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METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS: AUTHOR – TEXT – READER

Three phases can be distinguished in the development of exegesis. In the first phase, the focus is on the (historical) author. This is reflected in the historical-critical exegesis. In the second phase, the text is central. Regarding this, the interest in the study of grammar, the narratological and (de)structuralist text-approach, as well as the so-called canonical approach can all be situated. In the third and final phase, the communication in the text with the reader is central. This concerns various reader-oriented approaches, from psychological to (inter)textual. These three phases are explained on the basis of texts from the book of Amos.

Keywords: exegetical methods, reader, text, author, Amos.

Introduction¹

The methods used in biblical exegesis follow the developments within literary criticism, although at a certain distance. This has been the case not only from the 60's of the last century onward, with the rise of the so-called synchronic exegetical approaches, but has also been the case since the origins of biblical exegesis as a modern scholarly discipline in the 17th century².

Every text analysis, both in biblical exegesis and literary criticism, has to deal with the triplet: author – text – reader. This triplet is in itself very obvious; but this is not the case for the chosen focus in this triplet. In this paper, I would like to describe the developments in the exegetical approaches from the view point of the three possible focusses in this triplet, against the background of the developments

¹ For a first version, see: A. L. H. M. van Wieringen. Communicatiegeoriënteerde exegese en tekstuele identiteit: geïllustreerd aan het boek Amos // *Theologie & Methode* / ed. A. van Wieringen [= Theologische Perspectieven Supplement Series, 4]. Bergambacht: 2VM 2012, pp. 3-46. I am greatly indebted to Drs. Maurits J. Sinninghe Damsté (Gorredijk, the Netherlands) for his correction of the English translation of this article.

² See also: *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* / ed. Magne Sæbø et al., 5 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1996–2015.

in literary criticism. After abstracting all sorts of details and various side-developments, I distinguish three phases: a first phase with a focus on the author from the 17th century onward, a second phase, with a focus on the text from the 60's of the last century onward, and a third phase with a focus on the reader, existing since the last couple of decades.

Because biblical exegesis is not just about theoretical approaches towards a text, but also about the concrete analyses of biblical texts, I will use especially Amos 7:10-17, the well-known story about the clash between the priest Amaziah and the prophet Amos, as an example of the three phases of exegetical methods, without giving an exhaustive exegesis, but pointing out some characteristic aspects of the exegesis in these three phases.

I will conclude my paper by presenting my communication-oriented exegetical method, in which I integrate all three focusses of the three phases I distinguish.

First phase: the focus on the author

When biblical exegesis as a modern, critical discipline arose, the focus was on the author, more specifically on the author as a historical person. This focus is not surprising, for the origin of biblical exegesis, especially Old Testament exegesis, as a critical scholarly discipline lies with the question whether Moses could be or not be the author of the first five books of the Bible. Based on textual observations regarding wording and figures of speech among other things, the answer was negative: Moses could not be the historical author of any book of the Bible. Answering the question of how we should then view the origin of the Pentateuch, various sources-theories arose, such as the Documentary-hypothesis concerning the sources E, J, D and P, also known as the 'four-sources-hypothesis'. These sources were considered to be literary products written by historical persons, although anonymous, endowed with great literary creativity.

The rise of the younger sources-theories of Genre-criticism and Form-criticism was shocking. After all, they describe similarities in genres and motifs with literary products from elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Biblical texts thus appear to be part of a development of re-using of common genres, motifs and imagery, in which the idea of one single author, writing in a unique way, is replaced with the idea of various anonymous persons belonging to an already existing literary tradition. The connection to real, i.e. historical, authors, however, was not abandoned. The underlying focus, i.e. the focus on the historical author, did not change.

Various presuppositions underlie these historical-critical approaches. The most important one is the idea that there is a 1-to-1-relationship between text and the extra-textual reality, due to which the textual world and the extra-textual world in fact coincide. The sources-theories remained, as it were, trapped in the 1-to-1-concept regarding the textual world and the extra-textual world,

as was already held to be the case in the pre-empirical era, but was actually also the case from the 17th century onward regarding Moses' (denied) authorship.

An (over)appreciation for empiricism also underlies the historical-critical approaches. After all, empiricism arose in the same era as biblical exegesis as a scholarly discipline did. Measuring is knowing. This gave rise to a world view in which only that which can be measured empirically, is true. This also strengthened the idea of a 1-to-1-relationship between the textual and extra-textual world, certainly in the popular understanding of the Bible and the results of biblical exegesis³.

The influence of this grip of empiricism on religious life should not be underestimated. Not only does the faithful understanding of all sorts of things change, but also the meaning of the activity of believing itself changes from 'having faith in' to 'accepting as true that which cannot be (empirically) proven,' with the result that the act of believing has been withdrawn from the realm of rational discourse and has entered the domain of individual emotions

The concept of empiricism also gave rise to the idea that science has an objective, value-free statute. Although this value-free character is still propagated up to the present day, even in biblical exegesis, we now prefer to speak of intersubjectivity. The point is that both exegetical observations and the ordering of these observations ought to be verifiable and thus able to be discussed.

In biblical exegesis, however, a specific problem arises: the disappearance of the text. The unravelling of the history of the development of the text, as formulated in various sources-theories, does not automatically imply an understanding of this history, let alone an understanding of the text in itself. It is obvious that biblical texts are texts that have developed over centuries; but the reason why exactly this development and not another took place, is not. A new layer in the development of the text implies by definition that the actual text did not have enough meaning for the readers then, whereas the newly developed text must have done so. Text-development, therefore, always poses the question regarding the communication through which the reader is related to the text.

What does this first phase mean for the exegesis of the narrative text of Amos 7:10-17? I would like to give a couple of examples of interpretation characteristic for the focus of this first phase.

The narration is usually read as a historical account. But this comes into conflict with the empirical-historical reality: from historical research, we know that Jeroboam was certainly not killed by the sword, but that he died a natural death after a long and prosperous reign. In its turn, this conflict causes much speculation about the theological implications of unfilled announcements which occur

³ E.g.: W. Keller. *Und der Bibel hat doch recht: Forscher beweisen die historische Wahrheit*, Düsseldorf: Econ 1955 (and later editions).

in prophetic texts: after all, in this first phase, a prophet is considered to speak the truth only when his utterances are historically verifiable⁴.

In this first phase, the empirical-historical dating of the prophet leads to extremely exact calculations based on various texts in the book of Amos. In the texts of the visions, before and after the narration in chapter 7, all seasons are mentioned. Amos 7:1-3 is about spring, because of the combination of seeds and locusts. Next, Amos 7:4-6 is about summer, because of the drying out of the spring wells. The building activities in Amos 7:7-9 can be interpreted as repairs that should be made to the house in view of the winter period. The fruits of the summer mentioned in Amos 8:1-3 indicate the summer season. Thus, exegetes concluded that Amos' activities took two years⁵.

The book of Amos clearly mentions an earthquake in the heading in 1:1. Because, in Amos 8:9, the sun turns to darkness by day, the book of Amos is considered as mentioning a solar eclipse as well. Combining all this data, Amos is dated on June 15th, 763 BCE. Other exegetes calculate the date of February 7th, 784 BCE, probably because of the fact that they prefer Amos to be dated somewhere early in the eighth century, so that the conquest of Damascus by Assur had not yet taken place and Damascus was therefore still a real threat to the northern Kingdom of Israel⁶.

Not only is the text of the narration of Amos 7:10-17 analysed as having a 1-to-1-relationship regarding the historical reality, but also regarding its historical author. Because the narration is told between the third and fourth vision, some exegetes are of the opinion that the narration is out of place. They therefore believe that the narration is not related to the historical prophet Amos, but is rather the product of a later redactor who invented an intermediate narration associatively with the third vision⁷. Only the two repetitions of the words *חֶרֶב* *sword* in the verses 9 and 11 and *יֵרֹבָעָם* *Jeroboam* in the verses 9 and 10 would mark the superficial relationship between the visions and the intermediate narration.

⁴ Confer: E. Auerbach. *Die Prophetie // Das Prophetenverständnis in der Deutschsprachigen Forschung seit Heinrich Ewald* / ed. P. H. A. Neumann [= *Wege der Forschung*, 307]. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1979, pp. 220-251 (or in: *Wüste und gelobtes Land*, vol. 2: *Geschichte Israels vom Tode Salomos bis Ezra und Nehemia*. Berlin: Schocken Verlag 1936, pp. 105-128). See also the interesting title: R. P. Carrol. *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and responds to failure in the Old Testament prophetic traditions*. London: SCM Press 1979.

⁵ Confer: H. Weippert. *Amos: Seine Bilde rund ihr Milieu // Beiträge zur Prophetischen Bildsprache in Israel und Assyrien* / ed. H. Weippert, K. Seybold, M. Weippert [= *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*, 64]. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag – Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1985, pp. 1-29.

⁶ E.g.: S. Paas. *Creation & Judgement: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* [= *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, 47]. Leiden etc.: Brill 2003, p. 184.

⁷ E.g.: N. H. Snaith. *The Book of Amos*, vol. 1: *Introduction* [= *Study Note on Bible Books*]. London: Epworth Press 1945, p. 22.

The abrupt transition of the first person singular in the texts of the visions to the third person singular in the narration would mark the diachronic development of the text. The reason why this abrupt transition is not a problem to the redactor, however, has hardly been discussed in Old Testament exegesis.

According to some exegetes, this presupposed redactor has an exact place among the various sources which the diachronic exegesis has in mind for this historical era in the biblical land: the narration of Amos 7:10-17 must be considered as post-deuteronomistic, but pre-chronistic⁸. Other exegetes believe the intermediate narration is the product of Amos' pupils, in accordance with the idea which arose in this first phase as well: that prophets create 'schools' to which writing production could be attached⁹.

Second phase: focus on the text

Next, I would like to discuss the second phase. In the second phase, the focus moves to the text. This phase is not so much a successive phase, but a new one alongside the already existing exegetical approaches of the first phase, which remain dominant in biblical exegesis.

Focussing on the text arose in literary criticism initially in response to Romanticism, in which the feelings (of the author) were dominant. The major name for this movement is 'Structuralism'. The focus is not on the emotions of the maker(s) of the text, but on the form of the text, whereas form and meaning are considered to be interrelated. This focus is expressed in interest in syntax, figures of speech and metaphors.

Structuralism, the name of which goes back to Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009), covers many scholarly disciplines from philosophy to cultural anthropology, from sociology to linguistics, from architecture to musicology. Regarding linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) is the point of origin, when he escaped the 1-to-1-idea of the first phase by formulating a couple of important distinctions. For exegesis, the two most important ones are the distinctions between *synchronie* (*synchrony*), which studies a literary phenomenon at one single point in time, and *diachronie* (*diachrony*), which studies the same phenomenon in its changing literary forms through time, and between *signifiant* (*signifier*), the outer form of a sign, and *signifié* (*signified*), that to which a sign refers.

In structuralistic literary criticism, also called Formalism, two main movements initially develop: Russian Formalism and the New Criticism in the Anglo-American world.

⁸ E.g.: O. Kaiser. *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn 1984⁵ (1969¹), 224.

⁹ E.g.: J. Werlitz. Amos und sein Biograph: Zur Entstehung und Intention der Propheten-zählung Am 7:10-17 // *Biblische Zeitschrift* 44 (2000) 233-251, here 242.

Certainly within exegesis, Russian Formalism is well-known because of its literary research into fairy-tales by Vladimir Y. Propp (1895–1970).

The New Criticism is first of all characterised by the rejection of the author's intention (as well as the author's authority) and, parallel to this, of a reader's psychology. William K. Wimsatt (1907–1975) calls the idea that the intention of the real author would be present in a text, whether in a direct or in an encrypted way, *intentional fallacy*.

The structuralistic movements develop a new approach of analysis: the *close reading*. Today, also known as *slow reading*, parallel to cultural expressions such as *slow food* and *slow design*, as expressions of the *Slow Movement*. Close reading was introduced by Ivor A. Richards (1893–1979) and William Empson (1906–1984). In close reading, attention is given to each word, to each clause and to the order of the clauses. Syntax, therefore, has become an important part of literary analysis, although initially syntax was mostly limited to word-syntax. Phenomena such as figures of speech, plot and metre have become the focus of interest as well.

Narratology stemmed from Russian Formalism. It can be divided into two movements, *modal narratology* and *semiotic narratology*.

The main literary scholar for modal narratology is Gérard Genette (1930–). He introduces the important terms *order*, *duration* (sometimes called *narrative* or *discursive time*), and *frequency*. Genette also introduces the term *voice*. *Voice* is about who narrates and from which point of view. In fact, this idea forms a bridge to the focus on the reader as being part of the textual communication, as will be present in the third phase: after all, the reader is always addressed from a certain perspective¹⁰.

Regarding the semiotic-narratological analysis, Algirdas J. Greimas (1917–1992) is the main scholar. He introduces the *semiotic square* and the *actantial narrative model*. Semiotics gives special attention to the analysis of signs, which is the case for literary semiotics as well. Signs are studied in three pendencies, indicated as semantics, syntax and pragmatics. The first one studies the relationship between the sign and its meaning (*denotata*), the second one the relationships in formal structures (e.g. a clause) and the third one the relationship between the sign and the ones who use the sign.

Post-structuralism is a continuation of Structuralism, especially in the French-speaking world. The book *La mort de l'auteur* (*The Death of the Author*) written by Roland Barthes (1915–1980) in 1967–1968, clearly is a reception of the *intentional fallacy* of the New Criticism. Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007) continued the semiotic approach with his idea that something means something exactly because of the absence of something else (thus: 'lion' does not simply mean 'lion', but first of all 'no dog', 'no serpent', etc.).

¹⁰ See also: J. L. Ska. "Our Fathers Have Told Us": *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives* [= *Subsidia Biblica*, 13]. Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1990, especially pp. 8-15.

In Post-structuralism, the idea of the poly-interpretability of a text has become more and more important, and in such a way that the tendency has arisen that any interpretation is accepted as being a possible and consistent understanding of the text. Jean-François Lyotard (1924–1998) therefore speaks about the end of the *meta-narratives*, which means the end of the coherent explanations of experience and knowledge, certainly in a historical perspective. In the reception of this idea, however, these *meta-narratives* are often understood as existing ‘great stories’, such as the Bible.

Against the background of the poly-interpretability of texts, as found especially in semiotics and Post-structuralism, intertextuality has arisen. Texts have relations with other texts. In intertextuality, these relationships are primarily studied descriptively. The question is not which of the two texts, related to one another, is the oldest, but what does the relationship between them look like. The deconstructionist Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) eventually went so far that, in his view, all texts are related to all texts and that, as a consequence, there is no *hors-texte* at all.

Exegetes using the historical-critical approaches of the first phase have tried to incorporate intertextuality as well, but with their own historical interest. Their intertextuality is usually called ‘historical intertextually’, although intertextuality was originally developed to abstract historical issues.

Since the reception of this second phase in biblical exegesis from the 60’s of the last century onward, close reading and, to a slightly lesser extent, narratology have proved especially fruitful. The many handbooks on literary and narratological techniques testify to this as well¹¹. Although semiotics can be valuable, the disadvantage of a semiotic analysis is that the roles of the narrative characters have been determined already in advance, in terms as ‘hero’ and ‘helper’.

In biblical exegesis, these approaches of the second phase are normally indicated as synchronic exegetical approaches to be distinguished from the exegetical approaches of the first phase, which are called diachronic. Although the terminology of Ferdinand de Saussure is used, a change in meaning has taken place, from one single moment somewhere in time to an exegesis which is focussed on what in German is called the *Endtext* of the history of the textual development.

Deconstruction, however, appears hardly to have been received in biblical exegesis due to its lack of being text-oriented. Moreover, the text is in danger of getting lost, just like happens in a multi-faceted source-theory, for the text is nothing more than just a loose collection of words and phrases, whether conflicting historical sources (as in the first phase) or conflicting textual meanings (as in this second phase).

¹¹ See especially: M. Sternberg. *The Poetics of biblical narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [= Indiana Literary Biblical Series]. Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1985; L. Alonso Schökel. *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* [= Subsidia Biblica, 11]. Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1988; Ska. “Our Fathers Have Told Us”.

Nevertheless, the developments within Structuralism have made clear that texts could have more than just one single meaning and that, as a result, the idea of ‘one text-one interpretation’ – as a kind of a 1-to-1-relationship – has been abandoned. This does not imply that a text can mean anything. Biblical exegesis should also be normative. In other words: biblical exegesis should be able to say that an interpretation of a text is incorrect.

Still, the 1-to-1-relationship, characteristic to the first phase, is basically present in this second phase. Although it is correct to criticise the identification of textual observations with the historical author (and with other historical events), the idea of *authorial fallacy* has appeared to have had the tendency to block every question pertaining to the author. In my view, synchronic exegesis should never suggest being in opposition to diachronic exegesis. However, I believe that the order of both exegeses is of the utmost importance¹². Because of the fact that the text is a reality and the text-reconstructions are hypotheses, synchrony should be given priority in making an exegesis above and over diachrony.

The reception of intertextuality has also taken place in biblical exegesis. This interest in intertextuality has created a particular movement in Old Testament exegesis: the *canonical approach*. This exegesis wishes to understand each book of the Bible within its canonical position among the other biblical books. Founder of this exegetical approach is Brevard S. Childs (1923–2007): the words ‘*as Scripture*’ in the title of many of his publications clearly reflect his canonical approach¹³. His approach, however, is nonetheless mainly focussed on the historical-critical question, as expressed in the first phase: instead of questioning the text-development, the canon-development is researched. In contrast to this initial focus, this approach has developed into a reader-oriented view, as we will encounter in the third phase. In particular, Edgar W. Conrad (1942–2017) was the exponent of this development. The focus remains the biblical canon, but the question is now as to how books of the Bible can be read as a coherent whole within the canon.

The study of grammar underwent a similar development in this phase. Classical philology, with its interest in the historical development of grammatical phenomena and in the direct consecution of the syntactical phenomena, especially the *tempora* (tenses), developed into two new grammatical movements: the formalistic grammatical approach and the functionalistic grammatical approach.

The functionalistic approach deals with syntactical phenomena from the perspective of the function they have in grammar. For each function, a grammatical element is to be indicated. The underlying idea of a functionalistic approach,

¹² See also e.g.: E. Talstra. *Solomon's Prayer: Synchrony and Diachrony in the Composition of 1 Kings 8,14-61*. Kampen: Kok 1993.

¹³ See: B. S. Childs. *Biblical theology in crisis*. Philadelphia: the Westminster Press 1970; *ibid.* *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. London: SCM Press 1979² (1979¹).

however, is also a kind of 1-to-1-relationship, in this case between function and grammatical phenomenon.

In contrast, the formalistic approach deals with the grammatical phenomena primarily descriptively, from the perspective of the form. In the German-speaking world, this formalistic approach is especially visible in the publications of Harald Weinrich (1927–), who does not describe the *tempora* using the idea of ‘time’, but using three oppositions demonstrably present in each language, namely: *Sprechhaltung* (= orientation), *Sprechperspektive* (= perspective) and *Relief* (= relief). Because these three oppositions presuppose a textual reader, they form a bridge to the third phase as well.

This formalistic approach is especially incorporated in biblical research by Eep Talstra. The *Eep Talstra Centre for Bible and Computer* in Amsterdam celebrated its fortieth anniversary last year¹⁴.

For the book of Amos, this second exegetical phase creates an extensive interest in structure, both for the book as a whole and for the separate pericopes. Regarding the book as a whole, the idea of a diptych arose: the chapters 1-6 form the first main-unit and the chapters 7-9 the second main-unit. This idea is based on the occurrence of the expression יְרַבֵּד [סוֹמַע] the *words [of Amos]* and the verb הִזָּה *to behold* in the heading of the book in Amos 1:1. The יְרַבֵּד [סוֹמַע] are considered to cover the chapters 1-6, while the aspect of the activity of הִזָּה is dealt with in chapters 7-9¹⁵.

However, it is very questionable whether this conclusion is correct. During this second phase the idea rose that loose words have no meaning, but only in their relationship to other words, as we see especially in semiotics. This implies for the two expressions used in Amos 1:1 that they cannot be understood disconnected from their prophetic context. In Micah 1:1, the words דִּבְרָר and הִזָּה are used as well; nevertheless the book of Micah does not contain visions. Furthermore, an Amos-exegesis that makes a hard distinction between words and visions, ignores the fact that texts such as 7:1-3 (one of the so-called visions) are ‘words’ of the prophet as well, because it is the prophetic character that tells what he saw. The chapters 7-9 are not less ‘דִּבְרָרֵי עֲמוֹס’ than the chapters 1-6.

Furthermore, such a diptych does not do justice to Amos 7:10-17. This text-passage is a narration and forms neither Amos’ ‘words’ nor ‘visions’. A structuring of the text of the book of Amos, whilst ignoring one of the text-passages in the book, is inadequate.

¹⁴ See also: D. Roorda, W. Th. van Peursen, C. Sikkel, J. Dyk, G. Kalkman. *SHEBANQ: System for Hebrew Text: Annotations for Queries and Markup – New Version*. Data Archiving and Networked Services 2015.

¹⁵ E.g.: S. J. Bramer. *Analysis of the Structure of Amos // Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (1999) 160-174, here 162.

The weak point of such observations concerning ‘words’ and ‘visions’ of Amos, is that the point of departure is semantics. That is why syntax should always precede semantics. This implies that the first observation must be that Amos 1:1 syntactically is the heading, because of the fact that verse 1a has no predicate: *דְּבַרֵי עָמוֹס* does not mean *these are the words of Amos*, but *the words of Amos*. After the heading, the text begins with the *wayyiqtol*-form *וַיֹּאמֶר* then he said in verse 2a, a beginning of a narration *in medias res*. This *wayyiqtol*-form opens a narrative chain which the *wayyiqtol*-forms in Amos 7:10-17 continue. These syntactical observations exclude the possibility of a diptych consisting of the chapters 1-6 and 7-9.

In this second exegetical phase, interest rose in intertextual relationships evoked by the text of the book of Amos. Thus, various semantics characterise the relationship between Joel and Amos. The image of the Lord, roaring as a lion, occurs in both Amos 1:2 and Joel 4:16. Amos and Joel also have in common the image of mountains dripping with wine, respectively in Amos 9:11-15 and Joel 4:18. An infestation of locusts occurs in Amos 4:9; 7:1-3 and Joel 1:2. The theme of the ‘day of the Lord’ is present in both books as well, especially in Amos 5:18 and Joel 1:15; 2:1-2. All these intertextualities play an important role in the interpretation of the Twelve Minor Prophets as a coherent collection¹⁶.

The intertextual relationships dealt with in the second phase also involve New Testament texts. The two quotations in Acts 7:42; 15:15-18 from respectively Amos 5:25-26 and 9:11-12 receive ample attention. These two quotations must be understood together. Macro-syntactically, this relationship is realised due to the fact these quotations are the only ones in the book of Acts introduced by the formula *καθως γεγραπται as is written*. Semantically, these two text-passages have in common the themes of *tent* (*סֹכֶת* and *σκαηνη*), *David* (*דָּוִד* and *Δαβιδ*) and *to build* (*בָּנִי* and *οικεδομεω*). Moreover, the movement of turning away, mentioned in Acts 7:42 // Amos 5:25-26, is connected to the movement of return, mentioned in Acts 15:15-18 // Amos 9:11-12. In view of this, Acts applies the text of Amos to its own time and sees the nations receiving access to God’s salvation in Jesus Christ¹⁷.

Not only did interest in New Testament interpretations of texts of Amos rise in this second phase, but furthermore in Rabbinic and patristic interpretations.

Third phase: focus on the reader

In the third phase, the focus shifts to the reader. This new phase is not so much a phase following upon the preceding phases, but develops within liter-

¹⁶ J. D. Nogalski. The Day(s) of YHWH in the Book of the Twelve // *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* / ed. P. L. Reddit, A. Scharf [= Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 325]. Berlin: de Gruyter 2003, pp. 192-213, here pp. 204-205.

¹⁷ H. van de Sandt. The Minor Prophets in Luke-Acts // *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament* / ed. M. J. J. Menken, S. Moyise. London: T&T Clark 2009, pp. 57-77.

ary criticism from the 20's of the previous century onwards under the broader name 'Reader-response criticism'. Its reception in biblical exegesis has been underway as from the past few decades.

There are two main movements in Reader-response criticism, that both stem from the New Criticism: a psychological Reader-response criticism and a text-immanent Reader-response criticism.

Just as is the case in the two focusses of the preceding phases, however, the psychological Reader-response criticism is characterised by a 1-to-1-relationship, but this time regarding the real reader. The real reader's position can vary from totally depending on the author to totally independent, even independent of the concrete text that is to be read.

In this approach, the reader could be either an individual, as is the case in the work of Michael Riffaterre (1924–2006), or a group of readers, as is the case in the work of Stanley E. Fish (1938–) and Jonathan Culler (1944–). David Bleich takes a middle position describing how affections, associations and the need to know whether other people think similarly play a role for a reader. On the one hand, therefore, he assigns a reader a subjective orientation, whereas, on the other hand, he perceives a *community consensus*.

In the second movement in Reader-response criticism, the focus is on the (more or less) text-internal reader. A complex arsenal of terms, hard to survey, has developed to indicate this text-internal reader.

I would like to list the most important ones:¹⁸

1. In 1950, Walker Gibson (1921–2011) introduced the *mock reader*, to be distinguished from the reader of flesh and blood.
2. In 1973, Gerald J. Prince (1942–) introduced the *narratee* as the parallel on the receiver's side to the *narrator* on the sender's side. He distinguished the narratee from the *real reader*, the concrete text-reader of flesh and blood, the *virtual reader*, the reader the real author has in mind, and the *ideal reader*, the reader who understands the text perfectly.
3. In 1966, Michael Riffaterre (1924–2006) introduced the *superreader*, indicating a reader of flesh and blood, provided with all literary knowledge.
4. In 1961, Wayne C. Booth (1921–2005) introduced the *implied author*, an author created by the reader, but nevertheless compatible with the biographical data regarding the *real author*.
5. In 1974, in the footsteps of Wayne Booth, Wolfgang Iser (1926–2007) also introduced the *implied reader*, who, however, is implicitly present in the text as intended by the text.

¹⁸ Confer also: A. van Wieringen. Two Reading Options in Psalm 114: A Communication-Oriented Analysis // *Revue Biblique* 122 (2015) 46-58.

6. Jonathan Culler (1944–) speaks about an *ideal reader*, the perfect reader evoked by the text.
7. Umberto Eco (1932–2016) speaks about the *model reader*. However, it seems that Eco does not exclude that a model reader can be a reader of flesh and blood.

Due to the various indications of readers who could be situated either inside or outside of a text, or even inside as well as outside of a text, the idea has developed in this movement that the supremacy of assignment of meaning is situated with the reader. Wolfgang Iser makes the reader to be only filling in *gaps* and in such a way that what a reader reads in the *gaps*, is already implicitly present in the text. The reader has no autonomous function. This is the reason why Iser devised his *implied reader*. Stanley Fish makes the reader to be not only filling in *gaps*, but all meaning. This is the reason why Fish shifted to the psychological movement in Reader-response criticism: the question shifts from ‘what does a text mean?’ to ‘how does a reader create meaning?’. It is striking that, according to Fish, this focus on the reading process (in his eyes a learning process as well) demands the attitude of paying attention to each clause, a kind of slow-down in reading, which actually is a form of *close reading*.

Biblical exegesis has especially incorporated the textual Reader-response criticism.

In biblical exegesis, the confusing amount of terms in Reader-response criticism has caused the problem as to what kind of reader is actually meant. If an exegete is not aware of which reader’s position in the communication process inside and/or outside of the text is indicated, the ‘reader’ might become a repository of all that can be said about whichever reader. However, for instance, the text-internal reader, who can be addressed immediately by the text-internal author, is equal neither to the reader outside of the text contemporary to the time of the origin of the text, nor to the reader contemporary to the time of the exegete. Without these distinctions, an exegetical mishmash will arise.

Parallel to the question regarding the identity of the reader, c.q. the various reader-poles in the communication, the question regarding the author has to be asked as well. A position of a reader inside or outside of the text presupposes a different position of the author inside or outside of the text. In the reception of the Reader-response criticism two dangers are present:

1. The focus on the text-internal reader often causes a fading away of the extra-textual communication.
2. The reader-pole in the communication is padded with all the extras attached to the author-pole in the first phase.

For the Amos-exegesis, this third phase has especially created interest in rhetorical questions. After all, rhetorical questions provoke the reader. Initially, this interest was connected to the interest in genres as present in the first phase. The observations regarding the rhetorical questions in Amos 5:18; 6:1 thus led

to the conclusion that Amos has ties with the Wisdom literature, and thus belongs to the same historical era.

But in the third phase, the rhetorical effect of the figure of speech ‘rhetorical question’ has become important. Especially Yehoshua Gitay has made rhetorical analyses of prophetic texts. Amos 3:3-6 contains a series of rhetorical questions. The form of this series of rhetorical questions, both syntactical, e.g. by using the rare conjunction *בְּלֹאֵי אִם* *without that*, and semantical, e.g. by using repetitions of the word *פֶּה* *snare* between the verses 5a-b and 5c-d, emphasize the rhetorical effect. This form does not only strengthen the addressing of the *audience* (the term Gitay uses for the text-immanent reader), but also the identity of the one who speaks this series of rhetorical questions: the fact that he has knowledge unknown to the audience, magnifies Amos’ authority¹⁹.

Karl Möller develops this exegesis by involving the textual reader explicitly. In his view, the reader starts joining the speaking prophet, for each rhetorical question should have an affirmative answer²⁰.

The communicative phenomenon of the *gap* in the book of Amos has been studied as well in this third phase, especially regarding the narration in 7:10-17. Verse 10 tells that Amaziah sends a message to King Jeroboam that Amos has been conspiring against the King. After this, the text tells a narration about what Amaziah says to Amos and Amos to Amaziah. In between, there is a *gap*, which leads to two reading options²¹.

The text can be read so that Amaziah acts before having received an answer from the King. Whereas in all direct speeches the so-called *Botenformel* *NN פֶּה אָמַר thus NN has said* is used, in the direct speech by Amaziah to Jeroboam in verse 13 and in the direct speech by Amos to Amaziah in verse 17, the *Botenformel* is missing in the direct speech by Amaziah to Amos to indicate that he is speaking on behalf of Jeroboam. This implies that Amaziah sends away Amos on his own initiative.

A second reading option, however, is also possible. Amaziah’s action is read as following King Jeroboam’s instructions given to Amaziah. After all, biblical accounts normally do not re-tell obvious repetitions.

Both reading options demand reading activities of the text-immanent reader, distinguished from the real reader who might not notice this *gap* at all.

¹⁹ Y. Gitay. A Study of Amos’s Art of Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of Amos 3:1-15 // *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980) 293-309, here especially 298-304.

²⁰ K. Möller. *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos* [= Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 372]. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 2003, 233.

²¹ See also: M. Dijkstra. ‘I am neither a prophet nor a prophet’s pupil’: Amos 7:9-17 as the Presentation of a Prophet like Moses // *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist. Papers read at the eleventh joint meeting of The Society for Old Testament Study and Het Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland en België held at Soesterberg 2000* / ed. J. de Moor [= Oudtestamentische Studiën, 45]. Leiden: Brill 2001, pp. 105-128, here pp. 116-119.

A communication-oriented exegesis

In biblical exegesis, the three focusses, as they are present in the three phases, are often considered as competing with each other. In my view, this is neither adequate nor fruitful. Based on the developments mentioned above, I would therefore like to present my exegetical approach of communication-oriented exegesis in short.

The communication-oriented exegesis should lead to an integration of all three focusses. Therefore, I believe the following elements are essential.

(1) Exegesis starts with the text. The text is the 'hard material' of exegesis. Firstly, the text is studied syntactically, secondly semantically. Syntax is about the grammatical structure of the text. Within this framework, the semantics of the text can be explored. Whereas syntax reveals, as it were, the skeleton of the text, the semantics shows the flesh and muscles on this skeleton.

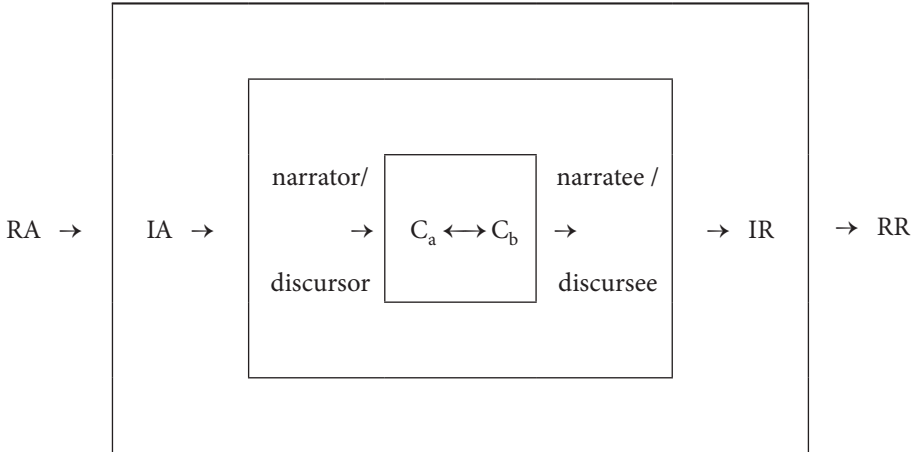
Semantics are therefore about the 'softer material' rather than about the 'hard material' of syntax. In performing a semantic study, it is important to order the observations from the hardest semantic material to the less hard semantic material. This concretely means that exact word-repetitions are given priority, then come synonyms, word-pairs and, finally, isotopes.

(2) Texts are communication between sender and receiver. Communication takes place both inside a text and outside of a text. However, we do not need many of the overcomplicated communication-schemes with too many authors and readers. In my view, only four layers of communication are present regarding texts:

- a) Outside of the text, we have the communication from the real author (RA) to the real reader (RR). The real author is the text-producer. The real reader is the reader of flesh and blood. The real reader can be situated in any historical time after the completion of the text. As a matter of course, both the real author and the real reader can be various different people.
- b) Within the text we find the stage on which the *characters* perform (C_a , C_b , etc.). Characters communicate with each other, verbally, by means of direct speeches, as well as non-verbally.
- c) Characters, however, do not perform on their own initiative. There is a position in the text which determines when a character is allowed to perform on the scene. In accordance with the text-sort, either *narration* (a narrative text) or *discursion* (a discoursing text), this position is called *narrator* or *discursor*. The narrator/discursor on the author's pole corresponds with the *narratee* or *discursee* on the reader's pole. The narrator/discursor is able to act as a character in the text, e.g. in an 'I'-narration. The narrator/discursor is also able to address the narratee/discursee directly.
- d) In his turn, the narrator/discursor is also not independent, but is determined by the *implied author* (IA). The implied author corresponds with the *implied reader* (IR). In contrast to the narrator/discursor, the implied

author is neither able to perform as a character in the text nor able to address the implied reader.

The following scheme outlines these four communication-layers:



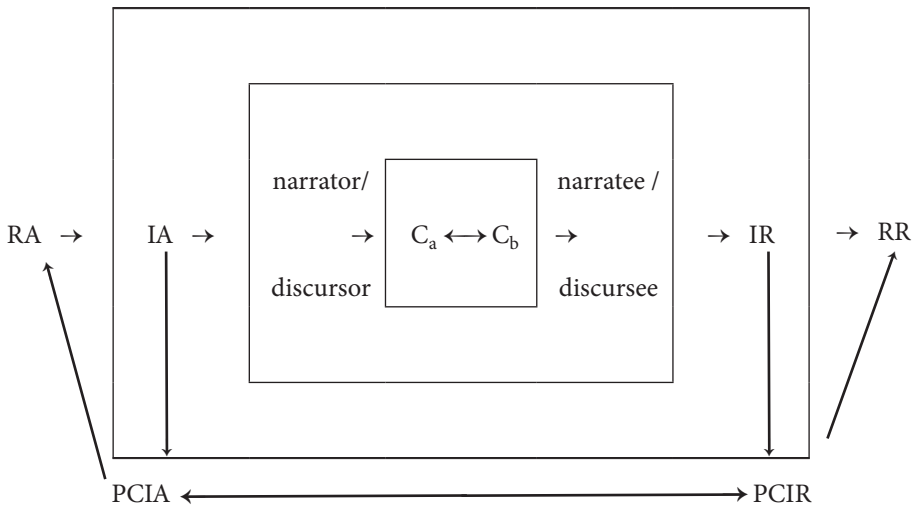
In biblical texts, various techniques are used to offer a reading access to the nar-
ratee/discurssee:²²

1. The two sorts of texts, either narration or discursion, reflect their own textual reader's orientation. A narration evokes a relaxing orientation, a discursion an attentive orientation.
2. Collective characters, especially when they are not actually present on the scene, are open characters. They are realized in various ways: using a general indication, e.g. 'seed of Abraham', or using an impersonal pronoun, e.g. 'they'.
3. The so-called we-texts are important. A first person plural can be used both exclusively and inclusively. If used exclusively, the first person plural means the one(s) speaking; if used inclusively the addressees are involved as well. In this case, the text-internal reader could be part of the first person plural.
4. A very explicit technique is the narrator/discursor directly addressing the nar-
ratee/discurssee, because in this way an immediate communication arises with the text-internal reader, over the heads of and passing by the characters.
5. Finally, texts can have implications beyond the text. In a text, items can be dealt with, of which the (final) realizations are not in the text itself. If this is the case, a realization is supposed which is beyond the text. In such

²² See further: A. van Wieringen. Assur and Babel against Jerusalem: The Reader-Oriented Position of Babel and Assur within the Framework of Isaiah 1-39 // 'Enlarge the Site of Your Tent': The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah: The Isaiah Workshop: De Jesaja Werkplaats / ed. A. van Wieringen, A. van der Woude [= Oudtestamentische Studiën, 58]. Leiden: Brill 2011, pp. 49-62.

a situation, the text-internal reader must guarantee its realization after the ending of the text, i.e. beyond the text itself.

(3) Diachrony has its place after synchrony. As a matter of course, diachrony cannot be realized using a 1-to-1-relationship between the characters and the extra-textual world. In my view, diachrony takes place via the implied author and the implied reader: which possibility-conditions are presupposed regarding the implied author and the implied reader of the text? Therefore, an elaboration of the above scheme is necessary:²³



The position of the *implied author* (IA) supposes *possibility-conditions* (PCIA) for this author’s pole, just as the position of the implied reader (IR) supposes *possibility-conditions* (PCIR) as well. These two have to be brought together in order to determine the extra-textual diachrony.

Studying diachrony, therefore, is not about searching for tensions within a text, in order to explain these tensions historically, in contrast to studying synchrony understood as searching for continuity, but for possibility-conditions, which enable the textual communication.

In this paper, I do not have the opportunity to apply these aspects in all their detail to Amos 7:10-17, but I would nevertheless like to mention a couple of aspects in short.

From a syntactical point of view, the narrative acts are indicated by the *way-yiqtol*-forms. These reveal various aspects of 7:10-17, based on which the narration has to be considered as being an open narration.

²³ See also: A. van Wieringen. *The Reader-Oriented Unity Of The Book Isaiah* [= Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie, Supplement Series, 6]. Vught: Skandalon 2006, 3-7.

- The narration has an open beginning. The narration does not start with the standard *wayyiqtol*-form וַיָּבֹא and then it came to pass that..., but with the *wayyiqtol*-form וַיִּשְׁלַח and then he [= Amaziah] sent. This implies that the narration starts *in medias res*.
- The narration has an open end. Neither the ending regarding Amos nor the ending regarding Amaziah is narrated. After the narration, a double ending is suggested in discursive texts, rendering visions about the destruction of the temple and rendering words about a turn the Lord will realize for his people Israel. However, how this double ending is related to the characters in 7:10-17 is not made explicit.
- The narration has an open plot. The narration only contains speaking acts. There is no plot. After all, the realization of all speaking acts is absent in the text. What does Jeroboam do with Amaziah's message? What does Amos do with Amaziah's call to leave? What does Amaziah do with Amos' announcement of exile?

From a semantic perspective, the text is ambiguous as well. Is בֵּית־אֱלֹהִים in 7:10 a place in the Northern Kingdom of Israel or does $\text{כֹּהֵן בֵּית־אֱלֹהִים}$ mean *the priest of the house of God*, an expression which better suits Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom of Judah?²⁴

The syntactical and semantical characteristics of Amos 7:10-17 make a demand upon the narratee to do reading work. The narratee has to construct both a beginning and a conclusion of the narration. This conclusion, dealing with the open end of the narration, reaches beyond the text: if exile and/or return are not in the text, but beyond the text, they could pertain to the narratee as well.

These characteristics bring me to presuppose *possibility-conditions* for the implied author and reader which assume their knowledge concerning the Northern and Southern Kingdom, and maybe even concerning the Exile. This implies that the *Endtext* has to be dated at least after the decline of the Northern Kingdom of Israel caused by Assur, for the Southern Kingdom looms up behind the Northern Kingdom, not the other way round. This does not exclude an older prophet-narration concerning Amos in the Northern Kingdom, but such a narration is not traceable.

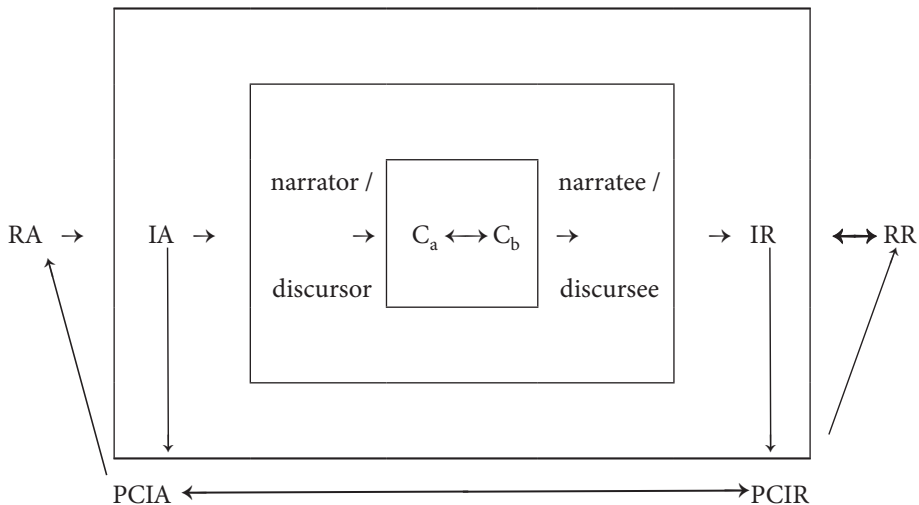
As a matter of course, in a detailed exegesis of Amos 7:10-17, more aspects can be discussed. However, in the framework of this conference on methodical developments in theology, in my case in biblical exegesis, it is important to take note of the fact that three focusses author, text and reader have been developed. An integration of these three focusses is worth pursuing and is able to be realized.

²⁴ See also: A. van Wieringen. *The Triple-Layered Communication in the Book of Amos and Its Message of Non-Appropriation Theology // Multiple Teachers in Biblical Texts* / ed. B. J. Koet, A. L. H. M. van Wieringen [= Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, 88]. Leuven: Peeters 2017, pp. 89-106.

To conclude my paper, I would like to emphasize the importance of the communication-oriented exegesis for theology in general. All theological disciplines study texts (written or oral) and are therefore involved in the textual communication.

However, the importance of the communication-oriented exegesis for theology lies in the fact that new texts create communicative relationships with other, already existing, texts. A real reader, reading a text, gets in touch with the text-internal readers (the narratee/discursee and the implied reader). In relation to these textual reader's positions, the real reader becomes a real author, creating a new text with its own text-internal communication positions.

This implies that the scheme of the textual communication has to be elaborated in the following way:



The real reader is not only the final destination of the textual communication, but has a communicative relationship towards the text as well. This phenomenon is usually indicated as 'contextualization'. In this contextualization new texts arise.

This chain of texts, in which new texts are in communication with other texts, is already present in the Bible itself, both in the Old and New Testament. But it continues in post-biblical time as well. Catholic theology, therefore, is the communication-oriented analysis of components of this textual chain. Only in this way, can Catholic theology participate in the communication evoked by the Scriptures and continue the various traditions of the textual communication-poles in thought, action and celebration²⁵.

²⁵ Confer: A. van Wieringen. '....', heeft de HEER, jouw God, gezegd: Amos 9:15d als sleutel tot leesopties in het Amosboek (inaugural lecture). Tilburg: Tilburg University 2018 (https://www.academia.edu/36360205/inaugural_lecture_2018.pdf).

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Архібальд ван Вірінген

МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНИЙ РОЗВИТОК У БІБЛІЙНІЙ ЕКЗЕГЕЗІ:

АВТОР – ТЕКСТ – ЧИТАЧ

У розвитку екзегези можна виділити три фази. У першій фазі фокус спрямований на (історичного) автора, що відображено в історично-критичній екзегезі. У другій фазі центральним є текст, і основний інтерес звернений на вивчення граматики, наративного і структурного підходів, а також так званого канонічного підходу до тексту. У третій фазі головною стає комунікація в тексті з читачем. Це стосується різних підходів, зорієнтованих на читача, від психологічного до (інтер)текстуального. Ці три фази пояснено на основі текстів книги Амоса.

Ключові слова: екзегетичний метод, читач, текст, автор, Амос.