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## לְ AND אֲבִיּוֹן :

### THE POOR AND THE NEEDY IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

Terry Giles

#### 1. Introduction

A number of recent studies of the book of Amos have been concerned with the sociological characterization of the prophet. In particular, several have attempted to define the political intent of the prophet and/or the book which bears his name.<sup>1</sup> Morris Silver has argued that "the classical prophets sought, with the support of Israel - Judah's affluents, to commit the rulers to programs of social amelioration and regeneration."<sup>2</sup> With regard to the prophet Amos, Silver supports his argument with evidence drawn from certain reform minded literary parallels culled from various parts of the Ancient Near East and with a plausible reconstruction of the prophet's social positioning.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Max Polley relies upon a presupposed view of state religion imposed upon the prophet in order to provide a suitable context for his reading of the book.<sup>4</sup> Whether or not Polley or Silver are correct, their work illustrates the difficulties involved in utilizing the biblical text while making sociological judgements. Regarding his own view of the prophets and their social function, Bernard Lang states that "this reading represents no more than an educated guess."<sup>5</sup>

In the investigation of the sociological or political design of a portion of the biblical text, there must be established criteria which have been agreed upon and which identify valid literary evidence by which to make sociological conclusions. This paper attempts to add to this discussion by noting the peculiar fashion in which the book of Amos identifies victims of social abuse. When compared with the other prophetic documents found in the Hebrew Bible, especially those of the eighth century, the book of Amos is unusual in the terminology which it employs in identifying those victims.

It will be suggested that the prophetic critique involves a perception of the contrived nature of the present social reality.<sup>6</sup> O. Keel is in agreement with the assessment concerning the prophets that, for them, the way things are is not the way things need be, for alternative worlds are possible.<sup>7</sup> The focus of the prophetic critique identifies a set of norms which the prophet considers valid and necessary in constructing an alternative world. The construction of that alternative calls for the eradication of the present abuses. The suggestion made in this paper is that the manner in which the prophet views the nature of the social victim involves a specific attitude concerning his perception of the social abuse and this qualifies as valid literary evidence in determining the social or political intent of the prophet. The assumption is made that in a document such as the book of Amos the plight of the victim is addressed by any proposed social or political program of reform. The identification of the victim will aid in the characterization of the proposed reform.

## 2. *The Personae Miserabiles*

Throughout the Biblical literature, and especially throughout the prophetic books, certain members of the Israelite community are mentioned as deserving special judicial care and kindness. Typically, the "widows and orphans" are recognized as meriting protection from the rest of the community. In turn, the prophets are quick to reprimand and condemn their fellows if the "widows and orphans" are not treated with kindness.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the "widows" and "orphans", the Biblical writers use three other terms to refer to those who are specially deserving of acts of kindness: "poor" (עני/עניו, ל) and "needy" (אביון). Those books which have occasion to refer to the "widows and orphans" will typically have occasion to refer to the "poor" and "needy" as well.<sup>9</sup> Isa 10:2 serves as an example:<sup>10</sup>

To turn aside the poor from justice  
and to rob the poor of my people of their right  
that widows may be their spoil,  
and that they may make the fatherless their prey.

In contrast to the other Hebrew prophets, Amos, whose book is largely given over to the discussion of social ills and judicial practices, never mentions the "widow and orphan", while he regularly uses the terms אביון and ל, and less frequently the term עני.<sup>11</sup> These several terms used in the prophecy of Amos deserve special consideration due to their importance in identifying the victims of the abuses mentioned in the document and thereby helping to illuminate the nature of the social interaction which served as the context for the prophetic indictments. The use of the terms in the literature stemming from the traditions which are thought to have influenced the prophet will be surveyed in order to provide a context for the examination of the terms within the book of Amos. Only those parts of the book which are most commonly accepted as having originated in the eighth century will be examined.<sup>12</sup>

### a. ל (poor)<sup>13</sup>

The root *dll* is found in most Semitic languages.<sup>14</sup> H. Fabry suggests that the root does not suggest the idea of poor in the sense of helpless (אביון) but rather that of "oppressed, exploited, or enslaved."<sup>15</sup> His definition requires that the referent of the term be understood as intrinsically social in nature. In that the term assumes an oppressor, exploiter, or enslaver, the condition is the result of social interaction. Throughout the Ancient Near East, the regency of a king was evaluated as to how well the poor fared under his rule.<sup>16</sup> The plight of the "exploited" (ל) was evidently thought to have been a political concern and care for the poor was a commonly accepted social ideal.

In the legal documents, the Book of the Covenant [Exod 23:3] and the Holiness Code [Lev 19:15; 25:6], the ל appears as a full and free citizen, not listed as a household dependent, who is caught in the daily struggle of survival and the maintenance of his or her independence. This person is vulnerable to those who are more wealthy and so is in special need of the protection of the court in order to retain possession of his or her small land holding.<sup>17</sup> Other texts are not so explicit. In 2 Kings 24:14 and 25:12 [cf. Jer 52:16] the term is contrasted with craftsmen and smiths. The "poorest of the land" were left in Judah by the Babylonians to maintain vines and fields. Fabry identifies the "poorest of the land"

as the "lowest social stratum."<sup>18</sup> Peter Ackroyd is of the opinion that the 2 Kings narrative is designed to indicate that "nothing of significance was left in Judah."<sup>19</sup> It is clear that those remaining, the poorest of the land, were agriculturalists and it is probable that they held no title to the land and that their produce was appropriated in order to sustain the occupied province. This relationship to the land approaches the situation described in the book of Amos.

The Hebrew wisdom literature presents a portrait of the Lord God of Israel as the lawyer for the disadvantaged, among whom are included the **לד**.<sup>20</sup> The king, expected to emulate the Lord, is encouraged to protect the rights of the poor and oppressed [Prov 29:4,14; 31:5]. The recipients of this special attention are distinguished from those who, through their own neglect and laziness, have become poor [Prov 12:11,24; 13:4; 24:33].<sup>21</sup> This difference in attitude, given expression in Prov, suggests that a sense of social responsibility had developed which acknowledged the propriety of nurturing the poor and oppressed while neglecting the lazy and indifferent.<sup>22</sup> Job agrees that this attitude is proper both in the realm of the human and divine [31:16-23; 34:19,28].

This same ethos, which is present in the Wisdom literature, is expressed in the prophecy of Amos. The prophet uses **לד** [2:7; 4:1; 5:11; 8:6], **אביון** [2:6; 4:1; 5:12; 8:4,6], and **עני** [2:7; 8:4] in close association with each other.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, all four occurrences of the word **לד** in Amos appear in parallelism with the word **אביון** [2:7; 4:1; 5:11; 8:6].<sup>24</sup>

The **לד** mentioned in Amos retain property, for fines are exacted from them. They are nevertheless subject to abusive treatment and are in jeopardy of exploitation by the other members of the society [2:7; 5:11; 8:6]. This exploitation has generally been understood to include some form of debt-slavery which effectively removed from the victim the economic means of restoration. The lender created a forced dependency in which the victim, reliant upon the lender for the means of survival, became chattel which could be bought and sold. The poor seem to have had little legal or economic power. In Amos, the victims of the oppression appear to be directly involved in agricultural production, in contrast to the oppressors who appear as beneficiaries of the agricultural production. The posture assumed by the prophet is not one which champions the cause of the small farmer simply because he is a small farmer, but instead is one that brands the practices of the powerful elements of society as contrary to the will of God due to their inhumane treatment of the poor. The devaluation of the poor is expressed economically [5:12] and judicially [2:7], and as a result the offenders stand in danger of the punishment of God. Sue Gillingham is of the opinion that the poor "are those within the community who are physically oppressed" and that "nowhere outside the Psalter does *dal* suggest...a particular social class."<sup>25</sup>

#### b. **אביון** (needy)<sup>26</sup>

In Exod **אביון** is clearly contrasted with the landowner [32:11]. The landowner is able to live off the surplus produce of the land during the fallow years, while the **אביון** is forced to eat that which grows wild. Exod explicitly forbids perverting justice which is due to the **אביון** [23:6]. It is interesting for our examination of Amos that prohibitions in Exod against the mistreatment of the "righteous" [23:7] follow close behind the regulations protecting the **אביון** [23:6]. Amos, likewise, makes a close connection between the "righteous" and the "needy" [2:6; 5:12].

The wisdom literature, particularly Prov, uses other terms in reference to the poor (דל, רש, and עני / עניו) much more commonly than אביון. Frequently, poverty is depicted as the outcome of a lifestyle [10:4; 14:23; 19:15], yet the admonition is also present which states that the one who oppresses the "needy" insults the Creator [14:31].<sup>27</sup> Very explicitly, Prov indicates that the "poor" (דל עני) are specially cared for by the Lord God of Israel [22:22,23]. Further, the person who shows kindness to the "poor" (דל) receives kindness from the Lord [19:17; 22:9]. Gillingham seems to think that אביון parallels this use of דל, for she is of the opinion that "עביון implies those who want something they cannot have, and thus are materially poor."<sup>28</sup>

Amos uses אביון in 2:6; 4:1; 5:12; 8:4,6. The term finds its parallel in the term דל in 2:7; 4:1; 5:11, 8:6, and עניו in 2:7; 8:4. Of particular interest is the close usage with "righteous" (צדק) in 2:6 and 5:12.<sup>29</sup> The צדק and אביון are victims of the perversion of justice within the city gate. Francis Anderson and David Noel Freedman suggest that the two terms are here complementary and may best be understood as "righteous poor."<sup>30</sup> These unfortunates are deprived of their rights, something guaranteed by Exod 23:6. Parallel to the enslavement of the "righteous" (צדק)<sup>31</sup> and the "needy" (אביון) in 2:6, verse 7 mentions the affliction of the דלים and עניו. The introduction of the term עניו may indicate that the prophet also has in mind a sense of psychological humiliation as well as material need.<sup>32</sup> Interesting is the parallel occurrence of this indictment in 8:6, which replaces the צדק with דלים, but maintains אביון in both 2:6 and 8:6. This interchange, as noted by Andersen and Freedman, is purposeful and suggests a commonality when contrasted to the "oppressors" which can rightly be characterized as צדק.<sup>33</sup> J. Emmette Weir writes: <sup>34</sup>

The biblical understanding of the poor is that they are not merely those who are lacking in material goods but those who are without the means to protect themselves from the oppression of the influential and powerful. They are the 'righteous,' those whose rights have been taken away...by those who wield power. In biblical teaching, 'The poor are the powerless.'

While Weir's claim to represent the whole of the Biblical text may be too ambitious, he does seem correct regarding the poor in Amos. The antagonists of the אביון are named explicitly only in 4:1, the "cows of Bashan." These luxurious pleasure seekers are accused of maintaining their lifestyle by oppressing the "poverty stricken" (דלים) and crushing the "innocent needy" (אביון).<sup>35</sup> In 4:1 two participles are used to characterize those abusing the poor and needy. The prophet uses עשקוה and רצצוה to describe the activity engaged in by the cows of Bashan. A variant of עשק also appears in 3:9. In both 3:9 and 4:1 misdeeds are described which appear to be institutionally sanctioned.<sup>36</sup> The activity of 4:1, directed towards the poor, is perhaps better described as extortion. Economic misdeeds also appear to be the concern of 5:11 and 12. Here the דל suffer extortion, while the צדק are pressed hard (צור) because of bribes.<sup>37</sup> Amos' use of אביון and דל in

close association with צדק as the victim of these misdeeds suggests a moral sensibility which is inflamed by what is perceived to be a violation of property rights.

### 3. Conclusion

Several summary conclusions may be offered regarding the identity of the "poor" and "needy" in the book of Amos. First, it is apparent that Amos does not have in mind a particular social class identifiable by either marital status or land ownership. If, however, social class is defined as a group differing from other groups by its relation to property in means of production then the prophet does appear to be class conscious.<sup>38</sup> The "poor" own property, while the "needy" may or may not. Yet, common to both the "poor" and "needy" is a susceptibility to the social power of others, and the inability to offer any real defense to the domination of those wielding judicial and economic power. Second, the oppression or exploitation of the "poor" and "needy" received legal sanction. Those guilty of oppression were apparently not guilty of breaking Israelite law. The prophet does not appeal to litigation as a means for correcting identifiable abuses. In fact, the prophet is convinced that the judicial process enhances the abuses meted out to the "poor" and "needy." Third, the life-style of the oppressors could be maintained only by the continued subjugation of the "poor" and "needy." It is perhaps significant that there is absolutely no indication within the book that those guilty were ever directly involved in production. They appear as officials, responsible for judicial proceedings [2:7; 5:10,12], military endeavours [6:13], political decisions [4:1], and merchants [8:5,6], but never as growers or laborers.

The basic assertion which seems to have informed the behavior of those whom Amos indicts was a valuation based upon functional economic potential. Those with greater economic potential were granted more privileges within the community, while those of little economic potential were denied a minimum standard of human rights. Those rights included, but were probably not limited to, fair judicial treatment, continued economic independence, and vocational self-determination. This bifurcation of human rights based upon the functional economic value of an individual was unacceptable to the prophet.

While not explicitly stated as such in the book, Amos appears to prefer a non-economic method of determining the worth of an individual. Economic disaster is presented in chapter 4 as something other than the normal consequence of individual functional value. This presentation smooths out economic distinctions and invalidates the function of economics in calibrating good social standing.

Amos' critique involves an awareness that the present social experience composes a contrived reality and not a necessary one. Realization of this contrivance is the first step in developing an alternative social reality more in keeping with the prophet's sense of justice and equity. The alternative world envisioned by the prophet is one which alleviates the plight of the poor and needy. The process of realizing the vision of the alternative world necessarily involves political alteration. The terms "poor" and "needy" are used since they represent referents which are intrinsically social in nature and require an agent of oppression, while the terms "widow" and "orphan" represent victims of providence and only potential victims of the social system. The poor are the powerless. It is clear that the victims whose cause was championed by the prophet were victimized by those maintaining Israel's social institutions. The peculiar way in which the prophet formulated his concern for the oppressed makes certain that in his mind an institutional problem was at fault. This identification lends support to the contention that Amos did indeed have an agenda for political reform.

<sup>1</sup> Earlier studies were concerned with the characterization of the prophetic career of Amos. See, for example, Y. Hoffmann, "Did Amos Regard Himself as a NABI?", *Vetus Testamentum*, 27 (1977), 209-212, or Matitiahu Tsevat, "Expressing Denial in Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew, and in Amos", *Vetus Testamentum*, 29 (1979), 505-510. Impetus was given for a new direction in the investigation of Amos by G. Henton Davies, "Amos - the Prophet of Re-Union", *The Expository Times*, 92 (1981), 196-200 and Herbert Huffmon, "The Social Role of Amos' Message", in F. A. Spina and A. R. W. Green, eds., *The Quest for the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), p.109-116. Recently, Davies' suggestion has been amplified by Max Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire: A Socio-Historical Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Additional discussions have been included in John Hayes, *Amos: His Times and His Preaching. The Eighth Century Prophet* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), p.28-39; Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p.137ff; William Doorley, *Prophet of Justice: Understanding the Book of Amos* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989); Stanley Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel: A New Interpretation* (Macon, GA: Mercer, University Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> *Prophets and Markets: The Political Economy of Ancient Israel* (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing, 1983), p.163.

<sup>3</sup> Silver, *Prophets and Markets*, p.152-163.

<sup>4</sup> Polley, *Amos*, p.14-15, 82.

<sup>5</sup> *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority. An Essay in Biblical History and Sociology* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), p.115.

<sup>6</sup> For analytical comments on this problem see W. Brueggemann, "Unity and Dynamic in Isaiah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 29 (1984), 93-94. A helpful survey concerning the relationship between prophecy and politics in ancient Israel is found in Lang, *Monotheism*, p.83-91.

<sup>7</sup> "Rechttun oder Annahme des drohenden Gerichts?" *Biblische Zeitschrift*, 21 (1977), 215.

<sup>8</sup> Some of the more outstanding Biblical witnesses to this moral disposition are Exod 22:22; Deut 10:18, 14:29; 16:11; 24:17,19; 26:12,13; 27:19; Ps 68:5; 94:6; 146:9; Prov 15:25; 23:10; Job 6:27; 22:9; 24:3,9; 29:12; 31:12,17; Isa 1:17, 23; 9:17; 10:2; 47:8; Jer 7:6; 15:8; 18:21; 22:3; 49:11; Ezek 22:7; 22:25; 44:22; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5. A passage which is not specifically judicial but still asserts a moral stance favoring the "widow and orphan" is Hos 14:3. A helpful discussion of this ethic is found in E. Hammershaimb, "On the Ethics of the Old Testament Prophets," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, 7 (1960), 75-101. A series of articles in *The Expository Times* on the topic of the poor is quite helpful: Richard Coggins, "The Old Testament and the Poor", *The Expository Times*, 99 (1987-1988), 11-14; J. Emmette Weir, "The Poor are Powerless: A Response to R. J. Coggins", *The Expository Times*, 100 (1988-1989), 13-15; Sue Gillingham, "The Poor in the Psalms", *The Expository Times*, 100 (1988-1989), 15-19; T. R. Hobbs, "Reflections on 'The Poor' and the Old Testament", *The Expository Times*, 100 (1988-1989), 291-294; R. N. Whybray, "Poverty, Wealth, and Point of View in Proverbs", *The Expository Times*, 100 (1988-1989), 332-336. See also L. Hoppe, *Being Poor: A Biblical Study* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> Illustrative are the following: עָנִי: Deut 24:14,15; Isa 3:14,15; 10:2,30; 14:32; 26:6; 32:7; 41:17; 58:7; 66:2; Jer 22:16; Ezek 16:49; 18:12,17; 22:29; Zech 7:10; 11:7,11; Job 24:9,12,14; 36:6,15; Prov 14:21; 30:14; 31:9; Ps 10:2,9; 12:5; 14:6; 35:10; 37:14; 72:2,4,12; 74:19,21. One prophet, Zephaniah (3:12), refers to the poor but not in a legal

sense and yet discloses a morality which gives special preference to the needs of the poor. לָל: Isa 11:4; 14:30; 25:4; Ps 41:1; 72:13; 82:3,4; 113:7. אַבְיִן: Exod 23:6,11; Job 29:16; 69:31; 112:9; 132:15; 140:12; Isa 29:19; Jer 2:34; 20:13; 14:31. While the most prevalent way of referring to the object of social concern by the Hebrew prophets is through the use of "widow and orphan," one prophet, Habakkuk, uses the term עֵנִי while making no reference to the "widow and orphan." Likewise, another prophet, Zephaniah (3:12), suggests a moral posture which favors the לָל without ever referring to the "widow and orphan." Neither prophet, however, has as a primary focus the description of social ills.

<sup>10</sup> Notice דָלוּם is parallel to עֵנִי עַמִּי, in Isa 14:30 דָלוּם and אַבְוִנִים appear in Isa 25:4 the לָל and the אַבְיִן receive favour from God.

<sup>11</sup> The Qere of Amos 8:4 indicates that confusion existed between the terms עֵנִי and עֵנִי. If a difference in meaning existed it seems to have been slight. There is no firm reason to use these terms as part of a dating sequence. See also Gillingham, "The Poor in the Psalms", p.18.

<sup>12</sup> It is believed that the inclusion of other portions of the document would not significantly change the outcome of this study.

<sup>13</sup> For convenience, Hebrew terms will be translated normally by just one English term. The semantic context in which the word is used in various Biblical texts will provide different nuances to the Hebrew word which affect the English translation. In the Old Testament text לָל occurs 48 times. Predominantly the word occurs in poetic texts (39 times). The texts most pertinent to the study of Amos are Exod 23:3; Jer 5:4; 39:10; Job 5:16; 20:10, 19; 31:16; 34:19, 28; Prov 10:15; 14:31; 19:4, 17; 21:13; 22:9, 16, 22; 28:3, 8, 11, 15; 29:7, 14. For a discussion of the translation of Exod 23:3 and the use of either *dal* or *gadol* see, H. Fabry, "dl", *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1978), III, 218.

<sup>14</sup> T. Donald, "The Semantic Field of Rich and Poor in the Wisdom Literature of Hebrew and Accadian", *Oriens Antiquus*, 3 (1964), 27-41; A. van Selms, "Akkadian DULLU(M) as a Loan-Word in West Semitic Languages", *Journal of North Semitic Languages*, 1 (1971), 51-58; Fabry, "dl", p.208-230; J. Grey, "Social Aspects of Canaanite Religion", *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, 15 (1966), 170-192. While admittedly far removed in time, interesting in the investigation into Amos is the occurrence of the root in the recovered Ugaritic literature. Although the sense of the Ugaritic root at times causes great difficulties, the occasional parallel use of *dll* with *hbt* ("to plunder", "steal", or "rob"), suggests that *dll* has a similar connotation, perhaps "to make poor, or oppress."

<sup>15</sup> "dl", 214.

<sup>16</sup> F. Charles Fensham, "Widow, orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 21 (1962), 129-139. The very title of Fensham's article is descriptive of the close association which the Hebrew Bible gives to widows, orphans, and the poor. Fensham's article also implies the exceptional nature of Amos' reference to the socially disadvantaged. Egyptian literature displays a similar mores. One text states: "do not oppress the widow; supplant no man in the property of his father. ["Instructions for King Meri-Ka-Re", *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p.415]. For a similar moral stance see "Instruction of Amen-em-opet" [*ibid.*, p.424].

<sup>17</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 2:135.



18 "d1", p.226.

19 *Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1987), p. 163.

20 This concept also is evident in Egyptian literature, see "Instruction of Amen-em-ope", p.421-424.

21 Regarding the semantic range of the four terms translated as "poor" within the book of Prov, Whybray notes that "whatever distinction there may be between these four terms elsewhere in the Old Testament, in Proverbs they appear to be used interchangeably" ["Poverty, wealth, and Point of View in Proverbs", p.334].

22 H. Eberhard von Waldow, "Social Responsibility and Social Structure in Ancient Israel", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 32 (1970), 182-204. While Von Waldow affirms the statement made here, it is noteworthy to point out that he limits his concern to the "sojourner," "widow," and "orphan." These are indeed the normal terms used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to the *personae miserabiles* except, in the book of Amos.

23 For the inclusion of 5:12 and 8:5-6 as authentic to the eighth century see Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, p.804.

24 The chiasmic formulation existing between 2:6-7 and 8:4-6 has been clearly described by Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, p.803-804.

25 "The Poor in the Psalms", p.16.

26 The Hebrew term אֲבִיּוֹן occurs 61 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. The greatest frequency of usage is in Exod (twice), Deut (7 times), the prophetic texts (17 times), Ps (23 times), and the wisdom literature (10 times). Given the comparative size of the book, the usage in Amos is striking (5 times)

27 Here אֲבִיּוֹן is parallel to דָּל. Prov 17:5 substitutes רָשׁ for דָּל.

28 "The Poor in the Psalms", p.16.

29 A helpful discussion of this term is found in Eliezer Berkovitz, *Man and God: Studies in Biblical Theology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969).

30 *Amos*, p.310.

31 Given the judicial emphasis of 2:7, it may be that "innocent" better translates צָדִיק in 2:6.

32 See also Deut 21:14 and 22:24.

33 While speaking of a similar occurrence in Ps 140:13-14, Gillingham indicates that "ebhyon" can be used in the psalms to refer not only to a physical state, but also to a moral and spiritual quality" ["The Poor in the Psalms", p.17].

34 "Poor are Powerless", p.13.

35 For a more detailed treatment see, G. Johannes Botterweck, "ebhyon," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1974), I, 27-41.

36 Hayes prefers the term "harassment" in the translation of 4:1, *Amos*, p.139. See also Anderson and Freedman for their discussion regarding the nature of the abuses, *Amos*, p. 308-309.

37 For this treatment of בְּרִשָׁם see H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p.230.

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<sup>38</sup> See the introductory discussion by J. N. Postgate, "Employer, Employee and Employment in the Neo-Assyrian Empire" in Marvin Powell, ed., *Labor in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1987), p.257-258.