**The Polemical Cosmogony in the Doxologies of Amos (4:13; 5:8; 9:5–6)**

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**Abstract**

The paper explores the doxologies in the book of Amos, arguing that they articulate a polemical viewpoint distinct from prevailing biblical and ancient Near Eastern notions about the formation of the sea, mountains, wind, and God’s abode. Central to the comprehension of this cosmogony is the recurring phrase in Amos 5:8d and 6:9c, “(He) who summons the waters of the sea and pours them on the surface of the earth.” While previous scholars have understood this phrase as referring to the primeval Flood, a tsunami event, or Levantine torrential rain, the present paper suggests a cosmogonic interpretation, in line with its context. Subsequent descriptions in the same series of texts are interlinked with this portrayal, emphasizing the unified—and polemical—perspective of the doxologies. This new explanation also has ramifications for the dating and composition of the doxologies in the book of Amos.

**Keywords**

Doxologies, Amos, Cosmogony, Polemical Approach

In 1875, the esteemed German scholar Bernhard Duhm made a significant observation regarding Amos 4:13; 5:8–9; and 9:5–6.[[1]](#footnote-1) He pointed out that these units deviate from their context in terms of literary, syntactic, and lexical features. At the same time, they share common elements, such as cosmogonic themes and the use of participial phrases concluding with the statement “his name is YHWH.” Because of their hymnic nature, these units have come to be known as “the doxologies of/in Amos.” Over time, scholars have identified editorial intervention within these units, resulting from intentional or accidental scribal modifications. The following presents the doxologies of Amos, excluding such modifications:[[2]](#footnote-2)

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| 4:13[[3]](#footnote-3) |
| (He) who forms the mountains and creates the wind, | יוֹצֵר הָרִים וּבֹרֵא רוּחַ  |
|  And has told man what his wish is,[[4]](#footnote-4)  | וּמַגִּיד לְאָדָם מַה שֵּׂחוֹ  |
| (Who) makes blackness daybreak,[[5]](#footnote-7) | עֹשֵׂה שַׁחַר עֵיפָה  |
| And treads upon the back of earth[[6]](#footnote-8)— | וְדֹרֵךְ עַל בָּמֳתֵי אָרֶץ  |
| His name is YHWH, the God of Hosts. | ה' אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ. |
| 5:8 |
| (He) who makes the Pleiades and Orion,[[7]](#footnote-9)  | עֹשֵׂה כִימָה וּכְסִיל  |
| And turns deep darkness into morning,  | וְהֹפֵךְ לַבֹּקֶר צַלְמָוֶת  |
| And darkens day into night,  | וְיוֹם לַיְלָה הֶחְשִׁיךְ  |
| Who summons the waters of the sea and pours them on the surface of the earth— | הַקּוֹרֵא לְמֵי הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפְּכֵם עַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ  |
| His name is YHWH. | ה' שְׁמוֹ. |
| 9:5–6 |
| It is my lord, YHWH of Hosts, who touches the earth, and it trembles, and all who dwell on it mourn;[[8]](#footnote-10)  | וַאדֹנָי ה' הַצְּבָאוֹת הַנּוֹגֵעַ בָּאָרֶץ וַתָּמוֹג וְאָבְלוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי בָה  |
| Who builds his lofts in heaven,  | הַבּוֹנֶה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעֲלוֹתָו  |
| And founds his vault on the earth,  | וַאֲגֻדָּתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ יְסָדָהּ  |
| Who summons the waters of the sea and pours them on the surface of the earth[[9]](#footnote-13)— | הַקֹּרֵא לְמֵי הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפְּכֵם עַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ  |
| His name is YHWH. | ה' שְׁמוֹ. |

The combination of the roots יצ"ר (“to form,” 4:13), בר"א (“to create,” 4:13), and עשׂ"י (“to make,” 5:8) in these units, as well as בנ"י (“to build,” 9:6) andיס"ד (“to found,” 9:6), indicates that the doxologies of Amos mainly address cosmogony and creation. However, I posit that the key verb for understanding this cosmogony, which challenges other prevailing cosmogonic concepts in ancient Israel and beyond, is a different one altogether: קר"א (“to summon,” 5:8; 9:6). Therefore, I shall begin the following analysis by examining this verb in its current context, before proceeding to additional units that exemplify the polemical approach of the cosmogony embedded in the doxologies.

**1 (He) Who Summons the Waters of the Sea and Pours Them on the Surface of the Earth (5:8d = 9:6c)**

The phrase in Amos 5:8d and 9:6c has been widely interpreted as a description of a catastrophic flood. According to the majority of scholars, the author refers here either to the primeval Flood[[10]](#footnote-14) or to a tsunami event that supposedly occurred in the Mediterranean Sea.[[11]](#footnote-15) It has also been suggested that the text refers to the frequent torrential rains that characterize Levantine winters[[12]](#footnote-16) or that it merely warns of a future flood, representing God’s judgment upon Israel’s transgressions.[[13]](#footnote-17) Alternatively, some interpret this phrase in a positive sense: YHWH waters the land with the sea itself, through streams that “run to the sea” (Qoh 1:7) or through the rains that result from the sea.[[14]](#footnote-18)

However, the submersion of the land in seawater is not a scenario that features in biblical doom prophecies. Rather, it is the threat of drying up the sea and sending drought that is frequently presented (e.g., Deut 11:17; Jer 3:3; Isa 50:2; Nah 1:4). Likewise, the water of the sea does not play any role in biblical or Mesopotamian Flood narratives, where the flooding is caused by rain from above and by water that surges from the great deep below (rather than biblical ים and Akkadian *tiāmtu*).[[15]](#footnote-19) Moreover, irrigating the soil with seawater can hardly be seen as a blessed act, as the seawater contains salt; and it would be misleading to interpret the expression “water of the sea” as a sophisticated reference to other bodies of water such as streams or rain.[[16]](#footnote-20) In fact, the common biblical description of the land being covered by seawater fits into a cosmogonic context.[[17]](#footnote-21) In what follows, some prominent examples are given.

According to the Priestly account in Gen 1:1–2:4a, the creation story begins with a depiction of the whole land being submerged under waters (1:2). On the second day, God commands the waters to gather in a single place (1:9: “Let the water below the firmament be gathered into one area”), resulting in the emergence of dry land (“so that the dry land appears”). God then names the land “earth,” and the gathered waters “seas.” According to the account in Genesis, both the sea and the earth are considered primordial materials, thus exemplifying the perception of *creatio ex materia*. The sea in its current basin is nothing but the primordial waters that covered the land and gathered in one place, while the earth is the land that existed beneath the seawaters beforehand.

In Ps 104, a similar event is described. According to verse 6, before the creation of the inhabited world, the earth was covered by primordial waters, likened to a garment enveloping a person.[[18]](#footnote-22) The abundance of these waters was such that even the mountains were submerged (“the waters stood above the mountains”). YHWH then rebukes the waters and thundered at them in the manner of a storm god, causing them to retreat (7: “They fled at your blast, rushed away at the sound of your thunder”). The waters flee to the designated place established by YHWH (8: “They rose mountains, sank valleys, to the place you established for them”), and their boundary is set to prevent the seawater from covering the dry land again (9: “You set a boundary they must not pass so that they never again cover the earth”).

The significant similarities in substance and vocabulary between Gen 1 and Ps 104 (here and in further verses) have led scholars to argue for a relationship of dependency between the two texts.[[19]](#footnote-23) However, since none of them appears to be reliant on the other, they seem to have been independently influenced by a common tradition.[[20]](#footnote-24) Psalm 104 preserves more traces of original theomachy during creation, with its description of the waters’ flight, God’s rebuke, and thunderous actions. Both texts, however, arrive at the same conclusion: when the dry land emerged from the receding waters, the sea basin—where the primordial waters gathered—was simultaneously formed.

Other biblical texts that describe the enclosing of the primordial waters in their new basin during creation indicate that a cosmogony portraying the land submerged by water as the initial state was widespread in ancient Israelite poetry. Noteworthy examples include Pss 89:6–13 and 74:12–17, Job 26:7–13 and 38:8–11, and Jer 5:22.[[21]](#footnote-25) The latter clarifies that the boundary of the sea, its bars and doors, which are mentioned in Ps 104 and Job 38 (among others), are a metaphor for the sand, which separates the seawater in its new, present-day basin, from the inhabited earth.

The widespread adoption of such a creation account in West Asia during the first millennium BCE can be inferred from the Babylonian work Enuma Eliš (which was composed around the 12th–10th centuries BCE). The existence of its multiple manuscripts from the first millennium, as well as the commentaries dedicated to it and the works composed under its influence, reveal the broad distribution of that work.[[22]](#footnote-26) According to Enuma Eliš, Tiamtu (Tiamat), whose name is the Akkadian term for the sea, existed before the gods and the inhabited world were created (I 1–5). After the gods were born, the youngest of them, Marduk, battled against the raging Tiamtu and began creating the world by dividing his defeated enemy into two parts. The upper liquid part he transformed into the blue sky (VI 138–140), while on the lower liquid part, he poured a mountain of dust, causing the water to flow out in the form of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers (V 54–58; cf. VII, 70).

The comparison between the creation account in Enuma Eliš and the biblical cosmogonies reveals distinct variations. Although both view the sea as a primordial substance, the process of land formation differs. In Enuma Eliš, the dry land emerges as Marduk pours soil over the lower part of Tiamtu, the sea, concealing the seawater beneath the earth. According to the prevailing cosmogony in the Hebrew Bible, the land appeared when the waters receded to their new location, the present-day sea basin. These differing descriptions reflect the contrasting geographical settings of Mesopotamia, characterized by its two rivers, and the coastal Levant, where the tumultuous Mediterranean dominates the visible horizon.[[23]](#footnote-27) Nevertheless, the shared common tradition between the two cannot be denied. [[24]](#footnote-28)

Not surprisingly, not all biblical texts share the prevalent *creatio* *ex materia* narrative. Some present a contrasting cosmogony that excludes the mythical traces of the sea. Pss 95:5 and 146:6, for example, emphasize that God created everything, including the sea. In fact, the Priestly account in Gen 1 also opposes the traditional cosmogony, but in a different way. While it maintains the sequence of events and considers the sea as a precosmogonic material, it specifically eliminates all traces of theomachy, such as the divine rebuke and the fleeing of the waters.[[25]](#footnote-29) The doxologies of Amos challenge the prevalent cosmogony from yet another standpoint.

Like Gen 1 (and other biblical texts), the doxologies of Amos describe the seawater as a primordial material. Unlike Gen 1, however, they present a distinct perspective according to which the primordial waters did not cover the land before creation. Instead, YHWH summoned them to be poured onto the dry land. According to this view, the waters were subordinate to God and obediently fulfilled his command, and God did not engage in any conflict with them, contrary to other biblical and Mesopotamian texts. This unique perspective offers a novel understanding of the relationship between YHWH and the primordial waters.

Similarities can nevertheless be observed in the prophecies of Amos and Deutero-Isaiah. In Amos 9:3, YHWH commands the sea serpent, which is considered hostile in other biblical cosmogonies (like the sea itself), to serve him: “And if they conceal themselves from my sight at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them.” This verse, in keeping with the rest of the doxologies, appears to support the mythical notion of the sea serpent, portraying it as an aide of YHWH rather than his rival.[[26]](#footnote-30) The use of the verb קר"א to express the summoning of seawater during creation recurs in Isa 48:13, where earth and sky are ordered to stand up during creation: “My own hand founded the earth, and my right hand spread out the skies. I summon them (קֹרֵא אֲנִי אֲלֵיהֶם); let them stand up.” As discussed elsewhere, the verbs בר"א, יצ"ר and עשׂ"י are used exclusively in the cosmogonic contexts of both the doxologies of Amos and Deutero-Isaiah. In light of the above, the verb קר"א should also be included in the list of cosmogonic verbs that feature in both texts.

To conclude, the phrase “(He) who summons the waters of the sea and pours them on the surface of the earth” is neither a prophecy of doom nor a blessing. Rather, it suggests an alternative, polemical interpretation, according to which the sea was formed when God ordered the seawater to cover the dry land.[[27]](#footnote-31) This approach goes against the traditional view that the sea was present before creation and then expelled from the land during creation. The following examination aims to demonstrate that this polemical approach is reflected throughout the doxologies of Amos and is not unique to the present phrase.

**2 (He, Who) Treads upon the Back of Earth (4:13d)**

The final phrase of the initial doxology in Amos 4:13, following three cosmogonic expressions, exalts God: “וְדֹרֵךְ עַל בָּמֳתֵי אָרֶץ”. Based on the old translations of the Hebrew Bible, the lexeme במתי in this phrase is commonly interpreted as “heights,” rather than its literal meaning “back,” implying that the poet extols God for treading upon the heights of the earth. However, this interpretation lacks support both etymologically and contextually.[[28]](#footnote-32)

In biblical Hebrew, the phrase דר"ך על במה, literally—treading upon the *back* (of)—commonly signifies the triumph of the victor over his defeated rival. For instance, the victory of the Israelites is vividly expressed in Deut 33 through the imagery of treading upon the backs of their enemies: “Your enemies shall come cringing before you, and you shall tread (תִדְרֹךְ) upon their backs (בָּמוֹתֵימוֹ).” Additional verses referencing this victorious gesture describe it in relation to the enemy’s neck (“Come forward and place your feet on the necks of these kings”; Josh 10:24) or focus on the victor’s feet (“Because of the enemies that encompassed him, until YHWH had placed them under the soles of his feet”; 1 Kgs 5:17). Similar references can be found in ancient Near Eastern literature and iconography, involving both gods and humans. For example, the Egyptian king Sahure of the Fifth Dynasty extols “Thoth and Soped who treading (*ptpt*) upon the Mntw (= the nomad people).”[[29]](#footnote-33) Enuma Eliš also depicts Marduk trampling (*izziz*) on the corpse of Tiamtu (IV 104), and treading (*ikbus*) on her lower parts (IV 129), just before creating the world from her organs.[[30]](#footnote-34)

A striking parallel to the scene in Enuma Eliš can be observed in Job 9:8–9. In this doxological passage, the poet exalts YHWH for treading upon the back of the sea, and this is embedded in cosmogonical phrases: “(He) who alone stretches out the heavens and treads upon the back of (the) sea (וְדוֹרֵךְ עַל בָּמֳתֵי יָם); who makes (the) Bear and Orion, Pleiades and the constellation of the South.”[[31]](#footnote-35) The depiction of the submission of Rahab’s aides’ in Job 9:13 reinforces the interpretation of Job 9:8–9 as referring to the victorious gesture of YHWH at the end of his battle against the sea.[[32]](#footnote-36) Another reference appears in Hab 3:15, at the end of a hymn: “You trod on the sea (דָּרַכְתָּ בַיָּם) with your horses, churning the mighty waters.”[[33]](#footnote-37) These citations demonstrate that YHWH’s victorious gesture upon conquering the sea was well-known among Israelite poets.

The close similarity between the doxological phrases in Job 9:8–9 and the doxologies of Amos, both in content and wording, has been widely noted.[[34]](#footnote-38) This is especially evident in the phrases “(He) who makes … Orion and the Pleiades” and “(He) who treads upon the back of…” For convenience, Fig. 1 presents these verses side by side:

Figure 1: Job 9:8–9 and Amos 4:13; 5:8

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| **Job 9:8–9** | **Amos 4:13 and 5:8**[[35]](#footnote-39) |
| (He) who alone stretches out the heavens,**and treads upon the back of (the) *sea*.**  | (He) who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and has told man what his wish is, (who) makes blackness daybreak, **and treads upon the back of (the) *earth*.**  |
| **(He) who makes (the)** Bear and **Orion, Pleiades,** and the constellation of the South. | **(He) who makes (the) Pleiades and Orion,** and turns deep darkness into morning and darkens day into night, who summons the waters of the sea and pours them on the surface of the earth. |

Though the occurrences of these two phrases in two different texts may suggest that one depends on the other, it is more plausible that both draw from a shared tradition, and that certain phrases were reworked to align with the poetic style, context, and theological perspectives of the text in which they were inserted.[[36]](#footnote-40)

Nevertheless, due to the close similarity, scholars have tended to amend one of the verses in accordance with its parallel. For example, because Job 9:9 includes the constellation of the Bear (עש) and the constellations of the South (חדרי תמן) alongside Orion (כסיל) and the Pleiades (כימה), some have argued that the Bear (עש) was mistakenly omitted from the stich “who makes Orion and the Pleiades” in Amos 4:13, possibly due to haplography caused by the preceding verb “who makes” (עשה).[[37]](#footnote-41) Alternatively, the hapax term עש may have resulted from the dittography of the verb עשה in Job 9:9. Others maintain that the stich in Amos 4:13, which notably lacks a supplementary stich, originally included the “constellations of the South,” as does Job 9:9.[[38]](#footnote-42) Alternatively, some posit that the absence of a supplementary stich in Amos 4:13 might suggest that the extant stich “who makes the Pleiades and Orion” was added (albeit through metathesis) to Amos 4:13 by a later scribe due to his familiarity with Job 9:8–9.[[39]](#footnote-43)

In contrast to the above conjectures, which are explained by haplography, dittography, metathesis, or other scribal errors, the alteration from “earth” to “sea,” or *vice versa* in the phrase “(He, who) treads upon the back of…” (Job 9:8 / Amos 4:13) cannot be explained in the same way. Rather, it is a significant difference, suggesting intentional modification. In Job 9:8, the phrase refers to a victorious gesture upon conquering the sea, a familiar mythological entity referenced multiple times in the Hebrew Bible and other sources, whereas the phrase in Amos 4:13 lacks such connotations. The earth is rarely depicted as a mythological entity in biblical texts, and it is never portrayed as an adversary of YHWH.[[40]](#footnote-44) Since this difference cannot be explained as a scribal error, and considering the process of demythologization that the biblical texts underwent,[[41]](#footnote-45) it is reasonable to assume that the old cosmogonic tradition that includes the aforementioned victorious gesture of power over the sea during creation was integrated in its entirety into Job 9. In contrast, the poet of the doxologies of Amos, who opposed the notion that the primordial seawaters were expelled from the earth by YHWH, altered the term “sea” in favor of “earth.” In this way, neither the primordial sea nor the fighting against it during creation left any echo in this verse.[[42]](#footnote-46)

**3 (He) Who Forms the Mountains and Creates the Wind (4:13a)**

The first cosmogonical phrase in the same doxology in Amos 4:13 praises YHWH who “יוֹצֵר הָרִים וּבֹרֵא רוּחַ.” Following the Septuagint, some commentators have amended the term הרים (“mountains”) in this phrase to רעם (“thunder”) or הדים (“thunderclaps”),[[43]](#footnote-47) since they could not find any connection between “mountains” and “wind,” or any reason to choose the mountains, out of all the forces of nature, as the objects of divine creation. Others, however, have rightly rejected this emendation, for thunder never functions as an object of cosmogony in the Hebrew Bible (it is rather used as a weapon by God who combats the sea before and during creation), nor is it recorded as a peer of the wind in biblical and other West-Semitic poetry.[[44]](#footnote-48) Moreover, contrary to the argument above, the wind and the mountains do share something in common: like the primordial waters, and always in relation to them, they are presented as precosmogonic materials in the biblical texts cited above.[[45]](#footnote-49) According to Ps 104:6, the mountains were covered by primordial waters before YHWH drove them into their new basin. As for the wind, it is portrayed in Gen 1:2 along with all other precosmogonic materials, such as the waters, over which it hovers (מרחפת).[[46]](#footnote-50) The wind is mentioned in Ps 104 as well, but it does not hover over the waters. Instead, it is YHWH who moves (מהלך) over it (v. 3c) and makes (עשה) his messengers from it (v. 4a).[[47]](#footnote-51) Since both Gen 1 and Ps 104 are probably based on a shared tradition,[[48]](#footnote-52) it seems that each of them preserved some original mythical details while reworking others.

Phoenician-oriented sources, like the writings of Philo of Byblos (FGrH 790 F 2 = Eusebius PE 1.9.30–1.10.2; 1.10.7) and those of Damascius, attributed to Mochos and Eufemos (FGrH 784 F 4 = Damascius de Princ. 125 c), indicate that the perception of the wind as a precosmogonic material was widespread in neighboring cultures as well.[[49]](#footnote-53) In these sources, as in Gen 1:2 and Ps 104:3–4, the wind does not represent God’s anger (רוח אפו) or function as his weapon, nor is it breath or spirit; rather, it is a force of nature: the movement of the air, which functions as a primordial material. Together, all these texts thus illuminate a prevailing Levantine concept, only traces of which have been preserved in the extant ancient writings. Accordingly, the wind is never mentioned among the created matter in the Hebrew Bible. The sole exception is the doxologies of Amos. By comparison, the mountains, which are also portrayed as precosmogonic material in Ps 104, are depicted as having been created by YHWH in other biblical texts (such as Isa 40:12; Ps 65:7; and Prov 8:25).

While the creation of the wind and mountains in the doxologies can be interpreted from the polemical perspective I have proposed, without necessarily linking them to the formation of a sea basin, a firm connection between them nevertheless appears to exist. For the poet of the doxologies, none of the three—the mountains that according to other sources were hidden under the primordial waters before creation, the wind that hovered above the primordial waters before creation, and the primordial waters themselves that submerged the mountains before creation—existed in these forms before creation. Only during creation did the wind, mountains, and sea come into being. The fact that YHWH is praised in the doxologies for creating those forces of nature, which are described elsewhere as precosmogonic materials, points again to the consistent polemical view of the doxologies of Amos.

**4 (He) Who Builds His Chambers in Heaven, and Founds His Vault on the Earth (9:6a–b)**

The discussion so far has highlighted the contrasting cosmogony presented in the doxologies of Amos in comparison to biblical texts like Gen 1; Ps 104; and Job 9, as well as the Babylonian Enuma Eliš and the Phoenician cosmogonies. It is thus intriguing to examine whether there are additional phrases in the doxologies that share similarities with those texts while altering one or more elements to dismiss the notion of the sea as precosmogonic material. Amos 9:6a–b, which describes the construction of YHWH’s abode, aligns with this paradigm.

Psalm 104:3 praises YHWH as covering his lofts (עליותיו), i.e., his upper dwelling, with water (“הַמְקָרֶה בַמַּיִם עֲלִיּוֹתָיו”).[[50]](#footnote-54) In light of Ps 104:13 (“[He] who waters the mountains from his lofts”), these lofts probably refer to primordial upper heavens. This notion corresponds with further biblical and Babylonian cosmogonies that suggest the presence of primordial waters in the upper heavens. Prominent examples are Gen 1:6–7 and Ps 148:4–6 where the “firmament” (רקיע) or the “limit” (חוק) is said to close off the upper primordial waters.[[51]](#footnote-55) Similarly, in Enuma Eliš IV 135–140, a watch (*naṣṣaru*) is assigned to prevent the waters from escaping the heavens, which are the upper part of Tiamtu, the primordial sea.

The phrase occurring in Amos 9:6a (“הַבּוֹנֶה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעֲלוֹתָו”) bears a striking resemblance to the one in Ps 104, as both describe the building of the upper dwelling of YHWH.[[52]](#footnote-56) The prominent difference between them is that the verse in Psalms includes a reference to water (מים), whereas the doxologies refer to heaven (שמים) instead. Theodore Gaster proposed amending the term “heavens” (שמים) in the doxologies to “waters” (מים),[[53]](#footnote-57) thus expressing a preference for the version in Ps 104 over Amos 6:9. However, the difference between מים and שמים does not seem to be the result of a scribal error in one of these texts. Rather, considering the polemical approach of the doxologies, it is very plausible that the poet intentionally added the letter ש to the term מים, in order to eliminate the old tradition about the building of the upper seat of YHWH in the primordial waters.[[54]](#footnote-58)

The second part of Amos 9:6 praises YHWH as “וַאֲגֻדָּתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ יְסָדָהּ.” The term אגודה here is commonly understood in biblical dictionaries and commentaries as a vault, which evokes the round shape of the earth,[[55]](#footnote-59) upon which rests the upper seat of God. Since אגודה in this context is a hapax, its usage cannot be directly compared to other biblical occurrences. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Prov 8:27 and Job 26:10 describe the foundation of “a circle” (חוג)—a term that shares a similar meaning to אגודה—within the primordial waters.[[56]](#footnote-60) These texts emphasize again that for the poet of the doxologies there was no primordial water on which to base the world’s vault, but only dry land. Hence, “(He) founds his vault on the earth.”

# **5 Summary and Conclusions**

The present paper suggests that the doxologies of Amos present a cosmogony that disputes the common view reflected in multiple biblical texts, as well as in some extra-biblical sources. In contrast to these cosmogonies, according to the doxologies of Amos, seawaters did not cover the land before creation and then recede into a basin. Instead the waters of the sea were poured upon the dry land during creation (Amos 5:8d; 9:6c; cf. Gen 1:2, 6–10; Ps 104:6–9). Therefore, YHWH did not triumphantly tread upon the back of the sea (Amos 4:13d;cf. Job 9:8–9). Likewise, the mountains did not emerge from the receding primordial waters, nor did the wind hover over them; rather, both were created by God (Amos 4:13a; cf. Gen 1:2; Ps 104:3–4). And YHWH’s dwelling was not built in the primordial upper waters, nor was his vault founded in the lower waters, but rather in the solid heavens and earth (Amos 9:6a–b; cf. Ps 104:3; Prov 8:27; Job 26:10).[[57]](#footnote-61)

Although this polemical view is unique to the doxologies of Amos, it bears significant similarities to the cosmogonic phrases of Deutero-Isaiah. These include the exclusive use of four cosmogonic verbs referring to God the creator: בר"א, יצ"ר, עשׂ"י, and קר"א, alongside the opposition to *creatio ex materia*. Since Deutero-Isaiah is dated to the beginning of the Second Temple period, there is no reason to date the doxologies to an earlier time. The question of their dating also pertains to the composition of the doxologies. Their unified and distinctive viewpoint, as well as their close relation to each other, supports the premise that the doxologies are based on a single source, rather than independent supplementary additions. Yet, the inquiry regarding the integration of those doxologies within the book of Amos deserves a broader study, as it relates to the formation of the book of Amos, a topic that falls outside the scope of the present study.

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1. Duhm, *Die Theologie der Propheten*, 119 n. 1. For extensive research of these units in subsequent years, see discussions and history of research in Horst, “Die Doxologien”; Koch, “Die Rolle”; Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation*; Foresti, “Funzione semantica”; Weiss, *Amos*, 2:212–218; Paas, *Creation*, 209–214, as well as the commentaries on the book of Amos. The main disputes revolve around the date and authorship of the doxologies, their unity, their original *Sitz im Leben,* and the purpose of their integration into Amos’ prophecies. The conclusions below address some of these issues. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These include the first two words of 4:13 which are not considered part of the doxologies; they serve as a link between the preceding prophecy and the doxologies. The stich 9:5c–d (“And it arose like the Nile, and subsided like the Nile of Egypt”), which repeats 8:8c–d, using the verbs in the *qatal* form, appears to be an error resulting from homoioteleuton. In addition, 5:9, which follows the concluding part “YHWH, lord of hosts,” seems to be a later addition. Alternatively, some scholars include extra verses in the doxologies that were not part of Duhm’s original list. For a discussion, see the references in n. 1 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The translation of the biblical text follows the NJPS with my modifications. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The traditional translation of שחו is “wish” or “thought,” interpreted as a hapax by-form of שיח. See, e.g., *HALOT* s.v. \*שֹח. For a new suggestion, see below, n. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. An alternative translation would be “(He, who) makes the daybreak blackness.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
6. The traditional translation, following LXX, is “heights of the earth.” For further discussion, see below, section 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
7. Identifying Kimah with the Pleiades and Kesil with Orion follows LXX and other early translations. Among these, only the connection between Kimah and the Pleiades finds support elsewhere, namely in Eblaite and Amorite texts (see George and Krebernik, “Two Remarkable Vocabularies,” 119). Some scholars have suggested that this verse refers to Kimah and Kesil because they represent the changing seasons, while others conclude that it exhibits a polemic against Babylonian astronomy (for the former interpretation, see e.g., Koch, “Die Rolle,” 517–520; for the latter, see e.g., Berg, “Hymnenfragmente,” 294–295. Jeremias, *Amos*, 91, considers both interpretations). However, both these interpretations lack a philological basis, especially in light of Job 9:8–9; see the discussion below, section 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
8. Gaster (“An Ancient Hymn”) suggested omitting this verse from the doxologies, probably due to its diverse content in relation to the other units of the doxologies. I tend to agree with him. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
9. Most commentators (such as Gaster, “An Ancient Hymn,” 24; Watts, *Amos*, 55–56; Crüsemann, *Formgeschichte*, 100, 103; Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation*, 73–74; Berg, “Hymnenfragmente,” 102, 115–116) assume that this stich was originally located in 9:6, for various reasons. The most plausible reason, in my opinion, is the fact that the participial forms in 9:5–6 are all definite, including the current stich, while those in 5:8 are indefinite, excluding the present stich. However, if indeed the original location of the stich was in 9:6, it is difficult to determine why it was copied again in 5:8. Therefore, that phrase might have instead served as a refrain, copied at the end of each original stanza. Alternatively, a few commentators (such as Wolff, *Joel and* *Amos*, 216) suggest that the original location of the stich was in 5:8. For further discussion, see Weiss, *Amos*, 2:274 n. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
10. See Harper, *Commentary*, 116; Tur-Sinai, *Language*, 378; Koch, “Die Rolle,” 518–520; Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation*, 128; Szabó, “Textual Problems,” 504. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
11. See Rahmer, *Erdbeben-Theorie*, 30–31, 38–39; Weiser, *Amos*, 202; Shalem, “Seismic,” 162; Luria, “Who Calls”; Ben-Dov, “World Order,” 696 and n. 10. The earlier interpreters associated the tsunami with the earthquake mentioned in the book of Amos. In recent years, with the growing awareness of climate change, geoarchaeological studies on this topic have gained momentum (see, for example, Shtienberg et al., “A Neolithic Mega-Tsunami”). These efforts have included attempts to find literary evidence of such calamities in the Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
12. See Driver, *Joel and Amos*, 183, 223. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
13. See Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, 240; Cripps, *Commentary*, 188; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 491–492; Hadjiev, *Amos*, 126; Cox, “Hymn”; Eidevall, *Amos*, 158. Among these scholars, some argue that this warning ultimately alludes to the primeval Flood in Genesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
14. For the first interpretation, see Gaster, “An Ancient Hymn,” 23–24; Story, “Amos,” 72. For the second, see Hitzig, *Propheten*, 114. For the third, see, e.g., Horst, “Die Doxologien,” 47; Watts, *Amos*, 60; Mays, *Amos*, 96; Pfeifer, “Jahwe als Schöpfer,” 478; Gillingham, “Who Makes,” 180 and n. 19 (mentioning the subterranean waters together with the rain). According to Foresti (“Funzione semantica”) the phrase originally referred to seasonal rain, but in its new context, it was reinterpreted as a threat of flooding. Note that some commentators describe the various interpretations without favoring one over others (e.g., Wolff, *Joel and* *Amos*, 241 n. 93; Paul, *Amos*, 168–169; Paas, *Creation*, 287–288). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
15. Cf. Pfeifer, “Jahwe als Schöpfer,” 478, who additionally argues that the root שפ"ך is not part of the vocabulary of the Flood stories in Gen 7–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
16. Therefore, instead of the subterranean sea, some have interpreted the seawater in this phrase as the “upper sea”, above the firmament, which rains on the land according to Ps 104 (e.g., Mays, *Amos*, 155; Koch, “Die Rolle,” 518). Others have found in this verse a familiarity with the water cycle, comparing it to Job 36:27 (e.g., Harper, *Commentary*, 116). However, it seems that the biblical authors did not possess such a modern meteorological understanding (see Paas, *Creation*, 287). Additionally, several commentators assume that this phrase cannot be interpreted as a blessed act due to the occurrence of the root שפ"ך, which is used elsewhere in negative contexts (Berg, “Hymnenfragmente,” 311; Koch, “Die Rolle,” 518; Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation*, 128; Weiss, *Amos*, 1:155). In contrast, Paul (*Amos*, 168–169 n. 99) argued that this verb does not inherently carry a negative meaning, with its Akkadian equivalent being used in the context of rain. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
17. Cf. Driver, “Two Astronomical Passages,” 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
18. The masculine suffix pronoun in כִּסִּיתוֹ in v. 6 does not correspond with the feminine gender of תהום as the object of the verb. The emendation to the feminine pronoun (following several ancient translations) is implausible given the context and additional biblical texts in which YHWH drives out the waters covering the earth. Gunkel (*Creation*, 311–312 and n. 196) thus corrected it to כִּסַּתָּה in the pausal form, taking תהום to be the subject of the verb, which covered the mountains with water; cf. also Kraus, *Psalms*, 297; Allen, *Psalms*, 37; Rofé, *Introduction*, 321. The Masoretic text appears to have originated from later copyists attributing the verb כִּסִּיתוֹ to YHWH. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
19. Humbert (“La relation”) and Berlin (“Wisdom,” 76) for example, maintain that Gen 1 is dependent upon Ps 104, while van der Voort (“Genèse”) and Day (*Godʼs Conflict*, 52) assume that Gen 1, which presents fewer mythic characters than Ps 104, draws on the latter. For further discussion and references, see Allen, *Psalms*, 41–42. The similarity between these texts, as reflected in the aforementioned verses, is also discernible in the description of the formation of the sea creatures, the Taninnim (Gen 1:21) and Leviathan (Ps 104:25–26), and in their shared terminology, including מועדים in regard to the creation of the luminaries (Gen 1:15; Ps 104:19), חיתו ארץ/חיתו שדה/חיתו יער (Gen 1:24; Ps 104:11, 20), עוף השמים (Gen 1:28; Ps 104:12), and others; cf. Day, *Godʼs Conflict*, 51–52. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
20. It is likely that the hymn in Ps 18 // 2 Sam 22 was influenced by the same shared tradition; see Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, 166–167, and cf. Anderson, *Psalms*, 719–720; Craigie, “Comparison,” 18; Fenton, “Attitudes,” 378. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
21. To that list of biblical texts, one may add some more verses that echo additional pieces of cosmogony, beginning with waters covering the land. See, e.g. Prov 8:29, as well as Isa 17:14–16; Ps 18 [=2 Kgs 22]:14–16 and 33:7–9. Cf. Gunkel, *Creation*; Cassuto, *Studies*; Cross, *Myth*; Day, *Godʼs Conflict*; Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, 156–203, and further references there. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
22. For a discussion and references, see Lambert, *Creation Myths*, and further references in Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, 148–149 nn. 132–133. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
23. Note, however, that a few biblical texts (like Ps 24: 1–2) describe the earth’s foundation above the seawater. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
24. Gunkel, *Creation*; Cassuto, *Studies*; Cross, *Myth*; Day, *Godʼs Conflict*; Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, and further references there. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
25. Cf. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
26. Cf. also Job 40:28–29 concerning the Leviathan: “Will he make an agreement with you, to be taken as your lifelong slave? Will you play with him like a bird, and tie him down for your girls?” The process of turning God’s rivals into his subordinates and aides is also recorded in Enuma Eliš (IV 105–118; V 73–76). For further discussion, see Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, 124–125. Note that Amos 9:4, which describes God’s command for the sword to do his will, was apparently added later, inspired by v. 3 (cited above); for a discussion, see Rofé, *Introduction*, 317–318. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
27. Therefore, there is no reason to interpret the root קר"אin Amos through Arabic *q-r-y*, which means “to gather, bring or hold together,” as suggested by Eitan, “Biblical Studies,” 6 (because he assumed that the verbs קר"א and שפ"ךmust oppose each other), followed by Speier, “Bemerkungen,” 307; Wolff, *Joel and* *Amos*, 241; Gordis, “Studies,” 229–230. For the theme of creation through speech in general, which is also common to Egyptian cosmogonies, see Weinfeld, “God the Creator.” [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
28. Etymologically, במה refers to the middle body part, like the chest and back, as inferred from the occurrences of the Akkadian word *bamtu* 2 (*CAD* B, 78–79) and the Ugaritic term *bmt* (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Ugaritic*, 221). It also corresponds to the meaning of the Akkadian word *bamtu* A: “half” (*CAD* B, 77–78). In light of the parallels in Ps 18 // 2 Sam 22 and Hab 3, the biblical Hebrew term במה may refer additionally to the upper legs. Metaphorically, both in biblical Hebrew and Akkadian, במה and *bamtu* are used in topographical contexts to describe the middle position of a certain place (similar to other body parts such as ירך ,ירכתיים [thigh], and ראש [head], which are used in reference to low and high positions, respectively, in accordance with their location in the human body). Only in later periods, as evidenced by the Greek and Syriac translations of the Bible, was the term במה understood in topographical contexts as a “high place,” and henceforth it was often translated and interpreted in this way. This secondary later meaning of במה may have been influenced by the homophonic term במה, namely a construction or an elevated object that was used in religious rituals and funerary rites. In any case, the later meaning of במה as a high place in a topographical context is not recorded in biblical Hebrew, but only in its translations from the Hellenistic period onwards. For further discussion, see Tur-Sinai, *Beliefs*, 235–239; Vaughan, *bāmâ*; Weiss, *Amos*, 2:97 n. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
29. Borchardt, *S‘aḥu-Re*, pl. 8. For further discussion, see David, “Devouring,” 86–89. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
30. Lambert, *Creation Myths*, 92–93. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
31. See Cassuto, *Studies*, 96; Pope, *Job*, 69–70; Crenshaw, “Wedōrēk,” 47; Gray, *Job*, 195, who all highlight the link between Job 9:8–9 and the parallel scene in Enuma Eliš. Some of them also compare these verses to the scene shown on the *Baal au foudre* stele (AO 15775) although the sea on this stele is not anthropomorphic. This comparison probably derives from the common translation of Job 9:8, “(He, who) treads on the waves of the sea” (instead of: “… treads upon the back of the sea,” as translated by, e.g., Gray, *Job*, 191; Greenstein, *Job*, 39), which again reflects the erroneous meaning of במה as a high place, this time referring to high waves; see Vaughan, *bāmâ*, 60 n. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
32. Rahab is listed among YHWH’s enemies, alongside Tannin and Leviathan, in contexts combining theomachy and cosmogony (see Ps 89:11; Job 26:12, and cf. Isa 51:9–10). Over time, Rahab was identified with Egypt (see Isa 30:30; Ps 87:4). For Rahab, see further Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
33. Cf. Cassuto, *Studies*, 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
34. Koch, “Die Rolle,” 520–522; Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation*, 135; Wolff, *Joel and* *Amos*, 216; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 490; Jeremias, *Amos*, 77; Gray, *Job*, 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
35. The doxologies’ concluding line “YHWH (God of hosts)” is not included in the above quotations. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
36. Cf. Koch, “Die Rolle,” 522. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
37. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 490. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
38. Crüsemann, *Formgeschichte*, 100. In contrast, Gaster (“An Ancient Hymn”) suggested reconstructing ומוציא מזרות בעתו in light of Job 38:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
39. Wolff, *Joel and* *Amos*, 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
40. For that reason, scholars have suggested several other mythical interpretations of this phrase. Dijkstra (“Textual Remarks,” 247) linked it to the Hittite and Levantine iconography of the storm gods standing on mountains. Rudolph (*Amos*, 182) connected it to the Near Eastern descriptions of the sun god’s journey, from sunrise to sunset. And others attributed it to the journey of the storm gods and the natural storms themselves (Harper, *Commentary*, 105; Edghill, *Book of* *Amos*, 47). According to Andersen and Freedman (*Amos*, 456–457), only traces of a myth have been preserved here, without the myth itself. In this, they are close to the interpretation suggested below, but without offering a reason for the disappearance of myth here. Alternatively, some, influenced by the content of the book of Amos, have linked במתי ארץ here with the במות used in Israelite and Canaanite worship (e.g., Jeremias, *Amos*, 79). While this could have been one of the reasons for integrating the doxologies in their current place, namely—the book of Amos (cf. Koch, “Die Rolle,” 513–514), it is unlikely that the doxologies originally incorporated elements of reality within the cosmic descriptions attributed to God (cf. Eidevall, *Amos*, 149). For further discussion, see Crenshaw, “Wedōrēk”; Weiss, *Amos*, 2:228–229 nn. 108–109. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
41. See Shinan and Zakovitch, *From Gods*, with previous literature therein. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
42. The closest parallel to the present phrase is found in Mic 1:3–4: “He will come down and tread upon the back of earth (וְיָרַד וְדָרַךְ עַל בָּמֳתֵי אָרֶץ), and the mountains shall melt under him, and the valleys burst open.” However, interpreting במתי ארץ in Amos 4:13 in a topographical sense, as in Mic 1:3–4, is difficult, since it requires the catastrophic results of God’s treading upon the earth, results that are missing in Amos 4:13. In this regard, note that some scholars have questioned the originality of the verb דרך in Mic 1:3–4, due to its absence in LXXL (however, in LXXA the verb וירד is missing) and in 1QpMic (however, traces exist in the Micah scroll from Mur 88), as well as the duplication created by the two successive verbs וירד ודרך (e.g. Wolff, *Micah*, 41; cf. *BH*). According to them, the verb ודרך was added later in Micah under the influence of Amos 4:13 and Deut 33:29. Others, in contrast, maintain that both verbs in Micah are original (e.g., Crenshaw, “Wedōrēk”; Waltke, *Micah*, 48). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
43. E.g., Duhm, *zwölf Propheten*, 8; Edghill, *Book of* *Amos*, 47; Driver, “Problems,” 56 n. 70; Cripps, *Commentary*, 176; Mays, *Amos*, 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
44. Considering this, several scholars (e.g., Harper, *Commentary*, 104; Rudolph, *Amos*, 182; Paul, *Amos*, 154; Paas, *Creation*, 247–248; Eidevall, *Amos*, 150) argue that the choice of mountains and wind, among all the forces of nature, stems from their inherent opposition: stability vs. transience; visibility vs. invisibility, and so forth. However, this interpretation is overly inclusive and therefore insufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
45. It should be emphasized that in Amos 4:13, as well as in other biblical cosmogonies (see below), the term “wind” refers to the natural phenomenon of moving air, distinct from breath, soul, spirit, and the like; see Paul, *Amos*, 154. For alternative viewpoints, see Weiss, *Amos*, 2:221 n. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
46. The interpretation of the biblical root רח"ף is based on the Ugaritic parallel between the roots *r-ḫ-p* and *d-ˀ-y*: “to fly” (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Ugaritic*, 727–728). Gunkel (*Genesis*, 105–106) has proposed an alternative interpretation of the Hebrew רח"ף, drawing on its Syriac equivalent root. Since one of the meanings of the Syriac רח"ף is “to brood,” he argued that the biblical term is an echo of the Phoenician cosmogonic tradition involving a legendary egg, a motif that originated in Egyptian cosmogonies. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
47. While participial forms are employed in these verses, their content and close affinities with subsequent verses lead to the conclusion that they also originate from the ancient cosmogonic source, which the biblical poet drew upon for the present hymn. See also Kaduri, “Windy,” 143, regarding Ps 104:4a: “[T]he broader context would suggest that at the time of the creation, the winds *were made* God’s angels and not vice versa. The reason is that the parallel syntax of the previous verse, ‘who has made clouds His chariot,’ seems to assert that an element of the natural world (clouds) was taken by God and shaped into something of service to Him (His chariot)” (italics in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
48. See above section 1 (p. 8). Note that Jub 2:2–3 (cf. 4QJuba V 4–10) directly connects Ps 104:3–4 with Gen 1, incorporating the above verses into the creation story of Gen 1. Was the author of Jubilees familiar with an independent tradition that fused ideas from Gen 1 and Ps 104, or was this an innovative adaptation of his own? For additional Jewish post-biblical sources addressing these topics, see Kaduri, “Windy”; Darshan, “Ruaḥ ‘Elohim,” 68–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
49. The topic has recently been discussed at length by Darshan, “Ruaḥ ‘Elohim”; cf. Eissfeldt, *Kleine Schriften*, 3:501–512. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
50. For עליה as loft, see, e.g., Judg 3:20, 23–25; 1 Kgs 17:19, 23; Jer 22:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
51. Other texts (e.g., Prov 8:27) consider the clouds as the storeroom of the upper primordial waters; cf. Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, 168, 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
52. For the equivalent roots בנ"י and קר"י*,* cf. Neh 3:3; 2 Chr 34:11. Since the Hebrew term מעלות is commonly interpreted as “stairs” in other instances (e.g., 1 Kgs 10:19; Neh 3:15), some have suggested this meaning here (Berg, “Hymnenfragmente,” 307; Paas, “He Who,” suggesting an Egyptian influence; idem, *Creation*, 294; Eidevall, *Amos*, 231–232). However, many others rightly understand it here as “lofts,” in keeping with Greek and Latin translations of Amos 9:6 (Harper, *Commentary*,190–191; Edghill, *Book of* *Amos*, 89; Gaster, “An Ancient Hymn,” 25; Mays, *Amos*, 155; Cripps, *Commentary*, 261; Wolff, *Joel and* *Amos*, 335–336; Rudolph, *Amos*, 242 n. 6; Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation*, 72, 74; Paul, *Amos*, 280 n. 75). While most suggest that dittography of the letter מ turned עליות into מעלות in Amos 9:6, the term מעלות may have merely been used as a synonym for עליות (Driver, *Joel and Amos*, 223). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
53. Gaster, “An Ancient Hymn,” n. f (cf. Harper, *Commentary*, 191). In addition to Ps 104, Gaster compared this text to line 17 in the Babylonian composition *The Foundation of Eridu* (Lambert, *Creation Myths*, 372–373): “Marduk constructed a raft on the surface of the waters.” [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
54. For the motif of the building of God’s abode that concludes cosmogonies in the Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature, see Ayali-Darshan, *Storm-God*, 187–190, and references there. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
55. This interpretation is primarily drawn from the context, as in its other biblical occurrences it typically signifies “a bundle” (but cf. Paas, *Creation*, who interprets אגודה here as a bundle of plants decorating the throne of YHWH, inspired by Egyptian iconography). *BDB* 8a suggests a semantic development of the root אג"ד (“as fitted together, constructed”), comparing it to the Arabic *ˀijād*, meaning “arch, dome.” Gaster (“An Ancient Hymn,” 25) compared it to the Arabic *ˀajd* “foundation,” in light of which he interpreted אגודה. For additional suggestions, including emendations, see Weiss, *Amos*, 2:517 nn. 89–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
56. Proverbs 8:27: “When he inscribed (בְּחֻקוֹ) a circle (חוּג) upon the deep (תְהוֹם)”; Job 26:10: “He inscribed (חֹק) a circle (חָג) upon the water (מָיִם), up to the boundary between light and darkness.” The close relation between חוג and אגודה has been noted by, e.g., Cripps, *Commentary*, 262; Paul, “Cosmographical Terms.” For the links between Prov 8 and Job 26, see Ayali-Darshan, “Question.” [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
57. In light of the conclusion drawn from the examination of the four phrases discussed above, which all seem to align with the same polemical approach, I would cautiously propose amending the phrase “וּמַגִּיד לְאָדָם מַה שֵּׂחוֹ” (8:13)—over which scholars have disagreed in their interpretations and emendations—to ומגיר לאדמה שרע. This suggestion, in part, follows Coppens (“Amos IV”), who amends the verse to: ומגיר לאדמה מי שחו. While the first part of his conjecture is convincing, the second part remains unintelligible. The proposed emendation שרע refers to the subterranean water, which, according to this view, was poured onto the ground by God the creator, in contrast to other biblical texts describing it as part of the primordial waters stored in the abyss (cf. Ps 33:7b; Prov 8:28b). The term *šrˁ*, documented in a Ugaritic text in proximity to *thm* (*KTU* 1.19 I 45) and thus understood in the same semantic field, is not recorded in the Hebrew Bible. However, an equivalent term in metathesis, שעירים, is mentioned in parallel with רביבים (Deut 32:2), meaning “copious showers.” Furthermore, it has long been suggested that the biblical expression שדי תרמת (2 Sam 1:22) should be amended to שרע תהמת based on that Ugaritic text (Ginsberg, “Parallel,” followed by many). For a comprehensive review of the various opinions regarding the possibility of שרע in biblical Hebrew, see Dietrich and Loretz, “Die Wasserflut,” and further bibliography there. If this emendation is accurate, then the doxologies reference the three traditional locations of the primordial waters in the inhabited world: the heavens, the land, and the abyss. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)