



Hebrew Poetic Books

An Introduction to Hebrew Poetry



Orientation

- Purpose:
 - To equip the pastor/exegete to preach accurately and sensitively from the poetic portions of the Old Testament
- Requirements:
 - Book review presentation
 - Mid-Term
 - Exegetical Sermon



The Hebrew Bible

- The Hebrew Bible or Tanakh.
 - TaNaKh = ת נ כ an anagram from the first letters of each of the 3 sections of the Hebrew Bible.
 - t = T for the Torah תורה the 5 books of Moses
 - n = N for the Nevi'im נביא the Prophetic books
 - Divided into former and latter prophets
 - k = K for the Khetuvim כתובים the *writings*



The Writings

- The *Writings* (Khetuvim) are divided into three sections
 - The *Book of Truth*
 - The *Scrolls*
 - The *Histories*



The Writings

- The book of Truth (tm) ('emet) contains
 - The book of Psalms or Tehillim (Myl@ihit@;)
 - The book of Proverbs or Mishley (yl'#\$;mi)
 - The book of Job or 'Iyyov (bwy@))
- The “Scrolls” or Megilloth, 5 works arranged in liturgical order...
 - Song of Solomon for Passover
 - (begins liturgical year)
 - Ruth for Pentecost
 - Lamentations for the Tisha B'Av (9th of Av)
 - Ecclesiastes for Sukkoth
 - Esther for Purim



The Writings

- The Histories contain 3 histories of the post-exilic period arranged in chronological order plus a comprehensive history of the covenant people from Adam to the edict of Cyrus.
 - Daniel
 - Ezra & Nehemiah these 2 books were originally grouped as one book in the Hebrew manuscripts
 - The Chronicles



Our Study

- We will study the 5 books generally considered to be poetic plus 1.
 - Job & Psalms
 - Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Songs
 - Lamentations
- But this is not the full extent of Hebrew poetry.
 - Many of the best poetic passages are found in the writings of the literary prophets.
 - 2/3s of the Bible are poetic if not poetry



“If it Quacks...”

- There is a general lack of consensus concerning the nature of Hebrew Poetry
 - Compare the number of books on Hebrew Poetry to books on Hebrew Prose
 - "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like." Gelett Burgess
 - Poetry is at the same time: intuitive & elusive
- Even though Hebrew poetry is not easy to define, it should be fairly easy to interpret because it is not a highly technical form of expression.
- The Masoretic editors sensed the difference:
 - accents in the poetic books are different



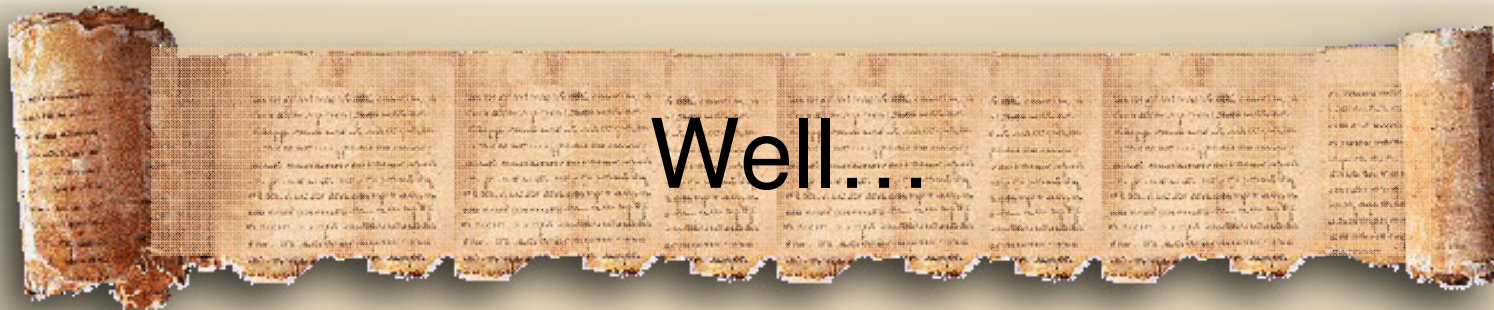
The Quantitative View

- Poetry is well delimited by its differences from prose. While there is an area of overlap, generally it is not difficult to distinguish the two without precisely defining the difference... in spite of some blending of types and blurring of the lines of demarcation, prose and poetry are basically two different ways of using language. David Noel Freedman
- For Freedman & Cross, the classification of poetry is evidenced in the absence of definite articles, prepositions and particles.



The Gradient View

- If one puts aside the notions of biblical poetry and prose and tries to look afresh at different parts of the Bible to see what it is about them that distinguishes one from another, it will soon be apparent that there are not two modes of utterance, but many different elements which elevate style and provide for formality and strictness of organization (Kugel)
- Elements of style are subjective and cumulative




- Kugel is certainly correct in seeing a gradient of elevated style and formal organization.
- But
 - The masoretes recognized enough difference to use a completely different scheme of accents in the poetic books
 - The syntax of the narrative sections of the Hebrew Bible is obviously different from that in passages that have a high concentration of elements which “elevate style.”
- It is fair to say that there are 2 dominant modes of expression in the Hebrew Bible, story and song!
 - These 2 expansive genres are
 - mnemonic and custodial



So, What is Hebrew Poetry?

- “The historical inability of poetic terminology to describe Hebrew style might be compared to modern physicist’s difficulty in deciding between wave and particle theories of light.” James L. Kugel
- The two major theories of Hebrew Poetry are:
 - Meter
 - Parallelism



Alonso Schökel

- Ascending order of abstraction
 - Sounds,
 - Rhythm and arrangement, quantitative elements
 - Parallelism and other lexical & grammatical devices
 - Thematic structures including everything from images to motif.



Sounds

The Most Concrete Element
of
Poetic Organization



Sound

Phonological elements

- The area of “sound” is probably used less by the pastoral exegete than any other organizational feature.
 - This is because the aural use of the Hebrew language is the first area to be abandoned by many seminary students.
 - The use of good transliterated texts such as BibleWorks can be very helpful.



Sounds

- Sound is a simple and important way that the Hebrew poets use to provide cohesiveness to their poetry.
- Poetic structure that works at the sound level is usually based on some form of repetition.
- At a very simple level, assonance and alliteration are the repetition of vowel and consonant sounds.



Assonance & Alliteration

- The simple definitions of assonance and alliteration do not adequately describe the various textures of the phonological patterns..
 - But these are useful distinctions.
- Consider the English phrases:
 - “Hey rain came, day saved,”
 - “Bring back black beans,”
 - “Hot pet cut flat net,”
 - “How now brown cow”



Assonance

- At a very simple level assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds.
- Since the simplest Hebrew syllable is the open syllable (CV).
- It should be obvious that since consonants and vowels are not totally divisible, the distinction between assonance and alliteration is not without a degree of fuzziness.



Jeremiah 49:1

- Notice the dominant “a” vowel sound:

מִדּוּעַ יִרְשׁ מִלְּכָם אֶת־גַּד וְעַמּוֹ בְּעָרָיו יֵשֵׁב

maddû^{ac} yāraš malkām ‘et-gād wə^cammô bə^cārāyw
yāšāb

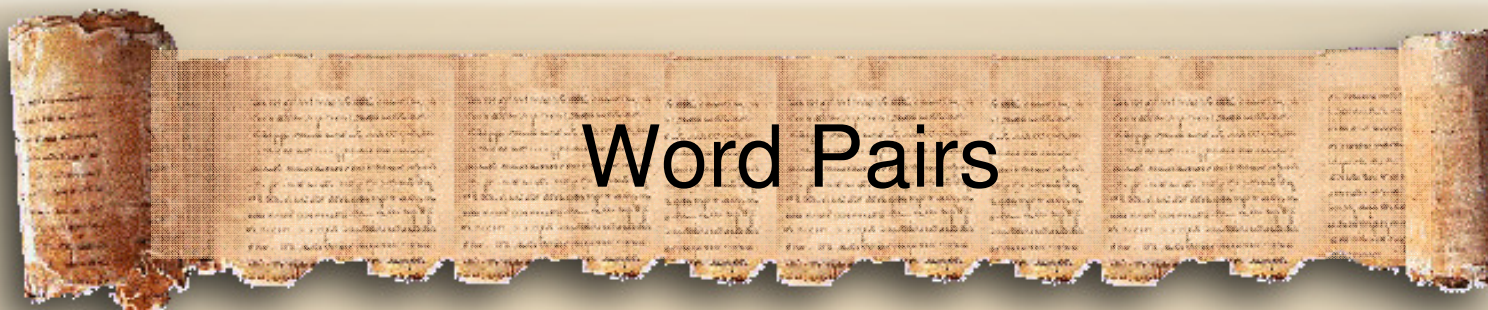
- *Why then does Milcom inherit Gad, And his people dwell in its cities?*



- An example of the repetition of vowel sequences;

אִם־קָרָאתִי וַיַּעֲנֵנִי לֹא־אֲאָמִין כִּי־יֹאזִין קוֹלִי

- 'im-qārā'tî wayya'ānēnî lō'-'a'ā'mîn kî-ya'āzîn qôlî
- If I called and He answered me, I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.



Jeremiah 1:10:

לְנִתּוֹשׁ וְלִנְתוּץ וְלְהַאֲבִיד וְלְהָרוֹס לְבָנוֹת וְלִנְטוֹעַ

linṭôš wəlinṭôš ûləha'ăbîd wəlahārôs libnôt wəlinṭô^{ac}

Notice the word pairs:

To root out and to pull down

To destroy and to throw down

To build and to plant.

Word pairs exhibit both lexical and phonological cohesion.

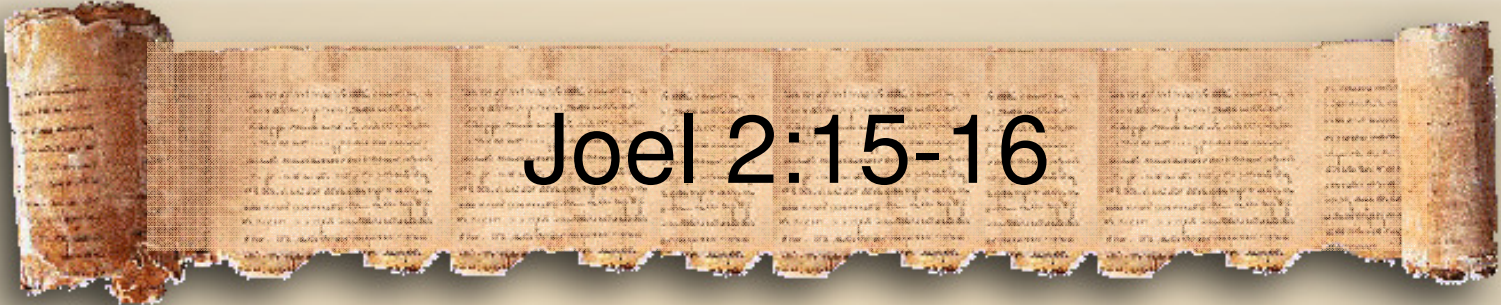


- One rough definition of alliteration is a *cohesive* grouping of similar sounds to produce an identifiable effect.
 - This means there can be a variety of effects, but they are all intended to produce some kind of cohesion within the poem.
 - If consonants or consonant clusters are repeated this is called alliteration. It can be as simple as word initial alliteration, a series of words (or lines) beginning with the same consonant.



Complex Alliteration

- Alliteration can be very complex involving sequences of consonants that are repeated. There is also near alliteration where similar sounding consonants can be combined.
- Alliterative clusters can be strictly repetitive, (mb mb), or suggestive (pt bd). They can even be mixed clusters (nsk skn).



Joel 2:15-16

tiq^ʿû šôpār bəṣiyyôn
qaddəšû-šôm
qir'û ʿăšārā^h
ʾisṗû-ʿām
qaddəšû qāhāl
qibṣû zəqēnîm
ʾisṗû ʿôlālîm

Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly; Gather
the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders, Gather the
children



Rhyme

Is not a prominent feature of Hebrew poetry. It is a superficial form of repetition because of the limited possible endings of words.

Occasionally it is used in a striking manner:

Isaiah 33:22

kî yhwš šōp̄tēnû

yhwš məḥōqəqēnû

yhwš malkēnû

hûʔ yôšîʕēnû

For the LORD is our Judge,

The LORD is our Lawgiver,

The LORD is our King;

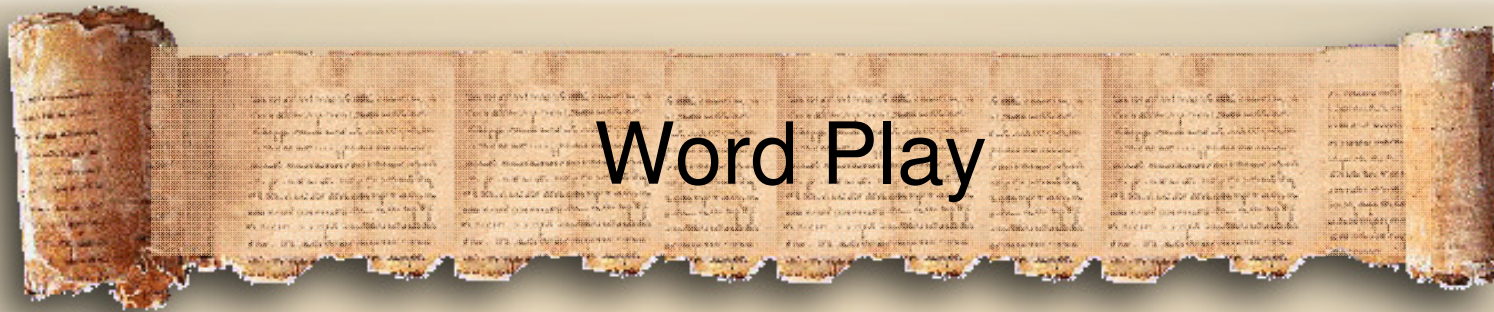
He will save us



- Using sounds to invoke some kind of image, to paint an aural picture. Here is Isaiah 17:12;

hōy hāmôn ‘ammîm rabbîm
kahāmôt yammîm yehēmāyûn
ûšə’ôn lə’ummîm
kiš’ôn māmîm kabbîrîm yiššā’ûn

- Woe to the multitude of many people
Who make a noise like the roar of the seas,
And to the rushing of nations
That make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!



Word Play

- Structure that rises out of the use of ambiguity:
- Homonymy, different words that are spelled the same (I can open the can)
- Polysemy, which is a single word with different connotations (I saw him come, I saw him off)



Figura Etymologica

- Word play based on a single root:
 - bōgđîm bāgādû ûbēged bōgđîm bāgādû
- The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.
Isaiah 24:16b



Root Transformation

- Psalm 107:33

yāśēm nəhārôt ləmidbār
ûmōšáʿê máyim ləšimmāʿôn

- He turns rivers into a wilderness,
And the water *springs* into *dry ground*;

– וּמִצְאֵי מַיִם לְצִמְאוֹן —

- Notice how the imagery of the sentence and the rearrangement of the consonants in the root both reflect this transformation.



Puns

- Another form of root-play is polysemantic punning, often called *double entendre*.
- Proverbs 28:23 is an example of the double meaning of the root הלך this root can mean *smooth* in the sense of *flatter* or it can mean *to divide* (hiphil stem). So that the meaning of the verse; “Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.” carries the implication that the one who flatters actually divides.



- Wordplay based on similar sounding words of different meanings, or near homonyms.
 - lō´-[˘]aśā^h lərē[˘]ēhû rā[˘]a^h
 - לֹא-עֲשֵׂה לְרֵעֵהוּ רָעָה
 - Nor does evil to his neighbor
- Here the roots for *neighbor* and *evil* are spelled the same but are actually different words.



Amos 8:2

- And He said, "Amos, what do you see?" So I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me: "The end has come upon My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore.

The word for *summer fruit* is קַיִץ while the word for *the end* is קֵץ



The Need for Sounds

- The most compelling reason to be aware of wordplay in the Hebrew text is to avoid exegetical excesses that come from using the lexicon as the primary tool for interpreting a text.
- Many times we could mistakenly argue for a nuance to a word that is lexically appropriate but unsuitable for the context,
- if we are not aware that the word in question has been chosen not for its semantic nuance but for its phonological contribution to the *art* of the poem.



Rhythm and Arrangement

Quantitative Elements



Rhythmic Balance

- There are 5 common theories of rhythmic structure
 - The traditional approach:
 - This approach counts accents; it is highly dependent on Masoretic accentuation.
 - The semantic parallelism approach:
 - The colon (line) is analyzed by semantic units, inseparable units of meaning that are counted.



More Systems

- Alternating meter approach:
 - Those who adopt this model read the colon as primarily iambic alterations of stressed and unstressed syllables. The counting of iambic feet lends an aura of precision, but is actually misleading
- Reconstructive vocalization:
 - Requires linguistic skill and knowledge of cognate languages
- Syllabic scansion:
 - The quantity of syllables, not stress or vowel value, are the determining feature of Hebrew meter in this system



Rhythmic Organization

- “parallelism could not be regarded as the sole or even sufficient criterion of Hebrew verse, if only because of the large number of lines which have no parallelism. Since Gray and others have pointed out correctly, these lines often share a common rhythm or meter with others in the same poem which, however, have parallel elements, it then becomes clear that the overriding consideration in such cases is rhythm rather than parallelism”

Stanley Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel*,



Colon Length

- “It should be noted that a system of meter based on the quantity of syllables per colon does not ignore the possibility of internal feet of various types. It merely gives primary consideration to the variable most neglected in past approaches to Hebrew meter: overall colon length in number of syllables and the patterns discerned therefrom.”

Douglas K. Stuart, *Studies in Early Hebrew Meter*



For sermon preparation:

- counting syllables is probably too fine a degree of discrimination for which to aim. Freedman has suggested that “the principal object is to devise a measuring system that is **symmetry-sensitive** ..”
 - “rhythmic balance.”
 - This term is chosen rather than meter to avoid misunderstanding;
 - ...the perception of rhythmic balance
 - This is quantitative assessment of symmetry and asymmetry



An Exegetical Method

- The method recommended for an exegetical examination should focus on three major features.
 - First it must be able easily to estimate individual, overall colon length.
 - Second it must be able to demonstrate the relative lengths of cola in the context of an individual poem.
 - Third it should provide a means of evaluating the “weight” of sections comprised of groups of cola
- Freedman;
 - “An equally simple system that also works with large samples is word-counting.”



Psalm 1

- Blessed is the man who
 - walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
 - Nor stands in the path of sinners,
 - Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
 - But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
 - And in His law he meditates day and night.
 - He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water,
 - That brings forth its fruit in its season,
 - Whose leaf also shall not wither;
 - And whatever he does shall prosper.
- The ungodly are not so,
 - But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.
 - Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
 - Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
- But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

אֲשֶׁר־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר

לֹא הֵלֵךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים

וּבְדַרְךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד

וּבְמוֹשֵׁב לֵצִים לֹא יָשָׁב

כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְּצוּ

וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵלָה

וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל־פְּלִיגֵי מַיִם

אֲשֶׁר פֵּרִיו יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ

וְעֵלְהוּ לֹא־יִבּוֹל

וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ

לֹא־כֵן הָרְשָׁעִים

כִּי אִם־כַּמֶּץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ

עַל־כֵּן לֹא־יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט

וְחַטָּאִים בְּעֵדַת צְדִיקִים

כִּי־יִוָּדַע יְהוָה דְּרֹךְ צְדִיקִים

וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד



- The correspondence between line length in the Hebrew text and in an English translation is noticeable. Certain features are easily recognizable.
- For example, “Blessed is the man who:” and “the ungodly are not so” are both the shortest lines in the text.
- The longest line in the text is “he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water” is the longest line, it is also the line that states the central image of the poem.
- The blessing of the man, and the attributes of the tree are both described by a cluster of three short lines.
- The condition of the ungodly is described by three lines that together reflect both sets of images used for the godly man.
- The flow of ideas is reflected in the balance and symmetry of the structure of the poem.



Lexical and Grammatical Devices

Words Working Together



• **Lexical and Grammatical Structure**

- Of all the structural devices that operate at the level of words and sentences, the various relationships that are classified as parallelism form the feature that is most intimately associated with the very nature of Hebrew poetry.
- These lexical and grammatical elements are certainly the most common devices used to establish structure and meaning in Hebrew poetry.



Adelle Berlin

- *Parallelism, then, consists of a network of equivalences and/or contrasts, parallelism calls attention to itself and to the message which it bears. Parallelism embodies the poetic function, and the poetic function heightens the focus on the message.*

Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 141



Parallelism

- The pastor exegete seeks to describe the operations of parallelism primarily to understand the meaning and mind of the poet.
- The structure is studied for the contribution it makes to meaning.
- The varieties of parallelism are too complex to comprehensively list in a brief introduction.
- The familiar categories of parallelism suggested by Bishop Lowth are called synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic.



Types of Anthithesis

- Kinds of antithetical parallelism
 - Contrary: a and not a
 - as in to speak and not to speak
 - Contradictory a and b when b is logically antithetical to a
 - as in to speak and to be silent



Polar Structures

- Contrast or Merismus, polar pairs
 - Night and day, heaven and earth
 - Psalm 139:12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.
 - Psalm 74:16 The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun.



Synonymous Parallelism

- Synonymous parallelism builds cohesion by using terms that are similar or equivalent.
- Psalm 19:1, 2
 - [The heavens] [declare] [the glory of God];
[and the firmament] [shows] [his handywork].
 - [Day unto day] [utters] [speech],
[and night unto night] [shows] [knowledge]
- Symbolic representation:
 - $a - b - c / a' - b' - c' //$
 $a - b - c / a' - b' - c'$



Other Parallel Structures

- Parallelism with ellipsis
 - Psalm 24:1,
 - [The earth] [is the LORD's,] [and the fulness thereof];
 - [the world], [and they that dwell therein]
 - A – B – C / A' - C'
 - Antithetical parallelism involves one or more elements that are contrasting.
 - Psalm 1:6
- [For the LORD] [knows] [the way] [of the righteous]:/
[but the way] [of the ungodly] [shall perish.]
 - A B C D /
 - C' D' B'



Synthetic

– Synthetic Parallelism:

Psalm 95:3;

- [For a great] [God] [is the LORD]/
- [And a great] [King] [above all gods]
A B C / A' B' D
- The third element (C) in the first colon is the subject,
- while in the second colon it is the false gods to whom the LORD is being compared.
- This extension of meaning in the second colon constitutes the synthetic element.



Terraced or Staircase

- Stair-case parallelism.
 - It is primarily a form of synonymous parallelism,
 - elements of the poem are extended or intensified.
 - Psalm 29:1,2
 - Give unto the LORD, (O you mighty ones),
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name;
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.



Centrifugal & Centripetal

- Daniel Grossberg describes structures that tend either
 - to emphasize the unity of the whole
 - or the individual character of the parts.
 - The elements that serve to unify and contribute to coherence, that serve to establish the integrity of the whole are categorized as “centripetal.”
 - Devices that stress detail and decentralization, that are atomistic and linear or successive in progression are identified as “centrifugal.”
 - The combination of embracing or concentric structures and the more familiar linear structures often demonstrate an artful balance of centrifugal and centripetal perspective.



Psalm 41

- Blessed is he who considers the poor;
The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.
The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive,
And he will be blessed on the earth;
You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.
- The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness;
You will sustain him on his sickbed.
I said, "LORD, be merciful to me;
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."
- My enemies speak evil of me:
"When will he die, and his name perish?"
And if he comes to see me, he speaks lies;
His heart gathers iniquity to itself;
When he goes out, he tells it.

All who hate me whisper together against me;
Against me they devise my hurt.
"An evil disease," they say, "clings to him.
And now that he lies down,
he will rise up no more."
- Even my own familiar friend
in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up his heel against me.

But You, O LORD,
be merciful to me,
and raise me up,
That I may repay them.

By this I know that You are well pleased with me,
Because my enemy does not triumph over me.
As for me, You uphold me in my integrity,
And set me before Your face forever.
Blessed be the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
Amen and Amen.



Thematic Structures

The Highest Level of Abstraction



Thematic Structure

- The Highest level of abstraction involves the use of thematic structures
 - the use of ideas drawn from the rest of the Tanakh will be significant for this aspect of the analysis.
 - these ideas are represented in images and themes
 - The goal is not to catalog themes, but to observe the structural influence these themes exert.
 - The structure and organization is useful in understanding the meaning and purpose of a poem.

Psalm 23

יְהוָה רֹעִי לֹא אֶחְסָר:

² בְּנֵאוֹת דְּשֵׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי

עַל־מִי מְנַחֹת יִנְהַלֵּנִי:

³ נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב

יִנַּחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי־צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ:

⁴ גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגֵיא צַלְמוֹת

לֹא־אִירָא רָע

כִּי־אֲתַה עִמָּדִי

שִׁבְטְךָ וּמִשְׁעֲנֶתְךָ הֵמָּה יִנַּחֵמֵנִי:

⁵ תַּעֲרֹךְ לְפָנָי | שְׁלֹחַן נֶגְדַ צְרָרִי

דִּשְׁנַת בִּשְׁמֹן רֹאשִׁי

כּוֹסֵי רוּיָה:

⁶ אֵךְ | טוֹב וַחֲסֵד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי

וּשְׁבַתִּי בְּבֵית־יְהוָה לְאַרְךָ יָמִים:



- The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
 He leads me beside the still waters.
 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name`s sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil;
 For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
 You anoint my head with oil;
 My cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.



Stanzas Emerge

- The rhythmic or stanzic structure suggests 3 units of meaning.
 - The first stanza and the last stanza are longer
 - the middle stanza shows a marked degree of symmetry.
- The first stanza begins with an example of *emblematic* parallelism
 - Emblematic parallelism is when two statements are coordinated, in which one is a figure of speech and the other is a literal statement.



Initial Imagery

The imagery that is being invoked is initially that of a shepherd.

- The first stanza clearly uses the concept of a *good shepherd* as a metaphor for God's personal care of David.
- The last stanza is also drawn from David's life.
 - Here the picture is one of a guest seeking asylum in another's home.
 - His host and protector provides for him, and provides abundantly. His protection is so sufficient that only goodness and mercy can pursue him there.
 - The imagery of this section is the imagery of hospitality.
 - If one misses the shift in the thematic structure one can be tempted to allegorizing these images by making them all pastoral and related to a shepherd's duties.



The Roots

- The concept of God as the shepherd, or at least the one who gives His people a shepherd has already been hinted at in Torah.
- In Genesis 49:24 as Jacob blesses Joseph, we see reference to Israel's shepherd.
- Also in Numbers 27:17 (the calling of Joshua) God will not leave his people without a shepherd.
- 2 Samuel 5:2 connects this imagery with the Davidic monarchy.



The middle stanza

- This naturally raises the question of the middle stanza.
 - It is different in structure, very symmetrical, it is at the heart of the poem.
 - At the very center, the focus is the statement. I will not fear, because you are with me.
- Theologically this is the statement of the poem. This is its crux its hinge.
- Now what is the imagery used here? It certainly can be construed as relating to a shepherd's care.
 - The rod and staff are used by the shepherd, yet in the Old Testament, they are both used of political power.
 - The imagery may therefore be mixed. And this is not inappropriate because here at the center of the message the focus is clearly intended to be on the LORD.



Summary

- The analysis of Hebrew poetry cannot be reduced to parallelism or any other single feature of organization.
 - 4 levels of organization from sounds to themes
 - The 4 levels of organization are simply useful categories to help the pastoral exegete understand how artful words are invested with meaning by the poet's craft.
- The art is intended to reinforce and confirm the structure and meaning of the poet's message.



Summary

- There are too many individual devices available to the poet's ingenuity to exhaustively catalog these elements.
 - They are the strings and threads that form the warp and woof of the poem.
 - They will expand and compact a framework of meaning.
 - Meaning is mapped by thematic structure,
 - connected by the stanzic and rhythmic elements,
 - embellished with the use of sounds and words.
 - But all of these, for the pastoral exegete, are the servants of the message.
- While the nature of Hebrew poetry may still be elusive, there is great value in recognizing the prominent features that contribute to the unity and texture of a poetic passage