"Resurrection Imagery form Baal to the Book of Daniel," in *Congress Volume: Cambridge, 1995*, ed. J. A. Emerton (VTSup 66; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997) 125-33; **P. S. Johnston,** "Death and Afterlife," *DOTHB* 215–18; idem, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; Leicester: Apollos, 2002); **J. D. Levenson,** *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); **R. L. Routledge,** "Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament," *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 9.1 (2008) 22-39. P. S. Johnston

AMOS, BOOK OF

The book of Amos, possibly the earliest legacy of the "writing prophets," is a paradigm of the prophetic genre. It is notable especially for its powerful rhetorical language, while its most significant theological contribution to the biblical canon lies in the uncompromising censure of the social injustice prevalent in Israelite society in the eighth century BC.

1. Structure and Argument
2. Composition and Interpretation
3. Theology
4. Place in the Canon

1. Structure and Argument.

1.1. Structure. Until well into the 1980s it was common for OT scholarship to affirm that the Prophetic Books, Amos included, lack a clear structure. According to G. von Rad, "The prophetic corpus lies before us in what are, to some extent, very shapeless collections of traditional material, arranged with almost no regard for content or chronological order" (von Rad, 33). Of Amos it has been said that the book "has too little story, too little train of thought, and too little internal coherence to hold interest for more than a few verses or, at most, a chapter" (Coote, 1).

However, such views had to be thoroughly revised following detailed redaction- and rhetorical-critical investigations, with the effect that R. Gordon can now claim that "the prophetic books . . . clearly represent the work of craftsmen and rhetoricians who sought to influence not only by the content of the message but also by the literary form into which they molded it" (Gordon, 107). Similar conclusions have been reached with regard to the arrangement of Amos, but since the book features a complex array of structural devices and literary forms, no final consensus has been reached regarding its structure.

At the most basic level, Amos can be divided into three or four parts: Amos 1—2, the introduction; Amos 3—6, often labeled the "words"; Amos 7—9, the "visions." The final verses of Amos 9 sometimes are treated as a separate part that is thought to have been appended in postexilic times. However, this outline, which provides no more than a general starting point, glosses over the fact that Amos 7—9, in addition to *visions, also features a historical narrative (Amos 7:10-17), judgment speeches (Amos 8:4-14) and a *salvation oracle (Amos 9:11-15). Observations such as this led some earlier commentators to reassign (some of) those sections to other parts of the book (see, e.g., the overview of proposed solutions regarding Amos 7:10-17 in Gordis, 217-18), but B. Childs probably is correct to conclude that "the editorial shaping established no theological significance between Amos' words and visions" (Childs, 404).

In an attempt to move beyond the general tripartite outline, various proposals have been suggested. For instance, a structural function has sometimes been assigned to the hymn fragments in Amos 1:2 (if this is to be included among the hymn fragments); 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6 (Koch), to the distribution and use of, in some cases, highly elaborate divine names (such as *ʾădōnāy yhwh ʾĕlōhê haṣṣĕbāʾôt* in Amos 3:13 [see Koch; Dempster]), to heptads and seven-plus-one series (Limburg) and to "telescoping n+1 patterns" (O'Connell). However, none of these proposals has won wide appeal (for further discussion, see Möller 2003, 62-88).

A far more popular approach has been to find a variety of chiastic structures in the book of Amos. This endeavor goes back to some early studies by J. de Waard and N. Tromp, who argued that Amos 5:1-17 displays a concentric arrangement. Building upon these proposals, some have attempted to extend the outer limits of this central chiasm to include wider sections of the book. Intermediate steps are represented by the works of J. Lust, who extended the boundaries to Amos 4:1—6:7, and P. Noble, who found a chiastic arrangement throughout Amos 3:9—6:14. The most far-reaching chiasms that have been suggested encompass more or less the entire book of Amos (see, e.g., Dorsey; Rottzoll). However, while the early

studies by de Waard and Tromp successfully demonstrated the chiastic arrangement of Amos 5:1-17, thus making a significant contribution to the study of the book of Amos, many of the proposals for more extensive concentric structures suffer from a tendency to rely on obscure section breaks, exaggerate the level of correspondence between purportedly parallel parts, or delete or rearrange passages that sit awkwardly within the proposed arrangement (see the discussion in Möller 2003, 64-74).

Perhaps a better way forward is to pay attention to indicators of aperture and closure within the text, such as divine speech formulas and other structural markers. Based on these, it has been suggested that, in addition to the historical superscription in Amos 1:1 and the motto in Amos 1:2, the book consists of nine major units (Möller 2003, 89-103). The first of these, the introductory series of oracles against the nations in Amos 1:3—2:16, is easily identified as one of the book's major sections due to its strophic arrangement, in which each of the eight oracles not only is introduced by the divine speech formula "This is what the LORD says," but also features additional recurring elements, such as the phrase "For three sins of . . . , even for four, I will not turn back my wrath." The occurrence of a major break after Amos 2:16 is signaled by the introductory words "Hear this word the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel" in Amos 3:1. Similar phrases in Amos 4:1 and Amos 5:1, together with other structural indicators, such as the inclusio achieved by the use of *pāqad* ("punish") in Amos 3:2, 14 and the chiastic arrangement of Amos 5:1-17, indicate that the oracles against the nations are followed by three extended judgment speeches in Amos 3:1-15; 4:1-13; 5:1-17.

These judgment speeches give way to two extended woe oracles in Amos 5:18-27; 6:1-14, each of which is introduced by the term *hôy* ("woe"). In the visions-cum-narrative section Amos 7:1—8:3 we find another passage that is serial in nature in that each of its four visions is introduced by the words "This is what the Sovereign LORD/he showed me," a phrase that performs a similar function to the recurring divine speech formula in Amos 1:3—2:16. The two final parts are introduced by phrases that represent variations on the introductory markers employed in earlier sections of the book. Thus, the words "hear this" mark the commencement of another judgment speech in Amos 8:4-14, while the book's conclusion in Amos 9:1-15 is opened by the phrase "I saw the LORD standing by the altar," which by its repetition of the term *rā'â* (Qal "see" in Amos 9:1; Hiphil "show" in Amos 7:1, 4, 7; 8:1) recalls the introductions to the earlier visions. These two final parts share some similarities in that both end in sections introduced by the eschatological formulas "in that day" (Amos 8:9, 13; 9:11) and "the days are coming" (Amos 8:11; 9:13). To summarize, this analysis suggests that the book of Amos falls into the following main parts: Amos 1:1-2; 1:3—2:16; 3:1-15; 4:1-13; 5:1-17; 5:18-27; 6:1-14; 7:1—8:3; 8:4-14; 9:1-15.

1.2. Argument. The book opens with a superscription (Amos 1:1), which briefly introduces the prophet Amos and outlines the period of his ministry with reference to the ruling kings in Israel and Judah, thus pointing to a time toward the earlier part of the eighth century BC (*see* Israelite History). The book's gloomy mood is foreshadowed in Amos 1:2, a verse perhaps best understood as the book's motto. This is followed by a series of oracles that threaten Israel's neighbors with the divine punishment for their atrocious war crimes (Amos 1:3—2:5). The series, which appears to play on the audience's nationalistic feelings, features an adroit rhetorical arrangement that moves from foreign *nations proper (Arameans, Philistines, Phoenicians) to Israel's blood relatives (Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites) before apparently settling on the sibling nation, Judah (Amos 2:4-5), whose inhabitants are accused of having rejected the divine Torah, as the prime target. However, Amos's words turn out to be a cleverly designed rhetorical trap, for his harangue eventually culminates in a judgment speech against the Israelites themselves (Amos 2:6-16). It is they who are singled out as the prime target of the divine punishment, and their inclusion in this powerful discourse suggests that the social injustice, the oppression of the poor and marginalized, that especially the upper echelons of Israel's society are guilty of is just as bad as, if indeed not worse than, the war crimes committed by their neighbors.

It has been argued that the book from this point on presents the debate between the prophet Amos and his complacent audience (see Möller 2003), who reject the prophetic

message of judgment, relying instead on their cherished theological traditions (such as the *Day of the Lord [see Amos 5:18-20]). A reading of the book in its final form suggests that the debate is triggered by Amos's denunciation of Israel in the concluding part of the introductory series of oracles against the nations (Amos 2:6-16). To this the people apparently replied that they would not be punished by their God, who, after all, had elected them as his chosen people. The people's reply has to be inferred at this point, but similar responses are explicitly stated throughout (see Amos 5:14; 6:1-3; 9:10). In response to the Israelites' reliance upon their status as the chosen people, Amos, in what is the first of a series of extended judgment speeches addressed to Israel, stresses that this status, far from implying impunity from punishment, brings with it a greater level of responsibility (Amos 3:1-2).

That the book of Amos features the debate between the prophet and his audience is suggested not only by those passages that refer to the people's objections (e.g., Amos 5:14; 9:10), but also by the fact that the prophet feels compelled to reinterpret and subvert cherished theological concepts such as the *exodus tradition (Amos 2:9-10; 3:1-2; 9:7) and the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18-20). Indeed, with regard to Amos's allusions to the exodus tradition, it can be seen that the prophet's stance becomes increasingly more radical. In Amos 2:9-10 the exodus is simply affirmed, and in Amos 3:1-2 the special responsibilities ensuing from Israel's election as God's chosen people are pointed out, while in Amos 9:7 any special status is now flatly denied. This is best understood in the context of a debate where positions have become more and more entrenched, thus demanding more drastic rhetorical measures from Amos if he is to succeed in his attempt to get his audience to face up to reality. The hymn fragments extoling God's destructive powers (Amos 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6) and the acerbic criticism of Israel's religious activities (Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-23) are also best understood from the polemical perspective demanded by this dialogical context.

The judgment speeches in Amos 3:1-15; 4:1-13; 5:1-17, each of which is introduced by the phrase "Hear this word," reiterate the threat of the divine punishment, but they also represent progressive stages in the debate between the prophet and his audience. In Amos 3:1-15 the judgment is threatened at the beginning and reaffirmed at the end of the speech (Amos 3:1-2, 13-15). Its initial announcement once again features Amos's rhetorical shock tactics, for the basic meaning of the verb *pāqad* in Amos 3:2 is "to visit." In its context here, which talks about Israel's election, the natural assumption would be to take this as a friendly visit, and it is only when Amos makes the point that God is going to visit because of "all your sins" that it becomes clear that God's intention is to visit in order to punish his people. The concluding judgment section (Amos 3:13-15), which repeats the verb *pāqad* (Amos 3:14), underlines that the punishment is aimed especially at the rich, the owners of several, richly adorned houses, and that there will be no refuge anymore, since the horns of the altar, which would have guaranteed sanctuary (see Ex 21:13-14; 1 Kings 1:50; 2:28), will be cut off.

In between these framing judgment sections we find Amos arguing his case. First (Amos 3:3-8), in response to an apparent demand that he refrain from proclaiming such a terrible message, Amos employs a series of rhetorical questions to make the point that he has no other choice: "The Sovereign LORD has spoken; who can but prophesy?" He even, in another polemical twist, offers the supporting evidence of two witnesses, ironically provided by Ashdod and Egypt—described by one commentator as "experts in terms of oppression" (Rudolph, 163)—which are called upon to witness the oppression that is going on in Israel's midst (Amos 3:9-10) and that will lead to an enemy plundering the fortresses of the plunderers (Amos 3:10-11). But surely God would rescue his people from such an attack, or so the people assumed. To this objection Amos replies with heavy irony, indicating that there will be a "rescue," but only in the form of some worthless remains that merely prove that God's devastating judgment has indeed taken place (Amos 3:12). For that is the point of the remains that a shepherd might rescue from a lion's mouth: they serve as evidence that the animal truly has been torn by a wild beast (Ex 22:13; see also Gen 31:39).

The well-to-do are also the focus at the beginning of the next judgment speech (Amos 4:1-3), as Amos singles out Israel's upper-class women as an illustration of the lifestyle that Yahweh denounces. Again the oppression of

the poor and needy is highlighted, together with what appears to be a drinking problem, as these "cows of Bashan," as the *women are called, are known for demanding drink from their husbands. God now even swears that they will be punished for their outrageous behavior; and the punishment is described in the most drastic of terms (Amos 4:2-3). The numerous *sacrifices and tithes that the people boast about cannot avert this punishment (Amos 4:4-5), as Amos points out, again with the help of a heavy dose of irony, as he parodies a priest's call to *worship. Whereas a priest might have encouraged the people to "go to Bethel and worship; go to Gilgal and bring your sacrifices," Amos turns this on its head when he says, "Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more" (Amos 4:4). Once more the judgment announced at the beginning of the discourse (Amos 4:2-3) is reaffirmed at least implicitly at its end when the Israelites are called upon to prepare for a meeting with a God who is described in highly ominous terms as the one who turns dawn to darkness and treads upon the high places of the earth (Amos 4:12-13). This meeting will be necessary not least because the people had failed to respond to Yahweh's earlier acts of judgment, which had been intended to occasion their return to him (Amos 4:6-11).

The drama increases in the third judgment speech (Amos 5:1-17) when Amos suddenly laments Israel's fall (Amos 5:1-3). When read in context, the text's implication is that this is the outcome of Israel's meeting with Yahweh, which appears to have resulted in the nation's death. However, as we read on, the exhortation to seek God and live (Amos 5:4-6) indicates that it is not too late, and that the divine punishment might yet be averted. Yet the central part (Amos 5:7-13) of this chiastically arranged text underlines the existing crisis between Yahweh and Israel. God's people, who pervert justice (Amos 5:7, 10, 12), commit social crimes and live a self-complacent life (Amos 5:11), are to face the creator God, whose awesome destructive powers are once again highlighted in one of the book's hymn fragments (Amos 5:8-9). This contrast between Yahweh and his people provides the backdrop for another exhortation (Amos 5:14-15), which now admonishes the Israelites to seek good instead of *evil. If they were to do this, Yahweh might still be merciful toward at least the "remnant of Joseph." However, the concluding part (Amos 5:16-17) suggests otherwise. Forecasting the people's wailing in response to the divine passing through their midst, it anticipates a negative outcome to Israel's meeting with their God.

The ensuing "woe oracles" in Amos 5:18-27; 6:1-14 are fitting sequels to the lament in Amos 5:16-17. Again, the transition to Amos 5:18 from the preceding verse gives the impression of Amos reacting to an implied response by his addressees. The prophet's references to Israel's meeting with God (Amos 4:12; 5:17) triggered the people's memory of the Day of the Lord tradition, which they understood to speak of a time when God would come to their rescue. Because they believed Yahweh to be with them (Amos 5:14), his arrival would be a glorious occasion, a day of light (Amos 5:18). But Amos turns the Day of the Lord tradition against them (Amos 5:18-20). That day, far from being a day of light, would turn out to be utter darkness. It would be a time of terror, as the prophet's story of a person fleeing from a lion and getting away from a bear only to be bitten by a snake illustrates. Further reasons for Amos's negative interpretation of the Day of the Lord are given in Amos 5:21-27, a passage that also explicates the consequences of that day as the people's exile "beyond Damascus." Here, as in Amos 4:4-5, the focus is on empty worship rituals together with a lack of concern for justice (Amos 5:21-24).

In the second woe oracle (Amos 6:1-14) Amos once more rebukes the people's complacency and contemptuous lifestyle, which slights "the ruin of Joseph"—that is, the ruin of the poor (Amos 6:1-7). Again Amos appears to be reacting to the audience's objections to his message of judgment. Those who trust in their military prowess, thinking that this would help them against any threat of exile, are reminded of others who had suffered military defeat despite their assumed strength (Amos 6:2-3). The ruling classes' attempt to "put off the evil day" thus only testifies to their self-delusion, and their excessive decadence and complacency pictured in Amos 6:4-6 will soon come to an end when, in another ironic twist, Israel's leaders will lead their people into exile (Amos 6:7). The remainder of this extended woe oracle sees Amos struggling to convince the Israelites that Yahweh is indeed going to punish them, that the impending judgment will be of the utmost severity

(Amos 6:8-11, 14), that their pride and complacency are abhorred by God (Amos 6:8, 13), and that the injustice they are guilty of is profoundly irrational and unnatural (Amos 6:12).

The visions in Amos 7:1—8:3, together with the embedded narrative report of Amos's clash with the priest Amaziah, which confirms the hostile attitude of Amos's audience (Amos 7:10-17), emphasize that the punishment, while not desired by Amos, will not be averted (Amos 7:8; 8:2). Twice, having become alert to the disastrous consequences of Yahweh's destructive actions in the first two visions, Amos had been successful in obviating the judgment by interceding on Israel's behalf (Amos 7:2, 5). However, in the third vision (Amos 7:7-9) he is prevented from a similar course of action by the fact that there does not appear to be a picture of devastation. In fact, it seems that the significance of the third vision is not immediately clear to the prophet, and when he eventually receives an explanation, Yahweh, before spelling out the punishment, declares that he would not spare Israel again (Amos 7:8). At this point, the visions are interrupted by the story of Amos's encounter with Amaziah (Amos 7:10-17), which appears to have been included here because Amaziah's refusal to take Amos's words as a divine message (compare Amos's "then the LORD said" in Amos 7:8 with Amaziah's "this is what Amos is saying" in Amos 7:11) illustrates the problem that Amos had been facing all along. With the priest's intervention, which is intended to silence the prophet, the debate between Amos and his audience intensifies. The placement of the fourth vision (Amos 8:1-3) after this interlude stresses that the priest's attempt had been futile: God and his prophet cannot be silenced. This vision also features the climactic announcement that "the end has come upon my people Israel" (Amos 8:2).

In another judgment speech in Amos 8:4-14 Amos revisits the exploitative practices of the rich and powerful (Amos 8:4-6) (*see* Wealth and Poverty), before once again focusing upon the divine judgment and its implications (Amos 8:7-14). The judgment section, which is introduced by another divine oath (Amos 8:7), returns to the notion of Yahweh's awe-inspiring cosmic power (Amos 8:9). The theme of mourning and wailing also resurfaces (Amos 8:10), but the most striking feature is the announcement of a famine, yet not a famine of food and drink but rather of hearing the word of the Lord (Amos 8:11-13). This is poetic judgment par excellence: those who did not want to listen to Yahweh's word when Amos proclaimed it will one day hunger and thirst for it, but in vain. Their search for the life-sustaining word of Yahweh is described in vivid colors, but all their attempts will be futile (Amos 8:12).

The divine judgment that had been at the center of Amos's proclamation is depicted as finally occurring in the last, climactic vision (Amos 9:1-4), in which Amos witnesses Yahweh ordering the destruction of the temple. Its fall brings about the demise of the people, and although some may be able to make an initial escape, Yahweh will track them down wherever they hide. Now Israel's God is no longer content with his people's exile but instead is determined to destroy them (Amos 9:4). The book's final hymn fragment (Amos 9:5-6) underlines that no one could possibly escape from this God, who only has to touch the earth for it to melt and who can pour the waters of the sea out over the face of the earth. Now, in a last polemical flourish, Israel is denied special status altogether (Amos 9:7-8). Their exodus experience and election will not save them, as the sinful kingdom will be destroyed. It also becomes clear, however, that Israel's end (see Amos 8:2) entails not the total annihilation of the populace but rather the demise of Israel as a national entity, and that it is "all the sinners among [God's] people" who are the prime target of the divine judgment (Amos 9:9-10). Their identity has been revealed throughout the book in passages that talk about social injustice and hollow worship practices, but, in a fitting conclusion to the debate that Amos has been leading with his audience, the prophet emphasizes that it is the ones who had been complacent all along, thinking that "disaster will not overtake or meet us," who are most at risk.

An image of future restoration, agricultural abundance and security in the *land concludes the book (Amos 9:11-15). This envisaged future, contrary to J. Wellhausen's well-known dictum that these verses offer "roses and lavender instead of blood and iron" (Wellhausen, 96), does not mitigate, let alone negate, Amos's message of judgment. In line with a message that knows culprits and victims, hope is offered for those who are not to be counted among the sinners. From a rhetorical perspective, one

ISBN 978-0-8308-1784-9

might say that while the announcements of judgment provide "negative motivation" by warning the addressees not to continue with their present lifestyle, the salvation oracle in Amos 9:11-15 offers "positive motivation" by appealing to the audience's hopes and aspirations. The book eventually closes with the words "says the LORD your God," which is the only time that Yahweh is called "*your* God," thus reinforcing the emotive impact of Amos's final words, which seek to elicit a positive response from the prophet's audience.

2. Composition and Interpretation.

The foregoing analysis of Amos's argument is based on a rhetorical reading that engages with the final form of the text as it has come down to us and interprets the book without recourse to diachronic reflections on how the text might have come into being. This is in line with prominent developments in the study of the OT literature over the last thirty years, which have witnessed an increased focus on the study of the text's final form that is primarily concerned with the investigation of its structure, poetics or rhetorical nature. These developments have also left their mark on Amos studies (see, e.g., Carroll R. 1992; Möller 2003). However, alongside the exploration of these new avenues, which also include studies that approach the text from various reader-centered perspectives that pay attention to the contribution made by the reader in the generation of meaning, there is an undiminished emphasis on the investigation of Amos's composition that assumes that an adequate reading of the book must be able to relate its individual parts to their putative times of composition.

2.1. The Composition of the Book of Amos. Modern research on Amos shows the same tendencies as the scholarly investigation of the OT prophets generally. From the 1880s to the 1920s interpreters concentrated on the innovative impetus of the prophet, understood by some as an "ethical monotheist," whose task it was to announce the divine ethical imperative (Wellhausen). This stress often went hand in hand with a search for Amos's *ipsissima verba*, the very words of the prophetic genius. From the 1920s onward form and tradition critics reversed this trend when they focused on the social and institutional settings (such as the Israelite cult or certain wisdom circles) of the speech forms used by Amos and understood the prophet largely as a transmitter of traditional theological convictions (*see* Form Criticism). What characterized these early approaches was their concern with the oral stages of the prophet's words. In contrast to this earlier emphasis, redaction criticism, which emerged in the 1960s, attends to the book's literary history and attempts to trace its stages of growth (*see* Editorial/Redaction Criticism). Contrary to their predecessors, who were interested in the prophet's *ipsissima verba*, which were deemed to be far superior to any "secondary" or "inauthentic" additions, redaction critics reject such pejorative labels and affirm the value of contributions made by later redactors in their quest to adapt the prophetic message to changed historical circumstances.

The beginnings of redaction-critical work on Amos can be traced back to W. Schmidt's 1965 article, in which he argued that several passages show the influence of a Deuteronomistic redaction. Schmidt's conclusions, which were based primarily on philological observations (i.e., on comparisons of certain phrases in Amos with the language and style of the Deuteronomists), had a significant impact on Amos studies, affecting, for instance, H. Wolff's influential presentation of the book's redactional growth. Wolff was the first to posit that behind the book of Amos lay a long history of literary growth, stretching from the eighth century BC down to postexilic times and leading to the book's six redactional layers. However, since the first three stages are thought to date either to Amos's own time or to the period immediately following his prophetic ministry, in Wolff's redaction-critical model the majority of the book is still understood in close connection with the prophet himself.

Wolff's work on the redaction history of the book of Amos, though highly influential, found few supporters as such. However, it did lead to further attempts to come to terms with the book's composition, the most notable of which has been provided by J. Jeremias, who published a series of redaction-critical studies as well as a commentary on Amos. Similarly to Wolff, he believes that the book has been continually updated in order to adapt its meaning to changed historical situations. According to Jeremias, Amos's message therefore "can be recovered only through complicated, and in

many instances only hypothetical, reconstruction" (Jeremias, 5). And he maintains that the book as we now have it in the biblical canon comes from the (late) postexilic period, having undergone a long redactional process that spanned several centuries. This, in Jeremias's view, is highly significant for the book's interpretation, for "the modern exegete must deal first of all with the exilic/postexilic history of transmission of Amos' message. Any attempt to get back to earlier strata of the book, not to speak of Amos' actual words themselves, is necessarily burdened by a (variously differing) degree of uncertainty" (Jeremias, 9).

One of the most complex analyses of Amos's literary growth has been provided by D. Rottzoll, who isolates no fewer than twelve redactional layers, each of which he seeks to link to its own specific historical setting. The account of redaction-critical developments up to this point might suggest that the findings have become increasingly complex, with the number of proposed redactional layers ever increasing, but it should be noted that this is not necessarily the case. Thus, for instance, A. Park has detected only three compositional layers, all three of which, he claims, have been composed during the preexilic era. Most recently, T. Hadjiev has similarly argued for a less complex scenario, suggesting that a "repentance scroll," written in the northern kingdom, was later reworked in Judah when its message was applied to the southern kingdom. Sometime later, an independently composed "polemical scroll" was added before the resulting book was edited once more in the exilic period.

2.2. Amos and the Redaction of the Twelve. Whereas the works surveyed above agree in their assumption that the development of the book of Amos was a self-contained process, from around the mid-1980s onwards there has been a constant flow of studies that have moved beyond the boundaries of the individual Prophetic Books in an attempt to trace the redaction history of the minor prophets, or the so-called *Book of the Twelve, as a whole. Here the assumption is that the redaction history of Prophetic Books such as Amos did not develop in isolation from the other books that make up the Twelve. Instead, it has been suggested that these books were gathered together from a fairly early stage in their development, and that subsequent editors or redactors not only left their mark on individual books, but also were engaged in redactional operations that spanned several of the books within the Twelve.

Important stages in the investigation of the redaction history of the Twelve, which cannot be traced here in any detail, include E. Bosshard's observation of structural similarities between Isaiah and the Twelve, which he interpreted as reflecting deliberate redactional efforts by the same tradents, and J. Nogalski's two-volume work, which investigates redactional catchword links and proposes that two multivolume collections (i.e., a "deuteronomic corpus," consisting of early versions of Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zephaniah, and a "Haggai-Zechariah 1—8 corpus") eventually were combined into a "Joel layer." This layer, dated to the fourth century BC, also included Nahum, Habakkuk, Joel, Obadiah and Malachi, while the subsequent addition of Zechariah 9—14 and Jonah at last completed the Twelve's redaction history.

One of the difficulties with proposals that focus on catchword links between adjacent books lies in the possibility that the order of the individual books within the Book of the Twelve may have been somewhat variable, as is indicated by a comparison of the MT with the versions found in the LXX and in 4Q76, one of the texts discovered at Qumran (*see* Dead Sea Scrolls). Indeed, it has been suggested that the order preserved in the LXX should be considered to reflect the original ordering of the Twelve, which, if correct, would seriously undermine many of the redaction-critical proposals that have been advanced in recent years. Finally, mention should be made of A. Schart's study, which is of particular interest in this context because it understands the development of the Twelve as a gradual process of revisions of the book of Amos. As envisaged by Schart, the process is thought to be far more complex than the scenarios proposed by Nogalski and others in that the development of the Book of the Twelve is supposed to have gone through multiple redactional layers.

2.3. Interpreting Amos. The redaction-critical study of Amos has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of the book. Redaction criticism represents a major advance over against earlier attempts at identifying the prophet's *ipsissima verba* in assigning a more positive role to proposed redactional additions,

which are no longer regarded as inauthentic and inferior. Despite redaction criticism's interest in earlier redactional layers and the tracing of the book's development, the canonical text is generally regarded in more positive terms in that subsequent modifications of the prophetic message are understood as legitimate endeavors to relate Amos's words to changed historical circumstances. In addition to this positive outlook on the redactors' work, redaction criticism's minute attention to details has also helped to advance our understanding of Amos.

However, perceived weaknesses in redaction-critical methodology have led to the emergence of alternative approaches that concentrate on the received text of the book of Amos rather than its assumed literary development. The ostensible presence of textual inconsistencies and intertextual verbal clues that have played a major role in redaction-critical reconstructions has been questioned by some. But perhaps more importantly, it has been pointed out that redaction criticism's insistence that a proper understanding of the biblical books necessitates that readers are capable of relating individual passages to their presumed historical contexts, which in turn presupposes detailed knowledge not only of those contexts but also of redaction-critical methodology and findings, has had the effect of taking the Bible out of the hands of the laity. This, ironically, reverses the aspiration of the Reformation, whose heirs many redaction critics claim to be, for the Reformers were intent upon making it possible for Scripture to be understood apart from any overriding authority, which in their day and age would have referred to the church. Another serious problem with the redaction-critical approach is that historical interpretation of Amos's redactional layers often runs counter to the perspective demanded by the text itself, as B. Childs especially has highlighted (Childs, 408). However one believes the book to have come into being, canonically it is best read as what it purports to be: the words of the prophet Amos (Amos 1:1).

Some major commentators on Amos (e.g., F. Andersen and D. Freedman; S. Paul) have therefore largely resisted redaction-critical trends. In addition, several approaches have emerged that concentrate on Amos's final form, seeking to elucidate the book's poetics (Carroll R. 1992) or to apply a rhetorical-critical perspective (Möller 2003). In the former case, the book is subjected to a detailed literary analysis that pays close attention not only to formal textual mechanics, such as structural markers and rhetorical devices, but also to characterization and point of view in order to enable readers to enter the world of the text. When coupled with a theological hermeneutic, such an approach can help us to address questions such as how the representation of reality in the textual word of the book of Amos, including its depiction of the identities of God and his people, might draw modern readers of faith into the book's "covenantal discourse" and challenge them to respond to the divine demands and guidance for life in once again very significantly changed historical situations.

Rhetorical-critical readings (*see* Rhetorical Criticism) that apply a sociolinguistic model of interpretation and approach the prophetic literature as a form of social discourse understand the book's rhetoric in suasive terms and thus seek to explicate its "art of persuasion." Based on the classical Aristotelian conception of rhetoric and, in some cases, on the steps of rhetorical-critical analysis outlined by G. Kennedy (Kennedy, 33-38), these readings pay close attention to the rhetorical situation and the specific problem or exigency that occasioned the utterance in question. In the case of the book of Amos, it has been suggested that the presentation of the prophet struggling, and failing, to convince his eighth-century BC Israelite audience that their God would punish them for their disregard for the poor was utilized as a cautionary precedent in a subsequent Judean context, a time when Amos's successors were for their part striving to convince their fellow Judeans of the impending divine judgment should they fail to mend their ways (Möller 2003, 119-20). The rhetorical situation influences the rhetorical choices made by the speaker or writer, such as Amos's rhetoric of entrapment that was mentioned above in connection with the book's oracles against the nations.

The rhetorical situation and problem also determine the choice of rhetorical genre. In the book of Amos the judicial genre is prevalent, yet this does not necessarily reflect the author's main purpose, as has sometimes been argued (see Kennedy, 19), but might rather be indicative of the rhetorical strategy, which is yet another aspect that has attracted scrutiny by rhe-

torical critics. In Amos the presence of nonjudicial rhetoric (such as rhetorical questions) and the inclusion of the prophet's appeal to his audience's emotions—for instance, in the warning that the divine punishment would lead to a time of lamentation and wailing (Amos 5:1-3, 16-17; 8:10)—suggest that the overarching purpose of those presenting the prophet's debate with his Israelite audience is best described not as judicial but rather as deliberative: it is an attempt to persuade subsequent Judean readers to reexamine their own lifestyle and theological assumptions, especially regarding issues such as divine election and protection. Rhetorical critics also seek to evaluate the rhetorical effectiveness of the discourse in question, whether or to what degree the utterance is a fitting response to the exigency that prompted it. With reference to Amos, one might conclude that "at a time when, for instance, the prophet Isaiah, criticizing the Judaean elite for their social crimes and luxurious lifestyle, announced the divine judgment as a consequence of the people's wrongdoings, the book of Amos would have been a powerful means for backing up that message" (Möller 2003, 296).

The canonical approach developed by B. Childs and those following in his footsteps similarly focuses on Amos's final form (*see* Canonical Criticism). While acknowledging that the book is the result of complex literary developments, the stance endorsed by proponents of this approach is one in which the interpreter identifies with the perspective suggested by the text itself. Childs illustrates this with reference to the salvation oracle in Amos 9:11-15. Whereas redaction critics tend to regard this passage as a commentary on the *exile, a reality that the redactor had already experienced, in Amos 9 both the threatened *destruction and exile and the promise of the nation's subsequent restoration are in fact presented as future events. It is for this and similar reasons that Childs arrived at the conclusion, already alluded to above, that redaction-critical readings (Childs refers specifically to Wolff's approach) often run counter to the perspective demanded by the biblical text itself (Childs, 408).

It probably is fair to say that the last two decades have seen some greater awareness among Western biblical scholars of the contribution made to the study of the book of Amos by those who understand themselves as reading "from the margins" or "from below," from the perspective of marginalized groups throughout the world. These are intentionally contextual readings (although it is now more widely acknowledged and understood that any reading is determined to a large extent by the context in which it originates) that approach the biblical text out of a deep desire to redress injustices endured because of race or gender and all too frequently legitimated by the biblical interpretation of those in power. A helpful introduction to these readings that is still reasonably up-to-date has been provided by M. Carroll R., who refers to African American, Hispanic American, *feminist and womanist perspectives and looks at ideological critique of Amos, ecological readings and interpretations from Africa and Latin America (Carroll R. 2002, 53-72) (*see* Hermeneutics).

Some of these readings have found in Amos's "alternative imagination" an ally "that persuades the reader that ultimate power, far from being 'a monopoly of throne and temple,' remains with Amos's God" (García-Treto, 124) or "a model dissenting voice to what appears to have been the prevailing way of thinking about Israel's divine election," a voice that "criticizes the hegemonic interpretation of what it meant to be God's elect people" (Weems, 222). Others, adopting a hermeneutics of suspicion, have been critical of the way the poor are "gendered" in Amos and of the book's apparent lack of concern with the lamentable fate of poor women in eighth-century BC Israel (Sanderson). It is, however, instructive to note M. Carroll R.'s observation that "the level of suspicion argued by First World scholars does not find an echo in the Two-Thirds World" (Carroll R. 2002, 67), where the book of Amos tends to be received as an encouragement and an inspiration by liberationists committed to social change.

3. Theology.

Since the early part of the twentieth century there has been a strong tendency to regard the prophet Amos as the messenger of an inescapable and all-inclusive divine punishment. Yet this has not gone uncontested, as others have rejected what has been described as the construal of the prophet as the messenger of a nation-murdering God, maintaining that Amos's proclamation aimed at *repentance rather than the announcement of an inexorable disas-

ter. More recently, the application of sociolinguistic approaches such as rhetorical criticism and speech-act theory has gone some way toward overcoming the aforementioned dichotomy by demonstrating that prophetic judgment oracles, by their very nature, evoke the possibilities of ineluctable doom and of mercy invoked by repentance (see Möller 2001).

Discussions of Amos's theology, such as those alluded to above, have tended to focus on the theology of the prophet Amos rather than on the theological contribution made by the book bearing his name. Moreover, the understanding that Amos's theology is restricted to an unconditional announcement of divine punishment goes hand in hand with judgments regarding the inauthenticity or secondary nature of passages, such as the calls to seek God in Amos 5:4-6, 14-15 and the salvation oracle in Amos 9:11-15, which seem to contradict the prophet's categorical proclamation of judgment by offering some rays of hope. Of course, a different picture emerges once it is admitted that prophetic oracles of judgment are genuinely open to the two possibilities of ineluctable doom and of mercy invoked by repentance. In this case, glimpses of hope and salvation are no longer as incompatible and out of place as is frequently maintained.

Yet another situation arises with the focus shifting to the theology of the book of Amos, although in this case too there are at least two principal avenues along which to proceed. One is the route taken by redaction criticism, which concentrates on the gradual development of the emerging book's theology. This has been traced in a variety of ways, but the general principle is that each subsequent version needs to be understood as a theological response to the specific time of its composition or redaction. As noted above, some redaction-critical proposals envisage highly complex scenarios involving several stages in the development of the book and thus also its theology. To illustrate this with a simple example, redaction critics generally maintain that the theologies of the book's earlier versions did not include the message of hope and salvation now found in Amos 9:11-15, and that this was introduced only during the final stage of its development by exilic or postexilic redactors whose theology once again reflects and responds to the exigencies of their own situation.

Another approach to the discussion of Amos's theology is to focus on the book's final form. Although redaction criticism also eventually arrives at this, for other scholars Amos's canonical text has been the focal point throughout. From such a perspective, a "full" theological reading entails not only an awareness of the prophet's condemnation of the social injustice prevalent in Israelite society and the attendant threat of the forthcoming divine judgment; it also includes an appreciation of Amos's vision of a restored people who, at some stage in their future, will once again enjoy life in the land under the divine blessing. Other theological emphases appear in, for instance, the oracles against foreign nations (Amos 1—2), which highlight God's sovereign control over the entire world and his resolve to hold the nations accountable for their inhumane war crimes, and in the book's hymn fragments (Amos 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6) with their focus on God's awesome power displayed in creation and de-creation.

As regards contemporary engagement with Amos's theology, special attention should be drawn to Latin American theologies of liberation, for which the book of Amos has been a highly inspirational text. Interpreting it out of their own concrete political, economic and social circumstances, such readings have discovered a great sense of affinity between those conditions and the world depicted in the biblical text. And this affinity has enabled liberationist interpreters to appropriate Amos's message in their desire to modify prevailing political and economic realities and construct a society characterized by solidarity with the poor and marginalized and "sacrificial service in the struggle to eradicate oppression" (Carroll R. 1992, 19).

4. Place in the Canon.

As noted above, recent redaction-critical scholarship has devoted considerable effort to the investigation of Amos's place in the Book of the Twelve, not only historically but also in terms of its literary links with other parts of the Twelve. Redaction critics have paid particular attention to literary echoes, such as that of Joel 3:16a (MT 4:16a) in Amos 1:2, which are commonly regarded as deliberate redactional linkages aimed at juxtaposing the two prophetic writings. While these observations have led to a va-

riety of suppositions concerning the development of the book of the Twelve, they also are profitably employed in a canonical reading of the text that seeks to interpret Amos in the light of its place in the biblical canon. However, such a canonical perspective is not confined to perceived literary links but seeks also to read the entire book of Amos against the wider context provided by the canon, beginning with the Book of the Twelve but also considering, in turn, the prophetic corpus more generally, the OT as a whole and, ultimately, the full biblical canon consisting of OT and NT.

From such a canonical viewpoint, Amos's message of judgment can be fruitfully compared with, for instance, a text such as Habakkuk 1:12-17. For whereas one prophet, Amos, can readily and unproblematically announce a divine judgment in the form of an enemy invasion, Habakkuk, by raising the question of theodicy that such an enemy attack elicits, offers an intriguing canonical counterperspective. In the wider outlook afforded by the canon of the OT and regardless of how the historical relationship between the prophets and the Torah is construed, Amos is portrayed as presupposing some of the stipulations found in the Torah (*see* Law). Examples of this include the regulations regarding a garment taken in pledge (Ex 22:26), which are referred to in Amos 2:8, and the instructions concerning the remains of an animal mangled by wild beasts (Ex 22:13), which inform Amos's ironic statement about rescue in Amos 3:12. From a canonical viewpoint, such passages present the prophet as an interpreter and an enforcer of the divine instructions contained in the Torah. Another link between Amos and the Torah has been seen in the book's utilization of the language of the pentateuchal curses and blessings in its numerous judgment speeches and the salvation oracle in Amos 9:11-15 (see Stuart, xxxi-xlii).

Canonical links between the NT and the book of Amos are most readily perceived in the two quotations found in the book of Acts. In Acts 7:42-43 Amos 5:25-27 is interpreted as a reference to Israel's idolatry during the time in the wilderness, whereas in Acts 15:13-18 James reapplies the rebuilding of David's fallen booth (Amos 9:11-12) to God forming a new people for himself from among the Gentiles. But it would be wrong to give the impression that a canonical reading is dependent upon direct quotations. In the pages of the NT allusions to the OT abound at many different levels, beckoning us to read one in the light of the other. A general illustration of this is the ministry of Jesus, whose praxis and eschatological message about the kingdom of God evince clear links with the OT prophets. Another example concerns certain statements in the letter of James regarding the luxurious lifestyle of the rich and their oppression of the poor (Jas 2:6-7; 5:1-6), which clearly are influenced by the language of the OT prophets generally and perhaps some of Amos's speeches in particular.

See also DAY OF THE LORD; SOCIAL JUSTICE; TWELVE, BOOK OF THE.

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ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PROPHECY

One of the most exciting changes in the study of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible in the last thirty years is the realization that other ancient Near Eastern cultures also knew prophecy, just as there were prophets in Israel. Not only do they know of people who occasionally were inspired to speak in a deity's name, but also there were "professional" prophets, people recognized as regularly speaking in the name of a deity. This article focuses on those individuals in the ancient Near East who were "professional" prophets and, therefore, whose social and religious role is directly comparable to that of the Israelite *nābîʾ*.

1. The Corpora
2. Terminology
3. Comparison of Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible and in the Ancient Near East

1. The Corpora.

Most texts come from two large archives: the royal archive from Old Babylonian Mari (eighteenth century BC) and the Neo-Assyrian state archives (seventh century BC). Some of the texts preserve oracles transmitted in letters by governors and priests to their king; other texts are administrative documents that attest to the existence of prophets even when we do not have oracular material. In addition, there are some Aramaic inscriptions from Transjordan. Prophecy as such is usually not identified in Egyptian, Ugaritic and Hittite sources, but a number of recent studies have challenged this