

And, after all, no definitive review of Weinfeld's commentary can be written until the full two-volume work is completed. I therefore hope that he will take this not as a negative review, but as sincerely well-meaning advice and urging from a friend, former colleague, former student, and admirer of his. Overall Weinfeld's *Deuteronomy* is a grand effort which deserves to be admired for the wealth of information and insight it provides, for its clarity and good sense, and for the quality of the translation; and at the same time it has some gaps, the most serious of which are in the area of origins: how did this book come to exist? If Weinfeld fills these gaps in his second volume, the final product could be the finest treatment of Deuteronomy ever produced.

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Shalom M. Paul. *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*. Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. xxvii, 409 pp.

Readers who keep abreast of the appearance of biblical commentaries will know that the Hermeneia series previously issued a commentary on Amos, namely that of H. W. Wolff, published in 1977 (a slightly revised version of a German work published in 1969). Why then present the public with a new commentary on the same book in the same series? An Editor's Note (unsigned, but written presumably by F. M. Cross, the series editor) provides the answer: "Our desire [is] to preserve the currency of the series and also to provide commentaries written by scholars with different fields of special competence or different methods of approach to critical and historical issues" (p. xxvii).

These goals have been realized with Shalom Paul's superb commentary on Amos. It is only natural to compare the two volumes, especially in light of the criteria mentioned in the Editor's Note.

Currency. Paul's book appears twenty-two years after Wolff's original book, and it is thoroughly *au courant* in its interaction with the secondary literature. By contrast, Wolff relied heavily on older commentators, such as F. Horst, K. Marti, T. H. Robinson, E. Sellin, A. Weiser, and J. Wellhausen, so that a reading of Wolff is somewhat like a step back in time.

Different fields of special competence. First, Paul brings to his study of

Amos a wealth of knowledge about the greater world of the ancient Near East (especially Mesopotamia). Wolff's use of this material was much more restricted. A comparison of the indices in the two books shows that Paul refers to Akkadian and Northwest Semitic texts about four times as often as did Wolff. Secondly, Paul utilizes the full gamut of medieval Jewish (and Karaite) commentators and lexicographers, a group of scholars totally neglected by Wolff. By the "full gamut," I mean not only such notables as Rashi, Qimḥi, and ibn Ezra, but lesser-known men, such as Judah ibn Bal'am, Salomon ibn Parḥon, and Daniel al-Qumissi as well.

Different methods of approach. For Wolff, as well as for many of the scholars upon whom he relied, much of the book of Amos dates to a period later than that of the prophet himself. Paul, on the other hand, consistently argues for the entire book as emanating from the prophet Amos (see further below). Similarly, Wolff often was inclined to emend the Hebrew text when a difficulty confronted him. Paul is less inclined to do so (see example below). Finally, it was unfortunate that Wolff felt it necessary to end his commentary on Amos with an emphasis on the way in which Acts 15:14–17 reinterprets the message of Amos 9:11–12 to refer to Jesus. No such discussion is found in Paul's work, appropriately so.

In short, Paul's commentary is a considerable improvement over the earlier Hermeneia commentary by Wolff. But my review should not deliberate on this comparison alone; it should and now will address Paul's contributions directly.

The most unique aspect of Paul's approach, alluded to above, is his consistent argument for the integrity of the book of Amos. In his words, "almost all of the arguments for later interpolations and redactions, including a Deuteronomistic one, are shown to be based on fragile foundations and inconclusive evidence. When each case is examined and analyzed on its own, without preconceived conjectures and unsupported hypotheses, the book in its entirety (with one or two minor exceptions) can be reclaimed for its rightful author, the prophet Amos" (p. 6). To such an approach I say bravo. Indeed, in each case Paul demonstrates how the words or lines in question can just as easily match the historical background of the eighth century B.C.E. as that of a later epoch. Moreover, Paul has a keen eye for literary structures, so that a deletion here or there would ruin what is otherwise a literary unit.

I illustrate Paul's defense of the Amos authorship of the whole book with a few examples. The oracle against Judah in 2:4–5 is held by most

scholars to be a later addition to the book. The reasons usually given are (a) these verses are unique in that the denunciation concerns offenses against the deity and not offenses against humanity, and (b) deletion of the Judah oracle reduces the number of oracles to the expected seven, not eight, with Israel in the all-important seventh position. But as Paul notes, one cannot preclude the possibility “that, according to Amos, apostasy was actually the cardinal sin of Judah” (p. 21). In addition, the number pattern 6:7 is only one such scheme in biblical and ancient Near Eastern literature; the number pattern 7:8 is frequently used as an alternative (Mic 5:4, Qoh 11:2, etc.).

Similarly, 6:2, with its mention of Calneh, Hamath Rabbah, and Gath, is almost always considered a later addition. Since the Assyrians conquered all three cities under Tiglath-pileser III (with Gath the latest, in 734 B.C.E.), it is assumed that the use of these three cities as a warning to Israel must postdate Amos by at least several decades. But as Paul points out, foreign incursions into Hamath Rabbah and Gath are attested either several decades before Amos’ career or during his career (witness the Zakkur inscription, 2 Kgs 12:18, and 2 Chr 26:6; less can be said about Calneh, though it too was conquered earlier, by Shalmaneser III in 858 B.C.E.). Accordingly, there is no *a priori* reason to date 6:2 to the post-Amos period.

Paul makes an important contribution to the study of Amos in his discovery of the prophet’s wide use of the pentad. Examples are five kindnesses God bestowed upon Israel in 2:9–11, the fivefold use of לָא in 2:14–16, the five visions in chapters 7–9, the five curses against Amaziah in 7:17, the fivefold use of אִם and מָשֵׁם in 9:2–4, etc. Again, the approach of earlier scholars to consider an occasional phrase or section within some of these pentads as post-Amos will have to be reconsidered in light of this discovery.

Another aspect of Paul’s commentary alluded to above is his desire to retain the Masoretic Text wherever possible. One example will suffice. Virtually everyone who has dealt with the very enigmatic קִמְשֵׁק in 3:12 has seen fit to emend the word. Although Paul can offer no new insight towards the resolution of this *crux*, he also is unwilling to follow the crowd in emending it. Instead, he contents himself with the comment that “though the etymology and meaning of the word are still unknown, most likely it refers to another part of the bed” (p. 122).

Paul’s commentary is rich in philological analysis. It is a pleasure to read his excellent treatment of difficult words in Amos, for example, צְנוּת, סִירוֹת, צְנוּת, צְנוּת, דּוּגָה and הִהְרַמוּנָה in 4:2–3, or בּוֹשֶׁשֶׁם in 5:11. Wordplay in Amos is highlighted

on several occasions. In 4:2 the word אדניהם is used for “their husbands” (the Bible typically uses בעל or איש) because of the word אדני “Lord” in the following verse. Similarly, “the ראשית הגיום will be בראש הגלים” (p. 210, n. 96), referring to 6:1 and 6:7.

The only major issue on which I would have liked a fuller treatment is the question of Amos’ home and/or his use of northern dialect. Previous scholars (beginning with Qimḥi) have suggested that Amos’ Tekoa was not the Tekoa of Judah, but rather a northern city of the same name. Paul dismisses this theory in a footnote (p. 35, n. 27). He may be correct, there simply is not enough evidence to argue one way or the other (even 7:12 is equivocal). But regardless of where Amos’ home is to be located, there are unmistakable signs of northern dialect in the book. If Amos’ Tekoa was in the north, the explanation is easy. If it was in Judah, then we simply need to posit the “literary device of employing native vocabulary when addressing foreign nations,” a usage Paul is well aware of (pp. 52–53, n. 94). A prime example of northern dialect in Amos is the prophet’s use of the word חֶלֶק meaning “field” in 7:4. This usage is attested elsewhere in the Bible only in northern contexts (2 Kgs 9:10, 36, 37; Hos 5:7), and its cognate exists in Aramaic חקלא (with metathesis). Paul presents all the data (p. 232, n. 52), but he does not make the connection with what I call Israelian Hebrew.

Paul’s commentary is as complete a philological treatment of Amos (or perhaps any biblical book) as exists today. The work builds from this firm philological base to address with equal excellence the larger literary, historical, and theological issues central to the book of Amos. Paul’s *Amos* is destined to remain a valuable work for years to come.

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Michael V. Fox. *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther: Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991. xv, 317 pp.

The fast and frenzied reading of the Megillah during the annual Purim celebration is not likely to engender respect for the book of Esther as a work of literature in the minds of the inebriated. And even those who approach the book fully sober have often criticized its plot as contrived, its characters as