



On Biblical Poetry

F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp

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On Biblical Poetry takes a fresh look at the nature of biblical Hebrew poetry beyond its currently best-known feature, parallelism. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp argues that biblical poetry is in most respects just like any other verse tradition, and therefore biblical poems should be read and interpreted like other poems, using the same critical tools and with the same kinds of guiding assumptions in place. He offers a series of programmatic essays on major facets of biblical verse, each aspiring to alter currently regnant conceptualizations in the field and to show that attention to aspects of prosody--rhythm, lineation, and the like--allied with close reading can yield interesting, valuable, and even pleasurable interpretations. What distinguishes the verse of the Bible, says Dobbs-Allsopp, is its historicity and cultural specificity, those peculiar encrustations and encumbrances that typify all human artifacts. Both the literary and the historical, then, are in view throughout. The concluding essay elaborates a close reading of Psalm 133. This chapter enacts the final movement to the set of literary and historical arguments mounted throughout the volume--an example of the holistic staging which, Dobbs-Allsopp argues, is much needed in the field of Biblical Studies.

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