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## SYMMETRICAL REPETITIONS IN *LAMENTATIONS* CHAPTERS I AND II.

IN my critical translation of the Book of Isaiah (*Le Livre d'Isaïe*, which was the object of a very kindly notice in this JOURNAL, April, 1905, pp. 463, 464) I endeavoured to separate the poems contained in chapters xl and onwards, by means of the sense and the symmetry of the strophes. Certain words are symmetrically repeated in such wise that they form a kind of concentric setting (*inclusion*) for the whole poem, the repetitions occurring in the first and last strophe, in the second and second from the end, in the third and third from the end, and so on. No one will deny that an exact delimitation of these poems is very important, particularly with regard to the question of the Servant of Yahweh.

It may be useful, therefore, to adduce some clear and incontestable examples of this concentric form in entire poems. The examples I bring forward will be incontestable, (1) if the poems are already on other grounds clearly delimited, (2) if the symmetrical repetition occurs so frequently and so regularly in a poem, that it cannot be set down to mere chance or to a simple figure of rhetoric. These two conditions seem to me to be realized in chapters i and ii of the Lamentations. Here we have alphabetical poems, and consequently we can determine with certainty the beginning, the regular sequence, and the end of each poem.

In these two chapters, each of the sections marked by the letters of the alphabet forms one Massoretic verse and contains three metrical verses. The metrical verse is the *kinah verse* (first clearly pointed out by Dr K. Budde). Each section repeats one or more words of the corresponding section. Thus, the repetitions occur in sections א and ת (Massoretic verses 1 and 22), ב and ש (2 and 21), ג and ו (3 and 20), &c. The following list will make this clear:—

### CHAPTER I.

- |     |   |                                  |                              |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1.  | א | רַבְתִּי                         | in the first metrical verse. |
| 22. | ת | רַבּוֹת                          | in the last metrical verse.  |
| 2.  | ב | אֵין לֵה מְנַחֵם . . . לְאִיבִים |                              |
| 21. | ש | אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי . . . אִיבִי    |                              |
| 3.  | ג | הַמְצַרִּים                      | in the ninth metrical verse. |
| 20. | ו | צַר                              | in the ninth from the end.   |

4. ד בניה, in the eleventh metrical verse.  
19. ק כהני, in the eleventh from the end.

(The word כהן occurs nowhere else in this chapter.)

5. ה יהוה . . . הלכו בשבי  
18. צ יהוה . . . הלכו בשבי

(The expression הלך בשבי does not occur elsewhere in this chapter.)

6. ו ציון  
17. פ ציון

7-9 and 14-16 are dealt with further on.

10. י פרש  
13. מ פרש

11. כ ראה . . . והביטה  
12. ל הביטו וראו

(The verb הביט is not found elsewhere in this chapter.)

## CHAPTER II.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. א ביום אפו   | 7. ז אויב . . . כיום  |
| 22. ת ביום אף יהוה  | 16. פ איביך . . . היום  |
| 2. ב לא חמל . . . לארץ                                    | 8. ח בת (ציון)  |
| 21. ש לארץ . . . לא חמלח                                  | 15. ס בת (ירושלם) (No special significance is to be attached to this repetition of בת, which occurs in almost every section.) |
| 3. ג אכלה   |   |
| 20. ר תאכלנה (The verb אכל nowhere else in this chapter.) |   |
| 4. ד שפך  | 9. ט נביאיה . . . חזון  |
| 19. ק שפכי  | 14. נ נביאיך חזו  |
| 5. ה ארני   | 10. י בת ציון . . . בתולת   |
| 18. צ ארני  | 13. מ בתולת בת ציון   |
| 6. ו יהוה   | 11. כ נשפך . . . בעטף . . . ברחבות  |
| 17. ע יהוה  | 12. ל בהחטפם . . . ברחבות בהשחמך  |

The seventh verse of chap. i needs correction: the words כל מחמריה בל אשר היו מימי קדם are regarded as a gloss by Budde, Löhr, Dyserinck, Baethgen, Minocchi, Sievers, &c. Moreover, *v.* 7 does not correspond with *v.* 16, nor *v.* 9 with *v.* 14; but *v.* 7<sup>b</sup> does correspond with 14, especially if we complete, with Budde, the first member of the last metrical verse in 14, according to a very good reading of the LXX, which requires only a change of vowels: ἐν χερσίν μου ὄδυνας = פְּיָרִי צָר; read

צָר, *into the hands of the adversary*. Between 9<sup>b</sup> and 16 the correspondence is very marked. Let us try a transposition:—

<p>7<sup>a</sup> זכרה ירושלם ימי עניה [ ]          9<sup>b</sup> לא זכרה אחריתה          ותרד פלאים          אין מנחם לה          ראה יהוה את עניי          כי הגדיל אויב</p>	<p>16 על אלה אני בוכיה          עיני [ ] ירדה מים          כי רחק ממני מנחם          משיב נפשי          היו בני שוממים          כי גבר אויב</p>
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(In *vs.* 8 and 15 no important repetition.)

<p>9<sup>a</sup> טמאתה בשוליה . . .          . . . . .          ב<sup>ל</sup> בנפל עמה ביד צר          ואין עזר לה          ראוה צרים          שחקו על משבתה</p>	<p>14 נשקר על פשעי בידו . . .          שחרגו עלו על צוארי          הכשיל כחי          נתנני ארני בידי [צר]          לא אוכל קום</p>
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The above transposition I give as probable for the following reasons: (1) it re-establishes perfectly the symmetry; (2) the gloss which now finds a place in *v.* 7 refers to *v.* 10 כל מחמריה; it was probably inserted somewhere near, that is in the primitive ninth verse; (3) 7<sup>a</sup> and 9<sup>b</sup> hang well together as regards the sense (זכרה and זכרה); as also 7<sup>b</sup> and 10 (ידו פריש צר 10, ביד צר . . . ראוה צרים ב<sup>ל</sup> 10).

I have purposely refrained from giving the name of strophes to the sections indicated by the letters of the alphabet, because each strophe contains several sections. For instance, in chap. i the division into strophes is as follows: (1) as regards the sense:—

1. *vs.* 1-3. Affliction of Sion.
2. *vs.* 4-6. Its priests, virgins, children, princes.
3. *vs.* 7-11. Triumph of its enemies.
4. *vs.* 12-16. Sion makes an appeal to the compassion of passers-by.
5. *vs.* 17-19. Sion remains unconsolated.
6. *vs.* 20-22. Sion addresses Yahweh.

In *vs.* 1-11 Sion is spoken of; in *vs.* 12-22 Sion is speaking<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Verses 1-11 lament the sufferings which Jerusalem is now undergoing, while twice in the course of this portion (verses 9, 11) the city itself breaks out into a wail of distress, and thus leads up to the second division of the chapter, verses 12-22, where the city itself is the speaker.' A. W. Streane, 'Jeremiah and Lamentations' (*The Cambridge Bible for Schools*) p. 361.

(2) Symmetry of these strophes in the number of metrical verses :—

9, 9, 15, 15, 9, 9.

(3) Symmetry in repeated words :—

לֹא מִצָּאָה . . . רָדַפְתִּי at the end of strophe 1.

לֹא מִצָּאוּ . . . רָדַף at the end of strophe 2.

The expression הִשִּׁיב נַפְשׁ is repeated at the end of the strophes 3, 4, and 5 (vv. 11, 16, 19). In the last strophe notice the *inclusion* לְבִי (sv. 20, 22); and in the third, the *inclusion* רָאָה יְהוָה (sv. 9<sup>b</sup>, 11), if the transposition be admitted.

According to the symmetry, as well as according to the sense, the alphabetical order v. 16 ע, v. 17 פ in chap. i, and v. 16 פ, v. 17 ע in chap. ii seems to be right. In chap. ii (not in chap. i) the concatenation is worth attention :—

sv. 1 and 2	אֲדַנִּי	sv. 12 and 13	} ?
2 and 3	יַעֲקֹב	13 and 14	
3 and 4	כֹּאשׁ	14 and 15	
4 and 5	כֹּארוֹב	15 and 16	עֲלִיךְ . . . שְׂרָקוּ
5 and 6	שָׁחַת	16 and 17	עֲלִיךְ . . . אֹיִב
6 and 7	מוֹעֵד	17 and 18	יּוֹם
7 and 8	חֹמֶת	18 and 19	לַיְלָה
8 and 9	יְהוָה	19 and 20	עוֹלָלִים
9 and 10	אֲרִיץ	20 and 21	הֲרֵג
10 and 11	לְאֲרִיץ	21 and 22	בְּיוֹם אֶף
11 and 12	בְּרַחֲבוֹת, עִמָּךְ, שַׁפֵּךְ		

These remarks, besides confirming the statements made with regard to Isa. xl ff, may perhaps throw some light on the origin of chapters i and ii of the Lamentations.

ALBERT CONDAMIN, S.J.

#### NOTE ON THE WORD עֲבָרָה, GEN. XLIX 7.

How did this word come to mean 'wrath'? The verb עָבַר first means 'to pass over', specially to pass over a river by a ford. Now, passing over a river by a ford, and passing over by a bridge, are very different modes of action. To pass by the bridge is to get across easily. To pass by the ford is often to push one's way strenuously. And it is this latter sense, which, although inherent in the Hebrew stock עָבַר, has been largely lost sight of, chiefly no doubt owing to our Western habit