

The Book of Isaiah as Isaiah's Book: The Latest Developments in the Research of the Prophets¹

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to represent conclusions for scholarly exegesis from recent developments in the field of the prophets, especially those pertaining to the Book of Isaiah. In order to do this, the author will pay attention in this article to the following aspects: (1) The prophet's book before the prophet's word; (2) The prophet as authority of the book; (3) Deutero-Isaiah: from hypothesis to author personality; (4) An anonymous prophet? The critical objections against the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis; (5) The figure of the prophet and the redaction-critical research of Isa 40-55; (6) The temple-singer hypothesis as alternative: from the individual to the collective; (7) The double tracked argumentation of a solution; (8) The discursive continuation of the tradition around Isaiah ben Amoz as Isaiah's book.

A THE PROPHET'S BOOK BEFORE THE PROPHET'S WORD

There is no lack of recent and informative review articles as to the status of the research of the prophets, especially those pertaining to the Book of Isaiah.³ The aim of this article is therefore not to increase the existing material, but rather to represent definite conclusions from recent developments for scholarly exegesis. The sometimes heated discussion between diachronic and synchronic ways of interpretation, namely, those that try to determine the origin and the development of the existing end text⁴ on the one hand or the validity thereof on

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³ Christof Hardmeier, "Jesajaforschung im Umbruch," *VF* 31 (1986): 3-31; Uwe Becker, "Jesajaforschung (Jes 1-39)," *TRu* 64 (1999): 1-37, 117-152; Uwe Becker, "Tendenzen der Jesajaforschung 1998-2007," *TRu* 74 (2009): 96-128; Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, "Neue Literatur zu Deuterojesaja (I)," *TRu* 65 (2000): 237-284; Uwe Becker, "Neue Literatur zu Deuterojesaja (II)," *TRu* 65 (2000): 379-430; extremely helpful is Peter Höffken, *Jesaja. Der Stand der theologischen Diskussion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004).

⁴ It is assumed to be generally known that "end text" only represents a preparatory interpretation which is subject to text-critical decisions and revisions.

the other, has undoubtedly contributed to the understanding of the biblical books and book collections as literary compositions that have evolved over centuries. This continuous evolution of the collection of texts happened neither totally uncontrolled, nor with predetermined rigorousness, so that these books possess a clear deposition gradient on the one hand, but on the other exhibit no all-encompassing structure. At least the following applies to the Book of Isaiah: on the one hand it is too disparate to be viewed as unified, and on the other hand too unified to be viewed as disparate.⁵ On a diachronic and therefore production-hermeneutical level the concern can only be to cautiously open up the tightly woven network of the evolved symbols and meanings at its seams, taking care not to destroy or violate this network.⁶

The programme of the early modern interpretation of the prophets to liberate the supposedly oldest traditional cores from imitative expansions and mindless deformations, thereby laying bare the view to the only true divine mediators is obsolete; even convinced literary and redaction critics do not support the programme in this fashion any longer. However, further inquiry into the Word of the Prophet in the Book of the Prophet is still being conducted, but in a more restrained fashion and with more respect for the literary whole.⁷ Furthermore, the actual difference of opinion between the two camps of synchrony and diachrony does not lie in the question as to whether the biblical texts evolved historically or not, but rather to what extent and to what degree the genesis of the verse, the cola and semi-cola can be accurately retraced and made plausible over the distance of more than 2000 years. Whatever decision one takes, the historical dimension remains a constitutive part of scholarly exegesis and of academic theology. According to Steck⁸ the reason is simple:

as long as theology and faith base themselves on the Bible, one cannot cease to question that which one stands upon. Foundations need to be safeguarded and scrutinised on a regular basis. The indispensable act of confirmation of the foundations by means of continuous research with the Bible as subject matter forms part of the process which essentially characterises theology and churches. It is part of not just any process of conveyance, but of conveyance according to the facts of the hugely significant Bible into the period

⁵ Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja. Komposition und Endgestalt* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1998), 13.

⁶ Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 46.

⁷ Cf. Jörg Jeremias, "Prophetenwort und Prophetenbuch. Zur Rekonstruktion mündlicher Verkündigung der Propheten," *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* 14 (1999): 19-35.

⁸ Odil H. Steck, *Gott in der Zeit entdecken. Die Prophetenbücher des Alten Testaments als Vorbild für Theologie und Kirche* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001), 30.

following.

In the same way that contemporary readers and hearers of the prophetic scripts all have their individual cultural and historical preconceptions of what is receptive-hermeneutically of significance,⁹ so also do the production-hermeneutic preconditions and circumstances of the initial authors and readers form an integral part of the business of interpretation.

Thus one can reiterate anew the statement by the late scholar of the Old Testament (hereafter OT) in Zürich, Odil Hannes Steck:

We should occupy ourselves not with the way in which a Book of the Prophets *can* be read then and now, – the possibilities are legion – but with the way in which, if need be, it *must* be read within the context of its formative period according to the will of its creators, because this determines the formation as a historical process. It depends on the signals contained in the book itself, as well as on the receptional processes that show up in the book itself!¹⁰

The analyses of the past twenty years have shown that the prophetic books are not merely a mountain of words underneath which the individual oracles of the men of God lie hidden like treasures, but that they are like literary cathedrals that have been crafted – or rather composed and revised – for centuries by various architects.¹¹ Alongside more or less independent partial compositions which dominate the final character like the nave of a church (cf. Isa 1-12; 13-27; 28-35; 36-39; 40-48; 49-55; 56-66), there are also literary cross-struts that enhance the coherence of the work of art (for instance home-coming diaspora themes in Isa 11:11-16; 27:12-13; 35:9b-10; 51:10-11; 62:12; Edom themes in Isa 34; 63:1-6) as well as specially crafted bridging texts (Isa 33, 35). Over and above this, enormous building brackets are also present (Isa 1 and 66), as well as engravings that provide individual accents on a small scale, either to reinforce that which is given or to set a counterpoint (Isa 6:13b). On this point the various exegetical camps agree: the prophetic writings and collections of writings (*Dodekapropheton*) now stand in the foreground as

⁹ Amongst others Claire M. McGinnis & Patricia K. Tull, eds., *As Those Who Are Taught.* *The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

¹⁰ Odil H. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher und ihr theologisches Zeugnis. Wege der Nachfrage und Fahrten zur Antwort* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1996), 17; Odil H. Steck, *The Prophetic Books and their Theological Witness* (trans. by James D. Nogalski, Atlanta, Ga.: Chalice Press, 2000).

¹¹ Ulrich Berges, "Das Jesajabuch als literarische Kathedrale. Ein Rundgang durch die Jahrhunderte," *BK* 61 (2006): 190-197. The booklet in its entirety is dedicated to the Book of Isaiah.

books.¹²

This is the current position: before the prophet stands the book. Whoever wants to reach the prophet is first pointed towards the book. For a long period of time the dominating inquiry was concerned with the prophets as persons, therefore the pressing task at hand is the clarifying inquiry into the prophetic *books*.¹³

The interpretation has to face this new challenge so that shared commentaries on one book, which are often unavoidable due to time and work related reasons, must not appear isolated, but should rather tie in with one another.¹⁴ Taking into account the direction that research is taking, it is no coincidence that recent commentaries on the entire Book of Isaiah from the North-American region are at hand,¹⁵ similar commentaries of which are not found in the German-speaking region (any longer). The Anglophone research had begun to look into the question of the composition of the entire Book of Isaiah much earlier than its German counterpart, and thus Rolf Rendtorff, the exegete from Heidelberg, had to observe in 1984: "The question of the composition of the Book of Isaiah in its present form does not constitute a part of the generally accepted topics of scholarship of the Old Testament."¹⁶ The situation has changed so fundamentally in the last twenty years that at present a preoccupation with partial compositions has to take the entire book into consideration. This is due to the fact that there is no partial composition which is not connected to other parts by cross-struts. However, these various book parts are, production-hermeneutically speaking, not on the same level – just as the various building phases of medieval cathedrals differ from each other – they are rather diachronically layered and interlocked. The synchronic reading of the final form does not offer a solution derived from the diachronic inquiry.

¹² Apart from the mentioned monographies by Steck, see also Uwe Becker, "Die Wiederentdeckung des Prophetenbuches. Tendenzen und Aufgaben der gegenwärtigen Prophetenforschung," *BTZ* 21 (2004): 30-60.

¹³ Steck, *Prophetenbücher*, 7.

¹⁴ Cf. the interpretation of the Book of Isaiah by Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2003); Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 13-27* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2007); Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 28-39* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2010); Ulrich Berges, *Jesaja 40-48* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2008).

¹⁵ John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985); John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987); Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (New York: Doubleday, 2002); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66* (New York: Doubleday, 2003); Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998); Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Rolf Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition des Buches Jesaja," *VT* 34 (1984): 295-320 (p. 295).

To stay with the image of the cathedral: of course anyone can visit these buildings without a guide and be impressed by them, but only a guided tour by an expert opens the eyes to the overall structure as well as the relevant details. The scholarly commentary is nothing but a guide through the interwoven character of words and meanings of biblical books, the prophetic books being particularly in need of explanation due to their discursive erratic nature. The final form is consequently not the solution but rather the starting point, as well as point of destination for analysis and commentary. Prior to the formation of every hypothesis towards a diachronic genesis and a redactional layering lies the detailed exploration of the text form at hand, and every specification and analysis must serve towards its illumination. This approach has far-reaching consequences, as considerations about composition should precede redaction-critical aspects, thereby taking care not to separate that which serves the structures that overstep the narrow boundaries of pericope and chapter.¹⁷

B THE PROPHET AS AUTHORITY OF THE BOOK

The diverse history of interpretation of the Book of Isaiah can be condensed into a single formula: from the prophet to three books, to one book, to one prophet! During the first and longest epoch which begins with the formative phase of the origin of the text and stretches over the rabbinic and patristic era up to the Renaissance,¹⁸ Isaiah was perceived to be the undisputed author, or rather the authority of the book with the same name. Thus biblical tradition assigns the entire scroll with the following heading which was only added in the times of the Chronicles to the well-known prophet in Jerusalem: “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah” (Isa 1:1). It remains undisputed that this prophet was active in Jerusalem during the period of neo-Assyrian expansion of Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II and Sennacherib between 734 and 701 B.C.E. According to a legend found in the “martyrium Jesaiae” in the last third of the first century C.E., Isaiah died a martyr's death under king Manasseh (696-642): he was supposedly sawn to pieces (cf. Heb 11:37; jSanh X, 2; bSanh 103b).

Interestingly enough, biblical tradition does not consider Isaiah ben Amoz to be the author, but rather the visionary who stands behind the divine

¹⁷ Rainer Albertz, *Die Exilszeit. 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 291: “For successful literary critical and redaction-critical work to be done on the Book of Deutero-Isaiah, book editions must emerge that have a distinct beginning and end, a clear structure and a meaningful text sequence.”

¹⁸ Cf. Henning G. Reventlow, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung* (4 vols.; München: C.H. Beck, 1990-2001); for Isaiah compare John F. A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel. Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Brevard S. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004).

experience recorded in this script. This is in accordance with the spirit of the time, as authors were unknown in the biblical Israel of that time: By the listing of names of "authorities" in the Talmud and the lack thereof in the Torah, the difference between Hellenistic and pre-Hellenistic Judaism is expressed. Both are tradition literature, as opposed to author literature: collections of that which was taught and handed down in the name of authoritative personalities rather than authors. Because the author does not matter, but rather the authority in whose name the book is written, the great books of the prophets can contain but a few words of the historical Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel, without them having the incorrect title.¹⁹

The lack of an author in the classic Greek-Roman literary sense is in line with the absence of the book as a literary product for a wider public audience: literature remained the spiritual property of the specific group that owned it and had command over it.²⁰ A "publication" only occurred in the form of an inscription (Deut 27:2-4, 8) or of a public reading (Deut 30:10-13; Neh 8:3-8). Publication was a state act ("Staatsakt").²¹ Thus, like Moses for the Pentateuch, the great prophetic figures of the books with the same name were similarly not authors in the modern sense, but rather authorities and founders of theological discourses and discourse communities that competed with, but also against each other: side by side but not independent of each other, continuous discourse functioning along scholarly lines existed as means of interpretation of authoritative words that were attributed to the particular founder of that discourse.²² Moses was considered to be the discourse founder of the priestly scholars of scripture, and post-exilic continuous interpretations ("Fortschreibung") of his words originating from pre-exilic and exilic times in Deuteronomy and priestly writings were put into his mouth and thereby authorised. Similarly, words of the prophetic discourse founders of an Isaiah, a Jeremiah or an Ezekiel were being interpreted in a continuous manner in the circles of the prophetic tradents, who, putting them into the mouths of these discourse founders, imbued them with their legitimacy by means of the prophetic authority in competition with Moses and functioned as revelation mediators of divine words.²³

¹⁹ Ernst A. Knauf, "Audiatur et altera pars. Zur Logik der Pentateuch-Redaktion," *BK* 53 (1998): 118-126 (p. 121).

²⁰ Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal culture and the making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

²¹ Knauf, *Audiatur*, 121.

²² Eckart Otto, "Welcher Bund ist ewig? Die Bundestheologie priesterlicher Schriftgelehrter im Pentateuch und in der Tradentenprophetie im Jeremiabuch," in *Für immer verbündet. Studien zur Bundestheologie der Bibel, FS F.L. Hossfeld* (eds. Christoph Dohmen & Christian Frevel; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk; 2007), 161-169.

²³ Otto, *Welcher Bund*, 161.

The biblical tradition and the subsequent rabbinic and patristic interpretations know only Isaiah ben Amoz as authority and discourse founder. Everything that is contained in this scroll is considered to be the vision of this Man of God. Thus, in the great Qumran-Isaiah-scroll from the last third of the second century,²⁴ Isa 40:1 directly connects to the last verse of chapter 39 as the last line in a column (as opposed to Isa 34:1). There can be no question of an epochal new beginning. On the contrary: the vision of Isaiah ben Amoz continues seamlessly in chapter 40-66. This view is shared by Sir 48:22-25, as here the healing of Hezekiah by the prophet is directly followed by the comforting of Zion (Isa 40:1-11). On the whole, therefore, up until the end of the 18th century C.E. Isaiah was considered to be the authority who was responsible for the content of the entire scroll. Only the Jewish exegete Abraham Ibn Ezra voiced some doubts in his Isaiah commentaries, written in 1145, as to whether the prophet from Jerusalem could also have spoken the words of comfort contained in Isa 40-66, as these chapters already applied to the end of the Babylonian exile. Out of concern as to the reaction of the orthodoxy, Ibn Ezra avoided an explicit opinion on this subject.²⁵

C DEUTERO-ISAIAH: FROM HYPOTHESIS TO AUTHOR PERSONALITY

The historical gap of more than 150 years which lies between Isaiah at the end of the 8th century and the time of the end of the exilic period presumed in Isa 40-55 (Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C.E.), could, with the rise of the historical-critical Bible interpretation, no longer be overcome merely by referring to the visionary power of Isaiah. To compound matters, Isaiah is said not only to have announced the prospect of salvation, but also to have mentioned the name of the new Persian ruler, Cyrus II (559-530) in Isa 44:28; 45:1.

It was this problem which gave rise, toward the end of the 18th century, to the argument between ecclesiastical and rationalistic interpretation. This argument was not only concerned with the question as to which words can be traced back to Isaiah, but more fundamentally with the question as to what rationally comprehensible accreditation one was prepared to give to the prophets and what not. This is of utmost importance to the emergence of the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis. Johann Christoph Döderlein (1746-1792), Professor at the Franconian University of Altdorf writes: "The dogmatics of Christians cannot be the dogmatics of the contemporaries of Isaiah, and where Cyrus is being described, I cannot think of the Messiah." He then poses the question: "Might it not be feasible that this entire chapter was only written down during

²⁴ Easily accessible in Donald W. Parry & Elisha Qimron, *The Great Isaiah Scroll (1Q Isa^a). A New Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

²⁵ Reventlow, *Bibelauslegung II*, 256-257; also Uriel Simon, "Ibn Ezra between Medievalism and Modernism. The Case of Isaiah XL-LXVI," in *Congress Volume: Salamanca, 1983* (ed. John A. Emerton, Leiden: Brill, 1985), 257-271.

the Babylonian exile?"²⁶ Only as late as 1789 does Döderlein formulate the thesis in the third edition of his Isaiah-commentary that the "oratio," or rather the entire book after chapter 40 cannot be attributed to Isaiah, but that it was written at the end of the exilic period by an anonymous, or rather a homonymous prophet. Because of this, Johann Christoph Döderlein is considered to be the discoverer of Deutero-Isaiah,²⁷ and justifiably so, for in so doing he found middle ground between the rational and the orthodox view. The solution was as simple as it was brilliant: Isa 40-55 was not written by Isaiah ben Amoz, but rather by an inspired prophet whose name and identity, however, remained unknown. Without naming Döderlein, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827), in his famous and much-read introduction dated 1783, also takes as his point of departure an exilic writer for chapters 40-52, at least.²⁸ It was only in 1892, with the Isaiah commentary by Bernhard Duhm, however, that the idea of a "second Isaiah" experienced a break-through. On the one hand Duhm contested the idea that an exilic anonymous person had written the four Servant Songs in Isa 42; 49; 50 and 53, as well as the polemics concerning the idols; on the other hand he attributed Isa 56-66 to a further, even later prophet, the "third Isaiah." Thus Duhm is not only the discoverer of "Trito-Isaiah," but is also the person who gave the exilic anonymous person the literary name "Deutero-Isaiah." However, to Duhm "Deutero-Isaiah" was not only one of the scriptural prophets, but the climax and summary of ancient Israelite prophecy.²⁹ It is one of those paradoxes in research that Duhm stresses the anonymity of the OT writings on the first page of his Isaiah commentary,³⁰ only to then provide his exilic author with a personality that deftly covers this anonymity.

To date the research into Isaiah is thus deeply characterised by the idea of an individual prophet in exile, whose literary opus, handed down and continued by students, is now at hand. A writer personality emerged out of this hypothesis with very distinct character traits. Duhm himself, however, could

²⁶ Jean M. Vincent, *Studien zur literarischen Eigenart und zur geistigen Heimat von Jesaja, Kap. 40-55* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1977), 17.

²⁷ Klaus Leder, *Universität Altdorf. Zur Theologie der Aufklärung in Franken. Die Theologische Fakultät in Altdorf 1750-1809* (Nürnberg: Spindler, 1965), 168-173 ("Döderlein als Exeget des Alten Testaments"); Martin Mulzer, "Döderlein und Deuterjesaja," *BN* 66 (1993): 15-22.

²⁸ For Eichhorn's life and work, see also Rudolf Smend, *Deutsche Alttestamentler in drei Jahrhunderten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 25-37 (especially p. 31-37).

²⁹ Bernhard Duhm, *Israels Propheten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1916), 292.

³⁰ Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* (5th ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 7: "The later Jews had no literary interest [...]. As it is, the concept of the author, his honours, rights and duties were not really understood anyway, and the names of their historians and poets were all the same to them. It is a culture-historical mistake to transpose our literary views onto the Israelite-Jewish literature [...]."

have been more reserved, or better still, all the subsequent readers should have been more critical. In "Israels Propheten" (1916) Duhm named one chapter "Deuterocesaja und die gleichzeitigen Anonymi" ("Deutero-Isaiah and the simultaneous anonymous ones") and explains:

From three Jewish authors whose names we do not know we possess prophetic poetic works dating to this time, from the so-called Deutero-Isaiah and two others, one of which is more of a poet than a prophet, while the other is a true visionary.³¹

With the other two, however, he does not mean "Trito-Isaiah," but rather the authors of Isa 13-14 (specifically 13:2-22; 14:4b-21] and Isa 21 [21:1-10, 11, 12-15), those chapters that predict the Fall of Babel. The strategy is obvious: for all texts of the Book of Isaiah, which, due to their historical statement, do not fit into the time of the Jerusalem prophets, additional anonymous authors are created. If Duhm had been consistent, he would have had to name them "Quarto- and Quinto-Isaiah" respectively. Had he done that, the concepts of a Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah would probably have met with much more criticism. Especially the literary name Deutero-Isaiah thus nurtures the opinion to this day that, apart from the name, a great deal is known about the exilic poet, the climax of Israelite prophecy.

D AN ANONYMOUS PROPHET? THE CRITICAL OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DEUTERO-ISAIAH HYPOTHESIS

It was this very anonymity of the supposed exilic prophet which the critics latched onto, as is illustrated by the following quote by Wilhelm Caspari, dated 1934:

A realistic reflection cannot view a personal name as a mere form which is of no consequence to the essence of the personality being searched for. It rather views it as crucial to the basic approach towards personal tradition and investigation. Without the name, historical man would not be discernible from pre-historic man. No portrait artist of Deutero-Isaiah lacked brushes, palette, colours or divination, only – the nail to hang the painting.³²

In short: that which is lacking in person and personality cannot simply be offset by a literary name and all kinds of fantasy. Not the demarcation of chapters 40-55 is being rejected, but the idea of an exilic anonymous person: "The personal Deutero-Isaiah was an indoor pot plant on the desks of scholars."³³

The immense success of the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis in theological

³¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 285.

³² Wilhelm Caspari, *Lieder und Gottessprüche der Rückwanderer. Jesaja 40-55* (Gießen: Töpelmann, 1934), 228.

³³ Caspari, *Lieder*, 244.

and ecclesiastical circles is closely related to the Christian shaping of the understanding of the prophets. As men inspired by God they announced the coming of the last and final Revelation in the form of Jesus of Nazareth. That which applies to the prophets in general applies to a much higher degree to Deutero-Isaiah, the evangelist of the OT. One can only agree with Diethelm Michel's query concerning the riddle of Deutero-Isaiah (1981):

The question must thus be asked as to whether, with the postulating of a prophet Deutero-Isaiah, the opinion that such a convincing theological achievement could only originate from a great individual, played a significant role.³⁴

Together with the critical and long ignored voices of Caspari, Vincent and the early Michel with his inaugural speech of 1967, the small monograph "Isaias – der Prophet und sein Buch" ("Isaiah – the prophet and his book") by Joachim Becker from 1968 belongs here as well. His assessment hits the nail on the head:

The widely held concept of a prophetic figure operating shortly before 539 – awkwardly named Deutero-Isaiah – subconsciously originates from the aspiration to preserve a prestigious and important text like Isa 40-55 from the fate of redactional anonymity, which would have condemned it exegetically to meaninglessness. Or conversely: one cannot consider the text to be redactional just because it is significant, thereby artificially creating the prophetic figure of "Deutero-Isaiah." Especially the fact that we do not know the author by name gives us reason to believe that a reviser or redactor was at work. Real prophetic figures did not remain anonymous, the great revisers of the biblical books on the other hand did remain so, and with good reason.³⁵

E THE FIGURE OF THE PROPHET AND THE REDACTION-CRITICAL RESEARCH OF ISAIAH 40-55

The conspicuous fact that the redaction-critical research only turned its attention to this text collection from about 1980 onwards can only be explained with the background of the meaning of these chapters for the Christian interpretation. Much later than in the texts of the Pentateuch or in the books of the Deuteronomistic History (Joshua – 2 Kings), literary-critical divisions were put in place and redactional layers were determined. After more than a quarter

³⁴ Diethelm Michel, "Deuterocesaja," *TRE* 8: 510-530 (especially p. 520); Diethelm Michel, "Das Rätsel Deuterocesaja," *ThViat* 13 (1977): 115-132; newly released in Diethelm Michel, *Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte alttestamentlicher Texte* (Gütersloh: Kaiser, 1997), 199-218; cf. Richard J. Coggins, "Do We Still Need Deutero-Isaiah?" *JSOT* 80 (1998): 77-92 (p. 91).

³⁵ Joachim Becker, *Isaias, der Prophet und sein Buch* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1968), 38.

century of very intensive research, however, no consensus has been reached as yet, but basic ideas and concepts are being brought more into focus. The view that the extent of a basic document ("Grundschrift") of Deutero-Isaiah is much smaller than previously thought, insofar as it is actually still possible to document, forms part of these basic ideas.³⁶

The "textual habitat" of the exilic Anonymous has decreased quite substantially and reduces itself noticeably to Isa 41-45. Here a consensual majority excludes the so-called Prologue in 40:1-11.³⁷ Some interpreters minimise the basic text of Deutero-Isaiah to those passages which more or less explicitly deal with the imminent triumphal march of Cyrus.³⁸ The lack of consensus concerning the criteria to establish the basic document ("Grundschrift") is anything but beneficial to the search as to the identity of the biographical prophetic figure; if unity about the basic textual layers is not in existence, then the outcome of the profile of the prophet will also differ greatly.³⁹ To examine this more critically: if the basic textual layers ("Grundschrift") cannot be separated from an initial composition by means of verifiable criteria, then the exilic prophet increasingly stands on clay feet. Consequently the presumption of a Deutero-Isaianic basic document ("Grundschrift") has fundamentally been called into question in the postdoctoral thesis of Jürgen Werlitz from 1999. According to this thesis the texts of the basic textual layers ("Grundschrift") have been disputed since Duhm, namely, the Servant Songs and the polemic against the foreign idols, which belong to the basic composition of these chapters. Texts of differing origin were assumably compiled into a composition by literary scholarly circles.

³⁶ See also the summaries in Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, "Einheit und Komplexität Deuterjesajas. Probleme der Redaktionsgeschichte von Jes 40-55," in *The Book of Isaiah* (ed. Jacques Vermeylen, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 287-312 (especially p. 311); Reinhard G. Kratz, *Kyros im Deuterjesaja-Buch. Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Theologie von Jes 40-55* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1991), 217; Jürgen van Oorschot, *Von Babel zum Zion. Eine literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 345; as well as Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 549.

³⁷ See also the discussion in Henk Leene, "Auf der Suche nach einem redaktionskritischen Modell für Jesaja 40-55," *ThLZ* 121 (1996): 803-818, p. 812: "In the chapters Isaiah 40-48 70%, 56% und 40% of the verses, according to Hermisson, Kratz und van Oorschot resp., belong to the basic text ("Grundschrift")."

³⁸ Jacques Vermeylen, "L'unité du livre d'Isaïe," in *The Book of Isaiah* (ed. Jacques Vermeylen, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 11-53 (cf. p. 41): Jes 40,9.11; 40,12-41,5*; 41,21-29*; 42,5-7*; 44,24-28*; 45,1-7*; 45,11-13*; 46,9-11*; 48,12-15*.

³⁹ See the existing review of Caspari, *Lieder*, 227: "If no two scholars concur in the portrayal of the life that they outline about Deutero-Isaiah, then the knowledge about this is of an illusory nature."

According to this assumption, those responsible for Isa 40-55 are a group of returning emigrants, who have some connection to the pre-exilic temple-singers and who – after their return in the thirties or twenties of the 6th century B.C.E. – probably made contact with this group of cultic officials. These returning emigrants view it as their task to bring a message of comfort to Zion, but rather appear to have encountered some objections in Zion. These objections obviously led to the first edition of the book. The primary concern of this book is the self-assurance of a group in post-exilic Jerusalem.⁴⁰

The redactional inquiry into this first compositional layer which is connected to the Isaiah-tradition of Jerusalem is, according to this thesis, not possible anymore as these chapters apparently present a “mixtum compositum” *from the very beginning*.

F THE TEMPLE-SINGER HYPOTHESIS AS ALTERNATIVE: FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE COLLECTIVE

The concept of a group of authors for Isa 40-55 has been around for some time in scholarly circles, as the succinct title of the monograph by Caspari has already shown: “Lieder und Gottessprüche der Rückwanderer” [“Songs and divine sayings of the returning emigrants”]. Alongside an Isaianic school,⁴¹ the more specific idea of a “Deutero-Isaiah-school”⁴² was entertained in which scholars stored and edited the words of the exilic Anonymous and crafted them into the final version we have today.⁴³ Trito-Isaiah would then have been one of these scholars who supplemented and updated (“Fortschreibung”) the message of his master in post-exilic times.⁴⁴ Concerning Isa 56-66, this school- or rather scholar thesis has however proven to be untenable, the almost unanimous current point of departure being that of a prophecy by scribal scholars (“schriftgelehrte Prophetie”) in the third corpus of the Book of

⁴⁰ Jürgen Werlitz, *Redaktion und Komposition. Zur Rückfrage hinter die Endgestalt von Jesaja 40-55* (Berlin: Philo, 1999), 321; cf. adoption and further expansion of this model in: Albertz, *Exilszeit*, 293-296.

⁴¹ John H. Eaton, “The Isaiah Tradition,” in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage. Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd* (eds. Richard J. Coggins et al; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 58-76.

⁴² Hans-Christoph Schmitt, “Prophetie und Schultheologie im Deuterojesajabuch. Beobachtungen zur Redaktionsgeschichte von Jes 40-55,” *ZAW* 91 (1979): 43-61.

⁴³ According to Hugh G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah. Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), Deutero-Isaiah updated his text with the knowledge of “the literary deposit of Isaiah” (p. 188). Over and above that: It is thought that only through this integration of 1-39* as introduction to Isa 40-55 was Proto-Isaiah able to see the light of day.

⁴⁴ See especially Karl Elliger, *Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis zu Tritojesaja* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933).

Isaiah.⁴⁵ Might it, however, in the case of Isa 40-55 have been possible that an exilic prophet acted as “chef du groupe”⁴⁶ whose message was subsequently collected and published by his scholars? In this manner the contribution of the exilic Anonymous to the literary opus would be reduced; however, the concept of an individual author personality would not have to be discarded. To an extent the problem of anonymity is further reinforced by the circle-of-scholars thesis; why would the group of tradents otherwise not have handed down the name and the concrete appearance of their master?

If one scans the latest and most recent publications concerning Isa 40-55, the impression is reinforced that the idea of an exilic prophetic figure comes under increasing pressure and that there can be no question of an unconditional defence of this hypothesis.⁴⁷ The *opinio communis* of the last hundred years has disintegrated; similarly, this security of old does not hold fast anymore.⁴⁸ The burden of proof shifts more and more towards those who steadfastly hold onto the exilic Anonymous and less towards those who lay these concepts *ad acta*.⁴⁹ Can one truly compare the namelessness of the exilic prophet with the anonymity of the poets of the Psalms, as the latter did not remain entirely nameless either?⁵⁰ Does not the recording of certain names like Asaph (Pss 50; 73-83), Korah (Pss 42-49; 84-85, 87-88), Heman and Ethan as well as the Ezrahites (Pss 88-89) in the Psalm headings suggest that an identity which might have been collective was associated with these names?

⁴⁵ Klaus Koenen, *Ethik und Eschatologie im Tritojesajabuch. Eine literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990); Wolfgang Lau, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie in Jes 56-66. Eine Untersuchung zu den literarischen Bezügen in den letzten elf Kapiteln des Jesajabuches* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994); Brooks Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah. Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

⁴⁶ Michel, *Deuterojesaja*, 521; Albertz, *Exilszeit*, 285.

⁴⁷ Odil H. Steck, “Israel und Zion. Zum Problem konzeptioneller Einheit und literarischer Schichtung in Deuterojesaja,” in *Gottesknecht und Zion. Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja* (ed. Odil H. Steck, Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1992), 173-207 (cf. p. 174).

⁴⁸ Christoph Levin, *Das Alte Testament* (2nd ed. München: C.H. Beck, 2003), 85: “The question as to the person of the prophet is even less appropriate with this book than is usually the case. The individual character that is part of Deutero-Isaiah is mainly due to the different genres that were used. It is not an individual signature.”

⁴⁹ Konrad Schmid, “Das Jesajabuch,” in *Grundinformation Altes Testament* (ed. Jan C. Gertz; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 314-334, p. 328: “One can therefore *still* assume a prophet ‘Deutero-Isaiah’ behind chapter 40ff, even if we do not know his name” (cursive U.B.).

⁵⁰ So Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, “Deuterojesaja,” *RGG* 2: 684-688 (p. 684): “The intensive use of the world of language and form of the Psalms suggests that Deutero-Isaiah originated from the circles of cult singers; his anonymity is in accordance with the namelessness of the poets of the Psalms.”

Furthermore, the psalm in 1 Chr 16:8-36, which is compiled from Ps 105 and Ps 96 and incorporates fundamental elements from Isa 40-55 also specifically names poets and musical groups (amongst others recurrent Asaphites) and so doing demonstrates this fact. The information in 1 Chr 25:1 where such behaviour is explicitly denoted as prophetic activity (nif. *nb'*) also points into this direction.

If a prophetic poet and thinker should actually be behind Isa 40-55 who, animated by the grandiose victory march of the Persian ruler Cyrus, for whom all doors stood open after the success against Croesus of Lydia (547 B.C.E.), wrote the most impressive passages of the Old/First Testament, then this anonymity is unique and inexplicable.⁵¹ Consequently one cannot but take the alternative solution seriously and give up the concept of Deutero-Isaiah as an Anonymous of the exilic era. Increasingly scholarly thought leans towards this direction:

In these strong words of salvation a profile of the congregation becomes apparent. Preachers have a chance to speak, "prophets" are not mentioned. Merely the literary footprints of the divinely authorised speakers and orators can be detected.⁵²

G THE DOUBLE-TRACKED ARGUMENTATION OF A SOLUTION

It must be pointed out *via negationis* that Isa 40-55 lacks all the biographical anchoring of a prophet, neither is the "I" of a Man of God apparent as opposed to the construction of an Ezekiel who was also active in Babel (cf. Ezk 1:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1). Unlike in the latter (cf. Ezk 6:1; 7:1; 12:1, 8 etc.), the formulation: "The Word of YHWH came unto me" is conspicuous in its absence in Isa 40-55. It must be pointed out and a correction should be made in the revision of the German "Einheitsübersetzung" that the third person singular "and one/he says" of the Masoretic text should be retained as opposed to 1QIsaa, LXX and Vulgata "and I said."⁵³ Verses 6-8 is the discussion within the group of those who see themselves as being called to comfort Zion and

⁵¹ Cf. Johannes C. Kim, *Verhältnis Jahwes zu anderen Göttern in Deuterjesaja* (Diss: Heidelberg, 1962), 264 (levitical background).

⁵² Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit. 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), 248; less transparent, but tending towards the same direction is Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Propheten Israels* (München: C.H. Beck, 2003), 98: "In this respect the equation of the Servant of God and Deutero-Isaiah is definitely correct, only that Deutero-Isaiah was no real person, but rather a book, and the Servant of God the incarnated Word of God of the Book of Deutero-Isaiah."

⁵³ Cf. Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* (vol. 2, Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1986), 278; Marjo C. A. Korpel & Johannes C. de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry. Isaiah 40-55* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 18 (footnote 3).

Jerusalem (v. 1 “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God”) but who are at the same time caught up in scepticism as to whether this message of salvation will be accepted at all after the exilic events. The so-called Prologue in Isa 40:1-11 cannot serve as biographical anchoring of a Deutero-Isaiah in the sense of a scene of vocational calling, as the assignment to comfort does not go out to an individual but rather to a collective and the latter does not address the Babylonian Golah, but Zion/Jerusalem. But who is this person who receives this assignment from God and passes it on to the collective of messengers?⁵⁴ As Isaiah ben Amoz announces the deportation of the royal family to King Hezekiah in chapter 39 and no indications of an additional prophetic individual are at hand, the prophet now resumes his function as spokesperson – and not as a character in the book. Last but not least the vision of the Fall of Babylon in Isa 13 and 21 has already prepared the readers that they will continue to hear the voice of Isaiah ben Amoz even after his departure from the world's stage.⁵⁵ Apart from this, the allusions to the authorisation of Isaiah in Isa 6 cannot be overlooked.⁵⁶ Just as the prophet from Jerusalem received the command to preach the impending inevitable judgement, the divine command to comfort reaches – via the Isaiah of the book – those who will, in the course of the chapters, prove to be the ones who bring “good tidings” (41:27; 52:7) for the Golah and the Judean capital. Only if they succeed in the carrying-out of this command can Jerusalem become the city that brings “good tidings” for the cities of Judah (40:9).

If there is no mention in Isa 40:1-11 of a prophetic individual, then this gap cannot be closed with the “I” and the supposedly biographical traits found in the Servant Songs. This is also being acknowledged by those who continue to seriously consider an anonymous exilic prophet: “With a common interpretation of the Servant Songs (...) one can attempt to discover something about the person of the prophet, especially his suffering and death; however, the language which is rich in imagery and bound to form forbids any kind of closer biographical interpretation. The prophet is only present in his message and his official position.”⁵⁷ One cannot, however, distil any biographical personality from the message and official position if the text does not provide any pointers to this effect. There is simply no information forthcoming by means of an entrance scene, for instance, as can be repeatedly verified for Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 12). That the suffering and death of the Servant in Isa 53

⁵⁴ The LXX “priests” as well as Targum “prophets” allocate a distinct identity to the collective.

⁵⁵ Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, *The Reader-Oriented Unity of the Book of Isaiah* (Vught: Skandalon, 2006), 120-122.

⁵⁶ Cf. Rainer Albertz, “Das Deuterocesaja-Buch als Fortschreibung der Jesaja-Prophetie,” in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte. FS R. Rendtorff* (eds. Erhard Blum *et al*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), 241-256.

⁵⁷ Hermisson, *Deuterocesaja*, 684-685.

cannot be interpreted as “martyrdom” as is being repeatedly suggested,⁵⁸ has already been explained sufficiently by Wellhausen:

The assumption that an incomparable prophet in exile was possibly turned into a martyr by his own people and was subsequently forgotten is an adventurous one. These statements are moreover not in accordance with a real prophet. It is not his duty and function to convert all heathens, nor is he successful in doing so.⁵⁹

Similarly, the “I”-reference in the last colon of Isa 48:16 (“and now Adonai YHWH has sent me and his Spirit”) cannot be interpreted as an individual pointer, as it has been acknowledged that this line in this verse serves as a redactional bridge to the second (Isa 49:1-6) and the third Servant Song (Isa 50:4-9; cf. “Adonai YHWH” in 50:4, 5, 7, 9). Moreover, the theme of the prophetic spiritual gift refers to the first Servant Song in 42:1ff (cf. 59:21; 61:1). Behind this “I” is not in any way the exilic Anonymous,⁶⁰ or even the Isaiah of the book,⁶¹ but rather the group of prophetic groups who understand themselves to be the true personification of the servant for YHWH’s cause.⁶² Nothing compounds this collective understanding of the figure of the servant more than the divine salutation in the bicolon of 43:10: “You are my witnesses, says YHWH, and my servant whom I have chosen.” The transition from plural to singular is beyond reproach and even constitutes an important building block towards the identity of the servant of God (cf. 43:12; 42:18f; 44:8; 44:26; 48:6). The deaf and blind servant Jacob/Israel was purified and chosen during the Babylonian exile, the furnace of misery, as the servant of God by YHWH himself (48:10).⁶³ The putative incompatibility of the individual servant of the Servant Songs and the collective Ebed Jacob/Israel outside of these texts is solved if there is no exilic Anonymous with the literary name of “Deutero-Isaiah” behind the servant of the Songs, but if the composers of the drama of salvation and the future in Isa 40-55 are to be understood as servants of God. The prophetic vanguard of the returned Golah continues in the final corpus of the book with the servants (cf. 54:17; 56:6; 63:17; 65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14). The enquiry of Diethelm Michel indicates the solution to the problem:

The question arises as to whether the problems with the attempts to

⁵⁸ Cf. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 356.

⁵⁹ Julius Wellhausen, *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte* (9th printing . Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981 (new print 1958), 152 (footnote 1).

⁶⁰ Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, *Jesaja 45,8-49,13* (vol. 2 of *Deuterojesaja*; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 2003), 283.

⁶¹ Werlitz, *Redaktion*, 331.

⁶² Cf. Kratz, *Kyros*, 118 and 137; Henk Leene, *De vroegere en de nieuwe dingen bij Deuterojesaja* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgewers, 1987), 215.

⁶³ See also the brief account in Jürgen Werlitz, “Vom Gottesknecht der Lieder zum Gottesknecht des Buches. Oder: warum die Vorstellung von Deuterojesaja in die Krise gekommen ist...” *BK* 61 (2006): 208-211.

determine the identity of the Ebed lie in the fact that we have up to now formed an incorrect picture of "the prophet" Deutero-Isaiah. If he did indeed consist of a group..., one could carry out an "autobiographical" interpretation of the *Ebed*, which one could then bring in line with the texts without any great difficulties.⁶⁴

In conclusion, the positive indications of a collective authorship will be mentioned, albeit sketchily. From a historical point of view there can be no doubt that the deportations and destructions of Judah and Jerusalem by the Neo-Babylonians gave rise to exilic fasting- and lamentation ceremonies which in turn found their literary expression in several collective lamentations in the Book of Psalms/Psalter.⁶⁵ Similarly, the Book of Lamentations forms a part of this milieu in Jerusalem of exilic and early post-exilic lamentation literature of the people.⁶⁶

A further area of creative literary production during the decades between 597 and 515 was at the time of the Babylonian exile and the exchange of letters which is mentioned in Jer 29 and Ezek 33, pertaining to the fact that a lively line of correspondence was upheld between Jerusalem and Babel. It is therefore quite feasible that, analogous to the poets back home, those living in exile set about to outline a production of hope and deliverance which only reached its completion and performance after their return around 520 B.C.E..⁶⁷ The conspicuously close connections between the Book of Lamentations and Isa 40-52, the first composition that was completed on home soil in Jerusalem, serve as proof for the above-mentioned contacts. It is therefore no coincidence that the refrain "there is none to comfort" in Lamentations 1:2, 9, 16, 17, 21 found its positive echo in the opening verse of Isa 40:1: "Comfort, O comfort my people." The lament about the harsh punishment for the iniquities of Jerusalem in Lam 1:5, 8, 14, 22 (cf. Lam 2:14; 4:22) similarly finds its counterpart in the definite promise of the redemption of guilt: "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from YHWH's hand double for all her sins" (Isa 40:2 – NRSV). However, it is not only the first verse of Isa 40-52 which connects with the Book of Lamentations, but also the penultimate verse in Isa 52:11: "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of YHWH" (NRSV), which can be found virtually verbatim in Lam 4:15: "'Away! Unclean!' people

⁶⁴ Michel, *Deuterocesaja*, 527.

⁶⁵ Steck, *Israel und Zion*, 195. Cf. Pss. 78; 79; 106; in contrast still "nationalistically" self-assured Pss. 74; 80; 83; 44:18f.

⁶⁶ Johan Renkema, *Lamentations* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998); Ulrich Berges, *Klagelieder* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2002).

⁶⁷ Steck, *Israel und Zion*, 196: "did the Deutero-Isaiah tradents of this phase, during a change-over from Babel to Jerusalem/Judah, come into special contact with these circles?"

shouted at them; 'Away! Away! Do not touch!'" (NRSV).⁶⁸ The combination of "depart, do not touch" appears, apart from these two quoted verses, only once more in the entire OT, namely in Num 16:26 where the destruction of Korah, the rebellious Levite (!) against the pre-eminence of the prophetic Moses and the priestly Aaron is related. This correspondence reinforces the view that the addressees concerned and for whom the command in Isa 52:11 to return home is intended are cultic officials. The present demand of separation from Babylon, the place of idolatry, is being parallelised with the former dissociation from the sinful Levites.

The temple-singer hypothesis is furthermore supported by the considerable close connections of Isa 40-55 and Pss 96 and 98, which sing the praises of the universal Kingdom of YHWH. The dependence of Isa 40-55 on these traditions – and not the reverse – is underlined by the fact that these affinities do not refer to the Ebed Jacob/Israel with the renewed commitment towards the chosen ones, but solely to the hymnic responsories:

It is difficult to imagine that a psalmist who was inspired by Deutero-Isaiah proceeded so selectively. The opposite is more likely: the composers of Isa 40-55 borrowed from an existent hymnic tradition for certain pivotal points of their dramatic composition, or even from these very songs passed on to us in Pss 98 and 96.⁶⁹

According to this, the authors of Isa 40-55 have fallen back on the tradition of the accession of YHWH to the throne, thereby structuring their own composition with the rejoicing declaration of his renewed, i.e. regained Kingdom (Isa 42:10-12; 44:23; 48:20-21; 49:13; 52:9-10; 54:1-3).

The affinities of Isa 40-55 are not, however, merely restricted to the Book of Lamentations and a few Psalms, but rather encompass all important traditions of the Hebrew Bible like the patriarchal narratives (Abraham and

⁶⁸ See Patricia T. Willey, *Remember the Former Things. The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997), 125-127 & 159-160.

⁶⁹ Henk Leene, "History and Eschatology in Deutero-Isaiah," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah. FS W.A.M. Beuken* (eds. Jacques van Ruiten & Marc Vervenne, Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 221-249 (p. 246); already Claus Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja. Kapitel 40-66* (5th ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 11; Otto Kaiser, *Der königliche Knecht. Eine traditionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Studie über die Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder bei Deuterjesaja* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 135; Otto Kaiser, *Die prophetischen Werke* (vol. 2 of *Grundriß der Einleitung in die kanonischen und deuterokanonischen Schriften des Alten Testaments*; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1994), 49: "From a linguistic and a form-historical point of view the texts of the Deutero-Isaiah collection are widely known to be under obligation towards the traditions of the temple-singers of Jerusalem."

Sarah; Jacob), the Exodus narratives as well as several elements of the Isaianic Jerusalem tradition ("the Holy One of Israel"). Over and above this there are influences from Jeremiah (especially the so-called Jeremianic confessions; but also amongst others Jer 31:35 in Isa 51:15) and Ezekiel (cf. profanation of the divine name in Isa 48:11 and Ezek 20:9, 14, 22).⁷⁰ Furthermore, deuteronomistic elements,⁷¹ religious traditions in Jerusalem with central motifs such as Zion being the cosmic centre for Israel and the nations, as well as a "democratised" Davidic royal concept (Isa 55:3-5) cannot be denied. The indissoluble crossing-over of creation and history, both of which are designed and directed by YHWH in absolute sovereignty, is in accordance with the Priestly tradition of the Pentateuch. The combination and fusion of all these traditions of the OT cannot be solely explained by stating that chapters 40-55 are a "latecomer in Israel's prophecy;"⁷² it is rather evidence of the assumption that these chapters were not written by *one* prophetic author or intellectual,⁷³ but by a group that had a high level of literary training and had access to the testimonials that had been recorded of the religious tradition of Israel.

H THE DISCURSIVE CONTINUATION OF THE TRADITION AROUND ISAIAH BEN AMOZ AS ISAIAH'S BOOK

The formation of the Pentateuch and the corpus propheticum in post-exilic Jerusalem must have taken place in discourses in which each position considered the other:

Side by side but not independent of each other, continuous discourses functioning along scholarly lines existed as means of interpreting authoritative words that were attributed to the particular founder of that discourse. Moses was considered to be the discourse founder of the priestly scholars of scripture; post-exilic continuous ("Fortschreibung") interpretations of his words originating from pre-exilic and exilic times in Deuteronomy and in the priestly writings were put into his mouth and thereby authorised. Similarly, words of the prophetic discourse founders of an Isaiah, a Jeremiah or an Ezekiel were being interpreted in a continuous manner in the circles of the prophetic tradents, who, putting them into the mouths of these

⁷⁰ Dieter Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterocesaja. Berührungen in der Heilserwartung der beiden großen Exilspropheten* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971).

⁷¹ Antje Labahn, *Wort Gottes und Schuld Israels. Untersuchungen zu Motiven deuteronomistischer Theologie im Deuterocesajabuch mit einem Ausblick auf das Verhältnis von Jes 40-55 zum Deuteronomismus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999).

⁷² Cf. Hermisson, *Deuterocesaja*, 687; Rikki E. Watts, "Echoes from the Past. Israel's Ancient Traditions and the Destiny of the Nations in Isaiah 40-55," *JSOT* 28 (2004): 481-508.

⁷³ Odil H. Steck, "Deuterocesaja als theologischer Denker," in *Wahrnehmungen Gottes im Alten Testament. Gesammelte Studien* (ed. Odil H. Steck, München: Kaiser, 1982), 204-220.

discourse founders, imbued them with their legitimacy by means of the prophetic authority in competition with Moses, thereby functioning as revelation mediators of divine words.⁷⁴

The model of the discourse founder is particularly apt in the case of Isaiah ben Amoz, as the literary drama of the post-exilic new beginning anchors itself in him and his visionary power.⁷⁵ The notion that this composition only came about in the decades after the reconstruction and inauguration of the temple (515 B.C.E.)⁷⁶ appears improbable. In comparison, the Babylonian colouring and the clash with the local divinities, especially with the inner-Babylonian religious conflict and the pre-eminence of Marduk or the lunar deity Sin, would be difficult to explain after the return from Mesopotamia had already occurred.⁷⁷

One should rather bear in mind that the original tradition around Isaiah ben Amoz which is now at hand in the first main section of the book – albeit quite considerably expanded – had been left aside around 590 B.C.E. The final entry is the announcement to the royal family that they would be exiled (Isa 39), but no mention is as yet made of the deportation of the entire nation which is an indication that the eviction of 587 B.C.E. into exile had not yet taken place.⁷⁸ After returning from the Babylonian exile the prophetic authors linked their composition to the tradition of Isaiah in Jerusalem in order to place themselves and their drama of salvation under his authority. Isaiah ben Amoz would, however, also have been previously known to them. That their intention from the beginning was the continuation of the words of the great prophet of Jerusalem cannot be corroborated. What can be established is that the cross-connections between the three main parts (1-39; 40-55; 56-66) become increasingly dense in post-exilic times after the connection between 40-55 and

⁷⁴ Otto, *Welcher Bund*, 161.

⁷⁵ Concerning the hypothesis that Isa 40-55 originally formed part of the Book of Jeremiah, cf. Erich. Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1-39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch. Untersuchungen zur literarischen Verbindung von Prophetenbüchern in babylonischer und persischer Zeit* (Freiburg (Schweiz): Universitätsverlag, 1997).

⁷⁶ According to Leene, *Auf der Suche*, 818.

⁷⁷ More detailed in Matthias Albani, *Der eine Gott und die himmlischen Heerscharen. Zur Begründung des Monotheismus bei Deuterjesaja im Horizont der Astralisierung des Gottesverständnisses im Alten Orient* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 2000); Matthias Albani, "Deuterjesajas Monotheismus und der babylonische Religionskonflikt unter Nabonid," in *Der eine Gott und die Götter. Polytheismus und Monotheismus im antiken Israel* (eds. Manfred Oeming & Konrad Schmid; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2003), 171-201.

⁷⁸ Cf. Rüdiger Feuerstein, "Weshalb gibt es 'Deuterjesaja'?" in *Ich bewirke das Heil und erschaffe das Unheil (Jes 45,7). Studien zur Botschaft der Propheten, FS L. Ruppert* (eds. Friedrich Diederich & Bernd Willmes, Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1998), 93-134, (p. 132).

1-39* had been carried out. The hypothesis of an exilic Anonymous should not only be dismissed but to refer to Isa 40-55 as the "book of Deutero-Isaiah" should also be avoided in future. By connecting these chapters to the tradition of Isaiah in Jerusalem the foundation was laid down for one of the longest continuous updating ("Fortschreibung") of prophetic literature during the Second Temple period. The more the size and complexity of the Book of Isaiah increased, the more indispensable it became that it should be Isaiah's book, stand under his authority, accommodate his vision of a suffering Servant of God and a humbled Lady Zion in service to the nations.⁷⁹

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⁷⁹ See Ulrich Berges, *Cesaja. Der Prophet und das Buch* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2010).

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