COVENANT IN DIALOGUE?
THE CASE OF LAMENTATIONS 3

Manfred P. Hedley
King's College London

OTSEM London 2019

PREFACE

This paper reflects the most recent research of my doctoral project, which seeks to examine the extent to which the theme and language of covenant influences or underpins the book of Lamentations, with particular attention to the way voices/personae and dialogue shape the poetry and convey its theological perspectives. The specific focus of this paper is to introduce some key areas for consideration in a so-pointed analysis of chapter 3. With respect to our discussion at OTSEM, I would like to highlight the following areas as focal points for scrutiny and conversation, which broadly follow the main sections of the paper: First, the identification of covenant-related themes and language in Lamentations 3. Second, the delineation of 'voices' in the poem. Finally, this paper will make some introductory comments regarding the dialogical interaction between these voices on the basis of contrasting covenantal perspectives, which may not yield a detailed discussion but could, I hope, set the scene for an informative conversation of the possibilities of what I propose.

I. THEOLOGY AND FORM

The Book of Lamentations presents five poems that cry out in response to the devastation of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 587 BCE.[1] In each case, the poems brim with visceral urgency, reflecting the distress and disorientation experienced by those who had survived the onslaught and now had to survive the ramifications. And yet each poem juxtaposes cries of despair with theological reflection, and utilises controlling poetic devices, which suggest a more ruminative and careful response than has sometimes been recognised. With respect to theology, N. Gottwald is widely credited for reinvigorating a somewhat dormant scholarly conversation about this aspect of the book with his important monograph *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (1954), in which he argued that theological interpretation was not only present, but vital to the message of the book.[2] While most scholars have tended to reject his assessment

[1] It is not within the purview of this paper to discuss the historical circumstances described by the five poems, or the authorial proximity to those circumstances. Suffice it to say for the argument that follows, that alongside scholars including F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp and P. Tull, and based on much the same evidence, I concur that *all five* poems were composed in Jerusalem in the years following the city's fall to Babylon but before the first exiles' return, sometime between 587 and 539 BCE: F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations' in *JANES* 26 (1998), pp. 1-36; P. Tull, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Precious Texts in Second Isaiah* SBLD 161 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), esp. pp. 265-66.

[2] Gottwald summarizes: "the whole burden of [the poet's] message was the indestructability of Jahweh's purposes of love and justice and, in consequence, the seed of hope in a restored Israel." N. K. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (London: SCM Press, 1954), 56.

that Lamentations responds principally to Deuteronomic sin-judgement theology,[3] finding instead that the poems draw on a variety of theological perspectives which overlap and intermingle,[4] and although many would contest the idea that Lamentations has a 'message' as such at all,[5] Gottwald's primary claim, that Lamentations is a *theological* response to the endurance of grief, continues to influence the scholarly pursuit to understand these poems.

An important line of enquiry throughout this pursuit has been the relationship between the book's theology and its form. Generally speaking, the book's most widely discussed literary feature has been the formation of at least four of its poems into acrostics.[6] However, several scholars have sought to find theological significance in the arrangement of the poems themselves. Most commonly, this has been in service of a theodic interpretation in which Lamentations 3 is elevated to be the centrepiece and final word within a symmetric or concentric structure of the entire book.[7] In recent years, however, attention has turned more towards the function of poetic voices and personae, and scholars have increasingly recognised the importance of polyphony and dialogue as literary constructs that enable the poet(s) to view the desperate circumstances being endured from different emotional, prayerful and theological perspectives.[8] For the most part, attention has been given to the task of ascertaining how many voices speak, including where possible the identification – whether literary or historical – of each speaker. More recently, however, scholars have sought to analyse the extent to which these poetic voices interact to create a sense of dialogue: within each poem,[9] across the five

[3] Note Dobbs-Allsopp's assertion that "the poems steadfastly resist all attempts to superimpose on them a single unifying theological perspective." F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Pres, 2002), 24; cf. K. M. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 83.

[4] See, for example, the surveys presented by C. Westermann, I. Provan, and P. House: C. Westermann (trans. C. Muenchow), *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 76-81; I. W. Provan, *Lamentations* NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Marshall Pickering, 1991), 20-25; D. Garret and P. R. House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations* WBC 23b (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 316-29.

[5] Typically, this is viewed in terms of Lamentations not seeking to convey a message so much as to bear witness to multiple responses that vie for prominence in the midst of grief. Note, for example, Linafelt's assertion that "[Lamentations] is more about the *expression* of suffering than the meaning behind it" – something Bergant describes as "the unqualified authenticity of the book's testimony." Similarly, O'Connor speaks of Lamentations' "ragged struggles to bring a testimony": T. Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 4; D. Bergant, *Lamentations* AOTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 139; O'Connor (2002), 4 cf. pp. 14, 110-23, 137.

[6] Here again, this paper will not discuss the function and dynamic effect of the acrostic form in Lamentations 3 or the book as a whole, but it may serve to state that I consider it likely that it should be viewed as a feature that consciously holds the book together as a unity, as well as providing something of an unspoken subplot, conveyed by the intensification and disintegration of the acrostic form throughout the book, implying that any attempt to bring the turmoil, confusion and disarray of the catastrophe into order ultimately breaks down (we might discuss the sporadic use of a 3/2-beat *qinah* meter, or the differing order of פ/ע between chapter 1 and chapters 2-4 in similar terms). K. M. O'Connor has argued similarly that "the alphabetic devices embody struggles of survivors to contain and control the chaos" but that "the shrinking alphabetic forms imply exhaustion, increasing numbness, and the loosening of structures": O'Connor (2002), 12, 14.

[7] See, e.g., B. Johnson, 'Form and Message in Lamentations' in *ZAW* 97.1 (1985), pp. 58-73; Renate Brandscheidt, *Gottesdorn und Menschenleid: die Gerichtsklage des leidenden Gerechten in Klgl. 3. Trierer theologische Studien, Volume 41* (Paulinus-Verlag, 1983), 223, 342-44; J. Renkema, 'The Literary Structure of Lamentations' in W. van der Meer and J. C. de Moor (eds), *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 294-396.

[8] This will be discussed below, but suffice it to say here that while he is not the first to make the observation, W. Lanahan's work on this aspect has proved to be the most influential: W. F. Lanahan, 'The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations' in *JBL* 93.1 (1974), 41-49.

[9] E.g., K. N. 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), 129-69; M. J. Bier, *'Perhaps There Is Hope': Reading Lamentations as a Polyphony of Pain, Penitence, and Protest* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015).

poems of the book,[10] and with other literary-theological traditions.[11] While the first task remains a vital element in the pursuit of the second, it is this latter endeavour that has moved the focus of textual analysis on from an appreciation of the poems' literary complexity, to a more nuanced view of how each poem holds its different perspectives in tension (never allowing one to definitively 'answer' the others).[12]

Among the various theological perspectives that have been identified as influencing the language and movement of the poetry of Lamentations, including (but not limited to) Deuteronomic notions of sin and judgement,[13] Priestly conceptions of ritual and moral impurity,[14] hope,[15] wisdom,[16] concerns for Zion,[17] and the faithful expression of suffering and lament,[18] one theme that rarely draws attention, despite being closely connected to many of the above, is Yahweh's covenant (**ברית**) with his people. In one sense, this is only to be expected, since there are no direct references to a **ברית** in any of the five poems. Indeed, in a brief reflection on the relationship between Lamentations and covenant, R. Salters has noted that of nineteen terms identified by M. Weinfeld as being used in parallel with, or otherwise indicative of, a covenantal relationship in the Hebrew Bible, "Most of these terms are conspicuous by their absence in Lamentations."[19] Consequently, "It would seem … that either the authors of Lamentations, for the most part, studiously avoided the term 'covenant' (and related language), or else they were unaware of it as basic to the relationship between Yahweh and Israel."[20]

His preference appears to be for the second of these options, although he never states as much,[21] and is founded on his belief that Israel's **ברית** with Yahweh was a Deuteronomic

[10] E.g., M. Saebø, 'Who is "The Man" in Lamentations 3? A Fresh Approach to the Interpretation of the Book of Lamentations' in D. J. A. Clines and P. R. Davies (eds), *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson* JSOTSS 152 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 294-306; J. Middlemas, 'Did Second Isaiah Write Lamentations III?' in *VT* 56.4 (2006), 505-25, esp. pp. 515-525.

[11] E.g., Prophetic traditions: E. Boase, *The Fulfilment of Doom? The Dialogic Interaction between the Book of Lamentations and the Pre-exilic/Early-exilic Prophetic Literature* LHBOTS 437 (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2006); C. R. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Psalmic traditions: J. Renkema, *Lamentations* HCOT (Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

[12] Regarding no one perspective 'answering' the others, see, e.g.: O'Connor (2002), 83-84.

[13] In addition to Gottwald, see for example: T. Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 336-38.

[14] A. Berlin, *Lamentations: A Commentary* OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 19-21.

[15] B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979), 594-95; cf. Johnson (1985), 66.

[16] Brandscheidt (1983); J. H. Tigay, 'Lamentations, Book of …' in *Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2nd Edition, Vol. 12* (Farrington Hills, MI: Thompson Gale, 2007), pp. 446-51, 447; cf. Middlemas (2006), pp. 505-25.

[17] Bertil Albrektson was the first to emphasise the importance of this theological perspective to the book as a whole, and since then he has been followed by many others: Bertil Albrektson, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations: With a Critical Edition of the Peshitta Text* STL 21 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1963), 219-30.

[18] E.g., Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* AB7A (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 4; Claus Westermann, *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994 [originally published in German in 1990), 76-85; Tod Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 43-61.

[19] R. B. Salters, 'Yahweh and His People in Lamentations' in A. D. H. Mayes and R. B. Salters (eds), *Covenant as Context: Essays in Honour or E. W. Nicholson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 347-70, 348; cf. M. Weinfeld, '**ברית**' in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Volume II (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 253-79.

[20] Salters (2003), 348.

[21] It is notable, however, that his subsequent ICC commentary makes no mention of covenant as a theological idea in Lamentations, and his only discussion of it comes with a refutation that the term … should be considered a covenantal word at this stage in Israel's history: R. Salters, *Lamentations: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* ICC (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2010), 225-26.

innovation, which may have developed from pre-existing proto-Deuteronomic notions of **ברית** as a juridical term, but only comes to define a bound relationship with Yahweh in the late pre-exilic or even exilic era. Such a view is well-grounded in recent scholarship,[22] but has also been countered by claims that Yahweh's **ברית** did in fact represent a more ancient idea that would have been established by the beginning of the sixth-century and so would have been known by both communities that survived the Babylonian incursion: the remaining Jerusalemites and those exiled to Babylon.[23] Moreover, the presence of themes, concepts and – contrary to Salters' assertion – terminology in Lamentations that are elsewhere closely associated with covenant would seem to support this thesis. Intriguingly, these themes, concepts and terms appear to reside in contrasting covenantal traditions, which draw the poet(s) to cry out against God who has broken his promise to favour them with one breath, only to confess their own broken promise to obey God with another. Moreover, when these themes, concepts and terms are mapped over the voices in each poem, what emerges is a sense of dialogue between differing covenantal perspectives that takes place within each poem and across the entire book.

The present study falls within a wider doctoral project to unpack the extent of this dialogue and its relation to covenantal ideology throughout the book of Lamentations, but the remainder of this paper will specifically focus on Lamentations 3, the poem within this short anthology that most clearly includes both dialogue and language that is elsewhere associated with covenant, to explore the way this literary technique has shaped what has so often been identified as the cornerstone of the whole book. Specifically, this paper will prioritise laying out the foundations of the argument, which are located in the identification of covenantal ideology and multiple poetic voices active throughout the poem, before offering some brief introductory comments about how these come together in dialogic analysis.

II. COVENANT IN LAMENTATIONS 3

Turning first to consider covenantal ideology, we have identified three barriers to being able to assert its influence on Lamentations generally, and chapter 3 in particular: first, doubts about whether such a concept would have been known to the poet; second, its general absence from scholarly discussion of the book's theology; and third, the absence of specific covenantal terminology. As we address each in turn, we will inevitably confront one of the principal difficulties facing any attempt to identify connections with or allusions to other biblical, cultural, or textual traditions; namely, direction of influence. This is a particularly thorny hazard for analyses of covenant traditions, which are beset with difficulties when it comes to dating the texts which display those traditions, and is reflected in the significant disagreements to be found among scholars when it comes to dating specific passages from Deuteronomy, the

[22] Salters cites G. Fohrer on this point, but he is likely to have had the studies published at much the same time by E. Kutsch and L. Perlitt in his mind as well, both of whom argued similarly and, especially in the case of Perlitt, more influentially (although neither have as yet been translated into English, which perhaps explains their omission from his essay): E. Kutsch, *Verheissung und Gesetz: Untersuchungen zum sogenannten "Bund" im Alten Testament* BZAW 131 (Berlin, 1973); L. Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* WMANT 36 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969). Perlitt's influence, in particular, is evidenced by important studies of 'covenant' in the Hebrew Bible that continue to cite and adopt his conclusions many years later, notably including: E. W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 109-88; N. MacDonald (Ed), *Covenant and Election in Exilic and Post-Exilic Judaism: Studies of the Sofja Kovalevskaja Research Group on Early Jewish Monotheism Vol. V* FAT2R 79 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), ix.

[23] See, for example: D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament, Revised Edition* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978).

Deuteronomistic history, Psalms, Genesis, Exodus, and so on.[24] In the face of such difficulties, for the present study, a synchronic approach will be adopted, which highlights points of correspondence between texts associated with covenant. While this may in some cases leave open a discussion about whether Lam 3 has drawn from or has influenced conceptions about covenant, it will suffice to show the way Lam 3 is articulating the same field of ideas, and how those ideas relate to contrasting understandings about the parameters of Judah's relationship with Yahweh.

i. *Knowledge of the concept*: That said, we must begin with a brief discussion about dates, with respect to whether the poet of Lam 3 would have had access to the basic notion of a **ברית** with Yahweh. As noted above, it has been argued that the theological notion of a covenant with Yahweh was a late development that only found its full expression in exilic times, most influentially by L. Perlitt. To be specific, Perlitt argues for the innovation of covenant ideology by the Deuteronomistic historian as a means to explain the downfall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, and still recalling the demise of Israel in 721 BCE.[25] This would certainly fit with the prominence given to covenant as a theme in the *Golah* community's prophetic response to these same events, both to explain the situation (Isa 24:5; Eze 16:59; 17:19; 44:7) and to envisage a way out of it (Isa 42:6; 49:9; 54:10; Jer 31:31-33; 32:40; Eze 16:60-63; 20:37; 34:25; 37:26).[26] It

[24] When, for example, are we to date the covenant curse list in Deuteronomy 28? Within the last ten years, scholars have argued for the Late Bronze Age, comparing the text to Hittite treaty curses (e.g. J. Berman), a seventh-century text that adopts the form of Assyrian treaty texts such as the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon (e.g. H. Steymans), and for a late- or even post-exilic text based on its lack of specific reference points to Assyrian material and focus on establishing Israel's own ethnic identity (e.g. C. Crouch). Moreover, do we treat the curses as being formed from two separate texts (Deut 28:15-46; 47-68) ascribed to Urdt and Dtr (e.g. D. McCarthy), or treat them as one coherent text? (e.g. Quick). Similar problems surround the dating of other Sinaitic covenant texts, especially Ex 19:3b-8; Ex 24:3-8, or those connected to the Davidic covenant (esp. 2 Sam 7; 23; Ps 89), the Abrahamic covenant (esp. Gen 15), or certain prophetic texts (e.g., Hos 6:7; 8:1; Isa 24:5; Jer 31:31-34; Eze 16:59-63). On the Deuteronomic covenant issues, see: J. Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 28-46; cf. J. Berman 'Histories Twice Told: Deuteronomy 1-3 and the Hittite treaty Prologue Tradition' in *JBL 133* (2013), pp. 229-250, esp. 231-32; H. U. Steymans, 'Deuteronomy 28 and Tell Tayinat' *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34.2 (2013), 1-13; C. L. Crouch, *Israel and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014); McCarthy (1978), 12; Laura Quick, *Deuteronomy 28 and the Aramaic Curse Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). On the Davidic covenant, see, for example, O. Sergi's discussion of 2 Sam 7: O. Sergei, 'The Composition of Nathan's Oracle to David (2 Samuel 7:1–17) as a Reflection of Royal Judahite Ideology Author(s)' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129.2 (2010), pp. 261-279; or A. Weiser and E. Gerstenberger's early and late attributions respectively to Ps 89: A. Weiser, The Psalms: A Commentary OTL (London: SCM Press, 1962), 590-91; E. S. Gerstenberger, Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 154-55. On Ex 19 and 24, as well as Hos 6:7 and 8:1, see Nicholson's discussion: Nicholson (1986), 164-88. On Isa 24:5, see Hay's discussion: C. B. Hays, 'That Date and Message of Isaiah 24-27 in Light of Hebrew Diachrony' in J. T. Hibbard and H. C. P. Kim (eds), *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 7-24. On Jer 31:31-34, see W. Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 7-11, 264-71. On Eze 16:59-63 see P. M. Joyce, Ezekiel: A Commentary LHBOTS 482 (London: T & T Clark International, 2007), 134-35 cf. I. M. Duguid, *Ezekiel* NIVAC (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 23-26.

[25] "Geschichte konnte darum in jenem 6. Jh. nur geschreiben werden unter dem theologischen Gesichtspunkt der miβachteten Bedingungen der Heilsgabe. Mögen die endgültig aufgeschreckten Judäer jener Tage sich auf Abraham und David berufen, die dtr Theologen muβten ihnen zuerst mit 'Mose' antworten. Damit war das Problem der 'Bundes'-Theologie vorgezeichnet." My translation: "History could therefore only be written in the sixth century from the theological point of view of the disregarded conditions of salvation. If the disquieted Judeans of those days invoked Abraham and David, the Deuteronomistic theologians had to answer them first with 'Moses'. Thus, the problem of 'covenant' theology was mapped out." Perlitt (1969), 7.

[26] The identification of exilic texts from Isaiah and Jeremiah as Golah productions is, of course, a matter of debate and certainly not conclusive. Suffice to say that the point being made here is to notice the shared emphasis on a new/renewed covenant as constituting Yahweh's vision for Israel's future in passages that have very often been identified as products of the Golah community. See, for example: J. L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah: A New*

would also cause no problems for those who argue that Lamentations 3 represents a much later composition.[27] However, quite apart from D. McCarthy's critique that Perlitt's argument too often fails to distinguish between Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic texts, and that he ignores parallels with treaties that point to **ברית** with Yahweh as an established concept by the seventh-century BCE,[28] Perlitt's own recognition that earlier pre-exilic Deuteronomic texts spoke about **ברית** in the context of Yahweh's promise (e.g., in Deut 7) and his law (e.g. Deut 5), and of his **ברית** with Abraham (in Gen 15),[29] indicates that in fact the Jerusalemite community would have known these traditions and so a later date for Lam 3 is not required to find covenantal undertones to its poetry.[30] Naturally this raises the question of why the Jerusalemite community neglected to use the term **ברית**, but it seems likely that we can discount Salters' speculation that it was simply an unknown concept to them.

ii. *Covenant in Lamentations scholarship*. Although it is certainly true that covenant has not enjoyed a central position in the scholarly discussion about Lamentations' theology, it has not been completely overlooked. With respect to Lamentations 3, P. House, R. Parry and H. Lalleman have each identified covenant as the theological context that sits behind the themes of judgement and hope,[31] whereas a number of commentaries and monographs have observed points of correlation with covenantal themes, most commonly noting allusions to the covenant curse-list in Deut 28 (see *Appendix 3*),[32] links to the Day of Yahweh and his anger (Lam 3:1-6, 12-13, 43),[33] and a close association between the term **חסד** (Lam 3:22, 32) and covenant – a point reinforced by the word studies of N. Glueck and K. Doob Sakenfeld[34] – leading many scholars to translate the word as "covenant loyalty."[35] Significantly for the present study, G.

Translation with Introduction and Commentary AB 20 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1968), xv-xxx ; W. Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 7-11, 264-71.

[27] E.g., O. Kaiser, who dated Lam 3 to the fourth century BCE: O. Kaiser, 'Klagelieder' in H. Ringgren & O. Kaiser, *Das Hohe Lied, Klagelieder, Das Buch Esther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 300-02. Cf. also: M. Treves, 'Conjectures Sur les Dates et les Sujets des Lamentations' in *Bulletin Renan* 95 (1963), pp.1-4; S. T. Lachs, 'The Date of Lamentations V' in The Jewish Quarterly Review 57.1 (1966), pp. 46-56.

[28] McCarthy (1978), 22-24.

[29] Perlitt (1969), 55-102.

[30] This point is further reinforced by E. Nicholson's in-depth evaluation of Perlitt's argument, with which he agrees in most instances except for countering that the traditionally earlier-dated Ex 24:3-8 and Hos 6:7, 8:1 are indeed pre-Deuteronomic in origin: Nicholson (1986), 164-88.

[31] In each case, they view covenant as a central theme to the book as a whole on this basis: House (2004); Parry (2010); H. Lalleman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary* TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013).

[32] See, e.g., Albrektson (1963), 231-37; Hillers (1972), 84; Berlin (2002), 21-22, 86. Again, as with the theme of sin and judgement generally, this particular expression of it can be extended to being evident throughout the book as a whole., although the evidence provided in this paper is only for chapter 3.

[33] Gottwald (1954), 82-89; Bier (2015), 112; cf. Boase (2006), 110, 120.

[34] N. Glueck (trans. by A. Gottschalk), *Ḥesed in the Bible* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1967); K. Doob Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Cambridge, MA: The Harvard Semitic Museum, 1978). Some caution ought perhaps to be exercised on this point, since although Glueck and Sakenfeld have strongly affirmed this link, Salters (citing H-J. Zobel) has countered that the link between חֶסֶד and covenant was a relatively late development and so "it is perhaps reading too much into this passage to assume that the poet was thinking of the covenant." That said, Zobel's point was in fact that חֶסֶד becomes essentially synonymous with ברית in the post-Deuteronomistic era (that is, it expressed the fulness of it), whereas he affirms an association between the two terms from a much earlier time, certainly pre-Deuteronomic and possibly as far back as J: R. B. Salters, *Lamentations: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* ICC (London: T & T Clark International, 2010); Hans-Jürgen Zobel, 'חסד' in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol. V* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 44-64.

[35] E.g., Gottwald (1954), 13, 97-98; Provan (1991), 93; Heath A. Thomas, *Poetry and Theology in the Book of Lamentations: The Aesthetics of an Open Text* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 182-84; cf. Berlin (2002), 93; Bier (2015), 113.

Hens-Piazza views Lam 3:1-24 as highlighting a conflict between covenantal ideas, noting that 3:21-24 shows that "[The strong man's] theology from the past is grounded in covenant images of God" but that "in light of the strong man's experience thus far … the matter of God's covenantal fidelity becomes complicated."[36]

Hens-Piazza's assessment serves not only as an astute read of the text, but also a broad summary of the spectrum of scholarly views, which tend to prioritise one idea over the other. Generally speaking, three perspectives are represented. The first is theodic and views covenant in the Deuteronomic sense of a treaty, but one which has been infused with Yahweh's grace-filled election of Israel, such that sin will be punished according to the ascribed curses but repentance will be met with forgiveness.[37] The second views covenant in a broader relational sense,[38] which in turn allows for a stronger anti-theodic perspective in which the complaint against Yahweh is as much an expression of covenant as the punishment from him. As Dobbs-Allsopp puts it: "complaint is the lifeblood of the biblical notion of covenant: it ensures that the relationship is alive, dynamic, and open."[39] C. Mandolfo calls this "a more democratic covenant tradition" than the hierarchical treaties of the ANE so widely seen as the template for biblical covenants.[40] A. Berlin recognises both of these perspectives on display in Lamentations, but adds an important third strand that adds substance to the second: that of covenant being rooted in Yahweh's promise and thus placing obligations upon him, which permit Judah's outcry against him should he not deliver.[41] Thus, the spectrum of scholarly views on covenant in Lamentations reflects to some extent the different covenant traditions in the Hebrew Bible, which could inspire the Jerusalemite community to understand their plight (because it *should* have happened, due to their disobedience) or to object to it (because it *should not* have happened, due to Yahweh's promise), but in either case to cry out to Yahweh in response to it. In this sense, Berlin's view of covenant in Lamentations is the most faithful to the text.

iii. *Covenant in the text*. Recalling Salters' contention about the absence of covenant terminology, it is important to note that he overstates his case. In fact, *twelve* of the nineteen terms raised by Weinfeld are used either directly or in their root form in Lamentations, five of which are used in Lam 3, including the previously discussed חסד (Lam 3:22, 32), and are used a total of twelve times in the poem (see *Appendix 1*). Contrary to Salters claim, then, *the majority* of these terms are reflected in some form in Lamentations, and Lam 3 contains more citations than the rest of the book combined. This would seem to be a concentration rather than a dearth of covenant-related terms. Moreover, this impression is only heightened when one

---

[36] Gina Hens-Piazza, Lamentations WC30 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017), 8, 12, 30-31, 45.

[37] For example, Parry states: "God's election of Israel was an election of grace based on God's unwavering commitment to them, and that commitment stood firm despite the ongoing infidelity of the people. Crucial to understanding the hope implicit in Lamentations is the appreciation that *the fire of divine punishment falls within a covenant relationship and does not mean the end of that relationship*." Parry (2010), 31; cf. House (2004), 320; Lalleman (2013), 329-30.

[38] Somewhat in line with W. Eichrodt's definition: "Wherever the *relationship with God* has the character of a *relationship of grace*, that is to say, it is founded on *a primal act in history*, maintained on *definite conditions* and protected by a *divine Guardian*, then even where the covenant is not explicitly mentioned the spiritual premisses of a covenant relationship with God are *manifestly present."* Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament, Volume I* (London: SCM Press, 1961 [originally published as *Theologie des Alten Testaments I*, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1933]), 36-37.

[39] Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 38.

[40] Mandolfo (2007), 74 cf. p. 20-21, including n.33.

[41] Thus Berlin can speak of Near Eastern treaties as "the model for the covenant between God and Israel" (p.20), specifying Deuteronomy in this respect, alongside other key covenant texts such as Ex 20-23 and Lev 26, whilst also asserting that Judah's prayerful complaint "points to the continuation of the covenant" (p.18), because "God, by virtue of his covenant with Israel, is obligated to help them" (p.93): Berlin (2002).

expands the field of study to include predicate verbs. Although the verb that is arguably most closely associated with covenant-making (**כרת**) is not used anywhere in Lamentations, others are. Altogether, thirty-nine verbs are directly attached to **ברית** as predicates in the Hebrew Bible, and of these, twenty-five are present in Lamentations, fourteen of which are in Lam 3 totalling twenty-five uses (see *Appendix 2*). Not all can be realistically considered even as potential attempts to convey a subtext – **בוא** (Lam 3:13), **היה** (3:14, 37, 47), and **נתן** (3:29, 30, 65), for example, are simply too common. However, **זכר** (3:19, 20), **עבר** (3:44), **נשא** (3:27, 41), **נבט** (3:63), **צוה** (3:37), **סום** (3:45), **פשע** (3:42), **ראה** (3:1, 36, 50, 59, 60), **שמע** (3:56, 61), and **קום** (3:62) present more compelling possibilities, especially when they are used in direct address to Yahweh, as in Lam 3:19 ("Remember [**זכר**] my affliction") and Lam 3:42 ("We have transgressed [**פשענו**] and rebelled [**מרינו**], you have not pardoned"),[42] or, more evocatively, to describe Yahweh's action against Judah (3:44, 45).

Moving beyond word associations, as we have already noted, scholars have identified themes and concepts in Lam 3 that appear to correspond with other texts and traditions associated with covenant. Probably the most notable of these is God's judgement of sin. Berlin identifies this as central to the book's theology and notes its rootedness in Deuteronomic conceptions of covenant, modelled on ANE treaties.[43] As a theological strand in Lam 3, it permeates the entire poem and is expressed via an array of metaphors and references to other biblical texts. For example, the depiction of God first as a wrathful conquering warrior (Lam 3:3-5),[44] and then a hunter (Lam 3:10-13), who brings his foes into darkness (Lam 3:2, 6 cf Amos 5:18; Zeph 1:14-16),[45] has drawn associations with prophetic proclamations of a Day of Yahweh (itself identified as closely related to covenant curse traditions),[46] when God's judgement will root out and destroy all evil.[47] A similar sense is often detected in the reference to "the rod of his wrath" (Lam 3:1b), which closely resembles the imagery from Isa 10:5, in which Yahweh declares Assyria to be "rod of my anger" in his judgement of Israel (cf. Prov 22:8).[48] Perhaps the most pervasive link to a biblical tradition of judgement, however, is the connection that has been identified with covenant curses, such as those listed in Deut 28.[49] The lexical and thematic links that can be detected are extensive (see *Appendix 3*)[50] and appear at every stage of the text.

---

[42] Note also that Yahweh's action is described with another verb [סלחת] that is frequently denoted as a response, either positive or negative, to breaches of covenant (Deut 29:20; Ps 25:11; 103:3; Isa 55:7; Jer 5:7; 31:34; 33:8). For examples of direct address to God using covenant predicate verbs elsewhere in Lamentations, see: "Look, Yahweh, and *consider* [**נָבֵט**]" (Lam 1:11; 2:20). "*Remember* [**זְכָר**], Yahweh, what has befallen us; *consider* [**נָבֵט**], and see our disgrace!" (Lam 5:1). "Why do you *forget* [**שָׁכַח**] us forever; why do you *forsake* [**עָזַב**] us for so many days?" (Lam 5:20). "Unless you have *rejected* [**מָאַס**] us?" (Lam 5:22).

[43] Berlin (2002), 21-22.

[44] J. Renkema argues that this specifically depicts Yahweh as "a charioteer careering from side to side in hot pursuit of a prisoner." J. Renkema (trans. by B. Doyle), Lamentations HCOT (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 354-57, quote: p.355; cf. Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 110.

[45] Cf. Provan (1991), 85; Parry (2010), 97; House (2004), 409.

[46] F. C. Fensham, 'A Possible Origin of the Day of the Lord' in *Biblical Essays: Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting of die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Sud-Afrika* (Bepeck: Potchefstroom Herald, 1966), 93-95; E. Boase, *The Fulfilment of Doom? The Dialogic Interaction Between the Book of Lamentations and the Pre-Exilic/Early Exilic Prophetic Literature* LHBOTS 437 (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2006), 110, 120.

[47] E.g., Bier (2015), 112. See analyses of the themes and language associated with the Day of Yahweh summarised by N. Gottwald and E. Boase: Gottwald (1954), 82-89; E. Boase, *The Fulfilment of Doom? The Dialogic Interaction Between the Book of Lamentations and the Pre-Exilic/Early Exilic Prophetic Literature* LHBOTS 437 (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2006), 105-13.

[48] Cf. Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 110; Berlin (2002), 89; Parry (2010, 97).

[49] Albrektson (1963), 231-37; Hillers (1972), 84; Berlin (2002), 21-22, 86.

[50] Note that although this paper reflects on correspondence with Deut 28, similar comparisons can be undertaken to other curse lists, including Deut 4:25-28, Lev 26:14-46, Jos 24:19-20, which is not necessarily to suggest that the author of Lam 3 is cross-referencing to any of these in particular, so much as drawing on a known tradition of

These references are used to describe God's action against the strongman,[51] the strongman's plight,[52] the community's outcry,[53] and the strongman's appeal for vengeance,[54] but are also used ironically to suggest that God *is saving* the strongman by discipling him.[55] Such a close connection to a covenant curse tradition does indeed suggest a close affinity between the poem and covenant treaties, rooted in a view of covenant informed by Deuteronomic ideology.

However, this is far from the only theological persuasion in the poem, and a close analysis of the text reveals themes that may relate to other conceptions of covenant with Yahweh. Notably, although there is an obvious comparison to make between Lam 3:1b ("the rod of his wrath") and Isa 10:5 ("Assyria, the rod of my anger"), this is not the only link forged by scholars. D. Hillers, notes four possible interpretations, prioritising the significance of "rod" (**שבט**) over "wrath" (**עברה**).[56] He, too, recognises the correlation with God's judgement, but he emphasises links to 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 89:33 [ET 89:32], two texts closely associated with the Davidic covenant. His inclination to find the link closer to the Davidic rather than Deuteronomic covenant may be informed by the remaining three interpretations, which relate to parenthood (cf. Prov 22:15), kingship (cf. Ps 45:6; 125:3), and shepherding (cf. Ps 23:4; Eze 20:37). Each of these are foundational concepts for the Davidic covenant, in which David the shepherd king (2 Sam 7:8) and his house are declared sons of Yahweh (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26) and shepherds of the flock Israel (Ps 74:1). As such, Hillers posits Lam 3:1-9 as a reversal of Ps 23 in which "the Lord is a shepherd who misleads, a ruler who oppresses and imprisons."[57]

With this in mind, it is notable that the strongman's introduction (**אני הגבר**, Lam 3:1) echoes ANE royal self-presentations – something that M. Saebø has identified as a key link to Davidic covenant and Zion traditions.[58] We ought also to observe the use of **עולם**, which is a vital aspect of the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:13, 16, 24, 25, 26, 29; 2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:1[ET:89:2], 2[3], 4[5], 28[29], 36[37], 37[38], 52[53]) and used evocatively in Lam 3 to compare God's rejection to everlasting death (Lam 3:6), and to express hope that it will not last forever (Lam 3:31). Finally, reflecting on the significance of **חסד** at the culmination of the strongman's speech, Dobbs-Allsopp has argued that the construct phrase **חסדי יהוה** in Lam 3:22 alludes to Ps 89, where the identical construct phrase is used (**חסדי יהוה עולם אשירה**; Ps 89:2 [ET: 89:1]), and thus to indicate an allusion to the Davidic covenant.[59]

---

covenant curses. Cf. Quick (2018) and N. Weeks, *Admonition and Curse: The Ancient Near Eastern Treaty/Covenant Form as a Problem in Inter-cultural Relationships* (London: T & T Clar, 2014).

[51] E.g., he has driven him into darkness (Lam 3:2 cf. Deut 28:29, 36-37).

[52] E.g., he has perished (Lam 3:18 cf. Deut 28:20)

[53] E.g., dread has come upon them (Lam 3:47 cf. Deut 28:66-67)

[54] E.g., "Destroy them!" (Lam 3:66 cf. Deut 28:20, 24, 45, 48, 51, 61, 63)

[55] Such as in conveyed the wisdom of turning one's cheek to the one who strikes it (Lam 3:30 cf. Deut 28:22, 27, 28, 35) or to putting one's mouth to the dust (Lam 3:29 cf. Deut 28:24)

[56] D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* AB7A (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 124-25.

[57] Ibid., 124; cf. Parry (2010), 97. Bier and Berlin unpack this further and draw the correlation out as far as v.11 and v.13 respectively: Bier (2015), 110; Berlin (2002), 86.

[58] Saebø (1993), 302. This has led to various attempts to identify the poem's first speaker with a historical royal figure. See, for example, Saebø's argument for the strongman to be Zedekiah (Saebø, 1993), or N. Porteous' proposal of Jehoiachin: N. W. Porteous, 'Jerusalem – Zion: The Growth of a Symbol' in *Verbannung und Heimkehr: Festschrift für W. Rudolph* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), pp. 235-52, 244-45. Regarding the royal self-presentation formula, note the examples cited by Dobbs-Allsopp in his discussion of this: "I am Azitiwada, the blessed one of Baal, a servant of Bal, whom Awarku, king of the Danunians, made powerful" and "I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu'ath. A humble man am I!" Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 108.

[59] Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 108, 118-19; cf. Berlin (2002), 93. Some caution ought perhaps to be exercised on this point, since although K. Doob Sakenfeld has strongly affirmed this link in her extensive study of חֶסֶד, identifying it as a distinctly covenantal word, being both relational and concerned with responsibility, Salters (citing H-J. Zobel) has countered that the link between חֶסֶד and covenant was a relatively late development and so "it is perhaps

In the absence of direct terminology (**ברית**, **כרת**, or **קום** in its *hiphil* form),[60] the evidence for covenantal allusions will always be subjective. This should perhaps not be surprising for any interpretation of poetry, with its partiality for metaphor and allusion – something R. Alter has called "a way of imagining the world through inventive similitude."[61] In other words, just because something is not said, does not mean it is not meant. Nevertheless, it seems clear from the foregoing discussion that the poet of Lam 3 is working within the same field of ideas that are aligned elsewhere to covenant and does so by calling on many instances of the same lexical and cultural vocabulary.

III. THE VOICES OF LAMENTATIONS 3

Moving now to consider how these covenantal perspectives interact in Lamentations 3, we must begin with an assessment of the voices that speak. The presence of multiple voices in Lamentations is well attested,[62] and owes much of its current prominence to W. Lanahan. He identified five personae (a reporter and personified Jerusalem in Lam 1-2, a defeated soldier in Lam 3, a bourgeois in Lam 4, and a choral voice in Lam 5) which, he argued, speak to the same situation from different perspectives, in order to "deepen and broaden the reader's grasp of the dynamics of the spiritual experience embodied by the book."[63] Lanahan's major contribution was not the novelty of his argument. As far back as 1906, M. Löhr had identified personified Zion as a separate poetic voice.[64] Nor was it the quality of his textual analysis, which lacked

reading too much into this passage to assume that the poet was thinking of the covenant." That said, Zobel's point was in fact that חֶסֶד becomes essentially synonymous with ברית in the post-Deuteronomistic era (that is, it expressed the fulness of it), whereas he affirms an association between the two terms from a much earlier time, certainly pre-Deuteronomic and possibly as far back as J: K. Doob Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Cambridge, MA: The Harvard Semitic Museum, 1978); R. B. Salters, *Lamentations: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* ICC (London: T & T Clark International, 2010); Hans-Jürgen Zobel, 'חסד' in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol. V* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 44-64.

[60] The choice to use קום in order to describe adversaries as "the lips of those who rise, and their whispering, is against me" (שפתי קמי והגיונם עלי כל־היום) in Lam 3:62, rather than the more familiar terms צר and איב which are elsewhere employed in the book (Lam 1:2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17; 2:3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 17, 22; 3:46, 52; 4:12), may possibly be suggestive, but the use of this phrase elsewhere in the context of appealing to Yahweh for his intervention shows that a covenantal setting is not necessary for this employment of the term. Cf. Ex 15:7; Deut 33:11; Ps 18:40, 49 [ET 18:39, 48]

[61] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (Philadelphia, PA: Basic Books, 1985), 237.

[62] The publication in the last twenty years of several commentaries, articles, and monographs that give specific attention to this aspect as a vital literary feature of the book is testimony to its growing appeal as a line of scholarly enquiry. For commentaries, see for example: Provan (1991), 6-7; Berlin (2002), 6-7; O'Connor (2002), 14-15, 83-85; Bergant (2003), 15-16; R. A. Parry, *Lamentations* THOTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 11-12. For articles/chapters, see for example: Heim (1999), 129-69; C. W. Miller, 'Reading Voices: Personification, Dialogism, and the Reader of Lamentations 1' in *Biblical Interpretation* 9.4 (2001), pp. 393-408. For monographs, see for example: H. A. Thomas, *Poetry and Theology in the Book of Lamentations: The Aesthetics of an Open Text* HBM 47 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 90-93; K. L. Nguyen, *Chorus in the Dark: The Voices of the Book of Lamentations* HBM 54 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013); Bier (2015).

[63] Lanahan (1974), 41.

[64] M. Löhr, *Die Klagelieder des Jeremias: Übersetzt und Erklärt* (Göttingen: Vendenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1906), 1, 9, 15, 23, 28. This concept was then adopted and expanded upon some years later by H. Wiesmann, whose posthumously-published commentary laid out his argument for Jeremiah, as the sole author of the book, to have incorporated five other poetic voices in addition to his own into his words. Both O. Eissfeldt and D. Hillers had similarly noted the presence of multiple voices: H. Wiesmann, *Die Klagelieder, übersetzt und erklärt* (Frankfurt: Philosophisch-theologische Hochschule Sankt George, 1954), 132, 167, 209, 241-2, 271; O. Eissfeldt (trans. P. R. Ackroyd), *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 500-03; Hillers, (1972), 79, 103, 120-24, 145, 162.

detail and left the impression that his mode of 'voice-detection' had been an intuitive, and therefore highly subjective, process. Rather, it was Lanahan's recognition of the poet's decision to withdraw his own voice altogether in favour of a myriad of others, each expressing one of the poet's own emotional or theological responses to the calamitous situation in which he found himself. Thus, Lanahan asserts: "the variety of voices sketches the topography of a unique spiritual consciousness, which can realize itself only by projecting its grief in its constituent phases by adopting different personae."[65] In other words, the poet is not to be limited to any one of his poetic voices. He is none of them, and he is all of them.

Most of the studies that have followed Lanahan's lead have contested his claims about the number and identity of voices that may be detected, with alternative proposals ranging between two and nine.[66] However, when it comes to his assessment of Lamentations 3, there has been widespread support for his identification of only one.[67] This voice identifies himself in the opening line – "I am the man (**הגבר**) who has seen affliction" (Lam 3:1a) – and is to be understood, according to Lanahan, as a defeated soldier, based on the setting of the book generally as well as references to imprisonment (3:7), ambush (3:10-12), and injury (3:13).[68] Dobbs-Allsopp counters that such language represents the conventional rhetoric of individual laments, and so cannot tell us too much with regards to identifying **הגבר**; nevertheless, he agrees that only one voice speaks throughout the poem.[69] This seems somewhat at odds with his identification of two voices in the first and second poems based on shifts in grammatical person,[70] given that similar shifts occur in Lam 3, not least with a significant shift from first-person singular to first-person plural speech in vv.40-47. This leads many scholars to identify at least two speakers active in the poem – **הגבר** and the community – either on the basis that the community responds to **הגבר**,[71] or that they join in with his call to repentance and second lament.[72] Dobbs-Allsopp's emphasis on such shifts as literary devices to affect the reading experience by drawing the reader from a place of detachment to inclusion is something that he feels has been achieved by a sense of increasing openness in **הגבר**'s speech, from first-person personal suffering (Lam 3:1-21), to third-person general human experience (Lam 3:22-39), to first-person plural shared personal experience (Lam 3:40-47), and thus a second speaker is unnecessary as **הגבר** switches to hortatory plural speech to speak as one among a larger group.[73]

However, this argument underestimates the points of dissonance between speech units. If the measure of grammatical person is taken to delineate the basic units of the poem as speech, then four basic units emerge: 1) Lam 3:1-12, characterised in the main by first-person singular speech. This does include a short passage of third-person speech (vv.22-23) and, I suggest, a line of second-person speech directed towards Yahweh (Lam 3:19),[74] but it is clearly framed

---

[65] Ibid., 42.

[66] Two voices; Lee (2002), 11; three voices: Provan (1991), 7; four voices: Bergant (2003), 15-16; O'Connor (2002), 17, 30, 44-45, 58, 70; five voices: Berlin (2002), 6-7; G. Hens-Piazza, *Lamentations: Wisdom Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017), xlvii; up to nine voices: Parry (2010), 12.

[67] E.g., Berlin (2002), 7, 84-85; House (2004), 405; Salters (2010), 186; J. M. Bracke, *Jeremiah 30-52 and Lamentations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 221.

[68] Lanahan (1974), 45.

[69] Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 105-09.

[70] Ibid., 49-53, 78-79, 103-04.

[71] E.g., Hillers (1972), 123-24; S. P. Re'emi, 'Lamentations' in R. Martin-Achard and S. P. Re'emi, *God's People in Crisis: A Commentary on the Books of Amos and Lamentations* ITC (Grand Rapids, MI: The Handsel Press Ltd, 1984), pp. 73-134, 112; Heim (1999), 160-61; O'Connor (2002), 44-45.

[72] E.g., Provan (1991), 6-7, 101; Parry (2010), 115-18.

[73] Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 106-07. Cf. Bergant (2003), 16, 81-82; Hens-Piazza (2017), xlvii, 40-41, 52.

[74] Opinion is divided among scholars as to whether זכר־עניי ומרודי in Lam 3:19 should be understood as an imperative, directed to Yahweh ("Remember my affliction and my restlessness!"), or an infinitive construct directed inwardly ("To remember my affliction and restlessness is …"). P. House has pressed this complexity

within this first-person speech; 2) Lam 3:25-39, characterised by third-person speech; 3) Lam 3:40-47, characterised by first-person plural speech; and 4) Lam 3:48-66, characterised once more by first-person singular speech. When these units are held apart from one another, points of discontinuity present themselves. It seems unlikely that the one who proclaims the goodness of sitting alone in silence (Lam 3:28) could have made the vociferous outcry of vv.1-18. Indeed, the reference to **הגבר** in Lam 3:27 as the third-person referent for sitting in silence only seems to reinforce this distinction (note also **גבר** in 3:39). Similarly, the entreaty that just punishment for sin cannot draw complaint (Lam 3:39) appears utterly opposed to the diatribe against Yahweh that fills Lam 3:43-45. Then, in Lam 3:48, 51, there seems to be an explicit distinction made between the speaker and his people/city; and the individual testimony of Lam 3:52ff., which speaks of "my enemies" (3:52), seems at odds with the communal lament at the defeat to "our enemies" (3:46). These discontinuities are best explained, I believe, by the dynamic created by different voices confronting and entering into dialogue with one another.

M. Bier has argued for just such a dialogue in an important study of polyphony in Lamentations.[75] She, too, contends there is only one voice active in the chapter (although she agrees that identification of multiple voices is "perfectly reasonable," she counters that it is "not necessary"),[76] but that the poem nevertheless contains several interactions as it follows **הגבר**'s own *internal* dialogue, which she delineates along many of the same lines as the units denoted above. She does, however, argue for two further divisions beyond the lines of grammatical person. First, within the communal lament unit (Lam 3:40-47) between verses 41 and 42, on the basis that while the hortatory plural distinguishes Lam 3:40-41 from 3:39, it agrees more with 3:39 than it does with 3:43. And second, within the individual lament unit (Lam 3:48-66) between verses 54 and 55, on the basis of the switch in emphasis from the community's woes to his own.[77]

---

further to note difficulties in translating v.20 that follows, which could also be translated as second-person speech if תזכור and תשיח are read as second-person rather than third-person feminine verbs (to refer to the נפש), and if BHS's *tiqqune sopherim* notation is followed to render נפשי as נפשיך. As such, he translates Lam 3:19-20: "Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and the bitterness. You will indeed remember, and your soul will meditate about me." House (2004), 400, 403. My own view is that House's translation creates a problem more than it solves one, since it adds a note of disjuncture between v.19 and v.20, which then become a request borne from desperation followed by a command borne from confidence. Were there a case to be made for a separate voice interjecting here, this might work, but the continuation of first-person speech without interruption, added to the fact that this comes at the end of a unit of speech rather than interrupting in the middle (as per Lam 1:9c, for example), points to v.20 as a mournful moment of honesty, following his brave appeal to Yahweh. Thus, I follow A. Berlin to find second-person speech in v.19, returning to first-person speech in v.20. Cf. Berlin (2002), 82-83.

[75] Bier (2015), 105-41. Her argument for chapter 3 resonates somewhat with C. Westermann's view of the book as a whole. In his discussion of the possibility of poetic voices, he objected that explaining the differences of perspective in terms of distinct voices "yields no intelligible sense," arguing instead that the poet is both a citizen of Zion and her representative, and as such inhabits both identities without the need of a distinct second voice. In other words, he recognises interchange within the poem as a form of internal dialogue. Nevertheless, contrary to Westermann, Bier does find multiple voices interacting in the other poems, and while Westermann is right to emphasise that the poet sits behind the identities conveyed in the poetry, he fails to appreciate the extent to which these identities contrast and confront one another. Cf. Westermann (1994), 139-40.

[76] Bier (2015), 107.

[77] Bier's reading of this final section follows Provan's argument for the perfect verbs in Lam 3:55ff. to be considered precative perfects, such that the speaker is not remembering a past salvation but turning once again to Yahweh to plead for redemption: Ibid., 131-32 cf. I. W. Provan, 'Past, Present and Future in Lamentations 3:52-66: The Case for a Precative Perfect Re-examined' in VT 41 (1991), pp.164-75. There is not space to discuss this matter in detail in this paper but suffice it to say for now that my natural inclination is to follow Provan and Bier on this point. However, I want to allow for the possibility that the poet in fact intends this to be left as an open question, a feature of the poem's ambiguity, so that the poem's dialogue ends on a note of uncertainty and depends on the readers themselves to engage with the dialogue and decide its conclusion.

The first division she proposes is consonant with the Heim's recognition that 3:40-41 continues the didactic tone of the previous unit,[78] which itself owes a debt to Westermann's analysis that these verses belong with the parenetic section and accordingly use verbs (נחפשה ונחקרה ...) that are closely associated with the same wisdom tradition that appears to guide that section.[79] Such a division is supported widely by other scholars, and is to be commended;[80] the only question is whether it should be considered part of that speech (as per Westermann) or, as has often been concluded, the faithful response of the community. It is important at this juncture to note that grammatical person is not the only, and not necessarily even the primary, indicator of an unmarked voice. Other considerations, including tone, perspective (theological, emotional, political, social, etc), vocabulary, addressee, genre, and its interaction with surrounding statements are also key determiners.[81] Based on this criteria, I see four reasons to align Lam 3:40-41 with the preceding speech. In the first instance, as Westermann has noted, its vocabulary identifies it as engaging with the same Wisdom genre; second, following this observation, there is also a shared theological perspective that views the present situation as the result of God's just judgement of sinfulness; third, there is a dramatic shift in mood at Lam 3:42, which seems to reject the very theology that has just been affirmed, and even to respond to the call to lift hearts and hands to Yahweh by turning to him and, instead of repenting, placing the blame resolutely at his feet; finally, there is a chiastic unity to the parenetic unit if it extends to v.41, which may be depicted as follows:

A (3:25): Commends seeking Yahweh

B (3:26): Commends reflection

C (3:27-30): Commends accepting discipline (specifies **הגבר** 3 verses from the start)

D (3:31): Adonai will not (**כי לא**) reject forever

E (3:32): Adonai will turn from grievance to **חסד**.

D^2 (3:33): Adonai does not (**כי לא**) grieve

C^2 (3:37-39): Affirms accepting discipline (specifies **גבר** 3 verses from the end)

B^2 (3:40): Invites reflection

A^2 (3:41): Invites seeking Yahweh

This works only on the basis that Lam 3:34-36 is removed, but it is significant that a number of scholars have detected an interruption of some kind in these verses, which correspond to the **ל** stanza. The difficulties facing translators of this stanza are well noted, especially with regard to v.36b (**אדני לא ראה**), but there is a growing recognition that it should be translated as an indicative statement ("Adonai does not see"), and that it therefore concludes a stanza that raises questions over the goodness of God.[82] Indeed, this is a reading for which Bier herself allows.[83] Salters views this as **הגבר**'s comparison of the exalted statements of vv.31-33 "which belong to his upbringing" with his present experience, "to juxtapose that high view of Yahweh with

[78] Heim (1999), 160.

[79] Cf. Prov 2:4; 20:27; Job 5:27; 28:3, 27; Ps 139:1, 23; Sir 13:11; 42:18): Westermann (1994), 179 cf. Brandscheidt (1983), 213, 222-23.

[80] E.g., Hillers (1972), 123-24, 131; O'Connor (2002), 52-53; Dobbs-Allsopp (2002), 123.

[81] For the substance of this argument, see the paper I presented at OTSEM 2018: M. P. Hedley, 'The Dialogue of Sorrow, Blame and Protest in Lamentations 1' (Conference paper presented at OTSEM, Oslo, 8th Sept 2018).

[82] E.g., Renkema (1998), 415-18; Bracke (2000), 221; O'Connor (2002), 50-52.

[83] Bier (2015), 120.

an observation that the same Yahweh pays no attention to severe cruelty in the world."[84] Whereas, Provan speculates that this may represent a separate voice altogether, which "constitute[s] an objection, spoken by a second voice, to the narrator's message of hope in the preceding verses [with] vv.37-39 representing the narrator's response to this objection."[85] Provan's thesis on this point is advanced on the basis that there are only two other voices in the poem (the narrator from chs.1 and 2, and the community), but if the parenetic speech is identified as its own voice, as Bier herself delineates within the strongman's internal dialogue,[86] then there is no need to find a new voice – this interruption is made by the strongman, whose first speech concluded at v.24.

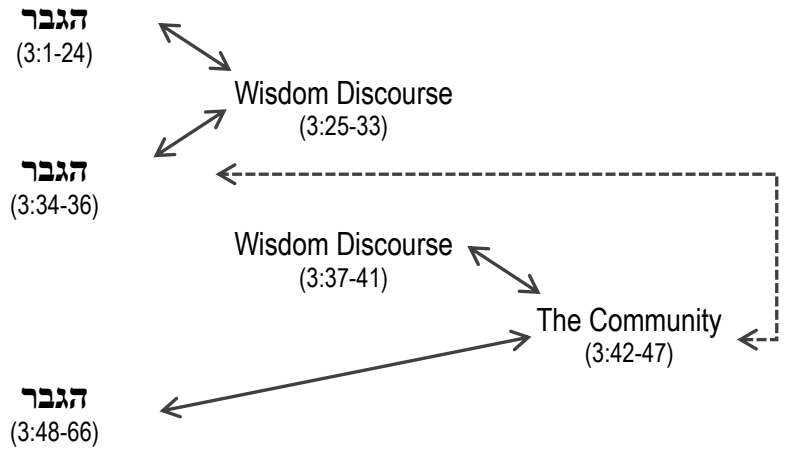
The second of Bier's divisions (between verses 54 and 55) is, however, unwarranted, since it fails to appreciate the way that the first-person singular voice follows the same pattern as the first-person plural outcry of (i) bewailing Yahweh's harsh treatment (Lam 3:43-45 cf. 3:48-51) before (ii) locating that treatment in the conduct of enemies (Lam 3:46-47 cf. Lam 3:52-54). It is only having drawn the community's lament into his own that the first-person singular speaker then turns to Yahweh to appeal for his intervention. As such, vv.48-66 represents a continuous speech from one voice, and given the resumption of the first-person singular, and the similar tone it projects to vv.1-18, there is no reason to doubt that it is **הגבר** who resumes his speech and concludes the poem.[87]

IV. COVENANT IN DIALOGUE?

This brings us to a final assessment of the voices that may be detected in Lam 3, and some brief comments about their interaction with respect to covenant. Bier's dismissal of multiple voices as "unnecessary," on the basis that the poem follows an internal dialogue, astutely retains Lanahan's insight that the poet's voice sits behind all of the utterances in the poem. However, given that she recognises that this dialogue proceeds via the division of the text into utterances that contend with one another in dialogue, it raises the question of what is gained by denying the role of poetic voices to bring this dialogue to life. Indeed, the poem includes several instances where voices and speech are directly indicated or chastised (Lam 3:18, 24, 26, 54-57, 61-63), making speech a pivotal theme throughout the poem.

In such a setting, the movement between first-person singular, third-person, and first-person plural, naturally implies different voices, so that what emerges from the poem as a whole is an array of voices, which speak aloud, or are imagined (the voices of Yahweh and the enemies), and which interact to enable the poet to give a voice to the different perspectives that are vying for his attention amid the chaos of grief. The danger of conflating them into one voice and equating that one voice with the poet's own voice, is that it flattens the dynamics of the text, dampens the dissonance between the utterances, and inevitably prioritises the voice of **הגבר** over the others. The irony of this for Bier's study, is that her dialogic approach draws its methodology from the considerable insights of M. Bakhtin, who one feels would have resisted such a conflation. What emerges, then, is a poem formed around a dialogue of three principal speakers: **הגבר**, Wisdom Discourse (WD), and the community.

[84] Salters (2010), 240-42.
[85] Provan (1991), 81.
[86] Bier (2015), 116-26.
[87] Contra Hillers (1972), 124, 131.



Among the many qualities of Bier's study is her attention to M. Bakhtin's work on the dialogism of ideas.[88] In this, she participates in a growing interest within biblical scholarship for reading biblical texts in the light of Bakhtin's insights. Initially, this interest emerged in analysis of prose and novella literature, in accord with Bakhtin's own focus on dialogue and discourse as a feature of prose,[89] most notably leading to valuable new studies of the literary unity and dynamism of the book of Job by C. Newsom and T. Stordalen.[90] Since then, however, these insights have been tested for their applicability to poetry, and specifically with reference to the dialogic qualities of the book of Lamentations. E. Boase and C. Mandolfo have both evaluated Lamentations' relationship to Israel's theological traditions on the basis of Bakhtinian thought,[91] whereas P. Tull had already done the same with respect to Lamentations influence on Isa 40-55.[92] C. Miller brought Bakhtinian insights into his analysis of dialogue in Lam 1,[93] and Bier has pressed this endeavour further in her analysis of the whole book. There is not space in this paper to reflect in depth on the implications of all of the foregoing scholarship, and particularly the insights of Bakhtin himself, on the material here presented. However, it will serve to make two initial general observations to give an insight into the potential for analysing how the different covenantal perspectives identified in Lam 3 interact once they are 'mapped' onto the voices that can be detected as active in the poem.

First, Bakhtin emphasised the propensity for all speech to participate in dialogue, not only with other speakers, but with the world within which they speak. Such a discourse, he states, "cannot fail to be oriented toward the 'already uttered', the 'already known' and 'common opinion' and so forth."[94] In other words, every utterance carries meaning, or may take on

[88] Bier (2015), 32-37.
[89] E.g., M. Bakhtin, (trans. by C. Emerson), *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 181-269. Hereafter, references to this text will be footnoted as *PDP*.
[90] C. A. Newsom, 'Bakhton, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth' in *The Journal of Religion* 76.2 (1996), pp.290-306; C. A. Newsom, 'The Book of Job as Polyphonic Text' in *JSOT* 97 (2002), pp. 87-108; T. Stordalen, 'Dialogue and Dialogism in the Book of Job' in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 20.1 (2006), pp. 18-37; T. Stordalen, 'Dialogism, Monologism, and Cultural Literacy: Classical Hebrew Literature and Readers' Epistemic Paradigms' in *The Bible and Critical Theory* 10.1 (2014), pp. 2-20.
[91] For their summary introductions to this theme, see: Boase (2006), 23-34; Mandolfo (2007), 1-28.
[92] For her summary introduction, see: P. Tull (1997), 1-9.
[93] Miller (2001).
[94] M. M. Bakhtin (trans. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), 279. Hereafter, references to this text will be footnoted as *Four Essays*.

meaning, according to the perspective of the one who spoke it, and the one who hears it, and the one who replies to it, and the setting within which it was articulated, and according to the manner in which it was stated, and whether it utilised or alluded to cultural, traditional or generic ideas or forms.[95] In Lam 3, this obliges the reader to listen beyond the words to find their meaning. For example, on its own Lam 3:28 is an abstract statement commending the wisdom of silence and contemplation; but set in reply to **הגבר**'s visceral outcry (Lam 3:1-18) it becomes a criticism (note WD's response to the **הגבר**'s suffering: "It is good for **הגבר** to bear the yoke in his youth" Lam 3:27),[96] weighted with the authority of authoritative speech,[97] which is in turn rejected by **הגבר**, first when he interrupts to question the truth of WD's words (Lam 3:34-36), and then in his next statement, "My eyes will flow … [hardly silent!] … "without ceasing" (Lam 3:48-49). This not only indicates a point of sharp confrontation within the text, but it reveals that there are two models for responding to the devastation being endured that are commended in the poem. Indeed, if WD had been given the last word, then it would stand as a correction, but **הגבר**'s interjection, followed by WD's counter argument, opens a dialogue between them (something we might expect from Wisdom literature) about the proper response to suffering, without either triumphing over the other. It may seem, as the poem proceeds, that the argument has been won by **הגבר**, since WD is silenced and the community cries out in much the same tone to **הגבר**'s opening lament, but then **הגבר**'s final utterance looks to Yahweh and seeks his compassion in the anticipation that his **חסד** has not run dry, which seems to follow WD's guidance after all (cf. Lam 3:25, 32). In the end, there is no 'winner'; rather, each hears and is informed by the other.

Second, and linked to the previous observation, Bakhtin emphasised the independence of each voice in a dialogue,[98] not only from the other voices with whom they interact, but also from the ideas that live within them,[99] and even from the author, who "elevates the social heteroglossia surrounding objects … [and] creates artistically calculated nuances on all the fundamental voices and tones of this heteroglossia."[100] Each voice speaks from an "I" perspective that is set against the "other,"[101] and dialogue assumes its meaning, as we have already seen in the previous example, only when the movement between every "I" and "other" is taken into account. Thus, when the covenantal ideas identified above are 'mapped' onto the voices of Lam 3, what emerges is that each "I" holds a distinct but overlapping theological vocabulary. **הגבר**'s speech, for example, includes striking allusions both to Deuteronomic and Davidic covenant perspectives, as does the community speech, whereas WD appears only to draw on the Deuteronomic.

---

[95] Ibid., 262-63; *PDP*, 182-83.

[96] It is notable, too, that הגבר's speech tends to use a different root for 'hope' (יחל) that WD's speech (קוה). The only inconsistency comes in WD's first call for הגבר for stop talking: "It is good to hope in silence for Yahweh's salvation" (Lam 3:26). This further distinguishes the two voices, as it reveals a pointed reply from one to another.

[97] This aspect of Bakhtin's dialogic theory (see *Four Essays*, 342-46), which asserts that speakers are in dialogue with *internal persuasive discourse* (based in expectations, experience, hopes, doubts, etc) and *authoritative discourse* (based in authority figures, traditions, laws, cultural norms, etc – in this case, the absence of internal dialogue within WD's speech reflects the rational "outside" voice of an authoritative speaker, reminding הגבר of the tenets of faithfulness to Yahweh) will be a key focus for the research that expands on this paper, but there is not space to discuss it here. The same applies to the distinction between monologic truth and dialogic truth (*PDP*, 93), which also is a key factor for interpreting WD's speech, since WD is introduced as a speaker of monologic truth, but his speech is transformed into dialogic truth by הגבר's interruption.

[98] E.g., Ibid., 6-7, 18, 81.

[99] Bakhtin's understanding of the independence of a living idea guides the focus of M. Bier's argument, and is certainly central to the present study, with different conceptions of covenant operating as living ideas in the text. Cf. e.g., *PDP*, 88.

[100] *Four Essays*, 278-79.

[101] *Four Essays*, 278-79.

A monologic evaluation (that is, assessing the *poet's* theological context), might view this as evidence that Deuteronomic ideas dominate, whilst other covenantal traditions may creep in but are not sufficiently frequent to define the text. Whereas, a dialogic analysis exposes the distinctive interlacing of Deuteronomic and Davidic imagery and phraseology in **הגבר**'s speech, which not only sets it apart from WD's speech, but also gives his words a subversive punch. Yahweh has "driven into darkness" (Lam 3:2 cf. Deut 28:28-29, 37), and **הגבר** is suffering hunger (Lam 3:4 cf. Deut 28:48) and ridicule (Lam 3:14 cf. Deut 28:37), and he has become food for the beasts (Lam 3:10-11 cf. Deut 28:26), all as the Deuteronomic covenant had warned. But Yahweh has done it to one who introduces himself with kingly language (**אני הגבר**), as one whom Yahweh had promised to establish forever (**עד־עולם**, 2 Sam 7:13), but who now faced eternal death (**מתי עולם**, Lam 3:6), and Yahweh has done it as a shepherd, who instead of leading his people to safety (Pss 23:1-3; 28:9) and rest from enemies (2 Sam 7:11), has brought **הגבר** to destruction (cf. Lev 26:44) and tears "without rest" (Lam 3:48-49). The force of this inner dialogue between covenantal traditions is to subvert the Deuteronomic references so that they become an indictment. There is also subversion at work in WD's response, which makes several allusions to covenant curses, but flips their meaning to depict them as blessings. His reply to the indictment of vv.1-18 is tinged with irony: these afflictions actually prove that God is saving them, if only they would respond faithfully.

These brief comments leave much to be discussed, but they serve to demonstrate the importance of recognising the multiple voices at work in Lam 3, and the potential for a careful study of the theological perspectives held by each and the dialogical interaction between them, for a more nuanced appreciation for the complexity, ambiguity and artistry that drives this poem. M. Bier attributes this to the internal dialogue of one voice, and in one sense she is correct, since the poem in its entirety certainly does reflect the poet's own internal dialogue, as he struggles with his complex and conflicted response to the suffering he endures. But the poem cannot be reduced to the sequential, or even sporadic, thoughts of one voice, since there is neither a sequential nor a sporadic movement between his utterances. Rather, each voice has its own identity – sometimes named, sometimes not – and together they engage in a back and forth dialogue, in which each speaks from his/their own distinct theological perspective, as they struggle to articulate and find the proper response to their grief. In the end, there is no definite answer, but then the goal was never to 'answer' the suffering, only to find the words to express it to Yahweh. Nor was it to resolve the theological conflict facing the Jerusalemite community, as happened in the assurances of a new or renewed covenant in *Golah* literature (e.g., Jer 31:31-34; Eze 16:59-63).[102] Instead, the polyphonic poetry of Lam 3, indeed of Lamentations as a whole, enables the poet(s) to legitimize each response with its own voice and space to speak, not to solve the puzzle, but perhaps in the hope of bringing some order to the chaotic physical, emotional and spiritual crisis that is confronted.

[102] See, e.g., J. Goldingay, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Exploring Text, Approaches and Issues* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 235. For a discussion of "new covenant" in Ezekiel, see: M. H. Woudstra, 'The Everlasting Covenant in Ezekiel 16:59-63' in *Calvin Theological Journal* 6.1 (1971), pp. 22-48, esp. 30-31.

APPENDIX 1

'COVENANT' PARALLEL NOUNS IN LAMENTATIONS

The following is a list of the nouns identified by M. Weinfeld as operating as parallel terms for **ברית** in the Hebrew Bible, and their usage in Lamentations. This list is referenced from M. Weinfeld, '**ברית**' in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Volume II (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 253-79). Verse references from Lamentations 3 are given in bold.

א	E.G.	MEANING	USE IN LAMENTATIONS
חזה	Isa 28:15	Pact (also: seer/vision)	Root (חזה): 2:14
חזות	Isa 28:18	Agreement	Root (חזה) – see above
דבר	Ps 105:8	Word	X
עצה	Isa 30:1	Plan	X
סוד	Ps 25:14	Secret/friendship (also: council)	X
תורה	Hos 8:1	Law	2:9
אמנה	Neh 9:38 [ET]	Agreement	Root (אמן): 4:5, 12
פקודים	Ps 103:18	Precept	Root (פקד): 4:22
חק	Ps 50:16	Statute	X
אמרה	Dt 33:9	Word/utterance	2:17
עדות	Num 7:89	Testimony	X
מצוה	Lev 27:34	Commandment	Root (צוה): 1:10, 17; 2:17; **3:37**
משפט	Lev 26:46	Judgement/justice	**3:35, 59; and root (שפט): 3:59**
אמונה	Ps 89:25	Faithfulness	**3:23**; and root (אמן) – see above
אמת	Mic 7:20	Truth	Root (אמן) – see above
חסד	Dt 7:9	Steadfast love	**3:22, 32**
טובה	2 Sam 2:6	Goodness	Root (טוב): **3:17, 25, 26, 27, 38**; 4:1, 9
שלום	Jos 9:15	Peace	**3:17**
אחוה	Zec 11:14	Brotherhood	X

APPENDIX 2

'COVENANT' PREDICATE VERBS IN LAMENTATIONS

The following is a list of verbs that are attached to **ברית** as predicates throughout the Hebrew Bible, and their usage in Lamentations. Verse references from Lamentations 3 are given in bold.

א	E.G.	MEANING	USE IN LAMENTATIONS
אמן	Ps 78:37	Be faithful to	4:5, 12
בגד	Hos 6:7	Deal treacherously with	1:2
בוא	1 Sa 20:8	Come/bring	1:4, 10, 21, 22; **3:13**; 4:12, 18; 5:4, 9
גבר	Dan 9:27	Prevail	1:16
געל	Lev 26:15	Abhor	X
היה	1 Kgs 15:19	Be/continue/become	1:1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 17, 21; 2:5; **3:14**, **37**, **47**; 4:8, 10; 5:1, 3
זכר	Ex 2:24	Remember	1:7, 9; 2:1; **3:19**, **20**; 5:1
חזק	Isa 56:4	Hold fast	X
חלל	Ps 55:20	Profane	2:2
ידע	Ps 25:14	Know/make known	X
כפר	Isa 28:18	Cover/cancel	X
כרת	Gn 15:18	Cut/make	X
מאס	2 Kgs 17:15	Reject	5:22
מוט	Isa 54:10	Shaken/removed	X
מרה	Dt 9:23	Rebel	1:18, 20; **3:42**
נאץ	Jer 14:21	Spurn	2:6
נאר	Ps 89:39	Renounce	2:7
נבט	Ps 74:20	Regard/consider	1:11, 12; 2:20; **3:63**; 4:16; 5:1
נגד	Dt 4:13	Declare	X
נשא	Dt 10:8	Lift up/bear/carry	2:19; **3:27**, **41**; 4:16; 5:13
נתן	Gn 9:12	Give	1:11, 13, 14; 2:7, 18; **3:29**, **30**, **65**; 5:6
סום	2 Sam 23:5	Appoint	**3:45**
עבר	Dt 17:2	Transgress/pass by	1:12; 2:15; **3:44**; 4:21
עזב	Dt 29:25	Forsake	5:20
עמד	2 Kgs 23:3	Stand/confirm	X
עשה	Ex 31:16	Do/observe	1:21; 2:17
פרר	Dt 31:20	Break	X
פשע	Hos 8:1	Transgress	**3:42**
צוה	Dt 4:13	Command	1:10, 17; 2:17; **3:37**
קום	Dt 8:18	Establish/raise/confirm	1:14; 2:19; **3:62**
ראה	Jos 3:3	See	1:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 20; 2:16, 20; **3:1**, **36**, **50**, **59**, **60**; 5:1
רשע	Dan 11:32	Act wickedly	X
שבע	Dt 7:12	Swear	X
שחת	Mal 2:8	Corrupt/destroy	2:5, 6, 8
שכח	Dt 4:23	Forget	2:6; 5:20
שמע	Jer 11:2	Hear/obey	1:18, 21; **3:56**, **61**
שמר	Gn 17:9	Keep	X
שקר	Ps 44:17	Deal falsely	X

APPENDIX 3
COVENANT CURSES (DEUT 28) IN LAMENTATIONS

The following is a list of the curses in Deut 28:15-68, with lexical and thematic correspondences to Lamentations noted. Verse references from Lamentations 3 are given in bold.

THEME	DEUT 28	LAM 3	NOTES
Yahweh will curse	28:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 45	3:38(?), 3:65	Albrektson speculates that 3:38 may refer to the full curse list of Deut 28 (*Studies* …, 234). Lam 3:65 uses תאלה whereas Deut 28 uses קללה (28:15, 45) and ארר (28:16, 17, 18, 19). In Lam 3:65 the speaker calls for enemies to be cursed.
Yahweh will destroy	28:20, 24, 45, 48, 51, 61, 63	3:47-48, 66	3:47-48 uses a different term (שבר) to Deut 28 (שמד), whereas Lam 3:66 uses the same term. In 3:47-48, Judah has been destroyed, in 3:66, the poet appeals to Yahweh to destroy his assailants.
Israel will perish	28:20	3:18	In Lam 3, the גבר's strength has perished.
Yahweh will consume	28:21	3:22	In Lam 3, this image is flipped to proclaim that Yahweh's mercies are never consumed
Yahweh will strike	28:22, 27, 28, 35	3:30	In Lam 3, this image is flipped to convey the wisdom of turning one's cheek to the one who strikes.
Israel will be afflicted with a wasting disease	28:22	3:4	These terms are not lexically related but convey the same image.
The heavens shall become bronze	28:23	3:7, 44(?)	In Lam 3:7, נחשת refers to the גבר's chains. There is a possible double-meaning in Deut 28:23, which depicts the sky searing in the sun's heat and also becoming solid and impenetrable. In this second sense, it may correspond to Lam 3:8 and 44's lament that prayer cannot penetrate the cloud of Yahweh's presence, despite the call to lift hearts and hands to heaven (3:41). This in turn inspires tears that will not relent until Yahweh looks down from heaven (3:50).
Rain will become dust.	28:24	3:29	In Lam 3, this is flipped to convey the wisdom of putting one's mouth to the dust.
Israel will be defeated by enemies.	28:25	3:46, 52	The connection is in the term איב rather than נגף, but it is clearly a poetic depiction of defeat.
Israel's corpse will be food for the birds and beasts.	28:26	3:10-11	Lam 3 does not use the same words, but the imagery of Yahweh as a bear and a lion is very similar.
Yahweh will cause blindness.	28:28	3:2(?), 6(?)	M. Saebø has argued that the "darkness" in Lam 3:2, 6 refers to blindness, in keeping with his identification of הגבר as Zedekiah ('Who is the man …?', 303). Berlin also notes the connection, but not based on identifying הגבר (*Lamentations*, 86)
Israel will grope as the blind do in darkness.	28:29	3:2, 6	Note the above comments, which may indicate a closer connection in this instance. But note that the words for 'darkness' are different: אפלה in Deut 28:29, חשך in Lam 3:2, and מחשכים in Lam 3:6.
Israel will build (בנה) a house but not live (ישב) in it.	28:30	3:5-6	Yahweh has "built against me"(בנה עלי) and "made me live (הושיבני) in dark places."
Israel's eyes will fail from longing for those in exile (v32) and from lack of rest (v65).	28:32, 65	3:48-49, 51	In Lam 3, eyes run with tears and do not fail, but the imagery and the cause are the same, with the added link in 3:49 that there will be no respite, although the word used (הפגה) is different than in Deut 28:65 (רגע and מנוח).
Israel will be physically abused.	28:33	3:4, 11-13	Berlin raises this as a thematic link, although it should be noted there is no shared vocabulary.
Israel will be driven mad by "the sight your eyes will see."	28:34	3:1	Berlin speculates that the phrase מראה עיניך in Deut 28 is deliberately echoed by ראה עני In Lam 3.

"Yahweh will make you go (יולך) … to where Yahweh drive you (ינהגך)."	28:36-37	3:2	"He has driven me (נהג) and made me go (וילך) …"
Israel will become a horror and a taunt.	28:37	3:14, 45	Albrektson notes this thematic connection but concedes there is no lexical link (*Studies* …, 233).
Israel did not serve Yahweh with a good heart, because abundance was taken for granted.	28:47	3:25, 26, 27, 32	In Lam 3, this is flipped to convey the wisdom that it is good to endure the present afflictions, and to wait for the abundance of his חסד.
Israel will hunger and thirst.	28:48	3:4a	The connection here may be inferred from the poetic imagery, but בלה could also apply to the general sense of physical degradation (that 3:4b describes) or the depiction of imprisonment that follows (3:5-7).
Yahweh will put a yoke on Israel's neck.	28:48	3:27	In Lam 3, this is flipped to convey the wisdom of wearing the yoke.
Yahweh will give Israel a languishing soul.	28:65	3:17, 20 cf. 3:24-25, 58	Although Lam 3 does not speak of the soul "languishing" (as it does in Jer 31:12, 25), a soul without peace (3:17), bowed down (3:20), and in pain (3:51) evokes the same idea. In Lam 3:24-25, 58 this image is flipped to depict a soul that hopes and seeks Yahweh, and whose cause has been taken up by him.
Israel's life will hang in doubt.	28:66	3:58	In Lam 3, this is flipped to affirm that the speaker's life has been redeemed.
Israel will be in dread day and night.	28:66, 67	3:3, 14, 47	Several instances of suffering are described in Lam 3 as lasting כל־היום, "all day long" (3:3, 14, 62) Lam 3:47 speaks of the same dread (פחד) as Deut 28.
Dread will make Israel wish away every morning.	28:67	3:23	In Lam 3, this is flipped to declare God's mercies to be new every morning.