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## Book Review: Hosea

Randall L. McKinion  
*Cedarville University*, [rmckinion@cedarville.edu](mailto:rmckinion@cedarville.edu)

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glasses of modern scholarship. God's love for and redemption of his creation are exemplified in the intense attraction between male and female while the need for such love and redemption is exemplified in the frustration and disaster experienced in love contrary to God's design.

Does not appreciating the text include recognizing the use of imperative forms and the threefold repetition of a stanza (2:7; 3:4; 8:4) that provides the most obvious interpretive key (see my "Song of Songs: Increasing Appreciation of and Restraint in Matters of Love, *AUSS* 42 [2004] 305–24)? If Exum would have us appreciate the text, where is the careful analysis, for example, of the use of imperatives in connection with verbs of pursuit and consummation? Similarly, why not consider how the Greek text so clearly agrees with OT usage in explaining the significance of terms like "gazelles" and "does?"

J. Cheryl Exum has given us an important interpretive work in this commentary. However, readers must understand that the commentary has more to do with modern attitudes toward sexuality than it does with the Song of Songs.

Michael A. Eschelbach  
Concordia University, Chicago, IL

*Hosea*. By Ehud Ben Zvi. FOTL 21A/1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, xiii + 321 pp., \$55.00 paper.

Just as the rest of the volumes in the FOTL series, the latest commentary by Ehud Ben Zvi on Hosea seeks to contribute to the ongoing application of form criticism by an evaluation of the genre and setting of this prophetic book. However, with the evolution of the form-critical method, there has come a renewed focus on the conceptually structured units of the actual text. Therefore, this commentary proceeds successively from the structure of the book as a whole to each smaller unit. Moreover, to emphasize the tendency toward a more textual understanding, each unit begins with a section evaluating its structure before proceeding to separate sections explaining its genre, setting, and intention. The author's comments regarding the structure of each unit will be especially helpful for the one reading the commentary alongside the actual text of Hosea.

Ben Zvi is not concerned to read Hosea as part of the larger context of the Twelve. This is not because he has overlooked this aspect but because he believes Hosea makes "a strong textually inscribed request to its primary readership to understand it as distinct from the others [i.e. the other books in the Twelve], and as a unit in itself" (p. 7). Thus Hosea should not be read merely as a subunit of the larger book of the Twelve, but as an independent unit.

As an autonomous entity, the structure of the book as a whole is indicative of all other prophetic books, which include an introduction, a body of prophetic readings, and a conclusion. It is the conclusion of Hosea (14:10; Eng. 14:9) that rightfully holds particular importance throughout the commentary in that it provides the "interpretative key for the entire book, and it characterizes the book as a didactic book, to be read, reread, and interpreted by those who are wise, discerning, and righteous" (p. 317). For Ben Zvi, then, each individual unit of the book is evaluated as to its meaning for the intended readership of the book, namely, the "small group of literati" who not only possessed the intellectual acumen to read the text but also "saw themselves as the guardian, broker, and interpreter of the knowledge communicated by the divine to Israel in the form of the written texts that they composed, edited, redacted, copied, read, and read to others" (p. 317). This group of literati among whom and for whom the present text was com-

posed lived many years after the time of the world that is presented within the book. Thus, the basis on which this commentary was written is the social setting of the literati, which was post-monarchic and post-exilic. As such, the book functioned to justify YHWH's actions in the past and to educate the community through its reading and rereading of the book.

The primary strength of the commentary is the skill of the author. Ben Zvi reveals a clear, expert ability to interact with other scholarship within form criticism as well as OT interpretation in general. The breadth of material presented in the bibliography speaks both to the author's competence and to the relevance of this volume to OT scholarship. Moreover, given that the author has contributed a number of articles on Hosea along with the commentary on Micah in the FOTL, the reader can be confident in the comprehensiveness of research in OT prophetic literature. In light of the author's level of expertise, however, one who is completely unfamiliar with the goals and methodology of form criticism may find this volume somewhat confusing and not as useful.

At the same time, a further strength is that Ben Zvi has provided a glossary of genres discussed within the commentary. Thus, one unfamiliar with terms such as "Ancient Israelite Book" or "Didactic Prophetic Reading," which are used consistently throughout the commentary and by form critics in general, can read a succinct paragraph describing that genre.

The reader who will find this commentary most useful is one who has wrestled through the issues of sources, authorship, intended readership, redactors, and the like, and has come to a conclusion similar to Ben Zvi's that the ultimate goal of reading the book of Hosea is not so much an engagement with a hypothetically reconstructed source document as with a proper understanding of the concrete readers of the text. Thus, one would have to be convinced that a correct comprehension of "the social identity, the world of knowledge, the theology and ideology of these readers" (p. 5) is the proper starting point and interpretive grid for a faithful reading of Hosea. Ultimately, then, the one who espouses form criticism will receive the most benefit from the book. However, other OT students, professors, and teachers will find the volume informative, useful, and an excellent example of the results of contemporary movements within a form-critical approach to reading OT prophetic literature.

Randall L. McKinion

Shepherds Theological Seminary, Cary, NC

*The Dead Sea Scrolls: What Have We Learned?* By Eileen M. Schuller. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006, xvii + 126 pp., \$17.95 paper.

This book is a slightly expanded version of the John Albert Hall Lectures that Eileen Schuller delivered at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, in October of 2002. The four oral presentations are augmented by a five-page introduction (pp. xiii–xvii), a five-page look to the future (pp. 105–9), a six-page bibliography (pp. 110–15), and an index of names and subjects (pp. 119–26). Schuller makes no pretensions to present new discoveries or to be comprehensive or complete. Her goal is much more restricted: to chart the accomplishments in the first 50 years of Qumran studies (chap. 1) and to offer discussions that concentrate on three specific areas (chaps. 2–4) where the scrolls have made an important contribution to how we now think about early Christianity and Judaism.

Chapter 1 begins well, documenting the accomplishments of Dead Sea Scroll scholarship in decade increments starting with the discovery of the manuscripts in