

The Rhetoric of Isaiah 1:2-20

An Exploration*

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Abstract

This essay explores the rhetoric of Isaiah 1:2-20. The discussion interacts with rather than ignores historical-critical approaches to the same text. Features of rhetoric and composition, indicia of author, audience, and communicative intent, and figures of composition receive attention. It is shown that Isa 1:2-20 forms a rhetorical unity. Its rhetoric is inscribed within structures spanning the whole.

1. Preliminaries

In a previous essay, I discussed the poetry and prosody of Isa 1:2-20. It was seen that Isa 1:2-20 forms a prosodic unity and displays a panoply of parallelisms throughout. Its poetry conforms to a text model of ancient Hebrew verse worked out over a large portion of the extant poetic corpus.¹

Analysis of prosody and tropes forms a foundation for an analysis of more comprehensive questions. To these I now turn. Literary-critical and rhetorical-critical studies tend to bracket out questions regarding the history of composition of the texts examined. The opposite tack is taken here. The approaches are distinct, but one approach is capable of confirming or undermining the results of the other.

2. A Historical Critical Approach to the Book of Isaiah

A generation ago, Kaiser outlined a methodology for the interpretation of the book of Isaiah: "Given the fact that the scroll of Isaiah underwent revision into and as late as the Hellenistic Period, the challenge to take up is that of denying to the prophet any word on principle that is also explicable in terms of a subsequent age."² Kaiser went on to conclude that not one verse

¹ "The Prophetic Poetry of Isaiah 1:2-20: A Programmatic Essay," available online at www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com.

² "Angesichts der Tatsache, daß bis in das hellenistische Zeitalter hinein an der Jesajarolle gearbeitet worden ist, muß die Forderung erhoben werden, dem Propheten grundsätzlich jedes Wort abzusprechen, daß auch aus einer anderen Zeit erklärt werden kann" (Otto

of Isaiah is to be attributed to a prophet of the 8th cent. BCE.³ If one takes a different path, such that, if a text seems explicable in terms of its “declared” or *prima facie* historical context, the attempt is made to make sense of it in terms of that context, one reaches conclusions of a different order. The bulk of Isa 1-39 is explicable in terms of the historical frame referred to in Isa 1:1, which functions as a superscription to it.

Scholars who concur on this point tend to reach broadly similar results. Attribution of components of Isa 1-5 to Isaiah or another exemplifies this. Of Isaiah according to Duhm, Clements, Wildberger, Sweeney, and Blenkinsopp: 1:2-3, 4-9, 10-17, 18, 21-26; 2:12-17; 3:1-9; 13-15, 16-17, 24; 5:1-7, 8-13, 17-24, 25-29. Not of Isaiah: 1:1, 27-28; 2:1, 5, 20-21; 4:2-6. Disputed: 1:19-20, 29-31; 2:2-4, 6-9, 10-11, 12-17, 18, 19, 22; 3:10-11, 18-26; 4:1; 5:14, 15-16, 30. The five agree on the attribution of 76 out of 115 verses in Isa 1-5.⁴

The difficulties that attend a reconstruction of author, audience, and communicative intent within the timeframe indicated by the book’s superscription (Isa 1:1) are undeniable. But they are *lighter* than those that attend a reconstruction of author, audience, and communicative intent of the entire Isa 1-66 in the Persian period or later. The bulk of Isa 1-39 is directly relevant to situations that obtained in late monarchic Judah, but relevant to Persian period Judah by way of complex refiguration only.

Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja Kapitel 13-39* [ATD 18; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983] 4).

³ Kaiser attributed Isa 1-12 to 5th cent. BCE authors with a small collection of prophetic sayings at their disposal (1:2-3, 4-9, 18-20) he ascribed in turn to an early 6th cent. BCE author (*Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja. Kapitel 1-12* [5th ed.; ATD 17; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981] 19-25). He later backed away from these conclusions (idem, *Grundriß der Einleitung in die kanonischen und deuterokanonischen Schriften des Alten Testaments* [3 vols.; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1992-94] 2:42).

⁴ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* (5th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968 [1892]) 16-17, 23-63; Roland E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 28-70; Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja: 1. Teilband: Jesaja 1-12* (2d ed.; BKAT 10/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1980) 1-229; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39 with an Introduction to the Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 63-131; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; Garden City: Doubleday, 2000) 175-222. I assign 1:1 (excluding “The prophecy of Isaiah son of Amoz,” in my view the collection’s original title), 1:27-31; 2:1, 18-21; and 4:2-6 to subsequent redactors, but the rest of Is 1-5 to Isaiah. I am in agreement with Sweeney except that I deny 1:29-31 and 2:18-19 and assign 1:19-20 and 2:2-5 to Isaiah. I also assign 2:22 and 3:10-11 to Isaiah: Sweeney allows that both might be attributed to Isaiah.

In light of the above, it is not necessary to apologize for the decision to throw one's hat into the hermeneutical ring traced by Ewald, Duhm, and scholarship thereafter intent on distinguishing the words of Isaiah from additions by subsequent writers.⁵ The challenge taken up here is the opposite of the one pursued by Kaiser: to ascribe to the prophet on principle any word explicable in terms of the age and circumstances he lived in and to which he might have responded.⁶

3. Rhetoric and Composition

A prophetic speech begins in Isa 1:2. The question is where the unit that begins with 1:2 comes to an end. Conclusions of varying degrees of comprehensiveness are reached in 1:3, 1:9, 1:20, 1:31, and beyond. The question to be explored concerns the delimitation of a rhetorical unit that might have been delivered by a prophet on a specific occasion. In principle,

⁵ Georg Heinrich August von Ewald, *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes* (2d ed.; 3 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1867; *Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament* [tr. J. Frederick Smith; 5 vols.; Theological Translation Fund Library 9, 12, 18, 21, 26; London: Williams & Norgate, 1875-1881]); Bernhard Duhm, *Jesaja*. The questions first posed with insistence by 19th century scholarship remain legitimate today. Recent historical-critical essays of exceptional interest include Christof Hardmeier, "Verkündigung und Schrift bei Jesaja. Zur Entstehung der Schriftprophetie als Oppositionsliteratur im alten Israel," *TGI* 73 (1983) 119-34; idem, "Jesajaforschung im Umbruch," *VF* 31 (1986) 3-31; Erhard Blum, "Jesaja und der דבר des Amos: Unzeitgemäße Überlegungen zu Jes 5,25; 9,7-20; 10,1-4," *DBAT* 28 (1992/93) 75-95; idem, "Jesajas prophetisches Testament. Beobachtungen zu Jes 1-11 (Teil I)," *ZAW* 108 (1996) 547-68; idem, "Jesajas prophetisches Testament. Beobachtungen zu Jes 1-11 (Teil II)," *ZAW* 109 (1997) 12-29. For overviews of recent research, see Hardmeier, "Jesajaforschung"; Marvin Sweeney, "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Research," *CurBS* 1 (1993) 141-62; idem, "Reevaluating Isaiah 1-39 in Recent Critical Research," *CurBS* 4 (1996) 79-113; Marvin E. Tate, "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Study," in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (ed. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996) 22-56; Uwe Becker, "Jesajaforschung (1-39)," *ThR* 64 (1999) 1-37, 117-52; and Peter Höffken, *Jesaja: Der Stand der theologischen Diskussion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004). For secondary literature on Isa 1-39 and 1:2-20 in particular, see "An Isaiah Bibliography," at www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com.

⁶ Past attempts to assign more of Is 1-39 to Isaiah than usual include: Yehezkel Kaufmann, *תולדות האמונה הישראלית מימי קדם עד סוף בית שני* (4 vols.; Tel Aviv: Devir, 1937-56) 3:147-256; 147-57, 163-73; ET *The Religion of Israel* (tr. and abridg. Moshe Greenberg; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960) 378-85; Harold Louis Ginsberg, "Isaiah: First Isaiah," *EncJud* 9 (1971) cols. 44-60; John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah: The Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987); William R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (SHCANE 18; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

the beginning and end of a prophetic speech are inferable from the location of discourse markers intrinsic to the genre in the textual continuum, from the “plot” created by transitions in the text, and from patterns of language and referentiality that crisscross the continuum and delimit, by the finitude of their reach, one speech from another. It is possible that there are no such units preserved in Isaiah, but an analysis of the textual data, as Gitay has shown, leads to the discovery of a sequence of apparent speeches each of which possesses rhetorical integrity.⁷ In Gitay’s view, 1:2-20 is a self-contained prophetic speech composed as such from the beginning. Roberts and Willis argue likewise.⁸ On this analysis, 1:21 begins another prophetic speech on a par with 1:2-20.

Many interpreters subdivide Isa 1:2-20 into a number of smaller units whose fusion into a greater unity is attributed to any number of factors, original authorial intent, however, excluded. Wildberger’s conclusions are typical: Isa 1 consists of six originally self-contained prophetic speeches: 1:2-3, 4-9, 10-17, 18-20, 21-26 [to which 27-28 were added], and 29-31, now fitted together to form a higher unity.⁹ Delimitation of a large unit of discourse and assignment of it to a prophet who might have “performed” it goes against current consensus. The tendency has been to discern terse prophetic sayings, sometimes no more than a biblical verse or two in length, *behind* the compositional unities that the text as it stands presents to us, and to assign the former to the prophet and the latter to a later redactor.¹⁰ This

⁷ Yehoshua Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience: The Structure and Meaning of Isaiah 1-12* (SSN 30; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1991).

⁸ Yehoshua Gitay, “Reflections on the Study of Prophetic Discourse: The Question of Isaiah I 2-20,” *VT* 33 (1983) 207-21; idem, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 14-34; J. J. M. Roberts, “Form, Syntax, and Redaction in Isaiah 1:2-20,” *PSB* 3 (1982) 293-306; John T. Willis, “The First Pericope in the Book of Isaiah,” *VT* 34 (1984) 63-77. Others who take 1:2-20 to be a rhetorical whole and assign its composition to Isaiah in response to a specific historical circumstance include Karl Budde, “Zu Jesaja 1-5,” *ZAW* 49 (1931) 16-40; 19-31; and John R. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah*, 69-78; .

⁹ *Jesaja 1*, 8. Wildberger ascribes the redactional unity of 1:2-20 to Isaiah and the unity of the whole to a disciple who lived in exilic or post-exilic times (67, 74).

¹⁰ Hermann Barth, Frank Crüsemann, Jacques Vermeylen, Otto Kaiser, and Wolfgang Werner’s attempts to discern a history of redaction behind 1:4-9 are exemplary in this respect. For an overview, see Rudolf Kilian, *Jesaja 1-39* (EdF 200; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983) 32-35. Shortcomings of these attempts are highlighted by John A. Emerton, “The Historical Background of Isaiah 1:4-9,” *ErIs* 24 (1993) [= *Avraham Malamet Volume* (ed. Shmuel Ahituv and Baruch A. Levine; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society)] 34-40. An unexamined assumption of much redaction critical work is that of extreme brevity of original prophetic speeches. For an exposé of the

has been and is the standard way of understanding the compositional history of Isa 1:2-20.¹¹

assumption and the now forgotten reasons originally advanced on its behalf, see Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (2d ed.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 10-27; esp. 13-15. Marvin Sweeney's redaction critical study of 1:2-20 stands out for its attentiveness to continuities observable across the components of the unit (*Isaiah 1-4 and the Post-exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* [BZAW 171; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988] 21-24; 101-33). He imagines 1:2-3 to have been composed by the prophet to introduce 1:4-9 (ibid., 126). This is analogous to suggesting that 1:4-9 was composed as a continuation of 1:2-3, as did Karl Budde, "Zu Jesaja 1-5," *ZAW* 49 (1931) 16-40; 21. As for 1:19-20, Sweeney considers it, as do others, a late addition with a deuteronomic orientation (ibid., 128-129). For a rejection of this hypothesis, see Christiaan H. W. Brekelmans, "Deuteronomic Influence in Isaiah 1-12," in *The Book of Isaiah/Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures. Unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. Jacques Vermeulen; BETL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989) 167-76, 172-74.

¹¹ Redaction-critical analyses of 1:2-20 are offered by the scholars mentioned in the preceding note and Oswald Loretz, *Der Prolog des Jesaja-Buches (1,1-2,5)* (UBL 1; Altenberge: Akademische Bibliothek, 1984); Scholastika Deck, *Die Gerichtsbotschaft Jesajas: Charakter und Begründung* (FzB 71; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1991) 87-148; Bernard Gosse, "Isaïe 1 dans la redaction du livre d'Isaïe," *ZAW* 104 (1992) 52-66; 58-63; Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja, Komposition und Endgestalt* (HBS 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998) 58-68; Uwe Becker, *Jesaja - von der Botschaft zum Buch* (FRLANT 178; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 175-199; Jacques Vermeulen, "YHWH en litige avec son peuple. Une lecture d'Isaïe 1, 2-20," in *Le jugement dans l'un et l'autre Testament. I. Mélanges offerts à Raymond Kuntzmann* (ed. Eberhard Bons; LD 197; Paris: Cerf, 2004) 165-189. Becker and Vermeulen argue for the unity of 1:2-20 but date its composition to the 6th cent. BCE or later. Roy Melugin does not discuss original historical context or redaction history, but makes a case for the unity of 1:2-20 on the basis of its "figurative coherence" ("Figurative Speech and the Reading of Isaiah 1 as Scripture," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 282-305; 287, 291). Hugh G. M. Williamson argues that 1:2-20 is a patchwork quilt of texts pulled from elsewhere ("Synchronic and Diachronic in Isaianic Perspective," in *Synchronic and Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; OTS 34; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 211-26; 224-26; "Relocating Isaiah 1:2-9," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 79; FIOTL 1; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:263-277; "Biblical Criticism and Hermeneutics in Isaiah 1:10-17," in *Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments: Beiträge zur biblischen Hermeneutik. Festschrift für Rudolf Smend zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Christoph Bultmann, Walter Dietrich, and Christoph Levin; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002) 82-96; "Isaiah 1 and the Covenant Lawsuit," in *Covenant as Context: Essays in Honour of E. W. Nicholson* (ed. Andrew D. H. Mayes and Robert B. Salters; Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003) 393-406; *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1-27. Volume 1. Commentary on Isaiah 1-5* (ICC; London: T & T Clark, 2006) 22-119.

That compositional unities are sometimes best attributed to a later redactor is undeniable. Isa 1:2-20 is part of a larger unity stretching to 1:31. In my view, this unity is the product of a Persian period author who added 1:27-31 to 1:21-26 and severed the latter from its original continuation preserved in 2:2-5. This conclusion is supported by an analysis of vocabulary and themes which cannot be rehearsed here.¹² It is probably true that 2-20 is situated within a compositional unity of the Persian period, but it does not follow that 2-20 is a composition of the Persian period.

Excursus on the Prophetic Literature as a Product of the Persian Period

A cogent example of an approach that locates the production of prophetic literature as we know it in the Persian Period is offered by Ehud Ben Zvi, *Micah* (FOTL 21B; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). Ben Zvi argues that the rhetorical units in prophetic books tend not to be anchored in any particular circumstance, time, or place, but to have a departicularized cast. He attributes the departicularization to the work of Persian period literati (ibid., 80-82, 110-11, 122-23, 139-41, 151-52, 162-64, 181-82).

The argument fails on several grounds. On the level of discrete rhetorical units, it forgets the paradox of occasional speeches preserved from one generation to the next: texts with embedded interpretive cues sufficient for the audience and the occasion they originally addressed are decontextualized by *definition* as times and circumstances change. The interpretive cues embedded within a speech anchoring it to a particular occasion will be opaque to us without retrospective historical and cultural reconstruction. The apparently deracinated quality of prophetic literature is not in contradiction to its being a collection of texts originally meant for discrete occasions and circumstances.

Secondly, there are indications that constituent parts of a book like Micah or Isaiah were not departicularized but reparticularized by later redactional activity. Examples include Micah 3-5 and Isaiah 13:1-14:27: additions (Mic 4:10b; 5:14; Isaiah 13:1, 17-22; 14:1-4) to a core reparticularized the whole. The evidence

¹² On 1:21-31 as a complex unity on a par with 1:2-20, see Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-4*, 114-123; idem, *Isaiah 1-39*, 63-65. On 2:2-5 as the continuation of 1:21-31, see Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, 35-49. On 1:27-31 as an addition by a Persian period author who hears 1:2-26 against the background of the situation reflected in Isaiah 56-66 and shapes the whole into a new speech announcing salvation to those who refrain from the religious and moral transgressions referred to in Isaiah 56-66, and perdition to those who do not, see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 187-88. The earlier 1:21-26 + 2:2-5 works out to be a 22 line unit. The later 1:21-31 works out to be an 19 line unit. In my view, 2:1 was added, along with 13:1, in consequence of the addition of 1:27-31 to 1:2-26, so as to subdivide Isa 1-35 into three sections. For a similar proposal, see Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 163-65.

suggests that the *Fortschreibung* that contributed to the growth of prophetic literature entailed a concomitant process of respecification, not despecification.

Finally, the argument overlooks the function of the superscriptions to prophetic books, which is to anchor interpretation of a book to a particular time and place. The superscriptions coexist in unresolved tension with the reparticularization of the text through subsequent expansions. The legitimacy of Ben Zvi's focus on how prophetic literature might have been understood by readers in Persian period Judah, a project requiring historical and cultural reconstruction of Persian period Judah and of that period's understanding and actualization of the history of Assyrian and Babylonian period Judah, is not thereby placed in doubt. But claims to the effect that interpretation ought to focus on the text in the form it came to have in the Persian Period are subject to the strictures not unlike those J. J. M. Roberts levels against approaches which privilege interpretation based on embedment within a larger corpus and the contours the text came to have in rabbinic Judaism of the Roman period ("Historical-Critical Method, Theology, and Contemporary Exegesis," in *Biblical Theology: Problems and Perspectives in Honor of J. Christian Beker* [ed. Steven J. Kraftchick, Charles D. Meyers, Jr., and Ben C. Ollenburger; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995] 131-141; repr. in idem, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002] 393-405; 401). Why should we accept a hermeneutical construct that allows the latest pre-Hellenistic revisions to control our reading of the whole? Why draw the line at the terminus of the Persian period, not before or after? The usefulness of a Persian period hermeneutical frame, like any other, is limited.

One might also compare the approach of Edgar Conrad, *Reading Isaiah* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); idem, "Reading Isaiah and the Twelve as Prophetic Books," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 79; FIOTL 1; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:3-18; idem, *Reading the Latter Prophets: Towards a New Canonical Criticism* (JSOTSup 376; London: T & T Clark, 2003) 182-242. In his last work, Conrad takes to task historical-critical scholars for their attempts to "return to the past" and understand the contents of the prophetic books in terms of reconstructed original settings (ibid., 25). But that, I submit, is precisely what the superscriptions to the prophetic books invite us to do. The difficulties inherent in accepting the invitation, and the consequences of the fact that neither narratives *about* the past nor narratives *from* the past provide us with unmediated access to the past, should not of course be underestimated.

Conrad interprets Isa 1-6, 7-35, and 36-66 in terms of three "timeframes," the vision Isaiah had in the year that King Uzziah died, the vision he had at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis in the reign of King Ahaz, and the vision he had at the time of Sennacherib's invasion in the reign of King Hezekiah, respectively (ibid., 196). Not only does this reconstruction lack *historical* plausibility, a point

Conrad would not deny, it also lacks *literary* plausibility, in the sense that it consistently misreads the cues the text itself provides. To read Isa 1-5 and not just 6 as if it represented a vision from the year that King Uzziah died, or anything beyond Isa 7-8 as representative of a vision received during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, or anything beyond the oracles contained in Isa 36-39 as representative of a vision received at the time of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, is unfounded conjecture precisely from the literary point of view.

The traditional goal of interpretation is to produce a reconstruction of a text's meaning against the background of the codes the text's author used to communicate to an intended audience. The code to which our first attention must be given is that embedded in the text itself. The embedded code remands to realities beyond the text that are reconstructible on the basis of extra-textual cultural and historical data. A reconstruction is considered successful if it appears to assign a historically plausible intention, author, and audience to the text, and if it appears to respect the text from the point of view of structure and content. A return to the past, a consideration of implied original settings, and reconstruction of author, audience, and textual intention are of the essence of retrospective interpretation. We will fail to understand the editorial page of a year old newspaper, much less a text written down thousands of years ago, if we do not perform these retrospective tasks. The scholarship of Hermann Gunkel, James Muilenburg, and Umberto Eco, three from whom Conrad would rightly have us learn (*ibid.*, 7-30), is characterized by retrospective interpretation in this sense. Conrad's work pursues a different course.

As noted above, Isa 1:2-20 is often dissolved into smaller components. But the atomization of 1:2-20 creates more problems than it solves. 1:2-9 by itself lacks an ending and fails to exhibit a fully developed rhetorical intent. It is not a prophecy of doom, as Fishbane has it,¹³ but is chiefly retrospective in nature. More than anything else, it raises a question: where will you be hit the next time, given your continued defiance. This is the sense of 1:5, the rhetorical peak of 1:2-9.¹⁴

The way out of the dilemma posed by 1:5 is found in 10-20. False solutions are first dismissed. Offerings and prayer (1:11-15) make matters

¹³ Michael Fishbane, *Haftarah: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation [and] Commentary* (JPSBC; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002) 270-71, 485.

¹⁴ For rhetorical points of prominence, see Ernst Wendland, "Discourse Analysis of Hebrew Poetry," in *Discourse Perspectives on Hebrew Poetry in the Scriptures* (ed. Ernst R. Wendland; UBSMS 7; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994) 1-27; 15-16; *idem*, "Continuity and Discontinuity in Hebrew Poetic Design: Patterns and Points of Significance in the Structure and Setting of Psalm 30," *ibid.*, 28-66; Loren F. Bliese, "Symmetry and Prominence in Hebrew Poetry: With Examples from Hosea," *ibid.*, 67-94.

worse rather than better. Only a decision to aid the widow and the orphan will avert a further catastrophe. This is the sense of 1:16-20, the rhetorical conclusion to the entire piece.

If 1:10-20 is an independent unit, it is not clear why the addressees are referred to as ‘notables of Sodom’ and ‘people of Gomorrah’ in 1:10. In the wake of 1:2-9, the sense is clear: because, as Sodom and Gomorrah did of yore, they paid a terrible price for disregard of God’s expectations of them. There is a break between 1:2-9 and 10-20, but 1:9 provides context for 1:10. The first mention of Sodom and Gomorrah is comforting. The second is sad and jarring. The sequence is rhetorically effective.¹⁵

The framing function of 1:2-3 and 18-20, insofar as the former calls upon heaven and earth to serve as witnesses and states a charge, and the latter calls for a settlement of the case, are naturally accounted for on the hypothesis that they are design elements of a rhetorical whole so intended from the start. The repeated structure at the core of the composition, whereby the people are twice called to attention by means of vocatives and accusatory epithets, twice posed an importunate question, and twice treated to a countering reply, first by the prophet, then by Yahweh himself (1:4-9 | 10-15), not to mention the other elements that tie 1:2-3, 4, 5-9, 10-17.18-20 together, are most easily accounted for in the same way.¹⁶

¹⁵ As Fokkelman remarks, the poet wrong-foots his listeners here (*Reading Biblical Poetry*, 103). On hearing 1:10, the listeners’ sense of superiority vis-à-vis Sodom and Gomorrah is their undoing.

¹⁶ Features that bind 1:2-3, 4-9, 10-17, and 18-20 together are noted by Marvin Sweeney (*Isaiah 1-39*, 64-65). On the other hand, the inconsistencies Sweeney identifies (*ibid.*, 67-68, 80, 82-83) vanish once one allows for the possibility that 1:2-20 derives from a time of relative peace following a devastating war to which the prophet retrospectively refers, and that the prophet composed 2-3 and 18-20 as the unit’s frame. The “either-or” conclusion in 1:19-20 is not so close to that of the speeches of the Deuteronomistic history as to require dependence on them. The rhetoric and language of 1:19-20 recall more closely Isa 7:9; 30:9, 15. Elsewhere (*Isaiah 1-4*, 120-121, 123-124) Sweeney argues, following Jacob Milgrom (“Did Isaiah Prophesy During the Reign of Uzziah?” *VT* 14 [1964] 164-182; 174), that the threat of being devoured by the sword in 1:20 is pointless when read together with 1:4-9. On the contrary, 1:5 ‘Where shall you be struck *the next time*? You continue to turn away!’ prepares the way for 1:20 ‘If you refuse and rebel, you will be eaten by the sword.’ Again following Milgrom (174-75), he finds a discrepancy in the fact that Zion is compared to Sodom and Gomorrah in 1:9 because of the latter’s baleful destruction, and in 1:10, on account of criminal behavior. But the turn in the point of comparison fits the context. The people were already tarred as heedless transgressors in the eyes of God (1:2-3, 4). The difficulties involved in arguing for the original independence of the subunits of 1:2-20 may be illustrated by the discussion of 1:2-9 found in Hugh Williamson’s recent commentary. He

Finally, 1:18-20 by itself is obscure, but 1:16-20 construed as a whole and as a conclusion to the preceding is cogent. A context-sensitive paraphrase might go like this: get your sorry offerings out of my face, cease harsh treatment of others, restrain the violent, defend orphan and widow; let's get things right; though your sins be like scarlet robes, they will become, upon fulfillment of the above demands, as white as snow. If you acquiesce and obey, you will eat of the good of the land. If not, the sword will eat you.

4. *Rhetorical Traditions and Textual Interrelationships*

Controversy surrounds the question of genre or genres represented by 1:2-20. In my view, the greatest stumbling block to understanding is created by the false expectation that prophetic speech will adhere to any conventions beyond its own in a sustained and predictable fashion. To the contrary, prophetic discourse exploits whatever genres and topoi serve its purposes without reproducing them in full or slavishly following them.¹⁷ In 1:2-20, notions of a deity calling on heaven and earth to witness a grievance against a client nation; of a relationship of privilege and obligation established by a deity on a nation's behalf, whereby he is understood as father and they as sons; of procedures a parent might follow when faced with a wayward and defiant son; of priestly instruction regarding ritual slaughter; and of conceivable resolutions to a quarrel between two parties, are all exploited for rhetorical ends. In terms of deployment of topoi and themes, Isa 1:2-20 compares well, if not in every detail, with Deut 32:1-43, Hos 4:1-19, and Mic 6:1-16. Its affinities with Mic 1:2 – 3:12, Amos 5:18-27, and Ps 50 deserve note. It also shares language and themes with texts now integral to Lev 26 and Deut 28.¹⁸

notes a series of links between 1:2-3, 4, and 5-9, but he ascribes the links to the skill of a redactor (*Isaiah* 1-5, 23, 37-38, 40, 54, and 61 [where 1:5's links with 1:2 and 4 are overlooked]). In my view, the connections between 1:2-3, 4, and 5-9 are more simply ascribed to the skill of an author who composed the subunits of 2-9 with a view to their place in the whole.

¹⁷ For a similar understanding of Mic 6:1-8 in relation to the genres it exploits, see Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24E; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 507-511.

¹⁸ Kirsten Nielsen notes parallels with Lev 26 ("Das Bild des Gerichts (Rīb Pattern) in Jes i-xii," *VT* 29 [1979] 309-24; 322, n. 26). Cf. Isa 1:5, 18-20 with Lev 26:21; 1:7 with 26:16; and 1:20 with 26:25-26. Jacob Milgrom dates the bulk of Lev 26 to the 8th cent. BCE in the wake of the northern kingdom's end (*Leviticus 23-27: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2000] 2363-65). The shared language and themes are not in any case of a kind to require an assumption of dependence in either

A rhetorical tradition to which all of the above texts were tributary is a plausible explanation for the affinities the texts share. In the case of Deut 32 alone, direct influence on Isa 1:2-20 is probable.¹⁹

Isa 1:2-9 echoes Deut 32:1-35 measure for measure. First comes the call to heaven and earth to witness the indictment of Israel on charges of disloyalty; then, the playing off of Yahweh's love for the people, the love of a father for his children, against the people's insensate disobedience (32:1, 4-20; cf. Isa 1:2-4). Identification of an enemy attack as punishment for defection follows (32:21-25; cf. Isa 1:5-7). Yahweh's decision not to blot the people out entirely, despite the defection, is then recounted (32:26-35; cf. Isa 1:8-9).²⁰

Thereafter the texts go their separate ways in accord with divergent rhetorical ends. Deut 32 continues with an account of Yahweh's plan to defeat Israel's enemies, capped by a call for all the gods to acclaim Yahweh for deeds on behalf of his people (36-43). Isa 1:2-20 proceeds with a speech in which Yahweh rejects the people's worship and demands the defense of the vulnerable, capped by an enunciation of alternatives (10-20). An "either-

direction. Parallels to threats contained in Deut 28, a 7th cent. BCE composition on most accounts, deserve note. Cf. Isa 1:16 with Deut 28:20; 1:5-6 with 28:22, 27, 28, 35; and 1:7 with 28:33. Deut 28 seems to be a revised and updated collection of older collections of threats, as Jeffrey Tigay points out (*Deuteronomy. The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation [and] Commentary* [JPSTC; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996] 490). In any case participation in a common rhetorical tradition is a sufficient explanation for the overlap in language and themes. Isaiah deploys language reminiscent of that contained in Deut 28 on two further occasions (cf. OG Isa 9:7 with Deut 28:20-21; and 5:26 with 28:49).

¹⁹ Tigay makes a case for the priority of Deut 32:1-43 relative to its literary context and to texts from the prophets and the psalms with which it shares phraseology and themes (*Deuteronomy*, 510-13). Disloyalty is described as covenant-breaking in 32's frame (31:19-21, 24-30) but not in 32 itself (*ibid.*, 295, 299, 509-10). The difference turns on construing the elective bond Yahweh establishes with Israel in terms of a relationship between a father and the sons he acquires (per Deut 32; cf. 14:1-2) rather than in terms of a covenant established by a superior on behalf an inferior (per Deut 31:19-21, 24-30). The two construals are compatible but distinct. Heaven and earth function as witnesses to a warning per Deut 4:26 and as witnesses to an indictment per 32:1-6. In both cases, they are called as witnesses because they are interested parties, with a stake in any breakup that might take place between Yahweh and his client nation.

²⁰ A key word comparison points in the same direction. See Ronald Bergey, "The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32.1-43) and Isaianic Prophecies: A Case of Early Intertextuality?" *JSOT* 28 (2003) 33-54; 39-41, 50.

or” conclusion to a parenetic unit (19-20, after 2-18) fits a pattern observable in various types of ancient Hebrew literature.²¹

Hos 4:1-19 and Mic 6:1-16 deploy a set of rhetorical strategies and themes which recur in Isa 1:2-20. In all three texts, Yahweh’s relationship with Israel is at issue. In-your-face accusation of unbecoming behavior (Hos 4:1-3, 11-14; Mic 6:1-5, 10-12; Isa 1:2-4), expression of Yahweh’s displeasure with cultic acts from those who ignore his counsel (Hos 4:15; Mic 6:6-9; Isa 1:11-15), and a warning of dire consequences should the breach of relationship go unhealed (Hos 4:4-10, 19; Mic 6:16; Isa 1:20), co-occur. Reconstructions which dissolve these sequences into constituent parts and assign the parts to different settings and authors are suspect.

The rhetorical macrostructures of Isa 1:2-20 correspond, in miniature, to those of Mic 1:2 – 3:12. In Mic 1:2-16, the nation is accused before the world (cf. Isa 1:2-3); then, in 2:1-11, by means of a *hōy*-cry initiated direct address (cf. Isa 1:4-9); then in 3:1-12, more directly still, by means of a ‘hear!’ initiated unit addressed *in primis* to the ruling class (cf. Isa 1:10-20).

Amos 5:18-27 has affinities with Isa 1:2-20. Like Isa 1:4-9, Amos 5:18-20 contains a *hōy*-cry, followed by a question which challenges those the *hōy*-cry addresses, followed by the prophet’s countering reply drawing out implications hidden in the question itself. Yahweh goes on to declare his hatred of their worship, demands its cessation, and pursuit of justice (5:21-25; cf. Isa 1:10-17). Predictions of a dire end conclude the unit (5:26-27).²² An equally dire end is predicted at the conclusion of Isa 1:2-20, should disobedience continue (1:20).

²¹ Cf. Ps 2:12, after 10-11; Ps 37:37-38, after 1-36; Ps 50:22-23, after 7-21; Prov 2:20-22, after 1-19; Prov 3:32-35, after 27-31; Prov 4:18-19, after 10-17; Deut 11:26-28, after 5:1-11:25; Deut 30:15-20, after 29:1-30:14; and 1 Sam 12:24-25, after 1-23.

²² Am 5:18-27 is more usually read, not as a rhetorical unity, but as a series of tiny self-contained units (18-20, 21-24, and 25-27) strung together by a later redactor (so J. Alberto Soggin, *The Prophet Amos: A Translation and Commentary* [tr. John Bowden; London: SCM, 1987] 94-101; Shalom Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991] 182-98; Meir Weiss, “Concerning Amos’ Repudiation of the Cult,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* [ed. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995] 199-214). For an approach attuned to the rhetorical strategies of larger units, see Karl Möller, *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos* (JSOTSup 372; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003).

Ps 50 shares themes and rhetorical strategies with Isa 1:2-20. Assuming a change in vocalization (עֲשֵׂה ‘wickedness’ for עֲשֵׂה ‘the wicked one’ in 50:16), the addressee throughout is ‘my people’, ‘Israel,’ (50:7; cf. Isa 1:3). God summons heaven and earth to the trial of his people (50:4; cf. Isa 1:2), arraigns the latter for breach of covenant (50:5, 7-8, 16-21; cf. Isa 1:18), and threatens dire consequences (50:3, 22; cf. Isa 1:5, 20). The people are reproved, not for sacrifices per se (50:8), but for wickedness (50:16-20). The text concludes with alternatives from the deity: ‘Mark this, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, with none to deliver! He who sacrifices a thank-offering honors me, but he who is blameless of way [reading וְהַיָּשָׁרִים for וְהַיָּשָׁרִים] – him I will show the salvation of God’ (50:22-23; cf. Isa 1:19-20). Isa 1:2-20 is not directly modeled on Ps 50, but may owe features of its basic outline to the cultic genre of which the latter is our only exemplar.

It might be objected that Isa 1:2-3 and 11-20, minus the quotation formulae in 1:2, 11, and 20, are self-contained divine speeches with a rhetorical integrity all their own. This is true, but does not change the fact that prophetic discourse as handed down to us *deploys* divine oracles within a matrix of argumentation that extends beyond the limits of the directly quoted divine speech it contains. The assumption that such does not represent an original state of affairs, that instead, a prophet stood up, recited a two or three line divine oracle, and sat down, is, so far as I can tell, entirely without foundation.

In short, themes and rhetorical strategies found in Isa 1:2-20 recur in other prophetic discourses in the same order (Hos 4:1-19, Mic 6:1-16, Mic 1:2 – 3:12; and Amos 5:18-27). Themes and language attested in one place elsewhere (Deut 32, Lev 26, Deut 28, and Ps 50) punctuate its length. These facts lack an explanation on the view that 1:2-20 is a pieced together collection of originally independent units.

5. *Emotional Logic*

If Isa 1:2-20 is broken up into pieces, its emotional logic is also shattered. 1:2-3 is plaintive and accusatory in tone, from the standpoint of an abandoned father. 1:4 brings the accusation to a climax with an apostrophe from the standpoint of a “third” party, the prophet, followed by a direct address with a leading question and exclamation (1:5a) that recall by way of context (1:2) and choice of terminology the status of the addressees as punished and disobedient children. The tone is one of exasperation. 1:5b-6 describes the nation’s malaise as though the nation were an injured and

uncared-for body, with the implication that, if not for estrangement, it would be cared for by the one committed to do so. The tone is accusatory and plaintive at the same time, a return to the text's emotional point of departure. 1:7-8 dwells on the desolation of land and city, first by staccato description, then by complex simile. Zion is described as a solitary hut in a vineyard destroyed by a flood, left over but surrounded by devastation. The accusatory tone is abandoned, displaced if only briefly by pure plaint. 1:9 brings the emotional sequence to closure. The prophet no longer presents himself as a third party, but aligns himself with the people whom Yahweh has spared. The tone is one of gratitude for not quite comparing to Sodom and Gomorrah in terms of degree of desolation.

In 1:10, the text makes a pivot. Roughly the same emotional ground is covered a second time. A tone of accusation returns with the onset of parenesis (10). An accusatory peak follows (11-15), then a parenetic peak (16-17). Finally, there is a fusion of perspective. Yahweh forms a "we" with the ones he has accused, and holds out promise and threat (18-20). In the poem's conclusion, the accusatory tone is abandoned, replaced by an air that is first conciliatory and then threatening. The terminology chosen joins the end of the poem to the language and themes of the poem's preceding parts.

6. *Figures of Composition*

If Isa 1:2-20 represents a unitary composition, we would expect it to contain figures of composition typical of intentional wholes attested elsewhere in ancient Hebrew literature. To paraphrase Meynet, two figures are characteristic of the macrostructure of biblical compositions: simplex parallelism, with elements recurring in the same order, and chiasmic parallelism, with elements recurring in reversed order, with or without an unrepeatable center. As Meynet points out, elements that introduce difference also tend to occur.²³

The primary figure of composition instantiated by Isa 1:2-20 is an example of ABC A'B'C' parallelism. A = accusation, highlighted by an importunate question (1:2-5a, 10-11a); B = description of a situation, highlighted by means of nominal clauses (1:5b-8, 11b-15); C = fusion of perspective, signaled by "we" (1:9, 18). The element that introduces

²³ Roland Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric* (JSOTSup 256; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 209. Rhetorical analysis as practiced by Meynet focuses on figures of composition characteristic of macrounits of biblical literature, not, as here, on rhetoric in the sense of the art of persuasion.

difference is that of parenthesis. Absent in 2-9, it dominates 10-20. Attested minor figures of composition include inclusios ('for Yahweh has spoken' [1:2, 20]; 'Hear!' and 'If you hear' [1:10, 20]), a simplex parallelism across macrounit boundaries ('Sodom ... Gomorrah' [1:9, 10]), and a long-distance echo in which the 'bringing of offerings' is subsumed under the category of 'turning away': 'You continue to turn away' and 'Do not continue to bring offerings' (1:5, 13).

7. *Historical Context*

The implied historical setting of 1:2-20 is provided by indicia in the text. At a point in time in which the desolation of town and country and the deliverance of Jerusalem in extremis was still fresh in all minds (7-9), at a location, perhaps, not far from the entrance to the temple courts (12), the prophet accuses the people of unrelenting defiance of their God (2-4) even as they heap a multitude of sacrifices upon the altar and redouble their dedication to the requirements of the religious calendar (10-15). In the relative calm following a cessation of hostilities, with destruction all around, awareness of having suffered and survived a terrible loss triggered an outpouring of attention upon the deity among those who were spared. Even so, a revival of piety did not translate into cessation of harsh treatment of others, or pursuit of justice, or defense of orphan and widow (16-17), whose numbers would have burgeoned following the loss of life and taking of captives in war. A malaise afflicted the nation (5-6). The devastation of town and country and ongoing usufruct of agricultural land by foreigners (7) had failed to chasten the nation into a mending of ways.

Failure to turn post-destruction is the implied occasion of Isa 1:2-20. Said occasion corresponds to one historical situation in particular: the aftermath of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701, perhaps a year or so hence. To be sure, the implied occasion of a text is a rhetorical construct which may not correspond to the occasion for which it was composed. Nevertheless, the hypothesis that the actual occasion of Isa 1:2-20 is identical to the implied one involves the least unproven premises.²⁴

²⁴ The case for understanding 1:7-9 as a description of the results of Sennacherib's campaign in 701 is argued by Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 77, and Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 63-67; the case against, by Ehud Ben Zvi, "Isaiah 1:4-9, Isaiah, and the Events of 701 B.C.E. in Judah," *JSOT* 57 (1993) 61-80. Christopher Seitz dates all of Isa 1 to the immediate post-701 period, and more precisely, to the early years of Manasseh (*Isaiah 1-39* [Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 1993] 31-38). Uwe Becker dates the composition of Is 1:2-20 to the

8. *Isa 1:2-20: A Rhetorical Unity*

A summary of results is in order. The rhetorical plot and substance of Isa 1:2-20 are consistent with the view that it reproduces a speech delivered by a prophet we may, following tradition, refer to as Isaiah. There is no reason why the parts of 1:2-20 could not have formed a whole from the start.

Qua speech, the text conserves an oral style.²⁵ The rapid changes of scene and vantage point and concomitant shifts of voice and person need not mislead. Along with staccato exclamation, invocation, plural command, and rhetorical questions, said shifts are *constitutive* of prophetic poetry, as Rosenberg points out.²⁶

Isa 1:2-20 presents itself as a record of a prophet's evocation of a deity standing in judgment of his own people. The depiction is textured and poignant. Respect for the text as poetry adds suppleness and precision to a reading of it, regardless of whether the goal of interpretation is to reconstruct

end of the 5th cent. BCE "at the earliest," (*Jesaja - von der Botschaft zum Buch* [FRLANT 178; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997] 175-199; 191).

²⁵ As Robert C. Culley points out, prophetic literature consists of orally composed texts taken down by dictation, texts composed using writing, or something neither one nor the other – "orally-derived texts that conserve oral style," or "*transitional text[s]* . . . composed with the aid of writing yet still in an oral traditional style" ("Orality and Writtenness in the Prophetic Texts," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* [ed. Ehud Ben-Zvi and Michael H. Floyd; SBLSS 10; Atlanta: SBL, 2000] 45-64; 56, 47; the quotations are culled from a review of *Writings and Speech* by Keith L. Eades (RBL 07/17/2001; www.bookreviews.org). In *all* the above cases, even if a prophetic text is a historical fiction composed by an author of a later age, if the text portrays prophetic speech, the conventions of prophetic oratory will have served as a norm. As Yehoshua Gitay points out, whether a prophetic text was originally a written composition or an oral proclamation which came to be written down, "in the ancient period even written material was designed to be heard and to be read in public" ("Deutero-Isaiah: Oral or Written?" *JBL* 99 [1980] 185-97; 197). In the composition of the text, the requirements of *oral performance* will have been accommodated. The first full scale attempt to explore the relevant issues with respect to prophetic literature is that of William Doan and Terry Giles, *Prophets, Performance, and Power: Performance Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005).

²⁶ Joel Rosenberg, "Jeremiah and Ezekiel," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) 184-206; 185. Lénart de Regt also touches on the subject ("A Genre Feature in Biblical Prophecy and the Translator," *OTS* 44 (2000) 230-50; "Person Shift in Prophetic Texts: Its Function and its Rendering in Ancient and Modern Translations," in *The Elusive Prophet. The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; *OTS* 45; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 214-231.

the meaning the text had at an earlier or later point in time or actualize it for a present day context to which the reader is now attached.

Isa 1:2-20 evokes a series of text-internal and text-external frames of reference through its use of culturally pregnant language and its deployment of traditional topoi. The capacity of poetic language to evoke entire worlds is harnessed in order to bear witness to a particular situation, saturate it with significance, and call for its transformation. The text's poetry offers what Harshav calls "double-decker reference" in cardinal richness.²⁷ *Qua* poetry the composition seeks to reveal things for what they are; *qua* rhetoric, it prevails upon its listeners to effect a change of course.

Isa 1:2-20 stands over against its implied audience with promise and threat. The promise is conditional upon the hearers placing acts of justice before acts of piety, and accepting forgiveness for past failure to do so. The threat is a source of consternation and a prod to action.

Why are promise and threat in poetry? Because, as Ben Jonson remarked, poetry is the "most prevailing eloquence."²⁸ Long after Isa 1:2-20 was composed, its eloquence endures.²⁹

[Last revised February 22, 2007]

²⁷ "Double-decker reference" refers to the way words and constructions derive their meaning from both text-internal and text-external frames of reference. See Benjamin Harshav (Hrushovski), "An Outline of Integrational Semantics: An Understander's Theory of Meaning in Context," *Poetics Today* 3/4 (1982): 59-88; "Poetic Metaphor and Frames of Reference," *Poetics Today* 5 (1984) 5-43; "Fictionality and Fields of Reference: Remarks on a Theoretical Framework," *Poetics Today* 5 (1984) 227-51. Harshav's theory of literature, regrettably, has largely been ignored by biblical scholars. The above essays are collected in idem, *Explorations in Poetics* (Berkeley: Stanford University Press, 2007).

²⁸ Ben Jonson, *Timber, Or, Discoveries made upon Men and Matter* (ed. Felix Emanuel Schelling; Boston: Ginn, 1892 [1640]) s. v. De Poetica.

²⁹ For a translation of Isa 1:2-20 based on the analysis presented here, see "Isa 1:2-20: A New Translation," www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com.

Isaiah 1:2-20: Scansion with Notes on Text, Prosody, and Tropes

Like MT, but not always in accordance with it, words dominated by a single main stress are conjoined with a *maqeph* (ֿ).³⁰ Prosodic variants vis-à-vis MT are noted.

Symbols

ֿ	A strophe made up of three lines, 1:(1:1) in structure
ֿ	
ֿ	ֿ concludes a strophe; ֿ a sub-stanza; ֿ a stanza; ֿ a section
2:(2:2)	A line consisting of three versets of two stress units each; the last two form a pair.
◦	Reference to a location within the text.
*	MT, if preserved, would violate the general rule or the length rule.
+m or -m	The addition or subtraction of a <i>maqeph</i> vis-à-vis MT.
vd, ld	Change in verset division, or line division, vis-à-vis MT.
s ₁ d, s ₂ d, or s ₃ d	Change in strophe, stanza, or section division vis-à-vis MT.
cv טַעֲמָה	Change in vocalization vis-à-vis MT; MT following.
cj 4QIsa ^f אַסְי	Conjecture based on witness; MT following.
◦ce אַסְי	Conjectural emendation vis-à-vis MT; MT following.
4/9/24	A stanza consisting of 4 lines, 9 versets, and 24 stress units.
40/90/216 17/6/2/1	A poetic composition made up of 40 lines, 90 versets, and 216 stress units, with a total of 17 strophes, 6 stanzas, and 2 sections.
p (or h)=0.5 (20/40)	Cases of <i>ssm</i> (semantic-syntactic-morphological) <i>parallelism</i> (or <i>hypotaxis</i>) per verset, averaged over 40 versets.
$a^1b^1:j^1c^1d^1$ $x^2c^2d^2:x^1b^2a^2$	The first line contains two pairs of two elements; enjambment occurs (hence the j); the second line begins with a pair of elements in chiasmic <i>ssm</i> parallelism with the second pair of elements of the first line (hence the x); it concludes with another pair of elements that match up with elements a and b in the first line, but in reverse order (hence the x); enjambment occurs (hence the j).
$a^1b^1c^1:g^1b^2c^2$	The first verset's a is not paralleled in the second, but is gapped (hence the g); b^2 's match with b^1 is concomitant with a mismatch in one or more fundamental <i>ssm</i> dimensions

³⁰ For terms and abbreviations used here, see the supporting essays at www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com. For a first orientation to the prosodic information encoded by the masoretic accents, see Bezalel Elan Dresher, "The Prosodic Basis of the Tiberian Hebrew System of Accents," *Language* 70 (1994) 1-52; "The Word in Tiberian Hebrew," in *The Nature of the Word: Essays in Honor of Paul Kiparsky* (ed. Kristin Hanson and Sharon Inkelas; Cambridge: MIT Press, in press); online: <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~dresher/tibhebrew.pdf>.

ישעיהו א 9-2

	(2:2):2	$a^1 b^1 : a^2 b^2 : ab$	$^{\circ} +m$	כִּי־יְהוָה דִּבֶּר	שָׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהֶאֱזִינִי אֶרֶץ	2
	3:3	$a^1 b^1 b^2 : a^2 b e$	sfx 2x תי	וְהֵם פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי	בָּנִים גִּדְלֹתַי וְרוֹמְמֹתַי	3
	3:3	$a^1 b^1 c^1 : g b^2 c^2$	$g=a^2$	וְחִמּוֹר אֲבוֹס בְּעֲלִיו	יָדַע שׁוֹר קִנְהוּ	3
4/9/24	3:3	$x b^3 a^3 : b^4 a^4$	לא 2x ידע v3a	עָמִי לֹא הִתְבוֹנֵן	יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָדַע	3
	3:3	$ab^1 c^1 : j b^2 c^2$	v2 פשעו חטא	עִם כְּבֹד עֹזֵן	הוּי גְּוֵי חֹטָא	4
	2:2	$j b^3 c^3 : j b^4 c^4$	v2 בנים ים sfx 3x	בָּנִים מִשְׁחִיתֵי	זָרַע מְרַעִים	4
	(2:3):2	$j a^1 b^1 : j a^2 b^2 : j a^3$	v2 פשעו ביעזבו את- נאצו את-ק	נָאֲצוּ אֶת־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל	עֲזְבוּ אֶת־יְהוָה	4
	3:2	$j a b^1 c : b^2 e$	*+m נזרו סרה v4	תּוֹסִיפוּ סָרָה	עַל־מָה תִּכּוּ עוֹד	5
	3:3	$a^1 b^1 c^1 : a^2 b^2 c^2$	-m cv כל 2x	וְכֹל לִבֵּב דְּוִי	כֹּל רֹאשׁ לַחֲלִי	5
	2:3	$b^3 : j c^3$	-m וראש v5	אֵין בּוֹ מֵתֵם	מִכַּף־רִגְלָו וְעַד־רֹאשׁ	6
	2:2	$j(a^1 a^2 : a^3)$	v5 תכו מכה sfx 3x	וּמִכַּה טְרִיָּה	פָּצַע וְחִבּוּרָה	6
8/18/44	(2:2):3	$j(a^1 b^1 : a^2 b^2 : a^3 b^3)$	-m $a^1 \dots b^2 a^1 a^2 v6 b a^3 b^3 a^3 v6 b$ לא 3x	וְלֹא רִכְכָּה בְּשָׁמֶן	לֹא זָרוּ וְלֹא חֲבָשׁוּ	6
	2:3	$a^1 b^1 : a^2 b^2$		עֲרִיכֶם שְׂרָפוֹת אֵשׁ	אֲרֻצְכֶם שְׂמֹמָה	7
	(2:3):3	$a^3 : j b^3 : j b^4$	v4 נז ce זרים כם sfx 4x	אֲתֶה וּשְׂמֹמָה כְּמַה־פָּכַת זָרִים	אֲדַמְתְּכֶם לְנִגְדְּכֶם	7
	2:2	$a^1 b^1 : j c^1 d^1$		כְּסִכָּה בְּכָרֶם	וְנוֹתְרָה בַת־צִיּוֹן	8
	2:2	$x c^2 d^2 : j x b^2 a^2$	v7 עריכם עיר sfx 5x	כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה	כְּמִלוּנָה בְּמִקְשָׁה	8
	3:3	$ab^2 : j cde$	v8 יהוה יהוה צ ונותרה הותיר	הוֹתִיר לָנוּ שְׂרִיד	לִלְוֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	9
6/13/32	3:2	$ab^1 c^1 : g b^2 c^2$	v8 כמעט cv vd כ/כ sfx 3x נו 6x	לְעַמְרָה דְּמִינוּ	כְּמַעֲט כְּסֻדָּם הִיְינוּ	9

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	3:2	$a^1b^1c^1;d^1e^1$	$\overset{\circ}{-}m$ v2 וְיִדְּוּ הָאֲזִינִי, שָׁמְעוּ	קָצִינִי סֹדִים	שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר יְהוָה	10
	3:2	$a^2b^2c^2;d^2e^2$	v9 וְעַמְרָה, סָ לָנוּ אֶל־נֹנוּ, הָ"נוּ, לָנוּ אֶל־נֹנוּ	עִם עַמְרָה	הָאֲזִינֹנוּ תוֹרַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ	11
	3:2	$a_2bc:ab$	$\overset{\circ}{-}m$	יֹאמֶר יְהוָה	לָמָּה לִּי רַב־זַבְחֵיכֶם	12
	3:2	$ab^1c^1;b^2c^2$	זַבְחֵיכֶם עֲלוֹת	וְחָלַב מְרִיאִים	שִׁבְעַתִּי עֲלוֹת אֵילִים	13
	2:2	$j_b^3c^3;j_c^4c^5$	ים sfx 5x	וּכְבָּשִׁים וְעִתּוּדִים	וְדָם פָּרִים	14
	2:3	$a^1b^1;j_c^1d^1e^1$	לְרֹאוֹת $\overset{\circ}{+}m$ $\overset{\circ}{c}v$ (cf. Is 14:29) $\overset{\circ}{l}d$	לְרֹאוֹת פָּנָי	לֹא חִפְצָתִי כִּי־תִבְאוּ	15
7/14/34	3:2	$a^2b^2c^2;j_d^2e^2$	v11 לְמָה מִי v11 שָׁלֵא מִי aligned	רָמַס חֲצָרִי	מִי־בִקֵּשׁ זֹאת מִיָּדְכֶם	16
	2:2	$ab;j_c d^1-m$	v5 לֹא לֹא v5 תו לֹא תו מְנַחַת $\overset{\circ}{c}v$	הֵבִיא מְנַחַת	לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ	17
	2:3	$a^1d^2:a^2d^3c$	v12 \uparrow תְּבֹאוּ הֵבִיא v11 לִי $\overset{\circ}{v}d$ $\overset{\circ}{v}d$	תוֹעֲבָה הִיא לִי	שְׂוֹא קְטָרֶת	18
	(2:2):2	$a^1a^2;j_a^3j_b^1j_2$	v12 לֹא לֹא א $\overset{\circ}{-}m$ $\overset{\circ}{s}_1d$ $\overset{\circ}{l}d$	לֹא אוֹכֵל	חֹדֶשׁ וּשְׁבַת קָרָא מְקָרָא	19
	3:3	$x^2b^2a^4;x_a^5b^3j_2$	v13 ח וְשֹׁחַ v13 שְׂוֹא קֹאָ וְעָ $\overset{\circ}{v}d$	וּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם שְׂנֵאָה נִפְשֵׁי	אֲוֹן וְעֲצָרָה חֹדְשֵׁיכֶם	20
	3:2	$g^4j_3:b^5j_2$	v13 \uparrow קָרָא מוֹמוּ ח"יכֶם...וּמוֹ"כֶם = $\overset{\circ}{g}$	נְלֵאִיתִי נִשְׂאָ	הִיוּ עָלַי לְטָרַח	21
	2:3	$a^1b^1;j_c^1d$	v13c-15: aligned 1sg 6x \downarrow sfx 3x $\overset{\circ}{c}m$	אֲעֲלִים עֵינַי מִכֶּם	וּבִפְרִשְׁכֶם כְּפִיכֶם	22
7/16/38	(2:2):3	$a^2b^2;j_c^2:abc$	v11 דְּדָמָ v11 רַב תֵּר v12 יָדְכֶם יָדִי" $\overset{\circ}{+}m$	יָדֵיכֶם דְּמַיִם מְלֹאוּ	גַּם־כִּי־תִרְבוּ תִפְלֶה אֵינֶנִּי שָׁמַע	23
	2:(3:2)	$a^1a^2:a^3bc;j_de$	v17 עֵינַי v11 רַב ז"כֶם רַע מ" $\overset{\circ}{s}_2d$ {ס} v17	הִסִּירוּ רַע מֵעֲלֵיכֶם מִנְגֵד עֵינַי	רָחֲצוּ הַזְּכוֹ	24
	2:(2:2)	$a^1b^1:a^2b^2:a^3b^3$	v4 מְרַע" v16 רַע הֵר $\overset{\circ}{l}d$ $\overset{\circ}{l}d$ $b^2 b^1 a^3 a^2$	לְמַדּוֹ הֵיטֵב דַּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט	חֲדְלוּ הֲרַע	25
	2:(2:2)	$a^1b^1:a^2b^2:a^3b^3$	v17a $a^1b^1 a^1b^1 b^1 b^2b^3$ מִשְׁפָּט שְׁפָטוּ	שִׁפְטוּ יְתוֹם רִיבוֹ אֲלֻמְנָה {ס}	אֲשֶׁרוֹ חֲמוּץ	26
	2:2	$ab:ab$	v11 יֹאמֶר יְהוָה	יֹאמֶר יְהוָה	לְכוּ־נָא וְנִזְכַּחַה	27
	3:2	$a^1b^1c^1d^1;x_d^2b^2$	v4 גֹּי ח v16 מ"כֶם ח"כֶם	כַּשְׂלֵג יִלְבִּינוּ	אִם־יְהִיוּ חֲטָאֵיכֶם כְּשָׁנִים	28
	2:2	$a^2x_b^3g_d^3;x_d^4b^4$	v11 דָם v15 דָּיָא $\overset{\circ}{g}=c^2$ 2x יְהִיוּ	כַּצֶּמֶר יְהִיוּ	אִם־יֵאָדְמוּ כַתּוֹלָע	29
	2:3	$a^1b^1:c^1d^1$	v7 ז אָכְ אֲתָה ט הָ תֹא v17 הֵיט ט v10 שׁוּשׁ	טוֹב הָאָרֶץ תֹּאכְלוּ	אִם־תֹּאבּוּ וּשְׁמַעְתֶּם	30
8/20/44	(2:2):3	$a^2b^2:c^2d^2:abe$	חָאָבְלוּ $\overset{\circ}{c}j$ וְאִם 4QIsa ^f $\overset{\circ}{+}m$ $\overset{\circ}{c}j$	כִּי־פִי יְהוָה דְּבַר {פ}	אִם־תִּמְאָנוּ וּמְרִיתֶם חֲרַב תִּאָּפְלוּ	31
			v5 \uparrow תוֹס סָרָה וּמָר v2 כִּי־פִי יְ דָ 4x אָם vv5-6 חָ תָ			