Poetry and Theology in the Book of Lamentations

Hebrew Bible Monographs, 47

Poetry and Theology in the Book of Lamentations

The Aesthetics of an Open Text

Heath A. Thomas

Sheffield Phoenix Press

2013

Published by Sheffield Phoenix Press
Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield
Sheffield S3 7QB

www.sheffieldphoenix.com

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

Typeset by CA Typesetting Ltd
Printed on acid-free paper by Lightning Source UK Ltd, Milton Keynes

ISBN-13 978-1-907534-75-1
ISSN 1747–9614

For Jill

כי יודע כל־שער עמי כי אשת חיל את (Ruth 3.11)

Contents

Preface

This monograph is a revision and substantial extension of my doctoral dissertation accepted in 2007 at the University of Gloucestershire (UK). The impetus for this research grew out of my love for poetry and theology in the Bible. It is a regular delight to read these texts and find a strange new world of aesthetic beauty and deep theological insight. This always-new terrain is beautifully revealed in the rich book of Lamentations. Many people read this text for doctrine, but this project has shown me that Lamentations more than anything is about formation: discovering what it means to be human in a world where things often times seems upside down. Lamentations squares off with this reality and responds with artistry and humanity before God.

This extensive project is not the work of one person alone. Immediate thanks go once again to Professor J. Gordon McConville for his gracious spirit and keen eye in supervising this thesis. His guidance has been extraordinary and his friendship a delight. His encyclopaedic knowledge of the biblical books helped me think through how Lamentations offered a distinctive theological outlook in the Old Testament. Thanks also go to Dr Paul Joyce formerly of St Peter's College, University of Oxford, and more recently of Kings College London, for his supervision and insight into all things Lamentations. His aid in matters of style, bibliography, and pushing the project to go more 'theological' in focus is greatly appreciated. My trips to Oxford to meet with him were memorable. My supervisors simply could not have been better. Of course, I am responsible for any infelicities in the current project. No fault is to be found with them!

Professor F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp of Princeton Theological Seminary generously provided a copy of his unpublished manuscript 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence', which deeply shaped my thinking on the way the poetry of Lamentations functions. Gratitude also goes to Dr Robin Parry, Professor Paul House and Dr Jill Middlemas, all of whom provided key suggestions, dialogue, and encouragement along the way in interpreting this difficult biblical book. Finally I am grateful for the sharp thought of my external examiners, Rev. Dr Richard Briggs (Durham) and Rev. Dr Knut Heim (Bristol). Their suggestions for improvement have refined the thesis.

The financing of this project (2004–2007) came in large part through the generous grant of the Overseas Research Student Award Scheme (ORSAS), awarded by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Uni-

versities of the UK. To this committee I owe a great debt and many thanks. Thanks also go to Dame Janet Trotter and the Janet Trotter Trust, which provided a bursary for research at the University of Gloucestershire.

The spiritual support for this project has been immense. I am grateful to good friends and colleagues at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Cheltenham and All Saints Anglican Church, Bisley. These communities of faith encouraged me and helped me keep the faith in this demanding project. In recent years, the Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina has been a community of faith and formation for both myself and my family.

It is in place to thank my colleagues and students at Southeastern Seminary. The administration kindly afforded a flexible teaching load to facilitate the production and the revision of this volume, for which I am very grateful. My students have been extraordinary in challenging me plumb the riches of lament literature in class discussions. I owe them a debt for teaching me. I am grateful to my research assistant, Mr Justin Orr, who has greatly improved the style of the manuscript.

Above all, thanks go to my wife, Jill, for her support, joy and patience. She is a delightful partner and friend. My prayer is that I give her the grace that she has given to me. And to my children, Harrison, Isabelle, Simon and Sophia, thank you for bringing light to your father's eyes. I confess that I read the cries of the children in Lamentations with you in mind. Perhaps this volume will enable you to hear their voices more clearly. To my parents, brothers and extended family: thank you for your support and belief in Jill and me. I pray that I might live with the Christian hope that you emulate.

Finally, gratitude goes to Professor David Clines and the editorial board at Sheffield Phoenix Press for taking a chance on this project.

Heath Thomas
Lent, 2013

Abbreviations

ABC	Anchor Bible Commentary
ABD	David Noel Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AJET	Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANES	Ancient Near Eastern Studies
ANET	James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950)
AOATS	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
AS	Advances in Semiotics
ASB	*Austin Seminary Bulletin*
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AUT	Acta universitatis upsaliensis
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BAW	Die Bibliothek der alten Welt
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907)
BDS	Bibal Dissertation Series
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BeO	*Bibbia e oriente*
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHS	*Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*, 4th edn
Bib	*Biblica*
BI	*Biblical Interpretation*
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BiOr	*Bibliotheca orientalis*
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSac	*Bibliotheca sacra*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies

BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CahRB	Cahiers de la *Revue biblique*
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBOTS	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CBSC	The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
CC	Continental Commentaries
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
COS	W.W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (eds), *The Context of Scripture* (3 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003)
CSPHS	Contemporary Studies in Philosophy and the Human Sciences
CTQ	*Concordia Theological Quarterly*
DAB	Die Dichter des Alten Bundes
EB	Die Echter Bibel
EBAT	Echter Bibel: Das Alte Testament
EJT	*European Journal of Theology*
ET	*Eglise et théologie*
ETSS	Evangelical Theological Society Studies
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
FAT	Forschungen zum alten Testament
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GBHS	Bill Arnold and John Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, as Edited and Enlarged by E. Kautzsch, Revised by A. E. Cowley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn, 1910)
GS	Geistliche Schriftlesung
HALOT	L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner and J.J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. and ed. M.E.J. Richardson; 4 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–1999)
HAT	Handbuch zum alten Testament
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HThKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum alten Testament
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HZAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
IB	George A. Buttrick (ed.), *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; NewYork: Abingdon Press, 1951–1957)
IBHS	B.K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990)
ICRHC	The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture

IDBSup	Keith Crim (ed.), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976)
Int	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
Int	Interpretation
IOSOT	International Organisation for the Study of the Old Testament
ISBL	International Society for Biblical Literature
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JAB	*Journal for the Aramaic Bible*
JANESCU	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JM	Paul Joüon, and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Vols. 1–2 (SubBib, 14; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2000)
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JQRSup	*Jewish Quarterly Review* Supplements
JR	*The Journal of Religion*
JSOT	*Journal for the Society of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* Supplement Series
KAT	Kommentar zum alten Testament
K&D	C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (25 vols.; Edinburgh, 1857–1878 [Reprint, 10 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996])
KHAT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum alten Testament
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
Lambdin	Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004)
LBS	The Library of Biblical Studies
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LJLE	Library of Jewish Law and Ethics
LSU	'Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur'
LU	'Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur'
MC	Mesopotamian Civilizations
Miss	*Missiology: An International Review*
MLBS	Mercer Library of Biblical Studies
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	The New American Commentary
NCBC	The New Century Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	W.A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997)
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBS	The Oxford Bible Series
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology

OS	Oudtestamentische studiën
OT	Old Testament
OTE	Old Testament Essays
OtSt	*Oudtestamentische studien*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
RB	*Revue biblique*
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RTR	*The Reformed Theological Review*
SAIS	Studies in Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture
SBB	Soncino Books of the Bible
SBEC	Studies in Bible and Early Christianity
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
Sem	*Semeia*
SemSt	Semeia Studies (SBL)
SHI	Seminars in the History of Ideas
SHS	The Scripture and Hermeneutics Series
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SOFS	Symbolae osloenses fasciculus suppletorius
SOTBT	Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology
SSU	Studia semitica upsaliensia
STL	Studia theologica ludensia
SubBib	Subsidia biblica
TDOT	G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testamen*t
TgLam	Targum Lamentations
THBAT	Theologisch-homiletisches Bibelwerk: Die heilige Schrift, alten und neuen Testaments
THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
TTS	Trier theologische Studien
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UBSMS	United Bible Society Monograph Series
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZB	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. *Aim of the Project*

The destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians in 587 BCE marks a pivotal moment in the history of Israel. The period after this event to the Edict of Cyrus (539 BCE),[1] most often described as 'the exile', was a distinctive era, spurring religious thinking and development for those who would write in this time and after. Becking has typified this period as a 'crisis in the Israelite, Yahwistic religion' in which the destruction of the temple marks a 'fundamental breach in the Yahwistic symbol system'.[2] How would faith in Israel's God persist?

Lamentations represents a literary and theological means of coping with this disaster.[3] Its poetry reflects upon the multiform historical trauma

1. Scholars dispute the veracity of the so-called Edict of Cyrus. It seems probable that there was, at the very least, an order from Cyrus to Sheshbazzar to rebuild the temple and install the temple implements. See Lisbeth S. Fried, 'The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient Near East', in Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 34-38. There is a discrepancy between the two passages in Ezra that depict the edict. Ezra 1.1-4 speaks of Yhwh's command for Cyrus to build the temple and grant the exiles freedom to return to Palestine. Ezra 6.3-5, however, commands only the rebuilding of the temple (paid for by the royal treasury) and the return of the temple implements. If both accounts are accurate, it is possible that Ezra 6.3-5 represents the formal decree given by Cyrus while Ezra 1.1-4 represents a subsequent proclamation of the decree given by official heralds in various Jewish communities spread throughout Persia. See J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes (eds.), *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: SCM Press, 1986), pp. 444-45.

2. Bob Becking, 'Continuity and Discontinuity after the Exile: Some Introductory Remarks', in Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel (eds.), *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (OS, 42; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), p. 4.

3. As well as Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Deuteronomistic History. For a fine overview, see Jill Middlemas, *The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the 'Exile'* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2007). Iain Provan, however, does not believe that the book can only be read in reference to (or datable to) a period close to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE

attendant to Jerusalem's destruction. Human suffering is depicted in excruciating lucidity, including rape, cannibalism and mourning. A religious crisis is exposed by the reality of a razed temple (Lam. 2.6-7; 5.18), dead/impotent cult functionaries (Lam. 2.9, 14, 20; 4.13-15), and a patron deity's judgment against his people (Lam. 1.12-13, 16; 2.1-9; 3.1-17).

In the face of such horror, it would seem natural that a religious people would turn to their deity, as Berlin suggests. So prayer to God represents a major focus for the book.[4] Instances of formulaic direct address in Lamentations express various points of pain to God. Appeals to God vary and in some cases radically: a desire for Yhwh to see the sinfulness of the community (Lam. 1.9c), emotional distress over internal grief due to recognition of sin (Lam. 1.11c, 20a),[5] the threat of enemies (Lam. 1.9c; 3.59), disgrace at the hands of enemies (Lam. 5.1b), and the violent (possibly unjust) activity of Yhwh himself (Lam. 2.20a). In this way the prayers of the book present a range of theological viewpoints.[6]

Beyond its prayers, other literary indicators mark a deep theological ambiguity at heart in the book as well. One notes the divergent representations of the city. In Lamentations 1, for example, Jerusalem is personified as a mother/daughter, whore/victim, and a beggar. And in Lamentations 3, the 'man' is presented as a victim of divine abuse, a victim of enemy abuse in need of divine succor, and a sinner in need of confession and divine forgiveness. Finally, divine portrayal varies. God is shown (almost paradoxically) to be a source of hope and pain throughout the book.[7] Each of these indicators creates a theological indistinctness in the poetry. Previous scholarship has addressed this ambiguity to a certain degree but has come to different conclusions as to its rationale.

('Reading Texts against an Historical Background—Lamentations 1', *SJOT* 1 [1990], pp. 130-43; *Lamentations* [NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991], pp. 7-19).

4. Adele Berlin, *Lamentations* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 17-22.

5. For Lam. 1.11c as a confession of sin, see H.A. Thomas, 'The Meaning of *zōlēlâ* (Lam. 1:11c) One More Time', *VT* 61.3 (2011), pp. 489-98.

6. For prayer in Lamentations, see H.A. Thomas, 'The Liturgical Function of the Book of Lamentations', in M. Augustin and H.M. Niemann (eds.), *Thinking Towards New Horizons. Collected Communications to the XIXth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Ljubljana 2007* (BEATAJ, 55; Frankfurt am Main: Lang Verlag, 2008), pp. 137-47; '"I Will Hope in Him": Theology and Hope in Lamentations', in G.J. Wenham, J. Grant and A. Lo (eds.), *A God of Faithfulness: Essays in Honour of J. Gordon McConville on His 60th Birthday* (LHB/OTS, 538; London: T. & T. Clark, 2011), pp. 203-21.

7. See the helpful analysis of E. Boase, 'The Characterisation of God in Lamentations', *ABR* 56 (2008), pp. 32-44; and U. Berges, 'The Violence of God in the Book of Lamentations', in P. Chatelion Counet and U. Berges (eds.), *One Text, a Thousand Methods: Studies in Memory of Sjef van Tilborg* (BIS, 71; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), pp. 21-44.

The aim of this project is to gain greater clarity on the ambiguous theology of Lamentations. I shall do so by paying close attention to its poetry using insights from Italian semiotician Umberto Eco. This thesis will demonstrate that Lamentations' poetry activates and informs its theology to create openness as to its theological meaning. The progressive alphabetic acrostic is coupled with the reflexive momentum of repetitive wordplays to create interpretative possibilities in the poems. These techniques are matched by biblical and extra-biblical allusions from Lamentations' cultural encyclopedia that drive the reader outside the confines of the book to inform interpretative possibilities. Further, use of metaphor and imagery complicates and enlivens Lamentations' theology.

This approach is different from previous research. Earlier work has assessed religious influences on Lamentations, whether cultic, prophetic, or wisdom ideology to understand the book's theology. More recent work has used the fruit of form criticism to do the same. Religious traditions and generic influence undoubtedly have affected the writing of the book, but I will argue that they do not over-determine its theology. The most recent work has worked the theological angle using the fruit of psychological and feminist research. The outcome of this research varies. While not slighting any of these approaches, Lamentations' poetry will be shown to be the primary means to access the religious thinking in this book. The poetry itself shapes theological formulation as it presents a people living in uncertainty yet doggedly dependent upon the deity.

Further, in former research, the faith of Lamentations often has been characterized in terms of piety and penitence. So Lamentations taught God's people to trust him in the face of dire circumstances. Yet in modern research, the faith of this same book is characterized in terms of protest against God. However, recent research notes the vacillating nature of theological outlooks in the book.[8] The present study posits that Lamentations' religious thought is expressed with penitence *and* protest, confession *and* lament. As such, this volume nuances the polarized discussion and advances another line of thought as it relates to the religious thinking of Lamentations.

This thesis will identify Lamentations as an 'open' rather than 'closed' text. According to the semiotic approach of Umberto Eco, the 'openness' of the poetry suggests that it was created to draw the reader into a variety of responses to the aesthetic work. This runs counter to previous scholarship, which argued that Lamentations primarily was designed to evoke one particular response. As an open text, Lamentations produces a kind of 'ideal insomnia' that elicits a number of interpretative possibilities regarding: the

8. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* (Int; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2002); Berlin, *Lamentations*; Boase, 'The Characterisation'; 'Constructing Meaning in the Face of Suffering: Theodicy in Lamentations', *VT* 58 (2008), pp. 449-68.

place of God's people to their God (are they in need of forgiveness of sin or deliverance from the divine warrior), how the deity should be understood (set against his people or able to save his people from enemies), how God's people are to respond to God (whether submission or protest), and the figure of Zion as either whore or victim. These and other interpretative possibilities are not finally 'solved' or definitively 'answered' within the poems of Lamentations. Rather, they are productively opened for the reader.

This rather uncertain form of religious expression is sensible in light of what the poetry commemorates and negotiates: the historical realities that severely threatened Yahwistic worship and Israelite identity during the exilic age. Although it is not the main outcome of the volume, by analysing the book's poetry and theology, some insight may be offered as to the religious thought of the post-war Judahite community who lived during the exilic period. This is not to say that Lamentations comprizes the only or even paradigmatic expression of exilic theology, but it does represent a particular thread of religious thinking of this time.

2. *An Introduction to the Theology of Lamentations*

Since 2000 a bevy of new commentaries or monographs have been completed on Lamentations, often with an emphasis upon its theological outlook.[9] This inundation of scholarly activity displays degrees of continuity and discontinuity with Westermann's findings in his fine, albeit dated, com-

9. J.M. Bracke, *Jeremiah 30–52 and Lamentations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2000); Tod Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000); Ulrich Berges, *Klagelieder* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2002); Berlin, *Lamentations*; Daniel Berrigan, *Lamentations: From New York to Kabul and Beyond* (Chicago: Sheed & Ward, 2002); Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*; Nancy C. Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations: Cities under Siege, from Ur to Jerusalem to Sarajevo* (BIS, 60; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002); Kathleen M. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002); Dianne Bergant, *Lamentations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003); Jill Middlemas, *The Troubles of Templeless Judah* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Paul R. House, *Lamentations* (WBC; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005); Elizabeth Boase, *Fulfilment of Doom? The Dialogic Interaction between the Book of Lamentations and the Pre-exilic/Early Exilic Prophetic Literature* (LHB/OTS, 437; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006); Carleen Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (SemSt; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008); Robin Parry, *Lamentations* (THOTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); R.B. Salters, *Lamentations* (ICC; London: T. & T. Clark, 2010); Robin Parry and Heath Thomas (eds.), *Great is Thy Faithfulness? Toward Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011).

mentary. In a survey of research that spans from the beginning of the 20th century to roughly 1992, Westermann identifies two scholarly positions on the theology of the book. Lamentations addresses God and the community (1) to provide the community an explanation of the disaster and confess their sin to Yhwh, or (2) to point a way out of crisis by appealing to the Lord's beneficent nature.[10] These approaches are complementary as they derive from an emphasis upon Lamentations 3, especially its central parenetic section (Lam. 3.21-42), which admonishes faith in God's justice and mercy, submission in punishment, and an appeal for confession and repentance.

As Westermann understood, many scholars mark this parenetic section as the 'heart' of Lamentations' theology and indicative of the purpose of the book. For Mintz, Lamentations 3 is a triptych, whose three panels provide for the reader a process of alienation (Lam. 3.1-20), recovery of faith (Lam. 3.21-39), and the experience of reconnection with Yhwh (Lam. 3.40-66), thus comprising the 'theological nub' of the book.[11] Heater believes the poem divides in half and that Lam. 3.34-36 comprises the 'central argument' of the poem, that Yhwh is gracious.[12] Although she views Lamentations 3 as composed after the other chapters, Brandscheidt believes it marks the official 'pious' affirmation of faith to be adopted in the community, counteracting the impious tones of Lamentations 1 and 2.[13] Heim believes Lamentations 3 comprizes the 'heart' of the book: to encourage sufferers and show that Yhwh is good and that he will aid them.[14] Krašovec affirms this view though adds that divine aid depends upon repentance and 'conversion', which the poem teaches.[15] Kaiser, too, sees the chapter as the theological crescendo and teaches both theodicy and divine succor in time of suffering.[16] Labahn suggests Lamentations 3 offers a forward, hopeful

10. Claus Westermann, *Die Klagelieder: Forschungsgeschichte und Auslegung* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), pp. 73-81. (Reprinted as *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994], pp. 76-85.)

11. Alan Mintz, *Ḥurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), pp. 33-41.

12. Homer Heater, 'Structure and Meaning in Lamentations', *BibSac* 149 (1992), pp. 304-15 (308-309).

13. Renate Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenleid: Die Gerichtsklage des leidenden Gerechten in Klgl 3* (TTS, 41; Trier: Paulinus, 1983), pp. 350-52; *Das Buch der Klagelieder* (GS, 10; Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1988), pp. 153-57.

14. Knut Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem and the Drama of Her Bereavement in the Book of Lamentations', in Richard S. Hess and Gordon J. Wenham (eds.), *Zion, the City of Our God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 163.

15. Jože Krašovec, 'The Source of Hope in the Book of Lamentations', *VT* 42 (1992), pp. 232-33. So also Bo Johnson, 'Form and Message in Lamentations', *ZAW* 97 (1985), pp. 67-68.

16. Walter C. Kaiser, *Grief and Pain in the Plan of God: Christian Assurance and the Message of Lamentations* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus, 2004), pp. 20-21.

perspective for the suffering community in their process of grief, while the other poems offer a reflective, backwards view of suffering.[17]

These interpretations display an interpretative *Tendenz* that views Lamentations 3 as determinative for both the book's theology and meaning. So Childs can argue the key to the book is found in the language of faith in Lam. 3.21-39.[18] As Westermann anticipates, these kinds of theological conclusions culminate into a theodicy: a theology that constructs a rationale for God's activity in punishing his people, particularly for their sins.

Yet Westermann thinks that this view misses the primary theological purpose of the book. It is not designed 'to answer certain questions or to resolve some problems or conflicts. These songs arose as an immediate reaction on the part of those affected by the collapse. Those so affected then expressed themselves in lamentation. The 'meaning' of these laments is to be found in their very expression'.[19] This theological viewpoint is what Dobbs-Allsopp identifies as 'anti-theodicy', which will be discussed fully in the next chapter. It is sufficient to say at this point that anti-theodicy refuses to condense Lamentations' theology into a justification of God's actions and a confession of human sin—precisely the opposite. Berlin too suggests that Lamentations does not construct a theology *per se* but assumes a deep theology of destruction.[20]

Westermann comes to his position on lament in part by excising Lamentations 3 from primary consideration. He thinks the chapter is the latest redactional layer of the book as a whole. So, it cannot be counted upon to provide the theological meaning of the earliest exilic community that used the book.[21] Lament comprizes the primary theological impulse in the book.

Westermann's approach has been instrumental in later research, especially in the last fifteen years. Middlemas focuses upon the theological themes present in Lamentations 1–2 and 4–5, while excising Lamentations 3 from consideration. She sees in these other poems a theology of protest speech, even 'god-slander' (*theo-diabole*), which is designed to evoke a positive response from God.[22] Lamentations 3 is a later piece of theologi-

17. Antje Labahn, 'Trauern als Bewältingung der Vergangenheit zur Gestaltung der Zukunft. Bemerkungen zur anthropologischen Theologie der Klagelieder', *VT* 52 (2002), pp. 513-27 (523-26).

18. Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 594-95.

19. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder,* p. 77 = *Lamentations*, p. 81. So too William Lanahan, 'The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations', *JBL* 93 (1974), pp. 41-49.

20. Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 17-18.

21. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 65-71, 137-60 = *Lamentations,* pp. 66-72, 160-93.

22. She believes Lamentations 3 belongs to a different 'thought milieu' than the other chapters (Middlemas, *The Troubles*, pp. 212, 226-27).

cal corrective that admonishes the people in the proper way to behave as opposed to the impious lament prayers in Lamentations 1–2.[23]

Rather than excising Lamentations 3 from the book, Linafelt shifts attention away from its centrality for theological discussion. He helpfully elucidates, following Westermann, the scholarly tendency to read the theology of the book as a whole through the central figure of the man (גבר) in Lamentations 3. Linafelt believes that this emphasis, seen particularly in the commentaries of Weiser,[24] Kraus,[25] Childs, Brandscheidt and Hillers,[26] is attributable to one of three primary factors: '(1) a male bias towards the male figure of the chapter; (2) a Christian bias towards the suffering man of Lamentations based on a perceived similarity to the figure of Christ; and (3) a broader emphasis on reconciliation with God rather than confrontation'.[27] Whatever the reasons, any such theological reading is untenable for Linafelt. Even though he does not believe that this theological thread can be divorced from the poetry, Linafelt highlights the figure of personified Zion in Lamentations 1 and 2. She is characterized as more theologically confrontational than submissive.[28]

A confrontational theology also is taken up in Mandolfo's reading of Lamentations 1–2. She argues that the discordant note that Zion personified sings in these chapters helps to counteract the overly positive theology of Lamentations 3 and the prophets (especially Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah). In Mandolfo combines insights of Bakhtinian and feminist analyzes to inform a reading of Lamentations that is resistant, confrontational against God, and overtly *anti*-theodic. In her approach, divine justification for the abuse of Zion in the prophets is counteracted by Zion's own countertestimony in Lamentations 1–2. In the voice of Zion, the abused and marginalized find their voice.[29]

Although popular in recent research, Westermann's theological impulse towards lament remains unsatisfactory, not because it is absent from the text but because it is too broad a category. If the poems of Lamentations offer 'lamentation' to express pain and confrontation, then what kinds

23. Jill Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah Write Lamentations III?', *VT* 56 (2006), pp. 514-18. The outcomes of her argument are in some ways similar to Brandscheidt's argument on Lamentations 3.

24. Artur Wieser, *Klagelieder* (ATD, 16; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962).

25. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Klagelieder (Threni)* (BKAT; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1960).

26. Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (ABC; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, rev. edn, 1992).

27. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, p. 5.

28. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, pp. 5-18, 35-61.

29. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back*.

of expressions are presented? Are they divergent from, or similar to, one another? Theological indistinctness in Lamentations creates difficulties for defining both the book's theology and the concomitant question of its purpose.[30]

If there has been an overemphasis upon theodicy assumed in Lamentations 3 to the neglect of the figure of Zion in Lamentations 1 and 2, then recently there has been an overemphasis upon Lamentations 1 and 2 and the concomitant 'anti-theodicy' assumed with these chapters to the neglect of Lamentations 3. And in these recent works, the final two chapters in the book are rather left out in the cold. No research at present observes how the *whole* of Lamentations presents its theology in concert, synthetically. As Lamentations figures and addresses the Lord in and through the poetry, attending to its poetry—how the language functions, its poetic devices, genre and structure—gives a means to access and assess the theology of the book.

3. *Composition and Date of Lamentations*

In light of the myriad of well-established literary readings in the academy, perhaps it would be enough to undertake a literary interpretation of the whole of the book here to establish findings. Indeed, such an approach would not undermine the major aim of the volume—explicating the theology of Lamentations through its poetry so as to elucidate its 'open' textuality.

Yet, the current project instead prefers a literary reading that takes due account of historical dimensions of Lamentations as well. Umberto Eco's semiotic approach (see below) expects that the creation of a literary artefact is an historical phenomenon, and thereby is created with certain historical conventions that may not be present or understood in a later literary aesthetic. So it is necessary to ask, at the very least, the historical question of a general timeframe for the book's composition as well as possibilities for its authorship and audience. A minority of scholars date the book or portions of it very late but these views have not won wide support.[31] Some further narrow the timeframe to between 587 and 540 BCE.[32] The present study assumes that the book as a whole was composed in a relatively short time, between the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and the reconstruction

30. This point holds for the theology espoused in Lamentations 3. See analysis below, as well as H.A. Thomas, 'I Will Hope in Him'.

31. Fries and Lachs date the book after the exile, even to the second century BCE (S.A. Fries, 'Parallele zwischen den Klageliedern Cap. IV, V und der Maccabäerzeit', *ZAW* 13 [1893], pp. 110-24; S. Lachs, 'The Date of Lamentations', *JQR* 57 [1968], pp. 46-56) while Provan remains agnostic about its date (Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 14).

32. Berlin, *Lamentations*.

of the temple in Jerusalem by 515 BCE. This is, by far, the majority view. While this is position is assumed here rather than closely proven, there are a number of ways that scholars have arrived at it.

The first is the perspective of the poems because they seem to look backward to the destruction of Jerusalem. So Renkema states, 'The songs leave one with the impression that they were conceived during a period of great misfortune after the fall [of Jerusalem], when chaos reigned throughout the land…One can be sure then that this does not refer to a period decades after the fall of Jerusalem. The people did not need tens of years to arrive at a kind of *modus vivendi* with the downfall'.[33] This view does not completely convince, as many reasonably maintain that Lamentations 3 and 5 are later additions to an exilic-era work.[34] Even though she excludes Lamentations 3, Middlemas rightly suggests Lamentations 5 belongs in the exilic period because it reflects a similar theological viewpoint to Lamentations 1, 2 and 4.[35]

The problem then becomes the date of Lamentations 3. It is typical to argue (along various lines) that the poem is composed later than the other ones, or that Lam. 3.21-39 represents a later redaction to an earlier text. It is true that Lam. 3.21-39 sits awkwardly in the book due in part to its unique parenetic tone, penitential themes, and vision of hope that comes in and through confession and repentance. Because of this, Middlemas suggests that Lamentations 3 (particularly 3.21-39) reflects an exilic *Golah* perspective rather than that of Judahites remaining in the land (the 'poor of the land' in Jer. 39.10; 40.7; 52.16). As such, this poem is different from Lamentations 1, 2, 4 and 5 in that it remains more hopeful (like *Golah* writings) than the other 'complaint-orientated' poems.[36] In particular, Lam. 3.21-39 should be understood as a piece that corrects the despondent view of both 3.1-18 and Lamentations 1–2. She proposes that a *Golah* poet composed Lam. 3.21-39 and used intertextual allusions from the other poems in order to invert the plaintive lament of these previous poems (the Judahite perspective) and theologically to critique them.

33. Johan Renkema, *Lamentations* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), p. 54. For an extended account of those who hold this view, see F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations', *JANESCU* 26 (1998), p. 4 n. 15.

34. Modern proponents of this view are Salters, Berges, Brandscheidt, Westermann (Lamentations 3), Middlemas (Lamentations 3), Labahn and most Continental scholarship in the last century.

35. Middlemas, *The Troubles*, pp. 171-84.

36. Distinctive motifs in Lamentations 1, 2, 4 and 5 are: a focus upon human suffering, a lack of confidence in a future hope, a deconstruction of the efficacy of confession of sin, the vocalization of pain, and the formulation of grief (Middlemas, *The Troubles*, pp. 197-228). See otherwise in J. Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah', pp. 505-25; *The Troubles*, pp. 197-226; Berges, *Klagelieder*. For my position, see below.

Middlemas' insight on intertextual connections between the first three poems of Lamentations is a welcome and insightful contribution. Her analysis, however, does not go far enough, in that she fails to recognize the connections that occur within the whole of Lamentations 3.[37] A traceable intertextual logic proceeds throughout the corpus of the poem that must be explained in some manner.

A number of compositional possibilities are possible. (1) The whole of Lamentations 3 is a later piece of literature than the other poems, belonging to perhaps a late- or post-exilic religious community in Judah.[38] (2) A *Golah* group composed Lam. 3.21-39 to respond to Lamentations 1–2 and correct it, only to have the Judahite community react by framing Lam. 3.21-39 with Lam. 3.1-20 and 3.40-66. (3) Lam. 3.1-39 was written by a *Golah* group to counter the despondency of Lamentations 1–2[39] only to have another group (Judahite?) compose Lam. 3.40-66 as a Judahite redaction and response to the *Golah* text (Lam. 3.1-39). (4) Lam. 3.21-39 represents a later, perhaps late/post-exilic perspective and reaction to the plaintive cries of Lamentations 1–2, 3.1-20, 3.40-66.[40] This theological response, then, sets the immediacy of confession and repentance over and above the suffering presented in the other bits of the poem (and correcting them). (5) It may be that the entire poem is Judahite and exilic.[41]

For any reconstruction of Lamentations 3 to be entirely persuasive, one major question needs to be resolved. One must prove that the intertextual links that exist throughout the corpus of Lam. 3.1-66 are in fact the work of redaction(s) rather than the work of an intentional composition written from a singular perspective. When one notes the number of repeated elements that occur across the whole of the poem, it is reasonable to suggest that the poem is written from a single perspective and for a single audience, rather than two (or more) of them. So options (1) or (5) are at least reasonable, and the most likely. This is a poem of high literary quality, tightly woven together through intertextual linkage, bound by the alphabetic acrostic, and united to the other poems by the general appeal for help from enemies. In this, Lamentations 3 concludes on a point of plea rather than penitence and in this sits comfortably with the other poems.

While it is possible to suggest that Lam. 3.21-39 may belong to a *Golah* milieu due to its differentiation in theme and tone (penitence rather than

37. See Lam. 1.3c (כל־רדפיה), 6c (לפני רודף) // 3.43a (ותרדפנו); Lam. 3.8b (תפלתי) // 3.44b (תפלה); Lam. 3.30b (בחרפה) // 3.61a (חרפתם); √ראה (Lam. 3.36b // 3.59a, 60a); Lam. 3.35a (משפט־גבר) // 3.59b (משפטי). For a full discussion, see Thomas, 'I Will Hope in Him', pp. 203-21.

38. Salters, *Lamentations*.

39. Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah'.

40. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenlied*; *Klagelieder*.

41. See Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; Thomas, 'I Will Hope in Him'.

plea), due to the intertextual strategy at work in the whole poem, it is better to regard the entire poem as Judahite. Still, it is impossible to be dogmatic. Any of the redactional processes I have identified should not be discounted out of hand. But, because of the poetics presented in the whole of the poem as well as the dark tone that is cast by the poetry, if any such redaction did occur, then it may be understood as happening before the dedication of the Temple in 515 BCE. On this reckoning, Lamentations fits within a timeframe roughly between 587–515 BCE.

Other approaches yield similar results in the dating of the book. Unhappy with the rather tenuous methodology of dating according to perceived outlook and perspective in a biblical book, Dobbs-Allsopp employs linguistic analysis and concludes the whole of it belongs firmly in the exilic age on the basis of its linguistic profile.[42] Different to the linguistic approach, the book has been dated on the basis of intertextual allusions between Lamentations, Isaiah 40–55 and Zechariah 1–2. This research suggests that the whole of the book sits within the exilic timeframe as well.[43]

These three threads of argumentation give positive support to the view that Lamentations as a whole belongs to the exilic age. It may be understood as being created in Judah during this period for a Judahite audience. And when one takes into account the historical and social evidence of Judah during this period,[44] the plausibility of this view is strengthened.

4. *Historical and Social Realities of Judah during the Exilic Period*

By placing the creation of Lamentations in exilic Judah, we are drawn into a complex discussion of the so-called 'myth of the empty land' of Judah

42. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Linguistic Evidence', p. 2 n. 7.

43. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, 'Lamentations in Isaiah 40–55', in *Great is Thy Faithfulness?*, pp. 55-63; Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah'; Boase, *Fulfilment of Doom*; Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets*; Patricia Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Isaiah 40–55* (SBLDS, 161; Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1997); Christopher Seitz, *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 130-49. Sommer argues that Second Isaiah drew on Lamentations 1–4 but was unaware of Lamentations 5. See B. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 130; Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, pp. 62-79; Michael R. Stead, 'Sustained Allusion in Zechariah 1–2', in Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd (eds.), *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (LHB/OTS, 475; London: T. & T. Clark, 2008), pp. 144-70.

44. Hans Barstad, 'Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period', in *History and the Hebrew Bible*: *Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* (FAT, 61; Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 2008), pp. 135-59; note Lena-Sophia Tiemeyer's suggestion that Judah could have produced even Isaiah 40–55 in the exilic period in *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (VTSup, 139; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011), pp. 53-75.

during the sixth century BCE. In the broad discussion, it is separately argued in different ways by Hans Barstad, Niels Lemche, Philip Davies and Thomas Thompson that it is mistaken to think that a significant change in Judahite culture occurred due to Babylonian forced migration (exile). Rather, this notion of exile represents an ideological vision not true to the realities on the ground during the period.[45]

Without conceding all of the points of that general view, and without reacting towards a 'maximalist' position, it is quite clear that the the land of Judah was neither completely destroyed nor the people of Judah completely depopulated or 'exiled' during the sixth century BCE. On the basis of recent archaeology and material evidence dated to this era, it is apparent that Judah remained relatively active despite the Neo-Babylonian advance into the Levant. This is true except for the region of Jerusalem and its surrounding territory. Besides this, basic social structures such as the family unit and agricultural development (grain, wine and oil) persisted in the region around Benjamin in what is known as the 'exilic age'.

Yet it is also clear that Jerusalem indeed was destroyed and its role as a prominent cultic center was quashed. In the period between 587–540 BCE neither Babylonian nor Persian policy encouraged or facilitated the rebuilding of the cultic site at Jerusalem, at least according to the biblical sources. In fact, nothing of Jerusalem is mentioned in the reign of Gedaliah to suggest its continued political or religious influence. Quite the opposite is apparent (2 Kings 22–26; Jer. 41.7-18). Attention in the biblical material shifts to the north, at Mizpah in the region of Benjamin. The reason for this is that likely the Jerusalem's infrastructure could no longer support government in the way that it had previously. The impression is advanced in Lamentations: 'the roads to Zion (Jerusalem) mourn on account of the dearth of festal pilgrims' (Lam. 1.4) and foxes prowl on Mount Zion 'which is desolate' (Lam. 5.18). The tone of the poetry is—to say the least—grim. Now for some, these sources are suspect for historical reconstruction. Still, other evidence supports the notion of Jerusalem's destruction.

Archaelogical data suggests that Jerusalem and the nearby vicinity was razed and burned in the beginning of the sixth century BCE, leaving the region of little use.[46] One cannot discount the reality or impact of this moment in

45. Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 2003 [1992]); Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaelogy and the Myth of Israel* (London: Basic Books, 1999); Hans Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaelogy of Judah During the 'Exilic' Period* (SOFS, 28; Oslo: Scandanavian University Press, 1996); *History and the Hebrew Bible*; Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (LAI; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1998).

46. See the extensive discussion in Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

history. It is probable that at least some faithful Yahwistic devotees prayed and made some pilgrimage to the ruins at Jerusalem in this period (Jer. 41.5-7). However, this activity is best seen as sporadic and undefined. Lamentations may have been used as a part of this pilgrimage, but it is uncertain. At any rate, that pilgrims would come to the ruins of Jerusalem does not leave one with the impression that the destruction of the temple left life basically at the same level as before.

Further, with the destruction of Jerusalem, one notes a shift in administrative policy and religious practice in the region. The region of Benjamin north of Jerusalem and Mizpah in particular supplanted Jerusalem as the administrative center for post-war Judah under Neo-Babylonian rule. This no doubt constituted a shift in a previous way of life, reinforcing a sense of both fragmentation and disorientation for those who remained in the region.[47] It is also possible that Bethel became an important cultic site once again, a point made by Blenkinsopp and then bolstered by Middlemas.[48] According to Zech. 7.2, in the fourth year of King Darius (c. 518 BCE) a delegation is sent from Bethel to Jerusalem for a religious ruling concerning fasting. The issue concerned the question of whether the priests at the ruined sanctuary in Jerusalem believed that a continued cycle of fasting should persist as it had done for a number of decades. That the delegation is sent from Bethel gives some indication that it was an important cultic site in lieu of the destroyed city of Jerusalem.

Another insight emerges from this point. It is apparent that there was some form of functioning priesthood in Judah during the exilic age that could give rulings for the people. There likely were priestly cadres located in or around Mizpah or Bethel,[49] but also may have been, especially in the latter half of the exilic age, around Jerusalem (hence the ruling given at Jerusalem in Zechariah 7). But, this latter point remains tenuous. Still Tiemeyer conjectures that the region around Bethel and Mizpah are likely locations for the kind of priestly activity and scribal practice that could have produced complex writings.[50] One such production could be the book of Lamentations.

So a certain degree of continuity for life persisted in post-war Judah, but a certain degree of discontinuity existed as well. On the one hand, especially

47. Note the discussion of Middlemas, *The Troubles*, pp. 122-70.

48. Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period', in Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 93-107; Middlemas, *The Troubles*, pp. 133-44.

49. It may have been part of the Aaronic line of priests, but this is uncertain. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'The Judean Priesthood during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods: A Hypothetical Reconstruction', *CBQ* 60 (1998), pp. 25-43.

50. Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion*, pp. 53-75 (58-68).

in the northern region of Benjamin, it is likely that a coterie of Yahwistic devotees, priests and/or temple-singers remained in the land. Lamentations could have been written by these groups in either Bethel or Mizpah, reflecting upon the ruined state of the former center of worship. This is a reasonable but tenuous hypothesis. The Hebrew text does not reveal its author with certainty, even though tradition ascribes Jeremianic authorship. Still, Lamentations itself as a literary artefact speaks to the possibility of a capable writing community in post-war Judah.[51] What can be said more definitively is that their experience was one of disruption in terms of movement to the north away from Jerusalem and its immediate environs, loss in terms of socio-religious fragmentation that comes as a result of the destruction of cultic life at the sanctuary. Even if one supposes that family and economic life continued in much the same way as before the Neo-Babylonian advance, one cannot then further suppose that religious life did as well for Yahwistic devotees. The failure of religious continuity is no small loss. A fracture in religious thinking constitutes a crisis of faith. Lamentations plausibly reflects one literary means to respond to that crisis.

5. *Conclusion*

Once it is shown as credible to assess Lamentations synthetically on an historical basis, the next question centres upon determining its theology. As indicated above, this is difficult due in part to the ambiguity arising from the poetry itself and to the variety of scholarly approaches to the question. Does the theodic or anti-theodic position hold sway?

In the following chapter, a survey of research will reveal that how one frames the question of theology in Lamentations impinges upon what one determines it to be. Implicit preconceptions ground explicit questions in scholarship. At this point it is important to note with Willamson that 'human understanding never begins with a *tabula rasa*, a completely blank page. No one comes to the Bible (or any other book bearing truth claims which could affect the life of the reader) with complete objectivity—he or she will carry some preconceptions and be inclined toward one position or another'.[52]

The worlds 'behind', 'within' and 'in front of' the text are common metaphors used to describe the different interpretative frames in what follows.[53]

51. Cf. Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion*.

52. Peter S. Williamson, *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture: A Study on the Pontifical Biblical Commission's The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (with preface by Albert Vanhoye; *SubBi*, 22; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2001), pp. 79-80.

53. W. Randolph Tate uses these metaphors to describe the different ways for the interpreter to think about accessing meaning: *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, rev. edn, 2003). Anthony C. Thiselton too uses

These serve as interpretative lenses that focus interpreters' readings of Lamentations' theology. The world 'behind' the text focuses the interpreter upon the history that lay behind the creation of the book of Lamentations: the book's literary or theological development or, alternatively, the theological traditions that infuse it. This focus is apparent in the monographs of Gottwald, Albrektson, Berges, Brandscheidt and Westermann. The interpretations of Johnson, Nägelsbach, Kaiser, Shea and Renkema typify a primary concern for the world 'within' the text. The concerns of Guest, Seidman, Mandolfo, Maier, O'Connor, Berrigan, Linafelt and Pyper ground their readings foremost from a concern for the world 'in front of' the text, that is, from a specific set of explicit questions and concerns that shapes how they read and understand the theology of Lamentations.

Chapter 2 will also demonstrate how House, Parry and Dobbs-Allsopp's analysis comes closest to integrating all three horizons productively in interpretation. In these works the world 'behind' the text remains in full view, but they suggest that Lamentations should be read as a synchronic whole. In their analysis the world 'within' the text remains prominent: a concern for the poetics of the text and how they function to make theological points. Finally in their attempts to negotiate the theology of Lamentations specifically from particular ideological/theological viewpoints (Christian-theological or Post-Holocaust theology) it will be clear that they recognize the importance of the world 'in front of' the text. The present context in which Lamentations is received and read must be brought to bear in ascertaining its theology. Thus, these works embody what I shall identify as an 'integrated approach'.[54]

As mentioned above, the aesthetic theory of Umberto Eco serves as the general methodological approach for the study. This decision stems in part from a belief, following Linafelt and Dobbs-Allsopp, that the theology of Lamentations is wholly enmeshed with its poetic quality. Theology only arises as one works through the poetry 'successively, progressively'.[55] This is one of the reasons that I have provided extensive analysis of the poetry to tease out its theology rather than organizing elements of the poetry's openness into systematic categories in order to access the book's theology. Both ways of engaging the material are possible, but the latter approach tends to flatten the poetry in a way that is not preferred here. Still, after working through the poetry, at the end of each chapter (Chapters 5-8) a brief

these metaphors in a similar manner: '"Behind" and "In Front of" the Text: Language, Reference and Indeterminacy', in Craig Bartholomew *et. al*. (eds.), *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation* (SHS, 2; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), pp. 97-120.

54. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

55. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, pp. 23-48.

'catalogue' of results will be presented in summary fashion to provide a more systematic account of the points that have been discovered.

Eco's aesthetic analysis presents a theory to assess productively the poetics of Lamentations from the cultural world in which the book was created. His concepts of the 'encyclopedia' and the 'open' versus 'closed' text, coupled with his hermeneutically sophisticated interpretative model, enables a rich approach to deal with the intricacies of Lamentations' poetry. And, Eco's philosophy of language and communication provides a comprehensive means to access Lamentations in a manner somewhat different to the more limited (but useful) scope of recent research employing Bakhtinian theory of polyphonic voices in Lamentations.[56]

In order to do justice to the internal workings of the poetry, a chapter is devoted to discussing the crucial elements that inform the encyclopedic world of Lamentations that would be necessary to construct a model reader (Chapter 4). This information will be incorporated in the exegesis of Lamentations, which occurs in Chapters 5-8. Finally I offer conclusions concerning both the poetry and theology of the poems. Thus in the present study I will assess the poetry of Lamentations synchronically, employing the aesthetic theory of Umberto Eco to discern the theology of the book.

56. For the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin and his employment in Lamentations research, see Boase, *Fulfilment of Doom?*; Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*.

Chapter 2

Survey of Research

1. *Introduction*

This chapter will expand outward the preliminary discussion on the theology of Lamentaitons in the previous chapter. Although not exhaustive, I will survey representative research, past and present, which revolves around the question of theology in Lamentations.[1] The metaphors of the worlds 'behind', 'within', and 'in front of' the text orient this survey. I then conclude with a discussion on the 'integrated approach' to understanding the book's theology, which is the approach adopted here.

2. *'Behind' the Text*

a. *Norman Gottwald and Bertil Albrektson*

Historical critical research suggests that theological variance in Lamentations should be understood as reflecting different historical strata of text or different theological traditions influencing the text. The historian traces textual development and then maps out theological development along with the growth of the text. Historical reconstruction is the clue for theological interpretation.

Gottwald and Albrektson centre upon the presence and nature of hope in Lamentations and how it arises.[2] Gottwald looks at this question from the perspective of both the history of Jerusalem and the presence of the Deuteronomic tradition in Judah at the time of Jerusalem's destruction. While situating the question from the history of Jerusalem as does Gottwald, Albrektson looks at another purported tradition thought to have existed in Judah to gain insight into Lamentations' theology. Both, however, approach the question of hope inthe book.

1. For more exhaustive surveys, see C.W. Miller, 'The Book of Lamentations in Recent Research', *CBR* 1 (2002), pp. 9-29; H.A. Thomas, 'A Survey of Research on Lamentations (2002–2012)', *CBR* (forthcoming).

2. The monograph of Johan Renkema raises this theological emphasis: *'Misschien is er hoop…': Die theologische vooronderstellingen van het boek Klaagliederen* (Franeker: Wever, 1983). Renkema's ideas are later expanded in his commentary. The concern for hope is central in Krašovec's article, 'The Source of Hope', pp. 223-33.

Gottwald argues that the book presents a theology of hope and doom, which originated in Deuteronomic prophetic circles prior to Jerusalem's destruction.[3] The logic of this Deuteronomic theology is as follows: if Judah follows Yhwh, then they will receive blessing; if they disobey him, then they will receive his punishment. And yet King Josiah, whom the book of 2 Kings affirms as a great reformer who encouraged the people to follow the Lord, died in 609 BCE at the hands of Egyptian Pharaoh Neco I. Political instability ensued after his death and contributed to the subsequent events of deportation of leaders of Judah (597 BCE) by the Babylonians and finally destruction of the capital city, Jerusalem, in 587 BCE at the hand of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar I. This serial trauma shook Judah's confidence and left the nation in theological crisis that can be summarized in a question: if Josiah had accomplished such a great Yahwistic reform movement in the nation, then why has the nation received retributive judgment rather than reward? This gap between historical reality and Deuteronomic faith marks the 'key' that unlocks the theology of Lamentations.[4]

This retributive theology gives way to covenantal hope. According to Gottwald, 'the unshakable nature of [Yhwh's] justice and love', is found in Lam. 3.19-33 and forms the hope for the book. God's 'constancy guarantees that the disappointments and defeats are not ultimate inasmuch as sovereign grace stands behind and beyond them (3.36-39)'.[5] Because this theology of hope sits at the structural center of the book, the theological complexity and tension in the book is answered by God's unshakeable nature and his covenant love.

Different from Gottwald's Deuteronomic theology, Albrektson argues that Lamentations' theology derives from royal Judahite ideology, specifically known as Zion theology, as the key to understanding its theological presentation and the source of hope. Zion theology promotes that Yhwh has elected Jerusalem as his home (eternally), commits himself to the Davidic royal line, and that this election and commitment makes Jerusalem impenetrable.[6] This is evidenced in Pss. 46.6 and 87.2, among other texts (Pss. 48, 76, 84; Isa. 37.33-35). Albrektson believes that the key to Lamentations' theology is found in the tension 'between the confident belief of the Zion traditions in the inviolability of the temple and city, and the actual brute facts' of history.[7]

3. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*.
4. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, pp. 47-62.
5. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 109.
6. Bertil Albrektson, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations: With a Critical Edition of the Peshiṭta Text* (STL, 21; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1963), pp. 219-30. Edzard Rohland gave full attention to the motifs and themes that distinguished the Zion tradition in his dissertation under the supervision of Gerhard von Rad, 'Die Bedeutung der Erwählungstradition Israels für die Eschatologie der alttestamentlichen Propheten' (Dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1956).
7. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 230.

Yet Albrektson agrees with Gottwald that there is an element of Deuteronomic faith present in Lamentations. This theological strand emphasizes the justice of Yhwh's punishment (cf. Deuteronomy 28).[8] God is not bound to his temple as Zion theology claims, but rather is 'unfettered by the fate of his cult-center, reigns supreme in history'.[9] Theological tension in the book is explained as tension between Zion theology and Deuteronomic faith, two separate traditions that coalesce in the book. For Albrektson, the strand emphasizing the royal ideology of Zion provides the backdrop of pain and questioning in Lamentations, while the Deuteronomic strand actually explains, justifies and offers a way out of the pain of the historical moment.[10]

The monographs of Gottwald and Albrektson rightly ask questions about theological traditions that lay behind the text that may infuse the theological portrait of the book. Still their monographs fail to convince in that they consider these theological traditions to be *determinative* for Lamentations' theology. Gottwald's attempt to explain the theology through the Deuteronomic theology of retribution and reward and the reality of Jerusalem's destruction remains unconvincing. Recent research into the *Urrolle* of Jeremiah demonstrates that after Josiah's death in 609 BCE, the prophet Jeremiah portrays a highly critical attitude towards the leadership of Judah, especially the religious leaders, for their continued sinfulness and waywardness apart from Yhwh.[11]

Seen in this light, Gottwald's historical portrait of a people questioning how the Lord could bring retribution instead of reward simply no longer remains tenable. In reality, after Josiah's death in 609 BCE, Jeremiah took his stance against the political Jerusalemite establishment and demarcates a radical theological position in his first temple sermon (Jeremiah 7), in which Judah will not be saved from disaster as long as the people continue in wickedness—religious leaders included. His second temple sermon (Jeremiah 26) also reflects this perspective as well. This confrontation with the post-Josianic political establishment, with their rebellion and injustice, worship of foreign gods and resistance to the word of God provides support

8. In fact, Albrektson sees connections between Lam. 1.3 and Deut. 28.58; Lam. 1.5 and Deut. 28.13, 41, 44; Lam. 1.9 and Deut. 28.43; Lam. 3.54 and Deut. 28.37; Lam. 4.10 and Deut. 28.53; Lam. 4.16, 5.12 and Deut. 28.50 (Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 231-34).

9. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 239.

10. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 237-39.

11. See Mark Leuchter, *Josiah's Reform and Jeremiah's Scroll: Historical Calamity and Prophetic Response* (HBM, 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006). Leuchter argues that Jeremiah was part of Josiah's reform movement and helped create the Deuteronomistic theology during Josiah's reign. After Josiah's death, Jeremiah took a radical theological position.

to the notion that, at least in the mind of Jeremiah, Judah's activity warranted retribution, *not* reward. There can be little doubt that others viewed the situation in this manner as well.[12] Leuchter correctly assesses Jeremiah's perspective on the political establishment, and his belief that they deserved judgment especially highlighted in Jeremiah's temple sermons.[13] In light of this, Gottwald's thesis remains at least too sweeping to account for contemporary thinking in Judah or at worst remains untenable.

Albrektson's supposition that Zion tradition determines or explains the theology of Lamentations is tenuous. It is certainly likely that some form of Zion theology informs the religious thought of the book. Is the Zion-theology in Lamentations of the same tradition that influenced Jeremiah 7 or Isaiah of Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 5.2-20)? If so, the fact that Zion was destroyed would not be a surprise, but an eventuality in light of the sins admitted in Lamentations. In these prophetic employments of the Zion tradition, Yhwh is not unequivocally bound to the sanctuary—justice must be practiced among the people as well.[14]

Further, it should be recognized that no single tradition adequately covers the book's theological diversity. What has been identified as broadly Deuteronomic, prophetic, or Zion traditions may be reflected in the book, but any one on its own does not determine or exhaust the theology of the whole. Berlin has exposed purity paradigms that derive from (generally) priestly traditions as well (cf. Lam. 1.9, 17; 4.13-15).[15] The paradigm of mourning also suggestively informs the theology of Lamentations.[16] The phenomenology of mourning paves the way for both expressing pain and sometimes

12. Jer. 26.20-24 reveals that Uriah the prophet also prophesied with similar reasoning against the Jerusalemite establishment and Judahite populace. King Jehoiakim actually pursued Uriah to kill him. Uriah fled to Egypt; Jehoiakim brought him back to Judah by force and killed him.

13. In my view, Leuchter overdraws the evidence that links Jeremiah's relationship to the creation of Deuteronomistic theology in the Josianic court.

14. This is following the logic of Zion theology advocated by two separate scholarly views: Roberts and Gese. See Harmut Gese, *Vom Sinai zum Zion: Alttestamentliche Beitrage zur biblischen Theologie* (BET, 64; Münich: Kaiser, 1974); J.J.M. Roberts, 'The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition', *JBL* 92 (1973), pp. 329-44; 'Yahweh's Foundation in Zion (Isa. 28:6)', *JBL* 106 (1987), pp. 27-45; 'Zion in the Theology of the Davidic-Solomonic Empire', in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (ed. T. Ishida; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 93-108.

15. Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 19-22.

16. Xuan Huong Thi Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Bible* (JSOTSup, 302; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Emmanuel Feldman, *Biblical and Postbiblical Defilement and Mourning: Law as Theology* (LJLE; New York: KTAV, 1977); Gary Anderson, *A Time To Mourn, a Time to Dance* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Paul Kruger, 'The Inverse World of Mourning in the Hebrew Bible', *BN* 124 (2005), pp. 41-49.

enacting penitence.[17] This is why poetry will be the primary means to negotiate theological presentation in the book here.

b. *Ulrich Berges, Claus Westermann and Renate Brandscheidt*

Different from tradition-history, other scholars use redaction or form criticism to date the individual poems and assess their theological outlook. Berges dates Lamentations 3 to the post-exilic period and is the last accretion of the book. He argues the chapter teaches that Yhwh's people may pray in lament to him on the basis of a continued relationship with God espoused in the pious affirmations of 3.19-39. The poem offers a way to theologically 'negotiate' rather than 'correct' the other poems of the book.[18] On a literary evaluation, Lamentations 3 is exemplary of 'Rollen- oder Problemträger-Dichtungen'. In this theodic poetry, Zion becomes a model for faithful prayer and hope for those coping with hardships in Persian Yehud. Faithful prayer is marked by penitence, in hopes God will forgive (Lam. 3.25-39).[19] The latest redaction of the book then provides the key to unlock the meaning of the whole.

Brandscheidt employs redaction criticism to understand Lamentations, especially the relationship between Lamentations 3 and the rest of the book. She suggests that Lamentations 3 represents the high theological point of the book and the final (Deuteronomic) redactional layer in the development of Lamentations.[20] The central chapter corrects the gross pain, suffering and laments that Lamentations 1, 2, 4 and 5 present. In this way, she differs from Berges, who sees more complementary interaction between the third chapter and the other poems in the book. Yet for Brandscheidt, the theology of this latest redaction espouses a penitent stance for the believing community, justifies the Lord's activity against his people, confirms his mercy and lovingkindness, and hopes in him on the basis of his beneficent nature.[21]

17. For mourning as expressing pain, notice the acts of crying out, 'איכה', a hallmark of mourning (Lam. 1.1; 2.1; 4.1), the act of wailing and crying out (Lam. 2.19), the act the act of sitting upon the ground in isolation (Lam. 1.1), and weeping (Lam. 1.16). But notice as well Lam. 3.28, 'Let him sit alone and be silent'; here this typical act of mourning is transformed into a penitential act.

18 .Ulrich Berges, '"Ich bin der Mann, der Elend sah" (Klgl 3,1): Zionstheologie als Weg aus der Krise', *BibZeits* 44 (2000), pp. 1-20. Although Yhwh has punished his people and land (Zion personified) his relationship with both through the covenant provides a ground for the future.

19. Berges, '"Ich bin der Mann, der Elend sah" (Klgl 3,1)', pp. 16-20; 'Kann Zion mannlisch sein? Klgl 3 als "Literarisches Drama" und "Nachexilische Problemdischtung"', in M. Augustin and H.M. Niemann (eds.), *'Basel und Bibel' Collected Communications to the XVIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament* (BEATAJ, 51; Frankfurt am Main: Lang Verlag, 2004), pp. 235-46. Note that Berges combines tradition-historical insights with redaction criticism.

20. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenleid*, pp. 202-35.

21. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenleid*, pp. 350-51.

The Deuteronomic redactor compiled three pre-existing, separate poems (Lamentations 2, 1, 5) and added Lamentations 4 to the corpus; he adjoined Lamentations 4 to contrast the hopelessness of Lamentations 2 and provided a glimmer of hope through the addition Lam. 4.22. The same redactor then completed the book by inserting the central chapter, Lamentations 3. Thus this chapter represents 'der Mittlepunkt des Buches und der Kristallisationspunkt seiner theologischen Aussage'.[22] With a parenetic section lying in the center of it (3.25-39) the poem is structured concentrically.[23] Thus the center of the poem and the book as a whole, functions as parenesis, teaching worshippers the appropriate manner to behave during the exile and in times of judgment on sin.[24]

Lamentations 3.21-41, especially the confession in vv. 40-41, offers proper response to the suffering Lamentations (repentance) as well as a basis for future hope (Yhwh will deliver). This hope overrides the impulse towards lamentation. In her reading of Lam. 3.39 Brandscheidt argues that the poet rejects lamentation and expression of pain (embodied in Lam. 3.1-20) as appropriate means of religious behaviour: 'Damit sind die anklagenden Partien vv. 1-16 und 17-20 als ein für den Frommen inadäquates Verhalten erwiesen worden'.[25] The Deuteronomic redactor shapes the central chapter so that the parenetic section, urging hope in God, overrides the lamentation of 3.1-20. This theological hope follows to the end of the chapter, from which Brandscheidt concludes: 'Jahwe, der schon immer den Gerechten erretet hat (vv. 52-63), wird zur Hoffnung für das im Gericht zerschlagene Volk (vv. 64-66)'.[26] Thus the chapter determines the theological outlook and the appropriate theological response to Yhwh for the community; through confession of sin and trust in him, despite the emotional laments in the other portions of the book, the community can have hope that God will deliver as he has done throughout Israel's history. In sum, Lamentations' literary history culminates with a Deuteronomic redactor ultimately controlling the theological significance of the book; this editor afforded Lamentations a pious, submissive and hopeful theology to contradict the raging despondency of the expression of pain found in other portions of the book.

Through form criticism, Westermann concludes the book's theology is to be found in its earliest oral formulation rather than its artificial acrostic pattern witnessed in the present and latest version of the text. He suggests that the poems originally were arranged in the form of communal laments.

22. Brandscheidt, *Das Buch der Klagelieder*, p. 157.
23. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenleid*, p. 48.
24. Brandscheidt, *Klagelieder*, p. 157.
25. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenleid*, p. 66.
26. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenleid*, p. 234.

Westermann argues that if one reads and interprets the text according to the artificial acrostic design, then one 'runs the risk of inferring conceptual relationships between sections, lines, or even clauses, where such are simply not present'.[27] In his view, the acrostic remains derivative and purely stylistic, an aesthetic frame that hinders an accurate understanding of the theological meaning of Lamentations.

On a form critical analysis, Westermann posits that Lamentations 3 (specifically the parenetic section in Lam. 3.25-39) represents the ultimate redactional stage of Lamentations. This section dilutes the potent force of the earlier laments, reflected in chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5. By analysing the lament forms present in Lamentations, Westermann argues that in its earliest stages the poetry is best understood as an expression of pain and grief to God. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Lamentations' 'theology' is found in the expression of pain rather than its resolution in a developed theodicy.

What are weaknesses to these three views? In the first place, while Berges has identified that Lamentations 3 may be reflective of 'Problemträger-Dichtungen', Heim rightly notes that personified Zion functions similarly to the kind of 'role-model' Berges assigns to the man of Lamentations 3. Lamentations 1–2 are firmly dated to the exilic period.[28] So there is no need to postdate Lamentations 3. And while it is true that penitent prayer did become prominent after the exile, Lamentations 3 (esp. 3.21-39) is more of a transitional piece of penitential prayer than the more stable examples and identifiable examples like Daniel 9, Nehemiah 9, or Ezra 9.[29] It certainly emphasizes penitence in vv. 25-39 in a way that the other poems do not, but the poem concludes on a prayer against enemies, something entirely absent from penitential prayer. The penitence admonished in Lam. 3.21-39 seems better framed in response to the other portions of Lamentations. As such, it is not entirely helpful to postdate Lamentations 3, even though perhaps rational to do so.

Brandscheidt rightly calls attention to the themes of suffering and sin, divine anger and instruction in times of disaster. All of these comprize essential threads in the poetic tapestry of Lamentations. Likewise, her work appropriately views chapter three as a fundamental portion of the book, though she overestimates its value as a corrective for the other poems. Where she fails to convince lies in her understanding of a Deuteronomic redaction. Determining what is, what is not and what one means by Deuteronomic is notoriously

27. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 92 = *Lamentations*, p. 100.

28. K.M. Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem and the Drama of Her Bereavement in Lamentations', in R.S. Hess and G.J. Wenham (eds.), *Zion City of Our God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 129-69 (137-44).

29. For a very helpful comparison, see Mark Boda, 'The Priceless Gain of Penitence: From Communal Lament to Penitential Prayer in the "Exilic" Liturgy of Israel', *HBT* 25 (2003), pp. 51-75.

difficult,[30] and her hypothesis suffers from lack of precision. From which Deuteronomic group does this redactor come and why is the redactor necessarily hopeful in Yhwh's future deliverance for Judah?[31] When does this redactor write, and why? These questions are not sufficiently answered. Finally there is the issue of why a pious redaction is necessarily aligned with a Deuteronomic perspective over and above any other theological tradition.[32] Her failure to sufficiently address these issues is detrimental to her argument.

There also seems to be a general depreciation of honest prayer over and against her construal of Deuteronomic piety. She argues that the theology of hope is a Deuteronomic redaction designed to correct 'inadäquates Verhalten' of lament in 3.1-20 and indeed the remainder of the poetry, assuming that this is something that godly worshippers (die Frommen) would not do. Yet, it is not at all clear why the Deuteronomic redactor would need to correct the tone of 3.1-20 or the previous chapters; what about them is theologically problematic to the degree the redactor was forced to 'correct' them?

Westermann critiques her argument here and reveals the value of lamentation for the people of God, both in ancient Israel and in the present day.[33] Far from 'impious', lament remains fundamental to the religious life of ancient Israel (especially in pre-exilic and exilic periods) as honest expression of pain to God.[34] Whether the source of pain derives from enemies, one's own sin, God's punishment, or his apparent lack of attention, through the lament prayer one faithfully brings that hurt to God vocally in worship.[35]

30. See Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973 [1997]), pp. 274-89; J. Gordon McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study of Deuteronomic Theology* (SOTBT; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), pp. 33-44.

31. Compare Cross' understanding of the exilic Deuteronomic redactor: Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 285-89. For a recent discussion of the DtrH, see Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2006).

32. So the critique of Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 37.

33. Westermann, 'Struktur und Geschichte der Klage im alten Testament', *ZAW* 66 (1954), pp. 44-80; 'The Role of Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament', *Int* 28 (1974), pp. 20-38; *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 78-87, 188-92 = *Lamentations,* pp. 81-91, 230-35.

34. Richard Bautch shows how communal laments transformed into penitential prayer after the exile. Communal lament, typified by a distinctive lament-petition-motive structure develops into penitential prayer in the late exilic and post-exilic periods, typified by an adapted lament-petition-confession of sin structure. Lamentations evinces elements of both structures through its poems. See his *Developments in Genre between Post-Exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament* (SBLAB, 7; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

35. 'In the Old Testament, from beginning to end, the "call of distress", the "cry out of the depths", that is, the lament, is an inevitable part of what happens between God and man […] In the lament of affliction the sufferer reaches out for life; he begs that his

In her devaluation of lament, Brandscheidt adopts an implicit understanding that lamentation is incompatible with proper religious expression.[36] Yet, Westermann rightly argues that lament should not be seen 'outside the domain of prayer' and impious. Moreover, she neglects the 'intrinsic' value of lament as a 'component of prayer, as is shown in the Psalter with its high percentage of psalms of lamentation'.[37] Expressing pain and questioning God are part of faith and worship.

Finally, Westermann's proposal does not fully convince. As shall be discussed in the following chapters, the tight interworking of the poetry speaks against rather clumsy editing into the final form, in which the alphabetic acrostic counteracts an originating lament form. These clues have been mentioned above and include the repetition of formulaic address[38] and terminology, the repetition of the acrostic structure, as well as repetition of divine representation within and between chapters all work to hold the reader, opening avenues of engagement with them.[39] It is one thing to explain theological discrepancies along historical lines; it is another thing to explain what happens when the book comes together in its final form, and what theology emerges as a result of this.

Despite their differences, Berges, Brandscheidt and Westermann commit to a hermeneutic which leads them to assess the theology of the book largely from historical grounds. Westermann assesses the book's theology from the perspective of early oral formulations while Brandscheidt focuses on the final redaction and its impact on the theology of Lamentations. Berges is similar to Brandscheidt in that he views the substance of Lamentations 3 to determine the theological outlook of the book by virtue of a historical argument concerning the development of the book.

3. *'Within' the Text*

a. *Bo Johnson*

Like Gottwald, Johnson believes that Lamentations was composed to respond to a specific theological question, namely, 'How can the events of 587

suffering be taken away; it is the only possibility in life left for him as long as he has breath' (Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* [trans. Keith Crim and Richard Soulen; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981], pp. 261-62).

36. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 78 = *Lamentations*, p. 81.

37. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 79, 78 = *Lamentations*, pp. 82, 83.

38. The vocative of יהוה + dual imperative (ראה וחביטה, 'look and consider') or √ראה + the vocative of יהוה: Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a; 2.20a; 3.59; 5.1b. See the argument of Thomas, 'The Liturgical Function'.

39. Previous work has recognised the tight interworking of the poetry, specifically Albert Condamin, *Poèmes de la Bible avec une Introduction sur la Strophique Hébraïque* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2nd edn, 1933), pp. 47-50; D. Marcus, 'Non-Recurring Doublets in the Book of Lamentations', *HAR* 10 (1986), pp. 177-95; Renkema, *Lamentations*.

BCE be associated with a continued and vital faith in [Yhwh]?'[40] He argues that the poetry guides the reader to theological response through the structure of the book. For Johnson, with the exception of chapter five,[41] the poetry exhibits the following structure: 'fact' in the first half of each of the poems followed by 'interpretation' in the latter half. The central verses of each poem (Lam. 1.11-12; 2.11-12; 3.21-41; 4.11-12) function as significant transitions between the 'fact' and 'interpretation' portions.[42]

Lamentations 1 and 2 exhibit this organization. Lam. 1.1-11 represents the 'fact half' of the poem and describes the state of Jerusalem and her inhabitants. Lamentations 1.12-22 represents the 'interpretation half' of the poem and explains that the destruction is a result of the Lord's anger (Lam. 1.12) over the transgressions of the people. The day of the Lord's anger is a crucial theme from Lam. 1.12 which chapter two picks up and expounds upon. In Lam. 2.1-11, the 'fact half' expands on the day of the Lord theme and describes the actions taken by God on the day of his anger while Lam. 2.12-22, the 'interpretation half', reveals the practical causes of God's wrath—sin.

Lamentations 3 is the core of the book and the theological answer to the question that the book raises. Lamentations 3.21-41 focuses upon God's continued relationship with Judah and the proper attitude and worshipping response from the people and thus responds fundamentally to the theological question the book raises. From these verses, the theological answer of Lamentations comes: God has been angry and punished the people for sin (3.37-39), but this was just punishment and the people must not complain (3.39) but rather 'test and examine' their ways in prayer and worship (3.40-41).

Lamentations 4 reiterates concerns which have arisen in the previous poems and is structured similarly to them. Lam. 2.4 focuses upon hunger and famine in Jerusalem, and the 'fact half' of chapter four (4.1-11) focuses upon the reality of famine in the land. The 'interpretation half' explains the present famine as a result of the sins of the priests and prophets. Also included in this chapter is a hopeful tone of continued relationship with Yhwh (4.21-22) which coincides with the perspective taken in 3.21-41. Lamentations 4 is formally incongruous though it provides a call to repentance as a way for rehabilitating the people's relationship with God. Johnson

40. Bo Johnson, 'Form and Message', p. 59.

41. Lamentations 5 does not follow the structural pattern of the previous chapters even though it touches upon all of the themes and theological ideas that are expressed in the previous poems. Johnson suggests that chapter five is the earliest of all the poems and the themes and theological ideas of the previous poems were based upon this poem (Johnson, 'Form and Message', pp. 70-73).

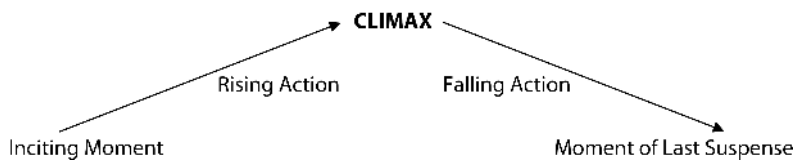
42. Johnson, 'Form and Message', pp. 58-73.

concludes, 'Ch. 5 *is* this prayer for forgiveness; it is the lifting up of 'hearts and hands' (3,41) to God in heaven'.[43]

The major drawback to this approach is that it neglects the subtlety of the poetry and it overplays the role of Lam. 3.21-41 in the book. To argue that the poems are broken up into 'fact' and 'interpretation' is an imposition that neglects the reality that interpretation proceeds throughout the whole of the poems. The logic of the poetry is not organized by the structure of 'fact' and 'interpretation' but by the parataxis of its language and imagery. Secondly, one sees again the overemphasis of the central portion of Lamentations 3 as the theological answer to the problem in the book. Penitence is not the predominant theological position taken in Lam. 3.40-66, as the return to lament in these verses mutes its force.

b. *Eduard Nägelsbach and Walter Kaiser*

Nägelsbach suggested that the five poems of Lamentations can be read together and evince a structure quite similar to a tragic structure. Known as Freytag's Pyramid for the theorist who originated it,[44] the tragic structure illustrates how plot develops within a five-act tragedy. Freytag concluded that five-act tragedies contain three essential elements: rising action, climax and falling action. The climax represents the most significant point or turning point in the action of the work. The rising action remains developmental and secondary to the climax. The falling action represents the shift in perspective which comes after the climax, sometimes accompanied by catastrophe or restored order.[45] This can be seen in the diagram below:



Nägelsbach assesses Lamentations' meaning on the basis of this structure: crescendo (chapters 1-2), climax (chapter 3), and decrescendo (chapters 4-5). He argues that chapter three serves as the climax, or 'Spitze', of the poem and says: 'Dadurch ist die Hervorhebung des Mittelgliedes und im Zusammenhang damit ein Hinauf- und Herabsteigen, ein crescendo und decrescendo

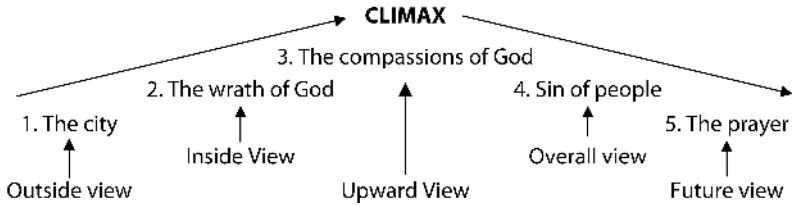
43. Johnson, 'Form and Message', p. 73.

44. C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, *A Handbook to Literature* (New York: Macmillan, 6th edn, 1992), pp. 153-54, 207-208; Gustav Freytag, *Teknik des Dramas* (Leipzig, 1863) = *Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2004).

45. Diagram adapted from Holman and Harmon, *Handbook*, p. 85.

mit deutlich markierter Spitze möglich gemacht'.[46] For him, Lamentations 3 is central both stylistically and theologically. The hopeful section (Lam. 3.22-42) is the theological core of the book and gives indication of the purpose of the poetry: to give hope to God's people after the events of 587 BCE.[47]

Kaiser, too, envisions a tragic structure for Lamentations. A representation of Kaiser's structure reveals affinities to Freytag's Pyramid:



In his arrangement, Lamentations 1 and 2 focus upon the city and the wrath of God, respectively, and offer the ascent steps up to the climax of the book. Chapter 3 represents that climax by focusing upon the hopeful section that speaks of the compassions of God (Lam. 3.18-33). After the climax, Lamentations 4 and 5 represent descent, or for all practical purposes, denouement.[48] After the climax, the intensity of the pain expressed in the book gradually recedes; he bolsters his opinion by citing the prevalence of third person speech in chapters four and five, which suggests that the raw emotionalism of first person speech in Lamentations 1, 2 and 3.1-17 have receded as a result of the turn to God's compassion in Lam. 3.18-33.[49] Both Nägelsbach and Kaiser's tragic structures follow Freytag's Pyramid, though without acknowledging it.

The tragic structure has two positive points that remain suggestive for theological analysis of Lamentations. It highlights the importance of Lamentations 3 and emphasizes its value for the interpretation of the book as a whole. This point is also raised by Renkema, Grossberg and Johnson, who see chapter three as an interpretative key for the book. Next to Psalm 119, Lamentations 3 is the most extensive and elaborate acrostic in the Old Testament. Its length, elaborate design and placement at the centre of the book bring attention to Lamentations 3. This poem, and the theology it presents, should be considered as a vital element within the theological portrayal of the book at large. Secondly, the tragic structure rightly takes the canonical form of Lamentations into account.

46. Eduard Nägelsbach, *Die Klagelieder* (THBAT, 15; Bielefeld and Leipzig: Belhagen und Klasing, 1868), pp. vi, vii.
47. Nägelsbach, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. vii-viii.
48. Kaiser, *Grief and Pain*, pp. 19-22.
49. Kaiser, *Grief and Pain*, p. 21.

Yet the difficulties associated with the tragic structure ultimately undermine its value. In the first instance, it is anachronistic to place a nineteenth century CE literary structure over a sixth century BCE text. One must query as to what textual clues drive the reader to conclude that Lamentations 1 and 2 represent something analogous to 'crecendo' or 'ascent' in the terminology of Nägelsbach or Kaiser and further, what clues drive one to surmize that Lamentations 4 or 5 display 'decrescendo', falling action, or resolution as the tragic framework suggests.

The argument offered by Kaiser, that the pain of the poems decreases with the shift away from first to third person speech is hardly satisfying. If anything, the level of pain brought to the fore in Lamentations 1 and 2 is redressed once again in the final chapters. And with the unsure conclusion of Lam. 5.22, it is not certain that resolution has been achieved when the reader reaches this final verse.[50] In fact, the despondent tone associated with Lam. 5.22 leads Jewish liturgists to repeat the less despondent plea of 5.21 in the festal celebration of the Ninth of Ab: 'Return to us, O Yhwh, and we shall be restored to you; renew our days as of old' (Lam. 5.21).

The tragic structure also fails in light of the logic of Lamentations 3. Although prominent theologically, hope that marks the central section of Lamentations 3 may not serve as the kind of climax or change in perspective that Kaiser desires. I will address this in my exegesis of Lamentations 3, below, but at this juncture it is appropriate to highlight Dobbs-Allsopp's opinion on the chapter. Far from offering a climactic point to the book, he believes that chapter three offers a complicated vision of God, where Yhwh's justice is 'localized, countered, questioned and generally complicated in important ways'.[51] The return to lament after Lam. 3.18-39 problematizes the argument that these verses represent the theological 'core' of the book. The preponderance of the alphabetic form in chapter three prevents the reader from remaining at the central, hopeful, portion of the chapter. Once attained, the hopeful verses then give way to a communal lament and a general plea for God to act on behalf of the people.

Finally, one must question the use of narrative structure for understanding a non-narrative text like Lamentations. The idea of reading Lamentations with a five-act tragedy assumes that the two in some way parallel one another as narrative modes of discourse: as the five-act tragedy tells its story in a certain manner, so then does Lamentations. This assumption is misleading. Lamentations does not 'tell a story' in the same manner of tragedy or many other modes of narrative discourse. One of the key features in tragedy is the

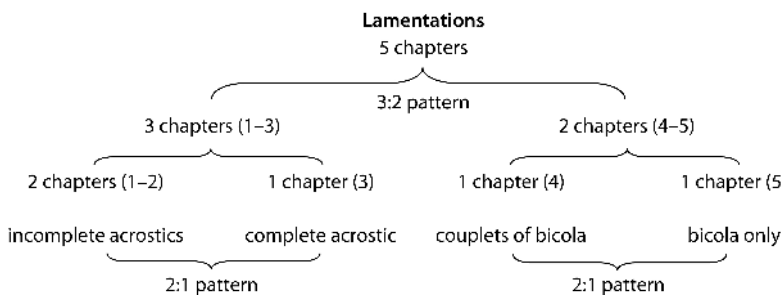
50. See the explanation of S. Goldman, 'Lamentations', in A. Cohen (ed.), *The Five Megilloth: With Hebrew Text, English Translation, and Commentary* (SBB; London: Soncino, 1970), p. 102.

51. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 48.

character development of the protagonist for his/her great fall. Though there are speaking voices in the poetry of Lamentations, they are personae, and not characters. The personae tell their experiences through the language and imagery in the poetry rather than plot or character development. Interpreting Lamentations' poetry through a narrative structure moves beyond what the poetry offers. Hillers summarizes, 'Neither narrative nor logical sequence is a dominant feature in contributing to the structure of Lamentations'.[52]

c. *William Shea*

Shea approaches the question of structure differently, believing the framework of the book to be inspired by its supposed meter, the *qinah* meter.[53] Shea looks at the entire corpus of Lamentations and questions why the poet arranged the book with five poems. He analyzes the book on the basis of colometry, and discovers the following: Lamentations 1, 2 and 3 display triplets of bicola while Lamentations 4 displays couplets of bicola and chapter five exhibits bicola only.[54] He then makes the following suggestion: 'What we have here then is another 3:2 or *qinah* pattern which is demarcated for us by the acrostics present'.[55] The *qinah* is the limping 3 + 2 meter suggested by Budde.[56] He argues that the third chapter represents the most complete acrostic poem, as the opening word of each bicolon corresponds to a letter in the alphabet, while chapters one and two are 'incomplete' in that only the first word in each strophe corresponds to the alphabet. From this, he argues for a 2:1 pattern in Lamentations 1–3. He sees a similar 2:1 pattern emerge in chapters four and five; chapter four exhibits couplets of bicola while chapter five only exhibits single bicola thus providing a 2:1 pattern. He then diagrams the structure of Lamentations:[57]



52. Delbert Hillers, 'Lamentations, Book of', in *ABD* IV, p. 137.

53. William H. Shea, 'The *qinah* Structure of the Book of Lamentations', *Bib* 60 (1979), pp. 103-107.

54. Shea, 'The *qinah* Structure', p. 106.

55. Shea, 'The *qinah* Structure', p. 106.

56. Budde, 'Das hebräische Klagelied', pp. 1-52.

57. Shea, 'The *qinah* Structure', p. 107.

The point of the structure of Lamentations is to reinforce its theology of lament. Through the structure, the limping *qinah* meter reveals a theology of despondency.

Shea's structure however, is inconsistent. His overall 3:2 structure is based is on a 2:1 pattern between the first three chapters and the other two chapters. In the first unit, the 2:1 pattern is achieved by observing differences in the acrostics between the three poems: upon two 'incomplete' acrostics and one 'complete' acrostic. In the second unit, the 2:1 pattern is achieved by observing difference in cola length between Lamentations 4 and 5. This is an almost arbitrary method to accomplish the 2:1 structure between parts and verges upon superimposing structure on the text of Lamentations.

Perhaps the most evident challenge to Shea's argument is the critique of the presence of identifiable meter in Hebrew poetry. In different works, Longman and Vance study the two most prominent metrical systems of Hebrew poetry and conclude that at best, Hebrew meter cannot be known (Longman) and at worst, there is no such thing as meter in Hebrew poetry (Vance).[58] The two basic ways to count meter are (a) the repetition of stressed syllables throughout a span of poetry, and (b) the repetition of the number of words within cola. Longman concludes that in the first option, meter cannot be said to exist in Hebrew poetry if one depends upon counting syllables in an unemended or emended MT.[59] Further, if one employs a syntactic-accentual method for analysing Hebrew meter, then one may arrive at slightly more balanced poems but then not arrive at a consistent number of words throughout the span of the poem, meaning that there is no consistent meter.[60]

Using a more precise methodology, Vance supposes that a *regular* meter in Hebrew poetry would demand that 97% of the lines must display a regular pattern, something that both author and audience would recognize. This is how most metrical systems in other cultures operate.[61] For the *qinah* meter then, in 97% of the lines in the book, the A colon must be longer than the B colon; Lamentations does not fit this standard in either counting method (syllabification or accentual units).[62] Vance thereby concludes that the *qinah* meter does not exist in Lamentations. The question pertinent here

58. Tremper Longman III, 'A Critique of Two Recent Metrical Systems', *Bib* 63 (1982), pp. 230-54. Donald R. Vance, *The Question of Meter in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (SBEC, 46; Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2001).

59. Longman, 'A Critique', p. 250.

60. Longman, 'A Critique', p. 253.

61. Vance studies both Romance languages and Japanese poetry as controls.

62. Just under 70% of lines have the A colon longer than the B colon through syllable counting; word counting yields only 51.612%. Thus Vance sees little evidence for regular metre in Lamentations (Vance, *The Question of Meter*, pp. 485-87, 489-97).

is as follows: in light of Longman and Vance's evidence in regards to Lamentations in particular, can one count *qinah* meter as a reliable and probable structuring device for the book as a whole? A positive response remains tenuous. This is not to say that it is not there but rather there is no compelling evidence that warrants it as a means to structure the book as a whole.

d. *Johan Renkema*

Renkema interprets Lamentations' theology from a proposed concentric logic displayed within the text itself, a structure that follows Canannite and Hebrew poetic convention.[63] Concentric structure is designed to push the reader to the centre of the poem to discover the theological 'kernel', or thrust, of each poem.[64] This is based upon a methodological assumption of the Kampen School which surmizes that ancient readers—or more to the point, hearers—of ancient Canaanite or Hebrew poems would expect this concentric structure and suspend interpretation of the poem until the entire work was recited.[65]

The Kampen School created a rule-based process of analysis to assess structures of Hebrew and Canaanite poetry. These rules (or laws) derive from empirical analysis of Northwest Semitic poetry—specifically Ugaritic and Hebrew verse. A ten-step methodology grounds analysis.[66] The methodology, to be sure, remains far from perfect and van der Meer and de Moor recognize that it will not provide unanimity in results. One major benefit of such analysis lies in its supposed level of objectivity. Its laws give a framework by which a modern reader can understand how Northwest Semitic poets structured their poetry given that the modern reader is unfamiliar with a creative literary process that was certainly more intuitive for the ancient hearer of Northwest Semitic poetry.

Their analysis traces a general trend towards concentric structures in Northwest Semitic poetry. This observation remains important for biblical exegesis because where modern scholarship may assume a linear development to poetic logic, the exact opposite is the case for Northwest Semitic

63. Repetition of terms or synonymous pairs of terms in opposing verses exhibits the structure. He argues that some poems are more *explicitly* concentric in structure than others. For instance Lamentations 2 has more of a concentric, or 'concatenated', structure than does Lamentations 1 (Renkema, 'The Literary Structure', p. 309). The concentric structure of Lamentations 3 has already been mentioned above, in which two mirroring-panels exist: Lam. 3.1-33 and Lam. 3.34-66. The structural core of the poem is a combination of Lam. 3.17, 50.

64. Renkema, 'The Literary Structure', pp. 294-396; *Lamentations*, pp. 72-79. He uses the term 'kernel' to describe the thrust of the poem in 'The Literary Structure of Lamentations (I–IV)', p. 321.

65. Renkema, 'The Literary Structure', p. 294.

66. See van der Meer and de Moor (eds.), *The Structural Analysis*, pp. vii-ix, 1-61.

poetry. According to structural analysis, its poetry is reflexive, introducing the central message of the poem within its heart. Thus repetitive patterns and allusion provide clues for structure rather than linear progression, as in narrative:

A: certain elements introduced
B: another element introduced
C: the heart or message of the poem
B(1): some element of B repeated
A(1): some element of A is repeated

Renkema analyzes Lamentations using structural analysis and argues that the theological focus of each poem lies at its structural heart. Renkema believes that Lam. 1.11; 2.11; 4.11; and 5.11 display the central thrust of those concentric poems. Although 'built' in a different way than the other poems, Lamentations 3 also is organized by concentric logic between mirroring cantos (Lam. 1.1-33 and Lam. 1.34-66) which makes the theological core of the poem a combination of Lam. 3.17 and Lam. 3.50: 'My soul goes from peace; I have forgotten the good / Until he looks down and sees, [Yhwh] from the heavens'. Differently from Johnson,[67] who sees the central verses of Lamentations 1, 2, 4 as transitions to the two halves of the poems, Renkema views the central portion of each poem in the book as interpretative guides. Moreover, the poem as a whole is concentric so that the central message of the book arises from Lamentations 3.

From what he identifies as an initial lament (Lam. 3.17) and the following prayer (Lam. 3.50) the theology presented in the book rests on a question. He queries, 'Can [Yhwh] continue to allow such agony, can he persist in punishment, when witnessing the pain of his beloved people?'[68] Renkema suggests the poetry is designed to appeal to God *against* God as a way to offset the hidden face of God by calling out to him.[69] Compared to the historicist oriented paradigms offered above, it is important to note that Renkema does not neglect questions about Zion, Deuteronomic, or any other historical theological tradition of Israel impacting the theology of the book.[70] Instead of beginning there and then moving to the text, he rather focuses primarily upon the style and structure of the poetry to then focus upon the question of theology for the book. Only after this first move does he enjoin historical questions as to what theological tradents could have informed such theology.

Yet Renkema perhaps overdraws the evidence because a number of parallels in the construction that he offers do not hold or are severely forced.

67. Johnson, 'Form and Message in Lamentations', pp. 58-73.
68. Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 58-71, 337-43.
69. Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 70-71.
70. He specifically addresses these and other theological traditions and their potential impact upon the theology of Lamentations in his commentary: *Lamentations*, pp. 57-71.

He identifies recurrent terms in opposing strophes, such as 'hand', in Lam. 3.1-3 (strophe 1) and Lam. 3.64-66 (strophe 22).[71] He does this with opposing strophes throughout Lamentations, but how significant some recurrent terms actually are in the text remains unclear. It is not certain that concatenation carries the pragmatic force (the intended effects) that Renkema points out.[72] It may only suggest that the poem is intentionally and artfully designed.[73]

Moreover, his recognition of concatenation between strophes in Lamentations 3 is inconsistent. He makes vague connections between within and between canticles; further, no linkages exist between strophes 5 and 18. He argues that song response exists in strophes and canticles and is ascertained on the basis of repetition of terms or content.[74] The difficulty arises in that what counts as response remains too vague to be useful as a structuring device: it can be repetition of terms, or synonyms, or conceptual content. The repetition of terminology remains helpful because it is at the very least measurable. The main problem is the repetition of conceptual content. A brief example: Renkema links 'who has seen affliction' (ראה עני) with 'He has consumed my flesh and my skin' (בשרי ועורי בלה). While it is true that God consuming one's flesh and skin would count certainly as affliction, it is not clear that the latter responds to the former or why one should think that it does. It appears that this connection is made intuitively, but not in terms of firm structural evidence like repetition of terminology. Moreover, one sees that the concatenation of strophes does not completely hold in Lamentations 3. No unifying term exists between Lam. 3.13-15 (strophe 5) and Lam. 3.52-54 (strophe 18).[75]

4. *'In Front of' the Text*

Historicist and structural orientations, however, do not comprize the only way to frame the question of theology for the book. Some readings share concerns about the violence enacted to the feminine in Lamentations, and this becomes the starting point of interpretation. This is indicative in some current

71. Renkema, 'The Literary Structure', pp. 321-34.

72. Set in speech-act theory, the locutionary and illocutionary force of the act of repeating terminology in opposing strophes does not then guarantee the perlocutionary effect of bringing the reader to the centre of the poem to recognise the theological thrust of the poem. The distinction between illocutions and perlocutions remain the area that speech-act theory's originator, J.L. Austin, identified as the most problematic. Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001), pp. 44-103.

73. Marcus, 'Non-Recurring Doublets', pp. 81-83, 85.

74. Renkema, 'The Literary Structure', p. 322.

75. Renkema, 'The Literary Structure', p. 321.

feminist and psychological readings of the book.[76] By contrast, peace-activist Fr. Daniel Berrigan reveals a post-911 reading of Lamentations that embraces its theology rather than quashing its presentation of divine violence.

a. *Naomi Seidman*

Seidman argues the poetry vindicates the Lord at the expense of the female in Lamentations, personified Jerusalem or 'the Daughter of Zion'. The reader must in turn resist divine vindication. The supposed divine complicity in violent destruction of the personified feminine city of Jerusalem leads Seidman to state of God: 'If we forgive him, it is because we are too exhausted to do otherwise'.[77] Her ultimate desire is not to forgive God but to abandon him, in a sense. Her rage against God's violence, and her perception that Lamentations justifies it, leads her to wish for a bonfire in which all the books of lamenting and violence, destruction and abuse, could be thrown: the book of Lamentations included. From this she gains the title of her essay, 'Burning the Book of Lamentations'.

b. *Kathleen O'Connor, Christl Maier and Carleen Mandolfo*

O'Connor, too, believes Lamentations theologically justifies Yhwh's violence at the expense of the feminine. Yet different to Seidman, she hopes the poet is simply wrong about Yhwh's violence. She draws out a theology of protest against the Lord from the poetry, especially in Lam. 2.20, where it appears that God's justice in his acts of slaughter and punishment is profoundly questioned. Far from allowing what she terms as Jerusalem's 'abuse' to go unchecked, O'Connor argues that

> the book's speakers stand up, resist, shout in protest, and fearlessly risk further antagonizing the deity. They do not accept abuse passively. They are voices of a people with nothing left to lose, and they find speech, face horror upon horror, and resist unsatisfactory interpretations offered by their theological tradition. From the authority of experience, they adopt a critical view and appraise and reappraise their situation. The result is a vast rupture in their relationship with God, yet they hold on to God, and in that holding they clear space for new ways to meet God.[78]

76. For a full account of both approaches, see H.A. Thomas, 'Justice at the Crossroads: The Book of Lamentations and Feminist Discourse', in Andrew Sloane (ed.), *Tamar's Tears: Evangelical Engagement with Feminist Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), pp. 246-75; 'Feminist Interpretation(s) and Lamentations', in *Great is Thy Faithfulness?*, pp. 166-74; 'Relating Prayer and Pain: Psychological Analysis and Lamentations Research', *TynBul* 61 (2010), pp. 183-208; Paul Joyce, 'Psychological Approaches to Lamentations', in *Great is Thy Faithfulness?*, pp. 161-65.

77. Naomi Seidman, 'Burning the Book of Lamentations', in Christina Buchmann and Celina Spiegel (eds.), *Out of the Garden: Women Writers on the Bible* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1995), p. 288.

78. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, p. 123.

Like Westermann, O'Connor's reads Lamentations as expressing the pain felt from the abuse of exile. The speakers of Lamentations, unable to see that this abuse could come anywhere but from Yhwh, voice pain and protest against Him. She says of Lam. 1.17: 'Like a woman in an abusive relationship, she agrees Yhwh is justified in his treatment of her because she has 'rebelled against his word' (Lam. 1:18a)'.[79]

O'Connor suggests that God is powerless to prevent the violence rather than overtly abusive. She sees a monistic theology in Lamentations—that both good and evil come from Yhwh (see Lam. 3:38). She hopes that this theology is culturally conditioned and not true of God's character. The speaker of Lam. 3.38 then is wrong in his theology of suffering: God has not *caused* abusive violence—he is simply unable to halt it. She favors Lam. 3.33, 'For he [God] does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of humans'.[80] In O'Connor's analysis, Lamentations gives voice to pain and accuses God of violence, and modern interpretation constructs theology out of the protest.

Her reading that inteprets Zion as an impetus to protest coheres with Maier, who explores the presentation of Daughter of Zion in Lamentations on the basis of sacred space, gender and the body. She suggests that Lamentations' deployment of feminine personification serves as a medium to mourn the destruction of the city, to engage God through prayer (in the voice of Zion), and to pave the way for the city as a positive symbol to which the people might embrace. Because Zion as a battered mother cries out to God on behalf of her children (people), 'The wounded body of Jerusalem' serves as a signal against the hopeless situation of exile. Zion represents 'an unwillingness to surrender'.[81] As she lives, she clears space for a broken people to live before God.

Like O'Connor, Mandolfo explores the marriage metaphor in Lamentations, its tacit power relations (male subjugates female), and ultimately dethrones biblical authority as presently construed. In her analysis, the 'Word of God' is deposed and a new vision of biblical authority as the 'words of God' is reified.[82] Mandolfo learns from the political edge of feminist analyzes to inform her reading. In this way, feminist approaches are her 'conversation partners' in the attempt to elucidate 'dialogic theology' in Lamentations.[83] Methodologically, Mandolfo employs the literary theory of Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who argued that texts speak beautifully when they speak with many voices (polyvalence) rather than with one voice (monologism). The interaction of the many voices in a work of art is 'dialogism'.

79. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, p. 27.
80. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, p. 122.
81. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, p. 152.
82. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, pp. 3-28.
83. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, p. 3.

Mandolfo teases out how this dialogic quality might be worked out in the prophets (Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah 40–66), who speak for God (the father/husband), and Lamentations 1–2, whose speech is that of Daughter Zion (the daughter/wife). Lamentations 1–2 are marked by divine silence to the cries of Zion. Rather than simply affirming this reality, Mandolfo figures Lamentations as Zion's response to God's voice heard in the prophets that accuse her of wantonness and sin. By attending to Lamentations' feminine voice set in dialogue with the prophets, a full-fledged voice is constructed and 'woman' attempts to reclaim her agency. Zion, then, in Lamentations subverts the voice of God in the prophets, exposing the unjust construction of woman therein and challenging it.[84] She says, 'If we care about justice, we must be careful not to approach the Bible, in Bakhtinian terms, as the monologic 'word of the father' that in the end justifies divine violence'.[85] Lamentations provides counter-voice to the divine violence in the prophets through its feminine, resistant voice against God (Lam. 2.20, for example). By doing so, Mandolfo, with recent feminist analysis, destabilizes the objectification of 'woman' and restores 'woman' to a cogent subject, a responsible agent.[86]

On the readings of O'Connor, Maier and Mandolfo, the theology of Lamentations culminates into either a theology of protest against God (Mandolfo) or a theology of witness to suffering (O'Connor, Maier). In either case, Zion becomes a counter-voice to overly triumphalistic construals theodicy for the theology of the book.

c. *Deryn Guest*

Likewise, Guest's analysis of theology in Lamentations derives from her concern to counter what she sees as a cycle of degradation of the feminine in the book. Guest judges that the explicit justification of divine violence (theodicy), as well as masculine concealment behind the naked, abused, raped and humiliated image of the woman, persists in the ideology of the author of Lamentations, the history of (mostly male) commentary of the book, as well as in God himself. She says: 'Evading blame by hiding behind a woman's figure is nothing new… The damaging ramifications for women ever since [Adam hiding behind Eve in Gen. 3.12] cannot be overstated'.[87]

Hers is an addition to the well-known debate over 'porno-prophetics', which turns on the view that God justifies himself at the expense of women in the Old Testament, often described as loose women or whores in the

84. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, pp. 81-102.

85. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, p. 5.

86. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, pp. 82-83.

87. Deryn Guest, 'Hiding Behind the Naked Women in Lamentations: A Recriminative Response', *BI* 7 (1999), p. 413.

prophets.[88] She traces how personified Jersualem is depicted as battered and the object of blame in Lamentations: she is raped (Lam. 1.10), she is accused of guilt (Lam. 1.5, 8), and she confesses guilt (Lam. 1.14, 18, 20). So the author of Lamentations confirms the image of a battered woman to advance its rhetoric about Jerusalem's sin. She sees that mostly male commentators have reduced the pain and violation of the feminine, especially the rape in Lam. 1.10, to advance the theology of just punishment: Jerusalem got what she deserved because of her sin. God too is implicated in abusing the feminine to advance the rhetoric of the city's sinfulness. Within the account of rape of Lam. 1.10, Guest argues that God is implicated in this violation and justified for it through a form of theodicy: Yhwh is justified, even in rape, because the city deserved punishment for sin.

The persistence of justified violence toward the feminine in Lamentations and in the commentary tradition leads Guest to read against the text, invalidating its claims. She argues 'an appropriate response to the personification of Zion/Woman in Lamentations is one of resistance to the text and a female solidarity' with ancient women in the situation of oppressive abuse.[89] She reads against those who created the metaphor of a personified city as female because she feels that these patriarchal 'masterminds' justify their own oppressive worldview at the expense of the female, making 'Zion/Woman the elected victim, the offering given up on their behalf' in Lamentations.[90] This abuse of the female can then extend outward, to those who read and comment on the text. As a result, Guest concludes that the image of Jerusalem as a battered and abused city, the very personification itself, 'must be rejected: literary oppression of women should not be continued'.[91] Thus Guest sees in Lamentations' theology a clear affirmation of the city's sinfulness, only to read against it.[92]

Guest rightly brings attention to the pain and destructiveness presented in the book but she paints far too monochrome a portrait of the book's theology. For instance, Guest under reads the complexity of the issue of 'blame' in the book by placing blame of the destruction upon the female scapegoat,

88. See Athalya Brenner and Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes (eds.), *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible* (BIS, 1; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993); Brenner, 'Pornoprophetics Revisited: Some Additional Reflections', *JSOT* 70 (1996), pp. 63-86. See also Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between Yhwh and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 2003), pp. 167-74.

89. Guest, 'Hiding', p. 427.

90. Guest, 'Hiding', p. 430.

91. Guest, 'Hiding', p. 444.

92. This theological response is very much akin to David Blumenthal's protest theology, in which he recognises God's violent image to resist and refuse it: *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

Jerusalem personified. Guest is certainly correct that Lamentations 1 and 2 present the feminine personification of the city as battered, isolated and abused. Even so, if one evades blame by hiding behind the female figure in Lamentations, then there are other persons behind whom the poet hides as well. On the basis of the text itself, not leaning upon any other theological tradition or any other canonical OT text, the blame for the disaster is spread around quite a bit and the feminine is not singled out. The man (גבר) of Lamentations 3 is also to blame for the punishment, especially in 3.39: 'Why should a living human being, a man [גבר], complain about his punishment for sin?' Lee argues this works to implicate the 'man' in blame for the punishment of exile.[93] Lee further argues that Lam. 4.13-15 contains an extended tirade against the leaders of Jerusalem, the priests and prophets, who are defiled and impure because they shed innocent blood, enraging the deity; the poetry blames the leadership for the downfall of Jerusalem here.[94] A similar critique is levelled at the prophets in Lam. 2.14, in which they have 'seen for you [Jerusalem] false and deceptive visions; they did not expose your iniquity so as to restore your fortunes. They saw oracles that were false and misleading'. Thus blame is spread around, not completely isolated to the female figure, though the female figure of Zion certainly is implicated.

In addition, the theological presentation of theodicy is not as straightforward as Guest supposes. The Lord is not necessarily justified *carte blanche* at the expense of the feminine. Rather, there is a strong protest element at work in the theology of the book. As evidenced in O'Connor's analysis, above, Lam. 2.20 at the very least sees Zion confronting Yhwh in his activity: 'Look, O Yhwh, and consider to whom you have done this! Is it right that mothers consume their own fruit, little ones raised to health? Is it right that priests and prophets be killed in the sanctuary of the Lord?' The protest impulse weaves into the fabric of verse and raises questions about the justice of God rather than affirming it. The poetry is not so unequivocally oriented towards theodicy that the feminine city must be 're-membered' as Guest suggests. While helpfully elucidating the anguish and pain witnessed in Lamentations as well as the masculine bias in the commentary tradition, Guest obscures the complexity, the ambiguity, of the book's theology. While feminist hermeneutics remain viable methodologically, Guest's employment of this methodology actually underreads theological data in Lamentations, skewing her results.

d. *Daniel Berrigan*

Berrigan's *Lamentations: From New York to Kabul and Beyond* does not seek to 'explain' Lamentations as much as to receive and respond to it. The

93. Lee, *The Singers*, p. 175.
94. Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 186-89.

touchstone of his reading is the human experience of war. Particularly, he writes from the perspective of reaction to the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC on 11 September 2001 and America's subsequent wars against Iraq and Afghanistan. With this in the foreground, Berrigan focuses upon this human experience as it intersects with the divine. Informing his anlaysis of the biblical is a tacit affirmation of peace, justice and the sacredness of God's created order.

In Lamentations, Berrigan finds resource to critique American imperialistic war policy, and a means to critique the Christian church complicit in imperialism. Lamentations surfaces what Berrigan identifies as idolatry within the sanctuaries of modern (especially American) church. Idolatry appears in the form of a flag in the sanctuary, and by the logic, the nationalistic zeal pronounced in the church that serves to rape the gospel of Christ. The power of the state forces itself onto the church and the beauty and nonviolence revealed in the Eucharist is censored.[95]

Further, Berrigan thinks Lamentations is a 'gift' that helps the church to negotiate disaster. He finds Lamentations 3 as a crucial text in this regard. Disaster is negotiated when God's people recognize sin. Berrigan comments:

> Confession of guilt, the first gift of Lamentations […] Let us submit to this awful decree. Let us mend our ways, in exile and shame coming on a saving wisdom. For even in Jerusalem, we were alienated from God and one another […] We have served other gods, 'the works of our hands,' the 'silver and chariots,' greed, violence, idols and icons of a deadly culture. Turn, turn, turn.[96]

And he sees the same 'lesson' for America as well, again from the ground of Lamentations 3.

> And by way of summing up, let us not permit intellectual pride to jettison a sense of sinfulness […] How chastening to confess; we Americans—our wars, our contempt for the victimized—we are accountable to Another.[97]

Lamentations helps to draw God's people to response. Penitence is a hallmark for the book and key to negotiate the sins of American policy. As America (particularly the Catholic Church within America) learns penitence, it will discover the way to live before God and to relate to the rest of the world.

Interestingly, Berrigan is a modern interpretation that reinstils a theodicy into the scholarly discussion. His focus upon the value of recognising sin, of confession, and of repentance works against the grain of feminist readings in general and Westermann's approach in particular.

95. Berrigan, *Lamentations*, pp. 18-19.
96. Berrigan, *Lamentations*, p. xix.
97. Berrigan, *Lamentations*, p. 81.

e. *Tod Linafelt and Hugh Pyper*

Linafelt's insightful work does not pay much attention to the literary development of Lamentations and this distinguishes his work from Westermann, Berges, Brandsheidt, Albrektson and Gottwald. And although he provides close analysis of Lamentations 1–2, it does not have the same kind of rigid focus upon the world of the text like Renkema. He reads Lamentations from an overt perspective of survival literature and psychological (Freudian) reading strategy. From this fertile field, Linafelt evaluates very closely Lamentations 1–2.

Linafelt follows Freud and distinguishes between mourning and melancholia. The former is a positive process that brings a sense of resolution to suffering. Melancholia, on the other hand, unhealthily persists, moving forward interminably.[98] Linafelt suggests that in the image of personified Jerusalem in Lamentations 1 and 2, the poetry aims for continued survival and protest against interminable pain rather than aiming for an explanation of suffering or a way out of it.[99] Linafelt's interest is not to develop a full theology of Lamentations but rather to shift the focus away from predominant theological impulses of Lamentations 3. So Linafelt's close analysis of Lamentations 1–2 within its own literary horizons exposes Zion's counter-voice to the prominent voice of the 'man' in Lamentations 3. For Linafelt, this bears the hallmarks of 'survival literature', a kind of literature that commemorates death and suffering to heighten the fact of loss. This kind of literary memorial to death almost paradoxically reinforces the power of life by reinforcing its negative. In so doing, survival literature functions to draw its readers on the side of the victim, the survivor. Lamentations, then, in concord with Westermann's view of the theology of the book, is designed to commemorate disaster and voice pain rather than provide an extensive theodicy.[100]

He thereby highlights the rhetoric of Lamentations 1 and 2. In these chapters, Lamentations presents the figure of Lady Zion, the personified city who cries out on behalf of her children, cries out to God in protest of his activity against her, and who commemorates her suffering through the voicing of pain. Melancholia prevents the possibility of resolution in mourning; thus the poetry functions to perpetually confront God and interminably express pain. Yet this promotes a crucial theological point: it is an audacious protest against the LORD and an eternal voicing of pain. It presents an 'unrelenting depiction of death' where, in the words of Zion herself, 'none survived or escaped' (Lam. 2.22).[101] Melancholia in the poetry vociferously

98. Sigmund Freud, 'Trauer und Melancholie', *International Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 4 (1917), pp. 288-301.

99. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, p. 4.

100. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, pp. 5-61.

101. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, p. 135.

confronts God rather than justifying him. In so doing, the voice of Zion in Lamentations works as a mechanism to survive the very destruction and devastation the book depicts and embodies. This reads against the suffering man of Lamentations 3, who focuses the reader's attention on confession and penitence, as Berrigan's reading exposes.

Pyper concurs with Linafelt that Lamentations reflects melancholia, though he presses this point further and in a different direction. Pyper notes that melancholia can be represented[102] as a 'revolt against the loved one which becomes an ambivalence turned on the self'.[103] Inevitably, Pyper believes the poet of Lamentations may have mitigated this anger by directing it against the victim,[104] in this case, personified Zion. He deduces that Lamentations justifies God at the expense of the degraded and raped woman, Zion herself. The poet fashions Zion as a lascivious woman through her admissions of sin, fashioning herself into an adulterous and abandoning mother.[105] Thus the poet uses Zion's admissions of sin to justify God (the Father) and degrade the mother (Jerusalem). In Pyper's reading, there is a strong case for theodicy at the expense of the feminine, in contradistinction to Linafelt. Divine justice that is constructed in Lamentations actually takes on a 'monstrous' aspect, because God is justified through the broken body of an abused woman.

Linafelt's reading of Lamentations 1–2 is not so much off-base as it is deficient. He is right to see Lamentations as a piece of survival and the figure of Zion provides a counter-balance to a triumphalistic theodicy from the perspective of Lamentations 3. Yet, a close read will reveal that Lamentations remains ambivalent as to the theological perspectives of Zion, the man of Lamentations 3, and even of God. The reason for this is because of the nature of Lamentations as an open text.

Further, Pyper's suggestive interpretation effectively underreads the text and its theology as well. In his attempt to see the text as a vindication of God (Father) at the expense of the woman (Zion/mother), he misses the reality that Zion herself cries out and accuses the LORD in Lam. 2.20-22, a point raised so well in Mandolfo, O'Connor and Maier. God is never unequivocally justified in his actions, and neither is Jerusalem unequivocally pronounced as an unfaithful woman. Closer exegetical detail is warranted for Pyper's analysis to be persuasive. However, both scholars productively (and provocatively) employ psychological research to inform their reading.

102. Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (Penguin Freud Library, 11; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 350-408; Hugh Pyper, 'Reading Lamentations', *JSOT* 95 (2001), pp. 55-69 (57).

103. Pyper, 'Reading Lamentations', p. 57.

104. Pyper, 'Reading Lamentations', p. 56.

105. Pyper, 'Reading Lamentations', pp. 63-65.

5. *An 'Integrated Approach'*

a. *Paul House and Robin Parry*

Three scholars in particular integrate the three horizons in a particularly successful manner. From a perspective of the world in front of the text, House and Parry read Lamentations from an overtly Christian perspective, connecting the theology of the book to an OT/NT covenantal framework.[106] This informs their interpretation at the outset and helps to create a fecund interpretation of the book. And yet this is tempered by both the world behind the text and within the text. Behind the text, both House and Parry see the work as a whole arising in the context of the exile and being informed by prophetic oracles of judgment against covenant violation. Both, however, recognize the importance of prayer in this period and the vitality that comes by expressing suffering to God.

Both House and Parry assess the theology of the book by paying close attention to the poetry, focusing particularly upon Lamentations 3 as the center-point of hope in the book. That God will not ultimately reject his people on the basis of the covenant undergirds the book's theology of hope.[107] Still, their works also demonstrate an emphasis upon voicing pain and prayer, especially in and through the perspective of Lady Zion. As such, they represent a mediating perspective to the kind of analysis that reads the masculine voice of Lamentations 3 against that of Zion in Lamentations 1–2. In Lamentations, a theology of hope works alongside a theology of lament.

b. *F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp*

In a ways akin to House and Parry's blending of theological outlooks, Dobbs-Allsopp treats the theology of the book as a whole and concludes that it can be described in terms of a relationship between theology and justice. He arrives at this conclusion after careful analysis of the provenance and poetic characteristics of the work.[108] The exile remains a viable and plausible setting for uneasiness about the relationship between theology and justice to appear among God's covenant people. Moreover Dobbs-Allsopp believes Lamentations should be read and theologically interpreted on the basis of this synchronic whole. Through comparative generic analysis between Lamentations and ANE city-laments Dobbs-Allsopp concludes that Lamentations fits in this ancient context and evinces specific generic resemblance to ANE city-laments.[109] His recent research into the poetic usage of enjambment, and how this affects the theology of the book, further points

106. House, *Lamentations*, pp. 323-26; Parry, *Lamentations*, pp. 28-33.
107. House, *Lamentations*, pp. 328-29; Parry, *Lamentations*, p. 33.
108. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Linguistic Evidence', pp. 1-36.
109. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion.*

to his synchronic concerns and further differentiates his methodology from that of Westermann.[110]

He arrives at his position on the theology of Lamentations—a relationship between theology and justice—from internal evidence within the text. In Lam. 3.58-59, Yhwh is called upon to defend the appellant's cause: 'May you defend [רבת], O Lord, the disputes [ריבי] of my life; may you redeem my life. May you see, O Yhwh, the wrong done to me; judge [שׁפטה] my cause [משׁפטי]!'[111] God is called to judge the 'disputes' of the appellant, likely identified with the 'man' of Lam. 3.1.[112] Yhwh is figured as a judge, and most likely a just judge, who will rightly 'defend' the disputant and 'redeem' his very life. And the issue raised is that of justice, which has been perverted in some way and which the Lord must counter, rectifying the situation and placing the appellant back into a restored vitality, thus the notion of Yhwh's redeeming life through a positive decision. So in 3.58-59, the appeal to Yhwh exemplifies the issue of justice.

Yet Dobbs-Allsopp projects this issue beyond the confines of 3.58-59 to the book as a whole. And he understands the relationship between justice and theology in the book in terms of polarized perspectives between 'theodicy' and 'anti-theodicy'.[113] Through the poetry, these perspectives aim to either (1) justify God, or (2) confront and resist God and his actions. Stemming from a concern for a post-Holocaust theology, Dobbs-Allsopp follows Braiterman's description of theodicy, which attempts to 'justify, explain, or find acceptable meaning to the relationship that subsists between God (or some other form of ultimate reality), evil and suffering. In contrast, *antitheodicy* means refusing to justify, explain, or accept that relationship.'[114] His dependence upon Braiterman reveals his attention to the world in front of the text. That is, in what way does the text of Lamentations engage the present, and how does the present impinge upon interpreting the book?

Dobbs-Allsopp contends that as theodicy, Lamentations explains the destruction of Jerusalem in terms of God's just punishment for the sinfulness

110. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Enjambing Line in Lamentations: A Taxonomy (Part 1)', *ZAW* 113 (2001), pp. 219-39; 'The Effects of Enjambment in Lamentations (Part 2)', *ZAW* 113 (2001), pp. 370-85.

111. I translate רבת, גאלת and ראיתה as precative perfects, following Provan and others. For precative perfects, see; Provan, *Lamentations,* pp. 105-109; 'Past, Present and Future in Lamentations III 52-66: The Case for a Precative Perfect Re-examined', *VT* 41 (1991), pp. 164-75. See also IBHS §30.5.4c. For a full discussion, see the exegesis of Lam. 3.55-66 below.

112. See analysis below.

113. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 29.

114. Zachary Braiterman, *(God) After Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 4.

of his people.[115] Theodicy is a well-established theological category in biblical literature and needs hardly any justification as a way to frame the question of theology in Lamentations. Outside Lamentations, portions of OT historiography justify God's punitive action against his people through their sinfulness, establishing its theological links with theodicy.[116] Job, too, raises the issue of theodicy profoundly. Both of these examples provide external OT evidence by which to confirm that theodicy is a possible way to frame theology for Lamentations.

Moreover, Lamentations offers internal evidence that it conforms to this theological category. Instances of confession come in overt recognition of sinfulness or covenant breach through legal terminology set against Judah and Jerusalem: 'on account of her transgressions' (Lam. 1.5), 'we have transgressed' (Lam. 3.42), 'she sinned grievously' (Lam. 1.8a), 'his sin' (Lam. 3.39), 'on account of the sins' (Lam. 4.13a), 'they sinned' (Lam. 5.7), 'we have sinned' (Lam. 5.16), 'I have rebelled' (Lam. 1.18a), 'I have rebelled exceedingly' (Lam. 1.20b), 'we have rebelled' (Lam. 3.42), 'your sin' (Lam. 2.14b), 'sins' (Lam. 4.13a). In all of these, Yhwh's activity against his people is affirmed and justified as a result of the people's sin. Further, confession of guilt and breach of covenantal relationship often comes through a characteristic usage of the term צדיק, 'just' or 'right', in a nominal phrase from the accused.[117] Such an example occurs in Lam. 1.18: 'Yhwh is right [צדיק], for I rebelled against his word'. Certain elements within the poetry of Lamentations justify God through confessions of sin. These confessions in the poetry conform to the category of theodicy.

Dobbs-Allsopp contends that the book also exhibits anti-theodicy that functions to refuse to justify God's activity. He says 'to read Lamentations as theodicy is finally to misread Lamentations'.[118] Anti-theodicy protests against Yhwh's abusive actions against his people, expressing pain over injustice; more controversially, Dobbs-Allsopp argues that anti-theodicy goes so far as to charge the Lord with crimes. The initial movement of anti-theodicy, protest, gains impetus from Westermann's theology of lament at work in Lamentations; Dobbs-Allsopp then pushes this observation further.

Lamentations moves from questioning the justice of God (a function of protest speech) to legal accusation or indictment against God for criminal

115. Moreover, if God is just, then God is to be trusted, and the community may yet experience hope out of his merciful nature.

116. See Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, pp. 89-99. But as to which portions and when they were composed, see Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 274-89.

117. Exod. 9.27; 2 Kgs 10.9; Ezra 9.15; Neh. 9.33; Dan. 9.14; Deut. 32.4-5. See Pietro Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice: Legal Terms, Concepts and Procedures in the Hebrew Bible* (trans. Michael J. Smith; JSOTSup, 105; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 103-104.

118. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 29.

activity. Dobbs-Allsopp sees the indictment of God as part and parcel of anti-theodic elements in the book.[119] Commenting on Lam. 1.10, the well-known description of rape in Lamentations, Dobbs-Allsopp comments with Linafelt,

> 'We are compelled to compassion by these images of victimization, and in so far as Yhwh is envisioned as the perpetrator of this crime (Thr 1.12b.13c. 22b) we are led by the poet to question the ethics of Yhwh's actions. Is there anything that can justify such an abhorrent crime? Our answer, and we believe the poet's answer as well, must be an emphatic No!'[120]

Whether he is correct in his interpretation of these verses in Lamentations, Dobbs-Allsopp's language aligns clearly with juridical terminology. In his view, the poet accuses Yhwh of a crime. Thus Lam. 1.10 refuses to justify Yhwh's activity as a reaction against Judah's sinfulness (Lam. 1.8-9), revealing a strong anti-theodic stance that works to indict the Lord—and with juridical force.

The theodic and anti-theodic positions remain polarized and difficult to conjoin. Both turn on the question of justice, and a limitation of Dobbs-Allsopp's approach lies in the fact that he does not offer adequate controls as to how the questions of justice and injustice would have been described and dealt with in ancient Judah in their relationship to Yhwh. This limitation appears when Dobbs-Allsopp argues that anti-theodicy in the poetry of Lamentations works to accuse the Lord of criminal activity. He follows Braiterman, whose theology at large, as well as internal distinction between theodicy and anti-theodicy, is grounded in and developed from a post-Holocaust perspective. If Dobbs-Allsopp is correct in his assessment of the *legal* aspect of anti-theodicy in Lamentations, then this legal function against Yhwh would represent a novum in Israelite theology, much less Israelite literature. This suggestion of the legal aspect of anti-theodicy in Lamentations perhaps goes too far, and Westermann flatly disagrees with this thinking.[121] Dobbs-Allsopp is right to negotiate the theological tensions in the book hermeneutically by engaging the three horizons of interpretation: 'behind', 'within' and 'in front of' the text.

6. *Conclusion*

This survey of research has highlighted a number of different avenues of interpretation available in the academy for assessing the theology of Lamentations. The historical paradigm with its various emphases upon the world

119. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 31.

120. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp and Tod Linafelt, 'The Rape of Zion in Thr 1.10', *ZAW* 113 (2001), p. 81.

121. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 86-89 = *Lamentations*, pp. 91-95.

'behind' the text is helpful in that it highlights the essential historicity of the text. Lamentations has been produced in an ancient environment different from the present day and knowledge of this world is invaluable in assessing the book of Lamentations and so must be taken into account.

Yet the historical analyzes offered to this point do not adequately depict the theology of Lamentations. Neither Deuteronomic/istic nor Zion theologies can be argued to determine the theology of Lamentations. Further, Westermann's literary reconstruction of Lamentations does not explain the theology of this biblical book; evidence points towards the book being a unified whole. Finally, the redactional approach offered by Brandscheidt is not adequate for the same reasons. The discrepancy in the theological portraits between Lamentations 3 and the other texts noted by both Brandscheidt and Westermann need not be explained on the basis of literary or redactional development.

A focus upon the world 'within' the text rightly calls attention to reading Lamentations as a synchronic whole, yet caution is indeed in order when dealing with purely literary readings. The literary structures offered by Shea, Nägelsbach and Kaiser and Johnson have been shown to be insufficient for Lamentations. Renkema's structural analysis rightly highlights correspondences of terminology between some strophes and between poems, yet he overdraws the evidence to fit into in his scheme. Moreover, even if he is correct about the concentricity of the text on the repetition of terminology, from the standpoint of philosophy of language, it does not then follow that the pragmatic force of this construction was to move the reader or audience to the center of the poem to discover its theological kernel. It can be argued that the repetition of terms within and across strophes and canticles first and foremost highlights the literary artistry and well-crafted design of the book.

Finally, this chapter touched upon those who construe the theology of Lamentations with a concern for the world 'in front of' the text. The many feminist works outlined above rightly draw attention to the themes of abuse, degradation, and pain in the book of Lamentations. Likewise, Guest may be correct in her assumption that interpreters of Lamentations have enforced a paradigmatic reading of Lamentations that degrades the female. Yet it has also been revealed that Lamentations itself does not isolate the feminine figure as a victim of degradation. Ideological approaches may lead to under reading the text and skewing the theological presentation in Lamentations. Alternatively, ideological readings may helpfully surface under-explored areas that need to be discovered, as Linafelt's analysis especially reveals.

As all readers read with preconceptions, it will not do to argue that an interpretative practice is purely objective and attends to the whole meaning of any biblical book. In this way, attending to the world 'in front of the text' is not only helpful, it is unavoidable. The proof of the interpretative pudding, inevitably, will be in the eating.

The present study adopts an integrated approach. Still it is important to note that I am not suggesting that one approach necessarily or generally supersedes another. Rather I simply have indicated and assessed the potential and deficiencies of each frame for investigating the theology of Lamentations. Because an integrated approach accounts for the worldview out of which the text was created—the world 'behind' the text—some interpretative 'guardrails' exist that encourage certain interpretations and discourage others.

An integrated approach also brings the world 'within' the text to bear upon theological analysis of Lamentations. The structure of Lamentations as well as its poetic features remains vital for theological interpretation. Dobbs-Allsopp has done this in both his various readings of Lamentations (reading it as a tragic structure or a lyric sequence) aids analysis.[122] Still, this focus requires the text of Lamentations to be treated as a canonical whole so that specific portions can be measured against other portions poetically, so that theological understanding is gained without smoothing over discrepancies through historical deconstruction, as was seen in Westermann. This remains an important point. Apparent theological dissonance highlighted above need not be explained through historical and theological development of the text. Rather these can be read and analyzed synthetically. Tate argues the 'interpretation of a text is exactly that—the interpretation of the whole and not just the stringing together of the interpretations of disjoined individual units'.[123] Focusing on the world 'within' the text provides richer understanding of its canonical form and its theology. This shall be discussed further in Eco's conception of 'the intention of the work' (*intentio operis*) in 3.3.1.

Finally, in the integrated approach, the world 'in front of' the text is taken into account. The reader's concerns and preconceptions are brought to bear in the process of interpretation, engaging the 'clue' of the text to initiate the interpretative process. There are two aspects of 'concerns and preconceptions' of the reader intended here. On the one hand, *explicit* concerns and reading lenses influence the interpretative practice, as evidenced in Dobbs-Allsopp's characterization of the theology of Lamentations from a post-Holocaust perspective and Guest's feminist analysis. Reading Lamentations is accomplished with specific questions in mind and these questions

122. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Tragedy, Tradition, and Theology in the Book of Lamentations', *JSOT* 74 (1997), pp. 29-60; 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence' (unpublished manuscript); *Lamentations*, pp. 20-23; 'The Enjambing Line in Lamentations: A Taxonomy (Part 1)', pp. 219-39; 'The Effects of Enjambment (Part 2)', pp. 370-85.

123. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 78. This point is heightened in Lamentations, which not only can be read synchronically, but appears to have been created to be read in this manner.

necessarily help shape the interpretation of the work. On the other hand, *implicit* concerns and preconceptions also shape the reader as well.

Understanding is shaped by both conscious and unconscious concerns in the reading process. As ancient worldview and ideologies fund the imagination of the ancient text, so too, worldview and ideology do fund the imagination of the reader, unconsciously shaping and coloring the reader's interpretation of the ancient text. By noting the world 'in front of' the text, an integrated approach recognizes that the reader, interpreting the text with both explicit and implicit presuppositions, is determinative for instigating the process of interpretation—without the reader, the text remains inert. I will situate this position within Eco's theory and his differentiation between the empirical and model readers in section 3.3.1., but suffice to say at this point an integrated approach understands that the reader actively seeks meaning from a text. The goal for interpretation is a fusion of horizons between the worlds of the reader and the text so that communication from the text to the reader occurs. This discussion orientates one to previous discussion on the theology of Lamentations and reveals both the challenges and prospects for theological analysis of the book.

And yet, if understanding never proceeds value-free, then it is certainly the case that pre-understandings are involved in the interpretation of Lamentations demonstrated in the present study. So presuppositions of a present day Christian, Jewish, or agnostic interpreter may well impact how he or she interprets Lamentations. This is a reality that cannot be escaped, whatever position one adopts concerning either critical or fideistic approaches to the biblical text.[124] And yet, though I am a Christian interpreter, the proceeding analysis of Lamentations is not necessarily simply a reflection of the ideology of the present author. Rather, I have adopted an integrated approach in the present study precisely because it appears to be the most balanced way to manage the process of interpretation; the present work follows Tate to integrate these constructively to gain a clearer understanding of the theology of Lamentations. An integrated approach provides a plausible means by which the text can transform the present author's readerly drives so as to become a *better* interpreter and reader of the text.[125] This will cohere with the process of interpretation evinced by Eco, in which the text provides constraints that limit interpretative drives of the reader.

124. See Walther Eichrodt, 'Does Old Testament Theology Still Have Independent Significance?', in Ben C. Ollenburger (ed.), *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future* (SBTS, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, rev. edn, 2004), pp. 23-25.

125. See also Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).

Chapter 3

Semiotics and Aesthetic Theory of Umberto Eco

1. *Introduction*

At present the academy is open to a variety of critical methodologies, opening a number of avenues to assess the biblical text. One of the ways that the text has been explored is through semiotic analysis. And a major theoretician in this broad field is Umberto Eco.[1]

For our purposes, it remains important to position Eco's semiotics critically within biblical studies, to address his aesthetic theory, and then to consider the benefits for Eco's theory for interpreting the theology of Lamentations. Hermeneutically Eco's theory comports with an integrated approach. Also Eco's theory takes literature like Lamentations as intentionally crafted art that is created to communicate, and this distinction remains a helpful premise for Lamentations interpretation. Moreover, his theory offers a way to analyze specifically aesthetic texts, of which Lamentations is one, if by aesthetic one intends 'artistic' literature created to elicit reactions to it rather than providing straightforward reportage. Recognising Lamentations as an aesthetic text should aid understanding of its theology. Finally, Eco gives a framework to assess the pragmatic dimension of aesthetic texts, and by this I mean how a text is designed to create different effects for its readers.

Eco's aesthetic theory derives from his larger semiotic project, which provides a way of thinking about how communication works in general and a framework by which to assess how specific communication functions and to what effects. To this end, his semiotics deals with communication and pragmatics. In Eco's understanding, pragmatics has to do with the expected effects generated by textual discourse.[2] 'Open' and 'closed' texts are the models that he uses to describe different pragmatic functions of texts.

Contextualized within the realm of biblical studies, Eco's aesthetic analysis connects with both poetic and rhetorical analyses. As in poetic and

1. For Eco's influence in biblical interpretation see Edgar Conrad, *Reading the Latter Prophets: Toward a New Canonical Criticism* (JSOTSup, 376; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003).

2. Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (AS; London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 68-80.

much rhetorical analysis, the text is assessed as a synchronic whole, engaging with the stylistic devices that are employed for communication. There are a number of critical methodologies which can be identified as poetic,[3] but I intend here poetic analysis that begins with the text, delimits its passages, analyzes its genre, structure, conventions, and stylistics, then explains them. In short, poetic analysis that looks 'not only for *what* the text says, but also *how* it says it'.[4] Eco's aesthetic analysis also pays close attention to the pragmatics of style: how style produces effects (in terms of expectation and actual functioning) for the reader, and why. In this way, aesthetic analysis shares common ground with rhetorical analysis.[5] That is, how the poetry draws in its readers to evoke responses from them. In the remainder of the present chapter, I shall address his semiotics and aesthetic theory and distinguish its usefulness for assessing the poetry and theology of Lamentations.

2. *Semiotics of Umberto Eco*

a. *Introduction*

Semiotics studies signs and the title of the discipline derives from the Greek word σημειον, 'sign'. Understood in Eco's theory, signs are both linguistic and extralinguisitic markers that point to meaningful bits of information.[6] Aichele describes semiotics as 'the study of the possibility and conditions of meaningful communication',[7] and as this definition implies, semiotics is associated with communication theory. Eco wants to discover how information

3. For discussion, see John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1984), pp. 104-39.

4. Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), p. 20. See also Wilfred G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOTSup, 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984); Meier Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985); Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (*SubBi*, 11; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1988).

5. James Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', in Paul R. House (ed.), *Beyond Form Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 49-69; Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Dale Patrick and Allen Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation* (JSOTSup, 82; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

6. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (AS; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 30 n. 1. Signs may be words or language but they may also extend to phenomenal objects that signify something meaningful such as a semaphore, for instance, or a gesture (Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 9-13).

7. George Aichele, *Sign, Text, Scripture: Semiotics and the Bible* (Interventions, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 9.

goes out from a sender along a channel to a receiver as meaningful communication. His semiotics accounts for (1) a theory of codes, that is, the structures available to produce messages for communication, and (2) a theory of sign-production, that is, the contextual circumstances in which specific communicative acts are created and transmitted through signs.[8] These two sides of his semiotics address the framework and possibility of potential communicative acts (a theory of codes) and the generation and structuring of specifically instantiated communicative acts, such as texts (a theory of sign-production).

A well-known model garnered from communication theory grounds his analysis: sender → channel → receiver.[9] Communication theory gives a frame for communication between human beings. The basic model proposes that senders produce certain messages and transmit them along channels; at the other end of the channels, receivers await the messages, obtaining them (or not, whatever the case may be). And yet, the relative simplicity of this model conceals the difficulty associated with real communication, especially between human beings. Eco argues that the simple model does not sufficiently 'describe the actual functioning of communicative intercourses'.[10]

In reality, communication involves a complex process of production and interpretation that exploits signification systems. A signification system is an abstract network of cultural data available to be used to encode meaningful messages; it is 'an autonomous semiotic construct that has an abstract mode of existence independent of any possible communication act it makes possible'.[11] Signification systems enable potential communicative acts and human beings employ elements from them to produce *meaningful*, or significant, communication. A sender produces a message and then the receiver begins to interpret this message. If the receiver is unacquainted with the world in which the sender produces the message, or the data from the signification system employed by the sender, then communication may fail or misunderstanding may occur; however the converse may occur as well. Eco modifies the basic communication model and incorporates various other elements:

8. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 3-5.

9. A model first proposed by C.E. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1949). Eco relates the model to his theory in *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 32-47.

10. Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (AS; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 5. These 'communicative intercourses' include oral and written communication and the focus of the present study is upon written communication.

11. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 9. See also Michael Caesar, *Umberto Eco: Philosophy, Semiotics and the Work of Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p. 81.

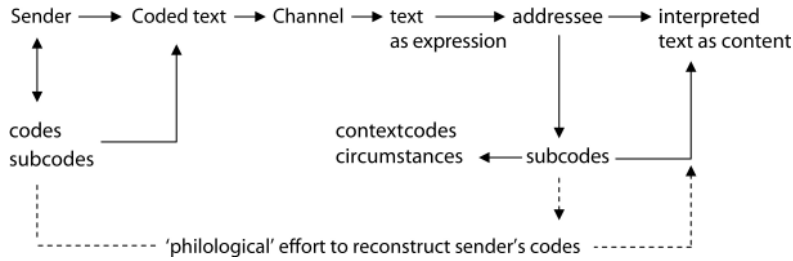


Figure 3.1: Eco's Modified Communication Diagram[12]

From this diagram, it is apparent that the traditional sender-to-receiver model has been advanced considerably. Eco has taken into account the codes and subcodes of the sender and how the sender codes a text. He also takes into consideration the context and circumstances in which the text is created. Moreover, he takes seriously the text as a created expression (important for aesthetic texts especially) and how this expression impinges upon the addressee. Finally, Eco relates the codes and subcodes of the addressee, as well as the context and circumstances of the addressee's reception of the text, into consideration. The dashed lines that extend downward from the sender and addressee point towards the addressee's attempt to reconstruct the codes and subcodes of the sender so as to gain greater understanding on the actual content of the message. In agreement with the integrated approach adopted in the present study, Eco acknowledges the world behind the text (codes/subcodes of sender, how the text was coded), the world within the text (text as expression), and the world in front of the text (codes/subcodes of addressee, context and circumstances of addressee's reception of the text). Thus the integrated approach adopted in the present study fits well with Eco's presentation of the communication process.

b. *Eco's Theory of Codes and Encyclopaedia*

It is in place to explain Eco's theory of codes. In common parlance, the term 'code' remains ambiguous, for at least three different plausible senses arise with the term: paleographic, correlational and institutional.[13] In the first sense, paleographic, the code is written to refer to something else; Eco's example is the *codex*¸ nomenclature derived from Latin roots for wooden tablets smeared with wax and that came to be known as parchment or paper books. In this sense, code denotes something designed to tell about something else. In the second sense, a code is a correlational system that connects two other systems. His example is Morse code, in which electric signals are

12. Diagram adapted from Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 5. The diagram in *The Role of the Reader* is a revised version from *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 141.

13. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 164-66.

related to specific letters in the alphabet. The third sense of the term arrives in the idea of legal codes; institutional codes are systemic and conventional rules designed to govern a specific subject. While his example is legal code, other codes are understood in this sense as well: codes of etiquette, chivalry and social systems (systems of mourning or shame).[14]

Along with the semantic range associated with the concept of a code, Eco distinguishes between s-codes and codes proper. Eco says that a code is 'a system of signification, insofar as it couples present entities with absent units. When—on the basis of an underlying rule—something actually presented to the perception of the addressee *stands for* something else, there is *signification'*.[15] S-codes (or 'system-codes') however, are structures that exist in cultures independent of communicative processes but essential to them. S-codes are systems of possibilities designated in syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic structures that are potentially useful for signification, or meaningful communication. These can be (a) syntactic structures (such as language), or combinatory possibilities yet to be activated in a communicative act, (b) semantic structures or sets of possible meaningful states or notions which are conveyed through signals but as yet not realized, or (c) pragmatic structures, systems of possible behavioral responses anticipated from any communicative process.[16] Alternatively, a code couples any of the s-code possibilities designated by (a), (b), or (c). Eco argues that s-codes only garner attention when they are inserted in an intentional communicational framework—a code. Through a code, a message is produced and this message can convey both information and possible instruction for the receiver. The receiver actively interprets the text so as to understand the encoded message and respond to it.

Also associated with his theory of codes is Eco's important concept of the encyclopedia. The encyclopedia encompasses s-codes and can be related to Eco's understanding of the signification system. If a theory of codes frames how one might understand the structure of potential communicative acts, then the encyclopedia proffers a way to describe the global material from which s-codes and codes are constructed that give insight to specific communicative acts. The encyclopedia is a descriptor of the cumulative amount of cultural knowledge present to a creator of a message at the time of its genesis. Set in terms of biblical studies, the encyclopedia represents all cultural information available to the creator of Lamentations in the period of its creation: social discourse, ritual practices (such as mourning, liturgy, sacrifice, worship, festal celebrations, etc.), theology, language, history, historical realities, literary genres, poetics and conventional understandings.

14. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 164-66.
15. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 8.
16. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 165.

Eco illustrates the encyclopedia with the model of a 'rhizomatic structure'. A rhizome is a 'tangle of bulbs and tubers' that appear in a mesh of interconnected points.[17] The qualities of a rhizome are: that every point of the rhizome must be connected with every other point, that it can be broken off at any point and reconnected, that it has neither recognizable beginning or end, that it has neither outside nor inside, it is susceptible to continual modifications, that it can grow outward or be cut off, that it cannot give a global description of the whole but rather only localized description due to the fact that it is always growing or changing.[18] Seen in this light, the encyclopedia is a net or tangle of cultural information, with each point of information intertwined with all other points. The encyclopedia, like the rhizome, grows and expands as culture expands; broadening the connections between information points however disparate they might appear from one another. Moreover, describing the encyclopedia (or any point of cultural information) can only be accomplished from a localized level, and there is no etic perspective by which to empirically perceive and assess the whole. The encyclopedia, then, remains theoretical yet knowable via localized descriptions of it.

Taking this discussion to a practical level for communication, though all possible points in the encyclopedia are available to be actualized in a communicative act, the sender of the message only 'blows up' or actualizes a particular point through one's cultural knowledge and social location and 'narcotizes' other points.[19] Eco states, '[T]he knowledge represented by an encyclopedia is a 'cultural' knowledge'.[20] Encyclopedic knowledge is therefore local to whatever individuals are creating and receiving communicative messages. This has the effect of shattering the 'crystal-like perfection' of dictionary models of semantic representation that demand universal semantics of terms grounded upon differentiae.[21] The benefit of an encyclopedic model arises in the fact that meanings of things are 'common social beliefs, sometimes mutually contradictory and historically rooted, rather than atemporal and theoretically fixed constructs'.[22] Thus interpretation can begin productively from a specific and localized level within the encyclopedia and then move outward to discern meaning in a text. In this way the concept of the encyclopedia becomes a ''regulative idea'; it is only on the basis of such a regulative idea that one is able actually to isolate a given portion

17. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 81.

18. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 81-82.

19. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 79-80.

20. Umberto Eco, 'Dictionary vs. Encyclopaedia', in Thomas Sebeok (ed.), *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Semiotics: Volume 1* (3 vols.; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), p. 206.

21. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 100.

22. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 99.

of the social encyclopedia so far as it appears useful in order to interpret certain portions of actual discourses (and texts)'.[23]

The localization of encyclopedic knowledge creates a fundamental challenge as well. If all encyclopedic knowledge is cultural and localized, there is no guarantee that the receiver of a message will have the same encyclopedic competence as the sender; in Eco's conception of the encyclopedia there always exists the danger of misunderstanding. Set in terms of his theory of codes, the codes employed by the sender to encode a message may not be the same codes employed by the receiver to decode the message. Eco agrees that the potential for code 'mismatching' is ever present in communication, yet this in no way diminishes the force of his concept of encyclopedia. Rather, he argues that this concept best reflects the actual act of understanding any communicative act. Thus in the rhizomatic labyrinth of the encyclopedia 'every local description of the net is a *hypothesis*, subject to falsification, about its further course; in a rhizome blindness is the only way of seeing (locally), and thinking means *to grope one's way*'.[24]

Yet 'groping one's way', or what he calls more technically 'abduction', remains positive and constructive rather than negative and deconstructive, so that knowledge and ultimately understanding of the specific communicative act is garnered through it. This separates Eco from other postmodern philosophers, notably Fish, Rorty and Derrida. Eco believes that texts are meaningful in an engagement between the reader, the text and the encyclopedia. He argues that this standpoint is theoretically 'moderate' compared to other reader oriented theories of interpretation.[25]

In contrast to this view, Fish argues that readers of texts determine textual meaning specifically through 'the authority of interpretative communities'.[26] Fish's reader-response theory argues that there is no 'meaning' in the text at all; meaning is a construct of the communally-constructed reader: 'The reader's response is not *to* the meaning; it *is* the meaning'[27] of a text. Fish understands that the reader, and one's interpretation of a text, is determined by one's community. Eco, on the other hand, firmly argues that meaning of a text can be adduced through a process of abduction through the encyclopedia.

23. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 84.

24. Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 82.

25. 'I shall take a "moderate" standpoint, arguing against some intemperance of so-called reader-response criticism. I shall claim that a theory of interpretation—even when it assumes that texts are open to multiple readings—must also assume that it is possible to reach an agreement, if not about the meanings that a text encourages, at least about those that a text discourages' (Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 45).

26. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, p. 538.

27. Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 3.

Rorty argues that texts cannot be interpreted but only used.[28] Rorty avers, '[Eco] insists upon a distinction between *interpreting* texts and *using* texts. This, of course, is a distinction we pragmatists do not wish to make. On our view, all anybody ever does with anything is use it. Interpreting something, knowing it, penetrating to its essence, and so on are all just various ways of describing some process of putting it to work'.[29] Here Rorty firmly disagrees with Eco's theory due to its insistence on the discovery of meaning in a text, or *interpretation*. As Eco defines it, usage means 'to start from it in order to get something else, even accepting the risk of misinterpreting it from the semantic point of view'.[30] As Eco states of *usage*, 'I can read a text to get inspiration for my own musing', but to interpret a text, 'I must respect [its] cultural and linguistic background'.[31] Thus, Eco believes that interpreting a text for its meaning (or meanings) comes from analyzing the text itself, with rigor. Usage, on the other hand, comes from a belief that textual meaning only arises from the reader himself, as one finds in Rorty's 'The Pragmatist's Progress',[32] and Derrida's deconstructive theory.

Derrida argues that while texts may be interpreted, these interpretations are always provisional and never arrive at 'meaning' of a particular text in terms of original sense.[33] Reading for Derrida is always something done behind the back of the author, something 'unperceived by the writer' and thereby something foreign to the author's original sense.[34] Though too expansive a discussion to explore here, this has to do with Derrida's fundamental dissolution of both the concept of, and relationship between, the subject and the object in his philosophy. In consequence, there is never a stable object that a controlling subject can analyze and assess.[35] Thus the text, like the author (and reader), remains temporally in flux and fixed meaning cannot be gained.

28. Richard Rorty, 'The Pragmatist's Progress', in Stefan Collini (ed.), *Interpretation and Overinterpretation: Umberto Eco with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler and Christine Brooke-Rose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 89-108.

29. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (AS; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 93.

30. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 57.

31. Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 69.

32. Rorty, 'The Pragmatist's Progress'.

33. See especially Jacques Derrida, 'Difference', in *The Margins of Philosophy* (trans. Alan Bass; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 2-27; *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

34. Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (trans. Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 158, 159-64.

35. Derrida, '"Eating Well", or the Calculation of the Subject', in *Points… Interviews, 1974–1994* (ed. Elisabeth Weber; trans. Peggy Kamuf; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 255-87.

Derrida avoids claims to concretized meaning and prefers openness, though an openness quite different from what Eco describes. For Derrida, the free play of reading does not hope to heighten emphasis on an ambiguous or ironic point within the structured framework of a text's unified meaning; rather Derrida's deconstructive reading collapses the whole system upon which the text's supposed 'unified meaning' stands.[36] Reading actually defers meaning, always revealing the absence of original meaning of a text.[37] Beardslee argues that in Derridean theory, 'significant reading is not 'reproduction', not reactualizing of a meaning that was once expressed by the author of the text or that is resident in the pattern of the text. Rather it is reading that challenges the reader, throws open the reader's world to creative discovery, to new associations that may be suggested as much by irrational or chance associations as by the logical relations so carefully studied'.[38] Thus, Derrida dismantles the 'seeming coherence of the text' and reads it in a manner that avoids closure (final meaning) at all costs.[39]

Eco firmly distances himself from such tendencies. In contrast to these, Eco believes that cooperation between the text, the reader, and the encyclopedia strengthens interpretations and give 'guardrails' by which to ascertain coherent from incoherent interpretation of texts. This distinguishes his approach from Rortian or Derridean positions.[40]

In Eco's theory of codes the encyclopedia remains crucial. The encyclopedia is the global universe of data available for a human being to fashion a code (through the use of s-codes within one's own localized position within the encyclopedia). But, it is also apparent in the discussion up to this point that the act of selecting and employing specific data from that encyclopedia so as to produce codes presupposes a certain kind of work done by both a sender and receiver of a message, and this work is explained in Eco's theory of sign-production.

c. *Eco's Theory of Sign Production and Aesthetic Texts*

Caesar identifies Eco's theory of sign-production as relating to both labour and pragmatics (the effects of encoded messages).[41] Primarily Eco's theory of sign-production assesses acts of *labour*: the labour involved when the sender encodes the message to send it out as well as the labour involved in

36. Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak, 'Translator's Preface', in *Of Grammatology*, p. lxxv.

37. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 21.

38. William L. Beardslee, 'Poststructuralist Criticism', in *To Each its own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application* (rev. and expanded edition; ed. Stephen L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999), p. 254.

39. Beardslee, 'Poststructuralist Criticism', p. 256.

40. Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 52.

41. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 90.

the decoding of that message by the addressee.[42] When a human being creates a text with a message designed to arouse 'interpretative response in the addressee'[43] then what is involved to describe and analyze this procedure is a theory of sign-production. The actual interpretative response of the addressee is brought to bear into his theory of sign-production as well. In this way sign-production also engages the field of pragmatics.

Eco's theory of sign-production also describes the production of aesthetic texts.[44] Aesthetic texts require a specific type of labor for both creation and interpretation. They are identifiable by the fact that *an aesthetic text manipulates language so that both semantic density and poetic quality exist in their expression rather than straightforward reportage, mentioning, or explanation*.[45] *Aesthetic texts employ language primarily to stimulate reactions and open horizons for the reader rather than to only convey content*. These reactions, however, are stimulated according to a particular order that 'focuses my attention [through the text] and urges me to an interpretive effort (while at the same time suggesting how to set about decoding) it incites me toward the discovery of an unexpected flexibility in the language with which I am dealing'.[46] Aesthetic texts actually reveal themselves as 'poetic' or 'aesthetic' in the way they surprise the addressee by 'violating' the norms of convention (whether a genre, an idiom, a concept, or such devices), so that the addressee's expectations are not met, providing a sense of bewilderment and creating space for further interpretation on the part of the addressee.[47] Thus the aesthetic text is simultaneously *ambiguous* (through the flexibility and density of its language as well as the way that it confronts the addressee's expectations) and *self-focusing* (as it directs 'the attention of the addressee primarily to *its own shape*') because it is a work of art.[48]

42. Caesar helpfully identifies and distils Eco's discussion on the various types of labour involved in the act of producing and interpreting messages in communication (*Umberto Eco*, p. 91). For Eco's full explanation, see *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 154-354.

43. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 8.

44. For discussion of his theory of sign-production, including the differences between semiotic and factual statements, mentioning, the problem of a typology of signs, and models of iconism, see Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 151-314. See also the helpful distillation of Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, pp. 76-99.

45. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 261-76.

46. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 263.

47. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 264. This trait of aesthetic texts in Eco's theory derives from the concept of 'defamiliarization' known in the work of Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky. In Shklovsky's understanding, the function of aesthetic texts is to make strange what has become habitual, conventional and unexciting. This can be conventional literary devices or move outward to social systems. See Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', in David H. Richter (ed.), *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1989), pp. 738-48.

48. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 264.

3. *Aesthetic Analysis of Umberto Eco*

Eco's focus upon the labour required to actually interpret that message reveals his theory of sign-production as hermeneutical. This fits well with his understanding of the nature of the localized encyclopedic knowledge and the process of 'groping' one's way through the encyclopedia (abduction) to build understanding about meaning in a text. The clue that guides the interpreter through the encyclopedia, validating or repudiating the interpreter's efforts, is the text: 'Thus, more than a parameter to use in order to validate the interpretation, the text is an object that the interpretation builds up in the course of the circular effort of validating itself on the basis of what it makes up as a result. I am not ashamed to admit that I am so defining the old and still valid "hermeneutical circle"'.[49] This hermeneutical quality of his theory is a vital clue to introduce the discussion on aesthetic analysis.

The terminology 'aesthetic theory' or 'aesthetic analysis' is shorthand for Eco's semiotic analysis of aesthetic texts, and aesthetic analysis is a means by which to analyze artistic texts.[50] Eco's aesthetic analysis takes into account the worlds of the text, reader and author. Thus the model proposed in Figure 3.1. above is again highlighted. Two aspects remain fundamental for aesthetic analysis. The first is understanding that interpretation is a cooperative act between three entities: (1) the *intentio auctoris* (what the author 'tries to say' as one is bound up in the world and ideology which fund one's imagination, hereafter 'the intention of the author'[51]), (2) the *intentio operis* (the physicality of the artifact, the literary text and its importance as a communicative device, hereafter 'the intention of the work'), and (3) the *intentio lectoris* (what the receiver or reader sees as 'text' as he or she is bound up in the world and ideology which fund his or her imagination, hereafter 'the intention of the reader').[52] The second aspect is his distinction between 'open' and 'closed' texts. I shall return to this pragmatic distinction below.

49. Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 64.

50. For his discussion of aesthetic theory, see his *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 261-98. Aesthetic analysis encompasses all artistic discourses. Visual and music arts also fit within the range of analysis. I focus upon the literary text.

51. The world and ideology of the author shapes how she understands reality and how she comes to create what she writes about. Terms like 'the world' and 'ideology' are broad, highly debated and ill-defined. These can include almost anything from familial relationships, social location, or cultural matrices, and theology. All of these different threads work to comprise the personhood of the physical real-world author and help fund the creative impulse, what one 'tries to say', in and through the text.

52. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, pp. 3-7; *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, pp. 63-88.

a. *The Intentions of the Author, Work and Reader*

For Eco, the concept of 'author' remains useful but fundamentally altered so that the 'author' becomes 'the intention of the author'. This is a readerly construct generated by a real reader to attempt to describe the producer of a message. Eco builds upon his views of authorship from his mentor, Luigi Pareyson.

Contrasting with the Italian Romantic theorist Benedetto Croce, Luigi Pareyson's aesthetic was material and not ideal. Pareyson differed from Croce, whose theory was the mainstream and idealistic trend in 1950s Italy. Pareyson's aesthetics centers on the concept of formativity, a term which emphasizes 'the twofold dynamism of the artistic form'.[53] In the first place, the artistic form is something that is *made* or *done* rather than an idealistic notion of art as transcendent vision in the mind of the artist. In other words, Pareyson saw the work of art as a *production* rather than a pure *expression*. As such, the produced work of art needs to be interpreted rather than intuited. Secondly, the artistic form is *organic*, that is, 'formed physicality with a life of its own'.[54] Formativity describes how knowledge about a work of art arises from the 'continual exchange between the stimuli offered by reality [the work of art] as 'cues', and the hypotheses that the person [interpreter] puts forward in response to the cues in order to give them a shape and meaning'.[55] In this way, the concept of formativity affords weight to both the production and individuality of a work of art. He clings to the role of the author as the *producer* and the role of the reader as the *interpreter*. The text, then, is the object of production and springboard for interpretation, so that for Pareyson, there is 'a very close link between the genesis of the work, its formal properties, and possible reactions on the part of the receiver'.[56]

Drawing upon Paryeson, for Eco the author is the producer of a text, which is embedded with specific encyclopedic content. So one must respect this fact and realize that the text is in fact produced by someone. Yet when one deals with a text, especially an ancient text, it necessarily means that the text has lived on while its author has not. The implication of this for Eco is that the artifact exceeds the controlled intentions of its author.[57] This does not mean that the author is somehow irrelevant to discern the meaning

53. Eco, *The Open Work* (trans. Anna Concogni; Introduction by David Robey; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 7.

54. Eco, *The Open Work*, p. 58.

55. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 8.

56. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 9.

57. Texts exceed the control of their authors in that (1) they are no longer kept private by the author—they are public domain and open to aberrant decoding, (2) they (may) outlive their creator, and (3) they may display structural characteristics that evince interpretations which go beyond what the author wished to convey.

of a text, for one must trust that an author has created the text and actualized a specific range of encyclopedic knowledge to make it communicative; interpretation, then, becomes a process of discovering and matching codes of encyclopedic competence between the reader and the author so that the text becomes communicative. The difficulty here comes in the text itself. Because the text has outlived the author, the author can in no way correct misreading or misinterpretation. The most significant guideline for interpreting a text *is* a text. Eco conceives of an author as a 'textual strategy', imputed by a real reader (which he calls an 'empirical reader') of a specific text, to instigate the process of interpretation of that text.[58] Whatever the reader identifies as 'author' or 'authorial intention' is tied to empirical evidence adduced by the reader and verified by the text itself.[59]

Eco describes this second hinge of the triad of cooperation as 'the intention of the work'. This concept is controversial and sounds embarrassing, for anyone can see that inanimate objects *have* no intentions! In the concept of 'the intention of the work' Eco demonstrates that because texts exceed the control of their authors, the text may in fact support a reading that goes beyond what the real author wanted to say—if an author is dead, real readers cannot ask the author to verify their interpretation. The concept of an 'intention of the work' conceptually describes an interpretation that is grounded and demonstrated from structural, semantic, or pragmatic characteristics from the text. It is not that these characteristics are 'not there'. Rather they *are* there in the text. But, the author never may have intended them as such. Interpretations that occur based upon certain textual phenomena from the physicality of the text remain justifiable in the absence of the author.[60] In this way, Eco defends his view of textual intention. The reader has much, but not total, control in the reading process; the text remains something distinct from the reader. Thus the reader must begin to make 'sense' of this unique and created object.

Finally, Eco speaks of 'the intention of the reader' in the triangular relationship between text, author and reader. This is the active 'seeking of sense'

58. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, pp. 10-11.

59. Poems like George Herbert's 'The Altar' and 'Easter Wings' reflect the principle of Eco's emphasis on the physicality of the text. The wing-like qualities of 'Easter Wings' as well as the structure of 'The Altar' immediately alert the reader to the mere physicality of the text. These shape poems leave the reader (somewhat unambiguously) questioning their meaning and purpose. The reader must first recognize this artistic device of shaping, however. One may not recognize the shape of the wing as a //wing// at all but rather a skewed hourglass. Because Herbert has died, he cannot hope to correct the error.

60. Interpretations that occur based upon certain textual phenomena are justifiable in the absence of the author, though the author may never have *intended* them as such. See Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, pp. 73-74.

from the text on the part of the reader. Eco avers that a producer of a text creates it according to specific codes and subcodes for a model reader who employs the same codes and subcodes to decipher the text:

> 'To make this text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader. The author has thus to foresee a model of the possible reader (hereafter Model Reader) supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them'.[61]

The model reader however is different from the real reader who picks up a text and reads it. Eco makes a distinction between the empirical reader and the model reader.

As intimated above, the model reader is 'a set of textual instructions, displayed by the text's linear manifestation precisely as a set of sentences or other signals'.[62] In this way, the model reader is a construct of the text, generated in the text by the producer who anticipates the interpretative moves of the empirical reader. As Caesar describes:

> 'To generate a text means putting into action a strategy which foresees the other side's moves, as in war or chess. The only difference is that generally (not always) the author wants his or her "adversary" to win. The author must foresee accidents or mistakes or lack of information on the part of the reader and deal with them sooner or later. It seems, therefore, at this point that the author has to refer to a series of competences (a phrase which Eco describes as being "wider" than "a knowledge of codes") which confer content on the expressions which he uses […] So he foresees a Model Reader capable of making interpretative moves which correspond to his, the author's, generative moves. This sort of reader required is signaled by a number of different means: language, the choice of a particular kind of encyclopedia or ensemble of cultural references, particular vocabulary or style, genre.[63]

In this quote, Caesar describes Eco's understanding on the author, the text and the reader (at least the model one).

The model reader and 'the intention of the work' are constructed initially through the work of the empirical reader. For Eco, the empirical reader is the real 'flesh and blood' reader that picks up a text to read it. This reader cannot hope to have the level of encyclopedic competences of the model reader. When faced with 'linear text manifestation', the empirical reader moves through the text in a linear fashion, following its movement and 'makes conjectures' about the model reader to help him grasp the text.[64]

61. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 7.

62. Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 15-16.

63. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 123.

64. Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 64.

These conjectures are the 'overgeneralized assumptions' mentioned above, and are summarized as follows: (1) the empirical should assume the text displays coherent message(s) and is communicative, else there is no point of communicating via written text anyway; (2) the empirical reader should assume that the text coheres; (3) the text is structured and it works according to a code.[65] This function of a text makes good sense because 'internal textual coherence controls the otherwise uncontrollable drives of the reader'.[66] The empirical reader '*posit*[s] a structure [garnered through his own encyclopedic competences], inventing it as a hypothesis and a theoretical model in such a way as to leap ahead of the interminable work of empirical verification'.[67] By imposing one's own structure on the text, the empirical reader then uses it as a heuristic device, and permits the text to 'correct' the imposed structure. The empirical reader determines textual structure and coherence through flexibility and a heuristic device (his imposed structure) rather than a rigid method. It is a process of *dialogue* rather than *monologue*, and this insistence remains crucial to understanding Eco's theory.

Eco avows confidence that the empirical reader can grasp meaning in a text through the text, but it requires 'a process of temporally progressive feedback'.[68] To make the dialogue as productive as possible, the empirical reader should become familiar with the s-codes (as much as possible) that underlie the text. This includes linguistics, philology, history, literary genre, sociology of the text—anything that contributes to the encyclopedia available to the model author of the text. By knowing as much as possible about the code underlying the structure, the empirical reader has some guardrails that prevent aberrant 'decoding', or 'misreading'.[69] The empirical reader tries then to 'act' like the text's model reader, as Eco's statement makes clear, 'The empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures about the kind of model reader postulated by the text'.[70] Thus, the empirical reader tries to transpose himself into the position of the model reader to discern 'the intention of the work'. How does one accomplish this?

Caesar lucidly explains how context or what Eco calls 'circumstance' helps discern structure, and thereby, the communicative act. Caesar states, 'Messages can be ambiguous, polysemous, but this polysemy can be limited

65. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 62.

66. Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 65.

67. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 62.

68. John Llewelyn uses this terminology in his discussion of the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, though there are similarities between Gadamer and Eco here: *Beyond Metaphysics? The Hermeneutic Circle in Contemporary Continental Philosophy* (CSPHS; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1985), p. 103.

69. See Umberto Eco, *Misreadings* (London: Picador, 1994).

70. Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 64.

by various factors such as the internal context of the syntagm, the circumstance in which the communication is made, or an explicit indication of the code to be adopted'.[71] In this way, 'circumstance' is a combination of the context without and within the text, available generic conventions for the production of the text, and the world in which the text was created. Thus, as the empirical reader familiarizes oneself with 'circumstance', one positions oneself to more readily adopt the persona of the model reader and thus make interpretative judgments on meaning in the text. Obviously, Eco's theory suffers at this point if the empirical reader is limited by the lack of knowledge of the encyclopedic knowledge actualized in the s-codes of the text.[72] If the reader is acquainted with the codes of the text, then reading becomes productive towards *interpretation.*

In this way the reader engages the text and posits both a possible author (model author) who could have created this work, and a possible person or group of persons to whom the text was written (model reader). To construct model author and reader, the real reader makes sense of the text on the basis of conjectures. Eco says, 'Thus it is possible to speak of text intention only as the result of a *conjecture* on the part of the reader'.[73] Conjectures are formulated by abductions through the encyclopedia; these abductions can only be proved through structural, semantic and syntactic affirmations of them from the text itself. Conjectures, of course, are open to critical debate and sometimes endless debate. But, 'making conjectures' remains the best way to describe what happens when readers attempt to understand a text[74] Out of conjectures, checked 'against the text as a coherent whole',[75] the reader will prove warrant for what will ultimately become the interpretation of the text. Eco says that the initiative of the 'intention of the reader' only 'starts to become exciting when I discover that my intention could meet the intention of the text'.[76] Aesthetic sense is only recognized or 'activated' within an engaged dialectic between 'the intention of the work' and 'the intention

71. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 63.

72. This is certainly the case for some texts, but for Lamentations, a good deal of available data from the encyclopedia has been assessed. Among this data, one can include: possible theological traditions (Deuteronomic, Zion, Priestly paradigms), biblical material (in terms of allusion), ANE material (city-lament genre and other pertinent lament categories), sociology of mourning in the ANE, poetics, poetic structures, liturgy and worship practices. Available encyclopedic content for Lamentations interpretation will be discussed in the textual analysis with special reference to how these impact the book's theology. The next chapter will provide access to genre, structure and poetics, while the other encyclopedic knowledge will be addressed in the exegetical portions of the present study.

73. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 58.

74. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 59.

75. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 59.

76. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 59.

of the reader' so that the model reader is built up and the understanding of the meaning of a text becomes strengthened.

b. *Pragmatic Distinctions between Open and Closed Texts*

Readers remain important to Eco's hermeneutics but still are constrained by the text. That is, texts can move readers in different ways. Here, Eco makes a distinction between open and closed texts. The conceptions of 'open' and 'closed' have nothing to do with canonicity (an open versus closed canon) or generic distinctions (such as lyric, lament, hymn, etc.) but rather with text pragmatics—how texts involve their model readers so as to elicit different types of responses from them. It is possible for texts to be constructed in different ways for their model readers. Whether open or closed, texts are 'syntactic-semantico-pragmatic' devices 'whose foreseen interpretation is a part of [their] generative process[es]'.[77]

'Closed texts' contain monotonous strategies for their model reader. They 'obsessively aim at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers'.[78] Eco typifies this tendency in his analysis of the myth of Superman comics. In his description of a hero like Superman, Eco states, 'The mythic character embodies a law, or a universal demand, and therefore must be in part *predictable* and cannot hold surprises for us'.[79] Eco is not making generic distinctions here as much as he is making pragmatic distinctions. Superman will always get away from the villain because he is *Superman*. The empirical reader fully anticipates Superman's escape from the disastrous situation because this is how the heroic comic strip genre plays out. The author exploits the expectation of the addressee, anticipating one, and only one, response from the empirical reader; through convention, the empirical reader is conditioned to make only that one response at that time. Thus Eco says that closed texts are structured 'according to an inflexible project'[80] and demand the reader know the textual strategy in order to make sense of the work. James Bond stories also fit as examples of closed texts. They aim at *one* kind of reader, *one* response, under *one* textual strategy. Readers know that Superman will always win in the end, as will Bond. They feel the excitement of the heroes' various dangers just when the text wants them to as well as the elation of their escape. The model reader of a closed text is manipulated to only one textual outcome of the hero: Superman wins in the end[81] and Bond defeats the madman and gets the girl.[82]

77. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 3.
78. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 8.
79. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 109.
80. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 109.
81. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, pp. 107-24.
82. Eco, 'James Bond: une combinatoire narrative', *Communications* 8 (1966), pp. 83-99.

Opposed to such texts are open texts which are designed in order to arouse a *variety* of interpretative options for the model reader. The open text is intentionally ambiguous, designed 'at the moment of its generation' to elicit and negotiate meaningful interaction between the text and the reader.[83] Open texts contain among their 'major analyzable [*sic*] properties, certain structural devices that encourage and elicit interpretative choices' on the part of the model reader. These depend upon 'a system of psychological, cultural and historical expectations on the part of their addressees'.[84] The choices enact an interpretative 'ideal insomnia' for the model reader. This means that 'the intention of the work' demands the model reader follow its textual project in such a way that one faces uncomfortable and sometimes incommensurable realities, which one must interpret in *some* way, though not *one* way. The model reader is surprised and set off-guard by the unexpected interpretative horizons afforded by the open text.[85] Eco states, 'The type of cooperation requested of the reader, the flexibility of the text in validating (or at least not contradicting) the widest possible range of interpretative proposals—all this characterizes [*sic*] narrative structures as more or less "open"'.[86] In this way, the reader has a degree of 'autonomy' in interpreting the work.[87]

It is important to note, especially for biblical scholars, that Eco understands open texts to be finished texts in the sense that they are in their final form. This fixity of form, however, does not then correspond to fixity in meaning. He says that open texts, 'though organically completed, are 'open' to a continuous generation of internal relations which the addressee must uncover and select in his act of perceiving the totality of the incoming stimuli'.[88]

And there are varying degrees of openness according to Eco.[89] Some texts, like James Joyce's *Ulysses*, are designed to elicit a plenitude of unforeseen connections of meaning. This is part of the point of the work. On the other hand, there are open texts that are open in the sense that they are aesthetic texts and forever open to interpretation due to the density of form, variation of imagery, and metaphorical mode of discourse. However they fit on this continuum, open texts are not open to endless inventions of meaning, as the term 'open' might imply. Rather, because open texts are created with possible responses of the addressee in mind, the open text remains intelligible, meaningful, and resists misinterpretation or endless deferral.

83. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 3.
84. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp. 49-50.
85. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 33.
86. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, p. 33.
87. Eco, *The Open Work*, p. 1.
88. Eco, *The Open Work*, p. 21.
89. Eco, *The Open Work*, pp. 20-21.

Two features constrain moves against textual meaning for open texts: ambiguity and self-reflexivity. Ambiguity is the first clue to discovering clarity and sense in the text. Ambiguity is an intentional distortion of the code, and thus, the reader can place limits as to what the object of ambiguity might be. In this way, 'productive' ambiguity 'awakens one's attention and induces one to try to interpret it, but at the same time suggests directions in which one might go' within the encyclopedia to begin to interpret it.[90] Ambiguity helps define the reader's limits of interpretation and point toward meaning. Likewise, Eco's discussion of the self-reflexive structure of poetic language limits interpretation and gives shape to the poetic message. The language of an artistic text is referential to itself; that is, it operates within the interplay of repetition of language and gives clarity and interpretative direction. Again in Eco's aesthetic theory one can see that the reader has autonomy in interpreting the work but not complete autonomy. The following quote by Eco in his earliest essay on open texts is helpful at this point. For an open work:

> 'The *possibilities* which the work's openness makes available always work within a given *field of relations*. As in the Einsteinian universe […] we may well deny that there is a single prescribed point of view. But this does not mean complete chaos in internal relations. What it does imply is an organizing [*sic*] rule which governs these relations […provides] the possibility of numerous different personal interventions, but it is not an amorphous invitation to indiscriminate participation. The invitation offers the performer the opportunity for an oriented insertion into something which always remains the world intended by the author […] In other words, the author offers the interpreter, the performer, the addressee a work *to be completed*'.[91]

Though Eco later modifies his language about authorial intention to speak of 'the intention of the work', for instance in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (1992), the basic contours of his aesthetics of openness are already present.

4. *Conclusion*

The semiotic project of Umberto Eco coheres with the integrated approach adopted in this study and his aesthetic analysis frames how to explore the theology of Lamentations, so that the worlds 'behind', 'within' and 'in front of' the text are met in the intentions of the author, work and reader. The focus of aesthetic analysis begins with an empirical reader reading a text. On the basis of the linear manifestation of the text, believing that its

90. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 64.
91. Eco, *The Open Work*, p. 19.

message coheres and operates according to a code (produced by a model author), an empirical reader begins the process of reading and interpreting from one's own setting within the cultural encyclopedia. The reader then makes 'conjectures' about the text under investigation. These conjectures strengthen the model reader and clarify questions concerning the meaning of the text on the basis of 'the intention of the work'. Dialectic between the intentions of the author, text and reader provides an interpretative frame for the aesthetic analysis of the present study.

a. *The Model Reader(s) of Lamentations*

This framework for interpretation remains productive and carries with it implications for Lamentations research. Most importantly it implies a primary emphasis upon the interchange between the reader (along with one's own encyclopedic knowledge) and the text (along with the cultural encyclopedia of the text).

The interchange between reader and text occurs at two levels. On the first level, the present (empirical) reader has engaged the text along the integrated approach, so the philosophical presuppositions that I possess may be productive as I listen to the text so as to become transformed into the model reader. My own presuppositions are latent and interwoven with the present understanding of poetry and theology in Lamentations. This thereby impacts my understanding of this text. Still this is a reality of any act of interpretation or critical analysis.[92] At the second level, this study explores how Lamentations constructs a model reader for the context of sixth century BCE Judah. That is, how would the model reader of exilic Judah receive and respond to this text?

Eco's concept of the model reader is flexible enough as a concept to encompass both ideas. Still, the purpose of this study is not primarily self-reflective. Rather it is primarily interested in the way that individuals within an ancient Judahite community become model readers, and then how the text moves these to respond to the work. So the present study explores the second level of interchange between text and reader: how the model reader is constructed for a sixth century BCE Judahite context.

One must be circumspect about the identity of such an ancient and Judahite model reader. Who exactly is in view? It is impossible to identify with a great degree of precision, but at the minimum the Judahite model readers of Lamentations likely was a priestly group that had both familiarity with literary material (whether oral or written) from ancient Israel as well as a facility with the rich imagery and poetic techniques employed by Lamentations. This group was located likely either at Mizpah or Bethel, in concord with the argument advanced in Chapter 1.

92. Eichrodt, 'Does Old Testament Theology?', pp. 23-25.

The discovery of an increasing amount of inscriptional evidence in Israel dating to the Iron Age suggests that writing was not isolated to only an elite scribal class. Further, it suggests that reading was not isolated to that group either. Davies and Hess separately point out that the presence of abcediaries, bullae and seal impressions from Iron Age Israel indicate that a degree of functional literacy existed among the broader populace beyond priests and/or scribes.[93] Hess suggests that it is conceivable that reading as well as writing at some level occurred in small villages as well as larger urban centres. If this is true, it is possible, and in light of the communal focus of Lamentations 5, perhaps likely that a wider group of readers may be in view for Lamentations than the scribal and priestly class. Still, this is only suggested rather than demonstrated. It is simply not known.

Eco's theory places emphasis upon the interchange between *text and reader* rather than a putative *empirical author*. Methodologically, then, it remains sensible to argue first for 'the intention of the work' in Lamentations before speaking about any real author, even though other works helpfully investigate this field of enquiry.[94] The LXX, Vulgate, Aramaic version (Targum) of Lamentations,[95] and Lamentations Rabbah[96] all conclude Jeremiah the prophet of the sixth century BCE is the author of the book. This is possible, but to my mind uncertain. Remaining temple singers or priests in Judah are more likely candidates.[97] Still, Eco's aesthetic analysis directs the process of interpretation of Lamentations' theology from the empirical reader to the model reader through the 'intention of the work'.

93. R.S. Hess, 'Questions of Reading and Writing in Ancient Israel', *BBR* 19 (2009), pp. 1-9; 'Writing about Writing: Abecedaries and Evidence for Literacy in Ancient Israel', *VT* 56 (2006), pp. 342-46; G.I. Davies, 'Some Uses of Writing in Ancient Israel in the Light of Recently Published Inscriptions', in P. Bienkowski, C. Mee and E. Slater (eds.), *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society: Papers in Honour of Alan R. Millard* (LHB/OTS, 426; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 155-74.

94. Nor does the present study wish to maintain that the concept of authorship is unimportant. Rather it is a vital reality of any text. Lee argues that the authors of Lamentations are the prophet Jeremiah and female temple singers (*The Singers of Lamentations*). Renkema believes pre-exilic temple singers originated the poems (*Misschien is er hoop*). Temple singers or a priestly class located at Mizpah or Bethel after 587 BCE are the most likely authors of Lamentations.

95. Étan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations* (New York: Hermon Press, 1981); Christian M.M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations: Vindicating God* (SAIS, 3; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 18-21.

96. Jacob Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* (BJS, 193; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).

97. Cf. Renkema, *Lamentations*.

b. *The Text of Lamentations*

Eco's approach assesses aesthetic works, and application of his insights becomes complicated by text-critical questions of the ancient biblical text. Because of this, a brief word is in order about the present study's understanding of the text of Lamentations. Hillers suggests that the 'Hebrew text of Lamentations is in a relatively good state of preservation' and is trustworthy to represent a hypothetical Hebrew Vorlage.[98] It appears that the LXX, the Peshiṭta, and Targum, presuppose a hypothetical Hebrew Vorlage on which the LXX and Peshiṭta depend, which is almost identical to the MT.[99] The oldest extant manuscript evidence for Lamentations comes from a few Qumran texts (3QLam, 4QLam, 5QLam[a] and 5QLam[b]),[100] and the most significant of these, 4QLam[a], contains Lam. 1.1-17, part of v. 18 and a small fragment of Lam. 2.5.[101] Hillers thinks 4QLam[a] followed the Hebrew Vorlage but altered it in a number of places to either smooth out translation or shift the focus of the poem toward explicit liturgical use, as it is sometimes addressed to God where it otherwise is not in the MT.[102]

One example in Lam. 1.7a reveals this. For a full explanation of divergences between the MT and 4QLam[a] on this verse and others consult Cross and Hillers; the main aim here is to show how the translator likely diverges from the Hebrew Vorlage to make a point. Lam. 1.7 in the MT reads:

זכרה ירושלם ימי עניה ומרודיה
כל מחמדיה אשר היו מימי קדם
בנפל עמה ביד־צר ואין עוזר לה
ראוה צרים שחקו על־משבתה

'Jerusalem remembers the days of her miserable homelessness
All of her precious things, who were from the days of old,
When her people fell into the hand of the enemy, but there is no helper for her.
The foes look on mockingly over her destruction'.

Using Cross' reconstruction of 4QLam[a] column II, Lam. 1.7, the text reads differently:

98. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 39.

99. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 210.

100. Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp. 41-59; Using other notation, 3QLam = 3Q3, 4QLam = 4Q111, 5QLam[a] = 5Q6, and 5QLam[b] = 5Q7. See DJD 3:95; 3:174-77; 178-79. Other nonbiblical Qumran poems quote Lamentations: 4Q179, 4Q501, 4Q282 [formerly 4Q241], 4Q439, 4Q445 and 4Q453 (Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 36-37).

101. F.M. Cross, Jr., 'Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse: The Prosody of Lamentations 1:1-22', in Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall go Forth: Essays in Honour of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 129-55.

102. Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp. 41-46.

זכ(ו)רה יהוה…	line 2
[כו]ל מכאובנו אשר היו מימי קדם בנפל	line 3
[עמ]ה ביד צר ואין עוזר צריה שחקו על	line 4
[כו]ל משבריה...	line 5

'Remember, O Yhwh,
All our pain which were from the days of old when they fell—
Her people—into the hand of an enemy, and there was no helper;
her foes mocked over
all of her destructions'.

The observer's description of Jerusalem in the MT Lam. 1.7a uses a qal 3 fem. sing. verb (זכרה) but the Qumran translator changes this to fashion a communal address to Yhwh: 'Remember, O Yhwh, all our pain'. In this permutation, זכ(ו)רה translates as emphatic imperative[103] and the Tetragrammaton is set in place of ירושלם. Here the observer appeals to Yhwh directly and anticipates the appeals by personified Jerusalem in Lam. 1.9c, 11c and 20a. The change from 'all her precious things' (כל מחמדיה) to 'all our pain' (כול מכאובנו) anticipates personified Jerusalem's focus upon misery in Lam. 1.12 (מכאוב כמכאבי) and makes the speaker a participant in communal suffering. The divergences mark a shift away from pure description by the speaker (as in the MT) to a communal appeal to Yhwh, heightening pain and suffering and the desire for the deity to change it. Lam. 1.7 will be explored further in Chapter 5, but it is evident that 4QLam[a] takes liberties in transforming the Hebrew Vorlage and diverges from the MT, likely to emphasize pain and suffering and focus appeal to Yhwh to alter the situation.

One notes theological interpretation as well in the Masoretic notations. So for example, in Lam. 1.21b, the text reads, 'All my enemies heard of my misfortune—they rejoiced; for You had done it' (כל־איבי שמעו רעתי שׂשׂו כי אתה עשׂית). The Masoretes were uncomfortable with the enemies being able to rightly identify the work of God and thereby place a *zaqef qaton* above שׂשׂו, dividing the line there. Renkema states, 'If we ignore the division [given by the Masoretes] we are left with a situation in which the enemy also recognizes Yhwh as the *auctor intellectualis* of the downfall of his people'.[104] Still, this is a perfectly sensible translation and interpretation of the line: 'All my enemies heard of my misfortune; they rejoiced that you had done it' (Lam. 2.21b).

The LXX translates the Hebrew Vorlage literally, with little variation. So Albrektson suggests that, Contra Rudolph, the LXX is at places an 'extremely

103. The ו is unclear, but if it does actually appear on the manuscript, then it is explainable through equivalence to the Tiberian זכרה, according to Cross, 'Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse', p. 140.

104. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 194.

slavish' translation of the Hebrew.[105] Even so, the LXX translator interprets in a different direction from the Hebrew in places. Perhaps the most obvious case of this lies in the prologue in the LXX that ascribes the book to Jeremiah. By directly linking Lamentations to Jeremiah, the LXX translator provides theological commentary immediately into its translation, namely, judgment enacted by God's hand. This theologically shapes the first few verses of the LXX in a manner different to the Hebrew found in the MT.

Similarly, the Targum Lamentations interprets the Hebrew text as a judgment for Jerusalem's sins.[106] The Targum achieved this theological emphasis through its structure, translation technique, and use of specific language. As with the LXX, it opens with a theological prologue that vindicates God by ascribing the blame for the destruction of Jerusalem to the sins of the people.[107]

Each of the versions contributes something to the way one reads the Hebrew text. The present study will follow the MT but will note where Masoretic notation impinges upon the interpretation of the Hebrew text in a significant way. I will also highlight significant variant readings. This comparative process will help distinguish places where translators/interpreters 'close' or leave 'open' hermeneutical possibilities in the text, especially in regards to the theology of the book.

105. Wilhelm Rudolph, 'Der Text der Klagelieder', *ZAW* 56 (1938), pp. 101-22; Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 208-209.

106. Christian M.M. Brady, 'Targum Lamentations' Reading of the Book of Lamentations', (D.Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1999), pp. 247-48.

107. Brady, 'Targum Lamentations' Reading', p. 248. See also the prologue in the Vulgate.

Chapter 4

Lamentations' Encyclopedia

1. *Introduction*

The present chapter will identify important 'cultural references' within Lamentations' encyclopaedic world. This is necessary because Eco assumes that the producer of a text employs certain competences in its production and that to interpret a text well the model reader will exhibit similar competencies in order to mirror the 'interpretative moves' of the producer.[1]

Lamentations' encyclopaedia should not be taken for granted. For instance, to argue that a tragic structure comprises the major structuring device for the book should stand in question because this very structure was not available in the ANE world at the time of Lamentations' construction. So its employment in Lamentations scholarship should be avoided. By contrast, the acrostic structure should be acknowledged as the major structuring device for Lamentations. Valid encyclopaedic content contributes to the exegesis that follows and will help to inform its ambivalent theology and help to confirm it as an open text.

Ideally, the encyclopaedia provides a way to compare theological traditions, genres, poetics and politics to Lamentations to see how the poetry exploits it to make textual meaning. However, demonstrating the influence of certain theological traditions as 'encyclopaedic' material available for Lamentations' construction remains extremely difficult. This creates unease about attributing a specific theological tenet of Lamentations to a particular religious tradition in Israel's history. There is no doubt that certain theological traditions were available to the authors of Lamentations at the time of its construction. And it may be that there were Deuteronomic, Zion, or Priestly theologies that impacted its theology. Any further research in this field would demand thorough demonstration and space to allow such argumentation. Space constraints of the present study preclude this.

Rather than attempting to fully assess how theological traditions have been used in Lamentations, the present study will rather emphasize OT *texts* as data for encyclopaedic content without then making the subsequent move to exhaustively trace the trajectory out of which such content stemmed. To be

1. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 123.

fair, by highlighting OT texts one still runs the risk of overgeneralization. It may be that Lamentations shares draws from a common repertoire of language in the encyclopaedia that is used by another biblical text rather than alluding to that other biblical text. One cannot discount this possibility, but rather than being hyper-sceptical in this regard, here I prefer to speak of allusion to *texts*.

Beyond OT texts, the encyclopaedic model structures comparative analysis between other cultural data and Lamentations. For the encyclopaedic world of Lamentations, one can expand the range of data to include other pertinent ANE elements. This includes social rites such as mourning. Mourning will prove to be a significant social code that the book exploits to generate meaning and impact theology.

For both OT and ANE elements, comparative method will be used in a heuristic manner to 'grope' our way through the rhizomatic labyrinth of the encyclopaedia to discover instances where Lamentations 'blows up' items in the cultural encyclopaedia to advance its theology. The comparative method opens a way to chart typological relationships and differences between Lamentations and extant ANE elements to address how the book constructs theology. I am arguing, where appropriate, for fruitful comparisons between extant ANE and OT material and Lamentations on the basis of the interchange between 'the intention of the work' of Lamentations and the ANE cultural encyclopaedia in which Lamentations sits.

From this basis, one must query which literary or formal elements that were in existence by the sixth century BCE that might be relevant for Lamentations. Most scholars have argued that city-laments, dirges, as well as individual and communal laments from both OT and ANE literature were available during this period.[2] Further, it is relatively clear that Mesopotamian paradigms of lamentation, especially city-laments, were available to Judahite and *Golah* intellectuals in the exilic and post-exilic ages.[3] In light of this, it is reasonable to argue for biblical *and* Mesopotamian generic forbears available to the cultural milieu for Lamentations' construction. Other generic material likely was available as well. Re'emi has rightly argued that complaints, thanksgiving songs, and wisdom material also impinge upon Lamentations.[4]

2. Paul Wayne Ferris, Jr., *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (SBLDS, 127; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), p. 158.

3. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Darwinism', pp. 625-30; Walter C. Bouzard, *We Have Heard with our Ears, O God: Sources of the Communal Laments in the Psalms* (SBLDS, 159; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 154-55, 201-11; Michael Emmendörfer, *Der ferne Gott: Eine Untersuchung der alttestmentlichen Volksklagelieder vor dem Hintergrund der mesopotamischen Literatur* (FAT, 21; Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 1998), pp. 17-38, 294. See the mediating position of William S. Morrow, *Protest Against God: The Eclipse of a Biblical Tradition* (HBM, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), pp. 82-105.

4. R. Martin-Achard and S. Paul Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis: Amos & Lamentations* (ITC; Edinburgh: Handsel, 1984), p. 79.

Various poetic devices from the ANE cultural world are available. Among these are: repetition and parallelism,[5] rhetorical questions and direct address,[6] speaking voices,[7] imagery and personification,[8] alphabetic arrangement,[9] strophic structures,[10] allusion,[11] and a number of other stylistic devices.

2. *A Mixed Genre Poem in Lyric Mode*

Albertz suggests that Lamentations marks a generic development in the literary history of Israel.[12] Whether or not his suggestion is correct, it is certainly true that the poetry uses available encyclopaedic material for its own purposes. At present four views hold sway on the major genre of the book: a set of communal dirges, communal laments, city-laments, or mixed genre poems.

5. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 112-44; Barbara Kaiser, 'Reconsidering Parallelism: A Study of the Structure of Lamentations 1, 2, and 4' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1983).

6. W.C. Gwaltney, Jr., 'The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Ancient Near Eastern Literature', in William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer and Leo G. Perdue (eds.), *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), p. 206; See also Thomas, 'Aesthetic Theory of Umberto Eco'; 'The Liturgical Function'.

7. Gwaltney, 'The Biblical Book of Lamentations', p. 206; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 36.

8. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 75-89.

9. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, pp. 23-32.

10. Renkema, 'The Literary Structure', pp. 294-396; Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 72-79.

11. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, pp. 62-79; Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*; Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*; John Day, 'Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions to the Covenant in Hosea and Psalm LXXVIII', *VT* 36 (1986), pp.1-12; Michael de Roche, 'Zephaniah I 2-3: the "sweeping of creation"', *VT* 30 (1980), pp. 104-109; David M. Gunn, 'Deutero-Isaiah and the Flood', *JBL* 94 (1975), pp. 493-508.

12. Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (Studies in Biblical Literature, 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 158-59. For other generic influence on Lamentations, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 25-26; Martin-Achard and Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis*, p. 79; Samuel N. Kramer, 'A Sumerian Lamentation' and 'Sumerian Lamentation', translated by Samuel N. Kramer (*ANET*, pp. 455-63, 611-19). All references for the 'Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur' (hereafter LU) and 'Lamentations over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur' (hereafter LSU) derive from Kramer's translation in *ANET*. For the Curse of Agade, see Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (MC, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989). For *balag and eršemma* see Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament*, pp. 38-53; for comparative analysis between the ANE texts and Lamentations, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 30-96.

a. *Communal Dirges*

Traditional research into the oral forms infusing Lamentations has focused upon individual poems rather than the book as a whole, following Gunkel's lead in form-critical research.[13] He classified Lamentations 1, 2 and 4 as an assemblage of communal dirges,[14] Lamentations 3 as a mixed genre poem that contains elements of both the individual lament (Lam. 3.1-17, 48-66) and communal lament (Lam. 3.40-47) as well as wisdom material (Lam. 3.25-39); Lamentations 5 is a communal lament.[15]

Jahnow understood Lamentations as being made up of communal dirges. A major difference between the dirge and lament has to do with whether or not the poetry addresses the deity in the second person. If there is direct address to the deity, then it has more affinity to lament rather than dirge, which simply mourns bereavement and expresses pain.[16] For Jahnow, Lamentations 1, 2 and 4 represent the most extensive evidence of the communal dirge.[17]

b. *Communal Laments*

Westermann, however, sees the poems as being comprised primarily of the lament form which was altered and nuanced by the acrostic so that they finally came into the shape that they now exhibit. He concurs with Jahnow that elements of the dirge appear in Lamentations. Yet these poems function differently. Because Lamentations continuously addresses the deity, its poems reflect the form of laments. So different to both Gunkel and Jahnow,

13. Gunkel isolated the variety of distinct oral forms of poetry in ancient Israel by assessing the different Gattungen in the corpus of the Hebrew Bible. See Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *An Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (trans. James D. Nogalski; MLBS; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998).

14. Gunkel and Begrich, *An Introduction to the Psalms*, pp. 94-96. Hedwig Jahnow employs different terminology, namely 'Leichenlied', or 'funeral song' in *Das hebräische Leichenlied im Rahmen der Völkerdichtung* (BZAW, 36; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1923).

15. Gunkel and Begrich, *An Introduction to the Psalms*, pp. 94-96, 308; Jahnow calls Lamentations 3 an individual lament (*Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, pp. 168-69). Among those who follow Gunkel are Nötcher and Rudoph. See Friedrich Nötscher, *Die Klagelieder* (EB; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1947), p. 1; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Die Klagelieder* (KAT; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1962), pp. 191-92.

16. See the classic discussion of Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied* and the response in Westermann, *Klagelieder.* Jahnow's work anticipates later comparative anthropological studies between the OT and ANE: Gary Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance*; Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*.

17. Amos 5.2 and Isa. 23.1-14, as well (Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, pp. 165-97).

Westermann identifies Lamentations 1, 2 and 4 as communal laments with elements of the dirge interspersed throughout them. He argues that Lamentations 3 is a mixed genre poem and Lamentations 5 follows a more typical pattern of communal lament.[18]

c. *Laments over the Destroyed Sanctuary and City-Laments*

Kraus suggests Lamentations represents a text used to mourn the destroyed sanctuary which was sung at the restoration of the temple in 515 BCE.[19] Akkadian songs sung at the restoration of the temple are its generic forbears.[20] Boecker and Wieser diverge slightly from Kraus, considering Lamentations to be liturgical poetry, sung at an *unspecified* lament festival.[21] Re'emi thinks Lamentations 1, 2 and 4 share elements with the dirge genre, yet they also display other elements as well: national laments, individual laments, complaints, and confessions of sin.[22]

Like Albertz, Berlin thinks Lamentations is a novum in Israel's generic repertoire and only arises during the exilic period. She calls this a 'Jerusalem Lament'.[23] This lament questions how one sings about Zion when the city, temple, and environs are destroyed. The opposite of the Jerusalem lament is the 'Zion song'.[24] After the fall of Jerusalem, theological and historical changes necessitated the creation of the new genre that would express the dismay over the destruction. Lamentations is this new genre that functions to mourn Jerusalem's destruction.[25]

Kramer long ago argued that Sumerian poets originated the city lament genre which directly influenced the OT book of Lamentations.[26] Rudolph denies direct linkage believing instead that similar situations depicted in both the Sumerian Lamentations over Ur and Akkad and the book of Lamentations explains their similarities without having to attribute direct influence of the former on the latter.[27] McDaniel most extensively questions direct influence of Mesopotamian laments. He cannot see how the writer

18. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 15-22 = *Lamentations*, pp. 1-11.

19. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, p. 9.

20. A. Falkenstien and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete: Einleitung und Übertragung* (Zürich: Artemis, 1953).

21. Hans Jochen Boecker, *Klagelieder* (ZB, 21; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985), pp. 12-13; Weiser, *Klagelieder*, pp. 298-300.

22. Martin-Achard and Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis*, p. 79.

23. Other than Lamentations, Berlin identifies Psalms 74, 79 and 137 as Jerusalem Laments (*Lamentations*, pp. 24-25).

24. Psalms 46, 48, 50, 76, 84, 87 and 122.

25. Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 24-25.

26. Samuel N. Kramer, *Sumerian Literature and the Bible* (*AnBib*, 12; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1959), pp. 185-204.

27. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, p. 9.

of Lamentations could have been exposed to Mesopotamian laments so he could not have imitated their style.[28]

However, if Lamentations was composed some time between 587–520 BCE, it is possible that the composer of this text could have come in contact with the Mesopotamian lament traditions.[29] Dobbs-Allsopp employs a comparative method to assess similarities between Lamentations and ANE city-laments[30] and concludes that Lamentations exhibits characteristics congruent with the ANE city-lament genre, though it is probably an imitation of the city-lament prototypes.[31]

d. *Mixed Genre Poems*

Lamentations shares family resemblance with each of the forms identified above, but is not coextensive with them.[32] Rather than dissecting the poetry of Lamentations to fit form-critical categories, the present study will observe how the different formal elements work within its mixed genre. Lee rightly suggests that the number of crossover traits between the lament, city-lament, and dirge as they occur in Lamentations indicate that the book actually is a set of mixed genre poems that prominently combine the communal lament and communal dirge forms.[33] Lamentations 5 is clearly a communal lament. And Gottwald insightfully notes that the lament is the primary formal type in Lamentations (especially the first four poems) but that various

28. T.F. McDaniel, 'The Alleged Sumerian Influence upon Lamentations', *VT* 18 (1968), pp. 198-209.

29. Morrow, *Protest Against God*, pp. 82-105.

30. This city-lament genre appears in primary and secondary production in Mesopotamia in, among other examples, the Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur, Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur and Sumer, The Lament for Nibru, The Lament for Unug; the city-lament genre is similar to the Curse of Agade and shares family resemblances with other Mesopotamian lament genres. After comparative analysis of the texts, Dobbs-Allsopp discovers nine distinguishing generic features between Lamentations and the Mesopotamian city-laments. *Balag* and *eršemma* compositions and the Curse of Agade share family resemblance to city-laments.

31. Like imitative *balag* and *eršemma* compositions (Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Darwinism', pp. 629-30); *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 31-94.

32. Some of the motifs share crossover traits with the lament and dirge. The obvious crossover trait, however, is the unified subject and mood of the city-lament and the communal dirge: mourning over the destruction. Another crossover motif is the emphasis on reversal of former glory to present abjection, what Jahnow calls the 'Einst und Jetzt' motif and Dobbs-Allsopp identifies as 'contrast and reversal'. Finally, both Dobbs-Allsopp and Jahnow identify different speaking voices as typical of the city-lament and dirge genres, respectively, and suggests examples from Lamentations. The appeal to God, associated with the communal lament, is combined in the city-lament in a lamentation and plea for restoration as well as a return of the gods.

33. Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 33-37.

other types are interwoven as well.[34] The poetry cannot be understood properly without recognising the usage of the variety of these elements at work within it.[35] The reason is because Lamentations' poetry exploits the encyclopaedia of literary genre, modifying it for its own purposes.

e. *Poems in Lyric Mode*

Somewhat apart from the generic question, Dobbs-Allsopp insightfully suggests that the poetry of Lamentations fits a lyric sequence. His aim in this classification is to explain how the poetry *functions* rather than identifying *genre* per se.[36] So he speaks of modes of discourse rather than genre classifications. How texts go about generating meaning through language deals with their modes of discourse. Lyric sequences are composite works containing multiple and discreet poems that display a degree of coherence and tell their 'story' without recourse to features normally associated with narrative: plot, theme development, or argument.[37]

Due to the fact that its mode of discourse is paratactic, imagistic and non-narratival, Dobbs-Allsopp believes Lamentations fits the lyrical mode of discourse more than anything else and can be understood as a lyric sequence.[38] It tells its story through the poetic usage of language, repetition and the progression of the acrostic rather than dramatic portrayal or narrative plot development. Dobbs-Allsopp is right in noting that lyric functions differently than other modes of discourse. His recognition alerts one to the necessary involvement of the reader in the interpretative process to make ties between disparate parts within the poetry and may give insight as to the discrepancy in divine imagery, sources of blame for the destruction, and the nature of hope in Lamentations.

3. *Re-Thinking the Acrostic Stucture*

For Eco's aesthetic theory, structure remains an important factor in the construction of the literary message(s), and so it remains important to reflect upon the structure of the Lamentations. In Chapter 2, it was shown that various other structuring devices failed to adequately explain the totality of the book. The present study suggests that the acrostic structure serves as the most comprehensible structuring device for the book.

34. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 41.

35. Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations*, pp. 33-37.

36. Keil anticipated Dobbs-Allsopp's research. Distinctive characteristics of lyric are: repetition of specific clauses and terminology, specific poetic usage of the divine epithet עליון, 'Most High', in Lam. 3.35, 38, and a formal structure (the alphabetic acrostic) that organises various 'chords' of emotion in the poetry (Keil, *K&D*, vol. 8, p. 472).

37. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence', pp. 1-5.

38. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, pp. 12-20.

Aside from Psalm 119, Lamentations 3 is the largest acrostic in the Old Testament. The remaining chapters of Lamentations embody the acrostic in their poems except for Lamentations 5, which has the vestiges of an acrostic with 22 verses. Lamentations 1 follows the normal פ–ע order of the alphabet[39] while Lamentations 2, 3 and 4 transpose the two, displaying ע–פ. The meaning of the acrostic is disputed. The Rabbis thought it was a way to express the completeness of both Torah and the keeper of Torah.[40] Commonly it is held that the acrostic in Lamentations is a means to organize the outpouring of pain so as to express grief completely from א to ת.[41]

Wiesmann suggests the acrostic remains only a stylistic artifice. 'Die Acrostichis ist also nur eine äußere Zugabe für das Auge, eine zierliche Einfassung des Gedichtes, die Andeutung einer äußeren Ordnung; natürlich unterstützt sie auch das Gedächtnis'.[42] Westermann agrees and argues that one should not follow the acrostic to get to the original meaning of the poems because they are a secondary addition, inserted after the original laments were uttered.[43]

Gottwald envisions four possible reasons for the acrostic. (1) It had magical power. (2) It served as a pedagogical device. (3) It served as a mnemonic device. (4) It functions conceptually so that the reader is forced to deal with its physical presence. Writing itself was sometimes imbued with symbolic and magical power,[44] but a magical explanation for Lamentations jars strongly against the theology among the Israelites reflected in the sixth century BCE.[45] The pedagogic explanation of the acrostic, too, ultimately fails. In this view, the acrostic trained students in the alphabet as well as in the literary style of the funerary lament, an idea purported by Munch.[46] Gottwald rightly follows Rudoph's critique, arguing that it is unlikely the extraordinary grief and emotional outpouring, not to mention the literary artistry of Lamentations, is wasted in a mere 'exercise of style' for pedagogy.[47] Finally

39. The Qumran text of Lamentations (4QLam[a]) follows the ע–פ order.

40. *The Soncino Edition Babylonian Talmud*, Tractate *Shabbath*, vol. 1 (London: Soncino, 1935–1953), p. 254.

41. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, pp. 29-30.

42. Hermann Wiesmann, *Die Klagelieder: Übersetzt und erklärt* (Frankfurt am Main: Philosophisch-theologische Hoschule Sankt Georgen, 1954), p. 28.

43. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 91-92 = *Lamentations*, pp. 99-100.

44. Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (LAI; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), pp. 44, 57-58, 81-84.

45. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 25.

46. P.A. Munch, 'Die alphabetische Akrostichie in der jüdischen Psalmendichtung', *ZDMG* 90 (1936), pp. 703-10; cited in Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 26.

47. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 26. See Rudolph, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 191. Likewise Niditch seriously doubts the pedagogical nature of acrostic texts, believing that acrostic texts much more likely hold symbolic, magical, or religious significance (Niditch, *Oral Word and Written Word*, pp. 45, 70).

Gottwald addresses the view that it serves as a mnemonic device, a theory that supposes the acrostic was an *aide memoire* for the believing community designed to keep the grief it presented fresh on their hearts.[48] Gottwald counters by highlighting the typical proficiency of ancient cultures for memorizing literature, most of which is not acrostic literature.[49]

Gottwald helpfully recognizes the visual and conceptual power of the acrostic. In the recitation and hearing of Lamentations, one may not especially notice the alphabetic structure. But, when one sees the textual manifestation of the alphabetic acrostic on the page, the reader is forced to deal with it in some conceptual manner and explain it. The acrostic encourages 'completeness in the expression of grief, the confession of sin and the instilling of hope'.[50] Grief is set on display again and again in the acrostic structure. The different orders of the acrostic on display in Lamentations 1, 2, 3 and 4 helped distinguish which poem should be read during and annual five-day mourning ceremony.[51]

There is little reason to dispute the notion that the acrostic gives a structure to express the totality of grief, but Gottwald's suggestion that the acrostic impacts the reader visually should be explored further. Because of the acrostic, the reader is constantly moved forward through the poems in a linear manner. The reader cannot stop at one point or another. The physicality of the acrostic moves the reader from א to ב to ג, on and on until one arrives at ת. Once arriving at ת, however, the acrostic begins anew with the next poem, reinforcing this forward directionality.

Dobbs-Allsopp suggests that the repetition of the alphabetic acrostic is reinforced by each succeeding repeated pattern. Because each poem reinstils the basic acrostic structure, even with variation, the cohesion of the work increases. This cohesive repetition works to bind the sequence together. Yet '[t]his experience of starting the alphabet over again noticeably diminishes the closural force experienced at the conclusions of Lamentations 2, 3 and 4, and consequently, further strengthens the feeling of cohesion, the expectation of continuation'.[52]

Poems governed by such repetitive structures face the challenge of how to provide adequate closure. The most basic way to overcome the challenge, Dobbs-Allsopp maintains, is simply to 'modify its governing patterns of repetition'.[53] Such modification occurs in Lamentations 5. After the ת verse in Lam. 4.22 the reader encounters Lam. 5.1, 'Remember, O Yhwh,

48. Goldman, 'Lamentations', p. 68.
49. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 28.
50. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 28.
51. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, pp. 27-28.
52. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence', p. 59.
53. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence', p. 70.

what has happened to us' (זכר יהוה מה־היה לנו). This clearly disrupts the alphabetic pattern evinced in the previous four poems. Lamentations 5 is a communal lament with only the vestiges of the acrostic appearing in the 22 lines of verse. Unlike the previous four poems, in Lamentations 5 'there is no perceptual stanzaic structure given to the poem'.[54] But, this does not then detract from its relation to the book as a whole. Rather '[t]he net effect of this formal variation, when viewed retrospectively and as a whole, is to suggest the building to a crescendo through the first three poems and then slowly dying away through the last two poems, the radical change in the dominant patterns of repetition alerting the reader to the sequence's impending conclusion'.[55] Upon encountering the conclusion of Lamentations 5, the reader is not necessarily surprised but rather prepared for the end of the book by the modification of the repetitive pattern of the alphabetic acrostic occurring in Lamentations 1–4.

4. *The Vitality of Poetics*

Poetics are, for Eco, one of the ways that the aesthetic text manipulates linguistic expression in order to elicit reflection and re-assessment of the aesthetic message.[56] The language and stylistic devices in Lamentations are crucial for 'telling' its story in the poems and generating various responses for the reader. Some of the poetic devices were mentioned above. This section will focus specifically upon repetition, wordplay and enjambment, imagery, personification, speaking voices, contrast and allusion.

a. *Repetition*

Repetition is central in the poetry of Lamentations, though it has been greatly underdeveloped in research into the poetics of the book. Eco has identified repetition as a major feature of poetics in the ancient world, but spends a good deal of time exploring how repetition should be considered in a modern aesthetic.[57] His discussion is less helpful for the purposes of this project because his insights apply to modern works of literature rather than ancient ones. However, a helpful point for our study is his understanding that repetition, at root, is a way for aesthetic texts to either reinforce the aesthetic message or defamiliarize it through variation of repeated elements, so that what the reader (thinks s/he) knows about the piece of art/the text and re-assess its content once again. This can occur at the level of the word, sentence, or formulaic interation. It can occur at the level of a

54. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence', p. 66.
55. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence', p. 66.
56. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 261-76.
57. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp. 83-100.

repeated metaphor or image. In this latter use of repetition, the repeated element creates ambiguity between the use of first and second instance of the word, image, or whatever, so that it introduces the indispensable element of *time*: reflection and re-reflection on the meaning of the aesthetic message.[58] It is this space of reflection in time that helps to identify a text, in fact, as an *aesthetic* text.

As seen above, Renkema is the only developed research specifically exploiting the use of repetition in the book. The present study will pay greater attention to its usage, though come to different conclusions than Renkema. What is repetition in poetry? Jakobson suggests that poetry is characterized by 'recurrent returns'.[59] Kaiser sees the value of Jakobson's conclusions for understanding Lamentations and argues:

> 'In fact the meaning of a poem derives from the various relationships among recurrent elements. It is the major task of the critic to determine what kinds of recurrence function in the poem, which individual elements relate to one another through repetition, and in what specific manner they are related. A critical method for analyzing [*sic*] poetry, therefore, should consist of a way of exposing relationships among recurrent elements'.[60]

Repetition can be used to bind poetry together, reminding the reader that this is text coheres. It can emphasize a particular point. It can be used to alter semantics of a term. However it functions, repetition is constitutive of poetic texts.[61]

In Lamentations, repetition works on a number of levels. It binds the poetry together. This will be shown by observing repetitive language, formulaic language and repeated imagery (specifically personified Zion). It is in place to note that repetition has long been recognized as a feature of Lamentations that binds the poetry together without extending the question as to how these features of repetition actually mean.[62]

Second, repetition introduces distinction between repeated elements, creating nuances in the meaning. Through variation, the model reader is forced to reconsider the text and the sense of the discrepancy. This can be seen in the repetition of formulaic address to Yhwh where similarity in form contrasts against the foci of the appeals, causing the reader to read them one against the other.[63] Renkema rightly recognizes the importance of repetition

58. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, pp. 262-66.

59. Roman Jakobson, 'Grammatical Parallelism and its Russian Facet', *Language* 42 (1966), p. 399.

60. Kaiser, 'Reconsidering Parallelism', p. 1.

61. Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 10-17.

62. Condamin, *Poèmes de la Bible*; Marcus, 'Non-Recurring Doublets', pp. 177-95.

63. Thomas, 'The Liturgical Function', pp. 137-47.

as a poetic device, though his conclusions as to how repetition reveals structure remain suspect. In fact, the poetics of repetition work alongside the acrostic. The acrostic moves the reader forward in Lamentations while the poetic use of repetition drives the reader in a reflexive movement backward. Both reflexive and projective movements are characteristic of the poetics of Lamentations, which will be explored in the analysis of the poems in the following chapters.

b. *Wordplay and Enjambment*

Wordplay is prevalent in Lamentations. According to Watson, wordplay describes the way language is rendered ambiguous; wordplay exploits the fact that 'words can be polyvalent', conveying multiple meanings.[64] Lexical polyvalence occurs in two different ways: homonymy (two or more words are sound the same but have different meanings) and polysemy (one in the same word has different meanings). Both these are extensions of the poetics of repetition. In Lamentations, the pun is a common, as is antanaclasis: the repetition of the same term (throughout the course of a poem), which takes on different shades of meaning as it is repeated.[65] The pun is an example of homonymic wordplay while antanaclasis an example of polyvalent wordplay. Hendiadys is another poetic device employed in Lamentations.[66] Hendiadys is understood as the expression of a single idea or concept through two terms linked by a coordinating conjunction.[67]

Another poetic feature that occurs in Lamentations is enjambment, as Dobbs-Allsopp has shown.[68] Though the present study shall focus more on wordplay, repetition, imagery and personification, it is important to recognize enjambment's contribution to the poetry. This poetic device is known as the absence of pause or end-stopping at the conclusion of a colon in a verse. In Lamentations, enjambment creates stylistic cohesion in the poetry, gives it forward motion and pace, heightens specific portions, and impinges upon the meaning of certain verses. This trope occurs in other Semitic literature, especially in Akkadian and Ugaritic poetry.[69] In Lamentations enjambment

64. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 237-50.

65. Anthony R. Ceresko, 'The Function of *Antanaclasis* (*ms,'* 'to find'// *ms,'* 'to reach, overtake, grasp') in Hebrew Poetry, Especially in the Book of Qoheleth', *CBQ* 44 (1982), pp. 551-69.

66. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 4.

67. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 324-28.

68. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Enjambing Line'; 'The Effects of Enjambment'.

69. K. Hecker, *Untersuchungen zur akkadischen Epik* (AOAT, 8; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), pp. 79-121; Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, p. 335. For full listing of Akkadian examples, see Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Enjambing Line', p. 220 n. 7; J.C. de Moor and K. Spronk, 'Problematic Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (II)', *UF* 14 (1982), p. 183; Stanlisav Segert, 'Parallelism in Ugaritic Poetry', *JAOS* 103 (1983),

occurs not only externally between two succeeding cola, but also internally within cola as well.[70] Clause internal enjambment occurs when a crucial element necessary for understanding the sense of the colon is shifted to the second half of the line. Clause external enjambment occurs when a dependent or subordinate clause, in some way reliant (temporally, logically, or syntactically) on the main clause, is shifted to the succeeding line. Two examples reveal the phenomena:

External: לאמתם יאמרו איה דגן ויין
'To their mothers they said,
'Where is the grain and the wine'?' (Lam. 2.12a)

Internal: ידי נשים רחמניות בשלו ילדיהן
'The hands of compassionate women
Boil their children' (Lam. 4.10a)

In the external enjambment above, the *rejet* (group of words shifted to the second colon) is logically tied to the preceding colon by virtue of the quotation—the words the children uttered to their mothers. In the example of internal enjambment above, the sense of the couplet cannot be understood until the second colon is actually read. The verbal clause is thereby shifted into the second colon of the couplet. Dobbs-Allsopp believes clause external enjambment is the most dramatic and gives the poems 'energy and a palpable sense of forward movement'.[71]

c. *Imagery*

Imagery is one of Lamentations' most significant tropes. As a category, imagery encompasses other tropes including metaphor and personification. All of these occur in Lamentations but personification and metaphor remain most prominent.

Metaphor stands out in Lamentations, and divine metaphors in particular highlight the significance (and prevalence) of this trope. Bergant contends that 'the most significant poetic feature of the book of Lamentations is its use of metaphor'.[72] By this, she means that images applied to the deity as well as explicit comparisons between the deity and other objects (foes, lions, bears, judges and even a storm) are used in Lamentations to

p. 300. For full listing of Ugaritic examples, see Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Enjambing Line', p. 220 n. 8.

70. His taxonomy of internal enjambment includes: vocative enjambment, adjunct enjambment, subject enjambment, object enjambment, combinations, verb enjambment and appositional enjambment. His taxonomy of external enjambment includes: dependent clauses, syntactically marked sequentiality, quotative frames, and unmarked dependency ('The Enjambing Line', pp. 224-39).

71. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 19; 'The Enjambing Line', pp. 237-38.

72. Bergant, *Lamentations*, p. 19.

both create a descriptive relationship and create a response from the reader. Her recognition is fecund because it assumes that the metaphor implies an enlarged semantic relationship between two associated objects *as well as* an intended effect for the reader from the association.[73]

Because of its interest in how poetry impacts theology, the present study is interested in how Yhwh particularly is described in Lamentations. Yhwh is compared to a judge, a warrior, a harvester, a bear, and a lion. Metaphors of God as warrior and judge suffice to reveal how this trope functions in the book, though the other metaphors will be explored in the exegesis in Chapters 5-8. In the OT Yhwh is described often as a warrior. This is most prominently displayed in the declaration of Exod. 15.3 in Israel's victory song over the Egyptian army, 'Yhwh is a warrior!' Isaiah depicts the deity going to war against Jerusalem complete with siege tactics and technology (Isa. 29.1-4). Metaphorical depiction of deities as divine warriors is common in the ANE and the OT follows this convention.[74] Kang believes that the divine warrior imagery in Israel was first 'a conventional idea in the time of the Davidic Kingdom', and the image revealed Yhwh 'as the divine warrior in history, that is, the Lord of history'; later, in the exilic and post-exilic period, this image took on a cosmic significance (as in Canaanite beliefs about Baal) so that he became 'the cosmic and mythical Lord beyond history'.[75]

Whatever the historical development, Klingbeil's analysis of the Psalms and ANE iconography makes clear that ANE understanding of gods as warriors was prevalent: iconography shows various gods holding various battle implements, among them swords, bows and spears.[76] ANE theologies saw no problem metaphorically depicting some of their deities as warriors.[77] Aris-

73. This understanding of metaphor coheres with Eco's understanding in his semiotics. See Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 87-129.

74. For comparative analysis between Yhwh as warrior and ANE gods as warriors, see D.T. Tsumura, 'Ugaritic Poetry and Habbakuk 3', *TynBul* 40 (1988), pp. 24-48.

75. Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* (BZAW, 177; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989), p. 204.

76. Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (OBO, 169; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), pp. 38-195.

77. Although not exhaustive, a brief list of some of the divine warriors in the ANE proves the point. In Mesopotamia, the deities Ninurta, Ishtar, Marduk and Assur all are pictured as warriors. In Anatolia, the god Teshub and the goddess Arinna are pictured as warriors. In Canaan, the gods Chemosh, Baal, Anat and Reshep are figured as warriors (Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*, pp. 11-110). In Ugarit, the god Athtar, like Baal, is a warrior god with all of the accoutrements of war. See Mark S. Smith, 'The God Athtar in the Ancient Near East and His Place in KTU 1.6 I', in Ziony Zevit *et al.* (eds.), *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), pp. 627-40.

ing from this context, it is no surprize in Lam. 2.1-9 that Yhwh is described metaphorically as a warrior: he has a bow (Lam. 2.4; 3.12); he has a net to capture people (Lam. 1.13b); he burns like a flame (Lam. 2.3c), he goes to war, even holy war (Lam. 2.17b).[78]

The metaphor of Yhwh as judge is also employed in Lamentations. This is perhaps best seen in Lam. 3.58-59. In this passage the גבר, positioned as a litigant, makes his dispute to the deity:

> 'Judge, O my Lord, the disputes of my soul; redeem my life!' (Lam. 3.58)
> 'May you see, O Yhwh, the wrong done to me; judge my cause!' (Lam. 3.59)

This metaphor is set with submetaphors: the divine judge has ears and eyes to both hear the dispute and see the wrong done to the גבר.[79] From what he sees and hears in the dispute, Yhwh will give positive response as a just judge.

Gibson argues that this metaphor has two sides to it in OT understanding. It can either be a source of comfort or trepidation to Israel, because it can either express hope in God's justice and judgment against Israel's enemies, or express the Lord's verdict against his own people in judgment, especially in the prophets. Brueggemann believes the comforting side of the judge metaphor 'becomes a ground for appeal, even for individual persons who plead their cause before "the judge of all the earth"'.[80] Such an understanding is present in Lam. 3.58-59, but also throughout other portions of the book as well. However, the association with the other side of Yhwh as judge, who enacts a 'day' of judgment against his people, is brought to bear in the poetry as well.

Personification, too, is prevalent in the book, especially in Lamentations 1–2. There, the city Jerusalem is personified as a woman, 'Daughter of Zion'. Personification of Jerusalem as a woman as well as other cities as women is well attested in poetic texts of the OT.[81] The practice of personifying cities in the OT may have derived from ANE texts associating goddesses

78. This language is similar to description of the divine warrior in Ugaritic texts. See Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM, 5; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

79. See Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, pp. 21-33.

80. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 235.

81. Under various designations: 'mother' (Isa. 50.1) who has sons and daughters, or city inhabitants (Isa. 47.8-9; 54.13; Ezek. 16.20; Lam. 1.5, 16); 'widow' (Isa. 47.8-9, 54.4; Lam. 1.1); 'princess' (Lam. 1.1). Ezekiel explicitly personifies Jerusalem as Yhwh's wife (Ezek. 16.8; 23.37). Tarshish is called 'Daughter of Tarshish' and Sidon is identified as 'Virgin Daughter of Sidon', in Isa. 23.12. Jerusalem is personified as a woman who sits upon the ground in Isa. 3.26 and Dibon, the capital city of Moab, is personified through the title 'Enthroned Daughter of Dibon'. As with Jerusalem, Dibon too sits on the ground.

to capital cities.[82] Imagery in the ANE city-laments of weeping goddesses, sometimes called mothers,[83] reveal the potential connection. The goddess Ba'u, (ama ^{d}ba-ú, 'mother Ba'u') laments over destruction with the refrain, 'Alas, the destroyed city, my destroyed temple!'[84] The prototypical example lies in the goddess Ningal's weeping and lamenting over Ur's destruction throughout the poem in 'Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur'.[85] The motif of the weeping goddess in ANE city-laments 'portrays the city goddess grieving over the destruction of her city and temple and the killing, suffering and dispersement of her people'.[86]

Still, a direct connection between ANE descriptions of city-goddesses and personification of capital cities as female in the OT is yet to be proved.[87] If there is such linkage, the poet(s) of Lamentations, faithful to monotheistic religion in Israel, does not afford something as syncretistic as the image of the goddess into the malediction of suffering, but instead appropriates the image as a feminine weeping city of Zion, incorporating the epithet typically used for a weeping goddess.[88] This feminine persona represents an expression of suffering.[89] The city cries out and mourns like a human being at the threshold of disaster: 'She weeps bitterly in the night and her tears are on her cheeks' (Lam. 1.2a).

Still, Jerusalem as personified woman in Lamentations ranges in her identity. She is personified a princess (Lam. 1.1), a widow (Lam. 1.1), a slave-labourer (Lam. 1.1), a *niddâ* (Lam. 1.17), even an adulterous woman (Lam. 1.19). This range functions uniquely, congruent with Dobbs-Allsopp's understanding of parataxis within lyric poetry. Imagery in Lamentations appears quickly and often on the top of other imagery, leaving discordant

82. So Aloysius Fitzgerald, '*BTWLT* and *BT* as Titles for Capital Cities', *CBQ* 37 (1975), pp. 167-83.

83. Ba'u (LSU 117, 161), Ninisina (LSU 137), Ninlil (LSU 141), Damgalnuna, 'mother of the Emah' (LSU 247).

84. LSU 118, 122.

85. S.N. Kramer, 'The Weeping Goddess: Sumerian Prototypes of the *Mater Dolorosa*', *BA* 46/2 (1983), p. 71.

86. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep O Daughter of Zion*, p. 75.

87. Peggy Day questions this connection: 'The Personification of Cities as Female in the Hebrew Bible: The Thesis of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F.S.C.', in Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (eds.), *Reading from this Place, Volume 2: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 283-302.

88. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep O Daughter of Zion*, p. 77; 'The Syntagma of *bat* Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar', *CBQ* 57 (1995), pp. 451-70.

89. Kaiser, 'Poet as "Female Impersonator"', pp. 164-82. Kaiser argues that the feminine persona capture the completeness and humanness of suffering and pain. In this way, the poet of Lamentations communicates human pain first and foremost.

pictures sitting together. The reader is forced, then, to negotiate the purpose of the parataxsis.

Heim's analysis of personification in Lamentations reveals that it functions in a variety of ways. He identifies four 'transformations operative in the personification of Jerusalem':[90]

ideation:	the translation of humans into an abstract idea
topification:	the translation of humans into a geographical location
personification:	the translation of a nonhuman quantity into a human being
impersonation:	the translation of a group of people into one person who speaks for them.

Through the language of the text, concrete and real people—the residents of Jerusalem—are transformed into abstract ideas. This is first order ideation. This serves as a basis for the remaining functions of personification. In topification, the city once full of people (Lam. 1.1) is now devoid of inhabitants due to destruction. Heim comments, 'Through the metaphorical relationship of "containment", all who are still living within Jerusalem's geographical limits (the "contained") have now been reduced to a geographical location (the "container")'.[91] Transforming from an architectural site as in topification, personification re-humanizes the inanimate city, making it a person, a woman. And finally, impersonation functions to distil the individual citizens of Jerusalem into the person of 'Daughter of Zion'. She becomes a representative of the whole. This occurs also in any personification of Jerusalem in Lamentations, whether 'Daughter of Zion' or 'widow' or otherwise. Impersonation enables every individual to see 'his or her sufferings and painful emotions' lived out in the representative's plight. 'This representative function explains why personified Jerusalem can be depicted in surprisingly different roles, which at times appear to be mutually exclusive. She is a wife, prostitute, divorcée, widow, mother, daughter and so on, thus impersonating the various individuals suffering distress'.[92]

d. *Speaking Voices*

It is widely held that speaking voices function as poetic devices in Lamentations. Lanahan's seminal work addressed the poetic usage of speaking voices in Lamentations.[93] He saw that one of the major stylistic devices in the book was the usage of different personae, or the variety of characterizations 'assumed by the poet as the medium through which he perceives and

90. Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem', p. 135.
91. Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem', p. 136.
92. Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem', p. 138.
93. Lanahan 'The Speaking Voice', pp. 41-49.

gives expression to his world'.[94] For Lanahan, the use of different personae enables the poet to assume a variety of viewpoints, to exhibit a number of insights into the human experience of destruction. He identifies five major *personae* at work in Lamentations: an objective 'reporter' who narrates destruction (Lam. 1.1-9b, 10-11b, 15a, 17; 2.1-19), Jerusalem personified as a woman (Lam. 1.9c, 11c-14, 15b-16, 18-22; 2.20-22), a soldier, 'a veteran who has endured hard use in the war' (Lam. 3.1-66), a bourgeois 'surprised by the economic upheaval in the fallen city' (Lam. 4.1-22), and a choral voice hoping to express misery to God so that he will change his attitude towards them (Lam. 5.1-22).[95] Lanahan saw five speaking voices while Wiesmann identified six, Bergant four and Provan three.[96]

No consensus exists, though his research has been taken up on a variety of fronts. Lee has sought to identify the historical personages making the various speeches while others have not. Lee identifies the main poets in Lamentations as the prophet Jeremiah and a set of female temple singers.[97] Jeremiah and the temple singers sing in response to one another, which reflect the dialogical interchange in the poetry. Pham identifies the narrator as a 'comforter' and 'Daughter of Jerusalem' as the bereaved in a mourning ceremony in Lamentations 1–2.[98] On the other hand, Kaiser follows Lanahan in seeing the speaking voices as personae. One notes the personae of a narrator and then prominently Daughter of Zion. Her insertion into the dialogue in Lamentations 1–2 reveals that the 'distinctively female experience was regarded highly enough to function as the chief metaphor through which the poet expressed his own agony over Jerusalem's fate and encouraged community catharsis'.[99] Provan recognizes not five, but three speaking voices in the book: the narrator, personified Zion, and the people of Jerusalem.[100]

To be fair, it remains very difficult to tell exactly who the speakers are in the poetry and whom they address. The poetry of Lamentations only identifies one speaker explicitly, in Lam. 3.1: the poem opens 'I am the man (who) has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath'. The גבר is the only identifiable speaker, though the speech of personified Jerusalem may be identified by virtue of her description of her children, the people who have been destroyed (Lam. 1.16c; 2.20).

Although the methodology used by scholars to identify speaking voices is not always explained,[101] the most common manner by which to assess

94. Lanahan, 'The Speaking Voice', p. 41.
95. Lanahan, 'The Speaking Voice', pp. 41-49.
96. Wiesmann, *Die Klagelieder*; Lanahan, 'The Speaking Voice', pp. 41-49; Bergant, *Lamentations*, pp. 15-16; Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 6-7.
97. Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations*, pp. 40-46.
98. Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, pp. 37-147.
99. Kaiser, 'Poet as "Female Impersonator"', pp. 164-82 (182).
100. Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 6-7.
101. Lanahan, for example, never explains how he identifies the speakers.

where speakers begin and end their speech is by observing the 'shifts of person and the distinctive content' of the speech.[102] Yet Meier admits that none of the words attributed to personified Zion are 'explicitly introduced as belonging to her'.[103] Further, he recognizes that speakers within each of the poems need not be identifiable to one another.[104]

This distinguishes Lamentations from the Mesopotamian city-lament genres. It is true that Lamentations, like the Mesopotamian city-laments, does have a third person narrator who reports the destruction and its aftermath, addresses the motivations of God, and even addresses Jerusalem.[105] Yet unlike city-laments, which often introduce the boundaries of speech (especially the speech of gods and goddesses) by way of explicit discourse markers (such as the phrases, 'she wails', or 'bitterly she wails', or 'she keened a lament', preceding or proceeding direct discourse) Lamentations simply does not afford such tidy borders.[106] This should raise a note of caution when identifying the speakers in the poetry. The blending of speech boundaries creates a certain degree of ambiguity: instances that could be identified as speech from personified Jerusalem can just as easily be attributed to the narrator, or vice versa. Moreover, there is no reason to assume that the narrator is male—the voice could just as easily belong to a female narrator because the linguistic data affords no clues.[107]

Heim argues that instead of identifying speakers as isolated entities, the reader of Lamentations should instead realize and embrace the ambiguity. One 'is confronted by a profusion of utterances, speakers and voices. These utterances are directed at different audiences within the textual world of the book. They convey different, and often competing, messages, and they struggle for the readers' attention'.[108] Instead of attempting to identify the personage speaking whichever utterance, or attributing these different voices to different sources or different redactors,[109] an intentionality lies behind the ambiguous and even confused nature of the speaking voices in question: these voices are 'distinctive contributions to a discussion of

102. Samuel A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (VTSup, 46; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 34. So too, Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, pp. 9-103.

103. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, p. 34.

104. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, p. 35.

105. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 32-38. This persona, however, should *not* be identified as embodying the perspective or theology of the poet.

106. These examples come from the speech of Ningal (LU, 247, 299-301), the speech of Ba'u (LU, 115-18, 271-77). See Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 75-90.

107. Bergant, *Lamentations*, pp. 15-16.

108. Heim, 'The Personfication of Jerusalem', p. 146.

109. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenlied*.

suffering and communal catastrophe *in progress* […the book] may have been designed to reflect the historical situation of a community going through turmoil and crisis'.[110] The use of speaking voices, then, is an indicator that the book is not a 'reasoned treatise on the nature of suffering' but rather reflects the disintegration of a known world into chaos and the community's attempt to deal with this crisis, theologically.[111]

e. *Contrast*

The notion of polarizing one item against another is a common notion in Hebrew poetics.[112] In Lamentations, this occurs in particular through the device of differentiating former versus present reality, otherwise known as a *Kontrastmotiv*, 'contrast motif'.[113] This is particularly common in ANE lament and city-lament traditions, and so may have influenced the use of Lamentations at this point. Or it may be that contrast simply comprises a useful device that effectively highlights the sense of pain and loss in the poetry.[114] Either way, contrast is an important poetic technique at work in Lamentations.

Contrast is employed prominently in Lam. 1.1, 2.1-10, 4.1-16 and Lam. 5.1-18 among other places in the poetry. Generally, the poetry contrasts the former glory of the city/woman, people, and environs against the harsh reality of destruction and its aftermath. The aim of this device is, on the one hand, to express horror and loss and, on the other hand, engender sympathy from the reader. Contrast is also employed to highlight the differing roles of characters within the book. So the city of Jerusalem as a 'widow'/mother can be contrasted against the personification of the city as a whore or a daughter (using the epithet 'Daughter of Zion'). Further, benevolent images of the deity can be contrasted against malevolent imagery as well, particularly in Lamentations 3. This suggests to the importance of contrast as a key poetic device in play in the book. As such, it is an important piece of Lamentations' encyclopaedic world that is activated in the poetry.

f. *Allusion*

In Willey's understanding, allusion is a poetic device that recalls in one literary text other literary texts independent of it.[115] Eco's aesthetics have demonstrated that all texts are interconnected in the rhyzomatic structure of the encyclopaedia. Willey touches upon this when she says that 'all texts, all systems of communicative symbols, are unavoidably intertextual: they

110. Heim, 'The Personfication of Jerusalem', p. 146.
111. Heim, 'The Personfication of Jerusalem', p. 146.
112. Schökel, *A Manual*, pp. 85-94.
113. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, pp. 10-12.
114. For discussion, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 38-41.
115. Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, pp. 57-84.

are semiotic patterns created by the reutilization [*sic*] of previously understood words, signs, or codes'.[116] In these terms, any text employs the fabric of other texts to comprise its own tapestry.

Still, some texts are more explicit in the pattern they use. Quotations and citations embedded within a text indicate to the reader that the text he or she is reading is using a previous text in a specific way. 'Quotations and citations enlarge the audience's understanding by putting the immediately present text's conversational partners on display, making them accessible so that the audience can place, by a strategy of mental triangulation, the thoughts of the present writer'.[117]

Between explicit quotations and the invisible fabric of text that interweaves all writing, a type of intertextuality can be discerned which is sometimes difficult to trace but nonetheless comprehensible. This comprises the realm of 'allusion, response, appropriation, recollection and echo'.[118] Allusion works because it awakens to the reader previous texts that enlarge or enhance the text at hand.[119]

Most scholars recognize allusion in Lamentations. Berlin frequently cites OT passages and incorporates them into her analysis of how Lamentations functions poetically.[120] Dobbs-Allsopp recognizes allusions to the book of Exodus and the exodus tradition in Lamentations 1.[121] Albrektson recognizes that Lamentations frequently alludes to Deuteronomy 28 and even chapter 32 (Deut. 28.13, 44 and Lam. 15a; Deut. 28.41 and Lam. 1.5c, 18c; Deut. 28.43 and Lam. 1.9b-c; Deut. 28.53 and Lam. 2.20, 4.10; Deut. 28.37 and Lam. 3.14, 45; Deut. 28.50 and Lam. 4.16, 5.12; Deut. 32.25 and Lam. 1.20) and certain psalms (Ps. 48.3 and Lam. 2.15c; Ps. 50.2 and Lam. 2.15c; Ps. 76.13 and Lam. 4.12). His argument is that the Deuteronomy and Psalms texts actually were available for the creator(s) of Lamentations to actually use and incorporate into its fabric of verse.[122]

Allusion is difficult to pin down, so some caution is warranted. The scholar who looks for allusions must attend carefully to matters of method in ascertaining them.[123] Willey adopts Hays' well-known criterion for ascertaining allusions: (1) *Availability*; (2) *Volume*; (3) *Recurrence*; (4) *Thematic Coherence*; (5) *Historical Plausibility*; (6) *History of*

116. Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, p. 59.
117. Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, p. 61.
118. Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, p. 61.
119. Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 20.
120. Berlin, *Lamentations*.
121. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, pp. 16, 58-60.
122. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 219-37.
123. H.G.M. Williamson, 'Isaiah 62.4 and the Problem of Inner-Biblical Allusions', *JBL* 119 (2000), pp. 734-39.

Interpretation; (7) *Satisfaction*.[124] Hays' approach sets itself in the more historicist-oriented theories of inner-biblical *exegesis*, which recognizes the historical process of a biblical text using another specific text and (re)interpreting it, rather than inner-biblical *allusion*, which recognizes that the Bible is a cumulative corpus of literature, necessarily allusive, irrespective of its historicity.[125]

Hays' conception is fruitful for studying allusion in Lamentations. The present work will compare OT texts to Lamentations where pertinent (specifically portions of Exodus, Deuteronomy 28, the Psalter, Isaiah 10, Jeremiah, Leviticus and the Former Prophets). Whether Lamentations alludes to these *texts* in particular or common textual *traditions* certainly deserves more study than can be accomplished in full here. At the very least, marked allusions in this work, even if not borne out historically, shall point to a need for further comparative analysis.

5. *Conclusion*

This chapter has demonstrated a range of relevant items that should be considered as encyclopaedic content within the cultural world present at the time of Lamentations' construction. The problems associated with attributing Lamentations to one particular oral-poetic form on the one hand or literary genre on the other within the cultural world of sixth century Judah are apparent. In fact the book evinces a number of cross-over traits between the communal lament, the dirge, and the city-lament genres, which reveal the book to comprise mixed genre poems written in a lyric mode. Moreover, the acrostic structure has been determined to be the most persuasive structuring device of the book.

Finally, poetics that occur in other ANE literature (and related genres) has been demonstrated to be active in Lamentations. Some of these poetics move the reader forward, such as the use of enjambment and the linear progression of the alphabetic acrostic. Others, however, create a kind of reflexive arc within the poetry, moving the reader backwards to previous portions of the poetry through the linear progression through the text. This is especially achieved through repetition. Allusion moves the reader outwards, into the larger field of available OT textual material, incorporating its message into the fabric of Lamentations. How Lamentations uses these poetics, however, shall prove to be a point of interest in the exegesis chapters below. Recognising and understanding the poetic usage will aid theological analysis.

124. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, pp. 29-32.

125. See for instance Williamson, 'Isaiah 62.4', pp. 734-39; Lyle Eslinger, 'Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category', *VT* 42 (1992), pp. 47-58.

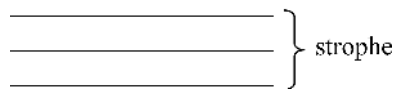
Chapter 5

Lamentations 1

1. *Introduction*

This chapter assesses Lamentations 1 using Eco's aesthetic analysis to discover how the 'intention of the work' constructs its model reader. Exegetical attention will be given to the blending of formal elements, the linear progression of the acrostic, poetics and the 'blowing up' of potential encyclopaedic content to see how these elements impact the reader and interpretation of the poem.

The structure of the poem at large is governed by the alphabetic acrostic, and speaking voices divide the poem roughly in half. Each individual strophe contains three lines (except for Lam. 1.7, which contains four lines):[1]



An outline of the speeches in the poem is as follows:

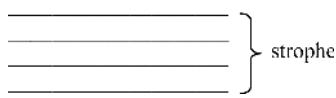
Lam. 1.1-9b:	speech of the observer
Lam. 1.9c:	appeal of personified Jerusalem
Lam. 1.10-11b:	speech of the observer
Lam. 1.11c-16c:	speech and appeals of personified Jerusalem
Lam. 1.17:	speech of the observer
Lam. 1.18-22:	speech and appeals of personified Jerusalem

2. *Analysis of Lam. 1.1-22*

a. *Lam. 1.1-3*

An unidentified observer describes the plight of an unnamed city and region in Lam. 1.1-9. The city and region remain nameless until explicitly stated in

1.. The structure of Lam. 1.7 and 2.19 appears as:



Lam. 1.7a. Lee believes the observer is the persona of Jeremiah,[2] and others identify him as a 'narrator'.[3] As the poem is not narrative, this anonymous speaker is identified as a persona, an 'observer' of destruction.[4] Anonymous observers like the one in Lamentations 1 are typical in the city-lament tradition.[5]

In his reportage, the city's straits are brought into a multifaceted portrait of pain through emotively charged personifications in Lam. 1.1-2. The city is a bereaved mother, a widow, a princess, a slave laborer, an abandoned woman, an isolated woman, a betrayed woman and a pursued woman. The array of identities presents different aspects of suffering, offering a range of identification points with which the reader can relate to the city. With each new depiction of suffering the reader is prepared to hear Jerusalem's song of suffering that will come in Lam. 1.11c-16, 18-22.

Far from offering 'objective', dispassionate commentary on the situation, as O'Connor believes,[6] the observer's intimate portrayal of the city's sufferings reveals that he mourns alongside her. In city-laments, 'The poet often abandons his role as impartial narrator and stands rather as a privileged, internal observer, who nonetheless is not actually involved in the action; he speaks from his own "spatial level"'.[7] Like the 'internal observer', the observer in Lamentations 1 evokes compassion for the city. 'Lamentations 1 facilitates a compassionate disposition in its readers most spectacularly through the figure of personified Jerusalem […] the reader is unmistakably confronted by suffering in a most particular and personal form, which, as already suggested, is all important for the veracity and allure of the image'.[8]

In Lam. 1.1, the dirge, mourning rites and antanaclasis all work to emphasize the debased situation and great reversal of the city. The verse opens with the hallmark of the dirge[9] (איכה), part of an institutional s-code for mourning within Eco's semiotics, which conditions the reader to anticipate the context of bereavement and loss. The next words reinforce this notion, as a female city יָשְׁבָה בדד, 'sits alone'. Sitting 'alone' in the encyclopaedic content of the OT is, ironically, a positive position as it indicates the notion of solitary security.[10]

2. Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 47-130. The persona of Jeremiah becomes increasingly significant in Lamentations 2.
3. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, p. 17.
4. Lanahan, 'The Speaking Voice', pp. 41-42.
5. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 33.
6. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, p. 17.
7. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 33.
8. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 57.
9. Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, p. 136.
10. Deut. 33.28; Num. 23.9; Jer. 49.31; Mic. 7.14. See Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 35.

This former reality, however, is shattered as the reader encounters the second half of Lam. 1.1a: the city once secure is now deserted ('the city once full of people', העיר רבתי עם).[11] Pham notes the act of sitting on the ground in isolation is common behavior for a bereaved mourner,[12] and thus the poetry may be exploiting the s-code 'mourning' to develop for the reader the reality of loss and bereavement. This is confirmed after realising that she is bereaved. Once full of people, or her 'children', the fate of the mother is reversed as she now sits on the ground: 'alone'.[13] The motif of reversal is a common element found in the dirge and city-lament genres, which is further explicated in Lam. 1.1b-c:

> 'She has become a widow; great among the nations,
> princess among the provinces, she has become a slave laborer'.

Once full of children and honoured greatly by the nations as a שׂרתי, 'princess', the city-mother has fallen into servitude (מס). The term רבתי highlights the use of antanaclasis in Lam. 1.1: 'full of people' (רבתי עם) is a nominal construct chain[14] while in the clause 'great among the nations' (רבתי בגוים), רבתי serves as an adjective which modifies the phrase בגוים, 'among the nations.[15] Antanaclasis poetically blends the image of the bereaved mother into the simile of the forlorn and 'widowed' city, both of which confront the reader with their debasement.[16] The general presentation of former glory and present shame in Lam. 1.1 reveals the effective use of the contrast motif to both picture Zion's degradation and engender sympathy form the reader.

Yet how does the presentation of the city as 'widow' function? By Lam. 1.7a, the reader learns the city is Jerusalem, yet until that point, the reader has no explicit knowledge of the city's identity. Once understood as Jerusalem, the city's husband could be recognized as Yhwh.[17] The LXX, Targum and Vulgate all introduce Jerusalem as the city in focus in their prologues of Lamentations 1.[18] Unlike these texts (and unlike Ezekiel 16 and 23, which

11. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Effects of Enjambment', p. 378.

12. Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, p. 13, p. 48.

13. This description is similar to the description of the mourning scene for Jerusalem in Isa. 3.26 and Dibon in Jer. 48.18a. Both cities personified sit on the ground (לארץ תשׁב, Isa. 3.26; ישׁבי בצמא, Jer. 48.18a).

14. GKC §90l; §128.

15. JM §129l, m, n.

16. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 45, note b.; Pete Schramm, 'Poetic Patterning in Biblical Hebrew', in L. Orlin (ed.), *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of G.G. Cameron* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1976), pp. 167-91.

17. As in Ezekiel 16 and 23; Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife* (SBLDS, 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

18. The LXX reads: 'And it happened after Israel was taken captive and Jerusalem was laid waste, Jeremiah sat weeping'. The Targum reads: 'Jeremiah, the prophet and

identify Jerusalem as Yhwh's wife and indicate her whoredom) the MT of Lamentations 1 does not immediately give this information away. Through personification, the observer depicts the feminine city in her debasement and suffering without then explicitly linking her to apostasy or whoredom, enabling the reader to witness her suffering without recourse to explicit linkage of sin, at least until Lam. 1.5b.

The observer continues his account of the personified city's pain in Lam. 1.2. Again, reversal is depicted, linking the verse to the dirge genre and possibly the city-lament genre as well. The pain of the reversal is in focus here rather than an explanation of what specifically caused the pain. The city is personified as an isolated and abandoned mourner and a betrayed woman. Lam. 1.2 reads:

> 'She weeps bitterly in the night, and tears (are) upon her cheeks
> There is no comforter for her from all those who love her
> All of her friends betrayed her; they became like enemies to her'.

In light of the myriad of phenomenal acts of mourning rites exemplified in Lamentations 1, it is likely that the poetry actualizes encyclopaedic content of mourning in v. 2, as both weeping and the need for a comforter are common in mourning rites.[19] The repeated refrain 'there is no comforter for her' (אין־לה מנחם)[20] heightens the focus upon present mourning over bereavement and tragedy. Instead of finding comfort, the city is isolated from those who love her (מכל־אהביה).[21] This statement finds parallel in Yhwh's words over Judah in Jer. 30.14: 'All your lovers have forgotten you; they seek you no longer' (כל־מאהביך שכחוך אותך לא ידרשו). Anderson argues that a loved one denying comfort to a mourning person in effect positions that person *against* the mourner, as an enemy.[22] By Lam. 1.19a,

great high priest, said how it was decreed against Jerusalem and against her people'. The Vulgate's prologue reads: 'And it happened, after Israel was carried into captivity and Jerusalem was deserted, that Jeremiah the prophet sat weeping, and mourned with this lamentation over Jerusalem'.

19. Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, pp. 24-35; Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance*, pp. 82-87.

20. Lam. 1.7c, 9b, 16b, 17a, 21a.

21. מכל־אהביה, 'from all those who love her'. Pham correctly notices the verbal nuance between √אהב in the piel and the qal stems, especially in the participle (Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, 47). √אהב in the qal stem connotes felicitous love and devotion, while √אהב in the piel stem connotes inconstant or infelicitous love (whoredom). The occurrence of √אהב in Lam. 1.2 anticipates its only recurrence in Lam. 1.19, in the piel stem, allowing them to be read against one another. The variance in meaning between stems is another example of antanaclasis and will be explored further in the exegesis of Lam. 1.19, below; See Ceresko, 'The Function of Antanaclasis', pp. 551-69.

22. 'To fail to show solidarity in such a situation—or even worse, to rejoice while a

the reader will discover that מכל־אהביה 'all those who love her' may not be neutral terminology, but at this point, it merely points out that her loved ones do not offer the role of comfort that she desires: she is abandoned and betrayed. Those allies who once were friends have turned on her (כל־רעיה בגדו בה). The language of 'friends' and 'enemies' carries political overtones, as it is a city that is being described through personification.

It is appropriate to begin to ask questions about the developing 'intention of the work'. The range of personifications in vv. 1-2 highlights the paratactic nature of this poetry. Feminine images abut one another without logical connection and provide different ways for the reader to identify with the city, specifically her multiform experience of trauma and pain.[23] Theologically, in these first two verses *no* imagery explicitly links the city to sin.[24] As a result, the reader is drawn towards compassion for this disgraced woman.

Interwoven into this portrait of pain, however, is a theological thread exposing the city's sin in Lam. 1.3-5. Lam. 1.3a-b depicts Judah going into exile from affliction (מעני) and hard servitude (ומרב עבדה), sitting among the nations, and finding no rest. The referent of ומרב עבדה is vague, leaving the reader guessing. Berlin rightly recognizes that this collocation occurs in Gen. 15.13 and Deut.. 26.6: in both occasions depicting miserable slavery in Egypt and thereby highlighting for the reader this kind of slavery is intended here.[25] Still, the clause remains difficult. One issue is the nature of the clauses מעני and ומרב. Dahood renders the phrase, 'Judah went into exile for her iniquity and the diversity of her worship', taking מעני from √עון, 'iniquity', rather than √ענה.[26] Deiana derives מעני from √ענה, 'to answer', and ומרב from √ריב, 'to strive': 'Judah went into exile for her arrogance, and for her rebellion went into slavery'.[27] While these are possible, it is just as plausible to derive the terms from √ענה and √רבב, respectively.

The *mêm* prepositions prefixed to מעני and ומרב may be either causal or conditional. Salters renders them causally: 'Judah has gone into exile *because* of affliction and hard servitude', or that Judah has voluntarily gone into exile because of harsh conditions at home.[28] Thus exile is the

[neighbour] was mourning—was to declare oneself an enemy rather than a covenantal partner' (Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance*, p. 94).

23. Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem', p. 169.

24. Explicit mention of sin arrives in Lam. 1.3-5, 7-9, 14a, 18a, 19a, 20b, 22b.

25. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 51. She also cites Exod. 1.11, where ענתו, 'to oppress', conjoins בסבלתם, 'with hard slavery', clearly depicting servitude, though not employing עבדה (Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 51).

26. Mitchell Dahood, 'New Readings in Lamentations', *Bib* 59 (1978), p. 175.

27. G. Deiana, 'Interpretazione die Lam. 1, 3a. 7a', *BeO* 23 (1981), pp. 101-103.

28. Robin Salters, 'Lamentations 1:3: Light from the History of Exegesis', in J.D. Martin and P.R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (JSOTSup, 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), pp. 73-89.

result of 'affliction and hard servitude' enacted in the region prior to exile. Gordis however argues the prefixed prepositions on both nouns are 'conditional', so that a condition or state of being is described: 'Judah has gone into exile, in a state of affliction and hard servitude'.[29] Berlin, following Hillers, believes the prepositions to be temporal, so that the situation being described is the way of life in Judah prior to the exile. Thus the colon reads: 'Judah has gone into exile after affliction and hard servitude'. That is, after a horrible period of trouble and turmoil in Judah, the nation was finally exiled by the Babylonians.[30] With this in view, Lam. 1.3a hails back to the city as a 'slave laborer', in Lam. 1.1c, and the plight of the Judahites has gone from bad to worse: from slavery to exile.[31]

The remainder of Lam. 1.3 alludes to Exodus and Deuteronomy 28, giving theological shape to the dire reversal.[32] Lam. 1.3b, 'She sits among the nations; she finds no resting place' (היא ישבה בגוים לא מצאה מנוח), recalls Deut. 28.65: 'And among those nations you will not find peace, and there will be no rest for the soles of your feet' (ובגוים ההם לא תרגיע ולא־יהיה מנוח לכף־רגלך). Other than Deut. 28.65, Lam. 1.3b marks the only instance of בגוים and מנוח being used in such close connection. Both verses describe, in part, God's curse against his people for disobedience, where they will be cast out of the land and exiled as a result of breaking the covenant.[33]

There is an inter-effectiveness between the language of 'exile' (גלתה) and 'affliction and hard servitude' (מעני ומרב עבדה) in Lam. 1.3. Exile may be punishment of former sinfulness in Judah that resulted in 'affliction and hard servitude' (taking the *mêm* causally). Thus exile fulfils the covenantal curse in Deut. 28.65 and suggests a (somewhat oblique) theological rationale as to why the disaster has occurred. Alternatively, exile and sitting among the nations can be seen as the benchmark of supreme suffering for Judah, where formerly 'affliction and hard servitude' were bad, but at least the people were in their own land (taking the *mêm* conditionally). In this way, syntax opens for the reader two possible theological worlds for the

29. Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations: A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary* (New York: KTAV, 1974), pp. 153-54.

30. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 45; Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp. 66-67. This interprets the colon in light of the serial trauma Judah experienced from 609 BCE to 587 BCE. After defeat by Egypt and Pharaoh Necho I in 609 BCE, Judah was caught in the middle of the struggle for Levantine supremacy between Egypt and Babylon; eventually Babylon won out after the battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE and subjugated Judah in 604 BCE as a vassal state. Judah experienced Babylonian deportations in 597 BCE and finally destruction in 587 BCE. See Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), pp. 36-133.

31. House, *Lamentations*, p. 332.

32. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 219-37.

33. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 52.

reader: one in which the disaster is explained as punishment for sin, the other culminates in a heightening of the present experience of pain and suffering, portraying an urgent need for divine deliverance. In this way, a theological openness persists in the poetry, where the theodic and anti-theodic poles highlighted in Chapter 2, above, *both* may be confirmed.

This theological openness is exploited further through wordplay that recalls and inverts the Exodus experience. The term המצרים, 'straits' (Lam. 1.3c) puns the term מצרים, 'Egypt'. The poet expresses the ironic difference between deliverance in Egypt and the present state of exile. The affliction and servitude Israel experienced in Egypt in former days (עני and √עבד) is in effect what is happening now, again, to Judah.[34] Dobbs-Allsopp argues that מעני ומרב עבדה reminds the reader of the Exodus narrative and are part of about a dozen allusions to the Egyptian captivity.[35] In Lam. 1.3c the term 'straits' (המצרים) puns 'Egypt' (מצרים) and alludes to the Exodus experience.[36] Instead of being delivered from a dire situation, they are overtaken (השיגוה) and forced into straits (בין המצרים). Whether psychological distress or real physical entrapment,[37] the clause בין המצרים Judah is in a difficult and exhausting situation: she finds no rest from her pursuers.[38]

The combination of pun and allusion in Lam. 1.3 creates a dark irony. Instead of being delivered from captivity, which is represented by the allusions to Exodus (עבדה מעני ומרב and בין המצרים), God's people now go *into* captivity (גלתה יהודה). The references to exile and the return to slavery leave the personified city sitting not among friends but rather בגוים 'among the nations' (Lam. 1.3b), a reversal of רבתי בגוים in Lam. 1.1b. Allusions to the exodus from Egypt bring to the reader an inverted 'backstory' that may highlight the consequences of rebellion against Yhwh and provides theological rationale for the city's degraded state. Yet the allusion simply may be understood as emphasising the present debasement that the city experiences.

b. *Lam. 1.4-7*

A cumulative portrait of a suffering people is expressed in Lam. 1.4-7, drawing once again from Deuteronomy 28. In the span of four verses, the reader encounters:

34. For מעני, see Exod. 3.7, 17; 4.31. For עבדה, see Exod. 1.14; 2.23; 5.11; 6.6.

35. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, pp. 16, 59.

36. כל־רדפיה השיגוה is similar to Exod. 14.9; 15.9: וירדף מצרים אחריהם וישיגו אותם, 'and Egypt pursued after them and overtook them' (Exod. 14.9); ארדף אשיג (Exod. 15.9).

37. For psychological interpretations, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 16; Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 39; Nötscher, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 2; for physical entrapment, see Otto Thenius, *Die Klagelieder* (KHAT; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1855), p. 128; Albert Gelin, *Jérémie, Les Lamentations, Baruch* (Paris: Cerf, 2nd edn, 1959), p. 252.

38. The root צרר carries psychological tenor in Lam. 1.20a. See discussion, below.

Lam. 1.4a: absent festal pilgrims (מבלי באי מועד)
Lam. 1.4b: groaning priests (כהניה נאנחים)
Lam. 1.4c: grieving maidens (בתולתיה נוגות)
Lam. 1.5c: little children walking as captives (עולליה הלכו שׁבי)
Lam. 1.6b: princes not finding pasture (שׂריה…לא־מצאו מרעה)
Lam. 1.7b: her people who fall in the hand of an enemy (בנפל עמה ביד צר)

The experience of the maidens (Lam. 1.4c) is too much for the personified city, as the observer describes her agony: והיא מר־לה, 'and it, it is bitter for her'. LXX, Aquila and Symmachus translate נוגות as αγομεναι, 'to thrust away', and it is proposed that נוגות should be emended to נהוגות, from √נהג, 'to drive away', as in the concept of exile.[39] This emendation is possible, but the normal derivation of נוגות (niphal participle from √יגה) is more likely.[40] The grief of the maidens leaves the city in bitter anguish.

Although it does not mention 'sons and daughters' (בנים ובנות), Lam. 1.5c is an eerie reminder of Deut. 28.41, 'sons and daughters […] walk as captives' (בנים ובנות…הלכו בשׁבי), and it probably alludes to it. The repetition of הלכו בשׁבי in both verses confirms the connection.[41] In these depictions the reader witnesses the most vulnerable (little children) as well as the best-off inhabitants (princes) in the city share the same fate: they are under the control and domination of others, specifically the צר and רודף. The parallel repetition of the verbal forms of הלך and לפני clauses in Lam. 1.5c and 1.6c reinforce this connection. The use of רדף in Lam. 1.6c recalls the description of the city's pursuers in Lam. 1.3c while צר recalls the synonymous term איבים in Lam. 1.2c; the repetition of terminology binds the poem together and gives the reader clues to make these connections in the poem.

Allusion to Deuteronomy 28 is exploited and carried further in Lam. 1.5. The verse apparently alludes to Deut. 28.44 and both affirm the Lord as the administrator of the city's fate. Moreover, it was punishment for sin. Lam. 1.5 reads:

> 'Her enemies have become her head; her enemies rest easy,
> For Yhwh tormented her on account of the greatness of her offences.
> Her little children walk as captives before an enemy'.

The observer portrays the city's reversal from a powerful entity to a vassal: 'Her enemies have become her head [לראשׁ]'. This reversal recalls Deut.

39. So Pham translates בתולתיה נוגות, 'her virgins have been led away' (Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, pp. 40, 44, 65-66). נהוגות occurs in 4QLam[a], as well.

40. √יגה is rare and occurs most prevalently in Lamentations: Lam. 1.4c, 1.5b, 12c; 3.32, 33. The niphal participle from √יגה does occur in one other instance: Zeph. 3.18: נוגי; see Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 67; Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 45, note e. Provan, too opts for this reading tentatively (*Lamentations*, p. 40).

41. Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 52-53. See also Lam. 1.18c.

28.44: הוא יהיה לראשׁ ואתה תהיה לזנב, 'He will become the head and you will become the tail'. In Deuteronomy 28 'Israel is told that obedience to God will lead to dominance over others and disobedience to their dominance over her'.[42] The curse is carried further: Jerusalem has in fact committed offences to the degree that Yhwh has הוגה 'tormented her' as a result of them (Lam. 1.5b).

The repetition of √יגה, here in the hiphil (הוגה) and in Lam. 1.4c in the niphal (נוגות), draws together the concepts of grief and the Lord's torment. Rather than other language describing the act of punishment, such as √פקד or √עון (Exod. 20.5: פקד עון אבת על־בנים), הוגה is charged with emotion. *God's* activity causes the grief that has been experienced. The word פִּשְׁעיה, 'her offences', denotes some sort of breach in the 'rule of justice with regard to a person or community' and the root generally refers to the offence itself rather than its judgment.[43] The noun פֶּשַׁע is often used in parallel with חטאה, 'sin',[44] yet פֶּשַׁע carries slightly different connotations and is often associated with breaches between individuals in domestic life and community, according to Knierim, and thereby connotes 'criminal activity' rather than 'sin'.[45] Both terms, however, indicate some form of deviation or rebellion from Yhwh's rule over the world.[46] Differently than the allusion to Exodus, the allusion to the curses of Deuteronomy raises significant theological questions about the cause of the disaster the city experiences.

The cumulative portrait of suffering and the allusions to Deuteronomy 28 lead the reader to supposed that Lam. 1.5 affirms a kind of theodicy. So Hunter says, '[The] poets of Lamentations […] seemed to have fully realized why the fall happened. Already in [Lam. 1.5], when the fall is attributed to the planning of [Yhwh] for the first time, it is immediately also linked to the sinning of the city and its people'.[47]

Yet Middlemas, Provan, Linafelt and Dobbs-Allsopp argue that because the explicit description of offences is not given, Lamentations demurs the notion that Jerusalem's sins warranted such punishment.[48] 'The 'multitude'

42. Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 40.

43. Horst Seebass and Helmer Ringgren, 'פָּשַׁע, *pāša'*', *TDOT* 12 (2003), p. 136.

44. As in Gen. 31.36, where Jacob asks Laban: מה־פִּשְׁעי מה חטאתי, 'what is my offence, what is my sin'? See also: Gen. 50.17: שׂא נא פשע אחיך וחטאתם; Exod. 34.7: עון ופשע וחטאה; Ps. 32.1: אשרי נשׂוי־פשׁע כסוי חטאה.

45. Rolf Knierim, *Die Hauptbegriffe für Sünde im Alten Testament* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1965), p. 141.

46. Štefan Porúbčan, *Sin in the Old Testament: A Soteriological Study* (Rome: Herder, 1963), p. 26.

47. Jannie Hunter, *Faces of a Lamenting City: The Development and Coherence of the Book of Lamentations* (BEATAJ, 39; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 143-47 (144).

48. Middlemas, *The Troubles of Templeless Judah*, pp. 210-16; Provan, *Lamenta-*

of Zion's 'transgressions' are acknowledged but never specified. We are never informed as to the precise nature of Zion's infractions. Moreover, their portrayal is flattened, spare and does not readily seize the reader's imagination'.[49] Lamentations presents pain to the deity, reaches out for life, and persuades the deity to act on the peoples' behalf.[50] This view eventuates into the 'anti-theodic' position. The offences depicted in Lam. 1.5b are only *rhetorical* a means of getting Yhwh to notice the pain that the city experiences, but they do not actually justify the deity's actions.

Still, it is likely that depiction of offences is intentionally *underdetermined* at this point to provide interpretative opportunity for the reader. On this understanding, underdetermined offence opens space for the reader to examine one's own culpability within the context of suffering. The text functions performatively rather than only descriptively. The reader is invited to be *involved* in making sense of the text and its theology rather than to be invited to explain precisely the nature of Jerusalem's offences. Psalms of lament often do this as well (e.g., Pss. 25.7; 51.1-4). In these instances, one could not argue that the psalmist is downplaying the issue of sin. It is better understood that the text is intentionally vague in reference to sin, so that the worshipper might reflect upon how specifically he or she has sinned, and then confess.[51] Or indistinct portrayal of sin may provide a sense of comprehensiveness, so the reader is invited to reflect upon the extent of the sin that warrants Yhwh's stern punishment. Both the performative and the latter descriptive explanations are at least as plausible as arguing that the oblique references to sin and sinfulness are a way of deconstructing their importance in the poetry of Lamentations.[52]

tions, pp. 20-25; Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, pp. 43-61; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, pp. 60-62.

49. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 61.

50. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, pp. 43-61.

51. See the discussion of H.A. Thomas, *'Until He Looks Down and Sees': The Message and Meaning of the Book of Lamentations* (GBS, 53; Cambridge, UK: Grove Books, 2009), p. 10.

52. Moreover, imprecision in description of offence occurs in at least one other text involving the usage of פֶּשַׁע in the OT, leaving the same two options for explanation. In Gen. 50.17, Joseph's brothers inform him that their father Jacob wanted him to forgive פֶּשַׁע אחיך וחטאתם, 'the offence of your brothers and their sin'. Whether or not Jacob actually spoke these words, it cannot be argued that the brothers do not specifically mention their offences because the narrator desires them to be downplayed. From the narrative account in Genesis, clearly they have committed the crime of kidnapping, but also they have broken kinship ties; they have perhaps even overstepped the authority of the patriarchal structure by selling someone into slavery without the father's knowledge (Knierim, *Hauptbegriffe*, p. 178). Indistinctness in reportage of crimes does not lead one to conclude that they are intended to be downplayed for the reader. Rather, the effect of this ambiguity in presentation is twofold: on the one hand, it calls the reader

Nonetheless, the variety of presentations of suffering among the people in Lam. 1.4-7 draws the reader's focus to the experience of Jerusalem's pain. The observer threads together an emotionally charged portrait of suffering, even by the most defenceless members of the city: 'her little children' (עוליה). These little ones are oppressed, in captivity. This horrific image, along with the plight of maidens, priests and princes, is brought into full view for the reader.

The first seven verses leave the reader ruminating upon the theology of the poem up to this point. The verses do portray a theology of suffering (as Westermann believes). And they do present clearly a kind of theodic thread by highlighting the sin of the city (as Hunter maintains). And they work to challenge Yhwh's activity (as Dobbs-Allsopp thinks). In fact, the poetry does not foreclose upon any of these possibilities even while it highlights pain and suffering.

Following the acrostic, the reader is forced forward in the poem to v. 6, the ו strophe. Here the reader faces contrast and reversal. Jerusalem's former 'glory' is gone and her once-stately princes are now pursued like weak and impotent stags running from before hunters. The reader is also introduced to the city's personification as 'Daughter of Zion' (בת־ציון). The translation of this title is an interpretative crux.

Dobbs-Allsopp thinks the construction of בת + geographical name (GN) as a locative genitive relationship on the basis of usage of a similar title given to ANE patron city-goddesses. Thus, בת־ציון, or בת + GN, should be translated 'Daughter of Zion' or 'Daughter of GN' meaning 'daughter that is from GN'.[53] This construct chain mirrors the epithets for the goddess in the *Hymn of Nanâ* typified by the construct chain *mārat* + GN[54] and the epithet for the lamenting goddess in *Tammuz Lament*.[55] The grammatical

to consider the various ways the brothers have indeed offended and sinned against their brother; at the same time, it provides a comprehensive way to describe the various infractions of the brothers against Joseph. See Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1994), p. 490. For an alternative view, see Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 379-80.

53. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Syntagma of *bat*', pp. 451-70.

54. E. Reiner, 'A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanâ', *JNES* 33 (1974), pp. 221-36.

55. W.G. Lambert, 'A Neo-Babylonian Tammuz Lament', *Studies in Literature from the Ancient Near East Dedicated to Samuel Noah Kramer* (AOS; ed. Jack M. Sasson; New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1984), pp. 211-15. Written in Akkadian and in Sumerian, the epithets of the goddess are as follows: *mārat uri*, 'daughter of Ur' (II. 6); [*mār*]*at* eridu, 'daughter of Eridu' (III.10); *mārat kullaba*, 'daughter of Kullab' (III.10), and [*mārat bāb*]*ili*, 'daughter of Babylon' (IX.27). In the Tammuz Lament, the goddess Ištar laments her city and is identified by the titles *mārat uruk*^{ki}, 'daughter of Ur' (1.3) *mārat akkade*^{ki}, 'daughter of Akkad' (1.3), *mārat larak*^{ki}, 'daughter of Larak' (1.4), and *mārat nippur*^{ki}, 'daughter of Nippur' (1.12). See Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Syntagma of *bat*', pp. 455-63.

similarities between these ANE forbears and בת־ציון are obvious. Dobbs-Allsopp goes further and connects this epithet usage to the weeping goddess motif prevalent in ANE city-laments as well as *balag* and *eršemma* compositions.[56] He says, '*bat* in the title *bat* GN, like the Akkadian *martu* in the title *mārat* GN, signifies a goddess as an inhabitant or citizen of a particular city or country'.[57] Thus Lamentations has adapted a city-lament convention within its own context.

The weaknesses of his argument lie in his linkage between the *mārat* + GN construction to the weeping goddess motif in city-laments and his reliance on geographical names. The *Hymn of Nanâ* is a hymn, not a city-lament and, other than the Tammuz Lament, the Mesopotamian city-laments do not use *mārat* + GN in their epithets for goddesses. Thus the linkage between the weeping goddess motif to the epithet is weak, and thereby it is likewise tenuous to make the same application to Lamentations. Moreover, what of other epithets that do not use a geographical name but still employ בת in them, such as 'daughter of my people' (בת־עמי)? This has precisely the same construction as בת + GN and occurs five times in Lamentations (Lam. 2.11; 3.48; 4.3, 6, 10). It is unlikely this epithet denotes a goddess that dwells among the people of Jerusalem. At any rate, there is no ANE parallel for this construction.[58]

The construction בת + noun may be rendered as a genitive of association and translated with such relationship in mind. So it is rendered 'Daughter Zion', or 'Dear Zion', meaning that X belongs to the class of בת, as Berlin maintains.[59] In this way, the place name is being metaphorically associated with the *nomen regens*, בת.[60] Further, following Stinespring and Kartveit, the term בת likely would be a term of endearment, as the term that Boaz uses for Ruth in Ruth 2.8: בתי. Berlin suggests that the construction could be rendered 'my maiden'. This is sensible when בת is associated with the name of a foreign place: 'Enthroned Maiden Dibon', ישבת בת־דיבון; Jer. 48.18a. For Ruth 2.8, it makes little sense for Boaz to call Ruth 'my daughter', or 'my maiden', but more plausibly 'my dear'.[61] In this translation, 'dear', rightly associates the construction with connotations as a term of endearment. בת־ציון then means 'Dear Zion' for Hillers, Berlin, Kartveit and Stinespring.[62]

56. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Syntagma of *bat*', pp. 455-63.
57. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Syntagma of *bat*', pp. 469-70.
58. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 12.
59. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 10.
60. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 11.
61. William R. Stinespring, 'Zion, Daughter of', *IDBSup*, p. 985.
62. Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp. 30-31; Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 12; Magnar Kartveit, 'Sions dotter', *Tidsskrift for Teologi of Kirke* 1-2 (2001), pp. 97-112; Stinespring, 'Zion, Daughter of', p. 985.

Yet Floyd has recently argued against this suggestion. Instead, he prefers a more traditional rendering of the construct chain 'Daughter of Zion'. He rightly notes the term is metaphorical through and through, so that the term בת comprises a metaphor of the inhabitants of the city of Zion. In this way, Zion is a metaphorical 'mother' in which she has a metaphorical and collective 'daughter', namely, the inhabitants/children of Zion. This plays out well in Lamentations when the phrase בת + 'place-name' is used. Floyd's view, which highlights the mother/daughter relationship between the city and people, is adopted here.[63] However, the weakness of his approach does *not* explain the phrase בת־עמי 'the daughter of my people'. This latter phrase seems more suited to the genitive of association: 'my dear people'.

In v. 6 the 'honour' (הדרה) which has gone from the Daughter of Zion is a reference to her princes, which are forced away from their mother, the city of Zion. They walk before a pursuer (לפני רודף), repeating √רדף from Lam. 1.3c and emphasising the desperate and powerless state in which they finds themselves. Contrast again comes to the fore in this verse. The princes' former emplacement in the mother-city of Zion is contrasted against the present displacement as a result of pursuers.

All of this drives the mother-city of Jerusalem to mull over her forlorn state, described by the observer in Lam. 1.7. The poetry exploits the dirge at this point, as Zion becomes again bereaved mother (as in Lam. 1.1), who through her memory depicts the effect her people's death has had on her. The verse is longer than the other verses in the poem—four lines instead of three—but there is no need to omit the second bicolon from the verse as BHS suggests as it is sensible without emendation.

Hendiadys in ימי עניה ומרודיה heightens the misery Jerusalem experiences, this time through memory. The text reads, 'Jerusalem calls to mind the days of her miserable homelessness' (זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודיה). The *waw* conjunction and repetition of the feminine suffixes on each *nomen rectum* clearly mark the hendiadys עניה ומרודיה.[64] ומרודיה derives from √רוד, 'to wander freely'.[65] This root is repeated with similar nuance in Lam. 3.19, and the entire hendiadys of Lam. 1.7a finds parallel in Is 58.7, 'miserable homeless ones' (ועניים ומרודים).

The point of this, and the verse at large, is to depict yet again the intense suffering the personified Jerusalem experiences. She witnesses מחמדיה, 'her precious things', falling under the control of the enemy. Although unspeci-

63. Michael H. Floyd, 'Welcome Back, Daughter of Zion'! *CBQ* 70 (2008), pp. 484-504.

64. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 325-26.

65. *HALOT*, s.v. 'מרוד'. There is no need to emend the text to מרוריה, 'her sorrows', as BHS; nor is it necessary to derive the term from √רדד, 'to beat down', as Meek has done (Theophile J. Meek, 'The Book of Lamentations', *IB*, vol. 6, p. 9).

fied, מחמדיה could be taken to be the 'children' of Jerusalem that have been taken by the enemies, which coheres with expressions of the city's inhabitants under enemy domination in Lam. 1.4-6. Moreover, Jerusalem's grief comes from the fact that she has no helper (ואין עזור לה, Lam. 1.7b), perhaps another description of her isolation in accordance with the various repetitions of אין־לה מנחם or related language (Lam. 1.2b, 1.7c, 1.9b, 1.16b, 1.17a, 1.21a), or in this verse a way of describing her inability to release her children from their captors. Either way, it depicts her powerlessness in the face of her present situation.

Interestingly, the displacement of her children (her princes in v. 6, her little children in v. 5, her absent festal pilgrims in v. 4, and the inhabitants of Judah in v. 3) now leaves the mother-city of Jerusalem miserable. Mother-Jerusalem is no longer a complete mother without her offspring. Her body as a 'home' cannot be called as such without her children, the former inhabitants now hunted and displaced. In her plight, again the activity of the enemies (צרים) comes to the fore. The text reads, 'the foes look on mockingly upon her downfall' (ראוה צרים שׂחקו על־משׁבתה). The two verbs here can be considered another example of hendiadys, though lacking a formal *waw* conjunction, as a result of the common nominal antecedent, צרים, that conjoins the verbal concept.[66] The derision of her enemies is an external source of pain that is matched only by internal grief over the loss of her children. She is wounded by the wounds of her people, but in her broken body, she provides testimony of her commitment to life.[67]

c. *Lam. 1.8-11*

The observer then turns again to the relationship between sin and the fate of the city. Lam. 1.8a reads, 'Jerusalem has sinned greatly, accordingly, she has become a wanderer' (חטא חטאה ירושׁלם על־כן לנידה היתה). Jerusalem's sin is unspecified, but the syntax indicates its seriousness by combining the noun with the verb, 'she sinned a sin' or 'she sinned greatly'.[68] This act of sinning is then directly linked to her plight as לנידה through the compound על־כן, linking the causal statement חטא חטאה ירושׁלם to the effect, לנידה היתה.[69] Yet what is it that Jerusalem has become, or put another way, what is the meaning of לנידה?

Admittedly, this is an unclear term, though its ambiguity exploits its theological evocativeness rather than a dearth of meaning. It is a homonym

66. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, p. 326.

67. Maier's *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion* also recognizes the imagery of Zion as mother, which complements the argument here.

68. GKC §117*p*; Ps. 14.5: פחדו פחד, 'they feared a fear', or 'they feared greatly'.

69. JM §170h. BHS suggests omitting על־כן because it impedes meter, yet as the *qinah* meter has been shown to be questionable there is no need for its omission.

of the term נדה, 'menstruant', that occurs in Lam. 1.17c.[70] One should not avoid this association. However Qumran (4QLam[a]) and later Masoretes derived the term from √נוד to differentiate the term from the noun נדה, 'menstruant'. √נוד either means 'to move or shake the head' in the sense of being an object of derision or mocking[71] or equally possible 'to wander'.[72] Berlin looks to Gen. 4.12, 14 (Cain's banishment) and translates לנידה 'as a wanderer'. Cain 'is the prototype of the exiled person, who was banished for defiling the land with spilled blood';[73] it follows that Jerusalem becomes a banished person, a 'wanderer' because she has 'sinned greatly' (חטא חטאה). LXX is middle ground with σάλον, 'object of shaking' or 'she became ashaken'.[74] Targum, and Rashi prefer the sense of 'wanderer' while Ibn Ezra favours 'derision'. All, however, translate on the basis of √נוד.[75] Lamentations Rabbah connects the two understandings of לנידה: ''Therefore she became filthy [נדה]': Condemned to wander [נוד]'.[76]

Previous references to exile (Lam. 1.3) coupled with 'her homelessness' (מרודיה) of Lam. 1.7a, reveal that Jerusalem 'as a wanderer' likely is the primary denotation of לנידה. For translation purposes, I follow the LXX, Targum, Rashi and Ibn Ezra, and Berlin to argue that לנידה derives from √נוד, and then follow Targum, Rashi and Berlin to translate the term 'as a wanderer'. As the term is contextualized with Lam. 1.8b, 'all those who honoured her (now) despise her, for they saw her nakedness' (כל־מכבדיה הזילוה כי־ראו ערותה), it is reasonable to conclude that overtones of derision from לנידה are evident, as Ibn Ezra and possibly LXX imply. The polyvalency of the term then, combines the shame and disgrace of Jerusalem's fall with the reality of the exile as a result of her sin.[77] Finally, because it

70. Albrektson believes that לנידה is a variant spelling, נדה 'menstruant', from the root √נדד, though he understands the term to mean 'filthy thing' or 'deplorable thing' (*Studies in the Text*, pp. 63-4). Syriac, Aquila and Symmachus all translate לנידה from √נדד.

71. Jer. 18.16: 'And he will shake with his head' (ויניד בראשו); Ps. 44.15: 'A shaking of the head (object of scorn) among the peoples' (מנוד־ראש בל־אמים).

72. *HALOT* and Ibn Ezra understand √נוד in both senses.

73. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 54.

74. See Peter J. Gentry, 'Lamentations', in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright; International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Inc., 2004), p. 8.

75. Targum Lamentations uses לטלטיל, 'as an exile' (Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, p. 29); For Rashi and Ibn Ezra, see Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 54.

76. Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, p. 151.

77. Robert Gordis argues that the employment of this polyvalent term is 'an instance of *talḥin*, a rhetorical figure where a word is consciously chosen because in addition to its dominant sense it carries another meaning on a secondary level' (*The Song of Songs and Lamentations*, p. 155).

is a homonym of נדה, the concept of menstruant is raised implicitly for the reader by the usage of נידה; this will be exploited in Lam. 1.17c. With לנידה, language is pushed to the limits to expose various interpretative possibilities for the reader: sin, pain, scorn and reversal.

Her wandering and scorn over nakedness causes her pain. Different levels of meaning were associated with the exposure of nakedness (כל־מכבדיה הזילוה כי־ראו ערותה) in the ancient world:

> 'Exposure of one's body, especially of the genitals, was to the ancient Israelites an almost immeasurable disgrace […] but in addition one may note that being stripped bare is also a curse connected with treaties and covenants […] Finally, one may note that the expression 'to see the nakedness' of a country is used (Gen. 42.9, 12) of spying out its weakness from a strategic point of view, and it is possible that a play on this sense of the term is also involved here'.[78]

Renkema adds that exposure of nakedness is a common theme in the OT particularly linked to Yhwh's judgment, as seen in Nah. 3.5 and Jer. 13.26.[79] Through divine judgment, the city experiences humiliation, which coupled with her status as a wanderer (see also Lam. 1.3a), leaves Jerusalem groaning, turning away (Lam. 1.8c). These actions indicate her distress stems from various sources: sin, disgrace, shame and patent suffering at the hands of enemies. The variety of sources of pain open theological questions: is the deity to be conceived of as the one who has judged sin, the one who witnesses the city's disgrace, or the one who *delivers* from oppression of enemies? Each of these theological horizons is opened in the poetry.

Lam. 1.9 exploits this theological openness. The observer describes the sin of the city and her downfall, only to have the city break forth in speech for the first time. This is one of three instances of Zion's direct address to Yhwh.[80] Lam. 1.9 reads,

> 'Her uncleanness is in her skirts; she did not remember her end.
> She has descended appallingly; there is no comforter for her.
> Look, O Yhwh (at) my affliction! For the enemy triumphs!'

Pham argues 'her uncleanness', טמאתה, speaks of the lower part of personified Zion's garments (which are associated with modesty) that have become soiled—rendered unclean—by sitting upon the ground in a mourning ceremony.[81] By contrast, because Provan and Kaiser understand לנידה within a

78. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 86.

79. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 134.

80. Lam. 1.9, 1.11 and 1.20 contain either a portion of or the entirety of the dual imperative 'look and consider', ראה והביטה, and the vocative address to Yhwh (only ראה in 1.9, 20) followed by a כי clause that describes the cause of the appeal. See Thomas, 'The Liturgical Function', pp. 137-47.

81. Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, p. 75.

cognitive field of disgust and derive the term from √נדה, 'to drive out', they argue that the uncleanness represented in Lam. 1.9a is menstrual blood and an object of revulsion.[82] The term נדה in its normal cultic usage designates a menstruant isolated from worship at the sanctuary; yet no moral onus is associated with the condition (Lev. 12.2, 5; 15.19-27). Nor is menstruation disgusting or filthy except 'in the minds of modern scholars'.[83] Nor is the נדה particularly isolated from social contact—even though her cultic impurity is contagious by contact, nonetheless she can associate with others.[84]

It is best to understand the first colon as metaphorically speaking of sexual impropriety. The clue to this understanding lies in the term בשׁוליה, 'in her skirt'. Although can refer to simply garments (cf. Isa. 6.1; Exod. 28.33; 39.24-26) Pham rightly notes that the skirt may refer to the lower part of a woman's garment and sometimes refers to modesty. This is especially true in the prophets. Jer. 13.22-26 depicts Jerusalem's rebellion against the Lord, in which the enemies expose her private parts (נגלו שׁוליך; Jer. 13.22). Here, too 'in her skirt' (בשׁוליה) is a euphemism for her private parts.[85] On my reading, בשׁוליה טמאתה connotes impurity neither from menstruation nor mourning. Rather, her impurity is a result of sexual impropriety. The uncleanness in her 'skirt' or private parts is the result of sexual dalliance with metaphorical lovers, or other nations. Using the same logic, Berlin states the city is 'not a menstruant; she is a whore'.[86] The theological tone fits well with the notions for טמאה in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, where moral impurity, notably whoredom, is cleansed through divine punishment.[87]

The notion of the city's dalliance with lovers immediately draws the reader back in a reflexive arc to reconsider Lam. 1.2b: 'there is no comforter from all those who love her' (אין לה מנחם מכל־אהביה). When read in the light of Lam. 1.8-9, the neutrality of the former reading is thrown in question and 'all those who love her' (כל־אהביה) of Lam. 1.2b takes on a different connotation. The city may be isolated specifically because she has

82. Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 44-45; Kaiser, *Klagelieder*, pp. 125-26.

83. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 58.

84. Tikva Frymer-Kensky: 'Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel', in Carol Meyers and M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honour of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 399-414.

85. *HALOT* 4: p. 1422, translates שׁוליך in Jer. 13.22 as 'your pubic area'.

86. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 55.

87. See Ezekiel 22–24; Jer. 13.22-26. Because of the admission of sin in Lam. 1.8 and the association of 'skirts' in Lam. 1.9, the text here specifically is reminiscent of Jer. 13.22, 26, where Jerusalem's enemies expose her privates (שׁוליך, 13.22) and rape her, and Yhwh pulls up her skirts (שׁוליך, 13.26) and exposes her shame, apparently the evidence of sexual impropriety. Both are a result of, or at least connected to, her guilt (עונך, 13.22) and her forgetfulness of the Lord (שׁכחת אותי, 13.25).

been a whore. The tension between the readings is not resolved and this is a prime instance where the text creates an 'ideal insomnia' for the reader so that the one is necessarily involved in attributing the theological understanding of the text. In this case, the poem exhibits an 'open' strategy for its readers.

Association with sexual impropriety is further emphasized through the second half of the colon 'she did not remember her end' (לא זכרה אחריתה). The repetition of the √זכר links back to Lam. 1.8a (זכרה ירושלם) but here it refers to her failure to remember what would happen to her for wantonness with other lovers. Mintz argues, 'Even in the anguish of her victimage Zion is not held to be entirely innocent of complicity in her fate […] The text here implies that in her glory Fair Zion conducted herself with easy virtue and 'gave no thought to her end' (1.8), so that what began as unwitting, voluntary promiscuity, suddenly turned into unwished for, forcible defilement'.[88] Wanton sexuality culminates in sexual violation.

Although her own whoredom is not denied, it is *their* actions, however, that she calls 'my affliction' (את־עניי).[89] Though complicit in her disaster, personified Jerusalem desires Yhwh to see her affliction from the enemy who has 'raped her': 'Look, O Yhwh, at my affliction, for an enemy triumphs' (ראה יהוה את־עניי כי הגדיל אויב)! The כי following ראה יהוה את־עניי links the clause directly as the motivation for her appeal to the deity indicates that Zion calls upon him to act as a deliverer or just judge, to 'see' the violence she experiences and save her from it. The appeal is characteristic of the lament rather than the dirge as the plea of suffering directly goes heavenward.[90] This appeal can be seen as an aspect of the communal lament after the *Feindklage*, 'the complaint against the enemy' has been offered.[91] Personified Jerusalem, however, has not offered a formal complaint against the enemy by listing his unjust activity; the reader must go back to the observer's complaints against the enemies' activity in Lam. 1.2-6 to discover how he has triumphed.

Theologically, in her appeal, personified Zion depicts the deity as a just judge who will hear her complaint against the enemy and act on her behalf—despite her sinfulness and whoredom. Speech attributing the disaster to her wantonness does not characterize the final emphasis in the ט strophe. Rather, Zion's speech depicts a focus upon the pain that enemies are causing the city. This final colon provides a theological nuance, shifting

88. Mintz, *Ḥurban*, p. 25.

89. In some instances in the OT, **עני** expressly depicts rape: Deut. 22.25-27; Judg. 19.24; 2 Sam. 13.12, 14, 22, 32; Ezek. 22.10-11. See also Lee, *The Singers*, p. 99 n. 79, pp. 109-10.

90. Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, pp. 176-81.

91. Westermann, *Der Psalter*, p. 35.

the focus of the strophe away from *sin* to *suffering* at the hands of enemies. Moreover, the shift in focus rhetorically alters the city's relationship to God. Instead of advancing theodicy, where Yhwh is presented as the one who has enacted judgment against sinful *Jerusalem* so that her punishment is justified, the final colon appeals to him as judge, who will act on her behalf and judge *her enemy*.

The observer teases out these theological threads further through depiction of rape in Lam. 1.10. Here he addresses Yhwh for the only time in the poem. Lam. 1.10a reads: ידו פרשׂ צר על כל־מחמדיה, 'an enemy spread his hand over all her precious things'; personified Jerusalem watches as גוים באו מקדשׁה, 'the nations penetrated her sanctuary' (Lam. 1:10b). The correspondence between body // temple is prominent, and personification particularly enables it.[92] In this correspondence, כל־מחמדיה 'all her precious things' likely denotes temple implements as well as either jewellery that adorns the female body or her body itself. The language of בוא, 'he entered into', evokes sexual abuse especially coupled with the term מקדשׁ, 'sanctuary':[93] the enemy has raped Jerusalem. In light of this violation, the observer addresses Yhwh directly. The final colon reads: 'whom you commanded, "they shall not enter into your assembly"' (אשׁר צויתה לא־יבאו בקהל לך). In concord with Jerusalem's complaint in Lam. 1.9c, the observer complains to Yhwh about the activity of the enemies, typical of the *Feindklage* in the communal lament.

His complaint reminds God of his former command, which was disobeyed by the enemy. This command may reflect Deut. 23.3-4, where Moabites and Ammonites are forbidden from entering (לא־יבא) the assembly of Yhwh (בקהל יהוה). Clearly, the logic of the association works beyond Moabites and Ammonites. The observer uses his former command to remind Yhwh of the impropriety of foreigners penetrating the assembly, not least because it violates his decree, but also because it has enabled the wanton rape of the city itself. This violation cannot go unnoticed, as the observer vividly and horribly depicts it to the deity. The complaint rhetorically sets the city as a victim and figures the deity as a judge who will act on her behalf rather than in judgment.

In the observer's concluding speech in Lam. 1.11 (with the exception of Lam. 1.17) repetition plays a key role that highlights the horror of the situation in Jerusalem. Lam. 1.11 reads,

> 'All her people are groaning from seeking bread.
> They give their precious things as food to sustain life.
> Look, O Yhwh, and consider! For I have become thoughtless!'

92. Mintz, *Ḥurban*, p. 25.
93. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 55.

The repetition of the verb אנח presents a panorama of suffering, with each verse offering a different scene: priests groan from a lack of worshippers in Lam. 1.4b; Jerusalem groans from personal anguish over her sin, reversal and disgrace in Lam. 1.8c; and in Lam. 1.11a, all of her people now groan from scarcity of food and likely starvation. Groaning and starvation are common motifs in city-laments.[94] Yet misery is heightened with with the repetition of מחמד. It is unlikely that the repeated term here refers to the temple implements mentioned in 1.10a. The enemy has 'spread his hand' over them and presumably carried them away. It is possible that מחמודיהם refers to the last available riches in the city, as Renkema believes, but the enemies likely carried these away as well.[95] 'Precious things' in Lam. 1.11a is better understood as the peoples' children, whom they give up in exchange for food to sustain their lives (להשׁיב נפשׁ).[96] The repetition of the language shows that people *and* riches are gone, carried away in exile. This heightens a sense of loss and suffering.

This final image of misery is juxtaposed against the startling appeal of personified Zion in Lam. 1.11c. Although constructed like the appeal in Lam. 1.9c,[97] the motivation in v. 11 does not refer to enemies, but rather her own actions. To understand this, one must understand זוללה, translated variously: 'like a beggar',[98] 'worthless',[99] 'despised', or 'thoughtless'. In the hiphil, √זלל means 'despised', as in Lam. 1.8, 'they despise her' (הזילוה). Yet √זלל in the qal means 'thoughtless' or 'rash', especially in case of gluttony as in Prov. 23.20: 'Do not be among tipplers of wine (drunkards) or among thoughtless eaters of food (gluttons)' (אל־תהי בסבאי־יין בזללי בשׂר למו).[100] Following the morphology of a geminate qal feminine participle, I derive זוללה from √זלל and translate it 'thoughtless' or 'thoughtless person'.[101] 'Thoughtlessness' connects with 1.9a, where the city 'did not remember her end'. Repetition of √זלל again reveals antanaclasis but it also creates a

94. For groaning (LU 231-4); for starvation (LU 227; LSU 297-313, 392-94).

95. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 149.

96. See also Hos. 9.6, where a child (מחמד) is given for money.

97. ראה יהוה את־עניי כי הגדיל אויב (Lam. 1.9c) // ראה יהוה והביטה כי הייתי זוללה (Lam. 1.11c). Westermann calls this structural parallelism (*Die Klagelieder*, p. 114 = *Lamentations*, p. 130).

98. Berlin and Hurowitz translate זוללה as 'beggar', from the Akkadian *zilulû*. See: Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 46, note m.; Avi Hurowitz, '*zllh* = Peddler/Tramp/Vagabond/Beggar: Lamentations 1:11 in Light of Akkadian *zilulû*', *VT* 59 (1999), pp. 542-45.

99. Bracke derives the term from √זול, 'worthless' (*Jeremiah 30–52 and Lamentations*, p. 192, pp. 196-97).

100. Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 56-57; Note the perceptive comments of M.V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31* (ABYC; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 294-95, 736, 822-23.

101. Thomas demonstrates the difficulties of the other translations and argues for 'thoughtless' or 'thoughtless person' in Thomas, 'The Meaning of *zōlēlâ*', pp. 489-98.

reflexive movement for the reader, enabling the reader to revisit Lam. 1.8 and *why* those who formerly honoured her now despise her: not only have they seen her nakedness, but she has forgotten Yhwh and consequences of breaking faith with him (as in Lam. 1.3b-c, 5).

Understood in this way, Zion's statement in Lam. 1.11c functions as a *confession* rather than a complaint. Seen from the co-texts of Lam. 1.3, 5, 8, 9 and Deuteronomy 28, the tone of personified Jerusalem's appeal to Yhwh has to do with her own sin, and thereby, to her own failure to remember the Lord and his word. Theologically if the appeal focuses upon the recognition of sin in disaster, then it implicates the city in the destruction and the suffering experienced. Such a perspective differs significantly from the complaint of Lam. 1.9c, whose focus remains on the enemies who are triumphing over shamed Jerusalem. Zion, in her own words, is not a victim at the hands of enemies but rather a cause in her own downfall (Lam. 1.11c). Zion's complaint does not function as a typical complaint but rather a confession for Yhwh to witness—that the city is aware of her complicity in disaster by virtue of her sin. This fits in line with the form of penitential prayer rather than a communal lament.[102]

Juxtaposed against one another, Lam. 1.9c and 11c invite the reader to make sense of them theologically in light of the whole poem. The reader's interpretative decision is significant. On the one hand, one can interpret the poem as an appeal against violating enemies, fashioning Zion as a victim in need of Yhwh as deliverer. On the other hand, the reader can read the poem as a confession to the deity, an acknowledgement of sin so that he will forgive her. Either choice has implications, though it is important to note that the logic of both Lam. 1.9c and 11c works only if personified Zion envisages the deity as present to hear them and respond in justice. As Miller maintains, '[The] fundamental ground of prayer, that is, the responsiveness of God to the cry of human need, is lifted up. All the description of the plight of the afflicted, wherever it occurs in prayer, assumes God's care and compassion, especially for those in distress'.[103] Thus whether complaining to Yhwh or confessing to him, in the poem up to this point, there is a tacit belief that upon hearing the appeal/confession, the deity will act out of gracious care.

d. *Lam. 1.12-16*

The confession of Lam. 1.11c is not followed by further description of sin but rather more of Jerusalem's suffering. Lam. 1.12 reads:

102. Morrow, *Protest Against God*, pp. 161-68; Bautch, *Developments in Genre*, pp. 1-6; Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, pp. 202-203.

103. Patrick D. Miller, 'Prayer as Persuasion: The Rhetoric and Intention of Prayer', *Word and World* 13/4 (1993), p. 359.

> ‘Is it nothing to you, all those who pass by the road: Consider and look!
> Is there any misery like my misery, that was inflicted on me,
> that Yhwh tormented me with on the day of his burning anger’.

The repetition of הביטו וראו ties Lam. 1.9, 11 and 12 together (and, as shall be demonstrated, Lam. 1.20). Yet Lam. 1.12a is neither a complaint nor a confession, but an appeal by personified Jerusalem to passers-by (כל־עברי דרך), for them to see and consider the suffering she undergoes. As nobody else has comforted her, anonymous passers-by may serve as potential comforters to salve her pain. The source of it, however, is not enemies or sin, but the grief Yhwh causes (הוגה) and the misery that he inflicts (עולל) upon her through his burning anger (ביום חרון אפו). Repetition of הוגה recalls Lam. 1.5b (הוגה), but there the observer acknowledges the Lord’s punitive action as just in light of the greatness of Jerusalem’s offences; here no such explicit justification is offered. Instead, she needs *comfort* from God’s activity.

As soon as the space is cleared for a focus upon the need for comfort, shifting the focus to pain, the third colon of the ל strophe introduces (or ‘blows up’ in Eco’s theory) encyclopaedic content having to do with ‘day of Yhwh’ language from the OT, effectively moving the reader towards further theological affirmation of the city’s sin. The day of Yhwh is the concept of a terrible day of judgment for sin, though with judgment also comes the hope for salvation. Zeph. 3.8 typifies the judgment aspect of the day of Yhwh which is particularly drawn upon in Lam. 1.12c: Yhwh’s burning anger (חרון אפי) will consume with fire (באשׁ) the land of Jerusalem, and indeed all the earth (Zeph. 3.8). Yet in Lam. 1.12c, his judgment is localized to Jerusalem and Judah, and this anticipates Lam. 2.1-11, a section that explicitly uses language of divine war to depict judgment against Judah and Jerusalem. Yhwh enacts war against his own people.

Lam. 1.13-15 presents Yhwh as a warrior. He sends fire from on high (שלח־אשׁ ממרום, Lam. 1.13a), he spreads a net of capture (פרשׂ רשׁת לרגלי, Lam. 1.13b),[104] and he gives personified Jerusalem over to captors (‘the Lord has given me into the hands of those against whom I am unable to stand’, Lam. 1.14c). God sending down fire is reminiscent of Canaanite and Babylonian iconography depicting the deity with lightning in his hand.[105] Yet different to these ANE depictions, which show the deity using the lightning (fire) in a ‘passive’ sense,[106] Yhwh has used the fire to destroy Jerusalem in judgment: the fire has descended into her bones.

104. For a discussion of the net being an implement of divine war, see Henning Fredriksson, *Jahwe als Krieger* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1945), pp. 94-101.

105. Klingbiel, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, pp. 252-57.

106. Klingbiel concludes: ‘the meteorological weapon is not used to attack an enemy, but rather held in an emblematic manner’ (*Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, p. 257).

Lam. 1.13b exploits the use of פרשׂ once again to reinforce violence against Zion. An enemy 'spreads' his hand upon Zion's precious things, and Yhwh 'spreads' a net for her feet. In both instances, Zions suffering is a result of something done to her by others: an 'enemy' and Yhwh. Her response will come in v. 17, when she 'spreads' out her hands, likely in prayer.

With the repetition of פשׁע, Lam. 1.14a-b creates for the reader a reflexive arc back to Lam. 1.5b, tying the two verses theologically. This verse has long been an interpretative crux:

> 'The yoke of my offences was bound;
> In his hand it was fastened together.
> They ascended upon my neck; he caused my strength to fail'.

נשׂקד is difficult because it is a *hapax legomenon*; BHS proposes emending נשׂקד to נשׁקד, from √שׁקד, 'to be watchful'. This is how the LXX reads the verb, and also reads the noun על, 'yoke', as a preposition על, 'over'. It retains פשׁעי, 'my sins', with τα ασεβηματα μου, 'my impious deeds'. Wiesmann follows LXX while Hillers follows the LXX yet emends פשׁעי to פשׁעי, 'my steps'.[107] Although reasonable, these emendations make a difficult reading all the more difficult.

Ewald's solution is better. He looks to the parallel term ישׂתרגו, 'they were fastened together', to help determine the semantics of נשׂקד and argues that it is probably a technical term for harnessing a yoke onto an animal, hence his translation 'O wie ist durch seine hand—meiner strafen joch geschirrt!'[108] Ewald's explanation has been adopted by Albrektson, Renkema and House,[109] and is preferred here.

This reading is difficult syntactically, however because the verbal clauses בידו ישׂתרגו and עלו על־צוארי both demand a plural antecedent. על פשׁעי does not fit precisely as it is a singular yoke constituted of Jerusalem's offences, though such disparity in agreement is not unheard of in poetic syntax. For clarity the verbs can be rendered 'it was bound' and 'it ascended', referring to the yoke made up of Jerusalem's sins. Dahood translates עלו as an infinitive absolute of the Phoenecian √*ʿālô*, 'to mount', and translates the clause, 'The yoke mounted my neck'.[110] This derivation from Phonecian however is unnecessary as עלו remains sensible as it stands. The offences that have been fastened together into a yoke and bound by Yhwh's hand have then ascended upon her neck, leaving her without strength. The yoke imagery

107. Wiesmann, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 115; Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 73.

108. Heinrich Ewald, *Die Dichter des alten Bundes: Die Psalmen und Die Klagelieder* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1866), p. 329.

109. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 74; Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 164; House, *Lamentations*, p. 335.

110. Dahood, 'New Readings in Lamentations', p. 178.

refers to slavery, as is often the case in the OT: Gen. 27.40; Deut. 28.48; Jer. 27.8, 11, 12.

Understood in terms of theology, one finds in personified Jerusalem's speech that Yhwh's actions as well as her offences are linked together to comprise the stuff of her suffering. The Lord's actions are clear: in his hand her yoke of slavery was fastened, he has caused her strength to fail, and has given her over into the hands of those from whom she cannot stand (נתנני אדני בידי לא אוכל קום). Renkema argues that in general when the term אדני is employed in Lamentations, 'we are left either with the context of his oppression in 1.5, 9 […] or it is said in general terms that he executes judgment'.[111] And, in light of the Lord's activity that personified Jerusalem describes in the following verses, piling up people (Lam. 1.15a) and treading people as in a wine press (Lam. 1.15c), Renkema's observation is cogent. Yet the judgment that Yhwh enacts, it cannot be gainsaid, comes as a direct result of Jerusalem's offences. The repetition of פּשׁע draws the reader back to its only other occurrence to this point, in Lam. 1.5b, where the observer has announced divine judgment as a direct result of Jerusalem's offences. Judgment and suffering go hand in hand in Lam. 1.14: both the pain that is a result of God's action and the suffering that is a result of the acknowledgment of her offences (פּשׁעי).

Divine judgment is described further by personified Jerusalem in Lam. 1.15, where traditional harvest language is gruesomely transformed into descriptions of divine warfare against her. In the dirge, this would amount to a description of the manner of death that the deceased endured. The text reads:

> 'The Lord rejected all of my young men in my midst;
> He proclaimed over me a festal time to break my young men;
> (Like) a winepress the Lord trod dear maiden Judah'.

Yhwh pronounces over her a 'festal day'. Yet instead of celebration of harvest or a worship service, normal connotations with מועד,[112] the celebration is the breaking of Jerusalem's young men. They are rejected by God and broken by him. Renkema argues that the language here may connote the act of threshing, as in crushing or threshing corn, and carries harvest imagery forward,[113] although this understanding is not crucial to grasp that the Lord has pronounced judgment over Jerusalem's people. Harvest imagery is taken over in the third colon where instead of trampling grapes for their juice to make wine, the Lord 'trod' the maiden daughter of Judah like a winepress.

111. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 167.
112. Klaus Koch, 'מוֹעֵד, *môʿēd*', *TDOT* 8 (1997), pp. 169-71.
113. Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 169-70.

This suffering leaves Jerusalem weeping constantly. The text reads:

> 'On account of these I weep, my eye constantly descending with water.
> For far from me is a comforter, the one who restores my life.
> My children have become desolate, for the enemy is superior'.

Personified Jerusalem weeps over the suffering she endures and weeps 'constantly'.[114] Her present suffering remains unremitting. Yet the cause of her suffering is unclear. Jerusalem only says that it is על-אלה, 'on account of these things', that she weeps. Lee isolates the antecedent to Yhwh's activity in Lam. 1.13-15, but there is no reason to isolate the cause of her suffering only to Yhwh's activity, though certainly it is one of the causes. The repetition of √בכה draws the reader back to the only other instance of this term (Lam. 1.2), where the city weeps bitterly over her reversal from honour to degradation, betrayal and isolation from רעיה, 'all her friends'. In light of the repetition and in light of the variety of sufferings she mentions in her speech, it is more sensible to broaden the referent of על-אלה as broadly as possible, to the sufferings the observer mentions as well as the entire account she has given up to this point, in Lam. 1.11c-15. This effectively creates a range of potential options for the reader to activate when interpreting the cause of Jersualem's pain, affirming an 'open' textual strategy for the model reader of Lamentations 1.

One must still deal with the כי that introduces Lam. 1.16b, which could be understood in a causal or an evidential sense. If causal, then the reason for Jerusalem's act of ceaseless weeping is demonstrated in Lam. 1.16b; if evidential, then Lam. 1.16b presents evidence or motivation that lies behind why she has said that she weeps constantly.[115] Either way, the second colon in the verse is logically connected to the first. In Lam. 1.16b, personified Jerusalem mentions for the first time a theme that the observer introduced in Lam. 1.2b, 7c, 9b: the lack of a מנחם, 'comforter'. Differently than the lack of comforters described by the observer, whether friends or loved ones,

114. I treat the duplication of the term עיני as reflective of intentional and constant action (cf. IBHS 7.2.3c, #13; 12.5a.). Albrektson (*Studies in the Text and Theology*) follows much German scholarship as well as BHS in deleting the second עיני as dittography: Thenius, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 136; Nötscher, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 5; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, p. 23; Kaiser, *Klagelieder*, p. 116; Boecker, *Klagelieder*, p. 21; and Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 101-102 = *Lamentations*, p. 113. Although plausible, this is unnecessary. Dahood's emendation to עני, 'my sorrow', is likewise gratuitous (Dahood, 'New Readings in Lamentations', pp. 178-79). The duplication of עיני suggests poetic license that evokes 'a certain pathos' (Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 52), reflects deep pain (Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, p. 45), and implies a constancy to the weeping, as in Deut. 2.27: 'I will constantly stay on the main road (בדרך בדרך אלך), and will not turn to the right or left'.

115. GBHS §4.3.4(a), (b).

the מנחם of whom Zion speaks is Yhwh himself. The apposition משׁיב נפשׁי, 'the one who restores my life', likely alludes to Ps. 23:3, where the Psalmist says about the deity, 'He restores my life' (נפשׁי ישׁובב).[116] If this is the case, then personified Jerusalem has connected her weeping to divine absence.

Moreover, the repetition of נפשׁ + שׁוב moves the reader reflexively to Lam. 1.11b. There the people give their 'precious things' (children) as food 'to restore life' (להשׁיב נפשׁ). The literary connection creates richness and multilayered levels of meaning. Yhwh's absence as a comforter, the life-restorer, creates a situation that causes the people to give up their 'precious things' to 'restore life'. This, too, causes Jerusalem to weep. This connection between verses is fecund, especially considering the way Jerusalem links her weeping to the Lord's distance from her through the כי clause. Thus in 1.16b, personified Jerusalem attributes her suffering, her cause for weeping, to divine distance (רחק) and lack of comfort.

Yet immediately her attribution creates an interpretative challenge for the reader. What theology does she present? Reading the text linearly, the reader may interpret על־אלה from what has preceded in her speech, centering upon the Lord's violent judgment against her, which has been part and partial to her מכאוב, 'misery' (Lam. 1.12b), and at least part of the cause of her weeping (על־אלה עני בוכה, Lam. 1.16a). Yet when faced with Lam. 1.16b, the cause of her weeping has shifted, to divine absence. The reader is left in an interpretative quandary: does she lament divine *absence* or his violent *presence*?

The poetry blurs the lines of theology and opens two interpretative horizons for the reader. The reader may interpret the poem as theologically positive towards Yhwh, that his role of comforter or absence thereof, is a source of pain for Jerusalem in light of Jerusalem's miserable state. Alternatively, the reader may interpret the poem as theologically problematic; Yhwh's role as divine warrior, meting out judgment for sin, creates the problem of suffering and pain, especially for the city's inhabitants, whom he heaps up, crushes and treads. Neither theological nor interpretative horizon is foreclosed upon.

In light of this interpretative aporia, the issue of text pragmatics becomes important. For Eco, a text that leaves interpretative options available to the reader, justifiable on the basis of the 'intention of the work', is to be identified as *open* rather than *closed*. In this case, the reader is left with (at least) two interpretative possibilities: (1) the poetry laments divine presence, in that he has caused in her a bloody harvest in which Zion's people have been heaped up, crushed, and trampled, or (2) the poetry laments divine absence, in that the deity has left and is, in effect, *deus absconditus*, leaves the city dead, without life, and open to violation from enemies (Lam. 1.9c, 16c).[117]

116. Yhwh is also described as the one who restores life (למשׁיב נפשׁ) in Ruth 4.15.

117. This openness remains valid whether one reads Lam. 1.16 following the acrostic

e. *Lam. 1.17*

In the פ strophe, the observer breaks in for an interlude. This interruption is evidenced by the shift in person. Namely, Zion is spoken of by the observer, who says:

> 'Zion spreads out her hands; there is no comforter for her
> Yhwh commanded for Jacob, those surrounding him (become) his foes.
> Jerusalem has become as a *niddâ* in their midst'.

Different to the enemy, who spread (פרשׂ) his hand over Zion's precious things (Lam. 1.10a) or to Yhwh, who spread (פרשׂ) a net for her feet, Zion spreads out (פרשׂה) her hands in vain for a comforter. The repetition of פרשׂ from vv. 10 and 13 shows that Zion's actions are tied to violence against her. She 'spreads out' her hands for comfort, but there is no help. The motif of 'no comfort' is reinforced with the repetition of אין מנחם לה, binding this verse to the previous verse (כי־רחק ממני מנחם), as well as Lam. 1.2b, 7c, and 9b. God has turned against her, and this divine turn leaves Zion isolated. Further, Zion's former political allies, or 'friends' from Lam. 1.2c (כל־רעיה בגדו בה), have become a 'foe' (v. 17). All this is from the command of God.

The פ strophe reveals both artistry and theological density in the poem, especially highlighted through the term '*niddâ*' (לנדה). Scholars translate it variously as 'unclean thing', 'filthy thing', 'chose impure',[118] 'Abscheu',[119] 'Ekel',[120] 'Greuel',[121] 'menstrual rag' and 'object of loathing'. It is not clear why scholars translate it as something filthy, disgusting, or abhorrent. In Israelite cultic law, the נדה is barred from worship at the sanctuary, but this is due to cultic purity regulations rather than a supposition that a נדה is an

arrangement in the MT or 4QLam[a]. The MT of Lam. 1.16 transposes the normal פ–ע order while 4QLam[a], however, sets v. 17 before v. 16 so that פ precedes ע, following the normal alphabetic sequence. If in its sequence 4QLam[a] reads without the openness displayed in the MT, then one may prefer emendation of the MT on the basis of textual corruption. But this is not the case. Reading with 4QLam[a], the cries of personified Jerusalem (4QLam[a], v.17; MT, v. 16) are preceded by an affirmation of her suffering and isolation (4QLam[a], v. 16a), Yhwh's command for punishment (4QLam[a], v. 16b), and a description of Jerusalem as an impure woman (4QLam[a], v. 16c). על־אלה, 'these things', in 4QLam[a], v. 17a connotes a range of suffering, including Yhwh's punishment (as in the MT). Moreover, the phrase [אין] מנחם לה (4QLam[a], v. 16a) is coupled with [נחם]מ [ממני] כיא רחק (4QLam[a], v. 17b), affirming that the deity's distance is a problem and that his presence is needed (as in the MT). See Cross, 'Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse', pp. 134-35.

118. Gelin, *Jérémie, Les Lamentations, Baruch*, p. 256.

119. Wieser, *Klagelieder*, p. 307.

120. Otto Plöger, *Die fünf Megilloth* (HZAT, 18; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1969), p. 134.

121. Thenius, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 136.

object of disgust ('Ekel' or 'Greuel').[122] Thus while 'unclean thing' may fit its primary denotation, the other translations remain questionable, especially 'Greuel', 'Ekel', or 'Abscheu'. Still, Lam. 1.17c treats the term differently so that the nations consider Jerusalem in a manner divergent than their former view of her.

The logic that lies behind לנדה in Lam. 1.17cis understood when compared with Lev 18.19: 'Do not approach a woman in her menstrual impurity; do not draw near to uncover her nakedness' (ואל־אשה בנדת טמאתה לא תקרב לגלות ערותה). As a cognitive filter for the verse, former allies—now enemies by Yhwh's decree (צוה יהוה, Lam. 1.17b)—become like (perhaps unwitting) adherents of Torah (specifically the decree of Lev 18.19) so that they do not approach the נדה (Jerusalem) and stay away from her—though in their midst, Jerusalem is isolated from them. This reading is strengthened through the pun of לנדה (Lam. 1.17c) on לנידה (Lam. 1.8a).

לנדה, 'as a *niddâ*', puns לנידה, 'as a wanderer' (Lam. 1.8a). The pun recalls the state of wanderer or exile that is a result of sin demonstrated in the observer's speech in Lam. 1.8a. It is significant that 1.8b speaks of those who formerly honoured Jerusalem now despise her because they saw her nakedness (ערותה), tying Lev 18.19 to both Lam. 1.8 and 1.17. Jerusalem becomes as a wanderer (לנידה) as a result of her sinfulness (Lam. 1.8a); in Lam. 1.17 Jerusalem is equated to a woman (לנדה) who is isolated and rejected by the nations surrounding her (צריו סביביו/היתה ירושלם לנדה ביניהם). Where normally associated with cultic impurity only, לנדה takes on a metaphorical connotation of moral impurity as a result of blatant sinfulness, making her, in effect לנידה 'as a wanderer'. Moral impurity is reflected in a number of places in the Pentateuch, two of which are Lev. 18.24-28 and Num. 35.33-34, and elsewhere in Ps. 106.34-41; Ezek. 22.1-4; 36.18; Jer. 2.23; 3.1. In the case of moral impurity, sin attaches to the individual and thus contaminates the land in which the individual lives. As a result, the land 'vomits' out its inhabitants in exile (Lev 18.25, 28; 20.22).

If this is the case, לנדה retrospectively puns לנידה and ties the exile to Jerusalem's sinfulness. The normal denotation of נדה is expanded in the pun and draws together the notion of נידה, a morally impure wanderer or exile. The poetic and theological interplay exposes Jerusalem as cultically *and* morally impure: 'Jerusalem has become like a *niddâ* in their midst'.[123] The linkage of moral and cultic impurity, exile and נדה only arises by working through the effective pun between vv. 8 and 17.[124]

122. Leviticus 11–15. See Frymer-Kensky, 'Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel', pp. 399-414.

123. The present study does not emend ביניהם, 'in their midst' to בעיניהם, 'in their eyes'; the clause is sensible as it stands.

124. This pun may be the origin of the moral impurity that is associated with נדה in

f. *Lam. 1.18-22*

After the observer's brief interlude, personified Zion resumes her speech in Lam. 1.18, which continues to the end of the chapter. She confirms 'Yhwh, he is right, for I have rebelled against his mouth' (צדיק הוא יהוה כי פיהו מריתי). Divine authority over her punishment cannot be discounted and thereby her statement should be understood as a confession and affirmation of her previous admissions of offence against God (Lam. 1.11c, 14a) as well as the observer's statements of her sin (Lam. 1.5b, 8a, 9a). This understanding contrasts against Lee, who reads it as protest speech. She translates מריתי in a stative or performative sense (it is unclear) and כי as an emphatic adversative (but!). Zion *ironically* declares Yhwh as 'innocent' but כי signals her continued rebellion against him: 'Innocent is Yhwh, *but* I rebel against his speech!'[125] The existence of an emphatic adversative כי is tenuous. The preposition can be used adversatively, however in this usage, the preposition either is coupled with אם or preceded by a negative clause (לא + verb), neither of which is the case here.[126] A regular function is asseverative ('indeed'), but it is unlikely that personified Jerusalem would be seen confidently revelling in her own rebellion against God. So the כי is best understood as either causal or evidential.[127] Moreover treating מריתי as stative or performative is doubtful. If stative, then Zion *continuously* rebels against God: 'I am rebelling'. If performative, then her speech is actually a speech-act of rebellion: 'by speaking about Yhwh's innocence, I am acting out in rebellion against him'. Either way, nowhere in the OT is √מרה used to describe positive activity of a human agent rebelling against the deity, whether his law or his judgment. Rather מריתי is best understood as focusing upon completed activity of rebellion against the Lord, likely against his command (פיהו, 'his mouth'), which has come under the judgment of Yhwh. Zion confesses this fact.

Immediately after this confession, Zion shifts the focus of her speech towards others as she did in Lam. 1.12. The difference here is that she does not address כל־עברי דרך 'all those who pass by the road'. Instead she addresses כל־עמים, 'all peoples', emphasising the universal scope of her appeal. In Lam. 1.18b, she makes an entreaty for the nations to hear (שמעו) and see (וראו) her misery (מכאוב). The reader makes a reflexive move to Lam. 1.12 where identical language is used: וראו and מכאובי. In v. 18b, she wants others to see that her 'maidens and young men walk in captivity' (בתולתי ובחורי הלכו בשבי). The repetition of הלכו and שבי recalls Lam. 1.5c,

exilic and post-exilic literature (Ezek. 36.17 and Ezra 9.11) but this ultimately moves beyond the discussion at hand.

125. Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 123-24.

126. GKC §163*a*; GBHS §4.3.4.

127. GBHS §4.3.4.(a), (b).

where Zion's little children walk as captives (עולליה הלכו שבי) before a foe. The plight of her inhabitants is reinforced through the iteration of language, something that carries through in the ק strophe.

Lam. 1.19 reveals that she has called to her 'lovers' for help, who have deserted her. The text reads:

> 'I called to my lovers; they deserted me.
> My priests and elders died in the city,
> As often as they sought food to restore their lives'.

The repetition of √אהב reminds the reader of Lam. 1.2, where there was no comforter for the city from all those who love her (מכל־אהביה). Yet there, where אהביה reads innocuously, the reader has come to realize that the 'lovers' are evidence of Jerusalam's whoredom, clearly described in Lam. 1.7-8. Jerusalem having 'lovers' is well attested in terms of marriage imagery between Yhwh and Jerusalem (Jer 3.7, 8, 11, 12). Thus מכל־אהביה 'all those who love her' from Lam. 1.2 are re-read in light of her lovers in Lam. 1.19. Although the original pathos the reader experiences for the city does not diminish, a crucial cause of her suffering becomes somewhat clearer. Jerusalem, in her own words, promotes a theology that recognizes her own sinfulness (whoredom) as a contributing factor to her isolation and abandonment.

Yet as quickly as this theology is raised, the second and third cola highlight the burden Zion feels for her people. 'As often as' the priests and elders went out for food to restore their lives (וישיבו את־נפשם), they died.[128] This phrase links back to Lam. 1.11. There, Jerusalem's inhabitants give their children up for food 'to restore life' (להשיב נפש). The scarcity of food, death and deprivation highlights the burden personified Jerusalem feels for her suffering people, despite the fact that the Lord was right in his punishment. Still, this is not a univocal affirmation of God's action, because between the repetition of the notion of 'restoring life' is Lam. 1.16, in which God's distance was emphasized along with the notion that it is God who could 'restore' (בוש) Jerusalem's 'life/soul' (נפש). Thus the poetry affirms

128. I render כי in the third colon temporally (IBHS 38.7.a, #2; JM §166m). Kraus, however, abandons the MT as nonsensical and follows the LXX (και ουχ ευρον, 'and found nothing') so that he translates, 'Ja, sie suchten nach Speise und "fanden nichts"' (Kraus, *Klagelieder*, p. 22). However, he fails to recognize the enjambment between the second and third cola. The poet abuts גועו in the second colon and כי־בקשו in the third to reveal the linkage between the two verbal ideas. The subordinating particle כי conjoins the two verbs poetically and thus the tendency of end-stopping between the second and third cola desists. In this way, the verbal concepts of 'dying' and 'seeking' conjoin temporally to entail the logic of the second and third cola: 'The priests and elders died in the city as often as they sought food to restore life'. In this way, enjambment poetically links the logic of the verse. The effect of this enjambment reflects on the endless cycle of death which personified Jerusalem experiences.

God's action while simultaneously calling upon God to do what he *has not* done, to restore Zion's life and the lives of her children. They cannot revive themselves.

In light of her (and her people's) suffering, Zion makes her final appeal and complaint to the deity. She says in Lam. 1.20:

> 'Look, O Yhwh, at my distress! My innards burn,
> my heart turns inside me, for I have rebelled exceedingly.
> Outside, the knife kills; in the house (inside) a place of death'.

This appeal is structurally similar to the other appeals in the poem. I take כי in Lam. 1.20a to be perceptual,[129] attempting to garner God's attention at her own inward anxiety, which is heightened through idiom ('my innards burn, my heart turns inside me') that highlights internal struggle. The second כי is causal, revealing what creates this anxiety: 'for I have rebelled exceedingly' (כי מרו מריתי).[130] The repetition of מריתי links back to Lam. 1.18b, confirming her rebellion yet again. צר draws the reader back to המצרים from of Lam. 1.3c; there the external forces push her into 'straits' while here it is internal distress that leaves her crying out to the deity. Her rebellion has created anxiety and pain that personified Jerusalem wants Yhwh to notice. Different to Lam. 1.9c, where her complaint centres upon enemies, and Lam. 1.11c, where her complaint centres upon her own thoughtless behaviour, *Lam. 1.20a complains to Yhwh about her anxiety that has come about as a result of her rebellion*. This, too, can be understood as a confession of sinfulness (like Lam. 1.18a), garnering the deity's attention so that he might reverse the situation of death and killing inside and outside her walls.

Dobbs-Allsopp also notes the term צר, 'distress', repeats המצרים (Lam. 1.3c) and puns צר, 'enemy', used throughout the poem.[131] The pun enables the reader to recognize the enemy's culpability for the distress Jerusalem experiences.[132] On this understanding, even an admission of offence against Yhwh is tempered with a reference back to the wrongdoing of enemies, which creates distress for personified Jerusalem. Rather than foreclosing upon either interpretative horizon, the poetry opens both of the sources of distress for the reader.

129. GBHS §4.3.4.(j).

130. Scholars rendering כי asseveratively (Renkema, Seow, Berlin) suppose the phrase כי־צר־לי is formally parallel to כי־מרו מריתי. This supposition is accurate but this parallelism does not require כי to be asseverative in order for the cola to cohere. The first colon employs a perceptual כי, with the poet pleading for God to perceive the city's anxiety and the כי in the second colon functions causally, explaining the source of the anxiety [GBHS §4.3.4.(a)]. Seow argues that מרו מריתי derives from √מרר rather than √מרה. Although possible, this emendation is not necessary. See C.L. Seow, 'A Textual Note on Lamentations 1.20', *CBQ* 47 (1985), pp. 416-19.

131. Lam. 1.5a, c, 7c-d, 10a, 17b.

132. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 72.

The verse concludes with the effects of rebellion, indicated by the merismus of 'outside' and 'inside'. Merismus represents totality by dividing it into two halves,[133] and this is how the outside/inside relationship should be understood here, a motif that occurs also in the Lament over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur: 'Ur—inside it is death, outside it is death; inside we die of famine, outside we are killed by the weapons of the Elamites' (LSU, 402-404).[134] Despite the similarities to the city-lament, the phrase 'Outside the sword bereaves, inside (is) death' in Lam. 1.20c is strikingly similar to Deut 32.25: 'Outside the sword shall bereave, and in the chamber, terror', which Albrektson marks as an allusion.[135] This is suggestive and indicates that the suffering Zion experiences is in fact punishment for covenantal breach, advancing a theodicy that works alongside the anti-theodic thread that the poem promulgates through its emphasis upon suffering and the ambiguous portrayal of the divine. No safe place exists in Jerusalem. Everywhere is death, and Zion as mother pleads to Yhwh for respite for her children.

The final verses of the chapter reinforce the themes of suffering, sin, pain, and anguish, and personified Jerusalem directs her appeal heavenward. I take Lam. 1.21-22 as personified Jerusalem's prayer to God. In the verses, he is figured as a trustworthy deity, the divine judge, who will hear her plea and respond on her behalf. She focuses particularly upon the actions of enemies (rather than sin), who have heard her suffering and rejoiced over her misfortune, typical of a *Feindklage* in the communal lament.[136] As Lam. 1.21a begins, it is unclear exactly to whom personified Jerusalem speaks. She says:

> 'They heard that I was groaning: 'There is no comforter for me!'
> All my enemies heard, rejoiced over my disaster. Indeed, you have done (it).
> You brought on the day you had proclaimed; but may they be like me!'

Rather than either reading שמעו as a plural imperative (with LXX) or as a singular imperative (with the Peshiṭta), I read this verb as it stands in the MT. personified Jerusalem is describing the activity of her enemies, whom she does not explicitly mention until the following colon, after repeating the verb again.[137] The enemies overhear Zion groaning (כי נאנחה אני). And as she groans, she says, אין מנחם לי, 'There is no comforter for me!' This remains sensible if the כי in the preceding clause is to be understood as clarifying what the enemies hear.[138] Lam. 1.21b expands knowledge of the activity of the enemies as personified Jerusalem makes them not merely passive

133. Schökel, *A Manual*, pp. 83-84.
134. *ANET*, p. 618.
135. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 236.
136. Westermann, *Der Psalter*, pp. 36-37.
137. Renkema emends שמעו to a qal imperative, 'Hear'! (*Lamentations*, p. 193).
138. GBHS §4.3.4.(c).

agents who have heard of Jerusalem's fate but active agents, who further rejoice (שׂשׂוּ) over her misfortune.

All of her description concerning the enemies, however, is directed towards a specific audience, when she indicates that 'indeed, *you* have done it' (כי אתה עשׂית). This half of the colon can be distinguished from the preceding half; otherwise, שׂשׂוּ may be associated with כי אתה עשׂית, leading to the translation, 'They rejoiced that you have done it'. This would imply that the enemies know and rejoice over Yhwh's punishing Jerusalem. The Masoretes were uncomfortable with this and inserted a *zaqef qaton* immediately above שׂשׂוּ, indicating its disjuncture from what follows.[139] This interpretative decision affects how the כי is understood, so that it is rendered asseveratively.[140] Thus, in light of what the enemies have heard and done, personified Zion then turns to the deity and confirms his activity in it all.

The third colon reinforces this as she confirms that he is the one who has brought on the day that he proclaimed. The referent of this former proclamation is unclear, and to make sense of it the reader goes back through the poem, searching for explanation. In Lam. 1.12c, the reader was confronted with the phrase 'that Yhwh tormented in the day of his fierce anger' (אשׁר הוגה יהוה ביום חרון אפו). This is likely the antecedent to v. 21c. In light with covenant judgment, Jerusalem confirms that the day of the Lord has come. Her affirmation of divine judgment advances a theodicy.

Yet precisely as that moment is gained, the concluding half of the colon shifts the focus once again to the enemies as she concludes a curse, typical of the communal lament. She curses the enemies through an imprecatory appeal: 'but may they be like me' (ויהיו כמוני)! The use of the jussive is fairly common for the imprecatory appeal, and this is how the present study translates the verb.[141] One must deal with the *waw* in some manner, though Renkema simply avoids it. In light of the shift in focal point, from Jerusalem's individual sin to her focus upon the enemies, I have rendered the *waw* disjunctively, 'but'. This nuance keeps both her own sin and the activity of the enemies in tension, so that either cannot be removed from the reader's attention.

The final strophe retains this tension as Zion pleads for divine justice: she wants him to deal with her enemies as he has punished her sin. The poem concludes as it began, with the city's great anguish. The ת strophe reads:

> 'May all their wickedness come[142] before you, and deal with them
> As you have dealt with me, on account of all my offenses.
> For great are my groanings; indeed my heart is sick'.

139. JM §15g, k.

140. GBHS §4.3.4.(i).

141. Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament*, pp. 124-28 (126).

142. Renkema understands תבא as a hiphil jussive, asking the Lord, 'May you bring all their wickedness before you' (*Lamentations*, p. 198). The MT remains understandable as a qal jussive, as I have translated it, but either option is plausible.

Her imprecation against the enemies is driven by her desire for Yhwh to judge them as he has judged her. Antanaclasis links the wickedness of the enemies (כל־רעתם) with the disaster (רעתי) of personified Jerusalem in the previous verse. The terms, repeated with different shades of meaning, confirm her knowledge that the disaster is a result of her own wickedness (which Yhwh has judged) and indicates her desire for the Lord to transform the wickedness of the enemies (כל־רעתם) into disaster as well!

She prays that as she has been dealt with because of her offences, so too would he deal with the wickedness of her enemies (תבא כל־רעתם לפניך ועולל למו). The sinful activities of the enemies includes: betrayal and desertion of Jerusalem (Lam. 1.2c, 19a); pursuit, capture and exile (Lam. 1.3, 5c, 6b-c, 7c, 18c); mocking or rejoicing in Jerusalem's destruction (Lam. 1.7d, 21b); despising Jerusalem (Lam. 1.8b); rape (Lam. 1.10). Their sinful actions are then set in relief against the extreme suffering of Jerusalem herself. Lam. 1.22c hails back to Lam. 1.1, with the repetition of רבות and behaviour once again associated with mourning. The city once described as a mourner now embodies it in her own speech. The phrase 'my heart is sick' (לבי דוי) parallels Jeremiah's speech in his lament over his people in Jer 8.18: 'Incurable sorrow overtakes me; my heart is sick (לבי דוי)'. Like the prophet, external realities of the destruction of Jerusalem, the plight of her people, and the triumph of the enemies leaves Zion miserable and sick of heart[143]; she can only appeal to Yhwh to hear her: 'Lady Jerusalem is in an extreme state of physical and mental exhaustion. She is on the verge of death. She needs a comforter. She needs [Yhwh's] deliverance'.[144]

3. *Conclusion*

This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the ways that Lamentations 1 exploits formal elements, poetics, and the acrostic to build up a model reader whose construction directly impacts theological presentation in the poem. Through the alphabetic acrostic, the reader moves through the poem, past depictions of loss, sorrow and pain, to admissions of sin, depiction of suffering, to further presentation of guilt and back again to pain. The physicality of the acrostic precludes the reader from resting at one specific point in the poem, but rather (almost) forcibly advances one from strophe to strophe until arriving at ת. Through the text, the reader has been confronted with a range of interpretative horizons, which will be summarized and assessed as they bear upon the poem's theology.

143. For a discussion of physical distress, as is evidenced in Lam. 1.20-22, see Terence Collins, 'The Physiology of Tears in the Old Testament, Part 1', *CBQ* 33 (1971), pp. 18-38; 'The Physiology of Tears in the Old Testament, Part 2', *CBQ* 33 (1971), pp. 185-97.

144. Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, p. 94.

a. *Form and Genre*

Lamentations 1 deploys features of the dirge, lament, and city-lament to advance differing purposes in the poem. Deployment of dirge elements such as איכה (Lam. 1.1), reversal motif (Lam. 1.1, 2, 8b), weeping (Lam. 1.2), the impact of death on the bereaved (Lam. 1.7), depiction of the manner of death (Lam. 1.15)—the poetry effectively commemorates loss and suffering. However, the Hebrew lament, too, as a means to complain to Yhwh and to petition him for favour and release from oppression. The lament is effectively used in formulaic address in Lam. 1.9c, 11c, and 20a-22. In these appeals, however, the complaints vary—from misery over enemies (Lam. 1.9c), to pain over the city's own thoughtlessness (Lam. 1.11c), to anxiety over rebellion (Lam. 1.20a), to finally an appeal for Yhwh to heed the city's plight as a result of the enemies' mocking and for him to bring a day of judgment upon them (Lam. 1.21-22). These depict a range of motivations that undergird the appeals themselves. Finally, the city-lament has been exploited at the most basic level to personify Jerusalem in a variety of ways and to provide an 'internal observer' to depict her suffering and enact dialogue with her. The poem also uses common themes of starvation and idiomatic language of outside/inside to depict the city's current misery.

b. *Poetics*

Speaking voices play a crucial role in this poem. The observer establishes a portrait of pathos in his opening speech (Lam. 1.1-9b, 10a-11b) that prepares the reader for Zion's speech in Lam. 1.9c, 11c-16, and finally 18-22. This dialogic interchange enables the reader to interpret each speaking voice in light of the other. At some points, the speeches coincide while at other points, especially when the language of Zion's speech recalls the observer's, their speeches diverge and must be negotiated by the reader. At any rate, the speaking voices project, at the most fundamental level, powerful testimonies of suffering that they both endure. It is of note, as well, that embedded speech plays a significant role in opening windows of emotion for the reader: the observer's feelings (Lam. 1.10c) and Zion's personal anguish (Lam. 1.21bβ).

The language of Lamentations 1 has been shown to generate response from the reader through personification, enjambment, wordplay, repetition, and allusion. As Heim recognizes, the various personifications of Jerusalem open a number of possiblities for the reader to identify with her suffering.[145] That she can be personified as a victim (widow, oppressed woman, and abandoned woman) and a morally loose woman (whore) provides a range of interpretative possibilities for the reader. Yet in it all, personification enables the city to be seen as a mother pleading the cause of her

145. Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem', p. 169.

inhabitants, particularly innocent children. Enjambment works to highlight reversal and present misery. In Lam. 1.1a enjambment highlights the great reversal from the secure past to the debased present and in Lam. 1.19b-c it reveals the present reality of starvation and scarcity of food.

Wordplay occurs throughout the poetry, demanding interpretative effort for the reader, especially with hendiadys, pun and repetition. Hendiadys occurs at Lam. 1.7a (ימי עניה ומרודיה), and 1.7d (ראוה צרים שׂחקו), and heighten both the misery Jerusalem experiences (1.7a) and the mocking she receives (1.7d). Prominent puns occur at Lam. 1.3c ('straights', המצרים, puns 'Egypt', מצרים) and between Lam. 1.17c (לנדה) and 1.8a (לנידה). The pun on Egypt draws the reader to encyclopaedic content from Exodus to depict a reversal of the exodus from Egypt. The pun on לנידה ties the exile to Jerusalem's sinfulness and transforms the normal denotation of the term נדה. Jerusalem has become cultically *and* morally impure. The reader is forced to re-read Lam. 1.8 in light of the pun in Lam. 1.17, enabling a reflexive movement for the reader, breaking the progression of the acrostic. Antanaclasis is an example of repetition, a trope that matches the forward movement of the acrostic and creates a reflexive arc for the reader, forcing one to re-read portions of the poem in light of new information garnered through repetition of language. Repeated elements occur throughout the poem, for various purposes. The prevalence of repetition in Lamentations 1 necessitates summation:

Function: Intensification

1. To emphasize suffering:
   a. רבתי / רבות, Lam. 1.1a-b, 21c: mourning of the city as a result of loss of people, honour (an example of antanaclasis).
   b. הלכו +לפני, Lam. 1.5c, 6c, 18c: suffering of inhabitants.
   c. אין־מנחם לה (or related language), Lam. 1.2b, 7c, 9b, 16b, 17a, 21a): isolation and persistence of mourning.
   d. מחמד, Lam. 1.7b, 10a, 11b: the loss of children, temple implements, and valuables of the city.
   e. שׁוב + נפשׁ, Lam. 1.11b, 19c: emphasis on scarcity of food and deplorable situation.

2. To emphasize judgment:
   a. √יגה, Lam. 1.5b, 12c: focus upon divine punishment.
   b. יום, Lam. 1.12c, 21c: focus upon the day of Yhwh.
   c. √שׁמם, Lam. 1.13c, 12c: focus upon desolation experienced in divine judgment.
   d. פּשׁע, Lam. 1.5b, 14a, 22b: focus on the suffering and judgment that comes from offence.
   e. √מרה, Lam. 1.18a, 20b: affirmation of judgment due to Zion's rebellion against Yhwh.

Function: Combination

1. To construct interpretative depth:
   a. √יגה, Lam. 1.4c, 5b: combines Yhwh's punishment (הוגה) as a source of grief (נוגות). This is also an instance of antanaclasis.
   b. √זלל, Lam. 1.8b, 11c: combines the scorn of the nations (הזילוה) with the city's pain over thoughtlessness (זוללה). This is another example of antanaclasis.
   c. √רעת, Lam. 1.21b, 22a: combines the misfortune of Jerusalem (רעתי) with an appeal that her enemies will receive the same fate (כל־רעתם).
   d. פרשׂ, Lam. 1.10a, 13b, 17a: combines different agents actively spreading hands over precious things (enemies, v. 10a), a net for Jerusalem's 'feet' (Yhwh, v. 13b), and hands out to God (Zion, v.17a).
   e. שׁוב + נפשׁ, Lam. 1.11b, 16b, 19c: confirms Zion's pitiable state and grounds the appeal to God as the one who can restore her life.
   f. ראה + מכאוב, Lam. 1.12a-b, 18b: combines (and contrasts) the misery administered by Yhwh (v. 12a-b) with the misery of her people (v. 18b).

2. To refocus previously held understandings:
   a. √אהב, Lam. 1.2b, 19a: revises previous understanding of the city (abandoned woman) to a new understanding (whore).
   b. לנדה / לנדה (homonym and pun), Lam. 1.8b, 17c: refocuses the primary denotation of נדה to incorporate into it a connotation of sinfulness and exile (נידה).
   c. (והביטה) ראה + vocative of יהוה + כי clause, Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a: refocuses different sources of pain for Jerusalem.
   d. צר / המצרים, Lam. 1.3c, 20a: contrast the 'straits' produced by the enemy (v. 3c) with the 'anxiety' produced by Jerusalem's rebellion (v. 20a). This is an instance of antanaclasis.

Next to repetition, allusion plays an important role. Allusion can be understood as the poetry actively 'blowing up' specific portions of the cultural encyclopaedia from which Lamentations drew to construct its argument. From the OT, Lamentations 1 alludes most prominently to Deuteronomy 28 (and Deut. 23.3-4), Exodus, Ps. 23.3 and Jer. 8.18. Each of these allusions makes an important contribution to the poetry. Below is a summary list of them:

Deuteronomy

1. Lam. 1.3b = Deut. 28.65: the theme of 'no rest' in judgment.
2. Lam. 1.5a = Deut. 28.44: the theme of enemies becoming the 'head'.

3. Lam. 1.5c = Deut. 28.41: the theme of children's captivity.
4. Lam. 1.10c = Deut. 23.3-4: command about who may enter into the assembly, which Lam. 1.10 cites for its rhetoric.

Exodus

1. Lam. 1.3c (המצרים, 'straits') puns the term מצרים, 'Egypt'. Instead of deliverance (Exodus), God's people go into slavery (Lamentations).
2. Lam. 1.3a (עני and √עבד) draws from language of slavery in Exodus (מעני: Exod. 3.7, 17; 4.31; עבדה: Exod. 1.14; 2.23; 5.11; 6.6). The affliction and servitude Israel experienced in Egypt in former days is in effect what is happening now, again, to Judah.
3. Lam. 1.3c (כל־רדפיה השיגוה) recalls the idiom of Exod. 14.9; 15.9: וירדף מצרים אחריהם וישיגו אותם, 'and Egypt pursued after them and overtook them' (Exod. 14.9); ארדף אשיג (Exod. 15.9).

Ps. 23.3

Lam. 1.16b (משיב נפשי) alludes to Ps. 23.3 (נפשי ישובב) and contrasts the psalmist's positive experience of Yhwh to Zion's negative experience of him: there he is present; here he is distant.

Jer. 8.18

Lam. 1.22c ('my heart is sick', לבי דוי) alludes to Jer. 8.18 ('my heart is sick', לבי דוי). Zion employs the prophet's speech to depict her own misery over the destruction of the city.

c. *Theology*

Poetics in particular open different theological horizons for the model reader of Lamentations 1. From intensification structures of repetition, Yhwh's judgment and Jerusalem's sin becomes a powerful theodic impulse in the poem. This theological impulse is strengthened when coupled with the use of allusions to Deuteronomic and the Exodus material. Similarly, both speaking voices confirm God's activity as a result of the offences of the city, further emphasising the rationale for the state of degradation in which Jerusalem finds herself. On the basis of personified Jerusalem's own views, this sinfulness leaves her in distress (ראה יהוה כי־צר־לי, Lam. 1.20a). Yhwh is figured as the just judge who has meted out judgment against a rebellious and sinful people—a people who deserved the punishment they received (Lam. 1.18a). Thus the theology of Lamentations 1, does, in fact suggest rationale for the disaster, contra Westermann's view that explanation of disaster is not part of the original theology of the book. To foreclose upon this theological horizon flattens the poetry's theological depth.

However, the model reader of Lamentations 1 is likewise confronted with the reality that theodicy is not all that is offered in this poem, opening

another theological viewpoint. Particularly through repetition structures that create interpretative depth, the reader notices quite readily the activity of enemies: their rape, their scorn, their mocking, and their oppression. Moreover, repetition structures of intensification focus upon the suffering of the city and people, often at the hands of enemies. Both the actions of the enemies and the suffering of her people becomes the motivation for appeal in Lam. 1.21-22. In this, Yhwh is figured as the judge who, it is hoped through the rhetoric of the poem, will be moved to act *on behalf of* his people and city, to deliver them from both suffering and their enemies.

Finally, the reader must confront the reality that God's actions are questioned, opening a final horizon. This is seen immediately in the observer's aside to Yhwh in Lam. 1.10c and Zion's speech about 'over *these things*' (על־אלה) in Lam. 1.16a. The observer recognizes that the violation of Jerusalem is, in some way, wrong, and Yhwh has administered it, perhaps going against his own law. His statement is rhetorical, designed to get Yhwh to act. Personified Jerusalem furthers this critique by portraying Yhwh as a violent warrior deity, harvesting his own people (Lam. 1.15). Rather than accepting this judgment, however, her speech in Lam. 1.16 blurs the lines theologically between divine presence and absence as being a fundamental problem. The rhetoric of this, however, is designed to get Yhwh to act beneficently towards his people. Different theological horizons, then, are projected for the reader.

From Eco's theory, we may ask why Lamentations 1 presents its theology in a vacillating manner. In terms of text pragmatics, this range of theological horizons projected for the model reader provides interpretative possibilities with which he or she must engage and actualize in the process of reading.[146] Opposed to arriving at *one* conclusion for Lamentations 1, as in closed texts, a model reader may tease out a number of theological horizons presented in the poem. These options afford the model reader an open strategy for interpreting the poem. Whatever theological horizon the model reader actualizes directly impinges on how one understands the theology of the poem. Thus the theology, like the text itself, is more open than closed.

Yet these possible theological worlds have a governing logic in of all of them. Underlying each is the tacit belief that Yhwh is present to hear the cries of his people—whether the cries centre upon sinfulness, enemies, or even the Lord's own activity—and is beneficent, so that he will be moved by the poetry to act on his people's behalf. This is a theology of hope that permeates Lamentations 1 itself: not that a specific theological tradition offers a way out of the crisis, as Zion theology often has been figured, but that the poetry itself, as it is uttered to Yhwh, remains the source of hope—a deity who is present to look and consider (ראה והביטה) the various sufferings of

146. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 276.

his people, sufferings identified and actualized by the reader. So the deployment of the lament form in the poem, with its focus upon complaint and appeal to the deity, effectively concludes the poem. The response that Yhwh will give, however, is uncertain. The ambivalence of Lam. 1.16 precludes an overly triumphalistic perspective on any divine action.

Chapter 6

Lamentations 2

1. *Introduction*

Analysis now moves to Lamentations 2. As in the previous chapter, using Eco's aesthetic theory, the blending of formal elements, the linear progression of the acrostic, and use of various poetics will be explored in order to understand how the model reader is constructed in the poem and how the 'intention of the work' as a whole continues to develop. Interaction between Lamentations 1 and 2 will also be assessed to demonstrate that the poems respond to one another to produce interpretative opportunities for the reader. This chapter concludes with a catalogue of the ways form, genre and poetics are exploited so as to impact theological presentation in the poem, and by extension, the book up to this point.

Like Lamentations 1, two voices speak in Lamentations 2. The first speaker is unidentified, but his language is strikingly Jeremianic, leading Lee to identify him as Jeremiah the prophet.[1] The present study suggests the observer in Lam. 2.11-17 utilizes Jeremianic material without equating him to the prophet. The observer addresses the reader in Lam. 2.1-12 and then personified Jerusalem from Lam. 2.13-19. The second speaker is personified Jerusalem, who appeals to Yhwh with prayer in Lam. 2.20-22, as in the previous poem. An outline of their speeches is as follows:

Lam. 2.1-9:	Observer describes divine wrath
Lam. 2.10-12:	Observer depicts suffering inhabitants of the city and describes his own pain
Lam. 2.13-19:	Observer addresses personified Jerusalem
Lam. 2.20-22:	Personified Jerusalem appeals to the Lord

2. *Analysis of Lam. 2.1-22*

a. *Lam. 2.1-9*

Lam. 2.1a prepares one for the dirge through the use of איכה, only to subvert the reader's expectations as Lam. 2.1b-9 portrays the wrath of Yhwh

1. Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 131-62. See also House, *Lamentations*, p. 398.

against בת־ציון, 'the daughter of Zion', with divine warrior imagery similar to Lam. 1.12c-15. Rather than the communal lament, these verses are similar in tone to prophetic judgment oracles even if not to be generically identified with them.[2] The major difference, however, is the perspective of the destruction. In the prophets, sin generally triggers Yhwh's wrath and divine judgment sits on the horizon. In Lamentations 2, sin is only explicitly mentioned in Lam. 2.14 and judgment has already come.

What the reader experiences is the aftermath of divine destruction that polarizes the former glory of Judah against present misery. In this way, the contrast motif is powerfully employed to depict suffering and present pain for the model reader. Because sin is nowhere specified in vv. 1-9, reader may draw from previous depictions of sin in Lamentations 1 to attribute the cause of divine wrath[3] or may simply suspend the question of what caused destruction.[4]

Yhwh's role as the agent of destruction links Lam. 2.1-9 with the city-lament genre, though other motifs are present as well.[5] Blending generic elements highlights the various purposes at work in Lam. 2.1-9 and creates a variety of ways for the reader to access the poem, among them mourning (dirge), depicting and commemorating disaster (city-lament), and recognizing judgment of the deity for his people's sin (prophetic judgment speech). The blend of these elements effectively differentiates this poem from Lamentations 1, which blended elements from the dirge, city-lament, and lament forms.

These verses vividly display divine judgment in a distinctive manner. Thirty active verbs concentrate upon the day of wrath, piling divine act on top of divine act to intensify the images of God's fury against his people and land.[6]

2. Jer. 46.1–51.58; Isa.15.1–16.14; 23.1-14; 47.1-15; Mic. 1.2-16; Zeph. 2.13-15.

3. Lam. 1.5b, 8-9a, 14a, 18a, 20b, 22b.

4. Lam. 2.14 depicts the sins of the prophets which cause divine wrath.

5. Among them are: reversal, description of destruction, and assignment of responsibility. See also Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 100-21, pp. 134-41.

6. Lam. 2.1a: He beclouded (יעיב); Lam. 2.1b: He cast from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel (השליך משמים ארץ תפארת ישׂראל); Lam. 2.1c: He did not remember his footstool (ולא־זכר הדם־רגליו); Lam. 2.2a: He swallowed (בלע); Lam. 2.2a: He did not pity (לא חמל); Lam. 2.2b: He tore down (הרס); Lam. 2.2c: He hurled to earth her kingdom and officials (גיע לארץ…ממלכה ושׂריה); Lam. 2.2c: He profaned her kingdom and officials (חלל ממלכה ושׂריה); Lam. 2.3a: He cut off every horn of Israel (גדע…כל קרן ישׂראל); Lam. 2.3b: He withdrew his right hand (השיב אחור ימינו); Lam. 2.3c: He burned in Jacob (ויבער ביעקב); Lam. 2.3c: He consumed everything (אכלה סביב); Lam. 2.4a: He strung his bow (דרך קשׁתו); Lam. 2.4b: He slaughtered (ויהרג); Lam. 2.4c: He poured out wrath like fire (שׁפך כאשׁ); Lam. 2.5a: He swallowed (בלע); Lam. 2.5b: He annihilated (שׁחת); Lam. 2.5c: He increased mourning and lamentation (וירב…תאניה ואניה); Lam. 2:6a: He treated violently (ויחמס); Lam. 2.6a: He annihilated (שׁחת); Lam. 2.6b: He abolished (שׁכח); Lam. 2.6c: He spurned (וינאץ); Lam. 2.7a: He rejected (זנח);

Through 'object enjambment'[7] in Lam. 2.1b, 2a-c, 3a, 4b, 5c, 6b-c, 7b and 8a, Zion and her environs are clearly marked as the target of divine wrath for the reader. Enjambment enables the reader to recognize Zion's helplessness before Yhwh's active judgment.[8] The alphabetic acrostic steadily draws the reader steadily through graphic depictions of judgment and reinforces its divine authority in which the deity is presented as a warrior through imagery of the cloud, fire and the bow.

Drawing from OT material and Canaanite mythological tradition available in Lamentations' encyclopaedia, Yhwh is depicted as an adversarial warrior who pours out his anger—against his city, people and temple. The cloud imagery in Lam. 2.1 'blows up' a portion of the encyclopaedic content of Israel, specifically theological conceptions both from OT traditions and from Canaanite mythology. The only instance of 'cloud' (עוב) as a verb in the OT occurs in Lam. 2.1a: 'he has beclouded (יעיב)'. Re'emi and Lee recognize this imagery is often associated with theophany and divine protection in the OT.[9] It was a sign of God's favor on his people, as in the Sinai revelation of Exod. 19.9, where after defeating Egypt and the miracle of the sea, Yhwh says to Moses, 'Behold! I am coming to you in a cloud' (הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב) and Exod. 34.5-6, where God descends in a cloud (וירד יהוה בענן) and promises his presence: 'Yhwh, Yhwh! A god compassionate and merciful; slow to anger and full of lovingkindness and faithfulness' (Exod. 34.6). Cross believes the Sinai theophany and divine battle theophany (as in Exodus 15) are variant aspects of similar conceptions of the divine warrior. He demonstrates that the OT draws from Canaanite imagery, usually ascribed to Ba'al, and transforms it polemically to refer to Yhwh's power.[10] Contrasted against the imagery of divine war against a foreign people, Yhwh is figured as a storm-god who has gone to war against Jerusalem and her people with his cloud of wrath in Lam. 2.1a.[11] He comes from the clouds and has arrows of lightning (Lam. 2.4a) to ravage his own land.

Lam. 2.7a: He repudiated (נאר); Lam. 2.7b: He delivers the walls of Jerusalem's citadels into the hand of an enemy (הסגיר ביד־אויב חומת ארמנותיה); Lam. 2.8a: He planned to annihilate the walls of dear Zion (חשׁב יהוה להשׁחית חומת בת־ציון); Lam. 2.8b: He stretched out a line and did not turn back his hand from swallowing (נטה קו לא־השׁיב ידו מבלע); Lam. 2.8c: He put in mourning rampart and wall (ויאבל־חל וחומה); Lam. 2.9a: He destroyed and shattered her bars (אבד ושׁבר בריחיה).

7. Object enjambment occurs when the *rejet* of a line contains the object of action, pulling the reader to the *rejet* 'as the syntax struggles to complete itself' (Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Enjambing Line', pp. 226-27).
8. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'The Effects of Enjambment', p. 376.
9. Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis*, p. 92; Lee, *The Singers*, p. 133.
10. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 156-77.
11. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 62.

The specific objects of his wrath are the city, the people, and his temple. 'The daughter of Zion' is associated with 'the beauty of Israel' (תפארת ישׂראל) and 'his footstool' (הדם־רגליו) in the second and third cola, respectively. Ambiguity persists as to the referents of these designations. תפארת ישׂראל may refer to Jerusalem, the temple, or the Ark of the Covenant. Faced with semantic ambiguity, Eco's aesthetic analysis suggests that the reader makes 'abductions' about the terminology on the basis of the coherence of the text, context and encyclopaedic competence. In this way, the reader gropes one's way to approximate the meaning of the terms. In this instance, based on coherence of the text, this is the first occurrence of תפארת ישׂראל and הדם־רגליו, so no help is gained there. Nor is going to context, for the semantic problem arises specifically from the triplet of terms used together.

Thereby, encyclopaedic content from the OT becomes helpful. תפארת ישׂראל is similar to Isa. 13.19, where Babylon is identified as 'the eminent beauty of the Chaldeans' (תפארת גאון כשׂדים). Thus the construct chain refers to Jerusalem. Frevel thinks תפארת ישׂראל refers to the temple and reads it with 'his footstool' (הדם־רגליו), in Lam. 2.1c. Precedent is found in Ps. 132.7: 'Let us go up to his sanctuary; let us worship at his footstool' (להדם רגלי).[12] This is not conclusive, however, because Yhwh's footstool is the Ark of the Covenant in the later understanding of the Chronicler: 'I had it in my heart of hearts to build a house as a place of rest for the Ark of the Covenant of Yhwh, for the footstool of our god' (ולהדם רגלי אלהינו). On the basis of encyclopaedic investigation, the association between תפארת ישׂראל and הדם־רגליו remains ambiguous as to its referents, which creates an openness rather than fixity of meaning. Whether the reader understands the terms to refer to the city, the temple, or the Ark of the Covenant, ambiguity of reference enables a multilayered depiction as to how Yhwh has 'cast' them all 'from heaven to earth'. Frevel believes that Lam. 2.1 displays the utter collapse of Zion theology in the mind of the poet. It is clear that God's activity demarcates a fundamental crisis for the continued relationship between the deity and his people.[13]

Fire and archer terminology enhances divine warrior imagery already drawn from the encyclopaedic world of the ANE. Lam. 2.2-4 read:

12. Christian Frevel, 'Zerbrochene Zier: Tempel und Tempelzerstörung in den Klageliedern (Threni)', in *Gottesstadt und Gottesgarten: zu Geschichte und Theologie des Jerusalemer Tempels* (ed. Othmar Keel and Erich Zenger; Quaestiones Disputatae, 191; Freiburg: Herder, 2002), pp. 105-11.

13. 'Die Dimension des Verlustes, die darin zum Ausdruck kommt, is kaum zu überschätzen: es ist der komplette Zusammenbruch der Ziontheologie' (Frevel, 'Zerbrochene Zier', p. 106).

'The Lord swallowed, he did not pity,[14] all the pastureland of Jacob.
He tore down, in his rage, the fortified cities of dear Judah.
He hurled to earth, he profaned, kingdom and her officials.

He cut off, in the heat of rage, every horn of Israel.
He restrained his right hand from the face of an enemy.
He burned in Jacob like a flame of fire: it consumed everything.

He strung his bow as an enemy, strong (in) his right hand.
As a foe he slaughtered all the precious things of the eye.
In the tent of the Daughter of Zion he poured out his wrath like fire'.

The presentation here fits with divine warrior imagery[15] prevalent in OT and Canaanite literature. Miller explains in the OT, 'The image of the 'devouring fire' [אֵשׁ להבה] seems to be predominantly expressive of the divine warrior's wrath and destruction', drawn from Canaanite theological traditions.[16] Yhwh pours out wrath like fire against pastureland (כל־נאות יעקב),[17] cities (מבצרי בת־יהודה) and temple (באהל בת־ציון) and the observer can rightly say the fire of the Lord consumed everything (אכלה סביב).

Along with the weapon of fire, Yhwh is an enemy warrior with a bow. The divine warrior with a bow appears in iconography with the deity holding the bow from the heavens,[18] while the OT often pictures Yhwh as an archer with bow or arrows, possibly understood as thunderbolts and lightning.[19] In Lam. 2.4a the deity has strung his bow (דרך קשׁתו) and has it tensed ready to fire in his hand, which is the force of the difficult phrase, 'strong (in) his right hand (נצב ימינו)'.[20]

As in Lam. 1.3b-c and 2.1, allusions to Exodus again reverse depictions of Yhwh in the encyclopaedic world of the poetry to portray the deity as a warrior against his people. Boecker sees allusions to Exodus in the Song of the Sea in Lam. 2.3b, 4a. In Exod. 15.6, Yhwh's right hand (ימינך) wins glory for himself and his right hand (ימינך) shatters his enemy (תרעץ אויב). Where the Lord has formerly fought enemies with the strength of his right

14. I follow the *qere* here but in either case the sense of the line is clear.

15. Antje Labahn, 'Fire From Above: Metaphors and Images of God's Actions in Lamentations 2.1-9', *JSOT* 31 (2006), pp. 239-56.

16. Patrick D. Miller, 'Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel', *CBQ* 27 (1965), pp. 256-61 (259).

17. נאות = 'grazing place'/'pastureland'. 'Over the mountains I raise weeping and lamentation; and over the pastureland of the wilderness (נאות מדבר), a dirge' (Jer. 9.9).

18. Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, fig. 88.

19. Deut. 32.23, 24; Job 6.4; 34.6; Pss. 18.14; 21.12; 38.2; 64.7; 77.17; 120.4; 144.6; Isa. 41.2, Hab. 3.9; Zech. 9.13.

20. BHS suggests emending to 'an arrow in his right hand' (חץ בימינו). Yet the niphal participle from √נצב suggests the bow is raised and tensed, ready to fire at its target. Thus Boecker translates: 'erhoben seine Rechte' (*Klagelieder*, p. 38).

hand, Lam. 2.3b, 4a reverses this tradition and presents Yhwh as an enemy warrior (כאויב) fighting against his people with a bow in his right hand (ימינו). Moreover, he withdraws his right hand from attacking the enemy (השׁיב אחור ימינו מפני אויב).[21] In a reversal of Exod. 15.6, Lam. 2.3b, 4a presents a dark divine victory song: Yhwh remains victorious, but his enemy is his *own people* rather than *Egypt*.

The divine warrior literally slaughters (הרג) Jerusalem's precious things (מחמדי־עין) in Lam. 2.4b. Repetition of the term מחמד exploits its polyvalence and suggests another depiction of victims of destruction. מחמדי־עין refers to the city's children when read with the information gained from Lam. 1.7b, 11b. The term takes on a different meaning in Lam. 2.4b.[22] The similar syntactical constructions in 2.3a and 4b, כל + construct chain (כל קרן ישׂראל and כל מחמדי־עין), conjoins 'leaders' with 'precious things'. Yhwh slaughtered both like a foe.

From the observer's description of divine wrath in Lam. 2.1-4, the comparison between Yhwh and enemy (כאויב) / foe (כצר) in Lam. 2.4a-b, 5a is understandable but still shocking. The reader has seen language about enemies in Lamentations 1, but the Lord is never named as such in it.[23] He remains the agent of change, the one whom (it is hoped) will counteract the negative work of the foe. Even where implicated in destruction, the poetry never names Yhwh as 'enemy'.[24] Rather he remains the divine judge, able to restore the city and people, if only he would ראה, 'look', upon the suffering described by the observer and personified Jerusalem.[25] In the previous poem, the enemies described are nameless and faceless.[26] By contrast, Lamentations 2 collapses the role of enemy onto Yhwh. As in Jer. 30.14, he enacts the day of his wrath like an enemy.[27]

This proves to be a troublesome metaphor in the history of interpretation. Central to its ambiguity is the understanding of the כ preposition in Lam. 2.4a, 5a.[28] Gordis suggests that it is *asseverative*, following Ugaritic and other OT precedents,[29] so the clause reads, 'The Lord has *indeed* become

21. Boecker, *Klagelieder*, pp. 38-39.

22. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 69.

23. Lam. 1.2c, 5a, c, 7c, d, 9c, 10a, 16c, 17b, 21b.

24. Lam. 1.5b, 10c, 13-15, 17b.

25. Lam. 1.9c, 10c, 11c, 20a.

26. The Babylonians or any other 'foes' are not named (Joyce, 'Sitting Loose to History', pp. 247-48).

27. Jer. 30.14: 'For (as) the blow of an enemy I have struck you'.

28. The Peshiṭta text does not translate the כ. Albrektson concludes the Peshiṭta translator did not follow the MT (*Studies in the Text*, p. 93). Dobbs-Allsopp believes the כ was an editorial or theological addition though this cannot be known with certainty (*Lamentations*, p. 83).

29. Robert Gordis, 'Asseverative Kaph in Hebrew and Ugaritic', *JAOS* 63 (1943),

the enemy'. In light of the vivid depictions of Yhwh as an enemy warrior against his own people in Lam. 1.13-15; 2.1-9, it is at the very least consistent to render an asseverative sense to the כ. Following Gordis, the poetry confirms the deity's antagonism against his people and destruction of his city.

The Targum and later Lamentations Rabbah, however, are careful to depict Yhwh as *compared* to an enemy but not *actually* so, interpreting the preposition as a comparative in its normal use. In the commentary on Lam. 2.4-5 the Targum writer employs a series of comparisons to show how the language is not making a final judgment on Yhwh's adversarial status against his people but merely compares his activity to an enemy: 'He bent his bow and shot arrows at me, like a foe. He stood to the right of Nebuchadnezzar and aided him, as though he himself were an enemy of the House of Israel' (TgLam. 2.4); 'Yhwh has become like an enemy' (TgLam. 2.5).[30] Levine summarizes, 'The [Hebrew] 'as an enemy' is paraphrased 'as though he were an enemy', to emphasize that the appearance belies the reality: God is certainly not the enemy of his people!'[31] In this understanding, divine antagonism is softened to a more palatable theological comparison. Brady agrees, 'God's behaviour is *like* that of an enemy, but he is not truly an enemy of Israel'.[32] Moreover, Lamentations Rabbah reveals anxiety concerning the proposition that God could be understood as an enemy: 'What is written here is not 'an enemy' but 'like an enemy''.[33] As in the Targum, Lamentations Rabbah distances itself from reading the כ asseveratively.

The reader is left to consider the theological positions that the poem provides here: Yhwh may no longer side with the people with whom he has formerly established covenant. Once a friend, he is now a foe. Still, the poetry leaves open the possibility that his judgment only *appears* to be adversarial: punishment for sin has come, but restored relationship will appear in the future. The fact that the poetry calls out to God in Lamentations 1, and as shall be shown below throughout the remainder of the poetry, reveals that there is an expectation of hope for the future in and through prayer. Either way, 'That a Judean poet could call God 'enemy' is a telling sign of the deep distress and unparalleled suffering brought on by the catastrophe [of the destruction of Jerusalem]'.[34]

pp. 176-78. This function is called 'correspondence' in GBHS §4.1.9.(b); Gordis, *Lamentations*, p. 162.

30. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, p. 66. This function is called 'agreement' in GBHS §4.1.9.(a).

31. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, p. 111.

32. Brady, 'Targum Lamentations' Reading', p. 95.

33. Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, p. 220.

34. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 83.

This distress becomes increasingly significant, as Lam. 2.4c-9 explicitly depicts God's rejection of his temple, cult and city as well as the leadership of Jerusalem. In Lam. 2.4c the deity pours out his wrath like fire into the tent of Zion (באהל בת־ציון שפך כאשׁ חמתו). The 'tent of the daughter of Zion' likely indicates the temple itself, as it is drawn from the encyclopaedic content available to Lamentations' poet, and recalls the description of the tabernacle or 'Tent of Meeting' (אהל מועד) in Exodus 27–40.[35] Moses is unable to enter into the Tent of Meeting because Yhwh settles upon it in a cloud (הענן) and fills it with his glory (Exod. 40.35). As in Lam. 2.1, where the Lord's 'beclouding' his people inverts the cloud imagery in Exod. 19.9; 34.5-6, his pouring out fire on the tent of Zion in Lam. 2.4c exposes a reversal. Yhwh is no longer present in the Tent of Meeting (אהל מועד) through the cloud (הענן) and glorified (Exod. 40.35); he now pours out his fire upon the Tent of the Daughter of Zion (באהל בת־ציון) in wrath (Lam. 2.4c). This logic is advanced in in Lam. 2.6-9, which read:

> 'He treated his booth violently like a garden; he annihilated his meeting-place.
> Yhwh abolished in Zion festival and Sabbath,
> And he spurned, in his indignant wrath, king and priest.
>
> The Lord spurned his altar; he repudiated his sanctuary.
> He delivered the walls of her citadels into the hand of the enemy.
> They raised a sound in the house of Yhwh as on a festal day'.
>
> Yhwh determined[36] to destroy the wall of the Daughter of Zion
> He stretched out a line; he did not withdraw his hand from destruction.
> And he consumed rampart and wall—together they dwindled.
>
> Her gates sunk into the ground; he destroyed and shattered[37] her bars.
> Her king and princes are among the nations—there is no Torah.
> Moreover, her prophets find no vision from Yhwh'.

God has utterly rejected all prior systems in Jerusalem, creating a profound theological contrast from his presence and provision in previous eras for Judah. With the abolishment of festival and Sabbath, the spurning of king

35. Exod. 27.21; 28.43; 29.4, 10, 11, 30, 32, 42, 44; 30.16, 18, 20, 26, 36; 31.7; 35.21; 38.8, 30; 39.32, 40; 40.2, 6, 7, 12, 22, 24, 26, 29, 32, 34, 35. See also Lev. 1.1.

36. LXX reads 'and he (the Lord) returned'. See Gentry, 'Lamentations', p. 12. The LXX translator may have misread the ח for a ה or possibly have read וישׁב (Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 100). The MT remains sensible as a qal perfective verb from חשׁב. The hiphil infinitive construct from שׁחת links with חשׁב, indicating God's purposeful act of destruction.

37. אבד ושׁבר may represent an early form proto-masoretic activity, where each term represents two text traditions. One tradition reads אבד and the other reads שׁבר. The early scribes included both traditions, connecting them with a *waw* (Gordis, *Lamentations*, pp. 162-63).

and priest, the rejection of altar and sanctuary, the exile of Jerusalem's king and princes, no Torah, and the failure of prophecy, what could be said of any form of religious future for Jerusalem. How could worship continue?[38] How can the people appeal to their deity for deliverance from the enemy when he *is* the enemy?

Ironically, when compared to divine presentation in Mesopotamian city-laments or related genres, divine potency described in Lam. 2.1-9 may provide an avenue of theological hope. For Gottwald, the question of hope in Lamentations stems from prophetic tradition about the love, faithfulness, and justice of God, so that even if he has destroyed his people, city and temple, he remains available to his people to deliver them—if they will but repent from sin.[39]

The following discussion rather will look at the question of hope from a different set of encyclopaedic content, namely LU and LSU, while also bringing other related texts to bear as well. It does so for two reasons: (1) Lam. 2.1-9 fits quite well with the city-lament tradition,[40] so comparative analysis is warranted; (2) assessment of divine presentation from comparative analysis reveals a different focus of theological hope than has hitherto been maintained.

In LU and LSU, Enlil (the high-god and head of the pantheon) orders the destruction of the cities (LSU, 20-22; LU, 173, 180, 203), and the patron-deities of the cities are powerless to counteract Enlil's decree.[41] Enlil decrees that the kingship of the city of Ur is handed over to another city (LSU, 366-72) and thereby Nanna, the patron deity for Ur, must abandon his sanctuary. Similarly, as a result of Enlil's decree of destruction, a series of patron deities of Mesopotamian cities are forced to abandon their sanctuaries, stripping them of their potency and worship (LU, 1-39). These deities are powerless to stop the destruction and are powerless to return to their shrines until Enlil changes his mind. Although they remain loyal both to their shrines and worshippers, they are still forced to abandon both, which leads to their inevitable destruction.[42]

38. See the discussion of Kraus, *Klagelieder*, p. 44.

39. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, pp. 91-111.

40. It is part of the 'divine judgment' motif (Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 55-75).

41. Dobbs-Allsopp rightly asserts that the concept of divine abandonment was a way for a defeated people to deal with their loss rather than to attribute their defeat to the impotence of their god in comparison to the deity of the victorious nation. From the victor's perspective, however, their own god defeated the patron-god of the fallen city (*Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 45-46). In the city-laments, however, all patron-deities are subject to Enlil's power and impotent next to his authority.

42. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 45.

In the Curse of Agade, a genre related to the city-lament,[43] the city goddess Inanna obeyed Enlil's decree to abandon her sanctuary (in line with LSU and LU) only to turn against her city (Agade) and shrine in battle, attacking it as a foe.[44] Although she attacks her city like a foe, Inanna, however, remains subject to Enlil's command. Lamentations, however, collapses both decree of destruction (Lam. 1.15b, 17b) and the activity of the foe (Lam. 2.1-9) onto Yhwh rather than differentiating it to two deities, Enlil and Inanna respectively.

The complete authority of Yhwh is more in line with the authority of Marduk, god of Babylon, in a text known as the 'Marduk Prophecy'.[45] In this text, Marduk describes how the enemies' sacking of his temple is actually associated with his volitional divine abandonment rather than his impotence. The fortunes of the city change when Marduk's disposition towards Babylon changes. The portrayal the deity here no doubt is influenced by the generic form of royal fictional autobiography, and ultimately supposed to reinforce the power of the king that ordered its composition. However, divine presentation of complete power and authority is the same as Yhwh's authority in Lamentations 2.

Unlike Marduk however, in Lam. 2.1-9, Yhwh does not abandon his sanctuary but remains its enemy. Jerusalem's own patron-deity has turned against his city, shrine and people by his own initiative. At the very least, this distinguishes the rhetoric of Lamentations' presentation of divine power from that of Marduk in the 'Marduk Prophecy'. The fervent outpour of divine wrath in Lam. 1.13-15; 2.1-9 confirms his adversarial status and works to undermine any notion of human authority and power. His people and their province fall before the might of Yhwh.

Yet because destruction is achieved by Yhwh rather than an enemy or foreign god, the poetry suggests a tacit belief in the deity's perseverance and potency, especially when compared to LSU and LU. Yhwh's supreme authority in his decree (צוה) for Jerusalem's destruction in Lam. 1.17b and his plan to destroy the wall of the Daughter of Zion in Lam. 2.8a coheres with Enlil's authority in LSU and LU. As seen above, Enlil's authority in destruction was absolute. So too is Yhwh's authority in Lamentations. Unlike the patron-deities in the Mesopotamian city-laments, in Lamentations Yhwh has not been overpowered or coerced to abandon his sanctuary by another, more powerful deity like Enlil. Rather, he sits in the place

43. For comparison between the genres, see Cooper, *The Curse of Agade*, pp. 7-36.

44. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade*, pp. 53, 240-42.

45. R. Borger, 'Gott Marduk und Gott-König Šulgi als Propheten: Zwei prophetische Text', *BiOr* 28 (1971), pp. 3-24; Tremper Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1991), pp. 132-42, 233-35.

of Enlil! Rather than differentiating the loss of Jerusalem and its decree for destruction to two deities, a high-god and a patron-deity, the monotheistic orthodoxy of the Judahites who created Lamentations 2 presented Yhwh as both the agent of destruction (in the place of Enlil) *as well as* the one who suffers the loss of his sanctuary (in the place of the patron deities).[46]

In this way, the religion of Judah was protected against total desolation. In light of the devastation of the city and cult, Yhwh worship was essentially threatened and could not continue as it had done prior to the destruction. Yet, there remains an implicit hope in the deity. Because *Yhwh* destroys his own city and cult, then he has not been overpowered by another deity or carried off into exile.[47] Therefore, hope for some kind of future with the deity exists, although a different configuration of that relationship than previously imagined. Even in destruction, theological hope is warranted when divine agency in Lam. 2.1-9 is compared with LSU and LU. This hope is prescient of Yhwh's continued presence and anticipates personified Jerusalem's fervent appeals in Lam. 2.20-22.[48]

46. Whether one accepts Edelman's position, that exclusive monotheism apparent by the second century BCE does not reflect the religious beliefs of the people of Jerusalem in the last years of the Judahite state, one can certainly argue that Yahwistic monotheistic tendencies pervaded Judahite culture (certainly in the upper classes) in the latter third of the seventh century BCE and into the sixth century BCE, reflected in Jeremianic prophecy. Even by Edelman's reckoning for sixth century BCE Judah, that Yhwh was the high-god of the pantheon, it is reasonable to construct a theology in which Yhwh could destroy his own temple and still remain potent. See Diana V. Edelman (ed.), *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms* (CBET; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995), pp. 18-21. For a more positive assessment of exclusive monotheism in the Judahite state in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, see N. Avigad, 'The Contribution of Hebrew Seals to an Understanding of Israelite Religion and Society', in Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson and S.D. McBride (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 195-208.

47. As the Assyrian relief from the palace of Tiglath-pileser III at Nimrud reveals. Warriors carry off the images of foreign gods away from a captured town, thereby exiling the deity. See F.F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations: From the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1969), plate 6.

48. Like Albrektson, Brueggemann argues, 'The theological implication of the destruction of the city that produced such profound grief is that the liturgical tradition of the inviolability of the city—a notion fostered in temple-monarchy ideology—is shown to be false' (Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 334). The kind of hope intimated in Lam. 2.1-9 runs counter to Albrektson and Brueggemann, who argue the destruction of the cult challenged Zion theology's views of Jerusalem's inviolability, election, and Yhwh's presence there. If Zion theology is present here, it fits more with the version developed by Isaiah the prophet in the Assyrian crisis. See Roberts, 'Yahweh's Foundation in Zion (Isa. 28:6)', pp. 39-40. Backhandedly Lam. 2.1-9 affirms Yhwh's potency theologically despite the fact that he has decimated his own city and religious centre.

b. *Lam. 2.10-12*

Whereas Lam. 2.6, 9 introduced the plight of the king, priest, prophet and leaders, Lam. 2.10-12 depicts the misery of the wider populace as well as the emotions of the observer, all of which are set in mourning language. These verses blend elements from the city-lament and lament. The substance of the observer's speech resonates with the contrast/reversal motif in the city-lament genre, while his tone verges on complaint over the present situation of his people, a typical element in the Hebrew lament.[49]

> 'The elders of the Daughter of Zion sat on the ground—they were silent.
> They placed ashes upon their heads;
> they girded themselves with mourning cloths.
> They bow their heads to the earth—the maidens of Jerusalem.
>
> My eyes fail with tears; my innards burn,
> My liver is poured out on the ground,
> on account of the breaking of my dear people;
> As little child and suckling languishes in the open plazas of the city.
>
> To their mother they say, 'Where is the grain and the wine?'
> As they faint like the wounded in the open plazas of the city,
> As their lives are poured out upon the lap of their mother'.

The blending of generic elements is matched by indicators of mourning. Various behaviours associated with mourning appear in v. 10: sitting upon the ground in silence (ישבו לארץ ידמו), pouring ashes upon the head (העלו עפר על־ראשם), girding oneself with mourning cloth (חגרו שקים), and bowing the head to the ground (הורידו לארץ ראשן). Pham suggests that the mourning depicted here is a ritual act that signifies repentance of sin.[50] Although possible, these actions may rather reflect non-penitential acts of mourning. The rite of penitence over sin is certainly one form of mourning, but not the only one in the OT. The language and the acts in both non-penitential and penitential mourning are the same. So, with a focus upon reversal, suffering and pain of the entire populace in these verses, the mourning here may be conceived of as grief over loss rather than penitence over sin.[51] The observer, too, joins in the mourning as his eyes fail with tears and he attempts (vainly) to comfort personified Jerusalem in Lam. 2.13: 'What shall I say for you, how shall I wail for you, dear Jerusalem?'

The cause for mourning is explicitly stated, as it is due to the breaking of the dear people of Jerusalem. Yhwh has unequivocally been affirmed as potent in Lam. 2.1-9, but it is his vitality in judgment against the people

49. Lee, *The Singers*, p. 148.

50. Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, p. 130.

51. But see the change in Lamentations 3. Olyan compares types in *Biblical Mourning*, pp. 19-21, pp. 65-96.

that produces pain in the observer. The term 'breaking' (שׁבר) in Lam. 2.11b recalls divine activity in Lam. 2.9a: 'he shattered (וישׁבר) her bars'. Lee argues שׁבר is a Leitwort used to depict the suffering of Judah both in Lamentations and the book of Jeremiah.[52] 'The daughter of my people' (בת־עמי) is a term that encompasses everyone mentioned up to this point:

Lam. 2.2c:	Princes
Lam. 2.3a:	Leaders of Israel
Lam. 2.4b:	Children
Lam. 2.6c:	King and priest
Lam. 2.9b:	King and princes
Lam. 2.9c:	Prophets
Lam. 2.10a:	Elders
Lam. 2.10c:	Maidens

'My dear people' (בת־עמי) is common in Jeremiah as an epithet for God's people (Jer. 4.11; 6.26; 8.11, 19, 21, 22, 23; 9.6; 14.17). V. 11 is very close to Jer. 8.21a: 'Because of the breaking of my dear people I am broken' (על־שׁבר בת־עמי השׁברתי). As with Jeremiah, the observer's pain derives from the suffering of Zion's people. The 'breaking' of Jeremiah in Jer. 8.21 and the anguish of the observer here in Lam. 2.11 both stem from the reality expressed in Jer. 4.6, the 'great break' of exile in 587 BCE. So Salters rightly suggests that the poet of Lamentations here may be leaning on Jeremianic tradition and interprets the pain of his people as a kind of fulfilment of the Jeremiah's announcement of exile.[53] This encyclopaedic content provides grounds for negotiating the 'breaking' of Zion's people.

Further, the observer's pain mirrors the pain of personified Jerusalem. Verse 11a almost quotes personified Jerusalem's description of inner turmoil in Lam. 1.20a through the repeated language חמרמרו מעי.[54] It is unlikely this repetition is accidental and it drives the reader to make the connection between the poems. The terminological replication reinforces the notion that the 'scream of Zion has, almost literally, become the scream of the poet'.[55]

Yet Linafelt's view collapses a distinction that exists between the speakers. Recurrence of חמרמרו מעי effectively draws attention to *different* sources of inner turmoil. Both the prepositions in 1.20 (כי) and 2.11 (על) reveal the sources of pain that create such anguish.[56] In Lam. 1.20 personi-

52. Lee, *The Singers*, p. 148, n. 62.

53. Salters, *Lamentations*, p. 147. See also the discussion of Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 147-48.

54. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, p. 52.

55. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, p. 52.

56. GKC §158*b*; GBHS §4.1.16(d).

fied Jerusalem's turmoil stems from the anxiety over her rebellion (כי מרו מריתי). In Lam. 2.11, the observer's turmoil stems from the breaking of his people (על־שבר בת־עמי).

Instead of reading Lam. 2.11 as hermeneutically *diminishing* the emphasis of Lam. 1.20, the verses are treated here as productively relating to one another in a distinctively open reading strategy. The reader may follow the 'rebellion' option and focus upon the pain that comes in divine punishment as a response to Jerusalem's sins (Lam. 1.3, 5, 8-9, 11c, 18a, 20a-b, 22b). On this reading, Lam. 2.1-11 becomes an enactment of the day of divine wrath. Alternatively, the reader may follow the 'breaking of the daughter of my people' option and draw from texts depicting victimization and abuse either by enemies (Lam. 1.2c, 3-4, 5c, 6b-c, 7, 8b, 9c, 12-16, 18b-c, 19a, 20c-22a; Lam. 2.1-11) or possibly Yhwh (Lam. 1.10). This latter reading highlights the desolation of God's people as a dominant source of pain. The poetry does not foreclose upon either and reveals interpretative fecundity in its openness.

Lam. 2.11c-12 rhetorically shifts its focus to the most vulnerable and helpless in society. The niphal infinitive that introduces Lam. 2.11c (בעטף) is one in a series of three temporal infinitive constructs[57] that depict the plight of Jerusalem's children in simultaneity with the observer's act of weeping. His eyes fail with tears and his liver is poured out, *as* he witnesses the children—little child and suckling (עולל ויונק)—languishing in the open plazas of the city (Lam. 2.11a, c).[58] The term עולל recalls עוללים in Lam. 1.5 and inverts the association, despite the fact that both picture the suffering of little children. Formerly the children went away into captivity (bound and oppressed), whereas in Lam. 2.11c they remain in the city's 'open plazas' (רחבות קריה), exposed and abandoned. Through the citation of children's speech in Lam. 2.12aβ, the reader not only sees their suffering but hears it as well.[59] Their mothers are helpless to prevent the deaths of their helpless children.

By following his admission of the source of his pain with a graphic and auditory depiction of the children's plight, the observer rhetorically shifts the focus from judgment (Lam. 2.1-9) to the reality and immediacy of human suffering. For *this* reason, the breaking of his dear people (especially the children) the observer's eyes fail with tears and his innards burn. The immediacy and horror of the suffering children is in focus. Linafelt is right to note that this horror rhetorically attracts the deity's attention and persuades him to act on their behalf, the kind of rhetoric typical of the lament.[60]

57. The others are בהתעטפם, Lam. 2.12b; בהשׁתפך, Lam. 2.12c. For the temporal infinitve construct, see GKC §114*e*; WO §36.2.2b; GBHS §3.4(b).

58. עולל ויונק occurs also in Jer. 44.7 and Ps. 8.3 (plural).

59. יאמרו introduces the childrens' speech (Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, p. 337).

60. Linafelt, *Lamentations*, pp. 52-54.

c. *Lam. 2.13-14*

The acrostic then moves the reader to the ל strophe, depicts behaviour characteristic of mourning rites, and evinces an element of the Mesopotamian city-lament. Lam. 2.13 reads:

> 'How can I strengthen you;[61] what can I compare to you, dear Jerusalem?
> What can I liken you to comfort you, dear maiden Zion?[62]
> For your break is as vast as the sea—who can heal you?'

Offering words of encouragement is typical of the comforter in the mourning rite[63] while the dialogical style between the observer and personified Jerusalem is similar to the dialogue between the narrator and the patron city-goddess in Mesopotamian city-laments.[64] It is unclear which aspect of the encyclopaedia the poetry actualizes at this point, but in either case it is clear that mourning and misery over devastation and loss remains central, specifically the loss of little children (Lam. 2.11c-12).

61. מה־אעידך is difficult. Following the *kethib*, אעידך is a hiphil verb from עוד, meaning 'to testify' or 'call as a witness'. LXX follows the *kethib*, 'What witness shall I bear of you' (Τι μαρτρησω σοι): See Gentry, 'Lamentations', p. 13. The Peshiṭta also reads the Hebrew *Vorlage* this way (Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 108). *Qere*, אעודך, is a qal imperfect verb from עוד, presumably derives from the adverb עוד, and according to Albrektson (following *BDB*), gains its primary meaning 'to repeat'. This would be the only instance of עוד in the qal stem in the OT, but Albrektson and House nevertheless translate אעודך: 'how can I repeat = produce yet another case of, name a parallel to you' (*BDB*, עוד, p. 728; Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 108; House, *Lamentations*, p. 371). Meinhold emends אעידך to אערך, 'to what can I liken you' (J. Meinhold, 'Threni 2,13', *ZAW* 15 [1895], p. 286). Hillers follows Meinhold (Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 100). Gordis disputes the emendation, as the orthography would have to be אערכך for the emendation to stand (Gordis, *Lamentations*, p. 164). Rudolph preferred the *kethib* and translated the verbal clause, 'was soll ich dir als Zeugnis, d.h. als Beleg, als Beispiel anführen'? (Rudolph, 'Der Text der Klagelieder', *ZAW* 56 [1938], p. 107). Gordis argues that the meaning of עוד in the hiphil is the same as the polel and hithpolel, thus translates אעידך, 'how shall I fortify (strengthen) you' (*HALOT*, IIעוד; Gordis, *Lamentations*, p. 164; 'A Note on Lamentations II 13', *JTS* 34 [1933], pp. 162-63). Rudolph follows Gordis (*Klagelieder*, p. 220). 'How shall I strengthen you' (מה־אעידך) couples with 'and how shall I comfort you' (ואנחמך), while 'what can I compare to you' (מה אדמה־לך) parallels 'what can I liken to you' (מה אשוה־לך), forming a chiasm, noted by Gordis (*Lamentations*, p. 164). This is how the present study understands the first two cola of Lam. 2.13, though reading with the *qere* is sensible (Albrektson and House) as is אעידך in its primary sense, 'to bear witness' (LXX and Peshiṭta).

62. LXX reads τις σωσει σε και παρακαλεσει, 'who shall deliver you and comfort you'? However, 'What can I liken to you' (מה־אעידך), remains sensible (Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 73).

63. Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 133-34.

64. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 33.

Westermann believes this verse diverges from the normal Hebrew form of lament and indicates a new theological awareness: that sin against the Lord leads to the suffering of the innocent.[65] While he may be correct, the argument advanced here takes a different tack. It appears that sin lies in the background, as it only appears explicitly in the next verse. Theologically, reading the poem with the acrostic, the verse and poem up to this point foregrounds the *enormity of suffering* as a profound problem, rather than sin. Linafelt provocatively and astutely avers, 'The questions of verse 13 are rhetorical: only the inadequate can be said; only the inadequate comparison can be made; there is no healing for a breach as vast as the sea'.[66]

And suffering is compounded here because of the utter failure of comfort. Although he attempts to become the comforter that both he and personified Jerusalem declared absent in Lamentations 1,[67] even here consolation remains vacuous. The city's wound remains vast and incurable. The observer's words recall Yhwh's speech in Jer. 30.12, 15: 'your break is incurable, your injury past healing' (אנוש לשברך נחלה מכתך), 'why do you cry out over your break, your misery is incurable' (מה־תזעק על־שברך אנוש מכאבך). The comparison between the 'sea' and city's destruction reinforces its magnitude.[68] Yet at least the observer has *attempted* comfort, even with vain words. His actions rhetorically contrast with Yhwh, who is confirmed as an absent 'comforter' in Lam. 1.16. The deity is the ever-present 'foe' and 'enemy' (vv. 4-5).

A focus on suffering and divine negligence in comforting Zion may appear to connote a lack of faith in Yhwh. However, the opposite is the case. The poetry backhandedly affirms Yhwh as healer (מי ירפא־לך) with its lament in Lam. 2.13c, further building upon allusions to Jeremiah 30. Jer. 30.17 affirms Yhwh as healer as he declares, 'For I will bring health to you, and from your wounds I will heal you' (כי אעלה ארכה לך וממכותיך ארפאך). In Lam. 2.13c, the observer draws from the Lord's own speech in Jeremianic tradition, rhetorically designed for Yhwh to overhear the lament over Zion and respond to the lament *as healer*. As O'Connor notes, 'Who can heal you […] is a rhetorical question aimed directly at Yhwh […the] only possible healer is God, but God is the very one who assaulted and smashed her in the first place'.[69] As a result of this contentious speech, the theology of judgment and wrath that was brought out in Lam. 2.1-9 is questioned as the enormity of the people's suffering, as well as the need for comfort and healing, is brought to light. This all is designed to be (over)heard by the divine judge, who is the *only* one who is able to comfort and heal the city's wound.

65. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 132 = *Lamentations*, p. 154.
66. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, p. 54.
67. Lam. 1.2b, 7b, 9b, 16b, 17a, 21a.
68. Bergant, *Lamentations*, p. 73; Salters, *Lamentations*, pp. 153-54.
69. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, p. 38.

The acrostic advances the reader past the focus upon suffering children and city to the observer's depiction of the sin of her prophets in Lam. 2.14. God's wrath against the people, as well as their pain as his victims, has been in view until here, where iniquity is explicitly mentioned for the first time and blame is assigned to the prophets (נביאך), whose false visions have been followed by destruction. This confession complicates the previous depiction of the prophets in Lam. 2.9c—they were victims of divine wrath. Yhwh was the source of punishment up to this point, yet in Lam. 2.14, false prophecy led to the disaster, thus in the verse the cause of the disaster (or blame for it) is uncertain, much like Lamentations 1 and the sources of pain: sin, enemies and Yhwh.

The verse alludes to Jeremiah and recalls the various denunciations of false prophecy throughout his preaching.[70] Jer. 5.31 warns, 'The prophets prophesy with falsehood' (הנביאים נבאו־בשׁקר), and 6.13-14 states, 'And from the prophet to the priest, everyone does falsehood. They have healed the breaking of my people as if it were insignificant; saying, 'Peace, Peace!' when there is no peace' (ומנביא ועד־כהן כלו אשׁה שׁקר וירפאו את־שׁבר עמי על־נקלה לאמר שׁלום שׁלום ואין שׁלום). The Jeremianic intertext in Lam. 2.14 evocatively outlines the utter failure of prophecy as Zion's prophets spoke false and deceptive words that led to punishment and exile:

> 'Your prophets saw for you emptiness and whitewash.
> And they did not expose your iniquity to restore your fortunes,[71]
> And they saw for you worthless and misleading pronouncements'.

Provan perceptively notes the use of ambiguity in this verse to emphasize the failure of the prophets (both at present and in the past) as well as the relationship between sin and punishment.[72] Ambiguity arises from the polyvalence of עון. The term can either mean 'iniquity' or 'punishment', and its polyvalence here highlights the comprehensive failure of the prophets. '[The poet] believed that, had the iniquity been revealed, the people could have changed their ways and averted disaster'.[73]

The second half of Lam. 2.14b affirms the blame pronounced upon the prophets through the usage of the language of 'restoration of fortunes' (להשׁיב שׁביתך). Technically, this (often prophetic) speech concerns a change from a poor state of affairs to a restoration, not necessarily back to the status quo, but to the way things always should have been. So this language appears in Jer. 32.44 and speaks of God's activity of 'restoring the fortunes' of his people. The question, as Salters perceptively notes, is whether the critique

70. Jer. 2.8; 6.13-14; 8.10-11; 14.13-16; 23.9-40; 27.14-28.17.
71. Read with *qere* שׁבותך.
72. Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 73-74.
73. Salters, *Lamentations*, p. 156.

against the prophets is that they failed to expose the peoples' sin *prior to* the exile and destruction *or after* the exile. He opts for a failure of the prophets to expose sins and restore God's people *prior* to the exile, and the v. 14 ruminates on that failure.[74] Either interpretation exposes the past and present impotency of the prophets: formerly they did not expose iniquity, sin and the punishment which would ensue, and this failure led them into captivity (Lam. 1.3, 5). And at present they are unable to return the people from sin with efficacious vision so as to restore their fortunes. This is a complete condemnation of the prophets that refocuses the plight of suffering children raised in Lam. 2.11-12 and sets blame squarely on the sin of prophets rather than upon Yhwh, as in Lam. 2.13.

Blaming the prophets, rather than Yhwh, for the present state is advanced further through the semantic polyvalence of מדוחים. This is a *hapax logomenon*, likely from נדח, meaning 'to seduce or mislead', as in Deut. 30.17, where the Lord describes the curse that comes if the hearts of the people are 'seduced' or 'misled' (ונדחת) by following other gods. However, the term can connote 'banishment' or 'expulsion'. The LXX renders the term as 'banishments'.[75] Lee recognizes the affinities between Jeremiah's use of נדח in his denouncement of false prophets and מדוחים in Lam. 2.14c. She states, 'In Jer. 23.12, Yhwh says the prophets will be 'expelled'. This imagery suggests punishment of the prophets congruent with the way in which the prophets' oracles caused the 'evicting' of the people in Lam. 2.14 […] In Jer. 30.17, in the salvation oracle to [Daughter] Zion, Yhwh will 'restore her health' and 'heal' her, because "they have called you an *outcast* (נדחה)"'.[76] The seductive words of the prophets have led the people to banishment. Yet read with the intertext of Jer. 30.17, healing from the sin of the prophets comes through Yhwh, congruent with Lam. 2.13.

d. *Lam. 2.15-17*

The acrostic takes the reader past the sin of the prophets to Lam. 2.15-17, where the focus shifts to further delineate Jerusalem's ruin and mocking. Scornful words are placed in the mouths of 'passers-by' (כל-עבר דרך) in Lam. 2.16. This phrase in Hebrew is identical to Lam. 1.12, where the 'passers-by' appear as neutral parties or possibly even the reader to whom personified Jerusalem appeals. Yet here, they are sinister parties.[77] They scoff her downfall by clapping their hands, hissing and shaking their heads

74. Salters, *Lamentations*, p. 157; Dobbs-Allsopp thinks both ideas are intended (*Lamentations*, p. 97).

75. Gentry, 'Lamentations', p. 13.

76. Lee, *The Singers*, p. 152 n. 84.

77. The observer goes on to identify them in Lam. 2.16 as 'all your enemies' (כל-אויביך).

over Jerusalem, and verbally taunting her: 'Is this the city that was called "perfection of beauty, joy of the whole earth"' (הזאת העיר שיאמרו כלילת יפי משוש לכל־הארץ)?[78] The intertext to Pss. 48.3 (יפה נוף משוש כל־הארץ) helps to elucidate former honour and present shame. Passers-by from whom Jerusalem begged to witness her misery (Lam. 1.12) now answer her pleas with taunting.

Repetition, too, plays a part in Lam. 2.16, raising questions for the reader about the agent of the city's destruction? √בלע ('we have destroyed', בלענו) recalls Lam. 2.2a, 5a-b, 8b, where the term is used to depict divine destruction in his day of wrath.[79] Yet in Lam. 2.16, the enemies take credit for Jerusalem's destruction: *they* destroyed (בלענו) Jerusalem, in their own day of wrath (אך זה היום)—a day for which they hoped (שקוינו), obtained (מצאנו), and finally witnessed (ראינו). The enemies' perspective contrasts against the perspectives of both personified Jerusalem and the observer, who confirm divine agency in destruction. This contrast briefly ambiguates the cause of destruction, enabling interpretative space for the reader to decide between them or, equally, leave the question of the agent of destruction open.

It may be that because the statement 'we have destroyed' is inscribed in the enemies' speech (אמרו בלענו), it is thereby unreliable testimony, and the former confession of Lam. 1.17 sets the record straight—Yhwh is in control of the disaster.[80] Still, this interpretation moves too quickly through the poetry and neglects the change in alphabetic acrostic in Lam. 2.16. The introduction of the פ strophe here diverges from the normal ע–פ order of the alphabet as displayed in Lamentations 1. This divergence may only represent variation in the Hebrew alphabet; a number of texts and text traditions follow the פ–ע order.[81] Following the MT, the reader notes the change in the

78. Re'emi mistakenly believes the passers-by 'were moved' or empathize with Jerusalem's degradation (*God's People in Crisis*, p. 97); our analysis reveals otherwise as they taunt her demise. Westermann rightly argues the epithets 'perfection of beauty' and 'joy of the whole earth' were commonly heard titles for Jerusalem used by Jerusalemites in their temple songs (*Die Klagelieder*, p. 134 = *Lamentations*, p. 156).

79. See exegesis above.

80. F.B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (NAC, 16; Nashville, TN: B&H, 1993), p. 465.

81. Prov. 31.25-26, Lamentations 3 and 4, an inscription on a storage jar from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, and an alphabet inscription at 'Izbet Ṣarṭah each follow the ע–פ sequence (F.M. Cross, 'Newly found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts', *BASOR* 238 [1980], pp. 8-30; Z. Meshel, 'Did Yahweh have a Consort? The New Religious Inscriptions from the Sinai', *BAR* 5/2 [1979], pp. 30-31; A. Demsky and M. Kockavi, 'An Alphabet from the Days of the Judges', *BAR* 4/3 [1978], p. 23). The MT, LXX, and Targum follow the פ–ע order; 4QLam[a] follows the ס strophe with פ strophe, though this evidence is less conclusive as the ע strophe is lacking (Cross, 'Studies', pp. 134-35, 148). The Lucian Greek recension of Lamentations, the Peshiṭta, four of Kennicott's Hebrew manuscripts and one of de Rossi's

alphabetic sequences between Lamentations 1 and 2, bringing attention to the strophe. Read in this manner, the change slows down the reading process and creates space for the reader to consider the meaning of the strophe, part of which is the question of divine agency of the city's destruction.

As soon as this interpretative space is gained, however, the acrostic moves the reader forward to the ע strophe, which affirms divine agency for destruction though complicates the issue of divine justice. In Lam. 2.17, the observer says, 'Yhwh has done what he had planned; he fulfilled his word (אמרתו), what he commanded (צוה) from days of old. He tore down and did not pity (הרס ולא חמל)'. On a straightforward read, the verse clearly affirms God's role in destruction. Repetition of language and allusion to Jeremiah confirms this: צוה is repeated from Lam. 1.17, where destruction is a result of Yhwh's command; 'He tore down and did not pity' (הרס ולא חמל) recalls Lam. 2.2, where the Lord swallowed, did not pity (לא חמל), and tore down in his anger (הרס בעברתו) the fortified cities of dear Judah. Further, Lee recognizes that the usage of זמם is peculiar only to Jeremiah, Zechariah, and in Lamentations, and in all cases where the term is associated with Yhwh's activity in Jeremiah, it is used to depict his divine plan for destruction.[82] זמם is used in this way in Lam. 2.17.

Although confirming divine agency, through the Piel verb בצע, the poetry potentially complicates the notion of divine justice. בצע is rare and primarily describes actions associated with self-interest and violence, in both verbal and nominal forms.[83] The poetry could be drawing again from Jeremianic language, as in Jer. 22.17, where the Lord condemns the King Jehoiakim for self-interest and gratuitous murder: 'For your eyes and your heart (are set on nothing) except upon personal gain (כי־אם־על־בצעך) and upon shedding innocent blood (דם־הנקי לשפוך)'. This is how the term is used, both in nominal and verbal forms, in 36 out of 39 usages in the OT. With the intertextual connection between בצע in Lam. 2.17 and בצעך in Jer. 22.17 in view, Lee believes the observer's affirmation of Yhwh's agency complicates theodicy in Lamentations: the Lord's 'word' (אמרתו) is unjust, accomplished by gratuitous violence or even self-interest.[84]

This possibility raises questions in the reader about the sufficiency of theodicy as the overriding theological position advanced in the poetry. On the information the reader has garnered up to this point, it cannot be gainsaid that Jerusalem had sinned and committed offences (notably whoredom

follow the פ–ע order; the divergent text traditions may reflect two Hebrew text traditions (Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 114).

82. Jer. 4.28; 23.20; 30.24. Lee, *The Singers*, p. 153.

83. Exod. 18.21; 1 Sam. 8.3; Ps 10.3; Prov. 1.19; 15.27; 28.16; Jer. 6.13; 8.10; 22.17; Ezek. 22.12, 13, 27; 33.31; Mic. 4.13; Hab. 2.9.

84. Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 153-54.

and false prophecy) that were destructive, leaving her anxious (Lam. 1.5b, 9a, 11c, 14a, 18a, 20a; 2.14). It is clear also that in his day of wrath the Lord enacted punishment against sin (Lam. 2.14). Yet the suffering of exposed and dying little children (and infants) described in Lam. 1.5c; 2.11c-12 as well as recurrent descriptions of the oppression and abuse by enemies in Lam. 1.3, 5b, 6b-c, 7c-d, 8b, 9c, 10, 16c, 17c-d, 21; 2.15-16 and 17c raises questions about the justice of this activity. As often as Lam. 2.13-17 alludes to Jeremiah up to this point, it is plausible that the poetry could exploit this material to challenge the reader to re-consider divine justice: like Jehoiakim's activity (Jer. 22.17), perhaps Yhwh's punishment has been done out of self-interest (בצע), weaving another anti-theodic thread in the book.[85]

Alternatively, the use of בצע is used three times in the OT to communicate the end of divine punishment.[86] Isa. 10.12 conveys this idea: 'And when the Lord has completed (יבצע) all his work (מעשׂהו) with Mount Zion and with Jerusalem, he will punish[87] the fruit of the boastful heart of the king of Assyria and the haughtiness of his eyes'. In this instance, יבצע occurs in the Piel stem, as in Lam. 2.17. Both texts, too, refer to the fulfillment of divine judgment: either his word (אמרתו, Lam. 2.17) or his work (מעשׂהו, Isa. 10.12). Drawing from the semantics of בצע in Isaiah 10 rather than its predominant denotation of 'self-interest', the meaning of בצע in Lam. 2.17 radically changes. In this reading, '[Yhwh] fulfilled his word' (בצע אמרתו) affirms divine punishment while simultaneously anticipating its *completion*. The completion of punishment appears clearly in Lam. 4.21-22, and will be assessed in Chapter 8, below.

However, here the poetry leaves the question open. This especially comes to light as Lam. 2.17c concludes once again with a portrayal of Judah disgraced and destroyed and the enemy elevated above her as he rejoices (וישׂמח עליך אויב). Even if there is anticipation for the end of punishment, at present, enemies remain. Through the poetry's use of בצע in conjunction with the logic of the remainder of the poem, the reader is allowed to consider both theodic and anti-theodic proposals.

e. *Lam. 2.18-19*

In Lam. 2.18-19 a speaker pleads with personified Jerusalem to appeal to the Lord over the lives of her little children. The verses read:

> 'Their heart cried out to the Lord, the wall of the Daughter of Zion.
> Let tears stream down like a river day and night.
> Do not give yourself rest; do not allow your eyes to be still/quiet![88]

85. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 29.
86. Isa. 10.12; Lam. 2.17; Zech. 4.9.
87. Following LXX 'he will punish' (יפקד) rather than MT 'I will punish' (אפקד).
88. Qal imperfect verb from √דמם. Unusual in the way it is related to the pupil of

> Rise up, cry out in the night at start of the night watches.
> Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord.
> Raise your palms to him over the life of your little children,
> Those languishing with hunger in the head of every street'.

The difficulties of syntax, nominal and verbal agreement, and obscure language in Lam. 2.18 have proved to be contentious among scholars, leading many to argue for textual corruption and thereby emendation.[89] If the path of emendation is taken, Gordis provides the most plausible and elegant solution. Yet as Provan notes, the LXX and all other ancient versions support the MT.[90] Apparently the versions thought the text as it stands is plausible. There is no Masoretic notation to point toward emendation, either. How, then, does the text read as it stands?

In the reading process, the semantic and syntactic difficulties in Lam. 2.18 have the effect of slowing down the linear movement of the reader, forcing one to consider the meaning of the verses. Following the MT, the heart of an unidentified group of speakers cries out to the Lord (Lam. 2.18aα)—that is, disparate entities have been subsumed into a collective (heart) to address the deity with an evocative appeal. This remains understandable, though syntactically awkward. The identity of the collective 'heart' is unknown. It could represent any of the groups of people within Jerusalem who have been mentioned up to this point: princes (Lam. 2.2c), leaders of Israel (Lam. 2.3a), children (Lam. 2.4b), king and priest (Lam. 2.6c), king and princes (Lam. 2.9b), prophets (Lam. 2.9c), elders (Lam. 2.10a), maidens (Lam. 2.10c), little children and sucklings (Lam. 2.11c), or even the collective 'my dear people' (Lam. 2.11b).[91] The vagueness lends itself to the reader 'filling in' the antecedent. How one fills in the antecedent remains variable, depending upon how one reads the text.

the eye (בת־עינך, see also Ps. 17.8), the repetition of the root here contrasts against its previous usage in Lam. 2.10a and the silence of the elders.

89. Gordis emends to, 'Pour out your heart' (צקי לבך), where צקי derives from √יצק (*Lamentations*, pp. 166-67). Hillers follows suit (*Lamentations*, p. 101). Westermann follows BHS and emends to, 'Cry aloud to [Yhwh], lament, O maiden daughter Zion' (צעקי לך אל־יהוה המי בתולת בת־ציון): *Die Klagelieder* pp. 124, 126 = *Lamentations*, pp. 143, 146. McDaniel emends צעק to צעקי and understands the *mem* on לבם as an enclitic mem rather than a 3 masc. pl. pronominal suffix, thus rendering the line 'Cry out from the heart to the Lord' (Thomas F. McDaniel, 'Philological Studies in Lamentations, II', *Bib* 49 [1968], pp. 203-204). Albretkson offers לבה, 'revenge', as an emendation of לבם, so that the clause reads, 'Cry out of revenge to the Lord', or if with a suffix (לבתם), 'Cry out about their rage (the enemies') to the Lord' (*Studies in the Text*, pp. 116-17).

90. Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 75.

91. Renkema thinks 'their heart' refers to the 'little children' in Lam. 2.19c (*Lamentations*, p. 308); this is possible, but it could only be known to the reader after working through v.18. I maintain the reader searches the repertoire of peoples mentioned already in the poem to discover the antecedent.

The semantic difficulty of חומת בת־ציון in Lam. 2.18aβ is also an interpretative challenge. Is this a vocative construct chain or an appositional genitive? If the former, then the poet 'apostrophizes the walls, and personifies the city, so that the stich b is virtually an appositional genitive, 'the wall, namely, Zion''.[92] Yet in this reading, the collective appeals to God only then to address a different party, namely 'the wall of the Daughter of Zion'. This is awkward, at best. The latter translation is preferred by Provan and Gottwald. They understand חומת בת־ציון as an appositional genitive, describing the protective power of the Lord; both cite Zech. 2.9 as evidence.[93] On this reading what follows in Lam. 2.18b-19 is the content of the collective cry to the Lord. This understanding remains difficult because it supposes the group directs their address towards the deity only to urge him to appeal to *himself* in Lam. 2.19b ('Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord')!

A way to circumvent this impasse is to see Lam. 2.18a as the observer's explanatory aside to the reader depicting the cry of the people to the Lord, after which he then resumes his appeal to personified Jerusalem (Lam. 2.18b-19).[94] However, the resumption of speech equally could fit in the mouth of the unidentified collective voice that cried to the Lord in Lam. 2.18a who then addresses personified Jerusalem, urging her to pray to the deity as they do! Ultimately, the speaker remains ambiguous in the verses, but for reading purposes, the aberration of the four cola in Lam. 2.19 retards the regular rhythm of the acrostic. In Lam. 1.7, the only other four cola strophe in Lamentations, the realities of no helper, the fall of her people to an enemy, and the enemies' mocking were ever present. In Lam. 2.19, the realities remain, though personified Jerusalem is encouraged to vociferously complain to the deity about them.

The speaker calls upon personified Jerusalem to cry out, weep, stand up in the public square, and pour out her heart before the face of the Lord to address the issue of the lives of her little children who are languishing and exposed. עוללים, שׁפכי and העטופים recall Lam. 2.11-12 and the plight of the children, reinforcing the notion that their plight represents an injustice to which God must surely respond. Renkema summarizes, 'Given the fact that God let himself be compelled to assist his people in need, such cries of distress also applied to him… The person of faith directed his or her cry of distress to Yhwh, knowing that he was attentive to the cries of those in need and was in a position to help'.[95]As the lives of the children ebb away (בהשׁתפך, Lam. 2.12), Zion is to pour out her very heart (שׁפכי כמים לבך,

92. Gordis, *Lamentations*, p. 167.

93. Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 76; Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, p. 12.

94. The observer, then, re-addresses the reader from his initial speech in Lam. 2.1-12. So Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 76-77.

95. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 309.

Lam. 2.18) to God in their defense, for their help. Unlike the elders of Lam. 2.10, who are silent (ידמו), personified Jerusalem is admonished to *be active and vocal* (אל־תדם), as she has not spoken up to this point: 'Jerusalem's prayer of tears must be oriented to him alone'.[96]

f. *Lam. 2.20-22*

Zion offers her response through complaint in Lam. 2.20-22. The imperatives to Yhwh in Lam. 2.20a are matched by second person verbs in Lam. 2.21c, 22a so that these verses can be seen as the *Anklage des Gottes* in the lament: they directly address the deity over present distress.[97] Yet equally they resemble the 'weeping goddess' motif in the city-lament genre, as personified Zion here perhaps most clearly can be seen as the goddess-mother pleading the case of her children, the city's inhabitants.[98] As in Lam. 1.20-22, the complaint concerns the present suffering of the people, especially the vulnerable:

> 'Look, O Yhwh, and consider whom you have dealt with in this way!
> Should mothers eat their fruit, little children of health and beauty?[99]
> Should he be slaughtered in the sanctuary of the Lord, priest and prophet?
>
> Young and old lay down on to the ground of the open places;
> Maidens and young men fell by the sword.
> You slaughtered in the day of your wrath, you butchered,[100] you did not pity.
>
> You called as on a festal day, terrors from every side.
> There was not—in the day of the wrath of Yhwh—fugitive or survivor.
> (Those) who I brought forth and reared, my enemy destroyed'.

Repetition of day of Yhwh language affirms divine control over the events of judgment: ביום אפו (Lam. 2.1c) // ביום אף־יהוה (Lam. 2.20b); Lam. 1.15, קרא עלי מועד; Lam. 2.22a, תקרא כיום מועד. Yet his active role has brought utter human catastrophe and loss of future, evidenced by the merism of

96. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 315.

97. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 135 = *Lamentations*, p. 158.

98. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 80; Contra Jahnow, who argues these verses exemplify the communal dirge genre (*Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, pp. 174-75). The present study doubts the existence of the communal dirge.

99. אם functions interrogatively, in the fashion of a prayer or entreaty, in the second and third cola of Lam. 2.20. See GKC §149*c*; §107*n*, *p*, *r*; §109*b*, *k*; §151*e*; JM §114g, h; §155l, m; GBHS §4.3.2.(g).

100. טבחת derives from √טבח, which has connotations of in the OT of butchering an animal at a slaughterhouse for consumption, as in Isa. 53.7; Prov. 7.22. Here, as in Isa. 34.2, 6; 65.12; Jer. 48.15; 50.27; Ezek. 21.15, the regular meaning of the term is transformed to depict the horrific killing of people and nations in prophecies of divine judgment.

the falling of young men and elders (נער וזקן), the death of teenagers in the prime of life (בתולתי ובחרי), and the ascendancy of enemies (מגורי מסביב, Lam. 2.22a; איבי כלם, Lam. 2.22c).

Despite this confirmation of divine control, these verses have the effect of redressing the justice of his judgment, rhetorically drawing Yhwh's attention (and the reader's) to the plight of the people and their unthinkable situation. Personified Zion uses the particularly Jeremianic idiom מגורי מסביב, 'terrors from every side' (Jer. 6.25; 20.3, 10; 46.5; 49.29). In Jer. 6.25; 20.3; 46.5 and 49.29, it depicts a situation of divine agency in the destruction. And yet, in the confession of Jeremiah (Jer. 20.10) as well as Ps. 31.13, the phrase מגורי מסביב depicts the slander and mocking of god's servant (Jeremiah or the psalmist, respectively). Zion's use of the Jeremianic idiom affirms divine judgement against her with 'terrors from every side'. Yet read with Jer. 20.10 and Ps. 31.13 as intertexts, Zion is in need of divine deliverance from an oppressive situation. Both positions are viable for Lam. 2.20-22.

Repetition of formulaic address links Lam. 2.20 with Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a, and brings a different focus to the appeals already offered and also raises the question of divine justice. The triumph of the enemies (Lam. 1.9c), the city's own thoughtlessness (Lam. 1.11c), and her anxiety over sin (Lam. 1.20a) contrast against the appeal in Lam. 2.20a, where *Yhwh's* activity focuses the appeal: he must consider what *he* has done! The interrogatives that follow the dual imperative formula of Lam. 2.20a rhetorically function to draw Yhwh's attention to his actions that have led both to cannibalism and the slaughtering of his representatives on the earth (priest and prophet) in his own house, the sanctuary (מקדשׁ). Even the prophets, who have been blamed for the destruction for seeing false and deceptive visions (Lam. 2.14), are portrayed in Zion's complaint as victims of divine wrath; this shocking reversal complicates any flat notion a sin-punishment relationship. Truly the prophets *are guilty of sin*, both before God and their fellow Judahites for leading them astray, but in personified Jerusalem's complaint, the justice of the punishment of sinful prophets is questioned—should this happen?

In essence, Yhwh's actions described in Lam. 2.1-12 are redressed by personified Jerusalem. She brings her complaint to him through a 'horrific pun'[101] that occurs between עוללת and עללי, juxtaposing once again the justice of Yhwh's activity against the plight of the little children in Jerusalem, a connection already made in Lam. 2.11. The wordplay drives the reader to consider the propriety of Yhwh's dealings (עוללת) with her, in that it has led to a situation where the gruesome imagery of cannibalism is realized. Little children have already been depicted as suffering in Lam. 1.5c (עולליה), and

101. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 99.

languishing in Lam. 2.11c (עולל), yet here their plight is worse: their own mothers consume them (עללי). The depiction of cannibalism as a result of warfare is common in OT literature, but nonetheless appalling.[102] Repetition of √עלל also recalls divine activity in Lam. 1.12, 22a-b, and leads Dobbs-Allsopp to recognize the correspondence between Lam. 1.12b and 2.20a: 'which you have done to me' (Lam. 1.12b) // 'to whom you have dealt with in this way' (Lam. 2.20a).[103]

She uses previously spoken language about Yhwh's day of anger[104] and turns it on its head: although he enacted destruction, surely he will recognize the inequity and injustice of it! Hillers says, 'Granted that Jerusalem had sinned, the actual conquest brought ghastly extremes of suffering, which seemed to those involved to be out of proportion to any guilt of the sufferers'.[105] Jerusalem's questions function rhetorically to get the deity to 'look and consider' the justice of his actions. Simultaneously, through recurrence of language, the questions prompt the reader to consider: is the deity's dealing (עוללת) with Zion right, or is there something fundamentally wrong with his judgment?

Zion's speech in Lam. 2.20-22 remains theologically provocative. The presence of this type of speech leads Brandscheidt to believe that a Deuteronomic redactor inserted the central core of Lamentations 3 in order to theologically correct it.[106] In the history of interpretation, the Targum likely reads against its parent text, providing a theological corrective to Zion's complaint. In Targum Lam. 2.20c, the translator introduces a response to Zion's speech by 'the Attribute of Justice', God himself. The Attribute of Justice responds, 'Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the temple of the Lord, as when you killed Zechariah son of Iddo, the High Priest and faithful prophet in the Temple of the Lord on the Day of Atonement because he told you not to do evil before the Lord?'[107] Of course the Targum has its own intentions when translating, not least to promote Torah adherence and to vindicate God's justice,[108] but it is interesting that at this verse the translator is compelled to interpret in a way that deflects Zion's focused complaint about divine injustice.[109]

102. 2 Kgs 26.29; Deut. 28.52-7; Jer. 19.1-9; Ezek. 5.10.

103. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 99.

104. ויהרג (Lam. 2.4b) // יהרג (Lam. 2.20c) // הרגת (Lam. 2.21c); לא חמל (Lam 2.2a) // לא חמלת (Lam. 2.21c).

105. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 108.

106. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenlied*, pp. 344-52; *Das Buch der Klagelieder*, pp. 154.

107. Christian M.M. Brady, 'Vindicating God: The Intent of the Targum Lamentations', *JAB* 3 (2001), pp. 34-35.

108. Brady, 'Vindicating God', pp. 27-40.

109. Alternatively, Linafelt thinks the Targum translator highlights the emptiness of

It says something about the controversial nature of this speech. The juxtaposition between divine wrath in Lam. 2.1-12 and Zion's distinctive complaint against it (Lam. 2.20-22) leads Westermann to state: 'Das Zusammengehören vom beidem, die Polarität der Ersprechung des einen zum anderen macht Thr 2 zu einem einzigartigen Zeugnis des Redens zu Gott im Alten Testament'.[110] Vociferous resistance against divine wrath is an appropriate way to talk to God in Lam. 2.20-22. Yet what makes it appropriate is its rhetorical logic: the complaint can protest against divine injustice because it is rhetorically grounded in a tacit belief *in the overriding justice that permeates Yhwh's character*. In this way, two theologies can be espoused simultaneously. Perceived injustice of divine wrath may be affirmed, described, yet resisted through complaint; this theology only becomes sensible if the poet believed that through the rhetoric of complaint, Yhwh would be moved to act, even against his own actions.

The theological challenge of Zion's complaint cannot go unnoticed. From Lam. 1.5, 9c, 10, 16c; 2.13 and 17, potential protest against (in)justice of God's activity has been raised for the reader; but in Lam. 2.20-22, these threads of protestation are given a full attention. Interpretatively, the reader has the opportunity to read Lamentations through Zion's complaint in Lam. 2.20-22, and the 'intention of the work' culminates into resistance over divine injustice and suffering, especially the suffering of the city's little children.[111] Dobbs-Allsopp states that 'It is in the likes of [Zion], hurt and hurting as she is but able to rise in the midst of her suffering to confront her God with the felt wrongness of that suffering, that the poem finally stakes its chance for survival and new life'.[112]

And yet there is no attempt to assert independence from God, and this remains fundamental to the logic of the complaint. Dobbs-Allsopp thinks the shift away from direct address in Lam. 2.22b-c portrays Zion as if she 'begins to slowly turn and walk away, perhaps shaking her head in utter disgust. The effect is strengthened, contradictorily, by the subsidence of rage, the lack of the felt need to address God directly, face to face'.[113] Yet the tacit hope of Zion's complaint is that God will be moved *by* the complaint to enact his justice. She does not 'walk away' from the deity, but rather challenges him for justice with a hope in his deliverance. This appeal, in

divine speech. Because Zion responds to the Attribute of Justice with hope for a future in the messiah (yet unrealized) the Targum emphasizes the persistence of Yhwh's antagonism against his people (especially the little children) rather than his justice (Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, pp. 95-96).

110. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 136 = *Lamentations*, p. 159.

111. Lee, Dobbs-Allsopp, Linafelt, O'Connor, Middlemas, Blumenthal, and Hillers interpret the book in this manner.

112. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 104.

113. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 102.

fact, depends upon the image of Yhwh as a divine judge, who will hear the complaint and respond in justice to it. With this challenge, Lamentations 2 concludes.

3. *Conclusion*

This chapter concludes with a catalogue of the ways Lamentations 2 exploits form and genre, poetics, and the acrostic structure to open various interpretative vistas for the reader. In Lamentations 2 the linear progression of the acrostic formally ties this poem together and associates it with the previous poem. Counterbalancing the forward movement of the acrostic, poetics tend to create a reflexive movement for the reader. Lamentations 2 differs slightly from Lamentations 1 in the choice and placement of encyclopaedic content that it 'blows up'. Whereas the phenomenology of mourning was prominent in the opening lines of Lamentations 1 and referred to personified Jerusalem, such usage only occurs later in Lam. 2.10-13, depicting the inhabitants of the city and the observer. The difference brings divine judgment into focus at the beginning of Lamentations 2 to rhetorically respond to it in the speeches of the observer and Zion.

a. *Form and Genre*

As in Lamentations 1, various formal and generic elements are woven together in the poetic tapestry of Lamentations 2. The dirge introduces the poem, with its characteristic איכה, only to subvert the reader's expectations and move into language similar in tone to prophetic judgment speech centering upon God's 'day' in Lam. 2.1b-9. A major difference between prophetic speech and that of Lamentations, however, is the former awaits God's judgment while the latter presents divine judgment as having already occurred. Still blending of formal and generic elements diverges from Lamentations 1 and emphasizes the surety of divine wrath and judgment. Moreover, in comparison with divine portrayal in the city-laments, divine portrayal in Lamentations 2 effectively collapses the roles of the high-god (Enlil) and patron-deity (Nanna) to Yhwh; he is seen as the authoritative god who decrees Jerusalem's destruction (in the place of Enlil) and the patron-deity who abandons their sanctuary (Nanna). This collapse effectively promulgates a hope for future worship—though fundamentally different to what it had been—as Yhwh's vitality and authority is affirmed. Yet elements of the lament blends into the poem as well, particularly the *Anklage des Gottes* (Lam. 2.10-12, 20-22).

b. *Poetics*

Repetition is stylistically prominent in Lamentations 2. The poem repeats elements throughout and it exploits and builds upon the poetry of Lamentations 1. As with Lamentations 1, repetition functions primarily in two ways:

intensification and combination. Yet the combinatory-refocusing function figures prominently in this poem:

Function: Intensification

1. To emphasize suffering:
   a. עולל, Lam. 2.11c (Lam. 1.5c): heightens focus on the persistence of toddler's suffering.
   b. הלכו +לפני, Lam. 1.5c, 6c, 18c: suffering of inhabitants.
   c. √נחם, Lam. 2.13b (Lam. 1.2b, 7c, 9b, 16b, 17a, 21a): failed comfort and persistence of mourning.

2. To emphasize judgment:
   a. בלע, Lam. 2.2a, 5a-b, 8b: focus upon Yhwh's active role in punishment.
   b. יום, Lam. 2.1c, 16c (Lam. 1.12c, 21c): focus upon the day of the Lord—its judgment and effects.
   c. √שׁבר, Lam. 2.9a, 11b, 13c (Lam. 1.15b): focus upon breaking experienced in God's judgment.
   d. לא־חמל, Lam. 2.2a, 17b: focus on divine judgment.

Function: Combination

1. To construct interpretative depth:
   a. מחמד, Lam. 2.4b (Lam. 1.7b, 11b): provides another facet of human tragedy: the loss of the city's 'precious' leaders.
   b. צר / איב, Lam. 2.4a-b, 5b (Lam. 2.3b, 7b, 16a, 1.8b, 11c): reveals the enemy is both an unnamed foe (Lam. 2.3b, 7b, 16a, 1.8b, 11c) *and* Yhwh (Lam. 2.4a-b, 5b).
   c. √בלע, Lam. 2.16b (Lam. 2.2a, 5a-b, 8b): this final repetition of the verb briefly provides the view that the *enemies* actually orchestrated the destruction rather than Yhwh.
   d. חמרמרו מעי, Lam. 2.11a (Lam. 1.20a): differentiates sources of pain: from inner anxiety over sin (Lam. 1.20a) to the breaking of the observer's people (Lam. 2.11a).

2. To refocus previously held understandings:
   a. לא־חמל, Lam. 2.2a, 17b, 21c: the third repetition (v. 21c) challenges previous affirmations of divine judgment (vv. 2a, 17b).
   b. עולל, Lam. 19c, 21c (Lam. 1.5c; 2.11c): Lam. 2.19c, 21c, effectively challenge the justice of the suffering of the toddlers at the hands of the Lord.
   c. (והביטה) ראה + vocative of יהוה, Lam. 2.20a (Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a): refocuses the motivation for appeal on the injustice of *Yhwh's* actions, rather than sin, anxiety, or enemies.

d. √עלל, Lam. 2.18a, 20b: affirmation of, the questioning, the justice of divine judgment (what he has *done*).
e. יום, Lam. 2.22b (Lam. 1.12c, 21c; 2.1c, 16c): refocuses the day of the Lord and questions its justice.
f. √הרג, Lam. 2.4b, 21c: the latter repetition questions Yhwh's act of slaughtering previously described.

Despite different functions, repetition of language effectively binds Lamentations 1 and 2 together stylistically, to the degree that Lee can say that the poems are of a piece and are to be read together.[114] In the combinatory examples cited above, repetition juxtaposes former understandings against present understandings, leading to different horizons of interpretation for the reader. This quality reveals the poem to be 'open' rather than 'closed' in Eco's theory.

Other tropes are active as well. Enjambment works effectively in Lam. 2.1-9 to emphasize the divine activity and the subjection and passivity of Zion to his wrath. Ambiguous language and grammar slows the reader to face the interpretative challenges created by them. This is seen in the terms תפראת ישׂראל and הדם רגליו in Lam. 2.1, where the exact meaning of these terms remains unclear, though a range of semantic options is offered as the reader engages content activated from the OT. Ambiguous language also occurs in Lam. 2.14, where the double meaning of the language creates for the reader a picture of the total failure of the prophets. Moreover, the polyvalence of מדוחים draws the reader to Deuteronomy and Jeremiah to garner its meaning, in comparison, its usage in Lam. 2.14c affirms the seduction of the prophets while pointing towards a glimmer of hope through the possibility of divine healing. Difficulties of syntax, nominal and verbal agreement and obscure language also appears in Lam. 2.18-19, with retarding the reader's forward movement, creating interpretative space for the reader to consider the appeal to personified Jerusalem evidenced in Lam. 2.19, calling her to vocalize her complaint to the Lord over the lives of her children.

Compared to Lamentations 1, personification of Zion is used considerably less, but effectively in Lam. 2.20-22, while divine imagery is exploited to a large degree. The most prevalent imagery in this poem is that of the divine warrior (Lam. 2.1-9) and the metaphor of the Lord being like an enemy/foe (Lam. 2.4a-b, 5b). Imagery of the divine warrior from both Canaanite myth and OT is exploited in Lam. 2.1-9 to great effect, as well. In it, Yhwh is depicted as a storm-god, an archer, and a consuming fire, all of which fit within the cultural encyclopaedia of the ANE. Lam. 2.1a reverses beneficent imagery of God to reveal his present role: that of a storm-god against his people. This imagery extends divine warrior imagery from Lam. 1.13-15. Moreover, through allusions to Exodus 15, 19, and 34, the image of Yhwh

114. Lee, *The Singers*, p. 162.

as divine warrior set against his people is contrasted against former accounts of this role against foreign nations and his presence and beneficence to his people. Allusions to Exodus build on those already demonstrated in Lam. 1.3. The poem concludes, however, as did Lamentations 1, with personified Zion appealing to Yhwh. In these verses he is depicted as divine judge, the one who hears will hear the complaint of Zion and respond. This image is juxtaposed against the former image of divine warrior, for it is the activity of the divine warrior that is questioned and brought before the Lord as the divine judge. Through juxtaposition of images, divine imagery is complicated.

Speaking voices are employed rather sparingly when compared to Lamentations 1, whose almost dialogic interaction between the observer and personified Zion was a hallmark of the poem. The poetry echoes Jeremianic idiom (שׁבר, מגור מסביב, זמם, עולל ויונק, בת־עמי,). The observer confirms divine wrath (Lam. 2.1-10) only to challenge its effects (Lam. 2.11-19), and Jeremianic language helps to accomplish this task. In this way, the observer's voice is infused with prophetic language in a manner unique from Lamentations 1. Also embedded in his monologue is the speech of children (Lam. 2.12) and enemies (Lam. 2.15, 16). As in Lamentations 1 (Lam. 1.10c, 21bβ), embedded speech occurs in Lam. 2.12aβ (the voice of children), 15c and 16b-c (speech of enemies). These speeches draw out two themes already presented in Lamentations 1, namely suffering children and mocking enemies, and give further 'audible' testimony of the city's plight. Finally, the voice of personified Jerusalem also effectively is brought to bear to vociferously question the deity over his actions in Lam. 2.20-22.

Finally, allusion is displayed with great effect in this poem. Lamentations 2 builds on allusions to Exodus in Lam. 2.1, 3b, 4a, a tradition already exploited in Lam. 1.3. Further, Lamentations 2 alludes prominently to Jeremianic language in Lam. 2.11-17 (שׁבר, בת־עמי, עולל ויונק, זמם, מגור מסביב), day of Yhwh language and the judgment oracles in his prophecy (Jeremiah 4–6; 8–10; 46–51), the presentation of Zion's incurable wound (Lam. 2.11 // Jer. 30.12, 15), the presentation of Yhwh as healer (Lam. 2.13c // Jer. 17.14), and depiction of false prophecy (Lam. 2.14 // Jer. 5.31; 6.13-14). The effect of this allusion is two-fold. Firstly, it confirms divine destruction as a result of sin, even the sin of the prophets. Yet through allusion, this confirmation (or theodicy) begins to be questioned, as the observer weeps over the break (שׁבר) of his city by focusing upon the plight of the children of the city (עולל ויונק); this will become a rhetorical springboard by which he urges the city to cry out to Yhwh on their behalf.

Lam. 2.17a alludes to Isa. 10.12 through the term בצע; the regular connotation of the word is rhetorically shifted so that the reader might denote a future 'fulfilment' of divine wrath against Jerusalem, briefly infusing a tone of hope in the poetry, though that hope is abandoned by Lam. 2.17c. Different to Lamentations 1, this poem has no overt allusions to Deuteronomy;

cannibalism mentioned in Lam. 2.20b may refer to Deut. 28.52-57 but this is not necessarily the case.[115]

c. *Theology*

The poetics of the poem impinge upon its theological presentation. In terms of the question of divine justice, the poetry opens possible interpretative worlds for the reader so that one is able to conjoin day of Yhwh language and divine warrior imagery (Lam. 1.13-15; 2.1-9) with confessions of the justice of the deity's actions (Lam. 1.5b, 18a-b) and overt depiction of the people's sin (Lam. 1.8-9b, 22b; 2.14) to construct a theodicy that (a) confirms divine judgment is a result of sin, and (b) divine judgment is just. However, the unparalleled depiction of Yhwh's active role in destruction (thirty active verbs in Lam. 2.1-9), the focus upon the suffering little children depicted up to Lamentations 2 (Lam. 1.5c, 11b, 18c; 2.11-12, 19c, 20b-22c), the observer's appeal to Zion to pour out her heart to the Lord over her children (Lam. 2.19b-c), and Zion's vociferous challenge to the deity in Lam. 2.20-22 reveals to the reader a theology that is essentially anti-theodic in orientation, resisting divine activity that has caused great pain. Neither horizon is entirely foreclosed upon for the reader, especially when read with Lamentations 1.

Another theological point that has been raised in the poem is the source and nature of hope, both in the present and for the future. In comparison with the Mesopotamian city-laments and related genres, Lam. 2.1-9 presents Yhwh as authoritative in his decree over Jerusalem's destruction and potent despite the destruction of his own shrine. Because Yhwh remains potent, even after the city and temple has been destroyed, Lamentations 2 intimates a glimmer of theological hope even amidst destruction: because the Lord is not exiled and powerless, he is able to hear the pleas of the people and rectify their situation. Moreover because the city's destruction was part of his divine decree, perhaps there is the possibility of a religious future with him, though admittedly a future fundamentally different than it had been. This contrasts to divine presentation in the Mesopotamian city-laments, whose patron-deities are impotent to prevent Enlil's decree for destruction of their cities and shrines.

Although divine sovereignty is affirmed by and large in the poem, at least in Lam. 2.16, this theological portrait is briefly questioned, but not completely abandoned. The repeated term בלע set in the mouth of the enemy raises for the reader an opportunity to question Yhwh's control in destruction. Moreover the shift in the alphabetic sequence slows the reader's progress through the acrostic so that one can consider why it is the case. Such

115. Alternatively, Albrektson believes there is direct correspondence between the two (*Studies in the Text*, pp. 232-33).

theological ambiguity over the cause of destruction was exploited to a larger degree in Lamentations 1, but nonetheless appears here as well.

Theological hope is perhaps most explicitly linked to the use of the rare word בצע in Lam. 2.17a, an allusion to Isa. 10.12. By reading the verse with this Isaianic allusion, the poetry shifts the normal denotation of the word (self-interest and violence) to present a hope for the end of divine punishment (the fulfilment of his word) against his people. But, this theological hope is achieved by the reader only by working through the semantic range for the word בצע to gain this insight; in this way, the question of divine injustice is dealt with to break forth into a hope for an end to destruction and punishment.

Another facet of theological hope that has been raised as well is the image of Yhwh as the divine judge. The hope that funds Lam. 2.13 stems from a view that the deity will heal and comfort because this is his nature as divine judge; once he sees the enormity of suffering—especially of children—he will heal and comfort. This verse aims to move Yhwh to neglect his role as the divine warrior (Lam. 2.1-9) and respond to his people as the divine judge, and out of his justice to deliver the oppressed. The fact that he has not, in fact, been the comforter and healer that the observer believes him to be reveals Lam. 2.13 as a piece of hopeful, theological rhetoric designed to gain God's attention and move him to act. This rhetoric underlies Lam. 2.20-22. Though his activity as the divine warrior is strongly questioned in these verses, they nonetheless depend upon a logic that confirms Yhwh as the divine judge, who will hear Zion's complaint of Lam. 2.20-22 and respond to her in a favorable manner. As Brueggemann rightly argues, the tacit belief in the justice of Yhwh as the judge of the earth enables his people to challenge him on areas they perceive to be fundamentally unjust in life.[116]

In conclusion, it is evident that theological presentation in Lamentations vacillates, opening different theological horizons for the reader. From poetics, the reader constantly moves forward (through the acrostic), backward (through repetition), and outward into the encyclopaedia (through allusion and comparison with other ANE literary data) to make sense of the poem, especially of its theology. Once this fact is recognized, the question of why comes to the fore.

Understood from Eco's aesthetic theory, diversity in theological horizons can be explained through reference to Eco's distinction between 'open' and 'closed' texts. Diversity in theological presentation is evident in Lamentations 2, like Lamentations 1, so that the reader might activate any of them in the reading process. Each theological presentation is fully justifiable as the reader can read—working through the text—Yhwh as just, unjust, a source

116. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 235-36.

of hope, or a source of despair. Thus the book develops an 'open' strategy for its model readers, making Lamentations an 'open text'.

An important caveat must be made here, however. Theological openness works *rhetorically* only on the basis of a ground-belief that the deity: (a) remained a viable object of faith and potent to hear the appeals presented in the poem and (b) would respond out of his just and beneficent character to rectify potential injustice drawn out in the text, even if the theological portrait painted the profile of an unjust deity. Only this tacit belief in divine power and justice enables the range of theological presentations in the poem. If the poetry holds Yhwh as *objectively* unjust, then the rhetoric of the poem, especially the strong rhetoric in the appeals of Lam. 2.20-22, misfires.

Chapter 7

Lamentations 3

1. *Introduction*

This chapter continues Eco's aesthetic analysis on Lamentations 3. Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated Lamentations' poetry elicits interpretative choices from its model reader, both in regards to its theology and meaning. The notion of hope has been ever present, however, in the logic and rhetoric of the poems: God is potent and present to hear the cries and prayers of his people. Hope then derives from the continued presence of the Lord and the various expressions of its readers in using this poetry. The blend of oral forms and literary genres, the range of divergent sources of pain (God, self, enemies), and the actualized encyclopaedic content facilitate these interpretative possibilities. In terms of text pragmatics, the diversity of theological and semantic horizons projected before the model reader reveals Lamentations 1 and 2 as open texts in Eco's understanding.

Yet, it has been argued, all of this changes when one arrives at Lamentations 3 because it represents the heart of the poem where the meaning of the book as a whole is found.[1] The poem draws attention to itself due to its structure and size. It has the most extensive acrostic in the book. Each strophe is comprised of three lines, all of which adhere to a letter of the alphabet, making twenty-two strophes in all. The boundaries of each strophe can be identified by the progression of the acrostic, which the Masoretes marked with *sětûmōt*. Using the first strophe as an example, each subsequent strophe appears as follows:

_____ א
_____ א
_____ א (ס *sětûmâ*)

Verses 4-6 comprise the ב strophe, 7-9 the ג strophe, progressing until the ת strophe appears in vv. 64-66.

The size of the poem leads Mintz to conclude it is 'three times the length of the chapters that flank it on either side'.[2] This point is slightly misleading.

1. So Childs, *Introduction*, pp. 593-95.
2. Mintz, *Ḥurban*, p. 33.

He is correct that as far as the number of *verses*, the poem is three times as long as the other poems in the book: it has 66 verses rather than 22. However, the number of *lines* shows Lamentations 3 to be one line shorter than the preceding poems.[3] Nonetheless, its alphabetic acrostic pattern and length draw attention to the poem for the reader and so must be accounted for interpretatively. Moreover, Lamentations 3 is conspicuous due to its theological presentation. It is the only chapter in the book that draws upon wisdom material (Lam. 3.25-39) that admonishes faith in Yhwh.

In different ways, these verses mark the theological centre of the book for Berges, Brandscheidt, Labahn, Krašovec and Heim. And Heater thinks Lam. 3.34-36 comprises the 'central argument' of the poem and book, that God is gracious.[4] Set against Eco's conception of open and closed texts, these scholarly treatments of Lamentations 3 provide varying degrees of theological closure to the book.

The present chapter, however, challenges this view and highlights the 'open' quality of the poem as it coheres with the developing 'intention of the work' on display in Lamentations 1 and 2. Openness is achieved, among other means, through recurrence of language within the poem (and from Lamentations 1–2), generic blending and drawing in of encyclopaedic content. This will be demonstrated through exegesis of the poem.

It is in place to note that the blend of formal and generic elements in Lamentations 3 remains different from the previous poems. Lamentations 1–2 interweaves the dirge, lament and city-lament,[5] but Lamentations 3 predominantly uses the lament form: individual (Lam. 3.1-21, 23-24, 48-66) and communal (Lam. 3.22, 40-47). Distinctive wisdom material is then set in between these (Lam. 3.25-39).[6] The juxtaposition of lament and parenetic material creates an interpretative richness for the model reader.

The ultimate purpose of this central parenetic setting remains unclear. It is conceivable to understand Lam. 3.25-39 as a didactic text, designed to influence the reader to adopt its teaching as normative for the meaning and theology of the book (see Chapter 2, above). However, it is equally plausible to understand these verses as a kind of rhetorical stop-gap that heightens for the reader an emphasis upon lament and the present reality of pain when

3. Lamentations 3 has 66 lines as opposed to 67 in the first two poems due to the four-line verses of Lam. 1.7 and 2.19. Lamentations 4 and 5 cumulatively comprise 66 lines. Thus, the structural centre of the book, counting according to lineation rather than versification, lies in Lam. 2.21 rather than Lam. 3.33.

4. Heater, 'Structure and Meaning in Lamentations', pp. 304-15 (308-309).

5. With other textual influences: Jeremiah, Isaiah, Psalms, Deuteronomy and Exodus. See above.

6. Moreover, prophetic material (specifically 'day of Yhwh' language and imagery) is incorporated within the larger generic blocks of Lamentations 3 as in the previous poems.

read in conjunction with Lam. 3.40-66.[7] In fact, the text allows both understandings, so that the model reader is forced into, in Eco's terminology, an 'ideal insomnia' to make a decision about its purpose: instruction on how to handle the crisis theologically or as a rhetorical tool to highlight the pain of the present moment.

In this third poem the interchange between elements of the individual and communal laments produces the effect of blending communal and individual perspectives, which in turn becomes productive for the reader. This view counters previous scholarship that polarize the distinction between the individual/communal voices in the poem. Some believe the speaker should be identified as an (historical) individual or as a community:

1. Jeremiah, the prophet (Wiesmann)[8]
2. The persona of Jeremiah, taken up by his followers to model how to handle disaster (Rudolph, Löhr, Gottwald)[9]
3. A pious sufferer, paradigmatic for the people (Brandscheidt)[10]
4. A defeated soldier (Lanahan)[11]
5. A 'strongman' (O'Connor)[12]
6. A literary 'everyman' or pious follower of Yhwh (Hillers, Renkema)[13]
7. Jehoiakin (Porteous)[14]
8. Zedekiah (Sæbø)[15]
9. Seriah the high priest (Brunet)[16]

7. Those adopting the former view are highlighted above (Mintz, Heater, Brandscheidt, Middlemas, Heim, Krašovec, W. Kaiser, Berges, Labahn) while Dobbs-Allsopp prominently accepts the latter view ('Tragedy, Tradition, and Theology in the Book of Lamentations', pp. 48-49; *Lamentations*, pp. 122-28). So too Federico Villanueva, *The 'Uncertainty of a Hearing': A Study of the Sudden Change of Mood in the Psalms of Lament* (VTSup, 121; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008), pp. 213-48.

8. Wiesmann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 44-84.

9. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, pp. 196-99; Max Löhr, 'Threni III und die jeremianische Autorschaft des Buches der Klagelieder', *ZAW* 24 (1904), pp. 1-16; Gottwald, *Studies in the Book*, pp. 37-46.

10. Brandscheidt, *Gotteszorn und Menschenlied*, p. 350.

11. Lanahan, 'The Speaking Voice', pp. 45-47.

12. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, pp. 44-46.

13. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 122; Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 347-52.

14. Norman Porteous, 'Jerusalem—Zion: The Growth of a Symbol', in *Verbannung und Heimkehr: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Wilhelm Rudolph zum 70. Geburtstage* (ed. Arnulf Kuschke; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1961), pp. 235-52.

15. Magne Sæbø, 'Who is "The Man" in Lamentations 3.1?', in *On the Way to Canon: Creative Tradition History in the Old Testament* (JSOTSup, 191; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 131-42.

16. Gilbert Brunet, *Les Lamentations contre Jérémie: Réinterprétation des quatre premières Lamentations* (Bibliothèque de L'École des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Religieuses, 75; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), pp. 114-87.

10. A General Davidic King (Gottlieb, Dobbs-Allsopp)[17]
11. The suffering community or Zion (Gerstenberger, Berges)[18]
12. Anonymous Sufferer (Weiser, Kraus)[19]
13. The same speaker (observer) as Lamentations 1 and 2 (Provan, House)[20]
14. The Job-like voice of the exiles (Berlin)[21]

The wide range of views displays the poetry's elusiveness regarding the specific identity of the speaker(s). Ultimately, he has affinities with a man, personified Zion, Jeremiah, a royal figure, a pious sufferer, and the observer of the previous poems. This range provides the reader a number of ways to access and identify with the speaker in a way similar to the range of personifications of Jerusalem in Lamentations 1. Delimiting the identity of the voice(s) in the poem diminishes the way it functions poetically. The varied identities of, and relationships between, the speakers of Lamentations 3 promote an open strategy for the model reader.

The interchange of speeches of individual and communal speaking voices contributes to destabilising a 'closed' notion for the poem. The borders of speech remain blurred and it is unclear whether speaking voices *respond* to one another[22] or they are the same speaker throughout, at times speaking on his own and at times speaking as part of a group.[23] A brief outline of the speeches (based upon shifts from first person singular to plural) highlights this point:

Lam. 3.1-21:	Individual speech of the גבר, who recounts his misery.
Lam. 3.22-23:	Speech of the גבר, speaking as part of a community.
Lam. 3.24:	Speech of the גבר, explaining his reason for hope
Lam. 3.25-39:	Speech of either an individual/communal voice offering instruction.
Lam. 3.40-47:	Speech of a communal voice, admonishing repentance and recounting Yhwh's and the enemy's activities.
Lam. 3.48-66:	Speech of an individual, speaking about distress, divine response, and praying against enemies.

17. Hans Gottlieb, 'Das kultische Leiden des Königs: Zu den Klageliedern 3, 1', *SJOT* 2 (1987), pp. 121-26; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, pp. 108-109. Dobbs-Allsopp, however, notes that Hillers' identification of the גבר as 'everyman' is persuasive as well.

18. Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations* (FOTL; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 496-97; Berges, '"Ich bin der Mann, der Elend sah"', pp. 10-20.

19. Wieser, *Klagelieder*, pp. 228-35; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, pp. 54-55.

20. Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 80-81; House, *Lamentations*, pp. 404-408.

21. Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 84-86.

22. Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 167-81.

23. Gordis, *Lamentations*, pp. 172-76.

2. *Analysis of Lam. 3.1-66*

a. *Lam. 3.1-18*

The poem opens with the clause, 'I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath' (אני הגבר ראה עני בשבט עברתו) rather than איכה as in Lamentations 1 or 2. This change immediately marks for the reader a different tone than the other poems. Though Lam. 3.1-18 is quite similar to an individual lament evidenced in the Psalms, most of these begin with an invocation and address to Yhwh, whereas Lam. 3.1 does not, leading Dobbs-Allsopp to state, 'For a poem that draws so self-consciously on the individual and communal lament genres from the Psalms, it is remarkable that no other psalm opens in a way analogous to Lamentations 3'.[24] This introduction to the poem focuses upon suffering, resultant of 'his wrath' (עברתו), whose antecedent is Yhwh (בעברתו; Lam. 2.2b). And God's wrath in the verse introduces in the poem a prominent theology of divine judgment.

'The man' speaks in the verse. גבר is a word used to connote physical, manly power, often in military prowess. Lanahan believes the man is a defeated soldier while O'Connor is content to identify him as a strongman. Dobbs-Allsopp argues the closest parallel construction of an 'I am X' clause in the ANE comes from self-presentation formulae in royal inscriptions: 'I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Luʾath', for example.[25] By virtue of its construction, 'I am the גבר' is a royal self-disclosure.

While this notion cannot be foreclosed upon, Renkema helpfully notes the primary meaning for the term can be seen from the Psalms. Here, the term identifies an exemplary figure, a righteous follower of Yhwh. 'Taste and see that Yhwh is good; blessed is the man (הגבר) who trusts in him' (Ps. 34.9); 'From Yhwh the steps of a man (גבר) are prepared and he delights (in) his way' (Ps. 37.23); 'Blessed is the man (הגבר) who places[26] his trust (in) Yhwh' (Ps. 40.5).[27] In this light, the 'man' of Lam. 3.1 is a faithful follower, strong precisely because of his devotion, a theme which becomes prominent in Lam. 3.17-39. The poetry exploits this portion of the encyclopaedia to enable these semantics for the reader so that what follows will be an exposition from a Yahwistic devotee.

Despite his devotion, his present situation is miserable. Unlike Lamentations 1 and 2 that both admit sin, there is no such confession from the man. The language used in Lam. 3.1, 'affliction/misery' (עני), recalls personified Jerusalem's suffering in Lam. 1.3a, 7b and Lam. 1.9a. This point has often been missed, and immediately the relationship between the גבר and Zion is

24. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 108.

25. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 108.

26. שׂם is a qal perfect (√שׂים) rather than 'the name' (שֵׁם), as LXX reads.

27. The usage of הגבר in Psalms 34 and 37 is interesting because these too are acrostic poems.

raised for the reader. Poetically, the suffering of גבר is effectively yet distinctively related to the suffering of Zion.

Like Zion (Lam. 1.13-15; 2.1-9), he experiences divine wrath. The text reads:

> 'I am the man who saw affliction under the rod of his wrath.
> He drove and led me into darkness and not light.
> Surely against me his hand demolished again and again,[28] all day long.
>
> He consumes my flesh and skin; he breaks my bones.
> He built over me and surrounded me (with) poison and hardship.
> In dark places he caused me to dwell, like those long dead.
>
> He built a wall around me, and I could not get out; he made my shackles heavy.
> Even though I cried out and called for help, he shut out[29] my prayer.
> He built a wall (over) my way with hewn stone, he twisted my pathway.
>
> A bear lying in ambush he is to me; a lion[30] in secret places.
> He has turned my path and torn me to pieces; he made me desolate.
> He strung his bow and placed me as a target for an arrow.
>
> He brought into my inmost parts the arrows of his quiver.
> I have become a laughingstock[31] to all my people;[32]
> their mocking-song all day long.
> He satisfied me with bitter drinks; he sated me (with) wormwood.

28. .The combined verbs (especially with the use of שׁוב) indicate a verbal hendiadys and שׁוב should be translated adverbially (Lambdin, §173). This is reinforced by the predication 'all day long' (כל־היום).

29. .שׁתם is a *hapax legomenon* whose meaning uncertain. Some manuscripts read סתם, 'he blocks my prayer'. Renkema believes the idea of Yhwh blocking the man's prayer is 'far from evident' (*Lamentations*, p. 363). As it stands, it is a qal perfect from שׁתם, 'he shuts out my prayer' (see *HALOT*). But this does not mean necessarily that Yhwh does not hear the prayer but rather he rebuffs it. Similarly, following Driver, Gottwald and Albrektson understand the term from the Arabic verb meaning 'to reject' or 'to frustrate' (G.R. Driver, 'Hebrew Notes on the "Song of Songs" and "Lamentations"', in Walther Baumgartner, Otto Eissfeldt, Karl Elliger and Leonhard Rost (eds.), *Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburstag gewidmet von Kollegen und Freunden* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1950), pp. 134-46 [139]).

30. Though its proper pointing would be אַרְיֵה, 'lion', the meaning of the noun is clear. Some manuscripts read אֶרְי, 'lion' (*qere*). Read with אֶרְי (*qere*).

31. Note the particularly Jeremianic idiom for an object of loathing or mocking, שׂחוק, 'laughingstock' (Jer. 20.7; 48.26, 27, 39; also Job 12.4).

32. The Peshiṭta reads 'the peoples/nations' (עמים) for 'my people' (עמי). If one follows the Peshiṭta, then the man, like Zion, is jeered and mocked by the foreign nations (Lam. 1.7d, 8b, 17c; 2.15-16). Yet following the MT and LXX, then his own people, presumably from Jerusalem, who taunt his suffering at God's hands. This offers a different theological perspective on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, marking them as taunting the suffering of a righteous follower of Yhwh. This inevitably leads the reader to question the ethics of the people.

> He caused my teeth to grind as gravel; he made me cower in the dust.
> And you rejected my soul from peace; I forgot goodness.
> And I said, "My splendor and my hope have become lost from Yhwh"'.

Lack of explicit 'confession' notwithstanding, the various divine metaphors in this pericope suggest divine judgment against the גבר, and by extension, to Zion as well.

The collocation בשׁבט עברתו in Lam. 3.1 is rare in the OT, and it occurs in only one other text, Isa. 10.5-6: 'Behold Assyria, the rod (שׁבט) of my wrath (אפי); and in whose hand my fury is a staff! Against an ungodly nation I will send him, and upon the people of my wrath (עברתי) I will command him!' Similar usage in Lam. 3.1 leads the model reader to its allusion in Isa. 10.5-6; already the encyclopaedic content of Isa. 10.12 was activated in Lam. 2.17 to great effect. The difference between Lam. 3.1 and Isa. 10.5-6 is significant: a foreign nation is not given credit for the man's affliction but the wrath dispensed upon the גבר derives directly from the Lord, as in Lam. 2.1-9.

That the poet again 'blows up' content from Isaiah 10 is telling. It is reasonable to surmize that the poet saw Isaiah 10 as a formative text for his work and used it as a clue for the reader to negotiate the poetry of Lamentations, noting the similarities and differences. For Lam. 2.17, the text opens a number of possibilities for the reader to consider the end of punishment even in the midst of it. Lam. 3.1 emphasizes the reality of divine punishment.

The reader moves through the divine judgment by negotiating language from the Exodus tradition (as in Lamentations 1) and Jeremiah (as in Lamentations 2) in Lam. 3.5. In the first place, Albrektson and Renkema argue 'hardship' (תלאה) is 'as a rule used of tribulations of Israel', especially the Exodus experience and thereafter in the wilderness wanderings.[33] When Moses explains to Jethro Israel's Egyptian experience and God's salvation in Exod. 18.1-12, Moses summarizes Egyptian captivity as 'hardship' (תלאה). This term is used again in Num. 20.14-17 by Moses to describe to the nation of Edom the hardships the Israelites experienced in Egyptian bondage: 'you know all the hardships (כל־התלאה) that have befallen us; that our forefathers went down to Egypt, we dwelled in Egypt for many days, and they dealt harshly with us and our forefathers' (Num. 20.14b-15). If it is true that in Lam. 3.5 'hardship' has the Egyptian experience as a referent, then the Egyptian deliverance is re-interpreted in Lam. 3.5 as a return to Egyptian hardship (תלאה), but now at the hands of Yhwh. This is similar to the way the poet employs the Egyptian experience in Lam. 1.3. By exploiting and inverting this encyclopaedic content through allusion, Lam. 3.5 reverses the Exodus experience, reinforcing the notion of divine judgment.

33. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 130-31; see also Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 357-58.

Moreover, 'poison' is a noun that derives from II ראשׁ, used especially in Jeremiah to describe divine judgment against his people for idolatry or false prophecy. 'For Yhwh has doomed us; he has mad us drink bitter waters (מי־ראשׁ)' (Jer. 8.14); 'Thus says Yhwh of the armies, God of Israel, 'I am the one who feeds that people wormwood (לענה) and make them drink poison (מי־ראשׁ)' (Jer. 9.14). Jer. 23.15 uses the same collocation (לענה and מי־ראשׁ) as Jer. 9.14 to depict Yhwh's judgment. Lam. 3.5b, then, exploits these allusions to suggest divine punishment for the reader.[34] And yet, allusion serves only to reinforce the concept of judgment without specifics as to the reasons for it: the reality of suffering is emphasized instead of particular causes, except that Yhwh has done it.

The brief acrostic lines in the poetry create a rhythmical movement, advancing the reader at a regular 'pace', though this is to be distinguished from meter, as this is a feature of the acrostic rather than internal workings of stressed syllables. The reader is confronted with a rapid presentation of divine imagery that heightens his judgment and adversarial role. The metaphor of Yhwh as shepherd in Psalm 23 as a foil, the man's trouble as a result of God's judgment is foregrounded by the metaphor of God as *anti*-shepherd in Lam. 3.1, 2, 6, 10. Hillers recognizes the 'rod' (שׁבט) as a common regulative symbol in the OT (2 Sam. 7.14; Ps. 23.4; 89.33; Job 9.34; 21.9).[35] Thus the 'rod' belongs to divine shepherding imagery and depicts Yhwh leading his people typically to salvation as in Ps. 23.4: 'Your rod (שׁבטך) and your staff (ומשׁענתך), they comfort me'.[36]

Although it is not clear that Lam. 3.1 is actualizing this encyclopaedic content (the analysis offered here prefers the notion of Yhwh's 'rod of wrath' deriving from Isaianic tradition), when set in relief against Psalm 23, Lam. 3.1-3 can be seen as a veritable *anti*-Psalm 23.[37] The Lord does not lead the faithful follower to salvation, but rather afflicts with wrath. He has not led the man to quiet waters (Ps. 23.2) but rather led and drove him to 'darkness and not light' (Lam. 3.2). Instead of 'dwelling' in the house of Yhwh forever (ימים ושׁבתי בבית־יהוה לארך; Ps. 23.6) the Lord causes the man 'to dwell' in dark places, like those long dead (במחשׁכים הושׁיבני כמתי עולם; Lam. 3.6). While not necessarily alluding to Psalm 23, virtual quotation occurs in Lam. 3.6, citing Ps. 143.3: 'For an enemy pursued my soul; he crushed my life to the ground. He caused me to dwell in dark places, like those long dead'. Kraus believes the phrase כמתי עולם in Ps. 143.3 to be an accretion, interpolated from Lam. 3.6, but this assertion is difficult to demonstrate with certainty.[38] Whatever the direction of influence, it is clear that

34. Thus the LXX reading, 'my head and it grew weary', remains unnecessary.
35. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 124.
36. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 125.
37. See the discussion of Villanueva, *The Uncertainty*, pp. 213-48.
38. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, pp. 535, 537.

both texts reflect the speaker's sense of isolation. Eaton argues that 'like those long dead' metaphorically depicts the furthest possible place from vitality, or 'those most remote from life'.[39]

Lam. 3.2-16 combines other metaphors with this anti-shepherd metaphor, so that the deity is typified as a jailor, warrior, bear, lion, and grim party host. Yhwh constructs over the גבר a wall to enclose and trap him in Lam. 3.5, 7. Here the divine jailor places heavy shackles upon the man (הכביד נחשתי). And Yhwh is a warrior who breaks the man's bones (שבר עצמותי) in Lam. 3.4, recalling the divine 'breaking' (שבר) in Lam. 1.15; 2.9a, 11b, 13c. Again, through the repetition of language, Zion is associated with the man, both of whom receive divine wrath. Like Zion, the man experiences the Lord as a divine archer in Lam. 3.10, recalling Lam. 2.4: 'he strung his bow like an enemy, standing strong in his right hand' (דרך קשתו כאויב נצב ימינו). Instead of simply being tensed ready to fire (Lam. 2.4), Yhwh has made the גבר his target, setting him up to receive arrows of wrath (Lam. 3.12), which have penetrated the man's kidneys (בכליותי; Lam. 3.11).

Divine metaphors compile one upon the other and culminate in animal imagery.[40] In Lam. 3.10 the Lord is a bear and lion,[41] the animals that shepherds defended against in the ANE. The only other instance of the conjunction of דוב and אריה other than Lam. 3.10 comes in the well-known passage in 1 Sam. 17.34-36, where David defends his fighting prowess. In both 1 Sam. 17.34-36 and Lam. 3.10, the lion and bear are marauders lying in wait for opportunistic hunting. In Lam. 3.10 the גבר anticipates such attack from God and describes him with the same language. These metaphors underline the man's sentiment towards his God. Far from beneficence, he anticipates Yhwh's unexpected attack.

Moreover, he tears the man to pieces (ויפשחני) and makes him desolate (שמם). The term שמם especially recalls Lam. 1.4b, 13c and further connects the man with the suffering of Zion. In this way, Lam. 3.10-11 juxtaposes typical positive divine content from encyclopaedia against the felt reality of the present, where God is typified as the very source of malevolence that threatens impending attack and death.

39. John H. Eaton, *Psalms* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 307.

40. For a helpful discussion of these, see Antje Labahn, 'Wild Animals and Chasing Shadows: Animal Metaphors in Lamentations as Indicators of Individual Threat', in P. van Hecke (ed.), *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (BETL, 187; Leuven: Peeters Press, 2005), pp. 67-97.

41. In Amos 1.2 and 3.8, Yhwh is a roaring lion announcing judgment (ישאג, Amos 1.2; אריה שאג, Amos 3.8). Yet in Hos. 5.14; 11.10 depict the Lord as a protective lion guarding his people: אנכי כשחל לאפרים וככפיר לבית יהודה (Hos. 5.14); ישאג כאריה (Hos. 11.10). In these texts, the divine metaphors are positive. Hos. 13.8, however, presents Yhwh as as a mother bear (כדב) denied of her cubs that then attacks Israel and rips them open, a lion (כלביא) that devours Israel. Lam. 3.10 uses different language, but is the only other text in the OT where Yhwh is imaged as a malevolent bear or lion.

Finally, Yhwh as 'party host' concludes the divine metaphors that span from Lam. 3.1-15. Rudolph perceptively notes Yhwh is figured as a grim 'host' (Gastgeber) in Lam. 3.15. Instead of giving the man good food and drink, the deity gives him bitter drinks and wormwood.[42] The range of metaphorical depiction for the deity in Lam. 3.1-15, like the range of personifications for Zion in Lam. 3.1-4, provide the reader a myriad of ways to identify with Yhwh. At each turn in divine imagery, a new facet of Yhwh's activity is revealed, enabling a multilayered depiction of the suffering of the גבר in Yhwh's judgment.

The ו strophe uses rare language to heighten description of the man's suffering. The text reads:

> 'He caused my teeth to grind as gravel; he made me cower in the dust.
> And you rejected[43] my soul from peace; I forgot goodness.
> And I said, "My lasting hope perished from Yhwh"'.

גרס is only used twice in the OT, here and Ps. 119.20, חצץ occurs only three times (Lam. 3.16; Ps. 77.18; Prov. 20.17), הכפישני is a *hapax legomenon*, and נשיתי is the only instance of נשׁה in the qal stem. The poetry may exploit this unusual language to depict the unusual experience of the man.Yet from this dire experience the גבר addresses Yhwh for the first time. He says what the deity surely knows, based upon divine actions described in Lam. 3.1-15: God has rejected (ותזנח) the man's soul from peace, similarly to the fact that Yhwh has rejected (זנח) Zion's altar in Lam. 2.7a. Divine activity prevents his worshippers' communion with the deity, and thereby, there is no way to find peace (שׁלום) or goodness (טובה). In terms of formal analysis, this is the first *Anklage des Gottes* in the poem, which recurs in Lam. 3.42b-45. And yet the logic of the complaint *about* God works on the basis of the justice *of* God, namely the metaphor of the divine judge, who will hear the complaint and respond in justice, even in regard to his own actions.[44] This represents a brief shift in metaphorical depiction of the deity, from antagonistic metaphors (Lam. 3.1-16, 18) to a more positive metaphor.

And yet as quickly as the poetry evinces positive divine imagery, the acrostic moves the reader to Lam. 3.18 shifts back to the reality, and results of, divine judgment. The variety of negative portraits of God against him (Lam. 3.1-15) leads the man to internally reflect that his splendour and hope are lost from the Lord. Following Hillers, I render נצחי ותוחלתי as a hendiadys: 'lasting hope'. In this translation, נצח connotes either 'glory' or the

42. Rudolph, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 239.

43. With Rudolph (*Klagelieder*, p. 231) I retain the MT (qal 2 masc. sing.) ותזנח rather than emending ['And he rejected', ויזנח, so the LXX (και απωσατο)] or repointing [וַתִּזְנַח (qal 3 fem. sing.) so the subject is 'my soul' (נפשׁי)].

44. Miller, 'Prayer as Persuasion', pp. 356-62.

idea of 'permanence'.[45] Certainly 'glory' is plausible, but glory is usually associated with Yhwh (1 Sam. 15.29; 1 Chron. 29.11) rather than humans, and the association between נצח and the גבר is unmistakable due to the 1 singular pronominal suffix. Likewise, תוחלת connotes 'hope'. But, what is the 'hope' that has perished? Renkema rightly notes that it is 'not the general sense of hope for the future but in the specific sense of the גבר's expectations of Yhwh' and his continued relationship to the man.[46] Contra Keil, who believes that the man has *himself* moved far from Yhwh by complaining or lamenting, it is apparent from the logic of the verse that *Yhwh* is removed from the *man*, specifically in terms of the expectation of Yhwh's continued relationship with the man, and this reality grounds his statement of loss: Yhwh has perhaps ended his relationship with the man![47] God's adversarial status in Lam. 1.12c-16aα has created a profound sense of uncertainty in terms of divine-human relationship.

Taken as a whole, the individual lament-speech of the 'man' is uniquely related to Zion so that the suffering of Zion takes on a different, yet still deeply personal, focus. Whereas personified Zion represented the suffering of the people and the city as a collective whole, in the 'man' the suffering of Zion is embodied at a localized level. Zion's pain is described in terms of an individual's oppression at the hands of God. The extraordinary suffering of Zion as a mother is balanced and mirrored by the extraordinary suffering of the oppressed 'man'. Both gendered images complement and play off of one another, so that neither gains ascendancy. Rather the poetry creates an inter-effective hermeneutical play enables the reader to relate the experience of Zion to that of the man. The interplay is founded on the repetition of language between Lamentations 1–3.

b. *Lam. 3.19-24*

The 'pace' of the acrostic advances the reader to a depiction of direct address to the deity in 3.19, exploiting language for Zion used in Lam. 1.7a. The ז strophe is difficult but reads:

> 'Remember my miserable homelessness, wormwood and poison.
> Surely my soul remembers, and cowers over me.[48]
> This I return to my heart; therefore, I will hope'.

45. *HALOT*, I נצח, 716; the man laments the loss of the Lord's manifest presence and immanence (Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 376-78).

46. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 378. He sees the grounds for divine fidelity in Zion theology, though this is far from clear.

47. Keil, *K&D*, vol. 8, pp. 513-14.

48. Translating תזכור and ותשׁיח as qal imperfect 3 fem. sing. verbs from זכר, 'to remember', and שׁחח or שׁוח, 'to be bent over/cower' (*kethib*), respectively. Moreover, one must read with the supposed scribal change 'my soul', נפשׁי (*tiqqune sopherim*), over and above the supposed original 'your soul', נפשׁך, making נפשׁי the subject of the

In Lam. 3.19, the fullness of Zion and the man's experiences are distilled into a plea for Yhwh to remember (זכר). The גבר urges Yhwh to remember the miserable homelessness that Jerusalem herself has remembered in Lam. 1.7a: 'Jerusalem remembers the days of her miserable homelessness' (זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודיה). This repetition rhetorically provides rationale for the deity to respond on behalf of the man, who once again is associated with Zion. This is different from the imperatives of Lamentations 1 and 2, for Yhwh to 'see' or 'consider'. Although Zion has remembered her miserable homelessness in Lam. 1.7, the man calls upon *Yhwh* to remember their state. The implicit intertwining between the voices of the man and Zion projects for the reader a portrait of solidarity in suffering. Suffering can be alleviated only through divine 'remembrance'.

The appeal is met with an abrupt change towards hope and confidence in v. 21. This is difficult interpretatively (what causes this change?) but syntactically as well. The syntax of על־כן is awkward as the particle normally links with *previous* argumentation that gives grounds for a present conclusion ('therefore'), as in Lam. 1.8a.[49] But, what is the argument that leads him to conclude that he has hope (אוחיל)? The speaker's present conclusion comes by returning an unidentified 'this' (זאת) to his heart (אל־לבי). Its antecedent may be found in Lam. 3.20, with the גבר reflecting upon the certainty that God surely will remember his 'miserable homelessness' and God's 'soul will melt over' the man, treating תזכור and ותשׁיח as 2 m.sg *yiqtol* forms and following the supposed *tiqqune sopherim*: 'Surely you remember and your soul will melt over me'. God, then, is the subject of the verbs. The text has been later altered by the scribes to avoid theological affront with the suggestion that God would condescend to humanity. If correct, then this verse represents a *Heilsorakel*, 'salvation oracle', in the lament genre that prompts a shift in mood and grounds for hope in Lam. 3:21,[50] which is how Westermann understands this verse.[51] Most commentators posit that על־כן breaks syntactical convention and refers to what comes after it, namely Lam. 3.22, where Yhwh's covenant love towards his people is confirmed.[52]

verbs rather than their object. For a similar construction, see Ps. 42:6: עלי נפשׁי תשׁתוחח על־כן אזכרך, 'My soul bows down over me (my condition); accordingly, I remember you' (Keil, *K&D*, vol. 8, p. 515). Alternatively, ותשׁיח may derive from √שׂיח, 'to be concerned with something, considering or speaking' (Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 143), and so coincides with the LXX's καταδολεσχεω, 'to chatter (about)'. Then the line reads: 'Surely you remember and your soul will be concerned over me'. While either the *kethib* (ותשׁיח) or *qere* (ותשׁוח) remains sensible, the *qere* reading is preferred here.

49. GBHS §4.1.6.(d).

50. J. Begrich, 'Das presterliche Heilsorakel', *ZAW* 52(1934), pp. 81-92.

51. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 145. See Albrektson's overview of positions (*Studies in the Text*, pp. 143-45).

52. Albrektson provides a helpful summary and list of commentators adopting this view (*Studies in the Text*, pp. 143-45).

Although attractive, this view is not without problems. McCarthy believes the evidence of an earlier נפשך is tenuous, as is Hillers.[53] The LXX reads נפשי (ψυχή μου), as does the later Targum. Apparently these versions felt no need to theologically 'correct' the text. Moreover, despite the somewhat awkward syntax of על־כן and the ambiguous antecedent to זאת, it is conceivable that both prepare the reader for the positive portrait of Yhwh in Lam. 3.22-24. Following most commentators, LXX and the Targum, the reader must face the reality that Yhwh either has punished the man (Lam. 3.1-18), which in turn leads the man to complain (Lam. 3.19-20), to only then express an abrupt and unsolicited confession of hope (Lam. 3.21). In this interpretation, the reader is left wondering how the man changes his perception, as the concept has been central from v. 18b (ואמר אבד נצחי ותוחלתי מיהוה) but nothing prepares the reader for this unexpected shift to trust the deity. The suggestion offered here is that the ambiguous referent to זאת and the awkward syntax of על־כן exhausts the reader's search for something that brings hope in vv. 1-21 (there is simply nothing there) only to work alongside the alphabetic acrostic and create a forward impulse: the reader must move to the following verses to understand what grounds hope.

Verses 22-24 *partially* satisfy the reader's question on the grounds for hope, as the speaker describes God's faithful love and covenant loyalty. The text reads:

> '[It is due to] Yhwh's proofs of covenant loyalty[54] that we are not consumed;
> indeed his mercies do not fail.
> [They are] new every morning—great [is] your faithfulness.
> 'Yhwh is my portion', my soul says; therefore I will hope in him'.

The first verse is difficult for a number of reasons. Some emend כי לא־תמנו, 'that we are not consumed', to read תמו, 'they have (not) ceased'. Hillers renders both instances of כי asseveratively (following Gordis) and חסדי יהוה as the subject of the verb: 'surely the lovingkindnessess of [Yhwh] has not ceased, nor have his mercies ceased', which reveals chiasm: (A[1]) רחמיו (B[1]) כי לא־כלו (B) כי לא־תמו (A) חסדי יהוה.[55] The Targum and possibly the Peshiṭta read תמו. The impetus for emendation stems in part from a view that the clause is supposedly illegible without it.[56] Albrektson believes

53. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 114; Carmel McCarthy, *The Tiqqune Sopherim and Other Theological Corrections in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament* (OBO, 36; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), pp. 120-23.

54. Yhwh's day of judgment does not signal the end of his relationship with his people due to the הסדי יהוה (House, *Lamentations*, p. 414), in which חסד 'describes the disposition of and beneficent actions of God toward the faithful, Israel his people, and humanity in general' (*NIDOTTE*, 2: p. 211).

55. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 115; Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations*, p. 179.

56. For further rationale for תמו, see Hans Gottlieb, *A Study on the Text and Theol-*

the emendation belies a prejudice against a corporate understanding of the speaker in the poem[57] yet corporate connotations of the גבר already have been introduced effectively up to this point by associating him with Zion, and some versions read תמנו.[58] The shift from a singular to plural perspective further blends the perspective of the man to the community, but here the man becomes a spokesman for the community. In terms of syntax, Keil and Albrektson rightly translate on the basis of תמנו and surmize that כי introduces a subject clause: '*that* we are not consumed'.[59]

This is how I understand the verse. The ground for hope introduced in verse 21 is tied to the covenant love of Yhwh (חסדי יהוה), his mercy (רחמיו), his faithfulness (אמונתך), and that he is the man's 'portion' (חלקי).[60] This is covenant language by all counts.

It is in place to note the meaning of the important but rare phrase חסדי יהוה. The construct chain only occurs here and Pss. 89.2; 107.43; and Isa. 63.7. In every instance the phrase depicts divine actions that demonstrate Yhwh's faithfulness toward the parties with whom he is in relationship: the king and his royal line (Ps. 89.2), Israel (Ps. 107.43), and remnant Israel (Isa. 63.7). Especially in Psalm 107, the phrase is a summary of Israel's history of God's redemptive and salvific activity, indicating the expectation of real, tangible divine actions that work on behalf of God's poeple. In its stilted, initial position directly following על־כן אוחיל (Lam. 3.21b) חסדי יהוה responds to the grounds for hope that was broached in v.21: the גבר's expectation of physical proofs of divine deliverance. This covenant language not only points back to the man's/Zion's experience of pain but also points forward to an expectation of *future* divine activity.

Thus, the man's affirmation of faith cannot be characterized as mere rumination upon God's *past action*. It is anticipatory, a future hope that is reflected in the inclusio of (Lam. 3:21b, 3:24b):

Lam. 3.21 (על־כן אוחיל)
Lam. 3.22
Lam. 3.23
Lam. 3.24 (על־כן אוחיל לו)

ogy of Lamentations (trans. John Sturdy; Acta Jutlandica; Århus: Århus Universitet, 1978), pp. 45-46.

57. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 145.

58. Aquila, Symmachus, Old Latin, Vulgate.

59. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 145; Keil, *K&D*, vol. 8, p. 515.

60. Yhwh as one's 'portion' recalls Pss. 16.5; 73.26; 142.6; and especially Ps. 119.57, an almost exact parallel. The concept derives from Num. 18.20, where Yhwh is the 'portion' of the Levites. Divine 'portion' in Lam. 3.24 provides the speaker with a hope that whatever ill he faces the deity will be his possession and sustenance in the midst of it (Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 391).

The acrostic provides a forward movement that is met with a reflexive movement through על־כן אוחיל, emphasizing the entire ח strophe within the inclusio. The progress of the acrostic retards, and the reader is left to consider how divine acts of faithfulness (among other characteristics) may bring the man (and Zion by extension) hope. I suggested that Lam. 3.21-24 *partially* satisfies the reader's search for the man's ground for hope. What remains unstated in this construction is significant. That is to say, placing hope in 'Yhwh's proofs of covenant loyalty' offers little specificity as to its particular shape, other than to say that it expects some sort of divine activity.

And it is at this point the 'openness' of the poem comes to the fore. Thomas has suggested that the hope on display in Lamentations, and especially in Lamentations 3, varies considerably due to the open strategy at work therein. Rather than advancing one strategy for hope in the poem and book, Lam. 3.21-24 actually opens a variety of construals for hope.[61] If the 'man' is expecting some sort of divine activity that demonstrates God's 'covenant loyalty', then what action does he anticipate from the Lord?

For some, the 'shape' of hope remains somewhat abstract. It supposes that adopting a theological *conviction* about the Lord's character expressed in Lam. 3.22-24 will move the community out of suffering in some way. By considering the mercies of God the sufferer will transition out of his state of pain and into an acceptance of Yhwh being the man's 'portion' (חלק) as in Lam. 3.24. 'In this way the poet gains new courage and new hope (v. 24b) and this he longs to impart to his congregation—"God is our only hope, in this hopeless situation"'.[62] And yet such abstraction does not account for the specific 'earthy' quality that resonates in the phrase חסדי יהוה.

Hope lay in an expectation that the deity will demonstrate his faithfulness through physical, tangible proofs which are yet to be experienced. This anticipation runs throughout the rest of the chapter and book. Set alongside vv. 1-20, vv. 21-24 centre upon a hope for reversal of God's negative actions against the man/Zion which have already been addressed in prayer (Lam. 3.19). The negative acts of the deity are figured through the myriad of divine metaphors identified in the exploration of Lam. 3.1-15, above: anti-shepherd (vv. 1-3), jailor (vv. 5, 7), warrior (vv. 4, 11-12), bear (v. 10a), lion (v. 10b), and grim party host serving horrible food (v. 15). This abuse leads the man/Zion to state that Yhwh has rejected his soul from peace (v. 17) and ultimately to pray that God would reverse the miserable homelessness of the man/Zion (v. 19).

In its immediate context, חסדי יהוה(v. 21) is semantically 'filled' with an expectation of reversal from real suffering (or deliverance out of it) caused by God which has been expressed to God through prayer. Hope here lay in

61. Thomas, 'I Will Hope in Him', pp. 203-21.
62. Martin-Achard and Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis*, p. 108.

the possibility that God would act (in a sense) against himself, that his salvific acts would counteract his punitive acts. This conception of hope recurs in Lam. 3.43-45 and will be explored below, but does not address the shift to wisdom instruction in Lam. 3.25-39.

As has been exposed above, many scholars suggest that Lam. 3.25-39 provides the theological key to unlocking the book, a key that teaches penitence over sin. The hope of the man, then, is that God would forgive his people's sin. On this view, the man/Zion is instructed to be silent before the Lord, and hope (ויחיל, v. 26) for his salvation. Silence, sitting alone, putting his mouth in the dust, giving his cheek to the one who strikes him (vv. 28-30) comprise acts of penitence for sin. In this way, 'forgiveness from sin' is the semantic referent for the clause חסדי יהוה and comprises the substance of expectation, of hope in God. Brandscheidt in particular espouses this interpretation, but Childs and Krašovec are representative of this view as well in their own ways.

There is some evidence for this view. Middlemas recognizes the wisdom-like instruction of vv. 25-39 inverts some of the cries of Lamentations 1–2, as intimated above. '[T]he admonitory section refutes the speeches made by Lady Jerusalem [in Lamentations 1–2], the stance taken by the eyewitness reporter towards her and corrects the (mis-) understanding of Yhwh'.[63] Because the parenetic section affirms the Lord's sovereignty, power and salvific disposition (Lam. 3.26, 31-36), it counters the strident prayers of the previous poems, especially Lam. 2.20-22. In Lam. 3.21-39, among other related themes God is pictured as a 'divine saviour' whereas in Lamentations 1–2, God (often) is depicted as a 'divine warrior'.[64] For Middlemas, then, these central verses, coupled with Lam. 3.1-24, are the proper (*Golah*) perspective on hope. Because God is faithful to his covenant love (Lam. 3.21-24), it follows that Israel's acts of penitence (Lam. 3.25-30) will lead God to forgive on the basis of his covenant fidelity (Lam. 3.31-39).

While apparent in the poetry, this sin-punishment-penitence theology cannot be construed as the only tie that draws the concept of hope in Lamentations 3 (or the book) together. Hope may be constructed from the idea that Yhwh will counteract *his own* extensive punitive actions described in Lam. 3.1-18 based upon his covenant characteristics, as well.[65] Or hope hope may be grounded in Yhwh's act of remembering the man's/Zion's

63. Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah', p. 515. She notes particularly Lam. 1.14 // 3.27, 28 in the repetition of the term על, 'yoke'; Lam. 2.18-19 // 3.26-30 in the repetition of the two roots דמם, 'to be silent,' and נתן, 'to give'.

64. Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah', pp. 518-19; See discussion of Thomas, 'I Will Hope in Him', pp. 203-21.

65. Building also off of previous depictions of excessive or theologically problematic punishment, especially in Lam. 1.10, 13-15; 2.1-9, 20-22.

miserable homelessness (עניי ומרודי לענה וראש; Lam. 3.19). If so, then this may connote some notion restoration of the land (Lam. 5.20-22). The question of *how* the mercies of Yhwh actually build hope within the גבר remains unstated and this omission leads the reader to move to the previous portions of the poetry to negotiate it. Though drawing in covenantal language as a source of hope in vv. 22-24, the precise *shape* of the hope remains an open question, which the reader, enabled by the text, must respond to in *some* manner though, I suggest, not in *one* manner. This fact projects an open strategy for its model readers in Lamentations 3, revealing the poem (at least up to this point) as an open rather than closed text.

c. *Lam. 3.25-33*

As intimated above, strophes ט – כ respond in part to the kinds of questions raised in vv. 21-24, providing a particular rationale for hope in God. The גבר continues his speech on behalf of the community, admonishing his hearers (who are unknown but presumably inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah) in the appropriate way to live in the present experience of suffering. Apart from the other portions of Lamentations, which display a high degree of parataxis rather than logical connection, these strophes are linked not only by repetition of language, but also by a kind of argumentation, if somewhat loose. If Lam. 3.24 depicts an expectant hope in Yhwh, vv. 25-30 reveal one reason why it is 'good' (טוב) to hope in him: 'Yhwh is good to the one who waits, to the soul who seeks him' (Lam. 3.25). Moreover, the strophes reveal the manner to 'wait' and 'seek' God, through external actions of penitence that mirror mourning (Lam. 3.26-30). The poetry further asserts that suffering through penitence is 'good' (טוב), especially Lam. 3.25, 27. Yhwh is just and he is in control of the world, even when it seems topsy-turvy.

Consistent to the style of the chapter as well, these verses cite portions of Lamentations 1–2 as well as previous sections of Lamentations 3 and enable intertextual links as well as interpretative richness to the poetry. Lam. 3.25 argues that Yhwh is טוב to the one who waits upon and seeks him. The repetition of the divine name יהוה in vv. 25, 26 links these verses structurally to verse 24 and bridges the ח and ט strophes. Verses 25, 26 reaffirm the covenantal notion of the previous strophe and emphasize both the goodness and salvation of the Lord as well as the sufferer's trust, silence and expectation of the Lord's deliverance. The teaching is directed to the גבר (Lam. 3.27) who seeks to move beyond the present crisis. Insodoing, the speaker encourages himself and the community specifically by waiting on the Lord (לקוו), seeking him (לנפש תדרשנו),[66] silent waiting and expectation

66. Masoretic notation implies לקוו (*kethib*) be read לקויו (*qere*) 'to those who wait for him' (plural participle). The present work follows the *kethib* with Hillers (*Lamentations*, p. 115). לנפש suggests the participle be understood as a singular, and תדרשנו

for Yhwh's salvation (טוב ויחיל ודומם לתשׁועת יהוה),[67] and bearing a yoke in youth (טוב לגבר כי־ישׂא על בנעוריו).

The statement about bearing the 'yoke' recalls for the reader Lam. 1.14a, where Zion bears the 'yoke' of her offences. Zion's על then mirrors the man's על, both of whom suffer under divine judgment for sin. Yet in Lam. 1.14a, the על that was bound fast to Zion was inscribed in a portrait of suffering that led her to 'weep' (Lam. 1.16). Here, God's conferring the על of punishment is productive, even 'good' (טוב).

The י-strophe advances this logic. The text reads:

> 'Let him sit alone and be silent, for he has laid (it) upon him.
> Let him lay his mouth in the dust; perhaps there is hope.
> Let him surrender his cheek to the one who smites him;
> let him be satisfied with scorn'.

Judgment is good is because it is done by God, the most likely antecedent of the masculine singular pronominal suffix (עליו) in v. 28. Moreover, laying one's mouth in dust, giving the cheek over to the one who hits and being filled with shame can be understood as a rite of 'penitential-petitionary mourning' following Olyan's taxonomy. The significant difference between the rite of mourning over bereavement or calamity (Olyan's 'non-petitionary mourning') and this example of penitential mourning has to do with the moral onus attached to the rites. For the former, no moral onus is attached to the mourner but for the latter, sin is present and must be borne and forgiven for the penitential mourner to move towards a restored state (forgiveness).[68]

Understood within Eco's semiotics, in v. 28 exploits the the s-code of mourning within the cultural encyclopaedia only to transform the reader's understanding of it. As identified in the previous chapters, the poetry exhibits non-penitential mourning (used in Lamentations 1–2). Here, the poetry re-employs this language with a penitential focus, revealing Zion/the man to be sinners before God and in need of forgiveness. The man/Zion

implies singular reading as well, observing parallelism (but see LXX and Targum, who read plural).

67. ויחיל, is difficult. The verb as pointed in the MT is unfamiliar. The LXX reads a hiphil imperfect 3 masc. sing. (√יחל), where the *qāmeṣ* under the ו is converted to a *ḥōlem*, making it fit the hiphil paradigm. This is how I understand it. The *wāw* conjunctive on ודומם is rare. Delitzsch emends to החיל, a hiphil infinitive construct. He emends ודומם to ם(ו)ודמ, a qal infinitive construct, thus the translation: 'It is good to wait and to be silent for the salvation of the Lord'. Albrektson, too, favours this solution (Franz Delitzsch, *Die Lese- und Schreibfehler im alten Testament nebst den dem Schrifttexte einverleibten Randnoten klassifiziert. Ein Hilfsbuch für Lexicon und Grammatik, Exegese und Lektüre* [Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1920], §132b; Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 147). The syntax, however rendered, does not necessarily muddy the sense of the line: it is good for a person to wait in silence for divine deliverance.

68. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*.

is to 'sit alone' (ישׁב בדד) and 'be silent' (וידם). The parenesis here transforms Zion's mourning activity in Lam. 1.1 ('she sits alone', ישׁבה בדד) to describe appropriate *penitence over judgment*. The same can be said of the act of silence: Lam. 3.28 transforms the former depiction of the elders' mourning (sitting on the ground in silence) in Lam. 2.10a (ישׁבו לארץ ידמו), by shifting its focus to repentance. These phenomenal or external physical acts are designed to affirm judgment and call God's people to penitence, which brings the possibility of hope (תקוה). Here, hope comes from penitence which *may* provide an end to judgment! Reconciliation between God and the man/Zion cannot happen without going first through the mourning rite of penitence.

Verse 28 also utilizes the expected social responses to mourning to further the communicative strategy of corporate penitence. Anderson notes that 'By publicly disfiguring himself, the lamenter invites those around him to react'.[69] Rhetorically, the presentation of penitential mourning instructs the reader (who may be a sufferer of distress like the man) the appropriate way to react to suffering. Additionally, the penitent acts are aimed at Yhwh, and they are designed to gain his attention. The expected 'reaction' from Yhwh is forgiveness of sin, a respite from divine antagonism, and some sort of relief from the current situation of suffering. Essentially, acts of penitence are good because they *may* usher in restoration. Restoration, however, in Lamentations 3 is liminal at best: 'perhaps there is hope' (אולי יש תקוה).

Verses 31-33 expose the rationale why both Yhwh and suffering through judgment are 'good' (טוב). The verses read:

> 'For he will not spurn forever.
> For if he torments; even so, he comforts—for great is his mercy.
> For he does not afflict from his heart,[70] nor grieve the children of man'.

The כ-strophe by and large reinforces the notion of divine justice by recalling language from previous portions of the poetry. Lam. 3.31recalls the only other instance of זנח + אדני in the poetry: Lam. 2.7. The terrifying finality of judgment on display in Lam. 2.7 is transformed into a temporary reality in Lam. 3.31. This logic is advanced in the repetition of the verb יגה as well. Whereas in Lam. 1.5b, 12c Yhwh 'tormented' (הוגה) Zion for her criminal acts, Lam. 3.32 (הוגה), 33 (ויגה) reveals that this divine 'torment' (√יגה) is met with divine 'comfort' (נחם), which is a direct response to Lam. 1.2b, 7c, 9b, 16b, 17a, 21a. The implication is, then, that the man's/Zion's experience of judgement is not God's a final word. Comfort, removal of scorn, and

69. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, a Time to Dance*, p. 96.

70. Lindström rightly views 'from his heart' (מלבו) as referring to an arbitrary punishment of God (see Num. 16.28). (Fredrik Lindström, *God and the Origin of Evil: A Contextual Analysis of Alleged Monistic Evidence in the Old Testament* [CBOTS, 21; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1983], p. 222.)

restoration exist on the horizon. The repetition of language nuances previous questions of God's character and actions in Lamentations 1–2 and reaffirms his justice. He does not afflict 'from his heart' (מלבו) meaning perhaps that he is not capricious in his punishment.[71] Rather when he afflicts, he comforts, his mercies are great, and he does not exert judgment in a manner that is exploitative or unjustified. The כ-strophe transforms previous depictions of spurning, and tormenting to reveal Yhwh as a comforter and just deity.

d. *Lam. 3.34-39*

And though difficult, the ל–strophe confirms the relationship between Yhwh and justice, especially to the man and Zion. The text reads:

> 'To crush under his feet, all the prisoners of the earth—
> To pervert[72] the justice of a man before the presence of Elyon—
> To suppress a person in his suit—does not the Lord see?'

The meaning of this strophe, as well as the two that precede it, depends upon the interpretation of the series of infinitive constructs that open each line and the last half of v. 36: אדני לא ראה. Hillers believes the infinitives should be understood temporally: 'by crushing under his feet'.[73] On their own, the infinitives make little sense and so are necessarily (syntactically) dependent on the verbal action of Lam. 3.33: 'He does not afflict from his heart…by crushing, by perverting, by suppressing'. On this view, אדני לא ראה is a circumstantial clause, 'without the Lord seeing (it)'.[74] And yet it is just as plausible that the infinitives are to be understood nominally ('to crush under his feet', 'to pervert the justice of a man', 'to suppress a person in his suit').[75] In this rendering, אדני לא ראה cannot be understood as a circumstantial clause but rather either an interrogative[76] ('does not the Lord see?') or

71. Westermann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 148-49 = *Lamentations*, p. 177.

72. The idea of 'twisting/perverting' justice (hiphil נטה + משׁפט) occurs in Lam. 3.35, but also it occurs prominently in Exod. 23.2, 6 and Deut. 16.19; 24.17; 27.19. In these texts, the law forbids the twisting/denial of justice of people in their lawsuits (especially Exod. 23.6: 'Do not twist/deny justice of your poor in their lawsuits', לא תטה משׁפט אבינך בריבו; responsibilities of the judge in Deut. 16.19: 'do not pervert justice', לא תטה משׁפט; the laws regarding the alien or orphan and justice in Deut. 24.17: 'do not deny the alien or orphan justice', לא תטה משׁפט יתום; and a curse is pronounced over the person who perverts justice (מטה משׁפט) for the alien, fatherless, or widow, from Mount Ebal by the priests and Moses.

73. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 116; see GBHS §3.4.1(g).

74. GKC §156*d-g*; Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp. 111, 116.

75. GBHS §3.4.1(a).

76. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, p. 51; Weiser, *Die Klagelieder*, p. 69; Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 151; Lindström, *God and the Origin of Evil*, pp. 225-26.

indicative clause ('the Lord does not see').[77] Kraus, Weiser, Albrektson and Lindström understand the clause as a rhetorical question that expects a positive response, affirming divine justice for the reader. Yhwh recognizes or 'sees' injustice and will not allow it to go on unchecked. Hillers agrees with these scholars that the verse promotes such a theology of divine justice but does not render אדני לא ראה as an interrogative clause.

Rudolph and Gottlieb interpret אדני לא ראה as a statement of fact. This decision has subsequent theological ramifications: the speaker complains about the Lord's capriciousness in deserting him.[78] Rudolph translates the verse, 'daß man den Menschen drückt in seinem Rechtsstreit, das hat den Herrn nicht gekümmert!'[79] Gottlieb states unequivocally that the verse 'should be read as a statement in the indicative, as an expression of the fact that the man praying is conscious of being deserted by God'.[80] Provan reads this text as a declaration about a lack of divine sovereignty.[81] And O'Connor states that 'the God of Lamentations is a blind God who, when asked to look, see, or pay attention […], does not respond'.[82]

The reading of אדני לא ראה as an indicative in v. 36 is rational, but not conclusive. It plausibly is an instance of an unmarked interrogative (cf. Hab. 1.12a) that is designed to continue the line of encouragement of divine justice that began in v. 21. On this reading, the the repetition of (ראה) directly responds to the formulaic addresses of Zion in Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 21c; 2.20a. Yhwh *does* see (ראה) the sufferings that both the man (Lam. 3.1-36) and Zion (Lamentations 1 and 2) face. Through the repetition of language from the previous poems,[83] Lam. 3.31-36 inverts the anti-theodic threads and reweaves a theological tapestry of hope and divine justice.

The מ-strophe apparently confirms the positive view and promotes its theodicy. The text reads:

> 'Who has said this and it come to pass except the Lord command it?
> Does not evil and good proceed from the mouth of the Most High?
> Why should a human complain, a man, over his sin?'

The correspondence between אדני לא צוה (Lam. 3.37b) and אדני לא ראה (Lam. 3.36b) is significant and Gottwald and believes the two strophes link together

77. Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 97; Johnson, 'Form and Message in Lamentations', p. 66; 'the Lord does not think proper': Gordis, *Lamentations*, p. 181; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 121; O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, pp. 51-52.

78. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, p. 229.

79. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, p. 229.

80. Gottlieb, *A Study on the Text of Lamentations*, p. 50.

81. Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 97-98.

82. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, p. 52.

83. Lam. 2.7; 3.31 (אדני + זנח); Lam. 1.5b, 12c; 3.32, 33 (√יגה); and Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 21c; 2.20a; 3.36 (ראה).

structurally.[84] Together, both strophes reveal the reality that God is in control of the world—all that comes to pass is a result of his command (מי זה אמר ותהי אדני לא צוה). Renkema adroitly draws a parallel from Ps. 33.9, the only other instance in the OT where the verbs היה, אמר, and צוה occur in such close proximity: 'For he said it, and it came to pass; he commanded it, and it stood' (כי הוא אמר ויהי הוא־צוה ויעמד).[85] In Ps. 33.9, the poet speaks of the goodness of creation. Through the allusive linkage between Ps. 33.9 and Lam. 3.37, along with the instance of the name of God associated with creation in 3.38, עליון, the cosmic significance of Yhwh's creative power may be in view. For the poet, God is just and aware of the events going on with the man and Zion.

These events are quite specific: the destruction that has come about in a particular 'day of wrath' on which Zion's enemies surrounded her and defeated her. This interpretation is strengthened through the repetition of צוה in Lam. 3.37. The reader, recognising this language from Lam. 1.10c, 17b and 2.17b connects the circumstance which the speaker describes to the day of Yhwh enacted at divine command (צוה). Perhaps the command for destruction is the referent of זה. Yhwh remains in total control: he has ordained the disaster so his continued vitality and potency are never in question. As presented in a somewhat ironic way in Lam. 2.1-11, that Yhwh has destroyed his city and people does not lead to ultimate despair because the deity is not defeated. Yhwh is powerfully present in and through the disaster he has ordained, and divine destruction ensures a future survival of faith, cult, people and worship.

This is true all the more when the phrase הרעות והטוב is properly. Rather than making a universal statement about theological monism—that good and bad (things) both have their direct source in Yhwh—the phrase is rooted to encyclopaedic intertexts that reinforce Yhwh's covenant stipulations with Israel. Hillers mistakenly takes Lam. 3.38 to indicate a general view that both good and bad proceed from Yhwh, a view quite common in the scholarship.[86] The question here should be specified to whether the verse is admonishing a view that all moral activity, both good and evil, stem from Yhwh or whether 'good and 'evil' represents judgment (הרעות) and blessing (והטוב) in a more localized, specific sense, especially seen in covenantal relationship.

It seems to be that this verse is actually functioning on a more fundamental level in terms of the latter. There are only a few instances in the OT where these terms are collocated as predicates of divine activity. A number of texts, of course, associate moral 'good' and 'evil' with human activity

84. Lindström, *God and the Origin of Evil*, pp. 223-24.

85. Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 418-19.

86. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 117. For discussion, see Lindström, *God and the Origin of Evil*, pp. 214-17.

(especially in wisdom material, prophetic warnings, and even in the creation account with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), but as predicates of Yhwh, the collocation 'good and evil' is relatively scarce. Among them are Amos 3.6, Isa. 45.7, and possibly Deut. 32.39. These texts depict Yhwh 'doing' evil (רעה) to a city in judgment (Amos 3.6), both killing and healing, presumably in judgment and then forgiveness (Deut. 32.39), and 'making' peace (שלום) or good (טוב)[87] and 'creating' evil (רע) (Isa. 45.7). With the strict collocation of 'good' and 'evil' the texts are: Deut. 30.15; Josh. 23.15; and Job 2.10b.

Of these, only Deut. 30.15 and Josh. 23.15 have Yhwh as the one who actively *dispenses* both טוב and רעה in a covenant relationship with his people. Deut. 30.15 reads, 'See, I set before you today life and good (הטוב), and death and evil (הרע)' and it is well known that this text reflects both a covenantal basis and exhibits interesting parallels to ANE covenants and treaties. Josh. 23.15 recalls the covenant ceremony of Deuteronomy 28–30, and both texts should be understood in *that* light rather than a general statement about the morality of the deity.

Job 2.10b is different from either Joshua or Deuteronomy. In Job, the protagonist responds to his wife about the evils that have come upon him, especially the statement, 'should we not accept evil (רעה) as well?' This statement is rhetorically designed to meet the test that he (unknowingly) confronts, of which the rest of the book plays out. In Deut. 30.15, Josh. 23.15, however, the emphasis particularly lies in the notion of divine judgment (רעה) and divine blessing (טוב), not just of an individual, but of a people in covenant with Yhwh. The focus of Lam. 3.38 seems to reflect this covenantal reality especially with the language of צוה as indicated above. For this reason, the focus of the questions lay not upon a general theological reality of 'good' and 'evil' but rather a specific reality: the judgment that both Zion and the man are experiencing.

The final verse in the מ-strophe heightens the emphasis on the justice of Yhwh's judgment. √אנן in the hithpolel occurs only in Lam. 3.39 (יתאונן) and in Num. 11.1: 'The people took to complaining (כמתאננים) bitterly before Yhwh'. It is interesting that, generally speaking, in the block of wilderness wandering material from Numbers 10–21, any mention of suffering is depicted as punishment for sin. Num. 11.1 fits within this: 'complaining' in the wilderness (Num. 11.1) is apparently sinful and rouses divine anger, causing Moses to intercede for the people, ameliorating his wrath. By contrast, pre-Sinai wilderness wandering pericopes in Exodus 15–18 present suffering as an opportunity to reveal Yhwh's deliverance rather than His anger.[88]

87. The Isaiah scroll at Qumran reads 'doing good (טוב) and creating evil (רע), I am Yhwh, doing all of these'. The MT, reads, 'making peace (שלום) and creating evil (רע), I am Yhwh, doing all of these'.

88. See Brevard Childs, *Exodus* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), pp.

That Lamentations here would exploit encyclopaedic content from the block of material in Numbers, particularly Num. 11.1, reveals that the main concern here is to admonish the people to *avoid* complaining, as Yhwh's punishment was *justified* and *predicted*, as on display in Deut. 30.15. The good and evil, blessing and curse, was set out before Israel, and they chose rebellion. Divine punishment ensued, which Lam. 3.25-39 reinforces. 'Complaint', then, remains an act of rebellion and not faith. The man/Zion should repudiate such lament and rather respond in penitence for sin.

This logic is confirmed through the repetition of the term גבר, at use only here, Lam. 3.1 and 3.27. The repetition of the term makes awkward the understanding that it is actually the גבר speaking in Lam. 3.1-38: is he reproaching himself? At some point the גבר's speech drops out and another speaker enters, but exactly where this is occurs remains unclear. Following the poetics of repetition, the poetry reiterates the term גבר to refocus the complaint of Lam. 3.1-18: the complaint (if it is such) is off-base, as the suffering is justified on account of the rebellion, namely 'sin' (חטאו). Like Jerusalem in Lam. 1.8a (חטא חטאה), sin is admitted, incidentally further linking the man with Zion. In both cases, what is rather admonished is the bearing of the yoke in Lam. 3.27 and the silent suffering of Lam. 3.28.

Poetics are strongly in play in Lam. 3.25-39 and work corporately to inform the theology of the book. Lam. 3.37-39 employs a similar kind of stylistic repetition of language found in vv. 25-36 to invert the appeals and anti-theodic threads in Lamentations 1–2 and instead advance a theodicy. Further, the acrostic takes the reader from this affirmation of divine activity and human responsibility in this particular judgment (day of Yhwh; Lam. 3.1-19) to the appropriate response in vv. 25-39: penitence and confession. For the reader, this move is both logical and necessary, as it fits within what is present in the concept of the covenant in the OT material. When a covenant is breached, the one who has breached the covenant must take the necessary step of confession or admitting guilt to restore the relationship, or to re-establish justice between the parties in dispute.[89] This covenantal concept classifies as an institutional s-code in Eco's theory of codes. As the speaker is a communal voice, the interweaving of the man/Zion throughout Lam. 3.1-39 has reached a crescendo of communal confession. In the case of Lam. 3.25-39, the accused (man/Zion), once cognizant of the breach in relations (Lam. 3.25-39, especially vv. 38-39), cognizant of the justice of the accuser (Yhwh, Lam. 3.31-39) and his accusation, is obligated to admit

258-74, and Samuel Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Human-Divine Dialogue* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 189-98.

89. Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, pp. 31-35, 94-109. For an alternative view, see Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (SHI; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), pp. 143-68.

guilt and confess sin. In vv. 25-39, appropriate response on the part of the man/Zion is a series of penitential-mourning actions that signify wrongdoing. In response to these actions, the accuser (Yhwh) then is obligated to forgive and reconcile—this is the structural nature of covenantal relationship.[90]

e. *Lam. 3.40-54*

In light of the emphasis upon confession and penitence in the previous strophes, it is no surprize that the נ-strophe reads:

> 'Let us examine and explore our ways and let us return unto Yhwh
> Let us lift our heart over our[91] hands to God in the heavens:
> We have transgressed and rebelled; you have not forgiven'.

The first two lines reinforce the need for confession through the three cohortative verbs 'examine', 'explore' and especially 'return' (שׁוב). The verb here takes on a connotation that is associated with prophetic messages of return back to the Lord, specifically in repentance.[92] This brings it close to its usage in Lam. 2.14b, where the prophets are denounced for not exposing the peoples' iniquities so as to 'restore' their fortunes. With this intertext, the 'return' of Lam. 3.40 has as its aim *confession* so as to receive a *restoration*. Similarly, 'lifting' ones heart over ones hand to God represents an act of complete dedication to returning to God in repentance: 'If love for God starts in the heart […] so does repentance'.[93]

Lamentations 3.42 enacts verbal confession with a corporate declaration: 'we have transgressed and rebelled'. The repetition of √פּשׁע and √מרה confirms similar statements about and by Zion in Lam. 1.5b (פּשׁעיה), 14a (פּשׁעי), 22b (כל־פּשׁעי) as well as Lam. 1.18a (כי פיהו מריתי), 20b (כי מרו מריתי). Poetically, the repetition heightens an already-established emphasis upon Zion's transgression and rebellion, the justice of Yhwh's activity, and the need for reconciliation. The confession rhetorically anticipates the deity's response that will bring restoration and forgiveness. And yet the last half of v. 42 explodes the reader's expectation. Instead of providing forgiveness, Yhwh has in fact 'not forgiven' (לא סלחת). As in Lam. 3.19, God is addressed. But, as Dobbs-Allsopp notes, the parallelism between the pronouns 'we' (נחנו) and 'you' (אתה) reveals a fracture in the relationship, a fracture that establishes primary challenge of the rest of the poem.[94]

As has so often occurred in the poetry up to this point, readerly expectation is circumvented by the shifts and movements of the text. The proper

90. Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, pp. 31-35, 120-66.

91. LXX reads לבבו rather than לבבנו, but either way the sense of the line is retained. For על, the present study follows the LXX (επι), 'over/upon our hands'.

92. *NIDOTTE*, 4: pp. 55-59 (57).

93. House, *Lamentations*, p. 421.

94. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 123.

theological perspective on Yhwh, his justice, his judgment and the necessity of penitence/confession that vv. 25-39 teaches becomes problematized. Penitent theology espoused in these verses, on the logic of v. 40, has not led to divine forgiveness. Instead the 'man' of Lamentations 3 comes to the brink of consolation in vv. 25-39 only to his hopes 'dashed by the continuing reality of God's silence and absence and the awful persistence of suffering'.[95]

Suffering continues in terms of divine wrath and judgment. The communal voice, which began in v. 40, continues with its divine address in vv. 43-45:

> 'You covered yourself in anger and pursued us. You slaughtered.
> You have not forgiven.
> You covered yourself in a cloud; prayer could not go through.[96]
> [We are] offscouring and rubbish; you have placed us in the midst of the peoples'.

These verses build upon previous language used to depict judgment against God's people described in chapters 1 and 2 and essentially inverts the logic of Lam. 3.25-39 by returning to the kind of pain and lament expressed in Lam. 3.1-19. Note, for example: סכך (Lam. 2.1a // 3.43a), הרג (Lam. 2.4b, 20c, 21c // 3.43b), and לא חמל (Lam. 2.2a, 17b, 21c // 3.43b). These verses also exploit language used for enemies who *pursued* Jerusalem's inhabitants in Lam. 1.3c (כל־רדפיה), 6c (לפני רודף) // 3.43a (ותרדפנו). V. 43 envisions God as the enemy warrior who is set against his people. The implications are clear: the Lord has once again become an enemy pursuer by 'covering himself' in a cloud, rebuffing prayers, slaughtering and not pitying his people. This divine activity leaves his people as 'offscouring and rubbish' (Lam. 3.45) once again 'in the midst of the peoples (העמים בקרב)' (Lam. 3.45b), or as Lam. 1.3b states, 'among the nations (בגוים)'.

It is in place to note the intertextual connections within Lamentations 3 and across Lamentations 1–3 identified above provide a different perspective on the poem that the suggestion of Middlemas.[97] Her insights on intertextual connections between the first three poems of Lamentations are a welcome contribution but do not go far enough to recognize the connections that occur throughout the poem to shape its theology. As she restricts her study to vv. 1-39, she does not deal with the repetition of language that actually reinforces the perspective of personified Zion in the first two chapters and the suffering man of Lam. 3:1-19. This, in effect, complicates the strict theodic and penitent theology so elegantly advocated in Lam. 3.25-39.

95. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 123.
96. LXX reads עבור as a qal passive participle, though the sense of the line is retained.
97. Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah?'

Along with those intertextual points identified in vv. 40-45, note as well: Lam. 3.8b (תפלתי) // 3.44b (תפלה); Lam. 3.30b (בחרפה) // 3.61a (חרפתם); √ראה (Lam. 3.36b // 3.59a, 60a); Lam. 3.35a (משפט־גבר) // 3.59b (משפטי). The connections reveal an intertextual logic that proceeds throughout the chapter, ambiguating the book's theology and (especially) drawing attention away from vv. 25-39 as being the 'theological key' to unlocking the meaning of the book. Because of these intertextual connections within the poem, Middlemas' distinctions between 'divine warrior' and 'divine savior' become somewhat blurred theologically.

The intertextual logic revealed above is also coupled with a distinguishing feature of a communal lament. Direct address to the deity about distress is typical in the *Anklage des Gottes* in the communal lament. As vv. 42b-45 are directed to the deity, these verses may be conceived of as this complaint. Its function is rhetorical, to present the current plight (namely Yhwh's own activity) before the deity so that he might transform the negative situation (divine judgment) into a positive situation (divine mercy). This is the most basic function of lament.[98] Although the poetry describes the deity using the language and metaphor of the enemy warrior (Lam. 1.3c, 6c; 3.43a), this is juxtaposed against the latent metaphor of the divine saviour and just judge that grounds the *Anklage des Gottes* in the lament. The lament supposes that as the just judge, God will hear the complaint (about his own activity) and respond justly. Through lament, Lamentations reinforces the view that out of his covenant, Yhwh's proofs of covenant loyalty (חסדי יהוה) will be his actual response to specific pleas.

Lam. 3.46-54 present a description of distress. The communal voice that began prominently in v. 40 gives way to an individual voice in v. 48, which concludes the פ-strophe. Once again the mixture of communal/individual voices productively interweaves the identity of Zion with the individual speaker, or the גבר.

This effective blurring of corporate/individual identity is productive for the model reader of Lamentations because it enabled both perspectives of suffering to intermingle: the reader (likely a 6th century BCE Judahite) is given a voice in and through these personae while being subsumed into a larger corporate totality of suffering, providing a sense of solidarity and social cohesion in the midst of crisis.[99] The text reads:

> 'All our enemies open their mouths over us.
> Trembling and ruin (the pit), came to us, devastation and breaking.
> Streams of water descend (from) my eyes over the breaking of my dear people.

98. Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1984), p. 54.

99. See especially Berges, '"Ich bin der Mann, der Elend sah"', pp. 1-20.

My eye flows and it is not still, there is no rest.
Until he looks down from above and sees: Yhwh from the heavens.
My eye deals severely with my soul over all the daughters of my city.

Indeed they hunted me like a bird, my enemies, without cause.
They silenced my life in the pit, and they cast[100] a stone against me.
Waters flowed over my head; I said, 'I am cut off!'

At the most basic level, these verses depict to the deity a situation of distress at the hands of enemies, or in form-critical parlance, a *Feindklage*. The 'pit' (בור) in v. 53 literally describes a 'cistern' into which the enemies throw the speaker.[101] Metaphorically, the same term is used in the OT as an archetype for distress and oppressive situations, perhaps even the place of the dead, especially in the Psalter.[102] Drawing upon this encyclopaedic content, the poetry depicts for the model reader a situation that is threatening and dire to the point of death.

It is of note theologically that the *Feindklage* arises only after the metaphor of Yhwh as divine judge has been invoked in the *Anklage des Gottes* (the ס-strophe). Thus the divine judge metaphor is carried forward while the divine (enemy) warrior metaphor fades away. It is unlikely that the relationship between the deity and the speaker(s) of Lam. 3.1-19 is reconciled because the evidence leads to a negative conclusion: no forgiveness is forthcoming and Yhwh is described as a divine warrior (cf. vv. 42-45). What remains clear is that the presentation of Yhwh as the divine judge through the *Feindklage* in vv. 46-54 enables a shift to focus upon a different reality and felt pain, namely the activity of 'enemies'.

Stylistically, vv. 46-48 use the prominent poetic device of repetition, delicately layering previous portions of the poetry into the logic of the present lines. Lam. 3.46 (פצו עלינו פיהם כל־איבינו) recalls Lam. 2.16a (פצו עליך פיהם כל־אויביך) prominently and reinforces the reality of enemy derision. The difference, of course, is that in Lam. 3.46 speaker is a part of the community, internally describing enemy activity, while in Lam. 2.16a the speaker is an individual, describing (objectively) enemy activity against Jerusalem.

Likewise, √שׁבר (vv. 47-48) is repeated, picking up the same root from Lam. 1.15b; 2.9a, 11b, 13c. This poetic interplay reinforces the 'breaking' and suffering of both the speaker and the people described. The clause 'over the breaking of my dear people' (על־שׁבר בת־עמי) emphasizes this point as well, a line that occurs both in v. 48b and Lam. 2.11b.

The poetic construction is powerful in v. 48 as not only Lam. 2.11b is layered into the line, but also as the speaker blends the words of Zion (Lam.

100. Piel imperfect plural verb from I ידה, 'they cast'. This is a rare word, only here, Zech. 2.4, and Jer. 50.14. For an explanation of the spelling, see GKC §69*u*.
101. See Gen. 37.24.
102. *NIDOTTE*, 1: pp. 620-21.

1.16b: מים עיני עיני ירדה) into his own speech. Yet v. 48 adds a nuance from the previous poems by inserting the noun פלג. By blending the words of Zion and the man in Lam. 3.48, the lines that mark communal or individual identity for the speaker become blurred. The man absorbs both communal and individual voices: he weeps over his people's destruction in a way similar to Jeremiah (using Jeremianic language), but as he weeps over what has happened to his people (using Zion's language), he manifests a distinctly communal perspective, like Zion.

Similar integration is effected in the recollection of Lam. 2.18c (אל־ תתני פוגת לך אל־תדם בת־עינך) and the next verse in Lam. 3.49 (עיני נגרה ולא תדמה מאין הפגות). In the former verse the observer calls upon Zion to not allow her eye rest or stillness over the lives of her little ones. In the present verse, the suffering one's eye (עיני) is not still (ולא תדמה) and he has no rest (מאין הפגות). Finally, the repetition of √ראה remains significant. This usage recalls its previous question in Lam. 3.36, 'does not the Lord see (לא ראה)?' and refocuses it to mirror the reality of its iteration in Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a; 2.20a: the deity has *not* seen (ראה) the distress in the sense that he has transformed the situation, so the complaint persists. Theologically, the complaint draws attention away from a purely theodic understanding of either the central verses in Lamentations 3, the poem as a whole, and thereby the book.

This repetition and poetic integration of these voices effectively binds Lamentations 3 to the other poems. The purpose here, however, is set within the context again of expressing pain over enemy activity, who have derided the people (v. 46), and who have presumably caused the breaking, destruction, ruin and trembling (v. 47). This distinguishes the strophe from the ס-strophe, which emphasized Yhwh's role in the city's rejection and pain. Yhwh rather is depicted as the one to whom the *Feindklage* can go for appropriate just response.

f. *Lam. 3.55-66*

The acrostic carries the reader past this depiction of distress to an extended direct address to Yhwh in Lam. 3.55-66. These verses, especially Lam. 3.56-66, remain syntactically challenging, and the main interpretative question centres upon how to understand the series of perfective verbs extending from the ק-strophe to the ת-strophe. They may be understood as simple past perfectives, praising Yhwh over his deliverance of the speaker from the pit (בור), or alternatively they may be understood as precative perfectives, the rare usage of the perfective which carries the force of a plea or wish.[103] I have translated the lines as follows:

103. Iain Provan offers the best summary of the problems and possible solutions for the perfective verbs: 'Past, Present and Future', pp.164-75. Salters translates the verbs as regular perfectives in *Lamentations*, pp. 266-75.

'I call your name, O Yhwh, from the depths of the pit.
May you hear my cry; do not close your ear for my relief, to my call for help[104]!
May you draw near in the day that I call you; may you say, 'Do not fear'!

May you plead, O my Lord, the disputes of my life; may you redeem my life.
See,[105] O Yhwh, my oppression! Judge my suit!
See all of their vengefulness, all their plans for me.

May you hear of their taunts, O Yhwh, all their intentions against me;
The speech of those rising against me, and their taunting,
(are) against me all day long.
In everything they do,[106] consider: I am their mocking-song!

May you return retribution to them, O Yhwh,
according to the work of their hands.
May you give to them hardness of heart; may your curse be on them.
May you pursue in anger,
and may you exterminate them from under the heavens of Yhwh'.

The very notion of a precative perfect, although attested in cognate languages,[107] has been received with little acceptance due to the influence of Gesenius and Driver.[108] The reason is due in part to the suggestion that the

104. לרוחתי is extremely rare, רוחה only occurring here and Exod. 8.11. Normally, after 'do not shut your ear' one would expect an object like 'my cry' or 'my voice' (Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 118). Yet Hillers draws out similar appeal as is here from a Palmyrene Aramaic inscription: 'they called on him in distress and he answered them with relief for them [ברוח לן]' (Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 118). On this view, the concept of 'relief' (רוחה) as an aim for appeal to God is not necessarily a completely foreign concept, though in the biblical context it is a break from idiomatic convention. With this in mind scholars generally think that לשׁועתי is an editorial gloss, meant to clarify the meaning and intention of לרוחתי. Rudolph nonetheless retains the primary meaning of לרוחתי and translates the line as a former appeal of the speaker from the depths of the pit, saying 'Verbig nicht dein Ohr, damit ich Luft bekomme' (Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, p. 229). Thus the sense of 'breath' from √רוח is retained: if Yhwh will open his ear (hear his cry), then the speaker will be able to breathe again (gain salvation and renewed vitality).

105. Morphologically, ראיתה may be considered as a simple past perfective. However, the ה ending on ראיתה in Lam. 3.59-60 is quite rare in this root (occurring only 5 times, primarily in poetic texts), as the more regular form for qal perfect 2 masc. sing., ראה, would be ראית (occurring 16 times). The imperative ראה appears in Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a and 2.20a, but ראיתה, too is an imperative. See GKC §48*c*, *d*, *i*.

106. שׁבתם וקימתם is difficult. I have construed these as verbal nouns from שׁוב and קום, respectively. If understood in this way, then their collocation indicates merism: in their resting and rising (all that they do / everything they do). Compare Deut. 6.7: 'in their sitting and in their rising' (ובשׁכבך ובקומך).

107. For references, see Provan, 'Past, Present and Future', pp. 165-66.

108. GKC §106*n*, n. 2; S.R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of Tenses in Hebrew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd edn, 1874), §20.

verbs in question can be understood as simple past perfectives and so thereby need not be explained as wishes or prayers.

Underlying this view is the belief that there are two speakers in the poetry that depict two separate situations: one who describes present distress (Lam. 3.46-54) and one who describes past distress out of which Yhwh has delivered him (Lam. 3.55-63).[109] In the former understanding, distress ensues from the description in Lam. 3.46-54 while in the latter understanding there has been a deliverance, of which Lam. 3.56-63 is considered a *Danklied*, at least until the ת-strophe where the imperfective verbs demand that the activity of enemies remains a pressing problem. The latter view infuses a good deal of hope in the poetry and responds to Lam. 3.42b-55 with a positive response from Yhwh. Yet this latter view is somewhat awkward in light of שׁפטה in Lam. 3.59 and הביטה in Lam. 3.63. If deliverance has been achieved, then why is there a need for Yhwh to see or consider or judge the present situation? Wiesmann notices this and suggests that there is a past distress of which Jeremiah laments (Lam. 3.52-58) to which Zion responds in Lam. 3.59, that God has seen (Lam. 3.59-61) but not fully acted upon and thereby the distress persists (Lam. 3.64-66).[110]

There are two challenges to this view. In the first place, it is not a simple matter to unravel the interconnection between the speaking voices of Zion and the second speaker. The voices play into one another, overlap, and remain enmeshed. This blending of voices effectively carries forward a productive reading strategy that enables speaking voices to be evaluated in light of one another without a single voice gaining prominence. Moreover there is a close association between the present distress depicted throughout Lam. 3.1-55 and the distress of Zion in Lamentations 1 and 2, also demonstrated through the use of repetition. The three poems cannot be divorced from one another stylistically, and thereby the distress exemplified in the course of Lam. 3.52-66 cannot be easily bifurcated into a 'past' and 'present' situations easily. The final challenge to this view, as Provan rightly notes, is that this view neglects the imperative הביטה in verse 63, clearly appealing for Yhwh to consider the situation.[111]

Besides this, Lam. 3.56 leads the reader away from thinking the verbs are simple past perfectives. This verse clearly has a perfective verb, 'you heard (שׁמעת)', followed by an imperfective with negation, 'do not close (אל־תעלם) your ear'. The typical response in favor of a simple past perfective

109. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, pp. 53-59; Weiser, *Klagelieder*, pp. 76-77, pp. 87-91; Kaiser, *Klagelieder*, pp. 349-51, pp. 357-58. Huey, *Lamentations*, pp. 477-78; Bracke translates on the basis of past perfectives but notes the precative view is plausible (*Jeremiah 30–52 and Lamentations*, pp. 224-25).

110. Wiesmann, *Die Klagelieder*, pp. 197-98.

111. Provan, 'Past, Present and Future', p. 169.

for 'you heard' is the clause which follows it represents embedded speech of the speaker to Yhwh, which then the deity heard (שמעת). Embedded speech certainly is employed to great effect in Lamentations, as the discussion above reveals. And it is used in Lam. 3.18 and clearly occurs in Lam. 3.57 (אל־תירא). While plausible, detrimental to this view is the reality that nowhere in the OT is there an occurrence where Yhwh hears a petition that is followed by a quotation of that petition, making Lam. 3.56 a unique case.[112]

Finally, rendering the span of verbs from Lam. 3.55-63 as simple past perfectives does not solve the theological problem of the ת-strophe. If God has delivered and the verses represent a *Danklied*, why then does Lam. 3.64-66 return to a present description of enemy threat, which then the speaker appeals for Yhwh to annihilate? Even if Lam. 3.55-63 *is* a *Danklied* and represents past salvation, the final strophe in the poem raises the spectre of present distress and enemy activity once again, leaving the poem as a whole on a tense note.

The other solution to the problem, as translated here, is to treat the verbs as 'precative perfectives'. It is true that this span of perfective verbs would be the most concentrated in the OT, but the reasons offered above suggest at the very least a precative notion is reasonable. There are obvious difficulties with this view as well, not least the perfective verb 'I call' (קראתי) in verse 55, which I understand as a stative pefective that indicates ongoing action or continual 'calling',[113] the alternation of 'may you hear' (שמעת) and 'do not close' (אל־תעלם) in Lam. 3.56 and verse 57, with its verb alternations between perfective (קרבת) + imperfective (אקראך) + perfective (אמרתי) + imperfective (אל־תירא). These issues deserve response. For Lam. 3.55, I understand this verb to link structurally back to the צ-strophe with the repetition of the term 'pit' (בור), the only other occurrence in the remainder of the poem. In this way the ק-strophe is structurally related to the צ-strophe and introduces the reality of present distress in the span of Lam. 3.56-66. As to vv. 55-56, Hillers and Provan rightly note the presence of similar structure in the Psalter, particularly in Ps. 130.1-2:[114]

> 'Out of the depths I call you, O Yhwh;
> O Lord, hear my voice;
> let your ears be attentive to the sound of my supplications'.

קראתיך may be understood as a perfective with a stative sense[115] while שמעה is clearly an imperative, and this parallels the general sense of Lam. 3.56, 'may you hear my voice (קולי שמעת)'.

112. Provan, 'Past, Present and Future', p. 171.
113. GBHS §3.2.1.(b).
114. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 118.
115. GBHS §3.2.1.(b).

Verse 56 remains difficult. Provan finds a similar construction in Ps. 102.2-3:[116]

> 'Hear my prayer, O Yhwh; let my cry for help come to you;
> Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress;
> Incline to me your ear in the day I call—hasten, answer me!'

In these verses there is a similar alternation of moods: volitional (שׁמעה) + imperfective (תבוא) + imperfective (אל־תסתר) + volitional (הטה) + imperfective (אקרא) + volitional (מהר, ענני). These verbs are understandable corporately as a present plea that is ongoing before Yhwh. The use of the imperfective אקרא + ביום in Ps. 102.3 parallels אקראך +ביום in Lam. 3.57, and both can be understood as 'in the day I call'. These parallels from the Psalter at least suggest plausible evidence for seeing the verbs as precative perfectives that depict a persistent situation of distress that demands the present appeals to Yhwh that extend from Lam. 3.55-66.

However precisely understood, the verbal syntax of these verses stretches the limits of language to express the inherent tension and anticipation of divine deliverance and the relationship between the גבר and the deity. The alternation between imperative (Lam. 3.59, 60, 63), perfective (Lam. 3.55-58, 61-63), and imperfective (Lam. 3.56-57, 64-66) forms reveal the uncertainty of the present situation: has Yhwh delivered, is he going to, or must the appeal for deliverance still go forth? The present study adopts the precative perfective translation, but this in no way diminishes the way the poetry strains verbal aspect in this span of verses.

It is also of note that this span of verses also, once again, exploits repetition as a stylistic device. The most significant is the repetition of √ראה and √נבט in the imperatives of Lam. 3.59, 60, 63. As has been demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, √ראה and √נבט are used in conjunction in the formulaic address seen in Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 12a; 2.20a. That they occur once again in close proximity in Lamentations 3 is not accidental. The appeals of Zion in Lamentations 1 and 2 are taken up once again in the appeal of the speaker in Lam. 3.59-63, indicating that repetition here functions poetically to intensify the focus upon present distress and the need for Yhwh's deliverance. Also in Lam. 3.61 the term חרפה is used in association with the 'taunts' or 'scorn' of the enemies, that the speaker requests for Yhwh to hear, and subsequently, to act. This term may subtly respond to Lam. 3.30b, where the man is admonished to be 'satisfied with scorn (בחרפה)'. In this way, the repetition subtly refocuses this former instruction in light of the present appeal: the speaker will not be satisfied with scorn (בחרפה) but will appeal to Yhwh to hear (שׁמעת) it, and subsequently act against it.

The poem concludes like Lamentations 1, with a focus upon the activity of enemies and an imprecation against their existence. Unlike Lam. 1.22,

116. Provan, 'Past, Present and Future', p. 174.

which emphasized Zion's pain, Lam. 3.64-66 focuses upon divine retribution against enemies. This is seen in the repetition of √רדף between Lam. 3.43, 66. In both instances, Yhwh is figured as the divine warrior: in Lam. 3.43 as the one who pursues the man/Zion but in v. 66 the one who will pursue the enemies. This is a transformation of the former usage of √רדף, where the 'pursuer' (Yhwh) *was* the enemy. Here, he is reimagined by the coupling of divine metaphor: he is the divine judge who will hear the appeal of the speaker and the divine warrior who will pursue the enemy who has plotted against him.

So the poem concludes as it opened with a lament that compiles divine metaphors to great effect. The differences are poignant, however: (a) Lam. 1.1-16 was an *individual* lament while Lam. 3.64-66 are part of a *communal* lament, and (b) Lam. 1.1-16 displayed antagonistic divine metaphors while Lam. 3.64-66 presents both positive metaphor (divine judge who will hear the appeal and act justly) and antagonistic metaphor (as a divine warrior acting against the enemy). By the time the poem concludes, though the relationship with the speaker(s) is not reconciled, at least it is at a place where the speaker(s) can refocus divine metaphors that figure Yhwh on the side of the speaker rather than against him in judgment.

The ambivalence of divine imagery in the poem leads the reader to question how to understand the deity. Is Yhwh depicted as beneficent, just (Lam. 3.25-39), and able to hear his peoples' complaint about his own activity (Lam. 3.1-19, 42b-45) as well as enemy activity (Lam. 3.46-54)? Is he simply a deity who will not respond, who shuts out prayer (שׂתם תפלתי; Lam. 3.8b), who rejects his people (ותזנח משלום נפשׁי; Lam. 3.17), and who hides himself so that prayer cannot pass to him (מעבור תפלה סכותה בענן לך; Lam. 3.44)? The linear progression of the acrostic draws the reader through divine portraiture in the following manner: various antagonistic divine metaphors (Lam. 3.1-16, 18, 42b-45) are juxtaposed against various beneficent divine metaphors (Lam. 3.17, 19-41a, 46-66). The poetry simply does not provide determinate response as to which metaphor the reader is to adopt.

Rather, one is forced to decide between theological portraits. There is good evidence to choose for a divine saviour, who remains beneficent and trustworthy; he is able to deliver from *his own* activity, the activity of *enemies*, and *ones own sin*. But also, there is good evidence to opt for the divine warrior, whose activity presents a profound challenge that cannot be avoided because this activity prevents any reconciliation between God and his people (Lam. 3.8, 42b-45).

3. *Conclusion*

Lamentations 3 is a complex poem poetically and theologically. As provided in the previous chapters, the present chapter concludes with a catalogue the

use of structure, form and genre, and poetics and how they impact theological presentation in the poem. First a word should be said about structure. The acrostic in this poem is much more extensive than the previous ones and the rapid progression from letter to letter in each strophe creates rather quick pace that keeps the reader moving through the poem. The extensiveness of the acrostic also offers an interpretative cue for the reader to pay close attention to the poem, enabling one to focus upon it in special relation to the previous poems, which is a helpful feature in light of the concentration of repetition of language drawn from Lamentations 1–2. As such, the acrostic, by nature of its physicality, is instrumental in framing the other poetic devices. The acrostic also formally ties disparate generic elements: individual lament (Lam. 3.1-24), wisdom material (Lam. 3.25-39), communal lament (Lam. 3.40-47) and an individual lament (Lam. 3.48-66).

Lamentations 3 'blows up' different encyclopaedic content from Lamentations 1 and 2 in that it draws from wisdom material. The other poems do not share this feature. Moreover, while the phenomenology of mourning was prominent in Lamentations 1 and 2, Lamentations 3 transforms the language associated with mourning into penitential language, particularly in Lam. 3.28-30. Alongside this activation (then transformation) of mourning, Lamentations 3 employs a good deal of textual data from the OT to construct its model reader. This is seen in the term הגבר in Lam. 3.1, which likely implies an exemplary figure, a righteous follower of Yhwh on the basis of the same language in the Psalter (Pss. 34.9; 37.23; 40.5). The activation of this part of the cultural encyclopaedia reveals that הגבר represents a faithful follower, strong precisely from his devotion to Yhwh.

a. *Form and Genre*

The interaction between genres in Lamentations 3 creates interpretative fecundity for the model reader. Distinct from Lamentations 1–2, the dirge and city-lament genres are not exploited at all. These literary pieces of cultural data are 'narcotized' in Eco's terminology. The individual lament in Lam. 3.1-21 promotes a divine portrait that is problematic for the גבר as Yhwh rebuffs prayer (Lam. 3.8). The deity is portrayed through a range of antagonistic divine metaphors in the lament. This leaves the lamenter questioning God (Lam. 3.17) and appealing to the deity about his situation (Lam. 3.19). The inclusio (Lam. 3.21-24) jars against the preceding lament and transitions into the wisdom section (Lam. 3.25-39). This parenetic section then effectively responds to both the preceding lament and Lamentations 1–2, effectively promoting a theodicy. A communal lament (Lam. 3.40-47) follows and is juxtaposed against the parenetic section. Juxtaposition of the generic blocks complicates a straightforward affirmation of the wisdom theodicy espoused in vv. 25-39. Finally, an individual lament spans from Lam. 3.48-66 in which an individual speaker laments both the fate of

his people (Lam. 3.48-51) and his own distress (Lam. 3.49-54). The individual lament concludes with an extended address to Yhwh (Lam. 3.55-66) in which the lamenter prays to the deity about his own situation (vv. 55-59) and the activity of the enemies against him (vv. 60-66). The generic interplay in the poem creates ambiguity for the reader in regard to the identity of the speaker as well as the *number* of speakers. Moreover, no singular perspective is adopted in the poem. The wisdom portion is counterbalanced by a focus upon enemies (Lam. 3.46-47, 60-66) and the activities of God (Lam. 3.1-19, 42b-45).

b. *Poetics*

Counterbalancing the forward movement of the acrostic, poetics tend to create a reflexive movement for the reader through repetition and an outward movement for the reader through allusion and drawing upon content from the cultural encyclopaedia. Repetition is stylistically concentrated in Lamentations 3 to a degree greater than the previous poems. And differently than the other poems, Lamentations 3 employs extensive internal repetition (that is repetition of language within Lamentations 3) alongside an intensified degree of external repetition (that is repetition of language from Lamentations 1–2). Nevertheless, as in the previous poems, repetition serves either an intensive or combinatory function. A catalogue of the use of repetition in this poem is as follows:

Function: Intensification

1. To emphasize suffering:
   a. לענה וראשׁ, (or related language), Lam. 3.5, 15: heighten pain of the גבר.
   b. √שׁבר, Lam. 3.47, 48 (Lam. 1.15b; 2.9a, 11b, 13c): reinforce the reality of pain in 'breaking'.
   c. √ראה / √נבט, Lam. 3.59, 36, 60, 63 (Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 12a; 2.20a): heightens suffering of Zion and the גבר, and the need for divine response. Lam. 3.59 recasts Lam. 3.36, 'does not the Lord see (לא ראה)?' and refocuses it to mirror the reality of its iteration in Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a; 2.20a: the deity has *not* seen (ראה) the distress in the sense that he has transformed the situation.
2. To emphasize judgment:
   a. עברה, Lam. 3.1 (Lam. 2.2b): divine wrath.
   b. √זנח, Lam. 3.17 (Lam. 2.7a): emphasize divine judgment—Zion's spurning becomes the man's spurning.
   c. צוה, Lam. 3.37 (Lam. 1.10c, 17b; 2.17b): Yhwh commands judgment.
   d. √חטא, Lam. 3.39 (Lam. 1.8a): reinforces the notion that judgment is justified and due to sin.

e. פשׁע, Lam. 3.42 (Lam. 1.5b, 14a, 22b): focus on the suffering and judgment that comes from offence.
f. √מרה, Lam. 3.42 (Lam. 1.18a, 20b): affirmation of judgment due to Zion's rebellion against Yhwh.
g. סכך, Lam. 3.43 (Lam. 2.1a): affirms divine judgment against both the גבר and Zion, strengthening their association.
h. הרגת לא חמלת, Lam. 3.43 (Lam. 2.2a, 4b, 17b, 20c, 21c): affirms divine judgment against both the גבר and Zion, strengthening their association.

Function: Combination

1. To construct interpretative depth:
   a. עני, Lam. 3.1 (Lam. 1.3a, 7b, 9a): integrate the pain of Zion and the גבר.
   b. זכר־עניי ומרודי, Lam. 3.19 (Lam. 1.7a; ומרודיה זכרה ירושׁלים ימי עניה): enmesh pain of Zion and the גבר.
   c. פלגי־מים תרד עיני על־שׁבר בת־עמי, Lam. 3.48 (Lam. 1.16b, עיני עיני ירדה מים; Lam. 2.11bβ, על־שׁבר בת־עמי): blends the speech of Zion (Lam. 1.16b) and observer (Lam. 2.11bβ) with the speech of the lamenter (Lam. 3.48).
   d. אל־תתני פוגת לך אל־תדם בת־עינך, Lam. 3.49 (Lam. 2.18, אל־תתני פוגת לך אל־תדם בת־עינך): combines the speech of the observer with the lamenter's description of distress.
   e. פצו עלינו פיהם כל־איבינו, Lam. 3.46 (Lam. 2.16a, פצו עליך פיהם כל־אויביך): reinforces the reality of enemy derision.
   f. ותרדפנו, Lam. 3.43 (Lam. 1.3c, 6c): transforms previous depictions of enemy 'purusers' and equates these to Yhwh, who has become an enemy 'pursuer'.

2. To refocus previously held understandings:
   a. על, Lam. 3.27 (Lam. 1.14a): revises previous understanding of the yoke as a good form of discipline rather than pain.
   b. ישׁב בדד, Lam. 3.28 (Lam. 1.1a; 2.10a): transforms acts of mourning into acts of penitence over judgment.
   c. אדני + זנח, Lam. 3.31 (Lam. 2.7a): transforms former depiction of spurning Zion into a temporary reality.
   d. √יגה, Lam. 3.32, 33 (Lam. 1.5b, 12c): divine torment is not lasting, as it is met with divine comfort (נחם).
   e. נחם, Lam. 3.32 (1.2b, 9b, 16b, 17a, 21a): divine comfort which Zion longed for is introduced in Lam. 3.32.
   f. ראה, Lam. 3.36 (Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a; 2.20a): the appeals of Zion are met with a declaration that the Lord *does* 'see' oppression and wrong.

g. חרפה, Lam. 3.61 (Lam. 3.30b): refocuses former instruction (Lam. 3.30b) in light of the present appeal (Lam. 3.61)—the lamenter will not be satisfied with scorn.

One implication that arises from the use and density of the repetition throughout the course of the poem is that a focus upon the generic aspects of the poem to the neglect of the use of repetition remains methodologically flawed. Repetition is employed across the full span of the poem, across generic boundaries. Its poetic usage reveals both a complex and nuanced poem in its presentation and paratactic logic. Its 'narrative' is precisely displayed in repetition of language, working alongside imagery, through the generic blocks. Thereby, focusing solely upon the parenetic section (Lam. 3.25-39) to discover the 'heart' of the poem is tenuous as it ignores the poem's other stylistic features.

Next to repetition, 'blowing up' of cultural data plays a significant role in Lamentations 3, which drives the reader *outward* into the encyclopaedia to build its model reader. This is first evidenced through allusion. The collocation of שׂבט and עברה in Lam. 3.1 from Isa. 10.5-6 reveals that Isaiah 10 played an important role in the formation of Lamentations, especially chapters 2 and 3. The term 'hardship' (תלאה) in Lam. 3.5 should be seen as an allusion to, and inversion of, the Exodus experience. Instead of deliverance from bondage, the man experiences a re-entry into hardship (תלאה) as Moses describes in Exod. 18.1-12 and Num. 20.14-17. This allusion works in a similar manner as allusion to Exodus in Lam. 1.3. Similarly, Lam. 3.5 draws from Jeremianic language in the use of 'wormwood' (ראשׁ), as in Jer. 8.14; 9.14; 23.15. This allusion depicts vividly the doom the גבר experiences in Yhwh's judgment. The covenant terminology in Lam. 3.22-24 alludes prominently to stock language of Yhwh's gracious nature, spelled out most clearly in the first half of the credo of Ex 34.6, 'Yhwh, Yhwh, a god compassionate (רחום) and gracious; slow of anger but great in mercy and truth (ורב־חסד ואמת)', linking the texts together as markers of Yhwh's beneficence and fidelity in covenant to the גבר.

In Lam. 3.24, the affirmation of Yhwh as the 'portion' of the גבר recalls texts from the Psalter (Pss. 16.5; 73.26; 142.6) but especially Ps. 119.57, which nearly forms a perfect parallel. Allusion to the 'portion' concept from the Psalter reinforces for the reader that the גבר trusts in Yhwh and that the deity will be with him. Continuing with allusion to the Psalter, Lam. 3.37 alludes to Ps. 33.9, reinforcing the notion that judgment is decreed by Yhwh and he is aware of the distress the גבר faces.

In Lam. 3.38b, 'evil and good' (הרעות והטוב) was demonstrated to be referring to the 'good' and 'evil' presented before the Israelites in Deut. 30.15 (הטוב and הרע). In this sense, Lam. 3.38b does not present a general monistic theology as much as it connects the present situation of the

man/Zion to covenant curses, emphasising the reality of divine judgment in a particular covenantal shape. Lam. 3.39 (מה־יתאונן) alludes to Num. 11.1 (כמתאננים) to reinforce the notion that complaint is sinful and arouses divine judgment. The main aim through the allusion is to admonish the people to *avoid* complaining, as Yhwh's punishment was *justified* and *predicted*.

After use of allusion, the poetry exploits 's-codes'. Lam. 3.25-30 exploits the institutional s-code 'mourning rite', which is used in Lamentations 1–2 through repetition of language. These verses then overlay an s-code 'penitential rite' against the s-code of mourning, so that the reader is forced to refocus his previous understanding of mourning in Lamentations 1–2 as something 'good' done through a penitential act. This refocuses semantics of previous portions of the book, leading the reader to a theology of divine justice and human sinfulness, which demands penitence rather than mourning. Finally, Lam. 3.40-42 exploits the s-code of 'covenant' to situate confession. For the reader, this move is both logical and necessary, as Lam. 3.25-39 demonstrated the reality of covenant breach, and thereby the need for the offending party to confess so that there might be reconciliation (forgiveness).[117] The reader is confronted with the acute reality in Lam. 3.42a-b that forgiveness has *not* ensued, and the dispute between parties (Yhwh and the people) remains.

In conjunction with the poetics of repetition, allusion, and the use of s-codes, Lamentations 3 exploits metaphor and imagery in a manner unprecedented in the book. From Lam. 3.1-19, divine metaphors abound:

Anti-Shepherd (Lam. 3.1)
Divine Jailor (Lam. 3.5)
Divine Warrior (Lam. 3.11-12)
Wild Animals: bear/lion (Lam. 3.10)
Party Host (Lam. 3.15-16)
Divine Judge (Lam. 3.17, 19)

The shifts from antagonistic to more positive divine metaphors occurs rapidly and without warning (Lam. 3.18, 19-20, 21-24, 42-45, 45-66). For the model reader, this variety of divine portrayal opens interpretative horizons through which he or she might understand the deity and the relationship between the speaker and God. And yet despite the variety of divine portrayal, the poetry remains focused upon maintaining address to the deity, appealing to him concerning his own actions (Lam. 3.17a, 42b-5), the sin of the appellant (Lam. 3.40-42a) or the activity of enemies (Lam. 3.46-66). This coheres with the range of motivations for appeal in Lamentations 1–2.

117. Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, pp. 31-35, 94-109.

c. *Theology*

The ambivalence present in divine imagery raises theological questions. What is the theology of this poem? How is the reader to understand the גבר, Zion and Yhwh? Clearly Yhwh is depicted as beneficent and just and the people as sinful, which promotes theodicy. The theodic presentation in Lam. 3.25-39 and the creedal allusion to Exod. 34.6-7 in Lam. 3.21-24 is a crucial element that confirms this. Moreover, the fact that the poem concludes in a lament about present distress and enemy threat (Lam. 3.6-66), presupposes a tacit logic concerning divine justice: Yhwh is the divine judge, just and able to hear his peoples' complaint about enemy activity (Lam. 3.46-54). This logic pervades even though there instances of complaint about Yhwh's denial of attention (זכר, Lam. 3.19) and lack of forgiveness (Lam. 3.42b-5), as these complaints, too, go to the deity. Moreover, the interconnections between previous portions of the poetry, allusion to Deut. 30.15, and the overt confession of sin in Lam. 3.42a confirm that the גבר (and Zion) is sinful. There is no attempt to 'downplay' the reality of sin, and this must be recognized. In this way, it is true that Lamentations 3 gives evidence to promote theodicy.

And yet, if Lam. 3.21-24 does play a crucial element in the theodic presentation, then what is unstated in this theological affirmation remains vital for understanding the poem as well. What precisely about Yhwh's covenant characteristics in fact give the גבר hope? Is hope constructed from the idea that Yhwh will counteract *his own* extensive punitive actions described in Lam. 3.1-18, or in Yhwh's act of remembering the man's miserable homelessness (Lam. 3.19) or in thinking that a theological conviction will relieve the man of his dire situation, or in the notion that the Lord will forgive the sins of the people after they have confessed and repented? The precise *meaning* of the hope in Lam. 3.21-24 remains an open question, which the reader, enabled by the text, may fill in the 'gaps' and respond to in some manner, though not *one* manner. This fact projects an open strategy rather than a closed one for its model readers.

Building from this, there are indicators that theodicy does not paint the full theological picture. Stated another way, there is indeed an anti-theodic impulse present. Divine response is not guaranteed, for he may shut out prayer (Lam. 3.8b), reject his people (Lam. 3.17), or hide himself (Lam. 3.44). Also the linear progression of the acrostic draws the reader through divine portraiture in the following manner: various antagonistic divine metaphors (Lam. 3.1-16, 18, 42b-45) are matched by various beneficent divine metaphors (Lam. 3.17, 19-41a, 46-66). Even if the reader recognizes that the poetry concludes on a tacit metaphor of divine judge, and thereby a rather positive view, the former depictions and questions raised by divine portrayal are not resolved, but passed over. Yhwh as divine judge is *still* the malevolent bear and lion—an opportunistic hunter (Lam. 3.10). The

poetry does not give determinate response as to which divine metaphor the reader is to adopt. Rather, the reader is forced into an 'ideal insomnia' in terms of theological portrayal. The reader may adopt the image of divine savior, who is beneficent (Lam. 3.25-39), or alternatively to recognize the reality of the divine warrior, whose activity presents a profound challenge that cannot be avoided because it prevents any reconciliation between God and his people (Lam. 3.8, 42b-45). This point nuances Middlemas' findings on the divine imagery in the poem.[118] Equally, present pain *is* the problem for the גבר, if the conclusion of the poem is any indication: Yhwh *has not* responded, leading the lamenter to cry out using the same language of Zion's formulaic address (√ראה / √נבט); this poetically connects Zion with the lamenter and heightening the emphasis upon present pain and the lack of divine response.[119]

A word, too, should be said about how the poetry stretches the limits of language to impact theological presentation beyond theodic/anti-theodic categories. This is seen first in Lam. 3.21-24, where the ambiguous referent to זאת and the awkward syntax of על־כן precisely creates a forward impulse for the reader to try and make sense of what could create hope in the man. Nothing in the verses prior suggests an answer. The reader is left wondering how the man changes his perception. The acrostic, then, moves the reader forward through positive depictions of Yhwh to the repetition of על־כן אוחיל, revealing an inclusio. Syntactically, the poetry stretches the reader to discover the theological truth of Yhwh's covenant traits. This is an entirely positive portrayal that only arrives by reading the text. Next, the rather strange syntax of the כ and מ-strophes, stretch the limits of language to show that Yhwh is beneficent and 'sees' the suffering of the גבר. This too promotes theodicy.

Finally, although the present study has translated the perfective verbs in the span from Lam. 3.55-66 as 'precative perfectives' it cannot be denied that the poetry here stretches the limits of language as well, which has theological implications. If precatives, the verbs in this span of verses imply ongoing distress from which there is no relief. If simple past perfectives, then there is a Danklied in which Yhwh has *already* delivered, providing a positive theology of divine justice, care and deliverance. This, however, is met by Lam. 3.64-66, in which another distress appears, needing Yhwh's deliverance once again. The past, present and future in the theological relationship between God-people-enemies in the poem is strained and uncertain, which is then revealed in the syntax and semantics of Lam. 3.55-66. The difficulties syntactically and semantically, I submit, give the reader different ways to construe the theological realities of the poem.

118. Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah?'
119. So see Berges, 'The Violence', pp. 41-42.

These factors present a theology that is profoundly open in Eco's terminology. Thus it is clear that the relationship between God and the גבר may be read in a multifaceted manner. The range of divine images suggests a number of ways for the model reader to access the deity. This is not a 'closed' project for the model reader but rather an 'open' one.

And yet as in the previous poems, a caveat must be made regarding the openness. Despite the varied ways the reader can approach the deity and the גבר and understand the relationship, as in Lamentations 1–2, the fact that all complaints—whether about sin, enemies, distress, or even Yhwh's actions—go before the deity implies that the poetry tacitly affirms divine justice. That is, the openness of the poem works *rhetorically* on the basis that Yhwh remains available and potent, able to respond out of that justice and beneficence to counteract distresses expressed in the text (even when the problem is his own divine activity). All the appeals and complaints rhetorically are designed to *persuade* Yhwh to act on the lamenter's behalf. The content of the appeal and complaint, however, is something that must be actualized for the reader in the reading process. The poetry opens up interpretative horizons for the reader to accomplish this.

Chapter 8

Lamentations 4–5

1. *Introduction*

Lamentations 4 and 5 will be analyzed together. Corporately, they are the same size as each of the first three poems. And both of these poems break the rhythm of the three-line alphabetic acrostic on display in the previous three poems. Lamentations 4 reduces the lineation from a tricolon to a bicolon while maintaining the alphabetic acrostic. Lamentations 5 reduces its lineation to a single poetic line, and the acrostic disappears.

As in the first two poems, in Lamentations 4 the first word of the strophe evinces the alphabetic word. Note Lam. 4.1:

_____ א (verse 1)

_____

Alongside the acrostic, Lamentations 4 utilizes speaking voices that helps to distinguish the major movements of the poem. Verses 1-16 exhibit a third person voice, a narrator who reports the disaster similar to the 'narrator' in Lamentations 1–2. A communal first person voice then appears in vv. 17-20. The change in voice does not necessarily mean a change in speaker, because the speaker describing disaster in vv. 1-16 then may be speaking on behalf of his people in vv. 17-20. If this is true, then one notes a change in focus from a kind of detached observation to that of an impassioned sufferer who sits amidst his suffering people. His words, then, become their words.[1] Or these latter verses may in fact comprise the voice of the people that were described as suffering in the former verses. If this is the case, then the narrator's description of their suffering falls away in light of their own testimony of pain in vv. 17-20.[2] It remains difficult to distinguish between these possibilities, as the poetry enables both of them. Still, this chapter supposes that the voice of the narrator is then complemented by the voice of the people in vv. 17-20, following O'Connor. In this way, there is a corollary to the voicing technique in Lamentations 1–2. Verses 21-22 are unique in the book and

1. Salters, *Lamentations*, pp. 282-83; Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 120.
2. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World*, pp. 66-68.

display direct address (from the narrator?) to the daughter of Edom (v. 21) and then to the daughters of Zion and Edom (v. 22).

Lamentations 5 uses single poetic lines, and the poem displays little strophic logic in contrast to the previous poems. Still, a discernible structure exists between the second-person address to the deity in Lam. 5.1, 19-22 and the general description of disgrace in Lam. 5.2-18. Generically the poem as a whole approximates a communal lament. Because the poem turns to God in prayer, it distinguishes itself as a lament rather than a dirge. In fact, in light of the prevalent use of the dirge in Lamentations 1–2, Lamentations 5 'narcotizes' (Eco's language) the genre of the dirge to reinforce communal prayer rather than simple mourning over disaster. As will be demonstrated below, Lam. 5.19-22 takes lived disaster to the deity in prayer. It does not merely ruminate on the shards of existence; the poetry expects God to change things.

Bergler and Guillaume, treating seriously the presence of the acrostic in the previous poems, suggest that a modified acrostic appears in the first letters of each line in Lamentations 5 so that a 'hidden' message appears.[3] Bergler argues that the hidden message reinforces the meaning of the poem—that God has judged his people for their sin. Guillaume, however, sees a different message using a similar approach and thinks that it provides a shining ray of hope for God's people in the midst of their darkness: 'Zechariah the prophet says, your God is greatly exalted!' Both suggestions remain provocative.

Of them, Guillaume's reading makes better sense because he takes seriously the extant data in the poem and does not try and adapt a message to fit that data. Further, he rightly draws in the insights of Jewish interpreters that read Lamentations 5 along the lines of a hidden message that have to do with Zechariah. Still, Guillaume's reading is far from conclusive. A number of moves must be made to support his interpretation, not least the selectivity in choosing what letters 'count' towards the reading. Their suggestions, however, do alert the interpreter to the major theological emphases identified throughout the course of this monograph (theodicy and anti-theodicy) and the attempts of readers to negotiate these divergent theological points of view.

The interpretation advanced here finds little evidence for a clearly articulated acrostic for Lamentations 5 in the manner advocated by either Bergler or Guillaume. Rather, the poem displays a series of 22 verses that may mimic the 22 letters of the alphabet. The acrostic at best remains vestigial,

3. S. Bergler, 'Threni V: nu rein alphabetisierendes Lied? Versuch einer Deutung', *VT* 27 (1977), pp. 304-20; Philippe Guillaume, 'Lamentations 5: The Seventh Acrostic', *JHS* 9 (2006), online journal. Accessible at: http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article_118.pdf.

but nonetheless it is reasonable to suppose it may have influenced the length of the poem. And as indicated in chapter 4 above, the abrupt shift away from a strict alphabetic acrostic in Lamentations 5 may reflect a way to initiate closure for the reader. Because of these factors, the reader understands that he or she is encountering the final poem in the book.

Unique to every other poem in the book, Lamentations 4 avoids direct address to the Lord. Its presents suffering and pain from the perspective of the narrator and community. Lamentations 5 takes this suffering to God in prayer. So Parry is right to note that the fourth poem cannot be read in isolation apart from the fifth poem.[4]

2. *Analysis of Lam. 4.1-22*

A high number of elements from Lamentations 2 repeat in Lamentations 4. Note especially the following:

√שׁפך (Lam. 2.12c; 2:19b; Lam. 4.1, 11, 13)
בראשׁ כל־חוצות (Lam. 2.19d; Lam. 4.2, cf. vv. 5, 8, 14, 18)
√חשׁב + יד (Lam. 2.8; Lam. 4.2)
באהל בת־ציון שׁפך כאשׁ המתו (Lam. 2.4) //
ויצת־אשׁ בציון + כלה יהוה את־חמתו שׁפך חרון אפו(Lam. 4.11)
עולל + יונק (Lam. 2.11, 12; Lam. 4.4)
כהן + נביא (Lam. 2.20; cf. 2.9; Lam. 4.13)
זקן (Lam. 2.10, 12; Lam. 4.16)
שׁבר בת־עמי (Lam. 2.11; cf. 3.48; Lam. 4.10; cf. 4.3, 6)

Although it is true that Lamentations 4 echoes the other poems in the book as well, the repetition from Lamentations 2 is recognizable as a significant part of a larger poetic strategy. The effect of this reading process is powerful. It intensifies and nuances the focus upon suffering and pain of God's people found in both poems, while simultaneously providing surprising hermeneutical turns for the reader.

a. *Lam. 4.1-16*

Verses 1-5 read:

> 'How the gold has dimmed; the good gold changed.
> The holy stones are poured out in every street corner.
>
> The precious children of Zion, the ones (once) valued like gold,
> How they are reckoned like jars of clay, a work of the potter's hands.
>
> Even jackals offer a breast, (even they) suckle their young.
> The daughter[5] of my people has become cruel; like ostriches in the desert.

4. Parry, *Lamentations*, p. 134.
5. LXX apparently reads 'daughters' and a number of scholars follow this line of

> The tongue of the suckling clings to the roof of its mouth.
> Infants request food; there is nothing extended to them.
>
> Those who consumed dainties are made to tremble outside.
> The ones established in clothes of scarlet cling to trashheaps'.

The poem opens with 'how' (איכה), creating a reflexive movement for the reader, back to the other poems that use the term: Lam. 1.1 and 2.1. The term, as before, is part of an institutional s-code for mourning within Eco's semiotics, which conditions the reader to anticipate the context of bereavement and loss. Poetic contrast works effectively to reinforce this sense of loss and death.

And like in Lamentations 1–2, the poem begins by blending generic categories, specifically the dirge and city-lament genres. The use of איכה and the motif of reversal/contrast both introduce a dirge. Yet the city-lament too carries a reversal motif within it, along with a description of destruction from an internal observer. Verses 1-5 evinces similarities to both forms of speech so that neither gains predominance. The effective blending of formal elements in any case highlights the presentation of personal loss coupled with the reality that the city itself is what has been bereaved, similar to the bereavement of a person.

Personification from the previous poems again becomes apparent as well: bereaved city // bereaved person.[6] Still, the presentation here is distinctive from the other poems in the book because the title 'Daughter of Zion' remains a muted figure in Lamentations 4 when compared to Lamentations 1–2. She is described here but does not speak. Nor does she carry the title given her in Lamentations 1–2 until v. 21. Rather, emphasis is laid upon the presentation of *her people*, her 'children' (v. 2). Although the 'narrator' in Lam. 4.1-16 describes their plight, nonetheless the community can be perceived apart from previous representation of it as they offer their own perspective in vv. 17-20.

In terms of Eco's aesthetic theory, this *ouvrée* into the contrasting visions of suffering in Lamentations 4, distinctive from the personification of Zion in the other poems, provides another *entrée* into the book of Lamentations. Zion's words for her people in Lamentations 1–2 are not their last words. Nor are they presented from the perspective of the 'man' of Lamentations 3, who gives his vision of his people (both as an individual and representative of the community, echoing the experience of Zion). Nor does the 'narrator'

translation, emending to בנות. This reasonable emendation nonetheless remains unnecessary. The Syriac follows the MT. Further, as Renkema notes, the title is a metaphor for the people and should not be 'interpreted too strictly' because the point of the image is that the entire population displays a 'lack of parental care' (Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 502).

6. Heim, 'The Personification of Jerusalem'.

of Lam. 4.1-16 offer the last word. They are given voice in vv. 17-20 without being subsumed under anyone's statements *about* them, even if their voice will use previous language from others. As each speaker has unique interaction with previous voices, corporately they present a myriad of responses to disaster. This multiplicity of presentation via voicing and representation reaffirms the poetry's open textual strategy, giving internal and external representations of suffering and sin, which do not all speak in the same way about their relationship.

Although the previous poems in the book appealed to God for change, present suffering remains and so Lamentations 4 focuses once again upon *present* suffering. In Lam. 4.1, this is achieved especially by transforming previous speech from Lam. 2.12c, 19d through the usage of √שׁפך and בראשׁ כל־חוצות. Whereas Zion is encouraged to 'pour out' (שׁפכי) her heart over the lives of her children who are fainting at the 'head of every street' (בראשׁ כל־חוצות) in 2.19, in 4.1 her 'holy stones' are *still* 'poured out' (ישׁתפכנה) at the 'head of every street' (בראשׁ כל־חוצות). The repetition of language effectively suggests that the prayers that have gone before have *not been* answered. The 'holy stones' are 'poured out' at the head of every street like the little children whose lives are 'poured out' on their mothers' laps in 2.12. At once, one notes an emphasis upon suffering and the lack of response to the prayers of Zion. In this way, an anti-theodic impulse sets the tone for Lamentations 4.

This is heightened further with the polyvalence of the repeated language of 'holy stones'. In the first place, the referent to these could be actually temple implements being looted from the sanctuary. And yet, with the intertextual connection between the children and stones 'at the head of every street' (Lam. 2.19; 4.1) the construct chain 'holy stones' also obliquely connects the 'children'. On this reading, the holy stones of the city—that which connotes its sacred space and vitality—are the very children that are dying in the streets. This interplay of imagery creates interpretative space for the reader to reflect upon and mourn over the loss of the city, temple and *people*—as the children are beautiful and lost, so too the city and temple are beautiful and lost in destruction.

Again, the cry of Zion in 2.20-22 that comes in response to Lam. 2.19 in fact, still echoes here: the children (Lam. 2.19d) and city/temple/people (Lam. 4.1b) *still* are dying in agony. Yhwh has *not* responded. This theological tension reveals that Lam. 3.21-39 cannot be thought to be the theological 'answer' to pain in Lamentations because it does not answer Lam. 4.1. Rather, Lam. 4.1 drives the pain of the complaints forward, heightening an anti-theodic perspective for the reader. The reader may tease out the theological issues of divine justice and present suffering by following this thread in the tapestry that is Lamentations.

This same theological point is carried through in v. 2, where the unique iteration of 'how' (איכה) reinforces the sense of loss and complaint. The

verse focuses distinctively upon the 'precious children of Zion', whose former care and beauty are contrasted against the breaking of pottery. These are broken shards in the hands of a potter: the divine potter.

That this is another divine image building from the range of divine images in the book is revealed through the careful intertextual linkage between Lam. 2.8 and 4.2. In these verses, √חשׁב + יד is used to describe divine activity: in the former instance divine activity is mentioned explicitly and in the latter it is assumed and reinforced with the language of 2.8. Yhwh 'determined' (√חשׁב) to destroy 'the wall of the Daughter of Zion' and did not turn back 'his hand' (ידו) from destruction (Lam. 2.8). The 'children of Zion' have been 'reckoned' (√חשׁב) as jars of clay in the 'hand' (יד) of a potter. The metaphor of the divine potter who reckoned to shatter his jar of clay stands in the background.[7] Yhwh has determined to destroy his people like jars of clay in his hand, but the plight of the people is set in the foreground. Indeed, it is the very activity of the deity which is questioned through the anti-theodic impulse of the first two verses.

Despite the theological contestation that opened the poem, vv. 3-5 surprise the reader in two hermeneutical shifts. The first comes in vv. 3-4, when these verses shift to a negative presentation of the people, particularly in terms of mothering imagery. Verse 3 abruptly declares that while wild animals care for their young, 'the daughter of my people' has become 'cruel'. Against the stark presentation of the 'victim' unanswered by God and broken by him in vv. 1-2, v. 3 presents 'the daughter of my people' as an abandoning mother, even mean to her children—'like an ostrich in the desert'.[8] No logical progression is at work here. This abrupt shift in focus and tone demarcates a fine example of Lamentations' paratactic logic.

This negative portrayal is carried further in v. 4, with a description of languishing children. The 'suckling' and 'infants' of Lam. 2.11 (יונק + עולל) with mothers *unable* to help them (see Lam. 2.12) are now presented as abandoned children (יונק + עולל), who languish in hunger and thirst; 'there is nothing extended to them' in Lam. 4.4. The point here is to reinforce the poor mothering of Zion. These vulnerable children face death and are desperate for help, 'but their parents are unwilling or unable to provide it'.[9] In this way, the repetition of language from Lamentations 2 effectively causes

7. Jeremianic material (Jer. 18.11) may serve as encyclopaedic content that informs this verse. This has been noted by Lee, *The Singers*, pp. 184-85. Of course this cannot be necessarily discounted but one should note the intertextuality present between Lam. 2.8 and 4.2 that informs the reading here.

8. The phrase about the ostrich conveys a negative tone, a majority scholarly view. For discussion, see Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 112. Driver views it as a positive image (S.R. Driver and G.B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921], p. 317).

9. Provan, *Lamentations*, pp. 111-12.

the reader to re-read the suffering of the children from another angle, one of parental abandonment.

Verse 5 then provides the second hermeneutical shift. Verse 5 may reinforce the themes brought out in vv. 3-4, but this is unclear.[10] The verse shifts away from a focus upon the plight of the children (suffering and abandoned) in vv. 1-4 to the wealthy of society who experience the contrast from glory to shame: from 'dainties' and 'scarlet' to 'outside' and 'trashheaps'. There is no indication of poor paternal or maternal action here. It provides another illogical move back to presenting a forlorn and victimized society. Again, through parataxis a myriad of perspectives and images of suffering move on top of one another, providing a number of ways to access the disaster the poetry portrays.

Verses 6-10 expand upon the contrast motif, intensifying the tragedy of the people's present situation but expand the reasons for the cause of suffering. The text reads:

> 'The iniquity/punishment of the daughter of my people
> is greater than the chastisement of Sodom.
> The one which was overthrown in a moment; hands did not move against her.
>
> Her Nazirites were purer than snow; they were brighter than milk.
> Their bodies[11] were ruddier than coral, their hair[12] (was) lapis-lazuli.
>
> Their appearance was blacker than soot;
> they were not recognized in the street corners.
> Their skin hung on their bones; it was dry like wood.
>
> Those slain by the sword were better off than those being slain by famine:
> They who ebbed away, being pierced from (lack of) produce of the field.[13]
>
> Hands of compassionate women cooked their children.
> They became their food, in the collapse of the daughter of my people'.

In v. 6, for instance, the reader discovers a nuance to Zion's reversal: their suffering is great, but their iniquity (עון) is greater—even greater than the sin

10. Provan, *Lamentations,* pp. 112-13.

11. 'Bodies' is my rendering of עצם, which indicates the whole person as in Prov. 16.24.

12. Some suggest that גזרתם means 'their beards' (Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 81) or 'their hair' (Provan, *Lamentations*, p. 115). This draws a connection between the hair of the Nazirites as it is depicted in artefacts that depict hair with lapis-lazuli in the ancient Near East. Salters renders it 'hair' which is followed here (Salters, *Lamentations*, pp. 302-303). Gottlieb is less certain on the meaning (*A Study*, pp. 63-64).

13. The line is challenging, but comprehensible. I take the relative pronoun + suffixed pronoun (שהם) to refer back to 'those being slain by famine'. These sufferers' lives 'ebb away' (יזובו), as they are 'being pierced' (מדקרים) from a lack of 'produce from the field' (מתנובת שדי).

(חטאה) of Sodom. Joyce suggests that the word-pair 'iniquity' (עון) and 'sin' (חטאה) may be polyvalent, as both terms can connote 'sinfulness' or 'punishment'. This raises a question about the nature of the comparison: is the sin of God's people exceeding the sin of Sodom, or is the punishment of God's people exceeding Sodom's punishment? 'Interpretation of this verse depends in part upon one's theological assessment of the message as a whole […] we may strive for certainty, but we have to recognize that semantic ambiguity remains'.[14] The word-pair recurs in Lam. 5.7, with similar effect.

Due to the open strategy advanced in the book up to this point, one may note that this is one more example of theological openness in Lamentations. If one's 'theological assessment' of the book falls in line with a theodic interpretation, then clearly one reads v. 6 as denigrating the wanton sin of God's people. They have had a fall from grace greater than Sodom. Thus, God is justified in his punishment. Alternatively, if one reads along the lines of the reversal/contrast motif established in vv. 1-5 along with various antitheodic elements in the poetry, the v. 6 reinforces that the punishment of Zion is excessive. The verse then expresses this pain and it may serve as a means to draw this inequity before God.

Contrast between what was before and what is presently carries on in vv. 7-8. The verses remain extremely difficult to translate, and their precise meaning eludes scholarship. But, the overall indication is clear: the people's former radiance (v. 7) is now reduced to ruin (v. 8). Verse 7 draws upon language likely intending 'Nazirites', literally those who were set apart for specific service to Yhwh (cf. Numbers 6). Salters prefers 'nobles' as a translation, supposing that 'Nazirites' cannot be intended despite the uniform witness of the versions.[15] Still, Provan rightly suggests that Nazirites is plausible here and indicates that the tragedy of reversal is all the more severe—even those who are dedicated to God's cause cannot escape disaster. They who once were beautifully arrayed and pleasant to look upon (note the color imagery in v. 7a) have now become 'black as soot' and 'unrecognizable' in the out of doors (v.8). Verse 7b plays upon the repetition of בחוצות (cf. Lam. 2.19; 4.5, 8) to reinforce the tragic contrast of the present. The 'holy stones' in the street corners in 2.1 are now 'unrecognizable' in the street corners in v. 8. Cumulatively, it presents a vivid picture of loss and tragedy: even among God's chosen.

Verses 9-10 draw the contrast motif to a climax and present life at the most extreme. Immediate death is celebrated while prolonged suffering is mourned. For this reason, it is 'better' for those who died by the sword (the initial siege and conquest of the city) than those who suffer in its after effects (the famine that ensues, per v. 9a). This bizarre celebration of death

14. Joyce, 'Sitting "Loose" to History', p. 225.
15. Salters, *Lamentations*, p. 299.

only speaks to the dire presentation of the city at present. Note that emphasis falls away from any indication of the sinfulness of the people (cf. vv. 3-6) but rather falls upon their suffering, emphasizing the anti-theodic theological tendency with which the poem began.

Verse 10 carries this vision of suffering forward but strangely alters the focus. Verse 10 'zooms in' not on the general populace that undergoes the 'piercing' of 'famine' elucidated in v. 9, but rather on the 'compassionate women'. They are 'compassionate', but remedy their suffering and pain by cooking their own children. Verse 10b heightens the horror of the description: 'they became their food'. The relationship between v. 10 and vv. 4-5 is striking because of the former verse's renewed emphasis upon the plight of the children, albeit with a different term (ילדיהן). The children (עולל + יונק) ask for food (לחם) only to be rebuffed (cf. v. 4) and then eaten by their own mothers as food (לברות). Thematically, this connects back to Lam. 2.20, where Zion complaints to the Lord to look upon their suffering, questioning whether it is right for women to eat their own children ('fruit').

The connection of siege warfare and cannibalism is present in other ANE materials. Lam. 4.10 may simply draw upon these ideas to depict the extreme reversal of the normal order of things, as one finds in the annals of Ashurbanipal. For example, Assyrian king Ashurbanipal's records one finds a description of the king's siege of Babylon: 'The remainders who succeeded to enter Babylon ate (there) each other's flesh in their ravenous hunger'.[16] Further the records describe Ashurbanipal's defeat of an army at the mountain Hukkurina. The account describes how those who are besieged at the mountain became parched, and '[f]amine broke out among them and they ate the flesh of their children against their hunger'.[17] And biblical material depicts cannibalism in the context of famine: Lev. 26.29, Deut. 28.53-57, 2 Kgs 6.26-30, Jer. 19.9 and Ezek. 5.10. Each of these texts horrifically presents cannibalism as an outcome of famine in the midst of destruction. By presenting things a similar way, the poet of Lam. 4.10 suggests that life is turned topsy-turvy.

Different than the Assyrian examples offered above, it is significant that the biblical contexts which depict cannibalism suggest that its presence is an outcome of covenant breach. Lev. 26.29 and Deut. 28.53-57 especially present mothers eating their children as an outcome of an enacted 'curse' for covenant violation. Verse 10 apparently follows this pattern. Although thematically similar to Lam. 2.20, Lam. 4.10 rather does not *plead* to God to change things. It describes the horror of cannibalism as a result (likely) of sin, and likely relates to the logic of covenant curse. The verse, in

16. *ANET*, p. 298.

17. *ANET*, p. 300. For further examples from the ANE, see Berlin, *Lamentations*, pp. 75-77.

conjunction with its thematic association with vv. 4-5, the horror of the reality of famine and cannibalism *is* palpable in the verse, and this is certainly bad enough. Yet, the poetry apparently takes the point further, beyond mere suffering and the 'contrast' motif. The evocation of mothers eating children as a result of covenant violation casts a dark tone on the action itself. Sin brings suffering: a theodic impulse that one finds throughout other portions of the poetry (cf. Lam. 1.3, 5, 7, 18, 20; 3.25-39a; 4.3-5).[18]

The final verset in v. 10b repeats language from Lam. 2.11b and 3.48, but sets the phrase שׁבר בת־עמי in a new light. Both previous instances of שׁבר + בת־עמי are summative expressions of pain over the collapse of the Zion. However, Lam. 4.10b does not use the preposition על in this combination as in the previous instances. Rather, a temporal ב is employed. The shift is subtle but nonetheless effective. Cannibalism is going on '*in* the collapse of the daughter of my people'. Thus in this third instance of שׁבר בת־עמי, the poetry focuses upon the midst of the collapse, in which the dire reality of cannibalism ensues. This provides another avenue by which to voice pain *over* (על) 'the collapse of the daughter of my people' (cf. 2.11b and 3.48).

Verses 11-12 move away from a presentation of pain to a depiction of Yhwh's violent judgment against Zion. The text reads:

> 'Yhwh kindled his anger, he poured out his burning rage,
> And he set fire against Zion; Her foundations were consumed.
>
> The kings of the land and all of the inhabitants of the world did not believe
> That an enemy and a foe would come against the gates of Jerusalem'.

The language of v. 11 echoes the depiction of Lam. 2.4, as indicated above: כלה יהוה את־חמתו שׁפך חרון אפו // באהל בת־דציון שׁפך כאשׁ המתו (Lam. 2.4) + ויצת־אשׁ בציון (Lam. 4.11). This repetition reinforces two points previously seen in the poetry. First, God himself is the author of destruction. Whereas previous portions of the book, the author of destruction remains polyvalent (whether God or enemies, cf. Lam. 1.10), v. 11 clearly identifies the author of destruction as Yhwh (v. 11a). The fire of Yhwh consumes Zion's very foundations. Second, destruction can be understood as an outcome of covenant breach, following the logic of v. 10.

An interesting interplay of √שׁפך in vv. 1 and 10 exists within the poem. Yhwh 'pours out' his wrath against Zion (v. 10), which causes the 'holy stones' to be 'poured out' (√שׁפך, v. 1) at the head of every street. Through the root-play, the reader notes that what was formerly a description of reversal has been re-contextualized into a terrible vision of divine judgment. On this reading, the 'foe' (צר) and 'enemy' (איב) of v. 12 that come against the gates of Jerusalem is none other than Yhwh himself. This collocation

18. So Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 148, contra Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, p. 132. See the discussion of Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 232-33.

obviously recalls Lam. 2.4-5, where the deity is described with both of these terms. The repetition, then, reinforces the notion of divine destruction and Yhwh as an enemy warrior fighting against his people.[19]

Verse 12 especially undercuts an overly-confident Zion theology that would assume God's presence and protection in Jerusalem.[20] Psalms 48.3, 50.2 locate Zion as the place where God dwells and, by virtue of this fact, it is beautiful and the 'perfection of beauty'. Zion, then, it may be thought, remains impregnable. Verse 12 shatters the notion completely, 'blowing up' the encyclopaedic content of this particular thread of Zion theology only to undercut it. Any view of Zion's impregnability, even if believed by enemy nations, has been exposed to be a false trust. Zion cannot save because its people are sinful. As such, Yhwh fights against Zion as an enemy warrior.

Verses 13-16 expose why such trust is indeed false: sins of priests and prophets bring judgment and suffering. These verses remain difficult because of the lack of clear subjects: who is intended to be the subjects of vv. 14-15? Is it the prophets, the priests, both together, the populace writ large, or blind people wandering around in the streets? On the reading advanced here, the ones in view as subjects are indeed the priests *and* prophets of v. 13, but the priests in particular may be intended. Verses 13-16 read:

> 'On account of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests,
> The ones who poured out in her midst the blood of the righteous.
>
> They wandered blindly[21] in the streets, they were defiled with the blood.
> That no one was able to touch[22] their garments.
>
> 'Get away!' 'Impure!' They cried to them.
> 'Get away!' 'Get away!' 'Do not touch!'
> As they wandered, tottering about, they said,[23]
> 'Among the nations they will reside[24] no more'.

19. Albrektson suggests that Lam. 4.12 repudiates traditional Zion theology (*Studies in the Text*, pp. 224-26), but this is debated. See House, *Lamentations*, pp. 325-26.

20. Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 524-26.

21. Following Salters (*Lamentations*, pp. 316-17) I understand עורים to be an adverbial accusative.

22. בלא יוכלו יגעו, a difficult phrase, barely legible. Gottlieb prefers to read בלא יוכלו as a relative clause that modifies יגעו so that the line reads in full: 'what they were not allowed, they touched with their clothes' (*A Study*, pp. 65-66). But this reading remains difficult: who is the subject here, and why would they only touch the forbidden items 'with their clothes'? I rather follow Berlin and read the line to be referencing those who wandered blindly in the streets, defiled, so that no one could touch their garments (*Lamentations*, pp. 100-102). See Salters, *Lamentations*, pp. 317-18.

23. Following Berlin, I read the phrase בגוים לא יוסיפו לגור to be the voice of the ones who cry out 'Get away'! and 'Unclean'! in v. 15a. The כי introduces a circumstantial clause, so that while these defiled people wander around, they mutter to themselves about the homelessness of the people.

24. Albrektson's suggestion that the infinitive לגור derives from II גור 'to attack' has

> The face of the Lord (was) their portion; he will no longer consider them.
> The faces of the priests did not raise; elders were not gracious'.

A number of internal repetitions within Lamentations 4 nuance previously held understandings. Although priests and prophets come in view for the first time, the familiar word-pair 'iniquity' (עון) and 'sin' (חטאה) from v. 6 recurs. Different to its first usage in v. 6, in v. 13 the meaning of the terms can only imply sinfulness rather than punishment—the prophets and priests have committed acts of sin and iniquity in the midst of her people. What was ambiguously described in v. 6 is now narrowed to the sin of the prophets and priests. When set in the larger framework of the book, whereas the prophets were formerly described in a pitiful state in Lam. 1.9, now they are wanton in their actions. This deepens the presentation of the prophets in Lam. 2.14. Thematically the verses complement one another, but 4.13 intensifies the action of the prophets—they, along with the priests, shed the blood of the 'righteous' in her midst.

Verse 13 also deploys √שׁפך to deepen the reader's understanding of human and divine action in this moment of judgment. The 'holy stones' were 'cast down' (√שׁפך, v. 1) by the wrath of God (√שׁפך, v. 11), but in v. 13, the rationale for the disaster of the city may be linked to the priests and prophets, the ones who 'poured out' (√שׁפך, v. 13) the blood of the righteous. In this way, divine judgment is reinforced, but the rationale is expanded: not covenant breach in general, but in particular the shedding of innocent blood. This provides yet another way to access the meaning of the disaster and strengthens the open textual strategy of the poem.

In light of the cumulative presentation of vv. 9-13, it is likely that vv. 14-16 continue to outline culpability in sin. עורים at least thematically echoes God's striking covenant violators with 'blindness / blind' (עורון / עור) in Deut. 28.28-29, much like the cannibalism motif from v. 10 echoes Deut. 28.53-57. Further, the defilement that comes from blood in vv. 13, 14 finds resonance in prophetic material, particularly in Ezek. 22.3-4, where blood that is shed defiles the city, a moral sin (murder) that is linked with the cultic sin of idolatry. It is because of sin that the prophets/priests say that they are unable to 'reside among the nations' any longer. This language of living 'among the nations' in v. 15 (בגוים)[25] echoes Lam. 1.1 (בגוים), where

won few adherents (*Studies in the Text*, p. 191), though see Gottlieb, *A Study*, p. 67. I follow the suggestions of Rudolph (*Klagelieder*, p. 249) and Otto Kaiser (*Klagelieder*, p. 173), understanding the term to indicate 'to reside' in the sense of לגור in Jer. 43.5. So Rudolph: 'dürfen nicht hier bleiben'; and Kaiser: 'durften sie nirgends bleiben'.

25. Salters treats אמרו בגוים as a gloss (*Lamentations*, p. 321). But this deletion misses the logic of security and honour God's people, including the priests and prophets, enjoyed 'among the nations' (as in Lam 1.1). The verse laments the contrast from honour to shame (a reversal motif) and focuses upon present homelessness.

personified Jerusalem sits honored in the midst of the nations as a 'princess'. God's people move from honor to shame and now have lost their prime place 'among the nations' precisely because of the sins of the priests and prophets. Verse 16 picks up this theme. The repetition of חלק and נבט in v. 16 creates an effective presentation of reversal: the priests have *not* treated Yhwh as their portion (cf. חלק in Lam. 3.24) due to their sin, and thereby Yhwh does not 'consider' them, or perhaps he does not 'consider' their appeals for the deity to 'consider' them (cf. נבט in Lam. 1.11, 12; 2.20; 5.1). Because of sin, his people no longer resided in the land (לא יוסיפו לגור) with honor (v. 15); because of sin, the Lord no longer regarded (לא יוסיף להביטם) them (v. 16). The use of this repeated language provides a strong theodic impulse that runs counter to the anti-theodic tendencies at other places in the poem.

b. *Lam. 4.17-20*

The speaker shifts away from a focus upon the sins of the prophets and priests to draw attention to a faulty faith in political alliances and kingship. These verses highlight once again the sense of pain and anguish that accompanies the situation of occupation: restricted movements (v. 18), the sense of being pursued and overtaken (v. 19), and regret over false and empty hopes (vv. 17, 20).

> 'Still, our eyes became weak (looking) for our help: futility.
> On watch, we waited intently for a nation who could not save.
>
> Our movements are restricted from walking in our streets.
> Our end is near. Our days are fulfilled, because our end is come.
>
> Our pursuers were faster than the eagles of the sky.
> They hotly pursued us on the hills; they ambushed us in the desert.
>
> The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Yhwh, was captured in their traps.
> Whom we said, "In his shadow we will live among the nations"'.

One notes immediately the use of רדף in v. 19 (cf. Lam. 1.3, 6c; 3.43), which again reinforces the terrible reality of enemy threat. Different to Lam. 3.43, the threat is not Yhwh but rather enemy nations, as in Lam. 1.3, 6. These verses highlight the vain hopes of the people on other sources other than Yhwh. Renkema helpfully notes the repetition of גוי in vv. 15, 17 and 20, but does not fully reckon with its potential significance.[26] In particular, the repetition of the term in vv. 17 and 20 highlight a point that has been going on since v. 15: the sin of God's people has led to living in distress rather than security among the nations (בגוים). Lam. 4.17 indicates that trusting in

26. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 545. He suggests that it is structural; the argument here links structure with semantics.

a 'nation' to save them was, in fact, 'futility' (הבל) because any such nation 'could not save'.

The interpretation of v. 20 needs some comment. If the reading offered here is correct, then it provides a dark and negative perspective of trust in the 'anointed of the Lord' rather than a positive one. This negative reading goes against scholarly consensus that reads the text as an affirmation of kingship. Of course, this verse was treated as a prophecy about Jesus in the patristic period. The title 'anointed of Yhwh' is understood in a positive manner as pointing to Christ even if they derive such a reading from a heavy dependence upon the Greek and Latin versions of the OT.[27] Critical scholarship denies such Christological interpretation but reads the verse as a lament over the demise of the Judahite king, which nonetheless underscores a positive view of the משׁיח יהוה.

Hillers suggests that the phrase רוח אפינו, which accompanies משׁיח יהוה, represents common royal title in accord with ANE precedence. Thereby it reveals the high regard God's people had for the king as he is their life-breath (רוח אפינו) as well as the divinely-appointed regent (משׁיח יהוה).[28] In this way, the demise of (even) God's king illustrates the contrast from former glory to present shame. This makes good sense in light of such contrast that has been evident in the poem up to this point.

Further, Salters rightly notes that the image of God as 'shadow' is well-known in the OT, but Lam. 4.20 is the only case where the king is mentioned as a 'shadow' (צל) or protector.[29] Renkema rightly brings attention to exilic texts that reinforce the king as protector of the people in a future time, but in each of the examples that he brings to bear in the discussion, none attribute the king as the one whose 'shadow' protects the people.[30] House assesses v. 20 in light of Isa. 32.1-2, which does associate Israel's king and leaders with provision of shelter and shade (כצל) for the people, undergirded by the power of Yhwh.[31] These interpretations suggest a positive view of God's chosen king, the one who provides life and security for the people. His loss is the climax of contrast outlined in the poem up to this point. This loss solidifies the confusion, the crisis of faith, expressed in the book.[32]

This interpretation is reasonable, but with the negative portrait of the leadership of Judah up to v. 20, it seems rather strange that the king would

27. H.A. Thomas, 'Lamentations in the Patristic Period', pp. 113-19. For further discussion see Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, p. 193; Philip S. Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations* (AB, 17B; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), pp. 48-49.

28. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 92.

29. Isa. 49.2; Pss. 17.8; 19.1; 121.5. Salters, *Lamentations*, p. 333.

30. Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 558-60.

31. House, *Lamentations*, p. 448.

32. Hillers, *Lamentations*, p. 92.

be singled out as the positive hope for the people. In fact, the book has continually revealed the frailty of trusting in anyone or thing for security other than Yhwh. In this fourth poem in particular, an overly-confident Zion theology was shown to be deficient (v. 12), other nations were shown to be deficient (v. 17), and here an overly-confident trust that the king will provide security is shown to be deficient (v. 20). So thematically a radical shift to a positive statement about a Judahite king seems out of place.

Three factors detract from a positive outlook on the statement about the king in v. 20. First, despite the fact that the phrase 'breath of our nostrils' may occur in other ANE texts to describe kingship in a positive manner (so Hillers), the notion that a king is the 'breath' of the people occurs nowhere in the OT. Yhwh breathes life into his people (cf. Gen. 2.7). Yhwh has the power from the breath of his nostrils to protect, judge, or save (cf. Exod. 15.7; 2 Sam. 22.16; Ps. 18.6; Job 4.9). There is no instance in the OT where the power described in Lam. 4.20 is ascribed to the king or another person in the same terms. Job 27.3 is interesting in this respect. Here, Job describes his very life (נִשְׁמָתִי) as 'the breath of God in my nostrils' (ורוח אלוה באפי). The verse reinforces the connection between the deity and the source of life and breath. Negatively, Isa. 2.22 highlights the vitality of God against the impotency of humanity. Isa. 2.22 repudiates glorifying or hoping in a man because he only has 'a breath in his nostrils' (נִשְׁמָה בְאַפּוֹ). The close association between נִשְׁמָה and רוח is well attested and Lam. 4.20 may have something close to this in view.

Secondly, the notion that the king is the people's 'shade' does not fit the predominant usage in the OT, discussed above. House's suggestion that this verse has affinity to Isa. 32.1-2 is tempting, but because the vision of Lam. 4.20 laments the fall of the king, it seems incongruous to appropriate Isaianic tradition on the future king as supplying the meaning of 'shade' here. Lam. 4.20, then, may serve as a critique of (and lament over) false trust: the people have trusted the king rather than Yhwh. In this way, the idea of trusting in a king as 'shade' or protection amidst the nations (בגוים) is shown to be wrong-headed.

Finally, God's people trusted in the king for security and protection 'among the nations' (בגוים, cf. vv. 15, 20), revealing their faulty trust because 'he was captured in their traps'. Zion's experience is one of reversal: she has moved from honour among the nations (בגוים, v. 15, 17) to shame (בגוים, v. 20). In this subtle wordplay building upon the repetition of בגוים, the separate sins of God's people are intertwined to provide logic for the downfall and dishonour they now experience: sin of the priests and prophets (v. 15), and trusting in foreign nations to save (v. 17). The anointed of Yhwh fails in providing security (v. 20). Whereas the people trusted the king to be their 'protection/shade' in the midst of the nations, the poet subtly suggests that it was Yhwh who should have been their shade, protection and 'breath'. This

reading accords for the common usage of צל in the OT, the unique deployment of רוח אפינו, and the poetic interplay of בגוים (vv. 15, 17, 20) that reinforces judgment and sin.

This, in turn, reinforces a theodic impulse in the poem. Simultaneously, the poetry provides a number of points of contact for which this theodicy might be recognized through repetition of language. This suggests an open strategy for the model reader of Lamentations even while limiting interpretative options within a broad theodicy in v. 20. Taken as a whole from vv. 1-20, judgment comes as a result of a myriad of sins: the wickedness of priests and prophets, trust in foreign powers, and faulty trust in a king when security should depend upon faith in Yhwh.

c. *Lam. 4.21-22*

Yet the alphabetic acrostic prevents the reader from stopping at v. 20. The ת-strophe shifts attention away from the situation of distress and loss described in the first twenty verses. Indeed, it diverges from the theodic and anti-theodic tendencies in the previous verses and presents a radical reversal: from punishment to an *end* of exile. The verses also proclaim punishment upon enemies, specifically Edom. Nowhere has there been such explicit mention of another nation in the book until this point. Also, this is the most explicit statement of hope in the book. The text reads:

> 'Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, O inhabitants in the land of Uz!
> Truly a cup will pass over to you; You will get drunk and strip naked.
>
> Your punishment is complete,[33] O daughter of Zion; He will no longer exile you.
> Your punishment is appointed, O daughter of Edom; it will expose your sins!'

The significant shift in tone from all that has preceded it leads Hillers rightly to note that they comprise the most overtly positive statement in the entire book.[34] The vengeance called for against enemies especially in Lam. 1.21-22 and Lam. 3.64-66 now comes into reality. This retribution is unleashed against either a real, historical enemy (Edom) that seems to have profited from Judah's demise, or the metaphorical arch-enemy (Edom) mentioned as the paradigmatic foe of Israel in prophetic ideology.[35] For the purposes of

33. On v. 22a, I do not follow Salters, who suggests that the verb תם 'it has completed', should be understood as meaning that Zion's guilt has come to fruition rather than her 'punishment has come to an end'. See Salters, *Lamentations*, p. 337.

34. Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp. 152-53. Renkema believes √תמם should be understood as a complete affirmation of Yhwh's judgment: 'Your iniquity has amplified itself, daughter Zion' (Renkema, *Lamentations*, pp. 564-65).

35. See the discussions of Bruce C. Cresson, 'The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism', in J.M. Bird (ed.), *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring* (Durham, NC: Duke

this discussion, adjudicating which view gains prominence in v. 22 is unimportant. Whether real or metaphorical, the fact that the foe has undergone punishment answers the pleas of Zion in Lamentations 1 and the sufferer of Lamentations 3: either *a* foe (historical Edom) receives its just desserts for sin, or *the* foe (metaphorical Edom) receives the same.

The commands 'rejoice' and 'be glad' are ironic as the daughter of Edom's joy is motivated by the cup of wrath passing to them. And the nakedness and exposure that marked the experience of the daughter of Zion (cf. Lam. 1.8) now is the experience of the daughter of Edom (v. 21b). Even if one translates the three perfective verbs with Hillers as precative rather than simple past verbs, one cannot escape the outlook that the 'exile' (גלות) will not be the final word for Zion.[36] In fact, the 'exile' mentioned for Judah in Lam. 1.3 is now transformed as a cessation of the same in 4.22, using the same root (גלה). By contrast, the enemy, against whom both Zion and the גבר prayed (Lam. 1.20-22; 2.22; 3.46-66), is now receiving just desserts—or rather, *has received* his just desserts.

Further, by way of repetition of language, the poetry reinforces the notion that God may have given countenance to the daughter of Zion once again. The phrase לא יוסף is used in Lam. 4.15b, 16a and finally in 22a. In the first usage, the phrase is set in the mouth of the enemies who say that Zion will 'no longer (לא יוסף) reside' among the nations, as argued below. This statement is an observation on Zion's pitiable state. The second instance is in the mouth of the poet, who suggests that Yhwh 'will no longer (לא יוסף) consider' Zion. This again is a statement of judgment. By using the exact same phrase in v. 22, the poetry effectively and surprisingly upends the vision of judgment against Zion: God will 'no longer (לא יוסף) exile you'.

This abrupt shift in focus and theological outlook is surprising in this chapter, with its mixture of theodic and anti-theodic verses. However, the quick alteration in tone and mood is not entirely unlike the abrupt shifts in theological tone and perspective witnessed either in the poem or in the previous chapters. In v. 21, then, there is a theological response from the divine savior, Yhwh, who has heard the cry, recognized the reality of Zion's suffering, and has enacted justice against the enemy.

This point is reinforced in v. 22b, where God appoints punishment (עון) for the daughter of Edom, which uncovers (גלה) Edom's sin (חטאה). The word-pair 'iniquity' (עון) and 'sin' (חטאה) from vv. 6 and 13 recurs once again. עון repeats in v. 22a-b, in both cases meaning 'punishment'. Further,

University Press, 1972), pp. 125-48; Bert Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist: The Role of Edom in Biblical Prophecy and Story* (JSOTSup, 169; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994). There is good evidence that shows Edom profited from the exilic situation in Judah. See J. Lindsay, 'Edomite Westward Expansion: The Biblical Evidence', *ANES* 36 (1999), pp. 48-89.

36. Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp. 152-53.

'punishment' (עון) of the daughter of Edom is closely associated with her 'sin' (חטאה). What may be a synonymous wordpair from v. 6 has, by virtue of the use of verbs in v. 22 (namely פקד and גלה), shifted in their relationship. In the new construction in v. 22b, sin and punishment are closely linked and are now due to Edom rather than the daughter of Zion. The repetition of √גלה in v. 22a-b shows that the 'exile' (גלה) of the daughter of Zion lay as a past event, while the 'uncovering' (גלה) of the daughter of Edom will come to pass. The contrast motif from vv. 1-10 in the poem has been turned away from Zion and advanced upon Edom. These final two verses in Lamentations 4 mark the most overtly hopeful in the book in terms of the defeat of enemies that have plagued Zion.

Yet, theologically it creates a challenge for interpretation. What theological image is espoused by the poem as a whole: divine warrior (vv. 1-20) or divine savior (vv. 21-22)? As in the previous poems, it is part of the poetic strategy to juxtapose both images off of one another, eliciting different responses of the readers. It is tempting to embrace the vision of the divine savior, but this can only be understood *against* and *in light* of the divine warrior images. This use of divine imagery in Lamentations 4 creates an 'openness' of theological presentation, which persists through Lamentations 5.

3. *Analysis of Lam. 5.1-22*

a. *Lam. 5.1*

As mentioned above, this poem approximates a communal lament. Two petitions marked by the imperative form (5.1 // 5.21-22) bracket the complaint-heavy middle of the poem, making clear that the lament's purpose is to garner the deity's attention to the plight of the sufferers, as Parry rightly notes.[37] As mentioned above, in Eco's theory this exclusive shift towards the lament genre effectively narcotizes the dirge elements, reinforcing the petitionary nature of the poem. This poem is distinctive in another way as well. The description of suffering that predominates the poetry up to this point has been framed by individual voices: the speaker/narrator and Zion in Lamentations 1–2, the 'man' of Lamentations 3, and the speaker/narrator in Lamentations 4. To be sure there is a communal voice who breaks through in Lam. 3.40-66 and 4.17-20, but here the communal voice appears predominantly throughout the entirety of the poem. The 'community at prayer' is precisely the 'goal' of the entire book of Lamentations, according to Allen.[38] Or as Hunter suggests, the emphasis upon communal prayer in this poem reveals the key to future restoration.[39]

37. Parry, *Lamentations*, p. 147.

38. Leslie C. Allen, *A Liturgy of Grief: A Pastoral Commentary on Lamentations* (forward by N. Wolterstorff; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), p. 145.

39. Hunter, *Faces of a Lamenting City*, pp. 61-62, 146.

The positive notes rung out in Lam. 4.21-22 contrast against the stark reality of Lamentations 5, where present disgrace and the need for Yhwh's aid is set in the foreground once again. The shift away from the acrostic structure marks for the reader the concluding poem of the book.[40] Lam. 5.1 opens with formulaic address, binding this verse to Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a; 2.20; 3.59. And yet it also differs from these by introducing, as in Lam. 3.19, a more common lament prayer: 'Remember'.[41]

> 'Remember (זכר), O Yhwh (יהוה), what has happened to us;
> Consider and see (הביטה וראה) our disgrace!'

This chapter as a whole depicts scenes of oppression and abuse including rape, starvation, fever, and disgrace. The motivation for appeal in v. 1 is חרפתנו, 'our disgrace', rather than enemies. The term here highlights the contrast of former glory to present shame, and sets the tone for the poem as a whole. Similar to Lam. 3.61 (חרפתם), the disgrace (חרפה) mentioned in Lam. 3.30 has been transformed into a complaint—present disgrace remains a problem in need of solution. Thus the motivation for the appeal lies in the present reality of suffering, of shame. The poet pleads with God to see the situation and do something about it—to 'Remember what has happened to us' (Lam. 5.1a). This prayer is a programmatic introduction to vv. 2-18 and enables the worshippers to address Yhwh about their shame and appeal for him to act on their behalf—to 'remember' them.

b. *Lam. 5.2-18*

These verses present suffering as a staid reality, and one that the people have endured for some time. The breakdown of society in this section occurs at various levels. Rather than one portrait, the model reader gains multiple visions of suffering, with a particular focus upon the plight of the people, which they have endured for some time. The experience of suffering is as follows:

a. *Reversal of inheritance*: 'strangers' and 'foreigners' inhabit the 'inheritance' and 'houses' of God's people (v. 2)
b. *Familial breakdown*: the people have become 'orphans', 'fatherless', 'widows' (v. 3)
c. *Economic breakdown*: paying for necessities such as fire wood and water (v. 3), and searching for scarce food (v. 9)
d. *Social breakdown*: 'slaves rule over' God's people (v. 8), women are 'raped' (v. 11), princes have no honour and elders no respect (v. 12), youths are in forced labour (v. 13)

40. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence', p. 66.
41. Isa. 38.3; Jer. 14.21; 18.20; Pss. 25.6-7; 74.2, 18, 22; 89.48, 51; Job 7.7; 10.9.

e. *Reversal from honour to shame*: 'the joy of our heart is gone' and 'rejoicing has been turned to mourning' (v. 15), 'the crown has fallen from our head' (v. 16).
f. *Desolation of Zion*: 'foxes roam' on Zion (v. 18).
g. *Emotional distress*: Zion's reversal brings 'sick heart' and 'dull eyes' (v. 17).

These verses highlight the contrast motif in an extraordinary manner, focusing upon the entirety of the populace of forlorn Zion. In these verses, the reader visages the troubles of: fathers (vv. 3, 7), orphans (v. 3), widows/mothers (vv., 3, 11), young men (vv. 13, 14), maidens (v. 11), elders (vv. 12, 14), young people (v. 13), and princes (v. 12). By presenting the range of the populace, the reader gains access to the myriad of individual experiences of suffering. These widen and semantically fill the term 'disgrace' as well as the phrase 'what has happened to us' mentioned in v. 1. In terms of Eco's distinctions between 'open' and 'closed' texts, the suggestive range of suffering presented through the sociological profile in vv. 2-18 enables the model reader to navigate the suffering from different angles of vision. This discloses an 'open' strategy for its model readers, so that suffering is presented in a number of ways and undergone by different peoples. Still, the thread that links pain with sin cannot be underplayed in these verses, as will be shown below.

A number of terms from the previous chapters are repeated in these verses that add nuance and complexity to the poetry. Beyond the formulaic appeal in 5.1, v. 3 repeats the language of 'widow' with the comparative preposition (כאלמנות) as in Lam. 1.1 (כאלמנה).[42] The difference here, of course, lay in the scope of the comparison. In Lam. 1.1, the poet described the reversal of the 'princess' city to a 'widow'. Here, the reversal of 'mothers' to 'widows' introduces the contrasting sociological profile of what once was to what is in the present from vv. 2-15. This repetition reinforces the sense of reversal and suffering of the poem and book, but does so from a specific (mothers-to-widows), rather than universal (princess city-to-widow), perspective. The same can be said about the repetition of √יגע, √נוח and √רדף in v. 5. This language appears in close connection in Lam. 1.3: √יגע, √נוח and √רדף.[43] Whereas in Lam. 1.3, this language depicts the enemy pursuit of Zion's people (כל־רדפיה) between 'straits' (המצרים) where there is no 'rest' (מנוח), in Lam. 5.5, the language features the present experience of oppression: the people are 'pursued' (נרדפנו), they are exhausted (יגענו), and they have no relief (לא הונה־לנו).[44] This interaction between poems reveals that

42. So Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 595, where he describes the relationship between Lam. 1.1 and 5.3 as an example of 'long distance parallelism'.
43. See analysis above.
44. Although a *hapax,* I take הונה to be a hophal perfect 3 masc. sing. verb.

Lam. 1.3 focuses upon the immediate suffering of exile, but Lam. 5.3 highlights 'the ongoing affliction which followed Judah's downfall and which was marked by persecution of the population by neighbouring enemies'.[45] By using the same language between poems, the poetry relates past suffering and present suffering.

Additionally, the contested meaning of v. 7 draws from the word-pair of Lam. 4.6, 13, and 22: 'iniquity/punishment' (√עון) and 'sin' (√חטא). The challenge of this verse lay in the depiction of 'blame' for the experience of suffering. On the one hand, it appears as though the poet laments that the 'fathers' have sinned (√חטא) and the children bear the 'punishment' (√עון). On this reading, the poet laments the fact that the inhabitants of Jerusalem experience 'punishment' for something their fathers have done. The poetic line may be understood to be emphatic: the fathers have sinned, and Jerusalem now, too, bears the iniquity. Berlin, however, is right to note that one should pay close attention to the poetic presentation in the line: 'sin' and 'punishment' are certainly reflected upon through the repetition of language from Lamentations 4, but still the focus lay on the experience of suffering:

> 'Some Judeans were punished for their sins by death or exile, says the verse, yet the destruction and exile were not the end of the punishment. Those remaining in Judah continue to suffer that punishment, no less than those who were killed or exiled'.[46]

The poetry enables the model reader to reflect on suffering and sin without systematically explaining the relationship into points of abstraction. Sin is present in the past and present, but suffering is all-too persistent as well. The poetic line does not diminish the reality of sin, but neither does it diminish the pervasive reality of suffering. Both, in fact, are brought before the deity in prayer.

The theme of sin comes out through the confession of v. 16b: 'The crown has fallen from our head; Woe to us! For we have sinned (חטאנו)!' Although the contrast of former glory to present disgrace is clearly elucidated, v. 16b negotiates this reversal by attributing it to sin (√חטא), as the fathers had done in v. 6. The issue of sin provides yet another facet of pain and provides a theodic impulse in the poem that is counterbalanced by the over-arching focus upon human suffering throughout the poem. Although it may be suggested that human suffering, in a way, overwhelms the theodic impulse in the book, this is a case where the admission of sin appears at a climactic point in the poem and reinforces the theodic feature of the poem. In fact, it is sin that is singled out as a summative statement of the range of suffering depicted in vv. 2-15.

45. Renkema, *Lamentations*, p. 601.
46. Berlin, *Lamentations*, p. 121.

Verses 17-18 both open with either על־זה / על־אלה(v. 17a, b) or על (vv. 18a), linking the admission of sin to the logic of the verses. They read: 'On account of this, our heart is sick, on account of these our eyes are dulled. Because of Mount Zion: desolate. Foxes roam upon it'. Interestingly, the expression of pain in vv. 17-18 finds an echo in Lam. 1.16. Note the correspondences:

על־אלה (1.16a) // על־אלה (5.17b)
√עין (1.16a) // √עין (5.17b)
√שׁמם (1.16c) // √שׁמם (5.18a)

Whereas in Lam. 1.16, Zion cries out and weeps over the lack of Yhwh's comfort, the devastation of the loss of children, and enemy triumph, in Lam. 5.17-18, the referent to על־זה / על־אלה(v. 17a, b) clearly is the issue of sin and the myriad of disgraces that vv. 2-16 have described. Also, God's 'comfort' is nowhere in view as in Lam. 1.16. What is in view, however, is the 'desolation' of the place of Zion where foxes roam. This reveals Lam. 5.17-18 to be an appeal designed to gain the deity's attention. It is not his 'comfort' but rather his *justice* that is drawn upon in the complaint. The desolation of God's *place* and the plight of God's *people* ought to motivate him to act. In light of the admission of sin in v. 16b, God's proper response should be *forgiveness* and restoration (cf. Lam. 3.42), but this has not been granted.

c. *Lam. 5.19-22*

The lack of divine action implied in vv. 17-18 sets the expectation for the direct address to the deity in vv. 19-22. Lam. 5.19 deploys language that echo psalmic affirmations of Yhwh's eternal reign. Verse 19 reads: 'You, O Yhwh, reign forever; your throne is everlasting' (ואתה יהוה לעולם תשׁב כסאך לדר ודר). Ps. 102.13 reads: 'But you, O Yhwh, reign forever; and your fame is everlasting' (ואתה יהוה לעולם תשׁב וזכרך לדר ודר). This evocation of the encyclopaedic content from the Psalter draws upon the motif of Yhwh's kingship in Zion. And the similarities between v. 19 and Ps. 102.13 heighten a theological point. Although God's people and land are desolated and humiliated, God's vitality is in no way diminished. The poetry affirms the deity's sovereign power in the face of his people's poverty.

This is a point that seems to run counter, for instance, to the thinking in Lam. 4.12. There, Zion theology is overturned with Yhwh as warrior against his city. Here, Zion theology is affirmed with Yhwh as the eternally reigning king. The pictures of Yhwh as warrior and eternal king in the two passages, however, are grounded in the view that Yhwh's vitality transcends particular place to cosmic authority. Lam. 5.19 overtly states this with the notion of the 'eternal throne' of the deity.

Because of this, the petition of v. 20 can be raised, 'Why do you forget us for the duration? (Why) do you abandon us forever?' Verses 16-18 affirmed

suffering and admitted sin, but still the experience of forgiveness and restoration is a distant hope for Lamentations 5. Verse 20b reinforces the paradox of the eternality of God on his throne and the long, enduring suffering of God's people. The community has called upon God to 'remember' in v. 1, but in v. 20a the deity persists in 'forgetting' them. Verse 20b affirms that while God is on his throne in v. 19, the experience of God's people is the enduring life of being God-forsaken. The phrase 'forever' (ארך ימים) is actually a fairly common Hebrew idiom often indicating 'long life' (cf. Deut. 30.10; Ps. 21.5; 23.6; 91.16; 93.5; Job 12.12; Prov. 3.2, 16). But, the enduring life of v. 21b is decidedly God-forsaken. The use of the term distorts the common association of the idiom into a lament: the long life presented in other biblical contexts is now a horrific experience of prolonged rejection by God. This brings not life, but a kind of living death. Rather than abandoning God, however, this pain is taken up in prayer.

Extending from the plaintive cry of v. 20, Lam. 5.21-22 reveals the deep desire exposed in the poem and book: that God would act to counteract the present situation of suffering. This desire, however, is matched with the understood reality of Yhwh's anger and the uncertainty of his response. The verses read:

> 'Return us to yourself, O Yhwh, and we will be restored;
> renew our days as of old.
> Unless you have utterly rejected us; you are angry over us forever'.

Lam. 5.21 echoes Jer. 15.19 and 31.18: 'If you return, then I will restore you (אם־תשוב ואשיבך)' (Jer. 15.19); 'Restore me, that I may return (השיבני ואשובה); for you are Yhwh, my God' (Jer. 31.18). At first blush, this verse longs for a return back to what had been prior to destruction. However, there is more here than meets the eye. The prior poems and indeed Lam. 5.16b have shown the status quo of the former days contributed to Jerusalem's demise. Confessions of faulty political alliances (Lam. 1.19; 4.17; 5.6), the sins of priests and prophets (Lam. 2.14; 4.13-15), and Zion's sins (Lam. 1.10, 13-15; 2.1-9, 20-22; 3.1-18, 42b-45; 4.6, 22; 5.16) portray a former way of life that cannot be reinstated without modification—socially, politically, and theologically. So the prayer for renewal in 5.21 cannot mean hope in restoration to the status quo prior to Jerusalem's destruction.

Hope for the return and restoration, and renewal to 'days as of old' found here is resonant with language of restoration in Jer. 31.17-22, esp. v. 18c (השיבני ואשובה), as well as Jer. 30.20 and Ezek. 36.11 (כ + קדם). This hope for renewal lay in an idealized eschatological portrait of covenant relationship between God, people and land. In this future vision, sin and corruption do not sully any portion of the triad. The return is an act of God (note the hiphil in השיבני and השיבנו in Jer. 31.18c and Lam. 5.21a, respectively) that is anticipated in and through prayer. The community pleads with God

to return them to himself so that they might be restored. The appeal in v. 21b looks to the past at how God has worked to re-establish justice with his people and anticipates that same enactment of justice in an unspecified, but hoped for, future reality. McConville's comments on Jeremiah 30–31 are appropriate for the logic of Lam. 5.21:

> The picture of a new life of Israel with [Yhwh], therefore, does not merely turn the clock back. All will be restored, indeed, but the prospect is not one which simply ignores the need to create a real, responsive relationship between the two parties to the covenant […] His 'bring me back that I may be restored' rests on a play on the verb [שׁוּב, Jer. 31.18c] which is at the heart of the great solution, and indeed of all theological wrestling with the relationship of divine enabling and human responsibility in adequate human response to God.[47]

In v. 21, the anticipation for God's restorative activity is broad and indistinct, enabling the prayer of the poem to be 'filled' semantically with the ways that God might 'restore' and 'renew'. The physicality of the restoration encompasses a reversal from a myriad of points of pain already highlighted in the poetry: present disgrace (v. 1), the extended depictions of suffering (vv. 2-17), the desolation of Zion (v. 19), and the reality of present divine punishment (v. 20). Each of these may be legitimately seen to be a source of pain which God might counteract through renewal. In this, it provides an open strategy for the model reader, yet the model reader anticipates the restoration to be achieved in a myriad of ways. This open strategy it reveals that the kind of 'restoration' envisioned has to do with more than just a 'spiritual' renewal. It is physical as well. Land, people, relationships (both internal and external, between Israel and the nations) reasonably fit within the vision of 'renewal' anticipated here. So the prayer of Lam. 5.21 reflects upon the problems which led to destruction, gazes upon the present condition of misery, but yearns for a future in which God really will restore the people to himself in a move that is at once spiritual and physical.

Additionally, it is fitting to note that the literary placement of the direct address to Yhwh in the book remains significant. Because it is direct address to the deity, the prayer in vv. 19-21 is similar to the conclusions of Lamentations 1, 2 and 3. Each of these poems concludes with direct address to the deity as well. Still, these concluding prayers redress the other portions of the respective poems, as demonstrated in the previous chapters of analysis. In Lam. 5.21 especially, the prayer effectively summarizes the state of suffering expressed in the previous verses, enabling reflective space to consider the myriad of ways that God might restore his people and 'renew' their days as of old. In this way, it is an effective conclusion to the poem, but also the book.

47. McConville, *Judgment and Promise*, p. 97.

How shall God respond? The sense of expectancy in this final prayer cannot be a 'sure bet'. The major difference between Jeremiah and Lamentations' conception of hope is that the latter does not share the same optimism as the former. In her assessment of Lamentations 1, 2, 4 and 5, Middlemas rightly brings to the fore the *lack* of certainty regarding God's presence or activity on behalf of Judahites in the land, thus leading them to pray to—or on her reckoning, protest against—God about re-engaging Judahites at the point of their sustained attention to, and vocalization of, pain and suffering.[48]

While not characterising it as protest in which Zion walks away from God, the petitions of Lamentations provide only a *glimpse* of what is hoped for beyond various sources pain. Yet, this is not an actualized picture. Hope here is not certainty. Rather it is anticipation that the deity, and perhaps the חסדי יהוה (Lam. 3.22), provides the possibility of a future life beyond lament. Or, in the thinking on display in Lam. 5.19, Yhwh's eternal reign as the metaphorical king reinforces his sovereignty that can provide deliverance and a just judgment concerning the peoples' suffering. The metaphor of Yhwh as eternal king and judge provides the possibility for such saving action, but does not guarantee it. The hope on display in this divine metaphor in Lamentations 5 cannot be equated to confident affirmations of hope found, for instance, in Isaiah 40–55 in particular.

There is no sure way to tell if Yhwh, the sovereign monarch, has heard, will hear, or will respond to the prayers both in this poem and throughout the book. Suffering may persist, or it may not. This is seen most clearly in the usage of כי אם in v. 22. The usage has been debated and Albrektson supposes that it should be translated 'but, nevertheless'.[49] Rather than offering an objective statement about the reality of the situation, the verse is logically connected to v. 21, highlighting the *uncertainty* of the speaker's knowledge. Thus כי אם is best understood as an exceptative clause: 'Unless you have utterly rejected us'.[50] The final two verses in the poem reveal a deep theological tension: the desire for (and hope in) Yhwh's saving power, a tacit recognition of both sin and divine punishment, and the problem of, as well as the uncertainty associated with, divine deliverance in light of present suffering.

4. *Conclusion*

Lamentations 4 and 5 raise similar questions using similar poetic techniques with similar language as Lamentations 1–3. In this, there is continuity

48. Middlemas, *The Troubles*, pp. 198-228.

49. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text*, pp. 205-206.

50. GBHS §4.3.4 (m). For full discussion, see R. Gordis, 'The Conclusion of the Book of Lamentations (5:22)', *JBL* 93 (1974), pp. 289-93; T. Linafelt, 'The Refusal of a Conclusion in the Book of Lamentations', *JBL* 120 (2001), pp. 340-43.

between the poems. And an open textual strategy rather than closed one persists in these two poems. Because Lam. 5.22 ends ambiguously, the model reader is invited to continually rehearse the poetry, activating different theological horizons along the way. Any interpretative activity, however, is chastened by the inertia in the poetry toward prayer to Yhwh. The intention of the work guides its model readers, as in Lamentations 1–3, to address God in light of the perspectives adopted and sufferings endured through the reading process. In this, Lamentations 4 and 5 corporately fit more as open rather than closed texts.

a. *Form and Genre*

Lamentations 4 exploits elements of the dirge and lament, but to a different degree than the other poems. Again, the poem opens with 'how' (איכה), as in Lamentations 1–2, creating interpretative linkage between the three poems. And Lamentations 4 uses the contrast motif present in the dirge to reinforce former glory and present shame. Lam. 4.1-2 introduces the contrast motif and dirge elements to highlight suffering and an anti-theodic element in the poem. However, as the poem progresses, the contrast motif draws within it an emphasis upon the sin of the people, heightening a theodic impulse. Lam. 4.17-20 moves towards the communal lament found in Lamentations 5.This is apparent even though Lamentations 4 uses a narrator's voice in the first 16 verses, similar to Lamentations 1–2. Still, neither Lamentations 4 nor 5 enable the voice of the Daughter of Zion. Whereas she spoke in Lamentations 1–2, Lamentations 4–5 describe of the plight of the present situation in the voices of the 'narrator' and community. By detailing the various sins of the society in the poem, Zion's protestations are muted, reinforcing a theodic impulse in the poetry.

However, Lam. 4.21-22 appear in a startling juxtaposition of what has gone before. There is no clear rationale as to *why* such a reversal from shame to forgiveness is warranted. This is unique in the poem and book and provides no textual clue as to what motivates this reversal. Is it a result of repentance or confession of sin? This is unclear. Apparently, however, the reversal is an act of God alone and the response is a move from exile (Lam. 1.3) to restoration where he will 'no longer' exile the Daugher of Zion (Lam. 4.22) in judgment.

Lamentations 5 stands out as a coherent communal lament. The dirge element drops out altogether. The effect of the shift to the lament draws attention to the focus of prayer. Of course presentation of pain is apparent as in Lamentations 1–4, but this is taken up formally within a communal prayer. The poem draws the reader's attention to this with the frame: it opens with formulaic prayer language from the previous poems (הביטה וראה) and traditional language of a lament (זכר), and closes unambiguously with a prayer to the deity. Still, this is a particularly dark communal lament,

with no evidence of a *Heilsorakel* or any turn to praise whatsoever. The ambiguous conclusion of v. 22 leaves the lament undecided and uncertain, heightening the force of the appeal and the expectancy for Yhwh to act.

b. *Poetics*

Continued recurrence of previous language within Lamentations 4–5 is further evidence that the poetics of repetition remains a constitutive stylistic feature in the book. However, one notes some difference in distribution. Lamentations 4 particularly draws upon elements from Lamentations 2 to construct its theological profile. Although previous language of suffering is repeated in Lam. 4.1-2, the recurrence of earlier language in vv. 3-20 is interowoven into presentation of the relationship between suffering and sin, providing a strong theodic impulse. This was shown especially in the iteration of 'sin' and 'punishment' throughout the poem. Internally, Lamentations 4 uses internal repetition of terms to create interpretative depth and to recast the reader's conceptions and understanding of the logic of the poem.

Lamentations 5 witnesses a decrease of repeated language from the other poems, but it does not disappear altogether. The opening poetic line of Lam. 5.1 uses a formulaic appeal to introduce the communal lament. This has the effect of tying together the prayer of Lamentations 5 with the prayers of the previous poems. Further, one notes repeated elements from Lamentations 1 in Lamentations 5. The situation of suffering and enemy threat introduced in the first poem and negotiated throughout the remainder of the poetry, nonetheless remains a present threat and source of suffering as the book concludes. A catalogue of the functions of repetition can be seen below:

Function: Intensification

1. To emphasize suffering:
   a. איכה, Lam. 4.1 (Lam. 1.1; 2.1): reinforces suffering and mourning.
   b. √שׁפך and בראשׁ כל־חוצות, Lam. 4.1-2 (Lam. 2.19; 2.12): reinforces the point that the prayers that have been offered to alleviate suffering have *not been* answered.
   c. √חשׂב + יד, Lam. 4.2 (Lam. 2.8): heightens suffering of Zion and the גבר, and the need for divine response. Lam. 3.59 recasts Lam. 3.36, 'does not the Lord see (לא ראה)?' and refocuses it to mirror the reality of its iteration in Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a; 2.20a: the deity has *not* seen (ראה) the distress in the sense that he has transformed the situation.
   d. חוצות, Lam. 4.5 (Lam. 2.19; 2.12; Lam. 4.1-2, 8): reinforces the persistent exposure of God's people, 'blacker than soot'.
   e. רדף, Lam. 4.19 (cf. Lam. 1.3, 6c; 3.43): the repetition of the root, associated with enemy threat, highlights suffering.
   f. נבט +ראה, Lam. 5.1b (Lam. 1.9c, 11c, 20a; Lam. 2.20): reinstalls

the complaint of Zion in Lamentations 1–2, but differentiates the motivation for the prayer: 'our disgrace'.

2. To emphasize judgment:
   a. √חשׂב + יד, Lam. 4.2 (Lam. 2.8): emphasizes divine judgment, but in different ways: Lam. 2.8 focuses upon the city while Lam. 4.2 focuses upon the people.
   b. ויצת־אשׁ בציון + כלה יהוה את־חמתו שׁפך חרון אפו, Lam. 4.11 (Lam. 2.4): Yhwh pours out fire and judgment.
   c. איב + צוה צר, Lam. 4.12 (Lam. 2.4-5): repetition reinforces the notion of divine destruction and Yhwh as an enemy warrior fighting against his people.
   d. צר + איב, Lam. 4.12 (Lam. 2.4-5): repetition reinforces the notion of divine destruction and Yhwh as an enemy warrior fighting against his people.
   e. √חטא, Lam. 5.16 (Lam. 5.6; cf. Lam. 3.39; Lam. 4.6, 13, 20): attributes reversal from honour to shame as a result of sin.

Function: Combination

1. To construct interpretative depth:
   a. יונק + עולל, Lam. 4.4 (Lam. 2.11, 12): children who have previously been forlorn (Lam. 2.11-12) are now in Lam. 4.4 abandoned.
   b. שׁבר בת־עמי, Lam. 4.10 (Lam. 2.11; 3.48): offers a different perspective on the collapse of the people and city. In Lam. 4.10, the collapse is associated with cannibalism.
   c. √שׁפך, Lam. 4.10 (Lam. 4.1; 4.13): the divine wrath that is 'poured out' (v.10) on Zion drives the reader backward, to provide a way of thinking about why and how the precious stones to be 'poured out' (v. 1) in the street. Verse 13 reveals that Yhwh has 'poured out' anger because priests 'poured out' the blood of the righteous.
   d. לא יוסף, Lam. 4.15b, 16a, 22a: The usage in v. 15 highlights Zion's pitiful state: the will 'no longer (לא יוסף) reside' among the nations. Verse 16 reinforces divine judgment as Yhwh 'will no longer (לא יוסף) consider' Zion. However, v. 22 subverts the affirmation of suffering and judgment in the previous verses, as God will 'no longer (לא יוסף) exile' his people.
   e. בגוים, Lam. 4.15, 17, and 20 (cf. Lam. 1.1): Zion's experience is reversal: from honour among the nations (בגוים, v. 15, 17) to shame (בגוים, v. 20). In this subtle wordplay building upon the repetition of בגוים, the separate sins of God's people are intertwined to provide logic for the downfall and dishonour they now experience.
   f. כאלמנות, Lam. 5.3 (Lam. 1.1): reinforces the sense of reversal motif, but from a particular perspective (mothers-to-widows), rather than universal one (princess city-to-widow).

g. √יגע, √נוח and √רדף, Lam. 5.5 (Lam. 1.3): past and present sufferings are brought together through repetition of language.
h. על־אלה, √עין, and √שמם, 5.17b-18a (Lam. 1.16): not divine 'comfort' (Lam. 1.16) but rather divine justice (Lam. 5.17-18) that is expected. The desolation of God's *place* and the plight of God's *people* ought to motivate him to act in restoration.

2. To refocus previously held understandings:
   a. יונק + עולל, Lam. 4.10 (Lam. 2.11, 12; Lam. 4.4): forlorn children are eaten by 'compassionate' mothers. This is part of a theodic emphasis in v. 10.
   b. √שפך, Lam. 4.13 (Lam. 1.1a; 2.10a): transforms acts of mourning into acts of penitence over judgment.
   c. √נבט, Lam. 4.16 (Lam. 1.11, 12; 2.20; 5.1): Yhwh does not 'consider' the previous appeals by his people that their deity might 'consider' their plight.
   d. עון + חטאה, Lam. 4.6, 13, 20 (cf. Lam. 5.6-7): interplay between the notion of sin and punishment for God's people (vv. 6, 13) and finally sin and punishment for Edom (v. 22).
   e. √גלה, Lam. 4.22a-b (Lam. 1.3): the 'exile' (גלה) of the daughter of Zion lay as a past event; the 'uncovering' (גלה) of the daughter of Edom will come to pass.
   f. חרפה, Lam. 5.1 (cf. Lam. 3.30, 61): the disgrace (חרפה) mentioned in Lam. 3.30 has been transformed into a complaint—present disgrace remains a problem in need of solution.

c. *Theology*

Lamentations 4 alludes to Deuteronomic tradition which is evidenced in Deuteronomy 28 to reinforce the notion of covenant violation due to sin (Lam. 4.10, 14). This is consistent with the use of allusion from the same material in Lam. 1.3-5. Allusion to Psalmic material associated with Zion theology is subverted in Lam. 4.12. The effect of this is to reinforce divine power to punish his people and city, but also to identify this as a powerful source of pain. This culminates in Lam. 4.16, which affirms that the face of the deity is set on rejection and vv. 17-20 highlight varying points of the people's false trust. In all of this, divine judgment is presented and bolstered theologically.

However, this is counterbalanced with the presentation of pain in Lam. 4.1-2, the vision of restoration and retribution in Lam. 4.21-22, and the communal prayer of Lamentations 5. Although divine judgment is shown to be a justified reality, the poetry nonetheless presents pain (Lam. 4.1-2), looks forward to divine restoration and retribution (Lam. 4.21-22), and sets the reality of suffering and the expectancy of restoration in the context of

prayer (Lamentations 5). Because of this, theodicy and anti-theodicy are set in a delicate balance in the poetry. Neither theological viewpoint is 'cancelled' by the other.

In fact, they are undergirded by the presentation of Yhwh in Lamentations 5, where the divine metaphor of Yhwh as king even cosmic king (Lam. 5.19) is affirmed. In Lamentations 1, Yhwh is depicted as a warrior and comforter. In Lamentations 2, Yhwh is depicted as a warrior (foe/enemy) and as a judge. In Lamentations 3, Yhwh is depicted variously (divine warrior, anti-shepherd, jailor, bear, lion, grim party host, judge and savior). Lamentations 4 reaffirms the image of Yhwh as warrior (Lam. 4.11, 16) enacting wrath against his people and city. This enacted divine wrath, as vv. 3-15 reveal, is a result of prevalent, yet variable, sin. Lamentations 5 presents God as able to hear the prayers of his people and adjudicate for them. This is likely a variation on the kingship metaphor (vv. 1, 19) that stems from Zion tradition, leaving room for the cosmic power and authority of the deity to manifest itself and the expectation that it would.

Lam. 5.21 exploits prophetic (Jeremianic and/or Ezekielian) encyclopaedic material associated with the 'restoration of fortunes' and the renewal as of 'days of old' to construct its final appeal in the book. This cannot be thought of a return to the status quo or a blithe turning the clock back. Rather, it is an appeal that notes the presence of sin, but requests that the deity would counter his punitive acts and restore the people and city to what they always should have been. In this, there is an eschatological anticipation in the book. This runs counter to the definitive vision of Lam. 4.21-22, which supposes that exile is at an end and the enemies of Zion have received there just desserts.

The conclusion to the book shows that the appeal in Lam. 5.21-22, however, is a question begging for an answer. In this, no 'definitive' solutions are offered for the suffering on display in the poem. No definitive action by God has taken place either. Rather, the reflex theological response is to affirm the kingship and power of Yhwh (a theodic impulse) but to also draw his attention to the continued pain of his people and place. His *in*-action and *un*-forgiveness in Lamentations 5 leads the community to rise up in lament prayer (an anti-theodic impulse).

Chapter 9

Conclusions

1. *Summary*

Lamentations' poetry draws its readers to negotiate what it means to live before Yhwh on the threshold of death. This death affects the remaining populace of Judah in a post-war environment (Lamentations 1–4) and under foreign oppression (Lamentations 5). As such, it faces Yhwh in both hope and horror at the reality of this fragmented and disorienting existence. If life is to persist, it must be done facing Yhwh, who has abused his city and people in punishment. Life will persist by praying that God would act in salvation and restoration rather than judgment. And recurrent prayer in the book, indeed prayer that closes the book, opens up Lamentations to both God and his people.

The present study has observed how Lamentations synthetically presents its theology. It has accomplished this task by assessing the poetry to discover how, in terms of form and genre, structure and poetics, theology is presented for the model reader of Lamentations. In Chapter 1, it was questioned whether or not selecting three chapters out of five is warranted as an object of study. In response, it was demonstrated that the majority of research on the theology of the book in the past has focused primarily on Lamentations 3, and the figure of the 'man' and vindicating God by highlighting Israel's sin. This is true until Westermann, whose monograph shifted interest on Lamentations research to a greater interest in the figure of 'Lady Zion' in Lamentations 1–2. This shift also spurred an emphasis upon the presentation of pain in scholarship that assessed the negative theology present in the book. These approaches were seen to polarize the theological research into theodic and anti-theodic trajectories. Thus, as the majority of research polarized these positions unhelpfully (for a number of reasons) the present study suggested approaching the theology of the book by observing how Lamentations presents theological issues synthetically.

Such an approach demands historical warrant, and a section in the first chapter was devoted to demonstrating the historical basis of assessing the poems together. It was demonstrated that Lamentations could plausibly be assigned as belonging to the exilic age in Judah on the basis of social and historical reconstruction. Further, it was shown that some indicators within

and without Lamentations suggest that it may have been composed within this milieu: correspondence between perceived proximity to Lamentations' description of the disaster of Jerusalem, linguistic analysis and textual interaction between Lamentations and Isaiah and Zechariah. So it was suggested that the book as a whole could have been completed between 587–520 BCE. Thus there is a historical warrant to assess the poems together rather than separately.

With this in view, the chapter concluded by suggesting that interpretation of theology remains a complex task not least due to the hermeneutical presuppositions of the interpreter and how one frames the question to respond to the theological question for the book. The horizons 'behind', 'within' and 'in front of' the text were offered as useful metaphors by which different approaches could be categorized. It was suggested that the present study would adopt an 'integrated' approach in which all three horizons could be constructively recognized in interpreting the poetry and theology of Lamentations. And finally in the first chapter it was revealed that the methodology adopted for the task was the aesthetic theory of semiotician Umberto Eco.

Chapter 2 surveyed research into the theology of Lamentations using those metaphors of 'behind', 'within' and 'in front of' the text as a guide. It was shown that the historical paradigm with its various emphases upon the world behind the text is helpful in that it highlights the essential historicity of Lamentations. Yet it was also shown that historical arguments may be detrimental in determining the theology of the book of Lamentations *qua* book from the outset. A focus on the world 'within' the text was shown to be beneficial in observing the internal workings of the poetry, especially the presence of repetition. However, it was shown that this approach can be overdrawn to highlight structural issues rather than allowing the text to speak in its own right. Finally, Chapter 2 touched upon the world 'in front of' the text, particularly in modern feminist analysis of Lamentations, among others. These works rightly draw attention to the themes of abuse, degradation and pain but their ideological commitments unhelpfully led to under-reading the theology of Lamentations. Finally, Chapter 2 adopted an 'integrated' approach, typified by Dobbs-Allsopp, Parry and House, that takes seriously all three horizons in interpreting Lamentations.

Chapter 3 provided an introduction to the semiotics and aesthetic theory of Umberto Eco. His approach was adopted for a number of reasons. In the first place, his theory coheres with the integrated approach adopted in the study. Further, his theory provides a helpful means to assess aesthetic texts, such as Lamentations. Eco's theory also enables distinctions between kinds of texts, namely how texts are designed differently to elicit different responses from model readers. Some texts are designed to arouse a single response from their model readers (closed) while others are designed to arouse multiple responses from their model readers (open). In light of the

ambiguity in Lamentations, it was decided that this distinction may prove useful. Finally, Eco's theory employed the concept of the cultural encyclopaedia, a useful device to describe the cumulative amount of cultural data available to the producer of a text at the time of its production. This concept was suggested to be useful in interpreting Lamentations' theology.

Chapter 4 framed the borders of encyclopaedic content for research into Lamentations. As such, it assessed the possible oral forms, literary genres, structures and poetics that have been offered for Lamentations research in the past. It was suggested that Lamentations cannot be reduced to one any one genre or formal category but rather exploits significant oral and literary elements to advance its theology. Features typical in the dirge, lament (communal and individual), city-lament, wisdom, and prophetic material were shown to be plausibly at work in the book. As to structure, analysis revealed that the acrostic was the most evident structuring device in the book. And finally, a number of poetic devices were explored that are activated in the encyclopaedic world of Lamentations including repetition, wordplay and enjambment, imagery, speaking voices and allusion. This discussion framed the aesthetic analysis of Lamentations, accomplished in Chapters 5–8.

Chapters 5–8 revealed Lamentations offers 'open' rather than 'closed' textual strategies for their model readers. This is significant because previous research has tended towards treating Lamentations as more 'closed' by focusing upon theodic or anti-theodic poles in the book or by focusing upon the 'man' of Lamentations 3 as opposed to the personification of Zion in Lamentations 1–2. Yet aesthetic analysis of the poems offered here confirms Heim's assertion that Lamentations fits Eco's classification as an open text, while giving significantly more demonstrable proof.

In terms of structure, the acrostic introduces the various poetics as well as the 'blowing up' of encyclopaedic content for the reader. The acrostic structure has shown to be the significant structuring device in the book. Against Westermann, who treated it as a literary accretion, and Weismann, who thought the acrostic was 'artificial', this monograph has argued that acrostic serves a significant structural and poetic function. It provides a space for the parataxis of the poetry to be presented, and in a 'forward' movement. In this way, the acrostic prevents the reader from resting on specific verses or images for too long. The acrostic also offers the framework for intertextual relationships within and across the poems of the book. In Lamentations 5, however, the acrostic structure dissolves and provides for the reader indication of poetic closure. Still, the 'forward' movement of the acrostic drives the reader progressively through the myriad of images, personifications, voices, and metaphors for God, the people and Zion herself.

Moreover, the use of cultural data present to Lamentations has been revealed to be significant, and drives the reader 'outward' into the encyclopaedia

to construct the intention of the work. Lamentations draws on ANE material (Mesopotamian city-laments) to advance its theology as witnessed in the divine depiction in Lam. 2.1-9, where Yhwh is affirmed as both high-god and patron deity in contradistinction to divine depiction in the Mesopotamian city-laments. Further, the s-codes of mourning (Lamentations 1–2) and penitence (Lam. 3.25-39) complicate a unified theology for the book.

This 'outward' readerly movement is also felt in the use of allusion, which has been demonstrated to be a prevalent poetic technique. Explicit allusion to Isaiah 10 in Lam. 2.17 and Lam. 3.1 is something that has not been identified in any previous research and represents a positive contribution of the present work. Moreover, allusion to portions of Deuteronomy 28 and 30 in Lamentations 1, 2, 3.38 and Lam. 4.10, 14 reveal the covenant curses to be formative for theology in these chapters. Recurrent allusion to Jeremianic tradition throughout the book reveals its pervasive influence on these poems. Finally, allusion to Psalmic material throughout the book reaffirms its formative influence on the intertextual conversation between that material and Lamentations.

In conjunction with the 'forward' and 'outward' movements, the reader is faced with a 'reflexive' movement, primarily through the poetic usage of repetition. While Renkema was correct to note the presence of repetition in the poetry, the present study revealed the pervasiveness of repetition as a poetic device. Rather than leading the reader to the central core of the poem as Renkema supposes, it creates theological complexity and depth in Lamentations through two primary functions: intensification (upon suffering, sin, judgment) or combination (to recast previously held understandings or to provide interpretative depth). In each of the poems, these two primary functions were seen to be at work. The effect of this device is, as with allusion, to provide a variety of interpretative horizons for the reader in regards to the book's theology: sin, suffering at the hands of enemies, justice/injustice of God, an end to suffering, hope for a future in God's power and continued authority, retribution for enemies. All these options were seen to be viable interpretative options for the reader to actualize, leading this study to recognize an open, rather than closed, pragmatic structure in the poems.

Finally, the use of metaphor, personae and imagery were shown to be prominent in Lamentations. Divine metaphors (warrior, judge, animal, jailor, bear, festal host, king, potter) provide interpretative fecundity for the reader and a variety of ways to identify and understand the people's relationship to the deity in exilic Judah. God is characterized in *many* ways, and cannot be reduced to a simplistic presentation. Moreover, the personae of Zion in Lamentations 1–2, the righteous follower of Yhwh (הגבר) in Lamentations 3, an 'internal observer' in Lamentations 1 and 4, and the communal voice in Lamentations 5 afford a variety of different voices that the model reader might take up. In so doing, the model reader could find his

or her voice and negotiate the experience of guilt and pain, of protest and prayer. Zion, too, is presented in a number of ways so that she might be presented as both victim and sinner simultaneously. If victim (Lam. 1.1-2, 13-15, 2.13-22), the reader sympathizes with Zion's suffering and questions Yhwh's activity. If a sinner (Lam. 1.5-8, 17, 20-22; Lam. 2.1-10, 14), the reader interprets the disasters she faces as just judgment for sin.

What has been demonstrated, then, is that the theology of the book varies, but this is part of the function of the poems. The poetry is not designed to teach a particular perspective as much as it is designed to bring the reader on an interpretative journey through its contents, and as he or she progresses, to engage the relationships between sin, God, self, Zion, pain, enemies, suffering, redemption and even an end of the punishment. In the process, the model reader faces an 'ideal insomnia' in deciding how to understand these relationships in the poems.

Despite the various ways in which the relationships can be configured, that the poetry moves the model reader(s) towards addressing Yhwh with these relationships in prayer. Each of the poems includes, and concludes with, prayer to the deity concerning various sources of pain. This is true except for Lamentations 4. Nonetheless, as it can be read alongside Lamentations 5, that poem can be understood as a penultimate presentation for the final prayer in the book. The poetry highlights prayer to Yhwh (even when he is the cause of pain), and this fact reveals that the model reader's interpretative journey has a 'destination' of sorts. The poetry of Lamentations is designed to enable the model reader to address the deity in light of the perspectives adopted and sufferings endured through the reading process.

In this, there is a positive theology at work in spite of the negative theological portraits displayed. Rhetorically, because all appeals go before Yhwh, the deity is tacitly confirmed as both potent and able to save. His justice must be inherently affirmed by the poetry, even if this perspective is explicitly questioned (e.g., Lam. 2.20-22). This, to be sure, creates a tension in the book that is unsettling.

While the pain is certainly expressed in the Judahite community, the poetry precludes the possibility of the model reader walking away from Yhwh on account of the horrors faced in and through it. The prayers in Lamentations demand active interpretation from the model reader. And they also expect response from Yhwh. The precise sources of pain, the nature of sin and the relationship of the sinner to Yhwh are never fully or finally decided. These are points to be negotiated in and through the poetry (in many ways, but not one) so that the model reader might be led to Yhwh, who is portrayed as the final arbiter of the complaints and appeals. Thus Lamentations can be said to affirm a strong theology of justice and sovereignty while simultaneously offering theological refiguration in protest and appeal.

2. *Purpose of Poetry and Theology in Lamentations*

Lamentations foregrounds both active readerly participation in interpreting poetry and theology and highlights the necessity of divine response in the poems. Both of these realities provide clues as to the purpose of these poems. It has commonly been assumed that Lamentations provided the post-war Judahite community a way to deal with the crisis of the destruction of Jersualem in 587 BCE in worship or a broader cultic setting. The particulars of this, to be sure, are debated.[1] But, as Middlemas rightly affirms, Lamentations represents the most likely candidate of worship material for the Judahite community in sixth century BCE. Far from offering a univocal theological understanding, the journey through the poetry will take its model readers through different permutations of the relationships between sin, suffering, God, themselves, enemies and justice.

A plausible explanation for the openness of the poetry may come in the fact that it is reflective of the fragmentation and uncertainty present in the Judahite populace during the period of exile. As such, rather than providing a *central* theological teaching for the people to understand, the poetry provides a means for the exilic Judahite model readers to address Yhwh in and through the poems: to confess sin, question the deity, complain about enemies, pray for healing, appeal for hope, or any of these permutations together. The world 'in front of' the text, the lived reality of those using Lamentations, would help inform exactly which horizon the model reader would actualize from the text by situating their reading process in the lived reality of experience.

In terms of the theological positions of theodicy and anti-theodicy which Dobbs-Allsopp identifies, neither horizon is foreclosed upon in the poetry. The particular theological horizion the reader actualizes is incumbent upon one's situation in life. So, the Judahite who reads Lamentations with a specific recognition of the nation's sin and one's own complicity in sin would activate the theodic interpretative horizon possible in the poetry. Alternatively, the Judahite who experiences the pain and disaster of death and suffering may come to Lamentations and activate the anti-theodic horizon present in the poetry.

This conclusion nuances current research in Judahite religious thought. Lamentations presentation of theology through its poetry cannot be pinned down to a primary category of protestation any more than it was previously thought that it could be marked with the penitence of other writings from the exilic period. The poetry vacillates on theological presentation and creates openness in this regard.

And yet there is a theological reality that grounds both theological diversity and interpretative drives. In the poetry, there is a tacit understanding of

1. Middlemas, *The Troubles*, pp. 1-23. See discussion in Chapter 1, above.

Yhwh as the divine judge to whom all prayer could go. This affirms, even necessitates, a theology of justice and power for Yhwh. Far from 'closing' the poetry, this theology enables openness. Without this theological foundation, the range of complaints present in the book of Lamentations, even complaints about Yhwh's activity or lack thereof, rhetorically misfire. Yhwh remains the one who can restore the people from whatever cause of pain. And it is to him that all poetry and prayer goes. Thus, if God speaks at all in Lamentations, he invites his devotees to call out to him, which they do by participating in the poetry.

Bibliography

Ackroyd, Peter, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968).

Aichele, George, *Sign, Text, Scripture: Semiotics and the Bible* (Interventions, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

Albertz, Rainer, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (Studies in Biblical Literature, 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

Albrektson, Bertil, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations: With a Critical Edition of the Peshitta Text* (STL, 21; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1963).

Alexander, Philip S., *The Targum of Lamentations* (Aramaic Bible, 17B; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007).

Allen, Leslie C., *A Liturgy of Grief: A Pastoral Commentary on Lamentations* (forward, Nicholas Wolterstorff; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

Alt, Albrecht, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1968).

Anderson, Gary, *A Time To Mourn, a Time to Dance* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

Austin, J.L., *How to do Things with Words* (ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2nd edn, 1977).

Avigad, N., 'The Contribution of Hebrew Seals to an Understanding of Israelite Religion and Society', in Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson and S.D. McBride (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 195-208.

Balentine, Samuel, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Human-Divine Dialogue* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

Ball, Edward (ed.), *In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements* (JSOTSup, 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

Ballard, Harold Wayne, Jr., *The Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms* (BDS, 6; North Richland Hills, TX: Bibal, 1999).

Barstad, Hans M., *The Babylonian Captivity of the Book of Isaiah: 'Exilic' Judah and the Provenance of Isaiah 40–55* (ICRHC; Oslo: Novus, 1997).

—*The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaelogy of Judah During the 'Exilic' Period* (SOFS, 28; Oslo: Scandanavian University Press, 1996).

—*History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* (FAT, 61; Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, ٢٠٠٨).

Barton, John, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984).

Baumann, Gerlinde, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between Yhwh and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 2003).

Baumgartner, Walther, *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet* (Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 1950).
Bautch, Richard, *Developments in Genre between Post-Exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament* (SBLAB, 7; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).
Beardslee, William L., 'Poststructuralist Criticism', in Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (eds.), *To Each its own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, rev. and expanded edn, 1999), pp. 253-67.
Becking, Bob, 'Continuity and Discontinuity after the Exile: Some Introductory Remarks', in Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel (eds.), *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (OS, 42; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp. 1-8.
Becking, Bob, and Marjo C.A. Korpel (eds.), *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (OS, 42; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999).
Baer, D.A., and R.P. Gordon, 'חסד', in Willem van Gemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, II (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), pp. 211-18.
Begrich, Joachim, 'Das presterliche Heilsorakel', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 52 (1934), pp. 81-92.
Bergant, Dianne, *Lamentations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003).
Berges, Ulrich, '"Ich bin der Mann, der Elend sah" (Klgl 3,1): Zionstheologie als Weg aus der Krise', *Biblische Zeitsschrift* 44 (2000), pp. 1-20.
—'Kann Zion mannlisch sein? Klgl 3 als "Literarisches Drama" und "Nachexilische Problemdischtung"', in M. Augustin and H.M. Niemann (eds.), *'Basel und Bibel' Collected Communications to the XVIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament* (Beiträge zur Erforschung des alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums, 51; Frankfurt am Main: Lang Verlag, 2004), pp. 235-46.
—*Klagelieder* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2002).
—'The Violence of God in the Book of Lamentations', in P. Chatelion Counet and U. Berges (eds.), *One Text, a Thousand Methods: Studies in Memory of Sjef van Tilborg* (BIS, 71; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), pp. 21-44.
Bergler, S., 'Threni V: nu rein alphabetisierendes Lied? Versuch einer Deutung', *Vetus Testamentum* 27 (1977), pp. 304-20.
Berlin, Adele, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985).
—*Lamentations* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2002).
—*Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994).
Berrigan, Daniel, *Lamentations: From New York to Kabul and Beyond* (Chicago: Sheed & Ward, 2002).
Beyer, Bryan E., and Eugene E. Merrill, 'בור', in Willem van Gemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), pp. 620-21.
Blenkinsopp, Joseph, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (ABC; New York: Doubleday, 2002).
—'Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period', in Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 93-107.

—'The Judean Priesthood during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods: A Hypothetical Reconstruction', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60 (1998), pp. 25-43.
Blumenthal, David, *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).
Boase, Elizabeth, 'Constructing Meaning in the Face of Suffering: Theodicy in Lamentations', *Vetus Testamentum* 58 (2008), pp. 449-68.
—*Fulfilment of Doom? The Dialogic Interaction between the Book of Lamentations and the Pre-exilic/Early Exilic Prophetic Literature* (LHB/OTS, 437; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006).
—'The Characterisation of God in Lamentations', *Australian Biblical Review* 56 (2008), pp. 32-44.
Boda, Mark, 'Terrifying the Horns: Persia and Babylon in Zechariah 1.7–6.15', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005), pp. 22-41.
—'The Priceless Gain of Penitence: From Communal Lament to Penitential Prayer in the "Exilic" Liturgy of Israel', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 25 (2003), pp. 51-75.
Boecker, Hans Jochen, *Klagelieder* (ZB, 21; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985).
Borger, R., 'Gott Marduk und Gott-König Šulgi als Propheten: Zwei prophetische Text', *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 28 (1971), pp. 3-24.
Bouzard, Walter C., *We Have Heard with our Ears, O God: Sources of the Communal Laments in the Psalms* (SBLDS, 159; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).
Bovati, Pietro, *Re-Establishing Justice: Legal Terms, Concepts and Procedures in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup, 105; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).
Bracke, John M., *Jeremiah 30–52 and Lamentations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2000).
Brady, Christian M.M., 'Targum Lamentations' Reading of the Book of Lamentations' (D.Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1999).
—*The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations: Vindicating God* (SAIS, 3; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003).
—'Vindicating God: The Intent of the Targum Lamentations', *Journal of the Aramaic Bible* 3 (2001), pp. 27-40.
Braiterman, Zachary, *(God) After Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
Brandscheidt, Renate, *Gotteszorn und Menschenleid: Die Gerichtsklage des leidenden Gerechten in Klgl 3* (TTS, 41; Trier: Paulinus, 1983).
—*Das Buch der Klagelieder* (GS, 10; Düsseldorf: Patmos, ١٩٨٨).
Brenner, Athalya, 'Pornoprophetics Revisited: Some Additional Reflections', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 70 (1996), pp. 63-86.
Brenner, Athalya, and Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes (eds.), *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible* (BIS, 1; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993).
Briggs, Richard S., *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001).
Bruce, F.F., *Israel and the Nations: From the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1969).
Brueggemann, Walter, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2003).
—*The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1984).
—*Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997).

Brunet, Gilbert, *Les Lamentations contre Jérémie: Réinterprétation des quatre premières Lamentations* (Bibliothèque de L'École des Hautes Études. Section des Sciences Religieuses, 75; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968).
Budde, Karl, 'Das hebräische Klagelied', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 2 (1882), pp. 1-52.
Caesar, Michael, *Umberto Eco: Philosophy, Semiotics and the Work of Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).
Ceresko, Anthony R., 'The Function of *Antanaclasis* (*ms,'* "to find"// *ms,'* "to reach, overtake, grasp") in Hebrew Poetry, Especially in the Book of Qoheleth', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982), pp. 551-69.
Childs, Brevard S., *Exodus* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974).
—*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).
—*Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001).
Collins, Terence, 'The Physiology of Tears in the Old Testament, Part 1', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (1971), pp. 18-38.
—'The Physiology of Tears in the Old Testament, Part 2', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (1971), pp. 185-97.
Condamin, Albert, *Poèmes de la Bible avec une Introduction sur la Strophique Hébraïque* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2nd edn, 1933).
Conrad, Edgar, 'Forming the Twelve and Forming Canon', in Paul L. Redditt and Aaron Schart, *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 325; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 90-103.
—*Reading Isaiah* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).
—*Reading the Latter Prophets: Toward a New Canonical Criticism* (JSOTSup, 376; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003).
—'Yehoshua Gitay: "What is *He* Doing"'? *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 27 (2002), pp. 237-41.
Cooper, Jerrold S., *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).
Cresson, Bruce C., 'The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism', in J.M. Bird (ed.), *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972), pp. 125-48.
Cross, Frank Moore, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973 [1997]).
—'Newly found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts'. *Bulletin for the American Schools of Oriental Research* 238 (1980), pp. 8-30.
—'Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse: The Prosody of Lamentations 1:1-22', in Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall go Forth: Essays in Honour of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 129-55.
Dahood, Mitchell, 'New Readings in Lamentations', *Biblica* 59 (1978), pp. 174-97.
Davies, G.I., 'Some Uses of Writing in Ancient Israel in the Light of Recently Published Inscriptions', in P. Bienkowski, C. Mee and E. Slater (eds.), *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society: Papers in Honour of Alan R. Millard* (LHB/OTS, 426; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 155-74.
Davies, Philip R., *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 2003 [1992]).
Day, John, 'Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions to the Covenant in Hosea and Psalm lxxviii', *Vetus Testamentum* 36 (1986), pp. 1-12.

Day, Peggy, 'The Personification of Cities as Female in the Hebrew Bible: The Thesis of Aloysius Fitzgerald, *F.S.C.*', in Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (eds.), *Reading from this Place*. II. *Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 283-302.

Deiana, G., 'Interpretazione die Lam. 1, 3a. 7a', *Bibbia e Oriente* 23 (1981), pp. 101-103.

Delitzsch, Franz, *Die Lese- und Schreibfehler im Alten Testament nebst den dem Schrifttexte einverleibten Randnoten klassifiziert. Ein Hilfsbuch für Lexicon und Grammatik, Exegese und Lektüre* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1920).

Demsky Aaron, and Moshe Kochavi, 'An Alphabet from the Days of the Judges', *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4/3 (1978), pp. 23-31.

Derrida, Jacques, '"Eating Well", or the Calculation of the Subject', in Elisabeth Weber (ed.), *Points… Interviews, 1974–1994* (trans. Peggy Kamuf; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 255-87.

—*Limited Inc.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

—*Of Grammatology* (trans. Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1974).

—*The Margins of Philosophy* (trans. Alan Bass; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Dicou, Bert, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist: The Role of Edom in Biblical Prophecy and Story* (JSOTSup, 169; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

Dobbs-Allsopp, F.W., 'Darwinism, Genre Theory, and City Laments', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120 (2000), pp. 625-30.

—*Lamentations* (Int.; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2002).

—'Lamentations as a Lyric Sequence' (Unpublished manuscript).

—'Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations', *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 26 (1998), pp. 1-36.

—'The Enjambing Line in Lamentations: A Taxonomy (Part 1)', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 113 (2001), pp. 219-39.

—'The Effects of Enjambment in Lamentations (Part 2)', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 113 (2001), pp. 370-85.

—'The Syntagma of *bat* Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995), pp. 451-70.

—'Tragedy, Tradition, and Theology in the Book of Lamentations', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 74 (1997), pp. 29-60.

—*Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (BibOr, 44; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993).

Dobbs-Allsopp, F.W., and Tod Linafelt, 'The Rape of Zion in Thr. 1.10', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 113 (2001), pp. 77-81.

Driver, G.R., 'Hebrew Notes on the "Song of Songs" and "Lamentations"', in Walther Baumgartner (ed.), *Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburstag gewidmet von Kollegen und Freunden* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1950), pp. 134-46.

Driver, S.R., *A Treatise on the Use of Tenses in Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1874).

Driver, S.R., and G.B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921).

Eaton, John H., *Psalms* (London: SCM Press, 1967).

Eco, Umberto, *A Theory of Semiotics* (AS; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976).

—'Dictionary vs. Encyclopaedia', in Thomas Sebeok (ed.), *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Semiotics*, I (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 201-206.
—*Interpretation and Overinterpretation: Umberto Eco* (ed. Stefan Collini with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler and Christine Brooke-Rose; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
—'James Bond: une combinatoire narrative', *Communications* 8 (1966), pp. 83-99.
—*Misreadings* (London: Picador, 1994).
—*Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (AS; London: Macmillan, 1984).
—*Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).
—*The Limits of Interpretation* (AS; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).
—*The Open Work* (trans. Anna Concogni; Introduction by David Robey; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
—*The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (AS; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984).
Edelman, Diana, *The Origins of the Second Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005).
Edelman, Diana (ed.), *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms* (CBET; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995).
Ehrensvard, M., 'Lingusitic Dating of Biblical Texts', in Ian Young (ed.), *Biblical Hebrew Studies in Chronology and Typology* (JSOTSup, 369; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), pp. 164-88.
Eichrodt, Walther, 'Does Old Testament Theology Still Have Independent Significance'?, in Ben C. Ollenburger (ed.), *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, rev. edn, 2004), pp. 21-29.
Emmendörfer, Michael. *Der ferne Gott: Eine Untersuchung der alttestmentlichen Volksklagelieder vor dem Hintergrund der mesopotamischen Literatur*. FAT. 21. Tubingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 1998.
Eskhult, Mats, *Studies in Verbal Aspect and Narrative Technique in Biblical Hebrew Prose* (AUP. SSU, 12; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990).
—'Traces of Linguistic Development in Biblical Hebrew', *Hebrew Studies* 46 (2005), pp. 353-70.
Eslinger, Lyle, 'Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category', *Vetus Testamentum* 42 (1992), pp. 47-58.
Ewald, Heinrich, *Die Dichter des alten Bundes: Die Psalmen und Die Klagelieder* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1866).
Falkenstien, A., and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete: Einleitung und Übertragung* (Zürich: Artemis, 1953).
Feldman, Emmanuel, *Biblical and Postbiblical Defilement and Mourning: Law as Theology* (LJLE; New York: KTAV, 1977).
Ferris, Jr., Paul Wayne, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (SBLDS, 127; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).
Fish, Stanley, *Is There a Text in this Class?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).
Fishbane, Michael, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).
Fitzgerald, Aloysius, '*BTWLT* and *BT* as Titles for Capital Cities', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 37 (1975), pp. 167-83.
Floyd, Michael H., 'Welcome Back, Daughter of Zion!', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70 (2008), pp. 484-504.

Fokkelman, J.P., *Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001).

Fox, M.V., *Proverbs 10–31* (Anchor Bible Yale Commentary; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

Fredriksson, Henning, *Jahwe als Krieger* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1945).

Freud, Sigmund, 'Trauer und Melancholie', *International Zeitschrift. für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 4 (1917), pp. 288-301.

—*On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (Penguin Freud Library, 11; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991).

Frevel, Christian, 'Zerbrochene Zier: Tempel und Tempelzerstörung in den Klageliedern (Threni)', in Othmar Keel and Erich Zenger (eds.), *Gottesstadt und Gottesgarten: zu Geschichte und Theologie des Jerusalemer Tempels* (Quaestiones Disputatae, 191; Freiburg: Herder, 2002), pp. 99-153.

Freytag, Gustav, *Teknik des Dramas* (Leipzig, 1863), reprinted as *Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2004).

Fried, Lisbeth S., 'The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient Near East', in Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 21-54.

Fries, S.A., 'Parallele zwischen den Klageliedern Cap. IV, V und der Maccabäerzeit', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 13 (1893), pp. 110-24.

Frymer-Kensky, Tikva, 'Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel', in Carol Meyers and M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honour of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 399-414.

Galambush, Julie, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife* (SBLDS, 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

Gelin, Albert, *Jérémie, Les Lamentations, Baruch* (Paris: Cerf, 2nd edn, 1959).

Gentry, Peter J., 'Lamentations', in Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title* (International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Inc., 2004).

Gerstenberger, Erhard, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations* (FOTL; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

Gese, Harmut, *Vom Sinai zum Zion: Alttestamentliche Beitrage zur biblischen Theologie* (BET, 64; Münich: Kaiser, ١٩٧٤).

Gibson, J.C.L., *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998).

Gillingham, S.E., *One Bible Many Voices: Different Approaches to Biblical Studies* (London: SPCK, 1998).

Goldingay, John, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005).

Goldman, S., 'Lamentations', in A. Cohen (ed.), *The Five Megilloth: With Hebrew Text, English Translation, and Commentary* (SBB; London: Soncino, 1970), pp. 66-102.

Gordis, Robert, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations: A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary* (New York: KTAV, 1974).

—'A Note on Lamentations II 13', *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1933), pp. 162-63.

—'Asseverative Kaph in Hebrew and Ugaritic', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 63 (1943), pp. 176-78.

—'The Conclusion of the Book of Lamentations (5:22)', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974), pp. 289-93.
Gottlieb, Hans, 'Das kultische Leiden des Königs: Zu den Klageliedern 3,1', *Scandanavian Journal of the Old Testament* 2 (1987), pp. 121-26.
—*A Study on the Text of Lamentations* (Acta Jutlandica, 48; Theology Series, 12; Århus: Århus Universitet, 1978).
Gottwald, Norman K., *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (SBT, 14; London: SCM Press, 1962).
Guest, Deryn, 'Hiding Behind the Naked Women in Lamentations: A Recriminative Response', *Biblical Interpretation* 7 (1999), pp. 413-48.
Guillaume, Philippe, 'Lamentations 5: The Seventh Acrostic', *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9 (2006): online journal. Accessible at: http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article_118.pdf
Gunkel, Hermann, and Joachim Begrich, *An Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (ed. James D. Nogalski; MLBS; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998).
Gunn, David M., 'Deutero-Isaiah and the Flood', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975), pp. 493-508.
Gwaltney, W.C., Jr., 'The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Ancient Near Eastern Literature', in William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer and Leo G. Perdue (eds.), *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 191-212.
Hallo, W., James C. Moyer, and Leo G. Perdue (eds.), *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983).
Hanson, Paul D., *Isaiah 40–66* (Int.; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1995).
Haran, Menahem, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly Code* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).
Hays, Richard, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).
Heater, Homer, 'Structure and Meaning in Lamentations', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (1992), pp. 304-15.
Hecker, K., *Untersuchungen zur akkadischen Epik* (AOAT, 8; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974).
Heim, Knut, 'The Personification of Jerusalem and the Drama of Her Bereavement in the Book of Lamentations', in Richard S. Hess and Gordon J. Wenham (eds.), *Zion, the City of Our God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 129-69.
Hermisson, H.-J., 'Einheit und Komplexität Deuterojesajas: Probleme der Redaktionsgeschichte von Jes 40–55', in Jacques Vermeylen (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah (Le Livre d'Isaïe)* (BETL, 81; Leuven: University Press, 1989), pp. 287-312.
Hess, R.S., 'Questions of Reading and Writing in Ancient Israel', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 19 (2009), pp. 1-9.
—'Writing about Writing: Abecedaries and Evidence for Literacy in Ancient Israel', *Vetus Testamentum* 56 (2006), pp. 342-46.
Hillers, Delbert R., *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (SHI; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).
—*Lamentations: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (ABC; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, rev. edn, 1992).
—'Lamentations, Book of', in David Noel Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. IV (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 137-41.

Holman, C. Hugh, and William Harmon (eds.), *A Handbook to Literature* (New York: Macmillan, 6th edn, 1992).
House, Paul R., *Lamentations* (WBC; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005).
House, Paul R. (ed.), *Beyond Form Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992).
Huey, F.B., *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (New American Commentary, 16; Nashville, TN: B&H, 1993).
Hunter, Jannie, *Faces of a Lamenting City: The Development and Coherence of the Book of Lamentations* (BEATAJ, 39; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996).
Hurvitz, Avi, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (CahRB, 20; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1982).
—'The Evidence of Language in Dating the Priestly Code', *Revue Biblique* 81 (1974), pp. 24-56.
—'The Historical Quest for "Ancient Israel" and the Linguistic Evidence of the Hebrew Bible: Some Methodological Observations', *Vetus Testamentum* 47 (1997), pp. 301-15.
Hurowitz, Avi, '*zllh* = Peddler/Tramp/Vagabond/Beggar: Lamentations i 11 in Light of Akkadian *zilulû*', *Vetus Testamentum* 59 (1999), pp. 542-45.
Jahnow, Hedwig, *Das hebräische Leichenlied im Rahmen der Völkerdichtung* (BZAW, 36; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1923).
Jakobson, Roman, 'Grammatical Parallelism and its Russian Facet', *Language* 42 (1966), pp. 399-429.
Janssen, Enno, *Juda in der Exilszeit: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehung des Jüdentums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956).
Johnson, Bo, 'Form and Message in Lamentations', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 97 (1985), pp. 58-73.
Joyce, Paul M., 'Sitting Loose to History: Reading the Book of Lamentations without Primary Reference to Its Original Historical Setting', in Edward Ball (ed.), *In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements* (JSOTSup, 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 246-62.
—'Psychological Approaches to Lamentations', in Robin Parry and Heath Thomas (eds.), *Great is Thy Faithfulness? Toward Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), pp. 161-65.
Kaiser, Barbara, 'Reconsidering Parallelism: A Study of the Structure of Lamentations 1, 2, and 4' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1983).
Kaiser, Barbara Bakke, 'Poet as "Female Impersonator": The Image of Daughter Zion as Speaker in Biblical Poems of Suffering', *Journal of Religion* 67 (1987), pp. 164-82.
Kaiser, Otto, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Presentation of its Results and Problems* (trans. John Sturdy; Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1975).
—*Klagelieder* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ١٩٩٢).
Kaiser, Walter C., *Grief and Pain in the Plan of God: Christian Assurance and the Message of Lamentations* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2004).
Kang, Sa-Moon, *Divine War in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* (BZAW, 177; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989).
Kartveit, Magnar, 'Sions dotter', *Tidsskrift for Teologi of Kirke* 1/2 (2001), pp. 97-112.
Klingbeil, Martin, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (OBO, 169; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

Knierim, Rolf, *Die Hauptbegriffe für Sünde im Alten Testament* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1965).
Knohl, Israel, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).
Koch, Klaus, 'מוֹעֵד, *mô'ēd*', in G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 8 (trans. Douglas Stott; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 167-73.
Koole, Jan L., *Isaiah, Part 3 Volume 1: Isaiah 40–48* (HCOT; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997).
Korpel, M.C.A., and Johannes C. de Moor, 'Fundamentals of Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry', *Ugarit Forschungen* 18 (1986), pp. 173-212.
Kramer, Samuel N., 'A Sumerian Lamentation' and 'Sumerian Lamentation', in James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Third Edition with Supplement (trans. Samuel N. Kramer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 455-63 and 611-19.
—*Sumerian Literature and the Bible* (AnBib, 12; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1959).
—'The Weeping Goddess: Sumerian Prototypes of the *Mater Dolorosa*', *Biblical Archaeologist* 46 (1983), pp. 69-80.
Krašovec, Jože, 'The Source of Hope in the Book of Lamentations', *Vetus Testamentum* 42 (1992), pp. 223-33.
Kraus, Hans-Joachim, *Klagelieder (Threni)* (BKAT; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1960).
—*Psalms 60–150* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).
Kristeva, Julia, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
Kruger, Paul, 'The Inverse World of Mourning in the Hebrew Bible', *Biblische Notizen* 124 (2005), pp. 41-49.
Kuschke, Arnulf, *Verbannung und Heimkehr: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Wilhelm Rudolph zum 70. Geburtstage* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1961).
Labahn, Antje, 'Fire from Above: Metaphors and Images of God's Actions in Lamentations 2.1-9', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31 (2006), pp. 239-56.
—'Trauern als Bewältingung der Vergangenheit zur Gestaltung der Zukunft. Bemerkungen zur anthropologischen Theologie der Klagelieder', *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002), pp. 513-27.
—'Wild Animals and Chasing Shadows: Animal Metaphors in Lamentations as Indicators of Individual Threat', in P. van Hecke (ed.), *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (BETL, 187; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. 67-97.
Lachs, S., 'The Date of Lamentations', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 57 (1968), pp. 46-56.
Lambert, W.G., 'A Neo-Babylonian Tammuz Lament', in Jack M. Sasson (ed.), *Studies in Literature from the Ancient Near East Dedicated to Samuel Noah Kramer* (AOS; New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1984), pp. 211-15.
Lanahan, William, 'The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974), pp. 41-49.
Lee, Nancy C., *The Singers of Lamentations: Cities under Siege, from Ur to Jerusalem to Sarajevo* (BIS, 60; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002).
Lemche, Niels Peter, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (LAI; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998).

Leuchter, Mark, *Josiah's Reform and Jeremiah's Scroll: Historical Calamity and Prophetic Response* (HBM, 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006).
Levine, Étan, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations* (New York: Hermon Press, 1981).
Linafelt, Tod, *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).
—'The Refusal of a Conclusion in the Book of Lamentations', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120 (2001), pp. 340-43.
Lindsay, John, 'Edomite Westward Expansion: The Biblical Evidence', *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 36 (1999), pp. 48-89.
Lindström, Fredrik, *God and the Origin of Evil: A Contextual Analysis of Alleged Monistic Evidence in the Old Testament* (CBOTS, 21; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1983).
Lipschits, Oded, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005).
Lipschits, Oded, and Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003).
Llewelyn, John, *Beyond Metaphysics? The Hermeneutic Circle in Contemporary Continental Philosophy* (CSPHS, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1985).
Löhr, Max, 'Der Sprachgebrauch des Buches der Klagelieder', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 14 (1894), pp. 42-50.
—'Threni III und die jeremianische Autorschaft des Buches der Klagelieder', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1904), pp. 1-16.
Longman, Tremper, III, 'A Critique of Two Recent Metrical Systems', *Biblica* 63 (1982), pp. 230-54.
—*Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1991).
—*Jeremiah, Lamentations* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008).
Love, Mark Cameron, *The Evasive Text: Zechariah 1–8 and the Frustrated Reader* (JSOTSup, 296; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).
Maier, Christl M., *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).
Mandolfo, Carleen, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).
—*God in the Dock: The Dialogic Tension in the Psalms of Lament* (JSOTSup, 357; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).
Marcus, D., 'Non-Recurring Doublets in the Book of Lamentations', *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986), pp. 177-95.
Martin, J.D., and P.R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (JSOTSup, 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986).
Martin-Achard, R., and S. Paul Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis: Amos & Lamentations* (ITC; Edinburgh: Handsel, 1984).
McCarthy, Carmel, *The Tiqqune Sopherim and Other Theological Corrections in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament* (OBO, 36; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981).
McConville, J. Gordon, *Grace in the End: A Study of Deuteronomic Theology* (SOTBT; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993).
—*Judgment and Promise: An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993).

McDaniel, Thomas F., 'The Alleged Sumerian Influence upon Lamentations', *Vetus Testamentum* 18 (1968), pp. 198-209.
—'Philological Studies in Lamentations, II', *Biblica* 49 (1968), pp. 199-220.
McKenzie, Steven L., and Stephen R. Haynes (eds.), *To Each its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*. Revised and expanded edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999).
Meek, Theophile J., and William Pierson Merrill, 'The Book of Lamentations', in George A. Buttrick (ed.), *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 6 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951–57), pp. 3-38.
Meier, Samuel A., *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (VTSup, 46; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992).
Meshel, Ze'ev, 'Did Yahweh have a Consort? The New Religious Inscriptions from the Sinai', *Biblical Archaeology Review* 5/2 (1979), pp. 24-35.
Meyers, Carol L., and M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall go Forth: Essays in Honour of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983).
Michalowski, Piotr, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (MC, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989).
Middlemas, Jill, 'Did Second Isaiah Write Lamentations iii'? *Vetus Testamentum* 56 (2006), pp. 505-25.
—*The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the 'Exile'* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2007).
—*The Troubles of Templeless Judah* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
Milgrom, Jacob, *Leviticus* (3 vols.; ABC; New York: Doubleday, 1991–2000).
Miller, C.W., 'The Book of Lamentations in Recent Research', *Currents in Biblical Research* 1 (2002), pp. 9-29.
Miller, J. Maxwell, and John H. Hayes (eds.), *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: SCM Press, 1986).
Miller, Patrick D., Jr., 'Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 27 (1965), pp. 256-61.
—*The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM, 5; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).
—'Prayer as Persuasion: The Rhetoric and Intention of Prayer', *Word and World* 13 (1993), pp. 356-62.
Miller, Patrick D., Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S.D. McBride, *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).
Mintz, Alan, *Ḥurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).
Moor, Johannes C. de, 'The Art of Versification in Ugarit and Israel (I)', in Yitzhak Avishur and J. Blau (eds.), *Studies in Bible and the Ancient Near East Presented to S.E. Loewenstamm* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1978), pp. 119-39.
—'The Art of Versification in Ugarit and Israel (II)', *Ugarit Forschungen* 10 (1978), pp. 187-217.
—'The Art of Versification in Ugarit and Israel (III)', *Ugarit Forschungen* 12 (1980), pp. 311-15.
Moor, J.C. de, and K. Spronk, 'Problematic Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (I-II)', *Ugarit Forschungen* 14 (1982), pp. 153-71, 173-90.
Moore, Michael S., 'Human Suffering in Lamentations', *Revue Biblique* 90 (1983), pp. 534-55.

Morgan, Robert, and John Barton, *Biblical Interpretation* (OBS; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
Morrow, William S., *Protest against God: The Eclipse of a Biblical Tradition* (HBM, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005).
Motyer, Alec, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999).
Muilenburg, James, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', in Paul R. House (ed.), *Beyond Form Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 49-69.
Munch, P.A., 'Die Alphabetische Akrostichie in der jüdischen Psalmendichtung', *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 90 (1936), pp. 703-10.
Nägelsbach, Eduard, *Die Klagelieder* (THBAT, 15; Bielefeld and Leipzig: Belhagen und Klasing, 1868).
Neusner, Jacob, *Lamentations Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* (BJS, 193; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).
Niditch, Susan, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (LAI; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996).
Nötscher, Friedrich, *Die Klagelieder* (EB; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1947).
Noth, Martin, 'Jerusalem und die israelitische Tradition', *Oudtestamentische Studien* 8 (1950), pp. 28-46.
O'Connor, Kathleen M., *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).
Oesch, Josef M., 'Review of Pieter van der Lugt, *Cantos and Strophes in Biblical Hebrew Poetry: With Special Reference to the First Book of the Psalter*', *RBL* 2 (2007).
Ollenburger, Ben C., *Zion the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol for the Jerusalem Cult* (JSOTSup, 41; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987).
Orlin, L. (ed.), *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of G.G. Cameron* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1976).
Oswalt, John, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986).
Parry, Robin, *Lamentations* (THOTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).
Parry, Robin, and Heath Thomas (eds.), *Great is Thy Faithfulness? Toward Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011).
Patrick, Dale, and Allen Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation* (JSOTSup, 82; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).
Pham, Xuan Huong Thi, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Bible* (JSOTSup, 302; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).
Plöger, Otto, *Die fünf Megilloth* (HZAT, 18; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1969).
Porteous, Norman, 'Jerusalem–Zion: The Growth of a Symbol', in Arnulf Kuschke (ed.), Verbannung und Heimkehr: *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Wilhelm Rudolph zum 70. Geburtstage* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1961), pp. 235-52.
Porúbčan, Štefan, *Sin in the Old Testament: A Soteriological Study* (Rome: Herder, 1963).
Provan, Iain, *Lamentations* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991).
—'Past, Present and Future in Lamentations iii 52-66: The Case for a Precative Perfect Re-examined', *Vetus Testamentum* 41 (1991), pp. 164-75.
—'Reading Texts against an Historical Background—Lamentations 1', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 1 (1990), pp. 130-43.
Pyper, Hugh S., 'Reading Lamentations', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 95 (2001), pp. 55-69.

Rad, Gerhard von, 'Die Stadt auf dem Berg', *Evangelische Theologie* 9 (1948/49), pp. 439-47.
Redditt, Paul L., and Aaron Schart (eds.), *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 325; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2003).
Reiner, E., 'A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanâ', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33 (1974), pp. 221-36.
Rendsburg, Gary, *Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew* (AOS, 72; New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1990).
Renkema, Johan, *Lamentations* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998).
—*'Misschien is er hoop…': Die theologische vooronderstellingen van het boek Klaagliederen* (Franeker: Wever, 1983).
—'The Literary Structure of Lamentations (I-IV)', in Willem van der Meer and Johannes C. de Moor (eds.), *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry* (JSOTSup, 74; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), pp. 294-396.
Richter, David H. (ed.), *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1989).
Ridderbos, N.H., *Die Psalmen: Stilistische Verfahren und Aufbau mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Ps 1–41* (BZAW, 117; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1972).
Roberts, J.J.M., 'The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92.3(1973), pp. 329-44.
—'Yahweh's Foundation in Zion (Isa. 28:6)', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987), pp. 27-45.
—'Zion in the Theology of the Davidic-Solomonic Empire', in T. Ishida (ed.), *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 93-108.
Roche, Michael de, 'Zephaniah i 2-3: the "sweeping of creation"', *Vetus Testamentum* 30 (1980), pp. 104-109.
Rohland, Edzard, 'Die Bedeutung der Erwählungstradition Israels für die Eschatologie der alttestamentlichen Propheten' (PhD dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1956).
Römer, Thomas, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2006).
Rorty, Richard, 'The Pragmatist's Progress', in Stefan Collini (ed.), *Interpretation and Overitnterpretation: Umberto Eco* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 89-108.
Rudolph, Wilhelm, 'Der Text der Klagelieder', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 56 (1938), pp. 101-22.
—*Die Klagelieder* (KAT; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, ١٩٦٢).
Sæbø, Magne, *On the Way to Canon: Creative Tradition History in the Old Testament* (JSOTSup, 191; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).
Salters, R.B., *Lamentations* (ICC; London: T. & T. Clark, 2010).
—'Lamentations 1.3: Light from the History of Exegesis', in J.D. Martin and P.R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (JSOTSup, 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), pp. 73-89.
Sasson, Jack M., *Studies in Literature from the Ancient Near East Dedicated to Samuel Noah Kramer* (AOS; New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1984).
Schmid, Hans, 'Jahwe und die Kulttraditionen von Jerusalem', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 67 (1955), pp. 168-97.
Schökel, Luis Alonso, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*. *SubBi*, 11 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2000).

Schramm, Pete, 'Poetic Patterning in Biblical Hebrew', in L. Orlin (ed.), *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of G.G. Cameron* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1976), pp. 167-91.

Seebass, Horst, and Helmer Ringgren, '*פָּשַׁע*, *pāša'*', in G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 12 (trans. Douglas Stott; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 133-51.

Segert, Stanlisav, 'Parallelism in Ugaritic Poetry', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983), pp. 295-306.

Segovia Fernando F., and Mary Ann Tolbert (eds.), *Reading from this Place, Volume 2: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

Seidman, Naomi, 'Burning the Book of Lamentations', in Christina Buchmann and Celina Spiegel (eds.), *Out of the Garden: Women Writers on the Bible* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1995), pp. 278-88.

Seitz, Christopher, *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

Seow, C.L., 'A Textual Note on Lamentations 1.20', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985), pp. 416-19.

Shannon, C.E., and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1949).

Shea, William H., 'The *qinah* Structure of the Book of Lamentations', *Biblica* 60 (1979), pp. 103-107.

Shklovsky, Victor, 'Art as Technique', in David H. Richter (ed.), *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1989), pp. 738-48.

Smith, Mark S., 'The God Athtar in the Ancient Near East and His Place in KTU 1.6 I', in Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin and Michael Sokoloff (eds.), *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), pp. 627-40.

Smith, Ralph L., *Micah–Malachi* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984).

Sommer Benjamin, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

The Soncino Edition Babylonian Talmud. Tractate *Shabbath*. Vol. 1 (London: Soncino, 1935–1953).

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravarti, 'Translator's Preface', in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (trans. Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. ix-lxxxvii.

Stead, Michael, 'Sustained Allusion in Zechariah 1–2', in Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd (eds.), *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (LHB/OTS, 475; London: T. & T. Clark, 2008), pp. 144-70.

Sternberg, Meier, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985).

Stinespring, William R., 'Zion, Daughter of', in Keith Crim (ed.), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 985.

Tate, W. Randolph, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, rev. edn, 2003).

Thenius, Otto, *Die Klagelieder* (KHAT; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1855).

Thiselton, Anthony C., '"Behind" and "In Front of" the Text: Language, Reference and Indeterminacy', in Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene and Karl Möller (eds.), *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation* (SHS, 2; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), pp. 97-120.

—*New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992).

Thomas, H.A., 'Feminist Interpretation(s) and Lamentations', in Robin Parry and Heath Thomas (eds.), *Great is thy Faithfulness? Toward Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), pp. 166-74.

—'I Will Hope in Him: Theology and Hope in Lamentations', in G.J. Wenham, J. Grant and A. Lo (eds.), *A God of Faithfulness: Essays in Honour of J. Gordon McConville on his 60th Birthday* (LHB/OTS, 538; London: T. & T. Clark, 2011), pp. 203-21.

—'Justice at the Crossroads: The Book of Lamentations and Feminist Discourse', in Andrew Sloane (ed.), *Tamar's Tears: Evangelical Engagement with Feminist Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Press, 2011), pp. 246-73.

—'Lamentations in the Patristic Period', in Robin Parry and Heath Thomas (eds.), *Great is Thy Faithfulness? Toward Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), pp. 113-19.

—'Relating Prayer and Pain: Psychological Analysis and Lamentations Research', *Tyndale Bulletin* 61/2 (2010), pp. 183-208.

—'The Liturgical Function of the Book of Lamentations', in M. Augustin and H.M. Niemann (eds.), *Thinking Towards New Horizons. Collected Communications to the XIXth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Ljubljana 2007* (Beiträge zur Erforschung des alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums, 55; Frankfurt am Main: Lang Verlag, 2008), pp. 137-47.

—'The Meaning of *zōlēlâ* (Lam i 11c) One More Time', *Vetus Testamentum* 61/3 (2011), pp. 489-98.

— *'Until He Looks Down and Sees': The Message and Meaning of the Book of Lamentations* (Grove Biblical Series, 53; Cambridge: Grove Books, 2009).

—'A Survey of Research on Lamentations (2002–2012)', *Currents in Biblical Research* (**forthcoming**).

Thompson, J.A., and Elmer Martens, 'שׁוּב', in Willem van Gemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), pp. 55-59.

Thompson, Thomas L., *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaelogy and the Myth of Israel* (London: Basic Books, 1999).

Tiemeyer, Lena-Sofia, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (VTSup, 139; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011).

—'Lamentations in Isaiah 40–55', in Robin Parry and Heath Thomas (eds.), *Great is Thy Faithfulness? Toward Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), pp. 55-63.

Trible, Phyllis, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

—*Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

Tsumura, D.T., 'Ugaritic Poetry and Habbakuk 3', *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1988), pp. 24-48.

Vance, Donald R., *The Question of Meter in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (SBEC, 46; Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2001).

Villanueva, Federico, *The Uncertainty of a Hearing: A Study of the Sudden Change of Mood in the Psalms of Lament* (VTSup, 121; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008).

Watson, Wilfred G.E., *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSup, 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984).

Weiser, Artur, *Klagelieder* (ATD, 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ١٩٦٢).

Wellhausen, Julius, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, *with a Reprint of the article 'Israel' from Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Preface by W. Robertson Smith; Forward by Douglas A. Knight; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

Wenham, Gordon, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1994).

Westermann, Claus, *Der Psalter* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1967).

—*Die Klagelieder: Forschungsgeschichte und Auslegung* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), reprinted as *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994).

—*Isaiah 40–66* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969).

—*Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (trans. Keith Crim and Richard Soulen; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

—'Struktur und Geschichte der Klage im alten Testament', *Zeitschrift für die alttetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 66 (1954), pp. 44-80.

—'The Role of Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament', *Interpretation* 28 (1974), pp. 20-38.

Wiesmann, Hermann, *Die Klagelieder: Übersetzt und erklärt* (Frankfurt am Main: Philosophisch-theologische Hoschule Sankt Georgen, 1954).

Willey, Patricia, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Isaiah 40–55* (SBLDS, 161; Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1997).

Williamson, H.G.M., *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

—'Isaiah 62.4 and the Problem of Inner-Biblical Allusions', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 (2000), pp. 734-39.

Williamson, Peter S., *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture: A Study on the Pontifical Biblical Commission's The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Preface by Albert Vanhoye; *SubBi*, 22; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2001).

Young, Ian, 'Biblical Texts Cannot be Dated Linguistically', *Hebrew Studies* 46 (2005), pp. 341-51.

—*Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew* (FAT, 5; Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 1993).

—'Evidence of Diversity in Pre-Exilic Judahite Hebrew', *Hebrew Studies* 38 (1997), pp. 7-20.

—'Late Biblical Hebrew and Hebrew Inscriptions', in Ian Young (ed.), *Biblical Hebrew Studies in Chronology and Typology* (JSOTSup, 369; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), pp. 276-311.

Zevit, Ziony, 'Introductory Remarks: Historical Linguistics and the Dating of Hebrew Texts c. 1000–300 BCE', *Hebrew Studies* 46 (2005), pp. 321-26.

Zevit, Ziony, Seymour Gitin and Michael Sokoloff (eds.), *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995).

Indexes

Index of Biblical References

Old Testament

Index of Authors