforced in 1 Kings 13:11–34. The narrative employs the character of an old prophet of Bethel to authenticate the prophecy of the man of God from Judah by declaring that “the word of Yahweh against the altar in Bethel, and against all the house of the high places [במות] in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass” (1 Kgs 13:32). This concluding prophecy by the old prophet from Bethel in 1 Kings 13:32 echoes and affirms the oracle of the Judean prophet in 1 Kings 13:1–2 and together they form a frame around the

is presented, and in the utterance of 'prophecies' (vaticinia ex eventu) to certain ancient heroes revealing the future fulfilment of that divine purpose.” Mason, Propaganda, 3.

98 Würthwein's work is cited in Fritz, I & 2 Kings, 150.

99 "The concluding reference to Samaria indicates the late date of this story, given that Samaria is not established as the capital of northern Israel until the reign of Omri (1 Kgs 16:24)." Sweeney, I & II Kings 182.
middle part of the narrative that is ill disposed to Jeroboam and Bethel.  

On this basis, 1 Kings 13:33–34, which immediately follows 1 Kings 13:1–32, appears to be the work of a redactor. Unlike the preceding dialogical section, 1 Kings 13:33–34 is a prosaic ‘report card.’ Verse 33 of this report paints Jeroboam as an incorrigible king who has even ignored the warning of the native prophet of Bethel (1 Kgs 13:11): “After this thing, Jeroboam did not turn away from this evil way.” Verse 34 then makes a final indictment against the king and promises a dire outcome: “And this thing became a sin for the house of Jeroboam, so as to efface and destroy it from the face of the earth.”

1 Kings 14:10–11 repeats this threat of the extermination of Jeroboam’s house through the mouth of Ahijah, another northern prophet. When 1 Kings 15:29–30 finally reports its fulfilment through the assassination of Nadab, Jeroboam’s son and successor, and his entire household, it states that Nadab’s death occurred “according to the word of Yahweh that he spoke by the hand of his servant Ahijah the Shilonite because of the sins of Jeroboam . . . he [Jeroboam] caused Israel to sin.” The narrative (1 Kgs 13:1–32) and conclusion (1 Kgs 13:33–34) about Jeroboam’s incorrigibility, the predictions about the destruction of the Bethel altar and house of Jeroboam, and their respective fulfilments (2 Kgs 23:15–18; 1 Kgs 15:29–30), in reality constitute an instance of propaganda. It seeks to convey the historian’s conviction that negative events in history, directed by Yahweh, have legitimised his deep concern for errant kings, especially those in the north, who hinder the people’s allegiance to Yahweh in Jerusalem.

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100 Cf. Fritz, 1 & 2 Kings, 152.

101 Italics mine.

102 Italics mine.
The historian’s revulsion for the fragmentation of loyalty to Yahweh is confirmed by no fewer than forty-one references to הבמות or במות with negative overtones throughout the books of Kings.103 1 Kings 15:14; 22:44; 2 Kings 12:4; 14:4 and 15:4; 35 deserve special mention. Each of these texts contains the phrase לazıירר הבמות “They did not remove the high places.” The phrase in each of the above-mentioned texts is preceded by a ו, אַךְ or רק that functions to qualify the preceding statement about the king’s pious attitude toward Yahweh.104 The phrase “they did not remove the high places” is then followed by a reference to an incident with a dire outcome. This literary pattern clearly conveys the consequence of not taking active steps to eradicate the הבמות despite doing other works that are right in the sight of Yahweh.

In King Asa’s case, he is said to have expelled the cult prostitutes from the land and removed all idols, including that of his mother Maacah (1 Kgs 15:11–13). The acts of Jehoshaphat are not specified but he is said to have followed closely in the footsteps of his father King Asa (1 Kgs 22:43).105 Likewise, Joash is simply reported to have done what was pleasing to Yahweh, presumably in relation to his effort to repair the


105 1 Kgs 22:47 indicates that Jehoshaphat continued with the work of his father Asa in expelling the remaining cult prostitutes from the land.
Jerusalem temple (1 Kgs 12:5–17). As for King Amaziah, Azariah and Jotham, no explanation is given as to the exact nature of the positive deeds they performed except that they “did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh” (2 Kgs 14:3; 15:4, 34). Despite their good works, the one decisive thing that these six kings did not do was to remove the high places of worship. In five (1 Kgs 22:44; 2 Kgs 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35) out of the six (1 Kgs 15:14; 22:44; 2 Kgs 12:4; 14:4; 15:35) references, the phrase "the people continued to sacrifice and made offerings in the high places" follows. This is then followed by texts that describe the divine punitive actions against these kings for their failure to remove the במות. Asa (1 Kgs 15:16–21), Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:45) and Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:11–14) all suffered militarily at the hands of the kings of Israel. Joash had to pay tribute to King Hazael to avert a full-blown Syrian military onslaught (2 Kgs 12:18–19). As for Jotham, the text simply reports that Yahweh had sent King Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel against Judah

106 Only in the case of King Asa (1 Kgs 15:14) is the phrase "the people continued to sacrifice and made offerings in the high places" absent. Perhaps its omission has to do with the fact that the author has likened Asa to King David two verses earlier. Other than Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah, Asa is the only king who has been positively compared to David.

107 The Hebrew text (1 Kgs 22:45) concerning Jehoshaphat reads: יהושָׁפַת מעָאת יִשְׂרָאֵל. Perhaps the peace referred to in this verse is contingent on Jehoshaphat’s submission to the king of Israel following some form of campaign by the latter. This understanding is reflected in the translation (“And further, Jehoshaphat submitted to the king of Israel”) in the Tanakh (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

108 2 Kgs 12:5–17, a long narrative about Joash's effort for the temple repair, separates the description in 2 Kgs 12:18–19 about the Syrian threat against Jerusalem and the statement about the non-removal of and the people's continual sacrifice in the במות in 2 Kgs 12:4. The intervening narrative reinforces the idea that the temple upkeep by itself is not pleasing to Yahweh if "they did not remove the high places": cf. "The extensive temple repairs are to little or no avail since the kingdom is eventually saved from Syria at the expense of the temple treasures. For reasons unstated, Joash dies as ignobly as his predecessor, murdered by two of his own people." T. Raymond Hobbs, 2 Kings (Dallas: Word Inc., 1998), 155.
without giving detail about the nature of the military activity (2 Kgs 15:37) that was involved. Although Azariah himself was not threatened by war, 2 Kings 15:5 reports that Yahweh made him a leper such that he had to live in isolation for the rest of his life (2 Kgs 15:5).

In summary then, the above biblical texts demonstrate the Deuteronomistic historian’s strong stand on complete loyalty to Yahweh. It is not sufficient that a king does what is pleasing to Yahweh but does not also remove the high places of worship. Such a king will still incur the wrath of Yahweh as events in history have shown.\(^{109}\) The only way to avert this dire outcome is for kings to take a pro-active role to foster the people’s exclusive allegiance to Yahweh and worship in the Jerusalem temple. The historian singles out Hezekiah and Josiah as good kings for not neglecting the signs of the times. They have taken concrete steps to secure the people’s allegiance to Yahweh and Yahweh’s blessing for them through the removal of the במות. With an awareness and appreciation of this backdrop, we can now turn to discuss the propaganda connected with Hezekiah’s reform, in particular, since it fits best with the persuasion in Hosea 3.

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\(^{109}\) With regard to the fate of the other kings of Judah, the relevant biblical texts list them as having done evil against Yahweh and, therefore, have incurred divine wrath: Rehoboam (1 Kgs 14:22, 25–26), Abijam (1 Kgs 15:3, 6), Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:18, 20–21), Ahaziah (2 Kgs 8:27, 28–29), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:2b–3a, 5–9), and Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:2, 11–15). In Rehoboam's case, after the usual regnal formula, it is stated "Judah did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh . . ." Although this statement refers to "Judah" not "Rehoboam," unlike the explicit characterisation of the other kings, Rehoboam's involvement, nevertheless, is implied. The historian’s view is evident in his treatment of the monarchs of the northern kingdom. He links them to the arch-crime of Jeroboam I in setting up the rival shrines and high places in Dan and Bethel. They are also responsible for Yahweh's wrath.
6.3.4 Hezekiah’s Reform and Propaganda

The collapse of the northern kingdom of Israel represents a major milestone in Israelite history. It forms a cogent backdrop to draw attention to Hezekiah’s reform program that has secured Yahweh’s blessing for Jerusalem, which came as a military triumph over Sennacherib’s army (2 Kgs 35–37). Despite suffering heavy losses (2 Kgs 18:13), a national disaster has been averted because Hezekiah took positive steps to foster the people’s allegiance to Yahweh. Thus, the deliverance of Jerusalem stands in stark contrast to the fate of Samaria. According to the Deuteronomistic historian, Samaria fell because all the kings of northern Israel had done nothing to reverse Jeroboam’s scheme to prevent the Israelians from worshipping and demonstrating their allegiance to Yahweh in the Jerusalem temple (1 Kgs 12:26–33). They are consistently condemned by the historian because they are deemed to have walked in the way of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 12:25–33), to have “caused Israel to sin” (1 Kgs 14:16) and, therefore, now have been overtaken by Yahweh’s punitive actions (1 Kgs 14:9–11; 15:25–30). As Sweeney argues, “the Josianic DtrH presents the northern monarchy as a complete failure in that the Assyrian destruction of the northern kingdom is attributed to the people’s sins in following in the path of Jeroboam.”

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110 Nadab (1 Kgs 15:26, 27–29); Baasha (1 Kgs 15:34; 16:3–4); Elah (1 Kgs 16:11–13); Zimri (1 Kgs 16:16–19); Omri (1 Kgs 16:26); Ahab (1 Kgs 16:30–31; 17:1–7; 20:1, 22:29–38); Ahaziah (1 Kgs 22:53; 2 Kgs 1:1–17a); Jehoram (2 Kgs 3:2–27); Jehu (2 Kgs 10:29–32); Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:2–7); Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:24); Zechariah (2 Kgs 15:9–10); Shallum (Nothing is mentioned about this king in relation to the sinful way of Jeroboam or how he had caused Israel to sin. The short tenure of his reign could have been the reason for this omission); Menahem (2 Kgs 15:18–20); Pekahiah (2 Kgs 15:24–25); Pekah (2 Kgs 15:28–30); Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:2–6).

The historian singles out King Manasseh of Judah as particularly bad. The recurring phrase (“he [Jeroboam] caused Israel to sin”) that he uses to indict the culpability of the northern kings is applied to Manasseh’s sin on two occasions albeit with a different verbal object: “he [Manasseh] caused Judah to sin” (2 Kgs 21:11, 16). The historian has indicted none of the Judean kings in this manner. The verdict against Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:12–15) conveys in unambiguous terms his hatred for kings who have stood in the way of the people’s allegiance to Yahweh. Manasseh’s accountability for the fate of Jerusalem and Judah is made based on his role in rebuilding the במות that Hezekiah had destroyed (2 Kgs 21:3, 10–15; cf. 24: 1–4). Manasseh’s action amounts to a subversion of the Judeans’ allegiance to Yahweh, which makes him a bad king compared to Hezekiah whom the historian has highly commended. Hezekiah is one of only three kings that have been compared positively to David. In the eyes of the historian, “He did what was right in the sight of Yahweh just as David his ancestor had done. He removed (سور) the high places (במות)” (2 Kgs 18:3). 2 Kings 18:5 further declares “that there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah after him, or among those who were before him.”

Studies surrounding the historicity of Hezekiah’s reform and its underlying motive are extensive. A full survey of the history of interpretations on this issue is

112 Italics mine.

113 Sweeney, King Josiah, 175.

114 The other two kings are Asa (1 Kgs 15:11) and Josiah (2 Kgs 22:2).

115 Some of these studies include Rosenbaum, "Hezekiah’s Reform and the Deuteronomistic Tradition," 23–44; Richard H. Lowery, The Reforming Kings: Cult and Society in First Temple Judah (Continuum, 1991), 142–168; Anson F. Rainey,
Prophecy, Propaganda or Both? A Rereading of Hosea 1–3

beyond the current research task. It is also unnecessary because it does not adversely affect the attempt to link the propaganda relating to Hezekiah’s reform and Hosea 3.116 Historicity in all aspects of Hezekiah’s reform can add much weight to the propaganda. However, some facts will suffice to build a successful propaganda around Hezekiah’s reform program. From the Deuteronomistic historian’s perspective, the indisputable gain of Hezekiah’s reform is that it has secured Yahweh’s blessing and protection for Jerusalem (2 Kgs 2:35–37). Had this not been the case, the southern kingdom would have ceased to exist in 701 BCE following the devastating military assault led by the

116 Mason’s view about the relationship between the stories concerning Yahweh's promise of territory to Abraham and the idealistic account of the extent of the Davidic/Solomonic empire as a propaganda to show the divine providence for the emergence of the Davidic kingdom and the land it possesses is insightful. According to him, "Questions about the actual historicity of Abraham and the other patriarchs are therefore irrelevant. There may well have been such people, although we lack any of the precise and verifiable historical allusions by which we could date or place them. But the important thing about them is not who and exactly what kind of people they were in history. The important thing about them is the role they came to play in the later tradition of Israel and the way that tradition expressed, and even helped to shape, later Israelite self-understanding." Similarly, it may also be argued that the question of the historicity of Hezekiah’s reform for the current task is irrelevant. See Mason, Propaganda, 35.
King Sennacherib of Assyria.\textsuperscript{117}

Archaeological evidence gathered from digs at Beersheba, Arad, Tell Halif, Nineveh and Tell ed-Duweir suggests to Oded Borowski that Hezekiah’s reform involving the destruction of the תומא and associated altars did occur. It also suggests to him that his reform had been motivated by an intention to rebel against the Assyrian rule.\textsuperscript{118} Cult centralisation, Borowski argues, was a means for Hezekiah to control the economy, the food supplies and other material for his planned revolt.\textsuperscript{119} Borowski points to the re-use of stones from destroyed altars in the repair of food storehouses that dates to the eighth century BCE in support of his argument.\textsuperscript{120} Material evidence also suggests that private shrines that did not threaten Hezekiah’s centralisation program were not destroyed but were allowed to operate up to the time of Sennacherib’s campaign in the region.\textsuperscript{121} According to Borowski, the discovery of jars with handles marked by \textit{lmlk} (“belonging to the king”) impression dating to Hezekiah’s reign that were supposedly used for distributing supplies to prepare for the revolt points to the


\textsuperscript{118} Oded Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria," \textit{ASOR} 58 (1995): 148–155; "The movement for independence had its first opportunity in 705 B.C. when Sargon died and his successor Sennacherib was met on his accession to the Assyrian throne by widespread rebellion throughout his empire." Nicholson, "Centralisation of the Cult," 385.

\textsuperscript{119} Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reform," 148.

\textsuperscript{120} Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reform," 150.

\textsuperscript{121} Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reform," 152.
political motivation behind Hezekiah’s reform program.\textsuperscript{122} His final assessment of the planned revolt is that “in spite of it being well planned, Hezekiah’s uprising or rebellion against Assyria was a disaster.”\textsuperscript{123}

Ernest Nicholson shares Borowski’s assessment of a disastrous outcome of Hezekiah’s reform/rebellion. He argues that “a considerable portion of Judah if not the whole of the country except Jerusalem was handed over by the Assyrians to the loyal Philistine kings of Ekron, Gaza and Ashdod, and heavy tribute was exacted from Hezekiah.”\textsuperscript{124} Kristin Swanson agrees with Nicholson and Borowski’s viewpoints about the utter failure of Hezekiah’s rebellion based on her investigation of the report in 2 Kings 18:4 concerning Hezekiah’s destruction of the Nehushtan.\textsuperscript{125} According to Swanson, the Nehushtan was a “royal symbolism by which Hezekiah asserted his authority as king.”\textsuperscript{126} The removal of the royal bronze serpent symbol (and the \textit{lmlk} impression on the jar handles) and its replacement by an Assyrian royal rosette symbol

\textsuperscript{122} Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reform," 152; the idea that jars bearing \textit{lmlk} stamps were used for storing and stockpiling liquid foodstuffs in anticipation of a invasion by siege is discussed in Grabbe, "Like a Bird in a Cage", 2–36.

\textsuperscript{123} Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reform," 153.; see also "The Siege of Jerusalem," translated by D. D. Luckenbill (ANET, 288).

\textsuperscript{124} Hezekiah's reform, it is further argued, occurred in the decade following Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 when the Assyrians were troubled by the uprisings in Babylon. The reform renewed attempt at national self-assertion. Nicholson, "Centralisation of the Cult," 385.

\textsuperscript{125} Swanson, "Hezekiah's Reform," 460–469.

\textsuperscript{126} Swanson, "Hezekiah's Reform," 469.
attests to Hezekiah’s complete submission to Sennacherib.\textsuperscript{127}

Isaiah’s prophecy in 2 Kings 19:1–7 (cf. Isa 37:1–7) and the account in 2 Kings 19:35–37, however, indicate that there was no “complete submission” by Hezekiah. Moreover, the annals of Sennacherib that recount his siege on Jerusalem contradict his other testimony of the devastating capture of the other forty-six cities in Judah.\textsuperscript{128} This raises the question as to why Sennacherib did not devastate Jerusalem as he did the other forty-six cities. Sennacherib only relates the payment of a tribute by Hezekiah—later in Nineveh!\textsuperscript{129} Antti Laato has picked up this inconsistency:

“It seems incredible that Sennacherib, who had conquered almost all the fortified towns of Judah, would have been satisfied to leave Jerusalem and Hezekiah in peace without demanding that the gates of Jerusalem be opened to the Assyrian army.”\textsuperscript{130}

The absence of any report about the capture of Hezekiah whose rebellion precipitated Sennacherib’s invasion militates against the idea that the invasion was an utter success.

Based on 2 Kings 19:35–37, Sennacherib’s attempt to capture Jerusalem ended in failure. However, the biblical account, which relates Yahweh’s victory over Sennacherib, has inspired little confidence. Some consider the account of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[127] Swanson, "Hezekiah's Reform," 469.
\end{footnotes}
miraculous victory as nothing more than “a theologian’s fairy-tale.” However, Alan Millard, in his study of Assyrian and biblical sources connected with the siege, has argued (convincingly) as to why Jerusalem probably did not suffer the same fate as the other Judean cities attacked by Sennacherib. That Hezekiah himself was treated lightly in comparison to how other rebellious kings were normally treated by the Assyrians raises further doubt that Sennacherib had scored a military success against Jerusalem. However, Alan Millard, in his study of Assyrian and biblical sources connected with the siege, has argued (convincingly) as to why Jerusalem probably did not suffer the same fate as the other Judean cities attacked by Sennacherib. That Hezekiah himself was treated lightly in comparison to how other rebellious kings were normally treated by the Assyrians raises further doubt that Sennacherib had scored a military success against Jerusalem.

As for the description of the miraculous defeat in 2 Kings 19:35–37, Millard argues using Assyrian, Egyptian and Hittite sources that the biblical account is not unique in the ancient world. Ancient historians who were unable to provide concrete answers to certain events, he argues, “had no alternative but to admit that something happened which is beyond his resources to comprehend.” With 2 Kings 19:35–37, the historian wishes to convey the idea that “something deflected Sennacherib from pressing his attack on Jerusalem and caused him to return to Nineveh before he received Hezekiah’s tribute.”

From a literary viewpoint, Laato has demonstrated that Sennacherib’s account of the siege contains elements that point to a typical Assyrian attempt to veil a military setback in Palestine. These elements include the use of stereotypical and stylistic

133 Millard, "Sennacherib's Attack," 76.
134 Millard, "Sennacherib's Attack," 77.
devices, the omission of facts, conflation of viewpoints to give the impression that the Assyrian army was victorious, boasting which lacks concrete references to political hegemony and aggressive presentation of enemies.¹³⁶ According to Laato, the annals of Sennacherib indicate that the king “wanted to conquer Jerusalem and remove Hezekiah.”¹³⁷ The Assyrian king’s abandonment of his firm intention to annihilate Jerusalem, in his view, “can be best be explained by a plague breaking in the army and devastating its ranks.”¹³⁸ Laato also argues that Hezekiah had paid a tribute to Sennacherib to deter the Assyrian king from attempting to re-capture Jerusalem. Hezekiah apparently paid that tribute with his first annual payment of tax to Sennacherib in Nineveh as an assurance of his allegiance to the Assyrian king.¹³⁹ Sennacherib, Laato argues, had used the event of the payment of the tribute and tax to boast in his annals of how he had humiliated Hezekiah in his war against Jerusalem.¹⁴⁰

In Clements’ view, the biblical account of Sennacherib’s defeat is “a piece of ‘narrative theology’, rather than a history narrative proper.”¹⁴¹ He is probably correct. Either way, it does not have an adverse impact on what the historian hopes to achieve

with the account.

The Deuteronomistic historian’s primary interest in the events surrounding Hezekiah’s reign is clearly not history per se. Regardless of the exact circumstances leading to Sennacherib’s withdrawal, the fact is that Jerusalem did not fall into the hands of the Assyrian king. Notwithstanding the tribute that Hezekiah had to pay to Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:15–16), the deliverance of the city showed that Yahweh was pleased with Hezekiah’s effort to centralise worship in Jerusalem which included the eradication of the high places of worship. The idea that Yahweh had saved Jerusalem from annihilation is sufficient grounds for potentially convincing propaganda. The narrative in 2 Kings 18–20, as the following shows, clearly conveys the historian’s persuasion.

After the opening regnal formula (2 Kgs 18:1–2), 2 Kings 18:3–8 recounts Hezekiah’s relationship with Yahweh. In verses 3–6, the historian reports Hezekiah’s dedication to Yahweh through his program of eradicating the high places and idolatrous objects and, in verses 7–8, he reports Yahweh’s reciprocal dedication to Hezekiah by granting him divine protection in his military endeavours. In 2 Kings 18:9–12, the historian shifts the focus to King Hoshea of Israel and the fall of the northern kingdom. It begins with a brief opening regnal formula in verse 9a. This is followed by a report

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142 It has been argued that it “was not David’s move of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel) that gave the city and its temple their special status . . . It was not until much later – half a century after Yahweh’s election of the city during the reign of Hezekiah [c.715–687 BC] (2 Kings 18–20.6) – that competing cult places were finally destroyed and Jerusalem declared to be that only place fit for the Yahweh worship (2 Kings 23).” Hjelm, "Hezekiah Narrative," 661.
in verses 9b–12 about Shalmaneser’s siege on Samaria, its eventual fall, the deportation of the Israelis and the reason for the disaster—namely their infidelity to Yahweh. 2 Kings 18:13–19:37 then shifts the focus back to Hezekiah to reinforce Yahweh’s dedication to the king by delivering Jerusalem out from the hands of Sennacherib. Here, the first sub-section starts in verse 13 with a short regnal formula and a report about how “Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.” This initial report constitutes the background for the ensuing narrative about the contest between Yahweh and Sennacherib. The text does not explain the reason for Sennacherib’s campaign against Judah and Jerusalem but it seems to be in retaliation for Hezekiah’s rebellion or, at least, a planned revolt against the Assyrian king (2 Kgs 18:7, 20–21).\textsuperscript{143} The historian’s purpose, it appears, is not to explain the reason for Sennacherib’s invasion but account for Yahweh’s protection for Hezekiah and the city of Jerusalem.

The Assyrian war delegate led by the Rabshakeh confronts the Jerusalem officials at an important part of Jerusalem’s water supply with a rhetoric aimed at weakening Jerusalem’s will to resist capture (2 Kgs 18:17–18).\textsuperscript{144} The Rabshakeh

\textsuperscript{143} For a re-construction of the rebellion, see Miller and Hayes, History, 410–421; cf. Millard, "Sennacherib's Attack," 61–77; Chavalas, "Historian's Approach," 5–22.

assures the Jerusalem delegate of certain defeat if they elect to not capitulate (2 Kgs 18:23–24). His argument is simple. Since Hezekiah has removed the במות, the worship places of Yahweh, there should be no doubt that Jerusalem will be captured for Yahweh is no longer with the nation (2 Kgs 18:22). The Rabshakeh further suggests to the Jerusalem delegate that Yahweh is now on the side of the Assyrian and that it is Yahweh who has commanded him to destroy the land (2 Kgs 18:25). He, therefore, urges the Judeans not to believe Hezekiah when Hezekiah says, “Yahweh will save us!” (2 Kgs 18:32). They are asked to look to recent events to see how the gods of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, Ivvah and Samaria have abandoned their people and to consider the certainty that destruction awaits Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:32) if they choose not to surrender. The next two sub-sections subsequently report the prophecy of Isaiah which assures the king of Yahweh’s protection in the face of the Assyrian threat (2 Kgs 19:1–34) and its miraculous fulfilment (2 Kgs 19:35–37).\textsuperscript{145} Where the historian is concerned, it does not matter whether Sennacherib’s withdrawal is the result of divine intervention.\textsuperscript{146} The fact is that Sennacherib withdrew and failed in his attempt to capture Jerusalem. As far as the historian is concerned, it must be because Yahweh has made it possible: “I [Yahweh] will return you [Sennacherib] to the way by which you


\textsuperscript{146} It has been argued that bubonic plague destroyed the Assyrian army threatening Jerusalem which also caused Hezekiah to become ill. Margaret Barker, "Hezekiah’s Boil," \textit{JSOT} 26 (2001): 31–42.
came” (2 Kgs 19:28).\(^{147}\) Yahweh has triumphed over Sennacherib as part of the divine master plan to use him as a pawn (2 Kgs 19:25–28). The triumph itself is also Hezekiah’s victory. It settles the core issue in the narrative in that the removal of the master does not represent the displacement or abandonment of Yahweh, and the call to sole worship by Hezekiah is not an empty or meaningless call, as the Rabshakeh claims (2 Kgs 18:22). The fact that Jerusalem has avoided a national catastrophe because Yahweh has triumphed over Sennacherib is an indisputable evidence of Yahweh’s abiding presence. The event affirms Yahweh’s approval of Hezekiah’s reform and Jerusalem’s status as Yahweh’s elected centre of worship.

That the historian underlines the difference between the recent histories of Judah and Israel, and between King Hezekiah and King Hoshea through a purposeful narration of the events in 2 Kings 18–20 is clear from the above analysis. Its primary objective is to contrast Hezekiah’s reform and his military success with the negative outcome of the failure of Hoshea and all the northern kings to promote the people’s allegiance to Yahweh. The crises that arise during the reigns of the northern kings testify to Yahweh’s displeasure with them and Israel’s fall in 722 BCE marks the limit of Yahweh’s tolerance for the nation’s apostasy.

The contrasting fates of the two kingdoms during the reigns of Hoshea and Hezekiah present an excellent justification for the Deuteronomistic historian to launch a campaign of propaganda to promote complete allegiance to Yahweh. In this respect, the black prophecy in Hosea 3 is a vehicle for that propaganda. Its aim is to persuade

\(^{147}\) Clarification in square brackets mine.
the Israelis in the defunct northern kingdom, to make a radical break from past infidelity to Yahweh that has led to disaster. The fall of Samaria, the historian argues, is Yahweh’s disciplinary action against an apostate nation and it provides an opportunity for repentance and change. Thus, Yahweh has tempered the message of doom in Hosea 1 with an announcement of a time of favour for the Israelis in Hosea 3. It begins with an offer of marriage to an ex-spouse and a demand to the betrothed to remain chaste pending her transfer to the husband’s household (Hos 3:1–3). The real recipient of the marriage offer is the Israelis, who will experience a period of deprivation following the fall of Samaria (Hos 3:4). The disaster provides an opportunity for the Israelis to repent and return to Yahweh:

For many days, the Israelites shall remain without king and without official, without sacrificial feast and without pillar, without ephod and teraphim. Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king . . . (Hos 3:4–5).

The strategic placement of Hosea 3 within the context of Hoseanic prophecies (Hos 1:1, 1-9) has obscured the identity of its redactor. It gives the impression that it contains the autobiography of the prophet Hosea concerning Yahweh’s aspiration for the Israelis. Yet, it would be wrong to classify the redactor’s literary approach as deceitful. He firmly believes that it contains the views and desire of Yahweh. He is of the conviction that the expression of hope for the Israelis in Hosea 3 gives voice to Yahweh’s aspiration for them following the fall of Samaria and ‘exile.’ Its ultimate goal is to draw the Israelis back to Yahweh. In his analysis of propaganda in the Hebrew Bible, Mason argues against adopting a narrow view of propaganda. He emphasises “that to say that something ‘is a work of propaganda’ is not to say that it is invariably, or necessarily wholly false . . . [propaganda] which claims divine sanction might indeed
be ‘within the will of God.’” The redactor of Hosea 3 sees himself as a mere spokesperson for Yahweh whose sole desire is for the return of the Israelis. The redactor hopes that they make a radical break from the past by re-pledging their allegiance to Yahweh and to a Davidic king who totally seeks the heart of Yahweh. If he had conveyed the divine desire in his own name, it would have come across as a Judean political propaganda. In contrast, the redactor’s message is likely to be more successful if Hosea himself conveys Yahweh’s desire for the return of the Israelis to Yahweh and a Davidic king like Hezekiah. The king’s effort to promote allegiance to Yahweh has been met with divine approval as the event of Sennacherib’s miraculous defeat by an angel of Yahweh had demonstrated (1 Kgs 19:35–37). This event is a clear endorsement of Hezekiah’s reform to promote allegiance to Yahweh, and Jerusalem as the place of worship. The Israelis’ return will not only put an end to the original scheme of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 12:25–33) but, more importantly, it will be counted as a concrete expression of their desire to act according to Yahweh’s will. This act will be a concrete step forward toward safeguarding their own survival just as King Hezekiah has done for Judah and whose survival Hosea has predicted in Hosea 1:7!

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148 Clarification in square brackets mine. Mason, Propaganda, 4.
7. CONCLUSION

This study began with a discussion about the superscription in Hosea 1:1. The primary purpose of the superscription is to assert the authenticity of the oracles in Hosea as Yahweh’s word to the prophet.¹ However, as explored in the ‘Introduction’ chapter, the findings of redaction critics have called into question the accuracy of that assertion. Regarding Hosea 1–3, many scholars have argued that Hosea 1:5, 7; 2:1–3; 3:5 do not belong to Hosea. Instead, they are the work of redactors.² More drastically, Rudnig-Zelt has argued that Hosea 1–3 was composed after the fall of Samaria as a theological explanation of that disaster.³ The issue that drives this research is that despite consensus that Hosea 1–3 has gone through a process of redaction, scholars have not questioned the insertion of non-Hoseanic material within a context of prophecies attributed to Hosea. Their inclusion gives the impression that the redaction actually derives from the prophet himself. The fact that scholars continue to debate the origin of the prophecies in Hosea 1–3 suggests the redactor has done an excellent job at integrating his work into the surrounding text. In this respect, this study has used the term black prophecy to denote the non-Hoseanic prophecy in Hosea 1–3. The problem with black prophecy is that it blurs the line between the redactor’s work and the word of Yahweh. The former

¹ The use of the singular "word" in Hos 1:1 suggests that it refers to the oracles in the book as a collection.

² For example, Harper, Amos and Hosea, clx; Mays, Hosea, 3, 29, 60; Yee, Composition and Tradition, 315; Davies, Hosea, 47, 60, 104–105; Macintosh, Hosea, lxx–lxxi.

³ Rudnig-Zelt, Hoseastudien, 94.
can be mistaken for Yahweh’s actual word to the prophet. In view of this issue, the aim of the study was to investigate if the black prophecy in Hosea 1–3 seeks to achieve more than to theologically explain the fall of Samaria or to give encouragement to those in exile. Is it possible that the black prophecy is actually propaganda, which uses the fall of Samaria as its backdrop and premise, to promote the Judean and Deuteronomistic ideals of sole allegiance to Yahweh and the Davidic king in Jerusalem (cf. Hos 3:5)? Toward this research goal, the following summarises the outcome of the investigation.

7.1 Summary

Chapter 1 began with a short discussion about the two extreme positions concerning authorship and redaction in the book of Hosea in general, and in Hosea 1–3 in particular. Despite consensus about the presence of redaction in Hosea 1–3 within the context of Hoseanic material, research has shown that the redaction has not been studied from the perspective of black prophecy. Moreover, nor has the possibility that the black prophecy serves a propagandistic end been investigated. Despite wide ranging discussion surrounding the marriage metaphor in Hosea 1, the possibility that it is a tool for propaganda has not been mooted. As for the unity of Hosea 1–3, research also shows that the complex of black prophecy and propaganda has not been given due consideration as a possible unifying element for these chapters. Having identified the aim of the research to study the black prophecy in Hosea 1–3, a literature review of works relating to propaganda was considered an important starting point for the investigation. The survey would lay the foundation to assess whether Hosea 1–3

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exhibits characteristics typical of propagandistic material. These chapters seem to exhibit a strong Deuteronomistic influence. Their primary aim, it appears, is to persuade the Israelis to demonstrate their allegiance to Yahweh through exclusive worship in Jerusalem in view of the demise of the northern kingdom, which has been interpreted as divine recompense of their infidelity (2 Kgs 17:1–18). They should also show loyalty to a Davidic king like Hezekiah whose effort in promoting the sole worship of Yahweh has secured Yahweh’s protection for Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kgs 19:32–37; Hos 2:7b; 3:5).³ Research has demonstrated that the foregoing interpretation is justifiable.

Chapter 2 explained the two broad and central steps to be adopted in the study. They are the attempts to identify the black prophecy in Hosea 1–3 and to explore their possible propagandistic intention. Stemming from these broad steps the subsidiary task was to examine the metaphors in the black prophecy and to relate them to possible historical backgrounds. To this end, the survey of biblical and non-biblical literature related to the topic of propaganda has yielded useful information. Regarding the former, propagandistic materials are found throughout the Hebrew Bible. In the prophetic literature, they often coincided with descriptions of times of extraordinary crisis.⁶ The literature survey also yielded characteristics of propaganda that were later found to be present in Hosea 1–3. These include:

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³ Cf. the view that “All successes of the victorious candidate are evidence of the favour and power of the god. People are to be subject to his authority as they would be to God.” Mason, Propaganda, 42.

1. Propaganda is primarily emotional rather than rational persuasion (cf. Hos 1:5, 7; 3:2–3) and it serves the self-interest (cf. Hos 3:5) of the propagandist.\(^7\)

2. Propaganda is manipulative in that it seeks to make others conform to a certain way of thinking and acting (cf. Hos 2:4–25; 3:5).\(^8\)

3. Propagandists seek to "bypass, or at least powerfully to influence, the self-conscious reasoning powers of the individuals addressed" (cf. Hos 1:5; 7; 3:2–3).\(^9\)

4. Propagandists seek to encourage others to adopt a new political or religious outlook, one which the propagandist claims for himself/herself or their group (cf. Hos 1:5, 7; 2:5–7, 8–15; 3:5).\(^10\)

5. Political powers often used religion to bolster their power claim, and religion and politics are so closely wedded in a piece of propaganda that "they are virtually not distinguishable" (cf. Hos 3:5).\(^11\)

Finally, chapter 2 outlined the contour of the investigation to be taken in the research to explore the presence of black prophecy and propaganda in Hosea 1–3.

The investigation in chapter 3 began with a review of existing theories

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\(^7\) O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda*, 16.

\(^8\) O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda*, 18.


\(^10\) Mason, *Propaganda*, 172.

concerning the literary growth, authorship and provenance of the book of Hosea. It is generally accepted (and the current study has affirmed) that the earlier prophetic oracles and accounts were revised to make them applicable as events in history unfold. \(^\text{12}\) Although scholars agree that redactions appear alongside Hoseanic oracles, different interpretations exist in distinguishing them. More significantly, no question has been raised about the redactor’s literary motive in not clarifying the real origin and intention of the redactions. In this respect, the chapter established that Hosea 1:5 and 1:7 are non-Hoseanic and black prophecies that show strong Deuteronomistic influence. Collectively, these verses form a piece of propaganda that seeks to contrast the demise of the northern kingdom (Hos 1:5) and, therefore, its rejection by Yahweh (cf. Hos 1:9; 2:6) with Judah’s military success (Hos 1:7). Their author claims Judah’s victory is a sure sign of its preferred status before Yahweh. The claim compels the Israelis to contemplate the reason for Yahweh’s kindness toward Judah in comparison to their own rejection. This paves the way for the propaganda in Hosea 3, particularly verse 5, which urges the Israelis in the defunct northern kingdom to redirect their allegiance to a Davidic king like Hezekiah, and to Yahweh through worship in the Jerusalem temple.

With an appreciation of the presence of black prophecy and propaganda in Hosea 1, Chapter 4 commenced the examination of Hosea 2 with a discussion about the two extreme positions concerning authorship. At one end of the spectrum scholars argue that the bulk of Hosea 2 derives from the prophet himself and, at the other end, scholars argue that most, if not all, of the prophecies it contains are redactions. Yet, no attempt

has been made to discuss the purpose of the redactions within the context of Hoseanic material. Hosea 2:4–17, research shows, has been interpreted by most as belonging in the early period of Hosea’s ministry and the final “golden” years of the reign of King Jeroboam II. In contrast, chapter 4 demonstrated that Hosea 2:4–17 actually provides a retrospective account of events surrounding the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 BCE. These include the siege of Samaria (Hos 2:8–9), the destruction of agriculture by Assyrian forces (Hos 2:11–15) and the disruption of Israel’s worship (Hos 2:13, 15). Investigation also shows that Hosea 2:4–15 and the oracle of rehabilitation in Hosea 2:16–25 are black prophecies with strong Deuteronomistic influence. The Deuteronomistic propagandist seeks to justify the demise of the northern kingdom in terms of Yahweh’s judgment in response to Israel’s infidelity. Yahweh’s punitive action is a necessary step in the process of restoring Israel’s relationship with Yahweh. On its part, Israel must repent and demonstrate its loyalty to Yahweh (Hos 2:16–18).

Chapters 5 and 6 examined the oracle of hope in Hosea 3 and concluded that it is black prophecy and propaganda. In this respect, the fall of Samaria provided an excellent argument for the propagandist to convince the Israelis in the defunct kingdom that the root cause of the disaster was their infidelity to Yahweh. The northern kings are held up as particularly culpable in that they have failed to take positive steps to promote the people’s allegiance to Yahweh. King Hezekiah of Judah, on the other hand, has acted exemplarily in his reform effort to promote the Judeans’ allegiance to Yahweh. Sennacherib’s defeat in 701 BCE during Hezekiah’s watch has shown that Yahweh was pleased with him. Thus, the Israelis must make a radical break from the

13 Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 46.
past by re-pledging their allegiance to Yahweh and to a Davidic king who totally seeks the heart of Yahweh (Hos 3:5).

In sum, the entire investigation strongly suggests that the black prophecy in Hosea 1–3 (1:5, 7; 2:4–25; 3:1–5) is a Judean and Deuteronomistic propaganda that is aimed at the Israelis living in the defunct northern kingdom. The black prophecy/propaganda seeks to gain their assent for the reunification of Israel to Judah under a Davidic king and the return to exclusive Yahweh worship in the Jerusalem in light of the demise of the northern kingdom in 722 BCE and Sennacherib’s defeat in 701 BCE.

7.2 Implications and Scope for Future Studies

This final section briefly outlines the implications arising from the investigation of the black prophecy in Hosea 1–3. The black prophecy that has been identified (Hos 1:5, 7; 2:4–25; 3:1–5) builds on what appears is a historical core in the reported speech of Yahweh to Hosea in Hosea 1:2–9. It comprises Yahweh’s instruction to the prophet to marry, to have children and to give them ominous names upon their birth. The black prophecy seeks to achieve more than to elucidate Yahweh’s instruction and judgment. It is a response to a crisis— the demise of the northern kingdom as result of Yahweh’s judgment—and an appeal for reform.

The central feature of propaganda, as literature on this topic shows, is the focus on the self-interest of the propagandist.\(^\text{14}\) However, the element of ‘self-interest’ in

Hosea 1–3 should not be viewed with negative connotations. Research into the propaganda in Hosea 1–3 shows that the propagandist of the black prophecy is fully convinced that it reflects Yahweh’s aspiration for the Israelis following the disaster of 722 BCE. The propagandist believes it gives voice to Yahweh’s hope for a penitent response by the Israelis involving a demonstration of their allegiance to Yahweh in Jerusalem and a king who actively promotes such an allegiance. From this perspective, the propaganda has good intentions in that it seeks to draw the Israelis back to Yahweh rather than to encourage them to serve other gods (cf. Deut 13:1–5). Like a faithful prophet, the propagandist has acted in accordance with God’s law, not against it. While the propaganda speaks harshly about the past behaviour of the Israelis (Hos 2:10–15), it also conveys Yahweh’s desire for the return of the Israelis (Hos 3:1–5). According to Philip Taylor, “Propaganda itself is neither sinister nor evil.” He argues that value judgments about propaganda being a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ thing should be directed at the cause being advocated or the regime conducting it rather than at the process itself. Based on this criterion, the endeavor to bring about a reconciliation between the Israelis and Yahweh (cf. Hos 2:9b; 3:1–5) must be considered a

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religiously good and noble thing to do.\textsuperscript{18}

The focus of this investigation on Hosea 1–3 has been to establish a connection between the propaganda in the black prophecy in this section of the book and the reform of King Hezekiah and Sennacherib’s defeat in 701 BCE. Although the connection appears to be a strong one, it is also possible that the propaganda in Hosea 1–3 actually relates to the reform of King Josiah (2 Kgs 22:1–23:25).\textsuperscript{19} This possibility has not been pursued in this study and, therefore, presents a further avenue of exploration.

It also remains to be investigated as to whether or how the propaganda in Hosea 1–3 influences the reading of the rest of the book.\textsuperscript{20} Having moved from judgment (Hosea 1) to punishment (Hosea 2) to promise of reconciliation (Hosea 3), Hosea 4 returns to accusation of wrongdoing and threat of punishment with a new introductory formula (Hos 4:1α): “Hear the word of Yahweh, O sons of Israel!” The threat to people in Hosea 2:6 and land in Hosea 2:5, 11 reappears in Hosea 4:1αβ and Hosea 4:3 in the

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. the criterion advanced in Deut 13:3 in which Yahweh forbids anyone to heed the word of prophet who encourages apostasy as opposed to a prophet who promotes undivided allegiance to Yahweh. James L. Crenshaw, Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect Upon Israelite Religion (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 55.

\textsuperscript{19} It is argued that the decline of Assyria in the closing decades of the seventh century and dominance over the province of Israel was an opportunity for Judah to take over the territories of the vanquished northern kingdom. This ambitious plan would require an active and powerful propaganda. Finkelstein and Silberman, Bible Unearthed, 281-283.

second major section of the book (Hosea 4–14). Given these observations, it appears that the propagandist in Hosea 1–3 intends to offer these chapters as the filter for reading Hosea 4–14. Future studies will need to establish whether this is indeed the intention of the propagandist.

A final implication that arises from this research concerns those who read Hosea 1–3 (and other prophetic texts) for devotional purposes. It alerts them to the possibility that they contain multiple and possibly competing voices seeking to convey their convictions about the aspiration of Yahweh.

7.3 Prophecy and Propaganda

The conclusion that the black prophecy in Hosea 1–3 is also propaganda and is influenced by Deuteronomistic theology reminds the present-day reader that it, like all other biblical texts, derives from real people and stems from real situations. Hosea 1–3 is a response to a religious crisis that ended in a disaster for the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE. The propagandist considers it his duty not only to interpret why the disaster occurred but also to recommend ways to set the situation right again to avert a future crisis. In this regard, the propagandist behaves like a prophet who seeks to persuade both Judeans and Israelis to adopt a specific way of thinking and acting that

21 Some scholars divide the book into two major sections, Hos 1–3 and 4–14. For example, Mays, Amos, 15–17; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 68; those who propose three major divisions include, Wolff, Hosea.xxix–xxxii; Davies, Hosea, 36; Yee, Composition and Tradition, 51.

22 Cf. the view that Hos 1–3 helps to make the significance of the discourse in Hos 4–14 more meaningful. Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 123.
would best represent the divine will and the best interests of the nation.²³

²³ Sweeney, The Prophetic Literature, 23; cf. Sweeney’s view about the basis for the persuasion of a prophet and Max Weber’s proposal that a prophet typically “propagates ideas for their own sake.” According to Weber, “The Israelite prophets were concerned with social and other types of injustice as a violation of the Mosaic code primarily in order to explain god’s wrath, and not in order to institute a program of social reform.” However, this proposal does not consider the issue of black prophecy in the prophetic literature (i.e. a prophecy that does not actually originate in a prophet) that serves a propagandistic end. Max Weber, On Charisma and Institution Building (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 255, 258; see discussion in footnote 11 in ‘Introduction’ about the debate surrounding the questions about who the ‘prophets’ were and what is meant by ‘prophecy.’ Research finding seems to support those who view the biblical prophets as literary constructs of later canonical community. However, that is not say that Hosea (or any of the biblical prophets) was never a historical prophet. While research shows that the propagandist in Hosea 1–3 acts like a prophet, it is a different matter altogether to consider the propagandist a prophet.
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