

is not to be built upon the results of either. Its approach is ahistorical in seeking to establish, not historical causal relationships between literature, but basic structures common to the human mind and society which would independently develop this type of literature. According to Via, "Structure properly speaking is the hidden or underlying configuration that can offer some explanation for the more or less visible or obvious pattern in the text" (p. 7). Again, "structure in one sense is the hidden and unconscious system of presuppositions which accounts for and holds together the visible, existing order, including its literary texts" (p. 13).

The hidden element that Via sees as the structure in the study of Paul (1 Cor 1:18-2:5; Rom 9:30-10:31) and Mark is the "comic genre—the rhythm of upset and recovery" seen in the death and resurrection of Christ. He points to the presence of this structure in Aristophanes' comedies, which in turn were derived from an ancient fertility rite. He sees a structural-genetic relationship rather than a causal-genetic relationship. The first question one must ask concerning this is whether in fact a structural relationship exists. How does one go about determining this? Is it sufficient to show that this motif is present in some other literature? Secondly, if we grant that this is so, what does this tell us about the kerygma? Does this mean that the kerygma of death-resurrection is so basic to human experience that it is expected that all men will sense it and accept the meaning of the Gospel for their lives? Does it mean that the tragic genre is not a basic structure of human existence?

We recognize that this is only the first foray in the application of this method to NT studies and much yet needs to be worked out. The first chapter, which presents the method and the language for this method, is rather awesome for the uninitiated. The new language includes diachrony, synchrony, syntagm, paradigm, signifier, signified, performance and competence texts, indicial, actantiel, etc. Actually Via presents much more than is relevant for his purposes, and the clarity of his presentation suffers because of this. One gets the impression that lack of clarity is also due to the fact that the subject has not had time to fully mature in the mind of the author before he placed pen to paper.

Perhaps one value in this method is that it seeks to understand a text as a whole rather than as fragments, as is the tendency in form and redaction criticism. This point which Via emphasizes is well taken. More emphasis needs to be made on the study of the text as a whole, though whether the structuralist approach is the correct one is doubtful.

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Wolff, Hans Walter. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. Translated by Gary Stansell; edited by Paul D. Hanson. *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974. xxxii + 259 pp. \$19.95.

This is a translation of the second edition (1965) of the German original published in the famous series *Biblischer Kommentar—Altes Testament*.

Without doubt this translation will effect an even more widespread use of one of the two best commentaries (the other is by W. Rudolph [1966]) by the critical school. Each reader will greatly benefit from this full-fledged commentary.

The present translation is the first publication of the *Hermeneia* series. This commentary follows the unique pattern of organization typical of the German series with the following headings: (1) *Bibliography*. It includes special literature bearing upon the passage or unit under discussion and supplements the general bibliography at the end (pp. 242-247). (2) *Text*. This is a new English translation, based on the ancient texts and joined with extensive text-critical notes. (3) *Form*. It provides a detailed discussion of literary form (form criticism) and structure. (4) *Setting*. Here the life-setting (*Sitz im Leben*), dating, tradition history, etc., are discussed. (5) *Interpretation*. This is a detailed verse-by-verse exegesis, often interspersed with excursuses of a more technical nature such as "The Sex Cult" (p. 14), "The Baal Divinities" (pp. 38-40), "The Valley of Achor" (pp. 42-43), "Yahweh as Baal" (pp. 49-50), "Resurrection on the Third Day" (pp. 117-118), "Torah in Hosea" (p. 138), "*ʿwn* (guilt) and *h't* (sin)" (p. 145), "'Egypt' in Hosea" (pp. 145-146) and "Israel and Ephraim" (p. 164). (6) *Aim*. This section strives toward a theological analysis, relation to the NT, and at times suggestions concerning how Hosea speaks today.

The commentary opens with an Introduction of only 12 pages containing sections on the historical period, Hosea's life, the language of the book and its literary form, and a painfully brief discussion of the theology of Hosea. To the reader's great amazement, nothing is said about the text, its history and preservation. This lack is even highlighted by the fact that the end-papers of this volume contain reproductions of Qumran texts from Hosea: 4QXII^d with Hos 1:7-2:5 (previously unpublished), 4QpHos^a (4Q166) with Hos 2:10-14; 2:8, 9, and 4QpHos^b (4Q167) with citations from and commentary on Hos 1, 2 (?), 5, 6, and 8. This Qumran material is unfortunately also left out of consideration in the respective sections of the commentary itself.

In terms of authorship, Wolff believes that Hosea himself wrote only 2:4-17 and 3:1-5, and that disciples or followers are responsible for 1:2-9; 2:1-3, 18-25; 7:10; 8:14; 11:10. These fused Hosea's language with that of their own so that a discernment of the *ipsisima verba* Hosea is no longer possible. In Wolff's view Hosea has no part at all in 1:1, 7; 14:10. In chaps. 4-11 the matter of authorship is more complex. These chapters come largely from his disciples who formed a "prophetic-Levitic group . . . and were experts in the transmission of Hosea's words" (p. 75). Chaps. 12-14 comprise a tradition complex that is distinct from chaps. 4-11 and stand nearer to Judah (p. 234) than the earlier materials. This complex tradition history of Hosea's message has not found support among Wolff's critical peers and is open to serious questions.

Wolff believes that the material in the book is to be dated between 752 and 724 B.C. To the last years of Jeroboam II are ascribed 1:2-9; 2:4-17; 3:1-5; 4:1-3; 4:4-19; 5:1-7, aside from the glosses and later additions. The remainder is dated to the decade beginning in 733 B.C., which means that there is no material for the period between about 750 to 733 B.C. The problem here is whether we are to assume that Hosea and/or his disciples

experienced such a long period of silence. It is not unlikely that Hos 5:8-7:16 comes from the time of Menahem (552-542/1 B.C.). In any case, it is precarious to suggest an extended period of silence for Hosea.

The most debated issue in the book of Hosea is the problem of the marriage. Wolff takes the incident as a real experience and not as an allegory. He follows L. Rost in explaining that the "wife of harlotry" (1:2-9) is not a woman of weak character or a common prostitute but one who followed the rule of women of her day. She participated or indulged in the bridal initiation rite of Canaanite origin in order to assure fertility. The children born to her are "of harlotry" because their birth had been ensured in the initial act "of harlotry" in the name of a strange god. They are actually the real children of Hosea. Even though Gomer abandoned the prophet after bearing three children to him, she is taken back, as it were, on probation. Thus chaps. 1 and 3 speak of the same woman. The complex of Hos 1-3 is a real event in Hosea's life; it is nevertheless a "memorable," namely a special kind of acted prophecy. Accordingly, Hos 1 and 3 are not to be taken as offering autobiography. Autobiography or biography is incidental to the main purpose of these chapters. For a critique of Wolff's interpretation of Hosea's marriage, see W. Rudolph, "Präparierte Jungfrauen," *ZAW* 75 (1963): 65-73, whose essay is referred to a few times but whose arguments are not refuted.

This is a competent commentary from which one learns much. It has not commanded, and must not be expected to command, agreement on the part of all readers. Nevertheless, to date it is the most extensive commentary in English on this book. Indices enhance its usefulness.

Among the misspellings noted were S. V. McCarland instead of McCasland (p. 118, n. 97, and p. 255) and O. Proksch instead of Procksch (p. 256).

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