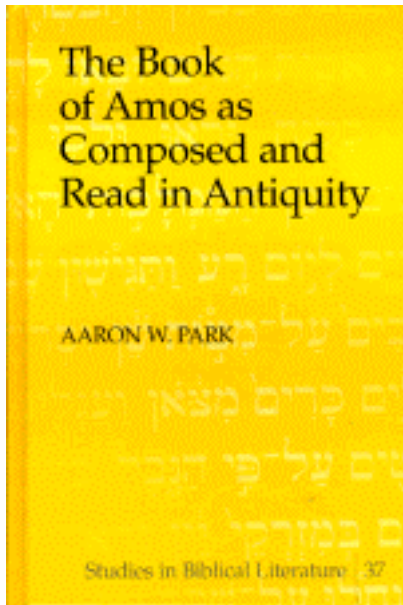


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The Book of Amos As Composed and Read in Antiquity

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This book is an edited version of the author's 1999 doctoral dissertation under the direction of James A. Sanders. The introduction describes the topic as the composition and transmission of the book of Amos from the earliest preserved speeches of the prophet to the establishment of the biblical canon. This ambitious goal is limited by a focus on Amos 5:25–27 and 9:11–15 and their role in the redaction of the book and in its reception in literature of the Second Temple period and in early Christian literature. The results of this study are twofold: (1) a form- and redaction-critical study of the book of Amos in its final form, and (2) a study in “comparative midrash” that examines the use of Amos 5:25–27 and 9:11–15 in numerous ancient texts.

The first part of Park's study applies the refined form- and redaction-critical methodologies reflected in recent volumes of the Forms of Old Testament Literature series to the book of Amos. Chapter 1 demonstrates that such an approach is warranted in light of the history of research on the composition of Amos. In chapter 2, Park describes the assumptions underlying his methodological approach and the criteria for his redactional conclusions. The method calls for an initial synchronic analysis of the final text before proceeding to a diachronic investigation of earlier literary levels of composition. Conclusions about redactional layers prior to the present form of the text are

qualified by a decreasing level of probability due to an increasing level of speculation. Park enumerates five categories of evidence that are helpful for detecting the presence of earlier material that has escaped the work of the “disappearing redactor”: particular historical references, unfulfilled prophetic utterances, signs of theological/ideological conflict, breaks or tensions in literary flow or form, and intertextual citations or allusions.

Chapter 3 offers the results of Park’s compositional analysis of Amos and contains the primary contribution of the book. Park first analyzes the structure of the book, basing decisions where possible on structural features rather than on the basis of content. The superscription and motto of Amos 1:1–2 function as an introduction and also signal the nature of the book’s composition as an edited report of the prophet’s words. Park divides the body of the book into two parts: YHWH’s plan to punish Israel (1:3–9:6) and YHWH’s plan to restore Israel as one nation (9:7–15). He identifies the genre of the entire work as a prophetic exhortation “Concerning YHWH’s Plan for Israel and Judah: One Nation.” This analysis of structure and genre highlight the unique ending of the book in 9:15: “says YHWH your [masc. sg.] God.” The masculine singular pronoun suggests to Park an individual addressee for the book as a whole. Park proposes that the intended recipient of the book was a Judahite king, specifically Josiah, for whom the exile of Israel would have been a past reality and the restoration of the northern territories a future hope. The book of Amos would have encouraged Josiah on the basis of YHWH’s continuing plan for Israel presented specifically in 9:11–15. This conclusion of a preexilic final redaction of Amos is the primary thesis of the book.

The remainder of chapter 3 examines the major structural units of Amos for evidence of earlier compositional layers. Park proposes two such layers. The first, attributed to “the school of Amos,” would have lacked the Judahite synchronisms in the superscription, the Zion poem in 1:2, and the restoration prophecy in 9:11–15. This composition would have served to vindicate Amos’s prophecy in light of the exile of the northern kingdom. Park proposes an earlier composition, the presumed *Grundschrift* of Amos, but does not venture a reconstruction of its content due to its necessarily hypothetical nature. He finds no evidence, however, to contradict the likelihood that most of this composition derived from the words of the prophet himself. Common to all three proposed redactions is the theme of exile as punishment for Israel’s sin. This theme is the basis for Park’s discussion of the reception history of Amos 5:25–27 and 9:11–15 in subsequent ancient texts.

Chapter 4 traces the reception history of Amos 5:25–27 and 9:11–15 in texts from the Second Temple period, early Christianity, and rabbinic Judaism. A major portion of the chapter is given to the interpretation of these passages in the Greek translation of Amos. Parks sets this discussion within a substantial analysis of the LXX of Amos as a whole. Chapter 4 also contains discussions of the use of the two focal passages in the Qumran

Damascus Scroll, 4QFlorilegium, the book of Acts, early Christian writings, and rabbinic literature. A final chapter summarizes the findings of Park's research with an emphasis on the adaptability of the traditions of Amos for multiple communities and multiple contexts.

The strengths of Park's book lie in the impressive amount of analytical research represented within and in his careful attention to methodological issues. His conclusion of a seventh-century redaction of the final form of Amos is well argued and based on sound methodological judgments. His analysis of three identifiable compositional layers of Amos provides a mediating position between commentators who see the book as entirely the literary work of the prophet and those who propose numerous and complex redactional layers. It will be interesting, because of their similar methodologies, to compare his work with the planned volume on Amos in the FOTL series when it becomes available. Another notable contribution is the discussion of the structure of the LXX of Amos and the guiding hermeneutic behind that important witness to the book.

Park's method and topic do raise some questions that are not adequately addressed in his book. Although he gives careful study to the LXX translation of Amos, he shows no interest in identifying the Hebrew *Vorlage* of that translation. Although reconstructing this Hebrew text is necessarily speculative, so is the enterprise of reconstructing earlier redactional stages. The discovery of Qumran manuscripts that support LXX readings against those of the MT would warrant such an investigation. Failing to address the question of the parent text of the LXX of Amos calls into question some of Park's conclusions about the translation, since some of the renderings that he judges to be intentional changes of the translator may in fact have been faithful renderings of a different Hebrew text. The *Vorlage* of the LXX is a major witness to the reception of Amos in antiquity that would seem to be valuable for a study such as this one.

The major question hovering over the book, however, is the scope of Park's project. Although he addresses both the redaction and reception of Amos, these two parts of his book seems disjointed and without sufficient unity. Park does not adequately answer the question of whether this is one unified study or two studies combined in one volume. This can be seen, for example, in the different treatments of Amos 5:25–27 in the two major sections of the book. The passage receives very little attention in the redactional study because Park's method focuses on structural analysis, and 5:25–27 is not a major structural unit. The attention it receives in the study of Amos's reception history is due to its content, specifically its reference to exile, and to the frequency of its use in Second Temple literature. Park's own comments further belie uncertainty about the goal of the study. On page 5 he states, "This book is essentially a study in comparative midrash," emphasizing the reception history of Amos. On page 38, however, he states, "This study

is primarily a redaction-critical investigation.” There does seem to be a way of uniting these two goals of the book. If Park is correct that the book of Amos was redacted in the seventh century to support Josiah’s restoration efforts in the north, how would this redaction have been interpreted in light of the failure of this restoration due to the untimely death of Josiah and the collapse of the kingdom of Judah just two decades later? These questions notwithstanding, Park’s book contributes insights into the formation of the book of Amos that need to be dealt with in future studies. It also marshals valuable resources for those interested in the reception of the book of Amos in antiquity.