

## The Baker's Oven Simile and the Divine Lament in Hosea 7:3-7

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### 1. Translation

7:3 In their wickedness they <sup>a</sup>make the king<sup>b</sup> glad<sup>a</sup>;  
and in their treacheries, the officials.

7:4 <sup>c</sup>All of them, O the adulterers<sup>c</sup>, are <sup>d</sup>like an oven, a burning by a baker<sup>d</sup>  
who ceases stoking  
after the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.

7:5 On the day of our king  
<sup>e</sup>-O they are making the officials ill with the heat of wine!<sup>e</sup>  
his hand draws<sup>f</sup> the traitors.

7:6a <sup>g</sup>Yea, they approach their ambush and their heart is like the oven;<sup>g</sup>

7:6b all night long their baker sleeps;  
but in the morning, <sup>h</sup>it burns<sup>h</sup> like a flaming fire.

7:7a All of them grow as hot as the oven, and they consume their rulers.

7:7b All their kings have fallen;  
<sup>i</sup> there has been none among them who calls upon me.<sup>i</sup>

### 2. Notes on translation

#### V 3 a-a (they) make...glad יִשְׂמְחוּ

Reading the text as describing the coronation of a king, Wellhausen made a suggestion that יִשְׂמְחוּ in MT should be emended to *yimšēhū* ("they anoint").<sup>1)</sup>

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1) The *terminus a quo* of the history of reading this text as describing the coronation of a king

However, partly because there is no textual evidence for an emendation to *yimšēhū*, and partly because biblical history attests no regicide on the day of coronation, the conjecture is rejected. LXX reads εὐφραναι “to make glad”, an equivalent of Hebrew יִשְׂמְחוּ .

### V 3 b the king מֶלֶךְ

LXX has a plural noun βασιλεῖς “kings”, rather than “a king”. It may be that LXX tried a harmonization with מְלָכֵיהֶם “their kings” in verse 7b, but 7:3-7a depicts a specific scene of a regicide<sup>2)</sup> which became a general pattern of other regicides.<sup>3)</sup> That is, the plural מְלָכֵיהֶם in verse 7b denotes the kings who became victims of the regicidal pattern while the singulars מֶלֶךְ (verse 3) and מְלִכְנִי (verse 5) depict the modeling king of that pattern.<sup>4)</sup> The harmonization attempted in LXX is rejected on the basis of the understanding of the passage as such.

### V 4 c-c All of them, O the adulterers כָּלֵם מְנַאֲפִים

Many scholars<sup>5)</sup> assume that the scribe read מְנַאֲפִים by mistake in place of

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dates to Ibn Ezra in the twelfth century who made a comment “as well as the princes who enthrone him” after the line “in their wickedness they make the king glad” (A. Lipshitz, *The Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea: Edited from Six Manuscripts and Translated with an Introduction and Notes* [New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1988], 72). In line with this reading, Macintosh argues that the root *smh* can be read “to make someone king” on the basis of the cognate Arabic verb *smh* ‘to be high,’ ‘to tower up’ (A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Hosea* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997], 255), which this author regards as a forced evidence.

- 2) Andersen and Freedman also take the specificity of the following details as the basis of reading “a king”, rather than “kings” (F. Andersen and D. Freedman, *Hosea*, The Anchor Bible vol. 24, [New York: Doubleday & Company, 1980], 454).
- 3) Hubbard shares this opinion and says: “The movement begins with a specific instance and concludes with a broad generalization as though the extended simile describes one instance to which there were many parallels” (D. A. Hubbard, *Hosea: An Introduction and Commentary*, [Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989], 133). In line with this, A. Macintosh (255) argues that the imperfect tense in יִשְׂמְחוּ expresses the behavior that has become customary and effected the fall of king after king.
- 4) There is no text that specifically depicts any of the regicides committed during the political vortex that Hosea talks about. However, the assassination of Elah by Zimri in ca. 876 BCE was carried off while the court was drunk (1 Kings 16:8-14).
- 5) Paul presents a long list of the commentators who emend אֵיךְ לֵאמֹר (S. Paul, “The Image of the Oven and the Cake in Hosea VII 4-10”, *VT* 18 [1968], 115). They are Nowack (1897), Sellin

*ʾānēpîm* from the root אָנַף.<sup>6)</sup> In order to make the scribal error look more likely, Paul suggests to read a piel participle *mēʾannēpîm* even though he admits that אָנַף in the piel stem is not attested in the Old Testament.<sup>7)</sup> The various suggestions to emend מְנַאֲפִים to *ʾānēpîm* are fundamentally interpretive attempts, which lack textual evidences. LXX reads *μοιχεύοντες*, a participle of *μοιχεύω* “to commit adultery”, supporting MT.

Many commentators render מְנַאֲפִים כָּלָם into “all of them are adulterers”.<sup>8)</sup> This author suggests that מְנַאֲפִים כָּלָם should be read as “all of them, O the adulterers”, understanding “the adulterers” as a scornful title hurled at כָּלָם the nature of whose acts is adulterous.<sup>9)</sup> Hosea 12:8<sup>10)</sup> and 13:2b<sup>11)</sup> present other

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- (1929-30), Robinson (1936), Driver (1938), Weiser (1949-50), Mauchline (1956), and Wolff (1965). Wolff, however, does not change the reading of MT, saying that the emendation to אָנַף “destroys a specific emphasis provided by its connection with vv 3 and 5” (H. W. Wolff, *Hosea*, Hermeneia, G. Stansell, trans., P. D. Hanson, ed. [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974], 107).
- 6) Driver (“Linguistic and Textual Problems: Minor Prophets I”, *JTS* 39 [1938], 156) and some other scholars read *ʾōnēpîm*, rather than *ʾānēpîm*. Following the analogy of *hānēp* (verb) and *hānēp* (adjective), however, this author reads *ʾānēpîm* for the suggested emendation.
- 7) S. Paul, “The Image of the Oven and the Cake in Hosea VII 4-10”, 115.
- 8) Among those are Mays (1969), Wolff (1974), Andersen and Freedman (1980), McComiskey (1992), Macintosh (1997), and so forth.
- 9) For the understanding on calling the nature of some acts to be adulterous, Sherwood presents a helpful comment: “The stem נָאֵף refers, more widely than אָנַף, to all pre- or extra-marital intercourse. (...) Hosea is the first text to develop the term figuratively, and it broadens its usage in two ways. First, it uses it to include a sense of betrayal, usually limited to אָנַף.” (Y. Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, JSOTSup 212 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996], 20). Hosea 3:1 may be quoted for an example of those texts where אָנַף is used figuratively as Sherwood points out in that a woman’s committing adultery is compared to the Israelites’ turning to other gods. This author understands אָנַף in Hosea 7:4 as another example of figurative use of אָנַף.
- 10) כַּנְעַן in Hosea 12:8 is a scornful title hurled at Ephraim against her unscrupulous pride of her wealth and, therefore, is to be rendered as “a trader”, rather than “a Canaanite”. As is seen by the comparison of כַּנְעַן in Zephaniah 1:11 and 2:5, the transition of the meaning of כַּנְעַן from “a Canaanite” to “a trader” occurs at least during the reign of Josiah (640-609 BCE), during which period Zephaniah had his ministry. Mays (1969), Wolff (1974), Andersen and Freedman (1980), McComiskey (1992), Macintosh (1997), and many others put כַּנְעַן as “a trader”, a scornful title hurled at Ephraim.
- 11) 13:2b reads הֵם אֹמְרִים זִבְחֵי אָדָם עֲגָלִים יִשְׁקֹן לָהֶם, and scholars have made suggestions and emendations. Wolff (219) reads “They say to themselves: ‘Those who sacrifice men kiss calves’” while Mays (171) renders “‘To them sacrifice,’ they say. Men kiss calves.” Macintosh (522) reads “Of them they say: True worshippers kiss calves”, and Davies (287) renders “They say, ‘Those who offer human sacrifices kiss calves.’” The suggestions are so confusing and

examples of Hosea's writing style in which he characterizes people by a word hurled at them. Rendering כָּלֵם מְנַאֲפִים into "all of them, O the adulterers" may be justified by Hosea's writing style as such.

**V 4 d-d like an oven, a burning by a baker כָּמוֹ תַנּוּר בַּעֲרָה מֵאֲפֶה**

There have been many suggestions and emendations to solve the problem of the gender disagreement between the masculine תַּנּוּר and the feminine בַּעֲרָה. One of the suggestions is to read בַּעֲרָה as a masculine participle on the basis of the penultimate accent as a rabbi noted a long time ago.<sup>12)</sup> In line with this suggestion, Macintosh regards the ה ending in בַּעֲרָה as a paragogic one added for poetic emphasis and reads the portion as "like an oven heated by a baker".<sup>13)</sup> However, because the paragogic ה does not appear elsewhere in Hosea, the suggestion does not seem convincing.

Other suggestions also deal with the problematic ה in בַּעֲרָה. Some scholars emend בַּעֲרָה מֵאֲפֶה in MT to בַּעֲרָה הֵם מֵאֲפֶה as Wolff does,<sup>14)</sup> and others to בַּעֲרָה אֲפֶה הֵם as Andersen and Freedman do.<sup>15)</sup> Wolff's reconstruction that reads כָּמוֹ תַנּוּר בַּעֲרָה הֵם מֵאֲפֶה "they are like an oven that burns without a baker"<sup>16)</sup> is

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serve only to reveal the difficulty of the verse as they fail to pay attention to Hosea's unique writing style. Hosea's writing does not flow logically. He adds words at awkward places as he feels it necessary to supplement his idea or to characterize people or events. This author suggests that זִבְחֵי אָדָם be understood as a scornful characterization of הֵם and that 13:2b be read as: "They, the ones who sacrifice men, speak to them (=idols), and they kiss the calves." Andersen and Freedman (624) have a similar reading: "Those who sacrifice people speak to them. They kiss the calves." 13:2b is another source that may support this author's translation "all of them, O the adulterers."

12) A. Lipshitz, *The Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra On Hosea*, 72.

13) A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, 257. It is odd that Macintosh translates *b'rh* as a passive participle right after an introduction of Ibn Ezra's reading of it as an active participle. His translation is still correct if he really read a passive participle because the preposition מִן usually functions as an agent marker when it is used with a passive verb (B. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 213-214). When *b'rh* is read as an active participle, the preposition מִן functions more likely as a privative marker as is seen in Wolff's translation "oven that burns without a baker".

14) H. W. Wolff, *Hosea*, 107.

15) F. Andersen and D. Freedman, *Hosea*, 457.

16) H. W. Wolff, *Hosea*, 107.

not without flaws. The placement of הֵם between בֵּעֵר and מֵאֶפֶה is so awkward that even the poetic character of this passage does not satisfactorily explain the syntactical problems in his emendation.<sup>17)</sup> The emendation of Andersen and Freedman, i.e. בְּמוֹ תִנּוֹר בֵּעֵר הֵם אֶפֶה, divides the verse after הֵם and reads אֶפֶה as the subject of יִשְׁבוֹת. Such a reading is not totally impossible, but this author doubts whether *b'rh* is really a participle and whether reading הֵם has any textual evidence. For reference, LXX reads κλίβανος καιόμενος εἰς πέψιν, and does not support reading הֵם.

As will be explained in the commentary section, the essence of the baker's oven simile is related not to the vessel of the oven itself but to the heat or the burning of the oven, and so this author suggests that *b'rh* be read as the feminine noun בְּעֵרָה “burning; fire” rather than an attributive participle that modifies the oven. So, verse 4a finally reads: “All of them, O the adulterers, are like an oven, a burning by a baker.”

#### V 5 e-e -O they are making the officials ill with the heat of wine!-

Freedman argues that the construct and the absolute may not be in direct sequence,<sup>18)</sup> and presents three places in Hosea where the broken construct chain occurs: 6:9,<sup>19)</sup> 8:2,<sup>20)</sup> and 14:3.<sup>21)</sup> Since its occurrence is considerably more common in Hosea than in other books,<sup>22)</sup> this author thinks that the broken construct chain in Hosea is understood more properly in terms of Hosea's

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17) Davies also points out that the Hebrew sentence in Wolff's emendation is very awkward, rejecting Wolff's emendation for that reason (G. I. Davies, *Hosea*, New Century Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1992], 182).

18) D. Freedman, “Problems of Textual Criticism in the Book of Hosea”, *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 319-322.

19) MT has וְרָצְחוּ שִׁבְכָמָה הַדֶּרֶךְ. Freedman (319) argues that הַדֶּרֶךְ and שִׁבְכָמָה are bound in the construct chain, yielding the sense “on the road to Shechem they murdered”.

20) MT has לִי יִזְעֲקוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִדְעוּנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל. Freedman (319-320) argues that אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל should be understood as a broken construct chain and that the sentence reads: “O God of Israel, we know you.”

21) MT has כָּל עֲוֹן תִּשָּׂא. Freedman (320) argues that כָּל עֲוֹן is the combination and that the sentence reads: “you shall forgive all iniquity עֲוֹן תִּשָּׂא”

22) Freedman (320-321) gives some other examples of the broken chain outside Hosea, namely, Ezekiel 28:14; 16; Amos 5:16. Some of them seem dubious and, above all, the examples are not numerous.

writing style than in terms of grammatical anomaly. In fact, since the phenomenon of breaking the bound words and clauses is not rare in Hosea, it does not seem right to confine the phenomenon only to some cases of the broken construct chain. It may be a feature of Hosea's writing style that appears often not just in the construct chain but also in a sentence.

Hosea 10:12 is an example. **נִירוּ לָכֶם נֵיר וְעַת לְדַרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה עַד־יָבֹוא וְיָרָה צֶדֶק לָכֶם** is a difficult sentence, and LXX reads the portion as φωτίσατε ἑαυτοῖς φῶς γνώσεως ἐκζητήσατε τὸν κύριον ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν “Lighten for yourselves the lamp of knowledge (and) seek the Lord until the harvest of righteousness arrives to you.” In order to make sense of its reading of the verb **נִירוּ** from the root **נור** “to lighten”, rather than from the root **ניר** “to freshly till”, LXX has a forced reading of φῶς γνώσεως “lamp of knowledge **נִיר הַעֵת**” from **נִיר וְעַת** and further emends the infinitive of **דָּרַשׁ** to an imperative. Wolff and some others follow the reading of LXX to some extent,<sup>23)</sup> but all these morphological confusions and emendations come from the lack of the understanding of Hosea's unique writing style. **וְעַת לְדַרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה** is an insertion between the bound clauses **נִירוּ לָכֶם** and **צֶדֶק לָכֶם וְיָרָה**, and the sentence is to be translated: “Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek YHWH,<sup>24)</sup> that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.”<sup>25)</sup>

With regard to the clause **הִחֲלוּ שָׂרִים חֲמַת מִיַּיִן** in verse 5, it breaks the sentence **וְיָם מִלְכָּנוּ מִשֶּׁךְ יָדוֹ אֶת־לְצָצִים** and the sentence is to be read: “On the day of our king -O they are making the officials ill with wine!- his hand draws the traitors.<sup>26)</sup>”

### V 5 f (his hand) draws **מִשֶּׁךְ**

Because of the difficulty in understanding **אֶת־לְצָצִים יָדוֹ מִשֶּׁךְ** within the context,<sup>27)</sup> scholars have made various suggestions for the meaning of **מִשֶּׁךְ** in

23) H. W. Wolff, *Hosea*, 180.

24) Part of the difficulty in understanding **וְעַת לְדַרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה** lies in its rare syntax. However, Genesis 29:7 has the same syntax: **לֹא־עַת הָאֶסְףָּ הַמִּקְנֶה** “it is not time for the cattle to be gathered.” By analogy, **וְעַת לְדַרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה** is rendered into “for it is time to seek YHWH.”

25) Among those who have this reading are Davies (246-247), Mays (144), and NRSV.

26) **לְצָצִים** may be translated as ‘conspirators’ or ‘traitors.’ For a detailed discussion on the meaning of **לְצָצִים** as “conspirators” or “traitors”, see H. Richardson, “Some Notes on *lys* and Its Derivates”, *VT* 5 (1955), 166f; Lipshitz, *The Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 72; and so forth.

order to make sense of the verse. Macintosh translates אֶת־לִצְצִים מִזֶּשֶׁךְ יָדוֹ as “he deploys the conspirators with a signal”, arguing that the verb מִזֶּשֶׁךְ is usually attested in military contexts as is seen in Judges 4:6f and 20:37.<sup>28)</sup> Andersen and Freedman read it as “He stretched out his hand with scoffers”,<sup>29)</sup> and Wolff puts it rather awkwardly as “whose power enchants the mockers”, from the Ugarit *mš̄k* “to grasp tightly”.<sup>30)</sup>

As discussed in the previous note, however, the whole verse makes sense when it is read with full consideration of Hosea's writing style. In a word, the entire verse depicts an ironic scene in which the king foolishly trusts the traitors, extending his hand to draw them near to him while the traitors are making the officials drunk as preparation for their evil scheme to kill the king. There should not be a problem in applying the ordinary definition of מִזֶּשֶׁךְ “to draw” here.

#### V 6 g-g Yea, they approach their ambush, and their heart is like the oven

Because כִּי־קָרְבוּ בַתְּנוּרָה לִבָּם בְּאֶרְבָּם does not make a good sense when it is read in direct sequence, various suggestions have been made to change either the consonantal text<sup>31)</sup> or the definition of words<sup>32)</sup> or the reading units.<sup>33)</sup> Some of

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27) Mays, for example, translates it as “whose power draws the scorers” after he rightly says that the sentence literally reads “his hand draws scorers”. He further comments that “whose power” is a reference to the influence of wine or the power of wine (Mays, 103-106). Such a reading is very dubious and forced.

28) A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, 259-260.

29) F. Andersen and D. Freedman, *Hosea*, 447.

30) H. W. Wolff, *Hosea*, 107.

31) Following LXX's reading of *qādēhū* (from ἀνεκαύθησαν) in place of MT's קָרְבוּ, Wolff (107) emends the line to *kī qādēhū kattannūr libbām bō'er bām* “for they are kindled like an oven, their heart burns within them.” Mays (104), McComiskey (103), and NRSV basically have the same translation although Mays (106) remains aware of the possibility of reading “when they draw near in their ambush, their heart is like an oven.” However, let alone the problem of the lack of textual evidence for emending בְּאֶרְבָּם “in their ambush” to *bō'er bām* “(their heart) burns within them”, the suggested translation ignores the relationship between verses 5 and 6, and this author rejects the suggestion. LXX verse 6 reads as διότι ἀνεκαύθησαν ὡς κλίβανος αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ καταράσσειν αὐτούς ὅλην τὴν νύκτα ἕπρου Ἐφραιμ ἐνεπλήσθη πρωὶ ἐγειρήθη ἀνεκαύθη ὡς πυρὸς φέγγος “for their hearts were kindled like an oven when they fell down (raged?); all night long Ephraim was satisfied with sleep. In the morning it was kindled like a flaming fire.” Because the reading of LXX is very different from that of MT, this author wonders how much one can justify a selective emendation based on LXX.

32) One of those who make this attempt is Macintosh (262), who reads the portion as: “For in their

them make some sense, but this author is afraid that the suggestions have been made without a serious awareness of Hosea's writing style. In a word, this author thinks that **כִּי־קָרְבוּ כְתַנּוּר לִבָּם בְּאָרְבָּם** is another example in which Hosea breaks the bound words, namely **קָרְבוּ** and **בְּאָרְבָּם**, by inserting **כְתַנּוּר לִבָּם**. One does not have to reconstruct the word order, but for its smooth reading one should translate it according to the more logical order: **קָרְבוּ בְּאָרְבָּם כְתַנּוּר לִבָּם** "they approach their ambush, and their heart is like the oven."<sup>34</sup>) This reading makes a natural connection to the previous verse. That is, verse 5 presents the ironic picture in which a king draws some traitors near to him while they are looking for a chance to kill him. Verse 6 depicts its result and means to say, "Yea, they approach their ambush easily! Their heart is like the oven,<sup>35</sup>) and so the king is vulnerable to the heat or the burning at any moment."

#### V 6b h-h it (=their heart) burns **הוּא בֵעֵר**

There are three possible antecedents of **הוּא** within the immediate context:

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conspiracy they have made ready their resolve like an oven." Even though his translation seems wild, he actually does not change the text at all. He simply changes the definition of words. For example, "in their conspiracy", "they have made ready", and "their resolve" in his translation correspond to **בְּאָרְבָּם**, **קָרְבוּ**, and **לִבָּם** respectively. He reconstructs the word order and the reading units as follows: **בְּאָרְבָּם קָרְבוּ לִבָּם כְתַנּוּר**. Rendering **קָרְבוּ לִבָּם** into "they made ready their resolve" seems forced, and this author rejects it.

33) For example, Andersen and Freedman (447) read: "when they drew near, their heart was like an oven. During their ambush [all night long]." Simply put, they understand **בְּאָרְבָּם** to begin a new sentence and thus change the reading units. Their suggested reading ignores the neat parallelisms of "all night long // in the morning" and "to sleep (non-action) // to burn (action)" in the following lines, and should be rejected.

34) **קָרְבוּ בְּאָרְבָּם** may be put literally as "they draw near in their ambush." For a smoother reading, this author follows JPS Tanakh: "they approach their ambush (with their hearts like an oven)."

35) It deserves notice that the text talks about *the* oven (*kattannûr*) rather than *an* oven. Andersen and Freedman (454) say that none of the nouns in this passage (7:3-7) has the article in the consonantal text, but that is not true. The text has the article in front of **לִילָה** in verse 6, and so MT's vocalization *kattannûr* (verses 6 and 7) has a sound ground. Simply put, the oven in verse 6 refers to the oven whose baker stopped stirring the fire for a while (verse 4). The oven is not burning now, but it will surely begin to burn as soon as the baker wakes up and stirs the fire in the morning. Verse 6b talks about the readiness of both the oven and their heart to burn in that their heart is like the oven (verse 6a). Therefore, "heart like the oven" or "their heart is like the oven" refers to this status of their "readiness" to burn like the oven fire and to consume their rulers.



לִבָּם “their heart” (verse 6a), תַּנּוּר “oven” (verse 6a), and אִפְהֵם “their baker” (verse 6b). “Their baker burns (like a flaming fire)” does not make a good sense. The expression of “their heart burns (like a flaming fire)” may also sound a little odd, but it still works because of the simile “their heart is like the oven” (verse 6a). That is, just as the oven burns like a fire, so does the heart because their heart is like the oven. Some scholars identify הַרִא with the oven.<sup>36</sup> If הַרִא refers to the oven, however, then *'ōpēhû*, rather than MT’s *'ōpēhem* in verse 6b, would create a more natural reading: “its baker sleeps all night long, but in the morning it (=the oven) burns like a flaming fire.”

This author suggests that more attention should be paid to the recurring third person plural forms “they” and “their” in verse 6,<sup>37</sup> and that הַרִא should be identified with לִבָּם “their heart” in line with that emphasis.<sup>38</sup> Verses 6-7a then read meaningfully: “their heart is like the oven. Their baker sleeps all night long, but in the morning it (=their heart, which is like the oven,) burns like a flaming fire; all of them grow as hot as the oven.”

### V 7b i-i there has been none among them who calls upon me

This author regards אִין־קָרָא אֱלֹהִים בְּהֵם as another example of Hosea’s tendency in his writing style to break the bound words by an insertion. The expected word order of the sentence would be אֱלֹהִים בְּהֵם אִין־קָרָא.

## 3. A brief exposition

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36) Among those commentators are Andersen and Freedman (459-460), Macintosh (263), McComiskey (103-105), and Wolff (107). Wolff renders verse 6b into “all night long their passion slumbers, in the morning it blazes up like a burning flame” with an emendation of *'ōpēhem* to *'appēhem* on the basis of the reading of Targum. His translation gives an impression that he equates הַרִא with “their passion” or “their anger”, but he argues that הַרִא refers to the oven. As Wolff confesses, the text is obscure with that identification. As Wolff does, Mays (104-106) and Birch (*Hosea, Joel, Amos* [Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997], 71-75) also emend *'ōpēhem* to *'appēhem*, but they do not mention clearly whether הַרִא refers to *'appēhem* or (*hat*)*tannûr*.

37) The third person plurals are dominant not only in verse 6 but also in the whole text.

38) Not many scholars equate הַרִא with “their heart”, but at least Hubbard articulates that reading (D. A. Hubbard, *Hosea: An Introduction and Commentary*, 135).

7:3	Wickedness & treachery in the royal court	A	Accusation against Wickedness & Treachery I
7:4	Accusation through the baker's oven simile	B	
7:5	Wickedness & treachery on the day of our king	A'	Accusation against Wickedness & Treachery II
7:6-7a	Accusation through the baker's oven simile	B'	
7b	No one calls upon me!	C	Divine lament

### V 3 Wickedness & treachery in the royal court (A)

*In their wickedness they make the king glad;  
and in their treacheries, the officials.*

The first phrase of the passage 7:3-7, “in their wickedness”, provides a clear connection to the last verse of the previous passage 6:7-7:2 where people are accused of not considering the fact that God remembers “all their wickedness” (7:2a). 7:2b further reads: “Now their deeds surround them; they are before me.” Simply put, what the text describes after the catchword ‘(in their) wickedness’ is their deeds that God sees and remembers. To say correctly, however, it is not only their deeds that are wicked. What is also wicked is the inner motivation of treachery that underlies their deceptive friendliness, and that deceptive friendliness, which masks their secretly planned betrayal, may be the essence of the wickedness for which the text indicts the anonymous ‘they.’

Unable to identify ‘they,’ Davies calls them mysterious.<sup>39)</sup> However, the general description of ‘they’ in the text presents enough information for the identification of ‘they.’ That is, verse 3 describes them as those who make the king and his officials glad out of their hidden motivation of treachery, and so whoever acts that way becomes the wicked ‘they.’ History of northern Israel in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE witnesses many of those people. Groups of people would wait for their moment, gain the throne by intrigue and regicide, and then be

39) G. I. Davies, *Hosea*, 182.

assassinated by another group. Following this cycle, four out of six kings who gained ascendancy through wicked treacheries were assassinated during the period of 746-732 BCE.<sup>40)</sup>

#### V 4 Accusation through the baker's oven simile (B)

*All of them, O the adulterers, are like an oven, a burning by a baker  
who ceases stoking (the fire)  
after the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.*

'All of them' literally include all the characters in verse 3, namely 'they,' the officials, and the king as well,<sup>41)</sup> because the king himself was one of those former 'they' who became king through the practice of wicked treacheries. Note that it is not 'they' but 'all of them' as such who are being accused. It is 'all of them' who are being accused with the scornful title of 'adulterers' hurled at them,<sup>42)</sup> the meaning of which is hinted by the following simile, i.e. the simile of the baker's oven.

First of all, it may be necessary to explain the odd choice of the word 'adultery' before the meaning of the simile is explored. The term 'adultery' generally refers to a spouse's sexual unfaithfulness. However, it is often used figuratively in Hosea. For example, Hosea 3:1 directly compares the Israelites' turning to other gods to the committing of adultery. This figurative use of נֹאֲפֵי (na'afey) is also attested outside Hosea. One may compare Hosea 7:4 with Jeremiah 9:1b, which has a wording very similar to that of Hosea 7:4: כִּי כָּלָם מְנַאֲפִים עֲצֵרֶת בְּנֹדִים (for) all of them are adulterers, a band of traitors."<sup>43)</sup> Some reasons why

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40) Shallum's conspiracy against Zechariah (746-745) who reigned six months (2 Kings 15:8-12); Menahem's (745-738) regicide of Shallum (745) who was in the throne only a month (2 Kings 15:10; 13-15); Pekah's overthrow of Pekahiah (738-737) who reigned two years (2 Kings 15:23-26); Hoshea's (732-724) *coup* against Pekah (737-732) (2 Kings 15:27-31).

41) Among those with the same understanding of this phrase are Mays (105) and Wolff (124). Andersen and Freedman (455) regard 'they' as the schemers or traitors in verse 3 and further identify them with priests on the basis that adultery took place in the cult. This author reads this text as describing not a religious issue but a scene of political vortex, and rejects their reading.

42) For 'adulterers' as a scornful title hurled at 'all of them,' see the note on c-c.

43) Translation is from NRSV. Jeremiah 9:1 in MT corresponds to 9:2 in NRSV.

Jeremiah calls the people ‘adulterers’ or ‘a band of traitors’ are interesting. Jeremiah 9:3-4 states: “they all deceive their neighbors, not speaking the truth.” In addition, the reason expressed in verse 7 is striking as it reminds of Hosea 7:3. Jeremiah 9:7 reads: “they all speak friendly words to their neighbors, but inwardly are planning to lay an ambush.” Judging from the context as such, the figurative concept of adultery in Jeremiah 9:1b is essentially about acts of deception and betrayal, and it seems that the concept of adultery in Hosea 7:4 is basically the same concept that Jeremiah 9:1b has. However, one cannot be sure if Hosea really uses the word נֹאֲדָרִים in the same sense until one examines the text. What Hosea figuratively means by ‘adulterers’ in the text can be known only by the content of the following text, viz. the baker’s oven simile.

To begin with, archaeological excavations at Megiddo attest an Iron Age תַּנּוּר shaped just like a modern תַּנּוּר.<sup>44)</sup> It was made of clay in a truncated cone shape with the length of up to three feet, with an aperture at the top and another at the base for attending to the fire. When the baker wakes up and begins to work in the morning, he puts the wood inside the oven and ignites it. He also has to stir the ashes from time to time in order to expose more hot embers and keep the oven hot enough for the baking of the cakes. When a day’s business is over in the evening, he ceases stirring the fire, leaves the oven unattended, and kneads the dough for the next day. Then he goes to bed at night, and the dough is leavened and rises during his sleep. To say roughly, this is the daily routine of a baker’s work that is repeated everyday.

It is the state of the oven at night to which Hosea in verse 4 compares the nature of ‘all of them,’ calling them ‘adulterers.’ Simply put, the oven may seem harmless at night because the baker has ceased stirring the fire. The oven ceases to glow and is cooled down by the breeze of the night. But in the morning it will surely burn like a flaming torch as the baker wakes up and begins to work. In other words, the oven may seem harmless for a while, but that state will not last long. The oven will become seriously harmful to touch as soon as the baker wakes up and begins to work. Likewise, when the traitors are making the king and the officials glad, they may seem harmless just as the oven at night seems harmless. However, they are not harmless at all. If they seem so, it is simply

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44) M. Noth, *The Old Testament World*, V. Gruhm, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 159-160. For more details, see Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palastina IV* (1935), 88ff.

because their time to execute the wicked schemes has not come yet. The traitors will surely become seriously dangerous at any moment when they get ready to act upon their inner schemes to kill the king and take the throne, just as the oven will become harmful to touch at any moment when the baker begins to stir the fire. The traitors are essentially like the fire that is stirred by the baker, which is harmful to touch, even though they may seem harmless for a while.

In short, Hosea compares the deceptive coolness of the oven at night (verse 4; cf. verse 6) to the deceptive friendliness of the traitors (verse 3). He also compares the set routine in which the oven burns every morning (cf. verse 6) to the repeating treacheries of the anonymous 'they' (verse 3), the role of which is played in turn by different groups. Treacheries have become so customary by repetition that a series of betrayals is compared to the set routine of the baker's oven that burns every morning. For this deceptiveness and the readiness to betray, Hosea figuratively calls all of them 'adulterers,' the concept of which is used again later by Jeremiah.

### **V 5 Wickedness and Treachery on the day of our king (A')**

*On the day of our king*

*-O they are making the officials ill with the heat of wine!-  
his hand draws the traitors*

While verses 3-4 are more or less a general description of the wickedness of 'all of them' followed by an accusation through the scornful title 'adulterers,' the meaning of which is hinted by the simile of the baker's oven, verses 5-7a present a more specific witness to their wickedness 'on the day of our king.'

Regarding the meaning of 'the day of our king' (verse 5), Davies rightly says: "The day of the king has been variously understood as his accession, its anniversary or his birthday. But in popular speech a person's day was often the day of his death."<sup>45</sup> Such examples of the use of "day" for death or judgment are found in I Samuel 26:10; Jeremiah 50:31; Psalm 37:13, etc., and when 'the day of our king' is understood in that sense, the core meaning of the verse is revealed to lie in the ironic contrast between the acts of the traitors and the king

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45) G. I. Davies, *Hosea*, 183.

on the eve of regicide. That is, while the traitors are making the officials drunk as preparation for their scheme to kill the king, the king trusts them and draws them near to him instead of defending himself from the impending attack.

Whether the ironic scene is described with much pity on the murdered king is not certain despite the friendly expression ‘our king’: although it is possible that ‘our king’ is meant as an accusation against the person who assassinated the king of Israel,<sup>46)</sup> it is also probable that ‘our king’ is said in a cynical tone. Seow’s argument for the presence of the foolish people motif in Hosea may be supportive for the latter interpretation.<sup>47)</sup> Seow argues that the motif of the foolish people runs through Hosea 4-14, and the presence of the baker’s oven simile<sup>48)</sup> and the content of the passage itself suggest that 7:3-7 may be regarded as one of those passages where the foolish people motif is evident<sup>49)</sup>. That is, the beginning of the passage presents the king as an easily deceivable person (verse 3), and verse 5 further describes the foolishness of the king, who is not at all aware of the traitors’ scheme to kill him even though he himself probably took

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46) In the latter case the most probable candidate for ‘our king’ may be Pekah. Layard 66:228, which reports Tiglath-pileser’s treatment of Israel in 733 BCE, refers to Pekah as “their king” and thus reveals Tiglath-pileser’s emotional rejection of Pekah even though it was Tiglath-pileser himself who let Pekah rule over Samaria. Pekah was consistently anti-Assyria. On the contrary, Hoshea submitted to Assyria right after the assassination of Pekah. Such being the case, calling Pekah ‘our king’ could be an accusation against Hoshea in an anti-Assyrian atmosphere. Commentators such as Mays (104) and Wolff (112; 124-125) also read this passage against the background of Hoshea’s assassination of Pekah and thus provide some support for the conjecture that ‘our king’ refers to Pekah. However, this conjecture is not without flaws. The text of Layard 66:228 (“...his...I carried off and Samaria alone I [le]ft...their king ...”) is damaged, and so it is not certain whether or not ‘the king’ refers to the king of Samaria. For these and other reasons, Macintosh (261) reads the text against Pekah’s assassination of Pekahia while Andersen and Freedman (453) read it against Menahem’s succession. In short, even though it is very probable that ‘our king’ in Hosea 7:5 refers to Pekah, it is very difficult and sometimes even impossible to assign a specific, historical event to Hosea’s passage. [The text of Layard 66:228 is quoted from J. H. Chong, “The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43) and The Hoshea-Pekah Conflict”, Ph.D. Dissertation (Emory University, 1990), 307.]

47) C. Seow, “Hosea 14:10 and the Foolish People Motif”, *CBQ* 44 (1982), 212-224 (223).

48) Some forms such as parables, metaphors, similes, proverbs, and rhetorical questions are often regarded as sapiential elements.

49) Seow (223) includes 4:7; 10b-12a; 14; 7:11a; 8:7; 9:7; 12:2; 13:13; 14:10 in his list and says that the motif is discernible in other passages as well.

the throne by the practice of the same wickedness. With this understanding on 7:3-7, it is not hard to see that 'our king' is said in a cynical tone.

### V 6-7a Accusation through the baker's oven simile (B')

*v 6a Yea, they approach their ambush, and their heart is like the oven;*

*v 6b all night long their baker sleep;*

*but in the morning it burns like a flaming fire.*

*v 7a All of them grow as hot as the oven, and they consume their rulers.*

The emphatic כִּי translated as 'yea (indeed; truly)' calls attention to the previous sentence and thus functions to connect verse 6a to verse 5. That is, verse 6a introduced by 'yea' describes the ironic result of the king's foolishness in verse 5 and has an effect of saying, "Yea, the traitors approach their ambush *easily!*" The word 'ambush' may be understood best as a metaphor for a painstakingly slow and cautious approach, rather than a military move literally.

Verse 6a says that, when the traitors approach their ambush, "their heart is like the oven." Attention needs to be given to the article in front of תַּנּוּר. It's not תַּנּוּר 'an oven' but כַּתַּנּוּר 'like the oven,' and it surely denotes the oven mentioned in verse 4 whose baker stopped stirring the fire during his sleep at night. Verse 6 takes up that baker's oven motif again and explains its implications (verses 6b-7a). In brief, owing to the foolishness of the king, the traitors easily approach their ambush although it should not be that easy. When the traitors approach the king slowly and cautiously with painstaking efforts, trying to make him glad, they may look harmless. However, their heart is like the oven whose baker stopped stirring the fire only for a while during his sleep at night. As soon as the baker wakes up and begins to work in the morning, the oven will resume burning and be harmful to touch. Likewise, their heart, which is like the oven, will burn like a flaming fire soon. They grow as hot as the oven because their heart is burning with the wicked desire, and they act upon their scheme, killing their rulers.

### V 7b No one among them calls upon me! (C)

*All their kings have fallen;  
there has been none among them who calls upon me.*

People do not consider the fact that God remembers their wickedness (verse 7:2a), but God sees and remembers all their evil deeds done in their wickedness (verse 7:2b). In verses 3-7a, God reminds people of that through the presentation of the divine witness to their deeds. What follows verses 3-7a is the divine reaction to the divine witness to their wicked deeds. It deserves notice that God speaks of kings, rather than a single king. Even though verses 3-7a appear to describe a specific regicide, it becomes clear in verse 7b that the description in verses 3-7a is intended to remind Ephraim of the repeating history of its royal court, rather than a single, specific treachery. It is not a single king but many kings who have fallen in the recent, chaotic history of Ephraim (verse 7b).

Regarding the divine reaction in verse 7b, a few things need to be pointed out. First, it shows that the deaths of the kings are not unrelated to divine punishment. Although verses 3-7a describe human wickedness that eventually works for its own punishment, the divine reaction in verse 7b still implies that the deaths of the kings are ultimately the results of divine judgment; God could intervene and help, but didn't do so because they didn't call upon God. Second, it shows a divine lament; God is sorry that there has been none among them who calls upon God for help.<sup>50)</sup> At first glance it may seem very odd that God speaks of feeling sorry after having accused of people's wicked deeds. However, God's ultimate wish to save people and the divine frustration from people's not asking God to do so are in fact prevalent in 5:8-7:16:<sup>51)</sup>

“What shall I do for you, O Ephraim? What shall I do for you, O

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50) The identity of the third person plural in ‘none of them’ is ambiguous. Wolff (125) identifies them with kings’ murderers. Macintosh’s equating them with agitators (266) may be based on the same understanding that Wolff has. Davies (186) and McComiskey (106) equate the third person plural with ‘all the people.’ Birch (74) understands ‘them’ as referring to the current king and his officials. In a word, it is not certain who they are. However, the ambiguity of the third person plural should not be a problem because today’s murderers are tomorrow’s kings and today’s murdered king was one of yesterday’s agitators. In the repeating history, their roles circulate. The question about who they are is not important. Regardless of the identity of the third person plural ‘they,’ what is important is that ‘none’ of them called upon God.

51) Quotes are from NRSV.



Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early” (6:4)

“When I would restore the fortunes of my people, when I would heal Israel, the corruption of Ephraim is revealed, and the wicked deeds of Samaria.” (6:11b-7:1a)

“Israel’s pride testifies against him; yet they do not return to YHWH their God, or seek him, despite all this.” (7:10)

“I would redeem them, but they speak lies against me.” (7:13b)

Third, it reveals the foolish people motif again. No matter who ‘they’ are, God expects ‘them’ to call upon God. However, they do not call upon God despite all the chaos described in verses 3-7a. They do not know to whom they should turn in order to avoid the chaos. This foolishness of the people baffles God even more, and God laments over their folly, saying, “There has been none among them who calls upon me!” What it means to call upon God, however, is not self-evident in the text. Its meaning may be understood in a larger context.

#### 4. Meaning of ‘calling upon God’ in the context of 5:8-7:16

This author suggests that 7:7b should be regarded as a thematic sentence for the unit 5:8-7:16. That is, the meaning of 7:7b is best understood when the structure and content of 5:8-7:16 are properly examined. For this task, it may be necessary first to briefly explain the delineation 5:8-7:16 and its sub-divisions.

To begin with, partly because both 5:8 and 8:1 introduce the summons to alarm, and mainly because the same theme runs through 5:8-7:16 as will be explained, this author sees 5:8-7:16 as one large unit<sup>52)</sup> which divides into 5:8-6:6 and 6:7-7:16. One of the reasons for that subdivision is that, while both Judah and Ephraim are mentioned in 5:8-6:6, Judah is not mentioned in 6:7-7:16.<sup>53)</sup> Hosea’s concern in 6:7-7:16 is directed exclusively to his own country Ephraim. Attention needs to be given especially to 6:7-7:16, in which

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52) Among those who regard 5:8-7:16 as one unit are Hubbard (116-120), Wolff (108-112), and Thompson (M. E. W. Thompson, *Situation and Theology: Old Testament Interpretations of the Syro-Ephraimite War* [Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1982], 19-20; 63-78).

53) Even though verse 6:11 mentions Judah, that comment may be regarded to be secondary.

our text 7:3-7 is contained. 6:7-7:16 divides into 6:7-7:7 and 7:8-16, in that the former mainly describes Ephraim's domestic politics while the latter talks about Ephraim's foreign alliances. The following discussion is based on the unit divisions as such, namely 5:8-6:6, 6:7-7:7, and 7:8-16.

First, regarding 6:7-7:7 which divides into 6:7-7:2 and 7:3-7, Alt points out that 6:7-7:2 refers to the progress of a revolutionary attack originating in Gilead, crossing the Jordan at Adam, and reaching Shechem.<sup>54)</sup> In fact, such an attack originating in Gilead did not happen just once. It is said in Hosea 6:8 that "Blood is tracked to Gilead, a city of evildoers", and among the evildoers from Gilead are Shallum, Menahem, and Pekah. However, it does not matter whose revolutionary movement 6:7-7:2 specifically refers to, even though the most probable candidate seems to be Pekah.<sup>55)</sup> What matters is that all those revolutionary movements are judged to be wicked. God says that these and other wicked deeds of Samaria are revealed when God would heal Israel (6:11b-7:1). 7:3-7 picks up this "wickedness" (verse 3) in its beginning and connects itself to 6:7-7:2, criticizing Ephraim because she has not called upon God (verse 7).

Regarding 7:8-16, its historical background is in fact not clear. Some argue for the Syro-Ephraimite War as its historical background while others argue for different occasions.<sup>56)</sup> It is certain, however, that 7:8-16 deals with Ephraim's

54) A. Alt, "Hosea 5,8-6,6: Ein Krieg Und Seine Folgen In Prophetischer Beleuchtung" in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel II* (Munche: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), 163-187 (186). (First presented in *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 30 [1919], 537-568)

55) Alt identifies Shallum or Menahem as the leader of the revolution depicted in 6:7-7:2 with quotations from 2 Kings 15:10; 14; 16. Scholars have wondered why Alt quoted those verses because the quotations do not say of the home of Shallum and Menahem. J. Day, "Pre-Deuteronomiac Allusions To The Covenant In Hosea And Psalm LXXVIII", *VT* XXXVI (1986), 5, guesses that Alt referred to those verses because in those verses Shallum and Menahem are said to be the son of Jabesh and the son of Gadi respectively. The names such as Jabesh and Gadi might indicate their Gilead background, Day says. Pekah's Gilead background is mentioned in 2 Kings 15:25, and Gottwald says on the basis of this verse that the revolutionary movement in 6:7-7:2 may be the one led by Pekah "since the core of his revolutionary following was from Gilead" (N. Gottwald, *All the Kingdoms of the Earth* [New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964], 125-126).

56) Even though the majority of scholars seem to argue for the Syro-Ephraimite War as the background of 7:8-16, Gottwald (130) regards 7:11-16 as related to the negotiations of Hoshea with Egypt in 727-726 BCE after the death of Tiglath-pileser III. Davies also regards 7:10 and

reliance upon other nations. The text begins with the statement that Ephraim mixes with foreign peoples (7:8a). It also says that she calls upon Egypt and goes to Assyria (7:11). The result is destruction. Foreigners devour Ephraim's strength, and Ephraim becomes as weak as an old person with gray hairs (7:9). Her current state is as bad as that of a cake not turned (7:8b). Therefore, Ephraim needs to return to YHWH who trains her and strengthens her arms (7:15), but she does not cry to YHWH from the heart (7:14). Ephraim has become like a silly dove (7:11), and she does not return to her God or seek God (7:10). In brief, 7:8-16 paraphrases the theme of 6:7-7:7, viz. "they do not call upon me" (7:7b), as "they do not return to God or seek him" (7:10) despite all the bad things. 6:7-7:7 and 7:8-16 are thematically connected together.

The same theme is also found in 5:8-6:6. When Ephraim and Judah saw their sickness and wound (5:13a) caused by the Syro-Ephraimite War and Judah's counter attack described in 5:8-12,<sup>57)</sup> both Ephraim and Judah went to Assyria (5:13b) and sent to the Assyrian king, whom God declares to be unable to cure them. Clearly, 5:13 refers to the events in 733 BCE when King Hoshea submitted to Assyria and became a vassal to Tiglath-pileser III, followed by King Ahaz of Judah (2 Kings 16:7ff). As they go to the wrong place and to the wrong person for healing, YHWH returns to his place and waits until they acknowledge their guilt and seek God's face (5:14-15). They surely show a kind of devotion through sacrificial meals, but what God wants is not those burnt offerings or sacrificial meals. What YHWH wants is steadfast love and the

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16 as belonging to the time when the states of the Levant were looking to Egypt for support in their anti-Assyrian stance after the death of Tiglath-pileser III in 727 BCE (G. I. Davies, *Hosea*, Old Testament Guide [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993], 17-18).

57) According to Alt, the summons to alarm to the Benjaminite cities in 5:8 indicates the progress of a Judahite counterattack against Israel after the Syro-Ephraimite invasion of Jerusalem (Alt, "Hosea 5:8-6:6", 168-169). Andersen and Freedman (403) say that Alt's aim of a complete historical understanding of everything in the text is too high to reach. Arnold also rejects Alt's view on a topographical basis, saying, "In all probability, Gibeah, Ramah, and Beth-Aven were closely situated together on the northern fringes of the kingdom of Judah. (...) In view of the likelihood that all three cities belong to Judah, it is highly improbable that a Judahite army would have assaulted Judah's own Benjaminite cities in the course of a so-called 'counterattack'" (P. Arnold, "Hosea and the Sin of Gibeah", *CBQ* 51 [July, 1989], 457). Regardless of the interpretation of 5:8, however, the Syro-Ephraimite War background is widely accepted.

knowledge of God. YHWH's lament "What shall I do for you, O Ephraim? What shall I do for you, O Judah?" (6:4) shows YHWH's bitter pathos caused by the reality that none of them come back to him, and the same theme is found also in 6:7-7:7 and 7:8-16. Simply put, despite different historical backgrounds, all the three units of 5:8-6:6, 6:7-7:7, and 7:8-16 present the same theme of the divine lament over Israel's not returning to YHWH (5:15; 7:7b; 10; cf. 6:1).

Finally, what does it mean to call upon God? 'Calling upon God' (7:7b) is paraphrased as 'returning to God' (7:10; cf. 6:1) or 'seeking God or God's face' (5:15; 7:10) in the immediate context. In 5:8-6:6, it is closely related to the acknowledgment of one's guilt (5:15), the content of which is the lack of steadfast love and the knowledge of God (6:4). In other words, seeking God's face or calling upon God in 5:8-6:6 is about practicing steadfast love and knowing God. In addition, regarding the latter, the specific content of 5:8-6:6 informs that the knowledge of God is to know God who judges (5:12; 14; 6:5).

The focus of the knowledge of God in 7:8-16 is a little different from the one in 5:8-6:6. In short, the knowledge of God in 7:8-16 has more emphases on the knowledge of God as a healer, rather than a judge. God wants Ephraim to be aware of its near death (7:8-9) and to know that it is God who trains and strengthens them (7:15). Returning to God or seeking God in 7:8-16 is asking for help from God who strengthens them, rather than from foreigners who just devour their strength and quicken their death.

In 6:7-7:7, the divine lament over the people's refusal to call upon God is uttered against the historical background of the violent revolutionary movements, which result in repeating treacheries. It may be that arrogant trust in human wisdom underlies the attempts to change leaders in order to create a new history. The text says, however, that the agitators are not wise at all. They do not think that God remembers their wicked deeds (7:2) while God not only sees and remembers their wicked deeds but also knows that they do not think that God remembers their deeds. Furthermore, kings do not even know that death is approaching them with a mask of deceptive friendliness on the face (7:3-7a).

In brief, calling upon God in 6:7-7:7 is not unrelated to trust in the divine wisdom and plans, rather than human wisdom and schemes. By the way, its meaning can not be confined to the content of 6:7-7:7 only. The specific

meaning of 'returning to God' or 'seeking God' in 5:8-6:6 and 7:8-16 should be also added to the specific meaning of 'calling upon God' in 6:7-7:7 because the three units are connected together thematically.

<주요어>(Keywords)

baker's oven simile, adultery, divine lament, calling upon God, Ephraimite regicides in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Syro-Ehpraimite War.

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<Abstract>

## **The Baker's Oven Simile and the Divine Lament in Hosea 7:3-7**

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The divine lament over Israel's not calling upon God is not just the theme of Hosea 7:3-7. It is also the theme of Hosea 5:8-7:16 that encircle the text. One may even say that it is the theme that runs through the book of Hosea. The simile of the baker's oven and the figurative use of the word 'adulterers' in Hosea 7:3-7 are of grave importance in understanding the theme. This paper tries to show how the simile and the concept of adultery help understand the theme.

Before doing so, this paper firstly presents a serious study on textual issues. The book of Hosea is regarded as one of the most difficult books in the Old Testament, and 7:3-7 is especially notorious for its difficulty. Mays presents a list of some other difficult places such as 4:4f., 17-19; 6:7-9; 7:14-16; 8:9f., 13; 10:9-10; 11:12; 13:9-10 while McComiskey regards as difficult and problematic 1:6, 7; 2:3; 4:11, 16; 5:8, 11, 13; 6:5, 7; 7:4, 12; 8:13; 9:1, 13; 10:5, 10; 12:1; 13:2; 14:3. Others suggest some other difficult places, enlarging the number of difficult passages.

The difficulty does not always come from textual corruptions. Some difficulties are caused by Hosea's unique writing style, and this paper gives attention to Hosea's writing style in making efforts to understand the text and its message.