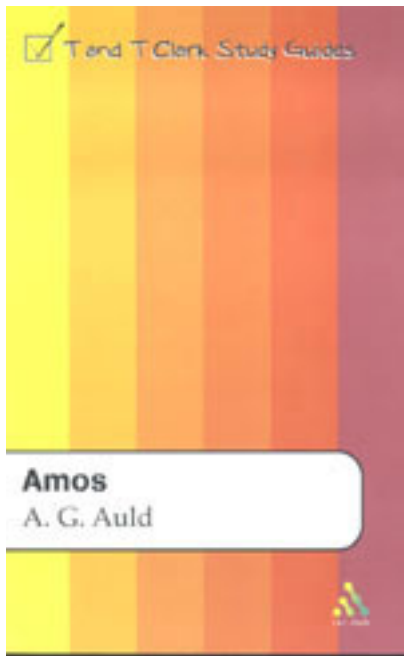


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Auld, A . G.

Amos

T&T Clark Study Guides

London: T&T Clark, 2004. Pp. 93. Paper. \$13.95. ISBN 0567084973.

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This small booklet is a photographically reduced reprint of the well-known volume of the Old Testament Guides first published in 1986 “by JSOT Press for the Society for Old Testament Study.” The review copy shows that the process of photographic reduction was unsatisfactory. Therefore, this reviewer decided not to strain his eyes and to prepare the review according to the original publication.

The treatise consists of an introduction and seven chapters. Each chapter is appended with a short bibliography for “further reading.”

In the introduction the author explains his own approach to Amos and lists some of those scholars’ works, through which he enters into the problems relating to Amos and his book. Auld indeed successfully and attractively blends his own questions and interests with the problems and pursuits that arise from the research of different scholars. He succeeds in clarifying his own points by discussing important contributions of other scholars. The result is a good general introduction to the book of Amos and its problems, avoiding the pitfalls of idiosyncrasy.

Chapter 1 (“Amos the Visionary”) deals with some basic questions concerning the visions in Amos 7:1–9:4. According to Auld, there is “no evidence which compels us to deny these reports to Amos himself” (37).

The question raised by the title of Chapter 2 (“Amos a Prophet?”) is answered by Auld largely in the negative: there is no good reason to believe that Amos claimed for himself the “role label” of “prophet,” nor is the label *hozeh* authentic, because the relevant story in Amos 7:10–17 is probably of later origin.

Chapter 3 asks in its title “What Was Amos?” If Amos 7 and also 1:1 contribute next to nothing to answering this question, “the record of Amos’s publicly uttered speeches” may offer evidence “about the man behind them” (40). Therefore, Amos 1–2 and 3–6 become relevant in this respect.

Chapter 4 (“Her Neighbours and Israel”) concentrates on the problems of the “unity and authenticity” of the oracles against the nations, followed by oracles against Judah and Israel in Amos 1–2.

Chapter 5 (“Literary Issues”) mainly treats the structure and composition of the biblical book and its parts. Among other things, Auld addresses the concentric structure discovered by de Waard and others in Amos 5:1–17, which centers on the doxology in 5:8(+9) and, according to articles by Lust and Smalley, might continue into large parts of the book.

Chapter 6 (“Social and Religious Critique”) characterizes the message of Amos that social and religious critique “intersect,” in Auld’s phrase.

Finally, chapter 7 (“The Message of Amos”) summarizes some main issues of the previous chapters and adds notes on subjects that did not find their place earlier in the book, such the “doxologies,” “poetry” (in the book of Amos), “religion,” and “hope at the end.” It is stressed that according to Amos religion is not to be confused with cult and that “hope at the end” appears only as a later addition to the book.

The fact that after its first appearance in 1986 this small book was reprinted three times testifies to the need of such a guidebook and to its qualities.

Unfortunately, however the booklet has never really been updated since its first appearance. The only addition is a three-page “supplementary bibliography” (91–93), which lists twenty-one entries until 1991. The research of the last twenty years or so is thus not taken into account in the text of the present volume. This is regrettable, even if we consider only the important commentaries by F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman in

the Anchor Bible, the commentary by S. M. Paul in *Hermeneia*, and the extremely voluminous commentary in Hebrew by M. Weiss, all of which appeared during these years, to say nothing of important recent monographs and articles.

And talking of Paul's commentary, a glance at it shows that Auld's evaluation (43–44) of Paul's position regarding the secondary character of the oracle against Judah (Amos 2:4–5) proves incorrect. Although this oracle does not display the “concatenous literary pattern” (Paul) of the proceeding oracles and is not connected to them, Paul regards it as authentic (S. M. Paul, *Amos* [*Hermeneia*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 20–24).

The reader who is less interested in more recent developments in research will find in Auld's book an excellent introduction to many basic themes and problems relating to Amos and his book. But the author would serve his readers well if in the next reprint he added another chapter reviewing new trends in the research on Amos during the last two decades.