

ISAIAH 42.18-25

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Text

- 18 You deaf, listen.
You blind, look—so that you can see.
- 19 Who is blind except my servant
or as deaf as my aide whom I am to send?
Who is blind like one in a covenant of peace,
blind like the servant of Yahweh?
- 20 There is seeing of much, but you do not pay heed.
There is opening of ears, but he does not listen.
- 21 Now Yahweh is longing, for the sake of his just purpose,
that he should exalt the teaching and ennoble it.
- 22 But this is a people spoiled and plundered
by being trapped in holes all of them
and confined in prisons;
they have become spoil with no-one to rescue,
plunder with no-one to say 'Give it back'.
- 23 Who among you will give ear to this,
will attend and listen for the future?
- 24 Who gave Jacob to plundering and Israel to spoilers?
Was it not Yahweh, whom we failed?
People did not consent to walk in his ways
nor did they listen to his teaching.
- 25 So he poured fury upon it,
his anger and warring power.
This set it aflame all around but it has not recognized,
burned it but it does not take notice.

Introduction

The final paragraph of Isaiah 42 has perplexed scholars. J. Begrich¹ said that he did not understand it; C.R. North² described it as 'more like a poet's notes than a finished poem'; R.P. Merendino saw it as the interweaving of two independent oracles.³ Part of the background to such judgments is that, although vv. 18-25 contains the imperatives, rhetorical questions, accumulating repetitions, and verbs in triads which are characteristic of Isaiah 40-55,⁴ the section also manifests a less characteristic number of syntactical surprises and apparent unevennesses. For example:

Verse 18: one might expect the clauses in the opposite order, addressing the familiar 'blind' before the unfamiliar 'deaf', and in a 3-2 rather than 2-3 line; so Symmachus.

Verse 19a: 'blind' and 'deaf', which were plural in v. 18 and addressed in the second person, are now singular and spoken of in the third. Targ. has plural throughout v. 19, LXX has plural except for the opening 'Who is blind?'

Verse 19b: the question repeats the content of v. 19a, and the use of the phrase 'the servant of Yahweh' is unique in the Hebrew Bible. In the second colon one would expect not yet another 'blind' but 'deaf', as appears in Symmachus and two MSS.

Verse 20: the verbs are second person singular (*qere*) or infinitive absolute (*ketib*), then second person singular, then infinitive absolute (a unique usage), then third person singular. LXX and Targ. continue the plural used for v. 19 but revert to second person. Vg has second singular throughout, RSV third singular throughout.

Verse 21: 'exalt *torah*' looks a Deuteronomistic rather than a prophetic expression.

Verse 22: infinitive absolute הָפַח 'by being trapped' is unusually followed by a finite verb הִתְחַבֵּא 'they are hidden'.

1. *Studien zu Deuterocesaja* (BWANT, 77 [1938]; reprinted TBü, 20; Munich: Kaiser 2nd edn, 1969 [1963]), p. 5.

2. *The Second Isaiah* (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn, 1967[1964]), p. 117.

3. *Der Erste und der Letzte* (VTSup, 31; Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 276-83.

4. See J. Muilenburg, 'The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66', in *IB V* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), on the passage.

Verse 24a: abstract 'plundering' (מְשׁוֹסָה) is followed by concrete 'spoilors' (בְּזוּיִם).

Verse 24b: after the second plural of v. 23 and the third singular of v. 24a, there is a sudden transition to first plural verb 'we failed' (a sentiment more characteristic of Second Temple prayers such as that in Isaiah 63–64 than of earlier prophecy) and then another sudden transition to third plural in 'they were not willing to walk in his ways...' This clause is also an Aramaism in its word order. LXX and Targ. have third plural 'they failed'; in contrast Syr has first plural 'we did not consent...listen'.

Verse 25: 'upon it...' reverts again to the third singular of v. 24a. LXX keeps third plural, Targ. reverts to it from v. 25aβ.

Form-critically, A. Graffy is doubtless right that the section 42.18-25 is not truly a disputation,⁵ but R.F. Melugin is also right that it is more like a disputation than anything else.⁶ Melugin comes to the conclusion that the poem is the result of Second Isaiah's creativity rather than being an example of any traditional form. Both this observation and the aporia that traditional text-critical and literary-critical study experiences in relation to the passage make it a natural poem for consideration on a more literary/rhetorical basis.

The illuminating form-critical insight is that the passage reflects a counter-charge to an accusation directed at Yahweh. The people have protested that Yahweh is blind and deaf to their plight as the defenceless and helpless victims of attack and despoiling. Yahweh not only bears responsibility for their national defeat and downfall but in their situation of urgent need fails to listen to their prayer or to look at and see their situation. Their claim parallels the way Psalms, and particularly the prayers in Lamentations, plead with God not to 'be deaf/dumb' but to 'listen', 'look', or 'see' (חָרַשׁ, שָׁמַע, נָבַט, hiph., רָאָה) (e.g. Ps. 28.1-2; Lam. 1.11). It also has a background in the complaint already countered in 40.12-31 (see v. 27).

As well as relating to the prayers that people prayed, the passage has a significant relationship with previous material in Isaiah 42. This alone may make North's assessment an unlikely description of the passage's actual nature. In four of its opening six cola (vv. 18-19) the word 'blind' (עוֹרֵר) appears, once in the plural then three times in the singular, and in

5. See *A Prophet Confronts his People* (AnBib, 104; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1984), pp. 6-15.

6. *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (BZAW, 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), pp. 41-43.

the other two of these six the word 'deaf' (חרש) appears, once plural, once singular. Now blindness has already been a significant motif in vv. 7 (singular) and 16 (plural); in the present poem Yahweh undertakes to bring blindness to an end by bringing people out from prison (v. 22 plural, cf. v. 7 singular), out of darkness into light. In v. 14 Yahweh also acknowledged having behaved in a way suggesting deafness or dumbness (חרש). Other expressions in vv. 18-25 that have appeared earlier include 'my servant' (עבד; v. 19, cf. v. 1), 'listen' (שמע; vv. 18, 20, 23, 24, cf. vv. 2, 9, there *hiph.*), 'justice/just purpose' (צדק; v. 21, cf. v. 6), '[his] teaching' (תורה; vv. 21, 24, cf. v. 4), 'walk in a way/his ways' (הלך) (בדרך; v. 24, cf. v. 16), and 'do/did not recognize/know' (לא ידע; v. 25, cf. v. 16). The reappearance of such phrases hints that Jacob/Israel has characteristics earlier attributed to the nations and to pre-exilic Israel itself instead of those attributed to the servant. As is commonly the case in these chapters, the reappearance of phrases combines connection with novelty.

With regard to the 'unevennesses' noted above, three approaches to the data may be considered. It seems unlikely that all simply result from separate disruptions of an original smoothness, though no doubt this may be true of some. A more plausible possibility is that the passage is a conflation of two earlier variant texts. But in any case the surprises and 'unevennesses' may seem such because of mistaken expectations on our part, and it is appropriate to see if the text as we have it can be plausibly interpreted.

The general consideration to be pointed out here is that it can be a feature of Hebrew parallelism to combine singular and plural, finite verb and infinitive, second and third person verb or first and third person verb, and abstract and concrete. The combination of singular 'servant' and plural 'witnesses' or 'aides' reappears in 43.10; 44.26. GKC 144p notes the presence of abrupt transitions (as they seem to us) from one person to another in a number of vigorous prophetic or poetic passages, including 1.29; 5.8; 22.16; 29.15; 31.6; 47.8; 48.1; 52.14; 54.1, 11; 61.7. Such phenomena serve to underline a point and suggest completeness. Passages where the RSV emends the text to remove such changes include 10.12; 14.30; 31.6; 33.2; 44.7; 52.14; 61.7; 65.7. The unevenness of the versions' own elimination of the unevennesses does not inspire confidence in the view that they had a different text from ours rather than that they were inclined to tidy the text, as modern translations have been. Scholars offer varying accounts of which elements within the

material belonged to earlier versions of the passage.⁷

The unevennesses generate complex transitions between speakers and addressees as vv. 18-25 unfolds. The matter is explicit at the following points:

	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Subject</i>
18		deaf/blind (pl.)	
19	Yahweh		blind/deaf servant
20a		blind servant	
20b			deaf servant
21			Yahweh
22aα			needy people (sing.)
22aβb			needy (pl.)
23		deaf (pl.)	
24a		deaf (pl.)	Yahweh, needy people (sing.)
24b	we		Yahweh, deaf (pl.)
25			Yahweh, needy/deaf people (sing.)

Through vv. 18-20 the speaker seems to be Yahweh. This is explicitly so in v. 19aβα, and it is plausible to see it as also the case in v. 19bβ, on the assumption that Yahweh can refer to 'the servant of Yahweh' thus in the third person. Presumably Yahweh is also the speaker in v. 18, and though v. 20 could fit on the prophet's lips, no such change has been indicated. In vv. 21-25 Yahweh is spoken about rather than speaking: one would naturally take it that the speaker is the prophet throughout, though the surprising 'we' in v. 24bα complicates matters. This is but one of a number of such first person plural expressions within Isaiah 40-43 (see 40.3, 8; 41.21-24; 42.17; 43.9, 26; see also 35.2; 36.7; 37.20; 47.4; 51.23; 53.6-12). Grammatically it would be possible to reconsider whether 'we' (the only specific indication of the speaker in vv. 20-25) might be the subject throughout vv. 21-25, or at least vv. 24-25. Perhaps the better way to put it is to assume that the prophet is the subject, but is capable of identifying with the people as in those other passages.

When we allow for such possibilities, the 'we' in v. 24b becomes less isolated and the immediately subsequent 'they' also becomes no more surprising than any other 'they' in vv. 20-25 (the movement also compares with that in v. 17, the reverse sequence where 'they' leads to

7. See e.g. K. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1900); B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 4th edn, 1922 [1892]); G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*; III (Stuttgart: Zwingli, 2nd edn, 1986 [1964]); R.P. Merendino, *Der Erste und der Letzte* (VTSup, 31; Leiden: Brill, 1981), on the passage.

'our', both referring to the same people). It is thus neither plausible nor necessary to see the 'we' as speaking about a 'they' that comprises a different group. The movement between 'we' and 'they' in v. 24 is part of a pattern of movement between I/we, you (singular/plural), and he/it/they running through vv. 18-25. One may compare the way a preacher moves between speaking of 'the Jewish people', 'you Jewish people' and 'we Jewish people', or between 'Christians', 'you Christians' and 'we Christians', from sentence to sentence. Different rhetorical effects are achieved by each form of speech—for instance, distancing which encourages open thinking, or confrontation which encourages self-examination, or identification which encourages openness by forswearing a criticism such as aspires to lofty transcendence.

While 'we', 'you' and 'they' are all described pejoratively in vv. 18-25, the pronouns are not used quite indiscriminately. In particular, 'you' is/are always addressed as unperceptive and challenged to listen (vv. 18, 20, 23). 'You' is/are never addressed as Yahweh's servant or as oppressed and needy; those descriptions appear only applied to he/it/they, not to 'you'. 'He/it/they' is the same entity as 'you', but when spoken of in the third person it is more diversely conceived, as singular servant (vv. 19, 20b), as singular people (vv. 22a, 24a, 25), or as plural people (vv. 22b, 24b). As needy, then, the people appear only as he/it/they; as failed, the people appear as we, you, and he/it/they. The second person expressions contribute to the addressees' being driven to see themselves as guilty and obtuse rather than as needy and let down, but the first person verb takes the edge off the prophet's confrontation by its identification with them, and the third person expressions do the same by their portrayal of the people as needy as well as perverse. The singular underlines the people's corporate identity and oneness, while the plural urges them to individual responsibility.

Alongside the 'unevennesses' and 'redundancies' in vv. 18-25 is a delicate set of interwoven structures; indeed, these partly issue from the unevennesses and repetitions. The 'interwovennesses' run through the section and hold it tightly together.

One structure alternates between a focus on the servant/people and one on Yahweh, and also has a chiasmic aspect:

- 18-20 questions/statements about the servant
- 21 statement about Yahweh
- 22 statement about the people
- 23-25 questions/statements about Yahweh

The whole can be expressed as a more detailed chiasm:

- 18 introduction regarding attentiveness
 - 19-20 two 'Who' questions about Yahweh's servant
(concerning hearing, and including an infinitive absolute)
 - 21 a statement about Yahweh's purpose
 - 22 a contrasting statement about the people's situation
 - 23-24 two 'Who' questions about Yahweh
(concerning hearing, and including an infinitive absolute)
- 25 conclusion regarding attentiveness

But vv. 18-23 comprise a chiasm of their own:

- 18 Yahweh's challenge: 'listen' (3-3, according to K. Elliger)⁸
 - 19-20 two negatives: Yahweh's regrets about the servant's failure
 - 21-22 two negatives: the prophet's regrets about the people's trouble
- 23 the prophet's challenge: 'listen' (3-3, according to Elliger)⁹
- 24-25 conclusion, leading into 43.1-7

And vv. 20-25 also comprise a chiasm of their own:

- 18-19 introduction
 - 20 a statement about incomprehension
 - 21 Yahweh's will and the role of Yahweh's *torah*
 - 22 the people as spoil and plunder
 - 23 a question about attentiveness
 - 24a the people as spoil and plunder
 - 24b Yahweh's will and the role of Yahweh's *torah*
 - 25 a statement about incomprehension

Or, viewed in yet another way in the light of internal inclusions in vv. 20-22 and 24b β -25:

- 18-19 introduction
 - 20 two negatives: the servant's incapacity
 - 21-22a positive: Yahweh's initiative
 - 22b two negatives: the people's incapacitatedness
 - 23-24ab α the central questions
 - 24b β two negatives: the people's unresponsiveness
 - 25a positive: Yahweh's reaction
 - 25b two negatives: the people's unresponsiveness

8. *Deuterocesaja*, I (BKAT, xi/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), p. 281.

9. *Deuterocesaja*, I, p. 281.

It is a famous question whether designating something as a chiasm constitutes a statement about its author's intention or about the intrinsic nature of the text or about the way the reader understands it. In this case I do not suggest that the author consciously incorporated these patterns into the text (though one cannot exclude this possibility). Neither do I think I am simply reading them into it; the analyses do not issue simply from my personal impression of how the thought of the passage develops. They depend upon textual phenomena such as the use of different forms of speech and the recurrence of particular words. The analyses draw attention to features of the text itself, though it is of course readers who notice and analyse these features. One effect of the passage's interweaving of a number of chiasms is to underline its circularity. It gets nowhere. The structure reflects and suggests the fact that this is true of Yahweh and of the people.

Verse 18

The section begins with a paradoxical summons: people who lack the capacity to incline eyes or ears are urged to do so. The explanation 'look so that you can see' nuances the paradox and heightens the parallelism as the extra word produces an unexpected 2-3 line. Possessing and even having in use the equipment to receive sound and light waves is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for actual hearing and seeing. It is possible to listen but not hear, to look but not see.

Whereas one might have expected the more familiar 'blind' to come first in v. 18, MT's arrangement makes for a chiasm in vv. 18-19a. It also advertises both connection and contrast with what has immediately preceded, where the words also came in this order in vv. 14, 16. Verses 19-20 will make explicit that the blindness of vv. 18-20 overlaps with the pitiable blindness of vv. 7 and 16, but also suggests a blindness for which its victims are to blame. Beginning with deafness and going on to blindness also hints at that, for it takes up the concern with deafness and blindness in the key passage 6.9-10, where deafness and blindness is not mere incapacity but both fault and judgment.¹⁰ This link with 6.9-10 also already advertises the fact that the prophet is talking about a problem with a long history. It is a feature of the exile (cf. Ezek. 12.2) but it goes back long before. The stress on listening will come to be more dominant

10. Cf. R.E. Clements, 'Beyond Tradition-History', *JSOT* 31 (1985), pp. 102-103.

as vv. 18-25 unfold, not least through their stress on response to Yahweh's *torah* (see vv. 20b, 21, 23, 24b), and this note is established by the nature of the opening clause.

To put it another way, in their blindness the Israelites are identified with the world, but deafness is their distinctive problem (cf. also 30.9-11, and Amos 2.4 following on 1.3-2.3). The summons thus begins with the term that marks them out and indicates that they are indeed the addressees. It is the people of God, not the nations, who have refused to hear or see and have had such capacities withdrawn; contrast the summons in 41.1, where ironically the verb 'be deaf/dumb' (חרש) also appeared, with its more neutral meaning 'be silent'.

The people's prayers had apparently raised the question whether Yahweh would listen, look and see, for Yahweh seemed to be behaving as one deaf to their prayers and blind to their state (and Yahweh had acknowledged deafness/dumbness in v. 14). Insofar as Yahweh is here engaged in disputing this charge and returning it, again this indicates that the addressees are Israelite. The earlier plaint in 40.27 was expressed with relative politeness: has their destiny perhaps escaped their God's attention, slipped away from Yahweh? That destiny was personified so that it could be the subject of reflexive and active verbs; Yahweh was not directly accused. The charge presupposed here in 42.18-25 implies no such delicacy or obliqueness, and the response to it pulls no punches in return. If the situation suggests a problem regarding deafness and blindness, it lies in Israel's deafness and blindness to the purposeful activity of Yahweh in its life, which it claims to listen and look for but is wilfully blind to hear or see.

All this also suggests that the confrontational address implies a hidden promise. Isaiah 6 hints that its terrible judgment on those who are unwilling to hear or see will not be the end of the story, not only by its enigmatic closing clause *זרע קדש מצבחה*, 'the holy seed is its stump' (?), but even more clearly towards the end of the material which that vision introduces, when darkness is succeeded by light (8.33-9.1 [9.1-2]). All the speaking and portraying in 40.1-42.17 and the many actual invitations to listen which follow (see 44.1; 46.3, 12; 48.1, 12, 14, 16; 49.1; 51.1, 4, 7, 21; 55.2, 3; 66.5) can surely not have been meant with relentless cruel irony. If there is a promise of sight for the blind nations (42.7, 16), there will surely be one for blind Israel. The point becomes more explicit when 42.18, 19; 43.8 are also read in the light of 29.18 (see also 29.9-24 more generally) and 35.5, the only other earlier

passages where 'deaf' and/or 'blind' occurred While it is an exaggeration to suggest that the dominant note here is promise rather than censure,¹¹ the summons to listen and look is meant seriously and does hint at a note of hope Yahweh can summon deaf and blind in this way, implicitly affirming that it is after all possible for them to respond, for Yahweh does (alone) have the capacity to bring about that miracle¹²

Verse 19a

I have suggested that v 18 against its backgrounds offers many clues to the identity of the blind and deaf it addresses, though the matter remains implicit there Even v 19 does not make the point explicit, LXX^L adds ὁ λαός to do so, but MT simply assumes that the blind ones are the Israelites without stating it It also presupposes, without restating it, the further conviction from ch 41 that the Israelites (plural in v 18) can be identified with Yahweh's servant (singular) Yet more, it presupposes without stating it that this servant of Yahweh is blind It leaps over all these points to a rhetorical question whose actual subject is the fact that the profound blindness of this servant is unparalleled In comparison to the servant's blindness, no-one is blind¹³ No-one, after all, has had so much opportunity to see Yet the statement stands in the context of a promise that the eyes of the blind are to be opened and their darkness is to be replaced by light (vv 6-7, 16) If the servant is himself blind, presumably he can be the beneficiary of the ministry he was supposed to exercise

The simple כ ('as') in the second colon lowers rather than heightens the tension in the line (LXX ἀλλ' ἤ, Vg nisi suggest a repeated כ) Its heightening lies elsewhere The epithet 'aide' is its initial novelty מלאך is usually rendered 'messenger' or 'angel', but a מלאך is not confined to delivering messages It is one who in various ways speaks or acts on behalf of a superior, the related noun מלאכה means 'work' The term is close in meaning to 'servant' (cf 44 26) In its other occurrences the one

11 So C Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja Kap 40-66* (ATD, 19, Gottingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn, 1976 [1966], ET *Isaiah 40-66* [London SCM/Philadelphia Westminster, 1969]), on v 18

12 So G A F Knight, *Deutero Isaiah* (Nashville Abingdon, 1965), on the passage

13 So E J Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, III (Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1972), on the passage

Yahweh calls 'my aide' is a supernatural being (Exod. 23.23; 32.34; Mal. 3.1). Here alone is מלאך a term for Israel; the usage is very striking. The point is underlined by the colon's third word, the verb 'send', which is often used to govern מלאך (cf. 37.9) and indicates that a מלאך indeed functions as subordinate to a sender; when Yahweh is the sender, the one sent is a supernatural being (e.g. Gen. 24.7, 40). The rendering 'I am to send' assumes that the imperfect is modal, and specifically equivalent to cohortative.¹⁴

Whether we render 'messenger' or 'aide', the word marks the servant's role as an active one; the servant is sent as an aide upon a mission.¹⁵ And whichever way we render the word, it must be said that deafness is a fundamental disqualification for a מלאך. Yet the expression 'my aide/messenger whom I am to send' again thus hints at a note of promise underlying the overt negative of the colon. Targ. הלא אם יחובן (הלא אם יחובן רשיעיא יחקרון עבדי ('if the wicked return, will they not be called my servants?')) is more negative than MT in the present, implying that as long as it remains blind, Israel cannot be identified with Yahweh's servant(s), but it makes the note of hope explicit.

Verse 19b

The question is underlined by being repeated, characteristically with variation. 'One in a covenant of peace' represents the enigmatic משלם, which I provisionally take as a pual participle from the denominative verb שלם (cf. BDB). Balancing the unexpected prominence of 'deaf' in v. 18, 'blind' has unexpected prominence in v. 19, appearing for a third time in v. 19bβ. The servant who is supposed to be a means of sight is blind, blind, blind. Such repetitions which are not characteristic of Western poetry can be a feature of Hebrew poetry, not least that of Isaiah 40–55. Alongside the repetitions v. 19 offers a developing movement in its epithets, coming to a close with a combination of inclusion and novelty by adding to the unfamiliar משלם the phrase 'the servant of Yahweh' which takes up the word 'servant' from v. 19aα but which as a phrase is otherwise uninstanced in Isaiah 40–55. Only here in the Hebrew Bible, furthermore, does it have a corporate

14. So P. Volz, *Jesaja II* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1932), on the passage; cf. GKC 107n.

15. S. Mowinckel thus takes it as an expression from Third Isaiah: see 'Die Komposition des deuterojesanischen Buches', *ZAW* 49 (1931), p. 97.

reference. Elsewhere it is nearly always an epithet for Moses,¹⁶ though only after his death (beginning with Deut. 34.5); it thus draws attention to Moses' role as the great founding father of Israel's story. Even while making the identity of the servant of Yahweh quite explicit, the prophecy here puts 'blind' and 'servant of Yahweh' in another striking juxtaposition.

Verse 20

The direct address of v. 18 and the third person reference of v. 19 are now combined, driving the point home.¹⁷ The harsh statements of v. 19 relate to the very entity that is being addressed, and they relate to its ongoing behaviour, if we may follow the *qere*'s less expected רִאִיתָ rather than the *ketib*'s perfect רִאִיתָ (and Vg's *vides* rather than LXX's εἶδετε—cf. Targ.).

'Seeing' and 'opening' are infinitive absolute, a form which suggests the verbal idea in the abstract and can convey abruptness, hurriedness or agitation.¹⁸ The usage perhaps marks v. 20 as a climax and thus as the end of Yahweh's own words in vv. 18-20 over against vv. 21-25. Within the Hebrew Bible the verb for 'opening', פָּקַח, is elsewhere applied only to eyes.¹⁹ In contrast the much more common פָּתַח used by 1QIs^a here is often applied to mouth and ears, and to eyes only in the passive participle in 1 Kgs 8.29, 52; 2 Chron. 6.20, 40; 7.15; Neh. 1.6. Perhaps the two verbs were kept distinct earlier but by the exile came to overlap. While each of the balancing three-beat cola has an infinitive absolute, followed by an object, followed by a negative imperfect verb (with assonance), their parallelism is thus heightened in the second colon by the unique use of the verb for 'open', by the dual 'ears' balancing the plural 'many things', and by the transition from second singular to third singular verb.

The theme of Isa. 6.9-10 is clearer here than in v. 18, though the allusion is little more direct in language. Nor does v. 20 specify what was

16 H.M. Orlinsky in H.M. Orlinsky and N.H. Snaith, *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah* (VTSup, 14, Leiden: Brill, 1977 [1967]), pp. 8-9.

17. J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), on the passage.

18. GKC 113a, y, aa, ff; B.K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 35.5.2a.

19. But see *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, I (ed. D.J.A. Clines; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) on פָּתַח, for extra-biblical occurrences with 'ears'.

supposed to be seen or heard. The motif of having eyes and ears but failing to see or listen also appears in Jer. 5.21; Ezek. 12.2. There presumably what is not listened to is the voice of Yahweh reaffirming expectations and warning of calamity, but what is it that is not seen or heeded? In Deut. 29.2-4 [1-3] what could have been seen and heeded is Yahweh's acts, the events which have brought the people from Egypt to the edge of the promised land. The people have not appreciated their significance in such a way as to respond to them with lives of commitment to Yahweh; cf. also Ps. 107.43, where people are urged to 'pay heed' (שמר as here) to what could be 'seen' of Yahweh's acts (see esp. vv. 24, 42). 'Paying heed' is typically an attitude which issues in obedience. Here, then, the 'paying heed' will be to events which the community can 'see'. The parallel with Deuteronomy 29 draws attention to the fact that alongside Isaiah, in a broader sense v. 20 links as much with Deuteronomy, which keeps reminding people of all that they have seen and heard and keeps urging them to look, pay heed and listen/obey (see e.g. Deuteronomy 4).

The use of the imperfect tense suggests that their paying heed and listening are not responses to events of the somewhat distant past (contrast Psalms 44; 78). More likely the reference is to the events on which the previous chapter focused: the story of Abraham whose pattern is currently being repeated in the rise of Cyrus, the 'first events' to whose understanding 41.22 promised attention (cf. also 42.9). Talk of 'not listening' thus no doubt opens a window on the prophet's own ministry and how it was received.²⁰

Verse 21

If v. 20 brought Yahweh's words to a grieved climax, v. 21 continues the theme in the prophet's words. The opening reference to Yahweh in the third person signals this, though putting the subject at the beginning of the clause also serves to give it some inherent emphasis. One reason for the emphasis will become clearer in v. 22, where 'But this...' contrasts with 'Yahweh...'. But such an antithetical clause beginning with the subject is commonly circumstantial. 'Verbal clauses of this kind approximate closely in character to noun-clauses, and not infrequently (viz. when the verbal form might just as well be read as a participle) it is doubtful whether the writer did not in fact intend a noun-clause' (GKC

20. So W.A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIa (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1979), on the passage.

142a, see also d), this is surely an example. The temporal reference of the noun clause is then determined by the context. Since LXX ἐβούλετο the clause has been taken to refer to the past, but the context refers to the present, and this makes good sense (cf Targ.)

Part of the background may again be Israel's prayers. The community could have appealed to Yahweh's צדק as a basis for action to reverse its oppression, Beuken compares Ps 44 23, 27 [22, 26]²¹. Verse 21 answers such prayers by affirming the nature of Yahweh's own present desire in this regard. But in doing so it once more takes up the terms of preceding poems. Yahweh longs for the sake of צדק (cf v 6) to respond by means of the servant to the far coasts' longing for תורה (v 4). The words do not, then, continue vv 18-20 by expressing an intention to punish unresponsiveness to תורה in order to affirm its significance. They rather take us behind vv 18-20 to the hopes which this unresponsiveness frustrates, the hopes already expressed in vv 1-9.

The two hiphil verbs 'exalt' (גדל) and 'ennoble' (אדר) are unusual, the former in its particular usage here with a meaning more usually associated with the piel (but cf Ps 138 2), the latter in its rarity bringing the verse to a striking close (otherwise it occurs only twice, in Exod 15 6, 11, both נִפְח). Context and syntax indeed suggest that the idea is of Yahweh's desire personally to exalt and ennoble תורה (through Israel, indeed), not of Israel's effecting this. But the antithesis should not be drawn too sharply, given that the verse does connect with the expectation that the far coasts are to discover Yahweh's תורה through the servant. Further, the link with vv 4 and 6, showing that v 21 fits its context, points away from its being a gloss or a doxology from synagogue reading.²²

While the speaker changes with v 21, the material thus continues to link with its Isaianic context. 'Long/longing' (חפץ) is characteristic of Isaiah 40-66. The link between 'longing' and 'Yahweh's word' in 55 11 deserves particular comparison with the link between 'longing' and תורה here, it is the present longing which that closing passage in Isaiah 40-55 declares will indeed be fulfilled. 'Just purpose' is the characteristic noun צדק (see 41 2, 10, 42 6). Both the familiarity of this usage and the syntax suggest that the allusion is to Yahweh's own צדק rather than that of the blind and deaf people (contrast Vg and Targ.) and that צדק has an active

21 See his *Jesaja*, IIa, on the passage.

22 So respectively Volz, *Jesaja II*, on the passage, J Morgenstern, 'The Message of Deutero-Isaiah on its Sequential Unfolding', *HUCA* 30 (1959), p 63.

meaning rather than the more abstract idea of vindicating Yahweh's righteousness (contrast LXX ἵνα δικαιωθῆται).

Granted the Isaianic nature of the prophet's actual speech, the point being expressed in v. 21 is a Deuteronomic one. Again see Deuteronomy 4, where Moses reveals the hope that Israel's obedience to Yahweh's instructions will commend these to the nations around, who will thus come to acknowledge the special significance of both Yahweh and Israel. In other words, Yahweh longs to commend תורה (teaching, revelation or instruction) through giving it to Israel and having Israel embody it, and thereby to pursue a purpose for just order with Israel at its centre, recognized by other peoples. Doing good to Israel and bringing glory to God's revelation are thus interwoven.²³

Although the Deuteronomic cast of thinking in v. 20 continues in v. 21, the actual expressions are thus not Deuteronomic. Even absolute תורה is less a Deuteronomic expression (see only Deut. 33.4 in the Blessing of Moses) than an Isaianic one (see the key passages 2.3; 8.16, 20; 51.4). If the suffix 'his' on 'just purpose' in v. 21a applies also to the word תורה in v. 21b, the expression compares with those in 1.10; 5.24; 30.9; 42.4, 24; 51.7. Phrases such as 'his תורה' or 'Yahweh's תורה' also fail to appear in Deuteronomy (again except 33.10), where תורה tends to be a specific collection of instructions. In Isaiah, of course, תורה does not refer specifically to the collected teaching about a way of life which is associated with Moses, though it may be an exaggeration to suggest that it simply refers to Yahweh's purpose declared through the prophets.²⁴ One might rather set the superficially absolute use of the term here in the context of other instances such as those in the intellectual tradition (Prov. 6.23; 28.4, 4, 7, 9; 29.18; Job 22.22), and of the giving of תורה as a ministry in the present (e.g. Jer. 18.18; Ezek. 7.24; Zeph. 3.4; Hag. 2.11; Mal. 2.7; Lam. 2.9; 2 Chron. 15.3). When a prophet or sage speaks of תורה, the reference may be to authoritative teaching of any kind. In Isaiah it can thus cover the prophet's proclamation of Yahweh's moral and social expectations, assessment of the people's response, demand for change, announcement of ultimate worldwide historical purpose, and declaration of immediate intent.

23. See J. Calvin, *Commentarii in Isaiam prophetam* (2nd edn, 1559 [1551]; ET *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* [4 vols.; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948]), on v. 21.

24. So Clements, 'Beyond Tradition-History'. p. 107.

Verse 22

The noun clause opens with its subject ('But this is...'), emphasizing the contrast with v. 21 ('Yahweh is...'); if v. 21 were a gloss, the contrast would be with v. 20,²⁵ which is possible but much less effective. Yahweh's desire is to exalt and ennoble תררה by embodying its expectations and its promises in the life of a people and thereby proclaiming its glory to the world. It is evident to anyone that the prospects offered by passages such as Deut. 28.1-11 or Deuteronomy 33 are not present realities in the people's life and that therefore the illumination envisaged by Isa. 2.1-4 or Isa. 42.1-9 cannot be a reality either.

If we ignore MT's unexpected *maqṣeph* in the first line, v. 22 comprises three pairs of cola, 2-2, 3-3, and 4-4, which work towards a climax as the lines lengthen. At first sight v. 23 might seem to incorporate two images for the people's state, despoiling and imprisonment, but the syntax and the structure indicate that the image is one. Syntactically the middle line depends adverbially on the first line. הפח 'by being trapped' is another infinitive absolute (hiph. from פחח, lit. '[by] trapping'); unlike the ones in v. 20, however, it follows on as adverbial accusative from an earlier verb, here the two preceding participles (see GKC 113h, z). The finite verb הִקְבְּאוּ (lit. 'they were confined') then continues the infinitive absolute, as happens frequently after infinitive construct and participle.²⁶ The two verbs thus suggest that entrapment and confinement are the way the people are treated as spoil and plunder.

Structurally the unity of the image is suggested by the return to the language of spoil or plunder in the third line as an inclusion, though the language is varied (the words are nouns rather than participles) and the point is heightened rather than merely repeated: the people are like a bird or an animal first captured, then confined, and for the future kept firmly secure. But the language recalls what actually happened to human beings. P. Volz nicely compares them to a caravan which has been waylaid on its journey, robbed, and its people left in holes like Joseph in Genesis 37 (though he did have someone to 'rescue' him).²⁷ The words more specifically recall the story of the Amalekite raid on Ziklag, after which David acted to 'rescue' and 'restore/give back' their plunder (1 Sam.

25. So Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, Kap. 40-66, on v. 22.

26. See P. Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (trans. and rev. T. Muraoka; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), 121j, 124q; cf. GKC 114r, 116x.

27. Volz, *Jesaja II*, on the passage.

30.18-19): the two words which recur here in v. 23 function as a word pair to indicate the negative and the positive aspects of such deliverance ('from' and 'to'; cf. Num. 35.25; Jer. 42.12). The singular 'people' yields to plural for the 3-3 bicolon, as the plural in v. 18 yields to singular for vv. 19-20 and as v. 20 combines second person address and third person reference. The effect is also parallel, hinting that the plural addressees and the singular referent are identical; v. 23 will directly address these plural victims. Once again the thought parallels Deuteronomy but the language both parallels earlier material in Isaiah and also reflects Israel's prayers. The Assyrians had set themselves to treat the people as 'spoil' and 'plunder' (corresponding to the passive participles from *בזו* and *שסה* here, cf. 10.6, 13, *לבו בו* 'to take spoil', *שסס* *פו*. 'I plundered'; also the name *בו חש* *בו*, 8.1). The people's experience contrasts with the promise about their plunderers and despoilers in 17.14; cf. 13.16; 33.23. The task to be undertaken in v. 7 was to bring people out of prison; now this people is itself hidden in prisons (the same compound expression but in the plural, *בתי כלאים*). The denial that they have any one to rescue them (*נצל* *hiph.*) painfully recalls the Assyrians' challenge to Hezekiah (36.14-15, 18-20; 37.11-12; 38.6; see also 5.29; 31.5); the denial that there is anyone to say 'restore/give back' (*שיב* *hiph.*) painfully recalls the threat (using *שוב* *qal*) that the people will not be able to go back (to Yahweh), the promise that at least a remnant would do so (6.9; 10.21, 22) and the promise that it would go back to its land (35.10) (cf. also the name *שוב* *ישב*, 7.3). The words also take up the terms of Israel's prayers (e.g. Ps. 44.11 [10]; 71.11; Lam. 1.16; Lam. 3.52-53) and raise the question why it is so and why Israel itself will not face that question.

Verse 23

'This' might denote all that has been described in vv. 18-22, or more narrowly the people's situation as v. 22 has described it; v. 24a will suggest the latter. That situation is clearly understood by the people themselves, especially on the assumption that v. 22 does take up the language of their prayers; in another sense it is not understood at all. They are quite willing to have their eyes and mouths open in the face of their suffering; they are challenged to open them to what lies behind their suffering, in a way they have not yet done. For vv. 23-24a the prophet returns to the rhetoric of vv. 18-19 with their direct address in the plural, double 'Who' questions, challenge regarding attentiveness, and third person reference to a singular entity. But the function of the

questions is quite different. In v. 18 'Who' was a rhetorical question implying 'no-one' (cf. 40.13, 14, 18; 41.26; 43.9). The questions in v. 23 are not in the same sense rhetorical questions, sharing the concern of a disputant to make a point. They constitute an appeal, more overtly designed to break open an impasse and open up a future. This 'Who' expresses a wish (cf. Pss. 4.7 [6]; 60.11 [9]).²⁸ The question about hearing also takes up that in 37.26 via 40.21, 28.²⁹

Verse 24aba

The question about the present (v. 22) which has to be faced if there is to be a future (v. 23) is a question about the past that lies behind this present; v. 21 did not refer to this past, but v. 24 does. Its answer has already been made clear enough (vv. 18-20). The further question is unlike that in v. 23 in its rhetorical nature and unlike those in v. 19 in its implicit answer. Its implicit answer is in fact the same as applied to the similar questions in 41.2, 4, though like those it is capable of a different one, particularly on the part of people who started from different theological and religious presuppositions (as Jer. 44.15-19 indicates). The answer on which the prophet insists is also as unwelcome as it was at 41.1-4, though for different reasons.

The language of plunder and spoil recurs in v. 24, with characteristic variation over against v. 22 and within the line itself. An abstract noun 'plundering' corresponds to a passive participle 'plundered' and a concrete noun 'plunder'. An active plural participle 'spoilers' corresponds to a passive participle 'spoiled' and a noun 'spoil'. Within the line, abstract singular 'plundering' is thus followed by a concrete plural 'spoilers'. N.H. Snaith notes the halting 3-2 stress characteristic of a lament, suggesting the expression of emotion and making the line hurry on.³⁰

The inevitable answer itself takes the form of another rhetorical question, this time one that explicitly contains the answer in terms of an agent and of the reasons for the action. As a question it underlines even further its obviousness as an answer: 'Was it not Yahweh?' MT locates the *athnah* after these words, but the versification alone makes this an

28. *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, I, p. 170, suggests a close relationship between the three verbs, which appear together in 28.23.

29. Cf. E.W. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 75.

30. *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah*, p. 150.

unlikely reading of v. 24. The first colon is the 3–2 rhetorical question just considered. A balanced 3–3 line closes the verse. In between comes another 2–2 line, ‘Was it not Yahweh, whom we failed?’ ‘Whom’ is the poetic demonstrative/relative ך, which would be surprising if this is a prosaic gloss (supplemented by the colon which follows) as has been reckoned since Volz. The two clauses take up the terrible theological perspective that was stated in 40.2 but has been ignored since, yet has to be acknowledged if there is to be a future. It has underlain vv. 18-23 but was not actually required by them. It is quite possible to imagine other answers; in this sense this answer is not inevitable. When the Israelites were treated as prey in Egypt the tradition did not actually say that Yahweh submitted them to this experience, nor that its background lay in their failing Yahweh. When Job asked why life treated him in this way, it was the friends who unflinchingly attributed his experience to the action of God in response to Job’s wickedness.

The exilic Isaiah’s answer is one he could have learned from any of the prophets, but not least Isaiah of Jerusalem. The drift of vv. 18-25 as a whole, indeed, parallels that of his vineyard song (5.1-7). Both passages envisage Yahweh having a dream whose expectations are disappointed because of the people’s failure, which leads to Yahweh’s subjecting it to a devastation that makes it seem to have no future. Both gird up their rhetorical creativity to enable prophet and deity to break through the blindness that will not see matters this way, but then share the further frustration of their own failure. The exilic Isaiah might also once again be expounding the theology of Deuteronomy, though it utilizes its language no more than it does that of Isaiah 5. The promises and threats at the end of Deuteronomy laid before Israel two alternative scenarios, of blessing or calamity. Deuteronomy has no hesitation in seeing Yahweh as author of both. Obedience will bring Yahweh’s direct blessing, resistance Yahweh’s direct punishment.

Yet the harshness of the prophet’s words is softened by their identifying with the people in their failure, as Isaiah of Jerusalem does in a different way (see 6.5). Precisely at this hard moment the verb comes in the plural, ‘we failed’ (כִּשְׁלָנוּ: LXX’s third person [cf. Targ.] is surely tidying up the text). We have noted that this plural where prophet is associated with people appears at a number of significant moments (see esp. 35.2; 40.3, 8; 47.4). Indeed it is perhaps just as natural and recurrent a form of speech as the singular prophetic ‘I’ which has not been uttered since 40.6 (if indeed it featured there). Our instinctive assumption

through vv. 21-24a will have been that an 'I' speaks, but arguably what v. 24b α reveals is that the speaker throughout was a 'we' in the sense that the prophet was identified with the community even while addressing the community and speaking about the community.

Verse 24b $\beta\gamma\delta$

The final colon in v. 24 reverts from first person to third person verbs (Syr's first person assimilates to the previous clause). E.W. Conrad suggests that the prophet's implied audience, 'we', here speaks about other elements within a 'divided community' as 'they', people whose active disobedience was worse than the mere 'failure' which 'we' acknowledge.³¹ The former inference involves reading much into the text, while the latter suggestion hardly corresponds to Old Testament usage of the verb חָטָא. Earlier rhetorical alternation in these verses suggests that more probably both 'we' and 'they' refer to the community as a whole. It was indeed divided, but v. 24 hardly refers to the fact. After the 'we', therefore, which utters a judgment under which the prophet is also willing to stand, the exilic Isaiah immediately recoils into third person speech which enables prophet and people to distance themselves from their self-accusation and thus to stay with the facing of facts for a while. This failure consisted in the fact that 'people did not consent to walk in his ways nor did they listen to his teaching'. It is an ordinary third person (EVV 'they'), but Hebrew often uses the third person plural thus impersonally (GKC 144f), and the antecedent for a specific personal 'they' is rather distant in v. 22.

Yet again the thought is reminiscent of Deuteronomy, and here the language is more so, for Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic writings speak with distinctive frequency of 'walking in his ways', of תּוֹרָה, of 'listening', and of 'not consenting'. Yet 'to walk' is here infinitive absolute (again) rather than Deuteronomy's infinitive construct, and the words reverse Deuteronomy's order. Deuteronomy does not speak of listening to תּוֹרָה but rather of listening to (ב) Yahweh's voice or words. Indeed the distinctive phrase here in v. 24, literally 'listen to his תּוֹרָה', is difficult to parallel anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. Once more, then, the prophet's assessment corresponds to Deuteronomy without being Deuteronomic in expression. Indeed, the תּוֹרָה the people is here said to have ignored is again likely to be that of prophets such as Isaiah more

31. *Reading Isaiah*, pp. 74-75, 95-96.

than that of Moses. The people's failure thus makes for a further contrast with the servant's calling in v. 4. In this respect it compares with v. 19 at an equivalent point near the beginning of this unit, as well as connecting (in terms of one of the other chiasms) with the reference to Yahweh's purpose regarding his תורה in v. 21. This fits with the further fact that among the passages where 'consent' and 'listen' (אבה, שמע) appear together are Isa. 1.19 (a famous invitation or warning, where they are a word pair, as here); 28.12 (in a passage that provides prominent background to Isa. 40); 30.9 (where the object is Yahweh's תורה); 30.15 (whose warning, like that of 1.19, is in vv. 24-25 reported to have been fulfilled). Each time the object of this consent/hearing is the prophetic word; it is this that is denoted by תורה in 30.9.

Verse 25

Snaith takes the further change from third plural to third singular as an indication that whereas 'we' and 'they' did the sinning, the entity that was punished was a different one, the body of people who had not deserved to be taken into exile (cf. 53.6);³² this seems as forced as the inferring from the 'we' and 'they' that there was a division within the community. The singular entity that is punished is the particular entity Jacob-Israel from the beginning of v. 24, which is also the 'we' and the 'they'.

The language used to describe its experience yet again parallels the language of Israel's prayers, that of earlier material in Isaiah, and the thought of Deuteronomy. In Isaiah 6 the hardening of the mind (לב, as here in the phrase rendered 'take notice') leads to Yahweh's 'burning' the land (vv. 10, 12). In Isaiah 10 Yahweh's 'anger' appears in judgment on Jerusalem via the Babylonians' predecessors (vv. 5, 25) and Yahweh becomes a burning 'flame' (v. 17) on the Assyrians themselves; cf. 30.27 where Yahweh 'burns with anger'. It is a Deuteronomic commonplace that failure to walk in Yahweh's ways would result in curse rather than blessing from Yahweh, trouble which could involve the loss of the land. Yahweh's 'fury' and 'anger' appear together in Deut. 9.19; 29.22, 27 [23, 28]; the latter term also appears alone elsewhere, though the terms do not link specifically with the threat of exile. In laments in the Psalms the terms also appear together (6.2 [1]; 37.8; 90.7) and also separately. They are the two most frequent words for wrath in the Old Testament.

32. *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah*, p. 181.

Particularly significant are the plaints in Lamentations where all these expressions come together, especially in 2.1-4 and 4.11: 'his anger' (2.1, 2); 'he has burned like a flaming fire, consuming all round' (v. 3); 'he has poured out his fury like fire' (v. 4); 'Yahweh gave full vent to his fury, poured out the heat of his anger' (4.11). This last link likely underlies the apposition/parallelism of 'fury // his anger', which should thus not be emended to a construct. The bulk of v. 25 is revealed to be a restatement of such a plaint; its substance is affirmed indeed to have been the nature of Yahweh's actions, and the prophet needs to have no hesitation in accepting an assessment from Lamentations, for Lamentations (unlike the characteristic lament in the Psalter) itself accepts that the failure, resistance and wilful deafness to which v. 24 has referred gave Yahweh good reason for acting in fury.

Once more, then, the prophecy recalls earlier material in Isaiah, recapitulates the thinking of Deuteronomy, and readapts the terms of the people's prayers, but fashions out of such sources a new statement which expresses its characteristic message. Here the first 3-3 bicolon closes with the phrase 'and warring power' (ועזוז מלחמה) which is simultaneously more literal and down to earth yet more novel than the preceding phrases which it parallels, and the second 4-4 bicolon (if we again ignore a *maqeph*) closes with the people's saddening failure to learn from their experience, which forms a grievous contrast to the purpose of insight which often brings sections within the prophecy to their climax. It is where vv. 18-25 began and where it ends. The fall has to be understood as issuing from Yahweh's anger at human sin, but the point has not been grasped. The community went into exile through lack of recognition of Yahweh's ways (דעה, 5.13) and it risks staying there because it still has not recognized what these are (ידע, v. 25b). The reference is surely not to its not realizing that it was being set on fire (as is the case in 47.11). The parallel 'it does not take notice' makes clear that the prophet's concern is with the people's failure to respond appropriately to what has happened. This failure does not lie merely in the past (ולא ידע); it is an ongoing problem (ולא ישם על לב).

Isa. 42.18-25 MT works rhetorically in its context to confront an audience (and prepare it for the better news of 43.1-7).

ABSTRACT

The passage has puzzled scholars because of apparent unevennesses, unexpected transitions, and variations among the versions. These have provoked a number of proposals for textual emendation and hypotheses about the literary development of the material. The data are capable of explanation in rhetorical terms, however, and contribute to a series of interwoven chastic structures which run through the passage. The verses as they stand in MT work in their context to confront an audience and to prepare it for the better news of 43 1-7. The article works through the passage line-by-line and makes textual, exegetical, and rhetorical comments.



William Johnstone (ed.)

WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH

Essays in Reassessment

The centenary of the death of William Robertson Smith fell on 31 March 1994. Smith was Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis at the Free Church College, Aberdeen, Editor of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Librarian to the University of Cambridge and, finally, Professor of Arabic there. His written work includes the renowned *The Religion of the Semites*. The achievements of this remarkable scholar in many fields of academic endeavour were commemorated and evaluated at an international and interdisciplinary congress held in the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, in April 1994.

The essays presented here cover the following topics: the late nineteenth-century context of Smith's life and work, his international connections and influence, and his work as biblical scholar, encyclopaedist, social anthropologist, Arabist and orientalist.

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