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## Hosea and Monarchy Prophets and Politics

In the considerations presented I understand by politics, after Max Weber all matters related to a proper functioning of a state.<sup>1</sup> Since the prophet Hosea lived in the times of monarchy, his political views were expressed by his attitude to this institution. He was active in the period of decline of the Northern Kingdom (ca. 752–724),<sup>2</sup> weakened progressively by Assyria. It is worth noting that the word Assyria (אַשּׁוּר) does not appear in the oracles of Amos, contemporary of Jeroboam II, whereas in Hosea's it is mentioned eleven times. The country was tormented at the same time by inner turmoil after the death of this king (ca. 750). The weakened Northern Kingdom did not manage to stand up to Assyria. The attack of Shalmaneser on Samaria resulted in the downfall of the capital city in 722, annexation of the country by Assyrian Empire and deportation of the people. Thus, it is not accidental that Hosea presents the monarchy as a totally discredited institution. The main lines of Hosea's criticism are presented below.

The attitude of Hosea towards the monarchy can be reproduced on the basis of his statements about the king and officials. Apart from them Hosea especially criticises priests and official prophets. Hence, the thoughts devoted to the criticism of government machine reflect his general ideas on the role of the elite responsible for governing the state and education of the nation.<sup>3</sup> The importance of its role, in Hosea's opinion, is best expressed by the depiction of the end of Israel as connected to the loss of the king, officials and cessation of the cult (3,4).

<sup>1</sup> M. Weber, *Politik als Beruf*, in: Id., *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, (ed.) J. Winckelmann, Tübingen 1971, pp. 505–506.

<sup>2</sup> H.W. Wolff, *Hosea. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, Hermeneia, Philadelphia 1974, p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup> Other prophets from the 8th c., although attacked officials, but on equal footing with unjust judges, great landowners, creditors, etc.

In his focusing on the functioning of the state I see the essence of his commonly recognised political interests.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars emphasise the abundance of historical allusions in support of this thesis.<sup>5</sup> Officials in the book of Hosea are described by a rather general term שר (in plural שרים) occurring eight times (3,4; 5,10; 7,3; 7,5; 7,16; 8,10; 9,15; 13,10). According to the biblical sources and epigraphic documents this term refers to the functions of commanding or governing.<sup>6</sup> However, frequent occurrence of שר and שרים together with מלך ('king') as well as the contexts (3,4; 7,3; 8,10; 13,10; cf. 8,4) justify identification of this category in the book of Hosea with the members of central administration. The criticism of this governing group focuses on two subjects: *coups d'état* and foreign politics, in particular the alliances with Assyria and Egypt.

### Coups d'état

The palace rebellions are criticised already in the beginning of the book (1,3-5). The Prophet's attitude to this political phenomenon can be inferred from the symbolic name of Hosea's firstborn, which is Jezreel (יזרעאל), to indicate that God will punish the house of Jehu for the blood shed in Jezreel<sup>7</sup> and will put an end to the kingdom of Israel (1,4). This name refers to the *coup d'état* which took place in this city in ca. 841 inspired by Jehu, a high rank army commander.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> I. Jaruzelska, *The Officials in the Kingdom of Israel in the Eighth Century B.C. in the Books of Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 'Polish Journal for Biblical Research' 1, 2000, pp. 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Vollmer, *Geschichtliche Rückblicke und Motive in der Prophetie des Amos, Hosea und Jesaja*, BZAW 119, Berlin, p. 55; W.I. Toews, *Monarchy and Religious Institution in Israel under Jeroboam I*, SBLMS 47, Atlanta 1993, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> People described with this term, were either army officers of various ranks, or governors of districts, cities, members of royal cabinet (ministers). In the latter meaning the word שר occurs in *status constructus*, in which *nomen rectum* describes closer the function of an official: זעיר שר ('the chief of the city'), שר הצבא ('the chief commander of the army'). The category שר is studied in detail by U. Rütterswörden, *Die Beamten der israelitischen Königszeit. Eine Studie zu ŠR und vergleichbaren Begriffen*, BWANT 117, Stuttgart 1985; cf. I. Jaruzelska, *Amos and the Officialdom in the Kingdom of Israel*, Poznań 1998, pp. 110-111. 118-120.

<sup>7</sup> The town in the Northern Kingdom, localised at the East entrance to the valley of the same name.

<sup>8</sup> The epochal discovery of the fragments of an Aramaic stele from Tel Dan, in the years 1993 and 1994, dated to the second half of the 9th c. B.C. sheds new light onto the events. A. Biran, J. Naveh, *An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan*, IEJ 43, 1993, pp. 81-98; A. Biran, J. Naveh, *The Tel Dan Inscription*, IEJ 45, 1995, pp. 1-18. The most important in this document is the mention of 'The house of David' (*Beit David*) i.e. Judah and its king Ahaziah in parallel with the mention of Joram, king of Israel. The document shows both parts of the divided kingdom on the international arena in the 9th c.B.C. and describes the local political scene at the very time when Jehu assumed power. According to the biblical narration he was anointed the king in the context of the Joram's expedition in coalition with the king

In the Kings this *coup d'état* is presented as a response to the promotion of the Canaanite cult by Omrides who wanted the integration with the population of non-Israelites and enhancement of the diplomatic ties with neighbours.<sup>9</sup> In Jezreel Jehu murdered Joram, Jezebel and Ahab's officials. The king of Judah, Ahaziah, died in Megiddo from the wounds he suffered during retreat from Jezreel.<sup>10</sup> This was also the place where the heads of Achab's seventy sons killed in this purge were sent from Samaria. Jehu also removed all prophets and priests of Baal (2 Kgs 9–10).

A comparison of the descriptions of Jehu actions given in the Kings and the book of Hosea reveals drastic differences in their evaluation. In the former, they are seen as an expression of religious zeal (קנאת יהוה) (2 Kgs 10,16) and confirmation of the words of the prophet Elijah (2 Kgs 10,10).

Hosea does not agree with this view and describes the deeds of Jehu as a crime 'the blood of Jezreel' (דמי ירעאל). The intention of restoration of the faith in YHWH in the Northern Kingdom cannot justify the bloodshed. The Prophet does not accept the rule that the end justifies the means<sup>11</sup> and hence he expresses his condemn of the state resorting to violence in order to carry out religious reform. He announces the fall of the dynasty of Jehu. The last representative of this dynasty Zechariah, son of Jeroboam II was murdered after a six month rule. The deeds of Jehu have still further consequences, the Prophet predicts not only the fall of his dynasty but also 'the end of the kingdom of the house of Israel' (ממלכות בית ישראל) (1,4). The destruction of its military power

of Judah to Ramot-Gilead (2 Kgs 9,6), when the Aramaic king was Hazael, the author of the stele. The agreement between the sequence of events described in the stele and in the book of Kings is amazing. According to the stele, the territory of Aram was attacked by Israel before Hazael became the king. This evidence supports the biblical narration about the attack of the kings of Judah and the king of Israel on Aram. The two monarchs wanted to take advantage of the chaos related to the succession in Damascus to resume possession of Ramot-Gilead. A. Lemaire, *La stèle araméenne de Tell Dan*, (in:) *Etudes sémitiques et samaritaines offertes à Jean Marguin*, (eds) Ch.B. Amphoux, A. Frey, U. Schattner-Rieser, Paris 1999, p. 49. There were also some inconsistencies between the account given by the stele and the biblical source (see below).

<sup>9</sup> Z. Falk, *Religion and State in Ancient Israel*, in: *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature*, JSOTS 171, Sheffield 1994, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> According to the stele from Tel Dan, Hazael killed Joram and Ahaziah. The question is which of the accounts is more probable, however there is no simple answer to it. A. Lemaire, referring to J.A. Montgomery, and H.S. Gehman, *The Books of Kings*, ICC, Edinburgh 1951, points to the fact that the fragment of 2 Kgs 9,1–10,28 was written shortly after these events in order to justify the *coup d'état* of Jehu at the beginning of his rule. The stele from Dan was erected twenty or thirty years later. A. Lemaire, *The Tel Dan Stela as a Piece of Royal Historiography*, JSOT 81, 1998, p. 10; cf. W. Schniedewind, *Tel Dan Stela: New Light on Aramaic and Jehu's Revolt*, BASOR 302, 1996, pp. 85–86.

<sup>11</sup> A. Caquot, *Osée et la royauté*, RHPH 41, 1961, p. 128.

is expressed by the words 'I will break the bow in the valley of Jezreel' (1,5),<sup>12</sup> The combination of words 'Jezreel' and 'Israel' is a purposeful means to show a connection between the crime and the fall of the state. Thus the king has been charged with the responsibility for the tragic fate of the Northern Kingdom whose region Jezreel was annexed to Assyria in 733 under the rule of Tiglath-pileser III.

To the subject of rebellions Hosea comes back in Chapter 7 of his book: 'With their wickedness they supported the elevation (ישמחו) of king (מלך)<sup>13</sup> and officials (שרים) through their lies. They are all adulterers like an oven heated by the baker,<sup>14</sup> who stops keeping the fire burning to thin down the dough until it is leavened. On the day of our king when the officials are inflamed with wine he joins his hand with the mockers (לצצים).<sup>15</sup> For in their conspiracy they have made ready their resolve like an oven.<sup>16</sup> Their baker sleeps all the night. In the morning it blazes like a burning fire. They are all heated like an oven and devour their leaders (שופטיהם). All their kings (מלכיהם) fall. Not one of them calls upon me' (7,3-7).

This fragment describing the way to the throne and power of the king and officials well corresponds to the reality of the *coup d'état*, as usually replacement of the king was followed by the replacement of former civil and army officials by

<sup>12</sup> Wolff, op. cit., p. 19. According to some authors quoted by A.A. Macintosh the v. 1,5 does not come from Hosea, A.A. Macintosh, *Hosea*, ICC, Edinburgh 1997, pp. 19-20. However, this exegete points out that the Valley of Jezreel as the place of the eventual judgement of the events which took place in the town of the same name, could be indicated by Hosea. This region from the first half of the 17th c.B.C. had been the battle field in which Debora fought with Sisera, Gideon with Midianites, and Saul with Philistines. For this reason the Valley of Jezreel could be a synonym of the last battle in the future, similarly as Megiddo lying in the Western part of the region was to become the Armageddon of Christian apocalyptic. Therefore, Hosea could consider the Valley of Jezreel as the proper place for punishment of Israel, *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> The Hebrew word ישמחו I translate after Macintosh on the basis of a related Arab word *šmh* which means 'to be high', 'lofty', 'tower up', *ibid.*, p. 255; Wolff reads ישמחו as 'they enjoyed themselves' (contrary to the BHS and other commentators who proposed to read משחו as 'they anointed themselves') indicating that the author refers to the enthronement day, described in the Bible as the day of joy, e.g. in the context of acclaiming Saul the king of Israel (1 Sam 11,15). Wolff, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>14</sup> I follow Macintosh who interprets the preposition מן as 'through the means of', Macintosh, op. cit., p. 257, whereas Wolff understands מן as a preposition expressing the lack: 'an oven that burns without a baker. Wolff, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>15</sup> Macintosh accepts the suggestion of Ibn Ezra, that the word לצצים does not originate from the core לייץ ('to scoff'), because if it did with the doubling of the third consonant we would get the form מל(ו)צצים. Ibn Ezra did not suggest the meaning of this verb, which seems to appear only at this one place. According to Macintosh the related Arab word *lšš* ('to act secretly') better corresponds to the context, Macintosh, op. cit., p. 260.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

new ones.<sup>17</sup> Such an exchange of at least the most important officials took place when Solomon took power. He first dismissed the priest Abiathar (1 Kgs 2,26–27) and appointed Zadok to replace him (1 Kgs 2,35). Then he ordered to murder Joab — the chief commander of David's army (1 Kgs 2,28–34), and replaced him with Benaiah (1 Kgs 2,35).

The authors most often connect the above quoted fragment with the assassination of Pekah, which brought to power Hosea, the last king of Israel, in 732 (2 Kgs 15,30). His name is the same as that of the prophet Hosea (Hoshea). It is possible that the seal published by A. Lemaire, dated to the 8th c. B.C. belonged to an official of this monarch. It bears an inscription לעבדי עבד הושע ('Belongs to Abdi, servant of Hoshea') and an iconographic motif in an Egyptianizing style.<sup>18</sup> A plastic description of a burning oven (3x) damping down only to start burning anew, depicts a competition among different parties in the Northern Kingdom in the second half of the 8th century. The influence of proaramean party is evidenced by the actions of the antiassyrian Syro-Ephraimitic ligue, organised by Rezin, the king of Damascus, whose member was Pekah. After annexation of this state to Assyria in 732, more influential proved those who opposed the alliance with Aram and wanted to gain security by submission to Assyria. For this reason they removed Pekah and enthroned Hosea, who became a vassal of Assyria (2 Kgs 17,3).<sup>19</sup> This change in orientation resulting from an increase in Assyrian influence, is reflected in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser, who says that after killing king Pekah by the Israelites he put Hosea on the throne and accepted tributed from him (Summary inscriptions: 9:9–11; 4:17–19).<sup>20</sup>

The intensity of the fight for power the Prophet compares to the destructive force of fire — 'devouring' the leaders (שופטיהם), by which he means kings and state officials.<sup>21</sup> The expression 'all their kings fall' suggests that he does not mean

<sup>17</sup> Wolff, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>18</sup> A. Lemaire, *Name of Israel's Last King. Surfaces in a Private Collection*, BAR 21/6, 1995, pp. 48–52.

<sup>19</sup> Wolff, op. cit., p. 124; A. Gelston, *Kingship in the Book of Hosea*, OTS 19, 1974, p. 75.

<sup>20</sup> H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria*, Jerusalem 1994, pp. 141. 189. In the Bible, quite contrary, Hosea begins his rule as a result of the *coup d'état* (2 Kgs 15,30). However, it is difficult to establish the actual course of events.

<sup>21</sup> The noun שופט in the biblical tradition referring to the Israel before monarchy means both a judge and a ruler. Also the verb שפט has a double meaning as it refers to both to judge and to rule. However, there are contexts in the Bible in which the noun שופט and the root שפט are used only in reference to ruling, especially when they appear in parallel to מלך ('king') and שר ('officer'). It is commonly accepted that when the root שפט refers to the responsibilities of the king, it means more 'to rule' than 'to judge'. There are fragments in which the verb discussed can be translated only as 'to rule'. A similar double use of the core שפט is met in West Semitic languages. The use of the term שופט to describe the ruler and the judge can be explained by the fact that in the Near East the ruler usually acted also as the highest judge. *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Jerusalem 1955–1976, 7, col. 578. (Hebr.).

a single *coup d'état* but a series of *coup d'états* in the whole period, evoked by the authors of Deuteronomistic history. Shallum — the killer of the above-mentioned Zechariah (2 Kgs 15,10) was himself murdered by Menahem after a one month rule (2 Kgs 15,14). His successor king Pekahiah was killed by Pekah (2 Kgs 15,25), later murdered by Hosea.<sup>22</sup>

The greed of power of various parties stemming from by their wickedness (רעתם) burning like fire, was fed by excessive wine drinking, censured in the same context. This phenomenon must have been well known, as Isaiah, active in Judah, condemns 'Ephraim drunkards' (שכרי אפרים) (28,1.3) and those 'paralysed by wine' (הלומי יין) (28,1). Hosea does not mean the abundant use of wine in specific circumstances like on the occasion of enthronement but the constant drinking. Such an intemperance is condemned as it puts officials' vigilance to sleep and makes them more vulnerable towards possible exterior danger. They do not realise that the country is gradually swallowed by Assyria, which he describes in the following verses, see below. In Hosea's writings excessive drinking is not connected with condemnation of living in luxury, in contradistinction to the book of Amos, who condemns excessive drinking in the context of sumptuous feasts (6,1-6). Hosea does not pay too much attention to officials' wealth. He is more concerned with the greed for power. It seems that the differences in the approach of the two prophets living in the Northern Kingdom in the 8th c. are well illustrated by the remark of M. Weber. He distinguishes the wish for power for its own sake 'to delight in the feeling of meaning it gives' from the wish to gain power in order to realise other ambitions either idealistic or egotistic.<sup>23</sup>

The Hosea's metaphor of the oven dumping down only to start burning again and devouring the leaders, proves that he was an excellent observer of the political life. He describes those holding power in Israel as degenerated and threatened with self-destruction due to the use of violence. For this reason they do not have God's legitimisation which is overtly expressed in the fragment 'They make kings but not by my will, they set up officers, but without my knowledge' (8,4a). This reproach of the neglect of consultations of the choice of king with God is substantial evidence for the belief that not all power comes from God being expressed in the Bible, in particular the power taken by bloody *coup d'états* does not.

### Criticism of the State Religion

The Prophet criticises the rulers also for transgressions in cult, in particular for making gods of silver and gold: 'They made idols with their silver and gold

<sup>22</sup> Wolff, op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>23</sup> Weber, op. cit., p. 507.

for their own destruction. Reject<sup>24</sup> your calf, O Samaria! A workman made him and it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be brought to pieces' (8,4-6).<sup>25</sup>

The words against the calf of Samaria should be understood in the context of the deeds of Jeroboam I, who directly after the split of the monarchy (ca. 931) put up calves in Bethel and in Dan. These cities hosted traditional sanctuaries, which this king established as official religious centres. The discovery in the 80s of a bronze statue of a bull (18 cm long) in Dothan dated to the period of the Judges, confirms the practice of worshipping such objects. This bull was related to an open-air cult site surrounded by a stone wall in front of which was a stone-paved area bearing potsherds, bronze objects and a fragment of a square cult vessel. A large standing stone (probably *massebah*) was found on the side of the enclosure.<sup>26</sup> In view of this finding, it can be supposed that Jeroboam used a well-known iconography. By erecting calves on two ends of the kingdom he wanted to enhance his power by isolating his subjects from the influence of Jerusalem: 'so that the heart of the people would not be inclined towards the king of Judah, so that they would not kill him' (1 Kgs 12,27). Jeroboam I appointed priests who did not come from the house of Levy, as he knew that those from the house of Levy would not support him. Moreover, he moved the date of the autumn pilgrimage festival by one month (1 Kgs 12,26-33). This reform had a clear political background. Condemning the cult of the calf of Samaria, the Prophet not only classifies the king and officials as apostates but also at the same time expresses his objection against the state religion whose aim is to strengthen the actual political power.

The fragment discussed in the first part saying that: 'They make kings but not by my will, they set up officers, but without my knowledge' and the one: 'They made idols with their silver and gold', are in the same verse. This placement is not accidental, as pointed out by A. Macintosh. In his opinion, this parallelism means that Hosea compares the kings elected by people to gods produced by man.<sup>27</sup> In this way Hosea enhances the criticism of the monarchy, emphasising the ineffectiveness of the king and officials. They are as powerless as the gods made by human hands, in other words they who worship idols become idols themselves (cf. Ps 115). The ineffectiveness of the king is referred to once again when Hosea addresses the Israelites with the words: 'Where is your king who may save you, (וְיֹשִׁיעַךְ) in all your cities and your leaders (וְשׁוֹפְטֶיךָ), whom you mentioned, give us the king and officers (מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים)' (13,10). A similarity of the sounds of יֹשִׁיעַךְ (*yôšî'ākā*) and the name הוֹשֵׁעַ (*hōšēa*) suggests that the Prophet directed his criticism to king Hosea, during whose reign the state fell. In another fragment

<sup>24</sup> Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>25</sup> Macintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 298; cf. other allusions to the calf of Samaria in the book of Hosea: 10,5; 13,1-3.

<sup>26</sup> NEAEHL, pp. 266-267.

<sup>27</sup> Macintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

he prophesies that the king of Samaria 'will be swept like flotsam on the water' (10,7).

H.S. Nyberg suggested that the word מלך in Hosea's book denotes the deity called Melek to be identified with Molech.<sup>28</sup> The cult of this god requiring sacrifice of children was spread outside Jerusalem in the Hinnom valley.<sup>29</sup> However, such an interpretation of מלך in the book of Hosea is not justified, among others things, because of a later origin of this practice — probably the 6th or 7th cc. B.C.<sup>30</sup> Nyberg's interpretation of מלך seems to imply a veiled assumption that the Prophet is concerned only with the criticism of religion, i.e. he focuses strictly on idolatry. To my opinion however, מלך denotes an earthen king. Such a use reveals the radical character of Hosea's views on the monarchy. The comparison of kings and his officials to idols serves as a means to convince his audience that the king and his administration are redundant since they are not able to protect the country against Assyria.

### Foreign Policy

Another sphere of government activity Hosea criticises is related to making alliances with great powers of the time. His negative opinion is expressed by the words he uses when referring to the alliances — he calls it 'mixing with the nations' (7,8).

It cannot be excluded that this criticism refers to the proaramean policy of Pekah, which was manifested by Israel accedence to the Syro-Ephraimitic league.

The opposition to the 'mixing with the nations' and the criticism of the policy of subjection to Assyria covered also the search for protection in Egypt (7,11.16; 12,2). Hosea condemned the lack of proper orientation among the officials who could not decide which power they should trust: 'They called upon Egypt and turned to Assyria' (7,11); 'Ephraim concerns himself with wind,<sup>31</sup> he pursues an east wind all day, he multiplies lies and robbery, they make a treaty with Assyria and oil is transported to Egypt' (12,2).

The turn to Egypt could be related to the chaos after the death of Tiglath-pileser in 727, when king Hosea tried to take this opportunity and release from the submission to Assyria. He did not send the annual tribute to Assyria but sent envoys to Egypt (2 Kgs 17,4). The Prophet may refer to this mission connected

<sup>28</sup> Nyberg and Cazelles quoted by Gelston, op. cit., pp. 72–73.

<sup>29</sup> *Dictionary of the Bible*, (rev. ed.) F.C. Grant, H.H. Rowley, Edinbourg 1963, p. 669.

<sup>30</sup> H.P. Müller, *Hebraisch מלך und punisch ml (')k(t)*, in: *Michael. Historical, Epigraphical and Biblical Studies in Honour of Prof. Michael Heltzer*, (eds.) Y. Avishur, R. Deutsch, Tel-Aviv-Jaffa 1999, p. 248.

<sup>31</sup> Macintosh, op. cit., p. 477.



with sending tribute of oil<sup>32</sup> to ensure greater effectiveness of the negotiations. This change in orientation proved fatal. The new king of Assyria, Shalmaneser V, attacked Samaria and finally annexed the Northern Kingdom to Assyria.

Hosea condemned these alliances because they led to territorial loss, it is obvious from his words — having condemned the ‘mixing of the nations’, he writes that Ephraim has become a flat-cake which is not revolved.<sup>33</sup> Foreigners fed on its strength but he was unaware’ (7,8b-9a) (cf. 5,14). This verse is best interpreted when referred to the annexation of Israel’s territory by Assyria.<sup>34</sup>

The calamitous policy of alliances, contradictory to the interests of the state, seems to have been motivated by private interest of those remaining in power.<sup>35</sup> It is particularly evident in the case of Menahem, who paid enormous tribute to Tiglath-pileser III, so that the latter was more inclined to ‘strengthen the throne in his hands’ (2 Kgs 15,19).

The negative opinion on the alliances is enhanced by their perception as apostasies. This is apparent when the Prophet emphasises the ineffectiveness of Assyria and Egypt as protectors of Israel, opposing to them the reliability of the protection of God: ‘And the Ephraim saw his illness, and Judah his sores, and Ephraim went to Assyria and sent gifts to the great king, but he is unable to heal you nor heel your sores’ (5,13); ‘Come let us return to the Lord, for he has torn us but he will heel us, he has struck us but he will bind up our wounds’ (6,1; 11,3).<sup>36</sup>

The contrast between the ineffectiveness of Assyria and reliability of God’s can be interpreted as a discredit of the policy of alliances based on payment of tributes and relations of subjectivity. A huge tribute paid by Menahem, who collected fifty shekels of silver from each wealthy Israelite (גבורי החיל) (2 Kgs 15,19-20), surely did not win peoples’ hearts.

By condemning the policy of alliances as apostasy, Hosea shows that it does not lead only to the cult of gods made of silver and gold, but can be expressed by specific deeds, e.g. calamitous foreign policy.<sup>37</sup> In my opinion Hosea does not criticise these alliances because he is afraid that the people will turn to the gods of these powers, although such views are expressed. The greatest threat to the religion was the contact with Canaanite cults, as it is evidenced in the book. The cult of Baal is one of its main themes.

<sup>32</sup> For the summary of the discussion on the conquest of the city see: Jaruzelska, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-59.

<sup>33</sup> I.e. burnt with fire.

<sup>34</sup> Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>35</sup> Macintosh, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-318.

<sup>36</sup> Gelston, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

### Hosea as a Theoretician of the State

The ineffectiveness of the kings and officials as well as their policy of alliances perceived by the Prophet as the origin of the tragic developments, bring a more general reflection on the institution of monarchy. He blames it for all calamities of Israel and condemns the fact of its establishment. 'All their wickedness (became visible) in Gilgal, there did I hate them. For their evil deeds I will drive them from my house. I will love them no more; all their officials are rebels' (9,15). This text is an allusion to the beginning of the monarchy, since in Gilgal, which must have been an important religious sanctuary in the Northern Kingdom,<sup>38</sup> Saul was made king (1 Sam 11,15). The Prophet describes Gilgal as the place of their wickedness (רענתם), so using the same suffixed noun which he used to describe *coups d'état* caused by their wickedness (ברענתם) (7,3).<sup>39</sup> This literary means shows the monarchy as evil and rejected by God from the very beginning.

In this context the image of the king is very meaningful. The king is paradoxically shown as one from among his officers. This position of the king is well expressed by referring to the king and his officers using the same term שופטים meaning as mentioned above, the rulers. This name may reflect the situations of frequent *coups d'état* in the Northern Kingdom, organised by army officers who took the power. For this reason kings were close to army officers, e.g. Zimri, Omri or Jehu.

The rejection of monarchy is particularly well seen in the promise of restoration, which assumes the gathering of the sons of Judah and sons of Israel. There is no mention of a king as their leader, but of 'one head': "The sons of Israel and sons of Judah shall be gathered together and they will appoint a single head (רנש) and they shall go up from the country, for great be the day of Jezreel' (2,2). The evident dislike of the king is particularly striking against the parallel texts of other prophets. For example Jeremiah writes about a union under the leadership of David (Jer 30,9), and Ezekiel — under the leadership of one king (37,22). Indeed, in one of the promises of restoration Hosea mentions 'David, their king' (3,5). However, this mention is commonly considered as a gloss, i.e. a later addition by an editor from Judah, who wanted to bring the prophecy up to

<sup>38</sup> Caquot, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>39</sup> The expression 'the wickedness of Samaria' (רעות שמרון) occurs in parallel to the 'Ephraim iniquity' (עון אפרים) in 7,1: 'When I will be healing Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim and the wickedness of Samaria will appear' (7,1). According to J.J. Schmitt, in this context the guilt of the capital city is paralleled with that of the people, J.J. Schmitt, *Samaria in the Books of Prophets of the Eighth Century BCE*, in: *Proceedings of the Eleventh Congress of Jewish Studies Jerusalem 1994*, p. 117. It cannot be excluded that this parallelism is meant to emphasise the guilt of the central administration.

date and show that the prophesy had come true after the fall of Samaria in the Southern Kingdom, so in Judah.<sup>40</sup>

The rejection of the institution of monarchy by Hosea places him in the Bible tradition of its opponents. The famous negative response of the prophet Samuel to propositions of Israel's elders to appoint a king as in other nations and the so-called king's law reflects the perception of monarchy as an oppressive institution (1 Sam 8,10-17). The text belongs to the so-called Elohist tradition, originating from the Northern Kingdom. Scholars also attribute to the Elohist the antimonarchistic version of Saul anointment to king (1 Sam 10,17-25), comparing it sometimes with Hosea's description 8,4-7.11-13.<sup>41</sup>

The conclusion following from the above considerations is that Hosea condemning monarchy because of its political ineffectiveness, and treating it as apostasy of the rulers leading people astray, implies that this institution is redundant. It seems that none of the prophets has gone so far in the criticism of the state. Verification of this thesis requires further studies.

### Abbreviations:

BAR = Biblical Archaeology Review.

BASOR = Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.

BHS = Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.

BWANT = Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament.

BZAW = Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

FO = Folia Orientalia.

ICC = The International Critical Commentary.

IEJ = Israel Exploration Journal.

JSOT = Journal for the Study of the Old Testament.

JSOTS = Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series.

NEAEHL = The New Encyclopedia of Archeological Excavations in the Holy Land.

OTS = Oudtestamentische Studien.

RHPPhR = Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse.

SBLMS = The Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series.

<sup>40</sup> Macintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>41</sup> P. Grelot, *Introduction aux livres saints*, Paris 1963, p. 105.