

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH



Hebrew Bible Monographs, 46

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH
ITS COMPOSITION AND FINAL FORM

Ulrich F. Berges

Translated by Millard C. Lind

from the German original: *Das Buch Jesaja:
Komposition und Endgestalt* (Freiburg: Herder, 1998)



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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

After retiring from 30 years of teaching Old Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, I continued research in an area of interest to me—prophetic attitudes toward peace and war. When I came across Ulrich Berges's dissertation *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt*, I felt it made an important contribution toward understanding the Book of Isaiah's vision of a world community made up of Yahweh followers offering peace for all peoples. As such, it deserved to be translated for a wider audience, especially English-speaking students in biblical studies today who are less willing or able to delve into a German book. I first took the job on informally, thinking to disseminate the translation among students at the seminary. With the encouragement of friends and colleagues, the project has grown into the present book. My aim has been to provide an accurate and readable copy of Dr Berges's work.

I would like to thank Irene and Leonard Gross, friends from Goshen College, for spending many hours helping with the German. Mary Schertz and Barbara Nelson Gingerich of the Institute of Mennonite Studies encouraged me and underwrote some of the editorial work. Above all, I could not have finished this translation without my sons, particularly Dan and Matthew, getting me out of computer scrapes and being generally supportive, and my daughter Sarah, who revised the translation and prepared the manuscript for the publisher. I dedicate this translation to the memory of Miriam, my life's companion.

Millard C. Lind
Goshen, IN, USA
March 2012

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

At the end of 2006 I received a message from a colleague unknown to me at the time, Millard C. Lind. He informed me that at age 88 (!) he was translating my work on the book of Isaiah in order to make it accessible to his former students and others who could not read German. Through his tireless work and significant support from his daughter Sarah Lind we now have this excellent translation of my habilitation thesis of 1998.

Of course, scholarly work on the book of Isaiah has not stood still in the intervening years, and I myself now view some matters in a more nuanced way or even completely differently. This is particularly true regarding the question of the primary material of the Deutero-Isaianic and Trito-Isaianic corpora. Such an identification seems less and less possible to me, so I have since given up the quest for a prophet designated as Deutero-Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah.¹ This stance is reflected in my commentary on Isaiah 40–48,² and in a future volume covering Isaiah 49–66.

Regardless of this shift, David Clines as editor of Sheffield Phoenix Press is to be commended for agreeing to publish this foundational study of the development and dynamics of the book of Isaiah, along with my smaller book, *Isaiah: The Prophet and his Book*. The publication of these books in English bridges the gap between German and English/American Isaiah research, which can learn much more from each other than is commonly admitted. What is necessary is for each to become aware of the other, thus expanding the horizons of both. This 'Isaianic' openness gives new expression to the old, transcends rigid boundaries, and leads into the community of servants of the Word.

Ulrich Berges
University of Bonn, Germany
March 2012

1. 'Farewell to Deutero-Isaiah or Prophecy without a Prophet', in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007* (ed. A. Lemaire; VTSup, 133; Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 575–95.

2. *Isaiah 40–48* (Herder's Theological Commentary on the Old Testament; Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2008).

ABBREVIATIONS

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
ACEBT	<i>Amsterdamsche Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie</i>
AcOr	<i>Acta orientalia</i>
AGWG	Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas
AnBib	Analecta biblica
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
AUSTR	American university studies. Series VII, Theology and religion
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvTh	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
<i>Bijdr</i>	<i>Bijdragen</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BK	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BN	Biblische Notizen
BS	The Biblical Seminar
BthSt	Biblisch-theologische Studien
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
CBOT	Coniectanea Biblica
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> , Monograph Series
<i>Conc(D)</i>	<i>Concilium Deutsch</i>
CThM	Calwer theologische Monographien

DBAT	<i>Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament</i>
EdF	<i>Erträge der Forschung</i>
EeT(O)	<i>Eglise et Théologie</i>
Erls	<i>Eretz Israel</i>
EtB	<i>Études bibliques</i>
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
EvErz	<i>Evangelische Erzieher</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	<i>Forschungen zum Alten Testament</i>
FB	<i>Forschung zur Bibel</i>
FOTL	<i>The Forms of the Old Testament Literature</i>
FRLANT	<i>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>
FThL	<i>Forum theologiae linguisticae</i>
GrTS	<i>Grazer theologische Studien</i>
HAW	<i>Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft</i>
HBS	<i>Herders biblische Studien</i>
HSM	<i>Harvard Semitic Monographs</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBTh	<i>Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
KAT	<i>Kommentar zum Alten Testament</i>
KAW	<i>Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt</i>
KHC	<i>Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament</i>
KTR	<i>King's Theological Review</i>
KuI	<i>Kirche und Israel</i>
MIOF	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientalforschung</i>
MThA	<i>Münster Theologische Abhandlungen</i>
NCBC	<i>New Century Bible Commentary</i>
NEB	<i>Neue Echter Bibel</i>
NSKAT	<i>Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar, Altes Testament</i>
OBO	<i>Orbis biblicus et orientalis</i>
ÖBS	<i>Österreichische biblische Studien</i>
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studien</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PIBA	<i>Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association</i>
QD	<i>Quaestiones disputatae</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RevScRel	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>

<i>RivBib</i>	<i>Rivista biblica</i>
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>SBL Seminar Papers</i>
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
<i>ScrHie</i>	<i>Scripta Hierosolymitana</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SPB	Studia postbiblica
SS	Studi semitici
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
StUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
ThB	Theologische Bücherei
<i>ThGl</i>	<i>Theologie und Glaube</i>
<i>ThViat</i>	<i>Theologia viatorum</i>
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TP	Theologie und Philosophie
TQ	Theologische Quartalschrift
TSK	Theologische Studien und Kritiken
TTZ	Trierer theologische Zeitschrift
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VD	<i>Verbum domini</i>
VF	Verkündigung und Forschung
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplements</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WuD	<i>Wort und Dienst</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZdZ	<i>Die Zeichen der Zeit</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Chapter 1

IN SEARCH OF THE 'UNITY' OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

1.1. *Stating the Question*

The question of the 'unity' of this prophetic book is neither original nor of recent date, but in the English-speaking world especially, it has been one of the continuing common themes of exegetical research.¹ In contrast, German exegesis for decades barely touched on this question. Thus Rendtorff stated in 1984, perhaps mainly in regard to his German colleagues, 'The question of the composition of the book of Isaiah in its present form does not belong to the universally recognized themes of Old Testament studies'.² Though today the question of the unity of the book of Isaiah has become relevant even in Germany, in the end, this was accomplished not only through Rendtorff, but also through Steck. After many years of intensive study, Steck acknowledged in a recent publication,

The question concerning the prophets themselves, after differentiating earlier and later material in the prophetic books, has in no way been abandoned. But immediate access to the prophet and disparagement of the *books* are no longer self-evident positions... In point of fact, these books may also have a purpose *as books*. The present final structure of these books could also present a message that aspires to something and aims at something.³

Here a paradigm change is suggested, one which does not reject the diachronic study of the prophetic oracle but puts it in the service of the greater unity of the book.

1. See the research seminar 'Formation of the Book of Isaiah' in the framework of the SBL Annual Meetings in the USA (and also the anthology, Melugin and Sweeney, *New Visions of Isaiah*).

2. Rendtorff, 'Komposition', p. 295.

3. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. vi.

Implicitly, the question of the integral whole of the book of Isaiah was put into play with every critical inquiry into the Isaiah text; even the attribution of the Masoretic text to various authors, redactors, or composers ultimately served the goal of tracing the unity of the prophetic scroll. The driving question was and remains, why is there such a voluminous prophetic scroll under the title 'Vision of Isaiah', when, in contrast to the scrolls of Jeremiah or Ezekiel, the biographical anchoring of Isaiah ben Amoz in 'his' book is much weaker than either of those two? Indeed, after chap. 39, the prophet does not appear again!

1.2. *From the Prophet of Three Books to the Message of One Book*

For the pre-critical past, but also for a continuing conservative branch of research, the question of the unity of the book is not admissible, for the prophet Isaiah himself is the answer; this 'one-prophet interpretation'⁴ proceeds on the premise that 'the essential content of the book has come to us through one human author, Isaiah son of Amoz'.⁵ This view ignores a 200-year-old scholarly tradition of Isaiah exegesis and is burdened additionally with the 'muddy residue of the dogma of verbal inspiration'.⁶ To resolve the complexity of the book of Isaiah by adopting the view of the prophet who is all foreseeing and verbally inspired is indeed a neat solution on the surface,⁷ but from a basic theological point of view it creates great difficulties.

The difficulties of the 'one-prophet interpretation' were resolved by the 'three-book interpretation', first put forward by Bernhard Duhm (1892). Although his three-fold division of the book into Proto-, Deutero-, and Trito-Isaiah (1–39; 40–55; 56–66) did not go unchallenged, it formed the foundation of all subsequent Isaiah research. Even after Qumran findings ruled out his extreme late dating,⁸ the

4. Tate, 'Book of Isaiah', p. 25: 'With some overgeneralization, the phases of Isaiah study may be treated as threefold: the one-prophet interpretation, the three-book interpretation, and the one-book interpretation.'

5. So Oswalt, *Isaiah*, p. 25; cf. also the commentary of Motyer, *Prophecy*; also, Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah*; Young, *Studies in Isaiah*.

6. Kaiser, 'Jesaja/Jesajabuch', p. 637, who adds, 'such that, in a kind of self-defense of the faith, a fundamentalistic bias is evident, as can still be detected, for example, in the Isaiah research of Oswalt (*Isaiah*)'.

7. See also the statistical language studies of Radday, *Unity*, who ascribes 1–12 and 13–23 to the prophet Isaiah (p. 274).

8. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 15: 'only around 70 B.C. did the literary activity come to a close'.

division of the three fundamental historical contexts of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian periods into as many prophetic books remained the accepted view; disagreement and dissenters were dismissed or laughed at.⁹

While the delimitation of 40–55 still belongs to the *opinio communis* of research, this is by now no longer the case for 56–66. For a long time there has been little agreement with Duhm's ascribing these chapters to one individual prophetic author who may have lived in the time of Ezra. What is true of the relationship of 56–66 to 40–55 is also true of the relationship of both parts to 1–39: both form and content speak against their strict separation into two independent units. On the other hand, it is in their differences of content, in particular, that speak against a strict unification of all or even only the last two text-units. To state this still more paradoxically, the book of Isaiah is too disparate to be regarded as unified, and too unified to be regarded as disparate.¹⁰

The redaction-critical work, which was engaged with 1–39 from the very beginning and which did not ascribe 56–66 to a single prophet, soon focused on 40–55¹¹ and pressed the question, 'Has the time come to bury Exilic Isaiah? Probably not yet, but it may be well to start making funeral plans! Third Isaiah is hardly viable at all.'¹²

The question of the unity of the book of Isaiah, which had appeared to be answered by the hypothesis of three different scrolls, has reasserted itself, and we now face a paradigm-shift from the three-book interpretation back to the one-book interpretation. Stated differently, the question of the final form of the Isaiah scroll has proceeded from its original unity and leads back to unity!

Before the one-book interpretation is investigated in its various formulations, a review of the past should uncover a possible way to the future of Isaiah research. The discussion of the last twenty years, to which special attention shall be given in what follows, raises cautions against overhasty claims of success and relying on one single method. There is no point in pitting synchronic and diachronic

9. See Mowinckel, 'Komposition', pp. 87–88 n. 3, about Torrey, *Second Isaiah*: 'The scholarly discussion about Deutero-Isaiah can ignore TORREY's book without much injury, in my opinion, in order to keep to the agenda.'

10. Cf. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 575: 'our problem is no longer that there are so few obvious connections between parts of the book, but there are so many and they seem so independent and disparately related.'

11. For the history of research of Isa. 40–55 and 56–66, see under 6.1. and 7.1.

12. Tate, 'Book of Isaiah', p. 51.

approaches against one another; what is useful is to arrive together at a symphony of methods.

The view that the book might have found its final form by pure chance is just as impossible as the one-prophet interpretation.¹³ The 'accident-theory',¹⁴ according to which chaps. 40–66 were added simply because there was still sufficient space in the scroll after the first 39 chapters,¹⁵ belongs to the curiosities of Old Testament scholarship. While the unity of the book of Isaiah cannot be explained by the postulated 'unity' of its writer, it is also true that the entire book is headed as 'Vision of Isaiah, the Son of Amoz' (1.1; cf. 2.1; 13.1) and was understood as such.¹⁶

This understanding is documented in Sir. 48.22–25, where Isaiah is designated as a prophet 'who was great and faithful in his vision': 'By the spirit of might he saw the last things, and comforted those who mourned in Zion. He revealed what was to occur to the end of time, and the hidden things before they came to pass' (vv. 24–25). This can be seen as a first attempt, after the heading in the book of Isaiah itself, to secure one meaning of the scroll as a whole.¹⁷ The underlining of the significance of Zion and its inhabitants as evidence of the visionary power of Isaiah shows that Sirach understood the prophet in the light of the book of Isaiah and not in the context of the book of Kings! For today's exegesis of the final canonical text, these verses from the first half of the second pre-Christian century, only about 100 years after the scroll of Isaiah was completed, are of great heuristic value. The first nearly contemporary interpretation of the scroll understands it as a vision of Isaiah about the oppressed but saved city of Zion, and the comforting of its mourning inhabitants.¹⁸

13. A milder form of this interpretation is the idea of an 'Isaiah School', which may have existed over the long centuries of the book's development; for that, see Vermeylen, 'L'unité', pp. 16–17 (bibliography!); Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 6–8, both of whom reject such an idea of an 'Isaianic school.'

14. So Ackroyd, 'Isaiah I–XIII', p. 18.

15. Cf. Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, pp. 447–48.

16. Recently Seitz, 'How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present', p. 224, suggests that the scroll 'Isaiah' may still not sufficiently explain the unity of the book.

17. Ackroyd, 'Theological Reflections I', p. 57: 'Here in Ecclesiasticus we have the first example known to us of an overall theological statement about the book... It is the first attempt that we know at saying what the book taken as a whole is about.'

18. What Rendtorff writes about the final redactors of the biblical books in reference to their Isaiah interpretation is also valid for Sirach: 'The last writers, whatever we want to call them, were in any case much closer to the original meaning of the text than we can ever be' ('Paradigm', p. 52).

1.3. Approaches to the One-book Interpretation

The model of the 'three-book interpretation' has been visibly overtaken by that of the 'one-book interpretation', with formulations going in quite varied directions: The *one* book has been studied, among other things, in terms of its structural, thematic, inter-textual, holistic, canonical, pragmatic, as well as redactional aspects.¹⁹ This will be examined briefly in order to point up the strengths and weaknesses for the question about the unity of the book of Isaiah.²⁰

1.3.1. The Search for a Holistic Structure

Again and again in the more recent history of research, great weight has been given to repeated word-pairs, key word connections, and inclusions that point to a uniform structure of the book. Ziegler was already thinking along these lines:

The poet purposely chose at the various places the above-mentioned repetition of the same word-pair, and thereby often created quite effective and valuable literary pieces.²¹

Liebreich, in two essays from 1956–1957, made an important step in the direction of a literary approach to the book, a step which arguably corresponds to modern 'literary criticism'. He arrived at the following arrangement of the text:²²

IA:	1–5
Transition:	6
IB	7–12
IIA:	13–19
Transition:	20
IIB	21–27
III:	28–35
IV:	36–39
Added to these are:	²³
	40–49
	50–55
	56–66

19. Tate, 'Book of Isaiah', p. 45, identifies three formulations of the 'one-book interpretation': (1) thematic and inter-textual continuities; (2) redaction analysis; (3) literary reading.

20. See the summaries by Vermeylen, 'L'unité', pp. 11-53; Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 1-18.

21. Ziegler, 'Zum literarischen Aufbau', p. 253.

22. Liebreich, 'Compilation', p. 263.

23. Liebreich, 'Compilation', p. 124.

The strength of his work lies without doubt in its many individual observations, which cannot be discussed here; these observations, however, are not all of equal importance. The weakness of the work, and the majority of purely synchronic works, lies in the fact that there follows no interpretation corresponding to the description. Thus Liebreich's second article suddenly breaks off, without offering even *one* hint of possible clarifying models.

Brownlee moves in a comparable literary direction, starting with an observation on the first Isaiah scroll of Qumran: Between chaps. 33 and 34 there is an obvious break of three lines.²⁴ In addition, while plene writing clearly increases from Isaiah 34 on, both parts clearly were copied by the same hand. However else the phenomenon of the obvious gap may be interpreted, it is clear that in 1QIsa^a there is a division of the scroll into 1–33 and 34–66. Accordingly, Brownlee suggests a deliberate two-part composition (1–33 / 34–66), each with seven sections.²⁵ This division into a double series of seven sections was developed further,²⁶ but has only limited interpretive value. For a central theme, Brownlee appears to hold to the dialectic between 'ruin and future blessedness',²⁷ which is first encountered in the juxtaposition of 1.24-25 and 1.26-27. On the other hand, important themes appear to find no place in his schema, as for example, that of the polemic against foreign gods (40–48). In addition, he himself has to admit that the 'Ebed' in the second series lacks a counterpart in 1–33.²⁸

- | | | |
|------|-----------|---|
| I. | 1–5: | Ruin and restoration of Judah // |
| | 34–35: | Paradise lost and regained |
| II. | 6–8: | Biography // |
| | 36–40: | Biography |
| III. | 9–12: | Agents of divine blessing and judgment // |
| | 41–45: | Agents of deliverance and judgment |
| IV. | 13–23: | Anti-foreign oracles // |
| | 46–48: | Anti-Babylon oracles |
| V. | 24–27: | Universal judgment and the deliverance of God's people // |
| | 49–54/55: | Universal redemption through the Lord's Servant |

24. Brownlee, 'Manuscripts', pp. 16-21; Brownlee, *Meaning*, p. 247; to this question, further: Kahle, *Die hebräischen Handschriften*, pp. 72-77; Milik, *Ten Years*, pp. 26-27; Richards, 'A Note on the Bisection', pp. 257-58; Giese, 'Further Evidence', pp. 61-70.

25. Brownlee, *Meaning*, pp. 247-49.

26. Slightly modified by Gileadi, *Holistic Structure*, pp. 14-15; Evans, 'Unity', pp. 129-47, takes Brownlee's thesis as confirmed (p. 146).

27. Brownlee, *Meaning*, p. 255.

28. Brownlee, *Meaning*, p. 249.

- | | | |
|------|--------|---|
| VI. | 28–31: | Ethical sermons, indicting Israel and Judah // |
| | 56–59: | Ethical sermons, the ethical conditions for Israel's redemption |
| VII. | 32–33: | The restoration of Judah and the Davidic Kingdom // |
| | 60–66: | Paradise regained: The glories of the New Jerusalem and the new heavens and the new earth |

A positive aspect of this attempt to get a grip on the book is the recognition that inside the book there are two complementary movements on a synchronic plane: a linear development, on the one hand, and a circular repetition of fixed themes, on the other. So the book begins with the prophet Isaiah of the eighth century, continues through the crises of the Syrian-Ephraimite war and the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib into the postexilic period and, over and above that, into the messianic future. This last is already evident in 2.1-5 and after that is taken up again and again. The choir of the redeemed occurs in several places, which has a slowing effect.

To Sweeney's credit, he has presented both an analysis of the final form of the book, and a detailed interpretation of chaps. 1–4, and now also a commentary on 1–39. After nearly a hundred-page investigation of the 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah, he analyzes its structure in such a way that Isaiah 1–39 is entirely a preface to 40–66: 'In short, Isaiah 1–39 is presented as the preface which looks forward to Isaiah 40–66, and Isaiah 40–66 is presented as the completion which presupposes Isaiah 1–39.'²⁹ In addition, it must be noted that the relationship between the two textual blocks is much more complicated than the schema 'preface-completion' is able to express.

Exhortation to Jerusalem/Judah to return to Yhwh as their God	1–66
I. Prologue: Exhortation: Yhwh's offer of redemption to the people	1
II. Elaboration: Exhortation to people to participate in Yhwh's plan for a new world order	2–66
A. Announcement of Yhwh's plan for the new world order...in Zion	3–35
1. Announcement concerning the cleansing of Zion for its role	2–4
2. Elaboration on implementation of plan to achieve new world order	5–35
a. chastisement of Israel/Judah and the nations	5–27
b. announcement of Yhwh's assumption of kingship in Zion	28–35

29. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, 7; Sweeney, 'On Multiple Settings', pp. 267-73.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------|
| B. | Transition: Narrative explanation for delay in implementation of plan | 36–39 |
| C. | Exhortation to participate in Yhwh's renewed covenant | 40–66 |
| 1. | Announcement that Yhwh is reestablishing his covenant with Zion | 40–54 |
| a. | announcement proper: prophet's commission to announce Yhwh's return to Zion | 40.1–11 |
| b. | substantiation: Yhwh is renewing His covenant | 40.12–54.17 |
| 2. | Exhortation proper to join covenant | 55–66 |

It is further obvious that literary structural features remain unappreciated, for example, the so-called Immanuel book in 6–8, the foreign nation oracles in 13–23, chaps. 24–27, or even the unit of 40–55, which is clearly defined by the theme of the word of God. In addition, the last mention of Babylon in 48.20—‘Get out of Babylon, flee from Chaldea!’—together with the announcement of the end of punishment of 40.2 should be grounds enough to view 40–48 as a compositional and exegetical unit. Likewise, it is unusual that the theme of the servant and the servants finds no place in the schema. According to Sweeney, the whole book serves the call,

to reestablish and maintain the Jewish community in Jerusalem in the mid-to-late-fifth century B.C.E. It is directed to the postexilic Jewish population in general and attempts to convince them yet again that Yhwh is the God of all creation, that His covenant with them is still in effect, and that it is still necessary for them to adhere to Him and fulfill His requirements.³⁰

One can partially accept this particular pragmatism, but nevertheless important themes are not taken into account, as for example that of the three-sided relationship of Yhwh, Israel, *and* the nations, and correlating with that, the entrance of foreigners and eunuchs into the community of God's people. Besides that, the increasing split of the community, which reaches its high point in 65–66, is not sufficiently considered. The book of Isaiah as a unity does not follow the path of restoration, but rather that of an entirely new concept of the people of God. Because Sweeney does not recognize this, in his most recent commentary he can come to the astonishing conclusion that the book of Isaiah might have been a support of the reform programs of Ezra and Nehemiah.³¹ Of more interest here than the way he deals with

30. Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–4, pp. 185–86.

31. Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–39, p. 60; Sweeney, ‘Book of Isaiah as Prophetic Torah’, pp. 56–58.

content is his new structuring of the book,³² whereby he fixes the point of intersection no longer in Isaiah 40, but in 34;³³ in this he follows Brownlee's line of thought:

I.	Concerning Yhwh's plan for worldwide sovereignty at Zion	1.1–33.24
A.	Prologue	1.1–31
B.	Prophetic instruction concerning Yhwh's projected plans	2.1–33.24
II.	Concerning realization of Yhwh's plans	34.1–66.24
A.	Prophetic instruction concerning realization	34.1–54.17
B.	Prophetic exhortation to adhere to Yhwh's covenant	55.1–66.24

Among other things, what is surprising is the fact that Sweeney sets aside a diachronic evaluation of this almost monotonous list of 'prophetic instruction', 'prophetic announcement', 'prophetic exhortation', which all have to do with Yhwh's lordship on Zion, and which come from four major stages in the development of the book: (1) the final form in the middle or toward the end of the fifth century, in connection with the reform of Ezra and Nehemiah; (2) an edition from the end of the sixth century, comprised of 2–32*, 35–55, and 60–62 and motivated by the return from the exile and the rebuilding of the second temple; (3) an edition from the end of the seventh century, comprised of 5–23*, 27–32 and 36–37 and supporting the Josiah reform; (4) various texts from 1–32, which stem from Isaiah ben Amoz of the eighth century.³⁴ It would be high art to have created a structural whole such as Sweeney suggests from these four historical stages (in which there are clearly important differences)! It is apparent that the needs of 'synchronic harmony' and diachronic differences suddenly butt heads. 'Too much' about structure on the one hand conflicts with 'too little' literary-historical differentiation on the other.

Watts goes entirely his own way in his two-volume commentary on the book of Isaiah;³⁵ he also argues for a division between 1–33 and 34–66,³⁶ in which the twelve resulting scenes of the whole 'drama' are related occasionally to a historical phase, beginning with Isaiah 1–6 (Uzziah/Jotham) and ending with Isaiah 58–62 (Artaxerxes I); finally, chaps. 63–66 treat 'The Age to Come'.

32. His structure is only partially reproduced below; see Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–39, pp. 39–41.

33. Carr is critical of this in his review of Sweeney, p. 277.

34. Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–39, p. 51.

35. Watts, *Isaiah* 1–33; Watts, *Isaiah* 34–66.

36. Watts, *Isaiah* 1–33, p. 1.

Part I The former times: Judgment, curse
1-6/ 7-14/ 15-22/ 23-27/ 28-33/ 34-39.

Part II The latter times: Salvation, blessing
40-44.23/ 44.24-48.22/ 49.1-52.12/ 52.13-57.21/ 58-62/ 63-66.

For the most part, the scene divisions do not follow literary indicators but postulated historical allusions to Judaic kings, leaders, and their foreign counterparts;³⁷ so 15-22 has to do with Hezekiah, 34-39 with Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, and 58-62 with Shechaniah, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The understood *argumentum e silentio* remains weak: 'the veiled references and unspoken names would have been familiar to a fifth-century audience.'³⁸ The strongest argument against a structure which is directed to 'chronological' items is the position of chaps. 36-39 concerning the events in 701. According to Watts, however, they have to do with the exilic period, which is accurate, however, only for 39.6-8. Here lies a 'blind spot' in Watts's structure: Why should a book that treats all the important stages for the people of God from the middle of the eighth century to Artaxerxes I, leave out, of all things, the destruction of Jerusalem and the beginning of the exile?³⁹

More convincing is Watts's methodology in interpreting the whole book from the perspective of a Jewish reader in the middle of the fifth century. His research is directed then not at the pre-stages of the final text and their origins:

We will focus instead on the questions: Why were these gathered and reshaped about 435 B.C. and presented as a complete book? To whom was it presented? And what did the editors/composers/ authors try to accomplish by it?⁴⁰

To these questions he gives the following answers: As to the composition of the book, it most likely comes from that minority mentioned in chap. 66, who see themselves as poor and humble, and as such, hope in the word of God and tremble before it.⁴¹ These groups would have represented the following program: (1) With the era of the Persian rule the ancient period of the Assyrian and Babylonian

37. Already in 1884 Cornill presented the thesis of a strong chronological order ('Komposition', pp. 83-105).

38. Watts, *Isaiah* 1-33, p. 1.

39. Watts himself stands helpless before this question, *Isaiah* 1-33, p. xxxii: 'Any attempt to reconstruct the way this book came to be formed confronts those two basic anomalies, for everything else can be fitted into a compositional pattern.'

40. Watts, *Isaiah* 1-33, p. xli.

41. Watts, *Isaiah* 1-33, p. xxxi, with reference to 62.1-12; 63.11-64.12; 66.5-6.

oppression has supposedly ended and a new age has dawned; (2) presumably, there shall no longer be a kingdom in the ancient sense; the kingly rule lies now with Yhwh on Zion—to which the nations will make a pilgrimage; (3) the Persian state power should be recognized as godly and every opposition to it rejected; (4) a harsh critique of the offering cult in Jerusalem and upon heathen cults is presumably practiced.⁴² Besides that, by the covenant breach of Israel, Yhwh supposedly is no longer bound to the old covenant, but rather now intends a new one with his people; in God's plan, Israel is no longer entitled to the position of rulership (which now presumably has been awarded to the Persians), but rather to that of the servant. Watts's commentary is path-breaking in the sense that he takes the 'one-book interpretation' seriously in his exegetical *practice*—it is easy to talk about the *book* of Isaiah, while in practice focusing only on smaller or larger text collections. However, the commentary is unsatisfactory first in that the structure finds its vertices not in the book, but in the extra-textual reality, and second in that the postulate of a comprehensive final editing is not demonstrated but is forced by applying the reckoning that, because the book is so well thought-out, it must have sprung from one thoughtful plan!

In a further attempt to bring the book into an all-encompassing structure, O'Connell formulates two theses:

that the formal structure of the book of Isaiah comprises seven asymmetrically concentric sections, each of which presents a complex frame-working pattern of repetitions among its subunits, and that the rhetoric of the book is closest to that of the prophetic covenant disputation.⁴³

It is striking how small the first sections and how spacious the last sections turn out to be; these disproportionalities do not speak for a schema. Further, the analysis is so over-refined, that each verse is placed in a *structural* relationship to another. That forces the interpretation to the very improbable suggestion 'that the compilation of Isaiah took place under a single rhetorical program and, probably, a single hand in the sixth century BCE'.⁴⁴ From the 'one-book interpretation' comes in turn a 'one-prophet interpretation' where the author is not the Isaiah ben Amoz of the beginning, but the 'great Unknown' of the end of the historical development.

42. Watts, *Isaiah* 1–33, pp. xxxi–xxxii.

43. O'Connell, *Concentricity*, pp. 19–20.

44. O'Connell, *Concentricity*, p. 246.

I.	1.1–2.5:	Cameo of a covenant disputation ⁴⁵
II.	2.6–22:	Threat of judgment on idolaters
III.	3.1–4.1:	Threat of judgment on the unjust
IV.	4.2–12.6:	Syro-Ephraimite-Assyrian schema for Zion's judgment and restoration
V.	13.1–39.8:	Assyrian-Babylonian schema for Zion's judgment and restoration
VI.	40.1–54.17:	Yhwh's exoneration
VII.	55.1–66.24:	Final ultimatum

The strength of this work lies in its many individual observations. In addition, the theme of Zion is granted a proper place. However, the theme of the foreign nations is devalued. A positive note is the historical integration of the final text in the postexilic period. O'Connell attempts to identify a well thought-out structure which permits no coincidences (!), in order to transform it into a rhetorical concept, the 'covenant disputation', which would inspire in the implied reader a 'desire for covenant reconciliation to Yhwh'.⁴⁶ He mentions in the last (!) pages of his monograph three groups as addressees, groups that are separated both temporally and spatially: the unrepentant contemporaries of Isaiah in Jerusalem, the Babylonian *golah* who are still to return, and this (presumably) same group after its return.⁴⁷

Lack presents a work *sui generis*, in which he researches the structures and symbols in the book of Isaiah; he also presents no real schema of the structure of the book. Still, one can make out the following structure:

1–39:

1. Section: 1.2–5.24: 'l'annonce et la motivation globale d'un jugement qui devient réalité concrète et historique en 5.25–9.6'⁴⁸
2. Section: 5.25–9.6: 'l'exécution en deux épisodes...du jugement motivé en Isaïe 1–5'⁴⁹
3. Section: 9.7–11.16 (12)
4. Section: 13–35: 'L'ensemble d'Isaïe 13–35 est à lire dans la perspective du jour de Yahvé'⁵⁰

45. This schema is not found in O'Connell, but is deduced from the individual chapters of his monograph.

46. O'Connell, *Concentricity*, p. 242.

47. O'Connell, *Concentricity*, pp. 243–44.

48. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 30.

49. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 44.

50. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 61.

Appendice: 36–39 'la concrétisation du Völkersturmmotiv... Il est dans le livre d'Isaïe le paradigme de l'inviolabilité de Sion'⁵¹

40–55:

1. Section: 40.1–49.13: 'Dans le prologue, est *programmé* ce qui en
2. Section 49.14–55.13: 55.10ss est le *bilan* de la parole'⁵²

56–66:⁵³

	60–62	
59.15–21		63.1–6
59.1–14		63.7–64.11
56–58		65–66

Following its literary formation, the unity of the book lies not in the person(s) of the author(s), but in the 'unité d'une symbolique'.⁵⁴ It can be observed in Lack's work how difficult the tight-rope walk is between its descriptive literary reflection and its analytical-historical exegesis.⁵⁵ So the pithy four-page excursus concerning the redaction history of the book⁵⁶ is more an academic duty than a real matter of concern.

The divisions, especially in the first part, are too extensive to be fair to the compositional character of these chapters. Against Lack, one needs to emphasize that metaphors and symbols are not the only or the primary indicators of structure; but rather, syntactic and semantic shifts perform this function. Beyond that, it is, in the end, not clear as to what the book aims at in its pragmatism.

Of these proposals for tracing the structure of the book of Isaiah, it must be said in summary that they do not give a holistic structure of the book. Therefore it appears to be more appropriate to search for the structures of the compositional parts. Pointing out collections of key words and combinations of word-pairs is indisputable, but unsatisfying, in the end, to communicate the 'plot' of the book. Even with the useful consulting of digital data aids, our knowledge of the 'history' of the book is not automatic.⁵⁷ This means also that an excessively water-tight structure of the book is not to be expected; if

51. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 76.

52. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 84.

53. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 125: 'Nous usons du terme "disposition" pour serrer de plus près la texture particulière du III Is.'

54. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 142.

55. Lack's lament is an example: 'De nouveau, nous avons à défendre nos positions sur le double front des sciences littéraires et des sciences bibliques' (*La symbolique*, p. 255).

56. Lack, *La symbolique*, pp. 142–45.

57. See the helpful two-volume work of van Wieringen, *Analogies in Isaiah*.

there were such a perfect structure, that fact would speak not for, but rather, against the likelihood of the proposal.⁵⁸

1.3.2. 'Close Reading'—'Holistic Interpretation'

In this connection a few works should be presented which introduce a 'holistic interpretation' or a 'close reading' of the final structure. Pioneers of this literary-rhetorical preoccupation with biblical texts are Muilenburg⁵⁹ and Alonso Schökel.⁶⁰ Subsequently, a series of commentaries have appeared which are dedicated to a 'close-reading'.⁶¹ It is to be noted that they concentrate mainly on chaps. 40–66, just because the literary units there are longer and more consistent than in chaps. 1–39.

But there are also works that aim at the book of Isaiah as a whole; here among others, the exegeses of Dumbrell,⁶² Conrad,⁶³ and Webb should be mentioned.⁶⁴ According to Dumbrell the facts indicate that the book of Isaiah was received into the canon as *one* book, 'that the sixty-six chapters have a literary cohesiveness which may be related to a major aspect of the purpose of the book'.⁶⁵ If one reads this book as a literary unit, then a basic theme emerges which unites the individual parts with one another: 'This is the theme of Yahweh's interest in and devotion to the city of Jerusalem.'⁶⁶ Proceeding from the corrupt and sinful Jerusalem of the time of Isaiah, the path continues to the purification of the city by God's judgment, to the eschatological Jerusalem as goal and center of the international pilgrimage.⁶⁷ The

58. Note Carr's warning: 'Yet excessive confidence in the existence of a more complete unity in biblical texts—and our need to find it—can blind us to the unresolved, rich plurality built into texts like Isaiah' ('Reaching for Unity', p. 80).

59. Muilenburg, *Book of Isaiah*, pp. 381–773; in addition, his important article on methods of 'rhetorical criticism' in Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism', pp. 1–18.

60. Alonso Schökel, *Estudios*; Alonso Schökel, *Profetas I*; Alonso Schökel, 'Isaiah', pp. 165–83.

61. Special mention should be made of Beuken's four-volume commentary on 40–66: *Jesaja* (vols. IIA; IIB; IIIA; IIIB); Spykerboer, *Structure*; Clifford, *Fair Spoken*; Polan, *In the Ways of Justice*; Miscall, *Isaiah*.

62. Dumbrell, 'Purpose', pp. 111–28.

63. Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives', pp. 67–81; newly printed in Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, pp. 34–51; Conrad, 'Prophet, Redactor, and Audience', pp. 306–26, with an 'agnostic position' toward diachronic questions: 'The book of Isaiah's origins can be imagined in a variety of ways, but the data for identifying its roots are inaccessible' (p. 311).

64. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', pp. 65–84.

65. Dumbrell, 'Purpose', p. 111.

66. Dumbrell, 'Purpose', p. 112.

67. Dumbrell, 'Purpose', p. 128: 'The book of Isaiah moves from the perverse worship offered by physical Jerusalem under judgement arising from the neglect

first chapter thus introduces not only chaps. 1–12, but rather the entire book. Also important is the theme of 'remnant', which is referred to already in the name of one of the sons of the prophet, Shear-Jashub (7.3).

Webb refers to the work of Dumbrell and takes it further. At the beginning he makes clear his objective and methods: 'The subject of this essay is the book of Isaiah as a whole... The approach taken is literary as opposed to historical or sociological.'⁶⁸ Whether a literary investigation has to be understood as in contrast to the historical or sociological approach remains an open question; in any case, Webb abstains from any historical interpretation. Like Watts, he also accepts that the entire book should be read as a single vision (1.1)⁶⁹ about the transformation of Zion from a place of rebellion to the eschatological place of the community of God. 'The result is the production of a purified remnant which becomes the nucleus of the new Zion of the eschaton.'⁷⁰ The way to a cleansed Jerusalem proceeds only through judgment, which brings forth the remnant. This, he claims, is a central theme of the whole book.⁷¹ The 'holy seed', 'Immanuel', the 'cornerstone', the 'messianic figure', and God's 'suffering servant'—these are all metaphors for the faithful remnant, he says, whose hope is in God. So Webb concludes: 'It is the emergence of this remnant which is the key to Zion's transformation, and hence to the transformation of the cosmos.'⁷²

This idea-rich investigation would have been even more convincing had it not been entirely limited to the synchronic. Thus, important questions remain open: What social groups stand behind one such a 'remnant theology'? Has a radical opening for uncircumcised foreigners been accomplished sociologically-politically? These and similar questions are able to serve as horizon-opening questions even of a final textual-oriented exegesis.⁷³

of Yahweh's kingship, to the worship of Yahweh in the New Jerusalem... It is the function of the book to put this theology of the centrality of the New Jerusalem before us.'

68. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', p. 65.

69. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', p. 68.

70. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', p. 72.

71. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', pp. 72–84.

72. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', p. 84.

73. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah as a Human Witness', p. 280: 'An acknowledgement of the retention of the biblical pre-history here and there in the canonical context is not the same as a reading of the Bible in terms of its redactional history.'

For Conrad the 'Fear not' passages (אל תירא)⁷⁴ in the book of Isaiah are an important structural feature; in the first place they display parallels between the Ahaz and Hezekiah-episodes (7.4-9; 37.6-7) and, second, at prominent points they portray the whole people as a kingly figure: As with the kings, comfort is granted also to the people; they do not need to fear (10.24-27; 41.8-13, 14-16; 43.1-4, 5-6; 44.1-5).⁷⁵ The understanding of this 'Fear not' oracle probably is the key to the structure and testimony of the book, for in the Ahaz episode (7) the future Assyrian invasion is announced, which then happens under Hezekiah (36-38). Also, the Immanuel signs are fulfilled in the person of Hezekiah himself.⁷⁶ As the prophetic word concerning the freeing of the Assyrian yoke in Ahaz's time is fulfilled under Hezekiah, so might the readership of the book also have hope that the promise of being freed from the Babylonian yoke may be fulfilled as well.⁷⁷ The entire book, claims Conrad, may be concerned with this: strengthening the addressees in their expectation of redemption from Babylon. The nation is comforted with the oracle 'Fear not', and becomes the royal figure of the end-time.⁷⁸

While it is indeed undisputed that the episodes about Ahaz and Hezekiah should be read in close relation to each other, this does not allow one to deduce their presumed central importance for the structure and message of the whole book. On the contrary, it says that the book as a whole already looks back from some distance to the Assyrian and Babylonian period of oppression, and the addressees of the book are no longer to be sought in Babylon, but in the late Persian period. Already it is clear to the reader in chaps. 13-14 that Babylon and Assyria have been disempowered for a very long time. The further the reader pursues the book, the clearer it becomes that even the Babylonian superpower has been destroyed on Zion.⁷⁹ An overemphasis on the 'Assyrian-Babylonian' theme is prohibited also by the fact that Assyria is no longer discussed after chap. 38, nor Babylon after chap. 48. The 'Babylonian-free' chapters at the

74. See Conrad, *Fear Not, Warrior*.

75. Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives', p. 67: 'The use of the language stereotypical of royalty suggests that Yahweh is addressing the community as a king.'

76. Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives', p. 73: 'Hezekiah's actions, in contrast to the actions of Ahaz, illustrate how he fulfils this symbolic name.'

77. Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives', p. 77.

78. Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives', p. 77: in addition, Conrad, 'The Community as King', pp. 99-111.

79. Begg, 'Babylon', p. 123: 'The same readers likewise recall from Isaiah 13-23, however, that Babylon, Israel's future oppressor according to 39, is itself doomed to destruction.'

beginning (1–12) and close (49–66) of the book underline that the Babylonian exile was only one epoch, though a catastrophic one, in the history of the people of God: As there was a period *before* Babylon, so there is also a period *after* Babylon.⁸⁰

1.3.3. A Theme-oriented Interpretation

Beside the works that are committed to a 'close reading', there are those that read the book of Isaiah from a thematic perspective.⁸¹ So Roberts claims⁸² that the theme of the holiness of Yhwh and the resulting consequences of the purification of Zion are the all encompassing framework of the entire book. Basically, he takes as his starting point an Isaiah tradition which maintained a strongly theocentric theology.⁸³

Anderson⁸⁴ attempts to reach beyond an analysis of the last apocalyptic expansion to a holistic understanding of the book. Thus, he pays special attention to 56–66; 24–27; 34–35 and the redactional connections by means of 'on that day', or 'in that time' in 1–33; the latter, in particular, leads to a specifically apocalyptic re-reading.⁸⁵ In the center of this 're-reading' Yhwh stands as a cosmic king on Zion and as 'Divine Warrior' in the battle against chaos and sinners; if the nations recognized Yhwh's lordship, then the way of Zion would stand open also to them. The poor and oppressed of Israel wait on the triumph of the 'Divine Warrior', and against all evidence, the Day of Yhwh is imminent (13.6). It is certainly worthwhile to pursue this apocalyptic 're-reading', and there is no question that it took place shortly before the completion of the book. It is, however, very debatable whether this apocalyptic revision could have intruded in a far-reaching way on the structural composition of the book. Even in the last chapters, burning social-political questions are treated, such as those concerning the identity of the people of God, which will not fit into an apocalyptic expectation of the end. In regard to the apocalyptic revision, two things should be emphasized for the present

80. Begg, 'Babylon', p. 124.

81. See among others, Darr, 'Isaiah's Vision and the Rhetoric of Rebellion', pp. 847–82; besides this, in *Isaiah's Vision*, Darr investigates the theme of 'rebellion' in the book of Isaiah.

82. Roberts, 'Isaiah in Old Testament Theology', p. 131: 'If there is any concept central to the whole Book of Isaiah, it is the vision of Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel.'

83. Roberts, 'Isaiah in Old Testament Theology', p. 131: 'All, or almost all, the components of the Isaianic corpus move in the same stream of tradition.'

84. 'The Apocalyptic Rendering', pp. 17–38.

85. B. Anderson, 'The Apocalyptic Rendering', p. 18.

study: one, that the last hands to be involved with the book must not be identical with those that gave the scroll its defining form; and two, that because the position of the apocalyptic revision is in the center of the book and not at its close (!), it suggests that the book of Isaiah may have been updated latest in its center.

Clifford is another representative of the theme-oriented analysis. He begins his study with three themes from 40–55 which obviously go beyond the Isaiah tradition of the eighth century: Exodus–Conquest, creation, and Cyrus. He emphasizes that these themes do not speak against a coherent interaction of 1–39 and 40–55, for ‘Second Isaiah’s three apparent innovations are in fact deeply continuous with the Isaiah tradition, and they show an original mind discerning coherence in the divine plan for Israel and the world’.⁸⁶ Of the three themes, 56–66 takes up only that of the creation of Zion. The varied conception of Zion in the three blocks of the book is governed finally by three different pastoral goal settings. For Isaiah’s hearers, Zion meant absolute security; against this, he proclaims that Zion offers true security only to those who wish to repent (1.28). In the period of exile, Clifford continues, the prophetic message consisted in designating Zion as the goal of the Exodus and the return from chaos. The message of the postexilic period would be about purging Zion of those who still had not turned to Yhwh.⁸⁷

Very early, Ackroyd also aligned himself in the ranks of exegetes who were investigating an understanding of the book of Isaiah as a whole. His starting point is the form of the book as now presented in the Masoretic text: ‘What we can agree on is the book; and here, essentially on the book as it stands, as we know it.’⁸⁸ At the same time, he represents the idea that the book of Isaiah is too complex to outline a theology of it; one would be able only to collect important themes, such as, among others, that of the kingdom, or that of the relationship of Yhwh to Israel and the nations. The shaping of traditions within the book with its redactions and expansions may have been possible only by relating back to the unchallenged authority of the eighth century prophet.⁸⁹ The designation of the entire work as

86. Clifford, ‘The Unity of the Book of Isaiah’, p. 16.

87. Clements hands down a further theme-centered contribution, ‘A Light to the Nations’, pp. 57–69, who considers the motif of ‘lights’ in Isa. 9.1; 42.6 and 60.1–3.

88. Ackroyd, ‘Theological Reflections I’, p. 54.

89. Ackroyd, ‘Theological Reflections II’, p. 12: ‘The tradition has its authority because of its association with the prophet: the status and authority of the prophet is enhanced by the continuing validation of the tradition.’

'vision',⁹⁰ certainly late, shows that the book was placed under the authority of Isaiah. It raises, however, the basic question, why is it only the book of Isaiah that underwent such extensive editing and expansion?⁹¹ This is even more surprising since it can be seen from Jer. 26.17-19 that in their time, Micah held the greater authority compared to Isaiah.⁹² According to Ackroyd, one of the reasons lies in the presentation of Isaiah in chaps. 1-12 as a prophet of judgment and proclaimer of eschatological salvation;⁹³ the latter can be recognized especially in 12.2-3, where the root נצח appears three times and nowhere else in these chapters except in the name of the prophet; here Isaiah's name, and thereby he himself, are interpreted as proclaiming salvation. Subsequent tradents would have been easily able to build further on this mix of judgment and salvation in Isaiah 1-12.⁹⁴ Ackroyd's important observations are accurate for 1-12 and also for 1-39, but grow progressively weaker for chaps. 40ff. In the search for the conceptual unity of the book, the person of the prophet is certainly important (in spite of the heading of Isa. 1.1), but should not be overvalued, since the designation of all 66 chapters as the 'vision of Isaiah' is a late phenomenon having to do with canonical reception (cf. Sir. 48.22ff.). In other words, Isaiah ben Amoz became the visionary of the entire book only when it was already in its final form. Our own work will show that Isaiah 40-66 originated almost entirely independently of the prophetic figure of Isaiah and his tradents; only when the two major sections came together did the prophet of the eighth century become the dominating factor, so that now in the final form of the book Isaiah's voice can actually be heard throughout.⁹⁵

1.3.4. Canon Criticism and Canonical Exegesis

Rendtorff has made a particularly important contribution to the study of the unity of the book of Isaiah. Through his work, the final form of the biblical text has been recognized as a new challenge even

90. So also in 2 Chron. 32.32; Obad. 1.1 and Nah. 1.1.

91. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah I-XIII', p. 22.

92. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah I-XIII', p. 24.

93. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah I-XIII', p. 45: 'Whether the prophet himself or his exegetes were responsible, the prophet appears to us as a man of judgement and salvation.'

94. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah I-XIII', p. 46.

95. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. 66: Those 'responsible [for the book], so it seems to suggest until there is evidence to the contrary, deliver a substantially coherent whole in which Isaiah—or more precisely, Yahweh himself through Isaiah—is continuously explicated, expanded upon, clarified, and updated.'

in German Old Testament scholarship.⁹⁶ According to Rendtorff, the justified hypothesis about the historical development of the early stages of the text indicates that, on the synchronic level, the unity can only be seen as complex;⁹⁷ unity should not be confused with simplicity. He describes his approach as 'canon criticism' and seeks access to the understanding of the *one* book of Isaiah. In the process, he attempts first of all to free himself from viewing the structure of the text in its final form, and not to be constrained by prior diachronic decisions.⁹⁸ Thus he comes to the central question:

But what does that mean, the book as a whole? It is easier to say what it does not mean; it does not mean to ignore the many signs of the complex structure of the book. On the contrary, the task will be not to ignore these signs, but to understand them—not by dividing the book into numerous layers and sources, but also not by simplistically distinguishing between 'original' and 'redactional' elements.⁹⁹

Of course, it must be conceded that the rejection of diachronic preliminary decisions itself constitutes a preliminary decision. When an exegete, for example, is pre-disposed to accept three prophetic personalities or even just three circles of tradents, that fact will be noticeable also in his synchronic observations. It is not a matter of escaping the circle of presuppositions, but of being conscious that it is inescapable.

In Rendtorff's work it can be seen how completely he breaks from the preconception of the 'three Isaiahs' and is searching for a new paradigm. While he first spoke exclusively of the 'composition' of the book, now he speaks appreciably of its 'formation', which is more than merely a semantic variant. 'Composition' is a hallmark of the Isaiah research of the last hundred years; 'formation' introduces a new focus. According to Rendtorff, the idea of 'formation' has less commitment to the search for the pre-stages of the final text than that

96. For that, see Rendtorff, 'Paradigm', p. 43: He states that already in 1938 G. von Rad laments the lack of meaning of the final form; cf. Rendtorff, 'Between Historical Criticism and Holistic Interpretation', pp. 298-303.

97. Rendtorff, 'Book of Isaiah' (1991), p. 16: 'The discussion of the last decade revealed the unity of the Book of Isaiah. Of course, it is not a simple unity but a highly complex one'; see now also the 'updated version' in Rendtorff, 'The Book of Isaiah' (1996), pp. 32-49.

98. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 6', p. 81: 'It appears to me more important to keep a clear view of observations on the synchronic level of the present text, without in each case attempting to respond to the emerging issues on the diachronic level with the usual—i.e., essentially literary-critical—questions.'

99. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 56,1', p. 172.

of 'composition'.¹⁰⁰ For my own work presented here, the subtitle 'Composition and Final Form' was consciously chosen, where 'composition' is used more in the sense of Anglophone exegesis, that is, dedicated to the diachronic aspect of the origins of the book, but always in view of the final form of the book.

Rendtorff laid the foundation for considering Isaiah as book already in 1983 in his *Einführung*.¹⁰¹ He proceeds from the central meaning of Isaiah 40–55, with special attention to 40.1ff. The imperative call, 'comfort, comfort my people' (נַחֵם) takes up the same verb from the closing chapter of the textual unit 1–12 (12.1) and at the same time suggests a bridge to the last verses of the book (66.13). Similarly, he suggests that in the opening of the book and in the beginning of the second part the word 'guilt' (עוֹן) is a programmatic reference—to the guilt-laden nation (1.4), its guilt is forgiven (40.1). Rendtorff continues that the theme of Zion runs through all three parts of the book, as well as that of 'glory' (כְּבוֹד). Likewise, he points out that the expression 'the holy one of Israel' appears in all parts of the book, but in different usages: in 1–39 it appears mostly in words of lament; in 40–66, in contrast, only in salvation preaching. The use of the word 'righteousness' (צְדָקָה, צִדִּיק), he claims, is also powerfully expressed in 1–39, often with appearing 'justice' (מִשְׁפָּט) but never with 'salvation'; by contrast, it appears in the second part with 'salvation' and 'shalom', but no longer in combination with 'justice'; with the combination of all three expressions, Isa. 56.1 then becomes a key point.¹⁰² In tracing the numerous inter-weavings of the text, one returns again and again to chaps. 1, 12, 35, and 40, which leads to the conclusion that they have a special function in the final formation of the book.¹⁰³ It points to the fact 'that the demonstrated relationships of chapters i, xii, and xxxv to the second part are not isolated, but must be seen in relation to a far-reaching theological redaction of the first part'.¹⁰⁴ Rendtorff then offers a unique contribution concerning the forward and backward references in Isaiah 6.¹⁰⁵

According to Rendtorff the fundamental central themes originated in 40–55, leading to redaction and composition work in 1–39 'which

100. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 56,1', p. 172 n. 2: 'It is somewhat more open than the term "composition" (which I use elsewhere and also further on), in which the moment of composition clearly resonates with the antecedent components.'

101. Rendtorff, *Das Alte Testament*, pp. 210–12.

102. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 56,1', pp. 172–79.

103. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', p. 316.

104. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', p. 317.

105. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 6', pp. 73–82.

again and again set salvation oracles in opposition to accusation and judgment proclamations against Jerusalem'.¹⁰⁶ It is evident, he continues, that 56–66 never existed independently from 1–55, but rather emerged in conscious connection with the greater book of Isaiah.¹⁰⁷ At the end of his study of the composition of the book, Rendtorff adds an observation that is worth considering: 'In my opinion anyhow, there is much to support the possibility that those who are responsible for the final structuring of the third part also participated in the composition of the final form of the book.'¹⁰⁸ Thus 56.1 is a key text not only from a semantic viewpoint in its uniting 'righteousness', 'justice', and 'salvation', but also from a pragmatic viewpoint: 'It is precisely this group that are the readers of the book; for it is quite evident that the book as a whole in its present form speaks to post-exilic Israel.'¹⁰⁹ These observations do indeed point in the right direction, but are still too imprecise to unravel the testimonies of the book, which, because of their diachronic stratification, are polyphonic.¹¹⁰

When Rendtorff designates his method as 'canon criticism', he means the study of the final form. The 'canonical approach' of Childs goes beyond that; for him the canonical form is more than merely the final form of the biblical texts, but rather the historical process by which the faith community of Israel created texts that reflected their relationship to God in an authentic way.¹¹¹ The book of Isaiah in particular, he claims, is such an end-product of postexilic Israel; Isaianic phrases and exilic and postexilic redactions and new creations are so intertwined that they must have given up their respective historical contexts in favor of a new theological meaning. This phenomenon of *dehistoricizing* in favor of the canonical, i.e.,

106. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', p. 318; Rendtorff, 'Ort der Prophetie', p. 70: 'There is no canonical Amos and also no other canonical prophets who pronounce a radical "No" over Israel.'

107. Here Rendtorff sympathizes with the deletion of the concept 'Trito-Isaiah' from the exegetical vocabulary, which Steck advocates ('Tritojesaja', pp. 361–406).

108. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', p. 319.

109. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 56,1', p. 177.

110. So Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 68 n. 58, on Rendtorff's remarks: 'Until it is clear how the book of Isaiah developed, these sketches about the meaning of the final redaction of Isaiah 1–66 (cf. also Childs, *Introduction*, pp. 316ff.) are naturally justified as questions; as answers, however, they are still not binding.'

111. Childs, 'Exegetical Significance', p. 67: 'I am using the term "canon" to refer to the historical process within ancient Israel—particularly in the post-exilic period—which entailed a collecting, selecting, and ordering of texts to serve a normative function as Sacred Scripture within the continuing religious community.'

theological, meaning can be seen especially in parts of the Deutero-Isaiah composition, Childs claims. By the connecting of chaps. 40–55 to the pre-exilic composition of Isaiah oracles, the exilic oracles have been changed into salvation prophecies of the eighth-century prophet. Childs adds that this is not to be dismissed as a historical fiction, but recognized as a theological achievement.¹¹² By relieving the texts of their historical contexts, Childs says, the opportunity arises for a quasi-generalized theologizing: 'Indeed, the loss of an original historical context has given the material almost purely theological shape.'¹¹³ The canonical redaction has taken up prophetic words from various epochs not out of historical interest, but rather to create a theology of lasting value from the divine oracles. So, he says, it is clear in the canonical context that the 'earlier things' are related to the Isaianic oracle in the first part of the book, independent of the situation to which the anonymous prophet of the exile wished to allude.¹¹⁴ The importance of Childs's canonical formulation in relation to our question about the unity of the book lies less in the ascertainment of concrete dates than in its insistence on making the final form of the book the beginning point of exegetical study. His notion about reaching beyond a *dehistoricizing* to theological statements of universal value is, however, debatable.

For canonical interpretation Sheppard is also important, not least because of his hermeneutical observations, which are imperative for a work on the book of Isaiah. He makes it clear that the historical redaction process which led to the book is very much more complicated than is allowed by the still-customary separation of Isaiah into three books. He calculates the chances of discovering the traces of this development in its details to be slight, for 'if these ancient scribes were as clever as we are—which I fear we all must reluctantly grant—then our difficulty in detecting the presence of some redactional features will increase in direct proportion to their effort to conceal their influence'.¹¹⁵

Sheppard is concerned with understanding the book in its present final form in relation to form and function inside the Judaic and Christian canon.¹¹⁶ He underlines that 'text' is not an objective fact, but a creation of its interpreters. The same is also true for the structure

112. Childs, *Introduction*, p. 325.

113. Childs, *Introduction*, p. 326.

114. Childs, *Introduction*, pp. 328–29.

115. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 550.

116. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 574; Sheppard, 'Scope', p. 268: 'my aim is to envision the book of Isaiah in both historical and literary terms as a book of Jewish and Christian Scripture.'

of the text, which is not simply linguistic symbols, but is generated by the individual exegete's understanding of the text. Thus he warns against granting the 'close reading' a greater objectivity than form-, tradition-, or redaction-critical approaches.¹¹⁷ He criticizes Seitz, who sought a 'unity' of intention in the layers of redaction: 'In other words, the "unity" of the book of Isaiah lies not in the text *per se* but in the redactional "intentions" left as clues throughout the book which now orchestrate the various "strata" or "blocks" of prophetic tradition.'¹¹⁸ Such a viewpoint cannot be said to be a 'canonical approach', because meaning is sought in pre-canonical stages of redaction instead of in the final text within the Judeo-Christian canon.

More important than such 'inner-canonical' discussions is Sheppard's question as to the import of redactional or editorial interventions: 'Is a solution to a particular editorial problem necessarily the key, even for the editors, to the central usage of the book?... Did the feature that may have inspired the logic for choosing and expanding an earlier Isaianic collection actually prove to be decisive and comprehensive of its form and function as a book?'¹¹⁹ With regard to Seitz's thesis that Zion is the central theme, he goes on to ask whether the editors might not simply have given Zion a prominent position in the book in order to create a convenient base on which to build their own actual concerns.¹²⁰ Similarly, it must be examined whether 'catch-words' and redactional interventions only join together existing traditions or whether they point to something over and above those traditions.¹²¹

In regard to the 'message' of the canonical book of Isaiah, Sheppard maintains: 'If one asks what Isaiah is about, a logical answer is now, "the Torah".'¹²² This is surprising at the very least, since 'Torah' in 1.10; 5.24; 8.16; 30.9 refers not to the Mosaic law, but to the wisdom of Yhwh generally;¹²³ and also in 42.4, 21, 24; 51.4, 7 the identification

117. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', pp. 558-61, where he decisively distances himself from Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*.

118. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 562.

119. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 563.

120. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', pp. 563-64.

121. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah as a Human Witness', p. 276: 'An editorial device may trade on a persistent theme in order to wed traditions together without elevating that theme to be "the key" to the larger text's semantic import.'

122. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 581; Sheppard, 'Scope', pp. 274-81; now also Sweeney, 'Book of Isaiah as Prophetic Torah', pp. 50-67.

123. Jensen, 'The Use of Tôrâ', p. 212: 'Isaiah uses *tôrâ* because it was a term of the wisdom tradition that he wished to appropriate for his continuing debate with wisdom circles.'

with the Mosaic Torah is not as clear as Sheppard might like to see it. When he further insists that 'Any structural analysis that ignores that identification of the subject matter ignores the late form and function of the book as a book of Jewish and Christian scripture', this may indeed be accurate for the actual history of the book,¹²⁴ but expresses little about the inner dynamic of the scroll itself with its polyphonic voices. The criticism that we raised with regard to theme-driven investigations also applies to Sheppard's 'Torah-centrality': It is not the search for 'unity' but rather for standardization that appears to be the driving force. Just as the search for an overall structure of the entire book of Isaiah should be abandoned, so also should the search for the 'central message',¹²⁵ especially since a final redaction that involves the entire book has not been identified.

Seitz, too, belongs to those exegetes who are occupied with the unity of the book of Isaiah in a 'canon-critical' manner.¹²⁶ He considers the state of current research stagnant, as it maintains Duhm's division into three 'books of Isaiah', yet offers no new work to support it. Even the most recent commentaries maintain this division, if only for practical or conventional reasons.¹²⁷ 'On this score, Isaiah work at present has something of the hands of Esau, and the voice of Jacob.'¹²⁸ Seitz emphasizes that the book of Isaiah has only *one* heading and *one* call-narrative, and the redactional seams have been covered over so as to be unrecognizable. The decisive question may be not that of the delineation of individual units, but the following: 'Is there an internal, reader-oriented movement across the sixty-six-chapter length and breadth that we can perceive and that enables us to hear, see and stand before this entire... "vision of Isaiah" (1.1), as the book calls itself?'¹²⁹

124. Ploch, *Jesaja-Worte*, for the adoption in the synoptic evangelical tradition, in which the *torah* reference of the book of Isaiah is not thematized, but: 'The fulfilling of the time and the coming, or appearance of the Kingdom of God in the person of Jesus Christ could well be portrayed in the colors of the eschatological prophecy of Isaiah' (p. 279).

125. Sheppard, 'Scope', p. 270: 'what is "the central message" of the prophet as it is presented within the book as a whole?'

126. Seitz, 'Isaiah 1-66', pp. 105-26; Seitz, 'The One Isaiah', pp. 13-22; Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*; Seitz, 'Isaiah, Book of', pp. 472-88.

127. Seitz, 'On the Question of Divisions', p. 260.

128. Seitz, 'On the Question of Divisions', p. 261.

129. Seitz, 'Isaiah 1-66', p. 106; Seitz, 'The One Isaiah', p. 18: 'What are the internal literary features that enable us to read this multilayered collection as a coherent whole?'

Seitz names the Zion theme as a main thread which runs through the entire book, undergirded by the central place of 36–39:

A theological problem and a readership problem are solved in one fell swoop by the inclusion of chaps. 36–39. God's word of judgment over Israel's sins, declared in the Assyrian period by Isaiah, is to be fulfilled in the Babylonian period. At the same time, the reader is prepared for the words of comfort that appear in Isaiah 40ff.¹³⁰

Chapters 36–38, which once formed the high point of a first collection of Isaianic oracles, now stand inside of the tradition concerning the elevation of Zion after the fall of Babylon and after the return of the *golah*.¹³¹ The 'watershed' of the book therefore lies not in the tradition of the exile, but in the nations' storming of Zion and their defeat.¹³² The redemption of Zion in the year 701 became the theologoumenon of the impregnability of the mountain of God. As in the case of Assyria, so must Babylon also fail, like anyone who attacks Mount Zion. The vision and kerygma of the prophet about the impregnability of Zion belong to the 'earlier things' (1–39); its redemption and proof of the effective power of Yhwh are their fulfillment (40–48), which in turn gives stimulus to the 'new things' (49–66).¹³³ The so-called 'red thread' in the book of Isaiah is not to be sought in the prophetic personality, as it is, for example, in the book of Jeremiah and partially in the book of Ezekiel. Already in 1–39 Isaiah appears only sporadically; from chap. 40 on, every trace of him is gone. It is not his person, Seitz claims, which serves as the leading theme through the 66 chapters, but Yhwh's word which is an effective power (40.8; 50.10–11). That is what ties together the past and the future.¹³⁴ Seitz modifies this position in an article from 1996; now it is the transitions from the prophet Isaiah to the prophetic word (40–48), and from this to the 'servant' (49) and the 'servants' (65–66), that provide the continuity in the book.¹³⁵

In his assessment of the theme of Zion, Seitz is absolutely right; what he emphasizes still more strongly is the importance of Zion not

130. Seitz, 'Isaiah 1–66', p. 111.

131. Seitz, 'On the Question of Divisions', pp. 262–63.

132. Seitz, 'On the Question of Divisions', p. 264.

133. Seitz, 'The Divine Council', p. 244: 'The redactional perspective is one of former visions (1–39), and its fulfillment 40–48), which in turn gives rise to "new things"' (49–66); Seitz, 'On the Question of Divisions', pp. 261–62.

134. Seitz, 'The Divine Council', p. 245.

135. Seitz, 'How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present', p. 238: 'Alongside the transition from *prophet* (Isaiah) to *prophetic word* in chaps. 40–48, one sees in chaps. 49 and following a transition from *prophets* to *servant* and then *servants*.'

only for Israel, but for Israel *and* the nations. What emerges in 2.2-4 *in nuce* becomes a driving force in the course of the book. Together the nations will march with Israel to Zion. The last section of the book emphasizes, among other things, the conditions for entering Zion and the divine community; this also means a new conception of the identity of the people of God.

1.3.5. *Ideological Criticism and Pragmatic Understanding*

Brueggemann presents an attempt to unite a canonical understanding of the book in Childs's terms with a strong dose of social-critical interpretation à la Gottwald.¹³⁶ On the one hand, Brueggemann says, the canonical consideration of the text has to take into account more carefully the social-historical context, and on the other, social analysis must not completely take over the texts, so that they lose their independence. This combination is both difficult as well as promising.¹³⁷ It is not just a question of clarifying the canonical form, but also 'What were the processes and dynamics that caused the literature to achieve this particular shaping?'¹³⁸ As a heuristic framework for studying the book, this question is certainly legitimate, but it remains to be seen whether, or with what degree of probability, it can be answered. It is certainly established that biblical texts are products of social interactions, which in principle must not exclude the fact that these texts originated in the scriptorium of the prophets.¹³⁹ According to Brueggemann the canonical structure of the book of Isaiah is sociologically relevant for postexilic Israel to the highest degree: Isaiah 1–39 are a 'critique of ideology'; 40–55 a 'public embrace of pain which leads to hope' and finally, 56–66, a 'release of social imagination';¹⁴⁰ Thus, he follows the traditional division into an 'Assyrian' and 'Babylonian' Isaiah, but it is not clear whether he also reckons with a 'Persian' Isaiah for 56–66. Brueggemann himself admits that this fixing of the major literary divisions of the book in relation to their social functions does not do justice to all individual texts—perhaps not even the majority. But more important

136. Brueggemann, 'Unity', pp. 89-107.

137. Brueggemann, 'Unity', p. 91: 'for I judge the relation of the work of Childs and Gottwald, i.e., a canonical approach and a study of social dynamics in relation to the text, to be the most difficult as well as the most important question facing us in our study of these issues.'

138. Brueggemann, 'Unity', p. 91.

139. Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', p. 378: 'We encounter text-based and textually-trained tradent prophecy here, those who primarily write for a like-minded circle of recipients; whose activity is evident in the population.'

140. Brueggemann, 'Unity', p. 102.

than the actual interpretation is Brueggemann's heuristic stance: What social conditions have stamped the final structure of the book? What societal groups and what problematic situations are spoken to? What decisions are struggled over? What is the common ground for negotiation? The list of questions could go on and on—many of them cannot be solved, others only partly so. But they must be posed. Even the final text must have had sociological significance, having been built on its redactional stratifications.

That the book of Isaiah, in particular, is stamped by an inner-Judaic discussion led with increasing vigor is shown mainly by the last chapters.¹⁴¹ In view of the social contingencies of any text (and especially those of biblical texts), the question of the 'ideological' goals of the various redactions and of the total work arises. Steck warns that we must wait for a 'political-social-hermeneutical classification of Trito-Isaiah and of the book of Isaiah as a whole'¹⁴² until the redactional strata and inner-prophetic additions have been clarified.¹⁴³ This can be supplemented by the proviso that literary-critical and redaction-critical distinctions can no longer be determined only by syntax and semantics, but must include text pragmatics.

In a rhetorical-pragmatic examination of Isaiah 2–4 Wiklander points to a deficiency in exegetical study. He states that, since Duhm, 'Isaiah' has been studied almost exclusively from a mimetic-expressive viewpoint; i.e., scholars enquired about the text's metaphorical power, its historical reference, and its authors. In contrast, pragmatic and objective viewpoints received too little attention.¹⁴⁴ The first he understands as the relation of the text to its 'users', and the second as the relation of the symbols of a text to one another. After a summary of the history of Isaiah research he comes to the conclusion that scholars who speak of unity are those who have a dynamic understanding of the text, who observe the pragmatic dimension of biblical literature, and who make the final text the most important focus of their investigation.¹⁴⁵ Wiklander's approach values the text in its historical-communicative context: 'Pragmatic textual analysis should consequently aim at a description of what the producer was doing in

141. Cf. in addition the verses on the 'sinner vs pious issue': 48.22; 57.21; 66.24.

142. Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', p. 365 n. 12.

143. Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', p. 365: 'One should not distribute the fur before one has shot the bear.'

144. Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, p. 14: 'expressive and mimetic dimensions dominated, while the objective and pragmatic aspects were discriminated.'

145. Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, p. 20.

producing the text or what the intended receivers were able to do with it in receiving it.¹⁴⁶ What texts ultimately offer is not the intent or aesthetic sense of the author, nor his wish to portray the historical reality, but rather the 'implied dialogue' between emissary and receptor. Texts are communicative actions which aim to confirm, abrogate, or modify social facts.¹⁴⁷ For the question about 'unity', the answer lies not 'in the text as some independent artifactual object, but rather in the human activities we perform by it'.¹⁴⁸ The recurring question of a pragmatic view is this: 'Who or what social groups acted at what time by what means for what purpose under what media conditions towards whom or what social groups and with what effect?'¹⁴⁹ What was true for Brueggemann's social-historical base in relation to the book of Isaiah is also true here. The questions are more than can be answered. Still, any investigation must keep in mind the social and communicative locus of the book and its constituent parts.

Wiklander's methodological approach is considerably undermined by his early dating of Isaiah 2–4 to the years 734–622. Equally disturbing is his thesis that 'covenant' and 'treaty' stand behind these chapters as the central themes.¹⁵⁰

1.3.6. *Redaction-critical Approach*

Ahead of his time, J. Becker considered the book of Isaiah as a whole already in 1968: 'Thus the book, not the prophet directly, speaks to the reader. The book speaks as a unity; while reading the first chapter, one must already have the last chapter in view.'¹⁵¹ But, he continues that it is not basically the book that is concerned with unity, but rather the redaction that spans the whole book. According to Becker, a unified view of the book is produced only if one reads it through the eyes of the definitive exilic–postexilic redaction: 'We must distance ourselves from the bewildering variety of individual statements and enquire about the viewpoint of the redaction of the book.'¹⁵² In view of the different redaction-critical attempts to shed light on the genesis of the book, Becker holds that only a separation

146. Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, p. 154.

147. Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, p. 156.

148. Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, p. 331.

149. Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, p. 26; taken from Breuer, 'Die Bedeutung', p. 31.

150. Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, p. 243.

151. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 33.

152. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 33.

of the Isaiah material and the postexilic redaction is demonstrable.¹⁵³ On the one hand, this does not do justice to the diachronic complexity of the book,¹⁵⁴ and on the other hand, he 'proves' the unity of the book with a proposed unified final redaction. If such a thing could be proved, the unity of the book would in fact be indicated,¹⁵⁵ but the postexilic redactional editings of the book increased rather than the opposite. Nevertheless, Becker rightly makes a case for a historical reading of the final text in as much as he makes out themes that allow the reader to discover a continuity in the reading process: the pardon of the sinful people, their return from imprisonment, the dawning kingship of Yhwh on Zion, the miraculous increase of the people of God, the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, and the final destruction of the enemies of Israel.¹⁵⁶ The interpretation of these themes is undisputed; Becker's viewpoint, however, is debatable; for him, they all lie on one and the same redactional plane, which equals a 'redaction-fundamentalism'. A further weak point with Becker lies in the fact that he has paid little attention to the last chapters of the book of Isaiah (65–66). If one accepts the idea of a comprehensive redaction, then obviously such a thing would be especially noticeable at the beginning and the end of the book.

Among the many redaction-critical studies of the large units in Isaiah or even of smaller units, there is little attempt to give an answer to the 'unity' of the book. From the point of view of redaction criticism, this is understandable—it is concerned with the study of smaller and more manageable units.¹⁵⁷ As a rule, redaction critics consider the question of 'unity' premature or simply unrealistic. An answer to this question could only be given if all text units could be assigned to the various stages of redaction with great certainty. However, even here, there are attempts to extend the view from the individual text to include the whole book. Accordingly, attention should be paid only to such redaction-critical works that pursue the question of the unity of the book explicitly. Clements has done this in his article, 'The Unity of the Book of Isaiah'.¹⁵⁸ First, he opposes a

153. J. Becker, *Grundzüge*, p. 37 n. 42.

154. See Vermeylen's *criticism* of Becker, 'L'unité', p. 21.

155. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 40. 'There were dissenters, outsiders so to speak, who in the situation of the exile, among other things, also took up the written words of Isaiah, and interpreted and extended them into the book of Isaiah.'

156. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 42.

157. Cf. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 20: 'Nevertheless the focus of the following study is not on this overarching perspective of the book, although it is, in its substance, only appropriate.'

158. Clements, 'Unity', pp. 117–29.

unity of the book that appeals to a unity of authorship, be it that of the prophet or that of a circle of disciples.¹⁵⁹ Already in the development of the book one can recognize attempts to understand it as a unity.¹⁶⁰ The unity of the book can only be recognized, however, if one takes into consideration the relation of the Isaiah oracles of the eighth century to the fall of Jerusalem in 587.¹⁶¹ In particular, the prophetic oracles in 2.6–4.1 were read in exile as past prophecies now fulfilled.¹⁶² The new interpretation of Isaiah's oracles in the period following the exile determines finally the unity of the book; establishing unity is fundamentally the confession of the ever authoritative and powerful word of God. As further themes, which are carried throughout the entire book, he lists those of the 'blindness/deafness' of the people and those of the 'election of Israel'.¹⁶³ Against Clements, however, it must be said that the events around 587 find *no* express mention in the book of Isaiah; the leap from the announcement of the exile to Hezekiah (39.5–8) to the oracle of comfort points to the near end of the Babylonian captivity; the period of exile with the destruction of Jerusalem has been left blank. This empty place is of great import for the question of unity and thus of the message of the book of Isaiah. It is the protection and redemption of Zion, not its destruction, that stand at the center of the book (36–39).

This 'blind spot' in the book of Isaiah also makes it difficult to accept the continuous progression of a pre-exilic Isaiah tradition to the exilic Deutero-Isaiah material or even to make Deutero-Isaiah the 'publisher' of the Proto-Isaiah materials, as Williamson supposes: 'He bound the version of Isaiah's book into his own as the necessary precursor to what he was now announcing to his compatriots in exile.'¹⁶⁴

Our own work will take the diachronic viewpoint that the two major portions of Isaiah, 1–32* and 40–66, which were developed separately, were placed together in the postexilic period and were

159. Clements, 'Unity', p. 120.

160. Clements, 'Unity', p. 121.

161. Clements, 'Unity', p. 117: 'The connection between the prophecies of Isaiah and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem provides the essential clue to understanding the unity of this prophetic book.'

162. In addition, Clements, 'The Prophecies of Isaiah', pp. 421–36; Clements, *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem*.

163. Clements, 'Beyond Tradition-History', pp. 101–106.

164. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 113, and 93: 'Deutero-Isaiah must have read an earlier form of the work and had been influenced by it sufficiently to adopt a considerable number of its themes and modes of expression.'

linked by two bridge-texts (33 and 35), and the 'exilic' empty place was filled with an ideological version of the events of 701 (36–39).

In a review of the recent redaction-critical works on the book of Isaiah, it can be seen that most confine themselves to *the same* demarcation of the text (1–39; 40–55; 56–66).¹⁶⁵ The works of Vermeylen and Steck go beyond that, for they claim to shed light on the redaction history of the book and thus also its final form. Both authors will figure extensively in the course of this investigation, so at this point I will highlight only the main lines of development that they trace in the book.

Vermeylen proceeds from a Proto-Isaiah collection which, around the year 480, had a structure comparable to that of the book of Ezekiel and that of Jeremiah in the version that lies behind the LXX:¹⁶⁶ Judgment oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (1–12), judgment oracles against the nations (13–27) and promises for the people of God (28–35), with 36–39 as a historical supplement concluding the collection.¹⁶⁷ For chaps. 40–55, Vermeylen accepts a basic continuity of oracles of the anonymous prophet of the exile, 'Deutero-Isaiah', which all had to do with the appearance of Cyrus: 'La prédication du prophète du VI^e siècle poursuivait vraisemblablement un but pratique: convaincre des opposants à se rallier au nouveau régime perse.'¹⁶⁸ The two collections would have been joined only after 480, but originally had no relation to each other. Vermeylen counts chaps. 60–62* as the basis of the Trito-Isaiah collection, which is not concerned with the building of the second temple, but rather with the city walls of Jerusalem (60.10; 62.6). He rejects the idea of a 'Trito-Isaiah', regarded as an anonymous prophet of the postexilic period, since 56.9–62.12 are purely literary productions, related point by point to 1.2–2.5.¹⁶⁹ The driving force behind the continuity of 1–55* was Nehemiah's reform activity:

165. For Isaiah 1–39: Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, pp. 294–309; Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, pp. 1529–76; for Isaiah 40–55: Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', pp. 287–312; Kratz, *Kyros*; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*; Merendino, 'Der Erste' (40–48); for Isaiah 56–66: Koenen, *Ethik*; Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie'; P. Smith, *Rhetoric*.

166. For the versions of the books of JerLXX and JerMT, see Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, p. 7: 'In the form witnessed by JerLXX the book of Jeremiah is a prophetic book like any other.'

167. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', pp. 28–34.

168. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 41.

169. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', pp. 42–44.

Bref, le 'grand livre' d'Isaïe paraît être la création d'un témoin de la réforme de Néhémie, qui voit dans cet événement le tournant majeur de l'histoire de Jérusalem, le passage décisif du temps du malheur à celui—définitif—du salut en plénitude accordé par la grâce de Yahvé.¹⁷⁰

Then there was a final redaction, which brought the whole book together and highlighted the fate of the paganized sinners and of the nations who had turned to Yhwh.

Steck's extensive and detailed observations about the development of the book of Isaiah resulted in numerous works, in which, in particular, he accepts the diachronic development of the final sections.¹⁷¹ He agrees with Vermeylen that 'Trito-Isaiah' referring to an anonymous prophetic image should be struck from the exegetical vocabulary; he regards 60–62 as a purely literary continuation of 40–55, by means of which the latter text was joined to the Proto-Isaiah collection of 1–39 in the course of a 'homecoming redaction' in the period of the early Diadochen wars, with the bridge-text of Isaiah 35 (cf. 11.11–16; 27.[12]13; 62.10–12).¹⁷² Like Vermeylen, Steck also accepts the separate development of the two major divisions of the book of Isaiah, but regards the joining of 40ff. to 1–39 as possible only after the death of Alexander the Great in the year 323. The basic concern of the first comprehensive redaction of a book of Isaiah was to delimit the consequences of world judgment for those Jews who had voluntarily returned from the Diaspora (Isa. 13; 24–27*; 34).¹⁷³ After the combination of 1–39*; 40–55*; 60–62* into one book, there are two further redactions, whose historical location would have been the destruction of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I in the years 302/301, and which would have been responsible for the final form of the last division of the book, but also left traces in the first part of the book. For the consolidated period of the Ptolemies, Steck reckons with smaller additions like those in 19.18–25 and 25.6–8.¹⁷⁴ In the course of the present investigation Steck's work is often appealed to; at this point, two comments with regard to the question of the unity

170. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 48; and now also Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, p. 60.

171. See especially Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*; Steck, *Der Abschluss*, pp. 26–30; Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', pp. 361–406; and the two collections: Steck, *Gottesknecht und Zion* (FAT 4) and Steck, *Studien zu Tritojesaja* (BZAW 203).

172. See the summary in Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 80.

173. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 83: 'the guarantee of a future return of the exiles of Israel to Zion, well prepared right up to the terrain of the way home, in the face of a world judgment that the nations and the world arena will meet almost without exception, so that with this return Yahweh's goal for God's people is realized.'

174. A good summary is found in Steck, *Der Abschluss*, pp. 28–30.

of the book can be made. The first is to emphasize that Steck arrives at an overall picture of the book via the stony ground of redaction-criticism, which indeed does not proceed as smoothly as for the 'synchronic' approach, but the many colors and nuances are not thrown together under *one* structure or *one* theme.¹⁷⁵ Second, Steck has stressed far more strongly than Vermeulen paying attention to connecting texts between the main parts of the current book of Isaiah; in this he has given an important impetus to the present work, for the 'unity' of the book of Isaiah is decided on the diachronic level, basically on the question of whether texts can be identified as having been deliberately inserted as bridge-texts into the developing scroll.

1.4. *Conclusions and Prospects*

- (a) The question about the unity of the book of Isaiah is one of legitimate concern for exegetical research, both in synchronic as well as diachronic respects. It will first depend on getting the book as a whole on the synchronic level within one's grasp with the greatest possible accuracy. For this it is helpful to observe basic indicators in the text, e.g., the song of thanksgiving in Isaiah 12 as the boundary of the first twelve chapters.
- (b) The search for the structure will prove successful only for the composition of sections; less is also more here. It should be emphasized that structures cannot be read simply from the linguistic symbols, but rather that their determination must always involve subjective judgments.

Also, the description of literary structures must always include the question of their rhetorical, pragmatic function. If the synchronic account ends with the description of the textual phenomena, the search for the pragmatics of the text breaks down in the diachronic level. What is needed is a 'diachronically-reflected synchrony', which carefully opens the existing textual fabric at its seams without destroying what it has become.

- (c) The paradigm of the search for unity is not that of 'chaos versus creation', but rather that of a 'controlled chaos'. The synchronic need for harmony will always have to be broken

175. Here U. Becker's critical question to Steck (*Jesaja*, p. 19) might be mentioned, 'whether redaction-historical methods must not also consistently be turned to the presumed kernel text of the prophetic tradition (chaps. 6–8 and chaps. 28–31)'.

by diachronic interruptions; so, for example, with respect to the question posed to Williamson whether the thematic references between Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah are really to be reckoned to the redaction work of an exilic Anonymous, or whether it is a post-Deutero-Isaianic work—the issue is not about unity *or* complexity, but about unity *in* complexity!

- (d) The unity of the book of Isaiah cannot be fixed upon *one* author, whether it is the prophet of the eighth century or even of the great unknown postexilic final redactor, nor can it be fixed upon a few individual themes. Also, it is not sufficient to characterize key word connections or similar phenomena as purely additive; the main issue must be about the 'plot' of the book, about those things that shine through in its final form, in spite of all the diachronic disturbances, to make the book what it is. The book of Isaiah in its final form is a 'frozen dialogue' between various Judaic groups in the postexilic period who struggle about the meaning of Zion for themselves and for the nations.
- (e) The beginning, the end, and the middle of the book deserve special attention; it must be given, in particular, to the question, why the events of the year 701 were placed in the center of the scroll, especially at the point—before Isaiah 40ff.—where the discussion would have to have come from the exilic period.
- (f) In our opinion, the search for the unity of the book means tracing its textual development, which indeed must start from the present (completed) final text, but it also means discovering its historicity and its strata. The hypothetical character of the achieved results should not deter, but rather belongs to the burden of every science. Our 'composition-critical' or even 'text-production-critical'¹⁷⁶ approach accepts, on the one hand, the results of the synchronic way of working and correlates it with the findings of diachronic research, on the other. This mediation of synchronic reading of final text and diachronic analysis is a difficult undertaking, obviously, but is virtually demanded methodologically, given the Old Testament text.¹⁷⁷

176. This is Leene's terminology ('Auf der Suche', p. 813).

177. Kratz, 'Die Redaktion', p. 13: 'Diachrony is not to be had without synchrony; synchrony, however, is also not to be had without diachrony.'

That synchronic analysis comes first in the investigation is not an evasion of the difficulties of textual prehistory,¹⁷⁸ but fits the objective facts.¹⁷⁹ What we have is the prophetic book, which needs to be seen in terms of its development and in terms of its message(s): 'Whoever wishes to get to the prophets is first pointed to their book. In contrast to the long dominating inquiry concerning the prophetic persons, the urgent task presently is therefore the clear call concerning the prophetic books.'¹⁸⁰

Thus, it is necessary not to underestimate the complexity of the book of Isaiah on the synchronic plane; it is absolutely not true that the book in its present final form poses no problems and one only needs to read it from beginning to end in order to know what it supposedly is or intends to be.¹⁸¹ Synchrony and diachrony indeed function in one and the same text but pursue different goals, are equally legitimate, and benefit fruitfully from each other.

- (g) Anticipating the results of this study, it has to be said that no redaction in the long history of the development of the book has been able to penetrate deeply enough into the text in order to unify the entire textual inventory.¹⁸² J. Becker's idea of a final redaction that is in complete charge guiding the reader¹⁸³ remains purely hypothetical; there is no indication of a redaction that impressed its stamp on the entire book of Isaiah, but rather, there are several attempts to structure

178. Cf. Steck, *Gottesknecht und Zion*, p. 117: 'In this research situation one can understand the present popular flight into a holistic view of the books of the prophets, which concentrates only on the given, available, final text.'

179. Kratz, 'Die Redaktion', p. 13: 'Working with what is given, that is, the historical synchronic reading, does the most justice to the sources and the wording of the prophetic books'; likewise Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 550.

180. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. 7; cf., in contrast, U. Becker's monograph, *Jesaja—von der Botschaft zum Buch*, which suggests the reverse way!

181. Seitz, 'On the Question of Divisions', p. 266: 'There is nothing obvious about the intended redactional structure of a book like Isaiah, taken synchronically, or the way it was meant to be read as it moved from the hand of the "last editor" to that of its "first reader".'

182. Carr, 'Reaching for Unity', pp. 77-80.

183. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 36: 'We postulate therefore one redaction responsible for the book in its present form and its unified theological concept.'

the book.¹⁸⁴ It is necessary to trace these in individual exegeses and to evaluate the results in terms of the issue of the unity of the book. The paradigm appropriate to the book is not that of a final redaction or final composition, but that of sectional compositions building upon one another, supplementing each other, in which the later ones respected the collections already available.¹⁸⁵ This model has the advantage of not simplifying the great complexity of the textual inventory by structural and thematically restricted management, but at the same time showing a continuity in the development and significance of the whole work.¹⁸⁶ The extent to which the sectional compositions are also prophetic expansions has to be shown in the ensuing discussion; yet even the concept of 'expansion' is not *the* master key which is able to solve all problems of continuity and discontinuity in the book of Isaiah.¹⁸⁷

184. Carr, 'Reaching for Unity', p. 77: 'it is clear that not just one, but several redactors have introduced their macro-structural conceptions into the book of Isaiah.'

185. Carr, 'Reaching for Unity', p. 70, uses the concept 'collection'.

186. Tate, 'Book of Isaiah', p. 50: 'The collection concept can accommodate the highly complex unity in Isaiah without having to assume a tight, precisely fitted macro-literary structure.'

187. Against Kratz, 'Die Redaktion', p. 15: 'In a word: Expansion [Fortschreibung] is the key to the redaction of the prophetic books.'

Chapter 2

ISAIAH 1–12: ZION BETWEEN CLAIM AND REALITY

2.1. *The Structure of Isaiah 1–12*

The first twelve chapters of the book of Isaiah exhibit a structural scheme in which the ‘memoir’ takes a central place. Its prominence is emphasized by a double inclusio formed on the one hand by the ‘Woes’, on the other by the refrain of ‘Yhwh’s outstretched hand’.

1.1	חזון ישעיהו בן אמוץ	
1.2–2.5		
2.6–4.6		
5.1–7	(Song of the Vineyard)	
5.8–24 (6x דו"י)	6.1–8.18(–9.6)	10.1–4 (דו"י 7th)
5.25–30 (יד נטויה)		9.7–20 (יד נטויה)
5.30 (נבט...חשך צר)		8.22 (יביט...צרה וחשכה)
		10.5–12.6

Structured auto/biographically, the starting point of 6.1–8.18 of Isaiah is the Song of the Vineyard in 5.1ff., which launches the series of the seven cries of דו"י, and in which 5.7, as the key of the entire song, likewise attacks the social sins of Israel and Judah, sins that are explicated in the Woes. Alongside the domestic political aspect of the Woes, international politics is found in the form of the refrain of Yhwh’s outstretched hand: His wrath over injustice calls the Assyrian world-power and the immediate neighbors to the east and west (9.11) to the scene; Ephraim has actually already succumbed, while Jerusalem alone in Judah has narrowly escaped a similar fate (10.27b–34). The overwhelming political events of the eighth century, in whose vortex Israel and Judah became ever more strongly involved in the pull of the new Assyrian politics of expansion, are interpreted by this literary arrangement as Yhwh’s answer to Israel’s and Judah’s disregard for social demands. Even after the blow against Ephraim Yhwh’s hand remains outstretched, now against Assyria, which does not wish to regard itself as the instrument of Yhwh’s punishment

(10.5–34), but rather marches against Jerusalem in order to destroy it. At the last moment, Yhwh intervenes in a saving way for his city (10.33). But even then his hand is not drawn back, as a glance beyond the bounds of chaps. 1–12 shows (14.24–27); that this oracle against Assyria has been placed after the ‘Babylonian Chapters’ of Isaiah 13–14 indicates that a historical-theological constant is beginning to develop: whoever the oppressors of the people of God are, be it Assyria or Babylon, they all will be destroyed, according to the plan of Yhwh (esp. 14.26a). It can be observed that, in contrast to the composition of Isaiah 1–12, here ‘world politics’ is uncoupled from the behavior of the people of God: Assyria becomes ever more strongly the cipher for the nations which Yhwh leads into judgment.¹

The distress of Jerusalem and of Zion, which is dressed in the literary mantle of a memoir, has produced a positive effect in the growth of the sprout from the root of Jesse (11.1ff.), which contains not simply a Davidic-messianic promise. It has consciously gone back before David in order to emphasize that the Davidic monarchy did not survive the political crisis,² but itself bore serious guilt! The royal characteristics have been transferred to a portion of the postexilic community, which exemplifies a model of righteousness on Zion (11.6–9). That it is still inconspicuously small does not stand in the way of its royal honor—no one thought the young David had a chance. It is this community that started singing the thanksgiving song in Isaiah 12, which makes known Yhwh’s great deeds among the nations (!). It can do this because Yhwh’s wrath has changed to comfort (12.1b); what 1–12 recapitulates on the one hand, is prelude in 40.1ff., on the other.³ In addition, 12.1–6 gives indications for the reading of the foreign-nation chapters of Isaiah 13–23; 24–27. There too, a remnant of righteous persons, for whom Yhwh himself prepares the festival meal (25.6ff.), escapes from the judgment upon the nations.

The overview of the arrangement of the material of the text in the first part of the book of Isaiah began with the Song of the Vineyard in 5.1, which is syntactically detached from the previous chapters, with the new section emphasized by the 1st person singular pronoun (אני־יהוה). Also, technically, chaps. 1–4 have not been included in the

1. See Vermeulen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 261.

2. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 50: ‘The Davidic dynasty did not simply survive as a shattered body that after a brief period of regeneration could return to its former royal magnificence.’

3. See Sheppard, ‘The Anti-Assyrian Redaction’, pp. 197–98.

structure of the inclusio of 5–10;⁴ on the contrary, they form a parallel structure, in which the salvation oracles of 2.2-4 and 4.2-6 take the place of the previous oracles of disaster and in the counterpoint emphasize the restoration of Zion: while 2.2-4 sketches a positive image of Jerusalem as the goal of the pilgrimage of the nations for the sinful city of 1.2-31, 4.2-6 stresses the quality of the new Zion population in contrast to the leadership and people in 2.6–4.1. Considered together, 1.2–2.4 [5] and 2.6–4.6 point in the following direction: Mount Zion shall be the center of the international pilgrimage, but this can only happen after judgment and destruction, when a Zion population develops that participates in the holiness of Yhwh (4.3).⁵ Just for that reason, the transition verse 2.5 issues the summons: ‘House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of Yhwh!’

Greater attention needs to be given to this ‘we’ for it belongs to the present in the communication of the text, in contrast to 2.2-4 with its future orientation and to 2.6ff. with its orientation to the past.⁶ Here, as already in 1.9, can be heard the voice of the redactor, who speaks directly to his recipients and reveals his purpose. As the speaker, he identifies with the We-group who are escaping judgment, who see themselves as the kernel of a new Zion population, who live Torah symbolically for the nations, so as to let the Mount of God become the center of the pilgrimage of the nations.

With regard to the logical relationship of the thematic guidelines between 1–4 and 5–10, it becomes clear that Isaiah, his children, and students (8.16-18) are a model remnant community, in spite of all the internal and external temptations. The promise of ‘God with *us*’ is only for them; for those of the house of David, i.e., the royal house, the proclamation ‘Immanuel’ is a threatening judgment! It is exactly those compositional connections of prophetic attack, indictment, and threat of punishment (1.2-31; 2.6–4.1), in contrast to the concise portrayals of salvation (2.2-4; 4.2-6), that force the reader to the decision to identify either with the remnant saved with Isaiah, or with those doomed to destruction!

4. The inclusios go beyond the memoir; 1.21-26 goes to 11.1-5; on this, see Blum, who accepts an Isaianic ring composition for 1.21–11.5 (‘*Jesajas prophetisches Testament I*’, pp. 547-68).

5. Gross, ‘Israel und die Völker’, p. 165: ‘The Torah that is sought and received by the nations on Zion is connected with the Torah of Israel; the exaltation of Zion by the stream of nations is connected with the actualization of this Torah through Israel.’

6. In addition Oesch, ‘Jes 1,8f. und das Problem’, pp. 440-46.

The fact that contemporary historical statements are lacking in the first chapter, and the astonishing fact that the throne-vision of Isaiah does not appear until the sixth chapter, shows how cleverly those who are responsible for chaps. 1–4 hide their concerns behind the ‘Vision’ of *their* Isaiah. Nevertheless, or perhaps exactly because of that, it bears fruit.⁷ *They* are not the ones who promulgate the idea of a postexilic people of God who are open to the nations; rather, it is the great Prophet who does so!

The various connections of 1.2–2.4 with chap. 66 have often been observed.⁸ Accordingly, the closing chapter forms a conscious inclusio with the beginning of the scroll. ‘Heaven and Earth’ in the witness stand (1.4) are in contrast to the ‘new heaven and new earth’ (66.22), and the sinful cult in the first chapter is replaced by a God-pleasing one in the last chapter (66.22–23). This turning to God, however, is no longer to be managed by Israel alone, but rather includes those joined to Yhwh from all over the world (66.18–23), by which 2.2–4 is fulfilled. Accusation and judgment against apostates (1.2, 28) (פְּשָׁעִים פִּשְׁעֵי בִי) are completed in 66.24: the fire, which destroys them, cannot be put out by anything or anyone (1.31; 66.24). Still, an inclusio does not mean that nothing has changed between the first and the last chapters; on the contrary, with all the prophetic accusations the door to repentance stands wide open in 1.2–31, while, at the end of the book, this chance is no longer given.⁹ Stated differently, the moment of reading is the moment of decision—at the end of the prophetic book the die is cast also for the reader.

2.1.1. *The Book’s Superscription (Isaiah 1.1)*

The ‘vision’ of Isaiah in 1.1 functions not only as a heading over 1–12, but comprises the entire book.¹⁰ Whatever the reader of this scroll will come across, it is offered to him as the חִזוֹן of the prophet of the eighth century.¹¹ Thus, more than a mere heading is placed here; rather, the hermeneutic framework for understanding the book is created at the same time.¹² To this hermeneutic framework also

7. Cf. Conrad’s stimulating essay (‘Prophet, Redactor and Audience’, pp. 306–26), in which he replaces the image of a redactor who ‘quotes’ his source with that of an author who combines his source material into a new whole, in the manner of a collage (p. 310).

8. See under 7.5.4.3.

9. See Carr, ‘Reading Isaiah’, p. 204; Carr, ‘Reaching for Unity’, p. 75.

10. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 1. Teilband, p. 2; cf. Obad. 1; Nah. 1.1.

11. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 30.

12. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. 25: ‘What we have in Isa. 1–66 is a book which as a whole deals with Isaiah.’

belongs the fact that Isaiah does not ‘appear in the textual-world as *writer* of the book’,¹³ but rather an anonymous narrator directs the word; this is what it means that the entire book is entitled חזון ישעיהו. It is not Isaiah who repeats his vision in the book named for him, but the book’s author is empowered by the superscription both with the prophetic as well as the divine voice. Naturally, Isaiah is a key figure of the book, ‘not as writer, but as the “accountable subject” in the text-world of the book’.¹⁴ The prophet Isaiah is in the eponymous book a main character whom those who structured the book inserted for their own purposes, guided by the materials they had in hand. Looking back to Isa. 1.1, it follows that it is no longer in the first place about the vision of Isaiah, but about the book which has become a vision¹⁵ (cf. 2 Chron. 32.32; Sir. 48.22). Steck incisively states: ‘This is the situation: Before the prophet is the book.’¹⁶ Now the partial repetition¹⁷ of 1.1 in 2.1 presents a special problem:

Isa. 1.1	Isa. 2.1
חזון	הדבר
ישעיהו בן אמוץ	אשר חזה
אשר חזה	ישעיהו בן אמוץ
על יהודה וירושלם	על יהודה וירושלם
בימי עזיהו יותם אחז יחזקיהו	
מלכי יהודה	

The chiasmus of 1.1 and 2.1 did not originate by chance; nor did the exchange of חזון and הדבר. Yet in which direction is the dependency? For that the following is important: While 1.1 stands as a superscription outside of the corpus of the text, comparable to a book cover, 2.1 stands as a title parallel to that of 13.1, inside the scroll. Against the interpretation of 2.1 as a new superscription over chaps. 2–4,¹⁸ 2–12¹⁹ or 2–33²⁰ is the phrase with הדבר, which as a superscription over a prophetic segment of a book would be unique;²¹ at the very least, one

13. This formulation is borrowed from Lohfink, “‘Ich komme nicht’”, p. 173.

14. Thus Lohfink, “‘Ich komme nicht’”, p. 174, on the place of Hosea in that book; the terminology stems from Assmann, ‘Schrift’, pp. 64–93.

15. Tucker, ‘Prophetic Superscriptions’, p. 70: ‘While the superscriptions to the prophetic books do not represent the stage of canonization, they do reveal the decisive turning point when—at least for certain circles in Israel—the spoken prophetic word had become scripture.’

16. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. 7.

17. O’Connell, *Concentricity*, p. 36: ‘resumptive force.’

18. Among others, Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 31; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, pp. 87ff.

19. Cf. Bartelt, *The Book around Immanuel*, p. 235.

20. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, p. 45; Melugin, ‘Figurative Speech’, p. 286.

21. See Hos. 1.1; Joel 1.1; Zeph. 1.1; Mic. 1.1: דבר יהודה.

would expect דברי ישעיהו (cf. Jer. 1.1; Amos 1.1). A presumed new beginning with 2.1 in contrast to the opening chapter also contradicts the purpose of Isaiah 1–4, for, in that case, the theme of Jerusalem's purification would be cut off from the pilgrimage of the nations. The chiasmic repetition of 'Word of Yhwh...Torah of our God' (1.10) in 'Torah...Word of Yhwh' (2.3) shows, however, that both themes are very closely tied together.²²

If 2.1 is therefore not to be related to the whole book and not even to a section of a book as typically delimited,²³ then this verse belongs to the following verses 2.2–4, and at the same time serves to ascribe to Isaiah the son of Amoz²⁴ this oracle of salvation which is theologically unusually dense, though it is not ascribed in the sense of 'inner-prophetic concurrence' with Micah (cf. Mic. 4.1): 'but rather, the "vision" emphasizes by the same Zion promise through Isaiah and Micah the importance and credibility of this oracle for the reader.'²⁵ The indication that the prophecy of the pilgrimage of the nations also belongs to the vision of Isaiah was really necessary, because this was a theological position that needed a strong legitimacy.

The superscription in 1.1, dependent on 2.1, originated in the period of Chronicles, as is indicated by linguistic evidence. For one thing, the sequence 'Judah and Jerusalem' speaks for the postexilic period, in contradistinction to the Isaianic usage 'Jerusalem and Judah';²⁶ another indicator is the long form of the name יְהוֹשִׁיָּהוּ which, outside of 1–2 Chronicles, appears elsewhere only in Jer. 15.4.²⁷ Understanding Isaiah as prophetic seer and the eponymous book as prophetic vision (cf. 2 Chron. 32.32; Sir. 48.22) no longer belongs to the process of productive expansion, but instead to that of the reception of authoritative Judaic scriptures: The superscription is the final product, not the *fons et origo* of the scroll!

The list of the Judaic kings, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah is 'strung out' from chaps. 6 to 39, with Uzziah presented in the notice of his death (6.1) and reappearing with Jotham in the genealogy of

22. See I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 32: 'The idea that the nations will seek Torah and the Word of Yhwh on Zion and in Jerusalem is connected with the idea that these will be vividly fulfilled there.'

23. Against Williamson, 'Synchronic and Diachronic', p. 222: 'the late exilic form of the book of Isaiah began at 2.1.'

24. Ackroyd, 'A Note on Isaiah 2.1', pp. 320–21; and following him, Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 60; and U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 176, who thinks, however, that 2.1 is modeled after 1.1 (p. 195).

25. Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', p. 566.

26. Cf. 3.1, 8; 5.3; 22.21.

27. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, pp. 127–28, 232.

Ahaz (7.1); the death of Ahaz is then communicated in 14.28. From Isaiah's appearances in the time of Hezekiah (36–39) the Isaiah tradition does not have its own lore—except for the Psalm of Hezekiah—but shares its tradition with the book of Kings.²⁸ All in all, the contemporary anchoring of a person Isaiah in the book of the same name is much weaker than that of a Jeremiah or Ezekiel in 'their books', which makes it that much more surprising that such a comprehensive tradition of Isaiah has been able to develop. Already here the hypothesis should be stated that this is not to be traced back to his unique charismatic power—are Micah or Amos, for instance, any less prophetic?—but rather, to a growth of other tradents who discovered 'Isaiah' for themselves. This will have to be considered with the question of how Isaiah 40ff. could have been attached to the already existing Isaiah-tradition.²⁹

2.2. *Zion between Claim and Reality:*

The Composition of the Remnant Community (Isaiah 1.1–4.6)

With Isaiah 1–4 an introduction was given to the framed memoir, which goes back neither to Isaiah nor to pre-exilic tradents. Here in an early postexilic period, a composition has been created at whose center stands the future of the cleansed Zion and its population. As Isaiah, his children and students formed the remnant, charged with hope, within the memoir, so now the 'We' are a group who carries the history of Yhwh with his city forward in the postexilic period. It is not first and foremost a question of the development of 1–4 in the preliminary stages of its redaction-history,³⁰ but rather of its classification, not only in terms of the memoir, but particularly with regard to the final chapter of the entire scroll. Thus, it is of the greatest interest whether in the beginning and close of the book we are dealing with this same cycle of redaction or whether the influences are to be explained as of another kind. That the beginning and the end of the scroll of Isaiah are 'aware of' each other is without question, as the major bracketing of 1.31 and 66.24 already proves on its own, supported by the fact that the programmatic text of the pilgrimage of

28. In contrast with 2 Chron. 26.22, where Isaiah is designated as the 'biographer' of Hezekiah.

29. 2 Chron. 36.22 appears to indicate that Isa. 40ff. should be ascribed, alternatively, to Jeremiah.

30. See U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 161–99, who detects 'three new editions of the book' in 1.1–4.6 (3.1–7*, 14–15; 2.6–19*; and 1.1–20*).

the nations in 2.2-4 stands in close relation to the movement of the nations in Isaiah 60.³¹

The beginning chapters of the book are characterized by the fact that past, present, and future pervade them in the closest way; thus the great oracles of salvation³² (2.2-4; 4.2-6) stand in contrast to the indictment, demonstration of guilt and threat of punishment (1.2-31; 2.6-4.1).³³ The dialectic of the oracles against Judah and Jerusalem and those of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion characterizes the book of Isaiah from its beginning: Zion can be a center to the gathering of the nations only after its purification. What remains, and must remain, is a 'remnant': 'If the Lord of Hosts had not left a remnant for *us*, we would have become like Sodom, we, like Gomorrah' (1.9). This remnant, which in 6.13b is called a 'holy seed', is the unconditional prerequisite for Zion's new role among the world of nations. Then Zion will become the center of peace of all nations. While Mic. 4.1 speaks only of 'nations', in Isa. 2.2 it is 'all nations' (כל הגוים) that make pilgrimage to Zion. In the reading-process of the book, this points to the world of nations seen in 13-27; in contrast to the storming of the nations against Zion, there is a procession of nations to Zion. The unusually positive assessment of the nations in 2.2-4 is even surpassed in 66.18-23, where full membership in the Yhwh cult is assured to them.³⁴ This openness toward the world of nations, which is placed programmatically at the beginning—even before the oracle about the gathering of the Diaspora (4.2-6), also serves, among other things, to interpret in advance the relationship of 'Israel-nations' for the entire second part of the נביאים.³⁵

Rapidly shifting literary types are conspicuous in chaps. 1-4, from a legal opening (1.2-3) to an indictment (1.4-9), to a prophetic Torah-teaching (1.10-17) with concluding statement (1.18-20), to a death lament (1.21-26), to a poem about the Day of Yhwh (2.12-16), to threat oracle (3.1-15), not to mention annotations (1.27-28, 29-31; 2.18, 21) and sprinklings of wisdom (2.22; 3.10-11). This colorful collage of bewildering variety, if it is to be understood at all, is directed not to

31. In addition, Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39*, pp. 253-58.

32. Salvation oracles that include the nations: 2.2-4; 14.1; 18.7; 19.18-25; 25.6-8; 56.8; 66.18-23; salvation oracles that do not include the nations: 4.2-6; 11.11-16; 27.12-13; 35.

33. Thus Cornill already in 1884 ('Komposition', p. 90): 'first judgment upon Zion for the sake of its sins, and portrayal of these sins; then, after judgment is completed, the portrayal of the dawning of salvation.'

34. This bracketing shows how important the theme 'Israel/Nations' is in the book of Isaiah; in addition, Davies, 'The Destiny of the Nations', pp. 93-120 (96).

35. See Schwienhorst-Schönberger, 'Zion', p. 113.

hearers, but rather only to a practiced reader. This is an important indication, therefore, that writers are responsible for the composition of this initial chapter, where they insert traditional material as well as create their own material, and give to the book of Isaiah a programmatic prelude which emphasizes their interest in a Zion which is open to the nations. For the tradents of the 'book of Deutero-Isaiah', this will not have been without interest, as they returned to Jerusalem in stages after 522/1: two developing 'Isaiah-scrolls' met one another!

Thematically Isaiah 1–4 is held together by two alternating elements: the purification of Zion from cultic and from social wrongs. While both areas of indictments are closely bound together in 1.10–20 and 1.21–31, they are treated separately in 2.6–22 (cult) and 3.1–4.1 (social).³⁶ As with all prophetic criticism and indictments, however, the proclamation of judgment does not stand in the foreground, but rather the call to turn to Yhwh; the introductory verses 1.2–3, 4–9 point to this especially, characterized by their closeness to dtn/dtr and to the wisdom world of language. That the demand no longer reached all Israel was already recognized as a fact: there is only a remnant left which preserves the people of God from their complete collapse (1.9). Those who are the We-group at the beginning of the scroll are the ones who are the servants at its close!

2.2.1. *From the Center of Sin to the Convergence of the Nations (Isaiah 1.2–2.5)*

The book of Isaiah begins with a call to heaven and earth, the hearers, which is not a summons to the witness stand, as commonly interpreted,³⁷ but Yhwh's appeal to an independent authority to examine his punishments of the rebellious children, i.e., to investigate his people Israel, in order to show that his retributions are justified (1.2–3).³⁸ The matter of negotiation is not Israel's unfaithfulness, which can be challenged as an objective fact by no one, but the reasonableness of Yhwh's reaction! Like parents who care for their children whom they have brought up and from whom they may expect thankful and respectful behavior (Deut. 21.18–21), so also Yhwh has a claim on the same from Israel.³⁹ That his expectations

36. Cf. O'Connell, *Concentricity*, p. 38.

37. Mattioli, 'Due schemi', p. 352, presents the entire chapter against the background of a legal case: 'nessun altro *rīb* ha la completezza del prologo isaiano.'

38. In addition, Bovati, 'Le langage juridique', pp. 180–83.

39. See the explicit fatherhood of Yhwh in 45.10; 63.(8), 16; 64.7; as in the prayer of lament of 63.7–64.11, 1.2–9 is about a 'clarification of relationship' between Yhwh and postexilic Israel.

were so bitterly dashed can be explained only by the incredible foolishness Israel has shown; every animal knows and remembers who it is who gives him food (cf. Jer. 8.7).⁴⁰ Still there is one question: Did Yhwh, as in Deut. 21.18, exhort his sons within a reasonable time, or has he smitten them without warning? Verses 4–9 underline that the God of Israel has fulfilled very well his fatherly duty of pedagogical exhortation. If only a small remnant has survived his blows, that is not proof of boundless punishment, but of undeserved restraint.⁴¹

While 1.2–3 are designated as Oracle of Yhwh, the perspective changes in 1.4–8. The author, in the cloak of the prophet, confirms the position of Yhwh; he has disciplined his sons so thoroughly,⁴² that no part can be found intact on the entire body. The placing together of 1.2–3 and 1.4–8 implies the following: Israel wanted to hear neither good nor evil—all of Yhwh's disciplinary efforts have had no effect!

The fact that the divine speech is introduced with *כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר* and not, for instance, with *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה* is not unimportant, for the piel of *דִּבֶּר* is always used in the book of Isaiah to emphasize the effectiveness of the divine word, except for one single time (59.3).⁴³ The twofold usage at the beginning of the book in 1.2, 20 emphasizes the entirely fixed efficiency of the divine word, namely that which the curse and blessing oracles at the end of Deuteronomy set in power. This meaning is not only suggested by the reference of 1.2a to Deut. 32.1, but also by that presented in Deut. 30.19: 'I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live' (cf. Deut. 31.28). As in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32.28–29), so also in the prologue of the book of Isaiah Yhwh despairs at the failed insight of his people (*עַמִּי לֹא הִתְבִּינִי*). When in 1.7b the destruction of the land is compared with the 'overturning

40. The momentous simile of 'ox and ass' at the crib of their master probably therefore occurred to the author of 1.2–3 because of the mention of 'ox' and 'ass' (Deut. 22.1–4, 10) shortly after the law of the stubborn son (Deut. 21.18–21).

41. Cf. the *mashal* in 28.23–29, which likewise justifies Yhwh's action.

42. See Prov. 3.12; 13.24; 19.18; 23.13–14; 29.15–17.

43. Already Rignell, 'Isaiah Chapter 1', p. 142; and, without reference to Rignell, Gosse, 'Isaïe 1', pp. 56–57: 1.2, 20; 16.13, 14; 20.2; 21.17; 22.25; 24.3; 25.8; 37.22; 38.7; 39.8; 40.5; 45.19; 46.11; 48.15, 16; 58.14; 65.12; 66.4.

of Sodom' (מִהַפְכַת סֹדֶם),⁴⁴ that means the fulfilling of the similarly worded threats of Deut. 29.22.⁴⁵

To the writers, these verses which open the book of Isaiah are not about threatening their readers with the punishments of Deuteronomy, for these were long ago carried out against the land and its inhabitants, but about emphasizing the reality of the divine word, not least in the perspective of the beginning of the book of Isaiah.⁴⁶ The fact that the curses threatened at the end of the Mosaic Torah for covenant breaches were fulfilled documents the validity of the new beginning for the word of God. By tying the book of Isaiah to the curse and blessing oracles in Deuteronomy,⁴⁷ for whose dating alone the postexilic period is a possibility, the writer makes Isaiah son of Amoz a current actualizer of the Mosaic Torah.⁴⁸

In the accusation 1.4-8, which is tied to 1.2 by the key word בָּנִים, the We-group continues clothed in the prophet's mantle and speaks directly to the addressees; while the outer verses 1.4, 8 are maintained in the 'objective' perspective of the 3rd person, in the central verses direct address prevails. The ever more personal emerging tone in 1.4 is marked by the succession of 'nation', 'people', 'family', and 'sons'.⁴⁹ The designations 'sinful nation' (גֹּי חַטָּא) and 'guilt-laden people' (עַם כְּבֹד עֵינִי) anticipate the emphasis of guilt and sin in 40.2.⁵⁰ As to the concrete accusation, it states, 'They have deserted Yhwh (עָזְבוּ אֶת יְהוָה), rejected the Holy One of Israel (נִאֲצוּ אֶת קֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל)', which reminds one very much of dtn/dtr language,⁵¹ namely in the context of the polemic against the foreign gods.⁵² Just because of this similarity, the lack of the expected formula, 'and they have despised/violated/forgotten/deserted the covenant', is especially conspicuous.

44. MT offers 'overturning by foreigners' (זָרִים), which is explained as a transference from the earlier זָרִים, who 'eat up' the land.

45. Cf. the בָּל רָאשׁ לַחֲלִי (1.5b) with the illness of the land as divine punishment in Deut. 29.21.

46. Against this, Willis ('The First Pericope', p. 77), who traces 1.1-20 back to Isaiah in his late period; in addition, Williamson ('Synchronic and Diachronic', pp. 215-16), is critical, feeling that a discussion regard to 65-66 is missing, something that Carr supplies ('Reading for Unity', pp. 71-75).

47. See the list by U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 185, who classifies the connections between 1.2-20 and Deuteronomy and Lev. 26 as post-dtr (p. 186).

48. Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', p. 46: 'A new Torah proceeds therefore from the prophet's mouth, yet it is only the actualizing of the Torah of Israel.'

49. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-4*, p. 104.

50. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', p. 302.

51. Emerton, 'Historical Background', p. 35, dodges the evidence here.

52. Werner, 'Israel in der Entscheidung', p. 65.

It is not about establishing the breach of covenant by Israel, but rather about Yhwh's carrying through with the *berit* with the remnant community.⁵³ What is still expressed in a recognizable dtn/dtr manner in 1.4ff. is no longer thought of in exactly the same way, as shown by the accusation of 'forsaking/rejecting Yhwh', now no longer fulfilled in terms of content with respect to worshipping foreign gods, but rather with respect to the failure to meet the ethical and cultic demands of the Yhwh religion, which sets the stage for the Chronicler's language.⁵⁴ With a view to chaps. 56–59 and 63–66, one can already say that the assessments of the postexilic community situations are conspicuously similar: they lack nothing in offerings and cultic actions (1.10–20; cf. 58), but rather in practical justice. The 'solutions to the problems' lie close to one another, even if they are expressed differently: thus 1–4 and the following texts of the We-group are about the development of a remnant community; in 65–66, about the separation of servants and sinners.

The disciplinary strokes by which Yhwh intends to bring his sons to reason leave behind only external traces: boils and bruises everywhere, which on the one hand fulfill the threat of the curses in Deut. 28.35; 29.21; on the other hand it has its closest parallels in Jer. 5.3; 8.18. Beyond these correspondences, an inner Isaianic reference to the fourth EYS (Ebed-Yhwh Song) has come to light, and is supported by the following indicators: 'smitten' (נכה hof.) is encountered only in 1.5 and 53.4 in this book; 'illness/to be ill' (חל'), outside of 38.9, only in 1.5 and 53.3, 4; 'stripes' (חבורה) only in 1.6 and 53.5.⁵⁵ Still, no direct influence is evident in either direction, but both texts profit from the idea of Zion as a man, whom Yhwh's strokes hit (cf. Lam. 3.1: 'I am the one who saw misery'); so it is also not surprising that in 1.8 the phrase 'daughter of Zion' appears, an expression which, besides being found in the tradition of the book of Isaiah,⁵⁶ is also used by Lamentations.⁵⁷ The parallels are again evident between We-groups and servants: if the former are the left-over remnant of

53. It is not 'celebrating the end of the Torah' (Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', p. 46), but its continuation that is conjured up in these beginning verses of the book of Isaiah!

54. Werner, 'Israel in der Entscheidung', p. 65: 'The observation that the Chronicler uses the phrase *to desert Yahweh* more often in the sense of "to violate the commandments" or "to fail in the cultic sphere", is not without interest for a dating of Isa. 1.4–9'; cf. 1 Chron. 28.9; 2 Chron. 12.5; 13.11; 24.20.

55. See Grosse, 'Isaïe 1', pp. 59–60.

56. Isa. 1.8; 10.32; 16.1; 22.4 [בַּת עֲמִי]; 52.2.

57. Cf. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 181, with a view to Lam. 1.6; 2.1–18; 4.22.

the 'Daughter of Zion', the latter are the successors of the suffering righteous (53.10).

Now the counter-question is posed whether the presentation represented here is not shattered by the majority, perhaps even universally accepted, idea that vv. 1.4-9 are a literary deposit of the events of the year 701 with Judah's destruction and Jerusalem's siege by Sennacherib.⁵⁸ In spite of some plausibility, several important reasons speak against this: (a) The historical fixed points in the book of Isaiah stand without exception in a chronological sequence; why should an event from Isaiah's late period open the book? (b) The metaphors of a stricken body are clarified by references from Deuteronomy and Jeremiah and therefore speak for an exilic to postexilic dating.⁵⁹ (c) The years after the resumption of the offering cult, interrupted by the exile, offer a better background for the prophetic Torah in 1.10-17, with which the frenetic preparation of offerings stands in the foreground, and not the time of the siege, where everything has failed, especially food (36.12!);⁶⁰ (d) Interrupting that, the illness metaphor describing the children's unmanageable character (עוד הוסיפו סרה, 1.5a) is not to be interpreted as the breaking away from Assyria, but rather, as the statement of 31.6 suggests (העמיקן סרה), as the breaking away from Yhwh.⁶¹ (e) The destruction in 1.7, which is about the depopulation of the land (שממה), of fire-pillaged cities (שרפות אש), and of grazing by foreigners (זרים אכלים), needs no embedding into the fatal year of 701, but can be well understood against the background of the curse verdicts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.⁶² That the depopulation of the land (שממה) in the book of Isaiah does not refer to the consequence of the third field campaign of Sennacherib, but rather to the devastations in the wake of the Neo-Babylonian invasions leading to the exile, is shown by the references concentrated in chaps. 49ff. whose themes are the restoration of Zion.⁶³ Thus the hardening will have an end only when the

58. Even Milgrom ('Did Isaiah Prophecy', pp. 174-77), who puts 1.10-6.13 in the reign of Uzziah, places 1.2-9 in the year 701; also Emerton, 'Historical Background', pp. 34-40.

59. As a supporting argument, יר ('ill') is only in Isa. 1.5; Jer. 8.18; Lam. 1.22.

60. Budde ('Zu Jesaja 1-5', pp. 25-26) already seeks to tone down the often-encountered inconsistency of the siege in 1.4-9 and the abundant offering-cult: 'Difficulty teaches not only prayer, but also offerings.'

61. So Loretz, *Der Prolog*, p. 136: 'srh in v. 5 cannot therefore be placed in relation to the situation of Judah and the political, Egyptian-friendly efforts of the Jerusalem administration after 701 B. C.'

62. Cf. Lev. 26.33; Deut. 28.51; 29.22.

63. Cf. Lev. 26.33; Deut. 28.51; 29.22.

subjection of land and people is fully completed,⁶⁴ as 6.11b proclaims it.⁶⁵ (f) The final indication of a postexilic writing is the expression ‘daughter of Zion’ (בת ציון⁶⁶), which corresponds neither to an Isaianic nor generally pre-exilic language usage (cf. 3.16, 17: ‘daughter of Zion’), but rather expresses a salvation hope of the postexilic community.⁶⁷

The description of the destruction and desolation as the result of divine lashings (1.5–6, metaphoric / 1.7, literal) comes together in the image of the daughter of Zion, who is deserted like a *sukkah* in a vineyard, like a hut in a field of cucumbers.⁶⁸ This metaphor, in contrast to that which preceded of the smitten body and of the scorched earth, is not derived from the curse oracles of the Mosaic Torah, but possesses a certain counterpart in Amos 9.11, where it says, Yhwh will again set up the collapsed *sukkah* of David (סכנת דוד הנפלה), which relates to the reestablishment of the Davidic royal house and the restoration of Jerusalem.⁶⁹ Seen on the whole, this postexilic addition, which because of the ‘Edom-theme’ of Amos 9.12 is to be dated just after the defeat of Edom in the fifth century, positively places our reference in Isa. 1.8—they will lie not too far removed from one another.⁷⁰

The metaphor of Jerusalem as a hut in a vineyard, a place for overnight in a cucumber field, does not intend to promise a hopeful new beginning, but ‘still implies so much, that that which is left over after Yhwh’s act of judgment is valued as much as the unusable and unlivable remnants of hastily erected housing, which, once they have fulfilled their function, are now no longer useable and are left soon to decay’.⁷¹ Jerusalem too would suffer this fate had Yhwh not left for *us* a small remnant (הותר לנו שריד במעט). In this way, the author

64. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 181: ‘The idea of total destruction of the land is to be understood less as a historical than as a *theological* statement.’

65. Rendtorff, ‘Jesaja 6’, p. 79.

66. See 16.1; 37.22; 52.2; 62.11.

67. So Gosse, ‘Isaïe 1’, p. 60; in contrast, Emerton, ‘Historical Background’, p. 35.

68. The *w-qatalti* form ונתורה here shows the result of the preceding description of the situation; see Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, § 119r); it is not to be translated as future, against the LXX (ἐγκαταλείψήσεται) and V (*derelinquetur*), but with T (ואשהארת); against Oesch, ‘Jes 1,8f. und das Problem’, pp. 441–43.

69. See Wolff, *Dodekapropheton* 2., p. 407.

70. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton* 2., p. 407: ‘as a scribe, he could have been led by Isa. 1.8’; in contrast, U. Becker (*Jesaja*, p. 183) takes Isa. 1.11–17 as an ‘extended and generalized new conception of Amos 5.21–24’.

71. Oesch, ‘Jes 1,8f. und das Problem’, p. 443.

offers his addressees a possible identification, to include themselves with the postexilic remnant community;⁷² at the same time, he makes himself known as speaker of this group.⁷³ It is through this We-group that Yhwh has at the last minute kept the people of God from going under like Sodom and Gomorrah.⁷⁴

In this verse the level of communication between the author and readership appears for the first time. The book of Isaiah is the communicator by which the most people possible should be brought into association with this We-group. The use of the root *והר* both for the 'daughter of Zion' (1.8) as well as for the We-group (1.9) is constitutive for the entire book. It is about Jerusalem as a remnant of pre-exilic Israel and about those who may live on Zion.⁷⁵ So it is also only logical that the words of salvation in 2.2-4 and 4.2-6 have one of these two aspects as the theme: Zion and the Zion population.

The connection of the prophetic Torah (1.10-17, 18-20) to 1.2-3, 4-9 is secured by the acceptance of the key words 'Sodom' and Gomorrah' and by the adoption of the We-group perspective from 1.9: *תורה אלהינו*. It is the We-group, who, with this Torah teaching, turns itself toward the leader and to the entire postexilic community; it directs its prophetic word, which it designates as 'Torah of our God', to the 'lords of Sodom' and the 'Gomorrah People' and intimates that it still holds repentance to be possible (cf. 1.18-20).⁷⁶ That the expressions 'word of Yhwh' and 'Torah' appear again in 2.3 in reversed order and only there (!), shows that 2.2-4 is tied to the prophetic Torah of 1.10-20.

The fact that the opening teaching formula *שמעו דבר יהוה* appears again only in 66.5 shows that the writers of 65–66, i.e., the 'servants',

72. Oesch, 'Jes 1,8f. und das Problem', p. 446: 'Together with the postexilic superscription it therefore suggests a community, or even the Yhwh-believing community in postexilic Jerusalem, to which the text of the book of Isaiah here directs its statements as its "virtual addressees".'

73. Werner, 'Israel in der Entscheidung', p. 62: 'As corroboration he [the writer, U.B.] links his personal destiny to that of the addressees, when he skillfully casts his words in the 1st pers. pl.'

74. Cf. Gen. 18.16-33: Sodom was destroyed by Yhwh because there were not found even ten righteous; Jerusalem, however, was spared from total destruction because of the Yhwh-faithful remnant community!

75. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, p. 89: 'the "we" understands itself as a group of a "few survivors" ..., what may be described as a minority party in a larger group with whom it had shared an experience of disaster.'

76. The pragmatics comes very close to that of the 'repentance redaction' of 56.9–59.21, which it inscribes—and not by chance—in 1.27-28!

have oriented themselves toward 1.10-20.⁷⁷ So it is no surprise that there are close ties to 1.10-20 in the cultic critique of 58.1-14, which points to a common original milieu.⁷⁸ It is a milieu in which trembling before the word of Yhwh (66.5) has more importance than the blood of rams and steers (66.3-4).⁷⁹ Even small linguistic details, like the formula *יְהוָה יְהוָה*, which is found only in the book of Isaiah with the exception of Ps. 12.6, point to the postexilic period, as the references with 'Yhwh' and other epithets show (1.11, 18; 33.10; 40.1, 25; 41.21; 66.9).⁸⁰

The critique in 1.10-15 of the excess of offerings and cultic zeal shows implicitly the reaction of postexilic Israel to its drab reality; only Jerusalem still continued to belong to it. In spite of all offerings and cultic efforts, the turn for the better was still to come. The prophetic Torah of the We-group consists not of radical dependence upon the offering cult, but rather its stress on the primacy of ethics to every cult; if Yhwh would accept offering-gifts from the hands of the violent, then he would behave like a corrupt judge, guilty of venality!⁸¹ As Yhwh rejects the festivals of those who should first cleanse themselves of their social sins (1.14), so he later condemns robbery with the offering (61.8).⁸²

It is noteworthy that no threat of punishment follows the cult-critique in 1.10-15, but rather, a series of nine imperatives which exhort reformation and demand definite actions. So Isaiah has not spoken, for teaching does not follow his accusations, but instead

77. As Steck says ('Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7–66,24', p. 265): 'The closing segment 66.5-24, leading everything to its goal, now directly addresses the pious and through them the recipients of the book's final hand, and in view of the target group, is deliberately designed as a dialogical reply to 1.10ff., in which 1.19-20, 27, 30-31 finally become a reality.'

78. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 464-65; Cult without social consciousness (1.11-15//58.2-5), the learning of social responsibility (1.16-17//58.6-7), salvation in the case of repentance (1.18//58.8-9a), phrases with *אֵל*: (1.29-30//58.9b-12), the same closing formula with *יְהוָה דָּבָר* (1.20; 58.14); Tomasino, 'Isaiah 1.1–2.4', pp. 86-88, emphasizes the similarity of the cult critiques of 1.10-20 and 66.1-6.

79. Loretz, *Der Prolog*, p. 120: 'The song in vv. 10-17 originated in a milieu in which opposition between the old sacrifice cult and obedience to the law and word of Yahweh had already developed. This development was possible only after the destruction of the temple in 587 B.C.'

80. Against Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 79-81, who assumed a continuity of Isaianic style of language.

81. Bovati, 'Le langage juridique', p. 189 n. 47.

82. In both references Yhwh is the subject of *אָז*, as Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 217; see also the milieu connection to 66.3-4.

threats (cf. 5.8-24; 10.1-4; 28.1-4; 29.1-4; 30.1-3; 31.1-3). Beyond that, one seeks cult-criticism from him in vain. The cult-criticism with additional teaching about god-pleasing action (1.10-20) is not to be explained, however, as a deuteronomistic reckoning with the exile experience, in which Yhwh is exonerated, though Israel would be burdened with all responsibility for the catastrophe.⁸³ It is not simply about the nexus of guilt and punishment, but rather about unreasonable behavior after punishment is already completed (1.2-9), which is expressed by turning toward the cult while at the same time rejecting the neighbor.⁸⁴ This abnormal behavior is meant to be put away, and serving the nine imperatives to be adopted (1.16-17).⁸⁵

The tenth imperative in 1.18 (לבו), now clothed as the oracle of God, introduces the legal proceedings which conclude the entire segment (1.2-20): 'Come now, let us argue it out.'⁸⁶ What is this clarification about?⁸⁷ It is not about the question whether the people of God may be heavy with guilt or not, but about whether the measure of guilt may not exceed the ability of Yhwh's forgiveness, according to the truism: If we are actually so bad, in spite of the most intensive cultic efforts, then it is a hopeless case. This objection weakens 1.18b: 'If your sins are like red-colored material, they can become as white as snow; if they are fiery red like crimson-colored material, they can become like wool.'⁸⁸ This does not mean to remove the 'dye' from sin to make it harmless, as if sin could be made no-sin,⁸⁹ but rather, the metaphor aims to prevent the target group from being walled in by their old burdens. Only if they can be convinced of the possibility of a new beginning can the traditional 'doctrine of

83. So among others, Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 70.

84. Thus with 1.10-17, nothing contradicts Kaiser's dating in *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 49, to the fifth century; on the contrary, there is much to recommend it, among other things, the similarity to the texts from Isa. 56.9-59.21.

85. Precisely this demand for a change in behavior is also presented in the 'repentance redaction' (especially 58); in the later 'servant redaction' this possibility is no longer given (65-66)!

86. Fohrer translates 'Komm doch, daß wir uns auseinandersetzen' (*Das Buch Jesaja*, I, p. 160); for the various expositions, see Willis, 'On the Interpretation of Isaiah 1.18', pp. 35-54.

87. Kutsch argues that the legal character should not be over-emphasized; it is about the assessment of 'what is right and correct' ('"Wir wollen miteinander rechten"', pp. 152-54).

88. 6.7 demonstrates that Yhwh truly does take away guilt and sin!

89. So the objection of Kutsch, '"Wir wollen miteinander rechten"', p. 151, against the affirmative character of 1.18b.

the two ways',⁹⁰ which stems from dtn/dtr and is marked strongly by wisdom, gain a hearing with them.

That the closing verses 1.19–20 are deuteronomistically marked needs no discussion; still, this recognition is not accepted by many and certainly not by all. Thus Perlitt stresses, against Kaiser, that the two other occurrences of *סָבַח* in Isa. 28.12b and 30.15b (cf. 42.24b), each in negative form, could very well go back to Isaiah, especially since the dtr uses of this verb have Yhwh as their subject, not Israel.⁹¹ Now, however, the affirmative use of *סָבַח* without an object in 1.19a (elsewhere, only Job 39.9), can neither be credited to the deuteronomists nor to Isaiah, but rather, Isaiah tradents have copied the language of their master and at the same time have employed a deuteronomistic commonplace,⁹² something which is especially not to be denied for 1.20a.⁹³ With 1.18–20 the Isaiah tradents, who in 1.9–10 gave themselves away as a We-group with a prophetic claim, compel their target group to make a decision for or against Yhwh: "'You have your destiny now in your hand and need only to choose"; that is the perfectly clear sense of vv. 18–20 as a more complete conclusion of the oracle, which begins with v. 2.'⁹⁴

The fact that, by the introduction of the We-group in 1.9–10, the people of God are no longer seen as a unified whole, contrary to the dtn/dtr conception, is also confirmed by the 'you (pl)' in 1.18–20; in spite of a dtn/dtr-colored language, Israel is no longer placed *en bloc* under the decision of curse and blessing, but rather, the individual is. What is only hinted at here is made clear at the end of the chapter in the statement by the greater Isaianic 'servant redaction' (1.29–31): if there are still punishment, it no longer strikes the entire people, but now only individual sinners and apostates (cf. 1.31 and 66.24).

In order to emphasize its evaluation of the postexilic situation of Jerusalem, the We-group takes over a death lament, of whose Isaianic origin there need be no doubt.⁹⁵ In so doing, the postexilic remnant

90. Cf. Deut. 11.26–28; 28.1–46; 30.15–18.

91. Perlitt, 'Jesaja und die Deuteronomisten', pp. 124–40; cf. also Brekelmans, 'Deuteronomistic Influence', pp. 172–74.

92. Cf. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 186: 'Isaiah 1* is to be classified as *post-dtr*.'

93. Thus even Perlitt, 'Jesaja und die Deuteronomisten', p. 146: 'Schooled in the exemplary prophetic language of 30.15 and 7.9 with the absolute usage of the decisive verbs, they have inscribed this special intonation of the master in the theology of the closely related dtn/dtr school.'

94. Budde, 'Zu Jesaja 1–5' (I), p. 30; cf. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 129; Melugin, 'Figurative Speech', p. 291; Niditch, 'Composition', p. 521.

95. Cf. Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', pp. 563–64, especially his objection to Vermeylen's linguistic-statistical analysis (*Du prophète Isaïe*, I,

community compares the situation of Jerusalem of its time with the situation that Isaiah so impressively lamented. So in 1.21-26 it not only puts on the prophet's mantle, but lets Isaiah speak anew through his old death lament. In contrast to its own composition (1.2-20), at the end of which there is not an announcement of judgment but instead teaching, after the assignment of guilt Isaiah very consciously announced the judgment with an emphatic 'therefore, oracle of the Lord Yhwh of hosts, the mighty one of Israel'.⁹⁶ The proof of guilt and the proclamation of judgment are in chiasmic correspondence, in order to build around the axis of Yhwh's oracle formula:⁹⁷

- 21a קריה נאמנה
- 21b צדק, משפט
- 22 סיגים (dross = purification)
- 23 Critique of leadership
- 24a Yhwh's oracle formula
- 24b Revenge on leadership
- 25 סיגים (dross = purification)
- 26a שפטים
- 26b עיר הצדק/קריה נאמנה

The remnant community responded as called by this funeral song, which aims so strongly at ethical responsibility, i.e., the keeping of 'justice and righteousness',⁹⁸ in order to protect Jerusalem before its collapse. The command of the hour was not to a frenetic cult, but rather one practicing righteousness—in Isaiah's time as well as in theirs.

The real enemies of the city of God are not the external but the inner enemies⁹⁹—this is a word of Isaiah which the We-group takes up with gratification; the servant community, which is responsible for the closing chapter of the book, lets this conflict between the pious and sinners then come to its climax.

pp. 80-93), at the end of which he assigns the funeral dirge to the 'l'école deutéronomienne et jérémienne' (1.93).

96. For Willis ('Lament Reversed', p. 239), 1.27-28 belong with the 'Lament'; Luc, 'Isaiah 1', p. 115, even regards 1.29-31 as 'anti-climactic if the chapter was intended to serve as an introduction to the book'.

97. With minor changes, from U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 193; see also Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', p. 563 n. 74.

98. (ה) צדק / משפט in Isaianic material: 1.21; 5.7; 28.17; in redacted material: 1.27; 5.17; 9.6; 16.5; 26.9; 32.1, 16; 33.5.

99. Hardmeier, 'Verkündigung und Schrift', p. 130; it appears to be completely mistaken that foreign people are meant in 1.24b; so, however, Kilian, *Jesaja* 1-12, p. 26, among others.

The Isaianic death lament in 1.21–26, which proclaimed destruction for the corrupt upper strata of society and a conscientious new leadership for the mass of the population, is commented on in 1.27–28 by the writers of the ‘repentance redaction’ of 56.9–59.21.¹⁰⁰ While Isaiah spoke of the ‘City’ (1.21, 26), these redactors speak of ‘Zion’ (1.8), reaching back and at the same time preparing for the ‘insertion’ of 2.2–5. For them it was about Zion as the center of the postexilic people of God, who are redeemed by a just life (במשפט), not by a frenetic offering-cult.¹⁰¹

Besides the saving future of Zion, yet another aspect is important to this redactor of the Greater-Isaiah book, and that is the make-up of the population of Zion, as 1.27b emphasizes, ‘and their repenting ones (לשביה)¹⁰² by righteousness (בצדקה)’. The construct form of the active plural participle of שׁוּב is found in the entire Hebrew Bible in only one other place, Isa. 59.20 ‘and he comes to Zion as Goel, to those turning in Jacob from transgression (לשבי פשע ביעקב)’. This is not mere chance, but rather points to common authorship: here as there, Zion and Zion’s population are named in one breath. The connecting of ‘turn/redeem’ (שוב/פרה) is found in the Hebrew canon only in the 51.10/35.10 parallel: ‘The redeemed of Yhwh turn around and come to Zion.’ There it relates to the homeward-returning Diaspora; here, it relates to those ready to change their ways, the targeted group in Jerusalem.

In contrast to the redeemed of Zion and those willing and capable of reversing themselves, the rebels (פשעים), sinners (חטאים), and those who have deserted Yhwh (עזבי יהוה, 1.28b) collapse. Three central concepts are thus taken up from 1.2, 4, where an endpoint is obviously to be placed. The separation of sinners and pious is still not pictured in full-color, but is rather only negatively observed. The motif of cleansing taken from the Isaianic death lament is conceived and actualized in the separation of good and evil. The paralleling of personal decision for (שוב) or against Yhwh (יהוה object + עזב) with the emphasis on Jerusalem points to a complete merging of Zion

100. Thus Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,9–59,21; 63,1–6’, p. 192; Steck, ‘Jahwes Feinde’, p. 190.

101. Cf. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 35: ‘this is the dominant concept during and after the exile; it cannot be verified with any reference outside of Isaiah, but many from Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah can be cited (including 52.3ff.; 59.17–20; 61.8).’

102. There is no doubt about the correctness of the Masoretic vocalization, in spite of LXX (ἡ αἰχμαλωσία αὐτῆς = שביה = its captives).

tradition and dtr tradition,¹⁰³ which point to the middle of the fifth century as a *terminus a quo*. The transformation of the physical return from exile to Zion into an inner turning to Yhwh points to a time in which the homecoming movement had already ended, but the memories of it were still fresh enough for it to be employed as a theologoumenon.¹⁰⁴

If the words of 1.27-28, however, are to be attributed to the Repentance Redaction, which placed 56.9-59.21 before the Trito-Isaianic 'light' chapters (60-62) in order to limit the salvation promises made there to those who turned from their sins in Jacob (59.20!), then there is a good possibility that these same redactors also took over 2.2-4 from the Micah scroll, consciously anchoring the meaning of Zion for the nations at the beginning of the greater Isaianic scroll, again under the conditions that Zion and the Zion population be marked by 'justice and righteousness'. In short, the relationship of 56.9-59.21 to 60-62 is mirrored *en miniature* by that of 1.27-28 to 2.2-4. At the same time, an essential difference is not to be underestimated: while in 60-62 the nations and their serving function stand in the foreground with the building up of Jerusalem, in 2.2-4 their pilgrimage to Zion stands in the forefront, assessed entirely positively.¹⁰⁵ The purification of Zion, i.e., the separation of sinners and righteous, is the prerequisite for Zion as the goal of the pilgrimage of the nations. The astonishing openness to the nations in the book of Isaiah is understandable only in the succession of the Deutero-Isaianic servant-of-God texts with their turning to the nations (42.1-9; 45.14; 49.1-6), the Zion statements of 51.4-5; 54.1-3, and the Trito-Isaianic 'light' chapters, which bring us to the fifth century. With the accumulating indications that the insertion of 2.2-4 in the book of Isaiah is to be placed in the fifth century, the question arises whether the thematic parallel of 'purity of Zion' and the 'international pilgrimage to Zion' was not a protest against the religious politics of Ezra and Nehemiah, which, by the forced solution of forbidding mixed marriages (Ezra 9-10; Neh. 13.23-31), had moved to clarify a position against the opening of the

103. Koenen, *Heil*, p. 92.

104. Its similarity to the Isa. 65-66 ruling theme of the separation of righteous and sinners supports this dating; so, among others, Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 69; Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 37: 'first half of the fifth century, prior to the coming of Nehemiah to Jerusalem', without regard for 2.2-5.

105. Thus Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1-39*, pp. 257-58, who estimates the middle of the fifth century for 2.2-4, in view of 'the Persian war with the Greeks, the revolts of Inaros and Megabyzos; shortages in Jerusalem and in the countryside' (p. 258).

postexilic community to Yhwh disciples from the nations, indeed, even against the brothers in the faith from Samaria.¹⁰⁶

The logical connection of 1.21–26, 27–28¹⁰⁷ with 2.2–4 is obscured in the final form by the insertion of vv. 1.29–31 and the clarifying addition of 2.1. If the repentance redaction of 56.9–59.21 was inscribed by means of 1.27–28 in the beginning of the scroll, so too was the following ‘servant redaction’ of 63–66 inscribed by means of 1.29–31,¹⁰⁸ thereby bracketing the entire book.¹⁰⁹ This insertion was perhaps even intended to obscure the unity of the ‘ethical demand’ and the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion: for one thing, the ‘transgressors, sinners, and Yhwh deserters’ (1.28) are identified as followers of pagan cults, by which the socially-directed nudge of 1.27–28 with its reference to ‘justice and righteousness’ is returned to its cultic critique. On the other hand, 1.29–31 have the function of supplementing the splendid image of the international pilgrimage to Zion with an allusion to the conditions of entrance: followers of foreign cults are naturally excluded from the pilgrimage to the Mount of God! This also is the probable reason that Mic. 4.5, which speaks with absolutely no problem of the numerous religions among the nations, has found no place in the book of Isaiah. What Kaiser says of 1.29–31 can also be related to this postulated insertion on the part of the servant community:¹¹⁰

One can imagine how the absence of help from Yahweh in turning the fate of Judaism opened the nation *in the late Persian period* to the fascination of cults whose divinities it believed to experience directly

106. Against Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, p. 54: ‘Insofar as the book of Isaiah constitutes an exhortation to adhere to Yhwh’s covenant, it becomes an exhortation to support the reform program of Ezra and Nehemiah.’

107. Against U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 192, it should be stressed that 1.27–28 does not cut the connection to 2.2–4, but continues the ‘purification poem’ of vv. 21–26.

108. Steck’s question (‘Jahwes Feinde’, p. 190 n. 190), ‘Or does 1.29–31 belong together with Isa. 65–66?’ is to be answered affirmatively; see the sacrifices in the gardens (1.29; 65.3; 66.17), destruction of the apostates by fire (1.31; 66.16, 24). According to Williamson (‘Isa. 6.13 and 1.29–31’, pp. 119–228) Isa. 1.29–31 is a conscious exegesis of 6.13!

109. The emphatic כִּי and the continuation of the 3d pers. pl. of 1.28 with בָּשׂוּ in 1.29aα, against the 2d pers. pl. in 1.29aβ–30, suggest the verses are an addition.

110. Against this, Vermeylen (*Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 108; II, pp. 747–48) views 1.28–31 as an anti-Samaritan polemic at the beginning of the Hellenistic period; Steck, *Der Abschluß der Prophetie*, p. 29, hesitates to allocate it definitely to the period after Alexander.

in the forces of life, and which thus appeared to guarantee immediate help in daily life.¹¹¹

The nexus of 'Zion purification' and 'pilgrimage of the nations', after its interpolation in 1.29-31, is nearly lost entirely by the addition of 2.1. This verse is inserted here by someone of a still later period (after 400), who wished to include the phenomenon of the double tradition in Micah. One can hardly maintain that the oracle in Mic. 4.1ff. has been inserted more successfully,¹¹² considering the thematic preparation for 2.2-4 in the theme 'purification of Zion' (1.21-26) with its commentary in 1.27-28 as the condition for a future international pilgrimage.¹¹³

That the prophecy of the pilgrimage of the nations from the book of Micah was inserted at the beginning of the greater book of Isaiah by the 'repentance redactors' of 56.9-59.21 after the set-up of 1.27-28, is also shown by the bridge-building verse 2.5, which with *לכו ונלכה*, on the one hand, takes up 'but we will walk in the name of Yhwh, our God', from Mic. 4.5b and at the same time looks back to 2.3 (*לכו* ונעלה), and on the other hand, looks forward to 2.6 with *בית יעקב*.¹¹⁴ The phrase 'house of Jacob' is not a designation of an ethnic whole, but rather a hallmark of those who want to repent in the postexilic congregation.¹¹⁵ Again, it refers directly to 59.20, where the 'repentance redactors' limit the promises of light only to those who have turned from the sins of Jacob. It is evident that the light metaphor together with the motif of those who walk (in the sense of a life-walk [*ביו*], unknown in the Micah-model) is borrowed from Isa. 60.1-3.¹¹⁶ With Isa. 2.5, the redactors clarify the duty that ensues, for the post-exilic community in Jerusalem, from the promise of the international pilgrimage of the nations to Zion: the gift is recognized and accepted

111. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 59 (italics, U.B.).

112. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, 'Zion', p. 113; Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', p. 565 n. 85: 'In contrast to the severe, unexpected reversal in Mic. 3.9-12 + 4.1-5, Isa. 1.21ff. builds a bridge to 2.2ff. with its image of the city in v. 26.'

113. According to U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 194-97, Isa. 1.21-26 is modeled after its source in Mic. 3.9-12 'in order to prepare adequately the oracle taken over from the book of Micah [i.e., Isa. 2.2-4; U.B.] and to assign to it a new theological place in the book of Isaiah' (196-97).

114. Budde, 'Zu Jesaja 1-5' (I), p. 188: 'hardly ever is it so obvious that a verse is quoted as in v. 5.'

115. Cf. especially 10.20, 21; 14.1-3; 29.22; in addition, Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, pp. 112-14.

116. Van Wieringen, *Analogies in Isaiah. Volume A*, pp. 37-38; cf. Steck, 'Israel und Zion', p. 204.

as a task.¹¹⁷ It consists of this, to walk in the light of Yhwh (בְּאוֹר יְהוָה), which refers to 51.4: ‘Give me your attention, my people! My nation, listen to me! For Torah goes forth from me (תּוֹרָה מֵאֵתִי הֵצֵא), and I will set my justice as a light to the peoples (וּמִשְׁפָּטִי לְאוֹר עַמִּים אֲרִינֵי).’¹¹⁸ That the repentance redactors resonate in 2.5 with 51.4 does not happen by chance, but is motivated by 2.3, where likewise the phrase is ‘the Torah goes forth’. It does not, however, proceed from Yhwh, but from Zion (מִצִּיּוֹן הֵצֵא תּוֹרָה). Thus the repentance redactors place their pragmatics of the connection of Zion’s ‘ethics’ and ‘function of light’ at the beginning of the scroll. It is only when that part of postexilic Israel that wishes to repent walks in the light of Yhwh, that Zion can become the center of international pilgrimage.

That the insertion of 2.2-4 with its connecting verse 2.5 is motivated by the mission of the Servant of God to the nations (esp. 42.1-4; 49.6; 51.4-8) has to be considered. Still there is an important difference: while there, justice and Torah go out to the nations, here the nations come to Zion, drawn by Torah. While the Ebed brought the Torah as light to the nations, now the community will exemplify Torah on Zion. Thus, the nations see this light and go on pilgrimage in order to receive Torah there.¹¹⁹ The mission of the Ebed (i.e., of Zion) to the nations is transferred to the community. Stated otherwise, the greater the number of those who are joined to it, the more clearly the light of the Torah will shine out to the nations.

The question remains: Does the thesis that the repentance redactors inserted Isa. 2.2-4 with the closing comment of 2.5 fit with current scholarship? There is much to be said in favor of this. On the one hand, the postexilic origin of Isa. 2.2-4/Mic. 4.1-3 is nearly universally accepted.¹²⁰ On the other hand, the negative reference of Joel

117. Carroll, ‘Inner Tradition Shifts’, p. 303: Isa. 2.2-4 ‘is given an immediate relevance to the present cult in Jerusalem by the addition of an exhortation in 2.5’.

118. I. Fischer’s translation: ‘Merkt auf mich, mein Volk, meine Völkerschaft auf mich lauscht! Denn Tora geht von mir aus, und mein Recht zum Licht der Völker lasse ich es ruhen’ (*Tora für Israel*, p. 103).

119. With that the ‘unconnectedness’ of Zion and Torah for the nations is overcome; in addition, Lohfink, ‘Bund und Tora’, p. 44; Gross, ‘Israel und die Völker’, p. 165; Gross, ‘Yhwh und die Religionen’, p. 39.

120. Against this, Wildberger, *Jesaja. 1. Teilband*, pp. 78-80, maintains Isaianic authorship, although he lists the counter-arguments (among others, the universalism of the offer of salvation; the positive view of the nations); Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 130ff., understands the procession to Zion in a ‘sens “intra-israélite”’ and indeed relates it to Josiah’s cultic centralization, an interpretation which, to my knowledge, has found no followers.

4.10 ('Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears!') to Isa. 2.4/Mic. 4.3 points to the *terminus ad quem* for dating the prophecy, in that the core of Joel 4 belongs to the fourth century.¹²¹ Can the time at which Isa. 2.2–4.5 was accepted into the book of Isaiah be fixed more precisely than the 'Persian period' presumed by Steck?¹²² The rare נהר I (to stream¹²³) in Isa. 2.2/Mic. 4.1 could offer a clue, as it occurs elsewhere only in Jer. 31.12 (the exiled stream to the gifts of Yhwh, to Zion) and Jer. 51.44, a reference which is of special importance for our question: 'I have visited Bel in Babylon and have torn what he has swallowed out of his mouth, and no longer do nations stream to him (ולא ינהרו אליו עוד גוים); also the wall of Babylon has fallen.' This closest and in fact only parallel, which names 'nation' as the subject of 'stream',¹²⁴ allows the statement of Isa. 2.2–4 to emerge still more clearly: No longer will the nations march to Babylon, for Babylon has fallen, but rather, to Zion, to the house of the God of Jacob.¹²⁵ Isa. 2.1, whose close relationship to 13.1 is obvious, indicates that the prophecy of the pilgrimage of the nations in Isa. 2.2–4 should be understood objectively against the background of the defeat of Babylon:

2.1: הדבר אשר חזה ישעיהו בן אמוץ

13.1: משא בבל אשר חזה ישעיהו בן אמוץ

Thus the possibility of understanding 2.1 against the background of the Babylon oracle in chaps. 13–14 is offered as reading instruction for the following prophecy of the pilgrimage of the nations.¹²⁶ If these chapters, however, are not the literary expression of the peaceful taking of Babylon by Cyrus in the year 538, but rather of the politics

121. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton* 2., p. 91; Plöger, *Theokratie und Eschatologie*, p. 127: 'the time after the founding of the Jewish community until the Chronicker's work became known, i.e., between 400 and 330.'

122. Steck, *Der Abschluß der Prophetie*, p. 26 n. 33: 'New Addition[s] from the Persian Period'; cf. in addition Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 174: 'late sixth century'; Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 163: 'the outgoing seventh and the beginning fifth century B.C.'

123. In contrast to נהר II 'to shine': Isa. 60.5; Ps. 34.6; Roberts, 'Double Entendre', pp. 46–48, presumes a case of 'purposely playing on the ambiguity between the two homonymous roots...in order to express both joyous recognition of and movement toward God's exalted house' (p. 48).

124. Cf. Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39*, p. 254.

125. So Gosse, 'Michée 4,1–5', p. 102.

126. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, p. 292 n. 40: 'Terminus a quo for 2.2–5 appears to be the inclusion of the נחם-collection in I Isaiah.'

of Xerxes in the year 482,¹²⁷ then a period after 482 becomes ever more probable for the transfer of Isa. 2.2–4 into the book of Isaiah. The teaching of the peace-Torah instead of the handiwork of war would fit well as a reaction to the last clash of the Babylonian and Persian superpowers, as would the addresses to the ‘many’, i.e., ‘mighty’ nations¹²⁸ (עַמִּים רַבִּים), among whom Yhwh will appear as arbitrator.

2.2.2. *The Judgment of Purification and the New Zion Population (Isaiah 2.6–4.6)*

With 2.6 onwards we return to the composers of 1–4*, who, following the Isaiah ben Amoz tradition, placed an introduction before the framed ‘Isaiah Chapters’ (5–10*). That a break occurs before 3.1 is undisputed, unlike its varied and uneven origin, which is also reflected in the textual tradition.¹²⁹

The ‘Isaiahness’ of 2.12–17 is for the most part recognized; it is confirmed as the heart of Isaianic preaching.¹³⁰ It is introduced by the directive to unnamed target groups to seek safety from the terror of Yhwh (2.10), which together with the destruction as a result of the Day of Yhwh points to a violent earthquake as a historical point of reference. So Isaiah makes an earthquake, collectively witnessed and suffered (cf. Amos 1.1; Zech. 14.5), the beginning point of his preaching against human pretense.¹³¹

This poem with its ten-fold repetition of *על כל* (against all...) has been doubly bracketed: first by the repetition of the motif of ‘Hide yourselves’ (v. 10) in v. 19; second, by the addition of the motif of humbling of arrogance (v. 17) in v. 11. The insertions of vv. 11 and 19 thus each fill out an element of the Isaianic text: Isaiah spoke in v. 10 of ‘hiding’, and this motif was added in v. 19; in v. 17, he spoke about human ‘humiliation’ as a climax of his preaching, and this element is added at the beginning in v. 11.¹³² If the poem framed by the Day of Yhwh is read in association with the close of 1.2–20, 21–26 (1.27–28,

127. See below, 3.2.

128. Cf. Mic. 4.3: עַמִּים רַבִּים וְהוֹכִיחַ לְגוֹיִם עֲצָמִים and Zech. 8.22: וְבָאוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְגוֹיִם עֲצוּמִים לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בִּירוּשָׁלַם.

129. Thus, 1QIsa^a does not have 2.9b–10, and 2.22 is lacking in the LXX.

130. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 135: ‘nous sommes au coeur même de la prédication isaïenne’; so also Kilian, *Jesaja 1–12*, p. 32; on the other hand, Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 75, sees 2.12–17 as a composition from the Persian period; now also U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 169–75.

131. Thus Seybold, *Die anthropologischen Beiträge*, p. 407.

132. Cf. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 141: ‘Lev. 11 n’est pas un refrain à mettre sur la même ligne que le v. 17, mais plutôt une reprise secondaire de ce verset.’

29-31; 2.2-5 were only added in the process of the greater Isaianic redaction), the function can be clearly recognized: The Isaianic poem of the Day of Yhwh against all arrogance is now united as an element in the cleansing events of Jerusalem.

The poem of the Day of Yhwh exhibits a further development in the expansion of vv. 6-8. The terror of Yhwh, which strikes down all which is high and arrogant, shall now be directed against all fortune-telling, commerce and military adventurism; in short against all humanly-made idols (אֱלִילִים). In the poem itself, the ten-fold 'against all' set the tone, while here it is the four-fold 'be full' (מֵלֵא). Vermeylen has correctly pointed to the close connection between Isa. 2.6-8 and Mic. 5.9-13, in, for example, the opening 'you have rejected' (נִמְשַׁתָּה) (וְנִהְיִיתָ) (Mic. 5.13).¹³³ Verses 2.6-8, extending finally into a polemic against idols, have their correspondence in 2.20, by which a new ring is laid around the composition. This verse offers the result of the implementation of the 'Day of Yhwh' (2.12). On that day, humankind (הָאָדָם) will throw away its gods of silver and gold, which both v. 7 (בַּסֶּף וְזָהָב) as well as v. 8 (אֱלִילִים) have taken up; this 'idol polemic' ring (vv. 6-8, 20) is probably also to be ascribed to the composers of 1-4, if it is not to be placed still later.¹³⁴

So, the following structure is produced at the level of the final form:

- 2.6-8 Full of silver-gold-idols
 - 2.10 Hide yourselves before the Terror of Yhwh
 - 2.11 Mankind is bowed down vs Yhwh alone is exalted
 - 2.12-26 The Day of Yhwh על כל 10x
 - 2.17 Mankind is bowed vs Yhwh alone is exalted
 - 2.19 Hide yourselves before the Terror of Yhwh
- 2.20 Idols of Silver and Gold, thrown away

This composition was enlarged by three additions, which as such reveal that they no longer continue to build on the ring composition, but rather clarify statements that are already made. Thus v. 21 dramatizes the fate of those who worship idols on the Day of Yhwh and makes them look ridiculous, picturing their hopeless attempts even

133. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 135-40, thinks he recognizes an originally unified oracle that was later distributed to the Micah and Isaiah scrolls, respectively.

134. A related milieu is certainly to be found for 65.3-5; 66.3-4—cf. the addition of 1.29-31; also, the worship of idols remains virulent in the postexilic period!

yet to escape Yhwh's judgment. In v. 18, the polemic against idolatry is continued as well, observing neither grammar nor context; so a verb in the singular follows a plural subject (יִחְלֶה¹³⁵). The shortness of these verses could indicate that they behave like a gloss, by which an alert scribe wanted to note that now the gods 'are in for it'.

In contrast, the closing verse appears to be well thought out. A scribe conforms to the mocking manner spoken by the idolater, as if the latter had lost his mortal nature through following an undoubtedly false cultic path:¹³⁶ 'Turn away from mortals, who have only breath in their nostrils, for of what account are they?' This recalls Gen. 2.7, perhaps also Pss. 8.5; 144.3-4; and Job 7.16-17. Verse 2.9b might be an objection to this 'lenient' tack, demanding the opposite: 'Do not forgive them' (אַל תִּשָּׂא לָהֶם). The wording would have been expressly chosen to exclude the possibility that idol worshipers might still escape judgment!

At the level of the final text, the logic of the combination of the Zion pilgrimage of the nations and the judgment on the idol worshipers becomes clear. It is aimed at the people of God: as long as the house of Jacob on Zion runs after foreign idolatrous cults, the pilgrimage of the nations will not take place. Accordingly, the great prophet of the eighth century had not only proclaimed the pilgrimage of the nations, but also the Day of Yhwh against all idols and idol worshipers. 31.6-7 shows that precisely Judaic apostates are meant, where the 'Sons of Israel' are commanded to turn themselves around (שׁוּבוּ), from that to which they have so deeply apostatized (סָרָה; cf. 1.5!)—'indeed, on that day each one will despise his idols of silver and his idols of gold', which 2.20 takes literally. There, too, Isaiah has been made the champion against the cults of foreign gods.¹³⁷ In reference to the nations who wish to go up to Zion, this is necessary: only the one who separates himself from idols has entry to Zion. For the chronological and theological historical categorizing of this type of polemic against idols in connection to the postexilic community and to the prophesying of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, it is noteworthy that אֱלֹהִים in the Psalter appears only within the Yhwh-Kingship Psalms (Pss. 96.5; 97.7),¹³⁸ a collection which touches close to Isa. 2.2-4 and at whose end the nations themselves are acknowledged

135. The 1QIsa^a reading is pl. as are those of LXX and T.

136. So Seybold, *Die anthropologischen Beiträge*, pp. 413-15.

137. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1244, of 31.7: 'the verse reminds one of 2.20; 17.8; 30.22; there have been obvious attempts to make Isaiah the champion against idolatrous worship.'

138. אֱלֹהִים: Lev. 19.4; 26.1; Isa. 2.8, 18, 20; 10.10, 11; 19.1, 3; 31.7; Hab. 2.18.

as full fellow members of the people of God¹³⁹ ('we are his people, the flock of his pasture'; Ps. 100.3; cf. Isa. 64.7!). The indispensable presupposition for such a confession is the rejection of all idolatrous worship, for which the two cited Psalm passages supply the motivation. The target of the אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל-passages in the Psalter collection 93–100 is met with that of Isaiah 2: only the one who renounces idolatrous worship has entry to Zion, whether he comes from Israel or from the nations!

Yet let us return once again to Isa. 2.6–4.6, which, in the course of the cleansing of Jerusalem and its occupants, leads the reader to the new Zion population (4.2–6). If 2.6–22 deals with the end of the idols and their followers on the Day of Yhwh, 3.1–4.1 is about the purification of Jerusalem and Judah from social defects. The 'Day of Yhwh' (יוֹם יְהוָה) against everything high and mighty will sweep over Judah and Jerusalem; the consequences of these destroying and cleansing days will be marked with the formula 'on that day' (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא¹⁴⁰), until the goal is reached, the growth of the 'branch of Yhwh', (the scion) in 4.2–6. In 2.6–22 the thought of the land 'being-full' (מָלֵא) and 'against all' (עַל כָּל) stands in the foreground; now it is that of 'estrangement' (סִיר, hi., 'remove' 3.1, 18), of the removal of all deceptive over-confidence.

The new beginning with כִּי הִנֵּה in 3.1 is not isolated from 2.6–22, but continues the argument. It is especially important to emphasize that 3.1–7 is not about the threat of future judgment, but is rather the description of an actual historical deed which happened on the part of Yhwh, which is underlined by הִנֵּה with a participle. 'Indeed, see, the Lord Yhwh of hosts is about to remove (מִסִּיר) support and staff from Jerusalem and Judah.' The tendency toward anarchy, everywhere visible (3.4–7), will increase to the point that the inconceivable actually happens: no one any longer wishes to be a leader, because there is nothing more to distribute, but rather, each person must worry about their own bread and clothing (3.7). Here it should be noted that in Isaiah's day there could be no such statement of anarchic development, not even in the heaviest crisis, like for example, the siege of Sennacherib in 701. This chaotic situation has its closest parallel in the exilic songs of lament.¹⁴¹

With an emphatic 'indeed', which takes up the opening כִּי of v. 1, a summary is drawn up in which the expression 'Jerusalem and Judah'

139. Cf. Zenger, 'Juden und Christen', pp. 49–50.

140. 2.17, 20; 3.7, 18; 4.1, 2; the בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא comes too early in 2.11, before the Day of Yhwh in 2.12, a further argument for its later insertion as a bracket to 2.17.

141. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 166, with a view toward Lam. 1.10–20; 2.5–17.

of v. 1 likewise recurs: 'Indeed, Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah, fallen' (3.8a). There follows a clearly separated, wisdom-tinged objection, meant to assure that not everyone receives the judgment over Jerusalem and Judah, only the guilty.¹⁴² The redemption of the righteous is literally placed afterward, where the צַדִּיק (3.10) stands between two Woes about sinners (3.9b, 11a).

With 3.12–15, 16–17, two demonstrations of guilt unexpectedly follow, with their accompanying proclamations of punishment against the oppressor and the rich women of the ruling class. Yhwh exposes their shame (3.17b), embellished extensively in 3.18–24. The last verses (3.25–4.1) sum it up: The men are fallen, the women dishonored, life and survival hang by a thread.

In the chapter's final form, there is a clear inclusio of 3.1, 15 (הִנֵּה הָאֲדֹנָן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת—נָאֻם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת), verses about Yhwh's act of judgment upon the *men* of Jerusalem and Judah. From 3.16, with its transition וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, it is the women of Jerusalem against whom Yhwh's deeds are directed, where, not incidentally, the יֹסִיר of 3.1 is taken up again in 3.18. Yhwh removes from Jerusalem all men and women who are unable to stand firm in the judgment, in order that a holy remnant (4.3) might remain from the men *and* women on Zion. This 'men-women' perspective is brought back in the closing verses (3.25–4.1).

Among scholars, 3.1–15* is as a rule assessed as Isaianic.¹⁴³ Yet the passage and especially the pragmatics of the entire composition speak, without doubt, of the development of a remnant community on Mount Zion (4.2–6); certainly it belongs to the postexilic period. The leading motif of purification is suggested in 3.1, expressed by the 'removal' (מִסִּיר) of the leaders in society from Jerusalem and Judah. Isaianic phraseology is taken from 1.25, with a markedly different accent, however. As it is stated there in a Yhwh-oracle, he will remove (וַאֲסִירָהּ) the dross of Jerusalem and install judges and counselors as at the beginning of time, while in Isaiah 3 the motif of *restitutio ad integrum* is completely given up, replaced by the anarchy provoked by Yhwh. The solution is no longer a reestablishing of the old order with better people, but a divinely-instigated chaos which leads to the development of a new order in the form of the 'Yhwh-branch' (4.2–6). Also weighing against an Isaianic authorship of these

142. Cf. Koenen, *Heil*, p. 188; this theme has been inserted especially frequently in 13–23 and essentially characterizes the style of 24–27.

143. Cf. Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', p. 559; see, in contrast, the discussion by U. Becker (*Jesaja*, pp. 162–69), who, proceeding from 3.14–15, dates the textual kernel of 3.1–15* to the beginning of the fifth century (p. 168).

verses is the fact that the king and the royal family are excluded in this critique, considering that the prophet definitely had something to say to the 'House of David' (Isa. 7). Is the royal criticism lacking because at the time of the writing of Isaiah 3 there were no longer kings in Israel?¹⁴⁴ If we approach these verses again with a reasonable initial suspicion of a non-Isaianic authorship of the core of 3.1-15*, the 'Isaianic façade' becomes ever more fragile: the introductory **כִּי הֵנָּה** has a redactional character, whereby the participle **מַסִּיר** does not lose its 'Isaianic character', but does lose the force of a word expressed for the moment from the mouth of the prophet. The close of 3.1, 'every support of bread and every support of water', is certainly an addition, occasioned probably by the narrative of the siege of Jerusalem (36.12). The enumeration of the groups of persons in 3.1-3 recapitulates a list of all whose who are lifted up, against whom the Day of Yhwh is directed (2.12-16).¹⁴⁵ Verse 4, with its sudden introduction of a divine oracle, is to be seen as a later insertion; specifically, it is supplied lexically by v. 12 (**מַשֵּׁל** // **מַעֲלִיל** / **הַעֲלִילִים**); vv. 12-13 are also postscripts.¹⁴⁶

The composition of 3.1-7*, which in the portrayal of the anarchic situation reaches its climax with v. 7—under such circumstances no one will any longer be 'lord of the people' (**קִצִּין עַם**), an expression which refers back to 1.10 (**קִצִּינִי סֶדֶם**)—is continued with 3.14-15 and brought to its end, as indicated by the *inclusio* created with 3.1.¹⁴⁷ These last two verses arrive at a decisive meaning;¹⁴⁸ verse 3.14a (**יִהְיֶה בְּמִשְׁפַּח יְבוּא**) clearly points forward to 4.4, the purification of the Zion population by the spirit of justice (**בְּרוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט**), and 3.14b, 'you have burned up the vineyard' (**וַאֲתֵם בִּעַרְתֶּם הַכֶּרֶם**)¹⁴⁹ prepares for the vineyard in 5.1-7.¹⁵⁰ With 3.14-15, the writers have thus created both a bridge to the next sub-composition (5–10) and at the same time the climax of their own composition (1–4*), together with 4.2-6. In a striking way, 4.4 shows special interest in the purification of the unclean daughters of Zion (**בָּנוֹת צִיּוֹן**) by Yhwh.

144. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 167, answers in the affirmative.

145. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 77-78.

146. See the detailed reasons for this in U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 165-66.

147. So with U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 166.

148. So with U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 167, who however sees only the reference to the vineyard, not that to 4.2-6.

149. Cf. the **אֵתֵם הָאֵשׁ** in the Nathan parable in 2 Sam. 12.7.

150. Does **בִּעַרְתֶּם** in 3.14 ('you devour'; cf. 5.5) present a wordplay with **בִּעַר** in 4.4 ('by the breath of extermination')?

The litany of the ladies' fashions in 3.18–23 is a counterpart of the enumeration of the positions held by men in 3.1–3; as the societal pillars give way to chaos (3.4–7), so also feminine chic and charm turn to sackcloth and rope.¹⁵¹ The close of 3.24 has caused a few headaches not only for modern exegetes; even the versions were at a loss.¹⁵² The fifth תחת ('instead of beauty...') apparently lacks continuity, if one does not wish to supply the word 'shame' (בשה), like 1QIsa^a, or to give כ the meaning 'brand' ('a brand instead of beauty').¹⁵³ Both solutions, above all, invert the four-fold 'positive-negative' order. The lack of any textual witness in the versions speaks against the first solution; against the second is the questionable practice of eliminating a problem by proposing a hapax legomenon, especially since the solution with כ as 'brand' is known only since the middle of the fourth century.¹⁵⁴ The MT with the usual understanding of כ as conjunction is, however, definitely meaningful if one views 3.25–4.1 as the negative counterpart to פ' in 3.24b: 'for/indeed, instead of beauty, your men will fall by the sword.'¹⁵⁵

The Day of Yhwh is so violent about sweeping away its male and female population in the cleansing of Jerusalem that this image offers a catastrophic military defeat. From this scenario of total destruction a shoot grows up 'on that day', i.e., the new Zion population.

The salvation proclamation in 4.2–6 is the close of the composition of Isaiah 1–4*, which the We-group placed before the written Isaiah tradition of 5–10* in order to document that they were the true remnant of the early postexilic period, just as Isaiah and his sons and scholars were of their time. The anarchic chaos which the Day of Yhwh brings to Jerusalem is not the final word, but rather there follows a saving oracle which aims at the new population on Zion.

On a synchronic level, 2.2–4, 5 offers the future 'external perspective' of Zion—the nations stream to it—while in 4.2–6 it is about the 'domestic perspective'¹⁵⁶: The 'remnant of Zion, and whoever is still

151. For the structure of 3.18–23 with its juxtaposition of masc. and fem. nouns, see Magonet, 'Isaiah 2.1–4.6', p. 84.

152. See especially the LXX: καὶ ὁ υἱός σου ὁ κάλλιστος, ὃν ἀγαπᾷς, μαχαίρα πεσείται (3.25).

153. Cf. Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 26–29; HALAT, p. 448; Loretz, 'KJ "Brand-mal"', p. 448, rejects the interpretation 'brand' 'on stichometrical grounds.'

154. According to Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 27.

155. So Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature*, pp. 80–81; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 154; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, p. 107.

156. Bartelt, *The Book around Immanuel*, p. 238: 'In this way, 2.2–4 and 4.2–6 form structural brackets, like "bookends", or a larger-scale inclusio around the major intervening materials.'

left in Jerusalem (הנוותר), shall be called holy' (4.3a), which refers back to the 'remnant' in 1.8-9 (הותר/ונוותר).

The allusions of 4.2-6 to Isaiah 1 are clear. The portrayals of vegetation taken up from there are changed into positive statements. Out of the burned-over and fruitless land—like that of Sodom—a shoot develops. The comparison of Jerusalem with a *sukkah* in the vineyard (1.8) comes to signify the limitless protection of Yhwh for Zion, which stretches over Zion as a *sukkah* protects against heat and rain (4.6). These are the only two references to סככה in the entire book of Isaiah, which reinforces the connection to the message: from the symbol of complete destruction has come that of divine protection!¹⁵⁷

4.2-6 is no longer universally believed to have Isaianic authorship. The separating of 4.2, 3-5a, 5b-6¹⁵⁸ or similar adventures do not do much to advance our understanding. Thus one can concur with Werner's assessment that 'the inner-textual tensions find a sufficient explanation in the mosaic style of the writer, who takes up linguistic expressions of the book of Isaiah'.¹⁵⁹

If any individual verses are still eliminated or set aside, it would only be based on the question of their logical sequence, and not on the presupposition that they once existed separately in the development of the book. Although the lack of the 'We' might speak against the thesis that the We-group of 1.9 is at work in 4.2-6, the 'concentrated remnant terminology' of 4.3-5 (פליטה / הנשאר / הנוותר) speaks in favor of this thesis; for this 'can only be explained if a direct cause is at hand connecting an actual group with the concept of remnant. A writer oriented only to the future would hardly be interested in thematizing the remnant idea in an organized way to that extent.'¹⁶⁰ It is the community on Zion which, as a 'remnant within a remnant', as a shoot, has a task to fulfill with regard to those 'escaping of Israel' (לפליטת ישראל), i.e., the postexilic Jerusalem community.¹⁶¹ 'Shoot' is not only a metaphor from nature,¹⁶² but also a top position in society toward which point the 'Messianic' passages in Jer. 23.5; 33.15,

157. So Gosse, 'Isaïe 4,2-6', p. 134.

158. So Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 1. Teilband, pp. 152-53, but who also speaks of a 'kerygmatic whole' (p. 152); Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 92, proceeding from 4.2, assumes 'at the least three expansions [Fortanschreibungen]': 4.3-5a, 5b, 6.

159. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 92.

160. Hausmann, *Israels Rest*, 142.

161. Werner expressly points to this in *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 224 n. 1.

162. Cf. צמח in 42.9; 43.19; 44.4; 45.8; 55.10; 58.8; 61.11 [cf. 61.3: מנע ירוה]

specifically in the name 'Zerubbabel' (Shoot of Babel; cf. Zech. 6.12), whose person and name were tied to hope in a 'Davidic renaissance', a hope that was, however, bitterly disillusioned (cf. Zech. 6.12).¹⁶³ The political aspect of the metaphor of the 'shoot', which appears only veiled in 4.2-6, is overt in 11.1: 'A sprig will emerge from the stump of Jesse (וַיֵּצֵא חֹטֶר מִגִּזְעֵי יֵשׁוּעַ), a shoot will bear fruit from his roots (וַיֵּצֵא פֶרֶה מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה).' The following verses (11.1-5), which ascribe to this shoot its functional gifting by the spirit, are closely based on 61.1-3, which suggests that the writers of 11.1-9 adapted from Trito-Isaiah. But even in the description of the obligation of the shoot to those 'escaping of Israel' (4.2), several concepts are taken from 60–62, which indicate the glowing future of Zion there: כְּבֹד (60.1, 2, 13; 61.6; 62.2), נְאוֹן (60.15) and תְּפִאֲרָה (60.7, 19; 62.3). Still, these Trito-Isaianic texts are not the only force behind this formulation, but also the international oracles against Babylon in Isa. 13.19, 'And it will be Babylon, the ornament (צִבִּי) of the royal kingdoms, jewel of the proud (תְּפִאֲרַת נְאוֹן) of the Chaldeans, like God's overturning of Sodom and Gomorrah', as well as the Woe against Samaria in 28.1: 'Woe to the proud crown (עֲטֹרַת נְאוֹת) ... the fading bloom of its splendid beauty (צִבִּי תְּפִאֲרָתוֹ).' It is no longer Babylon or Samaria, but Jerusalem, i.e., the community of Zion, that will be the splendid beauty.¹⁶⁴

As we saw already in 1.9, the idea of the remnant is one of the driving forces of the We-group. This remnant community is qualified as 'holy' in 4.3b (קֹדֶשׁ); all those who are enrolled into life (כָּל הַחַיִּים) in Jerusalem belong to it. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah comes in contact with the holiness of Yhwh (6.3) and is taken in service by this God of holiness and justice (5.16).¹⁶⁵ From the perspective of the event of reading, Isaiah is the first to participate in this holiness after his cleansing (6.6-7) and thereby can be validated as the first of those enrolled into life. The commentary in 6.13bβ shows that this connection between 4.2-6 and the 'call chapter' is real. It happens in the most extreme destruction, in which even the last tenth [of those surviving] is abandoned,¹⁶⁶ as with the falling of an oak, where a few shoots remain: This greatness will become 'holy seed' (זֶרַע קֹדֶשׁ).

163. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, pp. 482-83.

164. Gosse, 'Isaïe 4,2-6', p. 133: 'Ainsi, nous croyons que 4,2-6 entretient des liens avec la rédaction d'Is 60–62 et des oracles contre Babylone et Edom du livre d'Isaïe.'

165. The theme of justice/holiness comes into tension especially in the expansion of 5.15-16; see especially: הוֹאֵל הַקֹּדֶשׁ נִקְדָּשׁ בַּצִּדִּיקָה.

166. Cf. וְהָיְתָה לְבַעַר with the בְּרוּחַ בַּעַר, the destroying storm/spirit in 4.4.

Again the idea of remnant meets with a 'tree metaphor',¹⁶⁷ which is not by chance, in view of Isa. 4.2 and 37.30-32.

The designation 'holy seed' reminds one of the זרע קדש in Ezra 9.2, where a lament is made that the holy seed has been made unclean through mixed marriages. A look at the 'citizen lists' in Ezra 2.62; Neh. 7.5, 64; 12.22-26 shows that the 'registration unto life'¹⁶⁸ is about far more than mere proof of Judaic, i.e., priestly, origin. Also Ps. 87.6 has to be considered, where the 'birthright' of all pilgrims to Zion from the nations is documented: 'Yhwh records as he registers the nations (בכְּתוּב עַמִּים): This one was born there.' If it is accurate that Isa. 4.3 was written with an eye on an incipient 'religious- and mixed-marriage politics', then the marked 'interest in the female portion of the city's population'¹⁶⁹ in 4.4 becomes understandable: It is not the non-Judaic women who are polluting the 'holy seed', but the daughters of Jerusalem with their love of grandeur (3.16-24)!

The purified community in Jerusalem will be convinced of the continuing protection of Yhwh as the Israelites once were at the exodus from Egypt. Thus in 4.5-6, Exodus-Sinai motifs¹⁷⁰ are combined with Jerusalem, Zion, and temple-theologies, and others, even returning to the light imagery of 60.19-20, 'yet under the strong protection of the transcendent God. He himself is not light and protection; he creates them now and henceforth.'¹⁷¹ Not only the temple is granted protection from the elements of cloud and smoke created (ברא) by Yhwh, but rather, every place of gathering on Zion, an idea that a narrow priestly leadership contradicts. Everyone who comes to Zion experiences his exodus, his meeting with Yhwh as at Sinai: 'Zion here becomes the mount of the Torah-Revelation and the Holy Place.'¹⁷² In the concept בִּקְרָא, Yhwh's abhorrence in the face of the assemblies and cult celebrations held in Jerusalem (1.13) is turned positive: he protects them day and night. With the key word סִכַּח a festive assembly is emphasized, namely that of the fall festival of Booths, which is congruent with Zech. 14.16-20, where the nations of

167. In addition, K. Nielsen, *There Is Hope for a Tree*, especially p. 239: 'In the image of the tree that is felled but sprouts again Isaiah and the redactors of the Isaiah tradition have found the key to the understanding of the political situation best described by the quotation from Job: "THERE IS HOPE FOR A TREE."'

168. Cf. Ps. 69.29 (סִפֵּר חַיִּים), where the sinner shall be wiped out of the book of the living.

169. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 97, also refers to 11.12.

170. Cf. the cloud and fire columns in Exod. 13.21; 14.19, 24; 33.9-10; 40.34; Num. 10.11, 34; 14.14; Deut. 1.33.

171. Kilian, *Jesaja 1-12*, p. 39.

172. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 29.

the earth are obligated to make their yearly Zion pilgrimage to 'Sukkot', in which the theme of 'holiness' plays a major role, bringing Isa. 4.3 to mind. Thus it is not impossible that this remnant community was already open as a basis for the admission of proselytes. Whatever the case, 4.6 is interpreted in any event as 'friendly to the nations' in the quotation¹⁷³ in 25.4-5¹⁷⁴ with the subsequent promise of the eschatological banquet (25.6).

In the conceptual field of the Festival of Booths lies also the emphasis on protection from gushing rain (זָרַח¹⁷⁵) and scorching heat, so that a good harvest and its resulting festive joy did not become clouded. Comparable to that is Yhwh's later promise which would permit his servants to enjoy themselves in his holy courts (62.9) with those fruits for which they had labored—a positive contrast to the trampling of the courts as a result of a frenetic offering cult (1.12).

2.3. *Isaiah, His Sons and Disciples as a Model for the Remnant Community (Isaiah 5.1–10.4)*

5.1–10.4 connect to the programmatic chaps. 1–4, which, proceeding from the actual state of Jerusalem, hold out the prospect of the target state of the city and its inhabitants, so that the We-group as a remnant community takes on special meaning. These chapters (5.1–10.4) indicate how at the time of Isaiah the community had already been reduced to a true remnant. Thus, the event of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis (734–733) also takes on special meaning, with the ensuing collapse of Samaria (722) and the *political* future of Jerusalem already played out at that time. Unlike the remnant in chaps. 1–4, the remnant community in 5.1–10.4 can be traced back not only to individual Isaianic 'building blocks', but goes even farther back to a composition existing in the pre-exilic period, a composition which, after accruing many layers, arrives at the time of the prophet and his disciples.¹⁷⁶

2.3.1. *The Memoir (Isaiah 6.1–8.18), Its Frame and Historical Reference*

The memoir has a three-part framework: six 'Woes' in 5.8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22, closing with the seventh הוי in 10.1, form the outer bracket; the

173. So Sweeney, 'Textual Citations', pp. 45–46.

174. Cf. 25.4b: מִזֶּרֶם צֶל מִחְרָב with 4.6: מִחְרָב לְצִל־יּוֹמָם מִחְרָב וּלְמַחְסֵה מִזֶּרֶם וּמִמָּטָר.

175. In the sense of a destroying power of nature: 4.6; 25.4; 28.2; 30.30; 32.2; elsewhere only Job 24.8; Hab. 3.10.

176. Against Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', pp. 551–52, who fixes the Isaianic ring-composition at 1.21–26 and 11.1–5.

poem of the 'outstretched hand' (5.25-29; 9.7-20; [10.4]) is laid around the memoir as the middle ring; and verses 5.30 and 8.22 with the theme of 'darkness'¹⁷⁷ form the inner ring. Schematically, this may be rearranged as follows:¹⁷⁸

Song of the Vineyard in 5.1-7 as prologue:

Woes				Woes
5.8-24				10.1-4
	Hand			Hand
	5.25-29			9.7-20
		Darkness	Darkness	
		5.30	8.22	
		Memoir		
		6.1-8.18		

The starting point of this composition is the Song of the Vineyard (5.1-7),¹⁷⁹ which acknowledges that Israel *and* Judah stand under Yhwh's sentence in its last verse. The Woes that follow explain why Yhwh's vineyard bears no fruit.¹⁸⁰ Because the 'house of Israel and the men of Judah' do not yield the expected fruit of righteousness, the vineyard is abandoned to plundering, as 5.24a states unambiguously at the close of the six series of Woes: 'Therefore (לכן), as the raging fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass together sinks into the flame, so their root will become rotten, and their blossom go up like dust.' Thus the proclamation of Yhwh is fulfilled (5.6). Yhwh commands the clouds to give no rain for this vineyard; Israel and Judah are now so dry that a small spark is enough to burn everything!

The original completeness of the Woes in 5.8-24¹⁸¹ is also supported by their thematic arrangement; only six 'Woes' appear here, because a seventh דוי in 5.23 fell out,¹⁸² as the Woe in 10.1 was moved there as a bracket.¹⁸³

177. 5.30: ואל-אֶרֶץ יִבִּיט וְהִנֵּה צָרָה וְחֹשֶׁכָה 8.22: וְנִבְטָ לְאֶרֶץ וְהִנֵּה חֹשֶׁךְ צָר.

178. Cf., similarly, Sheppard, 'The Anti-Assyrian Redaction', p. 196.

179. The 'vineyard' as an image for unfaithful Israel: besides Isa. 3.14; 27.2-5, there is also Jer. 2.21; 5.10; 8.13; 12.10-11; Ezek. 15.1-8; 17.5-19; 19.1-14; Hos. 10.1-2; Ps. 80.9-17; Song 8.11. Vermeylen's thesis, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 159ff., of a dtr provenance for the Song of the Vineyard is untenable; so, especially, L'Heureux, 'Redactional History', pp. 102-103.

180. So Fohrer, 'Entstehung', p. 122.

181. Verses 5.15-16 are to be regarded as an insertion; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 174, 186 passim: 'communauté postexilienne des Juifs pieux.'

182. Cf. Kilian, *Jesaja* 1-12, p. 44.

183. Against 10.1-4 as originally speaking a seventh Woe: (a) the length of seven bicola, which are oriented to the poetic chorus; (b) the direct address; (c) the future verb forms. Thus, U. Becker (*Jesaja*, pp. 155-59) agrees that 10.1-4* is

1st Woe (5.8-10)	Social sins (unjust wealth)
2nd Woe (5.11-12)	Drunkenness
3rd Woe (5.18-19)	Skepticism about Yhwh's plan
4th Woe (5.20)	Perversion of good/evil
5th Woe (5.21)	Regard themselves as wise
6th Woe (5.22)	Drunkenness
[7th] Woe (5.23)	Social sins (perverted justice) ¹⁸⁴

In this joining of the Song of the Vineyard and the Woes, which might have gone back to the disciples of Isaiah, the historical dimension is lacking, because the indictment (no fruit) as well as the sentence (drought, fire) remain in the arena of nature. When this textual unit moved close to the memoir, the lacking historical relationship became noticeable. Nevertheless, another Isaianic building block was already laid which was able to achieve precisely this historical bridge-building: the poetic chorus, whose original beginning is now located in 9.7-20 and whose original close is found in 5.26-29.¹⁸⁵

With this arrangement, Isaiah took the occasion to list every divine blow that had befallen Israel, up to the hardest blow of all, the entry of the Assyrian super-power. He did this by drawing on an oracle of Amos, his 'counterpart' from the Northern Kingdom (Amos 4.6-12)—the oracle of an earthquake which shook the entire Jordan valley¹⁸⁶ (cf. Amos 1.1; Zech. 14.5). As Amos lamented that Israel has not returned to Yhwh in spite of every catastrophe (ולא שבתם עדי), now Isaiah says that Yhwh's anger is still not turned back and his hand remains stretched out [in punishment] (לא שב אפי ועוד ידו נמויה). Neither the earthquake (9.9; 5.25a), nor the political-military threat of Aram and Philistia (9.11), nor the growing anarchy in Israel under pressure from Assyria (9.13ff.), nor the political pressure of the northern Kingdom against Judah in the years 734–733 (9.20) were sufficient divine blows. Yhwh whistles for the military machinery of Assyria, in the face of which there is no savior (ואין מציל, 5.29). The end of the poetic refrain with its indirect but clear allusion to Assyria

'a pure redactional construction' (p. 156), but the chronological setting ('hardly before the fourth century', p. 159) corresponds to his generally late dating. Blum, 'Jesaja und der דבר', p. 82, holds an entirely differently view: 'the formal separation of the final strophe' based on a 'principle of composition'.

184. According to Bartelt, *The Book around Immanuel*, pp. 101-102, but who goes on to say that the seventh Woe was removed to heighten the reader's expectation until 10.1.

185. Against the transposition hypothesis, see U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 124-27.

186. According to Blum, 'Jesaja und der דבר', pp. 76ff.; Fey, *Amos und Jesaja*, p. 104.

has been placed after the Woe, in order to prepare for the historical scene of the memoir, the march of Assyria to Palestine.

It is no surprise that the interface of the original series of seven Woes with the displaced conclusion of the poetic refrain raises special problems. Thus 5.24b was added by someone who wanted to identify the preceding series of Isaianic Woes as a rejection of the divine Torah¹⁸⁷ and at the same time clearly mark its connection to the call chapter.¹⁸⁸ So, inspired by the ה"י statement in 1.4, it applies to the formulation in this very verse, on the one hand,¹⁸⁹ and on the other hand points ahead to 8.6, 16 (מַאֵס/תּוֹרָה).¹⁹⁰ Onto this assessment that Yhwh-Torah had been criminally rejected, the connecting verse 5.25 would have then been attached by עַל כֵּן, which both conjures up in dtn/dtr language¹⁹¹ the divine anger over such despisers of Torah, and introduces the displaced piece of the poetic refrain, taking up the refrain of Yhwh's outstretched hand.¹⁹² With the chiasitic inclusion of 1.4 in 5.24b the beginning chaps. 1–4 have been united with the composition of the framed memoir (5–10). Who is responsible for this? Two indicators point to the answer: first, in Deut. 31.17, 20, the 'despisers of Yhwh' (נֹאֲפִין) and 'flaming up of his anger' are also in close conjunction to one another; second, apart from the Torah-Psalms (especially Ps. 119), תּוֹרָה and אִמְרָה are parallel only in Isa. 5.24b and in the blessing of Moses over the tribes of Levi (Deut. 33.9b, 10a).¹⁹³ As the tradents responsible for the formation of chaps. 1–4 probably did not belong to priestly circles, this last observation reinforces the impression that they may have come from the 'Levitical camp'. It is unlikely that a new compositional framework was placed over chaps. 1–5¹⁹⁴ with these verses, for the existing framed composition 5–10 is respected, and the verses are connected only by cross-reference to the remnant community and its own composition (1–4*).

187. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 38: 'This kind of excessive unsocial behavior matches the rejection of the Torah of Yhwh Sabaoth!'

188. Cf. 6.3: קְדוֹשׁ and צְבָאוֹת.

189. 1.4: וְאֵת אִמְרַת קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל נִאֲצוּ; 5.24b: וְנִאֲצוּ אֶת קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

190. Thus Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, p. 47.

191. Cf. Deut. 6.15; 7.4; 11.17; 31.17; Josh. 7.1; 23.16; Judg. 2.14, 20; 3.8; 10.7; 2 Kgs 23.26.

192. Brown, 'The So-Called Refrain', pp. 432–43, recognizes that 5.25 is not a shortened strophe of the poetic refrain, but draws from that the erroneous conclusion: 'Consequently, there is no reason to claim that 5.25–30 originally belonged anywhere other than its present location.'

193. I. Fischer points toward this in *Tora für Israel*, p. 40: אִמְרָה elsewhere in Isa. 28.23; 29.4; 32.9 in a non-theological meaning and usage.

194. So I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, pp. 38–41.

Against the commonly-held opinion that the insertion of the memoir into the developing scroll of Isaiah inadvertently split up the refrain poem and the cries of Woe, it is more likely that there is a conscious framing of the memoir by those elements. If an existing connection had been broken, it would have been from lack of awareness; in contrast, this framework is constructed deliberately, as we have seen. Furthermore, it is more logical to accept the idea that a more comprehensive textual block may have been placed in a framework than the idea that a small text (Woes plus poetic refrain) may have been split in two by a larger composition.

Now for the memoir itself: The discussion of the pros and cons of a composition in 6.1–8, 18 which goes back to Isaiah or his students has not rested, let alone been concluded, since Budde.¹⁹⁵ In spite of clear objections,¹⁹⁶ the research proceeds predominantly from the assumption of a composition that reflects the proclamation of the prophet at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war (734–732).¹⁹⁷ The fact that a three-fold frame surrounds the chapter also confirms, based on compositional considerations, the thesis of the original independence of the framed text.

In most recent times the historicity of the Syro-Ephraimite war, by which Aram and Israel aimed to force the southern-lying neighbor-state, Judah, into an anti-Assyrian coalition, has been ever more vigorously challenged. Thus Bickert sums up: 'There was only ever one unsuccessful Aramaean attack on Judah, which Israel simply did not participate in, and that was surely not an international event, but merely a local one.'¹⁹⁸

Independent of that and on other premises, the Assyriologist W. Mayer comes to a similar conclusion:

For his actions, Tiglathpileser hardly needed the request of Ahaz of Judah to come to his aid against Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus. The 'Syro-Ephraimite' war which was extrapolated from

195. Budde, *Jesajas Erleben* (1928).

196. Reventlow, 'Das Ende', p. 67: 'The misleading "Memoir" Hypothesis should be dropped once and for all'; Irvine, 'Isaianic Denkschrift', p. 231: 'The *Denkschrift* hypothesis must be radically rethought, or dropped altogether.'

197. In addition, among others, Müller, 'Glauben und Bleiben', pp. 25ff.; Steck, 'Bemerkungen', pp. 188ff.; Lescow, 'Jesajas Denkschrift', pp. 315ff.; the works of Hardmeier, 'Jesajas Verkündigungsabsicht', pp. 235ff.; Hardmeier, 'Verkündigung und Schrift', pp. 119ff.; Hardmeier, 'Gesichtspunkte', pp. 33ff.; Hardmeier, 'Jesajaforschung', pp. 21–24; now especially Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, pp. 37–65.

198. Bickert, 'König Ahas', p. 383; in addition Gonçalves, 'Isaie', pp. 282–98; U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 45ff.

2 Kgs 16.5-9 might therefore need to belong to the realm of later legends. It may be safely assumed that even contemporaries were aware that, after North Syria, Media and Urartu, Damascus would become the next enemy. In spite of the ancient enmity between Judah, Israel and Damascus, there is little likelihood that, in expectation of an Assyrian resurfacing, they would have embarked on a suicidal war with such a one, in view of the total political situation.¹⁹⁹

These historical considerations do not mean the collapse of the thesis of the memoir, but only of the idea that it may have been written already shortly after 732 by Isaiah or his students. The unusually strong historicizing glosses,²⁰⁰ the introductory dating (6.1), and the retrospective character of the whole unit all speak for a time of writing which has to be located no longer in the eighth century, but after 701. While Kaiser's arguments for a late dating of the whole memoir with its core in 7.1-9²⁰¹ are not conclusive (not every single 'post-Isaianic' reference is *ipso facto* suspect of being the deuteronomist's), what is left as the time of origin of the memoir composition is either the period of Manasseh in the first half of the seventh century or that of Josiah in the second half. If one considers, on the one hand, that both the memoir and the construction of the framework portray the political-military threat by Assyria in the most garish colors, and on the other hand, that since the loss of Egypt (after 656) and the nearly four-year war of the brothers Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šum-ukīn (652-648) and the subsequent Arabic wars, the end of the Assyrian imperium was in sight,²⁰² then rather, the composition of the memoir should be placed in the long reign of Manasseh (696-642). If these considerations are not entirely plucked out of thin air, they support a marginal note of Spieckermann in his historical judgment of the Judaic kings in the time of Sargon:

199. Mayer, *Politik*, p. 308; also Tömes, 'Reason', p. 70; against this, Gonçalves, 'Isaie', pp. 283-84, holds that the 'Syro-Ephraimite war' is still the best explanation for how Judah became the vassal of Assyria; cf. Irvine's monograph on this topic, *Isaiah*, esp. chap. 3: 'Biblical Accounts of the Syro-Ephraimite Crisis', pp. 75-109.

200. According to Hardmeier, 'Verkündigung und Schrift', p. 125, in Isa. 7.4b, 5b, 8b, 17b; 8.6b, 7b.

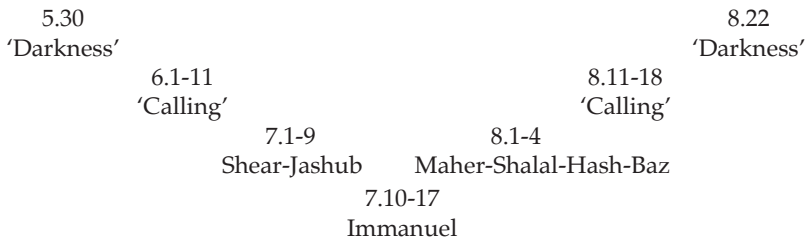
201. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 118: 'a theological narrative, which, in the shadow of the deuteronomistic theology, answers the question about why the Davidic dynasty was replaced and the nation decimated, by referring to the wrong decision of the royal house owing to its insufficient trust in God, and thereby presents its own community with the decision either to believe or be destroyed.'

202. Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur*, pp. 375-76; Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 398-412.

Who knows if, in line with the alleged Isaiah model of Manasseh, the latter sought in his way to understand and take to heart the message of the prophet, ‘be still’ (Isa. 7.4; 30.15)—against which his grandfather Ahaz had turned a deaf ear and which his father Hezekiah, well sanitized by dtr, had defied! In any case, the lack of a prophetic voice in the period of Manasseh cannot be evidence for the king’s desire to kill, but can only be a sign that the stability achieved by his (external) politics gave no occasion for a prophetic critique.²⁰³

Accordingly, the memoir would become a narrative designed to help the young Manasseh to learn from the mistake of his great grandfather Ahaz, a lesson which he took to heart, in contrast to his son Hezekiah, who came to be held in such acclaim by tradition!

The threat to the people of God by the Assyrian superpower is emphasized in the present text by the literary framing with the key word ‘darkness’ (5.30; 8.22).²⁰⁴ In the midst of this ‘darkness’, Isaiah and his children are located on Zion, which is threatened; they are the foundation of the saved remnant.²⁰⁵ A structuring which takes into consideration both the references between the autobiographies of 6.1-11 and 8.1-4 as well the arrangement of the three ‘signs’, does justice to the composition:



The call or commissioning of the prophet (6.1-11) falls in the period of the Assyrian threat to Zion; 8.11-18 harks back to this section,²⁰⁶ with 8.16-18 marking the end of the composition in the manner of a colophon.²⁰⁷ Beginning and end are topically related to each other. Thus Isaiah stood purified and commissioned at the beginning of a movement which split the people of God into a stubborn majority

203. Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur*, p. 376.

204. B. Anderson, ‘God with Us’, p. 240.

205. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, p. 111.

206. On this, K. Nielsen, ‘Is 6.1–8.18* as Dramatic Writing’, pp. 3-5: ‘this people’ in 6.5, 9, 10 and 8.6, 11, 12; ‘holy’: 6.5 and 8.13, 14; the selection of Isaiah: 6.5-6 and 8.11; ‘How long?’ (6.11) and Isaiah’s ‘waiting’ (8.17).

207. Hardmeier, ‘Jesajas Verkündigungsabsicht’, pp. 237-38; Hardmeier, ‘Verkündigung und Schrift’, p. 125.

and a hopeful, significant community of disciples. While in chap. 5 Isaiah the prophet stood alone against הָעָם הַזֶּה, now he speaks to a group with the pronoun 'you' (pl., 8.12-13), a group which stands over against 'this people'. Accordingly, there was a development, beginning with Isaiah himself selecting a group, beyond that of his own children, a group which is still clearly in the minority. Thus at the end, the רַבִּים, i.e., the great mass of people, stood irreconcilably against Isaiah and this minority, the לְמוֹדִים (8.15-16). As the memoir begins with a description of Yhwh seated on a powerful throne (יָשָׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא רַם וְנֹשָׂא, 6.1), so it ends with Yhwh inhabiting Mount Zion (הָשָׁכַן בְּהָרִי צִיּוֹן, 8.18).²⁰⁸

2.3.2. *Vision and Sending (Isaiah 6.1-13)*

The chronological statements in 6.1 and 7.1 clearly delimit this textual unit. After a 'vision report' (1-5) at whose center is Isaiah's experience of the immeasurable greatness and holiness of Yhwh, follows the 'cleansing' of the prophet (6-7), to which the 'commissioning report' is attached (8-11).²⁰⁹ 6.12-13 have long been recognized as postexilic commentaries, already suspect by the change of perspective in the speaker.²¹⁰

In spite of the peculiarities, especially that of Isaiah's ready willingness to be enlisted by Yhwh, Isaiah 6 has to be understood as a call report.²¹¹ In terms of tradition history, it lies in an intermediate position between the closest parallels in 1 Kgs 22.19-22 and Ezekiel 1-3.²¹²

The vision is dated to the year of Uzziah's death,²¹³ and nothing is said about the succession of his son, Jotham, who had already long

208. With 8.16-28, Isaiah himself appears to have said goodbye to 'politics' for a short time; thus among others, Schoors, 'Historical Information in Isaiah 1-39', p. 92.

209. According to Irsigler, 'Gott als König', p. 131.

210. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 64-65: 'Vv. 12-13bα obviously have the task of expressing more precisely the rather general view of v. 11 about the devastation of the land in the sense of a total deportation.'

211. Steck's definition of the genre ('Bemerkungen', p. 191) as the 'awarding of an extraordinary mission in the heavenly royal assembly', which is directed, however, toward a specific task, but not toward an inaugural vision of the entire prophetic activity, has not gained acceptance.

212. Müller, 'Sprachliche und religionsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen', p. 173 n. 49; Gosse, 'Isaïe vi', p. 340: 'un maillon intermédiaire.'

213. According to Hayes and Hooker, *A New Chronology*, relying on Irvine, *Isaiah*, pp. 73-74, Uzziah became king in the year 785, abdicated in 760/759, perhaps because of his illness (2 Kgs 15.5), and died in Sept./Oct. 734.

since taken over his father's official duties because of the latter's leprosy. Should one then reckon with Isaiah's royal-council vision being situated in a 'king-free' period in order to emphasize the real and only Royal-Being of Yhwh? That Yhwh is no longer called *המלך* in further 'authentic' words of Isaiah speaks for this hypothesis. In addition, the statement about Yhwh sitting on a very high throne does not correspond to 'any average conventional cultic depiction such as a man on the streets of Jerusalem might have imagined'.²¹⁴ It refers only and uniquely to the 'Royal Majesty of Yahweh Sabaoth...', and no other "royal" majesty'.²¹⁵ In contrast to the legitimate function of the Kingdom of Yhwh for the Davidic ruler, there is rather a critique of royal power in this passage, as Irsigler maintains:

It is quite remarkable that there is not once mention of the earthly king, except in dating. Was it prudence, from a fearful caution or respect, that kept him cut out? But the disastrous undoing of the nation would lead even the Davidic king to expect anything but good coming directly from King Yahweh Sabaoth! The Divine King who legitimates kingship has become the sharpest opponent of the existing power of the state when cities, houses and cultivated land are destroyed, as in 6.11.²¹⁶

Furthermore, it is not only royal, but also priestly power that is regarded critically—and not only Jerusalem and the temple mount, but the temple itself, and even the *debir*, its most central room, the place of vision and appointment. What makes Isaiah, who is a prophet and no priest, sharply attack this most holy place (28.7-8), even if 'only' in a visionary way? To this non-priest is granted one of the most immediate encounters with God reported in the Hebrew Bible, for to construe Adonai, King Yhwh Sabaoth, as the direct object of *ראה* (6.1, 5) goes to the most extreme boundary of what might be said in biblical Israel about the relationship of a person to God.²¹⁷ In addition, the cleansing of the prophet (6.6-7) does not come about by priestly atoning, but rather is effected by Yhwh himself,²¹⁸ thereby

214. Irsigler, 'Gott als König', p. 141; Yhwh is not 'enthroned on the cherubim' here, as he is in 1 Sam. 4.4; 2 Sam. 6.2; 2 Kgs 19.15=Isa. 37.16; Pss. 80.2; 99.1.

215. Irsigler, 'Gott als König', p. 145.

216. Irsigler, 'Gott als König', p. 150.

217. Cf., however, 17.7; 33.17!

218. Schmitt, 'Zur Gegenwartsbedeutung', p. 283: 'In an unmediated way, forgiveness is granted him from the heavenly world; unmediated, the divine task is issued to him—an immediacy of the divine relationship, from which it was possible to arrive at the relativization of the priestly cult that was so typical in the later prophetic tradition.'

emphasizing once again the corruption of the cult, which is the topic at the beginning and end of the book.²¹⁹ In contrast to the book of Ezekiel, here the meaning of the priesthood has become questionable for the people of God.²²⁰

Only in recognition of the 'Most Holy Holiness' of Yhwh,²²¹ which transcends every idea and can only be hinted at in the expression of 'holy' three times, does Isaiah recognize his sinfulness which he shares with the people of God. Guilt and sin were burned away from him in the most literal sense of the word by a seraph; he thereby becomes the firstborn of those who survive the judgment of Yhwh. To understand the cleansing of Isaiah not as proof of a last-ditch rescue, but rather as a sign of definitely decided destruction, misses the point of the message²²²—and interprets vv. 6-7 only from the point of view of the task of hardening, which in fact is not really a task. After his cleansing, the prophet freely offers himself for service, which means placing before the eyes of his fellow Israelites the holiness of Yhwh (8.12-14), and at the same time the alternatives of salvation or ruin are laid at the feet of those who hear the word.²²³

With the cleansing of the prophet from guilt and sin, a new beginning has been made, with a view toward 1.4, where there was a Woe to the גוי חטא and to the עם כבד עון; in 27.9 the forgiveness of the guilt of Jacob in connection with the abolition of a syncretistic cult is tied to 6.7 (and to 6.13, see below) in obvious thematic agreement; and with 33.24 the goal of a new Zion population is achieved: 'To the people who live on Zion, their guilt is removed' (נשא עון); then in 40.2 there is a clear reference to 1.4; and thus the major divisions of the scroll are bound to each other.²²⁴

In the context of the book, Müller's thesis that Isa. 6.6-7 represents a 'mouth-cleansing ritual' falls short,²²⁵ since then the message to be communicated should have appeared more clearly; what stands in

219. 1.11-15; 65.3-5; 66.1-4.

220. Against Gosse, 'Isaïe vi', p. 349, who is inclined to ascribe it to priestly opposition circles because of its cultic framework.

221. Unconventionally, Eslinger, 'The Infinite', p. 157: 'what Isaiah sees is God's pudenda.'

222. Knierim, 'The Vocation of Isaiah', pp. 54-57; Steck, 'Bemerkungen', pp. 194-98.

223. Against Kilian, 'Der Verstockungsauftrag Jesajas', pp. 209-25, for whom Isaiah is only a 'prophet of hardening, of judgment' (p. 225); Kilian, *Jesaja 1-39*, pp. 112-30.

224. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', pp. 302-304; Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 6', p. 78.

225. Müller, 'Sprachliche und religionsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen', pp. 171-73.

the foreground is not a message about the future, but rather the change in his being which Isaiah experienced as a result of the meeting with the 'thrice Holy'. It is this experience toward which Isaiah led his disciples and which he left behind as a legacy: Yhwh's holiness, before which many in Israel, Judah, and from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem will stumble (8.13-14).

The decisive character of 6.8 continues to escape comment for the most part, owing to the prospective 'Look, send me!' on the one hand, and, on the other, the dominance of the task of hardening in vv. 9-11. But the narrative 'I heard' (v. 8) points back as well to 'I said' (v. 5) and to 'I saw' in v. 1;²²⁶ v. 8 especially imitates the beginning verse:

v. 1: אֲדַנִּי יֵשֶׁב וְאֶרְאֶה אֹתָּהּ

v. 8: וַאֲשַׁמַּע אֹתָּהּ קוֹל אֲדַנִּי אָמַר

If v. 8 is recognized as the original stopping point, then it is possible to maintain a commissioning of Isaiah through his vision without joining it with the task of hardening.²²⁷ The joining of the commission and the task of hardening, as it is presented in the final text, is a logical and theological impossibility. Thus, does it lead to an unsolvable contradiction if Isaiah's emphatic and extreme vision and audition of the holy God should only have served to make a meeting with Yhwh on Israel's part impossible? What meaning might the expression 'the glory of Yhwh Sabaoth fills the whole earth' have had, if his people remain hardened by divine will and imposition? Is his glory (i.e., his acknowledgment) in the world not fundamentally dependent on the behavior and relationship of Israel to Yhwh? Can there be a world permeated by Yhwh's glory which doesn't include Israel? If so, then Israel, at the least, is left out of כָּל הָאָרֶץ in 6.3.

These considerations feed the doubt whether the visionary commission of the prophet is to be understood from the viewpoint of the task of hardening, or whether it is not rather that the vision of Yhwh's holiness joined with the commission to confront the nation with this 'most-holy God' should be seen as separate from the task of hardening.²²⁸ Hesse's observation has lost nothing of value in spite of

226. Schreiner makes this apparent ('Zur Textgestalt', p. 92).

227. In addition, see the extensive discussion by U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 81-89: the inaugural vision in 6.1-8 (except 5aβ) was expanded in 9+11,10 (hardening) and 12-13bα and 13bβ.

228. Deck, *Die Gerichtsbotschaft*, p. 168: 'If the function of a prophetic call report lies in legitimization with respect to the audience, as is suggested by Amos 7.15, then a satisfactory conclusion may be reached also with Isa. 6.8.'

the intervening debate since then: 'So, it actually appears that Isaiah's proclamation cannot be understood if one takes 6.9-10 literally.'²²⁹ This is true in spite of Kilian's statement that if only the task of hardening were taken seriously, the whole proclamation of Isaiah could thereby easily be integrated.²³⁰

There is no way forward for the projecting-back thesis, not only because Isaiah's proclamation sets before the hearer a decision for or against Yhwh, but also because there are always a few who can bring themselves to make a positive decision of belief (8.16-18). If Isaiah had truly been a preacher of the hardening of the heart, he would have had even in his closest circle of disciples a 'successful' failure!

Also speaking for an uncoupling of the hardening commission and Isaianic proclamation is the epistemological observation that, according to the assumptions of intentional communication, hardening cannot be preached. The command to 'listen carefully and do not comprehend (please)' is so paradoxical and devoid of any communicational intention, like the 'Negation of any mental activity... Isaiah appears to credit the people with being in a dull vegetative state'.²³¹ It is worth keeping in mind in interpreting it that no 'existing fact of perception/knowledge [is] implied' in the so-called hardening-commission, so that 6.9-10 in the communicative sense is simply invalid.²³² While it is not a main argument, there is an indication in the possible continuity between 7.3 and 6.8 that supports separating the vision (1-8) and the hardening-commission (9-11).²³³ According to that, Isaiah, after the vision to Ahaz would have been sent in order to place him and the house of David as first in the decision of faith; the 'confrontation of Ahaz' would seamlessly connect to his preparation for sending.

If the 'projecting-back' thesis is required on epistemological grounds, as well as appropriate for the content of the other Isaianic proclamations, then the question is raised concerning who added

229. Hesse, *Das Verstockungsproblem*, p. 84.

230. Kilian, 'Der Verstockungsauftrag Jesajas', p. 215: 'if it should actually be the case that the task of hardening stands at the beginning of the Isaianic activity, and this is taken seriously, then the result would be: No matter what else the prophet proclaims, it always has to do with the mission of hardening, of judgment!'

231. Schweizer, *Metaphorische Grammatik*, pp. 181-82.

232. Schweizer, *Metaphorische Grammatik*, p. 181; R. Wagner, *Textexegese als Strukturanalyse*, pp. 203-204.

233. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 246: 'la mission d'Isaïe auprès d'Achaz se situait dans le prolongement immédiat de sa vision au sanctuaire'; U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 94-102, sees in 8.1-4 the original continuation of 6.1-8.

vv. 9–11 to the call vision of Isaiah: was it an Isaiah ‘weary of office’ and smitten by failure?²³⁴ or disciples who, after the death of their master, were forced to recognize the fruitlessness of his and their actions, and so had to revise them theologically? Or does the theological principle of hardening go back to an exilic Isaiah tradent who did not want to blame the loss of temple and statehood on Yhwh and his prophets?²³⁵

This correct observation has to be supplemented to the effect that vv. 9–11, 12–13 are not only about total destruction, but also about a possible new beginning, and not simply because of the glosses 10bβ and 13bβ. Thus the expression ‘this people’ (6.9, 10) does not necessarily designate the whole population as *massa damnationis*, as a look at the larger passage shows. The negative characterization is valid for that part of the population which does not rely on Yhwh (8.6), which is not associated with the Isaianic proclamation (8.11, 12), which has been led astray by its leader (9.15). It is especially the upper class which falls under the designation ‘this people’ (28.11, 14), all those whose worship of God is only a confession of the lips (29.13, 14). With *הָעָם הַזֶּה* in 6.9 is intimated a separation within the people, an idea which is especially meaningful in the postexilic period. The close connection of vv. 9–11 to Isaiah 1 shows that this hypothesis is correct. Thus the imperative *שִׁמְעוּ* reminds one of the dtn-colored call upon heaven and earth in 1.2, and the combination of *בִּינְיָדָע* is reminiscent of 1.3, which introduces an Israel without knowledge.²³⁶ Just as chap. 1 refers several times to the closing chapter of Deuteronomy, so also does 6.10, with the task to ‘make the heart of this people become fat’ (*הַשְׁמִין*), which reminds one of the fattening of Jeshurun in Deut. 32.15.²³⁷ Verse 10 continues the topic of v. 9, in which the skillful construction ‘understand-hear-see//see-hear-understand’ is more important than the logic, for the command to ‘Hear intensively’ does not fit well with ‘make-heavy the ears’.²³⁸ The mosaic character

234. So among others, Hardmeier, ‘Jesajas Verkündigungsabsicht’, p. 246; Niehr, ‘Zur Intention’, p. 63; according to Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience*, p. 229, there was (is?) no bridge ‘between the religious prophetic orientation and the political approach’.

235. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 123: ‘Only in this way is the suspicion eliminated that Yahweh may have proved powerless at the end, in the catastrophe of his people, and his power over the history of his people, in the past as in the present, is elevated over every doubt.’

236. See also Rendtorff, ‘Jesaja 6’, p. 77.

237. Elsewhere only in Jer. 5.28; Neh. 9.25.

238. Thus Schreiner, ‘Zur Textgestalt’, pp. 93–94, regards v. 10 as added by a later hand; also U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 81–82.

of v. 10 also points in this direction, in that the motif of 'make heavy the ears' is from the hardening tradition of Egypt and of Pharaoh;²³⁹ that of the 'blinding' (שָׁטַט²⁴⁰) of the eyes, however, has been taken from the Isaianic tradition. It is no coincidence that 'make heavy the ears' is found elsewhere only in Zech. 7.11-14 outside of the 'hardening tradition' of Egypt. Above all, the motif of 'desolation' in the Zechariah passage reminds one very strongly of Isa. 6.11.²⁴¹ While no direct literary dependence can be proved, a common theological tradition can nevertheless be assumed. With a view to the prophetic preaching, the exilic destiny of Israel is interpreted precisely as a 'hardening' which led to the desolation of the pleasant land. Thus it is a safe assumption that the hardening motif has been introduced into the Isaiah scroll to anchor the deuteronomistic-shaded exilic expansion precisely in the prophet's book par excellence, from the perspective of the great prophetic structuring.²⁴² Thus the entry of the hardening motif in 6.9-11 does not treat first and foremost the question of theodicy,²⁴³ but rather the judgment of the pre-exilic prophets in light of the catastrophe. That it came to the exile lay not on them, certainly not on any imperfect preaching of Isaiah ben Amoz, but on the hardening decreed by Yhwh, a hardening which cannot be blamed on despotism because Israel had opportunity enough to reject its abuses (Isa. 5!). The early postexilic situating of this exilic expansion, together with its relation to the 'dtn/dtr shading' of Isaiah 1, suggests that the introduction of the hardening-motif in 6.9-11 is to be identified with those responsible for the composition of 1-4. Did they have to justify themselves even *post exilium* in order to hold on to the message of Isaiah ben Amoz? Had

239. Exod. 7.14; 8.11, 28; 9.7, 34; 10.1; 1 Sam. 6.6; in addition Habel, 'The Form and Significance', pp. 297-323: even the seraphim, who are attested only in Num. 21.6 and Deut. 8.15, point to the Exodus event.

240. Only in 6.10; 29.9; 32.3.

241. Zech. 7.11ff. 'But they refused to pay attention, and showed a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears so that they did not hear (אָזְנֵיהֶם הִכְבִּידוּ) ...so that the land lies waste (לְשָׁמָה) behind them, so that no one goes to and fro in it. So they made a valuable land a wilderness (לְשָׁמָה).' ['Aber sie weigerten sich, darauf zu achten, und zeigten eine störrische Schulter, und ihre Ohren verstockten sie, so daß sie nicht hörten...so daß das Land wüste hinter ihnen liegt, daß niemand darin hin- und herzieht. So machten sie ein köstliches Land zur Wüstenei.' Reventlow's translation in *Die Propheten*, p. 74.]

242. Cf. Schmidt, 'Gedanken zum Verstockungsauftrag', p. 75; 'This expression obviously completely reverses a profound, intensively considered understanding of the prophetic task.'

243. Thus U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 85-86.

not this prophet been just too optimistic in his vision of Zion and its future? That this motif would have such a fruitful sequel in the scroll of Isaiah through its reversal as the rescinding of the hardening²⁴⁴ was probably neither intended nor foreseen.

The subsequent question *עַד מָהִי* in 6.11 is not to be interpreted in the sense of a demand for reversal directed at God or as a request on the part of the prophet. It is a question concerning the end of punishment, similar to the closing verse of the prayer in 64.11: 'After all this, will you restrain yourself, Yhwh? Will you keep silent, and humiliate us so severely (*עַד מָהִי*)?' In the answer (6.11b)—until the cities are without inhabitant, the houses empty of humans, and the cultivated lands are desolate—Isaianic (5.9) and dtn-informed (1.7) language returns. The key word 'desolate' (*שָׁמָמָה*)²⁴⁵ surfaces again in 40–55. This shows that the tradents of the book of Isaiah have understood the 'hardening verses' not as the end point, but rather as a way to new understanding.

Current research does not challenge the idea that a still later enlargement is presented in 6.12–13, supported especially by the abrupt change in the point of view of the language. At the most, three or four additions are assumed (12, 13a, 13b α , 13b β).²⁴⁶ This is easily possible though not conclusive, if one observes the close and successful continuation of the thought of v. 12 in 13a.²⁴⁷ Verse 12 clarifies that it is not only the desolation of the land that belongs at the end of the hardening, but also Yhwh's 'leading far away' (*וַיִּרְחַק יְהוָה*), i.e., into the exile.²⁴⁸ A fact which has long been neglected speaks to vv. 12–13a coming from *one* hand: if 6.11 (*עָרִים מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב וּבְתִים מֵאֵין אָדָם + שָׁמָמָה*) refers back to 5.9 (*בְּתִים רַבִּים לְשָׁמָמָה... מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב*), so also the hand commenting in 6.12–13a resumes this reference to the first Woe in 5.8–10. It takes up the *בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ* from 5.8, makes from the 'ten acre vineyard' (*עֲשֶׂרֶת צִמְדֵי כֶרֶם*) a tenth of the land (*עֲשֶׂרִיָּה*), and thereby dramatizes the exilic destiny of the people of God, which finds its expression and grand finale in the destruction of this final tenth²⁴⁹ (*וְהִיָּתָה לְבָעֵר*), cf. 1.31).

244. Isa. 29.18; 30.20; 32.3–4; 41.20; 42.16–20; 43.8; 44.18–19.

245. See 49.8, 19; 54.1; 62.4.

246. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 1. Teilband, p. 241; Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 134.

247. For one thing, *וְעַד*, for another, *בֵּה*, which can only be related to *הָאָרֶץ*.

248. Thus Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 47; Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 134; Werner, 'Vom Prophetenwort', p. 25.

249. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 171, accepts an allusion to Judah as the tenth part of the tribal people (cf. 2 Sam. 19.44; 1 Kgs 11.29–39).

A theologically more interesting hand does not wish this word of total destruction to be left uncommented on and so opens up a prospect by adding v. 13b. In that it gives witness of its hope in the metaphor, though more stammering than ringing, it honors, and is not meant to be a reproach:²⁵⁰ 'Like the oak and terebinth of which, if/after one fells them (בשִׁלְכָה²⁵¹), the offshoots remain (מִצְבָּה²⁵²)—the offshoots are holy seed in this regard.'²⁵³ This verse doubtless presents a 'remnant idea'; it is probably thematically connected to 4.2-6. The key word קִדְּשׁ (4.3) is taken up, and בֵּעַר in 6.13a would generally have evoked the related text 4.2-6 for the comment in 6.13b. Thus the supplementer would have interpreted בֵּעַר in 6.13, which means 'to destroy' there, now with an eye on 4.4 (בְּרוּחַ בֵּעַר) understood as a 'purifying judgment',²⁵⁴ out of which the remnant community is rescued and hopefully follows with growth.²⁵⁵

Because the added comment in 13b inserts the idea of holiness from 4.3 and in addition is cut off from the hardening passage in 9-11 by the dramatizing of the exile in 12-13a, it is not advisable to identify the writer of 13b with that of 9-11. While the hardening passage stems from the early postexilic editors of 1-4, the 'holy remnant addition' at the close of the scroll stems from the late postexilic tradents. So it is not by chance that the זֶרַע קִדְּשׁ refers to the descendants of the Ebed in 53.10;²⁵⁶ these are the 'oaks (!) of righteousness' (אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק),

250. The lack of 13bβ in LXX is due simply to an *aberratio oculi*, but has exerted an influence in interpretation to the detriment of the whole verse.

251. For a discussion, see especially Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 41-44, who does not give preference to the hof. part. in 1QIsa^a (מִשְׁלָכָה) for the hapax legomenon שִׁלְכָה, but rather favors the toponym from 1 Chron. 26.16: Were there two burned or fallen trees at the gate of 'Shalleket'? The word שִׁלְכָה surfaces again and again in exegesis as the 'dropping' of the leaves, but is quite weak in contrast to the 'felling' of a tree (Emerton, 'Translation and Interpretation', p. 106).

252. Cf. HALAT, p. 587: 'neither of the bare trunk after the burning the branches...nor of "new growth".'

253. See the extensive discussion by Emerton, 'Translation and Interpretation', pp. 85-118.

254. Against that, an allusion to 3.14 ('to graze') is improbable; it is more likely a reference to 5.5 (וְהָיָה לְבֵעַר).

255. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 196: 'C'est en ce sens qu'il faut comprendre le suffixe féminin à la fin du dernier mot (*maṣṣabtāh*); l'humble communauté de ceux qui observant la Loi n'est autre que la "semence sainte" du nouvel Israël'; cf. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 102; Hausmann, *Israels Rest*, p. 161.

256. So Gosse, 'Isaïe 52,13-53,12', p. 538.

61.3) and these are called עַם הַקָּדָשׁ (62.12).²⁵⁷ Rendtorff shows a further relationship: ‘While in 6.10 [וְשֶׁבַע וּרְפָא לֵוִי] the “not-healed” is a result of the inability to repent, 53.5 says of the “Servant of God” that through his suffering the community which is speaking is healed (נִרְפָּא לָנוּ).’²⁵⁸ It is significant that the connections between Isaiah 6 and 53 are concentrated in the latest expansions in the chapter of the call: The tradents of the Ebed-Songs, who in the course of the book identify themselves as ‘servants’, as a community of the righteous, have inscribed themselves in the inaugural vision of Isaiah and thus document that they had discovered Isaiah ben Amoz and his Jerusalem tradition for themselves in the late postexilic time. So it becomes clear how Isaiah of Jerusalem becomes increasingly the defining figure of the entire scroll.

2.3.3. *The Prophet’s Sons and the End of the Memoir (Isaiah 7.1–9; 8.1–18*)*

The texts forming the inner composition-ring of the memoir speak of Isaiah’s sons ‘Shear-Jashub’ and ‘Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz’, symbols of salvation from Aram and Ephraim both for the Davidic royal house as well as for the Judaic population—but only if subject to the presupposition that the trust of the royal house and of the people is entirely directed to Yhwh. As Isaiah remains unsuccessful in his attempt to awaken a posture of faith and trust, in the end, he seals away his message with his disciples and hopes the course of events will bear the mark of his God (8.16–18).

The names of the two sons of Isaiah have a clearly positive association for the people and king, and a negative one for Aram and Ephraim. Two divine oracles confirm what the names of the sons by themselves already show: The Damascus-Ephraimite plan will not happen (לֹא תִקֵּים וְלֹא תִהְיֶה, 7.7b), for ‘the wealth of Damascus and the booty of Samaria will be carried away to the king of Assyria’ (8.4). On the level of the narrated world, the names of the sons, like the name Isaiah itself, are provocative witnesses to divine care. The unconditional promise of salvation is conditioned in 7.9b by a demand to believe. Just as the message ‘If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all’ opens the alternatives between salvation and disaster, so also, on the level of the book’s communication, the names of the two sons of the prophet are ambiguous. ‘Spoil Speeds—Prey Hastens’ becomes a threat to every reader and hearer who do not

257. Gosse, ‘Isaïe 52,13–53,12’, p. 542.

258. Rendtorff, ‘Jesaja 6’, p. 78; McLaughlin, “‘Their Hearts Were Hardened’”, pp. 1–25, follows up on further texts of hardening (29.9–10; 44.18; 63.17), as well as those of its reversal (32.3–4a; 42.6–7), but does not discuss Isa. 53.5.

answer the demand of faith, and 'A Remnant Shall Return' becomes a promise for the small remnant of those who return to Yhwh.²⁵⁹ This exegesis is confirmed in 10.20-22: 'A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your nation Israel is like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return' (10.21-22).

But in what concrete political situation are the names of the prophet's sons a sign of the saving care of Yhwh? The traditional idea of Syro-Ephraimite pressure on Judah to participate in an anti-Assyrian coalition has neither a correspondence in the Assyrian sources nor historical plausibility. The conquest of Arpad by Tiglath-pileser in the year 741 was understood as a signal to be subject to the Assyrian superpower itself, with which Damascus and Ephraim (among others) complied under Menahem (2 Kgs 15.19-20).²⁶⁰ In 737-735, when the Assyrian emperor turned to his chief enemy in the east, Urartu, this became the perfect opportunity in the Damascus-Ephraimite arena to further an anti-Assyrian politics. In this scenario the murder of Pekahiah, son of Menahem, by the officer Pekah supported by 50 Gileadites, would fit in well (1 Kgs 15.25). This successful coup with the help of a powerful mercenary army could have led Aram, under the general leadership of Rezin and Pekah who had seized power through the coup, to establish an anti-Assyrian leadership over the neighbor to the south (cf. 2 Kgs 15.37: 'In those days Yhwh began to send Rezin...as well as Pekah...against Judah'). This cannot be reckoned as a time- and power-consuming major military action—as for example a siege of Jerusalem would have been, which would also have immediately alarmed Assyria—but rather as a palace coup in which Ahaz might have been a victim, and in whose place an unknown person with the name Tabeel²⁶¹ would have been made king (Isa. 7.6). Such a political calculation, which aimed at a quiet deposing of the former, i.e., the Davidide in Jerusalem, would explain the focus on the 'house of David' in Isa. 7.1-9, as well as the 'dynastic' promise of the prophet,²⁶² in which the

259. That 7.9b may be directed to vacillating disciples of Isaiah is to be excluded, against Hardmeier, 'Gesichtspunkte', pp. 49-53; especially as the logical referent of the 'you'-group is the 'house of David' (7.2, 13, 14).

260. According to Mayer, *Politik*, p. 305.

261. The masoretic vocalization 'Tabal' ('Good-for-nothing' or similar) is tendentious; so Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 135 n. 8.

262. According to Clements ('Immanuel Prophecy', p. 234), besides 7.2, 13*, 17, 7.9b is a product of an addition that brought in the anti-typology Ahaz-Hezekiah from the Hezekiah legends; against that, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 41-42.

Davidic throne in Jerusalem is protected [‘betreut’] by Yhwh as long as the royal house is faithful [‘vertraue’] to him.²⁶³

Perlitt argues energetically and with justification against Kaiser’s attempts to place these theologically climactic statements, like those of 28.16 and 30.15, in the arena of dtn/dtr writings, or indeed in their shadow.²⁶⁴ In regard to the call to Ahaz to keep quiet (שָׁקֵט, 7.4; 30.15), there may indeed be similarities to the dtn war preaching, but what comes across is not at all identical: ‘That Ahaz should “keep quiet” is very particular counsel in very specific language; that Israel should not be afraid, on the other hand, is nearly always applicable in the Old Testament. “Thus Isa. 7.4 must” literarily hardly “go back to Deut. 20.3”’.²⁶⁵ This particular language formulation reflects a particular political situation, one which was unlike open conflict, a fact which the historicizing gloss in 7.1 erased.²⁶⁶ If it is historically not about an extensive military action against Jerusalem but about a coup, this also explains the failure on Ahaz’s part to call for help from Assyria (in contrast to 2 Kgs 16.7). The information about a planned revolt against his house is indeed sufficient to cause the most extreme anxiety, but not enough to turn to Assyria, which from every viewpoint could have been only the *ultima ratio*. The position of Isaiah was not that of an apolitical quietist, but that of an analyst of power relationships. There was much to be gained in the royal palace’s acquiring information of an imminent revolt (וַיִּגְדַּל לְבֵית דָּוִד), as the saying goes: Danger recognized is danger averted! It is completely unnecessary that the heart of the king and his people should tremble like the trees of the forest before the storm, for there are only humans behind Aram and Ephraim²⁶⁷ (7.8a, 9a), whereas

263. The bracketed words are Buber’s well-known translation, *Bücher der Kündigung*, p. 28; on the level of the narrative, ‘you’ (pl) refers to the members of the royal house; on the level of the communication of the text, it refers to each hearer and reader; for the last, Sonnet (‘Le motif de l’endurcissement’, pp. 208–39) points out how the communication situation *in* the text becomes that *of* the text (p. 233).

264. Perlitt, ‘Jesaja und die Deuteronomisten’, pp. 133–49 (here, pp. 144–45); Brekelmans, ‘Deuteronomistic Influence’, pp. 175–76.

265. Perlitt, ‘Jesaja und die Deuteronomisten’, p. 142; outside of Isa. 7.9; 28.16, the absolute שָׁקֵט hif. without an object occurs only in Exod. 4.31; Ps. 116.10; and Job 29.24.

266. Haag, ‘Das Immanuelzeichen’, p. 5; in addition, the discussion by Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, pp. 123–30.

267. Lescow, ‘Jesajas Denkschrift’, p. 320, emphasizes that the speech keeps ‘to the usual topic of the war speech—disparagement of the enemy’.

Yhwh is behind the throne of David.²⁶⁸ The silent recognition of this position by Ahaz and his companions places a burden on neither him nor them, but is appropriate to the situation. That this straightforward conclusion in 7.9 gave occasion for later expansion is nevertheless understandable.

The direct continuation of 7.1-9 is in 8.1-4, where the prophet writes on a tablet the symbolic name 'The-Spoil-Speeds-The-Prey-Hastens', to be attested by two reliable witnesses.²⁶⁹ With the proph-
etess, probably his wife, he engenders a son to whom he gives this very name. The birth of a male descendant, from the perspective of his mandated name, was the guarantee therefore that the promise of 8.4 would also be fulfilled.²⁷⁰ Before the baby can say 'Papa, Mama', i.e., after about one year, the threat of Aram and Ephraim must certainly be shattered for good by the attack of Assyria.²⁷¹ If one proceeds from that perspective, that the plans for a 'palace revolt' by the neighboring nations to cause unrest in Jerusalem was in 735, then the birth of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz fell in the year 734 and his first words in the following year, 733 or even 732. Isaiah had it right: between 734 and 732 Tiglathpileser subdued the Northern Kingdom and left Israel consisting only of Ephraim and Samaria; Pekah was destroyed and Hoshea, the last king of the Northern Kingdom, came to the throne.²⁷² According to Assyrian statements, Rezin was held like a bird in a cage (cf. Hezekiah in the Sennacherib-Campaigns) and the city fell in 732, by which Isaiah's prognosis was confirmed.

268. What will not happen is the execution of the planned revolution; 7.8a, 9a are added as reasons that emphasize the special place of the Davidic monarchy; so, among others, Kilian, 'Prolegomena', p. 208; Kilian, *Die Verheissung Immanuels*, pp. 24-28. In contrast, Rignell, 'Das Immanuelszeichen', pp. 104-105, and especially Sæbø, 'Formgeschichtliche Erwägungen', pp. 54-69 (esp. 63-64), see the nominal clauses of vv. 7.8a, 9a as the subject of 7.7; so also Steck, 'Rettung und Verstockung', pp. 77-83. Irsigler adds ('Zeichen und Bezeichnetes', p. 85): 'Literarily, the connection in vv. 5-7 with the anaphoric v. 7b-c is primary. Secondly, with v. 8aß, 9aß a new subject has been added to 7b-c.' On the other hand, Werlitz is critical of this position (*Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, pp. 153-60).

269. Note in 8.2 נִיִּף נִיִּף the reference back to נִיִּף nif./hif. in 7.9b.

270. Cf. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 95-97.

271. Høgenhaven, 'Die symbolischen Namen', p. 232: 'There is no reason to doubt that this was indeed the message of Isaiah during that crisis.'

272. Mayer, *Politik*, p. 309: 'The cut off territories were made into Assyrian provinces, where at least a portion of the population was displaced. Thus, with the annexed territories a virtual wall of Assyrian provinces in the hinterland of the coast was created, which formed a good basis for commerce with the coastal cities and at the same time isolated Damascus.'

Still in the year 735, as Tiglathpileser was busy against Urartu in the east of his kingdom, before his second campaign in the year 734 all the way to the border of Egypt, there was a faction in Jerusalem which had to be taken seriously as it felt itself bound to anti-Assyrian politics and thus to Rezin and Pekah. Isaiah's birth-announcement of a son as a guarantee for divine protection was unable to convince this portion of the population (העם הזה, 8.6). The gently flowing water of Shiloah (cf. Ps. 46.5) was less persuasive to them than the enthusiastic welcoming (משׁוּשׁ²⁷³) of an aggressive international politics as Rezin and Pekah represented it. After the prophetic accusation denouncing this lack of trust in Yhwh, the threat follows: Yhwh will let the mighty and powerful waters (i.e., the king of Assyria with all his power) overwhelm Judah (8.7).²⁷⁴ It is revealing that such a prophecy is called 'conspiracy' by those who favored an anti-Assyrian politics (8.11). Isaiah can only be called to the divine task, not to follow the way, i.e., not the politics of this anti-Assyrian faction (העם הזה). So he attempts to convince a You-group that it is valid not to fear Assyria, but only Yhwh Sabaoth. Which group does the prophet speak to here? Certainly not to the faction that embraces an anti-Assyrian politics, nor to his disciples, for it is among them (בְּלִמְדִי) that he will bind up a witness and torah (8.16). Rather he addresses those who are still undecided about whether they trust Isaiah's words and his prophetic symbolic actions or the political opinion of the העם הזה. Enticed against Assyria or enticed to Yhwh, that is the question here!

If a part of the populus believes that the prophet's position toward the leading politicians' plan of revolt is a 'conspiracy' against the national preparation for defense, then his hearers had better know that 'Yhwh Sabaoth, him you should regard as the conspirator (תִּקְשִׁירוּ). He becomes for the conspirator (לְמִקְשִׁיר) and the conspiracy (מִקְשֶׁר) a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling. They will stumble over it and be shattered.'²⁷⁵

273. The change into מִסֹּס ('to melt before terror') is not justified text-critically; cf. Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 49-50.

274. In view of the meeting at the vital point of the city's water-supply (7.3), this is especially apt; for topographic and archaeological information, see, among others, Wenning and Zenger, *Die verschiedenen Systeme der Wassernutzung*, pp. 279-94 (esp. 281-83) and Ussishkin, 'The Water Systems of Jerusalem', pp. 289-307.

275. For the literary critique, see Werner, 'Vom Prophetenwort', pp. 7-11; also, the slight correction by Deck, *Die Gerichtsbotschaft*, pp. 177-79.

This evaluation of the political situation by the prophet has been expanded a number of times, on the one hand, by identifying those for whom Yhwh had become a rock of offense, i.e., for both houses of Israel, which points toward a reworking from the experience of exile. This is supported by the metaphor of Yhwh as a trap, a net for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, by which many were ensnared and taken,²⁷⁶ which as *vaticinium ex eventu* probably alludes to the Assyrian blockade in 701 and the Babylonian siege of 587.

The second corrective expansion leaves the strictly political arena; it accentuates the stance of believers vis-à-vis Yhwh. If Isaiah had exhorted a willing audience that they should not fear what was feared by that portion of the population who favored the anti-Assyrian politics of Hezekiah (וַאֲנִי מוֹרֵאוֹ לֹא תִירָאוּ²⁷⁷), he now states it positively: it is valid to fear only Yhwh; he alone is due saving terror (וְהוּא מוֹרֵאכֶם וְהוּא מַעֲרַצְכֶם). That Yhwh can be 'conspiracy' and 'conspirator', now far from the context of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, is scandalous and incomprehensible. Therefore these Isaianic words are corrected: one should not hold Yhwh to be a conspirator, but rather, keep him holy (תִּקְדְּשׁוּ, pl.); he is not a 'conspiracy' or 'conspirator', but a 'sanctuary' (מִקְדָּשׁ)! The addressees of this demand for faith and trust are no longer the hearers of Isaiah's proclamation, but the hearers and readers of the prophetic book. That this is so is clear from the perspective of 29.17-24, where the expression is found again, 'keep holy' the name of Yhwh (יִקְדְּשׁוּ שְׁמִי), and fear the God of Israel (יִרְאוּ, 29.23), and where it is promised that even the deaf shall hear the words of this book and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see (29.18). Here as there it is the Zion community of the pious which demands the reader and hearer of the book also to make the decision for Yhwh. As the prophet in his time, so are they in their time: *nec laudibus nec timore!* They probably were aware that there were not many who would follow another way than 'this people', and so they were perhaps the pious who added in 8.15,²⁷⁸ 'many' (רַבִּים) there are who will be shattered on Yhwh!

When Isaiah binds up the testimony and seals the teaching among his disciples, and hopes in Yhwh, neither he nor his hearers need wait too long, for Tiglathpileser made Ephraim and Damascus a ruin as quickly as the small 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz' could say for the

276. The וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ וְנִקְשׁוּ וְנִלְכְּדוּ in 8.15 attenuates the forceful 'shattering' of which Isaiah had spoken.

277. The וְלֹא תִירָאוּ (at the end of 8.12) was probably taken over from 8.13 (וְהוּא מַעֲרַצְכֶם).

278. In addition, Werner, 'Vom Prophetenwort', p. 10.

first time, 'Papa, Mama!' The fulfillment of the prophetic preaching by the annexation of the greater part of the Northern Kingdom brought to Isaiah and his disciples the great prestige of success, so it is no surprise if he stands in the limelight in the new political crises of the years 713–711 (revolt of Ashdod) and 701 (Sennacherib's campaign).

Verses 16–18 clearly mark the close of Isaiah's proclamation during the years 735–732;²⁷⁹ nothing speaks against and much for the idea that immediately following these years, Isaiah himself and/or his disciples wrote down the *kernel* of the call vision, minus the hardening-task (!), the clash with Ahaz in the presence of 'Shear-Jashub' (7.1–9), and the witnessed statement about 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz' (8.1–4), in order to deter the Jerusalem population from a pro-Syrian and anti-Assyrian politics (8.5–8a, 11–15*, 16–18).²⁸⁰

The first-person report in chaps. 6 and 8 speaks for the thesis of a written recollection of the crisis years 735–732 by Isaiah or his disciples; however, the biography of chap. 7 appears to stand in contrast to that.²⁸¹ Since, according to our concept of this chapter, only vv. 1–9* belong to the memoir, a single change in 7.3 (יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ instead of אֲלִי) would make this too part of the autobiography, something which also is supported by most scholars.²⁸² The objection of those who oppose the idea of the memoir that the text must be altered here in order to maintain a thesis is not convincing. Even leaving 7.1–9 as a biography does not bring down the memoir thesis. At the same time, the change to 'to Isaiah' might have been provoked by the historicizing revision in 7.1aβ,b.²⁸³

2.3.4. *The Rejected Sign (Isaiah 7.10–14a, 17a)*

The new section is clearly marked by וַיֹּסֶף יְהוָה דְּבַר and set off by the same phrase in 8.5; it is striking that Yhwh addresses Ahaz directly,

279. Wildberger, *Jesaja. 1. Teilband*, p. 344; Vermeylen *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 227; U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 114–20, sees in 8.16–18 a redactional piece that was reworked three times.

280. Weiss, 'The Contribution of Literary Theory', p. 380.

281. Thus, among others, Reventlow, 'Das Ende', p. 65: 'Against the assumption of a continuous autobiographical source, it may be said that this possibility is excluded by the third-person biographical form in chap. 7.'

282. See the discussion by Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, pp. 109–15.

283. So Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 203; other historicizing glosses can be seen in 7.4b, 5b, 8b, 16bβ, 17b; cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 167–69; and critical of this view, the discussion by Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, pp. 201–207.

which on the one hand relieves Isaiah,²⁸⁴ and on the other, puts the burden on the king. If Ahaz rejects a sign offered by God himself, he gambles away the Davidic monarchy! Against the dark foil of the unbelieving Ahaz, the example of the faithful Hezekiah²⁸⁵ in the same situation shines all the more brightly (7.3; 36.2).

The insertion of 7.10-14a, 17a²⁸⁶ is skillfully placed at the ambiguous conclusion of the original scene of Isaiah with Ahaz and his royal escort; his silence is explained to him as unbelief which is so great that he even refuses a sign (אִימָה) offered by God. Lagarde already recognized 120 years ago, that this is no longer grounded in history:

whether the old Isaiah ever dared in this way to put an אִימָה at the disposal of the reader as an attestation of his oracle, so that what we today call a miracle might be seen in heaven and on earth, we do not know; if he had done it, he would have been a fanatic who would be proved a liar if such an אִימָה failed to materialize, or a fraud if it were faked.²⁸⁷

From the perspective of 6.9-11, this posture of the king can only be interpreted as a hardening; in spite of the offers from Yhwh, 'that tribe'—especially its king—has pitifully failed through unbelief and as a result has gone from one crisis to another. While 7.11 still speaks of Ahaz's God (אֱלֹהֵי־דָוִד), in 7.13 it is only the God of the prophet (אֱלֹהֵי). As in Greek tragedy and the biblical image of the first king, Saul, Ahaz apparently has no fair chance.²⁸⁸ The accusation in 7.13 indicates that it is not about his personal destiny as such, but rather about the continuity of the Davidic dynasty (שָׁמַעְנוּ נָא בֵּית דָּוִד).²⁸⁹ The fact that the prophet nowhere else attacks the royal house itself speaks against an Isaianic authorship.²⁹⁰ Ahaz's refusal to ask for a sign, which is equal to a negative decision against the faith demanded in 7.9b, is answered by an אִימָה which results in a proclamation of

284. Cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 163.

285. See the parallels: 'conduit' (7.3; 36.2); 'test of faith' (7.4; 37.6-7); 'sign' (7.10-13; 37.30-32; 38.7-8); 'prophetic war oracle' (7.4-9; 37.6-7).

286. There is nothing to add to Kaiser's redaction criticism here, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 163-67.

287. Lagarde, 'Kritische Anmerkungen', p. 10.

288. Bartelmus, 'Jes 7.1-17', p. 65: 'What is treated in the theoretical critical reappraisal of the Greek tragedy under the key word "blindness" corresponds in the theology of the OT to the term "hardening".'

289. Cf., among others, Irsigler, 'Zeichen und Bezeichnetes', p. 95; Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, p. 180.

290. So Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, p. 62: 'With all of his criticism of the ruling circles in Jerusalem there is found nowhere else a direct word of judgment of the Davidic house.'

judgment (v. 14a, לִכְן). Not only does Yhwh offer a sign to the king (vv. 10–11), but the Lord himself subsequently gives a sign. It consists in this, that upon ‘your people and the house of your father’²⁹¹ days will come such as have not come since the separation of the kingdom (17a), which refers to the Babylonian exile with the results for Judah and the Davidic monarchy and not to the withdrawal of the coalition²⁹² or to the events of the year 701,²⁹³ which are so significant in the Isaiah tradition not as judgment, but as salvation. With the separation of Ephraim from Judah following Solomon’s death, the view is that Israel’s fate was already sealed; the faith- and sign-rejection by Ahaz now also set Judah on its inevitable path to destruction.²⁹⁴

The objection that the sign could not be the proclaimed disaster, for then indeed, sign and signified have collapsed into one,²⁹⁵ does not hold up, since an analogous case is presented in the אִיִּית of 37.30–32, where the sign likewise consists solely in the announcement of future events. If the Immanuel-birth oracle had not followed in 7.14b–16, no one would have taken exception to the broader use of אִיִּית. This linguistically limited understanding of ‘sign’ as ‘only the certain eventuation of a predicted event’,²⁹⁶ is in like measure valid for the Immanuel oracle, for it is not speaking of Immanuel as a child of flesh and blood. The sign is not the birth, of which there is no mention, but only its proclamation! Lagarde’s trenchant words are still applicable today:

as proof that one should not lose heart in the current adversity, a miracle is offered, that after approximately ten months a child will be born who shall be named Immanuel because God is with the people (such naming is still no אִיִּית,²⁹⁷ since it could happen naturally if Isaiah

291. The ‘over you’ (עַל־יְדֶיךָ) may have been influenced by the historicizing expansion in 7.16bβ; cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 168; against that, Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, pp. 192–94.

292. Hubmann, ‘Randbemerkungen’, p. 32; Dohmen, ‘Verstockungsvollzug’, p. 48.

293. Against Höffken, ‘Notizen’, pp. 335–36.

294. Werlitz, ‘Noch einmal Immanuel’, p. 257: ‘The dynasty constituted the promise of the continuing house (2 Sam. 7.16); the promise is invalidated because of the Davidides who, like Ahaz, have not believed (V. 9b).’

295. So Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 18; Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, p. 181; against Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 153.

296. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 153.

297. This is the case even today for anyone who recognizes the symbolic in name-giving; among others, Lescow, ‘Jesajas Denkschrift’, p. 331; Steck, ‘Beiträge zum Verständnis’, pp. 166–69.

possessed any influence with the mother); and then it continues that this boy will experience no happiness, but when he turns 13 years old, as a result of the reversal of national well-being occasioned by enemy attack, he will have to be satisfied with cheese and honey as nourishment, which is really more than one should have to put up with.²⁹⁸

If it is correct that the judgment preaching of v. 17 cannot be understood as a sign, then the same must be true for the prophecy of v. 14,²⁹⁹ since even here only a birth is proclaimed; what is truly a sign is experienced neither here nor there, but in the 'shadow miracle' of 38.7! It is precisely the figurative understanding of אִמָּנוּל³⁰⁰ in 7.14a, 17 which the expansion of the Immanuel oracle has made possible. The expansion of the rejected sign is built on the Ahaz-Hezekiah typology, is aware of the Hezekiah legends, and is an early postexilic reassessment of the collapse of the Southern Kingdom with its monarchy. If the hardening commission in 6.9-11 was to be credited to the account of those responsible for the formation of 1-4*, this suggests that they also are to be viewed as the writers of 7.10-14a, 17a. The exile is not to be laid on Yhwh's lack of concern, but on the hardening of nation and king!

2.3.5. Immanuel (Isaiah 7.14b, 16a, bα)

The addition, which reinterpreted the silence of Ahaz negatively as unbelief, even as the transgression collapsing the Davidic kingship in its greatest crisis since the division of the Kingdom, is construed positively in a subsequent step by a group that was able to say of themselves and their divine relationship: אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'God with us!'³⁰¹ So the birth oracle concerning Immanuel is the proclamation of a community which took the place of the Davidic dynasty, discredited by the events of the exile, and which understood itself consciously as a sprout from the root of Jesse, not of David.³⁰²

298. Lagarde, 'Kritische Anmerkungen', pp. 10-11.

299. Cf. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 19: 'Isa. 7.14 now offers a clear sign, even if it is difficult to interpret: It is a proclaimed sign that refers to an event which is still to happen.'

300. Rignell, 'Das Immanuelszeichen', p. 107: 'אִמָּנוּל can also be used for a word of God, an oracle...whose inevitable truth and astonishing power will sooner or later be revealed, because it is a word of God.'

301. Rignell, 'Das Orakel', p. 43: 'in our opinion however, Immanuel symbolizes the "remnant" of the nation, the new nation which is saved from the catastrophe.'

302. Cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 161: 'Thus the new royal lineage of the time of salvation is contrasted here to the unbelieving house of David, represented by Ahaz and stripped of its lordship in the catastrophe of 587.'

It is noteworthy that 'Immanuel' is the only personal name in the Hebrew Bible that contains a plural element, which underlines its communal character.³⁰³ The closest connection, not incidentally, is to the Korah Psalm 46,³⁰⁴ in which the cry of faithfulness יהוה צבאות עמנו is sung twice as a refrain. The composition of Psalms 46-47-48 is about Yhwh's victory against the onrushing nations in the battle of the end-time, his return as World-King to the [heavenly] throne, and the recognition of his kingship by the world of nations (Ps. 47.9-10).³⁰⁵ That these Psalms at the least in their core 'had been sung at the Jerusalem autumn and new-year festival (Yhwh's ascent to the throne as an actualization of his worldwide kingship)'³⁰⁶ is also important in understanding the orientation of the 'Immanuel-group'. It is toward King Yhwh, who has filled the entire earth with his glory (Isa. 6), and whose world kingship is celebrated in the autumn Festival of Booths with pilgrims from Israel *and* the nations! Paradoxically, it was the end of the Davidic monarchy, which had not been able to enjoy a renaissance even with Zerubbabel, that opened the way for the recognition of Yhwh as מלך of the whole earth. Zechariah 8.23 offers an indication (though not proof) of the correctness of this exegesis in the promise that ten men from the nations will take hold of the cloak of one man from Judah and say, 'We want to go with you, for we have heard that *God is with you*' (אלהים עמכם).

The 'Immanuel-group' is convinced that the enemy nations who are ill-disposed to Zion and their population are not able to do harm; thus it writes itself into the Isaianic oracle of 8.8b-10, which extends Isaiah's proclamation of the gushing waters of the Assyrian army to that of the storm of the nations, before which Immanuel, however, has no need to fear. What Isaiah once promised Ahaz, i.e., that the plans (יֵעִץ) of Aram and Ephraim would not be achieved (לֹא תִקֹּם, 7.7), the group echoes in the affirmation of the impregnability of the mountain of God, לֹא יִקֹּם כִּי עִמָּנוּ אֵל (8.10), which has its closest parallel in Psalm 46.³⁰⁷

303. Stegemann, 'Der Restgedanke', p. 184: 'still, the plural form in the name points clearly to a community which will stand in close connection with Yahweh.'

304. So the question arises whether the opaque על עַלְמוֹת (in the manner of virgins) in Ps. 46.1 is not to be related to the עַלְמוֹת of Isa. 7.14.

305. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalmen I*, p. 290 (here edited by Zenger).

306. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalmen I*, p. 284 (here edited by Zenger).

307. See Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 182-83; J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 57: 'For the redactor, Emmanuel is the new community of the postexilic period.'

If the promise of the birth of Immanuel truly expresses the hope of a group³⁰⁸ to be the kernel of postexilic Israel, then the *עלמה* can only be Zion itself, to which it is born!³⁰⁹ Thus E. Haag, among others, comes to the conclusion, "The '*almāh*' in Isa. 7.14 is...in the sense of this meta-historical fact, the representative of Zion, namely, that "place" in the world where Yahweh constitutes the "remnant" of the house of David as the "beginning" of the saved people of God."³¹⁰ The objection that Zion is nowhere else called '*almāh*' should be taken into consideration, but loses its importance in view of how distinctive the feminine metaphors of Zion are in the book of Isaiah, on the one hand,³¹¹ and, on the other hand, in view of the fact that the unique situation into which the birth oracle has to be fitted demands a special terminology:³¹² Compared to the 'Daughter of Zion', 'spouse' (62.4), 'wife' (54.6), 'bride' (61.10), the concept *עלמה* emphasizes, beyond the wife-, bride-, and motherhood of Zion, that Immanuel is the community of the pious, the first-born of the new people of God. According to that, *עלמה* is chosen not so much in view of the woman who has given birth, but of the child who is coming to the world. Immanuel is the first-born of 'many brothers', which can be easily recognized as the basis of the images of the unexpected abundance of children of Zion in 49.17–50.1; 54 and 66.7–14. On the synchronic level, the last reference reads almost like an exegesis of the Immanuel oracle: 'Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before pain came upon her, she delivered a son (זכר)... Hardly in labor pains, Zion has already given birth to her children' (66.7–8). The fact that the heirs stem from the entire world of nations is a strong reminder of Zion as mother of all disciples of Yhwh, as stated in the Korah Psalm 87.³¹³

The interpretation of *עלמה* in 7.14 as Zion, whose first-born is the community of the pious has the advantage, on the one hand, that it explains the article—for Zion is this unique one—and on the other

308. Cf. 7.22; 8.8b–10; 10.20–22.

309. Cf. Rignell, 'Das Immanuelszeichen', p. 113: 'If "the young woman" can be conceived as Israel, then her son is the new Israel which belongs to the future'; more concretely, Kruse, 'Alma Redemptoris Mater', pp. 22–23: 'If we now look around in the armory of the prophetic symbols, then...really only the Zion figure is a possibility as the motherly bringer of salvation'; Rice, 'A Neglected Interpretation', pp. 220–27.

310. E. Haag, 'Das Immanuelzeichen', p. 19.

311. 'Daughter of Zion' 1.8; 10.32; 16.1; 'daughter of my nation' 22.4; 'harlot' 1.21; 'daughters of Zion' 3.16; 'violated one' 3.26b; 'virgin daughter of Zion' 37.22; 'daughter Jerusalem' 37.22; 'the one giving birth in difficulty' 37.3.

312. Cf. Kruse, 'Alma Redemptoris Mater', p. 23.

313. The idea of Mother Zion giving birth is also found in Mic. 4.9–10; 5.1–2.

hand, it explains why it is *she* who names the son (וּקְרָאָהּ), since with this metaphor nothing can be said about a father. Moreover, the participle יִלְדָּה occurs with the emphatic הִנֵּה, which indicates an imminent birth, an appropriate clarification, since there is the conviction that the birth, i.e., ‘its public meaning’, is close at hand.³¹⁴

With the help of the Isaianic words of 8.4 it is emphasized that before the boy has learned to choose good and despise evil—i.e., in view of Solomon in 1 Kgs 3.9, before the beginning of the rule of Immanuel—the land [of Judah] would first be deserted. Whether this means a second catastrophe is still coming after the exile must remain open. The imminent birth of Immanuel speaks in any case against a vision of the future which is imagined as all too far off. Related to 7.16, the idea in 6.12–13³¹⁵ that the desertion and destruction must progress still further before the holy seed can grow, means, in contrast, that the high-flying messianic expectations should be dampened down. The We-group that appears in the Immanuel-oracle with the expectation of a definitive turn toward salvation is probably not identical with the remnant community responsible for the composition of 1–4 in the early postexilic period; rather, the Immanuel birth-proclamation builds on the insertion of the rejected sign and already presupposes the image of Zion as wife and mother from the book of Isaiah.³¹⁶

2.3.6. *The Difficulties of the Remnant (Isaiah 7.18–25)*

This disunified expansion³¹⁷ portrays on the one hand the days (of judgment) which shall come upon Israel (7.17); on the other hand, it reinforces the idea that in spite of all difficulty, the remaining remnant (הַנּוֹתָר) will survive (7.22). The crisis, which, from the exilic view in v. 17, was attributable to the behavior to Ahaz and hence to the Davidic royal house, is now traced directly back to Yhwh in 7.18–20 by two images which no longer offer a historical ‘grounding’: he

314. On the contrary, among others, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 55: ‘It follows that “the young woman” is none other than the *queen*, therefore the mother of Hezekiah and the wife of Ahaz.’

315. Thus 7.16 with הָעֵזוּבָה echoes 6.11b הָאֲדָמָה and 6.12 (הָעֵזוּבָה); against this, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 56: ‘The natural association is the imminent defeat of the two enemy powers, Aram and Israel.’

316. The insertion of 7.15 then points to a growing individualization of the Immanuel idea, which has to be understood solely as a Messianic expectation (see below at 7.21–22); 9.1–6 provides an eloquent witness to that.

317. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 34: ‘It involves a progressive chain of expansion which is occasioned by the question of what the future which is envisaged in 7.15–17 holds (cf. the formula “on that day” in 7.18, 20, 21, 23).’

whistles to the flies and bees which occupy every fissure, every bush, every waterhole in an unbelievable quantity, and with the hired Mesopotamian razor he shaves the national body of Israel, like the bodies of war prisoners, humiliatingly smooth.³¹⁸

In this scenario where the distress is arranged by Yhwh, analogous to the Immanuel birth oracle (7.14b, 16a, בָּא) in the early postexilic redaction (7.10-14a, 17), the motif of protection of the remnant is inserted (7.21, 22), which is reminiscent of 6.13b. Although the images of the sprouting shoots from the felled tree and of surviving only with one cow and two goats³¹⁹ are different, they have similar messages: out of the difficulty, new life springs forth. Thus 'sour milk and honey' (not 'milk and honey') are food neither of a time of blessing nor of a time of disaster, but rather the time following catastrophe, of gradual normalization; one is not rich, but it reaches!³²⁰ Whether the Immanuel birth oracle and vv. 21-22 stem from the same pen may be doubted; it should not be doubted, however, that they were regarded as related to each other by a later pen, which did not wish to deprive the boy Immanuel of the food of those who were left (7.22). If one compares the statement about the remnant (הַנִּחְרָת) with the 'remnant-passages' in 1.8, 9 and 4.3, then it is obvious that 7.22 neither concentrated on Jerusalem/Zion, nor possessed any special theological character; v. 22 is therefore not to be enlisted as part of an elaborate 'remnant theology'.³²¹

Verses 23-25 are marked by a three-fold 'there' and a three-fold mention of 'thorns and thistles', which recalls 5.6 in exactly the same terms. Thus these verses appear to have used the Song of the vineyard as a 'quarry'.³²² Had they made reference to the remnant eating sour milk and honey (v. 22), it would have been with the goal of giving this hopeful image a large dose of skepticism: The vineyard, i.e., postexilic Israel, is [again] so full of thorns and thistles that 'it would be appalling to have to face the task of reclaiming the vineyard yet again'.³²³

318. Thus גָּלָה ('to be exiled') was probably heard at the same time with גָּלַח ('to shave').

319. Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, p. 185: 'This image...clearly expresses reduced circumstances, a meagerness that implies the deterioration or destruction of the socio-cultural situation.'

320. Against Dohmen, 'Verstockungsvollzug', p. 50 n. 48: 'Too little to live, too much to die.'

321. Thus with Hausmann, *Israel's Rest*, pp. 147-49, and against Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 223.

322. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 1. Teilband, p. 307; Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, p. 183 n. 250.

323. Rignell, 'Das Immanuelszeichen', p. 118.

Looking back on this chapter, we note that Isaiah 7 shows an admirable dynamic in that word and history continually dovetail: The Isaianic word to Ahaz, which forced him to the decision of faith, is followed by early postexilic material by the compositors of 1–4* with the insertion of the ‘rejected sign’, a defense of their prophetic master. It lays the responsibility for the collapse of the Davidic monarchy not on Isaiah, but rather on Ahab’s rejection of faith, by which the hardening task of 6.9–11 was obtained. In a late postexilic period the Immanuel oracle was inserted as the positive turning point of the political collapse of the Davidic monarchy, perhaps after the pathetic shattered renaissance under Zerubbabel! The community of the servants understood itself as a son of the ‘Maid Zion’; she is a bearer of hope in the postexilic period. With the absent turning point of salvation, the Immanuel oracle in the fourth century was the popular springboard for the messianic expectation: the community of the righteous on Zion which could say of itself, ‘God with us’, was rapidly marginalized sociologically, and their hopes began to concentrate on Immanuel, which came to be characteristic of the remnant community (7.15), and thus a process was set in motion which would run all the way into the New Testament.³²⁴

2.3.7. *Two Poems Attached to the Memoir (Isaiah 8.19–9.6)*

It is evident that 8.18 concludes the memoir.³²⁵ The language in ‘Yhwh who lives on Mount Zion’ (הַשֵּׁכֵן בְּהַר צִיּוֹן) harkens back to the beginning of the memoir in 6.1, where Isaiah saw him sitting on a high throne (יָשָׁב עַל כִּסֵּא). With the sealing of the ‘Torah’ among the disciples (8.16–18) the memoir comes to its actual end. Isaiah and his children and disciples are security for the new prophetic community, toward which the book of Isaiah is aimed.³²⁶ The role that Isaiah and his children and disciples play at the level of the narrative transfers to the community of the pious at the level of communication established by the book.³²⁷ The ‘Isaiah disciples’ of the narrated world become ‘students of Yhwh’,³²⁸ the kernel of the postexilic community in the

324. Höffken, ‘Grundfragen’, p. 41: ‘Emmanuel has become an iconic sign.’

325. Against Whitley, ‘Language and Exegesis’, pp. 28–43, who sees 8.16–23 as a unit.

326. Cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 191: ‘This is the circle of the disciple community separated from “that people”, as a guarantee, as it were, for the remnant, which will turn to Yahweh on the other side of the catastrophe.’

327. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, p. 112: ‘Furthermore, Isaiah and his disciples (8.16) represent the model of the “we” who are the present survivors.’

328. So I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 45.

narrating world faithful to Yhwh and his Torah; they are the basis for a new Israel in the postexilic period.

2.3.7.1. *Disciplehood or Necromancy (Isaiah 8.19-23aα)*. The 'Sitz im Buch' and message of these verses can be understood only if one locates them on the communication level of the text. The narrative flow which described Isaiah's appearances at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis is interrupted in order to turn to the addressees of the book itself; they are enjoined to adhere to 'Torah and Testimony', i.e., to the record of the will of God, and not to give in to necromantic practices.³²⁹ One can conclude from this that with the passage of time, the lack of fulfillment of the promises for the postexilic community and especially for the pious in it became increasingly problematic, so that one must reckon with a revival of necromancy.³³⁰ The report of the sealing of torah and testimony by Isaiah and those waiting on Yhwh's intervention points to exemplary behavior, for he and his disciples waited in the darkness of history and did not go the way of inquiry of the dead; in short, prophetic inheritance and necromancy are mutually exclusive!³³¹ When the addressees of the scroll of Isaiah ('you' pl.) are exhorted to stop the inquiry of the dead because of the written will of God, there is perhaps an underlying attempt to connect with the prophetic primal ancestor, even with Isaiah himself, according to the motto: 'Is it not so, that a people/person inquires of his ancestors (אֲבוֹתָיו),³³² the dead on behalf of the living?' This foreign quote is followed by a denial from the 'orthodoxy':³³³ 'By torah and testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, there is no sunrise for that one (לֹא)!'³³⁴

329. Müller, 'Das Wort von den Totengeistern', p. 75: 'The demand for the conjuring up of the dead could just as well have come from Jews, which itself had let in all kinds of superstitions in the postexilic period, or from the heathen of their environment, in whose vortex they found themselves'; cf. Isa. 44.25; 47.9-12; 65.3-4.

330. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 193-94.

331. Also, van der Woude, 'Jesaja 8.19-23A', pp. 129-36, who proceeds from the unity of this text, which he places in the Josianic period, however.

332. The parallelism with דְּמוּתֵיהֶם suggests dead ancestors, not gods; among others, Müller, 'Das Wort von den Totengeistern', pp. 65-76; Niehr, 'Ein unerkannter Text zur Nekromantie', pp. 301-306.

333. Loretz, *Ugarit und die Bibel*, p. 141: 'After the Torah of Moses, the law of Sinai, had become the sole standard of the divine will and Yahweh the only God, inquiring of the "divinities" in the underworld of itself created an unbearable rivalry to the official religion.'

334. Cf. שֹׁחַר in 58.8: Righteous conduct ensures the sunrise!

In vv. 21–23a α this fact is paraded—that for the necromancer there is no light, i.e., no hope for the future—and is connected to the ‘people who walk in darkness’ (9.1–6). This is the people of whom it is said, they cross through *it*, i.e., the land (אֶרֶץ, 8.21), or the darkness (הַשְׁכָּה, 8.22).³³⁵ The results of the necromancy are painted in the darkest colors: hunger, anger, cursing of the state and religious order,³³⁶ and overwhelming darkness wherever they look. Those who seek to find wisdom and teaching in the death-oath will not see the light, but only those who hold only to the written word of God in spite of oppressing difficulty.³³⁷

2.3.7.2. *The Enthronement of Immanuel (Isaiah 9.1–6)*. This prophetic song of thanksgiving³³⁸ has been united with the previous verses through the theme of the ‘written will of God vs. the ancestor cult’ by the historicizing gloss in 8.23a β ,b,³³⁹ which has in view the annexation of the north-eastern area of Ephraim by Tiglathpileser in the year 733 (cf. 2 Kgs 15.29).³⁴⁰ In this way, the connection of 8.19–23 and 9.1–6 is established and at the same time clarifies who the people are that walk in the dark and see the light through the enthronement³⁴¹ of a royal prince. It is the population on the ‘Via Maris’³⁴² west of the Judaic tribal land, as well as that east of the Jordan and those living in the ‘Circle of Nations’ (גִּלְיָה הַגּוֹיִם); thus ‘it treats the Galil as a territory in south(west) North Palestine’.³⁴³ The proclaimed rule of the prince, therefore, is again extended to the entire area of the Davidic King-

335. Rignell, ‘Das Orakel’, p. 49, thinks of the transgression of the Torah; similarly I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, pp. 53–54; Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, p. 153, thinks of passing through Jerusalem.

336. Whitley, ‘Language and Exegesis’, pp. 32–33, understands the curse במלכו to refer to foreign cults: ‘the nation...will curse by whatever deities it recognises’ (p. 33).

337. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 231: ‘Si le peuple marche aujourd’hui dans la nuit, c’est parce qu’il n’a pas recherché la vraie lumière, celle de Yahvé, mais les reflets trompeurs de la divination et de la nécromancie.’

338. This is the literary type as identified by Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 199.

339. Fohrer, ‘Entstehung’, p. 125.

340. With respect to this half-verse, Alt’s insight remains valid (‘Jesaja 8,23–9,6’, pp. 206–25), though not as clarification for an assumed original unit of 8.23–9.1.

341. So Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 234–35, who refers to Egyptian parallels (five throne-names of the Pharaohs) and Pss. 2.7; 110.3. See also Robert’s corroborative discussion (‘Whose Child Is This’, pp. 115–29).

342. Cf. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, p. 164.

343. Cf. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, p. 159; cf. Josh. 12.23; Judg. 4.2, 13, 16.

dom. That kingdom's territorial losses, which the people of God had had to accept ever since the campaigns of Tiglathpileser, belonged to that dark past.

If one is looking for a biblical narrative that approximates these themes of the birth and enthronement of a prince, 2 Samuel 12 presents itself as a case where, as almost nowhere else, a royal ילד stands at the center. The son of David's adultery with Bathsheba must die, in contrast to the newborn whose birth is celebrated in Isa. 9.5: 'For a child has been born to us (ילד ילד לנו), a son given to us!' Where an allusion to the royal house would be expected in the birth oracle, there stands a 'to us' (לנו), which points to the 'democratization' of the idea of kingship.³⁴⁴ The new royal shoot does not come from the root of David and certainly not from the root of Saul!

9.1-6 also alludes repeatedly to the Nathan prophecy in 2 Samuel 7: 'there is a son' (9.5; 2 Sam. 7.14), continuity of the throne (9.6; 2 Sam. 7.16), 'name' (9.5; 2 Sam. 7.9), and allusion to the period of the Judges (9.3; 2 Sam. 7.11).³⁴⁵ Beyond that, the motif of 'Yhwh is with him',³⁴⁶ which pervades the narratives of David, is found again in the Immanuel name. This does not mean, however, that a 'David redivivus' is being celebrated, for the royal title (מלך) is avoided. Yhwh alone is regarded as king (6.1; 33.22; 52.7). Instead, the language of 'lord' (שֵׁר) and 'rulership' (מִשְׁרָה) is used, where שֵׁר never appears as a royal title.³⁴⁷

This critique of kingship while at the same time transferring key elements from its scope of ideas indicates, therefore, that the rulership of the royal princes would be essentially different from that experienced and endured in the time of monarchy. So the 'day of Midian' in 9.3 points to an important episode of the time of Judges (Judg. 7). Gideon strikes the Midianites only with Yhwh's help and *not* by his own military effort, whereupon a position of dynastic leadership is offered to him. 'Become our ruler (מִשְׁלֵל בָּנוּ), you and your son and your grandson; for you have freed us from the power of Midian.' Gideon rejects this categorically: 'I will not rule over you, and my son shall not rule over you: Yhwh shall rule over you'

344. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 44: 'If "to us" in Isa. 9.5 refers to the people, this allows the understanding of the "democratization" of the king idea, especially observable since Deutero-Isaiah.'

345. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 42: 'Consequently, Isa. 9.1-7 has to do with a new interpretive takeover of the deuteronomistically-shaped Nathan prophecy.'

346. 1 Sam. 16.18; 18.12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5.10; 7.3-9.

347. The language 'Throne of David' does not entail a continuation of the dynasty, as Jer. 22.30 shows; cf. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, pp. 38-40.

(Judg. 8.22). His son, with the symbolic name 'Abimelech' ('my father is king'), sees this entirely differently. After the blood bath with his brothers he is made מלך (Judg. 9.6). The 'Day of Midian' in Isa. 9.3 points therefore to a saving act which probably could have led to kingship, but did not under Gideon. Thus it is possible to hypothesize that even the 'child' in Isa. 9.1-6 would have a share in liberating from the 'rod of the oppressor' without, however, becoming מלך through that action. If interpretations that see a conventional enthronement in the ילד of 9.5, be it Hezekiah³⁴⁸ or Josiah,³⁴⁹ do not really give further help, the eschatological-messianic interpretation gets its chance.³⁵⁰ The preterit character of the Thanksgiving Song appears to speak against this, though it is qualified by the closing statement that the zeal of Yhwh Sabaoth will accomplish this (...קנאתו).³⁵¹

The proclamation that the people in darkness would see a great light alludes to Ebed texts from 42.6-7 and 49.9, but has also a great affinity with the descriptions of destiny in Job and Ecclesiastes,³⁵² so that it essentially is speaking of liberation from a personally experienced difficulty, as Werner points out.³⁵³ It is not about a one-time political act of salvation, as the historicizing gloss in 8.23aβ would have it, but rather 'about a comprehensive change of the reality of life up to now'.³⁵⁴

Because of that, there is no doubt that 9.1-6 means to interpret the Immanuel prophecy of 7.14. Recognizing the relation of ילד ילד לנו to

348. Lescow, 'Das Geburtsmotiv', pp. 187-88; Laato, 'Immanuel—Who Is with Us?', pp. 313-22; and especially his monograph, *Who is Immanuel?*; Clements, 'Immanuel Prophecy', pp. 233-39; Dohmen, 'Das Immanuelzeichen', pp. 318-19, with his interpretation of the עלמה as a foreign (Assyrian?) princess.

349. See especially Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, pp. 176-77; Vieweger, 'Das Volk', p. 83.

350. Höffken, 'Grundfragen', p. 41, on 9.5: 'This verse can hardly be understood otherwise than as a Messianic echo of the Immanuel proclamation.'

351. With Vollmer, 'Zur Sprache', p. 348, and Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, pp. 23-25; according to Renaud, 'La forme poétique', pp. 336-38, this is an addition which underlines Yhwh's initiative (cf. 37.32).

352. See Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 44: הליך בושך in Eccl. 2.14; 6.4; ראה אור in Job 3.16; 31.26; 37.21; אור נה in Job 22.28; also צלמות in Job 3.5; 10.21; 12.22; 28.3; 34.22 (in prophetic literature: Amos 5.8; Jer. 2.6; 13.16).

353. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 30: 'Although verses 9.2ff. make one think of a situation of political oppression, because of the terminological similarity to Job and Ecclesiastes, one must consider in particular whether Isa. 9.1 is not speaking more broadly of human life but of a personal life-and-death experience.'

354. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 31.

עֲמֻנָּה is not to deny at all its closeness to 11.1-9:³⁵⁵ In all these texts the royal sprout stands at the center. If on the synchronic plane one goes along with Fohrer's identification of the three elements of the birth oracle,³⁵⁶ then 7.14-16 is understood as 'A Proclamation of the Pregnancy', 9.1-6 as 'A Command about the Name of the Child', and 11.1-9 as 'A Prophecy about the Future Acts of the Child'. Yet a common authorship of all three texts is scarcely probable. If the pious community, which understood itself as the royal first-born of Mother Zion, is behind the 'Immanuel' of 7.14, the right of the first-born is validated by the spirit-endowed shoot in 11.1 which will pursue the achievement of justice and righteousness, where Zion-centeredness stands out (11.9) in contrast to 9.1-6. These verses appear to have grown out of the disillusioned hope of the late postexilic community, which increasingly vividly imagined the shadows of death and hoped in imminent redemption.

2.4. Judgment upon Assyria— *Change for the People of God (Isaiah 10.5–12.6)*

On the synchronic plane, the Woe against Assyria (10.5) fulfills the change for the better for the people of God, who ultimately join in the thanksgiving song of Isaiah 12. The outermost bracket around the memoir is marked by the seventh Woe in 10.1 and the 'outstretched hand' in 10.4. The first part of the memoir, beginning with the Song of the Vineyard and the Woes attacking the social outrages, would have been sufficient to prove that the punishment of Ephraim and Judah by the Assyrian superpower was groundless, but rather had been delegated by Yhwh. Yet Assyria also stands under the wrath of Yhwh, because it does not understand itself as the instrument of the universal God against Zion. This last portion of chaps. 1–12 is about that and about its effect on the Zion community. Thus, added to the Woe against Assyria in 10.5-15, is a series of six בִּינִים הָהוּא³⁵⁷ sayings, which extend to the eschatological thanksgiving song of Isaiah 12 and explain the positive results of the judgment of Assyria for the cleansed people of God.

On the diachronic level, chap. 10 is an extremely complicated textual arrangement which can be reappraised here only with respect

355. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 119, 241 n. 21, appears to assign these three texts to one common redaction.

356. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, I, p. 113 n. 55.

357. Isa. 10.20, 27; 11.10, 11; 12.1, 4.

to the fact that it is important for its place in the composition of the book. In particular, the question of who is responsible for the connections of 11.1–9 will receive consideration. The thesis set out above serves as a point of departure, that is, that the memoir with its double framework probably served in the time of Manasseh to encourage the king to take a position of expectant quietude, a message that he took to heart.

With the successive defeats of the one-time world power Assyria, which lost its capital cities—Assur in the year 614 and Nineveh in the year 612—and completely disappeared from the stage of world history after the battle of Carchemish (605),³⁵⁸ a new situation arose, even for small Judah, which has not gone without comment. Thus, tied to the framed memoir is a reflection about the fall of Assyria in 10.5–15, with its original conclusion to be found in 14.24–27.³⁵⁹

2.4.1. *The Double Return (Isaiah 10.5–34)*

After 10.1–4, which combines and brings to a conclusion the two framing sections (Woe-call and chorus poem), there follows a Woe against Assyria (10.5–15).³⁶⁰ This positions itself not only by the connection to the יְהוָה of 10.1, but also by the refrain of the ever outstretched hand of Yhwh (10.4), which Assyria will now experience. This Woe pursues the question of why Yhwh's instrument of divine punishment for Israel and Judah had itself fallen.³⁶¹ It is not

358. On this, see Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 412–18.

359. Surprisingly, Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, pp. 21–27, attributes this 'Anti-Assyrian speech' not to his Assyrian redaction from the Josianic period, but rather to Isaiah himself; see U. Becker's critique in *Jesaja*, pp. 212–19. Against Becker (*Jesaja*, pp. 219, 224, 264) it should be emphasized that the Assyrian texts do not primarily serve the literary preparation of the Hezekiah Legends, but are mainly rooted in their contemporary history. Becker does not see this, since he places the Assyrian texts only in the Persian period.

360. According to Mittmann, 'Wehe', p. 127, the original oracle had two strophes (5–9; 13aβ–15), 'which are of similar structure and skillfully related to one another.'

361. For the idea that Isaiah changed his mind toward Assyria as a 'punishing instrument' see W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, pp. 101–14, with his thesis of a doubled 'change of the salvation prophecy to disaster prophecy...around 713 and around 705' (p. 114); according to Huber, *Jahwe, Juda und die anderen Völker*, p. 60, Isaiah's hostile words about Assyria are probably to be dated in the year 701; according to Hoffmann, *Die Intention der Verkündigung Jesajas*, pp. 56ff., after the departure of Assyria in 701, the return of the people to their God, anticipated by Isaiah, does not take place, and that is why the prophet changed from a preacher of repentance to one of judgment.

just the connection of the Woe to the redactional הוי in 10.1 that speaks against a draft by Isaiah or by his immediate disciples.³⁶² Also speaking against it is the expansion of the Assyria oracle in 10.10-11 with the theme of idols and in 10.12³⁶³ with that of the inviolability of Zion, pointing to an insertion from the Hezekiah narratives. Already in 10.5-15 and still more clearly in 14.24-27,³⁶⁴ Assyria increasingly becomes the symbol for the ungodly world-powers generally who not only attack the people of God, but Yhwh's honor itself.

The original conclusion of the Assyria oracles in 14.24-27 was misplaced in the Oracles of the Nations because, in the course of a 'theologizing of history',³⁶⁵ an oracle against Assyria was needed in 13-23. As a result of the transfer of the contents of 14.24-27 to follow the Babylon oracle, an proclamation of judgment against the disobedient and arrogant Assyria was lacking after the question of 10.15 whether the tool may turn against its master. Such a proclamation was then supplied in 10.16-19,³⁶⁶ in which the key phrase 'not wood' לֹא עֵץ is picked up from 10.15, and images are utilized that depict Assyria with a 'tree metaphor', a language which continues up to 11.1, 10. At the end of the punishment, what will remain of Assyria is so small a 'remnant of the trees of his forest' (שֹׁאֵר עֵץ יַעֲרֹ) that a child will be able to count them (10.19). It is no accident that in 10.33-34 this same tree-metaphor comes into play again, now however, no longer directed against Assyria, which had already received its punishment, but against the branches, the thickets of the forest, the 'Lebanon', i.e., against the leaders of the people of God.

The interconnected outcomes of the year 701 for Assyria and Israel are pointed out by the contrast of the שֹׁאֵר of 10.19 and 10.20. Assyria's remnant is decimated into meaninglessness; Israel's remnant, however, will in the future no longer rely on Assyria, but upon Yhwh. It

362. So Kilian, *Jesaja 1-12*, p. 80; against this, Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', pp. 560-61, attributes 10.5ff to Isaiah (as also 11.1-5), in order to support his thesis of a Isaianic ring-composition in 1.21-11.5.

363. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 222: 'The blasphemy against Yhwh contained in them [vv. 10-11; U.B.] appears to demand an immediate answer.'

364. According to Clements, 'Isaiah 14.22-27', p. 256, 14.26-27 is a later expansion from an apocalyptic worldview.

365. Cf. 10.24, 26: 'It is happening now with Assyria as it once happened with the Egyptians' with the context of 14.24ff. 'It will happen with Babylon as it once happened with Assyria.'

366. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 222-23, 227; K. Nielsen, *There Is Hope for a Tree*, p. 190.

is the community of the pious which, midrash-like,³⁶⁷ in 10.20–23 is already occupied with the symbolic importance of the son of Isaiah, ‘Shear-Jashub’. While the son of Isaiah was the sign of God’s protection for Ahaz and the whole royal house, because of their rejection he became the sign of the separation into pious and sinner. The community of the pious is adorned with the honorific title שֹׂאֵר יֵשׁוּב, and it is their task to turn back to the strong God (10.21). A mitigation of this honorary designation is added, which is that they will remain a small remnant, even if postexilic Israel should become like the sand of the sea (10.22).³⁶⁸

This statement of identity is followed by a word of comfort that is designated as an oracle (10.24–26): the inhabitants on Zion (יֹשְׁבֵי צִיּוֹן) shall not fear (אֵל תִּירָא) before Assyria and its blows. This charge is found again in Isaiah 1–39 only twice, directed to Ahaz (7.4) and Hezekiah (37.6).³⁶⁹ This connection indicates that the community on Zion saw itself as successor to the Davidic kingship,³⁷⁰ expressed in the image of the ‘shoot from the root of Jesse’ (11.1). The miraculous freeing of Zion and its population from the power of the Assyrian aggressors in the year 701 is equal to the exodus from Egypt (בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם), and, one is tempted to say, was accepted into the postexilic credo. The purpose of 10.20–23, introduced with the first בְּיוֹם הַהוּא after the turn of 10.5–15 (from the punishing Assyria to Assyria who is punished), is continued with 10.27–34, likewise introduced by בְּיוֹם הַהוּא: the remnant of Jacob, the population of the pious on Zion, does not need to fear before the military strikes of Assyria, even if they have to suffer under them still a ‘very little’ while (עוֹד מְעַט מִזֶּמֶר, 10.25a). Here Assyria is no longer the historical superpower of the eighth and seventh centuries, but a cipher for all enemy powers, before which the community felt itself threatened.

It is universally recognized that the army that came from the north-east in 10.27–34, outflanking the boundary fortress of Mispah, is that of Assyria; likewise it is clear that none of the supposedly historical locales of the text is completely correct.³⁷¹ Both the topographical knowledge of the writer as well as the inability to grasp

367. Cf. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, p. 30: Carroll, ‘Inner Tradition Shifts’, pp. 301–302.

368. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 117: ‘The text draws a clear line between the saved of the exile and those finally chosen.’

369. In the rest of the book of Isaiah: 41.10, 13, 14; 43.1, 5; 44.2.

370. Cf. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, p. 41: ‘The people, then, are addressed as if they were a king...’; Conrad, ‘The Royal Narratives’, p. 67.

371. Also, recently, Sweeney, ‘Sargon’s Threat’, pp. 457–70 (bibliography!).

historical fact suggest that a author with knowledge of places but at some temporal distance from the Assyrian invasion (against Egypt, 720; against Ashdod, 712; against Jerusalem 701) has just sketched out these deployments, whereas the intensifying drama best relates to the 'siege' of Jerusalem in the year 701, especially since this event is also highlighted in 36–38.³⁷²

If it is correct that the 'Assyria' connected to the historical-theologically directed Assyria oracle (10.5-15)³⁷³ no longer means merely the once-great power, but rather the enemies of Zion generally, then Yhwh's intervention at the last minute (10.33-34) also is only superficially directed against Assyria; however, it is certainly against an actual enemy: They are the 'arrogant' (רמי הקומה) and the 'high' (הגבהים), those who are cut down and fall to the ground, which the Isaianic preaching in 2.12-21 actualizes against everything high and every hubris. Just as the thicket of the forest and 'Lebanon' would be stricken, i.e., felled, so the Davidic royal house is seen as being destroyed by Yhwh (!): 'As the "forest", the nations' splendid force, is hewn down together (10.34), even the mighty tree of the house of David falls under the ax (11.1). Yet Yahweh will raise up a shoot from the tree-stump of Jesse, going back beyond the stem of David to its root.'³⁷⁴ Thus in this contrast of the hewn-down Davidic house and Isaiah's sprouting scion can be seen the basis of a critical conflict in the postexilic period over the future of the Davidic monarchy. For the community of the pious, Yhwh had destroyed the house of David through the exile; only the shoot from the root of Jesse still possessed royal qualities, and this referred to none other than themselves.

2.4.2. *The Beginning of the Rulership of the Isaiah-shoot (Isaiah 11)*

Both syntactically as well as thematically, chap. 11 is securely linked with the previous material³⁷⁵ as a substantiation of the positive results

372. Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament II', p. 20: 'Unfortunately, however, the lack of historically corresponding dates allows no confident dating of the verse. At any rate, the year 701 is situated closest.'

373. Cf. E. Haag, 'Jesaja, Assur und der Antijahwe', pp. 18-37, for whom two historical revisions in Isa. 10.5-15 more and more strongly emphasize an 'anti-Yahweh' character.

374. Schreiner, 'Das Buch jesajanischer Schule', p. 155; Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', p. 562: 'Among the stricken trees of Lebanon is also the stem of the royal house, which 11.1ff then treats. From this it also indicates that (27b) 28-34 is meant as a continuation of the subject.'

375. K. Nielsen, *There Is Hope for a Tree*, p. 131: 'an original redactional marrying together.'

of Assyria's punishment for the people of God, where Assyria is a cipher for the opponent and enemies of the Zion community.³⁷⁶ The punishment of the hubris of Assyria does not mean that it results in a Davidic renaissance, for together with Assyria, the high-soaring ones of the royal house have also fallen. The future does not lie with a 'David redivivus' but rather with a shoot from the root of Jesse. The chapter is not unified. After vv. 1-5, which announce the achievement of justice and righteousness by the spirit-endowed shoot, vv. 6-8 portray the salutary results in the picture of peaceful animal relations, which amounts to a 'restitutio ad integrum' of the entire creation. 11.9 connects the Israel-centering of vv. 1-5 with the theme of the peaceful animals, the first half-verse emphasizing the just order on the Mount of God, the second, the land's recognition of God.

The Masoretes underline the peculiarity of 11.10 by placing a *petuḥa* before and after the verse. The banner that Yhwh had lifted up to signal the attack against Zion (5.26) has become a signal for the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion (cf. 49.22). When the nations recognize that justice can actually be obtained on the Mount of God, then even they will bring their legal cases to be decided on Zion (שפט/הורכיה in 2.4 and 11.4).

This international perspective is narrowed down in vv. 11-16³⁷⁷ to the return of the Diaspora Jews from the world of the nations, which is covered by 27.12-13 and 35.9b-10. It should be emphasized that 11.11-16, 27.12-13, and 35.9b-10 lie on one redactional level, as Steck and Vermeylen have noted;³⁷⁸ that 56.8 and 66.20 also belong to this redaction should be challenged, however, in agreement with Steck but against Vermeylen. Steck's thesis that 62.10-12 is supposedly the closing point of a Diaspora homecoming redaction³⁷⁹ cannot be followed, since the exegesis will show that Yhwh disciples from the nations to Zion are expected there. The argument which Steck makes against Vermeylen about excluding 56.8 and 66.20 from the homecoming redaction is equally valid for 62.10-12. They cannot be the closing point of the homecoming redaction, because they also

376. Against Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', p. 568.

377. Three expansions in 11-12, 13-14, 15-16 are probable, where v. 16 (שאר עמו) refers back to v. 11. According to Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 279, Assyria represents the Seleucids, and Egypt the Ptolemies.

378. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 279-80; II, pp. 749-50; Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 62-64; against this, Williamson, 'Isaiah XI 1-16', p. 335.

379. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 65-69; Steck, *Der Abschluß der Prophetie*, pp. 157-59.

indicate a positive relation to the nations.³⁸⁰ Thus we conclude that the three endings 11.11-16, 27.12-13, and 35.9b-10 stem from one hand, by which the viewpoint of the book of Isaiah—openness to the nations, which can be traced back in its essence to the redaction of the servant community (63–66)—is reduced to the return of the Jewish-Diaspora.

Concerning the homecoming redaction in 11.11-16, Steck has stated, 'For the first time in the book, this passage exposes its dominant theme, the return home of the Diaspora in a safe march to Zion and the land in the midst of world judgment.'³⁸¹ But now in Isaiah 11, especially in association with 11.10(!), there can be no oracle of a judgment of the nations; this is also entirely rejected in the view of the thanksgiving song of chap. 12. In the first place, bringing the context of international judgment from 13–37 into chap. 11 does not speak for the sustainability of this thesis; second, even in those chapters, forward-looking statements can be found concerning an integration of the nations into a divine relationship, which find its highest expression in the common meal with Yhwh (25.6-8). In addition, if one observes *how* 11.11-16 is related to previous statements, then the suspicion may be confirmed that any international perspective in 11.10 is diminished in favor of the return home of the Diaspora Jews. Thus the signal in 11.12 no longer stands in the context of Yhwh being sought by the nations, but in connection with the return home of the Diaspora Jews. The maxim of 9.20, 'Manasseh with Ephraim against Judah', no longer applies; instead they are united against their enemies in the west, east, and south (11.12-14). Thus the vision of a pleasant situation for the world's nations, even of the primal creation on the Mount of God, has been laid to rest; there is no longer understanding and a common search for God, but plundering and lordship over the ancient enemies are now the images of the future. Indirectly, Steck even confirms the interpretation that 11.11-16 reverses the openness toward the nations of 11.10³⁸² and the corresponding oracles of salvation in the cycle of

380. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 64: 'The statements of 56.8; 66.20, which Vermeylen sets alongside the texts mentioned, do not belong here, since they speak of a positive inclusion of the nations in the homecoming; the same goes for proto-Isaiah in the famous passage 19.18-25 as well as 14.1-2; 18.7; 25.6-7.'

381. Steck, "'...ein kleiner Knabe'", p. 105; cf. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 60-64.

382. Cf. Steck, "'...ein kleiner Knabe'", p. 105: 'Vv. 11-16 are more recent than v. 10, for they build on this verse, already correcting it'; so also E. Haag, 'Der neue David', p. 99, who views 11.10, 11-16 as two supplements to 11.1-9.

the nations when he states: '11.11-16—in looking forward to Isaiah 13–27—reckons no longer with an eschatological co-existence of the nations with the people of God.'³⁸³ The question of whether 11.11-16 has actually been inserted as a corrective to the international perspective of 11.10 is decided in the thanksgiving song in Isaiah 12. It is obvious that this song, in contrast, is positive toward the nations. Proceeding from the inhabitants of Zion, the knowledge of the great act of Yhwh shall reach the entire world. Its close connections to 25.1-3 likewise point in the direction of an open stance toward the nations;³⁸⁴ if that is so, then only the 'root of Jesse' of 11.10 is a possibility as the singer of this thanksgiving song, behind whom is concealed the Zion community—it is the *יְהִיבֶת צִיּוֹן* (12.6).³⁸⁵

On the plane of a synchrony that reflects the diachronic, which makes access to the composition possible, clear relationships between 11.1-9 and 1.2–4.6 can be detected. Thus the lexeme 'knowledge' (*דַּעַה*, 11.2, 9) refers back to the 'not-knowing' of Israel in 1.3, and in all of Isaiah 1–39, the concepts 'do evil' (*רַעַע*) and 'bring about destruction' (*שָׁחַה*) appear only in 11.1-9 and 1.4, where the Zion rural context in 11.6-9 is also described in 1.7-9.³⁸⁶ And that is not all: As the cleansing judgment of 1.21-26 reestablishes justice and righteousness, by which Jerusalem again becomes the *עִיר הַצֶּדֶק קְרִיָּה נְאֻמָּה*, so also in 11.1-5 there is the shoot of Jesse who judges in righteousness (11.4) and whose hip- and loin-girdles are *צִדְקָה* and *נְאֻמָּה* (11.5).³⁸⁷ Thus the suspicion is strengthened that a first closing point has been consciously set with 11.1-9,³⁸⁸ which makes clear under what conditions a cleansed Jerusalem can be the goal of the international pilgrimage. In 11.1-9 the narrative of the election of David from the circle of the sons of Jesse and his anointing by the spirit stands in the foreground; thus the key word *יֵשׁ* in 11.1 is taken up again in 11.10. The emphasis lies not on continuing the Davidic dynasty,³⁸⁹ but rather on the choice

383. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 63.

384. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 281.

385. Cf. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 62: 'the postexilic community'; Zenger, 'Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10', p. 147: 'the renewed Zion community rests on the creative *יְהוָה יִרְוֶה*.'

386. So Steck, "'...ein kleiner Knabe'", p. 106 n. 13.

387. See Zenger's list of references, 'Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10', p. 144.

388. Thus, the ring-composition maintains its importance with Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament I', pp. 551-52, but not as an Isaianic composition!

389. E. Haag, 'Der neue David', p. 104: 'As the image of the tree-stump and the rootstock shows, all that remains is the memory of the election of David, which was fundamental for the theocracy of Israel.'

of the unassuming.³⁹⁰ As Yhwh once chose David, the youngest of the sons of Jesse, so the divine choice of the unlikely sprig from the root of Jesse is validated now.³⁹¹ The resting of spirit (נוח רוח) on those remaining of the root-sprig is expressed in a similar way to that of the 70 Elders, who participate in the prophetic spirit of Moses (Num. 11.25), and to that of Elisha, who carried on the charisma of Elijah (2 Kgs 2.15), but with the difference that the anointing is now achieved directly, without human mediation.³⁹² This is a further clue that behind the image of the root-stock of Jesse is concealed the community on Zion, in which the royal-Davidic as well as prophetic-Mosaic endowing of spirit lives on. The main concern of this community is the achievement of a just social order, emphasized in 11.3-4 (שפט/יכה) and comparable to Isa. 2.4. Only when the administration of justice for the דלים and the עניי ארץ is achieved by the spirit-endowed new prophetic-royal community on Mount Zion will the signal be given for the international pilgrimage to Zion, which is 'my holy Mount'.³⁹³ Righteousness and confidence, the once futilely hoped-for attributes of Jerusalem (1.21, 26), now belong to the innermost character of the Zion community!³⁹⁴

With the motif of 'animal peace' in 11.6-8, the issues of the righteous social-economic order which shall rule on Zion under the leadership of the Zion community are outdone in the sense of obtaining the original violence-free order of creation; not only will there be peace among mankind, but also in the animal world (6-7) and between humans and animals (8).³⁹⁵ The deadly enmity that rules between the offspring of the woman and the snake (Gen. 3.15) is

390. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 65: 'The appearance of the new ruler is understood in Isa. 11.2 as a new beginning. Thus as Yahweh once marked a beginning by the selection of David and the associated imparting of the spirit, now he begins a second time.'

391. Cf. Lescow, 'Das Geburtsmotiv', p. 191: 'Just as the kingly "sprig" was suddenly "there" in that entirely non-royal "stem", so it will be once again in the future.'

392. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 66.

393. הוה קדשו occurs elsewhere only in the last division of the book: 56.7; 57.13; 65.11, 25; 66.20.

394. The motif of 'knowledge' (ידע) frames the text of Isa. 11.1-9 (vv. 2, 9) and at the same time alludes to the indictment of 1.3 that Israel has no knowledge (ישראל לא ידע).

395. This does not have to do with the extermination of the wild animals as in Lev. 26.6; Ezek. 34.25; or Isa. 35.9, which would undermine the image of nonviolence; against E. Haag, 'Der neue David', pp. 109-10.

removed—the small child plays in the lair of the adder.³⁹⁶ Stated differently: The lost paradise does not lie ‘yon-side of Eden’, but on Zion! Here on the Mount of God the original order of creation will be instated symbolically for the nations: ‘On Zion the nations will experience and learn *that* and *how* the creation as a place of God’s rule and as the house of life comes to the fulfillment which is sketched out in Genesis 1–9. They will learn that and how the eschatological renewal of creation begins in and with the messianic Zion community —“on that day” (11.10) or “at the turn of the era” (2.2).’³⁹⁷

2.4.3. *The Song of Thanksgiving—Openness to the Nations (Isaiah 12)*

The ‘Thanksgiving Song of the Redeemed’³⁹⁸ concludes³⁹⁹ the first part of the book of Isaiah, and points forward to the songs in 25.1–5; 26.1–6; 35; and to the hymns in 40–55.⁴⁰⁰ Thus this song not only closes the first division, but is a text which has the entire book in view,⁴⁰¹ a fact that must be considered much more seriously than heretofore in the exegesis of the individual verses. Already the fact that the opening וְאָמַרְתָּ does not belong to the actual song shows that with chap. 12 a song has been composed to be inserted into this place. The thanksgiving song is not simply the close of 11 or of 1–11,⁴⁰² but rather is a text which gives structure from the final perspective of the book, and is fed from what precedes as well as from what follows. Thus the ‘divine wrath’ from the poetic refrain is taken up⁴⁰³ and considered ended,⁴⁰⁴ while the motif of comfort is taken from 40–55.⁴⁰⁵ When

396. Bartelmus, ‘Die Tierwelt’, p. 305.

397. Zenger, ‘Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1–10’, p. 145; see also Steck, ‘Der neue Himmel’, pp. 349–65.

398. So Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 254.

399. Against this, Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 280–82, views Isa. 12 as the prelude of the oracles of the nations, which is precluded, however, by the backward references to 1–11 and the new beginning in 13.1.

400. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 164: ‘Chapters 12 and 35 thus form one framework for the foreign oracles of the nations, the apocalypse, and for chaps. 28–34. This bracketing function is strongly reminiscent of the compositional role of the hymns in 40–55.’

401. Thus Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, pp. 181–200, designates Isa. 12 appropriately as ‘the summary of the book of Isaiah’ (p. 181).

402. Alonso Schökel, ‘Is 12’, p. 160: ‘Cap 12 psalmum esse arte confectum, et contextui suo aptari tamquam festivam conclusionem sectionis 7–11, vel etiam 1–11.’

403. 5.25; 9.11, 16, 20; 10.4.

404. The basis of the whole song is that the turn to redemption and comfort has already come about; cf. van Wieringen, ‘Isaiah 6–12’, p. 205.

the leitwort 'salvation' ⁴⁰⁶יְשׁוּעָה appears for the first time three times over (12.2-3), then 'ad maiorem ⁴⁰⁷יְשׁוּעָה gloriam!' Thus it is also Isaiah, the prophet of the book, who demands of Zion's inhabitants to sing this song of thanksgiving in 12.1aα—'on that day you will say' (cf. 25.9).

Structural marks within the song are to be found both in the sequence of וְאַמְרָתָם and וְאַמְרָתָהּ (1,4),⁴⁰⁷ as well as in the alternation of singular and plural.⁴⁰⁸ This structure is properly appreciated only when it is considered that the beginning 'You' (1-2) is identified as 'inhabitant of Zion' יוֹשֶׁבֶת צִיּוֹן only in the last verse, a phrase which reminds one of the מְבַשֶּׂרֶת צִיּוֹן in 40.9. If the female speaker in the song is the Zion community and not, as generally accepted, the remnant of the Diaspora returnees of 11.11-16,⁴⁰⁹ then the point of reference of the song lies with the community (11.1-9, 10), which is understood as a Mosaic-Davidic successor. No longer does the glory lie in an expansionist conquest as under David, but rather it lies in the fact that the nations of themselves go up to Zion in order to turn to the root of Jesse [to inquire of God] (אַלֵּינוּ גּוֹיִם יִדְרֹשׁוּ, 11.10). The יוֹשֶׁבֶת צִיּוֹן is the Moses of the (foreign) ethnic peoples! The knowledge of God which, proceeding from the sprig of the root of David, covers Jerusalem's environs (11.2, 9), impels the ethnic peoples to Zion to inquire of Yhwh (יִדְרֹשׁוּ, cf. 65.1). This openness toward the ethnic peoples, which is anticipated in 11.10 and elaborated in the thanksgiving song of 12,⁴¹⁰ is entirely in line with the greater Isaianic 'servant redaction', which is responsible in particular for the structuring of the last part of the book in 63–66.⁴¹¹

With reference to the Isaiah of the book(!) the nations are told, 'With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation' (12.3). The call goes forth to them to join in praise with the Zion community

405. 40.1; 49.13; 51.3, 12; 52.9; 61.2; 66.13 (3x); cf. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', pp. 298-300.

406. Cf. within 1–39: 25.9; 26.1, 18; 33.2, 6.

407. According to Alonso Schökel, 'Is 12', p. 158, we are dealing here not with 'duas partes independentes, sed duas partes integrantes'; see van Wieringen's structural analysis, 'Isaiah 12.1-6', pp. 149-72.

408. For the discussion about whether one, two, or even three psalms have been incorporated into Isa. 12, see Prinsloo, 'Isaiah 12', pp. 25-33.

409. Thus, among others, Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 255; against this, Beuken, 'Servant and Herald', p. 414, sees 'Isaiah' as the singer of the song.

410. For the joining of 12 to 11.10, cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja. 1. Teilband*, pp. 484-85.

411. So Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7–66.24', p. 229, who places Isa. 12 in his final greater-Isaianic stratum.

(הוֹדוּ/אוֹדךָ, 12.1, 4), ‘to call on his name’ (קִרְאוּ בְשֵׁמוֹ—not the שֵׁם of one of the other gods), and to make known and proclaim among the nations his deeds, may his name be exalted. After the knowledge of Yhwh (דַּעַה אֵת יְהוָה, 11.9) follows the command to disclose this (הוֹדִיעוּ), until Yhwh’s greatness is recognized (מוֹדַעַת) in the whole earth. After the procession of the nations to Zion will follow a wave of proclamation from Zion outward to the nations (cf. 66.19).

The connections of 12.1 to 25.1 (אוֹדַה), to 25.9 (‘It will be said on that day, See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is Yhwh for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation’ [בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ]), and to 26.1 (‘On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a fortified city; for our salvation [יְשׁוּעָה], he sets up a wall and bulwark’) are significant, for the eschatological meal of Yhwh with the nations in 25.6–8 leaves no doubt of his positive relationship to the nations. This positive relation to the nations is equally valid for Isaiah 12. That 12.2b is quoted from the Song of Moses (Exod. 15.2a) is significant also from the viewpoint of its inclusion in Ps. 118.14, a psalm which was most likely anchored in the Festival of Booths, and which, through Psalm 117, like the entire Hallel collection of Psalms 113–118⁴¹²—would be sung in light of a positive ‘theology of the nations’. If that is so, then even the primary Israelite testimony of salvation at the Red Sea is also made available to the Yhwh disciples from the nations. If the festival Psalm of the Feast of Tabernacles (Ps. 118) is in view in 12.2a and indeed the direction of openness to the nations, so too the emphasis on ‘drawing water’ and on the ‘source of salvation’ in 12.3 is even more insightful. Thus the Talmud reports (Sukkah 4.5) that in the Festival of Tabernacles water from the Shiloah Spring is brought to the altar of the temple and poured out there, with Isa. 12.3 quoted by a priest at the Water Gate.⁴¹³

That the command ‘to draw water’ in 12.3a is not limited merely to Israel, but rather is extended to the nations who come up to Zion, is shown by the statement מִמַּעְיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה (‘from the wells of salvation [healing]’), which Ps. 87.7 evokes, where pilgrims from all the world

412. See also Schröten’s dissertation, *Entstehung, Komposition und Wirkungsgeschichte*.

413. Wildberger, *Jesaja. 1. Teilband*, pp. 482–83; Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 256: ‘The rite itself must be seen in connection with the ancient New Year, which was celebrated in the fall and now coincided with the ancient Festival of Tabernacles, in which it represented the rain and the fruitfulness dependent upon it.’

sing, dancing from Mother Zion,⁴¹⁴ בָּלַעַיִן בְּךָ, 'All my wells are in you'). Also the theme of 12.3 evokes the invitation of 55.1⁴¹⁵ that all who thirst should come to the waters, including Yhwh disciples from the nations (55.4-5).

The assurance of salvation for a Yhwh-Believer from the nations who makes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, especially on the Festival of Tabernacles, does not entice by idle, simple needs, but is an incentive to proclaim among the nations (בְּעַמִּים) to the whole earth (בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ). This positive attitude towards the nations is an important clue to the proper interpretation of the book vis-à-vis the insertion of the oracles concerning the nations. Even the nations stand under the imperative to call in remembrance, praising Yhwh's glorious name (הַזִּכִּירוּ), 12.4).⁴¹⁶ But first of all the יוֹשְׁבֵי צִיּוֹן is obligated to praise God, for in their midst the קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל is great.⁴¹⁷ The proclamation of his great deeds shall indeed reach the entire world, but the fullness of Yhwh is presently in the midst of the יוֹשְׁבֵי צִיּוֹן.⁴¹⁸ The prerogative of Israel and inclusion of the nations are not mutually exclusive, but rather depend on one another!

2.5. Review and Prospect

Chapters 1–12 of the book of Isaiah can rightly be designated a book of Isaiah *en miniature*. The way leads from the description of the actual sinful Jerusalem to the prospect of a cleansed Zion as goal of the pilgrimage of the nations, as the pilgrims 'full of joy draw from the wells of salvation' (12.3). What had been registered programmatically at the beginning of the scroll as the nations' pilgrimage to Zion (2.2-4) remains the driving dynamic in the composition of this chapter.

Just as Isaiah and his children and students hoped in Yhwh alone in the years 734–732 of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, so too did the We-group (1.9, 10), who understood themselves as the remnant community on Zion, and who expected nothing from themselves and

414. For the 'theology of the nations' of Ps. 87, see Zenger, 'Zion als Mutter', pp. 117-27.

415. Already Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 111; Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, p. 189, but both without reference to the nations.

416. Cf. זָכַר in 26.8, 13; 48.1; 62.6; 63.7, 11; 64.4.

417. With נִשְׁבַּח (2.11, 17) and קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל (5.19, 24; [6.3]; 30.11, 12, 15; 31.1), two important Isaianic theologoumena are reworked.

418. Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, pp. 194-95, with בָּקָרָב refers to Ps. 46.6 and Zeph. 3.14-17.

everything from Yhwh. Building upon a pre-exilic composition from the time of Manasseh (5.1–10.4), at whose center stood the memoir (6.1–8, 18), this remnant community actualized the oracles of Isaiah for their time and created with 1–4 a particular introduction which aimed at moving the greatest number of people possible to associate with their group. As Isaiah marched into battle against all human hubris, to which Assyria itself fell victim, so the proclamation of the remnant community was aimed against the arrogant and proud in Jerusalem.

By interpolating the task of hardening in 6.9–11, this early post-exilic group defended *their* Isaiah ben Amoz in the face of his critics, showing that he was able to direct the fate of the people of God for their good, and at the same time, making Ahaz responsible for the collapse of the Davidic monarchy with the ‘rejected sign’ of 7.10–14a, 17a.

Out of the group of those who survived the destruction of Jerusalem (1.9, 10), there is a community which can say of itself and its divine relationship, *עִמָּנוּ אֵל* ‘God with us!’ (7.14b), with the insertion of the Immanuel oracle here (7.14b, 16a, bα) from the end of the scroll. They are the first-born of the young woman Zion (*עִלְמָה*), and the sprig of Jesse on whom the spirit of God rests (11.1–9) and who is called to establish a just social order on Zion. The theme of the motherhood of Zion, which plays such a great role in Isaiah 49–55, follows the Immanuel insertion on the synchronic plane, but on the diachronic plane falls prior to it.

The violence-free creation is realized on ‘my holy Mount’ (11.9), so that the nations set off to ‘inquire of Yhwh’ (11.10), which begins the fulfillment of 2.2–4. Similar to the hymnic entry of chaps. 40–55, this first part closes with a Thanksgiving Song in which the ‘Isaiah of the book’, as well as the people of God, including the pilgrims from the nations, lift up their voices to praise the ‘Holy One of Israel’ and to proclaim him in the world of the nations.

At least two questions remain or have been raised in the course of this first section. For one, how can Zion be the goal and center of the international pilgrimage when the exile-event must have been highly damaging to the reputation of the Mountain of God? How this question is answered is explained in the Woe poem against Assyria (10.5–15) and the texts which have been added to it: Yhwh guards his ‘Holy Mountain’ from all enemy attacks and guarantees security to those on Zion.

The second question, brought to the fore particularly by 11.10 and chap. 12, concerns the identification of those on Mount Zion who might 'draw water from the wells of salvation'. That such a reference cannot be limited to Israel is indicated quite clearly in the outlook of 2.2-4: Zion's centralization and openness to the nations are not exclusive, but rather, the former makes the latter possible.

Chapter 3

ISAIAH 13–27: OF ZION'S ENEMIES AND FRIENDS

3.1. *Isaiah 13–23 and 24–27 as an Interpretive Unit*

In view of their position in the book, these chapters can be recognized as a compositional unit,¹ which contradicts the accepted interpretation that treats 13–23 as oracles against the nations and 24–27 as 'apocalypse'.² Ever since Duhm, chaps. 24–27 have gone nearly unchallenged as an 'apocalypse' which under no circumstances can go back to Isaiah ben Amoz.³ Fewer and fewer interpreters affiliate with this assignment of genre, except as a language of convenience in academic circles.⁴ Chapters 13–23 are only partly to be viewed as oracles concerning foreign nations, since for one thing there are found among them not only oracles *against* or *about* foreign nations,⁵ but also oracles against Jerusalem itself (22) and for another, in 20.1–6 a prophetic symbolic action is inserted, unique among sayings concerning foreign nations (Jer. 46–51; Ezek. 25–32; Zeph. 2; Amos 1–2; Obadiah; Nahum).

Kaiser's differentiation between eschatological, proto-apocalyptic, and apocalyptic texts is helpful to the discussion. According to him, 'eschatological' expectations are those which reckon with a decisive turn in the fate of Israel and at the same time of the nations, without abandoning a basis in history. They are said to be apocalyptic when they expect a change caused by supernatural or cosmic interventions,

1. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', p. 74: 'Compositionally, chaps. 13–27 are a single unit within the overall structure of the book.'

2. Thus Habets, 'Die Grosse Jesaja-Apokalypse', p. 15: 'This writing does not belong to the oracles concerning the nations, but occupies a special place.'

3. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 172: 'In fact, Isaiah may as well have written the Book of Daniel as to have written this document.'

4. So Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, p. 196.

5. Wodecki ('The Religious Universalism', p. 44 n. 2) draws attention to this.

or the connection to concrete historical powers appears confused or fantastic, or, finally, calculations concerning the final days are made.⁶

Proto-apocalyptic, accordingly, 'is characterized by the stage of transition from the historical-eschatological to the cosmic-apocalyptic expectation'.⁷ If one applies this classification to Isaiah 24–27, then these chapters should be designated as eschatological with several proto-apocalyptic elements, but not as 'apocalypse'.⁸

As long as 24–27 are considered as an 'apocalypse' separate from 13–23, their interactions cannot be appreciated. Steck rightly wonders whether 'Isaiah 24–27, instead of being an isolated piece, may not be regarded as an expanding redaction text which is to be explained by the development of the book of Isaiah',⁹ and Sweeney demonstrates that these chapters have not been written independently, but rather in close relationship to the growing book of Isaiah.¹⁰

Already going against the trend,¹¹ Liebreich recognized 24–27 as a logical consequence of 13–23, in which the task falls to chap. 24 to close the previous ten ~~sayings~~ sayings.¹² This function is to be extended to 24–27 as a whole: They close the sayings to the nations from 13–23, and they are to be understood within the purpose of the book only from the perspective of this closure. So one may really postulate that the sayings to the nations are to be read from the perspective of 24–27: 'From the perspective of the canonical editors these chapters receive their interpretation in the oracles of chaps. 24–27, in which one again hears the liturgy of the redeemed community.'¹³

As the thanksgiving song in chap. 12 closes the first division, so the songs in 25–27 end the second¹⁴ segment of the book of Isaiah. While 13–23 are for the most part related to individual nations,

6. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 2; cf. Habets, 'Eschatologie–Eschatologisches', pp. 351–69.

7. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 2.

8. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 910: 'One may well risk the verdict that the so-called Isaiah–Apocalypse is even farther from apocalyptic than, for example, Proto-Zechariah.'

9. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 57 n. 36.

10. Sweeney, 'Citations', p. 51: 'the author(s) of Isa. 24–27 did not compose these chapters in isolation from the rest of the Isaianic tradition.'

11. Before Duhm, Delitzsch (*Jesaja*, p. 274) argued for the close connection between 13–23 and 24–27: 'Chapters 24–27 are the finale to chaps. 13–23, indeed in the most specifically musical sense.'

12. Liebreich, 'Compilation', p. 266.

13. Childs, *Introduction*, p. 332.

14. Cf. Lindblom's designation (*Die Jesaja-Apokalypse*, p. 103), 'Jesajakantate'.

chap. 24 reviews the entire world from the perspective that its only king is Yhwh Sabaoth: 'For Yhwh Sabaoth rules as King on Mount Zion' (v. 23). The oracle against the foreign nations and the people of God achieves its goal in the royal proclamation of Yhwh on Zion. So that Yhwh alone can be King, the kingdoms must first be judged for their pride, and the sinners, together with all anti-god-like powers, destroyed from the earth.

Beyond that, the turning of the nations to the God of Israel constitutes a theme in this second section of the book, whether it is in connection with Zion (16.1; 18.7), or independent of it (19.18–25). Both the remnant of Israel, as well as those of the nations who have escaped the world judgment, are invited to the enthronement banquet on Zion (25.6–8). 'Such a change requires a fundamental shift in the world order. Because of this shift, and because of the projecting orientation of the whole passage, Isaiah 24–27 may be labeled "Proclamation of the New World Order".'¹⁵ It is about the turning point in the history of Israel and of the nations. The final fall of Babylon, symbol for the collapse of all world powers and the disempowerment of the nations, is the necessary prelude for the great finale of the Reign of Yhwh on Zion. In Anglophone exegesis, in particular, this overall view of 13–23 and 24–27 is increasingly prevalent: 'What is contextually significant about this loose collection of traditions is their aim to interpret the earlier oracles against the nations (13–23) explicitly in terms of God's future restoration of the world.'¹⁶

With the complicated history of the origin of these chapters, it is no surprise that a synchronic analysis fitting in all elements is hardly successful. The paradigm of 'disciplined chaos' which characterizes the search for the unity of the book of Isaiah comes to bear in special measure in these chapters. It is not about a unity which runs straight through to the end, but rather, about a 'substantive unity', which Anderson describes as follows: 'this is not the unity of a carefully articulated argumentative poem. Nor is it an architectonic unity of the kind that Muilenburg has demonstrated for the much broader sweep of Isaiah xl–lv. It is rather, the unity of a prophetic response to a particular situation.'¹⁷ It will be shown that the 'particular situation' to which the 'Babylonian' version of the sayings of the nations

15. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 54.

16. Sheppard, 'Isaiah 1–39', p. 562; but also Kilian, *Jesaja 13–39*, p. 142: 'In these sayings the basis is laid for 24–27: Yahweh is able to destroy every power. And in 24–27 it is promised that he will do it, and will create new conditions.'

17. G. Anderson, *Isaiah XXIV–XXVII*, p. 122.

responds was the action of Xerxes against Babylon in the year 482, an action that stood in stark contrast to the rebuilding of Jerusalem with Persian approval and support.

In a surface reading of the text, the most obvious feature is the ten-fold reference of מִשָּׁא¹⁸ with the meaning 'prophetic saying'. This designation of prophetic oracles gained acceptance in the fifth century, as the formulations in Hab. 1.1; Nah. 1.1; Zech. 9.1; 12.1; and Mal. 1.1 show.¹⁹ If the expression מִשָּׁא בְּבָל refers prospectively to the coming chapter, so אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יִשְׁעִיהוּ בֶן אֲמוּן looks back to 1.1 and 2.1.²⁰ As with 1–12, 13–27 are also placed under Isaiah's prophetic authority. Was this necessary because prophetic visions became ever more suspect with the completion of the written Torah at the end of the fifth (?) century (cf. Zech. 13.4)?

The following diagram should show clearly the composition of 13–27:

13–19	20.1–6	21–23	24
5x מִשָּׁא		5x מִשָּׁא	
19.16–25			25.9–27.13
6x בְּיוֹם הַהוּא			6x בְּיוֹם הַהוּא

With this 'synchronizing' of the chapters, Isaiah's symbolic action stands in the center, surrounded on each side by five מִשָּׁא sayings; these in turn are each closed off by a six-fold 'on that day'. The goal of the central place of the prophetic foreign reports is evident: even the non-Isaianic pieces should benefit from the authority of Isaiah. This is valid in special measure for Isaiah 21, where a visionary, in autobiographical style (vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 10), sees Babylon's collapse.²¹ By the connection with the symbolic action in chap. 20, the visionary of chap. 21 is identified with Isaiah.

Furthermore, the verses that close the first half of this composition, i.e., those which deal with the Yhwh-nations, Egypt and Assyria, have not been pushed back so close to the prophetic symbolic action of chap. 20 by chance; in order to legitimate the idea of Egypt and Assyria as Yhwh-nations, they must be placed in proximity to the Isaianic symbolic action in order to participate in its 'Isaianess'. In addition, the symbolic action lends this section a historical point of

18. 13.1; 14.28; 15.1; 17.1; 19.1; 21.1, 11, 13; 22.1; 23.1 (also 22.25, but there with the meaning 'burden', 'load-bearing burden').

19. So Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 39.

20. The LXX underlines the connection between 13.1 and 1.1 when it translates "Ορασις, ἣν εἶδεν Ησαίας υἱὸς Αμώς in both places.

21. See Gosse, 'Le "moi prophétique"', pp. 70–84.

reference which continues the chronological threads of the years 734–732 (Isa. 6–8) to the time of the revolt of Ashdod of 713–711, then leads to the years 705–703 with Isaiah 28–31, and ends with 36–39 in the year 701, the year of decision.²²

The theme ‘Babylon’ opens both series of the five נבטא-sayings (13.1–14.22; 21.1–10). The first text deals with the way Yhwh himself²³ summons his holy warriors and heroes, who are then identified as Medes (13.17). With the use of עור II hi., a bridge is built over to the awakening of Cyrus in 41.2, 25 and 45.13.²⁴ Thus, after the Babylonian chaps. 13–14 and 21, the call of Cyrus comes to the reader no longer as a surprise—quite different from the first addressees of the Deutero-Isaianic oracle—but rather as a confirmation of the Isaianic visions: the great prophet had already seen even this!

The ‘Babylonian’ perspective of the sayings of the nations is broadened out in Isaiah 24 to the entire world, by the sixteen-fold הארץ/ארץ. From 13.5, it is already clear that the collapse of Babylon will bring about world-wide effects, for Yhwh’s army is mustered in order to destroy the entire earth (להביל כל הארץ). If the strongest power has fallen, then all world powers fall together with it!²⁵

The few²⁶ but important references between 13.1–14.23 and chap. 24 lead one to deduce that chap. 24 may be not so much an introduction to the ‘Apocalypse’, but rather, a closing point of the sayings to the nations. Thus the verb רעש (‘to tremble’, ‘shake’) occurs only in 13.13, 14.16, and 24.18, but with a meaningful difference: The first and third references deal with the earth or its foundations, which are shaking because of divine anger; on the other hand, in 14.16 it is the dangerous tyrant in Sheol who had made the world tremble and the kingdoms shake. The contrast between the power of the tyrant from Babylon and the all-powerful Yhwh is one of the interpretive keys of this section; the רעש in 24.18 is consequently a clear reference back to Isaiah 13–14.²⁷ A further indication of a deliberate connection of 13–14 and 24 is the ‘remnant concept’, which, however, no longer relates to the remnant of the judged nations²⁸ but to that of mankind

22. Cf. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, p. 120.

23. See the seven-fold repetition of the 1st pers. sing. in 13.3.

24. Kilian, *Jesaja 13–39*, p. 99; Sheppard, ‘Isaiah 1–39’, p. 559: ‘The depiction of how God uses and relates to other nations precedes a similar concern with God’s relation to the Persians in Isa. 40–66.’

25. Thus Vermeylen, ‘L’unité’, p. 31.

26. Also עליון and שׂאון (13.3, 4) are taken up again in 24.8.

27. Cf. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 151.

28. As in 14.22, 30; 16.14; 17.3, 6; 21.17.

in general (אֲנִי in 13.12; 24.6). The wrath of Yhwh has the declared purpose to make the earth a wilderness (לְשׂוֹם לְשִׂמְחָה) and to eradicate its sinners 'away from it' (וְהִטְאִיהָ יִשְׁמִיד מִמֶּנָּה, 13.9). As was the case in 1.4 with 'Israel sinners' (גֵּרֵי חַטָּא), so now it happens to the 'world sinners'. The image of the purification of the earth from sinners causes one to think of the flood narrative,²⁹ to which 24.6 also appears to refer,³⁰ where it says: 'Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled, and few people are left.' The judgment of the nations and of the world in the book of Isaiah should accordingly be read against the background of the flood narrative (cf. 54.9-10).³¹ As Zion and its population are cleansed from guilt and sin in order to become the center of the international pilgrimage, so too must the 'world sinners' be destroyed, so that the righteous of the nations are able to set forth on the way to Zion!

The symmetry of 13-27, which is created by the two series of five אֲנִי-sayings, each beginning with Babylon and in whose center is found a symbolic action, is strengthened by the double series of six בְּיוֹם הַהוּא. The symmetry is formed not only by formal elements, but also by content. In 19.23-25 and in 27.12-13, Assyria and Egypt are jointly named in a positive context. 19.23-25—in a lead formula found nowhere else in the Tanakh—is about the conversion of Egypt and Mesopotamia; the second text deals 'only' with the return of the scattered Jews from the Diaspora. On the level of the final text, this conclusion of 13-27 is read as a revision of the extremely nations-friendly expectation of 19.16-25, which has its earlier stage in the positive insertions into the Moab and Cush oracles. Reduction of the international perspective to the return of the Diaspora has been observed already in the sequence of 11.10 and 11.11-16.

Drawing conclusions from a close examination of 13-27 on the synchronic level: The 'Babylonian chapters' 13-14, 21, and 24 form the fundamental structure of the composition at the level of the final text. The pre-exilic compilation of oracles of the nations from an Isaianic source³² is fully realized in this 'Babylonization'. It is no longer about the polemics of Isaiah against all anti-Assyrian treaty politics, but about the fall of the Neo-Babylonian superpower and the resulting perspectives for postexilic Jerusalem together with Zion.

29. Watts (*Isaiah 1-33*, p. 198) refers to Gen. 6.13.

30. Cf. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 132-33.

31. See I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, pp. 60-62.

32. Even U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 271-80 agrees with this, however, with a minimal assignment of Isaianic material (17.1b, 3*; 18.1-2*; 20.3-4*).

3.2. *The Historical References of Isaiah 13–27 and the Isaianic Core*

The historical perspective, which in the first twelve chapters is clearly oriented to the political-military relationships between Jerusalem/Judah and Assyria in the years 734–732, is broadened in 13–27 to the Neo-Babylonian Empire and its collapse (21.9). The key chronological data in these chapters dealing with Israel/Judah reach from Ahaz's death (14.28) in the year 727 (?), through the fall of Samaria (17.3) in the year 722, and up to the Philistine revolt of the years 713–711, in which the symbolic action of 20.1–6 and also the oracles against Jerusalem and its leading politicians in chap. 22 find their place. This unique mixture of clearly historically related oracles and acts in relation to the political future of Israel and Jerusalem after the Syro-Ephraimite crisis until the revolt of Ashdod against the Assyrian world-power, and the oracles of foreign nations, which point far beyond that, can be explained only from a redaction-historical view: oracles from the time of Isaiah have been gradually enriched by the foreign nation oracles, which fall in the period of the collapse of the New-Babylonian Empire.

As hardly anywhere else in the book of Isaiah, in these chapters the oldest and most recent texts stand together, a view accepted by the majority of scholarship in spite of all other exegetical differences.³³ If one begins from the *opinio communis*, in Isaiah 13–23 there are few texts from the period of the prophet of the eighth century.³⁴ There is nearly unanimous agreement that the prophetic foreign report in 20.1–6 belongs to that time; as already during the years 734–32, Isaiah stands against an anti-Assyrian pact during the Philistine revolts in the years 713–711.³⁵ His three-year nakedness was to have been a warning against blind trust in Egyptian help against Assyria. Hezekiah himself appears to have approved of the rebellion of Ashdod only half-heartedly, avoiding getting involved in a

33. Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon*, argues once again for a common Isaianic authorship of 13–23, in which he assumes Assyria to be behind 'Babylon': 'Our perusal of the present context of the Burden of Babylon, 14.24–23.18, has shown that Assyria actually figures in the whole of this collection' (p. 102).

34. See Jenkins, 'The Development of the Isaiah Tradition', p. 248: 'The collection of oracles in 18–22 is built upon the foundation of prophecies which reflect Isaiah's opposition to alliance with Egypt against Assyria, typified by the prophetic sign of Is 20.'

35. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*, p. 114: 'The segment belongs to the situation of the years 713–711.'

state-endangering anti-Assyrian adventure.³⁶ In the evaluation of the political situation, Isaiah was 'dead-right', for the rebellious lord of Ashdod, an Ionian³⁷ whom the Assyrians had put in for Ahim-mittī, who had followed the rebellious and deposed Azuri after the latter's flight to Egypt, was extradited to the Assyrians in chains by the Ethiopian king Shabako (712–698). Again Sargon (722–705) had quickly and supremely reestablished the *pax Assyrica*. The prophetic symbolic action of 20.1-6, about whose historicity there is no doubt, falls therefore in the years 713–711,³⁸ with the writing possibly going back in part to 'Isaianic bedrock'.³⁹

The death notice of King Ahaz in 14.28⁴⁰ offers, with the added oracle against the Philistines (29.31), a further clue for the concept that 'Isaianic' material is presented in Isa. 13–23. According to the chronology of Pavlovsky/Vogt,⁴¹ Ahaz died in the year 728/727 and not in the year 716; this fits well with the added exhortation to the Philistines, that they should not rejoice over the broken staff, for out of the serpent would proceed an adder, as out of a root (14.29). This refers to the death of Tiglathpileser III, who likewise died in the year 727 and whose successor was Shalmaneser V (726–722).⁴² Under the presupposition that both kings died in the same year, the death notice can be identified with Ahaz and the image of the adder relates to the Assyrian ruler.⁴³ Isaiah accordingly feared that the death of Tiglathpileser III might unleash attempts to revolt in Palestine, which

36. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 92-93: 'How far the Davidide king Hezekiah in Jerusalem had become involved in the movement of rebellion, we do not know. Since absolutely no reports about an extension of the Assyrian military campaign in the year 711 against Judah and its easterly neighbors have survived, we may accept that it either remained a mere plot or ended in a timely surrender.'

37. According to Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 35 and 337, against the current idea that it deals with a name of a person, 'Imānu', or something similar.

38. See among others, Huber, *Jahwe, Juda und die anderen Völker*, pp. 107-13.

39. W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, p. 131, sees in 20.4-5* the Isaianic kernel; in contrast, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 277-79 votes for 20.3-4*.

40. The MT... וְאֶחָז בְּשָׁנָה מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אָחָז הָיָה... ('In the year of the death of the king, I had a vision...'), as Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 299-300, advocates (among others); on this, see Williamson, 'Synchronic and Diachronic', pp. 221-23.

41. Pavlovsky and Vogt, 'Die Jahre der Könige', pp. 321-47; also Irvine, *Isaiah*, p. 73, following the chronology of Hayes and Hooker, *A New Chronology*.

42. Wildberger, *Jesaja. 2. Teilband*, p. 578: 'This solution is by far the most probable'; cf. Hamborg, 'Reasons for Judgement', p. 150.

43. The death notice is often said to pertain to Sargon II (722–705): among others, Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*, p. 111; Gosse, 'Isaïe 14,28-32', pp. 97-98.

under the circumstances would also include Judah; in the face of that, the prophet emphasizes correctly that Shalmaneser V is not to be underestimated:

Since Damascus had still not been conquered by Tiglathpileser, but that oasis appears as province at the time of Sargon, the final conquest and the change into an Assyrian province must have taken place during Shalmaneser's reign. Similarly, the annexing of Israel, preceded by a more than two-year siege of the capital city, Samaria, was completed in this period. This several year siege of Samaria so impressed its contemporaries that it even found its way into the Babylonian Chronicle as *the* event of the period of the reign of Shalmaneser. Whether and in what way a chronological connection with the fall of Damascus existed is not mentioned there.⁴⁴

This long quote is supplied here because it illuminates the historical background against which the sayings about Damascus (and Ephraim) in Isa. 17.1-3 should be understood.⁴⁵ Thus Isaiah announced that the death of Tiglathpileser III would not protect Damascus and Ephraim from final destruction. He proclaimed that the bulwark of Ephraim would come to its end just as the kingdom of Damascus would. If the statement is about the remnant of Aram (שְׂאֵר אֲרָם), then it accurately expresses the situation, for Tiglathpileser III had indeed isolated Damascus in the years 733/2 and had severely restricted its area of activity, but still had not taken it.⁴⁶ In dealing with the 'remnant of Aram', which Shalmaneser V finally took care of, Isaiah again proved to have good political sense, having recognized possibilities, limitations, and risks early on.

So as an intermediate result, it should be noted that a new beginning is presented with 14.28,⁴⁷ which reports a further appearance of Isaiah in a politically explosive situation, analogous to the death notice of Uzziah reported in 6.1. This time the situation is not that of the Western campaign of Tiglathpileser III (734–732), but rather that of his successor, Shalmaneser V, whose uncompromising acts against Damascus and Samaria must have been warning enough to face down any anti-Assyrian politics in Judah and Jerusalem!

44. Thus Mayer, *Politik*, p. 315.

45. According to U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 274-75, the basic text is presented in 17.1b, 3*.

46. Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 310-11; U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 274 n. 13, sees 'remnant of Aram' as secondary.

47. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 286, assumes that here we 'obviously have to do with an older system of superscriptions contrasting to the שְׂאֵר superscription system in Isa. 13–23'; similarly, Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 162-63.

In contrast, the sayings against Cush (18) and Egypt (19) are no longer to be assigned to the period of Shalmaneser V, but rather, to that of his successor, Sargon II (722–705), who struck down the revolt of Ashdod in the years 713–711. These oracles already stand under the influence of the prophetic symbolic action in chap. 20, which are to be understood explicitly as a warning על מצרים ועל כוש (v. 3b). In the context of the general political climate during the Philistine revolts, Isaiah's words were meant for Hezekiah and his counselors;⁴⁸ trusting in the power from the Nile would end in a fiasco, just as it ended in catastrophe for Ashdod.⁴⁹

Isaiah 22 marks the closing point of the 'Isaianic' texts inside of chaps. 13–23. With v. 1a (בַּשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת), a secondary adjustment to the sayings to foreign nations is presented. The 'untimely jubilation of the Jerusalemites',⁵⁰ which Isaiah sharply judges, and his words against leading politicians are to be placed at the end of the action against Ashdod's revolt in the year 711. Hezekiah, who distanced himself in good time from the rebellion of his neighbors, saved himself and Jerusalem at the last moment;⁵¹ from v. 2, one may conclude that the king at least *pro forma* sent a few warriors to Ashdod, who were then immediately taken prisoner or fled.⁵²

48. Even Kaiser, *Grundriß der Einleitung*, II, p. 42, among others, believes an Isaianic basic text for 14.29, 31–32a; 17.1–3*; 18.1–2; 20* is probable. 22* is still usually accepted as Isaianic; see the listing by Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 286–87 n. 230.

49. Whether 'Isaianic material' is present in Isa. 19 is strongly contested. For vv. 19.1b–4, 11–14, Wildberger (*Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, pp. 704–708) has made this probable: Isa. 19 lies temporally before Isa. 18, therefore before the Ethiopian dynasty of Shabako; Osorkon IV (730–715), however, took an anti-Assyrian course that was entirely unrealistic, and possibly also Ilu-bi'di of Hamat was goaded to revolt by an Egyptian emissary (see Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 323–24). The 'hard lord' (19.4) probably refers to Sargon II. On the other hand, Kaiser, 'Der geknickte Rohrstab', p. 99, places the sayings against Egypt in the fourth century at the earliest.

50. So Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 114.

51. Thus Vermeylen (*Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 333–34), against the *opinio communis*, relates the jubilation to the departure of Sennacherib in the year 701; also Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 114–17; Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*, pp. 128–29; W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, pp. 158, 196; Auret, 'A Different Background', pp. 46–56. Clements, 'The Prophecies of Isaiah', pp. 429–30, assumes from this that the Isaianic oracle may have been reapplied after 587; similarly U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 278–79, who no longer recognizes an Isaianic core.

52. Like the Ionian who fled to Egypt: 'As always, Sargon reacted quickly and decisively, taking Ashdod completely by surprise with his cavalry guard' (Mayer, *Politik*, p. 337).

Even if the prophet might not have had the power and authority to interfere personally in the staff-politics of Hezekiah, the oracle about Shebna (vv. 15–18) is best understood as a consequence of the catastrophe which was averted once again. Shebna had to vacate the second position of state for Eliakim,⁵³ but remained in the third position, where he still was during the siege by Sennacherib in the year 701 (chaps. 36–37; B1).⁵⁴ The fact that the oracle against Shebna was not fulfilled speaks for its authenticity. Looking back, it can be maintained that the genuine Isaianic words in Isaiah 13–27 begin with 14.28 and end with chap. 22*, covering the years 727–711. It is quite possible that this collection of Isaianic sayings served in addition to warn against anti-Assyrian efforts during the period of Manasseh.

Philistia	Damascus/Ephraim	Cush	Egypt	Jerusalem
14.28ff.*	17*	18*	19*	20* 22*

Since the tenor of these words and action is directed against the nations⁵⁵ who could or actually did incite Judah and Jerusalem to anti-Assyrian policies,⁵⁶ it is understandable that they were developed into an imposing collection of sayings against the foreign nations in the exilic–postexilic period.

If we look now from the Isaianic words within the oracles to the nations to their final structure, at least in chaps. 13–21, we can see that it is not characterized by the topic of Assyrian expansion policies, but is dominated by the collapse of the Neo-Babylonian world empire. The horizon of the understanding of chaps. 13–27 is thus the situation of Israel *after* the Babylonian period, i.e., its situation in the Persian time;⁵⁷ it is doubtful whether the Hellenistic period to approximately the middle of the third century⁵⁸ must be reckoned

53. The oracle against Eliakim (22.24–25) is unanimously attributed to Isaiah; the oracle in his favor (22.19–23) is disputed, but can scarcely go back to the prophet; see Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 432–34.

54. See the discussion by Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 432–34.

55. The chronological arrangement is more appropriate to the text than Jenkins's system: Isa. 14.28–17.14 = neighbor-states and Isa. 18–21 = great powers ('The Development of the Isaiah Tradition', p. 239).

56. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 280, is too one-sided: 'His mission was to announce the imminent end of the *foreign* (neighboring) nations, and for the kingdom and people of Judah that meant nothing other than a *prophecy of salvation*.'

57. See 'Medes' in 13.17; 21.2; 'Elam' in 21.2; 22.6.

58. Because of the two Isaiah scrolls and the Isaiah fragments from Qumran, an extreme late dating like that presumed by Duhm (*Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 13, 'apparently around 128 B.C....', as Antiochus Sidetes had destroyed Jerusalem and was himself killed by the Parthians...) has become untenable.

with for the context of these chapters. There is no question that individual insertions from a Hellenistic period can be found, but such 'newcomers' are often overvalued, as if only *they* provide the framework for understanding the entire composition. If the greatest part of the book of Isaiah supposedly originated only after the collapse of the Persian kingdom and at the beginning of the Ptolemaic period,⁵⁹ then it would be astonishing that the Persian superpower does not come *overtly* under fire anywhere in the Tanakh,⁶⁰ in contrast to Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.⁶¹ Furthermore, in reference to the book of Isaiah, one might ask how the extremely positive evaluation of a Cyrus as 'shepherd' and 'anointed' of Yhwh (44.28; 45.1) would have been able to persist if the Persian kingdom had already collapsed by the time of the major composition of the book of Isaiah. The book of Esther, among others, gives an eloquent witness to the feelings and aggressions that were released after the collapse of the Persian kingdom. In the book of Isaiah there is (almost) no trace of such an anti-Persian polemic;⁶² rather, the opposite is the case. Could this not be related to the fact that the readership of the Tanakh and thus also of the book of Isaiah—*princeps inter pares* of the Nebiim—were to be encouraged to feel positive toward the Persians? The approbation of the Torah as to the authority of the Persian Empire⁶³ can be brought in connection with the unusual titles of the Persian king Cyrus. Would the events after 538—the freeing from the Babylonian yoke, the permission to return, and the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem—not have a positive effect on the relationship to the Persian superpower? If the collapse of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, and not that of the Persian, is more likely as an interpretive-horizon of the book of Isaiah, it raises the question of a more precise dating within the Persian period (538–333 BCE). The following considerations should serve that end.

In the book of Isaiah, the collapse of the Babylonian superpower is referred to within chaps. 13–27 and 40–48. Thus it is the *opinio*

59. See Steck's diagram, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 80.

60. A reticent critique of the Persian kingdom can be seen in Hag. 2.6–7; see Cross, 'A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration', p. 15.

61. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. 52, asks whether the lack of a reference to Greek rule, in contrast for instance to Zech. 9ff., may not be 'because this is the foundational, enduring turning point, and the commencement of Jahwe's restoration of Judah and Jerusalem will then be accomplished meta-historically, so that the Greek world power need not have its own epoch since it will perish in the imminent world judgment?'

62. See, however, the interpretation of 33.1 under 4.5 below.

63. Cf. Blum, *Studien*, p. 356.

communis to date chaps. 40–48* to the period of Cyrus; whether the more likely proposal is the years shortly before or shortly after 539 plays no role in this connection. With these chapters, the range is within the years 550–538. Does the ‘Babylonized’⁶⁴ version of the sayings to the nations fall in this period or is one to think of later decades of the Persian period? A look at the portrayal of Babylon in both segments helps to answer this question. If one compares the tenor of 13.1–14.23 and 21.1–10 with that of chaps. 46 and 47, the greater forcefulness of derision and scorn in the former chapters cannot be denied.⁶⁵ In Isaiah 47 the humiliation of the daughter of Babylon is indeed in the foreground, but still without explicit military connotation; chaps. 13–14 speak of a march to battle of divine heroes against Babylon, where, at least on the level of the final text, it is the Medes, named in 13.17—the days of Babylon are numbered (13.22b). Then in 21.9 the end is announced: ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon.’ This gives the impression that the Babylonian texts in 13–27 follow chaps. 40–48 chronologically. The increasing aggressiveness against Babylon in 13–14 and 21⁶⁶ may be explained by the fact that the conquest of the enemy capital city by Cyrus went peacefully, against Judah’s hope and expectation. Babylonia was not destroyed, the Marduk cult not dragged off; on the contrary, after the neglect by Nabonidus, it was restored to its original place by order of the Persian ruler. Cyrus was not feared as Babylon’s conqueror, but celebrated as its deliverer.

In contrast, the portrayal of Babylon in 13–27, which hails the fall of the Tyrant as the beginning of an eschatological turning point in the destiny of Israel and the nations, does not accord with the peaceful entrance of the Persians into Babylon. Even the suppression of two Babylonian revolts by Darius in the years 522–521⁶⁷ did not fulfill the Judaic view, namely the expected reckoning with Babylon. The fact that neither Cyrus nor Darius executed the hoped-for punishment of Babylon increased aggression and bitterness among the disciples of Yhwh. The end of the despotic power, the death of the tyrant, had still to become a reality. The dammed-up aggressions

64. See also under 3.3.

65. Cf. Jeppesen, ‘The Maśśa’ Babel’, p. 70.

66. So Gosse, ‘Isaïe 13,1–14,23’, p. 15: ‘Is. 46–47 n’a ni la violence, ni l’ampleur, ni les prétensions d’Is. 13–14. Le texte d’Is. 46–47 est davantage marqué par une période déterminée, celui d’Is. 13–14 offre une réponse plus radicale.’

67. Dandamayev, ‘Babylonia in the Persian Age’, pp. 328–29; Stern, ‘The Persian Empire’, p. 71; Koch, *Es kündet Dareios*, pp. 10–11; Briant, *Histoire de l’empire perse*, pp. 127–29.

exploded when Xerxes carried out the long-desired retribution on Babylon in the year 482.⁶⁸ Gosse's suggestion⁶⁹ that the delayed sentence against Babylon essentially stimulated the development of proto-apocalyptic thought and images is also worthy of consideration.

Lying behind the oracles to the foreign nations of 13–23 and the concluding chapter of the collapse of the City of Chaos (קְרִיַת הַחַי, 24.10) are therefore not only the capture of Babylon by Cyrus (538) and Darius's suppression of two Babylonian revolts (522–521), but rather most particularly the acts of Xerxes (482). Only then was the expectation of the end of the Tyrant fulfilled.

There is no question that 13.1–14, 23 and 21.1–10 speak of the defeat of Babylon. But is there a question whether 'city' in 24.10–12 and 25.2 likewise refers to the fallen Babylon?⁷⁰ The accumulation of clues speaks in favor of this:⁷¹

- No other city in the Tanakh is the subject of such open hostility (cf. Jer. 50–51; Isa. 13.1–14.23; 21.1–10; 46–47).
- The *הַפִּיץ יִשְׁבִּיחַ* in 24.1b recalls the three-time use of *פִּיץ* in the Babel episode (Gen. 11.4, 8, 9); beyond that, the alliterations in 24.4 remind one of those in Gen. 11.1–9.⁷²
- Even if they have different formulations, 13.9 and 24.6 agree that sinners fall prey to judgment and only a few persons are saved.⁷³

68. Dandamayev, 'Babylonia in the Persian Age', p. 329; Stern, 'The Persian Empire', p. 73; more conservative, Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, p. 541; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White speak critically of Xerxes's attack against Babylon ('Xerxes' Destruction', pp. 69–78).

69. Gosse, 'Isaïe 13,1–14,23', p. 269: 'Ce problème posé par la non-destruction de Babylone a pu donner naissance à la pré-apocalyptique.'

70. The 'City' theme is so strong in 24–27 that in a later expansion it is connected to Moab (25.10b–12); perhaps that refers to the conquest of Petra by the Nabateans (312). In contrast, Isa. 27.10–11 (cf. Hos. 13.13; Sir. 50.25–26) is certainly related to Samaria, namely, after the capture by Ptolemy I (312) or by Demetrius Poliorcetes (296) (Vermeulen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 378; Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy*, p. 266).

71. The proposed identifications of the 'city' or 'cities' are legion: among others, Babylon, Nineveh, Jerusalem, a Moabite city, Carthage, Tyre, Samaria, urban life as such; on this, among others, Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, pp. 11–14; Redditt, 'Once Again, the City', pp. 317–35; Millar, *Isaiah 24–27*, pp. 15–22; Habets, 'Die Grosse Jesaja-Apokalypse', pp. 27–53.

72. So Vermeulen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 355.

73. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 132–33.

- In the context of the book, קְרִית־תְּהוֹ (24.10) can mean no other city than Babylon,⁷⁴ as תְּהוֹ has echoes in the Babylonian chapters in 40–48 (41.29 and 44.9).
- The contrast of the fallen city of Babylon (24.10–12; 25.1–5; 26.5) with the city of God and Zion (24.23; 25.6, 10a; 26.1–4) has a parallel in the contrast of ‘daughter Babylon’, who had fallen in the truest sense of the word (47.1 רַדָּ), with the ‘Daughter of Zion’ (cf. 52.1–2; 54.1–3), who was lifted out of the dust.⁷⁵
- The alternating comparison of the destroyed city with the city of Zion in 24–27⁷⁶ is an obvious clue that a reference to the current time lies in the background; if that is so, then Babylon’s defeat and Jerusalem’s rebuilding are particularly in view.

3.3. The ‘Babylonizing’ of the Oracles Concerning the Nations

In the final form of these chapters it is obvious, on the one hand, that ‘Babylon’ is not firmly anchored in the discourse; on the other, however, it deliberately appears at the beginning (13–14), in the center (21) and at the end (23).⁷⁷ Thus ‘Babylon/Chaldeans’ in 13.1, 19 and 14.4a, 22 frames the poems of the ‘Day of Yhwh’ (13.6–16) and the collapse of the tyrant (14.4b–21), stands in parentheses in 23.13, and appears *only* in 21.9 within the actual train of thought. Thus, it can be assumed that only Isaiah 21 presents an original Babylon reference, while the reference is secondary in 13–14 and also added in 23. To trace this ‘Babylonizing’ back to *one* hand, that is to say, to a uniform processing of the Isaiah sayings, is to hypothesize that the tradents are to be sought in the trained literary circles of exilic–postexilic Israel. For a more detailed chronological determination, we must proceed from Isaiah 21, the only place a genuine Babylonian context is likely.

74. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 355: ‘Cette cité est identifiée explicitement dans le chapitre XIII à Babylone.’

75. See Franke, ‘The Function of the Satiric Lament’, p. 417, on Isa. 47: ‘The humiliations and losses of Babylon emphasize by contrast the rejoicing and elevation of Jerusalem/Zion in xlix–lv.’

76. According to Otzen, ‘Traditions and Structures’, p. 203, the key to the composition of Isa. 24–27 lies here and not, as often accepted, in the differentiation of prophetic oracles and lyrical songs.

77. Begg, ‘Babylon’, p. 122, speaks of “‘loose-sitting” Babylon references’.

A specific exegesis of Isaiah 21 with its three oracles regarding the 'wilderness of the sea',⁷⁸ 'Duma', and the 'Steppe', connected in the following verses with the oases of 'Tema' (v. 14) and 'Kedar' (v. 16), cannot and must not be provided at this point,⁷⁹ since scholars argue on a relatively broad basis⁸⁰ for an origin in the time of Nabonidus (556–539), more precisely in the years after his return from Tema to Babylon (around 542) and *before* the celebrated entrance of Cyrus into the same city (539). If a Babylon oracle was inserted in exilic times, closest to Deutero-Isaiah, it was in order to reclaim the visionary power of the great prophet from the eighth century for what was being experienced in the present. Not only had Isaiah spoken to the immediate political neighbors of his time—to Philistia, Damascus, Ephraim, Assyria, Cush and Egypt—but also to the protagonists of the sixth century. To emphasize this, the Babylon oracle in 21.1–10 with the additions of 21.11–12, 13–15 was placed *between* the symbolic action (chap. 20) and the words of Isaiah against Jerusalem (chap. 22). The Babylon oracle consequently was able to profit from the Isaianic 'aura'. Speaking in favor of this conjecture are the many connections between Isaiah 21 and 22, making it probable that the Babylon oracle was specifically composed against the background of the words of Isaiah against Jerusalem.⁸¹

The hope and expectation of the Isaiah tradents for the end of Babylon was too great for them to have been content with only *one* oracle against Babylon, built between 'Isaianic bedrock'. Thus sayings against Babylon had to come at the beginning of the collection, especially since the continued existence of Babylon after 539 would have

78. The mysteriousness of מִשְׁאֵל מַדְבָּר ים cannot be solved by the versions. It even appears to be intentional; see Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 152–53; the Akk. *mat tamti* for South-Babylonia is therefore not rendered with אֶרֶץ ים, which would have been more correct, because the key word מַדְבָּר from the oracle (v. 1b) should not be lacking in the title; cf. חֲזוֹן in 22.1, 5.

79. See Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39*, pp. 23–42, who thinks of a march up from the wilderness between Egypt and Palestine against Jerusalem.

80. Galling, 'Jesaja 21', pp. 49–62; Wildberger, *Jesaja. 2. Teilband*, pp. 770–74; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 289 ('écrite vers 540'); against this, according to Macintosh, *Isaiah xxi*, pp. 106ff., it presents a 'palimpsest' in which Isaianic words of judgment from the eighth century have been reapplied to the defeat of Babylon.

81. So Gosse, 'Isaïe 13,1–14,23', p. 53; Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 293–94: אֶרֶץ in the oracles concerning the foreign nations only in 21.6, 8 / 22.5, 12, 14; 'Elam' 21.2 / 22.6; מִן 21.5 / 22.6; רָכַב 21.7, 9 / 22.6, 7; פָּרַשׁ 21.7, 9 / 22.6, 7; the consternation of the visionary: 21.3 and 22.4; feasts: 21.5 and 22.13.

presented a challenge to theological discussion. Why had the arch-enemy of the people of God—the enemy responsible for the exile and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple—not been punished by Yhwh through his instrument, the Persian king Cyrus? The result of these efforts is presented in Isa. 13.1–14.23, which neither goes back to Isaiah nor stems from *one* exilic hand,⁸² but rather, is a composition which deliberately combines exilic material akin to that of Deutero-Isaiah with postexilic textual material.

The point of departure is from the Babylon oracle in 13.1a, 17–22, which now forms the framework around the poem of the ‘Day of Yhwh’ (13.6–16); it can remain an open question whether 13.1b–5 is an independent expansion or belongs intrinsically to 13.6–16.⁸³ The important thing is that the original Babylon oracle, like Isaiah 21, is to be dated about 540, as is suggested by the Deutero-Isaiah vocabulary of Yhwh’s awakening of the Medes (מַעֲרִיר אֶת מְדַי, v. 17; cf. 41.2, 25; 45.13).⁸⁴ In addition, it should be noted that the deployment of Yhwh’s army in 13.2–5 as well as the elaboration of the Day of Yhwh in 13.6–16 do not introduce an alien element into the book of Isaiah tradition, but are bound up in manifold ways with it. Thus the marching of the army up the ‘bald mountain’ takes up the topic of the pilgrimage to Zion of 2.2–4 in a special way, and 13.6–16 takes up the ‘Day of Yhwh’ against all that is proud and lofty of 2.12–16. As Yhwh once called up Assyria as a punishing instrument against his own people (5.26; 10.5–19), so now he calls a heavenly and earthly army against Babylon! The ‘battle of the nations’ motif is thus significantly changed (cf. 13.8; Ps. 48.6, 7): ‘On the one hand, the “nations” are no longer a chaotic power in revolt against Yahweh, but rather Yahweh’s army itself, and on the other hand they march, not against Jerusalem, but rather are mustered as the executioner of Yahweh’s judgment on the entire world.’⁸⁵ It should be emphasized that we are dealing here with a judgment upon the sinners of the entire world

82. Erlandsson represents the first (*The Burden of Babylon*); Gosse, the last (‘Isaie 13.1–14.23’, p. 274), placing 13.1–14.23 in the time of the Babylonian revolt under Darius.

83. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 60 n. 189; 227, in discussion with Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 54 n. 31.

84. For dating, see Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 169–71. It is not saying much to credit the fall of Babylon to the Medes and not to the Persians. ‘In preaching about God’s ability to rescue them from Babylon, it was all the same to them whether the name mentioned was Median or Persian’ (Jeppesen, ‘The Mašša’ Babel’, p. 70).

85. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 214.

(13.9, 11). By the insertion of 13.1b-16 (or 1b-5, 6-16) into the original Babylon oracle, Babylon is not designated as sinful, a fact so self-evident that it is not worth mention; rather, the sinners are identified with Babylon! It is no longer Babylon or the nations that are a threat to Israel to be feared, but rather, it is now the sinners, the deriders, the violent (13.11), who are everywhere, inside and outside of Israel!⁸⁶

Compositionally, Isaiah 14 presents a contrast to Isaiah 13; in their purpose, however, they speak a common language. Just as a reflection concerning Yhwh's punishment upon the sinners of the world was inserted *into* the original Babylon oracle, so now in 14.1-4a, 22-23⁸⁷ a poem about the fall of the tyrants is secondarily Babylonized. For one thing, the scribal references to Deutero-Isaiah and Proto-Zechariah⁸⁸ are especially obvious, especially in 14.1-2, and, for another, we find the same topic of the total destruction of Babylon in 14.22-23 that is found in 13.21-22.⁸⁹ There has been much speculation⁹⁰ about the source of the ironic Song of Derision over the death of the tyrant, and especially about the mythological background of verses 14.12-15, which originally treated the fall of Helel, Son of the Dawn (הִלֵּל בֶּן שָׁחַר).⁹¹

Since this poem probably attained its place in the book of Isaiah only through the framework verses and these are joined to Isaiah 13 and therefore continue the Babylon topic, it must be attributed to a time *after* 539. It is doubtful that the suppression of the two Babylonian revolts under Darius (522-521) had such an effect on the Judaic

86. Against Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 320.

87. Even if 14.1-2, 3-4a have to be isolated literary-critically, the question can still remain open. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 263-69, sees these verses as a unity; in contrast, Jeppesen ('The Mašša' Babel', p. 70) views 14.1-2 as a 'connecting link'. The Masoretes placed a *setuma* after 14.2!

88. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 264-65: Yhwh's compassion in 14.1 and 49.10, 13; 54.7, 8, 10; 55.7; election of Israel/Jacob: 14.1; 41.8; 44.1; Zech. 2.16; joining of foreigners: 14.1; 56.3, 6; Zech. 2.15; house of Jacob: 14.1; 46.3; 48.1; service of the nations: 14.2; 49.23; in addition, Jeppesen, 'The Mašša' Babel': 'if there are Deutero-Isaianic interpolations in Isa. 1-39, this text is one of the most obvious examples.'

89. In 34.14, then, it is applied to Edom.

90. The list is long; among others, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus, Alexander the Great. See Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 292-94; O'Connell, 'Isaiah XIV 4B-23', p. 417: 'A precise identification seems unlikely... either an Assyrian or Babylonian ruler (at different stages of Israel's history).'

91. Geyer, 'Mythology and Culture', p. 135: 'deeply influenced by mythological traditions known to us from the OT and elsewhere'; McKay, 'Helel and the Dawn-Goddess', pp. 451-64; Craigie, 'Helel, Athtar and Phaeton', pp. 223-25.

community that it led to the drafting of this satirical song⁹² about the profound fall of the tyrant.⁹³ Rather, the insertion of chap. 14 (frame-work + poem) is to be located in a period after the action of Xerxes against Babylon in the year 482. This long-awaited event did not go unnoticed in Jerusalem. It is likely that just after the destruction of the city, both Jews and foreigners struck off to a new, or as the case may be, old homeland (cf. 14.1-2).

By opening the collection of the sayings of the nations with the Babylon oracles in chaps. 13–14, the prior insertion of chap. 21 between chaps. 20 and 22 moved the prophetic symbolic action even more to the center of this section; furthermore, a structure of five sayings was imposed *before* and *after* Isaiah 20. Thus the long Moab oracle (15–16),⁹⁴ whose origin remains seriously disputed, was fittingly placed as a ‘smaller neighbor’ before the Damascus–Ephraim oracle (17), and the Tyre oracle in Isaiah 23 came at the end of the collection, perhaps in order to celebrate not only the end of the military-political dominance of Isaiah 13–14, but now also the defeat of high-finance!⁹⁵ The formulation of 23.13, ‘the Chaldeans were the people—it was not Assyria...’, shows that the saying originally was at home in the Assyrian period but now is situated in a ‘Babylonian’ context.⁹⁶ There would have been abundant reason for an Isaianic oracle against Phoenicia, for evidently the prosperous coastal cities had also pulled together against the Assyrian ruler. Sennacherib had then marched against Phoenicia and captured Sidon, whose king, Luli, was able to abscond to Cyprus. Verse 23.12 may refer to that escape: ‘rise, cross over to the Kittim—even there you will have no rest.’⁹⁷ Yet even Wildberger doubts an Isaianic authorship, since the Tyre oracle is not really a prophecy, but additional commentary.⁹⁸ Thus he accepts as historical background the action of Assarhadon against Phoenicia (681–669).⁹⁹ Undoubtedly, Isaiah 23 does not belong

92. Thus, among others, Yee, ‘The Anatomy of Biblical Parody’, pp. 573-82: ‘The Parody of Dirge in Isa. 14.4b-21.’

93. Against Gosse, ‘Isaïe 13,1–14,23’, p. 274.

94. Now in addition, Smothers, ‘Isaiah 15–16’, pp. 70-84.

95. Cf. among others, Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 7; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 50.

96. Thus Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, p. 192, correctly.

97. Rudolph, ‘Jesaja 23,1-14’, p. 174: ‘The song belongs, then, to the period between 705 and 701, the period of the great Palestinian revolt: Isaiah warns Phoenicia by his prophecy, just as he warned Judah.’

98. Wildberger, *Jesaja. 2. Teilband*, p. 863.

99. Wildberger, *Jesaja. 2. Teilband*, p. 866.

to the Isaianic foundation text, but rather in the course of the final composition of the sayings to the nations has been placed at the end in order to create a fitting endpoint.

In review, it is once more to be emphasized how the number ten for the sayings to the nations was arrived at almost forcibly, with two sayings about Duma and Arabia being annexed to the Babylon oracle (21.1-10)—probably by the same author.¹⁰⁰ As in 21.1 (מִדְבָּר, v. 5), so also the superscription in 21.13a takes up the corresponding key word from the oracle itself (עֲרָב, 21.13b), while דְּיוֹמָה in 21.11 is aimed either at Edom or else gives a kind of summary-statement of the oracle ('silence'). Whatever the case, the difference of the oracles from the Isaianic foundation text is striking. It is clear that, for the sake of the number ten, several oracles have been elevated artificially to the level of a מִשָּׁל, as is the case here. The Babylon theme has become the decisive factor of the collection, opening the two series of five מִשָּׁל sayings.

The fact that no Edom-oracle is handed down in this collection (cf. chap. 34; 63.1-6) can be explained historically; Edom's defeat toward the end of the fifth century was still not foreseen by the Babylonization of 13-23. If the *terminus a quo* for the 'Babylonizing' is synchronized with the action of Xerxes against Babylon in the year 482, the *terminus ad quem* is to be associated with Edom's defeat. The knowledge of the Isaianic material and its redaction suggest that Jerusalem was the place of this literary activity. Whether the period of the 'Babylonizing' of the sayings to the nations already preceded the connecting of the major parts of the scroll (1-32* and 40-66) can indeed be hypothesized, but not definitely decided. In any case, the subsequent 'Zionization' of the sayings of the nations indicates a still greater knowledge of material from the second major part of the scroll.

3.4. The 'Zionizing' of the Oracles Concerning the Nations

The Babylonized collection of sayings to the nations creates the impression for most exegetes that the foreign nations were standing alone under the wrath of God and are only there as *massa damnationis* to clear the way through their defeat for the return of the Jewish Diaspora from the lands to which they had been scattered. The texts which, in contrast, are positive toward foreign nations (for example, 19.16-24) are easily overlooked even though they force the question

100. So Duhm resolutely states (*Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 156).

why this internationally open view has been inserted in the sayings concerning the nations. If one follows the more recent Anglophone exegesis, which views Isaiah 24–27 as key for understanding the sayings concerning the nations,¹⁰¹ then the thesis that the nations in 13–23 are only a ‘quantité négligeable’ becomes increasingly unlikely. Furthermore, the feast on Zion for all nations would be a farce, if they had first been brought to ruin by judgment.

Once one has taken leave of the idea that the sayings of Isaiah 13–23 are always *against* the nations, the view is freed up for the significant declaration that the way to Zion is also open to the nations, that is to say, to their righteous people. After what has been said of 1–12, especially of the proem of 1–4, it should come as no surprise that the sayings concerning the nations of 13–23 were ‘Zionized’, i.e., that the topic of the Mountain of God, to which the righteous from Israel *and* the nations make pilgrimage, was registered in these chapters.

13.2 is the beginning, a verse which is generally counted as Yhwh’s announcement of the destruction of the entire earth (3–5). This exegesis is supported essentially by its relation to 5.26,¹⁰² where a banner is hoisted (נִסָּא + נִס) in order to muster Assyria for judgment against the people of God. But in contrast to that, it should be emphasized that the word ‘banner’ (נִס) in the book of Isaiah is not used with the context of judgment in the foreground; rather, the banner is hoisted to point the way to Zion for the nations and Diaspora Judaism, as in 11.10, 12; 18.3; 49.22; 62.10. Once freed from the idea that the assembly of Yhwh’s army is being called up in 13.2, the verse becomes much clearer—the fact that the ‘bare hill’ refers to Mount Zion,¹⁰³ and suggests a connection to 2.2–4 as well as to 40.9 (עַל הַר גְּבוּהָ); in the latter, in particular, the language of the lifting up of the voice (הִרְיִמִּי קוֹלְךָ בִּבְכָה) is also found. If one then reads 62.10, which similarly speaks of lifting up a banner (הִרְיִמוּ נִס) and of the summons to stride through the gates [of Jerusalem] (עָבְרוּ עִבְרוּ בַשְּׁעָרִים)—in a positive evaluation of the nations—then a ‘nation-hostile’ exegesis of 13.2 in the sense of a public notice of Yhwh’s army against the nations becomes untenable.

101. Cf. Childs, *Introduction*, p. 332: ‘God will protect his pleasant vineyard (27.1; cf. 5.1ff.) and all the nations will worship at the mountain of Jerusalem (27.13; cf. 2.1ff.).’

102. Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon*, p. 139; Gosse, ‘Isaïe 13,1–14,23’, p. 119.

103. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 32: ‘נִסְפָּה would be a good description of the Mount of Olives, especially the side which is turned toward the wilderness of Judah.’

The closing phrase of the verse also supports the idea that a positive relationship to the nations is expressed in 13.2: 'so that the nobles may enter my gates' (וַיָּבֹאוּ פִתְחֵי נְדִיבִים),¹⁰⁴ which has its closest parallel in 26.2: 'Open the gates (פִּתְחוּ שַׁעֲרֵי), so that the righteous people, those who keep faith, may enter' (וַיָּבֹא גֹי צְדִיק שֹׁמֵר אֱמֻנָה). In both references it is not about volunteers to an armed encounter, but about self-aware, responsible, 'noble'¹⁰⁵ persons, whose entrance to the Mount of God is guaranteed. Although נְדִיב (and נְדִיבָה) appear in only one other place in the book of Isaiah (32.5, 8), it would be negligent to ignore this passage as a help for understanding 13.2. There, it is about the separation of the fool (נָבָל) and the noble, where the context is a prophecy about the new people of God.¹⁰⁶

This exegesis finds important support in the closing verse of the Korah Psalm 47, whose cultic anchoring lies in the autumn or tabernacle festival,¹⁰⁷ where it says: 'The noble of the nations are assembled (נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֹאכְפִי), [as] people of the God of Abraham.' The prerogative of Israel to be the people of Abraham is extended to the נְדִיבִים of the nations, as with the extension of the *proprium israeliticum* in Ps. 100.3. There, the designation of nobility, 'his people, sheep of his pasture' (עַמּוֹ וצֹאֵן מִרְעִיָּה), is also meant for the nations, who are summoned to 'enter his gates'.¹⁰⁸ In Isa. 13.2, too, it is not Yhwh-warriors that are commanded to march through 'noble gates', but 'noble men' are awarded entrance to Zion!

A second insertion that falls under the rubric of 'Zionizing' is found in 14.1-2, although the language is not about Zion or the Mount of God, but the land of Yhwh (אֶרֶץ יְהוָה). These verses, known

104. For this interpretation, see Zapff's discussion (*Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 28-31); he indicates that בֹּיָא can also stand without the preposition ב (cf. especially Ps. 100.4: בָּאוּ שַׁעֲרָיו). It is then to be vocalized פִּתְחֵי. The old idea that it is a reference to Babel 'bāb-ili' ('gate of gods') is no longer tenable; see Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, pp. 506, 512.

105. Conrad, נְדִיב, *ThWAT* V, p. 243: 'The *nadib* incorporates therefore the wisdom ideal of the righteous and wise and is thus the perfect man par excellence.'

106. Cf. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 255: 'Prophecy of societal change in the imminent period of salvation.'

107. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalmen I*, p. 293: 'The vision of the Psalm does not emphasize the ancient specific identity of Israel and of the nations, but it binds all together in the peaceable festive recognition of Yhwh's world rulership.'

108. In Ps. 100, the 'Israel Psalms' 95; 99 and the 'International Psalms' 97; 98 of the group of Pss. 93-100 are brought together in one great final chord; so Zenger, 'Juden und Christen', pp. 49-50.

as a ‘connecting link’, have been placed deliberately at the end of the Babylon oracle (13.18–22) and before the introduction to the satirical Song of the Tyrant’s Death (14.3–4a), as is shown in the way **לֹא יִרְחֹמוּ** (14.1) contrastively takes up the **לֹא יִרְחֹמוּ** of 13.18, and in the use in 14.1 of **הִי**, repeated from 14.3a. Apparently after the vividly portrayed end of Babylon in 13.18–22, the tradent felt the lack of a positive conclusion for the people of God¹⁰⁹ and added it here. The fact that he takes up a ‘theologoumenon of Zechariah’ with the ‘renewed election’ of Israel¹¹⁰ and is also influenced strongly by Deutero- and Trito-Isaianic ideas¹¹¹ shows him to be knowledgeable of biblical traditions. Since the Zionizing of the oracles concerning the nations picks up concepts and key words from Isaiah 40–62*, this means that the updated ‘Deutero-Isaiah book’ together with the Trito-Isaianic oracles were already known; this brings us most likely to at least the middle of the fifth century.

The fact that the scribe placed this positive, and in its way unique, statement that foreigners too were able to join the people of God on their way to freedom, analogous to the Exodus from Egypt (Exod. 12.38),¹¹² between the extremely negative Babylon texts of 13–14 cannot be assessed highly enough. While it may appear strange that the discourse is still about the service-function of these foreigners, this can be explained precisely by its positioning before 14.3–4a. In addition, there is this consideration: ‘This prophecy, like many others, is only for the acute crisis; that makes it unpalatable for the secure person.’¹¹³ In spite of this statement about the nations, the book of Isaiah is *the* prophetic book for the nations.¹¹⁴ At any rate, it is not to be ruled out that the ‘you’ (14.3) who sings the satirical lament to the tyrant also includes the **גֵּרִים**, who are themselves joined to the people of God on the way to freedom!

Two further entries were added which express the hope that Zion and its inhabitants will benefit from the wealth of the nations. The first is joined to the Isaianic oracle about Cush; this mysterious people will bring gifts (**בַּעַת הַחַיִּים**, 18.7) one day (**יּוֹבֵל־שָׁנָה**) for Yhwh

109. So Köckert, ‘Die Erwählung Israels’, p. 290.

110. Quell, ‘Jesaja 14,1–23’, p. 142: Zech. 1.17; 2.16 (referring to Jerusalem).

111. **יִרְחֹמוּ**: 49.10, 13, 15; 54.8, 10; 55.7; 60.10; **בָּחַר**: especially 41.8; 44.1; 49.5; **לִיזֶה**: 56.3, 6; a serving function of the foreign nations: 60.10, 14; 61.5; ‘the nations bring Israel home’: 49.22–23.

112. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 113: ‘This memory of the Exodus has the character of an analog-motif.’

113. Quell, ‘Jesaja 14,1–23’, p. 145.

114. Davies, ‘The Destiny of the Nations’, p. 105: ‘If any one of the prophetic books deserves the title “a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1.5), it is Isaiah.’

Sabaoth. This expectation is read in the same breath with Ps. 68.30: kings will bring gifts to Yhwh (יְיָ יִבְלִי מַלְכִּים שֵׁי). From Egypt will come ambassadors and Cush (!) will stretch out its hands to God (v. 31). Zephaniah 3.10 also stands in the background ('from beyond the rivers of Cush, gifts will be brought').¹¹⁵ The same hand¹¹⁶ that added 18.7 must also have inserted 18.3, thereby universalizing the oracle, on the one hand, and providing a cultic context on the other, with the help of the motifs of the banner (נֵס) and the blast of the shofar (וּבְהִקֵּץ שׁוֹפָר). This reinforces Kaiser's exegesis: 'In the background of the entire addition stands the expectation of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, as encountered in 2.2-5; 45.14; 60.3ff. and finally also 66.18, 19 and 21; cf. also Zeph. 3.8ff.'¹¹⁷

A further entry, which goes on about the hoped-for prosperity of the postexilic community brought about by the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, is present in the last addition to the oracle of Tyre (23.17-18). After Tyre has drunk the cup that the people of God also had to drink, it again achieves commercial prosperity after 70 years.¹¹⁸ However, it will no longer be the wooer benefitting in the world market;¹¹⁹ rather, those who live in the presence of Yhwh (לִישָׁבִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה) will eat and clothe themselves elegantly, so that they are content.¹²⁰ Like the Aaronide priests who live from the gifts of the faithful, the Zion community is painted in the most brilliant colors, as they, a priestly people (cf. Isa. 61.6), indulge in the riches of the nations.¹²¹ Against Fohrer, this image of the future in the heads of those who were so long excluded from the profit of world trade should not be explained as a 'perverse piety' 'which permitted Tyre to sin so that they could live from the wages of sin',¹²² but rather, it is to be understood as the desperate desire of the poor to participate at last in the abundance of the wealthy.

115. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 695.

116. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 681.

117. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 80.

118. Cf. Jer. 25.11-12; 29.10; Zech. 1.12; 7.5.

119. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 139: 'The market accepts every relationship from which it has hope of gain.' Cf. Rev. 18.1ff.

120. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 139-40: 'Among those who live before Yahweh are not only the priests—cf. Ps. 134.1—but rather are to be understood as all Jerusalem. Thanks to this delivery of Tyrean merchandise they have the prospects of living a lavish life. Thus they take on the role of the priestly kingdom and holy nation—cf. Exod. 19.6—from whom the nations of the earth receive their instruction—cf. 2.2ff.'

121. Isa. 18.7; 23.15b-18; 60.16; 61.6b.

122. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, I, p. 263, on Isa. 23.15b-18.

The Moab oracle (15–16) has also undergone a clear Zionizing, and indeed intentionally so, exactly at its center. Thus 16.1, 3–5¹²³ have been added as an answer to the question whether there would be no future for Moab. The answer falls out positive, but with two reservations: First, Moab must again subject itself as a vassal to Israel¹²⁴ and as before, pay the ‘royal lamb tax’¹²⁵ (cf. 2 Kgs 3.4)—now however, no longer to the king, but rather to the ‘mount of the Daughter of Zion’, i.e., to the community on Zion, which will comply with the request of those seeking protection and help, giving ‘shade like night at the height of noon’. Second, however, the Zion community can comply with this protection-duty only when the oppression under which it still suffers ends (16.4). When this has happened, ‘then a throne will be established in steadfast love in the tent of David, and on it will sit a ruler who seeks justice and is swift to do what is right’ (16.5). The motifs of ‘shade’ (צל) and protection (סֹהַר) point back to 4.6, where on ‘Mount Zion’ (!) a *sukkah* will stand as a shade from heat¹²⁶ in the day, and as a hiding-place before storm and gust of rain. In reference to the Moabite oracle, that means that even Moab will be able to hide on Zion; it will not be excluded if it does not want to be excluded. The statute that forever excluded Ammonites and Moabites from the קהל יהודה (Deut. 23.4–5) is thus rescinded—a further case of abrogating the Torah of Moses, along with 56.3–5 (cf. Deut. 23.2–3)! If 16.5 is also read as an expression of hope for the imminent restoration of the Davidic monarchy,¹²⁷ it must still be obvious that the language is not about the מלך but the ‘tent of David’ (אֹהֶל דָּוִד). In short, there may indeed still be a throne, but certainly no longer a palace—a tent will be enough!

3.4.1. *The Idea of Independent Yhwh Nations (Isaiah 19.16–25)*

A final insertion comes up here, which in view of the Zionization can only be classified as an alternative plan; it is not to be aligned with other texts of friendly nations, although it builds up to them. It is no

123. The majority regard 16.2 as a gloss; see Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 600; Smothers, ‘Isaiah 15–16’, p. 75.

124. Smothers, ‘Isaiah 15–16’, p. 80, who retains the imperative, ‘send!’: ‘What is presented is a decision of state...it seems best to understand the sending of the lambs as a willingness to become a tributary to Judah.’

125. Buber’s translation [‘landesfürstlichen Lämmerzins’], *Bücher der Kündigung*, p. 52.

126. Cf. 25.4–5; 32.2.

127. Smothers, ‘Isaiah 15–16’, p. 76: ‘seems to serve as an assurance of the restoration of the Davidic dynasty.’

surprise that 19.16-25 has found a place precisely in the book of Isaiah: Where else could the expectation of several Yhwh nations with equal rights, and even without explicit reference to Zion,¹²⁸ achieve canonical status? The addition was only possible perhaps because the Cush oracle already had received a 'positive turn' (18.3, 7) and also because much in the oracles concerning the nations could be attributed to Isaiah, the prophet of the book.

The many appearances of **ביום ההוא** ('in that day')¹²⁹ in the book of Isaiah are not by chance; of the forty-five references, eighteen fall in Isaiah 1-12¹³⁰ and twenty-two in Isaiah 13-27.¹³¹ After Isaiah 31¹³² the expression is encountered only one single time (52.6)! As is known, not every occurrence of **ביום ההוא** points to an eschatological editing, but the phrase often functions as an adverbial statement of time (pret. 'at that time' or fut., 'then').¹³³ In addition, the expression is a favorite connecting method of later redactors.¹³⁴

19.16-25 without doubt counts as a high point in eschatological statements. Here Egypt's turning to Yhwh, the final pacification of the Fertile Crescent, and the Yhwh community of Egypt, Assyria, and Israel are all anticipated. The compelling, thoughtful progression makes a composite work by several editors improbable;¹³⁵ the six-fold **ביום ההוא** also does not support this. So Deissler thinks, rightly: 'In this case it would be quite wrong to conclude that six consecutive additions were produced.'¹³⁶

The interpretation was popular that 19.16-25 has to do with a *vaticinium ex eventu*, and that the mysterious **עיר ההרס** (City of Destruction) referred to the historical capital, the Egyptian Heliopolis (**עיר ההרס** =

128. This makes it impossible to designate 2.2-5 and 19.18-25 as one common redaction, as Barth supposes, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, pp. 291-92.

129. In the OT 208x: dtr historian, 69x; Prophets, 109x; Isaiah, 45x; Zech. 12-14, 17x.

130. Isa. 2.11, 17, 20; 3.7, 18; 4.1, 2; 5.30; 7.18, 20, 21, 23; 10.20, 27; 11.10, 11; 12.1, 4.

131. Isa. 17.4, 7, 9; 19.16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24; 20.6; 22.8, 12, 20, 25; 23.15; 24.21; 25.9; 26.1; 27.1, 2, 12, 13.

132. 28.5; 29.18; 30.23; 31.7.

133. So Jenni, י"ם, *ThWAT* I, p. 715.

134. Sæbø, י"ם, *ThWAT* III, p. 570: 'Especially in the more recent layers of tradition...widely used compositionally, either to unify..., or to insert segments..., or to create a framework.'

135. Against Werner, *Studien*, p. 50: 'In Isa. 19.16-25 there is a six-fold, perhaps successively added, reinterpretation of the Egyptian words in 19.1-15'; to the contrary, Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 144: 'but probably from a single hand.'

136. Deissler, 'Der Volk und Land überschreitende Gottesbund', p. 9.

City of the Sun).¹³⁷ The LXX reads πόλις-αἰσεδεκ, which points to Jerusalem in 1.26 as עִיר הַצֶּדֶק. According to Josephus, Isa. 19.16-19 was the basis for Onias IV's flight to Alexandria around the year 160 in order to obtain permission from Ptolemy V Philometer to build a Jewish temple like the Jerusalem sanctuary in Leontopolis in the district of Heliopolis (the Egyptian On; Gen. 41.45, 50; 46.20), which he succeeded in doing.¹³⁸ עִיר הַחַרֵם is to be viewed as an original reading, not as a place-name, but with a symbolic meaning: One of the five Egyptian cities will be named 'City of the Sun'. This interpretation is supported by 4.3; 32.5; and 62.4, where symbolic names are similarly introduced by the verb נִמַּר (nif.). Once Onias IV had appealed to Isa. 19.18-19 for the legitimation of a Jewish temple outside of Palestine, this 'eisegesis' was encouraged throughout the Diaspora (LXX: 'City of Righteousness'), but rejected by Palestinian Judaism (MT: 'City of Destruction').

While Duhm's extremely late dating of our passage can no longer be maintained in light of the Qumran discoveries,¹³⁹ that dating which began a century ago enjoyed a special popularity. Thus Kaiser believes that 'temporally, 19.16-24 might have belonged in the third or early second century B.C.'¹⁴⁰ With that assessment, it nearly always followed that 'Egypt' and 'Assyria' referred to the Ptolemaic and Seleucid arenas in the course of the division of the empire, after the death of Alexander.¹⁴¹ In contrast to such a late dating, placing Isa. 19.16-25 in the late Persian period has the advantage of being able to identify texts that possess a similarly expressed message. So 19.16-25 and others build on the universal salvation of 40–55. Also, Yhwh's compassion for the godless Nineveh in the book of Jonah is close to Isa. 19.25, where Yhwh designates Assyria as the 'work of my hands'. The positive assessment of the offerings of non-Israelites in Mal. 1.11; Jon. 1.16; Zech. 14.20; and Isa. 66.20-21 and the eschatological divine praise of the nations in Zeph. 3.9 are close to the statements

137. For the emendation of חַרֵם to חַרֵם, see Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 149, who regards חַרֵם as the original reading: 'elle est la plus anciennement attestée dans le judaïsme palestinien: depuis le milieu du 2^e s. av. J.-C. à Qumrân.'

138. See Gross, 'Wer soll Yhwh verehren?', pp. 11-13; Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches*, p. 167: 'The Yahweh temple of Leontopolis (also Tel el Yahudiya "Hill of the Jews") still constituted a national Jewish center in Roman times, but was destroyed by the Romans one year after the great Jewish war of A.D. 66–70.'

139. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 145: 'the fact that an oracle authored after 160 B.C. could come into the book of Isaiah is a sure proof, for an unbiased person, of the late completion of this book.'

140. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 86.

141. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 324; Höffken, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 159.

of Isa. 19.16-25 and speak for a period of writing toward the end of the Persian period.¹⁴² Furthermore, the image of peace between the world powers is explained only with difficulty in the years of the military campaign of Alexander the Great, and with even more difficulty in those of the Diadochen battles. The period of advancing Hellenization is likewise excluded, because then the Jewish powers were concerned with preserving Jewish identity.¹⁴³

The insertion in 19.16-25, which places in view the conversion of entire nations and not merely individual proselytes, belongs to the climactic statements the Hebrew Bible makes about the three-cornered relationship of Yhwh-Israel-Nations. Indeed, the growing interest of non-Jews¹⁴⁴ in the faith of Israel¹⁴⁵ will have stood in the background of such statements. Yet these eschatological expectations extend far beyond such concrete occasions. At the beginning, the expectation is for a type of weakened Egypt that gives it no more occasion for 'political' temptation (cf. Ezek. 29.13-16¹⁴⁶). Isaiah 19.16-17 is thus a connecting piece between the promise of judgment against Egypt (19.1-15) and the added oracle of salvation. Only a politically humiliated Egypt, which trembles before the plan of Yhwh, will be open for a future as a people of Yhwh.¹⁴⁷

As the settlement of the land west of the Jordan began with the victory of Joshua over five Canaanite Kings (Josh. 10.1-27), so the spiritual conquest of Egypt will begin when five cities speak the language of the people of God (19.18).¹⁴⁸ The extraordinary character

142. Sawyer, "'Blessed Be My People Egypt'", p. 59: 'We shall probably not be far out if we date the passage to the fifth century BC'; Renaud, 'Das Verhalten Israels', p. 458: 'The passage stems from the pen of a postexilic redactor and doubtless from the Persian period.'

143. Feuillet, 'Un sommet religieux', p. 83: 'Par là nous sommes amené à opter pour la dernière période de la domination persane (cinquième siècle), qui vit fleurir une riche littérature, souvent pénétrée d'un magnifique universalisme: Prov. i-ix, Job, Jonah, Ruth.'

144. Gross, 'Yhwh und die Religionen', pp. 34-35, offers an inventory of the numerous inner-Old Testament attempts to relate the religiosity of the nations to Israel's belief in Yhwh.

145. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 324: 'Les vv. 19-22 expriment l'effort de prosélytisme des communautés juives de la Diaspora (cfr XVIII, 7).'

146. Vogels, 'Restauration de l'Égypte', pp. 473-94, draws attention to this connection.

147. Vogels, 'L'Égypte mon peuple', p. 497: 'L'auteur ose appliquer à d'autres nations ce qu'Israël croyait être son propre privilège.'

148. Feuillet, 'Un sommet religieux', p. 70; Renaud, 'Das Verhalten Israels', p. 460.

of this event is evident only if it is understood that it is Egyptians who accept Hebrew as their cultic language; if Hebrew-speaking Jews living in Egypt were meant, then the verse is weak and tautological. It is expected that Egyptians will speak the cult-language of Israel and will swear by Yhwh. Thus 45.23b begins to be fulfilled: 'Every knee will bow before me, and every tongue will swear by me.' The expectation of an altar of Yhwh in the midst of Egypt and of a Yhwh *matseba* at its border has its inner-biblical background in Josh. 22.10–34.¹⁴⁹ There Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had erected an altar beyond the Jordan, not for sacrifice, which would have run afoul of the Deuteronomic demand for centralization (Deut. 7.5; 12.3), but rather, as a witness for later generations that the trans-Jordanian tribes are also Yhwh-worshippers. Related to Isa. 19.19, that means, as the Jordan no longer is a religious boundary between Yhwh-believers and unbelievers—on both sides of the river one worships Yhwh—so also the southern boundary of Palestine loses this distinction: 'Donc, sur le plan religieux, il n'existe plus de frontière entre ces pays, unis dans le culte du même Dieu.'¹⁵⁰

Altar and *matseba* in 19.19 have the function of reminding Yhwh (!) that Egypt, too, is a people of Yhwh (v. 25: עַמִּי מִצְרַיִם). When the Egyptians cry to Yhwh in the face of the oppressors, he will send them a מוֹשִׁיעַ who fights for them and saves them. As a people of Yhwh, Egypt also has a claim on Yhwh's help; because of that, the Exodus is no longer a *privilegium israelicum* (cf. Amos 9.7)!¹⁵¹ Yhwh reveals himself to the Egyptians and they acknowledge him (v. 21a). The requirement of the centralization of the Yhwh cult does not apply to them, of course.¹⁵² Instead, they are a people of Yhwh with their own salvation history, their own Yhwh cult, and their own 'Jerusalem'¹⁵³—likewise a case of abrogation of the Mosaic Torah!

The anticipated highway connecting Egypt and Assyria (v. 23a) serves not only the peaceful co-existence of the arch-rivals, but also is an expression of their religious-cultic commonality. Both will serve [Yhwh] (v. 23b). The motif of the 'street', which surfaces at the close

149. Thus Köckert is right ('Die Erwählung Israels', p. 295).

150. Feuillet, 'Un sommet religieux', p. 74.

151. For the many references to the time of the Exodus and Judges, see Gross, 'Israel und die Völker', p. 155 nn. 9 and 10.

152. Offering by non-Israelites can be found in Exod. 18.21; 2 Kgs 5.17; Jon. 1.16; Mal. 1.11, among others.

153. Sawyer, "'Blessed Be My People Egypt'", pp. 60–61: 'Egypt will be a land of promise too, with its own *Heilsgeschichte*, its own Jerusalem'; Gross, 'Wer soll Yhwh verehren?', p. 19.

of the first and third sections of the book (11.16; 35.8), is in both cases related to the procession to Zion. In 19.23, the collocation with עֶבֶר as a *terminus technicus* for the 'cultic service' (cf. 19.21b) likewise could suggest a pilgrimage-road for Egyptians and converts from Mesopotamia to Zion.¹⁵⁴ But Zion is not named, for one thing, and if it were, it would neutralize the provocative character of the entire expectation. Accordingly, this verse means rather that the broadening interest in Yhwh faith would benefit from safe routes of passage.

The legitimate Yhwh service performed by Egypt, Assyria, and Israel has a beneficent effect on a world level. The key word בְּרִכָּה (24) points back to the quality of blessing granted to the patriarchs for all extended families of the earth.¹⁵⁵ In Egypt and Assyria, therefore, the fulfillment of the patriarchal promise of blessing in favor of the nations has begun. Now both nations, like Israel, are bearers of blessing in the midst of the world: 'On that day Israel will be a third—beside/with Egypt and Assyria—blessing in the midst of the world.' But that means Assyria and Egypt as independent Yhwh nations not only have a share in the בְּרִכָּה; they are themselves a blessing in the midst of the world. From this blessing then, Yhwh blesses *him* (אֲשֶׁר), saying (לְאָמֵר): 'Blessed is my people Egypt, Assyria the work of my hands, and my heritage, Israel.' The concluding designations עַמִּי, מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי, and נַחֲלָתִי are more than mere designations; they are blessing formulas with which Yhwh blesses *him*.¹⁵⁶ Yet who is hiding behind the 3rd personal masculine suffix?¹⁵⁷ Duhm already doubted that it refers to Israel: 'Israel is a blessing, with which Yahweh blesses Israel?'¹⁵⁸ Since a reference to Israel makes no sense, but בְּרִכָּה is to be maintained, the only other possibility for an antecedent is Egypt, Assyria, and Israel: 'All three stand together before God as

154. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, I, p. 232: 'Perhaps the writer is thinking less about commercial exchange than about pilgrimages.'

155. Gen. 12.1-3; 18.18; 22.18; 26.4; 28.14; also, Schreiner, 'Segen für die Völker', p. 9: 'Thus each patriarch receives the promise at least once in its complete form, which included the nations; and with Jacob the line is extended down to the people of Israel.'

156. The continuation in 19.25 with אֲשֶׁר בְּרִכָּה is problematic, since semantically it most likely relates to the בְּרִכָּה of v. 24, but with the masc. suffix it presents a difficulty.

157. This question is unnecessary with an emendation to בְּרִכָּה, as LXX reads, and the fem. suffix either refers to the 'earth' or to the 'blessing' of 19.24. Arguing against such an emendation are the masc. suffix in 1QIsa^a and the tendentious direction of the LXX in these particular verses.

158. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 147.

one people. He blesses them as Israel (25a). This is the consequence and uniqueness of our passage if one maintains the MT (ברכי).¹⁵⁹

The *proprium israeliticum* in the context of the book of Isaiah consists, accordingly, neither in the fact that Israel is a ‘people of Yhwh’ nor in the experience of the Exodus, but rather in Israel’s knowledge of the Torah. There will be many ‘peoples of Yhwh’, each with their own cultic center, but the Torah and Yhwh’s Word go forth only from Zion (2.2-4)! The nations will experience divine liberation and salvation, they will be recognized by Yhwh as ‘his people’, but they can never be his people of revelation. This remains in Israel’s preserve alone, forever.¹⁶⁰

The idea that there would be a majority of Yhwh nations in the future is not in the least an ‘absurdity’,¹⁶¹ but rather, is often presupposed in the Tanakh (among others, Zech. 2.15; Pss. 47.10; 82.8; 100.3). The uneasiness exegetes and theologians feel with respect to this universalizing of the people of God is not new: already the LXX and Targum muted or torpedoed the canonical text of Isa. 19.16-25 wherever they could.¹⁶² The final canonical text, however, maintains the concept that Israel’s salvation-historical priority over the nations will no longer be a special privilege in the future: ‘Israel’s advantage consists alone in that it already *is*, what Egypt and Assyria *will be* “on that day”, not through Israel, but truly in the peaceable community of independent nations *with* Israel.’¹⁶³ Whoever fears that the idea of universalizing the people of God is at ‘the expense of Israel’ must ask ‘what Israel is removed from God’s affection, if the nations become what Israel already is’.¹⁶⁴

159. Schreiner, ‘Segen für die Völker’, p. 25.

160. Thus Vogels, ‘Restauration de l’Égypte’, p. 494.

161. Gross, ‘Israel und die Völker’, p. 157: ‘Thus there is in the concept of several Yhwh-nations an absurdity which was not really tidied up in the Old Testament.’

162. In 19.23b the LXX turns the common cultic Yhwh worship of Egypt and Assyria into a slavish service of Egypt toward Assyria, and the divine blessing in 19.25 validates not Assyria and Egyptians but the Diaspora Jews in these lands. The Isaiah Targum takes up this ‘particularistic’ interpretation of the LXX: ‘Blessed be my people which I have led out of Egypt. Because they sinned against me, I led them to Assyria into exile. But now since they have repented, they are my people and my heritage, Israel.’ The Masoretic change of ‘Sun City’ (חַרְסִי) into ‘City of Destruction’ (חֲרָסָה, 19.18) points in the same direction.

163. Köckert, ‘Die Erwählung Israels’, p. 297.

164. So Köckert, ‘Die Erwählung Israels’, p. 300 n. 93; against the position of Gross, ‘Israel und die Völker’, p. 157.

In closing, it should be emphasized once more that in spite of all the openness of the book of Isaiah, the expectation in 19.16-25 that independent peoples of God would participate in a legitimate Yhwh cult not related to Zion is quite unique. It appears to be a further development of the vision of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion. It is built upon the goals of the Zion community; however, it goes far beyond it.

3.4.2. *The Separation of the Pious and Sinners in the Oracles Concerning the Nations*

Besides the Zionization of the collection of the oracles concerning the nations, there is another topic which in its turn illuminates the different fates of sinners and pious and gathers strength in 24–27.¹⁶⁵ It stands in close logical relationship to the Zionization of the oracles concerning the nations, for if Zion is open not only for the house of Jacob, but also for humanity from the world of the nations, then the question about membership in the people of God is placed in an entirely new light and can no longer be decided 'by origin of birth'. The eligibility issue, which Isa. 56.1-9 essentially decides, is thus already mapped out here.

The book of Isaiah signals the openness of Zion to the nations of the world with the simultaneous restricting of admittance to the righteous—the two go hand in hand. Zionizing and the question of 'sinner versus pious' in the oracles concerning the nations stem from the same writer. How closely the two themes lie to each other was already observed in 13.2, where the 'nobles' who are to enter the gates of Yhwh are not warriors, but rather, people who act ethically. Corresponding to the 'where' is the 'who' of the theme 'pious vs sinner'. A look at the parallel verse 26.2 leaves no more doubt: the נְדִיבִים are to be understood as the righteous, people who keep faithfulness who may enter through the gates of Jerusalem or of the temple; as in Ps. 24.7 not only Jews but also the righteous from the nations are intended.¹⁶⁶ The same is to be reckoned for Psalm 100 with its summons to enter through 'his gates with praise' (בְּאוֹ שַׁעֲרָיו) (v. 4).¹⁶⁷

165. Cf. Koenen, *Heil*, pp. 93-116, who examines the texts 25.1-5; 26.1-6, 7-12 (within 24–27) in this respect.

166. On this, Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', p. 62: 'Psalm 24 in its Masoretic version deals with the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Zion.'

167. Lohfink, 'Die Universalisierung', pp. 172-83; otherwise, Lescow, 'Die Universalisierung', pp. 96-98.

In the course of Isaiah 13 in verses 9bβ and 11, redactional intrusions of the same type are to be reckoned with: The consequences of the Day of Yhwh, in whose wake the whole earth shall become a desert, are restricted to the sinner: וְהַטְּאִיָּה שְׂמִיד בְּמִנֶּה. Since the Day of Yhwh (יּוֹם יְהוָה) does fit with such ‘selective fine-tuning’, Yhwh himself is to be taken as the subject of שְׂמִיד. The introductory ‘and’ does not carry the final clause forward,¹⁶⁸ but rather as a *waw explicativum* clarifies the events on the Day of Yhwh: ‘And indeed, he will destroy its sinners from it.’

The restricting of judgment to the sinners of the earth regardless of their ethnic-national membership, which alludes to the salvation of the righteous Noah from the flood that destroyed sinners,¹⁶⁹ is confirmed without a doubt in 13.11. The portrayal of the Day of Yhwh is interrupted, and the divine ‘I’ begins immediately: Now Yhwh no longer ‘controls’ his army like a field-general before battle (פָּקֵד; v. 4), but rather, he punishes the evil of the world and the wrongdoing of sinners. This has its closest parallel in 26.21, where Yhwh appears in order to punish the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth (לִפְקֹד),¹⁷⁰ and where the earth delivers up its past bloody deeds and no longer covers its murdered, an allusion to the primeval history (Gen. 4.10; 9.4–6). The plane of world-political events is long ago superseded when 13.11 says: ‘Then I will visit evil (רָעָה) upon the world and upon sinners (רְשָׁעִים) their wrongdoing (עֲוֹנֵם); I will put an end to the impudence of the proud (גִּזְּזֵי זֵדִים), and bring low the arrogance of the tyrants (גִּזְּזֵי עֲרִיצִים)!’¹⁷¹ Here it is no longer about revenge upon Babylon as a political-military figure, but rather, about divine judgment upon the enemies of the common good.¹⁷²

Besides 13.11, mention of the world (חֲבַל) in the book of Isaiah is almost exclusively within expansions (14.21; 18.3) or in 24–27.¹⁷³

168. Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, § 114r; Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 126.

169. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, p. 198.

170. Cf. also 24.21. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 141, sees these ‘thematic and literary cross-references between Isa. 13 and Isa. 24–27’; might he not be pursuing them in order to save ‘his’ homecoming redaction in 13 from the ‘righteous of the nations’?

171. Kaiser’s translation (*Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 9): ‘Dann suche ich an dem Erdkreis die Bosheit heim und an den Frevlern ihre Verschuldung; mache dem Stolz der Frechen ein Ende und demütige der Tyrannen Hochmut!’

172. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 289: ‘Dans ce contexte, Babylone n’est pas la vieille ennemie dont on a souffert et dont on espère la chute comme une juste revanche, mais l’anti-Jérusalem, le centre vital d’une sorte d’anti-créeation.’

173. Isa. 24.4; 26.9, 18; 27.6; in addition, 14.17 and 34.1.

Yhwh judging the world, that is, the sinners within it, is reminiscent of the verses in Pss. 9.9; 96.13 and 98.9: 'Isa. 13.11 also appears to allude to these texts through the use of this same lexeme.'¹⁷⁴

In Yhwh's punishment of the רשעים, a term is used that is especially at home in the Psalter (82x) and in the Wisdom literature (Job 26x; Proverbs 78x). Except for Ezekiel (28x), however, it appears relatively seldom in the prophets.¹⁷⁵ The authors who addressed this issue of 'pious versus sinners' are not to be sought in circles which speculated *sub specie Dei* over the course of history. This is shown by the fact that they identified these sinners as 'Babylon', 'Philistia', 'Moab', or 'Kedar'¹⁷⁶—that is, they were endeavoring to cope concretely with everyday life in which they particularly suffered under their sinful and faithless co-religionists. This phenomenon of comparing inner-community sinners with their arch-rivals of political history is found likewise in the bracketing of 59.15-20 and 63.1-5[6], where 'Edom' serves to describe the sinners who do not turn away from sin in Jacob (59.20). If the two passages are not to be attributed to the same hand, the phenomenon at least suggests temporal proximity. The split in the community that is a reality in the redaction of the servant in 63-66 has not yet taken place here, however. The proclaimed judgment upon 'sinners' should be an exhortation and warning for them, and for the pious, a confirmation that righteousness will yet overcome.¹⁷⁷ If disaster does not strike the sinners of one generation, one should not despair; because of the guilt (בטון, cf. 13.11; 26.21) of their fathers, the sons will certainly end up on the slaughter-block (14.21)! Yhwh's secure promise to end the arrogance of the mocker and bring down the haughtiness of the violent¹⁷⁸ is meant for the pious who still suffer under the machinations of the sinners. The key word שבת (to end) is used in the same sense in 21.2: 'To all sighing, I make an end' (cf. 51.11). The humiliation (השפיל) of the proud has its closest parallels again in 24-27, in 25.11, 12 and 26.5, stimulated by this fundamental element of Isaianic preaching

174. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 141.

175. Isaiah, 11x; Jeremiah, 5x; Habakkuk, 3x; Malachi, 2x; Micah and Zephaniah, each 1x.

176. Cf. Vermeylen's sixth 'couche littéraire', 'La revanche sur les impies', *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 735-43: 'Les justes n'attendent plus rien de ceux qui se prétendent Israélites, mais qui sont en réalité plus païens que les païens' (pp. 741-42).

177. See רשע/רשעים in 14.5; 26.10; 53.9; 55.7 and in the closing verses of 48.22; 57.20-21.

178. עריץ/עריצים: 25.3, 4, 5 (!); 29.5, 20; 49.25.

(Isa. 2.6-21). In closing, it may further be noted that the divine promise in 13.11 reads like an answer to the lament of the petitioner in Ps. 86.14 ('O God, the insolent rise up against me; a band of ruffians seeks my life'), for in these two places alone זרעים and עריצים are parallel.¹⁷⁹ If, as Zenger has indicated,¹⁸⁰ the nations together with Israel pray this psalm which is related to a 'theology of the poor', then this fits splendidly into the context of the 'pious versus sinner' theme encountered in the book of Isaiah. Psalm 86.2, 4, 16 emphasizes that the praying community identifies itself as עבד; this should be kept in mind with respect to the 'servant' in the last part of the book of Isaiah.

In 14.5 and 14.20b-21, where the beginning and close of the poem are aimed at the fall of the tyrant, the theme 'sinner versus pious' again appears. The mocking lament over the tyrant is applicable to every sinner. It is widely recognized that 14.5 is an addition. In contrast to the 'opaque' language of the poem, 'horse and rider' are clearly named here.¹⁸¹ Yhwh makes sinners (רשעים) and rulers (משלים) as nothing. The latter term is a play on words: naturally the משל (14.4a, 10) must be directed against the משלים! In this connection Wildberger speaks of a 'Yahweh-izing' analogous to what takes place in the Wisdom literature, where 'the action-result relationship was forced apart by statements that speak of Yahweh as the bearer of blessing or disaster'.¹⁸² By including the key words מטה and שבת from the Assyria oracle (10.5, 15, 24), 14.5 proves to be an insertion of a scribal notice to the effect that the shattering of Assyria and Babylon serves as a pledge of the anticipated destruction of all sinners.

The same collectivizing¹⁸³ can be seen in 14.20b-21, which skips unexpectedly from the tyrant's end to the lot of the offspring of evildoers. The expression זרע מרעים likewise occurs in 1.4 where it stresses the sinfulness of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. The characterization עם כבד עין is picked up in 14.21 where the sons are punished because of the guilt (בעון) of their fathers. The universalizing of judgment upon sinners is continued in 14.20b-21, not only on a 'horizontal', but also on a 'vertical' plane. The sons of the evildoers will not escape judgment. The mocking lament is therefore

179. See the uncertainty in Isa. 29.5; on that point, Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 203-204.

180. Zenger, 'Zion as Mutter', pp. 147-48.

181. Cf. Zapff's solid argumentation in *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 266-67.

182. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 545.

183. Clements, *Isaiah* 1–39, p. 144: 'collective interpretation of the tyrant power whose passing is celebrated.'

relieved of its concrete historical context and made applicable to every situation of inhuman oppression.¹⁸⁴

It can be observed in the use of the terms עוֹן and תּוֹבָל that the same hand that wrote 13.11 is also at work in 14.20b, 21, where it is emphasized that the sons of the evildoers are prevented from filling the world with 'cities'. This introduces a topic that becomes especially important in the 'Songs of the City' of 24–27.¹⁸⁵

It becomes clear how closely the themes of Zionization and 'sinners versus pious' are connected in 14.30, 32, where in the oracle against the Philistines a salvific message is inserted for the 'firstborn of the poor' (בְּכוֹרֵי דָלִים) and the needy (אֲבִיּוֹנִים) who find refuge in the Zion that Yhwh has founded (וְזָבַח יְחִסּוּ עִנְיֵי עַמּוֹ).¹⁸⁶ The parallel to Zeph. 3.12 is evident: 'I would leave in your midst a people humble and lowly (עַם עֲנִי וְדָל), and they shall find refuge in the name of the Yhwh (וְיָחִסּוּ בִשְׁם יְהוָה).' Why has this 'theology of the poor of Zion' been inserted here? Presumably it has to do with the death notice of Ahaz (14.28), which his successor, the 'pious' Hezekiah, implicitly brings into play. With a king who is so pleasing to God, even (in fact, especially) the 'poorest of the poor' feel hidden on Zion. Verse 14.32 supports this thesis, with its unexpected 'messengers of the nation' (מַלְאֲכֵי גוֹי) who will receive the answer that Yhwh has founded Zion and the poor of his people may find refuge there. This answer has reference to the narrative of the distress and salvation of Zion in 36–37. The interpolation in 14.32 stems from a hand for which a major portion of the Isaiah tradition was available and which consciously makes reference to it. Already with the implicit assumption of office by Ahaz's successor, this hand has preinterpreted the Hezekiah narratives. Under him salvation and healing take place on Zion.¹⁸⁷ The events of the year 701 have been 'theologized' by the paradigm of divine salvation. Just as Yhwh did not let city and population fall into the hands of the hostile attacker under Hezekiah, even now he puts himself on the side of the 'poor of his people' (עֲנִיֵּי עַמּוֹ) who seek refuge on Zion.

184. Yee, 'The Anatomy of Biblical Parody', p. 582: 'The oppressed are consoled by the parody... Moreover they have a chance to celebrate proleptically the tyrant's funeral, assured that he will receive his just deserts in the end.'

185. Otherwise Torrey, 'Editorial Operations', p. 117, who here sees an allusion to the many city foundings of Alexander the Great.

186. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 303: 'Par cette addition, la "Philistie" est identifiée au groupe des mauvais Juifs, adversaires de la communauté sainte.'

187. Cf. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah 36–39', p. 20: 'The death of Ahaz marks the accession of Hezekiah, and who better than such an ideal king to bring overthrow to Philistia and the establishment of Zion in security (14.29–32)?'

The phenomenon of the theme of ‘sinners versus pious’ being specifically placed at the beginning and/or at the end of the given textual units is repeated in 16.13–14 at the close of the Moabite oracle. The contrast of ‘at that time’ (בְּזֶמְנוֹ) and ‘now’ (וְעַתָּה) shows clearly that it is about a subsequent activating [of the threat].¹⁸⁸ It is not a question of the rash calculation of an apocalyptic writer who wants to cite exactly to the year the time of Moab’s punishment,¹⁸⁹ but rather of the already often-observed parallel between the inner-community sinners and the external enemies of the people of God, whose comings and goings are tracked in the collection of the oracles concerning the nations. Just as surely as Moab’s destruction took place, the ‘end’ will come to the sinner as well; the divine purpose already fulfilled (cf. the threefold דָּבָר) is a pledge for the new prophecy.¹⁹⁰ As in the similarly worded supplement of the ‘Sayings against the Plain’ (21.16–17), this oracle, too, remains realistic: The sinners hidden behind ‘Moab’ and ‘Kedar’ are not entirely destroyed, but at least are so decimated (בַּעֲטַ מִזֶּעַר) that they are no longer a threat to the pious Zion population. The lament of the supplicant of Ps. 120.5–6, ‘Woe to me...that I must live among the tents of the Kedars’, finds its liberating answer here.¹⁹¹

The oracle about Damascus (chap. 17) has also been revised at the beginning and end with the theme of ‘sinners versus pious’. In 17.2bβ (וּרְבֻצֵי וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד) the motif of the peaceful herds is introduced in a formulation identical with that in Zeph. 3.13b; the same motif appeared in 14.30 in relation to the poor of Zion. The Woe in 17.12–14a, which in mythological language thematizes the international attack and the mysterious divine salvation, has been actualized by the supplement in an ethical-political sense, ‘this is the lot of our plunderers, dividers of our booty’. As is shown in the history of Jerusalem and Zion, paradigmatically concentrated in the narratives of the threat and salvation of Jerusalem in the years 701, Yhwh’s and Israel’s enemies will be destroyed, no matter how hopeless the situation may seem: The pious community applies this theologoumenon to itself and its opponents.¹⁹²

188. Kaiser, *Grundriß der Einleitung*, II, p. 43; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 306–307; Williamson, *The ‘Book’ Called Isaiah*, p. 156; Smothers, ‘Isaiah 15–16’, p. 75.

189. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 63: ‘The apocalypticist, in his calculating impatience, has miscalculated.’

190. See Jenkins, ‘The Development of the Isaiah Tradition’, p. 242.

191. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 332.

192. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 316; Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 72–74, supported by Lutz, *Jahwe, Jerusalem und die Völker*, pp. 48–50, opposes this in

Similarly, this theme is again added at the beginning and end of the Babylon oracle in 21.2 and 21.10. The divine promise, 'every sigh I bring to an end' (כל אִנְחָתָהּ הַשְׁבֵּתִי), is paralleled closely by that of 13.11, where Yhwh puts an end to the arrogance of the mockers (וְהַשְׁבֵּתִי וְנֶאֱמָן זִדִּים).¹⁹³ The hope that Yhwh would stand by the oppressed petitioner in his sighing is particularly characteristic of the laments of the individual (Pss. 6.7; 31.11; 38.10; 102.6),¹⁹⁴ but here expresses the expectation of those who are designated in God's words as 'my threshed one' (מִדְשָׁתִי) and 'son of my threshing floor' (בֶּן גֵּרְנִי) in 21.10, where the plural 'you' (לָכֶם) shows that a group is being addressed. 21.10 thus also reveals the character of an addition in which, on the one hand, the theme and vocabulary of 21.6 are incorporated (what the visionary sees or hears, he announces [הַגִּיד]), and on the other hand, the image of threshing from 28.27-28 is repeated again in a shortened form. The community on Zion, beset by enemies within, needs to have no concern because of the testings, for Yhwh does not thresh the 'son of his threshing floor' beyond measure, as every wise farmer knows when the threshing is sufficient.

Similarly, the supplement to the oracle against Shebna and for Eliakim (22.19-23) is shaped by the concerns of wisdom, especially recognizable in the inclusion of the central pair נֶאֱמָן נֶאֱמָן. The love of wordplay is shown in the irony: Eliakim's 'throne of honor' (כִּסֵּא) puts on all the weight of his clan (כָּל כְּבוֹד בֵּית אָבִיו, vv. 24-25) through nepotism. The end is fatal: Even a good nail hammered into a secure place is not able to hold this excessive weight. Every burden is shattered—מִשָּׁה is likely a conscious play on the collection of oracles concerning the nations. The socially critical reprimand is unheard of; power corrupts even the best—the nails were hammered in at a secure place!¹⁹⁵

The hopes of the poor of Zion, who are still being threshed, i.e., who continue to suffer under the political and economic conditions, erupt in a portrayal of the future at the end of the oracle of Tyre (23.15-18). They dream of a world with reversed circumstances, of the

favor of the unity of 17.12-14; according to Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, pp. 129ff., a 'summary-appraisal' is presented in 17.12-14, as in 14.24-27 and 28.23-29, which bears strong wisdom characteristics.

193. Against Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1-39*, p. 24, who sees the ending of 21.2 as original, but the imperative to the Elamites and Medes as secondary; the differentiation of Elam/Medes is not new—see Torrey, 'Editorial Operations', pp. 124-25.

194. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 328.

195. For this see Briant's remarks ('Pouvoir central', pp. 12-14) about the 'do ut des' of the Persian central power with the local upper strata.

profit which world trade yields, which can satisfy hunger and clothe elegantly. This is not the language of an apocalyptic looking forward to the end of the world, but rather of prophetic tradents, admittedly those of a late period.

3.5. *Isaiah 24–27 as a Conclusion to the Oracles Concerning the Nations*

While a fundamental consensus emerged, in spite of much debate, in the reappraisal of the genesis of 13–23 in the sense of being further development of a basic Isaianic core, with 24–27 there is no minimal consensus in sight, except that Isaianic words are no longer found here. Are independent texts joined together, for example, oracles about world judgment and songs of the city ('source hypothesis'), or are they a 'conglomerate' of disparate individual texts ('fragmentary hypothesis'), or again is there a basic core that has been expanded and updated, which amounts to a 'supplementary hypothesis'?¹⁹⁶ In a canonical reading, both the bias for late dating in the Hellenistic period and the thesis that disparate 'foreign material' has been inserted here—a negative inheritance of Duhm's interpretation—make way for the insight that what is involved is a special type of 'compositional unity'.¹⁹⁷ The paradigm speaks no longer of 'foreign material', but rather of 'distinctive material', developed from texts of the book of Isaiah¹⁹⁸ and other prophetic books,¹⁹⁹ and placed after the collection of oracles concerning the nations as a conclusion.

The section's uniqueness lies in the fact that, while in some places the 'joints of the mosaic' or seams in the composition can be identified (for example, 25.1; 26.1, 7; 27.12), it does not allow allegedly separate pieces to be considered in isolation. This may also clarify the astonishing phenomenon that exegetes have indeed attempted to separate individual text units from one another but do not dare to

196. See this helpful classification by Koenen, *Heil*, pp. 93–95, with bibliography (!).

197. Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, p. 15.

198. See in addition the table by Lindblom, *Die Jesaja-Apokalypse*, pp. 111–17.

199. See the lists of citations and allusions in Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, pp. 910–11; Sweeney, 'Citations', pp. 39–52; Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 181, connects the following: 24.2 (Hos. 4.9); 24.4 (Hos. 4.3); 24.7 (Joel 1.10, 12); 24.17–18 (Jer. 48.43–44); 24.18 (Gen. 7.11); 24.20 (Amos 5.2). In 26.13–27.11 Day ('A Case of Inner Scriptural Interpretation', pp. 309–19) recognizes no fewer than eight parallels. The allusion in 27.2–6 to 5.1–7 is unchallenged; see Sweeney, 'New Gleanings', pp. 51–66; in addition 27.12–13 and 11.11–16.

speak of 'breaks'.²⁰⁰ One gets the impression that this text-mosaic has been inserted into the book of Isaiah as a whole, after the joining of the individual parts had been completed *outside* the actual development of the scroll. Arguing against the gradual growth of 24–27 within the scroll is the fact that genuine points of adhesion cannot be determined.²⁰¹ Even the single concrete name, that of Moab in 25.10-12, cannot serve as an argument for continuous development, for it possesses all the signs of a later insertion. The mosaic yields one whole whose basic lines can be traced, as Coggins summarizes: 'There is, that is to say, a unity imposed upon these chapters by the recurrence of the theme of the city (24.10-13; 25.1-5; 26.1-6), by the picture of death and Sheol (24.17-23, 25.6-8; 26.11-19), and by the recurrent structure of threat-war-victory-peace which appears to run through these chapters.'

For illuminating the composition's structure, it is advisable not only to rely on the formal introduction in songs about the fallen city and oracles about world judgment, but also to observe closely the contrast in content between defeat of a city and earth's inhabitants, and Zion's ascent. By slightly modifying Otzen's suggestion,²⁰² the following sequence results:

- 24.1-13: *World Judgment and Destruction of the 'Chaos-City'.*
- 24.14-16a: *Jubel-cry: 'Praise to the Righteous'*
- 24.16b-20: *Continuation of the World Judgment*
- 24.21-23: *Yhwh's Rulership on Zion*
- 25.1-5: *Thanksgiving Prayer for Yhwh's Judgment on the 'City'*
- 25.6-10a: *Festive Meal for all Nations on the Mount*
- 25.10b-12: *Judgment on the City of Moab*
- 26.1-6: *Victory Song at the Entry of the Righteous Nations*
 26.7-18[19]: Psalm of the Righteous
- 26.20-27.1: *Judgment on the Whole World and on the Sea Monster*
- 27.2-6: *Sing of the New Vineyard!*
- 27.7-11: *Reflection over the Judgment on Israel and Judah*
- 27.12-13: *Return of the Dispersed to the Holy Mount*

Contrary to general opinion, in our interpretation Isaiah 24 is seen as a rounding off of the oracles concerning the nations, in which the Babylonian theme of chaps. 13–14 and 21 has been elevated to the 'world level'. The fall of Babylon and the final defeat of the Neo-Babylonian super-power by Xerxes in the year 482 was valued by Jews in Palestine and the Diaspora not only as further proof of the

200. Coggins, 'The Problem of Isaiah 24–27', p. 328, makes this point.

201. Against Amsler, 'Des visions de Zacharie', pp. 263-73, who assumes a 'récit de vision' as a basis.

202. Otzen, 'Traditions and Structures', pp. 202-203.

power of Yhwh in history; in the defeat of Babylon, in the positive Persian religion-politics, and in the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem they recognized a major turn in the eon for themselves *and* the nations. After the long centuries of Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian suppression, Yhwh had finally brought the dawn of the eschatological time of salvation. The definition of ‘eschatology’ presumed by Wanke applies here: “‘Eschatological speech’ is the proclamation of a period of salvation effected by Yahweh, a time which has already dawned or is expected soon and which will take the place of a clear period of disaster.”²⁰³

The nations and with them the world-embracing perspective of this chapter do not come without preparation, but, since the proclamation of the pilgrimage of the nations in 2.2–4, they determine what happens in the book of Isaiah. The end of the Babylonian exile, the new freedom of religion in the Persian Empire, together with the promulgation of the written Torah, the interest of the non-Jews in the faith of Israel, and the fixed position of Jerusalem as center of Judaic life and faith—all this was fertile soil for the idea of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion.

The replacement of Babylonian rule by the Persian kingdom was experienced by the Jews as a turning point not only for them, but rather, for the whole world of nations. It became ever more clear that Yhwh cherished a plan for this world which went far beyond selective interventions for the protection or affliction of his people. Thus might be sung: ‘Wonderful decisions (פלא עצה) you have made; from ancient times, reliable truth (מרחוק אמונה אמן)’ (25.1b).²⁰⁴ The fall of the ‘city of chaos’ meant the dawn of the time of salvation not only for the people of God, but rather, for the righteous from Israel *and* the nations. Only the sinners among the earth’s inhabitants must fear before the judgment; the righteous for a short time shall have the door closed behind them (26.20), as the door of the ark was closed behind Noah.

3.5.1. *Well-being and Salvation Only of the Righteous*

Thus as the Babylonian perspective of 13–23 continues in 24–27 and is elevated to the world plane, the theme ‘sinner vs pious’ is universalized. Corresponding to the broadening perspective from Israel

203. Wanke, ‘Eschatologie’, p. 308.

204. ‘Wunderbare Ratschlüsse hast du getan, von alters her zuverlässige Wahrheit’, Werner’s translation, *Studien*, pp. 135, 145: ‘thus, the destruction of the city is not the result of *one* ad hoc fixed divine decision of judgment, but it is understood as decisions existing “since ancient times”.’

to the nations, is the limiting of the expectation of salvation to the righteous alone, whether from Israel or from the nations. The paralleling of the flood narrative and world judgment expresses both an inclusive and exclusive movement: Yhwh's public announcement of salvation is indeed valid for the whole of humanity, but will be effective only for its righteous. Noah as righteous world citizen par excellence becomes the leitmotif of those who escape the world judgment; the redemption of the צדיק from the primeval flood is the paradigm for the redemption of the righteous from the final judgment. It is no longer ethnic membership in Israel, but rather ethical behavior that is the measuring-rod of salvation. What social events have made possible such a paradigm shift from 'ethnicity' to 'ethics' can be answered only with uncertainty: One factor might be the experience of communal life with humans of varied origin, language, and religion; another, the painful recognition that the comrade in faith and nation often enough is no help in difficulty, but actually the one who causes it.

The inclusive movement (world perspective) as well as the exclusive movement (separation of righteous and sinners) achieve their highpoint in Isaiah 24–27. For one thing, the previous oracles of judgment against individual nations are brought into focus on a 'world plane'.²⁰⁵ The sixteen-fold הארץ/ארץ in the 23 verses of Isaiah 24 speaks clearly.²⁰⁶ Not only the earth will suffer under world judgment—"The earth dries up, it withers; the world disintegrates, it withers" (24.4a)—but also its inhabitants (24.1, 5, 6, 17). In the background stand the narratives of the tower of Babel and of the judgment of the flood. The first verse (24.1b) already refers to the narrative of the tower with the formula הפיץ ישיבה, which takes up a key word from Genesis 11 (פּוּץ, Gen. 11.4, 8, 9). The alliterations in 24.4 with the piling up of beth and lamedh make the relationship to בבל in Gen. 11.1–9 unmistakable.²⁰⁷

The world judgment is not haphazard or random, but is directed at the destruction of those who transgress the 'toroth' (עברו תורה), who have changed the statutes (חלפו חק), and have broken the eternal covenant (הפרו ברית עולם, 24.5).²⁰⁸ In 13.9, 11, such men are designated as חטאים, רשעים, זדים, and עריצים. In 33.8, they have broken

205. Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–4, p. 51: 'Whereas the surrounding material is concerned with individual nations, chapters 24–27 are concerned with the fate of the entire earth.'

206. In addition: חבל (24.4); בתוך העמים (24.13); אנוש (24.6); מלכי האדמה (24.21).

207. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 355.

208. I. Fischer, 'Die Bedeutung der Tora', p. 161: 'They all have transgressed the Torot—therefore these Torot must be valid for all!' Cf. Sir. 17.11–14.

the covenant (הַפֶּדֶר בְּרִית), despised testimony,²⁰⁹ and not respected humanity as such.

While the defeat of tyrannical Babylon stood mainly in the background of Isaiah 13–14, the redemption of the righteous Noah stands in the foreground of Isaiah 24 (cf. 54.9). The allusions to the covenant-making with Noah are clear;²¹⁰ after the primeval flood, Yhwh commits himself to remember the eternal covenant (Gen. 9.16).²¹¹ With the remark that breaking an ‘eternal covenant’ is a *contradictio in se*, some interpreters see the reference to the Noah covenant either as peripheral, or think of a combination of the Mosaic and Noahic covenants.²¹² The eternal oath of Yhwh never again to destroy the earth and its living beings does not at all mean, however, that from now on they are altogether removed from divine punishment. Thus, it says in Gen. 9.5: ‘For your own lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning: from every animal I will require it and from human beings, each one for the blood of another, I will require a reckoning for human life.’

The post-flood creation, which is under the sign of the divine renunciation of violence, is also not dismissed from personal responsibility; the bow of God in the clouds is anything but a license for a doer of violence, and those who do deliberate and serious damage to the order of creation. So it follows in 26.21: ‘For Yhwh breaks out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will expose the blood shed on it, and will no longer cover its slain.’²¹³ From this perspective the statement of 24.5a is more understandable, when it speaks of the ‘pollution of the earth under its inhabitants’. Using similar words (חָנַף), Num. 35.33 clarifies that this refers to the crime of deliberate killing: ‘You may not pollute the land; for blood pollutes the land, and there can be no atonement for the land from the blood which has been shed on it except by the blood of the one who has shed it.’²¹⁴ The forbidding of intentional killing has validity for all inhabitants of the earth. Is the Sabbath

209. Read עֲדִים (‘witnesses’) for עָרִים (‘cities’).

210. See also the opening of the ‘windows of heaven’ in Isa. 24.18 and Gen. 7.11; 8.2.

211. The expression ‘eternal covenant’ is also encountered in reference to the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam. 23.5; Isa. 55.3); the Davidic covenant is not meant here, however.

212. Thus Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, pp. 921–22.

213. Kaiser’s translation, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 169.

214. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 60: ‘the profaning of the earth thus stands in connection with the offense against the commandment for Noah and his posterity. In canonical readings, Isa. 24.5 is the next instance after Num. 35.33 of חָנַף “to profane/to be profaned”.’

command also a duty for all humanity? The designation of the Sabbath command in Exod. 31.16 as *בְּרִיית עוֹלָם* and the use of the same expression in Isa. 24.5 point toward this. In addition, among the conditions of entry for proselytes in 56.1-8, only the Sabbath command (vv. 2, 4, 6) and refraining from every evil deed (v. 2) are expressly mentioned, while circumcision is not. According to Isaiah 24, the fall of Babylon, the world capital of evil,²¹⁵ is more generally the metaphorical defeat of human violence (cf. 14.5, 20-21);²¹⁶ accounts will be settled definitively with the transgressors of the Noahic prohibition, whether from Israel or the nations, because of which the entire creation has to suffer.²¹⁷ The reckoning of those on earth who break the covenant is like the pickings of the olive harvest: only very few²¹⁸ escape the beating strokes and avoid the olive press (24.12-13). In the background of the flood narrative, in which only Noah and those with him in the ark remained (*יִשְׁאָר*, Gen. 7.23), a theological interpretation of the remnant can hardly be denied.²¹⁹ In 24.1-13 the statements about the destruction of the city and those about the world judgment cannot be separated; what happened to the city is like the beginning of what will happen at the world level:²²⁰ 'For thus shall it be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the grape harvest is ended!' (24.13a). As the judgment is 'worldwide' so also is the jubilation of those who have escaped (24.14-16a);²²¹ they are those who now lift up their voices and break out loudly in jubilation over the sovereignty of Yhwh. Ethics, not ethnicity, is the deciding factor between redemption or destruction.

From all directions of the heavens, a We-group hears songs that are encapsulated by the call: *צְבִי לְצַדִּיק* 'praise the just one!' (24.16). In 35.2, in turn, there is an unexpected *הַמָּה*, again in connection with a

215. So Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 356.

216. Roberts, 'Isaiah in Old Testament Theology', p. 136 n. 14: 'Isa. 24.4-6 apparently presupposes an understanding of the covenant with Noah similar to that in later rabbinic sources according to which the Gentiles were obligated to keep certain minimum commandments.'

217. Fohrer, *Geschichte*, p. 350: 'The current era is characterized by the constant and therefore also the current sins of humanity in transgressing the Noahic laws.'

218. Cf. *נִשְׂאָר* in 24.6, 12.

219. Against Hausmann, *Israel's Rest*, p. 155.

220. This parallelism also argues against understanding Jerusalem as the 'Chaos-City' of 24.10; against I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, pp. 64-65; Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, pp. 29-35.

221. Cf. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 204; likewise Kilian, *Jesaja 13-39*, p. 144.

We-group: 'They see (הֵמָּה יִרְאוּ) the glory of Yhwh, the splendor of our God (הֵדָר אֱלֹהֵינוּ).' Behind the הֵמָּה is hidden those who have escaped the judgment (Isa. 34). So also in 24.14, הֵמָּה refers to those who have escaped from the world judgment; they escaped because *they* have not transgressed the Noahic laws, have not broken the בְּרִית עוֹלָם.²²² Expressed in another way, they are saved as Noah once was, solely on the grounds of their righteousness. Because of that, they cheer the sovereignty of Yhwh, who has finally removed the proud sinners, and they sing: 'Honor to the Just One!' The צַדִּיק is praised for he has nothing to fear in the face of world judgment.²²³ Several exegetes relate צַדִּיק to Yhwh himself,²²⁴ which is possible, but not convincing. Against an identification of Yhwh as צַדִּיק is the fact that צַדִּיק in its eighteen appearances in the Tanakh never is used in relation to God. On the contrary, in Isa. 4.2 and 28.5 it is connected to the idea of remnant.²²⁵ Most exegetes therefore relate the jubilation over the צַדִּיק to the people of God.²²⁶ On the contrary, the orientation of the chapter is toward the whole world and speaks of the flood-narrative that stands in the background: Noah was saved, thanks to his righteousness and not because of his ethnicity—from Genesis 10 as a whole, this is indeed possible. The separation which the world judgment establishes concerns not only Israel, but the population of the entire world: 'Dread, graves, and snares [await] you, O inhabitants of the earth' (24.17). As Noah escaped the primeval judgment, so the צַדִּיק escapes the final judgment, whether he is from Israel or not. This explanation is upheld in the added contrast of 13.19a and 23.9 where, on the one hand, Babylon is called, 'jewel of the kingdoms' (בֶּבֶל צִבִּי (מַמְלָכוֹת) and on the other hand, Yhwh appears in order to shame all the boastful pride (כָּל צִבִּי) of earthly powers—the 'jewel' no longer applies to Babylon or to them, but rather to the righteous. This makes sense if only the just nation (גּוֹי צַדִּיק) may enter into the gates of the city of God (26.2; cf. 13.2b!).

222. For a discussion about the identity of הֵמָּה in 24.14, see Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, pp. 36–37.

223. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 359–60: 'Le "juste", quant à lui, n'a rien à craindre; tout au contraire, l'intervention divine lui sera bénéfique.'

224. So, for example, Henry, *Glaubenskrise und Glaubensbewährung*, pp. 49–50; Habets, 'Die Grosse Jesaja-Apokalypse', pp. 75–76; Millar, *Isaiah 24–27*, pp. 32–33. Cf. especially Exod. 9.27; Deut. 32.4; Isa. 45.21.

225. So Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 357 n. 4.

226. So, among others, Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 176: 'The "just" is the people of the Torah (cf. 26.2; Hab. 1.4, 13; 2.4), not Yahweh, to whom the poet could not have juxtaposed his לִי'; Rudolph, *Jesaja 24–27*, p. 11; Kessler, *Gott geht es um das Ganze*, p. 134: 'a blessing for Israel.'

3.5.2. *Destruction of Sinners and Dawning of the Royal Rule of Yhwh*

A prophetic voice contrasts with this brilliant praise of the righteous, a voice which expresses horror that faithless disobedience breaks faithfulness (בגד בגדים בגד). The cry אִי לִי (24.16b) points to 6.5, where Isaiah himself shows consternation over his own sinfulness and that of his people. Even more, the abrupt 'T' of the visionary, i.e., of the Isaiah of the book, appears to have been provoked by the reference back to 21.2.²²⁷ Just as a 'hard vision' had been communicated to him there (חֲזוֹן קָשָׁה הִגֵּד לִי), in which he saw through the underhanded behavior of Elam and of the Medes toward Babylon, so he now recognizes the evil behavior of the בגדים. They are those who do not keep the divine order of creation and so force the world into chaos.²²⁸ They are numerically far superior to the righteous, which may indicate that the position of an eschatological separation of righteous and sinners was represented only by a minority group.²²⁹ The experience of the growing supremacy of evil and the wicked demanded their radical removal and final destruction;²³⁰ with a nearly word-for-word use of the Moab-oracle in Jer. 48.43-44, this hope is given expression, now universalized to the יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ.

Only after the destruction of the wicked and of evil, in the control over the cosmic powers (עַל צְבֵא הַמְרוֹם בַּמְרוֹם),²³¹ can Yhwh begin his comprehensive kingly rule on Zion (24.21-23), which he inaugurates with a festival meal for all nations (25.6-10a).²³² When it says that Yhwh has begun his kingly rule on Zion (מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה) and in Jerusalem and is glorified before his elders (וַיִּגְדַּל וַיִּקְנִי כְבוֹד) (24.23b), the latter is clearly an allusion to the scene on Sinai where Moses, Aaron, Nadab,

227. Sawyer, "My Secret Is with Me", p. 309, stresses the possibility 'that the scene of horrific global destruction is being witnessed by the prophet, in an apocalyptic vision like those of Daniel'; cf. Niehaus, 'RĀZ-PĒŠAR', pp. 376-77, who refers to Dan. 5.25-28.

228. For the verb בגד in Isa. 21.2; 24.16; 33.1, it is unnecessary to postulate an unusual meaning such as 'to plunder'; thus, correctly, Erlandsson, בגד, *ThWAT*, pp. 507-11.

229. See Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy*, p. 266: 'The refusal to rejoice is best explained as the result of the eschatological position of a minority represented by the speaker.'

230. See B. Anderson, 'The Apocalyptic Rendering', p. 29: 'The human problem, then, is not simply sin, which may be overcome by divine discipline and forgiveness, but radical evil, which must be exorcised from history.'

231. According to Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, pp. 54-56, what is presented here is not an incipient angelology, but rather, the traditional motifs of the chaos war; Millar, *Isaiah 24-27*, pp. 70-81.

232. Welten, 'Die Vernichtung des Todes', pp. 135-36.

Abihu, and the seventy elders look on the Lord and hold a meal (Exod. 24.9–11). The meal on Sinai was reserved for the leaders of Israel; on Zion it is the leaders of the new congregation—made up of Israel and the nations—that are invited to the eschatological meal.²³³ The positive view evidenced in the description of the relation of the nations to Yhwh (25.6–8) leaves no doubt about that.²³⁴

A Song of Thanksgiving has been inserted in 25.1–5, which correlates closely with that of 12.1–6, the hymnic close of the first section of the book (12.1: אֲשֶׁר / אֲשֶׁר 25.1). There, it is the community on Zion that sings the thanksgiving song and is called to proclaiming the exalted Yhwh among the nations; here, the righteous sing, both from Israel *and* from the nations, those who escape world judgment. The occasion for the thanksgiving song is the ruin of the fortified city with the decay of the palace of the foreigners;²³⁵ yet it is not the national dimension that stands in the foreground, but rather the ethical.²³⁶ Also included are those from Israel who turn their backs on their own religious tradition and become ‘foreigners’.²³⁷ If the destruction of the ‘city of chaos’ in 24.10 already stood in a world-wide context (24.1, 5–6, 13), the consequences of the end of the קִרְיָה בְּצוּרָה for the nations in 25.1–5 are even more strongly emphasized: ‘Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;²³⁸ cities of ruthless nations will fear you’ (25.3). Kaiser agrees: ‘A glance at Ps. 86.9 reveals that the subject here has to do with the end-time conversion of the nations to Yahweh.’²³⁹ The recording of Psalm 86 holds special significance for the statement of the Thanksgiving Song of Isa. 25.1–5, for what Zenger worked out for that psalm is likewise valid for the Thanksgiving Song: ‘It is the nations together with Israel who speak the prayer quoted in Psalm 86.11 (= Ps. 25.4–5 almost word for word).’²⁴⁰ Thus, the ‘wonderful plans from time immemorial’ that Yhwh has carried out with

233. Webb, ‘Zion in Transformation’, p. 74: ‘These elders are presumably the leaders of the community which inhabit the new Zion.’

234. More cautiously, Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 950.

235. It is difficult to decide whether מְדַבְּרִים (‘foreigners’) or זֹרֵם (‘despisers’) is to be read (LXX: ἀσεβῶν); see Koenen, *Heil*, p. 95 n. 9, on this point.

236. Lohmann, ‘Die selbständigen lyrischen Abschnitt’, p. 21, emphasizes the ethnic orientation of 25.1–5.

237. Cf. Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 178: ‘méconnaissance des traditions religieuses et culturelles d’Israël que la notion d’“étrangers” implique.’

238. The קִרְיָה at the beginning of the second half of the verse should be deleted, with BHS.

239. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 159.

240. Zenger, ‘Zion als Mutter’, p. 148.

absolute certainty (אִמּוֹנָה אִמּוֹן) (25.1b) do not primarily consist of the destruction of the city, but rather the fact that the God of Israel has finally been honored and acknowledged by the nations.

Verses 25.4-5 leave the 'international context' and shift to the language of the 'individual psalms'.²⁴¹ Whether that shift justifies a literary-critical distinction within the meaning of the 'sinner vs. pious problem'²⁴² can be left open. It is more important that the supplicants, even those from the nations, are entrusted with the songs of Israel and draw from these treasures: 'You were a refuge for the weak (דָּל), a place of refuge for the poor (אֲבִיּוֹן) in his distress' (25.4). The images and expressions which speak of the hiding place from the rainstorm (מַחֲסֵה מִזֶּרֶם) and shade from the heat (צֶל מִחֶרֶב) are taken from 4.6: Zion offers shade and protection for the supplicant from both Israel and the nations!²⁴³

In contrast to the ideas of Isaiah or Amos, in the postexilic texts the terms דָּלִים, אֲבִיּוֹנִים, עֲנִיִּים, and עֲנִיִּים no longer designate merely the economically weak, but are at the same time titles of honor for Yhwh worshipers. The references in the book of Isaiah belong to the beginning of this growing 'spiritualization' of economic poverty and dependence. However, the economic dimension is still present in the book, as is shown by the image of the future in 26.5-6, where the feet of the poor and the steps of the weak crush the inhabitants of the arrogant city underfoot.²⁴⁴ Here 'city' has lost any national connotation in the sense of a foreign city and has become entirely a symbol of an arrogance that despises both God and humans.

If one understands the thanksgiving song as a song of praise issuing also from the mouths of Yhwh disciples from the nations, then the continuation of the theme of the kingship of Yhwh (24.23b) with the festival banquet for all nations 'on this mount', i.e., on Zion, is understandable (25.6-8),²⁴⁵ as is the subsequent confession, 'See, this is our God in whom we have hoped!' The meal of Yhwh with Moses and the elders (cf. Isa. 24.23), which sealed the communion of

241. Werner, *Studien*, p. 112.

242. So Koenen, *Heil*, pp. 98-105.

243. Sweeney, 'Citations', p. 46: 'Isa. 25.1-5 does not explicitly identify the poor and the needy who will receive protection, but Isa. 25.6-8 suggests that all peoples are included.'

244. Redditt, 'Once Again, the City', pp. 317-35, interprets the 'Song of the City' in 25.1-5 and 26.5-6 against the background of an antagonism between the country and city population: 'The singer appears, therefore, to be someone outside the city, but victimized by it' (p. 326).

245. See in addition Doyle, 'A Literary Analysis of Isa. 25.10A', pp. 173-93.

Israel with its God (Exod. 24.9–11), is here extended to all nations, i.e., to the righteous of all nations. Sinai is not longer the place of meeting with God, but rather, Zion:

In the Exodus text it constitutes the special relationship of God and Israel; correspondingly, in our Isaiah text such a relationship is established between God and the nations, in the expansion of kingdom and *zebah*-community to the nations. The prerequisite for this act is that the Israelite Sinai-event be transferred to Zion with its universalist tradition.²⁴⁶

With the dawn of the kingship of Yhwh, all mourning rites will have an end, for he has forever swallowed up death (בלע המוֹת); this is not some sort of precursor of eternal life, but is rather a contrasting wordplay with the Canaanite Baal myth.²⁴⁷ Though Baal was able to defeat Yam, the sea monster, he was powerless against Mot, ring-leader of the underworld; yet Yhwh swallowed up (בלע - wordplay on בעל) the last enemy Mot, i.e., death (מָוֶת/מוֹת). The explicit destruction of the sea monster לִיִּיתָן in 27.1 speaks for this interpretation. The text deals with all these mythological ideas to emphasize that all powers which oppose the well-being of humanity will be destroyed.²⁴⁸

The removal of the veil (לוֹט) and cover (מַסְכָּה) that cloaked the nations signified for them that they might achieve an immediate relationship to God; they do not need to cover their faces, as Elijah did on the Mount of God (וַיִּלֵּט פָּנָיו, 1 Kgs 19.13). Fischer goes one step farther and asks:

Is it a coincidence that this material, מַסְכָּה, has a name very similar to the curtain, מַסָּךְ, that covered the entrance to the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant? When Yhwh tears this curtain in two all nations have access to the holy place, immediate access to the ark of the covenant and its tablets—to the Torah.²⁴⁹

Both the positive context of the nations²⁵⁰ as well as the two-fold קוּה, which designates the hopeful expectation of the nations toward

246. Welten, 'Die Vernichtung des Todes', p. 145.

247. So Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, pp. 65–66. For the theme of future hope in the OT and in Qumran, see Puech, *La croyance des Esséniens*.

248. G. Anderson, *Isaiah XXIV–XXVII*, p. 126.

249. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 30.

250. The Targum is completely to the contrary: 'And the Lord of hosts shall make for all the nations in this mountain a feast and a festival; they *shall* consider that *is given* for honour, but it shall be unto them for shame, even plagues from which they cannot escape, plagues wherein they will perish' (Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, p. 78).

Yhwh in 51.5 (cf. 42.4), show that hidden behind the 'We' of the confession (25.9-10a) are not only the Yhwh-faithful from Israel, but also the Yhwh-faithful from the nations.²⁵¹

This inclusivity went much too far for one scribe, so that—motivated by the key word לֹוֹט (25.7)²⁵²—he adds that the Moabites, the progeny of Lot, are definitely not invited to the festival banquet on Zion, but rather, must wallow in dung and muck. He is oriented towards 2.9-17,²⁵³ Isaiah's reckoning with all arrogance, especially the גֵּאוֹן מוֹאָב already mentioned in the Moab oracle (16.6). Thus he expressly confirms the exclusionary statement of Deut. 23.4 (cf. Neh. 13.1)!

3.5.3. *The Righteous from Israel and the Nations*

In 26.1-6 the beginning of a song is presented in which a We-group expresses thanks and joy that there is a fortified, secure city (cf. 60.18; 62.6), which can refer only to Jerusalem.²⁵⁴ Still, at the center stands not the secure encircling wall, but rather, the 'righteous people', who enter through its doors. Hidden behind the collective expression are both the Yhwh worshipers from Israel and those of the nations, as is suggested not only by the context, but by other details as well. 26.2-3 alludes to the entrance liturgies of Psalms 15 and 24,²⁵⁵ but also to the Noah narrative. In the same way that Noah, the exemplary righteous person, goes into the ark (Gen. 7.1-6), the 'just nation' marches into Jerusalem. Different from the populace before the flood, whose structures of thought (יִצֵר) were only evil, the thoughts of the just nation are entirely steadfast and focused on peace (יִצֵר סִמּוּךְ הַצֵּדִיק שְׁלוֹמִים).²⁵⁶ As Yhwh closes (סָגַר) the ark before the waters (Gen. 7.16), so now his people shall close the door behind themselves for a little while (Isa. 26.20). As Noah planted a vineyard after being saved from the flood (Gen. 9.20), so again after a flood in which now even Leviathan

251. So Davies, 'The Destiny of the Nations', p. 100: 'the statements would be a very apt expression for the conversion of the nations.'

252. So Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 320.

253. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 365-66; Sweeney, 'Citations', pp. 46-47.

254. According to Lohmann ('Die selbständigen lyrischen Abschnitte', pp. 38-40), it is a 'song for dedicating a wall' from the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 12.27ff.); also Lindblom, *Die Jesaja-Apokalypse*, p. 90.

255. Lohfink, 'Bund and Tora', pp. 61ff. points out that Pss. 24-25 also refer to a supplicant from the nations.

256. See יִצֵר I. 'inclination, striving': Gen. 6.5; 8.21; Deut. 31.21; Isa. 26.3; 1 Chron. 28.9; 29.18.

is killed (Isa. 27.1), there is a vineyard at the center (27.2-6). The Noahic background of Isaiah 26–27 is a strong indication that Yhwh disciples from the nations also belong to the גֵּי צְדִיק that may gather in Jerusalem. The abrupt change from perfect (26.5a) to imperfect suggests that an actualizing is in progress vis-à-vis the ‘Sinner-Pious Problem’ in 26.5b-6.²⁵⁷ No longer do the suppressed merely acknowledge that Yhwh brings down the inhabitants of the heights, i.e., the upper class, but they themselves will trample them with their own feet.²⁵⁸

The open conflict of oppressors and oppressed is emphasized in its fundamentals in the following psalm (26.7-18), embedded in the context of eschatological hopes, suggesting that whoever inserted 26.5b-6 may also be responsible for 26.7-19.²⁵⁹ The psalm, in characteristic wisdom language, witnesses to a situation in which the צְדִיק (v. 7) is guided by the divine מִשְׁפָּטִים which apply to each and every יִשְׁבֵי הַבֵּל (v. 9), but is beset by the suspicion²⁶⁰ that Yhwh might forgive the sinners so that they can move toward improvement. The psalmist opposes such a divine pedagogy with a categorical ‘no’: ‘The רָשָׁע never learns what is righteous even if he is pardoned; in the land of the upright he perverts [everything]; he does not see the majesty of Yhwh’ (v. 10). A presumption of this statement is that the inhabitants of the earth know about צֶדֶק and נִבְחֹת. 24.5 offers the same conclusion, using the expression בְּרִית עוֹלָם.²⁶¹ If Yhwh’s צְדִיקָה is to be established, the lot of the sinner must be clearly separated from that of the pious.²⁶² The reflection about the destiny of the צְדִיק and רָשָׁע ends with the hope that the fire that Yhwh apportions to his enemies might destroy them, which alludes to 66.24.

While the We-group is still identified as a female suppliant, the tone changes from 26.12 on to that of a psalm of trust, in which Yhwh disciples from the world of the nations are again fellow supplicants. So v. 13 says: ‘Yhwh, our God, there are lords other than you who

257. So Koenen, *Heil*, pp. 108-10, who also stresses the parallels between 25.4-5; 26.4-6; and 29.17-21 (p. 116).

258. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 365: ‘Le chant d’actions de grâces célèbre la victoire de l’humble fidélité à Yahvé sur l’orgueil des gens au pouvoir.’

259. On this, see Koenen, *Heil*, pp. 114-15.

260. Henry, *Glaubenskrisen und Glaubensbewährung*, pp. 67-115 emphasizes in particular the difficulty of belief which is expressed in this prayer.

261. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 989.

262. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 2. Teilband, p. 900: ‘The idea is thought through to the end: since mercy may stand in the way of disciplinary purpose, God must therefore forego letting grace proceed before justice.’

have ruled over us; but we acknowledge your name alone.' The allusion to Hos. 13.4 'I, Yhwh, have been your God from Egypt until now, and you have known...no other God besides me (אלהים זולתי)' points to the fact that the problem of foreign gods is also being addressed in Isa. 26.13,²⁶³ which is even more clear in the LXX translation: κύριε, ἐκτὸς σοῦ ἄλλον οὐκ οἶδαμεν. Thus the אֱדֻנִים who have ruled over them (בעליוֹנִי—a play on 'Baal') are not secular powers but rather foreign gods. The dead, i.e., the spirits of the dead, the רַפְּאִים, rise no more, for Yhwh has destroyed them and wiped out all memory of them (זכר, v. 14), while Yhwh's name is proclaimed (נִכְרִי).²⁶⁴ This denial of all cults of the dead is in accord with the statement of 24.21-22, where, among other things, Yhwh disempowers the army of heaven and locks it up in a grave (cf. 8.19-23a) before beginning his royal reign (24.23b).

Beside carrying out justice and righteousness as conditions for a life in שְׁלוֹם (26.3[2x], 12) the supplicants hope for nothing more ardently than an increase in their numbers.²⁶⁵ This wish is already fulfilled in a preliminary way, and so they can say: 'You have increased the nation (יִסַּף), Yhwh, you have increased the nation, have glorified yourself, have enlarged (רָחַק) all the boundaries of the earth', which alludes to the Yhwh disciples in the community. The proclamation of the great deeds of Yhwh among the nations (12.5) has borne its first fruits. Yet the hoped-for breakthrough, the new community of Yhwh's disciples from Israel and the nations as a sign of Yhwh's world rulership, still has not happened. So the community is compared to a pregnant woman who is in the heat of birth-pains; but instead of delivering, the community gives birth only to air. Thus it must recognize that the birth of new Yhwh disciples who are not ethnically bound, but are 'earth-dwellers' (יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל),²⁶⁶ is not possible through their own power.²⁶⁷ The birth motif occurs many times in the

263. The connection to Hos. 13.4 is assured by the fact that Day ('A Case of Inner Scriptural Interpretation', pp. 309-18) identifies a total of eight parallels between Isa. 26.13-27.11 and Hos. 13.4-14.10.

264. זכר hi. in 12.4; 26.13; 48.1; 62.6; 63.7.

265. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 372 n. 1, refers also to Isa. 1.9; 6.13bβ; 10.22a; 27.6; 37.31-32; 61.9; 63.10-12; 65.23.

266. Otherwise, Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 217: 'This must refer to the wicked who abuse the faithful, and make life hard for them.'

267. Cf. Darr, 'No Strength to Deliver', p. 249: 'These righteous sufferers have conceived and their "labour" is anguished indeed. But they cannot birth "a new thing on earth" (Jer. 31.22b). Such an accomplishment lies beyond human resources; only God can perform that task.'

book of Isaiah,²⁶⁸ but 13.8, 26.17–18, and 66.7–9 show the greatest commonalities.²⁶⁹ With the world judgment in 13.8, the labor pains that the people experience lead to no positive outcome; what remains is only destruction. The birth pains of the Zion community (26.17–18) proclaim a new generation, but remain without result. The hoped-for offspring of the community of Yhwh-faithful from Israel and the nations comes only at the end of the book. There it is Zion who rejoices as a mother over the blessing of children who have been sent to her from Yhwh (66.7–9). The theme of labor and birth therefore binds together one of the main messages of the book of Isaiah. The divine judgment upon Babylon as the quintessential event is celebrated as the turn of an era; the labor pangs which befall humanity are an expression of extreme distress and decision (13.8). Even the Zion community is not excepted from these birth pains; it must recognize that bringing about a righteous world filled with **שְׁלום** and **יְשׁוּעָה** does not lie within its power (26.17–18). Nevertheless, the way to a world without grief and tears can no longer be blocked.

With 26.19 Yhwh's answer to the prayer addresses in particular the problem of the death cult of v. 14, as indicated by the use of certain key terms (**קִים**, **רַפְּאִים**, **מַחִים**). It is not the dead of those who pursue necromancy that will live, but rather 'your dead', i.e., those of the Yhwh community, 'my corpses', i.e., the dead for whom Yhwh himself takes responsibility: 'Awake and rejoice, you who lie in the dust, for your dew is a radiant dew (**טַל אֹרֶחַ טָלֵךְ**), and the earth will give birth to the **רַפְּאִים**.' If an allusion to Baal's daughter, *pdry bt ar* ('maiden of the honey-dew'),²⁷⁰ lies behind this, the result is, 'Yhwh's dew, which can bring about the resurrection of the dead, is of a special type, i.e., it is the same as that known from ancient times, a life-giving honey-dew'.²⁷¹

268. According to Sweeney, 'Citation', p. 48, the birth motif is present in Isa. 7.14; 8.3; 9.5; 13.8; 21.3; 23.4–5; 33.11; 42.11; 45.10; 49.21; 51.2, 18; 54.1; 55.10; 59.3–4; 66.7–9; see also Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 'Travailing Woman Similes in Isaiah', pp. 102–105.

269. In addition, Sweeney, 'Citations', p. 49: **חַבַּל** in the book of Isaiah, only in 13.8 and 66.7; **חֹרֶל** in 13.8; 26.17–18 (2x) and 66.7–8 (3x); **יָלַד** in 13.8; 26.17–18 (2x); and 66.7–9 (5x): 'No other passages treating the theme of childbirth show such a great degree of lexical correspondence.'

270. Loretz, *Ugarit und die Bibel*, p. 163, among others, considers this possibility.

271. Otzen, **טַל**, *ThWAT* III, p. 350; or is it to be changed to 'dew of the spirits of the dead' (**טַל אֲבוֹת**), with Schwarz ("Tau der Lichter", pp. 280–81)? Day, 'A Case of Inner Scriptural Interpretation', pp. 311–13, emphasizes the connection to

The particular character of the reply in v. 19 to the issue of death or the spirits of the dead in v. 14 makes an interpretation which is geared solely toward the secure future of the congregation of the righteous appear oversimplified;²⁷² Isa. 26.19 comes astonishingly close to the idea of an individual afterlife (cf. 2 Macc. 7.9, 14;²⁷³ Dan. 12.1-3).

As the righteous Noah, together with the creation, finds refuge in the ark before the destroying judgment, so now the community of the righteous on Zion finds refuge. They must close the door behind themselves for a little while until the anger has passed, a phrasing which additionally reminds one of the passing over of the punishing angel on the Passover night (Gen. 7.16; Exod. 12.23).²⁷⁴ When Yhwh avenges the evil of the world's inhabitants and the earth reveals the bloody deeds perpetrated on it (cf. Gen. 4.10; 9.4-7), this is an event analogous to the flood. Yet it goes beyond that. This time the sea monster Leviathan, embodiment of chaotic evil, is not spared as at the flood; Yhwh carries out a 'special operation' against him, killing the dragon in the sea with a 'hard and great and strong sword'—thus the last enemy is overcome!

As Noah laid out a vineyard after the flood (Gen. 9.20), so a new vineyard appears in 27.2-6; its relationship to the Song of the Vineyard in 5.1-7 is unmistakable.²⁷⁵ As at the flood Yhwh learned something, namely, never again to destroy the earth completely, so too after the judgment, he learns with regard to his vineyard Israel. True, it will produce 'thorns and thistles', but Yhwh will act against it selectively, since it may still make peace with him (יעשה שלום לי). The new vineyard of Jacob and Israel will strike roots, bloom, and fill the circle of the earth with fruits; where else is this fruitful vineyard from which the entire circle of the earth will profit, if not on Zion!

Verses 27.2-6 make an excellent closing point for chaps. 13-27; out of the judgment upon the sinners in Israel and the nations has grown

Hos. 13.14 (redemption from Sheol) and 14.6 (Yhwh as dew for Israel); Day, 'טל אורח', pp. 265-69, includes Hos. 6.2-3, Pss. 110.3; 46.6 in the discussion.

272. So among others, Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, p. 80: 'there can be no doubt that v. 19 refers to a national rather than an individual resurrection.'

273. So Puech, *La croyance des Esséniens*, I, p. 71, sees Isa. 26.19 as a 'témoignage indéniable d'une certitude de vie après la mort et d'une résurrection suivie de la joie eschatologique dans quelques cercles juifs, déjà à une date ancienne, antérieure à Daniel et la traduction de la LXX qui l'ont compris d'une résurrection corporelle'.

274. Cf. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 373.

275. See Sweeney, especially ('New Gleanings', pp. 51-66).

a new vineyard. The Israel perspective of the Song of the Vineyard in 5.1-7 is extended here to the nations, that is, to the righteous in them. In a two-stage expansion, this closing point was later restricted, first to postexilic Judah in contrast to Samaria, and then to the Jews returning from the Diaspora in contrast to the righteous from the world of the nations.

At the same time, the key words 'Jacob' and 'Israel' motivated a scribe to consider more closely, from the Judah or Zion perspective, the judgment on the Northern kingdom in the context of the oracles to the nations. Thus the question here is whether Yhwh has struck it, i.e., the Northern Kingdom, just like all other nations? The first answer to that is that he acted 'according to measure',²⁷⁶ and indeed with the goal that the guilt of Jacob should be covered (יִכְפֹּר עוֹן יַעֲקֹב), i.e., idol worship should be wiped out. The fact that the 'east wind' is also found as an instrument of punishment in Hos. 13.15, just like the 'idol polemic' against Samaria in Hos. 14.9, is a further clue that the historical reflection in Isa. 27.7-11 deals in fact with the Northern Kingdom. The allusions and the literal borrowing of אֲשֵׁרִים וְחַמְנִים from the oracle against Samaria (17.8) expressly confirm this.²⁷⁷ Has Samaria used this opportunity to draw salutary consequences from the punishing blows? Unfortunately this question must be answered in the negative, for the fortified city lies there deserted. Animals graze everywhere; women go together to seek firewood. The piece of mosaic for this comfortless image comes from the traditions of the book of Isaiah (cf. 13.21-22; 14.13; 17.3; 25.2). The idea that the assessment 'this is a people without understanding' (לֹא עַם בִּינֹת הוּא) relates to Jerusalem is impossible, in spite of what is inscribed in 1.3,²⁷⁸ for it is precisely Zion, the new vineyard, that remains after the judgment. Again the close of the book of Hosea shows the way (13.13), where the Northern Kingdom is named as lacking understanding (הוּא בֶן־הוּא חֹכֵם); Sir. 50.25-26 also shares this opinion! If 27.7-9 granted one more chance to the brother nation from the North to be part of the new vineyard on the condition that it gave up idol worship, in 27.10-11 that chance is no longer in evidence.²⁷⁹

The insertion of the one- or two-stage reflection (27.7-9, 10-11) about the lot of the Northern brother nation at just this place may

276. For בְּמִסְאָה, see the discussion by Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 194-96.

277. See Vermeylen's list of connections to 17.1-11 (*Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 377-78), expanded by Sweeney, 'New Gleanings', p. 55.

278. Against Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, II, p. 40; Sweeney, 'New Gleanings', pp. 56-58.

279. See also van Grol, 'Isaiah 27, pp. 10-11', pp. 195-209.

have been motivated by the redactor reading in 27.6 of the 'blooming of Jacob' (יִצְיָן) and in 28.1, 4 of the Woe against the 'fading bloom of Ephraim' (צִיָּן נָבֵל). He would have then joined these ideas as: No, Ephraim would bloom no more; instead, only a withered twig will be found there, in contrast to the valuable vineyard that Yhwh himself waters regularly (27.3)!

If it is correct that the historical reflection of 27.7-11 was provoked by the destruction of Samaria in the years 312/296 and that it was consciously placed *after* 27.6 and *before* 28.1-6, then that would support the idea that the 'Diaspora refrain' of 27.12-13 was added only after that. In the case of the refrain of 11.11-16 we have already suggested that these verses, in contrast to the openness to the nations of 11.10, are restricted to the Diaspora. The addition of 27.12-13 was aiming for the same effect; 'fruits' for the entire earth are no longer hoped for (27.6), and rather than one community of the righteous from Israel and the nations on Zion, there is the gathering of each individual Jew out of the Diaspora.²⁸⁰ It is clear that this is an explicit reaction against the idea of an Israel open to the nations, when one considers how the idea of Assyria and Egypt as Yhwh-nations has been turned around (19.18-25). They are no longer merely countries from which Diaspora Jews, at the sounding of a great shofar, make pilgrimage to worship Yhwh on the holy Mount at Jerusalem. In the background of 27.13 the kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucids already stand with 'Egypt' and 'Assyria'.²⁸¹ The hopes for a world center at Zion, made up of Yhwh nations outside of Israel, were lost with the end of the Persian Empire. The new game is no longer an ingathering of nations, but rather an ingathering of the scattered, namely the scattered of Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל, 11.12; 27.13).

3.6. Review and Prospect

Chapters 13–27 are characterized by the presence of the nations; the nations are not assessed *en gros* as *massa perditionis*, but the righteous among them belong to the 'righteous people' who are included in the fortified city (26.2). Ethos and ethics, not ethnicity, are the decisive

280. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 177-80, does not place 11.11-16 and 27.12-13 on one common redactional layer, but an explanation for their concluding position (like that also of 35.8-10) is still owing. Even if one rejects Steck's homecoming redaction, the phenomenon of the striking closing verses in chaps. 11, 27, and 35 is still not explained.

281. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy*, p. 266; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 378-79; Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 186.

factors for membership in the people of God, with the figure of the righteous Noah standing clearly in the background. Just as he and his family found protection in the ark, the righteous from Israel and the nations find refuge on Zion.

After the city of Babylon, a symbol of human hubris and state idolatry, has fallen (21.9), and after Yhwh has destroyed the sinners among the earth-dwellers, he begins his rule as king on Zion with a festival banquet (25.6–8).

The collection of Isaianic oracles against those nations that were able to tempt Judah and Jerusalem into a dangerous anti-Assyrian politics in the years of the Philistine revolt (713–711) was gradually enlarged to a collection of oracles of the nations against the enemies of Zion. At the same time, special importance was given to the defeat of Babylon. Since the destiny of this great enemy of Jerusalem was sealed by the action of Xerxes in the year 482, nothing more stood in the way of the flowering of the city of God. The Babylonization of the oracles of the nations and their Zionization are therefore closely related to one another. The final fall of Babylon was the confirmation, visible to all, of the special status of Jerusalem and Zion. All enemies of the city of God will be destroyed; all righteous persons will find refuge in the fortified city. The forcefully stated theme of ‘Sinners versus Pious’, which documents the priority of ethical behavior over ethnic affiliation, also points in exactly this direction.

The fact that the Assyrian period is already gone with Isaiah 13–17, and that the Babylonian era also belongs to the past, reveals the contemporary location of the composers of these chapters. That location is clearly in the Persian Period, which for them is marked by Zion’s restoration. This conclusion also explains why the exile events, including the destruction of the city and temple, remain completely hidden. The historical background of Xerxes’ action against Babylon in the year 482 as well as the idea of Zion as divine mountain of the World-King, Yhwh, point to the middle of the fifth century as *terminus a quo*.

On the synchronic plane, chaps. 24–27 form the close of the collection of the oracles concerning the nations in chaps. 13–23, and are therefore also to be interpreted against that background. The three chief themes of the redaction of the ‘Zion community’—*Babylonization*, *Zionization* and the problem of *Sinners vs Pious*—are bound together in chaps. 24–27, developed, and *universalized* toward the ‘citizens of the earth’. At the same time the Noah narrative appears as the paradigm for the pious righteous who are now no longer in the ark, but rather in Zion’s refuge and under its secure protection. This

widened perspective seems to have become possible only through increasingly convergence and finally incorporation with the second major portion of the book of Isaiah. It stands in a very close conceptual relationship to the servant redaction in 56.1-8 and 63.1-66.24, which likewise proclaims Zion's openness to the righteous of the nations. However, since the servant community elsewhere has only sporadically inscribed itself into chaps. 1-32, it appears more probable that 24-27* was inserted still later than the close of 66. The *terminus ad quem* for this section, again, is shown in the attenuation of the salvation perspective to the Judaic Diaspora in 27.12-13 (cf. 11.11-16; 35.9b-10).

Chapter 4

ISAIAH 28–35: THE DIVINE KING AND THE ZION COMMUNITY

4.1. *The Structure of Isaiah 28–35*

With the הוי in 28.1, a clear break is made from the preceding chapters, and the prose form beginning in 36.1 clearly demarcates this section from the following chapters. The clearest marking is made by the cry of 'Woe'; after the first five instances of הוי in 28.1; 29.1, 15; 30.1; 31.1, a הן follows in 32.1, and a final הוי is added in 33.1 against an unnamed oppressor. On the synchronic plane, this is a series of Woe-cries following the 'Song of the Vineyard' in 27.2-6, as was the case in 5.1-7. With the structural feature of the cries of Woe, the interpretive unit comprises 28–33 at the least,¹ underscored by the concise summary statement that the guilt² of the people on Zion will be forgiven (33.24).

What are these chapters about in terms of their place in the book? The oracles concerning the nations in 13–23 make clear that the nations are not en bloc *massa perditionis*—their righteous ones, similar to the saving of Noah, have entrance to Zion. Then chaps. 24–27 have to do with the city from which Yhwh's royal rule over the nations must begin: Jerusalem with Mount Zion (24.23). Neither Babylon, Jerusalem's major adversary in the 'Songs of the City', nor Samaria (27.10-11) were able to erode the position of the City of Zion. But if Jerusalem is to be the city of the heavenly world king, it must develop a population that corresponds to this vocation. Chapters 28–33 are about how Jerusalem and its inhabitants will prepare for this role. First the corrupt leaders must be held responsible. 'With the corrupt

1. So Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 13, 194; Brückner, 'Komposition', pp. 1-3; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 383-84; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, pp. 353-58; Stansell, 'Isaiah 28–33', pp. 68-103; with a different division, Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 187-88 (Chapters 28–32).

2. Cf. the key word 'guilt' (עוֹן) in 1.4; 6.7; 33.24; 40.2.

leaders removed, Yhwh will be able to establish His kingship in the newly cleansed city.³ Thus at the outset there is the expectation that Yhwh himself [and not a human king] will be 'a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people' (28.5), and at the end there is the certainty that the new Zion population, free from blindness and stubbornness, pure from every guilt (33.24), will see the king in his beauty (33.17) and acknowledge that 'Yes, Yhwh is our Judge, Yhwh is our Ruler, Yhwh is our King; *He* (הוא) will save us!' (33.22).

In this context, the five cries of Woe in 28–31 appear in a new light. Unlike their predecessors, they no longer serve to demonstrate concrete guilt, but are rather the dark background against which emerges in bright contrast what is expected of the people and leaders who acknowledge Yhwh as their ruler, king, and savior: trust in him alone, and no other power in heaven or on earth! Thus it is no coincidence that the theological climaxes of 28.16 and 30.15 are found in just this section of the book.

The series of the five-fold cries of הוי is closed by a 'See' (הן), which announces the coming of the king (32.1), in whose wake the blindness and hardening of the Zion population will be removed (32.3). The arrival of this righteous king is opposed unexpectedly by a new obstacle (33.1): 'Woe to you, destroyer, who yourself are not destroyed; Faithless one, whom no one has treated faithlessly!'⁴ This cry of Woe provides the background for the following confession of the We-group and their lament (33.2–6, 7–9). It cannot be long before the lament is heard,⁵ as the three-fold עתה expressly underlines: 'Now I get up, now I arise, now I will lift myself up' (33.10). Both those nearby and those far off, i.e., the nations and Israel, will have to confront in an unprecedented way Yhwh's presence, which destroys sin and sinners (33.10–16). Only then will 'your eyes perceive the king in his beauty' (33.17), i.e., the new Zion population will be deemed worthy of a vision of God, a vision equal in every way to that of the prophet purified of guilt (6.5). Like Isaiah, the new Zion population is also granted its inaugural vision of Yhwh as king, with his people free of all fear in a secure Jerusalem (33.17–22). As the prophet was freed from guilt in the course of his vision, so too is his prophetic successor: for the people 'who dwell there', i.e., on Zion, their guilt is

3. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 63.

4. 'Weh dir, Verwüster, der du selbst nicht verwüstet bist! Treulose, an dem man nicht treulos gehandelt hat!' (Wildberger, *Jesaja. 3. Teilband*, p. 1282).

5. Cf. the prompt answer of God in 65.1ff. to the collective lament of 63.7–64.11.

forgiven (33.24)! Thus the proclaimed kingship of Yhwh and the creation of a Zion population 'secure from attack' have become a reality (32.1-2).

While Isaiah 32 and 33 are closely connected by the 'king' theme and by the repeated 'we', both of these elements are almost entirely lacking in 34–35. Furthermore, any syntactical connection to 28–33 is lacking. Chapters 34–35, however, are closely interwoven, as the relationships of the key words show.⁶ But there are also two thematic connections between chap. 33 and chap. 34. First, in 33.13 Yhwh calls on those 'far off' (רַחֲקִים), i.e., the nations, to acknowledge his effectiveness (גְּבוּרָתִי), to which 34.1 connects with: 'Come here, you peoples, and hear; pay attention, you nations'. The entire population of the earth is mustered, in order to be present at the divine criminal court in Edom and consequently to be made aware of the historical powerfulness of Yhwh. Thus the Deutero-Isaianic theme of the legal trial of Yhwh is prefaced by the nations confronting his historical effectiveness.⁷ Second, Yhwh's kingship in chap. 33 finds its confirmation in the testimony of 34.12 that in Edom there will no longer be anything to call מְלוּכָה. If 32.1 expressed the hope of a just leadership, now the end of Edom's princes is promised (34.12b). In 13–27 the contrast between Jerusalem and Babylon was located in the opposition of the building and destruction of the two cities; here the contrast consists in the destruction of Edom's state structure while Yhwh begins his divine kingship in Israel.⁸

The fact that Yhwh's גְּבוּרָה is demonstrated precisely in the brother-nation of Edom has to do with the historical situation of those who attached chaps. 34–35 as a new conclusion to 28–33.⁹ It is not surprising that they incorporated an actual historical experience here, since they thereby were continuing the sequence of the destruction of the enemies of Israel: after Assyria (10.5–34) and Babylon (13–14; 21; 24), Edom has also fallen (34). Thus as the Neo-Babylonian superpower removed Assyria as enemy and opponent of the people of God, so Edom has become the infamous successor of Babylon. The

6. נָקָם: 34.8; 35.4; נָחֳלִים: 34.9; 35.6; בְּנוֹה תַּנִּים: 34.13; 35.7; חֲצִיר: 34.13; 35.7; three-fold שָׁם: 34.14–15; 35.8–9; also, the parallel of אֵין עֹבֵר in 34.10 and לֹא עֲבָרְנוּ in 35.8.

7. Beuken, 'Isaiah 34', p. 79: 'the opening of Isaiah 34 serves as a prelude to the very important topic of the lawsuit against the nations in Isaiah 40–66.'

8. Liebreich, 'Compilation', p. 122: 'The removal of kings and princes from the face of the earth will at least bring about the consummation of the kingship of God. Chap. 34, therefore, owes its present position to the antithesis between שָׁם מְלוּכָה in 34.12 and הִן מְלֻכָּנוּ in 33.22.'

9. See 'Contemporary Relationships' under 4.2.

references to Isaiah 13 in Isaiah 34 leave no doubt about this objective.¹⁰ The nations will become aware of the effective power of Yhwh in history in terms of the series of enemies Assyria–Babylon–Edom, and thus acknowledge it. In this way, a bridge to chaps. 40–55 is created: ‘The nations are now witnesses of the decision, not because they have deserved better but because for them, within the same book of Isaiah, the possibility exists of recognizing Yhwh as the only ruler of the earth (45.22–25).’¹¹

The alternation of judgment and salvation oracles which characterizes chaps. 28–33, in particular, is continued in chaps. 34–35:¹²

Judgment:	28.1-4	7-15	18-22 [23-29]	29.1-4	9-14, 15-16
Salvation:	5-6	16-17		5-8	17-24
Judgment:	30.1-17	31.1-3	9-14	33.1	34
Salvation:	18-26, 27-33	4-9	32.1-8	15-20	2-24 35

It appears therefore that chap. 34 has been coupled to 33 because the Woe against the unidentified oppressor of 33.1 demanded a definite resolution, or at the very least allowed for it. This oppressor, who still opposes the dawning of the era of salvation on Zion, is identified with Edom in chap. 34. Its destruction, which is compared to that of Sodom and Gomorrah (pitch, brimstone, v. 9), incorporates that of Babylon at the beginning of the oracles concerning the nations, and takes it to the extreme.

After the destruction of Edom as a last enemy, chap. 35 paints a rich portrait of Zion’s prosperity, using motifs from 32–33:¹³ areas of abundant trees and fruit (לִבְנוֹן, בְּרִמְלָה, שְׂרֹן) that wither in 33.9 shine in new splendor (35.1-2); while the rash are promised knowledge in 32.4, in 35.4 there is the exhortation to be strong and without fear.¹⁴ In 33.8 the streets (מַסְלֹת) were ruined, so that no one walked on them anymore; now there is a street (מַסְלֹל), a holy way, on which the unclean do not walk (35.8); in 33.23b it was proclaimed that even the

10. חֲרָב in 13.15 and 34.4-5; the theme of the יוֹם יְהוָה in 13.6, 9 and 34.8; the animals or demons in the region of Babylon and Edom that was stricken by God’s judgment in 13.21-22 and 34.11-15 (שְׂעִיר, אֵיִים, חַיִּים), borrowed from 13.21-22 by 34.13-14; the boundlessness of the judgment in 13.20 and 34.10 with לִנְצַח and מִדּוֹר לְדּוֹר or עַד דּוֹר וָדּוֹר; the four-fold שָׁם as place of judgment in both 13.20-21 and 34.12-15.

11. Beuken, ‘Isaiah 34’, p. 96.

12. The schema of Stansell, ‘Isaiah 28–33’, p. 71, is adopted with modifications.

13. See Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 10-11.

14. The reversal of the phrase לִבְנֵי נִמְחָרִים (32.4) to לִנְמַחֲרֵי־לֵב (35.4) is evidence that a deliberate connection is being made.

lame (פסחים) would participate in the booty processions in the era of salvation; now the lame (פסח) leap like a deer (35.6). The temporal marking of the dawning era of salvation with *אז* (33.23) is taken up twice in 35.5–6; similarly, there are corresponding statements in 35.5–6 and 29.18; 30.21; 32.3–4; 33.24a about removal of hardening and the end of all physical handicaps for the redeemed in the era of salvation. However, in contrast to 32–33, Isaiah 35 no longer prepares a Zion population corresponding to the holiness of Yhwh—a population whose guilt after all is already forgiven (העם הישב בה נשא עון) (33.24)—but rather encourages the community to acknowledge, in the face of their doubt, the renewed presence of their God: הנה אלהיכם (35.4). And this is precisely the pragmatics of the prologue in 40.1–11, where the same statement is found: הנה אלהיכם (40.9)!

The encouragement to be strong once again in Yhwh, emphasized by the two-fold imperative of חזק in 35.3–4, points to 36–39, at the center of which stands the king whose name חזקיהו has programmatic significance for the addressees of the book. The same call for fearlessness meant for the disheartened in 35.4 (אל תירא) is directed to Hezekiah at the siege of Sennacherib (אל תירא, 37.6). Hezekiah himself twice picks up on the promise to the despairing that Yhwh will save them, at the end of his prayer of entreaty and at the end of his prayer of thanksgiving.¹⁵ The implication is obvious: he who relies entirely on Yhwh, as the pious king Hezekiah has done, will continue to be cared for.¹⁶ Like Hezekiah—but unlike Ahaz, who in spite of the command not to be afraid (7.4) did not rely on Yhwh—Jerusalem's bearer of good news (מבשרת ירושלם) should not be afraid (40.9): אל תירא!

Accordingly, on a synchronic level obvious relationships exist, not only between 35 and 40.1–11,¹⁷ that is, between the last prophetic text of chaps. 1–35 and the first of 40–55,¹⁸ but there are also connecting lines which include chaps. 36–39. Thus the pious Hezekiah, who is confident of the saving presence of Yhwh even in a hopeless situation, sets the perfect example of the fearlessness expected in chaps. 35 and 40.1–11; he is genuinely heroic. Like all biblical heroes, he also had failings, as shown in Isaiah 39, which so skillfully creates a bridge to the 'Babylonian Period' in 40–55.

15. Cf. 35.4 וישעבם with 37.20 הושיענו and 38.20 להושיעני; Liebreich points this out ('Compilation', p. 270).

16. Borrowing from Buber's translation of 7.9b, 'Bleibt betreut'.

17. כבוד יהוה, 35.2b; 40.5; ערבה and מדרב, 35.1; 40.3; מסלה or מסלול, 35.8; 40.3; (יאמר אלהיכם, 35.4; 40.9 (cf. 40.1b, הנה אלהיכם).

18. Thus Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 13.

On the level of the final text, the theme of *return* connects 35.9b-10¹⁹ with 11.11-16 and 27.12-13; there, references to a return concluded chaps. 1-11 [12] and 13-27, and this is also the case for 35.9b-10 as a closing point of chaps. 28-35. Steck's thesis that the destruction of Edom and the king's highway would make the return from Babylon and Egypt impossible since these two streams would have met in Edom²⁰ has no correspondence to the text; neither returnees from Babylon nor those from Egypt²¹ would voluntarily have taken the route through Edom!

Chapter 34's elaboration of Edom's complete destruction not only borrows content-wise from the judgment on Babylon, but the chapter is also a conscious bracketing that brings the theme of the nations in 13-34 to an end.²² This can be seen in 34.11-17, which is structured as an inclusio²³ and emphasizes the uninhabitability of Edom, where all kinds of strange demonic animals have gathered.²⁴ Thus, the scribe²⁵ draws not only on Isa. 13.11-22, but also on Lev. 11.13-19; Deut. 14.12-19; Jer. 50.39; Mic. 1.8; Zeph. 2.14 and Job 30.29 and requires the reader to do some biblical sleuthing: 'Seek and read the book of Yhwh (סֵפֶר יְהוָה)!²⁶ Not one of them shall be missing, none shall be without its mate. For the mouth of Yhwh has commanded, and his spirit has gathered them' (34.16). If one responds to this imperative, one finds that, to be sure not all, but nearly all the sought-after animals are there, 'except the demoness Lilith and the arrow-snake'.²⁷

19. For the demarcation of 35.8-9a, 9b-10, see under 4.6.2.

20. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 43 n. 6.

21. Even the jubilation of Kedar in 42.11 cannot bear the burden of proof for that!

22. As Ps. 137 shows, Babylon and Edom were arch-enemies of the people of God; cf. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, p. 254; Gosse, 'Isaie 13,1-14,23', p. 273.

23. Cf. the incorporation of שָׁכֵן יִרָשׁ from v. 11 into v. 17.

24. Beuken, 'Isaiah 34', p. 89: 'The desert in Edom will indeed be so terrifying that all twelve of these ruin-inhabiting creatures will be encountered there.'

25. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 253: 'Apparently, the author involuntarily divides himself here between the prophet that he would be and the scribe that he is.'

26. According to Lauterjung, 'Textgestalt', pp. 124-25, this is a gloss, 'evidence of apocalyptic handling of the text'.

27. Donner, "'Forscht in der Schrift Jahwes'", p. 293; according to him this is the precursor of the 'later classical principle: *Sacra Scriptura est sui ipsius interpres*'. This is qualified, rightly, by Herrmann, 'Überlegungen', pp. 77-78.

With the destruction of Babylon (13) and making Edom uninhabitable (34), will all foreign nations now be given over to destruction, or only enemy nations? The call to the nations and the earth to draw near and pay attention (v. 1) does indeed have echoes of a call to witness,²⁸ but should be seen rather as an ‘instruction opening’: the nations will draw their lesson from the destruction of Edom, to which they are witnesses.²⁹ When it says the earth and whatever fills it, the world and all its offspring (כל צאצאיה) should pay attention, the word ‘offspring’ refers not to plants or similar things, but certainly to human beings, which is covered by the biblical usage of the word and especially by the usage in the book of Isaiah.³⁰ The lesson that the people of the nations should draw in view of the destruction of Edom is obvious: no one will do battle against Zion with impunity, even if it may have seemed possible at times,³¹ ‘for it is the day of Yhwh’s vengeance, the year of vindication for Zion’s cause’ (v. 8).

Verses 34.2–4 appear to contradict this ‘teaching and learning invitation’ to the ‘progeny of the earth’, for they treat of anger, of Yhwh’s glowing heat against all nations and their armies. On the synchronic level, there are three solutions to this dilemma of Edom and the nations’ judgment: (a) the judgment on Edom is a concrete example for the nations; (b) the judgment against the nations in 34.2–4 is only ‘rhetorical background’ for their destruction, which *de facto* touches only Edom;³² (c) the nations should learn that they will suffer Edom’s fate if they behave like Edom, i.e., continue to be or become an enemy of Zion. The fact that Yhwh’s sword falls only on Edom (v. 5) argues against an already closed and therefore irrevocable judgment upon all nations; furthermore, a total world destruction in which only the people of God are left presents no meaningful vision of the future. Yet the vividness of vv. 2–4 argues against a purely fictive or rhetorical background of the statement of the nations’ destruction. Thus, in the context not only of these verses but also of the entire book, which

28. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1331; Beuken, ‘Isaiah 34’, p. 94: ‘The judgment is, to be sure, destined for all the nations, but in the first instance they remain witnesses to it, for their instruction.’

29. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 54; Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39*, p. 259; see the discussion by Mathews, *Defending Zion*, pp. 34–54, who rejects both the ‘call to witness’ as well as the ‘instruction opening’ but suggests no solution of his own.

30. Isa. 22.24; 34.1; 42.5; 44.3; 48.19; 61.9; 65.23; Job 5.25; 21.8; 27.14; 31.8 (Sir. 47.20); in addition, Gosse, ‘L’emploi de צאצא’, pp. 22–24.

31. Vermeulen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 441.

32. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1331.

makes accommodation for an enormous openness toward the nations, it makes sense to choose the third reading: the nations and 'earth's offspring' should take Edom's fate to heart, and change from enemies into friends of Zion. From the perspective of reading, the nations are observers not only of the destruction of Edom, but also of the catastrophic results to Assyria from its attempt to wrest Zion for itself. Therefore, chaps. 36–38 serve both as a representation for Israel, and also as a lesson in 'biblical history' for the nations!

However, the nations should draw their lesson not only from the destruction of Edom, but also from its positive counterpart, the prosperity of Zion. So the picture of salvation in chap. 35 is the other part of the diptych to the image of terror in 34—the *dies gloriae* of Zion stands in contrast to the *dies irae* of Edom! It is of the utmost importance, in terms of interpretation, not to alter this contrast by assuming that 35 is about the transformation of the wilderness to make a passage to Zion. This widely-held view, which blurs image and subject, can be attributed to 35.9b-10, which, as a quotation of 51.10-11, undoubtedly speaks about a return to Zion.³³ This closing statement, however, is not so bold as to have the wilderness become the *terra intermedia* between the Diaspora and Zion, still less to change Edom's desert of pitch and brimstone into a blooming landscape through which the returnees could come rejoicing to Jerusalem.³⁴ No, as Edom is changed to a total wilderness, so Zion³⁵—and not *the terra intermedia* between Diaspora and Zion—is changed from a wasteland to a blooming, well-watered, danger-free landscape. The three-fold 'there' (35.8-9a) is related not to the destroyed Edom,³⁶ but rather to the dry ground (35.7) that became abundantly-watered, even marshy, land. The anticipated objection that such terrain, like the inaccessible 'Selva',³⁷ may be very hard to traverse is thrust aside: even *there* (!) a highway may be made, a holy way on which the unclean do not travel, and onto which those lacking understanding do not stray (35.8-9a). This is followed by 35.9b-10, the quote from 51.10-11, which

33. Hubmann, 'Der "Weg" zum Zion', p. 40: 'When the editor added V. 9b-10 to the original text, it was his aim to end this chapter with a promise of return.'

34. One of Steck's main theses (*Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 42-43); *ibid.*, p. 52: 'The factual relationship of Isa. 35 to Isa. 34 is...that of a partial correction regarding the condition of the terrain and its duration.'

35. Mathews, *Apportioning Desolation*, p. 256, against Steck's thesis, above.

36. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. *Teilband*, p. 1364: 'There is no doubt that the present passage does not mean that it [the street, U.B.] will lead through Edom, which according to 34 has become a wilderness'; if this is so, then a pillar of Steck's argument falls (*Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 19).

37. Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, p. 123.

now speaks in fact of a way of return. A glance at the other verses of return 11.11-16 and 27.12-13 and their respective positions reveals that chaps. 1–35 are divided into three parts by these passages (1–11, 12; 13–27; 28–35), and thus placed under the theme of the Diaspora Return.

4.2. *The Historical Relationships of Isaiah 28–35 and the Isaianic Core*

The main chronological connecting-thread of the book of Isaiah began with the year of King Uzziah's death (6.1) and traverses the Syrian-Ephraimite war of the years 734–732 (chaps. 7–8) and the Philistine revolt of the years 713–711 (chap. 20) to the events of 705–701, which are reported in chaps. 28–31. There is common agreement in the scholarly community that within these four chapters a core text of the Isaianic tradition has been used that reflects the prophetic stance against the Hezekian politics of the years 705–701.

With the sudden military death of Sargon³⁸ in the year 705, the time appeared to have come to throw off the Assyrian yoke once and for all.³⁹ The defeat of Samaria and the transformation of the Israelite heartland into an Assyrian province in the years 722–721⁴⁰ had apparently lost their terrifying impact on the politicians in Jerusalem. Thus Hezekiah, undergirded by a pro-Egyptian faction in Jerusalem, headed up an anti-Assyrian coalition, which was joined by the Philistine cities of Ashkelon and Ekron. Contact was also established with the Ethiopian king, Shabako, in the hope of receiving his powerful support.

After Sennacherib managed to secure his position as successor to the Assyrian throne, he attended to the revolts in the southern Palestine area. The rebellious city-states of Ashkelon and Ekron were taken; an Egyptian relief army was destroyed near Eltekeh. Sennacherib boasts of having captured 46 villages and smaller settlements, so that Hezekiah was isolated in Jerusalem like a 'bird in a cage'. After the fall of Lachish, the die was finally cast: Hezekiah was forced to surrender and pay high tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18.13-16). The

38. According to Mayer, *Politik*, p. 341, Sargon is 'the only Assyrian king of whom it is known for certain that he fell in battle'.

39. So Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*, pp. 117-19; see, among others, W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, pp. 133-96; Huber, *Jahwe, Juda und die anderen Völker*, pp. 88-139.

40. See Alt, 'Das System der assyrischen Provinzen', pp. 188-205; Alt, 'Neue assyrische Nachrichten', pp. 226-41.

countryside of Judah was transferred to the Philistine cities for their benefit since they had not participated in the rebellion. Surprisingly, Hezekiah was not removed from his office, probably so as not to destabilize the southern Palestine area too much; that would only have encouraged Egypt to assert its influence there. Likely Jerusalem also escaped destruction for the same reason. The sparing of Jerusalem through purely political power calculations then became 'theologized', bypassing all historical reality, as a paradigm of divine protection for the city of God for the sake of the pious king Hezekiah.⁴¹

Surprisingly, in chaps. 28–31 there is no verbal attack by Isaiah on the politics of Hezekiah, as had been the case in chaps. 7–8 under Ahaz. Because of that, on a synchronic plane chaps. 28–31 prepare for the anticipated future of the Hezekiah legends of 36–39, in which the king saves the city of God through his trust in God and his prayer of entreaty. Does this mean, however, that on the diachronic plane chaps. 28–31 in their oldest form are dependent on the legends of 36–39, that they presuppose these chapters literarily and in terms of content?⁴² Is it not equally possible that the prophet's careful handling of Hezekiah, which finds its literary expression in chaps. 28–31, makes the much later insertion of the legends easier, if not actually engendering them? Was the historical Hezekiah really no longer master of the political situation in 705–701, so that Isaiah proceeds deliberately against the priests, prophets, and leading alliance politicians of the pro-Egyptian faction? Arguing in favor of this hypothesis is the fact that as a result of the catastrophic politics with the revolt of Ashdod, in which Hezekiah was able to draw his head out of the noose only at the last moment, the palace chief Shebna had to vacate his position (22.15–18), but still remained as 'scribe' (36.3).⁴³

The pending question here concerning Isaianic sayings in chaps. 28–31 should not be misunderstood as a search for the prophet's *ipsissima verba*; it is really about language which is suited to no other period better than that of Isaiah. Kaiser's principle of denying to the prophet all sayings which *also* can be explained as from any other time than that of Isaiah cannot be accepted⁴⁴; on the contrary, the case

41. The three completed narratives A, B1, B2 in 2 Kgs 18.13–19.37 are a good example of the route from historical fact to theological historical ideology; on that, see the interpretation of Isa. 36–39 in chap. 5.

42. This is the thesis of U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 223.

43. Cf. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 434.

44. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 4: 'Given the fact that the Isaiah scroll was being shaped well into the Hellenistic period, the requirement must be upheld

should be that the sayings denied him are those which can *only*, or more meaningfully, be understood as from another time.⁴⁵ That being said, it should also be understood that there are border cases. However, in spite of all of the differences in individual judgments, the consensus is really not so small that it cannot be built upon.

The Isaianic sayings in 28–31, on the one hand, are regularly introduced with *הוֹי* (28.1; 29.1; 29.15; 30.1; 31.1) and, on the other, take the form of prophetic indictment and threat (28.7-18*; 29.9-14*; 30.6-8, 12-14, cf. *לִכְן*). In addition, in 30.6-8 there is the report of a symbolic action of the prophet which is reminiscent of the sealing of the prophecy in 8.16. In these sayings, which go back to the prophet of the eighth century, no salvation proclamation is found, not even a proclamation conditioned by a call for repentance. In the years after the revolt of Ashdod (713–711)—from which Hezekiah removed himself just in time—Isaiah had ever more emphatically abandoned all hope of a reversal in foreign policy away from Egypt and toward Yhwh.

The first series of five Woes, which all have to do with the political circumstances of 705–701, is very logically constructed.⁴⁶ The Woes begin with the exhortation that Jerusalem should take the lot of Samaria to heart; for what has happened to Samaria can and may also happen to Jerusalem (28.1-6), as is underlined by the following Woe to ‘Ariel’ (29.1-8). After the first two Woes, in which there still remains a spark of hope, Jerusalem may yet revise its politics; what follows makes clear that this will not be the case. The third Woe (29.15-24) shows how plans flourish in secret; the fourth (30.1-5), how they take shape in an alliance with Egypt; and the fifth (31.1-3), how they compel military action.

The fact that the first Woe is directed toward the ‘proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim’ is no argument against a date in the period at the beginning of the pact with Egypt. As in the Song of the Vineyard, Isaiah allows his Jerusalem audience to be lulled into a sense of security when they hear with satisfaction how the pride of Samaria collapsed, in order then to attack most emphatically the drunken elite of Jerusalem (28.7).⁴⁷ Isaiah points to the cautionary example of the Northern Kingdom which likewise had relied on

that, as a matter of principle, any words that can be explained as coming from another time must be denied the prophet.’

45. Cf. Perlitt, ‘Jesaja und die Deuteronomisten’, p. 134.

46. So already Brückner (1897), in ‘Komposition’, pp. 9-14.

47. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 229, does not attribute this saying to Isaiah, since in his view Isaiah ben Amoz spoke only against foreign nations.

deceptive Egyptian help with the results that now lay exposed before all eyes: Assyria swallowed Samaria like an early fig, like one who can hardly wait to enjoy the first fruit of the year (28.1-4). This saying is directed, therefore, not retrospectively to the leaders of Samaria already punished by history, but rather to the priests and prophets of Jerusalem who are inebriated with wine and visions (28.14).⁴⁸ As the national leaders of proud Ephraim fell to the intoxication of strong drink, so also do those in the Judean capital—*וְגַם אֶלֶּה* (28.7)—who claimed they had transacted a treaty with death and the underworld.⁴⁹ Behind *מוֹת* and *שָׁאוֹל* lies Egypt with its gods of the underworld (28.15); this *בְּרִית* will not endure—*לֹא תִקֶּיֶם* (28.18)!

Verses 7-11, at the center of which stand the stammering drunks, are generally interpreted in the following way: the prophets and priests, who favored a pro-Egyptian politics, made fun of Isaiah, and asked raucously if he really believed that they could be influenced by his prophetic stammering (*צִי לְצִי לְצִי קִי לְקִי לְקִי*). They are political realists and not small children just weaned from their mother's breast (28.9). However, it is improbable that they would have attributed such meaningless babble to Isaiah. He has been known in Jerusalem not for his unclear, but rather, for his all-too-clear language. No, it is not that the drunken accuse him of unintelligible chatter, but rather that Isaiah accuses them.⁵⁰ With tables⁵¹ full of vomit and filth everywhere, to whom will he, priest and prophet, teach knowledge and to whom will he explain what has been heard [from God]? It seems only small children, for these people jabber just like they do! If those who are appointed to communicate God's will babble such unintelligible rubbish,⁵² then Yhwh will also speak an entirely different language (28.11).⁵³ Isaiah did not meet with success

48. Beuken, 'Isaiah 28', p. 20: 'The ambiguity of the text takes a chance on the bias of the readers against Ephraim and for Jerusalem.'

49. Asen, 'Garlands of Ephraim', pp. 73-87, points out that the prophetic attack may be directed against the practices of the pagan *marzihu* celebration (cf. Amos 6.7; Jer. 16.5) which was characterized by drunkenness, festive meals, and decorative flowers; see also Loretz, *Ugarit und die Bibel*, pp. 139-43.

50. So Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, pp. 295-99; Beuken, 'Isaiah 28', pp. 34-35, takes a different view.

51. Tanghe, 'Dichtung und Ekel', p. 245: 'It is thus an event which is played out not on the periphery, but in the workplace of the priests.'

52. According to van der Toorn, 'Echoes of Judean Necromancy', pp. 199-217, the prophet is criticizing necromantic practices here.

53. Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, p. 301: 'The babbling of the drunken priests and prophets has an unintentional prophetic character. Yahweh's word will be just as unintelligible to them, but in the form of the Assyrian!'

in this confrontation, which probably belongs at the beginning of the Hezekian revolt.⁵⁴ He could only repeat: A treaty with Egypt will not last (28.18), for the flood (שׁוּטַף שׁוּטָף), i.e., the Assyrian army, will descend and everything will be swept away.

The second Woe (29.1-4), with a proclamation of judgment (9-10) and threat with its justification (13-14), stems likewise from the period in which the Palestinian league was formed under the leadership of Judah for its revolt against Assyria.⁵⁵ As the link between 29.9-10 and 28.7-8 in the theme of drunkenness shows, these verses are to be seen in connection with the first cry of Woe and the following indictments in Isaiah 28. The announcement of judgment that those who even now follow festival upon festival will only mumble like spirits of the dead from the dust (טַפֵּר)—i.e., from the kingdom of the dead—likewise points back to the first cry of Woe, where Isaiah warned against an alliance with death and Sheol. If the connections between the first and second Woes are taken seriously and the relation of the undisputed Isaianic saying in 29.9-10⁵⁶ to these two is recognized (drunkenness not from wine but rather from Yhwh!), this reveals a compelling image of the prophet, who became ever more convinced of the defeat of Jerusalem. He could only imagine the blindness of the leaders as being caused by Yhwh's punishment; thus in 29.9-10 he introduces the first instance of the theme of 'hardening',⁵⁷ which was inserted into the vision report (6.9-11) in the early postexilic period. Synchronically speaking, the 'task of hardening' certainly enjoys priority in Isaiah 6. As with Ahaz in the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, the Isaianic commission with its call vision proves applicable also now to Jerusalem's leading class.⁵⁸

High spirits prevailed in Jerusalem circles, for the unexpected military death of Sargon II in 705 was grist for their mill. Hezekiah's rejection of Sennacherib in the year 703 was an occasion to feast and

54. Thus Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1057: '28.7b-12 is perhaps the earliest statement by Isaiah about the revolt of the Palestinian states against Sennacherib.'

55. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 234-45, sees 29.1, 2a, 3, 4a as the basic strand, which he assigns to his 'Assyrian redaction', which also includes 10.5-11* and 14.24-25a (p. 245).

56. Even Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 216, sees these two verses as Isaianic.

57. So Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament II', p. 24; against this, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 240.

58. Cf. 'sealed tight, pasted together' (שָׁעַע I) in 6.10; 29.9; and 32.3; also Beuken, 'Zij zijn dronken', p. 17: 'maar strikt genomen zegt het niet meer dan dat wij deze tekst op redactioneel niveau tegen de achtergrond van Jesaja 6 moeten begrijpen.'

celebrate, and Assyrian punitive measures were still not in sight.⁵⁹ Isaiah saw it entirely differently. True, people everywhere might speak Yhwh's name, but they are following a foolish human calculus (29.13-14).⁶⁰ Although 29.1-4 is more likely a later composition from a prophetic circle of disciples rather than *ipsissima verba* of Isaiah, since no guilt is demonstrated and Yhwh himself lays siege to Ariel⁶¹ (i.e., Jerusalem), this does not detract from the overall picture.⁶² Even the two successive additions in 29.5-7, 8, which turn the *divine attack* on Jerusalem into an *international assault* against the city of God,⁶³ an assault that ends dismally for the attacker, reveal how later writers struggled with Isaiah's proclamation of disaster against the city of God.⁶⁴ Here the word has been turned upside down in the mouth of the master, but even as such it belongs to the חזון ישעיהו.

The Isaianic character of the last three Woes in 29.15-16; 30.1-5 and 31.1, 3 is virtually uncontested.⁶⁵ The political situation into which Jerusalem had gotten itself after the break with Sennacherib in the year 703 becomes ever more difficult. In a clandestine meeting, the Ethiopian king Shabako has to be entreated to send relief troops against Sennacherib. One can sense that the Jerusalem politicians, who only shortly before celebrated in high spirits, no longer feel

59. In 703, Sennacherib was still occupied with the Babylonian revolt of Marduk-apla-iddina, and in 702 with actions in the mountainous regions east of Babylon; so Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 347-49.

60. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 218: 'In other words: While the politicians of Jerusalem are convinced that their anti-Assyrian politics of seeking Egypt's help is in the country's best interests, they actually lead it into catastrophe, because they have put the plan into action without asking for God's counsel.'

61. Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, p. 303: 'The lack of culpable conduct by the addressees of the Woe, including the unspecified addressee "Ariel", itself is an argument against, rather than for an authentic piece.'

62. See Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*, p. 155: 'It is in any case possible, though by no means beyond doubt, that the core of the oracle, vv. 1-4, stems from Isaiah. A time of origin would most likely be the years before 701.'

63. Werner's thesis (*Studien*, p. 318) does not make sense: His idea is that already in the basic strand there was a postexilic statement about the destruction of Jerusalem and of the altar (Ariel), that is, a proclamation of a divine judgment in the end-time. Why would such a statement have produced such additions?

64. It is striking that Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, pp. 184-90, assigns 29.1-7 to the Isaiah of the late phase (as also 31.1-4, 8a). Does he do this to avoid the basic problem of his Assyria redaction? Could one already claim in Josiah's time that Assyria, and thus the nations, foundered in 701 on the Mount of God for Zion's glorious salvation? See also the critical remarks of Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, pp. 365-66.

65. Again to the contrary, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 242.

comfortable. They attempt to conceal their political maneuvering not only before Yhwh, but also before the prophet; in that, however, they will simply not succeed.⁶⁶

In the two other Woes with their accompanying justification, the man of God is now all too clear. Hezekiah, with the water of the Assyrian flood in the form of the oncoming Sennacherib already up to the neck for him and Jerusalem, had probably once again sent a delegation to Shabako. The Egyptians even marched out, but were beaten by the Assyrian troops near Eltekeh (701). If it is an Isaianic kernel that has come down to us in the oracle (מִשָּׁח) of 30.6-7, the mentioned route through the Negev is a clue that an additional delegation to Egypt by way of the Via Maris had already been blocked, after the battle near Eltekeh.⁶⁷

When Isaiah inscribed the words ‘Rahab who sits still!’⁶⁸ as a witness for later times against the useless, indeed highly dangerous, pact with Egypt,⁶⁹ this symbolic action served as a hook in postexilic times for contemplating the rejection of the Torah of Yhwh as a whole (30.9-11). The point of reference was an event whose historicity is not in doubt. As the prophet saw ever more clearly that his warning against an anti-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian politics faded away without result, he carved onto a tablet the inscription רַהַב הַמְּשַׁבֵּת.⁷⁰ Unlike the similar sign action in 8.1-4 there is no mention of witnesses here, which does not speak for direct transcription of this event.

In view of the writing down of the three symbolic actions (8.1-4; 20.1-6; 30.8), it appears that they serve to impart an ‘Isaianic aura’ to each of the first three sections of the book. The sin, whose impact was as devastating as a crack in a wall that causes it to collapse suddenly, was to have relied on ‘Rahab who sits still’ (30.12-14).⁷¹ In this political situation that is characterized by a conspiratorial pact with

66. Werner, *Studien*, pp. 85-94, weighs in against the Isaianic authenticity of 30.1-5; in favor of it are Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 225-26, Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 409, Gonçalves, *L’expédition*, p. 160, Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, pp. 400-403.

67. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 230.

68. Gonçalves, *L’expédition*, p. 146: “‘Rahab réduit à l’inactivité’”.

69. Kaiser, ‘Literarkritik’, p. 64: ‘At the core of vv. 6-7 and v. 8, we may assume a genuine oracle of Isaiah.’ Against Kaiser, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 254.

70. The feminine pronoun in חָקָה and בְּרַחֲבָהּ in 30.8a relates back to 7bβ; see, among others, W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, p. 142; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 411; Kaiser, ‘Literarkritik’, p. 64.

71. Exum, ‘Of Broken Pots’, p. 335: ‘It is likely that iniquity in this case also refers to Judah’s attempts to gain military support from Egypt.’

Egypt against the Assyrian super-power, the maxim-like torah 'Let quietness and confidence prevail' (30.15) comes too late! The die has been cast, as is confirmed by 30.16-17 as well as the last Woe (31.1-3). The defeat of the rebellious by the Assyrian army is already foreseeable. The last verse summarizes succinctly Isaiah's position: 'Even the Egyptian is only a man and not God; his horses are mere flesh, not spirit; when Yhwh stretches out his hand, the helper stumbles and the one whom he would help falls down, and together they all perish' (31.3).⁷² With the attack of the Assyrian, Isaiah had no more to proclaim; he fell completely silent! Thus after 31.3, there is no longer an Isaianic word with which to reckon.⁷³ Even—and especially—in his efforts to deter pro-Egyptian forces in Jerusalem from their chosen path of rebellion against Assyria, Isaiah had failed.

For the interpretation of this chapter for one thing, but also for the diachronic situating of Isaiah 28–32,⁷⁴ it is very important to consider the actual wider historical reference of chaps. 28–32. The conspicuous concentration on the role of Egypt, especially in the last three Woe sayings (29.15-24; 30.1-5; 31.1-3), suggests yet another historical background, beyond the relation to the revolt of 705–701, that is, the role of Egypt in the fifth century BCE.⁷⁵ After the conquest of the kingdom on the Nile by Cambyses in 525, Egypt was incorporated into the Persian Empire.⁷⁶ A first Egyptian revolt against the Persians broke out in 486, a few years after the Persians had suffered a crushing defeat at Marathon, in September 490.⁷⁷ However, these efforts for independence were not crowned with success, for Xerxes (485–465) again brought the kingdom of the Pharaohs under complete Persian control in 484. The murder of Xerxes, however, again permitted the

72. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 248: 'It is possible that our oracle has been placed at the close of the words of the prophet from 701 simply because it once more summarized succinctly what Isaiah, in the name of his God, had exposed in the pro-Egyptian politics of the Judean kingdom.'

73. Recent scholarship is nearly unanimous that no more Isaianic material is present in Isa. 32–35; Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. *Teilband*, p. 1557: 'In contrast, a certain cluster of Isaianic material is encountered again in 28–31, while no authentic segments are to be found in 32–35.'

74. According to U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 265-68, the 'repentance redaction' is responsible for 1.1-20* as well as for the formation of chaps. 28–31; however, their different interpretations of history, among other things, place Isa. 1 in the early postexilic period, and Isa. 28–31 in the late Persian period.

75. See especially Kaiser, 'Der geknickte Rohrstab', pp. 100-106.

76. See also Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, pp. 61-72.

77. According to Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, pp. 172-73, 'Marathon' had only local significance.

resurgence of anti-Persian outbreaks.⁷⁸ Only in the year 454 was Artaxerxes I able to bind the rebellious Egypt securely to the Persian colonial power once again. Still, even from then on, it was not peaceful on the Nile.⁷⁹ So it is no surprise that, with the death of Darius II in the spring of 404, for the third time within a century another uprising shook Persian rule over Egypt. Amyrtaeus succeeded in the year 401 in regaining Egypt's independence from the Persian king, Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404–359), particularly since he was much occupied with the revolt of his younger brother Cyrus in the same year (401, Battle of Cunaxa). For the following six decades Egypt was the most dangerous opponent of the Persian Empire, 'until Artaxerxes III Ochus (358–338) succeeded in reconquering it and Egypt lost its freedom for more than two thousand years'.⁸⁰ This thumbnail overview of the political relations between the Persian Empire and Egypt from the beginning of the fifth to the middle of the fourth century suggests that in these long decades the international politics of Jerusalem was also dominated by the polarization of 'pro-Persian versus pro-Egyptian'.⁸¹

Against this (second) historical background the chapters of *Isaiah* 28–32 take on a new profile which also has relevance for the redactional pieces. All too often interpretation goes no farther than the implications of the Isaianic statements for the 'Hezekian' rebellion and leaves the redactional texts to disappear, featureless, into the darkness of the Persian period. On the other hand, if these chapters are read against the background of the above-mentioned 'Persian-Egyptian polarity', it becomes clear how the *Isaiah* tradents applied the politics of their master to their own actual situation. As *Isaiah* had emphatically voiced his opposition to the politics of an anti-Assyrian alliance with Egypt in the eighth century, so they now reject the politics of an alliance with Egypt against Persia. The word of their

78. See Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, pp. 591–95, on the Inaros rebellion and on the events concerning Megabyzus, which, however, remain almost entirely unknown (pp. 594–95).

79. Kaiser, 'Der geknickte Rohrstab', p. 105: 'The instability of the Persian rule over Egypt during the last third of the reign of Darius II (Ochus, 423 to 404) is dramatically exposed in the reports preserved in papyri from the Jewish military colony at Elephantine and in the leather documents from the archive of one of the officials of the Persian Satrapy in Egypt, 'Aršam.'

80. Kaiser, 'Der geknickte Rohrstab', p. 106.

81. See also the exchange of letters in *Ezra* 4.7–23 between Persian officials in Samaria and the Persian central regime concerning the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem; also Kaiser, 'Der geknickte Rohrstab', pp. 104–105.

master, inscribed as a prophetic sign against Egypt, had lost nothing of its relevance: רָדֵב הַמִּשְׁבֵּת.⁸² As then, now too, Egypt remains an ineffectual dragon!

Another historical connection is opened up in the Edom chapter (34), where the nations are called upon to be present at Yhwh's trial of Edom. In 63.1-6, this theme surfaces again; chap. 34 announced judgment on Edom, and 63.1-6 stresses that its destruction has been accomplished. Edom has replaced Babylon of 13-14; 21 as enemy *par excellence*. If it can be assumed that the background of these chapters is Babylon's destruction by the Persian king Xerxes in 482, the Edom chapters are to be ordered chronologically after those of Babylon. The next question is: what is the historical location of the Edom texts in Isaiah?

Against any historical likelihood,⁸³ several Old Testament texts make the Edomites the hated accomplices of the Babylonian destroyers in 587/586.⁸⁴ This 'Edom-phobia', which apparently was cultivated especially in prophetic circles⁸⁵ and from there also found propagandists among Israel's poets,⁸⁶ was opposed in the deuteronomistic writing, surprisingly: 'You shall not abhor an Edomite; for he is your brother' (Deut. 23.8). The prohibition relating to Ammonites and Moabites, who even after a cleansing period of ten generations may not be accepted into Israel's cultic community (Deut. 23.4-5), is not valid for Esau's posterity (Gen. 32.4; 36.16). They can be integrated into the cultic community after the third generation (Deut. 23.9).

Although Jer. 25.15-29 and 49.7-22 contain prophecies against Edom, they are very bland in their indictments,⁸⁷ a fact which argues against Edom having a share in the blame for Jerusalem's defeat. An often ignored fact which should give occasion for the historical rehabilitation of Edom is cited in Jer. 40.11-12:

82. Isa. 30.7: emended following BHS; see the discussion by Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, pp. 1158-59.

83. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, p. 157: 'In fact, Edom played no direct part in the events of 587 BCE.'

84. See Ezek. 35.1-36.15; Obad. 11-14; Ps. 137.

85. Thus the indictment in Amos 1.6, 9 on slave trafficking, which probably played an important economic role in Edom.

86. So Haller, 'Edom', p. 111: 'The hatred of Edom in the poetry generally appears to have been transferred from prophecy (see Lam. 4.21 and Ps. 137.7).'

87. This is also the judgment of Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, p. 155: 'In all these prophetic accusations against Edom, the charges are general and conventional rather than specific and circumstantial.'

Likewise, when all the Judeans who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom and in other lands heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan as governor over them, then all the Judeans returned from all places to which they had been scattered and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah in Mizpah; and they gathered wine and summer fruits in great abundance.

Accordingly, in the course of the Neo-Babylonian policy of expansion there evolved a mutually supportive community of Judeans and Edomites that continued into the time of Nabonidus.⁸⁸ So it is not surprising that Edom participated in consultations with representatives of Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, and Judah under the overall leadership of Zedekiah (594/593) for the purpose of a possible rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 27.3). Still, the delegation of Edom appears to have taken to heart the prophetic symbolic action of Jeremiah better than their counterparts in Jerusalem did (Jer. 27.1–22), such that when Zedekiah in fact led a revolt against the great king of Babylon in 589, Edom did not participate in the action, unlike Ammon and Tyre. To accuse the Edomites of complicity in the destruction of Jerusalem is incorrect;⁸⁹ and to claim ‘that the Edomites, as 3 Esd. 4.45 maintains, may have set the temple on fire is slander, not a historical report’.⁹⁰

We return to the earlier question about the historical situation of the Edom texts in *Isaiah* 34 and 63.1–6. There is no doubt that these texts have to be regarded as postexilic; it is improbable that they have in view a punitive expedition of Nabonidus against Edom during his stay in Tema (552), for at least two reasons. First, chaps. 34 and 63.1–7 are to be placed chronologically after Nabonidus’s death (538) because of their literary dependence on chaps. 13/14 and 21, and second, Nabonidus would have had no interest in the total destruction of Edom. Such an action would have gone entirely against Babylon’s own economic self-interests of access to the copper mines

88. If Kellermann is right, then there was in the time of Nabonidus a common hope in Edom and Judah for an end to Babylonian rule: ‘It is striking now that the prophet locates this typical Judaic hope in the Edomite arena as well. Evidently the pressure of foreign rule through the establishment of the Arabian kingdom of Nabonidus had an especially strong impact’ (*‘Israel und Edom’*, pp. 107–16).

89. Bartlett, ‘Edom and the Fall of Jerusalem’, p. 23: ‘For the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah in 587 B.C., Edom cannot be held in any way responsible. The prophets, and many of their less critical followers, owe Edom an apology.’

90. Weippert, ‘Edom und Israel’, p. 295.

and trade routes to the important desert regions.⁹¹ However, it is certain that Edom ceased to exist as an independent political entity in the fifth century. Thus the most probable scenario is

that in the first half of the fifth century Edom succumbed to Arabs pushing westward from the Syrian desert, whose activity had already been noted in the seventh century under Assurbanipal; for the author of Mal. 1.2-5, who wrote between 500 and 450, the destruction of Edom is a fact. According to current knowledge, the resettlement of the country by the Arab Nabateans took place around the middle of the third century B.C.⁹²

The assumption that Edom was removed from world history around the middle of the fifth century is supported by the fact that Edom and the Edomites are nowhere mentioned in Ezra–Nehemiah.⁹³ Thus the question of the historical position of the Edom texts in the book of Isaiah is answered.⁹⁴ It is at the time of the disintegration of Edomite autonomy through the Arabian invaders toward the middle of the fifth century. The latter may be related to the archers of Kedar mentioned in Isa. 21.16-17; in addition, Isa. 60.7 prophesies that sheep from Kedar and rams from Nebaioth would be brought to Zion as gifts of the nations to Yhwh.⁹⁵

Accordingly, there is no reason to search for a time after 450 for the historical situation of 34 and 63.1-7. The writing down of this knowledge about Edom's destruction would have followed not much later.⁹⁶ This confirms our skepticism about an extreme late dating, not

91. So also Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, p. 159: 'If Nabonidus was interested in controlling the trade of the region, as has often been suggested, the permanent destruction of places like Bozra and Elath was hardly to his advantage'; nevertheless, Bartlett sees Nabonidus as the destroyer of the Edomite kingdom (p. 161). He appears to have revised his opinion in 'Rise and Fall', p. 37.

92. Weippert, 'Edom und Israel', p. 296; so also Haller, 'Edom', p. 113: 'These hopes were at least partially fulfilled in the devastation of the land of the Edomites by an attack of Bedouin in about 460 (Obad. 1-7); Malachi also appears to look back on this event (1.2-5), and Trito-Isaiah, no less, who of course saw it only as the beginning of the greater event of universal judgment.'

93. It is possible, if not indeed probable, that the Arab lord identified as Geshem in Neh. 6.1-2 took over the *de facto* rulership of the former Edom; for this idea, see Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, pp. 169-72.

94. See Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother*, pp. 182-96 ('Edom's Hostility').

95. According to Knauf, *Umwelt*, p. 73, 'there are clues that suggest the clan of Nabat belonged to the Kedarites (Gen. 25.13; Isa. 60.7) before they became the nucleus of a separate tribal group, the Nabateans'.

96. Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom', p. 198: 'So it remains most likely that the text of Isaiah 34 was written in the middle of the fifth century BC at the earliest.'

only of this chapter,⁹⁷ but also of the entire composition of the book of Isaiah. Clarifying the temporal and material relationship between the two Edom texts in the book is a task and subject for further investigation, whereby contemporary historical references delimit a framework in which literary findings then are a greater likelihood.

In his doctoral dissertation, Kellermann attempted to clarify the proclamation-historical location of the prophetic anti-Edom oracle, concluding that ‘the brief prophetic announcement of judgment’ stood at the beginning of the anti-Edom tradition in the exilic–postexilic prophets.⁹⁸ On the occasion of the commemoration of the destruction of city and temple in Jerusalem, these oracles may have held ever stronger importance: ‘The liturgical *Sitz im Leben* for the anti-Edomite focused prophecy and hymnic poetry is to be sought in the annual memorial celebration.’⁹⁹

Locating the Edom topic in the exilic–postexilic lament liturgies is a further element for identifying the circles in which these texts were transmitted.¹⁰⁰ Since 34–(35) and 63.1–6 stand at compositionally strategic points of the book, it is to be assumed that their transmitters also had something to do with the composition of the book. In looking at the ‘Babylon-Edom’ Psalm 137, Kellermann comes to the conclusion that the author is a ‘Levite temple-singer’.¹⁰¹ Prophetic-Levite transmission circles are also presumed to be behind the Edom texts of the book of Isaiah. In the course of their ongoing writing and composition of the book, they created a major bracket by the positioning of 34–(35) and 63.1–7, and used the content of the destruction of Edom as an opportunity to give new impetus to the eschatological expectation of salvation.

Kaiser also holds Levitical circles decisively responsible for the final form of the book of Isaiah.¹⁰² However, with regard to the

97. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 80, dates Isa. 63.1–6 to the period of the Diadochen wars, but still before 302/301.

98. Kellermann, ‘Israel und Edom’, p. 226.

99. Kellermann, ‘Israel und Edom’, p. 368.

100. Dicou, *Edom, Israel’s Brother*, p. 192, does not consider any *Sitz im Leben* likely for 34 and 63.1–6, against Kellermann, but nevertheless grants that ‘Kellermann may well be right in appointing the Jerusalem cult as the “motor” for the production of oracles against Edom’.

101. Kellermann, ‘Psalm 137’, p. 52, accepts the period of 521–446 BCE as the time of writing of Ps. 137.

102. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, pp. 24–25: ‘If we ask who the men are who form this chain of witness in the book of Isaiah, we are pointed to Levitical circles, from whose ranks the deuteronomic and deuteronomistic

absorption of the prophetic 'anti-Edom tradition' into the book of Isaiah, a tradition that contradicts the dtn/dtr 'pro-Edom tradition', it appears inadvisable to assume that the Levitical transmission circles of the book of Isaiah were in any great proximity to the deuteronomistic circles, let alone to identify one with the other. Even with a maximal assignment of texts to a dtn/dtr redaction¹⁰³ an Isaiah will not become a Jeremiah¹⁰⁴ and a ספר ישעיהו will not become a deuteronomistic prophetic book! It is simply not a book of the exilic/early-postexilic diagnosis of guilt, but rather of the late-postexilic therapy of the future.

4.3. *The Zion Community Redaction*

The Isaianic sayings in 28–31 that reflect the prophet's critique of the leaders of Jerusalem in the years 705–701 have already been investigated.¹⁰⁵ The striking mix of Isaianic core tradition and late redactional texts in these chapters is due to the pragmatism of those who provided the fundamental final form. They inserted the narrow Isaianic tradition here specifically for their purposes: for one, they create chronological continuity by employing Isaianic materials from the years of the crisis (705–701); furthermore, they draw a parallel between the eighth-century historical situation and that of the fifth century. Such 'politicization' was not observed in the redactors of the 'remnant community', largely responsible for the form of chaps. 1–4*; the shapers of chaps. 28–32 recognized the danger that, as in the days of Isaiah, postexilic Jerusalem could again be relying on the useless kingdom on the Nile and opposing, not Assyria this time, but the Persian overlord.

Another thing that separates the shapers of 1–4* and those of 28–32 is that, while the former were able to reach back to a pre-exilic composition of disciples of the prophet himself in 5.1–10.4*, for the latter this was not the case. For them the Isaianic material was available only in individual verses, which they incorporated redactionally into their composition. Thus the Isaianic material in the five Woe

movement originated. In the form of the singers' guild in the second temple they received the inheritance of the pre-exilic cult-prophets, who perhaps also came from the same ranks.'

103. See Vermeylen's fifth redactional layer, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 693–709.

104. Cf. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 287: 'What is customarily called "deuteronomistic"—in contrast to the Jeremiah tradition, for instance—never became a decisive factor in the development of the book of Isaiah.'

105. See above under 4.2.

oracles of 28–31 decreases toward the end until it is finally reduced to two verses (31.1–3). Metaphorically stated, those responsible for the structural composition of 28–32 used the Isaianic words warning against rejection of Assyria and foolish trust in the supposed covenant-partner Egypt as the ‘timber framing’ upon which they hung their own words. There were once again groups who strongly sympathized with the Egyptian movements of revolt in the fifth century. The aim was to counteract such sentiments; theologically leading statements like the cornerstone oracle (28.16–17) and the call to repentance and rest (30.15) served this aim.

In their literary work, these redactors were lead not by antiquarian but rather by very practical interests: the creation of a Zion community that recognizes Yhwh alone as its king and will prove itself worthy of him. This position was not generally to be met with sympathy; in this the redactors shared the fate of their prophetic model. The strong focus on Zion as the secure place of Yhwh’s presence permits the supposition that the Zionization observed in Isaiah 13–23 is due to the same tradents who gave Isaiah 28–32 its structural shape. The chronological arrangement also argues for this, in that the Zionization follows the Babylonization of the oracles of the nations in Isaiah 13–23, where a *terminus a quo* for the latter can be set at Xerxes’ advance against Babylon in 482. The redaction of the Zion community, which appears clearly and increasingly independently active in Isaiah 28–32, is to be dated to the second half of the fifth century, with all due caution in terms of absolute chronology. The coalescing of the two major parts of the book by means of specially designed bridge-texts, which will be examined in succession, confirms this chronological assessment.¹⁰⁶

Within chaps. 28–32, this redaction first becomes apparent in 28.5–6, verses that are universally classified as postexilic. As is stated, it is hoped that Yhwh Sabaoth will be a glorious crown and a shining garland for the remnant of his people, and that he will be both a spirit of justice for the one who is enthroned for judging, and strength for those who turn back the battle outside the city gate. This redactional statement has been woven into the framework of the Isaianic core by the inclusion of the key words *הַפֶּאֱרָה* (28.1, 4) and *עֲמֻרָה* (28.1, 3) from the first Woe. Regarding the content of the Isaianic material, a careful continuity has not been respected. Juxtaposing Yhwh as glorious crown of the remnant community with the proud crown of

106. In addition, Gosse, *Structuration des grands ensembles*, p. 3, looking at the major compositions of the Old Testament books, states: ‘les rédactions d’ensemble les plus représentative relèvent de l’époque Perse.’

the drunken Ephraimites does not give evidence of good taste and sensitivity. The insertion ends up sounding rather inelegant.¹⁰⁷ The connections to 4.2-6 and 62.3 are obvious;¹⁰⁸ in 62.3, Zion itself shall be changed to an עִמְרֵת הַפִּאֲרָה by the power of Yhwh. Generally, הַפִּאֲרָה is a favorite word in Trito-Isaiah to describe the wealth of the new Israel.¹⁰⁹ The connection with 4.2-6 is not only in the introduction of בְּיוֹם הַהוּא, but also in the idea of remnant (4.3). What Yhwh is causing to sprout will be a הַפִּאֲרָה for the survivors of Israel (4.2). What can that mean other than that the prophetic community, the shoot of Yhwh, claims to be a jewel and ornament for postexilic Israel. The relation between 28.5-6 and 4.2-6 is clarified fully by the expression רוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט; in 4.4 Yhwh cleanses Jerusalem from filth and blood by the spirit of justice and of fire (בָּעֵר), and in 28.6 Yhwh is a 'spirit of justice' (רוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט) for the one who sits in judgment. This statement evokes the listing of intellectual gifts of the young shoot from the stump of Jesse that will equip him so he will judge not according to appearances, but rather, according to justice and law (11.1-9). Such a spirit-gifted community, strengthened by the administration of justice and righteousness, is able to drive out battle and strife (מִלְחָמָה) from the city-gate (cf. Ps. 101.8).

The 'rest statement' in 28.12 is more understandable in the time of the Egyptian revolts against the Persians in the fifth century, which must have aroused sympathies in Jerusalem, than in the time of Hezekiah's defection; for the war-machinery of Assyria, once provoked, could not be stopped by calm and composure, but only, if at all, by the payment of a horrendous tribute. In addition, the fact that 28.11 is not logically to it connected argues for an insertion. The threat that Yhwh would speak in a language that could not be understood is certainly not fulfilled by the climactic phrase of 28.12! Where the מְנוּחָה is to be found and what it means is made clear when v. 16 is read alongside v. 12. 'Only then is it clear that *m^enûḥâ* refers to Zion as the place that gives shelter to the weary. The "rest" speech and the "cornerstone" speech interpret each other.'¹¹⁰ Supported by Mettinger's and Veijola's interpretation of Psalm 132, Kaiser proposes

107. Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, p. 284: 'After Samaria, the proud garland of Ephraim, fell, Yahweh himself was the pride of the remnant community. This reversal is reflected (literally) in the play on words שֹׁאֵר-רֵאשִׁית.'

108. Cf. Gosse, 'Isaïe 28-32', pp. 80-82; according to Gosse the redactors are at work here on the final structure of the book of Isaiah; but the processes are more complicated than that.

109. Isa. 60.7, 19; 62.3; 63.12, 14, 15; 64.10.

110. Kaiser, 'Literarkritik', p. 65; followed by U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 230-32.

that Isa. 28.12 should be ‘viewed as a secondary echo of the dtn/dtr idea’,¹¹¹ because of the recognized reference to Ps. 132.8 (‘Rise up, O Yhwh, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might’) and with an eye to Deut. 12.9 and 1 Kgs 8.56//1 Chron. 22.9. This is no doubt true, and should be kept in view for further clarification of the Zion Redaction. It processes Isaianic material, stands close to the dtn/dtr thought and linguistic world and is known to be indebted to the wisdom milieu; the priestly is quite alien to it!

The ‘cornerstone’ speech in 28.16–17a is also the responsibility of this redaction; even in purely formal terms, this statement interrupts the flow of the Isaianic-based threat (28.7–11, 14–15, 17b–18). In addition, in terms of content it does not fit into Isaiah’s oracles. In v. 14 the phrase ‘this people’ (הָעָם הַזֶּה) had expressly confronted them with judgment, whereas now the cornerstone speech promises a separation within the community—those who rely on Yhwh will have no cause to panic: הַמֵּצִיִּין לֹא יִחַשׁ. The content and linguistic similarity to 7.9b is unmistakable, just like those of the other ‘maxim-like *toroth*’¹¹² in 28.12 and 30.15. The idea of such a definitive consequence of private piety being either salvation or disaster for the individual is based on Isaiah’s demand for faith addressed to Ahaz and the Davidides (7.9b), a requirement which is renewed ‘catechetically’.¹¹³

The redactors of the Zion community were convinced that they were the bearers of a prophetic spiritual gift. So they did not hesitate to put the messenger formula before their own words, בִּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי: ‘See, I am hereby¹¹⁴ laying a stone in Zion, a proven stone, a precious foundation cornerstone.’¹¹⁵ The participial form with a present-future meaning is the cleanest grammatically and the best solution given the context. The prophetic tradents took this to mean that Yhwh was now

111. Kaiser, ‘Literarkritik’, p. 66.

112. Kaiser’s term (‘maximenhaften Torot’), ‘Literarkritik’, p. 63.

113. See U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 377, with different nomenclature and diachronic analysis: ‘Stated somewhat over-simply, the “Disobedience Redaction” made a catechetical textbook from the (already postexilic) Isaiah tradition.’

114. The הֵנִי seems to require a participle, therefore יֹסֵד; the two Isaiah scrolls from Qumran confirm this. See Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, pp. 1065–66; against this, Jeppesen, ‘The Cornerstone’, p. 95, retains the Masoretic pointing of the perfect and views the saying as Deutero-Isaianic: The cornerstone of the temple may not have disappeared in the destruction in 587, but now serves as the foundation for the new temple (p. 97).

115. See Galling, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels*, p. 132, who translates: ‘See, I am laying stones as a foundation in Zion, *bohan*-stones, with a precious corner-structure of the foundation’ [Siehe, ich lege als Grund in Zion Steine, Bochansteine, mit kostbarem Ecksteingefüge des Fundaments].

in the process of laying as a foundation in Zion a community that would measure up to the plumb line of divine justice, and so become the foundation of a new Israel: 'Comme le suggère le parallèle étroit avec le Ps 118,22, cette pierre représente sans doute la communauté croyante de Sion.'¹¹⁶ The *הנני יסד בציון* of 14.32; there the 'poor of his people' are referred to as the foundation of Zion, seeking refuge in Zion (*בה*). To qualify as such a foundation, the pious must demonstrate that they have been tested and proven, as *אִבְּן בָּחֵן*.¹¹⁷ Viewed diachronically, however, 28.16 is older than 14.32. The latter verse refers to the Hezekiah legends and already accepts them as outstanding proof for the validity of the cornerstone oracle, while the redaction of the Zion community appears not yet to allude to it.

The basic requirement is that of a believing trust in Yhwh alone, which reads in 7.9, 'If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all'. This statement, once directed to Ahaz and the Davidic royal house, now applies to the hearers who are called to join themselves to the Zion community with its maxim of faith, justice, and righteousness.¹¹⁸ If the 'corner measurements' of a society are in plumb, the society is able to stand; if they are not, the walls become first imperceptibly, then markedly crooked. The appearance of the Zion community that gives postexilic Israel its shape and design will be set forth especially in 32.1-8, 15-20.

The *mashal* in 28.23-29 reveals that the composers of 28-32 are also associated with the wisdom milieu.¹¹⁹ It begins with the teacher's call demanding the pupil's attention, and with its metaphors about sowing and harvest is clearly separated into two parts (vv. 24-26, 27-29), each part closing with the summarizing moral. The *mashal* begins with the rhetorical question whether the plower, i.e., the farmer, keeps plowing every day in order to sow, or harrows and works the soil every day. The answer can only be, of course not! Then the teacher continues: That is right, since every farmer knows how he must bring which type of seed in what way for sowing in order to

116. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 48; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 391-95; Kaiser, 'Literarkritik', p. 69.

117. For *בָּחֵן* in connection with testing of the pious, among other places: Pss. 17.3; 26.2; 139.23; Job 23.10; see also Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 394.

118. The 'repentance redaction' has programmatically inscribed this from 56.9-59.21 in 1.27-28; Schmitt, 'Zur Gegenwartsbedeutung', p. 272: 'Seemingly, something fundamentally new is emerging; only the identity of the place is preserved (see 1.26).'

119. On the other hand, Barthel, *Prophetenwort*, p. 343, locates the *mashal* in Isaiah's dispute with the Wise of his time.

achieve the greatest possible harvest (v. 25). Even this professional knowledge comes from God, says the teacher, closing his first 'instructional unit': 'his God instructs him in the correct order (לְמַשְׁכֵּם); he teaches him' (v. 26). The second half of the parable builds on the first and shows how the various methods of producing the harvest always serve one goal, to achieve the maximum possible output from the farming activity. The wisdom teacher closes with the tenet that this also comes from Yhwh Sabaoth; he designed the plan wonderfully and made the outcome great (הַגְדִּיל תוֹשִׁיָּה).¹²⁰

The *mashal* is directed to the hearers and places before them the farmer as a model. As the farmer accepts Yhwh's teaching in order to be successful, so they too should be open to the wisdom of God.¹²¹ The case of the farmer serving as an example to the students of wisdom has a parallel in Isaiah's earlier conflict with the professional politicians in Jerusalem. Had those 'smart-aleck' people in the time of Hezekiah listened to Yhwh's wisdom, they might have been granted the same success that comes to every farmer who lets himself be instructed by Yhwh. The redactors have very cleverly inserted the *mashal* here. There is still another thing to be considered. The metaphor of sowing is often used elsewhere in the book to describe Yhwh's work on his people. The classic example is the Song of the Vineyard (5.1-7), but in addition 4.2 and 11.1, which speak of Yhwh's offshoot. The well-known saying about the word of God which does not return empty to Yhwh but rather brings about the desired result (55.10-11), is likewise to be noted here.

We have already seen how the statement of the 'shoot' can be understood from the perspective of the remnant community's self-understanding; it is Yhwh's new planting. The first half of the image of the *mashal* is in accordance with this. Yhwh, as the farmer, is the one who orders his planting with care; the time of the harvest is that of judgment¹²² or testing. The new Zion community receives the honorary title of 'My Threshed One and Son of my Threshing Floor' (מִדְשָׁתִי וּבֶן-גֵּרְנִי, 21.10a). The message is the same as that of the cornerstone speech. The community should not be surprised when it is tested, when it is threshed by Yhwh. The threshing will not last forever (לֹא לְנֶצַח), for no farmer threshes his grain so long that nothing of

120. תוֹשִׁיָּה belongs to the 'vocabulary of the wisdom teachers'; Brückner, 'Komposition', pp. 76-77; Prov. 2.7; 3.21; 8.14; 18.1; Job 5.12; 6.13; 11.6; 12.6; 26.3; 30.22; late, Mic. 6.9.

121. Beuken, 'Isaiah 28', p. 26.

122. דִּשׁ: Isa. 21.10; 25.10; Judg. 8.7, 16; 2 Kgs 8.12; 13.7; Amos 1.3; Mic. 4.13; דִּקֵּק: 2 Sam. 22.43; Mic. 4.13.

it remains. On the contrary, God's action is about maximizing profits (הגדיל תושיה).¹²³ The testing of the pious belongs to his marvelous plan (הפליא עצה).¹²⁴ The *mashal* is about a search for identity¹²⁵ that takes place within those who see themselves in the testing as the foundation of postexilic Israel.¹²⁶ The division of the community, as portrayed in the redaction of the servant community or in the theme of 'pious versus sinner' in 13–27, is glimpsed, but not yet realized. The redactor of the Zion community in 28–32 stands closer thematically to the repentance redaction of 56.9–59.21, which likewise still has the unity of postexilic Israel in mind, although even there, the longer it goes the more obvious it becomes that this notion is shattered.

The wisdom instruction element manifested in the composition of the parable holds an important place in the redaction of the prophetic Zion community. It is especially noticeable in the theme of 'book/teacher' which stands in the center of 29.11–12, 17–24 and 30.18–26. While the medium of Isaiah had been the spoken word, which had been written only as a special exception (cf. 8.16–18; 30.8), the medium of the postexilic tradents is the written word; even more, the דברים have become a ספר. Although the medium of prophecy changed, the reality of hardening remained. For the contemporaries of Isaiah his דבר had become incomprehensible; now for many the prophetic book became הספר החתום (29.11). Verses 29.11–12, which are set off from the preceding verses only because of their prose form, were skillfully fitted into the framework of Isaianic oracles (29.9–10, 13–14). Just as Isaiah could declare that the political blindness of the ruling circles to the escalating crisis could only be God's judgment (29.10),¹²⁷ the

123. See Werner, *Studien*, p. 83: 'The redaction understands the didactic poem of the divine plan and its result, manifested in the actions of the farmer, as a parable about God's power in history.'

124. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 401: 'dans leur détresse, les Juifs fidèles ont le sentiment de souffrir en vain, alors qu'ils font l'objet des soins attentifs de Yahvé; ils ne sont pas broyés par une force aveugle, mais vannés comme le blé, selon le plan de salut de Dieu'; and Brückner already in 'Komposition', p. 75.

125. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1090, but with respect to the followers of Isaiah.

126. Against Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, p. 211, who assigns the *mashal* to his Assyria redaction: 'Now the course of history of the past 100 years is clear—the prevailing, miraculous, saving plan of Yahweh that was hidden in it only appeared to be "alien" (28.21!)'; but the *mashal* does not emphasize the alien, but rather the obvious logic of the divine action!

127. Blum, 'Jesajas prophetisches Testament II', p. 24, correctly views 29.9–10 as the oldest reference of the hardening motif.

postexilic tradents were able to understand the rejection of their prophetic writing as a phenomenon of hardening.¹²⁸ This leads to the conclusion that the understanding of the prophetic ספר is not a question of literacy (29.11–12), but rather of a divine ‘time-table’ and subject to each individual attitude. In the same way that Isaiah, with a ‘Witness and Torah’ sealed among his disciples, hoped in Yhwh who had covered his face before the house of Jacob (8.16–18), the postexilic tradents are conscious that their prophetic book also remains sealed (29.11, 12), but only for a short time (מעט מזער, 29.17).¹²⁹ In the near future, when things will have changed fundamentally (29.17b),¹³⁰ even the deaf will hear the words of this book (דברי ספר).¹³¹ If it is a question only of hearers and not of readers of the words of the book, then that may suggest that the prophetic book was intended for oral proclamation and not yet for scriptural study. This assumption is confirmed in the following verses, where the ‘poorest of humanity’ (אביוני אדם), the oppressed, and all those who suffer under violence and perversion of justice are named as beneficiaries of this salvation. By hearing the message of the sealed book they all can delight in Yhwh once more (29.19). Thus 29.17–24 offers a miraculous picture of the future hope of the Zion community—not for the dissolution of heaven and earth, but rather, for redemption from blindness and oppression. This new community understands itself as ביה יעקב, who no longer have to live in shame, whose basic concern is Yhwh’s salvation, and whose greatest hope is the increase of fellow members (29.23).¹³¹ This concern may also have motivated the mention of Abraham, who was redeemed by Yhwh (פדה)¹³². In him both the redemption of the Zion community *and* its increase are confirmed; the fact that he came from the world of the nations will not have been insignificant, in view of the later discussion about the admission of foreigners.¹³³ When all this is fulfilled, then even

128. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1115: ‘Revelation is already available in book form; it can be studied and must be heeded.’

129. Cf. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 46: ‘Isa. 29.9–12 brings together the opposite poles of the Isa. 6–8 collection and interprets the action of 8.16.’

130. See also Beuken’s explanation, ‘Isaiah 29.15–24’, pp. 43–64.

131. If ילדיי is a gloss (Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 221), it is one that reinforces the meaning, rather than distorting it.

132. Cf. the occurrences of פדה in the book of Isaiah: 1.27; 29.22; 35.10; 51.11; according to Gosse, ‘Isaïe 28–32’, p. 76, they all belong to the final redaction of the book.

133. Cf. 51.2: ‘He was one when I called him; but I blessed him and gave him many descendants.’

skeptics, those who 'stray in spirit' (תַּעֲיִרוּחַ), will gain understanding and the 'murmurers' (רִגְנִיִּם) will accept instruction (יִלְמְדוּ לִקְחַ, 29.24).¹³⁴ If תַּעֲהָ here refers to wandering in the wilderness, then the expression means, 'The confused will gain understanding of the ways of Yahweh with his people'.¹³⁵ These are the people often directly addressed by the 'we' as 'you' (plural). The Zion community wishes to recover this group for Yhwh first of all.¹³⁶ The change in circumstances that they look forward to (29.17b) will turn out double-edged: for them it is positive—'from Lebanon to Carmel [=orchard]'; for the sinner, however, it is negative—'from Carmel to the forest'.¹³⁷ The resumption of the same image in 32.15-20 shows that 'forest' is used negatively here. There the 'forest' is felled, the 'city' humiliated, i.e., the symbols of arrogance are destroyed (2.9-17). (Note, incidentally, the ingenious wordplay of יַעַר and עֵיר.)

In the reflection about Israel's hardening against the Torah of Yhwh (30.9-11), the redaction of the Zion community moves into deuteronomistic paths; it is post-deuteronomistic, because, among other things, hardening no longer serves as a reason for punishment and judgment, but is noted only as a fact. With its talk of rebellious people (עַם מָרִי) and lying sons (בָּנִים כְּחֹשִׁים), it is strongly reminiscent of 1.2, 4, 19-20 and Deut. 21.18-21; 31.27. The rejection of Isaiah is stylized to become a paradigm for the lot of all pre-exilic seers and prophets. The individual arguments that speak for a post-deuteronomistic dating have been easily listed by Vermeylen.¹³⁸ It is no accident that these redactors, at precisely this place, are reflecting on the persistent and offensive phenomenon of hardening and rejection of God's word. Just as Isaiah had reproached the pro-Egyptian faction to no avail with the warning that 'Rahab' was pure inaction, now they too encounter deaf ears with their warning against trust in Egypt's movement of revolt. The theological point made in 30.15 is

134. According to Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, p. 554, this 'refers to the solidarity of the upper social stratum..., which...demonstrably distanced itself from eschatological prophecy.'

135. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 3. Teilband, p. 1145.

136. Similarly Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 221: 'His word, which comforts and strengthens faith in the imminent advent of change, is for the group of the humble and poor.'

137. So Ziegler, 'Zum literarischen Aufbau', pp. 238-41. This ambivalence is for the most part overlooked, even by Laberge, among others, who calls this 'A promise of better things to come' ('Woe-Oracles', p. 173).

138. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 411-16; now also U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 252-53.

also to be attributed to this redaction: 'In passivity (בְּשׁוּבָה)¹³⁹ and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and composure shall be your power.'¹⁴⁰ The closing וְלֹא אֶחְבֶּה suggests that the 'rest' speech should be understood as a retrospective 'subjunctive of missed opportunity'; so, for example, 'in passivity and rest *might have been* your salvation; in quietness and composure *might have consisted* your strength—but you did not wish it'. With Perlitt, it must be conceded that לֹא אֶחְבֶּה is not a deuteronomism, since in that linguistic world it is only Yhwh who 'does not wish to';¹⁴¹ Deut. 1.26 alone speaks of Israel as the subject of 'does not wish to'. However, it is just as clear that the other two לֹא אֶחְבֶּה references in 28.12 and 30.9 cannot be ascribed to Isaiah without problems. Particularly in 30.9, 'they did not wish to hear the torah of Yhwh', it is difficult to exclude a dtn/dtr influence. Perlitt's suggestion that this verse should be 'regarded as a clarifying, and in fact, coarsening, addendum'¹⁴² is untenable in view of its deliberate placement after the 'Rahab inscription' (30.7); this is not coarsening, but rather updating!

While it is not possible to achieve complete certainty, those who relegate the 'rest' speech to the prophet of the eighth century must ask themselves whether this really could have been Isaiah's position. In the years after the death of Sargon II, he is not engaged in urging the proponents of an anti-Assyrian policy to keep still,¹⁴³ but rather in discouraging them from a fatal Egyptian politics. When the breach with Assyria was a fact after 703, Isaiah did not call for passivity, but rather prophesied judgment for the anti-Assyrian alliance!

The salvation image of 30.19–26 also fits within the strategy of the Zion Redaction to awaken hope in spite of hopelessness, with 30.18 serving as a bridge. The unmotivated transition from judgment proclamation (30.16–17) to salvation announcement is understandable

139. So Kaiser, 'Literarkritik', p. 70. On the derivation of the much discussed בְּשׁוּבָה from the root שׁוּב see Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 171–75; in contrast, Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1181, states: 'If scholarship is not satisfied with the translation of שׁוּבָה as "repentance", it is because they do not want to admit that Isaiah speaks of repentance.'

140. Gonçalves, 'Isaïe', p. 288, regards the word as Isaianic: 'En bref, Is 30,15 promet la victoire à Juda par "l'inactivité et le repos, par la tranquillité et l'assurance".'

141. Perlitt, 'Jesaja und die Deuteronomisten', p. 138: Deut. 10.10b; 2 Kgs 8.19; 13.23; 23.6; 29.19; Josh. 24.10; and elsewhere.

142. Perlitt, 'Jesaja und die Deuteronomisten', p. 147.

143. Against W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, p. 151: '30.15 is a concise summary of the message which Isaiah proclaimed at the beginning of the crisis of 705–701.'

only as a product of editorial compilation.¹⁴⁴ The image of salvation may have been prompted by the key word 'to be left' in the Isaianic verse 30.17. *Ad vocem* added, it is no longer the fleeing Israelites who are left (נוֹתָרִים), but those for whom Yhwh has compassion, who hope in him (30.18). The redaction skillfully turns the characterization of those who were 'hardened' and 'unwilling to hear' in 30.9-11 toward the positive. In 30.10 they say the seers should not see; now, the 'people who live on Zion' will see their Teacher (30.22). There, the rebellious people did not want to listen to the prophecy of Yhwh (30.9); now the Zion community is attentive (30.21). There, the rebellious encourage deviating from the right way (30.11); here the Zion people now follow the straight path (30.21). Foreign gods were once worshipped (30.1¹⁴⁵); now they are thrown away (30.22). Then they were deeply enmeshed in guilt (30.13); now Yhwh is compassionate again (30.18).¹⁴⁶ The contrasting resumption of the motifs shows that 30.18-26 no longer deals with the entire nation, but only with the עַם בְּצִיּוֹן that dwells in Jerusalem (יֵשֶׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַם, 30.19). This people on Zion no longer need to weep and sorrow (cf. 65.19), for Yhwh has compassion upon his own and anticipates every plea (30.19; cf. 58.9; 65.24). Uninterrupted fruitfulness is also part of the time of salvation; there will be ample bread and water (30.20a, 23-25). But the greatest salvation gift will consist in the fact that the Zion community will see their Teacher (מֹרִיד, 30.20). Grammatically the question of a plural or singular¹⁴⁷ translation of 'teacher' cannot be resolved; the plural would refer to the teachers of the Zion community,¹⁴⁸ who had to go underground because of the activities of their religious and political enemies.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, there are good

144. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1193: 'The idea that Yahweh will now be completely compassionate because the judgment was so hard corresponds not to the Isaianic message but to later dogma.'

145. Even if one does not follow Irwin (citing Dahood), *Isaiah* 28-33, p. 72, in the translation of עֲצָב as 'wooden gods', the foreign god polemic is nevertheless alluded to in לִנְסַךְ מִסִּכָּה ('to pour out a stream', i.e., to present a libation offering).

146. See Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 418.

147. So Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1191.

148. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 239-40, draws parallels with Dan. 11.33 and 12.3; he is thinking of the persecutions under Antiochus IV Epiphanes: 'men who, thanks to their eschatological knowledge, stand as teachers in their community, but beyond the circle of the pious who understand themselves as the "humble and poor", do not find a sympathetic ear for their message; see 29.19.'

149. Blenkinsopp, 'A Jewish Sect', p. 14 n. 35, reads the singular and draws a parallel to the Servant of God in Isa. 53: 'It, too, may be understood in the same context of the posthumous guidance of a charismatic leader.'

reasons for an interpretation in the singular with מורה referring to Yhwh. The reference to the *mashal* in which God instructs the farmer (אלהיו יורנו, 28.26), the fact that the 'hiding place of Yhwh' is also spoken of elsewhere,¹⁵⁰ and the similar expectation in 33.17 that the Zion community would see Yhwh as their מלך in this time of salvation, argues for Yhwh as 'Teacher'. This idea of Yhwh as royal *teacher* demonstrates once again the wisdom orientation of the redactors; even if all enemies abroad are conquered and all sinners at home destroyed, there remains the constant task not to deviate from the דרך (30.21).

In the final Isaianic Woe (31.1, 3), directed at those who go down to Egypt for help, the Zion community has inserted v. 2,¹⁵¹ which stresses that, in contrast to the fatal plans of the wise, Yhwh too is wise (וגם הוא חכם); he brings disaster and does not call back his words, but will rise up against the family of evil ones (בית מרעים) and against the accomplices of evildoers (על עזרת פעלי און). The foreign policy analysis which stood at the center of the Isaianic Woe oracle is abandoned, and the prophet's statement is transposed to the internal arena of their experiences. As Yhwh carried out his word about the collapse of Egypt, the presumed helper, and of Israel, presumed to have military support (עזר // עזר 31.3), so will he also act against the evildoers and their accomplices in the postexilic community. Yhwh will punish even those who assist the evil ones! The formulation 'Yhwh too is wise' sets up a contrast to the wise of Egypt (19.11–12).¹⁵² The phrases בית מרעים and פעלי און are a reminder of 1.4 and 14.20, on the one hand, and of the language of the Psalms, on the other.¹⁵³ Kaiser's observation about the writer of 31.2 applies generally to the redaction of the Zion community:

His use of the language of wisdom, of the Psalms, and his simultaneous ability to integrate the Isaiah tradition, suggests that he belongs to an era in which the preservation of the prophetic and wisdom literature, like that of the collection of the Psalms, happened at the same place.¹⁵⁴

150. See Isa. 45.15: אל מסתתר; cf. Pss. 27.9; 44.25; 102.3; 143.7.

151. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 259, assigns 31.2 to his 'disobedience redaction'.

152. Kaiser, 'Literarkritik', p. 62.

153. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 421: the two phrases occur together in Pss. 92.10, 12; 94.16, 'où ces expressions visent sans aucun doute les mauvais Juifs'.

154. Kaiser, 'Literarkritik', p. 61.

Within chaps. 28–31 the redaction attached its own words onto the ‘Isaianic framework’. In contrast, it created Isaiah 32 completely independently.¹⁵⁵ It starts this chapter off with *הֵן לְצֶדֶק יִמְלֹךְ-מֶלֶךְ*. The themes ‘king’¹⁵⁶ and ‘justice/righteousness’¹⁵⁷ run like a red thread throughout chaps. 32–33, at the end of which stands the message to the people who live on Zion that their sin has been forgiven (33.24). However, they do not stem from the same hand; Isaiah 33 instead turns out to be the first explicit bridge-text connecting the first two major sections of the Isaiah scroll (1–32* and 40–52*).

Who then is this king who will rule in righteousness, as 32.1 emphatically proclaims? The messianic king, a historical figure (for example, Hezekiah¹⁵⁸), the community of the righteous on Zion, or Yhwh himself? The emphasis on the removal of hardening in v. 3, which refers back to 6.10, the chapter that exemplifies Yhwh as *the* king, and the fact that Yhwh is the *מֶלֶךְ* in 33.17, 22, shows that Yhwh is also the king of 32.1. This is confirmed by the fact that the description of the period of salvation in chap. 32 is in accord with that of chap. 33 in a number of places, a description that is clearly oriented toward the ‘kingdom of God’.¹⁵⁹ If it is Yhwh who is expected as the just king, that is in no way a socially irrelevant hope, since in the same breath are mentioned leaders who will lead with justice (*שָׂרִים לְמִשְׁפַּט שָׂרִים*); it is they who, as representatives of Yhwh, bear responsibility for the execution of the just order—a task which in pre-exilic Israel came to be recognized as that of the earthly king. If *אִישׁ* (‘each one’) in v. 2 refers to the *שָׂרִים*, then hope would consist in the fact that each single ‘official’ would become a person in whom those in distress would find refuge: ‘each one will be like a hiding place from the storm, a protection from a deluge (*סֶתֶר זֶרֶם*), like water channels in a dry land (*כַּפְלִי מַיִם בְּצִיּוֹן*), like the shadow of a gigantic rock in a parched land.’ What was presented in 4.6 as an image for the protection of the community on Zion (*לְמִסְתוֹר מִזֶּרֶם*) and is repeated in 25.4 (*מִחֹסֶה מִזֶּרֶם*) with the clear inclusion of Yhwh’s

155. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1571: ‘The brief additions of the revision designated above as a “salvation recension” do not conform to this time-period; one would expect to see more extensive, more filled-out salvation prophecies.’

156. Isa. 32.1; 33.17, 22.

157. Isa. 32.1, 16, 17; 33.5, 15.

158. So Seitz, *Zion’s Final Destiny*, p. 79.

159. Williamson, *The ‘Book’ Called Isaiah*, p. 226: ‘Chapter 32 looks forward to the benefits of his coming rule, some of which overlap with those of the reign of God in chapter 33; cf., for example, 32:1-3, 16-18, and 33:5-6, 16, 20, 22-24.’

disciples from the nations,¹⁶⁰ has become the task of the leaders of the Zion community: protection in the face of state despotism, which can descend upon everyone like gushing rain and storms.¹⁶¹ However, it should be not merely protective, but also creative: like irrigating channels in a dry land, where צִיּוֹן is a play on צִיָּין.

But the 'prophecy of the transformation of society in the coming period of salvation'¹⁶² concerns not only the leaders, but every fellow citizen as well. Thus the hardening that made obedience to divine instruction impossible will be removed (32.3); with this, the 'task of hardening' from 6.10 has ended. 'The eyes of the seeing will not be sealed,¹⁶³ the ears of the hearing will listen, and the heart of the rash will gain knowledge', in which the sequence 'heart-ears-eyes' of the corresponding text (6.10) is taken up in reverse order.¹⁶⁴ The motif of the removal of hardening, which directly (29.18; 30.20–21; 32.3) or indirectly (29.14; 33.17, 19–20) runs throughout chaps. 28–33, reaches its climax in 32.3.¹⁶⁵ This reversal will especially benefit the rash (נְמַדְרִים; cf. 35.4!), who gain insight (יִבִּין לְדַעַת; cf. 1.3); the language underscores the wisdom components of the Zion Redaction, which perpetuates the dogma about fools (32.4–8).¹⁶⁶

Whether the verses about the rich women in 32.9–14 stem from the same redaction of the Zion community or have been inserted later is difficult to decide; in any case, they are not Isaianic.¹⁶⁷ The call to attention or teacher's opening formula in 32.9 is strongly reminiscent of the beginning of the *mashal* in 28.23, which we have ascribed to the redactors of the Zion community (cf. קוּלִי/אֲמַרְתִּי). Furthermore, the prophetic accusing tone of these threats argues for the same

160. Sweeney, 'Citations', p. 46; Stansell, 'Isaiah 28–33', p. 91.

161. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1571, dates Isa. 32 to the first half of the fifth century and names three problem areas: disloyalty in the ranks, foreign rulership, and poverty caused by exploitation and crop failure.

162. So Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 255.

163. Not to be vocalized as if from שַׁעַר ('they shall not see'), but rather from שַׁעַר ('they shall not be sealed together'), thus McLaughlin, 'Their Hearts Were Hardened', p. 19.

164. McLaughlin refers to this in 'Their Hearts Were Hardened', p. 18.

165. So Stansell, 'Isaiah 28–33', p. 86.

166. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1251: 'The writer emphasizes that the essential characteristic of the new period is the new humanity.'

167. Even Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, pp. 1265–67, says: 'The Aramaizing forms in v. 11 appear to suggest the postexilic period; still, this is not convincing. The vocabulary is clearly in no way postexilic'; surprisingly, Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 425–26, sees these verses as Isaianic: 'tout dernier oracle d'Isaïe, placé logiquement en finale de la collection XXVIII–XXXII' (p. 426).

authorship. The hope that the well-heeled women will be brought to a conversion, i.e., to more righteousness, indeed appears not all too great, but is present nevertheless. In addition, these verses serve to picture the foolishness of fools (32.6) in view of the prophetic accusation of 3.16–4.1. The ‘thorns and thistles’ growing up on the soil of ‘my people’ (32.13a) points to a difficult period, which however is limited by the outpouring of the spirit of God.¹⁶⁸

Verses 32.15–20, on the other hand, are to be reckoned with greater confidence to the redaction of the Zion community. The references to 32.9–14 are manifold, which of course does not prove a common authorship; however, it does suggest it. Although 32.14 had proclaimed destruction of city and land forever (עַד עוֹלָם), in v. 15 this is restricted to the period ‘until a spirit is poured upon us from on high (עַד־יִיעָרָה עֲלֵינוּ רוּחַ מִמְרוֹם);¹⁶⁹ the עַד עוֹלָם now applies to living in security (v. 17b)! According to 32.13 only thorns and briars grew on אֲדָמַת עֲמִי; now my people (עֲמִי) can live in secure places of rest (בְּמִנוּחַת), 32.18), a deliberate contrast to the careless women of 32.9a (נָשִׁים שְׂאֵנָנוֹת). Previously, wild asses roamed in the ruins of the city (32.14), but now flocks and asses can run about freely (without the danger of carnivorous animals tearing them to pieces, 32.20). This image of a care-free¹⁷⁰ household and land economy is closely connected to 30.23–25 and to the *mashal* of 28.23–29, which also belongs to the redaction of the Zion community.

The wishes of these men for the future are definitely modest; they do not wish for heaven on earth, but only quiet and security (שָׁקֵט/בְּטָח). However, these do not fall from heaven, but instead are the work of a well-practiced צִדְקָה which definitively shapes society (32.17). The רוּחַ מִמְרוֹם¹⁷¹ only facilitates such action: ‘Righteousness is what people should practice; but God gives them the possibility of doing so through the pouring out of his spirit.’¹⁷² At the end of the eschatological expectation, there is still this world, but in new circumstances; the wilderness has changed to a garden, the garden to

168. Vermeulen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 426: ‘le malheur du peuple durera jusqu’au moment de l’effusion de l’Esprit.’

169. The temporal boundary of the devastation which, according to Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 43, binds chaps. 34 and 35 together, is already marked out here—independent of the return of the Jewish Diaspora (!).

170. Cf. the parallels of the carefree women in 32.9 (שְׂאֵנָנוֹת/בְּטָחוֹת) and the carefree dwellers in 32.18 (שְׂאֵנָנוֹת/מְבִטָּחִים).

171. For the outpouring of the spirit, see Isa. 44.3; Joel 3.1–5; Ezek. 36.27; 37.14; 39.29.

172. Rendtorff, ‘Jesaja 56,1’, p. 178; he draws a parallel to Isa. 1 and 56.

a forest (32.15; 29.17). That the first half-colon is to be understood positively does not present any difficulty. Those who have lived on the dark side of society will now lead a life of security. But what does the transformation of a garden to a forest mean? If it is an improvement on the first half-colon, does it mean the poor would live not just in a 'fruit garden', but indeed in a 'fruit forest'? Two things argue against this. First, יַעַר, like עֵיץ, is a negative symbol (32.19). Forest and city stand for pride and arrogance (see 2.11–17). Second, there is the expectation that, analogous to the contrasting pair 'desert-garden', the pair 'garden-forest' also has to be conceived as a contrast; 'forest' then means not 'a greater garden', but rather, an inaccessible place, where there is not only not enough food, but all kinds of dangers must be expected. Thus 32.15b really speaks in a more proverbial way (cf. 28.23–29) of the two sides of the impending time of salvation: 'there will come a great transformation in the end-time, which has a positive and a negative side.'¹⁷³ With that the redaction of the Zion community closed its 'book of Isaiah', which comprised chaps. 1–32*. The blessing (אַשְׁרֵי־כֵם), in contrast, closes the previous five Woe sayings (28.1; 29.1, 15; 30.1; 31.1). The image of the ox and ass that can be allowed to range freely points back to 1.3 with the word pair הַשּׂוֹר וְהַחֲמֹר, and creates an inclusio. It is also not an accident that the redaction of the Zion community alludes to the theme of the pouring out of the spirit in 11.2 in its finale of 32.15–20 (v. 15), and to the theme of the peaceful animals of 11.6–8 in 32.20; rather, these emphasize the intention of bringing *its* book of Isaiah, chaps. 1–32*, to a felicitous conclusion.

4.4. *The Proto-Apocalyptic Revision*

In 28–33, this revision is not well-integrated into the existing composition constructed of 'Isaianic timber' and 'Zion theology walls'. Therefore it is not to be designated 'redaction', which takes extensive older traditions and brings them together, either for the first time or in a new way. While redactions productively link existing traditions to new paths, this is not the case with revisions; they only update the former, without developing the latter. They differ from glosses by their frequency and the extent of their additions.¹⁷⁴

173. Ziegler, 'Zum literarischen Aufbau', p. 240; on the other hand, Laberge, 'Woe-Oracles', p. 173.

174. Nissinen, *Prophetie*, p. 37, makes a basic distinction between redaction and expansion [Redaktion and Fortschreibung], in which the latter however is superfluous, 'where the redaction not only collects and orders older texts, but

While the Zion community united the view of salvation and deliverance with the demand for trusting faith and the active practice of justice in good prophetic tradition, the proto-apocalyptic of the Hellenistic period believed the Mount of God *ipso facto* to be unassailable by the nations. It is no longer Israel who comes to fall on Zion and Yhwh's holiness; but rather, it is the nations, Assyria above all, who storm the Mount of God heedlessly and come to an end in the oven of fire (30.27-33; 31.8-9).

In the previous Zion Redaction the initial separation of righteous and sinners for the establishment of a God-fearing community stood in the foreground; here, the nations come into view, in negative terms as enemies of Yhwh and Zion. This revision begins in 28.19-22. It still cannot be called 'apocalyptic' in the full sense; although it contains speculations about the end of the world and history, it cites no signs of the final intervention of God. The Isaianic word about the imminent thundering flood, which can only mean the feared Assyrian war machinery, is now related to a catastrophe that is often (מדי) repeated.¹⁷⁵ In relation to this it cites what is probably a proverb about a bed that is too short with a cover that is too small (v. 20); in other words, there can be no protection against this difficulty.¹⁷⁶ Taking up the Isaianic critique of the drunken priests and prophets who are incompetent to interpret revelation (יבין שמועה, 28.9), the proto-apocalyptic now emphasize that in the coming difficulty, understanding the revelation will mean only terror (והיה רק-זועה הבין שמועה, 28.19b). It is probably not a coincidence that the key word שבע closes the insertion of vv. 19-22. The visionary alone, by which only the 'Isaiah of the Book' can be meant,¹⁷⁷ is not overwhelmed by the impression of the destruction of the entire world, of which he had heard from Yhwh Sabaoth (שבעה, v. 22b).

While 28.20 underlines the impossibility of salvation before the coming disaster, in v. 21 the overwhelming power of Yhwh carries out his 'strange work' with absolute confidence, analogous to David's

also exhibits literary activity'; at least for the book of Isaiah, then, it appears to be appropriate to differentiate between redactions that are productive expansions, and revisions [Bearbeitungen], which insert only isolated modifications.

175. Thus correctly Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 396; but against Vermeylen this virtually excludes a relation to the 'douloureuse épreuve de la déportation'.

176. So U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 233: 'Verse 19 stresses the inevitability of judgment in an apocalyptic manner, and v. 20 expresses the same idea with a well-known proverb.'

177. Thus Beuken, 'Isaiah 28', p. 30: 'the prophetic figure created by the 8th century prophet and the transmitters together'.

surprising victory over the Philistines (cf. 29.1).¹⁷⁸ It is still unknown against whom Yhwh appears with all power; this is communicated only in v. 22, where the goal of the entire insertion is reached (ועתה). They are the ridiculers, to whom this final warning is given (אנשי לִצְיוֹן)—a deliberate allusion to the ‘men of derision’ (אנשי-התלוצצוֹן) whom Isaiah ben Amoz opposed (28.14).

It is noteworthy that the proto-apocalyptic insertion is closely connected to the cornerstone statement. It is, so to speak, ‘the last call’, a last chance to take refuge on Zion before the divine punishments descend, which Kaiser expresses thus: ‘Anyone who admonishes in the face of a coming disaster and is convinced that its severity can still be influenced by a particular behavior, perhaps also knows that Zion can offer shelter for those who believe.’¹⁷⁹

With 29.5-7 the proto-apocalyptic reviser now turns the Isaianic threat that once applied to Jerusalem (29.1-4, 9-10) against the enemies of Zion. Prompted by 29.4—which speaks of the chirping from the dust (מַעֲפָר) of those who have entered into a pact with the underworld—here the mass of foreigners¹⁸⁰ and tyrants who ‘attack Ariel’ (הַצִּבְאִים עַל אֲרִיאֵל) would be ‘like fine dust’ (כַּאֲבֹק דָּק). The statement in 29.7, that the storming of the nations would be like a ‘dream’, a ‘night-vision’, does not say who the dreamers in fact are; the prose addition in v. 8 clarifies this:¹⁸¹ they are the nations who will awaken from the dream of a victorious attack against Zion with hungry stomachs and thirsty throats!

The suggestion in 29.5-7 that ‘Ariel’, against whom the nations wage war, will be the great altar on which they burn (לֵהָב אֵשׁ אִיבֹלֶה, 29.6b), becomes fully formed in 30.27-33, which incorporates the language of the earlier verses (in 30.27, 30, [33]). The imagination knows no boundaries here. The proto-apocalyptic revisers represent the destruction of the enemy nations by Yhwh’s fierce wrath as a festival with beating drums and string music, a festival in which

178. See 2 Sam. 5.17-21, 22-25 (so Beuken, ‘Isaiah 28’, pp. 28-29); others add the victory of Joshua in Josh. 10.9-14.

179. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 204; otherwise Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 398, who sees only the heathen world as being under judgment here: ‘seul Israël sera épargné’.

180. זִרְיָךְ is not to be changed to ‘your pride’ (זִרְיָךְ, cf. 25.2); for that, see Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, pp. 276-78. Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 203-204, refers to Jer. 51.2; Ezek. 28.7; 31.12: ‘connotation de “barbares envahisseurs”.’

181. Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritischen Methode*, p. 316: ‘The redactor of v. 8 takes up again the motif of the dream simile from v. 7a and relates it to the nations as dreamers.’

Yhwh goes full tilt against Assyria—symbol of all Israel's enemies—to the rhythm of the music (30.31-32). The hues for this portrayal of the end-time were taken from the already existing book of Isaiah;¹⁸² the most important textual reference is without doubt to 10.24, with the nearly literal repetition of *בשבת ירכה* in v. 31. As part of the increasing transcendence, it is no longer God himself who comes in judgment, but the *שם* Yhwh.¹⁸³ The great festival is probably the Feast of Booths,¹⁸⁴ during which water from the pool of Siloam was brought to the temple in a nightly procession with torches and ceremonial music. This ritual may have been intended to evoke the security of the temple mount in the face of enemy attack. The corpses of the attackers, who fall at the divine entrance of Zion as a sacrifice, are to be burned in Topheth, a dumping grounds for Jerusalem (30.33). A later reviser perhaps wondered about the site of conflagration also serving for the destruction of Molech;¹⁸⁵ as a result, the word was finally vocalized *melekh*, and thus the verse could be related to any enemy king. If 'Assyria' is a cover-name for the Seleucid kingdom here,¹⁸⁶ then the revocalization as *melekh* might point to the hope that the Seleucid king would also meet his end in this place of conflagration (cf. 66.24!).¹⁸⁷

According to the impression so far of the function and objectives of this revision, it is not surprising that it also has its say in 31.4-5, 8-9. While the Isaianic Woe prophesied certain doom for the coalition with Egypt (31.1, 3), the reviser emphasizes that Zion is in no danger, for Yhwh will fight on it (*לצבא על-הר-ציון*)¹⁸⁸ like a fearless lion that

182. Thus among others, Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 243: 'The image of the raging river: 30.28a from 8.8 and 28.2, 15; the motif of the roar (of the lion) that strikes terror: 30.31 from 31.4a; the brandished arm: 30.32b from 19.16.'

183. Thus among others, Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*, p. 164.

184. Thus Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 245; Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1220.

185. Cf. 2 Kgs 23.10; Jer. 7.31-32; 19.5-6, 11-12.

186. So among others, Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*, p. 164: 'The epoch of the Seleucids would come into consideration as a time of origin.'

187. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 247: 'So *molek* has been repointed as *melek* so that it appears to be only a question of whether the "Assyrian" king likewise would be in Tophet.'

188. If *לצבא על* here is translated 'to fight against' (cf. 29.7-8), then 31.4 would not be a salvation oracle but the extension of the word of judgment of 31.3; so among others, Exum, 'Of Broken Pots', pp. 336-38. But 'to fight on' is more probable; in addition, the parallel *על גבעותיה* is better translated 'on her heights' than 'against her heights'. For this see U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 262, who also conceives v. 4 as positive.

guards his prey against all the cries of the shepherds (cf. 1 Sam. 17.34–36; Hos. 5.14; Amos 3.12).¹⁸⁹

The same idea is expressed once again in another animal simile. Like a bird flapping its wings keeping watch over its brood, so Yhwh will guard (יִגֹן על) and save Jerusalem. Assyria must again serve as the enemy par excellence; it will pay bitterly for its attack against Zion, falling by a sword not wielded by a human hand (בְּחֶרֶב לֹא־אִישׁ/לֹא־אָדָם), 31.8).¹⁹⁰ The narratives of threat and deliverance of Jerusalem in 36–37 are summarized in shorter form; they certainly predate this proto-apocalyptic revision, perhaps already as part of the Isaiah scroll.¹⁹¹ As in 29.5–7 and 30.27–33, so also in 31.4–5, 8–9 Zion is the bulwark against which the nations charge in vain, Assyria leading them all.¹⁹² Yhwh has a fire (אֵשׁ) on Zion and a furnace (תַּנּוּר) in Jerusalem into which the attackers collapse (31.9; cf. 30.33; 34.3). The ‘theologized’ historical connecting point of the events of 701 no longer play a role for the proto-apocalyptic redactor. Neither Hezekiah’s prayer nor the angel of Yhwh effects redemption, but instead, the furnace on Zion!

This revision is inscribed one last time in 33.3–4, 7–12. Inspired by the Woe upon the oppressor (33.1), it underlines that the end for all peoples and nations is declared. In this version there is no longer the idea that there could also be righteous from the nations who marched not against, but rather to Zion; as *massa damnationis* the nations are free to be plundered. It is still not at that stage; the ‘people of Ariel’,¹⁹³ which refers back to the designation of Jerusalem in 29.1, cry for help. The rendering of the lament is done with the help of popular motifs from 24¹⁹⁴ and 29.1–8¹⁹⁵ and emphasizes the extreme distress. Yhwh swiftly answers this lament and announces his immediate intervention by a three-fold עֲתָה (33.10). While his intervention against all

189. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 251: ‘Yahweh does not permit what belongs to him to be plundered. Jerusalem belongs to him, because he has chosen it; cf. Ps. 132.13–14.’

190. In dependence on the formulation in 31.3: מַצְרִיִּים אָדָם וְלֹא־אֵל.

191. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 262, on 31.4: ‘37.35–36 obviously has served as a source.’

192. Cf. 8.9; 14.24–26; 17.12–14a.

193. So Gunkel, ‘Jesaja 33’, p. 178; for the various translations of the difficult מְצֻרֵי אֲרִיֶּל, see Beuken, ‘Jesaja 33’, p. 17 n. 33.

194. ‘To break a covenant’: 33.8b / 24.5; ‘the peoples do not pay attention, or few are left’: 33.8b / 24.6; ‘a lamenting land’: 33.9a / 24.7; ‘Lebanon, or the sun, is ashamed’: 33.9a / 24.23.

195. So Beuken, ‘Jesaja 33’, p. 18: ‘a raging fire’: 29.6; 33.11; ‘chaff / straw’: 29.5; 33.11; ‘thunder’: 29.6; 33.3; ‘peoples / nations’: 29.7–8; 33.3, 12.

human arrogance¹⁹⁶ had been proclaimed for the end-time in Isaiah 2, now Yhwh redeems this promise.¹⁹⁷ The end of the nations who threatened Zion is a done deal, and the favorite image of the reviser is used again: The nations are burned to chalk, burned like thorns that have been cut down and thrown in the fire!

This proto-apocalyptic revision, which conceived the destiny of Assyria as the clearest example of God's judgment upon the nations, appears also to be responsible for the perspective of judgment against the nations expressed in 34.2-4.¹⁹⁸ Into that Edom chapter it has introduced judgment on all nations, and so has interrupted the logical flow of 34.1, 5-15. The function of the nations as witnesses to the judgment on Edom, learning from Edom's experience,¹⁹⁹ has been turned into a judgment upon the nations! The gruesome image of the slain cast out and their corpses rotting is to be regarded as an apocalyptic one of the first order (cf. 30.33; 31.9). Possibly inspired by the expression ספר יהוה in 34.16, it extends the image of judgment over the entire earth still farther: heaven and all its stars are rolled up like a scroll.²⁰⁰ The logical difficulty, produced by the insertion of 34.2-4, of combining the local judgment on Edom and universal world destruction really disturbed the revisers very little: like Edom, the nations are headed to the same certain end!

4.5. *Isaiah 33: The First Bridge-text of the Book of Isaiah*

After the finale of the out-pouring of the spirit on the Zion community (32.15) and the outlining of the salvation period (32.16-20), the Woe in 33.1 is unexpected. It is not very likely that the closing

196. Cf. קיום / 33.10 / 2.11, 12, 17, 19, 21.

197. Beuken, 'Jesaja 33', p. 21: 'Our conclusion is that Isa. 33.10-13 refers in particular to chapter 2, which forms the foundation of the first collection of texts in the book of Isaiah (chapter 1 deals more with the opening of the entire book).'

198. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 52: 'But principally, 34.2-4 appears as an addition that extends the Edom judgment to an overall world judgment'; his arguments (pp. 52-54) make sense; see also Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 247-48.

199. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 54, sees the nations as witness in a wisdom context, since there is no indication of a forensic context: 'In 34.1 a teaching event is introduced; instruction will take place in what follows, in order to inform—the nations, in viewing the destruction of the people of Edom...' Basically, both positions amount to the same thing: the nations of the world shall see how Yhwh destroys Edom.

200. Cf. 24.19, 21; 51.6.

beatitude in 32.20 and the Woe of 33.1 stem from the same pen; what is more likely is that an update has been integrated in the scroll in view of a changed situation. This expansion was necessary because the great hope for salvation in chap. 32 created an obstacle that had to be removed. But apart from this incorporation of a new situation, Isaiah 33 is also distinguished as the first bridge-text, connecting the two major parts of the scroll (1–32* and 40–50) to each other.

The question whether Isaiah 33 acts as a ‘mirror text’ that captures the entire book as in a prism, or if the bridging function applies to a more restricted framework, will be reserved for later. Following our usual procedure, we will first look at the chapter synchronically in order to collect the relevant data for the subsequent diachronic analysis.

The formulation in 33.1 (שׂדֶד/בֹּנֵד) is borrowed from 21.2;²⁰¹ the destroyer whose end is anticipated is the successor of Babylon. As the Woe against Assyria in 10.5–19 pointed to the turning point for the salvation of Israel, here the הוֹי against the unnamed oppressor clearly intends to be a promise of salvation for the people of God. Could it be that hiding behind this final Woe is a quiet and cautious hope for the end of Persian rule? It would not have been expressed explicitly, to avoid showing sympathy with the Egyptian revolt of the fifth century and thus falling into the same trap as the contemporaries of Isaiah in the last years of the eighth century. While the Zion Redaction may have desired rest and tranquility in 28–32, with 33.1 the beginning of a resistance appears to be taking shape. If that is the case, then the Persian Empire stands behind the present oppressor and plunderer (note especially the Persian tax politics!), whose end is destined to be that which has already overtaken the Neo-Babylonian Empire.²⁰²

As with the We-group, who hoped for the spirit from on high for themselves (32.15a), a prayer about an imminent attack is directed to Yhwh in 33.2: ‘Yhwh, be gracious to *us*; *we* hope in you.’²⁰³ Be *our* arm²⁰⁴ every morning; indeed, *our* salvation in time of difficulty’

201. Beuken, ‘Jesaja 33’, p. 13; Williamson, *The ‘Book’ Called Isaiah*, p. 230. Thus the authors of Isa. 33 are at least aware of the ‘Babylonized’ version of the oracles concerning the nations.

202. Beuken, ‘Jesaja 33’, p. 16: ‘What has already come to Assyria shall also happen to Elam and Media, i.e., Persia, because they also played the role of the oppressor toward Israel’; likewise Wildberger, *Jesaja. 3. Teilband*, p. 1288.

203. Cf. 8.17; 25.9; 51.5; 59.11; see also Beuken, ‘Jesaja 33’, pp. 13–15.

204. Read: זרענו see *BHS*; cf. ‘arm’ in 51.5; 59.11.

(33.2). This prayer of petition is motivated by the continuing distress caused by the oppressor; before the time of salvation can dawn, this last hurdle must still be overcome. The community recognizes Yhwh as the one who is exalted (נִשְׁבָּח²⁰⁵), who is enthroned in the heights,²⁰⁶ and who fills Zion with מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה.²⁰⁷ The theme of a Zion filled with justice and righteousness refers to 1.21-28²⁰⁸ and especially to 11.1-10, as is confirmed by the reference of 33.6b to 11.2. 'The clearest agreement between the two texts lies in the last words. "Wisdom, knowledge, and fear of Yhwh" appears to be a summary of the gifts with which the shoot of Jesse is endowed.'²⁰⁹ As to content, the relationship of 33.5-6 reflects the dialectic, already recognized from 32.1a, 1b and 32.15-17, between divine and human activity in the establishment of a just social order: Yhwh is the one who creates the conditions for the Zion community, as the shoot of Jesse, to set an example of righteousness. The 'democratizing' of the kingship idea, often observed with wonder and emphasized by interpreters of 55.3, has its foundations already in 33.6 with reference to Isa. 11.1-9. Beuken expressed this in a different, but substantially similar way, in view of the book: 'In the telescopic perspective of chap. 33 the distinction between the anointed and the renewed Zion fades, a process that can be observed elsewhere in the book of Isaiah, with daughter Zion and the divine servant.'²¹⁰

The expected manifestation of the kingdom of Yhwh has consequences, to be sure, even for the Zion community itself, since it is well aware that it consists not only of the righteous;²¹¹ the Torah liturgy (33.13-16²¹²), in view of the coming of Yhwh, puts all to the test and aims to inspire all to a better way of living: 'The community of the poet must live even now in such a way that they are awarded entrance to Zion and its God, and thus also to the salvation effected

205. Cf. 2.11, 17; 12.4.

206. Cf. 57.15 (רַם וְנִשְׁבָּח עַד); Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 232-33, correctly sees 57.15 as dependent upon 33.5; however, Isa. 33 is not a 'mirror text' of the entire book of Isaiah.

207. Cf. 1.21; 5.7; 9.6; 32.1, 16, 17.

208. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 34.

209. Beuken, 'Jesaja 33', p. 17.

210. Beuken, 'Jesaja 33', pp. 29-30.

211. Cf. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 270: 'The revelation of the complete power and strength of God also poses a problem for the people of God, since they consist not only of the pious, but also of sinners.'

212. Cf. Pss. 15; 24.3-5; see also Steingrimsson, *Tor der Gerechtigkeit*, pp. 94-120.

by him, and are not condemned.²¹³ Reward for the observance of divine instruction is, in turn, not heaven, but secure dwelling places and enough to eat (see 30.20).

If, in oracles about the nations in the book of Isaiah and especially in Isaiah 24–27, the nations are not simply *massa damnationis*, but their righteous too are saved, as in the case of the righteous Noah, then it is at least possible that those ‘far off’ (רחוקים) who shall hear (33.13) refers to them.²¹⁴ The Torah liturgy (cf. Pss. 15.1; 24.3) with its conditions of entrance to Zion may thus have been for the righteous from the nations and from Israel, who are ‘near’ (קרובים), something that Lohfink has also pointed out for Psalm 24.²¹⁵ The question, ‘who can live with the devouring fire?’ refers back to Isaiah 6, where Isaiah is cleansed by the glowing coal in the hand of the seraph (6.7). The same goes for 33.13–16 with regard to admission to the temple,²¹⁶ which farther on in the book shall stand open to the righteous both from Israel and the nations (see 56.1–9).²¹⁷

The six conditions of entrance (33.15), which have to do with ethical relationships, are contrasted to the six Woes in 28–33. For anyone who lives and acts in this way, ‘divine qualities’ are applied to that person; he will dwell in high places (הוא מרומים ישכן, v. 16, cf. v. 5), and fortresses of rocks are his refuge (משגבר; cf. v. 5: יהיה יחוז). In Isa. 33.17, clearly the working out of Isaiah 6, the vision of the king in his beauty is set before the righteous as the greatest gift in the time of salvation. As it was for Isaiah with his call (6.5), the Zion community too, made up of Israel and the nations, might see Yhwh as the glorious King (cf. 32.1)! Here it should be emphasized that, outside of 33.17, the ‘vision’ of Yhwh as divine ‘King’ is found only in 6.5 and in 52.7–8. This is of great relevance for the diachronic configuration.

Different from Isaiah, the Zion community has nothing to fear before the vision of the divine King. On the contrary, it finally knows

213. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 270; so also Steingrimsson, *Tor der Gerechtigkeit*, p. 116.

214. According to Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 55, what happens to the people of Zion as the ‘near’ ones is unfolded in 33.17–24, and what the nations, those ‘far off’, shall hear is revealed in 34.1, 5–15.

215. Lohfink, ‘Bund und Tora’, pp. 61–62. See also where it is taken up in 57.19!

216. Against Koenen, *Heil*, p. 121, who views the question of admittance in v. 14 as ‘rhetorical’, for with Yhwh, no one is able to abide the raging fire.

217. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 34: ‘If Isa. 33—like Ps. 24—speaks of the nations, then Zion becomes for them a village of the festival of meeting (קריית) (מיעדנו); the tent (אהל) in Jerusalem, which will no longer be taken down, is also for them.’

security and calls upon Yhwh as Judge, Legislator, and King (33.22); there will be no more illness among them, for the guilt of the people on Zion is forgiven.²¹⁸ Here again and for the last time, the text refers to Isaiah's commissioning scene. As in the case of Isaiah, the people's sin is also forgiven. Thus is released the tension that spans from the book's beginning in 1.4 ('Woe to the sinful people, to the guilt-laden nation') over 6.7, the exemplary atonement of Isaiah as the down-payment for a new community, right up to the guilt-free Zion population in 33.24. It is also obvious that the 'forgiving of sins' connects Isaiah 33 and 40; 40.2 emphasizes that Jerusalem's debt is wiped away (נִרְצָה עֲוֹנָהּ). The forgiving of sin is the reason a message of comfort can be directed at Jerusalem.²¹⁹ The difference between the two texts lies not in whether the forgiveness has already been enacted or has only been proclaimed, but rather in a joyful reception on the one hand and a hesitating skepticism on the other. A more fitting transition to 40.1-2 than 33.24 is hardly imaginable.²²⁰ A life of security, on fruitful soil, free from illness and sin, and in addition, the divine vision on Zion—that is the expectation of the community!

The curious statement about the 'beauty' of the king, of rivers and proud ships that do not travel through the city of God, is to be understood simply as weaving in references from Psalms 46 and 48.²²¹ The perspective of nations that is the dominant feature at the center of the Korah Psalms (45–48)²²² is likewise of importance in Isa. 33.17-24. The Yhwh disciples from the nations also arrive at the credo of 33.22. Both texts stem from a milieu in which prophetic and wisdom traditions were woven together with the song material of the Psalms.

The statement that proud ships might no longer pass through the city of God and their ropes may have become slack—as opposed to the ropes that hold the tent (=Jerusalem; 33.20)—may express the hope that Jerusalem need no longer bear exploitation by an aggressive world commerce (cf. 23.1-14; Ps. 48.8). The image of Jerusalem

218. Gunkel, 'Jesaia 33', p. 208: 'Then there is no longer sin in Jerusalem (Isa. 60.21) and therefore also no illness.'

219. With Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 225-26, and against Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 17, who believes that 33.24 and 40.1-2 are therefore incompatible, because in Isa. 33 the forgiveness is already effective, while it is only first proclaimed in 40.1-2.

220. Similarly U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 269.

221. 'Beauty': 33.17; Ps. 48.3; 'counting towers': 33.18; Ps. 48.13; 'place of rivers': 33.21; 17.5; Ps. 46.5; 'ships': 33.21; Ps. 48.8.

222. Cf. Zenger, 'Zion als Mutter', pp. 127-38.

as a tent not to be torn down led the author of 54.2-3 to a different elaboration of this metaphor.²²³ Zion, whose exile will not be repeated,²²⁴ enlarges its tent in order to receive the crowds of pilgrims.

For the most part, there is agreement that Isaiah 33 occupies a special place in the book.²²⁵ Beuken regards it as a 'mirror text', in which the entire book of Isaiah is refracted as through a prism, though he concedes that the references forward are clearly fewer than are the references backward.²²⁶ Against that, Williamson disputes in particular the references from Isaiah 33 that Beuken recognizes as Trito-Isaianic material,²²⁷ and sees this chapter as a bridge-text from the pen of Deutero-Isaiah. For Steck, Isaiah 33, along with 34*, belongs to a stratum of a 'Proto-Isaianic redaction', which does not establish any greater-Isaianic connections.²²⁸ He is criticized by Becker for discounting any connection between 33.24 and 40.1-2.²²⁹ Becker, for his part, leads the discussion onto the right track: 'The basic core of chap. 33 appears to continue (and to correct) chapter 32, and to look ahead to the return of Yahweh to Zion in 52.7-10.'²³⁰ If one now goes along with Williamson with regard to Beuken's identification of references from Isaiah 33 to texts from the book of Isaiah,²³¹ then one must also accept his (and others') argument that 33.8b-9 does not refer back to 24.3-7, but rather Isaiah 24 is the borrower,²³² and that definite references to Trito-Isaianic texts cannot be found. Thus, according to Williamson, 57.15 incorporates both 33.5 and 33.16, meaning that there is no reflection of Isaiah 57 in chap. 33.²³³ What remains are the back-references of Isaiah 33 to texts from 1-32*²³⁴ and the two forward-references to 40.2 (forgiven sin)²³⁵ and

223. Thus Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 228.

224. Gunkel, 'Jesaja 33', p. 206.

225. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', p. 305: 'The close of chap. xxxiii suggests that this chapter, too, has a specific function within the overall composition of the book of Isaiah.'

226. Beuken, 'Jesaja 33', p. 28.

227. Beuken, 'Jesaja 33'; Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 221-38.

228. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 55-59.

229. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 269.

230. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 269.

231. See the listing in Beuken, 'Jesaja 33', p. 27.

232. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 234-35.

233. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 232-33.

234. 33.1 / 21.2; 33.5 / 2.11, 17; 33.5 / 1.21; 33.6 / 11.2; 33.17 / 6.5 and 32.1-3; 33.19 / 28.11.

235. See also Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 225-26; Beuken, 'Jesaja 33', does not cite these references.

to 52.7-8 (seeing Yhwh as King). Now it is of the greatest interest for the question of the book's composition that these verses belong to the beginning and closing pericopes of the first Jerusalem redaction, which in my opinion, reworked the basic core of the book of Deutero-Isaiah (40-52*) in the fifth century.²³⁶ If the writers of Isaiah 33 deliberately alluded to the beginning and end of the 'Deutero-Isaianic book' which was well known to them with the two forward-references to Isa. 40.1-2 and 52.7-8, then Isaiah 33 was *the* text which brought the Proto-Isaianic book of 1-32* to a conclusion and at the same time effected the bridge to 40-52. A further observation of detail argues for this thesis. In the exodus command of 52.11-12, v. 11a clearly takes up Lam. 4.15a. Could it be pure coincidence that Isa. 33.24 agrees so closely with Lam. 4.22, which likewise deals with the dismissed sin of The Daughter of Zion (תִּם־עוֹנֶיךָ בַת־צִיּוֹן)? Arguing for the assumption that there is a deliberate allusion in Isaiah 33 through 52.11a to the fourth chapter of Lamentations is the fact that the contrast of guilt-free Zion and guilt-laden Edom (Lam. 4.22!) represents precisely the theme of Isaiah 34-35!

Thus it must be assumed that, in the second half of the fifth century, a first greater book of Isaiah comprised chaps. 1-32; 33; 40-52. Chapter 33 is accordingly not to be evaluated as a mirror text of the whole book of Isaiah, but as the first bridge-text,²³⁷ which is followed by a second, namely chap. 35, provoked by the negative image of Edom in chap. 34.

4.6. Placement and Function of Isaiah 34-35

After the summarizing verses 33.17-24, which present the vision of God for the community on Zion, publish its confession, and emphasize the removal of its guilt, chap. 34 announces judgment upon Edom, surprisingly, and chap. 35 portrays the Edom's future. It appears as though chaps. 34-35 may have been added as a new conclusion to 1-33*,²³⁸ so that chaps. 1-35 are now to be considered

236. See under section 6.6.

237. Thus, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 269, is fundamentally on the right path, though incorrect in his late dating: 'Isaiah 33, therefore, is a very late expansion within an already existing greater book of Isaiah, which already contained not only the (proto-Chronistic) disobedience stratum, but also chap. 32 and the Deutero-Isaianic collection.'

238. Thus Collins, *Mantle*, p. 43: 'Chs. 34-35 now constitute the new conclusion to the older material in 28-33.'

as *one* large section of the book.²³⁹ There must have been important reasons for the intervention of the newly formed conclusion (chaps. 34–35) after the first bridge (chap. 33) to 40–52*, reasons that will be examined in what follows.

Many understand *Isaiah* 34–35 as a transition, such that 28–39²⁴⁰ or at least 34–39²⁴¹ stand together; others regard chaps. 34–35 as the introduction to 34–66.²⁴² Neither the assignment of the literary type ‘small apocalypse’ to 34–35²⁴³ nor the external evidence of 1QIsa^a, which has a three-line break²⁴⁴ and shows a marked increase in *matres lectionis* for 34–66, can resolve the question of how and in what context 34–35 are to be read.

The view that chaps. 34–35 are an introduction for chaps. 40–55, and that these elements were separated from each other in order to integrate 36–39 into the book, as Torrey²⁴⁵ argued, has justifiably not gained acceptance.²⁴⁶ Elliger’s acute observations, in particular, made the thesis of a Deutero-Isaianic authorship for 34–35 obsolete:

239. Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–4, pp. 54–55; Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–39, pp. 353–58, now makes the case for 28–33 as a unit and for 34–35 as an introduction to 34–66 (435–36).

240. Seitz, ‘Isaiah 1–39’, pp. 203–208.

241. Watts, *Isaiah* 34–66, 1, ‘From Curse to Blessing (Chaps. 34–39)’.

242. Scott, ‘Relation of Isaiah’, pp. 179–91; Olmstead, ‘II Isaiah’, pp. 251–53; Pope, ‘Isaiah 34’, pp. 235–43; Torrey, ‘Editorial Operations’, pp. 129–39.

243. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 280; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 439.

244. See Brownlee, ‘Manuscripts’, pp. 16–21; Brownlee, *Meaning*, pp. 247–59; Barthélemy, ‘Le grand rouleau’, pp. 543–45; Kahle, *Die hebräischen Handschriften*, pp. 72–77; Milik, *Ten Years*, pp. 26–27; Richards, ‘A Note on the Bisection’, pp. 257–58; Giese, ‘Further Evidence’, pp. 61–70. It is undisputed that the two halves (1–33; 34–66) of 27 columns stem from the same copyist; the differences result from the fact that he had before him two versions from different sources, which he united in one scroll. The original separation into two scrolls of chaps. 1–33 and 34–66 was simply for ease of use, and says nothing of the history of the origin of the textual material, for instance, that Deutero-Isaianic material begins with 34–35 (against Brownlee).

245. Torrey, ‘Editorial Operations’, pp. 126–27; Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, pp. 103–104, was based on a number of works, including that of Graetz, *Isaiah xxxiv and xxxv*, pp. 1–8, who regarded chap. 34 as exilic, and chap. 35 as Deutero-Isaianic, a chapter which originally may have stood between 51.3 and 51.4 (!); for Olmstead, ‘II Isaiah’, pp. 251–53, chap. 35 is ‘the First Chapter of Second Isaiah’ (p. 253); for Scott, ‘Relation of Isaiah’, pp. 178–91, Deutero-Isaiah begins with chap. 34; and likewise for Pope, ‘Isaiah 34’, pp. 235–43.

246. See the fine summary by Mathews, *Defending Zion*, pp. 20–27.

Chapters 34–35 never formed the introduction to 40ff., as is shown by 40.1–8, a piece that is clearly an introduction. The most likely assumption is that chaps. 34–35 were authored from the beginning as a conclusion or supplement to Isaiah 1–33, before the concluding chapters 36–39 were attached. This would be the simplest explanation for the ‘book’ of 34.16.²⁴⁷

Still, the view that 34–35 is the introduction to 40–66 has not been shelved, but rather has experienced a renaissance. As Gosse notes, ‘Isa 34–35 constitue une introduction d’ensemble aux Deuxième et Troisième Isaïe’.²⁴⁸ According to Vermeylen, on the other hand, the ‘small apocalypse’ formed by chaps. 34–35 closes the major section made up of chaps. 1–35.²⁴⁹ Over against these schemas one might ask whether 34 and 35 in fact originate from a common pen,²⁵⁰ or whether they may not have sprung from successive expansions that built upon 1–33, picking up on both particular and wider contexts. Are the interrelationships of 34 and 35 sufficient²⁵¹ to make a common authorship probable?

נָקָם	34.8	35.4
נִחְלִים	34.9	35.6
נוֹה תְנִים	34.13	35.7
לֹא/אֵין עֵבֶר	34.10	35.8
חֲצִיר	34.13	35.7
שָׁם	34.14, 15(2x)	35.8, 9(2x)

These close points of contact between the two chapters are not of a coincidental type, but rather, are so structured that Edom’s complete destruction stands in contrast to Zion’s prosperity, which could be an argument for a common authorship. However, there are decisive

247. Elliger, *Deuterijosaja in seinem Verhältnis*, pp. 277–78; according to Caspari, ‘Jesaja 34 und 35’, p. 86, chaps. 34–35 are familiar with Deutero-Isaianic views, but they are more ‘idiosyncratic’: ‘The simplest explanation leads to an origin that is temporally, and perhaps also geographically, different from that of Deutero-Isaiah.’

248. Gosse, ‘Isaïe 34–35’, pp. 396–404 (403).

249. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 439–46.

250. So also Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 156, with restrictions: ‘The author of the expansion vv. 3–6 is evidently responsible for the connection between chaps. 34 and 35. Perhaps he is identical with the writer of chap. 34.’

251. In view of these clear references, Steck’s view (*Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 55–56) is strange—that Isa. 33–34 (and not 34–35) form one compositional unit, which he claims to recognize especially in the forward-referencing from 33.13 to 34.1; see Williamson’s criticism in *The ‘Book’ Called Isaiah*, pp. 217–20; Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39*, p. 188 n. 2; U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 269; Mathews, *Apportioning Desolation*, pp. 253–60.

arguments against this: (a) the inclusio of 34.11-17 with the ‘biblicist’ comment that the reader should be able to find all the mentioned wild animals in the book of Yhwh, a statement that argues for a deliberately placed closing point; and (b) the fact that chap. 34 points back much more strongly to the Babylon chapters 13 and 21, while 35 more clearly takes up Deutero-Isaianic language. The only thing that connects 34 with 40–66 is the Edom theme (34.8; 63.4), while 35 stands in closest connection with 40.1-11. Thus one has to agree with Williamson²⁵² when he says that the ‘bridge’ of chap. 35 only became necessary once 34 was attached to 1–33 and was thereby abruptly pushed up against 40–66.

Thus it can be concluded that 33.24 introduced the original close of 1–33* to which chap. 34, with its Edom theme, was been added. With that addition, the reference to the book of Yhwh formed the second point of closure, this time 1–34*. Chapter 35 was then introduced to provide a conscious contrast between the depiction of Edom’s terror and that of Zion’s salvation. Thus on a diachronic plane, chaps. 34 and 35 are successive expansions of 1–33; on the synchronic plain, however, they are a ‘diptych’ of Edom’s end and Zion’s salvific future.

4.6.1. *Isaiah 34: Edom’s End*

These synchronic observations, together with the historical references, have laid the basis for taking up the discussion of both chapters from a diachronic perspective. The fact that no Isaianic vocabulary can be identified after 31.1-3²⁵³ and the historical placement of the Edom theme toward the end of the fifth century exclude an Isaianic, exilic, or early postexilic composition for chap. 34. Since the following chapter is generally classified as later, the same applies with even greater certainty to Isaiah 35.

Chapter 34, in which the judgment on Edom (vv. 1, 5-15) is interwoven with judgment upon the nations (vv. 2-4),²⁵⁴ concludes with an

252. Williamson, *The ‘Book’ Called Isaiah*, pp. 214-15: ‘the main “problems” which Isaiah 35 sought to solve were raised by the juxtaposition of chapters 34 and 40; those raised by 33 are more apparent than real. The need for 35 may, therefore, have been perceived not so much when the two main parts of Isaiah were first joined as when chapter 34 was added.’

253. Otherwise, Roberts, ‘Isaiah 33’, pp. 15-25, who regards Isa. 33 as a composition of the Zion tradition.

254. According to Lust, ‘Isaiah 34’, pp. 275-87, 34.2-3[4], 7 has to do with judgment upon the nations, 34.5-6 with judgment upon Edom, and 34.8-15 with judgment upon Judah (!), and 34.1 serves as an introduction (p. 282). This proposal founders on the logical consequence that Judah would suffer more than

‘interpretative guideline’ (vv. 16-17) intended to show that the animals living in the destroyed Edom are ‘canonical’.²⁵⁵ The section 34.2-4 has already been assigned to the proto-apocalyptic revision,²⁵⁶ for which the example of the judgment on Edom seals the destruction of all nations. For the diachronic classification of the chapter, attention therefore has to be directed to 34.1, 5-15, keeping in view the two reference texts, Isaiah 13 and 63.1-6.

Both Vermeylen²⁵⁷ and Zapff²⁵⁸ have noted that chap. 34, in the sequence of its content as well as in word choice, is oriented to chap. 13:

Preparation for battle:	13.2-4	34.1
Slaughter of the nations:	13.5-9, 14-16	34.2-3
Radical change of cosmos:	13.10-13	34.4-5a
Capture of the city:	13.17-19	34.5b-8
Desolation:	13.20	34.9-10
Wild animals:	13.21-22	34.11-15
לנצח	13.20	34.10
עד/ל/מדור ודור	13.20	34.10, 17
שם	13.20, 21	34.1, 14, 15
צִיִּים	13.21	34.14
בנות יענה	13.21	34.13
אִיִּים	13.22	34.14
תנים	13.22	34.13
אלמנותיו	13.22	34.13 ארמנותיה

It is striking that the *semantic* connections appear only when it is about the forming of judgment against Babylon or Edom, which in each case is compared with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. With these key words explicit (13.19) or simply alluded to (pitch/brimstone; 34.9), both chapters run in parallel, though the destruction of Edom surpasses that of Babylon in intensity and completeness. Thus Edom shall not only suffer like Babylon, but indeed far surpass it!²⁵⁹

Babylon (Isa. 13) and Edom; thus Zapff’s criticism, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 246-47, and Mathews, *Defending Zion*, pp. 19-20, 66.

255. Beuken, ‘Isaiah 34’, pp. 89-90: ‘The incitement to perform a scribal investigation must be from a later date, like the concept *the book of Yhwh*’ (p. 90).

256. Cf. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 54-54; Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 243-48.

257. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, pp. 440-41.

258. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 249-54.

259. Thus Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 250-51.

Consequently, it can be stated that chap. 34 is guided by the Vorlage of chap. 13 in those places²⁶⁰ where it is about the consequences of divine judgment, in which Edom is aligned with Sodom/Gomorrah and Babylon.²⁶¹ If the Babylon chapters 13–14 originated in the wake of Xerxes' activities against Babylon (482), then the *terminus a quo* is established for the composition of 34.1, 5–15; the proto-apocalyptic interpolation of the judgment of the nations in 34.2–4 remains the *terminus ad quem*.

The design of the consequences of divine judgment upon Edom may be borrowed from the chapter on Babylon, but that still does not answer the question why the Edom theme surfaces at just this place, after the cycle of the nations of 13–23* and after the closing chapter of 33. Two reasons may be cited: for one, the historical fact that toward the end of the fifth century Edom had been crushed, likely by Arabian attacks. This fact could not have been unknown to the tradents of the book of Isaiah; on the contrary, they gratefully transposed it literarily into a final proof of the divine punishment that overtakes everyone who assaults Zion. Strengthened and legitimated by the biblical anti-Edom tradition, they could align Edom with Assyria and especially with Babylon (Ps. 137). This literary revision of 'the last minute news' of Edom's destruction was most likely not inserted in the cycle of the nations because that cycle was already a closed composition into which it was no longer desirable or possible to intrude. Even the 'biblicist reader's introduction' of 34.16–17 demonstrates that adding 34* to 1–33* required particular legitimation.²⁶² Another reason for the addition of chap. 34* is internal to the book. Toward the end of the fifth century the two major parts of the book of Isaiah were moved ever closer to one another, with Isaiah 33 functioning as a first bridge-text. In the course of this convergence it would have become noticeable that there was an Edom oracle in 63.1–6—the one nation missing in the prophet Isaiah's cycle of the nations (chaps. 13–23); should he not have directed a statement against Edom? This question was answered in the positive by the proclamation of Edom's judgment in chap. 34.

260. But this is not yet stated—only 13.17–22a (13G) would have been accessible to the writer of 34.1, 5–15; so Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, pp. 249–54.

261. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 217: 'it looks as though we have here a post-exilic development whereby in some circles Edom became a type of enemy of the people of God, just as Babylon had been.'

262. Donner, "'Forscht in der Schrift Jahwes'", p. 297: 'The scribe of Isa. 34.16–17 literally "sanctioned" Isa. 34; because of him, as it were, this chapter became a part of the Bible.'

Although the literary revisions of the Edom theme in 63.1-6 and 34* happened nearly at the same time, they nevertheless do not derive from one hand. This can be understood from the fact that 'Edom' is variously connoted. With the bracketing of the Zion chapters 60-62 by 59.15-20 and 63.1-6, 'Edom' in 63.1-6 becomes a cipher for those in Jacob who do not want to repent from their sins (59.20). The promises of 60-62 are limited therefore to those of God's people who turn toward Yhwh.²⁶³ Whoever does not do that can no longer appeal to his status as a fellow-member of the people of God, something that even the Edomites as descendants of Esau (Gen. 25.19-26) had once been able to do!

This connotation of 'Edom' as a rebellious member of the people of God is completely lacking in chap. 34.²⁶⁴ Here Edom is entirely and only the foreign nation that has acted audaciously against Zion and will now be punished for that beyond all measure. It is this theme that is expressed in closest parallel in 34 and 63, which again is dependent upon 61.2. According to Gosse,²⁶⁵ the following chronological sequence can be determined, as is also confirmed by Koenen:²⁶⁶

61.2:	ויום נקם לאלהינו	לקרא שנת רצון ליהוה
63.4:	ושנת גאולי באה	כי יום נקם בלבי
34.8:	שנת שלומים לריב ציון	כי יום נקם ליהוה

Elliger was an early and eloquent proponent for the literary dependence of 34 on 63.1-6; he especially emphasized the pedantry of the writer of 34, who elaborates broadly on each detail of his model: 'the one is a poet, the other a scholar who makes an essay out of the poem of the poet, an essay whose theme he has perhaps borrowed from 66.16.'²⁶⁷ Steck disputes this evaluation and argues for dependence in the opposite direction (63.1-6 from 34.1, 5-15): 'The strange fact that Isaiah 63 is not about a judgment of Yahweh *on* Edom, but rather of a judgment of the nations *in* Edom and Bozra, can be understood only if one knows Isaiah 34.'²⁶⁸ Anticipating our exegesis of chap. 63, it has

263. See under section 7.5.

264. Mathews, *Defending Zion*, p. 167, is not so certain of this because of the juxtaposition of Edom and Zion in chaps. 34-35.

265. Gosse, 'Détournement', pp. 105-10; Gosse, 'Isaïe 34-35', pp. 397-98.

266. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 82: 'Isa. 61.2 is on the one hand the source of Isa. 63.4...and on the other hand, in contact with Isa. 63.4 (context Edom/Bozra), which is from Isa. 34.8...'

267. Elliger, *Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis*, p. 275; Dicou, 'Literary Function', pp. 42-44; Mathews, *Defending Zion*, p. 25.

268. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 51.

to be emphasized, however, that the statement about a ‘judgment of the nations’ is found only in 63.6; the LXX knows nothing at all of this! Furthermore, the question remains how, in a judgment on the nations, Yhwh could boast that he alone has tread the wine press, and no one ‘from the nations’ (מַעַמִּים) stood at his side (63.3); also, against Steck, the speech is not about a judgment *in* Edom (בְּאֶדוֹם)! The discussion of ‘on’ versus ‘in’ disregards the intention of the text: It is not the object of the punishing destruction that stands in the foreground, but, rather, its subject. *WHO* is this who comes from Edom (מִי זֶה בֹּא מֵאֶדוֹם, 63.1a), and why are his garments so red (אֲדָם, 63.2a)? They are red because Yhwh trod the wine press and none of the nations helped him! So it remains that 63.1-6 was the triggering literary impulse for the creation of 34.1, 5-15 and that the historical basis for Edom’s disintegration lay toward the end of the fifth century. The judgment on Babylon (13) served at the same time to supply the details for Isaiah 34.*

4.6.2. *Isaiah 35: The Second Bridge-text of the Book of Isaiah*

Because of the way that Isaiah 35 juxtaposes Zion’s future and Edom’s destruction, and draws its forms and hues especially from 32–33 to stand out against the dark background of 34, the hypothesis comes to mind that 35 must be chronologically subordinate to chaps. 32, 33, and 34. In contrast to the focus of 34 on Edom’s destiny, 35 stresses that the subject is ultimately the future of Zion.²⁶⁹ While this chapter may form a ‘diptych’ together with 34, the connections between 35 and 40.1-11 show that 35 is more than just an opposite image to 34. Chapter 35 performs a ‘double-duty’ function. On the one hand, it sketches out the radiant future of Zion against the dark background of the judgment upon Edom and, on the other hand, it reestablishes the bridge from 1–33* to 40–66, broken by Isaiah 34. Thus, the ‘bridging character’ of Isaiah 35 must be underlined, with Steck, but with this modification, that it comes *after Isaiah 33*, the second and not the first bridge-text between the major portions of the book of Isaiah.²⁷⁰

269. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1356: ‘One may even discern in chap. 35 an expostulation against 34: What the day of vengeance against Edom means is joy and delight finding their way to the true Israel.’

270. Cf. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 270: ‘Isaiah 35 therefore is not at all a first level connection, but rather, attempts to relate the “disaster section” of the book of Isaiah (chaps. 1–39*) still more strongly and intensively to the salvation prophecy of chaps. 40ff.’

The lexical connections between the last sayings text of 1–35 and the first of 40–66 are too close to be accidental, on the one hand, and on the other hand, they factor into the Hezekiah legends on the synchronic plane. Thus 35 and 40.1–11 are connected with the legends by the key words חזקיהו / חזקיהו and the call to fearlessness (35.4; 37.6; 40.9). Hezekiah is an example of the attitude of fearless trust in God, a trust demanded of the addressees in 35 and 40.1–11. In spite of these references from 35 through 36–39 to 40.1–11, the insertion of Isaiah 36–39 in the center of the book of Isaiah is diachronically subordinate to the connection between 1–35* and 40–66, as is indicated in the following chapters. Still, the objection of Steck should be heard at this point: ‘Why Isaiah 36–39 should have been inserted between an existing direct literary connection between 35 and 40 is completely inexplicable, and in addition it is agreed that no direct links can be established between Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 36–39.’²⁷¹ On the contrary, very good reasons can be found for the insertion of Isaiah 36–39 in the already existing literary unity of 1–35 and 40–66. One reason was the desire to have all the prophets of Isaiah together in *one* scroll, and another was the effort to secure a historical anchoring for the centrality of Zion,²⁷² which was thus stamped on the greater book of Isaiah. What could be better than that the Hezekiah-Isaiah narratives of the book of Kings, which were themselves created in contact with the Isaiah tradition, be placed in the center of this prophetic scroll? The disadvantage of this placement—breaking the *second* bridge in forming Isaiah 35 and 40.1–11—was accepted because of the great advantage, through the ‘historical’ verification of the oracles of the first part of the scroll (all Zion’s enemies dashed on the Mount of God), of ensuring the fulfillment of the promises of the second part, which are still outstanding!

The close connections between 35 and 40.1–11 show that they are coordinated texts:

ערבה/מדבר	35.1	40.3	
כבוד יהוה	35.2	40.5	
הנה אל היכם	35.4	40.[1], 9	
מסלה/מסלול	35.8	40.3	
חזק	35.3, 4	40.10	36–39: חזקיהו
אל תירא	35.4	40.9	37.6

271. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 57 n. 37; Steck, ‘Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch’, p. 382 n. 53.

272. Cf. Gosse, *Structuration des grands ensembles*, pp. 22–26, who identifies a priestly circle for this, which cannot be accepted; consider the suppression of circumcision alone!

The same communication situation in 35 and 40.1-11 suggests the significant affinity of the writers in 35 and 40.1-11. A group of people each acts as a speaker who feels an especially closely bond with Yhwh and who therefore calls him אלהינו (35.2; 40.3, 8). From the perspective of the continuum of the reading, this can only be the We-group that surfaced already in the beginning of the book (1.9) and comes into full voice especially in chaps. 32–33. The idea is to encourage the postexilic community to try again with Yhwh: הנה אלהיכם (35.4; 40.9). To the objection that Yhwh had permanently broken with his people with the exile, the We-group counters with the divine salvation oracle, which had bound them to proclamation, but which served to establish a new beginning with Yhwh for the people: Comfort, comfort my people, says your God (יֵאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, 40.1). In spite of this common agenda, Isaiah 35 and 40.1-11 do not stem from *one* hand, an idea that is already excluded by the fact that the first bridge-text (chap. 33) made reference to the beginning and end of the first Jerusalem redaction. If Isa. 40.1-11, however, already lay before the first bridge-text, then certainly the second bridge-text, namely Isaiah 35, only became necessary when Isaiah 34, with its Edom theme taken from Isa. 63.1-6, rendered the first bridge ineffectual and caused the end of 34 to border directly on 40.1-11.

After a first dialogue with Steck about the place of Isaiah 36–39, a second more extensive discussion now has to be joined about the position of Isaiah 35 after the Edomite chap. 34. According to Steck, chap. 35 is the first and only bridge-text between 1–34 and 40–55; 60–62,²⁷³ which attempted to smooth out the inconsistencies produced by placing the two complexes together, in particular, how a return of the Diaspora Jews through a destroyed Edom would be possible:

Isaiah 34 prophesies a definitive, expressly temporally unbounded judgment over this very terrain, and consequently makes impossible the events concerning the return and the terrain of the return prophesied in Isaiah 40ff. which should happen after the judgment in the framework of the salvation events. This tension has to be bridged over and resolved. This happened not because Isaiah 35 removed the statements of Isaiah 34 or restricted them spatially, but rather, because the statements about the land in 34.9ff. were restricted temporally, contrary to their original sense!²⁷⁴

273. Arguing against Steck's view, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 68-69, that Isa. 35 is a bridge only to 40–55 and 60–62, Davies, 'The Destiny of the Nations', pp. 101 n. 34, 117, claims that the combination of נֶקֶם and גְּמוּלָה in 35.4 has its closest parallel in 59.17-18.

274. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 42-43, 52 *passim*.

Isaiah 35 indisputably plays a redactional role; yet this does not consist in making the return of the Jewish Diaspora possible by temporally restricting Edom's destruction. On the one hand, there is absolutely no mention in chap. 34 of a return to Zion, and on the other, the returnees from Babylon and the Diaspora would hardly have taken the road through Edom! Isaiah 35 is not about temporally restricting the statements about the terrain in chap. 34, and thus removing Edom's destruction for the purpose of the Diaspora returnees, but rather, it is about the contrast of a destroyed Edom and a prospering Zion. Essentially two elements contributed to the idea that Isaiah 35 must have to do with the return. The first is the view, generally not questioned, that 'desert', 'transformation of the dry land', and certainly 'way' in the book of Isaiah have to do *ipso facto* with the second Exodus from Babylon; the other is the closing remark of 35.9b-10, which undoubtedly speaks of the return to Zion, and thus makes it tempting to consider the entire chapter from this perspective and 'retrospectively' chap. 34 as well! If one recognizes, however, that the mention of a return in 34-35 comes only at the close of 35.9b-10, moreover as a quote from 51.10-11, then the suspicion is confirmed that chap. 35 was made into a 'return text' only retroactively. The appended verses 11.11-16 and 27.12-13 show that, proceeding from the quotation of 51.10-11 in 35.9b-10, the entire book is structured in terms of the return of the Diaspora to Zion—arguably as a critique of the international perspective, which propagated Zion as the center of pilgrimage for the nations.

In his monograph, *El desierto transformado. Una imagen deuteroisaiana de regeneración* (1992), Farfan Navarro challenges the commonly held view that 'wilderness' and 'way' in the book of Isaiah are to be assigned to the theme of the second Exodus. According to him, only texts from 40-55 and their dependents²⁷⁵ speak in a real sense of a transformation from dry land to a well-watered and wooded park, a transformation in which three elements play a role: (a) Yhwh is the author of the transformation; (b) dry land becomes a watered terrain; (c) trees and bushes grow there. To this schema is attached a fourth motif, that of the 'highway' (35.8-10), which is dependent on the other transformations. Thus with the transformation Yhwh makes the deep waters a way (יָם + דֶּרֶךְ, 51.10) for the liberated; in the transformation Yhwh makes the mountains a way (הָרִים + דֶּרֶךְ), and raises the streets (49.11; cf. 40.3-4); and even makes water pools dry

275. Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, pp. 119-20: Isa. 41.18-19; 44.3-4; 51.3; and dependent on that section: 32.15; 35.1-2, 6b-7; Ps. 107.35; and more broadly: 55.13; Ezek. 36.35; Joel 2.22; Ps. 84.7 (?).

and straightens the crooked places, so that blind persons may walk on unfamiliar paths (42.15-16). All these images are ultimately intended solely to emphasize Yhwh's transforming power of creation. Thus the wooded park is not a passage through the countryside, but rather, a life goal: 'El Edén no es camino, sino término.'²⁷⁶ If a greening landscape has arisen out of a desert, dry land out of the sea, a straight way out of the crooked, this all means the end of punishment and the beginning of final salvation. Thus Farfan Navarro comes to his final unambiguous conclusion: Nowhere in Isaiah 40–55 does 'desert' mean the scenario of the Exodus; rather, it represents the people, punished and bound for death.²⁷⁷ Therefore, these linguistic images of nature transforming are not about the transformation of landscapes, nor even of the wilderness as the *terra intermedia* of the return, but rather, are about the transformation of humanity, a fact which clearly comes to expression in 35.3-6a and 40.1-2 in particular. The transformation of wilderness to garden in the arena of nature is analogous to the healing from all illnesses in the human sphere, and for the human psyche the hopeful new beginning after great disillusionment!²⁷⁸

Once it is recognized that the images of the transformation of nature ultimately speak of transformation from illness to healing, from discomfort to a comforted humanity, the salvation picture in 35 with its counterpart in 40.1-11 comes into its own. Thus the demand of 35.3-4 to strengthen slack hands and shaky knees and to exhort those of a 'despairing heart' (נִמְהָרֵי לֵב) to have courage, means substantially the same thing as the imperative, 'Comfort, comfort my people' or 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem' (דַּבְּרוּ עַל לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם). Steck's view that 40.1-2 was deliberately ignored in Isaiah 35 'because on the basis of statements of the preceding context, with the turn to salvation mention of the guilt of the people of God is no longer expected'²⁷⁹ is virtually to be turned into the opposite. Only the fact that the guilt of the people on Zion is forgiven (33.24) makes the

276. Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, p. 124.

277. Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, p. 129: 'El "desierto" del Segundo Is (incluso el que no va determinado por עֲרֵבָה o אֶרֶץ צִיָּה) no significa jamás el escenario del éxodo, sino que representa al Pueblo castigado, moribundo. Lejos de remitir a la situación del éxodo (como sostienen de ordinario los intérpretes), la excluye en absoluto.'

278. Hubmann, 'Der "Weg" zum Zion', p. 33: 'In the following verses (vv. 3-4), the three types of human weakness and lack of courage correspond to these three areas (נִמְהָרֵי לֵב; בָּרִכִּים כְּשִׁלּוֹת; יָדִים רַפּוֹת).'

279. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 17.

courageous message of trust possible.²⁸⁰ Forgiveness of guilt becomes an anthropological reality only when the guilt is accepted and acknowledged!

If the nature images speak of the transformation of real people, then Kiesow's literary-critical division is invalid; he views 35.3-6a as an expansion of the basic text of 35.1-2a; 6b-10.²⁸¹ The opposite is the case: The creative power of God, which lets the desert become a garden and a thick stand of trees (35.1-2), is precisely that which also brings all to bloom, within and around humanity!²⁸²

Besides Kiesow's attempt to wield the literary-critical knife with 35.3-6a, Hubmann should also be mentioned. He sees 35.9b-10 as an addition, because that is the only place with a statement about a return to Zion, and at the same time the metaphorical usage of 'wilderness' is no longer present: 'Our thesis is, therefore, that Isaiah 35 has been transformed into a proclamation about the return only through later interpretation; the original text was nothing other than the promise of an eschatological period of salvation, which announced a comprehensive restoration of humanity and nature as a consequence of God's coming.'²⁸³ It should not be surprising that we share this view, not only from the perspective of the quotation from 51.11, but also considering the direction of our earlier interpretation.

The literary-critical separation of 35.9b-10 would have found more disciples, however, if Hubmann himself had not weakened his thesis by eliminating the 'way' motif from vv. 8-9a in order to reserve it for the expansion alone. This would lead to the untenable hypothesis that the hapax מסלול in 35.8a, a parallel form of מסלה, does not really mean 'way', but rather 'area';²⁸⁴ completely beyond the bounds of possibility, he opined that the parallel expression הדרך הקדש then speaks not of a 'holy way', but rather about a 'holy area'. The solution of the problem lies in recognizing that the 'way' motif appears in both 8-9a and 9b-10, but with a *different* usage! In 8-9a a road is

280. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 226: '40.2 also speaks of forgiveness as something already effective, though not yet appreciated.'

281. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 143: 'The call to mutual encouragement, the reference to the coming of God as avenger and, temporally connected to that, the announcement of the healing of all possible afflictions, not only have nothing to do with the miraculous transformation of the wilderness, but also destroy the connection between v. 1f* and v. 6b.7.'

282. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 154, recognizes this to some extent: 'That the "wilderness" rejoices and blooms is a sign of a new period of salvation, a changed world.'

283. Hubmann, 'Der "Weg" zum Zion', p. 30.

284. Hubmann, 'Der "Weg" zum Zion', p. 36.

indeed meant, though not a road of return or pilgrim road to Zion (9b-10), but rather one which gives access to the wilderness that was changed into a land of abundant water and vegetation.²⁸⁵ The road leading through such impenetrable vegetation is an essential part of the salvation portrayal; otherwise that portrayal would face the criticism²⁸⁶ that uninhabitable wilderness had simply been traded for impassable bush.²⁸⁷ This highway will not lead anywhere, but will simply be there (three-fold שם) where the growing, luxuriant open country is, *precisely there, where* the other transformations also take place.²⁸⁸ It is not only the road that belongs to the portrayal of salvation, but also the notion that neither the unclean (טמא) nor fools (אילים) travel on that road. Also excluded is danger from wild animals, who naturally have their best livelihood in the luxuriant selva.

With the closing verses of 9b-10, the return motif has been added to this salvation portrayal in 35.1-9a. Two circumstances contributed to this. First, the connection to 35.8-9a was lent itself very well to such an addition, since it speaks of a road, indeed, of a 'holy highway'. If there is therefore a highway—and what a highway (!)—it was necessary to allow only the redeemed run to Zion on it! Second, this motif was already at hand in 51.10(end)-11, and so 'highway' and 'redeemed' were easily combined in 35.9b-10. This may also have happened, therefore, in order to incorporate the difficult statement about the highway of the freed, through the deepest depths of the sea (מעמקים דרך לעבר גאולים, 51.10b), into an easier, more understandable context;²⁸⁹ the passage through water thus became a walk through the transformed wilderness (יהלכו²⁹⁰) toward Zion. This

285. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 148, confirms this indirectly when he states with regard to the vegetation images: 'The image is so extravagantly imagined without regard for continuity that it is factually in tension with the creating of the street in the last two strophes, as the nearly impenetrable woods of Carmel and Sharon, in antiquity just one of the obstacles on the great North-South route through Palestine.'

286. The ויהיה in v. 8a after the identical beginning of v. 7a points to an addendum.

287. Cf. Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, pp. 123-24.

288. Hubmann, 'Der "Weg" zum Zion', p. 31.

289. This is a conjecture of Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, p. 123.

290. Emerton, 'A Note on Isaiah XXXV, 9-10', pp. 488-89, suggests: 'There the redeemed will walk' (שם יהלכו גאולים), in which the verb is in the piel; the *yod* was misread as *waw*, so that the שם stood alone and was thus supplemented by לא תמצא. It might be added that לא תמצא could have been inspired by ימצא בה (51.3).

transfer from the mythological to the historical context, as well as the fact that Isaiah 51, alongside its similar vocabulary to 35.10, shows evidence of a relationship to 40.1-11, support the suggestion that Isaiah 51 is the donor text both for 40.1-11 and for chap. 35. Thus the call to comfort in 40.1 has its counterpart in the emphatic expression 'I, even I, am he who comforts you' (אֲנִכִּי אֲנִכִּי הוּא מְנַחֵמְכֶם, 51.12a), which is followed by the question addressed to a feminine 'you' (מִי אַתְּ וְתִירָאִי) —who is she that fears humans who wither like grass (51.12b), an image which accords exactly with 40.6-8! And in 51.16 the words spoken to Zion, 'you are my people' (לְצִיּוֹן עַמִּי אֶהְיֶה), correspond to 40.1, where the message of comfort likewise is directed to 'my people'.²⁹¹

When we speak of a 'Return' addendum to the portrayal of Zion's salvation, that is indeed correct in view of 11.11-16; 27.12-13; and 35.9b-10; but for the borrowing of 51.11 in 35.10 there is still a further point to be considered. In the context of Isaiah 51, v. 11 is not only about the return of the Jewish Diaspora, but also about the procession of pilgrims to Zion, in which the righteous from the nations are able to join. Where 35.10 speaks of the coming in and going out of the redeemed (יָשׁוּבִין וְבָאִין צִיּוֹן), that still points toward the pilgrim context. In the additions of 11.11-16 and 27.12-13, however, there is no longer the language of a pilgrim movement to and from Zion, but rather of a gathering in of every Jew from the dispersion. Now Zion is no longer a pilgrimage center of the righteous from Israel and the nations, but a place of refuge for Jews from the world of the enemy nations! This new defining likely has its historical background in the decay of the Persian kingdom, in the sudden uncertainty as a result of the Diadochen wars and in the hardening religious climate of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms.²⁹²

4.7. Review and Prospect

The five Woes in 28.1-4; 29.1-8; 29.15-16; 30.1-5; and 31.1-3 give structure to chaps. 28-31. They are about the preparation of a Zion community which is appropriate to the dawning kingship of Yhwh. In 32.1a, Yhwh is announced as מֶלֶךְ, and the pouring out of the spirit

291. Volz, *Jesaia II*, p. 117, and Mathews, *Defending Zion*, p. 122, among others, make a case for Isa. 51 as a donor text for 35; against the idea are Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 94, and Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 28-29 (chap. 35 is earlier); in 29 n. 36, Steck expresses uncertainty, which Vanoni, "Die Tora im Herzen", p. 360 n. 12, remarks on critically.

292. Cf. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 446.

over the We-Group is awaited (32.15–20), by which the last sign is set for the oncoming period of salvation. Surprisingly, a more recent Woe over an unidentified destroyer stands in the way of these announcements, and is probably a veiled reference to the Persian administration. The We-group reacts with a confession and lament (33.2–6, 7–9), which finds an immediate hearing by Yhwh (33.10). His presence will meet the sinner, inside and outside of the people of God equally (33.13). The chapter ends with the royal proclamation of Yhwh (33.22) and by the conclusion that the community on Zion has its guilt forgiven (33.24). With that, a good close would have been reached if a further complication had not appeared: the enemy Edom. After its final destruction, which in view of the gathered nations serves as warning and admonition for all future potential enemies of Zion, nothing more stands in the way of the blossoming of the city of God and the salvation of its inhabitants.

From a diachronic perspective, these chapters offer a turbulent history which is especially varied, partly because new situations found their way into the written prophecy and partly because it was the time of uniting the two major parts of the *Isaiah* scroll. The *Isaianic* words against forming anti-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian pacts were recycled by the Zion community in their time, the fifth century, in order to warn against a pro-Egyptian and now an anti-Persian politic. The theologically climactic statements of 28.12, 16–17a, and 30.15 as well as the Zionization of the national oracles is credited to their account.

To the greater book of *Isaiah* 1–32* was attached *Isaiah* 33, a text which on one side was tied to the previous chapter (esp. the royal rule of Yhwh, removal of guilt and hardening), and on the other side struck a bridge to the second major part of the scroll. The connections to *Isa.* 40.1–11 ('comfort') and to 52.7–8 ('seeing Yhwh') suggests that *Isaiah* 33 was composed as a bridge between the major portions 1–32* and 40–52*.

Toward the end of the fifth century, the collapse of the south-eastern neighbor Edom was integrated into the scroll as final proof that all enemies of Zion, following the example of Assyria and Babylon, will suffer the fate they deserve; the events in Edom, which suffice to teach the nations (*Isa.* 34), were not inserted into the oracles of the nations (13–23), possibly because that section already existed as a self-contained composition.

Since the bridge formed by chap. 33 between 1–32* / 40–52* was destroyed by the installment of chap. 34, chap. 35 was added as a second bridge-text with its positive portrayal of salvation in favor of

Zion, against the dark background of the collapse of Edom. While Isaiah 33 as the first bridge-text is oriented more toward 1–32*, chap. 35 is clearly more strongly oriented to 40–66.

Neither the proto-apocalyptic additions in 28–33 nor even the insertion of the Diaspora return theme (11.11–16; 27.12–13; 35.9b–10) are able to conceive anything about an inclusion of the nations. The nations do not march as friends to the city of God, but like Assyria they will burn in the furnace (30.27–33; 31.8–9). The collection is not about the Yhwh disciples from Israel *and* the nations, but only the scattered of Israel, who before the imminent judgment of the world are brought to Zion in security.

The focus on Zion, which is clearly recognizable in all chapters, presses ever more urgently for an answer to the question, how in view of the painful experience of exile this concept was able to gain acceptance. Had the events of 587 then not compromised the idea of Zion as the invincible mount of God? The insertion of the narratives of the threat and salvation of Zion in the year 701, in which the Assyrians paid dearly for their attack on Yhwh's city, and in which the prophet Isaiah played an important role, closed the 'wound' that Nebuchadnezzar had inflicted on the city of God.

Chapter 5

ISAIAH 36–39: THREAT AND SALVATION FOR ZION

5.1. *The Double Tradition in 2 Kings 18–20 and Isaiah 36–39*

These four chapters, which have to do with the Assyrian threat against Jerusalem and its miraculous delivery by Yhwh in the year 701 (chaps. 36–37), the deadly illness and salvation of King Hezekiah (chap. 38), and a visit of the Babylonian messengers under Merodach-Baladan with Isaiah's added judgment oracle (chap. 39), were rather neglected until a few years ago, if treated at all. The reason for that lay in the fact that these chapters exist in nearly identical form in 2 Kgs 18.13–20.19. That is why we can speak of the Kings and Isaiah texts as one received tradition;¹ in the research the three questions of the priority, unity, and historicity of these two versions are especially disputed.

Scholars have long accepted as self-evident the view that the books of Kings was the original setting of the Hezekiah-Isaiah Narratives (HIN).² The statement of Gesenius in his Isaiah commentary of 1821 had an epoch-making impact in that regard:

After all this, it can now be submitted confidently that the text of 2 Kings is the original, and our passage is a later redaction of it, whether that segment already existed at that time in the book of Kings in its present order (which is not at all improbable), or whether the redactor took it from the source itself.³

1. The terminology is Wildberger's, *Jesaja. 3. Teilband*, pp. 1371–75.

2. Cf. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, p. 405: 'The entire complex 18.17–20.19 in which the prophet Isaiah plays a role, was first inserted into the book of Kings and from there was taken over by the (first) book of Isaiah as a supplement (Isaiah 36–39).'

3. Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar*, p. 934.

In comparing the Kings and Isaiah versions,⁴ Gesenius arrived at seven major reasons for this conclusion:

- (1) The Isaiah text, in contrast to the Kings text, is often abridged, both in content as well as linguistically. Secondary incidents are omitted (36.2-3; 38.4, 5, 6, 8), and the Isaiah version is generally smoother stylistically.
- (2) On the other hand, the Isaiah text has an important addition, the Hezekiah Psalm (38.9-20). If the Isaiah text were the original, why would the redactor of Kings not have included it?
- (3) The Isaiah text smoothes out small difficulties in the Kings version: 'Anything at all unusual in the language is removed (37.2); also, small additions are made, most likely for the purpose of facilitating (36.20). And the smoother and more elegant is an almost certain criterion of a later version.'⁵
- (4) The Isaiah text is distinguished by certain uniformities in forms and word constructions (for example, 36.7 **הָאִמֶּר** for **הָאִמְרִין**), which points to the next observation—
- (5) There is 'some evidence of use of linguistic phenomena that are typically later (36.8, 13; 37.10, 30)';⁶ in contrast, older forms of expression are rejected (36.15; 37.24).
- (6) The expression **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** (37.16, 32; 39.5) is typical for the book of Isaiah, in contrast to the simple tetragram in the Kings version, a fact that clearly shows the secondary character of the Isaiah text.
- (7) This secondary character is established unambiguously when one considers the placement of Isa. 38.21-22 after the Hezekiah Psalm: 'It is so out of place and makes so little sense there that its transposition cannot possibly be intentional, but must be random.'⁷

Besides these arguments, the systematic integration of the chapters in the books of Kings speaks for their being original there, as well as the prophetic legends that are found there. Furthermore, the compiling of the book of Isaiah is to be placed later than the exilic redaction of the book of Kings. Also pointing in this direction is the fact that Jeremiah 52, taken from 2 Kgs 24.18–25.30, was attached to the book

4. See the synopsis of both versions in Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, pp. 1484-95.

5. Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar*, p. 933.

6. Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar*, p. 934.

7. Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar*, p. 934.

of Jeremiah in a way similar to that in the book of *Isaiah*.⁸ Gesenius's findings in essence determined the interpretation of these chapters for the next 150 years. Even Kaiser accepts this 'supplement hypothesis' when he states that the analogous situation in Jeremiah 52 led to the understandable desire 'also to incorporate these stories in the book of *Isaiah*, so that now the whole tradition—that connected with the name of the prophet and the canonical tradition—is united in one book'.⁹

Stade in his *Miscellen* (1886)¹⁰ would set a further milestone in the history of understanding the HIN. He built upon Gesenius's argument in favor of the priority of the Kings text, but raised questions about its unity. For one thing, he argues, 2 Kgs 18.14–16, which reports on Hezekiah's tribute payment to Sennacherib, was added from an annalistic source which was based on historical fact, as the similar text from the Sennacherib Prism demonstrates. For another thing, the rest of the text of the HIN is not at all unified, as it has been recognized that

between 18.17 and 19.37 it is prophesied three times of Sennacherib that he would return by the same way that he came without having accomplished anything, except that the second and third time only the slightest consideration is given, since one such prophecy has already taken place, as would be expected of any reasonably skilled writer.¹¹

According to Stade, two independent traditions of threat and deliverance have been worked into the present text: (a) 2 Kgs 18.17–19.9 (up to וישב; with the addition of the second narrative, an original וישב לארצו was mutilated) and (b) 2 Kgs 19.9b–37. The problem with Stade's thesis, which reckons with only one complete closing in 2 Kgs 19.35–37 for two narratives, has been resolved by further studies that posit 19.36–37 as the close of the first and 19.35 as the close of the second narrative.¹²

The thesis that the three traditions are present in the HIN only recently received strong support from Gonçalves. The exposition of B2 in 37.10–13 already shows the dependence of B1, with 37.10b

8. Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar*, p. 935; cf. Bogaert, 'L'organisation des grands recueils', pp. 150–52.

9. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 291; also Fohrer, 'Entstehung', p. 134.

10. Stade, 'Miscellen', pp. 156–89 (172–86).

11. Stade, 'Miscellen', pp. 173–74; cf. the three prophecies in 19.7, 28b, 33.

12. See Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, p. 76: 'To summarize: The presence of two continuous parallel sources has been confirmed. The first account (B1) has been broken off at 19.9a and resumed in vv. 36–37. The second account (B2) extends from 19.9b–35, and concludes with the Assyrian destruction.'

(לא תנתן ירושלם ביד מלך אשור) being taken over nearly literally from 36.15 (לא תנתן העיר הזאת ביד מלך אשור).¹³ Thus the following distribution emerges:

- (A) 2 Kgs 18.13-16
- (B1) 2 Kgs 18.17-19.9a,bα (*wayyāšôb*), 36-37*
parallel Isa. 36.2-37.9a, 37-38*
- (B2) 2 Kgs 19.9bα (*wayyislah*)-35*
parallel Isa. 37.9b (*wayyislah*)-36*

An evaluation of the 'historicity' of the traditions goes hand in hand with this literary-critical division.¹⁴ Thus the A narrative is evaluated as a historical report,¹⁵ B1 as a *Tendenzerzählung*—a story with a purpose—with a historical core,¹⁶ and B2 is assigned entirely to the realm of legend.¹⁷

The verdict in favor of the priority of the Kings version and the subsequent literary-critical separation of sources with its resulting historical evaluation have for a long time made it impossible to study both versions in their own literary contexts, i.e., in the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) and the book of Isaiah. The universally recognized dependence of Isaiah 36-39 upon 2 Kings 18-20 has allowed this chapter in Isaiah research to become a 'quantité négligeable'. Thus Barth entirely dismisses these chapters in his study of the genesis of Isaiah 1-35.¹⁸ The assessment of 36-39 as an appendix, however, came not only from the representatives of diachronic studies, but 'synchronizers' also had an easy job of it with these four chapters; Lack devotes no more than eight lines to them, which begin as follows: 'Nous laissons en dehors de notre étude les chapitres 36-39.'¹⁹

13. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 479: 'Autrement dit, B2 dépend, dans sa totalité, de B1.'

14. As Vogt very clearly lays out ('Der Aufstand Hiskijas', pp. 25, 39, 47).

15. See Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 367: 'récit d'invasion'.

16. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, p. 93: 'ancient tradition with a genuinely historical setting'.

17. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, p. 103: 'The analysis of the B2 account has revealed the characteristics of this legendary source...'

18. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, p. 4 n. 5; also Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, does not include Isaiah 36-39 in his study. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 34, adheres to the 'appendix thesis'; U. Becker, *Jesaja*, pp. 220-22, is of the view that Isa. 36-37 may have found its way into the book relatively early as a basis of the Assyrian redaction (10.5-11* + 14.24-25a and 29.1-4a + 31.1, 3, 8a); in contrast, Isa. 38-39 would have been added only in a postexilic, that is to say, proto-Chronistic, period.

19. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 76; at least he emphasizes the importance of the 'confidence motif' in Isa. 36-37.

The situation has changed only in the last two decades, with Anglophone Isaiah exegesis in particular dedicating greater attention to these chapters, and indeed to the literary context of the book of Isaiah. Ackroyd is in large part responsible, having made numerous literary contributions. First, he directs attention behind the superficial historical relationships of the HIN to ask about its kerygmatic statements. It is not the historical facts in themselves, but a selective perception and subjective interpretation of history, thus allowing alternative histories.²⁰

This tendentious impulse of biblical narrative in the case of the HIN can be seen already in the historically improbable order of the events; thus Merodach-Baladan was ruler over Babylon from 721–710 and then again in 703, so that his delegation in Isaiah 39 is historically plausible only before the year 701, if at all.²¹ An ordering of the material that relates to history would look like this: illness and recovery of Hezekiah (38), visit of the Babylonian delegation (39), Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem (36–37). The present ordering does not appear, however, to have originated from any historical ignorance or disinterest on the part of the compilers, but 'it would appear more likely that the arrangement, whether or not chronological information was available, has some deliberate purpose'.²² Following Ackroyd's interpretation, the story of the Babylonian delegation has been placed at the end of the HIN in order to lead into chaps. 40–55.²³ On the basis of the prophecy from the lips of Isaiah concerning the exile of Jerusalem in 39.6–7, Ackroyd concludes that these chapters in their entirety are no appendix to the complex 1–35, but a compositional bridge which brings together the traditions of Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah. So in his programmatic essay, 'Isaiah 36–39: Structure and Function' he arrives at this conclusion: 'The placing of 36–39 where it stands in the book of Isaiah [is] used to provide a contextual basis for the prophecies of chaps. 40ff.'²⁴ This has since been confirmed many times,²⁵ yet the interpretation of 36–39 as a bridge in the

20. Ackroyd, 'Historians', p. 21.

21. Vogt, 'Der Aufstand Hiskijas', p. 29, dates the Babylonian delegation to the year 714/13.

22. Ackroyd, 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile', p. 332.

23. Ackroyd, 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile', p. 338.

24. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah 36–39', p. 20.

25. Melugin, *Formation*, pp. 177–78; van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, pp. 17–18; Clements, 'Unity', pp. 120–21: 'They have been inserted before chapter 40 at a relatively late stage in the compilation of the book and thereby assist the reader in making the transition from the "Assyrian" part of the book (1–35) to the "Babylonian" part (40–66).'

middle of the book of Isaiah has made only tentative appearances in the repertoire of exegetical textbooks.²⁶ So it is not surprising that in the Leuven collection on the book of Isaiah published in 1989 (Vermeulen, ed., BETHL 81) no article on chaps. 36–39 is to be found!²⁷

On the other hand, profiting from Ackroyd's groundwork, Smelik places these chapters intact in the center of his exegetical interest and achieves astonishing results; accordingly, chaps. 36–37 are not at all a collection of several narrative traditions, but rather, *one* carefully constructed narrative with a parallel double structure that should not be subjected to the tribunal of historical research.²⁸ Smelik contradicts both Gesenius's verdict in favor of the priority of the Kings version, as well as Stade's source analysis; he argues for the priority of the Isaiah text, which was then absorbed by the redactor of the book of Kings, and attempts to prove the literary unity of Isaiah 36–37. His arguments in favor of the originality of the Isaiah text are as follows:

- (1) Against Gesenius's notion, the Kings text is not to be preferred to the Isaiah text; sometimes one or the other version has the better reading.²⁹ In fact, the very detailed text-critical work of Catastini³⁰ (1989) on 2 Kings 18–20 // Isaiah 36–39 has led to a 'rehabilitation' of the Isaiah version.³¹

26. Rendtorff, *Das Alte Testament*, pp. 201–204, devotes hardly any attention to these chapters and treats the HIN only within the book of Kings (pp. 190–91); Kaiser, *Grundriß der Einleitung*, II, p. 31, thinks, mysteriously, that the 'Isaiah narratives of chapters 36–39 [appear] at first sight to be a mere supplement of the collection', without being able to come to a more positive evaluation; for Jüngling, 'Das Buch Jesaja', p. 310, Hezekiah's answer in 39.8 is 'a fitting transition to the heartfelt words directed to the exiles in Babylon' (40.1–2).

27. But now see Vermeulen, 'Hypothèses', pp. 95–118, who is decidedly committed to the priority of the Isaiah text.

28. Smelik, 'Zegt toch tot Hiskia', p. 64: 'geen weergaven van een eventueel authentieke redevoering, maar te verstaan uit de ideeën die in de profetisch geïnspireerde bijbelboeken, met name Jer. (darnaast ook Jes. en Deut), verkondigd worden.'

29. Smelik, 'Distortion of Old Testament Prophecy', p. 71 (later published in nearly the same form as 'King Hezekiah Advocates True Prophecy', pp. 93–128).

30. Catastini, *Isaia ed Ezechia*, p. 265: 'dal punto di vista della tradizione "letteraria", cioè interna ai due libri biblici, il testo di Isaia si dimostra in genere più conservativo che non quello di II Re.'

31. Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, p. 59: 'one [can] indeed say with reasonable certainty, that the original place of the textual complex is the book of Kings; in spite of that, the question of which text has priority cannot be decided by a text- and literary-critical comparison.'

- (2) The book of Kings cannot have been the original literary situation of the HIN, for in the Dtr History this is the only place one of the writing prophets is mentioned. There are no prophetic narratives of Hosea, Amos, Micah or Jeremiah to be found elsewhere in the book of Kings; not once in 2 Kgs 25.22–26 is Jeremiah named, even though a résumé of Jeremiah 40–43 is clearly presented there. The question is obvious: ‘Why would the authors of Kings have made an exception for Isaiah?’³² On the contrary, a prophetic narrative with and about Isaiah in his eponymous book would be more than understandable.
- (3) The HIN have a parallel in the Ahaz-Isaiah narrative of Isaiah 7,³³ but not in the book of Kings.³⁴
- (4) The poetic pieces in the HIN have a natural place within the book of Isaiah; within of the book of Kings, however, they are difficult to explain.
- (5) The story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery is more logically composed in the Isaiah version than in the Kings text; in 2 Kgs 20.8 Hezekiah asks for a sign that would confirm his healing, even though in 20.7 he has already been healed.³⁵ Moreover, it is only within the book of Isaiah that the ‘sign motif’ is set up by the parallel sign to Ahaz in Isaiah 7. And the place name in Isa. 36.2b would have significance only for those who knew about the meeting of Isaiah and Ahaz at the same place (7.3), a detail that is handed down only in the book of Isaiah.³⁶
- (6) Isaiah 36–39 is an editorial bridge between Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah, and therefore indispensable for the book of Isaiah. Already Isaiah 35 sounds Deutero-Isaianic themes which are then continued in these chapters. Since Isaiah proclaims the Babylonian exile already in 39.6–7, it is not surprising ‘that he is also supposed to have announced the

32. Smelik, ‘Distortion of Old Testament Prophecy’, p. 72.

33. Conrad has worked out these parallels in *Reading Isaiah*, pp. 38–40.

34. Smelik, ‘King Hezekiah Advocates True Prophecy’, p. 100: ‘Since Isaiah vii is only found in the Book of Isaiah, it is evident that its literary counterpart, Isaiah xxxvi–xxxix must also have been intended for this book and not for Kings’.

35. Smelik, ‘Distortion of Old Testament Prophecy’, pp. 72 and 88 n. 20. This argument is probably the weakest, since the Isaiah version about Hezekiah’s illness also has its difficulties; so Isa. 38.21–22 poses major problems. Smelik gets around these easily by excluding them as a later insertion from 2 Kgs 20.7–8.

36. For the relationships of 7 and 36–37, see Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, pp. 38–39.

return of the exiles in the days of the Persian king Cyrus'.³⁷ On this understanding, the echoes of Deutero-Isaianic expressions and themes in Isaiah 36–39 are explained;³⁸ however, if the priority lies with the Kings version, then this affinity with Deutero-Isaiah becomes a serious problem.

- (7) The HIN are closely related to Isaiah 1–35*; thus the remnant concept had been taken up anew (37.4, 31–32), as well as the role of Assyria in the story of Yhwh with Israel (esp. 37.23–25 // 10.8–11; 14.13–14) and the rejection of Egypt as a useless covenant partner (36.6; 37.25 // 30.1–8; 31.1–3). In addition, Groves names the theme of 'trust' (esp. 36.4–20 // 30.15) and the reference to Shebna and Eliakim (36.3), which points back to Isa. 22.15–25.³⁹
- (8) The arrangement of the narrative, closing with an announcement of the exile by means of the Babylonian delegation, is meaningful only as a bridge-text to Isaiah 40–50, but not within the book of Kings.⁴⁰

Smelik's position has been referred to so extensively precisely because it places the consensus regarding the Kings and Isaiah versions radically in question. This can only be useful to Isaiah research, even if not all Smelik's positions can be maintained. In his frontal attack on current positions (priority of the Kings version, source separation into at least A, B1, and B2, and the graded historicity which goes along with that) Smelik has succumbed to a methodological fallacy: the narrative logic of an account is *per se* still no proof of its unity.⁴¹

After Smelik directed the exegetical study of Isaiah 36–39 along new lines, Seitz advanced the discussion further with his monograph,

37. Smelik, 'Distortion of Old Testament Prophecy', p. 72.

38. For cross-relations between Isa. 36–39 and Isa. 40–55, see Groves, *Actualization and Interpretation*, pp. 198–99.

39. Groves, *Actualization and Interpretation*, p. 197.

40. Smelik, 'Distortion of Old Testament Prophecy', p. 74: 'We have to conclude that the present arrangement of the Hezekiah-narratives is only understandable from the perspective of the book of Isaiah, not from that of Kings'; likewise Groves, *Actualization and Interpretation*, p. 196.

41. Sheppard, 'The Book of Isaiah: Competing Structures', p. 566: 'So, I am leery of recent "literary" approaches that find so much *semantic* coherency, at so subtle a level, that we are driven to exhume an "author", despite the evidence of equally sophisticated redactional devices and form-critical signs of earlier units of tradition. What Smelik does with Isaiah 36–37 in this regard is similar to what Wiklander tries to do for all of Isaiah 2–4.'

Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah. A Reassessment of Isaiah 36–39 (1991). According to him, these chapters are not simply a bridge between 1–35* and 40–55, let alone a supplement to the Proto-Isaianic collection, but are the core piece of the entire book of Isaiah. Following Smelik, Seitz also rejects the separation of sources into B1 and B2, yet, against his pioneering predecessor, he argues for a pre-exilic writing of Isaiah 36–38.⁴² The miraculous freeing of Jerusalem under Hezekiah would have confirmed both Isaiah's Zion theology as well as his evaluation of Assyria as an instrument in the hand of the God of Israel who acts in history, so that in the context of the Proto-Isaianic collection a prophetic narrative theology developed, whose outcome would now be presented in the HIN. Seitz points to the end of Hezekiah's reign as the period for a Proto-Isaianic collection that includes Isaiah 36–38 (Isa. 39 stems from the deuteronomistic environment, in Seitz's view).⁴³ Zion's fall in the year 587, i.e., the discrepancy between the destinies of Jerusalem in the years 701 and 587, then became the precipitating reason for the recontextualizing of the book of Isaiah.⁴⁴

A first conclusion to be drawn from the various positions goes as follows: On the one hand, the linguistic and thematic proximity of the HIN to the Isaianic oracle tradition is too strong for the thesis to be maintained that Isaiah 36–39 originated completely independently of the Isaiah tradition. On the other hand, however, there are important indications that the HIN originated in the context of the DtrH. After a balanced review of Seitz's monograph, Carr counters by again emphasizing the priority of the Kings text.⁴⁵ He argues that the prose of the HIN in the book of Kings is understandable, whereas in the book of Isaiah, it is unusual; and the contrast of king versus prophet, in spite of Isaiah 7–8, is more at home in the writing of the DtrH. Furthermore, the center of 36–39 is not Isaiah, but the juxtaposition of the great Assyrian king with his gods and Hezekiah with Yhwh, the true God.⁴⁶ Carr also calls attention to the fact that the HIN are linked so closely with the DtrH writing in at least four places that

42. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 96.

43. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 61: 'In sum, a strong possibility exists that the initial editorial work on Isaiah traditions came not during the period of Josiah (who is never mentioned in the book), but during the reign of Hezekiah, at the end of Isaiah's own lifetime (contrary to Barth)'.

44. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 147.

45. Carr, 'What Can We Say', pp. 583–97.

46. Carr, 'What Can We Say', p. 593.

they must presuppose it as a basis (2 Kgs 18.13, 22; 20.6, 16-18). So the allusion in the mouth of the Rabshakeh to the cultic reform of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18.22; Isa. 36.7) is understandable only in view of 2 Kgs 18.4, and the biblical 'arithmetic' of the 15-year lengthening of Hezekiah's life in the fourteenth year of his rule can only be understood by someone who knows from 2 Kgs 18.2 that he reigned 29 years. In addition to other evidence for the use of deuteronomistic language patterns (e.g. *בַּעַת הַחַיִּים/בִּימֵי הָהֵם*), there are also other examples of praying kings in the DtrH, David (2 Sam. 7.18-29) and Solomon (1 Kgs 8.14-53).⁴⁷ So Carr comes to the conclusion that the evidence for deuteronomistic authorship of the HIN is insufficient, but that a deuteronomistic editing of these narratives is probable, 'an editing most likely to have taken place in adapting the material to its context in Kings'.⁴⁸

According to Hardmeier, the fact that the Kings version has a 'more peopled atmosphere' argues for its priority. Thus a trio of Assyrian subordinate actors appears there while the Isaiah text speaks only of Rabshakeh. In 2 Kgs 18.18 the king is expressly named as addressee of the first oracle, with the people as co-addressees of the second (2 Kgs 18.36), and Eliakim is designated as 'son of Hilkiah' in 2 Kgs 18.26.⁴⁹

In Gonçalves's view two indications in particular support the idea that the HIN have been taken from the book of Kings and adopted into the book of Isaiah. The first is the opening verse (Isa. 36.1), which has been taken from 2 Kgs 18.13 and introduces the A report (2 Kgs 18.13-16),⁵⁰ and the second is the chronological statements, which are understandable only in the framework of the DtrH.⁵¹ In spite of his vote in favor of the priority of the Kings text, Gonçalves emphasizes that the HIN continue three important themes of the Isaianic oracle-tradition, and indeed, bring them to a close: (a) Yhwh's commitment

47. Carr, 'What Can We Say', p. 594.

48. Carr, 'What Can We Say', p. 595, and further, on the same page, 'Even if the tradition-historical priority of 2 Kgs 18.13; 18.17-20.19 were accepted, it would still be possible for Seitz to argue that the Hezekiah section of a pre-exilic edition of Kings (whether Hezekian or Josianic) had been adapted into a conclusion to an early Isaiah collection'.

49. Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*, pp. 125-26.

50. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 345 and 356-61.

51. Deutsch, 'Die Hiskiaerzählungen', p. 7, points to the unusual place of *שָׁנָה* after the number in 36.1a (cf. Deut. 1.3; 1 Kgs 6.1; 2 Kgs 22.3; 23.23; 25.27; Jer. 1.2) and attributes it to those 'to whom we owe the final redaction of the Deuteronomistic History'.

to Jerusalem; (b) the absolute requirement of trust, which king Hezekiah fulfilled exemplarily; (c) the end of Assyrian arrogance.⁵²

Williamson offers a very balanced discussion about the relationship of the Kings and Isaiah texts, stressing, in agreement with Smelik and Seitz, that the HIN originated in view of the Isaiah tradition. Against Smelik and Seitz and with the majority vote, he underlines that they were not, however, written for the book of Isaiah, but rather as a source first inserted into the book of Kings and from there, after a few pragmatic adaptations, moved into the book of Isaiah.⁵³ He thereby weakens the argument for the priority of the Isaiah text, the arrangement of the material with its transfer through Isaiah 39 to the Babylonian period—since in Kings the story of Merodach-Baladan's delegation also has its pragmatic function, namely as premonitory to 2 Kgs 24.12-16!⁵⁴ In addition, the critical question has to be allowed as to whether the HIN really were composed as a transition, because the prospective connections in particular would be weak. There is no doubt that 36–39 *now* serves as a bridge, but if these chapters in the book of Isaiah now function as a transition to the end of the Babylonian period, they could have entered the book only in the post-Deutero-Isaianic period.⁵⁵ Also arguing against the possibility that the HIN are placed in the book in association with Deutero-Isaianic material is the fact that the theme of the house of God (בֵּית) as a place of the communal praise of God, which the Isaiah text emphasizes so strongly in contrast to the Kings text (38.19-20), is not found in 40–55, but resurfaces in 56.5, 7 and 66.20. If this bracket around 56–66 belongs to the last redaction layer, then 36–39 must have been placed in the middle of the book precisely in the course of this final redaction.⁵⁶ If the eunuchs of 56.3 are related to those of 39.7, that would be a further indication that the HIN were integrated into the Isaiah scroll in the course of the Trito-Isaianic addition.⁵⁷ Verse 8, which is incomprehensible in relation to 39, would support such a late insertion of the HIN, since the שְׁלִיחַ theme constitutes the final attempt

52. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 341.

53. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 189-211; thus also Konkel, 'Sources', p. 477.

54. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 208; against Groves, *Actualization and Interpretation*, p. 196.

55. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 209.

56. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 210: 'Is there a possible hint here that the inclusion of Isaiah 36–39 should be ascribed to this same process?'

57. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 210, with a view to Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', p. 79 n. 1.

to structure this second major section (39.8; 48.22; 57.21; and see 66.24).⁵⁸

Like Williamson, Konkel is also of the viewpoint that the narrative of Hezekiah's illness and healing, which exhibits the greatest differences between the Kings and Isaiah versions, has the best chance of revealing the circles responsible for the integration of the adapted HIN into the book of Isaiah.⁵⁹ The story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery in the Isaiah version serves as a typology for the resurrection of Jerusalem from the dead and the Kings text has been deliberately abbreviated or expanded for this purpose.⁶⁰ The Isaiah tradents, who adapted the HIN for their book and placed them in its center, made the salvation of the city in 701 the center of their Zion theology.

To sum up in general terms: Greater attention must be given to Isaiah 36–39, from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. The positioning of these chapters in the center of the book is of great significance not only for synchronic interpretation; it also plays a decisive role for the diachronic question concerning the historic development of the book. If one clings to the view that chaps. 36–39 were merely inherited from the book of Kings as a historicizing appendix to the oracle tradition of the book of Isaiah, one will fail to uncover either the function of the composition as a whole or the genesis of the book.

And to sum up in specific terms: (a) the HIN chapters first appeared as 'special material' in the book of Kings and from there were taken over into the book of Isaiah; (b) the priority of the Kings version is to be maintained, but with the provision that the HIN *ab ovo* arose in close contact with the Isaiah oracle tradition; (c) the striking and deliberate differences in the Isaiah version in relation to its model are to be appreciated as clues that allow inferences about the tradents responsible for the transfer and incorporation of the HIN into the center of the book of Isaiah.

5.2. *The Historical Relationships*

If the anti-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian movements that reached the western part of the Assyrian Kingdom after Sargon II's death in battle in 705 lie behind chaps. 28–31, chaps. 36–39 are devoted entirely to

58. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 210–11.

59. Konkel, 'Sources', p. 479; Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 206–207.

60. Konkel, 'Sources', p. 478: 'The text of the Hezekiah story has been abbreviated and expanded to function as a theology of the future of Jerusalem in Isaiah.'

the outcome of this development. The revolt movements, which were believed to profit from the sudden death of the great king, completely underestimated the decisiveness of Sennacherib, whose determination was no less than that of his father. The first to feel the iron hand of the new king of Assyria was the rebellious Babylonian, Marduk-apla-iddina ('Merodach-Baladan'), who was able to regain power over Babylon in the year 703 with the help of the Elamites, although only for nine months. For the historicity of Merodach-Baladan's delegation to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 20.12-19; Isa. 39) there are no extra-biblical witnesses, but it corresponds to the political situation and logic of those years and months when he sought confederates in the west;⁶¹ the more fronts that could be established against Assyria, the greater the chance of success for the insurgents. When Hezekiah showed the delegation from far-off Babylon his wealth and weapons of war, if the event is historical, he did so not out of negligence or ignorance, but in the proud consciousness of presenting himself as a valuable and important partner in the fight against Assyria. Hezekiah's politics of religious propaganda in the former Northern Kingdom (2 Chron. 30.1-12), his cultic reform in Judah (2 Kgs 18.4),⁶² his attempts to expand to the Philistine coast (2 Kgs 18.8), his strategic preparation of the wall fortifications and water supply with the Siloam tunnel (2 Chron. 32.2-8),⁶³ as well as his military-diplomatic relations with the kingdom on the Nile, all point in one and the same direction: to be able to defy the awaited Assyrians by a secure defense.⁶⁴

Sennacherib's rapid and consistent action against Merodach-Baladan in southern Babylonia in his first campaign in 703—in which Baladan was able to save himself only by his flight into the swamplands of the great lagoon—and the second campaign in the year 702 in the eastern mountainous regions, already should have shown Hezekiah how truly dangerous and pointless a rebellion against Assyria was. Also, Hezekiah did not have many voluntary alliance partners, outside of the cities of Ekron, which extradited to Hezekiah

61. Vogt, 'Der Aufstand Hiskijas', p. 29, and Liwak, 'Die Rettung Jerusalems', p. 157, on the contrary, regard the rebellion of Ashdod (713–711) as the probable scenario of the Babylonian delegation.

62. For this, see Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, pp. 283-87.

63. Possibly the jug with its stamp 'LMLK' and the flying two- or four-winged scarab also play a role here; see Dion, 'Sennacherib's Expedition to Palestine', 7 (bibliography!); see also Na'aman, 'Sennacherib's Campaign', pp. 61-86.

64. See Liwak, 'Die Rettung Jerusalems', pp. 158-59; Mayer, *Politik*, p. 353.

its vassal king Padi, who was loyal to Assyria, and Ashkelon, whose king Sidqa was later deposed by Sennacherib and taken to Assyria. The political outcome of the third campaign of Sennacherib can be seen in who was connected with Hezekiah and lost, and who was not connected with him and won: besides Padi of Ekron, who was freed from forced detention in Jerusalem, Ashdod and Gaza also profited at the expense of the rebellious Judah from their loyalty as vassals to Assyria. How severely rebellion was penalized and how consistently obedience was rewarded can be seen in the example of Ashdod: severely punished after the revolt of 711, ten years later it is on the side of the victor!

In the southwest of his kingdom, Sennacherib's third campaign proceeded in three stages, which resulted in the reestablishment of the *pax assyrica* in Phoenicia, Philistia, and Judah.⁶⁵ Accompanied only by swift cavalry, the great king reached the first area of deployment, the Mediterranean coast by Sidon, whereupon its king Luli immediately absconded to Cyprus. The logistics had been determined in advance, with the Assyrian troops stationed near the border or concentrated there.⁶⁶ The entire coastline recognized that the hour had struck. So Sidon, Tyre, and Akko renewed their vassalage; deputations from Byblos, Arwad, Samsimuruna, Ashdod, as well as from Ammon, Moab, and Edom came with their tributes to Ushu where the great king himself was staying.⁶⁷ The absence of three kings from this area made further actions necessary—against Sidqa of Ashkelon, against Ekron, whose loyal vassal king Padi had been deported to Jerusalem, and against Hezekiah of Judah.

Ashkelon was first on the itinerary and gave the Assyrians no opposition at all; the rebellious Sidqa was seized and deported with family and idols to Assyria and in his place Sharru-lu-dari was elevated to the throne; the latter probably belonged to the hostages that his father Rukibtu must have sent to Assyria as a pledge of his loyalty as a vassal and who now served as a substitute king loyal to Assyria.⁶⁸ The rebellious Ekron was next in the series: an Egyptian-Ethiopian relief army was utterly destroyed near Eltekeh, and Ekron, Eltekeh, and Timna were seized. Padi, loyal to Assyria, was again installed as king of Ekron.⁶⁹

65. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 109-10.

66. Mayer, *Politik*, p. 355.

67. Mayer, *Politik*, p. 356; Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 109.

68. Mayer, *Politik*, p. 357.

69. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 109-10.

The biblical account of the Ethiopian king Tirhakah's advance and Sennacherib's subsequent departure from Jerusalem presents a mixture of historical fact, half-truth, and fiction. It is true that there was a battle between the Assyrian powers and the relief army from Egypt near Eltekeh; it is not true that Tirhakah would have born the royal title already at that time, since his brother Shebitku (Shabataka) was still in power in 701. Within the bounds of historical fact, however, it is certainly possible that Tirhakah participated as an approximately twenty-year old in the battle with the Assyrians: 'So Tirhakah's royal title would simply be in anticipation, and is applied casually from memory to "king" Tirhakah, the successor of Shebitku, considering the biblical report was not written immediately after the events of 701.'⁷⁰ The naming of Tirhakah in the biblical report is not to be viewed as an anachronism that distorts history,⁷¹ nor does it force acceptance of a second campaign, not mentioned elsewhere, by Sennacherib against Egypt after 690, but rather it is an inaccuracy which does not even concern the person but only his title.

After the battle of Eltekeh, Sennacherib set up his main camp at Lachish and besieged the most important city on the way to Jerusalem; the remnants of the siege-ramps are witness to the art of war applied here. The situation of Hezekiah and Jerusalem had so deteriorated that the Assyrian Annals report 46 cities of Judah conquered, 205,105 prisoners led away,⁷² and Hezekiah locked up like a bird in a cage. Nothing was left for the rebels but to bow down to the great king and to take on themselves the heavy burden of tribute of 810 kg of gold and 8100 kg of silver.⁷³ Both the Assyrian Annals and the biblical texts agree that in the case of Jerusalem, in contrast to Lachish, there was no siege but only a blockade.⁷⁴ Because Sennacherib neither shot an arrow into the city nor raised up a rampart against it, the writer of 2 Kgs 19.32/ /Isa. 37.33 *post festum* created an oracle about its divine protection. When it says in the Assyrian

70. So Liwak, 'Die Rettung Jerusalems', p. 148; thus one of the main arguments for a second campaign of Sennacherib against Egypt in 688/7 collapses; Shea makes a case for it again in 'Sennacherib's Second Palestinian Campaign', pp. 401-18.

71. So among others, Vogt, 'Der Aufstand Hiskijas', p. 50.

72. For the high number, see Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 41-43; Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 115: 'peut-être l'ensemble de la population des territoires judéens conquis...'

73. For the difference in the amount of silver (bibl. 300 talents; Assyr. 800 talents), see Mayer, *Politik*, p. 43.

74. So Mayer, *Politik*, pp. 360-61; van der Kooij, 'Das assyrische Heer', pp. 97-99.

references that Hezekiah 'has sent [his tribute] after me to Nineveh', that has nothing to do with a presumed precipitous departure of Sennacherib from Palestine, but rather indicates that he had better and more important things to do than to wait until Hezekiah had collected the required quantity of gold and silver, at great sacrifice (2 Kgs 18.16!). As suddenly as Sennacherib had appeared in the west, he quickly disappeared again to the east, for in the following year his fourth campaign was already underway in southern Babylonia, again on the heels of the trouble-maker, Merodach-Baladan,⁷⁵ who was supported by Elam and whom Sennacherib was again unable to capture. The fact that even after 701 Sennacherib still remained very active and had in no way decreased in military strength and numbers suggests that the death of 185,000 Assyrians by Yhwh's messengers before the gates of Jerusalem is in the realm of legend.⁷⁶ While Flavius Josephus still knew an area in northwest Jerusalem as the 'war camp of the Assyrians' (ἡ Ἀσσυρίων παρεμβολή), where Titus was also said to have set up his camps in 70 CE, this does not argue for the historicity of the statement of 2 Kgs 19.35, but rather for the durability and popularity of biblical fiction.⁷⁷

An important historical question which Sennacherib's withdrawal leaves open or raises is that of the unusually mild treatment of the rebellious Hezekiah. Why was he not deported to Assyria with his family and pro-Egyptian counselors, as Sennacherib had done with Sidqa of Ashkelon, or why were the rebels not executed in the same sentence of deterrence received by those from Ekron who had delivered the loyal vassal Padi to Hezekiah? Why did the great king not transform Judah and Jerusalem into an Assyrian province but was instead content with a tribute-paying vassalage, even though with the forced separation and transfer of the western area to Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza, Hezekiah was entirely circumscribed to the income-poor Judean hills with Jerusalem?

These questions can certainly be brought closer to an answer, and are not evidence that Sennacherib's campaign against Hezekiah

75. For this, see M. Dietrich, *Die Aramäer Südbabyloniens*, pp. 9-10.

76. According to Herodotus (II, p. 141), Sennacherib's military encampment against Egypt, set up in Pelusium, was caught off-guard one night by a troop of mice that gnawed the soldiers' weapons, making them unfit for battle; see also, among others, van Leeuwen, *Sanchérib*, pp. 264-66; Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, p. 290.

77. See van der Kooij, 'Das assyrische Heer', pp. 93ff.; cf. 1 Macc. 7.41; 2 Macc. 8.19; 15.22; Sir. 48.21.

ultimately failed, thus demonstrating that the Assyrian sources—in contrast to the biblical ones—do not stand up to historical inquiry,⁷⁸ according to the motto, ‘Nous savons en effet de quelle façon furent rédigées les annals des rois d’Assyrie!’⁷⁹

The reasons for the lenient treatment were various. First of all, there was no longer a need for a siege of Jerusalem, since Hezekiah had yielded. Because of the tribute obligation, Jerusalem was already so stricken economically that plundering was superfluous. Second, by the punishment of partitioning the region in favor of its neighbors who had not revolted, the danger of a new rebellion by Hezekiah was virtually excluded. Third, the biblical witness, which amounts to an Assyrian offer to negotiate addressed to Jerusalem, may have a historical kernel—Sennacherib wished to avoid a long and costly siege, especially after the siege of Lachish, and Hezekiah’s preventive measures had paid off to the extent that he could still ransom himself. True, he was like a bird in a cage, but he was still alive! From a historical point of view, there is no doubt that Sennacherib could have dragged his feet over Jerusalem had he wished to, whatever the cost; but who else would he have installed as a vassal king if not a Davidide? Was it not much wiser politically, in order to remain in the picture, merely to trim the wings of the bird and leave him in the cage, than to hazard the uncertainty of a non-Davidide on the throne in Jerusalem? In addition, it could hardly have been in the interests of Assyria to destabilize unduly the southern border with its arch-rival on the Nile.⁸⁰ Sennacherib’s calculation paid off. Hezekiah remained peaceful⁸¹ and his son Manasseh, a loyal vassal of Assyria, learned from the mistakes of his father for the long years of his reign. It belongs to the ironies of biblical history that the writer of the DtrH so strongly condemned *that* Davidide, Manasseh, to whose political

78. Mayer refers to the traumatic consequences for Assyriology because of the differences between the Assyrian Annals and the biblical report in relation to the events of the year 701 (*Politik*, pp. 4–6).

79. H. Haag, ‘La campagne de Sennachérib’, p. 358; likewise Hutter, ‘Überlegungen’, p. 26: ‘The Assyrian Annals should not be considered as primarily historical inscriptions; their purpose is rather to praise the deeds of a ruler which he has accomplished in the name of his god Ashur’; esp. Laato, ‘Assyrian Propaganda’, pp. 198ff.

80. Cf. Gonçalves, *L’expédition*, p. 134; Clements, *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem*, p. 20.

81. Against Liwak’s hypothesis (‘Die Rettung Jerusalems’, p. 160), according to which Hezekiah represented to Assyria ‘a latent danger in the conspiratorial efforts of the Syrian-Palestinian area.’

moderation and clarity they owe the fact that Judah and Jerusalem still existed in their time.⁸²

It is historically correct that Sennacherib was killed at the hand of his sons, although not at the end of his third campaign, but only in the year 681. Sennacherib's decision in favor of Esarhaddon for the succession is probably what prompted the passed-over prince Arda-Mulissi ('Adrammelech') to become his father's murderer; in contrast, the identity of the second-named 'Sharezer' (2 Kgs 19.37) is still unclear. The temple of 'Nisroch' is an 'old reading for Nimrud/Ninurta', who was the city god of Kalah, so this is the place—otherwise unnamed—where the attack is assumed to have taken place.⁸³

Summing up, and keeping in mind the function and placement of the HIN in the book of Isaiah, it may be said that the Assyrian sources of Sennacherib's Palestine campaign are ideologically slanted not more but somewhat less than the majority of the biblical witnesses. The fact that Hezekiah was not deposed and Jerusalem did not fall serves as a basis for the theological processing of events. Considering the way the Isaiah version suppresses Hezekiah's tribute-making and emphasizes the piety of the king, it is easy to imagine how eager these tradents were to think of Sennacherib, too, as being among the dead Assyrians. But political history cannot be rewritten quite so radically! At least they managed to leave him in the temple to be murdered by his sons—just after the shameful attack on Zion!

5.3. *Contextual References and Demarcation of Interpretational Units*

The double tradition of the Kings and Isaiah versions raises special problems for the exegesis of Isaiah 36–39 within the book of Isaiah. As the introductory remarks above have shown, the investigation of the origins of the HIN can only be carried out on the basis of the Kings text, which is not part of this study. The discussion has shown

82. Ackroyd ('Biblical Interpretation of the Reigns', p. 257) correctly emphasizes: 'Hezekiah seems to have had a better press than he deserved'; see Hutter, *Hiskija*, pp. 102–105, on 'Entwicklung der Hiskija-Tradition'.

83. Mayer, *Politik*, p. 379: 'From a synopsis of the various sources, the following can be determined approximately: On the 20th of Tebetu (10th month) Sennacherib was murdered by his son Arda-Mulissi in a Ninurta temple—probably in Kalah. Arda-Mulissi was at the head of a group of princes who probably felt rejected by the favoring of Esarhaddon.'

just as clearly, however, that studying the Kings text does not relieve one from asking about the inherent function of the HIN within the book of *Isaiah*. Therefore, what follows will concern itself exclusively with determining the place and function of the HIN within the book of *Isaiah*. If a number of passages are investigated with respect to their literary-historical situation, this is done with the aim of addressing the questions of when, how, by whom, and with what purpose the HIN were included in the book of *Isaiah*.⁸⁴

The chronological threads which are woven through chaps. 1–35 continue in these chapters, not only up to 701, but beyond that into the future exile. Chapters 28–31 have already brought the reader up to the years of the Hezekian revolt (705–701); now the effects of this development are traced up to the year of decision. According to the book's superscription, *Isaiah* prophesied in the time of King Uzziah until Hezekiah; now, if the end is announced in 39.8, that means, for the reader who still recalls 1.1, that *Isaiah*'s end is also here, although half of the book still lies ahead. If, in this book named '*Isaiah*', the oracle is no longer from *Isaiah* after chap. 39, then his presence from chap. 40 onward lies entirely in the prophetic word. High demands are therefore placed on these chapters. They bring together the past and what is to come. On the one hand, they fulfill the prophetic words of *Isaiah* in 1–35 and, on the other, lay the groundwork for the subsequent prophecies. In the same way that the '*Anti-Assyrian*' and '*Pro-Zion*' oracles of 1–35 are fulfilled in 36–39, so it may be hoped the salvation oracles of 40 onwards would also become a reality in the near future.⁸⁵

The delimiting of these chapters in relation to chap. 35 on the one side and chap. 40 on the other poses no difficulty; prose sections occasionally intrude on poetic sections. At the same time, there are connections between 1–35 and 36–39 on the one hand, and between 36–39 and 40–55 on the other, thought not of such a syntactical type.⁸⁶

84. Hardmeier's stating of the question (*Prophetie im Streit*) is fundamentally different from this, and an examination of his thesis will be made only in passing; he views the HIN as propagandistic writing by an opponent of Jeremiah around the year 588 with the purpose of strengthening Zedekiah's opposition against the Babylonian invaders, according to the motto: Paying tribute does not protect from attack! This pragmatic does not apply to Isa. 36–39, for there is no mention here of paying tribute!

85. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 341–42.

86. As Sweeney, *Isaiah* 1–4, p. 32, unilaterally declares: 'Furthermore, there is no syntactical connection between chapters 35 and 36, on the one hand, and chapters 39 and 40 on the other.'

So, for example, the two-fold imperative of חֲזַק ('strengthen the weakening knees'—'be strong' [35.3, 4]) connects to the central figure חֲזַק־יְהוָה in 36–39.⁸⁷ Through Hezekiah and his actions, the addressees of the book of Isaiah read what it means to strengthen themselves in Yhwh alone, who comes 'in strength' (בְּחֹזֶק, 40.10)! Hezekiah sets an example of 'trust' (בְּטָח) and tranquility, which Isaiah had demanded (30.15). The call to fearlessness, which in 35.4 is directed at all who are disillusioned (אֵל הִרְאָו), is repeated by Isaiah in 37.6 before Hezekiah himself, אֵל הִרְאָה, and in 40.9 this demand applies to the troop of messengers bringing good news to Zion. This stereotypical formula is not an attempt at encouragement in bad times, but rather part of a 'war oracle' in which saving help from the divinity is proclaimed to a leader of the army or king, without human military effort being required.⁸⁸ Such a call was made already in Isa. 7.4 to King Ahaz, who, however, did not trust in Yhwh's help, but in Assyrian military power.

After the אֵל הִרְאָה to Ahaz comes the exhortation in 10.24-27: 'My people, who live on Mount Zion, do not fear the Assyrians when they strike you with the rod.' The allusion to chaps. 36–37 is unmistakable. In the HIN the prophecy of 10.27 is fulfilled which says, 'On that day it will happen: his burden will be removed from your shoulder, his yoke from your neck.' The prophecy of the miraculous reversal from Assyria's inexorable onslaught (10.28-32) to Yhwh's saving intervention (10.33-34), from which the Zion community results as a sprout from the stem of Jesse (11.1-10), is fulfilled in 36–37. The intercession speech (37.4) and salvation oracle (37.31-32) of the prophet apply to this remnant that lives on Zion. In addition, the proclamation of Yhwh's saving intervention (35.4, וַיִּשְׁעֵבָם) is taken up twice in 37–38 (37.20; 38.20). In the course of the book of Isaiah, all Isaianic prophecies against the self-confident and arrogant Assyria are fulfilled in the HIN;⁸⁹ similarly, the anti-Egyptian words of the prophets are confirmed.⁹⁰ In fact, it is not Egypt that frees Jerusalem from the power of Assyria, but rather the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה. The prophecy of divine protection

87. Ruprecht, 'Die ursprüngliche Komposition', pp. 41-42, with a view to the wordplay between 'Hezekiah' and 'he strengthened' in Isa. 39.1: 'As bearer of this name of praise, Hezekiah as a person is a walking confession of trust throughout these events' (p. 42).

88. Conrad, *Fear Not, Warrior*, pp. 52-62; Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives', p. 67; Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, pp. 36-41.

89. See Isa. 8.8b-10; 10.5-19, 24-27; 14.24-27; 17.12-14; 29.5-8; 30.27-33; 31.4-9.

90. See Isa. 36.6, 9; 37.25 and 30.1-8; 31.1-3.

(גן) and salvation (נצל hi.) for Jerusalem (31.5) is worked out almost literally by Yhwh in 37.35 and 38.6.⁹¹ This narrative strategy is of the utmost importance. The fulfilling of the prophecies against Assyria (and Egypt) is the guarantee that the oracles in the second half of the book will also become a reality. Here, the אֱלֹהֵי הָיָדָא oracles no longer apply to the king, but to the community of Israel alone,⁹² which has taken up the legacy of the Davidic kingship.⁹³ Consequently, there is no longer any talk of a king in Israel; rather, Yhwh's eternal covenant with the חֶסֶד־דָּוִד pertains to those who are associated with the community of the 'servant' (55.3). While the prospective references from 36–39 may be weaker than the retrospective ones, they are nevertheless not to be overlooked. When Yhwh poses the question in 37.26 asking Sennacherib if he had not heard that Yhwh long ago planned everything that is now being fulfilled,⁹⁴ there is a clear connection to the Deutero-Isaiah theme of the 'earlier-later things'.⁹⁵ Further, the 'monotheistic' prayer⁹⁶ on the lips of the pious Hezekiah (37.14–20) points to the polemic against the foreign gods in 40–48.⁹⁷ When the last salvation oracle promises the protection and redemption of Jerusalem 'for my sake (לִמְעַנִּי) [and for my servant David's sake]' (37.35), there is again an internal pointing to the Deutero-Isaiah texts.⁹⁸

This short overview of the forward and backward references of 36–39 shows that these chapters are no random portion in the book. To the contrary, it confirms Groves's view that, 'In summary, we have found that Isaiah 36–39 functions admirably in its context as a

91. So Liebreich already ('Compilation', p. 270): 'It becomes apparent that division IV was intended to demonstrate that the promise made in division III (31.5) was actually fulfilled in Sennacherib's unsuccessful siege of Jerusalem.'

92. Isa. 41.10, 14; 43.1, 5; 44.2.

93. So Conrad, 'The Royal Narratives', p. 77: 'As the book looks forward to the future deliverance of the people, it is looking beyond the time of Davidic kingship to a time when the people will be king'; in addition, Conrad, 'Community as King', pp. 99–111.

94. Cf. the rhetoric in 40.21; 41.1, 26; 44.7–8; 45.21.

95. See 46.9–11; 48.3–5; 51.9–10; Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 86, consistently rejects the connection to Isa. 40–55, because he wants to maintain the pre-exilic dating of 36–37.

96. Cf. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 468: 'En conclusion, la prière se présente comme une confession de monothéisme yahviste très bien construite.'

97. Cf. esp. 37.19 and 40.19–20; 41.6–7; 44.9–20; 45.16–17.

98. Isa. 43.25; 48.9; 55.5; 'for my servant David's sake' is a typical deuteronomic expression: 1 Kgs 11.13, 14; 15.4; 2 Kgs 8.19; so Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 313.

connecting link between the oracle of Isaiah of Jerusalem and Deutero-Isaiah'.⁹⁹

The narrative that begins with the exposition of Sennacherib's campaign through Judah (36.1-3) and the delegation to Hezekiah with the demand to surrender, comes to an end in 37.36-38 with the sudden death of 185,000 Assyrians, the departure of Sennacherib, and his murder by his sons in the temple of his god. With that the first arc of narrative tension—which could be entitled 'Assur ante portas'—ends, suggesting 36–37 as a unit of interpretation. The dramatic close of 37, the question about the historicity of the events of 701, and the discussion about the relationship of the Isaiah and Kings texts have together resulted in chaps. 36–37 and chaps. 38–39 generally being considered as two separate narratives. Thus Childs's influential monograph about the Assyrian crisis treats only Isaiah 36–37//2 Kgs 18.13–19.37, and leaves Isaiah 38 and 39 out of consideration. In contrast, Ackroyd, in his well-known essay on 2 Kgs 20//Isaiah 38–39, 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile', includes these narratives in his interpretation of the main narrative.¹⁰⁰ He assigns chaps. 36–37 to the Assyrian period, and chaps. 38–39, in contrast, to the Babylonian period. Chapters 36–37 are accordingly the high point of the Zion theology of 1–35, while he views the narratives about Hezekiah's illness and recovery and the Babylonian delegation as interpretations of the Exile.¹⁰¹

In contrast, Seitz argues for a different division; without denying the connection of 38 and 39, he regards 36–38 as one unit of interpretation, and 39 as another. He points out that 38 is connected to 36–37 not only chronologically (38.1), but especially by the statement in 38.6: 'I will deliver you and this city from the power of the king of Assyria and will defend this city.' He refuses to excise this verse from chap. 38 merely because the rescue of Jerusalem had already happened in 37.36.¹⁰² In addition, the promise to Hezekiah of fifteen more years (38.5) develops its full meaning only in connection with Isa. 36.1 (the threat against Jerusalem in his fourteenth year of rule) and 2 Kgs 18.2 (total duration of rule = 29 years). Verse 38.6 is

99. Groves, *Actualization and Interpretation*, p. 199.

100. So Ackroyd, 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile', p. 330.

101. Gileadi, *Holistic Structure*, p. 38: 'As Ackroyd has shown, Chapters 38 and 39 may be seen as material prefacing those sections of the book of Isaiah whose setting is exilic and post-exilic.'

102. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 152: 'Far from needing to be excised, the reference to delivery of king and city belongs to the very rationale of the story from its inception.'

significant in terms of narrative strategy, since it makes clear that at the same time the city of Zion hovered in danger of death, Hezekiah's life was also threatened because of severe illness. Both the city and the king were saved by their godly piety. Thus in his view, the narrative of the illness and recovery of Hezekiah was written from the beginning with a view to Isaiah 36–37: 'From its inception, the narrative understands the illness in relationship to the fate of the city, not in relationship to isolated *bruta facta*.'¹⁰³

The comparison of the positions of Ackroyd (36–37; 38–39) and Seitz (36–38; 39) reveals that both present solid arguments. Chapters 36–37 are in their present form a self-contained narrative and are to be interpreted as such; Isaiah 38 is, however, clearly dependent on these chapters, and the parallel structure of 36–37 and 38 shows that the writer of the narrative of Hezekiah's illness and healing is oriented to the threat against and rescue of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴ The conclusions of both narratives confirm this. While Sennacherib, who had just escaped the angel of death, was killed in the temple of his god by his own sons (37.38), Hezekiah composed a song which he hopes soon to be able to sing in the midst of the believers in the house of Yhwh (38.22). 'A contrast is set up between the one God who delivers and those gods who are no gods, doomed to fail along with their worshipers (37:10-20).'¹⁰⁵ Chapter 38 is to be treated therefore as an independent unit of interpretation, separate from 36–37 but always in view of the main narrative:

A.	Threat:	36.1-20	37.9b-13	38.1
B.	Hezekiah's Reaction:	37.1-4	37.14-20	38.2-3
	Grief-Temple-Prayer			
C.	Oracle:	37.5-7	37.21-29, 33-35	38.4-6
D.	Sign:	_____	37.30-32	38.7-8
			(Psalm: vv. 9-20)	
E.	Redemption:	37.8-9a	37.36-38	38.21
			(Sign: v. 22) Temple	

The completely positive image of Hezekiah as the pious king who saves both Jerusalem and himself from mortal danger through prayer becomes noticeably blurred in Isaiah 39. Here he has a relationship with the Babylonian counterpart of Assyria, with the demonstration of his economic and military reserves suggesting a concerted plan against Assyria. In contrast to Isaiah 28–31, in which Hezekiah is not

103. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 176.

104. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 173.

105. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 174.

even named, here he plays an extremely active political role. And in contrast to chaps. 36–38, in which he is portrayed in marked contrast to Ahaz, here he appears to be the image of his father.¹⁰⁶ The pious king is no longer such a shining example, but those who inserted the HIN into the book of Isaiah accepted this blurred image of Hezekiah *nolens volens*, because the bridge from the Assyrian to the Babylonian epoch could not be had for a lower price!

5.4. The Threat against and Salvation of Zion (Isaiah 36–37)

The beginning verse, 36.1, which from a tradition-historical perspective belongs to the A Narrative (2 Kgs 18.14–16¹⁰⁷), is indispensable for the HIN in the book of Isaiah. Elsewhere, chronological dates of more or less precision are found in 1.1; 6.1; 7.1; and 14.28. Isa. 36.1 presupposes an awareness of 14.28, which reports the death of Ahaz and implicitly marks the beginning of Hezekiah's reign. The fourteenth year of Hezekiah has been calculated by the redactor of the HIN as the time of the blockade of Jerusalem from the statements of 2 Kgs 18.2 (29 years of rule) and 2 Kgs 20.6//Isa. 38.5 (fifteen years after Hezekiah's recovery).¹⁰⁸ If Hezekiah reigned 29 years and was ill at the same time as the siege of Jerusalem, then recovered and gained an additional fifteen years of life, then the siege must have fallen in his fourteenth year of office—thus goes the biblical calculation! The location given in Isa. 36.2b (בתעלת הברכה העליונה במסלת שדה כובס) is clearly related to the meeting of Ahaz and Isaiah at a similar place (7.3), an episode which as a whole provides important background for the image of Hezekiah in Isaiah 36–37. The meeting of Ahaz and Isaiah is handed down only in the book of Isaiah and is lacking in 2 Kings, which again suggests that Isaiah 36–37 was composed in awareness of the book of Isaiah. Hardmeier also believes that Hezekiah is being contrasted to his father Ahaz:

106. Cf. O'Connell, *Concentricity*, p. 140: 'Thus, Hezekiah's portrayal is not, in the end, an idealized contrast to that of his father Ahaz, but a continuation of the prophet's negative portrayal of Judah's monarchy.'

107. See Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 356–61, who advocates its place in the A Narrative.

108. Against Vogt, 'Der Aufstand Hiskijas', p. 26, who does not relate the 14th year to the time during Hezekiah's reign, but rather to the beginning of his reign. He suggests 'not counting from the year in which Hezekiah became king at "5" years of age (18.2), but perhaps from the year when Hezekiah began to reign at the age of about 19 years, that is from the year 714 = the first year.'

The ABBJ narrative as a whole may also have been designed and created as a conscious anti-typology to Isaiah 7. Hezekiah listened in an exemplary way to Isaiah's salvation prophecy of liberation from Assyria. In contrast, Ahaz would not believe Isaiah's salvation oracle, which could have spared the Jews from subjection to Assyria.¹⁰⁹

As the narrative continues, it becomes more and more clear that the conflict with the Rabshakeh is not about deeds, but about words! It is striking that after a boisterous beginning the overbearing words of the enemy grow increasingly weak, while those of Hezekiah and Isaiah become increasingly stronger in the course of the narrative. The delegations of both sides are there with the specific purpose of transmitting the words of Sennacherib and of Yhwh, respectively.¹¹⁰ There are essentially only two actors, Sennacherib and Yhwh, who operate in the background by means of their messengers.¹¹¹

	Speech	Sender	Receiver	Communicator
A:	36.4-10	Sennacherib	Hezekiah/People	Rabshakeh
B:	37.3-4	Hezekiah	Isaiah	Judean Messengers
C:	37.5-7	Yhwh	Hezekiah	Isaiah
<i>37.8-9a (First Result: Tirhakah - Departure from Jerusalem)</i>				
A':	37.9b-13	Sennacherib	Hezekiah	Letter messengers
B':	37.14-20	Hezekiah	Yhwh	Prayer
C':	37.21-35	Yhwh	Hezekiah	Isaiah
<i>37.36-38 (End result: Death of the Soldiers and Sennacherib)</i>				

The names of Eliakim and Shebna as two of the three negotiators in Isa. 36.3, 22 and 37.2 point back to the oracle which concerns them in Isa. 22.15-24. The sequence of 22 and 36 makes one thing clear: Isaiah's prophecy that Eliakim would take the place of Shebna has already been fulfilled in chap. 36!¹¹² The oracle tradition about Shebna and Eliakim, which at least can claim Isaianic authorship for 22.15-18,

109. Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*, p. 439 n. 41 (ABBJ-Narrative = Narrative of the Assyrian threat and the Freeing of Jerusalem [der assyrischen Bedrohung und der Befreiung Jerusalems]).

110. So Fewell, 'Sennacherib's Defeat', p. 80: 'A literary device especially important... is the disproportionate use of character speech in the telling of the story.'

111. This list is a combination from de Jong, 'Het verhaal', p. 60, and Leene, 'שְׁמוּעָה עַן רוּחַ', p. 50; also Ruprecht, 'Die ursprüngliche Komposition', pp. 50-52.

112. Seitz thinks otherwise (*Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 111), assuming that there were two different persons with the name 'Shebna', but only one 'Eliakim'; Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1-39*, p. 99, thinks that 'Shebna and Eliakim as such are transparent references to the two kings Jehoiachin and Jehoiakim from the turn of the seventh to the sixth century B.C.; the latter are, so to speak, pre-portrayed'.

stems from a circle of supporters, according to whom career officials, while they may enter brilliantly, do not come to a good end. In their opinion, family coterie corrupts even the greatest hope (22.10-23, 24-25). In contrast, Shebna, Eliakim, and Joah appear in the HIN as flawless comrade-in-arms of Hezekiah. One might suppose that the HIN were first handed down in the influential families of these very officials; that would argue for a late pre-exilic tradition of the Assyrian threat and the divine salvation of Jerusalem.¹¹³ This tradition appears to have been already so popular at the time of Jeremiah that the prophet refers to it: Hezekiah feared God so that Yhwh 'repented of the evil with which he had threatened them' (Jer. 26.19).¹¹⁴ A pious Hezekiah who saved Jerusalem and Zion from the power of Assyria through Yhwh's intervention naturally would also have brought a significant gain in prestige to the circles of supporters that are hidden behind the names of Shebna, Eliakim, and Joah. However, the circles of supporters surrounding Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah are not responsible for the final form of Isaiah 36-37, but for the fact that a Hezekiah-Isaiah tradition was formed at all.¹¹⁵ Hardmeier also points out 'how scrupulously, even downright insistently, the ministers—who were practically non-functional in themselves—were accorded distinction again and again for their dignified positions and their full family membership',¹¹⁶ which leads him to conclude that, 'the names most likely indicate the specific location of the narrator circle within the theological-political tradition'.¹¹⁷ When the negative image in 22.15-24 is contrasted with the completely positive one of the same officials in 36-37, it suggests that the two accounts must be from different circles, which later found a common home in the book of Isaiah.

Now let us return to the messenger and speech situation of Isaiah 36-37. Sennacherib's words become increasingly sparse, while Yhwh's become more numerous. After the first oracle of Yhwh,

113. Cf. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 291-92.

114. The connection of Jer. 26.19 to the Hezekiah tradition is a strong argument against Hardmeier's thesis (*Prophetie im Streit*) that Isa. 36-37 originated as a propaganda piece around the year 588.

115. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 115: 'In short, no one would have been in a better position to recall and preserve the original 701 traditions, ultimately shaping them into their present, carefully structured form, than the circles associated with the triad of Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah—steward, scribe, and record keeper.'

116. Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*, p. 440.

117. Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*, p. 440.

mediated by Isaiah, the Assyrian has already backed off from the first speech. A certain irony is unmistakable: Sennacherib, who had earlier made fun of the broken reed-staff of Egypt (36.6), withdraws from Lachish solely because of a rumor of Tirhakah's return, absenting himself from Jerusalem. The salvation oracle in 37.6-7 is already bearing its first fruits: 'See, I am putting a רוח in him; he will hear a שמועה and turn back to his land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his land.' The first part of the oracle is realized immediately; the second, at the end of the narrative (37.36-38). In this context, the spirit referred to can only be a spirit of panic¹¹⁸ that causes Sennacherib to initiate the retreat solely on the grounds of the rumor about Tirhakah's return; the Isaiah text with its twofold וישמע¹¹⁹ with Sennacherib as the implied subject, underscores the significance of 'hearing',¹²⁰

Sennacherib's departure has still not removed the danger for Jerusalem, but essentially defuses it. The great king is obviously no longer able to send the Rabshakeh with a great entourage to Jerusalem (בחיל כבוד, 36.2), but has to be satisfied with couriers; that takes the sting out of his words in 37.10-13.¹²¹ Fundamentally, Sennacherib is already defeated, for he can only invoke the successes of his predecessors (37.12), rather than his own. In contrast to his first reaction to the words of Rabshakeh, Hezekiah now casually accepts the threatening letter. There is no more talk of him tearing his clothes; the drama of his first answer is lacking: 'Today is a day of distress... Children have reached the mouth of the womb, but there is no strength to give birth' (37.3).¹²² The statement אולי ישמע יהודה ('perhaps

118. So Leene, 'שמועה en רוח', p. 51: 'en wat kan dat anders geweest zijn dan een geest van paniek?' See also his listing of interpretations, pp. 59-60 n. 15.

119. 2 Kgs 19.9b reads וישלח וישב, which in context can only mean, 'he sent an additional time'; 1QIsa^a does not help, since it simply combines the Isaiah and Kings versions: וישמע... וישב.

120. Leene, 'שמועה en רוח', p. 55, points out that שמועה and רוח serve a 'double duty'; in the context of the first part, they are related to the panic and the rumor about Tirhakah; in connection to the whole narrative, however, they are related to his rage against Yhwh and the report of the blow by the death angel (37.36).

121. So Fewell, 'Sennacherib's Defeat', p. 82.

122. Darr, 'No Strength to Deliver', pp. 241-44, interprets Hezekiah's first reaction in 37.3-4 as a rejection of his pro-Egyptian politics which had brought him and Jerusalem to a situation from which they knew no way out, even if they had had the strength to escape: 'The Strategic Confession of a Powerless Monarch' (pp. 242-44).

Yhwh will hear'; 37.4) has given way to 'But now, Yhwh our God, save us' (עתה יהוה אלהינו הושיענו, 37.20). Now, 'your God' (אלהיך, 37.4) has become 'our God'!

It is striking that Hezekiah does not direct a single word to the Assyrians;¹²³ one does not negotiate with blasphemers, but hands them over to the punishment of the only saving God! It is not swords, but words that are crossed;¹²⁴ at first, it looked as if Sennacherib had the upper hand, directing his blasphemous words through the Rabshakeh on two occasions both to Hezekiah's deputies (36.4-10) as well as to the people on the wall (36.13-20). The first speech of the Rabshakeh is especially eloquent. The extensive introduction to the speech with **כֹּה אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר** already signals that the words of Sennacherib should be placed on a par with those of Yhwh (cf. the prophetic messenger oracle beginning with **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**). In the course of the argument it becomes increasingly clear that Yhwh's claim to universal kingship and the prerogatives of Assyria and its gods are in conflict. The God of Israel, who saves his city and those who trust him from great hardship and distress, stands in contrast to the imperialistic gods of Assyria who are the destroyers of other nations. For the great king the object of Hezekiah's trust is a mystery (**מִה הַבְּטָחוֹן**, 36.4), for neither his own military power nor the help of the Egyptians nor hope in Yhwh could justify such confidence.

a.	v. 5	Military
b.	v. 6	Egyptians
c.	v. 7	Yhwh
<hr/>		
a':	vv. 8-9a	Military
b':	v. 9b	Egyptians
c':	v. 10	Yhwh

The Rabshakeh's first speech picks up on the direction of Isaiah's words in relation to trust in Yhwh, which stands diametrically opposed to trust in Egypt. The alternative of trusting in Yhwh or in Egypt, a theme that characterizes Isaiah's preaching (18-19; 20; 30.1-7; 31.1-3), unfolds in 36-37 as a narrative. Thus the term 'trust' (**בְּטָחָן** / **בְּטַח**), used seven times, stands at the center of the first speech of the Rabshakeh. In the 'rest' statement of 30.15, which is juxtaposed to 30.12 (**וְהַבְּטָחוֹ בַּעֲשָׂק**), trust (**בְּבְטָחָה**) is a matter of the conduct that could bring about security for the people of God. What is presented

123. Entirely in contrast to 2 Kgs 18.14b: 'I have done wrong; withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear.'

124. So Fewell, 'Sennacherib's Defeat', p. 87.

as a condition for salvation in 30.15 is exemplified paradigmatically by Hezekiah, who trusts in Yhwh alone, in 36–37. Praise to the ‘God of my salvation’ in the thanksgiving song of chap. 12 (אֲבָרְכָה, v. 2) is honored on a synchronic plane by Hezekiah (similarly, the call in 26.4: בָּמָחָו בִּיהוָה עֲדִי-עַד).

At the same time, the question of the Rabshakeh in 36.5bβ—‘In whom do you trust, *that you have rebelled against me* (בִּי מָרַדְתָּ)?’—shows that the first speech was composed not only with an eye toward the already existing Isaiah corpus, but also with an awareness of the Deuteronomistic History. Without an awareness of the dtr verse 2 Kgs 18.7, which tells of Hezekiah’s rebellion against the king of Assyria (וַיִּמְרֹד בַּמֶּלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר), this detail would be incomprehensible. On the other hand, the allusion to Hezekiah’s cultic reform (36.7) assumes a knowledge not only of 2 Kgs 18.6, but also, and above all, of Josiah’s reform with its demand for centralization (2 Kgs 22–23).

Hezekiah’s representatives have no response to this well-composed speech, except that they seek to minimize the damage to the battle morale of those addressees who are on the wall; they request that the Rabshakeh speak Aramaic (אַרְמִיָּה¹²⁵) with them and not Hebrew (יְהוּדִית, 36.11). This request is explained from a narrator’s viewpoint as anxiety for the demoralizing effect of the speech of the Rabshakeh on the people who were present.¹²⁶ The emphasis on the language difference in Isa. 36.11–13 is not a simple aside in the narrative, but rather a bridge to the second speech of the Rabshakeh. While the first speech was marked by the key word בָּמָחָ, the second one is distinguished by eight occurrences of the verb נָצַל hi. (‘save’¹²⁷). Neither Hezekiah nor Yhwh could save Jerusalem from the power of the Assyrians, for other gods, too, had not been able to protect their people effectively; not even Samaria could be saved (36.19). The Assyrian calls into question the effectiveness of Yhwh’s power, which was certainly an inner-Judaic subject of discussion as well.¹²⁸ One gets the impression that the Rabshakeh was an apt ‘student of Isaiah’, or at least a good authority on the book of Isaiah when he says, mere lip-service is neither עֲצָה nor גְּבוּרָה that can decide a battle (36.5); the

125. Cf. Dan. 2.4; Ezra 4.7.

126. So Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur*, pp. 346–47; for Garbini, *Storia e ideologia*, p. 76, the ‘nazionalismo linguistico’ is a clue to the postexilic period (cf. Neh. 13.24).

127. Isa. 36.14, 15(2x), 18(2x), 19, 20(2x); see also Ruprecht, ‘Die ursprüngliche Komposition’, pp. 48–49.

128. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, p. 98.

references to 29.15 and 30.1 (forging plans with Egypt, bypassing Yhwh), and to 30.15 (trust and rest are your strength) are obvious.¹²⁹ When the Assyrian negotiator says that Sennacherib is going into battle not out of self-interest, but rather by the command of Yhwh against his own people (36.10), he again shows good knowledge of the first part of the book of Isaiah.¹³⁰ Yet the attentive reader knows better: Assyria may be an instrument of the divine anger, but it is also itself a target of that anger (5.26-30; 8.5-8; 10.5-34; 17.12-14; 30.27-33).

The strategy of the Rabshakeh is to divide the people and Hezekiah (אל, 3x). They should not let themselves be deceived by their king, for he is not able to save; they should not let themselves be seduced into trusting in Yhwh, and finally, they should refuse to give their allegiance to Hezekiah and thereby to Yhwh (אל השמעי, 36.16). Then, the Rabshakeh says, Sennacherib will take over the divine task of providing for the land and its fruitfulness.¹³¹ The Assyrian's promise of an assured harvest of grain, wines,¹³² and figs clearly possesses echoes of Deuteronomy; the theme of the choice between life and death is strongly reminiscent of Deut. 30.15-20. This confirms that the Rabshakeh is simply the spokesman for an inner-Judaic discussion. The writer of these verses was quite confident with the deuteronomistic language without himself being a deuteronomist.¹³³ It is clear that not only Jerusalem is at stake, but Yhwh himself; if he cannot save his city out of the hand of Assyria, then he is like all the other gods, who likewise had not been able to protect their people from Assyria's attack (36.18-20; 37.12-13)!¹³⁴ Following Hezekiah's instructions, the besieged persons give no answer to the Rabshakeh (36.21); outside of capitulation, they also would not have had much to say!

129. So Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 434.

130. Smelik, 'Distortion of Old Testament Prophecy', p. 79: 'So we have to conclude that Rabshakeh was a diligent pupil of the prophets, especially Isaiah. Only by his misinterpretation of Hezekiah's cultic reforms has he betrayed himself'; cf. Ben Zvi, 'Who Wrote the Speech', pp. 85-86.

131. Cf. Deut. 8.8; 33.28; 1 Kgs 5.5; Mic. 4.4; Zeph. 3.10.

132. Cf. ארץ דגן ותרש in Deut. 33.28.

133. So Gonçalves concludes (*L'expédition*, p. 392).

134. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 163: 'But it is precisely the effective and redemptive power of Yhwh in comparison to the other gods that is the central theme of the polemic against idols in 40-48 (cf. esp. 44.17, 20), as much as trust in foreign idols (42.17). It is obvious that this stating of the question in chapter 36 anticipates the argument in 40ff.'

5.4.1. *Hezekiah as Paradigm of the Righteous*

The exemplary characteristics of Hezekiah's portrayal in Isaiah 36–37 are clearly manifested, in comparison with the oracle tradition. While Isaiah proclaimed a Woe over those who kept their political plans secret from Yhwh (29.15), Hezekiah does precisely the opposite of them. He does not belong to those against whom the prophet could hurl a הוי because they set out for Egypt without consulting Yhwh. Hezekiah does not rely on Egypt and does nothing without waiting on the decision of his God (36.21; 37.1-7, 14-20). He is not one of those who trust in their many chariots (ויבטחו על־רכב) or rely upon horses (על סוסים שֶׁעֲנִוּ) (31.1; cf. 36.8-9). No, Hezekiah forges no secret plans, but rather he goes immediately to the temple of Yhwh (37.1), which is the place of prayer and divine decision. This has to do with the argument (תוכחה¹³⁵) whether Yhwh can protect Jerusalem so that Zion can give birth to new descendants (37.3b; cf. Hos. 13.13). The real threat does not consist in the military power of the enemy, but rather in an enemy 'theology' that subverts trust in Yhwh. As in the unequal battle between Goliath and David, so now Yhwh must bring about a decision between the superpower Sennacherib and the god-fearing Hezekiah. Like the Philistine giant, the Assyrian king has also blasphemed the living God (לִחַרף אֱלֹהִים חַי¹³⁶). Like Hezekiah, the supplicants in the Psalms are often exposed to the blasphemous words of their enemies, who seek to shake the pious person's confidence in the divine: 'As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me (חַרְפוּנִי צוֹרְרִי), while they say to me continually "Where is your God?"' (Ps. 42.11[10]).¹³⁷ Hezekiah is not only the successor of the victorious David, but also a model for the supplicant who is mocked and despised for his confidence in God! In the few words of Hezekiah (37.3-4) it becomes clear what it is about: not about Jerusalem or the temple, but about the living God (אֱלֹהִים חַי). Not a human, but Yhwh himself will silence the blasphemer.¹³⁸

The motif complex of 'prayer' (תַּפְלָה/פִּלֵּל) in connection with 'salvation' (שֶׁעַ/נִּצֵּל) is especially at home in the Psalms, DtrH, Deutero-Isaiah and Jeremiah.¹³⁹ The expression נָשָׂא תַפְלָה בְּעַד is

135. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 416-19: 'Selon cette interprétation, Jérusalem vit, aux yeux d'Ezéchiass, un jour où la décision va être prise et la sentence prononcée.'

136. Cf. Isa. 37.4 // 2 Kgs 19.4 and 1 Sam. 17.26, 36; חָרַף in 1 Sam. 17.10, 25, 36, 45.

137. Cf. Pss. 44.17; 55.13; 74.10, 18; 89.52; 102.9.

138. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah 36–39', p. 11: 'There is no answer from men to a blasphemer: the answer comes from God.'

139. See also the discussion by de Jong, 'Het verhaal', p. 62.

encountered outside of Isa. 37.4 and its parallel only in Jer. 7.16 and 11.14. The suspicion that the B1 narrative is exilic–postexilic is likewise confirmed by the expression *הַשְּׂאֲרִית הַנִּמְצָאָה* ('remaining remnant'),¹⁴⁰ a theme that is taken up and developed in 37.31–32.¹⁴¹ Verses 37.3–4 with Hezekiah's request to Isaiah for his intercession for the remnant left behind cannot have been a later expansion,¹⁴² for then there would have been no message from the king to the prophet.¹⁴³ Verses 3–4 are only superficially directed to the prophet; at the communication level of the text, they are directed to the reader. Zion's distress is no longer a sign of guilt and sin, but of hope and trust in God; it is, finally, the situation that gives rise to the proof of God! The narrative of Zion's misery and salvation becomes the meaningful paradigm of genuine piety. After the pious Hezekiah has turned to Yhwh through the prophet, the salvation oracle comes immediately (37.6–7): Yhwh does not let the pious supplicant wait in his distress! He will cause the blasphemer to fall by the sword in his own land (*וְהַפְּלֵתִי בַחֶרֶב בְּאַרְצִי*), a pronouncement that is fulfilled in 37.38, when the sons of Sennacherib killed their father with the sword (*בַּחֶרֶב*).¹⁴⁴

The first trajectory which began with the speech of the Rabshakeh (36.4–10) has come to a provisional end with the salvation oracle of Isaiah and the departure of Sennacherib from Lachish (37.8–9a). But the danger has still not been averted, as is shown by the new beginning in 37.9b, which heralds the 'second round' of the conflict. If the 'first round' (=B1) consisted mostly of speech (23 out of 32.5 verses), the second (=B2) consists almost entirely of speech, into which two interpolations were integrated, the derisive song of the daughter of Zion (37.22–29) and an announcement of a sign (37.30–32). The action is reduced to a minimum (3 of 26.5 verses),¹⁴⁵ indicating how the theological discussion is again intensifying.

140. 1QIsa^a specifies *הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת* in order to clarify that it is not about those left behind after the exile, but about the besieged in the time of Hezekiah; also Iwry, 'whnms?'. A Striking Variant', pp. 34–43.

141. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 265: 'The "remnant" already has something of an eschatological figurative meaning (cf. 37.32).'

142. Against Hausmann, *Israels Rest*, p. 130.

143. Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 3. Teilband, p. 1392: 'Surely here speaks a man of the exile who has spontaneously applied the situation of Israel in the text to his own time.'

144. See Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 178: 'the prayer of one king saves a city; the "prayer" of another (37.38) finds its response in a sword of death.'

145. So Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, pp. 78, 96.

Sennacherib's letter,¹⁴⁶ which sets in motion the 'second round', reads like an abridged version of the speeches of the Rabshakeh in B1, especially the second speech (36.14–20). Thus the message to Hezekiah begins in 37.10 with the same negative demand (אל־יִשְׁאָךְ) as the second speech of the Rabshakeh to the citizens of Jerusalem on the city wall (אל־יִשָּׂא). The situations of B1 and B2 have changed. While it was previously a matter of the people not letting Hezekiah deceive them into trusting in Yhwh (וְאַל יִבְטְחוּ אֶתְכֶם חֻקֵּיהֶוּ אֵל יִהוּדָה), now it is said that Hezekiah should not let himself be disillusioned by his God (אֶל־יִשְׁאָךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ בְּוַטֵּחַ בּוֹ, 37.10a). Just as the Rabshakeh had wished to make clear to the people that neither Hezekiah nor Yhwh would be able to save them (נִצַּל, 7x), so Sennacherib asks derisively how Hezekiah could believe that he would actually be saved (וְאַתָּה תִּנָּצַל) when the gods of other nations were not able to save them (הֲהִצִּילוּ אֹהֲנֵם אֱלֹהֵי גוֹיִם, 37.12a). This close relation, both in terms of language and subject, which even goes so far as to quote (37.10b//36.15b), can only be explained by the already existing B1 narrative serving as a reference for the drafting of B2. At the same time, B2 sets its own tone. Thus Hezekiah now confronts the 'theological' attacks against his trust in God entirely on his own. The distress of Zion, the diplomatic delegation, the political calculation on an Egyptian pact of assistance, all that no longer plays a role. Now there is only the petitioner, who faces the blasphemous words of the enemy and trusts in Yhwh alone. Sennacherib's boast about the military successes of his fathers (37.12–13) and the resulting disgrace for the gods of the subjected nations are borrowed from Isa. 10.9–11.¹⁴⁷ The B2 narrative reads on the whole like a narrative development of Isa. 10.5–34. What was proclaimed in Isa. 10.12 is now fulfilled: 'When the Lord has completed his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will punish the arrogant behavior and the insolent pride of the king of Assyria.' So it is not actually Hezekiah, but rather Yhwh, the God of his hope, who is challenged: He is the one who will answer the blasphemers and break their arrogance!

146. The problem of 'messengers' (37.9b) and 'letter(s)' from the hand of the messengers (37.14) is difficult to solve; the supposition that the B2 narrative was only damaged precisely at the beginning remains speculative, but the double לֹא־מֵרָחֵק in 37.9b, 10a supports that supposition; so Deutsch, 'Die Hiskiaerzählungen', p. 22.

147. Cf. the taking over of 'Hamat' and 'Arpad' (10.9; 37.13); so already Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 267.

As the speech of the Assyrian stands in the center in B1, so the prayer of Hezekiah stands in the center of the narrative in B2; the blasphemers are defeated not merely on Zion, but by the prayer of the righteous in Zion! In B1 Hezekiah approached Isaiah for a prayer (37.4); now he himself prays, without prophetic mediation (37.15).¹⁴⁸ The theme is no longer the threat against Zion, but the defamation of the divine honor. The letter as *corpus delicti* of the blasphemers protects the pious Hezekiah from the need to repeat the blasphemy.¹⁴⁹ In contrast, out of his mouth comes a monotheistic confession (37.16-20) made up of an invocation, a presentation of the difficulty, and a plea to be heard. The prayer has not been appended to the original B2 narrative,¹⁵⁰ but has always belonged to it.¹⁵¹

If the Assyrian had placed Yhwh on the same level with the gods, Hezekiah contradicted this blasphemy in his confession of Yhwh, who is enthroned over the cherubim,¹⁵² the one God over all the kingdoms of the world—*אֱתֵהּ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים לְבַדּוֹ לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ*—and the sole creator of the heavens and the earth—*אֵתָה עָשִׂיתָ אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ*.¹⁵³ This monotheistic confession is understandable from a literary-historical viewpoint only on the basis of the deuteronomist and deuteronomistic writer,¹⁵⁴ Deutero-Isaiah,¹⁵⁵ Psalms,¹⁵⁶ and Chronicles.^{157,158} Two episodes in the books of the Chronicles form a special parallel. Thus, after an urgent prayer, King Asa is said to strike down one million (!) Cushites (2 Chron. 14.7-14), and Jehoshaphat

148. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, p. 100.

149. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 463; he also mentions the Mesopotamian practice of the 'letter to the gods'; however, there is no example of a letter from an enemy.

150. Keel, 'Sturmgotte', pp. 90-92, dates the prayer to the years 600-587; Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, pp. 81-88, sees it as an integral part of the B narrative (he rejects the division between B1 and B2), which he dates to the first years of Manasseh.

151. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 468, against W. Dietrich, *Prophezie und Geschichte*, p. 138 n. 115.

152. Cf. 1 Sam. 4.4; 2 Sam. 6.2; 1 Chron. 13.6; Ps. 99.1; also 80.2.

153. The closest parallel is Neh. 9.6: (*אֱתֵהּ הוּא יְהוָה לְבַדּוֹ*) 'You, Lord, are the Unique One: you have created the heavens and its entire host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them'; cf. also the nearly identical formulation in Ps. 86.10: *אֱתֵהּ אֱלֹהִים לְבַדּוֹ*.

154. Cf. Deut. 4.35, 39; 7.9; 2 Sam. 7.22; 1 Kgs 8.22.

155. Isa. 43.10-11; 44.6-8; 45.5-7, 18-25.

156. Pss. 83.19; 86.10.

157. 2 Chron. 20.6; Neh. 9.6.

158. So Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 464.

deploys singers who, with their prayer psalm, ‘Thank the Lord, for His Grace Protects Eternally’, bring about victory through Yhwh, the Ruler of all kingdoms (2 Chron. 20.20–30).¹⁵⁹ The prayer of Hezekiah is accordingly just as successful as that of Asa or as the prayer psalms of the singers’ guild of Jehoshaphat.¹⁶⁰

Hezekiah’s plea that Yhwh incline his ear in order to hear¹⁶¹ and open his eyes in order to see is encountered again nearly word for word in Dan. 9.18.¹⁶² The reason for Hezekiah’s request is not the attack on the city—this is simply not a theme in B2—but rather, the defamation of the living God (לַחֲרֹף אֱלֹהִים חַי, 37.17; cf. 37.4). If Sennacherib believes that Yhwh is simply one helpless god among many others, then he errs. In contrast to the אֱלֹהִים חַי, those gods are only the pathetic efforts of human hands, made of wood or stone¹⁶³ (מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי אָדָם עֵץ וָאֲבֶן)¹⁶⁴. This understanding about the nullity of the foreign gods is a logical result of the monotheistic confession: ‘Si Yahvé est le seul Dieu de tous les royaumes de la terre, tous leurs prétendus dieux n’en sont pas.’¹⁶⁵

The collective prayer to be heard אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹשִׁיעֵנו מִיָּדוֹ (37.20) suggests that Hezekiah stands as representative for many supplicants [of the book of Isaiah?].¹⁶⁶ His confession (37.16) has its final goal not in his own salvation, but rather, in the wish that all kingdoms of the world might recognize Yhwh: וִידְעוּ כָּל-מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ כִּי-אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ (37.20b). The motif of the recognition formula is prevalent in the book of Ezekiel,¹⁶⁷ the plague narratives of the book of Exodus,¹⁶⁸ the dtn/dtr writings,¹⁶⁹ Psalms,¹⁷⁰ and Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 49.26).¹⁷¹

159. 2 Chron. 20.6, 29; on מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ, see Deut. 28.25; Jer. 15.4; 24.9; 29.18; 34.1, 17; Ezra 1.2.

160. So M. Smith, ‘Jewish Religious Life’, p. 258: ‘Even prayer could do as much. The army of Sennacherib was destroyed at the prayers of Hezekiah and Isaiah, and more than a million Ethiopians at the prayer of Asa alone.’

161. הִטָּה אָזְנוֹךְ esp. in the Psalms: Pss. 17.6; 31.3; 71.2; 86.1; 88.3; 102.3.

162. ‘Open the eyes’ referring to Yhwh with פָּקַח is found again in Jer. 32.19; Zech. 12.4.

163. Gods of wood and stone: Deut. 28.36, 64; 29.16; Jer. 2.27; 3.9; Ezek. 20.32.

164. Identical to Deut. 4.28; cf. Pss. 115.4; 135.15.

165. Gonçalves, *L’expédition*, p. 466.

166. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, p. 101: ‘This first plural voice is also paradigmatic for the survivors who speak in the book.’

167. In addition, the classical monograph of Zimmerli, *Erkenntnis Gottes*; on the formula, see Ezek. 6.7, 13, 14; 7.4, 27; 12.15, 16, 20, and elsewhere.

168. Exod. 7.5, 17; 8.6, 18; 9.14; 14.4, 18; 15.7.

169. Deut. 29.5; Josh. 3.10; 1 Sam. 17.46, 47; 1 Kgs 8.43; 18.36–37; 20.13, 28.

170. Pss. 59.14; 109.26–27; 135.5.

171. In addition, Gonçalves, *L’expédition*, p. 467, with other evidence.

Hezekiah's monotheistic prayer is the orthodox answer to Sennacherib's blasphemy: Yhwh himself rules over all—he alone is Lord of creation and history!

The salvation oracle followed immediately, introduced by 37.21 but displaced in the present text by the interpolation of 37.22-29, 30-32, so that it is present only in vv. 33, 35.¹⁷² With a fourfold negation it is proclaimed to Hezekiah that there will be no siege (37.33). Positively, Yhwh reveals to him: 'I will protect (וְנִגַּדְתִּי) this city, so as to save it (לְהַשִּׁיעָהּ) for my sake (לְמַעַנִי) and for the sake of my servant David (דָּוִד עַבְדִּי).' The proto-apocalyptic interpolation of 31.5 has recourse to this verse, and had also already used B1 (36.14-15) as a reference; from B1, 31.5 takes up the key word נִצַּל, and from B2, the rare word גִּנָּן.¹⁷³ On a synchronic plane, the prophecy of divine protection for Zion is fulfilled in an unambiguous way.¹⁷⁴

This steadfast protection and certain salvation of Jerusalem for the sake of Yhwh's honor and for the sake of his Davidic promise¹⁷⁵ are the focus of B2, and in the present final text the purpose of the narratives of 36-37 generally. For Yhwh's action to lead to the nations' recognition of his exclusive divinity, it must be more spectacular than the mere departure of Sennacherib from Jerusalem and his subsequent murder by his sons. The night-time appearance of the killing messenger of Yhwh (מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה) with the corpses of 185,000 Assyrians is the fitting spectacle. In these images are combined characteristics of the מַשְׁחִית (Exod. 12.23) who strikes the firstborn of Egypt, and of the מַלְאֲכֵי (Exod. 14.19) who brings both freedom and death by way of the sea.¹⁷⁶ As the saved Israelites in the time of Moses saw the dead Egyptians (Exod. 14.30), so now the saved in Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah find the corpses of their enemies in the morning. Salvation happens through Yhwh alone, with not even a witness to the act

172. Isa. 37.34 was probably added only after the interpolation of Isa. 37.22-29; v. 34 takes up v. 29 nearly literally and attempts to unite more firmly the song of derision and the original salvation oracle (33, 35). Furthermore, the presentation of Sennacherib's departure is foreign to the B2 narrative; its end lies not in his departure, but in the massacre in his own camp!

173. Only in Isa. 31.5 (twice); 37.35//2 Kgs 19.34; Isa. 38.6; Zech. 9.15; 12.8.

174. Liebreich, 'Compilation', p. 270: 'It becomes apparent that the promise made in division III (31.5) was actually fulfilled in Sennacherib's unsuccessful siege of Jerusalem.'

175. Typical dtr expression, cf. 1 Kgs 11.13, 32, 34; 2 Kgs 20.6.

176. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, pp. 473-74; in the Kings text (2 Kgs 20.35) the parallel to the night of death for the firstborn of Egypt is still more clear (Exod. 11.4; 12.8, 29).

among the liberated.¹⁷⁷ But the dramatic conclusion of B2 not only takes up elements of the plague stories,¹⁷⁸ it also explicates via narrative the tenor of the anti-Assyrian oracles in the book of Isaiah. In the moment of greatest threat, Yhwh will suddenly and unexpectedly place himself before Zion, protecting and saving, so that its enemies are destroyed in a flash.¹⁷⁹ The freeing of Zion is fulfilled at the last minute: 'In the evening terror prevails, yet before morning comes—they are wiped out' (17.14a; cf. also 29.5–8). The 'superhuman sword', which according to 31.8 will bring down Assyria and devour it, is now wielded by the מלֹאֵךְ יְהוָה (37.36).¹⁸⁰ For the reader of the book this means: If the anti-Assyrian oracle of the חזון of the prophet was so clearly fulfilled already in his lifetime, then his promises in the second part of the scroll will also be fulfilled with the same certainty! Looking back on the Isaianic core of the oracle in Isaiah 28–31, the great difference in the presentation of the prophet becomes clear. There he was the nearly resigned warner and exhorter; here he is the man of God who communicates the divine promise and whose words assuredly come about.¹⁸¹

The first round of the conflict ended with the ostensible help of Egypt; now the narrative closes with real salvation from Yhwh.¹⁸² The messenger of Yhwh strikes 185,000 Assyrians; is Sennacherib among them? No, he returns to his own land, to be killed there at the hand of his sons in the temple of his god, Nisroch. Thus the second part of the salvation oracle is also fulfilled (37.7). The living God of Israel not only protects Zion, but proves himself also on foreign terrain as the only effective God, whose deeds correspond to his words.

5.4.2. *The Victorious Virgin Zion and the Saved Remnant (Isaiah 37.22–29, 30–32)*

Before the second salvation oracle of the prophet to Hezekiah (37.33, 35), there are two interpolations: the derisive song of the daughter

177. Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 474: 'Ils ne sont même pas témoins de cette action dont ils constatent, étonnés, le résultat.'

178. Possibly also 1 Sam. 5.6–6.16; 2 Sam. 24.

179. So Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 471: Isa. 8.8b–10; 10.12, 16–19, 24–27; 14.25b–27; 17.12–14; 29.5–8; 30.27–33; 31.5, 8–9.

180. U. Becker, *Jesaja*, p. 222, is of the view that Isa. 36–37 was originally tied directly to Isa. 31.8a.

181. Entirely otherwise, U. Becker, *Jesaja*, makes Isa. 36–37 the foundation of the oldest oracle traditions, for which he pays a high price, however: he must deny to Isaiah all disaster prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem (pp. 282–83, among other places)!

182. Leene, 'שמועה en רוח', p. 50.

of Zion (37.22-29) and the proclamation of a sign (37.30-32). The secondary character of these verses inside of B2 is commonly recognized by scholars. At least two reasons support the case for the separation of vv. 22-29 from 30-32. First, the former are addressed to the arrogant oppressor, which can only refer to Sennacherib; the latter verses, however, are addressed to Hezekiah or to the readership of the book. Second, the promise of renewed fruitfulness and growth for the saved remnant goes far beyond the narrative framework of the Assyrian crisis of 701.¹⁸³ Also in favor of the interpolation of Isa. 37.22-29 is the fact that the Yhwh oracle (of course only a negative one) is directed to the blasphemer here, while elsewhere in B1 and B2 there is no word for the blasphemer.

The first interpolation consists of a judgment oracle against the enemy but is quite varied in its literary type, which argues for a setting in the late period of the history of ancient Israelite literature. Following the poem of derision by the Daughter of Zion (37.22-24a) is a 'monologue of arrogance'¹⁸⁴ couched in a quotation (24aβ-25), to which is joined the divine oracle of judgment (26-29). The positive result for the city of God is thus established so securely that the virgin Daughter of Zion can already exult proleptically over her oppressor.¹⁸⁵ If Sennacherib had formerly tormented the besieged with his questions, now similar questions are directed against him. His 'In whom have you trusted?' (36.5) is opposed with 'Whom have you despised and derided?' (37.23). As the Assyrian previously laid open Hezekiah's thoughts thus emphasizing his subjection (36.7¹⁸⁶), so Yhwh now repays the blasphemer in kind (37.24-25).¹⁸⁷

The designation of Jerusalem as *בֵּית יְרוּשָׁלַם* points to an exilic-post-exilic period of authorship.¹⁸⁸ The combination of *גָּדַף* and *חָרַף* in v. 23 refers back to B1 where these key words occur in 37.4 and 37.6, while 37.24, with the use of *חָרַף* by itself, alludes to B2 where the verb also

183. So Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 142.

184. So García López, 'Analyse littéraire', pp. 484-85: 'Monologue de l'arrogance ou de l'orgueil', to which he adds, among others, also Deut. 8.17-18; 9.4-7; Isa. 10.13-14; 14.13-14; the parallel of Deut. 8.17 and Isa. 10.13-14 is especially telling: 'Aussi bien le roi assyrien qu'Israël attribuent à leurs propres mérites et à leurs propres forces ce qui est l'oeuvre de Dieu' (p. 485).

185. So Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*, p. 270.

186. The Isaiah version with the singular is clearly preferable to the Kings text *הַמְּחַרְיִן*.

187. Fewell, 'Sennacherib's Defeat', p. 82: 'He becomes the taunter, the threatener, the punisher, and the destroyer.'

188. So Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 143; cf. Mic. 4.8; Zeph. 3.14; Zech. 9.9.

stands alone (37.17). This leads to the educated guess that the interpolation of vv. 22–29 is to be placed in the same period as the joining together of B1 and B2, at the earliest.¹⁸⁹ The dependence of the arrogant speech of 37.24aβ–25 on Isa. 10.13–14 and 14.8–14 is obvious. The arrogance of Assyria (10.5–15)¹⁹⁰ and Babylon (14.8–14) are bundled together and placed in the mouth of Sennacherib. There are allusions which presuppose a knowledge of the Isaianic oracle-tradition.¹⁹¹

The fact that the subjection of Egypt is attributed to Sennacherib (37.25) and not, as would be historically accurate, to his son Assarhaddon (671 BCE) argues not only for a certain distance of the narrator and his readership from the event, but at the same time indicates Sennacherib's self-glorification. He claims for himself the feat of having dried up the Nile, like Yhwh.¹⁹² The proximity to the thought of Deutero-Isaiah is felt very strongly in 37.26:¹⁹³ 'Have you not heard? From afar (למרחוק¹⁹⁴) I effected it; from days of old I formed it; now I have brought it to pass.' Yet this brings to mind not only the relationship with Deutero-Isaiah's mindset,¹⁹⁵ but also at the same time the connection with the Proto-Isaianic oracle tradition. So with 37.26 incorporates the verb שָׁאַה ('to be a waste', 'to make a desert'), verified elsewhere for certain only in Isa. 6.11a,b. In addition the destruction of the 'fortified cities' in 37.26b has its counterpart in the laying waste of the cities in 6.11. The fact that different contexts are involved in the two passages is an argument for, not against, the associative nature of the relationship. Thus, in almost playful ways, the connections turn out to be at times more direct, at times more indirect, at times stronger, at times weaker, in order to encourage the learned reader to trace the network of relationships in the citations, allusions, and motifs! So the literate will notice that the expression חָתוּ וּבָשׁוּ of 37.27 appears again only in 20.5 and that דָּשָׁא, חֲצִיר and יֶרֶק also occur together in 15.6.

189. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 143; Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 486, thinks instead in terms of Isa. 37.22–29 being located chronologically between B1 and B2.

190. Deutsch, 'Die Hiskiaerzählungen', p. 76: 'Vv. 26–29 are accordingly an interpretation of Isa. 10.5–11 from the perspective of folk piety.'

191. Cf. in addition 37.24 (אֲנִי עָלִיתִי מִרוֹם הָרִים יִרְכָּתִי לִבְנוֹן) with 14.13 (אֲרֻזִּי לִבְנוֹן), and 37.24 (אֲרֻזִּי מִבְּחָר), 14.8 (אֲרֻזִּי לִבְנוֹן).

192. Isa. 44.27; 50.2; 51.10.

193. Cf. Isa. 40.28; 44.7; 45.21; 46.9.

194. Isa. 45.21; 46.10: מִקֶּדֶם and 51.9: בְּיָמַי קֶדֶם.

195. Isa. 40.21; 41.4, 26; 44.7–8; 45.21; 46.9–11; 48.3–8; 51.9–10.

The relationship of 37.22-29 to parts of the Deutero-Isaianic linguistic and thought world leads Werner to pose the very legitimate question,

whether the Deutero-Isaianic points of contact in a section that is attributed to proto-Isaiah might not indicate a time in which Isaiah 40–55 was already associated with the book of Isaiah... The interpolation would then be of a relatively late date, and O. Kaiser's supposition that the chapters of Isaiah 36–39 were interpolated into an Isaiah scroll which already contained Isaiah 40ff. would not be unreasonable.¹⁹⁶

Also supporting the idea of the incorporation of Isaiah 36–39 into an already existing unity of Isaiah 1–35* and 40–55 is the fact that 40–55 have remained entirely untouched by the Hezekiah tradition. Had chaps. 40–55 been attached to a textual corpus consisting of 1–39*, one might expect a few allusions to the HIN.

In 37.30-32 another interpolation presents a depiction of the remnant community situated on Mount Zion. The sign of a slow, but steadily increasing fruitfulness, which only in the third year gains full strength, breaks completely with the narrative framework of the HIN. Verses 31-32 confirm the presumption of a figurative meaning for this image and

raise the question whether the sign is not meant allegorically and has in view the eschatological role of the remnant, which survives the storming by the nations in the last days of a history full of battle and conflict, and thus is destined to be the germ of a new Israel, an Israel to which the nations make pilgrimage and which rules the earth.¹⁹⁷

Nowhere else in the book of Isaiah is there such concentrated language concerning the idea of the remnant,¹⁹⁸ on top of which is the chiastic arrangement of the terms *פליטה* and *שארית*. The Hezekiah of B1 had already entreated Isaiah to intercede with Yhwh on behalf of the remnant which was left behind (*השארית הנמצאה*, 37.4), in which the idea of the Jerusalem population trapped by Sennacherib still dominated. This reference to the concrete threat in 701 is abandoned

196. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 143; see Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 291: 'It is possible that chapters 40ff. had already been accepted into the Isaiah scroll at the time of the addition, so that chapter 39 with its references to the Babylonian exile forms a transition to the salvation prophecies of the nameless exilic prophet whom we call the second Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah.'

197. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, p. 315.

198. Hausmann, *Israels Rest*, p. 132: 'It can be assumed that the remnant idea has been consciously inserted here in a concentrated way in order to remove any last doubts about a positive future for Judah.'

here and ‘in 37.32 “the remnant” is already a technical expression for the Jews in Jerusalem who were saved from the catastrophe’.¹⁹⁹

These three verses are a mixture of quotations, allusions, and transfer of motifs from the already existing core of chaps. 1–35. Thus the sign of the slowly increasing fruitfulness²⁰⁰ of 37.30 is reminiscent of the promise of a new beginning through the holy seed of the felled tree stump (6.13bβ). This connection is made even stronger by the fact that the rare *שאר* of the neighboring verse 6.11 is also found in 37.26. The term *פליטה* recalls 4.2-3 and 10.20, each of which speaks of the remnant (*שאר/הנשאר*), as in Isa. 37.31-32 (*שארית/נשארה*). The statement that a remnant would go forth from Jerusalem and a group of survivors from Zion evokes the thought in Isa. 2.3b, which says that Torah shall go forth from Zion, and Yhwh’s Word from Jerusalem. On the other hand, a quote in 37.32b borrows 9.6 quite literally: *קנאת יהוה צבאות העשה זאת*. This is not happenstance, but indicates rather that the reader will connect the interpolation of Isa. 37.30-32 with the oracle in 9.1-6. The sign (*אות*) from 7.11 and 37.30 points in one and the same direction. The remnant community locates itself in the vicinity of the Emanuel prophecy toward which 9.5 aims (7.14). Both interpolations of 37.22-29 and 37.30-32 depend so heavily on references from the book of Isaiah that they necessarily imply knowledge of it.

5.5. *The Pious King Saves Himself and the City (Isaiah 38)*

The story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery is parallel to that of the threat and salvation of Zion. The destinies of city and king are inextricably bound up with one another.²⁰¹ Comparison with the Kings version shows that the greatest difference between the two versions lies in this story, which suggests that it is precisely in Isaiah 38 in contrast to 2 Kgs 20.1-11 that the different pragmatics can be understood most clearly. The following differences between the Isaiah and Kings texts may be noted in particular:

199. Mowinckel, ‘Komposition’, p. 288.

200. It may be that *שחים* (wild growth) as compared to *ספיה* (new growth; Lev. 25.5, 11) represents an intensification of the crisis; things must first become still worse before they are finally better! So Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 144.

201. See the diagram under 5.3. Cf. Seitz, *Zion’s Final Destiny*, ‘The point to be made is that the composition, or at least the editing, of chapter 38 has taken place with an eye toward the Hezekiah-Isaiah narratives of 36–37.’

Isaiah 38	2 Kgs 20.1-11
1) vv. 4-5: 'go (הלך) and say' (No indication of place)	'return (שוב) and say' (indication of place, v. 4a)
2) v. 5a: 'to Hezekiah'	'to Hezekiah', נגיד עמי
3) v. 5b: Oracle: 15 years and	Healing; third day to the temple; 15 years
v. 6: freeing of the city	and freeing of the city.
4) _____	למעני ולמען דוד עבדי
5) _____	medicinal treatment
_____	healing
6) v. 7: A sign for the word (given freely)	A sign (demanded) for healing and temple visit on the third day
7) v. 8: A sign realized without influence of Isaiah	Hezekiah chooses the difficult sign Isaiah cries out for fulfillment
8) v. 8: 'by the sun'	Shadow goes back
9) vv. 9-20: Psalm of Hezekiah	_____
10) v. 21: medical treatment, _____	
which cures him	
11) v. 22: Request for a sign for a temple visit	

In the Isaiah version, the narrative tension caused by the threat of death (חלה... למות) is resolved only in the penultimate verse, and even then only in the future: 'Let a fig paste be brought and applied onto the ulcer so that he may recover.' The healing is not reported in the Isaiah text as a fact. The king remained a convalescent to the end. The illness was indeed overcome; nevertheless, a boundary was set to his life. Inspired by the parallels of king and city, this could mean that the life-threatening crisis of Jerusalem of 701 was indeed deferred, but not removed. The same is true for Josiah. The prophetess Huldah reveals to him that the exile would indeed overtake Judah and Jerusalem, but he himself would be united with his fathers in the grave בשלום (2 Kgs 22.20²⁰²).

Isaiah 38 presents the contrast between death and life,²⁰³ with praise in the house of God and silence in the underworld in the foreground, and the theme of healing remaining in the background. By contrast, in the Kings version this motif is entirely in the service of the presentation of Isaiah as a miracle worker, equal to an Elijah or Elisha. So the first trajectory of the illness of Hezekiah is already closed in 2 Kgs 20.7 with his healing, and the second trajectory

202. Josiah is alluded to in 39.8 (2 Kgs 22.20).

203. See חיה with derivatives חיי, חיים: 38.1, 9, 11, 12, 16, 19, 20, 21.

originates in the question that follows, whether he would truly be so healed that he would be able to go to the temple again inside of three days. The Kings text is concerned not only with the medical facts of the healing, but also with cultic purity.²⁰⁴ According to Leviticus 13, seven days after a skin lesion is discovered a first follow-up examination must be performed, and must be repeated after another week, if necessary; after that, if the rash has worsened, the person must be sent off because of a serious skin disease and the priest declares the diseased one unclean (טמא). Since the salvation oracle in 2 Kgs 20.5b sets the reestablishment of the cultic cleansing as early as the third day, Hezekiah demands a sign which would guarantee such a rash promise of healing. This requested sign calls on all the prophet's resources, so that he must make a great effort. He cries to Yhwh (ויקרא...אל יהוה) and is successful, for 2 Kings ends with the miracle of the shadow which runs backward. The Kings text is not primarily about the healing of the king, but about Isaiah's ability to effect an extravagant miracle from Yhwh.

The difference between the Isaiah and Kings texts is clear. Here Hezekiah no longer demands a sign; on the contrary, it is offered to him freely. The offering of a sign by Isaiah serves only to confirm the effectiveness of the word of God; it therefore has nothing to do with a possible skepticism on Hezekiah's part. In the Isaiah text it is of course out of the question that Hezekiah should demand a sign. A pious petitioner does not demand; he receives! In Isaiah 38, the idea that the God-fearing would be able to select between easier and more difficult miracles, and would then choose the more complex is quite impossible. Given such a choice, the Hezekiah of Isaiah 38 certainly would have answered as his father had: 'I do not want to request anything and will not put the Lord to a test!' The sign which was freely given to the pious king serves only one purpose in Isaiah 38: it is a guarantee that Yhwh 'will do the דבר which he has proclaimed' (38.7).

Correspondingly, the pragmatics of the Kings text follows the prophet's cry to Yhwh with the miracle of the shadow; Isaiah is an essential participant in the materialization of the miracle. In the Isaiah version, on the other hand, Yhwh alone is responsible for the miracle; it is he who, 'by the sun' (בשמש), draws back the shadow cast on Ahaz's dial by ten steps. Not only the shadow, but the sun itself

204. Thus Catastini, *Isaia ed Ezechia*, p. 272: 'Per questo, la ritualistica prescritta in II Re 20.6—la salita al tempio al terzo giorno—doveva servire a fugare anche i sospetti di impurità.'

obeys Yhwh, who thus makes good on his word (cf. Josh. 10.12-14). After the sign, which confirms both the promise of extending the life of the king as well as that of the deliverance of Jerusalem—in Isa. 38.5-6 there is simply no mention of a cure(!)—Hezekiah's writing (מכתב) 'about his illness and how he survived his illness'²⁰⁵ stands in the center in Isaiah 38. The syntactical disunity of this piece of writing within its context draws attention to the piece.²⁰⁶ The 'miracle of the shadow', with which the Kings version ends as a climax, is in the Isaiah text only the trigger for a piece of writing that now draws all the attention to itself. Like David (2 Sam. 22; Ps. 18), Hezekiah, with the end of his life in view, is also granted a composition in which the pious king celebrates his deliverance from great difficulty.²⁰⁷ Yet while the song of David referred to liberation in the face of his enemies (2 Sam. 22.18, 35-43), in the מכתב it is Yhwh himself who brought Hezekiah to the gates of Sheol. Its similarity to Job's lament is unmistakable.²⁰⁸

The general designation 'Psalm of Hezekiah' is only partly accurate. As to literary type, this מכתב is most likely to be understood as an individual thanksgiving song with a review of the previous situation of the lament (38.10-14).²⁰⁹ Still, 'formally it is striking that the song begins neither with a call upon Yahweh, as is usual in the lament, nor with an introduction in the form of a declaration of intent to praise God, nor an invocation, as is typical of the thanksgiving song'.²¹⁰ More than one Psalm resembles this 'transcription' of a

205. So Buber translates, *Bücher der Kündung*, p. 119 ['um sein Kranksein und wie er von seiner Krankheit auflebte']; similarly Wildberger, *Jesaja. 3. Teilband*, p. 1440: 'as he was ill and again recovered from his illness' ['Als er krank war und von seiner Krankheit wieder genas'].

206. For a text-critical discussion of the psalm, see van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, pp. 3-7.

207. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 182: 'The frequent practice of placing poetic material toward the end of large blocks of tradition (Gen. 49; Deut. 32-33) was adopted for the proto-Isaiah material, by means of the psalm of the king (Isa. 38.9-20).'

208. Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia*, p. 58: 'The God who torments him is, someone other than the one from whom he requests help. For him the two ways of Yahweh's working are so separate that he can use an image of him which presents virtually two persons, that he was able to cry out to God against God, like Job.'

209. For the specification of the literary type, see Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia*, pp. 4-12.

210. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, pp. 320-21.

soliloquy of a person in great personal difficulty.²¹¹ This comes to a climax in v. 14b: 'O Lord, I am oppressed; be my security' (אֲדֹנָיִי (עֲשֵׂקָה לִי עֲרֹבָנִי).²¹² With v. 15 comes a drastic change in the voice of the petitioner which contrasts with the euphoric confidence of being heard that is found in many psalms of lament.²¹³ What triggers this change of tone is not the sudden removal of the difficulty, but rather clinging to the promise of God: 'Que dirai-je? alors qu'il m'a fait une déclaration et qu'il l'a réalisée',²¹⁴ which is related to the promise of extending Hezekiah's life in 38.5. In a most difficult illness, close to death, new strength from the promise of extended years of life awakens the pious king! Nevertheless, no ground for euphoria exists, as the difficult v. 15b shows: 'I shall wander all my years in the bitterness of my soul.'²¹⁵ The אֲדֹרָה (1QIsa^a: אֲדֹרָה) alludes to the slow and uncertain course of a convalescent who has escaped death, it is true, but his whole life long remains marked by the disease.²¹⁶ The following v. 16 confirms that the recovered one is aware that his new life is thanks to the salvation promises of God alone, to which עליהם and בהן refer: 'Seigneur! c'est grâce à cela que l'on revit et c'est en ces choses que réside toute la vie de mon souffle.'²¹⁷

Hezekiah ended his prayer on the distress of Jerusalem with the key word יָשַׁע (37.20), and this word occurs at the end of this song as well. The declaration 'with my stringed instruments we will sing all the days of our life in the house of Yhwh' points ahead to the closing question of Hezekiah: 'What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of Yhwh?' (38.22). Here Hezekiah is like a father who

211. Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia*, p. 54: 'The Psalmist laments to himself. His words are a *monologue*, a monologue of distress.'

212. So Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 271: 'Seigneur, on me fait violence, sois mon garant!'; also Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia*, p. 58: 'If we consider how emphatically the Wisdom of Israel warns against standing surety, we can detect only the slightest hope in the word עֲרֹבָנִי. About his certainty of being heard nothing more is said.'

213. Cf. Pss. 6.9-11; 7.15, etc.; against Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia*, p. 59, who call this a 'surprising, sudden change in the tone of the song.'

214. Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 272, on Isa. 38.15a: עֲשֵׂה לִי וְהוּא עֲשֵׂה.

215. Buber, *Bücher der Kündung*, p. 120; Barthélemy's text-critical discussion (*Critique*, pp. 272-73) arrives at a similar conclusion.

216. Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 273.

217. Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 275; Buber, *Bücher der Kündung*, p. 120: 'by these things one lives, in this alone is the life of my spirit'; de Boer, 'Notes on Text and Meaning', p. 182: 'One lives by these things'; differently, Barré, 'Restoring', p. 391, who restores v. 16aβ as follows: הַמְחִייה בְּלִבְ / הַמְחִייה רוּחַ ('O Lord Most High, you who give life to every heart, who give life to [every] spirit...').

relates to his sons his own experience of the faithful God (38.19) and now with them, that is, with all who have been inspired by his experience, wishes to give his song a 'premier performance' in the house of Yhwh.²¹⁸ What a contrast to the close of Isaiah 39, where it is announced to Hezekiah that several of his sons will do their service as eunuchs in the temple of the king of Babylon (v. 7), and what a contrast to the lot of Sennacherib, who is murdered by his own sons in the temple of his god!

But still Hezekiah's illness stands in contrast to the 'premiering' of the מכתב in the house of Yhwh; this is brought out in v. 21: 'Let a fig paste be brought and applied onto the ulcer so that he may recover.' The initiation of healing by a fig compress is in no way displaced in the Isaiah version, for if Hezekiah had been healed already at the beginning of the narrative as in the Kings version, this would have robbed the מכתב of its drama. The pious king writes his prayer not as someone who has recuperated, but rather as someone who is deadly ill, who relies entirely on the word of God, confirmed by a sign.²¹⁹ Thus the healing process is only introduced with Isa. 38.21; the recuperation has yet to happen. For the pious petitioner, the divine promise of recuperation is more important than the healing itself. Furthermore, it is not primarily about Hezekiah, but about the praise of God that he wishes to sing in the temple with his friends. The psalm is not an anomalous block inside of the narrative, but rather reinforces and condenses the narrative's own best purpose.²²⁰ This literary type—narratives that end with poetic pieces—is also found, among other places, in Genesis 49, Deuteronomy 32–33, and 2 Samuel 22–23. This suggests the exilic–postexilic period for the writing of this Psalm of Hezekiah.

A pre-exilic time of composition is also an improbability for the prose of Isa. 38.1–8, 21–22 // 2 Kgs 20.1–11. Thus the expression in 38.3, *החלה כתי לפיך באמת*²²¹ ובלב שלם, is indigenous to the deuteronomic writing style;²²² the same is true for *הטוב בעיניך עשיתי*,²²⁴ which

218. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 178: 'Hezekiah looks forward to his new life in the temple in the company of other worshippers.'

219. Thus J. Jeremias, correctly ('Jes XXXVIII 21f.', p. 107).

220. Against de Boer, 'Notes on Text and Meaning', p. 185: 'There is no direct contact with this story.'

221. Cf. 1 Kgs 8.61; 11.4; 15.3, 14; 1 Chron. 28.9; 2 Chron. 16.9.

222. Cf. Josh. 24.14; 1 Sam. 12.24; 1 Kgs 3.6.

223. 1 Kgs 2.2–4; 3.6; 8.25; 11.4; 14.8; 15.3; 2 Kgs 10.31; 23.3.

224. Cf. Deut. 6.18; 12.28; 2 Chron. 14.1; 31.20.

reminds one of the standard deuteronomistic formula, עשה הרע בעיני יהוה.²²⁵

Hezekiah's זכר-נא is found only once again, on the lips of Nehemiah (Neh. 5.19). The designation of Yhwh as the God of David (אלהי דוד) is in accord with the deuteronomistic idea of divine grace for the sake of his servant David.²²⁶ If the dependence on the deuteronomistic writing may be regarded as assured,²²⁷ the fact that Hezekiah's illness was not tied to his sinfulness or immorality points to a post-deuteronomistic period of composition. Even 38.17b does not alter this conclusion. That Yhwh has cast Hezekiah's sins behind his back²²⁸ does not emphasize his guilt, but rather, Hezekiah's thankfulness for the gift of new life. Hezekiah's illness does not mean punishment for his sins, but is a test of his piety—it is not a coincidence that both Hezekiah and Job are stricken by a שחין (Job 2.7).

The Psalm of Hezekiah itself dates to the postexilic period.²²⁹ The theme of Yhwh causing a mortal danger for the pious righteous is a familiar one in the book of Job and the Psalter;²³⁰ similarly, the theme of the descent into the underworld stems from these traditions.²³¹ When Hezekiah laments that he would see neither Yhwh nor a human being (v. 11), he echoes a well-known concern of the Psalm writers that, in their existential distress, cultic and social life were to be taken away from them forever.²³² The comparison of a premature death with the breaking down of a shepherd's tent is likewise found in Job and in the Psalms,²³³ and the idea that the worship of God ends with death (Isa. 38.18–19) is also found in the Psalms.²³⁴ The reflexive אִמְרָתִי of vv. 10–11, as in Jon. 2.5, 7 and Ps. 31.21, expresses 'the viewpoint of the petitioner after salvation'.²³⁵ The lack of the

225. 1 Kgs 11.6; 14.22; 15.26, 34; 16.19, 25, 30; 2 Kgs 8.18, 27; 13.2; 14.24; 15.9, 18, 24, etc.

226. Cf. 1 Kgs 11.36; 15.4; 2 Kgs 8.19.

227. So Meinhold already (1898) in *Die Jesajaerzählungen*, p. 18: 'In short, the writer of the report belongs to the deuteronomistic school.'

228. Cf. 1 Kgs 14.9; Ezek. 23.35; Neh. 9.26.

229. Against this dating, Nyberg, 'Hiskias Danklied', p. 96: 'On the contrary, the psalm is very archaic both in form as well as in content and belongs without any doubt to the pre-exilic period.'

230. Cf. among others, Job 10.20; Pss. 39.6; 102.25; 119.84.

231. Cf. among others, Job 10.21–22; 17.16; 21.13; 33.22; Pss. 9.14b; 18.6; 28.1b; 31.18; 39.14; 49.15.

232. Cf. Pss. 31.23; 42.3; 61.5; 84.3; 88.19; 116.9; 142.6.

233. Cf. Job 4.21; 5.24; 29.4; Ps. 91.10.

234. Cf. Pss. 6.6; 30.10; 88.11–13; 115.17–18.

235. Deutsch, 'Die Hiskiaerzählungen', p. 44.

thank-offering theme also argues for a postexilic period of writing; here the prophetic criticism of offering perhaps continues its presence in the literature of prayer.²³⁶ All these indicators point to the post-exilic period, as Deutsch, representing the great majority of scholars, maintains: 'God rewards the truly pious with life. But this is especially the conviction of postexilic legalistic piety.'²³⁷ In this context is also the fact that the Isaiah version ignores the cultic reform of Hezekiah from 2 Kgs 18.3-6, which in contrast was paraded extensively in 2 Chronicles 29-31, important evidence in determining the purpose of those who adapted the King's version for the book of Isaiah. For them the cult decreases in importance, while personal prayer gains importance.²³⁸ The Hezekiah of Isaiah 38 is profiled over against the negative image of his father Ahaz. Like Ahaz (7.11, 14), a sign was also offered to Hezekiah; the former rejected it, the latter accepts it (38.7). So it should also not be ruled out that the naming of the *מַעֲלָה* five times in the 'Hezekiah sign' (38.8) should be seen in connection with the offering of a sign to Ahaz, from the depths or from the heights (*לְמַעַל*, 7.11).²³⁹

5.6. *The Announcement of the Exile (Isaiah 39)*

The narrative of the visit of Merodach-Baladan's Babylonian delegation with Hezekiah is connected to chap. 38 and the HIN only by the opening verse, on the one hand by the temporal tie *בַּעַת הַחַוָּה* and on the other by the clause that recalls Hezekiah's illness and recuperation. Without these references, chap. 39 would be completely unrelated to 36-37 and 38.²⁴⁰ To name chaps. 38 and 39 in one breath, analogous to 36-37, is out of the question, however, because of the different presentations of prophet and king. Where Hezekiah formerly had saved the threatened Jerusalem (36-37) and his own life by composure and prayer (38), here he bears a share of the guilt for the prophet's announcement of judgment, i.e., of the Babylonian

236. So Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia*, p. 68.

237. Deutsch, 'Die Hiskiaerzählungen', p. 80.

238. Watts, *Psalm*, p. 130: 'Do these changes reflect an intentional de-emphasis of national cult in favor of the psalm's model of dependency on God?'

239. Ackroyd, 'Isaiah 36-39', p. 17 n. 3, asks whether a wordplay may be intended between *עֲלָמָה* (7.14) and *לְמַעַל* (7.11).

240. Cf. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 150: 'there is no direct compositional or redactional relationship between chapter 39 and chapters 36-37, but only one that is established by virtue of chapter 38 and the motif of sickness.'

exile; if Isaiah previously stood on the side of the king, now he abruptly turns against him. The Chronicler was already aware of this contradictory assessment and would attempt to harmonize it. He would re-interpret Merodach-Baladan's delegation as a divine test of Hezekiah, and would completely suppress the announcement of the exile (2 Chron. 32.31).

Biblical scholarship is agreed on this: historically speaking, the content of this narrative must be placed before Sennacherib's third campaign. Merodach-Baladan, contemporary war-lord of a south-Babylonian Aramaic tribe,²⁴¹ is said by archaeological documents to have reigned in Babylon from 721–710 and afterwards for a few months in 703. Indeed, a political attack against the still-powerful Assyria is ascribed to him even earlier than 703, in the course of the rebellion of Ashdod (713–711), in which Hezekiah would disassociate himself from Assyria.²⁴² However that may be, a delegation of Merodach-Baladan in the year 701 or shortly thereafter is not historically warranted. Therefore the present place of the narrative must be in the service of a pragmatic which is not of a historical, but of an ideological nature.²⁴³ In the book of Isaiah it leads from the Assyrian period to that of Babylonian dominance, creating a third bridge, after 33 and 35, to 40–55. Isaiah 39 makes it unmistakably clear to the reader 'that Jerusalem would not be rescued from the Babylonians in the way it had been spared from the Assyrians (Isa. 36–37)'.²⁴⁴ Jerusalem and Zion had once again escaped in the year 701, but the catastrophe of 587 could no longer be stopped. In this, Hezekiah and Josiah are comparable (cf. 2 Kgs 22.19–20). So Hezekiah in Isaiah 39 is 'an unwitting agent in bringing about the loss of the land'.²⁴⁵

The structure of the narrative is easily sketched out:

- v. 1: Exposition—the delegation from Babylon
- v. 2: Reaction of Hezekiah—'let them see everything'
- vv. 3–4: 'Interrogation' by the prophet—confession of guilt
- vv. 5–7: The sentence: pronouncement of exile
- v. 8: Hezekiah's reaction to the sentence

241. On this, see M. Dietrich, 'Merodach-Baladan' in *Die Aramäer Süd-babyloniens*.

242. Vogt, 'Der Aufstand Hiskijas', p. 29, places the delegation of Merodach-Baladan in the year 714/713.

243. So Ackroyd, 'Isaiah 36–39', p. 11: 'We may ask whether the order is not dictated by interests other than chronological or historical.'

244. Sheppard, 'Isaiah 1–39', p. 548.

245. Ackroyd, 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile', p. 341.

The dominating vocabulary is the five-fold הִרְאָה . Hezekiah lets the Babylonians *see* everything in his domain (hi., vv. 2-4), both his military and economic reserves; they inspect everything (qal, v. 4, twice). Here the showing and the seeing have a strong legal connotation. It involves a seeing for the purposes of lawful possession.²⁴⁶ The Isaiah version rather than the Kings text offers the better narrative logic, for in contrast to 2 Kgs 18.14-16, it does not contain the statement of Hezekiah's counting out tribute money to the Assyrians. Thus it rejects the narrative inconsistency of the Kings text which speaks on the one hand of paying heavy tribute, but on the other of great riches! The announcement of the exile in vv. 5-7 ends with the note that the royal princes would perform their service as סֵרִיסִים in the palace of the king of Babylon. The fulfillment of this prophecy is not found in the book of Isaiah,²⁴⁷ but rather in the book of Kings.²⁴⁸ In the book of Isaiah the royal sons as סֵרִיסִים point to the end of the monarchy, and in the rest of the book no human king over Israel or Judah is mentioned again.

The reference to the exile in 39.6-8 confirms the prophetic abilities of Isaiah on the one hand, and on the other hand it is the only place in the book which speaks explicitly of the events of 587. The exile, proclaimed in 39, is already past in 40.1.²⁴⁹ Since the announcement in 39.6-8 is the only place in the book to speak of the exile, it places a heavier burden on Hezekiah than in the Kings version, where the prophecy of Isaiah in 2 Kgs 20.17 is fulfilled in 24.13, giving more emphasis to the validity of his word than to the guilt of the king. Hezekiah's reaction to the announcement of the exile is astonishing, especially if one interprets it in the sense of 'After me, the deluge!'²⁵⁰ This would completely contradict his characterization in 36-37 and 38, and strongly detracts from the intended purpose of presenting

246. Ackroyd, 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile', pp. 340-41, with the following examples: Gen. 13.14-17; Deut. 3.27-28; 34.1-4; Mt. 4.8-9; Lk. 14.18; also Gonçalves, *L'expédition*, p. 340; Ruprecht, 'Die ursprüngliche Komposition', p. 431.

247. Of a different opinion, Webb relates Isa. 56.3-4 to 39.7 ('Zion in Transformation', p. 79 n. 1); so also Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 210.

248. 2 Kgs 24.12-16; see also 2 Kgs 25.7, 27-30.

249. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, p. 99: 'In 39.6-7 God said, and in 40.1 it was so!'

250. So Ruprecht, 'Die ursprüngliche Komposition', p. 44: 'It rings quite cynical as Hezekiah breathes a sigh of relief because the disaster will not come in his lifetime: "What does that matter, as long as peace and security rule in my lifetime!"'

him as an exemplary pious man.²⁵¹ The parallels already mentioned between Hezekiah and Josiah give further help. Neither the good Josiah nor the God-fearing Hezekiah was able to avert the proclaimed exile. Their positive conduct, nevertheless, was not entirely fruitless. At least they and those living in their period of rule are spared the exile. One might compare Hezekiah's reaction with the words of the prophetess Huldah to Josiah: 'I will unite you with your ancestors, and you shall be buried in your grave in peace. Your eyes shall not see all the disaster which I will bring to this place' (2 Kgs 22.20). The sentence of judgment is *נִצַּח*, not because it leaves Hezekiah without guilt, but because Yhwh offers one final grace.²⁵² With his reaction in Isa. 39.8//2 Kgs 20.19 Hezekiah is placed in the series of the good kings David and Josiah. In the same way that Hezekiah in his piety achieves only an extension of life but cannot escape death, the catastrophe of the exile will only be delayed but not removed. Piety is indeed effective, but no cure-all; nor does it infringe upon Yhwh's justice and sovereignty.²⁵³

5.7. *Place and Function of the HIN in the Book of Isaiah*

In the wake of these considerations the question should be raised, finally, about the place and function of the HIN in the book of Isaiah. For this we have recourse to the results of the comparison of the Kings and Isaiah versions, the interpretation of Isaiah 36–39 itself, the historical references, and the exegesis of 1–35 that has already been presented. If the chapters of the HIN, modified and enriched, were taken from the book of Kings into the book of Isaiah, these factors suggest it is because they already had close contacts with the Isaiah tradition from the beginning. In addition, the oracle tradition in Isaiah 28–31 came perforce out of the events of 701 and at the same time prompted the insertion of the HIN into the book of Isaiah. Even if they first found their place in the book of Kings, this does not mean that they were originally composed for that purpose. Thus one must agree with Williamson,

251. For exegeses of Hezekiah's reaction in 38.8, see the overview by Ackroyd, 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile', pp. 335–37.

252. Buber, *Bücher der Kündung*, pp. 122–23: 'HIS word which you have spoken is still gracious. He spoke further: For in my days, peace and faithfulness may still continue.'

253. Watts, *Psalms*, p. 125: 'The result is that Hezekiah's piety does save both himself and Jerusalem for the time being, but is insufficient to forestall impending judgment completely (38.5; 39.6–8).'

that these chapters were certainly written by someone who was thoroughly familiar with the earlier Isaianic tradition...and that they were not shaped at the first as part of the narrative of the Deuteronomistic History (so Smelik and Seitz in particular); they give every appearance of being incorporated into that work as a source.²⁵⁴

There is much to be said for the possibility that soon after 701 a Hezekiah tradition developed which clearly deviated from the Isaianic oracle tradition from the years 705–701. For the Isaiah tradents the heavy tribute which Sennacherib imposed on Hezekiah confirmed the oracles of the prophet, whereas for the Hezekiah tradition the departure of Sennacherib and the non-capture of Jerusalem meant the confirmation of the Davidic monarchy. This Hezekiah tradition of the threat and deliverance of Jerusalem could definitely have exerted its influence in the following period on the politics of Zedekiah and those besieged around the year 588, as Hardmeier believes.²⁵⁵ Thus the anti-Babylonian, pro-Egyptian faction interpreted the story of the deliverance of Jerusalem to the effect that paying tribute (2 Kgs 18.14–16) would not protect them from an attack by Nebuchadnezzar, just as Sennacherib had not been stopped from besieging Jerusalem by Hezekiah's tribute. With such reasoning, the politicians of the resistance in 588 would have opposed the demoralizing and anti-defense politics of surrender of a Jeremiah or Ezekiel. The Hezekiah tradition, which had already been in circulation for a century, did not first emerge under Zedekiah as a propaganda writing, but it was used politically at that time in order to strengthen the opposition to the surrender of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar.

This hypothetical history of the development of the HIN would likely neither have been known to the Isaiah book tradents nor have been of interest to them. They inserted the HIN in the middle of the scroll because, for one thing, it continued the Isaianic oracle tradition chronologically from Isaiah 28–31; for another, it offered a 'historical' point of reference, namely the year 701, for their Zion theology of the impregnable Mount of God, and in addition was yet another (!) bridge, connecting the two major portions of the scroll (1–35 and 40–66) even more closely. They also thereby took advantage of the opportunity to have all the biblical traditions about the great prophet together in one scroll.

254. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 193–94.

255. Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*, p. 465: 'a literary attempt, in the form of a historical Tendenz narrative, to influence the policies of Zedekiah around 588 for the purposes of the national-religious and anti-Babylonian faction.'

Concerning the question of the identity of those who may have placed the HIN in the Isaiah scroll, the following may be taken into consideration. The omission of the payment of tribute, the insertion of the Hezekiah psalm, and the emphasis on the pious prayer rather than the miracle, could point in the right direction, for which Williamson's remark proves valuable: 'If the psalm was added to fit the wider redactional concerns of the book as a whole, it is likely that the addition was made by the same editor who was responsible for including the narratives in the first place.'²⁵⁶

In contrast to the Kings version, where the healing and recovery of the ill king stand at the center in order to emphasize Isaiah's prophetic effectiveness, in the book of Isaiah it is the prospect of recovery that serves the emphatic purpose, with the recovery itself placed after the song of thanksgiving. In addition, the Isaiah version emphasizes Hezekiah's reverence for God, in that he composed his psalm not as a well person, but rather while still ill. The idea that he had paid tribute to the blasphemous Sennacherib was for these writers just as unacceptable as the idea that, given a choice between an easier or a more difficult sign, the pious king would have chosen the latter. Finally, with Hezekiah's psalm they created the opportunity for all who may be found in illness or any other difficulty to identify with its words. For all these it would be the case that the communal praise of God in the house of Yhwh is the fulfillment of their hope: 'We will play all the days of our life in the house of Yhwh.' Beyond the Hezekiah tradition of the HIN, this king was styled by the composers of the book of Isaiah as the pious person par excellence. Thus they made Hezekiah the type for the pious who, in their greatest need, may turn to Yhwh for protection and salvation on Zion, in the house of Yhwh. The emphasis in the psalm on the praise of God in the *בית יהוה* (38.20) is comparable with the mention of the house of Yhwh which, in regard to the admission of foreigners, encloses chaps. 56–66.²⁵⁷ If the bracketing formed by 56.1–8 and 66.18–23, however, belongs to the last major Isaiah redaction—that of the servant community—this suggests that they were also responsible for the insertion of the HIN into the book of Isaiah. While it may not be possible to prove this absolutely, at least a supporting argument may be offered. The theme of *שלום*, which ends the HIN (39.8), could have

256. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, p. 203, with an eye to the problem of the priority of the Kings or Isaiah version, not however in reference to the composition of the book of Isaiah.

257. So Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 210–11: 'House of Yhwh' in 56.5, 7; 66.20; in addition, 60.7; 64.10.

served, in connection with the servant redaction, to reinforce this motif also in 48.22 and 57.21, where it is, in contrast, a matter of the denial of peace for the wicked.²⁵⁸

The idea of the temple as a house of prayer, not of sacrificial offering, came at exactly the right time for the servant community; here the pious supplicant could find protection from the snares of those who called Yhwh's might and power into question, as the Assyrians once did. The existing Hezekiah tradition thus came in handy since it was so well-suited to serve as a pledge for their Zion theology.

As Assyria once was shattered on the Mount of God, so the fall of Babylon and the defeat of Edom were further proof that Yhwh would protect his city and lay low every attacker. Still, the situation of the community was filled with anxiety; they had to be content with disorderly growth, yet 'the surviving remnant from the house of Judah will again take root downward, and bear fruit upward; for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of Yhwh of hosts will accomplish this' (37.31-32). This community knew itself to be the holy seed of the stricken tree stump (Isa 6.13bβ); to this faithful remnant were promised renewed fruitfulness and Yhwh's steadfast faithfulness.

The threat and salvation of Zion in 701 have changed to the paradigm of the eschatological drama:²⁵⁹ every nation and all peoples who go up to fight against Zion will be shattered upon it. In spite of this tendentious idealizing of the historical facts, the composers still have not left behind a grounding in history, in contrast to their proto-apocalyptic successors. Stated in other words, 'Yhwh's angel' (37.36)—Yes!; 'An oven of fire on Zion' (31.9)—No!

The insertion of the HIN in the center of the book of Isaiah places it not only on the level of the final text, but also at the endpoint of the historical development of its fundamental overall compilation. With the addition of chaps. 36–39, the two major parts, which had already been connected by the bridging texts of Isaiah 33 and 35, gained not only a further linkage but also their textual center. As the oracles against Assyria and for the city of God had been fulfilled in the humiliating defeat of the attacker and in the death of the blasphemer,

258. Cf. Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 210-11.

259. Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 145: 'These stories, which are clearly postexilic in their final form, see the preservation of the city of Jerusalem, already interpreted as miraculous in late pre-exilic times, as a prefiguring of the eschatological event.'

so also the message of comfort in the later chapters will become a reality. From the movement of the nations *against* Zion in the first part of the book, an increasingly strong movement from the *golah*, Diaspora Judaism, and people of the nations is gathering *to* Zion!

This idea of Zion as the Mount of God for the righteous of Israel *and* the nations came under more and more pressure with the end of the Persian period, and could certainly no longer be maintained after the capture of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I (302/301 BCE). A beginning reaction to this isolation of the people of God, with a view to Isaiah 13–27; 28–35, is on the one hand the ‘Return of the Diaspora’ verses of 11.11–16; 27.12–13; and 35.9b–10; and on the other hand, a more radicalized reaction is seen in the proto-apocalyptic revision in 28–34. For these, the idea that the righteous of the nations would gain entrance to Zion is completely inadmissible. Now the nations are nothing other than a great *massa damnationis*, out of whom the scattered Jews only just save themselves on Mount Zion.

The fact that neither the Return of the Diaspora verses nor the proto-apocalyptic revision were able to inscribe themselves in the closing part of the book shows how strong, in contrast, the positive view of foreigners who were eager to affiliate was in the greater Isaiah book. The book’s tendency of openness to the nations is due in particular measure to the second major section and its prolific redactors. For those unwilling or unable to share this perspective for historically plausible reasons, there was nothing left but to leave their mark in Isaiah 28–34, perhaps not by chance in close proximity to the narrative of Sennacherib’s ignominious defeat and the death of the Assyrian attacker. Still, the fundamental openness of the book of Isaiah toward the nations could no longer be undone.

Chapter 6

ISAIAH 40–55: FROM BABYLON AND THE NATIONS TO ZION

6.1. *Introductory Remarks*

The separation of Isaiah 40 onwards from the previous chapters and, since Johann Christoph Döderlein and Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, its assignment to an anonymous prophet of the exile, belong to the most recognized findings in recent Old Testament exegesis. Döderlein (1775) assumed a single exilic author for Isaiah 40–66 and is regarded as ‘the discoverer of Deutero-Isaiah’.¹ A further milestone in Isaiah research was set by Bernhard Duhm (1892), who denied Isaiah 56–66 to the anonymous author from the exilic period and ascribed it to a postexilic ‘Trito-Isaiah’.²

Isaiah studies began only hesitantly to doubt the more postulated than proven unity of 40–55 and 56–66.³ These chapters were subjected to the redaction-critical method significantly later than the other prophetic books.⁴ One reason for that lay in the dominance of form-critical treatments of chaps. 40–55, treatments which upheld the relative unity of the textual corpus in spite of its diversity of genres. The complexity of the evidence was explained as the result of the assembling and mixing of originally independent genres, which

1. Vincent, *Studien*, pp. 15-39 (17); see also Hermisson, ‘Deuterojesaja-Probleme’, pp. 53-84, and Michel, ‘Deuterojesaja’, pp. 510-30.

2. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 14-15, 18-19; cf., in contrast, Caspari, *Lieder*, p. 244, who dismisses the anonymous exilic prophet as ‘a house plant on the scholar’s desk’.

3. Exceptions are the polemical texts against idols (40.18-20; 41.6-7; 44.9-20; 46.5-7) and the Ebed-Yahweh Songs (EYS) in 42.1-4; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; 52.13–53.12, which Duhm already saw as secondary.

4. See Kiesow, *Exodustexte*; Merendino, ‘Der Erste’; Vermeylen, ‘Le motif de la création’; Sekine, *Die Theodizee*; Hermisson, ‘Einheit und Komplexität’; Steck, *Gottesknecht und Zion*; Kratz, Kyros; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*.

was judged as a clearly late phenomenon in the literary history of ancient Israel.⁵

The difference between the Zion-centered chaps. 49–55 and chaps. 40–48 with their clear emphasis on Israel-Jacob was observed,⁶ it is true, but this difference was not analyzed redaction-critically. Either it was thought that there were various phases in the work of the exilic prophet, where the point of intersection was in Cyrus's takeover of Babylon in 539, or a Deutero-Isaianic school was held responsible⁷ for assembling a textual corpus of such striking differences. If form criticism explained the multiplicity of forms in Isaiah 40–55 as a late phenomenon of ancient Israelite literary history, for the founders of 'literary criticism' it was evidence of resourceful shaping of the text.⁸ So for a representative of 'rhetorical criticism' the present text is a prime example of the best rhetorical persuasion of 'Deutero-Isaiah' to the exiled, to inspire them to return from Babylon.⁹ There are attempts to prove the rhetorical brilliance of the concentric structure of the text to the smallest detail.¹⁰ A 'pitfall' of Deutero-Isaiah research consists of the view that the Babylonian 'setting' must be the only horizon for understanding 40–55; this is so dominant that all texts are forced into an exilic procrustean bed, so that 'wilderness and dry land', for example, in each and every case is seen as the *terra intermedia* between Babylon and Palestine. A good heuristic point of departure is thus unduly taxed and increasingly diminishes in its validity. Critical voices who wished to free Isaiah 40–55 from this 'exilic captivity' and place it in the context of the whole of the book of Isaiah were pushed to the fringes of the discourse.¹¹ Furthermore, the mostly church-based context of biblical research also likely played a subliminal role. If the entire book could not be attributed to the Isaiah of the eighth century, at least the assignment of 40–66 to the exilic 'Deutero-Isaiah' or to his postexilic student 'Trito-Isaiah' limited the damage, according to the principle that it is better to live with several

5. According to Melugin, *Formation*, p. 175, the arrangement of the originally independent textual units is 'kerygmatic'; he sees the search for a redactional development of Isa. 40–55 as illusory (p. 82).

6. Cf. Zillesen, 'Israel in der Darstellung', pp. 251–95.

7. Schmitt, 'Prophetie und Schultheologie', pp. 43–61, borrowing from Elliger, *Deuteriojesaja in seinem Verhältnis*.

8. Muilenburg, *Book of Isaiah*; Lack, *La symbolique*; Heßler, 'Gott der Schöpfer'; *Heilsdrama*.

9. Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*; Clifford, *Fair Spoken*.

10. So O'Connell, *Concentricity*.

11. So, among others, J. Becker, *Isaias* (1968); Vincent, *Studien* (1977).

'Isaiahs' than simply to let such dogmatically and liturgically important texts as the Servant of God poems fall into redactional anonymity.¹²

Still critical inquiry spared neither the 'call vision' of the exilic prophet (40.1-11) nor the Servant of Yhwh poems, which conceded ever less certain evidence for the individuality of a 'Deutero-Isaiah'. The redaction-critical work on Isaiah 40-55 begun in the last 20 years has truly freed these chapters from their 'exilic imprisonment'; this work, however, is entangled in a confusion of successive layers of redactions that are not dissimilar to the confusion of tongues at Babel. Yet there is no going back before these studies, since in spite of all their divergence they concur that it is the basic message of one exilic prophet¹³ that is primarily, if not exclusively, to be recovered within 40-48.¹⁴ But one must be cautious, since it is an illusion that the solving and proliferation of even the most detailed redactional layers would answer the question about the final form by itself. The results of redaction criticism increase in likelihood to the degree that they contribute to the understanding of the overall composition.¹⁵ The question of the development of the text is always also a question of the present form of the text.¹⁶

Setting aside the idea of a purely mosaic-like growth of these chapters and accepting the probability of a kerygmatic arrangement of various literary types opens up the search for a dramatic structure.¹⁷ The question of whether chaps. 40-55 should be conceived of as 'the desk work of a literary figure...who created this complex *ad hoc* for the redaction of the book of Isaiah'¹⁸ is certainly to be answered in the negative, but the fact that the question has an eye to

12. Cf. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 38.

13. In contrast, Leene, 'Auf der Suche', p. 818: 'In my view there has never been such a basic text.'

14. So among others, Merendino, 'Der Erste', p. 540; Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', pp. 309, 311; Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 217 (plus 52.7-10); van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 93-97; Vermeylen, 'L'unité', pp. 35-42.

15. Against Fohrer's skepticism in *Das Alte Testament*, p. 69: 'The origins of the Deutero-Isaianic text cannot be unlocked, since the principles of the composition or of the structure cannot be identified.'

16. Kratz's 'model of a diachronic composition criticism' (*Kyros*, p. 35) is accepted here, only the synchronic analysis should precede the diachronic in order to arrive at a 'text-production critical' holistic structure; see also Leene, 'Auf der Suche', p. 813.

17. It is doubtful whether this can be reduced to *one* concept, as Heßler attempts in *Heilsdrama*: 'Yahweh's Path to Universal Rule' (p. 27).

18. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 35.

the book is of crucial importance. In the end, one cannot deal with Isaiah 40–55 without taking the entire book of Isaiah into consideration; this is clear from the fact that the exilic prophet who is the most probable at least for 40–48* does not appear under his own name, but rather is placed in the tradition of Isaiah ben Amoz. This must be attributed to the intention of prophetic writers and composers in postexilic Israel.¹⁹

6.2. *The Structure of Isaiah 40–55*

After the announcement of the Babylonian Exile (39.6-7), the charge to anonymous persons to comfort 'my people' (40.1a)—that is, Jerusalem (40.2a)—is a complete surprise. The lack of development of the theme of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (in contrast to the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel) is a particular mark of the book of Isaiah. It is not about a reckoning or balancing out of an account with guilt and punishment, but rather about a hopeful new beginning for Jerusalem and Zion. For this comforting message of a new future, both proclaimer and hearer are required. The group of persons hidden behind the 'anonymous' ones will be clarified only in the course of the reading process, which suggests that the 'prologue' in 40.1-11 has a referencing function with regard to the subsequent chapters, while in itself it necessarily remains obscure. It is widely recognized that 56.1-8 begins a final major segment of the book, which for its part exhibits a chiasmic structure up to the end of the book.

It has frequently been emphasized that chaps. 40–48 and 49–55 are distinctly separate thematically. While the former deals with Israel's destiny in Babylon, the latter is about Jerusalem and Zion. Thus with Isaiah 48, important themes come to an end: 'Babylon-Cyrus',²⁰ 'former and latter/new things',²¹ 'polemic against idols',²² and matters of discussion about the 'incomparability of Yhwh'.²³ Yhwh still appears in Isaiah 40–48 in large part, if not exclusively, as אלהי ישראל²⁴

19. J. Becker, *Isaias*, p. 42: 'Its interest is that the entire book, redactional parts not excepted, be read as the work of the prophet Isaiah, just as the Pentateuch traces back every legal statement fictively to Moses.'

20. Cyrus texts: 41.1-5, 25; 43.14; 44.24-45.7; 45.13; 46.11; 48.12-16a; Babylon in 46-47.

21. 41.21-29; 42.6-9; 43.8-13; 44.6-8; 45.21; 46.8-11; 48.3-8, 14-16.

22. 40.19-20; 41.6-7; 42.17; 44.9-20; 45.20; 46.1-7; 47.9b-15 (against Babylonian divination practices).

23. 40.12-18, 21-31; 41.21-28; 42.14-17; 45.9-13; 46.3-5; 48.1-11.

24. 41.17; 45.3, 15; 48.1-2; 52.12.

and קדוש ישראל.²⁵ It is about his claim on Israel as his people, a claim that did not die either in or through the exile. Yet, it is not only about Israel, but also about Yhwh himself. For what is a God without people, who turn to him and thus maintain the memory of him? So in the center of 40–48 stands a renewed Yhwh-Israel relationship which was greatly imperiled by the exile and the loss of temple and statehood. Yhwh is fighting for Israel to return to him, as 44.22b clearly shows: ‘Return to me, for I have redeemed you’ (שׁוּבָה אֵלַי כִּי גִאֲלָתִיךָ).

That Yhwh’s freeing act for Israel played out through Cyrus was at first blush not congenial to the divine image; Yhwh could muster a foreign nation as punishment *against* his own people, as had become clear at least since the defeat of the Northern Kingdom in 722—but should he also be able to muster foreign powers *in favor* of Israel? The Exodus tradition stood against that notion, for there it had been Yhwh alone who carried out the liberation without outside help. Was that notion not closer to the idea that by destroying Jerusalem and temple, Yhwh bargained away his claim to divinity, while the gods of Babylon proved themselves the true leaders of the world and history? The strongest argument invoked against such a position is the ‘announcement proof’, according to which it is not the historical fact alone that counts, but rather the agreement of the word and the fulfilled deed. Thus already before Cyrus’s capture of Babylon, probably after his victory over Media (549) and Lydia (546), Yhwh would have announced through his prophet that he would bring disaster upon Babylon and give leave for Jerusalem and the temple to be restored (44.28). It speaks in Yhwh’s favor that he, and not the Babylonian gods, had foreseen this development, and thus their nothingness could finally be recognized (41.21–23). What Isaiah 40–48 is ultimately about is convincing Israel-Jacob²⁶ to see Yhwh himself at work in Cyrus’s victory. Only when the blind and deaf servant (42.18–20) acknowledges the liberation (גִּאֲלָה²⁷) as Yhwh’s work, is the soil prepared for the message of the comforting (נִחַם²⁸) of Zion,²⁹ i.e., of the restoration of postexilic Jerusalem. In the presence of the nations, Yhwh calls Israel to the witness stand, where Israel witnesses

25. 41.14, 16, 20; 43.3, 14; 45.11; 47.4; 48.17; 49.7; 54.5; 55.5.

26. 40.27; 41.8, 14, 17, 21; 42.24; 43.1, 15, 22, 28; 44.1, 2, 5, 21, 23; 45.3, 4, 15, 17, 19, 25; 46.3, 13; 47.4; 48.1, 2, 12, 20; 49.3, 5, 6, 7, 26.

27. 35.9; 41.14; 43.1, 14; 44.6, 22, 24; 47.4; 48.17, 20; 49.7, 26; 51.10; 52.9; 54.5, 8; 59.20; 60.16; 62.12; 63.9, 16.

28. 40.1; 49.13; 51.3(twice), 12, 19; 52.9; 54.11; 57.6, 18; 61.1; 66.11, 13; (12.1; 22.4).

29. 40.9; 46.13; 51.3, 16; 52.1, 7–8; 59.20; 60.14; 61.3; 62.1, 11.

(עֶד³⁰) to his genuine divinity. But the Ebed Israel, i.e., the exiled Israel, skeptically resists this commission and laments, 'My way is hidden from Yhwh; my justice is ignored by my God' (40.27). The question is even more urgent: how can Yhwh make his Torah great and glorious with the help of a blind and deaf servant who sees much but understands nothing, who has ears, but hears nothing³¹ (42.18-21; 43.8-13)? The purpose of the divine action for Jacob-Israel by Cyrus and the Ebed is not freedom from exile, but the glorification of Yhwh and of Zion (פֶּאֶר/הַפָּאֵרָה).³²

49.1-13 mark the point of intersection between the 'Jacob-Freedom' section (40–48) and the 'Zion-Restoration' section (49–55).³³ In the first section Yhwh himself was the leading actor (49.1ff.); now the Ebed himself takes the stage *coram publico*.³⁴ The reference from 49.1 (שָׁמַעַן) back to 41.1 (הִחֲרִישׁוּ אֵלֵי אֵיִים)³⁵ together with the double rejection of Israel's (40.27) and Zion's (49.14) complaint, shows that the beginning of the Zion section depends structurally on the Babylon section. Also the fact that the first 'hymnic verse' of the second part is taken from chap. 44 supports this observation:

44.23: רְנוּ שָׁמַיִם ... פִּצְחוּ הָרִים רְנָה

49.13: רְנוּ שָׁמַיִם ... יִפְצְחוּ הָרִים רְנָה

Anticipating the interpretation, it should be noted that from 49.1 onwards the *golah*, brought out of Babylon and purified in the furnace of suffering, now performs, as Ebed, the office of the word toward a postexilic Israel that doubts Yhwh's providence;³⁶ they can do this, for they themselves were led from doubt to trust through the preaching of the exilic prophets. Where Israel/Jacob doubts Yhwh's righteous leading of history (40.27: מַלְאֲכֵי מִשְׁפָּטֵי יַעֲבֹר), the Ebed is fully confident of divine advocacy (49.4: אֲכֵן מִשְׁפָּטֵי אֵת יְהוָה); this

30. 43.9, 10, 12; 44.8; 55.4; (1.2; 8.2; 19.20; cf. 33.8).

31. On the recourse to the theme of stubbornness from 6.8-10, see Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 110-12.

32. 44.23; 46.13; 49.3; 55.5; 60.7, 9, 13, 21; 61.3.

33. So Mettinger, *Farewell*, pp. 24-25; previously, E. Nielsen, 'Deuterokesaja', pp. 190-205, who however, treats 41-48 (before 539) and 49-55 (after 539) too unilaterally from a chronological viewpoint alone; cf. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 60.

34. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, p. 202: 'Here for the first time one encounters first-person speech differentiated from direct Yhwh speech.'

35. See Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 85.

36. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIB*, p. 15: 'Wie hier spreekt, is ook degene die uit Babel weggetrokken is.'

contrasts with Zion's complaint that Yhwh has forgotten them (49.14). Zion as bride should be brought to the same certainty of the divine care as the Ebed was previously! He was promised that kings would fall down before him (49.7), and the same is promised to the city of Zion (49.23); as the Ebed is Yhwh's creation from the womb (מִבֶּטֶן, 49.1, 5), so also is Zion (בֶּן בִּטְנָה, 49.15), for both are called by Yhwh to an office of the word. He has put his word into their mouth and has made their mouth a sharp sword (49.2; 51.16). The Ebed and Zion were both hidden in the shadow of Yhwh's hand (בְּצֶל יְדוֹ/י, 49.2; 51.16) and only later come into the public sphere.³⁷

This paralleling of Ebed and Zion continues. The Ebed turned his back to his enemies (50.6), and so too the city of Zion (51.23). Both times it is about the reversal of destiny from oppression and shrinking posterity to fullness of life in the midst of many children (53.10; 54.3). The theme of numerous offspring, which stands in complete contrast to the earlier situation of childlessness, pervades chaps. 49 to 66.7-14.³⁸ The arrangement of Ebed and Zion texts is a 'kerygmatic' one and not accidental.³⁹ This convergence of Ebed and Zion sayings is not at all odd, since behind the faithful Ebed stands the *golah*—those who departed voluntarily as well as those forced out—who work to win over Jerusalem's population in the face of their resignation regarding the future of their city.

6.2.1. The Hymnic Verses

The songs of praise or hymnic verses are the most obvious structural features within chaps. 40–55; more important than the discussion within the genre whether a given verse should or should not be considered hymnic⁴⁰ is the question of their structuring function.⁴¹ The following texts are counted as 'hymns', even if not by all, and if not without discussion: 42.10-12; 44.23; [45.8]; 48.20-21; 49.13; [51.3]; 52.9-10; [54.1-3].⁴² These verses begin with a call to praise God in

37. Willey, 'Servant', p. 302: 'In each, the story line moves from abuse, shame, despair, and recrimination to promise, vindication, fulfillment, and exaltation.'

38. 49.20-23; 50.1-3; 51.2, 17-20; 53.10; 54.1-3, 11-13; 60.4-9; 61.9; 66.7-14.

39. In addition, Sawyer, 'Daughter of Zion', pp. 89-107; Wilcox and Paton-Williams, 'Servant Songs', pp. 79-102.

40. See also the discussion of the state of the research by Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, pp. 10-29; Mettinger, *Farewell*, pp. 23-27.

41. Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 74: 'The surest evidence of a deliberate division of the book of Deutero-Isaiah can be found in the (eschatological) praise songs.'

42. Cf. Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 74; Mettinger, *Farewell*, pp. 20, 24-25; Mettinger, 'Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder', pp. 72-73; Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 23.

which the verbs *רנן* and *פצה* dominate.⁴³ The entire creation is invited to praise: the sea, its inhabitants, islands, the cities of Kedar, the heavens, the depths of the earth, mountains, forests with their trees, those fleeing from Babylon, the coming Zion, newly abundant with children. When a reason introduced by *כי* follows the call to praise God, it is always related to the divine saving action, characterized by the verbs *עשה*,⁴⁴ *נאל*,⁴⁵ and *נחם*.⁴⁶

God's accomplishment in the hymns is a freeing action (*נאל*) in which the concrete accompanying circumstances of the deliverance are not explicitly named:

The subject of *נאל* is exclusively Yhwh, and nowhere is there mention of the situation from which those addressed—invariably Israel—are redeemed. The context, meanwhile, leaves no doubt that the escape from Babylon is meant; more precisely, the consequence of the liberation through Yhwh is the return to Zion (43.1–7; 48.20–21; and 51.10–11, where *g'l* and *pdh* stand beside one another).⁴⁷

The work of Yhwh as *Goel* stands in special relationship to his activity as Creator (54.5!), which itself is an act of 'liberation'.⁴⁸ If 'liberation' (*נאל*) is the basic tenor of the 'hymns' up to chap. 48, from Isaiah 49 the theme of 'comfort' (*נחם*) takes the lead.

Chaps. 40–48 are about the liberating action of Yhwh, while chaps. 49–55 deal with a new perspective of the future for Zion: 'for Yhwh has comforted his people (*נחם יהוה עמו*) and is compassionate to his poor' (49.13), which 51.3 clearly references: 'Yes, Yhwh has comforted Zion' (*כִּי־נחם יהוה ציון*), 'has comforted (*נחם*) all her ruins (*כל*)' (*חרבתיה*).⁴⁹ These hymnic inserts are not merely ornaments or purely functional text markers, but rather bring the previous segment into focus and thus communicate the progression of thought.

A survey of the verses under discussion reveals that they do not all lie on the same descriptive plane. For one thing, verses 42.10–12 serve

43. For a lexical study, see Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, pp. 34–44.

44. 'To act': 44.23.

45. 'To release': 44.23; 48.20; 52.9.

46. 'To comfort': 49.13; 51.3; 52.9.

47. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, pp. 37–38.

48. See also Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption*, p. 233: 'Though always subsidiary, this idea of creation served to enhance many features of the prophet's concept of redemption, transforming it into an *exceptionally wondrous* redemptive act, performed with personal concern by Yahweh for his chosen people.'

49. According to Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 47, this is an allusion to the rebuilding of the city wall under Nehemiah; cf. also 52.9 and especially 62.6: 'on your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen.'

as the beginning of the hymnic framework; second, 49.13 and 51.3 stand behind an Ebed Yhwh Song with its additions. 45.8 is the responsory to the central ‘Cyrus verses’ of 44.24–45.7.⁵⁰ The function of closing a segment is especially clear in 44.23 (נִאֵל), 48.20 (נִאֵל) and 52.9–10 (נִחַם+נִאֵל), and is reinforced in the two last passages by the repeated Exodus motif.

42.10: שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֹדֶשׁ תְּהַלְלוּ מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ

44.23: כִּי־נִאֵל יְהוָה יַעֲקֹב וּבִישְׂרָאֵל יִהְיֶה נִפְאָר

48.20: אָמְרוּ נִאֵל יְהוָה עֲבַדוּ יַעֲקֹב + Exodus

49.13: כִּי־נִחַם יְהוָה עָמוֹ וְעָנִיו יִרְחַם

[כִּי־נִחַם יְהוָה צִיּוֹן נִחַם כָּל־חֲרִבְתֶּיהָ 51.3:]

52.9: כִּי־נִחַם יְהוָה עָמוֹ נִאֵל יְרוּשָׁלַם + Exodus

[כִּי־בִשְׂמִיחָה תִצָּאֻ וּבְשָׁלוֹם תִּוְּבְלוּ... יִפְצְחוּ לִפְנֵיכֶם רְנָה 55.12:]

In 52.9 the two main themes of liberation and comfort come together. After 40.1, the latter theme of comfort does not resurface until 49.13(!), which closes the hinge-text 49.1–12. With 52.9–10, there is another turning point: ‘Here Jerusalem is freed and Israel is comforted. Liberation and restoration thus have been understood as two sides of the coin and both have their basis in the saving, creative activity of God’.⁵¹ Even if 55.12 is not in the hymn genre, there is no doubt that this verse is dependent upon the previous hymnic verses; even more, the hymn and the instruction to leave are combined here.⁵² A narrowly form-critical analysis that leaves out 55.12–13 deprives interpretation of an important pillar of the present structure; together with the theme of a ‘theology of the word’ in 55.8–11, which points back to 40.6–8, 55.12–13 marks a deliberate terminus.

6.2.2. The Instruction to Leave

Besides the hymns, the three-fold instruction or summons to leave also serves as a structuring device (with the key word יֵצֵא 48.20 [21]; 52.11–12; 55.12–13). It would be natural to be inclined to perceive the

50. Thus Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 80: ‘44.23, 48.21–22, and 52.9–10 conclude a large section of the book; 45.8, the Cyrus oracle; 42.10–13, 49.13, and 51.3 (?) each conclude an Ebed Song, with a supplement (or supplements). The closing function of the Songs is thus demonstrated.’

51. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 154.

52. יֵצֵא: see 42.11; 44.23; 48.20; 52.9; 54.1; and פִּצְחוּ: see 44.23; 54.1; also, יֵצֵא: see 48.20; 52.11.

authentic voice of Deutero-Isaiah at precisely this point. Still, it can be observed that those who are called to exodus are never addressed explicitly as *golah*—in none of the three references does the instruction go beyond a more precise designation than ‘you’ (pl.).⁵³

48.20: צאו מבבל ברחו מכשדים

52.11: סורו סורו צאו משם... צאו מתוכה

55.12: כי-בשמחה תצאו ובשלום תובלון

A development can be discerned within these three exodus verses. While the geographic connections become weaker, the structuring takes on more and more color. In 48.20 the language describing flight out of Babylon/Chaldea and Yhwh’s concern was still about sufficient water for passage through a desert landscape (חרבות). But in 52.11–12 the place of exodus is an undefined ‘from there’; now it is about a celebrative procession that is made in cultic purity and not in haste (לא בחפז⁵⁴) or as if in flight (למנוסה לא תלכו). The comparison to the Passover night in Egypt is clear (Exod. 12.11; Deut. 16.3). In the Exodus from Egypt, Yhwh went out before his people (Exod. 13.21; Num. 10.33–36; Deut. 1.30); here he is both the vanguard and rear-guard (52.12b). After Isaiah 52, Exodus motifs no longer appear, and the final exodus verses (55.12–13) have completely abandoned the Exodus typology. Here it is neither about a path through almost impassable territory nor about a vastly increased exodus, but rather about transforming creation into cheering spectators as the wandering people pass through.⁵⁵

The event that was for the honor (שם) of Yhwh and an eternal sign (לאות עולם) was not the return of the exiles, but rather the transformation of nature. The close connection of 56.1–8 with its subject of admitting non-Jews into the ברית (56.4) to these last exodus verses through the use of לא יכרת/שם (55.13; 56.5) and עץ (55.12; 56.3) suggests that non-Jews are included among those addressed.⁵⁶ If that is so, then the statement about the eternal covenant which will not be cut off (אות עולם לא יכרת, 55.13) takes on a deeper meaning, with its

53. Against D. Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterocesaja*, p. 19 n. 83, who sees in this only a ‘tendency to generalize’.

54. See Exod. 12.11; Deut. 16.3.

55. Thus Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 186.

56. See יבל (ho.) in 55.12 with 18.7 (gifts are brought from Egypt) and the pilgrimage context in Jer. 31.9, limited there, however, to Israel; see also Ps. 45.15–16.

clear reference to the Noahic covenant.⁵⁷ Yhwh disciples from the nations are also expected as Zion's pilgrims provided that they follow the example of Noah and practice righteousness and observe the Sabbath (56.2). Consequently, with the exodus verses a three-fold progression is produced: from the return of the *golah*, to the gathering of the Diaspora, to the pilgrimage of Yhwh disciples from the nations.

A word may be added about the Ebed-Yhwh Songs (EYS) from a structural point of view. If we consider the texts in 42.1-4, 49.1-6, 50.4-9, and 52.13-53.12, it is clear that they themselves hardly play a structuring role, but rather the hymns or exodus verses which precede (48.20-21; 52.9-12) or follow (42.10-12; [51.1-3]) them fulfill this function. Consequently, the following may be considered as the overall structure:⁵⁸

- Programmatic Opening: 40.1-11
- I. Babylon Exile Section 40.12-48.21[22]
 - 40.12-**42.10-12** (H)
 - 42.13-**44.23** (H)
 - 44.24-**45.8** (H)
 - 45.9-**48.20-21** (H + E)
 - II. Zion Restoration Section 49.1-55.13
 - 49.1-**13** (H)
 - 49.14-**51.3** (H)
 - 51.4-**52.9-12** (H + E)
 - 52.13-53.12
 - 54.1-**55.12-13** (H + E)

After the structuring by means of hymnic verses and exodus commands, there is a final attempt to organize 40-66, this time through the theme of the rejection of a peaceful future for the sinner: **אֵין שְׁלוֹם... לְרָשָׁעִים** (48.22; 57.21). If one includes the closing verse of the entire book about the horrific fate of the **פְּשָׁעִים** (66.24), which together with Isaiah 1 forms⁵⁹ an inclusio that spans the entire book, then it can be seen how the theme 'righteous versus sinner' that dominates 56-66 organizes the entire text of 40-66 into three segments: 40-48; 49-57; 58-66. In this structuring, exodus verses and hymns no longer play a role; the confrontation between righteous and sinners within

57. Gen. 9.11: **לֹא יִכְרַת**; Gen. 9.17: **זֹאת אוֹת הַבְּרִית**; even if it is not explicitly referred to as an 'eternal sign', the bow in the clouds is one such.

58. The boldface indicates structuring verses: H = hymns; E = exodus verses.

59. **אֵין מִכְבָּה** in 1.2, 28; theme of 'not extinguishing': **לֹא תִכְבֶּה** (66.24) and **אֵין מִכְבָּה** (1.31).

the postexilic community leaves far behind any memory of the progression of the line of thought from *golah* to Diaspora to nations (40–55), just like the demarcation of 55/56.⁶⁰ Compared with hymns and exodus commands, the structuring force of 48.22 and 57.21 is rather weak, since in the one case, there is only a connection through key words (רשעים and שלום in 57.21 from 57.19), and in the other, a straight quotation.⁶¹ The historical-theological design which the kerygma of the exilic prophet produced has been reduced to an internal community conflict.

6.3. *The Historical Relationships*

With the announcement of the Babylonian exile in 39.7 a connection has been made within the book from the Assyrian to the Babylonian Period. Furthermore, on the synchronic plane Isaiah's oracle against Babylon (Isa. 13–14; 21) has begun to be fulfilled with Isaiah 40. Contrary to Caspari's skeptical comment that 'none of Deutero-Isaiah's portraits lacked a brush, palette, colors, or discernment, only the nail for hanging the picture',⁶² it should be pointed out that the appearance of the Persians with Cyrus and the fall of Babylon are—in keeping with the metaphor—the nail for the exilic prophet's message. The two events define Isaiah 40–48, where it is no coincidence that Cyrus is called by name at their center. Torrey's famous objection that the mention of 'Babylon/Chaldea' (43.14; 48.14, 20) and of the Persian king (44.28; 45.1) is an interpolation, has not taken hold,⁶³ especially since the Cyrus Cylinder offers an important parallel. Here Marduk appoints the great king to rule over Babylon:

He [i.e., Marduk] scanned and looked (through) all the countries, searching for a righteous ruler willing to lead him [i.e., Marduk] (in the annual procession). (Then) he pronounced the name of Cyrus [*ku-ra-aš*], king of Anshan, declared him (lit. pronounced [his] name) to be (come) the ruler of all the world... Marduk...ordered him to march against his city Babylon (...) He made him set out on the road to Babylon (...) going at his side like a real friend. His widespread troops—their number, like that of the water of a river, could not be established—strolled along, their weapons packed away. Without any battle, he made him enter his town Babylon (...), sparing Babylon (...) any

60. See Seitz, 'On the Question of Divisions', p. 265.

61. This structuring probably springs from 39.8 and is to be positioned after the last major Isaianic redaction by the servant community; see 5.7.

62. Caspari, *Lieder*, p. 228.

63. Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, pp. 40–52; Torrey, 'Editorial Operations', pp. 130ff.

calamity. He delivered into his [i.e., Cyrus'] hands Nabonidus, the king who did not worship him [i.e., Marduk]. All the inhabitants of Babylon (...) as well as the entire country of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors (included), bowed to him [Cyrus] and kissed his feet, jubilant that he (had received) the kingship, and with shining faces.⁶⁴

The Cyrus texts also include indirect references which must have been recognized by the first addressees as such. They can be found in 41.1-4, 25-29; 45.9-13; 46.9-11; and 48.12-16a.⁶⁵ The references to the appointment of the mighty field commander from the East before the eyes of the world have their historical anchor in Cyrus' victory over the Median Astyages in 550, by which he would become king of the Medes and Persians. In 549 Cyrus captured the Median metropolis Ekbatana and made it the capital city of the Persian Kingdom. After the conquest of Sardis and taking the Lydian king Croesus prisoner in 546, it was clear that no path toward the west or east could remain blocked to him. After further successes in Elam, Parthia, and Hyrcania, in the years 545 and 539 he conquered the whole of Central Asia up to the boundaries of India.⁶⁶ In one final major victory in October of 539, Cyrus entered Babylon without a fight, with cheers from both victors and vanquished. Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king, had returned from Haran only one year before, and had deserted the worship of the Babylonian gods, Marduk, Nabu, Bel, etc. in favor of the moon god, Sin.⁶⁷ Under Cyrus the Marduk cult bloomed anew, to the joy of its priesthood. While the new Persian king over 'Babylon and its lands' may have left the besieged Babylon virtually untouched economically, he did away with its political autonomy and made it into a Persian satrapy. In 530 Cyrus died in a skirmish on the Caspian sea and his son Cambyses (530-522) inherited the kingdom; Cyrus had already made him king of Babylon, if only for 9 months, between 538-537.

The high expectations expressed in the Cyrus texts, with the anonymous exilic prophet as spokesman, were fulfilled only in small part. The Neo-Babylonian kingdom was indeed politically disem

64. *ANET*, 3rd edition (1969), pp. 168-69.

65. See Kratz, *Kyros*, pp. 15-17.

66. See the histories in Dandamayev, 'Babylonia in the Persian Age', pp. 326-42; Frye, *History of Ancient Iran*, pp. 89ff.

67. The crown prince Belshazzar, reigning in his absence, even banned the celebration of the New Year and 'was the most hated man in Babylon—a fact that has found legendary expression in the book of Daniel (Dan. 5) from the second century B.C.' (Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, II, p. 367).

powered, but its cultural influence continued; its pantheon was stronger than it had been under Nabonidus. The dark side of the Cyrus events has not gone unnoticed: 'Babylon was *not* torn down and the Chaldeans were *not* deported by Cyrus! Thus there remained over the *golah* the shadow of an uncertain future. That was a hard blow for those who had tied their high hopes to the change of leadership.'⁶⁸

Contrary to the Chronistic representation in Ezra 1.1–4⁶⁹ of the Cyrus edict for the rebuilding of the temple and permission to return taking place at the same time in 538,⁷⁰ it is assumed that repatriation on a large scale under the leadership of Zerubbabel occurred only under Darius I (521–485), which did not exclude but rather also involved smaller contingents returning under Cyrus and his immediate successor Cambyses.⁷¹ The anachronism of a return from Babylon coinciding with the edict for the rebuilding of the temple in addition is shaped by the Chronistic historian's idea that 'there were not sufficient and suitable people in Jerusalem and Judah who could have been entrusted with the building of the temple'.⁷² A large-scale return of exiled Jews to Palestine in the first year of Cyrus as king of Babylonia also lacks historical plausibility because the loss of some 40,000 workers (cf. Ezra 2 = Neh. 7) would have caused serious damage to the Babylonian economy and thus to Persian financial interests; furthermore, the new rulers could not have carried this out without a careful analysis of whether the situation in Palestine⁷³ would permit such a repatriation. That certainly would not have happened out of pure altruism!

The return of a significant part of the *golah* would only be successful as a result of two Babylonian revolts, led by Nebuchadnezzar III and IV, which broke out in 522/521 after the death of Cambyses II and were struck down bloodily and successfully by Darius I. Within

68. Galling, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels*, p. 55; Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 170: 'this was all still open after 539, if not even more uncertain than ever.'

69. See the Aramaic version in Ezra 6.3–5, which is completely silent about a repatriation; see also, among others, Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, II, pp. 408–409.

70. The Chronicler's emphasis on Cyrus is comparable with that of Xenophon, who even credited the founder of the Achaemenid empire with the conquest of Egypt in his *Cyropaedia*; see Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, pp. 73–74.

71. So Galling, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels*, p. 56: Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, II, pp. 409–12.

72. Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, II, p. 409.

73. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 166 n. 375.

the *golah*, this was probably judged a sign to risk the return to Jerusalem and its environs.⁷⁴ The suppression of the Babylonian revolts by Darius is also a good historical background for the composition of chap. 47, which is aimed not so much at the military defeat of Babylon, but rather at the continuing subjection by the one-time world power. The exodus instruction of 48.20-21, 'Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea', literarily inspired by the Exodus from Egypt, can be best understood in terms of this situation. In addition, it serves to explain the declaration in the book of Jeremiah that the *golah* would linger in Babylon for seventy years.⁷⁵

Appointed by the Persian government, Zerubbabel, a grandson of Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3.19), would function as 'repatriation commissioner' in order to oversee the building of the temple and the reintegration of those returning,⁷⁶ which ran into considerable opposition from those who remained at home and triggered early debates about the 'true Israel' and about mutual claims on the land (cf. Ezek. 11.14-21; 33.24).⁷⁷

A final historical hook for the 'literary painting' in Isaiah 40-55 is the action against Babylon by the Persian king Xerxes, who quelled another rebellion led by Shamash-riba in 482, supposedly razed the main temple Esagila and carried off the statue of Marduk,⁷⁸ which probably finds its literary expression in 46.1-4. The Babylonian statues of the gods are depicted as burdens loaded onto draft animals, while Yhwh promises that he will continue to bear the house of Jacob [out of Babylon]! The events of 482 were undoubtedly accepted in Jerusalem with joy. The traditional enemy, Babylon with its imperial gods, had been punished anew by the Persians, while the story of Yhwh with his people faced a new future. The action of

74. See Stern, 'The Persian Empire', p. 72: 'The repatriates may also have been encouraged by Darius' new imperial organization. It can be assumed that Judah was made an independent "state" (*medinâh*) for the short period during which Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel and the grandson of Jehoiachin, served as governor (*pehah*) of the province by Darius' appointment.'

75. Jer. 25.11-12; 29.10; 2 Chron. 36.21; i.e., from the first deportation in 597 to 521.

76. Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, II, p. 411.

77. See Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, pp. 419-21, 479-83.

78. The question of whether Xerxes destroyed the Marduk statue (Strabo, *Geographia* XVI 1.5) or only removed it from Babylon (Herodotus, *Historia* I 183), is not significant in this context: the dismal picture of Xerxes in the Greek sources served as a foil for their radiant 'Portrait of Alexander' (Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, pp. 561-62).

Xerxes against Babylon⁷⁹ would also bear results within Babylonian Judaism in its increased turning to the God of the fathers. So it is evident that exiles who themselves bear Babylonian names beginning around the year 480 increasingly give their children 'Yahwistic' names.⁸⁰ Whereas even Davidic offspring with important functions, such as Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, still bore heathen theophoric names at the beginning of the restoration, with the return under Ezra that is no longer the case. With regard to these abbreviated historically key figures chapters 40–55 can be seen as prophetic literary efforts which, on the one hand, nurture the hope of Babylonian exilic Judaism in the God of their fathers and, on the other hand, present postexilic Jerusalem as the goal of the returnees from Babylon *and* the Diaspora.

6.4. *The Deutero-Isaianic Basic Literary Stratum*

Following the approach of a 'diachronically reflected synchrony', after examining the textual markers, the structure of the final form, and the implications of the historical references, we venture into the area of the diachronic development, but without losing sight of the book as a whole. For this task, the historical-redactional works of the last two decades offer abundant help.⁸¹ The present study agrees with most others by beginning from an exilic core that stems from the years before Cyrus's capture of Babylon. The elaboration of the *golah* redaction, which was the first to assemble the basic stratum as a composition, takes on great importance, and the hypothesis of two subsequent Zion redactions comes very close to the proposals of Kiesow and van Oorschot.⁸² Not accepted here, however, is the widespread thesis of an 'imminent expectation' or *qarob* stratum, since on the one hand, it lacks a constitutive framework, and on the other, it pursues an objective that is not limited to a definite redaction

79. Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, p. 541: 'Elle eut une durée très éphémère (une quinzaine de jours). Néanmoins elle atteste elle aussi d'une atmosphère troublée, sans que l'on puisse dire précisément quelles en étaient les origines ni les causes.'

80. See Bickerman, 'The Babylonian Captivity', p. 356: 'This change in nomenclature, which according to the extant evidence begins about 480 B.C.E., is remarkable.'

81. See above under 6.1.

82. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 165, calls them first and second expansion layers; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, speaks of a 'first Jerusalem redaction' and a 'secondary Zion layer'.

group. Least plausible is a supplementary Cyrus stratum that identifies the Persian king with the Servant of God as 'governor of the divine King Yhwh, on earth',⁸³ for how, after the obvious failure of the hopes set on Cyrus, could such an immense appreciation have been pushed through, either religiously or politically? On the other hand, there is agreement here, again with the majority, that the Ebed-Yhwh Songs (EYS) are to be understood as an integral part of the textual corpus and not as random set pieces.

There is good support for the possibility that the basic message of the exilic prophet was connected with Cyrus's appearance, from 550 to his taking of Babylon in October 539. It is not impossible that the prophet continued his office of the word after 539, but is rather improbable. It seems more plausible that the prophet became silent after 539, as he must have known that Cyrus had not met the high expectations as 'anointed' of Yhwh and had proved to be not at all a Yhwh disciple (cf. MT 41.25a), but rather favored the Marduk cult. But it was precisely the only partial fulfillment of the exilic prophet's oracle that provoked its creative expansion by tradents within the *golah*, who would keep the prophet's words from being forgotten through that expansion.

The victory march of the Persian king was in no way the center of the prophet's preaching, but rather only its cause; its center was the historical power of Yhwh, who would shine more brightly than ever before, just at the moment of deepest humiliation. It was not the gods of Babylon, but the God of Israel alone who had proclaimed this development previously and thereby proved himself as Lord of history and unmasked the foreign gods as nonentities. To the prophet, this is not a matter of derision, but rather is a proof of God that is to be measured by reason and not by artificial handiwork.⁸⁴ The actual purpose of the preaching of the anonymous exilic prophet is to promise to the exiled Israel a renewed election by Yhwh; to that purpose, he reaches behind the calamitous history of statehood to the period of the patriarchs and never tires of addressing his audience with 'Jacob/Israel';⁸⁵ 'Jacob' is always mentioned first, up to 41.8.⁸⁶

83. Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 179.

84. See Ruppert, 'Die Kritik', pp. 82-85, as against the earlier position of Preuss, *Verspottung*, pp. 192-247: 'The derision is not primarily didactic, but has a pastoral purpose. It has not a rational, but a theological basis' (p. 237).

85. See Isa. 40.27; 41.8; 43.1, 22; 44.1, 21; 45.4; 46.3; 48.12; in 44.2 Jacob stands parallel to 'Jeshurun'; only 'Jacob' in 41.2 (King Jacob); in 45.19 (lineage of Jacob).

86. All 22 references to 'Jacob' in DI are found in chaps. 40-49; in PI 15x; in TI 5x; for comparison: 16x in Jeremiah; 4x in Ezekiel. The data are now readily available in Andersen and Forbes, *Vocabulary of the Old Testament*.

These designations do not refer to exilic Israel in its political dimensions, but rather to Yhwh's relationship to his people. God has 'chosen',⁸⁷ 'created',⁸⁸ 'seized',⁸⁹ 'called',⁹⁰ and made them his 'servant'.⁹¹

It was the anonymous prophet who would make the idea of divine election acceptable again after the exile. This was in contrast to DtrH, who consistently avoided speaking of an election of Israel, on the contrary: 'I reject (מַסְתִּיךְ) this city Jerusalem which I chose (בַּחֲרֵתִי), and the house of which I said, "My name will be there"' (2 Kgs 23.27).⁹² Deutero-Isaiah was the first prophet to place 'Israel' and 'Jacob' not in the context of guilt and punishment, but in that of election: 'You are my servant whom I have chosen; I have not rejected you' (בַּחֲרֵתִיךָ וְלֹא מַסְתִּיךָ, 41.9). However, he conspicuously locates this neither in the act of the Exodus deliverance nor in the period of statehood, but in the time of the patriarchs. This period alone afforded him fertile ground for Yhwh's new history with his people; the period of statehood led only to ruin and tears.⁹³ The anonymous exilic prophet also does not reckon with a renaissance of the post-exilic kingdom; Yhwh alone is King in Israel (41.21; 43.15; 44.6; [52.7]) and Cyrus is his shepherd (44.28) and anointed (45.1). Royal dignity rests no longer on the shoulders of a Davidide, but rather on those of the Ebed Israel, who serves as witness before the entire world for the Godhead of Yhwh.⁹⁴

The reversals under Cyrus, the demonstration of the proclamation, and the renewed election by Yhwh are the three cornerstones of the exilic prophet's preaching. Whether the basic stratum already existed as a small composition at the time of the prophet or whether it was a collection of individual logia⁹⁵ is difficult to determine and essentially depends upon whether one retains at least some of the hymnic verses

87. בַּחַר: 41.8, 9; 43.10; 44.1, 2; [49.7]; בַּחֲרִיר: [42.1]; 43.20; 45.4.

88. בָּרָא: 43.1, 7, 15; יָצַר: 43.1, 7, 21; 44.2, 21, 24; 45.9, 11; [49.5: Ebed]; עָשָׂה: 43.7; 44.2, 23; פָּעַל: 45.9, 11.

89. חָזַק: 41.9, 13; 42.6; (45.1: Cyrus); in contrast to those who make idols: 41.6, 7(2x).

90. קָרָא: 41.9; 42.6; 43.1, 7; 48.12: (41.25; 45.3; 46.11; 48.15: Cyrus).

91. עֲבַד: 41.8, 9; [42.1, 19 (2x)]; 43.10; 44.1, 2, 21(2x), 26; 45.4; [48.20]; further on, 49.3, 5, 6, 7; 50.10; 52.13; 53.11; עֲבָדִים: 14.2; 54.17; 56.6; 63.17; 65.8, 9, 13 (3x), 14.15; 66.14.

92. See Köckert, 'Die Erwählung Israels', p. 280.

93. Thus Köckert, 'Die Erwählung Israels', p. 282.

94. עַד: 43.9, 10; 44.8, 9; 55.4 (2x); in PI 8.2; 19.20.

95. Thus, among others, Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', p. 309.

as structural features of the exilic prophet.⁹⁶ However, if both the programmatic beginning verses in 40.1-11 as well as the end of the first part in 48.20-21 are to be denied the anonymous prophet, as will be argued, then a composition as the basic stratum is increasingly improbable. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the logia were collected and compiled haphazardly. There is a general movement from the disputation sayings⁹⁷ with which the prophet wishes to persuade the deaf and blind exile community (40.12-28), to the announcement that Yhwh would now take action (42.14-17), up to the revival by Cyrus (44.24-45.7) and the resulting discussions which would be kindled among the *golah* and with the nations (45.9-13; 45.18-23*).

The first recorded saying of the exilic prophet is a skillfully constructed disputation⁹⁸ or argument⁹⁹ (40.12-28) which rejects the lament of the exiled that Yhwh has disregarded their מִשְׁפֹּט.

12-14: מִי 3x (1. מִשְׁפֹּט, 2. דֶּרֶךְ, 3. תְּבוּנָה)

15-17: Nations-Islands = Nothing (תִּהְיוּ)

18: וְאֵלֵּי־מִי תִדְמִיּוּן אֵל

[19-20: Polemic against Idols]¹⁰⁰

21-22: Have you not heard?

23-24: Rulers = Nothing (תִּהְיוּ)

25-26: וְאֵלֵּי־מִי תִדְמִיּוּן

27-28: Why do you say, O Israel? (1. דֶּרֶךְ, 2. מִשְׁפֹּט, 3. תְּבוּנָה)

With three rhetorical questions which can only be directed to Israel, explicitly addressed in v. 27,¹⁰¹ the exilic prophet underlines Yhwh's incomparability. The questions about who can teach God the path of justice, i.e., his guidance in the world and history, and about

96. Thus, among others, Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 217: 42.10-13; 44.23; 48.20-21; basically the same, Merendino, 'Der Erste', p. 540; otherwise, van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 93-97, who assumes four sub-collections which make up the basic stratum.

97. In addition, Ruppert, 'Die Disputationsworte', pp. 317-25.

98. See now Dijkstra, 'Lawsuit', pp. 251-71.

99. Thus, with Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 42; Heßler, *Heilsdrama*, p. 39, speaks of 'argumentation': 'It has a clear leaning toward the personal-pastoral address and response.'

100. The insertion at this point of the polemic against idols was probably motivated by the key word from v. 18 (דְּמוּת); see also Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1-45,7*, pp. 65ff. In contrast, K. Baltzer, 'Stadt-Tyche', p. 114, sees 40.19-20 as original; also Spykerboer, *Structure*, p. 50, who himself assigns 44.9-20 to the exilic prophet.

101. Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 45: 'Those who are quoted in v. 27 are addressed from v. 12 on.'

who is able to show him the way of understanding,¹⁰² are answered implicitly—‘No one except Yhwh alone!’¹⁰³

According to 40.13, the discussion within the *golah* about the אֱלֹהִים מְשַׁפֵּט was sparked by אִישׁ עֲצָרוֹ,¹⁰⁴ which can only refer to Cyrus, in view of the same expression in 46.11. Thus the question was posed whether it might not be Cyrus, and hence the gods of the victor, who had taken over the directing of history? The victorious march of Cyrus was therefore in no way acknowledged as an unequivocal sign of the historical power of Yhwh in Israel or in the *golah*. Instead, was not the Persian king the best proof for Yhwh’s powerlessness in history? The prophet counters with the credo of the ‘nothingness’ of the nations and their dictators and emphasizes that Yhwh alone leads the world and its history and is responsible for the מְשַׁפֵּט of his people.¹⁰⁵ The prophet vigorously challenges the idea that anybody would be able to teach Yhwh about his leading of history (אֱלֹהִים מְשַׁפֵּט, 40.14). Thus Israel’s lament is unwarranted; they complain that Yhwh ignores their cause (מֵאַלְהֵי מְשַׁפֵּט יַעֲבֹר, 40.27). The prophet underlines that Yhwh not only *wishes* to intervene for Israel, but is also *able* to help: ‘he does not weary or become tired’ (לֹא יִיָּעַף וְלֹא יִיָּגַע). These are the key words which are included in the recasting in 40.29–31, also inspired by the expression יִחַלְּפוּ כַחַּ from 41.1. After the exilic prophet has stressed Yhwh’s incomparability, there follow two judgment addresses against the nations and their gods (41.1–5, 21–26, 28), between which are two oracles of salvation to Servant Israel, i.e., the *golah* community (41.8–13, 17–20).¹⁰⁶ This shows clearly that even the oracles addressed to the nations and their gods are in the end intended to build up the exilic community. Again, it should be pointed out that the metaphors of change from wilderness to the

102. Thus Beuken, ‘Mišpaṭ’, p. 20: ‘*mišpaṭ* and *tēbunot* are two terms which cover the same reality from two angles: the course of history as determined by God’s will and his insight.’

103. Thus K. Baltzer, ‘Jes 40.13–14’, pp. 9–10.

104. The נִי in 40.13a also applies to v. 13b, where אִישׁ עֲצָרוֹ is the subject of the following verb: ‘and who is the person of his counsel, who would be able to instruct him (=Yhwh)’; see Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 41; in contrast, Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1–45,7*, pp. 40–41.

105. According to Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 45, vv. 12–26 challenge the idea that Yhwh cannot save; vv. 27–31 challenge the idea that he does not wish to save.

106. The polemic against idols in 41.6–7 is secondary, as is the salvation oracle about Israel as a threshing-sledge, which still looks too euphoric with respect to the portrayal of the *golah* as a community of the poor and needy from 41.17–20.

abundantly wooded land do not lay emphasis on the Exodus, but rather on Yhwh's creative power.¹⁰⁷

40.12-28 Denial of the complaint

41.1-5 I. Judgment speech (against the nations)

[41.6-7: Polemic against idols]

41.8-13, 16b Salvation oracle for the Ebed/Israel

[41.14-16a: Salvation oracle: Israel as a threshing sledge]

41.17-20 Salvation proclamation for the poor

41.21-26, 28 II. Judgment speech (against the gods of the nations)

42.5-9 Commissioning oracle for Cyrus

As the disputation with *Israel* boiled down to the recognition of Yhwh as אלהי עולם (40.28), so the judgment speeches against the *nations* and their *gods* also pressed toward the same goal by way of negation. On the one hand, in and through the Cyrus events Yhwh proves himself the one true God before the nations, and on the other hand, he convicts the foreign gods of their nothingness: 'See, you are nothing, your work is naught' (41.24a).¹⁰⁸ For the ancient Israelite world it is understood that events are attributed to the actions and will of the gods and that this fact is not sufficient as proof of divinity. What goes beyond the scope of the known is that Yhwh declares and executes a completely new thing: 'Thus Yahweh's action, unlike that of the gods of their surroundings, consists in ongoing new actualization and repetition of the old salvation acts. Yahweh does a truly new thing which had not yet occurred, and proclaims it beforehand.'¹⁰⁹ Yhwh's new saving action for the *golah* through Cyrus, his shepherd and anointed, appears as a novelty to be accepted or rejected, and leads to a reflection on the history of Yhwh with his people. By way of analogy it is demonstrated that Yhwh shows himself unchangeable as the helping God of Israel (41.4). The appointment of a foreign ruler, however, is without analogy, such that the prophet can draw the surprising conclusion that the 'former things' should not be remembered (43.18)!

The ראשונות have come to their end with Cyrus, and the time of the חדשות has dawned (42.9!). The 'former things' refer to Yhwh's past acts of salvation, in particular the call of Abraham and the Exodus from Egypt. These actions of Yhwh on behalf of Israel were com-

107. For this, see the monograph of Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*; cf. Simian-Yofre, 'Exodo', p. 538: 'no es legítimo asociar simplemente desierto con éxodo.'

108. 41.24b: הוֹעִיבָה יִבְחָר בָּכֶם is an addition, a polemic against idols, as is 41.29.

109. Michel, 'Deuterocesaja', p. 518.

pleted with the advent of Cyrus and the taking of Babylon.¹¹⁰ Since the Cyrus episode is about a dramatic, progressive event it can also be associated on occasion with the 'future things',¹¹¹ although not with the 'new things'!¹¹²

After the allusions to the Persian, in 42.5-9¹¹³ a message from God is addressed directly to him. As *the* God (הָאֵל יְהוָה, 42.5a; cf. 40.18; 45.18) who is responsible for the entire creation, Yhwh bears an equal concern for all creatures. Its very proximity to the rest of the Cyrus oracles¹¹⁴ shows that 42.5-9, in continuation of 41.21-26, belongs to them and was only secondarily transformed into a message to the Ebed.¹¹⁵ Verses 42.5-9 are not an expansion of the first EYS,¹¹⁶ but rather 42.1-4 is a reinterpretation of an original Cyrus oracle that now concerns the servant. The question of who was responsible for this transformation is to be answered to the effect that it was tradents who were disillusioned with the actual conduct of the Persian king, and thus transferred the onetime oracle about Cyrus to the Ebed.

To return to the commissioning oracle for the Persian: Through Cyrus, Yhwh, as the one Lord over creation and history, once again takes charge, making of Cyrus a 'covenant to the people' (לְבְרִית עַם)¹¹⁷ and 'light to the nations' (לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם, 42.6).¹¹⁸ Verse 42.7 indicates what the covenant and light roles¹¹⁹ of the Persian king consist of: opening

110. Leene, *De vroegere*, p. 329: 'Cyrus is the outcome of a Heilsgeschiede which in itself is a promise. The perspective lines of Israel's past, apparent in the tradition of Abraham or the Sea of Reeds, converge in Cyrus.' According to Haran, 'Literary Structure', p. 138, the fall of Babylon also belongs to the רִאשֻׁנוֹת.

111. אֲשֶׁר תְּבַאֵה: 44.7; הַבְּאוֹת: 41.22; הַאֲחִיזוֹת: 41.23; 44.7; 45.11.

112. So Leene, *De vroegere*, p. 329; Leene, 'History and Eschatology', p. 225.

113. On the intrusion into the exilic prophet's oracle, including the updated 'you' in 42.9b, see Vermeulen, 'Le motif de la création', pp. 198-202.

114. See Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1–45,7*, p. 228: 'grasp by the hand' (42.6) and 'grasp by the right hand' (45.1); 'call' (42.6; 46.11; 48.15); 'call בְּצַדֵּק' (42.6) and 'awaken בְּצַדֵּק' (45.13); the incomparability of Yhwh is especially emphasized when the Cyrus event is involved (42.5, 8; 45.5; 46.9), which is seen in the context of Yhwh as Creator (41.4; 42.5; 44.24; 45.7, 12; 48.13).

115. See Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1–45,7*, p. 228; Merendino, 'Der Erste', p. 252: 'The text supplies the call oracle to Cyrus.'

116. Thus Werlitz, 'Vom Knecht der Lieder', pp. 34-36.

117. In addition, Stamm, 'Berit 'am', pp. 510-24. "'Covenant" is to be understood here in the sense of obligations, not dissimilar to the modern concept of the "global ethic".'

118. לְבְרִית עַם: 42.6; 49.8; לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם: 49.6; לְאוֹר עַמִּים: 51.4; בְּרִית שְׁלוֹמִי: 54.10; בְּרִית יְהוָה: 59.21; בְּרִית עוֹלָם: 55.3; 61.8.

119. Clements, 'A Light to the Nations', pp. 57-69, pursues the light motif in 9.2, 42.6, and 60.1-3 on the synchronic level; see also, especially, Langer, *Gott als 'Licht'*, pp. 103ff.

blind eyes, releasing (יִצֵּא, hi.; see 42.1, 3.) the captive from prison, and freeing those sitting in darkness from the dungeon. Insofar as Cyrus does this, he helps bring Yhwh's created order into its own, for it is he who gives breath to the people on earth (נָתַן נְשָׁמָה לָעָם עַל־יָדָה) and spirit to those who walk upon it (לְהִלָּכִים בָּהּ, 42.5b):¹²⁰ 'Cyrus will, on Yahweh's behalf, bring freedom to all those peoples who were enslaved under the neo-Babylonian hegemony (including, of course, the Israelites), especially to the exiles, the displaced of those peoples (among whom were exiles from Israel).'¹²¹

After the self-predication of Yhwh in 42.5 and 8, which frames the Cyrus oracle, v. 9 brings the unit to a close, on the one hand once more emphasizing the end of the past salvation history (הִרְאֵשְׁנוּתָהּ (הִנֵּה בָּאוּ חֲדָשׁוֹת)), and on the other hand, proclaiming a 'new' thing (חֲדָשׁוֹת). What the exilic prophet means by this new thing is clarified by the recasting in 42.14-16 and by the close parallels of 43.18-19:¹²³ 'Remember not the former things! Have no regard for the things of old! Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? Indeed, I will make a path through the wilderness, and rivers in a dry land.' The exilic prophet does not conceive of the new things as specific events, such as the return from exile,¹²⁴ but rather as the continual implementation of the divine will for Israel's salvation; he makes no vague announcement that has to be deciphered, but rather uses these metaphors in order to relieve the exilic community of their anxiety about the future.¹²⁵

For the tradents of his oracle, the prophet's metaphor of new things springing forth was a welcome opportunity for an expansion. This can already be seen in the disconnected 'you' (אַתָּה), and

120. Steck, 'Der Gottesknecht als "Bund"', p. 122: 'Insofar as the Ebed's conduct is oriented toward humanity, he is *bryt 'am*'; insofar as he frees the captive, in accord with creation, he is *'wr gwym*'; see Kratz, *Kyros*, pp. 131-32, in the discussion of his Cyrus addition stratum.

121. Ruppert, 'Das Heil der Völker', p. 143, who follows Kratz's redaction model.

122. The instance of חֲדָשׁוֹת in 48.6 does not belong to the basic stratum nor to the tradents within the *golah*, but rather to a postexilic reflection about the continual disobedience of the people of God; the demonstration of the prophecy is now directed against Israel itself! On this, see van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 300-306.

123. Cf. also the תְּהִלָּה theme in 42.8 and 43.21.

124. So Marböck, 'Der Gott des Neuen', pp. 207-208; Vermeylen, 'L'unité', pp. 47-48, identifies the 'new' with the time of the restoration under Nehemiah.

125. Schüpphaus, 'Stellung und Funktion', p. 180, who aptly summarized the oracles of Deutero-Isaiah as 'forward-looking, comforting promises and assurances that reject doubt.'

especially in the *שיר חדש* response to the *חדשות*, as well as in the incorporation of the key word *תהלה* (42.8) in 42.10, 12. For those who created the response, the new thing consists specifically in the full development of the faithful Ebed (42.1-4).

In the next few units, which are to be ascribed to the basic stratum, it is clear how the exilic prophet pulls together all his skills to instill new hope in the *golah*.¹²⁶

- 42.13-16 Salvation proclamation—Yhwh intervenes anew!
 [42.17: Polemic against the gods]
 [42.18-25: Disputation speech about Israel's blindness]¹²⁷
- 43.1-4 Salvation oracle—Yhwh redeems the *golah*
 [43.5-7: secondary expansion from the Diaspora]
- 43.8-13 Judgment speech—Israel as witness to Yhwh's divinity
- 43.14-15 Promise—Yhwh sends to Babylon
- 43.16-21 Salvation oracle: the new thing grows; a praising people
 [43.22-28: Judgment speech about the lack of offering]¹²⁸
- 44.1-3a, 4 Salvation oracle—thriving life
 [44.3b: first expansion: outpouring of the spirit]
 [44.5: second expansion: openness to proselytes]
- 44.6-8 Judgment speech—Israel as witness to Yhwh's divinity
 [44.9-20: Polemic against the gods]
- 44.21-22 Exhortation—Turn to me; I have redeemed you.

At the center stands the promise that God would send Cyrus to Babylon, which finally determines the ground of all hope for the *golah*. The obligation for Israel that arises from this is that of witnessing to the divinity of Yhwh—'for your sake' of the redemption (43.14) corresponds to 'Turn to me for I have redeemed you' (*שובה אלי כי גאלתיך*, 44.22). It is no wonder that directly following this, before the explicit Cyrus oracles, a hymnic verse was again inserted, in which Yhwh's qualities as Savior are recorded (44.23). The prophet shows Yhwh's renewed turn to salvation in favor of exiled Israel in a sequence of four images, each of which serves to emphasize only one thing, as stated at the end: 'These are the things that I am doing and

126. See Hardmeier, "Geschwiegen habe ich", pp. 155-79, who explains the redundancy of genres and topics as Deutero-Isaiah's communication strategy.

127. For literary criticism and the redaction-critical integration in his 'imminent expectation stratum', see van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 207-13; Baldauf is more conservative ('Jes 42,18-25', pp. 13-36).

128. See also van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 295-300. The critique of the cult and the pessimistic assessment do not fit the tone of awakening hope in Deutero-Isaiah; according to Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht*, p. 103, in the background of 43.22-28 is the belief of the priestly writers that there was no cult of sacrifice in the time of the ancestors.

will not neglect' (42.16[*end*]). An initial argument against the unity of 42.13-16 is that v. 13 uses the third person, while the remaining verses maintain the first person;¹²⁹ on the other hand there are important reasons not to see v. 13 as a final causal clause of the hymn of 42.10-12. One is the five-fold use of the imperfect found in 42.13, while the causal clauses in the hymns of 44.23, 48.20, 49.13, and 52.9-10 are all expressed as perfects; another point is that the battle of Yhwh against his enemies would be an unusual cause for calling for jubilation, given that the other motivations are so centered on Israel. The prophet varies the one basic theme of his preaching in four ways: Yhwh marches like a victorious warrior into the battle (cf. Judg. 5.4; Ps. 68.8), he pushes out new life from himself like a woman giving birth, his creative powers are due to the most paradoxical natural phenomena, and he does everything for the welfare of those who would be lost without his leading.¹³⁰ The majority of interpreters see 42.16 as the promise of the return of the *golah* under Yhwh's leading¹³¹—the blind are the exiles for whom Yhwh paves the way home. This interpretation is to be rejected, since it creates more problems than it solves. Why then does the prophet not speak in the same way about the return of the *golah*? The argument of poetic license exposes itself to the further question of why the exiles should then not know the way home.¹³² Furthermore, the withering of grass and drying up of rivers and pools would have seemed to the returnees rather as a bad joke than as a helpful event! The exilic prophet does not prophesy the return home to the *golah*, but rather responds with 42.13-16 to the unsilenced laments of the *golah* that Yhwh has become helpless in the truest sense of the word; he is no longer to be trusted.¹³³

The following salvation oracle in 43.1-4, which was later expanded to refer to the return of the Diaspora, likewise aims at giving the *golah* new courage.¹³⁴ Yhwh's declaration of support so that Israel has

129. So now, among others, Prinsloo, 'Isaiah 42,10-12', p. 292.

130. Simian-Yofre, 'La teodicea', p. 69: 'Si la epifanía de Yavé, guerrero poderoso, es el pensamiento teológico central en Is 42,14-17, v. 13 encuentra su lugar en la pertenencia a la unidad.'

131. See the overview by Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption*, p. 272.

132. Thus Simian-Yofre, 'La teodicea', p. 70: 'era un camino que al menos ya habían hecho los exilados una vez, de ida.'

133. Melugin, *Formation*, p. 103: 'Admittedly Yahweh was silent, so the argument goes, but the time of silence is past.'

134. Against Schmitt, 'Erlösung und Gericht', pp. 120-31, who proceeds from the compositional unit 42.18-43.7, which a post-exilic 'Schultheologie' had created as 'a general call for fearlessness in the face of the varied needs of the post-exilic period' (p. 130).

nothing to fear in its passage through water and fire (v. 2) is not to be related to the exodus from Babylon, but rather is a promise of divine help in every danger, a reminder of Ps. 66.12: 'We have gone through fire and water, yet you have led us out into the broad places.' The reason Yhwh is so involved with his people is stated in 43.4: 'because you are precious in my eyes, highly treasured, and I love you (אֶהְבֶּתִּיךָ); I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.' The expression נָתַן חַחַת is taken up later in 43.3b and, with the technical term 'ransom' (כַּפֶּר), has become localized to Egypt, Cush, and Saba; this interpolation may refer to the taking of Egypt by Cambyses in 525.¹³⁵ Once the reference to Egypt was created, the 'Diaspora expansion'¹³⁶ in 43.5–7 made sense directly following, with its vantage point clearly in Jerusalem.

In the judgment speech¹³⁷ of 43.8–13, blind and deaf Israel (i.e., the hesitant *golah*), who recognize neither the signs of the times nor listen to the message of the prophet, are called to the witness stand, along with all the nations. Cyrus's victory, predicted by the prophet and carried out by Yhwh, will be proof of Yhwh's divinity for the *golah* and the nations! There is no doubt that the exilic prophet turns toward the *golah*, and that he expects that the Cyrus event announced by Yhwh will bear witness to him among the nations. Thus the nations ('You are my witnesses') and the *golah* ('my servant')¹³⁸ are called to witness to Yhwh as the only redeeming God (וְאֵין מַבְלַעַדִּי, 43.11b); it is not victory that makes a God divine, but deliverance! And as 43.12 demonstrates, the nations who are present at Cyrus's victory against Babylon are also Yhwh's witnesses: 'I declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no foreign god (זֶר) among you,'¹³⁹ to complete the thought: ...who would have done this! Anyone from the nations that stands and enquires of his gods in the face of the Cyrus event must acknowledge that only the God of Israel has prophesied this (זִאֵר); he is thus *nolens volens* a witness for

135. This is van Oorschot's conjecture (*Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 61); for the reception history of Isa. 43.3b, 4, see Vieweger and Böckler, "'Ich gebe Ägypten'", pp. 594–607.

136. 43.5–7 is clearly related to 43.1 by the incorporation of אֶל תִּירָא and בְּרָא; the key word 'gather' (אֶקְבֹּץ) could have been motivated by 43.9a (וְנִקְבְּצוּ).

137. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 34, speaks of a 'kerygmatically motivated breach of the selected judgment situation'.

138. Hermisson, 'Israel und der Gottesknecht', pp. 4–8, understands עַבְדִּי as an individual personality who stands between 'Israel as witness and Israel as one who needs to be persuaded' ('Israel als Zeugen und Israel als zu Überzeugendem', p. 7).

139. For זֶר, see Deut. 32.12, 16; Jer. 2.25; 3.13; Pss. 44.21; 81.10.

Yhwh, before and after whom no other god is formed (43.10). This statement is directed polemically against the Babylonian theogony according to which Marduk (cf. 46.1: Bel) stems from the divine couple Ea and Damkina.¹⁴⁰ This polemic against the god of Babylon, which reaches its climax in Isaiah 46, is especially important because Cyrus's taking of Babylon would have been reckoned to Marduk-Bel. This is contradicted in 43.12, for it was no foreign god (אֵין בְּכֶם זֶר) that brought salvation, but rather Yhwh alone (אֲנִי אֵל).

It is in this context that the central place of the fragmentary (?) salvation oracle is to be understood (43.14-15). In the name of his God, the prophet communicates the oracle that Yhwh, the *Goel*, the Holy One and King of Israel, will send to Babylon because of his people and will bring down *all* the refugees (בְּרִיחִים כֻּלָּם),¹⁴¹ including those exiles from other nations! The freeing also of non-Israelites from the Babylonian yoke has a parallel in the Exodus from Egypt, from which many 'Arabs, Bedouin' (?) (עֲרַב רַב), Exod. 12.38) also benefited.

With the salvation proclamation of 43.16-21, Deutero-Isaiah clearly refers to the Exodus from Egypt;¹⁴² yet this analogy is not tantamount to the promise of a better exodus, but is intended only as a point of comparison for Yhwh's entirely unexpected action in favor of an Israel in the greatest of difficulty. Verse 18 shows that the exilic prophet virtually prohibits himself and his hearers any comparison between past and future: 'Do not call to memory the earlier things; think no more upon the past.' This instruction, extraordinary for an ancient culture of remembrance, is accounted for by the new thing which Yhwh is creating (הִנְנִי עֹשֶׂה חֲדָשָׁה). What is new is not as easy to recognize as the dead Egyptians at the Red Sea—it is something that grows; its meaning must consciously be drawn from it as it grows. What is new is Yhwh's creative power which produces new life just where everything appears dried up and lifeless. The image of Yhwh who gives drink to his chosen people in the wilderness (לְהַשְׁקוֹת) cannot be taken as an allusion to a better Exodus, any more

140. Thus Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy*, p. 213.

141. The gloss וּבְשִׂרִים בְּאִיּוֹת רִנָּתָם 'and the Chaldeans on the boats of their jubilation' was triggered by the Egyptian Exodus motif of 43.16-21; if the Babylonians could not be drowned in the sea as the Egyptians were, at least they would be put to flight on their famous boats! For בְּרִיחִים 'escapees' (LXX: φεύγοντας), not 'bars' (בְּרִיחִים), cf. 45.2 (!), see Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 316-18.

142. Here even Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 76, in spite of his justifiable rejection of an over-extension of the Exodus theme in Isa. 40-55, sees a clear usage of the Red Sea motif: 'No other text in Isa. 40-48 lays out in such a coherent way Yahweh's current action in terms of the Exodus and Red Sea miracle.'

than the metaphor of the ‘rivers in the desert’. The goal of the new thing is not the exodus from Babylon—the going forth of the *golah* in this way is spoken of neither here nor elsewhere—but rather, it is the creation of a people who know themselves committed to the praise of God (43.21). The image of a Yhwh who possesses the power to make a path through mighty floods and rivers through the wilderness can ignite hope in a future for the doubting *golah*. While בִּים דָּרֶךְ in 43.16 may still allude to the path through the Red Sea in the sense of the Exodus motif,¹⁴³ in 43.19 it is no longer about an actual path, but rather about hope for survival in the wilderness, i.e., in the bleakness of the exile. The continuation ‘rivers through a dry land’ (בְּיַשְׁמוֹן נְהָרוֹת)¹⁴⁴ indicates that it is not an actual path that is meant; the way in the wilderness consists of rivers!¹⁴⁵ Yhwh creates a way through the wilderness, i.e., a future for the parched *golah*. In the prophet’s view, repatriation is not the occasion for praising God, but rather praise should be focused on the believed in and hoped for creative power of Yhwh. Stated otherwise, ‘the one who praises is the one who is freed!’ From 43.21 on, with the emphasis of the תְּהַלֶּה (cf. 41.16b; 42.8), it is clear that the tradents of the exilic prophet continue their master’s approach through the placement of the hymnic verses.

The following salvation oracle in 44.1–3a, 4, with the key word בָּהָר (44.1, 2), goes well with the previous salvation announcement (43.20), and also has the organizing theme of the life-giving power of Yhwh, who creates streams in the wilderness and makes them flourish (44.4).¹⁴⁶ The שְׁמַע יַעֲקֹב (44.1) reminds one of the שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל of Deut. 6.4 and lends a ceremonial tone to the entire oracle. As in the salvation oracle of 43.1–7, which likewise begins with וַעֲתָה, the Ebed Jacob in 44.1–5 is portrayed positively: he is neither blind nor deaf!¹⁴⁷ Deutero-Isaiah’s task of persuading the *golah* appears to bear its first fruits. The promise that the desert will be blessed with water is

143. This image is used again in 51.10–11, there in the context of the Jerusalem tradition of the battle against Chaos; cf. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, pp. 109–11.

144. 1QIsa^a reads נְהִיבוֹת (paths); all versions, however, maintain the MT (Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 318–19; Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, p. 126 n. 21).

145. Thus Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, p. 126: ‘El “camino” en el desierto consiste en ríos!’

146. Both pericopes show striking connections to Deut. 32; 43.19 with יַשְׁמוֹן (desert) as in Deut. 32.10 and 44.2 with יִשְׁרוּן (Jeshurun) as in Deut. 32.15 [33.5, 26].

147. The authors of the EYS will return to this: ‘formed from the mother’s womb’ (44.2; 49.1, 5); ‘gift of the spirit’ (44.3; 42.1); ‘progeny of the Ebed’ (44.3; 53.10).

directed to them: 'they shoot up among grass (בבין הציר)¹⁴⁸ like poplars in flowing streams'. Here, the image of the shoot (צמח) is used precisely as in 42.9 and 43.19, namely as announcement of the new, which consists in the power of Yhwh's creation bringing about new life for the *golah*. The force of the image is not that the exiled community might blossom like grass, for that would indicate only a temporally-bounded hope (cf. 40.6-8; 51.12), but rather that it will shoot up among grass, i.e., in the midst of otherwise only short-lived expectations, like secure poplars by streams.¹⁴⁹ Again the tradents carry on the word of the master when they speak of shoots of righteousness (צדקה הצמיח) in the hymn of 45.8. In 61.8 צמח is used three times, describing the new Zion community—probably in a polemic against the claims of the Davidic shoot, Zerubbabel (Zech. 3.8; 6.12; cf. Jer. 33.15). It is likely that the expansions in 44.3b, 5 developed from here (cf. the key words 'descendants'/'offspring' in 61.9; 44.3b), namely through assimilation of the EYS (with the endowing of spirit from 42.1 and 'descendants' from 53.10). The openness to Yhwh disciples from the nations (44.5)¹⁵⁰ also coincides with the conception of the Zion community in the last part of the book of Isaiah.

A kerygmatically modified judgment speech¹⁵¹ is present in 44.6-8, as already in 43.8-13, in which the exilic community is invited to draw hope and confidence from the demonstration of Yhwh's unique and genuine divinity,¹⁵² a demonstration achieved by the realization of proclamation and fulfillment:¹⁵³ 'Have no anxiety and do not be disheartened!' (44.8a). The subsequent admonition to return to Yhwh, fashioned as a divine address (44.21-22)—now separated by the inserted polemic against the gods¹⁵⁴—gets to the heart of the purpose of this second part of the Deutero-Isaiah oracles: it is about

148. 1QIsa^a offers the *lectio faciliior* with 'as between grass' (בבין); cf. LXX ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος; see also Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 322-24.

149. See Ps. 1.3; Jer. 17.8.

150. See Ps. 24.6; also, Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, pp. 157, 160; for the unity of Pss. 24-25, see Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', pp. 63-64; in contrast, Lescow, 'Die Universalisierung', pp. 96-98.

151. See Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1-45,7*, pp. 398-99.

152. According to Ruppert, 'Die Disputationsworte', pp. 317-25, Deutero-Isaiah draws on the Babylonian cultic lyrics here (especially, the self-praise of Inanna/Ishtar).

153. See Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 58; Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1-45,7*, p. 399.

154. The catch-word is 'witness' (עד) in 44.8 and 44.9: only those who stay away from idolatry can be a 'witness' to the genuine divinity of Yhwh! Preuss, however, maintains that 44.9-20 is Deutero-Isaianic (*Verspottung*, pp. 208-15).

reestablishing a broken relationship,¹⁵⁵ toward which Yhwh stresses he has already performed his part in advance, that is, by forgiving Israel's guilt!¹⁵⁶

The 'Cyrus section' in 44.24–45.7, now enclosed by the hymnic verses 44.23 and 45.8, explicates the remaining allusions to the Persian king.¹⁵⁷ It is no accident that these verses, in which Cyrus is mentioned by name (44.28; 45.1), now stand in the center of Isaiah 40–48; they were placed there intentionally by the compositionists, i.e., the tradents of Deutero-Isaiah.¹⁵⁸ These 'Cyrus verses' are in two parts, each introduced by a messenger formula (44.24; 45.1), in the first of which Yhwh addresses Israel/Jacob, and in the second, the Persian himself. The verses are bracketed by the self-predication of Yhwh as the sole Creator of all reality (אֲנִי/אֲנִי יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה כָּל / אֱלֹהִים, 44.24; 45.7). Because he is the Creator God, he is also the only arbiter of history: 'The Lord of creation *is* the Lord of history. This means that the one who can command the depths to dry up is *the same one* who can say of Cyrus, 'My shepherd! he will carry out all my purpose.'¹⁵⁹

Because Yhwh has made the heavenly bodies (44.24), the reading of destiny from the stars by the [Babylonian] augurs is completely absurd (44.25¹⁶⁰); it is not the stars that point the way of history, but rather Yhwh, 'who establishes the word of his servant (מִקְיָם עֲבָדָיו, 44.26a).¹⁶² With these words the exilic prophet consciously locates himself in the line of the pre-exilic prophets of Yhwh; as their oracles of disaster were fulfilled, so now—clearly visible in the Cyrus-events—his oracles of salvation are being fulfilled! It is no coincidence that the prophet can speak so clearly of Cyrus¹⁶³ as an

155. Hardmeier, "Geschwiegen habe ich", p. 176.

156. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 6', p. 78, emphasizes the relation to the task of hardening, which makes repentance impossible. This obstacle no longer exists; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 216–18, ascribes 44.21–22 to the 'imminent expectation stratum'. But should not Deutero-Isaiah have spoken to the question concerning the why of exile, that is, the guilt of Israel?

157. 41.1–4; 42.5–9; 45.9–13; 46.9–11; 48.12–16a.

158. Now also Fokkelman, 'The Cyrus Oracle', pp. 303–23.

159. Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 64.

160. For the MT בָּרִים dependence on the Akkadian *bārû(m)* (a sacrificial divination priest), see *AHW*, pp. 109–10; Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 333–34; see also Werner, *Studien*, p. 116 n. 2.

161. Read the plural; also Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1–45,7*, p. 454.

162. Werner, *Studien*, pp. 116–25: 'The plan and the word of Yahweh, therefore, operate in the history of his people, aimed at the salvation of Jerusalem.'

163. Gitay, 'Back to Historical Isaiah', p. 68, points out that the time frame of Isa. 1.1 is broken with 'Cyrus' in 44.28 and 45.1.

instrument in the hand of Yhwh, for there is no longer any doubt about his victory. Consequently, from this time forward the debate about Israel's blindness is lacking. Even the *golah* cannot be so blind as not to see the success of the Persian! However, at the time of this oracle, the prophet himself was probably not clear what the actual consequences for the exiled community might be. So he left it with the statement that Cyrus himself would fulfill all the plans of Yhwh (כל חפצי שלם). For those who came later this was not enough, so they inserted the line in 44.26b that through his prophets, Yhwh promises to resettle and restore Jerusalem, as well as to rebuild the cities of Judah. They even went to the extent of situating their addition in an appropriate place at least, namely, after the saying of Yhwh confirming the words of his prophets (44.26a). A further addition was placed in the middle of the two-fold האמר—a third 'who said' (44.27), which deserts the context of prophecy and stresses Yhwh's power over the forces of chaos, suggesting a connection with the Jerusalem cult tradition.¹⁶⁴ Still later, in the (pre)Chronicler's period, the last addition in 44.28b ascribes the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple (Ezra 1.1-3; 6.3-5) to Cyrus and not, as would be historically correct, to Darius I.¹⁶⁵ The view that the name 'Cyrus' was first inserted only in the time of Darius I, i.e., in the last decade of the sixth century, as Kratz maintains with his Cyrus-Supplement stratum,¹⁶⁶ raises more questions than it solves. Would the exilic prophet, who had made the center of his proclamation Yhwh's new intervention for Israel through the advent of a victor from the east in 550, deliberately not have named Cyrus? This assumption makes little sense, since everyone knew which Persian king was being referred to. It is another matter that later more would be ascribed to the Persian than he was entitled to, as 44.28b affirms! Second, after the disillusionment over the true concerns of Cyrus, who made himself king over Babylon and became a worshiper of Marduk, it is unlikely that the honorary title of 'shepherd' and 'anointed' of Yhwh would have been conferred on him.¹⁶⁷ It is much more plausible that these titles of honor would have been taken away from him later; that they were not speaks for

164. For this, see Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 82.

165. See Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 186, who ascribes 44.28 and 45.1 (from לבורש, 3b(beg.)), 5, among others, to the 'Cyrus additions', which led to the Chronicler's presentation.

166. Kratz, *Kyros*, pp. 175-91.

167. Against Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 189: 'The mention of Cyrus's name in Isa. 44.28; 45.1 clearly assigns to the Persian king the mediating role of the previously unnamed "messiah" in the salvation events'.

the Deutero-Isaianic authenticity of the Cyrus designations. God's word was not removed from the prophet's mouth, but rather was updated. This happened especially in the first EYS, where Cyrus's unfulfilled tasks were shifted to the servant, i.e., to the *golah*, ready for an exodus! Moreover, even the explicit references to Cyrus, whether from 44.24–45.7 or, even more, from the Deutero-Isaiah corpus as a whole, do not make a pro-Persian propaganda tract, but these texts remain an unsurpassable credo on the power of Yhwh in history.¹⁶⁸

According to Deutero-Isaiah's portrayal, the Persian king has *no* task from the viewpoint of the restoration, but is solely the instrument by which Yhwh intervenes again in world history in favor of his people. Cyrus has no portion in the new thing that Yhwh causes to spring forth (43.19), but creates the conditions for it! Against this background the parallels of 41.1–5 and 49.1–6 are more clear. With the awakening of Cyrus, freedom begins; with the call of the Ebed, i.e., the *golah* eager to return home, the restoration begins.¹⁶⁹

In the royal oracle of 45.1–7, Yhwh speaks directly to Cyrus. The two explicit Cyrus pericopes have been placed together redactionally, which is already suggested by the inclusio of 44.24bα/45.7. The disparate literary-critical solutions proposed for this pericope, together with the indisputably high relevance of this oracle, suggest that both early on and subsequently the text had been frequently revised, so that one can hardly distinguish any more between authentic and imitated sayings on a purely linguistic level; but the 'literary-critical knives' might still be sharpened on conceptual differences. Thus the tension¹⁷⁰ between the opened doors and the unlocked gates on the one hand (45.1b), and the divine promise to break to pieces the bronze gates and iron bars (of Babylon) before Cyrus (45.2) on the other hand, is unmistakable. An addition in 45.1b reflects the actual historical events of the peaceful capture of Babylon in October 539.¹⁷¹ The supplementer introduced it quite skillfully, recapitulating the

168. Thus Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', pp. 301–302, against Vermeylen, 'Le motif de la création', pp. 219–20.

169. Cf. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 127; in contrast, the connection between Cyrus and the 'man of sorrows' of Isa. 53 which Mettinger ('Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder', p. 74; Mettinger, *Farewell*, p. 26) claims to recognize appears to be too speculative.

170. Critically, Leene, 'Auf der Suche', p. 811, whose concept of the 'metaphorical tension', however, is more suited to the reception of the text rather than its production.

171. Thus Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 33, who maintains that the entire verse 45.1 is secondary, however.

key word 'open' (אָפֿען, 45.1aβ) in the infinitive (לִפְתּוֹחַ). The promise of rich booty for the Persian in Babylon (v. 3), which was not then fulfilled, possesses all the characteristics of an authentic oracle.¹⁷² As with the entire proclamation of Deutero-Isaiah, this royal oracle, too, ultimately has to do with the promise of salvation for the exiled people of God, as the final clauses in 45.4, 6 (לִמְעַן) show. The Persian king was inducted into service for Israel's sake, so that the world would acknowledge Yhwh's uniqueness.

In the last sayings that go back to Deutero-Isaiah, the confrontation with the *golah* and the nations—naturally fictive—outweighs Cyrus' appointment as the instrument in Yhwh's hand:¹⁷³

45.11-13* Disputation with the *golah* about Yhwh's action

45.20a, 21 Judgment address to the 'survivors of the nations'

46.9-11 Yhwh's proof-saying to the *golah* with respect to Cyrus

The messenger formula, expanded in Deutero-Isaianic style, already shows that the original unit began with 45.11. The literary type oscillates between a disputation saying and judgment address.¹⁷⁴ Early on, the balance between dispute and accusation inclined in favor of the latter, since two Woes (45.9-10) were inserted¹⁷⁵ which reminded not only exilic Israel, but each listener, of their absolute dependence on the Creator.¹⁷⁶

The prophetic word in 45.11-13 is aimed at the *golah* and those in it who did not wish to acknowledge that Yhwh, 'Maker of Israel', had called a foreign military commander as liberator.¹⁷⁷ Yet Yhwh can exercise his right to steer history however he will, an indisputable right he has earned as Creator of earth, people, and stars: 'I have awakened him in righteousness and I will smooth out all his paths' (45.13a). As in 44.26b, 28b, this statement also appeared too flat to

172. Gallig, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels*, p. 20, dates 45.1-7 to the period of the Lydian field campaign.

173. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 93-104, reckons with no more authentic sayings after 46.9-11; Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 217, still counts Isa. 47* and 48.20-21 as belonging to the basic stratum.

174. For this, see Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, pp. 11-16.

175. See Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, p. 14.

176. The trigger was the key word יָצַר (45.11a), incorporated twice in v. 9, especially since it is also found in 45.7!

177. Leene thinks otherwise ('Universalism', pp. 309-34), seeing in 45.9-13 a lament of the nations, who find themselves disadvantaged by Yhwh's politics in favor of Israel through Cyrus.

later editors, who supplemented it with,¹⁷⁸ 'He shall build my city and set free my *golah*' (גִּלְוָהּ).¹⁸⁰

The consequences of the Cyrus events even, and in particular, for the nations in the context of the prophetic evidence is again a theme of 45.20-23, within which v. 20b is generally recognized as an addition consisting of a polemic against idols, interrupting the imperatives of vv. 20a, 21.¹⁸¹ Unlike 45.18-19, the 'descendants of Jacob' are not addressed here, but rather the 'survivors of the nations' (פְּלִיטֵי הַגּוֹיִם), who in a mock courtroom scene are called on to recognize the effective power of Yhwh as the only God, the God who caused this (זֶה— i.e., the Cyrus-events) to be prophesied and fulfilled,¹⁸² and who thereby proved himself to be אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיק וְמוֹשִׁיעַ.¹⁸³ Those people from the nations who were affected by the triumphal march and the approaching collapse of the New Babylonian empire are confronted by Yhwh's exclusive claim and have nothing to say against it. This oracle is not a 'missionary' word for the nations, but serves the self-confidence of the *golah*!

The case appears to be otherwise in 45.22-23, where the divine call to turn to Yhwh and be saved, no longer concerning only the 'survivors of the nations' but 'all the ends of the earth', goes far beyond what the exilic prophet has to offer to a 'theology of the nations'.¹⁸⁴ Thus it makes more sense to ascribe these verses of openness toward the nations to a later hand which consciously took up two key words of the prophet (צִדִּיק / יֹשֶׁעַ) and placed them in the context of a 'theology of the word' (cf. לֹא שׁוֹב in 55.10, 11). To later generations this openness to the nations was illusory or even intolerable, and so

178. Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 106, draws a parallel to 44.28 and describes it as 'Chronicles theology in pre-Chronicles form.'

179. In reference to prisoners: Isa. 20.4; Jer. 24.5; 28.4; 29.22; 40.1; Obad. 20.

180. The secondary character of 45.13 (end) is undisputed; thus, with Hermisson, *Deuterokesaja*, p. 26.

181. Hermisson, *Deuterokesaja*, pp. 56-57; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 39-40; Ruppert, 'Die Kritik', p. 81; however, Beuken, 'Confession', p. 342.

182. See Hausmann, *Israels Rest*, p. 75; Ruppert, 'Das Heil der Völker', pp. 138-39.

183. Hermisson, *Deuterokesaja*, p. 72, following Reiterer, *Gerechtigkeit*, pp. 40-46: 'Here too it is about the unstoppable saving power of Yahweh, which one can therefore call "victorious" and "true" / "reliable", because it certainly achieves its goal.'

184. Against van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 44-50, who views 45.22-23 as the original conclusion of 20a, 21. The prophet himself, however, would not have recognized its fraught significance, which in turn accounts for the special position of this oracle (p. 47).

45.24-25 was added as a limitation: only Israel's progeny will worship Yhwh,¹⁸⁵ all others tend to be his enemies.¹⁸⁶

Isaiah 46.9-11 presents a proof-saying¹⁸⁷ in which the essential elements of the Deutero-Isaianic preaching are summarized; this condensation is also the reason that the proof of prophecy, elsewhere always expressed in the context of a confrontation with the nations and their gods, is now applied to Israel. The 'you' of those who are told to remember the earlier things (רִאשִׁוֹנוֹת) can only mean members of God's people who should have gained from the fulfillment of the earlier prophetic oracles the certitude that Yhwh alone is God and that the promise of the Persian's victory is a reality.¹⁸⁸

The expression אִישׁ עֲצָרוֹ closes the circle that 40.13 opened with the same phrase: 'Even the foreign ruler is a man of his plan, whose deeds Yhwh commands in his divine sovereignty, since he is the master of his plan from its beginning to its completion'.¹⁸⁹ In contrast to 43.18, Israel should indeed remember here the past history with its God in order to become aware of all his constant help, in spite of all the setbacks.¹⁹⁰ The prohibition against remembering applies only where the 'new thing' comes into play, for which Cyrus creates the conditions but in which he himself does not participate. In retrospect, the exilic prophet's preaching does not correspond to the image of the 'evangelist of the Old Covenant', as it is so readily deemed. But less is more here; in difficult times, it is enough for prophecy to announce Cyrus as an instrument in Yhwh's hand and not in Marduk's, and at the same time offer the proof of prophecy against the doubts of the *golah* and its flirtation with the gods of Babylon. That the prophet remained nameless was probably due to the fact that Cyrus did not fulfill what the exilic prophet had hoped of him. His students are to be thanked for nurturing and protecting his oracles, creating a composition of them and bringing it to Jerusalem.

185. A positive connection to the nations can be established here only if one leaves the difficult לִי אֶמְצָא (45.24a) and understands those who 'shall come and be ashamed' of 24b as repentant former idolaters; but then they too belong to the אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁרָאֵל! Assuming an error from לִי אֶמְצָא (LXX: λέγω) alleviates the problem; Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, pp. 53-54.

186. Thus Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, p. 79.

187. Merendino, 'Der Erste', p. 477; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 83; Werner, *Studien*, pp. 126-27.

188. Marböck, 'Der Gott des Neuen', p. 207; Werner, *Studien*, pp. 128-29.

189. Werner, *Studien*, p. 129.

190. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 139: 'This continuous action of God from the beginning is realized in the present time in the appearance of Cyrus'; cf. Leene, *De vroegere*, p. 200.

6.5. *The Golah Redaction*

If it is correct that the years of Deutero-Isaiah's prophetic office can be fixed at 550–539, and if a significant return of exiles from Babylon can be reckoned during the reign of Darius as a result of the suppression of two major revolts, then it is probable that the *golah* redaction is to be dated between 539 and 521.

At the same time, the exodus verses 48.20–21, together with the striking thematic differences between 40–48 and 49–55, receive a plausible historical background; in this case, it is no longer a question of Cyrus, Babylon, and the proof of prophecy with its specific vocabulary of 'earlier and later', because the communication situation after Isaiah 48, i.e., after the year 521, is fundamentally changed. It is now Zion, not Babylon, that stands at the center.¹⁹¹ Chapters 49–52, which have been shown to possess their own unique coloring,¹⁹² precipitate literarily the inclusion of chaps. 40–48* in their new Jerusalem context as edited by the *golah*. It was no accident, but artful design, that placed the second Ebed Yhwh Song at the beginning and the call to the Jewish Diaspora to return home at the close.

The exilic tradents of the Deutero-Isaianic oracle materials have given 40–48 its present form; on the one hand they placed the hymnic verses at selected points (42.10–12; 44.23; 48.20–21) and, on the other hand, they positioned the first EYS (42.1–4) before the call of Cyrus (42.5–9), thus displacing the latter in laying claim to the role of light to the nations. The *golah* that had returned, then, are those who begin the Zion Restoration section with the second EYS (49.1–6); the referral of 49.6 back to 42.6 shows that they take up Cyrus' legacy as light to the nations.¹⁹³ This *golah*, first keen to return and then in fact returning, faithful to the oracle of the exilic prophet, sees itself as the Ebed who takes up the office of the word for the reluctant inhabitants of Jerusalem; thus in the second EYS the returned *golah* is presented to the Jerusalem population as the Ebed.¹⁹⁴ The *golah* redaction has even 'signed' this EYS with a hymnic verse (49.13).

191. See Abma, 'Travelling from Babylon', pp. 3–28, who stresses the Babylon–Zion dichotomy.

192. See, among others, Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, pp. 165–68 (first expansion stratum).

193. See Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 200, who ascribes the hymns 44.23; 49.13; 52.9–10 and the first two EYS (42.1–4; 49.1–6) to his first expansion stratum, and the third and fourth EYS to the second expansion stratum (200 n. 67).

194. See Abma, 'Travelling from Babylon', pp. 27–28: 'The role of the servant also receives clear contours. He is the corporate personality of those who moved out from Babylon.'

The first entry of the *golah* redaction is found in 42.1-4, the presentation of the Ebed.¹⁹⁵ While the Ebed is spoken of here in the third person, he is directly addressed with 'you' in 42.6. Furthermore, the close resemblance of 42.5-9 to other Cyrus oracles is remarkable, which suggests, analogous to 41.21-26, 28, that 42.5-9 is also to be viewed as a Cyrus oracle that was secondarily transformed into an Ebed oracle.¹⁹⁶ The thematic key word מִשְׁפָּט is encountered three times (vv. 1, 3, 4) as a task of the Ebed, to bring מִשְׁפָּט to the nations. It is evident that the word מִשְׁפָּט unites all four EYS with each other.¹⁹⁷ The case of 42.1-4 referring back to 40.14, 27 is quite clear; the exiled Israel does not recognize Yhwh's new leading of history, i.e., the 'path of justice' (אֶרֶץ מִשְׁפָּט), but believes that its own justice has been ignored by Yhwh. In contrast to the skepticism of Deutero-Isaiah's addressees, the Ebed, the returning *golah*, understands itself as the bearer of the divine spirit, in fulfillment of Moses's wish that the spirit would be bestowed on the entire people.¹⁹⁸ With knowledge of the divine רוּחַ, on the one hand, that part of the *golah* prepared for exodus takes up the prophet's mantle;¹⁹⁹ on the other hand, the *golah* assumes a royal²⁰⁰ leadership role in the world of the nations, to which it brings מִשְׁפָּט, the 'order of rule'²⁰¹ of the God of Israel. The Ebed does this לְאֻמֹּת,²⁰² i.e., in such a way that מִשְׁפָּט becomes a reality. It is obvious that such a royal-prophetic commission²⁰³ in and to the world of nations can hardly be directed to a single person.²⁰⁴

The collective mission of the Ebed with his worldwide task has its *fundamentum in re* in the person of Cyrus and his significance in world history. Deutero-Isaiah had laid this before the *golah* in the Cyrus oracles, to which 42.5-9 also belongs. Yhwh as the God of creation and of the world (הָאֵל יְהוָה, 42.5) again takes over the leadership of history, making Cyrus the 'covenant of humanity' (לְבְרִית עַם)

195. Note the Masoretic demarcation of 42.1-4 by two petuhot.

196. Thus Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1–45,7*, p. 228; Merendino, 'Der Erste', p. 252.

197. 42.1, 3, 4; 49.4; 50.8; 53.8; elsewhere in 40–55: 40.14, 27; 51.4; 54.17.

198. Num. 11.25, 29; cf. Joel 3.1.

199. See Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 38.

200. So, especially, Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht*, p. 38.

201. Hermisson, 'Der Lohn des Knechts', p. 283.

202. Not בְּאֻמֹּת as in 48.1 and 61.8; cf. in contrast 43.9; Beuken, 'Mišpaṭ', p. 25: 'unto faithfulness, so that faithfulness comes to light.'

203. J. Jeremias, 'מִשְׁפָּט im ersten Gottesknechtslied', p. 40: 'The servant theme [is] introduced as a royal one, but in the explication of the role and action of the servant it ends up as a prophetic one.'

204. See the LXX additions in 42.1 with 'Jacob/Israel'.

and the ‘light of the nations’ (לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם, 42.6). By freeing Israel from the Babylonian yoke, Cyrus should prove to be the one who takes upon himself and fulfills the ‘obligation’ on the part of Yhwh for the benefit of enslaved humanity.

In placing 42.1–4 after the salvation sayings of their master to the Ebed, i.e., the whole of exiled Israel (41.8–13), and before the original Cyrus oracle, the *golah* redactors laid their claim to the heritage of the Ebed Israel as well as to that of Cyrus. These are no longer the passive or active agents of the divine plan; the Ebed, as the eagerly returning *golah*, is ‘one who brings forth’ מַשְׁפֵּט, i.e., a righteous social order,²⁰⁵ and interpreter of *his* torah (תּוֹרָתוֹ). Unique in the entire book of Isaiah, the expression ‘*his* torah’ indicates that the nations indeed wait on Yhwh’s torah, but it is a torah that is brought and explained by the servant! As Moses once delivered and explained Yhwh’s torah to Israel, so the nations now expect this from the returning *golah*; they are ‘Moses for the nations’.²⁰⁶

The *golah* redactors skillfully placed the first hymnic insertion after the Cyrus oracle, which they had expanded to an EYS (42.1–9), with the Deutero-Isaianic saying about the חֲדָשָׁה providing the connection. The ‘new thing’ which occasions the ‘new song’ now consists concretely of the development of the Ebed, i.e., of a *golah* eager for an exodus, which stands in positive contrast to the deaf and blind servant Israel, i.e., the mass of the exiled people of God. The new lies therefore in the preparation of the faithful servant, i.e., the *golah*, for performing its mission to Israel. Cyrus stands at the end (אַחֲרִית²⁰⁷) of the old salvation history. He has no portion in the new (חֲדָשָׁה, 43.19); rather, he must give way to the Ebed.²⁰⁸ Taking up the kerygma of their master, the *golah* redactors are convinced that the new salvation act of Yhwh is performed for all to see; thus it is no accident that the ‘boundaries of the earth’ (מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ) appear in the first and last hymns of the ‘Babylon chapters’ (42.10; 48.20).²⁰⁹

Once again, the *golah* redaction marks the second part of the collection—which begins with 42.13 and announces with great vehemence

205. I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 82: ‘Yhwh’s מַשְׁפֵּט creates peace and security through righteousness—and not just for his people, but for all nations.’

206. J. Jeremias, ‘מַשְׁפֵּט im ersten Gottesknechtslied’, p. 38.

207. 41.22; 46.10; 47.7.

208. See Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 136: ‘Cyrus does not indicate something new, but stands in the continuity of the acts of God. What is “new” is the calling of the servant.’

209. Does יוֹרְדֵי הַיָּם וּמִלֵּאֵי allude to a ‘sea shanty’ (42.10), as Leene (‘History and Eschatology’, p. 245) would have it?

the renewed intervention of Yhwh—with a hymnic ‘signature’ (44.23), which at the same time points to the following Cyrus oracle (44.24–45.7, 8). From the word of God in the master’s mouth, that Yhwh had redeemed Israel (נִצְּלֵהוּ), they borrowed this key word to express the reason for the divine praise: ‘For Yhwh has redeemed Jacob and in Israel he is/will be glorified’ (יִתְפַּאֵר). The *golah* is confident that the glorifying of Yhwh can only be accomplished through them, since the greater exilic community has not allowed any trust in a new future to take root; thus, in the second EYS, the divine speech confirms: ‘You are my servant; in you, I will be glorified’ (בְּךָ אֶתְפַּאֵר, 49.3).²¹⁰ That the ‘liberation’ is already expressed with the certainty of a prophetic perfect—while the ‘glorifying’ remains in the present/future—indicates the continuing task of the *golah* to the people of God, which does not end with their return to Jerusalem, but will carry forward to even greater effect (cf. 49.5-6)!

Before the *golah* redactors call for the exilic community to leave Babylon and promise Yhwh’s protecting presence (48.20-21), they cite the reason for the exodus command in 47.1-11: The end of Babylon is already so close that the mistress of the kingdom is commanded to sit in the dust to grind flour with the hand-mill and to wade through streams with bared legs.²¹¹ The imperatives of vv. 1, 2, 5 as well as the recapitulation of the phrase ‘daughter of the Chaldeans’ together with the expression יִקְרְאוּ לָךְ יְהוֹסִיף in 47.5 present 47.1-5 as a first textual unit, into which the second Jerusalem redaction must have incorporated the call to faithfulness of v. 4.²¹² Thus it is no coincidence that 52.1 makes reference to 47.5 with לֹא יוֹסִיף יְבֹא בָךְ: Babylon must sit in the dust; Zion shall arise from the earth.²¹³ In 47.6-7 follows the grounds for punishment, which consist in Babylon’s ruthlessness and hubris. The announcement of judgment begins in 47.8 with יָעִתָּה: widowhood and childlessness will hit Babylon suddenly and in one fell swoop, and not even its arts of divination and magic can protect it. The theme of the futility of magical practices will be detailed in an expansion (47.12-15), in which the connection with the key word ‘able/useful’ (יָכֹל) is made and its irony is ever

210. See the key word פֶּאֶר in 44.23; 49.3; 60.7, 9, 13, 21; 61.3.

211. On the sexual connotations, see Eslinger, ‘The Infinite’, pp. 149-51.

212. Only in 47.4 and in 54.5 do ‘Yhwh Sabaoth’ and ‘Holy One of Israel’ occur together, both times with נִצְּלֵהוּ; the parallel between the fall of Babylon and the restoration of Zion is unmistakable (Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 146).

213. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 139; Hermisson, ‘Einheit und Komplexität’, p. 305; Franke, ‘The Function of the Satiric Lament’, pp. 408-18; Franke, ‘Reversals of Fortune’, p. 119.

more biting.²¹⁴ The goals have changed; it is no longer the punishment of hubris that is in focus, but the uselessness of magic and conjuring tricks. Several important indications argue against the view that the authenticity of Isaiah 47 is to be assumed from the simple fact that the fall of Babylon did not happen as expected here.²¹⁵ For one thing, the argument of Yhwh's guidance of history, which serves to emphasize his uniqueness, is missing²¹⁶—elsewhere the prophet does not tire of using it; and second, any reference to Israel is missing, so that chap. 47 cannot simply be declared as a salvation oracle for God's people.²¹⁷

The connections to the 'Babylonian texts' of chaps. 13–14 and 21.1–11 have been observed a number times;²¹⁸ the differences, however, have not been emphasized. In chaps. 13–14 and 21 a greater aggressiveness toward Babylon can be recognized, while 47.1–11 resonates with no more than a little regret over the insubordination of the instrument in Yhwh's hand. The fall of Babylon is associated with neither the Day of Yhwh (13.6) and its cosmic results nor the intervention of the Medes (13.17) or Cyrus, but is the result of human hubris, which inevitably comes to an end.²¹⁹ If it is correct that the first great return made its way to Palestine following the defeat by Darius I of the Babylonian uprisings in 522/521, and chap. 47 supplies the thematic background for the exodus command of 48.20–21, then it is likely that 47.1–11 has in view the harsh punishment of Babylon by Darius, which must have had a signal effect on the exilic community.²²⁰ The similarity to Deutero-Isaiah is also reflected in a convergence of content. 'The denunciation of Babylon's claim to be the only invincible power can be explained as a deliberate counterpoint to

214. Rechenmacher, *Jungfrau, Tochter Babel*, p. 371, especially with respect to v. 12.

215. Martin-Achard, 'Ésaïe 47', p. 89; on the other hand, Kratz reckons on a writing shortly after 539 BCE (*Kyros*, pp. 169–70).

216. Thus van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 158.

217. See Merendino, 'Der Erste', pp. 486–88; Elliger, *Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis*, p. 115, maintains that Trito-Isaiah is the author of 47: 'a small mind, one might say: a moralist.'

218. Among others, Franke, 'The Function of the Satiric Lament', pp. 250–59; Begg, 'Babylon', pp. 121–25.

219. Heßler, *Heilsdrama*, p. 151, maintains that Isa. 47 is a 'wisdom poem, less "song" than prose, a type of "didactic sermon".'

220. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 166 arrives at the same dating for Isa. 47* by another way, which he assigns to his first Jerusalem redaction: 'This brings us to a temporal location of Deut-Isa Z in the context of the years 520/51, which were turbulent in Judah as well as in the greater Persian Empire.'

the message of the prophet about Yahweh's uniqueness and sovereign power.²²¹ The hubris of the state, which assumes an equality with God in an imperial megalomania²²² and finds its most eloquent expression in the boast 'I and no other' (אני ואפס־עוד, 47.8, 10), challenges Yhwh's claim of sole divinity: אנכי אל ואין עוד אלהים ואפס־כמוני—I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me' (46.9). In contrast to the exilic community, which is called on to remember the former things and to recall that Yhwh proclaimed the outcome from the very beginning (זכרו ראשונות, 46.9-10), Babylon did not consider its end (לא זכרת אחריתה, 47.7). The *golah* redactors could not have attached their Babylonian poem more fittingly to the sayings of their master. They exposed Babylon's claim to divinity as false and its disregard for the end as criminally stupid!

If it is accurate that the *golah* redactors attached 47.1-11 to the words of Deutero-Isaiah in 46.9-11, then the question arises how 46.1-4, the text of the fall of the Babylonian gods Bel and Nabu, is related to it.²²³ It is striking that these verses without exception present the removal of the statues of the gods in the perfect, as an event that has already happened, while the Babylon poem in chap. 47 is written in present form. Is the downfall of its gods the reason that Babylon must sit humiliated in the dust?²²⁴ Against this logical sequence is the fact that in chap. 47 the removal of the divine images is not the central concern; on the contrary, it is not their presence but their usefulness that is in question! In other words, had the images of the gods already been dragged out of Babylon, 47.9, 11 would certainly not say that widowhood and childlessness, i.e., disaster, 'shall come upon you' (ותבאנה לך/ובא עליך). There are many indications, therefore, that 46.1-4 with its expansion is not to be placed chronologically before the Babylon poem in 47.1-11, but after it. A concrete historical occasion can even be cited for the writing of 46.1-4: the dragging off of the Marduk statue and the destruction of the Babylonian central sanctuary, Esagila, by Xerxes I in 482. In this historical context the address to 'the whole remnant of the house of Israel' (כל שארית בית ישראל, v. 3) is understandable. This refers to the Jews

221. Merendino, 'Der Erste', pp. 491-92.

222. See the narrative of the building of the tower in Gen. 11.1-9; also, Berges, 'Gen 11.1-9', pp. 54-56.

223. 46.5-7, 8 are generally assigned to the stratum of the polemic against idols and 46.12-13 to the 'imminent expectation' or 'qarob' stratum.

224. Hanson, *Isaiah* 40-66, p. 117: 'Abandoned by her gods, mistress Babylon is portrayed sitting in mourning and shame in the dust.'

who still remained in Babylon after the first return in 522/521. The dragging off of the Marduk statue and the further punishment of Babylon by Xerxes should be recognized as a last warning to abandon the foreign city once and for all. That the attack against Babylon by the Persian in 482 made a strong impression on the Babylonian Diaspora can be seen from the fact that the names of the Jews living there become increasingly 'Yahwistic' from 480 onwards.²²⁵ The call in 46.3-4 also aims to encourage the Babylonian Diaspora Jews to let themselves be carried back to the homeland by Yhwh—what a contrast to the Babylonian gods, who can carry no one, but are themselves abducted! The fact that 46.1-4 shapes the polemic against Bel,²²⁶ the highest god of heaven in the Babylonian pantheon, and Nabu,²²⁷ the protecting divinity of the Chaldean royal dynasty, in the context of the brutal appearance of Xerxes against Babylon and its gods in 482, gives verisimilitude to the narrative of Bel and the Dragon in Daniel 14.²²⁸ When the oldest stratum of Daniel 14 has its climax in the monotheistic confession of the Persian king to the God of Israel, Μέγας ἐστὶ κύριος ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι πλὴν αὐτοῦ ἄλλος (Bel and the Dragon, [Dan. 14] v. 41), this is a striking parallel to Isa. 46.9.²²⁹ Both Isa. 46.1-4 and Daniel 14 are reflexes of the conflict in Babylonian Diaspora Judaism at the turn of the sixth century to the fifth over the monotheistic claim of the Yhwh religion.²³⁰ Within the book of Isaiah the Deutero-Isaianic saying in 46.9 ('I am God and there is no other') would become the peg for the historically motivated inscribing of Isa. 46.1-4; it is no wonder that this was expanded in the manner of a 'polemic against idols' (46.5-7).

After the *golah* redaction in Isa. 47.1-11 which announced the punishment of the hubris of the oppressive world power, there is a further divine address to the house of Jacob, to those who are called

225. See Dandamayev, 'Babylonia in the Persian Age', p. 356.

226. See Abusch, 'Marduk', *DDD*, pp. 1014-26.

227. See Millard, 'Nabû', *DDD*, pp. 1141-47.

228. Thus Kottsieper, 'Zusätze zu Daniel', p. 253, sees 'in the present narrative of the serpent dragon a witness to the conflict within the Babylonian Diaspora over the Babylonian religion...', a conflict which probably intensified in the late sixth century B.C. and reached its climax at the beginning of the fifth century B.C.'

229. LXX: ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἕτι πλὴν ἐμοῦ.

230. According to Kottsieper ('Zusätze zu Daniel', p. 255), P. Amherst 63 shows, with the invocations of Marduk and Nabu with El and Asherah, that the Marduk cult was still very much alive in the fifth century even in the Palestinian region, due to the Assyrian deportations of south Mesopotamian peoples; he also refers to Ezra 4.1-5 and 2 Kgs 17.24-41.

by the name of Israel, who have come from the loins of Judah, who swear by the name Yhwh and acknowledge the God of Israel. The accusatory tone of the entire chapter which the addition in 48.1b β only re-enforces, 'not in truth and justice' (לֹא בִצְדָקָה), does not match the encouraging tenor of the words of Deutero-Isaiah, but perhaps fits the résumé of the Ebed as the returning *golah* concerned with the persuasion of the exilic community. The text unfolds its full effect only in view of the chapter's closing exodus command (48.20-21).²³¹ While the exiles are indeed 'nominal' Yhwh followers and even call themselves after 'the holy city' (v. 2), the idea of an Exodus or return to Jerusalem seems to have moved very few. Thus it is no surprise that the proof of prophecy is now directed to Israel itself. The punishment of Babylon was a testament to Yhwh's effectiveness, in contrast to the uselessness of all Babylonian interpretations of the future. This means that not only the magic and sorcery of Babylon are exposed, but also those of Israel in exile.²³² It is no coincidence that the main themes of chaps. 40-48* are brought to an end by the *golah* redaction: 'former things, things coming later, new things', 'Babylon', 'Cyrus', 'idol worship', with the theme 'proof of prophecy' clearly dominating. The discussion about the dimensions of time referred to here, with their corresponding facts, is a lively one;²³³ in it, the significance of the 'new' is of greatest importance. Against the majority of interpreters, we follow the results of Leene, who interprets the three time dimensions in 48.16 as follows:

מֵרָאשׁ: Time of prophecy: Israel's tradition, the former things

מֵעַתָּה: Time of fulfillment: Cyrus as culmination of the former things

וּמֵעַתָּה: Time of the new: The servant takes up the word

In the divine address the *golah* redaction has Yhwh emphasize that because of Israel's stubbornness he will 'suddenly' (פֶּתָאֵם) cf. also 47.11) make his earlier announcements a reality so that Israel will not be able to claim that their idol had done it (48.3-5). In the same vein, *from this time forward* Yhwh lets Israel 'hear new things' (הִשְׁמַעְתִּיךָ), which are created now (עַתָּה נִבְרָאוּ), neither in the far

231. Verses 17-19 are an expansion which blames the lack of blessing not on Yhwh, but on Israel's disobedience (van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 306-308).

232. Cf. Leene, *De voegere*, p. 330: 'The fall of Babylon (chap. 47) as the outcome of the former means the exposure of idol-worship, even that of Israel itself.'

233. See the summary by Leene, *De vroegere*, pp. 207-10.

distant past (לֹא מֵאָז וּלְפָנַי יוֹם) nor in the recent past, so that he cannot say, '[Already for a long time] I have known them!' (תֹּאמַר הֲנֵה יָדַעְתִּין) (48.7).

With Westermann, most interpreters understand the triumph of the Persian king and the fall of Babylon as one of the 'new things'.²³⁴ In the process of reading the book, however, the Cyrus event cannot be this radical new thing since, beginning with 41.2, it has already been announced again and again with increasing explicitness! How could Cyrus comprise the new thing when he is referred to by name already in 44.28 and 45.1? With Leene,²³⁵ it should be stressed that Cyrus fulfilled the former saving acts of Yhwh in Israel's favor, and consequently belongs to the sphere of the earlier things or even, depending upon the perspective, to the coming things, but not to the חדשות, by which something entirely and absolutely new is meant, something that has no parallel in the history of Yhwh with Israel.

What then is this new thing? Looking at the three references, one for חדשה (43.19) and two for חדשות (42.9; 48.6), one sees an arc of meaning stretching from the announcement of the new things (אֲנִי מְגִיד, 42.9), to their creation (הֲנִי עֹשֶׂה חֲדָשָׁה, 43.19) to the retrospective view of past proclamation (הַשְׁמַעְתִּיךָ חֲדָשׁוֹת, 48.6).²³⁶ The 'new' is related not to the Cyrus event, but to the growth and development of the true Ebed as the *golah* who are eager to return, emerging from the deaf and blind servant 'Israel'; this faithful Ebed will take up the office of the word in 49.1. So it is not surprising that a later writer clarifies this connection of Isaiah 48 and 49 through the addition in 48.16b: 'And now the Lord Yhwh has sent me and his spirit'. After the preparation of this true Ebed, his commission begins! Also related to this preparation are the words of Yhwh (חֲנֵה צִרְפֶּתִיךָ) about the servant's complete purification and 'testing election'²³⁷ in the furnace of adversity (48.10), which refers to the experience of exile (Deut. 4.20²³⁸).

What is at stake in 48.10 is the testing of the Ebed in the Babylonian exile, the purification of the faithful remnant that calls for the exodus

234. Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 72.

235. Leene, *De vroegere*, pp. 184–85.

236. See Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, pp. 139–40.

237. MT: בַּחֲרֵתִיךָ בְּכֹור עֲנִי: 'I have chosen you in the furnace of misery.' The replacement of בַּחֲרֵתִיךָ with בָּחֵן (to prove, test) in 1QIsa^a was suggested by the parallel with צִרְף; however, Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 354, retains MT with a view to the choosing of the Ebed in 41.8, 9; 43.10; 44.1, 2.

238. Deut. 4.20: מִכֹּר בְּרוֹל מִמִּצְרַיִם, 1 Kgs 8.51; Jer. 11.4.

from Babylon and assumes the office of the word in 49.1.²³⁹ Out of the blind and deaf Ebed, the mass of the exiled, a servant has arisen who sets off to depart from Babylon, i.e., from idolatry (Isa. 47). The cleansing of the *golah*, which Yhwh does not carry out for the price of silver, that is not as with silver recovery, stands in contrast to the actions of the idol-smiths (cf. צִרְיָה in 40.19; 41.7; 46.6) who finishes their statues for a price—of silver or gold. The one true God is not refined in the forge, but he himself purifies his servant in the furnace of affliction!²⁴⁰

With the hymnic verses 48.20-21 which call on the exilic community to depart from Chaldea, the *golah* redaction bids farewell to Babylonian soil; that it does so in connection with 47.1-11, which alludes to the suppression of the Babylonian revolts by Darius, is shown by the inclusion in 48.20 of the word-pair בָּבֶל/בְּשָׂדַיִם from 47.1. Verse 48.20 is connected to the hymn in 42.10-12 through the proclamation 'to the end of the earth', and to the hymn in 44.23 through the theme of Yhwh's act of deliverance (נָצַל). This is also the central message: 'Yhwh has redeemed his servant, Jacob' (נָצַל יַהֲוֵה). Only they are redeemed who make their way homeward; they alone belong to the Ebed, who introduces himself to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in 49.1-6.

6.6. The First Jerusalem Redaction

The conjuncture of the returned *golah* as the true Ebed with the composition of Deutero-Isaianic oracles and that of the inhabitants of Jerusalem with the Proto-Isaianic collection in circulation among them (1-32*) prompted a first expansion of the exilic collection now present in 49-52 on the one hand, and on the other hand, the creation of the first links between 1-32* and 40-52*.

In this first Jerusalem redaction the returned *golah* are the main speakers and so they attached the second EYS (49.1-6) to the beginning of this expansion. That the returnees saw themselves in the position that the anonymous prophet had occupied before them can be recognized in the parallels of 49.1 and 41.1. As Yhwh's prophet

239. Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 137: 'When the wider context is taken into account, it becomes clear from 48.20f. and also 48.16bff. that the Ebed speaking in 49.1ff. and directly addressed in 49.7ff. is supposed to represent the Israel of the returned Babylonian exiles (*golah*)'; Steck, 'Der Gottesknecht als "Bund"', p. 123.

240. Leene, *De vroegere*, p. 330: 'The new is Israel's purification... The purified Israel is this speaking servant.'

spurred the exiled community on to new hope in the saving action by Cyrus, ultimately leading to the emergence of the faithful Ebed, it is now the servant who, on his return, seeks to communicate the certainty of a glorious future to the Jerusalem population. Against all the disillusionment he wants to lead postexilic Jerusalem to accept his call as central to the Diaspora return movement, of which their own homecoming is only the beginning. The kerygma of the returned Jerusalem *golah* as Ebed aims at a global proclamation²⁴¹ to the Diaspora that the return to Jerusalem is all the more worthwhile because Yhwh has also returned home (52.8)! The hoped-for return of Diaspora Jews is ultimately, however, only a stepping stone to the real goal: the realization of God's salvation (שְׁוִיעָה) to the ends of the earth (49.6b).

The second EYS is clearly delimited by the call to depart (48.20-21) and a hymn (49.13): the Ebed, i.e., the *golah*, purified in the exile, performs the office of the word before the whole world. There is complete agreement on these verses, a reflection of the Ebed about the call (vv. 1-6) that was already voiced in 42.1-4, and on their division into two expansions, where v. 7 is incorporated from the fourth EYS; vv. 8-12 comment on the second EYS through reference to the first EYS and subsequent texts. The structure of the second EYS is as follows:²⁴²

- 1a Call of the servant before the whole world
- 1b-4 The shared past of Yhwh and Ebed
 - 1b-3 Yhwh has called him
 - 4 The Ebed maintains his confidence
- 5-6 God's address to the Ebed
 - 5 Reaffirmation of the commission proclaimed earlier
 - 6 Extension of the task to all nations

The reference of this 'self-assurance of the Ebed'²⁴³ back to the first EYS is undisputed. If the *golah* was presented in 42.1-4 as Ebed in contrast to the mass of the exilic community and in contrast to Cyrus, it now reflects upon the past history of its calling.²⁴⁴ In the present

241. Cf. קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ: 43.6; 48.20; 49.6; [62.11]; אֶפְסֵי הָאָרֶץ: 52.10.

242. See Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIB, p. 14.

243. Thus van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 188, who identifies the Ebed with the *golah* here as well.

244. The identification of the Ebed with 'Israel' in 49.3 is not to be used against this explanation, which is unassailable both text-critically (lacking only in an otherwise secondary LXX manuscript, Kennicott 96 from the fourteenth century) as well as metrically; but it creates insurmountable logical problems

structuring of the four EYS, Yhwh speeches enclose the reflections of the Ebed:

- First EYS: Yhwh presents his Ebed and his task
 Second EYS: The Ebed considers the history of his mission
 Third EYS: The Ebed knows he is above all temptations
 Fourth EYS: Yhwh vouches for the success of his Ebed

The reflection of the Ebed on the task assigned him in 42.1-4 ends with the confession that he knows, though nearly shattered by his commission, that his right (משפט) and his reward (פעלה) are secure with Yhwh. What is meant by the futile labor to which the servant refers in his retrospective (לרִיק יַגְעִיתִי לַתְּהוֹ וְהַבֵּל כַּחַי בְּלִיתִי)? The context suggests that the futile effort of the returning *golah* involved the task of leading Jacob back to Yhwh and gathering Israel to him (לִי, v. 5), i.e., persuading them to leave Babylon. If the insertion of the command to depart in 48.20-21 is correctly associated with the years 522/21, then it follows for the second EYS that the returning *golah*, in spite of their evident failure to persuade the whole or even a major part of the exilic community to return to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah (40.9!),²⁴⁵ have no doubt about their vocation, but on the contrary know about the expansion of their mission, communicated in 49.6.²⁴⁶

Beuken has noted, with regard to the question of what was meant by the futile efforts of the Ebed (v. 4), that particular attention should be given to the pair 'heavy-light' in 49.5b-6a (קָלִיל/כָּבֵד).²⁴⁷ The Ebed had thought that, by returning Jacob to God and assembling Israel, he would gain honor in the eyes of Yhwh (וְאֶכְבֵּד בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה); this expectation, however, had proved deceptive. With this negative experience in the background, the returning *golah* faces the question of how a new beginning in Jerusalem might then be possible if a major part of the *golah* had not been persuaded to trust in Yhwh.

quite apart from the fact that the Ebed is identified only here. How should we imagine the task of the servant of Israel to the people of Israel? Is the Ebed the true Israel (North, *The Suffering Servant*, p. 145; Beuken, *Jesaja, IIB*, p. 28)? Or is the agent in 49.6a not the Ebed, but Yhwh himself (Lohfink, "'Israel' in Jes 49,3", p. 224; Mettinger, *Farewell*, p. 36)? 'Israel' in 49.3 is the 'canonical' witness in favor of a collective interpretation of the EYS!

245. See שׁוֹב/שָׁב in 49.5, 6; for the Ebed as returning *golah*, the mission is the same as Yhwh's: 'Return to me.'

246. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 170.

247. Beuken, 'De vergeefse moeite', pp. 29ff.; cf. Keller, קָלִיל, *THAT II*, p. 642, with a view to 1 Sam. 2.30; 2 Sam. 6.22; 1 Kgs 12.10; Isa. 8.23; 23.9; Hab. 2.16.

Yhwh answers with a further commission that does not merely confirm the old, but stresses the new, and can be rendered as follows: 'Measured by your definition of what it is to be my Ebed, it is an easy thing merely to bring home the tribes of Jacob and the survivors of Israel; I appoint you as a light to the nations, that my salvation might reach to the ends of the earth' (49.6).

It is not random that the returning *golah* takes over only the light function as its purpose from the original Cyrus oracle, and not the covenant obligation with humanity (ברית עם). While the exilic prophet saw liberation from the Babylonian yoke through Cyrus (42.6) as redemption of Yhwh's obligation toward humanity, the relationship of the returning *golah* to the peoples is only indirect, inasmuch as the nations come to the realization that Yhwh is Redeemer and Savior, the Strong One of Israel (49.26), when they carry the sons of the Diaspora living among them to Zion in a bosom-cloth (בִּחֻץ), and the daughters on their shoulders (על־כֹּתֶף, 49.22; cf. 60.4b). The 'Light to the nations' is the returning *golah* as Ebed to the extent that it brings along as many as possible from the dispersion on its homeward way to Zion, where the nations will be their servants.

The first expansion of the second EYS in 49.7 still strikes a positive balance for the nations, with an eye toward the fourth EYS;²⁴⁸ kings and lords will throw themselves down before Yhwh because they recognize him as a faithful [God] (נֶאֱמָן), as the Holy One of Israel.

The second expansion (49.8–12) supplies the missing parallel term to אִוֵּר גּוֹיִם (49.6), introducing ברית עם from 42.6 but reducing it to the internal perspective of Israel;²⁴⁹ deliverance is promised only to the brothers in the faith who are in distress.²⁵⁰ Goal and center of its concern are the establishment and revival of postexilic Israel, in favor of the returning Diaspora (49.12);²⁵¹ even the task of the nations—to carry the returnees to Zion—no longer applies, for they come entirely

248. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 237: 'If 49.7 is not even to be attributed to the author of the fourth EYS, there is at least a secondary connection between the second EYS and the fourth through 49.7'; see especially לבווי נפש (1QIsa^a) with the 'man of sorrows' in Isa. 53.

249. Thus Ruppert, 'Das Heil der Völker', p. 146.

250. Is this about debt slavery? Cf. the cognate construction 'inherit heritages' (לְהִנְחִיל נַחֲלָה), which alludes to Josh. 19.51, the closing sentence of the apportioning of the land after the conquest. There must certainly be a new apportioning of the land if the return of the Diaspora is to succeed at all.

251. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 184: 'The aim of this collection is not so much the life and welfare of those who have returned home, but the renewal and resettlement of the land, which are emphatically placed in the foreground.'

without foreign help!²⁵² In keeping with the mosaic style characteristic of this second expansion,²⁵³ the expressions 'in the time of favor' (בעת־רצון) and 'on the day of salvation' (ביום־שועה) have been adapted from 61.2 (שנת־רצון / יום־נקם); in particular, the themes of restoration (cf. the repeated 'prisoners') are strikingly similar.²⁵⁴

The bridging function of the second EYS with the expansions between the 'Exodus from Babylon' and the 'Restoration of Zion' passages is also clear in the wording of the closing hymn in 49.13.²⁵⁵ It refers back to 44.23 (הרים־רנה / פצחו־רנו־שמים), replacing the cause for praise there—salvation (כי־נאל־יהוה)—with that of comfort (כי־נחם־יהוה), which appears again in this form in 52.9.

The additional parallel portion in 49.13bβ supplies the key theme of the following chapters up to 55: 'And he will have compassion on his poor' (ועניי־ירחם). The future of postexilic Jerusalem, guaranteed by Yhwh (נחם), will only become a reality when his poor experience a real mother-like love (רחם²⁵⁶); thus, the theme of the motherhood of Zion is already introduced here.

With 49.14-26, the Ebed as the returning *golah* begins his persuasive work on the Jerusalem population, which no longer dares to hope for a future of healing with and by Yhwh.²⁵⁷ The unique mix of lament (v. 14), disputation (v. 15), salvation announcement (v. 18), and paradox (vv. 20-21) is to be understood against this background.²⁵⁸ The fall of Jerusalem, with its catastrophic results for its inhabitants, had left behind such deep traces of doubt and skepticism that a mere announcement of salvation could not hope for widespread acceptance. The persuasive work of the Ebed on the Jerusalem

252. Is 'east' lacking in 49.12 because the Babylonian *golah* already has returned home?

253. Borrowings from 42.6-7 (בר־יה־עם / 'prisoners' / 'darkness'); from 48.20-21 ('draw out' / 'not thirst'); from 40.9-10 ('graze' / 'lead'); from 40.3-4 ('mountains into a way' / 'raise up highways'); from 49.13, 15 ('compassion').

254. Van Oorschot's claim (*Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 237) that 49.8-12 belongs to the imminent expectation stratum because of its correspondence with 55.6 is inexplicable; the connections to 61.2 are not taken into account. For Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, pp. 182-86, 49.7-12* belongs to the first expansion stratum, and for Kratz, *Kyros*, pp. 135-39, to the 'Ebed-Israel stratum' from the fifth century.

255. See van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 161.

256. Isa. 49.10, 13, 15; 51.3; 52.9; 54.8, 10; 55.7; 60.10.

257. See the close connection to the hymn in 49.13 by means of the consecutive waw in 49.14 (Merendino, 'Jes 49.14-26', p. 326).

258. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 143; also Melugin, *Formation*, pp. 149-50.

population is analogous to that of Deutero-Isaiah in the exilic community. As Jacob/Israel had complained that Yhwh had disregarded his right (40.27), Zion now complains that Yhwh has forgotten her (49.14). Now the departure perspective, centered on the *golah* willing to return and those who have actually returned, no longer governs events; instead, 'the perspectives of pending fulfillment in relation to the Diaspora, Jerusalem's urban population, the restoration of Jerusalem and land, peoples'²⁵⁹ are the focus.

The addressee throughout 49.14–26 is Zion; the woman without children or future is promised a posterity.²⁶⁰ The Ebed as returned *golah*, who himself had walked the path from doubt to knowledge of the saving power of Yhwh, challenges the Jerusalem population, not about their right to lament, but about their clinging to it in a way that demolishes hope.²⁶¹ To their lament about Yhwh's forgetting them, the Ebed answers with the rhetorical question of how a mother could forget her baby; and even if that should be possible, Yhwh would never forget Zion (49.15). Everything is aimed at instilling the Jerusalem population with spirit for a saving future, underlined by the promise of a prolific posterity (49.21). Verses 49.22–23 clarify where the children of the childless will come from. Kings and princes of the nations will bring scattered Judaism to Zion under Yhwh's banner (נֹס). It is no accident that an Isaianic saying is updated here for the first time; it confirms that the Ebed, the returned *golah*, came upon the collection of the Isaiah sayings in Jerusalem. Isaiah had spoken of Yhwh lifting up a banner to mobilize the invading Assyrian troops to battle against Zion (5.26); now the banner is transformed into a sign for the rulers of nations to bring the Jews who were deprived of their homeland back to Jerusalem.²⁶² Thus the image is of Yhwh who snatches the prey (מִלְקִיָּח = Diaspora Judaism; 49.24–26) from the powerful (גְּבוּרָה = rulers of the world), taken from 5.29—where it is Assyria whose prey (טֶרֶף) cannot be disputed.²⁶³ If it is the case that this is a reference to 5.26–29, then it is also likely that the allegory of the children of Jerusalem who are quicker than their destroyer (49.17;

259. Steck, 'Der Gottesvolk und Gottesknecht', p. 65.

260. So Melugin, *Formation*, p. 151, who subdivides these verses into 49.14–21, 22–23, 24–26; see also Hermisson, 'Die Frau Zion', pp. 30–33.

261. Thus Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 50.

262. See Davies, 'The Destiny of the Nations', p. 115; Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 64–65.

263. Contrary to the separation of 49.24–26 as a secondary expansion, as van Oorschot suggests ('secondary Zion stratum', *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 243–47).

בניך²⁶⁴) was adapted from 5.26, where it is Assyria that is fast approaching [for destruction] (והנה מהרה קל יבוא).²⁶⁵

The contrast of the childlessness of Babylon in 47.8, 9 (שבול) with precisely the opposite for the wife and mother Zion (49.20, 21) is clear: 'While daughter Babylon is doomed and no salvation is possible for her, Jerusalem is again built up and saved.'²⁶⁶ The compositional character of 49.14-26 is apparent from the collocation of two leitmotifs in v. 26b: נאִל from 40-48 and ישַׁע from 49-52,²⁶⁷ in participial form to designate the saving presence of Yhwh. All flesh (בשר), cf. 40.5; 66.23) will acknowledge the אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב as savior and deliverer. The defeat of Babylon, for whom there could be no savior (אֵין מוֹשִׁיעַד, 47.15), serves as a dark foil for Yhwh's saving presence for Jerusalem and Zion (אֲנִי יְהוָה מוֹשִׁיעַד, 49.26).

The persuasive work of the Ebed does not in any way end with 49.14-26. On the contrary, no sooner is the accusation that Yhwh has forgotten Zion parried, than the dispute intensifies in 50.1-3.²⁶⁸ Yhwh has not forgotten Zion, as the objection went, but repudiates it! The supplementary argument goes like this: The exile and its consequences made it clear that Yhwh had separated himself from Zion, just as a husband divorces his wife (cf. Deut. 24.1-4). The prophetic Ebed opposes this view with a question clothed as a word of Yhwh: Where then is the divorce document of 'your mother' (אֵי זוֹ סִפְרָא (כְּרִיתוֹת אִמְכֶם)? Since nobody could produce such a document, the fall of Jerusalem and the consequent exile are not to be interpreted as Yhwh's divorce of wife Zion. Equally absurd is the idea that Yhwh disposed of Jerusalem in a forced sale to a debtor.²⁶⁹ No, the punishment which has struck Zion is to be attributed solely to the debt of

264. MT is to be maintained against the vocalization in 1QIsa^a (בְּנִיךְ); Merendino, 'Jes 40.14-26', p. 325, points out that all the themes at the beginning of the divine speech in 49.16-17 are touched upon: 'Zion is with Yhwh in honor, her walls stand forever, her sons return to her.' The blending of the motifs of 'reconstruction and resettlement' may have been encouraged through the connection to 5.26-29.

265. These references argue against Steck's thesis (*Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 80) that the joining of Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah took place only in the early Hellenistic period; see also the query of Albertz, 'Deuterjesaja-Buch', pp. 242-43.

266. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 88; Steck, 'Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 49,14-26', p. 54, who advocates the unity of the pericope.

267. 49.6, 8, 25, 26; 51.6, 8; 52.7.

268. Among others, even Melugin (*Formation*, p. 156) makes the case for the argumentative association of 49.14-26 and 51.1-3.

269. See the skillful chiasmus of מִכָּר/שָׁלַח in 50.1.

their children!²⁷⁰ The objection that Yhwh has dismissed Zion must be so sharply rejected because, in the case of an actual divorce by the first husband, i.e., Yhwh, Zion may not be taken back as a bride;²⁷¹ the marriage bond between Yhwh and Zion would thus be broken forever. But Yhwh has not disowned Zion his bride, he courts her. In response, however, she ‘shows him the cold shoulder’ (50.2a)²⁷²—as if he were not able to turn every possible situation into its opposite.²⁷³ Thus, for example, the divine speech points out, Yhwh is able to dry up the sea, making the rivers a desert, so that all fish meet their end (50.2b).

After this persuasive speech by the Ebed as the returned *golah*, he turns with his wakening call to Yhwh himself in 51.9–11, whereupon the latter responds in 51.17, 19 with a healing word of comfort that originally continued in 52.1–2. There is no doubt that this ‘imperative poem’ goes back to a common hand.²⁷⁴

Wakening call to Yhwh:	51.9–11	עורי עורי לבשי עז
Comforting word of Yhwh:	51.17	התעוררי התעוררי קומי
Comforting word of Yhwh:	52.1–2	עורי עורי לבשי עזך

It is striking that there are similar three-fold sequences of imperatives also present in 40.1–2, 3, 9, and that both 40.9–11 and the continuation of the imperative poetry in 52.7–10 present the return of Yhwh as climax. The common bond of the ‘prologue’, imperative poem, and ‘epilogue’ within Isaiah 40–52 is corroborated by the fact that the motif of the ‘arm of Yhwh’ ([יהוה] זרוע)²⁷⁵ is found in 40.10, 51.9, and 52.10.²⁷⁶

The ‘imperative poem’ shows how the announcement of Yhwh’s renewed turn toward salvation places both the announcer and the hearer under pressure: Yhwh must intervene in a saving way so that the message of comfort does not prove to be false! Consequently,

270. Cf. Exod. 21.7; 2 Kgs 4.1; Neh. 5.5.

271. See Deut. 24.1–4; Jer. 3.1–5.

272. Farfan Navarro, *El desierto transformado*, pp. 92–93.

273. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 222, who assigns 50.1–3 to his imminent expectation stratum: ‘Israel does not believe in Yahweh’s power, and so does not experience it.’

274. See Steck, ‘Zions Tröstung’, p. 76; Steck, ‘Beobachtungen zu den Zion-Texten’, p. 114. Among others, Steck also includes 54.1.

275. Cf. the ‘divine arm’ in 51.5 (dependent on 51.9); 53.1; 59.16; 62.8; 63.5.

276. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 99, speaks of two movements ‘which press each other from different sides: Yahweh’s arm, preparing for action, and Zion, which is to prepare for the reversal of fortune’.

the returned *golah* directs a wakening call to the divinity who is portrayed as sleeping, so that he might show himself in all his power—in the background stands the mythological notion of Yhwh as the primal conqueror of Rahab, the monster of chaos.²⁷⁷ The participial forms (51.9-10) emphasize that Yhwh is believed to be the one who even now can lead from chaos to cosmos. As in the Red Sea song of Exodus 15 where the emancipating action of Yhwh concludes at the sanctuary in Jerusalem (vv. 13, 17), he will now smooth the way to Zion for the נְאוּלִים, in spite of all the powers of chaos.

In an entirely original way, Exodus theology is incorporated into Zion theology, a mixing of traditions that confirms the hypothesis that the writers are on Jerusalem soil.²⁷⁸ Those who make their way to Zion will experience for themselves how Yhwh blazes a path for them through the sea, which is an occasion for celebrative joy (51.11). The נְאוּלִים and פְּדוּיִים of 51.10-11 refer to the Diaspora Jews, whom Yhwh himself brings to Zion as a reward and recompense (40.10-11). To the wakening call of the oppressed messenger, Yhwh responds at once that Jerusalem should arouse itself, lift itself up, for it has drunk the cup of drunkenness;²⁷⁹ that is, the period of devastation and misery is past.²⁸⁰ But Zion is not only to arise; no, it shall put on its festival clothing and clothe itself with strength, just as Yhwh had been commanded to do! The further command that Zion shake off the dust is a reverse image of Babylon sitting in the dust in humiliation (47.1).²⁸¹ The promise that no uncircumcised or unclean person would come into the holy city (עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ) is not a 'particularistic contrast' to the motif of international pilgrimage in 55.5, but rather it expresses the hope that the era of oppression is forever past.²⁸² When Jerusalem herself is enthroned (שָׁבִי) as Yhwh's bride, that throne is beside the King, a construction that creates a nice wordplay on her former status as 'prisoner' (שְׁבִיָּה).²⁸³

277. Sponk, 'Rahab', *DDD*, pp. 1293-94: 'In Isa. 51.9-10 the reference to Yahweh as victor in the battle "in the days of old" against the monsters of chaos is used, just as in the Ugaritic myth of Baal, as a reason for hope in the present situation: this victory can be repeated in new situations of distress.'

278. Thus Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, pp. 110-11, 122.

279. Cf. in Lam. 4.21 the cup which the daughter of Edom must drink.

280. Cf. 'two' (שְׁתַּיִם) in 51.19 and 'double' (כְּפַלַּיִם) in 40.2.

281. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 152: 'It appears to be a reversal of the imagery in Isa 47'; Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', p. 305: 'a reversal of roles of the two queens.'

282. Thus Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', pp. 305-306.

283. K. Baltzer, 'Stadt-Tyche', p. 116: 'The "chains" will just not hold Zion. Zion-Jerusalem here is a contrasting image to the "chained city-goddess".'

Not only the imperative poem but the entire first Jerusalem redaction concludes with 52.7-12, forming an unmistakable *inclusio* with 40.1-5, 9-11. The bride of the heavenly King has put on her festival clothes and is ready for his glorious arrival! Verses 52.7-8 are a vision in hymnic language which declares the final appearance of the victorious world King, Yhwh, in his city.²⁸⁴ For the interpretation of these verses, it is advisable to begin with the previous history of the first Jerusalem redaction from 49.14-26 with the second EYS preceding it, and only then to draw a line from the end to the 'prologue' in 40.1-11. After difficulty and oppression, the joy over the steps of the messenger (רַגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׁר) who proclaims peace and well-being (מְבַשֵּׁר טוֹב) and says to Zion, 'Your God reigns' (מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ), is understandable. The news of the arrival of the royal rule of Yhwh which the messenger proclaims on the mountains first reaches the sentinels of Jerusalem, who raise their voices in joy as they see firsthand the return of Yhwh to Zion. It makes sense that this picture with יְיָ בָּשׁוּב יְהוּדָה צִיּוֹן breaks off and turns into the hymn of 52.9-10, since the description of the messenger, sentinels, and message only serves to set up the incredible image of the ruins of Jerusalem praising God.²⁸⁵

The combination of the key words גֹּאֵל and נָחַם in 52.9 indicates that the first Jerusalem redaction, under the direction of the Ebed as the returned *golah*, wished to place the text of 40–52* in a comprehensive framework. The liberation of Jerusalem—and not the *golah* (!)—lies in the fact that Yhwh has comforted his people, i.e., has paved a path for them into the future. This event, anticipated in the divine praises and proleptically wrested from the future, must not remain within the inner arena of Jerusalem, but will find universal recognition: 'all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God' (52.10b). The following Exodus verses clarify how this goal should be achieved (52.11-12). The members of the people of God who were scattered in the Diaspora at the fall of Jerusalem are commanded to go up from the nations to Zion,²⁸⁶ so מְשֻׁם and מְצֻבָּה can only be related to the 'nations' and 'ends of the earth' mentioned in 52.9. The saving power of Yhwh (יְשׁוּעָה) dawns on the nations when the Diaspora Jews begin

284. Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 144.

285. Against Steck ('Beobachtungen zu den Zion-Texten', p. 115), who thinks that 52.7-10 could not be the conclusion of the imperative poem, because, among other things, after the festive clothes have been donned (52.1-2), the address to the ruins of Jerusalem (52.9) would come too late.

286. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 118, regards 52.11-12 as a 'belated postscript... in the form of an epistle to the Diaspora'.

to return to the 'comforted' Zion. In contrast to those fleeing Egypt, who burdened themselves with costly goods (Exod. 12.35), the exiles returning home from the nations shall not touch anything unclean. They should refrain from doing so because they are on their way to the 'holy city' (עיר הקדש), into which the uncircumcised or unclean (טמא) will not enter (52.1). The holiness and purity²⁸⁷ of the city of God require of Diaspora Jews who have decided to return a separation from all the impurity that they had to accept during their stay among the nations. It is against this background that the command 'Purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of Yhwh' is to be understood. This is generally related to Sheshbazzar's return of the vessels that were plundered from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 1.8).²⁸⁸ If that were the case, it would be the only place in the book of Isaiah in which a cultic-ritual politics of restoration is operating. It is therefore more likely that it does not concern the return of stolen temple furnishings, but emphasizes the sanctity of the return from the Diaspora,²⁸⁹ which is compared with the bearing of the holy vessels, especially the ark.²⁹⁰ Paraphrasing, one could say, 'Keep yourselves far from every unclean thing and purify yourselves, as if you were bearers of the sacred vessels, even of the ark of the covenant!'

It is no accident that 'Babylon' and 'Chaldea' remain unnamed in 52.11, in contrast to 48.20; rather it is a clear indication that this command to depart is not directed to the Babylonian exilic community, but to all Diaspora Jews, who should make their way back to Jerusalem from wherever they are ('from there'). The connection to Lam. 4.15 also argues for this interpretation:²⁹¹

Lam. 4.15a: סורו טמא קראו למו סורו סורו אל-תגעו

Isa. 52.11a: סורו סורו צאו משם טמא אל תגעו

There are nations who say to the Jews who have been scattered by Yhwh and are living among them that they might no longer remain among them because their clothes have been stained with blood (Lam. 4.15b), although those Jews had hoped to find a homeland among the nations (נחיה בגוים, Lam. 4.20b). Now they are commanded to leave all the uncleanness of the heathen nations and return home. In doing so they are promised the protecting guidance of Yhwh,

287. D. Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterjesaja*, pp. 17-24, stresses the contrast of 'clean' and 'unclean' in Isa. 52.1-12.

288. Cf. 2 Kgs 25.13-17; Jer. 27.16; 28.3, 6; Ezra 1.7.

289. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 204.

290. Cf. Num. 4; Deut. 31.25; Josh. 3; 1 Sam. 6.

291. Cf. the use of Isa. 33.24 in Lam. 4.22; see under section 4.5.

which will be in no way inferior to that of the Exodus from Egypt. If Israel once had to leave Egypt precipitously (בַּחֲפוּזִין, Exod. 12.11; especially Deut. 16.3), the returnees now are able to go their way in peace (לֵא בַּחֲפוּזִין תֵּצְאוּ). While Yhwh only went *before* his people at the Exodus from Egypt,²⁹² now he is an advance and rear guard for those returning (52.12b).

The message that the prologue proclaimed using the image of the shepherd (40.11) is fulfilled in 52.7–8 with Yhwh's return to Zion as king.²⁹³ Still the question remains, from where does Yhwh return to Zion? In view of the idea in the book of Ezekiel of the glory of Yhwh exiting from and returning to the temple (Ezek. 8–11; 43), it is tempting to think of Yhwh's return being from Babylon for the book of Isaiah as well. While this idea may have played a role, it is nevertheless not the fundamental one. Yhwh's return to Zion before the eyes of all the world (40.5; 52.10) is the homecoming of the victorious 'Divine Warrior' from battle against the powers of chaos, alluded to in 51.9–11.²⁹⁴ This shows how skillfully the Exodus tradition and that of the preservation of Zion through Yhwh's battle against the forces of chaos have been united into one common testimony.

In this connection, Mettinger refers to the similarities between the hymns in Isaiah 40–55 and the 'Yhwh as King' Psalms (93–100).²⁹⁵ Thus the formulation of 52.10b 'All ends of the earth see the salvation of our God' is identical with Ps. 98.3; that of 'his holy arm' (52.10a) with Ps. 98.1 and the פָּצְחוּ רִנּוֹ (52.9a²⁹⁶) is found also in 98.4. The first hymn in 42.10–12 refers to שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ, as do Pss. 96.1; 98.1; 'the sea and all that fills it' (42.10) is also mentioned in Pss. 96.11; 98.7 (and 1 Chron. 16.32). 'Clap your hands' is found in Isa. 55.12 and Ps. 98.8 (and Ezek. 25.6). These correspondences between the hymns in Isaiah and the 'Yhwh as King' Psalms are not accidental; they should make it easy for the Jerusalem addressees of the message of comfort to give the hymnic response to the return of Yhwh to Zion as world king, since the formulations of the responsory are well known to them.²⁹⁷ However, while the demand to praise God goes forth directly to the entire world in the 'Yhwh as King' Psalms,²⁹⁸ in 52.9–10 it is directed

292. Exod. 13.21; Num. 10.33; Deut. 1.30.

293. Cf. זרעו מַשְׁלֵחַ (40.10) with זרעו קִדְשׁוֹ (52.10).

294. Mettinger, 'In Search of the Hidden Structure', pp. 153–57; cf. Cross, 'Canaanite Myth', pp. 105–11; Hanson, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 149.

295. Mettinger, 'In Search of the Hidden Structure', p. 156; see also Leene, 'Psalm 98', pp. 313–40.

296. Cf. 44.23; 49.13; 54.1; 55.12.

297. Mettinger, 'In Search of the Hidden Structure', p. 157.

298. Zenger, 'Das Weltenkönigtum des Gottes Israels', p. 162.

to the 'ruins of Jerusalem' and the 'barren' (54.1); in other words, the nations are able to join in only when the inhabitants of Jerusalem are convinced of their God's salvation and sing God's praise! To persuade the Jerusalem population of this, the returned *golah* frames 40–52 with a prologue and epilogue; the numerous relationships between them have often been cited:

- 40.9 מבשרת ציון / מבשרת ירושלם // מבשר טוב / רגלי מבשר
 40.3 קול קורא // קול צפיד נשאו קול יחדו
 40.1 נחמו נחמו עמי // כי נחם יהוה עמו
 40.10-11 בזרעו יקבין / זרעו משלה לו // חשף יהוה את זרוע קדשו
 40.5 וראו כל בשר יחדו // וראו כל אפסי ארץ

It is striking that verses 40.6-8, with their topic of the assertion of the divine word, are excluded from these relationships; on the other hand, they show a special connection with 55.10-11, which suggests that 40.6-8 was only later added from 55.10-11 and consequently does not belong to the first Jerusalem redaction.²⁹⁹

The references cited impressively underline that the 'Deutero-Isaianic prologue' is not an account of an audition by the prophet, but rather forms part of a redactional framework. The confusing alternation of personal pronouns in 40.1-11 is neither a deliberate obscuring of identity,³⁰⁰ nor indication of a dialogue in the heavenly court³⁰¹ or of a 'herald's instruction' from heavenly beings,³⁰² but rather is the result of the *inclusio* with 52.7-10.³⁰³ The prologue can be understood from the perspective of this closing text of the first

299. See van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 114, who also regards 40.3aa, 5bβ as secondary.

300. See Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, p. 43; Seidl, 'Offene Stellen', pp. 49-56, makes a virtue of the difficulty: 'The conspicuous erasures and gaps... have in themselves a function and evidential value; they are not to be filled out and explained, but to be taken seriously as vacancies' (p. 52).

301. Among others, Seitz in 'The Divine Council', pp. 229-47, where he accepts Cross's thesis in 'The Council of Yahweh', pp. 274-77; now in Seitz, 'How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present', p. 229, he appreciably distances himself from this view.

302. Loretz, 'Die Gattung des Prologs', pp. 210-20; Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1-45,7*, p. 6: 'apparently the speaker comes directly from an audience with his master.'

303. Along the lines of Kratz, 'Der Anfang... und seine literarischen Horizonte', p. 407: 'Consequently, for the difficulties of understanding Isa. 40.1-2, what is at least a partial solution emerges at the level of the composition of the book. It is based on the stratification of the prologue, which reveals its original connection with 52.7-10 as part of Deutero-Isaiah's basic writing.'

Jerusalem redaction: It is the sentinels of Jerusalem who receive the renewed message of the royal rule of Yhwh from the messenger of good tidings on the mountains. The prologue becomes more clear if, on the one hand, 'says your God' is regarded as a quote of the sentinels, and on the other hand, 'a voice calls' in v. 3a α is viewed as an addition from the update in 6-8;³⁰⁴ following from these presuppositions, 40.1-5 is a report from Zion's watchmen of their commission to give a message of comfort. Thus they present themselves as prophetic representatives of God who want to motivate their fellow-inhabitants to accept the proclamation of the end of guilt and of a new beginning.

The view that the first Jerusalem redaction brought the two major parts of the scroll more into line is reinforced by the way the 'prologue' in 40.1-11 consciously draws on Isaiah 1. The situation has changed radically. Isaiah 1.4 spoke of the nation heavy with guilt (עַם כְּבֵד עוֹן); now, their guilt is wiped away (נִרְצָה עֲוֹנָה). In 1.5 the whole heart (= Jerusalem) is ill (כָּל לֵב רָוִי); now, the guards are commanded to speak to the heart of Jerusalem (דַּבְּרוּ עַל לֵב, 40.2).³⁰⁵ As the proof of guilt against the faithless sons in 1.20 is underlined by the expression כִּי פִי יִהְיֶה דֹבֵר, here the call to comfort contains precisely this same expression (40.5; cf. 58.14): the earlier word of Yhwh has thus been replaced by a new one.³⁰⁶ The theme of 'glory' (כְּבוֹד) also makes it clear that 40.1-11 refers back to the Proto-Isaiah collection 1–32*: Isaiah's vision of Yhwh's glory (6.3) filling the whole earth is taken up in 40.5 (cf. 35.2), where it says that all flesh shall see it. The popular interpretation of Yhwh's 'way' in the wilderness (40.3-5) as an image for the *golah*, whose path would soon lead them back to Jerusalem from Babylon, breaks down partly because the *golah* is simply not mentioned and, second, because the road is not said to be for those returning home, but for *our God* (מַסְלַח לְאַלֹהֵינוּ). As in 35.8, then, this 'way in the wilderness' (40.3) is not about building a road in rough terrain,³⁰⁷ but rather about the removal of all internal and external obstacles that stand in the way of

304. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 273-74.

305. G. Fischer, 'Die Redewendung', pp. 244-50, argues that this phrase does not come from the language of love, but actually means 'to speak against the heart of someone. The basic meaning of the expression would then be "to speak against an existing (negative) attitude = to attempt to change"' (p. 250). This is exactly the situation of the watchmen in the face of the skepticism of much of Jerusalem's population!

306. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 45.

307. Against S. Wagner, 'Ruf Gottes', p. 310.

the appearance of Yhwh's *kabod* (35.2; 40.5). Where will this event take place? In Jerusalem, clearly referred to in 40.1-2, 9-11; behind the דרך lies nothing other than an ethical behavior which corresponds to the will of Yhwh.³⁰⁸ This is this sense in which the theme of 'preparing the way' in 57.14, which runs parallel with 40.3 and 62.10, is taken up: 'Build a highway, prepare the way, remove the obstacles in the way of my people.'³⁰⁹ All three passages are about the same thing. Preparing the דרך means the ethical preparation of the population of Zion, as they anticipate the coming of Yhwh.³¹⁰ In 62.6 the watchmen (שומרים) are entrusted with special care for Zion; in an echo of 40.3, they are to prepare the way for the pilgrimage to Zion, in which Yhwh's way has become a way for humanity (פנו דרך העם), i.e., for pilgrims from all nations. So that the goal of their pilgrimage is not lost from sight, the 'watchmen' and 'Yhwh's reminders' are to hoist a banner for the nations (הרימו נס על־העמים, 62.10). Thus the sign of the nations storming against Zion (5.26) has been changed to a sign for the pilgrimage of the nations, as indicated already in 49.22, where Yhwh himself lifts up a banner (ואל עמים ארים נס) for the nations to bring the Diaspora Jews living among them back to Zion. The Zion community is to pass back and forth through the city gates (עברו עברו, 62.10a), in order to remove the obstacles that impede the flow of pilgrims. The trio of 'Return of the *golah*', 'Return of the Diaspora', and 'Pilgrimage of the nations' pervades the entire second part of the book of Isaiah. The concern for a restoration of Jerusalem by Diaspora Jews and Yhwh disciples from the nations would not have been entirely altruistic; if the tradents of the book of Isaiah were connected with Levitical guilds of temple singers, this would adequately explain their strong interest in a renewed pilgrimage revival.

To return to the final verses of the prologue in 40.9-11: These verses are connected by the key word בשר with 52.7-10, and it is no accident that this word occurs twice in both 40.9 and 52.7,³¹¹ and is associated in both with the announcement's location 'on the

308. Simian-Yofre, 'Exodo', pp. 531-38, and Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 38; Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 177.

309. Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 190: 'It is therefore about cleansing the community of all offenses and opposition.'

310. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 39, sees a bridge to 58.6-10: 'le raisonnement est identique à celui d'Is 58,6-10: la gloire divine se manifesterà (v.8; cfr. 40.5), à condition que le croyants vivent une fidélité réelle (vv. 6-7; cfr. 40,3).'

311. 41.27b (ולירושלם מבשר אתן) does not lie on the same line redaction-critically, but is a verse that identifies the Ebed of 42.1-4 with the 'messenger of good news' and at the same time benefits from the proof of prophecy.

mountains' or 'on a high mountain' (על הר גבה / על ההרים).³¹² In turn, the epilogue sheds light on the speech situation of the prologue. As the sentinels are the ones who hear the good news of the messenger on the mountains and see the return of Yhwh with their own eyes, they are also the ones who now call on Jerusalem and Zion to be bearers and heralds of the good news (מבשרת) to the surrounding cities.³¹³ Isaiah 40.10–11 lays out the content of this news. Yhwh comes with power, his arm rules for him, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him (הנה שכרו אִתּוֹ וּפְעֻלָּתוֹ לִפְנֵי). The key word 'gather' (קבץ) indicates that this is not about the return of the Babylonian *golah*, but about gathering the Diaspora, who find their way home under the careful guidance of their royal shepherd. According to the tenor of chaps. 60–62, the theme of the return of the Diaspora is expanded to include Yhwh disciples from the nations, and it is with this sense that 62.11 also quotes 40.10b.³¹⁴ When the 'comforters', i.e., those in postexilic Jerusalem who had been convinced by the returned *golah* of the new future of their city,³¹⁵ advocate that the message of comfort now be repeated to the surrounding cities, it appears they want to prevent a restricting of the restoration efforts to the capital city (and temple?). The return of scattered Israel from the Diaspora is to benefit not only Jerusalem, but also the surrounding area; this further supports a Levitical origin for the author of the prologue.

If the *golah* redaction which assembled the Deutero-Isaianic sayings (40.12–46.11*), 'formatted' by means of hymns and brought to Jerusalem as a composition (40.12–48.20*), is to be situated in the years following the suppression of local rebellions by Darius (539–522/1), the first Jerusalem redaction, which begins programmatically with the presentation of the Ebed as the returned *golah* in 49.1–6 and ends with the appeal for the exodus of Diaspora Judaism, falls in a time when, in the wake of the Persian restoration

312. Kratz, 'Der Anfang...und seine literarischen Horizonte', pp. 404–406, overlooks these connections and regards 40.9–11 as secondary to 40.1–5.

313. For McEvenue, 'Who was Second Isaiah?', pp. 218–21, this is an indication that Deutero-Isaiah was a woman.

314. In 11.12 and 66.18, קבץ is also in the context of the Diaspora returning home, and of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations.

315. Against Kratz, 'Der Anfang...und seine literarischen Horizonte', p. 412, who maintains that those addressed in 40.1–2 are forerunners of the returning *golah*, and believes he detects an analogous situation in Gen. 50.15–21; Kratz, 'Der Anfang...und das Jeremiabuch', p. 258: the anonymous persons of the prologue are virtually identical 'with the "We" group of refugees from the people returning home, who are quoted in Jer. 50–51.'

policy, the Jerusalem sanctuary was able to resume its service. In light of this certain hope in the definitive turning-point toward salvation, the awakening call and the imperative style of this redaction are understandable.³¹⁶ The question is not the coming of salvation—the watchmen have already seen Yhwh's return home as king (52.8)—but whether this Jerusalem is willing and able to accept the promised comfort. The message of the impending definitive turn toward salvation places its proclaimers increasingly under pressure. The problem of delayed salvation must be confronted in the subsequent redaction; its responses are dominated by confidence in the effective power of the divine word, a word that aims not only at the gathering of the Diaspora Jews, but also at the pilgrimage movement of Yhwh disciples from the nations to Zion.

6.7. The Second Jerusalem Redaction

Just as the first Jerusalem redaction surrounded the composition of the *golah* (40–48*) with prologue (40.1-5, 9-11) and epilogue (52.7-12), the second redaction on 'home soil' followed in a similar manner:³¹⁷ It is skillfully woven into the prologue with 40.3aα, 6-8, and with 55.10-11, the corresponding epilogue which closes with the deliverance verses 55.12-13, is analogous to 48.20-21 (= *golah* redaction) and 52.12 (= first Jerusalem redaction). The theme of the efficacy of the divine word serves not only as motivation for the addressees, but also as 'self encouragement'; to be able to raise up the weary (40.29-31; 46.12-13; 51.12-16), the proclaimer must be armed against his own skepticism and frustration, as he expresses in the third EYS in 50.4-9. Quite independently this redaction formulated 54–55, where it created a vision for Zion, building on each of its predecessors but outdoing them in intensity and originality. The first redaction in 40.1-5* gave testimony of the message of comfort commissioned by Yhwh, with the professed goal that Jerusalem's transformation should plainly show the glory of its God (v. 5) to humanity (כל בשר). The next generation is confronted with the question of how this could become reality if 'all flesh' (כל הבשר)—i.e., all those who have already heard the proclamation—has no more staying power than a flower of

316. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 176: 40.1-2, 3-5, 9-11; 51.9-10, 17, 19; 52.1-2.

317. This classification adopts, with modifications, Kiesow's 'second expansion stratum' (*Exodustexte*, p. 165), and van Oorschot's 'secondary Zion stratum' (*Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 243ff.), together with his 'imminent expectation stratum'.

the field. The use of חסר here does not convey a moralistic quality in the sense that a lack of faithfulness is being lamented—as one might expect—but has to do with the observation that the nation lacked the power³¹⁸ to make the message of comfort effective. Since an answer as to the why of this situation is not at hand, a comparison with nature is offered: As only Yhwh (רוח יהוה) can be responsible for the withering of the grass and the flowers, so too is he responsible for the frailty of the nation.³¹⁹

This knowledge does not increase doubt, but produces astonishment at his word: the powerlessness of the hearers does not deprive the divine word of its power, but allows it to come alive: ‘the word of our God shall stand forever’ (יקום לעולם).

The theme of the efficacy of the divine דבר effects the bridge to 55.10–11, where it says of this word, ‘The word does not return to me empty, but accomplishes what I wish, and achieves the thing for which I sent it’ (55.11). As in 40.6–8, this is also fundamentally about the continuity between God’s words and action.³²⁰ Also, the orientation of the epilogue to the success of the divine word indicates that the question of ‘What?’ (מה) in 40.6 does not introduce an objection by the prophet that he expects Yhwh himself will answer, to the effect of, ‘What should I announce, since all is transitory and futile!’³²¹ Instead, the question is about the content of the message.³²² The message of comfort for postexilic Jerusalem, to whom rebuilding and resettlement is promised, remains a gift and a task even for the author of the second Jerusalem redaction; now however, the phase is one of delayed salvation. Only in conjunction with 55.7–10 does 40.6–8 unfold its full meaning: As grass and flowers fall prey to the ‘storm of God’, so snow and rain, likewise divine gifts, produce manifold fruitfulness; the lesson to be learned in that is that there is no comparison between human and divine plans and actions (55.8–9). Compressed in this message is the knowledge of the paradox of divine growth and annihilation, which leads relentlessly to its goal; this was formulated

318. Elliger, *Jesaja* 40,1–45,7, pp. 23–24, points to, among others, 2 Kgs 20.20 // 2 Chron. 32.32; 2 Chron. 35.26; Pss. 59.10–11, 17–18; 62.12–13; Exod. 15.13 (parallel to עז).

319. The gloss in 40.7b (אכן חציר העם) simply clarifies the identity of כל הבשר in contrast to כל בשר (‘humanity’).

320. Westermann, *Sprache*, p. 58.

321. Thus Stoebe, ‘Zu Jesaja 40, v. 6’, p. 127: ‘V. 6b is not an answer, but belongs still to the question. The prophet gives up; what shall I preach?’

322. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 37.

by the author of 45.7-8 in regard to the word of the great prophet of the exile. Given the paralyzing delay of the turn toward salvation, the proclaimers need not worry about the result of their message, if they would only proclaim it!

Like the first Jerusalem redaction, the second was formulated with frequent reliance on the Proto-Isaiah composition (1–32*). Thus the writers create from the repetition of the divine commission (40.1-5) a dialogue which is hinted at in v. 3αα, then made explicit in v. 6, where the setting of the delivery of the instruction is borrowed from Isaiah 6.³²³ The reader/hearer can only gather from Isaiah 6 that the unidentified voice in *קול אִמֶּר* belongs to a seraph.³²⁴ The restraint in the adaptation of Isaiah's throne council vision emphasizes that the redactors themselves were well aware that they were standing in a prophetic tradition in which they were receiving more than giving. Isaiah 40.6-8 has to do with the reflection of prophetic tradents who saw themselves as bound to a vision of the future rebuilding of the temple and who were caught up in the pull of the Proto-Isaianic collection; thus the scale of the much discussed *קול אִמֶּר* tilts in favor of the MT³²⁵: a voice (= one of the seraphs) calls, 'Proclaim!' and when someone (= one of the prophetic tradents) says 'What shall I proclaim?' the answer is, 'All flesh is grass..., but the word of our God stands on "world time!"'³²⁶

The suspicion that the authors of the second Jerusalem redaction, who developed the 'Deutero-Isaiah Book' on the core of chaps. 40–55, were the force behind the connections with the 'Proto-Isaianic collection', is reinforced by the image of the withering flowers (*נבל צִיִּין*, 40.8) borrowed from the oracle against Ephraim in 28.1, 4 (*צִיִּצָה נבל/ וצִיִּין נבל*).³²⁷ This indicates that the convergence of the corpora 1–32* and 40–55 took place not only by means of explicit

323. See especially the idioms with *קול אִמֶּר* / *קול קורא* and the dialogical character; cf. Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 6', pp. 79-81; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 274 n. 183; Clements, 'Zion as Symbol', pp. 6-8.

324. See Albertz, 'Deuterjesaja-Buch', p. 245, who emphasizes that 'Isaiah 6 fills in the blanks of the scene from Isa. 40.'

325. 1QIsa^a (*וְאִמְרָה*), LXX (*καὶ εἶπεν*), and Vulgata (*dixi*) favor the first person singular, which is due to the tendency to hear the voice of an individual prophet even in Isa. 40; thus, among others, Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 278-79. The MT displays this tendency in 48.16b; 50.10; Carr is of a different opinion ('Isaiah 40.1-11', pp. 66-68).

326. For this interpretation in terms of a prophetic group of tradents, see Michel, 'Deuterjesaja', p. 521.

327. See Seitz, 'The Divine Council', p. 242; Sommer, 'Allusions and Illusions', pp. 158-60.

bridge-texts (33; 35), but first in a preliminary way through associative references which were added as the exilic *golah* tradition encountered the Jerusalem Isaiah tradition.

The pragmatics of the second Jerusalem redaction—in view of the delay of the era of salvation—not to let this hope cool becomes evident in 40.29–31. Following the disputation of 40.12–28, which goes back to Deutero-Isaiah himself, the redactors take the final thought that Yhwh does not tire (לֹא יֵעָפֵי) and turn it on themselves and their hearers; the untiring God gives ‘strength to those who have become weary’ (נָתַן לַיֵּעָפִי בָח). Even if youths grow tired and weary (...וַיֵּעָפוּ, יְחַלְּפוּ בָח), they who hope in Yhwh shall renew their strength (בָּח, borrowed from 41.1!), they do not tire or grow faint (...וְלֹא יֵעָפוּ, וְלֹא יֵחַלְּפוּ)! It is no accident that יֵעָפֵי appears in a similar context in the book of Isaiah only in the third EYS (50.4)³²⁸ where it is the duty of the Ebed to be accountable to the weary.³²⁹ The group of proclaimers can fulfill this task, because it has a share in the power of the untiring God!

In the Deutero-Isaianic saying about the effectiveness of the divine plan (עֲצַתִּי תִקּוּם) through the bird of prey, the man of his purpose (46.9–11), this redaction attaches a saying to the despondent who are (still) far from salvation (הִרְחִיקִים מִצְדָּקָה); they are granted a divine oracle in which Yhwh himself vouches for the imminent arrival of his salvation (קִרְבֹּתִי צְדָקָתִי), which means redemption in Zion (בְּצִיּוֹן) and glory for Israel (לִישְׂרָאֵל תִּפְאָרֶתִי). In contrast to the use of the formulation in 56.1, this is not an accusation that the delay of salvation was provoked by sinful behavior,³³⁰ but rather a promise that the difficult situation would soon come to an end.³³¹ If the beginning of Isaiah 46 refers to Xerxes dragging away the Marduk statue in 482, then the redactional addition at the end of this chapter may mean that those who despair because of the delay in salvation should understand the punitive action against Babylon—which did not go unnoticed even in Jerusalem—to mean that the turn toward salvation which brings with it the glorification of Zion (cf. 52.1) is imminent.

328. יֵעָפֵי 40.29, 30, 31; 44.12 (the idol maker is tired); עָפֵי 5.27; 28.12; 29.8; 32.2 (of the tired land); 46.1 (animals that bear the idols are tired).

329. The incomprehensible לַעֲנוּת is to be substituted by לַעֲנוּתָהּ, according to Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 351.

330. Against Elliger, *Deuteriojesaja in seinem Verhältnis*, pp. 183–85, who hears Trito-Isaiah speaking here.

331. According to van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 198–201, and Hermisson, ‘Einheit und Komplexität’, p. 295, 46.12–13 belongs to the ‘imminent expectation stratum’.

In the statement in 51.1-2, the messengers of the impending salvation address an important point of great concern especially for those who 'pursue salvation' (שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי רְדִפֵּי צֶדֶק, cf. 46.12!): the current lack of blessing and increase. The 'pastoral' answer refers to the rock from which they were hewn (חֲצֵב), to the quarry from which they were dug (נִקְר). According to Steck the pual of נִקְר, in particular, has such a negative connotation 'that in 51.1b, too, it must involve a violent, unnatural, absolutely agonizing event: The persons addressed have been chopped away, hacked away from a hollow / opening of a well'.³³² The rock or the well refers to Zion rather than Yhwh,³³³ since the focus of the image is not on its firmness, but rather on its water-giving vital force; but this is often a theme in regard to Zion.³³⁴ The word of the Ebed is directed to those who have good intentions but are discouraged by Jerusalem's desolate situation. To them it is said that the exile with its consequences still has not made Zion's life-giving sources dry up! Furthermore, they should not worry about the low population numbers—even Abraham with Sarah had been called as an individual, but Yhwh blessed and increased him (וְאַבְרָהָם; cf. Gen. 12.1-3).³³⁵ In 54.1-17 this second Jerusalem redaction will interpret the theme of the turning point for Zion's salvation against the background of the story of Sarah.

A later hand, prompted perhaps by the theme of the ancestors, can be seen going back still farther to the time of the beginning: Yhwh would make Zion into God's garden (גֵּן יְהוָה); he has comforted all its ruins, a statement which in view of 51.12, 19 and 52.9 comes too early.³³⁶ The secondary character of 51.3 can also be recognized in the way that 'joy and gladness' (שִׂשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה) are incorporated from 51.11,³³⁷ not as the attendant circumstances of the returnees, but as a description of conditions in a 'paradisiacal Zion'.

The complaint about the ever-delayed salvation, to which the proclaimers of the message of comfort must give an answer, shapes

332. Steck, 'Zions Tröstung', p. 84.

333. Against I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 106, who indicates that in Isa. 8.14; 17.10; 26.4; 30.29; 44.8, צִוֵּר is an epithet of Yhwh.

334. Thus Steck, 'Zions Tröstung', p. 85; Isa. 33.21; Pss. 46.5; 65.10; 87.7; Ezek. 47; Joel 4.18; Gen. 2.10-14.

335. Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 132; Melugin, *Formation*, p. 157: 'Yahweh comforts Zion as surely as he called Abraham and blessed him.'

336. Thus Steck, 'Zions Tröstung', p. 74.

337. That 35.9b-10 is not the source of 51.10b-11 but is dependent on it can also be seen in the fact that the disruptive לֹא תִמְצָא (35.9a) is drawn from 51.3, which in turn depends on 51.11.

the salvation oracle in 51.12–15, which ends with a word of self-assurance to the ‘comforter’ in v. 16.³³⁸ The strongly accented opening of the salvation oracle with ‘I myself, I myself am that one who comforts you’ makes clear how great the pressure was on both those who announced the comforting message of the imminent turn toward salvation as well as those who put their faith in it.³³⁹ Both have been addressed as the woman Zion in the second person feminine singular,³⁴⁰ who has no need to fear mortal humanity that withers like grass (cf. 40.6–8). If she is now afraid, it is because she has forgotten Yhwh, her Creator, who stretched out the heavens and formed the earth; therefore it is completely absurd to tremble before the fury of the oppressor. The prisoner will quickly (מִהֵר) be freed (נִפְתָּח ni., cf. 52.2 htp.) and will have a secure livelihood. If Yhwh can take on the sea and its waves (cf. 51.9–10), then any despondency is completely out of place. This brings the unit to an end (with אֲנִי in initial position in vv. 12, 15). A further special word has been added for the proclaimer himself who, no less than his audience, had to battle with the problem of delayed salvation. In the form of a divine oracle, it emphasizes that ‘I have put my word in your mouth’ (cf. 59.21), which refers neither to the people nor to Zion, but solely to the group of those who, in spite of the absence of salvation, continue to proclaim the message of comfort.³⁴¹

In 50.4–9, the prophetic group that stands behind the second Jerusalem redaction reflects upon the difficulties of its preaching and the growing opposition to it. In terms of genre, the third EYS is a ‘prophetic psalm of trust’,³⁴² accompanied by a comment (vv. 10–11) that expressly identifies the ‘I’ of vv. 4–9 as עֶבֶד. The prophetic group defies the opposition³⁴³ and proclaims that Yhwh has given it the ‘tongue of disciples’ (לִשׁוֹן לְמוֹדִים) so that the group might know how to respond to the weary. ‘Disciples’ is mentioned twice, which under

338. Melugin, *Formation*, p. 161: ‘an imitation of a cultic salvation oracle.’

339. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 253–54: ‘51.12–15 contrasts the current ‘fear of man’ of the Israelites with their God who offers comfort.’

340. The change to the second person masculine singular in 51.13 does not contradict this.

341. Steck, ‘Der Gottesvolk und Gottesknecht’, p. 70, sees in 51.16 and 59.21 a re-reading [Relecture] of the Ebed texts in terms of the book prophet Isaiah.

342. ‘Prophetischer Vertrauenspsalm’, according to Elliger, *Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis*, p. 34; see also Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht*, pp. 67–69; Melugin, *Formation*, pp. 72, 152.

343. It is noteworthy that in the third EYS there is no mention of a mission to Israel, the Diaspora, or the nations.

lines the fact that this is a group of prophetic proclaimers and not an individual prophetic figure; in this sense 50.10-11 comments on the third EYS, with the result that the vision of Isaiah as prophet and protagonist of the entire scroll begins to emerge,³⁴⁴ later leading to the title in 1.1 and culminating in Sir. 48.22-25.

In the prophetic literature the word 'disciples' occurs only four times, each in the book of Isaiah; thus at the end of his memoir Isaiah is told to seal up Torah among 'my disciples' (בְּלִמְדֵי), i.e., the disciples of Yhwh. When the prophetic group in 50.4 says that Yhwh gave to it a לִשׁוֹן לְמוֹדֵיִם, that means it understands itself as legitimate successor to the Isaianic legacy.³⁴⁵ This is not simply an associative relationship to the Proto-Isaiah tradition, but a conscious application and expansion of it; the links between the two major sections gain in importance not only numerically, but also in terms of content. In an addition that interrupts the metaphor of building the radiant new Zion,³⁴⁶ all the sons of Zion are turned into Yhwh disciples: כָּל בְּנֵי־צִיּוֹן לְמוֹדֵי־יְהוָה (54.13)!

As already seen, the prophetic group is able to give an accounting to the weary, i.e., to those despairing over the postponement of salvation, because the group itself shares in the power of the untiring God (40.29-31). When it says, 'every morning Yhwh wakens my ear to hear as a disciple', it means that the proclaimers need not worry about lack of inspiration; as confident as the teacher propounding daily lessons to students,³⁴⁷ so certain is the enduring receipt of the word for the proclaimer of imminent salvation. The prophetic group is no longer stubbornly opposed to the oracle of Yhwh (וְאִנִּכִּיל לֹא מְרִיתִי, 50.5), as Isaiah's audience was (עַם מְרִי הוּא, 30.9).³⁴⁸ But the ongoing receiving of the word which gives the proclamation authority not only locates the proclaimers in the Mosaic tradition of the prophets (Deut. 18.18), but also places them in mortal danger in some circumstances, namely when the message is not fulfilled and is thereby rejected as false, for which the messenger is to be punished with death (Deut. 18.21-22).³⁴⁹ In spite of all reprisals (50.6) the proclaimers know that no one can dispute their right (50.8-9), because Yhwh is at hand as their 'justifier' in the truest sense of the word (קָרוֹב מַצְדִּיקִי),

344. See Werlitz, 'Vom Knecht der Lieder', p. 42.

345. See Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 107-109.

346. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 268-69.

347. See Weippert, 'Konfessionen', p. 112.

348. This is pointed out by Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, pp. 107-109.

349. See Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 128.

cf. 51.5³⁵⁰); what a difference from the exilic community, who believed their גשפֿט was lost (40.27)! The idea that the prophetic proclaimer's life is not a bed of roses is neither new nor unusual, but in the exilic–postexilic period its difficulties become almost a trademark of true prophecy. It is noteworthy that in contrast to the objections of a Moses (Exod. 4.10) or Jeremiah (1.6) that they were altogether unqualified for prophetic office, the tradents in Isa. 50.4–9 knew no such concerns.³⁵¹ The idea that there should be an interruption in the work of proclamation, as in the case of Ezekiel (Ezek. 3.26–27; 24.27; 33.21–22), is completely foreign to the style of the third EYS. Jeremiah is outdone in this respect—in the prophetic image of Isa. 50.4–9 there is no place for complaint. Unlike Ezekiel, who had to be commanded not to be rebellious like the rebellious house (Ezek. 2.8), the prophetic voice in Isa. 50.5 points out of its own accord, 'but I am not rebellious' (וְאֵנִי לֹא מִרִּיִּי). If Yhwh is responsible for the 'hardening' of a Jeremiah or Ezekiel (Jer. 1.18; 15.20; Ezek. 3.8–9), in Isa. 50.7b the prophet himself makes his face like flint, lest he be put to shame.

Those who provided the expansion in 50.10–11 knew full well that they were no longer prophetic proclaimers, but they also knew that they could be 'his servants' to the Yhwh-fearing in terms of listening to the word. They did not share with the prophetic servant the charisma of receiving the divine word, but certainly did share hostile receptions and social ostracism. It appears that for them hearing the voice of 'his servant' already coincides with hearing the message of the prophetic book. The split between those who listen and those who light the fire-brands becomes more radical in the course of the book up to its climax in the closing verse, 66.24.³⁵² Those who listen to the voice of the עֶבֶד, i.e., who hear the voice of the prophetic message of the book and share its concept of Israel, are called 'servants' (עֲבָדִים) from 54.17 on; the comment of the third EYS in 50.10–11 is accordingly an important unifying link between the Ebed-Songs and the texts about the servants in the closing section of the book.³⁵³

350. 51.4–8 is a later mosaic-like insertion, which is supplied from a whole series of references, including 2.2–4; 42.1–4; 49.1–6; 50.9; in addition, Budde, *Die sogenannten Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder*, p. 18: 'It remains the case that everything that is stated in 50.4–9 concerning the servant can be read in chap. 51.1–8 concerning the people.'

351. See also van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 280–83.

352. Cf. Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', p. 294; Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 131.

353. Thus Blenkinsopp, 'A Jewish Sect', p. 13: 'an important link between the prophetic servant of whom it speaks and the "servants" of the last two chapters of the book.'

Listening to this servant, which is the basis of what it means to 'fear the Lord', leads to social isolation³⁵⁴ that can only be endured and overcome through trust in Yhwh.³⁵⁵

If the second Jerusalem redaction up to this point consisted simply of interpolation, with Isaiah 54–55 it manages a genuine expansion that sets entirely its own agenda. Resisting the doubt and skepticism of their audience and building their own self-confidence were only 'defensive tasks'; now with these chapters, the prophetic group takes the offensive, focusing on the future of Zion, who goes from a childless and rejected wife to the mother of many children, the bride of Yhwh.

The section 54.1–55.9 is a kerygmatic unit to which is tied an epilogue with the theme of the 'theology of the word' (55.10–11) and which is concluded by the 'Exodus' verses of 55.12–13. The fact that Zion is addressed as wife in the second person singular in chap. 54 but as a You-group in 55.1–9 is not an argument against common authorship, but rather shows a dynamic progression of thought: from addressing Zion as wife, mother, bride, and city, to addressing her children with whom Yhwh makes an eternal covenant, which is also of importance for the nations.

With 54.1–3, the second Jerusalem Redaction updates the text in connection with its predecessor (52.7–12), so that it is unnecessary to identify the addressees once more with Zion.³⁵⁶ With the key words רִנֵּן/פָּצַח, 54.1 takes up the final verse of the first redaction of 52.9–10 and closes its own expansion with the same word-pair (55.12), which the compositional unit of 54–55 again underlines. If 54.1–3 was originally joined directly to 52.7–12, then the writers of 54–55 saw themselves as the watchmen of Jerusalem (52.8), who, in anticipation of the definitive turn toward salvation, exhort the city of God to rejoice and to make preparation for its numerous troops of children. In the background is again the urgent problem of the overdue period of blessing and increase, which was dealt with already in 51.2 with regard to the ancestors Abraham and Sarah. Just as the God of Israel had granted these two numerous offspring against all expectation, he is even now preparing an unending brood of children for childless Zion. The echoes of the figure of Sarah in the salutation of Zion as the

354. The אִשָּׁר in 50.10 does not refer to the Ebed who walks in darkness, but to the one who fears Yhwh and listens to the voice of the Ebed; so Beuken, 'Isaiah 50.10–11', p. 170.

355. Thus Beuken, 'Isaiah 50.10–11', p. 181.

356. See Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 407: 'Zion is addressed but not named, apparently because 52.7–12 immediately preceded it.'

barren one, who did not bear nor lie in labor, is all the more effective since 51.2 is the only place where Sarah is named outside of the Pentateuch; when she is first introduced there she is described as עקרה אין לה ולד (Gen. 11.30).³⁵⁷ Abraham no longer comes into the picture in 54.1–3 because the position of husband now is taken by Yhwh himself; Zion is like Sarah, and at the same time infinitely greater! When the wife Zion is commanded to widen her tent, to spread it out to the right and the left, this again alludes to the promise of increase to the patriarch.³⁵⁸ The promise, ‘your posterity will inherit nations’ (וורעך גוים יירש), refers to Gen. 22.17 and 24.60,³⁵⁹ but goes beyond these, for there dominion is only over the enemy; in the case of the children of Zion it is extended even over the nations. But these verses have recourse not only to the promises to the ancestral couple, but also to the promise concerning the occupation of the land.³⁶⁰ Zion’s seed will ‘assume the rightful succession of the nations’,³⁶¹ What is meant by that can only be understood by referring back to 49.19–23 and forward to 61.4–7; as the first text presents it, it is the nations who bring the Diaspora Jews living among them to Zion under Yhwh’s banner, whereupon the place is too narrow and she asks in amazement how she has come to have such an abundance of children. Accordingly, ‘to inherit nations’ does not mean to oppress them or to occupy their territory, but rather to profit in the broadest sense from their coming to Zion. The theme of the ‘settlement of destroyed cities’ (ערים נשמות ישיבו)³⁶² is taken up in 61.4,³⁶³ where the relation of the foreigner to Israel is explained in detail: the foreigners will see to the agriculture so that Israel can devote itself to its priestly duties in the midst of the world. All the statements about the nations who bring the exiles to Zion, who will be inherited by Zion’s children, who take up those children’s agricultural work, are nothing more than tentative attempts to foresee the consequences that result from the promise to Zion of a glorious future in which the nations will participate in some way or other. The fourth EYS takes on precisely

357. Thus Beuken, ‘Isaiah LIV’, pp. 37–47.

358. Cf. Gen. 13.16; 28.14.

359. Only at these two places in Genesis is זרע the subject of ירש.

360. Cf. Num. 33.52; Deut. 4.38; 9.1; 11.23; 12.2, 29; 19.1; 31.3.

361. ‘Die Rechtsnachfolge von Völkern antreten’ is Lohfink’s translation of ירש (*ThWAT* III, p. 984).

362. Note the wordplay between שוממה / ערים נשמות, ‘deserted wife’ and ‘desolate cities’ in 54.1, 3; cf. Hermisson, ‘Jakob und Zion’, p. 264.

363. Because of the connections especially to Isa. 60–62, Elliger argues for a Trito-Isaianic authorship of 54–55 (*Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis*, pp. 135–67).

this problem, but finds an entirely unique solution that is not in line with this redaction and therefore cannot be assigned to it.

The call to praise God and prepare for the new era of salvation is followed in 54.4-6 by a salvation oracle placed in the mouth of the comforter, who encourages Zion to leave behind the humiliation of her youth and the shame of widowhood. Her heavy fate should not lead her to think that her husband had rejected her as a young wife, or that she had become a widow at a young age, because 'your Creator is your husband...the Holy One of Israel your Redeemer' (54.5); the relationship between Zion, the wife, and Yhwh, her Husband,³⁶⁴ had indeed been disturbed, but there can be no talk of a final separation! In the face of her despondency, Yhwh has [again] called her "'the wife of his youth; can she then be cast off?" says Yhwh, your God'. Would Yhwh have done to his bride Zion what no one could do to the beloved of his youth?

With the divine speech that begins in 54.7, Yhwh turns to Zion and confirms the salvation oracles of his proclaimer: the short time he deserted her is nothing in comparison to the great love with which he now gathers her (ברחמים גדלים אֶקְבֹּץ); in light of the 'eternal grace' (בחסד עולם רחמתיך) with which he loves her, the short period of his wrath also³⁶⁵ loses its terrors! As if this guarantee of his faithfulness were still not sufficient, Yhwh turns at last to his promise never again to abandon or repudiate Zion, his bride and the mother of his children, a promise henceforth so unalterable and irrevocable that he reinforces it with an oath, as in the days of Noah. Thus as the earth will never again experience a flood, Zion will no longer suffer disgrace and shame; though mountains and hills may shake, 'my grace (חסדי) will not depart from you; my covenant of peace shall not be moved (ברית שלומי לא תמוט)', says Yhwh, who has compassion on you.' As Yhwh gave the oath of an eternal covenant *after* the flood (Gen. 9.16) never again to destroy the earth, he now swears to his bride Zion *after* the exile and destruction never again to be angry with her (54.9).³⁶⁶ The Noahic and Zion covenants are thus connected with one another³⁶⁷—as the former covers the entire creation, the latter

364. In addition, see Krupp's dissertation, 'Das Verhältnis Jahwe-Israel'.

365. On נָעַר (17.13; 50.2; 51.20; 54.9; 66.15) 'to scold' or better, 'to bark at', see Klopfenstein, 'Wenn der Schöpfer die Chaosmächte "anherrscht"', p. 43.

366. Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', p. 52; Melugin, *Formation*, p. 171: 'Just as Yahweh swore to end his anger in the time of Noah, so now his berit and hæsaed can be counted as sure.'

367. Thus I. Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, p. 62.

includes all the nations of the world. With the mention of the *ברית עולם* in 55.3, the reference back to the Noahic, Abrahamic, and Davidic covenants clearly indicates, in contrast to the Mosaic covenant, the inviolability of the divine relationship.³⁶⁸ Yhwh's appointing Zion as a witness to the nations (55.4) emphasizes that with the inclusion of the nations a three-way relationship has developed from the two-way relationship of Yhwh and Israel. In 26.20–21, after the composition concluded by the oracles concerning the nations in chaps. 13–23, there is again a reference to Noah and the flood. The positive relationship to the nations, however, has been weakened there since Yhwh's oath never again to allow a great flood only applies to Jerusalem;³⁶⁹ the righteous of the nations can be saved, however, by seeking refuge in Zion, even as the righteous Noah survived the flood in the ark!

The circumstances of salvation confirmed by an oath from Yhwh himself is the theme of 54.11–17; the threefold characterization of Zion as 'wretched, shaken [by the storm], and un comforted wife' refers to 54.1³⁷⁰ and indicates that it is still about inspiring hope in a desolate Jerusalem: the first part of the chapter did so by dealing with the past, now it is done through images of the future! Zion shall be rebuilt from the foundation up,³⁷¹ which will provide the security guaranteed by Yhwh of towers and walls to be erected from precious stones; these are no longer for defense, but so that this shining city will serve as the point of attraction for Israel and the nations.³⁷² With v. 13 a later hand has inserted the image of children from 54.1–3, in a statement that goes back to 50.4 and relates the 'covenant of peace' from 54.10 to the 'disciples of Yhwh', no longer to Zion as wife of Yhwh. In other words, not everyone in Jerusalem belongs to this group of disciples, which is similar to the interpolation of 51.4–8 with the mention of 'those who bear my Torah in their heart'. It is surely no coincidence that 51.7 and 54.13 stand in close relation to Jer. 31.31–

368. See Gen. 9.16; 17.7, 13, 19; 2 Sam. 7; Pss. 89; 132; see also Vanoni, "Die Tora im Herzen", p. 365.

369. Steck, 'Beobachtungen zu den Zion-Texten', p. 107: 'the world faces a judgment corresponding to the Flood; such a judgment for Jerusalem is definitely behind it.'

370. Beuken, 'Isaiah LIV', p. 55.

371. Van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 267 n. 140: What is envisioned is not so much a rebuilding (as in 44.24–28) as a new building with new foundations.

372. Cf. Lam. 4.1–2; Tob. 13.17; Rev. 21.18–21. A reference to the 'cornerstone oracle' of 28.16–17 is quite possible; cf. *צדקה* in 28.17 and 54.14.

34:³⁷³ what is said there of the postexilic people of God as a whole is reduced here to a subset. A similar phenomenon is found in 54.17b, where the description of salvation in vv. 11-17a is restricted to the 'servants of Yhwh',³⁷⁴ anticipating a split in the community³⁷⁵ which is especially evident in the last two chapters of the book of Isaiah. Who belongs to the 'servants' and what kind of program they represent for postexilic Israel are questions which are answered only in the last section of the book.³⁷⁶ What is true for now is that Yhwh will not allow success to the weapons and tongues directed against Zion and its inhabitants (לֹא יִצְלַח ³⁷⁷). That this same God is responsible for the weapons and their bearers who turn against his people, the redactors know from 45.7; yet Yhwh's will for the salvation of Zion and its inhabitants is inviolable.

Following the restoration and surpassing of the previous relationships of Yhwh with his bride, 55.1-5 is an invitation to participate in this new covenant community; all who thirst (כָּל צָמֵא) are invited to come to the waters and to feast on cereal, wine, and milk without cost.³⁷⁸ The metaphor of coming to the water is about Torah instruction by Yhwh himself, as the call to listen to him emphasizes (שִׁמְעוּ שִׁמְעוּ אֵלַי, 55.2b).³⁷⁹ Standing behind this may be the saying from Deut. 8.3, that humans do not live by bread alone, but by that which proceeds from the mouth of God, which also provides a piece of the mosaic for the concluding 'theology of the word'.³⁸⁰

In Zech. 2.10-11, exilic and Diaspora Judaism is commanded with a three-fold הוֹי to return to Zion, and in their wake many nations will join themselves to Yhwh (וְנָלְלוּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים אֵל יְהוָה), so that they too might become his people (וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם, Zech. 2.15). Similarly, the הוֹי summons in 55.1 is meant for all who are attracted by the abundant

373. The declaration about rebuilding in Jer. 31.38-39 is far surpassed in Isa. 54.11; Isa. 51.15a β is identical to Jer. 31.35b.

374. Olley, "'Hear the Word of Yhwh'", p. 40, points out that 1QIsa^a marks a new section with 54.17b and not with 55.1. Does this imply that participation in the covenant of 55.1-5 should be limited to the servants, i.e., the community of Qumran?

375. 'Servants': 56.6; 63.17; 65.8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66.14; 'chosen': 65.9, 15, 22; 'my people who have sought me': 65.10 (cf. 63.8; 64.8; 65.19, 22); 'blessed of Yhwh': 65.23; cf. among others, Jeppesen, 'From "You, My Servant"', p. 126.

376. Thus Beuken, 'Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI', p. 205.

377. Cf. the success of the Ebed (53.10) and of the divine word (55.11).

378. So Spykerboer, 'Isaiah 55.1-5', p. 358: 'an invitation to come to the new Jerusalem where Yahweh reigns and to share in its wealth!'

379. Korpel, 'Metaphors', p. 49.

380. Cf. 55.11 (עַל כָּל מוֹצֵא פִי יְהוָה) and Deut. 8.3 (דְּבַר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּי).

water on the mountain of God. This motif is extended into the post-exilic literature³⁸¹ and in part connected with the pilgrimage of the nations; to be refreshed with the waters of Zion recalls the invitation in 12.3 'to draw water from the wells of salvation'.

In Ps. 46.5 it is 'its streams' (פְּלִינִי) which enliven the city of God, and in the procession to Zion the pilgrims from the nations will sing, 'all my springs are in you' (Ps. 87.7). Likewise, in Ps. 65.3 all humanity (כָּל בָּשָׂר), which has come to God on Zion, sings of 'God's stream full of water' (פְּלִג אֱלֹהִים מְלֵא מַיִם, 65.10), which ensures the rich fertility of crops and livestock. It is against this background that the 'streams' of Isa. 30.25 and 32.2 take on their particular importance; the promise that the people in Zion will see their teacher (30.20) is fulfilled in the new Zion community from Israel and the nations, who are all students of Yhwh (54.13). If this community does not deviate (30.21–22) from the way (דֶּרֶךְ), especially from the prohibition of foreign gods, abundant fruitfulness will be granted to it, not least because of the 'streams full of water' (פְּלִינִים יְבֵלֵי-מַיִם, 30.25). In the period of the just king (32.1, cf. 52.7), the stubbornness will be removed (32.3) and every inhabitant of Zion will be like a stream in a dry land (בְּפִלְגֵי מַיִם בְּצִיּוֹן).³⁸²

The combination of 'water streams' and 'Torah teaching', which also applies to Isa. 55.1, is emphasized at the beginning of the Psalter (Ps. 1.3);³⁸⁴ whoever ponders the Torah day and night, i.e., as expressed by Isa. 51.7, whoever carries it in the heart, is like a tree planted by streams of water, always full of fruit and leaves that do not wither (cf. 55.13!).³⁸⁵ Zion, from which Yhwh functions as Judge, Legislator, and King, is consequently a מְקוֹם נְהָרִים to which all nations 'flow' (נִהְרָו, Isa. 2.2) in order to receive the Torah there! In the background of the metaphor of 'God's stream' which goes out from Zion, is the geographic phenomenon of Jerusalem with its vital Gihon Spring as well as the mythological idea of the נָהָר of Eden, which feeds the four world rivers, among them the גִּיחוֹן (Gen. 2.10–14).³⁸⁶

381. Ezek. 47; Joel 4.18; Zech. 14.8.

382. צִיּוֹן, 'Dry land', only in the gloss of 25.5 with reference to 'Zion'.

383. See John 7.38: 'As the Scripture says, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water".'

384. Cf. LXX/Sir. 24.23–31, where the rivers of paradise are explicitly associated with Torah instruction!

385. Cf. Ps. 119.136: The righteous person sheds 'streams of tears', when he sees how Yhwh's Torah is disobeyed.

386. Gunkel, 'Jesaia 33', p. 206: 'Jerusalem, blessed with great rivers that come from one primal river—this is a mythological paradise tradition transferred to the glorified Jerusalem'; see also Eising, גִּיחוֹן, *ThWAT* I, pp. 1008–11.

Now when the nations, in their pilgrimage to Zion, draw water from the Gihon spring, and sing the praise of the springs of the city of God, this is indicative of a return to the paradise garden of creation!³⁸⁷ Though the authors of Isaiah 54–55 are not ready to go so far as to call the nations to Zion, they still know that the turning point for the salvation of Zion will not turn out to be unfavorable for the nations (55.4–5).

With all who come to the life-giving source of Zion Yhwh will enter into an 'eternal covenant—like the steadfast, sure love for David' (חסדי דוד הנצמנים,³⁸⁸ 55.3). This does not refer to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy (cf. Ezek. 34.23–24) but rather is about the witness function that Zion takes on for the nations: 'See, I have made you a witness (עד) for nations, a prince (נריד) and commander (מצוה) over nations.' The promises to the Davidic monarchy³⁸⁹ will be transferred to Zion³⁹⁰ and 'spiritualized'; the content of Yhwh's steadfast faithfulness is no longer the domination of foreign nations³⁹¹ by the Davidic royal house, but rather Zion's witness (עד; cf. 43.10, 12; 44.8) to the true divinity of Yhwh, who is glorified on Zion (55.5).³⁹²

The three-fold negative characterization of Zion in 54.1, 22 corresponds to the three-fold positive identification as 'witness', 'nagid', and 'commander for the people'. The royal title is deliberately avoided, because Yhwh rules as מלך in Jerusalem (52.7).³⁹³ The third identification of function, 'commanding the nations' (מצוה לאומים), aims at Zion's authority over the nations, which is exercised at least

387. Görg, 'Wo lag das Paradies?', p. 32: 'Finally, there is in Jerusalem the "garden" from which flow all the streams of the world and the ends of the earth. The geographical notions are consolidated in a metaphorical image with the message, the city of David is based in paradise.'

388. The discussion of whether this is a subjective or objective genitive has been decided in favor of the objective, according to Williamson, 'Sure Mercies', pp. 331–49. Beuken is now in agreement (*Jesaja, IIB*, pp. 284, 354), having previously argued for the subjective in Beuken, 'Isaiah 55.3–5', pp. 49–64.

389. 2 Sam. 7; Pss. 89; 132.

390. Sæbø, 'Vom Individuellen zum Kollektiven', p. 121, speaks of 'collectivization'.

391. See Ps. 18.43–44; 2 Sam. 22.44–45; cf. Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', p. 53.

392. Cf. Sweeney, 'Reconceptualization', p. 47: 'Now, it is the people of Israel who receive that promise.'

393. Unlike Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht*, p. 125, who claims that the 'political royal office' was already filled through the proclamation of Cyrus as anointed one (45.1).

in the area of the mediation of Torah;³⁹⁴ its authority is evidenced by the fact that unknown nations come when Zion calls,³⁹⁵ because Yhwh has glorified himself in it.³⁹⁶ The promise of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion (2.2-4) shows the first signs of fulfillment here.

With 55.6-7 the prophetic group that stands behind the second Jerusalem redaction turns directly to its audience and, in imitation of a priest's instruction,³⁹⁷ invites them to seek Yhwh since he may be found (בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ³⁹⁸), to call on him since he is near (55.6). The key word קָרַב points back to 50.8 [51.5] and at the same time forward to 56.1; in 55.6-7 it is about the invitation to seize Yhwh's offer of salvation, which means concretely that the wicked (רָשָׁע), as in the stipulations of the entrance liturgies,³⁹⁹ changes his way of life (דֶּרֶךְ) and the 'man of evil' (אִישׁ אֵין) abandons his plans (מַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ) and returns to Yhwh.⁴⁰⁰ He does not need to fear that 'our God' might take advantage of this reversal to punish the repenting sinner, for God 'is great in forgiveness' (כִּי יָרֵבָה לְסִלּוֹחַ). If someone turns to Yhwh, he can be completely certain of Yhwh's compassionate love (וִירְחֻמָּהוּ), phrasing that points back to 54.7, 8, 10; the loving affection that Yhwh promised to Zion there is available here to all those who return to Yhwh, who begin the way back from sin (cf. Deut. 4.29-31). Yhwh does not repay in the same coin but rather forgives; this is demonstrated by the incomparability of his action: All are able to return to him.⁴⁰¹

The theme of the efficacy of the divine word (55.10-11) closes the circle which the second Jerusalem redaction had opened with its interpolation in 40.6-8. Against all the resignation and skepticism, the prophetic proclaimers know that the seed of the divine word will

394. Lohfink, 'Bund und Torah', p. 54: 'Shall Israel therefore be a "witness", inasmuch as it interprets its acquired position of "Davidic" ruler with respect to the nations to mean that Israel, like Moses, proclaims the Torah to them?'

395. Against van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, p. 272, who assumes, with reference to Ps. 18.44, that קָרַא here means call to slavery; but קָרַא does not occur in Ps. 18.44!

396. Cf. 44.23; 46.13; 49.3; 52.1; 'glorification' becomes one of the major themes from Isa. 60 on: 60.7, 9, 13, 19, 21; 61.3; 62.3; 63.12, 14, 15; 64.10.

397. Begrich, *Studien*, p. 58; Melugin, *Formation*, p. 86.

398. Unlike Clifford, 'Isaiah 55', p. 31, who translates in terms of space: 'Seek Yahweh *where* he may be encountered, call upon him *where* he is present.'

399. Cf. Isa. 33.14-16; Pss. 15; 24.

400. See 44.22b: 'Return to me for I have redeemed you.'

401. See Korpel, 'Metaphors', p. 50; cf. Jer. 29.11: 'thoughts for welfare, and not for harm'; Jer. 31.34: 'I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.'

grow and bear fruit. The *golah* redaction ends with the command to leave Babylon (48.20-21), the first Jerusalem redaction with the command to leave the Diaspora (52.11-12); both allude to the Exodus motif. The second Jerusalem redaction, however, closes with the call for pilgrimage to Zion in 55.12-13. If this invitation is read together with 55.5, then it seems it cannot be ruled out that foreigners, too, should make their way to Zion; thus יבֹלֵל ho. brings in the context of the nations from 18.7, which speaks of gifts from a tall people for Yhwh on Mount Zion. In Ps. 45.15, 16, first the daughter of Zion is led to the wedding of King Yhwh; then her female companions (the Yhwh nations?) are brought along in joy and jubilation (תִּבְלִנָּה בְשִׂמְחָה), in order to enter the temple/palace of the king. Against the background of Isaiah 54–55 the following emerges: at the wedding of the revived daughter of Zion with her royal bridegroom, the nations, too, as her companions are drawn into Yhwh's sphere! The journey to Zion has discarded everything that might recall the Exodus from Egypt. It will be accompanied by a miraculous transformation of creation, in which all that is irksome and burdensome gives way to the agreeable; this will serve Yhwh as a memorial (שֵׁם) and an eternal sign that will not be wiped out (לֹא יִכְרַת עוֹלָם, 55.13). The reference back to 'the eternal covenant, which I make with you' (וְאֶבְרַתְּהָ) (לִכְמֹ בְרִית עוֹלָם, 55.3), and to the inviolability of the covenant with Noah (Gen. 9.8-17) is unmistakable. The transformation of nature in the course of the pilgrimage to Zion will be an eternal sign for Yhwh(!) that marks the completion of creation and history.⁴⁰³

If the invitation at the beginning of the chapter to purchase water and food for nothing was a metaphorical call to receive Torah instruction (cf. 55.11 with Deut. 8.3!), it suggests that the final verse about the transformation of nature from useless to beneficial plants should also be understood in a figurative sense. Those who have left evil paths and turned to Yhwh are compared to cypress and myrtle which grow up in place of thorns and thistles and are a memorial and sign for Yhwh.⁴⁰⁴ From sinners to righteous converts, they are a sign for Yhwh⁴⁰⁵ that holds him back from another destruction of Zion, analogous to the sign of the rainbow against another destruction of

402. See the connection with 56.5: the promise of a שֵׁם עוֹלָם for the eunuchs, who shall not be wiped out (לֹא יִכְרַת).

403. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 202: 'The eschatological aspect of finality is expressly emphasized here.'

404. Korpel, 'Metaphors', p. 51: 'briers and thistles are a common biblical symbol of evil' citing Prov. 22.5; Jer. 4.3; 12.13; Ezek. 2.6; Mt. 7.16.

405. Cf. Gen. 9.11: לֹא יִכְרַת and Gen. 9.12: לְדֹרֹת עוֹלָם...

creation. It is no surprise that the Targum interprets the transformation from useless to useful vegetation as the replacement of the sinner with the righteous.⁴⁰⁶

If one takes seriously the metaphor of 55.13, then the intended connection with 56.1-8, indicated by the repetition of key words,⁴⁰⁷ can be seen even more clearly. When the foreigner laments that, in spite of all his striving to fulfill the covenant demands, he is still counted as a 'withered tree' (עץ יבש), it must be viewed against the background of the eschatological sign of the transformation from sinners to righteous. Whoever does not admit Yhwh believers from the nations into Zion rejects at the same time the eschatological signs of the final coming of salvation in 55.12-13; in other words, whoever compares Yhwh's word with the rain and snow that come from heaven and provide for fertility and seed will not be surprised when this seed sprouts—and comes to Zion! At the end of the book, the key word 'sign' (אֵימָה) surfaces again (66.19); there it deals with the 'survivors' who are sent to the nations that still have not heard of Yhwh. The proselytes who claim affiliation with Zion in 56.1-8, following on 55.12-13, will be sent by Yhwh himself at the conclusion of the book to be 'missionaries' among the nations. Such an expansion of the role of foreigners for Yhwh and Zion, however, goes far beyond what the second Jerusalem redaction had in view in chaps. 54–55.

6.8. *The Fourth EYS (52.13–53.12)*

The fourth EYS was inserted after the closing verses of the first Jerusalem redaction (52.7-12) and before the actual composition of the second (54–55). On the one hand, it presupposes the three previous EYS and on the other, it finds its being in references to the immediate context, which indicates that it follows both Jerusalem redactions chronologically. Its placement between the command to the Diaspora to depart and the salvation oracles for a Zion that is to be restored indicates the focus of the fourth EYS, which essentially has to do with the restoration of Zion, both within the internal space of Israel and with respect to the nations of the world.

406. 'Instead of the wicked the righteous shall be established, and instead of the transgressors they that fear sin shall be established: and it shall be before the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not fail' (translation by Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, p. 186).

407. Cf. 56.1 (קְרִיבָה) with 55.6; and 56.5 (אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְרֶה) with 55.13.

It is striking that the theme of the nations, which stood in the foreground in the first and second EYS, plays no role in the central part of the fourth EYS; in contrast to the third EYS, in which the speaker communicated his experience of suffering, it can be noted that in the fourth EYS the one who is bowed down does not himself speak, but rather others speak about him. The person around whom everything revolves speaks not a word; he is as silent as a lamb before its slaughter; his activity consists of a resolute passivity.⁴⁰⁸

- A) 13-15: Yhwh speech—opening oracle⁴⁰⁹
 ‘my servant’—‘many nations’
- B) 1-11aα: We-speech—central part
 - 1: ‘Arm of Yhwh’ (זרוע יהוה)
 - 2-3: *He* and his lot; despised by the *We*
 - 4-6: The new acknowledgment of the *We All*
 - 7-9: *He* and his death
 - 10-11aα: ‘Yhwh’s plan’ succeeds by his hand (בידו)
- A) 11aβ-12: Yhwh speech—closing oracle
 ‘my servant’ makes ‘many’ righteous
 Portion/booty with ‘the great and powerful’
 He bears the guilt of the many

Yhwh, who appears in the framing portions as the speaker of two oracles, is found only at the beginning and end of the central portion (53.1, 10), asking to whom his arm had been revealed, and affirming that his plan would succeed. Standing at the center is not what Yhwh does to and through the stricken one, but the relation of the *We* to *Him*. The fact that God speaks only in the outer frame, that ‘the nations’ occurs only there, and that the suffering one is identified with the Ebed only there, speaks against a common authorship of the central part and the frame. Since the *We* speech forms a meaningful unit without the frame, but the latter is meaningless without the central portion, the frame is to be regarded as a later interpretation, of which 53.11aβ-12 is not even likely to be a seamless part.

The beginning in 52.13 not only has the function of bringing the framed *We* speech together with the Servant of God with a view to 42.1 (הן עבדי), but at the same time creates a bridge to the beginning of the entire book of Isaiah. Thus the statement, ‘he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high’ (יָרֹם וְנִשָּׂא וְנִבְהַ מְאֹד) refers to the Day of Yhwh in 2.11-17 against all that is proud and lofty, with God

408. Clines, *I, He, We & They*, p. 42: ‘there is no concrete action that the servant does—apart from letting everything happen to him.’

409. For the outline, see Janowski, ‘Er trug unsere Sünden—Stellvertretung’, p. 80; Beauchamp, ‘Lecture et relecture’, p. 328; Ruppert, ‘Mein Knecht’, pp. 3-4.

alone standing as the only exalted one; 52.13b also looks back to the vision of 6.1–13, where Yhwh is sitting on a high and lofty throne. The proclaimed exaltation of the servant is accordingly not only a very great honor, but an act which brings him close to Yhwh, near to his throne.⁴¹⁰ In view of the call to Zion to put on her beautiful garments because Yhwh is approaching as king (52.1, 7), it is obvious that the elevation of the servant is to be understood as an announcement that Zion will be enthroned as a royal bride at Yhwh's side! The assumption that Zion may be concealed behind the stricken and dying one is confirmed by an examination of the immediate context of Isaiah 53:⁴¹¹

- (1) In 52.7, there is a twofold message from the herald (משמיע), who promises healing and redemption; 53.1 begins with the question, 'Who then would believe what we have heard?' (שמעתנו).
- (2) The 'We' in 53.1–11 has its starting point in the 'salvation of our God' (ישועת אלהינו), which the nations (הגוים) of the earth will see (ראה, 52.10b); this in turn supplies the key word for 52.15, where many nations are astounded by what they see.
- (3) The 'arm of Yhwh', which Yhwh uncovers before the eyes of all the nations (52.10a), provides the impetus for the question in 53.1b, 'To whom has the arm of Yhwh been revealed?' (זרוע יהוה על מי נגלתה). In 52.10–12 the wholehearted proclamation of the nations' recognition of God's salvation, power, and redemption becomes the problem in 53.1–11: The great salvation oracles, by which future generations are to live, are not only given, but also given away! How they grow in this task and achieve deeper insight is addressed in the witness of the 'We-group' in the central section.
- (4) The message of peace (משמיע שלום), which the messengers announce in 52.7, is taken up and modified in 53.5: Peace is possible, but at a price paid not by the beneficiary, but by the man of sorrows (מוסר שלומנו עליז). Thus both the 'covenant of my peace' (ברית שלומי, 54.10) and the great peace of the children of Zion (רב שלום בניך, 54.13) take on a new quality, in which salvation obtained through suffering endures!
- (5) The promise in 54.1b that the desolate and childless woman Zion shall possess many offspring (רבים בני שוממה) is incorporated into a wordplay in 52.14a:⁴¹² שממו עליו רבים (many

410. In 57.15, the majesty of Yhwh is coupled with his turning toward the wounded one (לב נרכאים/דכא), which points toward a re-reading of 53.5, 10.

411. See Vermeulen, 'Isaie 53', pp. 346–47; Olley, "'The Many'", pp. 350–51.

412. Gosse, 'Isaie 52,13–53,12', p. 540.

were appalled at him).⁴¹³ Zion and the man of sorrows will have an unexpectedly rich progeny (זרע, 53.10) and that of Zion will 'possess the nations' (54.3), motifs which are taken up again in 53.12a in the theme of a shared inheritance with the many and the strong, i.e., with the great nations.

- (6) As the divine speech in 52.5 states that 'my people are taken away' (לקח עמי), the 'We' acknowledges that the man of sorrows has been 'taken' by oppression and judgment.⁴¹⁴ The boasting of the oppressors who laughed at the fate of the people of God has given way to astonishment over what is now happening to Zion.
- (7) If one reads the fourth EYS against the background of 54.11-17, a number of connections which further support the parallelism of 'Zion' and 'servant' are in evidence: Zion is 'poor' (ענייה, 54.11), the servant is 'bowed down' (מעונה/נענה, 53.4, 7); Zion is established in righteousness (בצדקה), the righteous servant makes the many righteous (יצדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים).⁴¹⁵ The idea that someone might be smitten by God for the salvation of another comes in the wake of what Yhwh says of himself in 54.16—that he has also created the 'corrupter' (משחית) to wreak havoc; so it is in 52.14 that the appearance of the smitten one is 'corrupted' beyond any human semblance (משחת מאיש מראהו). In contrast to the promise that the instruments of the enemies of Zion shall have no success (לא יצלח, 54.17) stands the positive statement of 53.10b that Yhwh's plan will succeed by his hand, i.e., by the hand of his servant (חפץ יהוה בידו יצלח). Here Yhwh achieves success through his servant, while in 55.11b it is the divine word that guarantees it (חפץ/צלח).

The connections of the fourth EYS to the literary context, not all equally convincing⁴¹⁶ but still impressive as a cluster, give decisive clues for the identification of figures that remain vague in the text itself. Thus, the figure of the person bowed down and sentenced to death that appears in the framing divine oracle as a servant can be

413. Instead of the MT 'because of you' (עליך).

414. The connection of 53.8a to the divine speech in 52.5 may also explain the difficult מַפְשַׁע עַמִּי in 53.8b, 'because of the transgression of *my* people.'

415. Cf. 54.17bβ, where the righteousness of the servant (צדקתם) comes from Yhwh.

416. See, for example, 'to hide the face' in 53.3 and 54.8.

none other than Zion in the literary context!⁴¹⁷ The fact that the Daughter of Zion is concealed behind the broken man, plundered and despised by the nations, is not surprising when one considers the sequence of Lamentations 1–2 and 3; what Jerusalem says of itself in Lam. 3.1, Zion could also say of itself in Isaiah 53: אֲנִי הַנִּבְרָר!⁴¹⁸

If the middle section and the frame are now to be assigned to various hands,⁴¹⁹ the ‘We’ is no longer to be identified indiscriminately either with the ‘kings’ and ‘many nations’ from 52.15⁴²⁰ or with the ‘many’ in 53.11aβ–12.⁴²¹ The first is improbable because the kings shut their mouths from astonishment and horror!⁴²² The ‘We’ who wonders who would believe what ‘We’ heard, i.e., who would take it at face value and then radically revise their view about the fate of Zion, is not simply Israel, but a subset of it: They are those Diaspora Jews who had been called by the writers of the first redaction in 52.11–12 to leave the places to which they had been scattered, and who stood in the center of the interest of the second redaction (55.12–13). Only if they venture forth to return to Jerusalem can the unfruitful count on numerous offspring (54.1–3). This ‘We’ bears witness to their knowledge that they deem it utterly wrong that the suffering of the one condemned to death should be viewed as punishment for his transgressions. They are the Jews of the Diaspora, who bear witness to their skepticism about Zion, whose revival they had no longer believed possible. They have recognized that Zion was stricken so ‘inhumanely’ by Yhwh not because of its own guilt but because of their offenses, the offenses of those who had been driven out of Jerusalem to exile and established a new existence among foreigners, and now look upon their humiliated mother-city ‘from a safe distance’, halfheartedly rather than compassionately. The literary impulse for the central formulation in 53.5, which shows the reversal of the assessment of the smitten one—‘we regarded him as afflicted

417. Wilshire, ‘The Servant-City’, pp. 358–60; Sawyer, ‘Daughter of Zion’, p. 101; Seitz, *Zion’s Final Destiny*, pp. 202–205; Ruppert, ‘Mein Knecht’, p. 12.

418. See Eissfeldt, *Einleitung*, p. 681.

419. Among others, Vermeylen, ‘Isaïe 53’, pp. 352–54; Ruppert, ‘Mein Knecht’, pp. 7–12.

420. See Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht*, p. 88; Melugin, *Formation*, p. 167; Mettinger, *Farewell*, p. 38; van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion*, pp. 194–96.

421. Most interpret it as Israel, including Steck, ‘Aspekte des Gottesknechts’, pp. 25–27; Janowski, ‘Er trug unsere Sünden—Stellvertretung’, pp. 80–81; Janowski, ‘Er trug unsere Sünden—Jes 53’, p. 37.

422. Hermisson, ‘Das vierte Gottesknechtslied’, p. 11.

by God, but he (וְהוּא) was wounded because of our transgressions, crushed because of our sins'—is provided by 50.1b: 'See, you were sold because of your guilt, because of your sins your mother was sent away.' The 'We' group are those who have acknowledged that they owe their health and well-being solely to 'his bruises', i.e., to those of Zion (53.5b). Thus the fourth EYS is not primarily about the suffering of the oppressed one, but about the changed attitude *toward him*.⁴²³ The radically transformed perception of the whys and wherefores concerning the one who has borne this lot should not simply be reported; it should be communicated, i.e., shared with others. In the context of the fourth EYS this means: The 'We' testimony about their change of heart should encourage additional Diaspora Jews who have also been called on to leave (52.11-12) to revise their negative attitude to Zion. Another piece of evidence for this interpretation is the expression חָדַל אֲשֵׁים 'forsaken by humans' (53.3a), which alludes to the situation of the depleted population in Jerusalem,⁴²⁴ a situation which may have deterred many Diaspora Jews from returning, and one which is also alluded to in 54.1-3 with the image of the childless wife Zion. In such an uncertain situation, who would want to be part of those who abandon their homes in the Diaspora in order to set off for a homeland already foreign to later generations and offering few attractions? Besides, it had become apparent that, contrary to the view of the Psalmist (137.4), the songs of Yhwh could be sung very well even in a strange land! The We-group in Isaiah 53 would have thought precisely along these lines: the broken one, i.e., Zion, thought of herself as broken by God until she recognized that this was indeed true, but in a radically new way: 'Yhwh laid on him the guilt of us all' (וַיְהִיָּה חַפְנִיעַ בּוֹ אֶת עוֹן כָּלֵנוּ, 53.6b). Placed at the end of the central verses (4-6), the 'We/Us All' (כָּלֵנוּ, v. 6) in an emphatic initial and final position with the recognition that they all had gone astray, each following his own path,⁴²⁵ supports the interpretation that the speakers are Diaspora Jews, who only recently—but still not too late—had rediscovered Zion for themselves.⁴²⁶ The 'We All' includes the coreligionists who live in the Diaspora and have not yet managed to

423. Clines, *I, He, We & They*, p. 38: 'the attitude of the "we" to "him" changes from hostility or scorn to appreciation.'

424. Mettinger, *Farewell*, p. 40: 'Thus the passage speaks of an Israel which has been reduced to a small and insignificant group'; cf. Deut. 15.11; Judg. 5.6.

425. Cf. Ps. 95.7: 'people of his pasture' (עַם מְרֵעֵהוּ) and Ps. 100.3: 'we are his people, sheep of his pasture' (עַמּוֹ וצֹאֵן מְרֵעֵהוּ).

426. Beauchamp, 'Lecture et relecture', p. 329: 'plus que la passion d'un héros, il s'agit de la conversion d'un témoin.'

revise their conduct towards the postexilic Jerusalem; whether they know it or do not wish to know, Zion's representative suffering was also for them!

In v. 10⁴²⁷ this will be formulated as נָשָׂא, as the 'expunging of guilt', with the same emphasis on Yhwh himself initiating the action (וַיְהוֹה חָפֵץ דָּבָא / וַיְהוֹה חָפֵץ נָשָׂא). The We-group acknowledges that it is not they but the Zion-Ebed who has been affected by 'the obligation, the duty, the liability, that results from incurring guilt',⁴²⁸ in accordance with the divine decree. At the same time, it is not a matter of a 'cultic-ritual' action,⁴²⁹ but rather has to do with the idea that compensation must be offered for the culpable behavior: 'Constitutive of its meaning [i.e., of נָשָׂא] is the *situation of the guilt obligation*, in which the guilty person must pay material compensation for the guilt to be removed'.⁴³⁰ The speakers from Diaspora Judaism, with the knowledge they have gained both of themselves and of foreigners, eloquently emphasize in 53.10 that the destruction of Jerusalem and Zion was a recompense for guilt which they were obliged to pay.⁴³¹

The opening oracle of 52.13–15 anticipates the dramatic development within the middle portion, which goes from deepest contempt to highest estimation, in the sense that it presents the success of the servant programmatically at the beginning. The oracle is a 'synopsis' of the We speech, but now in the context of the relationships of the postexilic people of God to the nations. Again the 'Diaspora-Zion interpretation' of Isaiah 53 proves to be viable. When the nations and their kings see the Diaspora Jews who are living among them set off for Zion, so that it will be elevated to the highest, they will close their mouths: It is outrageous, unbelievable!

427. Attempts at 53.10a are legion: 'It was Yhwh's desire, however, to crush him, but he used his life as a sin offering (וַיְהוֹה אֱשֶׁם אֱשֶׁם נָשָׂא); Ruppert's translation ['Mein Knecht', p. 3: 'JHWH aber hatte es beliebt, ihn zu schlagen, er aber setzte ein sein Leben als Schuldtilgung']. This, according to Elliger's recommendation, 'Jes 53.10', pp. 228–33, is preferable to all others.

428. Knierim, נָשָׂא, THAT I, p. 254: 'die aus einem Schuldiggewordensein resultierende Verpflichtung, die Schuldpflicht, Schuldverpflichtung, das Schuldverpflichtetsein oder die Haftpflicht.' The English translation is from TLOT I, p. 193.

429. Thus Schenker, 'Die Anlässe zum Schuldopfer Ascham', pp. 63–64, who believes that the nations are speaking in the middle section; Ruppert, 'Mein Knecht', 5, is skeptical of this view.

430. Janowski, 'Er trug unsere Sünden—Stellvertretung', p. 90; cf. Gen. 26.10; 1 Sam. 6.3–4, 8, 17.

431. Janowski, 'Er trug unsere Sünden—Stellvertretung', p. 90, but without the Diaspora-Zion connection: 'Israel, which is not capable of accepting its guilt obligation, must be redeemed from it in order to have a future.'

In the closing frame of 53.11a β -12,⁴³² the three-fold naming of the 'many' (רבים) is striking, and raises the question of who is meant. The inclusio with the 'many nations' of 52.15 (גוים רבים) makes it clear that the promise in 53.12a that Yhwh will allot the servant a portion and booty with the many and the powerful refers to the foreign nations. Not only will they stand stock-still in astonishment before the revitalization of the city of God, but Zion will also have a portion of booty among them. As in the frame narrative of the book of Job, here too suffering that is endured must pay off!⁴³³

At the same time, 53.12a has probably been formulated with an eye to Psalm 135.10, where Yhwh is praised for having smitten many nations and killed mighty kings (שָׁחַה גוֹיִם רַבִּים וְהָרַג מַלְכִּים (עַצְמוֹת)), with v. 11 of the psalm alluding to the occupation under Joshua (Josh. 11–12).⁴³⁴ Zion is promised not only the astonished reverence of many nations with their kings, but also participation in their possessions (53.12a),⁴³⁵ which is consistent with 60.10-12 and 61.7 (חֵלֶק).

In contrast to this assurance of participation in the material goods of many nations, the promise that 'my servant will make many righteous' (53.11a β) is expressed theologically and is 'Israel-centered'. The parallel stich, 'he bears their iniquities', which connects back to v. 4 (סָבַל), confirms the view that the justification of the many does not refer to Israel *and* the nations but *only* to the totality of God's people,⁴³⁶ all those living in the homeland and in the Diaspora who have recognized the suffering of Zion as representative of them all. Thus it may be assumed that following the 'nations framework' of 52.12-15 and 53.12a, later tradents added the Israel perspective, to which 53.12b may also be attributed (if an even later hand was not at work here): 'He bore the sin(-guilt) of many and made intercession for the sinners.' This is no longer novel; inclusion of the פְּשָׁעִים from v. 12a has a retarding effect and the use of פָּנֵה hi. from v. 6 has lost

432. The atnach is poorly placed; following Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, it should come after בָּרַעְהוּ (see BHS).

433. See Kutsch, *Sein Leiden und Tod*, p. 38, with a view to Job 42.12.

434. There is no longer list of foreign kings than that in Josh. 12.7-24!

435. Olley, "'The Many'", pp. 352-53: 'Thus the first phrase of v. 12a is not simply a picture of the Servant having a place "among the many", but rather of his receiving "of the many".'

436. The meaning of 'many' in the ancient Hebrew is not to be understood as partitive, but in the general sense of 'a great many' (Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht*, p. 90).

something of its drama. It is no longer Yhwh who has the smitten one 'drag away' the guilt, but the latter interposes [voluntarily] for the sinner.⁴³⁷

6.9. Review and Prospect

In their final form, chaps. 40–55 are clearly divided: the 'Jacob–Babylonian–Liberation' segment (40–48) is followed by the 'Zion Restoration' section (49–55). The first segment is dominated by the themes 'Babylon', 'Cyrus', 'Polemic against the gods', and the 'former-latter/new things' which will no longer appear later. 'Hymns' and 'Exodus commands', and to a lesser extent the verses of the 'pious vs sinners' theme (48.22; 57.21), function as markers which give structure to the composition.

Based on the 'Exodus commands' in 48.10–21; 52.11–12 and 55.12–13, the body of the text can be divided in three parts (40–48; 49–52; 54–55), with the fourth EYS (52.13–53.12) holding a special position. This division, which is conspicuous on a synchronic plane, proves to be meaningful in a diachronic analysis as well.

The Babylonian segment (40–48*) goes back to the work of the disciples of the great exilic prophet; they were responsible for gathering his oracles and expanding on them in a single composition. Their prophetic master had attempted to awaken the confidence of the *golah* in the renewed salvation act of Yhwh through the Persian king Cyrus, even proclaiming him 'anointed by Yhwh'. The *golah* redaction continues this proclamation, only now in the light of the fact that after 539 Cyrus had not proved himself the 'Yahwist' he should have been. With the suppression of two Babylonian revolts by Darius I in 522/521, the signal was given to the Deutero-Isaiah tradents for the return home to Zion. As the *golah* who returned

437. It is worth considering whether or not in 52.15 MT became 'he sprinkles many nations' (זֶה נוֹחַ hi.) from 'many nations tremble' (יִרְנוּ); LXX: θαυμάσσονται) as part of the servant's 'active role', which goes beyond the passive suffering role of Zion. The MT probably refers to a high-priest function for Israel with respect to the nations; זֶה hi. with עַל: Exod. 29.21; Lev. 5.9; 8.11, 30; 14.7; 16.14–15, 19, etc.; but also with אֵל (Lev. 14.51; Num. 19.4), with לִפְנֵי (Lev. 14.16, 27; 16.14–15) but also with the direct object marker (Lev. 4.6, 17), which could mean, 'accomplir le rite d'aspersion sur tel objet ou telle personne' (Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 387), and comes close to the translation πάντισσι of Aquila and Theodotion. The ritual atonement of the anointed one is certainly in the forefront in 1QIsa^a: the hapax 'destruction' (מִשְׁחָה) is turned into 'I anointed' (מִשְׁחָהִי) by the addition of a yod; see also Hengel, 'Zur Wirkungs-geschichte von Jes 53', pp. 68–69.

home voluntarily, they were the true Ebed, the successor of both the blind servant, i.e., the *golah* not wanting to depart, and the Persian king, and thus 42.1-4 and 49.1-6 trace back to them.

Once on home soil, the *golah* met a Jerusalem population doubtful about their future destiny; thus began the work of persuasion of the first Jerusalem redaction, which announces a new posterity to Zion. The occasion for the call to return addressed to the *golah* which had remained behind was the action of Xerxes against Babylon in 482, which spelled the end for that world-city. The first Jerusalem redaction extended the 'book of Deutero-Isaiah' of the *golah* tradents (40-48*) to chaps. 49-52*, with the interpolations 40.1-5, 9-11 at the beginning, and closed with the call to the Jews of the Diaspora to venture the return to Zion, since Yhwh himself had returned (52.7-8, 9-10, 11-12).

The second Jerusalem redaction added chaps. 54-55*, interpolating 40.6-8 in the prologue, and closed its literary work with a call to the world-wide Diaspora for a pilgrimage to Zion (55.12-13). In view of the delayed salvation, it proclaimed the effectiveness of the word of God (40.6-8; 55.10-11) and at the same time reflected on the difficulties of its own prophetic office (50.4-9). The interconnections with the 'Proto-Isaiah' collection of 1-32* continually increased from the first Jerusalem redaction in number and intensity and thus prepared the way for the creation of the two bridging texts of Isaiah 33 and 35.

The fourth EYS of 52.13-53.12 delineates the relationship between Zion and Diaspora Judaism on the one hand (central part), and Zion and the world of the nations, on the other (framework). The Diaspora Jews recognize in the ailing—but not perished—Zion that this Ebed has paid for *their* guilt; as they make their way homeward, the kings of the nations acknowledge that Yhwh protects his Ebed forever.

The anticipated and desired revitalizing of Jerusalem by the return of the Jews of the exile from Babylon—both more coreligionists from the lands of the Diaspora, and the righteous of the nations in their wake—raised the question of the socio-religious position of the Zion population: Which requirements for admission should apply, and which should no longer be in force? From the outset, the loss of statehood and kingship made a strictly ethnic drawing of boundaries impossible, especially since the Persian central administration is likely to have had no interest in any such 'nationalization'. This search for the identity of postexilic Israel did not prove to be free of tension, but on the contrary was highly charged, as Isa. 54.17 had hinted earlier with the first mention of the 'servants of Yhwh'.

Who belonged to these servants following in the footsteps of the Ebed, what opposition did they anticipate, and what is negotiated and fought over? These are questions for which the last part of the book of Isaiah offers testimony.

Chapter 7

ISAIAH 56–66: ON SALVATION, REPENTANCE, AND YHWH'S SERVANTS

7.1. Preliminary Remarks

By separating chaps. 56–66 from 40–55 and assigning them to an anonymous prophet from the middle of the fifth century—a short time before the appearance of Nehemiah and Ezra—Bernard Duhm set a milestone in Isaiah research in the year 1882. In analogy with the artificial name ‘Deutero-Isaiah’, he called this additional anonymous segment ‘*Tritoisaiiah*, for convenience’.¹ A two-fold problem remains to be resolved up to the present day, and that is the question of the unity of 56–66 and of its historical classification. Since usable historical data within these chapters are almost entirely lacking,² research has concentrated on determining their literary history,³ with particular interest in their relation to 40–55, but also increasingly to the book as a whole. The various positions in regard to 56–66 have been summarized by Vermeylen,⁴ and are briefly outlined below. The approaches are similar in their orientation to those of Pentateuchal research and can be described as unitary, fragmentary, and supplementary hypotheses.⁵

(1) The most conservative line of research traces back before Duhm and maintains the unity of 40–66 or 1–66.⁶

(2) A moderate variation of the first position also argues against the separation of 56–66; the thematic differences from 40–55 are

1. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 418.

2. See the discussion of the lament in 63.7–64.11 under 7.5.1.

3. Thus Abramowski already, ‘Zum literarischen Problem’, pp. 90–143, against Gressmann, *Zeitgeschichtlichen Verhältnisse*.

4. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 451–54; overviews of research in Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde*, pp. 1–30; Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 1–7; Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, pp. 3–23; Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, pp. 11–52; P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 1–6; and Kaiser, *Grundriß der Einleitung*, II, pp. 60–66.

5. Thus Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 2–3.

6. Among others, Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah*; Young, *Studies in Isaiah*.

explained by the fact that, after the Cyrus edict, Deutero-Isaiah's high hopes would have to be dampened down in view of the difficult situation in the land of promise.⁷ For important reasons, Zimmerli has rejected this position.⁸

(3) Chapters 56–66 do not stem from late Deutero-Isaiah, but rather from one of his disciples, who composed this work at the time of the rebuilding of the temple (520–515). This attempts to account for the differences as well as agreements with Isaiah 40–55. This position, found in the works of Elliger, has attracted the most adherents.⁹

(4) If, however, one takes into account not only the links between 40–55 and 56–66, but also the connections of 56–66 to Malachi, Ezra, Nehemiah, and several postexilic Psalms, then in all probability these chapters should be dated to the fifth or fourth century; accordingly, the thesis of a direct group of disciples of 'Trito-Isaiah' has to be abandoned.¹⁰

(5) Against the notion of the orderly design of 56–66¹¹ is that of a haphazard arrangement that precludes any systematic hand.¹² This represents a fragmentary hypothesis.

(6) The redaction-critical view finds its first high point in Westermann's commentary; a Trito-Isaianic core (57.14–20; 60–62; 65.16b–25; 66.6–16), written by a disciple of Deutero-Isaiah, was supplemented in several stages up to the present text.¹³

In his search for the oldest texts of 56–66 Vermeylen himself finds only unconnected pieces of text, which could never have formed a cohesive core of a Trito-Isaiah collection;¹⁴ nevertheless, he accepts Trito-Isaiah authorship for a few of these fragments. Subsequently, the text of 56.9–66.24¹⁵ grew in six redactional stages, with the first

7. Glahn, 'Quelques remarques', pp. 24–46; Morgenstern, 'Isaiah 49–55', pp. 1–35; Maass, 'Tritojesaja?', pp. 153–63.

8. Zimmerli, 'Zur Sprache Tritojesajas', pp. 217–33.

9. Elliger, *Einheit*; Elliger, *Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis*; Elliger, 'Der Prophet'; Kessler, *Gott geht es um das Ganze*; Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*.

10. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*; Odeberg, *Trito-Isaiah*; Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*.

11. Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde*; Charpentier, *Jeunesse du Vieux Testament*; Charpentier, *Pour lire l'Ancien Testament*; Lack, *La symbolique*; Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*.

12. Abramowski, 'Zum literarischen Problem'.

13. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 237–46.

14. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 503: Isa. 56.9–12 (before 586); 57.6–13a (before 586); 57.14–15aα, 17–19 ('Trito-Isa. '); 60.1–4a, 5–9aα, 9b–11, 13 + 62.2–3 ('Trito-Isa. '); 63.7–64.11* (exilic); 65.16, 18b–20a, 21–22a, 23 + 66.7–14a ('Trito-Isa. ').

15. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 458, maintains that 56.1–8 belongs to Isa. 40–55.

collection stemming from the period of Nehemiah. He emphasizes first that the basic framework of the book of Trito-Isaiah was created by the Jerusalem community of the 'righteous' in the fifth century, and second, that the book achieved its final form only in the course of the third century.¹⁶

The work of Koenen and Sekine heads more in the direction of Westermann, particularly in assigning 60–62* to Trito-Isaiah himself, with Koenen only differentiating between him and a redactor,¹⁷ while Sekine works out seven further strata that were revised by the redactor of the present text. Lau¹⁸ also maintains the authorship of Trito-Isaiah for Isaiah 60–62*, but reckons with three 'tradent circles' and several 'individual traditions'. In what is more or less a new version of Koenen, Smith presents the redaction work in 56–66 more simply: Isa. 60.1–63.6 goes back to Trito-Isaiah, who worked in the early postexilic period, while all the rest is attributed to Trito-Isaiah 2, with the exception of 59.21, 63.7–64.11, and 66.18–24.¹⁹

(7) Steck takes a new path in redaction-critical study; he is vehemently in favor of bidding farewell to the Trito-Isaiah hypothesis, with regard both to a historic personality as well as to a previously independent book of Trito-Isaiah. In contrast, he sees chaps. 56–66 solely as a connecting phenomenon in a nascent book of Isaiah.²⁰

According to Steck, these chapters present a prophecy that is updated in six stages, (a) the first in the middle of the fifth century, 60.1–9, 13–16; 61.1–11 and (b) the second a little later, with 60.10–11 and 62.1–7 being added to 40–55. (c) The joining together of Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah plus chaps. 60–62* happens only around 312/311 in the so-called 'homecoming redaction', with the bridge-text of chap. 35 and the closing of this first greater book of Isaiah with 62.10–12. Still expected at this point are judgment on the nations, the return of scattered Israel, and Zion's glorification. (d) In the following decade, still before 302/1, there is another greater-Isaiah redaction, which includes 56.9–57.19; 58.1–12; 59.1–21; 60.17–22; 62.8–9; 63.1–6, and attributes the failure of the salvation announcement to a sinful Israel. Repentance of the nations is still seen as possible, and there is no mention of a separation of righteous and sinner within Israel. (e) Around 300, the prayer of 63.7–64.11 is added in response to the

16. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 517.

17. Koenen, *Heil*, p. 88: 'Trito-Isaiah's salvation announcement which was directed to all Israel was reworked in the fifth century by a redactor of the Trito-Isaianic book.'

18. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. vii–ix.

19. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 204–207.

20. See Steck, 'Tritojesaja', p. 361; cf. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 69–71.

capture of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I in 302/1, calling on Yhwh to act. (f) In the 'consolidated Ptolemaic period' around 270 comes the final redaction of the book, including also the redactional bracket of 56.1–8 and 65.1–66.24. This stratum restricts salvation from people of the nations, and at the same time limits it to the righteous.

(8) In his monograph *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, Hanson takes up a more socio-historical approach to the last part of the book of Isaiah; in so doing he hopes to avoid the apparent *impasse* of literary and redaction criticism by understanding both 56–66 and 40–55 as collections of anonymous oracles which stemmed from a period in which the creation of prophetic literature had already become a collective undertaking. Therefore the question of authorship by an individual prophet is the wrong one to put to these texts and one must choose an approach 'which takes seriously the anonymous character of the material and recognizes the underlying unity as that which stems from a common tradition and a common community situation'.²¹ Hanson sees the 'common tradition' as the continuation of Deutero-Isaianic thought and the 'common situation' as that of the struggle for sovereignty over the Jerusalem temple in the early postexilic period. On the one hand, the mixing of the literary types of salvation and judgment oracles in 56–66 clearly indicates that from the traditional succession of judgment and salvation a simultaneous conflict had developed which divided the postexilic community into righteous and sinners. On the other hand, the unwinnable struggle of the Trito-Isaianic visionaries, disciples of Deutero-Isaiah, in which they engaged bitterly with the temple hierocracy, pushed them increasingly into social isolation and thus more and more into the arena of apocalyptic speculation. The path from classical prophetic eschatology, which is 'grounded' on earth, toward an apocalyptic eschatology which has become completely uncoupled from world and society, clearly stands out in the development of chaps. 40–55 in contrast to that of 56–66.

Hanson's proposals, influenced especially by Plöger's *Theokratie und Eschatologie*, have been met with much discussion and, at times, controversy. The schematic opposition of 'priestly establishment vs prophetic visionaries in the battle for the temple' is certainly too unnuanced, as Schramm recently established in detail.²² Against Hanson, Schramm rightly asks how the Trito-Isaianic redaction,

21. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p. 41.

22. Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, especially chap. 3 ('The Proposal of Paul Hanson'), pp. 81–111. Plöger, *Theokratie und Eschatologie*, p. 132, is more cautious than Hanson, since he will only venture to speak of the tension between theocracy and eschatology with the reservation that it is a 'simplification terrible'.

which no doubt also stands in close connection with the redaction of the book of Isaiah, could be such a great force for merging traditions if it had been carried out by such a socially marginal group!²³ A comparison of redaction-critical approaches with Hanson's socio-critical approach suggests that there is 'too much' in historical detailed knowledge on the one side, and 'too little' on the other; thus it is no surprise that postexilic prophecy is declared to be 'desk work',²⁴ without concrete social goals or impact. Are the serious tensions which found literary expression especially in 65–66 no more than mere 'scribal prophecy'? Steck's warning, for those who read out of (or into) the texts too quickly and too much of the historical, that one should not divide up the fur before one has shot the bear,²⁵ should be counterposed by the fear that after the hunt via an extreme literary and redaction criticism, not much more would be left of the bear than sheer scribalism. Does this not actually reflect certain preconceptions and self-conceptions of modern exegetes?²⁶

More cautious in his historical conclusions and avoiding Hanson's distorting schematization, Beuken attempts a holistic approach with a sociologically pivotal date which, following Blenkinsopp's conclusions,²⁷ he perceives in the 'servants' of the last chapter of the book. These would have been the tradents of 55–66 and also of the greater book of Isaiah, heirs to the 'Ebed' of 40–55; they would have understood themselves as the progeny promised to the suffering servant (53.10).²⁸ With the thesis that the sponsors of chaps. 56–66 stood in immediate connection to the structuring of the book of Isaiah,²⁹ a heuristic starting point is achieved that anchors the literary references sociologically.

These 'servants' adopt, among other things, deuteronomistic speech patterns, but without being 'post-deuteronomistic'.³⁰ As

23. Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 109.

24. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 12: 'We are dealing with "scribal prophecy", with authors who never have appeared in public.'

25. Steck, 'Tritojesaja', p. 365.

26. Steck, more boldly on social history, 'Anschlussprobleme', p. 276; Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. 55 n. 73.

27. Blenkinsopp, 'The "Servants of the Lord"', p. 18.

28. Beuken, 'Main Theme', p. 81; Beuken, 'Isaiah Chapters LXV–LXVI', p. 205.

29. The cross-references of 56.1 to 1.21–28 point to this, according to Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 56,1', pp. 176–77; now also Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 43: 'what is going on in Third Isaiah is an integral part of a process that eventually led to the creation of the entire book of Isaiah.'

30. Already Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', pp. 529–30, who asks whether the cumulation of deuteronomistic language in Isa. 65–66 may not be credited to the עבדים.

Albertz clarified, in connection with Lohfink, the formation of groups or movements are not to be read solely or primarily by their language, but by their common political and/or religious objectives.³¹ Applied to 56–66, this means among other things that the dtn/dtr conceptual pair, *גִּדְדָה* and *גִּשְׁפַּח*,³² is used undeuteronomistically as a dividing line within Israel and for openness to the righteous of the nations!³³ Thus it is not circumcision but Sabbath observance that is the condition for admission for the people of Yhwh from Israel and the nations, contradicting the priestly tradition that proclaims the ‘covenant of circumcision’ as the exclusive obligation of Israel.³⁴

7.2. The Structuring and Sequencing of Isaiah 56–66

In comparison to chaps. 1–35 and 40–55, chaps. 56–66 give evidence of an increased density in design which finds literary expression in a concentric structure.³⁵ The fact that the concentric structure does not work out in all details does not argue against the conscious will behind the composition, but rather in favor of it!³⁶ The majority of the presumed ring-compositions suffer from the fact that no progression of events is apparent in them, in spite of the appropriate correspondence of individual texts, giving the impression that the beginning and the end stand in equal opposition. An example of this is Steck’s structuring:³⁷

31. Lohfink, ‘Gab es eine deuteronomische Bewegung?’, p. 334; Albertz, ‘Le milieu des Deutéronomistes’, p. 384; Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher*, p. 113: ‘The coherence of a redactional stratum is necessarily functional and conceptual, but not necessarily linguistic.’

32. Sehmsdorf, ‘Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte’, p. 547, of the deuteronimisms in 56.1–8.

33. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 78–79: ‘If one wishes to identify them, these Isaiah tradents of the final phase are to be sought on the side of the eschatological position in which prophetic orientation and deuteronimistic coinage come together.’

34. Sehmsdorf, ‘Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte’, p. 546: Gen. 17.9–14; Exod. 12.44, 48; and the polemic in Ezek. 44.7–9.

35. So already Charpentier, *Jeunesse du Vieux Testament*, pp. 79–80; Charpentier, *Pour lire l’Ancien Testament*, p. 77; Tournay, Review of Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 120–21; Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 125; Polan, *In the Ways of Justice*, pp. 14–16; Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, pp. 507–508; Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 318 (only Isa. 58 has no counterpart, according to him).

36. Cf. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, p. 507: ‘It is probable that a redactor worked with already-finished pieces that he collated and arranged without attempting to rewrite them extensively or even provide transitional links or headings.’

37. Steck, *Arbeitsblätter*, p. 21a.

- Extent of the Community: 56.1-8
- Accusation: 56.9-57.13; 57.14-21; 58
- Lament: 59
- Salvation for Zion: 60-62
- Lament: 63.1-6, 7-14; 63.15-64.11
- Accusation: 65.1-16; 65.17-25; 66.1-17
- Extent of the Community: 66.18-24

Following Gottwald, but centering the composition in chap. 61 (cf. Bonnard),³⁸ the following schema, in contrast, shows the correspondence of the single members and at the same time the progress of the whole composition. The corresponding members do not constitute static repetitions, but in almost every case introduce an additional idea:

- 56.1-8 A Salvation proclamation for proselytes and eunuchs
- 56.9-57.13 B Accusations against sinners (ruling class and commoners)
- 57.14-21 C Salvation proclamation for the people
- 58.1-14 D Wrong and correct worship
- 59.1-15a E Exhortation + Lament
- 59.15b-20 F Theophany against sinners
- 60 G Salvation coming to Zion/Light
- 61 Giving of the spirit to Zion
- 62 G' Salvation Arrival over Zion/Light
- 63.1-6 F' Theophany against sinners
- 63.7-64.11 E' Lament + Authentic confession
- 65.1-16a D' Wrong worship + Salvation for the servants
- 65.16b-25 C' Salvation proclamation for the people + New creation
- 66.1-6 B' Accusations against sinners + Exclusion of the servants
- 66.7-24 A' Salvation proclamation for foreigners + Missions to the nations

Koenen's objection against such a symmetrical ring-composition, arguing that 'this structure is determined by the interest in shifting the gospel of Trito-Isaiah to the center and his preaching of law to the edge',³⁹ has no weight as long as no material deficiencies can be demonstrated. The salvation oracles at the center and the edges emphasize that the announcement of salvation has the upper hand over the words of judgment.

For example, while 56.1-8 is about the admission of individual proselytes to the people of God and their integration into the return movement of the Diaspora to Zion (v. 8), the closing verses of chap. 66 are about the mission of the 'escapees' to the nations who

38. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 318.

39. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 224 n. 7.

have still not come into contact with Israel or with Yhwh.⁴⁰ In 56.9–57.13 the leaders and people are condemned for their cultic offenses, and 66.1–6 correspondingly is about syncretistic practices; now however it has to do with the attempt of the apostates to exclude the servants from the temple cult. In 58.1–14 false and correct worship are placed side by side; its counterpart of 65.1–16a goes a decisive step further, in that the circle of persons to whom salvation ultimately belongs is named: the servants! While the communal lament of Isaiah 59 is limited to the representation of the unjust conditions without mentioning repentance to Yhwh, precisely this move is accomplished in the collective confession of 63.16a: ‘Yes, you are our Father!’ (cf. 64.7). The appearance of the judging and punishing God against the impenitent in Israel (59.15a–20) and against Edom (63.1–6), surrounding the Light chapters of 60–62, makes it clear that the sinners in Israel must face *the* punishment which all enemies of Zion have met, Edom among them.

The prefacing of the great salvation announcement of 60–62 with the foreigner issue (56.1–8) and prophetic accusations and exhortations against postexilic Israel (56.9–58.14) makes it clear that salvation is offered on the one hand to the Yhwh disciples from the nations, and on the other only to those in Israel who are willing to repent! One could call this idea ‘inclusive exclusivity’: inclusive, because the salvation offer is extended to foreigners and eunuchs; exclusive, because it applies only to the penitent.

Isaiah 54 is about the renewed marriage covenant of Yhwh with his people and chap. 55 about the invitation to Israel and Yhwh disciples from the nations to participate in this new covenant community;⁴¹ 56.1–8 then demonstrates how this invitation leads to unexpected success. Behind the image of the trees clapping their hands (55.12–13) are Yhwh disciples from Israel and the nations, those who are prepared to turn away from evil and toward Yhwh, to change from thorn-bushes to junipers, from thistles to myrtle!⁴²

40. Gross’s objection (‘Israel und die Völker’, p. 163) holds only if the ring-structure is conceived purely statically: ‘Isa. 56.3–7 deals with individual non-Israelites who observe the laws and are integrated into the people of Yhwh. Nothing comparable happens here in Isa. 66.’

41. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, p. 88: ‘They exhort the people to adhere to Yhwh’s conditions for participation in the covenant.’

42. Korpel, ‘Metaphors’, p. 55: ‘The author himself probably intended us to interpret the “trees” of vv. 12–13 as the faithful followers of Yhwh, both from Israel and the gentile nations.’

On the level of the final text it is crucial that the key word 'servants' is used already at the beginning of chaps. 56–66 (56.6) in connection with the integration of Yhwh followers from the nations into the postexilic community. This results in the paradox that the foreigners who already have joined themselves to Yhwh are threatened with exclusion, while the hereditary people of God lapse into foreign cults and lack righteousness.

Alongside the 'gathering movement' sought by Yhwh, which is to be led to the temple (or Temple Mount—על־י, 56.8) from far beyond the Diaspora, is placed a picture of postexilic Israel that serves, as compared to 56.1–8, as the 'unvarnished reality' to the 'programmatic blueprint'.⁴³ On the one hand, the leaders are reproached for neglect and deliberate abuse of office (56.9–12); as a result, the righteous and pious fall by the wayside (57.1–2). On the other hand, the people are reproached for their most serious cultic offenses. The seamless transition from the accusatory 'you however', (וְאַתָּה, 57.3–4), to a general 'you' (57.5), to the address of a feminine 'you' (57.6–13a) which can only refer to the city of Zion in the image of an 'adulteress and harlot', suggests that here the entire population of Jerusalem is confronted by the prophetic indictment.⁴⁴

It is important to note that, unlike the pre-exilic prophetic denunciations, no judgment is pronounced on the accused here, but the difference in the fates of the sinner and the righteous is expressed in a general way. Thus the זָדִיק dies without anybody taking it to heart, but he gets his rest in death (57.1–2), and whoever trusts in Yhwh (וְהַחֲסִים בִּי, 57.13b) gets a share in the land and possession of the holy mountain. The promise of 56.7 that Yhwh will also bring foreigners to the holy Mount and the promise that the faithful will possess the 'holy Mount' complement one another in a significant way: 'The faithful within Israel and the faithful foreigners will receive the same inheritance.'⁴⁵ While Yhwh will gather peoples from far beyond the Diaspora (56.8: קִבֵּץ 3x), the wanton Zion seeks help from her 'collection' (קִבְצִיד) in vain (57.13).⁴⁶ On the contrary, Israel and the nations

43. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIA*, p. 76: 'Kortom, de heilige berg is in zijn tegenbeeld verkeerdt.'

44. Against Steck, 'Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56–59', p. 183, who contrasts the 'divine speech regarding the national leader, Isa. 56.9–57.21', to the 'divine and prophetic speeches regarding the people, Isa. 58.1–12 + 59.1–21'; but see P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 98 n. 7.

45. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 87.

46. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIA*, pp. 72–73.

will not be able to assemble their collection of idols; the wind will carry them all—that is all idolaters—away from there.⁴⁷

The accusations against the leaders of the nation and the population of Jerusalem do not aim to condemn but to urge repentance, as 57.13b shows especially clearly.⁴⁸ The subsequent salvation announcement in 57.14–19 with its wisdom-like summary in vv. 20–21 emphasizes this purpose. While serious social and cultic crimes were denounced in 56.9–57.13, the things that Yhwh himself refers to—‘Me you have not remembered’ (וְאֶתִּי לֹא זָכַרְתָּ) and again beginning with the objective case, ‘Me you have not feared’ (וְאֶתִּי לֹא תִירָאִי, 57.11)—are the same thought and action patterns that are called for in 58–59 for healing once again the broken—but not shattered—relationship to Yhwh (cf. רָפָא in 57.18, 19). In short, if 56.9 onwards was about healing through exclusion of those members of God’s people that could not be healed, 58–59 is about healing through the exhortation of those who are willing and able to repent. The confidence of the seemingly pious, who attempt to exert pressure on Yhwh by their ritual observance (58.2–3; 59.1), is shattered in the face of the more demanding ethical criteria. For those opponents who ultimately turn the salvation promise of 60–62 against Yhwh, their weapon is taken from their hands and directed back against them: if Yhwh has not yet come it is for their own good, in order to give them a chance to repent. But when he does come, it will be only for those who have turned away from apostasy (59.20). Literarily, therefore, on the synchronic level, 58–59 introduce the ‘light’ chapters of 60–62; in terms of their literary history, that is on a diachronic level, they are subordinate to them, indeed, contingent on and triggered by them.

The bracketing around chaps. 60–62 describing the destruction of enemies and opponents (59.15b–20, 21 and 63.1–6) shows that these three chapters have been understood as a compositional center. The arc that begins with the preparation of Yhwh for battle in 59.15b–20 ends in 63.1–6 with his victorious return; this movement encloses 60–62, whose basic theme is the glorification of the city of God. The salvation announcement is conditioned by the framework in two ways: on the one hand, Zion can shine in the divine light only when all enemies have been destroyed, and on the other hand, the

47. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 362: ‘Les idoles elles-mêmes passivement regroupées, seront absolument impuissantes à opérer le regroupement de leurs fidèles.’

48. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 208: ‘There is still time for the idolaters to abandon their idolatry and join the ranks of Yahweh’s true worshippers.’

promises in 60–62 pertain only to those in Jacob ‘who turn from transgression’ (59.20). The ‘eternal covenant’ (61.8; cf. 59.21) is fulfilled only with them and their offspring (זרע: 59.21; 61.9), and Yhwh’s spirit rests only on them (59.21; 61.1).⁴⁹

The ‘light’ chapters begin with the striking imperatives קוּמִי אֲוֵרִי, which can only be directed to Zion or Jerusalem,⁵⁰ making a clear connection to 59.20 (וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל). If 40–55 was about the Ebed, i.e., the *golah* who had willingly returned and whom Yhwh appointed as a ‘light for the nations’ (אֲוֵר לְגוֹיִם, 42.6; 49.6), this function is now transferred to Zion in a reversed sign: no longer does the light go to the nations, but they come to the light!⁵¹

In chap. 60 Zion is addressed for the most part as a woman; in 61 she responds in a royal prophetic manner, thus taking on a new form with both Ebed and Cyrus characteristics as well as distinctive Babylonian features.⁵² In chap. 60 the focal point was the eschatological relationship of the nations to the illumined city of God as center of the pilgrimage of the nations; Isaiah 61 develops this theme further, only now with a clear look at the governing social relationships. Thus, a continuation of the central theme of 60 was offered because the question arose as to whether and in what way the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion redefined the relationship of the nations to Israel. The answer is given in 61.4–9: with the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, Israel becomes a priestly nation for them and as such finally fulfills the designation מַמְלַכַת כֹּהֲנִים of Exod. 19.6. It is the foreigners from the nations who say to the people of God, ‘You shall be called the priests of Yhwh’ and ‘ministers of our God’ (61.6). There is no more closely related passage to the famed מַמְלַכַת כֹּהֲנִים. When the nations name the Israelites אֲוֵלֵי יִהוּדָה (62.12), they explicitly acknowledge the significance of Israel for themselves, analogous to Exod. 19.6.⁵³ Thus Isaiah 61 is characterized by the priesthood theme, triggered by the vision of the pilgrimage of the nations. It is not about the inaugural address of a postexilic high priest, whose investiture brings a general release from debt as in a Sabbath or

49. See also 60.21a: צַדִּיקִים; and 61.3b: אֲוֵלֵי הַצֶּדֶק; 60.21a and 61.7b: יִירָשׁוּ; 60.21b: מַשְׁעוֹ and 61.3: מַשְׁעֵי יִהוּדָה; 60.21b and 61.3b: לְהַתְּפָאֵר.

50. The LXX and Targum even add ‘Jerusalem’ in 60.1.

51. Langer, *Gott als ‘Licht’*, p. 143.

52. See Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62’, p. 132.

53. Blum, *Studien*, pp. 170–71: ‘The comparison is all the more justified since in Trito-Isaiah, too, this promised designation of Israel is to be seen together with its special place among the nations (cf. 61.5! chap. 60) (and probably not to be understood less concretely than the service and gifts of the nations and kings).’

Jubilee year;⁵⁴ rather it is about the theological defining of the relationship between Israel and the nations and about the commitment to greater justice.

The renewed incorporation of the light metaphor in 62.1 (נֹרָה) from 60.3 (also 60.19) and of the key word 'righteousness' in 62.1–2 (צִדִּיק) from 61.3 clearly links chap. 62 to chaps. 60–61. However, in contrast to chap. 60, it is no longer Yhwh himself who rises over the city of God but rather its *righteousness* and its *salvation*. This is not 'theological shallowness',⁵⁵ but is related to a new community situation. The euphoria about the salvation situation of Zion and its inhabitants (60) is followed by a persisting argument in view of the delay of salvation.⁵⁶ Salvation and righteousness will radiate out from Zion only when the 'oaks of righteousness' (61.3) are able to prevail! The complex of chaps. 60–62 ends with the visionary call to the 'watchmen', Yhwh's announcers, to march out from the gates in order to prepare the way for the people, to clear the path of stones and obstacles and to raise a sign over the nations (62.10–12).

It is significant that the theophanies of judgment against sinners for the sake of Zion were placed around chaps. 60–62, with the build-up in 59.15b–20 and the execution in 63.1–6: the salvation proclaimed by Trito-Isaiah will arrive only when sinners who refused to turn from their sins (56.9–13) in spite of extensive exhortations (cf. 59.20) have been destroyed. Though 63.1 says that the blood-splattered treader of the wine-press comes *from* Edom (מֵעֲדֹם) and *from* Bozra (מִבְּצֻרָה), this does not mean that Yhwh has staged a judgment against the nations in Edom. It is not the nations that are destroyed, but those from Israel who block the advent of salvation by their anti-social and syncretistic behavior, so that they must be compared to Edom. The fact that Edom collapsed in the middle of the fifth century⁵⁷ fits well in the relative chronology of this chapter: its collapse is the historical background for the judgment theophany against these sinners in the postexilic community. As Edom collapsed on Zion, the sinners will be trodden down by Yhwh in Edom, alone and without help from other nations (וּמַעֲמִים אֵין יֵשׁ אֹתָם, 63.3).⁵⁸ The topic of judgment of the nations is mentioned only in 63.6, which clearly shows it is an

54. So Grelot, 'Sur Isaïe LXI', pp. 414–31, who speculates that it was Josiah's son, Jehoiakim, perhaps in the Sabbath year 511/510 (p. 429).

55. So Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 92.

56. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 90.

57. See under 4.2. for the contemporary historical references of Isa. 28–35.

58. Vermeulen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 489: 'Édom y représente sans doute l'oppresseur de la communauté des "justes".'

addition, in the resumption of נָצַח from v. 3 and by the unexpected newly introduced motif of 'drunkenness from wrath', which also comes too late after v. 3.

In the communal laments of 59.1-15a and 63.7-64.11, a We-group dominates in each case, the group of those who have responded positively to the prophetic accusations and exhortations from 56.9 onwards. Out of the gap between the prophetic speaker and his hearers (cf. 58.1, 'Cry with a loud voice...make my people conscious of their iniquity'; 59.2, 'No, your sins have made a separation between you and your God'), a common goal has emerged (63.7). 'I will recount (אֶזְכִּיר) the steadfast love of Yhwh, the praises of Yhwh, according to all that Yhwh has granted *us* (נָמְלֵנוּ).' The change from 'I' to 'we' indicates that the We-group of servants has taken up the succession of Zion.⁵⁹ They are the מִזְכְּרֵיהֶם whom Yhwh has appointed as watchmen (62.6) in order to maintain within Israel the memory of his great deeds.

The anticipated separation in Israel between those who turn away from the sins of Jacob and those who do not can no longer be stopped. References to the 'people' (עַם) in the historical flashbacks (63.8, 11, 14, 18) becomes increasingly replaced by the 'we' of the 'servants' (63.17). The series of four 'we all' (כָּלֵנוּ, 64.5-8) culminates in the final plea: 'Look now, we are all your people' (הַבְטִינָא עִמָּךְ כָּלֵנוּ). Yhwh's response, which begins with 65.1, will show quite clearly that this is true only for those who keep away from idolatrous cults. They are Yhwh's servants (7x in 65.8-15).⁶⁰

The new beginning with the messenger formula בֵּה אָמַר יְהוָה in 66.1 is unexpected. Apparently, in spite of the great vision of a new Jerusalem (65.17-25), there are still important topics for discussion.⁶¹ These include the temple (66.1-6), the new Zion population (66.7-14), and the acceptance of Yhwh disciples from the nations into the Jerusalem temple cult (66.18-21). The question of the admission of non-Jews to the Yhwh cult is the great inclusio around chaps. 56-66. The closing verses 66.22-24 refer, with the same cultic interests, to Isaiah 1 and form the closing bracket of the book.⁶² The rift between the servants and their brothers who hate them becomes ever greater

59. Otherwise, Pascal-Gerlinger, 'Isaïe 63,7-64,11', p. 17: 'le psalmiste qui s'exprime au nom de la communauté.'

60. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 168: 'In Isa. 64.5-8 the people are brought together in unity four times by "we all" (כָּלֵנוּ)". This unity is broken up in Isa. 65.'

61. See Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7-66,24', p. 255.

62. See פִּשְׁעֵיהֶם (1.27; 66.24); וַיֵּין מִכֶּבֶד / לֹא חִבְּבָהּ (1.31; 66.24); Sabbath (1.13; 66.23).

(66.5). The stronger the rejection by the one of an integration of foreigners into the Yhwh cult, the more daring the other's vision of a people of God from Israel and the nations.

7.3. The Trito-Isaianic Core Text

In spite of differences in where scholars have set the boundaries of the basic text of Trito-Isaiah, chaps. 60–62* are invariably considered part of it in the various delimitations. There is good reason for this, since the unity of 60–62 is underpinned by strong lexical and thematic associations;⁶³ thus it is usually assumed to have a single author, with the exception of minor editorial additions. Westermann's suggestion that 'the three elements of the lament' form the underlying basis of these three chapters⁶⁴ has been widely accepted⁶⁵ and gave impetus to the thesis that their authorship could substantially be traced back to 'Trito-Isaiah'.

The difficulty in understanding the reasoning behind the sequence of the majestic salvation announcement for Zion (60), the freeing of prisoners and the impoverished (61), back to the coming salvation of Zion (62)—was resolved by the thesis that the events were originally ordered differently. Thus Pauritsch proposed an original sequence of 61.1–9, 11; 62.1–9 and 60.1–22,⁶⁶ and Duhm already had contemplated the transposition of chaps. 56–60 and 61–66 by a redactor.⁶⁷ These attempts at reordering have not, however, made a lasting impression on Isaiah scholarship.⁶⁸

63. See Bonnard's lists, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 415 n. 1; p. 425 n. 1: including 'nations' / 'kings' in 60.3, 5, 11, 16; 61.6, 9, 11; 62.2, 10; 'foreigner' in 60.10; 61.5; 62.8; 'glorify' (פאר) in 60.7(2x), 9, 13, 19, 21; 61.3(2x), 10; 62.3; 'deliver' (ישע) in 60.16, 18; 61.10; 62.1, 11; 'righteousness' (צדקה) in 60.17, 21; 61.3, 10, 11; 62.1, 2; 'rejoice' (שש) in 60.15; 61.3, 10(2x); 62.5(2x); 'praise' (הלל) in 60.6, 18; 61.3, 11; 62.7; 'naming' in 60.14, 18; 61.3, 6; 62.2, 4, 12.

64. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 297: 'Chap. 60, the enemy lament (answered by the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion), chap. 61, the We-lament (answered by the building up Zion and reestablishing its honor) and chap. 62, the accusation of God.'

65. See Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 426.

66. Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde*, p. 106; most recently, de Moor, 'Structure and Redaction', p. 346, who sees 61.10–62.9 as the kernel, which was then bracketed with 61.1–9 and 62.10–63.6; only in a third stage was Isa. 60 added.

67. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 15, 'The two halves of this composition, chaps. 56–60 and chaps. 61–66, were perhaps transposed by the redactor of chaps. 40–66' (cf. p. 419).

68. Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, p. 81, notes that it is not clear why a redactor should have destroyed an originally coherent progression of thought.

While it remains undisputed that chaps. 60–62 are the compositional center of 56–66, the assignment of the whole to one anonymous prophet of the postexilic period has come under increasing pressure. Thus Vermeylen attributes chap. 60 for the most part to Trito-Isaiah, but denies him chap. 61 completely, and allots only two verses of chap. 62 to him.⁶⁹ Koenen is considerably more generous in working out a Trito-Isaianic core in 60–62, identifying only *one* subsequent redaction plus later additions, with the result that the major part of all three chapters remains the work of the postexilic Anonymous.⁷⁰

Steck ventures the most radical break with Isaiah studies of the last hundred years, doing away entirely with Duhm's Trito-Isaiah hypothesis. According to Steck, chaps. 60–62 still form the center of 56–66, but a postexilic prophet 'Trito-Isaiah' never existed; instead, 60–62 are to be regarded 'as a literary expansion [Fortschreibung] of Isaiah 40–55 and directly connected to it'.⁷¹ Of course, Steck is aware that the problem of authorship is still not solved by the thesis of a Fortschreibung prophecy, and thus he continues: 'We encounter here people in the land, certainly to be regarded as postexilic tradents of Deutero-Isaiah, who from the outset shape for readers this extended book of Deutero-Isaiah in literary connection to a book and within a book'.⁷² Independent of his thesis that the references in 60–62 are limited only to 40–55, and that chap. 35 is the bridge-text between chaps. 40–55, 60–62 and chaps. 1–39* as part of the 'homecoming redaction' with 62.10–12 as a closing, the question remains whether the phenomenon of a literary expansion in 60–62 in connection to whichever textual core *ipso facto* excludes the idea of a postexilic prophet 'Trito-Isaiah'.

In the search for a *fundamentum in re* for Isaiah 60–62 only two events in the postexilic period offer themselves for serious consideration. One is the dedication of the second temple in the year 515, and the other is the building of the wall under Nehemiah in 445. Only the reference to the walls (חמת־יֵד) in 60.10 argues for the latter,⁷³ and even this can be explained purely 'literarily' as a reference back

69. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 503, sees 60.1–4a, 5–9aα, 9b–11, 13 + 62.2–3 as 'trito-isaïen': 'Les nations de toute la terre montent vers Jérusalem non pour la profaner, mais pour y adorer Yahvé dans son sanctuaire.'

70. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 156: 60.1–18*; 61.1–4, 5–6; 62.1–7, 8–9*, 10–12; Trito-Isaiah grapples 'with the problem of delayed salvation. He explains its failure to materialize with the ethical abuses of his time. Because the poor in Jerusalem are being oppressed, the light has not yet come.'

71. Steck, 'Tritojesaja', p. 376.

72. Steck, 'Tritojesaja', p. 376.

73. 58.12 and 61.4 are about rebuilding the eternal ruins (חרבות עולם).

to 49.16, especially as the wall no longer affords protection because the gates are to remain permanently open for the influx of the wealth of the nations (60.11). There is an argument to be made for a correlation of 60–62 with the resumption of the sacrificial cult and the restoration of the temple, considering that, according to Ezra 3.3–4, the postexilic sacrificial cult resumed at the Festival of Booths even before the rebuilding of the temple.⁷⁴ The combination of burnt offerings and gifts from the nations in Isaiah 60 almost appears as a visionary outline of what is reported in Ezra 3;⁷⁵ it becomes even more clear that chap. 60 is related to the restoration of city and temple when Haggai 2 is brought into the discussion. There, the prophet encourages those chiefly responsible, Zerubbabel and Joshua, but also all the people, not to despair in the face of the difficulties and costs of rebuilding (2.4) by giving them a word from God.⁷⁶ If this word of promise is spoken 'with a view to the completion of the temple and its (future) furnishings',⁷⁷ it stands to reason that the proclamation setting of chap. 60 would likewise be the period of the slow-paced outfitting of the second temple.⁷⁸ Thus some would argue that behind Isaiah 60 is a prophet who on the one hand felt connected to the Isaiah tradition, and on the other saw the arduous work on the second temple as an opportunity to compose a vision of the greatness and glory of the city of God.

If the drafting of the core of 60–62 is to be placed in the period between the temple dedication in the year 515 and the building of the wall in 445,⁷⁹ this points to the connections and knowledge of the second Jerusalem redaction, with its main text of 54–55 in the period

74. Unlike Neh. 8.13–18, where Ezra comes across the provisions for the Festival of Booths (Lev. 23.39–44) while reading the law. The dedication of Solomon's temple had also taken place during the Festival of Booths (1 Kgs 8.2, 65; 2 Chron. 5.3).

75. Ezra 3.6–7: 'From the first day of the seventh month, they began to present burnt offerings to Yhwh. The foundation of the temple of Yhwh, however, was not yet laid. They gave the masons and carpenters money, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and Tyrians to bring cedars from Lebanon by way of the sea to Joppa, in accord with the authorization granted to them by Cyrus, the King of Persia.'

76. Hag. 2.7: 'I will shake all the nations so that the treasure of all nations will come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says Yhwh Sabaoth.'

77. So Galling, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels*, p. 136.

78. Unlike Isa. 60, Hag. 2.6–9 is not about free-will gifts of the nations, but Yhwh's war booty; thus Reventlow, *Die Propheten*, p. 22.

79. Steck's dating of the core of chaps. 60–62, 'Tritojesaja', p. 374: 'because the temple has already been rebuilt and the wall around Jerusalem is still only anticipated, in the period between 515 and 445 B.C.'

after Xerxes's action against Babylon in 482. If Babylon, queen of the nations, has finally fallen, then the nations have nothing left but to bring their treasures to Zion!

According to Hag. 2.19b, the time of blessing had dawned (מן היום הזה אברך) with the laying of the foundation stone of the second temple; with Trito-Isaiah, it is the time of light. With the leitwort אור (7x) he points back beyond 51.4 and 42.1-4 to 2.5,⁸⁰ but the promise to walk in the light of Yhwh is no longer for the house of Jacob; now it is the nations who are drawn toward the light to Jerusalem. Trito-Isaiah thus links the theme of light from 2.5 with that of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion from 2.2-4.⁸¹ Another possible association of the significant role of light in chap. 60 is with a tradition during the Festival of Booths of a procession of lights, a tradition known only from the Babylonian Talmud book *Sukkah* but which could very well have historical roots. According to *Sukkah*, on the night between the sixth and seventh day of the Festival of Booths, there was a huge procession of lights with music and the sounding of trumpets, during which water was brought from the pool of Siloam to the temple (cf. 12.3), where the high priest, dressed in ceremonial garments, poured it out on the altar.⁸² If the connection of Isaiah 60 to the Festival of Booths is accepted, then it is also easier to make better sense of the divine oath of 62.8-9 that the people will enjoy the fruits of their labor on the land, will praise Yhwh (והללו), and hold a feast in his holy courts (בהצרות קדשי). This description perfectly fits the harvest celebration of the Festival of Booths;⁸³ against this background, the unusual idea in 62.1b β of the salvation of Jerusalem burning like a torch (כלפיד יבער) also makes more sense.

In the following interpretation of chaps. 60–62, it is assumed that the basis of this expansion is the prophetic vision of Trito-Isaiah, who took the occasion of the restoration of the temple and city to paint the future of Jerusalem in the brightest colors.⁸⁴ He did this in connection

80. Cf. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 43; Kratz, *Kyros*, p. 146 n. 555.

81. The connection of light and pilgrimage of nations with rich gifts is taken up in Tob. 13.11-12 from Isa. 60; even Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62', p. 139, does not completely rule out a reference of Isaiah 60*, 61 to texts like 2.2-5 and 9.1!

82. Cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, p. 256.

83. According to Zech. 14.16 it is the Festival of Booths that draws the survivors of the nations year after year to Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 66.23).

84. Volz, *Jesaja II*, p. 244, already considered Isaiah 60 connected with the New Year and Festival of Booths; and Morgenstern, 'Two Prophecies', pp. 365-431, connected it with the New Year of the dedication of the temple in 516.

to Isaiah 55, bringing the key word פֶּאֶר from 55.5 alongside אֹר as the theme.⁸⁵ The references back to Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah's texts show⁸⁶ that he deliberately crafted his contribution to the restoration program of postexilic Jerusalem with reference to the growing book of Isaiah. A particular concern of his was the function of the Ebed as a 'light for the nations' (42.6; 49.6) to come to the city of God and to breathe new life into the promise of Zion's radiant future (cf. 49.14–26).

Trito-Isaiah's objective of directing a message of bright hope to the Jerusalem community in the years after 480 in order to remove the paralyzing sting of the seemingly insuperable difficulties of rebuilding continues in 61–62. In chap. 60 the dawning of the light over the city of God and the beginning of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion was the central theme; in chap. 61 the lack of social justice⁸⁷ is at the center, together with the priesthood of Israel within the world of the nations. When the nations bring their gifts and offerings(!) to Zion then the question of their cultic-religious relation to Israel can no longer be answered by a mere boundary politics.

7.3.1. Trito-Isaiah in Isaiah 60

According to Steck,⁸⁸ who will be followed here, the basic core of Trito-Isaiah is located in 60.1–9, 13–16. It deals above all with the role of the light from a Jerusalem radiant with Yhwh's glory, shining in the darkness of the world of nations (1–3), whereupon those nations bring both the Jews living among them as well as their own gifts and offerings to Zion (4–9); vv. 13–16 fill in this picture of salvation, which places special emphasis on the eschatological reversal of the former abuse of the city of God, and has only one goal: 'Then you will recognize that I, Yhwh, am your Savior, your Goel, the Mighty One of Jacob!'

While Trito-Isaiah saw the role of the nations only as bringing their riches along with the Diaspora Jews, later tradents thought about the place of the foreigner in the eschatological Jerusalem;⁸⁹ they were to raise its walls and keep open its gates day and night, so that the

85. Isa. 60.7(2x), 9, 13, 19, 21.

86. The references are well summarized in van Wieringen, *Analogies in Isaiah. Volume A*, pp. 30–52; also Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. 22–66.

87. צַדִּיק in 61.3, 10, 11.

88. Steck, 'Der Grundtext in Jesaja 60', pp. 49–79.

89. Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 140–41, recognizes the 'excursive character' of 60.10–11, 12, but draws no conclusions from that.

wealth of the nations might benefit the city of God without interruption (10-11). For this, *הַמִּיד* is taken up from 49.16 and *לֹא יִסְגְּרוּ* from 45.1. Yhwh no longer opens the gates of cities for Cyrus to capture; now it is foreigners with a peaceful purpose who hold open the gates of Jerusalem.⁹⁰ When it says in 60.11 that the kings [of the nations] will be led (*נִהְיוּ*), the expression does not mean led away as prisoners of war,⁹¹ but highlights the disempowerment of former rulers.⁹²

However, inspired by *נִהְיוּ*, now understanding it in the technical warfare sense as leading away a prisoner (cf. 1 Sam. 30.2; Isa. 20.4; Lam. 3.2), and in a conscious allusion to Jer. 27.8, a later author inserted 60.12⁹³ implying that the fate of those who do not wish to serve Zion will be the same as for those who opposed Nebuchadnezzar.⁹⁴

After the programmatic recognition formula in 60.16b the following vv. 17-22 are to be regarded as an expansion by the prophet's circle of disciples.⁹⁵ The main indication of this is the complete absence in these verses of the theme of the nations, so characteristic of 60.1-16.⁹⁶ While vv. 17-18, 19-20 refer to the preceding original text, vv. 21-22 are oriented toward and lead into chap. 61.

The *תַּחַת* ('in place of') that opens v. 17 picks up the *תַּחַת* from v. 15. But in contrast to 60.1-16 it will no longer be the nations who bring their gifts but Yhwh himself who becomes active (*אֵל אֲכִיזָר*); furthermore, it is no longer a matter of treasure to adorn the city of God, but the replacement of inferior building materials with those of higher quality. It may be concluded that these are not Trito-Isaiah's words from the fact that he hardly would have exchanged the 'eschatological' trees to beautify the temple district (60.13) with bare ore!

90. Cf. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 51.

91. Against Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 139 n. 485.

92. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 52.

93. On the gloss-like character of 60.12: Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 450 (with reference to Zech. 14.16-19); Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 243; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 474; Steck, 'Der Grundtext in Jesaja 60', pp. 49-51.

94. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 53.

95. Steck, 'Der Grundtext in Jesaja 60', pp. 55-58, starts from a single supplement which he locates in the early period of the Diadochi, 'occasioned primarily by the need to connect Isaiah *60-62 with accusation, final judgment, and salvation perspectives from proto-Isaiah and Isaiah *56-59' (p. 56); see also Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56.9-59.21; 63.1-6', p. 192, where he assigns 60.17-22 to the same stratum as 56.9-59.21 (= the penultimate redaction).

96. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 288: 'the movement of the nations streaming to Jerusalem does not extend into this section.'

The list of materials in 60.17b is taken from 1 Chron. 22.14,⁹⁷ but in addition to the building of the temple, it also relates to the rebuilding of the city. The physical restoration is not what is important here, but rather a quality superior to the disappointing postexilic leaders who were able to guarantee neither *שלום* nor *צדקה*. Thus 60.17b contains 'a promise concerning internal affairs. Yhwh will give Jerusalem a peaceful and just government. This implies what v. 18a expresses even more clearly: The current authorities are characterized by violence and injustice.'⁹⁸

Against the background of recent experiences of injustice that are attributed to the negligence of the community's leaders, v. 18 sketches a counter-image, with Jer. 6.7b (*חמם ושר ישמע בה*) cf. Jer. 48.3) and the internal tradition of Isa. 51.19 (*השר והשבר*) and 59.7 (*שר והשבר*) serving as donor texts. There will be no devastation or destruction at the hands of either outside or internal enemies!

The Trito-Isaiah disciples again take up the theme of light from vv. 1–3 in vv. 19–20, but now in a cosmic (and anti-astrological) sense, on the one hand,⁹⁹ and separate from the theme of the pilgrimage of the nations, on the other. The *kabod* of God will no longer shine over Zion to attract the nations of the world; instead, Yhwh himself as *אור עולם* will replace sun and moon.¹⁰⁰ Neither the Ebed nor Zion are the light-bearers anymore; now it is Yhwh himself. The writers appear to have neglected the fact that this would be accompanied by the repeal of the Sabbath and festival laws.

In contrast to these expectations, vv. 21–22 are strongly grounded socially; here the promise is that the entire population of the city of God will be made up of the righteous (*צדיקים*) and they will possess the land forever (*לעולם יירשו ארץ*). Thus *צדקה* no longer means the hoped-for quality of the political leaders as in 60.17b, but the moral-ethical 'seal of quality' on the Zion population. Particularly in view of the numerous references of 60.21 to 61.3 ('oaks of righteousness', 'planting of Yhwh', 'glorifying'), Lau's view that 'an ethical meaning of "the righteous" is excluded by the context'¹⁰¹ does not make sense. He deprives vv. 21–22 of their socio-political sting: 'with the promise

97. Thus Steck, 'Der Grundtext in Jesaja 60', p. 57: cf. also 1 Chron. 29.2, 7; 2 Chron. 2.6–7, 13.

98. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 155; likewise Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 209.

99. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 477: 'le salut prend une dimension cosmique (ou antiastrolâtrique) absente du reste du chapitre.'

100. Langer, *Gott als 'Licht'*, p. 153: 'Yahweh is light in the same way that he is God (*אלהים*) elsewhere.'

101. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 63.

of land, the traditional substance of salvation is accepted, without an insistence on a historical occasion for the reception of this promise.¹⁰²

As a counterpoint to the oppression of the righteous in 57.1, a radical new order in favor of the צדיקים is now promised. The new people of Zion are 'the shoot of his planting, the work of my hands for glorification' (60.21b); the *lectio difficilior* of the MT can be retained, against 1QIsa^a (מטע יהודה) and LXX (ידיי), since מטע already presupposes Yhwh as the subject based on 61.3.¹⁰³ The designation of the community as a 'shoot' (נצר¹⁰⁴) is an expansion of 11.1 which was suggested by the proximity of 61.1 and its reference to 11.2 with the theme of the gift of the spirit. Besides the concern about possessing a share of land, one of the greatest concerns of this group was rapid growth in order to avoid sinking into insignificance. This fear is also countered in v. 22, which cites the growth of the house of Jesse as an encouraging example. As a mighty royal house came from David הקטן (1 Sam. 16.11), they too will become a clan (אלף), indeed, a mighty nation (גוי עצום). This appeal to the traditional belief that with Yhwh's help a numerically insignificant group can find prestige and social power¹⁰⁵ aims to counteract a paralyzing sense of helplessness.

As the prophetic 'guarantee' for these promises of increase, another pointed word of Yhwh is added—he will carry it out quickly in its time (אני יהוה בעתה אחישנה)—which shows how the growing 'pressure for results' weighs on the group; they, however, can point to the great Isaiah, who himself had to deal with similar blasphemous interjections from his opponents that Yhwh's work should come quickly, so that they might see it (ימהר יחשה מעשהו למען נראה) (5.19).¹⁰⁶

Now to return to the Trito-Isaiah basic text, which is divided into three parts:

102. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 64; similarly, Hossfeld, 'Die Metaphorisierung', p. 32.

103. The *qere* מטעי ('my planting') is an adjustment to the following ידי, which must be considered original; the LXX reads נצר ('branch') as φυλάσσω ('guard' – נוצר) based on Isa. 27.3; Brayley's proposal ('Yahweh Is the Guardian', pp. 275-86) of 'Yahweh is the guardian of his plantation' (followed by Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 144 n. 501) harmonizes the variants suspiciously well, according to Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIA, p. 188; on the other hand, Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p. 57, reads מטע יהוה נצרי ('the guardians of the plantation of Yhwh'), but why are guardians required if all the people consist only of the 'righteous'?

104. Elsewhere only in Isa. 14.19 (?); Dan. 11.7; Sir. 40.15.

105. See Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIA, p. 189, with special emphasis on the tribal blessing (including Gen. 27.27-29; 48.8-20; 49); cf. Saul's growth in 1 Sam. 9.21; 15.17.

106. Odeberg, *Trito-Isaiah*, p. 233: 'It is not improbable that the writer has Isa. 5.19 in view'; likewise van Wieringen, *Analogies in Isaiah. Volume A*, p. 51 (חש' only in 5.19 and 60.22).

- 1-3: The dawn of the light and the beginning of the pilgrimage of the nations
- 4-9: Bringing the children of Zion and the wealth of the nations
- 13-16: The goal: 'the city of Yhwh'—Recognition of Yhwh as Savior and Redeemer

The first part is characterized by the motif of light (אור) in vv. 1 and 3, which surrounds the 'darkness' and 'thick darkness' in v. 2. The invitation to a feminine singular 'you' (= Jerusalem) to rise up contrasts with the call in 47.1 for the 'virgin daughter of Babylon' to come down (רדי) and sit in the dust (שבי על עפר). At the same time the two imperatives in 60.1 take up the call to Jerusalem from 51.17 (התנערי מעפר קומי), 52.1 (עורי עורי לבשי) and 52.2 (התנערי מעפר קומי),¹⁰⁷ underlining that these prophetic words are still relevant. 'The image of the woman languishing in mourning and lament [stands] in the background'¹⁰⁸ as a historical motif in all these references (cf. also Lam. 2.19). There is no doubt that Lady Zion is the one addressed, but who is the speaker? The fact that Yhwh has been referred to throughout in the third person indicates that it is not his voice but that of the prophetic writer speaking here. The appearance of the divine 'I' in the closing recognition formula does not contradict this, especially since it represents a quote from 49.26b.

Verse 1 supplies the underlying tenor of the entire chapter with the key words 'light'¹⁰⁹ and 'come'.¹¹⁰ Because Yhwh's *kabod* has risen above the city of God, the city too has now become 'light'; attracted by this light, the nations set off along with the Diaspora Jews, to bring their own riches to Zion.¹¹¹ The fact that זרח appears with Yhwh as subject only here and in Deut. 33.2¹¹² makes an intentional reference probable. As Yhwh shed light on his people Israel from Seir in order to give them the law, now he rises over Zion so that the nations make their way there in order to receive Torah, as 2.2-4 puts

107. See also 54.1: רני...פצחי...צהלי and 54.2: הרהיבי...האריכי...חוקי.

108. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 26.

109. Seven times: 60.1(2x), 3, 19(3x), 20.

110. Seven times qal: vv. 1, 4(2x), 5, 6, 13, 20; and four times hi.: vv. 9, 11, 17(2x).

111. Yhwh's two-fold 'bringing' of gold and silver in v. 17 comes too late, on the one hand, after the summary of vv. 15-16, and on the other hand does not correspond to the tenor of the chapter; so Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62', p. 121, against Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 142 ('Yahweh...takes care of the arrival of the treasures').

112. Cf. בא in Deut. 33.2 and Isa. 60.1; see Langer, *Gott als 'Licht'*, pp. 25-26, 41-43.

it. The motif of the bright light over Zion (60.1-3) with the nations in complete darkness is reminiscent of the ninth plague against Egypt, that of darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ), during which the light (אֹר) shone only on the Israelites (Exod. 10.21-23).¹¹³ The idea that without a connection to Yhwh the nations live in total darkness is already hinted at in 5.30b and developed in 9.1.¹¹⁴

In addition, Trito-Isaiah takes up the role of the servant as 'light of the nations' (42.6; 49.6) combined with the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion (cf. 55.5),¹¹⁵ and applies both to the Ebed Zion. Besides the motifs from the Book of Isaiah tradition—'light-darkness', 'pilgrimage of the nations to Zion', 'servant of God as light to the nations'—he has also taken up the priestly writer's vision of the appearance of the divine *kabod* over Sinai (especially Exod. 24.16-17) and transferred it to Zion as the eschatological mountain of God for Israel and the nations.¹¹⁶ When the promise is associated in v. 3 with the procession of the nations and kings, it should not be assessed as just a thematic connection, but rather a direct literary reference to Isa. 2.2-4/Mic. 4.1-3.¹¹⁷ Vermeylen emphasizes that there are many connections between 60.1-16 and Isaiah 2, which can hardly be random given their high concentration.¹¹⁸ When the symbols of human pride of 2.6-17 are brought in the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, this

113. Langer, *Gott als 'Licht'*, pp. 62-63, which also references Gen. 1.2 (chaos-darkness) and Zeph. 1.15 (Yhwh's judgment day).

114. Langer, *Gott als 'Licht'*, pp. 54-59, 130; van Wieringen, *Analogies in Isaiah. Volume A*, pp. 33-34; more cautiously, Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 30; Steck, "'Lumen gentium'", p. 92, denies the connection to Isa. 9.1.

115. Steck, "'Lumen gentium'", p. 91: 'Isa. 60.1-3 picks up the existing Servant of God function of "Light to the Nations" in conjunction with 55.5 and fashions both statements into one process related to Zion.'

116. Zenger, 'Der Gott des Exodus', p. 20; reworked by Langer, *Gott als 'Licht'*, pp. 76-79 (ה'אֵלֵינוּ ni. with the divine *kabod* as subject, outside of Isa. 60.2, is also found in: Exod. 16.10; Lev. 9.6, 23; Num. 14.10; 16.19; 17.7).

117. Thus Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 31, draws attention to the fact that הָלַךְ (qal) occurs with עַמִּים elsewhere only in Mic. 4.2 and with עַמִּים elsewhere only in Isa. 2.3; Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 71 n. 66, again detects no literary reference here; Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', p. 373 n. 23; but relents in Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60-62' p. 139.

118. Vermeylen, 'L'unité', p. 43 n. 144: 'temple' (בֵּית) in 2.2, 3; 60.7; 'walk in/to the light' (הָלַךְ בְּ/לְאוֹר) in 2.5; 60.3; 'to be bowed down' / 'to walk bowed down' (שָׁחָה) in 2.9, 11, 17; 60.14; the symbols of human arrogance of Isa. 2 are brought as gifts to Zion in 60: 'gold/silver' in 2.7; 60.6, 9; 'cedars of Lebanon' in 2.13; 60.13; as transportation, 'the ships of Tarshish' (2.16; 60.9): cf. 'every fortified wall' (בָּל חוֹמָה בְּצוּרָה) in 2.15, with the building of the wall by the foreigners, 60.10.

means that the nations go up to the light where they lay down their pride.

After vv. 1-3 have presented the theme of the pilgrimage of the nations to the mount of God, vv. 4-9 depict it in concrete images, followed by a description of the salvific consequences for the city of God in vv. 14-26. It is significant that, in addition to any allusions to texts from chaps. 40–55, in three strategically important places (vv. 4a, 9b, 16b) there are direct quotes from Deutero-Isaiah, alternating from 49.18 (60.4a), 55.5 (60.9b), and 49.26 (60.16). This is a clear reading instruction: 60.4-9, 13-16 should be read and understood as a new compressed edition of 49–55! The promises that Zion is headed toward a radiant future in spite of all inner and outer opposition are incorporated and at the same time exceeded.

The humiliated woman Zion is asked (v. 4) to look about her, so she can see the procession of nations and kings who bear her children home. Compared to the quoted verse 49.18a, 60.4 offers small but significant modifications. In 49.18 בָּלֶם referred only to the returning Diaspora Jews; now it refers to the nations and kings, together with Zion's children. In 49.18, these go on foot to Zion, which applies to the strong sons, but here the daughters are borne on the hips [of the kings] (עַל-צֶדֶד הַמֶּלֶךְ), which compared to the original (49.22, 23; עַל-כִּתְפֵי תַנְשִׂמָּה) indicates an intensification of the attentive treatment.¹¹⁹ The simple 'be borne' (נָשָׂא) becomes 'be borne as if by a nurse' (נָשָׂא II) based on the kings as nurses in 49.23a. The care and deliberateness with which Trito-Isaiah modifies his original can be seen in how he takes 49.23 apart in order to avoid the dilemma of the kings being wet-nurse to Diaspora Judaism (49.23a) while at the same time licking the dust from Zion's feet (49.23b). He keeps this humiliating fate ready only for those who [still] refuse to serve Zion (60.14 based on 49.23b and 49.26a).

Following (אֵלֶּה) the daughter Zion's observations comes a detailed description in v. 5 of what is taking place for her benefit. The widening of the heart (וַיִּרְחַב לִבָּךְ) may be an allusion to 49.21a, where, at the unexpected blessing of children, Zion says in her heart (וַיֹּאמֶרֶת בִּלְבָבָךְ), 'Who has borne these to me?' The three-fold אֵלֶּה in 49.12, 21 probably serves as the inspiration for מִי אֵלֶּה in 60.8.

119. This may represent a reversal of Ezek. 34.21, where it says that the weak have been pushed by hip (צֶדֶד) and shoulder (כֹּתֵף), which according to Steck, 'Heimkehr auf der Schultern', pp. 97-100 was interpreted already within Ezek. 34 as the ruthless behavior of the nations toward Israel; on the other hand, see Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 138 n. 484; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. 36-38.

The use of place and/or tribal names in vv. 6-7 (Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, Nebaioth) and vv. 8-9 (Tarshish) emphasizes that the nations bring their gifts from East and West, that is, from everywhere, to Zion.¹²⁰ There is nothing to suggest that the nations are forced to bring their treasures to Zion as tribute to the world-king. The theme of the pilgrimage of the nations from 2.2-5 and especially that of the servant of God as light to the nations speak a different language. The nations come not as payers of tribute, but rather voluntarily out of their own darkness, drawn by Yhwh's *kabod* over Zion.¹²¹

The passage in v. 6bβ appears strange—the camels and dromedaries that bring costly gifts to Zion proclaim the praise of God (וְתִהְיֶה יְהוָה יִבְשָׁרוּ). It remains unclear whether this is a later addition. The originality of the passage is not denied *ipso facto* by the fact that the beasts of burden are the grammatical subject of יִבְשָׁרוּ, especially if one takes into consideration a reference to יִכְפְּרוּ (43.21). There, it is, to be sure, the people of Yhwh who proclaim the praise of God, but in 43.20 it is the animals of the steppes that praise (כִּבְדוּ) the Lord. Koenen's solution, which is to deny all cultic terms to Trito-Isaiah and to assign them to a redactor,¹²² including 60.6bβ, is not tenable. Would the prophet of the glorious future of Jerusalem have assessed the cult so completely negatively? Much more likely is the idea that in view of the slow pace of the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple, the prophet prophesies of a splendid cultic institution in which the sacrificial animals of the entire world honor Yhwh to his satisfaction. To that end the prophet even has a divine saying to offer: 'I will glorify my glorious temple' (60.7b).¹²³

The glorification of Jerusalem and the temple becomes visible in the offerings and gifts from the nations. The prophet could not yet foresee the specific religious and political consequences of this prophecy. But as a result of the increased influx of foreigners to the

120. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 41; on the question of whether a pilgrimage from all four directions of the heavens is intended, see Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 140 n. 488.

121. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 473.

122. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 146: 'The language as a whole is not primarily that of the cult. Only in v. 7b does everything suddenly lead to the glorification of the temple.'

123. Here for the first time within 56–66 the key word תְּפַאֲרֶה/פָּאֵר occurs (60.7, 9, 13, 21; 61.3; 62.3; 63.12, 14; 64.10); it continues the language of 40–55: Yhwh is glorified in his servant Israel (44.23; 49.3); he makes Israel become his glory (46.13), glorifies Zion (55.5), and bids her to put on her beautiful clothing (52.1).

people of God, the problem of admittance was actually stated for the first time (56.1–8), since it was precisely this Trito-Isaianic saying that was used as an argument for their integration:¹²⁴ ‘Their burnt-offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar¹²⁵ (לרצון על מזבח), for my temple will be called a temple of prayer (בית תפלה) for all nations’ (56.7b). The Trito-Isaianic בית תפלתו (60.7b) becomes בית תפלה (56.7), which makes it clear that offering and worship are not to be played against one another. On the contrary, because the offerings of the nations in the Jerusalem temple are pleasing to Yhwh, the temple becomes the house of prayer for all the world!

The מִי־אלה in 60.8 picks up on the three-fold אלה from 49.12, 21, perhaps combined with the image of hope from Hos. 11.11,¹²⁶ although there it is aimed exclusively at the return of the Diaspora Jews. Trito-Isaiah goes far beyond this connection, as emphasized by 60.9, which incorporates 51.5bα (אלי אים יקוי) and 43.6bα (בני (מרחק) and quotes 55.5b (יהוה אלהיך ולקדוש ישראל כי פארך). In contrast to his source, for Trito-Isaiah the basis of hope for the nations lies not in the revelation of righteousness and salvation within the world of the nations (51.5), but in their encounter with Yhwh in the temple of the city of God. Furthermore, Yhwh no longer has to threaten in his demand that they carry home Zion’s children (43.6–7), for now they do this voluntarily. Trito-Isaiah also clarifies, going beyond 55.5, why unknown nations make their way to Zion: ‘for the sake of Yhwh, your God’ (למען) has become the bringing of people and their riches ‘for the glory (לשם) of Yhwh, your God’! If the nations bring their wealth to Jerusalem and the temple for the honor and glory of Yhwh, and if foreigners participate in building the wall and their kings serve Zion (ישרתוך, 60.10), these things will later become arguments for the admission of foreigners (בני הנכר) in 56.1–8. Whoever contributes to Yhwh’s שם will himself receive a שם (56.5). Whoever would serve Zion will also be admitted into Yhwh’s service (לשרתו, 56.6)!

In 60.13–16, the prophet depicts the circumstances of salvation in Zion. The trees¹²⁷ for the visionary structuring of the temple precincts¹²⁸ he draws from 41.19b. The eschatological salvation terrain

124. A reverse dependence is no longer taken seriously. See Lau, ‘Schriftgelehrte Prophetie’, p. 45.

125. מזבח occurs within chaps. 40–66 only in 56.7 and 60.7.

126. See also Lau’s discussion, ‘Schriftgelehrte Prophetie’, p. 46 n. 108.

127. The singular expression כבוד הלבנון has been adopted in 35.2.

128. A building-timber for the temple is not intended here, but probably a temple garden; the tradition of the ‘garden of God’ possibly stands in the background; see Steck’s discussion, ‘Jesaja 60,13’, pp. 101–105.

of the returnees from exile will permanently adorn the temple, the place¹²⁹ of the divine presence.¹³⁰

As already indicated, Trito-Isaiah separated the statements of his source, 49.23, into two parts. He takes the nursemaid role of the kings from 49.23a for 60.4bβ, but works the idea of their approaching in subjugation found in 49.23b into 60.14. He takes up the key word שָׁחָה/ח (to bow down) from 51.23. However, the humiliation of former foes is not the focus of 60.14, but the fact that they call Jerusalem 'City of Yhwh' and 'Zion of the Holy One of Israel'. It is not primarily about retribution for old wrongs,¹³¹ but about the recognition by those who once despised Zion (נֹאֵץ, cf. 52.5). It is precisely the archenemies¹³² who profess, when they see the city blooming against all expectation, that it is עִיר יְהוָה, 'Zion, of the Holy One of Israel'!

With 60.15-16 the prophet sums up his vision of the salvation of Zion.¹³³ It involves her permanent state, which is no longer the fate (49.14; 54.6) of a deserted wife (עֲזוּבָה), but one in which Yhwh makes her an 'eternal pride' (לְנֹאֵץ עוֹלָם) and a 'joy¹³⁴ from generation to generation.' With the word נֹאֵץ Trito-Isaiah takes up a theme that prominently characterizes the first part of the book of Isaiah,¹³⁵ is lacking entirely in 40-55, and surfaces only here in 56-66. It is therefore important to take note that outside of 60.15, נֹאֵץ is used in a positive sense in connection with Zion only in 4.2 (!). The eschatological promise for Zion is incorporated from 4.2, and as a result of the pilgrimage of the nations to the city of God no less.¹³⁶

129. The phrase מְקוֹם מִקְדָּשׁ appears to be inspired by Jer. 17.12, and מְקוֹם רִגְלֵי is taken from Ezek. 43.7; whether the absence from the throne (בִּסֵּס) should be given more importance must remain open (against Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. 55-56).

130. So Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 53.

131. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIA, p. 176: 'Het zou dan ook verkeerd zijn in deze scène enkel een akte van bestraffing en vergelding te zien.'

132. According to Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60-62', p. 122, Isa. 60.14 relates 'especially to the Babylonian descendants'.

133. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 286.

134. An important theme in 56-66: שֵׂשׁ (35.1); 61.10; 62.5; 64.4; 65.18, 19; 66.10, 14; שִׂשׂוֹן (12.3; 22.13; 35.10; 51.3, 11) 61.3; מִשֵּׂשׁ (24.8, 11; 32.13, 14) 60.15; 62.5; 65.18; 66.10. Since the expression שִׂשׂוֹן appears only in 51.3, 11 in Deutero-Isaiah, a conscious reference to it by Trito-Isaiah cannot be ruled out; cf. also the mention of the 'garden' in 51.3 with the 'trees' in 60.13.

135. The arrogance of humanity and nations (2.12; 9.8; 13.11, 19; 14.11; 16.6; 23.9; 25.11; 28.1, 3) stands in contrast to Yhwh's glory (2.10, 19, 21; 12.5; 24.14; 26.10).

136. Cf. also in 4.2 תְּפָאֲרָה, which together with פָּאֵר is one of controlling words of Isa. 60.

With the promise that Zion would drink the milk of the nations and suck at the breast of kings (60.16a), Trito-Isaiah intensifies his source text of 49.23, which spoke of the wet-nurse role of the kings for the returning Diaspora Jews. Trito-Isaiah expands the motherly concern of the nations to Zion's permanent salvation situation, analogous to his transfer of the miraculous stand of timber along the homeward procession (41.19b) to the permanent adornment of the city of God (60.13a). The image of Zion nursing¹³⁷ at the breast of kings understood in the sense of 'exploiting' the world of the nations,¹³⁸ completely misses the point, which Volz aptly describes: 'Zion will have no more worries about its future, like a child at its mother's breast; kings as attending nurses, the world as a foster mother: this massive shift will lead Zion to the recognition that Yahweh is its Savior.'¹³⁹

The prophet again varies the closing recognition formula from 49.26b. If it had been prophesied to timid Zion that all flesh would acknowledge Yhwh as Redeemer, Savior and Mighty One of Israel on seeing the dreadful fate of its enemies, it is now Jerusalem itself that attains knowledge of Yhwh, not in view of the destruction of its enemies, but by the experience of a positive relationship between Israel and the nations!¹⁴⁰

7.3.2. *Trito-Isaiah in Isaiah 61*

Except for vv. 10-11 this entire chapter is to be attributed to Trito-Isaiah, a position which is admittedly not unanimous in Isaiah scholarship, but does receive a certain amount of support.¹⁴¹ The exclusion of 61.10 is widely accepted, with v. 11 directly following v. 9.¹⁴² But given the close relationship of these two verses (key word

137. Cf. 66.11, 12: there it is the mourners of Zion who nurse at her consoling breast and are satisfied.

138. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 451-52; against this, Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, p. 616: 'Enrichment by robbery...is out of the question; the sucking is that of a child, not a vampire.'

139. Volz, *Jesaja II*, p. 247.

140. Cf. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIA*, p. 180: 'De ervaring van Gods heil komt niet los van de toetreding van de naties tot stand.'

141. Steck, 'Der Rachetag', pp. 106-107, sees no reason for a literary-critical intervention; Koenen's objection against the Trito-Isaianic origin of vv. 7-9 (*Ethik*, pp. 115-18) is strengthened by the 'Solomonic' decision that they are to be ascribed neither to the prophet nor the redactor (in the translation they are declared Trito-Isaianic [!]). Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 478-83, who finds nothing Trito-Isaianic in Isa. 61, represents an extreme position.

142. Including Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 458; Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, III, p. 234; Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde*, p. 106.

‘seed’ and ‘known among the nations’ // ‘praise for the nations’), a common authorship is even more improbable, since Trito-Isaiah does not extrapolate from his own words but from those of others.

The chapter is structured as follows, with vv. 1-3, 4-9 going back to the prophet and vv. 10-11 to the redaction:

- 1-3: Gift of the spirit and its social consequences
- 4-9: Israel’s priesthood among the nations
- 10-11: Thanksgiving song of the community of the righteous

Earlier, wife Zion was asked to stand up and observe the children and treasure coming to her from the world of the nations; now she herself begins to speak in 61.1-3.¹⁴³ Following the characteristic style of chap. 60, it is not surprising that features of the servant of God are again transferred to Zion, especially his endowment with the spirit (42.1) and his responsibility to ensure the execution of justice (42.3). While these were previously characteristics of the Ebed, i.e., the returned *golah*, they are now gifts and tasks passed on to Zion.¹⁴⁴ In 42.6-7 and 49.8-9 the Ebed had the exiled and other Diaspora Jews in view; 61.1-3 is concerned with people ‘in a similar situation in lands where, by Zion’s accession to power, their release through Yhwh from (economic) bondage is proclaimed’.¹⁴⁵

While the ‘world-priesthood of Zion’ is still to come and belongs to the future (see the imperfects in vv. 4-9), the restoration of equitable social structures in and around Jerusalem is a present and urgent challenge (vv. 1-3). The deepening social contradictions could not remain hidden from Trito-Isaiah; they were triggered in particular by a Persian tax policy under Darius I (522–486) that was based on coinage, forcing all taxpayers to generate a surplus to be paid in coin.¹⁴⁶ Kippenberg paints an eloquent picture of the transformation of the economic structure in the Judean hill country under the constraint of Persian tax policy.¹⁴⁷

143. For a discussion of the ‘I’ in 61.1-3, 10-11, see Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62’, pp. 133-35.

144. Steck, ‘Der Gottesknecht als “Bund”’, pp. 127-28.

145. Steck, ‘Der Gottesknecht als “Bund”’, p. 128.

146. Kippenberg, *Religion und Klassenbildung*, p. 176: ‘The prophet interferes in power relationships much more directly than is usual elsewhere in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. The reality of foreign rule gave a new political tinge to the salvation proclamation.’

147. Kippenberg, *Religion und Klassenbildung*, pp. 51-52; also Albertz, ‘Die “Antrittspredigt” Jesu’, pp. 195-97, although he rules out the social references for Isa. 61.1-3: ‘in the most general sense, Israel in its distress, feeling betrayed about his promises and mourning them’ (p. 189); and Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, p. 487 n. 26.

The catastrophic consequences for the character of the Judean community can be read stage by stage in Nehemiah 5. Most small farmers were forced to pledge their sons and daughters, their fields, vineyards and houses, indeed, even to sell their own children as slaves.¹⁴⁸ Syntactically and in subject matter vv. 1–3 form a unit which must not exclude v. 3b.¹⁴⁹ After the statements about receiving the spirit (רוח אדני יהוה עלי) and being anointed (משח) and commissioned by Yhwh, there follows a series of seven infinitives that describe the task in more detail. The last of these (לחזק) is in turn followed by a series of three (תחזק, 3x), which focuses on the radical transformation of reality in favor of the poor and bereaved; this flows into a concluding double naming (וקרא להם): ‘they will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of Yhwh for his glorification’ (61.3b). These verses are not about what will one day take place in the near or distant future, but about the concrete transformation of unjust living conditions.

Zion’s declaration that the רוח אדני יהוה [is resting] upon her is quoted by Trito-Isaiah from 42.1 (נחתו רוחי עליי), and is also dependent on 44.3 and 48.16, where it has to do with passing on the prophetic spirit. If Trito-Isaiah associates the giving of the spirit to Zion with anointing by Yhwh, this should only be understood *ipso facto* metaphorically. Apart from 1 Kgs 19.16 (instruction to Elijah to anoint Elisha as a prophet), anointing of the prophets is never mentioned. The key word משח clearly points to a ‘royal’ or ‘priestly’ context, whereas the purpose of the series of infinitives entirely disregards the cult. The unique combination of the prophetic giving of the spirit and commissioning (שלח) together with royal-priestly anointing is to be understood purely as the result of various literary influences that come into play in the prophecy of Trito-Isaiah. Thus the key word משח has been picked up from 45.1, where Yhwh presents Cyrus משיחו. This is even more likely considering that, already in 60.11, לא יסגרו draws on 45.1 as its donor text. As Cyrus was called and anointed for the liberation of the exiles, now the ‘royal prophet’ is called to liberate the oppressed from bondage and debt-slavery.¹⁵⁰

148. See Albertz, ‘Die “Antrittspredigt” Jesu’, p. 196, who points to the connections of Neh. 5 to Isa. 58.

149. Against Beuken, ‘Servant and Herald’, p. 415: ‘The Self-Presentation of the Prophet’ (61.1–3a).

150. Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62’, p. 132 n. 60: ‘The bias of this re-reading: God instead of Cyrus did this by the agency of the “I”!’

The series of infinitives which Tritio-Isaiah derived from 42.7; 49.5, 6, 8, 9; 50.4,¹⁵¹ and which is dependent on שלח as the central concept of prophetic commissioning, receives greater emphasis through the phrase בשר עניים, in which the prophet puts the theologically important בשר (40.9; 41.27; 52.7) in the service of social ethics. As the further development of the commissioning shows, the concern here is for those disillusioned by the reality in Jerusalem, because they are the ones suffering from the economic developments. The surprisingly sharp tone in 61.1-3 compared to the radiant vision of light in chap. 60 may also stem from criticism voiced about Tritio-Isaiah's vision of the future placing the cultic center of the nations in Zion, which would logically lead to an enrichment of those who serve in the cult. Would it not be the priests and the upper class alone who would profit from the gifts of the nations, so that only the rich would get richer?¹⁵² In answer to this skepticism Tritio-Isaiah emphasizes that Zion as the cultic center of the nations would mean that the poor and oppressed would be liberated and that foreigners would call them 'priests of Yhwh' and 'servants of our God'. They would no longer serve the foreigners; instead the foreigners would be their herdsmen and tend their vineyards!

When Tritio-Isaiah speaks of liberty for captives (לשבוים דרור) and 'opening' of the bound (לאסורים פקח-קוח), he compares the economically oppressed and impoverished of his time with the earlier exiles in Babylon¹⁵³ (אסיר/אסורים, 42.7; 49.9). Just as Yhwh could snatch the captives (שבי) away from the Babylonians (49.24-25), even now he can snatch the debt-slaves away from greedy exploiters.¹⁵⁴ That Tritio-Isaiah actually has this identification in mind is indicated in the combination פקח קוח, alluding to 42.7 with פקח (cf. 42.20) and to 49.24-25 with קוח (the root לקח occurs four times)!¹⁵⁵

When דרור is announced to the captives, the term suggests the release from indebtedness that was designated for the Sabbath year or year of Jubilee.¹⁵⁶ That Tritio-Isaiah actually had in mind such a

151. See Beuken, 'Servant and Herald', pp. 416-17; Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 205.

152. Cf. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 74 n. 230.

153. The Masoretes understood לקח as a noun derived from לקח: The strong connections of Tritio-Isaiah in chap. 60 to 49.4-26 are continued here; for further discussion of פקח קוח see Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 106 n. 283.

154. Cf. Lev. 25.10; Ezek. 46.17; Jer. 34.8, 15, 17.

155. Beuken, 'Servant and Herald', p. 429.

156. Against Steck, 'Der Rachetag', p. 106ff., for whom the absence of a specific 'enemy' (but see pp. 109-10) is an occasion for a redaction-historical hypothesis.

release from imprisonment or slavery for debt can be seen in his new terminology, 'year of Yhwh's favor', in which שנה is reminiscent of Lev. 25.2-7 and Deut. 15.1-6, and רצון, of Isa. 49.8 (בעת רצון). He interprets his source in 49.8 as signifying that the time of divine favor necessarily brings with it liberation from oppressive economic dependence. To reinforce his demands, against which he must have encountered considerable resistance from lenders and profiteers, he then announces (*waw explicativum*) יום נקם לאלהינו. This 'day of divine vengeance' is for all those who oppose the liberation of impoverished citizens. As with the singular expression 'year of favor', the poetic creativity of Trito-Isaiah is also to be recognized in the expression 'the day of vengeance for our God'. He presents his source in 49.8, which spoke of a יום ישועה, in such a way that salvation is no longer for Israel as a whole, but comes only to those who do not block the liberation of the enslaved. When the prophet does not call by name those who are the target of divine retribution, this is almost required for his purpose, which is that those opposing economic liberation be persuaded to relent. It is hardly surprising that the outcome was not a success, as Isaiah 58 shows: Ethical demands relating to the pocketbook usually fall on deaf ears!

In Trito-Isaiah's unique literary creation, the divine 'day of vengeance' coupled with an expression of comfort (נחם), he makes reference not only to the message of comfort in 40–55,¹⁵⁷ but also to 1.24, where Yhwh as אלהים מצרי¹⁵⁸ threatens his enemies with vengeance: וְאִנְקָמָה מֵאֹיִבַי (ni).¹⁵⁹ Trito-Isaiah updates this word from the Isaianic tradition in terms of the social wrongs of his time, applying the message of comfort for the exilic community or the returned *golah* 'to all who mourn', i.e., to those who are rightly disillusioned by the development of Zion, as a glossator emphasizes with לְשׁוֹם לְאַבְלֵי צִיּוֹן.¹⁶⁰

In the phrase the 'vengeance of *our* God', 'our' means those who are disadvantaged. Against their apprehensions it is stressed that the imminent transformation (תַּחֲתָה) of Zion from a deserted and isolated city to a scene of endless joy (60.15) also means the reversal of their living conditions (תַּחֲתָה three times in 61.3). This series of substitutions

157. נחם in: 40.1; 49.13; 51.3, 12, 19; 52.9.

158. Cf. 61.1, 11: אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה.

159. Thus Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 216 n. 57: 'Can it be entirely coincidental that the roots נחם ni. and נקם ni. from Isa. 1.24 are also to be found in reverse order in Isa. 61.2?'

160. Thus Koenen, 'Textkritische Anmerkungen', pp. 567-68; on the other hand, Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', pp. 205-207, sees 'a deliberate ellipsis' (p. 206) in the syntax here.

functions in a similar way in 3.24, which Jüngling points out: 'There a state of happiness is replaced by misery and sorrow. The change in situation is marked by the change of clothing.'¹⁶¹ Trito-Isaiah's reference back to 3.16-26 is shown in the adaptation of 'headdresses' (פארים, 3.20; cf. 3.18: תפארת) to 'turban' (פאר) and 'mantle over-coats' from 3.22 (מעטפות) to 'mantle wrap' (מעטה). Since the root אכל ('mourn') is not found in 40-55 it is probable that Trito-Isaiah adopted it in 61.2-3 from the emphatic conclusion in 3.26.¹⁶²

But these do not exhaust the reflexes of Isaianic texts in Trito-Isaiah. The naming at the close of the תחת-series, 'they will be called oaks of righteousness, plantings of Yhwh for his glorification', is clear proof of that. The parallelism in syntactic structure and in terminology between 1.26 and 61.3 cannot be denied. Apart from Qoh. 3.16, הצדק is part of a construct phrase only in these two places, in both verses as a complement of the verb קרא.¹⁶³

1.26:	אחרי-כן יקרא לך עיר הצדק קריה נאמנה
61.3:	וקרא להם אילי הצדק מטע יהוה

For Trito-Isaiah, the Isaianic prophecy is fulfilled by the transformation of the sinful city to the עיר הצדק through the fact that the mourners of Zion prove to be 'oaks of righteousness'. Trito-Isaiah discovered the 'oaks' in 1.29-30 and creatively associated them with the concept of 'righteousness' from 1.26; if the inhabitants of Jerusalem had previously run to their doom through an idolatrous tree cult, among other things, now in this respect too the leaf has changed fundamentally. The faithful are now the 'oaks of righteousness', far from any idolatry! If this connection to 1.29-30 is correct, then Rendtorff's idea of connecting the designation in 60.14 (עיר יהוה) with that of 1.26 (עיר הצדק) takes on a new plausibility.¹⁶⁴

In the same way that Trito-Isaiah got his new creation of 'oaks of righteousness' from Isaianic references, the phrase in apposition to it, 'planting of Yhwh' (מטע יהוה) appears as the 'planting of his delight' (נטיע ששועי) in 5.7. In contrast to his source, however, he prefers מטע in order to achieve a play on words with מעטה!¹⁶⁵ The use of the vegetation metaphor 'planting of Yhwh for his glorification'

161. Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 211.

162. Thus Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 212.

163. Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 212.

164. Rendtorff, *Das Alte Testament*, p. 220; Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', pp. 202 n. 12; 215 n. 53.

165. Thus Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 217: נטיע only in Isa. 5.7; 17.10, 11; Job 14.9; מטע in Isa. 60.21; 61.3; Ezek. 17.7; 31.4; 34.29; Mic. 1.6.

also suggested itself since Trito-Isaiah had mentioned trees already in 60.13a, based on 41.19b, in the magnificent arrangement (לפאר) of the Jerusalem temple precincts. In 61.3b the metaphor goes a step further. Those who had suffered from the downturn in postexilic times but still held fast to Yhwh are called 'a planting of Yhwh for his glorification' (להתפאר).

In 61.4–9 Trito-Isaiah sketches out the future results (imperfects!) of the transformation in 61.3 (תחת). In addition, he draws on 54.3 'in chiastic correspondence'¹⁶⁶ with 61.4. There are found the former mourners to whom the one-time promise applied: 'Your seed will succeed as rightful heir (ירש gal) to the nations, will settle ruined cities'.¹⁶⁷ He thereby also underlines that those still living in oppression and dependence are the true children of Zion. As 'sons of the ruined one' (בני שוממה, 54.1) they will rebuild the ancient ruins (שוממות 61.4) and Jerusalem's countryside no longer will be called שוממה (62.4). Thus Trito-Isaiah also interprets 49.19, where Zion's ruins and desolation (שוממות) are said to be too narrow for the growing number of their inhabitants. The transfer of the 'devastated inheritance' (להנחיל נחלות שוממות, 49.8), held out in prospect of the 'time of favor' and the 'day of salvation', has now begun. With the removal of the 'devastation' by the refurbishing work of the 'oaks of righteousness', Trito-Isaiah brings to a conclusion a theme that began in 1.7 ('Your land is devastated [שוממה], your cities burned, strangers devour your land [זרים אכלים] before your eyes'), and is continued in 6.11, where Yhwh answers the prophet's question 'How long?' about the people's stubbornness by saying, 'Until...the land is utterly desolate' (הארמה תשאה שוממה).¹⁶⁸

What taking possession of the nations means in concrete terms, at the close of 54.3b, 'is developed in a complex midrash in 61.5–7'.¹⁶⁹ To this end, Trito-Isaiah refers first to 1.7 and emphasizes the end of all foreign exploitation.¹⁷⁰ The often noted change to second-person address in 61.5 gives no cause for a literary-critical separation, considering the donor text 1.7 (fourfold 'your').¹⁷¹ There, *foreigners* live from *your* fields; here, *foreigners* will guard *your* flocks! But this does

166. Lohfink, ירש, *ThWAT* III, p. 985.

167. 'Dein Same wird die Rechtsnachfolge (ירש gal) von Völkern antreten, wird verwüstete Städte besiedeln.' Lohfink's translation, ירש, *ThWAT* III, p. 985.

168. Also Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 6', p. 79.

169. Lohfink, ירש, *ThWAT* III, p. 985.

170. Jüngling, 'Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit', p. 217.

171. Against Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 481, who ascribes 61.5–7a to a redactor; see the discussion by Kellermann, 'Tritojesaja', p. 54 n. 36.

not exhaust the thrust of the oracle, since it is not only or even primarily about the end of dependency, but beyond that, is about the new status of those mourning in Zion. Foreigners will carry out the profane work of agriculture, while they are able to devote themselves to priestly activity—and live well from it! They no longer have to sweat in the fields and pay tithes to the priests; instead, they will profit from the work of foreigners and the foreigners will call them ‘priests of Yhwh’ and ‘servants of our God’ (61.5a). In this way Trito-Isaiah clearly alludes to the vocational identity of Israel as מַלְכָּה נְהִיָּים (מלכה נהיים) and גוי קדוש (Exod. 19.6) among the nations of the world, which belongs entirely to Yhwh (כי לי כל הארץ), something that would be professed only in the postexilic period.¹⁷² This programmatic opening of the Sinai scene receives its ‘practical’ implementation in Exod. 24.1-11, where on the one hand the young men of Israel present burnt and communal offerings to Yhwh in an obviously priestly function, and on the other hand, the seventy elders with Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu see the God of Israel (24.9-10).¹⁷³ While Exod. 19.24 itself proclaims the separate existence of Israel as Yhwh’s own people with its priestly function for the nations, Trito-Isaiah now articulates the reaction of the nations to this.

If they bring their treasures and gifts to Zion, it is because they recognize the Zion population as Yhwh’s priesthood *de facto*. If they call those mourning in Zion ‘servants of our God’ (משרתי אלהינו), it is because they identify themselves as followers of Yhwh from the nations.¹⁷⁴ In contrast to Exod. 19.24, Trito-Isaiah does not have ‘Israel’ in mind here, but rather those who are disappointed with the current situation in Jerusalem and are suffering under it. When he ascribes the dignity of priesthood to these mourners, it means above all that they will benefit from the wealth of the nations. Their fear that the gifts of the nations would only make the priestly classes even richer and themselves even more dependent is answered with the promise: You will be priests, and the foreigners will work for you!

Trito-Isaiah’s framing of the topic of ‘priests of Yhwh for the nations’ so much from the perspective of the ‘cui bono’ almost certainly has to do with the actual situation at the time of the restoration of the city, temple and priestly elite. The tax burden to the temple at the expense of farmers and tradesmen appears to have very quickly exceeded tolerable levels; the first chapter of the prophet Haggai gives a good idea of how avidly pressure was exerted on the ‘paying

172. See Perlitt, *Bundestheologie*, p. 172, who refers to Isa. 42.5.

173. Blum, *Studien*, pp. 51-53, 170-72; Blum, ‘Israël à la montagne’, p. 274.

174. Wodecki, ‘Der Heilsuniversalismus’, p. 250.

community.’ Considering the additional tax duties to the Persian administration, the economic emphasis of the vision of the priesthood for the mourners in Zion is quite understandable. Not always merely ‘paying and more paying’, but rather becoming fat on the wealth of the nations (וּבְכֹבֶדָם תִּתִּימְרוּ)¹⁷⁵—now that is a future!

The new economic order in favor of the mourners of Zion comes to its climax in 61.7 where Trito-Isaiah incorporates a reference from 54.3–4. Since the offspring of Zion are the rightful heirs of the nations, Zion will no longer be ruined (לֹא תבוֹשׁ) and need not be ashamed (וְאֵל תְּבֹלֵם) but can forget the shame of her youth (בִּשְׁתַּעַלְמוּיָךְ תִּשְׁכַּח). Trito-Isaiah now interprets this promise in favor of the true sons of Zion. Instead of your [i.e., the mourners’] shame, two things (מִשְׁנֵה) will happen: first they [the foreigners] will rejoice in your lot, instead of insulting you. And what is more (לִכֵּן): in their [the foreigners’] land you will possess (יִרְשׁ) a double portion (מִשְׁנֵה) and have eternal joy (שִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם). Accordingly, not only is Zion awarded the wealth of the nations, but the mourners as ‘priests of Yhwh’ will even receive a second possession in foreign lands. Not only will they grow fat on the wealth of the nations, not only will foreigners work for them; no, they will even receive property in foreign lands, ‘though the land they currently work they cannot even call their own’.¹⁷⁶

In 61.8a Trito-Isaiah turns for a moment from the vision of the future to the present, emphasizing that Yhwh loves מִשְׁפֵּט and hates robbery with burnt offering (שָׁנֵא גֹל בְּעוֹלָה). With this the prophet takes up the cult and justice critique, again in ‘chiastic correspondence’ with 1.10–17 (מִשְׁפֵּט without the article in 1.17 and 61.8 as first and last occurrences of מִשְׁפֵּט in the book and שָׁנֵא in 1.14 and 61.8, both with Yhwh as subject¹⁷⁷). With Zion’s mourners as priests of Yhwh such abuses will no longer happen!

The fact that Trito-Isaiah not only holds out the prospect of reform in the current cult and legal praxis, but also even includes the replacement of the present Zadokite priesthood by the mourners of Zion suggests a connection to the narrative about the replacement of the house of Eli by the Zadokites in 1 Samuel 2.¹⁷⁸ Samuel is presented there as מְשֵׁרֵת אֶת יְהוָה in contrast to the impious sons of Eli (1 Sam. 2.11; 3.1), which has its counterpart in 61.6 with מְשֵׁרֵתִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

175. So Koenen, ‘Textkritische Anmerkungen’, pp. 567–68, who reads תִּתִּימְרוּ (מִרָה) as a secondary form of מִרָא III, ‘to fatten’; cf. the conjecture יִמְרָאוּ in 11.6 (also 1QIsa^a) for וִמְרָאוּ, ‘and fattened animal’.

176. Wallis, ‘Gemeinde des Tritoesaja-Buches’, p. 312.

177. Jüngling refers to this in ‘Die Eichen der Gerechtigkeit’, p. 217.

178. Also Berges, *Die Verwerfung Sauls*, pp. 18–22, 27–30.

The sons of Eli do not know or else disdain the *משפט הכהנים* (1 Sam. 2.13), to which the *אדם משפט* of 61.8 probably alludes. What is quite clear is Yhwh's hatred for 'robbery of the sacrifice', regarding the transgressions of Eli's sons, who demanded their portion 'contrary to custom, from the raw meat, even before the fat was offered on the altar. To be more precise, the offense was primarily regarded as falling in the area of social ethics.'¹⁷⁹ Trito-Isaiah alludes to this when he speaks of *גזל*. It could also be a pun on *מזלג*,¹⁸⁰ the three-pronged fork of 1 Sam. 2.13, 14, with which the sons of Eli fork up their unjust portion. The point of the message is clear: As the sons of Eli lost their priestly office to the Zadokites through their own misconduct, so could the Zadokites in turn lose it to the mourners of Zion! They will not get their reward as the sinful priests did, but Yhwh will give them the reward of faithfulness and will make an eternal covenant with them. With *ברית עולם* and *פעלה*, Trito-Isaiah references 40.10 and 55.3, and applies the entire message of chaps. 40–55 to the mourners of Zion.¹⁸¹ The Ebed's reward, which he knew was secure with Yhwh (49.4), is as certain (*באמה*) for Zion's mourners as it is certain that the Ebed also brings justice to the nations (*לאמה*, 42.3). The eternal covenant no longer applies, however, to the whole Zion population as in 55.3, but only to those who are disillusioned by the developments in Zion and are among the 'losers'.

It is no accident that covenant-making, giving of the spirit, and prophetic office are promised to a group in 59.21.¹⁸² It will be seen that the 'repentance redactors' of 56.9–59.21 wished to conclude by emphasizing that the promises of 60–62 applied to them in particular.¹⁸³

The statement—following the 'eternal covenant' with the Zion population—that unknown nations (*לא הרע*) would hasten to Zion (55.5) was reversed by Trito-Isaiah so that it is the descendants of the new priesthood that will become known among the nations (*ונודע* (בגוים זרעם)). Everyone who sees them will acknowledge that they are *זרע ברכ יהוה* ('a seed Yhwh has blessed', 61.9). When Trito-Isaiah uses

179. Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis*, p. 112.

180. If the reference to the rejection of the house of Eli in 1 Sam. 2 is correct, then *פעולה* is absolutely to be maintained and not changed to *בעולה* (LXX, Syr, Targ) or even *בעולה* (robbery of the married woman [Zion]; so Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 116 n. 347).

181. See Beuken, 'Servant and Herald', p. 431; Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIA*, p. 213.

182. Cf. Gosse, 'L'alliance', p. 117.

183. Cf. how the servants are later called 'seed of those blessed by Yhwh' in 65.23 (cf. 65.8, 16); they are descendants of the fallen oak (6.13), the suffering servant (53.10), Zion (54.3) and its new priesthood (61.9).

the combination of זרע and צאצאים for 'descendants',¹⁸⁴ he refers back to 44.3, where both terms are used in the context of the outpouring of the spirit. The descendants of the mourners of Zion will be endowed with the spirit forever, as 59.21 explicitly maintains! 48.19 also stands in the background here: the group of mourners are the true seed (זרע) and enduring shoots (צאצאים) of the people of God.

Prompted by the expression 'a seed Yhwh has blessed' in 61.9b, which the servant community relates to itself, they begin singing a 'thanksgiving song' in 61.10–11 in the first person singular in which they both take up the 'I' of Zion from v. 1¹⁸⁵ (see v. 3: ששון/תהלה), and also create a bridge to the divine joy over Zion in 62.5. If the MT 'your sons' (בניך) is original, it reinforces this interpretation. The servants see themselves as the true sons of Mother Zion.

The opening of the song שש אשש ביהודה תגל נפשי באלהי is derived from Ps. 35.9.¹⁸⁶ The similarity is so great and so concentrated in these two places that a random agreement is very improbable.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, Koenen has pointed out that of the 35 words in 61.10–11, a total of 19 also appear in the immediate context, suggesting that these verses were composed as a link between Isaiah 61 and 62.¹⁸⁸ Thus in 61.10 the terms 'righteousness/salvation' from 62.1 are now connected to the priestly conceptual world stemming from 61.4–9, with the mention in v. 10 of a special type of clothing (see especially Exod. 28.41: 'You shall put them on [לבש] your brother Aaron and his sons, and anoint them [משח] and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests [כהן]). The prophetic group of tradents interpreted the Trito-Isaiah's statement in this way: When

184. צאצאים only in Isa. 22.24; 34.1; 42.5; 44.3; 48.19; 61.9; 65.23; and Job 5.25; 21.8; 27.14; 31.8 (cf. Sir. 47.20); see Gosse, 'L'emploi de *šyym*', pp. 22–24.

185. The Targum views Jerusalem as the subject, from 60.10; Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, pp. 204–205; cf. Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62', pp. 133–35: 'it is a praise-song of Zion that summarizes Isa. *60 and (!) 61 and constitutes a solemn close to this extended Deutero-Isaianic book'; Beuken, 'Servant and Herald', pp. 413–14, 432–34, sees the prophet as the speaker; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 87: 'clearly Trito-Isaiah himself'; Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 118–22, assigns 61.10–11 to his redactor; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 482–83: 'la communauté des justes.'

186. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 122: only at these two places is נפש the subject of גיל; גיל - שש - ב (divinity) only here as well.

187. In contrast, Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 88.

188. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 121; see especially ישועה/שע (61.10; 62.1); צדקה/צדק (61.3, 10, 11; 62.1, 2); תפארת/פאר (61.3, 10; 62.3); משרש/ששון/שש (61.3; 61.10; 62.5); חתן/כלה (61.10; 62.5); 'clothing' מעטה/מעט II/מעיל/בנד/צנוף (59.17; 61.3, 10; 62.3); ה/גוים (61.9, 11; 62.2).

Zion's mourners have replaced the corrupt priesthood ('robbery of the sacrifice'), then Yhwh will wrap Zion itself in the priestly garments of salvation and righteousness. This idea of clothing Zion was already anticipated by 52.1 (לבשׁי בגדי תפארתך).

The continuation of the thanksgiving song in 61.10b shows that the servant community did indeed understand the prophecy of Trito-Isaiah in a priestly context, with the terms 'bride/bridegroom' coming from 62.5: 'As a bridegroom wearing the priestly turban (כחתי יכהן פאר), and as a bride adorning herself with jewels (ככלה תעדרה בליה)'.¹⁸⁹ Here the notion of a 'priestly future' (61.4-9) has been united with that of a future marriage celebration (62.4-5). Once this is recognized, כהן in 61.8 no longer appears to be a mistake for כיין or כינון¹⁹⁰ but rather is a meaningful incorporation and interpretation of 61.1-3, 4-9.¹⁹¹ It is the key word 'turban' (פאר) that represents both the contrast between joy and mourning (61.3; cf. Isa. 3.20; Ezek. 24.17, 23) as well as priestly clothing (Exod. 39.28; Ezek. 44.18); this covers all the occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. In 61.10 the two semantic fields are combined: Zion's transition from sorrow to joy (61.1-3) is expressed in the declaration that it is 'like a priest'¹⁹² wearing a turban and like a bride adorned with her jewels.

This transformation of Jerusalem into a place of righteous cultic activity is not restricted to Jews alone, but has worldwide consequences, with צדקה and תהלה springing forth before all the nations. They do not strike like lightening from heaven, but only slowly grow, as the three-fold צמח underscores. This growth metaphor draws from the familiar 'Shower, O heavens' found in 45.8—only in these two places does צמח hi. occur together with צדקה not in a creation-theological context (cf. צמח hi. in 55.10) but in a sociological setting. The new social order of Jerusalem initiated by Yhwh in favor of the mourners of Zion will slowly but surely (i.e., as surely as earth and garden bring forth plants) bear fruit worldwide. Once the 'oaks of righteousness' with their 'mantle of praise' (מעטת תהלה, 61.3) are established, then Yhwh will let 'righteousness' and 'praise' grow before all nations! Can it be a coincidence that in the thanksgiving song of the servant community תהלה follows two occurrences of צדקה, just as תהלה in 62.7 follows two occurrences of צדק in 62.1-2?

189. So Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, p. 625; cf. 49.18, where Zion is to wear her returning children like jewelry (כי כלם כעדי תלבשי ותקשרים ככלה).

190. Also Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 120 n. 371.

191. Cf. 1QIsa^a which reads ככהן ('as a priest'), and the Targum וכהנהא רבא ('as the high priest').

192. 'Priestergleich': Buber's translation, *Bücher der Kündung*.

The תהלה of 61.11 is clearly related to 62.7, where the ‘watchmen’ are reminded that they should grant Yhwh no rest until he has made Jerusalem בִּצְרֵן תהלה. Thus it is natural to suppose that the servants understood themselves as the ‘watchers’ and ‘reminders’ of which 62.6 speaks.

7.3.3. *Trito-Isaiah in Isaiah 62*

There is general agreement that vv. 1-7 belong to the core Trito-Isaianic text.¹⁹³ It is less unanimously but still widely accepted that the divine oath in vv. 8-9 is a redactional addition, a position that is also adopted here.¹⁹⁴ The unusual character of the closing verses 62.10-12 is undisputed, though their function and authorship are sharply debated. The obvious literary borrowing and actual quotes from chaps. 40, 48, 49, and 52 do not speak *ipso facto* against Trito-Isaiah’s authorship, since he did in fact work in a unique way as a ‘literary’ prophet. Since neither language nor content argues definitively against Trito-Isaianic authorship, Koenen’s conclusion may be followed here: ‘Isaiah 62.10-12 now stands at the end of the composition Isaiah 60–62 in order to bring together the content of these chapters. The Jerusalemites should prepare for the tide of the people and the nations announced in Isaiah 60, because Yahweh has proclaimed the coming of light (60.1) and salvation (62.11).’¹⁹⁵ This view contradicts that of Steck, for whom 62.10-12 is the close of his homecoming redaction, on the same stratum with the bridge-text chap. 35 and the interpolations of 11.11-16 and 27.12-13: ‘Isa 62.10-12, then, is the conclusion and goal of this entire redaction in Greater Isaiah—the completion of the return’.¹⁹⁶ Triggered by the turmoil following the collapse of the Persian Empire and the subsequent Diadochen wars, but still before the year 301 (Ptolemy I in Jerusalem), this homecoming redaction would have been added to the greater book of Isaiah to summon Diaspora Jews to the security of Zion to be present at the judgment on the nations: ‘In the homecoming redaction..., Yahweh’s direct action in the destruction of the nations in world

193. Steck and Koenen are united on this; Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62’, pp. 124-26.

194. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 297; Sehmsdorf, ‘Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte’, pp. 524-25; Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62’, p. 124; Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 128-31, regards only v. 9* of 62.8-9 as redactional, ‘they will praise Yahweh’ and ‘in my holy courts’, which is essentially due to his notion of a ‘cult-free’ Trito-Isaiah.

195. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 136; Lau, ‘Schriftgelehrte Prophetie’, p. 115.

196. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 67; see especially Steck, ‘Jesaja 62,10-12’, pp. 143-66.

judgment is focused on Edom; as a result, the Diaspora can free itself and return safely to Zion, to take on in its redeemed state a unique role among the nations.¹⁹⁷

Apart from the fact that chap. 35 is not only a bridging text in the framework of a greater Isaianic redaction, but also includes a smaller text that serves as the positive counterpart to the portrayal of Edom's disaster in chap. 34, the negative image of the nations which Steck suggests for 62.10-12 is not borne out by the text. A sign should be set up, not *against* the nations but *over* them (הָרִימוּ נֹס עַל הָעַמִּים). And it is not for their destruction, but is 'an eschatological signal..., so that they know that the time has come to begin their pilgrimage'.¹⁹⁸ When it is understood in this way, it can be seen that the prophet Trito-Isaiah has succeeded in creating a worthy finale in 62.10-12, in which he reaffirms one last time the promises of the return of the Jewish Diaspora.¹⁹⁹

One of the most contentious questions of Isaiah 62 is the identification of the speaker in v. 1. Who is it that will not keep silent or rest for the sake of Zion and Jerusalem? For some it is Yhwh²⁰⁰ or the 'messenger of good news'²⁰¹ or 'Trito-Isaiah'.²⁰² For others it is 'the eschatological community'.²⁰³ Or might this ambiguity even be deliberate?²⁰⁴ In the discussion whether 'Yhwh' or 'Trito-Isaiah' or a 'human speaker' has the floor, Michel has introduced the thesis for 61.1-7 that Trito-Isaiah quotes a word of God in v. 1 which he then comments upon in vv. 2-5. Then he again takes up a word of Yhwh in v. 6a and interprets it in vv. 6b-7—and possibly he does the same with v. 8 as a quote with direct speech and v. 9 as prophetic comment.²⁰⁵ This interpretation has not gone unchallenged, but the objections have not been able to diminish the interpretive gain. For one thing, הָשִׁיב is more apt in the mouth of Yhwh (42.14; 57.11; 64.11;

197. Steck, 'Jesaja 62,10-12', p. 161.

198. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 112.

199. Also, Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 115.

200. Targum ('until I accomplish salvation for Zion'); LXX ('until my righteousness goes forth as light'); Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, pp. 626-27; also Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60-62', pp. 126-28.

201. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIA*, pp. 225-26, with reference to 52.7-12.

202. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 458; Volz, *Jesaja II*, p. 251; Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 297-98; Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 122-28; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. 91-93.

203. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p. 69: 'visionary community'; Achtemeier, *Community and Message*, p. 96: 'prophetic community.'

204. Thus Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, pp. 90-95.

205. Michel, 'Eigenart', pp. 215-20, on 62.8-9.

65.6)²⁰⁶ than in that of a human, as is the statement of 1b that the speaker will not be silent until the righteousness of Jerusalem shines forth. In the second place, the quotation thesis explains the conspicuous change from speaking about Zion in v. 1 (3rd person) to direct address in vv. 2–5 (2nd person). In 62.1–7 Trito-Isaiah, as the speaker, draws on a divine word in v. 1 which emphasizes Yhwh's renewed devotion to Zion, as an argument against those who interpret the delay of salvation as discrediting evidence against the prophet's salvation message. The fact that the collective lament in 63.7–64.11 ends with the anxious question whether Yhwh would remain silent (תחשה) in the face of the increasingly precarious situation shows that the problem of the delay of salvation was weighing more and more on the community.²⁰⁷

In 62.2–7, the prophet skillfully interprets the divine word from v. 1. In vv. 2–3 he affirms the saving consequences of Yhwh's steadfast devotion to Jerusalem and Zion: (a) Nations and kings will see the righteousness and glory of Zion; here he takes up the theme of the pilgrimage of the nations from 60.1–3. (b) The city of God will be called by a new name, to be determined by the mouth of Yhwh.²⁰⁸ (c) Zion is the glorious crown, the royal diadem in the hand of God, an allusion to the thematic background in 61.4–9 of Israel as מלכות בהנים, through the word-pair מלוכה/צניף. This connection is less eccentric than it might first appear, considering that the rare צניף²⁰⁹ means 'royal crown' only in Sir. 11.5 and 47.6, whereas in Zech. 3.5 it refers to a 'turban' which is placed on the head of the postexilic high priest Joshua. Trito-Isaiah's intention with these allusions is easily recognized. It is not the high priest that will occupy the top position in postexilic Israel, but Zion, i.e., its 'mourners', are all endowed with royal²¹⁰ and high priestly prerogatives.²¹¹ When

206. Cf. the 'do not be silent' (אל תחש) in the Psalms of lament: Pss. 28.1; 35.22; 39.13; 83.2 (only here and in Isa. 62.1, 6 do שקט and אל דמי appear together); 109.1.

207. When v. 6 in the divine speech of 65.1–7 ('See, it is written down before me: I will not keep silent', לא אחשה, 65.1) draws on 61.2, it is a further clue that Yhwh is the 'quoted' subject.

208. Trito-Isaiah has a special penchant for naming: 60.14 (18); 61.3, 6; 62.4, 12; see Andersen, 'Renaming', pp. 75–80, who regards Isa. 62 as being strongly influenced by the topos of the royal wedding.

209. The related מצנפה always means the 'turban-like headband of the high priest' up to Ezek. 21.31 (thus HALAT, p. 590); Exod. 28.4, 37, 39; 29.6; 39.28, 31; Lev. 8.9; 16.4; Sir. 45.12.

210. The expression עטרת המלכות aims at the king's crown: Jer. 13.18; Ezek. 16.12 (?).

the Zion population is then called עַם הַקֹּדֶשׁ ('holy people', 62.12), this follows along the same lines, assuming an echo of גִּי קֹדֶשׁ from Exod. 19.6.²¹² Although Zion²¹³ has royal/high-priestly duties in store, the language is not about their literal crowning: Yhwh does indeed hold Zion as a royal diadem in his hand (v. 3), but he alone is king (52.7)!

In 62.4-5, Trito-Isaiah undergirds Zion's promised salvation, using the subject of the 'new name' from v. 2 with reference to 54.1-6. The references to the image of the 'abandoned' and 'desolate' woman are clear (עֲזוּבָה, 54.6; 60.15; 62.4; שׁוֹמְמָה, 54.1; 61.4; 62.4). Zion is the 'married one' (בְּעוּלָה) who was still שׁוֹמְמָה in 54.1. This key word is also the reason that Trito-Isaiah did not circumscribe the salvation announcement to Zion in 62.4-5, but rather extended it to the surrounding countryside (אֶרֶץ). שׁוֹמְמָה from 54.1 leads to the subject of the devastated land in 49.8, 19.²¹⁴ Furthermore, the exposition in 61.1-3 makes it clear that Trito-Isaiah had to address the land issue because of the steadily climbing debt of small farmers.²¹⁵

With reference to Isa. 54.1-6 (cf. v. 5: 'For your Maker is your husband, Yhwh Sabaoth is his name'), 62.4-5 also brings in the image of marriage between Yhwh and his bride Zion. The announced 'new name' (v. 2) is now disclosed as חֶפְצִי בָּהּ ('my delight is in her'), which, if there is any reference at all, is a reference to 54.12 (אֲבִי־הַפֶּיַךְ)²¹⁶ and not to the name of the mother of King Manasseh (2 Kgs 21.1). The marriage metaphor comes to a climax in v. 5, which hints at the statement of 54.5 that Yhwh is Zion's spouse, but avoids its explicitness.²¹⁷ 'Indeed, as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you.'²¹⁸ If one interprets בָּעַל not as 'marry', but as 'take possession as

211. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, p. 39, with regard to 55.1-5: 'Third Isaiah repeats this democratization of royal prerogatives (62.3) and carries the process one step further...third Isaiah specifically democratizes the cult (61.6).'

212. See Blum, *Studien*, pp. 170-71.

213. Cf. Andersen, 'Renaming', p. 79: 'It is the people then who receive the crown in v. 3', but Andersen considers the context to be almost exclusively that of 'marriage'.

214. See Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 99, who thinks an influence from 49.8, 19 is likely, though not certain.

215. Cf. Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60-62', p. 127 n. 46: 'The severity of the land problems is shown by the fact that Isa. 62 continues the *b'l* terminology for Zion from 54.1, 6 to refer to Zion's land here!'

216. Lau's suggestion, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. 99-100.

217. The expression יֵשֶׁעַ עַל־ךְ in 62.5 is borrowed from Zeph. 3.17; thus Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 102.

218. Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 428-29.

of a fiancée or a woman',²¹⁹ then the offending image of an incestuous relationship between Zion and her sons disappears. At the same time it eliminates the need to alter 'your sons' into 'your builder', a conjecture that finds no support among the ancient witnesses, represents a *lectio facilior*, and would require the change of the second בעל from plural to singular.²²⁰

If the 'I' in 62.1 is to be identified with Yhwh within a quote of the prophet, it suggests that 'on your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchers' should be interpreted as a quote of a divine word,²²¹ so much the more since in a divine speech in 49.16 Yhwh affirms that the walls of Jerusalem will stand continually before him (חומתֶיךָ נגְדִי תמיד). In contrast, the continuation in 6b-7 with direct address to the 'reminders' can hardly be understood as divine speech if Yhwh had just shortly before vouchsafed the salvation of Jerusalem!²²² Verses 6-7 make sense only if Trito-Isaiah quotes a divine word in 6a to the effect that Yhwh has appointed watchers who, like Yhwh himself (v. 1), do not rest until Jerusalem's announced salvation becomes a reality. When Trito-Isaiah takes up the speech in 6b and speaks directly to the watchers as 'those who remind Yhwh' (הַמְזַכְרִים אֶת יְהוָה), i.e., as those who keep reminding Yhwh without ceasing,²²³ they are likely not heavenly beings but human beings who, like the prophet, should be concerned that salvation would finally dawn. Trito-Isaiah thereby passes on his prophetic task to his circle of disciples. They do not need to remind Yhwh that he must not forget his salvation promises, but rather they are constantly to 'remind Yhwh', i.e., to 'proclaim to him' until he has made Jerusalem a praise in the earth [for all to see]. Only then will there be no need for proclamation! That זכר hi. can mean laudatory proclamation of Yhwh is shown expressly in 12.4: 'On that day you will say: "Praise Yhwh, call upon his name; make known his deeds among the nations, proclaim (הוֹדִיירוּ) that his name is exalted".'²²⁴ It is also no accident

219. HALAT, p. 136, on בעל I.

220. Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 429, refers to the expressions בעלי ירחו (inhabitants of Jericho, Josh. 24.11) and בעלי שכם (inhabitants of Shechem, Judg. 9.46).

221. Thus Michel, 'Eigenart', p. 218; also Delitzsch already, *Jesaja*, p. 630; Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 460.

222. See P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 34, against Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 60–62', p. 128 n. 51: 'These "reminders" also keep the Jerusalem problem continually before Yahweh, so that he thinks of it constantly.'

223. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 125: 'With זכר hi. the direct object is not the person whom one reminds of something or to whom one speaks, but that which is called to memory or made known.'

224. Cf. 26.13; 48.1.

that the beginning of the communal lament in 63.7 takes up the beginning and closing words of 62.6b-7: 'I will praise (אֲזַכִּיר²²⁵) the grace of Yhwh, the glorious deeds of Yhwh.' This collective prayer is related to 62.1-7 in two ways: in its close ('will you keep silent?' 64.11), related to 62.1 ('I will not keep silent') and in its beginning ('I will praise' 63.7), related to the exhortation of Trito-Isaiah in 62.6 ('You who proclaim Yhwh, give yourselves no rest'). The plea for Yhwh's imminent intervention is a prayer of the מזכירים²²⁶ who fulfill the task of Trito-Isaiah.

Trito-Isaiah concludes his prophecy by appealing to the 'watchers' and 'those who remind Yhwh' to prepare the last stretch of road for the returnees (62.10-12). These verses with their mosaic-style incorporation²²⁷ of Isa. 40.3 (פָּנוּ דֶּרֶךְ), 49.22 (רוּם + נֶם hi.), 48.20 (הַשְׁמִיעַ עֵד) and 40.10 (שִׁכְרוּ אֶתֹּו וּפְעֵלְתֹו לִפְנֵי) are the culmination of Trito-Isaiah's references to 40-55 that he adapts to his specific situation. Now it is no longer a matter of preparing a Way of Yhwh, but of preparing a street for the people. Also it is no longer a call to the exiles to leave Babylon, but a call to the 'reminders'²²⁸ to make the last stretch of the way as safe and pleasant as possible for the people on their pilgrimage to Zion. Here Trito-Isaiah turns to his circle of disciples²²⁹ to encourage them to maintain hope, in spite of the reality, in the imminent fulfillment of the promises to Zion. The coming together of the Diaspora Jews with people from the nations was so near that they could already set out to prepare the final segment of the road for those who were approaching. The imperative to pave the way for the peoples is made more precise in two ways: First they should lay out the road (סִלּוּ סֶלֶךְ הַמַּסְלָה); then they should remove the stones from it (סִקְלוּ מֵאֶבֶן).²³⁰ Besides 62.10 where Trito-Isaiah takes

225. Cf. the close of Ps. 45: 'I will proclaim your name (אֲזַכִּירָה שִׁמְךָ) from generation to generation; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever' (v. 18); unlike the two occurrences of זָכַר qal in 63.11; 64.4, 'remember'.

226. If Trito-Isaiah was thinking of the office of the 'Mazkir', the highest court official in the pre-exilic monarchy, he would have seen his group of prophets having this 'state' function in the postexilic period; cf. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 125 n. 401 (bibliography!).

227. Thus Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 134.

228. In the context the two-fold עֲבְרוּ עֲבְרוּ can only relate to the מזכירים and not to the Jerusalem population as a whole (Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 66; Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 132-33).

229. See Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 108 n. 401.

230. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIA, p. 236, thinks of the preparation of the way between the gates of the temple and the temple itself; Steck counters with a critical question ('Jesaja 62,10-12', p. 144): 'What is there between temple gates and

up the image of ‘road construction’ from 40.3,²³¹ later in 57.14 there is again a reference to 40.3, but in a way that is purely metaphorical, quite separate from the idea of literal preparation of a road, referring to clearing out ‘sinful’ conditions (57.17: ‘way of his heart’) in the community.²³²

When Trito-Isaiah adds the charge to raise a sign over the nations (הרימו נס על העמים) in 62.10bβ, it is because the pilgrims from the nations—as opposed to the Jews from the Diaspora—still need an indication of their destination²³³ so they can find their way to Jerusalem. Trito-Isaiah clearly refers to the salvation announcement of 49.22, since נס + רום hi. occurs only in these two references. This interpretation stands diametrically opposed to that of Steck, who contends that the raising of a ‘signal’ would not have been ‘over’ but ‘against’ the nations, and not for their salvation but for their destruction.²³⁴ For this he appeals to the raising of a נס in 5.26; 11.12; 13.2; 18.3 and 30.17,²³⁵ where, however, when there is a verb associated with נס it is נשא and not רום hi. The fact that על in Isaiah 60–62 never expresses the adversative ‘against’ also argues against such an interpretation in the context of judgment of the nations.²³⁶ The burden that Steck loads on the preposition על in 62.10 in order to suggest that the passage is about Yhwh’s judgment of the nations, followed by the return from the Diaspora, is too great, especially since the reference to 49.22 is indisputably the closest one. Though Trito-Isaiah no longer speaks of the arrival and homage of the nations in 62.10, in contrast to 60.1–3,²³⁷ this does not indicate different authorship but is related to

temple in the area of the forecourt that the people could prepare a way, for a street to be laid out, or even stones to be cleared away...?’

231. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 139.

232. The dependency goes from 40.3 to 60.10 to 57.14; Steck, ‘Jesaja 62,10–12’, p. 148 n. 25; Lau, ‘Schriftgelehrte Prophetie’, pp. 109–11; Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, p. 550 n. 66.

233. Thus Couroyer, ‘Le nēs biblique’, p. 13, on Isa. 62.10; cf. Görg, ‘Nes’, pp. 11–17: ‘all in all, one would not be mistaken to see נס first and foremost as an emblem of rule indicating in a substitutionary way, so to speak, the presence of the king or God’ (p. 15).

234. Following Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, pp. 134–35; Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, pp. 66–67; Steck, ‘Jesaja 62,10–12’, p. 153: ‘A signal will then be erected against the nations/over the nations as a sign of their destruction (30.17; cf. 5.26 MT; 13.2; 18.3).’

235. נס in Isaiah: 5.26; 11.10, 12; 13.2; 18.3; 30.17; 31.9; 49.22; 62.10.

236. Lau, ‘Schriftgelehrte Prophetie’, p. 112 n. 418; Isa. 60.1, 2, 4, 5, 7(?); 61.1; 62.5, 6.

237. Thus Steck, ‘Jesaja 62.10–12’, p. 150.

the deteriorating situation of the community. Compared with the ambitious initial vision, now the concern can only be not to allow the gap between the announced time of salvation and the experienced—or suffered—reality to become too great.²³⁸ Verses 62.8-9 are evidence of how modest the salvation visions could be and yet still be able to pass down the great sayings!

Verses 11-12 show that 62.10-12 is not shaped by judgment sayings, but rather by salvation proclamations from 40–55 which include the nations in a positive way. On the one hand, these verses incorporate 48.20 (נִצָּחַת יְהוָה / נִצָּחַת יְהוָה; שְׂמֵךְ + קִצְהָ הָאָרֶץ hi.; אֶרְמוֹ imp.; יְהוָה) and, on the other, they quote 40.10b word for word.²³⁹ For the actual formulation of what salvation (יִשְׁע) means for Zion, Tritio-Isaiah has recourse to 40.10b, taking into account that the masculine suffixes in relation to Yhwh there (*his* reward, *his* recompense) now apply to a feminine subject, בֵּית צִיּוֹן.

Following his penchant for bestowing titles, Tritio-Isaiah closes his proclamation with a final new naming (62.12)²⁴⁰: ‘And they shall be called The holy people, The redeemed of Yhwh; and you shall be called Sought out, a city not forsaken.’ Who will name whom? The parallels with the passive יִקְרָא ni. suggest that יִקְרָא is to be understood as a variation of this impersonal usage. But *who* will receive the new name? The word לָהֶם in this context can only be related to ‘his reward and his recompense’ in 62.11b,²⁴¹ thus to all those from the Diaspora and the nations who appear before the gates of Jerusalem. Then the city receives its final name: דְּרוֹשָׁה עִיר לֹא נִעְזְבָה.

7.4. The ‘Repentance Redaction’ (Isaiah 56.9–59.21)

In the course of Tritio-Isaiah’s argumentation—from the high expectations of Zion’s future salvation (chap. 60), to the emphasis on the reversal of fortune for its mourners (chap. 61), up to the persisting emphasis that Yhwh will not let his project fail (chap. 62)—it was

238. In order to support the thesis of judgment of the nations, Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 67, interprets אֶל קִצְהָ הָאָרֶץ in a military sense, referring to 30.30 (וְהַשְׂמִיעַ יְהוָה אֶת הוֹד קִלְיוֹ), but the connection to the salvation proclamation in 48.20 is much closer, as Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 134, points out.

239. Cf. Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 138: “City which is not forsaken”, but is visited by many pilgrims.’

240. Thus Kiesow, *Exodustexte*, p. 132.

241. Steck’s position of a ‘penultimate greater-Isaianic redaction’ that developed Isa. 56.9–59.21 is accepted here; cf. Steck, ‘Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56–59’, pp. 182–86; Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,9–59,21; 63,1–6’, p. 192; Steck, ‘Der sich selbst aktualisierende “Jesaja”’, pp. 224–30.

already clear that the social reality of Jerusalem and its environs in the middle of the fifth century corresponded less and less as time went by to the kerygma of the prophet. In order not to let his message fail through the course of history, it had to be supplemented or modified according to the new conditions. This is what happened in the text-complex which is now joined to chap. 55, beginning with 56.9 and reaching to 59.21.²⁴² Presumably, Triton-Isaiah's disciples were the authors who not only placed their editorial expansion before their master's message, but also, as already seen in 60.17–22, inscribed themselves in his sayings. In spite of the reality, they clung to his kerygma. Yhwh himself will see to 'peace and righteousness' in city and countryside (60.17–18); he will be the 'eternal light' (60.19–20), and all of Zion's inhabitants will be righteous (60.21–22).

The purpose of their expansion is clearly revealed in the closing verses. Yhwh comes as redeemer (*goel*) only to those who turn away from the sins of Jacob. The promises of the light in chaps. 60–62 apply to them alone; Yhwh makes his covenant only with them and anoints them and their followers with a prophetic spirit and words (59.20–21). The accusations and exhortations serve the goal of moving as many as possible to repent from sin in Jacob, i.e., to acknowledge their guilt (59.9–15a). Yhwh cannot leave this repentance unanswered, and so he readies himself for action against the sinner (59.15b–19). On the synchronic level, there is no question that 63.1–6 presents the result of divine intervention; in particular, the almost verbatim repetition of 59.16 in 63.5 speaks for itself, as well as the incorporation of the motif of Yhwh's clothing, his retribution (נִקְּם, 59.17; 63.4; cf. 61.2), his bringing redemption (59.20; 63.4), and the mention of 'justice and righteousness' (59.15b, 16, 17; 63.1). But on the diachronic level, it is precisely these close connections that argue against these two bracketing texts being assigned to one and the same stratum. Even the prophetic writers of this late phase did not repeat themselves so pedantically. On closer inspection, significant differences can be seen. Thus in 59.16 the divine arm saves 'him', i.e., the helpless oppressed; in 63.5, however, it saves 'me', i.e., Yhwh and his honor. From rescue for the benefit of the stricken community, Yhwh's punishing action is carried out on his own behalf. Moreover, it is obvious that 63.1–6 goes back not just to 59.15b–20, but also to chaps. 60–62,²⁴³ so that 63.1–6 is a rereading of 59.15b–62.12, namely 'as a prophetic answer to the

242. Thus Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 469–70.

243. See the themes of 'coming' (בֹּא) in 60.1; 62.11; 63.1; and 'redeemed of Yhwh' in 62.12; 63.4.

community that laments on Zion and about Zion'.²⁴⁴ Further evidence that 63.1-6 does not belong to the repentance redaction of 56.9-59.21 is provided by the fact that in the former the separation of pious and sinners is irrevocable.²⁴⁵ Another argument against the affiliation of these verses with the repentance redaction is that a greater Isaiah book would hardly have ended at 63.6. By 66.24 things are otherwise, in that it forms a deliberate *inclusio* with 1.31, going back to the final redaction of greater Isaiah, that of the servant community.

Two things are to be noted with the first greater Isaiah redaction, which encompasses the entire book. First, the unity of 56.9-59.21 (except for 58.13-14) is to be maintained, with Steck and against Koenen.²⁴⁶ Second, both the references²⁴⁷ and the interpolations in Proto-Isaiah²⁴⁸ indicate that this 'repentance redaction' in 56.9-59.21 creates the first framework that spans the entire book. Furthermore, the redactors not only managed to position their expansion strategically *before* the light chapters 60-62, but also created a felicitous connection to Isaiah 55. The time frame for this repentance redaction has as *terminus a quo* the appearance of Trito-Isaiah and as *terminus ad quem* the redaction of the servant community (63.1-66.24). In absolute chronology, this means the middle of the fifth century, a time in which social tensions were heightened and the ideological division of Israel versus Israel, i.e., of pious and sinners, assumed harsher features.²⁴⁹ This tension can be clearly discerned within this first greater Isaiah redaction. The offer of salvation, directed to the whole postexilic community and conditioned by a demand for repentance, finds a hearing and followers only within a small group.

244. Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom', p. 161.

245. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 470 notes the radicalizing of the contrasts.

246. The reasons can be seen in Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,9-59,21; 63,1-6', pp. 192-213.

247. See Beuken, 'Isa. 59.9-57.13', pp. 61-62, for the references from 56.9-57.13 especially to Isa. 5 (themes of drunkenness and breach of law); Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 505-11, is of the opinion that the Trito-Isaianic basic text is based on 1.1-2.5; Steck, 'Der sich selbst aktualisierende "Jesaja"', pp. 223-24, offers the following list: (a) 1.21-26/57.3ff.; (b) 1.2, 4/58.1-2; (c) 1.2-3; 6.9-10 ('knowing' statements)/56.9ff.; (d) 3.12b with 8.11 (way of the nations) for 57.14 and as repentance exhortation; (e) 3.13 MT with 5.30; 8.9-10/59.15-20; 63.1-6; (f) 3.14 with 5.1-7 for 56.9ff.; (g) 3.14 נָגַל to 61.8 and 57.1-2; 57.15, esp. 58 (possibly on the basis of 1.10-20).

248. Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,9-59,21; 63,1-6', p. 192, points to 1.27-28; 4.2-6; 29.17-24; 33.14-16.

249. This coincides approximately with Vermeylen's assumption, 'L'unité', pp. 45ff., of a 'formation du "grand livre" d'Isaïe' around the year 480.

7.4.1. *Analysis of the Situation (Isaiah 56.9–57.21)*

The Trito-Isaianic circle of disciples responsible for the composition of 56.9–59.21 succeeds in creating an excellent connection not only to the Zion chapters (60–62) with 59.20–21, but also to the end of chap. 55 with 56.9 onwards. There is no question that the message of Trito-Isaiah in 60–62* was designed with an eye to the growing book of Isaiah. What does remain in doubt, however, is whether chaps. 60–62 were added directly to chap. 55, or whether the ‘repentance redactors’ were the ones who tied Trito-Isaiah’s message in 60–62* and chaps. 40–55 *together* with their expansion in 56.9–59.21, and *at the same time* created the first bridge to the beginning of the Proto-Isaianic collection with 1.27–28.²⁵⁰

The indictment of the ruling class begins with a call to all the animals of the field and forest to come to eat (אָתִּיּוּ לֶאֱכֹל, 56.9)²⁵¹—a stark contrast to 55.1–3, considering the key word connections between the two passages.²⁵² There, *all* who thirst are invited to Zion to drink and eat; here, *all* the wild animals are invited to Zion to eat.²⁵³ This perversion of Zion from a desirable attraction for Israel and the nations to the romping ground of greedy exploiters is made possible on the one hand by the recklessness and negligence of the ‘watchmen’, ‘dogs’ and ‘seers’ (56.10), and on the other hand, by the insatiable greed of the shepherds, who care only about their own gain (56.11). There, Yhwh provides a life without worries; now it is the law of the jungle that prevails.²⁵⁴ With this prophetic indictment, the disciples of Trito-Isaiah deny the claim to leadership by the political and religious elite of Jerusalem, and implicitly assert that claim for themselves. They see themselves as the watchmen whom Yhwh has placed on the walls of Jerusalem (62.6). Evidently they blame the accused of virtually having called for the plundering of Zion, which is quite reasonable against the background of growing disunity among the upper class as a result of greater participation in

250. See under 2.2.1.

251. In 1QIsa^a and 1QIsa^b, 56.9 is connected to what precedes, which according to Oesch, *Petucha*, pp. 221–22, suggests an allegorical interpretation of the ‘animals’ in reference to Isa. 56.6–8; would this have stirred up feelings against the affiliation of foreigners with the people of God, since they devour Israel, like ‘wild animals’?

252. Beuken, ‘Isa. 59.9–57.13’, p. 59: ‘come’ (הֵלֵךְ/אָתָּה): 56.9; 55.1, 3; אָכַל: 56.9; 55.1–2; נָפֵשׁ: 56.11; 55.2; שָׁבַע: 56.11; 55.2; יֵיךְ: 56.12; 55.1.

253. Polan, *In the Ways of Justice*, p. 116, calls attention to the emphasis on אָכַל and בָּל.

254. Cf. Beuken, ‘Isa. 59.9–57.13’, p. 61.

the Persian establishment in Jerusalem.²⁵⁵ As long as their own interests are not touched, they look idly on the 'devouring' of Zion; and when it comes to their own advantage, they are insatiable.²⁵⁶ This accusation is clearly borrowed from Jer. 12.9-11,²⁵⁷ builds on the 'vineyard' sayings of Isa. 3.14; 5.1-7,²⁵⁸ and also has chap. 53 in view, which documents very well the greater Isaiah interests of this redaction.²⁵⁹ The redactors read and expanded on the greater Isaianic tradition and other prophetic texts (cf. Ezek 34!) in the light of their own social experiences. Whether they sought to update the 'Isaiah of the book',²⁶⁰ or to somehow throw the prophetic mantle around their own shoulders, is a question to be answered in favor of the latter alternative, in my view, with recourse to 59.21 (!) in particular.

The incorporation of 53.6 is particularly noteworthy here. In that verse, faced with the servant's fate, kings confessed that they had gone astray like *sheep* and that each had gone his own way (אִשׁ לְדַרְכּוֹ פָּנִינוּ). Now even the *shepherds* of God's people themselves are accused of this (בְּלֹם לְדַרְכָּם פָּנִינוּ, 56.11). But their path is not that of ignorance, but of having no desire to know and of exploitation (cf. 1.21-23!). While foreign kings come to a completely new insight (הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ, 52.15) through the innocent suffering of the righteous (צַדִּיק, 53.11), the leaders of Israel comprehend nothing (לֹא יָדְעוּ הַבָּיִת, 56.11), not even (בְּאֵין מִבֵּיָן, 57.1b) when the 'faithful' are taken away. The insight of foreign kings in the face of the suffering and restoration of Zion stands in contrast to the intransigence of their own leaders in the face of the righteous perishing.²⁶¹ This again confirms in a subtle way the orientation of 56-66 to extend the offer of salvation to all peoples on the one hand, but to limit it only to the righteous, on the other.²⁶²

255. See the grazing of Zion in 56.9-57.3 and the devouring by foreigners of Jerusalem and its surroundings in 1.7.

256. Thus Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 355.

257. Isa. 56.9 // Jer. 12.9; Isa. 56.11 // Jer. 12.10; Isa. 57.1 // Jer. 12.11.

258. Thus Steck, 'Der sich selbst aktualisierende "Jesaja"', p. 226.

259. Against Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 253-54, who thinks of a pre-exilic date of composition, following Volz, *Jesaja II*, p. 208.

260. Thus Steck, 'Der sich selbst aktualisierende "Jesaja"', p. 227.

261. Beuken, 'Isa. 59.9-57.13', p. 61: 'Even the vicissitudes of the Servant have not been able to bring them to repentance.'

262. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 37: 'Because only the righteous participate in salvation, the outsider can be received into the new community and a leader of the chosen people be brought down in judgment.'

To emphasize the hateful wickedness of the national leaders, the author imagines an invitation to an extended drinking binge (56.12), with an eye to 5.1-7, in which 'come!' (אָהוּי) echoes the 'hog-call' to the animals. Now, however, it is about drinking wine and other intoxicating drinks, presumably at the expense of the needy.²⁶³ This accusation picks up on both the Isaianic Woe oracles against drunkards in 5.11, 22, and the threats of the prophet against the drunken priests and prophets (28.7). To denounce the current abuses in postexilic Jerusalem, the students of Trito-Isaiah appeal to the greater Isaianic tradition already at their disposal. The prophetic word of Isaiah remained valid and current in and through them.

The consequences of the unjust conditions are described succinctly in 57.1. The צַדִּיק and אֲנָשֵׁי חֶסֶד perish, and no one cares. It is clear that the fourth EYS provides the interpretive framework for the destiny of the pious and righteous who are carried away, as Koenen points out: 'The writer draws a parallel between the suffering pious and the righteous sufferer to present the fate of his community in the light of the Servant Songs.'²⁶⁴ Those in the postexilic community who are in danger of being crushed by unjust conditions may be certain that they belong to the זֶרַע of the Ebed (53.10) and not to the זֶרַע מִנְאִיף (57.3) nor the זֶרַע מֵרַעִים (1.4!). As for the righteous Job (Job 3.17-19), the situation of the suffering pious is bearable only in the secure hope of ultimately finding the desired rest in death.²⁶⁵ While the lazy leaders love their slumber (שֹׁכְבִים, 56.10), it is the devout who, having been taken away, are resting in real peace in their beds (יָנוּחוּ עַל־מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם). Their resting places are also contrasted to the harlotous beds (מִשְׁכְּבֵךְ) of the idolatrous population of Jerusalem (57.7, 8). Considering the key word מִשְׁכָּב/שֹׁכֵב, the conclusion is inescapable: because of the negligence of sleep-loving leaders (אֲדָבִי לְנוּם), the worshipers of foreign gods freely pursue their activities on their 'beloved beds' (אֲהַבְתָּ מִשְׁכְּבֶךָ, 57.8).²⁶⁶

In 57.3-13 there follows a 'prophetic word against the idolaters with elements of a judicial accusation (direct address, v. 3; interrogation and questions, vv. 4, 11; indictment, vv. 5-10; verdict, vv. 12-

263. לקח suggests this, according to Beuken, 'Isa. 59.9–57.13', p. 61 (cf. 49.24-25; 52.5).

264. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 16; also Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p. 197.

265. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 20.

266. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 79-80; Polan, *In the Ways of Justice*, p. 118: 'watchmen characterized by their slumber and shepherds distinguished by their avarice.'

13)',²⁶⁷ whose formulation is strongly reminiscent of the pride and fall of the daughter of Babylon in Isaiah 47.²⁶⁸ This similarity between the daughter of Zion and the harlot daughter of Babylon underscores to what extremes Jerusalem has gone in the view of the tradents. While the former did not think about the bitter end (47.7), the latter did not think about Yhwh (57.11).²⁶⁹ The incorporation of 'not laying to heart' (57.11 from 57.1), now in a cultic-ritual context, indicates that the true worship of Yhwh cannot be separated from social justice.²⁷⁰ If the charges of idolatrous practices bear strong dtn/dtr characteristics,²⁷¹ it shows how the disciples of Trito-Isaiah are on the one hand in complete agreement with the ruling priestly class in the resistance to foreign cults,²⁷² and on the other hand, how they apply the dtn/dtr tradition to their own situation, especially with regard to the critique of the cult in Isaiah 1–2,²⁷³ along the lines of: Idolatry has always driven us to catastrophe!

It is difficult to make out exactly which syncretistic practices from pre-exilic times might have survived into the postexilic situation. However, that there was such syncretism is undeniable (cf. 65.1-7, 11; 66.3-4, 17).²⁷⁴ When the prophetic community accuses its opponents of foreign cults 'under every green tree' and even of 'child sacrifice', it places them in the ranks of those who had plunged the people of God in disaster in the past.²⁷⁵ The charge of child sacrifice is even more trenchant on a synchronic level because it presents an obstacle to Yhwh's promise that the eunuchs could be sure of a better future than biological sons and daughters (56.5). While Yhwh assures

267. I. Fischer, *Wo ist Yahweh?*, p. 266.

268. Beuken, 'Isa. 59.9–57.13', pp. 55-56; cf. 57.10 ברב דרבך ינעת with 47.9, 12, 13, 15; cf. 57.11 לא שמת על לבך with 47.7; cf. 57.12 ולא יועילך with 47.12; cf. 57.13 צילך קבוציך with 47.13, 14, 15; now also Biddle, 'Lady Zion's Alter Egos', pp. 124-39.

269. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 43.

270. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 461: 'Le respect de Dieu devrait se marquer par un souci de justice à l'égard de sa communauté sainte.'

271. Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 42-44, in particular, points to this.

272. Thus Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 179, against Hanson's dichotomy of visionaries versus theocrats.

273. Cf. 57.3, 'sons of a sorceress' (בני עננה) with 2.6, 'sorcerers' (עננים).

274. Gressmann, *Zeitgeschichtlichen Verhältnisse*, p. 9, already refers to Ezek. 33.24-26; Zech. 10.2; 13.2; Lev. 17.7; Job 31.26-27; Ps. 40.5.

275. For 'child sacrifice': Lev. 18.21; Deut. 12.31; 18.10; 1 Kgs 11.7; 2 Kgs 16.3; 17.17; 23.10; 2 Chron. 33.6; Jer. 7.31; 19.5; 32.35; Ezek. 16.20; 20.31; 23.37, 39; Mic. 6.6-7; Ps. 106.37-38; see also Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, pp. 130-31 (bibliography!).

foreigners that he would accept their offerings in his house (56.7), a segment of the Jewish population goes so far as to sacrifice to idols (57.6–7). While eunuchs and foreigners are assured that they will remain in the covenant (56.4, 6), the adulterous Zion enters into foreign covenants (וַתִּבְרַת־לֵךְ מִדָּם²⁷⁶, 57.8), which suggests, looking back at 28.15, 18, a death-cult covenant.²⁷⁷ Mount Zion (עַל הַר גְּבוּהָ, 40.9) was to be the place from which the liberating message of God's presence is announced and to whose heights (נֶשֶׁאִ) the nations flow (2.2); now the tradents²⁷⁸ can only lament that this lofty mountain (עַל הַר גְּבוּהָ וְנֶשֶׁאִ, 57.7) has become a place of idolatry!

57.13b marks a final contrast between the righteous and most of the population of Jerusalem, following up on v. 13a antithetically and at the same time leading into the salvation message of 57.14–19. While faithless Zion's portion is the 'smooth stones of the valley' (בַּחֲלִיקֵי-נָחַל חֲלָקָה, 57.6a) where libations and child sacrifice take place, those faithful to Yhwh inherit the land (יִנְחֹל אֶרֶץ) and possess the holy mountain!²⁷⁹ Here the goal of 56.9–57.13 to urge repentance becomes especially apparent. There is still time to abandon idolatrous worship and devote oneself to the true worship of Yhwh²⁸⁰—in 63.1–6, there is no longer such an opportunity!

Their analysis of the current situation in Jerusalem includes, besides assignment of guilt, the identification of both cultic and social offenses that involve people and leaders alike, as well as the reference back to the divine word, already known but again brought to bear in 57.14,²⁸¹ where the וַאֲמַר²⁸² is to be rendered with 'but he has said [to you]: Build, build, prepare a way'. With respect to the well-known

276. Read עֲמִהָם; cf. 28.15.

277. Thus P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 84–86.

278. See Odeberg, *Trito-Isaiah*, p. 79, in view of Isa. 57.6, 15: 'The epithets נֶשֶׁאִ and גְּבוּהָ are probably due to the writer's repeated reading or meditation upon Isa.'

279. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p. 187: 'the ironic treatment of the root *nhl* (inherit/wadi) in v. 6 is picked up and resolved in 13b'; Polan, *In the Ways of Justice*, p. 146.

280. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 208; P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 87; Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, p. 550 n. 66: 'The positions, which are still by no means rigid, point rather to an earlier phase of the crisis (second half of the fifth century).'

281. On the common bond of 57.14–21 and 56.9–57.13, see Steck, 'Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56–59', pp. 171–75.

282. According to Beuken, 'Trito-Jesaja', p. 75, וַאֲמַר signals the back-reference.

imperatives of 40.3 and 62.10, the leaders of the community in particular must have known what their task was: it no longer involved the preparation of cleared ground before the gates of Jerusalem to facilitate the pilgrims' entry into the city of Zion, and certainly not the building of a royal road for Yhwh; now it is about the removal of all inner and external obstacles and resistance (מכשול). This especially refers to social (56.9–57.2) and cultic (57.3–13) abuses, in short, everything that prevents God's people from assembling on Zion.²⁸³ The fact that the word for 'obstacle' (מכשול) is probably taken from Jer. 6.21 and the relevant references in Ezekiel²⁸⁴ indicates that the disciples of Trito-Isaiah not only knew the greater Isaianic tradition (8.14!), but also had access to other prophetic writings. Thus the present salvation oracle following the cursing of the sinner is a 'veritable midrash to the events in Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah; here the blows by God are re-evaluated, his anger and his hiddenness (*str*), the rejection of his people and his renewed comforting (vv. 17–18)'.²⁸⁵

Yet the prophetic tradents do not only have recourse to already well-known material. They are themselves bearers and mediators of a divine word, which they introduce in 57.15 with uncommon solemnity²⁸⁶ (cf. 59.21!). They pick up on 6.1 (רם ונשא), 6.3 (קדוש) and 9.5 (שמו/ער),²⁸⁷ in particular, to emphasize the transcendence of Yhwh, but also on the fourth EYS to emphasize the nearness of God in support of the oppressed (רבא, 53.5, 10; 57.15[2x]).²⁸⁸

The transcendence of Yhwh, a cornerstone of the Isaianic tradition, does not mean that God is distant from the shattered and humble, but is virtually a prerequisite for his special closeness to them.²⁸⁹ This salvation oracle is connected to 53.5 and also to 6.10 through the key word 'heal' (רפא, 57.18, 19). Thus in view of 57.18–19 the following emerges: Yhwh will be able to heal the postexilic community only when its members acknowledge—as the kings acknowledged in the face of Zion's suffering—that Yhwh is especially close to their weakest members (2.11–17) and embrace the corresponding social

283. Beuken, 'Trito-Jesaja', p. 76.

284. Steck, 'Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56–59', pp. 174–75; on the other hand, Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 54 n. 277. The connections to the book of Ezekiel were already pointed out by Odeberg, *Trito-Isaiah*, p. 100 (Ezek. 3.20; 7.19; 14.3, 7; 18.30; 21.20; 44.12).

285. Matheus, *Singt dem Herrn*, p. 167.

286. At the same time an argument against the view that 57.14 is already divine speech, according to Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 119.

287. In addition, cf. Isa. 2.11, 17; 12.4; 33.5; 52.13.

288. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIA*, p. 86; P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 71–72.

289. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 363.

consequences. But if they do not come to this awareness and remain obdurate, then there can be no healing for them (Isa. 6.10!).

The comforting words with which Yhwh will bring peace to the community²⁹⁰ are for those who mourn (וַאֲשֶׁלֶם נֹחֲמִים לוֹ וְלֹאֲבֵלִיּוֹ), those who bear the heaviest burden of the unjust conditions on Zion (61.2-3). The prophetic tradents of Trito-Isaiah have learned this lesson well, just as the servant community did when it emphasized that the grief of mourners would be changed to jubilation (66.10) and the comforting in Jerusalem would be boundless (66.13: נַחֵם 3x). Genuine peace²⁹¹ (שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם) and praise on the lips of the mourners are achieved only when the abuses suffered by the most vulnerable are eliminated.²⁹² The divine wrath against his people (קֶצֶף 3x in 57.16-17; see 47.6) finds its limits in the face of the impending destruction of the people whose רוּחַ languishes before God. Given this consequence of his anger Yhwh must comfort and heal. The servants will return to this in their prayer of lament (especially 64.4b-8).

The אָמַר יְהוָה in 57.19b marks the end of the divine speech that began in 57.15. Following is an addition in wisdom style that reflects in general on the characteristics of the רָשָׁעִים as such, without going into their responsibility toward the mourners.²⁹³ There is no further mention of Yhwh's intervention against them in favor of the oppressed, as is also the case in 59.5-8. The writers proceed from a protest against injustice to a didactic reflection on the nature of the wicked,²⁹⁴ who will never have peace (57.21). There is neither hope for Yhwh's intervention nor consideration of the lot of the victims, but only a description of the nature of the perpetrators. Thus it is not the prophetic group, which was in solidarity with the mourners of Zion, that is speaking here.

290. 'Mit Tröstungen ihn befrieden', according to Buber's translation, *Bücher der Kündung*.

291. לְרַחוּק וּלְקָרִיב is a merism (thus Polan, *In the Ways of Justice*, p. 158), not referring to the Diaspora and Jerusalem communities (thus Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, III, p. 205), but describing a peace which includes all the righteous (Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIA, p. 93).

292. According to P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 95, the destruction of the sinner and idolater is aimed at the healing of the community.

293. Cf. Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde*, p. 70.

294. This 'neutral' perspective also argues against a deliberately created literary inclusio of 57.1-2 and 57.20-21, on which Koenen (*Ethik*, pp. 20-21, and *Heil*, p. 81) placed so much value; against that, Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,9–59,21; 63,1-6', pp. 200-201.

7.4.2. *The Final Exhortations (Isaiah 58–59)*

Around these two chapters is an *inclusio* that makes their intent clear:²⁹⁵

58.1b: והגד לעמי פשעם ולבית יעקב חמאתם
59.20: רבא לציון גואל ולשבי פשע ביעקב

While attention is drawn to the offenses and sins of the people of God at the beginning of this section, at the end is the promise that Yhwh will come as ‘redeemer’ to Zion, that is, to those of the house of Jacob who wish to repent. Chapters 58–59 are about the fulfillment of the divine charge in 57.14 to remove the obstacles from the path of the nations (עמי, 57.14; 58.1), (a) by clarifying the fast and Sabbath questions (chap. 58) and (b) by rejecting the complaint that Yhwh is not able or does not wish to intervene to save his own (chap. 59).

Whose task is it to point out the transgressions of God’s people to them ‘in a loud voice’ (58.1), and who is to reject the complaint about Yhwh’s passivity (59.1–3)? It is the prophetic tradents who continue in the greater Isaianic tradition, with clear references to texts such as 1.10–20; 40.1–11; 52; the Servant Songs, and especially chaps. 60–62. Having incorporated, extended, and reapplied the greater Isaianic traditions of Proto-Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah, they have the difficult task of integrating Trito-Isaiah’s vision of the dawning salvation into their theological program. Their solution is that light and salvation can only come to those who consciously take on a stricter ethic that makes the relationship with fellow humans the touchstone of the divine relationship.

The interplay of literary references to texts from the developing book of Isaiah and other prophetic literature, and social realities has been observed repeatedly and can be seen again here. Thus in chap. 58 the tradents take up the prophetic accusations from 1.10–20,²⁹⁶ but do not allow them to lead to a pronouncement of judgment (1.20); instead they use the accusations to support their own arguments. Thus they lay claim to carrying forward the traditions of prophetic accusation in a legitimate way, as the dependence of 58.1 upon Mic. 3.8 and Hos. 8.1 demonstrates. Because the scouts are blind and the watchmen drowsy (56.10), the watcher’s office now transfers to the tradents (cf. Jer. 6.17; Ezek. 33.2–20). The fasting question in chap. 58 points to the postexilic period, during which lament

295. Cf. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 99.

296. In particular, Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 464–65: 1.10//58.1; 1.11–15//58.2–5*; 1.16–17//58.6–7; 1.18//58.8–9a; 1.19–20bα//58.9b–12; 1.20bβ//58.14bβ.

ceremonies were held, with accompanying self-diminution rites, commemorations of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, and calls for Yhwh's speedy intervention to relieve the suffering.²⁹⁷ Since צוֹם, which occurs seven times in chap. 58,²⁹⁸ appears only here in the entire book of Isaiah and thus does not represent a literary reference to the rest of the book,²⁹⁹ this chapter is a strong argument against the view that this section of the book is solely a matter of 'scribal desk work.' Their literary erudition does not make the tradents into 'desk workers'; they are, rather, a group that affiliated themselves with the ethical principles of the eighth-century Isaiah, making their master's vision of light bear fruit for their own situation in the fifth century. As was previously the case in proclaiming the renewed divine presence (קרא 40.6; 58.1), now too, especially given the 'final theophany' (60–62), the sinfulness of God's people (עמי: 40.1; 58.1) must be declared with a loud voice (see 40.9: הרימי בבח קולך and 58.1: הרים קולך).

The offenses to be uncovered, in contrast to those of 56.9–57.13, are not obvious. On the contrary, the tireless ritual efforts of the community appear to speak *in their favor* and *against* Yhwh. The daily (יום) seeking of Yhwh (דרש) and the desire to draw near to God (קרבה) give the impression that they are a nation that practices righteousness (צדקה עשה) and does not abandon the law of its God (לא עזב, 58.2). As Yhwh once again expresses his delight in Zion, according to 62.4 (חפץ ב, twice), here the people of God express their delight in Yhwh (58.2: חפץ, twice).³⁰⁰ It seems quite right that they should ask reproachfully what has gone wrong, that their situation should still be so far removed from the promises in 40–55 and 60–62.³⁰¹ To deny the justification of such questions³⁰² and to see them as evidence of priestly ritualizing to manipulate the deity, detached from any responsibility for other people,³⁰³ misses the point.

In the response of the tradents, it is not ritual fasting that is the focus of their criticism, but the 'self-castigating' (ענינו נפשנו, 58.3a) which disregards the poor (עניים, 58.7). Only when serving God and

297. Cf. Lamentations; Zech. 7.1–14; 8.18–19; Neh. 9.1–2; Ezra 9.5.

298. Isa. 58.3(2x), 4(2x), 5(2x), 6.

299. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIA, p. 105, points this out.

300. Cf. in addition, דרש/עזב in 58.2 and 62.12: לא עזובה.

301. Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 135.

302. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, p. 39: 'In 58.2–5 the use of a number of technical cultic terms makes it clear that third Isaiah regards the official restored cultus as apostate or illegitimate.'

303. Thus Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, pp. 100–113. To the contrary, Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 134 n. 2.

serving humanity are reconciled will Yhwh answer (יהוה יענה, 58.9). To 'torment' one's נפש makes sense only if it is also the impetus for giving one's own נפש for the hungry and satisfying the 'tormented nephesh' (נפש נענה) of the needy (58.10).³⁰⁴ Fasting, which should lead to willing participation in attending to the needs of the poor, instead results in closing one's self off, and that is where the fault lies.³⁰⁵ In contrast, the genuine fast that Yhwh chooses (צום אברהו, 58.5a) leads to sharing of bread, house, clothing, even self, with other people. It is no longer about the exodus from Babylon, but about the exodus from their own egotism!³⁰⁶

Instead, those who are fasting pursue their own interests exclusively, as if the deprivations they took on only made them more aggressive. They act as neither liberator nor liberated on fast days, but as 'slave-drivers', like the taskmasters of Pharaoh (תנשו, 58.3b³⁰⁷). In the event that they change their behavior and work towards liberation from bondage of every kind,³⁰⁸ a personal Exodus experience like that of 52.12 is held out to every individual:³⁰⁹ 'Your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of Yhwh shall be your rear guard' (58.8b). The saying, 'Your healing will hastily sprout up' (ארכתך מהרה תצמח, 58.8a), continues the image of healing from 57.18, 19. The sprouting of healing leads to the restoration of an untroubled relationship with God (ויאמר הני³¹⁰, 58.9a), which brings us to the end of the first part.

The disputation verses 5-9a are followed by a midrash-like interpretation in vv. 9b-12,³¹¹ no longer catechetically exhorting, but now setting conditions. In express terms, the circle of those over whom salvation will dawn (60-62) is restricted to those who remove the yoke from the community, who pour themselves out for the hungry and satisfy 'tormented people' (58.9b-10a): 'in the darkness your light will dawn and your gloom will be as noonday'.³¹² In 58.12 there is again a clear reference to 60.10 and 61.4, but again it is signifi-

304. Cf. the wordplay in Isa. 58 on ענה II (chastise oneself), עני (poor, miserable) and ענה I (answer).

305. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 135.

306. Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 134, coins the phrase 'l'exode sur place' for this.

307. Cf. Exod. 3.7; 5.6, 13-14.

308. In addition, Zenger, 'Israels Suche', pp. 124-27.

309. Gressmann, *Zeitgeschichtlichen Verhältnisse*, p. 30; Zimmerli, 'Zur Sprache Tritojesajas', pp. 219-21; Michel, 'Eigenart', p. 229; Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, p. 38.

310. Cf. 52.6; 65.1.

311. Thus Michel, 'Eigenart', p. 229.

312. זרח: 58.10; 60.1, 2, 3; חשך: 58.10; 59.9; 60.2.

cantly modified: it will not be foreigners who rebuild the ancient ruins,³¹³ but members of their own community (וּבְנוֹ מִמֶּךָ).³¹⁴

On a synchronic level, the subject of the Sabbath in 58.13–14 forms an inclusio with 56.2, 4, 6, and points forward to 66.23–24. Yet these two verses do not go back to the ‘repentance redactors.’ On the one hand, the ethical components, which have played such an important role in chap. 58 up to now, are entirely disregarded. Although Sabbath observance is traditionally given an ‘ethical’ foundation (cf. Exod. 20.10; Deut. 5.12–15), this is not contemplated here: ‘Here in Isa. 58.13, there is no trace of the motive of rest for humankind, so the holiness of the day can be emphasized even more strongly: it is the “holy day”. It is actually called the “holy of Yhwh”, and as such it is “honored”.’³¹⁵ This fixation on יוֹם קֹדֶשׁ, detached from any social engagement in contradiction to the general character of chap. 58, is in danger of attempting to build a relationship with God without bringing in personal responsibility for one’s neighbor. The many literary references of 58.13–14 to the rest of the chapter³¹⁶ are not able to defuse this tension. Moreover, it is not clear why the authors of chap. 58, who are also behind chap. 59, should have weakened the connection between their texts by the insertion of 58.13–14.³¹⁷

The closing אָכַל כִּי פִי יֵהוּה דָּבַר together with the motif of ‘eating’ (אָכַל) from the inherited land appears to be taken from 1.20.³¹⁸ The authors of 58.13–14 sought to combine the exilic and postexilic practice of fasting as part of lament rituals and the Sabbath commandment, ignoring the ‘ethical imperative’.³¹⁹ Thus, it is not impossible but also

313. According to Vermeylen (‘L’unité’, p. 44, and *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 464) the statements about building suggest the time of Nehemiah; in contrast, Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 78.

314. Cf. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 111–12.

315. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 271–72.

316. Cf. חֶפֶץ: 58.13(2x); 58.2(2x), 3; יָמִים: 58.2–5(6x); 58.13 (the 7th time); from that Polan, *In the Ways of Justice*, pp. 181–82, draws the conclusion of its literary unity.

317. In 1QIsa^a, 58.13–14 are clearly demarcated; on that, Oesch, *Petucha*, p. 222: ‘Perhaps because of that, the singular segment 58.13–14 should be particularly emphasized.’

318. Because of the close connections of chap. 58 to 1.1–20 it is worth considering whether the phrase ‘the mouth of Yhwh has spoken’ (1.20bβ / 58.14bβ) may not originally have stood after 58.12; this is Steck’s question, ‘Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56–59’, p. 178 n. 44.

319. Aejmelaeus, ‘Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger’, p. 34: ‘Isa. 58.13–14 is surely an attempt to connect the later inserted Sabbath with the lament about the divine service; so far as we know, the Sabbath is no fast day and therefore has nothing to do with the problem of 58.3–12.’

not imperative that this 'Sabbath interpolation' be placed on the same level with the Sabbath observance by foreigners and proselytes in 56.1-8.³²⁰

The disavowal of the claim in chap. 58 that fasting helps nothing is followed by the dismissal of the allegation that Yhwh either can not or will not intervene to save his community.³²¹ But while the complainants in 58.3a expressed themselves directly, now the complaints are only indirect, suggesting that their position has weakened. The further course of chap. 59 shows how the criticism of Yhwh's passivity changes into a communal lament and confession of sins. Yhwh comes as 'goel' only to those who effect such a change, who rank among those turning from transgression (לְשׁוּבֵי פֶשַׁע, 59.20). The chapter proceeds from the lament over Yhwh's failure to save (מְהִרְשִׁיעַ, 59.1), to the confession of their own guilt, to the recognition of Yhwh as גּוֹאֵל.³²²

With the acknowledgment of guilt as the positive outcome of prophetic accusation the foundation is laid for a renewed relationship with God, but the anticipated salvation has still not arrived. When 59.15a states that 'whoever turns from evil makes himself prey', it describes well the situation of the repentant. Like Job,³²³ the repentant must have the bitter experience that a life of justice, righteousness, and integrity does not pay (v. 14). Their hope is that this situation cannot last. As Yhwh saw the wickedness before the flood and rescued the righteous Noah from judgment, he now sees injustice (וִירָא יְהוָה, 59.15b; Gen. 6.5) and fights for the pious. Does the fact that the weapons used by Yhwh are only defensive mean that he is not primarily concerned with the destruction of the enemy, but with the defense of the pious?

The dismissal of the objection (vv. 1-2) transitions into prophetic accusation (v. 3), which is connected by a bridging verse (v. 4) to a reflection about the futile existence and conduct of sinners (vv. 5-8). Then follows the lament (vv. 9-11), introduced by an explanatory על כֵּן, of those who acknowledge their own guilt (12-15a; cf. 64.4b-6). This acknowledgment does not go unanswered by Yhwh (15b-20), in accordance with the promise of 58.9a.

320. Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,9-59,21; 63,1-6', p. 192.

321. The הָן at the beginning of 59.1 takes up anew the 'See' from Isa. 58.3b, 4a.

322. Beuken, 'Trito-Jesaja', p. 73.

323. In addition, Berges, 'Der Ijobrahmen', pp. 236-40.

As already observed several times, there is an interaction between concrete situations and literary references to texts from the developing book of Isaiah. As the fasting issue in chap. 58 had its historical location in the postexilic situation of Israel, so too did the complaint about the delay of the promised salvation (59.1). In response, the tradents draw on 50.1-2. There, the lament of the Jerusalem population that Yhwh had apparently separated from his bride, Zion, was dismissed with a reference to their sins, as is the suspicion that Yhwh's hand is too short to save (הַקָּצוֹר קִצְרָה יְדֵי מַפְדֹּת). The guilt of the nation no longer serves to justify the punishment of exile, but now is the grounds for the delay of salvation.³²⁴ The thematic inclusio in 59.1, 20 with שָׁעַ and נֶאֱלַל, in association with the incorporation of 50.1-2, also points to 49.26, where 'redeemer' and 'savior' stand beside each other for the first time.³²⁵ Although the indications of guilt are similar in chaps. 58 and 59,³²⁶ there is a significant difference in character. Chapter 58 is about 'how one comes to salvation, while chap. 59 is about why one has not come to salvation'.³²⁷ The implicit complaint that Yhwh does not hear (59.1-2) as well as the answer that their hands are stained with blood (v. 3) refer back to 1.15.³²⁸ The prophetic tradents see their situation in the middle of the fifth century in light of Isaiah of the eighth century: As Yhwh had once intervened with punishment, he now prepares himself for battle again.

The refutation of the complaint about pointless fasting and Yhwh's agonizing passivity opens into a communal lament with a confession of guilt (59.9-15a). Who is behind the 'we'? Is it the prophet who declared his solidarity with the sinful people?³²⁹ Or is this to be regarded as a penitential hymn 'which the people whose repentance the poet is imagining will sing after their conversion, but which the prophet already composes in advance'?³³⁰ According to Koenen, Isa. 59.9-15a is a quotation from the communal lament, 'to lead the people to see the connection between hardship and guilt through

324. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 205.

325. Beuken points this out in 'Trito-Jesaja', p. 73.

326. Cf. 58.4, 6, 9 with 58.3-4, 13-14; Gressmann, *Zeitgeschichtlichen Verhältnisse*, p. 14; also Steck, 'Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56-59', p. 181.

327. Thus Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, pp. 229-30.

328. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 276.

329. Thus Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 412; Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 277; Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, p. 389.

330. Elliger, *Einheit*, p. 17; cf. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, III, p. 221; Steck, 'Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56-59', p. 181.

their own words, and thus bring them to an understanding of the argument of vv. 1-2'.³³¹ But this is not at all about the dtr approach that sees a causal relationship between hardship and guilt; the argument does not proceed from the people's difficult conditions being explained by their own guilt, but from the legitimate question of why the promised salvation has not come. It has not yet come because the transgressions are a barrier (היו מברלים, 59.2) between 'you and your God'. The consequence of sinfulness is not hardship, but the withholding of salvation! The 'we' in 59.9-15a is to be identified with the same people who posed the questions about fasting (58.3a) and who were reproached for their transgressions.³³² They accept their responsibility for salvation being withheld,³³³ and therefore (על כן) take the floor in 59.9-15a.

In contrast to the communal lament of 63.7-64.11 there is still no plea for relief from hardship.³³⁴ Only when those addressed recognize that because of their behavior, צדקה 'stands far off' (מרחוק תעמד), truth (אמת) stumbles in the public square and uprightness (נבחה) cannot enter (59.14), will the barrier fall³³⁵ and Yhwh will be able to come to the שבי פשע in Jacob. This expresses the goal of the 'repentance redactors', to attract at least a portion of postexilic Israel to Yhwh's ethical standards.

And so they offer a brilliant solution to their task of establishing the (theo)logical connection between the promised, ardently awaited salvation (60-62) and the plight of their community: Yhwh comes as *goel* only to those who acknowledge their sins. Once such acknowledgment comes about, as in 59.12, with its unusual collection of terms for sin and guilt,³³⁶ then Yhwh will lose no time in arming himself for battle against the enemy, that is, against those who persist in their sin.

According to 59.20, Yhwh comes as redeemer for those who 'turn away from sin in Jacob.' Yhwh's covenant applies only to these

331. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 60.

332. Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 140.

333. See the spatial emphasis of רחק... ממני (59.9a).

334. Thus Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde*, pp. 100-103, considers the designation 'communal lament' [Volksklagelied] inappropriate and speaks of a 'revival sermon'.

335. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 468: 'La communauté reconnaît sa culpabilité et s'engage ainsi sur le chemin de la conversion. Faute avouée n'est-elle pas déjà à moitié pardonnée?'

336. שבי פשע twice, חטאת, עון; Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 140 n. 1, notes that these terms also surface in Isa. 1.2-4.

(59.21),³³⁷ and it consists in the promise that his spirit remains on them and their descendants, thus bestowing prophetic legitimacy and authority³³⁸ on the Trito-Isaiah tradents.³³⁹ They take up the words of 51.16, acknowledging themselves as successors of the prophet Moses, for their time and for all time. The staccato repetition of זרע three times in 59.21 emphasizes that this group constitutes the promised descendants of the Servant (53.10). Their use of the key words רוח, ברית, and זרע from chap. 61 is not random: They are the 'repentant of Zion', who feel called, as the group endowed with Yhwh's spirit and anointed by him (משח), to establish a just social order.³⁴⁰ Obviously, they had to face heavy opposition from the Jerusalem ruling class, in particular, which profited from the Persian economic and religious policies in Jerusalem and Judah.³⁴¹

7.5. The Redaction of the Servant Community (Isaiah 56.1-8; 63.1–66.24)

In chaps. 65–66 there is an increasingly noticeable split in the postexilic community, along with the simultaneous incorporation of foreigners into the relationship with Yhwh; the latter factor is especially emphasized by the inclusio of 56.1-8 and 66.18-23. Considering also the references to the criticism of the Jerusalem cult from the first chapter, this means that participation of people from the nations in worship pleasing to Yhwh on the Mountain of God is all the more expected. There are linguistic, thematic and pragmatic grounds for assigning 56.1-8 and 65–66 to a common redaction,³⁴² with the motif

337. Cf. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 126-27.

338. Unlike Steck, 'Prophetische Prophetenauslegung', pp. 240-42, who relates 59.21 to the Isaiah of the book: 'We should not expect to see this as the posterity of Isaiah's tradents' (p. 240); but see Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', p. 388 n. 70: 'Does זרע mean the circle of Isaiah tradents here?'

339. According to Rofé, 'The Piety of the Torah-Disciples', p. 83, 'word' and 'spirit' relate to the Torah, which is improbable in view of the admission of foreigners.

340. In contrast, Gosse, *Structuration des grands ensembles*, p. 5, who sees 59.21 as the legitimization of priestly redactors.

341. Briant, 'Pouvoir central', pp. 13-14, stresses how cleverly the Persian central power strengthened the local administrative class who were willing to collaborate, in order to meet with the least possible resistance from the subjugated peoples.

342. Following Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7–66,24', p. 242, who sees in this the final greater Isaiah redaction, admittedly with a somewhat different historical placement.

of 'servants' running through 56.6–66.14, but the assignment of the prayer in 63.7–64.11 and the 'Watchers' Questioning'³⁴³ in 63.1–6 presents an especially difficult problem. It also appears not unimportant that 63.17 mentions the 'servants' (לַמַּעֲבָדִים), a formulation which shows close contact with 65.8 (לַמַּעֲבָדִים). In view of the close parallels to exilic lament ceremonies,³⁴⁴ it is unlikely that the prayer was written *ad hoc* by the servant community for the book of Isaiah. It seems much more likely that the redactors of 56.1–8 and 65–66 adapted an exilic–postexilic source.³⁴⁵ According to Steck, the prayer of lament was composed in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Ptolemy I in 301,³⁴⁶ but archeological and historical evidence for this event is lacking.³⁴⁷ Moreover, such a theory comes under considerable chronological pressure, since it must still accommodate chaps. 65–66 as a successive response to the prayer and especially the subsequent interpolations in the Proto-Isaianic core (including chaps. 24–27; 19.18–25) up to the middle of the third century. In addition, it should be remembered that such interpolations probably occurred only in connection with a new edition of the entire scroll, which brought with it a significant intellectual and financial burden which could not be borne every ten or twenty years, quite apart from the question of whether too frequent revision would not have done the prestige of the scroll more harm than good.³⁴⁸

If we stick with the early postexilic writing of the prayer on the one hand,³⁴⁹ and the middle of the fifth century has already been reached, as we have seen, with the repentance redaction of 56.9–59.21 on the

343. 'Wächterbefragung' is Koenen's term (*Ethik*, p. 76), with a view to 62.6.

344. In addition, I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, p. 256: 'Against a setting just after 586 B.C., the portrayal of the ongoing difficulty without an indirect enemy threat can be mentioned. Because of that, the period after 560 B.C. should be preferred.'

345. Aejmelaes, 'Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger', p. 46: 'Possibly an older, early-exilic psalm was used as a model for the development of our psalm, which would explain the contact with the psalms of lament in the Psalter and the language of psalms.'

346. Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1–8; 63,7–66,24', pp. 233–42.

347. See also the discussion of the interpretation of 63.7–64.11 in 7.5.1.

348. To his own critical question whether a book of Isaiah around the year 300 could have ended with 64.11, Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1–8; 63,7–66,24', p. 242, replies: 'A look at Lamentations overcomes all the difficulties of this problem.' But an Isaiah scroll of 1–64* does not compare with the five chapters of Lamentations in terms of either structure or content!

349. Aejmelaes, 'Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger', p. 49 (between 530 and 520); Williamson, *The 'Book' Called Isaiah*, on Isa. 63.7–64.11, pp. 56–58, favors the parallels to Ps. 106 and Neh. 9.

other hand, then we have the *terminus a quo* for the incorporation of 63.7–64.11. Since no external historical basis can be identified for either its *inclusion* or its original *composition* (!), we must seek the answers in the internal pragmatics of the book, both from a literary and Tendenz-critical point of view. In this respect a look at the confession of sin in 59.9–15a yields immediate results, since in both places there is a ‘we’ that presents itself as speaker. The lexical correspondences, in particular, in contexts that are in large part quite different, show that the two ‘we texts’ do not belong to the same hand; instead the latter, 63.7–64.11, depends loosely on the former.³⁵⁰ Here the בלנו takes on great importance. The collective prayer of lament in 63.7–64.11 attempts once more to summon the unity of the postexilic community (‘we all’) against an impending split into those desiring to repent and those holding on to their sins (59.20)—without success, as chaps. 65–66, the personal possession of the ‘servant community’, emphasizes in no uncertain terms! In so far as the servants hide behind the ‘we’ of the prayer of lament of 63.7–64.11, they show themselves in solidarity with the postexilic community (‘we all’), but on the other hand make it known by Yhwh’s (!) response in 65.1–3 that the division of God’s people into sinners and pious arises not from their own fanaticism, but rather as a result of Yhwh’s decision. If the final greater Isaianic redaction, with a view to 59.9–15a, placed the prayer of communal lament in 63.7–64.11 before the divine response in chap. 65, the same can be assumed of 63.1–6, with a view to 59.15b–20, resulting in a good frame for the ‘light chapters’.

59.9–15a: Confession of sins by the ‘we’

59.15b–20: Yhwh’s preparation for battle against sinners

60–62: LIGHT and SALVATION

63.1–5[6]: Yhwh’s victorious return from the battle against sinners

63.7–64.11: Confession of sins by the ‘we’

There is no need to clarify that 59.15b–20 and 63.1–6 form a bracket around the light chapters 60–62;³⁵¹ it is improbable that they belong to one and the same stratum.³⁵² If Isa. 59.15b–20 is about limiting the promised salvation to those who willingly turn away from sin, the

350. 59.9 and 64.2 (נִקְוָה); 59.10, 14 and 63.13 (בִּשְׁלֵ); 59.11 and 64.5(2x), 7, 8 (בִּלְנוּ); 59.12 and 64.4 (וְחַמְאֻתָּיו עֲנָתָה בְנוּ); 59.13 and 63.8 (שִׁקָּר).

351. See the lexical correspondences of אֵין אֵישׁ: 59.16a; 63.3a; סִמֵּךְ: 59.16b; 63.5b; זָרוּעַ: 59.16b; 63.5b; שָׁמֵם (htpol.): Isa. 59.16a; 63.5a; נָקָם: 59.17b; 63.4a; תִּלְבַּשְׁתָּ/לִבְשָׁה/לִבֹּשׁ: 59.17(3x); 63.1.

352. See Vermeylen’s discussion, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, pp. 469–70; according to Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 84, both texts stem from the redactor of the Trito-Isaianic book.

sharper tone and bloody images of 63.1-6 indicate that the inner-communal tensions between pious and sinners have increased to the extent that the latter have been identified with the arch-enemy 'Edom'.³⁵³

While the implementation of justice and salvation dominated in 59.15b-20, in 63.1-6 divine anger stands at the center.³⁵⁴ The 'justice agenda' of the 'repentance redaction' became increasingly isolated socially, and reducing the salvation offer of 60-62 to those who repent would not satisfy for long as an answer to the painfully felt 'salvation gap'. The conversion of the penitent had to be followed by punishment for those who would not let go of the sins of Jacob! Disillusionment over the political failure to provide 'comfort for those mourning in Zion' is vented in 63.1-6 in the form of divine judgment on the enemies of Yhwh. The enemies have not changed from those of 59.15b-20, but the aggressiveness of the victims has; the hope for the implementation of justice, for the recognition of Yhwh by the nations, and for the coming of his glory driven by his spirit as swiftly as water in a thundering wadi³⁵⁵ has given way to angry resignation that Yhwh will trample the enemy in the winepress of his wrath. No other purpose is now in view than the destruction of the enemy, which means their own countrymen.³⁵⁶ The MT of 63.6 appears to contradict this, with Yhwh trampling 'nations' (עַמִּים) in his anger. But the solution is not so simple, as indicated by the LXX with its neutral αὐτοὺς, which can apply only to those persisting in sin, in view of the parallels in Isa. 59.15b-20. The 3p suffixes of 63.3aβ,b do not refer to slain Edomites, for Yhwh comes 'from Edom' and not 'from' the destruction of Edomites. It is not about a judgment of Yhwh upon Edom,³⁵⁷ but in Edom. In 63.3, 1QIsa^a offers וְעַמִּי ('and no one from my people was with me') in place of בְּעַמִּים ('and no one from the peoples was with me'), which reveals once again the attempt to make the nations the object of divine judgment. This bias

353. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 86; Mathews, *Defending Zion*, p. 167: "'Esau" is represented not by the inhabitants of Edom, but by a certain portion of the post-exilic community.'

354. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 84.

355. For a discussion of 59.19b with regard to the search for the proper subject of בָּוִי and the assignment of the final בִּי, see Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 69-71; recently, Rofé, 'Isaiah 59:19', p. 409.

356. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 87: 'Destruction is announced to the unrepentant Israelites in the traditional language of judgment theophany.'

357. So Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom', p. 159; also Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 79; Koenen, *Heil*, p. 83 n. 8, emends with reference to Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,9-59,21; 63,1-6', p. 210.

is displayed already in Isa. 59.18b, with לְאֵיִם גְּמוּלָה יִשְׁלַם ('to the coast-lands he will render requital') as a clarification of זָרִיִּי and אֲשֵׁרִי, a gloss that is lacking in the LXX.³⁵⁸ The identification of the sinners with Edom in 63.1–6 has its historical basis in the collapse of Judah's neighbor to the southeast toward the end of the fifth century, probably from Arab invasions. It was an event which, like the earlier defeats of Assyria and Babylon, would not escape comment in Israel. As the external enemies of Zion and God's people had been destroyed by Yhwh for all to see, the internal enemy could also expect that certain end! Furthermore, in view of the Jacob and Edom themes of 59.15b–20 and 63.1–6, the wordplay of אֶדְוִם ('Edom') and אֶדָם ('red') in 63.1, 2 takes on a deeper meaning. Those people of Jacob who do not repent of their sins will lose their birthright as Esau did ('Let me eat some of that red stuff' Gen. 25.30); it will be transferred from the unrepentant of Israel to people from the nations who turn to Yhwh. Such an interpretation would also provide a new way of understanding the adjoining prayer as coming not only from within Israel, but including Yhwh's disciples from the nations (cf. 63.16: 'Yes, you are our father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us'). The opening up of God's people to proselytes, which shines through only indirectly in 63.7–64.11 by the contextual connection and was not part of the original development of the lament, becomes the dominant theme in 56.1–8, the redactional addition to chap. 55; the 'nations/Zion' issue of chap. 66 provides the perfect counterpart for it and consequently realigns Isaiah 56–66.

The redaction of the servant community thus builds upon the 'repentance redaction' of 56.9–59.21, and it becomes increasingly clear that the envisioned split of the postexilic community is considered accomplished. The collapse of Edom toward the end of the fifth century also served the servant community as proof of the certain destruction of all internal enemies. They inserted the early postexilic prayer of lament as a counterpoint to the literary prompt (59.9–15a) from the previous redaction, in order to emphasize that there was no lack of solidarity with the sinful community. With chap. 65 the servant community writes freely for the first time but remains within Israel's internal space with the theme of the separation of the pious and sinners. That the elaboration of the 'question of the foreigner' in 56.1–8 and 66 is attributable only to a *second* phase of the expansion activity of the servant community is clear from the fact that a

358. Gressmann, *Zeitgeschichtlichen Verhältnisse*, p. 14: 'probably a later gloss to clarify who the enemies are.'

reasonable conclusion is already in place in 65.25. Apparently a new and final chapter was needed in order to work out the other aspect of the separation of Israel from Israel, namely, permitting non-Jews to enter Zion.

7.5.1. *The People's Prayer of Lament (Isaiah 63.7–64.11)*

This 'communal lament with hymnic introduction, extended historical review and confession of sins'³⁵⁹ is divided into two parts. After the introductory v. 7 comes the historical review about the *magnalia Dei* in 63.8–14, followed by direct address to Yhwh concerning his renewed intervention in 63.15–64.11³⁶⁰:

63.7	Introduction
63.8–10	Universal summary of history in dtr style
63.11–14	Turn to the good by remembering: Moses—occupation of the land
—	
63.15–19a	Request for Yhwh's attention
63.19b–64.4a	Request for a theophany
64.4b–8	Anger—confession—do not be angry forever
64.9–11	Description of distress—last appeal

The opening verse is designated as a unit by the initial and final position of the 'mercies of Yhwh' (חסדיו/חסדי יהוה).³⁶¹ In addition the references to the previous context are striking: **זִכִּיר** takes up the **מִזְכָּרִים** from 62.6 and **תְּהַלֵּת יְהוָה**, the **תְּהַלֵּה** from 62.7 (60.6). The servant community's laudatory 'bringing to mind' the great deeds of Yhwh helps to make Jerusalem the center of the praise of God on earth! The combination of the preposition **בְּעַל** with **נִמְלֵ/נִמֹּל** is found only once more in 59.18: 'According to their deeds, he will repay; wrath to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies'. The hoped-for retribution upon the enemies of Yhwh, who are also enemies of the servants, already belongs to the *magnalia Dei*. The fact that the praise of God does not stand as usual at the end of the prayer³⁶² but at its beginning is of landmark significance. It is not deliverance from distress that brings about the positive consequence of praising God, but rather the servants' praise of God, figuratively speaking, takes on the wrath of Yhwh. As Moses's intercession turned aside wrath, so now the

359. I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, p. 256.

360. The division is I. Fischer's, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, pp. 27–75 ('Textgraphik'); cf. also Pascal-Gerlinger, 'Isaïe 63,7–64,11', pp. 19, 22.

361. I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, p. 32; Kuntzmann, 'Une relecture', p. 27.

362. Cf. Pss. 74.21; 79.13; 80.19; 106.47; thus Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIB*, p. 11.

servants' praise is an obstacle to God's wrath. This special emphasis on Moses in the Exodus connects the prayer of lament with Psalm 106.³⁶³ By standing 'in the breach' (עמד בפדן), he turned aside the anger of Yhwh so that it would not destroy (מהשחית) Ps. 106.23b); here Yhwh holds himself back from total destruction (לבלתי השחית הכל) and (אל תשחיתו), according to 65.8, because of 'my servants'.

The general historical review in 63.8–10 is enclosed by the emphatic 'they' (המה). In spite of the saving deeds of Yhwh, the supposedly loyal sons emerged as rebels, and he became their enemy (ויהפך להם), and fought against them (הוא נלחם בהם). Contrary to popular belief, this is not to be restricted to Yhwh's reaction to the murmuring of the people on their wilderness journey, but embraces all of God's measures, especially those during the period of the Judges³⁶⁴ up to the Babylonian exile.³⁶⁵ A look at Lam. 2.5 confirms this: 'Adonai became like an enemy (היה אדני כאויב); he consumed Israel.'

Isaiah 63.11–14 continues the historical retrospective, but now with definite signs of a memory (זכר) stirred by hardship and distress: the servants interpret the deuteronomistic history of punishment and grace in such a way that for them the first necessary step of repentance is recalling the salvific days of the distant past: 'the people remembered the days of old [Moses]:³⁶⁶ "Where is he who led them up out of the water, the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who put his holy spirit in their midst?"' (63.11). As remembering the saving deeds of Yhwh produced repentance throughout the history of Israel, the servants now take up the task as מזכרים (62.6). They continue to beset Yhwh with 'where questions' (איפה, 63.11, 15). It is not particularly striking that the servant community invokes being led up from the sea as an example of memory stirred by difficult times, but the mention of 'shepherds of his flock' and 'setting his spirit in the midst of his people' certainly is. This alludes to the sharing out of the spirit from Moses to the 70 elders in Num. 11.16–30. As Yhwh shared Moses's spirit with the elders and legitimated them as 'shepherds of his flock' (Num. 11.17), the servants understand

363. Clifford points out the links between Ps. 106 and Isa. 63.7–64.11 ('Narrative and Lament', p. 95 n. 6): 'Rebellion' (Ps. 106.7; Isa. 63.10); 'Yhwh acting for his name's sake' (Ps. 106.8; Isa. 63.12, 14); 'Moses's role' (Ps. 106.16–18; Isa. 63.11–12); 'Moses's intercession' (Ps. 106.23; Isa. 63.11–12).

364. Morgenstern, 'Isaiah 63.7–14', p. 193; see Ps. 106.40–43.

365. Webster, 'The Rhetoric of Isaiah 63–65', p. 92.

366. 'Moses' was probably slipped in here from v. 12, especially since all of what follows in v. 11 appears to demand his name; see also I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, pp. 11–15; Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 438–39.

themselves in the present difficulty as spirit-endowed successors (cf. 59.21) of the elders. They see the salvation events in Moses's time, from Exodus to occupation of the land, as having been supported by the giving of spirit to Moses and the 70 elders (see the inclusio with *רוח יהוה/רוח קדשו* in 63.11, 14). At the end of the historical retrospective in v. 14 the people go down, like a flock in the valley, from the high plain of Transjordan into the promised land. With the repeated mention of the 'spirit of Yhwh' (*רוח יהוה תניחני*), it is possible that the servant community alludes to Joshua, who is filled with the spirit of wisdom (*מלא רוח חכמה*, Deut. 34.9) because Moses had laid his hands on him. Equipped with this gift of the spirit, Joshua led the people across the Jordan into the promised rest (*hi. with Yhwh as subject: Josh. 1.13, 15; 23.1³⁶⁷*). In this way the servant community, endowed with a prophetic spirit, expresses their hope that postexilic Israel, too, after passing through the exile and the following period of difficulty, will come to its rest!

When Yhwh is addressed directly in 63.14b ('you led your people'), the transition is made to the prayer for God to pay attention.³⁶⁸ While the Exodus event was the embodiment of God's saving presence when he revealed 'his glorious arm' (*זרוע הפארתו*, 63.12) to separate the waters, the servant community experiences Yhwh now as the God removed in his holy and glorious heavenly abode (*מזבל קדשך ותפארתך*), a God from whom they seek a renewed regard. This is the main thrust of the second part of the prayer (63.15–64.11).

While the review of the past dominated in the first half, now it is the present devotion to Yhwh. This part is held together by a triple inclusio. The first imperative 'Look!' (*הבט*) corresponds to 'Look now (*הבט נא*), we are all your people' in 64.8. 'Your holy and glorious habitation' (63.15) corresponds to 'our holy and glorious temple' (*בית קדשנו ותפארתנו*, 64.10). And 'the yearning of your inner being and your compassion are withheld from me' (*אלִי ההתאפקו*³⁶⁹) is similar to the anxious final question in 64.11: 'Will you hold yourself back at these things?' (*העל־אלה תהאפק*). Unlike the historical survey, there is no 'they' standing between the speaker and Yhwh, but rather it is a personal encounter.

367. *hi.* occurs only here with 'spirit of Yhwh' as subject, which makes an intentional reference to Joshua's receiving of the spirit even more likely.

368. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIB*, p. 10: De tweede regel van vs. 14 vormt de overgang'; I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, p. 47; Pascal-Gerlinger, 'Isaïe 63,7–64,11', p. 19: 'verset de transition.'

369. The emendations of this are legion; *אל* has been emended to *אל* ('do not hold back'), *אולי* ('perhaps'), and *אלה* ('these are held back').

The first subsection of the second part (63.15–19a) begins with a double imperative addressed to Yhwh that will give way to the urgent desire (לוא) for a theophany in 19b. The ‘where’ question in 63.15b (איה קנאתך וגבורתך) continues the ‘remembering’ questions in the history (63.11). In addition, it is clearly related to 42.13–16,³⁷⁰ as is highlighted by the inclusion of the key words קנאה and גבר in reverse order: ‘Yhwh goes forth like a hero (גבור), like a warrior he stirs up his zeal (קנאה); he utters the war cry, indeed, he rings out the battle cry; he shows himself as a mighty hero (יהגבר) against his enemies’ (42.13). The petition of the servant community (63.17; 64.11) that Yhwh not hold back (אפק) from them his *maternal* compassion (רחמים) takes up Yhwh’s own promise that after his period of silence (החשיתי) and holding back (אחזק), he would now cry out and become active like a woman giving birth (בולדה, 42.14), to lead the blind on the path they do not know (לא ידעו). This is precisely the desire of the servants—that Yhwh would stop leading them into error (‘why do you lead us astray, Yhwh, away from your ways; why do you harden our heart, so that we do not fear you’), and that he might again turn himself to them, his servants. As preachers of Yhwh (62.6), they take him to be active by his word that is already written. This reminder is not fruitless, as 65.6 indicates: ‘See, it is written (בהובא) before me: I will not be silent (לא אדעה) but I will repay, indeed, I will repay into their laps...’

To return to 63.15: With the reference back to the divine promise to become active again in saving and leading Israel, the servant community has it in mind to urge Yhwh to turn again in their own time to his erring people. As the period of wandering in the wilderness dominated the historical retrospective (v. 13!), the servant community similarly sees itself and the entire people of God led astray, now by Yhwh himself, away from his ways and the fear of him. The community understands the present period as a time of disorientation and at the same time as the ultimate trial. If Yhwh allows them to go on wandering aimlessly, there is no escape for any of them.³⁷¹ So the servants of Yhwh continue: You must change (שוב) your behavior, ‘because of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance’ (למען עבדיך שבטי נחלתך), so that we and your people can still go on. Yhwh should change his behavior, give up his anger, not *because of* the moral respectability of the servant community or even of the

370. Beuken, ‘Abraham’, p. 16; Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIB, pp. 21–22.

371. Berges, *חזקה*, ThWAT VIII, p. 724: ‘Straying from the path of his teaching is as deadly as straying from the path in the wilderness.’

people of God—on the contrary, all are sinners (64.4b-8)!—but rather *so that* something of his legacy survives the disaster. If Yhwh still expects to have any ‘servants’ in the future, then he must not pull back the bow of his wrath.³⁷² Yhwh responds almost apologetically in 65.8 that because of his servants, he would not destroy them all, like the winemaker, who refrains from crushing the clusters completely, in order to get good juice.

When the servant community reproaches Yhwh for hardening their hearts ‘against fearing you’, it is reminiscent of the ‘hardening commission’ in Isaiah 6. This is supported by the final repetition of the key word ‘devastation’ (שִׁמְמָה) and the emphasis on the cities of the land becoming a wilderness (מִדְבָּר) in 64.9. The servant community views the bleak postexilic situation of Jerusalem, Zion, the cities of the land, the temple, as the fulfillment of Isaiah’s question, ‘How long, O Lord?’ (6.11).³⁷³ If so, then it suggests that the servant community understood itself as a ‘holy seed’ that would sprout from the most depleted rootstock (cf. 59.21; 61.9; 65.8).³⁷⁴

In 63.18-19a the servants of Yhwh’s anticipated intervention compare the plight of the exiled ‘holy nation’ with the destruction of the temple. Implicitly they ask what Yhwh might have gained by this harsh punishment: ‘For little (לְמַצֵּעַ)³⁷⁵ they dispossessed your holy people; our adversaries have plundered your sanctuary.’ This is reminiscent of the ‘for nothing’ (חִנָּם) in Yhwh’s speech in 52.3 (and v. 5): ‘You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed (תִּגְאָלוּ) without money.’ The echo of בְּשׁוּב יְהוָה צִיּוֹן (52.8b) in the imperative שׁוּב לְמַעַן עֲבָדֶיךָ (63.17b) supports the notion that 63.18 is guided by Isa. 52.3. Two further references leave no doubt that 52.3-6 is the donor text for 63.18-19a. First, the theme of the ‘foreign power’ (מַשְׁלִי) that boasts of its strength is modified so that now, things are so bad for Israel it is as if Yhwh never had ruled over Israel (לֹא מַשְׁלַח בָּם). Second, 63.19a takes up the שָׁם theme of 52.5-6. In the latter, Yhwh’s name is despised because of Israel’s fate (v. 5) and his people shall again know his name (v. 6); this is to be compared with 63.19a, where

372. Beuken, ‘Abraham’, p. 19: ‘God moet wederkeren niet omdat de bidders zich beschouwen als zijn trouwe knechten, maar opdat zij Hem als knechten zullen dienen.’

373. Cf. the emphatic final position of עַד מָאָד in 64.11.

374. See I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, pp. 289-90.

375. With Aejmelaeus, ‘Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger’, p. 43 n. 55; for a discussion of this disputed verse, see Koenen, ‘Zum Text von Jes 63,18’, pp. 406-409; the ‘temporal’ interpretation of לְמַצֵּעַ (‘for a short time’) makes light of the lament!

the people are so deep in misery, it is as if Yhwh's name had never been called over them (לֹא נִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עֲלֵיהֶם). At this low point of the divine relationship, the servant community is no longer content to seek Yhwh's attention (cf. the imperative with הִי in 63.15); now they give expression to their most fervent wish that his theophanic intervention had already become a reality. The לֹא־יָ, with a perfect of continuity,³⁷⁶ is not to be translated as a future wish, but rather as an 'irrealis in the past': 'O that you had torn open the heavens and come down'.³⁷⁷ As the goal of divine intervention, the servant community anticipates the revelation of the divine name to Yhwh's enemies (לְהוֹדִיעַ שְׁמֶךָ לְצָרֶיךָ). If Yhwh had intervened, then this would already be fulfilled as surely as a brushwood fire brings water to a boil! (64.1).

In 64.3–4a, the 'establishing justification' follows this wish about an intervention of Yhwh already hoped for in the past: 'From ancient times no one has ever heard or perceived, no eye has seen a God besides you who acts for the one who awaits him.'³⁷⁸ The incomparability (אֱלֹהִים וְלֹא־יָ; cf. 45.5, 21) of a Yhwh who acts for the benefit of those who hope in him, who approaches whoever does righteousness joyfully, is the last basis of hope for the servant community, which sees itself as the group of those who 'remember you in your ways'. Thus an 'ideal image' has been sketched of those who belong to the servant community, or who want to belong to it: (a) waiting on Yhwh's intervention makes them the disciples of the great Isaiah (cf. חֲכִיָּה in 8.16; 30.18);³⁷⁹ (b) joy is a fundamental feature (מְשׁוֹשׁ/שִׂישׁ; I³⁸⁰); (c) the genuine doing of righteousness—compared with the mere pretense (58.2)—is their obligation, in which they comply with the imperative of 56.1 and embrace all 'just practices';³⁸¹ (d) members

376. Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, § 151e: 'Isa. 48.18 and 63.19 (both times לֹא־יָ) to express a wish that something expected in the future may already have happened.'

377. According to Aejmelaes, 'Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger', p. 43, who points to Num. 14.2; 20.3; Josh. 7.7; and Isa. 48.18.

378. 'Hat man doch nicht von Ur her gehört, nicht vernommen, ein Auge nicht ersehen einen Gott außer dich, der handelte für den, der seiner harrt', Delitzsch's translation (*Jesaja*, p. 649).

379. Cf. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIb, p. 34: 'TJ vat zijn situatie op als die van PJ.'

380. מְשׁוֹשׁ: Isa. 24.8, 11; 32.13–14; 60.15; 62.5; 65.18; 66.10 (elsewhere only in Jer. 49.25; Ezek. 24.25; Hos. 2.13; Lam. 2.15; 5.15; Ps. 48.3; שִׂישׁ: Isa. 12.3; 22.13; 35.10; 51.3, 11; 61.3 (oil of joy); שִׂישׁ: Isa. 35.1; 61.10; 62.5; 65.18, 19; 66.10, 14.

381. Cf. Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, p. 160.

of the servant community are those who remember Yhwh and keep alive the memory of him.³⁸²

In contrast to this knowledge of and holding fast to Yhwh, who does not disappoint the hope of those 'joyfully practicing righteousness', the servants portray the experience of divine anger. This part is framed by קצף (64.4b, 8a) and the opening and closing הן. The servant community can explain the postexilic plight of Israel only as the result of the divine anger, just as the exile had been justified by it (47.6: 'I was angry against my people, I desecrated my inheritance'). Yet, as Yhwh himself underscores in a divine oracle (esp. 57.16-17), his anger must stop before the complete destruction of those whose רוח languishes before him and whose breath (נשמה) he has made. The servants of Yhwh remember this when they stress in conclusion that he should not be angry forever (אל תקצף יהוה עד מאד) (64.8a), the same expression that concludes the book of Lamentations (Lam. 5.22).

The phrasing הן איתה קצפת expresses the wonderment that after the exile and after Yhwh's promise to follow punishment with mercy (60.10), the divine anger has again been unleashed. So the servants confess their 'sinfulness', for where Yhwh's anger becomes visible, it is a foregone conclusion in the notion of the connection between deeds and consequences that sins and sinners are not lacking! Thus this should be translated, 'See now, you were angry, and we stand here as sinners'.³⁸³

But this is not the final response to the unexpected encounter with the divine wrath, as the text continues: 'in them forever, and we are saved' (בהם עולם ונשע). The only proper antecedent for בהם is God's 'ways', through which the servants remember Yhwh (בדרכיך).³⁸⁴ In spite of the divine anger which compels them to confess themselves sinners, they maintain that only remaining on Yhwh's paths will bring to them salvation (ונשע³⁸⁵).

The servant community clarifies in the following two verses what exactly it means to stand under the wrath of Yhwh. The metaphor that compares 'all our righteous deeds' with a garment stained by menstrual blood indicates, on the one hand, that there are still righteous actions taking place, but on the other hand, that those deeds fail

382. See זכר in (12.4); 57.11; 62.6 (in contrast to מזכיר לבנה in 66.3); 63.7, 11; 64.4; 65.17.

383. Against Pascal-Gerlinger, 'Isaïe 63,7-64,11', p. 12: 'Voici que toi tu t'es mis en colère car nous avons péché.'

384. See also the discussion in I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, pp. 21-25.

385. A change to ונפשע or ונרשע, accordingly, completely distorts the meaning.

to make their practitioners cultically acceptable, comparable to a woman who is unclean and cultically impure during menstruation (cf. Lev. 15.19–27; Ezek. 36.17).

When the praying community then laments that no one calls on the name of Yhwh (יֵאָיִן קוֹרֵא בְשֵׁם־יְהוָה) and no one rouses himself to cling to him (מִתְעוֹרֵר לַחֲזוֹיק), they are not referring to themselves alone, because the community has in fact turned in lamentation to God, but to the bulk of the people of God, who risk being shattered by the experience of the divine wrath. For Yhwh also directs his anger against those who practice righteousness, and hides himself from them (כִּי הִסְתֵּרָה פָּנֶיךָ מֵמֵנו).³⁸⁶ Under these circumstances it is increasingly difficult to find someone who opens himself to holding fast to Yhwh and his covenant, that is, to complying with the requirements for participation in Israel and the servant community (cf. חֲזוֹק ב. 56.2, 4, 6). In spite of the deep darkness, there are fewer and fewer who fear Yhwh and listen to the voice of his servant (50.10).

Finally (וְעַתָּה), the servant community calls on Yhwh as ‘our Father’ for the third time and designates itself as clay and the work of his hands and God as ‘our Potter’ (יִצְרֵנו). This must be in pursuit of a very specific objective, especially since יִצַּר occurs only here in 56–66, in contrast to its frequent usage in chaps. 40–55.³⁸⁷ It is likely that 64.7, with its emphasis on Yhwh as Father and Creator makes reference to 45.9–11, where the key words ‘clay’, ‘Creator’, and ‘Father’ occur together. There Yhwh answered the polemical objections of those who criticized the appointment of the foreigner Cyrus, by referring to his roles of Creator and Father; now the servant community draws on this reference as an argument for opening Israel to Yhwh disciples from the nations. ‘Yhwh as Father’ is directed against those who misuse the story of the ancestors to exclude foreigners, and ‘Yhwh as Potter’ suggests he will make Israel the work of his hand, i.e., the people of God, conforming perfectly to his design. He will meet with no opposition or resistance from the servants, who recognize Yhwh’s sovereignty!³⁸⁸ The phrase מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָי alludes to מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לַהֲפָאֵר (60.21).³⁸⁹ A glance at the beginning of the

386. I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, p. 273: ‘That his name is no longer called is a result (כִּי!) of his hiding, thus representing an absolute low point of the relationship between God and his people in which all communication has ceased.’

387. Sekine points this out (*Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, p. 162): of the 32 instances of יִצַּר in the prophetic books, Isa. 40–55 accounts for 19!

388. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIB, p. 44.

389. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIB, p. 44; Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1–8; 63,7–66,24’, p. 239.

donor verse 60.21 (עַמְךָ כָּלֵם צְדִיקִים) both clarifies the source of 'we are all your people' (עַמְךָ כָּלֵנוּ) in 64.8b and points to an exclusive point of view: only the righteous are Yhwh's people!

The last three verses (64.9-11) offer a status report that moves in concentric circles from the 'holy cities' that have become a desert, to Zion as a wasteland, and to Jerusalem as a desolate place (יְרוּשָׁלַם (שְׁמֵמָה). Finally it considers 'our holy and glorious temple' (בֵּית קִדְשֵׁנוּ) (וְתִפְאֳרֹתֵנוּ) with 'all our treasures',³⁹⁰ in which 'our fathers' praised Yhwh, but which had become prey to the flames. Since the connection of 'temple' and 'glory' is present only in 60.7 and 64.10, it seems reasonable to assume a deliberate connection. But in which direction? Since the prayer of lament elsewhere refers to the context of 60–62, the same should be assumed for the connection of 'temple and glory'.³⁹¹ This is all the more so since 60.7 is about the vision of acceptance of the sacrificial animals from the nations, whereby Yhwh will decorate the temple (וּבֵית תִּפְאֳרָתִי אֶפְאֵר). The intended integration of foreigners into the people of God does not mean a break with the fathers, for the temple remains the center of the cult. Indeed, it is 'a house of prayer for all nations' (56.7). The break with the fathers is not at the level of cultic behavior, but rather has to do with the conditions of admission. The ancestors would have known nothing of an openness to Yhwh disciples from the nations!

From the lament over the wretched situation of the Judean cities, Zion, Jerusalem and the temple in 64.9-10, no clear conclusions can be drawn about the writing of the prayer. Nevertheless, the expression 'our fathers have praised you in the temple' suggests that at least one generation lies between the destruction of the temple in 587 and the current situation of the lamenting community.³⁹² But even decades after the rededication of the temple in 515, there was little to be seen of the ancient glory, and formulations such as those in 64.9-10 are still meaningful even much later. The notion of a devastating catastrophe through the supposed capture of Jerusalem by Xerxes in 485, in whose wake the city would again be destroyed and the population sold to slave markets in the west—so Julian Morgenstern—is pure

390. This probably means the temple vessels, according to Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. 307-308, with a view to Joel 4.5; Lam. 1.10; 2 Chron. 36.19.

391. Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7-66,24', pp. 238-39.

392. Aejmelaesus, 'Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger', p. 45; cf. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 314: 'to be dated not long after 587 B.C.'; I. Fischer, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, p. 256: 'Accordingly, the period after 560 B.C. is to be preferred'; Pascal-Gerlinger, 'Isaie 63,7-64,11', p. 159: 'entre 538 et 520.'

fantasy.³⁹³ A thesis of Steck's³⁹⁴ that is often advanced, suggesting that the invasion by Ptolemy I in 302/1 had such catastrophic results for Jerusalem and the temple that these events could be seen and understood only in the light of the destruction of Jerusalem in 587,³⁹⁵ is based on a report of Josephus in *Antiquities*, XII, 4-5 and *contra Apionem* I, 205-211, which he took from Agatharchides of Cnidus. According to that, Ptolemy was supposed to have taken Jerusalem by guile on the Sabbath by pretending a pious attitude, in order to plunder the beautiful consecration gifts, the temple coffer, and anything of any value:

He forbade them to offer those daily sacrifices which they used to offer to God, according to the law. And when he had pillaged the whole city, some of the inhabitants he slew, and some he carried captive, together with their wives and children, so that the multitude of those captives that were taken alive amounted to about ten thousand. He also burnt down the finest buildings; and when he had overthrown the city walls, he built a citadel in the lower part of the city, for the place was high, and overlooked the temple; ...And when the king had built an idol altar upon God's altar, he slew swine upon it, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to forsake the worship which they paid their own God, and to adore those whom he took to be gods; and made them build temples, and raise idol altars in every city and village, and offer swine upon them every day. He also commanded them not to circumcise their sons, and threatened to punish any that should be found to have transgressed his injunction.³⁹⁶

Even if Josephus's statements about Ptolemy I's looting were historically usable, the question remains why those praying the lament of 63.7–64.11 would have spoken only allusively of the usurper's brutality. The fact that Jews served in the Ptolemaic army also under Ptolemy I³⁹⁷ does not correspond in any case to Steck's supposed catastrophe, a difficulty that can be overcome only by recourse to the

393. Morgenstern, 'Isaiah 63.7-14', pp. 198-99.

394. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, p. 77 n. 89; Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', pp. 399-400; Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7–66,24', pp. 232-33.

395. For Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, pp. 24, 31 n. 97, 81, except for vague references in Zech. 14.2 and Joel 4.4-8, nothing concrete can be ascertained about Ptolemy I in Jerusalem; the same goes for Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches*, p. 166.

396. Josephus, *Ant.* XII, 4 (trans. William Whiston).

397. Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches*, p. 166: 'Papyrological and epigraphic evidence shows that Jews actually served in the Ptolemaic army since the third century.'

period of the exile. If a later historical event of the same proportions as the destruction of Jerusalem and temple in the year 587 can hardly be assumed for that city, the exilic catastrophe remains the reference point for the prayer of lament in 63.7–64.11, not as a personal experience, however, but as the reflection of a later generation which raises the question as to why Yhwh's anger would still rage.

It is not actual political-military aggression that disturbs the lamenting community, but the experience of the divine wrath *after* the announcement of salvation, forcing them to confess themselves sinners and to rate their righteousness as useless. This discrepancy between the painful experience of reality and the anticipated future is unbearable in the long run: Can even Yhwh restrain himself (הֲעֵלֵךְ אֱלֹהֵי תְהַפֵּק), remain silent (תְּחַשֶׁה), 'and lead us into the most extreme error' (וְהַעֲנִנוּ עַד מְאֹד)? The reversed order of תְּחַשֶׁה and תְּהַפֵּק in 42.14 is a further indication of a deliberate reference to that passage, which stands in the background of the entire prayer of lament (cf. 63.15).³⁹⁸ The servant community makes reference to Yhwh's promise finally to abandon his inaction for the benefit of the exiled, and to lead the blind in paths they do not recognize. They appeal to Yhwh's promise of salvation to persuade him to intervene. Not only have the holy cities and Zion become a wilderness (מִדְבָּר, 64.9); but they themselves feel as though Yhwh has guided them into losing their way (cf. 53.6: 'All we [כָּלֵנוּ] like sheep have gone astray' [הָעֵינִי]). To describe their situation they have recourse to Isaiah 1 and 6 (destroyed cities: 1.7; 6.11; 64.9; destroyed by fire: 1.7; 64.10; devastation/wasteland: 1.7; 6.11; 64.9), especially since all three contexts point to the temple as a central point of reference; the anxious closing question of עַד מְאֹד takes up that of עַד מְאֹד from the mouth of Isaiah (6.11). In view of the postexilic situation of city and temple and in contact with the Isaiah tradition, the servant community recognizes that the moment has come of which Yhwh had spoken to the prophet in 6.11. With that the time has also dawned for the shoot as holy seed (6.13b), as the servant community understands itself (cf. 65.9, 23).³⁹⁹

7.5.2. *The Split of the Community into Servants and Opponents (Isaiah 65)*

On the anxious question of whether there would still be a divine relationship, Yhwh answers the servant community (63.17) in a divine oracle (65.1–7) which is decisive for the overall progress of chaps. 65–66. He no longer remains inactive (לֹא יִחְשָׁה 65.6), but

398. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIB, p. 48; see the excursus on 42.14–17* in Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', pp. 308–13.

399. See above under 2.3.2.

presses for a separation of servants and opponents ('servants' 7x in 65.8-16a), which amounts to a re-creation of Jerusalem (65.16b-25; ברא 3x in 65.17-18). With a quote from 11.7-9 and אָמַר יְהוָה at the end, the tension caused by the announcement of 'retaliation' (שָׁלַם, 65.6b) comes to a first resolution in 65.25. The separation of servants and sinners will lead to a peaceful and nonviolent Jerusalem! The central theme of 65 that stands behind the opposition of Yhwh's faithful and the apostate⁴⁰⁰ is that the divine relationship is broken for some, but remains preserved for others (cf. 65.2, 12, 24). This chapter is to be divided as follows:

- 65.1-7: Yhwh's answer to the prayer; Retribution (וְשָׁלַמְתִּי, v. 6)
- 65.8-16a: Separation of servants and opponents
- 65.16b-25: The New Jerusalem

The demarcation of the first as 65.1-7 is relatively uncontroversial, as is its function as a divine response to the lament. While it lacks a messenger formula, that does not indicate a 'private soliloquy'⁴⁰¹ of Yhwh, but rather the compositional intention of the servant redaction to have the divine answer directly follow the closing request of 64.11. The first two verses are of crucial importance. It is clear that Yhwh points a way out of the lamented crisis in the relationship. Verse 1 does not say, 'I would have let myself be found'; in that case the verb in v. 2 would have to mean, 'I would have stretched out my hands.' Both 'let myself be found' and the divine seeking are realities that Yhwh claims for himself. But by whom did he let himself be found, or whom did he himself seek? Verse 2 clarifies who it is that Yhwh himself sought: a rebellious people who follow their own ways and thoughts. The verse refers back to the proclamation commission (58.1-2): 'show to my people (לְעַמִּי) their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins; daily they inquire of me (יָוֵם יִדְרָשׁוּן), they desire to know my ways (דַּרְכִּי)...as a nation (גּוֹי) that practices righteousness... they consult me (יִשְׁאַלֻּנִי) about righteous judgments'.

The similarities in wording and themes are not random, just as it is also no accident that דָּגְנִי of 65.1b echoes 'Here I am' in 58.9! Yhwh stretched out his hands in vain to the rebellious of Israel, a gesture that usually symbolizes the approach of the suppliant to God. However, does the reference to Israel (65.2) sufficiently describe the circle

400. Carr, 'Reading Isaiah', p. 212: 'The requested divine intervention has been promised, but only for God's servants.'

401. Steck, 'Beobachtungen zur Anlage von Jes 65–66', p. 218; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 193 n. 254, asks how a 'soliloquy' by Yhwh could be an answer to the prayer of lament.

to whom Yhwh's answer is addressed? The references to 55.5-9 makes this doubtful, since it says there that the Zion community (54.17; 55.4) is appointed as a witness to the nations, with the result that 'a nation (גוי) that you do not know calls you and people from the nations that do not know you (וגוי לא ידעוך) run to you' (55.5).⁴⁰² The combination of גוי and its associated verb in the plural, which clearly refers to people from the nations, invalidates the objection that גוי in 65.1b could not refer to foreign nations.⁴⁰³ In view of the donor text in 55.5, the opposite is true. This is reinforced by the comparison of another reference, 55.6a, 'Inquire of Yhwh while he may be found (דרשו יהוה בהמצאו), call on him while he is near', with 65.1a, 'I let myself be sought out (נדרשת), let myself be found (נמצאתי)'.⁴⁰⁴ The call to inquire of Yhwh, to seek him, is directed to people from the nations in Isaiah 55, as is shown by the continuation in 55.7 which speaks generally of the sinner, that is, the individual (איש), who should turn to Yhwh 'our God'. If the call was to fellow Jews, אלהינו would have been unusual at the least. In addition, the accusation of 65.2b that some from Israel went a bad way (הדרך לא טוב), or according to their own plans (אחר מחשבתיהם) is connected to 55.8-9, where Yhwh contrasts his ways and thoughts with the ways and plans of those who stand in the way of an invitation to people from the nations to seek Yhwh! From the references of 65.1-2 to the donor texts from chap. 55 (context of the nations) and chap. 58 (context of Israel) it is clear that Yhwh abandons his lamented inaction for the benefit of those from Israel *and* the nations who seek him.

To come closer to achieving the goal of such a people of God, Yhwh proclaims punitive retribution to all those who anger him with their illicit idolatrous practices. That this refers to people from Israel is confirmed by the reference to 57.3-13a. The six plural participial forms (vv. 3-5a) relate in hyperbolic metaphorical language not only to abuses of the priestly class in the Jerusalem temple,⁴⁰⁵ but also to Jews who even in the postexilic period continue illicit occult practices from the pre-exilic period.⁴⁰⁶ Particularly in mind here are

402. Grimm and Dittert, *Deuterojesaja*, p. 465, point out that the lack of relationship between Israel and heathen (לֹא יִדְעוּ) will be reversed.

403. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 159 n. 11.

404. Van Wieringen, *Analogies in Isaiah. Volume B*, pp. 357, 358; Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIB*, p. 64; remarkably, Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 186, does not cite this reference.

405. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p. 147.

406. Against Hanson's position, P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 137; Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 157.

fertility⁴⁰⁷ and death cults.⁴⁰⁸ With biting irony this sketch closes with a quote from the mouth of a participant in such cultic ceremonies, advising others not to approach him, or else he might ‘sanctify’ them (כי קדשתיד).⁴⁰⁹

The frontal attack against every kind of pagan practice links the servant community with the priesthood, whose vision of exclusive Yhwh worship is recorded in the Pentateuch in particular.⁴¹⁰ Since reference to these law texts is lacking in the Isaiah chapters, it may be concluded that at the time the latter were written the law texts had not yet achieved any normative significance.⁴¹¹ This argues against a late dating to the fourth or third centuries.⁴¹² The repeated mention of pork is conspicuous in the context of the pagan cult ceremonies (65.3-5, 7; 66.3, 17), due to the fact that swine were used especially for chthonic rites in Israel’s environment.⁴¹³ Though Yhwh had previously stretched out his hands day after day to the people who practice such things, now the outcome is clear: they are smoke in his nostrils, a burning fire day after day (כל היום).

When Yhwh continues, ‘See, it stands written before me: I will not be silent...’ (הנה כתובה לפני לא אדושש), for example, it does not mean that a register of sins lies before him, but refers to what is already presented as a word of God written in the scroll of Isaiah. What lies written before Yhwh reads לא אדושש; these are precisely the words in 62.1a: ‘For Zion’s sake, I cannot be silent; for Jerusalem’s sake I cannot be still!’ Like a scribe Yhwh quotes himself from the scroll of Isaiah, in order to justify his intervention on behalf of Jerusalem and Zion against the worshipers of foreign gods. At the same time the key word דושש connects the divine response to the final petition of the prayer (64.11, תדושש). The motif of ‘no longer silent’ on the part of Yhwh has its origins in 42.13-14, where like a warrior he

407. Thus the offering in the garden is associated with the Adonis cult (cf. Tammuz in Ezek. 8.14).

408. For the death cults in pre-exilic Israel, still practiced in postexilic times, see Bloch-Smith, ‘The Cult of the Dead in Judah’, pp. 213-24.

409. The terms ‘sanctify’, ‘swine flesh’, ‘garden’ connect 65.3-5 with 66.17 and have an inclusio function, according to P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 129-30.

410. Including Lev. 11.7; 19.31; 20.6, 27; Num. 19.11-16.

411. With Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 179.

412. According to Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, pp. 56-58, the situation in which these chapters originated is comparable with that which also provoked the ‘religion issue’ in Josh. 24.

413. See Botterweck, חזיר, *ThWAT* II, p. 846.

414. The diacritical point in Codex Leningradensis is incorrectly positioned; it should read אדושש (not אדושש).

issues the battle cry against his enemies and breaks his silence (החשיתי מעולם). As Yhwh once gave up his passivity in order to free Israel from the exile, now he does so to purify Israel from the worship of foreign idols!

The second unit of 65.8-16a is delimited from the preceding by the messenger formula and a new topic. While 65.1-7 provided a sketch of the syncretizers with their foreign cults, 8-16a offers a comparison of those who are Yhwh's servants and those who 'forget' him. The contrast is also mirrored in the literary type in which salvation and disaster oracles are intertwined.⁴¹⁵ The end of the unit is 65.16a, with the two-fold שבע connecting v. 16a to v. 15 (שבועה), while the theme 'former-latter' connects v. 16b to v. 17 (the contact word being הרשנות). After the separation between servants and apostates, which is clothed in the image of the winepress (63.3!), 65.16b-25 offer pure salvation oracles about the shining future of the servants.

The distinction between the servants and their opponents is clarified by the image of wine-making from must (תירוש), which is produced by trampling the grapes. Regardless of the contested etymological derivation of תירוש, a wordplay with the expression יורש הר (65.9) is likely.⁴¹⁶ It is the freshly crushed wine, Yhwh's chosen, his servants, who possess his mountain⁴¹⁷ and enjoy the right to live on Zion!

It is the servant community who as a blessing (ברכה) safeguards Israel from complete destruction (השחיה. ⁴¹⁸), similar to Noah's role for the future after the catastrophe of the flood.⁴¹⁹ The key word 'blessing', together with 'seed' (זרע), refers back to the promise in 61.9: 'They are a seed which Yhwh has blessed' (הם זרע ברכ יהוה), speaking of the mourners of Zion. In 65.23 the servants are called 'seed of those blessed by Yhwh' (זרע ברוכי יהוה), which is the high point in the delineation of this group. With this the theme of the posterity of the

415. Emerson, *Isaiah* 55-66, p. 31; Wallis, 'Gott und seine Gemeinde', pp. 182-200.

416. For ירש II (Mic. 6.15), see HALAT, pp. 421, 1591; in addition, Schmid, *THAT I*, pp. 780-81.

417. The Masoretic vocalization הָרִי should be changed to הָרִי, for it clearly refers to Mount Zion (cf. הָרִי קָדֵשׁ in 11.9; 56.7; 57.13; 65.11, 25; 66.20); see also the LXX: τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἁγίον; in addition, Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 181 n. 141.

418. Does the designation אֵל תִּשְׁחֶה in the superscriptions of Pss. 57, 58, 59, and 75 have anything to do with this idea?

419. This is the interpretation of the Targum: 'As Noah was found righteous in the generation of the flood, and I promised not to destroy him in order to establish the world from him; so will I do for the sake of my righteous servants, that I may not destroy *them* all' (Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, p. 214).

‘servant’, which has been a potent one since 53.10, reaches its conclusion:⁴²⁰ It is Yhwh’s ‘chosen’ (בְּחִירִי), his ‘servants’ (עֲבָדִי), ‘my people who seek me’ (לְעַמִּי אֲשֶׁר דֹּרְשׁוּנִי). As suffering and persecution were meted out to the servant, so the servants are also exposed to reprisals and defamation!

In the lament of 63.7–64.11, the servant community appeared united with the people (בְּלִנוּ in 64.5–8), yet this communal solidarity can no longer be maintained. It is not the servants but Yhwh who breaks up ‘Israel’, separating between faithful and apostates. The period of silence and concealment (64.6) was a period of testing, similar to that of the wilderness wanderings, when it became clear who would hold fast to him and who would fall away to other practices. In 65.8–16a this separation is now accomplished.

The announced bringing forth of a ‘seed’ from Jacob (וְהִצְאָתִי), the seed being those who have turned away from the sins of Jacob (שְׂבִי פֶשַׁע בִּיעֲקֹב 59.20), the prophetic servant community upon whom Yhwh’s spirit continually rests (59.21) in fulfillment of the descendants of the servant (53.10), also redeems the salvation oracle of Isaiah 11: ‘a shoot shall come forth from the stock of Jesse’ (וְיִצְאָ חֹטֶר) on which rests רוּחַ יְהוָה (11.2). In this Zion community endowed with the spirit there is no violence and no more sin (11.6–9), which is again taken up in 65.25 as the high point of the description of the new Jerusalem. Not only will the servants enjoy the right to live in Zion; the entire region of ancient Israel will also be at their disposal as a pasture land for herds and flocks—from the Sharon plain in the west to the Achor valley in the east (65.10). The promise of 57.13b is thus fulfilled: whoever trusts in Yhwh (וְהִחֲסִיחַ בִּי) will inherit the land and possess his holy Mount (וְיִירֶשׁ הָר קֹדֶשׁ⁴²¹). Both 56.7 and 66.20, which bracket the last part of the book of Isaiah, speak of הָר קֹדֶשׁ in correlation with the opening of Israel first to Yhwh disciples from Israel’s people then also to those from the nations, making it clear that in 65.9 people from the nations are also to be counted with the servants.⁴²²

420. Cf. Beuken, ‘Main Theme’, p. 81: ‘Thus 65.23 completes the identification of the oppressed with the servants of Yhwh.’

421. The mention of ‘inheriting the holy mountain’ is found only in 57.13 and 65.9!

422. This confirms and clarifies Lohfink’s hypothesis (ירֶשׁ *ThWAT* III, p. 985): ‘The final redactional stratum of Trito-Isaiah... may well include the foreigners of whom Isa. 56 speaks... If the “chosen servant” of Yhwh was Israel for Deutero-Isaiah, here the “chosen” and “servants” constitute something much more subtle and difficult to grasp, the concept of the fundamentally transformed extent of the people of God.’

Only when one takes into account the integration of foreigners into the servant community and thus into the 'blessed seed of Yhwh' does the contrastive 'but you' (וְאַתָּה, v. 11) come into focus. Foreigners join with Yhwh; for fellow Jews, however, who desert Yhwh, forget his holy mountain, prepare the table for the gods of fortune and destiny, Gad⁴²³ and Meni (מִנִּי), Yhwh threatens the consequences of their breaking the covenant (v. 12), with a wordplay on 'meni'. Their practices will not bring 'fortune', but rather Yhwh will 'destine' the apostates for the sword (וּמִנִּיהִי).⁴²⁴ The expression 'to desert Yhwh' refers on the one hand to 1.4, 28 and indicates that the announced judgment is now to be implemented; at the same time the dtr language in 65.11-16 is unmistakable.⁴²⁵ But there is an essential difference between Isa. 65.11-16 and the dtr curses and blessings. While those are related to the entire people of God, now they apply no longer to the whole, but to the servants and the apostates. Can there be a clearer indication that the unity of the people of God was experienced as truly broken, not as a result of a foreign aggressor but because of behavior that flouted the covenant? Curse and blessing no longer lie over Israel as a national community, but over each individual who either turns to Yhwh or away from him!⁴²⁶

Israel was threatened with hunger and thirst if it did not serve (עֲבַד, Deut. 28.47-48) Yhwh with joy (בְּשִׂמְחָה) and longing (בְּטוֹב לֵב); now the servants are promised food and drink, enjoying themselves (יִשְׂמְחוּ) with a happy heart (מְטוֹב לֵב, 65.13-14). This application of the covenant stipulations to the servants is also expressed in 56.4, 6, where Yhwh promises salvation for all humanity, including both foreigners and eunuchs, who hold fast to his covenant (מְחַזְּקִים בְּבְרִיתִי).⁴²⁷

Isaiah 65.16a turns back to the dtr context of curse and blessing, specifically Deut. 29.18, where it says that no one who has fallen to foreign gods ought to bless himself (וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבּוֹ), all the while taking the threatened curse lightly and persisting in apostasy. Whoever now blesses himself and takes an oath will do it only in the name of

423. See Ribichini, 'Gad', *DDD*, pp. 642-46.

424. See Sperling, 'Meni', *DDD*, pp. 1060-64 (1061).

425. עֲזַב with Yhwh as object: Deut. 28.20; 31.16; Josh. 24.16, 20; Judg. 2.12, 13; 10.6, 10, 13; 1 Sam. 8.8; 12.10, among others; see Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 182 n. 149; Sehmsdorf already, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', pp. 526-27; טוֹב לֵב occurs only in Deut. 28.47 and Isa. 65.14.

426. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 183.

427. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 143.

‘God Amen’ (בְּאֱמֵן). With this singular designation (cf. 25.1!) the servant community defines Yhwh as the God who fulfills with absolute certainty his proclamations of curse and blessing for apostates and faithful. He is no god of fortune or destiny, in contrast to Gad and Meni (56.11)! Over and above that, with this epithet the servants identify themselves as the ones who keep faith with the ‘God of the Amen’⁴²⁸ in a polemical distinction from their syncretistic opponents. As Yhwh made his plan for Israel and the nations ‘true’ through the Servant (42.3; 43.9), he now does the same through his servants (61.8); they are the positive counterpart of those who swear by the name of Yhwh and confess his Name, but not in faithfulness (לֹא בְאֱמֵן) or righteousness (לֹא בַצְדִּיקָה).⁴²⁹

While servants and apostate were contrasted to one another in the preceding segment, the final segment 65.16b–25 is concerned only with the lot of the ‘offspring of those blessed by Yhwh’ (65.23), an expression which can only mean the servant community. The separation of Israel by Yhwh as winemaker thus comes to an end. The fact that these verses no longer mention a division within the people of God is not an argument for a literary-critical separation but is rather the logical consequence of the flow of the discourse.⁴³⁰ The lack of the term ‘servants’ in 65.16b–25 is probably due to the fact that it conveys delimiting implications that no longer make sense *after* the separation into faithful and apostate.⁴³¹

Isaiah 65.16b–19a follows a structure⁴³² that juxtaposes the past hardship and the anticipated re-creation. This is followed by the portrayal of the new conditions of salvation in 19b:⁴³³

428. Blenkinsopp, ‘The “Servants of the Lord”’, p. 5: “‘the servants’ will bear this new name in the future age; they will be the Amen people, a people, that is, that says Yes to God’; cf. also 2 Cor. 1.17–20; Rev. 3.14.

429. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIB, pp. 78–79.

430. Against Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 178ff., who ascribes 65.1–16a to his redactor but 65.16b–24 to Trito-Isaiah; Lau, ‘Schriftgelehrte Prophetie’, pp. 134ff. and 193ff., assigns the first verse to ‘tradent circle I’ and the second to ‘tradent circle II’; Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, p. 178: 65.1, 24 (redactional), 65.16b–23, 25 (Trito-Isaiah stratum), 65.2–16a (late postexilic stratum); Steck repeatedly maintains its unity (‘Beobachtungen zur Anlage von Jes 65–66’, pp. 220, 227; ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56.1–8; 63.7–66.24’, pp. 248ff.).

431. Only once again in 66.14, in another polemic against the opponents.

432. Cf. Sehmsdorf, ‘Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte’, p. 520; Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 170.

433. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 325.

- 65.16b: End of the earlier difficulties
 65.17a: Yhwh as Creator of a new world
 65.17b: End of the earlier difficulties
 —
 65.18a: Rejoice without end!
 65.18b: Yhwh as Creator of the new Jerusalem as a joy
 65.19a: Yhwh's joy over Jerusalem and his people

In 65.16b-17a, the staccato-like salvation announcement begins with a series of three clauses introduced by a deictic כִּי. It is no longer about the juxtaposition of servants and apostates, but the contrast between past difficulties and the future time of salvation. That this is reserved only for those faithful to Yhwh is consistent with the entire flow of the chapter.

When v. 16b says that the earlier difficulties (הַצָּרוֹת הָרִאשׁוֹנוֹת) should be forgotten, it alludes to the 'former-latter' contrast in 40–48,⁴³⁴ especially since the key words חֲדָשָׁה/חֲדָשׁוֹת occur there, as they will in the following 65.17a.⁴³⁵ Within chaps. 40–48, the 'former' things meant the saving deeds of Yhwh in the past, which found their fulfillment in the call of Cyrus. The new thing which Yhwh had announced (42.9) and which had sprung up (43.19) referred to the 'preparation' of the Ebed, who, beginning in 49.1, took up his service to Israel and the nations. Just as the redemption of past history was tied to the development of the servant in chaps. 40–48, here the redemption of the 'former difficulties' is tied to the 'offspring of those blessed by Yhwh', i.e., the servants.⁴³⁶ The 'difficulties' to be forgotten are the unjust conditions. Such a radical reversal of life circumstances can be expected only when it can be attributed to Yhwh's creative activity.

The formulations in 43.18-19 (אֵל תִּזְכְּרוּ רִאשֻׁנוֹת... הֲנִי עָשָׂה חֲדָשָׁה) and 48.6-7 (חֲשַׁמְעִידִךְ חֲדָשׁוֹת מַעֲתָה... עֲתָה נִבְרָא), in particular, stand behind those of 65.16b-17: At the time of exile, the exiles were not to look back to the first exodus from Egypt so as not to obscure the view of the developing new event, that is, of the people whom Yhwh himself creates so that they might declare his praise. In the same way, the mourners of Zion should no longer be reminded of the earlier difficulties, so that they might proclaim his praise, for Jerusalem and its population are meant for joy and jubilation!⁴³⁷ The reversal of

434. רִאשֻׁנוֹת: 41.22; 42.9; 43.9, 18; 46.9; 48.3.

435. חֲדָשׁוֹת: 42.9; 48.6; חֲדָשָׁה: 43.19.

436. Beuken, *Jesaja*, IIIB, p. 82.

437. Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 521: 'What is prescribed in 43.18-19 unfolds in 65.16-19, updated to suit the situation.'

circumstances can only be compared with the creative activity of Yhwh, underscored by the three-fold ברא participle in 65.17–18. This recalls passages in 40–48, which use the ברא participle with Yhwh as subject to express his creation of heaven and earth⁴³⁸ as well as of Jacob/Israel.⁴³⁹

The singular expression that Yhwh creates a new heaven and a new earth is not an indication of an eschatological re-creation of the cosmos, but rather a re-reading of declarations about Yhwh's power in creation and history. This is not to say that the old heaven or the old earth should be forgotten, but rather the 'former' things, that is, the past difficulties. These things should 'no longer come to mind' (לא תעלינה על לב), but on the contrary, 'Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am creating Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight'⁴⁴⁰ (65.18). The connection of the divine power of creation with rejoicing and gladness is reminiscent of the sole appearance of ברא in 56–66, besides 65.17–18: 'Creator of the fruit of the lips' (57.19a). Not until Jerusalem is relieved of sinners and apostates will there be real cause for the Zion population to rejoice. The new creation is centered entirely on Jerusalem, the city and its population: 'The new creation *is* Jerusalem. One might say that the new creation begins in Jerusalem. In any case, Jerusalem is not only a part, but an embodiment of the new.'⁴⁴¹ When 65.19a sums up, in the mouth of Yhwh, 'I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people', it draws on 62.5 ('As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you'), as the portrayal of the new conditions of salvation in 65.21–23 refers to 62.8–9. Contrary to Trito-Isaiah's expectations, Isa. 65.19b–25 does not speak of the light shining over Zion that prompts the international pilgrimage with its gifts; instead it describes the small steps to a secure existence for those who suffered from short life expectations, high infant mortality, and economic disadvantage. The re-creation of Jerusalem does not begin by cosmic transformations,⁴⁴² but by establishing humane living conditions that are pleasing to God. A new heaven and earth are not the basis for the rejoicing and joy of Yhwh and his people, but rather

438. 40.28; 42.5; 45.18.

439. 43.1, 15 (45.7: Yhwh the Creator of light and darkness).

440. See the chiasmic arrangement of נִיל and שֵׁשׁ with ברא twice in the middle of 65.18.

441. Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 241.

442. Against Steck, 'Der neue Himmel', p. 361: 'The end of the era of the first creation is accepted here de facto in certain aspects!'

the circumstances that have changed for the better. It is not about a new cosmos, but about a new social order.⁴⁴³

- 65.19b: End of weeping and wailing
- 65.20: End of infant mortality and short life-expectancy
- 65.21: Positive: house—vineyard—eating
- 65.22a: Negative: building—planting—eating
- 65.22b-23a: Long life-expectancy—end of child mortality
- 65.23b: Conclusion: They are offspring of those blessed by Yhwh
-
- 65.24: Intense relationship with God
- 65.25: A peaceful order on the Holy Mountain

The portrayal of the salvific order that achieves the ‘forgetting of former difficulties’ relies on earlier texts of the book of Isaiah and also, once again, on the curse and blessing language in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. The declaration that weeping and cries for help will no longer be heard in the holy and redeemed Jerusalem refers in particular to the assertion of 51.11 that for those coming to Zion, sorrow and sighing will flee. This now applies not just to the time of the journey there (cf. 35.10), but describes a permanent state.⁴⁴⁴ 30.19 offers a clear parallel to 65.19b: ‘Truly, you people in Zion, inhabitants of Jerusalem, you shall weep no more (בְּבוֹ לֹא-תִבְכּוּ); he will be gracious to you at the sound of your cry (לִקְוֹל זַעֲקֶךָ); when he hears it, he will answer you’ (בִּשְׁמִיעָתוֹ עֲנֶךָ). Yhwh’s intervention in 65.24 in response to the pleading of the Zion population is intensified to the extent that the divine answer even precedes the human call!

There will be no more weeping and crying out because both the plagues of infant mortality as well as short life-expectancy will be banished from there (מִשָּׁם), i.e., from Jerusalem.⁴⁴⁵ The hope for a long life not only applies to the people of God (65.22bα: ‘like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be’), but also to the individual, as long as he belongs to the servant community which enjoys the right of residence in Zion.⁴⁴⁶ This is still a long way from the hope in a final destruction of death, as it was expressed in 25.8!

65.21-23 underlines that the expectation of a salvific future is still entirely oriented to daily needs, with concerns for a long life expectancy and healthy offspring again standing at the forefront. In

443. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIB*, p. 94: ‘Het hele gebeuren is primair een omvorming niet van de kosmos, maar van het volk Israël’; cf. Mauser, ‘Isaiah 65:17-25’, p. 184.

444. Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 325, who in addition maintains that a deliberate contrast to the judgment statements in Jer. 7.34; 16.9; 25.10 is possible.

445. Cf. Exod. 23.25-26; Lev. 26.9-10; Deut. 7.12-15; 28; Zech. 8.4.

446. In addition, Steck, ‘Zukunft des einzelnen’, p. 472.

contrast to Trito-Isaiah's vision it is no longer about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and the destroyed cities (60.10; 61.4), but about the more modest goal of building one's own four walls and laying out one's own vineyard, whose fruits one may enjoy for one's self.⁴⁴⁷ The curses of Deut. 28.30, 39 are turned into their opposite here, since those to whom the promises apply have remained faithful to Yhwh and his covenant (cf. 56.4, 6). He calls them 'my chosen' (בְּחִירִי), who may consume the 'works of their hands'.⁴⁴⁸ The view that בְּחִירִי does not mean the 'servants'⁴⁴⁹ but all of postexilic Israel makes no sense. Anyone who distinguishes between 'my chosen' in 65.9, 15 and in 65.22 fails to follow the flow of the chapter, instead substituting his own literary-critical (pre)conceptions.⁴⁵⁰

When it says in 65.23a 'they [the chosen] will no longer labor in vain' (לֹא יִיגְעוּ לְרִיק), there is an allusion to the lament of the Ebed that he has labored in vain (לְרִיק יִגְעָה, 49.4).⁴⁵¹ The 'servant' community and the 'chosen' are thus moved into close proximity to the Ebed.⁴⁵² The promise that children will no longer be born for terror (לְבַהֲלָה) for its part alludes to a curse formula from Lev. 26.16: 'In short: the curse of God will no longer lie on the salvation community. As a result, the salvation community will henceforth be designated "offspring of those blessed by Yhwh".'⁴⁵³ This title for the servants is taken from 61.9, a passage which in turn makes reference to 44.3. They and their offspring are the ones on whom the spirit and blessing (!) of Yhwh rest, who will be known among the nations as blessed. In view of 53.10 it is clear that the servant community sees itself as the offspring promised to the Ebed. The community stands in such an intimate relationship with Yhwh that he can 'read every wish from

447. Anyone who, in spite of this, maintains the authorship of Trito-Isaiah for 65.17–25, is under increased pressure in terms of argumentation; cf. Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, p. 178: 'This piece thus appears to come from the latest period of Trito-Isaiah's activity.'

448. A *dtr* expression, which designated, among other things, the living one has earned; so Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 527 (Deut. 2.7; 14.29; 16.15; 24.19; 28.12; 30.9).

449. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 179; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 139.

450. With Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1–8; 63,7–66,24', p. 253.

451. The phrase יִגְעַ לְרִיק appears only in these two places.

452. The Servant of God is not interpreted 'collectively as the salvation community' (so Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 139), but the salvation community sees itself as the successor of the Ebed!

453. Thus Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 139, who identifies the salvation community not as the servant community, but as all of postexilic Israel.

their lips' (65.24). What a contrast to the broken communication between him and the sinners (65.12)!

However, it is not only the relationship between God and people that will be renewed, but also the relationships of the people with one another. The reliance of 65.25 on 11.6-9⁴⁵⁴ to express the future conditions of salvation is not an apocalyptic-style gloss,⁴⁵⁵ but a deliberate conclusion to the real subject of 65. The Davidic-messianic context in which the servants see themselves also disposes them to have reference to Isaiah 11. They take on the Davidic legacy; Yhwh's spirit rests on them, so they are able to understand the promise of non-violent⁴⁵⁶ coexistence of 11.6-9 as being directed to them. They adroitly replace כֶּבֶשׂ ('lamb') from 11.6 with the synonymous טֶלֶה, thus evoking 40.11.⁴⁵⁷ The inhabitants of the mountain of God are the lambs whose Shepherd is Yhwh alone.

7.5.3. The Permanent Admittance of Foreigners (Isaiah 56.1-8)

As already emphasized, the division of the community into pious and sinners and the integration of foreigners into the covenant with Yhwh are two sides of the same coin for the servant community redactors. On the one side, sinful coreligionists are excluded; on the other, the righteous from the nations are included. In a thematic bracketing (56.1-8 and 66) the servant community takes up the issue of the admission of non-Jews to the temple cult in Jerusalem. Not coincidentally, it does this with a repeated emphasis on the 'house of Yhwh' (56.5, 7; 66.20). When it is also observed that the Hezekiah psalm in 38.20 amounts, in essence, to the praise of God in the temple, it appears likely that it was the servants who inserted the 'minor bracket' of 56.1-8 and 66 and placed chaps. 36-39—together with the Psalm of Hezekiah—in the center of the book, in a new version of the scroll.⁴⁵⁸

454. The fact that 65.25 is more or less a summary of 11.6, 7, 9a precludes a reversed dependence; so Steck, "'...ein kleiner Knabe'", pp. 108-109; likewise Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 141; against Werner, *Eschatologische Texte*, p. 49.

455. Among others, Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 326; Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde*, p. 173.

456. Even the poisonous snake of 11.8 will be 'defanged' through recourse to Gen. 3.14: it will have dust for food! Note also the wordplay between 'graze' (יָרַעַ) and 'do evil' (יָרַעַ).

457. Beuken, *Jesaja, IIIB*, p. 92: 'In het lam dat met de wolf weidt, ligt een zinspelend op de kudde die Yhwh mee terugneemt naar Sion.'

458. See above under 5.7.

With 56.1-8 the servants consciously follow the close of Isaiah 55.⁴⁵⁹ Thus the place where the source of life is located for all who thirst (55.1) is identified in 56.7 with the temple, which stands open to the people of all nations.⁴⁶⁰ As the Yhwh disciples in 55.12-13 were compared with green trees, now the image is again taken up in the lament of the eunuch that he is 'a dry tree' (עץ יבש, 56.3). In spite of his inability to reproduce, the eunuch does not need to worry about his continued life in the coming generations. The everlasting name that Yhwh gives to him will not be erased (לא יכרת). So he too belongs in a very special way to the green trees, which are for Yhwh an everlasting sign that will not be erased (לא יכרת, 55.13)! Verses 56.1-8 are arranged chiastically:

- vv. 1-2: Conditions for salvation in view of its eschatological imminence
- v. 3a: Objections of the foreigner
- v. 3b: Objections of the eunuch
- vv. 4-5: Divine speech in favor of the eunuch
- vv. 6-7: Response in favor of foreigners
- v. 8: Eschatological gathering from beyond Israel

The resumption in v. 2 of the verbs עשה and שמר from v. 1 and the reference of זאת and בה in v. 2 back to their antecedent in v. 1 suggest that the two verses belong together.⁴⁶¹ Ethical behavior is not elicited by Torah regulations,⁴⁶² but rather by Yhwh's eschatological imminence (cf. 46.13; 51.5).⁴⁶³ Since the arrival of salvation concerns all people, it also means all must prepare themselves for it. The word-pair צדקה/משפט⁴⁶⁴ characteristic of the Proto-Isaianic corpus and the distinctive combination of צדקה/ישועה⁴⁶⁵ in 40–55 are joined with each other in 56.1, indicating 'that Trito-Isaiah existed not as an independent collection that was attached to Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah, but that the formation of Trito-Isaiah must be seen in connection with the composition of the entire book of Isaiah'.⁴⁶⁶ In conjunction with the

459. שם: 55.13; 56.5; שמה: 55.12; 56.7; ברית: 55.3; 56.4, 6; קרוב: 55.6; 56.1; עץ: 55.12; 56.3; 'nations': 55.4-5; 56.7.

460. Beuken, 'Isa. 56.9–57.13', p. 56.

461. Against Koenen, *Ethik*, 11-15, who sees 56.1 only as a superscript for Isa. 56–66; the fact that אשר does not elsewhere introduce a divine saying is not sufficient reason to separate v. 2 from v. 1, according to P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 51.

462. See Wells, "'Isaiah" as an Exponent of Torah' (1996), p. 140; (1994), p. 883.

463. So Kraus, *Das Evangelium*, p. 175.

464. Isa. 1.27; 5.7, 16; 9.6; 16.5; 26.9; 28.17; 32.1, 16; 33.5.

465. Isa. 45.8, 21; 46.13; 51.5, 6, 8.

466. Rendtorff, *Das Alte Testament*, p. 211; cf. Rendtorff, 'Zur Komposition', pp. 312-14; Rendtorff, 'Jesaja 56,1', pp. 176-77.

theme of the pilgrimage of the nations in chap. 55, this extending of the ethical requirement to all humanity⁴⁶⁷ is not surprising in view of Yhwh's eschatological theophany: 'Because salvation is coming soon, one should behave in such a way as to be able to participate in it.'⁴⁶⁸ The unconditional proclamation of salvation in 40–55 is linked in 56.1–2 to the ethical claim of the Isaiah tradition in deuteronomistic language.⁴⁶⁹ Extending the offer of salvation to all people goes hand in hand with restricting it to the righteous! That the ethical requirement together with Sabbath observance⁴⁷⁰ are the only conditions necessary for salvation is unique in the Hebrew Bible. Especially conspicuous is the conscious avoidance of circumcision as a sign of the covenant (Gen. 17; P). If חֹזֵק ב (56.2, 6) is translated not as 'take hold of the covenant', but 'adhere to the covenant',⁴⁷¹ it is clear that this is not actually about the problem of admission into the community, but about separating from it! Foreigners and eunuchs were afraid of being pushed out of the Yhwh relationship into which they had already entered.

The mention of בן אֲדָמָה in 56.2 already directs attention to the book of Ezekiel, and with Ezek. 44.4–31 a clear background emerges for the discussion in Isa. 56.1–8. The two texts are not only linked by the theme of admission to the temple cult, but also have individual motifs in common.⁴⁷² The vigorous insistence on the exclusion of uncircumcised foreigners in Ezek. 44.7 and the permanent admission of foreigners and eunuchs to the temple cult in Isa. 56.3–7 are diametrically opposed. So it is not surprising that in 1QIsa^a לשרתו 'to serve Yhwh' (56.6) is omitted because of the 'offensive language'.⁴⁷³ This cultic 'foreigner policy' could be based on the Solomonic temple dedication which also assured a hearing of the prayer of the נכרי with the admission of foreigners to the temple (1 Kgs 8.41–43). Along this 'foreigner-friendly' line lies also the pledge in the outline of reform of the book of Ezekiel where the גֵּרִים are granted the right to an

467. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 15: 'צדקה comes only to the one who does צדקה.'

468. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 15.

469. Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 545.

470. Wells, "'Isaiah" as an Exponent of Torah' (1996), p. 152: 'Here, the "axial position" of the Sabbath reorders everything. The hallowing power of Sabbath observance breaks down proposed limitations of the worshipping community on mount Zion.'

471. See the discussion by Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', p. 55 n. 60.

472. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe*, II, p. 456: 'Sabbath observance': Ezek. 44.24; Isa. 56.2, 4, 6; 'break covenant' (Ezek. 44.7) versus 'hold on to covenant' (Isa. 56.4, 6); בן (ד) נכר: Ezek. 44.9; Isa. 56.3, 6; חלל: Ezek. 44.7; Isa. 56.6.

473. See Wells, "'Isaiah" as an Exponent of Torah' (1996), pp. 147–48.

inheritance of land among the tribes of Israel. Even in the position of Ezra and Nehemiah, who vehemently demanded the dissolution of mixed marriages, there is a place for admitting to the Passover those 'who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the nations of the land, in order to seek Yhwh, the God of Israel' (Ezra 6.21). Who precisely is meant by this group remains unclear, but there is no reason to suppose that foreigners who had joined the Yhwh cult were not among them.⁴⁷⁴ Nevertheless the separation (בדל) of Israel from foreigners and foreign cults, as in the period of the conquest under Joshua, stands at the center of postexilic restoration policies under Ezra and Nehemiah.⁴⁷⁵ The lament of the foreigner that Yhwh (!) might cut him off again from the community (56.3) is more than understandable in this context.

In the matter of admitting eunuchs (סריסים) to the temple cult, the position of 56.1-8 agrees with no other biblical tradition, so that one might speak of an 'abrogation'⁴⁷⁶ of the exclusion provision in Deut. 23.2, according to which castrated males or those with crushed testicles were denied entrance *ipso facto* to the קהל יהוה.⁴⁷⁷ The servant community, 'commander of nations' (מצוה לאומים, 55.4), sees itself as authorized to countervene with a radical interpretation of the Torah, which generally excludes the foreigner, in view of the impending arrival of salvation.⁴⁷⁸

Still, it was not only the provisions of the Pentateuch, the outline of reform in Ezekiel and the restoration policies of Ezra and Nehemiah that summoned the servant community to a prophetic redefinition of the relationship of the eschatological people of God to *those* people who traditionally could get little or no share of the saving presence of Yhwh. The message of chaps. 60–62 with its partly 'xenophobic' attitude must have raised fears among its targets, even among those who cultivated the Isaiah tradition(s), that their continued recognition by the community might prove difficult.⁴⁷⁹ Could the oracle that בני נכר would rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and kings serve the city (60.10) cause anything but anxiety over their future status? The supplement in 60.12, that every nation and kingdom not surrendering to Israel will be completely destroyed demonstrates how well-founded

474. P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, pp. 55-56.

475. Cf. Neh. 9.1-2; 10.29-32; 13.1-3; Ezra 9-10.

476. Donner, 'Jesaja LVI,1-7', p. 88.

477. According to Lev. 21.20 such persons were excluded from the priesthood.

478. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 272.

479. Smith works this out in *Rhetoric*, pp. 59-60.

the concern of the proselytes and eunuchs was. While the animals of the foreigner may indeed prove to be acceptable sacrifice material (60.7), there is no mention of an offering by their donor. This omission would not be reassuring to those who had joined the Yhwh cult. In Yhwh's service (לשרתו, 56.6) they represented something other than just the 'service duty' of sacrificial animals (שרתוֹןִךְ, 60.7), or the continued subjection of their kings (ומלכיהם שרתוֹןִךְ, 60.10). While foreigners and aliens will work in the vineyards and fields, the Israelites are the ones entitled to be 'priests of Yhwh' and 'servants of our God' (משרתי אלהינו, 61.6). Yhwh disperses the legitimate concerns of the proselytes in a divine declaration (56.7) that their burnt offerings and sacrifices would certainly be pleasing to him (לרצון על־מזבחִי). The prophetic torah of Isa. 56.1-8 consequently not only assures foreigners and eunuchs of a continuing status in the community, against the provision of the law in Deut. 23.2, but also corrects those expectations for the future in 60-62 that alarmed them. This indicates how the servants grappled critically with both the Torah regulations and the message of their scroll. In regard to 60.4 they felt that Yhwh's gathering (קבץ) could be related not exclusively to Diaspora Judaism, but must reach out far beyond that (in 56.8, קבץ 3x). When the eunuch in the temple (!) is promised a better memorial⁴⁸⁰ than biological offspring (56.5), there is yet another allusion to 60.4, where the sons of the Diaspora Jews will come to Zion and their daughters will be carried on shoulders.

Surely one of the most striking features of 56.1-8 is the emphasis on the Sabbath observance, repeated three times, both in general for the בְּנֵי אֲדָם (v. 2), and in particular for eunuchs (v. 4) and foreigners (v. 6). One gets the impression that this observance, which first became a hallmark of Jewish identity in the exilic-postexilic period,⁴⁸¹ now takes the place of the covenant sign of circumcision. If the גֵּר had to keep the Sabbath according to Exod. 20.11 and Deut. 5.14 just as the Jewish people, then obviously the proselytes, too, who had decided to associate with the Yhwh cult, would be enjoined to observe the Sabbath as a sign of Yhwh solidarity. If social-ethical behavior had already been required, the Sabbath observance could not be absent, since it fulfilled a socially protective function for those who were economically dependent, according to the principle: 'Your

480. This probably refers to a memorial stone (יָד) in the temple precincts; so P. Smith, *Rhetoric*, p. 64; cf. 1 Sam. 15.12; 2 Sam. 18.18.

481. Cf. Exod. 31.13-17; Lev. 19.30; 26.2; Ezek. 20; 44.24; Neh. 9.14 (!); 13.15-22 (esp. v. 18: the violation of the Sabbath commandment is a reason for the exilic catastrophe); Jer. 17.19-27 had already proclaimed this.

male and female slaves should rest as you do!’ (Deut. 5.14b). If one considers the texts about Sabbath observance in the last part of the book of Isaiah, there emerges ‘a path from the weekly Sabbath of the righteous and the eunuchs and foreigners who follow Yahweh (Isa. 56.2-6; 58.13-14), to the Sabbath for social needs in the nation (58.6-7; 61.1-2), to the Sabbath of the period of salvation, through whose observance the nations are integrated into the salvation of the people of God (66.23).’⁴⁸² All of humanity will come from Sabbath to Sabbath to worship Yhwh. Thus the created order of Gen. 2.2-3 reaches into the eschatological period of the end, which began with the inclusion of foreigners for its final fulfillment!

The servant community as the basis of the eschatological people of God from Israel *and* the nations is open for Yhwh disciples from the nations and for all who were previously excluded (56.7). The survivors from the nations (45.20) are the ones whom Yhwh will send to the most remote nations (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי מֵהֵם פְּלִיטִים אֶל הַגּוֹיִם, 66.19), to *those* peoples who have not directly experienced Yhwh’s acts for Israel (cf. 52.15; 53.1). The task of the Servant of God to the nations (42.4, 6; 49.6) will consequently be transferred to *those* members of the servant community who come from the nations!⁴⁸³

Yhwh himself will bring the servant community to his holy mountain (וְהִבִּיאֹתִים אֶל הַר קְדֹשִׁי, 56.7). The [holy] Mount Zion is one of the topics that lends thematic consistency to the book of Isaiah,⁴⁸⁴ since it is often encountered in Proto-Isaiah,⁴⁸⁵ never in Deutero-Isaiah (cf. 40.9), then increasingly in Trito-Isaiah.⁴⁸⁶ As Yhwh brings the servant community to Mount Zion, including foreigners and eunuchs (56.7), they then bring their brothers from all nations as an offering for Yhwh on his holy mountain (66.20).⁴⁸⁷ The gathering (קִבֹּץ) of the Diaspora Jews and the nations has Mount Zion as its goal (56.8: אֶקְבֹּץ עֲלָיו; 66.18-20). A major connecting bridge is thus constructed that spans from the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations back to 2.2-4. If the servant community living on Zion consists only

482. Kellermann, ‘Tritojesaja’, p. 47.

483. See Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 211 n. 13; Steck, ‘Die Gottesknechts-Texte’, p. 172.

484. Alonso Schökel, *Estudios*, pp. 297-301; Beuken, ‘Isa. 56.9–57.13’, p. 51: ‘Briefly, the holy mount Zion is a nodal point in the artistic ordering of the book of Isaiah.’

485. 2.2-3; 4.5; 8.18; 10.12, 32; 11.9; 16.1; 18.7; 24.23; 25.6; 27.13; 29.8; 30.29; 31.4; 37.32.

486. 56.7; 57.13; 65.9, 11, 25; 66.20.

487. Hausmann, *Israel's Rest*, p. 249: ‘When other nations are entitled to the term “remnant”, their integration is also possible.’

of the righteous, then Mount Zion is a place free of violence, a place of peace (65.25), which also fulfills the eschatological promise concerning the mountain of God in 11.9.⁴⁸⁸

When Yhwh promises that he will give his servants joy⁴⁸⁹ in his house of prayer (וְשִׂמְחָתִים בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּה), because 'my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations' (56.7), it is confirmation that foreigners will be admitted to the place of prayer as envisioned in Solomon's dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8.41-43). But Isa. 56.7 goes far beyond that, for foreigners can not only pray in the temple, but even present offerings in a manner pleasing (לְרִצּוֹן) to God.⁴⁹⁰ 'Prayer' and 'servanthood' are combined by prominent figures in the biblical tradition—by David (2 Sam. 7.20-29), Solomon (1 Kgs 8.23-30), Nehemiah (Neh. 1.6-11), and also by Daniel (Dan. 9.17).⁴⁹¹ The servants from Israel and the nations thus stand in the ranks of great servants and supplicants: 'Because they want to be servants of Yahweh (v. 6), Yahweh can be attentive to their prayer (cf. Neh. 1.6, 10-11).'⁴⁹²

7.5.4. *The Eschatological Jerusalem for Israel and the Nations (Isaiah 66)*

The issue of foreigners forms the thematic bracket which encloses the last part of the book of Isaiah and at the same time points back to 2.2-4. After the first conclusion of the servant community redaction (65.25), there appears to have been an increasing need for clarification regarding the integration of foreigners into the Jerusalem temple cult. The inclusion of chap. 66 in the same redactional layer as 56.1-8 is already indicated by the identical opening with בֵּה אָמַר יְהוָה, where the identity of the messenger again remains unspecified. In addition the term 'temple' (בֵּית, 56.5, 7; 66.20) and the terms 'chosen/delight in' (בָּחַר/חָפֵץ) occur in both texts. The chapter can be divided as follows:

488. Zenger, 'Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10', p. 147: 'When the poor and oppressed finally receive their right to life on Zion, the reign of God dawns at this place of creation. Then this place will truly be worth the nations coming there for knowledge.'

489. Cf. Isa. 55.12; 65.13; Pss. 86.4; 90.15-16; 92.5; 2 Chron. 20.27; Neh. 12.43; Ezra 6.22; see Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 552: unlike in Jer. 31.13-14, joy is no longer for all Israel, but only for the servants!

490. This signifies the reversal of the criticism of the cult in Isa. 1.15, according to Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, p. 117 n. 3; offering and prayer are not opposites!

491. Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 549.

492. Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 550.

- 1-6: Temple and City: Place of retribution (מִשְׁלָם v. 6)
 7-14: Zion, the mother of the new Zion population
 15-17: Yhwh's judgment on בָּשָׂר כָּל through fire (אֵשׁ)
 18-22: The new people of God from Israel and the nations
 23-24: Worship by בָּשָׂר; Fire (אֵשׁ) for the פְּשָׁעִים

7.5.4.1. *Temple and Temple Builders* (Isaiah 66.1-6). The demarcation of the first unit is debated. Is the imperative in v. 5 weighty enough to begin a new segment?⁴⁹³ A few reasons argue against it: (a) The designation 'temple'—'my resting place' (1b) is continued in v. 6 with the terms 'city'—'temple'. The change from בֵּית to הֵיכַל and from מִקוֹם מְנוּחָתִי to עִיר indicates that there is more at stake than just the question of temple-building, and that is the question of Jerusalem as the place of 'rest'. (b) The inclusion in v. 5 of the key word 'to shake' (חָרַד) from v. 2 likewise speaks against beginning a new unit with 66.5. (c) The mention of the 'enemies' of Yhwh (לְאֹיְבָיו) in 66.6, 14, parallel to the פְּשָׁעִים in 66.24, supports the conclusion that the unit of meaning ends with 66.6. (d) The terms 'choose' (בָּחַר) and 'delight in' (חָפֵץ) bind vv. 3-4 closely together so that they become the center of 66.1-6. The following schema⁴⁹⁴ shows how carefully this section is built up.

- 66.1: 'House–Temple' // 'my resting place'
 66.2: 'Who trembles before my word' (חָרַד עַל דְּבָרִי)
 66.3: They chose their way (בָּחַר), took delight (חָפֵץ) in idols
 66.4: I choose (אֶבְחָר)... What does not please me, they chose
 66.5: 'Hear..., you who tremble before his word' (הִחָרְדוּ אֶל דְּבָרוֹ)
 66.6: 'The sound of an uproar from the city; a sound from the temple'

This is not about the pros and cons of rebuilding the temple, but rather about who will take part in the undertaking and who may participate in equipping the temple. It is the quality of the temple-builder that is at issue, not the temple!⁴⁹⁵ This problem is not new, but is borrowed from the biblical traditions of the construction of the first temple, joining key statements from 2 Samuel 7 (// 1 Chron. 17), 1 Kings 8, and 1 Chron. 28.1-10 in a new synthesis and updating by the servant community. Thus 2 Samuel 7 is incorporated to the extent that the 'pious' desire to build a temple for Yhwh, but a divine 'building license' is not *ipso facto* included. The fact that David was

493. Steck, 'Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7–66,24', p. 265, with a view to 1.10.

494. Webster, 'A Rhetorical Study of Isaiah 66', pp. 94-95; Beuken, 'Does Trito-Isaiah Reject', p. 60.

495. See Darr, 'No Strength to Deliver', p. 250.

stopped from building the temple by Yhwh himself, reversing Nathan's earlier positive response, should at least give the postexilic temple propagandists pause!

According to the Chronicles tradition, David himself was not permitted to realize the building of the temple, since he was a warrior and had shed blood (1 Chron. 28.3). If peaceful conduct is a prerequisite for building the temple, then both those who slaughter bulls as offerings and those who kill humans are disqualified as temple builders. The fact that the Solomonic as well as the second temple were exposed to pagan influences and probably succumbed to them in varying degrees⁴⁹⁶ makes the warning voice of the servants in 66.1-6 appear more understandable.⁴⁹⁷ They did not reject the temple cult in principle, which would be in line neither with the biblical traditions nor with the kerygma of a Trito-Isaiah in 60-62, but they opposed a 'temple ideology' of those who professed to build a house to the Creator and God of the universe (1 Kgs 8.27) yet neglected their social obligations and fail to consider how 'contamination-prone' the temple was.⁴⁹⁸ A look at the admission of foreigners in Solomon's dedicatory temple prayer (1 Kgs 8.41-43) points to a further argument of the servant community. Yhwh does not look on the house built by humans, but rather on the person with a contrite spirit,⁴⁹⁹ on the person who trembles before his word—regardless of origin. If that is the case, can the building of the temple be restricted to the returned *golah* alone (Ezra 4.1-5), where even Yhwh disciples from bordering Samaria are generally excluded (with reference to the Cyrus edict since a theological basis was simply not at hand), thus giving preference to a 'smaller Judean' solution? From the outset, the emphasis on the Jewish 'proof of descent' as a condition for participation in the community and the radical disapproval of mixed marriages (cf. Neh. 13.23-27) encouraged suspicion regarding openness toward

496. For the 'ban on temple building' in 2 Sam. 7 see, among others, W. Dietrich and Naumann, *Die Samuelbücher*, pp. 143-48.

497. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, p. 480, with a view to Jer. 7.1-5: 'Thus, among those who remained at home, even those groups influenced by JerD will have given priority to the just settlement of social problems before the building of the temple.'

498. A summary about 300 years later (1 En. 89.73) shows that this skepticism toward the second temple was justified, that the temple was 'defiled and unclean' from the outset; Yhwh himself would do away with this polluted temple and build a new one in its place (90.28-29); cf. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, p. 668.

499. Note the wordplay with נבִּיָּה: Yhwh looks on the נבִּיָּה רִיחַ, while the zealots of the cult kill people (מִכָּה אִישׁ).

Yhwh disciples from the nations, even from Samaria, and discredited those Jews who supported Israel's openness toward the nations, in the sense of the traditions of the book of Isaiah. They were even threatened with exclusion from the religious community, as indicated by the phrase, 'your own people who hate you and reject you for my name's sake' (אַחֲיֵכֶם שִׂנְאֵיכֶם מִנְדִּיכֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמִי, 66.5b). The addressees here are not proselytes but 'full Jews' who supported the admission of foreigners, for which they were excluded 'in the name of Yhwh'. It is significant that the expression 'trembling ones', i.e., 'the God-fearing', also occurs in Ezra 9.4 and 10.3⁵⁰⁰ in the context of the 'foreigner problem'. Those who advocated a strict separation of the postexilic community regarded themselves as 'the trembling ones' because they observed the Torah (Ezra 10.3), while those in favor of admitting foreigners regarded themselves as God-fearing on account of 'my word' (66.2b), which meant the prophetic word within the book of Isaiah. The dispute about admission or exclusion of foreigners was therefore not to be decided in the arena of biblical traditions alone. Only an unambiguous statement from Yhwh himself could tip the balance in favor of those who, like the servant community, supported admitting proselytes and foreigners, and this is the aim of the quotation in 66.5b: 'May Yhwh be glorified (יִכְבֹּד יְהוָה) so that we may behold your joy'. This reflects the defiant ironic position of those who took the tradents of Trito-Isaiah's visions literally. Yhwh must at last be concerned for the bright כְּבוֹד (60.1-2; 62.2) that will dawn over Jerusalem! So long as that is still expected, it is better to remain within the clear Torah regulations (Deut. 23.2-9), especially since economic reasons speak against admitting the foreigner! Ever since nationalistic hopes for a Davidic restoration under Zerubbabel had been shattered through Persian intervention, the temple became increasingly the domain of the priesthood and the ruling elite, for whom Persian rule rapidly became profitable. As everywhere in the ancient Near East, the temple was not only the center of cultic life, but also of the economy. Whoever was eligible to participate in the temple cult was also a member of the polis, with the right to own land and property.⁵⁰¹ Ezra 10.8 shows how inseparable cultic and social affiliation were: Within three days all members of the *golah* had to assemble in Jerusalem in order to accept the forced dissolution of

500. Is it just coincidence that the singular-plural alternation in 66.2, 5 is reproduced in Ezra 9.4 (חָרַד) and Ezra 10.3 (חָרְדִּים)?

501. Blenkinsopp, 'Temple and Society', p. 29: 'Temple privileges were automatically extended to free, propertied citizens who jealously guarded their status and controlled admission to their ranks.'

existing mixed marriages if they did not want to be expelled from the community, including confiscation of all their possessions!⁵⁰²

In all the texts that address the theme of David's temple plans, the dynasty promise has also been mentioned, so it is not surprising that Isa. 66.1-6 also brings it up. It does so in a reference to 11.10 created by the key word מנוחה ('rest'). The servant community has already referred several times to Isaiah 11 and understood itself as the spirit-endowed branch of David; this is also suggested here.⁵⁰³ They live on Zion as a new non-violent community (cf. 65.25; 11.6-9); the nations make pilgrimage to them, they inquire about the Branch, they are interested in them (cf. 62.12: דרושה), they bring their gifts (בבד in 60.13; 61.6; 66.11), so that the resting place, that is, Zion, will be glorious (בבד).⁵⁰⁴ But this will only happen because the servant community is the basis of a quiet, violence-free Jerusalem. With the phrase מקום מנוחה (66.1b), the place of rest is inseparable from its 'quiet' inhabitants!⁵⁰⁵ This ambiguity of 'place/house' and 'people' is also present in the concept of בית, which is especially striking in Nathan's promise (2 Sam. 7.5, 11) but is also echoed at the beginning and close of the lament in Isa. 63.7 ('house of Israel') and 64.10 ('our holy house').⁵⁰⁶ Yhwh's question about the nature of the house and his place of rest is not solely or even primarily about the quality of the temple, but is first and foremost about the quality of the community on the Mount of God. If people are killed, pagan rites performed, and other evil doings prevail *there*, then there is no question of it being a place of rest! For Jerusalem and Mount Zion to be what they are meant to be, those who insolently disregard cultic and social rules must disappear. Yhwh takes care of this himself, and

502. See the parallel in ancient Greek law of 'atimia', which deprived the guilty person temporarily or even forever of his citizenship rights; Blidstein, 'Atimia', p. 358: 'Full *atimia* (there were partial invocations of the penalty as well) banned visits to public temples and shrines, and even to the agora. *Atimia* could, finally, evolve into exile'; Blenkinsopp, 'Temple and Society', pp. 29-30.

503. Cf. Zenger, 'Die Verheissung Jesaja 11,1-10', p. 147.

504. This is how J. Becker (*Isaias*, p. 62), Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*, p. 59) and Vermeylen (*Du prophète Isaïe*, I, p. 277: 'la communauté des Juifs pieux groupés autour du temple'), among others, interpret Isa. 11.10 on the postexilic community.

505. Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 541, with a look at, e.g., 1 Chron. 22.9; 28.2: 'It is unmistakable..., that a temple which Yahweh would call מקום מנוחה could only be built by those who are at peace, in the sense of Chronicles.'

506. Webster, 'A Rhetorical Study of Isaiah 66', p. 96 (cf. Jer. 24.6-7; 31.4, 27-28).

retributive punishment upon his enemies (לְאִיבָיו) proceeds from the temple! The resumption of this motif in 66.15–17 shows the urgency with which the servants await the intervention of Yhwh for the purification of Zion. The enemies of Jerusalem are not foreign powers, but the brethren, the ‘neighbor next door’! Proceeding from the beginning of retribution (מִשְׁלֵם גְּמוּלָה, part.) against the opponents in 66.6 to the end of the purge in 66.15–17, the initially shocking closing verse makes good sense. For the people rebelling against Yhwh, that is, for his enemies, it is over; their corpses lie outside of Jerusalem as a reminder and warning to those who make the weekly and monthly pilgrimages to the Mount of God. Jerusalem and Zion can now find rest at last!

For the interpretation of 66.1–6 it is important, against the majority of interpreters, to postpone or even abandon the question, ‘What is the meaning of a temple built by humans?’⁵⁰⁷ in favor of the question, ‘What do human beings have to be like so that they might build a temple?’ This is indicated by the following verses, which deal with the birth and growth of the new Zion population (vv. 7–14) in contrast to the still active apostates (vv. 15–17). Isaiah 66 is about the juxtaposition of people—of those faithful to Yhwh versus those who rebel against Yhwh (v. 24)—and not about the heavenly dwelling of God versus the temple made by humans.⁵⁰⁸ This mistaken emphasis was favored by the LXX καὶ ἔστιν ἐμὰ πάντα ταῦτα (‘this all belongs to me’, 66.2aβ), turning the creation statement of the מְהֵרָא בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים (‘all these came into being’) into a declaration of ownership. The MT of 66.1, however, refers to the contrast between the creation activity of Yhwh by which everything came to be (perf.), and the ongoing construction work on the temple by humans (impf.).⁵⁰⁹ If 66.2 is read according to the MT, which is also supported by Qumran,⁵¹⁰ it constitutes another statement that fits well into the flow of the entire chapter. It warns against the illusion that human temple building could even remotely come close to Yhwh’s creation activity.⁵¹¹ Several observations support this interpretation. The expression ‘Heaven is

507. So Koenen, ‘Textkritische Anmerkungen’, p. 572.

508. For that, Greenfield, ‘Ba’al’s Throne’, p. 198.

509. In Stephen’s speech (Acts 7.48–50; cf. 17.24) the orientation of the message of the Hebrew text is obscured even further when the temple building takes on idolatrous characteristics. Cf. χειροποίητος in LXX, e.g., for אֱלִיל, ‘idol’ (Lev. 26.1; Isa. 2.18; 10.11; 19.1; 31.7), according to Beuken, ‘Does Trito-Isaiah Reject’, p. 53.

510. Cf. Barthélemy, *Critique*, p. 458.

511. Beuken, ‘Does Trito-Isaiah Reject’, p. 56.

my throne; earth is my footstool' is not about the locale of the divine abode, but emphasizes God's unrestricted arena of power,⁵¹² where 'throne' (כִּסֵּא) indicates the exercise of royal authority. Here is sketched out an image of Yhwh 'which is free of all earthly restrictions on availability set by humans'.⁵¹³ That the earth, and not merely the ark (Ps. 132.7; 1 Chron. 28.2) or the sanctuary (Ps. 99.5; Lam. 2.1; cf. 60.13), is Yhwh's footstool (הֶדְרָם) is a singular formulation that requires explanation. While the 'throne' symbolizes the inaccessible power of Yhwh, emphasizing his transcendence, the 'footstool' stands for the side of God that is turned toward humanity.⁵¹⁴ When the earth is called 'footstool' in 66.1, it means that Yhwh's presence may be experienced everywhere, not just in the Jerusalem temple or on Zion. Thus the servant community stresses the possibility that the encounter with God ultimately depends not on the sanctuary, but on the personal disposition of the individual (66.2b). The Jerusalem temple is not rejected, but false expectations are dismantled. Yhwh's personal presence is not connected to the sanctuary; it demands an inner posture that expects nothing from the self, but everything from God: 'The cosmos knows only one direction for benevolence: from Yhwh to men.'⁵¹⁵

When 'building' (הִבְנוֹ) is referred to in 66.1b as an ongoing action (imperf.) and at the same time the temple is assumed to be already in existence (66.6) with thriving cultic activity (66.3), then 'building' cannot mean the first reconstruction of the destroyed temple in 520–515, but instead 'further construction on the temple', which must have been drawn out well into the fifth century.⁵¹⁶ In accord with the religious and economic interests that a fully functional temple satisfied, it is all too understandable that the priesthood together with the local aristocracy⁵¹⁷ would have devoted themselves to the temple building and expansion. It was almost inevitable, with all the activity and planning, that syncretistic practices would slip in (66.3), on the one hand—there was an obligation to the Persian royal house for its primary financing of sacrifices and prayers (Ezra 6.4, 8–10;

512. Beuken, 'Does Trito-Isaiah Reject', p. 55.

513. Fabry, כִּסֵּא, *ThWAT* IV, p. 266.

514. See Fabry, הֶדְרָם, *ThWAT* II, p. 355.

515. Beuken, 'Does Trito-Isaiah Reject', p. 57.

516. There is a greater temporal scope for those who anchor the 'temple motif' not historically, but literarily, as a response to the destroyed temple in 63.18 and 64.10, for example; so Steck, 'Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch', pp. 396–97.

517. For the involvement of the local aristocracy in the satrapies through the central Persian administration, see Briant, 'Pouvoir central', pp. 1–32.

7.23)⁵¹⁸—and on the other hand, that listening to Yhwh’s word would fall by the wayside (66.4). It is thus not surprising that the listing of cultic practices touches on almost all areas of priestly activity.⁵¹⁹ The stark juxtapositions in 66.3a of legitimate acts of worship and conduct hostile to Yhwh, without any comparative particles, shows that the person who makes legitimate sacrifices to Yhwh is the same one who is guilty of the worst cultic and social offenses:

The person who slaughters a bull (in the house of Yahweh) kills a human being (at the same time).

The person who offers a sheep (in the house of Yahweh) breaks the neck of a dog (at the same time).

The person who presents a grain offering (in the house of Yahweh) lusts after swine (at the same time).

The person who offers a memorial offering of incense (in the house of Yahweh) blesses the evil power (at the same time).⁵²⁰

Whatever atrocities these temple officials were accused of, it should be noted that this is the only time בָּרַךְ *pi.* does *not* have Yhwh as object when it is used as a term for a ritual action.⁵²¹ The emphatic ‘they chose’ (גַּם הֵמָּה בָּחָרוּ) is countered by an equally forceful ‘I also will choose’ (גַּם אֲנִי אֶבְחָר). They choose idols; Yhwh chooses the corresponding punishment! The cult attendants who chose what was not pleasing to Yhwh (66.3; 65.12) stand in direct opposition to the eunuchs who chose what pleases him (וּבָחָרוּ בְּאִשֵּׁר הַפְּצֹתִי, 56.4). That the latter are excluded from the divine covenant and temple worship while the former defile the temple is a wrong against which the servants of Yhwh strongly protest! This situation cannot continue, for the time of Yhwh’s reckoning has come. The three-fold קָל takes the reader closer and closer to the center of the tempest: ‘The sound of an uproar from the city! A voice from the temple! It is Yhwh’s

518. With tax exemption for the entire temple staff, while the common people were heavily taxed; see Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, p. 490.

519. Rofé, ‘Isaiah 66:1-4’, pp. 207-10, indicates that of the four legitimate cultic acts mentioned, two benefited the priests (food and incense offerings) and a third (sacrificial slaughter) eventually came to them.

520. Kellermann, ‘Tritojesaja’, p. 65 n. 78; Sasson, ‘Isaiah LXVI, 3-4a’, pp. 199-207, assigns the participles to different points in time (‘He who slaughtered an ox [would now] slay a man’), which is not supported grammatically. Koenen, ‘Textkritische Anmerkungen’, pp. 572-73, adds the missing participle in the third series with an Aramaism borrowed from Persian, הָרָם: ‘he who brings food offerings “dismembers” a swine’, which fits very well with a critique of mantic practices.

521. Cf. Sasson, ‘Isaiah LXVI, 3-4a’, p. 202.

voice! He is bringing retribution (מַשְׁלֵם גְּמוּלָה)⁵²² upon his enemies.' To his enemies he is slaughterer (66.16: cf. 65.15), but to Zion he is a midwife (66.9)!

7.5.4.2. *Zion as Mother of the Servant Community (Isaiah 66.7-14)*. The beginning of retribution upon the enemies of Yhwh is contrasted to the birth and growth of Zion's population by two means. Verses 7-9 are dominated by the semantic field of 'birth',⁵²³ and vv. 10-14a by that of 'joy' and 'comfort', with the key word שִׂשׂ (10b, 14a) bracketing the three-fold נַחַם (11, 13).⁵²⁴ Verse 14b has a dual function. It points back to v. 6 and leads into vv. 15-25: The growth of the faithful Zion community and the complete destruction of apostates and enemies are two sides of *one* divine action. The conflict between the servants and their enemies has so intensified that it can only be endured in the expectation of a sudden change for the better. For that they can rely on the prophetic words in 49.21-26 and 54.1-3 about Zion's future, rich in blessings and children, and make those words relevant for themselves. Here Zion is no longer the mother of the returning *golah*, but the one giving birth to the servant community.⁵²⁵

The statement of 54.1 that the woman who has not suffered birth pangs (לֹא חָלָה) will have a great many children is exaggerated to the effect that delivery will come so suddenly that there will not even be time for labor pains. In 8b-9 this statement is scaled back somewhat, as it is Yhwh as midwife who helps the woman Zion give birth to her children.⁵²⁶ If the emphasis lies on giving birth, the conclusion indicates who it is who receives life. It is the 'male descendant' (זָכָר) that she 'releases' (from the womb, וְהַמְלִיטָהּ), that is, 'her sons' (בְּנֵיהָ) 'whom she bore' (יָלְדָה). It is no coincidence that מַלֵּט hi. is used here; its basic meaning is 'to save', for the community's birth is at the same time its deliverance!⁵²⁷ In addition, this choice of words appears to have been influenced by the reference text 49.24, 25, which is formulated as an aphoristic riddle that asks whether prey can be snatched from the mighty, or captives escape from him (מַלֵּט ni.). Both passages

522. Is a wordplay on שָׁלוֹם (66.12) intended, in which retribution on the enemies means 'shalom' for the servants?

523. See חָיַל 3x; חָבַל 1x; יָלַד 5x; מַלֵּט hi.: 1x.

524. 66.13bβ: 'In Jerusalem you shall be comforted', originally a marginal note, slipped into the text, according to Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 132.

525. Cf. the 'sons' of Zion in 60.4, 9; 62.5.

526. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 129.

527. Webster, 'A Rhetorical Study of Isaiah 66', p. 97.

culminate in the Yhwh oracle affirming that he himself will save his sons (!). This promise in 66.7–9 is now entirely removed from the context of saving the *golah*, and applied to the longed-for liberation of the servant community from their opponents. The focus is no longer on the great number of Zion's children, but rather their sudden birth in which Yhwh acts as midwife (אֵשֶׁבֶר).⁵²⁸ A glance at 37.3 points up the drama: 'Indeed, children have come to the point of birth (מֵשֶׁבֶר), but there is no strength to bring them forth.'⁵²⁹ This reference is a further indication that it was the servant redaction that placed chaps. 36–39 at the center of the scroll, presenting Hezekiah as the exemplary pious supplicant on Zion. The startling and unheard-of nature of this birth is equaled only by the unexpected turnaround in the fate of the Ebed (cf. 52.15; 53.1). His promised offspring (53.10) are Zion's sons (66.8), the servants on whom Yhwh's יד is visible.⁵³⁰ As Yhwh's plan became manifest in the fate of the Ebed, i.e., Zion, so does his power in the plight of the servants! The servants' reversal of fortune from mourning to jubilation (66.10) is the sign (אוֹרָה) that Yhwh has placed among the nations (66.19). As the kings stood astonished before the turnaround in the humbled Ebed's fate, the nations now stand before the revitalization of the once lamenting servants.

The subject of 66.10–14 is the experiences of the growing sons of Mother Zion.⁵³¹ These verses feature the sons' joy in Jerusalem (מִשׁוֹשׁ/שִׂישׁ, 66.10[2x], 14), over which they once were 'mourning' (כָּל (הַמְהַאֲבִלִים עֲלֶיהָ)). 'The day of the vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn' (61.2) has now become a reality for the servant community.⁵³² The joy in Jerusalem is thus so great because the formerly impoverished population can now partake in the treasures and riches that will come through the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion. Trito-Isaiah's promise that the rebuilt city of Zion would 'suck the milk of nations and suck at the breast of kings' (60.16) has been updated to the effect that the servants now suck⁵³³ and are satisfied at Zion's

528. Sawyer, 'Daughter of Zion', p. 98, 'Yahweh once more humbling himself to assist his beloved Zion'.

529. See also Darr, 'No Strength to Deliver', pp. 249–53.

530. Webster, 'A Rhetorical Study of Isaiah 66', p. 99; cf. Beuken, 'Main Theme', p. 84.

531. Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, p. 676.

532. See Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 131.

533. MT וַיִּנְקֶתָם ('that you may suck') in 66.12aβ does not need to be changed into 'your infant' (following Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 460–61); against Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 130, and others.

‘comforting breast’ (מִשֵּׁךְ תִּנְחֵמֶינָהּ), from the ‘nipple of her glory’ (מִזִּין) (כְּבוֹדָהּ).⁵³⁴ At the same time these verses take up the opponents’ ironic challenge that Yhwh should prove himself glorious (יִכְבֹּד יְהוָה) so that they might see the joy of the servants (66.5). Yhwh proves himself ‘glorious’ when his divine city attains wealth and prosperity through the gifts of the nations, which the city shares with those who once were mourners! The impulse behind this movement is Yhwh, who turns ‘shalom’ toward Zion like a river (כְּנָהָר שְׁלוֹמִים) and the glory of the nations like an ‘flooding stream’ (כְּנַחַל שׁוֹטֵף). Both images stem from the tradition of the Isaiah scroll, but are entirely at odds with their usage there. Thus the image of the ‘flooding stream’ in 30.28,⁵³⁵ which indicated the brutally violent destructiveness of the Assyrian army, has changed to a metaphor for the wealth of the nations flowing to Zion.⁵³⁶ The retrospective admonition in 48.18 that if Israel had paid attention to Yhwh’s commandments, ‘your shalom would be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea’, has now been transformed into an image of promise for the Zion of the servant community. The promise to the servants that they would be ‘carried on the hips and rocked on the knees’ also comes from the ‘treasury’ of prophetic sayings in the Isaiah scroll. Now, however, it is no longer the exiles (49.22) or Diaspora Jews (60.4) who are carried by their royal nursemaids to Zion, but the servants, who like small children know they are safe in Zion’s bosom!

That the servant community as the ‘male descendant’ (זֶכֶר) identified itself with the promise of the Jesse shoot (11.1-9) is shown not only in the references and quotations in chap. 65, but also in the combination of יִנֵּק and שָׁעֵט, found only in 11.8 and 66.12.⁵³⁷ Could they see themselves as the infant (יֹנֵק) that amuses itself (וְשָׁעֵט) at the hole of the asp because they no longer have anything to fear?

The imagined life of the servant community proceeds from the swift birth to the nurtured child to the adult: ‘As a man (אִישׁ) whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.’ Now Yhwh is not presented in the image of the midwife, but as a woman who comforts her grown son. Yhwh’s ‘motherhood’ has already been mapped out in passages such as 42.14 (‘like a woman giving birth’), 46.3-4

534. To translate ‘udder’ (see Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 257) is misguided: Zion is not a cow, but a mother!

535. See שֹׁטֵף in 8.8; 28.2, 15, 17, 18.

536. Davies, ‘The Destiny of the Nations’, p. 118; Lack, *La symbolique*, p. 141; Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 285.

537. Lau, ‘Schriftgelehrte Prophetie’, p. 131 n. 63.

(‘carried from the womb...even when you turn grey I will carry you’), and 49.15 (‘can a women forget her nursing child?’).

One of the great leitmotifs of the book of Isaiah, that of ‘comfort’ (נחם), comes to a conclusion in a final concentrated statement in 66.13.⁵³⁸ Here the thanksgiving song of the saved remnant in 12.1–6, which celebrates in advance the turn from divine anger to comforting (והנחמני), reaches its fulfillment. Now it is also clear who the יושבת ציון is who is invited to sing for joy: It is the inhabitants of Zion, that is, the community of the servants of Yhwh. The connection between the song of thanksgiving and the servants is also confirmed by the call in 12.5 to sing praise to Yhwh for his majestic deeds, so that they become known throughout the whole earth (מידעת זאת בכל הארץ), which is similar to the statement that ‘it shall be known that the power of Yhwh is with his servants’ (ונודעה, 66.14).

The call of 40.1, ‘comfort, comfort my people’, which was taken up in the hymns of the ‘restoration of Zion’ section (49–55), especially 51.12, is finally fulfilled in 66.13. Yet the comfort, i.e., the promise of a new future, no longer applies to the population of Jerusalem as a whole,⁵³⁹ but only to the ‘mourners of Zion’ (61.2), the servant community (66.14). The servant community has also taken the comfort motif from the tradition of the Isaiah book, but modified it for the contrast between those faithful to Yhwh and those who oppose Yhwh in postexilic Israel. This is a far cry from the נחם references in 40.49–52!

7.5.4.3. *The New Jerusalem (Isaiah 66.15–24)*. The images of destruction in vv. 15–16 and 24⁵⁴⁰ form a frame around the design of the eschatological Jerusalem. This final unit of the book is skillfully structured, as Webster has demonstrated:⁵⁴¹

A:	Judgment by fire	15–17
B:	Assembly of the nations	18–19
C:	Returnees of the Diaspora	20–21
c:	Among them, Levitical priests	22
b:	Pilgrimage of the nations, ‘all flesh’	23
a:	Judgment by fire	24

538. Rendtorff, ‘Zur Komposition’, pp. 298–300; נחם is found at ‘strategic points’ in 12.1; 40.1; 51.12; 61.2; 66.13 and in the hymns: 49.13; 51.3; 52.9.

539. See, for example, 40.2: ‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem’; 51.3: ‘Indeed, Yhwh has comforted Zion, has comforted all her ruins.’

540. ‘Fire’: 66.15, 16, 24; ‘all flesh’: 66.16, 24; ‘the slain of Yhwh’ (66.16) and ‘the corpses of the rebellious’ (66.24).

541. Webster, ‘A Rhetorical Study of Isaiah 66’, pp. 99–103.

The half-verse 14b makes the transition from the salvation sayings for the servants to the judgment oracles against the enemy.⁵⁴² As the punishing judgment of Yhwh went forth from the temple in 66.6, his fire now seizes all apostates who do mischief in the gardens [behind a ritual leader?⁵⁴³]. These sayings of judgment are enclosed by the wordplay יספו/כסופה ('like a windstorm'/'they will be swept away') in 66.15, 17. What is swept away is not yet the apostates themselves—their corpses are first seen in v. 24—but their anti-Yhwh activities and plans (מעשיהם ומהשבתיהם) against the servants, whom they want to exclude from the temple cult. All this will come to an end, 'Saying of Yhwh', which underscores the commitment of divine intervention. The relationships between the anti-Yhwh practices in 65.3b-7, 66.3-4, and 66.15-17⁵⁴⁴ suggest that these passages are all about the same enemies of the servants.⁵⁴⁵ The incorporation of motifs from the judgment theophany to the nations in 66.15-17⁵⁴⁶ does not argue against this, but lends a distinctive character to the judgment oracle against the inner-Jewish enemies. Although they live in Jerusalem and play an important role in the temple cult, they are just as much Yhwh's enemies as the most dangerous foreign powers in the history of Israel! Like the slain of the nations left to lie unburied like dung (לדמן) on the ground, according to the judgment oracle in Jer. 25.33, the apostates in 66.24 are an abhorrence (דראון) at the gates of Jerusalem (cf. 37.36). It has already been observed on several occasions that 66.15-24 is closely based on 56.1-8. In addition, the closing verse 66.24 refers back to 1.31. With these last verses the redactors of the servant community succeed both in framing chaps. 56-66 and at the same time in creating an inclusio for the entire book.⁵⁴⁷

542. Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 201.

543. This is if one accepts the *kethib* אָחַד (cf. Ezek. 8.11). If the *qere* אֶחָד is preferred, it is generally interpreted as a cult stele; see Barthélemy, *Critique*, pp. 461-62; also Emerton, 'Notes on Two Verses', pp. 23-24.

544. The charge of 'eating swine flesh' is levied only in 65.4 and 66.17 (see 66.3); 'sacrifice in the garden': 65.3; 66.17; 'sanctify themselves/others through mystery cults': 65.5; 66.17.

545. Koenen, *Ethik*, pp. 196 n. 232, 202; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 185.

546. 'Come' used of Yhwh (cf. 63.1); 'all flesh' (Jer. 25.31) and 'the slain of Yhwh', חַלְלֵי יְהוָה, only in 66.16b and Jer. 25.33a! Cf. Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 183.

547. See above, under 2.2.1.

- At the beginning of the book, ‘heaven and earth’ are called to the witness stand against Israel against a ‘generation of evil-doers’ (זרע מרעים, 1.4); at its conclusion is the ‘new heaven and the new earth’.⁵⁴⁸
- To the vain appearance before Yhwh (פני, 1.12) is contrasted a worship that pleases God (לפני, 66.22–23).
- The accusation and announced judgment against the ‘apostates’ (פשעים/פשעו בי, 1.2, 28) corresponds to their destruction (66.24).
- The flagrant abuses in the Sabbath and New-Moon observance (חדש ושבֿת, 1.13) are removed from those celebrations (66.23), just as worthless offerings (מנחת שוא, 1.13) have also given way to offerings in pure vessels (מנחת בכלי טהור, 66.20).
- The fire that cannot be extinguished (אין מכבה), which consumes the followers of pagan practices in Israel (1.31), continues to burn (לא תכבה, 66.24). In that, nothing has changed!

These correspondences in such density are not the product of chance, but point to the fact that the Isaiah scroll has consciously been brought to a close with 66.22–24. The ‘cultic framework’ that opens the Isaiah scroll with the abuses on the Temple Mount and closes it with godly worship could no longer be broken! The cultic ‘setting’ remained the same, but significantly modified. Worship pleasing to Yhwh on his holy mountain is no longer to be achieved by Israel on its own, not even by one cleansed of its sins, but only by the cooperation of all those (כל בשר) from Israel *and* the nations who renounce their idols and turn to Yhwh.

In interpreting this closing pericope, it is important not to isolate it but to understand it as an *inclusio* with 56.1–8, not only repeating the acceptance of proselytes and eunuchs which was demanded there, but—in carrying out the Ebed task to the nations—pursuing it to its ultimate consequences. The connection to 56.1–8 is made especially clear by the key word ‘gather’ (קבץ) which opens 66.18–23 and is laid out thematically in 56.8 where it is cited three times: ‘Oracle of the Lord Yhwh, who gathers the scattered of Israel; I will gather yet others to it (עליו) [i.e., to the temple⁵⁴⁹], besides those

548. Beuken, ‘Isaiah Chapters LXV–LXVI’, pp. 220–21; his thesis that 66.7–14 is the close of Trito-Isaiah alone, 66.15–20[21] is that of Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah together and 66.22–23[24] closes the entire book, probably goes too far as a tidy solution; see Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1–8; 63,7–66,24’, pp. 263–64.

549. So Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*, III, p. 185; Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 28 n. 89.

already gathered.’ This proclamation, which was still pending, finds its fulfillment in 66.18-23. Besides the scattered Jews of the Diaspora, Yhwh will also gather the nations to the temple, so that it can rightly be called ‘a house of prayer for all nations’ (56.7). This goal for the Jerusalem temple is not to be achieved, however, without the help of the proselytes, who also carry the honorable title of ‘servants.’ As Yhwh brings them to his holy mountain (והביאותים אל הר קדש), they will bring their brothers as ‘remnants’ from the furthest regions of the earth to the holy temple (והביאו את כל אחיכם... על הר קדש, 66.20). But the inclusio of 56.1-8 and 66.18-23 is still not exhausted. Just as the eunuchs and foreigners adopted the observance of the Sabbath, which was a stamp of Jewish identity in the exile (56.2, 4, 6), as a gift and a duty, their brothers whom they have brought from the nations to the Mount of God and the temple will also respect the Sabbath (66.23)—with the ‘liturgical’ calendar of Israel!⁵⁵⁰

The assumption that the divine gathering of the nations aims at judgment on them⁵⁵¹ would not only make the connections with 56.1-8 absurd, but would also contradict the predominant usage of קבץ in the book of Isaiah. The term does not occur in a theological sense in the oracles concerning the nations, but in the context of the return of the Diaspora, as is the case programmatically in 11.12—‘He raises a signal for the nations and assembles the outcasts of Israel (גדחי ישראל), and gathers (מקבץ) the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth’—which has clearly been incorporated in 56.8. In 40.11 Yhwh as Shepherd gathers the lambs. The gathering of the Diaspora is also the theme of 43.5(9); 49.18; 54.7; and 60.4(7), with 45.20 being of particular significance: ‘Assemble yourselves (הקבצו) and come together; draw near, you survivors of the nations (פליטים)! They have no knowledge—those who carry about their wooden idols and pray to a god who cannot save.’ The statement in 66.19 that Yhwh will send ‘survivors’ from (מזהם) the gathered of the nations and languages (הלשונות) to the [even more remote] nations (פליטים אל הגוים) to make his glory known to them, is an updating of 45.20. The proselytes in postexilic Israel who have abandoned idol-worship and have turned to the worship of Yhwh take over the mission to the world of the nations!⁵⁵² Admitting foreigners to Zion is not just a question of the organization of the community, but is part of the divine plan for the peoples of the world. The function of the

550. Kellermann, ‘Tritojesaja’, p. 74.

551. Steck, ‘Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7-66,24’, pp. 259-61.

552. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*, pp. 487-88.

Ebed to the nations is transferred to the proselytes, while the mission to Israel is performed by the servant community!⁵⁵³

When it is acknowledged that Yhwh's hand is with his servants⁵⁵⁴ and his anger directed against his enemies, when he raises the community of the righteous from Israel and the nations on Zion, this is the sign. Now the foreigners already integrated into the Zion community can make the case for Yhwh and Zion to the nations and 'remote islands' (cf. 42.4; 49.1) that still have heard nothing of Yhwh (cf. 53.1) and still have not seen his glory (cf. 52.15). It is not judgment on the nations that brings Israel's salvation, but judgment on the enemies of Yhwh that brings the nations, through the teaching of the members of the servant community from the nations, to an awareness of his glory.⁵⁵⁵

The consequences of this awareness are practical in nature. Those from the nations 'will bring all your brothers from all nations as an offering for Yhwh' (66.20a), whereby the Diaspora Jews will be comfortably conveyed to Jerusalem, analogous to being carried by the kings of the nations in 49.22–23 and 60.4. With the lexeme נח appearing only in 66.5 and 66.20 in all of chaps. 56–66, a conscious connection between those verses is likely. Since the 'brothers who hate you' in 66.5 are clearly fellow-Jews, 66.20 is also to be regarded as referring to Jews, namely those from the Diaspora. The comparison between bringing more Diaspora Jews and an offering (מנחה) in clean vessels is probably to emphasize, in the face of Jerusalem's pride of place, the absolute cultic capability of their brothers from the Diaspora.⁵⁵⁶ To this, then, v. 21 is seamlessly attached. From the Diaspora Jews who have found their way home to Jerusalem only as a result of the preaching of proselytes, Yhwh will choose Levitical priests, thus breaking the Jerusalem priestly monopoly.⁵⁵⁷ Against the interpretation that claims the saying is about a priesthood of proselytes,⁵⁵⁸ 66.22 promises the unbreakable continued existence 'of your seed and your name'. 'It is hard to comprehend how calling

553. Cf. Kellermann, 'Tritojesaja', p. 72; Koenen, *Ethik*, p. 211 n. 13.

554. See י" and עבד י" in 56.5, 6 and 66.14!

555. Beuken, 'Isaiah Chapters LXV–LXVI', p. 212.

556. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 488: 'The "clean" vessel is a reminder that both the mincha and thus also the Diaspora that is likened to it, are pure and pleasing to God.'

557. Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*, pp. 172–73; Rofé, 'Isaiah 66:1–4', p. 212; Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 489; Kessler, *Gott geht es um das Ganze*, p. 103.

558. Among others, Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, p. 683; Achtemeier, *Community and Message*, p. 18; Kellermann, 'Tritojesaja', pp. 73–76; Gross, 'Israel und die Völker', p. 163; Davies, 'The Destiny of the Nations', p. 95.

non-Israelites to the priesthood could secure the biological continuity of Israel, which is addressed here according to v. 20 (אֲחִיכֶם).⁵⁵⁹

When v. 23 says, 'New Moon after New Moon, Sabbath after Sabbath' (cf. Num. 28.10, 14) 'all flesh' (כָּל בָּשָׂר) will come to worship Yhwh, that does not mean that the whole of humanity would appear weekly or monthly on Zion, but that the new totality of Israel and the nations will accept and respect the Jewish calendar of feasts.⁵⁶⁰ As Yhwh's judgment on כָּל בָּשָׂר in 66.16 is not directed against the whole of humanity but those devoted to pagan practices, so כָּל בָּשָׂר in 66.23 means all those who have turned to Yhwh. The usage in 66.24 demonstrates that the expression כָּל בָּשָׂר is not aimed at all humanity. There it says that the bodies of the 'rebels' will become an abhorrence for 'all flesh'—not for the entire world, but for those who according to v. 23 regularly come on pilgrimage to Zion.

When the new entity replacing an Israel separated from the nations is called כָּל בָּשָׂר, the oracle is not thereby employing lamentably fuzzy terminology,⁵⁶¹ but rather intends a deliberate reference to the human race before any division into nations and ethnicities (Genesis 6–9).⁵⁶² Just as Noah was saved from the flood not because of his ethnic affiliation—before the covenant of circumcision with Abraham!—so ethnic origins, even from Israel, no longer play a role in the new salvation community.⁵⁶³

Contrary to common opinion, v. 24 is not to be regarded as an 'apocalyptic' addition, separate from the previous material, but is an integral part of its context and fulfills several functions as the final verse in the book. First, it is closely linked to v. 23 through the inclusion of כָּל בָּשָׂר. Those who come on pilgrimage are also those who on their homeward journey (? וַיֵּצְאוּ) see the corpses of apostates lying about! Furthermore, with the threat and judgment oracle of 66.15–17 it forms an inclusio around the salvation oracles of 66.18–23. This bracketing of salvation sayings with images of judgment makes it clear that the Zion pilgrims from Israel and the nations will be continually reassessed for their 'orthopraxy'.⁵⁶⁴ It is also the desire

559. Sehmsdorf, 'Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte', p. 567; Lau, 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie', p. 148, with a view to the 'legitimation issue' in Ezra 2.62//Neh. 7.64.

560. Cf. Kellermann, 'Tritojesaja', p. 76, with a view to Zech. 14.16.

561. Gross, 'Israel und die Völker', p. 165; Gross, 'Yhwh und die Religionen', p. 38 n. 9.

562. Zenger, 'Israel und Kirche', p. 106; see Gen. 6.12, 13, 19; 7.15, 21; 8.17; 9.11, 15, 16, 17.

563. Cf. the similar usage of כָּל בָּשָׂר in Pss. 65.3; 136.25; 145.21.

564. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation', pp. 79–80.

of all pilgrims to Zion that the Mount of God be purified from all sinners and apostates. 'The goyim who believe in Yahweh have Jewish sensibilities, so to speak',⁵⁶⁵ which comes close to the closing request in Ps. 25.22, probably formulated as a prayer from the nations:⁵⁶⁶ 'Deliver Israel, O God, from all its troubles.' This corresponds to a request on the lips of the God-fearing (יִרְאָה יְהוָה) in Ps. 128.6: שְׁלוֹם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

7.6. *Review*

In contrast to the prophetic expansions in Isaiah 40–55, which in three stages bring the kerygma of the anonymous exilic prophet to bear on new situations, chaps. 56–66 are marked by a concentric structure at whose center stands the postexilic announcement of salvation for Jerusalem (60–62). These chapters, except for minor additions, are to be ascribed to another anonymous prophet—'Trito-Isaiah'. They survived, on the one hand, because of their literary relationship to the developing book of Isaiah and, on the other, because of the historical situation of an awaited but still far from fulfilled salvation, whose end point was a resplendent Mount of God and a Jerusalem blessed by the wealth of the nations.

The delay in the arrival of salvation intensified the pressure on the prophetic tradents responsible for the 'repentance redaction' of 56.9–59.21. The salvation promised in 60–62 is limited exclusively to those of the house of Jacob who freely repent, on the one hand, and to all who are righteous, on the other. The 'repentance redaction' inserted this program of 'inclusive exclusivity' already at the beginning of the scroll in 1.27–28, together with the addition of 2.2–5.

This concept of an Israel open to the nations met increasingly fierce opposition, as is witnessed in particular by Isaiah 65–66. With recourse to the text of its predecessor in 59.15b–20 the servant community redaction now declared the battle of Yhwh against evildoers as open in 63.1–6: Like Edom they will be trampled in the winepress of his wrath. Through the incorporation of an exilic lament in 63.7–64.11 the redactors emphasized their solidarity with the people, even though the 'we all' (כָּלֵנוּ) is gone forever. Yhwh himself separates Israel from Israel, divides sinners from his servants, who, with reference to Isaiah 11, are promised a secure and peaceful life on Zion (65.25).

565. Kellermann, 'Tritojesaia', p. 77.

566. Lohfink, 'Bund und Tora', p. 79.

These servants saw themselves as the true children of Mother Zion, and at the same time as the promised descendants of the suffering Ebed (53.10). Just as the Ebed and the woman Zion were spared neither suffering nor persecution, the servants also faced increasing vilification and marginalization, leading even to exclusion from the postexilic community (66.5). A central issue was the integration of foreigners and eunuchs, which the servant redaction specifically explores in a second phase of literary activity.

The reappraisal of the 'foreigner question' is especially highlighted in the bracketing passages 56.1-8 and 66.18-23. Foreigners and eunuchs as members of the people of God are not to be set apart, but on the contrary have a 'missionary' task to fulfill in and to the peoples of the world (66.18-21). Only when all flesh (כל בשר), that is, Yhwh disciples regardless of their origin and ethnicity, appears before Yhwh at the regular observances has the insubordinate cult at the beginning of the book been replaced by one that is pleasing to God. With the worship and ritual honoring of Yhwh by people from Israel *and* the nations, the vision of the pilgrimage of the nations (2.2-4) is realized, and the divine oath of 45.23b fulfilled:

כִּי־לִי תִכְרַע כָּל בָּרֶךְ תִּשְׁבַּע כָּל־לִשׁוֹן

Chapter 8

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

8.1. A Synchronic Approach that Reflects the Diachronic

The subtitle of this work on the book of Isaiah, 'Composition and Final Form', already indicates the tension between synchronic and diachronic analysis. An attempt to mediate does not result solely from the desire and will of the exegete, but is virtually imposed by the present biblical text.

The book of Isaiah exists as a 'layered history', as a textual corpus with its own shape, as the end product of a very special development. Research on the book of Isaiah by Anglophone and Dutch scholars, in particular, shows that questions of final form and development are interdependent, and lead to solid and groundbreaking answers only through mutual interaction.

So it is no exaggeration to speak of a paradigm shift, in view of the current situation in Old Testament research. From the driving questions concerning the development of the text (redactions, compositions, collections, recontextualizing expansions, selective additions and glosses, etc.), there is increased interest in the description of the final form of the biblical books and book collections.

The realization that the exegetical work has to be directed to the book first (rather than to its parts) has only slowly gained ground in German exegesis—moving from the description of what is, to answering the question why the book is what it is. This new formulation of the question has been applied here to the entire text of the book of Isaiah. The investigation goes from the synchronic to the diachronic and back again to the evolved synchronous final form. From a methodological viewpoint, therefore, the present work is situated between a production and reception hermeneutic.

In a review of the history of research on the 'unity of the book of Isaiah', sifting through English-language exegesis in particular, it becomes apparent there is neither an overall structure of the entire book nor a 'central message' that does justice to all its voices and nuances. Yet, it is certainly not the case that the book should be

understood merely as a catchment for disparate authors, compilers, and extrapolators. The many attempts to view the book as a whole in spite of all the tensions, contrary voices within the book, redactions, expansions, and interpolations, have demonstrated that, on the one hand, it is no 'textual scrap-heap' and on the other, it is more than just the sum of its individual parts. Features which have been repeatedly observed—the cross-connections, key word associations, resumption of themes, and especially the bracketing of the book by chaps. 1 and 66—reveal traces that point to a deliberate interweaving of various small compositions, and also to comprehensive book redactions. The paradigm that is most suited to the book of Isaiah in all its complexity is not that of a comprehensive overall structure or final redaction, but that of smaller compositions which build on one another, come into conversation with one another, and each bring into play specific contemporary problems. Although a common thematic denominator should not be forced on the book, still it is clear from working through the recent research that Jerusalem and Zion belong to the basic tenor of the book of Isaiah. This study was able to strengthen and reinforce this impression, in terms of both macrostructure and detailed observations.

8.2. The Final Form and 'Plot' of the Book of Isaiah

A 'synchronic analysis that reflects the diachronic', proceeding from the analysis of surface structure and then investigating the connections in the textual fabric, permits one to divide the book of Isaiah into six major sections, taking into consideration the transition from Isaiah 48 to 49 (1–12; 13–27; 28–35; 36–39; 40–48/49–55; 56–66). It becomes clear from this macrostructure that chaps. 36–39, dealing with the threat and deliverance of Zion in the year 701, do not constitute a historical appendix that is basically superfluous to the book's oracle tradition, but form the center of the book. These chapters go to the heart of the Zion theology that is constitutive for the book of Isaiah.

Several observations confirm this view. First is the fact that the insubordinate cult at the beginning of the book (chap. 1) gives way to worship that is pleasing to God at the end (66.18–23) which, while it also takes place in the Jerusalem temple, is now no longer carried out by Israel alone, but, following the vision in 2.2–4, by Yhwh adherents from Israel *and* the nations! The cultic frame of the book receives its historical validation in the central chapters of the threat and salvation of Zion. Yhwh worship on the Mount of God in Jerusalem is a continuing task and responsibility, because Yhwh himself protects

the place of his presence. In this 'drama' the Hezekiah psalm takes on a significance particular to the book of Isaiah. The pious king is the shining example for all the pious who seek refuge on Zion from the pursuit of their enemies. In contrast to the tradition in 2 Kgs 18–20, the Judaic king pays no tribute, but instead prays and composes a psalm even while his life and his city are in mortal danger! Zion is a secure fortress for anyone who prays like that! Furthermore, the central place of the Hezekiah-Isaiah narratives in the book of Isaiah can be seen in the fact that the reader expects the fulfillment of promise of the Babylonian exile after it was announced in 39.6-7, but is 'positively disappointed'. In contrast to the neighboring prophetic books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the temple in the book of Isaiah is not burned, the Judeans are not displaced, and the great Nebuchadnezzar does not march into Jerusalem! Instead, Yhwh answers the blasphemous speeches of the Assyrian before the gates of Jerusalem in 701 with the destruction of the attacker and death of the blasphemer by the hands of his own sons in the temple of his god, while Hezekiah composes a song of thanksgiving to Yhwh!

The suppression of the exile events, which appear as already overcome only in the hindsight of history (40.1-11), displays the pragmatics of chaps. 36–39 with perfect clarity. In the book of Isaiah, Zion cannot fall, the temple cannot burn, the opponents of the Mount of God cannot enter, because Yhwh protects it as a refuge for his faithful ones. The entire book takes its direction from this thematic center, in spite of all the tensions among individual tracks.

Against all historical reason, Zion is invincible. It is the Mount of God to which Yhwh as the Conqueror of Chaos returns triumphantly as King (51.10; 52.7-8). All those nations that stormed against Zion in the first part of the book—Assyria, Babylon, Edom—are shattered on it; Sennacherib's shameful defeat underlined this as an example for all times and generations.

With Hezekiah on Zion are Isaiah, his children with their symbolic names, and his disciples, who already exemplify, in the course of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis of 734–732, what it means, in times of need, to build not on political alliances, but on the living God. They are thus the pledge for a God-fearing community which expects nothing for itself, but everything of Yhwh.

Protection on the Mount of God and Zion's deliverance are the two sides of a coin. Accordingly, the naming of a We-group takes on great importance in the course of the book (cf. 1.8-9; 2.5). They are the true children of the bride and mother Zion who can say with complete justification, *עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים*—'God with us!'

This remnant community lies behind the shoot of Jesse on whom Yhwh's spirit rests (11.1-9); the royal prerogatives of the Davidic heirs now fall on the group which models exemplary righteousness on Zion, so that the Mount of God becomes a place of paradisiacal peace (11.6-9) to which the nations are drawn (11.10). The eschatological thanksgiving song which concludes the first section (1-12) serves at the same time as a means of interpreting the subsequent collection of the oracles concerning the nations. If the prophet Isaiah of the book calls on the addressees to make known the praise of God among the nations (12.4-5), the nations cannot simply fall victim as a *massa damnationis* to Yhwh's judgment. This impression is confirmed in the closing chapters of the second section (13-27), where Yhwh prepares a royal banquet for all peoples (25.6-8), i.e., for all the righteous from Israel *and* from the nations, who, like Noah in the ark, arrive safely on Zion in the face of God's judgment.

The theme of the third section is the appearance of the population that finds protection and deliverance on the Mount of God (28-35); this section is especially characterized by alternating judgment and deliverance sayings. The ייח-cries no longer serve as an indication of specific guilt, but form the backdrop against which it becomes clear what is expected from the new Zion population, whose king is Yhwh alone. Out of the cries of Woe rises a people whose guilt is forgiven and who see with their own eyes the divine King in his glory (33.17-24); with this, the time of hardening has ended (cf. 6.9-11).

Not coincidentally, the crowning theological statements of believing trust are found in this section (28.12, 16; 30.15); they underline the section's targeted pragmatic. The addressees should therefore recognize the conditions under which they belong to the community on Zion, including what behaviors would exclude them from it. Both they and the nations should read in Edom's fate (chap. 34) what consequences are brought on by an attack on the Mount of God. If this aggressor is also destroyed, nothing more stands in the way of Zion's prosperity (chap. 35), especially in view of the special protection which Jerusalem and Zion enjoy, established and confirmed in chaps. 36-39.

The movement *against* the Mount of God which marks the first half of the book (1-35) is followed in the second half by a movement *toward* Zion (40-66), a movement which proceeds from the *golah* to the worldwide Diaspora, and includes Yhwh disciples from the nations. In the previous course of the book all external enemies of Zion have failed miserably against the Mount of God (Assyria,

Babylon, Edom); now no further obstacle should oppose the procession to Jerusalem, unless it would be the crippling disillusion of both the exiles and the Judeans who had remained at home. To both groups, presenting post-exilic Jerusalem as the destination and center for the movement of returning Jews and incoming foreigners is the particular concern of chaps. 40–55, which are clearly divided into two parts, the ‘Jacob-Babylon-Liberation’ section (40–48) and the ‘Zion Restoration’ section (49–55). In the center of 40–48 is the call of the Persian Cyrus as anointed and shepherd of Yhwh (44.28; 45.1), through whom the God of Israel again demonstrates his creative power over history. With the liberation from Babylon, the ‘earlier things’, that is, the saving acts in favor of the people of God, come to an end. The new thing that is developing consists in the maturation of the servant, no longer deaf and blind as the majority of the *golah* who do not dare to believe in a future with Yhwh and instead place their confidence in the Babylonian gods. For those who have returned, the exodus from Babylon also means a departure from idolatry—thus after chap. 48, nothing more is heard of Cyrus or Babylon, or the later and new things, or the polemic against idols.

With 49–55 the reader is no longer in Babylon, but on Judean soil, where the problem is making Jerusalem’s hesitant and skeptical population receptive to a new beginning with Yhwh, now that Yhwh himself has returned home as King (52.7–9). It is the Ebed *qua* returned *golah* who experiences the communication of the forward-looking message of comfort to Jerusalem. The exodus command in 52.11–12 is directed therefore not to the *golah*, but to all Jews of the Diaspora, who should emulate the groups of exiles who have already returned. At the close of this section, the exodus theme occurs again (55.12–13), but now it includes Yhwh believers from the nations, which should not come as a surprise after the vision of the pilgrimage of the nations in 2.2–4 and the royal banquet on Zion for all nations in 25.6–8.

Not coincidentally, the designation ‘servants’ falls at the end of the development from the blind and deaf to the obedient and proclaiming Ebed (54.17). At the beginning of the book the We-group was the remnant ‘left behind’; they are now the ‘servants’, who are increasingly exposed to defamation and reprisals. They are the children of Zion, who themselves assume more and more the essential characteristics of the Ebed. Thus the parallel of the Ebed and the woman Zion offers an important clue to the interpretation of the fourth EYS (52.13–53.12). In the middle section the Diaspora Jews express their

reverent astonishment that it was Zion who took their sins upon herself and redeemed their guilt-obligation; in the framing section the nations are amazed that Zion has succeeded, against every historical probability, in rising up from death.

A major point of discussion in 56–66 is the opening of the community to Yhwh believers from the nations, as the programmatic beginning of the last section makes clear in 56.1–8. How are foreigners and eunuchs in Israel to be integrated into *the* people of Yhwh? Does not openness to the nations then mean *ipso facto* the surrender of their identity as the people of God? The concept of an Israel open to the nations is based not on circumcision, but on the recognition of Yhwh as the one true God, on ethical behavior, and on observance of the Sabbath. The controversy about openness to Yhwh disciples from the nations in contrast to the restrictive religious politics of Nehemiah and Ezra had become so intense that the servant community came under increasing pressure (66.5; ‘your brothers who hate you’), and the last verse of the book shows how irreconcilably the two positions clash (66.24).

It is no longer ethnicity, but ethics that will be the decisive factor for or against admission to the Mount of God and the temple. Thus the new standard of Israel *and* the nations which engages in godly worship at the end of the book is called ‘all flesh’ (כל בשר), an expression that points to the time *before* the post-flood division into ethnic groups. The one Creator God deserves a cultic service on his holy Mount, not carried out solely by Israel, but only by Israel’s righteous and by the righteous of the nations. Israel’s prerogative remains neither in the cult nor in Zion, but in its quality as a people of revelation, which has not been taken away even by Israel’s being scattered in the Diaspora: ‘for I will also take some of them to be priests and Levites, says Yhwh’ (66.21). The priestly mediation is thus to continue the *proprium israeliticum*, just as the Torah goes forth from Zion and Yhwh’s Word from Jerusalem (2.3b).

8.3. *The Major Compositions of the Book of Isaiah*

The present work has attempted to bring into interplay a synchronic reading and diachronic reflection, together with information from contemporaneous Ancient Near Eastern history. The book of Isaiah is simultaneously a ‘literary work of art’ (synchrony), and a historical witness and end-product of a nearly five-hundred-year history of textual development (diachrony). When the *composition* or *formation* of the book is involved, the diachronic impulse comes into play,

posing questions about the transmitters of traditions, their connections and specific objectives. Redaction criticism, with textual, literary, and form criticism as its indispensable antecedents, should no longer remain stuck on the individual text, but should become composition criticism, where the analysis of details never loses sight of the book as a whole.

Investigations into the development of the book of Isaiah concluded first, that its two major divisions (Isa. 1–32; 40–66) evolved independently of each other in their core texts, so that chaps. 40–66 are *not* to be explained as a continuation of the Proto-Isaiah collection, and second, that the book has the greatest development at its center.

Its development is thus not to be seen as a process of expansion, constantly pushing out the target point toward the end of the book, but as a movement in which two prophetic traditions (the Proto-Isaianic on Judean soil and the Deutero-Isaianic in exile) were drawn closer and closer together beginning with the fifth century—which is not particularly surprising given their common focus on Zion. For the exilic Deutero-Isaiah tradition, not preserving the name of its prophet might be connected to the fact that it had become increasingly difficult to legitimate a new tradition of God's word, given the advancing stabilization of the Torah, and thus the connection to the Jerusalem Isaiah collection (1–32) became a necessity.

The astonishing fact that Isaiah appears as an individual only beginning with Isaiah 6 and then full-scale in chaps. 7–9 was interpreted by the majority of exegetes to mean that 6.1–8.18 represents a composition that traces back to Isaiah himself or to his immediate disciples, and spotlights his behavior during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis. In the time of Manasseh, this basic Isaianic core was doubly 'encased' in the Woes and the poem of the outstretched hand to warn about the persistent danger of a rebellion against Assyria. The pre-exilic text that had grown to include 5.1–10.4 was expanded after the final end of Assyria in 605 by the Woe oracle against Assyria (10.5–15), with the conclusion now located in 14.24–25.

In the early postexilic period, chaps. 1–4* were placed before this Proto-Isaianic corpus, whereby the prophetic remnant community (cf. 1.8–9; 4.3) could occasionally draw on 'Isaianic building blocks' (1.21–26; 2.12–17). With Isaiah's words, the community now challenged the social and ritual abuses in the Jerusalem of their time. It was this community that interpolated the hardening commission into the call vision of Isaiah in 6.9–11, in order to protect their prophet against critics who might charge *after* the catastrophe of the exile that

he had not exerted sufficient influence in his time over the course of the disastrous events. With the rejected sign (7.10-14a, 17a), this group makes the Davidide Ahaz responsible for the final collapse of the dynasty and the loss of statehood, which constitutes a clear renunciation of efforts for Davidic restoration and is underlined by the spirit resting on the shoot of Jesse (not David!) in 11.1-9.

Following the sign rejected by Ahaz, the 'servant community' toward the end of the fifth century then inserted the Emmanuel oracle (7.14b-16a,b α), which built on the metaphors of the motherhood of Zion in 49-55; they are the ones who can say of themselves that God is with them. Thus the Emmanuel birth oracle is the confession of a community that replaces the Davidic monarchy, a monarchy discredited by the exile events and by its failed restoration under Zerubbabel.

The responsibility for the compositional work of 1-32 lies with a group of tradents whom we name the 'Zion community' because of their distinctive orientation to Zion. They are to be credited with 'Babylonizing' as well as 'Zionizing' the sayings concerning the nations in 13-23, and with the essential orientation of 28-31, providing in chap. 32 the successful culmination of chaps. 1-32*. A compositional technique of great importance is the way these productive tradents pursue a chronological thread beginning in chap. 6, from the year of Uzziah's death to the Syro-Ephraimite crisis of 734-732 (chaps. 7-8) to the revolt of Ashdod in 713-711 (chap. 20) and finally to Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria in the years 705-701 (chaps. 28-31). Within this chronological framework there are subcollections, such as the ten oracles (סִימָנִים) concerning the nations, with Isaiah's central sign acts in 20.1-6 and the five Woe (הִיָּי) sayings in 28-31, which end with the promise of the pouring of the spirit upon the community in 32.15-20.

The Babylon theme in 13-14 and 21, in particular, indicates that reference is made to the defeat of this world power; the collapse of Babylon and rebuilding of Zion in the middle of the fifth century feature as the temporal setting of the Zion Redaction, which shaped chaps. 1-32 increasingly freely toward the end of the present text. The Zion redactors gratefully took up the 'Isaiah building blocks' of the Woe oracles against the disposition of the anti-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian politicians of Jerusalem at the end of the eighth century, since in their own time in the fifth century renewed pro-Egyptian and now anti-Persian tendencies had become virulent. Thus the theological principles of peace and serenity are likewise to be attributed to the Zion community (28.12, 16; 30.15).

This development of the Proto-Isaianic collection on Jerusalem soil (1-32*) is supported by the growth of a Deutero-Isaianic collection on Babylonian terrain (40-48). Its basis is the proclamation of the anonymous exilic prophet who viewed Cyrus's victory march of 550 as unmistakable evidence of Yhwh's renewed guidance of history. His sayings are now to be found within chaps. 40.12-46.11. The fact that Cyrus favored Marduk after 539 instead of conducting himself as an 'anointed of Yhwh' silenced the prophet. It was up to his disciples in the *golah* to collect his sayings between 539 and 521, 'formatting' them as hymns and calling on the exiled Jews to leave Babylon (48.20-21). The suppression of two Babylonian revolts by Darius I during 522/521 was interpreted as the signal to begin the uncertain way back to Jerusalem. As a *golah* willing to pull up stakes, they related the prophetic words of Deutero-Isaiah regarding the role of the Persian to themselves, and thus the first two EYS originate with them. In 49.1-6, the returned *golah* present themselves as the Ebed in Jerusalem and attempt to persuade the disillusioned people of Jerusalem that they have a bright future, as they themselves had once been persuaded by the prophet.

Thus in chaps. 49-52 comes the first Jerusalem redaction, which sees one of its chief tasks as encouraging Diaspora Judaism to return to Jerusalem (52.7-12) since Yhwh himself is again installed as king in his city. This redaction is also responsible for the prologue verses 40.1-5, 9-11, through which it inscribes itself at the beginning of the *golah* composition and which clarify the function of this first Jerusalem redaction: to announce the message of comfort of Yhwh's renewed devotion to Zion, his bride.

Thus in the middle of the fifth century in Jerusalem, there were the Proto-Isaianic collection of 1-32* and the Deutero-Isaianic collection of 40-52*, connected by the first bridge-text of the book, chap. 33. Analysis of this chapter revealed that its retrospective references are very much stronger than prospective ones, the latter not by coincidence aimed at the beginning ('freeing from guilt': 33.24; 40.1-2) and at the end ('see Yhwh as King': 33.17; 52.7-8) of the Deutero-Isaianic corpus as it had developed up to that point. It should not be surprising that the compositions of the Zion community on Judean soil (1-32*) and the first Jerusalem redaction (40-52*), whose core text was formed in Babylon, came together, especially since the latter probably required a connection to a prophet already authorized by the tradition, to be able to transmit oracles such as that of Cyrus as Yhwh's shepherd and anointed one at all.

The prophetic tradents who promised a great future for Zion came under more and more pressure as any change toward salvation failed to materialize. With the 'theology of the word' in 40.6-8, the second Jerusalem redaction inserted itself in the 'prologue', thematized its experience of rejection and derision in the third EYS (50.4-9), created chaps. 54-55 entirely independently, and closed with an expression of secure confidence in the effective power of the divine word (55.10-11) and with the pilgrimage to Zion, in which Yhwh believers from the nations also participate.

Into this book, which now consisted of chaps. 1-32, 33, and 40-55, the Edom chapter was inserted (chap. 34), causing the existing literary bridge created by chap. 33 to collapse. This insertion can only be explained by the fact that the destruction of Edom at the end of the fifth century was seen as a final demonstration of the divine punishment of Zion's enemies, and should thus be integrated into the book. The Edom oracle was not included in the collection of the oracles of the nations (13-23) because that collection had already been closed. Following the insertion of chap. 34, the bridge from the Proto-Isaianic to the Deutero-Isaianic collection was reestablished by the depiction of Zion's salvation in chap. 35, resulting in a much closer bond with the second major portion of the book of Isaiah.

Next to be added to the greater Isaianic book of 1-35; 40-55* were the Trito-Isaianic chapters dealing with the vision of light in Zion (60-62); it is also possible that this only took place during the course of the Repentance Redaction of 56.9-59.21. Here the promises of the anonymous postexilic prophet, who had spoken of a redemptive future in the face of the slow pace of reconstruction of city and temple, are restricted only to those in Jacob who have turned away from sin (59.20-21). As part of the Repentance Redaction, the close of the book encroaches on its beginning for the first time with 1.27-28, which shows that the editing is now no longer of subcollections, but of the greater book of Isaiah. This first greater-Isaiah redaction on the one hand restricts the offer of salvation only to the repentant and on the other hand is appreciably more open to Yhwh believers from the nations; thus this redaction is to be credited with introducing the vision of the nations' pilgrimage to Zion to be cleansed and redeemed by righteousness (cf. 2.2-4 in interaction with 1.27-28).

With the increase of Yhwh believers from the nations came the problem of their admittance to or exclusion from the community, reminiscent of the discussions during the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. The redaction of the servant community takes up the

issue of the foreigner, first inserting in two steps 63.1-6 and 63.7-64.11, based on 59.9-15a and 59.15b-20, then ending with the division of the postexilic community in the name of Yhwh in chap. 65. Their opponents stand against the servants, who as the true children of Mother Zion claim for themselves the title of עֲבָדֵי. The question of admittance required a separate reappraisal, which is now presented in 56.1-8 and 66, expressly bracketing the last part of the book. Not ethnicity but ethics should be considered as conditions for admission, and a commitment to Yhwh and the observance of the Sabbath. This second greater-Isaiah redaction is also inscribed at the beginning of the book in 1.29-31, where it creates an *inclusio* that brackets the entire book (1.31; 66.24) on the one hand, and on the other hand, with regard to the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, emphasizes that worshipers of foreign gods would of course not come up to the Mount of God!

The few mentions of the house of Yhwh (בֵּית יְהוָה) in the last section of the scroll—56.5, 7 and 66.20, each from a universalistic perspective—suggest that the integration of the HIN of chaps. 36-39 with its own version of the Hezekiah Psalm, which has its climax in the anticipation of communal praise in the *house* of Yhwh (38.20), likewise is to be attributed to this final major Isaiah redaction.

With the insertion of the narrative about the threat and salvation of Zion, the book of Isaiah found its compositional center and at the same time its final structure was established. Zion stands immovable at the center; the nations attack her without effect, and the righteous from Israel *and* the nations come to her to find protection and salvation.

Only subsequent to that were chaps. 24-27 inserted as updates to the oracles of the nations, where Noah more and more clearly becomes the paradigm of the righteous of the nations who have been saved. As he experienced salvation in the ark, the worshipers from Israel *and* the nations find protection on Zion. This universalistic orientation of the book, which appears possible only in the period of Persian rule, was opposed at the beginning of the Hellenistic period by a revision that found this openness to the nations unbearable, and in connection to 35.9b-10 left its traces in 11.11-16 and 27.12-13, such that the first half of the book was divided in three parts. It was no longer about gathering the righteous of Israel *and* the nations, but only the Jews of the Diaspora, in order to wrest them alone from the impending world judgment, bringing the theme of the 'returning Diaspora' conceptually close to the proto-apocalyptic revision. Still,

Zion-centering and openness to the nations were already so well-established in the book's final form that restricting the divine plan of salvation to gathering the Diaspora to rescue them before the final world judgment could no longer be completely determinative. The book of Isaiah thus remains the Book of Zion for Israel *and* the nations—of course, only the righteous from them—so that the promise of 56.7b stands firm:

כי ביתי בית תפלה יקרא לכל העמים

APPENDIX

Diagram I. Synchronic Structure of the Book of Isaiah

1-12: Zion between Claim and Reality

Zion's Sin and Salvation 1.2-2.5; 2.6-4.6	5.8-24 + 5.25-30	6.1-8.18[9.1-6]	9.7-20; 10.1-4	10.5-34	Shoot of Jesse	Thanksgiving Song 12
						11.11-16 (<i>Diaspora</i>)

13-27: Of Zion's Enemies and Friends

5 Sayings about the Nations (שׁוֹמְרֵי) 13-19	'On that day' 6x 19.16-25	Sign-Action 20.1-6	5 Sayings about the Nations (שׁוֹמְרֵי) 21-23, 24		'On that day' 6x 25.9-27.13
					27.12-13 (<i>Diaspora</i>)

28-35: The Divine King and the Zion Community

Woe (דָּוִי) 5x 28-31	Portrait of the Zion-Nation 32	6th Woe (דָּוִי) 33	Edom's Fall 34		Zion's Ascent 35
					35.9b-10 (<i>Diaspora</i>)

36-39: Threat and Salvation for Zion

Attack and Defeat of Sennacherib ← 36-37: Assyrian Period	Salvation for the Pious Hezekiah from Mortal Danger 38				Delegation from Babylon Babylonian Period: 39 →

Jacob Liberation Section: 40-48

Creation/History/Foreign Gods/Cyrus

48.20-21: Exodus from Babylon

Foreigner Question 56.1-8	Accusation 56.9-58	Communal Lament 59	Salvation for Zion 60-62	Communal Lament/Confession 63.1-64.11	Sinner/Pious 65.1-66.14	Nations/Zion 66.15-23

Zion Restoration Section 49-55

Zion as Ebed, Mother, Bride

52.11-12 Exodus from the Diaspora 55.12-13 Call to Nations

Diagram II. The Compositional Development of Isaiah 1–32

Isaiah Ben Amoz	(before 734?) 1.21-26; 2.12-17	(734–732) 6.1–8.18*	(727–711) 14.28-29, 31; 17.1-3; 18*, 19*, 20; 22*	(705–701) 28.1-4, 7-18*; 29.1-4, 9-10, 13-14; 29.15-16; 30.1-5, 6-8, 12-14, 16-17; 31.1, 3
Composition from Manasseh's Period 1st Half of 7th C.	5.1.....	10.4		
			(after 605)	10.5-15; 14.25-26
'Remnant Community' Early postexilic	1.2-4.6*	6.9-11.....	11	
		7.10-14a, 17a		
'Zion Community' 2nd Half of 5th C.		'Babylonizing': 'Zionizing':	13–14; 21; 23.13 13.2; 14.1-2; 16.1, 3-5; 18.3, 7; 23.17-18	28.5-6, 12, 16-17, 23-29; 29.11-12, 17-24
		'Sinner/Pious'	13.9bβ, 11; 14.5, 20b-21, 30, 32 16.13-14; 17.2bβ, 14b; 21.2*, 10, 16-17; 22.24-25; 23.15-18	30.9-11, 15, 18-26 31.2; 32.1-8, 9-14(?) 32.15-20
Proto-apocalyptic Revision Early Hellenistic Period			'Universalizing' in 24–27	28.19-22; 29.5-7; 30.27-33; 31.4-5, 8-9 [33.3-4, 7-12; 34.2-4]

Diagram III. The Compositional Development of Isaiah 40–55

Deutero-Isaiah Exilic Anonymous 550–539	40.1246.11 I. 40.12-28*; 41.1-5, 8-13, 16b, 17-20; 41.21-26, 28; 42.5-9 II. 42.13-16; 43.1-4, 8-13, 14-15, 16-21; 44.1-3a, 4, 6-8, 21-22 III. 44.24–45.7* IV. 45.11-13*, 20a, 21; 46.9-11	
Golah Redaction Golah Ready to Return 539–521	42.1–4, 10-12; 44.23; 47.1-11; 48*	48.20-21 Exodus from Babylon
1st Jerusalem Redaction The Returned Golah after 521	40.1.....52.12 40.1-5, 9-11 49.13, 14-26*; 50.1-3; 51.9-11, 17, 19; 52.1-2, 7-8, 9-10	52.11-12 Exodus from the Diaspora
2nd Jerusalem Redaction Against Resignation in Jerusalem Mid-5th C.	40.1.....55.13 40.3ac, 6-8 40.29-31 46.12-13 50.4-9 51.1-2, 12-16 54-55*	55.12-13 A Call to Yhwh Believers from the Nations
[Insertion of the 4th Ebed Yhwh Song	52.13–53.12 Zion’s Unexpected Restoration in the Sight of the Diaspora and the Nations]	

Diagram IV. The Compositional Development of Isaiah 56–66

Trito-Isaiah Light and Salvation for Zion 1st Half of 5th C.	60.1-9, 13-16; 61.1-9; 62.1-7 62.10-12 Call to Diaspora and Nations
Repentance Redaction 60–62* Only the Repentant! 2nd Half of 5th C.	56.9.....59.21 → → 60.17-22 [except 58.13-14]
Redaction of the Servant Community a. Sinner vs Pious and b. Integration of Foreigners End 5th C.–Beginning of 4th C.	61.10-11 56.1.....↑ ← ← ← 63.1-6; 63.7–64.11; 65 66.24 56.1-8 66.1-24

[illegible]

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28.35	49	3.10	279	2.14	424
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30.19	47	24.10	211	15.12	482
31.3	369	24.11	431	15.17	408
31.16	472	24.14	290	16.11	408
31.17	76	24.16	472	16.18	106
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17.36	275	8	485	5.17	151
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