

As a whole, this commentary is a valuable resource for scholars and an important addition to the Hermeneia series. It is particularly good in dealing with the first half of Daniel. However, for the second half of Daniel those interested in the Hasmonean hypothesis would be better served by Goldingay's commentary.

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Dobbs-Allsopp, F. W. *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible*. *Biblica et Orientalia*, no. 44. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993. 228 pp.

This revised dissertation sets forth a hypothesis about ancient Near Eastern literary influences on the Hebrew Scriptures. Specifically, Dobbs-Allsopp concentrates on the genre known as the poetic lament over the destruction of a city, such as one finds in Lamentations. Dobbs-Allsopp's work is the first of its kind to examine in detail the several components of the lament over the fallen city. His method involves a careful description of the thematic elements which occur in nonbiblical Mesopotamian laments, followed by a comparison with the biblical genres—primarily the oracles against the nations ("OAN")—which contain many of the same elements. The fact that several important lament-type elements occur in this totally different biblical prophetic genre leads Dobbs-Allsopp to conclude that the city lament developed as an independent indigenous form in Israel. Since the earliest of these OAN date from the late eighth century B.C.E., this period probably indicates the beginning of this genre in Israel.

Some of the important thematic categories which the author identifies (for both the Mesopotamian laments and the OAN) are structural and poetic technique, divine abandonment, assignment of responsibility, divine agency, and the detailed nature of societal collapse and destruction. Though the author never so states, the eighth to sixth centuries B.C.E. are certainly a reasonable period for such a genre to be developed and expressed in Israel. For it was during this time that great empires systematically brought to an end the separate kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and destroyed their temples and major cities.

However, one cannot help but perceive here a kind of scholarly "tunnel vision." For instance, many of the motifs of the city-lament also occur in other kinds of ancient Near Eastern literature which Dobbs-Allsopp never considers. One such is the Egyptian "Tradition of Seven Lean Years" (*ANET*, 31-32). Of more importance are the Egyptian didactic essays from the Middle Kingdom period and later (e.g., see Lichtheim, I: 145-169). Dobbs-Allsopp does include in Appendix II (176) a collation of the various city-lament features as found in the ancient sources, including the Hebrew Bible.

Moreover the theme of the people's pathos over the loss of city and sanctuary and the general disruption of "normal times" is also found in other kinds of biblical literature not considered by the author (e.g., the victory hymn

of Judg 5 mentions unsafe highways (v. 6); and the theophany hymn of Hab 3 mentions the destruction of a sanctuary (v. 7).

But the most serious problem of all in the author's otherwise careful work is the ivory-tower mentality which characterizes it from start to finish. Absent is any sense of the comprehension of (or sympathy with) the terrible, violent times that peoples of the Near East endured (as his title implies). Only once does Dobbs-Allsopp step out of his sterile study to approach the agony of that ancient world; he suggests in his conclusions that the ancient poets wrote "about actual destructions" as opposed to "imaginatively creating situations for which the city-lament genre would be appropriate" (162). But these "actual destructions" and the sense of social loss that they created is what the lamentations about fallen cities are all about! This is the reason such poems were written and preserved. This is the reason such literature has meaning for us in these present violent times.

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Epp, Eldon Jay, and Gordon D. Fee. *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*. Studies and Documents No. 45. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993. xiv + 414 pp. Hardcover, \$39.99.

In the field of NT textual criticism, modern scholarship suffers from an abundance of materials and methods. If the first task of text criticism is the establishment of an original reading by sorting through and comparing the ancient manuscripts, then that task is complicated by the plethora of documents from over twelve centuries of church history, from different Mediterranean, European, and Middle Eastern source-locational subregions, with differing values of MS evidence as witness to an original text! Eldon Epp and Gordon Fee perform a genuine service by offering a set of "best-of-all" essays to guide the modern student through this very real maze.

From two senior scholars who have for years been at the cutting edge of their discipline, this is a welcome and informative addition. Their gift to the scholarly world stems from their deep knowledge of the history of the discipline, their original ideas about how to organize and assess the textual evidence, and certainly their demonstrated ability in presenting that research in a lucid and readable way.

Contrary to the suggestion of the publisher, this collection of critical essays is not for the novice in Greek exegesis or for first-time students of critical introduction. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently well laid out to enable one with limited facility in the field to proceed in an orderly way to a more informed understanding of the discipline. For the practiced scholar also, here is as good an assessment of the current research as one can find anywhere.

The first four essays provide the needed orientation for the more general reader: In essays one and two Epp and Fee explore the history of research in