

Lamentations

The Prophet Speaks:

ס (Alef)¹

1:1² Alas!³ The city once full of people⁴

¹ **sn** Chapters 1-4 are arranged in alphabetic-acrostic structures; the acrostic pattern does not appear in chapter 5. Each of the 22 verses in chapters 1, 2 and 4 begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, while the acrostic appears in triplicate in the 66 verses in chapter 3. The acrostic pattern does not appear in chapter 5, but its influence is felt in that it has 22 verses, the same as the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. For further study on Hebrew acrostics, see W. M. Soll, "Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics," *Bib* 69 (1988): 305-23; D. N. Freedman, "Acrostic Poems in the Hebrew Bible: Alphabetic and Otherwise," *CBQ* 48 (1986): 408-31; B. Johnson, "Form and Message in Lamentations," *ZAW* 97 (1985): 58-73; K. C. Hanson, "Alphabetic Acrostics: A Form Critical Study," Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1984; S. Bergler, "Threni V – Nur ein alphabetisierendes Lied? Versuch einer Deutung," *VT* 27 (1977): 304-22; E. M. Schramm, "Poetic Patterning in Biblical Hebrew," *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George S. Cameron*, 175-78; D. N. Freedman, "Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry," *HTR* 65 (1972): 367-92; N. K. Gottwald, "The Acrostic Form," *Studies in the Book of Lamentations*, 23-32; P. A. Munch, "Die alphabetische Akrostichie in der jüdischen Psalmendichtung," *ZDMG* 90 (1936): 703-10; M. Löhr, "Alphabetische und alphabetisierende Lieder im AT," *ZAW* 25 (1905): 173-98.

² **tc** The LXX and Vulgate (dependent on the LXX) include a preface that is lacking in the MT: "And it came to pass after Israel had been taken captive and Jerusalem had been laid waste, Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented this lament over Jerusalem, and said...." Scholars generally view the preface in the LXX and Vulgate as a later addition, though the style is Hebrew rather than Greek.

³ **tn** The adverb אִיכָה (*ekhhah*) is used as an exclamation of lament or desperation: "How!" (BDB 32 s.v.) or "Alas!" (*HALOT* 40 s.v. 1.e). It is often the first word in laments (Isa 1:21; Jer 48:17; Lam 1:1; 2:1; 4:1, 2). Like the less emphatic exclamation אֵיךְ (*ekh*, "Alas!") (2 Sam 1:19; Isa 14:4, 12; Ezek 26:17), it is used in contexts of lament and mourning.

sn The term אִיכָה (*ekhhah*, "Alas!") and counterpart אֵיךְ (*ekh*, "Alas!") are normally uttered in contexts of mourning as exclamations of lament over a deceased person (2 Sam 1:19; Isa 14:4, 12). The prophets borrow this term from its normal *Sitz im Leben* in the funeral lament and rhetorically place it in the context of announcements or descriptions of God's judgment (Isa 1:21; Jer 48:17; Ezek 26:17; Lam 1:1; 2:1; 4:1, 2). This creates a personification of the city/nation which is either in danger of imminent "death" or already has "died" as a result of the Lord's judgment.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "great of people." The construct רַבְתֵּי אֲמַ (*rabbati 'am*, "great of people") is an idiom for large population: "full of people, populous" (BDB 912-13 s.v. רב; *HALOT* 1172 s.v. 7.a). The *hireq-campagin* ending on רַבְתֵּי (*rabbati*), from the adjective רַב (*rav*, "great"), is a remnant of the old genitive-construct case (GKC 253 §90.l). By contrast to the first half of the line, it is understood that she was full of people formerly. רַבְתֵּי אֲמַ (*rabbati 'am*) may also be construed as a title.

sn Two thirds of Lamentations is comprised of enjambed lines rather than Hebrew poetry's more frequent couplets of parallel phrasing. This serves a rhetorical effect not necessarily apparent if translated in the word order of English prose. Together with the alphabetic acrostic form, these pull the reader/hearer along through the various juxtaposed pictures of horror and grief. For further study on the import of these stylistic features to the function of Lamentations see

now sits all alone!⁵
The prominent⁶ lady among the nations
has become a widow!⁷
The princess⁸ who once ruled the provinces⁹
has become¹⁰ a forced laborer!¹¹

F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* (IBC), 12-20; idem, "The Enjambling Line in Lamentations: A Taxonomy (Part 1)," *ZAW* 113/2 (2001): 219-39; idem, "The Effects of Enjambment in Lamentations," *ZAW* 113/5 (2001): 1-16. However, for the sake of English style and clarity, the translation does not necessarily reflect the Hebrew style and word order.

⁵ **tn** The noun בָּדַד (*badad*, "isolation, alone") functions as adverbial accusative of state. After verbs of dwelling, it pictures someone sitting apart, which may be linked to dwelling securely, especially of a city or people (Num 23:9; Deut 33:28; Jer 49:31; Ps 4:8 [HT 9]), or to isolation (Lev 13:46; Jer 15:17; 49:31). Applied to personified Jerusalem, it contrasts a possible connotation of dwelling securely, instead stating that Lady Jerusalem is abandoned and connoting that the city is deserted.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "great." The adjective רַב (*rav*, "great") is used in reference to a position of prominence, leadership (Ps 48:3; Dan 11:3, 5) or strength (Isa 53:12; 63:1; 2 Chr 14:10) (BDB 913 s.v. 2.b; *HALOT* 1172 s.v. 6). The *hireq-campagin* ending on רַבְתֵּי (*rabbati*) from the adjective רַב (*rav*, "great") is a remnant of the old genitive-construct case (GKC 253 §90.l). This adjective is the same word mentioned at the beginning of the verse in the phrase "full of people." These may also be construed as epithets.

⁷ **tn** The *kaf* (כ) prefixed to אִלְמָנָה (*almanah*, "widow") expresses identity ("has become a widow") rather than comparison ("has become like a widow") (see *HALOT* 453 s.v. 1; BDB 454 s.v. כ. 1.d). The construction emphasizes the class of widowhood.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* the noun שָׂרָתִי (*sarati*, "princess") is in construct with the following noun. The *hireq-campagin* ending on שָׂרָתִי (*sarati*) is a remnant of the old genitive-construct case (GKC 253 §90.l).

sn Judah was organized into administrative districts or provinces under the rule of provincial governors (*sarim*) (1 Kgs 20:14, 17, 19). The feminine term שָׂרָה (*sarah*, "princess, provincial governess") is a wordplay alluding to this political background: personified Jerusalem had ruled over the Judean provinces.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "princess among the provinces." The noun מְדִינָה (*mēdinah*) is an Aramaic loanword which refers to an administrative district or province in the empire (e.g., Ezek 19:8; Dan 8:2) (BDB 193 s.v. 2; *HALOT* 549 s.v.).

¹⁰ **tn** Following the verb הָיָה (*hayah*, "to be"), the preposition לְ (*lamed*) designates a transition into a new state or condition: "to become" (BDB 512 s.v. ל. 4.a; e.g., Gen 2:7; 1 Sam 9:16; 15:1).

¹¹ **tn** The noun מַס (*mas*) means "forced labor, corvée slave, conscripted worker." It refers to a subjugated population, subject to forced labor and/or heavy taxes (Gen 49:15; Exod 1:11; Deut 20:11; Josh 16:10; 17:13; Judg 1:28, 30, 33, 35; 1 Kgs 5:28 HT [5:14 ET]; 9:15, 21; 12:18; 2 Chr 10:18; Isa 31:8; Lam 1:1).

כ (Bet)

1:2 She weeps bitterly at night;
tears stream down her cheeks.¹
She has no one to comfort her
among all her lovers.²
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.

ג (Gimel)

1:3 Judah³ has departed into exile
under⁴ affliction and harsh oppression.⁵
She⁶ lives among the nations;
she has found no resting place.
All who pursued her overtook her
in⁷ narrow straits.⁸

¹ **tn** *Heb* “her tears are on her cheek.”

² **tn** *Heb* “lovers.” The term “lovers” is a figurative expression (hypocatastasis), comparing Jerusalem’s false gods and foreign political alliances to sexually immoral lovers. Hosea uses similar imagery (Hos 2:5, 7, 10, 13). It may also function as a double entendre, first evoking a disconcerting picture of a funeral where the widow has no loved ones present to comfort her. God also does not appear to be present to comfort Jerusalem and will later be called her enemy. The imagery in Lamentations frequently capitalizes on changing the reader’s expectations midstream.

³ **tn** *Heb* “Judah.” The term “Judah” is a synecdoche of nation (= Judah) for the inhabitants of the nation (= people).

⁴ **tn** There is a debate over the function of the preposition בן (*min*): (1) temporal sense: “after” (*HALOT* 598 s.v. 2.c; BDB 581 s.v. 4.b) (e.g., Gen 4:3; 38:24; Josh 23:1; Judg 11:4; 14:8; Isa 24:22; Ezek 38:8; Hos 6:2) is adopted by one translation: “After affliction and harsh labor, Judah has gone into exile” (NIV). (2) causal sense: “because” (*HALOT* 598 s.v. 6; BDB 580 s.v. 2.f) (e.g., Isa 5:13) is adopted by many English versions: “Judah has gone into exile because of misery and harsh oppression/servitude” (cf. KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, NJPS). (3) instrumentality: “by, through” (BDB 579 s.v. 2.e): “Judah has gone into exile under affliction, and under harsh servitude” (NASB). The issue here is whether this verse states that Judah went into exile after suffering a long period of trouble and toil, or that Judah went into exile because of the misery and affliction that the populace suffered under the hands of the Babylonians. For fuller treatment of this difficult syntactical problem, see D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (AB), 6-7.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “great servitude.” The noun עֲבֹדָה (*avodah*, “servitude”) refers to the enforced labor and suffering inflicted upon conquered peoples who are subjugated into slavery (Exod 1:14; 2:23; 5:9, 11; 6:9; Deut 26:6; 1 Kgs 12:4; 1 Chr 26:30; 2 Chr 10:4; 12:8; Isa 14:3; Lam 1:3).

⁶ **tn** The antecedent of “she” is “Judah,” which functions as a synecdoche of nation (= Judah) for the inhabitants of the nation (= people). Thus, “she” (= Judah) is tantamount to “they” (= former inhabitants of Judah).

⁷ **tn** The preposition בין (*bin*) is used in reference to a location: “between” (BDB 107 s.v. 1). The phrase בֵּין הַמְצָרִים (*bin hammetsarim*, “between the narrow places”) is unparalleled elsewhere in the Hebrew scriptures; however, this line is paraphrased in “The Thanksgiving Psalm” from Qumran (Hodayoth = 1QH v 29) which adds the phrase “so I could not get away.” Following the interpretation of this line at Qumran, it describes a futile attempt to flee from the enemies in narrow straits which thwarted a successful escape.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “distresses.” The noun מְצָרִים (*metsarim*, “distress”) occurs only here and in Ps 118:5 (NIV, “anguish”). Here, the plural form (*metsarim*, lit., “distresses”) is an example of the plural of intensity: “intense distress.” The phrase בֵּין הַמְצָרִים (*bin hammetsarim*, “between the narrow places”) is unparalleled elsewhere in the Hebrew scriptures; however, this line is paraphrased in “The Thanksgiving Psalm” from Qumran (Hodayoth = 1QH v 29) which adds the phrase “so I could not get away.” Following the interpretation of this line at Qumran, it describes a futile attempt to flee from the enemies in nar-

ד (Dalet)

1:4 The roads to Zion⁹ mourn¹⁰
because no one¹¹ travels to the festivals.¹²
All her city gates¹³ are deserted;¹⁴
her priests groan.¹⁵
Her virgins grieve,¹⁶
she is in bitter anguish!¹⁷

row straits which thwarted a successful escape.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “roads of Zion.” The noun צִיּוֹן (*tsiyon*, Zion) is a genitive of direction (termination) following the construct noun, meaning “roads to Zion.”

sn The noun דַּרְכֵי (*darkhe*, “roads”) is normally masculine in gender, but here it is feminine (e.g., Exod 18:20) (BDB 202 s.v.) as indicated by the following feminine adjective אֲבֵלוֹת (*avelot*, “mourning”). This rare feminine usage is probably due to the personification of Jerusalem as a bereaved woman throughout chap. 1.

¹⁰ **tn** The adjective אֲבֵלוֹת (*avelot*, “mourning”) functions as a predicate of state.

sn The term אָבֵל (*aval*, “mourn”) refers to the mourning rites for the dead or to those mourning the deceased (Gen 37:35; Job 29:25; Ps 35:14; Jer 16:7; Esth 6:12; Sir 7:34; 48:24). The prophets often use it figuratively to personify Jerusalem as a mourner, lamenting her deceased and exiled citizens (Isa 57:18; 61:2, 3) (BDB 5 s.v.; *HALOT* 7 s.v.).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “for lack of.” The construction כִּבְּלֵי (*mibbalei*) is composed of the preposition בן (*min*) functioning in a causal sense (BDB 580 s.v. בן 2.f) and the adverb of negation בְּלִי (*balei*) to denote the negative cause: “from want of” or “without” (*HALOT* 133 s.v. בְּלִי 4; BDB 115 s.v. בְּלִי 2.c) (Num 14:16; Deut 9:28; 28:5; Eccl 3:11; Isa 5:13; Jer 2:15; 9:11; Hos 4:6; Ezek 34:5).

¹² **tn** *Heb* “those coming of feast.” The construct chain בָּאֵי מוֹעֵד (*ba'e mo'ed*) consists of (1) the substantival plural construct participle בָּאֵי (*ba'e*, “those who come”) and (2) the collective singular genitive of purpose מוֹעֵד (*mo'ed*, “for the feasts”).

¹³ **tc** The MT reads שַׁעְרֵיהָ (*she'areha*, “her gates”). The BHS editors suggest revocalizing the text to the participle שְׁוֹרְיָהָ (*sho'areha*, “her gate-keepers”) from שְׁוֹרֵר (*sho'er*, “porter”; BDB 1045 s.v. שְׁוֹרֵר). The revocalization creates tight parallelism: “her gate-keepers”//“her priests,” but ruins the chiasm: (A) her gate-keepers, (B) her priests, (B') her virgins, (A') the city itself.

¹⁴ **tn** The verb שָׁבַם (*shamem*) normally means “to be desolated; to be appalled,” but when used in reference to land, it means “deserted” (Isa 49:8; Ezek 33:28; 35:12, 15; 36:4) (BDB 1030 s.v. 1).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “groan” or “sigh.” The verb אָנַח (*anakh*) is an expression of grief (Prov 29:2; Isa 24:7; Lam 1:4, 8; Ezek 9:4; 21:11). BDB 58 s.v. 1 suggests that it means “sigh” but *HALOT* 70-71 s.v. prefers “groan” here.

¹⁶ **tc** The MT reads נִוְגָה (*nugot*, “are grieved”). Niphal participle feminine plural from נָגַח (*vagah*, “to grieve”). The LXX ἀγομαι (*agomai*) reflects נְוֹגָה (*nahugot*, “are led away”), Qal passive participle feminine plural from נָגַח (*nahag*, “to lead away into exile”), also reflected in Aquila and Symmachus. The MT reading is an unusual form (see translator’s note below) and best explains the origin of the LXX which is a more common root. It would be difficult to explain the origin of the MT reading if the LXX reflects the original. Therefore, the MT is probably the original reading.

tn *Heb* “are grieved” or “are worried.” The unusual form נִוְגָה (*nugot*) is probably best explained as Niphal feminine plural participle (with dissimilated nun [ן]) נָגַח (*vagah*, “to grieve”). The similarly formed Niphal participle masculine plural construct נִוְגֵי (*nuge*) appears in Zeph 3:18 (GKC 421 §130. a). The Niphal of נָגַח (*vagah*, “to grieve”) appears only twice, both in contexts of sorrow: “to grieve, sorrow” (Lam 1:4; Zeph 3:18).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “and she is bitter to herself,” that is, “sick inside” (2 Kgs 4:27)

ה (He)

1:5 Her foes subjugated her;¹
her enemies are at ease.²
For the LORD afflicted her
because of her many acts of rebellion.³
Her children went away
captive⁴ before the enemy.

ו (Vav)

1:6 All of Daughter Zion's⁵ splendor⁶
has departed.⁷
Her leaders became like deer;
they found no pasture,
so they were too exhausted to escape⁸
from the hunter.⁹

ז (Zayin)

1:7 Jerusalem¹⁰ remembers,¹¹

when¹² she became a poor homeless per-
son,¹³
all her treasures
that she owned in days of old.¹⁴
When her people fell into an enemy's
grip,¹⁵
none of her allies came to her rescue.¹⁶
Her enemies¹⁷ gloated over¹⁸ her;

¹ **tn** Heb "her foes became [her] head" (היו צריה לראש, *hayu tsareha l'ro'sh*) or more idiomatically "have come out on top." This is a Semitic idiom for domination or subjugation, with "head" as a metaphor for leader.

² **tn** The nuance expressed in the LXX is that her enemies prosper (cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV, NLT).

³ **tn** Heb "because of her many rebellions." The plural פְּשָׁעֶיהָ (*p'sha'e'ha*, "her rebellions") is an example of the plural of repeated action or characteristic behavior (see *IBHS* 12.1 §7.4.2c). The 3rd person feminine singular suffix ("her") probably functions as a subjective genitive: "her rebellions" = "she has rebelled."

⁴ **tn** The singular noun שְׁבִי (*sh'vi*) is a collective singular, meaning "captives, prisoners." It functions as an adverbial accusative of state: "[they] went away as captives."

⁵ **tn** Heb "the daughter of Zion." This phrase is used as an epithet for the city. "Daughter" may seem extraneous in English but consciously joins the various epithets and metaphors of Jerusalem as a woman, a device used to evoke sympathy from the reader.

⁶ **tn** Heb "all her splendor." The 3rd person feminine singular pronominal suffix ("her") functions as a subjective genitive: "everything in which she gloried." The noun הֲדָר (*hadar*, "splendor") is used of personal and impersonal referents in whom Israel gloried: Ephraim (Deut 33:17), Jerusalem (Isa 5:14), Carmel (Isa 35:2). The context focuses on the exile of Zion's children (1:5c) and leaders (1:6bc). The departure of the children and leaders of Jerusalem going away into exile suggested to the writer the departure of the glory of Israel.

⁷ **tn** Heb "It has gone out from the daughter of Zion, all her splendor."

⁸ **tn** Heb "they fled with no strength" (וַיִּלְכוּ בְּלֹא־כֹחַ, *vayelku b'lo'-khoa'kh*).

⁹ **tn** Heb "the pursuer" or "chaser." The term צַדִּיק ("to chase, pursue") here refers to a hunter (e.g., 1 Sam 26:20). It is used figuratively (hypocatastasis) of military enemies who "hunt down" those who flee for their lives (e.g., Gen 14:15; Lev 26:7, 36; Judg 4:22; Ps 76; 69:27; 83:16; 143:3; Isa 17:13; Lam 5:5; Amos 1:11).

¹⁰ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹¹ **sn** As elsewhere in chap. 1, Jerusalem is personified as remembering the catastrophic days of 587 b.c. when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and exiled its inhabitants. Like one of its dispossessed inhabitants, Jerusalem is pictured as becoming impoverished and homeless.

¹² **tn** Heb "the days of her poverty and her homelessness," or "the days of her affliction and wandering." The plural construct יָמֵי (*y'me*, "days of") functions in the general sense "the time of" or "when," envisioning the time period in which this occurred. The principal question is whether the phrase is a direct object or an adverb. If a direct object, she remembers either the season when the process happened or she remembers, i.e. reflects on, her current season of life. An adverbial sense, "during" or "throughout" normally occurs with כָּל (*kol*, "all") in the phrase "all the days of..." but may also occur without כָּל (*kol*) in poetry as in Job 10:20. The adverbial sense would be translated "during her poor homeless days." Treating "days" adverbially makes better sense with line 7b, whereas treating "days" as a direct object makes better sense with line 7c.

¹³ **tn** Heb "The 3rd person feminine singular suffixes on the terms עֲנִיָּה וְיָדוּעָה (*onyah um'rudeha*, "her poverty and her homelessness," or "the days of her affliction and wandering") function as subjective genitives: "she became impoverished and homeless." The plural noun וְיָדוּעָה (*um'rudeha*, lit. "her homelessneses") is an example of the plural of intensity. The two nouns עֲנִיָּה וְיָדוּעָה (*onyah um'rudeha*, lit. "her poverty and her homelessness") form a nominal hendiadys in which one noun functions adjectivally and the other retains its full nominal sense: "her impoverished homelessness" or "homeless poor" (GKC 397-98 §124.e). The nearly identical phrase עֲנִיִּים מְדוּדִים (*aniyyim m'dudim*, "homeless poor") is used in Isa 58:7 (see GKC 226 §83.c), suggesting this was a Hebrew idiom. Jerusalem is personified as one of its inhabitants who became impoverished and homeless when the city was destroyed.

¹⁴ **tc** The BHS editors suggest that the second bicola in 1:7 is a late addition and should be deleted. Apart from the four sets of bicola here in 1:7 and again in 2:19, every stanza in chapters 1-4 consists of three sets of bicola. Commentators usually suggest dropping line b or line c. Depending on the meaning of "days" in line a (see note on "when" earlier in the verse) either line makes sense. The four lines would make sense as two bicola if "days of" in line 7a is understood adverbially and 7b as the direct object completing the sentence. Lines 7c-d would begin with a temporal modifier and the rest of the couplet describe conditions that were true at that time.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "into the hand of." In such phrases "hand" represents power or authority.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "and there was no helper for her." This phrase is used idiomatically in OT to describe the plight of a city whose allies refuse to help ward off a powerful attacker. The nominal participle לֹא עָזַר (*lo' ozer*) refers elsewhere to military warriors (1 Chr 12:1, 18, 22; 2 Chr 20:23; 26:7; 28:23; 26:15; Ps 28:7; 46:6; Ezek 12:14; 30:8; 32:21; Dan 11:34) and the related noun refers to military allies upon whom an attacked city calls for help (Lachish Letters 19:1).

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "the adversaries" (צָרִים, *tsarim*). The 3rd person feminine singular pronoun "her" is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and good English style.

¹⁸ **tn** The verb רָאָה (*ra'ah*, "to look") has a broad range of meanings, including "to feast the eyes upon" and "to look down on" or "to gloat over" fallen enemies with exultation and triumph (e.g., Judg 16:27; Pss 22:18; 112:8; 118:7; Ezek 28:17; Mic 7:10; Obad 12, 13). This nuance is clarified by the synonymous parallelism between רָאָה (*ra'aha*, "they gloated over her") in the A-line and שָׂחָקוּ עַל־מִשְׁבַּתָּהּ (*sakhaqu al-mishbatteha*, "they mocked at her downfall") in the B-line.

they sneered⁴ at her downfall.²

ח (Khet)

1:8 Jerusalem committed terrible sin;³ therefore she became an object of scorn.⁴ All who admired⁵ her have despised her⁶ because they have seen her nakedness.⁷ She groans aloud⁸ and turns away in shame.⁹

ט (Tet)

1:9 Her menstrual flow¹⁰ has soiled¹¹ her clothing;¹² she did not consider¹³ the consequences of her sin.¹⁴ Her demise¹⁵ was astonishing,¹⁶ and there was no one to comfort her.

¹ **tn** Heb “laughed” or “sneered.” The verb שָׂחָק (*sakhaq*, “to laugh”) is often used in reference to contempt and derision (e.g., Job 30:1; Pss 37:13; 52:8; 59:9; Lam 1:7).

² **tc** The MT reads מִשְׁבַּתָּה (*mishbatteha*, “her annihilation”) from the noun מִשְׁבַּת (*mishbat*, “cessation, annihilation”), which is derived from the root שָׁבַת (*shavat*, “to cease”). The LXX mistakenly connected this with the root יָשַׁב (*yashav*, “to dwell”), reading μετοικησία αὐτῆς (*metoikhesia autēs*) which reflects שְׁבִיטָה (*shivtah*, “her dwelling”). The MT is favored on the basis of internal evidence: (1) The MT is the more difficult reading, being a *hapax legomenon*, (2) the LXX is guilty of simply misunderstanding the root and wrongly vocalizing the consonantal text, and (3) the LXX does not make good sense contextually, while the MT does.

tn Heb “her cessation” or “her annihilation.”

³ **tc** The MT reads חַטָּא (*khet*, “sin”), but the BHS editors suggest the vocalization חַטָּא (*khato*, “sin”), Qal infinitive absolute.

⁴ **tn** Heb “she has become an object of head-nodding” (לִינִי הָיְתָה הַיָּדָה הַחַיָּטָה, *liyniydah hayatah*). This reflects the ancient Near Eastern custom of shaking the head in scorn (e.g., Jer 18:16; Ps 44:15 [HT 14]), hence the translation “object of scorn.” There is debate whether נִידָה (*nidah*) means (1) “object of head-shaking” from נָדָה (*nada*, “to shake,” BDB 626-27 s.v. נָדָה); (2) “unclean thing” from נָדָה (*nadah*, “to be impure”); or (3) “wanderer” from נָדָה (*nadad*, “to wander,” BDB 622 s.v. נָדָה). The LXX and Rashi connected it to נָדָה (*nadad*, “to wander”); however, several important early Greek recensions (Aquila and Symmachus) and Syriac translated it as “unclean thing.” The modern English versions are split: (1) “unclean thing” (NASB); “unclean” (NIV); (2) “a mockery” (NRSV).

⁵ **sn** The Piel participle of כָּבַד (*kaved*) is infrequent and usually translated formulaically as those who honor someone. The feminine nuance may be best represented as “her admirers have despised her.”

⁶ **tn** The verb הִזְלִיחָה (*hizziluha*) is generally understood as a rare form of Hiphil perfect 3rd person common plural + 3rd person feminine singular suffix from זָלַל (*zalat*, “to despise”): “they despise her.” This follows the *l nun* (ן) pattern with *daghesh* (dot) in זַיִן (ז) rather than the expected geminate pattern הִזְלִיחָה (*hiziluha*) with *daghesh* in לָמַד (ל) (GKC 178-79 §67.1).

⁷ **sn** The expression *have seen her nakedness* is a common metaphor to describe the plunder and looting of a city by a conquering army, probably drawn on the ignominious and heinous custom of raping the women of a conquered city as well.

⁸ **tn** Heb “groan” or “sigh.” The verb אָנַח (*anakh*, appearing only in Niphal) means “sigh” (BDB 58 s.v. 1) or “groan” (HALOT 70-71 s.v.) as an expression of grief (Prov 29:2; Isa 24:7; Lam 1:4, 8; Ezek 9:4; 21:11). The word וְגַם (*vam*) is usually a particle meaning “also,” but has been shown from Ugaritic to have the meaning “aloud.” See T. McDaniel, “Philological Studies in Lamentations, I-II,” *Bib* 49 (1968): 31-32.

⁹ **tn** Heb “and turns backward.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “uncleanness.” The noun מְבִיאוֹה (*tum’ah*, “uncleanness”) refers in general to the state of ritual uncleanness and specifically to (1) sexual uncleanness (Num 5:19); (2) filthy mass (Ezek 24:11; 2 Chr 29:16); (3) ritual uncleanness (Lev 16:16, 19; Ezek 22:15; 24:13; 36:25, 29; 39:24; Zech 13:2); (4) menstrual uncleanness (Lev 15:25, 26, 30; 18:19; Ezek 36:17); (5) polluted meat (Judg 13:7, 14). Here, Jerusalem is personified as a woman whose menstrual uncleanness has soiled even her own clothes; this is a picture of the consequences of the sin of Jerusalem: uncleanness = her sin, and soiling her own clothes = consequences of sin. The poet may also be mixing metaphors allowing various images (of shame) to circulate in the hearer’s mind, including rape and public exposure. By not again mentioning sin directly (a topic relatively infrequent in this book), the poet lays a general acknowledgment of sin in 1:8 alongside an exceptionally vivid picture of the horrific circumstances which have come to be. It is no simplistic explanation that sin merits such inhumane treatment. Instead 1:9 insists that no matter the legal implications of being guilty, the Lord should be motivated to aid Jerusalem (and therefore her people) because her obscene reality is so revolting.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “her uncleanness is in her skirts.”

¹² **tn** Heb “her skirts.” This term is a synecdoche of specific (skirts) for general (clothing).

¹³ **tn** The basic meaning of זָכַר (*zakhar*) is “to remember, call to mind” (HALOT 270 s.v. זָכַר). Although it is often used in reference to recollection of past events or consideration of present situations, it also may mean “to consider, think about” the future outcome of conduct (e.g., Isa 47:7) (BDB 270 s.v. 5). The same term is used in 7a.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “she did not consider her end.” The noun אַחֲרֵי יָמֶיךָ (*akharit*, “end”) here refers to an outcome or the consequences of an action; in light of 1:8 here it is the consequence of sin or immoral behavior (Num 23:10; 24:20; Deut 32:20, 29; Job 8:7; Pss 37:37; 73:17; Prov 14:12; 23:32; 25:8; Eccl 7:8; Isa 46:10; 47:7; Jer 5:31; 17:11; Dan 12:8).

¹⁵ **tc** The MT reads וַתֵּרֶד (*vattered*) *vav* (ו) consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person feminine singular from יָרַד (*yarad*, “to go down”). Symmachus καὶ κατέβη (*kai katēchthē*, “and she was brought down”) and Vulgate *deposita est* use passive forms which might reflect וַתֵּרֶד (*vatturad*, *vav* consecutive + Pual preterite 3rd person feminine singular from יָרַד [*yarad*, “to go down”]). External evidence favors the MT (supported by all other ancient versions and medieval Hebrew mss); none of the other ancient versions preserve/reflect a passive form. Symmachus is known to have departed from a wooden literal translation (characteristic of Aquila) in favor of smooth and elegant Greek style. The second edition of the Latin Vulgate drew on Symmachus; thus, it is not an independent witness to the passive reading, but merely a secondary witness reflecting Symmachus. The MT is undoubtedly the original reading.

tn Heb “and she came down in an astonishing way” or “and she was brought down in an astonishing way.”

¹⁶ **tn** The noun פֶּלִאָה (*pele*) means not only “miracle, wonder” (BDB 810 s.v.) but “something unusual, astonishing” (HALOT 928 s.v.). The plural פֶּלִאִים (*pele'im*, lit., “astonishments”) is an example of the plural of intensity: “very astonishing.” The noun functions as an adverbial accusative of manner; the nature of her descent shocks and astounds. Rendering פֶּלִאִים וַתֵּרֶד (*vattered pele'im*) as “she has come down marvelously” (cf. BDB 810 s.v. 1 and KJV, ASV) is hardly appropriate; it is better to nuance it “in an astonishing way” (HALOT 928 s.v. 3) or simply “was astonishing.”

She cried, “Look,¹ O LORD, on my² affliction because my³ enemy boasts!”

י (Yod)

1:10 An enemy grabbed⁴ all her valuables.⁵ Indeed she watched in horror⁶ as Gentiles⁷ invaded her holy temple⁸ – those whom you⁹ had commanded: “They must not enter¹⁰ your assembly place.”¹¹

כ (Kaf)

1:11 All her people groaned as they searched for a morsel of bread.¹² They exchanged¹³ their valuables¹⁴ for¹⁵ just enough food to stay alive.¹⁶

Jerusalem Speaks:

“Look, O LORD! Consider¹⁷ that I have become worthless!”

1 tn The words “she cried” do not appear in the Hebrew. They are added to indicate that personified Jerusalem is speaking.

2 tc The MT reads *onyi* (“my affliction”) as reflected in all the ancient versions (LXX, Aramaic Targum, Latin Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta) and the medieval Hebrew mss. The Bohairic version and Ambrosius, however, read “her affliction,” which led the BHS editors to suggest a Vorlage of *onyah* (“her affliction”). External evidence strongly favors the MT reading. The 3rd person feminine singular textual variant probably arose out of an attempt to harmonize this form with all the other 3rd person feminine singular forms in 1:1-11a. The MT is undoubtedly the original reading.

3 tn Heb “an enemy.” While it is understood that the enemy is Jerusalem’s, not using the pronoun in Hebrew leaves room to imply to God that the enemy is not only Jerusalem’s but also God’s.

4 tn Heb “stretched out his hand.” The war imagery is of seizure of property; the anthropomorphic element pictures rape. This is an idiom that describes greedy actions (BDB 831 s.v. *ḥāḥaz*), meaning “to seize” (HALOT 976 s.v. 2).

5 tc The Kethib is written *makhmādehem* (“her desired things”); the Qere and many medieval Hebrew mss read *makhmādehem* (“her desirable things”). The Qere reading should be adopted.

tn Heb “all her desirable things.” The noun *makhmad* (“desirable thing”) refers to valuable possessions, such as gold and silver which people desire (e.g., Ezra 8:27). This probably refers, not to the valuable possessions of Jerusalem in general, but to the sacred objects in the temple in particular, as suggested by the rest of the verse. For the anthropomorphic image compare Song 5:16.

6 tn Heb “she watched” or “she saw.” The verb *ra’ah* (“to see”) has a broad range of meanings, including “to see” a spectacle causing grief (Gen 21:16; 44:34; Num 11:15; 2 Kgs 22:20; 2 Chr 34:28; Esth 8:6) or abhorrence (Isa 66:24). The words “in horror” are added to “she watched” to bring out this nuance.

7 sn The syntax of the sentence is interrupted by the insertion of the following sentence, “they invaded...,” then continued with “whom...” The disruption of the syntax is a structural device intended to help convey the shock of the situation.

8 tn Heb “her sanctuary.” The term *miqdashah* (“her sanctuary”) refers to the temple. Anthropomorphically, translating as “her sacred place” would also allow for the rape imagery.

9 sn Lam 1-2 has two speaking voices: a third person voice reporting the horrific reality of Jerusalem’s suffering and Jerusalem’s voice. See W. F. Lanahan, “The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations” *JBL* 93 (1974): 41-49. The reporting voice has been addressing the listener, referring to the Lord in the third person. Here he switches to a second person address to God, also changing the wording of the following command to second person. The revulsion of the Reporter is so great that he is moved to address God directly.

10 tn Heb “enter.” The Hebrew term *bo’* (“bo”) is also a sexual metaphor.

11 tn The noun *qahal* (“assembly”) does not refer here to the collective group of people assembled to worship the LORD, but to the place of their assembly: the temple. This is an example of a synecdoche of the people contained (= as-

sembly) for the container (= temple). The intent is to make the violation feel more personal than someone walking into a building.

sn This is a quotation from Deut 23:3, “No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.” Jeremiah applies this prohibition against Ammonites and Moabites to the Babylonians who ransacked and destroyed the temple in 587/586 B.C. This hermeneutical move may be explained on the basis of synecdoche of species (= Ammonites and Moabites) for general (= unconverted Gentiles as a whole). On a different note, the prohibition forbidding Ammonites and Moabites from entering the “assembly” (Deut 23:2-8) did not disallow Gentile proselytes from converting to Yahwism or from living within the community (= assembled body) of Israel. For example, Ruth the Moabitess abandoned the worship of Moabite gods and embraced Yahweh, then was welcomed into the community of Bethlehem in Judah (Ruth 1:15-22) and even incorporated into the lineage leading to King David (Ruth 4:18-22). This Deuteronomic law did not disallow such genuine conversions of repentant faith toward Yahweh, nor their incorporation into the life of the Israelite community. Nor did it discourage Gentiles from offering sacrifices to the LORD (Num 15:15-16). Rather, it prohibited Gentiles from entering into the tabernacle/temple (= place of assembly) of Israel. This is clear from the reaction of the post-exilic community when it realized that Deut 23:3-5 had been violated by Tobiah the Ammonite who had been given living quarters in the temple precincts (Neh 13:1-9). This is also reflected in the days of the Second Temple when Gentile proselytes were allowed to enter the “court of the Gentiles” in Herod’s temple, but were forbidden further access into the inner temple precincts.

12 tn Heb “bread.” In light of its parallelism with *okhel* (“food”) in the following line, it is possible that *lekhem*, “bread” is used in its broader sense of food or nourishment.

13 tn Heb “they sell.”

14 tn Heb “their desirable things.” The noun *makhmad*, “desirable thing” refers to valuable possessions, such as gold and silver which people desire (e.g., Ezra 8:27).

15 tn The preposition *bet* denotes the purchase price paid for an object (BDB 90 s.v. *bet* III.3; HALOT 105 s.v. *bet* 17) (e.g., Gen 23:9; 29:18, 20; 30:16; Lev 25:37; Deut 21:14; 2 Sam 24:24).

16 tn The noun *nefesh* functions as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life) (e.g., Gen 44:30; Exod 21:23; 2 Sam 14:7; Jon 1:14). When used with *nefesh* (the Hiphil *hashiv*) *shuv* (“to turn, return”) may mean “to restore a person’s vitality,” that is, to keep a person alive (Lam 1:14, 19).

17 sn The *dagesh lene* in *ki* following the vowel ending the verb *shabitah*, “consider” indicates a dramatic pause between calling for the LORD’s attention and stating the allegation to be seen and considered.

ל (Lamed)

1:12 Is it nothing to you,¹ all you who
pass by on the road?²
Look and see!

Is there any pain like mine?

The LORD³ HAS AFFLICTED ME,⁴
HE⁵ has inflicted it on me
when⁶ he burned with anger.⁷

מ (Mem)

1:13 He sent down fire⁸
into my bones, and it overcame⁹ them.
He spread out a trapper's net¹⁰ for my

¹ **tc** The Heb לֹא אֵלֵיכֶם (*lo' 'alekhem*, "not to you") is awkward and often considered corrupt but there is no textual evidence yet adduced to certify a more original reading.

² **tn** The line as it stands is imbalanced, such that the reference to the passersby may belong here or as a vocative with the following verb translated "look."

³ **tn** Heb "He." The personal pronoun "he" and the personal name "the LORD," both appearing in this verse, are transposed in the translation for the sake of readability. In the Hebrew text, "He" appears in the A-line and "the LORD" appears in the B-line – good Hebrew poetic style, but awkward English style.

⁴ **tn** Heb "which was afflicted on me." The Polal of קָלַל (*'alal*) gives the passive voice of the Polal. The Polal of the verb קָלַל (*'alal*) occurs ten times in the Bible, appearing in agricultural passages for gleaning or some other harvest activity and also in military passages. Jer 6:9 plays on this by comparing an attack to gleaning. The relationship between the meaning in the two types of contexts is unclear, but the very neutral rendering "to treat" in some dictionaries and translations misses the nuance appropriate to the military setting. Indeed it is not at all feasible in a passage like Judges 20:45 where "they treated them on the highway" would make no sense but "they mowed them down on the highway" would fit the context. Accordingly the verb is sometimes rendered "treat" or "deal severely," as HALOT 834 s.v. pool.3 suggests for Lam 3:51, although simply suggesting "to deal with" in Lam 1:22 and 2:20. A more injurious nuance is given to the translation here and in 1:22; 2:20 and 3:51.

⁵ **sn** The delay in naming the LORD as cause is dramatic. The natural assumption upon hearing the passive verb in the previous line, "it was dealt severely," might well be the pillaging army, but instead the LORD is named as the tormentor.

⁶ **tn** Heb "in the day of." The construction בַּיּוֹם (*b'iyom*, "in the day of") is a common Hebrew idiom, meaning "when" or "on the occasion of" (e.g., Gen 2:4; Lev 7:35; Num 3:1; Deut 4:15; 2 Sam 22:1; Pss 18:1; 138:3; Zech 8:9).

⁷ **tn** Heb "on the day of burning anger."

⁸ **tn** Heb "He sent fire from on high." Normally God sends fire from heaven. The idiom מִמִּנְהָרֹם (*minmarom*, "from on high") can still suggest the location but as an idiom may focus on the quality of the referent. For example, "to speak from on high" means "to presume to speak as if from heaven" = arrogantly (Ps 73:8); "they fight against me from on high" = proudly (Ps 56:3) (BDB 928-29 s.v. מִנְהָרֹם). As a potential locative, מִמִּנְהָרֹם (*minmarom*, "from on high") designates God as the agent; idiomatically the same term paints him as pitiless.

⁹ **tc** The MT reads וַיִּרְדָּהּ (*vayyirdannah*, "it prevailed against them"), representing a *vav* (ו) consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person masculine singular + 3rd person feminine plural suffix from רָדָה (*radah*, "to prevail"). The LXX καταγagen αυτο (*katagagen auto*, "it descended") reflects an alternate vocalization tradition of וַיִּרְדָּהּ (*vayyirdannah*, "it descended against them"), representing a *vav* (ו) consecutive + Hiphil preterite 3rd person masculine singular + 3rd person feminine plural suffix from יָרַד (*yarad*, "to go down"), or הוֹרִידָהּ (*horidah*, "it descended against her"), a Hiphil perfect ms + 3rd person feminine singular suffix from יָרַד (*yarad*, "to go down"). Internal evidence favors the MT. The origin of the LXX vocalization can be explained by the influence of the preceding line, "He sent down fire from on high."

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "net." The term "trapper's" is supplied in the trans-

feet;
he made me turn back.
He has made me desolate;
I am faint all day long.

נ (Nun)

1:14 My sins are bound around my neck
like a yoke;¹¹

they are fastened together by his hand.
He has placed his yoke¹² on my neck;¹³

lation as a clarification.

¹¹ **tc** The consonantal text נִשְׁקַד עַל פְּשִׁעֵי (*nisqad 'ol p'sha'ay*, "my transgression is bound by a yoke"); but the ancient versions (LXX, Aramaic Targum, Latin Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta) and many medieval Hebrew mss vocalize the text as נִשְׁקַד עַל פְּשִׁעֵי (*nishqad 'al p'sha'ay*, "watch is kept upon my transgression"). There are two textual deviations: (1) the MT vocalizes the verb as נִשְׁקַד (*nisqad*, Niphal perfect 3rd person masculine singular from שָׁקַד [*saqad*, "to bind"]), while the alternate tradition vocalizes it as נִשְׁקַד (*nishqad*, Niphal perfect 3rd person masculine singular from שָׁקַד [*shaqad*, "to keep watch"]); and (2) the MT vocalizes עַל (*'l*) as the noun עַל (*'ol*, "yoke"), while the ancient versions and medieval Hebrew mss vocalize it as the preposition עַל (*'al*, "upon"). External evidence favors the alternate vocalization: all the early versions (LXX, Targum, Vulgate, Peshitta) and many medieval Hebrew mss versus the relatively late MT vocalization tradition. However, internal evidence favors the MT vocalization: (1) The MT verb שָׁקַד (*saqar*, "to bind") is a *hapax legomenon* (BDB 974 s.v. שָׁקַד) which might have been easily confused for the more common verb שָׁקַד (*saqar*, "to keep watch") which is well attested elsewhere (Job 21:32; Pss 102:8; 127:1; Prov 8:34; Isa 29:20; Jer 1:12; 5:6; 31:28; 44:27; Ezr 8:29; Dan 9:14) (BDB 1052 s.v. שָׁקַד Qal.2). (2) The syntax of the MT is somewhat awkward, which might have influenced a scribe toward the alternate vocalization. (3) The presence of the noun עַל (*ullo*, "his yoke") in the following line supports the presence of the same term in this line. (4) Thematic continuity of 1:14 favors the MT: throughout the verse, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are continually compared to yoked animals who are sold into the hands of cruel taskmasters. The alternate vocalization intrudes into an otherwise unified stanza. In summary, despite strong external evidence in favor of the alternate vocalization tradition, even stronger internal evidence favors the MT.

tn Heb "my transgressions are bound with a yoke."

¹² **tc** The MT reads גָּלוּ (*alu*, "they went up"), Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from גָּלוּ (*alah*, "to go up"). However, several important recensions of the LXX reflect an alternate vocalization tradition: Lucian and Symmachus both reflect a *Vorlage* of עַל (*ullo*, "his yoke"), the noun עַל (*'ol*, "yoke") + 3rd person masculine singular suffix. The Lucianic recension was aimed at bringing the LXX into closer conformity to the Hebrew; therefore, this is an important textual witness. Internal evidence favors the readings of Lucian and Symmachus as well: the entire stanza focuses on the repeated theme of the "yoke" of the LORD. The MT reading is obscure in meaning, and the 3rd person common plural form violates the syntactical flow: "[my sins] are lashed together by his hand; they have gone up upon my neck, he has weakened my strength; the LORD has handed me over" On the other hand, the Lucian/Symmachus reflects contextual congruence: "My sins are bound around my neck like a yoke, they are lashed together by his hand; his yoke is upon my neck, he has weakened my strength; he has handed me over to those whom I am powerless to resist."

¹³ **tn** Heb "his yoke is upon my neck."

he has sapped my strength.¹
The Lord² has handed me over³
to those whom I cannot resist.

ד (Samek)

1:15 He rounded up⁴ all my mighty ones;⁵
The Lord⁶ did this⁷ in⁸ my midst.
He summoned an assembly⁹ against me
to shatter my young men.
The Lord has stomped like grapes¹⁰
the virgin daughter, Judah.¹¹

¹ **tn** *Heb* "he has caused my strength to stumble." The phrase יהכישיל כחי (*hikhsil kokhi*, "He has made my strength stumble") is an idiom that means "to weaken, make feeble."

² **tc** Here the MT reads אדוני (*'adonay*, "the Lord"), the perpetual Qere reading for יהוה (YHWH, "Yahweh"), but a multitude of Hebrew mss read consonantal יהוה (YHWH, traditionally translated "the LORD").

³ **tn** *Heb* "The LORD has given me into the hands of."

⁴ **tn** The verb כלה (*salah*) occurs only twice in OT; once in Qal (Ps 119:118) and once here in Piel. It is possibly a by-form of סלל (*salal*, "to heap up"). It may also be related to Aramaic סלל (*sl'*) meaning "to throw away" and Assyrian *salu/shalu* meaning "to hurl (away)" (AHW 1152) or "to kick up dust, shoot (arrows), reject, throw away?" (CAD 17:272). With people as its object *shalu* is used of people casting away their children, specifically meaning selling them on the market. The LXX translates כלה (*salah*) as ἐξῆρεν (*exēren*, "to remove, lead away"). Thus God is either (1) heaping them up (dead) in the city square, (2) putting them up for sale in the city square, or (3) leading them out of the city (into exile or to deprive it of defenders prior to attack). The English "round up" could accommodate any of these and is also a cattle term, which fits well with the use of the word "bulls" (see following note).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "bulls." Metaphorically, bulls may refer to mighty ones, leaders or warriors. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp (*Lamentations* [IBC], 69) insightfully suggests that the *Samek* stanza presents an overarching dissonance by using terms associated with a celebratory feast (bulls, assembly, and a winepress) in sentences where God is abusing the normally expected celebrants, i.e. the "leaders" are the sacrifice.

⁶ **tc** The MT reads אדוני (*'adonay*, "the Lord") here rather than יהוה (YHWH, "the LORD"); this occurs again a second time later in this verse. See the **tc** note at 1:14.

⁷ **tn** The verb is elided and understood from the preceding colon. Naming "my Lord" as the subject of the verb late, as it were, emphasizes the irony of the action taken by a person in this position.

⁸ **tc** The MT reads the preposition ב (*bet*, "in") prefixed to קירבי (*qirbi*, "my midst"): בִּקְרִבִי (*b⁸kirbi*, "in my midst"); however, the LXX reads ἐκ μεσού μου (*ek mesou mou*) which may reflect a Vorlage of the preposition מן (*min*, "from"): מִקְרִבִי (*miqirbi*, "from my midst"). The LXX may have chosen ἐκ to accommodate understanding סלה (*sillah*) as ἐξῆρεν (*exēren*, "to remove, lead away"). The textual deviation may have been caused by an unusual orthographic confusion.

tn Or "out of my midst." See the preceding **tc** note.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "an assembly." The noun מועד (*mo'ed*, "assembly") is normally used in reference to the annual religious festive assemblies of Israel (Ezek 45:17; Hos 9:5; Zeph 3:18; Zech 8:19), though a number of English versions take this "assembly" to refer to the invading army which attacks the city (e.g., NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "a winepress he has stomped." The noun גת (*gat*, "winepress") functions as an adverbial accusative of location: "in a winepress." The translation reflects the synecdoche that is involved – one stomps the grapes that are in the winepress, not the winepress itself.

¹¹ **sn** The expression the *virgin daughter, Judah* is used as an epithet, i.e. Virgin Judah or Maiden Judah, further reinforcing the feminine anthropomorphism.

ג (Ayin)

1:16 I weep because of these things;
my eyes¹² flow with tears.¹³
For there is no one in sight who can comfort me¹⁴
or encourage me.¹⁵
My children¹⁶ are desolated¹⁷
because an enemy has prevailed.

The Prophet Speaks:

ב (Pe)

1:17 Zion spread out her hands,
but there is no one to comfort her.
The LORD has issued a decree against
Jacob;
his neighbors¹⁸ have become his enemies.
Jerusalem has become
like filthy garbage¹⁹ in their midst.²⁰

¹² **tc** The MT and several medieval Hebrew mss read עיני עיני (*'eni, 'eni*, "my eye, my eye"). However, the second עיני (*'eni*) does not appear in several other medieval Hebrew mss, or in Old Greek, Syriac Peshitta or Latin Vulgate.

tn *Heb* "My eye, my eye." The Hebrew text repeats the term for literary emphasis to stress the emotional distress of personified Jerusalem.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "with water." The noun מים (*mayim*, "water") functions as an adverbial accusative of manner or impersonal instrument. The term מים *mayim*, "water" is a metonymy of material (= water) for the thing formed (= tears).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "For a comforter is far from me."

¹⁵ **tn** The phrase משִׁיב נַפְשִׁי (*meshiv nafshi*, "one who could cause my soul to return") is a Hebrew idiom that means "one who could encourage me." The noun נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*) refers to the whole person (e.g., Gen 27:4, 25; 49:6; Lev 26:11, 30; Num 23:10; Judg 5:21; 16:30; Isa 1:14; Lam 3:24). When used with the noun נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*) the Hiphil (*hashiv*) of שׁוּב (*shuv*, "to turn, return") means "to encourage, refresh, cheer" a person emotionally (Ruth 4:15; Pss 19:8; 23:3; Prov 25:13; Lam 1:11, 16, 19).

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "my sons." The term "my sons" (בני, *banay*) is a figurative description (hypocatastasis) of the former inhabitants of Jerusalem/Judah personified as the Lady Jerusalem's children. Jerusalem mourns (and views) their devastation like a mother would her children.

¹⁷ **tn** The verb שָׁבַם (*shamem*) means "to be desolated." The verb is used in reference to land destroyed in battle and left "deserted" (Isa 49:8; Ezek 33:28; 35:12, 15; 36:4). When used in reference to persons, it describes the aftermath of a physical attack, such as rape (2 Sam 13:20) or military overthrow of a city (Isa 54:1; Lam 1:13, 16; 3:11).

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "his neighbors," which refers to the surrounding nations.

¹⁹ **tn** The noun נִדְדָה (*niddah*, "unclean thing") has three basic categories of meaning: (1) biological uncleanness: menstruation of a woman (Lev 12:2, 5; 15:19-33 [9x]; Num 19:9, 13, 20; 31:23; Ezek 18:6; 22:10; 36:17); (2) ceremonial uncleanness: moral impurity and idolatry (Lev 20:21; 2 Chr 29:5; Ezra 9:11; Zech 13:1); and (3) physical uncleanness: filthy garbage (Lam 1:17; Ezek 7:19, 20).

²⁰ **tc** The MT reads בְּעֵינֵיהֶם (*b²⁰enehem*, "in them" = "in their midst"). The BHS editors suggest that this is a textual corruption for בְּעֵינֵיהֶם (*be'enehem*, "in their eyes" = "in their view"). The *ayin* (*ayin*) might have dropped out due to orthographic confusion.

tn Or "in their eyes." See the preceding **tc** note.

Jerusalem Speaks:

ז (Tsade)

1:18 The LORD is right to judge me!¹
Yes, I rebelled against his commands.²
Please listen, all you nations,³
and look at my suffering!
My young women and men
have gone into exile.

ק (Qof)

1:19 I called for my lovers,⁴
but they had deceived me.
My priests and my elders
perished in the city.
Truly they had⁵ searched for food
to⁶ keep themselves⁷ alive.⁸

ר (Resh)

1:20 Look, O LORD! I am distressed;⁹
my stomach is in knots!¹⁰

¹ **tn** *Heb* "The LORD himself is right." The phrase "to judge me" is not in the Hebrew, but is added in the translation to clarify the expression.

² **tn** *Heb* "His mouth." The term "mouth" (פה, *peh*) is a metonymy of instrument (= mouth) for the product (= words). The term פה (*peh*) often stands for spoken words (Ps 49:14; Eccl 10:3; Isa 29:13); declaration (Gen 41:40; Exod 38:21; Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; Ezra 1:1) and commands of God (Exod 17:1; Num 14:41; 22:18; Josh 15:13; 1 Sam 15:24; 1 Chr 12:24; Prov 8:29; Isa 34:16; 62:2). When the verb נָקַדָה (*marah*, "to rebel") is used with the accusative direct object פה (*peh*, "mouth") to connote disobedience to God's commands (Num 20:24; 1 Sam 12:14, 15; 1 Kgs 13:21) (BDB 805 s.v. פה 2.c).

³ **tc** The Kethib is written עַמִּים (*ammim*, "peoples"), but the Qere, followed by many medieval Hebrew mss and the ancient versions (LXX and Aramaic Targum), read הָעַמִּים (*ha'ammim*, "O peoples"). The Qere is probably the original reading.

tn *Heb* "O peoples." Here Jerusalem addresses the peoples of the surrounding nations (note the use of "neighbors" in the preceding verse).

⁴ **sn** The term "lovers" is a figurative expression (hypocatastasis), comparing Jerusalem's false gods and political alliance with Assyria to a woman's immoral lovers. The prophet Hosea uses similar imagery (Hos 2:5, 7, 10, 13).

⁵ **tn** Here the conjunction כִּי (*ki*) functions in (1) a temporal sense in reference to a past event, following a perfect: "when" (BDB 473 s.v. 2.a; cf. KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV) or (2) a concessive sense, following a perfect: "although" (Pss 21:12; 119:83; Mic 7:8; Nah 1:10; cf. BDB 473 s.v. 2.c.β) or (3) with an intensive force, introducing a statement with emphasis: "surely, certainly" (BDB 472 s.v. 1.e). The present translation follows the third option.

⁶ **tn** The *vav* (ו) prefixed to וַיִּשְׁבוּ (*vayashivu*) introduces a purpose clause: "they sought food for themselves, in order to keep themselves alive."

⁷ **tn** The noun נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*) functions as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life) (e.g., Gen 44:30; Exod 21:23; 2 Sam 14:7; Jon 1:14). When used with נָפַשׁ (*nefesh*), the Hiphil הִשִּׁיב (*hashiv*) of שׁוּב (*shuv*, "to turn, return") may mean "to preserve a person's life," that is, to keep a person alive (Lam 1:14, 19).

⁸ **tc** The LXX reads ἀκα εὐρον (*kai ouch heuron*, "but they did not find it"). This is probably an explanatory scribal gloss, indicated to explicate what appeared to be ambiguous. The LXX often adds explanatory glosses in many OT books.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "because I have distress" (כִּי-צָרָה לִי, *ki-tsar-li*).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "my bowels burn" or "my bowels are in a ferment." The verb הִרְמַרְוּ (*khamarmaru*) is an unusual form and derived from a debated root: Poalal perfect 3rd person common plural from III הָרַר (*khamar*, "to be red," HALOT 330 s.v.

My heart is pounding¹¹ inside me.
Yes, I was terribly rebellious!¹²
Out in the street the sword bereaves a
mother of her children;¹³
Inside the house death is present.¹⁴

שׁ (Sin/Shin)

1:21 They have heard¹⁵ that I groan,
yet there is no one to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my
trouble;
they are glad that you¹⁶ have brought it
about.¹⁷

III הָרַר) or Pe`al perfect 3rd person common plural from I הָרַר (*khamar*, "to ferment, boil up," BDB 330 s.v. I הָרַר). The Poalal stem of this verb occurs only three times in OT: with פָּנִים (*panim*, "face," Job 16:16) and בְּעֵינַי (*me'im*, "bowels," Lam 1:20; 2:11). The phrase הִרְמַרְוּ (*me'ay khamarmaru*) means "my bowels burned" (HALOT 330 s.v.) or "my bowels are in a ferment," as a euphemism for lower-intestinal bowel problems (BDB 330 s.v.). This phrase also occurs in later rabbinic literature (*m. Sanhedrin* 7:2). The present translation, "my stomach is in knots," is not a literal equivalent to this Hebrew idiom; however, it is an attempt to approximate the equivalent English idiom.

¹¹ **tn** The participle הִרְמַרְוּ (*nehpakh*), Niphal participle masculine singular הִרְפַּךְ (*hafakh*, "to turn over") functions verbally, referring to progressive present-time action (from the speaker's viewpoint). The verb הִרְפַּךְ (*hafakh*) is used here to describe emotional distress (e.g., Ezek 4:8).

¹² **tn** *Heb* "because I was very rebellious." The Hebrew uses an emphatic construction in which the root נָקַדָה (*marah*, "to rebel") is repeated: מָרוּ מְרִיבֵי (*maro mariti*), Qal infinitive absolute from נָקַדָה (*marah*) followed by Qal perfect 1st person common singular from נָקַדָה (*marah*). When an infinitive absolute is used with a finite verb of the same root, it affirms the verbal idea (e.g., Gen 2:17; 18:10; 22:17; 31:15; 46:4; Num 16:13; 23:14; Judg 4:9; 15:13; 20:39; 1 Sam 2:30; 9:6; 2 Sam 24:24; Isa 6:9; Ezek 16:4). See *IBHS* 585-86 §35.3.1f.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "in the street the sword bereaves." The words "a mother of her children" are supplied in the translation as a clarification.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "in the house it is like death."

¹⁵ **tc** The MT reads שָׁמְעוּ (*sham'u*, "They heard"), Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from שָׁמַע (*shama*, "to hear"). The LXX ἀκουάσατε (*akouasate*) reflects the vocalization שָׁמְעוּ (*shim'u*, "Hear!"), Qal imperative 2nd person masculine plural from שָׁמַע (*shama*, "to hear"). Internal evidence favors the MT. Elsewhere in Lamentations, personified Jerusalem urges God with singular imperatives ("Look! See!"); however, nowhere else is a plural imperative used. In fact, the Qal perfect 3rd person common plural form שָׁמְעוּ (*sham'u*, "They hear") appears in the following line. The referent of שָׁמְעוּ (*sham'u*) is the enemy who has destroyed Jerusalem and now mocks her when they hear her laments. The MT vocalization is undoubtedly original. Most English versions follow the MT: "They hear" (KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, NJPS, CEV); but several follow the LXX and revocalize the text as an imperative: "Hear!" (RSV, NRSV, TEV).

¹⁶ **tn** "You" here and in the following line refers to the LORD.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "that You have done it."

Bring about¹ the day of judgment² that
you promised³
so that⁴ they may end up⁵ like me!

ת (Tav)

1:22 Let all their wickedness come before
you;
afflict⁶ them
just as you have afflicted⁷ me⁸
because of all my acts of rebellion.⁹
For my groans are many,
and my heart is sick with sorrow.¹⁰

The Prophet Speaks:

א (Alef)

2:1 Alas!¹¹ The Lord¹² has covered
Daughter Zion¹³ with his anger.¹⁴
He has thrown down the splendor of
Israel
from heaven to earth;
he did not protect¹⁵ his temple¹⁶
when he displayed his anger.¹⁷

ב (Bet)

2:2 The Lord¹⁸ destroyed¹⁹ mercilessly²⁰
all the homes of Jacob's descendants.²¹

¹ **tn** The verb הֵבִי'תָא (*heve'ta*) Hiphil perfect 2nd person masculine singular from הָבִיא (*bo'*, "to bring" in the Hiphil) probably functions, not as a simple past-time perfect, but as a precative perfect, an unusual volitional nuance similar to the imperative of request. The precativ is used in reference to situations the speaker prays for and expects to be realized; it is a prayer or request of confidence (e.g., 2 Sam 7:29; Job 21:16; 22:18; Pss 3:8; 4:2; 7:7; 22:22; 31:5-6; 71:3; Lam 1:21). See *IBHS* 494-95 §30.5.4c, d. This volitional precativ nuance is reflected in the Syriac Peshitta which translates this verb using an imperative. Most English versions adopt the precativ nuance: "Bring on the day you have announced" (NRSV), "Oh, that Thou wouldst bring the day which Thou hast proclaimed" (NASB), "May you bring the day you have announced" (NIV), "Bring the day you promised" (TEV), "Oh, bring on them what befell me!" (NJPS), "Hurry and punish them, as you have promised" (CEV). A few English versions adopt a prophetic perfect future-time nuance: "thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called" (KJV, NKJV, ASV).

² **tn** The term יוֹם (*yom*, "day") is often used as a metonymy of association, standing for the event associated with that particular time period: judgment (e.g., Isa 2:12; 13:6, 9; Jer 46:10; Lam 2:22; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Zech 14:1; Mal 3:23 HT [4:5 ET]) (BDB 399 s.v. 3).

³ **tn** *Heb* "proclaimed."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "and." Following a volitive use of the perfect, the *vav* (ו) prefixed to וְיָהִי (*v'hyu*, "and let it be!") introduces a purpose/result clause in a dependent volitive construction: "so that they may be like me!"

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "that they be like me."

⁶ **tn** For the nuance "afflict" see the note at 1:12.

⁷ **tn** For the nuance "afflict" see the note at 1:12.

⁸ **tn** The parallel statements "afflict them" and "just as you have afflicted me" in the translation mirror the Hebrew word-play between עָלַל לַמֹּת ('*olel lamo*, "May you deal with them") and עָלַלְתָּ לִי ('*olalt li*, "you dealt with me").

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "all my rebellions," that is, "all my rebellious acts."

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "is sorrowful" or "is faint." The adjective דַּוָּיָה (*davvay*, "faint") is used in reference to emotional sorrow (e.g., Isa 1:5; Lam 1:22; Jer 8:18). The cognate Aramaic term means "sorrow," and the cognate Syriac term refers to "misery" (*HALOT* 216 s.v. דַּוָּיָה). The related Hebrew adjective דָּוָה (*davah*) means "(physically) sick" and "(emotionally) sad," while the related Hebrew verb דָּוָה (*davah*) means "to be sad" due to menstruation. The more literal English versions fail to bring out explicitly the nuance of emotional sorrow and create possible confusion whether the problem is simply loss of courage: "my heart is faint" (KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, ASV, NASB, NIV). The more paraphrastic English versions explicate the emotional sorrow that this idiom connotes: "my heart is sick" (NJPS), "I am sick at heart" (TEV), and "I've lost all hope!" (CEV).

¹¹ **tn** See the note at 1:1.

¹² **tc** The MT reads אֲדֹנָי ('*adonay*, "the Lord") here rather than יהוה (YHWH, "the Lord"). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

¹³ **sn** Chapter 2 continues the use of feminine epithets (e.g., "Daughter Zion"), although initially portraying Jerusalem as an object destroyed by the angered enemy, God.

¹⁴ **tn** The verb יָעִיב (*ya'iv*) is a *hapax legomenon* (a term that appears only once in Hebrew OT). Most lexicons take it as a denominative verb from the noun עָב ('*av*, "cloud," *HALOT* 773 s.v. II עָב; BDB 728 s.v. עָב); Hiphil imperfect 3rd person masculine singular from עָוַב ('*ov*) meaning "cover with a cloud, make dark" (*HALOT* 794 s.v. עָוַב) or "becloud" (BDB 728 s.v.); "the Lord has covered Daughter Zion with the cloud of His anger." This approach is followed by many English versions (KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV). However, a few scholars relate it to a cognate Arabic verb "to blame, revile" (Ehrlich, Rudolph, Hillers): "the Lord has shamed Daughter Zion in His anger." Several English versions adopt this (NRSV, NJPS, CEV). The picture of cloud and wrath concurs with the stanza's connection to "day of the Lord" imagery.

¹⁵ **tn** The common gloss for זָכַר (*zakhar*) is "remember." זָכַר (*zakhar*) entails "bearing something in mind" in a broader sense than the English gloss "remember." When God "bears someone in mind," the consequences are beneficial for them. The implication of not regarding his footstool is to not esteem and so not care for or protect it.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "the footstool of His feet." The noun הָדוֹם (*hadom*, "footstool"), always joined with רַגְלָיִים (*raglayim*, "feet") is always used figuratively in reference to the dwelling place of God (BDB 213 s.v. הָדוֹם). It usually refers to the Lord's temple in Jerusalem (Isa 60:13; Lam 2:1) or to the ark as the place above which the Lord is enthroned (Pss 99:5; 132:7; 1 Chr 28:2).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "in the day of His anger." As a temporal reference this phrase means "when he displayed his anger." The Hebrew term "day," associated with the "day of the Lord" or "day of his wrath" also functions as a title in a technical sense.

¹⁸ **tc** The MT reads אֲדֹנָי ('*adonay*, "the Lord") here rather than יהוה (YHWH, "the Lord"). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "has swallowed up."

²⁰ **tc** The Kethib is written לֹא חָמַל ('*lo' khamal*, "without mercy"), while the Qere reads וְלֹא חָמַל ('*v'lo' khamal*, "and he has shown no mercy"). The Kethib is followed by the LXX, while the Qere is reflected in many Hebrew MSS and the ancient versions (Syriac Peshitta, Aramaic Targum, Latin Vulgate). The English versions are split between the Kethib: "The Lord swallowed all the dwellings of Jacob without mercy" (cf. RSV, NRSV, NIV, TEV, NJPS) and the Qere: "The Lord swallowed all the dwellings of Jacob, and has shown no mercy" (cf. KJV, NASB, CEV). As these words occur between a verb and its object (חָמַל [*khamal*] is not otherwise followed by מַת [et, direct object marker]), an adverbial reading is the most natural, although interrupting the sentence with an insertion is possible. Compare 2:17, 21; 3:43. In contexts of harming, to show mercy often means to spare from harm.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* "all the dwellings of Jacob."

In his anger he tore down the fortified cities⁴ of Daughter Judah. He knocked to the ground and humiliated the kingdom and its rulers.²

ג (Gimel)

2:3 In fierce anger³ he destroyed⁴ the whole army⁵ of Israel. He withdrew his right hand⁶ as the enemy attacked.⁷ He was like a raging fire in the land of Jacob;⁸ it consumed everything around it.⁹

ד (Dalet)

2:4 He prepared his bow¹⁰ like an enemy; his right hand was ready to shoot.¹¹ Like a foe he killed everyone, even our strong young men;¹² he has poured out his anger like fire on the tent¹³ of Daughter Zion.

ה (He)

2:5 The Lord,¹⁴ like an enemy, destroyed¹⁵ Israel. He destroyed¹⁶ all her palaces; he ruined her¹⁷ fortified cities. He made everyone in Daughter Judah mourn and lament.¹⁸

ו (Vav)

2:6 He destroyed his temple¹⁹ as if it were a vineyard;²⁰ he destroyed his appointed meeting place. The LORD has made those in Zion forget both the festivals and the Sabbaths.²¹

¹ **tn** Heb “the strongholds.”

² **tn** Heb “He brought down to the ground in disgrace the kingdom and its princes.” The verbs הִגְדִּיל וְהִקְדִּיל (higgi’...khil-lel, “he has brought down...he has profaned”) function as a verbal hendiadys, as the absence of the conjunction ו (vav) suggests. The first verb retains its full verbal force, while the second functions adverbially: “he has brought down [direct object] in disgrace.”

³ **tc** The MT reads אַף (‘af, “anger”), while the ancient versions (LXX, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate) reflect אַפּוֹ (‘appo, “His anger”). The MT is the more difficult reading syntactically, while the ancient versions are probably smoothing out the text.

⁴ **tn** Heb “cut off, scattered.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “every horn of Israel.” The term “horn” (קֶרֶן, qeren) normally refers to the horn of a bull, one of the most powerful animals in ancient Israel. This term is often used figuratively as a symbol of strength, usually in reference to the military might of an army (Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:1, 10; 2 Sam 22:3; Pss 18:3; 75:11; 89:18, 25; 92:11; 112:9; 1 Chr 25:5; Jer 48:25; Lam 2:3, 17; Ezek 29:21) (BDB 901 s.v. 2), just as warriors are sometimes figuratively described as “bulls.” Cutting off the “horn” is a figurative expression for destroying warriors (Jer 48:25; Ps 75:10 [HT 11]).

⁶ **tn** Heb “he caused his right hand to turn back.” The implication in such contexts is that the Lord’s right hand protects his city. This image of the right hand is consciously reversed in 2:4.

⁷ **tn** Heb “from the presence of the enemy.” This figurative expression refers to the approach of the attacking army.

⁸ **tn** Heb “he burned in Jacob like a flaming fire.”

⁹ **tn** Or “He burned against Jacob, like a raging fire consumes all around.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “bent His bow.” When the verb דָּרַךְ (darakh) is used with the noun קֶשֶׁת (qeshet, “archer-bow”), it means “to bend [a bow]” to string it in preparation for shooting arrows (1 Chr 5:18; 8:40; 2 Chr 14:7; Jer 50:14, 29; 51:3). This idiom is used figuratively to describe the assaults of the wicked (Pss 11:2; 37:14) and the judgments of the Lord (Ps 7:13; Lam 2:4; 3:12) (BDB 202 s.v. דָּרַךְ 4). The translation “he prepared his bow” is the slightly more general modern English idiomatic equivalent of the ancient Hebrew idiom “he bent his bow” – both refer to preparations to get ready to shoot arrows.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “His right hand is stationed.”

¹² **tn** Heb “the ones who were pleasing to the eye.”

¹³ **tn** The singular noun אֹהֶל (‘ohel, “tent”) may function as a collective, referring to all tents in Judah. A parallel expression occurs in verse 2 using the plural: “all the dwellings of Jacob” (בְּיַד יְהוָה, kol-ya’aqov). The singular “tent” matches the image of “Daughter Zion.” On the other hand, the singular “the tent of Daughter Zion” might be a hyperbolic synecdoche

of container (= tent) for contents (= inhabitants of Zion).

¹⁴ **tc** The MT reads אֲדוֹנָי (‘adonay, “the Lord”) here rather than יהוה (YHWH, “the Lord”). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “swallowed up.”

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “swallowed up.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “his.” For consistency this has been translated as “her.”

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “He increased in Daughter Judah mourning and lamentation.”

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “His booth.” The noun שֹׁכַח (sokh, “booth,” BDB 968 s.v.) is a hapax legomenon (term that appears only once in the Hebrew OT), but it is probably an alternate spelling of the more common noun סֻכָּה (sukkah, “booth”) which is used frequently of temporary shelters and booths (e.g., Neh 8:15) (BDB 697 s.v. סֻכָּה). Related to the verb שָׁכַח (sakhakh, “to weave”), it refers to a temporary dwelling constructed of interwoven boughs. This is a figurative description of the temple, as the parallel term מוֹעֵדוֹ (mo’ado, “his tabernacle” or “his appointed meeting place”) makes clear. Jeremiah probably chose this term to emphasize the frailty of the temple, and its ease of destruction. Contrary to the expectation of Jerusalem, it was only a temporary dwelling of the Lord – its permanence cut short due to sin of the people.

²⁰ **tc** The MT reads כַּגָּן (kaggan, “like a garden”). The LXX reads ὡς ἀμπελον (hos ampelon) which reflects כַּגֶּפֶן (k’gefen, “like a vineyard”). Internal evidence favors כַּגֶּפֶן (k’gefen) because God’s judgment is often compared to the destruction of a vineyard (e.g., Job 15:33; Isa 34:4; Ezek 15:2, 6). The omission of פ (pe) is easily explained due to the similarity in spelling between כַּגֶּפֶן (k’gefen) and כַּגָּן (kaggan).

²¹ **tn** Heb “The Lord has caused to be forgotten in Zion both appointed festival and Sabbath.” The verb שִׁכַּח (shikkakh, “to cause someone to forget”), Piel perfect 3rd person masculine singular from שָׁכַח (shakhakh, “to forget”) is used figuratively. When people forget “often the neglect of obligations is in view” (L. C. Allen, NIDOTTE 4:104). When people forget the things of God, they are in disobedience and often indicted for ignoring God or neglecting their duties to him (Deut 4:23, 31; 6:12; 8:11, 19; 26:13; 31:21; 32:18; Judg 3:7; 1 Sam 12:9; 2 Kgs 17:38; Is 49:14; 51:13; 65:11; Jer 18:15; Exek 23:35; Hos 4:6). The irony is that the one to whom worship is due has made it so that people must neglect it. Most English versions render this in a metonymical sense: “the Lord has brought to an end in Zion appointed festival and sabbath” (RSV), “[he] did away with festivals and Sabbaths” (CEV), “he has put an end to holy days and Sabbaths” (TEV), “the Lord has ended... festival and sabbath” (NUPS), “the Lord has abolished... festivals and sabbath” (NRSV). Few English versions employ the gloss “remember”: “the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten” (KJV) and “the Lord has made Zion forget her appointed feasts and her sabbaths” (NIV).

In his fierce anger¹ he has spurned²
both king and priest.

י (Zayin)

2:7 The Lord³ rejected⁴ his altar
and abhorred his temple.⁵
He handed over to the enemy⁶
her palace walls;
the enemy⁷ shouted⁸ in the LORD's
temple
as if it were a feast day.⁹

ח (Khet)

2:8 The LORD was determined to tear
down
Daughter Zion's wall.
He prepared to knock it down;¹⁰
he did not withdraw his hand from
destroying.¹¹

1 tn Heb "In the fury of his anger" (אָפּוֹ אֵיפּוֹ, *za'am-'appo*). The genitive noun אֵיפּוֹ (*'appo*, "his anger") functions as an attributed genitive with the construct noun זָעַם (*za'am*, "fury, rage"): "his furious anger."

2 tn The verb נָאֲצָה (*na'ats*, "to spurn, show contempt") functions as a metonymy of cause (= to spurn king and priests) for effect (= to reject them; cf. CEV). Since spurning is the cause, this may be understood as "to reject with a negative attitude." However, retaining "spurn" in the translation keeps the term emotionally loaded. The most frequent term for נָאֲצָה (*na'ats*) in the LXX (παροξύνω, *paroxunō*) also conveys emotion beyond a decision to reject.

3 tc The MT reads אֲדֹנָי (*adonay*, "the Lord") here rather than יהוה (YHWH, "the LORD"), which occurs near the end of this verse. See the **tc** note at 1:14.

4 tn The Heb verb זָנַח (*zanakh*) is a rejection term often used in military contexts. Emphasizing emotion, it may mean "to spurn." In military contexts it may be rendered "to desert."

5 tn Heb "His sanctuary." The term מִקְדָּשׁוֹ (*miqdasho*, "His sanctuary") refers to the temple (e.g., 1 Chr 22:19; 2 Chr 36:17; Ps 74:7; Isa 63:18; Ezek 48:21; Dan 8:11) (BDB 874 s.v. מִקְדָּשׁ).

6 tn Heb "He delivered into the hand of the enemy." The verb הִסְגִּיר (*hisgir*), Hiphil perfect 3rd person masculine singular from סָגַר (*sagar*), means "to give into someone's control: to deliver" (Deut 23:16; Josh 20:5; 1 Sam 23:11, 20; 30:15; Job 16:13; Pss 31:9; 78:48, 50, 62; Lam 2:7; Amos 1:6, 9; Obad 14).

7 tn Heb "they."

8 tn Heb "they gave voice" (קוֹל נָתַנוּ, *kol natno*). The verb נָתַן (*natan*, "to give") with the noun קוֹל (*kol*, "voice, sound") is an idiom meaning: "to utter a sound, make a noise, raise the voice" (e.g., Gen 45:2; Prov 2:3; Jer 4:16; 22:20; 48:34) (HALOT 734 s.v. נָתַן 12; BDB 679 s.v. נָתַן 1.x). Contextually, this describes the shout of victory by the Babylonians celebrating their conquest of Jerusalem.

9 tn Heb "as on the day of an appointed time." The term מוֹעֵד (*mo'ed*, "appointed time") refers to the religious festivals that were celebrated at appointed times in the Hebrew calendar (BDB 417 s.v. 1.b). In contrast to making festivals neglected (forgotten) in v 6, the enemy had a celebration which was entirely out of place.

10 tn Heb "he stretched out a measuring line." In Hebrew, this idiom is used (1) literally: to describe a workman's preparation of measuring and marking stones before cutting them for building (Job 38:5; Jer 31:39; Zech 1:16) and (2) figuratively: to describe the LORD's planning and preparation to destroy a walled city, that is, to mark off for destruction (2 Kgs 21:13; Isa 34:11; Lam 2:8). It is not completely clear how a phrase from the vocabulary of building becomes a metaphor for destruction; however, it might picture a predetermined and carefully planned measure from which God will not deviate.

11 tn Heb "He did not return His hand from swallowing." That

He made the ramparts and fortified walls
lament;
together they mourned their ruin.¹²

ט (Tet)

2:9 Her city gates have fallen¹³ to the
ground;
he smashed to bits¹⁴ the bars that lock her
gates.¹⁵
Her king and princes were taken into
exile;¹⁶
there is no more guidance available.¹⁷
As for her prophets,
they no longer receive¹⁸ a vision from the
LORD.

is, he persisted until it was destroyed.

12 tn Heb "they languished together." The verbs אָבַל (*aval*, "to lament") and אָמַל (*amal*, "languish, mourn") are often used in contexts of funeral laments in secular settings. The Hebrew prophets often use these terms to describe the aftermath of the LORD's judgment on a nation. Based on parallel terms, אָמַל (*amal*) may describe either mourning or deterioration and so makes for a convenient play on meaning when destroyed objects are personified. Incorporating this play into the translation, however, may obscure the parallel between this line and the deterioration of the gates beginning in v. 9.

13 tn Heb "have sunk down." This expression, "her gates have sunk down into the ground," is a personification, picturing the city gates descending into the earth, as if going down into the grave or the netherworld. Most English versions render it literally (KJV, RSV, NRSV, NASB, NIV, NJPS); however, a few paraphrases have captured the equivalent sense quite well: "Zion's gates have fallen facedown on the ground" (CEV) and "the gates are buried in rubble" (TEV).

14 tn Heb "he has destroyed and smashed her bars." The two verbs אָבַד וְשִׁבְּרָה (*ibbad v'shibbar*) form a verbal hendiadys that emphasizes the forcefulness of the destruction of the locking bars on the gates. The first verb functions adverbially and the second retains its full verbal sense: "he has smashed to pieces." Several English versions render this expression literally and miss the rhetorical point: "he has ruined and broken" (RSV, NRSV), "he has destroyed and broken" (KJV, NASB), "he has broken and destroyed" (NIV). The hendiadys has been correctly noted by others: "smashed to pieces" (TEV, CEV) and "smashed to bits" (NJPS).

15 tn Heb "her bars." Since the literal "bars" could be misunderstood as referring to saloons, the phrase "the bars that lock her gates" has been used in the present translation.

16 tn Heb "are among the nations."

17 tn Heb "there is no Torah" or "there is no Torah" (אֵין תּוֹרָה, *'en torah*). Depending on whether תּוֹרָה (*torah*, "instruction, law") is used in parallelism with the preceding or following line, it refers to (1) political guidance that the now-exiled king had formerly provided or (2) prophetic instruction that the now-ineffective prophets had formerly provided (BDB 434 s.v. תּוֹרָה 1.b). It is possible that the three lines are arranged in an ABA chiasmic structure, exploiting the semantic ambiguity of the term תּוֹרָה (*torah*, "instruction"). Possibly it is an oblique reference to the priests' duties of teaching, thus introducing a third group of the countries leaders. It is possible to hear in this a lament in reference to the destruction of Torah scrolls that may have been at the temple when it was destroyed.

18 tn Heb "they cannot find."

י (Yod)

2:10 The elders of Daughter Zion sit¹ on the ground in silence.² They have thrown dirt on their heads; They have dressed in sackcloth.³ Jerusalem's young women⁴ stare down at the ground.⁵

כ (Kaf)

2:11 My eyes are worn out⁶ from weeping;⁷ my stomach is in knots.⁸ My heart⁹ is poured out on the ground

due to the destruction¹⁰ of my helpless people;¹¹ children and infants faint in the town squares.

ל (Lamed)

2:12 Children¹² say to their mothers,¹³ "Where are food and drink?"¹⁴ They faint¹⁵ like a wounded warrior in the city squares. They die slowly¹⁶ in their mothers' arms.¹⁷

מ (Mem)

2:13 With what can I equate¹⁸ you? To what can I compare you, O Daughter Jerusalem?

¹ **tc** Consonantal יִשְׁבוּ (*yshvy*) is vocalized by the MT as יִשְׁבוּ (*yeshvu*), Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from יָשַׁב (*yashav*, "to sit"): "they sit on the ground." However, the ancient versions (Aramaic Targum, Greek Septuagint, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate) reflect an alternate vocalization tradition of יָשָׁבוּ (*yashvu*), Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from שָׁוָה (*shuv*, "to return"): "they return to the ground (= the grave)." The parallelism with the following line favors the MT.

² **tn** Heb "they sit on the ground, they are silent." Based on meter, the two verbs יִשְׁבוּ ... יָשִׁיבוּ (*yeshvu...yid'emu*, "they sit... they are silent") are in the same half of the line. Joined without a ו (vav) conjunction they form a verbal hendiadys. The first functions in its full verbal sense while the second functions adverbially: "they sit in silence." The verb יָשִׁיבוּ (*yid'emu*) may mean to be silent or to wail.

³ **tn** Heb "they have girded themselves with sackcloth."

^{sn} Along with putting dirt on one's head, wearing sackcloth was a sign of mourning.

⁴ **tn** Heb "the virgins of Jerusalem." The term "virgins" is a metonymy of association, standing for single young women who are not yet married. These single women are in grief because their potential suitors have been killed. The elders, old men, and young women function together as a merism for all of the survivors (F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* [IBC], 92).

⁵ **tn** Heb "have bowed down their heads to the ground."

⁶ **tn** Heb "my eyes are spent" or "my eyes fail." The verb בָּלָה (*kalah*) is used of eyes exhausted by weeping (Job 11:20; 17:5; Ps 69:4; Jer 14:6; 4:17), and means either "to be spent" (BDB 477 s.v. 2.b) or "to fail" (HALOT 477 s.v. 6). It means to have used up all one's tears or to have worn out the eyes because of so much crying. It is rendered variously: "my eyes fail" (KJV, NIV), "my eyes are spent" (RSV, NRSV, NASB, NJPS), "my eyes are worn out" (TEV), and "my eyes are red" (CEV).

⁷ **tn** Heb "because of tears." The plural noun דְּמִי'וֹת (*dim'ot*, "tears") is an example of the plural of intensity or repeated behavior: "many tears." The more common singular form דְּמִי'הָ (*dim'ah*) normally functions in a collective sense ("tears"); therefore, the plural form here does not indicate simple plural of number.

⁸ **tn** Heb "my bowels burn" or "my bowels are in a ferment." The verb הִרְבִּירוּ (*khomarm'ru*) is an unusual form and derived from a debated root: Poalal perfect 3rd person common plural from הִרְבָּרָה (*khamar*, "to be red," HALOT 330 s.v. III רִבֵּר) or Pe'al perfect 3rd person common plural from הִרְבָּרָה (*khamar*, "to ferment, boil up," BDB 330 s.v. I רִבֵּר). The Poalal stem of this verb occurs only three times in OT: with פָּנִים (*panim*, "face," Job 16:16) and בָּנִים (*me'im*, "bowels," Lam 1:20; 2:11). The phrase הִרְבִּירוּ בָנֵי (*khomarm'ru me'ay*) means "my bowels burned" (HALOT 330 s.v.) or "my bowels are in a ferment," as a euphemism for lower-intestinal bowel problems (BDB 330 s.v.). This phrase also occurs in later rabbinic literature (*m. Sanhedrin* 7:2). The present translation, "my stomach is in knots," is not a literal equivalent to this Hebrew idiom; however, it is an attempt to approximate the equivalent English idiom.

⁹ **tn** Heb "my liver," viewed as the seat of the emotions.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "on account of the breaking."

¹¹ **tn** Heb "the daughter of my people." Rather than a genitive of relationship ("daughter of X"), the phrase בַּת־אֹמְמִי (*bat-ammi*) is probably a genitive of apposition. The idiom "Daughter X" occurs often in Lamentations: "Daughter Jerusalem" (2x), "Daughter Zion" (7x), "Virgin Daughter Zion" (1x), "Daughter of My People" (5x), "Daughter Judah" (2x), and "Virgin Daughter Judah" (1x). In each case, it is a poetic description of Jerusalem or Judah as a whole. The idiom בַּת־אֹמְמִי (*bat-ammi*, lit., "daughter of my people" is rendered variously by the English versions: "the daughter of my people" (KJV, RSV, NASB), "my people" (NIV, TEV, CEV), and "my poor people" (NJPS). The metaphor here pictures the people as vulnerable and weak.

¹² **tn** Heb "they"; the referent has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹³ **tn** Heb "to their mother," understood as a collective singular.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "Where is bread and wine?" The terms "bread" and "wine" are synecdoches of specific (= bread, wine) for general (= food, drink).

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "as they faint" or "when they faint."

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "as their life is poured out." The term הִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ (*b^hhishtappekh*), Hitpaal infinitive construct + the preposition ב (*bet*), from שָׁפַךְ (*shafakh*, "to pour out") may be rendered "as they expire" (BDB 1050 s.v. שָׁפַךְ), referring to the process of dying. Note the repetition of the word "pour out" with various direct objects in this poem at 2:4, 11, 12, and 19.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "chest, lap."

¹⁸ **tc** The MT reads אֲדַעְךָ (*a'de'ekh*), Hiphil imperfect 1st person common singular + 2fs suffix from עָדָה (*adah*, "to testify"): "[How] can I testify for you?" However, Latin Vulgate *comparabo te* reflects the reading אֲעַרְכָּךָ (*e'erakh*), Qal imperfect 1st person common singular from עָרַךְ (*arakh*, "to liken"): "[To what] can I liken [you]?" The verb עָרַךְ (*arakh*) normally means "to lay out, set in rows; to get ready, set in order; to line up for battle, set battle formation," but it also may denote "to compare (as a result of arranging in order), to make equal" (e.g., Pss 40:6; 89:6 [HT 7]; Job 28:17, 19; Isa 40:18; 44:7). The BHS editors suggest the emendation which involves simple orthographic confusion between ר (*resh*) and ד (*daleth*), and deletion of י (*yod*) that the MT added to make sense of the form. The variant is favored based on internal evidence: (1) it is the more difficult reading because the meaning "to compare" for עָרַךְ (*arakh*) is less common than עָדָה (*adah*, "to testify"), (2) it recovers a tight parallelism between עָרַךְ (*arakh*, "to liken") and דָּמָה (*damah*, "to compare") (e.g., Ps 89:6 [HT 7]; Isa 40:18), and (3) the MT reading: "How can I testify for you?" makes little sense in the context. Nevertheless, most English versions hold to the MT reading: KJV, RSV, NRSV, NASB, NIV, TEV, CEV. This textual emendation was first proposed by J. Meinhold, "Threni 2.13," *ZAW* 15 (1895): 286.

To what can I liken you¹
so that² I might comfort you, O Virgin
Daughter Zion?
Your wound is as deep³ as the sea.⁴
Who can heal you?⁵

נ (Nun)

2:14 Your prophets saw visions for you
that were worthless lies.⁶
They failed to expose your sin
so as to restore your fortunes.⁷
They saw oracles for you
that were worthless⁸ lies.

ד (Samek)

2:15 All who passed by on the road
clapped their hands to mock you.⁹
They sneered and shook their heads
at Daughter Jerusalem.
“Ha! Is this the city they called¹⁰
“The perfection of beauty,¹¹

the source of joy of the whole earth!”¹²

פ (Pe)

2:16 All your enemies
gloated over you.¹³
They sneered and gnashed their teeth;
they said, “We have destroyed¹⁴ her!
Ha! We have waited a long time for this
day.
We have lived to see it!”¹⁵

צ (Ayin)

2:17 The LORD has done what he planned;
he has fulfilled¹⁶ his promise¹⁷
that he threatened¹⁸ long ago.¹⁹
He has overthrown you without mercy²⁰
and has enabled the enemy to gloat over
you;
he has exalted your adversaries’ power.²¹

¹ **tc** The MT reads *מה אשוהיך ואנהיך* (*mah 'ashveh-lakh va'anakhamekh*, “To what can I compare you so that I might comfort you?”). The LXX reflects a *Vorlage* of *מי יושיע לך וגויה* *מי יושיע לך וגויה* (*mi yoshia' lakh v'nikham'ekha*, “Who will save you so that he might comfort you?”). This textual variant reflects several cases of orthographic confusion between similarly spelled words. The MT best explains the origin of the LXX textual variants. Internal evidence of contextual congruence favors the MT as the original reading.

² **tn** The *vav* (vav) prefixed to *ואנהיך* (*va'anakhamekh*, “I might comfort you”) denotes purpose: “so that...”

³ **tn** Heb “as great as the sea.”

⁴ **tc** The MT reads *כמים* (*kayyam*, “as the sea”), while the LXX reflects a *Vorlage* of *כוס* (*kos*, “a cup”). The textual variant is probably due to simple orthographic confusion between letters of similar appearance. The idiomatic expression favors the MT.

⁵ **sn** The rhetorical question implies a denial: “No one can heal you!” The following verses, 14-17, present four potential healers – prophets, passersby, enemies, and God.

⁶ **tn** Heb “emptiness and whitewash.” The nouns *תפיל* (*shv' v'tafel*) form a nominal hendiadys. The first noun functions adjectivally, modifying the second noun that retains its full nominal sense: “empty whitewash” or “empty deceptions” (see following translation note on meaning of *תפיל* [*tafel*]). The noun *תפיל* (*tafel*, “whitewash”) is used literally in reference to a white-washed wall (Ezek 13:10, 11, 14, 15) and figuratively in reference to false prophets (Ezek 22:28).

⁷ **tc** The Kethib *שבתיה* (*sh'vitekh*) and Qere *שבתיה* (*sh'vutekh*), which is preserved in many medieval Hebrew mss here and elsewhere (Ps 85:2 HT [85:1 ET]; 126:4; Job 42:10), are struggling with the root. The ancient versions take it from *שבתה* (*shavah*) meaning “captivity.” Such a meaning is not tenable for the Job passage, which along with a similar phrase in the Sefire inscription suggest that the proper meaning is “to restore someone’s fortunes.”

⁸ **tn** The nouns *מרהימים* (*shav' umaddukhim*, lit., “emptiness and enticements”) form a nominal hendiadys. The first functions adjectivally, modifying the second noun that retains its nominal sense: “empty enticements” or “false deceptions.” The noun *מרהימים* (*madduakh*), meaning “enticement” or “transgression” is a *hapax legomenon* (term that appears only once in the Hebrew OT). It is related to the verb *נדה* (*nada-kh*, “to entice, lead astray”) which is often used in reference to idolatry.

⁹ **tn** Heb “clap their hands at you.” Clapping hands at someone was an expression of malicious glee, derision and mockery (Num 24:10; Job 27:23; Lam 2:15).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “of which they said.”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “perfection of beauty.” The noun *יופי* (*yofi*, “beauty”) functions as a genitive of respect in relation to the preced-

ing construct noun: Jerusalem was perfect in respect to its physical beauty.

¹² **tn** Heb “the joy of all the earth.” This is similar to statements found in Pss 48:2 and 50:2.

¹³ **tn** Heb “they have opened wide their mouth against you.”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “We have swallowed!”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “We have attained, we have seen!” The verbs *קצאנו* (*matsa'nu ra'inu*) form a verbal hendiadys in which the first retains its full verbal sense and the second functions as an object complement. It forms a Hebrew idiom that means something like, “We have lived to see it!” The three asyndetic 1st person common plural statements in 2:16 (“We waited, we destroyed, we saw!”) are spoken in an impassioned, staccato style reflecting the delight of the conquerors.

¹⁶ **tn** The verb *בצט* (*batsa'*) has a broad range of meanings: (1) “to cut off, break off,” (2) “to injure” a person, (3) “to gain by violence,” (4) “to finish, complete” and (5) “to accomplish, fulfill” a promise.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “His word.” When used in collocation with the verb *בצט* (*batsa'*, “to fulfill,” see previous **tn**), the accusative noun *אמרה* (*imrah*) means “promise.”

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “commanded” or “decreed.” If a reference to prophetic oracles is understood, then “decreed” is preferable. If understood as a reference to the warnings in the covenant, then “threatened” is a preferable rendering.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “from days of old.”

²⁰ **tn** Heb “He has overthrown and has not shown mercy.” The two verbs *תרה ולא חמלה* (*kharas v'lo' khamal*) form a verbal hendiadys in which the first retains its verbal sense and the second functions adverbially: “He has overthrown you without mercy.” *ולא חמלה* (*v'lo' khamal*) alludes to 2:2.

²¹ **tn** Heb “He has exalted the horn of your adversaries.” The term “horn” (*קרן*, *qeren*) normally refers to the horn of a bull, one of the most powerful animals in ancient Israel. This term is often used figuratively as a symbol of strength, usually in reference to the military might of an army (Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:1, 10; 2 Sam 22:3; Pss 18:3 HT [18:2 ET]; 75:11 HT [75:10 ET]; 89:18, 25 HT [89:17, 24 ET]; 92:11 HT [92:10 ET]; 112:9; 1 Chr 25:5; Jer 48:25; Lam 2:3; Ezek 29:21), just as warriors are sometimes figuratively described as “bulls.” To lift up the horn often means to boast and to lift up someone else’s horn is to give victory or cause to boast.

צ (Tsade)

2:18 Cry out¹ from your heart² to the Lord,³
O wall of Daughter Zion!⁴
Make your tears flow like a river
all day and all night long!⁵
Do not rest;
do not let your tears⁶ stop!

ק (Qof)

2:19 Get up! Cry out in the night⁷
when the night watches start!⁸
Pour out your heart⁹ like water

before the face of the Lord!¹⁰
Lift up your hands¹¹ to him
for your children's lives;¹²
they are fainting¹³
at every street corner.¹⁴

Jerusalem Speaks:

ר (Resh)

2:20 Look, O LORD! Consider!¹⁵
Whom have you ever afflicted¹⁶ like this?
Should women eat their offspring,¹⁷
their healthy infants?¹⁸
Should priest and prophet
be killed in the Lord's¹⁹ sanctuary?

ש (Sin/Shin)

2:21 The young boys and old men
lie dead on the ground in the streets.

¹ **tc** The MT reads צעק אל אדוני (tsa'aq libbam el-'adonay, "their heart cried out to the Lord") which neither matches the second person address characterizing 2:13-19 nor is in close parallel to the rest of verse 18. Since the perfect צעק (tsa'aq, "cry out") is apparently parallel to imperatives, it could be understood as a precativ ("let their heart cry out"), although this understanding still has the problem of being in the third person. The BHS editors and many text critics suggest emending the MT צעק (tsa'aq), Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular, to צעקי (tsa'aqi), Qal imperative 2nd person masculine singular: "Cry out!" This restores a tighter parallelism with the two 2nd person masculine singular imperatives introducing the following lines: הורידני (horidi, "Let [your tears] flow down!") and אל תתני (al-titni, "Do not allow!"). In such a case, לבב (libbam) must be taken adverbially. For לבב (libbam, "their heart") see the following note. The adverbial translation loses a potential parallel to the mention of the heart in the next verse. Emending the noun to "your heart" while viewing the verb as a precativ perfect would maintain this connection.

² **tn** Heb "their heart" or "from the heart." Many English versions take the ב (mem) in לבב (libbam) as the 3rd person masculine plural pronominal suffix: "their heart" (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV, NJPS, CEV). However, others take it as an enclitic or adverbial ending: "from the heart" (cf. RSV, NRSV, TEV, NJPS margin). See T. F. McDaniel, "The Alleged Sumerian Influence upon Lamentations," *VT* 18 (1968): 203-4.

³ **tc** The MT reads אדוני (adonay, "the Lord") here rather than יהוה (YHWH, "the Lord"). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

⁴ **tn** The wall is a synecdoche of a part standing for the whole city.

⁵ **tn** Heb "day and night." The expression "day and night" forms a merism which encompasses everything in between two polar opposites: "from dawn to dusk" or "all day and all night long."

⁶ **tn** Heb "the daughter of your eye." The term "eye" functions as a metonymy for "tears" that are produced by the eyes. Jeremiah exhorts personified Jerusalem to cry out to the Lord day and night without ceasing in repentance and genuine sorrow for its sins.

⁷ **tc** The Kethib is written בלילה (ballayil) a defective spelling for בלילה (ballaylah, "night"). The Qere reads בלילה (ballaylah, "night"), which is preserved in numerous medieval Hebrew MSS.

tn The noun בלילה (ballaylah, "night") functions as an adverbial accusative of time: "in the night."

⁸ **tn** Heb "at the head of the watches."

⁹ **tn** The noun לבב (levav, "heart") functions here as a metonymy of association for the thoughts and emotions in the heart. The Hebrew לבב (levav) includes the mind so that in some cases the translation "heart" implies an inappropriate division between the cognitive and affective. This context is certainly emotionally loaded, but as part of a series of admonitions to address God in prayer, these emotions are inextricably bound with the thoughts of the mind. The singular "heart" is retained in the translation to be consistent with the personification of Jerusalem (cf. v. 18).

¹⁰ **tc** The MT reads אדוני (adonay, "the Lord") here rather than יהוה (YHWH, "the Lord"). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

¹¹ **sn** Lifting up the palms or hands is a metaphor for prayer.

¹² **tn** Heb "on account of the life of your children." The noun נפש (nefesh) refers to the "life" of their dying children (e.g., Lam 2:12). The singular noun נפש (nefesh, "life") is used as a collective, as the plural genitive noun that follows makes clear: "your children."

¹³ **tc** The BHS editors and many commentators suggest that the fourth bicola in 2:19 is a late addition and should be deleted. Apart from the four sets of bicola in 1:7 and 2:19, every stanza in chapters 1-4 consists of three sets of bicola.

tn Heb "who are fainting."

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "at the head of every street."

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "Look, O Lord! See!" When used in collocation with verbs of cognition, ראה (ra'ah) means "to see for oneself" or "to take notice" (1 Sam 26:12). The parallelism between seeing and understanding is often emphasized (e.g., Exod 16:6; Isa 5:19; 29:15; Job 11:11; Eccl 6:5). See also 1:11 and cf. 1:9, 12, 20; 3:50, 59, 60; 5:1.

sn Integral to battered Jerusalem's appeal, and part of the ancient Near Eastern lament genre, is the request for God to look at her pain. This should evoke pity regardless of the reason for punishment. The request is not for God to see merely that there are misfortunes, as one might note items on a checklist. The cognitive (facts) and affective (feelings) are not divided. The plea is for God to watch, think about, and be affected by these facts while listening to the petitioner's perspective.

¹⁶ **tn** For the nuance "afflict" see the note at 1:12.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "their fruit." The term פרי (p'ri, "fruit") is used figuratively to refer to children as the fruit of a mother's womb (e.g., Gen 30:2; Deut 7:13; 28:4, 11, 18, 53; 30:9; Pss 21:11; 127:3; 132:11; Isa 13:18; Mic 6:7).

¹⁸ **tn** Heb "infants of healthy childbirth." The genitive-construc phrase עולל בריהו (olale tippukhim) functions as an attributive genitive construction: "healthy newborn infants." The noun תפוקה (tippukhim) appears only here. It is related to the verb יפקח (yafakh), meaning "to give birth to a healthy child" or "to raise children" depending on whether the Arabic or Akkadian cognate is emphasized. For the related verb, see below at 2:22.

sn Placing the specific reference to children at the end of the line in apposition to clarify that it does not describe the normal eating of fruit helps produce the repulsive shock of the image. Furthermore, the root of the word for "infants" (עולל, 'olel) has the same root letters for the verb "to afflict" (עולל, 'olel) occurring in the first line of the verse, making a pun (F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* [IBC], 99-100).

¹⁹ **tc** The MT reads אדוני (adonay, "the Lord") here rather than יהוה (YHWH, "the Lord") as at the beginning of the verse. See the **tc** note at 1:14.

My young women¹ and my young men
have fallen by the sword.
You killed them when you were angry,²
you slaughtered them without mercy.³

ת (Tav)

2:22 As if it were a feast day, you call⁴
enemies⁵ to terrify me⁶ on every side.⁷
On the day of the LORD's anger
no one escaped or survived.
My enemy has finished off
those healthy infants whom I bore⁸ and
raised.⁹

The Prophet Speaks:

ס (Alef)¹⁰

3:1 I am the man¹¹ who has experienced¹²
affliction
from the rod¹³ of his wrath.
3:2 He drove me into captivity¹⁴ and made
me walk¹⁵
in darkness and not light.
3:3 He repeatedly¹⁶ attacks me,
he turns his hand¹⁷ against me all day
long.¹⁸

¹⁰ **sn** The nature of the acrostic changes here. Each of the three lines in each verse, not just the first, begins with the corresponding letter of the alphabet.

¹¹ **tn** The noun נָגִיד (*gever*, "man") refers to a strong man, distinguished from women, children, and other non-combatants whom he is to defend. According to W. F. Lananah the speaking voice in this chapter is that of a defeated soldier ("The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations" *JBL* 93 [1974]: 41-49.) F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp (*Lamentations* [IBC], 108) argues that it is the voice of an "everyman" although "one might not unreasonably suppose that some archetypal communal figure like the king does in fact stand in the distant background."

¹² **tn** The verb רָאָה (*ra'ah*, "to see") has a broad range of meanings, including (1) "to see" as to learn from experience and (2) "to see" as to experience (e.g., Gen 20:10; Ps 89:49; Eccl 5:17; Jer 5:12; 14:13; 20:18; 42:14; Zeph 3:15). Here it means that the speaker has experienced these things. The same Hebrew verb occurs in 2:20 where the Lord is asked to "see" (translated "Consider!"), although it is difficult to maintain this connection in an English translation.

¹³ **tn** The noun שֶׁבֶט (*shevet*, "rod") refers to the weapon used for smiting an enemy (Exod 21:20; 2 Sam 23:21; 1 Chr 11:3; Isa 10:15; Mic 4:14 HT [5:1 ET]) and instrument of child-discipline (Prov 10:13; 22:15; 29:15). It is used figuratively to describe discipline of the individual (Job 9:34; 21:9; 37:13; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:33) and the nation (Isa 10:5, 24; 14:29; 30:31).

¹⁴ **tn** The verb נָהַג (*nahag*) describes the process of directing (usually a group of) something along a route, hence commonly "to drive," when describing flocks, caravans, or prisoners and spoils of war (1 Sam 23:5; 30:2). But with people it may also have a positive connotation "to shepherd" or "to guide" (Ps 48:14; 80:1). The line plays on this through the reversal of expectations. Rather than being safely shepherded by the Lord their king, he has driven them away into captivity.

¹⁵ **tn** The Hiphil of הָלַךְ (*halakh*, "to walk") may be nuanced either "brought" (BDB 236 s.v. 1) or "caused to walk" (BDB 237 s.v. 5a).

¹⁶ **tn** The two verbs יָשַׁב וְיָשַׁב (*yashuv yahafokh*, "he returns, he turns") form a verbal hendiadys: the second verb retains its full verbal sense, while the first functions adverbially: "he repeatedly turns..." The verb שׁוּב (*shuv*, lit., "to return") functions adverbially to denote repetition: "to do repeatedly, do again and again" (GKC 386-87 §120.d, g) (Gen 26:18; 30:31; Num 11:4; Judg 19:7; 1 Sam 3:5, 6; 1 Kgs 13:33; 19:6; 21:3; 2 Chr 33:3; Job 10:16; 17:10; Ps 7:13; Jer 18:4; 36:28; Lam 3:3; Dan 9:25; Zech 5:1; 6:1; Mal 1:4).

¹⁷ **tn** The idiom "to turn the hand against" someone is a figurative expression denoting hostility. The term "hand" (יָד, *yad*) is often used in idioms denoting hostility (Exod 9:3, 15; Deut 2:15; Judg 2:15; 1 Sam 5:3, 6, 9; 6:9; 2 Sam 24:16; 2 Chr 30:12; Ezra 7:9; Job 19:21; Ps 109:27; Jer 15:17; 16:21; Ezek 3:14). The reference to God's "hand" is anthropomorphic.

¹⁸ **tn** **Heb** "all of the day." The idiom כָּל־הַיּוֹם (*kol-hayom*, "all day") means "continually" or "all day long" (Gen 6:5; Deut 28:32; 33:12; Pss 25:5; 32:3; 35:28; 37:26; 38:7, 13; 42:4, 11; 44:9, 16, 23; 52:3; 56:2, 3, 6; 71:8, 15, 24; 72:15; 73:14; 74:22; 86:3; 88:18; 89:17; 102:9; 119:97; Prov 21:26; 23:17; Isa 28:24; 51:13; 52:5; 65:2, 5; Jer 20:7, 8;

¹ **tn** **Heb** "virgins." The term "virgin" probably functions as a metonymy of association for single young women.

² **tn** **Heb** "in the day of your anger." The construction בַּיּוֹם (*bayom*, "in the day of...") is a common Hebrew idiom, meaning "when..." (e.g., Gen 2:4; Lev 7:35; Num 3:1; Deut 4:15; 2 Sam 22:1; Pss 18:1; 138:3; Zech 8:9). This temporal idiom refers to a general time period, but uses the term "day" as a forceful rhetorical device to emphasize the vividness and drama of the event, depicting it as occurring within a single day. In the ancient Near East, military minded kings often referred to a successful campaign as "the day of X" in order to portray themselves as powerful conquerors who, as it were, could inaugurate and complete a victory military campaign within the span of one day.

³ **tn** The MT reads לֹא הִמְלִיטָהּ (*lo' khamalta*, "You showed no mercy"). However, many medieval Hebrew mss and most of the ancient versions (Aramaic Targum, Syriac Peshitta and Latin Vulgate) read וְלֹא הִמְלִיטָהּ (*u'lo' khamalta*, "and You showed no mercy").

⁴ **tn** The syntax of the line is awkward. English versions vary considerably in how they render it: "Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about" (KJV), "Thou hast called, as in the day of a solemn assembly, my terrors on every side" (ASV), "You did call as in the day of an appointed feast my terrors on every side" (NASB), "Thou didst invite as to the day of an appointed feast my terrors on every side" (RSV), "As you summon to a feast day, so you summoned against me terrors on every side" (NIV), "You summoned, as on a festival, my neighbors from roundabout" (NJPS), "You invited my enemies to hold a carnival of terror all around me" (TEV), "You invited my enemies like guests for a party" (CEV).

⁵ **tn** The term "enemies" is supplied in the translation as a clarification.

⁶ **tn** **Heb** "my terrors" or "my enemies." The expression מַעֲרָיִים (*m'garayim*, "my terrors") is difficult and may refer to either enemies, the terror associated with facing enemies, or both.

⁷ **tn** **Heb** "surrounding me."

⁸ **tn** The meaning of the verb תָּפַח (*tafakh*) is debated: (1) BDB suggests that it is derived from תָּפַח (*tafah*, "to extend, spread" the hands) and here means "to carry in the palm of one's hands" (BDB 381 s.v. תָּפַח 2). (2) HALOT 378 s.v. II תָּפַח suggests that it is derived from the root II תָּפַח (*tafakh*) and means "to give birth to healthy children." The recent lexicons suggest that it is related to Arabic *tafaha* "to bring forth fully formed children" and to Akkadian *tuppu* "to raise children." The use of this particular term highlights the tragic irony of what the army of Babylon has done: it has destroyed the lives of perfectly healthy children whom the women of Israel had raised.

⁹ **tn** This entire line is an accusative noun clause, functioning as the direct object of the following line: "my enemy has destroyed the perfectly healthy children...." Normal word order in Hebrew is: verb + subject + direct object. Here, the accusative direct object clause is moved forward for rhetorical emphasis: those whom the Babylonians killed had been children born perfectly healthy and well raised ... what a tragic loss of perfectly good human life!

ב (Bet)

3:4 He has made my mortal skin¹ waste away;
he has broken my bones.
3:5 He has besieged² and surrounded³ me with bitter hardship.⁴
3:6 He has made me reside in deepest darkness⁵
like those who died long ago.

ג (Gimel)

3:7 He has walled me in⁶ so that I cannot get out;
he has weighted me down with heavy prison chains.⁷
3:8 Also, when I cry out desperately⁸ for help,⁹
he has shut out my prayer.¹⁰

Lam 1:13; 3:14, 62; Hos 12:2).

¹ **tn** Heb “my flesh and my skin.” The two nouns joined with ו (vav) (בְּשָׁרִי וּבְעוֹרִי, (*basari v’ori*, “my flesh and my skin”), form a nominal hendiadys: the first functions adjectivally and the second retains its full nominal sense: “my mortal skin.”

² **tn** Heb “he has built against me.” The verb בָּנָה (*banah*, “to build”) followed by the preposition עַל (“al,” “against”) often refers to the action of building siege-works against a city, that is, to besiege a city (e.g., Deut 20:2; 2 Kgs 25:1; Eccl 9:14; Jer 52:4; Ezek 4:2; 17:17; 21:27). Normally, an explicit accusative direct object is used (e.g., מְצוֹרִים [matsorim] or מְצוֹרֵי [matsorim]); however, here, the expression is used absolutely without an explicit accusative [BDB 124 s.v. בָּנָה 1a.ה.].

³ **tn** The verb נָקָה (*naqaf*, “to surround”) refers to the military action of an army surrounding a besieged city by placing army encampments all around the city, to prevent anyone in the city from escaping (2 Kgs 6:14; 11:8; Pss 17:9; 88:18; Job 19:6).

⁴ **tn** Heb “with bitterness and hardship.” The nouns רָאשׁ וְהִלָּאָה (*ro’sh u’la’ah*, lit. “bitterness and hardship”) function as adverbial accusatives of manner: “with bitterness and hardship.” The two nouns רָאשׁ וְהִלָּאָה (*ro’sh u’la’ah*, “bitterness and hardship”) form a nominal hendiadys: the second retains its full nominal sense, while the first functions adverbially: “bitter hardship.” The noun הִלָּאָה (*ro’sh*, “bitterness”) should not be confused with the common homonymic root ל ראשׁ (*ro’sh*, “head”). The noun הִלָּאָה (*la’ah*, “hardship”) is used elsewhere in reference to the distress of Israel in Egypt (Num 20:14), in the wilderness (Exod 18:8), and in exile (Neh 9:32).

⁵ **tn** The plural form of the noun מְחַשְׁבִּים (*makhshakkim*, “darknesses”) is an example of the plural of intensity (see *IBHS* 122 §7.4.3a).

⁶ **tn** The verb גָּרַד (*garad*) has a two-fold range of meanings: (1) “to build up a wall” with stones, and (2) “to block a road” with a wall of stones. The imagery depicts the LORD building a wall to seal off personified Jerusalem with no way of escape out of the city, or the LORD blocking the road of escape. Siege imagery prevails in 3:4-6, but 3:7-9 pictures an unsuccessful escape that is thwarted due to blocked roads in 3:7 and 3:9.

⁷ **tn** Heb “he has made heavy my chains.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “I call and I cry out.” The verbs יָצַע וְאָשָׂה (*ez’aq va’asha’vva’*, “I call and I cry out”) form a verbal hendiadys: the second retains its full verbal sense, while the first functions adverbially: “I cry out desperately.”

⁹ **tn** The verb שָׁעַר (“to cry out”) usually refers to calling out to God for help or deliverance from a lamentable plight (e.g., Job 30:20; 36:13; 38:41; Pss 5:3; 18:7, 42; 22:25; 28:2; 30:3; 31:23; 88:14; 119:147; Isa 58:9; Lam 3:8; Jon 2:3; Hab 1:2).

¹⁰ **tn** The verb שָׁתַם (*satam*) is a *hapax legomenon* (term that appears in the Hebrew scriptures only once) that means “to stop up” or “shut out.” It functions as an idiom here, meaning “he has shut his ears to my prayer” (BDB 979 s.v.).

3:9 He has blocked¹¹ every road I take¹² with a wall of hewn stones;
he has made every path impassable.¹³

ד (Dalet)

3:10 To me he is like a bear lying in ambush,¹⁴
like a hidden lion¹⁵ stalking its prey.¹⁶
3:11 He has obstructed my paths¹⁷ and torn me to pieces;¹⁸
he has made me desolate.
3:12 He drew¹⁹ his bow and made me²⁰ the target for his arrow.

ה (He)

3:13 He shot²¹ his arrows²² into my heart.²³
3:14 I have become the laughingstock of all people,²⁴
their mocking song²⁵ all day long.²⁶

¹¹ **tn** The verb גָּרַד (*garad*) has a two-fold range of meanings: (1) “to build up a wall” with stones, and (2) “to block a road” with a wall of stones. The collocated terms דְּרָכַי (*d’rakhay*, “my roads”) in 3:9 clearly indicate that the second category of meaning is in view.

¹² **tn** Heb “my roads.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “he had made my paths crooked.” The implication is that the paths by which one might escape cannot be traversed.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “he is to me [like] a bear lying in wait.”

¹⁵ **tc** The Kethib is written אַרְיָה (*aryeh*, “lion”), while the Qere is אַרִי (*ari*, “lion”), simply a short spelling of the same term (BDB 71 s.v. אַרְיָה).

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “a lion in hiding places.”

¹⁷ **tn** Or “he made my paths deviate.”

¹⁸ **tn** “Since the Heb. וַיִּפְשְׁתֵּי (*vaypash’ekheni*) occurs only here, and the translation relies on the Syriac and the Targum, it is not certain that the image of God as a predatory animal continues into this verse especially since [the beginning of the verse] is also of uncertain meaning” (D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations* [AB], 54).

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “bent.”

²⁰ **tn** Heb “and set me as the target.”

²¹ **tn** The Hiphil stem of בּוֹא (*bo’*, lit., “cause to come in”) here means “to shoot” arrows.

²² **tn** Heb “sons of his quiver.” This idiom refers to arrows (BDB 121 s.v. בֵּן 6). The term “son” (בֵּן, *ben*) is often used idiomatically with a following genitive, e.g., “son of flame” = sparks (Job 5:7), “son of a constellation” = stars (Job 38:22), “son of a bow” = arrows (Job 41:2), “son of a quiver” = arrows (Lam 3:13), “son of threshing-floor” = corn (Isa 21:10).

²³ **tn** Heb “my kidneys.” In Hebrew anthropology, the kidneys are often portrayed as the most sensitive and vital part of man. Poetic texts sometimes portray a person fatally wounded, being shot by the LORD’s arrows in the kidneys (Job 16:13; here in Lam 3:13). The equivalent English idiomatic counterpart is the heart, which is employed in the present translation.

²⁴ **tc** The MT reads עַמִּי (*ammi*, “my people”). Many medieval Hebrew MSS read עַמִּים (*ammim*, “peoples”), as reflected also in Syriac Peshitta. The internal evidence (contextual congruence) favors the variant עַמִּים (*ammim*, “peoples”).

²⁵ **tn** The noun נִיגִינָה (*niginah*) is a musical term: (1) “music” played on strings (Isa 38:20; Lam 5:14), (2) a technical musical term (Pss 4:1; 6:1; 54:1; 55:1; 67:1; 76:1; Hab 3:19) and (3) “mocking song” (Pss 69:13; 77:7; Job 30:9; Lam 3:14). The parallelism with שִׂדּוֹן “laughingstock” indicates that the latter category of meaning is in view.

²⁶ **tn** Heb “all of the day.” The idiom כּוֹל־הַיּוֹם (*kol-hayyom*, “all day”) means “continually” (Gen 6:5; Deut 28:32; 33:12; Pss 25:5; 32:3; 35:28; 37:26; 38:7, 13; 42:4, 11; 44:9, 16, 23; 52:3; 56:2, 3, 6; 71:8, 15, 24; 72:15; 73:14; 74:22; 86:3;

3:15 He has given me my fill of bitter herbs
and made me drunk with bitterness.⁴

י (Vav)

3:16 He ground² my teeth in gravel;
he trampled³ me in the dust.

3:17 I⁴ am deprived⁵ of peace;⁶
I have forgotten what happiness⁷ is.

3:18 So I said, “My endurance has expired;
I have lost all hope of deliverance⁸ from
the LORD.”

י (Zayin)

3:19 Remember⁹ my impoverished and
homeless condition,¹⁰
which is a bitter poison.¹¹

3:20 I¹² continually think about¹³ this,
and I¹⁴ am depressed.¹⁵

88:18; 89:17; 102:9; 119:97; Prov 21:26; 23:17; Isa 28:24; 51:13; 52:5; 65:2, 5; Jer 20:7, 8; Lam 1:13; 3:3, 62; Hos 12:2).

¹ **tn** Heb “wormwood” or “bitterness” (BDB 542 s.v. לְעֵבֶד; HALOT 533 s.v. לְעֵבֶד).

² **tn** Heb “crushed.”

³ **tn** The Hiphil stem of כָּפַשׁ (*kafash*) means “to tread down” or “make someone cower.” It is rendered variously: “trampled me in the dust” (NIV), “covered me with ashes” (KJV, NKJV), “ground me into the dust” (NJPS), “made me cower in ashes” (RSV, NRSV), “rubbed my face in the ground” (TEV) and “rubbed me in the dirt” (CEV).

⁴ **tn** Heb “my soul.” The term נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”) is used as a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= I).

⁵ **tc** The MT reads וַתִּזְנֶה (*vattiznah*), vav (ו) consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person feminine singular from זָנָה (*zanakh*, “to reject”), resulting in the awkward phrase “my soul rejected from peace.” The LXX καὶ ἀπόσαστο (*kai apōsato*) reflects a Vorlage of וַיִּזְנֶה (*vayiznah*), vav (ו) consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person masculine singular from זָנָה (*zanakh*): “He deprives my soul of peace.” Latin Vulgate *repulsa est* reflects a Vorlage of וַתִּזְנֶה (*vattiznah*), vav (ו) consecutive + Niphal preterite 3rd person feminine singular from זָנָה (*zanakh*): “My soul is excluded from peace.” The MT best explains the origin of the LXX and Vulgate readings. The מ (*mem*) beginning the next word may have been an enclitic on the verb rather than a preposition on the noun. This would be the only Qal occurrence of זָנָה (*zanakh*) used with the preposition מִן (*min*). Placing the מ (*mem*) on the noun would have created the confusion leading to the changes made by the LXX and Vulgate. HALOT 276 s.v. מִן attempts to deal with the problem lexically by positing a meaning “to exclude from” for מִן זָנָה (*zanakh*) plus מִן (*min*), but also allows that the Niphal may be the correct reading.

⁶ **tn** Heb “from peace.” H. Hummel suggests that שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*) is the object and the מ (*mem*) is not the preposition מִן (*min*), but an enclitic on the verb (“Enclitic Mem in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially in Hebrew” JBL 76 [1957]: 105). שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*) has a wide range of meaning. The connotation is that there is no peace within; the speaker is too troubled for any calm to take hold.

⁷ **tn** Heb “goodness.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “and my hope from the LORD.” The hope is for deliverance. The words, “I have lost all...” have been supplied in the translation in order to clarify the Hebrew idiom for the English reader.

⁹ **tc** The LXX records ἐμνησθήην (*emnēsthēn*, “I remember”) which may reflect a first singular form זָכַרְתִּי (*zakharti*) whereas the MT preserves the form זָכַר (*zakhor*) which may be Qal imperative 2nd person masculine singular (“Remember!”) or infinitive construct (“To remember...”). A 2nd person masculine singular imperative would most likely address God. In the next verse נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”) is the subject of זָכַר (*zakhor*). If נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*) is also the subject here one would expect a 2fs Imperative זָכְרִי (*zikhri*) a form that stands in the middle of the MT’s זָכַר (*zakhor*) and the presumed זָכַרְתִּי (*zakharti*) read by the LXX. English versions are split between the options: “To recall” (NJPS), “Remember!” (RSV, NRSV, NASB), “Remembering” (KJV, NKJV), “I remember” (NIV).

tn The basic meaning of זָכַר (*zakhar*) is “to remember, call to mind” (HALOT 270 s.v. זָכַר). Although it is often used in reference to recollection of past events, it can also describe consideration of present situations: “to consider, think about” something present (BDB 270 s.v. 5).

¹⁰ **tn** The two nouns וְיָדָה וְרִדְדִי (*onyi um^orudi*, lit., “my poverty and my homelessness”) form a nominal hendiadys in which one noun functions adjectivally and the other retains its full nominal sense: “my impoverished homelessness” or “homeless poor” (GKC 397-98 §124.e). The nearly identical phrase is used in Lam 1:7 and Isa 58:7 (see GKC 226 §83.c), suggesting this was a Hebrew idiom. Jerusalem’s inhabitants were impoverished and homeless.

¹¹ **tn** The two nouns joined by ו (vav) לְעֵבֶד וְרִדְדִי (*la'ana varo'sh*, “wormwood and poison”) form a nominal hendiadys. The first retains its full verbal sense and the second functions adjectivally: “bitter poison.”

¹² **tc** The MT reads נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”); however, the Masoretic scribes preserve an alternate textual tradition, marked by the Tiquque Sopherim (“corrections by the scribes”) נַפְשֶׁךָ (*nafshekha*, “your soul”).

tn Heb “my soul.” The term נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”) is used as a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= I). The verb תִּזְכֹּר (*tizkor*) is Qal imperfect 3rd person feminine singular and the subject is נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”), though the term does not appear until the end of the verse functioning as the subject of both verbs. Due to the synecdoche, the line is translated as though the verb were 1st person common singular.

¹³ **tn** The infinitive absolute followed by an imperfect of the same root is an emphatic rhetorical statement: זָכַרְתִּי תִזְכֹּר (*zakhor tizkor*, “continually think”). Although the basic meaning of זָכַר (*zakhar*) is “to remember, call to mind” (HALOT 270 s.v. זָכַר), here it refers to consideration of a present situation: “to consider, think about” something present (BDB 270 s.v. זָכַר 5). The referent of the 3rd person feminine singular form of תִּזְכֹּר (*tizkor*) is the feminine singular noun נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”).

¹⁴ **tc** The MT reads נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”); however, the Masoretic scribes preserve an alternate textual tradition, included in some lists of the Tiquque Sopherim (“corrections by the scribes”) נַפְשֶׁךָ (*nafshekha*, “your soul”).

tn Heb “my soul...” or “your soul...” The term נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, “my soul”) is used as a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= I). Likewise, נַפְשֶׁךָ (*nafshekha*, “your soul”) is also a synecdoche of part (= your soul) for the whole person (= you).

¹⁵ **tc** The MT preserves the Kethib וַתִּשְׁחַךְ (*v^ttashiakh*), Qal imperfect 3rd person feminine singular from שָׁחַךְ (*shuakh*) + vav (ו) consecutive, while the Qere reads וַתִּשְׁחֹךְ (*v^ttashoakh*), Hiphil imperfect 3rd person feminine singular from שָׁחַךְ (*shuakh*) + vav (ו) consecutive. According to D. R. Hillers (*Lamentations* [AB], 56), the Kethib implies a Hiphil of שָׁחַךְ (*shuakh*) which is unclear due to a lack of parallels, and reads the Qere as from the root שָׁחַךְ (*shakhakh*) which has close parallels in Ps 42:6, 7, 11; 43:5. The conjectured meaning for שָׁחַךְ (*shuakh*) in BDB 1005 s.v. שָׁחַךְ is that of שָׁחַךְ (*shakhakh*). HALOT

3:21 But this I call⁴ to mind;²
therefore I have hope:

ח (Khet)

3:22 The LORD's loyal kindness³ never
ceases;⁴

his compassions⁵ never end.

3:23 They are fresh⁶ every morning;
your faithfulness is abundant!⁷

3:24 "My portion is the LORD," I have said
to myself,⁸
so I will put my hope in him.

ט (Tet)

3:25 The LORD is good to those who trust⁹
in him,
to the one¹⁰ who seeks him.

3:26 It is good to wait patiently¹¹
for deliverance from the LORD.¹²

3:27 It is good for a man¹³
to bear¹⁴ the yoke¹⁵ while he is young.¹⁶

י (Yod)

3:28 Let a person¹⁷ sit alone in silence,
when the LORD¹⁸ is disciplining him.¹⁹

3:29 Let him bury his face in the dust;²⁰
perhaps there is hope.

1438-39 s.v. שׁוּחַ reads the root as שָׁחַח (*shakhakh*) but the form as Qal.

tn Heb "and my soul sinks down within me." The verb II שָׁחַח (*shuakh*, "to sink down") is used here in a figurative sense, meaning "to be depressed."

1 **tn** Heb "I cause to return."

2 **tn** Heb "to my heart." The noun לֵבָב (*levav*, "heart") has a broad range of meanings, including its use as a metonymy of association, standing for thoughts and thinking = "mind" (e.g., Deut 32:46; 1 Chr 29:18; Job 17:11; Ps 73:7; Isa 10:7; Hag 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18; Zech 7:10; 8:17).

3 **tn** It is difficult to capture the nuances of the Hebrew word חֶסֶד (*khesed*). When used of the LORD it is often connected to his covenant loyalty. This is the only occasion when the plural form of חֶסֶד precedes the plural form of רַחֲמִים (*rahkhamim*, "mercy, compassion"). The plural forms, as with this one, tend to be in late texts. The plural may indicate several concrete expressions of God's kindnesses or may indicate the abstract concept of his kindness.

4 **tc** The MT reads תָּמַם (*tammu*) "indeed we are [not] cut off." Qal perfect 1st person common plural from תָּמַם (*tamam*, "be finished"): "[Because of] the kindnesses of the LORD, we are not cut off." However, the ancient versions (LXX, Syriac Peshitta, Aramaic Targum) and many medieval Hebrew MSS preserve the alternate reading תָּמַם (*tammu*), Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from תָּמַם (*tamam*, "to be finished"): "The kindnesses of the LORD never cease." The external evidence favors the alternate reading. The internal evidence supports this as well, as the parallel B-line suggests: "his compassions never come to an end." Several English versions follow the MT: "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed" (KJV, NKJV), "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed" (NIV). Other English versions follow the alternate textual tradition: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases" (RSV, NRSV), "The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease" (NASB), "The kindness of the LORD has not ended" (NJPS) and "The LORD's unfailing love still continues" (TEV).

5 **tn** The plural form of רַחֲמִים (*rahkhamim*) may denote the abstract concept of mercy, several concrete expressions of mercy, or the plural of intensity: "great compassion." See *IBHS* 122 §7.4.3a.

6 **tn** Heb "they are new."

7 **tn** The adjective רַב (*rav*) has a broad range of meanings: (1) quantitative: "much, numerous, many (with plurals), abundant, enough, exceedingly" and (2) less often in a qualitative sense: "great" (a) of space and location, (b) "strong" as opposed to "weak" and (c) "major." The traditional translation, "great is thy faithfulness," is less likely than the quantitative sense: "your faithfulness is abundant" [or, "plentiful"]. NJPS is on target in its translation: "Ample is your grace!"

8 **tn** Heb "My soul said..." The term נַפְשִׁי (*nafshi*, "my soul") is a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= I).

9 **tn** Heb "wait for him"

10 **tn** Heb "to the soul..." The term נַפְשׁ (*nefesh*, "soul") is a synecdoche of part (= "the soul who seeks him") for the whole person (= "the person who seeks him").

11 **tn** Heb "waiting and silently." The two adjectives וְיָחִיל וְיִדְמָם (*yakhil v'dumam*, "waiting and silently") form a hendiadys: The first functions verbally and the second functions adverbially: "to wait silently." The adjective יִדְמָם (*dumam*, "silently") also functions as a metonymy of association, standing for patience or rest (*HALOT* 217 s.v.). This metonymical nuance is captured well in less literal English versions: "wait in patience" (TEV) and "wait patiently" (CEV, NJPS). The more literal English versions do not express the metonymy as well: "quietly wait" (KJV, NKJV, ASV), "waits silently" (NASB), "wait quietly" (RSV, NRSV, NIV).

12 **tn** Heb "deliverance of the LORD." In the genitive-con-struct, the genitive יְהוָה (YHWH, "the LORD") denotes source, that is, he is the source of the deliverance: "deliverance from the LORD."

13 **tn** See note at 3:1 on the Hebrew term for "man" here.

14 **tn** Heb "that he bear."

15 **sn** Jeremiah is referring to the painful humiliation of subjugation to the Babylonians, particularly to the exile of the populace of Jerusalem. The Babylonians and Assyrians frequently used the phrase "bear the yoke" as a metaphor: their subjects were made as subservient to them as yoked oxen were to their masters. Because the Babylonian exile would last for seventy years, only those who were in their youth when Jerusalem fell would have any hope of living until the return of the remnant. For the middle-aged and elderly, the yoke of exile would be insufferable; but those who bore this "yoke" in their youth would have hope.

16 **tn** Heb "in his youth." The preposition ב (*bet*) functions in a temporal sense: "when."

17 **tn** Heb "him." The speaking voice in this chapter continues to be that of the גֵּבֶר (*gever*, "man"). The image of female Jerusalem in chs. 1-2 was fluid, being able to refer to the city or its inhabitants, both female and male. So too the "defeated soldier" or "everyman" (see note at 3:1 on "man") is fluid and can represent any member of the Jewish community, male and female. This line especially has a proverbial character which can be extended to any person, hence the translation. But masculine pronouns are otherwise maintained reflecting the Hebrew grammatical system and the speaking voice of the poem.

18 **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

19 **tn** Heb "has laid it on him." The verb נָטַל (*natal*) is used 4 times in Biblical Hebrew; the related noun refers to heaviness or a burden. The entry of BDB 642 s.v. is outdated while *HALOT* 694 s.v. נָטַל is acceptable for the Qal. See D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (AB), 57. Hillers' suggestion of a stative meaning for the Qal is followed here, though based on 2 Sam 24:12 "impose" is also possible.

20 **tn** Heb "Let him put his mouth in the dust."

3:30 Let him offer his cheek to the one
who hits him,¹
let him have his fill of insults.

כ (Kaf)

3:31 For the Lord² will not
reject us forever.³

3:32 Though he causes us⁴ grief, he then
has compassion on us⁵
according to the abundance of his loyal
kindness.⁶

3:33 For he is not predisposed to afflict⁷
or to grieve people.⁸

ל (Lamed)

3:34 To crush underfoot
all the earth's prisoners,⁹

3:35 to deprive a person¹⁰ of his rights¹¹
in the presence of the Most High,

3:36 to defraud a person in a lawsuit –
the Lord¹² does not approve¹³ of such
things!

מ (Mem)

3:37 Whose command was ever fulfilled¹⁴

¹ **tn** Heb “to the smiter.”

² **tc** The MT reads אֲדֹנָי (*adonay*, “the Lord”) here rather than יהוה (YHWH, “the LORD”). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

³ **tn** The verse is unusually short and something unrecorable may be missing.

⁴ **tn** Heb “Although he has caused grief.” The word “us” is added in the translation.

⁵ **tn** Heb “He will have compassion.” The words “on us” are added in the translation.

⁶ **tc** The Kethib preserves the singular form חֲסָדוֹ (*chasado*, “his kindness”), also reflected in the LXX and Aramaic Targum. The Qere reads the plural form חֲסָדָיו (*chasadayv*, “his kindnesses”) which is reflected in the Latin Vulgate.

⁷ **tn** Heb “he does not afflict from his heart.” The term לֵבָב (*levav*, “heart”) preceded by the preposition מִן (*min*) most often describes one’s initiative or motivation, e.g. “of one’s own accord” (Num. 16:28; 24:13; Deut. 4:9; 1Kings 12:33; Neh. 6:8; Job 8:10; Is. 59:13; Ezek. 13:2, 17). It is not God’s internal motivation to bring calamity and trouble upon people.

⁸ **tn** Heb “sons of men.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “prisoners of earth/land.” The term אֲרֶצַח may refer to (1) the earth or (2) a country or (3) the promised land in particular (as well as other referents). “Earth” is chosen here since the context presents God’s general principles in dealing with humanity. Given the historical circumstances, however, prisoners from the land of Israel are certainly in the background.

¹⁰ **tn** The speaking voice is still that of the גֵּבֶר (*geber*, “man”), but the context and line are more universal in character.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “to turn away a man’s justice,” that is, the justice or equitable judgment he would receive. See the previous note regarding the “man.”

¹² **tc** The MT reads אֲדֹנָי (*adonay*, “the Lord”) here rather than יהוה (YHWH, “the LORD”). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

¹³ **tn** Heb “the Lord does not see.” The verb רָאָה (*ra’ah*, “to see”) is here used in reference to mental observation and approval: “to gaze at” with joy and pleasure (e.g., 2 Kgs 10:16; Mic 7:9; Jer 29:32; Isa 52:8; Job 20:17; 33:28; Pss 54:9 HT [54:7 ET]; 106:5; 128:5; Son 3:11; 6:11; Eccl 2:1). If the line is parallel to the end of v. 35 then a circumstantial clause “the Lord not seeing” would be appropriate. The infinitives in 34-36 would then depend on the verbs in v. 33; see D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (AB), 71.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Who is this, he spoke and it came to pass?” The general sense is to ask whose commands are fulfilled. The phrase “he spoke and it came to pass” is taken as an allusion to the creation account (see Gen 1:3).

unless the Lord¹⁵ decreed it?

3:38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most
High that everything comes –
both calamity and blessing?¹⁶

3:39 Why should any living person¹⁷ com-
plain
when punished for his sins?¹⁸

נ (Nun)

3:40 Let us carefully examine our ways,¹⁹
and let us return to the LORD.

3:41 Let us lift up our hearts²⁰ and our
hands
to God in heaven:

3:42 “We²¹ have blatantly rebelled,²²

¹⁵ **tc** The MT reads אֲדֹנָי (*adonay*, “the Lord”) here rather than יהוה (YHWH, “the LORD”). See the **tc** note at 1:14.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “From the mouth of the Most High does it not go forth, both evil and good?”

¹⁷ **tn** The Hebrew word here is אָדָם (*adam*) which can mean “man” or “person.” The second half of the line is more personalized to the speaking voice of the defeated soldier using גֵּבֶר (*geber*, “man”). See the note at 3:1.

¹⁸ **tc** Kethib reads the singular חֲטָאוֹ (*khet’o*, “his sin”), which is reflected in the LXX. Qere reads the plural חֲטָאָיו (*khaat’ayv*, “his sins”) which is preserved in many medieval Hebrew mss and reflected in the other early versions (Aramaic Targum, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate). The external and internal evidence are not decisive in favor of either reading.

tn Heb “concerning his punishment.” The noun חֵטָא (*khet’*) has a broad range of meanings: (1) “sin,” (2) “guilt of sin” and (3) “punishment for sin,” which fits the context of calamity as discipline and punishment for sin (e.g., Lev 19:17; 20:20; 22:9; 24:15; Num 9:13; 18:22, 32; Isa 53:12; Ezek 23:49). The metonymical (cause-effect) relation between sin and punishment is clear in the expressions מִשְׁפַּטֵּי מוֹתָהוּ (*khet’ mishpat-mavet*, “sin deserving death penalty,” Deut 21:22) and מוֹתָהוּ מִתָּהוּ (*khet’ mavet*, “sin unto death,” Deut 22:26). The point of this verse is that the punishment of sin can sometimes lead to death; therefore, any one who is being punished by God for his sins, and yet lives, has little to complain about.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “Let us test our ways and examine.” The two verbs נִחַמְנוּ וְנִבְחַנְנוּ (*nakhm’nah...v’nakhqorah*, “Let us test and let us examine”) form a verbal hendiadys in which the first functions adverbially and the second retains its full verbal force: “Let us carefully examine our ways.”

²⁰ **tc** The MT reads the singular noun לֵבָבֵנוּ (*l’vavenu*, “our heart”) but the ancient versions (LXX, Aramaic Targum, Latin Vulgate) and many medieval Hebrew mss read the plural noun לֵבָבֵינוּ (*l’vavenu*, “our hearts”). Hebrew regularly places plural pronouns on singular nouns used as a collective (135 times on the singular “heart” and only twice on the plural “hearts”). The plural “hearts” in any Hebrew construction is actually rather rare. The LXX renders similar Hebrew constructions (singular “heart” plus a plural pronoun) with the plural “hearts” about 1/3 of the time, therefore it cannot be considered evidence for the reading. The Vulgate may have been influenced by the LXX. Although a distributive sense is appropriate for a much higher percentage of passages using the plural “hearts” in the LXX, no clear reason for the differentiation in the LXX has emerged. Likely the singular Hebrew form is original but the meaning is best represented in English with the plural.

²¹ **tn** The Heb emphasizes the pronoun “We – we have sinned...” Given the contrast with the following, it means “For our part, we have sinned...” A poetic reading in English would place vocal emphasis on “we” followed by a short pause.

²² **tn** Heb “We have revolted and we have rebelled.” The two verbs פִּשְׁעוּ וְרִבְּדוּ (*pasha’nu uvarinuu*, “we have revolted and we have rebelled”) form a verbal hendiadys in which the synonyms emphasize the single idea.

you⁴ have not forgiven.”

ד (Samek)

3:43 You shrouded yourself² with anger
and then pursued us;
you killed without mercy.

3:44 You shrouded yourself with a cloud
so that no prayer can get through.

3:45 You make us like filthy scum³
in the estimation⁴ of the nations.

פ (Pe)

3:46 All our enemies have gloated over us;⁵
3:47 Panic and pitfall⁶ have come upon us,
devastation and destruction.⁷

3:48 Streams⁸ of tears flow from my
eyes⁹
because my people¹⁰ are destroyed.¹¹

צ (Ayin)

3:49 Tears flow from my eyes¹² and will
not stop;

there will be no break¹³

3:50 until the LORD looks down from
heaven

and sees what has happened.¹⁴

3:51 What my eyes see¹⁵ grieves me¹⁶ –

all the suffering of the daughters in my
city.¹⁷

צ (Tsade)

3:52 For no good reason¹⁸ my enemies
hunted me down¹⁹ like a bird.

3:53 They shut me²⁰ up in a pit
and threw stones at me.

3:54 The waters closed over my head;
I thought²¹ I was about to die.²²

ק (Qof)

3:55 I have called on your name, O LORD,
from the deepest pit.²³

3:56 You heard²⁴ my plea;²⁵

“Do not close your ears to my cry for
relief!”²⁶

3:57 You came near²⁷ on the day I called
to you;
you said,²⁸ “Do not fear!”

ר (Resh)

3:58 O Lord,²⁹ you championed³⁰ my
cause,³¹
you redeemed my life.

¹ **tn** The *Heb* emphasizes the pronoun “You – you have not forgiven.” Given the contrast with the preceding, it means “For your part, you have not forgiven.” A poetic reading in English would place vocal emphasis on “you” followed by a short pause.

² **tn** *Heb* “covered.” The object must be supplied either from the next line (“covered yourself”) or from the end of this line (“covered us”).

³ **tn** *Heb* “offscouring and refuse.” The two nouns וְכִיּוֹס וְכִיּוֹס (s^h*khi uma'os*) probably form a nominal hendiadys, in which the first noun functions as an adjective and the second retains its full nominal sense: “filthy refuse,” i.e., “filthy scum.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “in the midst of.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “open wide their mouths.”

⁶ **tn** The similar sounding nouns פַּחַד וּפְתִיל (pakhad vafakhat, “panic and pitfall”) are an example of paronomasia.

⁷ **tn** Similar to the paronomasia in the preceding line, the words הַשְׁמָד וְהַשְׁמָד (hashe't v^hhashaver, “devastation and destruction”) form an example of alliteration: the beginning of the words sound alike.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “canals.” The phrase “canals of water” (eye water = tears) is an example of hyperbole. The English idiom “streams of tears” is also hyperbolic.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “my eyes flow down with canals of water.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “the daughter of my people,” or “the Daughter, my people.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “because of the destruction of [the daughter of my people].”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “my eye flows.” The term “eye” is a metonymy of association, standing for the “tears” which flow from one’s eyes.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “without stopping.” The noun הַפְּוּגָה (hafugah, “stop”) is a *hapax legomenon* (word that occurs only once in Hebrew scriptures). The form of the noun is unusual, probably being derived from the denominative Hiphil verbal stem of the root פּוּג (pug, “to grow weary, ineffective; numb, become cold”).

¹⁴ **tn** The phrase “what has happened” is added in the translation for smoother English style and readability.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “my eye causes grief to my soul.” The term “eye” is a metonymy of association, standing for that which one sees with the eyes.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “my soul.” The term נַפְשִׁי (nafshi, “my soul”) is a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= me).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “at the sight of all the daughters of my city.” It is understood that seeing the plight of the women, not simply seeing the women, is what is so grievous. To make this clear, “suffering” was supplied in the translation.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “without cause.”

¹⁹ **tn** The construction צָוַר צְדוּדֵי (tsod tsaduni, “they have hunted me down”) is emphatic: Qal infinitive absolute of the same root of Qal perfect 3rd person common plural + 1st person common singular suffix.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “my life.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “I said,” meaning “I said to myself” = “I thought.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “I was about to be cut off.” The verb נִגְזַרְתִּי (nigzar-ti), Niphal perfect 1st person common singular from נָזַר (gazar, “to be cut off”), functions in an ingressive sense: “about to be cut off.” It is used in reference to the threat of death (e.g., Ezek 37:11). To be “cut off” from the hand of the living means to experience death (Ps 88:6).

²³ **tn** *Heb* “from a pit of lowest places.”

²⁴ **tn** The verb could be understood as a precativ, “hear my plea,” parallel to the following volitive verb, “do not close.”

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “my voice.”

²⁶ **tn** The preposition ל (lamed) continues syntactically from “my plea” in the previous line (e.g. Ex 5:2; Josh 22:2; 1 Sam 8:7; 12:1; Jer 43:4).

²⁷ **tn** The verb could be understood as a precativ (“Draw near”). The perspective of the poem seems to be that of prayer during distress rather than a testimony that God has delivered.

²⁸ **tn** The verb could be understood as a precativ (“Say”).

²⁹ **tn** The MT reads אֲדוֹנָי (‘adonay, “the Lord”) here rather than יְיָ (YHWH, “the LORD”) as in the following verse. See the **tc** note at 1:14.

³⁰ **tn** This verb, like others in this stanza, could be understood as a precativ (“Plead”).

³¹ **tn** *Heb* “the causes of my soul.” The term נַפְשִׁי (nafshi, “my soul”) is a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= me).

3:59 You have seen the wrong done to me, *The Prophet Speaks:*

O LORD;

pronounce judgment on my behalf!¹

3:60 You have seen all their vengeance,
all their plots against me.²

שׁ (Sin/Shin)

3:61 You have heard³ their taunts, O

LORD,

all their plots against me.

3:62 My assailants revile and conspire⁴
against me all day long.

3:63 Watch them from morning to evening;⁵

I am the object of their mocking songs.

ת (Tav)

3:64 Pay them back⁶ what they deserve,⁷

O LORD,

according to what they⁸ have done.⁹

3:65 Give them a distraught heart;¹⁰
may your curse be on them!

3:66 Pursue them¹¹ in anger and eradicate
them

from under the LORD's heaven.

א (Alef)

4:1¹² Alas!¹³ Gold has lost its luster;¹⁴
pure gold loses value.¹⁵
Jewels¹⁶ are scattered
on every street corner.¹⁷

ב (Bet)

4:2 The precious sons of Zion
were worth their weight in gold –
Alas! – but now they are treated like¹⁸
broken clay pots,
made by a potter.¹⁹

ג (Gimel)

4:3 Even the jackals²⁰ nurse their young
at their breast,²¹
but my people²² are cruel,
like ostriches²³ in the desert.

ד (Dalet)

4:4 The infant's tongue sticks
to the roof of its mouth due to thirst;

¹ **tn** Heb "Please judge my judgment."

² **tc** The MT reads לִי (*li*, "to me"); but many medieval Hebrew MSS and the ancient versions (Aramaic Targum, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate) all reflect a *Vorlage* of עָלַי (*'alay*, "against me").

³ **tn** The verb could be understood as a precativ ("Hear").

⁴ **tn** Heb "the lips of my assailants and their thoughts."

⁵ **tn** Heb "their rising and their sitting." The two terms שָׁבְתָם וְקִיְמָתָם (*shivtam v'qimatam*, "their sitting and their rising") form a merism: two terms that are polar opposites are used to encompass everything in between. The idiom "from your rising to your sitting" refers to the earliest action in the morning and the latest action in the evening (e.g., Deut 6:7; Ps 139:3). The enemies mock Jerusalem from the moment they arise in the morning until the moment they sit down in the evening.

⁶ **tn** Heb "Please cause to return." The imperfect verb הָשִׁיב (*tashiv*), Hiphil imperfect 2nd person masculine singular from שָׁב (*shuv*, "to return"), functions in a volitional sense, like an imperative of request. The Hiphil stem of שָׁב (*shuv*, in the Hiphil "to cause to return") often means "to make requital, to pay back" (e.g., Judg 9:5, 56; 1 Sam 25:39; 1 Kgs 2:32, 44; Neh 3:36 HT [4:4 ET]; Prov 24:12, 29; Hos 12:3; Joel 4:4, 7 HT [3:4, 7 ET]) (BDB 999 s.v. שָׁב 4.a).

⁷ **tn** Heb "recompense to them." The noun תְּשִׁיבָה (*teshivah*, "dealing, accomplishment") has two metonymical (cause-effect) meanings: (1) positive "benefit" and (2) negative "retribution, requital, recompense," the sense used here (e.g., Pss 28:4; 94:2; 137:8; Prov 19:17; Isa 35:4; 59:18; 66:6; Jer 51:6; Lam 3:64; Joel 4:4, 7 HT [3:4, 7 ET]). The phrase תְּשִׁיבָה תְּשִׁיבָה (*tashiv teshivah*) means "to pay back retribution" (e.g., Joel 4:4, 7 HT [3:4, 7 ET]), that is, to return the deeds of the wicked upon them as a display of talionic or poetic justice.

⁸ **tn** Heb "their hands." The term "hand" is a synecdoche of part (= hands) for the whole person (= they).

⁹ **tn** Heb "according to the work of their hands."

¹⁰ **tn** The noun תְּשִׁיבָה (*teshivah*) is a *hapax legomenon*. Its meaning is debated; earlier lexicographers suggested that it meant "covering" (BDB 171 s.v.), but more recent lexicons suggest "shamelessness" or "insanity" (HALOT 546 s.v.). The translation is based on the term being parallel to "curse" and needing to relate to "heart." Cf. NRSV "anguish of heart."

¹¹ **tn** Heb "pursue." The accusative direct object is implied in the Hebrew, and inserted in the translation.

¹² **sn** According to W. F. Lanahan ("The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations" *JBL* 93 [1974]: 48), the persona or speaking voice in chap. 4 is a bourgeois, the common man. This voice is somewhat akin to the Reporter in chs 1-2 in that much of the description is in the third person. However, "the bourgeois has some sense of identity with his fellow-citizens" seen in the shift to the first person plural. The alphabetic acrostic structure reduces to two bicola per letter. The first letter of only the first line in each stanza spells the acrostic.

¹³ **tn** See the note at 1:1.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "had grown dim." The verb יָעַמַּם (*yu'ama*), Hophal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular from עָמַם (*'ama*, "to conceal, darken"), literally means "to be dimmed" or "to be darkened." Most English versions render this literally: the gold has "become dim" (KJV, NKJV), "grown dim" (RSV, NRSV), "is dulled" (NJPS), "grown dull" (TEV); however, but NIV has captured the sense well: "How the gold has lost its luster."

¹⁵ **tc** The verb יָעַמַּם (*yishme'*), Qal imperfect 3rd person feminine singular) is typically taken to be the only Qal imperfect of יָעַמַּם (*shanah*). Such a spelling with א (*aleph*) instead of ה (*he*) is feasible. D. R. Hillers suggests the root שָׂנְאָה (*sane'*, "to hate"): "Pure gold is hated". This maintains the consonantal text and also makes sense in context. In either case the point is that gold no longer holds the same value, probably because there is nothing available to buy with it.

tn Heb "changes." The imagery in this verse about gold is without parallel in the Bible and its precise nuance uncertain.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "the stones of holiness/jewelry." *qodesh* (*qodesh*) in most cases refers to holiness or sacredness. For the meaning "jewelry" see J. A. Emerton, "The Meaning of אֲבִנֵי קֹדֶשׁ in Lamentations 4:1" *ZAW* 79 (1967): 233-36.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "at the head of every street."

¹⁸ **tn** Heb "they are regarded as."

¹⁹ **tn** Heb "the work of the hands of a potter."

²⁰ **tn** The noun תַּמְנִין (*tammim*) means "jackals." The plural ending יָיִן (*-im*) is diminutive (GKC 242 §87.e) (e.g., Lam 1:4).

²¹ **tn** Heb "draw out the breast and suckle their young."

²² **tn** Heb "the daughter of my people."

²³ **tc** The MT Kethib form כִּי עֲנִיִּים (*ki 'enim*) is by all accounts a textual corruption for כַּיְעֲנִיִּים (*kay'enim*, "like ostriches") which is preserved in the Qere and the medieval Hebrew MSS, and reflected in the LXX.

little children beg for bread,¹
but no one gives them even a morsel.²

ה (He)

4:5 Those who once feasted on delicacies³
are now starving to death⁴ in the streets.
Those who grew up⁵ wearing expensive
clothes⁶
are now dying⁷ amid garbage.⁸

ו (Vav)

4:6 The punishment⁹ of my people¹⁰
exceeded that of¹¹ of Sodom,
which was overthrown in a moment
with no one to help her.¹²

ז (Zayin)

4:7 Her consecrated ones¹³ were brighter
than snow,
whiter than milk;
their bodies more ruddy than corals,
their hair¹⁴ like lapis lazuli.¹⁵

ח (Khet)

4:8 Now their appearance¹⁶ is darker than
soot;
they are not recognized in the streets.
Their skin has shriveled on their bones;
it is dried up, like tree bark.

ט (Tet)

4:9 Those who died by the sword¹⁷ are
better off
than those who die of hunger,¹⁸
those who¹⁹ waste away,²⁰

¹ **tn** Heb “bread.” The term “bread” might function as a synecdoche of specific (= bread) for general (= food); however, the following parallel line does indeed focus on the act of breaking bread in two.

² **tn** Heb “there is not a divider to them.” The term פָּרַשׁ (*paras*), Qal active participle ms from פָּרַס (*paras*, “to divide”) refers to the action of breaking bread in two before giving it to a person to eat (Isa 58:7; Jer 16:7; Lam 4:4). The form פָּרַשׁ (*paras*) is the alternate spelling of the more common פָּרַס (*paras*).

³ **tn** Heb “eaters of delicacies.” An alternate English gloss would be “connoisseurs of fine foods.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “are desolate.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “were reared.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “in purple.” The term תּוֹלַע (*tolā*, “purple”) is a figurative description of expensive clothing; it is a metonymy of association: the color of the dyed clothes (= purple) stands for the clothes themselves.

⁷ **tn** Heb “embrace garbage.” One may also translate “rummage through” (cf. NCV “pick through trash piles”; TEV “pawing through refuse”; NLT “search the garbage pits.”)

⁸ **tn** The Hebrew word אֲשֵׁפּוֹתַי (*ashpatot*) can also mean “ash heaps.” Though not used as a combination elsewhere, to “embrace ash heaps” might also envision a state of mourning or even dead bodies lying on the ash heaps.

⁹ **tn** The noun אֲוֹן (*avon*) has a basic two-fold range of meanings: (1) basic meaning: “iniquity, sin” and (2) metonymical cause for effect meaning: “punishment for iniquity.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “the daughter of my people.”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “the sin of.” The noun חַטָּאת (*khatta't*) often means “sin, rebellion,” but here it probably functions in a metonymical (cause for effect) sense: “punishment for sin” (e.g., Zech 14:19). The context focuses on the severity of the punishment of Jerusalem rather than the depths of its degradation and depravity that led to the judgment.

¹² **tn** Heb “without a hand turned.” The preposition ב (*bet*) after the verb חָלַל (*khul*) in Hos 11:6 is adversative “the sword will turn *against* [Assyria’s] cities.” Other contexts with חָלַל (*khul*) plus ב (*bet*) are not comparable to [bet] often being locative). However, it is not certain that hands must be adversarial as the sword clearly is in Hos 11:6. The present translation pictures the suddenness of Sodom’s overthrow as an easier fate than the protracted military campaign and subsequent exile and poverty of Judah’s survivor’s.

¹³ **tn** Heb “Nazirites” (so KJV). The Nazirites were consecrated under a vow to refrain from wine, contact with the dead, and from cutting their hair. In Gen 49:26 and Deut 33:16 Joseph, who was not a Nazirite, is called the “Nazir” of his brothers. From context, many translate this as “prince” (e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT), though the nuance is uncertain. If it is valid, then princes might be understood in this context as well.

¹⁴ **tn** The noun גִּזְרָה (*gizrah*) is used primarily in Ezekiel 41-42 (seven of its nine uses), where it refers to a separated area of the temple complex described in Ezekiel’s vision. It is not used of people other than here. Probably based on the reference to a precious stone BDB 160 s.v. 1 postulated that it refers to the cutting or polishing of precious stones, but this is conjecture. The English versions handle this variously. D. R. Hillers suggests beards, hair, or eyebrows based on other ancient Near Eastern comparisons between lapis lazuli and the body (*Lamentations* [AB], 81).

¹⁵ **sn** Lapis lazuli is a dark blue semi-precious stone.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “their outline” or “their form.” The Hebrew noun תָּאֵר (*to'ar*, “outline, form”) is related to the Phoenician noun תָּאֵר (*to'ar*, “something gazed at”), and Aramaic verb תָּאֵר (*ta'ar*, “to gaze at”). It is used in reference to the form of a woman (Gen 29:17; Deut 21:11; 1 Sam 25:3; Esth 2:7) and of a man (Gen 39:11; Judg 8:18; 1 Sam 16:18; 28:14; 1 Kgs 1:6; 1 Chr 17:17; Isa 52:14; 53:2). Here it is used in a metonymical sense: “appearance.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “those pierced of the sword.” The genitive-construct denotes instrumentality: “those pierced by the sword” (הַחַלְלֵי הַחֶרֶב, *khalle-kherev*). The noun חָלַל (*khatal*) refers to a “fatal wound” and is used substantively to refer to “the slain” (Num 19:18; 31:8, 19; 1 Sam 17:52; 2 Sam 23:8, 18; 1 Chr 11:11, 20; Isa 22:2; 66:16; Jer 14:18; 25:33; 51:49; Lam 4:9; Ezek 6:7; 30:11; 31:17, 18; 32:20; Zeph 2:12).

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “those slain of hunger.” The genitive-construct denotes instrumentality: “those slain by hunger,” that is, those who are dying of hunger.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “who...” The antecedent of the relative pronoun שֶׁהֵמָּה (*shehem*, “who”) are those dying of hunger in the previous line: בְּחַלְלֵי רֵעֵב (*mekhalle ra'av*, “those slain of hunger”).

²⁰ **tn** Heb “they flow away.” The verb זָרַח (*zav*, “to flow, gush”) is used figuratively here, meaning “to pine away” or “to waste away” from hunger. See also the next note.

struck down¹ from lack of² food.³

י (Yod)

4:10 The hands of tenderhearted women⁴ cooked their own children, who became their food,⁵ when my people⁶ were destroyed.⁷

כ (Kaf)

4:11 The LORD fully vented⁸ his wrath; he poured out his fierce anger.⁹ He started a fire in Zion; it consumed her foundations.¹⁰

ל (Lamed)

4:12 Neither the kings of the earth nor the people of the lands¹¹ ever thought¹² that enemy or foe would enter the gates¹³ of Jerusalem.¹⁴

מ (Mem)

4:13 But it happened¹⁵ due to the sins of her prophets¹⁶ and the iniquities of her priests, who poured out in her midst the blood of the righteous.

נ (Nun)

4:14 They¹⁷ wander blindly¹⁸ through the streets, defiled by the blood they shed,¹⁹ while no one dares²⁰ to touch their garments.

¹ **tn** Heb "pierced through and through." The term מְדַקְּרִים (m²duqarim), Pual participle masculine plural from דָּקַר (daqar, "to pierce"), is used figuratively. The verb דָּקַר (daqar, "to pierce") usually refers to a fatal wound inflicted by a sword or spear (Num 25:8; Judg 9:54; 1 Sam 31:4; 1 Chr 10:4; Isa 13:15; Jer 37:10; 51:4; Zech 12:10; 13:3). Here, it describes people dying from hunger. This is an example of hypocatastasis: an implied comparison between warriors being fatally pierced by sword and spear and the piercing pangs of hunger and starvation. Alternatively "those who hemorrhage (זָבַח [zav, "flow, gush"]) [are better off] than those pierced by lack of food" in parallel to the structure of the first line.

² **tn** The preposition מִן (min, "from") denotes deprivation: "from lack of" something (BDB 580 s.v. 2.f; HALOT 598 s.v. 6).

³ **tn** Heb "produce of the field."

⁴ **tn** Heb "the hands of compassionate women."

⁵ **tn** Heb "eating." The infinitive construct (from אָכַל, barah) is translated as a noun. Three passages employ the verb (2 Sam 3:35; 12:17; 13:5,6,10) for eating when ill or in mourning.

⁶ **tn** Heb "the daughter of my people."

⁷ **tn** Heb "in the destruction of the daughter of my people."

⁸ **tn** Heb "has completed." The verb כָּלָה (kalah), Piel perfect 3rd person masculine singular from כָּלָה (kalah, "to complete"), has a range of closely related meanings: (1) "to complete, bring to an end," (2) "to accomplish, finish, cease," (3) "to use up, exhaust, consume." Used in reference to God's wrath, it describes God unleashing his full measure of anger so that divine justice is satisfied. This is handled admirably by several English versions: "The LORD has given full vent to his wrath" (NIV), "The LORD gave full vent to his wrath" (RSV, NRSV), "The LORD vented all his fury" (NJPS), "The LORD turned loose the full force of his fury" (TEV). Others miss the mark: "The LORD has accomplished his wrath/fury" (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB).

⁹ **tn** Heb "the heat of his anger."

¹⁰ **tn** The term יָסֵד (y²sod, "foundation") refers to the ground-level and below ground-level foundation stones of a city wall (Ps 137:7; Lam 4:11; Mic 1:6).

¹¹ **tn** Heb "inhabitants of the mainland."

¹² **tn** Heb "they did not believe that." The verb אָמַן (he'eminu), Hiphil perfect 3rd person common plural from אָמַן ('aman, "to believe"), ordinarily is a term of faith and trust, but occasionally it functions cognitively: "to think that" (Job 9:16; 15:22; Ps 116:10; Lam 4:12) and "to be convinced that" (Ps 27:13) (HALOT 64 s.v. אָמַן hif.1). The semantic relationship between "to believe" = "to think" is metonymical, that is, effect for cause.

¹³ **sn** The expression "to enter the gates" of a city is an idiom referring to the military conquest of that city. Ancient Near Eastern fortified cities typically featured double and sometimes triple city gates – the bulwark of the defense of the city. Because fortified cities were enclosed with protective walls, the Achilles tendon of every city was the city gates – the weak

point in the defense and the perennial point of attack by enemies (e.g., Judg 5:8, 11; 1 Sam 17:52; Isa 29:6; Jer 17:27; 51:54; Ezek 21:20, 27; Mic 1:9, 12; Neh 1:3; 2:3, 13, 17).

¹⁴ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁵ **tn** These words do not appear in the Hebrew, but are supplied to make sense of the line. The introductory causal preposition מִן (min) ("because") indicates that this phrase – or something like it – is implied through elision.

¹⁶ **tn** There is no main verb in the verse; it is an extended prepositional phrase. One must either assume a verbal idea such as "But it happened due to..." or connect it to the following verses, which themselves are quite difficult. The former option was employed in the present translation.

¹⁷ **tn** "They" are apparently the people, rather than the prophets and priests mentioned in the preceding verse.

¹⁸ **tc** The Hebrew word עִוְרִים (ivrim) appears to be an adjective based on the root עָוַר (ivver, "blind"). The LXX, using a rare perfect optative of ἔγειρε (egeirō), seems to have read a form of עוּר (ur, "to rise"), while the Syriac reads "her nobles," possibly from reading שָׁרִים (sarim). The evidence is unclear.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb "defiled with blood."

²⁰ **tn** The translation is conjecture. The MT has the preposition ב (bet, "in," "by," "with," "when," etc.), the negative particle לֹא (lo'), then a finite verb from יָכַח (yakhal, Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural): "in not they are able." Normally יָכַח (yakhal) would be followed by an infinitive, identifying what someone is or is not able to do, or by some other modifying clause. לֹא יָכַח (lo' yakhal) on its own may mean "they do not prevail." The preposition ב (bet) suggests possible dependence on another verb (cp. Jer 2:11, the only other verse with the sequence ב [bet] plus לֹא [lo'] plus finite verb). The following verb נָגַע (naga'), "touch" regularly indicates its object with the preposition ב (bet), but the preposition ב (bet) is already used with "their garments." If both are the object of נָגַע (naga'), the line would read "they touched what they could not, their garments." As this makes no sense, one should note that any other verb on which the phrase would be dependent is not recoverable. The preposition ב (bet) can also introduce temporal clauses, though there are no examples with לֹא (lo') plus a finite verb. A temporal understanding could yield "when they could not succeed, they touched [clutched?] their garments" or "while no one is able [to ?] they touch their garments." In Jer 49:10 the meaning of יָכַח (yakhal) is completed by a finite verb (though it is not governed by the preposition ב [bet]). If so here, then we may understand "while (ב [bet]) no one dares (יָכַח, yakhal) to touch their garments." This gives the picture of blind people stumbling about while others cannot help because they are afraid to touch them.

ד (Samek)

4:15 People cry to them, “Turn away! You are unclean!
Turn away! Turn away! Don’t touch us!”
So they have fled and wander about;
but the nations say,¹ “They may not stay
here any longer.”

פ (Pe)

4:16 The LORD himself² has scattered
them;
he no longer watches over them.
They did not honor the priests;³
they did not show favor to the elders.⁴

The People of Jerusalem Lament:

צ (Ayin)

4:17 Our eyes continually failed us
as we looked in vain for help.⁵
From our watchtowers we watched
for a nation that could not rescue us.

צ (Tsade)

4:18 Our enemies⁶ hunted us down at
every step⁷
so that we could not walk about in our
streets.
Our end drew near, “our days were num-
bered,⁸
for our end had come!

ק (Qof)

4:19 Those who pursued us were swifter
than eagles⁹ in the sky.¹⁰
They chased us over the mountains;
they ambushed us in the wilderness.

ר (Resh)

4:20 Our very life breath – the LORD’s
anointed king¹¹ –
was caught in their traps,¹²
of whom we thought,¹³
“Under his protection¹⁴ we will survive
among the nations.”

The Prophet Speaks:

ש (Sin/Shin)

4:21 Rejoice and be glad for now,¹⁵ O
people of Edom,¹⁶
who reside in the land of Uz.

¹ tn Heb “They say among the nations.”

² tn Heb “the face of the LORD.” The term פָּנֵי (paneh, “face”) is a synecdoche of part (= face) for the whole person (= the LORD himself). The phrase is often translated “the presence of the LORD.” The term “face” also functions anthropomorphically, depicting the invisible spirit God as though he had a physical face.

³ tc The MT reads the plural verb לֹא נִשָּׂאוּ (lo’ nasa’u, “they did not lift up”), Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from נָסָא (nasa’, “to lift up” the face); however, the ancient versions (LXX, Aramaic Targum, Latin Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta) have singular verbs, reflecting a Vorlage of לֹא נִסָּא (lo’ nasa’, “he did not lift up”), Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular from נָסָא (nasa’). D. R. Hillers suggests that the MT plural is an intentional scribe change, to avoid the appearance that God brought about evil on the priests and elders. Equally possible is that consonantal לֹא נִסָּא (l’ khmv) should be revocalized as Qal passive perfect 3rd person common plural, and that כֹּהֲנִים (kohanim, “the priests”) functions as the subject of a passive verb rather than the accusative direct object of an active verb: “(the faces of) the priests were not lifted up.”

tn Heb “did not lift up.” The verb נִסָּא (nasa’) means “to lift up” (the face); however, the specific contextual nuance here is probably “to show consideration” (e.g., Deut 28:50; Lam 4:16) (BDB 670 s.v. 1.b.3).

⁴ tc The MT reads the plural verb לֹא נִחַנְנוּ (lo’ khamnu, “they did not show favor”), Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from נָחַן (khanan, “to show favor, be merciful”); however, the ancient versions (LXX, Aramaic Targum, Latin Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta) have singular verbs, reflecting a Vorlage of לֹא נִחַן (lo’ khaman, “he did not show favor”), Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular from נָחַן (khanan). D. R. Hillers suggests that the MT plural is an intentional scribe change, to avoid the appearance that God brought about evil on the priests and elders. Equally possible is that consonantal לֹא נִחַנְנוּ (l’ khmv) should be revocalized as Qal passive perfect 3rd person common plural, and that זְקֵנִים (z’ qenim, “the elders”) functions as the subject of a passive verb rather than the accusative direct object of an active verb: “the elders were not shown favor/mercy.”

tn The basic meaning of the verb נִחַן (khanan) is “to show favor [to], be gracious [to].” In some contexts this can mean “to spare” the lives of someone (Deut 7:2; 28:50; Job 19:21; Lam 4:16) (BDB 336 s.v. 1.c), though it is not clear whether that is the case here.

⁵ tn Heb “Our eyes failed in vain for help.”

⁶ tn Heb “they”; this has been specified in the translation as “our enemies” for clarity.

⁷ tn Heb “they hunted our steps.”

⁸ tn Heb “our days were full.”

⁹ tn The bird referred to here could be one of several species of eagles, but more likely is the griffin-vulture (cf. NEB “vultures”). However, because eagles are more commonly associated with swiftness than vultures in contemporary English, “eagles” was used in the translation.

¹⁰ tn Or “in the heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

¹¹ tn Heb “the anointed one of the LORD.” The term “king” is added in the translation to clarify the referent of the phrase “the LORD’s anointed.”

¹² tn Heb “was captured in their pits.”

¹³ tn Heb “of whom we had said.”

¹⁴ tn Heb “under his shadow.” The term צֵל (tsel, “shadow”) is used figuratively here to refer the source of protection from military enemies. In the same way that the shade of a tree gives physical relief and protection from the heat of the sun (e.g., Judg 9:15; Job 40:22; Ps 80:11; Song 2:3; Ezek 17:23; 31:6, 12, 17; Hos 4:13; 14:8; Jon 4:5, 6), a faithful and powerful king can provide “shade” (= protection) from enemies and military attack (Num 14:19; Ps 91:1; Isa 30:2, 3; 49:2; 51:16; Jer 48:45; Lam 4:20).

¹⁵ tn The phrase “for now” is added in the translation to highlight the implied contrast between the present joy of the Gentiles (4:21a) and their future judgment (4:21b).

¹⁶ tn Heb “O Daughter of Edom.”

But the cup of judgment¹ will pass² to you also; you will get drunk and take off your clothes.

ת (Tav)

4:22 O people of Zion,³ your punishment⁴ will come to an end;⁵ he will not prolong your exile.⁶ But, O people of Edom,⁷ he will punish⁸ your sin⁹ and reveal¹⁰ your offenses!

¹ tn Heb “the cup.” Judgment is often depicted as a cup of wine that God forces a person to drink, causing him to lose consciousness, red wine drooling out of his mouth – resembling corpses lying on the ground as a result of the actual onslaught of the Lord’s judgment. The drunkard will reel and stagger, causing bodily injury to himself – an apt metaphor to describe the devastating effects of God’s judgment. Just as a cup of poison kills all those who are forced to drink it, the cup of God’s wrath destroys all those who must drink it (e.g., Ps 75:9; Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15, 17, 28; 49:12; 51:7; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:33; Hab 2:16).

² tn The imperfect verb “will pass” may also be a jussive, continuing the element of request, “let the cup pass...”

³ tn Heb “O Daughter Zion.”

⁴ tn Heb “your iniquity.” The noun תּוֹעֵב (‘*avon*) has a broad range of meanings, including: (1) iniquity, (2) guilt of iniquity, and (3) consequence or punishment for iniquity (cause-effect metonymical relation). The context suggests that “punishment for sin” is most appropriate here (e.g., Gen 4:13; 19:15; Exod 28:38, 43; Lev 5:1, 17; 7:18; 10:17; 16:22; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17, 19; 22:16; 26:39, 41, 43; Num 5:31; 14:34; 18:1, 23; 30:15; 1 Sam 25:24; 28:10; 2 Sam 14:9; 2 Kgs 7:9; Job 10:14; Pss 31:11; 69:28; 106:43; Prov 5:22; Isa 5:18; 30:13; 40:2; 53:6, 11; 64:5, 6; Jer 51:6; Lam 4:22; 5:7; Ezek 4:4-6, 17; 7:16; 14:10; 18:19-20; 21:30, 34 HT [21:25, 29 ET]; 24:23; 32:27; 35:5; 39:23; 44:10, 12).

⁵ tn Heb “will be completed.” The perfect tense verb תָּמַם (‘*tam*), Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular from תָּמַם (‘*tamam*, “to be complete”), could be taken as a precative perfect expressing a request (“may your punishment be complete”). The translation understands it as an example of the so-called “prophetic perfect.” The perfect tense often describes actions that are viewed as complete (normally past- or present-time events). When the perfect tense describes a future event, it often depicts it as “complete,” that is, “as good as done” or certain to take place from the viewpoint of the prophet. Thus, by using the perfect tense, Jeremiah may be emphasizing the certainty that the exile will eventually come to an end. It has also been viewed as a simple perfect “your punishment is ended.”

⁶ tn The verb לֹא יוֹסִיף (‘*lo’ yosif*) could be taken as a precative perfect, making a request to God. See the note at the beginning of the verse.

⁷ tn Heb “O Daughter of Edom.”

⁸ tn The verb פָּקַד (‘*paqad*) could be taken as a precative perfect, making a request to God. See the note at the beginning of the verse.

⁹ tn The noun תּוֹעֵב (‘*avon*) is repeated twice in this verse: its first occurrence means “punishment for iniquity” (v. 22a), and its second usage means “iniquity” (v. 22b). See preceding translator’s note on the broad range of meanings of this word. The repetition of the same root with different meanings creates an ironic polysemantic wordplay: Zion’s “punishment” for its sin is about to come to an end; however, the punishment for Edom’s “sin” is about to begin.

¹⁰ tn The verb גִּלַּח (‘*gillah*) could be taken as a precative perfect, making a request to God. See the note at the beginning of the verse.

The People of Jerusalem Pray:

5:1¹¹ O LORD, reflect on¹² what has happened to us; consider¹³ and look at¹⁴ our disgrace.
5:2 Our inheritance¹⁵ is turned over to strangers; foreigners now occupy our homes.¹⁶
5:3 We have become fatherless orphans; our mothers have become widows.
5:4 We must pay money¹⁷ for our own water;¹⁸ we must buy our own wood at a steep price.¹⁹
5:5 We are pursued – they are breathing down our necks;²⁰ we are weary and have no rest.²¹
5:6 We have submitted²² to Egypt and Assyria

¹¹ sn The speaking voice is now that of a choir singing the community’s lament in the first person plural. The poem is not an alphabetic acrostic like the preceding chapters but has 22 verses, the same as the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

¹² tn The basic meaning of זָכַר (‘*zakhar*) is “to remember, call to mind” (HALOT 270 s.v. זָכַר). Although often used of recollection of past events, זָכַר (‘*zakhar*, “to remember”) can also describe consideration of present situations: “to consider, think about” something present (BDB 270 s.v. 5), hence “reflect on,” the most appropriate nuance here. Verses 1-6 describe the present plight of Jerusalem. The parallel requests הַבֵּט וּרְאֵה (‘*habbet u’reh*, “Look and see!”) have a present-time orientation as well. See also 2:1; 3:19-20.

¹³ tn Heb “Look!” Although often used in reference to visual perception, נָבַט (‘*navat*, “to look”) can also refer to cognitive consideration and mental attention shown to a situation: “to regard” (e.g., 1 Sam 16:7; 2 Kgs 3:14), “to pay attention to, consider” (e.g., Isa 22:8; Isa 51:1, 2).

¹⁴ tn Although normally used in reference to visual sight, רָאָה (‘*ra’ah*) is often used in reference to cognitive processes and mental observation. See the note on “Consider” at 2:20.

¹⁵ tn Heb “Our inheritance”; or “Our inherited possessions/property.” The term נַחֲלָה (‘*nakhalah*) has a range of meanings: (1) “inheritance,” (2) “portion, share” and (3) “possession, property.” The land of Canaan was given by the Lord to Israel as its inheritance (Deut 4:21; 15:4; 19:10; 20:16; 21:23; 24:4; 25:19; 26:1; Josh 20:6) and distributed among the tribes, clans and families (Num 16:14; 36:2; Deut 29:7; Josh 11:23; 13:6; 14:3, 13; 17:4, 6, 14; 19:49; 23:4; Judg 18:1; Ezek 45:1; 47:22; 48:29). Through the family, the family provided an inheritance (property) to its children with the firstborn receiving pride of position (Gen 31:14; Num 27:7-11; 36:3, 8; 1 Kgs 21:3, 4; Job 42:15; Prov 19:14; Ezek 46:16). Here, the parallelism between “our inheritance” and “our homes” would allow for the specific referent of the phrase “our inheritance” to be (1) land or (2) material possessions, or given the nature of the poetry in Lamentations, to carry both meanings at the same time.

¹⁶ tn Heb “our homes [are turned over] to foreigners.”

¹⁷ tn Heb “silver.” The term “silver” is a synecdoche of species (= silver) for general (= money).

¹⁸ tn Heb “We drink our water for silver.”

¹⁹ tn Heb “our wood comes for a price.”

²⁰ tn Heb “We are hard-driven on our necks”

²¹ sn For the theological allusion that goes beyond physical rest, see, e.g., Deut 12:10; 25:19; Josh 1:13; 11:23; 2 Sam 7:1, 11; 1 Chron 22:18; 2 Chron 14:6-7

²² tn Heb “we have given the hand”; cf. NRSV “We have made a pact.” This is a Semitic idiom meaning “to make a treaty with” someone, placing oneself in a subservient position as vassal. The prophets criticized these treaties.

in order to buy food to eat.¹
5:7 Our forefathers² sinned and are dead,³
 but we⁴ suffer⁵ their punishment.⁶
5:8 Slaves⁷ rule over us;
 there is no one to rescue us from their
 power.⁸
5:9 At the risk⁹ of our lives¹⁰ we get our
 food¹¹
 because robbers lurk¹² in the country-
 side.¹³
5:10 Our skin is hot as an oven
 due to a fever from hunger.¹⁴
5:11 They raped¹⁵ women in Zion,
 virgins in the towns of Judah.
5:12 Princes were hung by their hands;
 elders were mistreated.¹⁶

5:13 The young men perform menial la-
 bor;¹⁷
 boys stagger from their labor.¹⁸
5:14 The elders are gone from the city
 gate;
 the young men have stopped playing their
 music.
5:15 Our hearts no longer have any joy;¹⁹
 our dancing is turned to mourning.
5:16 The crown has fallen from our head;
 woe to us, for we have sinned!
5:17 Because of this, our hearts are sick;²⁰
 because of these things, we can hardly
 see²¹ through our tears.²²
5:18 For wild animals²³ are prowling over
 Mount Zion,
 which lies desolate.
5:19 But you, O LORD, reign forever;
 your throne endures from generation to
 generation.
5:20 Why do you keep on forgetting²⁴ us?

¹ **tn** Heb “bread.” The term “bread” is a synecdoche of specific (= bread) for the general (= food).

² **tn** Heb “fathers,” but here the term also refers to “forefathers,” i.e., more distant ancestors.

³ **tn** Heb “and are no more.”

⁴ **tc** The Kethib is written אֲנַחְנוּ (*anakhnu*, “we”) but the Qere reads וְאֲנַחְנוּ (*va’anakhnu*, “but we”). The Qere is supported by many medieval Hebrew mss, as well as most of the ancient versions (Aramaic Targum, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate). The ו (*vav*) prefixed to וְאֲנַחְנוּ (*va’anakhnu*) functions either in a disjunctive sense (“but”) or resultant sense (“so”).

⁵ **tn** Heb “so we bear.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “their iniquities.” The noun פְּשָׁעֵינוּ (*avon*) has a broad range of meanings, including: (1) iniquity, (2) guilt of iniquity, and (3) consequence or punishment for iniquity (cause-effect metonymical relation). The context suggests that “punishment for sin” is most appropriate here (e.g., Gen 4:13; 19:15; Exod 28:38, 43; Lev 5:1, 17; 7:18; 10:17; 16:22; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17, 19; 22:16; 26:39, 41, 43; Num 5:31; 14:34; 18:1, 23; 30:15; 1 Sam 25:24; 28:10; 2 Sam 14:9; 2 Kgs 7:9; Job 10:14; Pss 31:11; 69:28; 106:43; Prov 5:22; Isa 5:18; 30:13; 40:2; 53:6, 11; 64:5, 6; Jer 51:6; Lam 4:22; 5:7; Ezek 4:4-6, 17; 7:16; 14:10; 18:19-20; 21:30, 34 HT [21:25, 29 ET]; 24:23; 32:27; 35:5; 39:23; 44:10, 12).

⁷ **tn** Heb “slaves.” While indicating that social structures are awry, the expression “slaves rule over us” might be an idiom for “tyrants rule over us.” This might find its counterpart in the gnomic truth that the most ruthless rulers are made of former slaves: “Under three things the earth quakes, under four it cannot bear up: under a slave when he becomes king” (Prov 30:21-22a).

⁸ **tn** Heb “hand.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “at the cost of our lives.” The preposition ב (*bet*) here denotes purchase price paid (e.g., Gen 30:16; Exod 34:20; 2 Sam 3:14; 24:24) (BDB 90 s.v. ב 3.a). The expression בְּנַפְשֵׁנוּ (*bēnafshenu*) means “at the risk of our lives.” Similar expressions include בְּנַפְשׁוֹ (*bēnafsho*, “at the cost of his life,” 1 Kgs 2:23; Prov 7:23) and בְּנַפְשׁוֹתָם (*bēnafshotam*, “at peril of their lives,” 2 Sam 23:17).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “our soul.” The noun נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, “soul”) is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life) (e.g., Gen 44:30; Exod 21:23; 2 Sam 14:7; Jon 1:14).

¹¹ **tn** Heb “bread.” The term “bread” is a synecdoche of specific (= bread) for the general (= food).

¹² **tn** Heb “because of the sword.” The term “sword” is a metonymy of instrument (= sword) for the persons who use the instrument (= murderers or marauders).

¹³ **tn** Heb “the wilderness.”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “because of the burning heat of famine.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “ravished.”

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “elders were shown no respect.” The phrase “shown no respect” is an example of tapeinosis, a figurative expression of understatement: to show no respect to elders = to terribly mistreat elders.

¹⁷ **tn** The text is difficult. Word by word the MT has “young men hand mill(?) they take up” Perhaps it means “they take [our] young men for mill grinding,” or perhaps it means “the young men take up [the labor of] mill grinding.” This expression is an example of synecdoche where the mill stands for the labor at the mill and then that labor stands for performing menial physical labor as servants. The surface reading, “young men carry hand mills,” does not portray any great adversity for them. The Vulgate translates as an abusive sexual metaphor (see D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations* [AB], 99), but this gives no known parallel to the second part of the verse.

¹⁸ **tc** Heb “boys trip over wood.” This phrase makes little sense. The translation adopts D. R. Hillers’ suggestion (*Lamentations* [AB], 99) of בְּנֵיבֵי כִשְׁלוֹ (*bē’etsev kashalu*). Due to letter confusion and haplography the final ב (*bet*) of בְּנֵיבֵי (*bē’etsev*) which looks like the כ (*kaf*) beginning the next word, was dropped. This verb can have an abstract noun after the preposition ב (*bet*) meaning “from, due to” rather than “over.”

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “the joy of our heart has ceased.”

²⁰ **tn** Heb “are faint” or “are sick.” The adjective דָּוָה (*davvah*, “faint”) is used in reference to emotional sorrow (e.g., Isa 1:5; Lam 1:22; Jer 8:18). The related adjective דָּוָה (*daveh*) means “(physically) sick” and “(emotionally) sad,” while the related verb דָּוָה (*davah*) means “to be sad.” The cognate Aramaic term means “sorrow,” and the cognate Syriac term refers to “misery.”

²¹ **tn** Heb “our eyes are dim.” The physical description of losing sight is metaphorical, perhaps for being blinded by tears or more abstractly for being unable to see (= envision) any hope. The collocation “darkened eyes” is too rare to clarify the nuance.

²² **tn** The phrase “through our tears” is added in the translation for the sake of clarification.

²³ **tn** Heb “jackals.” The term “jackals” is a synecdoche of species (= jackals) for general (= wild animals).

²⁴ **tn** The Hebrew verb “forget” often means “to not pay attention to, ignore,” just as the Hebrew “remember” often means “to consider, attend to.”

^{sn} The verbs “to forget” and “to remember” are often used figuratively in scripture when God is the subject, particularly in contexts of judgment (God forgets his people) and restoration of blessing (God remembers his people). In this case, the verb “to forget” functions as a hypocatastasis (implied comparison), drawing a comparison between God’s judgment and rejection of Jerusalem to a person forgetting that Jerusalem even exists. God’s judgment of Jerusalem was so intense and enduring that it seemed as though he had forgotten her. The synonymous parallelism makes this clear.

Why do you forsake us so long?
5:21 Bring us back to yourself, O LORD, so
 that we may return¹ to you;
 renew our life² as in days before,³

5:22 unless⁴ you have utterly rejected us⁵
 and are angry with us beyond measure.⁶

¹ **tc** The Kethib is וְנָשׁוּב (v^enashuv, “and we will return,” ו [vav] conjunction + Qal imperfect 1st person common plural from שׁוּב [shuv, “to return”]). The Qere is וְנָשׁוּבָה (v^enashuvah, “and let us return,” ו [vav] conjunction + Qal cohortative 1st person common plural from שׁוּב [shuv, “to return”]).

tn The cohortative after a volitive indicates purpose (“so that”). There is a wordplay in Hebrew between “Bring us back” (Hiphil imperative of שׁוּב [shuv, “to return”]) and “let us return” (Qal imperfect of שׁוּב [shuv, “to return”]). This repetition of the root שׁוּב (shuv) is significant; it depicts a reciprocal relationship between God’s willingness to allow the nation to return to him on one hand and its national repentance on the other.

² **tn** *Heb* “our days.” The term “days” is a synecdoche of time (= days) for what is experienced within that time span (= life) (e.g., Gen 5:4, 8, 11; 6:3; 9:29; 11:32; 25:7; 47:8, 9; Deut 22:19, 29; 23:7; Josh 24:31; Judg 2:7, 18; 2 Sam 19:35; Job 7:1, 16, 18; Pss 8:9; 39:5, 6; 90:9, 10, 12, 14; 103:15; Prov 31:12; Eccl 2:3; 5:17, 19; 6:3).

³ **tn** *Heb* “as of old.”

⁴ **tn** The compound conjunction כִּי אִם (*ki im*) functions to limit the preceding clause: “unless, or...” (e.g., Ruth 3:18; Isa 65:6; Amos 3:7) (BDB 474 s.v. 2.a): “Bring us back to yourself... unless you have utterly rejected us” (as in the present translation) or “Bring us back to yourself... Or have you utterly rejected us?” It is Jeremiah’s plea that the LORD be willing to relent of his anger and restore a repentant nation to himself; however, Jeremiah acknowledges that this wished-for restoration might not be possible if the LORD has become so angry with Jerusalem/Judah that he is determined to reject the nation once and for all. Then, Jerusalem/Judah’s restoration would be impossible.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Or have you utterly rejected us?” The construction מָאֵס מְאֹד (ma’os m^eastanu), Qal infinitive absolute + Qal perfect 2nd person masculine singular from מָאֵס (ma’as, “to reject”) is emphatic: the root מָאֵס (ma’as) is repeated in these two verbal forms for emphasis.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Are you exceedingly angry with us?” The construction עָד־מְאֹד (*ad-m^eod*) means “up to an abundance, to a great degree, exceedingly” (e.g., Gen 27:33, 34; 1 Sam 11:15; 25:36; 2 Sam 2:17; 1 Kgs 1:4; Pss 38:7, 9; 119:8, 43, 51, 107; Isa 64:9, 12; Lam 5:22; Dan 8:8; 11:25). Used in reference to God’s judgment, this phrase denotes total and irrevocable rejection by God and his refusal to forgive the sin and restore the people to a status under his grace and blessings, e.g., “Do not be angry beyond measure (עָד־מְאֹד, *ad-m^eod*), O LORD; do not remember our sins forever” (Isa 64:9) and “Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure (עָד־מְאֹד, *ad-m^eod*)?” (Isa 64:12). The sentiment is expressed well in TEV, “Or have you rejected us forever? Is there no limit to your anger?” and CEV, “Or do you despise us so much that you don’t want us?”