The Book of Amos, traditionally a testing ground for interpretive and form-critical theories, has escaped rigorous and comprehensive analysis with respect to the Israelite covenant tradition and form. This reflects the widespread reluctance of OT scholars to grant knowledge of the covenant to the eighth-century prophets.

This studied silence of Amos scholarship was interrupted in earlier decades, however, by Karl Cramer's argument for the election faith as the only valid departure point for an interpretation of the first canonical prophet 1. Both Ernst Würthwein 2 and André Neher 3 additionally demonstrated that Amos' polemic is based upon the Israelite legal tradition. Later George E. Mendenhall contended for the antiquity of the Israelite covenant and subsequently for an interpretation of the prophetic message as "essentially indictments of Israel for breach of covenant." 4

Recent major Amos studies, John D. W. Watts' Vision and Prophecy in Amos 5 and Arvid S. Kapelrud's Central Ideas in Amos, 6 have inherited the once avant-garde conclusions of those scholars. Both liberally adopt the covenant as the basis for understanding Amos' denunciation of Israel. R. E. Clements even proposes in his monograph Prophecy and Covenant that the Book of Amos was accorded canonical status because that prophet was the first to preach the dissolution of the covenant! 7 Yet these contemporary inter-

pretations have but appropriated as premises the conclusions of the older scholarship regarding the covenant, and the discussion of the form and tradition is hardly more advanced than its preliminary stages of fifteen years or more ago. Despite the host of form-critical dissections that have been performed on the first prophetic book, analysis of covenant-related forms is minimal. There have been to my knowledge only four attempts.

The first is the proposal of H. Graf Reventlow that Am. iv 6-11 is patterned after the covenant curse list of Lv. xxvi. 1) The second two, which contribute indirectly, are the simultaneous but independent studies of Delbert R. HILLERS 2) and F. Charles FENSHAM. 3) The former’s extensive thesis, which is principally concerned with whether Israelite prophetic maledictions borrow ideas and expressions from Near Eastern treaty curses of the same era, draws seven parallels from Amos. FENSHAM’s briefer article, which limits OT examples to Amos and Isaiah, corroborates the parallels. Both scholars agree that knowledge of the covenant provides the plausible premise for these parallels between Near Eastern treaty curses and the doom-oracle sentences of Israelite prophetic literature. HILLERS cautions, however, that even assuming a generic relation between the forms, it would be premature to conclude that the prophets employed these curses with deliberate reference to the covenant. He concludes by calling for a re-examination of the importance of the covenant to the eighth-century prophets in the light of the parallel evidence. 4)

The most recent discussion is W. BRUEGGMANN’S attempt in VT (1965) to establish Am. iv 4-13 as a “liturgy of covenant renewal.” He regards the pericope as either an actual or imitated cultic formula which is ultimately dependent upon the covenant tradition. 5) There is no suggestion of its relation to the covenant form.

Hoping to advance the analysis of covenant-related tradition and forms in this prophetic book, I intend to demonstrate my hypo-

4) HILLERS, Treaty-Curses, op. cit., pp. 82-89. He finds deliberate reference to the covenant, however, in Is. xxxiv 16 and Jer. xxxiv 18.