

# Structure and the Book of Zechariah

Mike Butterworth





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**Mike Butterworth**

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## PREFACE

This book was conceived in Bangalore in about 1977, and over the past fourteen years there have been many people who have helped towards its completion in one way or another.

Among them I must mention my former colleague Jim Gibbs, whose enthusiasm for chiasmus was infectious.

Professor Peter Ackroyd was my first advisor and then supervisor, and made valuable suggestions in the important initial stages of reading and planning.

The tape for producing the tables of repeated words came from Professor Radday in Tel Aviv. Without that I should still be less than half way through. The program that actually produced the results was written by Mrs Christine Brown, of the King's College Computer Department, and her successors have also given valuable help.

I owe most to my wife Jean, who has continued to encourage me to work on this book, at considerable cost to herself, when I could cheerfully have abandoned it.

In 1984 I spent a sabbatical at Hope College, Holland, Michigan. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to many people: to students for their interest; to Barry Bandstra and the Religion Department for the loan of books, and for getting a computer tape of the text of Isaiah; to the Computer Department, and especially to Dan Griswold, for enormous help in producing an analysed tape and a program to give me the results I needed. In the event, it proved too much to deal with Isaiah in the present thesis, but I have articles on the structure of Isaiah planned for controlled release over the next ten years. The support I received from scores of people at Hope College and Western Theological Seminary (with its Tower of Babel) was overwhelming.

Richard Coggins has been my supervisor for the greater part of the writing of the thesis upon which this book is based. His encouragement, constructive criticism and advice have been of enormous help.

The students and staff of Oak Hill College have given support in a

number of ways: prayer, encouragement, stimulus to explain why the world needs to know about the structure of Zechariah, commiserations when progress was slow and so on. I should also mention the students of King's College London, who for nine years completely refrained from recalling any books on Zechariah in German or French.

Finally, I am most thankful to God, for all of the above, for illumination (I believe), and for helping me to persevere to the end.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibRes	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
EstBfb	<i>Estudios Bíblicos</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> , ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A.E. Cowley
GTJ	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IB	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDBSup	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IF	Introductory Formula
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
ISBE	G.W. Bromiley (ed.), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> , rev. edn

<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JEOL</i>	<i>Jaarbericht. . . ex oriente lux</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KAT</i>	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>KB</i>	L. Koethler and W. Baumgartner, <i>Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros</i>
<i>LB</i>	<i>Linguistica Biblica</i>
<i>NEB</i>	New English Bible
<i>OTG</i>	Old Testament Guides
<i>OTS</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RSV</i>	Revised Standard Version
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>V</i>	Vision
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> , Supplements
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

## BIBLE REFERENCES

Chapter and verse are separated by a full stop (period); where necessary the word number is indicated by ‘.#’. Thus Zech. 3.4.#5 means Zechariah ch. 3, v. 4, word 5.

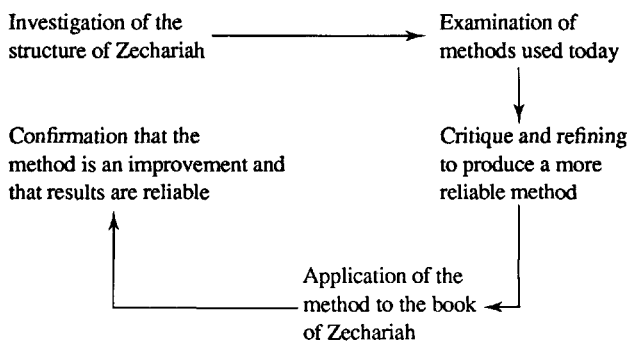
References to word numbers in different verses are separated by a comma plus a space. Thus 3.8.#5, 9.#7 means ch. 3, the fifth word of the eighth verse, and the seventh word of the ninth verse.

References to word numbers in the same verse are separated by a comma and no space. Thus 5.##7,11 signifies the seventh and eleventh words in v. 5.

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## INTRODUCTION

This book has two mutually dependent parts. The task I have undertaken is to elucidate the structure of the book of Zechariah, but in order to do this, a satisfactory method must be found. It seems to me that there is no ready-made, proven method in use in biblical scholarship. The first two chapters attempt to demonstrate this and to draw up criteria that will help us to frame a reliable way of proceeding. The method I then devise is tested on the book of Zechariah, and the results obtained are compared with those of biblical scholarship. The procedure may be set out thus:



The circle could be closed by incorporating the results into 'methods used today', and it is hoped that future studies will be able to build on this one.

Although the present investigation arises out of an interest in literary structures and their function in the Bible, it is not a structuralist work of the sort that traces its roots back to C. Lévi-Strauss and the French Structuralists.<sup>1</sup> I believe that there may be some insights to be

1. As seen in works like: R. Barthes *et al.*, *Structural Analysis and Biblical Exegesis: Interpretational Essays* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1974); D. Patte, *What is Structural Exegesis?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

gained from this activity, but my own interest is much more in the authors' and redactors' intentions than in the meaning of the text as something with complete autonomy.

This, of course, raises the question whether this is a legitimate concern, and whether the 'intentionalist fallacy' is being allowed to put the study out of focus.<sup>1</sup> It is beyond my competence to enter into this literary discussion in any depth, but I remain interested almost wholly in the structures that have been produced by a human mind, rather than by accident. It will probably not be possible always to decide whether a writer consciously and deliberately created a particular structure, but I shall try and establish that the structures discerned are unlikely to be the result of a random positioning of particular words and phrases.<sup>2</sup>

This book makes use of the computer. It has little in common, however, with the computer studies produced by scholars such as Radday and Wickmann.<sup>3</sup> It makes no use at all of statistical theory. The computer is simply a means of doing a great deal of tedious work that would have taken much longer otherwise.

The starting point is main line biblical criticism. I assume that any serious biblical study must take account of textual criticism, literary and historical criticism, and form criticism. I believe, however, that biblical scholarship has rightly moved beyond form criticism,<sup>4</sup> and that the text as we have received it is a proper object of study.

This means that I have some sympathy for the views and programme of B.S. Childs.<sup>5</sup> However, I do not think that his canonical

1. Cf. J. Barton, *Reading the Old Testament* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), pp. 147-51.

2. It is not possible to undertake a detailed statistical investigation, but some basic observations are made in Chapter 1.

3. E.g. Y.T. Radday and D. Wickmann, 'The Unity of Zechariah Examined in the Light of Statistical Linguistics', *ZAW* 87 (1975), pp. 30-55; cf. Y.T. Radday, *The Unity of Isaiah in the Light of Statistical Linguistics, with a Contribution by D. Wickmann* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1973); and S.L. Portnoy and D.L. Petersen, 'Biblical Texts and Statistical Analysis: Zechariah and Beyond', *JBL* 103 (1984), pp. 11-21.

4. As envisaged by J. Mulenburg, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', *JBL* 88 (1969), pp. 1-18.

5. As set out in several works, notably in his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1979).

studies are entirely clear in their orientation and foundation. I do not know precisely what is intended by 'canonical shaping': it seems to imply the existence of a mind of some kind, which is distinct from the minds of the writers and editors who had a hand in the production of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> I do not think that Professor Childs means to investigate the mind of God. In any case, I confine my attention to the shaping undertaken by individual minds.

This study comes under the general title of 'rhetorical criticism', but even so it is restricted in scope. It does not deal, for example, with several of the concerns expressed by Muilenburg<sup>2</sup> or the authors of *Rhetorical Criticism*,<sup>3</sup> let alone the many studies that have been inspired by this initiative. For example, Johnny Lee Wilson investigates the use of different types of consonant to express a particular mood and meaning.<sup>4</sup>

1. Thus, for example, he says:

A major literary and theological force was at work in shaping the present form of the Hebrew Bible. . . prophetic oracles directed to one generation were fashioned in sacred Scripture by a canonical process to be used by another generation.

('The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature', in J.L. Mays and P.J. Achtemeier [eds.], *Interpreting the Prophets* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], p. 42).

2. See Chapter 1 below.

3. E.g. A.S. Rose, 'The "Principles" of Divine Election', in J.J. Jackson and M. Kessler (eds.), *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1974), pp. 43-67, who argues that 1 Sam. 16 'is formulated in the categories of thought, and with literary features similar to those of Wisdom Literature' (pp. 43-44); or W.E. March, who investigates the functions and meanings of לָכֵן, in 'Laken: Its Function and Meaning', in Jackson and Kessler (eds.), *Rhetorical Criticism*, pp. 256-84. Some of the articles seem to have little connection with rhetorical criticism, e.g. E.J. Hamlin's account of 'The Liberator's Ordeal' (pp. 33-42). Perhaps rhetorical criticism is even wider than Muilenburg realized. See Chapter 1 below.

4. J.L. Wilson, *A Rhetorical-Critical Analysis of the Balaam Oracles* (PhD thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981). Thus he says, 'The sonoric value of the words are [sic] inseparably united with the meaning of the word and of the context'. He regards the labials and velars as 'dark letters' and the dentals and palatals as 'bright letters' (p. 23). On p. 35 he says,

It was shown that sound patterns may affect the mood and emphasis of the content; rhythm may be established if one uses more than one method; parallelism can aid in clarifying the message; the 'old rhetoric' can enable the reader/critic to discern the structure of the poem; and attention to imagery and irony is important in understanding the text.

The main stimulus for it has come from the many scholars who have noted regular structures in Old Testament passages.<sup>1</sup> These range from a single verse (or less) to a whole book (or more).<sup>2</sup> Many of these are stimulating and seem to throw new light upon the meaning of a passage.<sup>3</sup> Most of them, however, it seems to me, are not put forward with sufficient scepticism. I shall illustrate what I mean in Chapter 1 by means of the following:

1. An outline of contemporary structural studies of the kind that I am interested in.
2. A critique of such studies in general terms.
3. Detailed scrutiny of specific works dealing with the structure of biblical texts.
4. Theoretical remarks concerning the objectivity of the results of structural studies.

From this I shall draw some conclusions about a more secure way to proceed in structural studies. In the second part of the book I shall attempt to apply these conclusions to a consideration of the structure of the book of Zechariah. There will be different types of unit in focus:

On p. 151 he concludes that the use of velars and sibilants expresses the invulnerability and strength of Jacob-Israel. This is an interesting thesis but to test it would require another full length volume. I did produce a computer program to enable me to investigate the frequency of various types of consonant in each verse of Zechariah, but it soon became plain that there was no room in this work for such a study.

1. E.g. J.M. Gibbs, a former colleague in Bangalore, who discovered many chiasmic structures in different parts of the Bible. See the bibliography and treatment of the Psalms in Chapter 1 below. I am also indebted to Jonathan Magonet, whose study of the book of Jonah (*Form and Meaning: Studies in Literary Techniques in the Book of Jonah* [Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983]) is the most satisfactory and illuminating structural study I have yet seen. L. Alonso-Schökel, J.P. Fokkelman, J.R. Lundbom, W.L. Holladay, P. Auffret and P. Lamarche have all provided great stimulus, even though I have had to disagree with their results in many places.

2. Discoveries of small chiasmuses are numerous. Attempts to identify the structure of large works come from, e.g., J.P. Fokkelman (*Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel. I. King David* [2 Sam 9-20 & 1 Kings 1-2] [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981], and *Narrative Art in Genesis* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975]) and J.R. Lundbom (*Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975]).

3. For example Lundbom's observation of the correspondence between Jer. 1.5 and 20.18, in *Jeremiah*, pp. 28-30.

1. Small individual units (with or without suspected redactional additions or adjustments).
2. Larger units, for example, chs. 1–8, 9–11, 12–14, and 1–14.

In order to avoid circular argument in deciding upon individual units, these will be established, in Chapter 2, with reference to main line Old Testament studies, taking particular note of form-critical criteria and the scholarly consensus. In the following two chapters I shall examine the internal structure of individual units, and then the structure arising out of the relation of these units to one another.

The final section, Chapter 5, summarizes results obtained and estimates their reliability. It is hoped that this will make some contribution to the debate about how structural studies ought to be carried out, and that at least some future results will carry more conviction.

## Chapter 1

### INVESTIGATING STRUCTURE: IN SEARCH OF A RELIABLE METHOD

In his Presidential Address, at the 1968 annual meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature, James Muilenburg read a paper entitled 'Form Criticism and Beyond'.<sup>1</sup> In it he paid tribute to and identified with Gunkel and those scholars who had built upon his work, but then went on to point to some limitations which he believed must be met by a different type of study. This has come to be known as rhetorical criticism. He argued that there had been a tendency to stress the typical and representative features of a text to the extent that the individual and unique features had been obscured. What is needed is to take form and content together as part of an integral whole. He insisted that the form-critical method need not be applied in a formalistic way, so as to ignore or even denigrate personal and psychological factors, nor need it be hostile to aesthetic and artistic studies.<sup>2</sup> Muilenburg went on to formulate a 'canon':

a responsible and proper articulation of the words in their linguistic patterns and in their precise formulations will reveal to us the texture and fabric of the writer's thought, not only what it is that he thinks, but how he thinks it.<sup>3</sup>

According to Muilenburg the two main concerns of the rhetorical critic are as follows: 'To define the limits and scope of the literary unit'. This will give understanding of a writer's intent and meaning, and will show, for example, how a major motif is resolved within

1. *JBL* 88 (1969), pp. 1-18; reprinted in T.F. Best (ed.), *Hearing and Speaking the Word* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1984).

2. L. Alonso-Schökel makes the same point in his 'Hermeneutical Problems of a Literary Study of the Bible', in *Congress Volume: Edinburgh 1974* (VTSup, 28; Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 1-15.

3. 'Form Criticism', p. 7.

a unit. In this connection he mentions 'inclusio' as a well attested feature of Hebrew writing (cf. Jer. 3.1–4.4):

To recognize the structure of a composition and to discern the configuration of its component parts, to delineate the warp and woof out of which the literary fabric is woven, and to note the various rhetorical devices that are employed for marking, on the one hand, the sequence and movement of the pericope, and on the other, the shifts or breaks in the development of the writer's thought.<sup>1</sup>

In particular this means noting the way individual strophes (Muilenburg defends the retention of this term) are both marked off and grouped together.<sup>2</sup> In this connection Muilenburg mentions: turning points or breaks or shifts, the use of particles, vocatives, inclusio, questions at points of climax, repetition of keywords.<sup>3</sup>

This address was in no sense a new beginning. Muilenburg himself had written articles with this perspective,<sup>4</sup> and he referred back to much older writers, such as E. König, Bishop Lowth and E. Sievers, together with more recent writers up to U. Cassuto, Cross and Freedman, G. Gerleman and W.L. Holladay, who had shared his concerns.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the article seems to have acted as a stimulus to 'rhetorical criticism'. In 1974 a book by this name was published as

1. 'Form Criticism', p. 10.

2. He gives various examples of turning points or breaks in Hebrew poetry, and argues that particles play a major role in revealing 'the rhetorical cast of Semitic literary mentality' ('Form Criticism', p. 13). He claims that the deictic and emphatic particle *kî* is important in this respect. This has been dealt with in 'The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle *kî* in the Old Testament', *HUCA* 32 (1961), pp. 135-60. Examples given include Isa. 32.2; 34.5a, 6c, 8a; Ps. 95.3, 7; 1.6; Jer. 4.6b, 8b; 5.6c.

3. 'Form Criticism', pp. 13-17.

4. E.g. 'The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle ׀ in the Old Testament', and 'A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric', in *Congress Volume* (VTSup, 1; Leiden: Brill, 1953), pp. 97-111.

5. E. König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, und Poetik* (Leipzig, 1900); R. Lowth, *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum praelectiones academicae* (1753); E. Sievers, *Metrische Studien* (1901, 1904-1905, 1907); F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1950); G. Gerleman, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Stylistics', *VT* 1 (1951), pp. 168-80. At this time Holladay had already produced some articles on the book of Jeremiah: 'Prototype and Copies: A New Approach to the Poetry-Prose Problem in the Book of Jeremiah', *JBL* 79 (1960), pp. 351-67; and 'The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah', *JBL* 85 (1966), pp. 401-35.

a tribute to James Muilenburg.<sup>1</sup> One of the central features in rhetorical critical studies has been the discovery of 'chiasmus' in virtually all parts of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup>

Chiasmus was noted by J.A. Bengel as long ago as 1742,<sup>3</sup> but the greatest impetus to this in modern times seems to have come from Nils Lund who, in 1942, produced his book *Chiasmus in the New Testament*.<sup>4</sup> His writings contain patterns typical of those represented in structural studies today, for example, on Ps. 3.7-8:<sup>5</sup>

Save me  
 O my God  
 For thou hast smitten  
 all my enemies  
 On the cheek bone;  
 The teeth  
 of the wicked  
 Thou hast broken  
 To Yahweh  
 The salvation

This example, like several other short ones, is free from elements of selection and subjective characterization and seems to me to be quite convincing. In other words, Lund has simply put down what is there

1. Jackson and Kessler (eds.), *Rhetorical Criticism*.

2. For a long list of patterns claimed in both biblical and extra-biblical literature, see *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (ed. J.W. Welch; Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), pp. 287-352.

3. *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Tübingen), quoted in N.W. Lund, 'The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament', *AJSL* 46 (1930), p. 104. Other scholars who pointed to chiasmic structures include J. Jebb, *Sacred Literature* (T. Caldwell and W. Davies, 1820); T. Boys, *Key to the Book of Psalms* (London: L.B. Seely & Sons, 1825); and J. Forbes, *The Symmetrical Structure of Scripture, or the Principles of Scripture Parallelism Exemplified in an Analysis of the Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, and Other Passages of the Sacred Writings* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1854). Jebb noticed the structure of Zech. 9.5 formed by Ashkelon—Gaza—Ekron—her [= Ekron's]—Gaza—Ashkelon. See the treatment of this section in Chapter 3 below.

4. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942. He had previously produced several articles including 'The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament', pp. 104-26 and 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', *AJSL* 49 (1933), pp. 281-312.

5. 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', p. 288.

in these two verses, and the correspondence is plain. Patterns found in most other sections are plausible but not all are compelling. In subsequent studies, it seems to me, many scholars have assumed Lund's work to be a solid basis and have built more speculative work on it. They should have given more attention to checking their foundations. Lund himself was aware of the charge of subjectivism that might be levelled at his method and pointed to objective checks such as the 'prevalent parallelism, rhythm, or general sense of the passage in question'. He argues that 'chiasmus as a new instrument. . . need not supplant, but rather will supplement, parallelism and rhythm'.<sup>1</sup> This is accepted in the present study.

Despite the caution expressed by Lund, it seems to me that he did not carry out his studies rigorously enough. This may be illustrated by considering his analysis of some of the Psalms and by comparing his results with those of other scholars.

Lund presents Psalm 15 as follows:

- |       |    |  |
|-------|----|--|
| 1.    | A  | Vocative and Repeated question: 'Who shall dwell. . . ?'   |
| 2-3a. | B  | Two lines each concerned with deeds then words<br>Last line only is negative   |
| 3b    | C  | <i>Not</i> he doeth to his fellows/evil<br>And a reproach/ <i>not</i> he has taken against his neighbours                                      |
| 4     | B' | Two lines each deeds and words [questionable]<br>Last line only is negative  |
| 5     | C' | His money/ <i>not</i> he putteth out on interest<br>And a bribe against the innocent/ <i>not</i> he taketh                                     |
|       | A' | Answer to the opening question [but not phrased so as to correspond exactly to the question, e.g. 'Whoever does this shall dwell with Yahweh'] |

Lund comments on the fact that there is chiasmus in B' but not B, and concludes: 'Evidently it was not felt to be necessary to have every feature in the two strophes parallel'.<sup>2</sup> We might as easily have drawn the conclusion that the chiasmus was incidental or unconscious.

Other patterns that Lund detected in the Psalms are (using English verse numbers) shown in figure 1. Where available the patterns

1. 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', p. 286.

2. 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', p. 292.

claimed by J.M. Gibbs,<sup>1</sup> R.L. Alden,<sup>2</sup> J.T. Willis, and P. Auffret are given below Lund's.<sup>3</sup>

It is obvious that there are many substantial differences between these outlines. This does not mean that none of them can be right—after all there *may* be a washing powder that really does wash whitest of all—but it does suggest that scholars need to interact with one another and be prepared to demonstrate that their own scheme is more likely to be 'correct' than any of the alternatives. In this study I am assuming, as the scholars working in this area seem to do, that we are concerned with the plan in the mind of the author(s) and/or redactor(s). It is therefore not possible for us, as it would be for structuralists, to claim that the text allows all these patterns to be regarded as genuine.

<i>Psalm 1</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6a	6b						
	A		BC	C'	B'	A'							
[Alden	A <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>2</sup>	B	B	A <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>2</sup> ]							
[Auffret	a	B		b	A								
Also:	I	II		II'	I	II	II']						
[Willis	A			B		A	B]						
<i>Psalm 2</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7a	7b	8	9	10	11	12
	A	BCD	E		F	E'			A'		B'	C'	D'
[Gibbs	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	f'	e'd'	c'	b'	a'	]
[Alden	A <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>2</sup>		B <sup>1</sup>		B <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>2</sup>		B <sup>1</sup>		A <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>2</sup>	]
[Auffret	A		B				B'				A'		]

1. 'Chiastic Psalms' (Private circulation, 1971).

2. 'Chiastic Psalms: Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 1-50', *JETS* 17 (1974), pp. 11-28.

3. Ps. 1: Lund, 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', pp. 294-95; Alden, 'Chiastic Psalms', p. 14; Auffret, 'Essai sur la structure littéraire du Psaume 1', *BZ* 22 (1978), pp. 41, 44-45; J.T. Willis, 'Psalm 1—An Entity', *ZAW* 91 (1979), pp. 381-401. Ps. 2: Lund, 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', pp. 295-98; Alden, 'Chiastic Psalms', pp. 14-15; P. Auffret, *The Literary Structure of Psalm 2* (JSOTSup, 3; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1977), pp. 31-32. It is unfair to reduce Auffret's thorough and subtle study to this bare outline, since he points to many other marks of structure. Nevertheless, this is how he presents the structure of the whole, and this is the focus of our present comparison. Ps. 3: Lund, 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', pp. 298-300; P. Auffret, 'Note sur la structure littéraire du Psaume 3', *ZAW* 91 (1979), p. 100. Ps. 4: Lund, 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', pp. 299-302; Alden, 'Chiastic Psalms', p. 15. Ps. 30: Lund, 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', pp. 304-306; Alden, 'Chiastic Psalms', pp. 22-23. Ps. 29: Lund, 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', pp. 306-309; Alden, 'Chiastic Psalms', pp. 21-22. Ps. 58: Lund, 'Chiasmus in the Psalms', p. 311.

<i>Psalm 3</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (first two words)	7	8					
	A		B		B'			A'	+ Praise					
[Gibbs	a		b	c	d	d	c.....	b	a]					
[Auffret	A		B	B'		A'	B.....	A	B]					
<i>Psalm 4</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8						
	A	B		C	B'		A'							
[Gibbs	abc	def		g	f e' d'		c'	b'a'						
As Lund but with more detail]														
[Alden	A	B	C			B	A		]					
<i>Psalm 30</i>	1	2	3	4	5	[6	7a	7b]	8	9	10	11	12	
	A	B	A'	A	B	gloss			C	D	C'	B'	A'	
['Yahweh' and 'Yahweh my God' are used to separate sections]														
[Gibbs	a	bc	de	fg	hijk	lm	n	oon	ml	kjih	gf	edc	ba	
He notes this as 'probably chiasmic']														
[Alden	A	B <sup>1</sup>	B <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>3</sup>	CD	E	D	C		B <sup>1</sup>	B <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>3</sup>	A	]
<i>Psalm 29</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6		8	7+9b	10	11			
	A		B	C	D			C'	B'	A'				
[Transposing verses in the interests of a theory that concerns the order of verses must be regarded as precarious]														
[Gibbs	abc		de	f	g <sup>2</sup>	h (+ v. 7)		g <sup>2</sup>	f'e'	d'c'	b'a'			
He suggests that vv. 6-7 describe a volcano]														
[Alden	A		B <sup>1</sup>	B <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>3a</sup>	B <sup>3b</sup>	7=B <sup>1</sup>	B <sup>2</sup>	9=B <sup>3b+3a</sup>	A			]	
<i>Psalm 58</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	[9]	10	11			
	A	B	C	D		E	D'	C'	gloss	B'	A'			
[Gloss supposed to be added by someone who was unaware of the chiasmic nature of the Psalm]														
[Gibbs	ab	cd	ef	gh	ik	k'i'	h'g'	f'e'	d'	c'	b'a']			

Figure 1: Patterns in the Psalms detected by Lund et al.

Similar remarks could be made about Lund's other article, 'The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament'.<sup>1</sup> One of the convincing patterns he lays out is Isa. 60.1-3:

Arise (קָמִי)  
 shine (אֲרִירִי)  
 for thy light is come (כִּי בָא אֲוִרְךָ)  
 and the glory (וּכְבוֹד)  
 of Jehovah  
 upon thee is risen (זָרַח)  
 For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth  
 and gross darkness the peoples (לְאֻמִּים)  
 but upon thee will arise (יִרְחַח)  
 Jehovah  
 and his glory (וּכְבוֹדוֹ) shall be seen (יֵרָאוּ) upon thee  
 and nations shall come to thy light (וְהָלְטוּ גוֹיִם לְאֲוִרְךָ)  
 and kings to the brightness (לְנֹהַר)  
 of thy rising (וְזָרַחְךָ)

Even so this may give the impression of greater precision than was intended by the author. The first verb concerned with 'rising' is קָמִי whereas the other three are זָרַח. We might ask why the author did not use קָמִי in v. 3. Furthermore, 'shine' is not from the same root as 'brightness', but it does share its root with 'thy light' in vv. 1 and 3.

During the past twenty years there has been an increasing flow of articles and books concerned with the structure of literary units. Yet it is still true, as D.N. Freedman said, that 'the study of ancient literary techniques is still in ferment and flux. A common fund of axioms and assumptions and a single sure-handed methodology are yet to be established.' That remark was made in the preface to an important work published in 1981, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*,<sup>1</sup> which attempted to draw together results achieved in various literatures: Sumero-Akkadian and Ugaritic literature, biblical Hebrew (both narrative and poetry), Aramaic (contracts and letters), Talmudic-Aggadic (narrative), the Book of Mormon, the New Testament, and ancient Greek and Latin literature. In addition there is a valuable bibliography of books (but not articles) concerned with structure (although this is often not their prime concern), and an index arranged according to literary reference which gives the patterns detected in the books listed. John Welch shows some concern for objectivity and lists some of the 'objective criteria' which may be observed more or less clearly:

1. P. 7.

repetition  
balance  
inversion  
focus or shift at the centre  
density of the parallel forms

He argues that even where these are not clearly in evidence it may sometimes be

desirable to draw attention to ways in which the text tends toward inverted order, or to focus on a particular sense of balance or symmetry which seems foundational to the text itself. Here it is possible to speak of chiasmus in a looser sense of the term, for chiasmus, like poetical or artistic forms generally, lends itself to a variety of application and arrangements which may on some occasions only approximate to its ideal composition. Where the inversion is less than perfect, some might contend that this is evidence that no inversion was ever intended by the writer at all. Rather, this might better be explained as evidence that the author simply took some liberty with the form. . . In such instances the analysis becomes much more complex and, depending to a large extent on what is to be proved thereby, may become controversial.

It is not clear how committed to objectivity Welch is, for he says in conclusion,

In the final analysis, our study ends where it begins: with the ancient text in hand. The features which it ultimately manifests are largely determined by what features the text is observed as manifesting. What a text says, or looks like, or stands for, is fundamentally a matter of what it says to its readers. . . What one ultimately sees in a text is only limited by, not determined by, potential criticisms which render a view more or less attractive. . . These remarks. . . do not purport to prove the validity or importance of chiasmus, for its proof is only in its perception and for that we must turn to the demonstrations below.<sup>1</sup>

This seems to be to give up the hope of D.N. Freedman quoted above. In any case, it seems to me that most scholars interested in structure operate on the assumption that one simply needs to demonstrate a structure by pointing out correspondences that the reader can see. Very little attention is given to what the author might have intended and virtually no space is devoted to considering counter-claims from other scholars, or to explaining why certain correspondences in a text may be ignored. This will be demonstrated below, by considering a

1. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, pp. 13-15.

few selected examples from modern articles concerned with structure.

The articles in *Chiasmus in Antiquity* unfortunately, in my opinion, do not go very far towards establishing either particular large scale chiasmic structures, or criteria for recognizing structures planned by the author or editor of a text. Some examples are quite persuasive: for example, the Gilgamesh Epic, as presented by Simoons-Vermeer, although it is interesting that R.F. Smith, the writer of the article on Sumero-Akkadian literature, emends her scheme to something more complicated and with a different centre!<sup>1</sup> Some of the examples seem ridiculous, for example the Code of Lipit-Ishtar is said to have an A-B-A' structure: Prologue-Laws-Epilogue.<sup>2</sup> Radday's essay on biblical narrative contains some uncertain and, to my mind, irregular patterns. For example, Kings is presented as:

A	Introduction and Rise (1 Kgs 1-2; 2 chapters)
B	A Single Kingdom: Solomon (1 Kgs 3-11; 9 chapters)
C	The Divided Kingdom (1 Kgs 12-2 Kgs 17; 29 chapters)
B'	A Single Kingdom: Josiah (2 Kgs 18-23; 6 chapters)
A	Conclusion and Fall (2 Kgs 24-25; 2 chapters) <sup>3</sup>

This does not look particularly regular, nor is it clear that the author/editor thought of 2 Kings 18-23 as a single kingdom matching the kingdom of Solomon.

In the section 1 Kings 3-11 Radday argues for the following pattern:<sup>4</sup>

A B C D E F G H F' E' C' G' B' D' A'.

Apart from the fact that the sections vary in length from five to one hundred and fifty-five verses, this looks like a very irregular pattern. Radday admits that 'deviations from perfect symmetry occur' but argues that the only substantial one is G'. Statistics are used to measure 'deviation from a perfect chiasm', but I do not find this reassuring. It is particularly unsettling that Radday engages in a brief study of the book of Jonah, dismissing 2.2-9 as not integral to the book, without referring to Magonet's study.<sup>5</sup>

1. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, pp. 26-28.
2. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, p. 20.
3. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, p. 62.
4. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, pp. 62-63.
5. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, pp. 59-61.

The article by W.G.E. Watson is much more circumspect.<sup>1</sup> He first defines in a helpful way the terms he intends to use—hemistich, colon (a single line of poetry), strophe (verse unit made up of one or more cola) and so on—and then gives a brief account of ‘Strophic Chiasmus’. The terms he uses are:

1. Pure or mirror chiasmus: abc//cba, where the a’s are almost identical;
2. Complete chiasmus: ab//ba (strictly ab//b’a’); abc//cba; etc.
3. Split member chiasmus: a-bc//bc-a; etc.
4. Partial chiasmus: abc//cb; ab-c//ba-c; etc.<sup>2</sup>

As well as straightforward structural chiasmus he notes some other types:

1. ‘Skewed chiasmus’—‘after the midpoint [it] begins its way back, only to plunge forward briefly once more, and then, in the last line, offers a set of simultaneous balances in several media which psychologically brings us all the way home’.<sup>3</sup>
2. Assonantal chiasmus. This includes (a) texts containing both chiasmus and assonance; (b) texts with a chiastic pattern of root consonants (e.g. Jer. 5.25; 16.6).
3. Semantic-sonant chiasmus. Here one pair of words corresponds because they are similar in meaning; the other pair is similar in sound (e.g. Eccl. 7.1a, *טוב שם // טוב ריח*, ‘A good name is better than good perfume’).
4. Gender chiasmus, which is obtained by the layout of the gender of the nouns used (e.g. Prov. 20.9, ‘Young men’s glory [f.] is their strength [m.], But old men’s splendour [m.] their grey hair [f.]’).<sup>4</sup>

1. The Society for Old Testament Study Book List found it ‘unusually convincing’.

2. ‘Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry’, in Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, pp. 118-68 (123-26).

3. Quoting W.L. Holladay, ‘Poetic Passages of Jeremiah’, *JBL* 85 (1966), pp. 432-33.

4. J. Magonet also refers to gender chiasmus in ‘Isaiah 2.1–4.6: Some Poetic Structures and Tactics’, *Amsterdamse cahiers voor exegese* 3 (1982), pp. 82-83. He notes Condamin’s observation that Isa. 3.18-23 contains groups of nouns, 8 + 5 + 8. The first eight have the genders:

3m. + 3f. + m. + f., and the last: 3f. + 3m. + f. + m.

In addition he lists 'patterns related to chiasmus' as:<sup>1</sup>

1. Alternating chiasmus, i.e. ab//ab which is not chiasmus at all but 'may be significant in considering the development of chiasmus'.
2. Inclusio. Although all chiastic patterns of the form a...//...a could be considered as inclusios, Watson says that it is a 'distant form of parallelism' which 'cannot be confused with chiasmus'. Nevertheless, there may well be texts where we are not certain which description is the most apt.
3. Chiastic inclusio. For example, a-b/. . ./b-a. He also wants to include examples of 'phonological inclusio' (by which he seems to mean the assonantal and semantic-sonant chiasmus mentioned above).<sup>2</sup> This does not appear to be an appropriate name for the latter.
4. Chiastic gather-line. Watson mentions Jer. 23.4 and 23.32 as examples. This gather-line reiterates most of the elements of the poem in reverse order.<sup>3</sup>

Magonet comments, 'It is possible to consider a modified version of this system and discern a pattern to these forms. The first three words have a masculine plural ending, and the second three a feminine plural.' So far so good, but then he makes sense of the middle section by arguing for:

vv. 20-21a	-im -ôt -im endings, nouns in alphabetical order;
and	
v. 21b	construct phrase + single word single word + construct phrase.

At this point one must ask what controls are being exercised. For example, three plural nouns are just as likely to look regularly arranged as irregularly (f.f.f.; m.m.m.; m.f.m.; f.m.f.; as opposed to m.m.f., f.f.m., m.f.f., f.m.m.). Further see below.

1. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, pp. 135-36.

2. Assuming that '2.82' means '2.8 (2)'; the referencing is somewhat confusing.

3. Cf. A.R. Ceresko, 'The Chiastic Word Pattern in Hebrew', *CBQ* 40 (1978), pp. 1-10 (2-3). Another example of a gather-line, which *may* be chiastic, seems to me to be Isa. 2.20 which picks up various elements found in vv. 6-8 (idols, silver and gold, work of their hands/made for themselves). Verse 21 is very similar to v. 19 which itself forms the climax to vv. 9-18. According to most scholars vv. 20-21 come from a redactor, and this seems a sensible conclusion. A full treatment of this passage must be given elsewhere. Cf. Magonet, 'Isaiah 2.1-4.6', pp. 79-82. He does not draw attention to this feature.

In dealing with chiasmus in longer passages, Watson recommends some useful criteria:<sup>1</sup>

1. 'Such chiasmus must be *strict*.' Loose chiasmus must be judged against established norms.
2. A whole stretch of text must be involved, not just parts.<sup>2</sup>
3. Repetition of single words is of more value than is the comparison of headings or labels given by the scholar concerned.
4. The basis on which the chiasitic structure is posited *must be stated*, whether it is change of speaker, alternation of gender or content.

It seems that this is a useful start, but I shall suggest further safeguards as we proceed. Here I should mention that repetition of *phrases* is likely to be more significant than repetition of *single words*, and common words are less likely to be used to mark structure than rare and distinctive words.<sup>3</sup>

1. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, p. 137.

2. Here he criticizes Lund's treatment of Ps. 30 as I have done above.

3. It is interesting to note that one of Watson's examples is Isa. 1.21-26 which was proposed by R. Lack, *La Symbolique du livre d'Isaïë: Essai sur l'image littéraire comme élément de structuration* (AnBib, 59; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1973), pp. 164-71, which I noted independently. The two schemes proposed are:

	21	22	23	24	25	26
Lack	A B	C	D	E D	C	B A
Butterworth	a	b	c	dc	b	a

These are in substantial agreement. The rare word 'dross' (סיניך/סינים) occurs in vv. 22, 25 only in the whole of Isaiah. 'Faithful city' (קרייה נאמנה) occurs in vv. 21a and 26b, and 'righteousness' (צדק) occurs in vv. 21b and 26b, and this is noted in Lack's arrangement. I have kept his A and B together because the root נאם occurs in vv. 21b and 26a. There is some doubt about the correspondence of vv. 23 and 24b, since no words are repeated, but there is no doubt at all that the turning point comes here, and that this is marked by a heavy formula: 'Therefore, oracle of the Lord Yahweh of hosts, the mighty one of Israel...' Other scholars have also noted and/or accepted this chiasmus, e.g., J.D.W. Watts, who follows Lack, or at least is aware of the work of Lack and Alonso-Schökel on this passage (*Isaiah 1-33* [Waco, TX: Word Books], p. 24).

*An Examination of Specific Structural Studies*

Having considered recent work on structure in a general way, I shall consider some concrete examples of scholarly work. They are selected with the aim of presenting a cross-section of the work that has been and is being done. So, there are treatments of texts of varying lengths, from one short verse to one large book. In addition there is an example of scholarly interaction. I have not attempted to deal with uncontroversial short verses—I assume that chiasmus has been demonstrated in this area—nor have I chosen an example of work covering more than one book.<sup>1</sup>

1. John S. Kselman, 'The ABCB Pattern: Further Examples'<sup>2</sup>

In this brief essay, Kselman adds to results obtained by S. Gevirtz, who noted that the pattern abcb occurs in Gen. 27.29a and Isa. 45.7a, and by B. Porten and U. Rappaport, who discovered (with the assistance of D.N. Freedman) the same pattern in fifteen other short passages. Kselman adds fifteen more examples.<sup>3</sup>

The pattern is not particularly striking in itself, but the fact that it apparently occurs in several places (thirty-two are claimed here) and is recognized by several scholars means that we must take it seriously. For the purposes of this book it is an example of a small scale structure, validated by its frequency.

These examples usually contain four strophes and the elements singled out are either all verbs or all nouns. This removes one possible charge of arbitrariness. Some of the examples seem to be impressive,

1. E.g. J.P. Fokkelman's study of King David in 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kgs 1-2. This is not really a study that extends over more than one book, though it would be surprising if Fokkelman's complete work did not attempt to do this. Another example is Y.T. Radday's 'Chiasm in Samuel', *LB* 9-10 (1971), pp. 21-31.

2. *VT* 32 (1982), pp. 224-29.

3. S. Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 32; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 43-44; B. Porten and U. Rappaport, 'Poetic Structure in Gen. 9.7', *VT* 21 (1971), pp. 363-69, added Gen. 9.7; Num. 23.7-8; Isa. 28.23; 30.10; 34.1; 42.15; Jer. 22.20; 40.9; and 50.2; D.N. Freedman suggested Isa. 5.5; 44.7; 45.4-5; Jer. 5.3; 11.11-12; 12.7-8; Kselman added Pss. 34.22-23; 46.3-4; 68.10-11; 71.22-23; 72.5-8; 132.13-14; Isa. 29.4; 35.10; 56.1; Jer. 4.15-16; Ezek. 29.4; Amos 9.6; Hab. 1.4; Job 13.23; and Deut. 7.13.

for example, Ps. 72.5-8 has each word at the beginning of a line, and the repeated word, ירד [ו], is significant.<sup>1</sup>

Isa. 35.10 (= 51.11) is very different. It has two word pairs: ברנה and ששון ושמחה and ששון ושמחה. These are natural word pairs, and according to BDB occur twice and thirteen times respectively. The roots also occur parallel to each other. It seems a mistake, therefore, to say that this example strengthens the case for saying that the pattern abcb is used deliberately.

Several patterns are obtained from words distributed quite irregularly, for example, Ps. 132.13-14 has fifteen words in all; the positions of words chosen for the pattern are 2, 5, 13, 15.<sup>2</sup>

In this last example Kselman notes 'also the chiasmus of b with cb'. This is an unusual way of describing the situation. This could be set out as a bcdcb chiasmus with b-b forming a complete inclusio:

אזה  
 מושב  
 מנחת  
 אשב  
 אוחיה

This suggests, I believe, that the bcb pattern is unlikely to have been consciously intended by the psalmist.

In Isa. 29.4 Kselman presents a second person singular verb along with three nouns with second person singular suffixes. This is slightly misleading, since there are three other second person singular verbs in the verse. A valid reason for putting the selected words together (which Kselman also mentions) is that they all express the idea of speaking: חדרבי, אמרחי, קולך. It is true, as Kselman notes, that the full form of the pattern would include the twice repeated מאץ and מעפר. Thus we have quite a subtle whole:

1. More accurately 'words' since we have two homographs: 'go down' ירד, and 'rule' רדה.

2. Positions and total numbers of words in Kselman's examples are:

1,6,7,12 (15 words)	6,8,13,15 (16 words)	3,8,10,12 (15 words)	3,8,13,16 (20 words)
1,8,16,24 (31 words)	2,5,13,15 (15 words)	3,6,10,12 (13 words)	6,7,10,11 (15 words)
5,7,10,12 (13 words)	3,5,9,12 (14 words)	1,4,8,16 (16 words)	2,5-6,9-10,12-14 (14 words)
3,6,11,15 + 4,8,10,16 (17 words)		3,4,5,6 (7 words)	1,2,3,4 (8 words)

p And you will be low,  
 q from the earth  
 r you will speak,  
  
 q and from the dust  
 p you will be bowed down (?)  
 r (with regard to?) your utterance  
  
 s and it will be like a ghost  
 q from the earth  
 r your voice  
 q and from the dust  
 r your utterance  
 s? will whisper

It seems to me highly likely that the author intended some sort of pattern here, but *abcb* does not do it justice and may be quite incidental to the overall effect.<sup>1</sup> In general we may make the following observations.

1. It would be quite easy for a writer to produce the *abcb* pattern by accident, for it is only necessary to meet the following conditions:

- a. Four comparable items occur in a small unit, i.e. four nouns, four verbs, four identical suffixes etc. Even these do not seem to be enforced too strictly.
- b. The second and fourth word are similar (but not necessarily identical).

Neither of these is at all stringent, especially if the repeated word is fairly common,<sup>2</sup> and even more if one has a choice of four items out of five or more.<sup>3</sup>

1. The most obvious way of looking at this would be:

pq-r//qp-r (Watson's partial chiasmus)  
 s-qr//qr-s (Watson's split member chiasmus)

This is not very satisfactory, since *q* and *r* are kept together in one part and separated in the other, and we should need much more evidence before we could say that this was a recognized pattern. Even so, I think it is more plausible than Kselman's suggestion.

2. E.g. הרים in Ps. 46.3-4; צדקתי/צדקה in Isa. 56.1; ארץ [פני] אל in Amos 9.6, in Kselman, 'The ABCB Pattern', pp. 226-28.

3. A brief examination of the first few verses of Isa. 29, one of the chapters that Kselman refers to, reveals that several have repeated words: