

IMPULSE AND DESIGN IN THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

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Comparison between the Hebrew texts of Haggai as edited by O. Procksch in *BHK* (1937) and K. Elliger in *BHS* (1970) is revealing, as D. L. Petersen has noted.¹ Procksch saw the book as entirely a prose work, whereas Elliger set forth more than half of the book in poetic form (Hag 1:3-11, 15; 2:3-9, 14-19, 20-23). Most of the citations of Haggai in P. R. Ackroyd's seminal discussion are also in the stichic form of Hebrew poetry.² In some respects the situation parallels changes in scholarly perception of the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible in general during the modern period of critical scholarship. Though two hundred years ago relatively few translations or commentaries saw much poetry in the prophetic literature, today large sections, particularly in Isaiah and Jeremiah, are recognized almost universally as poetic in form. Increasingly, more and more of the rest of the Hebrew Bible is being read as poetry as well.³

In recent years J. C. de Moor and I have concluded, on independent grounds, that the books of Ruth and Jonah are in fact narrative poems in their entirety.⁴ Such a conclusion does not deny the fact that the Song of Jonah in Jonah 2 is clearly a different genre from the rest of that book. It rather raises new questions about how we define poetry in the literature of ancient Israel. Poetry includes a broad range of genres, from lyric to narrative. For de Moor and his associates the quest to define the basic elements of Hebrew poetry has led to an ongoing research project at the Kampen School of Theology in the Netherlands that is expanding our knowledge of both Biblical and Canaanite poetry at all levels of analysis.⁵ As a result the line between so-called prose and poetry in the ancient Near East is much less clear today than it was a few years ago.

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¹ D. L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 31-32.

² P. R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968) 153-170.

³ See in particular the recent study of W. T. Koopmans, *Joshua 24 as Poetic Narrative* (JSOTSup 93; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990).

⁴ D. L. Christensen, "Narrative Poetics and the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah," *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (JSOTSup 40; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987) 29-48; J. C. de Moor, "The Poetry of the Book of Ruth," *Or* 53 (1984) 262-283; *Or* 55 (1986) 16-46. See also the article by R. de Hoop, one of de Moor's students, "The Book of Jonah as Poetry: An Analysis of Jonah 1:1-16," *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry* (JSOTSup 74; ed. W. van der Meer and J. C. de Moor; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988) 156-171.

⁵ See *Structural Analysis* (ed. van der Meer and de Moor).

My own research has led me into interdisciplinary study of music and language in antiquity.⁶ We have long known that the Biblical text was sung according to established rules based on the ancient system of accentuation as laid down by the Masoretes. In fact the Biblical text is still canted in worship settings within various synagogue traditions. What is not yet clear is whether this musical reading of the text is a medieval invention imposed on a received textual tradition or the memory of earlier practice that these ancient scholars recorded as best they could. Since it does not appear that the Masoretes were musicians as such, it seems likely that the latter is the case. Consequently the accentual system they added to the consonantal Hebrew text may well provide information of considerable value for a musical reading of the Biblical text, from a period perhaps as early as that of the second Temple in Jerusalem as Suzanne Haïk-Vantoura claims.⁷

T. Georgiades has shown, at least for the literature of ancient Greece, that music and language cannot be readily separated.⁸ In fact their very term *mousikē*, from which our English word "music" is derived, does not mean music in the modern sense at all. Rather it referred to both music and language as a single concept. Theirs was an aural age, and literature was both conceived and transmitted in a rhythmic, musical form throughout the classical period. The rhythmic nature of classical Hebrew and Arabic, in particular, suggests that this was probably the case for the languages and literature of the ancient Near East as well.

Assuming that the book of Haggai was a musical text even before the time of the Masoretes, in the manner Georgiades has argued for classical Greek texts, I have turned to the modern world of musical composition for the outline of this particular study. Earlier work on the structure of the book of Jonah already suggested the work of the Polish composer Andrzej

⁶ See D. L. Christensen, "Two Stanzas of a Hymn in Deuteronomy 33," *Bib* 65 (1984) 382–389; "Prose and Poetry in the Bible: The Narrative Poetics of Deuteronomy 1:9–18," *ZAW* 97 (1985) 179–189; "Form and Structure in Deuteronomy 1–11," *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (BETL 68; ed. N. Lohfink; Leuven: Leuven University, 1985) 135–144; "The Song of Jonah: A Metrical Analysis," *JBL* 104 (1985) 217–231; "Andrzej Panufnik and the Structure of the Book of Jonah: Icons, Music and Literary Art," *JETS* 28 (1985) 133–140; "A New Israel: The Righteous from among All Nations," *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison* (ed. A. Gileadi; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988) 251–259; "The Book of Nahum as a Liturgical Composition: A Prosodic Analysis," *JETS* 32 (1989) 159–169; "Dtn 33, 11—A Curse in the 'Blessing of Moses'?", *ZAW* 101 (1989) 278–282; "The Masoretic Accentual System and Repeated Metrical Refrains in Nahum, Song of Songs, and Deuteronomy," *VIII International Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies* (Masoretic Studies 6; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 31–36.

⁷ S. Haïk-Vantoura, *La Musique de la Bible Révélée* (2d ed.; Paris: Dessain et Tolra, 1976). An American edition of this book has been published as *The Music of the Bible Revealed* (Berkeley: BIBAL, 1991).

⁸ T. Georgiades, *Music and Language: The Rise of Western Music as Exemplified in Settings of the Mass* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982) 1–6. The position of Georgiades is in sharp opposition to that of M. O'Connor who insists that "music is distinct from language"; see his discussion of "Musicality," *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980) 40–41. O'Connor and the scholars on whom he depends in this particular discussion are apparently unaware of the point Georgiades is making for the history of music in the pre-Christian era.

Panufnik as a useful point of departure.⁹ When asked by his publishers to write descriptions of his musical works, Panufnik wrote a remarkable little book in which he avoids any clinical analysis as such and focuses on what he calls "the less obvious factors: the design upon which each work is built and the impulse behind it." As he puts it: "In all my works, I attempt to achieve a true balance between feeling and intellect; heart and brain; impulse and design." Perhaps we can learn more about the book of Haggai from the example of Panufnik, who likens himself "to an architect, tackling each work in three stages, always in the same order: first the purpose, or reason for which the work is composed; then the architectural structure; then the material of which it is to be built."¹⁰

The "impulse" that produced the book of Haggai seems clear to anyone who takes the time to peruse the available literature. It was the restoration of the sacred Temple in Jerusalem in the Persian period (late sixth century B.C.) on the part of the Jews who had returned from exile in Babylon that occasioned this work. Our concern here is to explore in detail the architectural design of the book in terms of a careful prosodic, rhythmic analysis of the accentual tradition of the Hebrew text as preserved by the Masoretes. The fact that this analysis in turn highlights the "impulse" or purpose of the book, as shown on other grounds, lends some confirmation to the validity of this academic exercise. The third step in Panufnik's three stages will receive limited attention here—namely, the study of the material on which the architectural structure is built. That task would require careful attention to both the full range of musical information preserved in the Masoretic system of notation, perhaps along the lines of the musical interpretation of Haik-Vantoura,¹¹ together with detailed historical-critical analysis of the Hebrew text in the more traditional sense of modern Biblical scholarship. Limitations in both space and time require a more modest objective here.

In an important study that has yet to be fully integrated into recent discussion on the poetry of ancient Israel, D. N. Freedman has shown that the first three chapters of the book of Lamentations are the same length in terms of syllable count, along with certain other acrostic poems and so-called nonalphabetic acrostics in the books of Psalms and Proverbs.¹² From this fact Freedman concludes that something comparable to meter is operative in ancient Hebrew poetry. Some external restraint is at work that sets narrow limits on the length of these texts. Freedman's observations were confirmed by the writer, on the basis of mora count,¹³ in a

⁹ See Christensen, "Panufnik "

¹⁰ A Panufnik, *Impulse and Design in My Music* (Boosey and Hawkes, 1974) 1

¹¹ See n 7 above

¹² D N Freedman, "Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry," *HTR* 65 (1972) 367–392 (reprinted in *Pottery, Poetry and Prophecy Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* [Winona Lake Eisenbrauns, 1980] 51–76)

¹³ In quantitative verse a mora is the unit of metrical time equal to the short syllable. In languages where the quantity of the vowels is significant to both the poet and audience, one must distinguish between short and long syllables in prosodic analysis. In this sense a mora is simply a subdivision of the syllable, which is either short (one mora) or long (two morae)

recent seminar on Hebrew poetry in the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, along with additional data regarding the length of subsections within these same chapters. Consequently it was not surprising to find a somewhat similar situation in the book of Haggai.

*A Prosodic Analysis of the Book of Haggai*¹⁴

I. (1:1-14)—IT IS TIME TO REBUILD THE HOUSE OF YHWH
[(6:7):7] [(4:9):(6:5):4] [(5:4:4:5):4:(5:6)] [(9:4):(7:7:6)]

¹ In the second year / of Darius the king /	[12]	2
in the sixth / month / on the first day / of the month //	18]	4
The word of YHWH came / by the hand of Haggai the prophet /	18	2
To Zerubbabel ben-Shealtiel / governor of Judah /	[20	2
And to Joshua ben-Jehozadak / the high priest / saying //	29	3
² Thus says / YHWH of hosts ^a saying //	17	2
"This people / they say / the time has not come /	16	3
the time of the House of YHWH /	6	1
to rebuild (it)" ///	143 6	1
³ Now it was / the word of YHWH /	[9	2
by the hand of Haggai the prophet / saying //	13	2
⁴ "Is it a time for you / yourselves /	[8	2
to dwell / in your paneled houses? //	15	2

¹⁴ In the translation and analysis the first column of figures to the right indicates the mora count of that line, which is simply the syllable count plus one additional unit for each long vowel. The second column lists the number of syntactic-accentual stress units, which for the most part coincides with the disjunctive marks in the Masoretic accentual system. The boundary of such rhythmic units in the translation is marked by a slash (/), with a double slash (//) for both *ʾatnāḥ* and *sillūq*. The triple slash (///) marks the presence of the *šētūmā*² and *pētūḥā*² paragraph markers in the Masoretic tradition. The horizontal lines in the two columns of figures indicate the boundaries of larger groupings of rhythmic and metrical units, which indicate that the familiar concept of parallelism in Hebrew poetry can be demonstrated quantitatively and that parallelism is operating on a number of levels simultaneously. One aspect of this phenomenon can be called "parallelism at a distance" as shown by the distribution of syntactic-accentual stress units, which tend to nest within concentric configurations. Notes to the text: (a) When the *ʾatnāḥ* and *sillūq* do not fall at the boundary of a grouping of syntactic-accentual stress units, it may be necessary to change the preceding *tipḥā* to a conjunctive accent; (b) reading *yškr* with two Heb. mss (and BHS); (c) the *pētūḥā*² paragraph marker does not fall at the boundary of the strophe and should probably be ignored; (d) to achieve rhythmic balance here either a disjunctive accent in place of the *mērēkā*² or the *paštā*² in the next line should be replaced with a conjunctive accent; (e) deleting *lykm* with LXX as dittography; (f) replacing conjunctive *mūnāḥ* with a disjunctive accent (cf. BHS, which has extra space here); (g) reading the *ṭēlišā*² *parvum* as disjunctive to achieve closer rhythmic balance in terms of both mora count and distribution of accentual stress units; (h) reading *ḥamudōt* with BHS (cf. LXX); (i) the word pair is exchanged to achieve closer prosodic balance in terms of mora count; (j) the phrase is deleted as secondary to achieve closer rhythmic balance in terms of accentual stress units over against 2:1; (k) reading *māh-ḥēytem* for *mīhyōtām* of MT with LXX (*tines ēte*), BHS, and most commentators; (l) reading the *ḥmšym* (*mī*)*ppūrā* with *mēm* as a shared consonant; (m) taking the sequence *ʾazlā*² followed by *dargā*² as disjunctive.

And this House / is in ruins" // ⁵ and now /	14	3
Thus says / YHWH of hosts //	72	<u>13</u> 2_
"Put to your heart / concerning your ways //	[12	2
⁶ you have sown much / and brought in little /	[14	2
You eat but there is no satiety /	[13	1
You drink but there is no satisfaction /	[<u>13</u>	1_
You clothe yourselves / but no one is warm //	12	2
even the one who earns wages /	6	1
(He) ^b earns wages / (to put them) into a bag of holes" /// ^c	<u>12</u>	2_
⁷ Thus says / YHWH of hosts //	13	2
"Put to your heart / concerning your ways //	107	<u>12</u> 2_
⁸ Go up to the hills /	<u>7</u>	1
and bring wood / and build the House /	16	2
And I will accept it and will be honored" / says YHWH //	<u>16</u>	2_
⁹ "Turning to much / and lo (it came to) little /	[15	2
and you brought (it) ^d (to) the House /	[8	2_
And I blew it away //	[8	1
why?" / utterance / of YHWH of hosts /	[<u>15</u>	3_
"Because / of my House / which is in ruins /	14	3
And you busy yourselves / each with his (own) house //	113	<u>14</u> 2_
¹⁰ Therefore [above you /] ^e the heavens have withheld / the dew //15		2
And the earth / has withheld its produce //	<u>16</u>	2_
¹¹ And I have called for a drought /	[8]	1
on the land ^f and on the mountains /	[13]	2
And on the grain / and on the new wine and on the oil /	[20]	2_
And upon / what it the ground\ ^a brings forth //	[15]	2
And upon human beings / and upon the cattle /	[16]	2
and upon / all the toil of (their) hands" ///	114	[<u>11</u>] 2_
¹² And he obeyed / Zerubbabel / ben-Shealtiel /	[14	3
and Joshua ben-Jehozadak the high priest /	[24	1
And all / the remnant of the people /	[12]	2
the voice of YHWH their God /	[12]	1
yea, concerning the words / of Haggai the prophet /	[<u>13</u>	2_
Just as he had sent him / YHWH their God //	17	2
And the people feared / before YHWH //	109	<u>17</u> 2_
¹³ And he spoke / Haggai / messenger of YHWH /	[11	3
with the message of YHWH /	[8	1
To the people saying // "I am with you" / utterance of YHWH //	<u>18</u>	3_
¹⁴ And YHWH stirred up / the spirit ^g	[11	2
of Zerubbabel ben-Shealtiel / governor of Judah /	[18	2
And the spirit / of Joshua ben-Jehozadak / the high priest /	<u>28</u>	3_
And the spirit / of all the remnant of the people //	16	2
And they came / and they did work /	17	2
on the house of YHWH of hosts / their God ///	144	<u>17</u> 2_

II. (1:15-2:9)—BE STRONG, FOR MY SPIRIT IS IN YOUR MIDST
 [(4:7):(5+8):6:(6:6):6:(5+9):(7:4)]

15	In the twenty-fourth day / of the sixth ^a month //	[20	2
	in the second year / of Darius the king //	[14	2
1	In the seventh (month) /	6	1
	in the twenty-first (day) / of the month //	[12	2
	it came / the word of YHWH /	[9	2
	by the hand of Haggai the prophet / saying //	75 [14	2
2	"Speak now / to Zerubbabel ben-Shealtiel / ruler of Judah /	24	3
	And to Joshua ben-Jehozadak / the high priest //	25	2
	And to the remnant of the people / saying //	[15	2
3	'Who is among you / that remains /	[9	2
	Who has seen / this House / in its glory / the first? //	23	4
	And what are you / seeing (in) it / now? /	17	3
	Is it not in comparison to it / as nothing / in your eyes? //131	18	3
4	"And now be strong, O Zerubbabel" / utterance of YHWH /	[16	2
	"And be strong, Joshua ben-Jehozadak, O high priest /	27	1
	And be strong, all (you) people of the land /	[10	1
	(It is the) utterance of YHWH / so work! //	[9	2
	For I am with you" / utterance / of YHWH of hosts //	18	3
5	"(According to) the word / which I covenanted with you /	[17	2
	when you came out of Egypt /	106 [9	1
	Indeed, my spirit ^a is standing in your midst //	[14	1
	Do not be afraid" //c ⁶ For thus says / YHWH of hosts /	[22	3
	"Yet once / it is (but) a little while //	8	2
	And I / will shake / the heavens and the earth /	[20	3
	and the sea / and the dry land //	[14	2
7	And I will shake / all the nations /	[11	2
	and they will come / the desire ^h of all nations //	[16	2
	And I will fill / this House / (with) glory" /	[17	3
	says / YHWH of hosts //	133 [11	2
8	"To me (belongs) the (gold) ⁱ /	7	1
	And to me the (silver) ⁿⁱ //	6	1
	[utterance / of YHWH of hosts //]j	[10	j
9	"Greater it will be / the glory of this latter house /	[20	2
	than the former" /	[6	1
	says / YHWH of hosts //	11	2
	"And in this place / will I give peace" /	[16	2
	utterance / of YHWH of hosts ///	76 [10	2

III. (2:10-23)—THE TEMPLE OF YHWH: PURITY, BLESSING AND
 HOPE [(4+5):(6:5):(6+5):(4:4):(8:7:7:8)] [4:4] [(6+5):(5:6)] [4+5]

10	In the twenty-fourth (day) / of the ninth (month) /	16	2
	In the second year ^a of Darius // it happened /	16	2

The word of YHWH / (came) to Haggai the prophet /	13	2
saying //	4	1
¹¹ Thus says / YHWH of hosts //	<u>13</u>	2_
"Ask now the priests / (about) the Torah / saying //	19	3
¹² If / a person carries holy flesh / in the skirt of his garment /	<u>18</u>	3_
And he touches with his skirt / the bread or the pottage /	20	2
Or the wine or the oil / or any food / shall it be holy?" //	<u>19</u>	3_
And the priests answered / and they said / "No!" //	19	3
¹³ And Haggai said /	[6	1
"If one unclean by a dead body touches / any of these /	<u>13</u>	2_
Shall it be unclean?" //	15	2
And they said / "It shall be unclean!" //	[9	2
¹⁴ and Haggai answered /	205 [<u>5</u>	1_
And he said / "So is this people /	[12	2
and so is this nation before me' / utterance of YHWH /	<u>17</u>	2_
'And so\^a is every work of their hands //	[12	1
and that which they offer / there / it is unclean //	57 [<u>16</u>	3_
¹⁵ And now / put to your hearts / from this day / and onward //	[26	4
Before (you) put stone / upon stone /	[10	2
¹⁶ in the Temple of YHWH // how did you fare? ^{[k}	[12	2_
When (you) went to the grain heaps for twenty (heaps) /	[10	1
there were\^a (but) ten //	[11	1
When (you) went to the winevat / to draw off /	[9	2
fifty (measures) (from)\^l the press /	[9	1
there were (but) / twenty //	[<u>9</u>	2_
¹⁷ I smote you / with scorching and with mildew /	[22	2
And with hail / that is / all the work of your hands //	[18	3
and you did not (turn) to me' / utterance of YHWH //	[13	2_
¹⁸ 'Please put to your hearts / from this day / and onward //	[22	3
From the twenty-fourth day / of the ninth (month) /	[18	2
Even from the day / in which was founded the Temple of	[<u>13</u>	2
YHWH / put (it) to your hearts //	209 7	1_
¹⁹ Is the seed yet / in the storehouse /	[12	2
And still—the vine and the fig tree ^{[m}	[12	1
and the pomegranate /	6	1_
And the olive tree / —do they not bear (fruit)? //	[12	2
From this day (on) / I will bless you" ///	53 [<u>11</u>	2_
²⁰ And the word of YHWH came / a second time / to Haggai /	17	3
In the twenty-fourth (day) / of the month / saying //	<u>18</u>	3_
²¹ Say / to Zerubbabel ruler of Judah\^a saying //	20	2
"I am shaking / the heavens / and the earth //	<u>19</u>	3_
²² And I will overthrow / the throne of kingdoms /	14	2
And I will destroy / the strength /	[8	2
of the kingdoms of the nations //	[<u>8</u>	1_

And I will overthrow the chariots / and their riders /	18	2
And the horses shall come down / and their riders / each one /	17	3
by the sword of his brother" //	7	1_
²³ "In that day," utterance of YHWH of hosts, / "I will take you /	21	2
O Zerubbabel ben-Shealtiel my servant" /	[15	1
utterance of YHWH /	[5	1_
"And I will make you / like a signet ring //	10	2
For I have chosen you" /	9	1
utterance / of YHWH of hosts //	216	10 2_

* * *

From a prosodic point of view the book of Haggai is in three major parts, which will be designated here as "cantos,"¹⁵ each of which shares a somewhat similar concentric architectural design. The first canto (1:1-14) is made up of seven strophes, one of which (1:3-5a) appears to be a coda of some sort, which stands outside the carefully balanced binary structures that make up the balance of the larger whole. The curious double beginning of the book, with v. 3 as a virtual repetition of v. 1b, has been noted by commentators. It should also be noted that it has a further parallel in the conclusion of the book as a whole in 2:20. In fact, a close look at the content suggests that 2:20-23 should be read as a single unit, a canticle, which is parallel to 1:1-5a in its present prosodic structure: 146 + 70 = 216 morae (2:20-23) and 143 + 72 = 215 morae (1:1-5a). Moreover, both of these canticles contain the phrase *wyhy dbr YHWH* ("and the word of YHWH came"), a phrase that occurs in this exact form only in these two places within the book of Haggai. When vv. 3-5a are removed, the remaining six strophes in this section fall into three pairs in terms of total length: 143/144 morae (vv. 1-2 and 13-14); 107/109 morae (vv. 5b-7 and 12); and 113/114 morae (vv. 8-9 and 10-11). A close look at the content of these strophes gives further credence to the parallelism observed on the basis of length, as the following outline suggests:

Canto 1 (1:1-14)

- A - YHWH's word came through Haggai to Zerubbabel and
Joshua (1:1); [143]
these people say the time has not come to rebuild YHWH's
House (1:2)
- B - "Put to your heart concerning your ways" (1:5b-7) [107]
C - Though commanded to build my House, you built your
own (1:8-9) [113]
C' - Therefore I have sent a drought upon the land (1:10-11) [114]
B' - "And the people feared before YHWH" (1:12) [109]

¹⁵ The terms canto, canticle, and strophe are borrowed from M. C. A. Korpel and J. C. de Moor, "Fundamentals of Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry," *Structural Analysis* (ed. van der Meer and de Moor) 1-61.

- A' - Haggai spoke YHWH's message: "I am with you" (1:13);
 and YHWH stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and
 Joshua (1:14) [144]

The A strophes both contain specific reference to "Zerubbabel ben-Shealtiel governor of Judah," "Joshua ben-Jehozadak the high priest," Haggai (the prophet), and the (remnant of) the people. Though the people say that the time has not come to rebuild the Temple (1:2), YHWH is stirring up the spirit of their leaders to complete that task (1:14). In the B strophes the people are told to consider their self-centered ways (1:5b-7), which they in fact do in response to the urging of Zerubbabel, Joshua and Haggai; for "the people feared before YHWH" (1:12). The C strophes spell out in detail what the people were commanded to do and why: They were to gather materials and build the House of YHWH which is in ruins (1:8-9), so as to avert the great drought their inactivity in this matter had caused (1:10-11).

Haggai 2:10-23, the third canto of the book, appears to be a parallel rhythmic structure in a number of respects to 1:1-14. In total length the two cantos (with the deletion of 1:3-5a) are virtually identical: 730 and 740 morae respectively. In fact, if the rubric "utterance of YHWH of hosts" in 2:23 is taken as a coda, which is certainly possible from a prosodic point of view, the two sections are identical in length: 730 morae in each instance (1:1-14 and 2:10-23). A concentric architectural design of 2:10-23, on the basis of rhythmic structure, may be outlined as follows:

Canto 3 (2:10-23)

- A - Haggai to priests: The question of purity and impurity
 (2:10-14a) [205]
 B - Haggai's response: "This people is unclean" (2:14b-e) [57]
 C - Recall what it was like before the Temple was rebuilt
 (2:15-18) [209]
 B' - "From this day on I will bless you" (2:19) [53]
 A' - Haggai to Zerubbabel: In that day YHWH will establish you
 (2:20-23) [216]

If the final phrase "utterance of YHWH of hosts" in v. 23 is taken as a coda, the parallel in length between strophes A, C and A' is almost exact: 205, 209 and 206 morae respectively. The repetition of the phrase "the twenty-fourth day of the (ninth month)" in each of these same strophes (vv. 10, 18, 20) is further evidence for the parallel nature of these units. The term *hykl* YHWH ("Temple of YHWH") appears only twice in Haggai as a frame around the central part of 2:10-23 in vv. 16 and 18. The use of this particular phrase within the context of the Book of the Twelve is worth further reflection (see below).

A further parallel structuring device of note in the first and third cantos of Haggai is the use of the phrase "put to your heart" in both: as a frame around the B strophe in 1:5b-7 and around the C strophe in 2:15-18.

The central section of Haggai in 1:15–2:9 displays a similar concentric architectural design in terms of prosodic rhythmic structure, which may be outlined as follows:

Canto 2 (1:15–2:9)

- A - The word of YHWH came by the hand of Haggai (1:15–2:1) [75]
 B - Speak to Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people:
 Remember the glory of the first Temple (2:2–3) [131]
 C - "Be strong for I am with you" (2:4–5a) [106]
 B' - My Spirit is in your midst, so do not be afraid:
 I will fill this House with glory (2:5b–7) [133]
 A' - The glory of this House will exceed that of the former (2:8–9) [86]

If the phrase "utterance of YHWH of hosts" at the end of 2:8 is deleted as a secondary addition to the text (see the prosodic analysis above), the parallelism in length between the A strophes is almost exact: 75 morae (1:15–2:1) and 76 morae (2:8–9) respectively. It would also be possible to interpret the same phrase at the end of 2:9 as a coda, similar to the situation in 2:23. Either way the end result is the same. Moreover the B strophes are virtually identical in length as well, with 131 morae (2:2–3) over against 133 morae (2:5b–7). In terms of content, both the A and B strophic units complement each other in ways that suggest indeed that they are to be taken as parallel poetic structures. In the A strophes the word of YHWH, which came to Haggai (1:15–2:1), indicates that the glory of the second Temple will exceed that of the Solomonic Temple (2:8–9). The B strophes contain the specific message to Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people, which recalls the glory of the first Temple (2:2–3) and reiterates the fact that YHWH will fill the second Temple with glory as well (2:5b–7). The central message in strophe C of canto 2 is clear: Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people are urged to be strong, for YHWH is with them and will bring glory to their work in the rebuilding of the Temple.

In terms of content, strophes A + B and A' + B' are so closely connected that they may be combined into larger structural units, which with some hesitation I will designate here as "canticles."¹⁶ The resultant structural design at the level of the canticle in cantos 2 and 3 of Haggai is remarkably symmetrical:

Canto 2 (1:15–2:9): 206 + 106 [= 2 × 53] + 206 = 518 morae

Canto 3 (2:10–23): 205 + 57 + 209 + 53 + 206 = 730 morae

The poet seems to be working with structural units that are approximately 50–55 morae and 205–210 morae in length, which are alternated. The basic difference in structure between the two cantos is the insertion of an additional long strophe in the center of the latter.

¹⁶ See previous note.

At this point let us take a closer look at the structural center of the three cantos of Haggai. In 2:4–5, in the middle of canto 2 at the very center of the book, we find a threefold repetition of the phrase “utterance of YHWH (of hosts).” Zerubbabel is addressed first, followed by this particular phrase; then Joshua ben-Jehozadak and all the people of the land, followed again by the same phrase. Then at the very center of the book comes the single word *w^cšw* (“and offer sacrifice, observe, work, celebrate”), which may well be intended as a summation of the message of the book as a whole. This word is in turn followed by the phrase “utterance of YHWH of hosts.” The threefold repetition of this identification formula serves to stress the fact that what is found here is indeed the word of YHWH. Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people are commanded to get to work in terms of making full use of the rebuilt Temple. This message is dated to the twenty-first day of the seventh month (2:1), which would be the latter part of the feast of booths, “at a time when a major congregational gathering took place for an ‘offering by fire to Yahweh.’”¹⁷

The center of canto 1 (1:1–14) focuses on the actual rebuilding of the Temple as such in vv. 8–11. The section is made up of two strophes: vv. 8–9 recounts the fact that God’s House is in ruins while the people busy themselves “each with his own house,” whereas vv. 10–11 presents the consequences: This is why the earth itself and all its produce has been cursed. The canto is dated to the first day of the sixth month (1:1)—that is, in the month immediately prior to the reconstruction of the altar, which Petersen suggests is the “point just before the restoration of the sacrificial cultus” in Jerusalem.¹⁸ The canto is framed by reference to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of the people whose spirit “YHWH has stirred up” such that “they came and did work (*wy^cšw ml²kh*) on the House of YHWH of hosts their God” (2:14; cf. 1:1–2).

The center of canto 3 (2:10–23), which consists of vv. 15–18, is itself dated to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (2:18). This same date formula appears in both strophe 1 (2:10) and strophe 3 (2:20) of this canto as well. The significance of the date is not altogether clear, as Petersen has noted.¹⁹ The date marks three months to the day after substantive work on rebuilding the Temple began. The content of the canto as a whole contrasts the rather bleak present circumstances with the future glory that will emanate from this House. The phrase *hykl YHWH* (“Temple of YHWH”) appears only here in the book of Haggai (in vv. 16 and 18) as a frame around strophe 3 (vv. 15–18), the structural center of canto 3.

It is interesting to examine the use of the phrase *hykl YHWH* within the Hebrew Bible as a whole. Andersen and Forbes list 93 occurrences of *hykl*, 16 of which appear in the Book of the Twelve.²⁰ The actual phrase

¹⁷ Petersen, *Haggai* 62.

¹⁸ Ibid. 44.

¹⁹ Ibid. 71.

²⁰ F. I. Andersen and A. D. Forbes, *The Vocabulary of the Old Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1989) 307.

hykl YHWH appears only six times within the Book of the Twelve: twice in Haggai (2:15, 18) and in four consecutive verses of Zechariah (6:12, 13, 14, 15). These texts are closely connected, and all concern the rebuilt temple in the time of Zerubbabel. There are seven other occurrences of the word *hykl* as a reference to the Temple in Jerusalem within the Book of the Twelve: Amos 8:3; Jonah 2:5, 8; Micah 1:2; Hab 2:20; Zech 8:9; Mal 3:1. The text in Amos makes reference to "songs of the Temple." Four other occurrences (Jonah 2:5, 8; Mic 1:2; Hab 2:20) refer to "(YHWH's) holy Temple." Among the remaining 15 occurrences of the phrase *hykl YHWH* in the Hebrew Bible, three appear in 2 Chronicles (26:16; 27:2; 29:16) and two in Ezra (3:6, 10). The phrase appears three times in 2 Kings (18:16; 23:4; 24:13). Jeremiah uses the phrase four times (7:4 [three times]; 24:1) and Ezekiel once (8:16). On two occasions the phrase refers to the structure at Shiloh that housed the ark of God (1 Sam 1:9; 3:3). In short, the term is used in reference to either very early tradition (the "temple" at Shiloh before the time of David and Solomon) or rather late in the history of ancient Israel (the second half of the eighth century BC in the time of Uzziah [2 Chr 26:16], Jotham [27:2], and Hezekiah [2 Kgs 18:16; 2 Chr 29:16]; the time of Josiah and the destruction of the first Temple [2 Kgs 23:4; 24:13; Jer 7:4; 24:1; Ezek 8:16]; and the building of the second Temple [Hag 2:15, 18; Zech 6:12–15; Ezra 3:6, 10]). From a canonical point of view it seems likely that the phrase *hykl YHWH* was used primarily in reference to the consecration and rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, which was understood to be a return to the origins of YHWH's tabernacling presence in the midst of his chosen people. The text in Haggai speaks to the climax of these events, from an historical perspective, which probably also marked the culmination of the canonical process in ancient Israel that produced an official collection of sacred texts, what I have described elsewhere as the hypothetical 17-book canon of sacred Scripture.²¹ That collection of sacred tradition was conceived as a single book, the Hebrew Bible, the text of which was sung by Levitical cantors and choirs within the context of formal worship in Jerusalem during the period of the second Temple. The book of Haggai bears indirect witness to the establishment of this tradition in the latter part of the sixth century B.C.

The name Haggai is derived from the Hebrew word for "festival." Though this may simply be the result of the prophet's birth on a feast day, it may also have significance canonically in the sense that his work focuses on the restoration of proper worship within the second Temple in Jerusalem. The festivals play a primary role within that sacred tradition.

²¹ D. L. Christensen, "Josephus and the Twenty-Two-Book Canon of Sacred Scripture," *JETS* 29 (1986) 37–46.