LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (II)

From the Reign of Solomon to the Beginning of the Eighth Centruy

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From Solomon, we still have his original *dedicatory prayer at the dedication of the temple.* At the feast of tabernacles, in the Seventh month, the ark was removed from the city of David to the temple. At its arrival at the temple the priests took charge and place the ark. The words of dedication,

The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever.

(I King 8:12-13)

through an interesting light in the conception of Jehovah's nature and religious idea embodied in the erection of the temple.

We read of ballad singers or reciters of poems in early Israel but real literature didn't exist till near the end of the age of Judges. The two early collection of literature which we know are the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah* and the *Book of Jehovah*, both names already appeared in the former pages. The works themselves are no longer extant, but some of the poems such as the fragment of the list of station in Num. 21:14 from the book of the wars of Jehovah, David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan in II Sam 1.:19-27 and Solomon's dedicatory prayer in I King 8:12 are from the Book of Jehovah.

Joshua's famous prayer during the battle of Gibeon to the sun and moon is (Josh 10:12) also found there.

O, sun, stand thou still over Gibeon, And moon, over the vale of Aijalon. This book must have been a book slowly produced through a long term of years as we find the verses saying,

Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.

(II Sam. 1:18)

such as "Song of the Well" (Num. 5:17), "Ground Work" (Ex. 15:1), "Song of Mirrian" (Ex. 15:21) and The Ritual of the Ark are in "The Book of Wars of Jehovah". All these traces point to a collection of songs celebrating the heroic deeds of the people and especially of Jehovah, as the God of war, and the real commander in the battle which had to be fought for the conquest of the land which He had promised.

Israel's first literary production in prose was, the story of the founding of the kingdom. The great man David stimulated the beginning of historical literature in Israel. Sometime after David's death one of the men who had known David well wrote the story. He did it with intimate knowledge, great clearness, and produced a narrative which is the joy of historical and literary critics alike.

We find the court history of David in II Sam. 9-20 and in I King 1-2. This is the most remarkable part of the whole story, the story of the court at Jerusalem with its intimate details, its intrigues and crimes. It begins by the magnanimity of David toward Meribbaal, the son of Jonathan. Then the war against the Ammorites and Armeans including the story of David's adultery with Esthsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah by David (II Sam. 10-12) come. Amon's rape of Tamar, his half sister followed. David was a warrior and king, but he was weak as a father in his own family, so he hesitated to punish Amon for the rape which causes the fearful revenge of her sister Absalom. Absalom's rebellion had almost thrown David from his throne, but saved by David's old friend and councillor Chushai and Joab. Then the story goes on to the sick chamber of David and its momentous things that were worked out there. (I King. 1-2).

The story of the founding of the kingdom is an extremely able literary composition, well rounded and complete in itself, beginning with the condition that necessitated a kinship in Israel and ending with its secure establishment under Solomon. The author told the story simply and plainly he had no theory to propound or to prove, his interest was historical and biographical.¹⁾

We learn from I King 11:14 that there was the Book of the Act of Solomon. It was written by one of admirers of the King.

We might the splendor, wealth, and power of Solomon call forth an enthusiastic description of the internal administration of the kingdom; his wise utilization of the control of the caravan routes that led from Egypt and Arabia to Phoenicia and Syria; his great commercial undertakings as middleman and carrier; his commercial and political treaties with Egypt and Phoenicia, laid the foundation of the vast national wealth. Had he not strengthened the military power by important fortifications and given to the world an exhibition of magnificient splendor in the building of the temple and the palaces and in the maintenance of a brilliant court and harem at Jerusalem.²⁾

The Book of the Acts of Solomon is lost, so we only know his wisdom and not what he did.

We can find the beginning of the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel just about this time. (cf. I King 14:19) The institution of a royal and national government became neccessary to keep the records of all important events. Under David, the royal scribe and the King's rememberance have been in charge of the Royal Annals but after the division of the kingdom, Israel and Judah kept separate annals. We should think that they were the most historically valuable sources.

But we say nothing more we mentioned for the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, about the Beginning of the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, except we see the trace in I King 14:29.

Beginning of the Temple Annals, basis in I King 5-8 is also in this period. By the priest of the temple in Jerusalem, the book of official records was prepared. They chronicled year after year the important events of the temples. There were so many temples as they stood in the center of the religious life of the nation that Temple Annals were of great volumes.

All great undertakings and especially all wars were consecrated here, trophies were brought to it, tribute was taken from it.³

Like the Chronicles of the Kings, the records of the Temple Annals placed on the knowledge of the same period, as I

1) Bewer: LOT p. 27

²⁾ Bewer: LOT p. 28

³⁾ Bewer: LOT p. 44

mentioned before.

But the great conflagration destroyed the temple and city in 586 B.C. There are some quotations in the Books of the Kings: the story of the building of the temple by Solomon (I King 6 f) of the rebellion in the temple against Athalish (II King II); of the repairs of the temple under Jehoash (II King 16:10–18); and probably of Joshiah's reformation (II King 23:3 f). They do not differ from the stories excepted from the Royal Annals except in subject matter.

The beginning of the Prophetic Records, basis within I King II: 29-II King 13 are also found here. It is including the stories of Elijah and Elisha as well as other prophetic stories of Ahijah, the Shilonite and Micaiah. Main part of the records is the Elijah-Elisha cycle which is dated around 800 B.C. Elijah is described as the greatest, next to Moses, hero who was fed through three years' famine by the ravens, the widow's cakes and oil, and by the angels. However, important thing is that he rang out the challenge and embodied the watchword of the fight. He appeared before Ahab like a bolt out of a clear sky, and announced in the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, a drought that would last But this is just the prelude three years. for the further miracles which will lead to the contest with the Baal preachers on the Mt. Carmel. These stories do not give us the pictures of moral and spiritual grandeur of Elijah, but shows us that the people of this age were impressed by these extraordinary personality under the power of God. On the Mt. Carmel, Jehovah had triumphed, through the miracles performed by Elijah setting fire on the offering and wood which were poured four jars of water three times (I King 18:21-46). To Elijah the struggle between the Gods was a conflict of principles, between the nature religion of Baal and the moral religion of Jehovah. Baal was no real God to Elijah; a man who could mock Baal, as he did, could not believe in his reality and power. Iehovah alone is to be worshiped in Israel. This is the same with the fundamental principle of Moses, but Elijiah was closer to the idea of monotheism than that of Moses, which can be seen through his demonstration on the Carmel by contrasting Baal and Jehovah.

In the next story of I King 19: 11–14, we can see how he fled from the threat by Jezebel because of his slaughter of Baal prophet. He went to Mount Horeb to seek Jehovah after Moses, but there was not trace of victory but only utter despair. In the strength of miraculously provided food he walked through the wilderness forty days and nights and came to the cave on Mount Horeb. By the tempest, earthquake, and fire, God spoke to him showing the anger to the people of unfaithfulness.

Then Elijah appears as the champion of social justice. When Ahab was about to take possession of Jezeel, after he was stoned to death by Maboth, the incarnate conscience of Israel, the spokesman of Jehovah Elijah appeared and demanded that the righteousness is absolute, king and peosant alike. Thus Elijah is presented as a superman of heroic stature, contemplated by a reverent popular imagination through the haze of legend, the only champion of the God of Israel defying in solitary grandeur Ahab's displeasure and Jezebel's fury.⁴ It is rather difficult to draw the line between

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⁴⁾ Pfeiffer: LOT p. 404

fact and fiction. Perhaps, the impression that this great figure of Israel given to the people, their enthusiasm and admiration have been idealized and enlarged in these stories.⁵) It is noticeable that the idea of God, the dominion of Jehovah was enlarged to the foreign nations. He is direction history and people of the world for His purposes.

Some decades later a collection of Elijah stories were made. We can find them in II King: 2-8, 13:14-12. In the beginning of the section, Elijah becomes almost superhuman, too great to die. Elisha had seen the view of Elijah going up by a whirlwind into heaven, and became chief heir. (II King 2:10-12) However his personality pictured in them is that of a saint a miracle man, kind, gentle, human, always ready to help in time of need, but conscious of his power and insistent on the honor due to him as a prophet of Jehovah. Fortunately, the stories in II King 9:1-6 and 10 b-13 showed us the historicity of him by his part in the Then the story of revolution of Jehu. Micaiah began (I King 22:17, 22:19-23). After Ahab's death, Moab under its King Mesha revolted against Israelites suzerainty. But Ahab's son and second successor Jehoram tried to restore Israelitish supremacy. Our author describes in II King 3 how Jehoram with his vassals, the Kings of Judah and of Edom, advanced against Moab from the south. In the next story (II King 6:24-7:19), Elisha is also opposed to the king, but again he gives him a hopeful prediction. The war with Syria continued under Jehoram. Following this, two stories, Elisha is the excutor of Elijah's testament. (II King 8) The history of the Rise and Fall of the Dynasty of Omri in this section, as we have called it, is one of the most valuable historical sources that we posses. He maintained the standard of fairness and objectivity set by the early history of the Founding of the Monarchy. We find many imitation of the Elijah stories in Elisha stories, but it was written probably about 750 B.C. in Northern Israel.⁶

The Code of Covenant which we can find in Ex. 20: 22-23: 33. Ex. 34: 10-26 is perhaps the product of the time of Solomon. Though Hebrew tradition refers the legislation to Moses in its origin and growth, perhaps it is not correct, because these laws are originally customs which have come down through centuries. We can not deny, of course, the origin of laws by Moses in a sense that he vage the fundamental principle upon which the entire laws of Israel are based upon, insistence on the excusive worship of Jehovah as the God and obedience to His will for the social morality in the nation.⁷⁰

The most famous formulation of them is contained in the Decalogue in Ex. 20:2-17 and in Deut. 5:6-21. The ten original pithy saying were later expounded and elaborated, and this commentary material is not altogether the same in Ex. 20 and Deut. Thus, anyway, Israel became to aware 5. the fundamental obligation of monolatry. After they had settled in Canaan, the influence of Canaan religion as well as the influence of civilization were profound. They passed from their half nomadic stage to the settled life of agriculture, and begun to have the new order, new customs and

⁶⁾ Pfeiffer: LOT p. 408

⁷⁾ Bewer: LOT p. 30

⁵⁾ Bewer: LOT p. 50

new laws. Before this period, their laws were under the influence of Babylonian law for centuries. It is contained in this socalled Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20: 22-23: 19), of which it forms the largest part. (21: 1-22: 17). The Code was not written from a priestly point of view. Civil law precedes religious law, and takes up by far the larger space. It is very similar with the law of Hammurabi in many ways.

These Codes can be summarized in the following major headings.

- I. Laws Concerning Persons
 - 1. Personal rights during slavery a. Men
 - b. Women
 - 2. Laws safegurding life and limb
 - a. Homicide, Murder, Kidnapping
 - b. Assault and Battery
 - c. Accidents and Contributory negligence
- II. Laws of Property
 - 1. Accidents to animals
 - 2. Theft of Animals
 - 3. Damage to Fields and Vineyards
 - 4. Loss of Injury to Property
 - a. Money or other property held in trust
 - b. Animals kept for the owner
 - c. Borrowed or Hired Property
 - d. Seduction of a Virgin
- III. Social Laws
 - 1. Honest Administration of Justice
 - 2. Justice to the defenceless classes
 - 3. Considerate treatment of the debtor
 - 4. Kindness to the Enemy's animals⁸⁾

In the section of social and religious laws (22:28-31), they are different in their formulation while the civil law had been presented in the form of case law. These laws were given to fit to the conditions of premonarchic period. But Israel was settled in Canaan and had passed on to the stage of agriculture, some of them had to be modified. Some of the social laws such as kindness to debtors or justice to and kind treatment of widows, orphans, and strangers were left to the individual conscience. The only sanction behind them is religious, Jehovah is the protector of these defenseless classes.

The final section (23:10-19) forms an appendix which contains the religious laws. In the parable Ex. 34:17 f the prohibition of making molten gods is connected with the cultic laws which the former is dealing with idolatry and the altar.

IV. Religious laws

- 1. Images
 - 2. The Altar
 - 3. Sorcery, Perverseness, Sacrifices to other Gods, Blasphemy
 - 4. Cultic Laws
 - a. First fruits and first born
 - b. Unclean food
 - c. The Sabbath year
 - d. the Sabbath
 - 5. Monolatry

The parallel to the concluding laws (23:14-19) which is found in Ex. 34:10-26 are regarded not only as older than the moral decalogue of Ex. 20, but even as going back to Moses himself, tough it is introduced and interwoven by commentary matters now. In spite of all adoptations from Canaanities religious elements, the religion of Jehovah remained victorious; it assimilated Canaanite religion as far as it was not all together incompatible with Jehovaism, the rest it rejected and over-came.⁹

One of the most important product orthe source of this period in the matter of fact in all Old Testament, is the J. Document.

9) Bewer: LOT p. 42

⁸⁾ Bewer: LOT p. 30-40

It is one of the oldest document concerning the people of Israel from its beginning to the time when they became as the nation. J. is both an epic and a drama, both reflect the passionate religions and patriotic fever of the author. The Axiom, Jehovah is the God of Israel, Israel is the people of Jehovah, sums up his faith and his national pride.¹⁰⁾ After all human means had failed at the last moment, Jehovah intervened and changed defeat into victory. The J. author achieved dramatic unity with material drawn

from miscellaneous legends of Israelitic origin and memories of the dawn of their national history as well as from the stories told at the Cannanitic sanctuaries which could be dated from 950–850 B.C..

He built up a harmonious and organic structure in which each ornamental detail enhaunced the beauty of architectural lines. Inspite of details he never loses the main thread of narrative. The author of this document calls God Jehovah, so we named him Jahvist or J. The legends of the past had been handed down from age to age with astounding tenacity of memory. It was inevitable that by the time we come to literate records, the tales should have been more or less modified in the long oral process of tradition. Stories had been made Thus religious tales, originally Israelitish. connected with the Canaanitish god Baal or the Babyloian god Marduk or with some other deity, were noe told of Jehovah. How far this transforming process had gone by the time of Elijah, we don't know, but about that time (850 B.C.) our author gathered the various stories and groups together for a great work, in which he told the story of Israel from its origin to the conquest of Canaan and showed why and how his people came into the possession of the land.¹¹⁾

According to Prof. Pfeiffer, J. begins by the call of Abraham by God, "I will make of thee a great nation...and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-4 a) At this very beginning, J. already set forth his theme in sonorous language with patriotic and religious fervor.¹²⁾

The passages identified as the J. document by Prof. Pfeiffer are:

Geneisis 12:1-4 a, 6-20; 13:1-2, 4-5, 7 a, 8-10 a, (II a, 13-18); 16:1-2, 7 a, (7 b), 8, 11-14; 18:1-33; 19:27-28, 21:1 a, 2 a, 7, 33; 24:1-67; 25:21-26 a, 27-34; 26-27 are JE; 28:10, 13-16, 19 a; 29:2-14, 26, 31-35; 30-32 are JE; 33:1-7; 37 is JE; 39:1-23; 41-42 are JE; 43:1-13, 15-34; 44:45 is JE; 46:1 a, 28-34; 47:1-4, 5 a, 6 b, (12-27 a) 29-31; 48:2 b, 10, 13-14, 17-19; 50:(1-11), 14.

Exodus 1: 6, 8-10, 2: 11-23 a; 3: 2-4 a, 5, 7, 8 a, (18); 4: 19-20 a, 24-26; 5: 1-2, 5-23; 7: 14, 15 a, 16, (17 a), 18, 21 a; 8: 1-4, 8-15 a, 20-24, 28-32; 9: 1-7, 13, 17-18, 23 b, 24 b, 25 b-29 a, 33-34; 10: 1 a, (3-10), 13 a B, 14 a B, 15 a, 16-19; 11: 4-8; 12: 29-33, 38, 13: 21-22; 14: (5-6). 10 ab A, 11-12; 13-14, 19 b (20), 21, 24, 25 b, 27 ab, 28 b, 30; 15: 22-25 a, 27; 16-18 are JEP; (19: 2 b, 18, 20 a, al; 34; 1 a, 2, 4, 28)

Numbers 10: 29–32; 11: 4–34 are JE; 13: 17 b, 19, 22 a, 28, 30–31; (14: 1 b, 3–4, 31– 32, 40–45); 20: 1–13 is JEP: (21: 1–14; 32) Deuteronomy 34: 4

Joshua (5: 13–14; **96**–7; **10**: 12–13 a); **13**: 13; **15**: 13–19, 63; **16**: 10; **17**: 11–18; **19**: 47. Judges **1**: 1–3, 5–7, 10 b–17, 19–21, (22), 23–35.

We can divide these verses into three sections: the first part shows how the twelve tribes of Israel grew out of Abraham's

¹¹⁾ Bewer: LOT pp. 60-61

¹²⁾ Pfeiffer: LOT pp. 142-143

¹⁰⁾ Pfeiffer: LOT p. 142

seed (Gen. 12-13), the second how, through Joseph, the Egyptians and other peoples were saved from starvation (Gen. 37-50), the third how after being delivered by Moses from Egyptian bondage, Israel conquered Canaan, the land of Promise. (Ex. 1-Judge 1)

After the call of God to Abraham, he went to Canaan and subsequently to Egypt. Though his wife Sarah, because of her beauty, got them into trouble, they came back to Cannan safely morever with great wealth which Pharaoh had given to Sarah, a child Issac was born at the predicted time by the power of Jehovah. Issac married to Rebekah who was brought to Canaan from Syria, the homeland of Abraham. She was barren, but the twin-brothers, Jacob and Esau were born by the grant of Jehovah after the Issac's earnest entreaty. Although Esau (Edom) was the first-born, the future pre-eminence of Jacob (Israel) was recognized by the east with which Jacob obtained Esau's birth right in exchange for a dish of lentil soup (25:7-34) and deceitfully robbed him of his father's blessing (27, JE). Then Jacob fled Harran, but returned with two wives, two concubines, eleven sons, and much wealth. (29:2-14, 26, 31-35; 30-32 JE closely interwoven 33:1-17).

The second act is in Egypt where Joseph, until the birth of Benjamin in Canaan the only son of Jacob's favorite wife Rachel, had been taken as a slave and rose from prison to the position of grand vizier. Through Joseph, Jehovah saved not only the family of Jacob, but also the Egyptians from starvation. Thus, the seed of Abraham became a blessing of Israel to "all families of the earth."

In the third stage, the fortune of Israel

have fallen to its lowest. Israelites were enslaved in Egypt under brutal taskmasters, but at the end the Israelites have not only been freed by Jehovah from Egyptian bondages but also returning to Canaan as conquerors. The leader of them was Moses. He appears in J. as the slayer of an Egyptian taskmaster and a fugitive before the wrath of Pharaoh. No single event in their history made a deeper impression than the crossing of the Red Sea on the Israelites.

In J, the period from the Exodus to the invasion of Canaan was spent for the most part at Kadesh and not at Sinai as in later sources.

Through out his account, J created the nationalism of Israel which rooted on complete trust in Jehovah, although not created by the author of the J, received through him its classical expression and permanent validity in Israel. While he compiled out of stories circulating orally his original contributions were the style, selection, arrangement, and modifications dectated by his own conviction, by which he constructed a great work of art out of miscelleaneous materials. Also this great literature consists of great thoughts clothed in matchless form. The epic scope of J's subject the birth and triump of a nation under the seiges of its God; corresponds to the superb literary form. I's style, like that of the Iliad, combines nobility with simplicity, a paradoxical combination that is extremely rare.18)

S Document was made clearly by Prof. Pfeiffer originarily. Not all the scholars do agree at this point, like Bewer put into J, Eossfe; called as L. S is the remnant in Genesis after JE and P have been removed, which is not only redactional

¹³⁾ Pfeiffer: LOT p. 157

material and isolated fragments but a series of stories with well-defied characteristics,¹⁴) The passages regarded as S docment are:

Genesis: 2: 5–9, (10–14), 15–25; 3: 1–24; (4: 1–16); 4: 17–24: (4: 25–26); (5: 29; 6: 5–8, 7: 1–5, 7–10, 12, 16 b, 17 b, 22–23; 8: 2 b–3 a, 6–12, 13 b, 20–22); 6: 1–4; 9: 20–27; (10: 1 b, 8–19, 21, 24–30); 11: 1–9; (11: 28–30); 14: 1–17, (18–20), 21–24; 19: 12 b, 30–38; (25: 1–4); 34: 1–31; 35: 5; 35: 21–22 a; 36: (9–19), 20–39; 38: 1–30.

These passages can be divided into two parts: the mythical account of the origin and early development of mankind (Gen. 1-11, omitting P.) and the legendary account of the origin of the peoples in Southern Palestine and Trans-Jordania, concluding with a summary of the history of Edom before the time of David (Parts of Gen. 14-35, 38, 36). In its characteristic, Signores the tribes of North Israel, shows even the hostility. There is the related source which represents additions made to S at various times during the two centuries from 600-400 B.C. We call it S 2. Only importand sections of this source are the story of Cain and Abel and the story of the Flood. However, S 2 represents the earliest Hebrew transcript of the Babylonian flood story in the Gilgamesh Epic.¹⁵⁾

A dozen stories are consisting S document. Some of them may have been joined originally in other cycles. These stories of different character and origin were brought together by an editor, not as a organic whole, but for expressing a definite philosophical viewpoint. He selected carefully and arranged these miscellaneous stories. We can see the obvious conscious of the author on the progrese of civilization in five eras:16)

- 1. The primitive age: men were naked and lived from the fruits of the trees (Gen. 2)
- 2. The beginning of civilization: the use of garments of leaves (3:7) or skins (3:21) and the cultivation of the soil (3:17-19).
- 3. The development of arts and crafts: the making of tents (weaving), and of musical instuments; the working of metals (4:20-22)
- 4. The age of the giants (6:1-4)
- 5. The present age: the planting of vineyards and the making of wine (9:20 f) the distinction of nations and languages, the building of cities (11-1-9)

All through his stories, the picture of human life is given by S in extremely pessimistic way. The theme of S is "Paradise Lost" and an era of peace on earth and goodwill among men does not even appear as a comforting chimerical hope.¹⁷

Again our author, the editor of S, was a thinker and a collector of ancient mythical and legendary tales, rather than a creative literary craftman. His style is concise but not brilliant. The story of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3) is probably the masterpiece of S in its form and content. Its literary distinction and dignity surpasses any other parts of S.

Geographically speaking, S is centering around Edom. Naturally it shows the friendly attitude toward Cain and his descendants (the Kenites) as well as toward Edom. The friendly spirit toward Edom is indicated in the list of Edom's early kings and other genuine historical information. S was incorporated together with S 2 into the Pentateuch after the insertion of

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¹⁴⁾ Pfeiffer : LOT p. 159

¹⁵⁾ Pfeiffer : LOT p. 160

¹⁶⁾ Ibid p. 163

¹⁷⁾ Ibid p. 163-4

P perhaps around 400 B.C. before the final edition of the "Law of Moses" was issued.

As many of the songs of lessings in early poets, we should't forget the Blessings of Moses which is found in Deut. 33. It comes from the time of Jeroboam I (932-911 B.C.). It is the Ephraimite counterpart of the Blessing of Jacob. This long poems give the blessings to the tribes, Reuben, Judah, Levi, Thummim and Urim, Benjamin, Joseph, Zebulum and Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali and Asher.

The historical situation of this blessings is later than that of Jacob's. Simeon is not mentioned at all and Reuben is dying out, Levi is described as priestly tribe. Judah is in difficulties, but Joseph is prosperous and powerful. This tribe is an in Jacob's blessing, a favorite. The form of the poem with its Blessings for the individual tribes presupposes a strong tribal consciousness which was still awake at the time of Jeroboam I. The thecratic tone of the poem contrasts with the secular tone of Gen. 49. There are so much to learn for the historians from this Blessings of the time of the early monarchy. In the ancient

poems which have studied, we already found the balancing of the lines, which is the characteristic of Hebres and of Babylonian poetry. Its rhythnic accents of lines composed its poetic forms. Frequently the first half contains three, sometimes two, beats and is balanced by an equal number. In lamentation metre, the second half is shorter, but the whole line is a pentametre. The refrain is also very effective there. These excellent poetic expression tells us how well they have been trained in literature in early days.

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