

A REVIEW
by
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of
HANS GOTTLIEB'S
*A STUDY ON THE TEXT OF LAMENTATIONS*²

In this monograph Hans Gottlieb gives an account of and evaluates the debate on the text of Lamentations since the publication of Bertil Albrektson's *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Lund: Gleerup, 1963). His primary purpose was to examine those passages where he disagreed with Albrektson's solutions of text-critical problems even though he agreed with Albrektson's methodology and conclusion that the MT is the superior text tradition. In five sections which follow the chapter divisions of Lamentations (plus a four page excursus on "Past and Present in Lam. 3:52-66"), Gottlieb comments on 80 words or phrases from 72 of the 154 verses of Lamentations. Much of Gottlieb's study is a restatement of Albrektson's review of textual variants reflected by the versions and the conclusions of other commentators. Less than half of Gottlieb's work is concerned with the issues surrounding the integrity of the MT. Most of his comments, which vary in length from two lines to two pages, are directed to lexical and philological proposals advanced by Dahood, McDaniel, Gordis, and Hillers and frequently appeal to the conclusions of Albrektson, Driver,

¹ This review was published in 1979 in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Volume 98: 4 (1979), p. 598.

² *Acta Jutlandica* xlvi, Theology Series 12. Arhus: Aarhus Universitet, 1978 (80 pages).

Rudolph and others to counter the interpretations of the former.

Gottlieb does not view favorably the appeal of Dahood and McDaniel to elements of Northwest Semitic philology to establish the text or interpretation of disputed passages in Lamentations. His bias is reflected in the statement, “When as here the choice is between assuming the existence of an ‘enclitic mem’ in Hebrew, or assuming that *nun* has against the general rule not been assimilated . . . , I for one would prefer to follow the latter alternative” (p. 55). Yet Gottlieb recognizes the emphatic *lamed* in 4:3 (following Eitan), but not in 3:37–38 (as proposed by McDaniel). He recognizes the asseverative *kaph* in 1:20 (following Gordis) but not in 2:5 or 3:22 (contra Gordis).

Gottlieb is not totally committed to the superiority of the MT. He recognizes a scribal error in 3:60 and concurs with Driver’s emendation of 4:7. He agrees that glosses are found in 1:7; 2:19 and 4:15. When Gottlieb offers an independent opinion, he is extremely speculative and inconsistent. An example is his treatment of 2:18a (the LXX and Syriac support the MT here). Gottlieb suggests that *ṣā^caq libbām^oel^o ʾāḏōnāy* is a marginal gloss which has driven out the original text in which case “all we know of the original text is that it may have begun with *ṣ*, and that it probably contained a call to lament” (p. 37). Gottlieb succeeds in summarizing Albrektson’s work and the debate on Lamentations, but he does little to end that debate.