LITERARY INSERTION (AXB PATTERN) IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

by

D. T. TSUMURA

Tokyo

Dedicated to Professor C. H. Gordon for his 75th birthday

A phenomenon of literary breakup has been noted in the "breakup of stereotype phrases by parallelism", first called to scholars' attention by E. Z. Melamed in 1961 and followed by scholars such as M. Dahood, D. N. Freedman, M. Z. Kaddari and others. According to Kaddari, "complex semantic units, where constituents usually appear together even in non-parallel contexts, are split into the cola of a parallel verse". He notes the breakup of a composite substantive such as a hendiadys (e.g. ḥēṣed we ṭēmēt) and a construct chain (e.g. kēbel barzel) into two co-ordinated parallel lines (e.g. ḥēṣed / ṭēmēt; kēbel / barzel). In spite of recent criticism by C. F. Whitley, Melamed's thesis and its basic stylistic principle still remain valid in understanding poetic structure.

Another stylistic phenomenon, the so-called "broken construct chain", has long been recognized by Semitists, as in the case of the construct chain with intervening affix. Recently, Freedman made a significant observation of a "construct chain interrupted by a ver-

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1 This is a revised and expanded edition of a paper read at the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies at Jerusalem, 20 August 1981. I should like to express my sincere thanks to Professor J. A. Emerton for his helpful comments and suggestions.


5 E.g., see A. E. Cowley (ed.), Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar as edited and enlarged by the late E. Kautzsch (2nd edn., Oxford 1910 [= the 28th German edn]) § 130 a; for recent study see Dahood, Psalms III, pp. 381-3; C. H. Gordon, UT § 8.16.
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bal form". For example, in Hos. vi 9, derek y'ras'shû-sékmâh "They commit murder on the road to Shechem", the construct chain derek sékmâh is interrupted by a verb y'ras'shû. Again, Hos. xiv 3, which has been explained as a curious instance of "hypallage" (inversion of syntactic relationship), is taken by Freedman as an example of the "broken construct chain". In other words, kol-tiśsî țawôn "Forgive all iniquity" was formerly explained as inversion:

\[ \text{ABC} \rightarrow \text{ACB} \] (i.e. inversion of B and C),

but it should be taken as "broken construct chain":

\[ \text{AB} \rightarrow \text{A} \ldots \text{B} \]

Freedman's explanation is accepted and developed by A. C. M. Blommerde and M. L. Barré.

However, the term "broken", like the term "breakup", gives the impression of emphasizing the split of the construct chain. While Melamed and others are right in believing that the breakup (or split) of construct chains is caused by parallelism:

\[ \text{AB} \rightarrow \text{A} // \text{B} \]

the "broken" construct chain has nothing to do with poetic parallelism in principle. In my judgement, the so-called "broken construct chain" is but a branch of a larger stylistic phenomenon of "literary insertion" (AXB), which has been almost unnoticed as a literary pattern by scholars.

Let us define "literary insertion" (AXB Pattern) as follows:

A and B stand for two words, phrases, clauses, or even discourses which constitute grammatically and/or semantically either a composite unit [AB] or a compound unit [A & B]; X is an affix, word, phrase, clause, or discourse which is inserted between A and B and yet limits the complex A-B as a whole grammatically or semantically.

It is significant to note that [AB] or [A & B] as a whole still keeps its semantic or grammatical unity even after the insertion of X bet-

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7 R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax (2nd edn, Toronto, 1976) § 30; on hypallage see E. König, Stylistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die Biblische Litteratur (Leipzig, 1900), p. 119.
9 Note that a conjunction (waw) is optional. So "&" stands for a conjunction; "(\&)" signifies asyndetic juxtaposition.