

VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WORDS OF AMOS:
LITERAL AND LITERARY TRANSLATIONS

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IN FULFILLMENT OF
LAN 810-02 INDEPENDENT STUDY IN LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION AND TRANSLATOR'S IMPRESSIONS

I was first introduced to Amos's rhetorical power and theological perspective in Marcus Borg's memoir *Convictions*—a life-changing book for me. Later when writing my book *Homosexuality and the Authority of Scripture* I saw the Apostle Paul using similar entrapment or bait and switch techniques in the Epistle to the Romans. My fascination with this prophetic text deepened as I explored the language through comparing translations, and I wondered how these riches could be brought forth for an English reader.

Beginning to learn Biblical Hebrew has given me access to even more depth and nuance in Amos' functional language. This is not a text spoken or written for its own sake, but in order to effect a change in its hearers. My goals in this project have been three-fold: 1) to explore the original context and learn more about the Hebrew text, 2) to produce a translation which has enough of a "foreign" flavor to allow readers to hear it anew, and 3) to attempt transmitting the beauty and power of the message for current audiences.

Every time I return to this text I find new layers and hidden motifs. I can only see this paper as a first surface attempt to explore Amos and his message. A worthy attempt, and one which has given me much of value (and I hope is useful to others), but one that I hope to return to for deepening.

Amos' revolutionary prophetic voice echoes from almost 3,000 years ago as a message that our current society in America needs to hear more urgently than ever. He proclaims a universal God, with a universal law, concerned with nations and leaders caring for their citizens rather than power and wealth. This God is not one our world has yet believed in. Pray the message will be heard before the next Day of the Lord brings fire.

WORD-FOR-WORD TRANSLATION

Introduction/Foreword

The words of Amos

who was among the sheep-breeders from Tekoa

who foresaw over Israel

in the day of Uzziah king of Judah

and in the day of Jeroboam son of Joash king of Israel

two years before the presence of the quaking.

And saying:

"YHWH from Zion roars

and from Jerusalem gives his voice;

and scorches it the grazing places of feeding

and dried up the head of the Carmel."

Oracles Against Three Enemy Nations

Thus said YHWH,

"Upon three covenant-breakings¹ of Damascus

and upon four not will cause I him to return;²

Because they tread out,

as with threshing sledges of iron,

Gilead!

¹ Typically translated "transgressions," this word is political rather than ethical/moral and deals with rebellion against authority (Snaith, 14). Analogous Akkadian expression is "to break a treaty" (Paul, 45). Not with a fellow nation, but referring to the universal law of God who rules over all nations not just Israel (see Amos 9:7).

² I chose to translate the it/he pronominal suffix as "he" so that the thing "not returned" refers to the city/leader rather than the punishment. This brings to mind the exile/exodus motif of Israel, and it sounds a note of doom for the Northern Kingdom and all these nations who do not last the next round of empires.

And sent out I fire among the family line of Hazael
and consumed it the palace of Ben-Hadad.

And shattered I
the gate-bar of Damascus,

And exterminated I
the enthroned one³ from the 'Vale of Wealth'⁴
and the holder of the scepter from the 'House of Paradise,'⁵
and were exiled,
the people of Aram,
Kir-wards,"⁵

declared he, YHWH.

Thus said YHWH,

"Upon three law-breakings of Gazza,
and upon four not will cause I them to return;
Because they exiled an exile complete,
to the delivering up unto Edom.

And sent I fire against a wall of Gazza
and she ate her fortifications.

And cut off I
the enthroned from Ash'dod
and grasper of the scepter from Ash'kelon
and caused to return I
my hand over Ek'ron
and perished they,
remnant of the Philish'tines."

³ At first I translated this as "dwellers", but narrowing it to the one who sits enthroned makes more sense with Amos' primary condemnation of the ruling class. Suggested by Snaith, 17.

⁴ Snaith (18-19) proposes that *Bikath-aven* has been mis-voweled and should be "wealth" (Hosea 12:9, Job 20:10) not "wicked" or "idolatry". This fits the theology of Amos better; concerned about economic crimes.

⁵ Their original home according to Amos 9:7, 2 Kings 16.

Thus said YHWH,

"Upon three law-breakings of Tyre,
 and upon four not will cause I him to return;
 Because delivered they,
 of exile complete, to Edom,
 and not remembered their covenant-brothers.

And set loose I fire
 among the fortifications of Tyre
 and ate she her citadel.

Oracles Against Familial Nations

Thus said YHWH,

"Upon three law-breakings of Edom
 and upon four not will cause I him to return;
 Because pursued he with the sword his brother
 and annihilated he his compassion
 and rendered he unending his anger
 and his rage kept in perpetuity.

And loosed I fire through Teman,
 consuming she the palaces of Bozrah."

Thus said YHWH,

"Upon three law-breakings of Ammon
 and upon four not will cause I him to return;
 Because broke open they the pregnant of Gilead
 for the sake of making large their boundary.

And kindled I fire among the fortifications of Rabbah

and consumed she her citadel with a blast in a day of battle,
 in a tempest in a day of storm.

And went he their king into exile,
 he and officers his together,"

said he, YHWH.

Thus said YHWH,

"Upon three law-breakings of Moab
 and upon four not will cause I him to return;
 Because burned he the bones of the king of Edom to lime.

And sent I fire into Moab
 and consumed her the twin citadels of the Keriath
 and perished he among the roaring, Moab,
 in the loud noise in the voice of the horn.
 And exterminated I the judge from among her
 and all of officers, hers, killed I with him,"

said YHWH.

*[Oracle against Judah removed]*⁶

The Ultimate Oracle Against Israel

Thus said YHWH,

"Upon three law-breakings of Israel,

⁶ Multiple oracles are suggested by scholars as not original to Amos' original speeches. I chose to leave all but Judah to use the Hebrew 3+3+1 (7) pattern in emphasizing the last oracle. Judah is clearly not the target here. The 3+1 motif is used in each of the oracles (though intentionally left incomplete). I believe the doubling of this pattern for the oracles as a group is a powerful piece of rhetoric, and eliminating the almost-certainly much later addition of the oracle against Judah makes this clearer. The rest may include later additions, but even if so their three (enemy) + three (familial) grouping speaks to a intentional editing process that should be retained.

and upon four not will cause I him to return;

Because:

Sold they in exchange for silver the righteous

and the poor for the yield of sandals.

The crushers⁷ against the dust of the earth with the head of the poor,

and the way of the humble they stretch out against,

And a man and his father go they to the maidservant

in order to profane the Name-Sacred: mine!

And upon garments pledged stretch they beside every altar

and the wine of those-fined drink they [in the]⁸ house of their gods.

Yet I,

annihilated I the Amorites before their face,

who were as the tallness of cedars exalted,

and strong he as the oak,

and exterminated I

his fruit-from-above

and his root-from-below.

Yet I,

brought I up you all from the land of Egypt

and led I you all through the wilderness four years

to take possession of the land of the Amorite.

And establish I

from sons of you all to be prophets

and from your young men to be consecrated ones;

also is there not here son of Israel?"

groan/sigh/utterance-of-YHWH.

⁷ The literal meaning seems to be "the crushers". Identifying the kind of people these are, not just an action.

⁸ I think the English needs an "in the" here even in this very stilted translation, though I can't find it in the original. Same with following few words in [brackets].

“And gave drink you all [to] the consecrated, of wine,
and toward the prophets you all commanded saying,
"[Do] not you all prophesy!"

Behold!

cause I tottering underneath you all
who will her totter a rolling cart, the full one, of her reaped-grain.⁹

And will perish in flight, of swift,
and the strong will be not-strengthened their strength
and the strong hero not allowed to escape [with his] life-breath.

And holders of the bow will not stand
and the swift of feet not allowed to escape
and the mounted of horse not allowed to escape [with his] life-breath.

And mighty hearted heroes naked will flee in his the day,”

says the Lord.

⁹ The meaning is tough here. Is it a condemnation to repay with kind those who "overturn the cart" of provision? Is "tottering" referencing the recent earthquake as sign of divine judgement? Scholars debate.

AMOS' ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS:
A LITERARY TRANSLATION

The oracles of Amos,
 who came from Judah to prophesy in Israel.
 One from among the shepherd clans of Tekoa near Jerusalem,
 not of the prophetic guild—a herd owner by trade.
 He saw these words concerning the nation of Israel,
 in the reign of King Uzziah of Judah,
 in the reign of Jeroboam the son of King Joash of Israel,
 two years before the great earth-quaking in the mid-8th century BC,
 one generation before the destruction of Israel by Assyria.¹⁰

And he called for an audience:

“YHWH roars from Mount Zion,
 Thunder rolls from Jeru-Salem.
 Grazing lands are scorched,
 The summit of Mount Garden¹¹ withers.”

YHWH's first oracle:

"Upon three crimes of Damascus of the Arameans,
 even yet upon four, they shall not be restored:
 They ravaged, they trampled, they threshed our happy¹² dwelling of Gilead,
 they savaged her with weighted iron teeth.

"Therefore I sent out fire, threading among the house of Haza'el,¹³
 and it devoured the lofty palace halls of Ben-H'dad.

I shattered the mighty barrier gates of Damascus.

¹⁰ I chose to add in additional biographical information from elsewhere in Amos along with other notes on the timing to help a modern audience.

¹¹ I chose to translate Mount Carmel rather than transliterate so that the meaning of fertile land is clearer.

¹² The associated Israeli Hebrew name Gilad or Ghil'ad is derived from “joy/happy” and “eternal/forever.”

¹³ Fire becomes an anthropomorphized entity throughout, as a symbol of war.

I extinguished the enthroned one of the 'Vale of Wealth',
 the scepter-bearer of the 'House of Paradise'.

The people of Aram are rejected,
 they are exiled to Kir."

The second oracle of YHWH:

"For three crimes of Gaza of the Philish'tines,
 even yet upon four, they shall not be restored:
 For they grasped villages entire, and slaved them unto Edom for a coin.

Therefore my breath came as fire upon the wall of Gaza,
 And devoured her battlements.

And I severed the enthroned head of Ash'dod,
 the grasper of the scepter of Ash'kelon.

And I removed my hand from over Ek'ron,
 and the remnant of the Philish'tines perished."

The third of three oracles of YHWH:

"For three crimes of Tyre,
 even yet upon four, they shall not be restored:

They delivered an entire people as slaves to Edom,
 not remembering their covenant-brothers.

And my fire was loosed among the fortifications of Tyre,
 and it ate up her citadel."

YHWH's second trilogy of oracles begins:

"For three covenant-breakings of your cousin Edom,
 even yet upon four, he shall not be restored:

He pursued his own brethren with the sword,
 annihilated his pity,

cherished his anger continually,
 stoked his fury ever-burning.

“Therefore I loosed fire throughout Teman,
 and it consumed the palaces of Bozrah.”

YHWH's fifth oracle:

“For three covenant-breakings of your Ammonite kin,
 even yet upon four, they shall not be restored:
 They have ripped open the child-bearers of happy Gilead,
 extinguishing life to extend their boundaries.

“Therefore I kindled fire among the fortifications of Rabbah,
 consuming her citadel with a war-cry in the day of battle,
 with a howling gale in the storm-breaking day.

Their king will go into exile,
 he and his nobles together,”

The penultimate oracle of YHWH:

“For three covenant-breaking of your brethren Moab,
 even yet upon four, they shall not be restored:
 They have fire-rendered to lime the bones of the house of Edom,
 to build up their own white-washed palace.¹⁴

Therefore I sent a fire into Moab,
 consuming the twin towers of Ke'rioth.¹⁵

Moab perished under the roaring flame,
 with a war-cry,
 with the sound of the shofar

¹⁴ Details added to follow the story proposed by Jewish narratives as outlined by Paul,

¹⁵ Ke'rioth means “the Cities”, and “towers” probably refers to citadels. I’m deliberately using “twin towers” for modern relevance.

And I exterminated the judges from among the people,
and all the nobles perished,”

Thus said YHWH,

“For three rebellious acts of you yourself Israel,
even yet upon four,¹⁶ you also shall not be restored!

Because you sold the honest in exchange for a little silver, (1)
and the impoverished for the value of sandals.

You crushed the very head of the poor into the dust of the earth, (2)
and you stretched out against the way of the humble.

A man and his father purchase the sacred prostitutes, (3)
making unholy my Sacred Name!

And upon clothing confiscated for loans you stretch beside the altars, (4)
and the wine taken in fines you drink in the shrines of God.

Yet I, I annihilated the Amorites before your face,
who were as the tallness of cedars exalted,
and strong as the oak,
and I rotted his fruit above and his root below.

Yet I, I brought you all up from the lands of the Pharaoh,
and I led you all through the wilderness for forty years
to take possession of the land of the Amorite.

And I chose from your sons to be prophets
and from your young men to be consecrated ones;

¹⁶ For the first time, four actual violations are cited, rather than the one from each of the oracles prior. This reinforces the pattern that the entire rhetoric is focused on the final oracle against Israel. I chose to use the first-person pronoun at the very beginning of this passage for emphasis and further clarity for the modern audience who needs to remember where Amos is speaking, even though the Hebrew doesn't switch until later.

Is there not here a true son of Israel?

You forced the consecrated to drink wine,
and you commanded the prophets saying, "Do not prophesy!"

Behold!

I will overwhelm your harvest wagons,
you will break down under the crushing loads of your heaped-grain.¹⁷

And your swift will perish in flight,
and your strong will be lose their strength
and even the mighty hero will not escape with his life-force!

You holders of the bow will not stand,
and you, the swift of feet, will not find escape,
and you who are mounted on warhorses will not escape with your life-force!

In this Day your own mighty-hearted-heroes will flee unarmed and naked as a babe."

Thus end the oracles of YHWH.

¹⁷ There are many theories on how to translate this couplet. Though my literal translation uses the idea of instability following "totter" and the earthquake from the introduction, in the literary version I chose to follow Paul (94-95) in seeing the wealth of the nation as the very force that is crushing them, as closer to the theology and message of Amos.

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APPENDIX: ROUGH NOTES

Words of Amos: A Literal Translation

I'm attempting a very literal translation here. I'm even trying to change the order of the pronouns to match the suffix placement, though a) I'm not sure that's a good idea and b) I'm not yet perfectly consistent with it. My goal is to make a barely readable/understandable yet as original as possible translation, as a foundation for my own translation and commentary. It will be presented alongside the commentary so that questions of "why did you do this with the text" can be answered in context.

The oracles are written in the perfect tense, as if they have already happened. This is likely more of a prophetic tone assuming "if God said it will happen, then it will so use the perfect" rather than reporting on events afterward. Still working through how to handle this in the final translation and commentary, but it should be shown in the literal translation regardless I think.

Paragraph markers (§) are from the Hebrew text.

These notes were created as I went through the BHS Text with the BDB Lexicon. Some changes were made later in the final versions above based on commentaries and scholarly notes.

Introduction/Foreword

1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the sheep-breeders from Tekoa, who beheld/foresaw [a vision] over Israel in the day of Uzziah king of Judah and in the day of Jeroboam son of Joash king of Israel two years before the presence of the quaking.

Amos was not an ordinary shepherd, but a sheep-breeder or trader. A wealthy man on his own. Only other use of this occupation is the king of Moab, thousands of sheep. He may be

considered to be in the orbit of the king of Judah, prompting worries of being a spy later.

Ugaritic parallel: royal servants with land grants from the king, high social strata. (Cook)

1:2 And saying: "YHWH from Zion roared/thundered and from Jerusalem gave his voice, and scorched it the grazing places of feeding and dried up the head of the Carmel."

There appears to be a parallel between two forms of "drying" in this verse. The first has a connotation of mourning (drying up the deep?), the second is more literally drying up water/drought. Waard says "mourn" is old, inaccurate, "dry up" is correct (27).

The language seems to anthropomorphize the voice of YHWH as a physical force which devastates the land with its power.

The roaring could be an ongoing process. The first drying process is vav consecutive, also implying an ongoing process. NRSV treats this as present tense. But it really seems to be imperfect (Cook). "Roar" is also "thunder" in Hebrew (Waard, p 26).

Note that Carmel is a fertile place: "Garden-Land".

Oracles Against the Nations

The Oracles Against the Nations is the first section of Amos. It takes the rhetoric form of 3 + 3 + 1 (a significant total of seven), with the focus and main message traditionally understood as contained in the "+1". Note how YHWH calls out each nation for four offenses yet lists only one each until getting to the seventh nation!

Oracles Against Enemy Nations

These nations are traditional enemies of Israel.

Oracle 1

1:3 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Damascus (and upon four not will cause I him to return!), because they trampled, in their threshing sledges of iron, Gilead!"

The prefix "al-" seems to have the meaning "because" throughout much of this text (also "concerning" or ""). "Transgressions" has the connotation of a violation between nations of a command or law. Could use "crime." Need to consider what to use in the final translation to get this idea of "legal covenant-breaking" across. It both expands the idea of who God has covenants with (who they apply to, for sure) and what focus covenants have: on protecting the oppressed and helpless from profit-driven authoritarian systems.

1:4 And sent out I fire among the family/lineage of Hazael and consumed it the palace of Ben-Hadad.

Hazael was king of Aram-Damascus in around 800 BCE and conquered Israel (2 Kings 13:22-25). Ben-Hadad III was next, and Jehoash was said to have taken back the towns from him quickly (by 792?). This would have be a recent military reversal in memory of Amos' audience, about one generation. Also see <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aram-Damascus>. Although translations seem to put this statement in the present/future tense, it's in the perfect in Hebrew so I think it should be past tense?

Since the verbs are vav consecutive perfect, translate into imperfect? (Cook)

The "family" may have the larger meaning of dynasty. Attacking the dynasty is a direct threat to the people.

1:5 And shattered I the gate-bar of Damascus, and exterminated I the dwellers from the 'Valley of Idolatry' and the holder of the scepter from the 'House of Pleasure,' and were exiled, the people of Aram, toward Kir," declared he, YHWH.

Aven means "Idolatry" or "Nothingness," and Beth Eden is the "House of Paradise or Pleasure." It's likely that Assyria conquered Aram, since they had been trying to do so earlier, and took the inhabitants to exile in a place called "Kir". Kir simply means a walled or fortified

place, so it may or may not be a specific location. Later in the book of Amos it is said that this is where the people of Aram originally came from, so this is maybe more of a rejection of their ambition and original "blessing" of a strong kingdom than a simple exile.

Oracle 2

1:6 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Gaza, (and upon four not will cause I them to return!), because they exiled an exile complete, to the delivering up unto Edom.

Gaza was the capital of the Philistines. They apparently were enslaving whole cities and selling them to Edom. Edom may have needed slaves for mining, or they could have sold them further on since they controlled the major slave route.

1:7 And sent I fire against a wall of Gaza and she ate her fortifications. *Both the fire and the city are feminine.*

1:8 And cut off I the enthroned from Ashdod and grasper of the scepter from Ashkelon and caused to return I my hand over Ekron and perished they, remnant of the Philistines."

"Yahweh's "hand," turned against Ekron, denotes his overwhelming strength. He who is in someone's hand is in his power. Here we meet for the first time the characteristic idea of Amos that it means calamity if Yahweh "turns toward" (יָשַׁב hip.il) someone. Equally characteristic is the threat expressed in the final clause, which proclaims destruction even for the "remnant" of the Philistines. Oracles against Israel often conclude with the notice that any remnant which escapes the initial stroke of punishment will inevitably fall under a subsequent blow. Ezek 25:16 returns to the theme of Am 1:8bb." (Wolff)

Oracle 3

1:9 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Tyre (and upon four not will I cause him to return), because delivered they, of exile complete, to Edom, and not remembered their covenant-brothers.

Referencing I Kings 5:26; 9:12-13 - look up!

1:10 And set loose I fire among the fortifications of Tyre and ate she her citadel."

¶

Shortened description of damage, as if losing interest in this particular direction and ready to begin in another...

Oracles Against Related Nations

Edom, Ammon and Moab have special connections to Israel through Esau (1) and Lot (2,3) respectively. These hit closer to home for Amos' audience

Oracle 4

1:11 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Edom (and upon four not will cause I him to return), because pursued he with the sword his brother and annihilated he his compassion and rendered he unending his anger and his rage kept in perpetuity.

1:12 and loosed I fire through Teman, consuming she the palaces of Bozrah."

Notice that the second set of oracles start with shorter descriptions of punishment similar to the ending of the first set, but increase in detail rather than decrease.

Oracle 5

1:13 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Ammon (and upon four not will cause I him to return!), because broke open they the pregnant of Gilead for the sake of making large their boundary.

The verb for "broke open" is an action of breach, also means "taking city by storm": play on expansion—that in the effort to expand land they killed the expansion of life (pointed out by Dr. Fentress-Williams).

1:14 And kindled I fire among the fortifications of Rabba and consumed she her citadel

with a blast in a day of battle, in a tempest in a day of storm.

"Set on fire" has a root of "kindle" or "burn". "Tempest" could be "storm gale". "Blast" or "shout of war".

1:15 And went he their king into exile, he and officers his together," said he, YHWH.

¶

"Officers" could be "princes" or "rulers" ("governors"?).

Oracle 6

2:1 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Moab (and upon four not will I cause him to return!), because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.

In this oracle it's clear that the "crimes of the nations" are not limited to either ritual/ religion, or to attacks against "God's people". Moab attacks Edom and desecrates the bones of a ruler in order to create a symbol of power transfer. This is condemned by God.

S. Paul says: "What is of primary significance, however, is that the atrocity recorded here was committed by one foreign nation against another and does not involve Israel or Judah at all. This is the best proof that the oracles of Amos against the foreign nations are intended to denounce the barbaric act of inhumanity itself, no matter by whom or against whom it was perpetrated. Such a crime is a direct offense against the Lord, whose moral laws operate and are binding within the international community of nations."

Also, the line about burning is specifically about creating lime, not burning to nothing as some translators have it. It's not about sacrifices (disproven), but I think a symbolic transfer of power: the material of the "house" of Edom is used to "build up" the "house" of Moab.

2:2 And sent I fire into Moab and consumed her the twin citadels of the Kerioth and perished he among the roaring, Moab, in the loud noise in the voice of the horn.

"Roaring" could be "roar, crashing; uproar". "Loud noise" could be "blast or shout of war". The

"horn" is the "shophar".

2:3 And exterminated I the judge from among her and all of officers, hers, killed I with him," said YHWH.

¶

[Added Oracle]

The section below on Judah breaks the 3 + 3 + 1 motif, and was likely added later in an editing phase according to scholars based on both structure and grammar study. I plan to leave this short section out of my final translation for these reasons.

2:4 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Judah (and upon four not will I cause him to return!), because rejected they the law of YHWH and his regulation thereof not kept they; they led themselves astray, false-which-they-went/walked their fathers afterward.

Regulation: "ordinance, regulation; rule, prescription; limit, boundary".

QUESTION: don't know how to make sense of this last line: "and they caused them to err/go astray their false-of-which-of-walked-they fathers-of-afterward/behind."

2:5 And released I fire in Judah and consumed she the citadel of Jerusalem.

¶

End extra section

The Ultimate Oracle Against Israel

Here in Oracle 7 we find the true focus of the prophet's message: against the audience who have been cheering him on against their enemies. Note how here finally we have the full four law-breakings listed!

Oracle 7

2:6 Thus said YHWH, "Upon three law-breakings of Israel (and upon four not will I cause him to return!), because sold they in exchange for silver the righteous and the poor for the produce/gain of sandals.

"Produce" or "yield". In the story of Ruth, sandals are the symbol of land ownership. Following a rabbinic note from Rashi¹⁸, could this be referring to selling off the poor in order to gain the right to land? The Jewish Study Bible (JSB) notes that haftarah Torah reading tradition connects this line with the story of Joseph, "most likely reflecting an interpretive tradition that Joseph was the 'just' person sold 'for' [the price of] 'a pair of sandals.'"

"Israel" here make refer to the broader idea, as noted in the Jewish Study Bible. The reference to the Exodus in 10 pushes against the not-Judah assumption of 5 and 6.

2:7 The crushers against the dust of the earth with the head of the poor, and the way of the humble they stretch out against, and a man and his father they go to the maidservant in order to profane the Name-Sacred: mine!

Should I change "the crushers" to "they crush"?

2:8 And upon garments pledged stretch they beside every altar and the wine of those-fined/punished drink they [in the] house of their gods.

I think the English needs an "in the" here even in this very stilted translation, though I can't find it in the original. Question: verify that I haven't gotten something wrong.

"Stretch out" can be used in the sense of opposition: God stretches out a hand against. Or pitching a tent (can be figurative of establishing people: Je 10:20. Or "giving a thrust".

TODO: Cross-reference Deut. 4.17; Job 22.6; 24.3-4, 9 (JSB).

2:9 Yet I, I annihilated the Amorites before their face, who were as the tallness of cedars exalted, and strong he as the oak, and exterminated I his fruit-from-above and his

¹⁸ http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/63255/jewish/The-Bible-with-Rashi.htm

root-from- below.

"Tallness" is "haughty, arrogant, exhaled". The latter imagery plays with the full height of a tree, from the fruit in branches above to the roots in the "underneath".

"_j on" BDB says this is "strong", not wealth or treasure.

2:10 Yet I, I brought up you all from the land of Egypt and led I you all through the wilderness four* year to take possession of the land of the Amorite.

** This word is defined as the numeral "4", yet is translated (and logically understood from broader Biblical context) as "forty years". Needs research. I'm tempted to use "ya'll" for plural first-person because it's more exact, but it has an informal/colloquial quality in our cultural context that doesn't seem to fit well with the rest of the text.*

2:11 And establish I from sons of you all to be prophets and from your young men to be consecrated ones; also is there not here son of Israel?": groan/sigh/utterance-of-YHWH.

"Consecrated" could also be "devoted, consecration, devotee, Nazirite".

BDB emphasizes that YHWH's speech is prophetic, not just a general statement. This is kept for visionary communication.

2:12 And gave drink you all [to] the consecrated, of wine, and toward the prophets you all commanded saying, "[Do] not you all prophesy!"

The "to" is implied via the Direct Object marker, I think. Should I include, or not? I think the "do" here may be required for understanding in English too. See related commands to prophets to stop prophesying: 1 Kgs 13:4; 18:4; 19:2, 10; 22:26-27; 2 Kgs 1:9ff.; 6:31; Isa 30:10 ("Who said to the seers, 'Do not see,' to the prophets, 'Do not prophecy truth to us.'"); Jer 2:30; 11:21 (from Paul). Points forward to what will happen again with Amaziah

Note the exceptional inclusion of the Nazirites (forced to break their vows by drinking wine) and exclusion of the priests (conflict with prophets?) in this list of who YHWH raised up.

2:13 Behold! I cause tottering underneath you all who will her totter (overturn?) rolling cart, the full one, of her reaped-grain.

"totter" is hiphil participle, and only appears here. From Aramaic form, maybe related to pressing? "Cart" from rolling wheels, almost always transportation not war chariot.

Question: The meaning is tough here. Is it a condemnation to repay with kind those who "overturn the cart" of provision? Is "tottering" referencing the recent earthquake as sign of divine judgement?

2:14 And will perish in flight, of swift, and the strong will be not-strengthened their strength and the strong hero not allowed to escape (with his) life/soul.

Sanctuary/place of escape/refuge/flight. Firm/infirm?

- גִּבּוֹר (and the hero) חֲזָק (power/strength) אֲמַץ (not-strengthen) קָרָן (Strong/firm/mighty Gibor)

2:15 And holders of the bow will not stand and the swift of feet not allowed to escape and the mounted of horse not allowed to escape (with his) life/soul.

עָמַד stand/take a stand/abide

2:16 And mighty hearted heroes naked will flee in his the day, says the Lord.

Here the Oracles Against the Nations end and the prophet continues on in his focused berating of Israel through three other Oracle forms in chapters 3 through 6.