# Order and Disorder

καὶ γὰρ οὗτος εἷς τρόπος ἑρμηνείας, ἐκ τῶν ὕστερον ἀρξάμενον ἀναδραμεῖν εἰς τὰ πρῶτα καὶ πάλιν συνάψαι ταῦτα τοῖς ὑστέροις. καὶ ἔστι συνήθης ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἑρμηνείας τῷ ποιητῇ.

For indeed this is one manner of explanation, after starting from what is later, to jump back to the beginning and connect this back to what is later. This manner of explanation is customary for the poet. (Porphyry, *Homeric Questions* [MacPhail], 12.127-132, pp. 202-203)

## Introduction

In this chapter I will examine how the rabbis and the Homeric scholars dealt with order and disorder in their source texts, focusing on cases where the commentators, in order to solve various problems, claim that the words or the verses are transposed. I shall argue that the Rabbis share with the Greek scholars not only the hermeneutical techniques but also the same concept of the canonical text as a literary product which enables the use of various stylistic and rhetorical measures, one of which is the change of the natural order of words.

In their pioneering studies, Saul Lieberman and David Daube have famously pointed to the possible Hellenistic background of the rabbinic method of *sares*, transposition. Based on one rather anecdotal example gleaned from Athenaeus, both concluded that the rabbinic method is derived from the Greek *anastrophe*. However, this example is highly problematic and cannot be used for reconstructing the history of *sares* (as shown in detail in the Appendix). Moreover, neither Daube nor Lieberman analyzed in detail the various uses of this method in rabbinic commentary. Nonetheless, as I shall show in this chapter, they were correct in assuming that the origins of the method lay in Greek exegetical traditions, but the striking similarities are to be found rather in the Homeric commentators’ use of *hyperbaton* (ὑπερβατόν) as well as in notes concerning the reversal of the chronological order (reversal of the chronological order (τάξις) of events. In the following, I shall first survey some of the Greek approaches to disorder in the text, from both a rhetorical and an exegetical perspective, and then turn to analyze the rabbis’ use of *sares* and *seder* (‘order’).

### Hyperbaton

#### 2.1 The Rhetorical Use of the *hyperbaton*

The term ὑπερβατόν (*hyperbaton*), derived from the verb ὑπερβαίνω (to step over, go beyond), usually designates the transposition or inversion of words or lines from their given order, mainly as a rhetorical and stylistic technique.[[1]](#footnote-1) In antiquity there were disagreements among authors of rhetorical treatises concerning the merits of the use of *hyperbaton*. In the pseudo-Aristotelian *Rhetoric to Alexander,* composed in the second half of the 4th century BCE and attributed to Anaximenes of Lampsacus,[[2]](#footnote-2) the author emphasizes repeatedly that the clarity of the oration is dependent on the correct and ordered use of words (30.7):[[3]](#footnote-3)

ἐὰν ὅτι μάλιστα τοῖς οἰκείοις τῶν πραγμάτων ὀνόμασι τὰς πράξεις προσαγορεύωμεν καὶ ἐὰν τοῖς κοινοῖς, καὶ μὴ ὑπερβατῶς αὐτὰ τιθῶμεν, ἀλλ’ ἀεὶ τὰ ἐχόμενα ἑξῆς τάττωμεν.

[Our actual words will be clear,] if we describe actions as far as possible in words which are appropriate to them, and if we employ usual words and do not put them in an inverted order (ὑπερβατῶς) but always arrange together those which naturally follow one another.

The author rejects the use of *hyperbaton* for rhetorical purposes.[[4]](#footnote-4) There were others though who encouraged the use of *hyperbaton* on aesthetic grounds. Quintillian, for example, writes the following in his *Institutio Oratoria*, published in 95 CE:[[5]](#footnote-5)

[at](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=at&la=la&can=at0&prior=rebus) [cum](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=cum&la=la&can=cum1&prior=at) [decoris](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=decoris&la=la&can=decoris0&prior=cum) [gratia](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=gratia&la=la&can=gratia0&prior=decoris) [traiicitur](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=traiicitur&la=la&can=traiicitur0&prior=gratia) [longius](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=longius&la=la&can=longius0&prior=traiicitur) [verbum](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=verbum&la=la&can=verbum0&prior=longius), [proprie](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=proprie&la=la&can=proprie0&prior=verbum) [hyperbati](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=hyperbati&la=la&can=hyperbati0&prior=proprie) [tenet](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=tenet&la=la&can=tenet0&prior=hyperbati) [nomen](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=onem&la=la&can=onem0&prior=tenet): [animaduerti](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=animaduerti&la=la&can=animaduerti0&prior=onem), [iudices](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=iudices&la=la&can=iudices0&prior=animaduerti), [omnem](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=omnem&la=la&can=omnem0&prior=iudices) [accusatoris](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=accusatoris&la=la&can=accusatoris0&prior=omnem) [orationem](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=orationem&la=la&can=orationem0&prior=accusatoris) [in](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=id&la=la&can=id2&prior=orationem) [duas](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=duas&la=la&can=duas0&prior=id) [diuisam](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=diuisam&la=la&can=diuisam0&prior=duas) [esse](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=esse&la=la&can=esse0&prior=diuisam) [partes](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=partis&la=la&can=partis0&prior=esse). [nam](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=nam&la=la&can=nam0&prior=partis" \t "morph) [i](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=id&la=la&can=id3&prior=nam" \t "morph)n [duas](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=duas&la=la&can=duas1&prior=id" \t "morph) [partes](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=partis&la=la&can=partis1&prior=duas" \t "morph) [divisam](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=divisam&la=la&can=divisam0&prior=partis" \t "morph) [esse](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=esse&la=la&can=esse1&prior=divisam" \t "morph) [rectum](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=rectum&la=la&can=rectum0&prior=esse" \t "morph) [erat](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=erat&la=la&can=erat0&prior=rectum" \t "morph), [sed](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=sed&la=la&can=sed0&prior=erat" \t "morph) [durum](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=durum&la=la&can=durum0&prior=sed" \t "morph) [et](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=et&la=la&can=et1&prior=durum" \t "morph) [incomptum](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=incomptum&la=la&can=incomptum0&prior=et" \t "morph).

It is the transposition of a word to some distance from its original place, for ornamental effect, that is strictly called *hyperbatum*: the following passage will provide an example: “I noted, gentlemen, that the speech of the accuser into two was divided parts ([*in*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=id&la=la&can=id2&prior=orationem)[*duas*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=duas&la=la&can=duas0&prior=id)[*diuisam*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=diuisam&la=la&can=diuisam0&prior=duas)[*esse*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=esse&la=la&can=esse0&prior=diuisam)[*partes*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=partis&la=la&can=partis0&prior=esse))”. In this case the strictly correct order would be “was divided into two parts ([*i*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=id&la=la&can=id3&prior=nam)*n* [*duas*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=duas&la=la&can=duas1&prior=id)[*partes*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=partis&la=la&can=partis1&prior=duas)[*divisam*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=divisam&la=la&can=divisam0&prior=partis)[*esse*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=esse&la=la&can=esse1&prior=divisam)).” But this would have been harsh and ugly.[[6]](#footnote-6)

According to Ps.-Longinus in his *On the Sublime* (22), the use of *hyperbaton* enables the writer to imitate the mood of the speaker and to help convey strong emotions:

[Τῆς](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=*th%3Ds&la=greek&can=*th%3Ds0) [δὲ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=de%5C&la=greek&can=de%5C0&prior=*th=s) [αὐτῆς](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=au%29th%3Ds&la=greek&can=au%29th%3Ds0&prior=de\) [ἰδέας](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=i%29de%2Fas&la=greek&can=i%29de%2Fas0&prior=au)th=s) [καὶ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=kai%5C&la=greek&can=kai%5C0&prior=i)de/as) [τὰ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=ta%5C&la=greek&can=ta%5C0&prior=kai\) [ὑπερβατὰ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=u%28perbata%5C&la=greek&can=u%28perbata%5C0&prior=ta\) [θετέον](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=qete%2Fon&la=greek&can=qete%2Fon0&prior=u(perbata\). ἔστι δὲ λέξεων ἢ νοήσεων ἐκ τοῦ κατ’ ἀκολουθίαν κεκινημένη τάξις καὶ οἱονεὶ [\*\*\*](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/P12.html) χαρακτὴρ ἐναγωνίου πάθους ἀληθέστατος. ὡς γὰρ οἱ τῷ ὄντι ὀργιζόμενοι ἢ φοβούμενοι ἢ ἀγανακτοῦντες ἢ ὑπὸ ζηλοτυπίας ἢ ὑπὸ ἄλλου τινὸς [(](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB1.html)πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἀναρίθμητα πάθη καὶ οὐδ’ ἂν εἰπεῖν τις ὁπόσα δύναιτο[)](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB1.html) ἑκάστοτε παραπίπτοντες ἄλλα προθέμενοι πολλάκις ἐπ’ ἄλλα μεταπηδῶσι, μέσα τινὰ παρεμβάλλοντες ἀλόγως, εἶτ’ αὖθις ἐπὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἀνακυκλοῦντες καὶ πάντη πρὸς τῆς ἀγωνίας, ὡς ὑπ’ ἀστάτου πνεύματος, τῇδε κἀκεῖσε ἀγχιστρόφως ἀντισπώμενοι τὰς λέξεις τὰς νοήσεις τὴν ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν εἱρμοῦ παντοίως πρὸς μυρίας τροπὰς ἐναλλάττουσι τάξιν, οὕτως παρὰ τοῖς ἀρίστοις συγγραφεῦσι διὰ τῶν ὑπερβατῶν ἡ μίμησις ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἔργα φέρεται.

*Hyperbata* ([τὰ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=ta%5C&la=greek&can=ta%5C0&prior=kai\) [ὑπερβατὰ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=u%28perbata%5C&la=greek&can=u%28perbata%5C0&prior=ta\)) must be placed under the same category. They are departures in the order (τάξις) of expressions or ideas from the natural sequence; and they bear, it may be said, the very stamp and impress of vehement emotion. Just as those who are really moved by anger, or fear, or indignation, or jealousy, or any other emotion (for the passions are many and countless, and none can give their number), at times turn aside, and when they have taken one thing as their subject often leap to another, foisting in the midst some irrelevant matter, and then again wheel round to their original theme, and driven by their vehemence, as by a veering wind, now this way now that with rapid changes, transform their expressions, their thoughts, the order suggested by a natural sequence, into numberless variations of every kind; so also among the best writers it is by means of *hyperbaton* that imitation approaches the effects of nature.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Later on Ps.-Longinus cites Herodotus, Thucydides and Demosthenes as examples of authors who make good use of the *hyperbaton*. Rhetorical handbooks also often cite examples of *hyperbaton* from Homer.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The fact that many writers used word-transposition as a stylistic measure, is likely what enabled commentators to solve textual problems, claiming that the author had made use of a *hyperbaton*, even if the word order would not seem to be problematic or unnatural. Since, as far as I know, there is currently no study dedicated to the *hyperbaton* as an *exegetical tool*, I shall now present an overview of it.

#### 2.2 Derveni Papyrus

We shall open our discussion with the Derveni papyrus, our earliest example of the use of *hyperbaton* for exegetical purposes. The papyrus, which was discovered in 1962 in Derveni, northern Greece, was written most probably around 340 BCE, and it consists of a philosophical commentary to an Orphic poem on the Theogony. The commentary itself is most probably from the 5th century BCE, and thus is the earliest Greek commentary which has come down to us.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In column 8 lines 3-12 we find the following:[[10]](#footnote-10)

[\_\_\_\_] ὅπως δ’ ἄρχεται ἐν τῶ[ιδε δη]λοῖ·

“Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ̣ π̣α̣[τρὸς ἑο]ῦ πάρα θέ[σ]φατον ἀρχὴν

[\_\_\_\_] [ἀ]λκήν τ’ ἐν χείρεσσι ἔ[λ]αβ[εν κ]α̣[ὶ] δαίμον̣[α] κυδρόν”.

[τ]α̣ῦτα τ̣ὰ ἔπη ὑπερβατὰ ἐό[ν]τ̣α λανθάν̣[ει·]

[ἔσ]τ̣ιν δ’ ὧδ’ ἔχοντα̣· ‘Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ τὴ̣[ν ἀλ]κ̣ὴν

[πα]ρὰ πατρὸς ἑοῦ ἔλαβεν καὶ δαίμονα̣ [κυδρ]όν’.

[οὕτω] δ' ἔχοντα οὐκ ἀκούειν τὸν Ζᾶ[να ἐπικρα]τεῖ

[τοῦ πατρ]ὸ̣ς ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀλκὴν λαμβά̣[νειν παρ’ αὐτο]ῦ̣.

[ἄλλως δ' ἔ]χ̣οντα πα̣ρὰ̣ θέσφατα δ[όξειεν ἂν λαβεῖ]ν̣

[τὴν ἀλκήν·]

And how they (sc. the present things) begin he (Orpheus) makes clear in these words:

“Zeus then, when from his father (πατρὸς ἑοῦ πάρα) the prophesied rule

And the power in his hands had taken, and the glorious daemon.”

It has escaped notice that these words are transposed (τὰ ἔπη ὑπερβατὰ); (in fact) they are as follows: ‘Zeus, when he took the power from his father (παρὰ πατρὸς ἑοῦ) and the glorious daemon.’ [In this] word order the prevailing meaning is not that Zeus hears his father but that he takes power from him. [In the other] word order the impression would be given that he took the power contrary to the prophecies.

It would seem that the commentator polemicizes against a reading of the verse which follows the word order. Since “it has escaped notice that these words are transposed (τὰ ἔπη ὑπερβατὰ),” he goes on to elaborate the correct reading.

Yet, it is unclear why he claims that “[In this] word order the prevailing meaning is not that Zeus hears (ἀκούειν) his father but that he takes power from him,” as the verb ἀκούειν does not appear in the verse under discussion![[11]](#footnote-11) Rather, as Βetegh and Kouremenos have suggested,[[12]](#footnote-12) it would seem that the detailed discussion of the alternative readings is based on another, very similar, verse from an Orphic poem cited later in column 13:1:[[13]](#footnote-13)

Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ̣ πατρὸς ἑοῦ παρα[[14]](#footnote-14) θέσφατ’ **ἀκούσας**

It would seem therefore that in column 8 the commentator misquoted the verse (or quoted an alternative version). Thus we need to combine this verse with the verse from line 5 in the 8th column ([ἀ]λκήν τ’ ἐν χείρεσσι ἔ[λ]αβ[εν κ]α̣[ὶ] δαίμον̣[α] κυδρόν).

We can now try to understand the two alternative readings. The main problem is what the object of παρα is: it belongs either to the preceding words in the genitive παρὰ πατρὸς ἑοῦ πάρα (from his father), or to the following word in the accusative: παρὰ θέσφατα (against the prophecy).[[15]](#footnote-15) If the words are transposed the meaning of the verse would be as follows:

Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ̣ πατρὸς ἑοῦ πάρα θέσφατ’ ἀκούσας

[ἀ]λκήν τ’ ἐν χείρεσσι ἔ[λ]αβ[εν κ]α̣[ὶ] δαίμον̣[α] κυδρόν.

When Zeus, having heard the prophecies, from his father (πατρὸς ἑοῦ πάρα)

the power in his hands had taken, and the glorious daemon.

According to this reading, Zeus took the power from his father after he heard the prophecies. Zeus thus obeyed the prophecies and his actions are therefore justified. On the other hand, according to the reading the commentator is trying to undermine, the order of the words is kept:

Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ̣ πατρὸς ἑοῦ παρὰ θέσφατ’ ἀκούσας

[ἀ]λκήν τ’ ἐν χείρεσσι ἔ[λ]αβ[εν κ]α̣[ὶ] δαίμον̣[α] κυδρόν.

When Zeus, having heard his father, against the prophecies (παρὰ θέσφατα)

the power in his hands had taken, and the glorious daemon.”

According to this reading, after Zeus heard his father, he acted against the prophecies. Therefore, Zeus’ reign is unjustified! The difference between the two readings is drastic, and therefore the commentator’s decision that the words are transposed has significant theological and philosophical ramifications.

#### 2.3 Plato, Protagoras

*Hyperbaton* is also mentioned by Plato. In the platonic dialogue ‘Protagoras,’ Protagoras cites some verses from a well-known poem of Simonides: [[16]](#footnote-16)

ἄνδρ’ ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι χαλεπόν,

χερσίν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου

 τετυγμένον

For a man, indeed, to become truly good is hard,

In hands and feet and mind foursquare,

Fashioned without reproach.

Yet, claims Protagoras, these lines contradict what Simonides himself says later on (339c):

 οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον νέμεται,

 καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ’ ἐσθλὸν

 ἔμμεναι

Nor rings it true to me/ That word of Pittacus—/And yet it is a sage who spoke—It is hard, says he, to be good.

Protagoras then explains why he perceives this as a contradiction: “First Simonides laid it down himself that it is hard for a man to become good in truth, and then a little further on in his poem he forgot, and he proceeds to blame Pittacus for saying the same as he did—that it is hard to be good, and refuses to accept from him the same statement that he made himself.”[[17]](#footnote-17) Therefore, continues Protagoras, one of the two statements cannot be true.

Socrates, on the other hand, does not agree that Simonides contradicts himself. According to Socrates, Simonides distinguishes between ‘becoming’ (γενέσθαι) and ‘being’ (ἔμμεναι). In addition, the words ‘good’ and ‘truly’ should not be read together:[[18]](#footnote-18)

ἀλλ’ ὑπερβατὸν δεῖ θεῖναι ἐν τῷ ᾄσματι τὸ ἀλαθέως, οὑτωσί πως ὑπειπόντα τὸ τοῦ Πιττακοῦ, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ θεῖμεν αὐτὸν λέγοντα τὸν Πιττακὸν καὶ Σιμωνίδην ἀποκρινόμενον εἰπόντα· Ὦ ἄνθρωποι, χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι, τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινόμενον ὅτι Ὦ Πιττακέ, οὐκ ἀληθῆ λέγεις· οὐ γὰρ εἶναι ἀλλὰ γενέσθαι μέν ἐστιν ἄνδρα ἀγαθὸν χερσί τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον, χαλεπὸν ἀλαθέως. οὕτω φαίνεται [[](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB.html)τὸ[]](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB.html) πρὸς λόγον τὸ μέν ἐμβεβλημένον καὶ τὸ ἀλαθέως ὀρθῶς ἐπ’ ἐσχάτῳ κείμενον· καὶ τὰ ἐπιόντα πάντα τούτῳ μαρτυρεῖ, ὅτι οὕτως εἴρηται.

We must rather take the “truly (ἀλαθέως)” in the poem as a transposition (ὑπερβατόν), and first quote the saying of Pittacus in some such way as this: let us suppose Pittacus himself to be speaking and Simonides replying, as thus—Good people, he says, it is hard to be good (χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι); and the poet answers—Pittacus, what you say is not true, for it is not being but becoming good, indeed—in hands and feet and mind foursquare, fashioned without reproach—that is truly hard (χαλεπὸν ἀλαθέως). In this way we see a purpose in the insertion of “indeed (μέν),” and that the “truly (ἀλαθέως)” is correctly placed at the end; and all that comes after corroborates this view of his meaning. (trans. Lamb, LCL, slightly modified)

Socrates assumes a dialogue between Pittacus and Simonides. Yet the latter’s response is formed with a *hyperbaton*. Thus the verse should not be read as formerly assumed:

ἄνδρ’ ἀγαθὸν μὲν **ἀλαθέως** γενέσθαι χαλεπόν

For a man, indeed, to become **truly** good is hard

Rather, it should be read as if the word “truly” is placed at the end of the verse:

ἄνδρ’ ἀγαθὸν μὲν γενέσθαι χαλεπόν **ἀλαθέως**

For a man, indeed, to become good is **truly** hard

Thus, by assuming that the words are transposed, Socrates solves an exegetical problem. Yet, the solution seems rather forced, and it is therefore plausible, as suggested by Taylor,[[19]](#footnote-19) that Socrates is in fact parodying the exegetical techniques used by his contemporary sophists. If this is true, it would indicate that already in the 5th century BCE the sophists used *hyperbaton* in order to generate novel interpretations.

#### 2.4 Homeric Commentaries

One of the features which distinguishes poetry from prose is the order of words. While prose usually follows the natural word order, in poetry the word order is more flexible.

Since the Iliad and the Odyssey are poems, there are hundreds of comments in the scholia seeking to ‘translate’ Homeric poetic verses into a natural word order. These are

The commentators usually use the term τὸ ἑξῆς, followed by a ‘translation.’ At times, though, the commentators explicitly note that Homer uses a *hyperbaton*. This is found mainly in the exegetical scholia and in the comments by Nicanor.[[20]](#footnote-20)

In *Iliad* 1 Achilles addresses Agamemnon (169-171):

νῦν δ’ εἶμι Φθίην δ’, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτερόν ἐστιν

οἴκαδ’ ἴμεν σὺν νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν, οὐδέ σ’ ὀΐω

ἐνθάδ’ ἄτιμος ἐὼν ἄφενος καὶ πλοῦτον ἀφύξειν.

Now I will go back to Phthia, for it is far better to return home with my beaked ships, nor do I intend as I am here dishonored to pile up riches and wealth for you.

On these verses the scholia notes:

Sch. A *Il.* 1.169-171 ex.: νῦν δ’ εἶμι Φθίην δέ<—ἐνθάδ’ ἄτιμος ἐών>: ὁ νοῦς ὑπερβατόν· νῦν δ’ εἶμι Φθίην δὲ σὺν νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν, ἐνθάδ’ ἄτιμος ἐών, ἐπειῆ πολὺ φέρτερόν ἐστιν.

 “Now I will go back to Phthia [… as I am here dishonored]”: The meaning is in *hyperbaton*: ‘Now I will go back to Phthia with my beaked ships, as I am here dishonored, for it is far better to return home’.

According to the commentator the verses are written in *hyperbaton* and one should “translate” them into a natural word order, by shifting the words “as I am here dishonored” to the first part of the verse.[[21]](#footnote-21) This order clarifies the simple meaning of Achilles’ declaration.[[22]](#footnote-22)

It would seem that the understanding that Homer often uses a *hyperbaton* as part of his poetic style opened up the exegetical possibility for commentators to use the *hyperbaton* also, in order to solve textual problems.

In Iliad 16 before Patroclus dies, he defies Hector by stating that it was not Hector who actually killed him (ll. 849-850):

ἀλλά με μοῖρ’ ὀλοὴ καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός,

 ἀνδρῶν δ’ Εὔφορβος· σὺ δέ με τρίτος ἐξεναρίζεις.

Nay, it was baneful Fate and the son of Leto that slew me,

and of men Euphorbus, while you are the third in my slaying.

In his *Homeric Questions*, Porphyry presents the following discrepancy:[[23]](#footnote-23) How does Patroclus claim that Hector is the third who slew him, when he is in fact the fourth? Since he follows Fate, Apollo and Euphorbus!

According to Porphyry, several solutions were offered to this problem. One solution is that Fate is not counted.[[24]](#footnote-24) Another solution is that Apollo and Fate are counted as one since they are both divine. Others have proposed understanding the word “third” not as referring to an exact number, but rather as suggesting a general sense of ‘one of many’ (as can be seen in *Il*. 8.488). Finally, the transposition of words was offered as a solution;

τινὲς δὲ καθ’ ὑπερβατόν, ἵν’ ᾖ· τρίτος Εὔφορβος, σὺ δέ με ἐξεναρίζεις

Some (solve) according to a *hyperbaton*, so that (the reading) will be: Third Euphorbos, while you killed me.[[25]](#footnote-25)

According to this solution one should place (in understanding, not by altering the text) the word ‘third’ alongside Euphorbos.

In addition to transposed words in a verse, *hyperbaton* at times designates whole verses as transposed. In *Iliad* 8, after the Trojans are pushed back by Diomedes, Zeus forces him to retreat. Upon seeing this, Hector encourages his men to attack and then addresses his horses (184-190):

 Ὣς εἰπὼν ἵπποισιν ἐκέκλετο φώνησέν τε·

(185) Ξάνθέ τε καὶ σὺ Πόδαργε καὶ Αἴθων Λάμπέ τε δῖε

νῦν μοι τὴν κομιδὴν ἀποτίνετον, ἣν μάλα πολλὴν

Ἀνδρομάχη θυγάτηρ μεγαλήτορος Ἠετίωνος

ὑμῖν πὰρ προτέροισι μελίφρονα πυρὸν ἔθηκεν

οἶνόν τ’ ἐγκεράσασα πιεῖν, ὅτε θυμὸς ἀνώγοι,

(190) ἢ ἐμοί, ὅς πέρ οἱ θαλερὸς πόσις εὔχομαι εἶναι.

So saying he shouted to his horses, and said:

“Xanthus, and thou Podargus, and Aethon, and goodly Lampus,

[185] now pay me back your tending wherewith in abundance

Andromache, daughter of great-hearted Eëtion,

set sooner before you honey-hearted wheat,

and mingled wine to drink when the soul bade,

[190] than for me, that avow me to be her stalwart husband.” (LCL)

Verse 189 raised several difficulties for the commentators, as could be seen in the following scholia:

Sch. b *Il.* 8.188-90a1. ex.: ἀθετεῖται {δὲ} τὸ οἶνόν τ’ ἐγκεράσασα (189), ὅτι οὐ σύνηθες οἶνον πίνειν ἵππους, καὶ διὰ τὸ ὅτε θυμὸς ἀνώγοι (189) ψυχρὸν γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἵππων.

—ἔστιν οὖν ὑπερβατόν· ὑμῖν προτέροις πυρὸν παρέθηκεν ἢ ἐμοὶ τὸν αὐτὸν πυρὸν ἔθηκεν οἶνόν τ’ ἐγκεράσασα πιεῖν ὅτε θυμὸς ἀνώγοι (189), ἵν’ ᾖ τὸ πυρὸν ἔθηκεν (188) ἀπὸ κοινοῦ.

The verse “mingled wine” (189) is marked as spurious (ἀθετεῖται), because it is not customary for horses to drink wine, and because the (expression) “when the soul bade” is stupid regarding horses.

– There is therefore a *hyperbaton*: ‘set sooner before you wheat, (190) than she set the same wheat for me and mingled wine to drink when the soul bade’. So that the (words) ‘set wheat’ are shared (ἀπὸ κοινοῦ).

According to the literal reading, line 189 refers to the horses. Andromache poured them wine before she served wine to her husband. Yet the commentators deem this ridiculous – first, horses do not drink wine, and, secondly, the expression “when the soul bade” would seem better suited to humans than horses.

Two different solutions are offered. The first solution is to mark line 189 as spurious.

As we learn from the A scholia to this line (Sch. A *Il.* 8.189b) it was Aristophanes of Byzantium who first suggested this *athetesis* (καὶ παρὰ Ἀριστοφάνει ἀθετεῖται).[[26]](#footnote-26) Thus the verses are to be read as follows:

(188) ὑμῖν πὰρ προτέροισι μελίφρονα πυρὸν ἔθηκεν

(190) ἢ ἐμοί, ὅς πέρ οἱ θαλερὸς πόσις εὔχομαι εἶναι.

[188] Set sooner before you honey-hearted wheat,

[190] than for me, that avow me to be her stalwart husband.

According to this version Andromache served wheat to the horses before her husband, and *not* wine.

In contradistinction, according to the second solution offered in the scholia, there is here a *hyperbaton*, that is, the verses are transposed: verse 190 should be understood before verse 189:[[27]](#footnote-27)

(188) ὑμῖν πὰρ προτέροισι μελίφρονα πυρὸν ἔθηκεν

(190) ἢ ἐμοί, ὅς πέρ οἱ θαλερὸς πόσις εὔχομαι εἶναι,

(189) οἶνόν τ’ ἐγκεράσασα πιεῖν, ὅτε θυμὸς ἀνώγοι.

(188) Set sooner before you honey-hearted wheat,

(190) than for me, that avow me to be her stalwart husband.

(189) and mingled wine to drink when the soul bade.

According to this reading line 189 refers only to Hector and not to the horses: Andromache gave the horses wheat before she served the wheat to her husband, and she then mixed wine for her husband. Thus the horses are not said to have drunk wine.

It is important to stress once again that by using a *hyperbaton* the commentator does not intend to actually change the order of the Homeric text, but rather to explain the correct order in which the verses are to be understood. In the cases when the commentators want to amend the order of words or verses they usually use terms derived from the verb μετατίθημι (change, transpose).[[28]](#footnote-28)

In *Iliad* 6 when Hector arrives at his father’s palace he meets his mother, Hecabe, who asks him to stay a while:

ἀλλὰ μέν’ ὄφρά κέ τοι μελιηδέα οἶνον ἐνείκω,

ὡς σπείσῃς Διὶ πατρὶ καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισι

πρῶτον, ἔπειτα δὲ καὐτὸς ὀνήσεαι αἴ κε πίῃσθα. (260)

ἀνδρὶ δὲ κεκμηῶτι μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει

But stay till I have brought thee honey-sweet wine

that you may pour libation to Zeus and the other immortals first,

[260] and then shall you yourself have profit thereof, if so be you will drink.

for a weary man wine increases strength greatly

Hector then answers:

μή μοι οἶνον ἄειρε μελίφρονα πότνια μῆτερ,

μή μ’ ἀπογυιώσῃς μένεος, ἀλκῆς τε λάθωμαι· (265)

χερσὶ δ’ ἀνίπτοισιν Διὶ λείβειν αἴθοπα οἶνον

ἅζομαι· οὐδέ πῃ ἔστι κελαινεφέϊ Κρονίωνι

αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον εὐχετάασθαι.

“Bring me no honey-hearted wine, honoured mother,

[265] that you not deprive me of strength and I forget valor,

moreover with hands unwashen I have awe to pour libation of flaming wine to Zeus; nor may it in any wise be that a man should to the son of Cronos, lord of the dark clouds,

make prayer all befouled with blood and filth.

On this interaction between mother and son, Porphyry comments:[[29]](#footnote-29)

ζητεῖται πῶς ποτε ἐναντία ἑαυτῷ ὁ ποιητὴς λέγει· προειπὼν γὰρ "ἀνδρὶ κεκμηῶτι μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει [(](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/SB1.html)261[)](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/SB1.html), νῦν ἐπάγει "μή μ’ ἀπογυιώσης μένεος ἀλκῆς τε λάθωμαι".

It is inquired how in the world the poet says self-contradictions. For before having said, “for a weary man wine increases strength greatly” (261), now he supplies “that you not deprive me of strength and I forget valor” (265).

It would seem that Homer contradicts himself concerning the impact of wine. Porphyry suggests several solutions to this problem, including one based on the principle κατὰ τοῦ προσώπου: there is no contradiction since the two statements are delivered by different characters (Hecabe and Hector) and represent their individual points of view. In addition, Porphyry offers a solution based on line transposition:[[30]](#footnote-30)

ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἑτέρα λύσις τοῦ ζητήματος, καθ’ ὑπερβατὸν ἐξηγουμένων τινῶν οὕτως· μή μοι οἶνον ἄειρε μελίφρονα, πότνια μῆτερ, (264) χερσὶ δ’ ἀνίπτοισιν Διὶ λείβειν αἴθοπα οἶνον ἅζομαι, οὐδέ πῃ ἔστι κελαινεφέι Κρονίωνι αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον εὐχετάασθαι, (266-268) μή μ’ ἀπογυιώσῃς μένεος ἀλκῆς τε λάθωμαι (265)", ἵνα ὡς μὴ καθαρὸς τὰς χεῖρας τὸν οἶνον σπένδειν θεοῖς παραιτῆται καὶ μὴ ὀργήν τινα παρὰ θεῶν λάβῃ διὰ τοῦτο.

But there is also another solution to the question, with some explaining it by *hyperbaton* in this way: “Please do not raise sweet wine, Lady mother (264), but I shrink from making a libation of dark wine to Zeus with unwashed hands, nor is it in any way possible for me splattered with blood and filth to pray to the dark-clouded son of Cronus (266-268) “that you not deprive me of strength and I forget valor” (265), so that he refuses to make a libation to the gods as though impure with respect to his hands, and he does not receive any anger from the gods on account of this.

According to this solution line 265 should be read after line 268, and thus Hector does not mean that wine will remove his power but rather that if he were to offer a libation to Zeus with defiled hands, he shall be weakened.

#### 2.5 Philo and Christian Commentary

Under the influence of Greek scholarship, Philo and some early Christian authors also used the technical term *hyperbaton* in order to solve problems in the text. I will briefly discuss two examples.

In his treatise ‘On the Change of Names,’ Philo discusses God’s name and argues that it is impossible to attribute to Him a proper name (ὄνομα κύριον). Yet mortals need a name for God “so that they may approach if not the fact at least the name of supreme excellence and be brought into relation with it.”[[31]](#footnote-31) The proof that God’s proper name was never revealed to any mortal is found, claims Philo, in God’s declaration in Exod. 6:3:

[„](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q1.html)ὤφθην[“](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q2.html) φησί [„](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q1.html)πρὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακὼβ θεὸς ὢν αὐτῶν, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου κύριον οὐκ ἐδήλωσα αὐτοῖς[“](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q2.html) [(](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/SB1.html)Exod. 6, 3[)](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/SB1.html). τοῦ γὰρ ὑπερβατοῦ μετατεθέντος ἑξῆς ἂν τοιοῦτος εἴη λόγος· [„](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q1.html)ὄνομά μου τὸ κύριον οὐκ ἐδήλωσα αὐτοῖς[“](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q2.html), ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν καταχρήσει διὰ τὰς εἰρημένας αἰτίας.

 “I was seen,” He says, “of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, being their God, and my name of ‘Lord’ (τὸ ὄνομά μου κύριον) I did not reveal to them” (Exod. 6:3). For when the *hyperbaton* is reset (τοῦ γὰρ ὑπερβατοῦ μετατεθέντος) in the proper order (ἑξῆς)[[32]](#footnote-32) it will run thus, “My proper name (ὄνομά μου τὸ κύριον) I did not reveal to thee,” but, He implies, only the substitute, and that for reasons already mentioned.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Philo plays with the different meanings of the word κύριος. Κύριος could mean ‘Lord’ and this title is often used by the Septuagint to translate YHWH. However, the expression ὄνομα κύριον could mean ‘proper name.’ Reading the verse in the given order leads to the understanding (evident also in the Hebrew) that God did not reveal to the patriarchs his name, which is “Lord” (Κύριος).[[34]](#footnote-34) Yet, according to Philo, the verse is written as a *hyperbaton* and the definite article τό should be moved two words ahead.[[35]](#footnote-35) With this transposition the meaning of the verse is that God did not reveal to them his proper name – since it is impossible to name God. This slight change in word order has significant theological ramifications.

A similar use of *hyperbaton* for exegetical purposes is found among Christian biblical exegetes, especially Clement of Alexandria[[36]](#footnote-36) and Origen.[[37]](#footnote-37) Let us examine one example from the latter.

In Luke 1:26-27 it is stated:

Ἐν δὲ τῷ μηνὶ τῷ ἕκτῳ ἀπεστάλη ἄγγελος Γαβριὴλ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς πόλιν τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ᾗ ὄνομα Ναζαρέθ, πρὸς παρθένον μεμνηστευμένην ἀνδρί, ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωσήφ ἐξ οἴκου Δαβίδ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς παρθένου Μαριάμ

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. (KJV)

In a fragment from his commentary to Luke, Origen notes:[[38]](#footnote-38)

Τὸ οὖν ὑπέρβατον οὕτως ἔχει· [‹](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/Q7.html)ἀπεστάλη ὁ ἄγγελος πρὸς παρθένον ἐξ οἴκου Δαβίδ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς παρθένου Μαριάμ, μεμνηστευμένην ἀνδρί, ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωσήφ[›](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/Q7.html)

The *hyperbaton* is as follows: ‘The angel was sent to a virgin from the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph.’

Origen does not explicitly explain why the verse has to be transposed, yet the difficulty he seeks to resolve is evident. According to the given word order it could be understood that Joseph is from the house of David. In order to avoid such an understanding, Origen claims that the verse makes use of a *hyperbaton* and the words ‘espoused to a man whose name was Joseph’ should be transposed to the end of the verse, thus making it clear that the words ‘from the house of David’ refer to Mary. Here too, as we have seen above, Origen does not claim that the text itself has to be emended, only the way it is to be understood – the author of the gospel has employed the rhetorical technique of a *hyperbaton*.

Having discussed transposed word-order which could change the meaning of sentence, we turn now to cases in which the word-order presents a reversal of the order of events.

### Order (τάξις)

In rhetorical treatises τάξις (*taksis*) refers to the natural order (*ordo naturalis*), that is, the chronological order. Many of these treatises recommend that the orator (or author) follow the natural order of events when describing them.[[39]](#footnote-39) Yet at times the speaker should “reverse the order” (ἀναστρέφειν τὴν τάξιν) or “change the order” (ἀλλασσειν τὴν τάξιν), leaving the natural order in favor of an *ordo artificiosus*.[[40]](#footnote-40)

In the Homeric commentaries, some of the comments regarding τάξις deal with the order of the narrative in general, yet most of them deal with the limited unit of the verse or a short section, which we shall now discuss.[[41]](#footnote-41)

At times, the scholia notes that the poet ‘follows the order’ (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν). Thus in the battle scene, the goddesses Strife, Tumult and Fate appear on Achilles’ shield. The scholia comments:

Sch. bT *Il.* 18.535 ex.: ἐν δ’ Ἔρις, ἐν δὲ Κυδοιμὸς [<](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)ὁμίλεον, ἐν δ’ ὀλοὴ Κήρ[>](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)[:](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/P10.html) κατὰ τὴν τάξιν τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τὰς ὀνομασίας εἴρηκεν.

And amid them Strife and Tumult <joined in the fray, and deadly Fate>: He mentioned also the names according to the order of things.

The commentator notes that there is correspondence between the order in which the goddesses are mentioned in the text, and the order they appear in reality: first comes strife, followed by tumult, and finally death.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Alongside several other similar instances where the commentators note that Homer wrote κατὰ τὴν τάξιν (‘according to the order’), they more often comment on cases in which they believe that Homer ‘changed the order’. Such comments are not intended to solve a difficulty, but rather to point to Homer’s use of rhetorical methods. The terms usually used in such comments are ἡ τάξις ἐνήλλακται (‘the order has been changed’) or ἤλλαξε τὴν τάξιν (‘he changed the order’). Most of these comments appear in the bT scholia, but it is likely that some go back to Aristarchus.[[43]](#footnote-43)

So, for example, a commentator notes regarding Nestor’s speech in Iliad 4:

Sch. T *Il.* 4.308b ex.: πόλιας καὶ τείχεα: ἤλλαξε τὴν τάξιν, πόλιας καὶ τείχεα.

“(Lay waste) cities and walls”: He changed the order, cities and walls.

The usual order of action is to first destroy the walls of the city and then to lay waste to the cities themselves. Homer (or Nestor), reversed the order by placing the cities before the wall.[[44]](#footnote-44)

In *Odyssey* 4, Telemachus and Nestor’s son receive a generous hospitality at Menelaus’ abode, including the following treatment:

τοὺς δ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν δμῳαὶ λοῦσαν καὶ χρῖσαν ἐλαίῳ,

ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄρα χλαίνας οὔλας βάλον ἠδὲ χιτῶνας

And the maids bathed them and anointed them with oil, and cast about them fleecy cloaks and tunics

The scholia notes:

Sch. *Od.* 4.50a: ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄρα χλαίνας ... χιτῶνας: ἡ τάξις ἐνήλλακται· πάντες γὰρ <χιτῶνας> προενδύονται.

“Cast about them fleecy cloaks and tunics”: The order is changed. For everyone first puts on tunics.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Here too the commentator notes that there is no correspondence between the word order and the order of actions.

Similarly, on Hecabe’s emotional reaction to the death of her son, Hector, and the desecration of his body by Achilles, the scholiast notes:

Schol. T. *Il.* 22.406 ex.[:](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/CB2.html) [<](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)τίλλε κόμην,[>](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html) ἀπὸ δὲ λιπαρὴν [<](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)ἔρριψε καλύπτρην[>](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)[:](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/P10.html) ἤλλαξε τὴν τάξιν· ῥίψασα γὰρ ἔτιλλεν.

“(But his mother) tore her hair and from her flung far her gleaming veil”: He changed the order, for after she flung she tore.

According to the commentator, it is clear that the natural order is to first remove the veil and then to tear out the hair. Yet Homer chose to reverse the order, probably in order to highlight Hecabe’s grief.

As mentioned above, such comments on the reversed order do not seek to solve a textual problem but rather to draw the reader's attention to Homer’s rhetorical skill.

### *Sares*

In the Halakhic Midrashim the terms מקרא מסורס and סרס את המקרא are used to denote that the word-order of the verse is transposed.[[46]](#footnote-46) So, for example, the following *derasha* appears in Sifre Numbers (39, p. 106)

"כה תברכו את בני ישראל" (במד' ו 23), בשם המפורש. אתה אומר בשם המפורש או אינו אלא בכינוי? ת"ל "ושמו את שמי" (שם 27) במקדש בשם המפורש ובמדינה בכינוי.

ר' יאשיה אומר: "בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי" (שמות כ 21) זה מקרא מסורס - שבכל מקום שאני נגלה עליך שם תהא מזכיר את שמי. והיכן אני נגלה עליך? בבית הבירה. אף אתה לא תהא מזכיר את שמי אלא בבית הבירה.

“Thus shall you bless the people of Israel” (Num. 6:23): with the Explicit Name. You say with the Explicit Name, or is it rather with a substituted name? It therefore says: “And they shall place my Name” (Num. 6:27): In the Temple with the Explicit Name and in the provinces with a substituted name.

R. Yoshaya says: “In every place where I will mention My name” (Exod. 20:21). This is a transposed verse (*mikra mesoras*) – ‘For in every place where I reveal myself to you, there shall you mention my name'’ And where do I reveal myself to you? In the Temple. Thus you too shall not mention My name other than in the Temple.

R. Yoshaya’s derasha is based on Exod. 20:21:[[47]](#footnote-47)

בְּכָל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַזְכִּיר אֶת שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ

In every place where I will mention My name I will come to you and bless you.

As scholars have noted, it seems most likely that R. Yoshaya had a different version of the text, which had תזכיר (“you will mention”), documented also in the Aramaic Targum, rather than אזכיר (“I will mention”), as in the Masoretic version.[[48]](#footnote-48)

R. Yoshaya suggests that the word order in the verse is transposed. The verse should therefore be read by reversing the cause and effect:

בכל המקום אשר אבוא אליך וברכתיך, תזכיר את שמי.

In every place where I will come to you and bless you, you will mention My name.

Thus the words “I will come to you and bless you” and “you will mention My name” are transposed.

According to such a reading, one is permitted to mention God’s full name only in the place where He appears – that is, in the Jerusalem Temple. Through such a reading R. Yoshaya wishes to reject the literal meaning which would seem to permit mentioning God’s name everywhere, undermining the centralization of worship.

It is important to stress that R. Yoshaya does not argue that the verse is corrupt and its order should be reversed, rather, we need to understand the verse as if it were transposed (similar to ὁ νοῦς ὑπερβατόν).

Another example for the use of transposition as a solution to a problematic word-order could be found in the Mekhilta de-Miluim in the *Sifra*. After the death of Nadav and Avihu, Moses addresses Aaron and his remaining sons (Lev. 10:6):

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל אַהֲרֹן וּלְאֶלְעָזָר וּלְאִיתָמָר בָּנָיו רָאשֵׁיכֶם אַל תִּפְרָעוּ וּבִגְדֵיכֶם לֹא תִפְרֹמוּ וְלֹא תָמֻתוּ וְעַל כָּל הָעֵדָה יִקְצֹף וַאֲחֵיכֶם כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכּוּ אֶת הַשְּׂרֵפָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף ה'.

And Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, “Do not bare your heads and do not rend your clothes, lest you die and anger shall strike the whole community. But your kinsmen, all the house of Israel, shall bewail the burning that the Lord has wrought.”

The Midrash notes (Mekhilta de-Miluim 1, 2; 46a, following MS Oxford):[[49]](#footnote-49)

"ועל כל העדה יקצף ואחיכם בני ישר'" זה מקרא מסורס. אין ראוי לומר אלא "ואחיכם יבכו ועל כל העדה יקצף" הא אם אין אחיכם [בוכים](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=4142&SUM=%221609%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22בכי%20%5bקל%5d%20%7bבכי%7d%22) "ועל כל העדה יקצף".

“And anger shall strike the whole community. But your kinsmen, all the house of Israel”: This is a transposed verse. One should rather say: But your kinsmen shall bewail and anger shall strike the whole community”. Thus if your kinsmen do not cry, “anger shall strike the whole community.”

According to the midrash the word order in the verse is transposed and the correct order of understanding is:

ואחיכם כל בית ישראל יבכו את השרפה אשר שרף ה' ועל כל העדה יקצף

“But your kinsmen, all the house of Israel, shall bewail the burning that the Lord has wrought; *and anger shall strike the whole community*”.

The midrash goes on to explain that the words “and anger shall strike the whole community” are in fact the apodosis of an elliptic conditional phrase: “[And if your kinsmen shall not bewail] - *anger shall strike the whole community*.”[[50]](#footnote-50)

Alongside the use of *sares* for tackling a problematic word order, in other cases *sares* is used to solve a difficulty stemming from the fact that the events are not described according to their natural order. In Exod. 16:19 Moses instructs the people not to leave over any of the manna until the morning. However, the people do not obey (ibid, 20):

 וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיּוֹתִרוּ אֲנָשִׁים מִמֶּנּוּ עַד בֹּקֶר וַיָּרֻם תּוֹלָעִים וַיִּבְאַשׁ וַיִּקְצֹף עֲלֵהֶם מֹשֶׁה

But they paid no attention to Moses; some of them left of it until morning, and it bred worms and rotted. And Moses was angry with them.

On this verse the *Mekhilta of R. Ishmael* notes (va-Yasa 4, p. 167)

"וירם תולעים ויבאש" [הרי](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=8436&SUM=%2213565%22&ERECH=%22%E4%C2%F8%C5%E9%20(%E4%F0%E4,%20%E4%EC%E0)%20%7b%E4%C2%F8%C5%E9%7d%22) [זה](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=8887&SUM=%2252641%22&ERECH=%22%E6%C6%E4%20%7b%E6%C6%E4%7d%22) [מקרא](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=18634&SUM=%221741%22&ERECH=%22%EE%C4%F7%C0%F8%C8%E0%20%7b%F7%F8%E0%7d%22) מסורס.

 וכי [מה](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=16721&SUM=%2238908%22&ERECH=%22%EE%C8%E4%20%7b%EE%C8%E4%7d%22) [שמרחיש](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=30849&SUM=%2266%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%F8%E7%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%E4%FA%F0%E5%F2%F2%E5%FA,%20%E6%E7%E9%EC%E4,%20%EC%E7%E9%F9%E4,%20%E4%FA%F8%E7%F9%E5%FA,%20%E0%E9%F8%E5%F2)%20%7b%F8%E7%F9%D1%7d%22) [הוא](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=7904&SUM=%2261528%22&ERECH=%22%E4%E5%CC%E0%20%7b%E4%E5%CC%E0%7d%22) [מבאיש?](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=3422&SUM=%22124%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%E1%E0%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%F1%F8%E7%E5%EF)%20%7b%E1%E0%F9%D1%7d%22)

[אלא](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=1484&SUM=%2232470%22&ERECH=%22%E0%C6%EC%C8%CC%E0%20%7b%E0%C6%EC%C8%CC%E0%7d%22) [מבאיש](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=3422&SUM=%22124%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%E1%E0%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%F1%F8%E7%E5%EF)%20%7b%E1%E0%F9%D1%7d%22) [ואחר](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=1112&SUM=%2216742%22&ERECH=%22%E0%C7%E7%C7%F8%20%7b%E0%E7%F8%7d%22) [כך](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=14540&SUM=%2216647%22&ERECH=%22%EB%C8%CC%EA%C0%20%7b%EB%C8%CC%EA%C0%7d%22) [מרחיש.](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=30849&SUM=%2266%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%F8%E7%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%E4%FA%F0%E5%F2%F2%E5%FA,%20%E6%E7%E9%EC%E4,%20%EC%E7%E9%F9%E4,%20%E4%FA%F8%E7%F9%E5%FA,%20%E0%E9%F8%E5%F2)%20%7b%F8%E7%F9%D1%7d%22)

כעינין [שנ'](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=1923&SUM=%2242055%22&ZMAN=%221%22&ERECH=%22%E0%EE%F8%20%5b%F0%F4%F2%EC%5d%20(%E3%E9%E1%E5%F8,%20%EE%E7%F9%E1%E4)%20%7b%E0%EE%F8%7d%22) "ולא הבאיש ורמה ולא היתה בו" (שמ' טז 24).

“And it bred worms and rotted”: The verse is transposed.

For does a thing first breed worms and then rot?

Rather it rots and then it breeds worms.

As it is said: “And it did not rot, neither was there any worm therein” (Exod. 16:24).

According to the midrash, the order of events in the verse is opposite to the natural order of things: first the manna would have rotted, and only afterward would it breed worms. A proof is found in Exod. 16:24, where the events are described according to the correct order. It is necessary, therefore, to assume that the order of events in Exod. 16:19 is transposed. Such a conclusion is very similar to the examples of reversal of order (ἤλλαξε τὴν τάξιν) found in the Homeric commentaries, discussed above.

Another example could be found in Lev. 9:22 which describes the end of Aaron’s service on the eighth day of the *miluim*:

וַיִּשָּׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת ידו [יָדָיו] אֶל הָעָם וַיְבָרְכֵם וַיֵּרֶד מֵעֲשֹׂת הַחַטָּאת וְהָעֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים.

And Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he stepped down after offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the offering of well-being.

On this verse the *Mekhilta d’Miluim* notes (1, 2; 45b):[[51]](#footnote-51)

שנ' "וישא אהרן את ידיו אל העם ויברכם וירד מעשות וגו'" זה מקרא מסורס.

אילא ראוי לומר: "וירד מעשות החטאת העולה והשלמים", "וישא אהרן את ידיו אל העם ויברכם" שבירידתו נשא כפיו ויברך את העם.

For it says: “And Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he stepped down after offering etc.” – This is a transposed verse.

Rather, one should say: “and he stepped down after offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the offering of well-being. And Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them.” Since when he stepped down he lifted his hands and blessed the people.

According to the midrash the order of actions in the verse is reversed, as the last actions appear first. The correct order should be: First Aaron stepped down after offering the sin offering and only afterwards did he lift his hands and bless the people, thus ending the eighth day of *miluim*.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Alongside the term מקרא מסורס (the verse is transposed), there appears three times in *Sifre Numbers* the phrase סרס את המקרא ודרשהו (transpose the verse and expound it) attributed to R. Yoshaya.[[53]](#footnote-53) The three *derashot* are almost completely identical and in all three R. Yoshaya disputes with Abba Hanan in the name of R. Eliezer.

So, for example, on the address of the daughters of Zelophehad to Moses and Eleazar in Numbers 27:2 (“They stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest”) the following dispute appears in *Sifre Numbers* (133):[[54]](#footnote-54)

"לפני משה ולפני אלעזר", אם משה לא היה יודע אלעזר היה יודע?

אלא סרס המקרא ודורשהו, דברי ר' יאשיה

אבה חנן אומר משם ר' אליעזר: בבית המדרש היו יושבין ובאו ועמדו לפניהן.

“Before Moses and before Eleazar”: If Moses did not know, would Eleazar know?

Rather, transpose the verse and expound it, the words of R. Yoshaya.

Abba Hanan says in the name of R. Eliezer: They (i.e. Moses and Eleazer) were sitting in the study hall and they (the daughters of Zelophehad) came and stood in front of them.

The question R. Yoshaya and Abba Hannan address - If Moses does not know, would Eleazar know? – is based on the assumption that the sequence of the names in the verse designates also the sequence in which they were asked – first Moses and then Eleazar. In the Halakhic Midrashim of the school of R. Yishmael this assumption is often formulated by the rule (usually rejected): כל הקודם במקרא קודם במעשה (‘what precedes in the verse also precedes in reality’).[[55]](#footnote-55)

So, for example, in the beginning of the Mekhilta of R. Yishmael (Pisha 1, p. 1) the following *derasha* appears on Exod. 12:1 (“The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt”):

ר' או' "אל משה ואל אהרן". כל הקודם במקרא הוא קודם במעשה?

ת"ל "הוא אהרן ומשה" (שמ' ו 26) מגיד ששניהם שקולין זה כזה.

Rabbi says: “to Moses and Aaron”. Does the one preceding in the scriptural text have precedence also in reality? Scripture says: “It is the same Aaron and Moses [to whom the Lord said]” (Ex. 6.26) - It declares that both were equal.

Rabbi rejects the possibility that God first addressed Moses and only afterward Aaron by citing another verse where the names are reversed. The conclusion is that they were both addressed simultaneously.

In the *derasha* in *Sifre Numbers*, on the other hand, R. Yoshaya’s solution to the problem of the order in which Moses and Eleazar are mentioned is to transpose the verse. The natural order of the verse should be “Before Eleazar and before Moses”. Thus the daughters of Zelophehad first addressed Eleazar and only then Moses. Abba Hanna disputes this solution and argues that the meaning of the verse is that they came before Moses and Eleazar at the same time. Despite their disagreement, both R. Yoshaya and Abba Hannan agree that the order of the names in the verse does not reflect the order of the events. Why then, according to these sages, is Moses mentioned first? It would seem that a similar exegetical dispute in the Homeric scholia might shed light on this question.

In the opening of *Iliad* 10 we are told that Agamemnon could not sleep and therefore he got up, armed himself and went out to consult his friends. Immediately afterwards a similar account is given concerning Menelaus: he could not sleep, he got up, armed himself and went to wake up his brother, Agamemnon.

On the latter the scholia notes:[[56]](#footnote-56)

Sch. AbT *Il.* 10.25a. ex.: κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν τῷ Ἀγαμέμνονι. ἀλλ’ ὁ ποιητὴς τῷ βασιλικωτέρῳ προσώπῳ ἀπένειμε τὴν προτέραν τάξιν τοῦ λόγου

<Menelaus gets up> at the same time as Agamemnon, but the Poet gave the first

place in his text to the more kingly character.

According to the commentator, Menelaus and Agamemnon rose at the same time, but Homer chose to depict Agamemnon’s getting up first due to his higher status.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Yet there were scholars who disagreed with this solution. On the verse following the description of Menelaus’ rising - βῆ δ’ ἴμεν ἀνστήσων ὃν ἀδελφεόν – the scholia notes:[[58]](#footnote-58)

Sch. bT *Il.* 10. 32a. ex. δῆλον ὡς προεταράχθη Μενέλαος, ὁ δὲ ποιητὴς καταπλῆξαι ἠθέλησε διὰ τοῦ βασιλικωτέρου προσώπου.

It is clear that Menelaus rose earlier. The Poet though wanted to impress through the more kingly character.

From the fact that Menelaus went to wake his brother Agamemnon, it is clear to the commentator that he also woke up first. Yet both commentators agree that Agamemnon did not rise first. They also agree that Agamemnon was mentioned first because of his kingly status.

It would seem that, similar to the Homeric commentators, R. Yoshaya and Abba Hanna also assumed that the reason Moses was mentioned first was his higher status, even though it does not reflect the precise order of events.[[59]](#footnote-59)

To sum up, in the rabbinic commentary the use of verse transposition accounts for two similar yet distinct problems:

1. Problematic word order (“and anger shall strike the whole community”; “In every place where I will mention My name”, and most amoraic *derashot*).[[60]](#footnote-60)
2. Reversed order of events, where the last event appears first (“and it bred worms and rotted”; “to Moses and Aaron”).

In none of these *derashot* is any explanation given as to why the verse is transposed. The commentators merely note it as a fact.

The term סרס את המקרא (transpose the verse) appears three times in Sifre Numbers, whereas מקרא מסורס (the verse is transposed) appears once in the Mekhilta d’R. Yishmael, once in Sifre Numbers, and twice in the Mekhilta d’Miluim.[[61]](#footnote-61) It would seem therefore that these are typical terms of the school of R. Yishmael.[[62]](#footnote-62) Moreover, as noted by several scholars, all the named derashot of verse transpositions in tannaitic sources are attributed to R. Yoshaya, a prominent student of R. Yishmael.[[63]](#footnote-63)

It is thus possible that R. Yoshaya, active in the 2nd century CE, was the first to reflexively use this technique, or, at the very least, this terminology.

### According to the Order (על הסדר)

While מקרא מסורס designates the reversal of the word order or order of events, the term על הסדר (*‘al ha-seder*) means that the textual order reflects the order of events.[[64]](#footnote-64)

So, for example, on the verse which ends the instructions concerning the Yom Kippur services (Lev. 16:34), we find the following note in the Sifra (Aharei Mot 5.10, 83b, MS Vatican 31):[[65]](#footnote-65)

ומנין שכל הפרשה אמורה על הסדר? תלמוד לומר "ויעש כאשר צוה ייי את משה".

And whence [do we know] that the entire pericope (*parasha*) is said according to the order? For it says: “And Moses did as the Lord had commanded him.”

The meaning of the expression אמורה על הסדר, is that the order of the actions depicted in the chapter reflects their actual order in reality. The term על הסדר is therefore an exact parallel to the Greek term κατὰ τὴν τάξιν.

Even though the order of the various services in this and in most rabbinic sources follow the order of the verses, there is one exception, commented on a little earlier in the Sifra on Lev. 16:23 (Aharei Mot 4.2 82b, MS Vatican 31):

"ובא אהרן אל אהל מועד" כל הפרשה אמורה על סדר חוץ מן הפסוק הזה, "ובא אהרן אל אהל מועד"

ולמה בא? להוציא את הכף ואת המחתה.

“And Aaron shall go into the Tent of Meeting”: The entire *parasha* is said according to the order except for this verse, “And Aaron shall go into the Tent of Meeting”.

Why then did he go in? To remove the censer and the fire pan.

Shlomo Naeh and Israel Knohl have noted that there are two innovations in this reading, compared to the literal understanding:[[66]](#footnote-66)

The first, the changing of the order of the services: According to the biblical order, Aaron came to the Tent of Meeting after sending off the goat to Azazel, and before offering his and the people’s burnt-offerings; whereas according to the Rabbis, he comes only after completing all the daily services.

The second innovation – the purpose of the priest’s entrance to the Tent of Meeting: From the Torah it would seem to be implied that the priest enters the Tent only in order to change his vestments; whereas according to the Rabbis he enters in order to remove the incense-pan which he brought into the Holy of Holies, upon his first entrance.

In order to understand the change offered by the Sifra, it is necessary to examine the list of actions which appear after sending out the goat to the wilderness:

(23) וּבָא אַהֲרֹן אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּפָשַׁט אֶת בִּגְדֵי הַבָּד אֲשֶׁר לָבַשׁ בְּבֹאוֹ אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְהִנִּיחָם שָׁם.

(24) וְרָחַץ אֶת בְּשָׂרוֹ בַמַּיִם בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ וְלָבַשׁ אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְיָצָא וְעָשָׂה אֶת עֹלָתוֹ וְאֶת עֹלַת הָעָם וְכִפֶּר בַּעֲדוֹ וּבְעַד הָעָם.

(25) וְאֵת חֵלֶב הַחַטָּאת יַקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחָה.

23 And Aaron shall go into the Tent of Meeting, take off the linen vestments that he put on when he entered the Shrine, and leave them there.

24 He shall bathe his body in water in the holy precinct and put on his vestments and he shall come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, making expiation for himself and for the people.

25 The fat of the sin offering he shall turn into smoke on the altar.

According to the order of the verses, the high priest enters the Holy of Holies immediately after sending off the Azazel-goat. He then bathes, changes his vestments and offers his and his people’s burnt offering. Yet, according to the Sifra, the true order is that the priest makes the offerings after sending off the goat, and only then does he enter the Holy of Holies. Finally, he bathes and changes his vestments. According to the Sifra the true order of the verses would be as follows:

(24ב) וְעָשָׂה אֶת עֹלָתוֹ וְאֶת עֹלַת הָעָם וְכִפֶּר בַּעֲדוֹ וּבְעַד הָעָם.

(25) וְאֵת חֵלֶב הַחַטָּאת יַקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחָה.

(23) וּבָא אַהֲרֹן אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּפָשַׁט אֶת בִּגְדֵי הַבָּד אֲשֶׁר לָבַשׁ בְּבֹאוֹ אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְהִנִּיחָם שָׁם.

(24א) וְרָחַץ אֶת בְּשָׂרוֹ בַמַּיִם בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ וְלָבַשׁ אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְיָצָא.

24b And he shall offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, making expiation for himself and for the people.

25 The fat of the sin offering he shall turn into smoke on the altar.

23 And Aaron shall go into the Tent of Meeting, take off the linen vestments that he put on when he entered the Shrine, and leave them there.

24a He shall bathe his body in water in the holy precinct and put on his vestments then he shall come out.

In this case, similar to what we have seen above in the Homeric commentary, the order of the verses needs to be transposed in order to fit the correct order of events.[[67]](#footnote-67)

Thus a pericope which is written על הסדר follows the true order of events, in contradistinction to מקרא מסורס, which refers, at times, to a reversed order of events. Yet it should be emphasized that in the tannaitic literature על הסדר refers to the inner order of a pericope, whereas מקרא מסורס refers only to the word order in a single verse (=מקרא).

It is only in amoraic literature that the term “transposed pericope” (פרשה מסורסת) is introduced and placed in direct confrontation with the term “according to the order” (על הסדר), as in the following *derasha* from Genesis Rabba (70, pp. 800-801):

ר' אייבו ור' יונתן חד אמר מסורסת היא הפרשה וחרנה אמר על הסדר נאמרה.

מן דמר מסורסת היא הפרשה "הנה אנכי עמך" (בראשית כח 15) "אם יהיה אלהים עמדי" (שם 20) אתמהא?!

מן דאמר על הסדר נאמרה, ומה מקיים "אם יהיה אלהים עמדי"? אלא שאם יהיה לי זכות שיתקיימו כל התנאים שהיתנה עימי.

R. Aybo[[68]](#footnote-68) and R. Yonatan. One said the *parasha* is transposed (*mesoreset*), and the other said – it (the *parasha*) was said according to the order.

He who says the *parasha* is transposed: [How is it possible that] “Remember, I am with you” (Gen. 28:15) [precedes] “If God will be with me” (ibid 20)?

How does he who says it was said according to the order maintain “If God will be with me” (ibid 20)? Rather, if I will have the merit that all the conditions he made with me will be fulfilled.

On his way to Haran Jacob has a dream in which God promises him (Gen. 28:15):

וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ וַהֲשִׁבֹתִיךָ אֶל הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ.

Remember, I am with you: I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

When Jacob awakes, he constructs a stele and names the place Beit-El, and then makes the following vow (ibid 20-21):

וַיִּדַּר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבֶגֶד לִלְבֹּשׁ. וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה יי לִי לֵאלֹהִים. וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר שַׂמְתִּי מַצֵּבָה יִהְיֶה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן לִי עַשֵּׂר אֲעַשְּׂרֶנּוּ לָךְ.

Jacob then made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, if He protects me on this journey that I am making, and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and if I return safe to my father’s house—the Lord shall be my God. And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be God’s abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You.”

Jacob’s vow raises a difficulty: If God had already promised him in his dream that He would protect him and bring him back to his land – why does Jacob need to make a vow asking for these exact same things?

According to the interpretation that the *parasha* “was said according to the order,” Jacob’s statement should be interpreted not as a condition which he sets for God (since he already knows that God promised to be with him and to return him home), but rather as a condition that he sets for himself - if he, Jacob, will be worthy of all that God has promised. On the other hand, according to the position that the *parasha* is transposed, Jacob first made the vow and only later, in response, did God promise him: “I will be with you”. This is similar to the way the Homeric scholars claimed that some verses appear in a *hyperbaton* and should therefore be re-ordered.

### Conclusion

The main term used by Hellenistic scholars to designate unnatural word-order is *hyperbaton*. It is first and foremost a rhetorical trope. The fact that *hyperbaton* was a common feature of poetic style enabled the commentators to weaponize it and use it as an exegetical tool for solving various problems by transposing words or entire verses, thereby changing – sometimes quite radically – the meaning. Such a use of *hyperbaton* is early and is already documented in the Derveni papyrus and Plato’s, and was later used quite often by Homeric scholars. This hermeneutical tool was also adopted by biblical exegetes such as Philo and Origen.

In addition, the Homeric commentators use rhetorical terms in order to mark the cases in which Homer preserves the order of events in the verse (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν) or changes it (ἀλλασσειν τὴν τάξιν). Reversing or changing the natural order is not considered a problem, but rather a stylistic choice.

In tannaitic literature the expression על הסדר, which appears only in the Sifra (Mekhita d’Miluim), indicates that the order of the verses follows the order of the events. It would thus seem that על הסדר is a translation of its Greek parallel κατὰ τὴν τάξιν. Furthermore, the transposition of the verses in the case of the Yom Kippur service procedures is very similar to the Homeric scholars’ use of *hyperbaton*.

The expressions מקרא מסורס and סרס המקרא, typical to the school of R. Yishmael, indicate transpositions of words in the verse in order to solve problems presented by the surface meaning. It would seem that this technique is very similar to the *hyperbaton* technique, which was also explicitly used to solve problems in the biblical text by authors such as Origen and Philo.

Yet מקרא מסורס (transposed verse) not only refers to transposed words as in *hyperbaton* but also indicates the reversal of events, as could be clearly seen in the comparison of the following two notes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Mekh. R. Ish*. Va-Yisa 4, p. 167** | **Sch. T *Il.* 22.406 ex.** |
| "וירם תולעים ויבאש" | [<](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)τίλλε κόμην,[>](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html) ἀπὸ δὲ λιπαρὴν [<](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)ἔρριψε καλύπτρην[>](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/SB2.html)[:](http://www.tlg.uci.edu/help/BetaManual/online/P10.html)  |
| [**הרי**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=8436&SUM=%2213565%22&ERECH=%22%E4%C2%F8%C5%E9%20(%E4%F0%E4,%20%E4%EC%E0)%20%7b%E4%C2%F8%C5%E9%7d%22) [**זה**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=8887&SUM=%2252641%22&ERECH=%22%E6%C6%E4%20%7b%E6%C6%E4%7d%22) [**מקרא**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=18634&SUM=%221741%22&ERECH=%22%EE%C4%F7%C0%F8%C8%E0%20%7b%F7%F8%E0%7d%22) [**מסורס.**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=22735&SUM=%2229%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%F1%F8%F1%20%5b%F4%E5%CC%F2%EC%5d%20%7b%F1%F8%F1%7d%22) |  **ἤλλαξε τὴν τάξιν·.**  |
| [וכי](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=14478&SUM=%2242492%22&ERECH=%22%EB%C4%CC%E9%20(%EE%E9%EC%FA%20%F7%E9%F9%E5%F8)%20%7b%EB%C4%CC%E9%7d%22) [מה](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=16721&SUM=%2238908%22&ERECH=%22%EE%C8%E4%20%7b%EE%C8%E4%7d%22) [שמרחיש](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=30849&SUM=%2266%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%F8%E7%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%E4%FA%F0%E5%F2%F2%E5%FA,%20%E6%E7%E9%EC%E4,%20%EC%E7%E9%F9%E4,%20%E4%FA%F8%E7%F9%E5%FA,%20%E0%E9%F8%E5%F2)%20%7b%F8%E7%F9%D1%7d%22) [הוא](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=7904&SUM=%2261528%22&ERECH=%22%E4%E5%CC%E0%20%7b%E4%E5%CC%E0%7d%22) [מבאיש?](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=3422&SUM=%22124%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%E1%E0%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%F1%F8%E7%E5%EF)%20%7b%E1%E0%F9%D1%7d%22)  |  |
| **אלא** [**מבאיש**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=3422&SUM=%22124%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%E1%E0%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%F1%F8%E7%E5%EF)%20%7b%E1%E0%F9%D1%7d%22) [**ואחר**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=1112&SUM=%2216742%22&ERECH=%22%E0%C7%E7%C7%F8%20%7b%E0%E7%F8%7d%22) [**כך**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=14540&SUM=%2216647%22&ERECH=%22%EB%C8%CC%EA%C0%20%7b%EB%C8%CC%EA%C0%7d%22) [**מרחיש.**](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=30849&SUM=%2266%22&ZMAN=%224%22&ERECH=%22%F8%E7%F9%D1%20%5b%E4%F4%F2%E9%EC%5d%20(%E4%FA%F0%E5%F2%F2%E5%FA,%20%E6%E7%E9%EC%E4,%20%EC%E7%E9%F9%E4,%20%E4%FA%F8%E7%F9%E5%FA,%20%E0%E9%F8%E5%F2)%20%7b%F8%E7%F9%D1%7d%22) | **ῥίψασα γὰρ ἔτιλλεν** |
| [כעינין](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=24074&SUM=%223428%22&ERECH=%22%F2%C4%F0%C0%E9%C8%EF%20%7b%F2%F0%E9%7d%22) [שנ'](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F75726F65726A2D6765726E66686572662E756877762E6E702E7679%2B%2B/-CSCO-3h--resolve.asp?KODERECH=1923&SUM=%2242055%22&ZMAN=%221%22&ERECH=%22%E0%EE%F8%20%5b%F0%F4%F2%EC%5d%20(%E3%E9%E1%E5%F8,%20%EE%E7%F9%E1%E4)%20%7b%E0%EE%F8%7d%22) "ולא הבאיש ורמה ולא היתה בו" |  |
| “And it bred worms and rotted”  | “(But his mother) tore her hair and from her flung far her gleaming veil” |
| **The verse is transposed** | **He changed the order,** |
| For does a thing first breed worms and then rot?  |  |
| **Rather it rots and then it breeds worms.** | **for after she flung she tore.** |
| as it is said: “And it did not rot, neither was there any worm therein.” |  |

The similarity between the two commentaries is striking: not only in the use of the same technique but also in the structure: a citation of the verse; a comment on the technique used in the text, followed by presenting the events in their natural order.

It would seem then that when using *sares* (in both מקרא מסורס and סרס המקרא) the rabbis did not distinguish between transposition of words and reversal of the chronological order of events.

Yet how can we explain the fact that the rabbis used the same term for two distinct rhetorical tropes? One possibility is that the rabbis were not aware of the differences between the tropes. However, it is also possible to explain their use in the light of their contemporaneous definitions. While the Homeric scholars made a clear distinction between *hyperbaton* and reversal of events, authors of rhetorical treatises in the first centuries CE viewed both as part of several word disorders classified under one category: *hyperbaton*.

In his *de tropis*, based on earlier rhetorical works, Aelius Donatus (mid-4th century CE), defines *hyperbaton* as a general term encompassing five kinds of reordering:

*Hyperbaton est transcensio quaedam verborum ordinem turbans, cuius species sunt quinque: hysterologia, anastrophe, parenthesis, tmesis, synchysis. Hyperbaton* is a transposition which confuses the order of the words (*verborum*, of which there are five kinds: hysterologia, anastrophe, parenthesis, tmesis, synchysis.[[69]](#footnote-69)

For our purposes, the first and last terms are important. According to Donatus’ definition, *hysterologia* or *hysteroproteron* means the reversal of the event order.[[70]](#footnote-70) *Synchysis* (σύγχυσις), on the other hand, refers to a confused word order. And yet both are placed under the category of *hyperbaton*.[[71]](#footnote-71) It is thus possible that *mikra mesoras* parallels *hyperbaton* according to contemporary definitions which viewed it as a general term for any changes in word order.

Finally, there is a need to understand the very use of verse transposition in order to solve problems in the Torah: What concept of text lies at the basis of the assumption that at times the word order of the Torah is transposed?

David Daube in his discussion of chronology in rabbinic exegesis and the Gospels writes the following:[[72]](#footnote-72)

Interpretation by transposition, *seres*, was founded on the belief that the Bible, and in particular the Pentateuch, was inspired by God. Any passage might therefore contain various meanings, one beneath the other […], or it might even convey theological or moral instruction if read as it stood and a historical point if read in a different order.

According to Daube, it is only possible to explain the use of transposition by the rabbis in terms of their belief that the Bible is a divine text which contains layers of meaning accessible by different approaches to reading it. Yet I would argue that the basis for transposition *is the exact opposite*. As we have seen above, Homeric scholars noted transposed words or events in Homer, whether in order to solve a problem or as a stylistic choice, based on the assumption that this is a literary text which follows literary and rhetoric standards. I believe the rabbis’ use of *sares* should be understood similarly. The implicit assumption is that the Torah was written following human literary standards. One can therefore attribute to the Torah the use of various literary and rhetorical techniques common in their days. This is similar to what I have argued in the chapter of redundancies – that the maxim “The Torah spoke in human idiom” means that the Torah uses human literary techniques. Only on the backdrop of this literary understanding of the Torah is it possible to understand how sages, and especially R. Yoshaya of the school of R. Yishmael, could claim that words and events in the Torah are transposed.[[73]](#footnote-73)

**Appendix: *Sares*, Anastrophe and Nestor’s Cup**

In 1950, in the first edition of his book *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, Saul Lieberman argued that the rabbinic technique of transposition (*sares*) is parallel to the technique of ἀναστροφή used by Greek commentators. Lieberman’s argument was based solely on one example from Greek literature, which he found in the third edition of Lehrs’ *De Aristarchi studiis Homericis* published in 1882.[[74]](#footnote-74) This example, which presents a solution by Sosibius, from the 3rd century BCE, to the problem of Nestor’s cup, appears in Athenaeus’ great work – the *Deipnosophistae* composed in the early 3rd century CE.

In a rare intellectual coincidence, three years later, in 1953, David Daube published his influential article “Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis,” in which he argued, apparently without being aware of Lieberman’s book,[[75]](#footnote-75) that *sares* is modelled after ἀναστροφή, using the very same example from the *Deipnosophistae*, and thus recanting his previous suggestion in a 1949 article that *sares* should be compared to τέμνειν. Both Lieberman and Daube did not limit themselves to the comparison of Hebrew and Greek technique, but based on this sole example sought to deduce far-reaching historical conclusions concerning the use of the ἀναστροφή technique by Greek scholars.

Following Lieberman’s and Daube’s work, this example became the best known instance from Homeric commentaries among modern scholars of Rabbinic Literature, and it has been cited time and again in many studies.[[76]](#footnote-76) Yet, as I wish to show, this case raises many difficulties, both historical and hermeneutical, and therefore the conclusions drawn from it by Lieberman and Daube should be rejected. Nonetheless, as we have seen above, they were correct in assuming that *sares* was derived from a Greek technique, albeit not from ἀναστροφή.

The analysis of this example by Daube and Lieberman is in fact typical of the anecdotal approach adopted by scholars when comparing the Hellenistic and rabbinic techniques, and it is therefore worthwhile examining it in detail.

In Iliad 11 Machaon and Nestor enter the latter’s tent, where the braided, fair-haired Hecamede serves them wine (632-637):

πὰρ δὲ δέπας περικαλλές, ὃ οἴκοθεν ἦγ’ ὁ γεραιός, [...]

ἄλλος μὲν μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης

πλεῖον ἐόν, Νέστωρ δ’ ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν.

beside them a beauteous cup, that the old man had brought from home, […]

Another man could scarce have availed to lift that cup from the table,

when it was full, but old Nestor would raise it without difficulty.

This description raised a problem which was addressed by many scholars in antiquity: How is it possible that Nestor was the only one able to raise the cup, even though he was old and among heroes at the peak of their powers?

In Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*, it is said that there were some who solved the problem by assuming that Homer is referring here only to Nestor and Machaon, whose injury is described a little earlier (ll. 505ff.). These commentators suggested that instead of ἄλλος (other), one should read ἀλλ' ὅς (but he).[[77]](#footnote-77) Therefore the verse should be understood as follows: ‘But he (Machaon) had with difficulty removed it from the table’. The difficulty arose from his injury.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Following these attempts, Athenaeus presents Sosibius’ solution, on which Daube and Lieberman based their entire comparison with rabbinic *sares*:[[79]](#footnote-79)

Σωσίβιος δ’ ὁ λυτικὸς […] γράφει κατὰ λέξιν· ‘νῦν τὸ μὲν ἐπιτιμώμενόν ἐστι τῷ ποιητῇ ὅτι τοὺς μὲν λοιποὺς εἶπε μογέοντας ἀείρειν τὸ δέπας, τὸν δὲ Νέστορα μόνον ἀμογητί. ἄλογον δ’ ἐδόκει Διομήδους καὶ Αἴαντος, ἔτι δ’ Ἀχιλλέως παρόντων εἰσάγεσθαι τὸν Νέστορα γενναιότερον, τῇ ἡλικίᾳ προβεβηκότα. τούτων τοίνυν οὕτως κατηγορουμένων τῇ ἀναστροφῇ χρησάμενοι ἀπολύομεν τὸν ποιητήν. ἀπὸ γὰρ τούτου τοῦ ἑξαμέτρου ‘πλεῖον ἐόν, Νέστωρ δ’ ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν’ ἀπὸ τοῦ μέσου ἐξελόντες τὸ γέρων τάξομεν τοῦ πρώτου στίχου πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ τὸ ἄλλος μέν, εἶτα τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς συνεροῦμεν ‘ἄλλος μὲν γέρων μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης πλεῖον ἐόν, ὁ δὲ Νέστωρ ἀπονητὶ ἄειρεν.’ νῦν οὖν οὕτω τεταγμένων ὁ Νέστωρ φαίνεται τῶν μὲν λοιπῶν πρεσβυτῶν μόνος τὸ δέπας ἀμογητὶ ἀείρων.’ ταῦτα καὶ ὁ θαυμάσιος λυτικὸς Σωσίβιος, ὃν οὐκ ἀχαρίτως διέπαιξε διὰ τὰς πολυθρυλήτους ταύτας καὶ [τὰς] τοιαύτας λύσεις Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Φιλάδελφος βασιλεύς.

Now Sosibius, the solver of problems (λυτικὸς) […] writes exactly in these words (κατὰ λέξιν): ‘Today the charge is brought against the Poet, that, whereas he said all others raised the cup with difficulty, Nestor alone did it without difficulty. And it did seem unreasonable that, in the presence of Diomedes and Ajax, to say nothing of Achilles, Nestor should be represented as more vigorous than they, though he was more advanced in years. From these criticisms, then, we can absolve (ἀπολύομεν) the Poet by assuming the figure called anastrophe (τῇ ἀναστροφῇ). That is, from this (second) hexameter, “when it was full, but Nestor, that old man, raised it without difficulty,” we shall remove the word “old man” (γέρων) from the middle of the verse and place it at the beginning of the first line after “another,” (ἄλλος) and construe the words at the beginning thus: “Another old man had with difficulty moved it from the table when it was full, but Nestor raised it without labour.’ With the words in order, it is clear that Nestor is the only one of the old men, no matter who they were, who raised the cup without difficulty.’ Thus the marvelous solver of problems, Sosibius! He is the man whom King Ptolemy Philadelphus not unwittingly satirized for the famous solution and others like it.

The solution offered by Sosibius is to transpose the word γέρων (“old man”) and read it alongside “another.” According to such a reading, Homer did not distinguish Nestor from all other people but rather only from other old men.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Immediately following the presentation of Sosibius’ solution, Athenaeus adds an anecdote concerning the way King Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 BC) made fun of Sosibius. The king ordered his servants to tell Sosibius when he came to receive his stipend that he had already received it. When Sosibius complained to the King, the latter ordered that the accounting rolls be brought before him. After consulting them the king confirmed that Sosibius did indeed receive his royal stipend. Since in the rolls the names of Soter, Sosigenes, Bion and Apollonius were written in the genitive case, the king concluded:[[81]](#footnote-81)

[‘](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q3.html)ὦ θαυμάσιε λυτικέ, ἐὰν ἀφέλῃς τοῦ Σωτῆρος τὸ σω καὶ τοῦ Σωσιγένους τὸ σι καὶ τοῦ Βίωνος τὴν πρώτην συλλαβὴν [[](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/SB.html)βι[]](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/SB.html) καὶ τὴν τελευταίαν τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου, εὑρήσεις σαυτὸν ἀπειληφότα κατὰ τὰς σὰς ἐπινοίας. καὶ [‘](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q3.html)ταῦτ’ οὐχ ὑπ’ ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς αὑτοῦ πτεροῖς[’](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q3.html) κατὰ τὸν θαυμάσιον Αἰσχύλον ἁλίσκῃ, ἀπροσδιονύσους λύσεις πραγματευόμενος.[’](https://samba.huji.ac.il/%2BCSCO%2B0h756767633A2F2F6A6A6A2E6779742E6870762E727168%2B%2B/help/BetaManual/online/Q3.html)

‘Marvelous solver of problems, if you take *so* from Soteros, the *si* from Sosigenous and the first syllable [*bi*] from Bionos, and the last from Apolloniou, you will find that you yourself have received your due according to you own fantastic notions.[[82]](#footnote-82) And thus “not but other, but by thine own feathers art thou caught,” as the admirable Aeschylus says,[[83]](#footnote-83) because your labour to invent irrelevant solutions.’

This amusing anecdote is of very limited historical value, and it is not even certain that it is related to the earlier fragment of Sosibius – the anecdote ridicules Sosibius’ use of acrostics while in the fragment Sosibius uses *anastrophe*. Nonetheless, both Lieberman and Daube proceeded to deduce from this juxtaposition far-reaching historical conclusions.

Lieberman concluded that “the solution proposed by Sosibius seemed strange and ridiculous to his contemporaries, which indicates that in the third century BCE this method was not yet fully accepted.”[[84]](#footnote-84) Daube, on his part, argued that it is plausible that Sosibius was the inventor (!) of this exegetical method. Daube even went so far as to suggest that Sosibius laid the foundation for the *cento* (a weaving together of verses from different works and authors).[[85]](#footnote-85) Needless to say, there is no connection between the cento and *anastrophe*.

All of these historical reconstructions by Daube and Lieberman are unfounded. As we have seen above, word transposition as an exegetical method was well-known much earlier and is already documented in the Dervini papyrus and Plato’s. Furthermore, the fragment cited by Athenaeus is problematic on both historical and hermeneutical grounds. First, the solution offered is strange and artificial. This is not merely a transposition of words but the removal of a word from one verse to be placed in another. Such an extreme method is different from what we have seen above in Greek and rabbinic literature.

More importantly, Sosibius’ use of the term *anastrophe* is unusual, as even Daube and Lieberman conceded,[[86]](#footnote-86) since this is not the common term for word-transposition. In an exegetical context *anastrophe* designates primarily the reversal of the natural order of events (in a verse or a paragraph).[[87]](#footnote-87) In addition, in later rhetorical literature and in the scholia of Herodianus, *anastrophe* serves as a specific technical term designating “the reversal of the normal sequence of two words in direct succession,”[[88]](#footnote-88) usually placing the preposition after the noun.[[89]](#footnote-89)

It would seem that we could better understand the origin of Sosibius’ solution in light of other solutions given to this problem. So, for example, in his *Homeric Questions*, after presenting the difficulty concerning Nestor’s cup, Porphyry offers the solutions of several scholars of the 5th-4th centuries BCE.[[90]](#footnote-90) Thus Stesimbrotus suggested that Homer had to describe Nestor as possessing unusual strength in order to bestow plausibility on Nestor’s extreme old age.[[91]](#footnote-91) According to Antisthenes, on the other hand, Homer does not refer to the weight of the cup but rather to the fact that Nestor could bear the wine, that is, he did not get drunk easily. Glaucon said that “he took the handles along the diameter, and everything is easy to carry from the middle.” Finally, Porphyry presents Aristotle’s solution:[[92]](#footnote-92)

Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ τὸ Νέστωρ ὁ γέρων ἀπὸ κοινοῦ ἔφη δεῖν ἀκούειν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄλλος, ἵν’ ᾖ· ἄλλος μὲν γέρων μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης, Νέστωρ δ’ ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν, πρὸς γὰρ τοὺς καθ’ ἡλικίαν ὁμοίους γενέσθαι τὴν σύγκρισιν.

Aristotle said that one must understand (ἀκούειν)[[93]](#footnote-93) “the old man Nestor” jointly (ἀπὸ κοινοῦ) with “another (ἄλλος)” (Il. 11.636), so that it is “another old man could hardly move it away from the table, but the old man Nestor raised it effortlessly”. For the comparison (σύγκρισιν) is in regard to those who are similar in age.

Aristotle solves the problem by reading γέρων (“old man”) as a word shared by both verses. Therefore, ἄλλος (“another”) should be understood as referring to another old man. The similarity between Aristotle and Sosibius’ solutions is evident: both claim that Nestor is the only one *among old men* who could have lifted the cup. The fact that Aristotle preceded Sosibius and that his solution is simple and plausible compared to the forced nature of Sosibius’ solution, leads to the conclusion that Sosibius’ solution is based on that of Aristotle.[[94]](#footnote-94) Therefore it would seem that Sosibius’ use of *anastrophe* is not at all an original and innovative solution, as Lieberman and Daube suggested, but rather an exaggerated caricature of Aristotle’s solution.

There are also grounds for undermining the historical credibility of Athenaeus’ description. Sosibius the λυτικός is unknown to us from any other sources besides the fragment discussed by Athenaeus. Moreover, Sosibius is the only documented scholar to have received the title λυτικός (which might explain the scholarly interest in him). In the 19th and early 20th centuries scholars tried to identify him with Sosibius of Laconia (ὁ Λάκων), a rather known chronographer who was active in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.[[95]](#footnote-95) This was based on the entry in the Suda, the Byzantine lexicon, where the latter was said to be “a grammarian of those called ‘solvers’” (γραμματικός τῶν Ἐπιλυτικῶν καλουμένων).[[96]](#footnote-96) Yet as Wachmouth has already shown, the author of the entry in the Suida was completely dependent on Athenaeus, and merged two distinct scholars with the same name who were active in the 3rd century BCE.[[97]](#footnote-97) The title ἐπιλυτικός was taken by the author of the entry from the fragment under discussion concerning Sosibius the λυτικός and the rest of the data was derived from Athenaeus’ discussions of Sosibius of Laconia.[[98]](#footnote-98)

In light of several factors – Sosibius the λυτικός is only mentioned by Athenaeus; the solution cited in his name is actually a parody of Aristotle’s solution; the way he uses the term ἀναστροφή does not accord with the standard usage; as well as the anecdote of the acrostics – it seems most likely that the entire report by Athenaeus is not a historical depiction of what happened in the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus in Alexandria of the 3rd century BCE, but rather a scholarly parody of the convoluted solutions of Alexandrian Homeric scholars, which might have been based on the historical character of Sosibius (if he ever existed), but of whom we know nothing. This scholarly parody was probably composed by scholars, against scholars, and for scholars.

1. It should be noted that in some of the later rhetorical treatises the meaning of *hyperbaton* had become limited so that it was now a technical term denoting a *tmesis* (two parts of a complex word separated by other words). Some commentators, especially in the bT scholia regarded the *tmesis* not merely as a stylistic feature but also as a means to increase the dramatic impact. See e.g. Shc. T Il 15.1b1 ex.; A *Il.* 15.1b2; Sch. T *Il.* 17.542; Sch. bT *Il.* 17.522a ex.; bT *Il.* 22.354a ex.; Sch. T *Il.* 24.358-360ex. For further examples see Nünlist 2009, pp. 216-217 and note 81. To the references by Erbse and Nünlist one can add Sch. T *Il.* 12.308a. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. On this work and its dating see Chiron 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (Chiron) 30.7, trans. Forster [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Aelius Theon, from the first century CE, in his progymnasmata (82, Kennedy, p. 31) writes that in general one should avoid the use of *hyperbaton*, but not completely as it enables to variate the sentences. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Quint., *Instit*., 8: 6, 65 (and cf. his statements earlier on in section 62) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. LCL 3:339 (trans. H. E. Butler), modified to present the Latin order (at the expense of correct English). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Trans. Rhys Roberts. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See e.g. Ps.-Plutarch, *Life of Homer*, 30, p. 98 and the comments by Hilgruber 1994-1999, 1:145-146. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For an analysis of the hermeneutics and theology in the Derveni Papyrus see e.g. Betegh 2004a; Betegh 2004b; Bernabé 2007; the collection of articles in Laks and Most 1997; Kouremenos et al. 2006, which includes an introduction and commentary. For a comparison between some of the hermeneutical techniques in the Derveni Papyrus and Aristarchus see Schironi 2001. For a comparison between the Derveni Papyrus and the Pesher literature from the Dead Sea scrolls see Lange and Pleše 2011 and 2012, who use the term Transpositional Hermeneutics to refer to what they deem to be the common exegetical approach. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Derveni Papyrus (Kouremenos) 8:3-12, p. 77 (text), p. 131 (translation).

Another possible occurrence of *hyperbaton* in the papyrus is in column 4:10 (Kouremenos, 69) according to the editors' suggestion [ὑπερ]βατόν . [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Janko 2002, p. 17 translated the verb ἀκούειν as ‘understand’. But see the reservations of Kouremenos et al. 2006, pp. 173-174. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Betegh 2004a, pp. 213-215; Kouremenos et al. 2006, pp. 21-23; 175-176. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Derveni Papyrus (Kouremenos) 13:1, p. 87 (text), the different translations of this verse will be presented below. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Accent left unmarked so as to preserve the ambiguity (similar to Betegh 2004a, p. 214). The two possible translations of this verse will be given below. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. It is interesting to note that according to the definitions of later grammarians the transposition of a preposition is termed ἀναστροφή. See discussion in the appendix to this chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Protagoras 339b (trans. Lamb). Simonides fr. 37.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid 339d. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid 343e-344a. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Taylor 1976, p. 145. For a comprehensive discussion of Socrates’ commentary to Simonides’ poems (Protagoras 340-348), see Baltussen 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. As Schironi (2018, p. 159) notes, the word ὑπερβατόν “is extremely rare in the Aristonicus scholia and is absent from the Didymous scholia altogether.” For possible reasons for this see ibid, pp. 159-160. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Nicanor often notes that there are two ways of understanding a verse – to punctuate in a certain way or to assume that the Poet uses a *hyperbaton*. See e.g. Sch. A *Il.* 12.388 Nic.; Sch. A *Il.* 21.334-335 Nic. For further discussion of Nicanor's reading see chapter 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. For further examples see Degenhardt 1909, pp. 26-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Porphyry, Homeric Questions (Schrader, 2), 16: 850, pp. 216-217. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This answer was probably first offered by Aristarchus, see sch. A *Il*. 16.850a (cf. Schironi 2018, p. 536). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. For similar comments see Sch. A Il 16.580a Ariston.; bT *Il.* 16.850b ex. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See West 2001, p. 202. Delebecque (1951, pp. 59, 160) followed by Kirk (1990, pp. 312-312) assumed that the meaning of the verse is indeed that Andromache would mix the hay with wine for the horses. For a critique of this reading see West, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Cf. Sch. A *Il.* 8.188-90a3 ex. where the following terminology is used: τὸ ἑξῆς τοῦτό ἐστιν. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Zenodotus changed the order of the verses several times in his edition. See e.g. Sch. A *Il.* 18.174 Ariston.; Sch. A *Il.* 423a Ariston. A problematic order of verse is also at times considered a reason for *athetesis* (marking the verses as spurious) see e.g. Sch. Q *Od*. 18.330 and Niehoff 2011, p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Porphyry, Homeric Questions (MacPhail), 6:265, pp. 116-117. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid, pp. 118-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Mut*. 13. Trans LCL vol. V, p. 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. On this term see… [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Philo, vol. V, p. 149 (LCL) [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For a discussion of God’s name in Philo’s thought see Ben-Sasson 2019, pp. 79-83; Ben-Sasson and Halbertal 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See Philo, vol. V (LCL), pp. 586-587 for a short discussion of Philo’s use of the term in light of its use by the grammarians. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See, e.g., Eclogues, 56:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Besides the example to be discussed below see also the fragment from Origen’s commentary to Ephesians 1:15-17 and to Romans 1:13-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Origen, Luke, 20a. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Nünlist 2009, p. 89. For a discussion of *ordo naturalis* in the ancient rhetorical literature see Lausberg 1998, pp. 149-150, §317; 213-215, §§447-451. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. For a discussion of *ordo artificialis* in the rhetorical literature see Lausberg 1998, p. 214, §452. As Nünlist (2009, p. 89 and note 52) notes, this technique is at times referred to in the scholia as ἐξ ἀναστροφῆς. Usually this signifies a reversed order of events in an entire unit rather than a single verse. For a discussion of this term see Nünlist 2009, pp. 87-93 (with further bibliography); Lallot 1998, pp. 217-218; Lundon 1998, pp. 223-225; Meijering 1987, pp. 141-143, 147; Nannini 1986, p. 38; Schmidt 1976, p. 41; Griesinger 1907, pp. 19-21; Lehnert 1896, pp. 12-13.

In the later rhetoric literature of the first few centuries CE, both in Greek and in Latin, this technique is also called *hysteroproteron* or ὑστερολογία. Because of this, modern scholarship terms the technique *hysteron proteron*. Yet in the following I will avoid using this term so as not to create confusion with a similar term used by Aristarchus, which has a different meaning. See Paz 2015 ??? [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. For a collection of early sources dealing with narrative τάξις see Meijering 1987, pp. 138-148. See also the short discussion in Hunter 2009, pp. 52-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Cf. Sch. b *Il.* 15. 496-8a2 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See van Thiel 2014, IV, p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. For similar examples see: Sch. bT *Il*. 3.100a ex. (ἀντέστρεψε δὲ τὴν τάξιν); Sch. T *Il*. 11.243c1 ex.; Sch. T *Il*. 10.576; Sch. T *Il*. 13.689; Sch. bT *Il*. 23.119-120b ex. (κτυπέουσαι / πῖπτον: ἤλλακται ἡ τάξις); Sch. T *Il.* 24.223ex. (ἐνήλλαξε δὲ τὴν τάξιν. ); Sch. T *Il.* 24.446a ex. (ἤλλαξε τὴν τάξιν); Sch.Od. 4.50a; Sch. P *Od*. 5.230 (ἐνήλλαξε τὴν τάξιν. See also Nünlist 2009, p. 336 n. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. For a similar comment concerning the order of clothing see Sch. A *Il.* 24.588 Ariston. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. On the etymology of *sares* see Paz 2015…. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. A parallel to this derasha preserved in a Geniza fragment of the Mekhilta de R. Yishmael (Cambridge, T-S NS 258.185) on Exod. 26:10. In light of this copy as well as the difference in style between R. Yoshaya’s interpretation and the one which precedes it (מקדש/בית הבירה) it would seem, as Kahana (2011, II, p. 310) argues, that the derasha was transferred from the Mekhilta to Sifre Numbers. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. This had already been noted by Pineles 1861, pp. 94-96. For a comprehensive discussion see Kahana 2011, II, p. 309. For a discussion of the versions of the verse see Weissblueth 1985. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. The scribe of MS Vatican 66 omitted the words מסורס אין ראוי לומר אלא ואחיכם יבכו ועל כל העדה יקצף הא אם אין. For a discussion of this omission see Shama 2009, p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. For a similar transposition see Midrash Psalms 18: 9 70a ("מהולל אקרא יי" משובח אקרא אותך. "ומאויבי אושע", א"ר יודן סרוס המקרא ודרוש, איושע מן אויביי מהולל – כשתושיעיני מאויבי אהלל אותך). And see below note 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Cf. y.Ta’anit 4, 1 67b. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. It would seem that such a reading of the order of events appears already in Ben Sira 50: 20: אז ירד ונשא ידיו על כל קהל ישראל וברכת יי בשפתיו (“Then he descended and raised his hands over the whole congregation of Israel, and the blessing of the Lord on his lips”). It is possible that the midrash seeks to justify such a reading by using the method of *sares*. (I wish to thank Assaf Rosen-Zvi for drawing my attention to this verse). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. For a discussion of this term see also Mandel 2017, pp. 230-232, who rightly observes that the term *doresh* in this hermeneutical rule “does not signify the method employed (which would be superfluous after mentioning the method using the term *sares ʾet ha-miqraʾ*), but denotes the “exposition” (i.e., the paraphrase) of the re-ordered text” (ibid, p. 232). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Cf. Sif. Num. 68, p. 163; 113, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Kahana 2012, III, p. 501 notes that the meaning of מעשה is not the same in all of the occurrences of this rule. See Mekh. De R. Yishmael, Pisha 1 (ed. Rabin-Horovitz, 1-2); Bahodesh 8 (p. 232); Sifre Num. 73 (ed. Kahana, p. 174); 133 (p. 58); Mekh. Deut. (ed. Kahana, 350). And cf. the use of the rule ראשון ראשון ואחרון אחרון (“first first and last last”) in t.Sotah 6:10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. trans. Lundon, apud Nünlist 2009, p. 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Nünlist 2009, p. 82 dealt with these comments as part of his discussion of simultaneous events. See also Paz 2015…. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. For a similar comment see Sch. bT *Il.* 10.124b ex. Nünlist 2009, p. 82 dealt with such comments as part of his discussion of simultaneous events. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Frankel (2001, 1:155, see pp. 153-156 for his entire discussion on the topic) understood that the question “If Moses did not know, would Eleazar know?” is based on a distinct midrashic assumption and therefore it should be differentiated from the realistic assumptions in the rest of the examples, analyzed above. It would seem that Frankel wished to distinguish between מקרא מסורס, which offers a simple and logical solution; and סרס המקרא ודרשהו which refers to a creative interpretation not bound by the logic of the text. It is possible that such a distinction might be apt for the amoraic sources, but in the Halakhic Midrashim one cannot correlate the difference in terminology with a difference in interpretation: first, both terms are used by R. Yoshaya. Second, the use of סרס המקרא for indicating that the order of the events in the verse is reversed is similar to the cases of מקרא מסורס which also dealt with order of events. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. In most amoraic sources *sares* refers to the change of a problematic word order. See e.g. y.Berachot 9:5 14c ("עת לעשות ליי הפרו תורתך" ר' נתן מסרס קראי "הפרו תורתך" "עת לעשות ליי"); Lev. Rab. 22:1 (ed. Margaliot, 513), on this *derasha* see Frankel 2001, 1:156; Gen. Rab. 33 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 299-300) = Pes. R. Kahana 1 (ed. ???, 147) see Frankel 2001, 1:155-156; Ecc. Rab. 9:10, 1; 12:14, 1; Tanhuma Re’eh 11; Mid. Psalms 18:9 70a. For the use of מסרס קרייא to designate the change in the orders of letters in a word see y.Nazir 7:2 56b; y.Rosh Hashana 2”9 58b. The change of word order for solving a difficulty is called in the Baraita of 32 Middot (31, p. 39) .מוקדם ומאוחר שהוא בענין The example cited there is similar to the *hyperbaton* (cf. b.Kidd. 78b; Tanhuma Tsav 13). See Steiner 2007, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. On the general similarity between Mekhilta de Miluim and the midrashim of the school of R. Yishmael see Shama 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. As Kahana notes (2012, ΙΙΙ, π. 311 n. 83) all the eight occurrences of סרס המקרא in the Halakhic Midrashim appear in those of the school of R. Yishmael. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Bacher 1923, p. 93. Cf. Kahana 2012, II, p. 309; Horovitz note ad loc.; Epstein 1957, p. 611 note 143; Lieberman 1962, pp. 66-67; Daube 1953, p. 165. Also in *Gen. Rab.* 33, pp. 299-300 this technique is attributed to R. Yoshaya (ר' יונתן **בשם ר' יאשיה**: מסרס קרא 'צדקתך על משפטיך, כהררי אל על תהום רבה'). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Cf. the term כסדרן (‘in their proper order’, *Sifra*, Miluim 1.1 41a) and the comments by Shama 2009, p. 73 and n. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Cf. t.Yom. 3:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Naeh and Knohl 1993, 29-30 (my translation). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Cf. y.Sotah 8:2 22b: אין מקרא אמור על הסדר [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Bacher 1923, p. 93 n. 12 suggests that the name of R. Yoshaya was accidently omitted. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Donatus, *de tropis* 10.

Steiner 2007, p. 35 also cited this definition by Donatus. Yet he assumed that the terms מקרא מסורס and אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה are comparable to *hysteron proteron*, while *anastrophe* refers only to the transposition of word order as can be found in the Baraita of 32 Middot (see above note ???). However, since he followed Lieberman and Daube (see discussion in appendix) he did not notice that *anastrophe* by Donatus, as by other contemporary grammarians, refers *only* to the reversal of the order of preposition and noun (“Anastrophe est verborum tantum ordo praeposterus, ut ‘Italiam contra’ pro *contra Italiam*.”)

In addition, he overlooked the various uses ofמקרא מסורס in tannaitic literature. Nonetheless, his distinction between two kinds of disorder is important: “[*H*]*ysteron* *proteron* is an inversion that affects both logical structure and surface structure (when it occurs within the confines of a single sentence), while *anastrophe* affects only surface structure.” [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Donatus, *de tropis* 11: “Hysterologia vel hysteroproteron est sententiae cum verbis ordo mutatus, ut: ‘torrere parant flammis et frangere saxo.’” [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ibid 15: “Synchysis est hyperbaton ex omni parte confusum, ut: ‘tris notus abreptas in saxa latentia torquet, saxa vocant Itali mediis quae in fluctibus aras.’ est enim ordo hic: *tris abreptas notus in saxa torquet, quae saxa in mediis fluctibus latentia Itali aras vocant*.”

Further on σύγχυσις in the rhetorical literature see Lausberg 1998, p. 319, §717. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Daube 1973, p. 411. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. The basic assumption at the basis of the rule אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה (there is no before or after in the Torah) should be understood in a similar way. I will address this issue in a future study. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Lehrs 1882, p. 200. See Lieberman 1962, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. On the chronological relation between the articles of Daube and Lieberman see the short survey by Moss 2012, pp. 245-246 especially note 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. For an explicit reference to the example of “Nestor’s cup” see e.g. Steiner 2007, pp. 35-36; Alexander 1990, pp. 106-107; Ha-Levi 1979, p. 163; 1982, p. 99. Tauner 1973, p. 50 n. 1, as well as dozens of studies which refer to the articles by Daube and Lieberman. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Athenaeus, Deipnosophistai (Gullick), 11, 493a, p. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. A similar solution appears also in Sch. A *Il.* 11.636b Hrd.; Sch. T *Il.* 11.636c1 ex.; Sch. b I.l 11.636c2; Sch. D *Il.* 11.636 [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Athenaeus, Deipnosophistai (Gullick), 11, 493c-e, pp. 196-199. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Lieberman (1962, p. 65 n.149) rightly notes that this transposition was done “mentally, but not literally, without destroying the meter.” [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Athenaeus, Deipnosophists (Gulick) 11, 494a-b, 5:198-201. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. The result is σω-σι-βι-ου. That is, Sosibius’ name in the genitive case. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. From Aeschylus’ lost tragedy The Myrmidons (Greek Fragments [Redt], 3, Aeschylus fr. 139). As Gulick notes (ad loc.), this refers to a known fable (recorded also by Aesop) according to which the eagle sees his own feathers in the arrow which has struck him. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Lieberman 1962, p. 66. Lieberman later discusses also Athenaeus’ anecdote concerning Sosibius and the acrostics (ibid, pp. 79-80). Here too Lieberman reached far-fetched conclusions based on one dubious example: “If our conjecture is true, Sosibius was the first to introduce the search for an acrostic as a literary criterion for the establishment of the authorship of a given work. This innovation seemed ridiculous to his contemporaries, and he was accordingly given his own medicine.” There is no basis for such a conclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Daube 1953, pp. 167-168, where he writes: “It is very likely that Sosibius was its inventor. […] Sosibius, we may suppose, devised new ways of overcoming Homeric difficulties, and ἀναστροφή was one of his achievements.” On the cento see Sandnes 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. It would seem that both Daube and Lieberman were aware of the problematic use of the term *anastrophe* by Sosibius. Lieberman (1962, p. 67) notes: “The rhetor Theon writes ποιησόμεθα τὴν δὲ ἀναστροφὴν τῆς τάξεως πολλαχῶς. ‘We shall frequently make use of the inversion of the order.’ But he is really referring to the rhetoric scheme of ὕστερον πρότερον as is obvious from the examples he cites. This kind of ἀναστροφή is also utilized by the Rabbis, but the more common rabbinic *anastrophe* is that employed by Sosibius the λυτικός.” While Daube (1953, p. 166) concedes: “No dictionary I have seen lists this sense of ἀναστροφή: ‘interpretation by rearrangement’.” Yet this did not prevent him from reaching far-fetched conclusions. Ha-Levi (1979, p. 163) argues that Lieberman’s historical conclusion was inexact since *anastrophe* was often used to express the poet’s emotional upheaval (referring to Ps.-Longinus, cited above), rather “Sosibius used this method inadequately and in the wrong place”. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. See Nünlist 2009, p. 9; Hunter 2009, pp. 52-53; Richardson 1980, p. 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Lauserberg, 317 (§713) [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. For the various definitions of *anastrophe* in the ancient rhetorical literature see Lausberg 1998, pp. 317-318, §§713-715. For example, Tripho I (Spengel, p. 197), from the first century CE, defines the *anastrophe* as follows:

 Ἀναστροφή ἐστι λέξις, ἣν ἐχρῆν προηγεῖσθαι, δευτέραν ἔχουσα τάξιν· γίνεται δὲ ἤτοι ὀνόματος ἢ προθέσεως ἢ ἐπιρρήματος μετακίνησις. ἐπὶ ὀνόματος μέν, οἷον "οὕνεκα τὸν Χρύσην ἠτίμησ’ ἀρητῆρα/ Ἀτρείδης" (*Il.* 1.11). τὸ γὰρ ἑξῆς, τὸν ἀρητῆρα Χρύσην, ἐπὶ δὲ προθέσεως, οἷον " ᾧ ἔπι πόλλ’ ἐμόγησα". (*Il.* 1.162). ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐφ’ ᾧ. καὶ Ἰθάκῃ ἔνι ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐν Ἰθάκῃ. ἐπὶ δὲ ἐπιρρήματος, οἷον ὄρνιθες ὥς (*Il*. 3.2), βόες ὥς (*Il*. 11.172).

Anastrophe is a word which should have gone first but is placed second. The dislocation is either of a noun, a preposition or an adverb. A noun, for example: “Because son of Atreus Chryses dishonored the priest” (*Il.* 1.11), for the correct order is “[Because son of Atreus dishonored] the priest Chryses”. A preposition, for example: “which for I toiled so much” (*Il*. 1.162) instead of “for which”. And “Ithaca in” instead of “in Ithaca”. An adverb, for example: “birds like” (*Il*. 3.2), “bull like” (*Il*. 11.172).

Cf. Quintillian, Rhetoric, 8.6.65. See also Ps.-Plutarch, *Life of Homer* 30, p. 98 who seeks to distinguish between *anastrophe* and *hyperbaton* (see notes by Hillgruber 1994-1999, 1:145). Cf. Dickey 2007, p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Porphyry, *Homeric Questions* (MacPhail), 11.637, pp. 186-189. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Further on Stesimbrotus of Thasos see Tsakmakis 1995. Stesimbrotus and Glaucon are mentioned as Homeric experts in Plato’s Ion 530c-d. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Porphyry, *Homeric Questions* (MacPhail), 11.637, pp. 188-189. Rose, who collected the fragments from Aristotle’s *Homeric Questions* overlooked this source as already noted by Erbse ad loc. This solution also appears anonymously in Sch. T *Il.* 11.636c1 ex.; Sch. b *Il.* 11.636c2. In Sch. D *Il.* 11.636 we read προσληπτέον τὸ "πρεσβύτης". [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. For this meaning of the verb ἀκούειν see Schenkeveld 1992b. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. This has already been noted by Erbse *ad loc*. as well as by Schreder 1882, p. 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. On Sosibius of Laconia see Pagani 2002. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Suida Σ, 859:

Σωσίβιος, Λάκων, γραμματικός, τῶν Ἐπιλυτικῶν καλουμένων. ἐν τούτοις δὲ ἱστορεῖ καὶ τοῦτο, ὅτι εἶδός τι κωμῳδίας ἐστὶ καλούμενον Δικηλιστῶν καὶ Μιμηλῶν. Περὶ τῶν Μιμηλῶν ἐν Λακωνικῇ ἱστορουμένων παλαιῶν. καὶ ἄλλα. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Wachsmuth 1892, p. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Schrader 1880-1883, 369; Lehrs 1882, p. 200 n. 122; 218-219; Gudeman 1927, p. 2513; Laqueur 1927, p. 1149; Fraser 1972, 1:310; Pagani 2002; 2008; Montana 2002. Daube (1953, p. 167) who did not seem to be aware of the studies already published in his time, combined both the Sossibii and believed Sosibius the λυτικός was from Laconia. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)