GOD'S LOVE ACCORDING TO HOSEA AND DEUTERONOMY

A PROPHETIC REWORKING OF A DEUTERONOMIC CONCEPT?[1]

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Summary

One of the most evident shared themes between the books of Hosea and Deuteronomy is the theme of God's love for Israel. The usual scholarly explanation goes that Hosea fathered this notion which later was taken up in the Deuteronomy tradition. A close scrutiny of this theme in Hosea and Deuteronomy establishes that the lexical and structural agreements in the theme are considerable. However, it also reveals some major differences within the thematic parallel. The simplest solution seems to be that Hosea has reused an available Deuteronomic concept.

1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that the books of Hosea and Deuteronomy have an especially close relationship, with many phrases, themes, and theological concepts in common. The shared wording is so comprehensive that some sort of a specific relationship between these two books seems to be implied. One of the strongest thematic parallels[2] is God's love for his people Israel. The verb אָהַב 'to love' and the derived noun אַהֲבָה 'love' with God as subject and Israel as the object for God's love are met several times in Hosea and Deuteronomy, but

[1] This article is an expanded version of a paper read at the Evangelical Theological Society's conference in Providence, RI, 19 November 2008. I am much indebted to Nicholas Vagg for improving my English style.

[2] Defining the word *theme*: a *theme* is understood as a *main idea* in a *literary work,* which shows up in recurrent verbal elements. These components may be phrases, words, or metaphorical terms.

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found only infrequently outside those two books.[3] Almost two-thirds of all Old Testament occurrences with אהב denoting God's love for his people are found in Hosea and Deuteronomy. In addition to this, Hosea and Deuteronomy also employ the same root אהב in order to describe the human side of the relationship—either the covenant obligation of love of God[4] or Israel's apostasy in the shape of loving other gods.[5] According to Moshe Weinfeld, this theme of love between God and Israel is 'the most prominent point of contact between Deuteronomy and Hosea'.[6] Here the affinity is most evident. On the other hand, there is some profound dissimilarity in their use of אהב.

The question to be investigated is whether this shared theme tells us anything about the diachronic relation between Hosea and Deuteronomy. Is the thematic correspondence so comprehensive that one of the traditions might be dependent on the other? And are we in a position to say anything about the possible direction of dependence?

2. Some Proposals

The prevalent understanding within today's scholarly world is that Hosea must be considered to be the godfather of the Deuteronomic notion of God's love for his people. As an example the prominent German Hosea scholar Hans Walter Wolff may be mentioned. In the introduction to his magisterial commentary on Hosea he states,

> Entire complexes of thought characteristic of Deuteronomic paraenesis occur first in Hosea. Thus, we find reminiscences of the exodus from Egypt … In addition, there is … Yahweh's 'love'[7]

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[3] Hos. 3:1b; 9:15; 11:1, 4; 14:5 and Deut. 4:37; 7:8, 13; 10:15; 23:6. Apart from the books of Hosea and Deuteronomy, אהב / אהבה with God as subject and Israel as object occurs in 1 Kgs 10:9/2 Chr. 9:8; 2 Chr. 2:10; Jer. 31:3 (twice); Zeph. 3:17; Isa. 43:4; 63:9, and Mal. 1:2 (thrice). If the three occurrences of אהב in Mal. 1:2 are counted as one (since this accumulation turns up because of Malachi's well-known disputation technique), and if 1 Kgs 10:9 and 2 Chr. 9:8 are taken together (because of the duplicate), the preponderance in Hosea and Deuteronomy is rather striking: ten occurrences in total out of eighteen in the whole OT.

[4] Deut. 5:7; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:4; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20.

[5] Hos. 2:7, 9, 12, 14, 15; 3:1b; 4:18; 9:1, 10.

[6] Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972): 368. Thus also in his commentary, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991): 49.

[7] Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974; tr. G. Stansell): xxxi. In German: 'Ganze

And in his exegesis on Hosea 11:1, Wolff states that Hosea makes use of the concept of love in order to interpret God's election of his people, and then he adds, 'Hosea's catchword [אהב] passes through his circle of traditionists into Deuteronomy's sermon'.[8] Thus the strong focus in Deuteronomy on God's love has its roots in Hosea's preaching on this very topic.

In similar vein Konstantin Zobel speaks in his study from 1992, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium*. Till now this monograph is the only major one on the relationship between Hosea and Deuteronomy.[9] After having gone through the relevant texts about God's love of Israel, he states in his conclusion,

> The theological concept of Yahweh's love of Israel is due to Hosea's work, and in the eighth century prophets it is found only in him. Among his contemporaries he stands alone. Not until several generations later did Deuteronomy take this theological idea into the very centre of its theology (compare 4:37; 7:13 et al.).[10] [my translation]

Dankbewegungen, die für die deuteronomische Paranäse kennzeichnend sind, finden wir erstmals bei Hosea, so … die Art … von ‚Liebe' Jahwes [zu sprechen]'. Hans Walter Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 1. Hosea* (4th edn; BKAT XIV/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990): xxvi.

8 Wolff, *Hosea*, 197. In German: 'Hoseas Stichwort [אהב] geht durch seinen Tradentenkreis in die deuteronomische Predigt ein' (Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 1*, 255).

9 In recent years only very few scholars have seriously studied this topic, e.g. Walter Brueggemann, *Tradition for Crisis: A Study in Hosea* (Richmond: John Knox, 1968): 38-54; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, 366-70; H. Louis Ginsberg, *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism* (Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America 24; New York: Stroock Publication Fund, 1982): 19-24; Hans-Jürgen Zobel, 'Hosea und das Deuteronomium: Erwägungen eines Alttestamentlers zum Thema ‚Sprache und Theologie'', *ThLZ* 110 (1985): 13-24; Hans Lubsczyk, 'Die Bundesurkunde: Ursprung und Wirkungsgeschichte des Deuteronomiums' in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies*, ed. C. Brekelmans and J. Lust (BEThL 94; Leuven, 1990): 161-77, esp. 166-70; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 44-53. Among older studies, the following deserve to be mentioned: U. Cassuto, 'The Prophet Hosea and the Books of the Pentateuch' in *Biblical and Oriental Studies: Vol. I Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973): 79-100. Translation by I. Abrahams of הוֹשֵׁעַ הַנָּבִיא וְסִפְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה in *Abhandlungen zur Erinnerung an Hirsch Perez Chajes*, ed. V. Aptowitzer and A. Z. Schwartz (Veröffentlichungen der Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation 7; Vienna, 1933): 262-78 (Hebrew section); Shmuel Sperber, השפעת ספר דברים על הושע, *Melilah* (Jerusalem, 1944): 205-231 ['The Influence of the Book of Deuteronomy on Hosea']; A. Alt, 'Die Heimat des Deuteronomiums' in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel: Vol. II*, A. Alt (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953): 250-75, esp. 271-73.

10 Konstantin Zobel, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium: Die Rezeption prophetischer Theologie durch das Deuteronomium* (BZAW 199; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992): 49. In German: 'Das theologische Konzept von der Liebe Jahwes zu Israel verdankt sich Hosea und findet sich in der Prophetie des 8. Jh.v.Chr. ausschließlich bei ihm. Unter

And further:

> The Hoseanic theological concept of Yahweh's love has been taken over and reshaped [in Deuteronomy]. The emotionality of this idea and the rich image world of the prophets have been lost.[11]

The development of the theological concept of God's love follows a trajectory from Hosea in the Eighth Century BC to the later Deuteronomy in the Seventh and Sixth Century BC. According to Zobel, the predominantly image-loaded and emotional portrayal of God's love in Hosea is transformed into a more universal theological concept in Deuteronomy.

Many other examples from the scholarly literature could be given.[12] The majority opinion has in common, however, that the Hoseanic priority is simply taken for granted. Without any thorough analysis of the shared theme itself it is assumed that this theme of course has its beginning with the prophet Hosea. The basis for assuming a Hoseanic priority for the vibrant concept of God's love is found outside the thematic parallel. Since the core of Deuteronomy is assumed to have been composed in Seventh Century Judah, it is taken for granted that the Deuteronomic concept of God's love must be understood as a

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seinen Zeitgenossen steht er allein; erst das Deuteronomium nimmt jenes Theologumenon in das Zentrum seiner Theologie hinein (vgl. 4,37; 7,13 u.ö.)'.

[11] Zobel, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium*, 86. In German: 'Das hoseanische Theologumenon der Liebe Jahwes ist von Deuteronomium übernommen und umgeprägt worden. Die Emotionalität dieser Vorstellung und die reiche Bilderwelt des Propheten sind fallengelassen worden'.

[12] E.g. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*; Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea* (ATD 24/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983): 141; Eberhard Bons, *Das Buch Hosea* (Neue Stuttgarter Kommentar – Altes Testament 23/1; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996): 177; Martin Schulz-Rauch, *Hosea und Jeremia: Zur Wirkungsgeschichte des Hoseabuches* (Calwer Theologische Monographien. Bibelwissenschaft 16; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1996): 181; A. A. Macintosh, *Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997): 438; Hermann Spieckermann, 'Mit der Liebe im Wort: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Deuteronomiums' in *Liebe und Gebot: Studien zum Deuteronomium*, ed. R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann (Lothar Perlitt Festschrift; FRLANT 190; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000): 191; Timo Veijola, *Das fünfte Buch Mose: Deuteronomium Kapitel 1,1-16,17* (ATD 8.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004): 118: 'Die Liebe Gottes zu Israel … dürfte ihren traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund in der Liebestheologie Hoseas haben'. Joy Philip Kakkanattu, *God's Enduring Love in the Book of Hosea: A Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of Hosea 11,1-11* (FAT 2/14; Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006): 194, speaks about 'the *influence* of Hos. 11,1–11 on the Deuteronomic concept of election as an expression for Yahweh's love for Israel (cf. Deut. 7)' (my emphasis). See also Jean-Marcel Vincent, '"… N'était l'amour qui me retient …". Aimer (*'âhab*) dans la Bible hébraïque', *Hokmah* 93 (2008): 2-19, esp. 14.

development from Hosea's preaching on the same topic. When it comes to the particular texts on the divine love in Deuteronomy, they are often assumed to have been composed during the exile[13] or in the postexilic period.[14]

A few scholars have opposed the idea that this theme in Deuteronomy is indebted to Hosea, because the difference between the Hoseanic and the Deuteronomic conception of divine and human love is too great.[15] Only a very few modern scholars have suggested that the direction of influence should be reversed, and that Deuteronomy might form a part of the prophet Hosea's spiritual heritage, enriching his preaching and theology.[16] Another way to contemplate a Deuteronomic priority is represented by Gale A. Yee who considers the divine love statements in the book of Hosea to be the result of a later Deuteronomistic updating of Hosea's oracles in the light of the love terminology in Deuteronomy.[17]

A hint that Hoseanic priority may not be as clear-cut and evident as the consensus scholarship would suggest, is the fact that first and foremost it is Hosea commentaries that recognise some sort of relation between the two books, while most Deuteronomy commentaries do not even mention the thematic parallel or they restrict themselves to giving only references. Out of twenty-one scholarly commentaries on Hosea since Wolff's magisterial commentary appeared in German in 1961, thirteen mention or discuss this thematic parallel. On the other hand, a review of twenty-three scholarly commentaries on Deuteronomy from the same period reveals that only seven consider it relevant to refer to the affinity with the divine love theme in the book of Hosea. Four

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13 E.g. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 212; Zobel, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium*, 78-80.

14 E.g. Veijola, *Das fünfte Buch Mose*, 114-15, 206-207, 255; cf. Eckart Otto, 'Perspektiven der neuen Deuteronomiumsforschung', *ZAW* 119 (2007): 319-40, esp. 336.

15 E.g. William L. Moran, 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy', *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77-87; P. J. J. S. Els, '**אהב**', *NIDOTTE* I (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997): 277-99, esp. 287.

16 In recent times most clearly Mark F. Rooker, 'The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Hosea', *Criswell Theological Review* 7 (1993): 62: 'Hosea appears to be aware of the book of Deuteronomy in its entirety'. According to Rooker, this may be demonstrated through common themes, such as 'the love of Yahweh being the motive for bringing the people out of Egypt'. Cf. also Walter Gisin, *Hosea: Ein literarisches Netzwerk beweist seine Authentizität* (BBB 139; Berlin: Philo, 2002): 299.

17 Gale A. Yee, 'The Book of Hosea' in *The New Interpreter's Bible: Vol. VII*, ed. L. E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996): 197-297, esp. 205.

commentaries contain scriptural references only, while twelve do not mention the thematic parallel at all.[18] The thematic parallel appears to

[18] The twenty-one Hosea commentaries reviewed are: E. Jacob, 'Osée' in *Osée – Joël – Abdias – Jonas – Amos*, ed. E. Jacob, C.-A. Keller and S. Amsler (Commentaire de l'Ancient Testament XI a; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1965); Wilhelm Rudolph, *Hosea* (KAT XIII 1; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1966); C. van Leeuwen, *Hosea* (De prediking van het Oude Testament; Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1968); James L. Mays, *Hosea: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1969); Wolff, *Hosea* (Hermeneia; 1974); Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AncB 24; Garden City: Doubleday, 1980); Alfons Deissler, *Zwölf Propheten: Hosea. Joël. Amos* (Neue Echter Bibel. Kommentar zum AT; Würzburg: Echter, 1981); Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*; Douglas Stuart, *Hosea – Jonah* (WBC 31; Waco: Word, 1987); David Allan Hubbard, *Hosea: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1989); G. I. Davies, *Hosea* (NCBC; London: Marshall Pickering, 1992); Thomas E. McComiskey, 'Hosea' in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary. Vol. I. Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, ed. Th. E. McComiskey, R. B. Dillard and J. Niehaus (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992): 1-237; Bons, *Das Buch Hosea*; Yee, *The Book of Hosea*; Macintosh, *Hosea*; Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel* (NAC 19A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997); Marvin A. Sweeney, 'Hosea' in *The Twelve Prophets: Vol. One*, M. A. Sweeney (Berit Olam; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000): 1-144; Gary V. Smith, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hosea, Amos, Micah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001); Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea* (FOTL 31 A.1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Daniel J. Simundson, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah* (Abingdon OT Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005); J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

The twenty-three reviewed recent commentaries on Deuteronomy are: Pierre Buis and J. Leclerc, *Le Deutéronome* (Sources Bibliques; Paris: Gabalda, 1963); Gerhard von Rad, *Das fünfte Buch Mose: Deuteronomium* (ATD 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968); J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (TOTC; London: Inter-Varsity, 1974); Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976); A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1979); Georg Braulik, *Deuteronomium 1-16, 17* (Neue Echter Bibel; Kommentar zum AT 15; Würzburg: Echter, 1986); *Deuteronomium II. 16,18-34,12* (Neue Echter Bibel; Kommentar zum AT 28; Würzburg: Echter, 1992); C. J. Labuschagne, *Deuteronomium. Deel I-III* (De prediking van het Oude Testament; Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1987–1997); Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 1990); Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*; Martin Rose, *5. Mose. Teilband 1: 5. Mose 12-25: Einführung und Gesetze*. *Teilband 2: 5. Mose 1-11 und 26-34: Rahmenstücke zum Gesetzeskorpus* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare. AT 5.1 & 5.2; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1994); Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC 4; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994); Eduard Nielsen, *Deuteronomium* (HAT I/6; Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995); Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* דברים (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996); Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (NIBC 4; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996); Ronald E. Clements, 'Deuteronomy' in *The New Interpreter's Bible: Vol. II*, ed. L. E. Keck et al. (2nd edn; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998): 269-538; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9: Second Edition* (WBC 6A; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001); Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001); J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2002); Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002); Mark E. Biddle, *Deuteronomy* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2003); Veijola, *Das fünfte Buch*

be more difficult to recognise when reading Deuteronomy closely than studying Hosea.

It is well known that Hosea evokes many historical traditions in his oracles, for example episodes from traditions about the patriarchs, especially Jacob, about Exodus and desert wandering, Moses as a prophetic leader, the conquest of the land and various historical episodes in the land.[19] He also seems to presuppose a covenant and law tradition to which Israel has been subject since its early days (compare Hos. 4:2; 8:1[20], 12; 10:11).

Therefore it seems obvious to question whether Deuteronomy might also form a part of that pool of traditions from which the prophet constantly draws, and with which he supposes his audience to be so familiar that they may recall these traditions when he alludes to them. The fact that the divine love theme in our two books is closely connected to Israel's history in exodus and conquest makes this a reasonable possibility.

The question I would like to investigate here is whether a close scrutiny of our theme will give us any hint about the diachronic relationship between Hosea and Deuteronomy. Does the shared theme of God's and Israel's love tell us anything about the direction of influence? Or are we compelled to interpret the relationship entirely from our a priori understanding of Deuteronomy's date and provenance?

Mose; Udo Rüterswörden, *Das Buch Deuteronomium* (Neue Stuttgarter Kommentar – Altes Testament 4; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2006); Lothar Perlitt, *Deuteronomium* (BKAT V/1, Lief.1-5; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990–2008).

[19] See e.g. Heinz-Dieter Neef, *Die Heilstraditionen Israels in der Verkündigung des Propheten Hosea* (BZAW 169; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987); Dwight Roger Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History: The Early Traditions of Israel in the Prophecy of Hosea* (BZAW 191; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990); Else K. Holt, *Prophesying the Past: The Use of Israel's History in the Book of Hosea* (JSOTSS 194; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Thomas B. Dozeman, 'Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition' in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible: Essays in Honour of John Van Seters*, ed. S. L. McKenzie and Th. Römer (BZAW 294; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000): 55-70; Erhard Blum, 'Hosea 12 und die Pentateuchüberlieferungen' in *Die Erzväter in der biblischen Tradition: Festschrift für Matthias Köckert*, ed. A. C. Hagedorn and H. Pfeiffer (BZAW 400; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009): 291-321.

[20] There are no good reasons for considering Hos. 8:1b a later Deuteronomistic addition; cf. Macintosh, *Hosea*, 293.

3. Method

In this article we will analyse the main features in the shared theme 'God's love of Israel and Israel's love of the divine'. Since that love is expressed with the help of impressive and emotional imagery, the metaphors being employed in relation to the theme should be included in the investigation, that is the father-son, husband-wife, peasant-animal metaphors, and similar.

Often a suspected shared theme may be just random. However, if the theme in common has shared wording, a shared pattern in the theme, and the two themes also share a certain complexity, then the thematic parallel must be considered intended, and it is probable that a borrowing of theme and the resulting contextual adaption from this has taken place.[21]

Setting up criteria for determining the direction of influence is next to impossible. The only reliable guide is to ask the question which part of the thematic parallel may best be explained as a reuse of the other one.[22] Does the available textual evidence make better sense if we assume that Deuteronomy's version of the thematic parallel may be dependent on the Hosea-tradition? Or does the possibility of a Hosean dependence on an authoritative Deuteronomy-tradition offer a better explanation of the theme in question? The understanding that provides the best explanation of all the resemblances and differences being observed in the thematic parallel is the most probable one.

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[21] Cf. to this, Jeffrey H. Tigay, 'On Evaluating Claims of Literary Borrowing' in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo*, eds. M. E. Cohen, D. C. Snell & D. B. Weisberg (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993): 250-55; Joshua A. Berman, 'CTH 133 and the Hittite Provenance of Deuteronomy 13', *JBL* 130 (2011): 25-44, esp. 27.

[22] Cf. Bertil Axelson, *Das Prioritätsproblem Tertullian — Minucius Felix* (Skrifter utgivna av Vetenskaps-Societeten i Lund 27; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1941), 69-70; Bertil Axelson, 'Lygdamus und Ovid: Zur Methodik der literarischen Prioritätsbestimmung', *Eranos. Acta philologica Suecana* 58 (1960): 92-111, esp. 110.

4. The Thematic Structure of God's Love in the Book of Hosea[23]

4.1 Introduction

The theme 'God's love of Israel' is found four times in the book of Hosea: 3:1; 9:15; 11:1-4; and 14:5. The common verbal component is אהב and the noun component is אַהֲבָה. In four cases God expresses his love of his people in first person direct speech (11:1, 4; 14:5—and in 9:15, where he states that he does not love them any longer), and 3:1b refers to God's love as the incentive for the prophet to go out and love a non-lovable woman (כְּאַהֲבַת יהוה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל 'as the LORD loves the children of Israel').[24] The object for God's love is Israel / Ephraim (11:1, 4; 9:13, 16; 14:5) or בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל 'children of Israel' (3:1). Other texts may be adduced as contributing to the theme, though the root אהב is not expressly used here, for example Hos. 11:8-9; 2:16-25; 14:4, 6-9. They all appear in the immediate context of the divine-love texts in the book of Hosea. From these texts appears that concepts like רָחַם ('show mercy on') and רַחֲמִים ('mercy') are part and parcel of the theme.

Closely related to our theme is Israel's attitude to the divine realm. The same verb אהב is used here; however, it immediately catches our eyes that אהב never describes Israel's relation to its covenant-God in the book of Hosea;[25] neither does this verb directly express Israel's

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[23] In recent years several studies have been undertaken on the theme of God's love in the book of Hosea. See e.g. G. Koonthanam, 'Divine Love in Prophet Hosea', *Jeevadhara* 13 (1983): 130-39; Zobel, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium*, 35-51; Brigitte Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden von Gott im Hoseabuch* (FRLANT 166; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); E. Bons, '"Denn ich bin Gott, nicht ein Mensch:" Eine Auslegung von Hosea 11' in *Gottes Unbeirrbare Liebe: Hosea 11. Materialheft für Gottesdienst und Gemeindearbeit* (no ed.; Stuttgart, 2003): 6-17; Kakkanattu, *God's Enduring Love*. — The love theme in Hos. 1-3 has been the subject of special studies, e.g. Nelly Stienstra, *YHWH is the Husband of His People: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993); R. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1-3 and 54:1-10, Hos. 1-3, and Jeremiah 2-3)* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 40; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1999); Ehud Ben Zvi, 'Observations on the Marital Metaphor of YHWH and Israel in its Ancient Israelite Context: General Considerations and Particular Images in Hosea 1.2', *JSOT* 28.3 (2004): 363-84.

[24] For the interpretation that the woman in question must be Hosea's former wife Gomer, see Macintosh, *Hosea*, 95-98.

[25] Hos. 10:11, however, is an exception, since it is stated that Israel once behaved like a trained animal 'loving' the work of threshing.

relation to YHWH's rivals, the other gods. As to the rivals and others gods, the verbal element being used instead of the expected אהב is זָנָה 'commit fornication',[26] while אהב is used to designate the *objects* of Israel's love—that is, the other gods, because they are called 'lovers' (מְאַהֲבִים)[27]—or the root characterizes Israel's delight in the sensuous *cult* of other gods (3:1b; 4:18; 9:1b).

4.2 Love as Saving and Caring Acts in History

A decisive element in Hosea's 'divine love' theme is that God loved Israel from the very beginning of its history. This love was an active relation establishing love[28] which took its beginning in Egypt (11:1). It was rendered visible as unsurpassed deeds of salvation in history in the form of exodus and redemption from enemy (compare 13:4), as divine election in the desert (9:10; 10:11) and as care in the wilderness (13:5). God's love is the crucial element in his election of Israel and in the exodus experience.

God's love further encircled the history of the people in the land from the beginning (11:3-4). It consisted in guidance and divine help in need and ensured prosperity (13:6). The whole history of Israel from Egypt to the present is depicted under the sign of God's love.

4.3 Unique Relation

In his love God elected Israel to enter an exclusive relationship, the relationship of father and son: Israel became son of God (11:1). The numerous references in the book of Hosea to covenant and to covenant formulas lead us to understand this father-son relationship as a covenantal one, not a mythological one.[29] The LORD bound himself to Israel and bound Israel to him in a relationship of love. אהב with God as subject means election.[30]

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26 Cf. Hos. 1:2; 2:4-15; 9:1.

27 Hos. 2:7, 9, 12, 14, 15; cf. 9:1 and 9:10.

28 Els, 'אהב', 279.

29 Cf. William L. Moran, 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy', *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77-87; Dennis J. McCarthy, 'Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel', *CBQ* 27 (1965): 144-47; Susan Ackerman, 'The Personal is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (*)α4ηε4β,)αηα]βα=*) in the Hebrew Bible', *VT* 52 (2002): 437-58.

30 Kakkanattu, *God's Enduring Love*, 63.

The phrase 'From Egypt I called my son' (11:1b) means that Israel was called into his service.[31] God gave instructions and commands meant to be followed. These instructions were not harsh and life-constraining, but given in his love (11:4; compare 10:11b). In Hosea's development of his theme, God's love is seen as a disciplining and rearing love.

4.4 All Israel

Crucial to the divine love theme in the book of Hosea is that this love is aimed at the whole of Israel, both in Egypt (11:1), at present where Israel is turning to other gods (3:1) and in the future restoration (14:5). God does not love only a certain segment of the people, for example the king, or the pious remnant, but all Israel.

4.5 God's Love Was Unmerited

Unlike other sons being loved by their fathers because of some special circumstances (Gen. 22:2; 25:28; 37:3; 44:20), Israel had no virtue or merits. Israel was only young, weak and vulnerable (Hos. 11:1a).[32] God's love had not its reason in its object, but in God himself (14:5). God was not bound to love, but did it because of himself.

4.6 Affective Love

This love has strong emotional and affective aspects, and expresses itself through several strong metaphors stressing the tenderness in God's relation to Israel and his loving care. The father takes care of his son, helps him to grow in maturity, guides him and carries him when necessary (11:3).[33] The metaphor of peasant and animal is invoked in order to bring out God's extraordinary caring love towards Israel (11:4). God does far more than an ordinary peasant would do: he lets his animal graze after having removed the yoke bar from on its neck,[34]

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[31] In OT the verb קרא + ל for the person being called, often implies that a person is called from somewhere else into the presence of the calling person in order to hear his statements or to perform his will. Cf. Gen. 12:18; Exod. 8:4; Josh. 9:22; 1 Sam. 28:15.

[32] Only in Hos. 11:1 the person being loved is termed a נַעַר 'child'.

[33] According to Göran Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert: Metaphors, Models, and Themes in Hosea 4–14* (Coniectanea biblica. OT 43; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996), 170-71, the shepherd-flock metaphor and not the father-child metaphor might be implied in v. 3.

[34] The MT should not be corrected in v. 4βb.

and he even bows down to feed it personally.[35] God's love is extraordinary.

4.7 Love Rejected

A crucial element in the thematic structure is that God loves a wayward and rebellious people (11:2). His love is patient and forbearing, in spite of Israel's continuous apostasy. While Israel has affronted God's love since its very beginning in the desert (9:10), it has been continuously and unknowingly exposed to God's love and care. It was a love of perseverance. God's love came to an end only after a long residence in God's land (9:15) and fruitless attempts of calling Israel through hardships. The cessation of God's love means exile and dispersal (9:15-17).

4.8 An Anger-controlling Love

However, even in his judgement God's love controls his anger. As an extraordinary expression of his love God turns his anger towards himself in 11:8-9, so that Israel will not be annihilated in the judgement.[36] The restoration will come after exile, because God still loves Israel (14:5). God's love is the prerequisite for the future recovery, and on the basis of his undeserved love the call for a return is proclaimed (14:2-3).[37]

4.9 Love as Mercy

The divine love therefore shows up in unmerited mercy and forgiveness (רחם). It entails a removal of Israel's inclination for apostasy (14:5). The goal of God's love is the absolute fellowship with the redeemed Israel, expressed through the father-son metaphor (14:4) or the marriage metaphor (2:16-17, 21-22). The broken marriage will be replaced by a new covenant relationship (2:21-22).

4.10 Marriage Metaphor

The theme of divine love in Hosea is tied up with the marriage metaphor. God loves a people running after other lovers, often termed מאהבים (2:4-15; 9:10). The verbal element describing Israel's reaction

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35 Cf. Macintosh, *Hosea*, 448-49.

36 See Kakkanattu, *God's Enduring Love*, 131-37.

37 Zobel, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium*, 38; Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 209; Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden*, 230-31.

is זָנָה.[38] Israel has reacted to God's love like a faithless wife pursuing potential lovers.

However, by means of the marriage metaphor Hosea states that God still loves the adulterous woman who is addicted to her lovers (3:1). Even if Israel has not changed at all, God still loves her. The aspect of absolute lack of merit is emphasised. Through the prophetic symbol act of buying the woman and isolating her for a long time (3:2-4), the prophet shows that divine love means an active-emotive act in order to win her back through payment and a long-term isolation.

4.11 The Function of Hosea's Theme

The theme of divine love is twofold: 1) to stress the ungratefulness and grave guilt of Israel; 2) to assert the sure foundation for Israel's future restoration in spite of its deeply rooted waywardness.

5. The Thematic Structure of God's Love in Deuteronomy[39]

5.1 Introduction

The theme is found explicitly in five places in Deuteronomy: 4:37-38; 7:7-10, 13; 10:14-19; and 23:6.[40] The shared Deuteronomic elements belonging to the theme are אָהַב, the noun אַהֲבָה and parallel to this the verb דָּבַק 'to be attached to somebody'.[41] Other shared elements are

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[38] Cf. Hos. 1:2; 2:4-15; 4:10, 12; 5:4; 9:1.

[39] In recent years only a few studies have been undertaken on the theme 'God's love of Israel in Deuteronomy': Zobel, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium*, 78-87; J. Schreiner, 'Gott liebt sein Volk – eine Botschaft des Alten Testaments' in J. Schreiner, *Leben nach der Weisung Gottes: Gesammelte Schriften zur Theologie des Alten Testaments II. Herausgegeben von Erich Zenger zum 70. Geburtstag des Autors* (Würzburg: Echter, 1992): 45-63; Spieckermann, 'Mit der Liebe im Wort'. — The work by Oskar Dangl, *Methoden im Widerstreit: Sprachwissenschaftliche Zugänge zur deuteronomischen Rede von der Liebe Gottes* (Tubingen: Francke, 1993), contributes nothing to the understanding of the theme. See however also Herbert Breit, *Die Predigt des Deuteronomisten* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1933), especially chap. 3: 'Der Liebesgedanke des Deuteronomiums', 111-65.

[40] The intense scholarly discussion about the possible redactions of Deuteronomy will not be entered here. Usually the 'divine love' texts are considered to originate from exilic or post-exilic Deuteronomistic redactions. See the standard critical commentaries and Otto, 'Perspektiven der neuen Deuteronomiumsforschung'.

[41] Deut. 33:3 gives another instance of God's love: אַף חֹבֵב עַמִּים 'You who love the nations'. The contextually surprising plural object עַמִּים 'nations' gets support from most of the versions (see *BHQ* ad loc.) and probably must be understood as a

בָּחַר ‘elect’ as the outcome of the divine love, and עַם ‘people, nation’ unfolding the limits of that love: Out of the many nations the Creator loved one עם. Six times God is the subject of the root, and the object for the divine love is either the assembly consisting of all Israel (7:8, 13; 23:6) or their founding fathers (4:37; 10:14). In the immediate context of God’s exclusive and elective love of Israel (10:14-15), we find the surprising statement that God also loves the גֵּר ‘stranger’ (10:18).

Directly connected to this is the notion that Israel is called to love (אהב) God as the proper response to God’s love (6:5[42]) and to love (אהב) the stranger (10:19).

5.2 Love as Election

In Deuteronomy God’s love means his *election* of Israel. Because of love he elected (בחר) Israel out of all nations to enter a privileged, exclusive and binding relationship of love with him (4:37; 7:7-8; 10:15).[43] This relationship showed up in an unprecedented experience of the living God’s presence on earth (4:36) and found its expression in an exclusive covenant (7:6; 14:2; 26:18-19). According to Els, the verb אהב in Deut. ‘expresses Yahweh’s establishing and/or maintaining the covenantal relationship between him and the people’.[44]

In keeping with Deuteronomy’s usual alternation between God’s promises to the fathers and to the present generation, God’s love now applies to the fathers (4:37; 10:15) and now to the present generation (7:7-8). Because God once loved the fathers and gave them his promises by oath, the present Israel now experiences the reality of his love.

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reference to the divine love of the nations, cf. McConville, *Deuteronomy*. While Deut. 32 and the book of Hosea have many verbal parallels in common (cf. Cassuto, ‘Prophet Hosea’, 95-99; Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 353-55), there seem to be no obvious parallels between Deut. 33 and the book of Hosea. In addition, the proper meaning of the hap. leg. verb חבב is disputed. Therefore, Deut. 33:3 will be left out of the discussion here.

42 Also 10:12; 11:1, 12, 22; 13:4; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20; cf. 5:10 and 7:9. In 7:7-11 and 10:12–11:1 these two subthemes are knitted together and enrich each other.

43 The inviolable linking of ‘love’ and ‘elect’ is indicated by the repeated sequence חשׁק / אהב in *qatal* followed by *wayyiqtol* וַיִּבְחַר. Only the election of all Israel is tied up with God’s love, not the chosen priest tribe, the chosen king, or the chosen place.

44 Els, ‘אהב’, 280: ‘*’hb* in Deut, just as in Hos, belongs to the semantic domain of divine-human associative event-words and expresses Yahweh’s establishing and/or maintaining the covenantal relationship between him and the people’.

5.3 Love as Saving Acts in History

God's love was rendered visible through his saving acts in leading Israel out (יצא) from its bondage in Egypt (4:37b; 7:8). His love further showed up in special acts of deliverance in relation to other peoples during the desert journey (23:6). Due to his love God turned an intended curse into blessing. No curse by any respected soothsayer can hinder God's protecting love. Israel's history in its totality from God's promises to the fathers to the conquest is framed by his love. Also the gift of the land is due to his love (4:38).

The statement in Deut. 10:18b regarding God's nature that he loves the גֵּר 'stranger' and cares for his welfare, is not contextually abrupt. For Israel has personally experienced the conditions and plight of being a stranger in Egypt, and it has seen God's love and care for a stranger (10:19b). The love of God thus is the very basis and reason for the whole existence of Israel.

5.4 All Israel

The object of God's love is all Israel, not the king or various officeholders like priest and prophet.[45] Not even Moses is termed 'beloved of God' in spite of his exceptional position in the book. However, God's love is not restricted to the descendants of the fathers who first were loved. He even cares about the stranger (גֵּר) and his physical need, even if he does not belong to the people of Israel (10:19).

5.5 Unmerited Love

A decisive element in the Deuteronomic theme of divine love is that it had no reason in the object. God did not elect Israel because of its special virtues, merits or preferences. On the contrary God loved 'the smallest of all people' (7:7b), which only recently had displayed grave evidence of stubbornness and rebellion (9:5-7). God's exclusive love was aimed at a people tending towards apostasy.

5.6 Love and Obedience

According to Deuteronomy, God's love in the future will be dependable on Israel's obedience to and love of him (7:9, 13). God's

[45] Cf. 2 Sam. 12:24; Neh. 13:26; Isa. 48:14.

love expects a spontaneous counter-love in the form of obedience.[46] The divine love will show up in much blessing and prosperity (7:12-13). However, in the case that anyone hates God (שָׂנֵא), that is, sets oneself not to follow his precepts, God's anger will destroy him immediately and without delay (7:10). God's love will change to hate.

5.7 Affective Love

God's love in Deuteronomy has certain emotional dimensions. Like a man being deeply attached (חשׁק) to a woman, thereby wanting to marry her (Deut. 21:11; compare Gen. 34:8), the LORD was attached (חשׁק) to Israel (7:7; 10:15) and wanted to establish a mutually binding relationship.[47] His love implied more than just cool commitment and obligation; it was due to an emotion-related decision of will to love.[48] The notion in 10:18 that God's nature is to love the stranger and see to his plight, also hints at an emotional dimension in his love.

5.8 Like a Son

In the periphery of the divine love theme in Deuteronomy stands the father-son simile (1:31; 8:5) and father-son metaphor (14:1).[49] God's attitude to Israel is compared to a father's protective care and disciplining love in his dealing with his son.[50] The father-son simile signals dependency and a sure relation of belonging and fellowship with God. The metaphor on the other hand illustrates Israel's absolute commitment to him (14:1-2).

Several scholars have noticed that this simile/metaphor is not used in connection with the divine love theme.[51] However, it belongs to the

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46 Spieckermann, 'Mit der Liebe im Wort', 196.

47 Only in Deut. is the verb חשׁק used with God as subject. Elsewhere man always is subject.

48 Cf. Jacqueline E. Lapsley, 'Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy', *CBQ* 65 (2003): 350-69, esp. 359-60.

49 Cf. to this theme, Andreas Reichert, 'Israel, the Firstborn of God: A Topic of Early Deuteronomic Theology' in Avigdor Shinan (ed.), *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies 1973* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1977): 341-49; Annette Böckler, *Gott als Vater im Alten Testament: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung eines Gottesbildes* (Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2000): 346-62; Annette Böckler, 'Unser Vater' in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, P. van Hecke, ed. (BEThL 187; Leuven: Peeters, 2005): 249-61.

50 It should be noted, however, that the simile avoids the very word אָב 'father'.

51 E.g. Moran, 'Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God', 78; Schulz-Rauch, *Hosea und Jeremia*, 179; Els, 'אהב', 287.

periphery of this theme, because the immediate context of the simile/metaphor is very much identical with the context of the divine love in Deuteronomy: an exclusive election compared with the nations, divine protection and help during the desert journey, fatherly discipline, and a commitment to God.[52]

Another Deuteronomic metaphor carrying the notion of divine love is the 'devouring fire' metaphor (4:24; 9:3).[53] Love may be compared with burning fire (Song 8:6-7), and the devouring fire metaphor used about God may not only signify his immediate presence and intense judgment but also his burning love, not tolerating any divided commitment.

5.9 The Function of the Theme

The theme 'divine love' is to give the reasons for God's election of Israel, to underline the paradoxical reality behind his covenant and to motivate the audience to respond to this God in love. From their experience of God's love, manifesting itself in an exceptional liberation from slavery in Egypt, they should realise that the LORD is the only God, the reliable God, which again should motivate them to a sincere observance of his commandments (7:8-11; 10:14-11:1; 4:37-40).[54]

6 Thematic Correspondences

After having given a brief review of the theme 'God's love of Israel' in our two books, the time has come to compare the two versions of the theme in order to establish, whether the two traditions are related, and whether it is possible to tell anything about the direction of dependence.

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[52] Kenneth Turner even argues that 'the driving metaphor' in Deut. 4:36-38 may be the metaphor of a father and his adopted son; see Kenneth J. Turner, *The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy's Theology of Exile* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 105.

[53] From a personal communication with Prof. Kirsten Nielsen, University of Aarhus.

[54] Veijola, *Das fünfte Buch Mose*, 208.

6.1 Comprehensive Similarities

There is a considerable agreement in structure as to the 'divine love' theme.[55] God's love has controlled Israel's history from its very beginning in Egypt, it has been constitutive for the election of Israel as God's people, and it became visible in the Exodus, desert journey and conquest events.[56] On the relational side this love shows up as a covenant-constituting and covenant-maintaining love.[57] The covenant stipulations therefore formed a part of God's whole אהב-act. What endangered this covenant-love relationship was disloyalty and disobedience to God's commands (Hos. 9:17; Deut. 7:10).

Both in Hosea and in Deuteronomy the basis of the divine love was not any virtue or attractive attribute in the object of God's love. The reason was found solely within God himself. God's love was directed towards a person termed a נַעַר (Hos. 11:1) or a גֵּר (Deut. 10:19).

The emotional aspects about God's love are stressed in Hosea by the use of several emotive metaphors. In Deuteronomy this is only hinted at through the verb חשׁק and through the use of the father-son simile and the devouring fire metaphor.[58]

This structure in the notion of divine love is not met outside Deuteronomy and Hosea, apart from Jer. 31:2-3. This suggests a direct relationship between them.

Some differences of accent in the shared theme should be noted, also. The sub-theme of divine election is emphasised in Deuteronomy by the repeated occurrence of בָּחַר, while it is only hinted at in Hosea. Deuteronomy further brings in the first ancestors as the earliest objects for God's love. Hosea, while referring to God's dealing with the ancestor Jacob (Hos. 12), does not mention the fathers as the original recipients of the divine love. And last: While Hosea proclaims that God still loves a people actually having other lovers and turning towards them (Hos. 3:1), Deuteronomy restricts itself to suggesting that the people being loved by God will be inclined to forsake him.

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55 Cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, 368: '[W]here the love of God towards Israel is concerned there is almost no difference between Hosea and Deuteronomy'.

56 Thus also Schulz-Rauch, *Hosea und Jeremia*, 179.

57 Els 'אהב', 280.

58 Against Schulz-Rauch (*Hosea und Jeremia*, 179), who sees a major difference here between Hosea and Deuteronomy.

6.2. Profound Differences

Apart from these minor differences of accent, some profound differences are characteristic also. The perspective is totally different: In the book of Hosea God's love in history relates to the distant past. Israel experienced the divine love *when he was young* (Hos. 11:1; compare 2:17). The present situation testifies to the fact that this love is gone (9:15; 1:6-9). Deuteronomy, on the other hand, envisages God's love of Israel as *a present reality* the roots of which are his love to the ancestors, but it has shown up in recent dramatic events and will have further immediate consequences (Deut. 4:37-38; 7:7-8; 23:6). In Deuteronomy, the divine love is not past history, but a current reality that Israel has to realise and recognise.

In the book of Hosea, the divine love manifested itself in spite of Israel's continuous apostasy (11:2-4); the LORD's love was persevering and forbearing, always seeking to call Israel back to him. Only after many generations this love came to an ending (9:15-17). In Deuteronomy, on the contrary, God's love in the future depends on Israel's willingness to follow him in serving obedience (Deut. 7:12-13). Furthermore, if Israel should follow other gods, its covenant-lord would react immediately and without delay (4:26-27; 7:4; 11:17; compare 28:20). The perspective of time in God's reaction when the covenant-relation comes under threat is totally different.

Another major difference is that the book of Hosea also ascribes Israel's physical and spiritual restoration to God's loving kindness. Deuteronomy on the other hand, restricts God's love to the past and present time but does not connect אהב with return from exile and restoration.[59]

Maybe the greatest difference between Hosea and Deuteronomy is that Deuteronomy 1-30 does not make any use at all of the marriage and adultery metaphors. While the father-son simile and metaphor appear within the field of vision of the divine love theme in Deuteronomy, the marriage metaphor is totally absent.[60] This is most

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[59] According to Deut. 4:31, God's future mercy to an Israel's repenting in the exile is ascribed to God's character of being an אֵל רַחוּם 'a merciful God', being faithful to the covenant with the fathers; cf. also 30:4. However, while God in Deuteronomy in his mercy (רחם) will look upon Israel in favour when they seek him in all earnest in the exile, the book of Hosea proclaims that because of God's love his judgement will not end in annihilation. The divine love also constitutes the future.

[60] Cf. Deut. 31:16, where the adultery metaphor is hinted at. However, while Hosea talks about God's wife whoring *away from* him (זנה מֵאַחֲרֵי, 1:2; זנה מִתַּחַת 'whore

surprising because אהב is a very appropriate term for conjugal love,[61] and because covenant and marriage have many elements in common. The metaphor of a burning fire used about God also suggests a love dimension in God. Yet Deuteronomy lacks the marriage notion in its presentation of the divine love theme. We find laws about adultery and unfaithful marital behaviour (Deut. 22:13-29). Moses admonishes vehemently against being unfaithful in the covenant-relation that has been constituted by God's strong love. Yet the adultery metaphor and adultery vocabulary are never used in the book's admonitions against disloyalty.

7 The Direction of Dependence

The question of who has influenced whom cannot be settled on the basis of thematic simplicity versus a more sophisticated developed theme. The Deuteronomic version of the theme appears in some aspects simpler, lacking most of the metaphorical and emotional traits in Hosea. However, it could be argued that the more simple presentation of the theme is due to theological reflection,[62] or that the thematic plainness betrays literary-historical priority.[63] It may be argued both ways.

As a matter of fact, most of the characteristic elements of the divine love theme could be explained as examples of Deuteronomy's reflective reuse of Hosea's theology; or as dependency on a shared proto-Deuteronomic tradition. However, it seems to me that the absence of the marriage and adultery metaphors in Deuteronomy is harder to explain if we think in terms of Hosean priority, than if Hosea is dependent on an authoritative Deuteronomy tradition.[64] It is impossible to explain how the assumed Deuteronomistic redactors could have picked up the love theme from Hosea, taken out the father-son metaphor from the theme and pushed it into the periphery of the

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from under', 4:12; זנה מֵעַל 'whore *from*', 9:1), Deut. 31:16 uses the phrase זנה אַחֲרֵי 'whore *after*' about the people's eventual whoring *with* the foreign gods of Canaan. This phrase זנה אחרי is also employed in the Pentateuch about the Canaanites and their worship (Exod. 34:15-16).

61 Moran, 'Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God', 78.

62 Thus Zobel, *Prophetie und Deuteronomium*, 86.

63 G. T. Manley, *The Book of the Law* (London: Tyndale, 1957), 144.

64 Thus also Moran, 'Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God'; Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband of His People*, 186; Els, 'אהב', 287.

divine love theme in the form of a worn simile, and then have cleared the love theme itself of any trace of marriage metaphorical language. The simpler solution seems to be that the prophet has taken over and reused a prominent theme which he has learned from Israel's covenant tradition, and that he has added several new traits to this theme in the light of his personal tragedy about a failed marriage.

A dynamic reuse of phrases and themes from an older tradition of course may entail a certain reduction of the theme and addition of new elements. However, it seems not likely that a rhetorical discourse (Deuteronomy) aiming at persuading its audience about a specific behaviour and reusing related prophetic themes will avoid all metaphorical components. Metaphors may become dead metaphors, but they hardly will be avoided and cleared out in the reuse of a complex theme. The surprising complete lack of marriage and adultery metaphors in Deuteronomy compared with the book of Hosea suggests that Hosea is reusing the 'divine love' theme from an older Deuteronomy tradition.

It seems also difficult to explain why the redactors of Deuteronomy should have introduced the notion about God's immediate and quick reaction to any violation of the love-relation, if they were swimming in the wake of Hosea's preaching that God in his love had displayed much long-suffering and forebearing to Israel. A rhetorical statement like that would be out of place in an exilic or postexilic context.[65] However, this difficulty evaporates if we assume that Deuteronomy has influenced Hosea's love theme.

The consequence of this study for the relationship between Hosea and Deuteronomy is that it seems difficult to see Hosea as the inventor of the divine love theme in the Bible. Much speaks for the possibility that this notion was formulated already by the beginning of Israel's life in the land, but Hosea took it up together with several other Exodus and covenant traditions and added the marriage and adultery phraseology, intensified the emotional aspects and stressed God's

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65 For a development of this, see my articles: 'The So-called *'Ur-Deuteronomium'* – Some Reflections on Its Content, Size and Age', *SEE-J Hiphil* 6 [http://www.see-j.net/index.php/hiphil/article/view/40] (2009): 1-22, esp. 13-15 (accessed 16.08.2011), and 'Deuteronomy and the Notion of Exile' in S. Riecker and J. Steinberg (eds.), *Das heilige Herz der Tora: Essays in Honour of Hendrik Koorevaar* (Aachen: Shaker, 2011), in publication.

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incomprehensible love as the constituting factor also in God's overcoming of his anger and for the future restoration of his people.