

**PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITÀ GREGORIANA
FACOLTÀ DI TEOLOGIA**

**A PROPHETIC RESPONSE
TO UNFULFILLED PROPHECY
A Theological-Exegetical Study of Isaiah 56-66**

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**Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Theology
at the Pontifical Gregorian University
for the Degree of Doctorate
in Theology**

Roma 2007

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|--|
| AB | The Anchor Bible |
| ABD | <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D.N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992 (CD-Rom) |
| ABRL | Anchor Bible Reference Library |
| AnBib | Analecta Biblica |
| AOAT | Alter Orient und Altes Testament |
| ASTI | <i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i> |
| BASOR | <i>Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research</i> |
| BBB | Bonner biblische Beiträge |
| B.C.E. | Before Common Era |
| BDB | BROWN, F. - DRIVER, S.R. - BRIGGS, B., <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Oxford, 1951, re-issued with small corrections from the first edition, Oxford 1906) |
| BeO | <i>Biblia et Oriente</i> |
| BETL | Biblioteca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium |
| BHS | <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983 |
| Bib | <i>Biblica</i> |
| BibOr | Bibliotheca Orientalis |
| BN | <i>Biblische Notizen</i> |
| BTB | <i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i> |
| BTod | <i>The Bible Today</i> |
| BZ | <i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i> |
| BZAW | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| CB OTS | Coniectana Biblica Old Testament Series |
| CBQ | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> |
| cf. | <i>confer</i> , compare |
| ch., chs. | chapter, chapters |
| DBS | <i>Dictionnaire de la Bible</i> |
| DDD | <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Second Edition. Leiden, 1999 |
| ed. | Editor/Editors |
| <i>et al.</i> | <i>et aliis</i> |
| ETL | <i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i> |
| FAT | Forschungen zum Alten Testament |
| fem. | feminine |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| FRLANT | Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments |
| Fs. | Festschrift |
| GKC | <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Edited by E. Kautsch. Translated A.E. Cowley. Second Edition. Oxford, 1910</i> |
| HALOT | Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J.J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Translated and edited under the supervision of M.E.J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden, 1994-2000 (CD-Rom)</i> |
| HAR | <i>Hebrew Annual Review</i> |
| HKAT | Handkommentar zum Alten Testament |
| HBS | Herders Biblische Studien |
| HSM | Harvard Semitic Monographs |
| HUCA | <i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i> |
| IB | <i>Interpreter's Bible. Edited by G.A. Buttrick et al. 12 vols. New York, 1951-1957</i> |
| ICC | International Critical Commentary |
| Id. | Idem |
| IDB | <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by G.A. Buttrick. 4 vols. Nashville, 1962</i> |
| IEJ | <i>Israel Exploration Journal</i> |
| Int | <i>Interpretation</i> |
| imptv. | imperative |
| inv. abs. | infinite absolute |
| JAOS | <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> |
| JBL | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> |
| JBR | <i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i> |
| JCS | <i>Journal Cuneiform Studies</i> |
| J-M | JOÜON, P. - MURAOKA, T., <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> (SB 14 I/II; Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, ³ 2000) |
| JQR | <i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i> |
| JSOT | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> |
| JSOTSup | Supplements to Journal for the Study of the Old Testament |
| JSS | <i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i> |
| JTS | <i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> |
| KuD | <i>Kerygma und Dogma</i> |
| LXX | Septuagint |
| masc. | masculine |
| mss. | manuscripts |
| MT | The Masoretic Text |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| NCB | New Century Bible |
| <i>NIB</i> | <i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i> . Edited by Leander E. Keck <i>et al.</i> 12 vols. Nashville, 1994-2004. |
| NICOT | New International Commentary on the Old Testament |
| NT | New Testament |
| OBO | Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis |
| OBT | Overtures to Biblical Theology |
| OS | Oudtestamentische Studiën |
| OT | Old Testament |
| <i>OTE</i> | <i>Old Testament Essays</i> |
| OTG | Old Testament Guides |
| OTL | Old Testament Library series |
| OTM | Old Testament Message |
| part. | participle |
| pass. | passive |
| pers. | person |
| pl. | plural |
| <i>RB</i> | <i>Revue Biblique</i> |
| <i>RHphR</i> | <i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i> |
| <i>RSR</i> | <i>Recherches de science religieuse</i> |
| SB | Subsidia Biblica |
| SBB | Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge |
| SBL | Studies in Biblical Literature |
| SBLMS | Society of Biblical Literature Monographs Series |
| SBLSP | Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers |
| SBLSS | Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies |
| sing. | singular |
| <i>SJOT</i> | <i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i> |
| <i>ST</i> | <i>Studia Theologica</i> |
| STDJ | Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah |
| TB | Theologische Bücherei |
| <i>TDNT</i> | <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> |
| <i>TDOT</i> | <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> |
| Tg | Targum |
| <i>TLZ</i> | <i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i> |
| TOTC | Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries |
| <i>TWOT</i> | <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by R.L. Harris - G.L. Archer - B.K. Waltke. 2 vols. Chicago, 1980. |
| <i>TynB</i> | <i>Tyndale Bulletin</i> |
| <i>TZ</i> | <i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i> |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| <i>UF</i> | <i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i> |
| v., vv. | verse, verses |
| vol., vols. | volume, volumes |
| <i>VT</i> | <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> |
| VTSup | Supplements to Vetus Testamentum |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| WMNAT | Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament |
| W-O'C | WALTKE, B.K. - O'CONNOR, M., <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) |
| <i>WTJ</i> | <i>Westminster Theological Journal</i> |
| <i>WZ</i> | <i>Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift</i> |
| <i>ZAW</i> | <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> |

INTRODUCTION

There are at least three events that have directed my reflection towards the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. First, a lecture on Isa 56-66 delivered by Professor Joseph Blenkinsopp, Visiting Professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in 1998, introduced me to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. It is true that during the lecture, Professor Blenkinsopp mentioned this problem merely in passing. His lecture was not specifically about the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Even after the lecture, that topic remains on my mind. To be sure, this topic has given rise to my curiosity, particularly because of its unusual and provocative nature.

The second event was a political and social uprising that exploded in Indonesia also in 1998. The economic debacle that worsened the country's situation finally also triggered a greater instability which was characterized not only by demonstrations as a means of the people to protest, but also by social upheavals that even created a greater chaos, particularly in some big cities. The innocent victims of violence and racism unavoidably fell down everywhere at that time. In such a situation, I remembered reading a religious article that invited the Christians to reflect on their lives in front of such a miserable situation through a quotation from Third Isaiah that later became important in the course of my work, that is, Isa 59,1-2.

Yes, the message is apparent: when disaster abruptly comes upon you, then think for a moment! Perhaps, your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he does not hear! It indeed sounds religiously good and pious! But when I positioned myself in the place of some of my friends who unfortunately became the victims, either directly or indirectly, this invitation to reflect on my life made little sense.

It is true that there is no direct point of contact between my experience and the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, at least on the surface. Yet it makes me aware that using a biblical passage to enlighten a particular situation is not always an easy undertaking. From a particular perspective, in this case that of the victim, using Isa 59,1-2 to explain the miserable situation is unacceptable. Thus, one's perspective does matter a lot in reading the biblical texts.

The third event happened in November 2003, when I was about to start this project. In one of the Indonesian big cities, there appeared a Protestant pastor who claimed to possess a particular personal revelation and, accordingly, called himself the Second Apostle Paul. He started to prophesy that the end of the world would come on 10 November 2003; and for that reason he established a doomsday sect that he called *Pondok Nabi* ("The Cottage of the Prophet") as a preparation to welcome that

great day. He succeeded in gathering around 300 followers who readily left their normal life and joined the sect. Then, the predicted day came and nothing happened! This prophet finally ended his career in prison. There was no further information about his congregation. To be sure, this was not a new case because, from time to time, every generation has witnessed the emergence of such "prophets" who declare the imminent destruction of the world and dawn of a new age. "The millennialists you will have with you always," Jesus might well have said.¹ The fact that this happened also in a country in which Christianity is only a small flock makes me aware that the same thing could also happen again anywhere and anytime. This would mean that the common people together with their expectations nurtured by the prophecies of such prophets will again become the unnecessary victims. This enhances the necessity to reflect seriously the problem of unfulfilled prophecy.

These three personal experiences, though banal as they might be, have actually shaped my idea about the relevance and the complexities of the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Needless to say, in the strict or broad sense, this problem really exists, and, therefore, needs to be appropriately handled. For some considerable time, I kept on reflecting on it. And finally, when I was sent to pursue the doctoral degree in Theology, this topic came up as the topic of my dissertation.

The Topic and Its Scope and Limits

The title of this thesis will actually tell us the process and the limits of this present work. According to popular opinion, a prophet is a person who has particular capacity given by God to predict the future event. It is well known, however, that this opinion is only partially true. The prophets whom we know from the Scriptures are more than just predicting the future. Indeed, some scholars, particularly those who are exceedingly influenced by rationalism, even negate the possibility that the biblical prophets truly predict the future. Nevertheless, it could not be denied that predicting the future is an important and also intriguing part of the proclamation of the biblical prophets. On the one hand, a prophecy becomes important because it is delivered by a person who claims to be commanded by the divine authority. On the other hand, it is also dangerous because the act of predicting the future is always a risky business.

The problem of unfulfilled prophecy is indeed an immense problem to cope with; but it is also a promising topic to explore. It could be examined from various perspectives. For example, from non-biblical perspective, especially sociology and psychology, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy has become a point of hot

¹ Quoted from J.R. STONE, *Expecting Armageddon*, 1.

discussions among scholars in those fields. This is particularly triggered by the publication of Leon Festinger's now-classic, *When Prophecy Fails* (1956), in which he and his colleagues reported their observation on a particular millenarian group by means of the theory of cognitive dissonance. Festinger's theory is indeed stimulating and continues to be a topic of debate until the present moment.

From the perspective of biblical scholarship, as far as we know, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy seems not to be considered as an important topic that deserves more attention from biblical scholars. Only few publications on that topic are available to us. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that this problem is not recognized by scholars. Nevertheless, very rarely does this topic become the focus of scholarly attention.

It is therefore obvious that "the problem of unfulfilled prophecy" which we have chosen as the title of this thesis is too broad to be adequately explored in this limited work. A further precision is inevitably needed. This work does not pretend to cover every element within the grand theme "unfulfilled prophecy." As a result, some delimitation still has to be made. In this case, the first part of the title of this thesis, "a prophetic response," serves as the first delimitation. This assertion brings two implications. *First*, it shows that what we are going to do in this work is to pursue the *response* to unfulfilled prophecy. Accordingly, we have no intention to prove whether the unfulfilled prophecies really exist in the Bible or not. We just follow the result of other scholars' investigations that, in the Bible, some particular prophecies have indeed failed to materialize.

Indeed, from another point of view, attempts to prove either the existence or the non-existence of unfulfilled prophecy in the Bible will not help much. On the one hand, if one succeeds to demonstrate the presence of unfulfilled prophecy, a further question as to how to deal with them is waiting for him. On the other hand, if one denies the presence of unfulfilled prophecy, then this enterprise could actually be considered as already an effort to respond to that problem. Thus, to provide evidence of the non-existence of unfulfilled prophecy would belong to the strategies in dealing with the problem of prophetic disconfirmation. If it could be proven that there is no unfulfilled prophecy in the Bible, then there would not be *the problem* caused by unfulfilled prophecy too. However, very often than not, the effort to negate the presence of unfulfilled prophecy by means of rationalization or interpretation only belongs to a small segment in the society, usually, scholars or those who have particular ability to make such intellectual reflection. The common people, who form the larger group in the society, remain unaffected by their scientific explanation undertaken to deny the possibility of unfulfilled prophecy. For them, with their

popular conceptions about the prophet and prophecy, unfulfilled prophecy remains a problem to be tackled. Therefore, rather than struggling to demonstrate the (non-) existence of unfulfilled prophecy, we prefer to pursue the response to this problem. We believe that this would be more useful for a larger group of people.

Second, this delimitation also directs our orientation. The response we are trying to pursue is a *prophetic* response. It means that we are looking for the response from a very particular perspective, that is, the prophetic perspective, and not from the other perspectives. In order to be precise, it should be clear from the outset that the adjective “prophetic” here refers to the biblical prophets, and not to other non-biblical prophets. Thus, the response we are pursuing is the response that derives from biblical tradition.

However, since we also realize that the biblical prophetic tradition consists of the material that is still so vast that it is almost impossible within the scope of this work to take them as the object of this study, then a further delimitation is still needed. In this case, the sub-title of this thesis “A Theological-Exegetical Study of Isaiah 56-66” then serves to lead us into a more specific orientation. From among prophetic writings available in the Bible, we shall concentrate our attention only on one particular “book,” that is, Chapters 56-66 of the Book of Isaiah, a section that is commonly designated as Third Isaiah. Put in an interrogative manner, the formulation of the topic of this work is: “How did Third Isaiah respond to the failure of the prophecy of his predecessor.” The choice of the object of our study, of course, assumes particular ideas with regard to the Third Isaiah. This will be worked out in chapter 1 of this work.

Thus, after delimiting the object of this present work, we could now briefly formulate the theme treated in this thesis. This thesis tries to pursue the prophetic response to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy by means of examining closely the passages of Third Isaiah. Practically, these are the points that will be extensively developed in the following chapters.

The Method of Research

As the sub-title also indicates, this project is a *theological-exegetical* study. The scope of this well-known statement needs to be further clarified. First, this work is an *exegetical* work. In accordance with the meaning of the Greek word *exēgēsis*, means “to bring out,” biblical exegesis seeks to explain the meaning of a particular biblical text. Since the biblical texts were always composed under the determination of their surroundings and therefore bear the marks of their contexts, then proper attempts to

bring out their meaning must unavoidably involve a good knowledge of their historical contexts. Therefore, we shall start by examining the text in its present form by means of philological and grammatical analysis of the Hebrew texts in order to discover the meaning of the written text. At this point, an inter-textual and comparative analysis proves to be of great help to enlighten the content of any particular text, and also to detect the pattern employed by the author of Third Isaiah. Examinations of the surrounding of the texts will also help to elucidate the meaning of the text. In this case, the information about the historical context of the texts that is now abundantly available to us would be a great help for our undertaking.

In doing exegesis, it is true that there is the danger of *eisegesis* ("to bring in," here means "reading into the text something that is not there"), as we are often reminded of, that will create biases in our reading. In this case, we believe that we should not exaggerate this dichotomy. In fact, our reading of the text is always a reading from somewhere; it is a situated reading, contextualized by many specific and general factors. There is no such thing as a view from nowhere. The interpreter has to be somewhere, so the views he takes are always from somewhere and not from nowhere.² It means that the interpreter comes to the texts already with all his presuppositions, interests and tendencies which, in turn, will influence his sensitivity and his way of reading the texts.³ Furthermore, it could be said that it is the creative mind of the interpreters that has often produced new unprecedented insights from biblical texts. This would mean that a pure objective reading of the text can never be achieved; the subjectivity of the interpreter will always play its role. Thus, most scholars today recognize their biases in interpretation and are willing to admit them, though they attempt to maintain as objective a stance as they can in their work of interpretation.⁴

After determining the meaning of the texts by means of exegesis, then the second point of the sub-title of this thesis will further enlighten us: The result of our exegetical task will be used in the *theological* level of our reading. This statement means that the result of our textual investigation will be read in their religious dimension. In contrast, it will not be used as, for example, an historical source, by which a tentative history of Israel or a history of Israelite religion could be reconstructed.⁵ The question of authorship or the history of composition of Isa 56-66

² Cf. R.P. CARROLL, "Exile! What Exile?," 66.

³ Cf. R. MORGAN – J. BARTON, *Biblical Interpretation*, 270-271.

⁴ Cf. R.D. WITHERUP, *Scripture*, 105.

⁵ The relationship between 'biblical theology' and 'The History of Religion' has indeed been a topic of hot discussions among scholars up to the present moment. See, among other, a summary of the present situation of the topic presented by L.G. PERDUE, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, 25-75. On biblical theology, PERDUE suggested that "(biblical theology)

are also beyond our consideration. Neither will it be read as literary artifact that could be admired from an aesthetic point of view. Instead of using the text as a “window” into the biblical world, we prefer to understand the text as a “mirror,” through which we can learn for our present world. It is in this sense that our undertaking is meant as a theological study.

The above considerations then determine the shape of this present work. Our reading of Third Isaiah will be directed by a particular perspective, namely, in search of the response(s) to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Thus, we are not intending to write a commentary on Third Isaiah. Consequently, not each and every passage will be closely analyzed. We shall only present the examination of the selected passages that are of great relevance and importance for our topic, namely, as long as they form the response to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. It does not necessarily mean that this selection of material is dictated by pre-conceptions that precede our analysis. On the contrary, we began with a thorough reading - though with a particular interest - of the whole text of Third Isaiah without exception. Only after a close reading are we then able to determine that for our particular purpose, a specific text is more important than the other and consequently, it needs to be presented in this written work.

In a certain sense, the method employed in this work could also be called a diachronic and, at the same time, a synchronic approach. It is diachronic because it takes into account the historical matters as long as they help us to determine the meaning of the texts. But it is also synchronic because the history of the text is not our point of interest and also because the interaction between the text and the reader is taken into consideration. Also in this case, it seems that the distinction between synchronic and diachronic is in some ways misleading. In fact, many scholars utilize a combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches in working with texts. Even scholars who think of themselves as theoretical purists will often utilize insights from “the other side” when they prove illuminating.⁶

The Process of Research

Framed by the *Introduction* and the *General Conclusion*, the result of this research is then formulated in five chapters that constitute the corpus of this work. *Chapter 1* offers our presentation about the complexities of the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. There are some considerations that should be taken into account in dealing with

has to do, at least in part, with revelation, that is, the effort to find a divine voice that exists within the multiple voices of the text that addresses Israel and Judah. L.G. PERDUE, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, 73.

⁶ S.L. MCKENZIE - S.R. HAYNES, *To Each Its Own Meaning*, 7.

“unfulfilled prophecy.” On the one hand, one must be cautious not to judge too easily that a particular prophecy has failed. On the other hand, however, one should not exaggerate the number of the unfulfilled prophecies. Since we are not starting from nothing but rather will make use of scholarly investigations undertaken previously, in this chapter, we also present our choice of the object of this research and the assumptions that stands behind. *Chapter 2* is a bibliographical study. This chapter consists of a presentation of scholarly studies on the Book of Isaiah since 1990. Though there is an increasing tendency to read the Book of Isaiah as a literary unit from the beginning (ch. 1) till the end (ch. 66), it will be clear that the presence of Third Isaiah as an independent unit, at least from literary perspective, still has supporters among the scholars. Compared to the other chapters, chapters 3 and 4, which become the main part of this research, will be somewhat longer. In *Chapter 3*, we shall closely analyse the common answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, namely, that the confirmation is caused by the sinful situation exemplified by Isa 59,1-3. The details that emerge from our analysis, however, demonstrate that assigning the blame to others as in Isa 59,1-3 cannot be accepted as the response to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. The proper and acceptable response must, therefore, be pursued in other places. *Chapter 4* is, then, the consequence of the previous chapter. In order to discover the adequate response(s) of Third Isaiah to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, this Third Isaianic corpus has to be examined thoroughly. Thus, this long chapter presents our thorough theological-exegetical analysis of most passages in Third Isaiah. *Chapter 5* is closely connected to *Chapter 4*. The results of our analysis carried out in the preceding chapter are now formulated in *Chapter 5* in a systematic and synthetic presentation so that the response(s) of Third Isaiah to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy could be made available in a more comprehensive way. In addition, we also present our evaluation of the work of R.P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, which, as far as we know, the only scholarly work that deals with this topic with considerable length and depth.

In addition, a practical note could now be presented. Since in this work we are not discussing the historical problems with regard to the problem of authorship or the history of composition of the book, the designation “the prophet” and/or its third pers. pers. sing. pronoun used throughout this work does not necessarily bring the implication that here we are dealing with a single male individual who was responsible for all of Isa 56-66. This expression is used merely for the sake of convenience in representing the voice of the text of Third Isaiah as we have now.

It is not an exaggeration to say that in our modern world, we could also detect the presence of the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. In the strict sense, we know that our world is characterized by the increasing appearance of "modern prophets" who unceasingly announce their prophecies. They attract many people so that they voluntarily go after them leaving behind their established lives. Unfortunately, more often than not, they become highly disappointed because their prophets' prophecies fail to materialize. To be sure, it is not our intention to defend or justify such groups, but we believe that one of the reasons why there happens a sort of exodus of the people who leave the mainstream religions to follow these modern prophets is the failure of their expectation or, perhaps better, the failure to explain the failure of their expectations. In our opinion, this is actually the problem of unfulfilled prophecy in the broadest sense of the term. Therefore, we believe that our project could have a particular importance for people in our modern culture.

We indeed realize that the scholarly works on Third Isaiah, such as commentaries, monographs and articles are immensely abundant. The problem of unfulfilled prophecy is also not something completely new, especially in the field of psychology or sociology of religion. Nevertheless, to make a combination between those two topics, namely, Third Isaiah and the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, is rather unusual and, seemingly, without precedent. Therefore, we could still believe that our research, which attempts to analyse Third Isaiah from the perspective of searching the response(s) to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, could still be claimed as the novelty of this project. Hopefully, this work would offer some contribution both in the theoretical and practical level.

CHAPTER I

PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main characteristics of human beings is their desire and, at the same time, their ability to survive. Once they are alive, at all costs they want to stay alive as long as possible. They would have loved to live forever, were it possible. Various legends, widespread now throughout our world, that recount the quest for perpetual life, from the classic *Gilgamesh Epic* up to the best-seller novels in our recent time, *Harry Potter* of J.K. Rowling, would be excellent attestations of this most ambitious desire of human beings. The only thing that matters for all men is life. This is the basis for everything.

In the words of the Darwinian theory, then it could be said that struggle for life has become one of triggering factors of human activities. Ironically, however, this hard effort to survive has to be carried out in the face of the unknown future. And even, to continue living means to enter into an unknown future from one moment to the next one. It is dark and unknown since nobody knows what will happen in the future. Who knows if I would be able to finish this work? Who knows if tomorrow would... etc. Even no one ever knows his immediate tomorrow. Indeed, tomorrow never comes. Relationship between “we” and “tomorrow” is similar to Zeno’s story of Achilles and the tortoise. Once we arrive at tomorrow’s today, it will have escaped into a new today. The tomorrow or the future is always a step ahead of us.

It is true, however, that *to some extent*, due to our intellectual faculty, we are able to predict the future. Thanks to the scientific development, we can make projects for the future. Thus, for example, EIRIK NEWTH, a Norwegian author, was able to write an interesting book on the remote future of our world based on increasingly developed science.¹ Indeed, in a certain sense, what we are doing now may be seen as an anticipation of the future. But our prediction will only touch the general future, as soon as we try to approach the exactness, then, more often than not, we will miss the target. We will never be able to fully grasp the future, not even our own future. The future is always conjectural and will remain a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.

¹ About his book, the author admitted that «Questo libro non parla di come sarà il futuro, perché questo non lo può sapere nessuno, ma di come lo immaginano gli scienziati, i pensatori e gli scrittori». The version in my disposal is the Italian tradition, *Breve storia del futuro*, 11.

The very fact that life is important and the future is uncertain would most likely create great anxiety and uneasiness for human beings. Therefore, discovering the future, then, becomes an essential factor in human enterprise. This situation would often force people to accept help from others who claim to possess extraordinary powers. Thus it is not surprising that from time to time, human beings have tried to discover the future employing every means available to them.

In the ancient world, endeavours to reveal the future were carried out by consulting something beyond human perception. This activity, which is one of the most ancient and mysterious human activities, can be named as the art of divination. Very often divination is closely connected with magic and/or cult. In this category we have, for example, necromancy, astrology, and especially, oracle.² In a more developed world like ours, however, this act of predicting the future could be done by using our human intellectual faculty. The development of science is a good help to calculate the future. Thus, we have for example, the weather forecast, prediction of population growth, fluctuation of the stock-exchange, etc. But, because of unceasing anxiety and the curiosity of the human soul, the ancient art of divination is still playing its important role in our modern era, often in more sophisticated ways.

To make it correspond with our main topic we would like to limit the discussion of the ancient art of divination to only one subject, namely *oracle*³ or prediction, leaving aside other means to disclose the future. This is, we would say, the connecting link between human *life* and its *future*. Being unable to discover the future by himself man relies upon oracle or prediction to make his life secure. Thus our human civilization has deposited as its richness, for example, the famous oracle of Delphi, *Sybilline Oracle*, Cassandra of Troy, *Jangka Jayabaya*,⁴ St. Malachy,⁵

² A brief description about this topic could be found for example in J.L. SICRE, *Profetismo in Israele*, 15-59.; J.K. KUERMELIN-MCLEAN - J.A. SCURLOCK, "Magic," *ABD* [CD-ROM]; F.H. CRYER, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*. Cf. also the now-classic study of W.O.E. OESTERLEY, *Immortality and the Unseen World*.

³ Etymologically the English word *oracle* came from Old French, which in turn, came from Latin *orare*, which means *to speak, to pray*. *Oracle* has something to do with divination or consulting a divine being. The majority of main English dictionaries indicate that *oracle* may mean *the person* to whom one consults, *the place* or the shrine where the response is give, and *the response* or the statement itself, which often takes the form of a prediction.

⁴ *Jangka Jayabaya* is an Indonesian collection of prophecies. Jayabaya was born in 1135 in the kingdom of Kediri, East Java. He was famous as a prophet-king. During his reign, he ordered Sedah and Panuluh, *Mpu* (teachers) and writers as well in the kingdom, to write his stories. He lived only for 24 years but left us 'Jangka Jayabaya,' a book of Jayabaya's prophecy. The most famous prophecies are about the colonization of Indonesia and the Second World War. These prophecies are often considered as being fulfilled. MARIO RUSTAN, "Jayabaya" in *Indonesian Myth*, [accessed on 10.11.2006] <http://www.st.rim.or.jp/~cycle/MYjayabaE.HTML>.

Nostradamus,⁶ to mention some ancient names, up to the recent period such as William Miller, Jim Jones, David Koresh, and many others. All of these names are closely connected with the prediction of the future. In various manners they talked about forthcoming events, often in an ambiguous or vague way.

Future prophecy of well-being - prophecy of doom could be safely excluded - will inevitably bring a certain *expectation* for those to whom it is delivered. Needless to say that one who receives a prophecy or prediction will eagerly expect its fulfillment. And herein lies the danger of prophecy! When a prophecy or prediction fails, then, both sides, the giver and the receiver, are jeopardized. The former could lose their reliability as a prophecy-giver, while for the latter, their trust (or faith) in the prophecy-giver could disappear because of disappointment.

The level of disappointment caused by the failure of expectation depends on two variables. *First*, the more important the matter predicted, the more disappointment created by its failure. *Second*, the more authoritative the origin of the prophecy, the more disappointment caused by its disconfirmation. This is the case when the divine being enters the scene as the origin of prophecies. In other words, the failure of prophecy or prediction will be extremely problematical in a religious sphere, in which God as the origin of prophecies is regarded as the Supreme Being who possesses an unshakeable authority; the one who is omnipotent and omniscient. The damage caused by the failure of prophecy will be great. And this is precisely the subject matter of this present work.

1.1 AUTHORITY PROPHECY

In the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, *prophecies* can mainly be found in the Bible. Thus, in brief, prophecy was understood as words delivered by a prophet under the command of God. However, due to the widespread influence of Judeo-Christian tradition in our world, this pair of words, *prophet* and *prophecy*,⁷ have also entered into our vernacular language.

⁵ St. Malachy (Maelmhaedhoc Ó Morgair; 1094 - November 2, 1148) was the appointed Archbishop of Armagh, to whom were attributed several miracles and a vision of the identity of the last 112 popes known as the Prophecy of the Popes.

⁶ Nostradamus is the Latinized form of Michel de Notredame, a French astrologer who born on 14 Desember 1503 in St. Remy de Provence, south of France, and died in 1566. His famous book was *Les Propheties de M. Michel Nostradamus*.

⁷ A detailed analysis of these words from biblical point of view needs not to be repeated here. An excellent treatment can be found for example, in H. KRÄMER, "προφήτης," 781-861. Also L. RAMLOT, «Prophetisme», 811-1222.

On the one hand, these words come to be used in a very broad spectrum of meaning. Not rarely the word *prophet* or *prophecy* is used in our daily profane life, far from a religious sphere. These words can refer to prediction (in any sense), emotional preaching, social activism, leaders of a cult group, and even founders of religion (Moses, Jesus and Muhammad) are regarded as prophets. On the other hand, it seems that their meaning has been reduced to simply predicting the future. It follows, then, that the first meaning that comes to mind when man talks about prophecy is foretelling future-events. *Prophecy* then, is equal to *future prediction*.⁸ Almost all standard dictionaries put this meaning as a part of the definition for *prophecy*, and *prophet* respectively.

In the religious sphere, it is not surprising then, that on hearing that the Bible contains prophetic books, ordinary persons will immediately assume that it contains predictions.⁹ Even, interestingly, JOSÉ LUIS SICRE, a Spanish biblical scholar, opens his book of prophecy in Israel with mentioning the phenomenon of *horoscope*, a common element found in today's newspaper and magazines.¹⁰ This may reflect the usage of the word in our daily life. How close is the idea of prophet and prophecy with future prediction. The word *prophecy* seems to have been limited to merely predicting future events. Then, consequently, a prophet would become like a kind of soothsayer or paranormal.

This reduction of meaning seems to have its justification in the order of the canon of the Christian Bible in comparison with that of the Hebrew Bible. As it has already been known, the Hebrew Bible has a three-fold division known as *Tanak*, the acronym of *Torah*, *Nebiim* (the Prophets) and *Ketubim* (the Writings). This division could be regarded as having a concentric structure in which Torah takes the central position, then come the Prophets and the Writings in the outer circle. This structure also shows the grade of importance of each part in the Jewish tradition. The most important part is, of course, the Torah that is considered as the divine revelation to Moses, the proto-prophet in the Jewish tradition. The prophetic books are the commentaries on the Torah that serve to help the reader to apply its teaching by providing examples of righteous and unrighteous conduct (especially in the historical books) and precepts and warnings (especially in the "latter prophets").¹¹ Thus the prophets' function is to remind the people of the Law of Moses by means of

⁸ This meaning is also adopted by a professional psychic, Sylvia Browne as the sub-title of her book indicates. See S. BROWNE, *Prophecy. What the Future Holds for You*.

⁹ J. BARTON, *Oracles of God*, 14.

¹⁰ J.L. SICRE, *Profetismo*, 15.

¹¹ J. BARTON, *Oracles of God*, 16.

actualizing it in the course of Israel's history.¹² They serve on behalf of Mosaic Law. Seen from this point of view, the prophets are more ethical teachers rather than future predictors. It must also be noted that, in the Hebrew Bible, the book of Daniel, which is very often interpreted as alluding to the future, belongs to the third part, namely, the Writings, and not the second, the Prophets.

The matter is different if we now turn to the order of the Christian Bible, which actually comes from the Greek Bible through the Latin Bible. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the books of the prophets come at the end of the collection. If we put the Pentateuch as a part of the historical books, as the story about the origin of everything, then we can distinguish three sections in the Greek canon too, namely, Historical books (Pentateuch and Historical Books) - Writings - the Prophets. However, instead of forming a concentric structure these sections represent a linear line. It starts with the story of the past, from the moment of creation up to the Babylonian captivity, and ends with the book of the prophets in varying orders, but always including Daniel, which practically points to the future. Then, if the other sections are concerned respectively with the past and future, then the middle section, which sometimes is called "didactic books" due to its nature as a guide to the conduct of life, may appropriately point to the present. Thus the Christian canon, which always includes Baruch and Daniel, has a clear orientation towards a predictive side of prophecy.¹³

The understanding of the New Testament's writers upon prophecy would also support the idea that prophecy indeed points to the future. The fact that the gospels, particularly the gospel of Matthew, frequently noted that Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures implies that the evangelists actually worked within the dialectic of prophecy-fulfillment. As an example, we shall see a text like Peter's sermon after Pentecost in Acts 3,24 (cf. also 3,18; 1Ptr 1,10-12).

"And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days"

This text represents the summary of the NT understanding of the OT prophecy. Two things should here be mentioned: first, the prophets are regarded as having proclaimed a unified message, and second, this message is regarded as one concerning the era of salvation which the NT writers now regard as having dawned.¹⁴

¹² Cf. J.L. SKA, *Introduzione alla lettura del Pentateuco*, 22.

¹³ Cf. J. BARTON, *Oracles of God*, 15.

¹⁴ R.E. CLEMENTS, *Old Testament Prophecy*, 191.

In addition, it is also possible that the futuristic nature of the prophets is influenced by a misunderstanding of the Greek word προφήτης *prophētēs*,¹⁵ which, according to KRÄMER, is marked by solemnity and also by lack of content.¹⁶ It could be noticed that, in most of the western languages, the word for “prophet” derives from this Greek word. In the LXX this word is consistently used to translate the Hebrew נָבִיָּא *nābî’*. The Greek preposition *pro-* can mean *before* in the sense of *local* (= in front of) but also *temporal* (=before). Too much emphasis put on the latter, as the early Christians did, would misjudge prophecy as simply a future prediction.

It is not surprising therefore, that in a world, which was heavily influenced by Christian culture – especially, but not only, in the West, the idea that prophecy means future prediction is so dominant among ordinary people. It is indeed true that the rise of critical study of the Bible in the nineteenth century has also brought impact to this understanding. However, the result of modern study does not very much affect the people’s understanding. Indeed popular opinion cannot be blotted out in a couple of days.

Now we can formulate the problem, which has been put forward previously. In our world, which is profoundly influenced by Judeo-Christian tradition, - though it does not necessarily mean that Judeo-Christian tradition should be regarded as the *only* source of such an understanding of prophecy - prophecy is commonly seen as the word of God given through a prophet with regard to the future. Since prophecy comes from an authoritative God, its failure would not by all means be accepted easily. It is unconceivable that a God-given prophecy would fail. But, when in reality, it does fail, as for example, in the case of the Great Disappointment caused by William Miller’s prophecy,¹⁷ or the founder of the Unification Church, Sun Myung Moon’s failure in establishing God’s Kingdom of Heaven on earth, for which he claimed to have been chosen,¹⁸ what would happen to the community to which the failed prophecy was addressed? What would be the reaction of both sides, the prophet and the people?

¹⁵ T. FENTON, “Israelite Prophecy,” 130.

¹⁶ H. KRÄMER, “προφήτης,” 795.

¹⁷ In 1831, William Miller (1782-1849), an American Baptist preacher, prophesied that the world would end on 3 April 1843. But it failed, and then twice he revised his prophecy. The failure of his last prophecy that the end of the world would be on 22 October 1844, caused what was later called the Great Disappointment by Miller’s followers.

¹⁸ In Easter 1936, Moon states that Jesus appeared to him and told him that he was to complete the mission that Jesus had begun but had not been able to complete due to his premature death. See, for example, S. LEWIS, “The Family Federation,” 71-74.

1.2 UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

1.2.1 A Dangerous Expression?

Truly, to most ordinary people this expression sounds somewhat provocative, subversive, or even dangerous. It would disturb them and make them unhappy. Some people cannot imagine that a God-given prophecy would actually fail. How can a prophecy fail?

It has to be admitted that behind this question lies a logic that runs like this: prophecy comes from God and God's word will never fail, therefore prophecy will never fail. The matter even becomes worse if one considers that an unfulfilled prophecy might indicate that the prophet who delivered it, should be considered as a false prophet (cf. Deut 18,18-22). And ultimately, the authority of the whole Bible and even God himself would also be questioned.

In reality, indeed, the idea of unfulfilled prophecy has become an arsenal for some people for polemic and apologetic reasons. They are unscrupulously utilizing it to attack the authority of the Scripture or even the religion itself. Therefore, it is not surprising that many people have been trying to defend the efficacies of prophecies, employing every possible manner at their disposal. The abundantly available writings and books on this topic would be a good indication of this tendency. To some extent, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy brings also economic impact.

It happens very often, however, that the arguments used to defend the reliability of biblical prophecy are not based on rational-scientific propositions, but rather on a number of dogmatic positions that are not open for critical discussion.¹⁹ In this case, the distinction between *exegesis* (to draw out) and *eisegesis* (to put into) of biblical text is somewhat blurred. Too heavily influencing dogmatic convictions, which consequently generate a number of assumptions, would inevitably create biases in one's opinions as it is commonly said that one will find what one wants to find in a particular text.

In general, the somewhat defensive reactions toward the idea of unfulfilled prophecy can be classified into two categories: First, those who hold that biblical prophecies *are not* future prediction in the strict sense of the word. Thus, if there is *no* prediction then surely there will be *no* failure of prophecy. And second, those who maintain that *all* biblical prophecies are fulfilled. The biblical prophecies never fail.

¹⁹ Cf. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 34. Carroll, perhaps, too much exaggerated his expression so that it triggered a harsh reaction from another side. See, for example, the reaction of DAVID THOMPSON in his article "A Problem of Unfulfilled Prophecy in Ezekiel," 93-106.

The commonest way is, for example, to place the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy in the person of Jesus Christ and in the world to come.²⁰

As it has been said above, it has to be admitted that behind these arguments lies a certain assumption of the Scripture and the method of approaching it. In the later stage of this work we will treat them further. For this moment, it is enough to realize that from the outset we are already warned to be extremely attentive in dealing with the so-called unfulfilled prophecy. The question of the unfulfilled prophecy is indeed a very sensitive question.

1.2.2 Is there Unfulfilled Prophecy in the Scriptures?

Prophecy, and also the prophet respectively, is a complex phenomenon so that it is not easy to determine the unfulfilled prophecy. When Croesus, king of Lydia, consulted the Delphic oracle respecting a projected war, he received for answer,

*Croesus Halyn penetrans magnum,
pervertet opum vim*
(When Croesus passes over the river Halys,
he will overthrow the strength of an empire)

Croesus supposed the oracle meant that he would overthrow the enemy's empire, but it was his own that he himself destroyed.²¹ This legendary story about the oracle of Delphi is just an example of the difficulties in determining the unfulfilled prophecy.

Up to now, it has become a topic of on-going discussion among biblical scholars demonstrated by so many publications, books and articles, which are easily found in many libraries. Indeed, the designation "unfulfilled prophecy" cannot be taken for granted. There are several considerations that have to be taken into account before we are able to identify the presence of the unfulfilled prophecy. In this part,

²⁰ This is the conviction of some Christian denominations such as the evangelical Christian. See for example J. BARTON PAYNE, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, 7-8. The most recent Catholic position can be found in the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, 2001. On the one hand, this document attempts to defend the unity of the NT and OT in the scheme of prophecy-fulfilment, but, on the other hand, it also offers an important note: "Christian faith recognises the fulfilment, in Christ, of the Scriptures and the hopes of Israel, *but it does not understand this fulfilment as a literal one.* ...In reality, in the mystery of Christ crucified and risen, fulfilment is brought about *in a manner unforeseen*" (II.B.5) (Italic mine).

²¹ Cited from C. COBHAM BREWER, *The First Hypertext Edition of the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. The New and Enlarged Edition of 1894.* <http://www.bartleby.com/81/12473.html>, [accessed on 10.11.2004].

regardless of the difficulties that lie ahead, we would try to go through those considerations in order to understand better the meaning, nature and the limit of the unfulfilled prophecy. Firstly we shall have a look in the Bible, particularly in the prophetic writings, in which the prophecy is actually found, then we shall see the prophecy and the person who delivers it, namely the prophet, and finally, the reflection on the interpretation will conclude this part.

1.2.2.1 *Biblical Attestation*

As it has been said in the Introduction, what we mean by unfulfilled prophecy is the prophecy found in the Scriptures and is delivered by biblical prophets. Therefore, it is fair enough to look at the Scriptures in order to examine what it says about prophecies that do not come true.

Before we proceed, it should be clear that in the Old Testament, prophetic words could be found in two parts: first, in the material from Jos - 2 Kgs, which is called *the Former Prophets* in the Jewish tradition; while the second is the collection of prophetic writings which runs from Isaiah up to Malachi, which is, according to Jewish tradition, called *the Latter Prophets*. We here limit our discussion to the latter, that is, the prophetic writings.

If we thoroughly examine the prophetic material in the Old Testament, we will find that those writings, at least in the textual level, never explicitly speak about verification or falsification of particular prophecies. Unlike the New Testament, which has abundant indications given by the narrator that certain events are the fulfillment of the old prophecy, the Old Testament provides no clear attestation that a certain prophecy has been fulfilled or not fulfilled.²² For example, even though we know that according to 2Kgs 4,29 the prophecy of Amos about the fate of Jeroboam the son of Joash (Am 7,11)²³ had not been fulfilled, it is not explicitly said to be so. Indeed, scholars think that Am 7,9 was inserted later in order to correct Amos's prophecy in 7,11. What concerns us here is the fact that this correction was simply placed there without any notice, as if everything were going fine. From what comes to

²² The case is different as regards to the material found in the former prophets, which are commonly accepted as belonging to the Deuteronomistic tradition. There, the prediction-fulfilment pattern is observable. As Zevit has analysed, the books of Joshua and Judges provide about 20 per cent of the examples of Dtr's prediction-fulfilment pattern. The remaining 80 per cent derive from the books of Samuel and Kings. He listed 58 texts, in which the predictions and their fulfilments are given. He also noted that this pattern is also found in the prophetic material in the book of Chronicles. Z. ZEVIT, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 481-486, 503-506.

²³ Though we should be aware that this prophecy did not come directly from the mouth of Amos, but from Amaziah who made a report to the king what Amos had said and done. In his report to Jeroboam, Amaziah was cleverly manipulating Amos' word for his interest.

us from 2Kgs 24,6 concerning the destiny of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, we know that the prophecy of Jeremiah against him (Jer 36,30-31 and also 22,13-19) is proven to be wrong. Also in this case, there is no clear information, neither in 2Kgs nor in Jer. These are examples of a few prophecies that *have* falsification and/or verification in the Bible. The majority of the prophecies, however, is left open and finds their falsification and/or verification in non-biblical sources.

This is the case of the prophecy of Ezekiel against Tyre (Ezek 26,7-14) and Egypt (Ezek 29,8-20). From non-biblical sources it has been discovered that Ezekiel's prophecies of doom against both nations had never been fulfilled. History records the fact that though Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for thirteen years (586-573 BCE), he did not succeed in destroying it. Tyre was the actual loser, but the destruction of the city did not come to pass.²⁴ Similarly, no such desolation has ever happened to Egypt; there has never been a time in recorded history when Egypt was not inhabited by man or beast for forty years, when its cities were laid waste and desolate, when its people were all dispersed to foreign lands, as Ezekiel predicted (Ezek 29,12-13). The prediction that Nebuchadnezzar would (soon) conquer and plunder Egypt also failed to materialize.²⁵

Our prophetic collection as it now stands consists of 15 books (3 major prophets and 12 minor prophets). However, it would be incorrect to say that the prophets who once existed in Israel were *only* fifteen.²⁶ Rabbinic tradition mentions that there were forty-eight prophets and seven prophetesses in Israel (*b. Meg* 14a).²⁷ Therefore it is reasonable to think that the people whom we call *the* prophets formed only a small minority among prophets at any given time. In other words, the prophetic books, which come into our hands, are redactional works. A redactor or some redactors had selected materials available to them according to a set of ideological criteria, and finally, created a compilation of prophetic writings as we have now.

It is broadly accepted among recent Old Testament scholarship that the editing of the Pentateuch and the substantial completion of the prophets, which included the books of Former Prophets, as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets can be assigned to the Persian period (539-333 BC).²⁸ It is not my purpose to

²⁴ J. KATZENSTEIN, *The History of Tyre*, 331. Cf. also M. ALONSO CORRAL, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Tyre*, 57-65 that gives a lot of non-biblical data concerning this issue.

²⁵ M. GREENBERG, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 617.

²⁶ Even the existence of a prophet name *Malachi* can be doubted, since the "name" *Malachi* (= "My messenger") is clearly borrowed from Mal 3,1.

²⁷ On this matter, Blenkinsopp gives a critical note that this is "a conclusion no doubt based on a head count over the entire Hebrew Bible." J. BLENKINSOPP, *History of Prophecy*, 9.

²⁸ Cf. for example, J.W. ROGERSON, "The History of the Tradition," 7, also J. BLENKINSOPP, *History of Prophecy*, 9. Only the third part of Hebrew Bible (the Writings) was not yet complete by the end of Persian period.

argue for the date of compilation of the prophetic books. It is enough to say that it was accomplished at a quite late date and not in the lifetime of the prophet²⁹. This would imply that the final editor must have known that some of the prophetic predictions had not come true.

If, on the one hand, the corpus of biblical prophets is an editorial work, which according to many scholars has been chosen and edited according to specific ideological criteria,³⁰ and on the other hand, the prophetic books do include some unfulfilled prophecies, then we can ask questions: why did the biblical editors let them enter into the biblical corpus? This question will become more complicated if we consider the so-called Deuteronomistic rule of the prophet as can be found in Deut 18,19-22. This text gives a criterion in distinguishing the true prophet from the false. According to this criterion, a false prophet is a prophet whose word does not come to pass or come true (18,22).³¹ If we go strictly along this line, then it should be concluded that prophetic books contain proclamations of "false" prophets. To be sure, this is an unacceptable conclusion. But how should we explain the existence of unfulfilled prophecies in the bulk of prophetic writing in the Bible?

Indeed, we are in no position to discover precisely what was in the editors' mind, when they were working with the biblical material. Nevertheless, there would be some indications that are, I think, reasonable in order to understand the presence of these disturbing prophecies.

As it is indicated by the threefold structure of the Hebrew Bible, the Torah holds the centre position, while the prophetic writings are regarded as commentary on the Torah. As CARROLL notes, the dominating ideology or theology in the post-exilic period was the Torah, as a result of a religious reform undertaken by Ezra. The Torah became the community's centre and identity and therefore we need to adjust our assessment of prophecy in order to make allowance for its secondary role in relation to the Torah.³² Consequently, in such a relationship, instead of the predictive element of prophecy, it is the ethical feature of prophecy that played an important role in the post-exilic community. For the post-exilic Jewish community – and also in the later period – the prophets are divinely-inspired teachers of the moral law. The prophetic books are to be seen as an aid to a better understanding of the teaching given through

²⁹ It is true that Jer 36 gives testimony that Baruch wrote the prophecy of Jeremiah when the latter was still alive (see especially 36,2-4, 32). But the reliability of the tradition concerning this account is doubtful. See, for example, R.E. CLEMENTS, *Old Testament Prophecy*, 208.

³⁰ For example, J. BLENKINSOPP, *History of Prophecy*, 9.

³¹ Deut 13,1-5 does give another criterion. The fulfilment of a prophet's word does not prove yet that he is a genuine prophet. It is necessary that he does not lead the people away from YHWH.

³² R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 122.

Moses.³³ In such a circumstance, therefore, it would seem that the failure of the predictive aspect of prophecies would have scarcely affected most Israelites³⁴ since keeping the regulations of the Torah was the main focus of their life.

Another thing that should not have escaped the final editor(s) of the prophetic books is that the existence of unfulfilled prophecies in the corpus of prophetic writings clearly stands in contradiction to the Deuteronomistic rule of prophet in Deut 18,18-22 (and also 13,1-5). Nevertheless, the very fact that the editors also put the prophets whose predictions had not come true, and therefore according to the Deuteronomistic rule would indicate false prophets, would suggest that this rule had not been applied rigorously. Had it been so, our Bible would have been free from unfulfilled prophecies. It shows, therefore, that the status of the prophets was not dependent on the accuracy of their predictions.³⁵

In the case of long-term prediction, the Deuteronomistic rule sounds unrealistic and its application seems to be absurd and inconceivable. It would mean that the people of Israel must have had to wait for seventy years to see the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer 25,11-12; 29,10) before they were willing to listen and trust the prophet. Consequently, the proclamation of the prophet will *always* fail. This is because nobody is allowed by the Law to obey him before it is evident that he is really a genuine prophet proven by the fulfillment of his prediction (Deut 18,22). As a rule that should enable the community to identify a false prophet *at once* and take the appropriate action. This rule is clearly not a practical one, since it involves waiting to see whether the prophecy in question comes true or not, maybe a long time in the future (cf. Ezek 12,27).³⁶

Here it is worthy to quote what D.N. FREEDMAN, the general editor of the Anchor Bible Commentary series, says in the case of Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy:

I think it is clear that Ezekiel didn't agree with the assessment of the Deuteronomist about how to tell the difference between true prophets and false prophets... Ezekiel knew from personal experience that he was a true prophet, and hence if some of his

³³ J. BARTON, *Oracles of God*, 21.

³⁴ Indeed, for a small group of prophetic circles, the failure of prophecies may have created, using the terminology employed by Carroll, a dissonance, which, in turn would force them to reduce this dissonance. Cf. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 88.

³⁵ J. ANTTI LAATO, *History and Ideology*, 297. Furthermore, Laato suggested that the purpose of Deut 18,21-22 was not to present a prescription for the ideal prophet but was directed against those who terrorized the community with prophecies of doom. It was not applied to the prophets who attempted to turn the people from "evil" to YHWH, but failed to accurately predict the course of a single event. Crenshaw too sees that Deut 18,22, as an assurance that the people of God need not be afraid of the prophets who speak a word that does not come to pass, would be meaningless unless the prophecy were one of woe. J.L. CRENSHAW, *Prophetic Conflict*, 53.

³⁶ Cf. J.F.A. SAWYER, *Prophecy and the Prophets*, 17.

predictions didn't come out, there had to be a different explanation from the one that would make him a false prophet. His God could change his mind, or some factor might require a shift in strategy, but that was all in the mystery of the Godhead, whereas a prophet...could only report what he had seen and heard in the heavenly assembly³⁷

What FREEDMAN said with regard to Ezekiel's prediction, it seems, could also be valid for the others as well. At least, it would indicate that the final editor of prophetic writings did not see the Deuteronomistic rule as the only decisive criterion in distinguishing the false and the true prophets. Scholars, indeed, believe that the Deuteronomistic rule does not do justice to the complex phenomenon of prophecy as practised in Israel.³⁸ The relationship between YHWH and the prophets of ancient Israel was undoubtedly more complex than a single rule like the Deuteronomistic rule could allow for, and the fulfillment and non-fulfillment of predictions cannot be employed in some simplistic way to distinguish true from false prophets.³⁹

Whatever may have been in the editors' mind when they were dealing with prophetic material, one thing is evident. For the final editor - and also for those who had preserved and transmitted the original words of the prophets -, the presence of the prophecies, which in reality were not confirmed by the events they predicted, were not regarded as a problem that should be eliminated. For them, nothing was wrong with unfulfilled prophecies. The failure of prophecies is apparent to modern readers, but it is not clear that the prophets themselves or their followers were aware of such failure.⁴⁰

From the above observation, then, it should be concluded that the problem is not the existence of unfulfilled prophecy as such, but rather something else. Therefore, it is the reaction of the community in front of the failure of prophecies that concerns us here. In this case, CARROLL has warned us that the important task of interpretation is not demonstrating that the predictions were wrong but showing how they were treated by the later communities as ongoing possibilities for their future.⁴¹

³⁷ M. GREENBERG, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 617. The tension between the Deuteronomist and Ezekiel, which is implied in Freedman's opinion, would seem reasonable if we consider that Ezekiel came from priestly circles.

³⁸ Cf. among others, J. BLENKINSOPP, *History of Prophecy*, 158; R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 186-188.

³⁹ D.N. FREEDMAN, "Between God and Man," 65.

⁴⁰ R.P. CARROLL, "Prophecy and Dissonance," 109.

⁴¹ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 58.

1.2.2.2 *The Prophecy*

There are two points on prophecy that should be considered here. First, we shall deal with the language used by the prophet, and then we shall dedicate our attention to the nature of the prophecy itself.

a) Prophetic Language

We can start this section by asking a question: "what constitutes the fulfillment of specific prediction?"⁴² Then a simple answer could be offered: A prophecy could be said to be fulfilled if there is conformity between the word spoken and the event that happens. On the contrary, a prophecy is said to have failed when a prophetic word is not confirmed by the matter it predicted. This simple answer, however, presupposes that we know exactly what the prediction is about. In the story of King Croesus' dealing with the Delphic oracle, the problem lies in a word of which the reference is ambiguous. Whose strength will be overthrown by Croesus' military campaign? What is actually meant by the Delphic prophet? If the oracle had been formulated in a perfectly clear way, absolutely King Croesus would have taken a different action. If the prediction is clear then what would be seen as its fulfillment is fairly identifiable. Therefore, in order to be able to test the utterances of the prophets by the facts, we must, first of all, determine their meaning.⁴³

However, to understand the language of prophecies is not so simple because of its nature. Most of the biblical prophecies are clothed in the language of poetic imagery and hyperbole.⁴⁴ Only a few parts in prophetic writings were composed in prose (e.g., Isa 36-39; Jer 26-29.32-45; Amos 7,10-17). It is precisely the poetic character of prophecy that creates difficulty for determining its exact meaning. It is well known that poetic language differs very much from the language used in prose. The poetic language is characterized by ambiguity, vagueness, metaphorical and hyperbolic language, or anthropomorphism. Mainly for esthetical reasons, most, if not all, words in poetic language are polysemous and are used figuratively. A poem says one thing and means another. In poetry everything is possible, e.g., for the trees to celebrate a birthday and for God to speak to man.⁴⁵ So we have, for example, Amos addressing the cows of Bashan (Amos 4,1), Isaiah speaking to the coastlands (Isa 49,1), and YHWH teaching Ephraim to walk (Hos 11,3).

⁴² R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 112.

⁴³ A. KUENEN, *The Prophets and Prophecy*, 98.

⁴⁴ R.B.Y. SCOTT, *The Relevance of the Prophets*, 11-12.

⁴⁵ A. HESCHEL, *The Prophets*, 368.

Besides its poetical characteristic that renders it difficult to grasp the exact meaning of a certain prophecy, there is also the possibility to elaborate a certain event so that it would match with a well-documented prophecy that was already in existence. For example, according to Ezr 2,64-65 those who returned from exile were 42.360 Israelites together with 7.337 menservants and maidservants and 200 male and female singers. The mention of 200 singers would serve to demonstrate the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in 51,11 "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing..." (Cf. also Isa 51,3; 52,8-9; 55,12).⁴⁶ And Ezr 2,62-63 would match well with Isa 52,11 because the unclean persons were not allowed to touch the vessels of the LORD.⁴⁷ In this case, literary invention is used to portray the event as close as possible to the prophet's prophecy.

At this present moment, it is not my intention to make a detailed analysis of every aspect of the language used by the prophet, such as figures of speech as literary devices in the prophetic literature, or even philosophical investigation into language, etc.⁴⁸ My aim in presenting this section is to demonstrate in a very general way that because of the nature of its language, it is not always easy to determine precisely what the content of a certain prophecy might be. Then, naturally, if we cannot define its exact meaning, then we are not able to evaluate whether a certain prophecy is fulfilled or not. This fact must be taken seriously in dealing with unfulfilled prophecy.

b) Nature of the Prophecy

Another aspect of prophecy that is also important to notice is its nature. The future prophecy could be divided into two categories: conditional and unconditional prophecy. A conditional prophecy can be represented by the proposition 'if p then q ' ($p \rightarrow q$), in which p as the antecedent stands for condition required so that q can happen, while q , the consequent, stands for the prophecy. In this case, the fulfillment of a certain prophecy depends on the fulfillment of a set of required conditions. The word of Isaiah to King Ahaz in Isa 7,7-9 is a good example of the formulation of a conditional prophecy (cf. other examples in Isa 1,19-20). As long as the conditions are

⁴⁶ Jacob M. Myers gives a note that the picture of the returnees points to a certain affluence on the part of the returnees that is contrary to the general impression derived from other sources. It may be that the whole summary pertains to the situation around 520 rather than 538. See J.M. MYERS, *Ezra Nehemiah*, 21.

⁴⁷ J.F.A. SAWYER, *Prophecy and the Prophets*, 141.

⁴⁸ Carroll provides a good treatment on prophetic language, which he differentiates into magical, cultic, symbolic, conditional, and performative language. See R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 55-77. Cf. also his other article that deals particularly with the language of Deutero-Isaiah, "Second Isaiah and the Failure of Prophecy," 119-131.

not fulfilled, then the prophecy or promise will not come to pass. If it is taken for granted that the announcement of the prophets is mostly a call to repentance,⁴⁹ then most of the prophecy is necessarily conditional.⁵⁰

However, it is interesting to notice that the Bible does not often tell us the sequence of such prophecies. There are only very few texts that tell us that the people of Israel really turned to YHWH after listening to the prophet's announcement, and then as a result, the punishment was cancelled (Cf. Jer 26,17-19; 1Kgs 21,27-29). Perhaps, the book of Jonah may be considered as the clearest example that tells us that the addressees of the prophet's prophecy changed their minds so that the prediction did not come true. Even in this case, however, the conditionality of Jonah's prophecy can only be assumed because the only word that Jonah spoke to the people of Nineveh is "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jon 3,4). No condition was offered to the people of Nineveh. We can only deduce the nature of Jonah's prophecy from the statement declared by the king of Nineveh, "Let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands" (Jon 3,8b). In the case of other prophetic books, the matter remains unclear.

A conditional prophecy is actually not a prediction at all, but rather a threat or warning. Thus, treating prophecy as conditional preaching, in CARROLL's word, would ease the problem of unfulfilled predictions by modifying the notion of prediction to one of threat or warning intent on changing attitudes and behaviour.⁵¹ Conditional prophecy will always find a scapegoat when it "fails," while the credibility of "prophecy" itself will remain unshaken. In this case, the focus of attention has actually shifted, from prophecy to the addressee of prophecy!

In the light of the theory of cognitive dissonance picked up by CARROLL in reading biblical prophecies, to change an unconditional prophecy to a conditional prophecy could then be placed under 'explanatory schemes' or 'rationalization process', one of the three devices proposed by the theory for handling the dissonance caused by unfulfilled prophecy.⁵² Conditionalizing a prophecy may then become a reaction in front of unfulfilled prediction. Indeed it offers a nice way out to escape from the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, but, at the same time, it would also imply, though in a very subtle way, assigning the blame to the victims.

⁴⁹ That the prophet's proclamation is a call to repent is usually an assumption because many texts do not say it explicitly (but see, for example, Jer 25,1-7). For this reason, it has been a topic of discussion as to whether, for example, Amos and Micah proclaimed repentance or rather delivered justifications of the YHWH's punishment.

⁵⁰ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 69.

⁵¹ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 69.

⁵² R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 86-103; esp. 96-98.

For our purpose, of course, conditional prophecy does not concern us. What is relevant for our discussion is unconditional prophecy, that is, a prophecy, the fulfillment of which does not depend on anything else. At the same time, however, considering the long journey a prophetic text must undertake before it arrives at the final form, we should be aware of the possibility of changing the direction, from unconditional to conditional prophecy as it is noted above, during the course of its transmission.

1.2.2.3 *The Prophet*

After treating the message that the prophets deliver to their addressee, we shall now turn to the person, namely the prophet himself. Also here, there are two aspects that should be thoroughly considered so that a balanced view could be achieved. In the section that follows, we shall discuss: the prophet as person and the prophet and his society.

a) The Prophet as Person

In dealing with biblical prophets, a famous Jewish scholar, ABRAHAM HESCHEL has reminded us that a prophet is a person, and not a microphone.⁵³ He is a person endowed with a mission. He speaks from the perspective of God as perceived from the perspective of his own situation. The opening verse of the book of Amos, which according to many scholars is the introduction to the whole book of Amos, may support this idea. "The *words* (דְּבָרַי) of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he *saw* (רָאָה) concerning Israel ..." It is clear then, that what Amos had *seen* now became his *words*. First, Amos got a vision from God then he expressed it in his own words. Or as LINDBLOM says, "The divine word passed through the soul of the prophet and was coloured by his personal mode of feeling and thinking."⁵⁴

VON RAD's reading of the calling of Isaiah demonstrates that to some extent, the prophet had a personal freedom.⁵⁵ The word of YHWH in Isa 6,8 "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" was surely not a word of commission as in the vocation of Jeremiah (Jer 1,5-8). Rather it was a rhetorical question, a soliloquy of YHWH. It was Isaiah's sensitivity that made him willing to offer himself to be a messenger of YHWH though he did not know for what purpose he would be sent. If

⁵³ A. HESCHEL, *The Prophets*, 2.

⁵⁴ J. LINDBLOM, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, 197.

⁵⁵ G. VON RAD, *Theology of the Old Testament*, II, 71.

the word of YHWH was not a calling or commission, then the prophet's response should come from his personal decision or his personal freedom. In turn, it also implies the possibility to refuse even though the prophet was always overpowered by YHWH himself as Jeremiah had declared (Jer 20,7). The prophets were drawn into God's *pathos*⁵⁶ without losing their personality. It could be said then, without entering further into the psychology of the prophet, constraint and freedom did not exclude each other, but were synthetically combined.⁵⁷

The prophet's personality and liberty would then affect his task to deliver the word of God in some ways. Therefore, prophecies against foreign nations, just to take an example, could be influenced by the prophet's ability to analyse the international political constellation at his time. They seemed like genial political observers. Seeing that Tiglath-Pileser moved westward aggressively, Isaiah of Jerusalem persuaded Ahaz not to fear Rezin of Damascus and Pekah, the king of Israel who insisted on a coalition against Assyria, because soon they would be annihilated (Isa 7,9). This came true. Samaria was sacked in 733 BC, Damascus in 732 BC.⁵⁸

Similarly, the prophet's religious conviction and his perception of YHWH's nature and attribute would have convinced him that in a certain circumstance YHWH must necessarily react. Thus, for example, in Israel society because of the lack of morals and justice, Amos could prophesy the punishment of YHWH. Therefore, the confidence with which the prophets predicted the future is thus explained by its being a result of their strong religious conviction.⁵⁹

Thus, when we give enough attention to the prophets as human beings that their prophecy was also influenced by their personality, then it becomes more difficult to talk about unfulfilled prophecy. When the word of YHWH and the word of the prophets have mingled inseparably, it is impossible to distinguish one from another. Consequently, we are not in a position to decide that the word of God has failed. It has to be admitted that in this case, there would arise another complicated problem, namely, concerning the psychological state of the prophet and also prophetic inspiration. Since they are not our main interest, we will leave them aside.

⁵⁶ A. HESCHEL, *The Prophets*, 114.

⁵⁷ J. LINDBLOM, *Prophecy*, 197.

⁵⁸ J. BARTON, *Isaiah 1-39*, 30-31. Similarly, Second Isaiah's observation that Cyrus' rise after the fall of Babylon would have led him to think that the moment for Israel's liberation from exile was now at hand. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 150-151. Also A.S. KAPELRUD, "The Main Concern of Second Isaiah," 51.

⁵⁹ John Muir in his introduction to A. KUENEN, *The Prophets*, xxvii. Cf. also R.B.Y. SCOTT, *The Relevance of the Prophets*, 13. This is exactly the criticism to the application of dissonance theory by Carroll. "...The dissonance theory does not allow us to penetrate into the actual faith of the prophet or to evaluate the correctness of the prophet's divine message in a religious sense." J.A. LAATO, *History and Ideology*, 298. Cf. also R.F. MELUGIN's review of Carroll's work in *Int* 35 (1981) 197.

Still in our effort to understand future prediction from a human perspective, perhaps it is worthy to consider a concept introduced by KARL POPPER, namely the concept of *Oedipus Effect*.⁶⁰ By this concept, it is meant that the prediction may have influence upon the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the predicted event. An example from biblical narrative may be illuminating. In his report to King Jeroboam, Amaziah, the priest of Bethel said, "Amos has conspired (קשר) against you in the midst of the house of Israel. ...For thus Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by sword'" (Amos 7,10.11). Amos' prophecy upon the fate of Jeroboam is regarded as a conspiracy against the king. On the one hand, however, it was hardly possible that Amos really made an intrigue with whomever to design a *coup d'etat*. On the other hand, it is very possible that his prophecy would inspire top-rank oppositions in the king's palace to create a conspiracy among themselves against the king, and thus fulfill Amos' prophecy.⁶¹

As persons who were in an intermediate position between YHWH and the people, the prophets must, on the one hand, have a strong commitment to carry out their mission, mostly to prophecy YHWH's punishment, at the same time, on the other hand, because of their love for the people, they must insist that the people avoid the disaster by changing their behaviour. In other words, by prophesying YHWH's punishment upon the people at the same time the prophet attempted to create a certain response in the community. When that attempt failed, it was more a case of failing to persuade the community to change than of the failure of prediction.⁶²

b) Prophet and his Society

Most scholars, either biblical or social science, especially sociology and anthropology, agree that there was a close connection between a prophet and the society in the midst of which he lived. In order to exist the prophets needed support from the society. They would not be able to carry out their task as messengers of

⁶⁰ K.R. POPPER, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 13. Popper himself admitted that he was heavily influenced by the famous Greek tragedy, *Oedipus Rex* written by Sophocles (496-406 BC), which was also picked up by Sigmund Freud for his *Oedipus complex*.

⁶¹ In the history of Israel, such a case was indeed quite common; for example, the story of Zimri who conspired (*qāšar*) against Elah, king of Israel (1Kgs 16,9-10). In this story, it is interesting that the narrator gives such information "Thus Zimri destroyed all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet" (1Kgs 16,12; cf. 1Kgs 16,1-4.7). Other examples can be offered: Jehu against Joram (2Kgs 9,14-24); Joash's servant against his master (2Kgs 12,20); against Amaziah, the son of Joash (2Kgs 14,19); Shallum against Zechariah, king of Israel (2Kgs 15,10); Hoshea against Pekah (2Kgs 15,30).

⁶² R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 33.

YHWH unless they got a certain acceptance from a society, although that support may be minimal and come only from a small group within the society.⁶³

The society around a prophet could roughly be divided into two categories, the people in general (broader circle, including common people and religious or civil authority) and those who were attracted to the prophet's teaching and then became his adherents (small circle). The prophet's relationship with the larger community might perhaps not always be in harmony, for the prophet's proclamations were often contrary to the common belief. Thus, Jeremiah's proclamation that the Temple would be destroyed was against popular belief because the Temple was YHWH's dwelling place (cf. Jer 26,1-6). The harsh attack launched by Amos and Hosea against cultic life (cf. Amos 4,4-5; 5,21-23; Hos 6,6; 9,4) would sound strange in the ears of the Israelites. The relationship with the small circle, on the other hand, would be different because those were the people who accepted and, therefore, agreed with the prophet's teaching. Then, they would become his followers.

The interaction between the prophet and the people in general does not matter to us very much. What is relevant for our discussion is the small group around a prophet. From the perspective of the cognitive dissonance theory, CARROLL has demonstrated the function of a small group as the supporter of the prophet Isaiah. According to CARROLL, a small group of Isaiah's disciples had become a safe place when the prophet had to withdraw himself from his public preaching after his failure to persuade Ahaz to trust YHWH (Isa 8,16-18).⁶⁴ In the midst of his followers, the prophet would be able to find an opportunity to rethink his policy and determine future tactics.

More than merely providing social support for the prophet, it would seem very probable that such a group must have been responsible for preserving and transmitting the prophet's prophetic words, though they knew that these words did not come to pass. It would then mean that the effect of disconfirmation is not the collapse of the group or the loss of prophetic credentials, but rather leads the group to explain, rationalize or reinterpret the non-fulfillment, and a more intense campaign to persuade oneself, and possibly others, of the truth of the original prediction.⁶⁵

⁶³ From socio-anthropological point of view, Wilson suggested that the existence of prophetic phenomenon – in Wilson's word, intermediary – within a society would need the presence of 4 conditions: the belief of supernatural power; the belief that that power can influence earthly affairs, and can in turn be directly influenced by human agents; the positive response from the society, and that social conditions of a society require the service of an intermediary. R.R. WILSON, *Prophecy and Society*, 28-32.

⁶⁴ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 140-141.

⁶⁵ J. BLENKINSOPP, *History of Prophecy*, 39. Also J. BARTON, "Prophecy (Postexilic Hebrew)," *ABD* [CD-ROM]. These mechanisms are devices employed to ease the cognitive dissonance

1.2.2.4 *Problem of Interpretation*

Having listed several considerations that should be taken into account in order to obtain a balanced view of the unfulfilled prophecy, now we must discuss the most important part of the process of understanding the problem. If we return to the story of King Croesus mentioned above, then it becomes evident that in dealing with prophecy, especially in the case of determining the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of prophecy, interpretation really becomes a decisive factor. King Croesus interpreted the Delphic prophecy delivered to him in a certain way and acted accordingly. But he was defeated. This fact does not mean that the oracle has failed; rather it was Croesus' interpretation that was wrong. It is also the act of interpreting the text that is a decisive factor in determining the existence of unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible. Even, it can be stated that all explanations, justifications, or the like, are rooted in interpreting the texts. Interpretation thus is the main thrust of all.

In interpreting a particular text, one cannot keep oneself free from a personal uniqueness.⁶⁶ Never is one able to approach a text with an "empty head," as LONERGAN said.⁶⁷ On the contrary, one always comes with *tabula plena*. Therefore it is not surprising that the result of the act of interpreting a given text will be different, one from another interpreter, even though the text they are dealing with is the same text. Thus, ABRAHAM KUENEN was able to talk about unfulfilled prophecy in three full chapters in his book.⁶⁸ He even boldly asserted with regard to the future of Israel that not one of them has been realized.⁶⁹ While JOHN BARTON PAYNE, an evangelical scholar, to mention only one example, was able to compose an encyclopaedia of biblical prophecy, in which he stated that out of the Old Testament's 23,210 verses, 6,641 contain predictive material, or 28 ½ % from the total verses, and all is fulfilled.⁷⁰

caused by the failure of prophecy. This is also Carroll's thesis: Dissonance gives rise to hermeneutic. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 124.

⁶⁶ What I mean with "personal uniqueness" is everything behind an interpreter. Thus, each reader brings to the text an agenda dictated by personal needs, presuppositions, and prejudices of the social class, or political and religious interest group, to which he and she belongs. In turn, these will affect his/her interpretation though sometimes in very subtle ways.

⁶⁷ B.J.F. LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, 157.

⁶⁸ A. KUENEN, *Prophecy and The Prophet*, 90-275.

⁶⁹ A. KUENEN, *Prophecy and The Prophet*, 186.

⁷⁰ J.B. PAYNE, *Encyclopedia*, 13. Based upon the books of the Bible, Payne divides history into 18 periods, from Primeval-patriarchal period (2133 BC/Abraham) to New Jerusalem. See J.B. PAYNE, *Encyclopedia*, 93-110. Period 1-14 are within our history, while period 15-18 (Christ's Second Coming-Millennium-Final Judgment-New Jerusalem) are beyond our history.

It has to be admitted that religious ideology exercises an exceedingly powerful control over the interpreting strategy of biblical text. When a believer so deeply committed to a religious movement that he adopts its theological conviction, for example, that biblical text is dictated literally by the Holy Spirit and therefore, unchangeably true, this religious conviction will inevitably print influence in his interpretation. Ideological biases, then, cannot be avoided. Thus, for example, in dealing with the unfulfilled prophecy of Amos concerning the fate of Jeroboam (Amos 7,11), BARTON PAYNE argued that

Amos' prediction (*Amos 7,9b. Unlike the common opinion, Payne maintained that this verse comes from Amos*) was then *misquoted* - or, "*suitably modified*," so as to arouse governmental action - by Amaziah the high priest of Beth-el, as purportedly saying that Jeroboam himself would be murdered⁷¹

If it is not interrupted, the discussion on method of (biblical) interpretation can be prolonged *ad infinitum*. In our context, however, it is sufficient for us to be aware that the problem of unfulfilled prophecy very much depends on its interpretation. And in turn, one's interpretation is influenced by one's personality. All reading is interested reading. And the interest comes not from the act of reading itself, but from the pre-reading experience in life.⁷²

As for us, we maintain the position that the prophets and their prophecies should be understood in their proper historical context. First of all, they spoke to their contemporaries. In the case that society lacked moral justice, the prophets would warn them because of their sinfulness. They insisted that their fellow-people turn to YHWH, lest the hand of YHWH come upon them. Consequently, it will not make sense if punishment for a sinful people is too long delayed. Why should the children's teeth be set on edge while it is their fathers who have eaten sour grapes?

The concept of "double fulfilment" and *sensus plenior*, which are often proposed by scholars so that Old Testament prophecy may find its fulfilment in the New Testament, do not necessarily deny a prophet's concern with his contemporaries. With regard to the connection between the Old Testament and Jesus Christ, we may

Therefore, it must be concluded that according to Payne, the fulfilment of prophecies is not verified by historical events, but rather by religious conviction.

⁷¹ J.B. PAYNE, *Encyclopedia*, 416 (italic mine). With regard to Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre, he explained that this prophecy was fulfilled by Alexander the Great in July 332 BC. See J.B. PAYNE, *Encyclopedia*, 363.

⁷² V.G. SHILLINGTON, *Reading the Sacred Text*, 34; cf. also, R. MORGAN - J. BARTON, *Biblical Interpretation*, 1-42. 269-296.

listen to the statement of the Catholic Church represented by the Pontifical Biblical Commission:

All the texts, including those which later were read as messianic prophecies, already had an immediate import and meaning for their contemporaries before attaining a fuller meaning for future hearers⁷³

Since the prophets and their prophecy would be seen in their historical context, it is possible to verify or falsify their prophecy, and at the same time, to find out the reaction which emerged in the case of the failure of prophecy. We shall do that by asking the text, because it is the only available source for us. However, not every biblical text could be employed as the means to approach the problem. There are some conditions to be met in order that a specific text may be useful for our purpose.

The purpose of the previous discussion is to show that the designation "unfulfilled prophecy" is indeed a problematic and complex concept. There are so many aspects involved there that it is particularly difficult to determine the presence of unfulfilled prophecy in the prophetic legacy as is found in the OT. Some considerations put forward above would indeed remind us not to oversimplify the matter by evaluating a particular prophecy as being fulfilled or not fulfilled too easily. They function as filters that would determine whether a particular passage should be considered the real problem or just a pseudo-problem. Considering the complexities of the procedure to find out the failed prophecies, we shall now ask: Are there any particular prophecies that finally fail to materialize?

1.2.3 Third Isaiah and Unfulfilled Prophecy: Limits and Presuppositions

Time and space do not permit us to do the necessary research on every single element in the grand complex theme of unfulfilled prophecy. We are not going to do everything in this topic by ourselves as if everything would depend on our work. In fact, we are not starting from nothing. Instead, we shall make use of the results of scholarly researches undertaken up to now which are available for us. Therefore, this section will present the limits of this study and also the results of the former researches that we take for granted as our basic assumption.

To answer the question put at the end of the previous section, it is commonly accepted that the prophecy of Second Isaiah concerning the glorious return to the

⁷³ PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, *The Jewish People*, II A.5.

Holy Land has failed to materialize. No such glorious things happened in the post-exilic community. So, the answer is affirmative: Yes, there is prophecy that failed. It is Second Isaiah's glorious prophecy! However, since the scope of this present work is - as the title indicates - not to detect the presence of unfulfilled prophecies, but rather to study the reaction of the community that suffered from such a bitter experience, we are not going to make a detailed analysis on Second Isaiah in order to prove that his prophecy has indeed failed. In this case, we rely on the previous examination of this topic undertaken by the scholars.⁷⁴ This is the first limitation and the assumption that we take for granted as the point of departure for our study.

If Second Isaiah's glorious prophecies have in fact been disconfirmed, what was the reaction of the community? How would they react to those prophecies? Again, thanks to the unceasing efforts of biblical scholars, we can now adopt the fruit of their researches. Scholars have frequently noted that, to some extent, the third part of the Book of Isaiah, the so-called Third Isaiah, which comprises chapters 56-66, was actually composed in order to deal with the failure of Second Isaiah's prophecy.⁷⁵ Thus, CARROLL wrote, "Although the various oracles in 56-66 date from different periods and belong to various literary genres together they constitute a pattern of dissonance resolution which clearly indicates some of the problem caused by the failure of the predicted salvation."⁷⁶

This means that, necessarily, we also hold a particular view about Third Isaiah. Instead of arguing by means of, for example, historical critical method, such as, redaction criticism, or source criticism, or whatever, in order to prove or disprove the existence of the so-called Third Isaiah, here we just follow the threefold division of the Book of Isaiah, first introduced by DUHM.⁷⁷ Though his theory is highly contested by scholars after him, which resulted in the refinement of the theory, it seems that, as we shall see in the following chapter, this threefold division (chs. 1-39; 40-55; 56-66) could still be maintained. The existence of Third Isaiah as a distinct

⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the failure of Second Isaiah's prophecy has, as far as we know, never become a main topic. Usually, the statement about that is briefly found in the context of the larger works, such as, commentaries on the book of Isaiah or other monographs, or in a short article. See, for example, an article by R.P. CARROLL, "Second Isaiah," 119-131. In this article, having examined the prophecy of Second Isaiah from linguistic perspective, Carroll finally concluded that "many of his predictions never came true."

⁷⁵ Here again, as in the case of Second Isaiah, the function of Third Isaiah as the response to the disconfirmation of Second Isaiah's prophecy does not become a major theme in the scholarly discussion. Usually, scholars only make small notices about this. We shall here mention several works that deal with this topic: W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 217-233; H.-J. KRAUS, "Die ausgebliebene Endtheophanie," 317-332; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*; R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, etc.

⁷⁶ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 152.

⁷⁷ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*.

unit still has strong supporters among the scholars. We thus accept the theory that the block of Isa 56-66 was composed in the Isaianic tradition, especially in the context of Second Isaiah's unfulfilled prophecy. Notwithstanding some recent tendencies to read the Book of Isaiah as a unity,⁷⁸ we are still convinced that Third Isaiah could be treated independently.

Within the corpus of Third Isaiah, however, a special attention should now be given to chs. 60-62. At least, there are three points that are frequently put forward with regard to the nature of these three chapters. *First*, the unity of chs. 60-62. Here we shall present HANSON's remark, which, we believe, summarizes the scholarly discussion on chs. 60-62. "Metrically, stylistically, and thematically the unit found in chapters 60, 61, and 62 are inextricably related, a fact recognized by all critics in spite of their wide disagreement on questions of authorship, date, and interpretation."⁷⁹ We shall also mention SMITH's proposal to read 60,1-63,6 as a literary unity, instead of simply chs. 60-62.⁸⁰ Of course, maintaining the unity of chs. 60-62 does not necessarily deny the complex development of the texts before it reached its final form.⁸¹ *Second*, as many scholars have noted, these three chapters are often regarded as the core of Third Isaiah and quite distinctive compared to their surroundings. The centrality of these chapters could be easily recognized if one considers their place in the whole corpus of Isa 56-66, a literary unity that is commonly designated as Third Isaiah. Thus, for example, BLENKINSOPP argued that the whole Third-Isaiah forms a chiasmic structure ($a - b - a$), in which chs. 60-62 hold the central panel framed by chs. 56-59 and 63-65.⁸² *Third*, it has also been frequently suggested that chs. 60-62 stand in a close connection with the proclamation of Second Isaiah, though it does not

⁷⁸ Though their perspectives are different, one could here mention the works of, for example, J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*; U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*.

⁷⁹ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 46.

⁸⁰ He argued that 63,1-6 should be read as a fulfilment of the "day of vengeance" (יום נקם) in 61,2, in which YHWH performs his direct intervention. In addition, he also launched other arguments based on vocabulary, imagery and thematic links. He then attributed this section to the prophet TI. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 38-44. Also A.-M. PELLETIER, "Isaiah," 992-993. According to her, the oracle against Edom (63,1-6) is a counter-point to the promises made to Zion.

⁸¹ The history of the text's development has been elaborated in the scholarly works dedicated to redaction-criticism. For example, Steck suggested that there are several layers in chs. 60-62 with 60,1-9.13-16; 61,1-11 as the basic kernel composed with reference only to Second Isaiah. Then this basic kernel was expanded with 60,10-11 and 62,1-7 and much later with 60,17-22; 62,8-9; and 62,10-12. O.H. STECK, "Tritojesaja," 361-406 (esp. 373ff); Koenen in general distinguished the work of TI and the work of a later redactor. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*; W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*. Several authors attempted to reorder the sequence of these chapters. Volz, for example, suggested ch. 60, 62, 61; while Pauritsch ch. 61, 62, 60. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 105.

⁸² Cf. for example, J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 38. For him, the very central panel is 61,1-3. See his diagram on page 61. Cf. also C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 296. 300-301; G.I. EMMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66*, 18-20; J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 465.

mean that the influence of Second Isaiah is only limited to these three chapters. Thus COLLINS stated, "The line between Second and Third Isaiah is blurred by chapters 60-62, which are closely related to Second Isaiah in style and in spirit."⁸³

This close connection between Second Isaiah and chs. 60-62 is apparent when we notice the vocabularies they employed⁸⁴ and the content they announced. With regard to the content, it seems that the scholars almost unanimously agree with WESTERMANN's impressive suggestion that "chs. 60-62 contain a message of salvation and nothing but salvation,"⁸⁵ and thus, closely follow the message of Second Isaiah. It is even suggested that chs. 60-62 belong to the earliest layer of Third Isaiah; after Second Isaiah but before the rest of Third Isaiah.⁸⁶ The extra positive tone of the message of chs. 60-62 perhaps reflects, borrowing BLENKINSOPP's formulation, "the euphoria of the first return to Judah in the final decades of the sixth century."⁸⁷ The author of chs. 60-62 continued or, in HANSON's word, summarized⁸⁸ the promise of Second Isaiah and, at the same time, made necessary adaptation in order to match the new circumstances.⁸⁹ Though the people must still wait for the further realization of Second Isaiah's promise that has now been perpetuated in chs. 60-62, there is no indication in these three chapters that could be interpreted as indicating a sort of failure of prophecy. There is no textual evidence in chs. 60-62 that would suggest that the not-yet fulfilled promise had become a problem for the people.

This last statement is important for our purpose. Since our focus is to discover the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy, we shall exclude the block of chs. 60-62 from our examination because they do not deal with such a problem. To some extent, our undertaking could be compared to that of RUSZKOWSKI who saw that the

⁸³ J.J. COLLINS, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 379.

⁸⁴ Some scholars have listed the textual connections between SI and Isa 60-62. Cf. among others, A. ZILLESSEN, "Tritojesaja," 240-243; W.W. CANNON, "Isaiah 61,1-3," 285-286; W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 217-233; N.H. SNAITH, "Isaiah 40-66," 139-146; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 27. For a computerized analysis of the textual relationships between Isa 56-66 and Isa 40-66, see A.L.H.M. VAN WIERINGEN, *Analogies in Isaiah*. In a larger scope, a recent work that attempted to explore the connection between Deutero Isaiah and other biblical texts has been worked out by B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*. As the sub-title indicates, Sommer's work tried to discover the traces of biblical texts within Isa 40-66.

⁸⁵ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 296.

⁸⁶ Cf. R. ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 379.

⁸⁷ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 209 with reference to J. VERMEYLEN, *The Book of Isaiah*, 471-478.

⁸⁸ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 45.

⁸⁹ However, this adaptation does not necessarily mean spiritualization of Second Isaiah's message, as Zimmerli seemed to have claimed. W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 221. It would seem better to say that such an adaptation is needed simply because the historical situation has changed.

failure of the promise in chs. 60-62, and not that of Second Isaiah (40-55), had triggered reactions that were now embodied in chs. 56-59 and 63-66.⁹⁰

These are the assumptions, and at the same time, the limits, which provide the point of departure for this present work. We are not going to do everything; instead, we shall take for granted the result of the scholars' previous investigations, now available to us. It is perhaps true that the scholarly opinions concerning the nature of Third Isaiah that we here adopt do not represent the mainstream voice among the Isaianic scholars and, therefore, could be contested. Be that as it may, such opinions can be found among their works. As we shall see in the next chapter when we explore the scholarly publications of the Isaianic scholarship, these ideas appear as those that are quite familiar to us.

With these delimitations and assumptions, we are then able to focus our attention on one particular point, that is, to examine how Third Isaiah formulated his messages in order to answer the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. This will be carried out by doing a detailed exegesis on the passages of Third Isaiah from a particular perspective, namely, as far as they provide answers to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. In this way, we hope that our procedure in approaching the topic can be justified.

2. CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have tried to place the problem of unfulfilled prophecy in the broader context of the human life that is unavoidably directed to an unknown future. The disconfirmed prophecy thus becomes problematic not only for the addressee, but also for the giver. This problem becomes acute in the context of religion, in which prophecy is accepted as God-given words. How can such a prophecy fail? The above presentation, however, has demonstrated that the designation "unfulfilled prophecy" is a complicated matter, because of the nature of prophecy and the particular interaction that happens when a reader meets the text.

Since the interest of this project is to explore the reaction or response to unfulfilled prophecy, and not to discuss the existence of such a prophecy by means of the above considerations, we have to limit ourselves by picking up the results of scholarly researches now at our disposal. We, therefore, owe much to the works of

⁹⁰ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 15-18. It should be noted, however, that his main interest is not exploring the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, but rather examining the different portraits of the people in Isa 56-66, which, he believe, have been influenced by the failure of Third Isaiah's promise presented in chs. 60-62.

many biblical scholars who, in one way or another, have demonstrated that one of the relationships that exist between Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah is that of "unfulfilled-reaction." Third Isaiah was composed to tackle the problem caused by the failure of Second Isaiah's glorious, but somewhat exaggerated, prophecy. This is the topic that will be developed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

“THIRD ISAIAH” Since 1990

1. INTRODUCTION

We concluded the previous chapter with a legitimation and, at the same time, also delimitation for our choice in taking the so-called Third Isaiah¹ as the stepping-stone from which we would further inquire into the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy. Our intention in this chapter is to make a survey on the scholarly research on Third Isaiah in order to find out assurances that our choice stands on firm ground.

Unlike other prophetic books, the term Third Isaiah does not point to a particular prophetic book that exists independently in our Bible. Rather, it is used to name a particular part of the book of the prophet Isaiah.² Consequently, a discussion on Third Isaiah cannot be separated from the Book of Isaiah as a whole.

It is beyond doubt that, due to its undeniable importance, the Book of Isaiah as a whole has become an inexhaustible well-spring for biblical scholars,³ particularly Jewish and Christian, from which they have been drawing the fresh water of inspiration throughout the centuries. Until the present day, an ocean of publications on this subject has been available at our disposal. Nevertheless, to trace back the history of interpretation of the book of Isaiah from the older period and to offer it in this present work would seem to be a somewhat superfluous repetition. For this, readers are referred to the work of SEIZO SEKINE, which has provided us with an excellent chronological summary of the Isaianic researches from 1892 up to 1990.⁴ What we would like to present in this chapter is the summary of researches from 1990 until the

¹ Throughout this present work, for the sake of consistency we shall use the term “Third Isaiah,” and First-, and Second Isaiah respectively, instead of “Trito Isaiah”. This will also be applied to the works presented in this section, though originally they used the term “Proto-, Deutero-, or Trito Isaiah,” except for the quotation.

² As it is already known, the father of Third Isaiah is Bernhard Duhm, a German scholar, who, in his commentary published for the first time in 1892, coined the name “Trito-Isaiah” to indicate the third part of the book of Isaiah, namely, chapters 55-66. Hence, it is common to use Duhm’s terminology when one speaks about Isa 56-66 though the existence of Isa 56-66 as an independent block has its contentions since the beginning up to the present time.

³ It has also to be admitted that the interpretation of certain parts of the Book of Isaiah has become the focus of debate between Jews and Christians, especially with regard to the interpretation of the Servant of YHWH and that of Isa 7,14.

⁴ S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 3-23. Cf. also K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 1-7. From different scope, see B.S. CHILDS, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture*. As the title indicates, Childs’s work attempted to display the history of interpretation of the book of Isaiah from the patristic period up to the postmodern age in the context of the struggle to understand it as a part of Christian scripture.

present day.⁵ By choosing this borderline, on the one hand, we are intending to continue SEKINE's presentation; on the other hand, however, our choice is somewhat arbitrary. It is not a rigid selection. In the course of this presentation, as we shall see, reference to works before 1990 is also made.

As it can easily be noticed in the works published from 1990 onwards, there is an important shift of orientation among the scholars. The existences of First Isaiah, Second Isaiah, and Third Isaiah as separate entities have been suffering strong contention from modern biblical scholars. The coming of literary criticism,⁶ which focuses on the text in the final form, also contributes to this change of paradigm. Instead of reconstructing the events and historical personages mentioned in the biblical tradition, scholars are shifting their interest to identify the literary work and theological perspectives of the anonymous tridents and redactors of the book of Isaiah.⁷ The canonical reading of BREVARD S. CHILDS proposed in his *Introduction*, which tried to understand the Book of Isaiah in its present form, is often regarded as one of the pioneers of a holistic approach to the Book of Isaiah.⁸ It seems, therefore, that the supporters of the Duhmian threefold division of the Book of Isaiah have decreased considerably so that MARVIN E. TATE could put this question: "Has the time come to bury Exilic Isaiah? Probably not yet, but it may well be to start making funeral plans! Third Isaiah is hardly viable at all."⁹ TATE's answer to his own question seems to be true because until today, as we can see in the following presentation, we still have the scholarly works based on Third Isaiah, notwithstanding the tendency of holistic reading.

⁵ Also in this case, our presentation is by no means intended to be the first. The readers can consult, for example, M.E. TATE, "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Study," 22-56; M.A. SWEENEY, "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Research," 141-162; U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 11-46. Moreover, scholars usually offer a brief summary of the history of research in their commentaries or monographs on the Book of Isaiah.

⁶ The term "literary criticism" has to be distinguished from classical usage of the same expression. Formerly, "literary criticism" was used interchangeably with "source criticism," which belongs to historical method. Though both approaches pay close attention to the literary features of the text, their goals are different. "Source criticism" tries to discover the sources behind the text by examining its literary features. More recent "literary criticism" grounds meaning in the literary or surface structure of a text; it focuses on the text as it is, not on the text as it came to be. See among others, P.A. VIVIANO, "Source Criticism," 36. Also H. SIMIAN-YOFRE, *Metodologia dell'Antico Testamento*; 85-90; J. BARTON, *Reading the Old Testament*, 20-29.

⁷ M.A. SWEENEY, "The Book of Isaiah," 141.

⁸ B.S. CHILDS, *Introduction to the Old Testament*. One could also add an article by P.R. ACKROYD, "Isaiah I-XII," 16-48.

⁹ M.E. TATE, "The Book of Isaiah," 51.

2. THIRD ISAIAH: RESEARCH FROM 1990

It is not easy to present the works of the scholars in a certain way that could incorporate their peculiarities. Unlike SEKINE's presentation, we would say that to expose those works in a merely chronological order is not an appropriate way due to their broad spectrum of perspectives. Therefore, we follow a classification practised by TATE, in which he divides his exposition under three headings:

1. The One-Prophet Interpretation
2. The Two/Three-Books Interpretation
3. The One-Book Interpretation

We shall posit the works we are about to analyze, each under the proper heading. And since our main concern is Third Isaiah, at the end of each part consequences of those works on the third part of the Book of Isaiah will be presented. Then, a brief summary of the whole journey will appear at the end of this section.

2.1 THE ONE-PROPHET INTERPRETATION

Notwithstanding the overwhelming majority of scholars hold the diverse-authorship of the Book of Isaiah, two recent commentaries by two biblical scholars still propose the single-authorship interpretation: the Book of Isaiah was written by one prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem from eighth century B.C.E.¹⁰ In his commentary, J. ALEC MOTYER states that the Book of Isaiah has a thematic unity, namely, that of messianism, and is built around the messianic portrait. Respectively, he divides his presentation into three parts: Messiah as King (chs. 1-37); Messiah as Servant (chs. 38-55), and Messiah as Anointed Conqueror (chs. 56-66). This thematic unity is explained by single authorship: the whole literature is the product of Isaiah of Jerusalem. Thus, it originates from the pre-exilic period.¹¹

According to MOTYER, the key point of threefold hypotheses lies at the dating of chs. 40-55. If these chapters, though referring to the exile, are not to be dated during the exile, there is no insuperable difficulty in attributing chs. 56-66 to a pre-exilic, Isaianic origin.¹² By analyzing chs. 40-55 under five headings: literature,

¹⁰ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* and J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*. Motyer actually published two commentaries (1993 and 1999), but, substantially, the content is almost the same. Unless clearly stated, the reference here is to his 1993 commentary.

¹¹ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 25.

¹² J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 36.

geography, history, prophecy, and theology, MOTYER finally concludes that the proposal of a Babylonian provenance for chs. 40-55 is untenable. He proposes that chs. 40-55 came from the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz and not from the exilic period.

Commenting on the generally held opinion that the Book of Isaiah was a product of multiple authors from different periods, Motyer says that

...the fragmentation of the Isaianic literature among multiple authors and along an extended time-line is historically the product of nineteenth century rationalism, which refused to countenance predictive prophecy¹³

Today many would find it impossible to think of the books of the prophets as verbally inspired by God, that is to say, that the chosen human agent not only received from God the essence and 'drift' of the message he was to convey, but was also so wrought and superintended by God that the human words which expressed the message were also the very words of God himself¹⁴

In his later commentary he says,

If prediction is impossible, the movement of the Isaianic literature progressively into the future can be explained only by the supposition of new authors working in those later times¹⁵

Another commentary with a similar approach is that of JOHN N. OSWALT in his two-volume commentary in the NICOT series published in 1986 and 1998. He maintains that chs. 40-66 could be divided into three parts: chs. 40-48; 49-55; and 56-66. Each of them describes the development of God's salvific action through and on behalf of his servant. So he proposes that chs. 40-48 witnesses God's declaration that he will demonstrate his deity to the world by delivering his servant Israel from Babylon; chs. 49-55 turns to the ministry of the servant on behalf of the servants Israel, while chs. 56-66 talks about the life and witness of the delivered servants.¹⁶

Similar to MOTYER, OSWALT also criticizes the commonly accepted hypotheses that chs. 40-55 was written about 540 B.C.E. by proposing that that opinion rests on a prior conviction that Isaiah of Jerusalem could not have known the future in any supernatural way. He holds the opinion that Isaiah of Jerusalem did predict the Babylonian exile. He carries on saying that "perhaps it is the scholarly understanding

¹³ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 25.

¹⁴ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (1999), 31.

¹⁵ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 29.

¹⁶ J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 6.

of the phenomena of biblical prophecy that needs to be corrected, not the traditional view of the book's authorship."¹⁷

The core of the difference between MOTYER and OSWALT on one side and other scholars on the other side, without doubt rests on the concept of biblical prophecy. Here we are reminded of an important principle that the position that one takes in dealing with the sacred text would determine his way of reading. In this case, both scholars are committed to the concept of verbal inspiration that would enable the biblical prophets to deliver predictions of remote future events. The time-span of their predictions would be unlimited. If an eighth-century prophet was able to predict an event which happened two centuries later, then theoretically, there would be no difficulty to say that he could also even predict events of the third millennium. Without neglecting many useful details on textual exploration produced by their researches, we shall agree with TATE's comment, "For good or bad, the works of Oswalt and Motyer are testimony to ongoing presence of the one-prophet interpretation."¹⁸

It is true that OSWALT divides his commentary into two parts (chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-66). This division is, of course, not based on an arbitrary decision or just for a practical purpose. Rather, it could then be argued, that Oswalt realizes an abrupt transition between chs. 39 and 40. The first part of the book (chs. 1-39) deals with the period when the kingdom of Judah still existed under king Hezekiah; while the second part (chs. 40-66) has to do with the Babylonian exile about two centuries after the time of Isaiah of Jerusalem. However, this two-century span time disappears as soon as the idea of prophecy, as future prediction, is attached as a special prophetic ability to the eighth-century prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem. Such a concept of prophecy thus bridges those two periods, that of Isaiah of Jerusalem and that of Babylonian exile. And this is, according to CHILDS, a situation without parallel in the rest of the OT.¹⁹ Verbal inspiration is indeed an easy solution to solve the complexity of the book, but inevitably creates a great problem for fundamental theology.²⁰

It is obvious, therefore, that by attributing these sixty-six chapters of the Book of Isaiah to one prophet, namely Isaiah of Jerusalem from eighth century B.C.E., MOTYER and OSWALT have rejected two things: the existence of other anonymous

¹⁷ J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 6.

¹⁸ M.E. TATE, "The Book of Isaiah," 27

¹⁹ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 290.

²⁰ U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 12.

prophets, to whom chs. 40-66 (or 40-55 and 56-66) are usually attributed and the hypotheses that chs. 40-66 (or 40-55 and 56-66) may have existed independently, apart from chs. 1-39, the traditional section that is usually related to Isaiah of Jerusalem. No particular (and historical) problems need be dealt with in the post-exilic community since everything belongs to the prophet's prophecy. However, this opinion does not necessarily negate the existence of chs. 40-66 (or 40-55 and 56-66) as a distinct *literary* unit. And this is supported by the way they treated chs. 56-66 in their commentaries.²¹

2.2 THE TWO/THREE-BOOK INTERPRETATION

In this section, we shall put the works that accept the traditional division of the book, either the twofold division (chs. 1-39 and 40-66) or the threefold division (chs. 1-39; 40-55 and 56-66), and treat each of them separately.

In the first place we shall mention a monograph by KLAUS KOENEN published in 1990, which is dedicated to the third part of the Book of Isaiah.²² Employing traditional literary criticism and redaction criticism, KOENEN attempted to discover the formation of chs. 56-66 of the Book of Isaiah. From this formation, he tried to draw the theological insight of Third Isaiah.

Due to the similarity in content and language, as it is common procedure in source criticism,²³ a series of texts in Third Isaiah can be attributed to certain hands. Therefore, KOENEN argued that Third Isaiah is, basically, composed of two layers. The first layer goes back to an anonymous prophet from 520-515 B.C.E. Perhaps he was a leader of his group. He claimed to be the Spirit bearer (Isa 61,1 cf. 42,1). Since he often cited or alluded to Second Isaiah, KOENEN thought that this anonymous prophet, whom he called Third Isaiah, should be regarded as the "student" of Second Isaiah, the great exilic prophet.²⁴ He continued the work of his predecessor by reinterpreting and actualizing his message in his own particular circumstance, namely, the fact that the promise of salvation delivered by Second Isaiah had been delayed. The message of Third Isaiah, therefore, is to explain why the delay of the coming of

²¹ Motyer proposed a chiastic structure of chs. 56-66 with 59,14-63,6 as the central panel. J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 461. Oswalt divides chs. 40-66 into three parts: 40-48/49-55/56-66. Further, he suggested that chs. 56-66 shows a chiastic structure in which chs. 60-62 occupied the central position. J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 15. 465. In addition, Oswalt also wrote a brief article dealing with chs. 56-66. Based on the analysis of the root צדק, he argued that chs. 56-66 in the present form are the result of a dialogue with both preceding sections of the book (1-39 and 40-55). See J.N. OSWALT, "Righteousness in Isaiah," 179-191.

²² K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*.

²³ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 7-8.

²⁴ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 216.

salvation promised occurred. His answer is twofold: on the one hand, the sin of Israel had hindered the coming of salvation and, on the other hand, he assured the people that salvation would certainly come.²⁵

The second layer, thus KOENEN, was the work of a redactor in the period of Ezra-Nehemiah (the second half of the fifth century B.C.E.), when the religious reform introduced by Ezra and Nehemiah took a rigid policy against foreigners: no foreigner was allowed to participate in the Temple cult. This policy led to the division in the community. In the face of this new situation, the redactor, whom KOENEN designated as an "author" of Third Isaiah as well,²⁶ elaborated and reinterpreted the work of the former prophets. Unlike Third Isaiah, this redactor was struggling with the question: who will participate in the salvation to come? His answer is clear: salvation is only for the just; the unjust, on the contrary, will be punished.²⁷

Thus, Isa 56-66 is an extrapolation, and at the same time continuation, of Second Isaiah. Both, Third Isaiah and the redactor, received the same message of Second Isaiah though it is true that due to the different circumstances that they dealt with, the redactor differed considerably from Third Isaiah in certain aspects. They developed further the proclamation of Second Isaiah and at the same time, added ethical aspects to it. Ethic is the *conditio sine qua non* of the coming of salvation promised. According to KOENEN, this is the central theme of Third Isaiah, and also, of course, the origin of the title of his book.

Still in the same direction as KOENEN, in 1994 another German scholar WOLFGANG LAU launched his work on Third Isaiah.²⁸ According to LAU, Third Isaiah is a *Fortschreibung*²⁹ of Second Isaiah from different hands and different periods. It is a *mixtum compositum*.³⁰

LAU proposed that the core of Third Isaiah is found in chs. 60-62, which are close to chs. 40-55. These three chapters came from the same anonymous author who worked in the first half of the fifth century B.C.E., whom LAU named "Trito Isaiah." Then, in the following periods this block was expanded by his followers. According

²⁵ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 217.

²⁶ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 222.

²⁷ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 234.

²⁸ W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*.

²⁹ On this term, Blenkinsopp commented, "There is no term in English corresponding exactly to the German *Fortschreibung* often used to characterize this type of literary activity. What is implied in this idea of 'ongoing writing' is the transmission of a complex of themes and beliefs, in the course of which they undergo development, modification, reinterpretation, and reconfiguration to meet the demands of new situations as they arise." J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 77. In other parts, however, he translated this word as 'exegetical extension', 'literary extension', or 'expansive comment.' Similar description is also offered by B.S. CHILDS, "Retrospective Reading," 363-364.

³⁰ W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 5.

to LAU, there were three compilations produced by three circles of tradents (*Tradentenkreise I, II, III*), which were built around the nucleus chs. 60-62. These compilations were distinguished according to the same theological thought, rather than the same period of composition or authorship.³¹ At the final stage of the development of the book, the above-mentioned texts were joined in the final redaction with the individual traditions (*Einzelüberlieferungen*) that stand by themselves (56,1-8; 63,1-6; 64,7-64,11). According to LAU, this group of texts could not be designated as *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, but rather as remarks or commentaries on Isaianic tradition.³² They do not follow a common theological line, and originate from different periods.

As the title of LAU's work indicated, the block of chs. 56-66 is a scribal work presented as prophecy (*Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*). The authors announced nothing orally, but quoted the older, already existing materials, not only from prophetic sources but also from other sources,³³ and thus, demonstrated themselves as "scribal prophets."³⁴ This, of course, assumes that the material quoted has already got a certain status as authoritative writing. At the same time, by quoting them, the later authors could legitimize their new composition.³⁵ In addition, LAU also suggested that in composing their words, these prophets-authors followed four textual traditions: the tradition of Zion/Jerusalem (cf. 2,2-4), the servants of God (42,1), the Holy One of Israel (6,1), and the Exodus-tradition.

Thus the block of chs. 56-66 is a result of exegetical processes by the tradents of Third Isaiah by extrapolating, reinterpreting, thus actualizing the already existing material to meet the new situation. In so doing, they took the four traditions above as their literary references, though the connection between them is not always the same. Some authors may frequently quote their sources, while the others less. The date of composition of chs. 56-66, as we have mentioned, can only be given in general. The more precise dates of each section of the book cannot be determined.

Another scholar, who attempted to pursue the development and authorship of the Book of Isaiah, is PAUL A. SMITH.³⁶ Notwithstanding the scholarly shift of paradigm in dealing with the Book of Isaiah, which goes from three-book

³¹ Thus, *Tradentenkreise I* (57,14-21*; 66,7-14a; 65,16b-25) concentrates on eschatological salvation of Jerusalem; *Tradentenkreise II* (66,18-24*; 57,3-13; 66,1-4.5ss.14b-17; 65,1-7.8-12.13-16a) is about criticism to the cult; and *Tradentenkreise III* (59,1-21*; 56,9-12 + 57,1-2; 58,1-14*) criticizes the social life of the community.

³² W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 315.

³³ The list of the material used by the authors of chs. 56-66 can be found in LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 349-357.

³⁴ W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 13.

³⁵ W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 317.

³⁶ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*.

composed in Palestine in the early restoration period, though it does not necessarily mean that it was written on one occasion.⁴⁷

According to SCHRAMM, Second Isaiah had delivered a powerful message about YHWH's salvation upon Israel. On the one hand, Third Isaiah continued this powerful proclamation (56,1; 60,1), on the other hand, however, he had to explain why the realization of this powerful proclamation had been delayed and at the same time, to identify and define who will participate in the salvation promised.⁴⁸ In his work, however, SCHRAMM did not explore further the first question; rather he went through the second question. Contrary to HANSON's thesis,⁴⁹ SCHRAMM insisted that the group being attacked by Third Isaiah was the same group attacked by other books of the Hebrew Bible, namely, those who practised traditional syncretistic cult, an old problem that still persisted down to the post-exilic period.⁵⁰ According to SCHRAMM, Third Isaiah is the representative of the interests and the theology of the Babylonian *gôlâ*; in other words, Third Isaiah was written *by* the very group that HANSON claims it was written *against*.⁵¹

As SCHRAMM himself admitted, his proposal is not entirely new.⁵² Numerous scholars have argued that Third Isaiah is a representative of the theology of Babylonian diaspora Judaism. What makes SCHRAMM's work important is the fact that he put his investigation in the context of discussion against HANSON's. If it were not for HANSON's work, it could be discussed whether his work would have achieved such an importance.

Recently, HANSON's position in identifying the opponents of Third Isaiah as those who returned from exile finds support from MARGARET BARKER who contributes the section on Isaiah in the latest one-volume commentary launched by William B. Eerdmans in 2003.⁵³ It could be said that her contribution is not only the most recent chronologically, but also offers new insight. Her first claim is that the Book of Isaiah has a close relationship with 1 Enoch. This claim was justified by similarities of themes in Isa and 1 Enoch; for example the presence of angel, the

⁴⁷ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 51.

⁴⁸ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 81

⁴⁹ HANSON argued that the conflict was between the hierocratic rulers consisting of Zadokite priests and those who had returned from exile and were very much influenced by the restoration program of Ezek 40-48, and the visionary group, which was made up of the disciples of Second Isaiah and other groups who had not gone to exile. In this struggle for power, the visionary group was marginalized. Furthermore, Hanson stated that Third Isaiah was produced by the latter group in order to attack the former.

⁵⁰ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 81.177-179.

⁵¹ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 179.

⁵² B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 179.

⁵³ M. BARKER, "Isaiah," 489-542.

messianic and royal traditions, the call narrative, etc. From this she drew a conclusion that "Isaiah's was the faith and tradition of Jerusalem before the influence of the Deuteronomists."⁵⁴ Furthermore, she continues that the Book of Isaiah is a priestly book, though throughout the book the priestly voice appears in different moods. This change of mood reflects the changes and divisions within the priestly circle with the arrival of the Deuteronomists.

With regard to the history of the composition of the book, she adopts the traditional threefold division. Chronologically, the prophet Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (cf. Isa 1,1). She states that this was the period of the old, traditional religion of Judah. Second Isaiah was the heir of the original Isaiah tradition and used them in a new situation. She dates the composition of Second Isaiah between 550-532 B.C.E. However, chs. 49-55 perhaps came from a later period, when the return to Jerusalem was a real possibility. She also argues that Second Isaiah reflected the first impact of the Deuteronomist reform. Third Isaiah used the oracles of his predecessor as the basis of his polemic, either as a critical contemporary or speaking for a disillusioned later generation. Seen from the priestly perspective, BARKER argues, without offering detailed argumentation though, that "Trito-Isaiah is the voice of the ousted priests, those who kept to the older ways but found themselves excluded by post-exilic innovations."⁵⁵ They were driven out of Jerusalem together with "the people of the land" who did not meet the stringent new requirements for purity. The fact that Third Isaiah says a lot about the enemies of the LORD, but does not mention the people of the land is understood by BARKER that Third Isaiah was the spokesman of the people of the land, and the enemies of the LORD were the returned exiles.⁵⁶ With this conclusion, BARKER arrives at the same conclusion as HANSON though the road she takes is different.

A recent monograph entitled *Volk und Gemeinde im Wandel*⁵⁷ written by LESZEK RUSZKOWSKI deals with Third Isaiah with somewhat different emphasis. As the title of his book indicates, he studied the third part of the Book of Isaiah with special attention given to Third Isaiah's use of the concept of "people" (*Volk*) and "community" (*Gemeinde*) as a literary-theological phenomenon, and not only as a historical reality.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ M. BARKER, "Isaiah," 492.

⁵⁵ M. BARKER, "Isaiah," 495.

⁵⁶ M. BARKER, "Isaiah," 536.

⁵⁷ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*.

⁵⁸ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 13.

interpretation to one-book interpretation, SMITH insisted that "a study of structure, growth and authorship of chs. 56-66 in its own right remains both possible and a necessary starting point for any study of these wider Isaianic issues."³⁷ By employing rhetorical and stylistic analysis, he identified five literary units in chs. 56-66, which, unlike the scholars who argued for single-authorship or multiple-authorship of Third Isaiah, he attributed to only two prophetic figures, whom he called TI and TI₂, who worked between 538 and 515 B.C.E.

According to SMITH, the growth of Third Isaiah can be summarized as follows:³⁸ the nucleus of Third Isaiah, which he claimed as coming from the hand of TI, who reinterpreted the message of Second Isaiah to meet the needs of his contemporaries, is the unit of 60,1-63,6. Then come, at a later period, four literary units 56,1-8; 58,1-59,20; 56,9-57,21 and 65,1-66,17. These four units were the work of a single author TI₂ who creatively reinterpreted and adapted earlier tradition by combining the message of Second Isaiah and other pre-exilic prophecies.³⁹ The situation in the post-exilic Israel community had changed so that TI₂ was forced to make necessary adaptations.

At the end of his work, SMITH attempted to reconstruct the historical background that has given birth to Third Isaiah. Early after the return from exile, there appeared Third Isaiah who developed and proclaimed the message of joy and salvation from Second Isaiah (60,1-63,6). It would seem, however, that the fulfillment of the promise has not yet come. The situation in Jerusalem and Judah remained hopeless, as during the exile. This situation indeed required an explanatory response. In such a situation, therefore, it is also possible that a part of the people looked back and practised the old idolatry cult as a response to such a disparate situation. This would explain the presence of the passages with the polemical tone against idolatry or syncretism. Under the influence of Haggai, one possible response was that to rebuild the Temple could be the necessary prerequisite before the salvation of YHWH might come. Another group, which SMITH thought was supported by TI₂, opposed this plan by arguing that the building the Temple would not change the situation as long as injustice and syncretism still existed in the community. At this point, SMITH argued that Third Isaiah did not attack the Temple as such, but was against the opinion that

³⁷ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 5.

³⁸ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 204-205.

³⁹ The remaining sections, 66,18-24 and 59,21 are later additions. Smith thought that they were probably written in the mid-fifth century at the earliest. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 188-189. 205.

building the Temple was the *only* key to hasten God's intervention. The conflict became worse and, finally, led to a definitive division in the post-exilic community.⁴⁰

In his work, it seems that SMITH has succeeded in presenting the growth of Third Isaiah as a literary work and, at the same time, the development of the post-exilic Israel community. However, in our opinion, there are two points that remain untouched properly. Is it necessary to attribute the four literary units to another author distinct from Third Isaiah? SMITH admitted that "it remains possible that they could be attributed to the prophet TI's having adapted his message for changing times and situations, which would explain the linguistic connections on the one hand, and the changes in outlook on the other."⁴¹ This in turn, would render his adapting of linguistic criteria to determine different authors at work in a literary corpus less convincing. Is it not possible that it was Third Isaiah himself, rather than Third Isaiah₂ (TI₂) who produced the linguistic and stylistic phenomena from a particular literary period?⁴² SMITH's position on the problem of syncretism seems also ambiguous. Does he think that many members of the community have returned to syncretistic practices as a *response to their disillusioning circumstance*?⁴³ Or does he hold that a syncretism attitude had *already* been at work in the early post-exilic community, so that he saw the building program as of no particular significance?⁴⁴

A monograph on Third Isaiah written by BROOKS SCHRAMM⁴⁵ is another attempt to understand the post-exilic Judean community insofar as it appears in the third part of the Book of Isaiah. As it is indicated by the title of his work, SCHRAMM tried to identify the opponents, which were being attacked by Third Isaiah. In this case, his book would be better understood in the background of PAUL D. HANSON's famous and provocative book *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*.⁴⁶

SCHRAMM stated that the dominant characteristic of Third Isaiah is its polemical nature (though it is not evident in chs. 60-62). Third Isaiah's conflict is not directed outwardly; rather it is within the restoration community. Then, he argued that chs. 56-66 should be read in connection with chs. 40-55. Because of the closeness between chs. 56-66 and chs. 40-55, SCHRAMM thought that Third Isaiah was

⁴⁰ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 187-207.

⁴¹ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 177-178.

⁴² The first criterion for distinguishing the work of different authors, which was cited from Williamson, is "Because of the possibility of linguistic and stylistic phenomena reflecting only the style of a particular literary period, a substantial number of words or stylistic peculiarities should be produced." P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 178.

⁴³ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 196. 199.

⁴⁴ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 195.

⁴⁵ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*.

⁴⁶ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*.

He put the discussion on these concepts in the context of responding to the failure of prophecy. Unlike other scholars⁵⁹ who read chs. 56-66 as reaction to the absence of the salvation promised by Second Isaiah, RUSZKOWSKI proposed that the confrontation between prophecy and reaction could already be recognized within chs. 56-66. He stated that in the section of chs. 56-66 the promise of salvation is found in chs. 60-62, which form the central panel of this section. It is so close to Second Isaiah that RUSZKOWSKI regarded chs. 60-62 as the earliest section in Third Isaiah.

When, in the post-exilic period, this promise did not come true, these three chapters were further reworked, reinterpreted, and extrapolated; the result of which is now found in chs. 56-59 and 63-66. The fact that the chapters contained the failed prophecy were not deleted from the book, is a sign that they already had an authoritative status as prophetic words. Therefore, it is necessary to defend its authority.⁶⁰ Thus, chs. 56-59 and 63-66 are series of later additions, which were intended to protect the credibility of the prophecy found in chs. 60-62. They, especially chs. 58-59, tried to explain why the salvation promised has not come.

At the same time, however, attempts to explain the failure of the promise would inevitably lead to a division in the post-exilic community. One group belongs to those who committed sins, another not. One group is the oppressor; the other is the oppressed, etc. Exactly at this point RUSZKOWSKI was able to speak of the distinction between *Volk* und *Gemeinde*, and the change of understanding of these two concepts. The admission to the salvation promised no longer depends on natural belonging to the "people" of Israel, but on each individual's ethical decision. Thus, the "chosen people", which is so dominant in Second Isaiah, is replaced by the people who choose YHWH. It is not YHWH who chooses the people, but it is the people who choose YHWH by doing what pleases him. The concept of the "people" changes so radically in Third Isaiah, that it cannot be understood in its common sense, but points to an eschatological community of YHWH, because one belongs to the "people" through birth and to the "community" through his own decision.⁶¹

Another monograph written by ANNA L. GRANT-HENDERSON, which appeared in 2002, treats Third Isaiah from another perspective.⁶² She argues that Third Isaiah speaks on behalf of post-exilic Israel and foreigners. Based on common phrases, which cannot be viewed as coincidence, Isa 56-66 was created as a unity and

⁵⁹ For example, CARROLL, WILLIAMSON, BLENKINSOPP, ZIMMERLI, KRAUS.

⁶⁰ Furthermore, Ruskowski stated that there are two possibilities in dealing with unfulfilled prophecy: *to (re)interpret* it in a new way so that its failure could be understood and *to demonstrate* with any possible manner that it has, as a matter of fact, been fulfilled. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 17-18.

⁶¹ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 174

⁶² A. L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*.

was composed by one author, who wrote in the context of polemic against the reforms of Ezra/Nehemiah and Ezekiel. Because the author had a single purpose, she furthermore argues that Third Isaiah was written on one occasion.⁶³ To be more precise, she placed the date of Third Isaiah's composition at 400 B.C.E. or even later.⁶⁴

Though her work is primarily concentrated on chs. 56-66, she admits that what is offered by these chapters is not unrelated to previous chapters of the Book of Isaiah. In her opinion, Third Isaiah conveys a message, which combines the message of chs. 1-39 and 40-55. Isa 1-39 puts the emphasis on the people's behaviour as required by God in order to avoid punishment (cf. 1,16-20; 28,16-22); while chs. 40-55 consist of God's promises that are not dependent on the people's action but assume that the people will follow and do what God requires (41,10; 42,1.6.9.14-16 etc).⁶⁵ Third Isaiah brought both requirements (chs. 1-39) and unconditional promises (chs. 40-55) together. The people are encouraged to continue waiting for God's salvation. Salvation is coming, and requires people to act ethically, but it is an exhortation and not a condition. The message, however, remains unconditional.

Considering the advance of scholarly research on Third Isaiah up to our present day, GRANT-HENDERSON's book can be regarded as simplifying too much the complicated character of the text and the development of Third Isaiah. Moreover, she does not provide the readers with sufficient argumentation as to how she could arrive at her conclusion with regard to the problem of authorship and the date of composition.

The most recent commentary on Third Isaiah is that of JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP, which is the third part of his three-volume commentary on the Book of Isaiah.⁶⁶ In his introduction to his first volume, BLENKINSOPP admitted that "writing a commentary on Isa 1-39 in the middle of a paradigm shift has not been easy."⁶⁷ With regards to the holistic reading tendency, such as canonical criticism or literary criticism, which appear in the last few decades, he asserted:

Attention to the canonical shaping of the book is frequently recommended in recent Isaian studies. The canonical approach is to be welcomed as a contribution to the theological understanding of the book as in some sense a unity, but it cannot by itself resolve critical issues having to do with the formation of the book. Theological

⁶³ A. L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*, 1. 26. 45-46.

⁶⁴ A. L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*, 67.

⁶⁵ A. L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*, 6.

⁶⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 1-39*; ID., *Isaiah 40-55*; ID., *Isaiah 56-66*.

⁶⁷ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 1-39*, 73.

reflection on the book as a whole should follow critical study of its formation not substitute for it⁶⁸

Therefore, the fact that at this moment we have at our disposal his three-volume commentary, divided into three parts according to the Duhmian hypotheses, would show that BLENKINSOPP takes the route of historical research.⁶⁹ This is confirmed by his treatment of the historical context of Isa 56-66 based on the material drawn from non-biblical sources, which he thought to be corresponding to the reigns of Darius I (522-486), Xerxes I (486-465), and Artaxerxes I (465-424).⁷⁰ From this observation and comparison with other biblical texts, especially Ezr 9-10, Blenkinsopp arrived at a provisional conclusion that chs. 65-66 reflect the situation in Judah from shortly before the activity of Ezra (458) to the arrival of Nehemiah (445). Isa 60-62, which forms the core of chs. 56-66, due to its closeness to Second Isaiah, would be more appropriate to put in a period close to Second Isaiah. The rest of the material in chs. 56-66 would have originated in a later period, perhaps from the completion of the temple to Ezra's arrival in the province (516/515-458).⁷¹

BLENKINSOPP holds the position that, on the one hand, chs. 56-66 is a composition or compilation distinct from chs. 40-55, but on the other hand, these chapters were essentially ordered to and dependent on chs. 40-55, though it does not mean that chs. 56-66 was composed by a single hand at one time. So close is the relationship between chs. 40-55 and chs. 56-66 that he could state "by careful attention to prophetic speech throughout chs. 40-66, we can detect stages in the development of a prophetic succession leading to the emergence of an eschatologically oriented sect within the Iranian province of Judah some time in the mid-fifth century B.C.E."⁷²

From his reading of chs. 56-66, BLENKINSOPP argues that the situation, which Third Isaiah had to deal with, was a community coloured by disorientation and disillusionment. They were people who had inherited and had themselves been the

⁶⁸ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 1-39*, 78

⁶⁹ This is in accordance with his statement in his previous work on the history of Israel's prophecy, in which he stated "...since our present concern is directly historical and only indirectly literary, our purpose will best be served by retaining the conventional divisions in the interests of orderly presentation of the relevant material." J. BLENKINSOPP, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 99. In this work, since it is an historical study, the three parts of Isaiah are treated in different positions according to their supposed date of compositions.

⁷⁰ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 43.

⁷¹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 54.

⁷² J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 65.

prey of successive disappointments.⁷³ It is then argued that various voices in chs. 56-66 attempted to address this situation by utilizing not only Deutero-Isaianic and other prophetic⁷⁴ legacies but also Deuteronomistic tradition. Third Isaiah's theology - understood as is always done in the context of a particular tradition and it is always a matter of mediating between situation and tradition⁷⁵ - according to BLENKINSOPP, is a theology oriented to the future, which then he called a prophetic eschatology.⁷⁶

The topic of intertextuality, the importance of which was insisted by CHILDS in his commentary, has further been explored by BENJAMIN D. SOMMER.⁷⁷ Unlike CHILDS, who seemed not to differentiate between "intertextuality" and "verbal citation and allusion," SOMMER makes a clear distinction between them. On the one hand, "intertextuality" has as its centre the reader or the text as a thing independent from the author. Therefore, an analysis based on intertextuality belongs to the synchronic approach. "Allusion," and also "influence," on the other hand, put attention on the author, as well as the text and the reader. Thus, it belongs to the diachronic approach or even historicist.⁷⁸ As the first chapter of his work,⁷⁹ in which he presented his methodology, indicates, it is clear that SOMMER is heavily influenced by secular literary theory.

Since chs. 40-66 (or at least chs. 40-55) are rooted in a readily identifiable history, a diachronic approach would prove usable and enriching. Therefore, SOMMER uses "the model of allusion and influence"⁸⁰ as his tool to analyze chs. 40-66, which he designates as Deutero-Isaiah. SOMMER argues that Second Isaiah made use of various traditions; not exclusively Israelite but also the common Near East traditions, such as Accadian, and Mesopotamian, etc. However, in his analysis SOMMER does not

⁷³ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 77. 78. He then carried on by mentioning a series of failed expectations experienced by post-exilic-Israelites.

⁷⁴ Blenkinsopp noted the closeness of some passages in Third Isaiah with Jer 1-12. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 78.

⁷⁵ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 77. 88.

⁷⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 89. By asserting that the future determines life in the present, which refers to the moral life of the individual and community (cf. Isa 56,1), Blenkinsopp seems to agree with Hanson's definition of prophetic eschatology. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 11.18-19

⁷⁷ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*. His article cited in this work previously (n. 74) shows the same argument presented in his book published two years later.

⁷⁸ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 8.

⁷⁹ The heading of the first chapter of Sommer's work is "Literary Theory and the Study of Inner-Biblical Allusion and Exegesis." As Sommer said, the later phrase originally comes from Michael Fishbane in his work *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. See B.D. SOMMER, "Allusion and Illusion," 156 n. 2.

⁸⁰ In fact, it is not always easy to treat certain texts that show similarities to the other texts as allusion, in the sense that one depends on the other. It is also possible to think that both texts share the common source. In the case of real allusions, the next problem to be solved is to determine precisely: who alludes and who is being alluded to. Consequently, it leads to the difficult problem of dating the texts. So, it is not surprising that Sommer must often give a long justification for his revising of the date of certain texts so that they may fit with his argumentations.

cover these non-Israel traditions very much; rather he limits himself to the Israelite (biblical) tradition, namely, the prophetic tradition (especially Jeremiah and First Isaiah), psalms and lament tradition, and pentateuchal tradition.

As for Israel's prophetic tradition,⁸¹ the nature of Second Isaiah's allusions can be categorized as:

- a. reversal: often Second Isaiah comforts the people with the same language by which his predecessor (Jeremiah and Isaiah) rebuked the people;
- b. reprediction: Second Isaiah paraphrased the older prophecies to make them come afresh. In this case it involves updating older prophecies that SOMMER terms as *historical recontextualization*.
- c. fulfillment of earlier prophecies: through Second Isaiah, YHWH proclaims that he is unique and trustworthy and that the people should realize this because what would take place now had been pronounced before.

The technique or stylistic features of Second Isaiah's allusions to his source can be described as *the split up pattern, sound play, word play, and word order*.⁸²

Having thoroughly analyzed Second Isaiah's allusion to the older prophetic traditions, SOMMER concluded that the allusion to Jeremiah is stronger than to Isaiah.⁸³ Therefore, unlike the commonly held position that Second Isaiah was a successor or a continuation of Isaiah of Jerusalem, he argues, "Deutero-Isaiah did not attempt to connect himself to First Isaiah in any special or unique way."⁸⁴ He did not exclusively belong to Isaianic tradition or to a Jeremianic circle, but rather to a wider prophetic tradition and used the same techniques to handle the work of more than one predecessor. By alluding to his predecessors Second Isaiah confirmed their credibility as YHWH's messengers, and at the same time bolstered his own authority: my words are believable since they come from the same source.⁸⁵ In his time, the latter purpose had become important because Second Isaiah would have to defend himself as a true

⁸¹ Allusions to psalms and lamentation are also characterized by reversal, repetition of the promise; while polemical nature was the nature of Deutero-Isaiah's allusion to pentateuchal tradition. B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 108ss.

⁸² B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 68-71.

⁸³ William L. Holladay also noticed the similarities between Isa 40-66 and Jeremiah. But he went in another direction. For him, it is the way Deutero-Isaiah treated Jeremiah's texts that is his 'non-imitable signature' so that the notion that chs. 56-66 have to be attributed to another prophet must be rejected. It is Deutero-Isaiah himself who produced chs. 56-66 in a later period. W.L. HOLLADAY, "Was Trito-Isaiah," 103-217.

⁸⁴ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 106. Utilizing this conclusion, in his article Sommer criticizes scholars who attempted to show the unity of the Book of Isaiah by means of redactional working. But then he somewhat neutralized his criticism by stating, "Canon critics and others are correct to note that the book of Isaiah displays this element of unity. They err in the historical conclusions they reach on the basis of that synchronic parallel." B.D. SOMMER, "Allusions and Illusions," 183.

⁸⁵ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 153.

prophet of YHWH without direct inspiration as happened to the former prophets. Thus, following SOMMER's formulation, "Deutero-Isaiah was a pivotal figure in the movement from the predominantly oracle-based religion of ancient Israel to the more hermeneutically based religion of the second temple period."⁸⁶

But, then we shall ask: How about Third Isaiah? SOMMER discussed this topic in the appendix of his book. After confronting the scholars' opinions who support the existence of Third Isaiah, SOMMER arrives at his conclusion that

no convincing evidence has yet been marshaled to demonstrate such a thesis (the existence of Trito-Isaiah). And yet the similarities in language, thought, and style between 40-55 and 56-66 that scholars such as Torrey, Kaufman, and Haran stress cannot prove beyond doubt that the latter chapters were written by the same author as the former; it remains at least possible that the similarities result from the attempt of a follower or followers to imitate the work of a master⁸⁷

It seems clear then, that SOMMER is of the opinion that chs. 40-66 were probably composed by a single author in the exile period utilizing earlier traditions.⁸⁸ Perhaps, he had "Scriptures" as his written sources – hence the title of his work –, though it does not necessarily mean that the documents available to him were in the same form as we have now. In another place, however, and it is interesting because it is found in the footnote, SOMMER admits that

chs. 56-66, and perhaps 49-55 and 35, were written in the land of Israel, but I think that in a phenomenological sense they too can be termed "exilic". Their author composed in a world still in need of rectification, a cosmos that was still not fully come to fruition⁸⁹

Without entering the authorship discussion, we can, therefore, deduce from SOMMER's presentation that chs. 40-66 could be divided into two parts: chs. 40-55 and 56-66. Both are separated from one another geographically and chronologically. From a different direction, HOLLADAY in the work cited before, also arrives at the same conclusion.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 181.

⁸⁷ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 191.

⁸⁸ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 177.

⁸⁹ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 289 n. 73.

⁹⁰ HOLLADAY asserts, "My own view is that if one subtracts a few redactional additions from chaps. 56-66 one hears in the remainder the same individual that is heard in chaps. 40-55. It is a prophet, I assume, that spoke both in Babylon and then in Jerusalem, a prophet who spoke out over a

And now it is the turn of the work of another scholar, CHRISTOPHER R. SEITZ⁹¹ to be discussed. In the *New Interpreter's Bible* series, the section on the Book of Isaiah was divided into two parts; each part was worked on by different scholars. SEITZ wrote the commentary of the second part of the book, namely chs. 40-66.⁹² Notwithstanding his assertion that common form criticism that deals with author, setting, and audience, has become more complicated in the case of chs. 40-66, SEITZ argues that these chapters were written in Babylon with a Jerusalem/Zion-oriented perspective. With regard to the date of composition, instead of giving a somewhat exact date, he just states that the *terminus ab quo* was the collapse of the Babylonian empire and the *terminus ad quem* was the period of the first generation concerned with the restoration of Zion.⁹³ SEITZ adopts the single-authorship hypothesis as the person who had produced chs. 40-66. It is the Servant who was the author of chs. 40-66, who took older forms and adapted these with great freedom to produce a literary work. Later, he got followers who were designated as "those who tremble of God's word" (66,2.5). They formed the core of a group who heard and transmitted the Servant's oracles to a wider audience. Therefore, it seems that for SEITZ the distinction between "Servant" and "servants" implies a chronological order. And as a result, based on the passage of the discourse about the Servant to that of the Servants, SEITZ proposes a break between chs. 40-53 and 54-66. Thus, his division of chs. 40-66 is 40-48; 49,1-52,12; 52,13-53,12; 54-66. In his *ABD* article, however, SEITZ seems to accept the distinction between 40-55 and 56-66, without necessarily giving up his single-authorship conviction. "It is quite possible that chs. 40-55 treat different *aspects* of the restoration of Zion than do chs. 56-66, which demonstrates special interest in the requirements for membership in God's Zion."⁹⁴ The distinction between these two units lies in the sphere of thematic and theological, and not historical. Third Isaiah, then, is more a literary designation for chs. 56-66, rather than pointing to a certain anonymous post-exilic prophet.⁹⁵

substantial enough period of time that fresh circumstances brought shifts in his point of view." W.L. HOLLADAY, "Was Trito-Isaiah," 195, cf. also 217.

⁹¹ C.R. SEITZ, "The Book of Isaiah 40-66," 309-552; ID., "Isaiah, Book of (Third Isaiah)," *ABD* [CD-ROM].

⁹² The commentary on the first part of the book (chs. 1-39) was written by Gene M. Tucker. It means that the NIB follows the universal practice; that the Book of Isaiah has, at least, a twofold division that deserves special treatment.

⁹³ C.R. SEITZ, "Isaiah 40-66," 318.

⁹⁴ C.R. SEITZ, "Isaiah, Book of (Third Isaiah)". In treating the Book of Isaiah, the *ABD* goes along with the tripartite consensus. Seitz wrote articles on First and Third Isaiah; while Clifford worked on Second Isaiah.

⁹⁵ C.R. SEITZ, "Isaiah 40-66," 314; ID., "Isaiah, Book of (Third Isaiah)," 501.

Two other articles by SEITZ could also be mentioned in order to shed light on some points in his general treatment on the Book of Isaiah, especially chs. 40-66.⁹⁶ In the first article SEITZ analyzed Isa 40,1-11 in comparison with the so-called "call narrative of Isaiah," Isa 6,1-13. The linguistic link between those two passages is clear. Following ACKROYD, SEITZ called Isa 40,1-11 as "the renewal of the Isaianic commission"⁹⁷ marking the beginning of "the new things." God speaks again to his divine court, as he did previously to Isaiah of Jerusalem. However, Isa 40,1-11 is not a call narrative in the traditional sense, namely, the call of an anonymous prophet of exile as many scholars suggested. Then, who will accept the call of God? Who will be commissioned? SEITZ argues that it is the Servant who accepted God's call (49,1-6).⁹⁸ In this way, SEITZ's division of chs. 40-66 above finds its justification. In chs. 40-48 God speaks directly from divine council without need of a prophetic agency; while chs. 49-52/53 speak about the Servant who responded to God's call.

As the title indicates SEITZ's second article deals with the question of Isaiah's presence in the second half of the book. At the same time, it also touches on the matter of its authority: how can the materials in chs. 40-66 claim prophetic authority?⁹⁹ Working on the same passage (40,1-11), which he calls as "serving the purpose of moving us from the authorized word of Isaiah into a new dispensation, with prophecy itself in a new mode,"¹⁰⁰ SEITZ asserts that here God is directly addressing Israel. Phrases in 40,5 and 8 that mention the word of God are understood as referring to *previously uttered* words of God, namely the words of the prophet Isaiah. Thus, as he said previously, in chs. 40-48 God speaks from the heavenly court addressing Israel to convey what Isaiah had spoken. In this sense, we can say that Isaiah is still speaking through God's word to Israel. However, in 48,6-7 God also speaks of "new things" (cf. also 42,9; 43,19). Since this prophecy cannot be related to the authorized word of Isaiah, another figure is needed. And precisely in 49,1-6 what could in fact be classified as a "call narrative" appears. To the question about the presence of the prophet Isaiah in the second half of the book, SEITZ answers that the prophet is present "in word, in chaps. 40-48, and in person in chaps. 49 and following - but not by himself. Isaiah ... is represented by the servant who speaks up in chaps. 49 ..."¹⁰¹ Thus, "alongside the transition from *prophet* (Isaiah) to *prophetic word* in

⁹⁶ C.R. SEITZ, "The Divine Council," 229-247; and also ID., "How is the Prophet Isaiah Present," 219-240.

⁹⁷ P.R. ACKROYD, "Isaiah 36-39," 6 cited in C.R. SEITZ, "The Divine Council," 239. 245.

⁹⁸ C.R. SEITZ, "The Divine Council," 246.

⁹⁹ C.R. SEITZ, "How is the Prophet Isaiah Present," 224.

¹⁰⁰ C.R. SEITZ, "How is the Prophet Isaiah Present," 229.

¹⁰¹ C.R. SEITZ, "How is the Prophet Isaiah Present," 237.

chaps. 40-48, one sees in chaps. 49 and following a transition from *prophets* to *servant* and then *servants*.¹⁰²

Without intending to explore deeper its theological or pastoral aspects, a brief mention should be made of the most recent official document of the **PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION**.¹⁰³ To be sure, this document is not a document on the Book of Isaiah or other biblical books. However, its way of presenting biblical books, especially the Book of Isaiah, may indicate the Commission's perception. It is clear that the Commission adopts the traditional tripartite division of the Book of Isaiah. Some relevant passages could be here presented:

Among the eighth century prophets... For *Isaiah*, ... (II.B.8.a)

In the anguished situation of the *Exile* – after the loss of the Land – *Second Isaiah*, a prophet whose name is unknown, announced to the exiles an unheard-of message: the Lord was about to repeat his original liberating intervention – that of the Exodus from Egypt – and even to surpass it. (II.B.3.a; also II.B.4.a; II.B.9.c)

After the return of the exiles, seen as imminent by *Second Isaiah* and soon to become reality – but not in a very spectacular manner – the hope of *eschatological liberation* began to dawn: the spiritual successors of the exilic prophet announced the fulfillment, yet to come, of the redemption of Israel as a divine intervention at the end of time. (II.B.3.a)

From these examples, the Commission's understanding of the Book of Isaiah can be summarized as follows:

- a. The Book of Isaiah was written by three distinct persons and covered three different periods: eighth century – exilic – post-exilic.
- b. *Second Isaiah* is a historical anonymous person.
- c. The term *Third Isaiah* is not explicitly used. However, from the passage above, it is clear that the Commission is of the opinion that there was more than one person who was behind the third part of the Book of Isaiah. And they are understood as the spiritual successors of *Second Isaiah*.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² C.R. SEITZ, "How is the Prophet Isaiah Present," 238.

¹⁰³ PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, *The Jewish People*, 2001.

¹⁰⁴ It should be here noted that the position of PBC represented in this document differs considerably from the position maintained previously. On 28 June 1908 PBC published *De libri Isaiae indole et auctore*, a document that dealt with the problem of the unity of authorship of the book of Isaiah. "Whether the philological argument, one derived from the language and the style, and employed to impugn the identity of the author of the book of Isaiah, is to be considered weighty enough to compel a man of judgment, versed in the principles of criticism and well acquainted with Hebrew,

- d. Thus, the common designations: *First*, *Second*, and *Third Isaiah*, though the latter is not directly mentioned, are used to point to historical figures and not merely as literary designation.

In this section, we have presented the works that, more or less, follow the standard two or threefold division of the Book of Isaiah. Indeed, in the present state, there is more and more tendency to treat the Book of Isaiah as a literary unit and that each part of the book should be read in connection with other parts. However, this does not necessarily invalidate attempts that discuss each part of the book separately. Thus, we have in this section the works that, in a sense, accept the existence of Third Isaiah as a distinct entity. However, it should be added that what those scholars meant by "Third Isaiah" is not always the same.

For the majority of the works discussed above, "Third Isaiah" was a product of anonymous post-exilic authors distinct from the authors of other parts of the book (particularly, KOENEN, LAU, SMITH, SCHRAMM, RUZSKOWSKI). In this case, they are along the same line as the previous publications on Third Isaiah since DUHM and those who supported him. The opinion of SOMMER and HOLLADAY is different. These two scholars reject the idea that Third Isaiah was written by another author(s) than Second Isaiah. According to them, there is no prophetic figure called Third Isaiah. Chs. 40-66 was composed by a single author, namely Second Isaiah. However, as we have noted earlier, both scholars admit that chs. 56-66 are a distinct literary unit that differs geographically and chronologically from chs. 40-55.

Without discussing further the opinions of the scholars presented above, it would seem enough for us to affirm that in the midst of paradigm-shift, the existence of Third Isaiah, either as a product of prophetic figure(s) or as literary designation, is still being confirmed.

2.3 THE ONE-BOOK INTERPRETATION

RICHARD J. CLIFFORD¹⁰⁵ insists on the unity of the Book of Isaiah but at the same time, still holds the Duhmian threefold division of the book. Based on the idea proposed by the scholars that chs. 36-39 form the bridging role between chs. 1-35 and

to acknowledge in the same book a plurality of authors. *Answer: In the negative*". See *AAS* 41 (1908) 613.

¹⁰⁵ R.J. CLIFFORD, "The Unity," 1-17.

40-66 and other evidence, CLIFFORD concludes that chs. 40-55 are the theological centre of the whole book of Isaiah.¹⁰⁶ He maintains that Second Isaiah interpreted the Isaianic tradition (not necessarily identical with the present chs. 1-35) for sixth-century exiles, both by composing chs. 40-55 and, possibly, by editing some form of chs. 1-35.¹⁰⁷ He demonstrates this by analyzing three major themes in Second Isaiah: exodus-conquest, creation, and Cyrus, instead of davidic king, is YHWH's king, which seems to stand outside the existing tradition. He then demonstrates that those themes are derived from Isaianic tradition and therefore, reinforce the unity of the book. He continues to argue from three Deutero-Isaianic topics, only one is further developed by Third Isaiah, namely: the creation of Zion. For him, Zion is the theme of Third Isaiah, of which the centrepiece is chs. 60-62, the description of the glorious city.¹⁰⁸ As his conclusion, he argues that the difference of formulation of creation and Zion in each part of the book can be explained by different pastoral programs.¹⁰⁹

It seems that in his article, CLIFFORD attempts to combine two things: the unity and, at the same time, the disunity of the book. One main topic is developed in three parts of the Book of Isaiah, practically, in a linear development along with the different historical context. Thus, implicitly, it could be said that the formation of three parts of the book follows a chronological order. Of course, he does not enter the discussion on the complicated history of the formation of the book. His approach is based on the text in its final form. His observation that from three Deutero-Isaianic themes only one that is developed in Third Isaiah is understandable. The exodus-conquest theme was no longer needed as soon as the exiles returned to Judah; this is also the case with the kingship theme. Since Cyrus was described positively in chs. 40-55, then it is reasonable to assume that at the period of Third Isaiah, the Persian political dominion was accepted as divinely mandated¹¹⁰. In such a case, there was no need to talk about kingship. However, the description of Zion, the third theme, as a glorious city, may create a question: Why has Third Isaiah changed its direction towards the future? What has driven him to do that?

Another thematic approach has been proposed by a Dutch scholar, WILLEM A.M. BEUKEN, who worked on Third Isaiah in his article that appeared in the 1990's.¹¹¹ According to BEUKEN, the "Servant (of YHWH)" in Second Isaiah and "the-

¹⁰⁶ R.J. CLIFFORD, "The Unity," 2.

¹⁰⁷ R.J. CLIFFORD, "The Unity," 2.

¹⁰⁸ R.J. CLIFFORD, "The Unity," 16. He treated Third Isaiah in less than two pages long. However, in his brief presentation he proposed the chiasmic structure of the third part of the Book of Isaiah.

¹⁰⁹ R.J. CLIFFORD, "The Unity," 17.

¹¹⁰ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 76.

¹¹¹ W.A.M. BEUKEN, "The Main Theme," 67-87. Also another article, ID., "Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI," 204-221.

servants (of YHWH)" in Third Isaiah are closely connected. Thus, his thesis is that, as his article's title indicates, the whole work of Third Isaiah works on the question of the servants of YHWH, until the last place where the term is found in this corpus (66,14).¹¹² In dealing with his investigation, BEUKEN's approach is mainly literary. Two texts (53,10 and 54,17) are important for him. The former deals with the promise made to the Servant that "he shall see offspring," and thus opens toward the future. The latter, an address to the city that makes it known that its children will live as the servants of YHWH on their own heritage. He argues that "the servants" are present in each part of TI, from the beginning till the end. The absence of the term in the two principal parts (56,9-59,21 and 60,1-63,6) is explained by referring to a literary phenomenon called *aposiopesis*. His conclusion is that the oppressed Zion is the offspring of the Servant of YHWH,¹¹³ and thus the fulfillment of the promise made to the Servant.

By analyzing the term "the servants" and other words that belong to its semantic field, for example, offspring, seed, and righteousness, BEUKEN demonstrates the close relationship that exists between Third Isaiah and Second Isaiah (or perhaps, more precisely, "The Servant Songs" in Deutero Isaiah). Like CLIFFORD, BEUKEN's strategy of reading does not allow him to enter into historical matters, especially with regards to the formation of the book. His analysis, however, seems to imply that the second and third part of the Book of Isaiah could be understood in chronological order.

A series of lectures delivered by HUGH G. M. WILLIAMSON on the occasion of the Didsbury Lectures in 1997,¹¹⁴ could also here be mentioned. In the introductory section WILLIAMSON admitted that in the light of recent researches, it becomes increasingly difficult to hold to the older view that the separate parts of the book grew up in total isolation from one another.¹¹⁵ He argued that the main theme of the Book of Isaiah is messianism. This theme, which is closely connected to kingship, could be found throughout the book, notwithstanding different ways and accents. However, in his discussion on Third Isaiah WILLIAMSON offered a slightly different emphasis. He suggested that chs. 56-66 dealt with the problem of the unfulfilled promise of Second Isaiah. The promise of the exilic prophet that was tied closely with the fall of Babylon to Cyrus and the consequent return of the exiles to Zion, is now cast off into a somewhat more indefinite future. Facing the situation, which may have seemed like a

¹¹² W.A.M. BEUKEN, "The Main Theme," 68.

¹¹³ W.A.M. BEUKEN, "The Main Theme," 81.

¹¹⁴ H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *Variations on a Theme*. The lectures were delivered on 6-9 May 1997.

¹¹⁵ H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *Variations on a Theme*, 10.

denial of the promise - a disappointment that the new age did not arrive quite as suddenly as Second Isaiah had envisaged - this prophet nevertheless keeps faith with the promise and reaffirms it without qualification for a new generation.¹¹⁶

WILLIAMSON then stated that chs. 56-66 give indications of a number of strategies adopted to ease this sense of dissonance between the promise and the reality. According to WILLIAMSON, there are four ways with which Third Isaiah had dealt with this problem:¹¹⁷

- a. The explanation that the fault lies not with God, but with the people (cf. Isa 59). Then the hunt was on to identify and then to eradicate the particular failings in conduct that had led to the delay.
- b. Consequently, the heirs of the promise are no longer the community as a whole, but only those individuals who meet the special condition. Chs. 56-66 show a sharp distinction between the faithful and the wicked.
- c. If the condition of the membership of this true community is a matter of conduct rather than birth, then nothing can prevent the gentile from joining the community (Cf. Isa 56,1-8).
- d. There is a shift of perspective into eschatological hope. The realization of the promise is separated from history and projected forwards into the eschaton (cf. Isa 65,17). In this way, Third Isaiah was approaching the world of apocalyptic.

This would appear to be an example of WILLIAMSON's strategy of reading, which he mentioned in his earlier works.¹¹⁸ On the one hand, he admitted the result of diachronic reading by accepting the commonly held opinion of the threefold division of the book with its multiple authorship hypotheses, on the other hand, however, he took into account the book in its final form, from which he could draw a thematic unity.

Two things are worthy to mention from ROLF RENDTORFF's articles published about 1990:¹¹⁹ his observation concerning the methods and approaches used

¹¹⁶ H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *Variations on a Theme*, 171. Cf. also his earlier work, *The Book Called Isaiah*, 2. 21-22.

¹¹⁷ H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *Variations on a Theme*, 189-206.

¹¹⁸ In addition to the works already mentioned, Williamson especially addressed the strategy of reading in his article, H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, "Synchronic and Diachronic," 211-226.

¹¹⁹ Three of them appear in the book that he edited, *Canon and Theology*: "The Composition," 146-169 (German original "Zum Komposition des Buches Jesaja," *VT* 34 (1984) 295-320); ID., "Isaiah 6," 170-179 (German original "Jesaja 6 im Rahmen der Komposition des Jesajabuchs" in J. VERMEYLEN (ed), *The Book of Isaiah* (Leuven, 1989) 73-82); ID., "Isaiah 56:1," 181-189; and another article: "The Book of Isaiah: A Complex Unity," 32-48.

by scholars in recent period and his own analysis of the Book of Isaiah from literary perspective.¹²⁰ We shall begin with the latter.

Though he admits that the literary boundaries between the three parts of the book are not marked in any special way, RENDTORFF still holds the idea of the threefold division of the Book of Isaiah (1-39; 40-55; 56-66)¹²¹. Like BEUKEN, RENDTORFF's analysis is based on the study on particular words or phrases and themes which occur in the Book of Isaiah. He sees that several words, such as: נחם "to comfort," עון "guilt," כבוד "glory" פשע "transgression," חטא "sin" play an important role in the whole book. The occurrences of these words at strategic positions in three parts of the book, for example ch. 1, 6, 12, 35, 40, 56, become connecting words that unite the book. Indeed, the point of reference is not always the same in each part of the book.

Besides the individual word, RENDTORFF also argues that there are also thematic and theological relationships between the three parts of the Book of Isaiah, such as: Zion/Jerusalem, "remnant," The Holy One of Israel, righteousness/deliverance (צדקה). From the treatment of the theme Zion/Jerusalem, which can be found in the three parts of the book, he notices that in the second part the theme is more elaborated, so that there emerges an impression that the third part is dependent on the second.¹²²

From his analysis RENDTORFF concludes that the second part of the book (chs. 40-55) forms the heart of the present composition and that the two other parts have been shaped and edited in its light, and point toward it.¹²³ With regard to the third part of the book, he argues that its author and/or redactors already had chs. 40-55 in front of them as a self-contained unit and other independent materials as well.¹²⁴ The third

¹²⁰ Rendtorff admitted that his approach is basically influenced by Melugin (*The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*) and Ackroyd ("Isaiah I-XII" and "Isaiah 36-39"). See. R. RENDTORFF, "The Book of Isaiah," 44.

¹²¹ On another occasion, Rendtorff argued that the Book of Isaiah contains texts from at least three different time periods: the eighth century, the exile period, and the post-exilic period. The materials from such periods have been blended together so that there is no clear literary beginning at each part. He also argued that the influence of elements from "Deutero-Isaiah" is clearly discernible in Isa 1-39 and 56-66 so that the Book of Isaiah as we now have shows a unity to a much stronger degree than is generally assumed. R. RENDTORFF, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible*, 167-201.

¹²² R. RENDTORFF, "The Composition," 159.

¹²³ R. RENDTORFF, "The Composition," 167.

¹²⁴ This conclusion is based on Rendtorff's analysis on Isa 56,1 as the opening verse of Third Isaiah. According to Rendtorff, Isa 56,1 juxtaposed two pairs of words (צדקה – משפט and צדקה – ישועה). The first pair appear only in the first part of the book (1-39), while the second part is used exclusively in the second part (40-55). See. R. RENDTORFF, "Isaiah 56:1," 182-184, also ID., "The Composition," 162-164.

part of the book is something different from the two previous parts and it can never have existed independently of the two preceding parts.¹²⁵

It is a fact that in the recent periods, in addition to the traditional historical approach (diachronic), a wide variety of new methodological approaches (synchronic) are being used to read the Book of Isaiah. Though those two approaches are different, it does not necessarily mean to exclude one from another. On the contrary, each can supplement the other. As for the approach that he himself used in his work, RENDTORFF argues that

It seems to me more important first to keep one's gaze for observations on the synchronic level of the present text, without simultaneously making the attempt in each case to answer the questions that arise on the diachronic level¹²⁶

In my view, it is the great advantage of such a sophisticated synchronic reading that the interpreter is able to read the text in its given continuity¹²⁷.

Another scholarly work, which tried to understand the Book of Isaiah in its unity, is that of ROBERT H. O'CONNELL.¹²⁸ His study is a rhetorical-critical analysis, and not form-critical or redaction-critical analysis of the Book of Isaiah. He did not pursue the question of authorship, rather tried to demonstrate the literary pattern that governs the book as a whole and thereby gives it unity, coherence, and rhetorical emphasis.¹²⁹ His thesis in dealing with the Book of Isaiah is twofold

the formal structure of the Book of Isaiah comprises seven asymmetrically concentric sections, each of which presents a complex frameworking pattern of repetition among its unit and that the rhetoric of the book is closest to that of the prophetic covenant disputation. It may be inferred that the book best manifests its structural unity, thematic coherence and rhetorical emphasis when read as an exemplar of prophetic covenant disputation genre¹³⁰

It has to be admitted that O'CONNELL developed his analysis in a highly complicated way. Through his presentation of a considerable number of schemes - 97 pages of his 246-page book consists of schemes - he proposed the structure of the Book as follows:

¹²⁵ RENDTORFF, "Isaiah 56:1," 184; "The Composition," 169.

¹²⁶ R. RENDTORFF, "Isaiah 6," 178.

¹²⁷ R. RENDTORFF, "The Book of Isaiah," 45.

¹²⁸ R.H. O'CONNELL, *Concentricity and Continuity*.

¹²⁹ R.H. O'CONNELL, *Concentricity and Continuity*, 29.

¹³⁰ R.H. O'CONNELL, *Concentricity and Continuity*, 19-20.

- a. 1,1-2,5 : Cameo of a covenant disputation
- b. 2,6-22 : Threat of judgment on idolaters
- c. 3,1-4,1 : Threat of judgment on the unjust
- d. 4,2-12,6 : Syro-Ephraimite-Assyrian scheme for Zion's judgment and restoration
- e. 13,1-39,8 : Assyrian-Babylonian scheme for Zion's judgment and restoration
- f. 40,1-54,17 : YHWH's exoneration
- g. 55,1-66,24 : Final ultimatum

O'CONNELL argued further that the Book of Isaiah in its present form was produced in the sixth century by an author or compiler, who integrated his own writings with the written prophecies of the prophet Isaiah of the eighth-century which had already existed, into a prophetic exemplar of covenant disputation.¹³¹ The book's order was meant to evoke the readers' desire for covenant reconciliation with YHWH.

O'CONNELL proposed that there are two or possibly three groups separated in time and place that became the *destinataires* of the book: the unrepentant people in Zion, contemporaries of Isaiah (eighth-seventh century B.C.E.); the yet-to-be-repentant descendants in exile in Babylonia, and perhaps the same community, after they had returned to Jerusalem, who needed to repent as the condition for rebuilding the Temple and walls in Jerusalem.¹³²

Though his analysis of structure of the book is very complicated and somewhat unusual, O'CONNELL finally arrived at a very simple conclusion regarding the mission and authorship of the Book of Isaiah: the whole book is the product of a single hand, an anonymous genial prophet of the sixth century B.C.E. and has the invitation to repentance as its main purpose. This simple purpose of the book seems to oversimplify the complicated situation of the post-exilic community, which is clearly demonstrated in the text. Then, of course it could be questioned whether or not this simplification of the topic was purposely made for the sake of complicated structure? Thus we may ask: Who is the genius: an anonymous prophet from the sixth century B.C.E. who has composed such a complicated structure or a twentieth-century scholar who has been able to find the structure of the book?

As it could be figured out in advance, a commentary by BREVARD S. CHILDS¹³³ is heavily influenced by canonical consideration. His concern is clearly stated at the outset, that is, "to develop interpretation of the book in an exegetical

¹³¹ R.H. O'CONNELL, *Concentricity and Continuity*, 237.

¹³² R.H. O'CONNELL, *Concentricity and Continuity*, 243-244.

¹³³ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*.

form rather than as a theological or hermeneutical tractate."¹³⁴ CHILDS' position among the Isaianic interpreters can be summarized as follows:¹³⁵

- a. the unity of the book, without agreeing with single-authorship hypothesis, should be maintained;
- b. the same is also valid for the concept of a multilayered composition of the book;
- c. intertextuality plays an important role in interpreting the book;
- d. relationship between synchronic and diachronic approaches should carefully be considered.

CHILDS does not say much about Second Isaiah. It is only a brief overview of the previous researches of Second Isaiah with an emphasis on the composition unity of chs. 40-55. Then, it is interesting to notice, that after three-pages introduction to Second Isaiah, Childs dedicates nine pages to Third Isaiah, a number that is more than the sum of the introductions to First and Second Isaiah put together.

CHILDS argues that chs. 56-66 has to be interpreted as part of the larger literary collection, and not as an independent section. The close relationship between chs. 56-66 and chs. 40-55 is not on the basis of sharing the same oral tradition, but on the level of intertextuality indicated by verbal citations and allusions (also from First Isaiah), though it is not easy to determine the nature of these citations and allusions. This intertextuality is used to highlight the authority of Second Isaiah and to support Third Isaiah's use of the same material, and at the same time to signal continuity with a prior tradition.¹³⁶ This intertextual use by Third Isaiah, however, does not simply establish continuity, but at the same time also results in a reinterpretation of the previous themes. Thus for CHILDS, by means of this intertextuality, the structure of the book in its final form moves in a linear progression.¹³⁷

The work of ULRICH BERGES on the Book of Isaiah is, of course, worthy of mention in this section. In the midst of the paradigm-shift in dealing with the Book of Isaiah, BERGES attempted to do justice with two approaches: the diachronic and the synchronic method, because of the force of the present biblical text itself.¹³⁸ The Book of Isaiah is a literary work, but at the same time, also a testimony of the past. Both aspects must be taken into consideration. One must not choose one aspect at the expense of the other. Therefore he called his approach "diachron reflektierte

¹³⁴ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 3.

¹³⁵ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 3-4.

¹³⁶ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 442, 444. Here, Childs slightly differs from Zimmerli who proposed the idea that Trito-Isaiah was spiritualising Deutero-Isaiah's prophecies to make them fit with the new situation. W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 217-233.

¹³⁷ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 449.

¹³⁸ U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 535.

Synchronie", starting from the surface of the text and then going to a reflection on its diachronic dimension. Instead of searching for the unity of the global structure of the whole book with a risk of reducing its richness and complexities, he claimed the importance of partial compositions ("Teilkomposition").

Synchronically, the Book of Isaiah could be organized into six sections (1-12; 13-27; 28-35; 36-39; 40-48/49-55; 56-66).¹³⁹ Transition from ch. 48 to ch. 49 could be considered together. In this composition, it could be noted that chs. 36-39, which deal with the threat and rescue of Zion, occupy the central panel, and thus sum up the Zion-theology. Though the central part is concluded with the announcement of the Babylonian exile (Isa 39,6-7), unlike other prophetic books such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the Book of Isaiah never tells of the sack of Zion and Jerusalem respectively. Chs. 40-55 continue the Zion-theme by describing the calling out of the exiles (chs. 40-48) and urge the skeptical population of Jerusalem to welcome the new beginning (chs. 49-55). The next to come is a discussion on the openness of the post-exilic community to the worshipers of YHWH from among the gentiles (chs. 56-66). This problem finally resulted in irrevocable division in the community (66,24). Another criterion thus emerges, what is decisive for admission in the community of YHWH is not ethnic but ethnic consideration.

From the diachronic point of view, BERGES is of the opinion that the Book of Isaiah emerged from multiple redactions.¹⁴⁰ At the outset, the two blocks (chs. 1-32 and chs. 40-66) existed independently, though they have a similar topic (Zion-centric). It means that the so-called Second Isaiah (chs. 40-66) is not an extrapolation of First Isaiah as many scholars suggest. Through several redactional editings, each part grew in its own way before they were finally united in the first half of the fifth century B.C.E., by inserting some passages as a connecting bridge (ch. 33.34.35), and became the great Isaiah corpus. According to BERGES, the materials of the book come from different periods, from the time of Isaiah in Jerusalem (eighth century BCE) to the early Hellenistic period (chs. 24-27).

In the next place, four writings would be presented as examples of a different approach employed to read the Book of Isaiah. They are one commentary by PETER D. MISCALL,¹⁴¹ two monographs by EDGAR W. CONRAD¹⁴² and KATHERYN PFISTERER DARR¹⁴³ and one article of BARRY G. WEBB.¹⁴⁴ What unites them so that

¹³⁹ The structure of the whole book is found in U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 547.

¹⁴⁰ See U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 541-548 for the complete presentation of the growth of the Book of Isaiah.

¹⁴¹ P.D. MISCALL, *Isaiah*.

¹⁴² E.W. CONRAD, *Reading Isaiah*.

¹⁴³ K. PFISTERER DARR, *Isaiah's Vision*.

they could be treated together is the similarity of the reading strategy they used. They read the whole book of Isaiah with the perspective of literary criticism used in a more rigid sense. WEBB's approach is more general than that of CONRAD and DARR as he said, "the approach taken is literary as opposed to historical or sociological."¹⁴⁵ We shall start this presentation with WEBB's idea.

In his article, WEBB, who was influenced by an article by DUMBRELL,¹⁴⁶ attempted to develop his thesis that the transformation of Zion is the key to both the formal and the thematic structure of the book as a whole.¹⁴⁷ He argued that analyzing the indicators of formal and thematic unity and the remnant concept in the Book of Isaiah is important in order to understand the book. The first indicator, Isa 1,1 indicates that the whole is to be read as one vision (וִיזוֹן); a vision about the eschaton towards which the book as a whole moves and has the new Jerusalem/Zion as its centre. One key element of this transformation to a new Jerusalem/Zion is a purifying judgment, which will result in the production of a purified remnant, which becomes the nucleus of the new Zion of the Eschaton.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, WEBB argues that "remnant" is not a static concept with a single stable semantic content throughout the book.¹⁴⁹ In each different part of the book, it refers to different entities¹⁵⁰ with the community of the new, eschatological Zion as its final reference. At this final stage, the remnant is not defined in national or ethnic terms, but in confessional and behavioural terms, which also implied openness to foreigners. The process by which the eschatological remnant is finally produced is represented in the book by a variety of metaphors, such as: metal refining, birth, re-growth of a plant, and corner stone.¹⁵¹

While WEBB's strategy of reading is not justified adequately, the methods of DARR and CONRAD are quite well defined. DARR dedicated the first chapter of her book to justifying her strategy of reading, which she called "a reader-oriented method,"¹⁵² a method that seems to be a further development of reader response criticism. This method is built on three premises:¹⁵³

¹⁴⁴ B.G. WEBB, "Zion in Transformation," 65-84.

¹⁴⁵ Then he explained, "That is, the way in which the various elements of the text interact with one another to produce meaning for the present reader, is studied without reference to the putative background and development of the text." B.G. WEBB, "Zion in Transformation," 65.

¹⁴⁶ W.J. DUMBRELL, "The Purpose of the Book of Isaiah," 111-128.

¹⁴⁷ B.G. WEBB, "Zion in Transformation," 67

¹⁴⁸ B.G. WEBB, "Zion in Transformation," 72.

¹⁴⁹ B.G. WEBB, "Zion in Transformation," 73

¹⁵⁰ B.G. WEBB, "Zion in Transformation," 79.

¹⁵¹ B.G. WEBB, "Zion in Transformation," 81-83.

¹⁵² K.P. DARR, *Isaiah's Vision*, 23.

¹⁵³ K.P. DARR, *Isaiah's Vision*, 24-25.

- a. Literature has a rhetorical function and uses rhetorical strategies to communicate with readers;
- b. Meaning results from the dynamic interaction of both the rhetorical strategies of the text and the interpretive structures of its readers;
- c. Many historical, social, linguistic, and literary factors of the text remain relevant for contemporary interpretation by modern readers.

Though DARR defined her method as “a reader-oriented method”, it should immediately be clarified that what she meant by “the reader” is a fictional figure from the fourth century B.C.E. with a series of specifications. DARR’s reader belonged to the post-exilic community; he was a scribe or religious leader and educator enjoying legal rights and social standing, culturally literate and fully at home within his society. He knew basic facts and conventions related to Israel and its world.¹⁵⁴ With such privileges, DARR imagined her reader to be in a special position in the post-exilic Israelite society so that he could possess all the possibilities to read and interpret the Isaiah scroll.

It would mean that DARR reads the Book of Isaiah through the eyes of her fictional Israelite reader from the fourth century B.C.E., and not from the perspective of a reader from the twenty first century. To be able to do this, consequently, knowledge of historical circumstances is absolutely needed. So we find her assertion on her method: “historical criticism and literary criticism are not inevitably antithetical. Some literary criticisms, including our own, rely upon historical critical discoveries.”¹⁵⁵ Thus DARR shows great appreciation for historical-critical studies, while at the same time employing a current literary criticism approach. Her way of reading is unique though it remains hypothetical since it depends on presuppositions regarding the past.

DARR argues that the central issue in the Book of Isaiah is the nature and status of an ongoing relationship between YHWH, Israel and Jerusalem as the capital city. The author of the book frequently employed tropes derived from everyday familial roles and experiences to shed light on the powerful bonds they believed existed between Israel and its God.¹⁵⁶

In our opinion, though DARR called her method as “a reader-oriented method” which gives an emphasis to the reader’s role, it would seem that her method is very much different from the standard “reader-response criticism” as represented, for

¹⁵⁴ K.P. DARR, *Isaiah's Vision*, 30-31.

¹⁵⁵ K.P. DARR, *Isaiah's Vision*, 13.

¹⁵⁶ K.P. DARR, *Isaiah's Vision*, 35.

example, by STANLEY FISH¹⁵⁷ or WOLFGANG ISER.¹⁵⁸ Reader response criticism as a theory of interpretation usually deals with the relationship between the text and the *present* reader, especially with regards to meaning production.¹⁵⁹ Because DARR attempted to reconstruct a reader from the fourth century B.C.E., which means (almost) contemporary with the production of the text, would it not be more appropriate to name "him" as the "implied reader" of the text? Since discussing the methods used by scholars, however, is not our primary intention, we prefer to leave it aside and turn to another work.

Another monograph with a similar approach to DARR is the work of EDGAR W. CONRAD. Like DARR, he initiated his undertaking with a chapter called "Choosing Reading Strategies," which serves as justification for the method that he has chosen. Also similar to DARR's, CONRAD's strategy of reading acknowledges the primary role of the reader in the construction of meaning.¹⁶⁰ Thus he is in contrast with historical-critical method, for which the meaning is associated with the author's intention. For CONRAD, "it is no more possible to reconstruct the development history of the text of Isaiah and uncover the intentions of its authors."¹⁶¹ It is the text that makes the journey from the past to the present, and not the author or its original audience.¹⁶² Therefore, CONRAD follows the route taken in the study of secular literature, which proves to be useful as the changing focus from the author to the text and the reader happened. About his strategy of reading, he states:

My reading does not assume the genre of the text, but it assumes the text is something as a whole and seeks to discover what that whole is. I am interested in relating parts of the text not to a world external to it (its historical background, or its history of literary development) but to the literary world of the text itself. I will be dealing with the final form of the text, but I will focus on the form, not the process by which it became final.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ S. FISH, *Is There a Text in This Class?* This work is a collection of Fish's major essays of 1970-1980 with a general introduction and four previously unpublished essays.

¹⁵⁸ W. ISER, *The Act of Reading*.

¹⁵⁹ A brief description about this method could be found, for example, in E.V. MCKNIGHT, "Reader-Response Criticism," 230-252.

¹⁶⁰ E.W. CONRAD, *Reading Isaiah*, 1.

¹⁶¹ E.W. CONRAD, *Reading Isaiah*, 154-155.

¹⁶² In addition, Conrad also mentioned the problem of historical-critical method, which is also noticed by many scholars, that the historical-critical approaches make the book virtually inaccessible to the non-specialist, and thus create a gulf between past and present. E.W. CONRAD, *Reading Isaiah*, 159.

¹⁶³ E.W. CONRAD, *Reading Isaiah*, 29-30.

Thus the structure of the book is very important for him. In this case, repetitions of vocabulary, theme, motif, narrative sequence, or rhetorical device provide a clue to the book's structural unity.

Along this line, CONRAD then argues that the royal narratives in ch. 7 and chs. 36-39 have an important function in the structure of the book as a whole.¹⁶⁴ The comparison between those two narratives demonstrate that the second royal narrative, that about Hezekiah (chs. 36-39), leads to the future hope that YHWH will deliver Israel from the Babylonians as He delivered them from the oppression of the Assyrians in the days of Hezekiah. The book, then, suggests that its implied reader or its implied audience is in waiting for the fulfillment of YHWH's promise.

At the outset MISCALL has already stated that his purpose was to read the text of Isaiah as a whole and in part and, as much as possible, according to the order of the book. He wants neither to explore textual or philological analysis nor to reconstruct the history of Israel.¹⁶⁵ For him, the Book of Isaiah is a unified work composed in the post-exilic era, probably around the fifth century B.C.E.

Like WEBB, MISCALL also put attention on the opening verse where the word "vision" (רִיבִּי) appears. He understood the whole book as drama.¹⁶⁶

Isaiah presents his vision as a quasi-drama. The book is dominated by dramatic speeches... The characters are not presented as distinct and historical individuals; they are constructs in the grand poetic work of Isaiah¹⁶⁷

This is a drama about the Israelite community's ideal way of life. The book envisions the past in ways that speak to the present and leap into the future. Therefore, thus MISCALL argues, the prophet can illustrate the post-exilic community drawing imagery even from ch. 1 and 2.¹⁶⁸

On the structure of the book, MISCALL proposed a twofold division, namely chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-66. The first part (chs. 1-39) is set in the years 735-700 B.C.E. (from the beginning of Syro-Ephraimite War/Ahaz until the time of Senacherib's invasion/Hezekiah). The second part (chs. 40-66) is set in the time of exile and return.

¹⁶⁴ See also his treatment on this topic in E.W. CONRAD, "The Royal Narratives," 67-81.

¹⁶⁵ P.D. MISCALL, *Isaiah*, 9.

¹⁶⁶ By presenting the book of Isaiah as a (quasi-) drama, Miscall seemed to be influenced by another scholar, John Watts, who, in his two-volume commentary on Isaiah, also defines the book of Isaiah as a drama with twelve acts. See J.D. WATTS, *Isaiah 1-33; Isaiah 34-66* [CD-ROM]. In his commentary, Watts also used a literary approach, which tried to interpret the book in its final form, that is, the work of authors, redactors, editors who selected and rearranged material from the history of Israel from ca. 750 to 435 BCE, with special emphasis on the ministry of Isaiah of Jerusalem.

¹⁶⁷ P.D. MISCALL, *Isaiah*, 15.

¹⁶⁸ P.D. MISCALL, *Isaiah*, 14.

But it is impossible to be more specific.¹⁶⁹ Since he maintained that the book of Isaiah is a fifth-century production, his division would mean that chs. 1-39 is a post-exilic representation and interpretation of the pre-exilic period; while chs. 40-66 is a later presentation and interpretation of the return from exile and of the early days of the post-exilic era.¹⁷⁰ The first part is about a distant past and points to the ways of the Lord. And in the second part, the poet takes his materials from the past and uses them to interpret the more immediate past of exile and return and express this in a different fashion from chs. 1-39.

The focus of attention in the works discussed in this section is the Book of Isaiah in its final form. Thus, instead of analyzing the book in two or three distinct parts according to historical-critical approach, they tried to understand the book in its unity (holistic or synchronic reading). As for historical considerations, the works we presented demonstrate two attitudes towards it. The first attitude is represented by the works of CLIFFORD, BERGES, CHILDS, BEUKEN, RENDTORFF, and O'CONNELL that try to accommodate diachronic consideration into their synchronic reading. Surely, as it has been noted by scholars, this undertaking is not a simple one. Cautions that come, for example, from CARR,¹⁷¹ WILLIAMSON,¹⁷² and SOMMER¹⁷³ underline the difficulties. The works of WEBB, CONRAD, DARR, and MISCALL show the second attitude. Deliberately, they chose their reading strategy which focuses merely on the final form of the book. Historical aspects, therefore, are not included.¹⁷⁴

Such a holistic reading would consequently diminish the force of Third Isaiah as an independent entity produced by several authors. However, as the above

¹⁶⁹ P.D. MISCALL, *Isaiah*, 19.

¹⁷⁰ P.D. MISCALL, *Isaiah*, 12.

¹⁷¹ In his two articles, Carr warned the scholars who attempt to draw a thematic-structural unity of the Book of Isaiah. Two considerations are pointed out by Carr. *First*, in the process of its formation, the Book of Isaiah has suffered many redactional interventions; each of them posed their macrostructure to the book. These macrostructures often do not fit one another. Therefore, there is a danger that one may claim a structural or literary coherence that does not actually exist in the book. *Second*, Carr draws attention to the contrast between the ancient and modern reading method (listening-reading; scroll-book; memory-written aids, etc). Since the ancient people never listened to book as a whole on one occasion, they did not have the same preoccupation with literary coherence that modern readers often have. D.M. CARR, "Reaching for Unity," 61-80; and ID., "Reading Isaiah from beginning," 188-218.

¹⁷² H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, "Synchronic and Diachronic," especially 225-226.

¹⁷³ B.D. SOMMER, "Allusions and Illusions," especially 183-186.

¹⁷⁴ Darr's work is an exception because, for the method she chose, that is, "reader-oriented method", she attempted to reconstruct her "reader" as a reader from the *fourth century B.C.E.* with a series of qualifications. See K.P. DARR, *Isaiah's Vision*, 30-31.

presentation demonstrates, most of the works still see that chs. 56-66 is, in fact, a distinct literary unit and treated it as such. Third Isaiah as an anonymous person may have receded, but as a literary designation, it still has its validity.

A shift of paradigm in approaching the Book of Isaiah, which began to take place around two decades ago, has now produced its impacts. As our journey through the works of the recent scholars on the Book of Isaiah, in particular on the third part, has demonstrated there appear various suggestions and proposals on the Book of Isaiah. On the one hand, the focus of the scholars since the time of BERNHARD DUHM, who concentrated their research on pursuing the author and/or the history of the development of the book, seems to have a serious rival in the recent period. Instead of dissecting the book into three sections or more, if we take into account the editorial works that produced the book's layers, the majority of scholars prefer to deal with the book of Isaiah as a unity. But on the other hand, this phenomenon seems to open wider the possibilities to approach the book and its richness; something that was inconceivable before.

Then, what is the destiny of the so-called Third Isaiah in the midst of such a shift of paradigm? As we have seen, it seems clear that the designation "Third Isaiah" underwent a shift of understanding as well. At the beginning, Third Isaiah referred to a single anonymous author who worked in the post-exilic period, whose composition was chs. 56-66. Then, based on the careful examination of the text, it was gradually realized that attributing chs. 56-66 to a single author was not a satisfactory solution. The commonly accepted consensus now is that the bulk of chs. 56-66 was a product of many hands. For those who believe that such figures may not have existed, it remains true that chs. 56-66 could still be viewed as a literary unit. In this sense, the term Third Isaiah still stands on firm ground.

Now, if we return to the statement launched by Tate, "Has the time come to bury Exilic Isaiah? Probably not yet, but it may well be to start making funeral plans! Third Isaiah is hardly viable at all." The answer seems clear: Third-Isaiah is still alive! As hypothetical prophetic figures, perhaps "Third Isaiah" has to resign, but as a literary designation it remains unshakeable.

3. EVALUATION

Having examined the recent works of the scholars, we need to clarify our position in the face of the Book of Isaiah, and particularly Third Isaiah. Based on this examination, we are also going to check whether our presuppositions in taking Third Isaiah as the object of our study could indeed be justified or not.

Needless to say that what we have, in reality, is the **written text**, the Book of Isaiah that consists of sixty-six chapters. The evidence from Qumran, especially 1QIsa^a, which is generally dated between 150 and 120 B.C.E., guarantees that the text as it now stands has followed a faithful transmission. The book comes to us under a unique heading or superscription, namely, the Book of Isaiah. This fact implies that the whole sixty-six chapters would be, intentionally, meant to be read as a single literary unit. Since as a written document, the book is trying to communicate something to those who read it, the scholars' recent tendency to grasp the meaning of the book based on a holistic reading could be justified.

On the other side, it is true that the Book of Isaiah is a product of an ancient period, a period, which is considerably distant from ours. Together with its literary character, the Book of Isaiah is also a testimony of past history and a long process of its formation. By using the same text as we have now as a window, scholars have been succeeded in tracing back the historical background and the long process of formation and transmission of the book. Up to now, the scholarly world has been witnessing the emergence of various hypotheses about historical matters that lie behind the Book of Isaiah. It often happens, however, that one contradicts the other. Despite caution signaled by J. MAXWELL MILLER that "history is a search for "what really happened," but it is also what the historians can convince us really happened,"¹⁷⁵ it seems fair enough to accept some general consensus on the historical background of the Book of Isaiah. And in this case, the division of the Book of Isaiah into two or three parts could be understood as, in one or many ways, the greatest historical consensus of the modern period.

However, as we have noted earlier, the final form of the book, which shows a unity, should not be overlooked. Therefore, the discovery of the tripartite division of the book does not mean that each part could be treated without connection to the others. And as frequently noted, to give a balanced treatment to both aspects of the book is not a simple task. But, it is the only possible way to do justice to the nature of the book.

¹⁷⁵ J. MAXWELL MILLER, "Reading the Bible Historically," 20.

Within this general consensus of a threefold division of the Book of Isaiah - because in more detailed and subtle matters scholars could hardly agree - at least, in some general points there is no great objection to establishing a certain agreement among them. We could mention some assumptions that have won a good amount of support among the majority of scholars:

Chronologically, Third Isaiah is a later composition than Second Isaiah. This does not necessarily negate the possibilities that individual passages in both writings might have come from an earlier or later period. Thus, it is possible, as many scholars have argued, that 63,7-64,11 was an old composition (exilic or even pre-exilic period?), which was then picked up by the author or redactor of Third Isaiah. It would follow then, that Third Isaiah has as its *Sitz im Leben* the (early) post-exilic Israel community in Judea. Nevertheless, the precise description about the historical background of Third Isaiah is difficult to achieve.

It is assumed that there is a certain connection between Third Isaiah and Second Isaiah. Not only is it at the formal level that both writings bear the name "Isaiah", but also at a deeper level, for example, that Third Isaiah is a continuation or expansion of Second Isaiah within the great Isaianic tradition. The question of whether the responsibility of the transmission of the tradition should be attributed to an Isaianic school or the prophet's disciples or scribal activities is a focus of the scholarly Isaianic discussion.

With regard to the themes of Third Isaiah, many scholars have proposed various possibilities. Though it is not immediately apparent from the final form of the text, many scholars have been recognizing for a long time that Third Isaiah was composed as a reaction to (Second Isaiah's) unfulfilled prophecy. We shall mention the works of, for example, CARROLL, KOENEN, SCHRAMM, SMITH, WILLIAMSON, and RUZSKOWSKI that we have presented earlier, as examples of those who put attention on this special concern of Third Isaiah. It is also true that not all have worked out this theme to the same degree of intensity. Some have just pointed to it as a stepping-stone for exploring other themes such as, the problem of community, or the growth and development of the text, and others.

Now, from the above considerations, it seems clear enough that our choice in taking Third Isaiah as the object of our research could well be justified. The existence of Third Isaiah with some peculiarities that makes it appropriate for our purpose stands on firm ground. Our presupposition is not an arbitrary and groundless choice, but it is the fruit of the researches carried out by biblical scholars. However, though it could be accepted that Third Isaiah was composed to tackle the failure of Second Isaiah's prophecy, the way it formulated its message still deserves attention.

One of the common points that the scholars proposed with regard to the way Third Isaiah dealt with the problem is that Third Isaiah responded to the failure of promise by pointing out that it was the people's failure, and not YHWH's or the prophet's failure, that caused the failure of prophecy. The clearest reference for such an answer is found in Isa 59,1-3. However, since their works are not fully dedicated to deal only with this problem, such a solution has left some questions unanswered. We shall here argue that the problem of unfulfilled prophecy is multi-dimensional and so complex that to answer it by simply using Isa 59,1-3 or saying that it was the people's sins that have caused the prophecy to fail, would simplify the problem. The following questions need to be considered: What are the consequences of this failure of prophecy? Who suffered more? Who would get the benefit? What are the implications of referring to the people's sin as the cause of the delay of salvation? How did Third Isaiah handle these questions? We believe that, on the one hand, these questions are important for clarifying Third Isaiah's answer; on the other hand, however, they have not yet been adequately investigated. It is, therefore, the intention of this present work to scrutinize Third Isaiah's response to unfulfilled prophecy.

We believe that the prophetic reaction to unfulfilled prophecy is found not only in the first three verses of ch. 59; but rather, it is dispersed throughout the whole corpus of Third Isaiah, namely chs. 56-66. Put differently, it could be argued that chs. 56-66 as a whole are dealing with the problem of the failure of prophecy, though with different emphasis, and therefore could be read as such. In order to begin this undertaking, however, we need a point of departure. For this reason, we suggest that Isa 59 could serve well as the starting point.

And this is the direction toward which our work would go. We shall take Isa 59 as our point of departure to inquire about Third Isaiah's response to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Then we shall also go over the other parts of Third Isaiah in order to find out their contribution in dealing with the problem with its related questions. Several critical questions mentioned above would be used as the framework of our investigation so that a balanced, comprehensive view of Third Isaiah could be achieved.

CHAPTER III

(THE PEOPLE'S) SIN AS THE CAUSE OF UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter concluded with a statement that, according to the scholarly opinions, one of the motives behind the composition of Third Isaiah was to provide explanations for (Second Isaiah's) unfulfilled¹ prophecy. Following Second Isaiah's prophecy, (at least, part of) the exiled returned to their homeland, leaving behind their established and somewhat comfortable life in Babylon. But, what they found in Judah was a situation that was completely different from their expectation. Even, after a period of time the situation had not changed much. It would seem then that the promise of a glorious restoration delivered by Second Isaiah remained hanging in the air. This is the situation with which Third Isaiah had to struggle. To be sure, this topic is not something completely new, since it has been investigated by many scholars regardless of the profundity and perspectives of their inquiries. The title of this chapter alludes to the solution frequently proposed by many scholars, at least, at the beginning or at one point of their analysis² to explain that the failure of Second Isaiah's prophecy was caused by the people's sin, of which the clearest reference can be found in Isa 59,1-3.

In the first instance, such a response appears to be clear, straightforward and also, and this is extremely important, inevitable due to the strong support provided explicitly by the text itself. It is even claimed that this is one of the characteristics of the proclamation of Third Isaiah.³ Needless to say, however, this response may also

¹ In the course of this work, the designation "prophecy" and its equivalent (e.g. promise, salvation, etc) will be characterized with various words, such as "unfulfilled," "failure," but also "delayed," "postponed," etc. There is indeed a great difference between "failed" and "delayed". To avoid misunderstanding that may arise, from the outset we should make a precision about the use of those words. They are used merely as a literary variation in order not to repeat the same word, and not necessarily implying a particular evaluation about (Second Isaiah's) prophecy.

² Scholars point out that the delay of the fulfilment of the promise was caused by the people's sins. But most of them do not specifically deal with this unfulfilled prophecy as their main concern. Therefore, they do not treat the passage (Isa 59,1-3) further. But exception has to be made. To my knowledge, Robert P. Carroll is the only scholar that occupies himself with the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. In this case, it is clear that he is very much influenced by *dissonance theory*, a theory of social psychology coined by Leon Festinger. The result of his researches is a book, which bears the similar title as Festinger's book, and several articles dedicated to that topic (cf. N. 4 below).

³ H.-J. KRAUS, "Die ausgebliebene Endtheophanie," 322.

bring a certain ideological agenda. For those who firmly hold a strong belief that biblical prophecy will never fail since it is the word of God spoken through his prophet (cf. Isa 55,10-11), the fact that a certain prophecy has failed will undoubtedly force them to point their fingers to the others as the sole cause of the failure. This blaming-the-other mechanism for the sake of the reliability of the Almighty God finds a good example in the case of the theological debate between Job and his three pious friends. However, we shall argue in this work that such an explanation does, in fact, oversimplify the problem very much, and brings, as we shall see, difficult consequences, especially when it is read from the perspective of a particular group. In turn, this would render it unacceptable as a proper response to unfulfilled prophecy. And this is the reason why we put a question mark at the end of this chapter's title!

It would be wise to make clear from the outset the procedure employed in approaching the text that we chose in the course of this work. We do not intend to write a full commentary on Isa 56-66. Therefore, we will not do verse-by-verse strict exegesis on each chapter in the sequential order as they appear in the Scriptures. Instead, we would rather treat them *thematically*, namely, each time we will only read the passage that is relevant for the topic we are dealing with. Thus, since in this chapter we would like to evaluate the common solution to unfulfilled prophecy as the starting point for our investigation, we will firstly read the passage that fits for our purpose - in this case Isa 59,1-3 - in order to find out the difficulties and consequences that would emerge from it. Of course, it does not mean that we will read this passage in isolation from other passages. Other texts related to the topic that can shed light on the discussion will also be investigated.

This chapter will consist of two main sections. In the first section (A), we shall examine Isa 59,1-3 in order to discover the nuances that stand behind this passage. In the second section (B), which is much longer than the first, we shall demonstrate the implications which emerge from using Isa 59,1-3 to handle the failed prophecy. The last section (C), which is rather brief, is a sort of concluding remark that sums up the previous discussion and prepares the following chapter.

1.1 A COMMON SOLUTION TO UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

It has been noted above that the common solution proposed by many scholars is that the delay of the coming of the salvation promised by the prophet was caused by the people's sins.⁴ Needless to say, this solution finds the clearest expression in Isa 59,1-

⁴ Among others, we shall mention the work of R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*. In the framework of Leon Festinger's theory of *cognitive dissonance*, Carroll understood the statement

3, though it should be added immediately that these three first verses are not the only place where the reference to the people's guilt can be found.

Isa 59,1-3

Based on the content, ch. 59 is usually divided into three parts:⁵ vv. 1-8 (indictment); 9-15a (lamentation or confession⁶); 15b-20/21 (divine intervention), with slight variations, especially with regard to v. 21, which is often considered as secondary due to the differences in its form and content. For our purpose, the first part (vv. 1-8), which contains the prophetic charge, is of great relevance. However, in the first instance, we will deal only with 59,1-3. Vv. 4-8, which can be understood as further specification of what has been said in vv. 1-3, will be treated separately in another context. In addition, it can be noted that vv. 1-3 is a direct speech directed to "you" (second person plural); while the discourse in vv. 4-8 uses third person plural.⁷ Moreover, from the rhetorical point of view, as POLAN has noted, there is a correspondence between v. 1 and v. 3. YHWH's "hand" in v. 1 goes with "your hand/palm" and "finger" in v. 3; while YHWH's "ear" with "lips" and "tongues."⁸ Therefore, our choice in separating the discussion on these verses can be justified.

Isa 59,1-3 expresses clearly that the delay of the fulfilment of the promise cannot be attributed to YHWH, neither to his capacity nor his willingness (v. 1). The

in Isa 59,1-2 as a device to explain the dissonance caused by the failure of Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 152-153; also his articles, "Ancient Israelite Prophecy," 135-151; "Second Isaiah and the Failure of Prophecy," 119-131, especially 129-130; "Prophecy and Dissonance," 108-119; "Eschatological Delay," 47-58. Also B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 411; H.-J. KRAUS, "Die ausgebliebene Endtheophanie," 317-332; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 120-121. It should be noted, however, that for Hanson, the sin mentioned in 59,2 was not that of the whole nation but of a certain group within post-exilic Israel community. See also B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 138; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 217, and many others. The position adopted by Brevard S. Childs is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he argued that „the problem of Third Isaiah was not a psychological problem of overcoming disappointment with the failure of Isaiah's promises to materialize. The new age was coming as promised, but the old will remain in all its violence and opposition." On the other hand, however, elsewhere he seemed to agree that, to some extent, Third Isaiah dealt with the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, when he wrote, for example "Second Isaiah's promise is not adjusted to meet a changing historical situation, but refined theologically to correct any possible misunderstanding stemming from Second Isaiah's formulation" (italics mine). B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 456, 463 and *passim*.

⁵ For example, B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 484; D. KENDALL, "The Use of Mišpat," 391-392, and many others.

⁶ Though the designation "confession" for vv. 9-15a can rightly be questioned because the confession comes only in vv. 12-13a. Since it is only the matter of naming the section, I think, it should not bother us further.

⁷ Cf. B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 138. Because of this shift of pronouns, some scholars regarded vv. 4-8 as a later addition.

⁸ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 252-253.

culpable part, therefore, must be looked for elsewhere. Verses 2-3 declare that it is *your* sin that has hindered the realization of YHWH's saving act.

Verse 1 consists of two parallel statements, one of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, introduced by an interjection demanding attention,⁹ הִן "Behold!" or "See!":

"See, the LORD's hand is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear."

The statement in v. 1a will immediately remind the readers of a quasi-similar expression found in 50,2aβ "Is my hand (יָד) shortened (קָצַרְתָּ), that it cannot redeem?" (cf. also Num 11,23). In his article originally published in 1950, ZIMMERLI has already noticed that 59,1-3 stands very close to 50,1-3, both in wording and in content.¹⁰ Comparing these two passages, it is easy to recognize that two themes from 50,1-3 reappear in 59,1-3: sin that separates the people from God and complaint about God's power.¹¹ In biblical tradition "hand," or its equivalent "arm" (זְרוֹעַ), represents the power to do something.¹² To express a powerful strength, this word is usually accompanied by the verb נָטָה ("to extend," "to stretch out") as, for example, in Isa 9,12.16.20; 10,4 etc. Thus, a hand that is short (קָצַרְתָּ), on the contrary, indicates powerlessness. For example, the expression קִצְרֵי יָד in 37,27 describes the powerlessness of the nations against the invasion of the Assyrian empire.¹³

After the *hand* of YHWH, then his *ear* is mentioned in the following sentence, which has a similar structure. Outside 59,1 the combination of the words "ear" (אָזְנוֹ) and "heavy/dull" (כִּבְדָּה) appears only in Isa 6,10 and Zech 7,11. In those three appearances, this word-pair have a negative nuance, namely, unwillingness to listen. In many texts, especially in the psalms, one prays that God would incline (נָטָה) or also קָשַׁב "to be attentive") his ear to accept one's prayer or petition,¹⁴ and then he would intervene for the sake of his people (e.g. Ps 34,7; 145,19).

⁹ J-M § 167 l; cf. also GKC § 147 b-c.

¹⁰ W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 217-233, see especially 225-226.

¹¹ W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 226; also B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 485; and many others. This, of course, becomes an indication that Third Isaiah stands in a close relationship with Second-Isaiah.

¹² Cf. LXX used the verb ἰσχύω, *to be able, can*, thus indicating one's ability.

¹³ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 170.

¹⁴ Indeed, the Tg to 59,1b has "...not because it is difficult before him to hear that *your prayer is not accepted*." Thus it makes clear the idea that it is to the *prayer* of the faithful that YHWH would or would not listen. Translation of the Tg is from B. CHILTON, *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 2*.

Using the negative particle **לֹא**, in v. 1 the prophet rejected the idea that YHWH's hand is too short to save and his ear is too dull/heavy to listen. It is very likely that the statement in v. 1 is actually an answer to a hidden complaint, which is not explicitly mentioned in ch. 59 that put YHWH's power, or even his willingness to listen into question. It should be a complaint similar to 58,3a "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"¹⁵ It seems that the people addressed in v. 1 had carried out some religious activities, perhaps including fasting mentioned in ch. 58, but without experiencing any of their beneficial effects.¹⁶

Having refused such a hidden lament, in v. 2 the prophet proceeded to launch his countercharge introduced by an adversative particle **כִּי אֲמַן** after a negative statement:¹⁷

"But, it is your iniquities that have caused the separation
between you and your God,
and it is your sins that have caused his face to be hidden from you
so that he does not hear"

In both statements, the words "your iniquities" (**עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם**) and "your sins" (**חַטֹּאוֹתֵיכֶם**) are the subjects of the sentence and are placed at the beginning. In this way, they receive strong emphasis. The use of *Hiphil* causative verbal form¹⁸ in both statements reinforces the idea that the evildoing of the addressees is *really* the cause of the miserable situation experienced by the post-exilic Israelite community.¹⁹

Before we go further a clarification with regard to the addressee is needed here: who is meant by this "you (pl.)"? If we look back to trace who might be intended by this personal pronoun, then we shall find its reference at the beginning of chapter 58: it is **עַמִּי** "my people," that is, *God's people* or **בֵּית יַעֲקֹב** "the house of Jacob". Whether or not we accept the opinion that chapters 58 and 59 are two distinct compositions or that chapter 59 is actually the execution of the command given in

¹⁵ Cf. O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 240. For him, ch. 58 and 59 is closely connected. Originally, these two chapters, together with 56,9-57,21, constitute a literary unity.

¹⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 188; cf. also E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 64.

¹⁷ A. AEJMELAEUS, "Function and Interpretation of **כִּי**," 201.

¹⁸ Based on his observation on the construction of both statements (*first*, **הִיָּה** perfect + participle; *second*, perfect), KOOLE thinks that the text is talking about a sinful past, as in 42,18ff; 43,22ff; 50,1, and then the existing situation is spoken of from v. 3b onwards. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 172. In my opinion, this is not necessarily the case. The use of such constructions could be seen as a poetic variation from the author (cf. in 57,1 we find perfect form paralleled with a participle). This does not necessarily indicate a different *tempus* between v. 2 and v. 3bff.

¹⁹ Cf. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 259.

chapter 58,²⁰ the result, we believe, remains the same: the addressee in both chapters could be understood as God's people, though it cannot be determined whether the whole people is intended or only a part of it.

The phrase "to hide his face" in v. 2b needs some explanation. The MT has the absolute form פָּנִים. The BHS critical apparatus, however, shows an alternative reading פָּנָיו (with third masc. suffix) as attested by several versions including LXX, Vetus Latina, and Vulgate.²¹ Thus some scholars have suggested emending this text accordingly.²² In the Hebrew Bible the phrase סָתַר פָּנָיו (the verb is always in *Hiphil* form) appears 29 times,²³ with God as always the subject, except in three occurrences where the subject is not God (Ex 3,6: Moses; Isa 50,6; 53,3: the Servant²⁴). Though very unusual and rare, the phrase "to hide *the* face" in absolute form does appear in relatively late texts, such as Job 34,29; IQIsa^a 50,6; Isa 53,3; 2Chr 30,9 (with the verb סָתַר *hiphil*). Probably, it may indicate that in the later stages of biblical Hebrew פָּנִים became a technical term for God's presence.²⁵

With these considerations, we therefore, prefer to maintain the absolute form of the MT. In this context, I would say that, with or without suffix, the meaning does not change considerably. Without any difficulty, the "face" would easily be understood as God's. After his hands and ears, now his face is also mentioned. Thus in these two introductory verses, God is addressed in a very personal manner. In this way, the personal relationship between God and his people is stressed.²⁶

This would, perhaps, find another support in the use of the generic name אֱלֹהֵינוּ, which recalls the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel, his people. In this context, YHWH as Israel's God has committed himself to provide Israel with what they need, especially in the moment of urgency. Thus, we may add

²⁰ This is Steck's observation. O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 239-240; cf. also P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 114.

²¹ According to BHS, it is also attested by Syrohexapla, Syriac Version, and Arabic Version.

²² Pauritsch, for example, thought that the presence of נָיו was caused by dittography. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 88.

²³ It appears in Pentateuch (4x); Psalms (12x); Prophetic writings (11x); Wisdom literature (2x).

²⁴ Some scholars argue that the subject in Isa 53,3 is not the Servant, but YHWH. Perhaps, this is the reason why Pauritsch noted only two occurrences, namely Ex 3,6 and Isa 50,6. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 88 n. 353.

²⁵ S.E. BALENTINE, *The Hidden God*, 69 n. 65; also H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 177; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 346. Also Blenkinsopp compares "the Face" with "the Name". The latter is indeed a common Jewish way to speak about YHWH. See, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 411; also J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 185. It should be noted, however, that the targumic translation, which is also a late text, retains the word "face" (פָּנִים in const. state), though it is combined with the word "Shekinah" (again) to avoid anthropomorphism: "your iniquities have deserved the removal of the face of my Shekinah from you, so that he does not accept your prayer."

²⁶ Cf. E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 66.

here that the allusion to the covenantal relationship will reinforce the implicit complaint of the people even stronger. As if not only they lamented that YHWH were not willing to listen, but also implicitly accused YHWH of betraying his covenantal responsibility!

In many psalms, a plea to God not to hide his face is put in the context of petition: God is asked not to hide his face in order to hear the prayer and then to save (e.g. Ps 22,25; 102,2 (MT); 143,7). Since it involves prayer and petition, HANSON claims that this phrase is a *terminus technicus* of the cult.²⁷ But then, he goes too far, in my opinion, when he argues that the issue at stake is the defilement of the normative cult.²⁸ An ineffective prayer does not necessarily have corrupt ministers as its sole cause! A sinful assembly as a whole may also render prayers sterile and unproductive. In this context, we shall argue that this is the case.

Thus, these two verses, formulated in negative and positive way, depict the prophetic response to the miserable situation, a reality that stays far from expectation flourished by Second Isaiah's prophecy. It is *not His* fault, but it is *your* fault that everything has gone wrong! And this is emphasized by the use of second pers. pl. suffix (םָךְ) in vv. 2-3! The implicit claim that YHWH as Israel's God has betrayed his covenantal duty is thus made obsolete. The complainer must have misunderstood the nature of the covenant.²⁹ It is not an *ex opere operato* process, by which one might think that as long as a certain formal procedure is strictly observed, then the desired outcome will automatically be achieved. The prophetic charge in vv. 2 demonstrates in a general way that something is missing here. That is, the corresponding attitude towards their fellow humankind, which could generally be designated as (social) sin, is lacking. Now, a further description of עֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם and חַטֹּאתֵיהֶם introduced by particle כִּי comes in v. 3:

“For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity;
your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters injustice”

²⁷ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic*, 121; also D. KENDALL, “The Use of Mišpat,” 394.

²⁸ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic*, 121. Hanson's thesis is that Third Isaiah describes a bitter conflict between the Zadokite priestly party who controlled the temple and the prophetic-visionary party, including the Levites, who were marginalized from the struggle to participate in the post-exilic cult. According to Hanson, Third Isaiah is the spokesperson of the latter, thus it is understandable if he interprets the text of Third Isaiah one-sidedly. Schramm, in his third chapter of his monograph on Third Isaiah, has harshly criticized his thesis. See B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 81-111.

²⁹ A covenant between YHWH and Israel seems to be Israel's privilege that guarantees their security. Though the OT is always insisting that this covenantal bound is a conditional relationship, the people kept on maintaining the idea of YHWH' unconditional promise that will always intervene for Israel's behalf. Cf. for example, J.L. SICRE, *Profetismo in Israele*, 408.

The use of second masc. pl. suffix (כֶּם-) and particle כִּי (“for,” “because”) in this verse shows that the prophetic discourse in v. 1-2 is still continued.³⁰ In this verse, four parts of the human body are mentioned in a couple of parallelisms, together with four types of evildoing. “Hand” and “finger” go together and represent parts of the body by which man does something; respectively, “lips” and “tongue” are organs by which man speaks. Similarly, “defiled with blood - iniquity” and “lies - injustice” form word pairs also.

Scholars have long noticed that the content of v. 3aα resembles the last sentence of Isa 1,15 (though not in wording).³¹

59,3aα : כְּפִיכֶם נִגְאַלְוּ בַדָּם :

1,15 : יְדֵיכֶם דָּמִים מְלֵאִי :

Besides the similarity between these two statements, the idea expressed in Isa 1,12-15 is also close to 59,1-3. The context of Isa 1,12-15 is the cultic worship. Israel’s worship: prayer and sacrifice, was not accepted by YHWH because of their sins, probably sin in the sphere of daily life (cf. exhortation in 1,16-17). This may suggest to us that also in our text, the sin in question lies in the public social sphere. It would find support in the following verses, which expand further the description of sin in v. 3 (see. vv. 4. 6b-7).

Some scholars suggested that this phrase is ambiguous and has a double meaning. On the one hand, blood can mean human blood spilled by the violent action of the addressee, either in a literal or figurative sense, directly or indirectly, manslaughter or calumny.³² But on the other hand, it can also mean animal blood that was sacrificed on the altar of the Temple.³³ Even if we accept both interpretations of this text, it does not automatically presuppose a defiled cult as being attacked here, as HANSON stated. As the analysis of ch. 58 will later demonstrate, religious activities cannot go together with violence. Thus, what is being attacked by the prophet is not

³⁰ Koenen, however, argues that the prophetic thesis formulated negatively and positively in vv. 1-2, is further expanded in the following verses. The first is developed in vv. 3-8 introduced by כִּי and the second in vv. 9-15a introduced by עַל כֵּן. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 59.

³¹ IQIsa^a 1,15 added אֲצַבְעוֹתֵיכֶם בְּעֵאָוֶן after “Your hands are full of blood.” This addition might probably have been taken from 59,3aβ and placed there to provide a “missing” colon and thus produced a balanced bicolon parallelism.

³² The Tg has “the innocent blood” (זָכִי), thus making the text clear that here, social sin is intended.

³³ Thus for example K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 95. This opinion implies the existence of the priest and the Temple. Was the Temple already in existence at that time?

necessarily the cult, but the person, who faithfully practices his religious activities, but at the same time, commits evil as well.

In biblical texts, “finger” (אֶצְבַּע) is sometimes used in the place of or in parallel with “hand” (יָד). Thus, when Pharaoh’s magicians saw the miracle of gnat performed by Aaron’s wand, they cried, “This is the *finger* of God!” (Ex 8,15). David praised the Lord who has trained his *hands* for war and his *fingers* for battle (Ps 144,1 see also Ps 8,4, Isa 2,8). In this case, “finger” in v. 3aβ would create a synonymous parallelism with “hand” in v. 3aα. In another passage, which stands closer to our text, we also find the expression “the pointing of the *fingers*” (שָׁלַח אֶצְבָּע) (58,2), as one of the points the prophet insisted the people avoid. Here, it seems that *finger* is used in the sphere of law court, thus denoting false testimony or unjust accusation. Whatever it may have been, it seems clear that v. 3a refers to the people’s sin against their fellow brothers, directly or indirectly.

The second line of v. 3 presents the accusation concerning not what people do, but what they say with their lips (שִׁפְהָ) and their tongues (לְשׁוֹן). These two words are often put in parallel (e.g. Isa 30,27; Ps 12,4; 140,4; Prov 12,19; 17,4). Here, these two organs of speaking stand as the subjects of the phrases, while the verb דָּבַר plays a double-duty function. The corresponding objects are “deceit” (שִׁקְרָה) and “dishonesty,” “injustice” (עוֹלָה). Since the latter, which is similar to עוֹלָה, is almost always used to characterize unjust action taking place within the social context and involving interpersonal relationship within community,³⁴ so also the former may have a similar nuance.³⁵

Looking again to v. 1 and v. 3, there appears a close connection that demonstrates the unity of 59,1-3. YHWH’s hands (v. 1a) correspond with the people’s palms and fingers (v. 3a); while his ears (v. 1b) go with the people’s lips and tongues (v. 3b). YHWH’s hands cannot reach the bloodstained hand, though raised upward in prayer. YHWH’s ears cannot hear the prayers, because he hears another voice speaking lies to one’s fellow brothers.

Thus in these three verses, we find a prophetic theodicy: the fault cannot be attributed to YHWH, but to the people. Their sins have hindered the coming of the promised salvation. As we have said earlier, this is the passage which has provided the basis of the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy for many scholars. However, some precision needs to be given now. Since in the whole Third Isaiah we can also discover the mentioning of various sins and transgressions, therefore, 59,1-3

³⁴ J. SCHREINER, “עוֹלָה,” 527.

³⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 174.

would be better designated as a **summary** of the whole discourse about the people's sin. As a summary 59,1-3 cannot treat every transgression found in the whole Third Isaiah with considerable detail. Therefore, though 59,1-3 primarily represents social sin, it is not surprising that in other places of TI we find another kind of sin that is very difficult to be categorized as *social sin* (e.g. 57,3-13; 65,1-7). At this moment, we shall call them *religious sin*, sin which is committed in religious sphere. Thus, there are two types of sins being spoken of in Third Isaiah: social sin and religious sin.

1.2 THE DIFFICULTIES: SCRUTINIZING THE "RESPONSE"

In view of 59,1-3; both types of sin are claimed to have caused the postponement of salvation. This is the common solution frequently proposed by scholars as the response to unfulfilled prophecy. However, since we claim it as inadequate, in the following section, we shall demonstrate the difficulties that would emerge from such a response by first analyzing the texts that describe these two types of sin: social sin and religious sin.

Social sin and religious sin are two types of sin that emerge from reading through the third part of the book of Isaiah, the so-called Third Isaiah. This does not necessarily imply that each type can stand independently apart from the other. More often than not, the two are intermingled: one affects the other. This becomes clear if we remember that in the life of the post-exilic community, the Torah, as the sole source of both the Israelite's way of worshipping and way of living so that - borrowing NEUSNER's expression - norms of conduct realizing norms of conviction,³⁶ occupied the central position. However, for the sake of convenience, in this section we shall treat them separately, though, admittedly, it is just an artificial division.

1.2.1 Social Sin

In this section, we shall closely examine the texts that speak about social sin, which are found throughout TI. They are 56,9-57,2; 58,1-14; 59,4-8. After a close analysis of them, critical notes will be given.

³⁶ J. NEUSNER, *Making God's Word Work*, 9.

1.2.1.1 *Analysis of the Texts*

a) 56,9-57,2

The first step to be undertaken is to justify the limitation of the text. The lay out of the printed edition of BHS is somewhat inconsistent. On the one hand, the editors indicated the subdivision of the text in Codex Leningrad by placing a *setuma* (Ⓢ) as paragraph marking after v. 9, thus indicating the unity of vv. 1-9;³⁷ on the other hand, however, there the editors also put a wider space between v. 8 and v. 9, which would imply the separation of those two verses. Most scholars, however, now agree that v. 9 goes more properly with the following section, rather than with the preceding one. Indeed, compared to 56,1-8, vv. 9-12 present a new addressee and new topic. Moreover, no single keyword of vv. 1-8 reappears in vv. 9-12.³⁸ The double imperatives אָרְיִן in 56,9 and 56,12 frames the section 56,9-12 and thus reinforces further the unity of 56,9-12 apart from preceding verses.³⁹ But then, does it stop here? How about 57,1-2? Does it belong to the next or previous section?

With וְאִתָּם in 57,3, a new beginning starts. The third pers. sing. pronoun in 57,1-2 has now been abandoned, so that these two verses stand separately from the following section. Can they be joined together with the previous section? Together with many scholars, we argue that in the present state of the text, 57,1-2 will fit better with 56,9-12. Though they deal with different subject matter from 56,9-12, there are also clear connections that make it advisable to treat both as parts of a single pericope.⁴⁰ The lack of understanding (בִּינָה) in 56,11 returns in 57,1. Taken together, 56,9-57,2 then present a contrast between the wicked and the righteous, a common topic in the work of Third Isaiah.⁴¹ In one way or another, the crooked behaviour of the leaders described in 56,9-12 has something to do, whether directly or indirectly, with the fate of the righteous in 57,1-2. The relationship between these two passages

³⁷ In the Foreword, the editors of BHS, K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, explain that the paragraph division (Ⓢ and Ⓣ) are not found in Codex Leningradensis B 19^A (L), which is the basic Hebrew text of BHS. However, the subdivisions themselves are there as indicated by the location of start of a subdivision. Koole noted that this division came from the early Jewish pericope division. See J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 30.

³⁸ Cf. O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 229.

³⁹ E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 38; also L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 75.

⁴⁰ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 30.

⁴¹ Hanson called this contrast description between two groups of people as a "salvation-judgment oracle." According to him, this new style is characteristic of the post-exilic prophecy, which becomes his clue to determine the date of Third Isaiah's texts. See P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 184 and *passim*.

can therefore be described as a causal relationship.⁴² Hence the choice to treat 56,9-12 together with 57,1-2 can find sound justification.

Considering the form and content of 56,9-12 several authors suggested a pre-exilic origin for these verses.⁴³ However, more recent scholars do not accept this suggestion. Already DUHM, by comparing our text with Jeremiah, Second Isaiah and particularly Ezekiel, insisted on its post-exilic provenience.⁴⁴ Recently, BLENKINSOPP claims that this proposal "depends on the unsustainable argument that only under the monarchy was Israel threatened by invasion and devastation by foreign nations."⁴⁵ Or, we shall also mention, the somewhat-cynical statement from SCHRAMM, "Many commentators date this oracle to the pre-exilic period because it 'sounds' pre-exilic."⁴⁶ It is true, some biblical texts from post-exilic period demonstrate that situations similar to the pre-exilic period also happened in the post-exilic community (cf. Hag 1,5-6.10-11; 2,16-17; Zech 8,10; Neh 5,1-5).

Thematically, it is quite clear that the section 56,9-57,2 show a contrast between the wicked (56,9-12) and the righteous (57,1-2). Some further detailed explanations, however, are still needed. The BHS at 56,9 proposed the *athnach* as verse division under וְשָׂדֵי "the fields," and thus may suggest that the object of לֶאֱכָלֵם is "all the beasts of the forest,"⁴⁷ a reading which naturally makes little sense. But then, what would the object of *to devour* be? The answer to this question will be proposed later, after analyzing vv. 10-12.

⁴² Cf. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 76-77; see also K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 60; B. RENAUD, "La mort du juste, entrée dans la paix (Is 57,1-2)," *RSR* 51 (1977) 8; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 465.

⁴³ For example, P. VOLZ, *Jesaja, II*, 208; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 319.

⁴⁴ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 394.

⁴⁵ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 146.

⁴⁶ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 127 n. 1.

⁴⁷ The critical apparatus, however, suggests to move the *athnach* under לֶאֱכָלֵם . This ambiguity is even worse in the LXX since the gender of $\theta\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ is neutral, which means the nominative and accusative forms are similar. The Targum has a very different translation, "All the kings of the people which gather together (כִּנְסוּ) to oppress thee, O Jerusalem, shall be cast down in thy midst; they shall be food for the beasts of the field, the beasts of the forest shall be sated with them." By means of the verb כִּנְסוּ (*to gather*, for Hebrew word קָבַץ) the Tg connected v. 9 with v. 8, where the same verb also appeared. At the same time, it is clear that the objects to be devoured by the beasts are the kings of the nations. See also K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 32, who suggested that, because of the presence of the preposition ב in בֵּיעַר , "the forest" is not in construct relationship with וְחַיָּוָה but rather stands independently and indicates a place where the animals devour the others. Koenen's proposal can be objected since a preposition can be inserted in a construct form (Cf. J-M, § 129 m-n), furthermore it ruins the parallelism between "the animals of the fields" and "the animals of the forest."

In 56,9-12 we find two groups⁴⁸ of people being spoken about: צַפִּיּוֹ (“his watchmen”) in v. 10aα (*Qere*)⁴⁹ and רֹעִים (“shepherds”) in v. 11aβ, each with its further figurative description. His watchmen are all blind so that they do not perceive. They are all dumb dogs, so that they cannot bark but are raving, lying down, and loving to slumber. Instead of barking, they have a mighty appetite and are insatiable (v. 10-11a). In the historical books, the צַפִּיּוֹ (“watchmen”) are sentinels who stand watch over the city to warn of enemy attack (1Sam 14,16; 2Sam 18,24ff; 2Kgs 9,17ff). With a shift of meaning from literal to figurative, the term צַפִּיּוֹ is often also applied to a prophet.⁵⁰ To give an example, Ezekiel was appointed as “watchman” or sentinel or Hosea was the watchman of Ephraim (Ezek 3,17; Hos 9,8; cf. also Ezek 33,2; Jer 6,17; Isa 52,8). Like sentinels who watch around from the מִצְפָּה (“watchtower,” cf. Isa 21,8), so that they are able to detect the arrival of threatening enemies at the very first moment, thus also prophets hold a responsibility for warning the people of the danger that is potential to destroy God’s people. But in vv. 10-11a, our *watchmen* are described as *blind*, thus cannot see and do not recognize (the danger) and *cannot bark* (in the sense of warning the people).

Here “dog” (כֹּלֵב) is perhaps not only used in a sense of humiliating, but has another (ironical) nuance. Dogs were common in Palestine from the eighth century on; soon after having been domesticated, they were used as watchdogs (or hunting dogs). A watchdog must be a faithful dog that will look after the interests of his master. Thus, for example, in 1Chr 17,19 David addressed YHWH with the words “for the sake of your servant and your *dog*,”⁵¹ expressing his humility and fidelity before YHWH. It is an irony that our “unfaithful dogs” cannot bark, but *keep on* - thus the meaning of the Hebrew participle - eating and sleeping. Their mouth is not for warning but for eating!

⁴⁸ Also C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 317. Instead of two groups, some scholars argued that this section deals with *three* groups, by including “the seers” as the third group. For example, P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 192; T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult Imagery,” 267-268; B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 126. By doing so, however, they must amend הָזִיּוֹם (MT also LXX and Tg) to הָזִיּוֹם (supported by IQIsa^a, Peshita, Vulgata, and some mss). While הָזִיּוֹם is a common word for prophet, MT’s הָזִיּוֹם is a *hapax legomenon*, and therefore a *lectio difficilior* that has to be preferred. The meaning is not entirely clear. Blenkinsopp translated it as *to pant*; Koole preferred *to rave*, while many English versions have *to sleep* or *to dream* (perhaps following LXX). See especially J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 35-36.

⁴⁹ The LXX’s rendering ἴδετε (imptv. aorist second pers. pl.) reflects the *Ktib* reading understood as imperative second pers. pl., צַפִּי. Cf. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 395.

⁵⁰ Cf. R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 200.

⁵¹ Read כֹּלֵבֶךָ as it is proposed by the critical apparatus, instead of MT וְכֹלֵבֶךָ. The Masoretic vocalization has perhaps changed the original וְכֹלֵבֶךָ which was regarded as unseemly in the mouth of David in his address to God. See D. WINTON THOMAS, “*Kelebh* ‘Dog’,” 424. Further about this topic, G.J. BOTTERWECK, “כֹּלֵב,” 146-157.

The *hapax* word הָזִים, which means “panting” or “raving,” may indicate something further. As KOOLE has noted, here the root הָזָה may involve not just “sleeping,” but the stupid things which somebody says when half awake (TOB: *rêvassant*), or rather what somebody dreams aloud, as LXX renders the word.⁵² If it is true that this word has the nuance of “raving” or “talking irrationally,” then we may suspect that there is something wrong with the *utterances* of these צַפִּים.⁵³ Instead of warning the people of the community’s corrupt situation, their words may have led the people astray. Thus, not only the watchmen completely neglected their responsibilities as the people’s guardians, but they also made them lose their way. Perhaps, they were simply telling what the people wanted to hear (cf. Isa 30,10). They were like false prophets who cried out “Peace! Peace!, when there is no peace” as Jeremiah said and got the payment (בַּצַּע as in Isa 56,11bb) (Jer 6,13-14; cf. also 23,16-17).⁵⁴

Another negative judgment is delivered to the second group, namely, the shepherds (רֹעִים) (vv. 11ba-12). Verse 11ba indeed creates difficulties, so that many scholars considered it secondary. The expression וְהָמָה רֹעִים is rendered as καὶ εἰσὺ ποτηροὶ in LXX and מְבֹאֲשִׁין (“those who do evil”) in the Tg, thus reflected the Hebrew רֹעִים, which perhaps summarized the misdeeds spoken about before. 1QIsa^a, however, has הַרְוֵעִים (*scriptio plena* with *mater lectionis*) and therefore, supports the MT.

In fact, if the MT is to be translated literally, then we will have “And they are the shepherds,” thus identifying the watchmen (*prophets*) with the shepherds (*rulers*). However, as KOOLE has already noted, these two groups cannot simply be identified, though they cannot be separated also. Already in the pre-exilic time the false prophets exercised an important influence on the court and life of the people (Jer 23,15; Ezek 13,10 etc.).⁵⁵ Here, together with KOOLE, we shall follow the suggestion offered by DELITZSCH that the accusation of the prophet is now extended to the leaders of the nations in general. Arguing that הָמָה has various usages, DELITZSCH suggested that here it functions as an exclamation, “And such are the shepherds!”⁵⁶

⁵² J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 36.

⁵³ Thus Westermann translates, “They talk confusedly in their sleep.”

⁵⁴ E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 39.

⁵⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 38.

⁵⁶ F. DELITZSCH, *Commentary, VII*, [CD-ROM]. Adopting Dahood’s proposal to understand הָמָה as a variant form of הָמָה borrowed from the Ugaritic *hm*, Polan also arrived at a similar solution as offered by Delitzsch. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 114; also J.J. SCULLION, “Some Difficult Texts,” 108.

These shepherds are accused of not having understanding, turning to their own ways, and looking for their own interest (v. 11aβ.b). These three descriptions are closely related one to another. To pursue one's interest, of which the cause is not having a proper understanding, would result in one turning from his own way. The description of the shepherds is further continued in v. 12 by quoting their own words, "Come! Let me get wine, let us fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow will be like this day, great beyond measure!" A *carpe diem* philosophy appears clearly here. Furthermore, the verb לָקַח can be used for a violent or at least illegal appropriation;⁵⁷ thus it would mean "to get" or "to take something away from others (because one is stronger)."⁵⁸ This would fit well with their insatiable desire to gain unlawful profit (בַּצֵּעַ "gain made by violence," "unjust gain"⁵⁹) mentioned in the previous verse.

In the first place, the mentioning of יַיִן ("wine") and שִׁכָּר ("strong drink"), indeed indicates the luxurious or gluttonous way of life of the shepherds, the drunken masters. But, it is not impossible that these two words would bring about other deeper nuances if we take into account other texts where they are also used.

BEUKEN has already suggested that Isa 5 was perhaps the model for Isa 56,9-12.⁶⁰ Isa 5,11-12, in which this pair of words appears together, warns that wine and strong drink make one become drunk, so that he cannot perceive the work of God (cf. also 28,7). This negative judgment is also found in Isa 5,22-23; where wine and strong drink only result in corruption and injustice. Thus, wine and strong drink are not only a sign of the shepherds' style of debauched life, but they also prevent them from seeing the hand of God clearly. In other words, יַיִן and שִׁכָּר "wine and strong drink" make them unable to get דְּבִינָה ("understanding").

In addition to Isa 5, perhaps, we could also have a look at Isa 29,7-10,⁶¹ another text in which the word pair, "wine and strong drink," also occurs together with several other words with similar connotation to the wording of 56,9-12. Isa 29,7-10 is preceded by vv. 1-8 which describe the strangeness of God's plan:⁶² He is first attacking Jerusalem (vv. 1-4) but then delivers her from her enemies (vv. 5-8). And then in v. 9 YHWH continued his utterance:

⁵⁷ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 40.

⁵⁸ W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Isa 56:9-57:13," 58.

⁵⁹ BDB, 130. This word is mostly used in a negative sense (cf. Ezek 22,17; Jer 6,13; 8,10; Hab 2,9).

⁶⁰ W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Isa 56:9-57:13," 61-62.

⁶¹ H. SIMIAN-YOFRE, oral communication 23 March 2004.

⁶² Cf. B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 218.

“Tarry yourselves (הִתְמַדְדוּ) ⁶³ and be astounded,

delight yourselves (וְשַׂעוּ) ⁶⁴ and be blind!

Be drunk, but not from wine; stagger, but not from strong drink!

As we shall see there are several words that are close to 56,9-12; not always in wording but primarily, in the semantic field. They are “wine and strong drink” (56,12 and 29,9); “blind” (עָוֵר in 56,10 and שַׂעַע in 29,10); “raving,” “lying down,” “slumbering” (56,10) and “deep sleep” (תַּרְדֵּמָה) and “closing one’s eyes” (עָצַם עֵינָיו) in 29,10; “watchmen” (צִפּוֹרֵי in 56,10) and “prophet” (נְבִיא) and “seer” (חֹזֵה) in 29,10.

Here the addressees are ironically urged to tarry (= to wait) and to delight themselves, and *not* to be drunk with wine and liquor. But why? Then in v. 10, comes the reason introduced by כִּי:

“For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep;

he has closed your eyes, you prophets, and covered your heads, you seers”

“Deep sleep” is a translation of the Hebrew תַּרְדֵּמָה. In the OT, this word appears 7 times (Gen 2,21; 15,12; 1Sam 26,12; Job 4,13; 33,15; Prov 19,15). And in all occurrences, except one in Prov 19,15, this word is used in a positive manner. It has something to do with the action of God. Thus, also in 29,10 we could expect that this word would bear the same nuance. In this way, our understanding of vv. 9-10 is that these two verses insist that the addressees wait for the action or manifestation of God (perhaps a vision?); while waiting for this event they are urged to take pleasure and blind themselves from anything else which is *not* from God. They should be “drunk” with this matter, and not with wine and liquor! Two texts from Hab could support this

⁶³ The English translations of this verse vary, depending on how one translates the first word הִתְמַדְדוּ. Some versions have “to stupefy” that, presumably, reflects the verbal root תמה, though the form is obscure (for example, RSV, NRSV, NJB). Thus, BHS apparatus suggests הִתְמַדְדוּ (*hithpael* imperative from תמה, BDB, 1069) as in Hab 1,5. Others have “to delay, to tarry, to wait” or similar (KJV, ASV, NIB, NKJ, NAB), thus mirroring the verbal root מדה (*hithpalpel* imperative, BDB, 554) as in Gen 19,16; 44,10; Ex 12,39; Judg 3,26; 19,8 etc. LXX and the Vulgate confirm that two different roots are being used here. Cf. R.P. CARROLL, “Eschatological Delay,” 52.

⁶⁴ The common translation is “blind yourselves” supposing the root שַׂעַע I (BDB, 1044). However, it could also be translated as “take your pleasure” or “delight yourselves,” which comes from the root שַׂעַע II, “to take delight in” (*hithpalpel* imperative) as it is also attested in Ps 119,16.47. LXX lacks this part. Thus it would seem that in v. 9 two pairs of words of the same roots but differing in meaning, are being used.

idea, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries (יְהִימָוֶה from מָוֶה *hithpalpel*), wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab 2,3) and "Look at the nations, and see! Be astonished! (הִתְמַהֵר from תָּמָה *hithpael*) Be astounded! For a work is being done in your days that you would not believe if you were told" (Hab 1,5).

If we are justified in reading 56,9-12 with reference to Isa 29,9-10 and Hab 1,5 and 2,3, then our text would stand in opposition to 29,9-10. In 56,9-12 the leaders of the people are blamed because they are not willing to wait; they have even been playing upon the patience (or the lingering?) of God for their own interest at the expense of the people!⁶⁵ This is, in our opinion, the reason why the leaders are described as not having understanding (56,10.11; also 57,1(?)). They are not able to perceive the plan of God!

As in the previous verses, in these two verses (vv. 11b-12) the shepherds are described negatively too; they are not better than the watchmen in vv. 10-11a. Instead of caring and curing the people, they care and cure themselves! These men of power have misused their social position in the administration of justice to organize lavish banquets for themselves!

We are not in a position to identify precisely the watchmen and the shepherds in vv. 10-12. Our text does not allow us to arrive at such a conclusion.⁶⁶ Instead of attempting to identify them, I think, it would be safer to say modestly that in this section we are dealing with the leaders of the people in general; both civil and religious leaders.⁶⁷ They are charged as having neglected their social duties and responsibilities for the sake of their own interest.

At this point, we shall now return to the question that arises from v. 9: what would the object of *to devour* be? Many scholars attempted to answer this question by referring to Jer 12,9, which also has the similar phrase כָּל-חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה הָחַי לְאֹכְלָהּ. But the literary context of Jer 12,7-13 is different from our text. In Jer 12,9 the object of לְאֹכְלָהּ is Israel, YHWH's heritage who has become to him like a lion in the forest. She has lifted up her voice against him; therefore he hates her (Jer 12,8). In this

⁶⁵ It is interesting to notice that Carroll took Hab 2,3 as a possible response for an eschatological delay. R.P. CARROLL, "Eschatological Delay," 52-53.

⁶⁶ Hanson's claim that "Since the *hōzīm* ('seers') were prophetic figures, the term *šōphim* may here designate the priests of the people (note: for Hanson these priests are the Zadokite priests)" is just conjectural and thus cannot be accepted. P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 196 and *passim*. Also Achtemeier's proposal that the watchmen refer to the prophets who accompanied the returnees and the shepherds are identified as Sheshbazzar and his officials is a merely speculative hypothesis that cannot be verified. E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 38.

⁶⁷ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 200.

context, the wild beasts are YHWH's instruments to punish his people. But the context of Isa 56,9-12 is an indictment towards the leaders of the people. (It is true that Jer 12,11 also criticized the shepherds (רֹעִים) for having destroyed YHWH's vineyard.) It has nothing to do with Israel, God's people (only later, in 58,1 we find an accusation against the people!). Another solution is that the people will be destroyed because of their leader's lack of responsibility,⁶⁸ and the fate of the righteous in 57,1-2 is the prototype of the outcome of their negligence. However, this suggestion sounds unacceptable, because the people, who have been oppressed by the leaders, still have to pay for the wickedness of their leaders.

Nevertheless, it is also possible to understand it as a judgment toward the leaders.⁶⁹ The double imperatives (v. 9 and v. 12), which form an inclusion that frames 56,9-12, may offer help. The invitation to eat for the beasts is parallel with the leaders' invitation to drink. As now the wicked are inviting (אָרְוּ) their companions to *drink*, thus YHWH will invite (אָרְוּ) the beasts to *devour* them.⁷⁰ It is the wicked leaders that the animals will come to devour as the recompense of what they have and have not done!

On the one hand, the post-exilic community suffered a lot from the hard life they had to face; on the other hand, unfortunately, even in the worst situation there were always some who managed to fare well.⁷¹ Doubtless, there is nothing worse than a society whose civil and religious leaders join together to pursue their own interests in a kind of relationship that offers reciprocal benefits. Both will find religious and political justification and protection from one another for their behaviour. In such a society, there is little doubt that the victims of their greediness will immediately fall one after another. The following section of our text (57,1-2), which describes the fate of the righteous, could be seen from this perspective. The righteous is the prototypical victim of the corrupt leaders. A similar situation is also found in Zech 10,2 "For the teraphim utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies; the dreamers tell false dreams, and give empty consolation. Therefore the people wander like sheep; they suffer for lack of a shepherd."

⁶⁸ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 200; J.J. SCULLION, *Isaiah 40-66*, 155; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 464.

⁶⁹ Smith rejects this opinion and argues that there is no judgment of the leaders until 57,14. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 68. However, in the context of 56,9-57,2 that forms a literary unit, a judgment of the leaders is needed to construct a parallelism with the salvation announced for the righteous.

⁷⁰ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 317; G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 112; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 33. For Beuken, the object to be devoured is the fruit of the land that belongs to Israel. W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Isa 56:9-57:13," 58.

⁷¹ J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 238.

Starting with 57,1 the subject matter changes. On the one hand, the structure of the sentence with the subject (הַצַּדִּיק) positioned at the beginning of the verse may stress this shift. On the other hand, the phrase בָּאֵין מִבֵּין (“no understanding”), which finds a parallel in לֹא יָדְעוּ הַבָּיִן (v. 11 ay), makes 57,1-2 remain connected to the previous section. To support this, we can also add the occurrences of the root שָׁכַב in 56,10 and 57,2.⁷²

The general meaning of the section 57,1-2 is clear enough, though there are obscurities in some further details. It describes the fate of the righteous in two lines, of which the terminology largely derives from the psalms (cf. Ps 12,2; also Mi 7,2), constructed in a synonymous parallelism (v. 1aαβ.βα).⁷³ The righteous perished. Then, the following verses (vv. 1bβ-2) introduced by כִּי, give the explanation or interpretation of this fact.⁷⁴

Though the content of this section is apparent, at least through a superficial reading, some points still need clarification. Who is intended by the designations הַצַּדִּיק and אֲנָשֵׁי הַסֶּדֶק? Because of the definite article and the *x-qatal* construction, PAURITSCH thought that the speaker had a certain righteous person in mind.⁷⁵ However, as KOOLE has noted, the use of a definite article does not necessarily indicate a particular person (cf. Ezek 18,20; Ps 37,12).⁷⁶ Moreover, the parallel plural אֲנָשֵׁי הַסֶּדֶק, which is juxtaposed together, will also lead in the same direction. Therefore, together with many scholars, it seems more probable to understand this terminology as pointing to a collective entity rather than a definite individual person.⁷⁷ The just perished and nobody paid attention!

With אָסַף (*Niphal*) used in parallel with אָבַד, the death of the righteous is understood as “being gathered (to his ancestors)” and “being removed/taken away.” It is not only a euphemism or a stylistic device to create parallelism, but rather

⁷² Thus P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 74.

⁷³ W.A.M. BEUKEN, “Isa 56:9-57:13,” 63. Thus attempts to join בָּאֵין מִבֵּין with the following part seems unjustifiable because it overlooks the strong parallelism found here.

⁷⁴ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 16.

⁷⁵ K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 63. 65. Indeed, some scholars see in the description the righteous’ fate an allusion to that of the Servant in Isa 53. Cf. P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 197; W.A.M. BEUKEN, “The Main Theme,” 69-70; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 78; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 42; cf. also J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 151; ID., “Who is the *saddiq*,” 109-120. Cf. for the death of the servant, see objection proposed by G.R. DRIVER, “Isaiah 52,13-53,12,” 90-105.

⁷⁶ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 42.

⁷⁷ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 42; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 16 n. 4; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 197; J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 240.

introduces a further clarification that is developed in the following part (vv. 1b β -2), in which the same verb כִּי reappears.

Then, comes the last line of v. 1 introduced by particle כִּי .⁷⁸ No agreement has been achieved with regard to its semantic value. Indeed, in itself this particle has no independent meaning. Only from the context in which it appears, are we able to determine its function.⁷⁹ In our case, I believe, that the key point here is how to understand the phrase מִפְּנֵי הַרְעָה .

The frozen prepositional expression מִפְּנֵי can be understood as "from before" (*distancing*) (e.g. Jer 42,17) or "on account of" (*causality*) (e.g. Jer 51,64).⁸⁰ Applied to 57,1 the former would mean "from before the evil," that is, from the godless existing situation or the disaster that will come imminently as the consequence of the corrupt situation.⁸¹ The righteous is taken away so that now he is beyond the reach of doom. Here, כִּי would have an adversative function,⁸² "but," indicating the contrast between the surface appearance and the true meaning (cf. Wis 3-4). Another possibility, "on account of evil" is represented, for example, by HANSON and BLENKINSOPP.⁸³ In this case, כִּי would be better understood as having an emphatic function, "Yeah! Surely!," with a nuance of affirming the previous fact and at the same time, underlining the leader's corruption. Considering these various possibilities, we may ask then, whether this ambiguity is purposely intended by the speaker. If this is true, then translating one possibility may mean neglecting the other. Therefore, I would prefer to maintain this double meaning of the phrase.

Verse 2 is a further explanation of this כִּי -clause. As a matter of fact, this verse has posed many difficulties for scholars, that BLENKINSOPP called it "one of the most obscure in these 11 chapters."⁸⁴ The interchange between singular and plural, the

⁷⁸ Hanson omitted this particle with the LXX. P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 192. I do not know which edition of the LXX was available to Hanson. In Rahlfs' and Ziegler's edition this particle is represented by $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ postpositive. I would suspect that Hanson often 'created' his own text - by frequently adding, omitting, or emending the MT text - so that it will fit with his tool to approach the text.

⁷⁹ A. AEJMELAEUS, "Function and Interpretation," 194-195.

⁸⁰ Cf. W-O'C 11.3.1; H. SIMIAN-YOFRE, "פְּנֵי," 611-612.

⁸¹ Thus for example, J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 44; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 17; B. RENAUD, "La mort du juste," 12; J.J. SCULLION, "Some Difficult Texts," 109; G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 121; and others. By translating "from before the evil that is about to come," the Tg explicitly referred to the future disaster.

⁸² J-M § 173 c; A. AEJMELAEUS, "Function and Interpretation," 200.

⁸³ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 188; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 149. This interpretation, however, as noted by Renaud, would render v. 1 apart from v. 2. Therefore, Blenkinsopp argued that v. 2 is a gloss. Also K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 57.

⁸⁴ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 152.

subject of יָבוֹא ,⁸⁵ the meaning of the absolute form of שָׁלוֹם , are the most cited problems in this verse. Without entering into a deeper analysis of the text, I would just say that v. 2 develops further the interpretation given by the previous כִּי -clause.

As we have noted earlier, the verb $\text{נִאֶסְרָה/נִאֶסְפִּים}$ interprets אָבָר , and gives it the nuance of a movement (“to be removed,” “to be taken away”). Then in v. 2 it finds its complement in יָבוֹא . The righteous is removed or taken away to enter into שָׁלוֹם , which stands in contrast with הָרָעָה .⁸⁶ Thus we have here a positive interpretation on the death of the righteous. This announcement of salvation for the righteous - whatever it may have meant in the period of its composition - stands in opposition to the fate of the corrupt leaders in 56,9-12.

Consequently, we must acknowledge that in 56,9-57,2 there are two groups, represented by the leaders and the righteous, that stand in opposition. Indeed, the polemical character of Third Isaiah is demonstrated by various texts indicating division in the community. In our text, we notice a division between the corrupt leaders and the righteous. Thus it anticipates the dichotomy between אֲתָם and עֲבָרֵי in 65,13ff. In 56,9-57,2 these two groups are not merely juxtaposed one after another, but placed in a causal relationship. The corrupt leaders’ insatiable vested interest and lack of responsibility, supported by their power and, perhaps, a conspiracy between the civil and religious leaders, have, in one way or another, caused the righteous to fall as their victim, directly or indirectly.

b) 59,4-8

Continuing in the context of analyzing social sin, the second text we are going to examine is 59,4-8. We have said earlier that vv. 4-8 is a further development of the sin mentioned in vv. 2-3. In this section a close reading of these verses will be undertaken so that the deeper and, if possible, the exact meaning of the text could be brought to the surface.

In its present form, vv. 4-8 constitute a literary unit. As POLAN has noted, the occurrences of אֵין שָׁפֵט in v. 4a and 8a form an inclusion.⁸⁷ After a direct discourse

⁸⁵ The subject of this verb cannot easily be determined. Many would say that it is the righteous in v. 1. IQIsa^a put a *waw*, which could be read in many ways. However, this is not the only possible solution. Already the Vulgate offered another answer since it took שָׁלוֹם as the subject; *Veniat pax*. Among modern scholars, Koenen, referring to Job 3,26, a text with similar construction, suggested the same opinion. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 18; also J.D. WATTS, *Isaiah 34-66* [CD-ROM].

⁸⁶ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 122.

⁸⁷ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 253.

formulated in the second pers. pronoun in vv. 1-3, there is a shift of pronoun in v. 4, which is formulated in the third pers. sing. impersonal, and then in vv. 5-8 in the third pers. pl. This change of pronoun in vv. 5-8 has invited many scholars to think that vv. 1-3 and vv. 5-8 do not form a literary unity; and therefore, the latter block (vv. 5-8) should be independently treated as a later addition.⁸⁸ The BHS printed these eight lines in indent mode, implying a different treatment. Regardless of its literary history, I believe that we are still able to treat vv. 4-8 as a unit that further describes the wrongdoings announced in vv. 2-3. But then, before we step further to examine the content of this section, we shall now ask: who is being spoken about in vv. 4-8? Who is meant by this third pers. pronoun in this passage?

In vv. 1-3 indeed the prophet was delivering his direct indictment to his discourse partner, the people of God, characterized by the use of second pers. pl. pronoun. Now, starting from v. 4 the prophetic charge is applied to all without exception. Therefore, the second pers. pronoun is now dropped. The prophet is now observing the general situation.⁸⁹ In this way, he expanded his accusation; not only those who were present and directly listening to his words who had committed sin, but also those who were not present; at the same time, the prophet underlined the gravity of the situation: sin has so widely spread that it covered all aspects of the people's life! Understood in this way, then we can say that the third pers. pronoun remains pointing at the people.

Verse 4 is constructed of two parallel statements (v. 4aα.β) expanded with four other verbs in the infinitive absolute (v. 4b). Here the common verb קרא ("to call," "to read," "to cry")⁹⁰ is used in an unusual meaning "to enter suit," "to cite" (cf. Job 5,1; 9,16; 13,22).⁹¹ This meaning is perhaps determined by the second verb נשפט (Niphal participle of שפט), which in Niphal form has the meaning of "to enter into controversy," "to plead,"⁹² "to go to the law with one another" (with a nuance of reciprocity).⁹³ As many have noted, these words belong to court terminology. These two actions are further specified by adverbial complements consisting of abstract nouns (צדק and אמונה) + preposition ב, indicating how the actions are carried out.

⁸⁸ For example, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 411; K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 89; the opposite position is held by, for example, C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 347; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 61 n. 9.

⁸⁹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 175.

⁹⁰ The Tg rendered קרא with *to pray* (צלי), perhaps, under the influence of 58,9 where the same word appears with that meaning. The LXX has a more general expression λαλει.

⁹¹ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 347; cf. BDB, 896.

⁹² BDB, 1048.

⁹³ GKC § 51 d. The LXX changes this sentence into a nominal sentence with εστιν "neither is there true judgment;" while the Vulgate has an active form *iudicet*.

But then, the particle of negation ׀א as impersonal subject creates a devastating effect: Nobody comes to the court honestly!

POLAN has also noted that v. 4a forms a cause-effect relationship.⁹⁴ Because nobody comes to court justly, then, as a result, nobody is judged honestly! This is highly ironic because in the very place where people should have found justice, they destroy each other by their lack of honesty. At the same time, this verse shows how corrupt the situation was. When justice as the only criterion in a court is replaced by something else, then the 'have-not' will always be the loser.

Verse 4a is then followed by four brief phrases with four verbs in the infinitive absolute (v. 4b). The use of infinitive absolute following the preceding finite verb is indeed quite common, especially in the later books. However, the reason for such a use is not clearly understood,⁹⁵ sometimes for stylistic reason, sometimes for expressing a vague subject like "one" or "they."⁹⁶ Since in v. 4 the prophet is describing a general situation, I think, this is sufficient to explain the presence of this form in this verse.⁹⁷

Verse 4b could be understood as two parallel statements indicating mental activity and its product or expression. Thus,

"Trusting in nothing, speaking emptiness;
Conceiving mischief, bringing forth trouble"

The verb בטח "to trust" has the sense of feeling secure which results from having something or someone in whom to place confidence. Therefore, it can also be rendered as "feeling secure". Its value is determined by the object upon which one relies.⁹⁸ Since here the object is תהו "nothing" then the result is, accordingly, שוא "emptiness". Verse 4b α finds its parallel in the following verse (v. 4b β), which is similar to Job 15,35 (with *Qal* Inf. Abs. ילד) and Ps 7,15 (uses שקר instead of און)

⁹⁴ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 264. For Koole, v. 4a α describes the beginning of a court process; while v. 4a β the course. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 175.

⁹⁵ J-M § 123 x; *GKC* § 113 z.

⁹⁶ J-M § 155 i. Indeed the LXX, Vulgate and the Tg have a third pers. pl. as subject. Similarly, IQIsa^a expressed the first and fourth verb in perfect third pers. pl.

⁹⁷ Blenkinsopp regards the use of the infinitive absolute as expressing continuous action or a persistent pattern of behaviour. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 185; while Polan thinks that it is intended to demonstrate a cause-effect relationship. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 265, also 265 n. 33.

⁹⁸ Based on texts such as Isa 30,12; 42,17; 47,10; Jer 2,37, PAURITSCH suggested that this prophetic diction is characteristic of the polemic against the false trust. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 89. However, the fact that this word is widely used in a positive sense (especially in Psalms) makes it difficult to agree with his argument.

which also describes the transgressors. This synonymous parallelism reinforces the idea that is being conveyed. By indicating the direct correspondence between the inner and outer expression, it is demonstrated that the main problem lies in the human heart: there is no goodwill in interpersonal relationships, because they are intrinsically evil. It is not surprising; therefore, that in v. 4a the court as institution is described as being corrupt.

This idea is still continued in vv. 5-6a and yet is expressed differently by means of a metaphorical language. This is not only a repetition that, of course, emphasizes the previous statement, but also, at the same time, adds in some new aspects. This section is also well structured:

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| v. 5aα.β | וקורי עכביש יארגו | ביצי צפעוני בקעו |
| v. 5b | | האכל מביציהם ימות והזורה תבקע אפעה |
| v. 6a | קוריהם לאייהו לבגר ולא יתכסו | |

Verse 5aα.β presents two statements using animal imagery; then in the following section each part is expanded and marked by word repetition.⁹⁹ Thus, v. 5aα goes with v. 5b (ביצה “egg” and בקע “to hatch”) and v. 5aβ with v. 6a (קור “thread,” “web”).

The idea of conception – birth mentioned in the previous verse comes in v. 5aα: “They hatch serpent’s eggs.” It is not clear what kind of snake is intended by צפעוני (also in 11,8; Prov 23,32; Jer 8,17 in plural).¹⁰⁰ Continuing this verse, v. 5bα speaks about “eating of” these eggs: “Whoever eats their eggs will die.” Though DUHM has already raised a doubt whether one would eat a serpent’s egg or it is to be confused with an edible bird’s egg,¹⁰¹ I think, we should not push it too far. Surely, here we are not dealing with one who wants to commit suicide; he eats the egg because it *appears* as edible. But, something supposed to bring life has proven to be the contrary. The good-looking appearance is deceptive. Had he known before that it was a deadly egg, he would not have consumed it! But in this case, it does not exempt him from the problems as the following part (v. 5bβ) demonstrates.

⁹⁹ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 266.

¹⁰⁰ Bodenheimer translates it with “adder” and explains it as the common Palestine viper (*Vipera Palaestinae*), the cause of almost all accidents in the settled area of Palestine. F.S. BODENHEIMER, “Fauna,” 246-256.

¹⁰¹ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 412.

Verse 5b β is difficult and the LXX does not offer much help.¹⁰² The difficulty lies in the grammatical subject הַזֵּיִרָה. The form is identified as *Qal* pass. part. fem. from the root זָרָר.¹⁰³ But this root has more than one meaning.¹⁰⁴ Following WERNBERG-MØLLER,¹⁰⁵ some scholars argued for the meaning “to stink”¹⁰⁶ (cf. Job 19,17). However, we suggest taking it as III זָרָר “to press down” referring to בִּיצָה “egg” (fem); a reading that is more preferable for many recent exegetes:¹⁰⁷ “The crushed (egg) comes forth as snake.” Nevertheless, the verb הִבְקַעַע (*Niphal*) can also be understood in two ways. If this form is taken as *Niphal* reflexive or, perhaps, tolerative, then it would mean a soft natural pressing of brooding leads to the hatching of the eggs. In this way, this phrase emphasizes the idea of producing (the evil), and thus parallel with the previous one. But if we take the form as *Niphal* passive, we will have another idea, which would perhaps fit the context better: The eating of snakes’ eggs is fatal (v. 5b α), but if this is seen to be pointless (because the egg is *stinking*?) and they are trampled, still, nothing is won. The broken egg will yet bring forth another poisonous snake (הַאֲפַעֵה)!¹⁰⁸ In this way, the effectiveness of the evil produced by the wicked is underlined; whether one accepts or refuses it, the outcome remains the same. If one can successfully be deceived by the egg’s attractive appearance, one will die; but if he cannot be fooled by appearances, then it will still produce another deadly danger. No way out from this venomous egg!

One small thing could still perhaps be added. Among the use of third pers. pl. in vv. 5-8, the statement with הַזֵּיִרָה (part. sing.) as the subject in v. 5b α is worth noting:¹⁰⁹ “He/the one who eats or whoever eats their eggs will die.” In the light of v. 5a α , this “he” becomes the victim *through* the evil intention proposed by the wicked

¹⁰² The LXX creates difficulties because it differs considerably from the MT. For a tentative solution to the problem, see D. WEISSERT, “Der Basilisk,” 315-322.

¹⁰³ For vocalization see *GKC* § 27 u; § 73 d; § 80 i.

¹⁰⁴ BDB, 266 offers three meanings: I. “be a stranger”; II. “be loathsome”; III. “press down and out.”

¹⁰⁵ P. WERNBERG-MØLLER, “A Note on זָרָר,” 322-325.

¹⁰⁶ K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 89; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 116.

¹⁰⁷ For example, BLENKINSOPP, CHILDS, WESTERMANN, POLAN, KOOLE; but also DUHM (*ausgedrückte*). See brief discussion on this choice in J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 177-178.

¹⁰⁸ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 178; cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 185. The LXX has βασιλίσκος, a legendary reptile whose breath and glance were presumed to be fatal. It was said that a basilisk is the offspring of a rooster or hen mated with a snake or toad. Weissert in his article cited above, argues that the LXX of Isa 59,5 is one of the bases of such a legend. D. WEISSERT, “Der Basilisk,” 321.

¹⁰⁹ Blenkinsopp considers v. 5b as gloss that interrupts the train of thought. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 185.

(“their eggs”). In other words, their project is a danger for the community! The wicked are seen as the source of evil in the community.¹¹⁰

Verse 5a β and 6a describe another aspect of this wickedness by using another animal imagery: “They weave a spider’s web.” In the light of v. 6a, especially the presence of בָּנָה and כִּסָּה (*Hithpael*), which brings the nuance of clothing and covering or clothing oneself, v. 5a β is frequently understood as weaving a *spider’s web* to make garment, in contrast to weaving *thread*. Understood in this way, then v. 6a α . β would highlight the futility of the project of the wicked: “Their threads are not for a garment; they cannot cover themselves with their works.” However, it is not the only possibility in understanding this verse.¹¹¹ BDB reads the phrase “to weave a spider’s web” *figuratively* as creating intrigue/conspiracy, machination of evil.¹¹² In this case, the wicked are compared to a spider that spreads its web to catch or to trap small insects for food.¹¹³ This reading will also fit well with v. 6a α . β since בָּנָה can also be understood as “treachery”¹¹⁴ (cf. Isa 24,16), while the verb כִּסָּה can have the meaning “to conceal,” “to hide” (cf. Prov 36,36). Thus, as an alternative reading, we can translate this verse as follows: “They weave a spider’s web. Their threads cannot serve for treachery; they cannot conceal themselves with their works.” Also in this way, the uselessness of their work is again underlined, though with a slightly different nuance because it is said that their dangerous intention will not succeed.

Thus, our analysis of vv. 5-6a, on the one hand, emphasizes the danger conceived in their evil project. Moreover, it becomes more dangerous and deadly because it appears good so that it will easily deceive the people. On the other hand, however, it is futile, a vanity!

The topic of thinking and doing again appears in v. 6b-7, a block that can be structured chiasmically.¹¹⁵ This section is connected with the previous one by מַעֲשֵׂה “deed,” “work,” which appears at the end of v. 6a and at the beginning of v. 6b.

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| A | <u>מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם מַעֲשֵׂי-אוֹן</u> וּפְעַל חָמָס בְּכַפִּיהֶם | 6b |
| B | וַיִּמְהָרוּ לְשַׁפֵּךְ דָּם נָקִי | 7a |
| A' | <u>מַחֲשֹׁבוֹתֵיהֶם מַחֲשֹׁבוֹת אוֹן</u> שֶׁד וְשֶׁבֶר בְּמַסְלוֹתָם | 7b |

¹¹⁰ E. ACHTEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 67. She understood the wicked as the Zadokite party with their project to restore the post-exilic community.

¹¹¹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 177.

¹¹² BDB, 71.

¹¹³ J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 254.

¹¹⁴ BDB, 93.

¹¹⁵ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 268.

As can be seen, the first part of A and A' is marked with word repetition. מַעֲשֵׂה “deed,” “work” and מַחְשְׁבָה “thought,” “device,” appear twice; while the word אָוֶן “mischief,” comes up at the end of each part. Both are followed by a nominal sentence with an adverb of place introduced with ב. The first (v. 6bβ), “and the work of violence is in their hands (palms),” stands in parallel with v. 6bα. חַמַּס may mean a physical violence (cf. Judg 9,24; 2Sam 22,3; Ob 10; Jer 51,35) and also harsh treatment by injurious language (cf. Gen 16,5; Job 19,7; Mal 2,16).

Verse 7bβ שֶׁר וְשִׁבְרָ בְּמִסְלוֹתֵיךָ שֶׁר echoes 60,19a and 62,10. The phrase שֶׁר וְשִׁבְרָ also appears in 60,19a in a different literary context, “Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction (שֶׁר וְשִׁבְרָ) within your borders.” Thus we find an enormous contrast between the promise¹¹⁶ and the reality.¹¹⁷ Similarly, מְסַלָּה is also found in 62,10 (cf. 40,3; 49,11), a famous isaianic text about “preparing the way.” And because 62,10 is closely connected to 57,14,¹¹⁸ our text will confirm the ethical interpretation of 57,14:¹¹⁹ the מְכַשׁוֹל “stumbling block,” “obstacle” that has to be removed is the people’s sin. Thus, according to 59,4-8 this gap is created by the wickedness of the people. In this way, v. 7bβ also becomes a text that stands similar to 59,1-3: a defense that it is the sin of the people that has actually turned over the glorious promise into a miserable situation.

In a chiasmic structure, the emphasis normally lies in the central part. Thus, in our text, v. 7a (B) holds the central position. This half verse consists of two statements characterized by two verbs expressing swiftness in doing something (מְהֵרָ *Niphal*, “to hasten” and רוּץ *Qal*, “to run”). The wicked are eager to do *evil*, which is further specified by *to shed innocent blood*. This verse is almost identical with Prov 1,16 and 6,18. Both also talk about social crime. In the context of vv. 4-8, this phrase does not necessarily denote actions involving violence directly. Even if the wicked are not personally involved, they sacrifice others by contributing to social and economic

¹¹⁶ As we have earlier stated, we follow the observation already made by the scholars that ch. 60-62, which form the core of Third Isaiah, stand very close to Second Isaiah. They announce nothing else but (unconditional) salvation. There is no sign of the presence of the problems found in the rest of Third Isaiah.

¹¹⁷ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 61.

¹¹⁸ The relationship between 40,3; 57,14 and 62,10 from the perspective of *literary* or *source criticism* have been widely investigated. Many scholars think that 57,14 elaborated 40,3. Ruzkowski, however, argues that 57,14 is a “Zitat der zweiten Generation.” It did not directly quote 40,3, but through 62,10. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 29.

¹¹⁹ This ethical interpretation is proposed by, for example, DUHM, ZIMMERLI, BLENKINSOPP, RUSZKOWSKI, etc. against CHILDS, KOENEN.

violence.¹²⁰ Therefore, we suggest that this specification would better serve to highlight the gravity of the outcome, namely, the fall of human victims, than to identify the type of evil committed.

The mention of “the works” and “the thoughts,” which frames the structure, displays a word pair spanning both inward and outward ways to manifest evil. This word pair could also be understood as merism.¹²¹ By demonstrating that both human thought and deed are involved in producing evil in society, vv. 6b-7 describe the seriousness of the situation. Both human faculties are totally corrupt. This is further underlined by v. 7a, the core of the chiasmic structure: the wicked cannot help pursuing evil!

Verse 8 can well function as a conclusion of vv. 4-8. It starts with the word דֶּרֶךְ, which belongs to the same semantic field as מִסְלָה at the end of v. 7b. In this way, the connection with the previous verse is still maintained. This verse consists of two bicola, each with a word presenting the motif of “a way” (דֶּרֶךְ 2x, מַעֲוֵל, and חִיבָה). This figure of road, which is the symbol of biblical ethic, points out strongly that the evil described in previous verses is in fact a *modus vivendi*, the way of life of the wicked, and not just sporadic undertakings.

The phrase לֹא יִרְעֵ שְׁלוֹמִים that appears in the first (v. 8aα) and last colon (v. 8bβ), serves a prophetic evaluation for the evildoers. No peace for them and for those who follow them! VON RAD, as cited by KENDALL, noted that

šalôm means more than “peace”; it defines the state “where things are balanced out, where the claims of a society are satisfied, a state that is, which can only be made effective when protected by a society governed by justice; the ‘man without peace’ is outside it”¹²²

Such a definition fits well with the context and highlights the importance of maintaining justice in a society.

To sum up our analysis, it could be said that vv. 4-8 vividly portray the sinful situation of the people. By means of rich and imaginative descriptions, many aspects of their wrongdoing have been put forward: the falseness of its appearance, the eagerness of the actors, as well as its uselessness. The use of court language in v. 4a is peculiar. The court as a juridical institution stands at the very heart of a society to guarantee that the rights of the members of the society can be maintained. It is the

¹²⁰ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 181.

¹²¹ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 270.

¹²² As quoted by D. KENDALL, “The Use of Mišpat,” 395.

only place where everyone, regardless of one's social status, can obtain justice. The reference to the court, from the angle of which the society is evaluated, is then a representative of the overall situation of the people. The court is again referred to in 59,14bα (רחוב "open place," "plaza," a place where justice is administered), a text that could be seen as a summary of the people's sinfulness.¹²³ When this main pillar falls down, the whole society is in chaos. Then, the only recognized rule is the law of the jungle. *Lupus est homo homini, non homo!* Even worse, those who try to avoid evil are even robbed of their rights.

c) 58,1-14

The third text we are going to deal with in the context of analyzing social sin is 58,1-14, though not the whole chapter speaks about (social) sin. Leaving aside for a moment its literary and textual problems, which we will deal with in the course of time insofar as it is relevant to our topic, we can say that the logic of the discourse in 58,1-14 is quite consistent. In v. 1 YHWH gives an individual, perhaps the prophet, a command to accomplish.

קרא בגרון אל-תחשך פשוֹפֵר הָרָם קוֹלְךָ
וְהִגַּד לְעַמִּי פְשָׁעָם וּלְבֵית יַעֲקֹב חַטָּאתָם:

"Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet;
declare to my people their transgression, and to the House of Jacob their sins"

Verse 1a thus describes the *manner* of how this order should be carried out, while v. 1b explains the *content* and the *addressee* of the message that has to be delivered.¹²⁴ The addressee is called עַמִּי which is paralleled with בֵּית יַעֲקֹב. The word יַעֲקֹב, rare in Third Isaiah (elsewhere only 59,21; 60,16; 65,9), occurs again in v. 14 thus forming an inclusion and suggests the integrity of this chapter.¹²⁵

¹²³ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 69.

¹²⁴ Cf. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 191.

¹²⁵ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 176; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 176; E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 60. Furthermore, it could be questioned: where is the limit of this divine speech? Up to v. 3a? Or perhaps, the whole of Ch. 58 is actually a divine speech commanding the prophet. The messenger formula כִּי פִי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר "for the mouth of YHWH has spoken" would be suitable as a limit for the divine speech. Thus, STECK, for example, sees 59,1-21 as the execution of the command given in 58,1. O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 239-240.

Verse 1a would remind the readers of the beginning of Second Isaiah, where the herald of good tidings is commanded to lift up the voice (קול רום *Hiphil impv.*) (40,9).¹²⁶ While v. 1b is almost identical with Mi 3,8bβ, as we shall see:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Mi 3,8bβ | לְהַגִּיד לְיַעֲקֹב פְּשָׁעוֹ וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל חַטָּאתוֹ |
| Isa 58,1b | וְהִגִּד לְעַמִּי פְשָׁעֵם וּלְבַיִת יַעֲקֹב חַטָּאתָם |

In this first verse, it seems that the speaker picked up the older prophetic traditions, the Isaianic tradition and Micah,¹²⁷ and, in this way, remained in the same tradition. In this way, his announcement combines both judgment and salvation.¹²⁸

Then in v. 2-3a the divine speech is continued by giving a further description of the people, to whom the prophet must deliver his message.

וְאוֹתֵי יוֹם יוֹם יִדְרָשׁוּן וְדַעַת דְּרָכַי יִחְפְּצוּן
כְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר-צָדָקָה עָשָׂה וּמִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיוּ לֹא עָזַב
יִשְׁאֲלוּנִי מִשְׁפָּטֵי-צָדֵק קִרְבַּח אֱלֹהִים יִחְפְּצוּן:

לָמָּה צָמְנוּ וְלֹא רָאִיתָ עֵינֵינוּ נִפְשָׁנוּ וְלֹא תָדַע
הֵן בַּיּוֹם צָמְמֶם תִּמְצְאוּ-חֶפֶץ וְכָל-עַצְבֵיכֶם תִּנְגְּשׁוּ:

“Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways;
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness, and did not forsake their
God;
they asked of me righteous judgments, they desire the approaching of God.
“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not
notice?”
“Behold, in your fast day you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your
workers.”

What kind of people are they? In these verses, the people are described by means of no less than eight religious activities, six in v. 2 and two in v. 3a. In v. 2 four are attributed to the people (v. 2a.ββ), and two to the nation (v. 2bα). Verse 2 consisted of three lines and is very well constructed.

¹²⁶ Koenen noted that in the OT, the *Hiphil* imperative of רום with קול as object appears only in those two places. He still added two citations from Second Isaiah, קרא from 40,6 and אלהיחושך from 54,2. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 95.

¹²⁷ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 95.

¹²⁸ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 105.

the people - וְאוֹתֵי יוֹם יוֹם יִדְרֹשׁוּן וְדַעַת דְּרָכַי יִחְפְּצוּן
 the nation - כְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר-צָדָקָה עָשָׂה וּמִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיוּ לֹא עֹב
 the people - יִשְׁאַלּוּנִי מִשְׁפָּטֵי-צְדָק קִרְבַּת אֱלֹהִים יִחְפְּצוּן

The first and third lines speak about the people, while the second speaks about the nation in comparison to the people. The verb דרש ("to seek") in the first line stands in parallel with שאל ("to ask") of the third line. Both the first and third line ended with חפץ (with paragogic nun) ("to delight in," "to take pleasure in"). The objects of the respective verbs in the second line reappear in a slightly different form in the third line as the object of שאל. דרש and שאל have as the basic meaning "to inquire after knowledge, advice or insight."¹²⁹ Here, they have as objects, respectively אוֹתֵי, which would mean YHWH himself and מִשְׁפָּטֵי-צְדָק, a rare and obscure expression that appears only in Ps 119,7.62.106.164 with a suffix second pers. pronoun referring to God.

Interestingly enough, three objects, which appear in the first and third line, could be interpreted in more than one way. The phrase יִדְרֹשׁוּן דְּרָכַי may mean "to know my law or ordinance" (cf. Isa 2,3; 42,24; Jer 5,4; Job 21,14; 24,13; Gen 18,19; Ps 95,10) and also "to know my action in history" (cf. Isa 40,3; Ex 33,13; Ps 67,3; 103,7).¹³⁰ The phrase מִשְׁפָּטֵי-צְדָק can be understood "as righteous ordinances" (as in Ps 119 mentioned above).¹³¹ But if we read this with reference to the previous line, where צְדָקָה and אֱלֹהֵיוּ, are mentioned, then we could also understand this as a request of the people that *YHWH should now act righteously*¹³² or that he should give his *righteous judgment* (concerning the future).¹³³ For the third expression, LXX and Vulgate,¹³⁴ supported by Ps 73,28 which is the only other place where the same construction appears, took אֱלֹהִים קִרְבַּת as *objective genitive*. In this way, it indicates the people delight in approaching God. This expression is also a standard cultic term

¹²⁹ There are three words commonly used to express the idea of searching for God: דרש, בקש, and שאל. For a full treatment, one can consult, for example, L. Díez-Merino, "Il Vocabolario relativo," 80-96 and 207-217; C. Westermann, "Die Begriffe," 2-30; also S. Wagner, "דרש," 293-307.

¹³⁰ Cf. J.L. Koole, *Isaiah III/3*, 125; K. Koenen, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 92 nn. 188 & 189.

¹³¹ Thus most of commentaries.

¹³² J.L. Koole, *Isaiah III/3*, 127.

¹³³ The word משפט (in const. state) in v. 2bα and 2 bβ is translated differently. Thus Sekine and other scholars he mentioned. S. Sekine, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 124.

¹³⁴ LXX ἐγγύζειν θεῷ; Vulgate *appropinquare Deo*; also Tg "...they desired to draw near to the fear of the LORD."

indicating the priestly administration (cf. Lev 16,1; Ezek 44,15).¹³⁵ However, it could also rightly be taken as *subjective genitive*, which means YHWH's approach.¹³⁶ The example of such a use is indeed not available. However, we could find expressions such as Ps 69,19 where JHWH is asked to come near to redeem; 34,19 YHWH is near to those are of a broken heart; Mal 3,5 God will come near to judge. That v. 2 is interpreted as cultic terminology is indeed the most common rendering taken by scholars. Nevertheless, since, as we have demonstrated, this is not the only possible meaning of these words, perhaps, we could look at another direction.

As a result of the word's double meaning, we would suggest that the verbs פָּדַח and שָׁאַל used in v. 2 may shed light to determine the meaning proper to our text. As KOOLE has noted, the verb פָּדַח, which also means "to desire" (cf. LXX: ἐπιθυμέω "to long for," "to desire," "to covet"), has a future or expectant nuance, namely, something which one is not yet doing or does not yet have,¹³⁷ thus something *desired* is something that has still to be expected. The same nuance is also true for שָׁאַל (LXX: αἰτέω "to ask," "to require," "to request," "to demand"). Verse 3a, in which the reaction of YHWH on these human efforts is questioned for not arriving, seems to support this argumentation. People expected something, yet it did not come! If our understanding can be justified, then v. 2 can be better understood as a description of the people who are searching for a 'not-yet-come' YHWH's saving activity,¹³⁸ or, at least, they are looking for the answer why his promise has not come true.¹³⁹ This does not necessarily deny the cultic aspect of those activities, since the terminologies used belong to the cultic sphere indeed.¹⁴⁰ This requiring of instruction can obviously happen in the cultic context. But, these cultic actions are undertaken in order to know *the programme of YHWH*, and not a *new* legislation with regard to cult or moral attitude! If the latter had been intended by v. 2, then it would have been somewhat superfluous since the people should have known the statutes of YHWH, including its ritual and ethical implications, from the proclamation of the previous prophets. There is no urgent need to ask something *new*. The promise for the genuine fasting described in the following section (vv. 8-9a; 11-12; 14) can support our argument

¹³⁵ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 109; H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 138; B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 396.

¹³⁶ H.-J. KRAUS, "Die ausgebliebene Endtheophanie," 323; K. PAURITSCH, *Die Neue Gemeinde*, 81; and also H. KOSMALA, "Form and Structure," 71.

¹³⁷ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 127; cf. BDB 343. "The basic meaning of this root is to feel great favour towards something," thus TWOT; also G.J. BOTTERWECK, "פָּדַח," 92-107.

¹³⁸ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 93.

¹³⁹ Cf. B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 134-135.

¹⁴⁰ SMITH stated, "It is probable that v. 2 refers to the people's cultic activity, and primarily their desire for ritual and ethical instruction in what will be pleasing to God so that they can do it and he will manifest his saving presence to them." P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 106-107.

that, by practising religious activities described in v. 2, the people are asking or attempting to accelerate YHWH's saving intervention, and not his new instructions (see especially v. 9a).

Verse 3a, which quotes the people's word, forms a contrast with the preceding section. Despite the performance of the above-mentioned activities, the people now complain, "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" HANSON argued that the voice in v. 3a is that of the priestly party and interpreted their motives "as attracting Yahweh's attention and bending his will in their favour."¹⁴¹ However, I doubt that his interpretation would find support in the text. If we look at the actions rejected (vv. 3b-4) and proposed by YHWH for an acceptable fasting (vv. 6-7; 9b-10a), which are also valid for other religious activities in general, then we should conclude that the addressees must be individuals with considerable economic resources at their disposal. They were indeed, the employers, the slave-owners, and able to help the others by sharing their goods. It also appears that they may have had an influential position in the community since they were able to commit wickedness by their words (cf. v. 9bβ). All of this points to common daily activities. Therefore, it would seem better to understand the addressed group as belonging to an economically-elite group, rather than priestly circles. Furthermore, if we regard v. 3a as a quotation from the people, and not from the priest, then we shall further assume that this complaint would, as a matter of fact, be an attack on the priests, as spiritual leaders in the community, under whose guidance the people practiced their religious activities. Therefore, it is the priests' credibility that would be jeopardized because of the inefficacy of the cult they have proposed.¹⁴² With this consideration, I maintain that the voice quoted in v. 3a is that of the people, and not of the priests.¹⁴³

Now, in v. 3a two religious activities are mentioned, together with a pair of questions addressed to God, introduced by *למה*. This question is of particular importance since nowhere else does it appear in the prophetic literature. On the one hand, being pushed by their miserable condition, religious activities are used to persuade YHWH to intervene or to accelerate the coming of his salvation. But on the other hand, it seems that here the people were facing an experience of - borrowing FESTINGER's word - *cognitive dissonance* because of the discrepancy between the expected result and the received outcome.

¹⁴¹ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 109-110; cf. also H.J. HOPPE, "Isaiah 58:1-12," 46.

¹⁴² This interpretation is, I believe, possible in the light of 56,9-12. Our analysis of this passage shows that the wickedness of the people's leaders may also include false teaching.

¹⁴³ See also Schramm' criticism of Hanson's interpretation in B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 135.

Fasting as one of the religious practices particularly mentioned in v. 3a, can indeed serve to influence the deity¹⁴⁴ to intervene especially in an economic or political crisis or at critical moments in public life (e.g. 1Kgs 21,27-29; Jer 14,12; 36,6.9; 2Chr 20,3-4).¹⁴⁵ In many places, the word *שׁוֹרֵר* used in the previous verse is also used to inquire about a divine solution in an emergency situation (e.g. 1Kgs 22; 2Kgs 3; 1Chr 34; 2Chr 18).¹⁴⁶ However, it should be added immediately that such activities do not automatically guarantee the corresponding response of the deity (e.g. the expression *מִי יִדְרֶע* in 2Sam 12,22; Joel 2,14; Jon 3,9).¹⁴⁷ In the light of the miserable social conditions of the post-exilic community, to which several biblical texts allude (Hag 1,6.9-11; 2,16-19; Zech 8,10; Neh 5,1-5), a complaint that religious activities practised by the people have not produced any effect is easy to understand, and even to sympathize with.¹⁴⁸

Read from v. 1, it seems that v. 2-3a would be an unexpected continuation of v. 1 in which the prophet was ordered to announce the sin of the people.¹⁴⁹ Do vv. 2-3a consist of the people's sin? In other words, we shall ask the significance of the divine judgment concerning the people in vv. 2-3a. Is it negative or positive judgment? Is it hypocrisy or misunderstanding? In the shadow of v. 1 where the prophet is commanded to declare the sin of the people and v. 3b-5, where social sin is presented, one is tempted to answer, spontaneously and instinctively, that the judgment upon the people is a negative one.¹⁵⁰ When something goes wrong then the

¹⁴⁴ On the one hand, saying *to influence the deity*, or even more provocative *to manipulate the deity*, is indeed not always comfortable. For those who maintain the sovereignty and freedom of the deity such an expression is perhaps nonsense. On the other hand, however, to influence the deity will make sense only in a society that believes that such deity can influence earthly affairs. It is thus one of the consequences of such a society. In a society in which the deity is regarded as Unmoved Mover, such activity cannot exist. Cf. R.R. WILSON, *Prophecy and Society*, 29; more general treatment can be found in MAX WEBER, *The Sociology of Religion*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁵ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 184; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 128; H.J. HOPPE, "Isaiah 58:1-12," 45; E. ACHTEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 52; L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 47; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 109 n. 52; H.H. GUTHRIE, JR., "Fast, Fasting," 241-244.

¹⁴⁶ L. DIEZ-MERINO, "Il Vocabolario relativo," 86; H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 129-130; Here Westermann's observation is noteworthy. He argued that the possibility of seeking (*שׁוֹרֵר*) God through the prophet or priest ceased at the exile period. If this is the case, perhaps we are allowed to say that the people, because of their pressing circumstances, have returned to the old-fashioned method of inquiring about God. C. WESTERMANN, "Die Begriffe," 17-22.28-29.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. M.L. BARRÉ, "Fasting in Isaiah 58:1-12," 95. He also mentioned other functions of fasting, e.g. an external expression of the fact that the individual was truly sorry for having wronged God. Cf. also the article of O.R. SELLERS, "Seeking God in the Old Testament," 234-237 that speaks about God's free will and the human possibility to seek him.

¹⁴⁸ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 177; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 41; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 477; B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 134.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 405; S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 121.

¹⁵⁰ It is possible that this interpretation is guided more by the interpreter's theological interest. The human mind desires to find patterns. In our case, as soon as one finds in v. 1 a charge on

fault must be laid on the people's shoulder. However, we believe that we can also understand it in a more positive way.¹⁵¹ Our analysis of v. 2 above has compelled us to take the position that this divine description about the people would be better understood as corresponding to reality rather than as an ironical discourse. By inquiring after God, the people *really* want to know why the promise of SI has not yet come true. But then, how is this verse connected with the previous one?

The problem now lies in the introductory particle ׀ at the beginning of v. 2. And indeed it has posed difficulties among scholars.¹⁵² It is absent in LXX and IQIsa^a. Considering the positive view assigned to v. 2, we would prefer to read this ׀ as introducing a circumstantial clause ("seeing that") or causal clause ("for").¹⁵³ Taken together, v. 1 and 2 form a unit that then serves as an introduction to the following section. If v. 2 has a positive tone, then what is exactly the people's sin that has made their fasting inefficacious?

Vv. 3b-4(5) offer an explanation that serves as a correction for the mistake of their past experience. Verse 3b looks like a summary, which is further developed in v. 4. An ironical nuance comes out in v. 3b α as demonstrated by מוצא חפץ ("to find") corresponds to דרש and שאל ("to search," "to look for"), while חפץ ("business") stands in contrast with YHWH as the object of their searching (אחרי). Thus, in v. 2 the people דרש and שאל something in the religious sphere, but in reality they מוצא their own business.¹⁵⁴ And on that very day of fasting, they oppressed their workers, namely, they forced their workers to work on that day! (v. 3b β).¹⁵⁵

people's iniquity and in v. 3bff its further description, one will think that v. 2 should be placed on the same line.

¹⁵¹ For example, B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 477; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 177; B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 134.

¹⁵² A brief summary of the scholarly opinions can be found, for example, in K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 91-92; also S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 121-122. Some scholars, for example, HANSON and KOSMALA preferred to omit it.

¹⁵³ For circumstantial clause see *GKC* §141 *e* and §142 *d*; causal clause *GKC* §158 *a* and J-M §170 *c*.

¹⁵⁴ This noun occurs in Eccl 3,1.17; 5,7; 8,6 as matter or affair. In the light of v. 13, the only other occasion in which מוצא חפץ is found, we could think that in v. 3b it is also used in this sense. Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 130.

¹⁵⁵ As a matter of fact, קל-עצביקם תגנשו is not free from problems, because the words נגש and עב can be understood in two different ways. נגש can mean "to drive," "to press," "to oppress," and also "to draw near" (synonym to קרב); while עב can mean "toiler," "worker," but also "idol." Cf. the discussion in J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 130. The Tg opted for the second meaning, "... (you) bring near all your stumbling block (תקלה) (= that makes one stumbled = idol)." If we follow the Targum, then a bitter irony emerges from the comparison with v. 2by. They delight in the approaching (קרב) of God, but in fact, they bring near (נגש) their idols! Watts has another interesting translation: "You suppressed all your pains." Thus fasting becomes a particular

Verse 4 is a further development of v. 3b. The repetition of ל (4 x)¹⁵⁶ at the beginning of each line in v. 4 is worth noting, for it corresponds with למה, literally “what for?”¹⁵⁷ The people are accused of fasting only to quarrel and to fight, and to hit with a wicked fist! Here an improper behaviour towards their fellow men is then involved. On the fasting day, they keep on practicing all kinds of wicked things towards each other. Verse 4b gives the concluding remark of the divine message, “You (shall) not fast like today to make your voice heard on high!” and at the same time, forms an inclusion with v. 1 through the words קול and רום.

This is actually the sin of the people that the prophet is commanded to announce. On the one hand, the people *truly* request YHWH to intervene (v. 2-3a); on the other hand, however, they keep on thinking of their own interest by committing injustice and violence towards each other; as if these two things, piety and social responsibility could be completely separated from one another. It does not mean that they do not know or misunderstand God’s righteous ordinance with its cultic and ethic aspects, as some scholars have argued. As we noted above, they should have known what they should do. But *knowing* is one thing, and *doing* is another thing. As a matter of fact, this is not new; rather it is an eternal problem, which the ancient prophets have been wrestling with. Israel’s long history has proven that such a tension is always present. I believe that our text also describes a similar case, namely, the tension between *knowing* and *doing*. And, like the pre-exilic prophets, particularly Amos and Micah, here the prophet is also commanded to remind the people that cultic and ethic should go together hand in hand. One cannot exist without the other.

Having explained to the people the failure of their *past* fasting, the divine message now refers to the *future* by indicating the fasting which will be acceptable to God (vv. 5-14). As it can be easily noted, this section consists of three blocks (vv. 6-9a; 9b-12; 13-14), in which condition or demand (6-7; 9b-10; 13) and promise (8-9a; 11-12; 14) intertwine.¹⁵⁸

A question at the beginning of v. 6 almost literally reproduces the question in v. 5aα. In contrast with the question in v. 5aα, which expects a negative answer, the

pleasure by which one can escape from all “pains,” that is, a very unstable social-economic situation compounded by opportunistic oppression. J.D. WATTS, *Isaiah 34-66* [CD-ROM].

¹⁵⁶ Three times in preposition ל, once in the negative לא (v. 4bα).

¹⁵⁷ H. KOSMALA, “Form and Structure,” 74.

¹⁵⁸ Since vv. 13-14 deal with a different subject matter, namely, the Sabbath, they have more often than not been considered either as an addition or a separate saying. Cf. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 410; O.H. STECK, “Beobachtungen,” 238; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 88-91; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 101; K. PAURITSCH, *Die Neue Gemeinde*, 73; H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 10; L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 36; and many others.

interrogative particle הֲלוֹא wants a positive answer.¹⁵⁹ Here, the mention of fasting (צוֹם) maintains the discourse to follow, at least up to v. 12, on the same lines as with v. 3a. What comes in this teaching on fasting (vv. 6-7. 9b-10) is in fact not a *new rubric* about how fasting should be done in order to be productive. Rather, YHWH equates the acceptable fasting with practising social virtues, which not only consist in an abstinence from unrighteous deeds (“to loose the bonds of injustice,” “to undo the thongs of the yoke,” “to let the oppressed go free,” “to break every yoke,” “to take away the yoke, the pointing finger and speaking wickedness”) but also more positive actions (“to take care of the needy”).

These two are closely connected. The difficult situation, which the post-exilic community had to face (cf. Hag 1,5-6.10-1; 2,16-17; Zech 8,10), might have forced the poorest ones of the community to submit themselves to the rich in order to survive (cf. Neh 5,1-5). Now, through his prophet, YHWH wants that freedom should be granted to them. But freedom without the means to sustain one's life is a hollow promise,¹⁶⁰ since, without the possibility to maintain their life, soon they will fall again into the same enslavement. Therefore, YHWH also requires the practice of good deeds, which I believe, is not only charitable in nature.

Though in this chapter fasting is harshly criticized, there is no compelling reason to understand it as a complete rejection of the institution of fasting. It would be better to say that unless it is accompanied by proper behaviour towards one's fellow human beings, fasting remains an empty activity.

From the above analysis,¹⁶¹ two things would deserve attention. First, the people were worried with their situation and, by means of traditional (cultic) methods, sought to insist that YHWH accomplish his promise or, at least, provide them with a reasonable explanation for the postponement of his salvation. Thus to a certain extent, the failure of divine prophecy has caused disappointment among the post-exilic community, which in turn, led them to seek for an explanation. On the one hand, their complaint that their attempts were not being heard by God (v. 3a) is, as we have seen, an understandable expression of their deep disillusionment. On the other hand, viewed from another angle, their question is dangerous. It is a subversive question that may

¹⁵⁹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 135.

¹⁶⁰ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 179-180.

¹⁶¹ We shall postpone the analysis of the promises given in this section (vv. 6-14) for two motives: first, in this chapter we are primarily dealing with the sin of the people, therefore the promise of salvation is not of great relevance at this present moment, and second, we believed that this promise is part of the prophetic response to the failure of prophecy, thus the full discussion on it will be given in the following chapter.

endanger the credibility of the whole religious system, especially that of those who are responsible for cultic and religious affairs in the society.

Second, though at the beginning the prophetic words are addressed to עַמִּי (“my people”) and בֵּית יַעֲקֹב (“the house of Jacob”), which may point to the *whole* people, it seems clear that here we are only dealing with a *particular* segment of the community, namely, the elite group¹⁶² which has a certain economic power and social status that would enable them to do many good and evil things. It is true that such social injustice described in ch. 58 can only be done mostly by those who possess economical and/or political or religious powers.

Indeed, 58,1-4 sounds similar to 59,1-3 in which the people are also charged with the fact that their sin has been the cause of the fulfilment of the promise. Both face the problem of credibility: 59,1-3 is the main thrust offered by most scholars to explain the failure of (Second Isaiah’s) prophecy, while 58,1-4 deals with the question of unproductive religious activities (fasting). Both also take the same pattern to solve the problem: blaming the other as the source of the problem. Since in this section we are dealing with social sin which involves two parties: the oppressor and the oppressed, such a solution would imply a blaming-the-victim way of thinking for the sake of a religious conviction. This creates difficulties as by-products of such a solution, to which we are now turning to examine.

1.2.1.2 *The Difficulties*

Having examined the texts that describe the presence of social sin, we shall move forward by drawing some consequences if this type of sin is used to explain the unfulfilled prophecy. We shall proceed with a question: Can the proposed response cover up the people as a whole? Or can it be acceptable for the whole people? We shall pursue the answer by taking on the perspective of those who suffer: Who suffers much from this post-exilic situation?

In this section we would use the term “victim” to designate those who suffer from the failure of Second Isaiah’s prophecy and its consequences. Since we argue that this failure generates more than a type of suffering, a (ordinal) number placed after the word “victim” serves to categorize them.

¹⁶² Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 46-47. It would go too far to identify the criticized addressee in vv. 1-4 as the *priestly circle*, as scholars have done (for example, HANSON, HOPPE, ACHTEMEIER, etc). Religious activities, such as fasting and the likes, can be practiced by the *whole* people (cf. 2Chr 20,3-4), though perhaps, under the guidance of a priest. Cf. B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 134.

a) "Victim I"

At the beginning of this present chapter, we have offered a brief sketch of the situation with which Third Isaiah had been struggling. Those who followed the proclamation of Second Isaiah, and also Cyrus' decree (Ezr 1,2-4; 6,3-5; 2Chr 36,23), returned from Babylonian exile back to Palestine. Many scholars believed that the Judean exiles had a favourable life in Babylon; some of them perhaps even had a good position there.¹⁶³ Moreover, we could also imagine that the prophet was dealing with a *new* generation who had no personal recollection of Judah, so that they would not have been particularly enthusiastic to return.¹⁶⁴ And indeed, this would understandably render the announcement of Second Isaiah to return home difficult to convince the exiled. Why should they leave all this convenient life and return to such a poor and underdeveloped province in the remotest part of Persia? Actually, there was little reason to return.

When they arrived in Palestine, what they found was realities of life that were not particularly paradisiacal. The country was small, surrounded by neighbours, which sometimes were hostile. The best of farmland was no longer within the borders of the province, etc. Then, after living in Palestine for a considerable time following the return, it was realized that the glorious promise of Second Isaiah had failed to materialize. The situation did not change very much. The temple remained in ruins; social and economic condition did not show any improvement, or perhaps, even worsened.

Indeed, one could attempt to understand Second Isaiah's prophecy in such a way that it would reduce its nature as predictive prophecy.¹⁶⁵ Thus, for example, one

¹⁶³ It is indeed a very complicated matter to describe the situation in the Babylonian exile. The Bible provides few details about the life of the exiles during the next fifty years. That the exiles enjoyed a better life, and not as prisoners or slaves (cf. Jer 25, 5-7), was once suggested by Martin Noth. This proposal is followed, for example, by Y. KAUFMANN, *History of the Religion of Israel*; N.P. LEMCHE, *Ancient Israel*, 171-196; and recently by R. ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 101ss and partly by W.M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 139-164. Recently, the "exile" has become the topic of hot discussion among the scholars. Cf. for example, H.M. BARSTAD, *The Myth of the Empty Land*; L.L. GRABBE, *Leading Captivity Captive*; G. GARBINI, *Il ritorno dall'esilio babilonese*; D.L. SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*; O. LIPSCHITS - J. BLENKINSOPP (ed.), *Judah and the Judeans*; J. KIEFER, *Exil und Diaspora*.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. H. JAGERSMA, *A History of Israel*, 195; R. ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 102, 124.

¹⁶⁵ A discussion on this subject can be found, for example, in R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 30-40, 55-83; and his previous article R.P. CARROLL, "Second Isaiah," 120-127. In this article, Carroll proposed to read Second Isaiah's prophecy under three possible language backgrounds (cultic, eschatological, and rhetorical) that would somewhat neutralize the predictive aspect of the prophecies. However, he still found insuperable difficulties and contradictions. From the (philosophical) hermeneutical point of view, Paul Ricoeur argues that prophetic "announcement" as literary genre does not include the narrative of its accomplishment. The latter is the result of the historians' inquiry, thus belonging to another

could argue that Second Isaiah's grandiose proclamation was, in fact, part of his propaganda to convince the exiled.¹⁶⁶ Its exaggerated and lavish language was just seen as a rhetorical device without any reference to the existing reality and is used merely in order to convince his exiled people. However, there are at least two objections that can be proposed against it. First, such a suggestion would imply that the unknown exilic prophet was *purposely* deceiving his people. If this were the case, there would not have been the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. It would be sufficient to say that Second Isaiah's prophecy is false, - so it is not surprising that it fails -, and everything would be all right! But at the same time, the whole prophetic proclamation - including the prophecy of doom - is in danger of being accused of being false! Second, it has to be remembered that this assertion is our *post-factum* modern invention. It is highly questionable whether the first audience of Second Isaiah had had such a consideration. Ezra's return to Jerusalem, which could be seen as a cultic procession intended to be a second exodus, is often regarded as an attempt to fulfill Second Isaiah's prophecy (cf. Ezr 1-2; 7,1-8,36).¹⁶⁷ If this is true, then it is obvious that at the time of Ezra, Second Isaiah's prophecy must have been considered as an authoritative prophecy. Moreover, if the message of Haggai and Zechariah to rebuild the Temple could be interpreted as a response to the failed realization of the expected well-being of Jerusalem,¹⁶⁸ then we could also consider that at the post-exilic period the promise of Second Isaiah must have, to some extent, been so influential that the prophets were determined to explain its failure.

Without repeating too much what has been previously said, together with many scholars, we can safely say that those who returned from the Babylonian exile had, in reality, met a situation that differed much from what they had expected in accordance with Second Isaiah's prophecy. To a certain extent, we can imagine that the returnees must have been overwhelmed by a kind of disappointment - without too much psychologizing the situation - caused by the discrepancy between the glorious promise and a (too) modest manifestation. This might even be worse, if we could assume that those who returned have abandoned their established life in Babylon. Thus, the "victim 1" in our category are those who returned from exile and suffer from the failure of their expectation.

literary genre. In itself, "announcement" includes an element of indetermination concerning its fulfilment. P. RICOEUR, "Sentinel of Imminence," 165-183 (esp. 166-172).

¹⁶⁶ N.P. LEMCHE, *Ancient Israel*, 189.

¹⁶⁷ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 180-181; also K. KOCH, "Ezra and the Origin of Judaism," 173-197; J.F.A. SAWYER, *Prophecy and the Prophets*, 141.

¹⁶⁸ For example, R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 159-168; also "Eschatological Delay," 49-57; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 195.

b) "Victim 2"

As we have also said earlier, the common explanation for this failure of prophecy is that it was caused by the people's sin, of which the clearest text is Isa 59,1-3. Other less explicit texts have also been shown and noted in the course of our analysis of various texts above (cf. 58,1-4; 59,7bβ). Our examination of 59,1-3 has demonstrated that the sin meant by our text must include both social and religious sin. And in this section, our analysis deals first of all with the social sin found in 56,9-57,2; 59,4-8, and 58,1-14.

By its very nature, social sin always involves two parts: the wrongdoers and their victims. So far, our analysis on the texts has proven it to be true. It is, indeed, very difficult, if not impossible, to identify precisely the parties being involved in each text without being too speculative. For our present purpose, however, the exact identification is not of great relevance. Therefore, we can be content with a more or less general portrayal of them. Thus, in 56,9-57,2 we notice, on the one side, the leaders of the community, perhaps both spiritual and political leaders are here intended, and, on the other side, a group of community members designated with "the righteous," understood collectively. In 58,1-14 we have the upper class of the community who oppressed their fellows from the lower class. The same groups, we believe, can also be found in the third text, 59,4-8 which underlines the corruption of the juridical institution. Who have more opportunities to manipulate the court verdicts if not those who have more power? Based on the examination of the texts, we can safely conclude that there were two groups that stood in opposition: the oppressor and the oppressed; both should be understood in the widest meaning of the word. The division into two groups is just a popular polarization between "the good" and "the evil," without implying difference in substance, such as theological or ideological affiliation. In this case, the "Victim 2" is the oppressed party.

c) "Victim 3"

According to Isa 59,1-3 the delay in the coming of salvation has been caused by the people's sin, thus many scholars have asserted. However, as we have already seen, the sin committed not only brings about in the community a group of oppressors but also a group of oppressed. Then, and this is a very important point, if "having committed sin" is used as a general explanation for the unfulfilled prophecy, then because of their belonging to a larger community, the oppressed group ("Victim 2") would inevitably have to suffer double oppressions: oppression from their oppressors and

from the prophetic accusation in 59,1-3! Instead of being a consolation, the prophetic explanation in 59,1-3 would, ironically, become another oppression for those who had already suffered from their oppressors. Even worse, if we assume that this poor group was also part of those who returned from the exile, then it means that they suffered from a threefold oppression successively: the failure of Second Isaiah's prophecy, the unjust treatment in their daily life, and, finally, also the prophetic charge in 59,1-3. In this sense, they belong to the category of "Victim 3."

d) Conclusion

By now, it seems clear that 59,1-3 cannot be taken for granted as an explanation for the unfulfilled prophecy, or at least, it cannot be applied to the whole people. From the perspective of the sufferers, the main objection for such an explanation is that it overlooks a layer in the community, namely, the oppressed group ("Victim 3") that has already become the victim of other groups ("Victim 2").

In order to handle this problem, then the next question to ask would be: Whose sin is actually intended by the prophet in 59,1-3? And, of course, it is clearly not the sin of the *whole* people, unless we consider that the oppressed party has also committed transgressions, in one way or another. But then, the designation such as "the righteous" or "men of mercy" in 57,1 would make no sense. Therefore, even if we are able to discover precisely the culpable party, the "victims" remains untouched, while, at the same time, the main problem remains unsolved too. The problem is not, first of all, to identify the culprit, that is, *who* has committed transgression, but to find out *what* would be the prophet's response to unfulfilled prophecy? We believe that a sound and responsible answer for this problem must take the "victims 2 and 3" into account and therefore, it has to be a more positive answer and not just a matter of blaming the other as being the scapegoat.

Thus, from the analysis of social sin, 59,1-3 proves to be inadequate as a response to unfulfilled prophecy. Now, we turn to the second part of this section, in which we will examine another type of transgression, the so-called religious sin. The same procedure will again be employed. First, the texts will be analysed, and then, critical notes will be given.

1.2.2 Religious Sin

As we noted earlier, there are passages in Third Isaiah that cannot be categorized as social sin. And therefore, we should count them as belonging to religious or cultic

sin.¹⁶⁹ What we mean by this terminology is sin that is committed within the religious sphere, or simply speaking, sin against God. In this case, however, we are still reminded that the division between social and religious sin is merely artificial.

This section will consist of two parts. In the first part (a), we shall focus our examination on the passages found throughout Third Isaiah, which are commonly understood as pointing to religious sin. There are at least two texts in this category, 57,5-9 and 63,5b-5, which need to be examined at considerable length. In addition, the discussion of several individual verses, such as 65,7.11; 66,3, and 66,17 will be incorporated into the analysis of the second main text (65,3b-5), due to its close connection. And then, in the second part (b), based on the analysis, critical comments will be proposed.

1.2.2.1 *Analysis of the Texts*

a) 57,5-9

Religious sin described in 57,5-9 is found in the context of divine reproach (57,3-13) addressed to a particular group designated with $\square\text{N}\text{N}\text{I}$. We have previously mentioned that $\square\text{N}\text{N}\text{I}$ in v. 3 clearly marks the beginning of a new section. The paragraph marking (\square *setumah*) of BHS suggests that this section should end at v. 14. However, it seems difficult to follow this because v. 14 needs further explanation and therefore, would be better read as the opening of another new section. Because of the shift of pronouns in v. 6 many authors attempted to divide this section into two parts (vv. 3-5 and vv. 6-13). However, we believe that there is no compelling reason for following such a suggestion.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, we prefer to maintain the unity of vv. 3-13.

¹⁶⁹ Elsewhere in this section, I shall use the expression "unorthodox cult" to indicate the cults condemned by the prophetic words, instead of the more usual terminology, such as, "syncretism," "pagan practices," or the like. It is true that syncretism, understood as the union of religious phenomenon from two historically separate systems or cultures, remains a standard way of characterizing Israelite interest in deities other than YHWH. Recent tendency among scholars, however, acknowledges that Israelite culture belongs to the larger Canaanite culture, and thus these two cannot be completely separated. This would lead to the conclusion that most cult activities prohibited by biblical texts have not come from *outside* Israelite culture as foreign entities, and thus formed a *syncretism*, but they may have originally been parts of the cult of YHWH, which *later* were defined as *unorthodox* as we find in the Bible as we now have it. Cf. among other, M.S. SMITH, *The Early History of God*, 4-7. The place of Israel among the broader Semitic cultures is actually not a new conscience among modern scholars. It has already been hinted by W. ROBERTSON SMITH in his *Religion of the Semites* published at the end of nineteenth century.

¹⁷⁰ Against this suggestion, Koenen offers four arguments in defending the unity of vv. 3-13. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 37-41. Cf. also, P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 78-79. For HANSON, "it seems impossible to separate 57,3-6 from 7-13 for those verses together

The people addressed with **וְאַתֶּם** is then characterized by two other appellatives **בְּנֵי עַנְנָה** (“children of a sorceress”)¹⁷¹ and **זֶרַע מְנַאֲף וְחַזְנָה** (“offspring of an adulterer and a whore”¹⁷²). These would be indications that the people are being accused of two distinct activities. On the one hand, the root **ענן** is mentioned in Deut 18,10.14, among the religious specialists whose activities are prohibited (vv. 10b-11). On the other hand, the image of adultery represented here by the use of **זנה** is often used to describe Israel’s unfaithfulness by abandoning YHWH and worshipping foreign gods (cf. Hos 1; Jer 3; Ezek 16.23). It seems that these two accusations deal with divination and sexual excesses of the fertility ritual, which are further developed in the following verses (vv. 5-9).¹⁷³

This childship is again repeated in v. 4b, characterized now by more general terms, **יְלִדֵי פֶשַׁע** (“children of sin”) and **זֶרַע שֶׁקֶר** (“offspring of deceit”). This time they are preceded by **הֲלוֹא**, an interrogative particle that usually expects a positive answer. The questions (**הֲלוֹא אַתֶּם** and **עַל-מִי**) correspond with the phrases **אֶת-מִי** and **אֲנִי הֲלֹא** in v. 11.¹⁷⁴ One stands at the beginning of the indictments against the people for committing religious sins, the other at the end. In that way, they form a frame for the description of sin in vv. 5-9.

Since vv. 5-9 constitute the core of religious sin described in this section, we consider that a detailed analysis of them is absolutely needed in order to properly grasp the nature of the accusations. Therefore, in the following section we shall proceed with a more thorough examination of the verses under discussion.

Before we proceed, a brief note on our model of presentation seems necessary. It is obvious that Isa 57,5-9 deals with the prophet’s attack against unorthodox cults.

comprise a single attack on a cult which is equated with Canaanite paganism.” P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 187.

¹⁷¹ The LXX **ὁσὶ ἀνομοῖ** perhaps reflects the more usual Hebrew **עון** rather than MT **ענן**, which is unusual. The *hapax* form **עננה** is usually understood as *Poel* part. fem. sing. without preformative (Jer 27,9 has the masc. form). Deut 18,10.14 has the masc. form with preformative **מְעוֹנֵן**. For the possible etymology of **ענן**, see G.B. GRAY, *Isaiah I-XXVII*, 54.

¹⁷² The presence of a finite verb in the phrase **מְנַאֲף וְחַזְנָה** creates difficulties. IQIsa^a has plural form **וְחַזְנָה**, while the LXX **καὶ ῥηκόσῃ**. Therefore, this phrase is usually emended to **מְנַאֲפֵת וְחַזְנָה** (cf. BHS’ critical apparatus), for example, K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 57; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 102 n. 4. In this way, **מְנַאֲפֵת** becomes a fem. participle. But, it is rather unusual because the verb **נאף** is usually applied to a male subject. In defence of the MT, Scullion offers a possibility to understand **וְחַזְנָה** as a participle with preformative **ח-**. SCULLION, “Some Difficult Texts,” 110 with reference to J-M § 88L q. Irwin argued that a noun in the construct form followed by a finite verb is well attested in Ugarit. W.H. IRWIN, “The Smooth Stones,” 33.

¹⁷³ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 54; cf. also T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult Imagery,” 270.

¹⁷⁴ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 79.

As our analysis will demonstrate -and thus anticipating the discussion that will follow- there are three unorthodox cults involved here: (a) the fertility cult (v. 5a and 7-8), (b) the cult of the dead (v. 6), and (c) child sacrifice (v. 5b and 9). However, instead of giving a systematic presentation on each cult, Isa 57,5-9 treats them simultaneously. This means that discussion on each cult is inseparably interwoven with one another. This fact creates difficulties for the presentation of our analysis. To examine 57,5-9 as a unity would be too long so that it would be difficult to follow. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, we shall discuss vv. 5-9 according to these three topics and not according to the order of the verses. The reasons and justifications will be given in the course of our analysis.

Fertility Cult (v. 5a.7-8)

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|
| הַנְּחָמִים בְּאֵלִים | 5a α | who have become hot at the terebinths, |
| תַּחַת כָּל-עֵץ רֵעֵן | 5a β | under every green tree |
| עַל הַר-גְּבוּהָ וְנִשְׂא | 7a α | On a high and lofty mountain, |
| שְׁמַת מִשְׁכְּבֶךָ | 7a β | you have set your bed |
| גַּם-שָׁם עָלִית לְזִבְחַ זֶבַח | 7b | also there you have gone up to offer sacrifice. |
| וְאַחַר הַדֶּלֶת וְהַמְזוּזָה | 8a α | And behind the door and doorpost, |
| שְׁמַת זְכוֹרֹנְךָ | 8a β | you have put your symbol. |
| כִּי מֵאַחַי גִּלִּית וְתַעֲלִי | 8b α a | Yes, away from me, you uncovered your bed and went up (into it), |
| הִרְחַבְתָּ מִשְׁכְּבֶךָ | 8b α b | you made it wide. |
| וְתַכְרַת-לְךָ מִהֶם | 8b α c | And you have made a covenant on their part, |
| אָהַבְתָּ מִשְׁכְּבֶךָ יָד חֲזִית | 8b β | you loved their bed, gazed at the symbol. |

With regard to v. 5a α , it is worth noting what BLENKINSOPP said that it "contains several ambiguities and obscurities, in part deliberate."¹⁷⁵ This proves to be true when we notice the lack of agreement among the various translations suggested by versions and commentators.¹⁷⁶ The Hebrew הַנְּחָמִים at the beginning of v. 5 is

¹⁷⁵ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 157, cf. also T.J. LEWIS, "Death Cult Imagery," 279.

¹⁷⁶ If it is true that the author have deliberately created such ambiguities, then this will render his text (almost) untranslatable, except by using words that are also homonyms.

usually understood as *Niphal* part. masc. pl. from the root חָמַם, “to become warm/hot.”¹⁷⁷ The difficulty with this translation is that this is the only instance of this verb in *Niphal*¹⁷⁸ and the only occurrence with reference to lust. Another possibility is to read it as deriving from the root נָחַם “to be consoled” or “to comfort oneself.”¹⁷⁹ This seems to find support in the LXX’s οἱ παρακαλοῦντες. Before we make a choice, however, it is necessary to consider other terms in the same context.

Like the previous word, בְּאֵלִים can also be translated in several ways. It could be understood as deriving from אֵיל (synonym to אֶלֶה, אֵלֶן cf. 6,13), which means a species of big tree, *terebinth* = *Pistaḱia terebinthus*, a deciduous tree with pinnate leaves and red berries; occasionally found in Palestine; grows to a great age.¹⁸⁰ If this is the case, then we have here a plural form with *scriptio defectiva*. The *scriptio plena* appears in 1,29 (אֵילִים) and also 61,3 (אֵילִי). It is also possible, however, to read it as deriving from אֵל, “god,” “deity”. This rendering finds support in LXX (ἐπὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα) and in the Vulgate (*in diis*) and also the Targum (טַעוּתָא). It is intriguing that the LXX (also Vulgate) translated אֵילִים in 1,29 with ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰδῶλοις (Vulg.: *ab idolis*), in which case *the oaks* or *terebinths* must have been intended because of parallelism with גַּנּוֹת “gardens.”¹⁸¹ Therefore, as SUSAN ACKERMAN asserts, it seems that the LXX cannot be taken as a reliable rendering of the Hebrew text.¹⁸² Recently, the situation has become more complicated because comparisons with Ugarit and Akkadian literatures have enriched the scholars with another possible suggestion. They proposed that אֵלִים can have the same connotation as “ilm” in Ugarit and “ilāni” in certain Akkadian texts, namely, referring to deified ancestors to whom the cult was offered.¹⁸³ Indeed, the Hebrew Bible attests such a usage; in the episode of Endor in 1Sam 28,13, the dead Samuel is called אֵלֵהִים. Isa 8,19 also speaks of consulting the dead, in which אֵלֵהִים is juxtaposed with הַמֵּתִים “the dead.”

Thus, from the examination of the word אֵלִים, there emerge three possibilities to understand the cult being spoken of in v. 5: fertility cult, a certain idolatry cult, or

¹⁷⁷ GKC § 67 u.

¹⁷⁸ BDB, 323.

¹⁷⁹ Thus J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 157; T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult Imagery,” 278. Also Vulgate has this understanding (*Qui consolamini in diis*).

¹⁸⁰ BDB, 18.

¹⁸¹ In this case, the Targum rendered the Hebrew text better with אֵילֶן “tree.”

¹⁸² S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 103.

¹⁸³ For example, T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult Imagery,” 278 and ID., *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 40 *passim*; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 157.

cult of the dead. Now, which one among these possibilities would be the best and most reasonable choice in this context?

First of all, it should be remembered that v. 5α is not yet a closed, finished statement. The next phrase (v. 5β) חַחַת כָּל-עֵץ רֵעֵן “under every green/luxuriant¹⁸⁴ tree” complements the previous section and at the same time, as we shall argue, would provide a clue for the interpretation of v. 5α. As is already known, this phrase brings a deuteronomistic flavor. It appears 10 times in the Old Testament (Deut 12,2; 1Kgs 14,23; 2Kgs 16,4; 17,10; Isa 57,5; Jer 2,20; 3,6; 3,13; Ezek 6,13; 2Chr 28,4).¹⁸⁵ In nine occurrences, save in Isa 57,5, this phrase is always used in the context of Israel’s idolatry in following foreign gods. In the Jeremianic passages, the word זָנָה is also used. It has also been suggested that the phrase is not merely used figuratively, but rather indicating the location of the idolatrous practices.¹⁸⁶ KOOLE even argues that the use of this deuteronomistic phrase brings the accusation to the climax: idolatry is committed not only under mighty and particularly venerable trees but under *every* tree¹⁸⁷. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that these two points, idolatry and its location, would also be found in 57,5a.

Therefore, it seems more appropriate to take *oaks* or *terebinths* as the translation of אֱלִים. From a literary perspective, the parallelism between בְּנֹחֲלִים and חַחַת סִעְפֵי הַסְּלָעִים in v. 5β would naturally lead us to expect a similar parallelism in v. 5αβ.¹⁸⁸ Thus, the phrase “under every green tree” forms a perfect parallelism with “oaks” or “terebinths”. LEWIS’ proposal to omit כָּל-עֵץ רֵעֵן and replace it with העל אלה אנחם (v. 6β)¹⁸⁹ - contrary to BHS’ suggestion to move it to the end of v. 7 - will obviously ruin the parallel structure of v. 5, and is therefore unacceptable.

Idolatry that has to do with אֱלִים as “tree” would be better understood as the cult of fertility, rather than with the cult of the dead or the cult of other idols, though

¹⁸⁴ It has been suggested that רֵעֵן is better translated as “thick with leaves,” “luxuriant,” “dense,” “spreading” rather than “green.” D.W. THOMAS, “Some Observations,” 387-397.

¹⁸⁵ Usually, this phrase goes in tandem with another phrase *on every high hill*, or its variants (but see v. 7α). This deuteronomistic set-phrase appears 16 times in the Old Testament. Holladay argued that Jer 2,20 is the standard formulation. See. W.L. HOLLADAY, “On Every High Hill,” 170-176.

¹⁸⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 158; W.L. HOLLADAY, “On Every High Hill,” 170; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 57; B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 129.

¹⁸⁷ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 57.

¹⁸⁸ S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 102; cf. also M. WEISE, “Jesaja 57:5f,” 28.

¹⁸⁹ T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult Imagery,” 278-280. Lewis indeed suggested “the dead spirits” as the translation for אֱלִים. However, as we can see, he found insuperable difficulties with the context, which compelled him to make the unnecessary emendation.

often they cannot be clearly separated. It is, indeed, a universal feature of all primitive religions that a tree is considered holy. A tree is then seen as a symbol of life. Where trees can grow, there is water, and where there is water, there is also the possibility of life.

In the climatic conditions in Palestine, it is hardly surprising that fertility of the land was an important issue. There is no wonder that the Canaanite religion with its fertility cult has become a great temptation for the Israelites. As SCHRAMM noted, there are many instances in the Hebrew Bible, where 'trees' are criticized without further explanation, for example, Isa 1,29-30 and Hos 4,13.¹⁹⁰ Particularly interesting is, perhaps, Hos 14,9. In this verse, YHWH is unusually and uniquely in the Old Testament compared with a tree in the context of condemnation of idols. It would seem therefore that Hosea is polemicizing against Canaanite idolatry associated with tree symbolism.¹⁹¹

The fertility cult is based on a belief that the process of nature was controlled by the relation between gods and goddesses. This understanding is projected to human sexual activities. It is not surprising, therefore, that a characteristic of the fertility cult is sacral sexual intercourse by the priests and priestesses or other specialists, intended to emulate and stimulate the deities to bestow fertility.¹⁹² As we shall see later, this verse is closely connected with vv. 7-8 which have a strong sexual connotation.

Since idolatry is described with a sexual imagery (זנה "harlotry"), then the expression "becoming hot," "burning with lust" (the root חזם) would match better to v. 5α notwithstanding its uniqueness. Therefore, we chose to follow the traditional translation in understanding v. 5αβ as "(Are you not)... who have become hot at the terebinths, under every green tree." Indeed, one could rightly argue that the other possibilities, namely, the cult of the dead and the cult of idols also belong to acts of idolatry; therefore they should not be discarded as candidates. This challenge is of course true, but, in our opinion, reference to fertility cult is still stronger, more specific and precise. Therefore, we prefer to read v. 5α as pointing to fertility cult.

Verse 7α על הר־גבה ונשא, "on a high and lofty mountain," indicates the location where the Lady Israel set her bed. If we read it together with v. 5αβ, then we shall see that the expression in v. 7α can be understood as the lost part of the

¹⁹⁰ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 129 n. 2.

¹⁹¹ Cf. J. DAY, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible," 405-406. Also K. NIELSEN, *There is a Hope for a Tree*, 80; O. KEEL, *Goddesses and Trees*, 16-57; J. DAY, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 56-57; also M.C.A. KORPEL, "Asherah Outside Israel," 125-150 (141). This interpretation of the Hoseanic text is contested by S.M. OLYAN, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh*, 19-21.

¹⁹² Cf. M.H. POPE, "Fertility Cult," 265.

deuteronomistic set-phrase *under every green tree* that appears in v. 5aβ.¹⁹³ Thus, at the same time, it indicates that v. 7 should be read in connection with v. 5a, namely, it speaks about the fertility cult.¹⁹⁴ But it must also be noted that נשא belongs to Isaianic tradition. It never occurs in the variants of the deuteronomistic phrase mentioned above,¹⁹⁵ and therefore, should be understood in the context of Isaianic tradition.

BLENKINSOPP observed that the adjectives גבה ונשא echo “the high and lofty throne” (רם ונשא) in Isaiah’s vision (6,1).¹⁹⁶ We should also mention 57,15, a text closer to the present one, in which YHWH is designated as the High and Lofty One (רם ונשא). It is true that, in the book of Isaiah, נשא more often appears together with רום (6,1; 2,13.14; 33,10; 52,13; 57,15), rather than with גבה (30,25; 52,13). However, in the light of הר קדש in v. 13, it would be more appropriate to look at the substantive (הר “mountain”) and not the adjective. In this way, הר-גבה ונשא “a high and lofty mountain,” will stand in contrast with הר קדש “holy mountain” that appears elsewhere in TI (56,7; 57,13; 65,11.26; 66,20) or also with *Mount Zion*¹⁹⁷ if we look at the whole book of Isaiah. With the above considerations, it seems clear that v. 7α is a mixture between the deuteronomistic tradition and the Isaianic language.

Is there any particular impression emerging from this combination? We believe there is! On the one hand, as we have seen, the use of Isaianic language creates a contrast with הר קדש and thus, highlights the stupidity of the *woman’s* idolatrous activities. Instead of taking refuge in the High and Lofty One (רם ונשא) that she may inherit the Holy Mountain (הר קדש), she prefers to set her bed in a high and lofty mountain! On the other hand, the deuteronomistic phrase will lead the readers to understand v. 7 in connection with v. 5a. It would mean that, as with v. 5, vv. 7-8 also speak of the fertility cult.

This connection is further suggested through the presence of the word מושב “bed” (appears 3 x in vv. 7-8), which brings a sexual connotation that represents a characteristic of the fertility cult, which is strongly present in this (and the following)

¹⁹³ Cf. W.L. HOLLADAY, “On Every High Hill,” 171; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 42.

¹⁹⁴ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 324.

¹⁹⁵ נשא also appears in Jer 3,6 (without נשא) and Isa 30,25 (with נשא). The full list of this deuteronomistic set-phrase can be found in W.L. HOLLADAY, “On Every High Hill,” 170-171.

¹⁹⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 159.

¹⁹⁷ Childs’ observation that “the use of adjectives chosen in the expression of v. 7, ‘a high (*gabōh*) and lofty (*nišša*) mountain,’ is found only in relation to Isa 2:2. ...only here is the specific terminology parallel” seems to me incorrect. Isa 2,2 does not have the adjective גבה “high,” but a substantive גבעה “hill.” B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 467. For Hanson, הר-גבה ונשא refers to a mountain with a special significance, that is, Mount Zion.

verse (cf. מִשְׁכַּב בְּדִים “the bed of love” in Ezek 23,17). As we have noted above, this is confirmed by the deuteronomic phrase על הר־גבה ונשא. But, what is actually intended by this *bed* that the woman set on a high and lofty mountain? To which does it refer? DUHM maintained that here we are dealing with the *place* of cult and not a certain cult-practice.¹⁹⁸ Then, in this case, HANSON was perhaps right in asserting that the object of the attack is actually the Jerusalem Temple and not any pagan shrines.¹⁹⁹ In this way, מִשְׁכַּב may be an intentional allusion to מִשְׁכַּן “the dwelling place” of YHWH on Mount Zion,²⁰⁰ where the Israelites used to go up and offer their sacrifices (עלה לזבח זבח) (v. 7b). Thus, this verse describes the nature of the woman’s worship: she practices the fertility cult at YHWH’s shrine or she practices both cults at the same time.²⁰¹

As we can see, the syntactic structure of v. 8a is similar to v. 7a (adverbial phrase + שמח + direct object), and therefore suggests a close connection between these verses. Before we proceed, we shall consider the reference of *door* and *doorpost* (הַדֶּלֶת וְהַמְזוּזָה). Do they refer to the Temple or to common houses? Following v. 7 we could agree that v. 8a is also pointing to the Temple’s door and doorpost. Since in many occurrences, the common preposition used with door and doorpost is על or אל,²⁰² then we should first understand the force of the preposition אחר used only here. At this point, there is not much to say before we know what זָכְרוֹן, which is set אחר the door and the doorpost, would be.

The word זָכְרוֹן is usually understood as derived from the verb זָכַר “to remember”. Accordingly, it could mean “memorial,” “remembrance,” “record,” or

¹⁹⁸ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 398. Cf. The LXX has ἐκεῖ σου ἡ κοίτη “Your bed is there.” It is not impossible that the translator has misread the Hebrew שָׁמָּה “to set,” “to place” as שָׁם “there.”

¹⁹⁹ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 199-200. Hanson argued, that if pagan high places were intended this should have been designated with the word בָּמָה, as attested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

²⁰⁰ Cf. H.L. GINSBERG, “Some Emendations,” 59-60; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 153; W.A.M. BEUKEN, “Isa 56,9-57,13,” 55.

²⁰¹ Lewis’s suggestion, later followed by Ackerman, Smith, and Blenkinsopp, that understands מִשְׁכַּב as referring to “grave” or “tomb” alluded to in v. 6 through the word נָחַל, and therefore points to a cult of the dead, is interesting and indeed possible. T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult Imagery,” 272; cf. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 153-154; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 84-85; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 159. Thus נָשָׂא נְשָׂא corresponds with נָשָׂא in v. 6 and זָבַח with מִנְחָה. The difficulty if מִשְׁכַּב is to be understood as grave or tomb is how to relate it to the phrase על הר־גבה ונשא that indicates the location of the cult. As we have seen, this deuteronomic-isaianic phrase brings heavy nuances on the fertility cult and the sanctuary, rather than on the cult of the dead.

²⁰² See for example, Ex 12,7.22-23; 21,6; Deut 6,9; 11,20; 1Sam 1,9; Ezek 45,19 (2x); 46,2; 43,8 (with אֶצֶל).

“token”. Though the formation of the noun indicates an abstract concept,²⁰³ it is generally assumed that this word refers to an existing, concrete object as in Zech 6,14.²⁰⁴ Considering the context, many scholars think that this object probably has the form of a phallus or *membrum virile*.²⁰⁵ Thus the word זָכָרֹן may have been chosen because of its allusion to the noun זָכָר “male.” In this way, זָכָרֹן should be understood as an euphemism of sexual imagery.²⁰⁶ In Ezek 16,17, we also find the phrase זָכָר צְלָמֵי, “male image,” with which Israel played harlot (זָנָה).

If we accept the suggestion that זָכָרֹן could be an object with the form of a phallus, then we can now proceed to the next problem about the unusual preposition אַחֲרֵי. It would be a too speculative conjecture, if we were to imagine that a phallus-form object is placed behind the door and doorpost of the Temple. There is no scriptural attestation for placing any object behind the Temple’s door. So, “behind” as a translation for אַחֲרֵי, seems not entirely clear.

Trying to solve the difficulty, KOOLE proposed an interesting suggestion. He noted that here there is a question of the point of view implied in *behind*. If the perspective is from outside, then *behind* would refer to something inside. And this is the common understanding. On the contrary, if the perspective is from inside, then it will naturally point to something outside (cf. Song 2,9). Thus, it would mean that the זָכָרֹן placed *behind* the door and doorpost would actually refer to something *outside* the sanctuary. He further suggested that a phallic ‘remembrance’ could also be applied to a column erected in front of the sanctuary, which in turns, makes for a splendid parody on the Temple with its ‘Jachin’ and ‘Boaz’ pillars also placed before it (cf. 1Kgs 7,15-22). Then he concluded:

We are not informed of what symbolic value was attributed to these two pillars when the Temple was built, but as Canaanite thinking started to prevail, they were no doubt interpreted as phallic and so produced the material for the description of the Baal sanctuary in these verses²⁰⁷

²⁰³ This word is a *Qatalān* word, that derives from verb + affirmative *ān, which then becomes ׀ן -on. J-M § 88M b, cf. GKC § 54 u.

²⁰⁴ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 67-68.

²⁰⁵ Thus for example, Duhm, Westermann.

²⁰⁶ Cf. K. KOENEN, “Sexuelle Zweideutigkeit,” 46-53 (49). In this article, he also briefly outlined scholars’ interpretations for this word.

²⁰⁷ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 66-68. It should be remembered that in building the Temple, Solomon was aided by Phoenician architects and craftsmen sent from Tyre who probably brought with them the traditions of Canaanite art and architecture (cf. 1Kgs 7,3; 2Chr 2,1-16). It is not impossible that symbolism and iconoclasm of Canaanite religion could also be found in the Temple. A detail treatment of Solomon’s temple and possible Phoenician/Canaanite

Though KOOLE's suggestion sounds attractive, it seems to me not so convincing. It is mainly based on two assumptions. First, it is assumed that זָכָרוֹן must have been an object with a considerable *size* that it could be visibly placed in front of the sanctuary. However, there is no clear evidence for this interpretation, as well as for the possibility that the object could not be of a very small size. And the second, because of its size, זָכָרוֹן could not be put *behind* the door, and thus KOOLE comes to his unusual interpretation of the preposition אַחֲרַי, which is not attested in the Hebrew Bible except in Song 2,9 a text which he cited.

As an alternative, we suggest a simpler interpretation. It is possible to understand the door and doorpost as referring not to the Temple but to private houses, *behind* whose door a *small* object, perhaps in the form of a phallus (DUHM: *Phallusbild*) - but in our translation we take a more generic term, *symbol* -, is placed.²⁰⁸ In this way, it creates a bitter allusion to Deut 6,9. According to Deut 6,9, they put the Shema *on* (עַל) the door and doorpost, but at the same time, they also place זָכָרוֹן *behind* them. The holy phylacteries will remind them of YHWH (cf. also Ex 13,9), but at the same time, another reminder brings them to a kind of idol and not to YHWH (cf. v. 11).²⁰⁹ The charge of idolatry is therefore broadened and also emphasized; the cult was practiced not only in the public domain (the Temple, openly on a high and lofty mountain) but also in the private domain (private house, secretly behind the door and doorpost). Furthermore, it could also imply that the pagan fertility cult had covered both official cult (religion) and popular cult (religion).²¹⁰

It is not easy to understand the second part of v. 8. The ancient versions, such as LXX, Vulgate and Targum, give only little help since they offer a completely different text. Many critics considered the text corrupt and thus emendations are needed. We shall now thoroughly examine the text.

Following the emphatic כִּי, v. 8b is initiated with a preposition with suffix מֵאֲחֵרַי. In itself, the preposition מִן already expresses the idea of separation, thus we

influence can be found, for example, in W.G. DEVER, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know*, 144-157; A. MAZAR, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 375-380.

²⁰⁸ Thus, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 399; cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 324; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 204.

²⁰⁹ Cf. H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 81.

²¹⁰ It is probable that the popular cult was practiced mostly by women who were often considered, especially in the case of Ancient Israel, as the disenfranchised layer of society. For this interpretation, cf. for example, W.G. DEVER, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know*, 196.

can render this word as “away from me.”²¹¹ Thus emendation proposed by BHS to read *גְּלִיתָ* (*Piel*) as *גָּלִיתָ* (*Qal*) in accordance with Greek translations,²¹² is not necessary. Indeed, it is also possible to understand *גְּלִיתָ* as taking an omitted object *עֲרוּתָהּ* “shame,” “nakedness,” “pudenda” (cf. Lev 18,6) as has been suggested by KOENEN.²¹³ Nevertheless, we prefer to read it as having *מִשְׁכְּבְּךָ* “your bed,” as the object, which, we believe, is a simpler solution.

The verb *וּתְעִלִי*, which also takes the same object, would then mean “to go up into the bed.” As BLENKINSOPP has noted, the verb *עָלָה* has an idiomatic meaning for getting into bed (cf. 2Kgs 1,4.6.16 with *מִטָּה* “couch,” “bed”).²¹⁴ Moreover, the combination of *עָלָה* and *מִשְׁכָּב* in Gen 49,4 is used to indicate sexual intercourse. In this context, *וַתַּחַבְּתִי מִשְׁכְּבִי* “to make her bed wide,” means to provide more room for the idols. Thus, it highly emphasizes the woman’s unfaithfulness. After leaving YHWH, it is not enough for her to have one substitution, but she wants as many as possible!

The following section (v. 8b_{ac}) is also not free from difficulties. The form *וַתִּכְרַתְּ* for second pers. fem. sing. from the root *כָּרַת*, is unusual. Because of its abnormal form, various emendations have been suggested.²¹⁵ However, there are good

²¹¹ Many authors find difficulties with this preposition, because it could not match the following verb *גְּלִיתָ* (*Piel*, “to uncover”). Therefore, various emendations have been proposed. Duhm proposed *מֵאַחֵר* (“away from him,” namely *from the idol* זִכְרוֹן). Fitzgerald suggested another possibility by reading *מֵאַחֵר* as *מֵאַחַת* *Piel* denominative from *מָאָה* “to do a hundred times” and used as hendiadys with *גְּלִיתָ*. The translation would be “Indeed hundreds of times you disrobed (committed adultery, worshipped idols).” A. FITZGERALD, “Hebrew *yd*,” 372; cf. J.J. SCULLION, “Some Difficult Texts,” 111. His proposal was then followed by Ackerman. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 104-105. Ginsberg thought that *מֵאַחֵר* is very probably corrupt for *אִתָּם* “with them,” and *וּתְעִלִי* not impossibly miswritten for *נָלַח וּתְעִלִי* “thou didst rejoice and exult.” H.L. GINSBERG, “Some Emendations,” 60.

²¹² The LXX has ἀποστῆς, while α', σ', and θ' have ἀπαστῆς, which reflect the *Qal* form of *גָּלָה*.

²¹³ K. KOENEN, “Sexuelle Zweideutigkeit,” 50. Koenen preferred this rendering because it gives a strong effect of sexual imagery. One could also note Lewis’ suggestion to read this phrase as “you tried to discover (oracles) from me (by) bringing up (spirits).” T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult Imagery,” 274. This rendering is attractive, especially because he read it in the context of the cult of the dead; but, in my opinion, it is somewhat complicated because it assumes objects (*oracles* and *spirits*) that are not explicitly found in the MT.

²¹⁴ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 154.

²¹⁵ BHS’ critical apparatus suggests reading *וּתְכַרְתִּי*, from the root *כָּרָה* II, “to buy,” “to bargain,” “to get by trade” (cf. Hos 3,2). This is also the opinion of Duhm, Ginsberg, Mulienburg, Westermann, Whybray, Blenkinsopp, etc. Koenen followed this emendation but read it as deriving from *כָּרָה*, “aushöhlen,” “graben,” “anstechen,” “to dig.” In this way, his translation would have a stronger sexual connotation, “Und du hast dich von ihnen ‘anstechen’ lassen.” K. KOENEN, “Sexuelle Zweideutigkeit,” 52.53. Fitzgerald preferred to repeat as *וַתִּפְרָח*, *Niphal* from *כָּרַח* indicating the fate of idolaters as in Hos 8,4. Thus, his translation would be “And you yourself have been destroyed because of them.” A. FITZGERALD, “Hebrew *yd*,” 372.

reasons for retaining the masoretic reading.²¹⁶ Though uncommon, it is possible to read the MT as second person fem. Sing.²¹⁷ This defective form is also attested in Jer 3,5; Ezek 22,4; 23,32. We can also mention that IQIsa^a has ורתכרותי, which reflects the normal form of second person fem. sing. from כרת. The Tg (וגזרת) *Peal* from נזר (“to cut”) and Vulgate (*pepigisti*) seem to support the MT.

Though many commentators understand this verse as “you make a covenant with them,” some details are often overlooked. We shall now examine them closely. To indicate a covenant making, בְּרִית is usually used together with כרת. But in some instances, בְּרִית is omitted (1Sam 11,2; 20,16; 22,8; 1Kgs 8,9,21; 2Chr 5,10; 7,18).²¹⁸ Thus we can assume the same thing in our text.²¹⁹ The preposition לְ could be understood as *dativus commodi*, expressing *for* whom or *to* whose advantage something is done.²²⁰ In the context of making a treaty, the preposition used is normally עם or את, and never מן as in our text. Thus, the common translation “with them” is somewhat problematic. To achieve such a translation one has to emend מזהם to עִמָּהֶם.²²¹ KOOLE suggested that מזהם should be understood as “on their part” (cf. Lev 24,8).²²² It would seem that the choice of this unusual preposition is influenced by מאתי in the previous line. Thus it deliberately creates a sharp contrast between *detaching* from YHWH and *attaching* to the other gods.

Versè 8bβ continues the description about the woman. The word מִשְׁכָּב, which reappears here, connects this verse with the preceding one (v. 8ba) and also with v. 7a. In this way, vv. 7-8 are bound in a thematic unity. As noted by POLAN, the verbs accompanying מִשְׁכָּב present a sense of gradation moving from the setting up the bed to loving it.²²³ The common but ambiguous word יד in the following phrase advances special difficulties with regard to its exact meaning. Various possibilities have been

²¹⁶ Thus SCULLION, HANSON, KOOLE, etc.

²¹⁷ GKC § 47 k. Cf. J.J. SCULLION, “Some Difficult Texts,” 111.

²¹⁸ BDB, 504.

²¹⁹ The Tg has קים, *covenant, oath, ordinance* as the object of נזר “to cut.”

²²⁰ J-M § 133 d; cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 70.

²²¹ Note in BDB, 504.

²²² J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 70.

²²³ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 141. Using the Ugaritic texts in which אהבת and יד stand in parallel, Ginsberg proposed to revocalize אהבת as noun in construct state (cf. BHS' critical apparatus) and to read as deriving from יד II, “love.” This he did because Ginsberg emended ורתכרתי that means “to buy,” which in some way needs an object. Thus his rendering would be “and thou didst buy thee from them lying-love, crouching-lust.” H.L. GINSBERG, “Some Emendations,” 60. Ackerman followed him in taking אהבת as noun, but then she cautioned that “the reliance on the Ugaritic parallel cannot be taken as a surety.” S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 106. We see no reason to emend the text in such a way, because the MT as it now stands does make a good sense.

put forward. In this case, the literary context of vv. 7-8 could help to achieve the better understanding of the text. In the context of harlotry, it seems that τ would be better understood as euphemism of *phallus* (cf. Song 5,4).²²⁴

Using sexual or erotic imageries, vv. 7-8 describe vividly the harlotry of Lady Israel; and at the same time, through some allusions and word plays, her departure from YHWH is also underlined. In order to grasp the nature of the idolatry described in vv. 7-8, we shall ask whether our text describes a particular cult or is just a stereotypical language of harlotry found elsewhere in biblical tradition.

Indeed, it is well known that throughout the Hebrew Bible, Israel's apostasy is commonly portrayed by using the image of adultery. Israel as YHWH's unfaithful bride breaks her marital bond and follows other gods (or foreign nations). We find this imagery in the form of narratives such as in Ezek 16 and 23, or Hos 1-3, but also through the use of particular words such as זנה (Jer 2,20; Deut 31,16; Hos 4,15) or נאף (Ezek 23,37; Jer 3,8-9; 7,8). With regard to our text, however, we have already noted that vv. 7-8 is closely connected with v. 5a. The connecting link is the use of the so-called deuteronomistic set-phrase "under every green/luxuriant tree" (v. 5a) and "on a high and lofty mountain" (v. 7a).²²⁵ Since our examination has demonstrated that v. 5a is dealing with fertility cult, therefore, we can conclude that vv. 7-8 are also connected with the same unorthodox cult mentioned in v. 5a.

The Cult of the Dead (v. 6)

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|---|
| בַּחֲלָקֵי-נַחַל חֶלְקָךְ | 6aα | With the dead in the graves is your portion |
| הֵם הֵם גּוֹרְלֶךְ | 6aβ | They, they are your lot! |
| וְגַם-לָהֶם שָׁפַכְתָּ נֶסֶךְ | 6bαa | Also to them you poured out libation, |
| הָעֹלִית מִנְחָה | 6bαb | offered an offering! |
| הֲעַל אֱלֹהֵי אֲנָחֶם | 6bβ | Upon these things, shall I be appeased? |

²²⁴ Among others, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 399; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 323; K. KOENEN, "Sexuelle Zweideutigkeit," 52-53; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 106-107; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 154. Cf. BDB, 391 gives a note of hesitation that the translation "a phallus thou beholdest" is favoured by the context but without support in Hebrew usage. However, it is found in a text from Qumran, "The Manual of Discipline" IQS 7,13. Discussions of the development of the meaning of τ can be found, for example, in P.R. ACKROYD, "ר," 399-400 and M. DELCOR, "Two Special Meanings," 230-240 (236-240). In addition, Lewis put two meanings in his translation "indecent symbol/mortuary stela." The latter is no doubt derived from his understanding that 57,3-13 speaks about the cult of the dead. T.J. LEWIS, "Death Cult Imagery," 281.

²²⁵ So, those who see in v. 5a only an incomplete allusion to this famous set-phrase clearly missed the point.

It should not be overlooked that with v. 6 the person whom the prophet addressed, has changed. From now on, we have second person. fem. sing in the place of second person pl. masc. As we have said above, this shift of pronoun has led the scholars to see a caesura here. However, it is not necessarily the case. The mention of two different addressees can be understood as describing a totality. After the children of the whore, now the harlot mother is targeted. The accused are sinners already from their root: they are born from sinful mothers and at the same time, they themselves are also sinful children.²²⁶

The sentence *בְּחִלְקֵי נַחַל חֲלָקָךְ* (v. 6aα) has for long become the focus of scholarly discussion.²²⁷ It is indeed apparent that we are here dealing with a paronomasia phenomenon through the presence of ל, ח, and also ק. There are at least three different meanings attributed to the Hebrew root חלק: I. "to be smooth;" II. "to divide;" III. "to die," "to perish." That חלקך "your portion" is the derivative form of חלק II is clear from its parallel *נֹרְלֶךְ* "your lot" in v. 6aβ. But, how about *בְּחִלְקֵי*? Majority of modern versions and also scholars' translations have chosen to take חלק I, and thus the common rendering is "among the smooth stones." But, as we can see, the word "stone" has to be supplied here because this meaning cannot be implied from חלק I.²²⁸ Moreover, since we are here dealing with an illegitimate cultic practice, this reading gives too little, if any, suggestion as to the cultic object in question. חלק II is also not helpful, though this is the reading of Vulgate, *in partibus torrentis pars tua*.²²⁹ The third possibility (חלק III), which has been proposed by IRWIN²³⁰ after having been long overlooked, would offer a more satisfactorily solution. At this point, we should remember that נחל can also mean "grave," "tomb." With the help of Job 21,33 and 28,4 KENNEDY argued that נחל "should be recognized here [Isa 57,6a] as a term for a grave or tomb, possibly having as its original referent those tombs cut into

²²⁶ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 41.

²²⁷ Odeberg commented that "(חלקי נחל)" to which there is no parallel, seems, in view of v. 6b, to denote some sort of idols, images or symbols. That the meaning had been forgotten already at an early time is shown by the uncertainty of the versions, unless one assumes that the text itself is corrupt." H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 75.

²²⁸ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 398. Duhm's translation "Bei den Losen des Tals ist dein Los" is derived from חלק II "to divide" > "portion" > "fate."

²²⁹ The LXX has ἐκείνη σου ἡ μερίς, which seems to be a free rendering of the Hebrew text. Based on this Greek text, Weise has attempted to understand 57,5-6. M. WEISE, "Jesaja 57:5f," 25-32. But, it is debatable whether one can have a better understanding of the Hebrew text base from its free translation. Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 40; also C.A. KENNEDY, "Isaiah 57:5-6," 48.

²³⁰ W.H IRWIN, "The Smooth Stones," 37.

the sides of rock scarps, whether in wadi beds or not.”²³¹ Following his train of thought, it could be concluded that נחל as grave or tomb, does not necessarily mean grave or tomb *in the wadi* or *valley*.²³² Therefore, as the translation of v. 6aα, we propose, “With the dead of the graves is your portion.”

It should also be noticed that נחל is also a word play with נחלה “possession,” “inheritance”. Sometimes this word is used together with גורל (Gen 31,14; Num 36,3). This concept goes back to the division of the Promised Land when it was conquered (Num 26,55f). The possession of the Promised Land as Israel’s inheritance given by YHWH himself also plays an important role in the context of burial place for the Israelites.

With regard to v. 6aβ the Tg and 1QIsa^a present a slightly different text. Instead of using a double הם, they have an adverb of place, שמה המה (1QIsa^a) and תמן אנון (Tg) which could be rendered as “There they are (your lot)”. However, we can still maintain the existing MT “They, they are your lot,” which, according to BLENKINSOPP, is supported by 4QIsa¹ (= 4Q62a).²³³ The double pronoun would then function as emphasizing the charge.

According to v. 6bα libation (נסך) is poured out and food offering (מנחה) is offered to them (להם). This pronoun has as its logical antecedent “the dead of the grave” in v. 6aα. If our reading of בחלקי-נחל can be justified, then it would seem that here we are dealing with a cult of the dead.²³⁴ According to popular wisdom, the dead especially need liquid refreshment, since the realm of death was widely conceived as an arid place, a desert devoid of life-giving rain. Thus liquids - water, wine and blood - were particularly welcomed.²³⁵ Several tombs that have been excavated show structural provision for the offering of food and drink. It is highly unlikely that some jugs, jars or bowls found in some of the tombs were empty when they were placed there.

The third line of v. 6 (v. 6bβ according to masoretic pointing) העל אלה אנהם is indeed somewhat out of place. The critical apparatus suggests moving it to the end

²³¹ C.A. KENNEDY, “Isaiah 57:5-6,” 49. BDB, 636 and HALOT [CD ROM] give the meaning “burial place” for נחל with reference to Job 21,33.

²³² Cf. Koenen has even objected that the grave in the wadi is improbable in view of regular flooding. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 40.

²³³ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 67.154.

²³⁴ Heider proposed 3 criteria for defining a cult of the dead: activities (especially offerings) which (1) are oriented toward the dead, (2) periodically conducted, and (3) at sites specially associated with the dead. G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molek*, 385-386. Point 1 and 3 seem to be found in v. 6. Point 2, however, cannot be determined.

²³⁵ C.A. KENNEDY, “Dead, Cult of the,” *ABD*; cf. also *idem* “Isaiah 57:5-6,” 50.

of v. 7. HANSON thought that this colon is extrametrical or a colon has been lost.²³⁶ However, we think, there are no compelling reasons for following this proposal. Ancient versions, IQIsa^a, LXX, Vulgate, and Targum, unanimously support the MT.

The existence of the cult of the dead in Israel has been the topic of debate among the scholars. For example, ACKERMAN quoted the opinion of two scholars who rejected the existence of such a cult in Israel.²³⁷ The few biblical texts that allegedly refer to the cult of the dead are indeed vague. Only in recent time, particularly with the help of the extra-biblical evidence and archaeological artifacts, modern scholars tend to admit the existence of the cult of the dead in Israel, or even that it has been an integral part of Israelite religion.²³⁸

The cult of the dead implies not only the idea of survival after death,²³⁹ but also the belief that the dead have some power to influence events in the world of the living, for good or ill.²⁴⁰ BRICHTO further noted that "the situation of the dead in this afterlife is connected with proper burial upon the ancestral land and with the continuation on that land of the dead's proper progeny." In this perspective, Nehemiah's lament before the Persian king, Artaxerxes, that "the place of my father's sepulcher lies waste" (Neh. 2,3) is understandable. The ancestor's tomb in their patrimony (נַחֲלָה) is crucial in ensuring the well being of the dead, but the Babylonian exile separated the Israelites from their land and also from the grave of their ancestors. It means then that the proper treatment for the deceased fathers can no more be undertaken. Therefore, in the hardship of the post-exilic context, it is reasonable that the cult of the dead was practiced in order to assure the well being of the dead and thus to ensure their favorable actions on behalf of the living,²⁴¹ and perhaps, to avert the possibility of revenge.²⁴²

²³⁶ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 193.

²³⁷ The works cited are those of Y. Kaufman and R. de Vaux. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 143. It could be added here the recent work of B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, who thought that the cult of the dead in Israel was a deuteronomistic invention for the sake of Yahwistic propaganda.

²³⁸ For example, H.C. BRICHTO, "Kin, Cult, Land," 1-54; T.J. LEWIS, *Cults of the Dead*; E.M. BLOCH-SMITH, *Judahite Burial Practices*. A similar position is also adopted by van der Toorn. See K. VAN DER TOORN, *Family Religion in Babylonia*, 206-236.

²³⁹ The existence of the afterlife in the Bible and its related topics and implications has been convincingly demonstrated by H.C. BRICHTO, "Kin, Cult, Land," 1-54.

²⁴⁰ Cf. G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molek*, 385; E.M. BLOCH-SMITH, "The Cult of the Dead," 221-222; B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 9-10.

²⁴¹ S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 145, 149. See also W.O.E. OESTERLEY, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 63f. The belief that the spirits are able to be manipulated by and are able

Child Sacrifice (v. 5b.9)

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| שחטו הילדים בנחלים | 5b α who slaughter the children in the valley, |
| תחת סעפי הסלעים | 5b β among the clefts in the rocks? |
| ותשרי למלך בשמן | 9a α You lavished with oil for the King |
| ותרבי רקחך | 9a β and multiplied your perfumes; |
| ותשלחי צריך עד-מרחק | 9b α and you sent your messengers far away |
| ותשפילי עד-שאול | 9b β and lowered (them) even to Sheol. |

Verse 5b is usually understood as referring to child-sacrifice, another practice also common in antiquity. That this practice was also carried out in Israel is clear from many scriptural attestations (cf. Deut 12,31; 18,10; 2Kgs 16,3; 17,31; Jer 7,31; 19,5; 32,35; Ezek 16,21; 23,39; etc), though it could be disputed as to *when* or *in which period* in Israel's history this cult was really practised. The vocabularies used indeed vary. In our text, the word שחט "to slaughter" is employed, in other passages שרף "to burn" or העביר (Hiphil of עבר) "to cause to pass (into fire)." The sacrificed children is usually called בנים and בנות, while here we find a more general term ילדים. This fact has indeed generated various interpretations.²⁴³

Another variation is also found in the manner of naming the location where the cult is supposed to be practised. At least according to Jeremianic tradition (7,31; 19,5; 32,35 above), this infant sacrifice is carried out in Hinnom Valley, south of Jerusalem. There the term used for valley is גיא, while our text uses נחלים "torrent," "torrent-valley," "wadi." If it is the case that our text refers to the Hinnom Valley, as the location of this child sacrifice, then why did it use the plural form? DUHM thought that this נחלים in v. 5b came under the influence of v. 6a in which this word also appears.²⁴⁴ Therefore, it is not impossible that here the author was alluding to more

to assist the living, is best exemplified in the Bible by the episode of Saul at Endor (1Sam 28,5-15), though this episode is better categorized as *necromancy* rather than the cult of the dead. Indeed, these two are often mixed and misunderstood. Some scholars considered Isa 57,6 as pointing to necromancy. The text itself is vague. Based on the word play between נחל - נחלה, we prefer to read v. 6 as referring to the cult of the dead, in which the inherited land plays an important role. For the description of the terminologies used in the context of mortuary rites, see B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 4-13.

²⁴² E.M. BLOCH-SMITH, "The Cult of the Dead," 221.

²⁴³ A brief summary is in J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 58.

²⁴⁴ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 397. Duhm indeed argued that v. 5 is a later insertion.

than just the valley of Ben-Hinnom. IRWIN, in his analysis of Isa 57,6, has suggested that נחל "the wadi" was a traditional burial ground.²⁴⁵ Biblical texts, such as 2Kgs 23,6 cf. also Jer 26,23; Jer 31,40, Job 21,33 seem to confirm this. Archaeological evidence offered by LEWIS verifies IRWIN's proposal.²⁴⁶ Thus, the plural form may indicate that the author was playing a *double entendre* of נחל. It means "valley," "wadi" that refers to the Hinnom Valley and, at the same time, also "grave," "tomb," and, thus, prepares v. 6a.²⁴⁷

Not less problematic is the phrase in v. 5bβ, תחת סעפי הסלעים the parallel member of v. 5bα, which also appears in 2,21 (with preposition ב instead of תחת). Orthographically, 1QIsa^a has ש instead of ס in סעפי. Since in 17,6 and 27,10 the same word is written with ס, BURROWS concluded that it should be taken as an "indication of thoughtless writing by ear."²⁴⁸ The LXX's rendering ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν πετρῶν is perhaps more disputable. DUHM considered it as an inadvertent repetition of the same word in v. 5a, thus he suggested to emend תחת to בתך following the LXX.²⁴⁹ Also WEISE questioned whether the LXX accurately reflects the Hebrew תחת. Assuming that when תחת is used in a locative context, it must be taken literally as "under," therefore he proposed a solution similar to DUHM's.²⁵⁰ Commenting on WEISE's difficulty, GREENFIELD demonstrated that תחת could have, as do most Semitic prepositions, a wide range of meaning; e.g. "under," "at," and "among."²⁵¹ In the context of Jes 57,5 "among" would be a good translation and is reflected well in the LXX.

GREENFIELD further suggested that סעפי הסלעים are "clefts in the rock" in which a person can hide out or carry out a foul act rather than overhanging cliffs.²⁵² HEIDER also holds the same opinion, "It is far more likely, I believe that both plural "wadis" and the "clefts of the rocks" (in parallel!) have to do with the hidden loci where the now-outlawed cult continued to flourish in secret."²⁵³ Based on parallel

²⁴⁵ W.H. IRWIN, "The Smooth Stones," 37. His proposal is followed by S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 141; T.J. LEWIS, "Death Cult Imagery," 272, and further discussed by C.A. KENNEDY, "Isaiah 57:5-6," 48-49, who proposed the translation "who slay your children in (rock-cut) tombs." Cf. also M. WEISE, "Jesaja 57:5f," 29.

²⁴⁶ T.J. LEWIS, "Death Cult Imagery," 272 n. 21; ID., *Cults of the Dead*, 148 n. 78.

²⁴⁷ It cannot be ruled out the possibility that נחל may also refer to the place of punishment for those who have rebelled against YHWH (Jer 7,32-33; 19,6ff; cf. Isa 66,24).

²⁴⁸ In Isa 2,21 the first consonant is lost in a lacuna. M. BURROWS, "Orthography," 204.

²⁴⁹ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 397.

²⁵⁰ M. WEISE, "Jesaja 57:5f," 26 n. 7, 28.

²⁵¹ J.C. GREENFIELD, "The Prepositions," 226-228.

²⁵² J.C. GREENFIELD, "The Prepositions," 228 n. 13.

²⁵³ G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molek*, 379-380; cf. also J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 59.

cases from Carthage, however, KENNEDY has objected to this opinion and suggested exactly the opposite: the child sacrifice was a public and civic activity.²⁵⁴ On KENNEDY's objection, for the present moment we could give a brief comment: the situations in Israel and Carthage were quite different. In Israel, as we notice, there happened the so-called Josianic reform that abolished everything that is considered as non-Yahwistic (cf. 2Kgs 23,10). We do not hear that such a similar thing happened in the Punic world (including Carthage).²⁵⁵ Therefore, it could be assumed that after the Josianic reform the cult of child sacrifice became an outlawed cult, an undercurrent practice beside the mainstream Yahwism, which could only be undertaken in secrecy.

We have already seen that v. 5a, which deals with fertility cult, is further developed in vv. 7-8. In the same way, we can also connect v. 5b, which describes child sacrifice, with our verse (v. 9). Many scholars have indeed seen a connection between v. 9 and v. 5b.²⁵⁶ The connecting link between these two verses is to be found in the location where the cult was supposed to be undertaken. In v. 5b, by means of two parallel phrases "in the valley" and "among the clefts in the rocks," this location is portrayed as a hidden place. This will find its counterpart in the double destination of the sending messengers, "far away" and "Sheol," in v. 9b, which also represent a hidden location. Taken as a whole, this hidden location in vv. 5b and 9 will find a contrast with the open place ("On a high and lofty mountain") where the fertility cult in vv. 5a and 7-8 is practised. In addition, the 'descent' to the underworld (שפל and שלח) in v. 9 will fit with the 'ascent' (עלה) to the mountain in v. 8.

If we are correct to see a connection between v. 5b and v. 9, then we have a context that would be a help to understand the difficult word in v. 9, וַתִּשְׂרֵי and לַמֶּלֶךְ. For the meaning of וַתִּשְׂרֵי, there are two proposals that deserve attention: one is the common translation, "you traveled/journeyed" (from the root שׂוּר),²⁵⁷ and the other is "you lavished/drenched (with oil)" (from the root שָׂרָה).²⁵⁸ The difficulty with

²⁵⁴ C.A. KENNEDY, "Isaiah 57:5-6," 50.

²⁵⁵ Heider notes, "At least in its Punic setting the cult of child sacrifice was a very long time dying off. Despite the best efforts of the Roman authorities to suppress it, Tertullian could write (ca. A.D. 197): 'to this day that holy crime persists in secret.'" G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molek*, 375 n. 744.

²⁵⁶ It is indeed a fundamental issue, we believe, to establish a connection between v. 9 with v. 5b because it will affect our understanding of v. 9. Without such a connection, v. 9 can be differently understood, even without necessarily referring to any human sacrifice.

²⁵⁷ For example, DUHM, SCULLION, and recently CHILDS, BLENKINSOPP.

²⁵⁸ By means of comparison between the Hebrew text of Isa 57,9 and Ezek 27,25 and the LXX, Wernberg-Møller suggested that וַתִּשְׂרֵי might have derived from שָׂרָה related to the Arabic *ṭarra*, "be considerable" (intrans.) or "multiply" (trans). Moreover, IQIsa^a, which abundantly used the *scriptio plena*, suggested that וַתִּשְׂרֵי could not have been derived from an ע"ו verb (שׂוּר) cf. HALOT "to bend down toward"; BDB "to travel," "to journey") but rather from a ל"ה verb

the former is that the root is poorly attested in Hebrew. The possible occurrences of this root in 1 Sam 9,7 (תְּשׁוּרָה), Ezek 27,25 (שְׁרוּתִיךָ), and Song 4,8b (תְּשׁוּרִי) are not particularly convincing. The latter will indeed create a good parallelism with the following line (note that שָׁמֶן also parallel with רִקְחִיךָ)²⁵⁹ as well as v. 9b α parallel with v. 9b β . Thus, in v. 9 we have two bicola constructed in synonymous parallelism. Because of this stylistic consideration, it is reasonable, therefore, to adapt this rendering.

Applied to the whole context, we can further propose that it is *the sacrificed child* that is lavished with oil, and not the woman herself. In other words, v. 9a describes the preparation of the immolation of the child.²⁶⁰ This suggestion would gain plausibility when we notice that in Ezek 16,15-20, oil, incense, honey and other things are used in the connection with human sacrifice.²⁶¹ The sacrificed child, which becomes the object in v. 9a, can be found in צְרִיךְ “your envoys” in v. 9b. Verse 9b, on the other hand, lacks the addressee that can be understood as מֶלֶךְ from v. 9a.

The second difficulty is about the reference of לְמֶלֶךְ. The masoretic vocalization clearly suggests that it should be read it as “(to/for) the king”. Some scholars considered that a human king must have been intended here.²⁶² However, since there is no political tone in Third Isaiah, it is unlikely that מֶלֶךְ would refer to a human monarch, either Persian or Babylonian kings, or any Asiatic ruler. The context, in which unorthodox cults are being attacked, would require something like a pagan deity or the like. Therefore, many scholars tended to revocalize the Hebrew word to *Molek/Molok*,²⁶³ or *Milkom*,²⁶⁴ pagan gods known in Palestine. In this case, v. 9, together with v. 5b, is understood as referring to the cult of Molek that involves child sacrifice. ACKERMAN, however, suggested another possibility when she rendered לְמֶלֶךְ as *mulk-sacrifice*, a technical term for sacrificial offerings in the cult of child sacrifice.²⁶⁵

(שָׂרָה). P. WERNBERG-MØLLER, “Two Notes,” 37-38. Westermann, Hanson, Lewis follow this suggestion.

²⁵⁹ Irwin noted that the combination of these two words also occurs in Ugarit. W.H. IRWIN, “The Smooth Stones,” 33; cf. also J.J. SCULLION, “Some Difficult Texts,” 113.

²⁶⁰ S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 108. Cf. also G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molek*, 380; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 75.

²⁶¹ Cf. J. DAY, *Molech*, 16.

²⁶² For example, P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 200; E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 42.

²⁶³ The vocalization is uncertain. One explanation is that the reading *mōlek* is a dysphemism formed with the vowels of the word *bōšet*, “shame”.

²⁶⁴ This reading is held, for example, by B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 400; H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 83, and perhaps implicitly by J. LUST, “The Cult of Molek/Milchom,” 362-366.

²⁶⁵ S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 107-108.

In fact, the above-solutions reflect the tendency among the scholars in the discussion about the cult of Molek or Molok connected with child sacrifice. Up to 1935, it was generally accepted that Molek in the Old Testament is referring to a pagan deity to whom children are sacrificed. In that year, however, OTTO EISSFELDT in his work *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch*, changed the long-held tradition. He proposed that the Hebrew *mōlek* is not a Semitic divine name or the epithet of any Semitic deity, but is rather to be identified with Phoenician *mulk*, a technical term used in a cult of child sacrifice. ACKERMAN clearly followed this opinion. EISSFELDT's thesis has been challenged by WEINFELD,²⁶⁶ who argued that *mlk* is not the name of a sacrificial offering but is simply the word for *king*, and also recently, by DAY²⁶⁷ and HEIDER,²⁶⁸ who maintained the traditional opinion that a Canaanite deity called Molek or *M-l-k* (variously vocalized) did really exist. In his recent commentary, BLENKINSOPP also tended to follow this path.²⁶⁹

At this point, it is important to notice that many scholars use Isa 57,9 in the context of the 'Molek discussion', for which this verse would serve as a piece of evidence to support their position whatever it may be. Since our purpose is to understand this verse in its context, and not to enter into the 'Molek discussion', then our approach would be different. For our purpose, it seems sufficient to understand that 57,9, together with v. 5b, is dealing with a cult that involves child sacrifice. In fact, the discussion whether מלך should be understood as the name of a pagan deity

²⁶⁶ M. WEINFELD, "The Worship of Molech," 133-154. Weinfeld further claimed that העביר באש, "to cause to pass into fire," which is considered as characteristic of the cult of Molech, is a term that indicated a ceremony of purification or dedication to pagan deity, and did not involve slaughtering or burning the children. Weinfeld also pointed out that Isa 57,9 is an echo of that ceremony, during which spices are burned. Against Weinfeld's suggestion, see M. SMITH, "A Note on Burning Babies," 477-479, and also the works of Day and Heider mentioned below.

²⁶⁷ J. DAY, *Molech and Yahweh and the Gods*. Ackerman seemed unaware of Day's first work. However, Day supports a part of Eissfeldt's thesis. In the Phoenician context, he agreed that *mulk* is indeed a sacrificial term, but in the Old Testament context, he argued that based on inscriptions from Mari, Ebla, and Ugarit, *mlk* must refer to Molech, a Canaanite underworld deity, for whom human sacrifice was offered. Day used Isa 57,5,9 as an argument for his hypothesis that Molech is an underworld god, parallel to Ugarit *mlk* and Akkadian *Malik*. For other opinions in favour of Eissfeldt's thesis, Cf. R. DE VAUX, *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice*, 75-91 and also the proposal of K.A.D. SMELIK, "Moloch," 133-142, who admitted that the argument for *molk* as sacrificial term (cf. Eissfeldt) may not be convincing, but the resemblance between *molk* and *molekh* in the same context is too striking to be thought merely coincidental (cf. Day and Heider). Therefore, based on analysis of some biblical texts, he suggested that in the OT, *Molech* as a Canaanite deity was actually an invention of later scribes to conceal the ancient practices that Judahite worship of YHWH also included child sacrifice (*mulk*-sacrifice).

²⁶⁸ G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molek*; "Molech," *ABD*; "Molech," *DDD*, 581-585. See also the review of Heider's *The Cult of Molek* by S.M. OLYAN - M.S. SMITH in *RB* 94 (1987) 273-275.

²⁶⁹ BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 160-161.

(*Molek*) or as a cultic term (*molk*-sacrifice²⁷⁰) - both can be well applied to our verse - does not change our understanding. Both of them involve a child sacrifice. In addition, the paucity of references to the 'Molek problem' makes it extremely hard to draw a decisive conclusion. Nevertheless, we cannot discard the possibility that also here, as in other places, the prophet was playing a *double entendre*.²⁷¹

The MT, as it now stands, reads לְמֶלֶךְ ("to/for the king") that has something to do with the underworld (שְׁאוֹל). If we retain the MT's vocalization, then we are dealing with the king of the underworld, which may, in turn, lead us to think of a certain deity. However, we believe, that it is not necessarily so. The king of the underworld could be simply understood as a personification of death, the fate that the sacrificed child must unfortunately endure. We can compare with Job 18,14 where death is personified by מֶלֶךְ בְּלִהוּת "the king of terrors."

Summing up our discussion, some points could be mentioned. Read independently, v. 9 may generate various interpretations. In this case, the context would play an important role. Since in vv. 5-9 we are dealing with prophetic indictment against an unorthodox cult, the political rendering of v. 9 could safely be left out. Moreover, as we have seen, there are good reasons to connect v. 9 with v. 5b. Accordingly, we should conclude that the unorthodox cult attacked in v. 9 is a kind of cult that involves child sacrifice, and not another cult.²⁷²

What is the finality of this sacrificing a child either to Molek or as *molk*-sacrifice? The answer is not so simple. The scholarly examinations are mainly focused in determining the identity of this *m-l-k*; while the purpose of the cult is hardly discussed. POPE suggested that child sacrifice was also a feature of the rites of fertility; the dearest things of life were offered to ensure the ongoing-life.²⁷³ ACKERMAN tried to connect it with a fertility cult and a cult of the dead. She argued that the cult of child sacrifice is a part of the cult of the dead offered to YHWH understood as the divine ancestor and, at the same time, as the one who can make a claim upon Israelite children.²⁷⁴ To maintain the continuation of the cult of the dead,

²⁷⁰ If it is to be applied in 57,9, then the definite article should be omitted.

²⁷¹ Particularly interesting is a remark offered by Edelman who points out that the connection between v. 5b and 9 shows "a very close association between the *molk*-sacrifice and the cult of the deity whose epithet was *mlk*." D. EDELMAN, "Biblical *Molek* Reassessed," 727-731 (730).

²⁷² For example, M.S. Smith suggested that 57,9 is dealing with necromancy. M.S. SMITH, *The Early History of God*, 170.

²⁷³ M. POPE, "Fertility Cult," 265.

²⁷⁴ As a support for this argument, Ackerman referred to the Law of the First-Born (Ex 13,1-2; 22,8; 34,19). But the requirement of the first born child does not match with the Punic and Carthaginian evidences which indicate that the sacrificed children were not limited to the first born. To resolve this difficulty, Ackerman argued that there was an evolution in the ancient

fertility cult is therefore needed to stimulate the fertility of the land and the family.²⁷⁵ While admitting that his opinion remains conjectural, HEIDER suggests that child sacrifice was performed in fulfillment of vows that usually had to do with fertility.²⁷⁶

Another possibility is to understand the child sacrifice as a response to crisis. In times of crisis, some great offering (e.g. child sacrifice) seemed necessary to appease the wrath of the gods. Or as DAY formulated "Desperate circumstances required desperate measures and the offering of human sacrifice was thought to possess especially strong apotropaic power."²⁷⁷ Unlike the previous suggestion, Phoenician and Carthaginian evidences explicitly mentioned such a purpose.²⁷⁸ Biblical attestation to this proposal is perhaps 2Kgs 3,26-27 when the king of Moab sacrificed his son when the battle was going against him. The story of Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter in Judg 11 perhaps indicates a combination between the motive of military crisis and personal vow.

As we can see the answer is not conclusive. However, whatever one's position with regard to the purpose of the cult of child sacrifice one thing is clear: the cult is practiced for the benefit of the practitioner.

The description of Israel's cultic sin stops here. The following verses present YHWH's words commenting on what Lady Israel had been doing. She untiringly pursued her lust for foreign deities (v. 10). Then in v. 11 YHWH reminds her of how her adulterous actions have affected her relationship with YHWH. Lady Israel did not fear YHWH. She even lied, forgot, and did not pay attention to YHWH. As we have seen, the questions at the beginning of v. 10 and 11 resemble those at v. 4. As the result, in vv. 12-13 YHWH pronounced his reaction. Verses 12-13a are directed to Lady Israel, and v. 13b to those who seek refuge in YHWH. This is an example of what Hanson frequently called the salvation-judgment oracle that, he believed, marks post-exilic prophesies.

Near Eastern cult of child sacrifice. In the later period all children become potential dedicatories to the god. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 138.

²⁷⁵ S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 157-160.

²⁷⁶ G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molech*, 406.

²⁷⁷ J. DAY, *Molech*, 62-63. Cf. also J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 241-242. Koole understood the "crisis" differently. Since no political danger occurred after 586/7, he suggested that "the cult of Moloch (*this is his interpretation of the cult of child sacrifice in 57,5*) was not just due to frightening circumstances, but also to fear of the numinous, the terrifying deity who can only be satisfied with horrible sacrifices." J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 58 italics mine.

²⁷⁸ Citations from ancient writers about this topic can be found in J. DAY, *Molech*, 86-91; also M.S. SMITH, *The Early History of God*, 171-181.

At this point, I think it is the proper time to discuss further the cultic sin described in 57,5-9 in the context of our main concern, namely, to evaluate this prophetic charge as an explanation of the unfulfilled prophecy. As we have seen in the analysis above, three different cults are being spoken of in vv. 5-9. They are fertility cult (v. 5a and 7-8), child sacrifice (v. 5b and 9), and cult of the dead (v. 6). Two points should now be clarified: first, *does* the cultic sin, which are attacked in our passage, describe the actual situation at the post-exilic Judah? *Second*, are they to be understood literally or rather figuratively?

As we have noted elsewhere, some scholars have argued that Isa 57,3-13 is a pre-exilic composition. The main reason is that the cults, which are being condemned, the imagery, language, and tone being used, are reminiscent of the indictments of pre-exilic prophets.²⁷⁹ But, this argument is not particularly convincing and needs further explanation. HANSON indeed admitted,

This oracle perhaps is the most difficult of the entire Third Isaiah corpus to date with confidence, the reason being that both the attack on the unfaithful leaders in 56,9-12 and the diatribe against the defiled cult in 57,3-11 are couched in phrases which could date anywhere from the pre-exilic to the post-exilic²⁸⁰

Even if it were true that Isa 57,3-13 was pre-exilic, there must have been a reason why a pre-exilic text was placed in a post-exilic context, lest it would have just become an empty rhetoric with no association with the (present) reality. It is true that the prophet might have used elements of traditional language and style at his disposal in order to address his contemporary situation. In this case, an originally pre-exilic text will become post-exilic. Therefore, together with many scholars, we are on firm ground in maintaining Isa 57,3-13 as the product of the post-exilic period and is addressed to the post-exilic community in Judah.

In addition to literary or linguistic considerations, we may suspect that behind this dating suggestion there has been a certain conviction that the so-called deuteronomistic Josianic reform had successfully put all alien elements of Yahwistic faith to an end. It would be too naïve to believe that by Josiah's reform, such elements have been completely abolished from the land of Israel. As our understanding of the Deuteromists' propagandistic purpose improves, many scholars now believe that there is no good reason to presume that such elements or cults could not have survived, at least as undercurrent activities, after the Josianic reform. Archaeological,

²⁷⁹ For example, C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 325.

²⁸⁰ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 193-194. Hanson dated this pericope in the last quarter of the sixth century.

epigraphical, and comparative data that have been hitherto discovered confirm that such unorthodox cults did really exist up to the post-exilic period.²⁸¹

This affirmation could then be used to answer the second question. HANSON strongly argued that the description of the unorthodox cult must be understood metaphorically against the ruling priestly elite and their cult. "This is no objective description of a cultic practice, but rather a highly sardonic paronomasia used to ridicule the cult of those being attacked."²⁸² However, there is no evidence that the prophetic charge should not be taken literally. As we have seen, the non-biblical evidence has proven otherwise. Perhaps, we shall quote ACKERMAN's words: "The prophet seeks to deliver an indictment. For that indictment to carry weight, it must be believable to its hearers. ... A polemic that is not plausible is simply not a good polemic."²⁸³ Therefore it could be safely concluded that Isa 57,3-13 describes reliably cultic practices in the post-exilic community.

b) 65,3b-5a

The second important passage we have to examine now is Isa 65,3b-5a. As many scholars have noted, this passage is similar to 57,3-13 both in tone and content. In this instance, we shall also examine other individual verses, namely, 65,7.11; 66,3; 66,17 that, we believe, also portray the cultic sin.

Most scholars agree that vv. 1-7 constitute the first stanza of Isa 65. In Isa 63,7-64,11 the people were lamenting; while in Isa 65,1 it is YHWH who speaks. Thus, the switch in speaker and subject matter at the start of Isa 65 hints that v. 1 does function as the beginning of a new section. The messenger formula at the beginning of v. 8 followed by a different group being spoken of marks another section within the composition of Isa 65. Therefore, the unity of 65,1-7 seems to be fairly justified.

Verses 1-2 show a bitter contrast between YHWH's availability and the people's refusal, described in four statements.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ We shall mention here the discoveries of many female figurines in the Judahite tombs, which would indicate the existence of a kind of fertility cult involving the goddess Asherah. For the argument in associating the worship of Asherah with a tree or stylised tree, cf. for example R. HESTRIN, "The Lachish Ewer and the 'Asherah'," 212-221 (220), W.G. DEVER, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know*, 152-153. For the evidence of the cult of the dead, see E.M. BLOCH-SMITH, *Judahite Burial Practices*; ID., "The Cult of the Dead in Judah," 213-224 (224).

²⁸² P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 198. In particular, Hanson understood v. 9 in a political sense: the reference to gifts sent to the king and envoys sent afar indicates a pact between the temple hierarchy and the Persian government.

²⁸³ S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 116-117.

²⁸⁴ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 159.

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| “to let oneself to be sought” | - “do not ask” |
| “to let oneself to be found” | - “do not seek” |
| “to say ‘Here I am’” | - “do not call on my name” |
| “to spread out my hands” | - “to walk in a way ...to follow one’s own devices” |

It is important to notice the terms used in v. 1a to describe the relationship between YHWH and the people. As has been noted, the verbs *דרש*, *שאל*, and *בקש*, with their basic meaning “to inquire after knowledge, advice or insight,” can imply consultation of the deity, especially in a difficult situation, through a designated intermediary (e.g. Isa 8,19; 11,10; 19,3) or participation in worship (Ps 24,6; 27,8; 105,4).²⁸⁵ In this way, the relationship between YHWH and the people is formulated in a very particular way. The highlighted aspect is YHWH as the source of information, whom the people should have consulted, and the people’s unwillingness to come to YHWH.²⁸⁶ Instead of inquiring after YHWH, they prefer “to walk in a way that is not good, to follow their own devices (*מחשבתיהם*)”²⁸⁷ (v. 2b). The phrase *על-פני תמיד* “to my face continually” resembles *לפני יהוה תמיד* “before YHWH continually” mostly used in cultic context (Ex 25,30; 28,29; 30,8; Lev 24,3.8).²⁸⁸ This would be a hint that the following indictments should be understood in the cultic sphere as well.

The people’s devices and ways that are not good are further developed in vv. 3b-5a by means of a series of participial clauses. Since it is particularly in these verses that the cultic sin of the people is found, then a more thorough analysis will be in order.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>זבחים בגנות</i> | v. 3b α those who sacrifice in the gardens |
| <i>ומקטרים על-הלבנים</i> | v. 3b β and burn incense on the incense-altars; |

Many scholars suspected a possible connection between v. 3b α “to sacrifice in the gardens” with other texts in the Book of Isaiah, such as Isa 1,29 and 66,17,²⁸⁹ and

²⁸⁵ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 269-270; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 409. More extensive discussion about the words is found, for example, in C. WESTERMANN, “Die Begriffe,” 2-30; L. DíEZ-MERINO, “Il Vocabolario relativo,” 80-96 and 207-217. Cf. note 128 above.

²⁸⁶ In these two verses, it is implicitly stated that the problem lies on the people’s side, and not on YHWH’s side.

²⁸⁷ The LXX translated as *ὁπίσω τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν*, and thus gave a theological evaluation: their device is a sinful way.

²⁸⁸ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 93.

²⁸⁹ A close relationship between the beginning (Ch. 1) and the end (Ch. 65-66) of the Book of Isaiah has been recognized by many scholars. See for example, L.J. LIEBREICH, “The Compilation of the Book of Isaiah,” *JQR* 46 (1955-56) 276-277 and *JQR* 47 (1956-57) 126-127;

perhaps also with 57,7. The word גַּנּוֹת “gardens,” appears in 1,29; 65,3b, and 66,17 in the context of idolatry. In Isa 1,29 גַּנּוֹת is used in a parallelism with אֵילִים “trees/terebinths.” This would suggest that the rituals in the gardens, in some way, involve *the terebinths*, which are most probably, considered as sacred.²⁹⁰ If we are correct in reading 65,3bα in connection with 1,29, then we can suggest that the unorthodox cult being charged here is a sort of fertility cult. As we have demonstrated in the discussion on 57,5b above, *tree* in general, or *terebinths* in particular, has a special meaning in the Hebrew Bible because of its close connection with the fertility cult.

The next part, v. 3bβ, presents a particular problem for textual criticism. At the end of the verse, the LXX has an addition τοῖς δαίμονιουσ ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν (“to the demons, who do not exist”), which has no basis in the Hebrew text. The LXX reading seems to be the result of inner corruption of the Greek text. The original LXX reading must have been τοῖς σκουσι, which reflects the Hebrew הַיְשָׁבִים at the beginning of v. 4.²⁹¹ Then, through corruption it became τοῖς σκουσσι, and finally, yielded the present Greek text, which is paraphrastic and expansionistic.²⁹² Both readings are attested in the Lucianic tradition. The main problem, however, comes from IQIsa^a that has a completely different text compared to the MT וינקו ידים על האבנים, “They suck hands on the stones.” Following RUBINSTEIN²⁹³ partly, BROWNLEE understood ידים as “phallus/penis” and אבנים as a reference to genitalia (*vagina*) and translated the phrase as “and suck the ‘hands’ above the knees.”²⁹⁴ He then concluded that the Qumran reading might be original and then was replaced because it was too shocking. Since the translator of the LXX seemed unaware of this reading, it must be assumed that this correction, if it had ever really happened, must have been done *before* it was translated into Greek. To affirm BROWNLEE’s hypotheses, a thorough examination of the history of the text’s transmission must be undertaken. However, this is beyond the area of our investigation. Therefore, we maintain the MT, which is supported by LXX and other versions (Vulgate, Targum).

R. LACK, *La Symbolique du livre d'Isaïe*, 139-141; M.A. SWEENEY, *Isaiah 1-4*, 21-24; W.A.M. BEUKEN, “Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI,” 217-221.

²⁹⁰ Cf. K. NIELSEN, *There is a Hope for a Tree*, 204; also S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 186-188; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 270.

²⁹¹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 414.

²⁹² Cf. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 169-170 n. 18.

²⁹³ A. RUBINSTEIN, “Notes on the Use of the Tenses,” 95. Cf. also our discussion of 57,8 above.

²⁹⁴ W. BROWNLEE, *The Meaning of the Qumrân Scrolls*, 245. Cf. also Ackerman’s critical observation on this suggestion. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 171-173.

The root קטר “to cause to rise up in smoke” in *Piel* stem is usually used to describe cultic actions that are contrary to the true worship of YHWH, either consciously (on the part of the offerer) or judgmentally (on the part of the biblical writer). The use of incense in the true Yahwistic worship is usually designated by the *Hiphil* stem of the same root.²⁹⁵ Therefore, the use of *Piel* in this verse (also in v. 7) makes it clear that we are dealing with an unorthodox cult. But, what is the meaning to burn incense על־הַלְבָנִים? The problem lies in determining the meaning of הַלְבָנִים.

The lexical meaning for לְבָנִים (sing. לְבָנָה) is “brick,” whence comes the common understanding “altar of brick.” Since what is meant by this word is far from clear, it has been a matter of some debate.²⁹⁶ Based on an Aramaic inscription found in one of the incense-altars discovered at Lachisch between 1932-1937 and a comparison with South Arabian incense-altars, DAHOOD proposed that the inscription *l-b-n-t* would mean “incense” and “incense-altar,” parallel with the Hebrew word לְבָנָה “frankincense.”²⁹⁷ It is true that in Hebrew the meaning of לְבָנָה as “incense-altar” is not attested. The Hebrew word for incense-altar is חֲמֶן, a word that also appears on a Palmyrene incense-altar, which was one of DAHOOD’s evidences. Though DAHOOD’s proposal is perhaps not the best rendering of v. 3bβ, it does help to make the text intelligible.²⁹⁸

If we accept that לְבָנָה could be equated with חֲמֶן, then it is worth noting that in the Hebrew Bible, this incense-altar (חֲמֶן) is elsewhere associated with Asherah symbols (Isa 17,8; 27,9; 2Chr 34,4.7).²⁹⁹ Since Asherah is frequently associated with the fertility cult, this understanding of v. 3bβ would fit well with v. 3bα that condemns the rites in the gardens, which we have previously identified as having to do with a

²⁹⁵ Cf. K. NIELSEN, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, 56.

²⁹⁶ See the discussion in S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 175-185; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 271.

²⁹⁷ However, Dahood seemed unwilling to follow his own proposal. Rather, he showed that the traditional rendering “bricks” is possible in the light of archaeological discoveries. By comparisons with Tyrian bronze coins, he further suggested that the Isaianic text might allude to some practice honouring Asherah. M. DAHOOD, “Textual Problems,” 407-408. This suggestion has been rejected by Ackerman as “extremely speculative and improbable.” S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 179 n. 57; also recently Z. ZEVIT, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 531 n. 65. He admitted that “archaeological data ... do not enable any definitive conclusion both with regard to the artifact involved and its special significance.”

²⁹⁸ It would mean that a slight emendation of the MT is needed. Since the MT לְבָנִים cannot be the plural of לְבָנָה, it should therefore be emended to לבנות or לְבָנִים, if we follow Dahood to understand it as a heteroclitic noun like אֲשֵׁרִים/אֲשֵׁרָה, and thus preserve the consonantal text. M. DAHOOD, “Textual Problems,” 407; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 183 n. 82.

²⁹⁹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 271. Ackerman also connected v. 3bβ with the worship of Asherah though she took a different way. She considered that the illegitimate burning of incense takes place in the *bāmôt* sanctuaries, where YHWH is worshipped alongside with Asherah, in all likelihood as YHWH’s consort. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 61-62. 185.

fertility cult. A deity particularly associated with the fertility cult connected with "tree" (or sacred groves) was Asherah, the great Canaanite mother goddess.³⁰⁰ In other words, in v. 3b YHWH's words are directed to those who practice a sort of fertility cult that takes place in the gardens. This cult is perhaps best understood as the worship of Asherah.

At this point, we shall discuss another text, which, we believe, refers to the similar cult. In v. 6-7, YHWH spoke his judgment that he will repay the people's iniquities "because they burn incense on the mountains, and on the hills they insult me." The reappearance of the words קטר "to burn incense" (again in *Piel* form) in v. 7 connects this verse with v. 3b. This will find support if one reads the expressions "on the mountains" (עַל-הַהָרִים) and "on the hills" (עַל-הַגְּבְעוֹת) not merely as the location where incense was burned, but as a variation of the Deuteronomistic set-phrase, "on every high hill and under every green/luxuriant tree."³⁰¹ It is true, the reference to "tree" is here (and also in v. 3b α) eliminated, but it seems to be alluded to in the word גַּנּוֹת "gardens" in v. 3ba. If we are right in connecting v. 7 with v. 3b α , then we shall suggest that v. 7 also refers to the same unorthodox cult condemned in v. 3b, namely, a sort of fertility cult.

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| הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּקַבְרִים | v. 4a α those who stay in the tombs |
| וּבְנִצּוּרִים יָלִינוּ | v. 4a β and spend the night in the secret places; |
| הַאֹכְלִים בֶּשֶׂר הַחֲזִיר | v. 4b α those who eat the flesh of swine |
| וּפְרֶק פְּגָלִים כְּלֵיהֶם | v. 4b β and unclean broth is in their vessels; |
| הַאֲמָרִים קָרַב אֵלַיךְ | v. 5a α those who say, "Keep to yourself, |
| אֶל-תִּגַּשׁ-בִּי כִּי קֹדֶשׁתִּיךְ | v. 5a β do not touch me, for I am too sacred for you" |

³⁰⁰ The LXX translates the Hebrew אֲשֶׁרָה regularly with ἄλσος, plural ἄλση, "groves"; while the Vulgate has *lucus*, "grove" or *nemus*, "wood," "grove." The argument that connects the worship of Asherah with a tree or stylised tree can be found elsewhere in the rabbinic literature, for example in the *Mishnah*, tractate *Abodah Zarah* 3,7. Among modern scholars cf. for example, R. HESTRIN, "The Lachish Ewer and the 'Asherah'," 212-221 (220), W.G. DEVER, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know*, 152-153; J. DAY, *Yahweh and the Gods*, 56-57. Suggestions that Asherah was originally a part of the Yahwistic legitimate cult and that she was consort of YHWH have been proposed by many scholars. See for example, J.A. EMERTON, "New Light on Israelite Religion," 2-20; J. DAY, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible," 385-408; S.M. OLYAN, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh*; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 193; also J.J. COLLINS, *The Bible After Babel*, 99-129. A different position is adopted, for example, by Mark S. Smith. See M.S. SMITH, *The Early History of God*, 108-137.

³⁰¹ In Holladay's word, "Is lxv 7 is a simple parallelism of 'mountain' and 'hill' unqualified." W.L. HOLLADAY, "On Every High Hill," 176; also K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 167-168.

Starting from v. 4, it seems that we are dealing with another different rite. Verse 4a α continues describing the people as sitting or staying (ישב) in the graves. In itself, this act deserves condemnation because graves cause uncleanness (cf. Num 19,16.18). But, is it merely for this danger of being unclean that YHWH accuses the people? The text does not explicitly mention the reason why they dwell in the cemeteries, and thus it is left open to various interpretations. Many scholars think that we are here dealing with a sort of necromancy, which can be defined as “the art or practice of magically conjuring up the souls of the dead to obtain information from them, generally regarding the revelation of unknown causes or the future course of events.”³⁰² A cemetery is indeed a favourite place for necromancy.

The classic example in the Hebrew Bible is the episode of Endor, when Saul, in a situation of crisis, failed to inquire (שאל) of YHWH, through the acceptable channels (dreams, Urim, and the prophets), and instead desperately turned to the female medium at Endor in order to obtain information (דרש) about the future of his waging war against the Philistines (1Sam 28,3-25). And as we are informed, this time Saul’s effort indeed succeeded. The ghost of Samuel was brought up to be consulted. And Samuel gave Saul an accurate, though undesirable, prophecy. Necromancy did work! OESTERLEY even considered that necromancy was the most important and probably the most reliable divination in order to know the future, “since the spirits of the dead could be expected to take a deeper interest in, and have a wider knowledge of the affairs of, those among whom they had once dwelled.”³⁰³

The *hapax legomenon* בַּנְצוּרִים in v. 4a β is not entirely clear. The MT seems to be a *Qal* passive participle from the root נצר “to watch, guard, keep” with the sense of keeping secret (cf. Isa 48,6 נְצוּרֹת “hidden things”; Prov 7,10 נְצֵרֶת “secret”),

³⁰² Bourguignon quoted in B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 11.

³⁰³ W.O.E. OESTERLEY, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 125; cf. T.J. LEWIS, *Cults of the Dead*, 159. The common words for the necromancer is אוב and יִדְעִים. The practice of necromancy is prohibited as abomination (Lev 19,31; 20,6.27; Deut 18,11 cf. also 1Chr 10,13-14). The cult of the dead and necromancy not only presuppose that the spirits' existence after death but also that they possess a superior understanding and power (1Sam 28; Isa 8,19, etc). However, as noticed by Oesterley, there is another set of texts in the Hebrew Bible in which the dead are described as being incompetent (Isa 14,9.10; Prov 2,18-19. 9,18 etc). Oesterley concluded that the later is the exilic or post-exilic product, which has been elaborated altogether with the growth of the worship of YHWH. As Yahwistic worship increased, all the non-Yahwistic elements must decrease. W.O.E. OESTERLEY, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 70-71. Similarly, necromancy as a medium for consulting the deity was considered illegitimate to give way to their legitimate counterparts, the seer and the prophets. For further treatment of this topic, see F. SCHMIDTKE, “Träume, Orakel und Totengeister,” 240-246; J. LUST, “On Wizard and Prophets,” 133-142; K. SPRONK, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel*; B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*.

hence the traditional rendering “secret” or “hidden places.”³⁰⁴ Drawing on N. AVIGAD’s two tomb inscriptions from the Kidron Valley, in which a parallelism between *qbrh* and *sr* is allegedly found, DAHOOD suggested that the proper parallel to **קברים** in 65,4 is **צורים**. Then, following his suggestion, many scholars prefer to emend to **בין צורים** “inside the mountains.”³⁰⁵ Another proposal has been put forward by SCHMIDT, who argued that the Hebrew **נצור** has an Akkadian cognate, *niširtu*, which likewise signified a secret place where graves were located.³⁰⁶ Considering all the arguments, we judge that there are no compelling reasons for emending the MT, notwithstanding its uniqueness. As it stands, the MT is understandable and, above all, is supported by IQIsa^a and also by α' and σ' .³⁰⁷

To what does the “hidden/secret places” refer? If we recall the parallelism between **ישבים** and **ילינו**, then the same parallelism between **בנקברים** and **בנצורים** could be expected. It would seem, therefore, that the cemeteries where the secret rites are practised are meant here. In this case, the Targum got the point when it rendered **בנצורים** as **בנצורים דירין בני אנשא דירין** “and dwell with the corpses of men.”

Then, what do we have in v. 4a β ? Many scholars think that this verse dealt with an incubation rite, that is, a technique for contacting the dead in a dream (oneiromancy).³⁰⁸ However, the Hebrew **לין** does not necessarily imply the state of sleeping or dreaming. In fact, the parallelism with **ישב** would rather suggest that we have here an all night *vigil* at a burial site.³⁰⁹ The idea of oneiromancy or incubation rite, we believe, has come up under the influence of the Greek translation that has $\epsilon\nu$ $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\sigma\pi\eta\lambda\alpha\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\kappa\omicron\iota\mu\omega\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ $\delta\iota'$ $\epsilon\nu\tau\omicron\upsilon\pi\nu\iota\alpha$ “and sleep in the caves (hideouts) for the sake

³⁰⁴ BDB, 666. J. F. Healey suggested that the root in question is **נצר** II (it is not the same as BDB’s **נצר** I), which means “to wail,” “to mourn,” equivalent to Syriac *nṣr*, Ugarit *nṣr*, and Akkadian *nṣr* II. Then, his translation would be “They sit in graves and spend the night in wailing/among wailers.” J.F. HEALEY, “Syria *nṣr*,” 433-434. Though his translation seems to make sense, it ruins the parallelism between **בנקברים** and **בנצורים**.

³⁰⁵ M. DAHOOD, “Textual Problems,” 408. His emendation is then followed by Westermann, Scullion, Koenen, Pauritsch, and recently Blenkinsopp. For the meaning of **בין** as “inside of” instead of the usual rendering “between,” Dahood referred to Prov 26,13 and Prov 22,13. See Ackerman’s criticism of this proposal. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 195 n. 112.

³⁰⁶ B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 260.

³⁰⁷ α' and σ' have $\omicron\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\theta\eta\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ $\epsilon\nu$ $\tau\alpha\phi\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\epsilon\nu$ $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\delta\iota\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\rho\eta\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\alpha\upsilon\lambda\iota\zeta\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$, which perfectly reproduced the MT.

³⁰⁸ For further survey, see, for example, J.L. SICRE, *Profetismo*, 29-35; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 195-202. Examples from Israel’s neighbours can be found in F. SCHMIDTKE, “Träume, Orakel und Totengeister,” 240-246.

³⁰⁹ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 416; B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 260. Nevertheless, Schmidt goes on to argue that v. 4a is about a combination between art of necromancy and incubation.

of (oracles received in) dreams.”³¹⁰ Since the phrase δι’ ἐνύπνια is not found in the MT, we may probably conclude that the LXX is a somewhat free rendering of the Hebrew text.³¹¹ If there is no sleep then, there is no dream too, and, consequently, there is no oneiromancy too! Therefore, we would suggest that v. 4a deals *merely* with necromancy, and *not* a combination of necromancy (v. 4aα) and the incubation rite (v. 4aβ) as some scholars have suggested,³¹² though those two are undoubtedly very close. Incubation is a short step away from summoning the dead. According to 1Sam 28, Saul first turned to dreams, Urim, and prophecies as the legitimate channels to consult God (v. 6), and finally to necromancy when the first three failed. When man feels to be abandoned by God, then he would turn to the deceased.³¹³ Nevertheless, we are not willing to insist too much on the difference between these two rites. As ACKERMAN noted, “While necromancy and incubation are not identical, they are certainly similar: either rites seek to summon some kind of spirit or being, the aim is to garner some kind of benefit for the supplicant.”³¹⁴

Except for a small emendation v. 4b does not present textual difficulty.³¹⁵ YHWH reproaches the people “who eat the flesh of swine” and whose vessels contain unclean broth. פִּגְלִים has clearly a cultic connotation. It is a *terminus technicus* for sacrificial flesh, which becomes unclean when it is consumed on the third day (Lev 7,18; 19,7 cf. Ezek 4,14). Because of the parallelism, we may then assume that הֶחֱזִיר בֶּשֶׂר “flesh of swine,” also goes in the same direction.³¹⁶ In other words, v. 4b primarily talks about sacrificial meals and not about transgressing Israel’s dietary law. In addition, the context in which the passage appears will further suggest that the sacrificial meal in v. 4b is, in some way, connected with an unorthodox cult.

³¹⁰ As it now stands, the LXX of v. 4a has only one verb (κοιμῶνται *to sleep*), which plays a double-duty (but see the versions of α’ and σ’ above n. 305). In the case of the LXX, we could remind our discussion on v. 3 above which shows that the first verb of MT שָׁבִים has probably been corrupted to τοις οὐκ οὐστ and placed at the end of v. 3.

³¹¹ In Pauritsch’s words, “δα ἐνύπνια ‘wegen des Traumorakels’ ist erklärender Zusatz in G.” K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 178.

³¹² For example, B.B. SCHMIDT, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 261; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 195-202.

³¹³ It is perhaps interesting that also in our modern era, the practice of contacting the dead can still be found. Recently, psychics claim to be able to contact the spirit of John Lennon. This program is going to be transmitted on TV on 24 April 2006.

See <http://www.spiritoflennon.com/index.html> [accessed on 22.03.2006].

³¹⁴ S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 200.

³¹⁵ Together with 1QIsa^a, we accept BHS’s suggestion to read וּמְרָק (Q) for וּפְרִיק (K) and add a preposition ב at the last word of the verse.

³¹⁶ Though many explanations for the prohibition against eating pork (Lev 11,7; Deut 14,8) have been suggested from ethical or medical perspectives, it is generally accepted that most modern scholars have preferred to seek a religious explanation for these dietary laws. In fact, these laws have been written by religious clerics as part of a code of religious law.

The function of eating pork in religious cult is not entirely clear, and therefore, it is subject to various interpretations. In the Hebrew Bible, the prohibition against eating pork is found in the dietary law and is never mentioned in the cultic context (as sacrificial animal) except in these three occurrences in the Isaianic passages (65,3; 66,3; and 66,17). In his classic *Religion of the Semites*, W. ROBERTSON SMITH noted that the sacrifice of pigs was attested in Cyprus in connection with the worship of the Semitic Aphrodite and Adonis, where wild boars were sacrificed once a year on April 2.³¹⁷ In his 1958 article, based on some archaeological data, R. DE VAUX³¹⁸ believed that pigs were sacred animals used in mystery religions, both in the ancient Near East and in the eastern Mediterranean world, and concluded: "Le porc est considéré comme un animal 'chthonien', que sa nature destine à être offert aux divinités infernales...le cochon est reserve pour des rites plus ou moins secrets qui s'accomplissent rarement...."³¹⁹ HEIDER connected the eating of the flesh of swine (v. 4b) with a meal shared in the context of the cult of the dead because of its chthonic characteristic.³²⁰ Almost similar is the conclusion of W. HOUSTON,

although the evidence is scattered and difficult to interpret there is some indication that in Syria-Palestine, as well as in neighboring countries, the pig, and possibly other animals, while not normally used in the public cult, was employed as a victim, and eaten, in obscure and perhaps often secret cults offered to the dead or the deities of the underworld, or both – sometimes perhaps also to goddesses of fertility³²¹

Unfortunately, we must be content with such a general, and thus obscure, observation.³²² The lack of evidence with regard to the function of the pig as well as the exact practice of these unorthodox cults does not permit us to go beyond the general observation of the mentioning of eating pork and unclean broth in v. 4b. The

³¹⁷ W. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, 290-291.

³¹⁸ R. DE VAUX, "Les sacrifices de porcs," 250-265. De Vaux's proposal with regard to the Isaianic texts was followed by F.J. STENDEBACH, "Das Schweinopfer," 263-271. Cf. also A. VON ROHR SAUER, "The Cultic Role of the Pig," 201-207.

³¹⁹ R. DE VAUX, "Les sacrifices de porcs," 261.

³²⁰ G.C. HEIDER, *The Cult of Molek*, 390-391 followed by P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 138.

³²¹ W. HOUSTON, *Purity and Monotheism*, 168.

³²² Indeed, the obscure stereotyped language may lead one to think that the description of cultic abuses in vv. 3b-5a should not be taken literally but symbolically or metaphorically. Thus, for example, Hanson followed this direction. P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 147. But, as already noted by Schramm, Hanson was not consistent with his opinion since he identified v. 5a as pointing to "the religiously elite leaders of the normative cult who regard themselves as having an exclusive claim on holiness." In other words, Hanson understood the unorthodox cults described in vv. 3-5 metaphorically, except v. 5a! See B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 157; cf. also the comment of L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 96.

most we can say is that they have something to do with unorthodox cults: the fertility cult (v. 3b) or the cult of necromancy mentioned in v. 4a.

In v. 5a YHWH cites the words of the people. Though unusual, because it appears only here, the phrase *קרב אליך* could be rendered as "Keep to yourself". This meaning is supported by the second phrase that uses *ננש* a verb similar to *קרב*, *אל-תנש-בי*, "do not draw near to me." The reason for this imperative is given in the following phrase *כי קדש-היה*. This word has become a crux for the scholars. As it stands, the MT should be understood as *Qal* perfect with second person suffix as object. This is unusual because the *Qal* form on *קדש* is an intransitive verb indicating a state or entering a state, so that a direct object could not be suffixed. Therefore, it has been suggested to amend *Qal* into *Piel* that could have a direct object. J.A. EMERTON, however, suggested that the MT vocalization as *Qal* can be maintained and the verbal suffix *ך* can be the equivalent of the preposition *ל* with a suffix.³²³ He then proposed the translation indicating a contrast "for I am holy to thee," that is, "I am too sacred for you."³²⁴ This would be a religious boasting with a bitter irony. Participating in an unorthodox cult is considered as conferring even a higher degree of holiness!

The three words used in v. 5a *קרב*, *ננש*, and *קדש* are often regarded as *termini technici* for priestly ministry.³²⁵ This fact would naturally create a question regarding the identity of the speaker. Some scholars, such as HANSON, ACHTEMEIER, and recently TIEMEYER, think that those who were being attacked were actually the Jerusalem priests. The context of 65,3-5a suggests that the speaker in v. 5a seems to be a "false priest" who presided over unorthodox cults and is being ironically portrayed by means of the terminologies commonly used for a legitimate cult.³²⁶ However, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the official priests are being involved here. Some reasons could be pointed out to support this. As we have previously noted, the prophet reproached the civil and/or religious leaders of the community (56,9-12). It is not impossible that their corrupt behaviour also extended into the cultic sphere. The words of inquiring of YHWH in v. 1 will further indicate that this practice of consulting takes place in the cultic context. In this case, they

³²³ Cf. GKC § 117 x; J-M § 125 ba.

³²⁴ J.A. EMERTON, "Notes on the Text," 437-451. Recently, Blenkinsopp suggested that as a result of participating in the rituals mentioned, the speaker has been made holy, that is, set apart, *with respect to YHWH*. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 272. As Emerton noted, "to set apart" as the original meaning of the root *קדש* is unproven. Moreover, it is doubtful that the speaker's word quoted by YHWH was directly addressed to YHWH himself.

³²⁵ Cf. Hanson's list of these verbs used in cultic context in P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 149. Cf. also L.-S. TIEMEYER, "The Haughtiness of the Priesthood," 237-244.

³²⁶ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 417; also P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 137.

practised their offices *on behalf* of the rebellious people (עַם סוֹרֵר). In addition, the close connection between 65,5a and 66,3 (and also 66,17) support this argument since in 66,3, as we shall see, the Jerusalem priests were involved in the illicit rites.

Since we are talking about eating swine and the possible involvement of the official priest, I think it seems in order to treat the other two passages (66,3a and 66,17) which also mention these two points. First, we shall examine 66,3a.

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| שׁוֹחֵט הַשּׁוֹר מִכֶּה-אִישׁ | 3aα “he who slaughters an ox kills a man |
| זֹבֵחַ הַשֶּׁה עֵרַף כָּלֵב | 3aα he who sacrifices a lamb breaks a dog’s neck |
| מַעֲלָה מִנְחַה דָם-חֲזִיר | 3aβ he who offers cereal offering (offers) swine’s blood |
| מְזַכֵּיר לְבָנָה מִכָּרֶךְ אֵן | 3aβ he who makes a memorial offering with frankincense blesses an idol” |

In this verse, we have eight brief statements arranged in four lines; each of which consists of two statements formulated in participial clauses. As noted by many scholars, the puzzling problem in this verse is determining the connection between two members of each line. In this case, two readings have been commonly proposed. The first is to read them as if there were a particle of comparison כּ: “he who slaughters an ox *is like* the one who kills a man.”³²⁷ Such a reading would imply “a condemnation of the regular sacrifices beyond anything else in the whole OT.”³²⁸ Though it is supported by the versions, this suggestion is unacceptable for two reasons. First, it is highly unlikely that Third Isaiah would completely reject the cult (cf. 56,7; also 65,11; 66,20). Second, v. 3bβ which is clearly connected with v. 3a, explicitly mentions “the idols” (שִׁקְצִיָּהִם) which indicates that the whole charge is dealing with idol-worship.³²⁹ This would then lead to the second possibility, which would read the text as: “the one who slaughters an ox kills a man.”³³⁰ The first clause becomes the subject, while the second the predicate.³³¹

³²⁷ This understanding is indeed supported by LXX (adding ὡς, though LXX seemed to have a somewhat free rendering); Vulgate (*quasi*); IQIsa^a (adding a כּ only at the first line), while the Tg has a כּ only at the first two lines.

³²⁸ Thus the words of J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 762.

³²⁹ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 478; also K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 190.

³³⁰ We should here mention the proposal suggested by J.M. Sasson to read the two actions of each line as taking place in a temporal succession. He thus translated: “He who slaughtered an ox (would now) slay a man...,” etc, implying an abandonment of Israel’s traditional cults for pagan rites. J.M. SASSON, “Isaiah lxvi 3-4a,” 199-207. Though contextually acceptable, grammatically

As many scholars have suggested, the first part of each line describes the official Yahwistic cults practiced by the official priests.³³² Then, for the sake of parallelism, the second part would require actions in cultic sphere as well.³³³ However, we cannot insist too much on this, since the second member of the first line מִכֶּה-אִישׁ can only with great difficulty be connected with cultic action, namely, child or human-sacrifice.³³⁴ The Hebrew word נִכָּה is never used in the cultic context, not to mention the cult of child sacrifice that has its own specific vocabularies.³³⁵ Apart from our text, the phrase מִכֶּה-אִישׁ appears only in Ex 2,11; Ex 21,12, and 2Kgs 6,22. Neither of them deals with cultic activities. Therefore, it is preferable to understand this phrase, not as pointing to a sort of cultic activity, but as referring to physical violence; and therefore, they belong to social injustice (cf. 56,9-57,1; 58,4 where the root נִכָּה is also used).³³⁶

Two other expressions “to break a dog’s neck” and “to offer³³⁷ swine’s blood” in the context of cultic sacrifices, are indeed unknown, at least, in Palestine during the post-exilic period.³³⁸ Because of this lack of evidence for such practices in the post-

it is dubious because the participles require actions that happen contemporarily rather than successively.

³³¹ Cf. A. ROFÉ, “Isaiah 66,1-4,” 208-209. Hanson and Achtemeier also argued that the priestly group being accused here is the Zadokite party and their followers.

³³² Cf. in the Hebrew Bible the expressions, such as שָׁחַט, זָבַח, בִּיעֹלָה, מִנְחָה, לֶבְנָה, are used elsewhere in the context of worship. Cf. A. ROFÉ, “The Onset of Sects,” 41-42; ID., “Isaiah 66,1-4,” 209-210; J. BLENKINSOPP, “A Jewish Sect,” 9-10.

³³³ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 270.

³³⁴ For example, Muilenburg, Westermann, Achtemeier, Blenkinsopp, etc.

³³⁵ The cult that involves child sacrifice usually uses very particular vocabulary, such as שָׂרַף “to burn,” הֵעִיךְ בְּאֵשׁ “to cause to pass into the fire,” or שָׁחַט “to slaughter.”

³³⁶ Cf. A. ROFÉ, “Isaiah 66,1-4,” 211 n. 31; also P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 157.

³³⁷ Unlike other statements, the third has no verb (in participle). Koenen has suggested emending הָרַם to הִרַם “to dismember,” which is a loaned Persian word found in Aramaic, thinking that the ה has been dropped out during the transmission. In this way, a parallelism with other lines is produced. K. KOENEN, “Textkritische Anmerkungen,” 572-573. However, the first participle מִעֲלָה, as many scholars have noticed, can have a double-duty function. Moreover, the MT reading is supported by IQIsa^a and Vulgate.

³³⁸ SASSON believed that these activities have parallels with the cult found in Hittite culture. However, he is facing difficulty to link a ritual performed in Anatolia of the Late Bronze Age with our prophetic utterance made in Israel at least a half millennium later. As an attempt to solve this difficulty, he suggested that 66,3 might have a pre-exilic origin, a date that seems unlikely for our verse. J.M. SASSON, “Isaiah lxvi 3-4a,” 199-207. Another solution for this chronological difficulty was recently proposed by Z. ZEVIT, who adopted the same position. He suggested that “knowledge of its performance may have trickled down somehow from the Neo-Hittite centres in Syria; alternatively, Hittite and other Indo-European elements in and above ancient Judaea Jerusalem may have been the source of this knowledge, cf. Uriah the Hittite.” Z. ZEVIT, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 534; cf. also J.C. MOYER, “Hittite and Israelite,” 19-38; B.J. COLLINS, “The Puppy in Hittite Rituals,” 211-226. With regard to the sacrifice of a dog, earlier, ROBERTSON SMITH has already proposed that the sacrifice of a dog seems to be alluded to as a Punic rite in Justin xviii. 1. 10, where it is said that Darius sent a message to the

exilic Palestine and its surrounding neighbours, KOENEN implicitly argued that these practices should not be understood literally.³³⁹ HANSON also thought in the same way by comparing the orthodox cult with the worst pagan abominations. Against this opinion, we shall quote SMITH's responses:

It is difficult to comprehend why the author should have chosen such apparently obscure practices in order to satirize the orthodox cult or his opponents. The power of this supposed polemic would have no effect if the practices described were not prevalent and well known, indeed, could have been practiced by the opponents concerned. ...our ignorance of the early post-exilic period should warn against assuming what kind of practices could or could not have been prevalent³⁴⁰

Truly, our analysis cannot determine the exact nature of the rites described in 66,3. The only thing we could say is that there are indications that the Jerusalem priests may have participated in the condemned illicit practices. However, it does not necessarily mean that they are the only group accused by the prophet. It is also possible that behind them, there were a larger group of the people, on whose behalf the priests practice the rites.³⁴¹

The next passage is 66,17:

| | |
|---|--|
| הַמְתַקְדָּשִׁים | 17aα those who sanctify |
| וְהַמְטַהְרִים אֶל-הַגְּנוֹת אֶחָד אֶחָד בְּתוֹךְ | 17aα and purify themselves in the garden following the one in the centre |
| אֲכָלֵי בֶשֶׂר הַחֲזִיר | 17aβ who eat swine's flesh |
| וְהַשֶּׁקֶץ וְהַעֲכָבֵר | 17aγ and the abominable and mouse |
| יַחְדָּו יִסְפוּ נְאֻם-יְהוָה | 17b together they will come to an end – the word of YHWH |

Here we again find the terms, such as הַמְתַקְדָּשִׁים ("to sanctify oneself," 65,5a), הַגְּנוֹת ("gardens," 65,3b), אֲכָלֵי בֶשֶׂר הַחֲזִיר ("to eat the flesh of swine," 65,4b; cf. 66,3a) that we have seen before. Indeed, scholars have long noticed that

Carthaginians forbidding them to sacrifice human victims and to eat the flesh of dog. W. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, 291.

³³⁹ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 190-192.

³⁴⁰ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 156-157.

³⁴¹ Considering what has been said about the corruptness of the leaders of the community (56,9-12), we cannot exclude the possibility that the priests as religious leaders may have led the people astray.

66,17 is closely connected to 65,3b-5.7³⁴² also 66,3, and even with 57,3-13. Some even preferred to attach 66,17 to 65,3b-5a. The closeness between 66,17 and the previous passages which describe the cultic transgression, would lead us to consider that what is portrayed in 66,17 will not differ too much from the other texts.

However, it seems that in 66,17 we have a piece of additional information. This new feature found in 66,17 is that here the participants should sanctify (מתקדשים) and purify (מטהרים) themselves for (the rites take place in) the garden, אָחַר אֶחָת בְּתוֹךְ³⁴³. This last clause, commonly translated as “following the one in the midst,” is indeed difficult. The ancient versions offer no help.³⁴⁴ Then, how should we understand this verse?

KOOLE seems to support the rabbinical tradition that understood “the one (fem.) in the midst” as denoting Asherah.³⁴⁵ This would indeed fit well with גַּנּוֹת “gardens,” which, according to our analysis of 65,3b, could be well understood as indicating the worship of the goddess Asherah, which is often connected with tree or stylized tree. Thus, “the one in the midst” does not point to a person (a priest or a priestess) in the midst of the worshipping congregation but to a *particular tree* in the midst of the garden. Accordingly, the preposition אָחַר should here be taken in the sense of attachment (e.g. following after a deity), corresponding to a phrase, such as וְזָנָה אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים.³⁴⁶ This is an attractive proposal to adopt, particularly, because it matches well with 65,3b and also 57,3-13. Nevertheless, we must admit

³⁴² In the Hebrew Bible, the phrase בָּשָׂר דְּחַיִּים אֲכָלִים is found only in 65,4 and 66,17.

³⁴³ We follow the Q; the K has אָחִיר (masc.).

³⁴⁴ The discussion on the ancient versions is found, for example, in J.A. EMERTON, “Notes on two verses,” 21-24; also J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 514-515. Following Winton Thomas, Emerton suggested that this phrase was corrupted by a vertical dittography. Though attractive, his suggestion is too speculative. Therefore, we prefer to retain the MT reading.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Ibn Ezra as quoted by J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 515. He then continued, “If the phrase can be taken in the sense of ‘the one tree in the midst of the garden,’ it parodies ‘the tree in the midst of the garden’ in Gen 2:9; 3:3.” Blenkinsopp also suggested the similar opinion. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 312. This possible interpretation has previously been mentioned by Delitzsch as well, though he did not agree with it. F. DELITZSCH, *The Book of Isaiah* [CD-ROM].

³⁴⁶ Many scholars, such as Duhm, Muilenburg, Westerman, Koole, Blenkinsopp, etc., have seen a possible connection between Isa 66,17 and Ezek 8,1-11. Outside of Leviticus, the word שָׁקֵץ appears only in Isa 66,17 and Ezek 8,10; while the phrase אָחַר אֶחָת בְּתוֹךְ is often paralleled with a certain Jaazaniah who עָמַד בְּתוֹכָם עֹמְדִים לְפָנֵיהֶם “was standing among them” (Ezek 8,11). Blenkinsopp noted that Isa 66,17 is reminiscent of this account in several points: the goddess theme (namely, Asherah in 8,3), the sacrificial food, and the function of the one who is standing among them. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 312. Ackerman has already demonstrated that “the image of jealousy” in Ezek 8,3.5 refers to the Canaanite goddess, Asherah. S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 55-66. If this can be justified, then the identification of Isa 66,17 as referring to the worship of Asherah would find support. The difficulty is that in the Ezekielian account the one standing in the midst is a *person*.

here that, due to the lack of our knowledge of the practice of unorthodox cults, we are not allowed to go further beyond the limit of the possible interpretations provided by the texts. Our suggestion will then remain conjectural, though not without foundations.

The last text to be considered in our discussion on the cultic sin mentioned by Third Isaiah is 65,11b. The relevant passage reads

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| הַעֲרִיכִים לְגַד שְׁלֶחָן | 11b α | those who spread a table for "Gad" |
| וְהִמְלֵאִים לְמִנֵי מִמְסָךְ | 11b β | and fill bowls of mixed wine for "Meni" |

The main issue here is the expressions לְגַד and לְמִנֵי, which are frequently understood as referring to the deities, Gad and Meni. Both ancient and modern versions are not in agreement in rendering these Hebrew words.³⁴⁷ The Hebrew גַּד, as deity, appears only here and, perhaps, in Gen 30,11 if Leah's acclamation (בְּגַד *Ktib*; cf. LXX: ἐν τύχη) implies that the birth came about with the assistance of that deity.³⁴⁸ We find in the Hebrew Bible place-names, such as, Baal-Gad (Jos 11,17; 12,7; 13,5) or Migdal-Gad (Jos 15,37), or personal names Gaddi (Num 13,11), Gadi (2Kgs 15,14.17), Gaddiel (Num 13,10), and Azgad (Ezr 2,12=Neh 7,17; Ezr 8,12; Neh 10,16). The last of these is equivalent to the theophoric type, such as, 'zbl (Baal is mighty) or 'zmlk (Malk is mighty). It is no doubt that he was worshipped in Syria and Palestine long before the Hellenistic period, since it is attested in Ugaritic and Amorite as well as Phoenician and Punic onomastics.³⁴⁹

Meni, commonly known as the god (or spirit) of destiny/fate, is sometimes connected with the goddess *manat*, an idol (a large stone) worshipped by pre-Islamic

³⁴⁷ KJV rendered as "troop" and "number," RSV, ASV, "Fortune" and "Destiny," JB and other recent versions left the word untranslated, "Gad" and "Meni". The LXX has τῶ δαίμονι and τῆ τύχη (α' θ' τω μεντι; σ' εκτος εμου). The Vulgate's rendering is "qui ponitis Fortunae mensam et libatis super eam." Thus the Hebrew מִנֵי was not read as a proper name. The Targum omitted references to proper name and rendered the MT as לַטַעֲוֹן ("for the idols, false god") and לְדַחְלָהוֹן ("their (illicit) objects of worship"). It has been interpreted that the LXX represented two of four Egyptian gods (Δαίμων, Τυχη, Ἐρως, Ἀναγκη), which preside over the birth of men. Δαίμων stands for sun, while Τυχη for moon. Both are regarded as gods of fortune. Though our passage is dealing with Babylonian rather than Egyptian culture, Delitzsch noted that "there might be some relation between the two views, just as in other instances ancient Babylonian and Egypt coincide."

³⁴⁸ It has been suggested that the deity Gad "Fortune" evolved relatively late as a personification of the appellative *gad*, fortune. This would explain the presence of the definite article in the MT (lit: "for the Gad"), which perhaps indicate that the Masoretes retained an awareness of the original appellative meaning of *gad*, i.e. "for the (god of) good fortune." Cf. W.A. MEIER III, "Gad (deity)," *ABD* [CD ROM]; S. RIBICHINI, "Gad," 389-341.

³⁴⁹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 278.

Arabs. The plural form *mnwtw* also appears in Nabatean inscriptions of Higr as a designation for a deity of the Nabateans. Thus, it has been suggested that the presence of the worship of Meni in the post-exilic Judah may have been caused by northward migrations of the Nabatean Arabs and/or Edomites during the exile period.³⁵⁰ BALDACCI claimed that the discoveries of Eblaite and Ugarit personal names have demonstrated that *meni* was a proto-Canaanite deity.³⁵¹

Various hypotheses about these deities have been proposed. However, no final agreement has been achieved. It is, however, apparent that both names are connected with fortune and destiny, either as personal names or as appellatives, which later were personified. In the textual level, as noticed by many scholars, there is a word play between v. 11b and 12a with regard to the people's destiny. They sought their good fortunes by setting (עָרַךְ) table for Gad and offering mixed wine for Meni (מִנִּי), but YHWH will destine מְנִיתִי (from the Hebrew root מָנָה, "to count," "to assign," "to appoint") them to sword and they shall bow down (כָּרַע) to the slaughter.³⁵² Indeed, with such diversities of interpretation on the nature of the deities, it seems impossible to obtain an exact description about the cult reproached in 65,11.

1.2.2.2 Evaluation

Having analyzed the passages that indicate the cultic sins, we shall now try to examine the consequences when they are used as a response to unfulfilled prophecy. In the passages that we have just analyzed, we have discovered several unorthodox cults practised by the people. As we have done with the social sin in the first part of this chapter, we shall now ask for the compatibility of this response for the people as *a whole*. Do the people as *a whole* deserve to experience the unfulfilled prophecy because of their sins? If not, then, how shall we understand this prophetic charge?

a) Is There Any "Victim" Here?

As in the previous section, the word "victim" is here used to indicate a particular group in the community who have to suffer from the unfulfilled prophecy *and* the prophetic accusation. But, is there any victim implied in the religious sin we have just analyzed? We shall answer this question by pursuing the indications provided by the

³⁵⁰ W.A. MEIER III, "Meni (deity)," *ABD* [CD ROM]; also S.D. SPERLING, "Meni," 566-569 for further treatment.

³⁵¹ M. BALDACCI, "Due antecedenti," 189-191.

³⁵² See K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 181.

texts we have just examined. Since some passages have been discussed before, we will not repeat the whole detailed discussion. Instead, we shall present some important points from our previous examination.

As we have seen, the prophetic charge against the unorthodox cults in 57,5-9 is a direct speech, addressed to **אַתֶּם** "you" (v. 3). The first question we have to deal with is: who is actually intended by this pronoun positioned in an emphatic way.³⁵³ Here, the scholars' opinions are divided into, at least, two possibilities. Some maintain that *you* refers to the leaders in 56,9-12.³⁵⁴ In the text as it now stands, the antecedent of *you* is indeed the watchmen and the shepherds in 56,10-12. The others, however, argue that it now points to the people, a part or as a whole.³⁵⁵

In Isa 56-66, the word **אַתֶּם** appears 6 x (61,2; 65,11.13 (3x); 65,14). Except in 61,2, it is always placed in a emphasized position as in 57,3, and stands in opposition to another group (for example, **עֲבָדֵי** in 65,13f). Then if we follow this logic of thinking, it seems that in our text, **אַתֶּם** would stand in contrast with **אֲנֹשֵׁי הַסֵּר/הַצְּדִיק** in v. 1-2,³⁵⁶ which is also emphasized. This contrast is further reinforced by a sort of parallelism between **יָבוֹא שְׁלוֹם** and **קָרְבוּ הֵנָּה**.³⁵⁷ The righteous enters into peace, but this *you* are summoned **הֵנָּה** "hither," namely, before God's trial.³⁵⁸

Since the fate of the righteous is, as we have seen, caused by the corrupt leaders in 56,9-12, then we can also connect the fate of this "you" to the same cause. Indeed, the imperative **קָרְבוּ** ("to come/draw near") in v. 3 corresponds with the double **אָתִי** ("to come") (56,9.12) attributed to the wicked leaders. In this way, a connection between 57,3ss and 56,9-12 is built. Thus, in some or many ways, the leaders were the cause of the people falling into sin.³⁵⁹ DUHM asserted that since this group is treated immediately after their leaders, they must have had a certain connection with them.³⁶⁰ It could mean that the idolatry of the people is, in one way or

³⁵³ GKC § 32 b.

³⁵⁴ For example, O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 231; P.D HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 193; B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 128; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 156, etc.

³⁵⁵ Muilenburg, for example, stated that "they are not the Samaritans (Duhm, Marti, Skinner), or the pre-exilic community (Ewald, Volz, *et al.*), or the godless in exile (Feldmann), but the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had yielded to the attraction of the Canaanite cult." J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 664-665. Also C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 302; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 79; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree.*, 116.

³⁵⁶ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways*, 125; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 42.

³⁵⁷ Other examples of correspondence between 56,9-12 and 57,3-13 can be found, for example, in P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 79-80.

³⁵⁸ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 52.

³⁵⁹ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 51.

³⁶⁰ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 396.

another, due to the lack of responsibility of their leaders, or in SMITH's wording, "...the former (*the leaders*) are not stopping the latter (*the people*) from transgressing against Yahweh's covenant, both group having gone their own way."³⁶¹ But also, it is not impossible - though it is difficult to attest - that it is caused by the leaders' active influence, e.g. through their false teaching. As SMART once said in his commentary on 56,9-57,12, "It would have been a strange Israelite community in the sixth century if there had been no false prophets in it."³⁶² Therefore, it seems to me that *you* in v. 3 points to a group in the community who practiced idolatry. Not the whole people, because it is contrasted with the righteous. And they are also not the leaders, because this group has become the victim of the wicked leaders.

In 65,3b-5a, the words of accusation are directed to the people, who are called "a nation that did not call³⁶³ on my name" (v. 1bβ) and "a rebellious³⁶⁴ people" (v. 2a). Paul in Rom 10,20-21 quoted, perhaps from his memory, the LXX version of Isa 65,1-2 and understood that v. 1 referred to the gentiles and v. 2 to Israel. It is true that גוי "nation" is often used for the gentile, while עם "people" for Israel as YHWH's chosen people.³⁶⁵ Since vv. 1-2 present a contrast between divine and human action, it seems, therefore, preferable to understand both terms as referring to the same single entity, namely, Israel, rather than pointing to two different groups.³⁶⁶ Moreover, the fact that Israel is now called by גוי and עם demonstrates that Israel has now become like the gentiles because of her refusal to be guided by YHWH. Nevertheless, this should not necessarily be applied to the people as a whole, since in v. 10b we are informed that YHWH will act for the sake of his "people, who have sought me" (לְעַמִּי אֲשֶׁר דָּרְשׁוּנִי). A division within the community is thus hinted at. This division will later be developed in the following part of Isa 65 (65,8ff.)

³⁶¹ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 82. Fohrer argued that this group has a great number of followers among the members of the community that joined the behaviour of the upper class. G. FOHRER, "Kritik an Tempel," 82.

³⁶² J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 237, cf. T.J. LEWIS, "Death Cult Imagery," 268.

³⁶³ Read the MT קרא (Pual perfect) as קרא (Qal perfect) together with LXX (ἐκάλεσαν) and Vulgate (*vocabat*) (Cf. Targum has צלי "to pray"). The divine word הִנְנִי "Here I am" fits better with "to call," rather than "to be called" (cf. 58,9; 1Sam 3,4f).

³⁶⁴ The LXX added another adjective ἀπειθοῦντα καὶ ἀντιλέγοντα ("disobedient and gainsaying"), which would create a perfect meter. This rendering may perhaps reflect the stereotypical expression סוֹרֵר וְמוֹרֵד (Deut 21,18.20; Jer 5,23; Ps 78,8). Some scholars (Duhm, Westermann, Pauritsch, Hanson, Blenkinsopp, etc) emended the text accordingly. 1QIsa^a is not entirely clear. Brownlee read as מוֹרֵד, which he understood as a combination of two words מוֹרֵד וְמוֹרֵד. W.H. BROWNLEE, *The Meaning of the Qumrān Scrolls*, 244. However, the photograph of the scroll in Burrows' edition seems to be מוֹרֵד rather than מוֹרֵד as in its printed transcription. Whatever may be the case, for our purpose, it is not of great relevance. Therefore, we prefer to retain the MT.

³⁶⁵ Cf. A. CODY, "When Is the Chosen People," 1-6.

³⁶⁶ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 159 n. 11.

In v. 3a, the people (עַם) is characterized by a participle הַמְּכַעֲסִים (“who provoke”). Here the participle as verbal adjective used attributively qualifies the subject. In this way, the division within the community is again asserted. Not the whole people is intended here, but only a particular group designated by the actions in participles.

As the above analysis has demonstrated, it is clear therefore that the prophetic indictment in 57,5-9 and 65,3b-5a cannot be addressed to the whole people, but only to a particular group in the community who practiced those forbidden cults. We can here add that according to 66,3 the priests were also involved in these illicit cults. Consequently, as in the case of the social sin, we should conclude that also the idea of suggesting the cultic or religious sin as the response to unfulfilled prophecy, cannot be taken for granted, unless we victimize the innocent who have already suffered because of the failure of prophecy.

b) Another Proposal

The presence of the unorthodox cults in the post-exilic Judean community as it is attested in Isa 56-66 is particularly intriguing. Is it merely an indication that the unorthodox cults still survived in that period, notwithstanding the so-called Josianic religious reform backed up by the Deuteronomistic circle that had attempted to wipe out all non-Yahwistic elements from the Israel worship? Or perhaps, is there something else?

It is true that, on the one hand, practising the cults prohibited by the Law would mean abandoning YHWH to follow other deities. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, this act is usually called idolatry, playing harlot, abomination, and the like. On the other hand, however, as we have tried to demonstrate, such forbidden cults are performed with particular expectations for the benefit of the practitioner in the first place. Thus, fertility cult is meant to guarantee adequate harvests; necromancy is for obtaining information from the dead; child sacrifice was probably practised in the moment of crisis and difficulty. Though they are regarded as outlawed cults, at least in the case of necromancy, the episode at Endor in 1Sam 28 has demonstrated that such a practice was indeed efficacious.³⁶⁷ Considering the difficult situation faced by

³⁶⁷ As many scholars have noted, the prohibition of such practices was founded on a “YHWH-alone” ideology. After listing biblical texts that mention the specialist in the arts dedicated to discerning hidden knowledge, such as Deut 18,10-11; Gen 41,8; Isa 3,3.20, etc., ZEVIT wrote, “Nothing in these references indicates that these individuals and their techniques were not considered efficacious and capable of producing result; these technicians were outlawed by

the post-exilic Judean community as it is attested in some biblical passages,³⁶⁸ is it possible that these cults have become a tempting alternative way-out to get rid of such a situation?

Some authors have indeed hinted such a possibility. WHYBRAY, for example, noted that "the period which followed the first return was therefore one of bitter disillusionment in which those who wished to remain faithful to YHWH's promise found it as difficult to maintain that faith as they and their fathers had found it to be in Babylon."³⁶⁹ SMITH asserted that in the apparent disillusionment over the failure of the prophecy of Second Isaiah, many members of the post-exilic community have returned to syncretistic practice.³⁷⁰ ZEVIT's opinion on 65,17 is even clearer, "Dedication of these rites to Gad and Meni, possibly deities of luck and destiny, may have made perfectly good sense to Jerusalemites who could not have imagined any good fortune emanating from the deity of the Jerusalem temple whose presence had not even safeguarded his own house and the city in which it was located."³⁷¹ Unfortunately, such suggestions lack textual evidence that could be verified.

Indeed, it is not easy to evaluate the opinions represented by the above scholars. BLENKINSOPP has rightly said that the author is not interested in exploring the *purpose* of these activities (namely, the condemned cults).³⁷² Nevertheless, we could perhaps find a piece of indication from the texts.

A part of YHWH's commentary on Lady Israel's harlotry described in 57,5-9 is *בְּזַעֲקֶךָ יִצְלָךְ קְבוּצֶיךָ*, commonly translated "When you cry out for help, let your collection (of idols) deliver you" (v. 13a). In the light of v. 12, it is clear that this is an ironic expression. The Hebrew *קְבוּצֶיךָ* "your gathered ones" or "collections" is a *hapax*.³⁷³ It is traditionally understood as "your collection of idols" or, as KOOLE recently suggested, "the multitude of the worshipped gods" or "the pantheon."³⁷⁴

some Yahwists because they operated on the "scientific" premise that Yahweh was not necessary for them to achieve results." Z. ZEVIT, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 515.

³⁶⁸ For example, Hag 1,6.9-11 (bad harvest and drought) (cf. 2,16-19); Zech 8,10 (social problems); 5,1-5 (economic difficulties that leads to exploitation and enslavement). We shall add to this, the taxation imposed by the Persian authorities and difficult relationship with their neighbours. Cf. among others, M.S. SMITH, *The Memoirs of God*, 40.69; L.L. GRABBE, *Judaic Religion*, 118.129; H. JAGERSMA, *A History of Israel*, I, 197; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 177, etc.

³⁶⁹ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 41.

³⁷⁰ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 194.196.199. It is interesting to notice that in the first and second statements, he held that a connection between the disillusionment and the return to unorthodox cults is still a *possibility*. But in the third occasion, he used the *indicative* mood.

³⁷¹ Z. ZEVIT, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 535.

³⁷² J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 164.

³⁷³ Some scholars, therefore, preferred to emend it to *שְׂקִיצֶיךָ* "your abominations." See, for example, C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 323; J.L. MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah*, 157.

³⁷⁴ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 85-86.

LEWIS, based on comparison with Ugaritic texts, proposed that this word refers to the dead persons.³⁷⁵ This would indeed fit with the context because in v. 6, as we have seen, the prophetic word accuses the people for practising a cult of the dead. For our purpose, however, the relevant word is the first one, namely **בזעקך**. The basic meaning of the root **זעק** is to cry for help in time of distress (cf. Ex 2,23; Judg 3,9.15; Jer 11,11.12). Accordingly, the motive why the people turned to others rather than to YHWH is to cry for help. In this case, whether this cry is addressed to “the collection of idols” or “the deceased persons” does not make much difference. Thus, according to the context, the unorthodox cults described in vv. 5-9 are practised with the motive of searching for help. Because of YHWH’s long silence (v. 11b; cf. 42,14), the people desperately turned to other gods!

Indeed, the silence of God (v. 11b) could be understood in two ways: God does not move to *help* or he does not move to *punish* the people. Many scholars adopted the latter, because it fits well with the common traditional conception of God, who is known as the one who is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love (cf. Ps 145,8). Conversely, the former is somewhat unusual though it is not completely strange. In our opinion, however, both solutions make no big difference. From the people’s perspective, the silence of God would, in fact, mean nothing less than his unwillingness to help (cf. Ps 28,1; Isa 42,14; 64,11 where **חשה** is used with God as subject). It would even be more difficult to comprehend, if on the one hand, God’s silence means his patience not to punish the people, but on the other hand, this would mean letting the people remain in their hard situation.

Our analysis of 65,1-7 seems to support the above suggestion. As we have noticed earlier, by using particular terminologies, such as **בקש**, **שאל**, **דרש** in vv. 1-2, the relationship between YHWH and the people is formulated in such a way that YHWH as the ultimate and legitimate source of information about whom the people should have inquired is emphasized. Therefore, the unorthodox cults practiced by the people should be put in the context of the people’s searching for information or explanation (cf. necromancy) for their miserable life. What kind of information do the people need? Considering their difficult situation, we believe that what the people were looking for was the reason or explanation why the prophetic promise has not yet come true. In other words, the people were searching for the solution for their situation through their unorthodox cults, rather than consulting YHWH. In this case we are dealing with a situation similar to Saul’s experience in 1Sam 28. Therefore,

³⁷⁵ T.J. LEWIS, “Death Cult,” 276. His suggestion is followed by Ackermann, Smith, and also Blenkinsopp.

from this piece of evidence, it seems that the possibility that the people turn to non-YHWH cult *because* He seemed to be silent, cannot be easily discarded.

If our reasoning is right, then we shall cautiously conclude that the difficult situation, which was, in some way, caused by unfulfilled prophecy, may have led the people to practise (again) the old-fashioned unorthodox cults previously condemned by the prophets. In other words, the cultic sins are *not* something that have hindered the fulfilment of the prophetic promise, as the prophet claimed, but rather, they are the *wrong* responses to it. We admitted that it is perhaps not well proven, but we are sure that this interpretation is not impossible.

c) Result

Up to several decades ago, condemnations against unorthodox cults found in post-exilic texts such as Isa 56-66 would be understood as referring to the past rather than the actual situation. We believe that this opinion was mostly based on an alleged conviction that the so-called Josianic reform must have successfully removed all the non-Yahwistic elements from the Israelite religion. However, the various kinds of data provided by archaeological discoveries as well as from biblical fields have led many modern scholars to change their mind with regard to ancient Israelite religion. The existence of unorthodox cults in the period after Josiah even up to the post-exilic period seems to be undeniable.³⁷⁶ It has been suggested that instead of dying with the religious ban posed by Josiah, some forms of unorthodox cult receded to the periphery and became an undercurrent practice beside the Josianic religious program that later became official. In the light of this current tendency, there is no reason to deny the practice of several kinds of unorthodox cults described in Trito-Isaianic passages (cf. particularly in the case of 57,5-9).

Then, having analyzed the sins belonging to the religious sphere in the context of our examination, we shall now conclude that, as in the case of social sin, we cannot here simply apply these sins as a general response to unfulfilled prophecy. Our examination on the passages in question has shown that it is *not* the whole of the people who were involved in such practices. The sharp division between two groups within the post-exilic community that has already been hinted in Isa 57 and later

³⁷⁶ Thus Gerstenberger said, "...the majority of the notions of God contained in the Hebrew and Aramaic writings derive from leading groups in the community. They need not indicate the actual state of community piety and the normal image of cultic behaviour. On the contrary, all kinds of polemic against a very diffuse popular religion, described in a stereotyped way, suggest that contrary to the sometimes very strict leadership of the community by the scribes and priests there was a variety of deviant behaviour." E.S. GERSTENBERGER, *Theologies in the Old Testament*, 258.

developed in Isa 65, will support our argument. Moreover, there are also indications, though slim and obscure, that the unorthodox cults practised by the people could be understood as their response to the unfulfilled prophecy.

2. CONCLUSION

We shall now conclude the foregoing discussion. At the beginning of this chapter, we stated that the purpose of this chapter is to closely examine the common solution to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy that the people's sin has hindered the glorious prophecy of Second Isaiah to materialize. The clearest expression for this response is found in 59,1-3 though our analysis has demonstrated that it is also found elsewhere in different levels of clarity (cf. 58,3-4; 65,1-2a).

Our examination of the relevant passages, namely, the texts that described social sin and religious or cultic sin, however, has discovered that such a solution contains difficulties so that it cannot be taken for granted as a proper response to unfulfilled prophecy applied to the whole people. In other words, such a simple and straightforward solution still needs to be accompanied by additional notes, explanations, and exceptions before it could be applied as a response to unfulfilled prophecy. Otherwise, it would merely become a theodicy at the expense of the innocent party.

If the sin of the people cannot be used to respond to the unfulfilled prophecy because it overlooks a particular group within the community, then we would naturally expect a more balanced and positive announcement, which will be able to cover the whole segment of the people, particularly, those who are neglected by the "previous response". The pursuit of such a message will be the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV
**THE PROPOSED RESPONSE TO UNFULFILLED PROHECY I:
 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTS**

Our analysis of the social and religious sin undertaken in the previous chapter has convincingly demonstrated that the prophetic announcement which states that the people's sin was, in one way or another, the cause of the failure of Second Isaiah's prophecy - a response which is frequently proposed as the traditional solution to the unfulfilled prophecy - cannot be simply taken for granted. The main objection is that such a solution does not address the whole community because it clearly overlooks a particular segment of the community. We have already seen in the preceding chapter that the sins described by the prophets could not be committed by the community as a whole, but only by a part of them. Some of the community's members even became the victims of the other's sins. Though this prophetic argument seems to be explicitly supported by some texts (cf. 59,1-3), such a straightforward and simple solution has been proven to be merely a generalization that cannot be justified. Therefore, in order to do justice to the *whole* community, which at the same time, together with the sinners, has to deal with the fact of the failure of prophecy, another way out to handle the problem has to be discovered in the rest of the passages of Third Isaiah. It is the purpose of the present and following chapters to pursue the more positive answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy.

In a broader sense, all biblical passages would primarily talk about God. This is also true for the prophetic books, such as Third Isaiah. However, we should remember that by its very definition - etymological or theological or the like - the primary task of a prophet is to deliver the message of God to the third party who constitutes the actual recipient of the message.¹ A biblical prophet never receives the divine words and then keeps them for himself, but he is always called to be a means of communication between God and his people. Therefore, since the divine words are always delivered in the context of communication, they would inevitably talk about God's partner of dialogue, namely, *the people*.

¹ Cf. The definition proposed by M. Weippert quoted by H.M. Barstad, "A prophet(ess) is a person, male or female, who (1) through a cognitive experience, a vision, an audition, a dream or the like, becomes the subject of the revelation of a deity, or several deities, and (2) is conscious of being commissioned by the deity/deities in question to convey the revelation in speech, or through metalinguistic behaviour, to a third party who constitutes the actual recipient of the message." H.M. BARSTAD, "No Prophets?," 39-60 (46).

Attempt to discover a more positive response for the problem of unfulfilled prophecy would then inevitably lead us to read through the whole Third Isaianic collection, from the beginning to the end. From such a reading it is then expected that we could draw some points that would illuminate our way in searching for the answer.

This chapter consists of two parts. In the *first* part, our discussion will be focused on the prophet of Third Isaiah as the medium between God and his people. The problem of unfulfilled prophecy would unavoidably put the authority and credibility of the prophet in question. Therefore, before the prophet delivers his new messages in a new situation, he must regain first his credibility in front of the people. This part demonstrates how the prophet's attempt to regain his credibility. In the *second* part, which is much longer than the first, we shall examine the corpus of Third Isaiah in order to discover the response(s) of Third Isaiah to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. In this case, we shall read the Trito Isaianic passages in a classic procedure, that is, to read the passages from the beginning up to the end. And only after this long journey through these passages, we will try to draw conclusions that may become the prophetic response(s) to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy.

1. THE QUESTION ABOUT THE PROPHET

It is hardly surprising that the failure of prophecy would put a prophet's reliability and credibility in question. A spontaneous comment based on an easy-to-fetch text, such as Deut 18,20-22, would easily put a prophet in danger of being accused as a false prophet. As a result, a prophet as a supposedly reliable spokesperson of God could hardly be able to accomplish his mission, when his credibility was lost, as it once happened to Isaiah and Jeremiah when they encountered a good deal of scepticism from the public (cf. Isa 5,19; Jer 17,15). Consequently, without some social elements responding to the prophet's preaching a prophet would have had little legitimate status in society. Therefore, something has to be done in order to recover his credibility in front of the people to whom a prophet is commissioned by YHWH to deliver his prophetic words.

After some considerable time, it seemed that the proclamation of Second Isaiah (and also chs. 60-62) that YHWH would continue his work in order to accomplish his promise made through the prophet, failed to materialize. The situation did not change much. If prophetic statements were short-term in outlook, namely that they were delivered to a specific community on a specific occasion, then the disconfirmation of such prophecies would give rise to dissonance for those who accepted their words. The prophetic words now preserved in chs. 56-59 and 63-66

tried to cope with such a problem. But first of all, the prophet himself has to demonstrate that his words are indeed reliable and worth noting. Thus, we shall now examine how the prophet tried to justify and legitimise his office and his words. As in other parts, we shall begin with a textual analysis, which is then followed by critical comments.

1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 59,21

We shall take Isa 59,21 as our point of departure to investigate the question about the prophet.

וְאֲנִי זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אִתְּחֶם
 אָמַר יְהוָה
 רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ וּדְבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי בְּפִיךָ
 לֹא־יִמּוּשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַעַךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַע זֶרַעַךָ
 אָמַר יְהוָה
 מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם

“And as for me; this is my covenant with them,
 says YHWH,

My spirit that is upon you and my words that I put in your mouth
 shall not depart from your mouth, and from the mouth of your
 offspring

and from the mouth of the offspring of your offspring,

says YHWH,

from now on and forever”

It should be clear from the outset that this verse is dealing with three groups represented by the use of three different personal pronouns: first person singular, second person singular, and third person plural. We hope that our analysis of this verse will be able to throw light to the identity of the groups and the relationship among them.

As can easily be noticed, this verse appears awkwardly in its present position². Its prosaic form does not fit with its surroundings that are characterized by poetic genre. It is not surprising that this verse could not find space in the work of most

² Cf. for example, a brief observation in J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 168.

scholars who considered it as secondary and unrelated to its context.³ Thus, WESTERMANN preferred to remove it at the end of the book, between 66,20 and 66,22.⁴ HANSON even removed it from the discussion.⁵ PAURITSCH saw it as an introduction to the following section.⁶

Another characteristic of this verse is that the wording of this verse echoes other biblical passages, not only the passages from the Isaianic tradition including Second Isaiah, but also from the other texts. This intertextuality has generated many ideas that attempted to shed light on this verse. Whatever its origin, however, we believe that the meaning of this verse in its present location deserves to be carefully examined.

1.1.1 This is my covenant with them

We shall begin with the first line of the verse: **וְאֲנִי זֶה בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם** commonly rendered as “As for me, this is my covenant with them.” The first thing to be examined is the identity of **אִתָּם** “with them.”⁷ Some scholars argued that here YHWH makes a new covenant with *his people*.⁸ But it is not clear to whom “his people” would refer. Who is meant by “his people”? In the context of ch. 59, perhaps it would be better to see **שְׁבִי פֶשַׁע בְּיַעֲקֹב** “those who turn from sin in Jacob” (v. 20aβ) as the closest antecedent for this pronoun.⁹ This would imply that the covenant of YHWH is not given to the whole people, but only to a particular group. As we shall see elsewhere, the division within the community is greatly developed in other passages of Third Isaiah.

³ But see S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 135; also U. KELLERMAN, “Tritojesaja und das Geheimnis,” 50.

⁴ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 352. 427.

⁵ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 113.

⁶ K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 94.

⁷ BHS' critical apparatus suggests to amend **אִתָּם** to **אִתָּם** together with many mss, Tg (עמרוון), and Vulgate (*cum eis*) (LXX has αὐτοῖς). Here we shall follow the emendation suggested by the MT though, in the Hebrew Bible, a confusion between the suffixed preposition **אִתָּ** and *nota accusativi* frequently happened (see for example, 2Kgs 6,16; Isa 54,15). Cf. J-M § 103 j. In the light of the common tendency to have a *scriptio plena*, **אִתָּם** in IQIsa^a is ambiguous. For this, Burrows said “An apparent exception is **אִתָּם/אִתָּם** 59,21, but this was doubtless read as **אִתָּם** (cp. BH³).” M. BURROWS, “Orthography, Morphology,” 197.

⁸ For example, J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 696; E. ACHTEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 72.

⁹ Thus many scholars, such as, G.I. EMMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66; 74-75*; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 66; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 126; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 200.

The mention of the subject וְאֲנִי in *casus pendens* not only clearly marks the shift of the speaker but also emphasizes the new speaker who enters into the scene.¹⁰ YHWH, who is spoken of in vv. 15b-20, now becomes the speaker. It has frequently been pointed that the structure of this line resembles the priestly document texts, such as, Gen 9,9 and 17,4; passages that also speak about YHWH's making covenant with Noah and Abraham.¹¹

Though it is perhaps true that 59,21 was influenced by those passages, two considerations should be taken into account. First, in Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah the term בְּרִית "covenant" (fem.) is also a common term (cf. בְּרִית עָם 42,6; 49,8; בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם 54,10; בְּרִית עוֹלָם 55,3; 61,8; also בְּרִית in absolute form in 56,4.6). Therefore, an allusion to these Isaianic passages, rather than to the Priestly texts mentioned above, cannot be excluded. Second, an attentive reading shows that there is a small difference with regard to the syntax of 59,21 in comparison with the text from Genesis. In this Isaianic text, this phrase forms a nominal phrase, in which the demonstrative pronoun זֹאת "this" (fem. agree with בְּרִית) is put in the first place. On the contrary, Gen 9,9 is a verbal clause; while it is not entirely clear whether Gen 17,4 is a nominal clause.¹² We believe that the use of demonstrative pronoun זֹאת is important for determining the meaning of בְּרִית "covenant" in this particular phrase.

As some grammarians have suggested, the demonstrative pronoun זֹאת receives some prominence when it is placed in the first place as in our phrase.¹³ Thus, זֶה הַבְּכֹר in Gen 48,18 means "This - and *not* the other - is the eldest son."¹⁴ Conversely, אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת in Gen 12,12, should mean "This is his wife, - and *not* his sister" (See also 12,13.18). Following these examples, וְאֲנִי זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אוֹתָם would then mean "As for me, this, - and *not the other* - is my covenant with them."¹⁵

¹⁰ For this construction, see *GKC* § 143 a; J-M § 156 b. In this case, this construction put an importance on the noun in *casus pendens* (וְאֲנִי), which is then resumed in the possessive pronoun בְּרִיתִי.

¹¹ For example, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 416; K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 100.

¹² הִנֵּה in Gen 17,4 can indeed include the meaning of a demonstrative pronoun (*GKC* § 147 b). Thus the common translation is ...*this is my covenant*... But originally, הִנֵּה is a demonstrative particle that does not function as noun or pronoun. It will be clear in a case where an object is needed. In this case, הִנֵּה cannot substitute a noun or pronoun; whereas a demonstrative pronoun זֶה/זֹאת can be put in accusative.

¹³ J-M § 154 fb; cf. also *GKC* § 141 l.

¹⁴ J-M § 154 ea.

¹⁵ Though it is not always easy to decide, we believe, that in our phrase *my covenant* is the subject, while *this* is the predicate that explains something about the subject. That is why in this particular verse, instead of using the word *subject* or *predicate*, we prefer to use the expression *the first place* (or *the second place*) for describing the order of the phrase.

This **אֵלֶּה** that represents the content of the covenant is then specified with a long statement concerning the divine spirit (**רוּחַ**) and divine word (**דְּבָרָה**). It is nicely framed by the messenger formula **אָמַר יְהוָה**. Thus, far from being a surprising exaggeration, this formula functions well in framing the content of the covenant. Nonetheless, it should be added that the first **אָמַר יְהוָה** plays a double duty function, since it also concludes the main statement, and thus underlines its divine quality.

If our interpretation of the first line of 59,21 could be justified, we could then say that semantically, the term **בְּרִית** has a closed meaning. It has already been determined by the syntax used in this phrase. Accordingly, though our phrase may have used the vocabulary picked up from other traditions, for example, the Priestly Document as some scholars have argued, we believe that it is not necessary to look for other meanings for the common term **בְּרִית** “covenant” used in the present verse.¹⁶ Its meaning is already there!

1.1.2 ...will not depart from your mouth

As we have noted, the content of the covenant declared in the first line of 59,21 is characterized by a discourse about *spirit* and *word*. These two words seem to be the key words to understand 59,21. Though these two concepts are common in Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah, 59,21 is the only place where the combination of spirit endowment and putting words in the mouth appear together.¹⁷ In this section, however, we shall first discuss the verb that is governed the concepts of *spirit* and *word*.

It is said that “(my spirit and my words) shall not depart (**יִמוּשׁוּ**) from your mouth (**מִפִּיךָ**), and from the mouth of your offspring and from the mouth of the offspring of your offspring.” Outside 59,21 in the Hebrew Bible, the combination **יִמוּשׁוּ** and **מִפִּיךָ** appears in only one other occasion, namely, Jos 1,8.¹⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that many scholars tried to understand 59,21 in the light of this text. From such a reading, it is frequently suggested that “the words” (**דְּבָרָה**) in 59,21 refers to “the word of Torah” or “the words of the Law.”¹⁹

¹⁶ See also U. KELLERMAN, “Tritojesaja und das Geheimnis,” 50.

¹⁷ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 201.

¹⁸ In the Hebrew Bible the root **יִמוּשׁוּ** appears 20 x (18 x in *Qal* and 2 x in *Hiphil*). In the Book of Isaiah, it appears 4 x (22,25; 46,7; 54,10; 59,20).

¹⁹ For example, H. RINGGREN, “**יִמוּשׁוּ**,” 184; A. ROFÉ, “The Piety of the Torah-Disciples,” 83-84.

However, a close reading will reveal that despite its alleged literary dependency, this suggestion has difficulties. In Jos 1,8, YHWH commanded Joshua to keep the Torah so that it shall not depart from his mouth. In Isa 59,21, in a direct speech, YHWH assured “the prophet” that His spirit and His words will not depart from his mouth. If here the Law was really meant, it would make little sense, if any, why YHWH should give His guarantee, as if the Law could depart from the prophet without YHWH’s assurance. The history of the Chosen People, on the contrary, told us that it is the people who repeatedly departed from the Law.²⁰ Moreover, if we notice that the promise concerning the spirit and the words that will remain is given to *an individual* person (cf. the second person possessive pronoun כִּי) and *not* to a group or community,²¹ this suggestion will lose its ground. The Torah or the Law is YHWH’s gift for the community as a whole, and not exclusively for any individual Israelite whoever he or she may be!

Then, how could we understand the connection between Isa 59,21 and Jos 1,8 that appears so strong? We believe that the connection between them lies *not* in the object, namely the Law according to Jos 1,8, but in the verb (יְמַרְשֶׁהוּ). As Joshua was commanded to keep the Torah faithfully, thus, in the same manner, YHWH will ensure that his spirit and words remain in the mouth of his chosen. The endurance of the divine spirit and words is again supported by the following part. Not only they “will not depart from your mouth,” but also “from the mouth of your offspring and from the mouth of the offspring your offspring,²² for this time forward and forever more.”

Indeed, this statement has also generated various interpretations. An assumption that the gift of prophecy is not hereditary²³ is often used to argue that Isa 59,21 does not speak about prophecy.²⁴ Another suggestion was proposed by ACHTEMEIER who argued that the reference of Isa 59,21 is to the perpetual remembrance

²⁰ This fact could lead to another understanding that YHWH will enable his people to observe faithfully the Law. Indeed, such an idea is not completely alien in the Bible (cf. Jer 31,31-34; 32,40; Ezek 36,26ff). Thus Kellerman seems to think in this direction when he understood the spirit and the words as representing “spirit of obedience” and prophetic words. U. KELLERMAN, “Tritojesaja und das Geheimnis,” 51ff. Duhm also understood the spirit as *der Geist des Gehorsams*. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 416. Working more in the literary level, an allusion to Jer 31,31-36 has also been suggested by Sommer. B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 47-50.

²¹ As is suggested by, for example, R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 229; A. ROFÉ, “The Piety of the Torah-Disciples,” 83. However, those two scholars disagree about the content of the covenant. For Whybray, it is the promise of the gift of prophecy to all God’s people such as in Jl 2,28-29; while for Rofé, it is the word of the Torah.

²² LXX omitted this last phrase.

²³ G.I. EMMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66*, 74.

²⁴ A. ROFÉ, “The Piety of the Torah-Disciples,” 83.

of the prophet's word.²⁵ These arguments, however, could be easily dismissed by asserting that זרע does not necessarily refer to physical offspring but to spiritual descendants, or in this case, this individual's disciple or followers.²⁶ Is not Second Isaiah the spiritual offspring of First Isaiah, and Third Isaiah that of Second Isaiah?

Having established the meaning of the verb, we shall now advance our examination. The question we are dealing now is: What is the subject of the verb יִמְרוֹשׁוּ? The text seems somewhat ambiguous and not entirely clear. The third pers. pl. verb יִמְרוֹשׁוּ could indeed refer either to רִיחַ and דְּבָרִי or only to דְּבָרַי (דְּבָרִי in plural). ROFÉ, for example, argued that the verb accords with the "words" and not with the "spirit."²⁷ Similarly, KOOLE maintained, "The predicate 'not depart from your mouth' (v. b) is more governed by the preceding 'my word' in v. aC than by 'my spirit'."²⁸ But if this is the case, then we shall ask: What happens with the Spirit? Moreover, from grammatical point of view, if "My words" is the sole subject of the verb, then how to explain the presence of "My Spirit" in the whole phrase since there is only one verb? Indeed, the presence of "spirit" and "word" together in such a close relationship as in 59,21 is somewhat disturbing. What would the relationship between them look like?

We shall first notice that the bestowing of God's spirit is not done without a particular purpose or that the spirit may remain sterile upon somebody. Rather, the bestowing of spirit is always connected with doing something. The spirit thus becomes the divine principle that drives or inspires the person on whom it rests to carry out certain things. Thus, the spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he uttered his oracle (Num 24,2-3); the spirit of YHWH is frequently mentioned as enabling Samson to perform many things (cf. Judg 14,6.19; 15,14); the spirit commanded Ezekiel to prophecy (cf. Ezek 11,5); and the speaker of Isa 61,1 clearly connect the presence of YHWH's spirit with a commission to bring good tidings. As the examples above show, the spirit as invisible inner force is manifested in certain visible material expressions, namely, action or speech. Without the latter, the spirit will remain sterile. Material expressions are, therefore, needed as the manifestation of the spirit. In other words, speech or action is a material-visible expression of the immaterial-invisible spirit. Similarly, this understanding leads us to propose that the relationship between

²⁵ E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 73. To support this argument, the fact that prophecy will cease is often put forward. However, it is not clear whether at the time when 59,21 was composed there have already been a conviction that one day prophecy would cease. To apply an argument drawn from a later period to an earlier text seems to be an anachronism.

²⁶ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 126; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 201.

²⁷ A. ROFÉ, "The Piety of the Torah-Disciples," 83 n. 18.

²⁸ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 213.

spirit (רוח) and word (דְּבַר) in 59,21 is that the latter is the material expression of the former. The spirit needs to be articulated in words in order to take effect.

This reasoning, we believe, finds support from the mention of פֶּה “mouth.” The Hebrew word פֶּה literally means an organ of speech for God, for man, and also for animals (cf. Num 22,28); and in the Hebrew Bible it is mostly used in that meaning. It means that פֶּה is used for producing speech (word) as articulation or expression of inner concept (spirit). Driven by divine force, David, for example, was able to say, “The spirit of YHWH speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue” (2Sam 23,2); while Jeremiah became the mouth of God (Jer 15,19). In this way, the prophets become YHWH’s spokesperson. The divine spirit (and the divine words) is materialized in prophetic human words.

With this consideration, we shall argue that the plural subject of the verb is רוח and דְּבַר, as long as the former is understood as articulated in the latter. But, at the same time, - and this is more significant - the spirit determines the quality of the words. The uttered word is not merely a human word, but the expression of the divine spirit and the divine words.²⁹

Having established the relationship between spirit and words, thus determined the subject of the verb, we shall now proceed by examining the meaning of the divine promise concerning the spirit and the words.

1.1.3 My Spirit and My Words

Like the other expression in Third Isaiah, these two words seem to allude to other biblical texts. In this section we are trying to examine the relationship among them and how such an allusion would perhaps help us to understand better the meaning of these two words in the whole context of Isa 59,21.

1.1.3.1 *My spirit that is upon you*

From grammatical point of view, the construction רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר עָלַיִךְ constitutes a noun clause with relative pronoun. No textual difficulties arise from this phrase. Ancient versions agreed upon the masoretic reading, except a small variation found in the Targum that added a specification רוּחַ קִדְשִׁי, “my Holy Spirit.”

²⁹ This is contrary to Rofé’s opinion “More likely, in my opinion, is taking the ‘spirit of the Lord’ as His blessing presence, not, however, a presence that inculcates His words in the people, but *vice versa* a bliss that is obtained by learning and reciting His words.” A. ROFÉ, “The Piety of the Torah-Disciples,” 83.

In this section, YHWH speaks *about* his Spirit that is upon somebody whom he addressed with the second person pronoun, "You." As we shall see, the Hebrew text has no verb so that the verb "to be" or the like has to be inserted in the modern translations. In such a plain construction, we could assume that the phrase talks about the present state.³⁰ It would mean, therefore, that the present phrase is not dealing with the action of pouring or bestowing the spirit, though such an action should be assumed as having taken place previously.³¹ It talks about the result or reaffirmation of the action of pouring the spirit. The preposition על originally has the locative meaning, "on," "upon," "over." Since the placing *upon* anything means an addition to it, this preposition could then be understood metaphorically, that is, as a command, commission, duty, or even burden, inasmuch as the command, obligation, etc. is *laid upon* the object.³²

It would therefore mean that the spirit that rests upon the person addressed would bring two implications. On the one hand, as we have noted in the previous section, the resting of the divine spirit implies a commission from YHWH himself. On the other hand, it also implies an authorization to act on his behalf because it is YHWH himself who put his spirit upon him. By bestowing the spirit - though this action is not explicitly mentioned in the text - the transfer of authorization takes place. Thus, we can say that the person addressed in this passage is commissioned to act authoritatively in the name of YHWH.³³

It has frequently been noted that this phrase seems to echo some other biblical passages. Among many passages, the most frequently cited passages are Isa 42,1 and 61,1.³⁴ We shall now look closely at those passages, which could perhaps give us help in order to get a comprehensive picture of our text. We shall now put together the relevant texts so that a comparison could become visible:

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 59,21 | רוּחִי | אֲשֶׁר עָלַיךְ |
| 42,1 | נְתַתִּי רוּחִי | עָלַי |
| 61,1 | רוּחַ אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה עָלַי | |

³⁰ If the speaker wants to express the temporal sphere of the phrase, namely, past (*was*) or future (*will be*), he should employ the verb *היה* in *qatal* or *yiqtol* respectively. Cf. J-M §154 *m*.

³¹ Cf. B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 503.

³² Cf. GKC § 119 *aa*; J-M §133 *f*; W-O'C 11.2.13.c. Waltke-O'Connor also suggested that it is also possible to understand the preposition על as *dativus commodi* ("on behalf of"; "for the sake of") (cf. 1Kgs 2,18).

³³ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 269. "The nominally constructed clause probably indicates that God's spirit rests continuously on the speaker."

³⁴ There are also other texts that have been proposed, for example, Isa 44,3; 48,16; Ezek 11,19f; 36,26f; 39,29f. Since not all these texts have particular importance for the discussion of Isa 59,21, therefore, we will not discuss them all.

As we shall see, these passages have two words in common: the substantive (רוּחַ) and the suffixed preposition (עַל). They describe the same situation, namely, the resting of divine spirit upon somebody. As one would often notice, these passages have particular places in the Book of Isaiah. Isa 42,1 is the opening verse of the First Servant Song; while Isa 61,1 is the beginning of the so-called self-presentation of “the prophet.”³⁵

According to *the speaker*, Isa 59,21 stands closer to 42,1 in that in both passages YHWH is the speaker. Nevertheless, there is a small difference between them. By means of the verb נתן “to give,” “to put,” which is not found either in 59,21 or in 61,1, Isa 42,1 reports YHWH’s action of placing his spirit upon His Servant (עַבְדִּי). In Isa 59,21, however, YHWH merely points that His Spirit is already upon the person addressed. As we have noted, the phrase in Isa 59,21 contains no verb. A similar verbless phrase is also found in 61,1. Thus, according to *the way of describing the Spirit*, Isa 59,21 is closer to 61,1.³⁶ But how shall we understand the relationship among them?

Admittedly, scholars usually focus their attention primarily to the relationship between two passages, namely, 42,1 and 61,1; while another passage (59,21) is not very much discussed. This perhaps due to its awkward position that may lead to a conclusion that it would be better understood as a later addition. We shall now look more closely at these two passages first.

Most scholars indeed agree that 61,1 was deeply influenced by 42,1.³⁷ In his article, ZIMMERLI even once said that 61,1 is an ancient interpretation of the Servant Songs.³⁸ As we have said, in 42,1 YHWH speaks about His servant. But now, how shall we understand the speaker in 61,1? The Targumic rendering is, perhaps, the first

³⁵ Since not every scholar agrees to understand the speaker in 61,1 as the prophet, we put it in quotation marks.

³⁶ Koenen observed that “der Geist Jahwes auf einem einzelnen ist (עַל רוּחַ + einzelnen), findet sich in den Prophetenbüchern sonst nur in Jes 11,2 und Ez 11,5.” K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 106 n. 278.

³⁷ Sommer is an exception. He argued that 60,17-61,1 rely on Isa 11 rather than on 42,1. The only point of contact between Isa 11,1-10 and 61,1 is the word רוּחַ *spirit*, though he himself admitted that the appearance of the same vocabulary is not sufficient for determining the presence of an allusion. Therefore, he needed to put forward the presence of similar additional themes. B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 87. It seems that his reading was very much influenced by his basic assumption that Isa 40-66 form a literary unit that he named Deutero-Isaiah. Thus this assumption does not permit him to see any literary connection *within* Isa 40-66 and, consequently, overlooks a clear thematic - not just wording - similarity between 61,1 and 42,1. Moreover, the royal or messianic imagery of First Isaiah does not play a significant role in the main body of Third Isaiah. Cf. B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 505.

³⁸ W. ZIMMERLI, “Zur Sprache Tritojesajas,” 27.

testimony which interpreted the speaker as the prophet, when it translated the first part of 61,1 as *אמר נביא רוח נבואה מן קדם יהוה אלהים עלי* "The prophet said, the spirit of prophecy from before the Lord Elohim is upon me."³⁹ While the pouring of spirit (רוח) is uncommon for a description of commissioning a prophet in the pre-exilic prophecy,⁴⁰ there are indeed several terms in 61,1 that could be aptly understood as pointing to prophetic description. In the biblical accounts, the verb *משח* "to anoint" also used in this verse, is usually applied for the anointing of the priests (Ex 29,1-9; Lev 7,36) or kings (cf. 1Sam 9,16; 10,1; 16,13; 1Kgs 19,16). Only in one occasion does this word seemingly point to an event of anointing a prophet when YHWH commanded Elijah to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his place (1Kgs 19,16). However, in the following story there is no execution of this anointment in term of anointing the kings or priests (with oil).⁴¹ Rather, we are informed in v. 19 that Elijah throws his mantle upon Elisha. BEUKEN argued that for the prophets, "anointing" does not suppose an actual rite of anointment, it rather means "appointing to."⁴² It would seem, therefore, that, as many scholars have suggested, the verb is here used in a non-literal and transferred sense, something like 'to give full authorization.'⁴³ We find another metaphorical use of the root *משח* in Isa 45,1 in which Cyrus is also called as *משחו* "his anointed" as God's chosen instrument.⁴⁴

Our metaphorical understanding of the root *משח* seems to find support from the following finite word *שלחני* "He has sent me." In the Hebrew Bible, the root *שלח* (in *Qal*) is mostly used in the meaning: "to send someone" (on a specific mission, as messenger, etc). It is not attested that this meaning is applied to kings or priests. We can therefore follow DUHM who said that *שלח* interpreted the previous root *משח*.⁴⁵ It explains the anointment indubitably as an appointment to become a prophet (cf. Moses in Ex 3,14f; 4,13.28; 7,16; Samuel in 1Sam 15,1; also Isa 6,6; Jer 1,7; 19,4;

³⁹ The targumic translation is taken from J.F. STENNING, *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford, 1949).

⁴⁰ Thus Muilenburg, later followed by Westermann, explained, "In general the pre-exilic literary prophets avoid the use of the Spirit as the mediator of their inspiration, perhaps in opposition to the ecstasy of the early *n'bhî'im* (1Sam 10,9-13)." J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 709 cf. 696; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 365. Weber explained the avoidance of the term רוח in the pre-exilic prophets. "...*ruach* in linguistic usage denoted essentially the irrational and transitory states of ecstasy, whereas the prophets located their sense of dignity precisely in the habitual possession of consciously clear and communicable interpretation of Yahwe's intention." MAX WEBER, *Ancient Judaism*, 297.

⁴¹ U. KELLERMAN, "Tritjesaja und das Geheimnis," 57.

⁴² W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Servant and Herald," 415.

⁴³ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 365.

⁴⁴ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 25.

⁴⁵ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 423.

Ezek 2,3f; 3,6; Hag 1,12; Zech 2,12; Mal 3,13).⁴⁶ Thus, based on the above reading, it seems clear that the speaker in 61,1 presents himself as a prophet sent by YHWH himself. In this case, BLENKINSOPP's words can perhaps represent the modern tendency, "With relatively few exceptions, interpreters have followed the Targum in identifying the speaker in 61,1-3 as an individual prophet."⁴⁷

But then, what is the relationship with the Servant in 42,1 seeing that the wording of 61,1 resembles that of 42,1? One thing to notice is that 61,1 refers not only to 42,1 but also to many other passages scattered in 40-55. The unusual phrase יהוה אֲדֹנָי "the Lord YHWH"⁴⁸ recalls the same phrase found in the third Servant Song (50,4.5.7.9 also 48,16).⁴⁹ In 49,8 YHWH speaks to the Servant about עַתָּת רִצּוֹן "a time of favour"; while the speaker of 61,1 is called to proclaim שְׁנַת־רִצּוֹן "the year of favour." In 42,7 the mission of the Servant is to open (פָּקַח) blind eyes and to bring the prisoner (אָסִיר) out of the dungeon (cf. also אֲסִירִים "prisoners" in 49,9).⁵⁰ This is also the task of the speaker in 61,1. The adjective כָּהֵן appears both in 42,3 and 61,3. Notwithstanding the closeness of 61,1 to the so-called Servant Songs,⁵¹ there are other key words in this verse that seems to originate from other parts of Second Isaiah. We shall mention here the root בָּשַׂר "to bear tidings" and נָחַם "to console, to comfort." The root נָחַם, an important root in the proclamation of Second Isaiah, but not found in the Servant Songs,⁵² appears at the beginning of SI (40,1; cf. also 51,3; 52,9). While the root בָּשַׂר (*Piel*) is found in 40,9;⁵³ 41,27; 52,7 and

⁴⁶ W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Servant and Herald," 415.

⁴⁷ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 221. Other interpretations are, for example, a collective voice of the visionary-prophetic-Levitical minority (P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 65-70; followed by E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 88); "la communauté des justes," (VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 478-481); the prophetic Servant (J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 259-260; J. MORGENSTERN, "Isaiah 61," 109); Zion (O.H. STECK, "Der Rachtstag," 324); a preacher, a healer, a messenger that is identified as Ezra (?) (J.D.W. WATTS, *Isaiah 34-66*); a newly anointed High Priest (P. GRELOT, "Sur Isaïe LXI," 414-431; one of the exiled princes in Babylon who was being called to restore Jerusalem (W.M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 159).

⁴⁸ The LXX, Vulgate, as well as 1QIsa^a omit אֲדֹנָי.

⁴⁹ The four Servant Songs detected by Duhm are 42,1-4; 49,1-6; 50,4-9; 52,13-53,12. However, his textual delimitation was contended by scholars after him. Cf. J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 406; W.W. CANNON, "Isaiah 61,1-3," 287.

⁵⁰ Here I follow Charles Conroy's suggestion. According to him, the First and Second Servant Song would be 42,1-9 and 49,1-13 respectively. Therefore, the words analyzed above still belong to the vocabulary of the Servant. C. CONROY, *Journeys and Servants*, 53, 55.

⁵¹ In the history of interpretation, this resemblance between 61,1-3 and Duhm's four Servant Songs has led some earlier scholars to read 61,1-3 as the Fifth Servant Songs (for example, Cannon, Delitzsch). But it is rarely heard today.

⁵² U. KELLERMAN, "Tritojesaja und das Geheimnis," 62.

⁵³ Isa 40,9 has a *Piel* participle feminine singular מְבַשְּׂרָה. However, the LXX and Vulgate have the masculine form: ὁ εὐαγγελίζόμενος Σιών and *tu qui evangelizas Sion*.

attributed to a herald of good tidings. It seems that the speaker of 61,1 saw the Herald of good Tidings and the servant as one and the same figure.⁵⁴

From the observation above, we could therefore conclude that the speaker of 61,1 presents himself as a prophetic figure who is commissioned by YHWH himself to accomplish the mission previously given to the Servant. In other words, the speaker of 61,1 is a prophet who claims to be the fulfillment of the Servant Songs, and whose mission is described according to that of the Servant. Here, we could follow BLENKINSOPP's suggestion that 61,1-3 is the signature of the prophetic author of chs. 60-62 which authenticates the message of these three chapters.⁵⁵

After a discussion about the speaker of 61,1 and its relationship with 42,1, we shall now return to the text under discussion, namely, 59,21. As we have already seen, according to the way of describing the spirit, 59,21 stays closer to 61,1 than to 42,1. However, one thing is clear, unlike 61,1 this verse (59,21) has no clear job description for "the prophet"; a fact that makes it a little bit difficult to determine its relationship with other passages. Nevertheless, we shall argue that 59,21 is more influenced by 61,1 - and not the other way around - rather than by 42,1. Some arguments could be put forward: first, as we have demonstrated, the unit of chs. 60-62 to which 61,1 belongs, is close to SI both in the date of composition and the content.⁵⁶ Therefore, it could be concluded that 59,21 was later than 61,1. Accordingly, it is likely that 59,21 was influenced by 61,1. Second, if the prophet-speaker had already claimed that he was the fulfillment of the role of the Servant in 42,1, it is highly unlikely that 59,21 would have asserted the same thing. Such a claim would bring great consequence because it implied a correction to the claim made in 61,1. It is as if to say, "It is not *he* (the speaker of 61,1), but it is *I* (the addressee in 59,21) who was the fulfillment of 42,1!" Though it is not impossible, it is difficult to imagine that the prophet in 59,21 would have taken such an extreme distance from his predecessor. Moreover, as the following will show, the prophet in 59,21 seems to place himself in the continuation

⁵⁴ W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Servant and Herald," 418; also B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 505.

⁵⁵ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 39, 61.

⁵⁶ Other voices could here be mentioned. Vermeulen, for example, argued that 61,1-4 was a later origin. However, his opinion lacked convincing arguments. J. VERMEULEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, II, 478-481. Another is that of Sekine. Unsatisfied with the proposed explanations about the place of 61,1-3 in the middle of chs. 60-62, he offered what he called a chronological solution, namely, that 61,1-3 was a later insertion and functioned as the prophet's legitimating for his commission in front of his skeptical contemporaries. In this way, Sekine had to interpret 61,1-3 as implying conditions to be fulfilled before one could participate in the fulfillment of the promise. Thus the promise itself is not for the whole community. S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 81-86. However, as many scholars have noted, chs. 60-62 contain only salvation, even unconditional salvation for the whole community. Moreover, if we read chs. 60-62 not in linear mode but as a unity that forms chiastic structure as proposed by Blenkinsopp and others, there would be no problem with the place of 61,1-3. Even the present position is the best place since it occupies the central panel in the chiastic structure.

of the tradition of 61,1. Third, the divine assurance that YHWH's spirit will not depart from the prophet, and even from his descendants, assumes that there must have already been a sort of fulfillment of bestowing spirit. The failure of Second Isaiah's prophecy - and that of chs. 60-62 respectively - could be regarded as lacking divine quality. Therefore, such a confirmation would be needed in order to regain the community's confidence.

Taken the above arguments together, we could therefore say that 59,21 shows a close continuation with 61,1. It would mean that the prophetic person addressed in 59,21 holds divine authorization and stands in the tradition of the Servant and also that of the prophet-speaker of 61,1 though their roles or functions are not explicitly applied in 59,21. We shall further argue that the prophetic nature of the addressee in 59,21 is supported by another phrase discussed in the following section.

1.1.3.2 *My Words that I have put in your mouth*

As we have noted earlier, the second subject of the verb יָמוּשׁוּ is דְּבָרַי "my words," which is then specified with a verbal clause אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַחַי בְּפִיךָ. Like the previous phrase, also the MT was faithfully reproduced by ancient versions. An exception should be mentioned with regard to the Targumic tradition that explicitly understood these divine words as prophetic words and thus rendered it as פְּתוּנְמֵי נְבוּאָתַי, "the words of my prophecy."

Scholars have already recognized that this phrase has a strong Deuteronomistic character. It indeed appears in Deut 18,18, a text that describes the regulation of the prophet according to the Deuteronomist school. In fact, in the Hebrew Bible, the phrase composed with the verb "to put" + object + "mouth" appears 11 x (Exod 4,15; Num 22,38; 23,12.16; Deut 18,18; 31,19; 2Sam 14,3.19; Isa 51,16; 59,21; Jer 1,9).⁵⁷ In this case, we shall not examine all available passages but only the texts which are relevant for the discussion of Isa 59,21. They are Deut 18,18; Jer 1,9 and Isa 51,16.

It should be admitted that it is not easy to uncover the possible relationship between those texts. Considering the fundamental character of this rule of the prophet in Deut 18,18 - at least from the Deuteronomistic point of view -, we could perhaps say that this famous prophetic rule must have stood behind the other texts, directly or

⁵⁷ In nine occasions the verb שָׁמַח is used, the other two employ the verb נָתַן (Deut 18,18 and Jer 1,9). In eight occurrences, YHWH is the subject of the verb; while human being is the subject in three passages (In Exod 4,15 YHWH orders Moses to put the words in Aaron's mouth; in 2Sam 14,3.19 Joab puts words in the mouth of the woman from Tekoa).

indirectly. Thus, for example, many scholars thought that Jer 1,9 depended on Deut 18,18.⁵⁸ The appearance of some terms in both passages seems to support this argument (cf. *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי* “and YHWH said to me” Jer 1,7/Deut 18,17; the root *נתן* “to give,” “to place” Jer 1,9/Deut 18,18 and *צוה* “to command” Jer 1,7/Deut 18,18).⁵⁹ Thus Jeremiah is here depicted as “the prophet like Moses.”⁶⁰ SOMMER argued that Jer 1,9 was the source of Isa 51,16 and, in this way, the role of Jeremiah as the prophet for the nations was transferred to Israel so that the latter became a prophet nation,⁶¹ though he also asserted that the words *וְאֲשִׁים דְּבָרַי בְּפִיךָ* may also recall the idea of God’s writing his torah in the people’s heart.⁶² In another place, SOMMER seemed to indicate implicitly that 51,16 has a particular connection with 59,21 when he said, “Some of the same borrowed vocabulary appears again in Isa 59,21. The nationalization of the prophetic role and the stress on the permanence of the relation between YHWH and Israel found in Isa 51,16 also appear there.”⁶³

Notwithstanding so many suggestions that have been proposed, perhaps we would not be able to reach a convincing conclusion with regard to the interrelationship between those passages. Nevertheless, seeing the particularity of the phrase as we have said earlier, it could be safely said that Isa 59,21 was influenced by Deut 18,18 either directly or indirectly.⁶⁴ The use of the root *נָשַׂא* that also appears in Jos 1,8 where it is spoken to Joshua as Moses’ successor, seems to justify the presence of such a connection. If this could be accepted, then some points from the reading of Deut 18,18 may perhaps help us to understand Isa 59,21.⁶⁵

To understand better its significance, Deut 18,18 should be read in its broader context, namely, the block of Deut 18,9-22 that deal with a consideration of various

⁵⁸ Links between Jeremiah and the Deuteronomistic work have been recognized long before the rise of critical biblical scholarship. Rabbinic tradition dealing with the order and authorship of biblical books, for example, attributes the book of Kings to Jeremiah (*b. B. Bat* 14b-15a). Recently, Richard E. Friedman in his popular work even suggested that Jeremiah is the Deuteronomist (e.g. he ‘wrote’ the Deuteronomy). R.E. FRIEDMAN, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, 146.

⁵⁹ J.R. LUNDBOM, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 223-225; cf. also W.L. HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah 1*, 36.

⁶⁰ Though it has been suggested that the narrative of Jeremiah’s call has been edited by a Deuteronomistic editor, this fact does not necessarily deny that Jeremiah believed himself to be the successor of Moses. See J.A. THOMPSON, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 150.

⁶¹ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 62-63. Sommer further suggested that the prophetic role of Israel as a nation was carried out indirectly: “Through being redeemed, they serve as a witness to the nations of YHWH’s might and loyalty.”

⁶² B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 229 n. 60.

⁶³ B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 236 n. 100. Here again, we find an example how Sommer’s basic assumption of the unity of Isa 40-66 does not permit him to understand the connection between Isa 51,16 and 59,21 in terms of allusion or textual dependence.

⁶⁴ Duhm, however, while admitting that 59,21 bears a deuteronomistic mark, preferred to refer it to Deut 30,14. Thus, he understood the addressee upon which the Spirit was poured as Israel and not as an individual prophet. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 416.

⁶⁵ Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 201.

means by which people might contact YHWH.⁶⁶ In vv. 10-14 we find a list of specialists to whom the Israelites are not allowed to go to seek information from a supernatural realm.⁶⁷ If they may not go to those intermediaries, then what kind of mechanisms that are available for the people to communicate with God? The answer is given in the following section (vv. 15-22): YHWH will raise up a prophet like Moses, to whom the people should listen. Since the prophet is here presented together with other forbidden specialists, it could also be said that the prophet functions as the channel through whom the people could refer when they want to approach YHWH with questions or requests. Thus the prophet is here considered as the Israelite counterpart to the non-Yahwistic practices of divination.⁶⁸

By alluding to Deut 18,18 the addressee in Isa 59,21 is thus depicted as a prophet, the legitimate mediator between YHWH and the people. This fits well with the train of thought of the whole of v. 21. As we could see, the covenant established in 59,21 is between YHWH and *them*, which we understood as שְׂבִי פֶשַׁע בִּיעֲקֹב “those who turn from sin in Jacob” (v. 20aβ). This covenant involves the promise of YHWH to somebody addressed by the second person pronoun, “you.” Thus, this “you” has something to do with the covenant between YHWH and the people. In other words, the “you” is a *prophet* who functions as the mediator of the covenant between YHWH and the people. As in Horeb, also here prophecy is YHWH’s answer to the people’s request for mediation.⁶⁹

If we are allowed to push a little bit further, then we could say that the deuteronomic concept of prophecy that was adopted by Isa 59,21 would also mean the exclusion of the other means of divination by which the people were attempting to inquire after YHWH or, perhaps, other supernatural beings. This point is of importance because, as we have discussed in previous chapter, elsewhere in Isa 56-66 we find illegitimate practices that could be understood as attempts to contact the deities in order to obtain a sort of information.

However, the adoption of Deut 18,18 also brings another risky consequence for the prophet in Isa 59,21. The deuteronomic view of prophecy is supplied with a

⁶⁶ It is also possible to take Deut 18,1-22 as the immediate context of v. 18. In this case, vv. 1-8 deal with the cultic function of the Levitical priests (17,8-13 show that, together with the judges, they also have judicial role.) According to this reading, the Levitical priests were not to provide any means by which people could contact YHWH (but cf. 33,8). Cf. R.R. WILSON, *Prophetic and Society*, 160-161.

⁶⁷ The first category in the list, “one who makes his son or his daughter pass through fire” is not apparently clear, and therefore, should be excluded from the list. For further discussion about this phrase, one could consult literatures mentioned in Chapter III of the present work when child-sacrifice is discussed (Ch. III.1.2.2.1.a).

⁶⁸ J. LUST, “On Wizards and Prophets,” 142.

⁶⁹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 203, also 201. Also J. BLENKINSOPP, *A History of Prophecy*, 47.

criterion by which one could discern the true prophet from the false. “And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word which the LORD has not spoken – when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is the word which the LORD has not spoken” (Deut 18,21-22). For the prophet in 59,21 this is indeed a bold proclamation that could jeopardize his reliability as a prophet of YHWH if his words do not come true.⁷⁰ But, in front of an audience that was suffering from the failure of prophecy and losing their confidence in the prophet, could there be any better way to regain their conviction than to label his prophetic words with such a straightforward, but, at the same time, an extreme, concept?

Having closely examined the two clauses⁷¹ that form the content of the covenant, we shall now sum up our discussion. With the help of the passages that seem to be alluded to, it seems that the combination of the endowment with the spirit and the placement of the words in the mouth constitute a description of YHWH’s partner dialogue addressed with the pronoun “you.” He is a prophetic figure who stands in the tradition of the Servant. As we have noticed, the first clause shows his prophetic character only in an implicit way (cf. the analysis of the root מָשַׁח “to anoint” in 61,1 above). It is the second clause that strongly marks the prophetic character of the person addressed because it echoes the deuteronomistic rule of the prophet. He is the prophet sent by YHWH as the official channel that renders possible the communication between YHWH and the people. Therefore, the people should not turn to other channels. The prophet’s words are reliable because they are uttered by a person who is driven by the Spirit of YHWH that is poured upon him.

1.2 RESULT

In Isa 59,21 YHWH (re)establishes a covenant with the people or, perhaps better, a part of the people, namely, “those who turn from sin in Jacob” (v. 20aβ) that is likely the antecedent of the pronoun אֲנִי. As our examination has shown, the formulation of 59,21 is characterized by allusions to other biblical passages, both to the Isaianic tradition and the other traditions. The content of YHWH’s covenant is the continuous presence of His prophets as mediator of the covenant; a prophet, whose words are the

⁷⁰ In Chapter I we have tried to demonstrate that the criterion provided by Deut 18,21-22 is not adequate to evaluate biblical prophecy. Cf. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 185-188.

⁷¹ What we here mean with the two clauses is רוּחַ אֱשֶׁר עָלַי “My spirit that is upon you” and דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר שָׂמַח בְּפִי “My words that I have put in your mouth.” For the sake of convenience, we shall call the former, the first clause and the latter the second.

words of YHWH and who, at the same time, stands in the line of the tradition of Second Isaiah.

Though this verse is presented as YHWH's discourse, it seems clear from its content that 59,21, like 61,1, speaks about the figure of the prophet. Borrowing BLENKINSOPP's expression it could be said that 59,21 is the signature of a prophetic author.⁷² In the whole of Third Isaiah, these two verses 59,21 and 61,1 are indeed the only places in which the speaker describes the prophet's personality. Thus, as we have known, 61,1-3 is often called as "a self-presentation of the prophet." If we detached chs. 60-62 from the rest of Third Isaiah as we have stated at the beginning of this work, then there remains 59,21 as the sole verse in chs. 56-59. 63-66 that portrays the identity of the prophet, not his personal identity but rather his functional identity.

As a part of chs. 56-59 and 63-66, the texts that deal with the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, we could also argue that 59,21 serves as a legitimation or authorization of the prophet. In this case, we could agree with VERMEYLEN, who once stated that Isa. 59,21 was intended as a response for the question of the delay of salvation, though he did not explain further.⁷³ After a bitter experience of unfulfilled prophecy, it is not surprising that the people would feel weary of the promise uttered through the mouth of the prophet. Their experience may have taught them that the prophet's words were not always reliable. In such a situation, the prophet who wanted to accompany the desperate people was forced to regain first their trust, lest his words would not find a proper acceptance from the people. It is in such a context that we should put Isa. 59,21. This verse is the prophet's attempt to win the people's confidence. And, as we have seen, it is undertaken by first proving himself as an authoritative spokesperson of YHWH, and therefore, claiming the reliability of his message.⁷⁴

By making YHWH as the speaker, the prophet made clear that his claim of divine authority does not derive from himself as in 61,1, but rather came from YHWH. It is not the prophet's *self*-presentation, but *YHWH's* presentation of the prophet! Had the prophet spoken of himself, then his claim could have been accepted with suspicion since false prophets could also claim to possess the divine inspiration

⁷² J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 61. According to him, however, this prophetic signature marks only chs. 56-59.

⁷³ J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 471. However, Vermeylen claimed that 59,21 is a later addition.

⁷⁴ Such a difficult situation that has forced the prophet to authorize first his message in order to recover his credibility as the prophet of YHWH is also seen by Sekine. However, he argued that it is 61,1-3 that constitute the prophet's attempt to defend his message. S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 83. Cf. also K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 109. However, as we have tried to show, there is no good reason to separate 61,1-3 from the rest of chs. 60-62. See also n. 105.

(cf. Deut 18,20; Ezek 13,6-7).⁷⁵ Moreover, reference to Deut 18,18 that portrays the deuteronomistic prophet *par excellence* gives another addition weigh to the way how the prophet is being described. According to Deut 18,15-22, the prophet is the response of YHWH for the people's request of mediation. The divine character of the prophet's commission is again underlined.

2. THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET

Having examined the way how the prophet described himself so that the people's confidence that was lost, could be regained, now we are going to pursue the content of his message in the context of his response to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. In doing so, we shall follow the traditional, and also simple, procedure. It means that our analysis will follow the order of the chapters in the present state. Thus, we shall start from the beginning of Third Isaiah (ch. 56) till the end (ch. 66).

We realize that such an undertaking has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, by following the order they appear in the book, we could reduce the danger of doing *eisegesis*. Presenting the passages in order would therefore mean letting them speak without being intervened by prior presumption. Classifying the passages under particular themes or topics, for example, the topic of God and the community could only be done after a thorough analysis is made. On the other hand, since the messages about God and the community with their subtle aspects are spread elsewhere in the book, there is a danger of losing our way during this long journey. We hope, however, that the conclusion at the end of the chapter could represent the red thread of our examination.

2.1 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 56,1-8

2.1.1 The Unity and Structure

The first literary unit to examine is Isa 56,1-8 that stands at the beginning of Third Isaiah. DUHM called this much debated section "a Torah on the admission of the

⁷⁵ It is true, the possibility that YHWH deceives the prophet or test his people through false prophet (Deut 13,3) should not be discarded (cf. 1Kgs 22,19-23). Even Jeremiah and Ezekiel once felt that they were deceived by YHWH (cf. Jer 4,10; 15,18; 20,7; Ezek 14,9). However, as Carroll has cautioned, this divine deception must be kept within proper proportions for the dominant motifs in the biblical traditions are the providence of YHWH rather than his destructive aspect. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 198-201, cf. also J.L. CRENSHAW, *Prophetic Conflict*, 88.

foreigner and eunuchs into the community and cult.”⁷⁶ This seemingly unorthodox message has probably become a factor that has led the scholars to discuss it particularly with regard to its present place, its date of composition and its integrity.⁷⁷ The fact that various proposals in search of the history of textual development that have come up from the scholars up to the present moment, undoubtedly show that an agreement among them cannot be easily achieved. This would naturally inform us that such an undertaking should be carried out with caution.⁷⁸

Without denying the history of the development of the text in the course of its transmission, we prefer to work on the text in its present state that, we believe, provides us with some good reasons to support the integrity of 56,1-8. The appearances of the so-called messenger formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה* “thus said YHWH” at the beginning (cf. also v. 4) and also *נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה* “oracle of the Lord YHWH” at the end, frame vv. 1-8 in a literary unity. We could also here add POLAN’s observation that the distant parallelism of the root *בּוֹא* in v. 1 and *קִבֵּץ* in v. 8 constitutes an inclusion as well.⁷⁹ Moreover, the fact that 55,13 is a good conclusion for ch. 55 and

⁷⁶ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 390.

⁷⁷ Some of the suggestions proposed by the scholars who worked primarily in a *Redaktionsgeschichtlich* perspective could be briefly presented here. Torrey considered that 55,1-56,8 without 56,2-6 was originally a literary unit. His argument seems to find support from 1QIsa^a which adds a particle *כִּי* at the beginning of v. 1 and thus suggests a link with preceding chapter. C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 427. Steck saw that 56,1-8 was formulated in connection with ch. 55, though he also said that originally, 56,1-8 cannot be the *Fortsetzung* of ch. 55. O.H. STECK, “Beobachtungen zu Jesaja 56-59,” 229. Westermann thought that vv. 1-2 and vv. 3-8 were originally independent entities that later used, together with 66,18-24, to frame the material in chs. 56-66. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 307, 315-316. Pauritsch argued that vv. 1-2 and 8 were originally independent pieces that were later used by a redactor to frame vv. 3-7. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 42-43. 45. Close to Pauritsch’s idea is that of Vermeulen who suggested a three-step development of 56,1-8. The earliest part was vv. 3-7; and then vv. 1-2 and 5b which he regarded as deriving from a redactor who wrote them in order to connect vv. 3-7 to the preceding material, and v. 8 as the last addition. J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 454-458. According to Koenen, v. 1 was originally an independent oracle put by the redactor at the beginning of chs. 56-66 as a heading; v. 2 was composed as a transition to vv. 3-8. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 11-27. Lau came close to Koenen when he said that v. 1 is a title; vv. 2-7 a “prophetische Thora”; while v. 8 was a later addition. For Lau, vv. 2-7 belong to individual tradition and cannot be regarded as a “schriftgelehrte Prophetie.” W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 262ff.

⁷⁸ The undertaking attempts to retrace redactional layers in certain passages (source-criticism) based on an assumption that an author exercises a certain consistency in the way he/she writes. Thus, variations in style, vocabulary and perspective, contradictions and inconsistencies in a passage or between passages, abrupt interruptions that break the continuity of a passage, and various kinds of duplications become criteria to determine the presence of layers in a passage. Cf. P.A. VIVIANO, “Source Criticism,” 37. It would mean that this approach depends on the presence of inconsistencies in a passage. If redactors were able to work smoothly on a passage so that no traces of their interventions were left, then this approach could have not worked.

⁷⁹ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 51. See also Smith’s arguments that support the unity and coherence of 56,1-8. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 51-54.

that 56,9 deals with a different topic reinforces the unity of 56,1-8.⁸⁰ We could also notice the repetition of words, such as, שָׁמַר (2b β ; 4a α ; 6b α), עָשָׂה (1a; 2a; 2b), שָׁמַר (1a; 2b α ; 2b $\alpha\beta$; 4a; 6b α) חֹזֵק (2a; 4b; 6b β).⁸¹ Such a dense appearance in this short section argues for the integrity of the pericope.

Based on the subject matter, 56,1-8 could be structured as follows:

- V. 1a α : messenger formula that marks the beginning of the discourse
- Vv. 1a β -2 : general invitation and proclamation
- Vv. 3-7 : particular case: the foreigners and eunuchs
- V. 8 : messenger formula that marks the end of the discourse

2.1.2 The Content

2.1.2.1 "Keep Justice and Do Righteousness"

Though writing a full commentary on Isa 56-66 is not our intention, the importance of this brief passage seems to have forced us to work on these eight verses with considerable detail. We shall start with the analysis of vv. 1-2 in order to see what these verses could contribute to our research to discover the answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. These two opening verses run as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה | 1a α Thus said YHWH, |
| שָׁמְרוּ מִשְׁפָּט וְעֲשׂוּ צְדָקָה | 1a β "Keep justice and do righteousness; |
| כִּי־קְרוּבָה יְשׁוּעָתִי לְבוֹא | 1b α for my salvation is soon to come |
| וְצִדְקָתִי לְהִגָּלוֹת | 1b β and my deliverance to be revealed" |
| אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה־זֹאת | 2a α Happy is the man who does <i>this</i> |
| וּבֶן־אָדָם יַחֲזִיק בָּהּ | 2a β and the son of man who holds <i>it</i> fast |
| שָׁמַר שַׁבָּת מִחֲלָלוֹ | 2b α who keeps the Sabbath so as not to profane it ⁸² |
| וְשָׁמַר יָדוֹ מִמַּעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־רָע | 2b β and keeps his hand from doing any evil |

⁸⁰ Cf. D.W. VAN WINKLE, "Isaiah LVI 1-8," 234. From textual point of views, it is true that IQIsa^a has a particle כִּי at the beginning of v. 1 and thus suggests a link with the preceding chapter. However, IQIsa^b, LXX, and other versions support the MT. One could also notice that BHS (and also IQIsa^a) put a paragraph marking (ס) at the end of v. 9 and thus leads the reader think that v. 9 should be included to the preceding section. This problem has been dealt with as we discussed Isa 56,9-57,2 in Chapter III. 1.2.1.1.a.

⁸¹ For full references, see G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 44-50.

⁸² IQIsa^a has a feminine ending מחללה agrees with Sabbath which is feminine. However, the MT could be retained and understood as referring to הַשַּׁבָּת.

The structure of verse 1 is quite clear. After the formula “Thus said YHWH” that underlines the divine quality of the prophetic words that follow, the listeners are invited to keep justice (משפט) and to do righteousness (צדקה) (1aβ). This exhortation is then joined by a particle כִּי to the proclamation about what YHWH is going to do “My salvation (ישועתי) is near to come and my deliverance (צדקתי) to be revealed” (1bαβ).

Verse 2 specifies further both the invitation and the proclamation and calls those who observe them אֲשֶׁרִי “happy.” In this verse, the references of the pronoun הִיא and the demonstrative pronoun זאת have been long discussed.⁸³ We shall propose our suggestion by first considering the whole verse. As we see, the subjects of v. 2, אָנוּשׁ and בְּיָאָרְם, are usually understood as representing humanity in general and in his creatural and moral weakness.⁸⁴ This last point helps us to determine the reference of the feminine suffix in הִיא that follows the root חזק (Hiphil, “to hold fast,” “to keep hold,” “to seize”). Because of his human fragility, man is admonished to find stability in something that he should grasp or hold fast. Here, we follow KOOLE’s suggestion that הִיא more likely refers to v. 1bαβ, namely, to YHWH and his salvation program (cf. Isa 27,5; 64,6),⁸⁵ but, at the same time, also points to v. 2bα; thus keeping the Sabbath is the concretization of this human’s dependence to God (cf. in v. 4 and 6 the root חזק is again used with בְּבִרְיָתִי).

We further suggest that זאת refers back to the exhortation in v. 1aβ and also to v. 2bβ, as the specification of v. 1a (cf. the threefold use of the root עשה). In this case the feminine form stands *pro-neutro*.⁸⁶ Taken together, we could present the relationship between v. 1 and v. 2 in the following scheme:

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Exhortation (v. 1aβ) | - זאת (v. 2aα) | - not doing any evil (v. 2bβ) |
| Proclamation (v. 1bβ) | - הִיא (v. 2aβ) | - keep the Sabbath (v. 2bα) |

⁸³ According to Muilenburg, they reach backward to v. 1b and forward to v. 2cd. J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 654. For Polan and Lau, they refer to v. 2b as a “delayed identification.” G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 62 n. 35; W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 266. Pauritsch, Koenen and Schramm think that they go back to v. 1. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 34; KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 11; B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 119.

⁸⁴ Cf. F. MAASS, “ארם,” 75; “אנוש,” 346.

⁸⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 9-10.

⁸⁶ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 10.

Thus, the promise of salvation should be supplemented with human collaboration. The divine grace is accompanied by human effort. As we shall see later, this notion will prove to be important for our purpose.

Having established the connection between v. 1 and v. 2, we shall now have a closer look at v. 1. It could be observed immediately that this verse uses the same word צְדָקָה with two different subjects. In the first instance, this common word used in pair with מִשְׁפָּט has human beings as the subject; while, in the second, together with יְשׁוּעָה it has YHWH as the subject.

The realization of מִשְׁפָּט - צְדָקָה with human beings as subject, is indeed a common concern of pre-exilic prophets, such as, Amos and Micah (cf. Amos 5,15.24; Mi 3,8; 6.5.8; 7,9). We see no reason why their appearance in 56,1 should not have an ethical nuance as in the other places. In this case, מִשְׁפָּט could mean the order in the community desired by YHWH as it is expressed in legal process or judicial procedure; and “to do צְדָקָה” would mean doing what is right in the sphere of social relations or in KOOLE’s word, to practise justice and solidarity in human relationship as ordered by God,⁸⁷ or as DUHM called *Werkgerechtigkeit*⁸⁸ (“works righteousness” or “the righteousness that comes from works”). Jer 22,3, prophetic words which are addressed to the king of Judah, could perhaps summarize the concept of human מִשְׁפָּט - צְדָקָה: “Thus says YHWH: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.” The king is asked to carry out the right government of the people, a government and jurisdiction conforming to the Divine principles.⁸⁹ Applied to the community as a whole, it means that each member of the community is invited to do as one ought according to one’s position in the covenant community of YHWH.⁹⁰ As we have seen, v. 2bα “keeps his hand from doing any evil” confirms the ethical force of this human מִשְׁפָּט - צְדָקָה.

Then, if we put human צְדָקָה in the context of the covenant between YHWH and the people, it means that a proper conduct in the community would also demonstrate the proper relationship with God (57,12; 58,2; 61,11; 64,5) as the realization of faithfulness to the covenant.⁹¹ And since a covenant involves two sides,

⁸⁷ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3,7*; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 133-134.

⁸⁸ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 390. He perhaps saw this post-exilic prophet as a precursor of the legalistic Priestly code. See, B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 455.

⁸⁹ H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 33.

⁹⁰ J.J. SCULLION, “*sedeq-šedaqah*,” 342.

⁹¹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 7.

צִדְקָה that indicates a proper conduct could also be applied to YHWH as the covenantal partner of the people. Thus, also here צִדְקָה could also be translated as *righteousness*.⁹² It is true that, as RENDTORFF has noted, in this verse צִדְקָה is used in two different meanings and should be better translated as *deliverance*.⁹³ This is not unlikely because this word indeed covers a very broad spectrum of meanings and the result of God's righteousness for the people is naturally their deliverance, salvation, or well-being. The parallel word יְשׁוּעָה contributes to this understanding.

Thus, v. 1 declares that the salvation of YHWH should be accompanied by a proper response of the people in the sphere of social life (cf. v. 2aβ). A community that neglects justice and righteousness cannot be compatible with YHWH's salvation which is to come. This reasoning would then lead many scholars to understand the particle כִּי as introducing a causal motive ("for," "because") and not conditional ("so that").⁹⁴ We shall here quote what EMMERSON has once said, "The right action (*mišpāt* and *ṣ̣ēdāqāh*) to which society is summoned is regarded not as the *means* of securing God's saving intervention, but, on the contrary, as the appropriate preparation of the community which is necessary *because* Yahweh's deliverance is imminent."⁹⁵ This sounds good and reasonable. However, if we go a little bit further, we will find another - often neglected - nuance.

Undoubtedly, no discussion is needed to assert that the salvation of YHWH cannot go together with a wicked community, in which justice and righteousness are ignored. When there is no social justice, there would not be salvation. And conversely, when salvation is present, there should not be evil in the community, lest salvation is no more salvation. In other words, *shalom* in the community is the material, concrete expression of the presence of the divine salvation. Since the

⁹² This is adopted by some scholars, for example, F. DELITSZCH, *Commentary*, [CD-ROM]; A.L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*, 5; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 6.

⁹³ Rendtorff saw that two different concepts of צִדְקָה are united in 56,1. צִדְקָה and מִשְׁפָּט, which are to be kept and done, are the characteristic of Isa 1-39; while צִדְקָה and יְשׁוּעָה that indicate God's action are typical of Isa 40-55. R. RENDTORFF, "Isaiah 56,1," 181-189. It is true that here LXX and Targum employ two different expressions: δίκαιοσύνη/צדקה and ελεος/יְשׁוּעָה; while Vulgate translated both as *iustitia*. Sommer also noted that this is one of the characteristics of Second-Isaiah's approach to his materials. B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophets Reads Scripture*, 70. 292 n. 11.

⁹⁴ However, Smart seemed to understand it differently as he wrote, "The first verse inverts the order that is usual in Second Isaiah. We expect to hear from him: God's salvation is near, therefore give ear to his word that creates in you a new righteousness and justice in anticipation of the glory yet to come. But in ch. 56:1 the hearers are exhorted to keep justice and do righteousness *that* God's salvation may come." J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 229 emphasis added. Blenkinsopp seemed to follow this direction when he said that the underlying idea behind vv. 1-2 is "that fidelity can advance and sin retard the advent of salvation." J. BLENKINSOPP, "Second Isaiah," 95; cf. also ID., *Isaiah 56-66*, 133.

⁹⁵ G.I. EMMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66*, 100.

realization of such a *shalom* depends more on the members of the community, rather than on the direct intervention of YHWH - though this is not to be excluded -, we should conclude that the particle **כִּי** that links the exhortation (1a β) and the proclamation of the coming of YHWH's salvation (1b), would bring, at least implicitly, the nuance of purpose or final clause. And, therefore, it is to be rendered as "so that" or "in order that."⁹⁶ In this way, v. 1 sounds close to the exhortation of the former prophets: ethic determines salvation, though it is not exactly the same because here, the ethical conduct is not necessarily a condition for salvation, but rather the expression of the salvation itself.

Such a rendering would bring a double consequence: first, YHWH's salvation for the people that is to be materialized in the form of the community's well-being, would necessarily depend on human behaviour. It is the community's members inspired by their commitment to the covenant that will bring it about so that the divine salvation comes true in their midst through the execution of **נִשְׁפָּט** and **צְדָקָה**. As we shall see, this notion is also found elsewhere in Third Isaiah and, we believe, it constitutes the prophet's main answer to the problem of the unfulfilled prophecy. The second, since the realization of the divine salvation should be carried out by the community itself, - and thus remains in the earthly-historical sphere -, the coming of the divine salvation proclaimed in v. 1b is not necessarily to be understood as having an eschatological force as many scholars have claimed. This would become eschatological only when human beings are not able or are not willing to realize justice (**נִשְׁפָּט**) and righteousness (**צְדָקָה**) in the community in which they live, so that YHWH himself must intervene.

Our understanding that the coming of salvation depends on human behaviour would also affect the understanding of the adjective **קְרוֹבָה**, "near," "soon" that qualifies the proclamation of the coming of salvation. In v. 1b this adjective plays a double duty function and serves to qualify both **לְבוֹא** and **לְהִגָּלוֹת**. Actually, a proclamation of the coming of salvation as we have in v. 1 does not necessarily need the use of such a adjective. The verbs **בוֹא** and **גָּלוּ** could have been perfectly formulated as finite verbs, rather than in infinitive construct qualified by **קְרוֹבָה** as, for example, in 40,10; 66,15 in which the imperfect **יָבוֹא** is used to describe the coming of YHWH. This fact would tell us that the use of **קְרוֹבָה** is intriguing.

⁹⁶ Koole noted that the history of exegesis shows that this connection has been understood in three or four ways: Medieval Jewish exegesis stated that Israel's sin has prevented the arrival of the Messiah, thus gives the value of "in order that"; for some newer exegetes who think that v. 1b is realized in v. 1a prefer to render the particle as "in this way," and the common meaning "for." J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 8.

The presence of קְרוֹבָה indeed highlights the nearness of the coming of salvation. It has not yet arrived, but it will soon to come. But, no matter how close the salvation may be, קְרוֹבָה remains a vague temporal indication that carries the nuance of indeterminacy. CARROLL once argued that this *near/soon* constitutes an explanatory device to handle the delay of the advent of salvation.⁹⁷ But when we realize that the coming of salvation is actually the same as the realization of justice and righteousness in the community, then it is the community itself that determines the temporal range indicated by קְרוֹבָה.

Understood in this way, קְרוֹבָה is not merely an explanatory device to reduce dissonance as CARROLL argued, though he added that it was only the first confident explanation for the non-appearance of the expected salvation.⁹⁸ Rather, the proclamation of the nearness of salvation functions to persuade or to accelerate the people to practise justice and righteousness among them, which, at the same time, becomes the realization of divine salvation. Thus, קְרוֹבָה no more lies in an indeterminate future that beyond the scope of human capacity, but has become a fluid expression, the range of which depends on the people's availability.

Having analyzed these two opening verses, we shall now continue our examination by searching the biblical passages that might have stood behind 56,1-2. Indeed, some passages have been proposed as the possible background of 56,1-2. Thus, for example, v. 1a stands close to Hos 12,7 and Ps 106,3; while v. 1b seems to have been influenced by Isa 46,12-13; 51,5. Space and relevancy do not allow us to undertake a detailed analysis on every passage that allegedly stands behind 56,1-2.⁹⁹

For our purpose, we shall first focus our attention to Isa 46,12-13 and 51,5. Three important roots in 56,1b, יָשַׁע, צְדָקָה, and קָרַב (or, in the case of 46,12-13, its equivalent, such as the root רָחַק "far" and אָחַר "to tarry," "to delay," with negative particle לֹא) appear in these two passages. It is particularly interesting to notice that, while the combination of the roots צְדָקָה and יָשַׁע is common throughout Second Isaiah (Isa 40-55),¹⁰⁰ only in 46,12-13 and 51,5 do they appear together with קָרַב. RUSZKOWSKI here made a difference between 46,12-13 which talks about nearness of expectation (*Naherwartungsschicht*) and 51,4b-5 that speaks about Torah or

⁹⁷ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 153. The similar idea has been proposed by Hermisson in his work on Second Isaiah, in which he called some passages that contain the idea of nearness the »qarob«-Schicht or »Naherwartungsschicht«. H.-J. HERMISSON, "Einheit," 139-141.

⁹⁸ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 153.

⁹⁹ An extensive and detailed list could be found, for example, in H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 33-39.

¹⁰⁰ R. RENDTORFF, "Isaiah 56,1," 183. Further, Rendtorff noticed that this combination never appears in Isa 1-39.

instruction (cf. the use of תורה in parallel with משפט in v. 4b).¹⁰¹ Since we are here dealing with expectation, then it is likely that 56,1b was more influenced by the former, rather than the latter. WESTERMANN explicitly said that the author of 56,1f may have had 46,12-13 in his mind, and used it deliberately to form a link with Second Isaiah.¹⁰² It is true that 46,12-13 is often regarded as a later addition and may have functioned as a device to explain the delay of the advent of the salvation promised.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, such a suggestion does not necessarily influence our effort to discover a literary dependency between 46,12-13 and 56,1b. As far as we know, when the scholars speak on the level of intertextuality, the majority of them hold that 56,1 depends on 46,12-13 and not the other way around. With these considerations, therefore, our attention will be paid to 46,12-13.

Besides the verbal similarity that appears strongly, there are also differences between 56,1b and 46,12-13. Though in 46,12 the people is addressed as אבירי לב “stubborn of heart” (= *obstinate*)¹⁰⁴ and “those who are far from righteousness” (cf. also 46,8 where the people is called פושעים “rebels”), they are simply asked to listen שמעו to the divine promise. No invitation to change their behaviour is required, no condition is proposed in order that the divine salvation may come. This is in accordance with the whole tone of Second Isaiah that ALBERTZ called “the only prophetic book of the exilic period that contains nothing but prophecy of salvation.”¹⁰⁵ The nearness of the advent of salvation is strongly emphasized through the use קרב and its equivalent לא תרחק “not to be far” and also לא תאחר “will not tarry.”

These facts seem sufficient for us to conclude that the author of 56,1b has used and reinterpreted the former prophecy of his predecessor in order to make it suitable for his contemporary situation. The nearness of salvation is still emphasized through the adjective קרובה, but now, it should be understood differently since it depends on the realization of the admonition to observe justice and righteousness by the community. The imperative given to the people has shifted from (simply) *listening* (to the promise) to *keeping* משפט and *practicing* צדקה. Thus, though still in the

¹⁰¹ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 131.

¹⁰² C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 309. Similarly, Rendtorff argued “...the end of this chapter (namely. ch. 46) sounds like a pointer to 56,1. R. RENDTORFF, “Isaiah 56,1,” 187.

¹⁰³ Cf. for example, R. ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 416; also Hermisson who argued that this passage belongs to what he called the «qarob»-Schicht. HERMISSON, “Einheit,” 155.

¹⁰⁴ The LXX has οἱ ἀπολωλεκότες, which reflects אבירי as its *Vorlage* (cf. BHS). It probably stems from misreading ר as ד. We prefer to maintain the MT that is supported by Vulgate (*duro corde*) and the Targum (חקיפי לבא). The same expression also occurs in Ps 76,6.

¹⁰⁵ R. ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 380.

language and tradition of Second Isaiah, in a very subtle manner, 56,1b has completely changed the direction of 46,12-13. In this way, he answered the problem of the failure of prophecy not only by indicating that the salvation is (now) conditional,¹⁰⁶ but also by showing that the community itself that should materialize the promised salvation!

2.1.2.2 *The Foreigners and the Eunuchs*

As many have noticed, Isa 56,1-8, or particularly vv. 3-7 contain a unique and very controversial message not only in the Book of Isaiah, but also in the Hebrew Bible. GRANT-HENDERSON even wrote that “Isaiah 56,1-8 presents a message which many would have found heretical and blasphemous in their interpretation of the Law.”¹⁰⁷ As we shall see, the main reason why this text has invited such harsh judgments is the fact that vv. 3-7 present a particular view with regard to the foreigners and eunuchs and their admission in the post-exilic community. Conversely, other biblical passages seem to exclude their membership in the community. It is not surprising, therefore, that so many scholarly proposals have come up as attempts to shed light on this enigmatic message of Third Isaiah.

In the context of 56,1-8, the promise given to humanity in general (אָנוֹשׁ and בְּנֵי-אָדָם) is now applied to specific groups of people, namely, foreigner (בְּנֵי-הַנֶּכֶר) and סְרִיס, which is commonly translated as eunuch (vv. 3-7). Stylistically, these verses are weil-structured. The question about foreigner and eunuch is responded through two parallel statements arranged in a chiasmic structure.

V. 3 : Question about בְּנֵי-הַנֶּכֶר formulated with אֵל-יֹאמֶר (v. 3a)

and about סְרִיס formulated with אֵל-יֹאמֶר (v. 3b)

Vv. 4-5: Response to סְרִיס that consists of condition (v. 4) and promise (v. 5)

Vv. 6-7: Response to בְּנֵי-הַנֶּכֶר that consists of condition (v. 6) and promise (v. 7)

Considering the importance of these two groups in having colored the whole section of Isa 56,1-8, we shall now concentrate our discussion in this section to the question of these two specific groups of people: *the foreigners* and *the eunuchs*.

Though it is commonly thought that this passage simply demonstrates the prophet's favourable but problematic attitude toward the foreigners and סְרִיס, a close analysis shows that the matter is not as simple as it appears. One thing to notice is that

¹⁰⁶ Cf. H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 35.

¹⁰⁷ A.L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*, 37.

while dealing with the *foreigners* (בְּיִהוּדִים or its equivalent) appears to be an important topic in Isa 56-66,¹⁰⁸ סְרִיס is never mentioned.¹⁰⁹ It is also frequently asked what these two groups have in common so that they are treated together in vv. 3-7. WESTERMANN argued that the only point of contact is that, according to the regulation in Deut 23,2-9, both are to be excluded from the community.¹¹⁰ However, as we shall see, it is not so apparent that Deut 23,2-9 might have been the background of this passage. The vocabulary for foreigner and eunuch is completely different. SARA JAPHET stated bluntly, "Only one word - the name of the Lord - is common to the two texts, which differ in every other respect."¹¹¹ While there are some other texts that deal with the foreigner in the community (cf. Num 18,1-7.22-23 and Ezek 44,9-16), practically, the references for סְרִיס are very sparse. It seems, therefore, that there is no kind of pattern or logic as to why these two groups are put together in 56,3-7, notwithstanding its well-structured composition. Third Isaiah treats them in an unbalanced way. Emphasis is more on the foreigner rather than on the eunuch. The only undeniable fact is that both groups appear together in vv. 3-7! However, it should be noted that the divine words are not given to *any* foreigner or eunuch. They are addressed to the foreigner and eunuch that fulfill some qualifications (vv. 4 and 6). With this preliminary observation we shall now look closer at each group.

a) The Eunuchs

Admittedly, the use of the word *eunuch* in the title of this section and elsewhere is the fruit of our understanding of the word סְרִיס that now has to be justified. Lexicons and dictionaries usually attribute two meanings for סְרִיס "high official at the royal court; political or military and eunuch."¹¹² This word appears 43 x in the Hebrew Bible and is mostly used to refer to non-Israelite, not necessarily mutilated, court officers (in Egypt or Babylonian). Only in the book of Esther and Daniel (?) סְרִיס could perhaps

¹⁰⁸ The word בני־נכר appears in Isa 60,10; 61,5; 62,8; while its equivalent נָכְרִי appears in 61,5. We can also here add the term נָטִי *nation*, found elsewhere in Isa 56-66, which belongs to the same semantic field.

¹⁰⁹ In the Book of Isaiah, besides 56,3ff, the word סְרִיס appears only in 39,7 (cf. 2Kgs 20,18).

¹¹⁰ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 313.

¹¹¹ S. JAPHET, "יֵד וְשֵׁם" (Isa 56:5), 79.

¹¹² Cf. for example, BDB, 710; HALOT; TWOT; TDOT. For the definition of eunuch, we shall here quote the proposal suggested by Kedar-Kopfstein, "Eunuch in the broad sense are men who are incapable of procreation as a result of a developmental defect or as a result of damage to the testicles from accident or from a surgical operation. In narrower sense, this refers to the voluntary castration of males, a phenomenon with cultural-historical as well as sociological implications." B. KEDAR-KOPFSTEIN, "סְרִיס," 344-356.

mean “eunuch.”¹¹³ Most commentators agreed that in 56,3, סָרִיס should be understood as “eunuch.” Such an understanding is indeed supported by several other expressions such as, עֵץ יָבֵשׁ “dry tree”; טוֹב מִבְּנִים וּמִבָּנוֹת “better than sons and daughters,” and also לֹא יִכָּרֵת “not to be cut off.”¹¹⁴ These expressions could be allusions to the nature of a eunuch that could not beget children because the genitals have been cut off. Moreover, *court official*, who is not a eunuch, as translation of סָרִיס makes only little sense in the context of 56,3ff.¹¹⁵ There is no reason why such *court officials* should be presented in this context. Therefore, we consider that סָרִיס would be properly understood as *eunuch*.

But who is this eunuch? Unlike the foreigner that has a particular importance in Third Isaiah, סָרִיס never appears in chs. 56-66 and is found only in Isa 39,7 (cf. 2Kgs 20,18) in the book of Isaiah. Some scholars have suggested that they were Jews or proselytes who had been sexually mutilated to qualify them for certain positions in the imperial service (Babylonian), especially in the harem, and now have returned from the exile.¹¹⁶ This seems plausible, especially when we observe the regulation found in Deut 23,2, “No one whose testicles are crushed or whose penis is cut off shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD.”¹¹⁷ On this text KEDAR-KOPFSTEIN

¹¹³ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 133.

¹¹⁴ Blenkinsopp noted that the use of דָּ, *monument* but also *phallus*, together with לֹא יִכָּרֵת is deliberate. J. BLENKINSOPP, “Second Isaiah,” 102 n. 35; cf. also L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 133.

¹¹⁵ In the light of Isa 39,7 and 2Kgs 20,18, some scholars, for example, Simian-Yofre (in an oral communication) and Ruszkowski argued that סָרִיס would refer to members of the Davidic dynasty who became officers in the Babylonian court, though their being mutilated as a means of humiliation cannot be excluded. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 146-147. It is indeed true that only if סָרִיס is connected to the Davidic dynasty then סָרִיס as *royal official* would make sense in the context of 56,3. Otherwise, there is no reason to mention סָרִיס here. Based on other considerations, Blenkinsopp suggested that the word סָרִיס should be understood as referring to the *eunuch*, but then he argued that they were of non-Jewish origin, hence a subcategory of בְּנֵי-הַנֹּכְרִי, because castration was not practised in Israel, either for court or harem official or as a judicial punishment. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 137. This seems unacceptable for at least two reasons. First, the text clearly distinguishes two groups of people, סָרִיס and בְּנֵי-הַנֹּכְרִי. And second, as noted by Delitzsch, there is no additional clause as in the case of foreigners. Considering the complexity of this approach, why should we not choose the simple one by adopting the common understanding that סָרִיס means *eunuch*?

¹¹⁶ For example, F. DELITZSCH, *Commentary* [CD-ROM]; H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 42; J. BLENKINSOPP, “Second Isaiah,” 95; B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophets Reads Scripture*, 275 n. 37; cf. also B. KEDAR-KOPFSTEIN, “סָרִיס,” 350; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 64.

¹¹⁷ It is true that the vocabulary used in Deut 23,2 is different. Instead of giving the noun *eunuch*, it gives the description of a eunuch. Since סָרִיס has a double meaning, it seems understandable that, in order to avoid confusion, Deut 23,2 chose such a rendering. It should also be noted that LXX and Vulgate have a more explicit terminology (LXX: θλαδίας, *eunuch*; Vulgate: *eunuchus*). Donner, who saw this case as a phenomenon of abrogation through a comparison

noted, "Since accidental injury of this sort was probably not so frequent that the law would have to accord it special attention, this stipulation presumably is directed at least in part against cultic self-mutilation."¹¹⁸ An intentional self mutilation would be regarded as a defiance of God's holy creation.¹¹⁹ It is also possible that the Israelites, while serving at foreign court, perhaps as eunuchs, voluntarily or involuntarily, would probably be involved in foreign cult as well, and therefore, as DELITZSCH argued, would have abandoned YHWH.

We shall now consider the lament of the eunuchs and the promise given by YHWH. As many have noticed, their complaint merely expresses their preoccupation about their being childless, הֵן אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ "Look, I am a dry tree!" (v. 3b). Having no child is commonly considered as a major misfortune. From a passage like 2Sam 18,18 we could see the belief that something of one's presence and personality will endure only through children on whom falls the responsibility to bury and care for parents when they die; and that in the absence of children, some substitute must be found.¹²⁰ And it is for a person with such a preoccupation that YHWH promises to give יָד וְשֵׁם in His house and within His walls, an everlasting name that shall not be cut off (v. 5).

The meaning of the phrase יָד וְשֵׁם, which occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible, has been long disputed.¹²¹ Whatever it may mean, probably a monument, it is sufficient for us to understand it as an assurance from YHWH for the eunuchs with their anxiety. More important for our discussion is the expression "in His house and within His walls."¹²² Though DUHM regarded the second word וּבְחַוְנוֹתַי "within my walls" as a later gloss that functions as explanation or qualification of בֵּיתִי, we do not think it is necessary. These two words, "house and walls," may refer to the Temple and the city wall representing two areas of life: cultic and civic sphere. In other words, YHWH's promise is a promise of membership in worship and in society (cf.

with Islamic Koran, argued that the abrogating text indeed never quoted literally the abrogated text. H. DONNER, "Jesaja LVI 1-7," 81-95 (92. 94).

¹¹⁸ B. KEDAR-KOPFSTEIN, "סְרִיס," 350. Cf. W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 268.

¹¹⁹ J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 657.

¹²⁰ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 139.

¹²¹ In addition to the suggestions proposed in the commentaries, several publications could be listed. M. DELCOR, "Two Special Meanings," 230-240; G. ROBINSON, "The Meaning of יָד," 282-284; S. JAPHET, "יָד וְשֵׁם (Isa 56:5)," 69-80; D.W. VAN WINKLE, "The Meaning of yād wāšēm," 378-385.

¹²² Duhm considered the second phrase as a later gloss that function as an explanation or qualification of בֵּיתִי. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 393; also H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 47.

Ezr 10,8).¹²³ The eunuchs will be continuously in the mind of the community that speaks of its ancestors and remembers them.¹²⁴

We shall conclude the discussion about the eunuch by asserting that 56,4-5 open a possibility to those who fulfill some conditions to participate in the community and in the cult. Admittedly, Isa 56,4-5, under divine authority, present a different regulation from that found in Deut 23,2. Many scholars have held that the divine words in 56,3-7 abrogated or cancelled the deuteronomistic stipulation.¹²⁵ For our purpose, however, it is not of great importance to investigate deeper the relationship between both passages more than what we achieved here that 56,3-5 gives a different regulation by admitting the eunuch to participate in the community.

b) The Foreigner

The foreigner is spoken of in vv. 3a.6-7. Unlike the eunuch, the foreigner (בן־הנכר) is here specified with a clause הַנִּלְוָה אֶל־יְהוָה¹²⁶ “who has joined to YHWH” (v. 3b and 6a). In the Book of Isaiah, besides in 56,3a and 7, the root לָוָה occurs only in Isa 14,1 in a quite similar context. There, it is said that alien sojourner (גֵּר) will join themselves (נִלְוָה) to Israel. Though the words for foreigner, גֵּר and נִכְר are often considered as having different nuances of meaning,¹²⁷ it is also possible that they are synonymous for the author of 56,1-8.¹²⁸ Therefore, as in 14,1, it is also possible that in 56,3a.6-7 we are dealing with a kind of proselytism that was current at that time.¹²⁹ MUILENBURG stated that this passage may have been the origins of Jewish proselytism influenced by the universalistic point of view of Second Isaiah.¹³⁰

While בן־נכר or נכר is found in several places in the Hebrew Bible, the form with definite article occurs only in 56,3 and 6. Some scholars just ignore it, while others think that such a difference might be significant, though no satisfactory solution has been proposed. We also believe that this article is important and could help us to understand better this passage.

¹²³ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 139.

¹²⁴ Thus C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 314.

¹²⁵ Cf. for example, Westermann who clearly stated, “The old regulation in Deut 23,2 is cancelled.” C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 313.

¹²⁶ The use of article as relative is common in the later texts. The MT is vocalized as perfect, but most probably the participle was intended by the writer. See *GKC* § 138 k; *J-M* § 145 e.

¹²⁷ Cf. the observation made by A.L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*, 9-10.

¹²⁸ D.W. VAN WINKLE, “Isaiah LVI 1-8,” 237.

¹²⁹ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 312. He also suggested that 14,1 may have roughly the same date as Third Isaiah.

¹³⁰ J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 656.

By using the definite form הַנֹּכַר, it seems proper to assume that the author must have had a certain נֹכַר in his mind. Who might this נֹכַר be? It is true that the indefinite form בְּנֵי-נֹכַר is found in some places in the Hebrew Bible. But when other considerations, such as vocabulary and content are taken into account, then there are two groups of texts that seem to stand closer to Isa 56,3-8. The first is a series of texts found in chs. 60-62, namely 60,10; 61,5; 62,8; while the second is Ezek 44,7-16. As we shall see, there are several key words that connect 56,3-8 with chs. 60-62 and with Ezek 44. In addition, the fact that all those passages deal with a quite similar topic, namely, the foreigners in their connection with Israel and her cult, would reinforce the connection between them.

First, we shall examine the possible connection between 56,3-8 and chs. 60-62. As some scholars have noted, Third Isaiah seems to apply a double attitude in treating the foreigners (בְּנֵי-הַנֹּכַר).¹³¹ Chs. 60-62 display a somewhat negative attitude toward the foreigners. In these chapters, they are considered as second class citizens. They have to serve (יִשְׁרְתוּנֶךָ) cf. 60,10 also 60,7) Israel as Israel serves (מִשְׁרַתִּי 61,6) YHWH. Further, the nations who do not serve Israel shall perish (60,12). Differently, however, Isa 56,7 changes the whole direction by asserting that the foreigners will minister (לְשִׁרְתוֹ) to YHWH. Isa 60,7 declares that the sacrifices of the Israelites which are supplied by the animals of non-Israelite origin will be acceptable on YHWH's altar (עַל-רִצּוֹן מִזְבְּחִי). This phrase also appears in 56,7 but points to a different direction: it is the sacrifices of the foreigners that will be acceptable on the altar of YHWH (לְרִצּוֹן עַל-מִזְבְּחִי). Thus, in comparison with chs. 60-62, Isa 56,3-8 offers a more radical view about the foreigners: not only are they equated with Israel, but also the opportunity to serve YHWH (שִׁרַת), in contrast with 60,7, is now attributed to them as well.¹³²

¹³¹ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 31; A.L. GRANT-HENDERSON, *Inclusive Voices*, 9.

¹³² We shall here leave open the discussion whether the root שִׁרַת should be understood as *terminus technicus* for priestly service or not. There is no conclusive agreement among the scholars. It is intriguing, however, that the ancient versions have "unusual" translations for this root (LXX: δουλεύειν but α' σ' θ' λειτουργεῖν; Vulgate: *colere, to worship*; 1QIsa^a even omitted this root; but retained it in 60,7.10; 61,6). This would suggest that at the time of translation, the root שִׁרַת must have undergone a shift of meaning, from a broader meaning *to serve* to a specific meaning *to serve in cultic sphere*, so that the translators felt uneasy to attribute this root to the foreigners. For an analysis of the versions, see D.W. VAN WINKLE, "An Inclusive Authoritative Text," 423-440.

Many scholars have also noted the closeness of Isa 56,3-8 to Ezek 44,7-16.¹³³ In the Ezekielian text, the foreigners (בְּנֵי־נֹכַר), who are among the people of Israel, are not allowed to enter the sanctuary (v. 9). This may be echoed in 56,3b and 6 “The foreigners who have joined themselves to YHWH.” Even for the Israelites, admitting the foreigners (בְּהִיאָכֶם בְּנֵי־נֹכַר) into the sanctuary (מִקְדָּשׁ) was considered an abomination (v. 7). In Ezek 44,15ff, only the Zadokite priests are allowed to minister (שָׂרָר) to YHWH in the sanctuary. In Isa 56,7 it is YHWH himself who promises to bring the foreigners to his Holy Mountain (הַבְּיָאוֹתִים אֶל־הַר קְדֹשִׁי). Such similarities in wording and topic seem sufficient to demonstrate the relationship between Isa 56,3-8 and Ezek 44,7-16.¹³⁴

Thus, the use of the definite form (בְּנֵי־הַנֹּכַר) could be fairly understood in the light of the relationship between Isa 56,3-7 and chs. 60-62 and Ezek 44,7-16. On the one hand, by exalting the foreigners to a state equal with the Israelites, Isa 56,3-7 go beyond the prophecy of chs. 60-62;¹³⁵ on the other hand, however, such a notion would come into conflict with Ezek 44,7-16.¹³⁶ Without entering into the discussion about the exact historical circumstance that has generated such a text, we shall say that what is important for us is that the proclamation of Isa 56,3b.6-7 about the foreigners, like that of the eunuchs, represents something different from the other biblical passages. Considering the fact that elsewhere in Hebrew Bible the foreigners - designated with various terminologies - almost always suffer an unfavourable treatment, the proclamation of Isa 56,1-8 is indeed a revolutionary announcement.

It should be noted, however, that the promise is not given to *any* eunuchs and foreigners. Rather, it is only given to the eunuchs and foreigners who fulfill a set of criteria, which is presented in vv. 4 and 6. And when we attentively read them, it seems clear that the achievement of those conditions is the matter of choice, and not

¹³³ The connection with Deut 23,3-5 is also frequently suggested. This will indeed provide a ground why the eunuch and the foreigner are treated together. However, based on similarity of vocabulary and theme, it would seem better to connect 56,3-8 with Ezek 44,7-16 rather than with Deut 23,3ff. As has been frequently noticed, Third Isaiah employed *Mischizitate* (a mixed citation from different sources in one verse) quite often.

¹³⁴ Fishbane argued that both Isa 56,3-8 and Ezek 44,7-16 depend on Num 18,1-7 and represent a debate over the cult which dominated the post-exilic scene. M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation*, 118. 138-143.

¹³⁵ Smith argued that the anxieties of the foreigners quoted in v. 3b was caused by the proclamation of chs. 60-62 in which the foreigners would be given a clearly subordinated role in the era of salvation. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 64. However, we find his argument is not so convincing. The conditions for the foreigners in v. 6 presume that they have *already* played their part in the community.

¹³⁶ Cf. M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation*, 138-143. Some scholars have often attempted to lessen the tension between Isa 56,1-8 and Ezek 44,7-16. By analyzing the conditions imposed to the foreigners, they tried to show that there is no actual contradiction between these two passages. See, for example, P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 58-59.

an innate gift. It is the people who voluntarily choose to perform such requirements. In the context of Israel, this concept of community shifts the emphasis from a *chosen* community to a *choosing* community. One's membership in the community is not the question of *to be* but *to become*. This would inevitably lead to the expansion of the community itself, because it now embraces those who are willing to choose to fulfill the conditions, though according to their birth, they should be excluded from the community.

Therefore, by admitting the eunuchs and the foreigners to join the community under certain conditions, Isa 56,3-7 offer a new vision about the community itself. Its membership is no longer determined by blood-relationship, but rather by a set of moral-religious attitudes that should be embraced by the members. This new vision of the community is confirmed by the designation of the foreigners as YHWH's servants (עֲבָדִים), a designation which would, as we shall see later, become important. At the same time, however, the divine proclamation about the eunuchs and the foreigners would persuade the whole community to accept among them the presence of these marginal groups. In this way, the role of the community is again underlined. The salvation of the marginal groups who hold fast to YHWH, is realized, at least partly, through their acceptance in YHWH's community.

2.1.3 Result

Our analysis of Isa 56,1-8 in the context of researching the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy discovers two important points, which have different emphasis but are also connected. The first is that the prophetic words indicate, through a subtle formulation, that the realization of the salvation promised would, in some ways, depend on the behaviour of the members of the community. And the second, and this primarily concerns with the nature of the community, Isa 56,1-8 present a new vision about community: it should not be an exclusive community, but rather an inclusive community. The change of behaviour may then involve the willingness to accept the presence of the marginal people.

2.2 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 57,14-21

Since we have analyzed 56,9-57,2 and 57,3-13 in our discussion of the sin of the community,¹³⁷ we will not repeat our treatment of those passages. Rather, we shall

¹³⁷ Isa 56,9-57,2 was discussed in Chapter III.1.2.1.1.a; while Isa 57,3-13 in Chapter III.1.2.2.1.a.

now examine the following section, namely, 57,14-21 which is frequently designated by scholars as an oracle of salvation¹³⁸. However, since this section is closely tied with its context, references to the previous section will also be given.

As scholars have rightly argued, Isa 57,14-21 does not stand alone, apart from its context; rather it should be understood within its broader context. Because of some vocabulary connections, which we shall see in the course of our analysis, it seems better to take 56,9-57,21 as the context in which 57,14-21 should be read.¹³⁹ This is the path that we have chosen in our reading of this passage.

2.2.1 57,14: Admonition to the Leaders

As it stands, v. 14 is introduced by an unusual formula וַיֹּאמֶר without a subject. There have been many discussions to understand this form. Since we understand the section that follows to be, as we shall see, a quotation from other prophetic material, it seems better to conceive it as it as simply a marker of a quotation¹⁴⁰ and thus translate it in past tense, “And he said” or “And it was said.”¹⁴¹ Thus, in this case, the possessive pronoun of עַמִּי “my people,” which is often used as argument to prove that the speaker is YHWH, should be understood as referring to the divine word uttered *through* the prophet rather than to YHWH directly.

Scholars have long recognized that v. 14 is a quotation from older material. Two passages are commonly recommended as the background of this verse: Isa 40,3 and 62,10. Though the trace of quoting is still detectable, the author of v. 14 did not merely reproduce his sources but rather, made an alteration which we think as important in order to understand better the content of this verse. Therefore, we shall now compare those three passages in order to see the differences.

¹³⁸ For example, C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 327; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 168.

¹³⁹ Cf. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 94-109; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 68-71. Steck also thought of the unity of 56,9-57,21 which he regarded as parallel to 58,1-59,21. O.H. STECK, “Beobachtungen,” 228-246. A different opinion regarded 57,14-21 as a separate entity forming part of the nucleus of TI close to chs. 60-62. See, for example, W.W. CANNON, “Isaiah c. 57,14-21. cc. 60-62,” 75-77; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 296; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 77-79.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 49; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 470. Lau understood it as a stylistic variation of קִיּוֹל קִרְיָא (40,3). W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 119. Cf. also Westermann who thought that וַיֹּאמֶר at the beginning of v. 14 was prefixed here when TI's utterances were in process of collection, in order to make a clear division between 57,14ff and what precedes. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 327-328.

¹⁴¹ The LXX has $\alpha\lambda\lambda\ \epsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\sigma\epsilon\kappa\acute{\iota}$ “And they will say”; Vulgate: *et dicam* “And I will say”; 1QIsa^a וַיֹּאמֶר “And he said.” Since it introduced an older prophetic word uttered in the *past*, to understand וַיֹּאמֶר as *w-qatalii* referring to the *future* does not fit with the context.

The relevant passages are as follows:

ואמר סלֹו סלֹו פְנו־דֶרֶךְ הַרִימוּ מִכְשׁוֹל מִדֶּרֶךְ עַמִּי : 57,14
 קוֹל קוֹרָא בַּמְדַּבֵּר פְּנוּ דֶרֶךְ יְהוָה יִשְׂרוּ בְעֵרְבָה מִסְלָה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ : 40,3
 עֲבְרוּ עֲבְרוּ בְשַׁעֲרֵים פְּנוּ דֶרֶךְ הָעַם סִלֹו סִלֹו הַמְסָלָה סִקְלוּ מֵאֲבָן : 62,10
 הַרִימוּ נֶס עַל־הָעַמִּים

As we shall observe, the double imperative סִלֹו סִלֹו and הַרִימוּ are found only in 57,14 and 62,10 and not in 40,3 that has the substantive מִסְלָה (also in 62,10¹⁴²). The phrase פְּנו־דֶרֶךְ appears in all three passages. However, in 57,14 and 62,10 it is connected to the people (עַם); while in 40,3 to YHWH. This fact would mean that 57,14 stands closer to 62,10 and depends only indirectly to 40,3¹⁴³ or, in ZILLESSEN's words, it is a case of "Zitat der zweiten Generation."¹⁴⁴

We have noted that both in 57,14 and 62,10 the way that should be prepared is the people's way and not YHWH's. As it is commonly known, the word דֶּרֶךְ could be understood in two different ways: literally or figuratively. The presence of the word מֵאֲבָן "from stone" in 62,10 suggests that in this verse, דֶּרֶךְ should be understood literally. However, by changing מֵאֲבָן to a more abstract word מִכְשׁוֹל "obstruction," it becomes difficult to determine the nuance of דֶּרֶךְ in 57,14. At this point, the meaning of the word could only be determined by the context in which it appears.¹⁴⁵ In this case, we believe that an attentive reading reveals that the context of v. 14 gives no indications for a literal rendering. In addition, the appearances of דֶּרֶךְ in 56,11; 57,17.18 suggest that דֶּרֶךְ in v. 14 should be understood figuratively, that is, as a *modus vivendi*, a way of life.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, מִכְשׁוֹל should not be understood literally, but rather it would mean a stumbling block in the religious-ethical sense (cf. Ezek 3,20; 7,19; 14,3 etc).¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² According to IQIsa^a, 57,14 has also מִסְלָה. It is likely that the variant in IQIsa^a is a quotation from 62,10. It is not found in 4QIsa^d which consists of 57,9-17; 57,18-58,3; 58,5-7.

¹⁴³ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 29-31; cf. also O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 233; W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 119 n. 2.

¹⁴⁴ A. ZILLESSEN, "'Tritojesaja'," 246.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 30.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. among others, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 402; W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 217-233.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Whybray's observation on מִכְשׁוֹל: "This word is most frequently used in the OT not in a literal sense but, especially in Ezekiel, of sin (especially idolatry) or guilt leading to divine punishment." R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 209; cf. also H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 100; G.I. EMMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66*, 47. Another scholar, Flynn argued that in this context, "the דֶּרֶךְ

The above observation would lead us to conclude that 57,14 should be understood as an invitation to prepare the way of the people by removing the stumbling block in religious-ethical sense, namely, a proper conduct before YHWH and their fellows, that has been hindering the people's way. With such a notion, we shall now attempt to answer the question: who is addressed by this verse?

The first thing to note is that the formulation of v. 14 suggests that this call is directed to a third party other than YHWH and his people (עַמִּי). Thus, considering that YHWH's invitation presupposes a certain authority or capacity to remove such a stumbling block from the people, we shall argue that the addressees should be understood as the leaders of Israel who were responsible for guiding them.¹⁴⁸ We find here two possibilities: are they the *good* leaders - in contrast to the wicked leaders described in 56,9-12 - who possess the capacity and authority to guide the people? Or are they the *wicked* leaders, who have led the people astray, directly or indirectly, through their behaviour? We think that the latter are here meant. It is the wicked leaders of the people that are now being addressed to change their behaviour that has become a stumbling block for the people.¹⁴⁹ Our previous analysis on the sin of the people has demonstrated that the wicked leaders have contributed in creating a stumbling block for the people, directly or indirectly.¹⁵⁰ In addition, we shall also notice that the root בצע "unjust gain" in v. 17 is also used in 56,11 with the leaders as the subject. And also, the phrase פְּנֵי-דֶרֶךְ (v. 14) recalls פְּנֵי לְדַרְכֵם in 56,11 that again refers to the leaders. Thus, our notion that v. 14 is addressed to the wicked leaders seems to be justified.

2.2.2 57,15-21: God's Preferential Option for the Lowly

YHWH's invitation to the leaders to change their behaviour is further developed in vv. 15-21. Therefore, the particle כִּי at the beginning of v. 15 that introduces a messenger formula אָמַר כֹּה, which curiously is not followed by God's proper name,

'way' could still imply a path of right living, but that right living involves seeking worship in the earthly temple." S.W. FLYNN, "Where Is YHWH," 358-370.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 231; followed by J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 95. It is difficult to accept Koenen's suggestion that the call is addressed to supernatural beings. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 54; also B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 470. As Koole noted, they do not play an active role in 56,14-21 in contrast to 40,1ff.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. the Targumic rendering "And he shall say, Teach ye, and exhort, turn the heart of the people to the right way, remove the stumbling-block of the wicked from the way of the congregation of my people."

¹⁵⁰ See Chapter III.1.2.1.1.a of this present work.

would be better understood as causal.¹⁵¹ In this way, it gives the motive why YHWH delivers such an admonition to the leaders.

It is particularly interesting that, except the messenger formula, almost every word in v. 15 appears twice.¹⁵² The designation of YHWH as the subject of אמר is repeated in YHWH's direct discourse that form a well-structured self description. The phrase רם ונשא in the introduction appears only here and in 6,1. Perhaps it would refer to הר־גְבוּהַ וְנִשְׂאָה "a high and lofty mountain" in 57,7 and thus, provides a contrast between the place where Lady Israel is going for other gods and the place where YHWH, the true God, is to be found. But then, in his self-description, which opens his direct discourse, YHWH underlines not only his high dwelling, but also his dwelling among the people, which he describes as דָּכָא וְשָׁפַל־רוּחַ "the crushed and humble spirit." That attention should be paid on the latter is clear from the structure of the discourse which is nicely arranged.

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <u>מרום וקדוש אשכון</u> | 15aβ On the high and holy place I dwell |
| <u>ואחדכא ושפל־רוח</u> | 15bα and with the crushed and humble spirit; |
| <u>להחיות רוח שפלים</u> | 15bβ to revive the spirit of the humble |
| <u>ולהחיות לב נדכאים</u> | 15bγ and to revive the heart of the crushed |

His heavenly dwelling is written on a single line, while his being with the lowly occupies three lines. In this way, God's concern to the lowly receives particular emphasis. This juxtaposition of the exaltedness of God and his dwelling with the lowly is particularly rare and, at the same time, close to formulation in 66,1-2:

It seems evident that the words דכא and שפל do not refer to man's spiritual virtue in front of the Exalted God, but to those who were depressed, crushed down by outward circumstances.¹⁵³ This is supported by v. 15bβγ that points to the purpose of God's dwelling among the crushed, that is, *to revive* (להחיות) them. God's intention to restore them would have made little sense, if דכא and שפל were intended to refer to man's *voluntarily* submission before God.¹⁵⁴ In the context of YHWH's

¹⁵¹ Attempt to understand it as having asseverative meaning *Truly* as suggested by Koole will loosen the relationship between v. 14 and v. 15. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 96.

¹⁵² The roots רום, שכן, קדש, דכא, שפל, רוח, זיה appear twice in v. 15; only the roots נשא and ער are not repeated.

¹⁵³ Cf. H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 103; also J. SKINNER, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, 92; E. ACHTEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 48-49. Herbert referred to the hard condition after exile that was described in Hag 1,6. A.S. HERBERT, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, 141.

¹⁵⁴ On the contrary, the root שפל also appears in 57,9 to describe Lady Israel's voluntarily journey to Sheol! A possible connection with 57,9 shall be pursued later.

admonition, which is directed toward the leaders of the community, it seems reasonable to think that those who are crushed and humbled are the returnees who become the victims of the leaders' neglectfulness, and at the same time, suffered from the failure of their expectation.

God's intention finds its expression in bringing his anger to an end (v. 16a) because apart from him, the spirit that he has made would weaken (v. 16b).¹⁵⁵ If God's anger is indefinite then the divinely originated spirit would suffer weakness or even death.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, the recognition of the limit of human endurance became the reason of God's changing behaviour.¹⁵⁷ The prolonged divine hidings that permit individuals to make free choices would ironically bring too much suffering. To prevent the further destruction of the community, God now breaks his silence.¹⁵⁸ As we shall see later, this notion appears again in v. 18a.

The reason for his anger is then described in v. 17. It is indeed tempting to connect immediately the sin of Israel with the exile as a punishment of divine anger.¹⁵⁹ However, as DUHM has noted,¹⁶⁰ the word used to describe the sin committed is not a general, common word for sin, but rather a very particular one, nameiy, עֲוֹן בְּצַעַו frequently translated as "the iniquity of his unjust gain."¹⁶¹ An attentive reader would not fail to recognize that the same substantive בְּצַע also appears in 56,11 which refers to the wicked leaders.¹⁶² Since, as we have already seen, the references to the leaders appear consistently in this section, it seems better to

¹⁵⁵ The verb עָשָׂה is difficult. The LXX has ἐξελεύσεται *to go forth* (cf. RSV) and the Vulgate *egredietur*. Some scholars thought that LXX represented the correct meaning (cf. for example, C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 436; J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 673-674; H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 105). Achtemeier took a more difficult path by rendering the phrase as "for I clothe a person (lit: spirit)[with flesh]" with a reference to Job 10,11. E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 49. However, we could read it as simply deriving from the root II עָשָׂה means "to be (become) weak," "to be without strength" (cf. NRSV). Thus, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 404 and the more recent exegetes, such as J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 167; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 101; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 471-472.

¹⁵⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 172.

¹⁵⁷ J. SKINNER, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, 92.

¹⁵⁸ J.L. CRENSHAW, *Defending God*, 192.

¹⁵⁹ Thus, for example, P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 94; cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 330; W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 122; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 103. Blenkinsopp argued that v. 17 is a summary account of Israel's history as a history of religious and moral failure, summarized here rather surprisingly in the accusation of avarice. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 172. Though he realized that the use of בְּצַע is surprising, he failed to see a reference to 56,11.

¹⁶⁰ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 404.

¹⁶¹ The LXX has δι' ἁμαρτίαν βραχύ τι, which Odeberg saw as an interpretation of MT בְּצַע *for a break* (cf. BHS' critical apparatus). H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 106. Bergmeier suggested that the LXX is a free translation of MT with reference to 54,7. R. BERGMEIER, "Das Streben nach Gewinn," 93-97.

¹⁶² Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 52.

understand v. 17 as describing the actual situation after the return from the Babylonian exile, in which social injustice prevails as 56,9-12 described, rather than referring to Israel's past experience.¹⁶³

Because of this sin YHWH was angry and hid his face from the people. It sounds strange that the people, on whose side YHWH declares himself to be, must again suffer YHWH's punishment because of the leaders' sins. However, if we realize that social injustice can in no way be compatible with the salvation of YHWH, then this problem would disappear. For the people, the leaders' evil treatment upon them will automatically mean the absence of YHWH, the hiding of his face. As long as oppressions and manipulations still prevail, the people cannot enjoy salvation. In other words, they suffer from the divine anger, though only indirectly. Thus, the statement of divine anger in v. 17a does not necessarily indicate YHWH's inconsistent behaviour in dealing with the lowly people, but rather a consequence of the evil committed by a certain segment of the community.

Verse 17b presents another implication of such a situation. Despite the fact that the phrase *וַיֵּלֶךְ שׁוֹבֵב בְּדַרְךְ לְבוֹ* could be read as having a positive tone, namely, the people's return to YHWH after "punishment,"¹⁶⁴ we think it would be better understood negatively. In such a desperate situation, the people turned away from YHWH. As we have seen, the word *דָּרַךְ* is used negatively in 56,9-57,21 (cf. 56,11; 57,10,14). Thus, their miserable situation has not led them to turn to YHWH, rather they looked for their own ways.

Could there be any specific reference for *וַיֵּלֶךְ שׁוֹבֵב בְּדַרְךְ לְבוֹ*, which KOOLE argued as describing a wrong reaction¹⁶⁵ to the actual circumstance in which the people lived? KOENEN, who has noticed the connection between 57,11 and 56,11, further argued that 57,17 has also a link with the passages against idolatry (cf. 57,3-13a; 65,1-7; 66,3 and 66,17).¹⁶⁶ We can further add to support KOENEN's observation: in v. 15 the people with whom YHWH now takes his side is called "the humble of spirit" or "the spirit of the humble" (*שַׁפְּלִים*). It should be noted that the root *שַׁפַּל* "to be

¹⁶³ Cf. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 404; O.H. STECK, "Beobachtungen," 235. Though they do not attribute the sin of unjust gain to the leaders of the community, both scholars agreed that 57,14-21 dealt with post-exilic situation.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. the patristic exegesis as mentioned by Koole. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 104; see also K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 51 n. 254.

¹⁶⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 104.

¹⁶⁶ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 52-53; see also 53 n. 266. Cf. also Smith who saw the word *לֵב* as a possible connecting link the preceding material. "Whereas the righteous perish without anyone taking notice (*לֵב עַל לֵב* [57,1]), and the idolaters continue their activities without bearing Yahweh in mind (*לֵב עַל לֵב* [57,11]), the faithful people will have their hearts (*לֵב*) revived." P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 93.

humble,” “to be low,” “to abase” is also used in 57,9 to describe Lady Israel’s abasement to Sheol. Thus, in addition to what have been said about the humble, we can say that the humble in v. 15 would also point to those who have gone down to Sheol in the context of an unorthodox cult.¹⁶⁷ If this connection with 57,9 could be justified, then the logic of v. 17 becomes perfectly intelligible: suffering from the leaders’ evil treatment has led the people to search a solution according to their own way!¹⁶⁸ These are the people to which YHWH now turns and gives his promise of consolation!

Verse 18 could be seen as a concretization of YHWH’s dwelling with the humble. Though YHWH saw their ways, he will heal them, lead them, and repay them with comfort. A connection with the preceding verse is established by means of the corresponding words that describe the change of YHWH’s behaviour:¹⁶⁹

- to see their ways (ראה) - to hide (one’s face) (סתר)
- to heal (רפא)
- to lead¹⁷⁰ (נחה) - to walk turning ... (הלך שובב)
- to repay with comfort (נחם) - to be angry (קצף)

And as we have seen in v. 16, YHWH changes his behaviour because of the limit of human endurance. Had he left them in such a miserable situation a little bit longer, the people would have gone astray much further!

The final result of YHWH’s intervention is then expressed by the repetition of the word שלום, which also echoes the previous root שלם in v. 18. And as it is commonly accepted, שלום does not simply mean the absence of war, but has a wider scope of meaning that is closer to completeness, wholeness, harmony, or well-being. Implicit in שלום is the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfillment in one’s undertakings.

¹⁶⁷ In our discussion of 57,3-13, we have tried to demonstrate that 57,9 belongs to a cult that involves child-sacrifice. See Chapter III.1.2.2.1.a of the present work.

¹⁶⁸ Moreover, we shall note Koole’s interpretation that the use of plural form of ררך in v. 18 suggests the wilfulness and confusion in which people seek solutions. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 105.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 107; G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 154-155; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 94-95.

¹⁷⁰ The MT אָנְחָהוּ is variously rendered in the ancient versions. IQIsa^a omitted it. The LXX has παρεκάλεσα that supposed the Hebrew root נחם or נח. The Targum offered וארחים “to have compassion,” which perhaps was derived from the root חנה II, “to have compassion” (cf. HALOT). The Vulgate, with its translation *reduxi eum*, seems to support the MT. Context and stylistic consideration, however, stand in favour of the MT. Cf. J.S. KSELMAN, “A Note on *w’hwh*,” 539-542.

This *שְׁלוֹם* is rejected for the wicked (*הַרְשָׁעִים*) (v. 21), so that they will be like the tossing sea that cannot be still. The idea of “being in *שְׁלוֹם*” is also present at the beginning of ch. 57 with the opposite meaning. In 57,2 it is the righteous who is described as entering into *שְׁלוֹם*. There, as we have seen, the righteous represents a group that, directly or indirectly, has become the victim of the wicked leaders. Since in vv. 15-19 YHWH’s words are addressed to the lowly, whom we identified as those who suffered under the oppression of the leaders, it seems justifiable that the wicked in v. 20-21 represent the leaders of the community. In this context, judgment about the future fate of the leaders could be understood as the reason behind the admonition in v. 14.

2.2.3 Result

This section begins with an admonition for the leaders to remove their behaviour that had become a stumbling-block for the people (v. 14). However, this should be understood in the light of vv. 15-19 that clearly describes YHWH’s preference toward the lowly and the crushed. These verses present the divine reassurance for the suffering community that YHWH is on their side and gives them the promise of well-being. At the same time, YHWH’s assurance that he takes the part of the oppressed would mean that he could not take the part of the oppressors. This attitude is expressed in an admonition to the leaders (v. 14) accompanied with the threatening words to them (vv. 20-21). It should also be clear by now that the promise of salvation is not applied to the whole people, but only a part of them. The division within the community is here again underlined.

We shall also notice how the author of 57,14-21 worked on the older material - especially Second Isaiah and chs. 60-62 - to address his contemporaries. Dealing with the challenge of a new and problematic situation, the author was creating new Isaianic prophecy out of old.¹⁷¹ In this way, on the one hand, he stood in the tradition of SI, but on the other hand, he tried to contextualize the message of his predecessor by reinterpreting it according to the new situation. As we shall constantly see in the course of this work, reinterpreting the older materials at his disposal becomes a particular device of the author.

The fact that YHWH’s preference falls on the lowly and the oppressed becomes an important point for our purpose. As our previous discussion has demonstrated, the common solution that sin has delayed the coming of the promised

¹⁷¹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 170.

salvation cannot be taken for granted because such a solution is a generalization that overlooks the victims of social injustice. Now, it becomes clear that YHWH has a promise of well-being for them.

2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 58,5-14

The first part of this chapter (vv. 1-4) has been examined in the previous chapter as we were discussing the nature of the social sin found in ch. 58.¹⁷² We shall now briefly review the result of our examination so that our discussion could be placed in its proper context.

Two sets of human activities are put in contrast in v. 1-3a. On the one hand, through the practice of traditional religious activities, the people were really trying to accelerate the coming of salvation, or at least, to discover why it does not come true. On the other hand, however, they kept on practicing their improper conduct toward their human fellows. And when later they realized that their religious activities (fasting is taken as example) did not work as they expected, they then questioned YHWH (v. 3). YHWH answered them in vv. 5-14. In these verses, YHWH described the fasting that the people should do.

In this section, we shall focus our attention to this response. Therefore, we shall not repeat the discussion that has been carried out previously. However, references to previous discussion will, of course, be made whenever necessary.

2.3.1 Structure

In the previous discussion, we held the position that this chapter forms a literary unity that can be structured in this way: vv. 1-4 YHWH rejects the fasting that the people has practised and vv. 5-14 YHWH proposes the fasting that the people should carry out. In turn, the latter, as could be easily observed, consists of three literary units: 5-9a; 9b-12; 13-14.¹⁷³ Each unit has a similar pattern, in which demand or condition (5-

¹⁷² See Chapter III.1.2.1.1.c.

¹⁷³ It should be noticed that the discussion among scholars focuses on the position of v. 5. Some scholars prefer to attach it to the previous section (thus for example, P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 102ff; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 121) or to consider it as a transition or bridge to the following section (J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66"; 680; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 110; G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 187). However, if we notice that vv. 1-4 forms a unity, by means of the inclusion *הָרַם קוֹלְךָ - הָרַם קוֹלְכֶם* and the divine judgment in v. 4b that constitutes a good conclusion for vv. 1-4, then logically, v. 5 should be better attached to the following section. At least, three further arguments could be marshalled in favour of joining v. 5 to v. 6ff. (1) The repetition of interrogative particle *הֲ* in v. 5.6.7 supports the closeness of v. 5 to the following verses; (2) The quasi-verbatim repetition of v. 5 in v. 6 would connect them

7; 9b-10a; 13) and promise (8-9a; 10b-12; 14) intertwine. Thus, in examining this section, we shall follow the order of the units.

2.3.2 58,5-9a: Condition and Promise 1

In the rhetorical questions that assume the audience's knowledge of the topic being treated,¹⁷⁴ the divine words in vv. 5-7 deal with the fasting that should have been practised by the people. They are introduced by the interrogative particle הֲ (3x in v. 5), which expects a negative answer and by הֲלוֹא (v. 6.7) that expects an affirmative answer respectively.

In v. 5, the external expressions of fasting: to humble oneself, to bow down one's head and to spread sackcloth and ashes are presented. It is noticeable that they are framed by two statements about fasting from different points of view: that of God הֲכִיזָה יְהוָה צוֹם אֲבַחֲרֶהוּ ("is not this the fast that I choose?" v. 5aα) and that of man הֲלֹזָה תִקְרָא צוֹם ("will you call this a fast?" v. 5bβ), and thus produces an ironic contrast. One could also notice that יְהוָה suggests that what is being said is not the true fast¹⁷⁵. Indeed, as BLENKINSOPP noted, "fasting and mourning as a response to extreme crisis were distinctive features of religious life in the post-disaster period."¹⁷⁶ At this point, the last part of v. 5, יוֹם רְצוֹן לַיהוָה, gives further weight to the ironical nuance in YHWH's words, and at the same time, may point out to the real intention of the people's fast.

As could be noticed, this phrase resembles two Isaianic passages, 49,8 and 61,2. In 49,8 the phrase עַתָּה רְצוֹן appears in the divine discourse that describes the moment in which YHWH answers Israel's prayers "Thus says the LORD, "In a time of favour, I have answered you..." Whereas in 61,2, שְׁנַת רְצוֹן לַיהוָה is found in the context of the prophet's proclamation of good tidings "...to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour..." Thus, יוֹם רְצוֹן לַיהוָה connected with fasting in 58,5 could be understood as indicating that fasting that was practised by the people is actually

tightly; (3) The demonstrative pronoun הַ in v. 5 would introduce something new to be discussed (cf. GKC § 136b). This last point is also noted by Polan. However, he separated v. 5 from v. 6 because of the break of 3+3 rhythm and suggested that "such a rupture in the general flow of the rhythm can serve as a signal that something new is beginning, that there is a change taking place in the movement of the text, or that something important is being introduced" (italic mine). G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 187-188. Anyway, it is difficult to imagine that the author might have introduced something new in v. 5 and then another new thing in v. 6ff.

¹⁷⁴ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 38.

¹⁷⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 133.

¹⁷⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 178. 182-183.

intended to accelerate the realization of salvation or to get YHWH's responses.¹⁷⁷ However, it should also be noted that 49,8 and 61,2 also deal with liberation (cf. 49,9; 61,1-3). Thus, by employing this phrase YHWH wants to remind the people of an aspect that is absent in their fasting. And this is made explicit in v. 6.

The divine speech in v. 6 is opened with a phrase which is an almost *verbatim* quotation from v. 5, *הֲלוֹא זֶה צוֹם אֲבַחֲרֶהוּ*, "Is not this the fast that I choose." Then, come four verbs; three are in the infinitive absolute used epexegetically after a demonstrative pronoun¹⁷⁸ (*שֶׁלַח, הִחַר, פָּתַח*) and another one is in the finite form (*תִּנְחַקוּ*). All four verbs used here express the idea of liberation from social injustice. By using *כָּל* "every," "all," the last verb in finite form (*Piel נַחַק*) serves as a summary of the others.¹⁷⁹ As WHYBRAY expressed, "The four actions required by Yahweh are basically one: the rescue of the oppressed members of the community from harsh treatment by the powerful and unscrupulous."¹⁸⁰

However, in such a difficult situation in the post-exilic community, freedom without sufficient means to sustain life would be less meaningful. The people, therefore, have not only to commit themselves to avoid any evil as v. 6 describes, they are also required to perform more positive actions. Each individual is invited to renounce his individualistic self-interest and to assume personal responsibility and solidarity (v. 7). After an interrogative particle *הֲלוֹא* v. 7 presents a set of required actions: to share bread with the hungry, to give a shelter to the homeless, and to cover the naked. As in the previous verse, these actions are then summarized in the last phrase: You shall not ignore your fellow.¹⁸¹

Some small details in the text then reinforce this invitation. Fasting, which means to refrain from food voluntarily, is an act of piety which can only be practised by the wealthy, since the poor are always fasting though involuntarily.¹⁸² In this case, fasting would become an offense for those who are not able to practise such a piety. To share bread with the hungry would then demonstrate the sincerity of fasting. The

¹⁷⁷ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 38. The word *רָצוֹן* which is peculiar to the later poetical literature appears in Third Isaiah in 56,7; 58,5; 60,7.10; 61,2; never in First Isaiah, and in Second Isaiah only in 49,8. H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 146. Lau suggested that the change of *עָרַב* or *שָׂנֵה* to *יָם* is influenced by the Day of YHWH-motif. W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 246. However, we consider that a connection with 49,8 and 61,2 will provide a more fruitful understanding.

¹⁷⁸ *GKC* § 113b. Since these verbs depend on *הוּא*, it is not necessary to translate these verbs as imperative as LXX and Vulgate suggested.

¹⁷⁹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 137-138; G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 207-208.

¹⁸⁰ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 215.

¹⁸¹ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 100.

¹⁸² Cf. L.J. HOPPE, "Isaiah 58:1-12," 45.

phrase כִּי־תִרְאֶה “when you see” (v. 7b α) would also allude to v. 5ba “to bow down one’s head.” People should not bow their heads so that they could see. They should look around and pay attention to their fellow men. Moreover, it is not enough to lie down in a humble mourning garment, but they should provide the other with the clothes he needs.¹⁸³ Thus the invitation to perform good deeds is not only given in the explicit requirements, but also through some textual allusions to the external expression of fasting.

After a set of conditions of the fasting which is acceptable to God, which shows a development from external expression to avoidance of evil doing, and finally, to solidarity, then follow the promises introduced by אָז “then,” “at that time” (v. 8), a temporal adverb that implies a strict logical sequence.¹⁸⁴ The promise in v. 8 appears in two parallel lines, each of which has a chiasmic structure.

8a יבקע כשחר אורך וארכתך מהרה תצמח
8b והלך לפניך צדקך כבוד יהוה יאסף

The first promise “your light¹⁸⁵ shall break through like the dawn” (v. 8a α) is actually a repetition - in content but not in wording, except the appearance of the word אור - of the same promise given in 60,1 and also 42,16 “I shall turn the darkness before them into light.” This repetition may suggest that the former promises have not been fulfilled yet.¹⁸⁶ Thus, the conditions which are now attached to 58,8 could be understood as a device to explain the delay of the realization of the previous promise.¹⁸⁷ The imagery of the springing up of אַרְיֹכָה¹⁸⁸ in v. 8a β presents another picture of the promise.

The comparison with the dawn (כְּשַׁחַר) and the use of the root צמח, usually used of a plant, would suggest that the coming of salvation is not an instantaneous

¹⁸³ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 139.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. BDB, 23; W-O’C 39.3.4f.

¹⁸⁵ Here אור symbolizes salvation or prosperity (cf. also in 58,10; 59,5; 60,1). It should be distinguished from the use of אור that describes the role of Israel as the light of the nations (42,16; 49,6; 51,4). Cf. H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 152; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 216.

¹⁸⁶ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 180.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 40.

¹⁸⁸ This word means the new layers of skin that grow over a wound that is healing. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 398; cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 338. In addition to 58,8, this word that is always used in a figurative sense appears in Jer 8,22; 30,17; 33,6; Neh 4,1; 2Chr 24,13. Only in 58,8 the verb צמח, that normally used of a plant (55,11; 61,11), is used, in other places we find the verb עלה.

transformation of the whole scene but rather a gradual process.¹⁸⁹ Slow but sure! Accordingly, the realization of the promise would be better understood as taking place in the worldly sphere rather than as a result of YHWH's direct intervention.

As many scholars have recognized, v. 8bβ picked up the proclamation of Second Isaiah, 52,12b with a slight, but important, change. Isa 52,12b described the return from the Babylonian exile using the exodus motive "YHWH will go before you (הַלֵּךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם cf. Exod 13,21), and the God of Israel will be your rear guard." The subject of these two statements is always YHWH, God of Israel. In 58,8b, however, the subjects are changed: "your righteousness" (צְדִיקָה) in the place of YHWH and "the glory of YHWH" (כְּבוֹד יְהוָה) for *God of Israel*. The former needs a further discussion with regard to the nuance of the ambiguous word צְדִיקָה "righteousness."

Particularly in Third Isaiah,¹⁹⁰ the word צְדִיקָה could be understood in two ways; it could mean human righteousness as a moral principle which has to be kept and practised, but it could also refer to human deliverance performed by God. Scholars and modern translations of the Bible do not agree on this point.¹⁹¹ In this case, we should remember that, in Third Isaiah, the promise of salvation is no longer unconditional; but rather it has become conditional. Accordingly, the salvation would also involve the execution of social justice in the community. This would mean that the coming of salvation does not depend merely on YHWH, but also on the community, or if we consider the singular suffix here, on the personal decision of each individual member of the community. This is also apparent in 58,6-7, in which the conditions of the proper fasting are given. As DUHM noted, vanguard and rear guard¹⁹² here should not be understood spatially but temporally.¹⁹³ First, the community should fulfill the conditions presented, then YHWH will do his part.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 338.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. here an illuminating article by R. RENDTORFF, "Isaiah 56,1."

¹⁹¹ For example, JPS, KJV, NKJ, RSV have "your righteousness"; while NAB, NJB, NRS, TNK have "your vindication," or "your vindicator," or "saving justice." The Targum understood this word as human righteousness as it translated, "and thy *righteous acts* shall go before thee."

¹⁹² There is also a difference on the use of the root אָסַף; in 52,12b מְאַסְפֶּכֶם is a *Piel* participle; while 58,8b uses the *Qal* form (אֶסְפֶּךָ). Since this is not of great importance for our purpose, we shall leave open the discussion and, together with many scholars, adopt the common rendering *to be a rear guard*, by following the emendation suggested by BHS' critical apparatus. For another opinion that prefers to maintain the MT reading, see for example, K. KOENEN, "Zur Aktualisierung," 255-258.

¹⁹³ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 408.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 42.

With such considerations, we understand צדק in v. 8b as human righteousness as in 56,1.¹⁹⁵

It should be noted that in the context of 58,8, the exodus motif does not completely disappear, but rather it should be understood differently: now it is about an exodus from a miserable situation - represented by the metaphor of light and wound in v. 8aα.¹⁹⁶ This is to be realized with the participation of the community, and therefore is a gradual process.

Verse 9a that concludes the first unit (vv. 5-9a) seems to refer back to the lament raised by the people in v. 3a. There the people lament that YHWH does not listen to them, notwithstanding their fasting. Now, it is promised that after the people accomplish the condition, *then* (אם) “you shall call and YHWH will answer; you shall cry and he will say: Here I am.” Communication with YHWH that has been blocked would then be restored.

2.3.3 58,9b-12: Condition and Promise 2

Though using different imageries, this second unit practically presents a similar content to the first. A literary connection with vv. 5-9a is even attestable. In this second unit, vv. 9b-10a constitute the protasis introduced by the particle אם “if,” which give an emphasis stronger than before that the coming of salvation depends on what follows.¹⁹⁷ Then come three admonitions to avoid actions in the sphere of social relationship. The words מוטה and שלח make this verse close to v. 6. Verse 10a describes the positive actions that the people are encouraged to perform: “to offer yourself¹⁹⁸ for the hungry, and to satisfy the need of the afflicted.”

¹⁹⁵ This understanding is also held by H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 154; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 216; J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 505. Also Scullion when he said, “The *sedeq* of the people...is that which belongs to them as a covenant people when they are faithful to what Yahweh demands,” but then he added, “It is Yahweh’s saving presence among his people...” J.J. SCULLION, “*sedeq-sedaqah*,” 343.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 250. As many have noticed, this figurative interpretation has previously been suggested by Zimmerli. W. ZIMMERLI, “Zur Sprache Tritojesajas,” 220-221.

¹⁹⁷ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 144.

¹⁹⁸ The word נפשך presents particular problem for the commentators. Based on LXX, many scholars prefer to emend the MT to נפשך, assuming that the MT reading was a result of a dittography. However, the LXX καὶ δῶς πεινῶντι τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ ψυχῆς σου, could be read as a paraphrase, perhaps under the influence of v. 7a. The MT is supported by 1QIsa^a and α’ σ’ θ’ καὶ υπεραχνης πεινωται ψυχην σου (note: the accusative case of ψυχη). Compare to נפשך, the MT נפשך is indeed a *lectio difficilior*, though still intelligible. Therefore, we prefer to maintain the MT and read it as reflexive personal pronoun (cf. 58,3.5; 61,10; 66,3). Cf. the discussion in

Then the promise or the apodosis comes in the following verses (vv. 10b-12). As in v. 8a, v. 10b makes use the metaphor of light as well. Verse 11 offers a set of promises in figurative language that is not always easy to grasp. As he has done in the wilderness, also here YHWH promises his guidance (נחה cf. 57,18b; Exod 15,13; Deut 32,12) and providence, “to satisfy your need in an arid land” (v. 11a).¹⁹⁹

Then follows in v. 11b a description of the people using water imagery: “and you shall be like a watered garden; and like a spring of water, whose water does not deceive.” The phrase כגן רוח היה is also found in Jer 32,12b. But it is not clear if there is a literary dependence here. מוצא מים seems to be picked up from 41,18 (cf. עקב in 41,8.14 and 58,1). “The water that does not deceive (כזב)” resembles Jer 15,18. A deceitful brook is an unreliable water source that flows only in winter and dries up in the summer. In 41,18 YHWH promises to provide water for the poor and the needy (41,17 contrast with Ps 107,33), but now, it is the community that is promised to become the spring of water. Thus, by means of the metaphor of water, the social responsibility of each member of the community is here underlined.²⁰⁰

This divine promise is then continued in v. 12. “And from you, the eternal ruins shall be rebuilt, and you shall establish the foundation for generation to generation.” The first two words in v. 12 (ובנו ממך), which present considerable difficulties, deserves attention. One could notice that v. 12a is close to 61,4:

| | | |
|--------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 58,12a | מוסדי דור-ודור תקומם | ובנו ממך חרבות עולם |
| 61,4 | שממות ראשנים יקוממו | ובנו חרבות עולם |

K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 100 n. 245; V.A. HUROWITZ, “A Forgotten Meaning,” 43-52.

¹⁹⁹ The MT is בנחצרות a *Hapax Legomenon*. That the exact meaning was not known already in early times is attested by the diversities of ancient versions (LXX: εμπλησθησθι καθαπερ επιθυμει η ψυχη σου, α': εν λαμπηδου ψυχην σου, σ' θ': εν λαμπροτητι την ψυχην σου; Vulg: *splendoribus*). Modern scholars' renderings are divided into two ways: “dry place” and “good things.” The former (cf. BDB, HALOT) seems to be derived from נחח > צח; while the latter is perhaps more an interpretation rather than a translation, particularly, if one follows the reading of Vulgate for the first verb of v. 11 *requiem*, assuming the root נח “to rest,” instead of נחה “to lead.” The train of thought in v. 11 would then support the later interpretation. Cf. H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 160. For another suggestion see K. KOENEN, “Textkritische Anmerkungen,” 564. Though it remains obscure, in the context of the Exodus-motif, it seems better to follow the common translation, “an arid place.” The similar expression צחיחה “scorched land” in Ps 68,7 perhaps supports our choice.

²⁰⁰ Cf. W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 255.

In 61,4 the subject of בְּנֵי seems to be “those who mourn in Zion” (61,3).²⁰¹ Isa 58,12 lacks a grammatical subject, but has מִמֶּךָ which is not found in 61,4.²⁰² While maintaining the verb בָּנִי, some scholars attempted to draw the subject from מִמֶּךָ understood as partitive, “some of you.”²⁰³ In this way, a division within the community is therefore implied. The renewed community would not comprise the whole community, but only a part of it.

The idea of restoration is then continued in two other designations introduced by קרא ל + פּוֹל (cf. 61,3; 62,2): “the repairer of breach” (גִּדְרֵי פְּרִיץ) and “the restorer of the paths (נְתִיבוֹת)²⁰⁴ to dwell in.” In Isa 5,5 YHWH will “make a breach in the wall” (פָּרַץ גִּדְרוֹ) to let his vineyard be trampled down by strangers. Now, the breach is repaired. In the Isaianic tradition, נְתִיבוֹת is often paralleled with דֶּרֶךְ (cf. 42,16; 43,16; 59,8 etc.). While it is true that this word could have a figurative meaning, “way of life,”²⁰⁵ the idea of restoration and parallelism with “breach” implies a negative nuance of this word. Accordingly, the restoration could be understood as the restoration of the community to be an ideal community, in which there exists the ideal relationship between the community and YHWH and among the members of the community. The former would mean the reestablishment of the relationship between YHWH and the renewed community that has been ruined by the “breach” in the community; while the latter would be characterized by the proper social-ethical conduct that replaces the older “path.”

For some scholars, this piece of information of “rebuilding the wall” has indeed provided a key to determine the historical situation of the post-exilic community or the date of composition of this verse. While it is perhaps true that this passage would allude to a particular historical circumstance - and this would fit with the description drawn from other biblical passages, it should be admitted that the

²⁰¹ Lau argued that the subject in 61,4 is the foreigner. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 255; cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 43. However, his opinion is questionable. In the context of ch. 61 the foreigners are mentioned only in the following verse (61,5). Perhaps, Lau was influenced by 60,10.

²⁰² Some scholarly suggestions could be here mentioned. Duhm wanted to insert עַמְּךָ “your people” as the subject of בָּנִי. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 399. While Torrey, based on Arabic poetry, argued that מִמֶּךָ would simply function as possessive pronoun. C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 439; thus also P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocaiptic*, 103.

²⁰³ Thus, for example, B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 474; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 174. This rendering is perhaps supported by the Targum, “And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places.”

²⁰⁴ Some scholars suggested to emend נְתִיבוֹת to נְחִירוֹת “ruins,” which is considered to match better with the verb מִשְׁבֵּב. However, as Koole noted, the versions agree with the MT. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 153-154.

²⁰⁵ Cf. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 223-224.

evidence is ambivalent and inconclusive.²⁰⁶ Therefore, we prefer to understand it metaphorically. As the picture of “a watered garden” (v. 11b) stands in a metaphorical level, it should be so for “rebuilding the wall.”

2.3.4 58,13-14: Condition and Promise 3

Because of the abrupt shift of the subject matter,²⁰⁷ the last two verses that form the last unit of ch. 58 are often considered as a later addition. But if we remember that this chapter deals primarily with the relationship or communication between YHWH and his people, then vv. 13-14 in their present state would fit the context well. After describing the ideal relationship among the people (vv. 5-9a; but particularly 9b-12 above), now the author presents the ideal relationship between the people and YHWH.²⁰⁸ This relationship is here represented by the proper attitude toward the Sabbath day.

The protasis is introduced with אם “if.” This is then followed by a set of instructions for the people - represented by second personal singular “you” - patterned in an ABA' structure: A negative (v. 13a) - B positive (v. 13bα) - A' negative instruction (v. 13bβγ).²⁰⁹ In AA', the instruction about what should not be done on Sabbath is given; while B consists of what should be done on Sabbath. By means of allusions to the preceding passage, we see here the confrontation between the people's idea about Sabbath and that of YHWH. Thus, the phrase ביום צמכם חמציא חפץ (v. 3b) is put in contrast with ביום קרשי (v. 13a) and ממצוא חפץ (v. 13bγ). The Sabbath day should then be treated as it deserves. It cannot go along with doing one's personal business, not to mention social injustice, neither is it an “automatic” way to influence the deity.

As in v. 8a and 9a, the apodosis in v. 14 is also started by the particle אז “then,” “at that time.” “You will delight (ענג) in YHWH” echoes the same root of the preceding verse. As scholars have noted, the obscure phrase “and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth”²¹⁰ is picked up from Deut 32,13a. But, thematically, the

²⁰⁶ Cf. G.I. EMMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66*, 62. Whybray also reminds us that here we are dealing with an “exaggerated, or vague, language of poetry.” R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 217.

²⁰⁷ T.K. CHEYNE, *Introduction*, 324; B.DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 410.

²⁰⁸ S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 130.

²⁰⁹ Cf. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 227-228.

²¹⁰ We shall here follow the suggestion of Brongers who proposed that, based on the comparison with mountain and hill, the higher land is the more fertile part. This would fit with LXX's rendering ἐπὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς γῆς (α' σ' θ' τὰ ὑψηλὰ). This interpretation also finds support from the next phrase in v. 14 that talks about feeding the people. H.A. BRONGERS, “Einige Bemerkungen,” 215. It could also be noted that the Targum has “and he will cause thee to dwell

connection with Deut 32 is not limited to this single verse. The feeding of the people recalls Deut 32,13b; נחלת יעקב goes with נחלתו חבל יעקב חבל (32,9); אביך with 32,7.²¹¹ We can also here add the topic of the desert (32,10) and the divine guidance (32,12). Therefore, as a whole, by means of the desert wandering motif in Deut 32,9-14, YHWH promises the people prosperity and fertility of the land. In the context of v. 13, this is the compensation that YHWH will give to the people who are willing to dedicate themselves on the Sabbath day, and not to pursue their own business.²¹²

The promise of prosperity is here given to נחלת יעקב (cf. Deut 32,9), and thus the community as a whole is meant. We believe that this would also shed light on our understanding to the mention of Sabbath in this context. According to a deuteronomistic point of view, the Sabbath day is a means by which the solidarity among the Israelites could be realized (Deut 5,12-15). The gift of prosperity is for the whole community. And thus, it is not allowed that an individual has to work on the Sabbath day in order to survive. Accordingly, social injustice has to be avoided. Seen in this way, not only is the mention of Sabbath in v. 13-14 a way of describing the ideal relationship between YHWH and the people, but also underlines its social dimension.

2.3.5 Result

After examining the passage, two points could be here presented as the result; one from the literary point of view, the other from the perspective of content. From the literary point of view, our analysis demonstrates the reinterpretive strategy employed by the author of Isa 58,5-14. It is worth noting that the use of older materials is primarily found in the apodosis, namely, the promise given to the people. It would mean that the author picked up the older promises and made them conditional. In this way, the adoption of the older materials becomes a device to respond to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. From the perspective of content, we can fairly say that this pericope gives a description about the community. The restored community should be characterized by solidarity among its members. As we have seen previously, also in this passage the community is portrayed as the agent through which salvation could be materialized.

in the strongholds of the earth." This was perhaps influenced by the LXX of Deut 32,13 ἐπὶ τῆς ὀχυρῆς τῆς γῆς. In this case the Hebrew בְּמִצְדָּה is understood as high land that functions as a defensive stronghold in a battle. However, this rendering does not make much sense in the context of Isa 58,14.

²¹¹ Cf. W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 258.

²¹² H.A. BRONGERS, "Einige Bemerkungen," 215.

2.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 59,9-20

There is a general agreement among the scholars that Isa 59 could be divided into three literary units: 1-8; 9-15a and 15b-20(21).²¹³ We have examined the first part in the previous chapter.²¹⁴ Therefore, in this section we shall deal with the rest of ch. 59, namely, vv. 9-15a and 15b-20.

2.4.1 59,9-15a: The Intercession of the Community

It is often suggested that vv. 9-15a form a response to the prophet's indictment delivered in vv. 1-8. This is facilitated by the use of *על־כֵּן* "therefore" that links vv. 9ff with the previous section. As POLAN argued, this particle expresses the result of what is previously stated.²¹⁵

This section could be divided into two parts: vv. 9-11 and vv. 12-15a. The first part (vv. 9-11) is framed by the appearance of a pair of key words: *נִשְׁפָּט* - *צְדִיקָה* in v. 9 and *נִשְׁפָּט* - *יְשׁוּעָה* in v. 11b. In the light of vv. 1-8, in which the improper actions of the people are revealed, it seems reasonable to understand the first pair as referring to human subjects. This will match well with 56,1 in which, as we have seen, this pair of words are better understood in the context of social order. The social sins described in vv. 1-8 indicate the absence of *נִשְׁפָּט* "justice" and *צְדִיקָה* "righteousness," two fundamental elements for constructing an ideal community. In v. 11b, this word pair is aptly attributed to the divine subject. The verb *קִוָּה* *Piel*, "to wait for," "to look for" that governs *נִשְׁפָּט* and *יְשׁוּעָה* with the people as subject supports this understanding. People are looking for or waiting for something that they themselves cannot achieve,²¹⁶ that is divine justice and salvation. The lack of human righteousness in the social sphere would also mean the absence of divine salvation.

The imagery of light *אֹר* and its synonym as well as darkness as its counterpart would recall to 58,8 and 10b (cf. also 42,16 and 60,1). In 58,8 and 10b, as we have seen, *אֹר*, that symbolizes Israel's prosperity, is promised by YHWH under

²¹³ It is true that scholars still attempted to dissect each unit into some smaller units. But, in general, the threefold division is acceptable.

²¹⁴ Isa 59,1-3 is discussed in Chapter III.1.1; while 59,4-8 in Chapter III.1.2.1.1.b.

²¹⁵ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 275.

²¹⁶ Cf. The meaning of the word *קִוָּה* is "to wait or to look for with eager expectation" (TWOT), "hope directed towards a target" (HALOT), "to wait or look eagerly for" (BDB). Eagerness of expectation would then suggest that the fulfillment of its expectation lies beyond the subject's capacity.

the condition that the people perform the action of charity towards the others, especially the lowly class. Now, in 59,9-10a, it is exactly the absence of this social justice that makes the people unable to find the light. As long as the conditions are not fulfilled, the promise could not come true too.

Thus, vv. 9-11 describe the miserable present situation of the people which is an affirmation to the prophetic indictment in vv. 1-8 and also the result of such sinful behaviour in the life of the whole community.

The second part (vv. 12-15a) is the people's confession of sin. It could be divided into two parts: v. 12 is a confession in general; while vv. 13-15a describe a more specific confession. The introducing particle כִּי "because" opens this confession of sin and thus connects this section with the previous ones, the prophet's words in vv. 1-8 and also the people's acknowledgment in vv. 9-11. In v. 13 two groups of sins are mentioned in infinitive absolute:²¹⁷ against God, "*transgressing* (פָּשַׁע) and *lying* (כָּשָׂה) against YHWH, *turning aside* (סוּג) from following our God" (v. 13a) and against man, "*speaking* (דַּבֵּר) oppression and falsehood, *conceiving* (הִרָה) and *uttering* (הִגִּיד) lying words from the hearts" (v. 13b). The fact that, in this context, the people's sins are considered as sins against God is particularly interesting. The people acknowledge that social sins committed against each other would also mean sin against YHWH.²¹⁸ As we have elsewhere mentioned, relationship between the people and YHWH depends on their relationship between themselves. Thus, the OT ethics is theologically determined.²¹⁹

In v. 14 the lack of צְדָקָה - מִשְׁפָּט is again emphasized. Here the statement is followed by a causal phrase introduced by כִּי. The location (בְּרַחוּב) "in the public place") in which truth (אֱמוּנָה) and uprightness (יִצְחָק) are absent suggests that the social sphere is here being referred to. Therefore, the word pair צְדָקָה - מִשְׁפָּט would be better understood as referring to human righteousness as in v. 9.

Thus the whole section of vv. 9-15a forms the people's response to the prophet's indictment in vv. 1-8. This sounds good and logically reasonable. And

²¹⁷ The use of infinitive absolute as a substitute for finite verb is common to the latter books. It emphasizes the abstract verbal idea, without regard to the subject or object of the action (GKC § 45a. 113a; W-O'C 35.2.2a, 582). Blenkinsopp suggested that this use of infinitive absolute gives a sense of continuous and unremitting activity and a regular pattern of behaviour. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 190.

²¹⁸ Therefore the verb כָּשָׂה *to lie, to deny* should not be understood as apostasy, but rather a practical denial. People acknowledge YHWH with their mouth and in all kinds of liturgical practices, but fail to recognize his demand concerning everyday life. In this way, the people deceive him with their hypocrisy. Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 192; cf. J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 693; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 224.

²¹⁹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 192.

indeed, this is the common explanation held by many. However, if we realize that the sins mentioned in vv. 1-8 and in some places in vv. 9-15a are social sins that inevitably create two different groups: the oppressor and the oppressed, then we must be cautious with regard to the identity of “the people.” The suggestion to read vv. 9-15a as the people’s response in the form of confession of sin should therefore be further clarified. Does “we,” which is understood as “the people,” represent the *whole* community, the evildoer and the victim altogether? If this is the case, we should further ask: should the victim confess the sin through which they themselves become the victim? We believe that the identity of “we” should be made clear before we can grasp the whole meaning of the passage.

There have been many proposals suggested by the scholars with regard to the identity of “we.” With some variations, attempts to make clear the identity of the speaker could be categorized into, at least, two tendencies. Each is characterized by the position and role of the prophet. First, the speaker is identified with the community, thus the prophet is not included, or at least, it is not explicitly mentioned;²²⁰ while the second, the “we” is in some ways connected with the prophet.²²¹

We shall now analyze the first suggestion. The closest possible reference to the “we” who confess their sins in vv. 9-14 is indeed those who are attacked by the prophet in vv. 1-8. If we accept the close relationship between vv. 1-8 and 9-15a, then, considering the sincerity of the lament and confession, as CHEYNE has already noticed,²²² it is very unlikely that the heartless evildoers described so vividly in vv. 1-8 would have confessed their sins in such a short time. Moreover, in v. 15, the evil is described as so prevalent that “those who seek to depart from such evil become the targets for persecution.”²²³ Thus, if this “we” might not include the wicked, then it would refer to rest of the community that, unfortunately, has become the victim of their fellow. CHILDS explicitly argued that in vv. 9-15 one hears the voice of faithful remnant within Israel.²²⁴ VERMEYLEN implicitly suggested that this “we” is “le groupe des juifs pieux,” though he went on to argue that the whole community remained sinful.²²⁵ HANSON indeed suggested that the “we” represents only *a group* within the

²²⁰ For example, J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 690 “community in prayer”; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 184-185, “community as a whole”; DELITZSCH, “the whole community, the wicked and the righteous.”

²²¹ For example, J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 191; O.H. STECK, “Beobachtungen,” 241; J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 254; C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 441; E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 64-65.

²²² T.K. CHEYNE, *Introduction*, 332.

²²³ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 488-489.

²²⁴ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 486.

²²⁵ J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*; 467-468.

whole people. For him, this "we" is the minority group who lamented because "the defilement of the apostates has turned that promise into corresponding curse."²²⁶ Without agreeing with their details, we shall tentatively follow VERMEYLEN and HANSON's suggestion that the "we" would be better understood as representing a group within the community that had to suffer from unjust treatment from their wicked fellows and, as a result, realized that the promised salvation did not come true.

But then, how to understand the fact that this group confessed the sins that are not theirs? It is true that it is impossible to draw a strict demarcation between the wicked and the innocent victim. Thus, it could not be ruled out that the victims, in some ways, might have taken part in this wicked game,²²⁷ or as CHILDS said, "The confessing community acknowledges freely its own guilt, *which is always present*."²²⁸ Nevertheless, from another perspective we could argue that, actually, the idea that the innocent intercedes for the wicked is not completely alien in the context of Second Isaiah. In the fourth Servant Song, one of the servant's characteristic is to "made intercession for the transgressors" (53,12b). And we have also seen that the prophet-speaker, as his signature in 59,21 indicates, is also described as bearing the servant tradition. If we follow this direction, we could propose two points: first, the confession of sin in vv. 12-15 should be understood as intercession on behalf of the sinners and second, the voice of "we" in vv. 9-15a is highly influenced by the prophet's self-understanding as the bearer of the Servant's tradition.

Consequently, it seems more appropriate to understand the "we" as the prophet who identifies with the community as whole²²⁹ rather than the community as the prophet's partner of dialogue who responded to his indictments. According to SMART, "...the prophet becomes intercessor for his sinful nation and confesses its sins as though he himself were a participant in them."²³⁰ Indeed, we are not able to precisely determine whether the "we" represents the prophet alone who put his idea of intercession in the mouth of the confessing community or the prophet *and* the

²²⁶ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 122. However, it should be noted that Hanson put the stress on the lamentation (vv. 9-11) and skipped the discussion on the confession of sin (vv. 12-15a). He did not explain whose (social) sin was intended by those verses. Therefore, it is not surprising that his position was harshly attacked by Schramm who argued that the people accused in 59,1-8 and those who confessed their sins are the very same people. B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 140. We notice here that Schramm's suggestion overlooks the victim of the social sins described in these verses.

²²⁷ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 184-185. Koole then referred to v. 15b where it is stated that "not a single champion of justice has remained." We should argue that such a statement does not necessarily mean that all do commit sins. The prevailing evil might have closed the possibility for such a champion of justice to arise.

²²⁸ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 488 (Italics mine).

²²⁹ Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 191; C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 441.

²³⁰ J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 254. However, he did not make a distinction between the wicked and the righteous victims.

community. The best we could say is that no matter who is intended by the pronoun “we,” one point is clear: under the influence of the servant-prophet what the community should resemble is here made clear.

2.4.2 Result

In this passage, we are struck by two points: the use of the pronoun “we” and the idea of intercession. Our analysis above suggests that these two points are linked together under the influence of the prophet’s announcement and thus present a description of the community. The community is a community which is willing to bear the sin of the wicked members and make an intercession for them. By doing so, it could then be expected that YHWH will change his mind and make the promised salvation come true.

It could be fairly argued that, on the one hand, the people’s willingness to intercede for the wicked is more motivated by their own interest. But, on the other hand, it remains a choice. In a circumstance where evil is so strongly prevailing, they could have lost their way and followed their wicked fellows. “Their confession” thus shows their preference: to remain faithfully to follow YHWH notwithstanding their surrounding sinful reality. It remains an act of faith and hope.

2.4.3 59,15b-20: The Promise of Divine Intervention

Before we proceed in analyzing this passage, some words on the connection between 59,15b-20 and 63,1-6 that have long been noticed seem appropriate. This connection could be seen from the overall structure of Isaiah 56-66. In this case, both passages that share similar subject - and also some small details, namely, the intervention of YHWH as the divine warrior, framed the core of Third Isaiah (chs. 60-62).²³¹ From such a literary consideration, it has been argued that one was composed under the influence of the other. The crucial point here is the relationship between 59,15b-16b and 63,5, upon which WHYBRAY commented, “Here the points of comparison, especially of vocabulary and syntax, are so numerous that a direct literary connexion between the two passages is beyond doubt.”²³² Nevertheless, no agreement has been achieved by the scholars as to how such an intertextual relationship should be

²³¹ For example, J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 61; also G.I. EMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66*, 20. The detail of similarities between those passages have been offered, for example, by J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 196; also J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 469.

²³² R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 226.

determined.²³³ Since to pursue the connection between these two passages is not our primary concern, we shall at this moment leave this problem open.

In his commentary BLENKINSOPP gave a title "Finally, A Reply" to this passage, by which he meant that "59,15b-20 serves as a response to the complaint immediately preceding."²³⁴ Indeed, what was taking place in the society was now seen from YHWH's perspective as vv. 15b-16a indicate:

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינָיו כִּי־אֵין מִשְׁפָּט
וַיֵּרָא כִּי־אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲמַם כִּי אֵין מִפְּנֵי

"YHWH saw and it was evil in his eyes²³⁵ because there was no justice. And he saw that there is nobody and wondered that no one intervened."

The lack of right order in the society (מִשְׁפָּט) is again underlined. The result of the gravity of the situation in which "one who departs from evil makes himself a prey" is again mentioned in a different manner (v. 16a).

The statement "YHWH saw (רָאָה)" seems to allude to 58,3 in which the people accused him as not seeing, and also to vv. 9b-10 where the people lamented their miserable hopeless situation.²³⁶ This actually leads to the third nuance implied in the verb רָאָה, namely, an indication that now YHWH is ready to assert himself (cf. Gen 6,5; Ex 3,7). The threefold repetition of כִּי־אֵין adds more weight to the urgency of situation so that YHWH has now to intervene. The first step of YHWH's intervention is then described in v. 17 using the language of cosmic battle myth: YHWH is now preparing to wage his war.

Verses 18-20 portray the target of YHWH's action. These three verses contain some textual difficulties. Therefore, in order to better grasp the meaning, a more attentive reading seems to be in order.

²³³ The majority of scholars hold that 59,16 is later than 63,5 and therefore, depends on it. Thus, for example, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 415; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 350; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 226; S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 136; W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 218-220; L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 70-72. Vermeylen stands in the opposite position with his opinion that 63,5 is a *relecture* of 59,16. J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 469-470. Koenen thinks that both passages were written by the same redactor. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 84-87.

²³⁴ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 195.

²³⁵ BHS suggests by וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינָיו as another reading that is followed by HANSON for metrical and structural reasons. P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 117. However, there is no compelling reason to emend the text. 1QIsa^a and LXX support the MT. The changed metre (2+2+2) could be understood as a mark of the transition to a new part of Isa 59. Cf. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 91.

²³⁶ G.T. POLAN, *In the Way of Justice*, 276 n. 73.

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| כְּעַל נְמִלוֹת כְּעַל יִשְׁלָם | 18a “According to deeds, he will repay accordingly |
| חֲמָה לְצַרְיוֹ נְמוּל לְאֵיבָיו | 18b wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies, |
| לְאֵיִם נְמוּל יִשְׁלָם: | 18c to the coastlands he will render requital. |
| וַיִּירָאוּ מִמַּעַרְב אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה | 19a Those from the west shall fear ²³⁷ the name of YHWH |
| וּמִמְזֶרֶח שָׁמֶשׁ אֶת־כְּבוֹדוֹ | 19b and those from the east, his glory, |
| כִּי־יָבֹא כְנֶהֱרַ צַר רוּחַ יְהוָה נֹסְסָה בּוֹ: | 19c for he will come like a rushing oppressive stream, which YHWH’s breath drives. |
| וּבָא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל | 20a And he will come for Zion as redeemer, |
| וּלְשֵׁבֵי פֶשַׁע בְּיַעֲקֹב | 20b and to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” |
| נְאֻם יְהוָה: | 20c oracle of YHWH |

Despite ODEBERG’s observation that v. 18 is corrupt,²³⁸ the MT is supported by IQIsa^a and Vulgate.²³⁹ The word לְאֵיִם “to the coastlands” in v. 18c is often understood as referring to foreign enemies. However, there is no mention of foreign enemies in Third Isaiah until now. On the contrary, elsewhere the foreigner is described positively (cf. 56,3.6-7). The whole context requires strongly that the

²³⁷ According to BHS, there are many Mss that read וַיִּירָאוּ (from the root רָאָה to see) because the expression “to fear his glory” is rather unfamiliar, while in 66,18 the expression וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי “to see my glory” is found. However, the amended phrase “to see YHWH’s name” would also make little sense. Torrey believed that there is a play on words here, between the meaning “fear” and “see.” The former applies only to the *name*, the latter to the *glory*. C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 443. For a comment on Torrey’s suggestion see D.F. PAYNE, “Characteristic Word-Play,” 226. Ancient versions unanimously support the MT. Cf. IQIsa^a (וַיִּירָאוּ); LXX φοβηθησονται; Vulg *timebunt*; Tg וירחלוך.

²³⁸ H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 194.

²³⁹ The Targum has perhaps a paraphrased text, “He is a lord of recompenses; recompense shall he repay, even retribution to them that hate him, recompense to his enemies; he shall repay recompense to the coastlands.” Very probably, the Tg is influenced by Jer 51,56 in which YHWH is designated as אל נמלות ירוה “God of recompense.” The LXX has a shorter version ὡς ἀνταπόδοσιν ἀνταπόδοσιν δεῖδος τοῖς ὑπερπαντίοις. The last three words of the MT are here missing.

enemies of YHWH are those who are within the community and not from outside.²⁴⁰ Therefore, many scholars suggested that the last three words of v. 18 are a gloss. The author might have picked up these verses from the tradition available to him and applied them somewhat clumsily to a different situation: "as in the past YHWH saved his people from their foreign enemies, so now he will intervene to save his loyal servants from a new kind of danger."²⁴¹

In this way, what YHWH is going to do is now presented. He will execute vengeance on them according to what they have done to his faithful people. So terrible is his action that everybody will fear his name and his glory (v. 19ab) (cf. Ps 102,16).

The scholarly discussions on v. 19c demonstrate that this half-verse contains so many ambiguities that have generated numerous well-grounded suggestions as well. They are mostly based on philological considerations.²⁴² In this occasion, we will not repeat the whole scholarly discussion. Rather, we shall present our opinion with references to the suggestions proposed by the scholars. We shall approach the text with two considerations: first, in spite of many suggestions, we understand v. 19c as having to do with YHWH's intervention; and second, as we have already seen elsewhere, the author often employed double meaning words. Consequently, more than single translation would be possible.

We shall first try to identify the much-debated subject of the verb יָבוֹא. Some scholars suggested that the subject of this verb is צָר understood as a noun, in the sense of adversary or enemy.²⁴³ This would find support in v. 18b where צָר appears in that sense. However, it seems better to follow the common translation that understands YHWH as the subject of the verb.²⁴⁴ Some considerations could be advanced to support this choice. First, as KOOLE noted, in the previous verses, the

²⁴⁰ According to Steck, the words צָר and אֹיִב in plural and used to refer to YHWH's enemies only appear in 1,24 and 59,18. O.H. STECK, "Jahwes Feinde," 54. In Isa 1,24 they are used to indicate YHWH's enemies *within* the community. Smith, however, suggests that the enemies are both apostate Jews and the gentile nations. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 124.

²⁴¹ Cf. R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 226.

²⁴² A summary of the discussions can be found, for example, KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 69-71; also H.A.J. KRUGER, "Who comes," I and II, 84-91; 268-278.

²⁴³ For example, F. DELITZSCH, *Commentary* [CD-ROM]; H.A.J. KRUGER, "Who comes," II, 276. Because of the absence of the definite article, צָר seems to indicate a noun rather than an attributive adjective modifying כְּנֹהֵר (cf. GKC § 126 u). The LXX, however, has $\omega\varsigma$ $\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\alpha\mu\omicron\varsigma$ $\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\sigma$ that clearly understood צָר as an adjective attached to כְּנֹהֵר.

²⁴⁴ Duhm suggested to read "the name and the glory of YHWH" as the subject of the verb. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 416. The LXX rendering that has η $\omicron\gamma\eta$ $\pi\alpha\pi\alpha$ $\kappa\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ as the subject is already an interpretation.

singular form verb always referred to YHWH²⁴⁵ (cf. also in v. 20a the verb בּוֹא has YHWH, or his representative, as subject). Second, it could also be observed that the topic of 59,15b-20 is the coming of YHWH (cf. v. 20a). This is further underlined by the use of בּוֹא with the phenomena that accompany YHWH's advent in the following ch. 60.²⁴⁶ Third, in the context of the whole verse, v. 19c forms a subordinate clause introduced by כִּי. If we consider this particle as introducing a causal clause that interprets the preceding part, then the train of thought is perfectly understandable: the coming of YHWH causes fear for the people (v. 19ab). As POLAN noted, the opening verbs of each bicolon in vv. 19-20 highlight the progression of thought.²⁴⁷ Other choices of subject like, for example, *enemy* or *adversary* etc., would therefore break this flow of thought. Since we understand YHWH as the subject of בּוֹא, consequently, we should omit the definite article in כְּנִהָר as is suggested by many scholars²⁴⁸ and also by BHS based on the Greek translations, that is, the LXX and the recensions α' σ' θ' that have ως ποταμός. The similar expressions in 48,18 and 66,12 seem to support this small emendation.

The word צַר should then be taken as an attributive adjective modifying כְּנִהָר. The exact meaning is indeed difficult to access. HALOT takes it as a *Qal* participle from the root I צור; but then admitted that the meaning is uncertain, though it gives three possible renderings.²⁴⁹ BDB sees it as an adjective (I צַר "narrow," "tight") and translates the phrase "like a constricted (and hence swift, powerful) river."²⁵⁰ POLAN reminds us that there is an apparent word play on the root צור that unites v. 18 and v. 19.²⁵¹ As YHWH - and his people - bears the burden of being oppressed by the oppressors (צָרִים in v. 18), so does an oppressive (צַר) stream now break loose against them. KOOLE also preferred the active sense of this adjective.²⁵² Thus we arrive at the

²⁴⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 207.

²⁴⁶ In ch. 60, the verb בּוֹא used in the connection of the coming of YHWH is found 11 times: 60,1,4 (2x).5.6.9.11.13.17(2x).20. Cf. G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 303 n. 86; H.A.J. KRUGER, "Who comes," 85. 275.

²⁴⁷ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 300-301.

²⁴⁸ Cf., for example, R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 228; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 195. Notwithstanding Watts' opinion, "In spite of the article, MT is not thinking of a specific stream." J.D. WATTS, *Isaiah 34-66* [CD-ROM].

²⁴⁹ (i) literally "like a constricted stream," (ii) "like a rushing, roaring stream" cf. LXX and Vulgate, (iii) צַר = II צַר means enemy cf. Peshita and Targum. It further notes that the first is to be preferred.

²⁵⁰ BDB, 865.

²⁵¹ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 301.

²⁵² J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 208-209.

translation, "...for he will come like a rushing stream, which the breath of YHWH drives."

Verse 20 indicates that the coming of YHWH brings another consequence: a disaster for his adversaries but redemption for Zion, namely, for those who turn from sin in Jacob. Instead of "for Zion" in v. 20a, some Greek manuscripts have εκ Ζιων (cf. also Paul in Rom 11,26).²⁵³ However, as WESTERMANN has already noted, the context seems to favour the MT.²⁵⁴ If we consider the destination of YHWH's coming; we shall here see a good parallelism between "for Zion" and "to his adversaries" (cf. v. 18). Moreover, 1QIsa^a has אֶל צִיּוֹן, which like ל in the MT, could be understood as *dativus commodi* ("on behalf of Zion").

The second part of v. 20 goes on to say further that YHWH's salvation will reach those in Jacob who turn from sin. This specification implies a division within the community between the wicked and those who turn from sin. Salvation is thus not for the whole community. Sin has divided the community. This is in accordance with 57,13 that we have seen before "...but, those who take refuge in me shall possess the land and inherit my holy mountain." Here, the LXX has different reading: YHWH is the subject of ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακωβ "He will remove the transgression from Jacob."²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the MT and LXX agree that God's redemptive act effects a separation.²⁵⁶ Thus, in these three verses, the prophet expressed the intervention of YHWH that has a double effect: salvation for the faithful but destruction for the wicked.

Before we conclude the analysis of this passage, a comment about the shift of the tenses used in these verses seems appropriate. It has long been noticed that the shift of the verbal form employed in vv. 15b-17 and vv. 18-20 is rather unusual and has, in fact, created many difficulties. Verses 15b-17 use the consecutive imperfect, while vv. 18-20 use the future imperfect. It is traditionally suggested that the consecutive imperfect in vv. 15b-17 should be understood as prophetic perfect; a prediction uttered with such certainty that it is as if it had already taken place,²⁵⁷ though the use of the narrative imperfect form, as CHILDS noted, is not frequent for

²⁵³ Duhm considered this as the original version. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 416. Also S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 133f.

²⁵⁴ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 351. He argued that the expression "YHWH comes from Zion" belongs to later tradition. And it is this tradition that is represented in LXX's variants.

²⁵⁵ However, α' and σ' have τοις ἀποστρέψασιν which are close to the MT.

²⁵⁶ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 351-352.

²⁵⁷ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 197; cf. also J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 694; G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 292; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 225.

the prophetic perfect.²⁵⁸ In this line of thought, there is perhaps an additional nuance here. On the one hand, the actions, which are described in vv. 15b-17 and understood as prophetic perfect, are internal invisible actions that are supposed to take place *within* YHWH himself. Thus, the prophet was sure that YHWH will intervene. On the other hand, the actions which are described in vv. 18-20 and formulated in the form of future imperfect,²⁵⁹ are actions that would affect other human parties and work effect on them. They are YHWH's external actions that would be visible and verifiable. In this case, the use of imperfect consecutive as in vv. 15b-17, on the one hand, would indeed express the certainty of the action, but on the other hand, would run the risk of verifiable unfulfillment. Conversely, the use of future imperfect would indicate, in a milder way, that the prophet was sure that YHWH will intervene but he did not know when it will happen. In this way, the future imperfect suggests an indeterminate future.

2.4.4 Result

In 59,15b-20, the prophet offers a solution to the unfulfilled prophecy in a different form. In addition to what has been said through the analysis of the other passages that the community should be the agent of the fulfillment of the prophecy, it is here suggested that, using the traditional figure of YHWH as warrior, YHWH himself will intervene and bring salvation to the faithful. It has a double meaning. On the one hand, it gives hope that when human beings fail to realize the salvation, YHWH will be the solution. One could here notice the triple use of כִּי־אֵין in v. 15b and 16a that highlights the lack of human participation. On the other hand, it shows that the key answer to the solution to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy does not merely depend on human actions, but, finally, upon YHWH's. And for the latter, faith in YHWH is inevitably needed!

Another aspect that also emerges from our analysis is that the salvation promised is no longer for the whole community, but only for a part of it. YHWH will indeed come for Zion, but only those who turn from evil will recognize him as the redeemer. The ethical consideration introduces the possibility of failure and renders a division within the community inevitable.

²⁵⁸ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 489. He believed that such a construction involves more than the traditional understanding. He then preferred to Lau's suggestion that the shift of tense in Ch. 59 serves to thematize the action of YHWH. Cf. W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 218.

²⁵⁹ In v. 20 we have an inverted perfect (אָבָה) that has the same value as future imperfect.

2.5 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 63,1-6

Among biblical scholars, there is no unanimous agreement with regard to relationship of this passage with its surrounding context. Many commentators claim that these verses should be regarded as an independent unit unrelated to the preceding passage (chs. 60-62).²⁶⁰ However, this opinion is not left uncontested. Various alternative suggestions have thus been proposed.²⁶¹ Though we are not intending to enter into the discussion in establishing the nature of the passage, we shall argue that 63,1-6 indeed demonstrates some connections with its surroundings, which could help us to understand the significance of the passage.

This section that HANSON called “a fine example of a Divine Warrior Hymn”²⁶² takes the form of a dialogue that consists of two pairs of question and answer. Thus, v. 1a presents the question and v. 1b the answer; v. 2 has the second question, while v. 3 the second answer. Both questions are introduced by interrogative particles (מִי and מִדָּרוֹעַ). Because of the particle כִּי at the beginning of v. 4, it seems better to understand vv. 4-6 as a further explanation of the answers given in v. 3.²⁶³ We shall now begin with examining the first part (v. 1).

2.5.1 63,1: Question and Answer 1

In the first question, the speaker was asking about somebody’s identity, “Who is this that comes from Edom,²⁶⁴ in a reddened²⁶⁵ garment from Bozrah, he that is glorious in

²⁶⁰ For example, J. MULLENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 724; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 252.

²⁶¹ Thus, based on various considerations, some scholars argued that 63,1-6 should be attached to chs. 60-62. For example, F. HOLMGREN, “Yahweh the Avenger,” 133-148; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 38-44. Another position is held by Torrey who prefers to connect 63,1-6 with the following. C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 461. Watts prefer to read this passage together with 62,8. J.D. WATTS, *Isaiah 34-66*, (CD-ROM). Summary of the scholars’ opinions can be found in K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 76-83.

²⁶² P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 203.

²⁶³ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*; 513. Though, according to Westermann, vv. 4-6 merely repeat v. 3 rather than to explain. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 383; cf. also S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 144.

²⁶⁴ Duhm together with some other older commentators, following the brilliant emendation of de Lagarde, preferred to emend מִדָּרוֹעַ “from Edom” to מִדָּמָה “reddened” and מִבְּצִירָה “from Bozrah” to מִבְּצִיר “redder than a vinedresser.” B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 433. However, more recent commentators refused this suggestion. Indeed, there is no compelling reason for such emendations. For more elaborated reasons, see, for example, S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 146; also K. FAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 139-140. Moreover, against this emendation, it should be argued that the MT presents a play on word between “Edom” (אֲדוֹמִים), “red” (אָדָם) in the second question in v. 2, and, possibly also alluding to “blood” (דָּם). Lau noticed that the word play between *Edom* and *red* is only found in Gen 25,30. W. LAU,

his apparel, marching²⁶⁶ in the greatness of his strength?" From the way of asking question, it is often deduced that the speaker was a sentinel or a watchman who stationed on the city wall to guard the city. Thus, the scene displays the watchman interrogating somebody who was approaching from the direction of Edom. At this point, the figure of a watchman would remind the readers to 62,6 in which YHWH orders his watchmen (שמרים) to stand on the walls of Jerusalem.²⁶⁷ In addition, SMITH also argues that the use of צדקה and להושיע in v. 1b points to 62,1 in which "the prophet, perhaps performing the role of a watchman, will not be silent until Jerusalem's vindication (צדקה) and salvation (ישועה) are clearly perceived."²⁶⁸ Though 63,1 does not use the word שמרים "watchmen," it portrays a scene of a watchman in action. Therefore, though vague indeed, a connection between 63,1 and 62,6 - and thus with chs. 60-62 - seems to be established.²⁶⁹

The approaching figure then replied introducing himself, "It is I, announcing righteousness, mighty to save." Though the text does not mention the identity of the figure, if one considers the context, it seems too difficult not to attribute him to YHWH.²⁷⁰ Therefore, we follow the traditional understanding. Despite the problems

Schriftgelehrte Prophetie, 282; cf. also J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 726; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 253; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 78.

²⁶⁵ The Hebrew word חָמֵץ is a *hapax legomenon*, whose etymology is uncertain (according to BDB it derives from the root חָמַץ II "to be red" (?). BDB, 330; while HALOT suggests that it comes from חָמַץ I "to be sharp or with mixed colour" (?)). The LXX has ἐρυθρία, "a redness on the skin," or "scarlet," "dye red (of garments)"; while Vulg *tinctis vestibus*. This translation is conjectural based on the context. Koole thinks that this word is usually connected with the root חָמַץ, "to be sour," which in Syriac developed into "to become red." J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 332. Recent commentators, such as Koole and Blenkinsopp prefer the translation "bright" and "glistening" respectively.

²⁶⁶ Read צָעַד "marching," instead of MT צָעָה "stooping," "bending" (cf. Vulgate: *gradiens*). As Odeberg noted, this emendation is almost universally accepted. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 272. However, some scholars, for example, Childs and Watts prefer to maintain MT which is supported by 1QIsa^a. B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 514; J.D. WATTS, *Isaiah 34-66*, (CD-ROM). Watts further explains that such a body-posture is caused by the weight of his armors. His suggestion has been refused by Claire R. Mathews, who said that Watts' translation "would make sense in light of the similar passage, 59:15-20, but requires one to apply the unusual sense 'armor' to the noun כִּיח." C.R. MATHEWS, *Defending Zion*, 77 n. 37. Be that as it may, both readings indicate the physical appearance of the approaching figure. We believe that it does not make much difference for the interpretation of the whole passage.

²⁶⁷ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 50.

²⁶⁸ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 43. Smith indeed wanted to attach 63,1-6 to chs. 60-62. Thus, he tried to demonstrate a number of links of vocabulary, imagery and theme which reinforce the affiliation of 63,1-6 with chs. 60-62; cf. also F. HOLMGREN, "Yahweh the Avenger," 142-143.

²⁶⁹ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 82.

²⁷⁰ However, Watts argued that "he is more likely a symbol of Persian power fighting Jerusalem's and Yahweh's battles for them. Perhaps he is best thought as Megabyzus, the redoubtable Persian general who served as satrap of Beyond the River during this period." J.D. WATTS,

caused by the preposition ב, ²⁷¹ it seems that the phrase מְדַבֵּר בְּצִדְקָה could here be understood as speaking *about* righteousness. ²⁷² Here we should understand צִדְקָה “righteousness” as covering the actions in accordance with the demands of a relationship. ²⁷³ In this sense, the response shows YHWH as coming from Edom after accomplishing his righteousness on behalf of Israel because of his covenantal relationship with them. As we shall see below, the use of נָקַם and גָּאֵל in v. 4 (cf. also גָּאֵל in 59,20) would support this interpretation.

YHWH’s response seems to demonstrate that YHWH is not just coming, but he also wanted to proclaim to his people what he had done in Edom. The last phrase in his response could also be included here. He was coming to show that he is *mighty to save* (רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ) as well. ²⁷⁴ This was to convince the people who doubted his willingness and ability to deliver them.

2.5.2 69,2-3.4-6: Question and Answer 2

The first question is an enquiry of the identity of the approaching figure. Now, the second question goes further. The speaker was now questioning the appearance of YHWH, which has actually been implied in the first question. As it has already been stated, we could here notice the word play between the first and the second question: אָדָם “red” recalls מֵאֲדוֹם “from Edom” in v. 1, while נֶת “wine-press” alludes to מִבְּצָרָה “from Bozrah.” The latter is indeed not so clear. But one should here notice that מִבְּצָרָה is close to מִבְּצֵר (from the root בָּצַר “to harvest grape”) as is suggested by older commentators such as DE LAGARDE, DUHM, ²⁷⁵ etc.

Verse 3 presents YHWH’s response in such a way that average readers with a common image of the divine in their minds might not expect it as coming from YHWH. The description of what YHWH has done in Edom is formulated in very

Isaiah 34-66 (CD-ROM). His view has been recently rejected by Blenkinsopp who argued that Megabyzus never campaigned in Edom. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 249.

²⁷¹ Cf. the discussion launched by J.W. OLLEY, “Notes,” 446-453. He preferred to understand the preposition ב as indicating the manner as in 42,6 and 45,13. He believed to find support in σ’ εγω λαλω εν δικαιοσυνη.

²⁷² LXX has διαλέγομαι δικαιοσύνην; while the Vulgate *loquor iustitiam*. The preposition ב has indeed a broad spectrum of meanings. In support of our choice, BDB states “...occasionally also with verbs speaking, thinking, mentioning, knowing, to denote the object of the action, *to speak about*” cf. Deut 6,7; Ps 87,3. BDB, 91 IV e; cf. also W-O’C 11.2.5, 199.

²⁷³ J.W. OLLEY, “Notes,” 452.

²⁷⁴ Cf. emendation proposed by Harding, in which he suggested to add אָנִי before רַב “I, mighty to save.” F.C. HARDING, “The Oracle against Edom,” 214. Also P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 203.

²⁷⁵ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 433.

violent language. YHWH is portrayed as treading on not the wine press, but the people alone until his garments were stained not with the juice of grapes, but with blood. This verse consists of three parallel lines:

- 3aα I have trodden the wine press alone
and from the peoples no one was with me;
3aβ I trod them in my anger
3aγ and trampled them in my wrath,
3bα their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments,
3bβ and all my raiment I stained.

This verse raises a problem with regard to the identity of עַמִּים “the peoples” (v. 3aα) especially in connection with the third pers. pl. suffixes in the following parts (v. 3aβγ.bα). Do these pronouns refer to עַמִּים “the peoples” in the previous part? At this point, 1QIsa^a has a different reading רַמְעַמִּי “from my people,”²⁷⁶ while LXX (τῶν ἐθνῶν) and Vulgate (*de gentibus*) support the MT. However, since there is no textual support for the reading of 1QIsa^a, it seems better to follow the MT. BLENKINSOPP here noted that the Qumran reading “probably an intentional alteration due to the difficulty of accepting that YHWH would look to Gentiles for assistance.”²⁷⁷

In order to approach the problem, we shall first ask: What is the purpose of YHWH’s turning to the peoples? In the light of v. 3aα it seems clear that YHWH looked at the peoples in order to find help from them. Verse 5a, which practically repeats v. 3aα, supports this positive interpretation towards the peoples, “I looked, but there was no helper; I was appalled, but there was no supporter” (cf. the particle אֵין appears three times in these two verses). In the tradition of Second Isaiah that emphasized a strict monotheistic vision of YHWH, the idea that YHWH is looking for help from other nations should not indeed be surprising. In Second Isaiah, Cyrus was also considered as YHWH’s chosen instrument against Babylon (cf. 45,1ff). If this is the case, then the third person plural pronoun in v. 3aβγ.bα could *not* refer to the peoples. Of course, one could argue that YHWH will destroy the people because they refused to be *with him* (אִתּוֹ in v. 3aα)²⁷⁸ understood in the broadest sense of the word.

²⁷⁶ This reading is also adopted by J. MORGENSTERN, “Further Light,” 15; and among the versions, by NJB and Indonesian Version. Unfortunately, the Indonesian Bible Society that is responsible for the Indonesian translation could not provide us with the reason why such an emendation has been made. Nevertheless, we are recently informed that in the next revised version that is being undertaken, the MT would get the priority.

²⁷⁷ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 246.

²⁷⁸ Thus, for example, S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 141-142.

Apart from the context it would indeed make good sense that YHWH will punish those who refuse him, though it sounds rather unusual. However, in the context of 63,1-6 this maxim cannot be accepted. The line of thought is as follows: YHWH has a particular project to accomplish; then he turns to the peoples for help; and *because*²⁷⁹ he could not find any help, he executed his project alone; and, as a result, his garments are stained with blood. Thus, to understand the pronoun as referring to the peoples will obscure the flow of the story.

Two questions then arise: If the pronoun cannot refer to the peoples (עַמִּים), then to whom does it refer? What would 'the project' of YHWH be? We shall deal with the latter question first by looking at v. 4 that provides us with the motive for YHWH's action. This verse is introduced by כִּי indicating the motive of YHWH's action.²⁸⁰

v. 4a כִּי יוֹם נִקְמָה בְּלִבִּי "For, the day of vengeance was in my heart,
v. 4b וְשָׁנַת גְּאוּלֵי בָּאָה and the year of my redemption has come"

As scholars have noticed, the phrase יוֹם נִקְמָה also appears in 61,2 and also 34,8.²⁸¹ In all these passages, it is accompanied by another phrase with שָׁנָה in construct state (שָׁנַת־רִצּוֹן "the year of (YHWH's) favour" in 61,2 and שָׁנַת שְׁלוֹמִים "the year of vindication" in 34,8). We are not going to enter into the complicated discussion about the intertextual relationship between those passages. Rather, it suffices to assert that 63,4 is connected to 61,2 through the appearance of יוֹם נִקְמָה. In 61,1-3 the speaker prophet declared himself as the one with the Spirit of YHWH who was anointed to proclaim *the year of YHWH's favour* and *the day of vengeance*. Now, in 63,4 YHWH himself portrays his action as the coming of *his day of vengeance* and *the year of his redemption*.

The use of נִקְמָה "to avenge," "to take vengeance" together with גָּאֵל I "to redeem" is here important for understanding the nature of YHWH's action. Both words are commonly used in a particular context. Basically, נִקְמָה is meant to restore

²⁷⁹ This would mean ו in v. 3aα has a causal nuance. See, S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 142.

²⁸⁰ Cf. F. HOLMGREN, "Yahweh the Avenger," 136.

²⁸¹ Koenen presented a discussion of the intertextual relationship between these three passages. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 81-82. It is interesting to notice that ch. 34 is also connected with 63,1-6 through the word pair Edom - Bozrah (34,6), elsewhere not found in the Book of Isaiah. The context of ch. 34 is the destruction of the nations by YHWH's anger (34,2), which is then narrowed to Edom (34,5.6b). This would suggest that Edom stands as the representative of all the nations. In the light of the use of *Edom-Bozrah* and *the day of vengeance* in both passages (34,5.6 and 63,1.4), 63,1-6 could then be seen as the fulfillment of ch. 34. Cf. B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 517-518.

the damage suffered by a kinship group because of some crimes committed against an individual or a particular group. In this context, the execution of vengeance is not optional. Rather, as BLENKINSOPP formulated, “it is a contractual obligation, as the most effective means for protecting people who could not act on their own behalf in claiming the rights that custom and law assigned to them.”²⁸² This obligation to take vengeance arises from the real or imagined blood kinship among the members of a clan or tribe.²⁸³ Interestingly, the avenger is called גֹּאֵל “the redeemer,” who was the person among one’s kin who assumed the role of protector and vindicator by executing vengeance, thus making a close link between vengeance and redemption.²⁸⁴ In reading the phrase שָׁנַת גְּאוּלִי “the year of my redemption,” we shall follow KOOLE who suggested that the vocalization of גְּאוּלִים refers to a certain age or period in someone’s life, as נְעוּרִים “youth.” So here it means a ‘year’ in which YHWH acts as a גֹּאֵל.²⁸⁵

Read from this perspective, v. 4 describes YHWH presenting himself both as the avenger and also the redeemer of his people - and thus there is no need to choose one from these two roles attributed to YHWH as some scholars have attempted. At the same time, it would mean that YHWH does not act spontaneously according to his free initiative but rather he fulfills his legal duty implied in the terms נָקַם and גֹּאֵל. This legal understanding of YHWH’s action is, as we have seen, in accordance with our reading of צְדָקָה in v. 1b above. The use of these terms with this particular nuance thus depicts YHWH as taking action on behalf of his people in the context of his relationship with his people. Though the poet takes the form of Divine Warrior Hymn, it seems clear that here YHWH appears as the redeemer in a juridical sense.²⁸⁶

Having presented YHWH’s project to redeem his people, we shall now return to another question: If the pronoun in v. 3 could not refer to the peoples (עַמִּים), then to whom does it refer? In other words, who is being punished by YHWH’s anger? In the context of 63,1-6, another possible candidate to which the pronoun might have referred is *Edom* in v. 1a. Is it possible that the third personal pronoun in v. 3 refers to Edom?

The word *Edom* in v. 1 has indeed generated many scholarly interpretations. Some scholars suggest that in 63,1-6 Edom is *not* the target of YHWH’s fury, rather it

²⁸² J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 250-251.

²⁸³ E. LIPÍŃSKI, “נָקַם,” 3.

²⁸⁴ Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 251; E. LIPÍŃSKI, “נָקַם,” 1.

²⁸⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 340; cf. also L. KOEHLER, “Jes 63:4,” 316.

²⁸⁶ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 81.

is *the location* where YHWH's final intervention takes place.²⁸⁷ Others maintained that YHWH's destruction falls upon Edom and Bozrah as Israel's neighbour.²⁸⁸ Most commentators, however, prefer to understand Edom in 63,1 as a symbol of the nations who stand in opposition to YHWH.²⁸⁹ Indeed, Edom has long been known as the archenemy of Israel. Even the literary attestation of the OT demonstrate that Edom was the most hated of all Israel's neighbours and, indeed, became a symbol for the enemies of God's people, and so was used for Rome in post-biblical literature.²⁹⁰

Based on the appearance of *Edom* in 63,1, some scholars attempt to connect this passage with historical events that involved Edom, and in turn, to determine the date of composition of this passage.²⁹¹ However, if Edom is used as a symbol that represents any parties that opposed YHWH and his people, then connection to any historical references becomes unnecessary.

Seeing that the suffix pronoun in 63,3 cannot refer to the peoples and considering the tendencies among the scholars to understand *Edom* in 63,1 as Israel's archenemy, it seems reasonable that the suffix would indeed refer to Edom. But now, we shall ask a question: in *what sense* should we understand *Edom* here? In order to answer this question we shall first examine the comparison between 63,1-6 and 59,15b-20, which has been widely recognized by the scholars.

Both in textual and thematic level, these two passages stand very close to each other. And thus, as many scholars have concluded, a textual relationship cannot be denied though its exact nature cannot be easily decided.²⁹² We shall show here the similarities found in both passages as observed by HANSON.²⁹³

²⁸⁷ For example, J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 249; B. DICOU, *Edom, Israel's Brother*, 191-192. A slightly different idea was proposed by Mathews who stated that in "Isa 63 Yahweh is not said to have trampled Edom (read the nations). He is simply depicted as coming from Edom after having trampled the nations." C.R. MATHEWS, *Defending Zion*, 79.

²⁸⁸ Cf. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 40; J. MORGENSTERN, "Further Light," 16.

²⁸⁹ Among others, J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 726; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 253; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 206; T.K. CHEYNE, *Introduction*, 349; J.M. MYERS, "Edom and Judah," 384.

²⁹⁰ Cf. B.C. CRESSON, "The Condemnation of Edom," 145.148.

²⁹¹ For example, Morgenstern argued that 63,1-6 refers to the destruction of Edom by the Nabateans in 465 B.C.E. He further concluded that the text must have been composed shortly before the middle of fifth century B.C. J. MORGENSTERN, "Further Light," 16. Cf. also S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 147.

²⁹² For a brief summary of the discussions among the scholars, see K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 83. But then he concluded, "Es scheint mir unmöglich, den Primat eines der beiden Texte zu begründen, da ein synoptischer Vergleich dafür keinerlei Anhaltspunkte bietet."

²⁹³ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 205.

| | 59,15b-20 | 63,1-6 |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Yahweh acts alone: | <u>וירא יוהוה כי אין איש</u> | ומעמים <u>אין איש אחי</u> |
| He is appalled, for | <u>ישתומם כי אין מפניע</u> | <u>ואשתומם ואין סומך</u> |
| there is no other: | | |
| His own arm delivers: | <u>ותושע לו זרעו</u> | <u>ותושע לי זרעי</u> |
| His glorious apparel: | <u>וילבש צדקה כשרין</u> | <u>הדור בלבוש</u> |

In addition to the observation above, we can still notice that:

- a. In 59,15b-20 YHWH is described as preparing himself to go to the battle (cf. imperfect יבוא); while in 63,1-6 he is portrayed as returning from the battle (cf. present participle בא);²⁹⁴ though it should be noticed that in 59,15b-20 YHWH's armor is not offensive.
- b. 59,20 says that YHWH will come as גאל "Redeemer" for Zion; in 63,4, as we have seen above, YHWH's action could be understood as the accomplishment of his role as גאל.
- c. *Edom* in 63,1 stands in contrast parallel with "Those in Jacob who turn from sins" (59,20).

For our purpose, this last point deserves closer attention. We believe that the juxtaposition of *Edom* and *Jacob* is here significant because it underlines another - often overlooked - aspect in the relationship between Edom and Israel. Edom is not only Israel's archenemy *par excellence*, but also their brother!²⁹⁵ This might be a hint that the enemies trampled in 63,1-6 are not outside, but within the Israelite community. As we have seen, a careful reading of chs. 58-59 indicate that the community is divided into two groups, the sinner and the faithful. In 59,20 the faithful, who will see YHWH as גאל "Redeemer," are called "Those in Jacob who turn from sins." Thus, it is reasonable to argue that *Edom* as Jacob's kin and archenemy now represents the members of the community who are not willing to repent.²⁹⁶ Against them YHWH executed his role as גאל in 63,1-6.

²⁹⁴ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 329.332; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 85.

²⁹⁵ Though the relationship between two nations cannot historically be originated in the Genesis account about the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau (Gen 25), there are some biblical passages that indicate the brotherly relationship between Israel and Edom (cf. Amos 1,11; Ob 10.12). For full treatment of this topic, see among others J.R. BARTLETT, *Edom and the Edomites*; B. DICOU, *Edom, Israel's Brother*.

²⁹⁶ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 518.

Two considerations would perhaps support this interpretation. First, as 56,3.6-7 suggest, the ideal community would transcend ethnical boundaries since it gives the foreigners a chance to take part in it. The distinction is no longer between Israel and non-Israel, but between those who are with YHWH and those who are against YHWH. Consequently, Edom is not the symbol of *the nations* who oppose YHWH, but simply the symbol of those who are against YHWH regardless their ethnic origin. Second, as KOENEN has noted, the similarity between 59,15b-20 and 63,1-6 would indicate that both passages are dealing with the same battle, and thus, the same enemies, namely those in Jacob who *did not* turn from sins.²⁹⁷

There remains another problem to solve. In v. 6 those who were trampled by YHWH is called *the peoples* (עַמִּים). In accordance with what has been said above, we should say that עַמִּים here refers to sinners within community, and not *the nations*. In this case, SCHRAMM reminds us that “for the most part in Third Isaiah the traditional distinction between Israel and the nations is blurred.”²⁹⁸ Admittedly, this would mean that in v. 3 and 6 the word עַמִּים is used with different reference.

2.5.3 Result

Two things that are relevant for our purpose have emerged from our analysis of this brief passage. First, as it has long been recognized, both from structural and content considerations, 63,1-6 stands in parallel with 59,15b-20. Because nobody comes to intervene (cf. the triple appearance of the particle אֵין in vv. 3.5), YHWH is depicted as the lonely conqueror who acts alone on behalf of his faithful. However, there are two significance differences between them.

1. In 59,15b-20 YHWH is preparing to wage war; while in 63,1-6 he is portrayed as returning from the battlefield. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that the divine intervention has already taken place. It remains in the future. However, such a formulation that shows the prophet's conviction, would hopefully give weight to his proclamation. And, in turn, this would encourage his listeners' expectation.
2. Unlike 59,15b-20, in 63,1-6 YHWH's covenantal actions are underlined. By highlighting YHWH's faithfulness, the prophet rejected the people's question about YHWH's willingness and ability to save them. YHWH is faithful and is ready to save his people.

²⁹⁷ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 85-86; cf. also J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 489-490.

²⁹⁸ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 149.

Second, as our analysis above have demonstrated, the intertextuality detected throughout 63,1-6 shows that in composing this passage, the author made use of the tradition available to him. As we have seen, this is one of the characteristics of Third Isaiah's strategy.

2.6 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 63,7-64,11²⁹⁹

Notwithstanding the textual difficulties that notably characterize this poem,³⁰⁰ its unity commonly recognized as a communal lament seems to be accepted by most scholars.³⁰¹ This long psalm-like passage is usually divided into two parts: 63,7-14 and 63,15-64,11. The first part describes the historical recital of YHWH's dealing with his people in the past; while the second is often considered as a prayer. Further divisions into smaller units, especially for the second part, vary according to the perspective of the commentators. Though there have been many proposals with regard to the detailed divisions of the passage, we believe, that, based on an attentive reading that puts the emphasis on the content, another division is still also possible.

As we have done elsewhere, also here we are not intending to make a close analysis of every single verse in this poem; rather we are going to highlight some themes that are relevant for our purpose. We shall initiate our reading by paying attention to the main topic that marks the poem, namely, the supplications or requests addressed to YHWH.

2.6.1 The Requests (63,15; 64,8.11)

As a communal lament, this poem is characterized by several appeals to YHWH insisting him to intervene.³⁰² We shall here mention 63,15 in which the speaker urged

²⁹⁹ English version 63,7-64,12. In this work, we follow the Hebrew verse enumeration. In English translation, 63,19 is divided into two verses (63,19 and 64,1), so that the number of verses is one higher throughout ch. 64.

³⁰⁰ Thus Fischer observed, "Jes 63,7-64,11 ist einer jener biblischen Texte, deren textliche Überlieferung problematisch ist. Einige Verse des Abschnittes waren seit jeher Gegenstand von Konjekturen...Die verschiedenen Versionen des Textes sind nun aber nicht nur in bezug auf die ursprünglich vorauszusetzende Textgestalt interessant; manche Lesarten greifen derart in den Sinngehalt der einzelnen Verse ein, daß durch sie eine teils sogar entgegengesetzte theologische Konzeption entsteht." I. FISCHER, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, 6.

³⁰¹ It is true, at least, for the final shape of the passage as we now have it. It does not necessarily mean that it was originally composed as a text unit. Morgenstern, for example, argued that "63,7-14 can under no condition be a literary unit with the prayer which follows in 63,15-64,11." It is only at the later stage that it was inserted into its present position. J. MORGENSTERN, "Isaiah 63,7-14," 197.

³⁰² Westermann observed that these supplications even constitute the structure of the psalm. Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 392; cf. R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 260.

YHWH: "Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and glorious habitation." According to WESTERMANN, the request that YHWH would turn towards the suppliant invariably precedes the prayer that YHWH should intervene and give help.³⁰³ Here YHWH is asked to return (שוב) for the sake of his servants (63,17b). That YHWH is addressed as being in heaven corresponds with 63,19b that evokes him to rend the heavens and come down. In other places, he is urged not to be exceedingly angry and not to remember his people's iniquity and to consider them as their people (64,8). Rhetorical questions in 64,11 could also imply a request to YHWH, "Will you restrain yourself at these things, O Lord? Will you keep silent, and afflict us sorely?"

If we notice carefully, these supplications have a similarity in that they are all grounded on an acknowledgement that YHWH is the Father. Thus, 63,15 is based on 63,16 "For (כי) you are our Father." And the prayers in 64,8.11 are prepared by 64,7 "Yet (ועתה), O Lord you are our Father." Since the designation of YHWH as *Father* is not very common in the OT, it seems necessary to explore it further in order to grasp the better meaning of this title.

First of all, it could be noted that in these two occurrences, the designation of YHWH as *Father* does not stand in isolation, but rather is accompanied by other statements. Therefore in order to understand better the meaning of the title of YHWH as *Father*, these other statements should be taken into considerations as well.

63,16a כִּי־אֲתָהּ אֲבִינוּ
כִּי אֲבֹתָם לֹא יָדְעוּ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִכְרְנוּ

The statement in 63,16a β is rather unusual "For Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us." In fact, this has inspired various different interpretations among scholars.³⁰⁴ Despite the variety of interpretations,³⁰⁵ we believe that its proper

³⁰³ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 392.

³⁰⁴ See a brief summary of scholarly interpretation on this topic in J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 92-93.

³⁰⁵ We shall here mention Duhm's interpretation in his commentary which is particularly impressive. He suggested that the reference of Abraham and Israel should be understood as dealing with necromancy. The people asked help from their long-dead forefathers, Abraham and Jacob/Israel. B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 438. Cheyne also held the same position as he argued that 63,16 implied a half acceptance of a popular belief in the semi-divine character of Abraham and Israel. T.K. CHEYNE, *Introduction*, 352. This interpretation is later confirmed by Spronk who pointed to the fact that YHWH is compared with a father (אב) and the use of the root ידע. For consultation of the dead, the terms אבות and ידעיים are indeed important. The etymology is not certain. However, very probably they are connected with אב "father" and the verb ידע "to know." K. SPRONK, *Beatific Afterlife*, 255; cf. also K. VAN DER TOORN, "Echoes of Judaeen

interpretation would be determined by its position in juxtaposition with v. 16aa. As we shall see, YHWH's title as Father, which comes from the mouth of the people, corresponds with 63,8 in which, in the context of covenantal relationship, the people is called *the sons*.³⁰⁶ If we agree that the title Father should be read in the context of the relationship between YHWH and his people, then the reference to Abraham and Israel in 63,16 should be read in this direction as well and not from other perspectives.

It is already clear that YHWH's covenant with his people is made through their forefathers, namely, Abraham and Jacob/Israel. We shall here mention other texts from the Isaianic tradition that describe the relationship between YHWH and his people through the role of Israel's forefathers. The first is Isa 41,3, which, in addition to 63,16a, is the only place in the OT where the names Abraham and Israel appear together,³⁰⁷ "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." And the second, Isa 51,2, "Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was one when I called him, and I blessed him and made him many." In these two texts, Israel's guaranteed well-being is related to their being descendants of Abraham as the mediator of the ancient covenant. Now, by comparing Abraham's fatherhood with YHWH's fatherhood in 63,16a this way of thinking is negated! The forefathers of Israel can no longer be the point of reference for asking YHWH's favour. Thus, they are now turning to YHWH's fatherhood!

This understanding finds support from 64,7 in which YHWH is again designated as Father.

ועתה יהוה אבינו אתה
אנחנו החמר ואתה יצרנו ומעשה ידך כלנו:

"Yet, O Lord, you are our father;

We are the clay and you are our potter, we are all the work of your hand"

Necromancy," 216. This understanding actually fits well in the context of petition. After invoking their forefathers without result – nowhere else in the Bible that Israel's forefathers are invoked for help -, now the people turn to YHWH! Attractive as it may be, in our judgment there is no sufficient evidence to adopt this interpretation, even though the contrary argument is also not apparent. As Williamson commented, "It is not necessary (*though not absolutely impossible*) to see here a veiled reference to some form of necromancy or ancestor worship." H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, "Isaiah 63,7-64,11," 54 n. 20 (italic mine).

³⁰⁶ Cf. M. EMMENDORFFER, *Der ferne Gott*, 278; J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 90.

³⁰⁷ J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 93-94.

Here YHWH as Father is paralleled to his role as a potter, that is, as their Creator.³⁰⁸ Thus now, the point of reference is YHWH as Creator, the prime and basic relationship between YHWH and his people. There is no trace of covenantal relationship that presupposes exclusively the natural relationship with Israel's forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

As noted by GOLDENSTEIN, this combination of father-potter motive is rare in the OT.³⁰⁹ Other places where it could be found is Dtn 32,6 and Isa 45,9-11. The latter text is interesting not only because of the words that also appear in 64,7 (אב "father"; יצר "maker," "potter"; חמר "clay"), but also because it comes from the Isaianic tradition. This would mean that the statement in 64,7 is not completely alien in the Isaianic tradition; moreover it could be suspected that 64,7 might have derived from that tradition.³¹⁰

From the above observation, it could then be said that, in this section, the title *Father* applied to YHWH indicates a shift of relationship between YHWH and the people. It is no longer based on the covenant, but on the basic relationship between God and human beings, namely, between the Creator and the Creatures. Upon this basic relationship the people's lament for help is now founded! Another appearance of YHWH's title as Father in 63,16b further supports this argument. In this verse, YHWH as *Father* stands close to his role as גאל "Redeemer." Indeed, it sounds somewhat contradictory when YHWH as Father plays the function of a גאל because the latter is usually a more distant relative and *not* the father. Yet, we could here understand this word not in its relational aspect, rather in its function as a redeemer. The idea of YHWH as Israel's redeemer is also found in other parts of TI (59,20; 62,12; 63,4). At this point, KOOLE suggested that in the course of time, this word has assumed a fully theological meaning.³¹¹

Summing up our discussion on the use of the title *Father* for YHWH, we could simply say that by invoking YHWH as *Father*, the prayer goes beyond the unique relationship that existed between YHWH and Israel, namely, the covenantal

³⁰⁸ Emmendorffer sees here a *crescendo*: YHWH is here addressed first as Father, then as Redeemer (גאל 63,16), and finally as Creator. Cf. M. EMMENDORFFER, *Der ferne Gott*, 285. The word used here is the *Qal* participle from the root יצר which means "to form," "to fashion." The common translation "potter" is more determined by the use of חמר "clay." Applied to God in his relationship with human beings this verb indicates God's creative activity. In Second Isaiah tradition, the verb יצר with YHWH as subject is found, for example, in 43,1.7.21; 44,2.21.24; 45,7.11.18; 46,11; 49,5.

³⁰⁹ J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 130ff.

³¹⁰ Aejmelaeus then followed by Goldenstein suggested that 64,7 could be interpreted as an answer for 45,9-11. A. AEJMELAEUS, "Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger," 44-45; J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 131-132.

³¹¹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 378.

relationship. In the context of Third Isaiah, at least, there are two motives why the people cannot now remain in the level of the covenantal relationship with YHWH and thus, should go beyond that. First, as we have seen in some other passages, there were in the community the wicked members who oppressed their fellow members either directly or indirectly. Thus, ironically, the community is divided into two parts: the oppressor and the oppressed. Such a community can no longer appeal to its natural ancestry, to whom YHWH gave the promise of well being. The ancient promise now applies only to those “who pursue righteousness” (cf. 51,1f).³¹² Second, an appeal to YHWH as Father and Creator stands in accordance with the idea of community as inclusive community (cf. 56,1-8), in which the moral conduct replaces the blood tie as the criterion for belonging to the community.

Thus the request that YHWH would intervene is grounded to a particular aspect of God. It is based on YHWH’s fatherhood, which, in turn, also brings subtle implications as we have already seen in the above analysis of his title as Father. We shall now proceed to look closely at some aspects in this poem that deserve our attention due to their particularity.

2.6.2 Remembering the Past (63, 8-11a)

We shall now observe the first part of the poem, that scholars commonly call the historical recital of YHWH’s deeds in the past. The description of YHWH’s actions on behalf of his people is usually extended to v. 14. However, contrary to this commonly held opinion, a closer reading seems to suggest otherwise. We shall first notice that not *all* the verses in the commonly accepted block vv. 8-14 talk about YHWH’s deeds in the past. As we can observe, v. 11b deals with a different subject. It should also be noted that the description of YHWH’s actions, characterized by the use of imperfect consecutive, ends with v. 11a. Therefore, it seems reasonable to treat vv. 8-11a as a distinct section, instead of including vv. 11b-14.

In this section, YHWH’s merciful deeds in front of his rebellious people are put forward. In vv. 8-9, YHWH’s action on behalf of the people is first stated. The expression “They are my people” (v. 8a) seems to refer to the covenant-making (Deut 29,13; Lev 26,12; Jer 7,23); but then the people are further qualified as “sons, who will not deal falsely” (שִׁקְרָה). The root שִׁקַּר in *Qal* also appears in Gen 21,23 as the violation of the covenant. Thus, as BLENKINSOPP noted, it reinforces the allusion to the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel.³¹³ It seems that this

³¹² Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 378.

³¹³ Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 259-260; cf. also M. EMMENDÖRFFER, *Der ferne Gott*, 271.

qualification that Israel is “the sons who will not deal falsely” has been purposely chosen, on the one hand, to prepare the invocation to YHWH as Father (63,16 2x; 64,7) and on the other hand, also to anticipate the rebellion of Israel in 63,10 that shows a deep contrast between YHWH’s expectation and Israel’s behaviour.

Verse 9a is very difficult, and thus has generated various scholarly suggestions.³¹⁴ With the considerations that we prefer the reading that involves the least emendation of the MT and that would better fit with the context, it seems preferable to follow the now commonly accepted reading: “In all their affliction,³¹⁵ he was afflicted; and the angel of his presence³¹⁶ saved them.”³¹⁷ Understood in this way, v. 9a shows YHWH’s solidarity and compassion towards his people.³¹⁸ His attitude stands in accordance with his commitment as the people’s covenant partner.

Verse 10 then demonstrate the contrast between the attitude of YHWH and that of his people. Instead of showing their faithfulness, as it is expected by YHWH himself, Israel rebelled against YHWH. And thus, YHWH turned to be Israel’s enemy

³¹⁴ There are three points that make this verse problematic: the position of the phrase בְּכָל־צָרָם , the *Ketib-Qere* לֹא־לֵל , and the meaning of צָר . The ancient versions differ considerably from the MT. The LXX even has a completely different text from that of the MT $\text{\epsilon\kappa\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma\ \theta\lambda\iota\psi\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \sigma\acute{\upsilon}\ \pi\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\beta\upsilon\varsigma\ \sigma\acute{\upsilon}\delta\epsilon\ \\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\prime\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \xi\omega\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma}$, in that it attaches the phrase בְּכָל־צָרָם to v. 8, reads the *Ketib* לֵל , and understands the MT צָר as צִיר messenger. The Vulgate rendered it as *in omni tribulatione eorum non est tribulatus et angelus faciei eius salvavit eos*, and the Targum paraphrased “Whosoever they transgressed before him, so as to bring affliction upon them, he did not afflict them, but an angel sent from before him delivered them.” Indeed; with small variations, this reading has been roughly adopted by many commentators. See, for example, the renderings of B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 435-436; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 80; W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 288-291; J. MORGENSTERN, “Isaiah 63:7-14,” 191, B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 149, R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 257; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 385; M. EMMENDORFFER, *Der ferne Gott*, 261.263; J.L. MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah*, 188; J.J. SCULLION, “Some Difficult Texts,” 123-124.

³¹⁵ Though attaching this phrase to v. 8 instead of v. 9a would complete the line that is often considered to be too short, it faces two objections. *First*, it would make the following section stand clumsily in the whole context of v. 9a. The rendering “He was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them,” as Whybray suggested, though not impossible, seems to break the train of thought of the context. R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 257. And, *secondly*, it would need to emending the MT, which would involve either to adopt the *Ketib* לֵל or to understand צָר differently.

³¹⁶ Scholars may object this reading because this expression is not found elsewhere. Koole thought that this phrase could be a combination of Exod 23,20ff, in which Israel was guided by YHWH’s מַלְאָךְ and 33,14ff, in which his פָּנִים is promised to Moses. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 354; cf. also J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 260-261, I. FISCHER, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, 6ff. However, the immediate context of v. 9 and the reference to Moses in the following verses indeed support this understanding.

³¹⁷ This is the choice taken by the recent commentators, such as, E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 109; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 354; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 519; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 252; D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique Textuelle*, 434-437.

³¹⁸ Cf. G. HOAAS, “Passion and Compassion,” 154-157. This idea of God’s passion is also found in the rabbinic literature, as Beek has demonstrated. Cf. M.A. BEEK, “Das Mitleiden Gottes,” 23-30. Beek’s observation would naturally support the reading of MT.

and fought against them. But it is not the end of everything, because “He³¹⁹ remembered the days of old, Moses his servant”³²⁰ (v. 11a). Thus, if we detach v. 11a from the preceding verses and connect it with the following, then v. 10 would have no solution, no reconciliation, and no mercy: YHWH would remain to be Israel’s enemy! When we read v. 10-11a in the light of Israel’s tradition, then the train of thought is perfectly clear. The phrase יְמֵי-עוֹלָם “the days of old” could here be understood as referring to the early history of Israel when Moses appeared to deliver the people from Egypt and then guided them in the wilderness as the Exodus narrative tells us. Later, when the people rebelled against him, for example, in the episode of the golden calf (cf. Ex 32), it was Moses who interceded on behalf of the people. This is what YHWH was remembering, and thus, at the same time, showing his mercy to his people!

So, in this section, the speaker remembers the past action of YHWH with special attention directed toward YHWH’s compassion and mercy, and also toward the role of Moses as the people’s leader. These two points will be further developed in the sections to come. This historical remembrance that underlines YHWH’s

³¹⁹ There is no agreement with regard to the reference of the verb ויזכר. There are some possibilities for that: YHWH (e.g. Targum, W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 292, J. MORGENSTERN, “Isaiah 63:7-14,” 191-193, J.D. WATTS, *Isaiah 34-66* [CD-ROM]), the people, either to emend the text into plural ויזכרו (e.g. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 385, J.L. MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah*, 188, J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 733-734, I. FISCHER, *Wo ist Jahwe?*, 12, CHEYNE, *Introduction*, 350) or not (e.g. M. EMMENDORFFER, *Der ferne Gott*, 263, R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 258, J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 254, J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 268, D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique Textuelle*, 439), someone (C.C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah*, 463), “I” as in v. 7 (E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 110, P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 80.84), or even Moses (R.J. CLIFFORD, “Narrative and Lament,” 97). We prefer the first possibility, namely, that the subject of the verb is YHWH. Thus, it would be in accordance with a series of imperfect consecutive used here with YHWH as subject that runs from v. 8. Moreover, as Koole noted, quoting Pascal-Gerlinger, the verb ויזכר is mostly used with God as the subject. Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 360. Ps 106.45 that is often considered as an example of a community lament psalm as our passage, also has the verb ויזכר with YHWH as the subject.

³²⁰ The MT as we have it now does not make sense. BHS proposes two possible readings for the phrase עָמַד עִמּוֹ: to insert a conjunction ו between these two words or to emend עָמַד into עָבְדוֹ. Though Whybray has expressed his doubt to both solutions, we choose the later, following the Syriac Version and some Hebrew manuscripts. For this reading, Clifford argued “that the original *bêt* and *dālet* of ‘*abdō* were read as *mēm*, which could easily have happened in the ‘archaic proto-Jewish’ hand of the mid-third century B.C., in which the *bêt* resembles the right stroke of the *mēm*, and the slant of the *dālet* and its open top resemble the left downward stroke of the *mēm*.” R.J. CLIFFORD, “Narrative and Lament,” 97. One could question our reading: if YHWH is the subject of the verb ויזכר, then how to understand the possessive pronoun in עָבְדוֹ that naturally refer to YHWH. We shall argue that in this passage, it is the prophet (“I” in v. 7) who speaks about YHWH, and not YHWH himself. Therefore, the possibility cannot be excluded that the pronoun here indeed refers to YHWH but from the speaker’s point of view. Indeed, our reading remains conjectural. In spite of textual difficulties that can hardly be overcome convincingly, we accept Childs’ assertion that “the only comfort is that the general meaning of the whole sentence is fairly clear.” B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 524.

compassion and mercy then becomes the motive for the people for presenting their supplication. However, as we shall see, this prayer is also coloured with a kind of “protest” about the people’s sinfulness. The emphasis on the role of Moses is perhaps because of a crisis of leadership at that period (cf. 56,9-12).³²¹ Thus, it supports our previous analysis that there was such a problem in the community.

2.6.3 Confession of Sin? (63,17a; 64,4b-6)

We have claimed above that together with their supplication that YHWH would intervene, the people also offer a kind of “protest” with regard to their sins. We shall now clarify such a statement by looking attentively at some relevant parts of this poem.

It has been long recognized that along with the community prayer addressed to YHWH, there are parts in this long poem that have usually been designated as the people’s confession of sin. They are 63,17 and 64,4b-6. We shall discuss them because these so-called confessions of sins are formulated in such an unusual way.

First of all, we shall now look closely at 63,17a.

לָמָּה תַחַעַנּוּ יְהוָה מִדְרָכֶיךָ
תִקְשִׁיחַ לִבֵּנוּ מִיִּרְאַתֶּךָ

“LORD, why do you make us err from your ways,
harden our heart from fear of You?”

The speaker did not deny that the people have sinned. Even it is acknowledged that they have gone astray from YHWH’s way and feared him not. However, he formulated this fact in such a way that it is YHWH who has actually caused them to be in such a sinful situation (cf. the use of תַעַה *Hiphil* “to cause to err” and קִשַׁח *Hiphil* “to harden”). KOOLE noted that the use of imperfect forms refer to an actual situation.³²² And now the speaker asked *why* (לָמָּה) YHWH is doing such a thing. Therefore, v. 17a cannot be considered as a confession of sin as such, but rather a charge or reproach against YHWH for having led his people astray. Though it could perhaps be scandalous, the idea of YHWH’s hardening one’s heart is not completely alien in the book of Isaiah (cf. 6,10).

³²¹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 261.

³²² J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 380.

Despite the textual difficulties found especially in v. 18a,³²³ it could still be understood that vv. 18-19a describe the miserable situation of the people. The relationship between the people's sinfulness and the situation described in vv. 18-19 seems to be ambiguous. It is not apparently clear whether their present situation was considered as a punishment from YHWH, or rather, it is their present situation that has led them to commit sin.

The first part of the second "confession of sin" in 64,4b is also ambiguous.

הִן־אַתָּה קִצְפָּת וְנִחַטָּא [בְּהֵם עוֹלָם וְנִשְׁע]

"Look, you were angry, and we sinned;

[...]"³²⁴

As KOOLE noted, the introductory particle הִן "Look!" exposes the real situation.³²⁵ The pronoun אַתָּה "you" is emphatic. Then, comes the statement with a particular structure: Perfect (קִצְפָּת) - Imperfect consecutive (וְנִחַטָּא). Grammatically, the imperfect consecutive following the perfect expresses the conditions "which represent the logical consequence of what preceded,"³²⁶ as, for example, in Gen 39,2 "And the Lord was with Joseph (וַיְהִי) and he was (i.e. and so he was) a prosperous man" and in Gen 1,3 "And God said 'Let there be light' (וַיְהִי) and there was (and, as a consequence of His speaking, there was) light."³²⁷ Thus, in our case, this imperfect consecutive, which is very rare with the verb חָטָא (cf. Ezek 28,16), makes a

³²³ Two main problems that appear in v. 18a are the meaning of לְמַעַר and the subject of יָרַשׁ. The LXX and Vulgate do not offer much help. Thus, in order to solve the problem, many have attempted to emend the text (cf. BHS' critical apparatus). A brief summary of the solutions to the problem is found in K. KOENEN, "Zum Text von Jes 63,18," 106-109. He himself suggested to emend the MT into קָרַשׁ עִם דָּשׁ לְמַעַר דָּשׁ "Zur Kleinheit haben sie dein heiliges Volk gedroschen."

³²⁴ The second part (64,4b) עוֹלָם וְנִשְׁע בְּהֵם is difficult. Scholars have proposed various readings that mostly involved emendation of the text. One suggestion is to restore the text into בָּהֶעֱלַמְךָ or בָּהֶחֱלַמְךָ which are the *Niphal* (Muilenburg, Whybray) and *Hithpael* (Blank, Blenkinsopp) infinitive construct of the root עָלַם respectively. In this way, v. 4bβ forms a perfect synonymous parallelism with the preceding part (v. 4bα). With regard to the reading of the LXX, which is quite different (δια τουτο επλανηθημεν), we shall here note Blank's attempt to explain it. "The reading in the LXX is probably an acute substitution, for an untranslatable text, of a relevant thought based upon 63,17a, in which the same spirit is evident." SHELDON H. BLANK, "And All Our Virtues," 150. For our purpose, however, the understanding of the verse under discussion (v. 4bβ) is of little relevance, because it does not affect the reading of v. 4bα, upon which we put great attention.

³²⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 392.

³²⁶ *GKC* § 111 i.

³²⁷ These examples are suggested by S.H. BLANK, "And All Our Virtues," 151-152.

connection between God's anger and human sin: YHWH was angry, and so, as a result, the people sinned!

CHILDS rendered the Hebrew text as follows: "It is because you have been angry that we have sinned."³²⁸ This unusual theology radically reverses the traditionally held dogmatic sequence of first the sin, then the divine judgment. For that reason, there have been many attempts in translations or scholarly works to reduce the force of this scandalous statement by modifying the link between two verbs.³²⁹ However, it should here be suspected that various readings proposed by scholars are more driven by their uneasiness with the Hebrew text as it is, rather than by scientific considerations.

We do not see the reason why the reading based on the Hebrew text should be discarded. Grammatically, it does make sense. From textual point of view, it has no significant variant that could suggest different readings.³³⁰ Furthermore, as scholars also admitted, in the context of this long poem, the idea is not completely strange. The idea expressed in 63,17a has a perfectly similar nuance.³³¹ If God has led the people astray (63,17), then his fury cannot be the consequence of the people's sin, on the contrary, it could be the cause of that sin.³³² From other perspectives, though theologically it sounds unorthodox, this concept could also be understood as a depiction of the so-called dark side of the divine³³³ or as a consequence of the doctrine of monotheism, with which one believes that all things - good and evil - come from God.³³⁴ Therefore, we prefer to take the reading as the Hebrew text offers.

In the context of a communal lament poem, these two "confessions of sin" that indeed imply a reversal of common theology would inevitably suggest another possible understanding of the reality behind the people's supplication. Instead of perceiving the miserable situation of the people, implied in the poem, as the divine punishment because of their sins, perhaps it is also possible to interpret differently. It is the actual miserable situation in which they lived that has led them to sin! Actually, this is also not an alien idea. When we discuss the religious sins that involved idolatry, there are hints that the people, actually, turned to other gods because YHWH

³²⁸ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 525. Childs's rendering resembles TNK: "It is because You are angry that we have sinned."

³²⁹ The KJV and NKJ are typical. They have "Behold, thou art wroth; *for* we have sinned" (KJV) and "You are indeed angry, *for* we have sinned" (NKJ). Other versions seem to avoid the problem by obscuring the relationship between two verbs by placing simply a general conjunction "and."

³³⁰ The ancient versions the LXX, Vulgate, Peshitta appear to have had our received text.

³³¹ Cf. S.H. BLANK, "And All Our Virtues," 152; M. EMMENDORFFER, *Der ferne Gott*

³³² J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 118.

³³³ Cf. for example, J.L. CRENSHAW, *Prophetic Conflict*, 80, also R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 198-204.

³³⁴ For example, J.L. CRENSHAW, *Prophetic Conflict*, 77; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 394.

was silent and not willing to fulfill his promise given through Second Isaiah. If our understanding of 63,17a and 64,4b could be accepted then it would support our interpretation of the religious sin undertaken in Chapter 3 that, in one way or another, the people's actual situation might have directed them to turn from YHWH.

2.6.4 About the Speaker (63,7)

The last small point that still deserves close attention is 63,7. This verse displays some peculiarities. The appearance of the word **זָכַר** at the beginning and the end of the verse forms an inclusion, and thus shows the unity of this verse.³³⁵ This verse serves as an introduction that offers a direction for the reading of the whole passage.³³⁶ It could also be noted that, unlike the rest of the verses, v. 7 is the only place in the whole passage where the speaker is formulated in the first person singular. The main verb here used, that is, **זָכַרְתִּי** (*Hiphil*) "to put in remembrance" shows a connection this verse with 62,6 in which the sentinels on the walls are also called **הַמְזַכְרִים** (*Hiphil participle*). Such a literary connection would then suggest that 63,7 should be read as the fulfillment of 62,6;³³⁷ or that the speaker in 63,7 takes over the function of **הַמְזַכְרִים** in 62,6 who were probably the disciples or the followers of the prophet. In this way, the speaker appears to stand on the line of the tradition of the prophet in 62,6.³³⁸ Therefore, it is not of great importance to clarify precisely the identity of the speaker. The Targum indeed explicitly mentions that it is the prophet who here speaks. The shift to plural form in the following section may mean that the prophet starts this poem in his capacity as an intercessor and then gradually puts it in the mouth of the congregation.³³⁹ It has also been suggested that the "I" referred to a singer,³⁴⁰ or to the community as a *corporate personality*.³⁴¹

³³⁵ Cf. E.C. WEBSTER, "The Rhetoric of Isaiah 63-65," 90; J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 34.

³³⁶ Cf. M. EMMENDORFFER, *Der ferne Gott*, 269.

³³⁷ Cf. J. GOLDENSTEIN, *Das Gebet*, 37; Koole and Achtemeier also saw the connection between 63,7 and 62,6 through the keyword **זָכַר**. However, they do not further develop the implication of such a connection. See J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 350; E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 112.

³³⁸ In this case, perhaps we could here refer to one of four criteria for identifying the presence of quotations proposed by Aejmelaeus, that an author hardly quotes his own formulation in a deviant context. A. AEJMLAEUS, "Der Prophet als Klagediesänger," 32.

³³⁹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 349-350.

³⁴⁰ K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 146.

³⁴¹ M. EMMENDORFFER, *Der ferne Gott*, 270.

2.6.5 Result

We can now sum up our reading on this long poem. Compared to other parts of Third Isaiah, it seems clear that this poem does not offer a direct response to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy except that it offers supplication to YHWH that He would intervene for the sake of the people. Nevertheless, it provides us with some useful hints that stand in accordance with our analysis of the other texts, and therefore, could be illuminating for our understanding of them.

As we have seen, the designation of YHWH as Father, which becomes the ground of the people's supplications (63,16; 64,7), goes beyond the covenantal relationship between YHWH and his people because the covenantal community has been betrayed by injustices practised among its members (cf. 57,1-2; 58; 59,1-8). This situation, which is somehow connected with the lack of the good leaders (cf. 56,9-12), is also reflected in the reference to Moses the leader of the people *par excellence*. The unorthodox idea about the cause of the people's sin (cf. 63,17; 64,4b) opens a new understanding of the actual situation of the community. The desperate situation which the people had to face could be understood not as the result of the divine punishment, but rather as the cause that drove the people to enter into sinful ways. Hardship of life is always a temptation!

It is true that the understanding of 63,7-64,11 presented above could lead us to the problem of the date of its composition: is it exilic lament or post-exilic protest? Scholarly opinions are divided in this case. In our opinion, however, the question about the date of composition is not of great importance. A pre-exilic date does not necessarily mean that this composition would *only* be meaningful for its contemporaries, namely the pre-exilic community. The fact that this poem is juxtaposed with other texts from later post-exilic period, so to speak, demonstrates that it could still be applicable to the people in different (later) periods. Otherwise, the citation becomes sterile and useless! There is a certain vitality in the text so that it could serve as response to the ever-changing historical circumstances. Thus, we should argue that this text also brings some historical information, particularly, with regard to the community.

2.7 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 65,1-25

In the history of the study on the Book of Isaiah, this chapter has been a matter of hot discussion among scholars. Without intending to examine their studies closely since this is not our primary concern, some topics could here be outlined. Scholars have

questioned whether there is a relationship between this chapter (ch. 65) and ch. 66 so that these two chapters should be treated as a literary unity?³⁴² Do they belong to the original layers composed by the so-called Third-Isaiah? From this then comes the question of whether a relationship between chs. 65-66 that constitute the closing of the Book of Isaiah with Isa 1 that stands at the opening of the book could be determined.³⁴³ Another point of discussion is the relationship between this chapter (with or without ch. 66) with the preceding section, namely, the communal lament 63,7-64,11: do these two concluding chapters of the Book of Isaiah (Chs. 65-66) constitute a response to the lament or not?³⁴⁴ For our purpose, however, we shall look at the text with a particular interest, namely, to pursue the response of Third Isaiah to unfulfilled prophecy. For this objective, we shall, of course, refer to the results of these scholarly enterprises whenever it is relevant.

We shall now come closer to the text. In this chapter, the divine words are addressed to two different groups within the community. In this way, we may also say that it is YHWH himself who is making a division between the righteous and the wicked.³⁴⁵ As scholars have noticed, the division in the community, a theme which is only implicitly expressed in other sections of Third Isaiah, notably characterizes this chapter. Based on the divine speech to each party, we could also make a division in the text, though, as always the case, this kind of internal division always generates various proposals among scholars. Thus, without entering into the discussion with regard to the history of its composition, we believe that this text could be divided into 3 parts based on the logic of its content. Thus, we shall propose the following division³⁴⁶:

³⁴² Here, scholars usually go further by determining the relationship between chs. 65-66 and ch. 1. However, some scholars, for example, Smith argued that 65,1-66,17 constitute a literary unity without touching the possible connection between these passages and the beginning of the Book of Isaiah. Cf. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 129-132.

³⁴³ This opinion with its slight variations is represented, for example, by L.J. LIEBREICH, "The Compilation of the Book of Isaiah," *JQR* 46 (1955-1956) 276ff; *JQR* 47 (1956-1957) 126-127; R. LACK, *La symbolique du livre d'Isaïe*, 139-141; M.A. SWEENEY, *Isaiah 1-4*, 22-24; W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI," 217-221; A.J. TOMASINO, "Isaiah 1.1-2.4," 81-98; D.M. CARR, "Reading Isaiah from Beginning," 188-218.

³⁴⁴ Many scholars tend to understand Chs. 65-66 as the response for the lament expressed in 63,7-64,11. Cf. WEBSTER, STECK, CHEYNE, MUILENBURG, SEITZ, TORREY, MCKENZIE, SMITH; contra WHYBRAY, DUHM, VERMEYLEN, LAU. Achtemeier argued that only 65,1-7 form a response to 63,7-64,12, E. ACHEMEIER, *The Community and Message*, 122. For Koenen, 65,1-66,17 constitute a response to the preceding lament. However, he suggested that 65,1-7 come from a redactor of TI. See K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 159-168.

³⁴⁵ Cf. C.R. SEITZ, "Isaiah 40-66," 542.

³⁴⁶ Scholars also arrive at such a division with small variations. Cf. B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 156-161; C.R. SEITZ, "The Book of Isaiah," 542-545; B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 534-539; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 398-411; L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 80.

- 65,1-7 : The punishment for the wicked
 65,8-16 : Punishment and reward to the wicked and the righteous
 65,17-25 : The promise to the righteous

2.7.1 65,1-7: Divine Words for the Wicked

Before we proceed further, we shall recall here that a part of this section has been examined before when we attempted to determine the exact reference of the cultic sin described here.³⁴⁷ Therefore, we are not going to repeat what has been discussed there. When it is necessary, we will simply quote the result of the discussion there.

A close reading would reveal that, notwithstanding its tight unity, this section could be differentiated into two sections: vv. 1-5 that consist of YHWH's indictment of the apostates and vv. 6-7 that describe the divine verdict for this apostasy.³⁴⁸ Some scholars even wanted to divide further the first part (vv. 1-5) into two parts: vv. 1-2 and vv. 3-5. However, we judge such a proposal unnecessary because v. 2 and v. 3 belong to the same sentence. It seems reasonable to understand vv. 3-5 as further detailed information that explains vv. 1-2.³⁴⁹

As we have previously seen, the divine words in vv. 1-2 make use of terms such as *שאל*, *דקש*, and *בקש* that have particular nuances, that is, implying acts of inquiring after knowledge, advice or insight. Thus, the relationship between YHWH and the people is viewed from a special aspect, namely, that YHWH should be the source of information for his people. We believe that this would be a hint that the cultic transgression described in the following verses should be understood from this perspective as well. Instead of inquiring of YHWH, they prefer "to walk in a way that is not good, to follow their own devices" (v. 2b). SMITH asserted, that "(the majority of the people), as 65,3-5; 66,3.17 make clear, have fallen back into old ways and reliance on other sources of knowledge and security."³⁵⁰ If v. 1 forms a close connection with the following verses that describe a cultic transgression (vv. 2-5), then, consequently, 65,1-7 cannot originally be the response for the communal lament in 63,7-64,11. The divine self-disclosure *הנה אנכי, הנה אנכי* "Here am I, here am I" in 65,1b cannot be a response for *איפה* "Where is he..." in 63,11 as many commentators have argued. Rather it is addressed to the people who chose to follow their own ways in

³⁴⁷ See Chapter III.1.2.1.1.b.

³⁴⁸ See P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 144; K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 189.

³⁴⁹ Cf. J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 747.

³⁵⁰ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 135.

seeking information that seems to be described in terms of cultic activities in vv. 3b-5.7b.³⁵¹

After the indictment (vv. 1-5) now comes the verdict for the wicked in vv. 6-7.

הִנֵּה כְּחוּבָה לְפָנַי
 לֹא אֶחְשֶׂה כִּי אִם־שְׁלֵמֹתַי וְשְׁלֵמֹתַי עַל־חַיִּיקָם:
 עֹנֵיתִיכֶם וְעֹנֵת אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם יַחְדָּו אָמַר יְהוָה
 אֲשֶׁר קָטְרוּ עַל־הַהָרִים וְעַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת חָרְפוּנִי
 - וּמִדַּחִי פָעַלְתֶּם רֵאשֶׁנָּה עַל־חַיִּיקָם:

“Behold, it is written before me:

I will not keep silent, but I will repay, yea I will repay to their bosom,
 your iniquities and your fathers' iniquities together, says YHWH,
 who burned incense on the mountains, and reviled me on the hills,
 I will measure into their bosom payment for their former doings”

We shall start by discussing the meaning of the particle **כִּי אִם**, which is important for understanding v. 6b. According to the standard Hebrew grammar, this particle followed by a verb in perfect tense after a negative clause is usually to be understood as an exceptive clause and should be translated as *unless* (cf. Gen 32,27; Lv 22,6; Isa 55,10; Ruth 3,18).³⁵² If one accepts this interpretation, the text would read “I will not keep silent (**אֶחְשֶׂה** instead of BHS' **אֶחְשֶׂה**),³⁵³ *unless* I will repay...” It means that YHWH will be silent *only after* he repays the wicked. His being silent will only happen in the future.³⁵⁴ From a grammatical point of view, this statement is perfectly possible indeed. The speaker in 62,1 (cf. also 62,6), for example, expresses this idea (there **אֶחְשֶׂה** is used with proposition **עַד** “until,” which is less ambiguous). But now, how to understand it in the context of Isa 65,1-7?

KOOLE argued that a promise that YHWH will ‘be silent’ is hard to imagine here.³⁵⁵ Some other considerations, we believe, seem to support his impression. It

³⁵¹ This does not exclude the possibility that, on the later redactional level, ch. 65 might have intentionally been placed there in order to create a response for 63,7-64,11.

³⁵² GKC § 163 c; W-O'C 39.3.5d; J-M § 173b. The main lexicons also put **כִּי אִם** in Isa 65,6 under the meaning *unless* (cf. BDB, HALOT).

³⁵³ BHS' critical apparatus writes that **אֶחְשֶׂה** is the reading of Codex Leningrad. It is therefore suggested to read **אֶחְשֶׂה** together with many other manuscripts and editions of the Hebrew OT. In fact, the root **חשׂה** does not exist in the Hebrew vocabulary stock.

³⁵⁴ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 164 and also 45 n. 220. Also many modern versions adopt this understanding.

³⁵⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 420.

should be noted above all, that among the biblical prophets, only the Book of Isaiah used the root חָשָׂה "to be silent."³⁵⁶ Moreover, it appears almost exclusively in Third Isaiah (57,11; 62,1.6; 64,11; 65,6 outside Third Isaiah only in 42,14). In all occurrences in Isa, except in 62,1.6, the subject of the verb is always YHWH (also Ps 28,1). In these verses, the silence of YHWH always indicates that something is missing. The silence of YHWH does not represent an ideal situation, so that the speaker tried to persuade him to end his silence (cf. 64,11). Based on such attestations, we see no reason why 65,6 should be interpreted differently. In this verse, therefore, the phrase "I will not be silent" must carry a positive sense as well. YHWH is now going to break his silence. Moreover, it is difficult to figure out what kind of activity that YHWH performs *before* he repays the wicked. Therefore, as YHWH's passivity (חָשָׂה "to be silent") stands in contrast with his activity (שָׁלַם *Piel* "to repay"), then, consequently, the particle אִם כִּי should be better understood adversatively and translated as "but."³⁵⁷

Together with many scholars, the double שְׁלֵמָהי, which is often dropped as dittography, could be retained.³⁵⁸ The first is used absolutely (as in Jer 50,29; Ps 62,13); the second with a direct object. The phrase עַל-חִיקָם "into/on their laps" could refer to one's inner self, but, as KOOLE suggested, in this context it rather suggests the ample fold of a robe in which people collect and keep all kinds of things (cf. Prov 17,23; 21,14),³⁵⁹ and therefore, could be translated as *full measure*.³⁶⁰ YHWH will repay the wicked in a full measure. No more and no less!

The certainty of this divine pronouncement is thus highlighted by the first phrase in v. 6a הִנֵּה כְתוּבָה לִפְנֵי לַפָּנִי, "Behold, it is written before me."³⁶¹ Scholars often noted that this phrase could be a reference to a heavenly book recording sins to be punished, a concept that perhaps derived from the practice of keeping annals at royal courts in which notes about crimes yet unpunished may have had a place. Because it is written by God himself, it could also be a "magical book" that contains the list of the names that could be added or erased.³⁶² Some have also tried to see here the

³⁵⁶ BDB notes that throughout the OT, this root appears 16 x either in *Qal* or *Hiphil* (Isa 42,14; 57,11; 62,1.6; 64,11; 65,6; Ps 28,1; 39,3; 107,29; Ecc 3,7; 1Kgs 22,3; 2Kgs 2,3.5; 7,9; Jdg 18,9; Neh 8,11). YHWH as subject is found 4 x in Isa and in Ps 28,1.

³⁵⁷ See GKC § 163 a; J-M § 172c; W-O'C 39.3.5d (see # 17).

³⁵⁸ Cf. D. BARTHELEMY, *Critique Textuelle*, 454. The MT is supported by 1QIsa^a, Vulgate, and also by α and σ.

³⁵⁹ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 420; cf. also J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 749.

³⁶⁰ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 268.

³⁶¹ Cf. E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 124.

³⁶² In this case, however, this heavenly book functions as a symbol, and not as a literary text to be read or consulted. W.M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 24-34.

influence of ancient near east cultures.³⁶³ In spite of these proposals, however, we still believe that this often-overlooked phrase contains important aspects for our purpose. On the one hand, the writing of the (oral) words is actually an act of preservation.³⁶⁴ The spoken words are preserved through the act of writing down. And in this case, it gives an assurance that those words will not be forgotten! Thus, the writing referred to in this verse could not be a heavenly book with a list of actions or a list of names that is now being retrieved by God, but rather it would be a document upon which YHWH is now adding the sins to be punished, so that he would not forget. Thus, it is not an old-already-existing document, but a new document!

On the other hand, this assurance would also have a tranquilizing effect. That the divine punishment is to be written does not necessarily mean that it is to be carried out *immediately*. Even as WESTERMANN commented, “The meaning (that they are written) is that God’s intervention to punish their offences is not to take place at once.”³⁶⁵ Thus, through the writing of the divine punishment, YHWH’s intervention is again promised and assured, but, as we could notice, there is no single word about its fulfillment. Again, the people were given the promise and re-assurance, but its realization is still to be expected. In this sense, the act of writing the oracle could produce a tranquilizing effect for the listeners! It is to lull or to calm the listeners!

2.7.2 65,8-16: Divine Words for the Wicked and the Faithful

The proclamation of the divine punishment upon the wicked or the apostates in 65,1-7 sounds clear and reasonable. Further reflection, however, shows the difficulties which emerge from this announcement. It is clear, first of all, that the addressees upon whom the divine word of wrath is invoked were those who belong to the larger Judean community. They were not YHWH’s enemies who come from outside Palestine but rather from within the society. They are like the weeds that grow together with the wheat in a New Testament parable (cf. Matt 13, 24-30). This would inevitably create problems: How could YHWH punish only a segment of the people who live side by side with another? Would YHWH use an instrument to carry out his decision? What about the righteous? Thus WESTERMANN put it, “Since the people affected are a group

³⁶³ Thus, Muienburg argued that “The idea of the divine accounting in a heavenly register was familiar to the Babylonians; the god Nebo wrote down the destinies of men in a book. ... The same idea is present both in later Jewish apocalyptic and in Zoroastrian eschatology.” J. MUIENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 748-749; SCHNIEDEWIND, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 37; see also J. BAINES - A.R. MILLARD, “Literacy,” *ABD* [CD ROM].

³⁶⁴ For a relationship between speaking and writing, see, for example, P. RICOEUR, *Interpretation Theory*, 25-44.

³⁶⁵ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 402; also E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 72.

living among others to whom the oracle of judgment does not apply, it is difficult to picture the way in which the judgment is to be meted out to them.”³⁶⁶

We shall here suggest that the following verses (vv. 8-16) constitute the answer for such questions. We can say, therefore, that the section vv. 8-16 practically elaborates further the divine words in the previous section. As could be easily noticed, this section is marked with two messenger formulas in v. 8 and v. 13. Based on this formula, some scholars have attempted to divide this section into two parts. However, we do not believe that such a division is necessary. KOOLE noted that the particle לכן *therefore* at the beginning of v. 13 refers back to the pronouncement of salvation in vv. 8-10 and to the reproach in vv. 11-12; and thus links up v. 13ff with the previous part.³⁶⁷ After being addressed individually in vv. 8-10 and vv. 11-12 respectively, then in vv. 13-16 both parties, the wicked and the faithful are juxtaposed together in an extreme contrast. HANSON called it a salvation-judgment oracle and considered it as representing a key development in the prophetic genres of the post-exilic period.³⁶⁸ This is for the first time in the OT that we find YHWH acting toward Israel in two different ways: to the faithful he will give salvation, to the wicked, death.³⁶⁹

Verses 8-10 pronounce the promise of salvation for certain groups of people. However, it seems better to treat v. 8 separately due to its transitional character.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
כַּאֲשֶׁר יִמְצָא הַתִּירוֹשׁ בְּאֶשְׁכּוֹל
וְאָמַר אֶל־תִּשְׁחִיתוּהוּ כִּי בִרְכָה בּוֹ
כִּן אֶעֱשֶׂה לְמַעַן עַבְדֵי לְבִלְתִּי הַשְׁחִית הַכֹּל

Thus YHWH said:

“As the wine is found in the cluster,
and it is said, ‘Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,’
so I will do for the sake of my servants, in order not to destroy the whole”

After a messenger formula, there comes a proverb-like statement that picks up the vintage imagery, “Do not destroy it (שחית), for there is a blessing in it” (v. 8a). This imagery precisely reflects the question triggered by the divine announcement in vv. 1-7: what about the fate of the good in the society? Must they experience the

³⁶⁶ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 402.

³⁶⁷ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 426.

³⁶⁸ For example, P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 145 *passim*.

³⁶⁹ E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 128; cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 404.

punishment addressed for the wicked as well? Now, here the divine word responds clearly: No! Not all will be destroyed (שחח)! The good will be spared.

In vv. 9-10 the fate of the righteous is then declared. There are two points that deserve attention: the content of the promise given to the righteous and the designation by which the righteous is called. We shall pursue each of the points thoroughly, starting with the latter.

Verse 9a describes that YHWH will bring forth (הוֹצִיאָתִי *Hiphil* from יָצָא)³⁷⁰ a seed from Jacob and from Judah an inheritor of his mountains. This is followed by another statement, “my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there” (v. 9b). Though the words זָרַע “seed” and יִרְשׁ “inheritor” are in singular, it seems less problematic to understand them collectively, rather than individually. Thus, it is possible to see that the word pair “seed - inheritor” in v. 9a and “my chosen” (בְּחִירִי pl.) and “my servants” (עֲבָדָי) in v. 9b are actually referring to the same entity.³⁷¹ This finds support from the use of the verbal root יָרַשׁ “to inherit” that is used twice in this verse. Furthermore, as BEUKEN has demonstrated, the root יָרַשׁ “to inherit”³⁷² and זָרַע “seed”³⁷³ belong to the semantic field of “the servants.” It could also be observed that already in Second Isaiah the word *chosen* (בְּחִיר) is a synonym for the Servant (in the singular cf. 42,1; 43,20: 45,4). In Third Isaiah, it appears only here and in vv. 15.22 always in the plural, also as a synonym for the servants.³⁷⁴

Thus, in the context of Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah, the term *servant* (עֲבָד) is an important category that has increasingly become the topic of scholarly examinations.³⁷⁵ On the one hand, the word *servant* establishes an undeniable connection between Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah. But, on the other hand, there are also differences, or better, development in both Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah. First of all, it could be noted that Second Isaiah only speaks of *the servant* in singular

³⁷⁰ It is noted that in the OT, this root is used to indicate YHWH's liberative action on behalf of his people. The root יָצָא is also used when YHWH brought Abraham out of Ur (Gen 15,5,7); the children of Israel from slavery (Deut 5,6) and from the land of Egypt (Exod 3,12); the action of the Servant and Israel from those who are in the darkness (Isa 42,1); the shoot that will come out of the stock of Jesse (Isa 11,1). Cf. E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 81 n. 135.

³⁷¹ Cf. L. RUZSKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 86.

³⁷² Cf. 63,17; 57,13; 60,21; 61,7 for the root יָרַשׁ. See W.A.M. BEUKEN, “The Main Theme,” 77-78.

³⁷³ W.A.M. BEUKEN, “Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI,” 206; ID., “The Main Theme,” 68.

³⁷⁴ W.A.M. BEUKEN, “The Main Theme,” 78.

³⁷⁵ Thus Beuken in his article argued that *the Servant of YHWH* is the main theme of Third Isaiah, that extends from the beginning (56,6) till the end (66,14). Cf. W.A.M. BEUKEN, “The Main Theme,” 67-87; ID., “Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI,” 205-207. Also J. BLENKINSOPP, “The Servant and the Servants,” 155-175; A. LEBA ATAWOLO, *The Servant in the Service of the Lord*.

(except at 54,17), while Third Isaiah exclusively speaks of *the servants* in plural.³⁷⁶ More important, even within Third Isaiah, this word is also used with different references. In 63,17, for example, the term עֲבָדִים “servants” refers to the community as a whole, following the earlier Isaianic usage (41,8-9; 42,19; 43,10; 44,1-2.21; 45,4; 48,20; 54,17).³⁷⁷ But in 65,8-16, in the context of the divine words that were addressed to both the righteous and the wicked, that is, to the divided community, this title cannot have the same reference. After a radical split in the community that characterizes the last two chapters of the Book of Isaiah, there must be a shift or restriction of the traditional Isaianic designation. It now refers only to a certain segment in the community that will receive YHWH’s promise!

The same is true for another designation, “the chosen” (בְּחִיר). It no longer represents the old community, namely, Israel as a whole as YHWH’s chosen people (cf. Isa 43,20; 45,4), but rather only a part of the community, that is, the faithful individuals within the nation.³⁷⁸ ODEBERG noted that the use of בְּחִיר and עֲבָד in plural is an excellent illustration of the change of meaning in Third Isaiah of words adopted from earlier writings.³⁷⁹ In v. 10b the righteous is designated as “my people who sought me” (דָּרַשׁ).³⁸⁰ The use of this root thus connects this verse to vv. 1-7. At the same time, it also indicates that one of the reasons why YHWH makes a division within the people is the manner in which this root דָּרַשׁ, in the sense of *inquiring after a deity*, is carried out in the community. Thus, vv. 3-5, which describe the transgression of the people in term of unacceptable cultic activities, stands in contrast with this passage.

It is clear, therefore, that the recipient of YHWH’s promise of salvation is no longer the whole community, but only a part of it. After the divine words in 65,1-7, a division within the community is inevitable, because 65,1-7 cannot be addressed to the whole community. To do justice to the rest of the community who is not involved

³⁷⁶ Blenkinsopp suggested that in addition to a general reference to the Jewish community as a whole, the term עֲבָד (עֲבָדִים) stands both for an individual prophetic figure (in chs. 49-54 [55]) and for a specific group cherishing eschatological beliefs and alienated from the official leadership (in chs. 55 [56]-66). Particularly in chs. 65-66, he further suggested that the relationship between the prophetic Servant and the servants of YHWH in the last two chapters could be formulated in term of discipleship. J. BLENKINSOPP, “The Servant and the Servants,” 170-171; also ID., *History of Prophecy*, 216ff.

³⁷⁷ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 275.

³⁷⁸ Cf. R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 272.

³⁷⁹ H. ODEBERG, *Trito Isaiah*, 282.

³⁸⁰ Some scholars, for example, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 446; K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 187 considered v. 10b as a gloss. But there is no textual evidence for omitting it. Stylistically, this phrase builds a sharp contrast with the following one marked with וְאַתָּם (“but you”).

in that divine judgment, a different kind of - more positive - words should be presented. Nevertheless, through the use of the words זרע “seed” and יורש “inheritor,” it should also be noted that the promise to the righteous is actually placed in the future. We also see that the traditional designations of the people that are common in the Isaianic tradition, particularly in Second Isaiah, are reinterpreted according to the actual situation. As we have seen, reinterpretation of the older material is a device common to Third Isaiah.

Another topic to be here examined is the promise given to the righteous. According to v. 9, the divine words promise to the servants and the chosen that they will inherit YHWH’s mountains and dwell there. In spite of the discussion over the word הרי and the feminine suffix attached to the verbal form וירשוה,³⁸¹ it seems better to understand the plural noun here as describing a general characteristic of the geography of the land. Thus, it points out to the land as a whole,³⁸² rather than referring to a specific mountain.³⁸³ Double geographical indications in v. 10, “Sharon and the Valley of Achor,” support our interpretation.³⁸⁴ At this point, KOOLE noted that “the mountains makes for a good connection with the plains mentioned in v. 10.”³⁸⁵ Thus, in vv. 9-10 YHWH promises to give to a part of the community, who is designated as *his servants* and *his chosen*, the possession of the land, even the prosperous land.

While it is true that the promise of possessing the land is a general topic in the whole Old Testament writings, the promise to the *servants* and the *chosen* in 65,9-10 would have a particular meaning in the context of Isaianic tradition. As could be observed, Second Isaiah also offers such promises (cf. for example, 49,8; 54,1-3).

³⁸¹ The Hebrew text has הרי *my mountains* masc. pl., but then in the verbal form that comes next a feminine singular pronoun is suffixed (וירשוה). The LXX has the singular noun τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἄγιον, but omits the pronoun. The Vulgate, Peshitta, and the Targum support the MT. 1QIsa^a has וירשוהי, and thus relates this 3 sing. masc. suffix to a preceding הרי as a singular form. Following the LXX, scholars preferred to read הרי as singular, for example, P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 142; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 181; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 141. Others chose to emend the suffix in the verbal form to וירשום, for example, B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 446; and later S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 165; E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 82. But notice that Duhm immediately added that perhaps ירשו הארץ is better. Together with some recent commentators, we prefer to keep the MT since it also makes sense and thus an emendation is hardly necessary.

³⁸² The plural הרי could be understood as referring to “the hill country of Palestine” (cf. WATTS) or “the whole land of Israel” as in Isa 14,25 (cf. Ezek 38,21). See, for example, R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 272; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 274.276; J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 646.

³⁸³ Isa 57,13 also employs the root ירש but there, the mountain is further qualified as הרי קדשי “my holy mountain.”

³⁸⁴ For the discussion on those locations, see particularly, L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 89-90.

³⁸⁵ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 432.

This promise could also be found in chs. 60-62, which are often called the core of Third Isaiah and stand close to the proclamation of Second Isaiah (cf. 60,21; 61,4). Thus, it is clear that the promise given in vv. 9-10 is not an alien entity in the Isaianic tradition, rather it derives from that tradition. Through this promise, the author wanted to hold on to the previous promise, but now the addressee is different. In this case, to borrow RUSZKOWSKI's word, reinterpretation becomes then a re-addressing (*Umadressierungen*).³⁸⁶

The verdict for the other party of the community is delivered in vv. 11-12. This part is introduced by a disjunctive *waw* and the personal emphatic pronoun **אַתָּה** "but you." In Third Isaiah, this construction appears 6 x (57,3; 61,2; 65,11.13 (3x); 65,14). Except in 61,2 it is always placed in an emphatic position and underlines an opposition between two groups.³⁸⁷ HANSON noted that this formula serves to indicate a transition between salvation words to the faithful and judgment words to the wicked.³⁸⁸ Thus the "you" here is placed in opposition with the previous phrase "my people who have sought me" (v. 10b). This indicates that v. 10b, at least from a stylistic point of view, cannot be separated from its present position as some scholars have suggested. This "you" is further specified as those "who forsake YHWH and forget my holy mountain."

Upon them, YHWH announces his wrath that he will destine them to the sword and all of them shall bow down to the slaughter (v. 12aα). The use of the terminologies "sword" (**חֶרֶב**) and "slaughter" (**שִׁבְחָה**) would naturally lead us to think that a reference to a destruction through war is being here intended. Foreign forces could indeed be used as YHWH's instruments, as in the case of Cyrus (cf. 45,1)! This sounds perfectly good, particularly, if we position ourselves on the side of the faithful, who would expect the destruction of the wicked. For them, the division within the community between "we-salvation" and "they-punishment" caused by the divine words becomes a clear sign that God is in their part. However, if we take into account that the context here is the prophecy of destruction upon the wicked, which is only a group within the larger community, then it would be hard to imagine how human agents (perhaps, foreign enemies are being referred) could fulfill such a task.³⁸⁹ It is impossible that war destruction can, on the one hand, spare the righteous and, on the other hand, slay only the intended, that is, the wicked. Thus WESTERMANN argued that it is here evident that the author has taken up stock-terms used in the announcements

³⁸⁶ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 94.

³⁸⁷ G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 125.

³⁸⁸ P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 188.

³⁸⁹ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 91.

of judgment of older days.³⁹⁰ In the context of the salvation-judgment oracle in vv. 9-12, it could only mean that the destruction of the wicked will be carried out by YHWH himself as, for example, in 63,1-6; and, therefore, it seems better to place it in the future, far beyond the present history. In other words, the future dimension of the promise is again underlined.

The contrast between the faithful and the wicked reaches its climax in a summary in vv. 13-16, particularly in vv. 13-14 in which both parties are juxtaposed in an extreme opposition. As could be noted, the word *servants* here refers back to vv. 9-10; while the idea of *eating and drinking* seems to allude to a banquet description in v. 11.³⁹¹ WESTERMANN thus noted that the composition is deliberate in order to join together v. 9ff and v. 11ff.³⁹² As a summary, the introductory particle (לכן) "therefore") is repeated at this point. The structure of vv. 13-14 is also impressive. It consists of a series of beautifully arranged bicola. The first colon of each colon begins with הִנֵּה "behold" - a particle commonly used to attract attention - followed by עֲבָדַי "my servants," which, thus, is in the emphatic position. Then, the parallel colon is begun with a disjunctive *waw* followed by the independent pronoun, again, in an emphatic position וְאַתֶּם "but you." The fact that YHWH addresses the wicked directly implies that he stands on the side of his servants and speaks on their behalf.

Though vv. 13-14 constitute a summary for vv. 9-10 and vv. 11-12, it could be noted that the content of the punishment is here presented differently. Sword and slaughter (cf. v. 12) are no longer here mentioned and are replaced by different kinds of - less concrete - punishment: the unrighteous are to be hungry and thirsty, and to weep and cry out! This may indicate that, on the one hand, the destruction by sword (65,12) need not be understood literally, as we have suggested earlier; and on the other hand, this judgment could also imply the existing condition, namely, the miserable situation of the post-exilic community in Judah.³⁹³

Verse 15 presents another aspect of the salvation-judgment oracle by picking up the *name* (שֵׁם) as the theme. To the wicked YHWH said, "You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the LORD GOD will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name."³⁹⁴ There is no agreement among scholars with regard to

³⁹⁰ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 405.

³⁹¹ Cf. J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 528.

³⁹² C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 406.

³⁹³ J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 753.

³⁹⁴ The second part of this verse (v. 15 ab) creates many difficulties among scholars. The phrase וְהָרַגְתִּי אֶתְּךָ יְהוָה "And the LORD God will slay you" is indeed awkward in its present position, so that most scholars consider it as a marginal gloss. Cf. for example, DUHM, MUILENBURG, WESTERMANN, SMART, PAURITSCH, HANSON, KOENEN, etc. This solution, however, required

the reference of this *name*-theme. It is not clear what is meant by the name. Jer 29,22b α perhaps presents the use of a name for cursing (קָלַלְהָ) “The LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab,” where the lying prophets Ahab and Zedekiah are to be remembered only by using of their name to invoke their terrible fate on others. More difficult is to understand another name (שֵׁם אֲחֵר) ³⁹⁵ granted to the faithful - and not the use of their name for blessing as we might have expected. It has here been suggested that this topic alluded to the Abrahamic promise of name (Gen 12,2). ³⁹⁶ SMART thought that this different name is “Amen,” meaning *true* or *faithful*, a name to be borne only by a people what would maintain in sincerity and truth the covenant relation with God. ³⁹⁷ Despite these various attractive proposals, it seems better to hold the simplest interpretation for this designation “another name” (שֵׁם אֲחֵר), namely, that this phrase merely points to a different identity. ³⁹⁸ Having a different name would mean becoming a different person with different potentialities and prospects. Thus, “another name” (שֵׁם אֲחֵר) would symbolically mark a new epoch. ³⁹⁹ The community is divided into two groups with different fates in the future. As SMART here noticed “this verse (v. 15) is proof that until now the rebellious and the faithful have formed one community and have borne one name.” ⁴⁰⁰

2.7.3 65,17-25: Divine Words for the Faithful

An attentive reading demonstrates that this last part of this chapter (vv. 17-25) differs from the previous part (vv. 1-16) in that these verses show no distinction between the elect and the wicked. We could notice that the addressee of the divine words in vv. 17-25 is not clearly formulated as in vv. 8-16, which constitutes a direct speech. Thus, if this passage is read out of the context, its affinity with chs. 60-62 (the core of Third

that this verse could not be YHWH's words and that the following phrase (v. 15b) in which YHWH is spoken of in third person form should also be understood as an already-altered text after the gloss had found its way into the body text. The original text might have been in the first person. Save the LXX and IQIsa^a that have different texts, ancient versions such as the Vulgate, Syriac, and Targum support the MT. It seems better to follow the simpler solution by retaining the MT reading and understand v. 15ab and 15b as YHWH who speaks using the formula pronounced by people to each other in which his name occurs in a third person form. Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 441.

³⁹⁵ The LXX has ὄνομα καινόν “new name.”

³⁹⁶ Thus, for example, Oswalt's suggestion that was later picked up by Dim. J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 651; cf. E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 93.

³⁹⁷ J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 279.

³⁹⁸ In the course of time in the history of Israel, this promise of the granting of a different name did not actually happen. Israel is never called by a *new* name as Isa 65,15 has predicted. It means that this promise fails again.

³⁹⁹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 283.

⁴⁰⁰ J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 279.

Isaiah),⁴⁰¹ and therefore indirectly with chs. 40-55, becomes apparent. These verses proclaim good news for YHWH's people. But when it is read within its present context, whatever one thinks about its original form or location, it becomes clear that the promise is granted *not* to the whole people, but only a part of them that is designated as "my people who seek me" (65,10b), "the Servants" (65,8-9. 13-15), and "the chosen of God" (65,9.15.22).⁴⁰² Since this passage in its present position does not stand alone, its context should therefore be taken into account.

As it could be noticed this section could be divided into two smaller units: vv. 17-19a and vv. 19b-25. The former consists of the announcement of the divine promise of salvation, while the latter portrays its further description⁴⁰³ or its concrete consequences to the prophet's contemporaries.⁴⁰⁴ Because of its content, our analysis will be focused primarily on the first part (vv. 17-19a). The second part will be referred to as long as it could throw light for a better understanding of the first unit.

The Hebrew text of v. 17-19a runs as follows:

כִּי הֲנִי בּוֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים וְאָרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה
 וְלֹא תִזְכְּרֶנָּה הָרֵאשֹׁנוֹת וְלֹא תִעֲלֶינָה עַל-לֵב:
 כִּי־אֲמַם־שִׂישׁוּ וְנִילֻ עַד־עַד אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי בּוֹרֵא
 כִּי הֲנִי בּוֹרֵא אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם נִילָה וְעַמָּהּ מְשׁוֹשׁ:
 וְנִלְתִי בִירוּשָׁלַם וְשִׂשְׁתִּי בְעַמִּי

- 17a "For I am about to create new heavens and new earth;
 17b the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.
 18a But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating;
 18b For I am about to create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people as a
 delight.
 19a I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people"

⁴⁰¹ For a complete list of the verbal correspondence between ch. 65 and chs. 60-62, see, for example, L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 82-86.

⁴⁰² J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 285-286. Westermann even suggested that 65,16b-25 forms part of the nucleus of Third Isaiah's proclamation (57,14-21; 60-62) and perhaps may once have formed the direct continuation of chs. 60-62. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 411. A similar position is also held by K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 176-177; S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 177-178; J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 492-495. While Smith argued that 65,16b-25 should be understood as distinctive from, and a development of, DI and TI. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 144-147.

⁴⁰³ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 407; E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 102.

⁴⁰⁴ R. MARTIN-ACHARD, "L'espérance des croyants d'Israël," 444.

First of all, we shall note the presence of a phrase “new heavens and new earth” (שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים וְאָרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה),⁴⁰⁵ which is totally new in the OT, the reference of which has been the focus of scholarly discussions. At this point, scholars are dealing with a question whether this phrase should be viewed as a gross exaggeration on the part of the author or as an isolated apocalyptic fragment. It is true that it sounds to be apocalyptic, implying that heaven and earth are to be destroyed and in their place a new heaven and a new earth created (cf. Rev 21,1; 2Ptr 3,13).⁴⁰⁶ However, together with many others scholars, we shall argue that there is no need to understand that phrase in such a way. Rather, it merely points to a transformation of the world, designated as *heaven and earth*.⁴⁰⁷ The promise is not an apocalyptic flight into an imaginative world of fantasy, but the fulfillment of God’s will.

The following arguments could be put forward to support this understanding. The force of the verbal construction participle (בֹּרֵא) + הִנְנִי implies that the event announced is imminent or *futurum instans*.⁴⁰⁸ It would therefore mean that YHWH is *already* beginning his new creation and that it is a continuous process within Israel’s historical life.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, the promise of longevity and prosperity in vv. 19b-25 that functions as a further description of vv. 18-19a also suggests that *new heaven and new earth* is aptly understood in the present history, rather than in the context of the world to come. But then, to which does it refer? We believe that the context is again decisive.

We shall here observe that the phrase כִּי־הִנְנִי בֹרֵא appears twice; each with different object: “new heavens and new earth” in v. 17a and “Jerusalem as joy” and “her people as delight” in v. 18b. This would suggest that both objects stand in parallel. In other words, the first object “new heavens and new earth” is practically the same as the second, namely, “Jerusalem as joy and her people as delight.” In v. 18b the nouns “a rejoicing” (גִּילָה) and “a delight” (מְשׁוֹשׁ) are respectively in apposition to *Jerusalem* and *her people*. Hence, *Jerusalem* becomes the same as *a rejoicing* while *her people*, the same as *a delight*. Both are interchangeable.⁴¹⁰ If our reading could be

⁴⁰⁵ For the vocalization of אָרֶץ see GKC § 29i n. 3.

⁴⁰⁶ This position is held, for example, by P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 158-161; or McKenzie who argued that “the salvation he (the prophet) expects can only be achieved outside history, when the judgments of Yahweh are perfectly executed, when wickedness becomes utterly powerless.” J.L. MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah*, 201.

⁴⁰⁷ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 408; J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 755; J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 657.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. GKC § 116p; J-M § 119n.

⁴⁰⁹ E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 133.

⁴¹⁰ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 530; cf. also E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 107.

justified then the promise of *new heavens and new earth* could be understood as the transformation of Jerusalem and her inhabitants into *joy and delight*. The emphasis on rejoicing in vv. 18-19a is indeed shown by the use of no less than six words, which actually derive from only two roots גיל "to rejoice" and שוש "to exult," in order to express this joy: שישו ("be glad!" v. 18a); גילו ("rejoice!" v. 18a); גילה ("a rejoicing" v. 18b); משוש ("a delight" v. 18b); גלתי ("I will rejoice" v. 19a); ששתי ("I will be glad" v. 19a).⁴¹¹

That the joy becomes central in this part is also shown by a double invitation to rejoice; one is directed to the listeners, and the other to YHWH himself. In v. 18b, the addressee is invited to rejoice, "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating" (בִּרְאָה again, in participial form). And in v. 19a it is YHWH himself who shall rejoice, "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people." The reason to rejoice is YHWH's imminent intervention that will transform *the former things* into a *new heaven and new earth*. The further description of the promise in vv. 19b-25 seems to demonstrate these two life atmospheres in contrast.

The above considerations thus confirm our understanding that the expression "new heaven and new earth" need not necessarily indicate the presence of an apocalyptic way of thinking. They are to be conceived as a transformation of the present situation into a new situation characterized by joy by means of divine intervention. Thus, as BLENKINSOPP said, "the new heavens and earth are thought of more as the context for social and political transformation and therefore are not the focus of attention in themselves, as is the case in apocalyptic writings from the Greco-Roman period."⁴¹²

Thus in this last section of ch. 65 the prophet assured his listeners that YHWH's intervention is about to come among them. The description of the promise, which covers the longevity, prosperity, and harmony within the community of YHWH's chosen as vv. 19b-25 demonstrate, strongly suggests that YHWH's action is not to be expected of taking place in the future, in the world to come, but rather, at present, in their historical sphere of life.⁴¹³ Thus, a miserable life characterized by weeping (v. 19b), premature death (v. 20), oppression and slavery (v. 21-23) will soon be transformed into a better condition; while a harmony with God and nature (vv. 24-25) will be restored as well. Nevertheless, it should be admitted that the prophet said

⁴¹¹ E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 102; cf. SMART, *History and Theology*, 280.

⁴¹² J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 286.

⁴¹³ Cf. A. GARDNER, "Isaiah 65,20," 88-96.

nothing about *how* this transformation of history would come about.⁴¹⁴ YHWH alone is the actor on the scene.

The prophet's assurance that YHWH will intervene is also shown by the use of the verb ברא "to create" that appears three times in vv. 18-19. One cannot fail to see that this verb is a technical term for the divine creative activity.⁴¹⁵ In Second Isaiah, this verb is used in the sense of new creation (cf. 41,20 also 42,9; 43,19; 48,16).⁴¹⁶ On the one hand, as scholars have noted, the use of this specific word indeed shows the dependence of 65,17-19 on chs. 40-48. On the other hand, by using a verb that has almost exclusively YHWH as subject, the prophet wanted to demonstrate his conviction that the transformation promised will never fail because the actor is YHWH!

In this occasion, it seems appropriate to mention another term that was generally accepted as being another influence of Second Isaiah. This term is הראשנות "the former things" that appears in v. 17b. Many commentators suggested that the background of this word should be found in 43,18.

אל-תִּזְכְּרוּ רֵאשִׁנוֹת וְקִדְמֵינִיּוֹת אֶל-תִּחַבְּנֵנּוּ

"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old"

In Second Isaiah, the verse asserts that the former *saving acts* of God will be forgotten in view of the tremendous new saving act, "Behold, I am doing a new thing" (43,19). In 65,17, as we could see, the phrase with הראשנות "the former things" (v. 17b) stands together with "For I am about to create new heavens and new earth" (v. 17a). This would suggest that v. 17b stands in contrast with v. 17a. Here, the word הראשנות "the former things" is given another interpretation: it stands for the whole created order which is to be replaced by a *new* one.⁴¹⁷ It no longer represents YHWH's particular saving acts as in Second Isaiah, but rather stands for former troubles which the people had to face (cf. in v. 16c הצרות הראשנות "former troubles"). Just as v. 17a talks about the new situation, so the former things in v. 17b must refer to the

⁴¹⁴ Indeed, it is actually difficult to determine with full confidence that YHWH would transform the world instead of creating a new one. Thus Oswald cautioned, "Suppose the author were talking about a coming existence that is absolutely unlike anything that we know here. How would he describe it to us? Only in analogous terms that are familiar to us. Thus one cannot sustain the thesis that the picture given is not talking about a completely new world. It is and it is not..." J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 657.

⁴¹⁵ Steck even argued that Isa 65,17-25 depends on Gen 1-3. O.H. STECK, "Der Neue Himmel und die neue Erde," 349-365.

⁴¹⁶ C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 408; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 286-287.

⁴¹⁷ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 276.

present situation.⁴¹⁸ Here again, we find the strategy commonly employed by Third Isaiah, namely, picking up the materials at his disposal, but using them in a different manner or context. By picking up the tradition and giving them a fresh reinterpretation, the prophet gives a new life and vigor to that tradition.

2.7.4 Result

The analysis of ch. 65 is a long enterprise. Now, at the end of this examination, we shall sum up the discussion that we have been undertaking and point out some important results from the perspective of this research.

Chapter 65 differs greatly from the previous sections of Third Isaiah in that it strongly emphasizes the division within community, a point that is only vaguely apparent in the other parts of Third Isaiah. Now, the community is split into two groups: the wicked and the faithful. From that time on, the traditional designation of the people, for example, *my people* (v. 10), *my servants* (vv. 8.9.13-14.15), *my chosen* (v. 9.15.22), can no longer be applied to the whole community. They are now applied only to those who sought the Lord (cf. v. 10b). This division finds its clearest expression in 65,8-16, particularly vv. 13-15 in which these two parties are juxtaposed in perfect contrast. As we have seen, this division is also followed by different divine promises: punishment for the wicked and promise of reward for the faithful respectively.

In view of the people who were expecting the realization of the promise delivered by Second Isaiah, the prophet re-elaborated and reinterpreted the old material and applied them in a new circumstance. The result is a reassurance that the old promise is still valid and will soon materialize. And, as we have seen, the prophet diligently emphasized the *nearness* of the fulfillment of the promise without specified further.

Again we find here the method, which is elsewhere employed by the author of Third Isaiah. He made use of the already-existing materials and applied them in a new context. Old promises are picked up again and reinterpreted to meet the actual needs of his contemporaries. Thus in CARROLL's word, "Dissonance gives rise to hermeneutic."⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Cf. J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 451.

⁴¹⁹ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy*, 124 and *passim*.

2.8 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: 66,1-24

Now we arrive at the last chapter of the so-called Third Isaiah. Due to its composite nature, it seems clear that scholars have agreed to disagree with regard to the division of this chapter.⁴²⁰ At best, they agree that this chapter is a collection of disparate elements with a minimum of editorial links.⁴²¹ Thus, every commentator offers its own chapter division along with its justification.⁴²² In this case, rather than closely following the scholarly suggestions, we will try to group this chapter according to the flow of the text.

Based on the content, it is clear that, like the previous chapter, ch. 66 is also dealing with the division within the post-exilic community. As we shall see, this chapter presents the divine words addressed to these two parties, namely, the righteous and the wicked. Our discussion of this chapter will then be carried out according to the divine words delivered to each party.

2.8.1 66,1-6: Judgment upon the Apostates

The content of this section is easy to grasp. In verses 1-2a, the divine words seem to refer to the temple. Verse 2b depicts YHWH's preference. By means of eight participles describing cult abuses, a group of persons is being addressed in v. 3a. Then in v. 3b-6 divine judgment upon them is delivered. From v. 7 onwards the subject matter completely changes so that it could be justified to delimit the first unit of this chapter as comprising of vv. 1-6.

A reference to the temple that could allegedly be found in vv. 1-2a has indeed become a matter of long discussion among scholars, as they seem to demonstrate YHWH's disapproval of the temple. The main question that might here emerge is whether Third Isaiah rejects the temple as such or religious practices undertaken in connection with it. At this occasion, we are not going to answer that question or to present the whole scholarly discussion concerning the matter. We just state briefly that 66,1-4 do not reject the temple as such or the cultic activities that were carried out there, but rather it is a critique against a particular view of the importance and value of the temple.

⁴²⁰ Thus, for example, Pauritsch commented, "Kein anderes Kapitel des trjes Buches wurde in der Frage der Einheitlichkeit und der Versanordnung so unterschiedlich beurteilt wie das letzte." K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 195.

⁴²¹ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 279.

⁴²² Thus, for example, Duhm divided this chapter into six parts (1-4, 5-11, 12-17, 18-22, 23, 24); Westermann into five (1-4, 5, 6-16, 17, 18-24); Whybray into seven (1-4, 5, 6, 7-14, 15-16, 17, 18-24); Webster into three (1-6, 7-14, 15-24) etc.

Two considerations seem to support the above understanding. First, the mention of a list of cultic abuses in v. 3a also throws light to understand vv. 1-2a. It must be admitted that, as we have seen previously, the exact nature of the rites described in v. 3a cannot be determined with precision.⁴²³ The only thing we could assert is that there are indications that the Jerusalem priests may have been involved in such condemned illicit practices,⁴²⁴ which are called as **בְּדַרְכֵיהֶם** "their own ways" (v. 3b α). This would then suggest that these two verses are attacking, above all, the cultic activities *insofar as* they are contaminated with unorthodox practices and/or immoral life behaviours. They are not necessarily addressed against the temple as such. Second, as BEUKEN has argued in his reading of v. 1b, this verse does not contain a refusal of the reconstruction of the temple itself, but of a certain interpretation thereof.⁴²⁵ One is not allowed to build that house as if YHWH could profit from it (cf. **תִּבְנוּ-לִי** "you shall build for me") and owes it to the benevolent initiative of the people; and in turn it might persuade YHWH to grant his blessing to the people in exchange.⁴²⁶ In this case, the accomplishment of cultic activities would automatically produce results for the people's well-being. Such a kind of *do ut des* mentality or *ex opere operato* theology seems to be rejected here. These two points, we believe, contribute to our understanding of vv. 1-2a that these two verses are not rejecting the temple as such.

The description of irregular cultic practices is then followed by a verdict (v. 3b) and judgment (v. 4). It could be noticed that the verdict and the judgment are carefully composed by means of the repetition of the key words. In that way, a correspondence between the action of the apostates and YHWH's judgment is then perfectly achieved:

"Just as they (**גַּם-הִמָּדָה**) have chosen (**בְּחָרָו**) their own ways,
and their soul delights (**חִפְּצָה**) in their abominations.
I also (**גַּם-אֲנִי**) will choose (**אֶבְחַר**) affliction for them,
and bring their fears upon them;

⁴²³ Beuken argued that the criticized practices are understandable against the general biblical background, but not from a concrete religio-historical situation, because they remain obscure, especially if it is about which religious party they represent. See W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Does Trito-Isaiah," 53-65. But, if this description has no reference to the reality and just a general prophetic criticism, why is it placed exactly here? We believe that it has to do with the reality described, though perhaps it does not fully and faithfully represent it.

⁴²⁴ See above III.B.2.a.

⁴²⁵ W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Does Trito-Isaiah," 56.

⁴²⁶ Cf. J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 667. Perhaps, the idea is also rejected here that salvation is entirely dependent on the building of the new temple (cf. Hag 2,19).

because, when I called, no one answered,
 when I spoke they did not listen;
 But they did what was evil in my eyes,
 and chose (בְּחָרָוּ) that in which I did not delight (חָפְצָתִי),⁴²⁷

So as in the previous chapter (ch. 65), again we here find the same theme, the wicked will not be left unpunished, instead YHWH's judgment is declared upon them.

In the context of a polemic with those who practised the irregular cultic practices, the presence of a particular party in v. 2b seems to be conspicuous and break the flow of the text. The reference to "the afflicted" (עָנִי) and "the crushed in spirit" (נִכְוָה רוּחַ) and "he that trembles (חָרַד) at my word" does not seem fit with the context. However, BEUKEN detected here the presence of *anadiplosis*,⁴²⁸ a rhetorical figure of speech that connects v. 2a and 2b. Thus, God has created everything, but his attention goes forth to the oppressed human being who venerates his word. Again, as in 57,15 (and also Ps 113,5-7) God's transcendency here meets with his immanency in the people in particular circumstances, namely, the marginalized and lowly people. His creative power will also be a benefit for the people he takes care of. How YHWH will treat the afflicted will then be elaborated in vv. 7-14a.

In v. 5 the divine word is now directed to "those who tremble at his word"⁴²⁹ explaining what the previous verses mean for them.⁴³⁰ This group is further

⁴²⁷ It could be noted that this half-verse (65,4b) seems to be a quasi-verbatim repetition of 65,12b (the same wording but with a second pers. pl. subject). This fact suggests a close relationship between these two chapters.

⁴²⁸ This means that the end of the first line and the beginning of the second one contain the same word - here the demonstrative pronoun -, marked by a frame-formula: 'and so all *these* things came to be, oracle of YHWH, but *this* is the man to whom I will look' (כל אלה נאם יהוה ואל זה). W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Does Trito-Isaiah," 57. Dim, from a different perspective, argued that אֶל־זֶה contrastingly links to אֵי־זֶה in v. 1, in this unit of vv.1-2, thus, heightening the emphasis on YHWH's expressed preference. E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 125, cf. J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 761.

⁴²⁹ This participial-substantival form הַחֹרְדִים or חָרַד occurs only in Isa 66,2.5 and Ezra 9,4; 10,3. It is Blenkinsopp who in his various writings has been trying to demonstrate that these הַחֹרְדִים in Isa 66,2.5 represent a certain group in the post-exilic Judean community, which was persecuted and marginalized, or even excommunicated, by the majority of the society, depicted by the designation אֶחָיִכֶם "their brothers," that is, their fellow Jews, and more specifically by the religious and civil authorities. He described the oppressed group as a prophetic-eschatological group of low status. Hence comes the description of the group in Isa 66,2 as the *afflicted* and the *crushed in spirit* by social and political injustice. This designation (הַחֹרְדִים) could be understood as an expression of intense religious emotion. As a title, this is well attested in the history of religious movements (e.g. Quakers, Shakers); and it still used for the ultra-Orthodox faction in Judaism, though it does not appear with reference to a distinctive group in post-biblical texts of the Hellenistic and Roman periods including the Qumran material. See J. BLENKINSOPP, "Interpretation and the Tendency," 1-26; ID., "A Jewish Sect," 5-20; ID., *History of Prophecy*, 219-222; ID., "The Servant and the Servants," 155-175; ID., *Isaiah 56-66*, 299-300; ID.,

characterized by the manner they have been treated by their brothers (“who hate שׂנא and cast you out נִדָּה for my name’s sake”)⁴³¹ and what YHWH will do on their behalf (“to put them to shame” בּוֹשׁ). It is noticeable that this divine judgment יִבְשׂוּ “they shall be ashamed” is similar to YHWH’s judgment upon the opponents of the Servants in 65,13 וְאַתֶּם תִּבְשׂוּ “but you shall be ashamed.” Therefore, as BLENKINSOPP suggested, there are reasons to believe that both groups are identical.⁴³² Verse 6 then describes how the divine judgment is now ready to explode to “rendering recompense to his enemies.”

2.8.2 66,7-17: Promise of Salvation and Judgment

An abrupt change of subject matter in v. 7 must inevitably lead the readers to become aware that this verse constitutes a beginning of a new section. Many scholars also agreed with this. Nevertheless, as we shall see later on, it does not necessarily mean that v. 6 and v. 7ff stand without any connection. This section starting with v. 7 could be expanded up to v. 17. Thus it could be structured as follows:

- vv. 7-14a : promise of salvation for the faithful
- v. 14b : transition
- vv. 15-17 : proclamation of destruction for the apostates

The first block vv. 7-14a can be further divided into three parts: vv. 7-9 that announce the promise of salvation, vv. 10-11 a call to rejoice, and vv. 12-14 is a fuller description of the salvation promised.⁴³³ In these three verses, the author used the figure of a mother who is giving birth to her children.

Opening the Sealed Book, 67-71. The idea that הַחֲרִיִּים points to a minority persecuted by the official religious leaders whoever they may have been is also supported by some other scholars, such as, Hanson, Achtemeier. But Whybray doubted it. R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 282

⁴³⁰ J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 669.

⁴³¹ Blenkinsopp suggested particular nuances implied in the words שׂנא and נִדָּה *Piel*. He thought that the root שׂנא implies active dissociation rather than a merely emotional state. He referred to the legal phrase for marital separation in use in the Jewish military colony on the island of Elephantine in the Persian period. The root נִדָּה (*Piel*), occurs only here and Am 6,3, the latter instance apparently with the sense of exorcizing, driving away by magic. In Mishnaic Hebrew it was one of the terms in official use for excommunication from the synagogue. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 299-300.

⁴³² J. BLENKINSOPP, “The Servant and the Servants,” 171; ID., “A Jewish Sect,” 11; ID., *Isaiah 56-66*, 300.

⁴³³ W. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 126; J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 674.

Verse 7 begins with a literary form resembling a riddle⁴³⁴ constructed in two parallel statements:

“Before she was in labor she gave a birth;
before the pain come upon her she was delivered of a son”

These two statements portray the same thing: they describe a woman who gives a birth without experiencing birth-pangs. This is, of course, an unusual description of a child-birth. It never happens that a woman escapes from birth-pangs, because it is a part of the natural law that a woman should experience such pains before she gave birth to a child. Thus, the questions that follow would naturally expect negative answers.⁴³⁵ In the following verse (v. 8a) there come four questions formulated into two pairs of questions; each consists of two questions. The first two questions come from the perspective of the observer: *who* (וַיִּשְׂאֵל 2x) (v. 8aα); and the answer is negative. The other two refer to the subject matter under discussion: “Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment?” (v. 8aβ). Also here the answer is negative: No, it shall not because it should follow the process of the nature! Thus, the riddle and the questions in vv. 7-8a point to the *impossibility* of the case picked up in v. 7, that is, the description of a woman that gives birth without pain.

Verses 7-8a then give way to the contrast statement in v. 8b: “*But*⁴³⁶ as soon as Zion was in labor, she brought forth her children.” This half verse demonstrates that in the case of Zion, things will be going differently. She does not need to experience the birth pangs, because *as soon as* she was in labor, she would bring forth her children. Thus, the birth of the children is now seen as instantaneous and miraculous! The salvation promised is about to come! Through the image of miraculous birth it is demonstrated that the promise has actually been fulfilled, but still remained invisible.⁴³⁷ Here the emphasis is upon the speed and immediacy of the event.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah*, 541.

⁴³⁵ E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 150.

⁴³⁶ The particle וַיִּשְׂאֵל is commonly interpreted as having *causal* nuance, and thus translated as “for” or “because.” However, it could also be interpreted adversatively “but,” “yet,” especially after a negation (Cf. J-M § 172c) though the negation is only virtually contained in the preceding sentence of condition e.g. in the form of a rhetorical question or of conditions which are to be regarded as not having been fulfilled (GKC § 163b). I prefer this choice since it shows a contrast between the impossibility of the painless birth and the miraculous birth that YHWH is about to perform. This translation is taken, for example, by NAB (“Yet Zion is scarcely in labor when she gives birth to her children”), NRS (“Yet as soon as Zion was in labor, she delivered her children”), TNK (“Yet Zion travailed and at once bore her children”), IEP («Eppure Sion, appena entrata in doglie, partorì i suoi figli»), NRV («Ma Sion, non appena ha sentito le doglie, ha subito partorito i suoi figli») also by Indonesian translation.

⁴³⁷ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 108.

A double statement in v. 9 then serves for two functions. First, it challenges a skepticism that has ceased to think that the promised salvation will be realized; and second, it also underlines that it is YHWH himself who will accomplish such a miraculous birth. Two concluding divine speech formulae at the end of each statement (יֵאמֶר יְהוָה, יֵאמֶר אֱלֹהֶיךָ) highlight this divine assertion. The imperfect יֵאמֶר expresses the persistence of the speaker, the perfect אָמַר underlines the fixity of what is said.⁴³⁹ Thus, in front of this YHWH's imminent intervention, vv. 10-11 proclaim an invitation to rejoice with Jerusalem. As in Isa 65,17-25, also here the emphasis upon joy is indicated by means of the abundance use of the words with that meaning (מְשׁוֹשׁ "to exult," שִׂישׂוּ "to rejoice," גִּילוּ "to rejoice," שִׂמְחָה "to be glad," "exultation").

Verses 12-14a then describe further the content of the promised salvation. The particle כִּי at the beginning of v. 12 introduces the reason to rejoice proclaimed in v. 10. Verse 12a then emphasizes that the salvation that is about to come, whose surety is further underlined by the emphatic formula הִנְנִי + participle, has to do with prosperity.⁴⁴⁰ "Behold, I am extending prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream," so that needs of all sorts will be supplied. In that way, YHWH comforts his people like a mother comforts her children (v. 13) and as a result, they may see and rejoice (v. 14a).

One could easily notice that in this section, there are references to other passages, particularly that of Second Isaiah, so that WHYBRAY said that this passage is a mosaic of quotation and near-quotations from Second Isaiah and elsewhere and seems to be a commentary on vv. 7-11.⁴⁴¹ The phrase כְּנָהָר שְׁלוֹמִים "prosperity like a river" echoes 48,18 where YHWH tells the people that *if* they had obeyed him, "your peace שְׁלוֹמֶךָ would have been like a river כְּנָהָר."⁴⁴² In 66,12, however, such a condition does not appear! The expression in v. 12a כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם "the glory of the

⁴³⁸ J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 289.

⁴³⁹ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 537; E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 153.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. J. MUILENBURG, "Isaiah 40-66," 767. We understand Jerusalem's prosperity as the main promise in these verses, despite the image of woman in labor in vv. 7-9 that might suggest that the promise is about the birth of a new community, or the repopulation of Judea after the return, etc. as many scholars have proposed. A "new" community has already been there as the expression like עֲבָדִים "servants," הַחֹרְרִים "those who tremble in my word" show. There is no need to expect the emergence of another "new" community. What the people badly needed is the fulfillment of the promise of well-being.

⁴⁴¹ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 285.

⁴⁴² In the Old Testament, the word pair "prosperity/peace" (שְׁלוֹמִים) and "river" (נָהָר) appear only in two places 48,18 and 66,12. LAU, *Schriftgelehrte*, 131; cf. also A. ZILLESSEN, "'Tritojesaja,'" 248; W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas," 230.

nations” resembles *גוים חיל שופך* “the wealth of the nations” in 60,5 and 61,6. *כְּנַחַל שׁוֹפֵךְ* “like an overflowing stream” is also found in 30,28 in a different context. Thus, also here there is a radical reinterpretation, which changes the significance of the old text from an expression of wrath into one of blessing.

Verse 14b then serves as a transitional verse.⁴⁴³ There is an important shift here: YHWH is no longer speaking but he is now being spoken of.⁴⁴⁴ This half verse unites the proclamation of salvation* that comes before (vv. 7-14a) with the proclamation of judgment that follows (vv. 15-17) into a literary unit that contains a salvation-judgment oracle. It also shows that the promise of salvation is actually addressed to YHWH’s servants (*עֲבָדָיו*); while the disaster will come upon his enemies (*אֹיְבָיו*) respectively. The mention of *עֲבָדָיו* then connects vv. 7-17 with the previous section (vv. 1-6) because, as we have seen, “those who tremble at his word” and “the servants” practically refer to the same entity. In the same manner, “YHWH’s enemies” (*אֹיְבָיו*) refers to the apostates described in v. 17, which in turn, goes back to v. 3a and v. 6. The mention of “servants” and “enemies” is thus an indication of the relations of this chapter to its context,⁴⁴⁵ by which the unity of vv. 1-17 is thus confirmed.

Though *כִּי־הִנֵּה* “For behold” (v. 15a) could be regarded as an opening of a new section, the thought that follows has clearly been prepared by v. 14b.⁴⁴⁶ The judgment over YHWH’s enemies is then elaborated further in vv. 15-17. In vv. 15-16 this judgment is portrayed through the image of a theophany of judgment⁴⁴⁷ with *אֵשׁ* “fire,” appearing 3 x in these two verses, as its important element. Another image is also here employed: *וְכַסּוּפָה כְּרֶכְבֵּתָיו* “his chariots like the storm wind.” This phrase is also found in Jer 4,13 that depicts the arrival of Babylonian army. This image seems to be derived from the clouds of dust raised by advancing chariots. The chariots, an earthly manifestation of destructive power, are symbolic of the irresistible power of God acting in judgment.⁴⁴⁸ The coming of YHWH is then followed by his actions in vv. 15b-16.

⁴⁴³ B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents*, 170-171.

⁴⁴⁴ Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 201.

⁴⁴⁵ J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 768.

⁴⁴⁶ J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 684.

⁴⁴⁷ Thus R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 287. But he thought that vv. 15-16 originally formed the continuation of v. 6. Thus, in their present position, v. 6 and vv. 15-16 constituted a framework to vv. 7-14 which are of a quite different character. However, as we have seen, v. 14b would require a kind of description of YHWH’s enemies following the description of the fate of the Servants. Thus, we see no reason why vv. 15-16 should be detached from vv. 7-14.

⁴⁴⁸ J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 539.

In v. 17 YHWH's judgment over his enemies is now repeated differently. Now, his enemies are described in a greater detail, indicating that they are the apostates Jews who participated in the unorthodox cults as in v. 3b, while the punishment is put in a very short way יִחָדוּ יִסְפּוּ “to come to an end together.” SMITH notes that the occurrence of the root סוּךְ in vv. 15 and 17 forms an inclusion that binds these verses together⁴⁴⁹ and, of course, supports its unity.

The reference to this particular group, which practices unorthodox cults, within the community in contrast to the seemingly-universal enemies indicated by the expression כָּל-בָּשָׂר “all flesh” led some scholars to conclude that vv. 15-16 and v. 17 should be better treated separately.⁴⁵⁰ However, as KOENEN has noted, in the context of the conflict between the servants and YHWH's enemies in chs. 65-66, כָּל-בָּשָׂר “all flesh” does not necessary mean *the whole humankind*, thus gives the oracle a universal-eschatological character; rather it could rightly be understood in a limited sense, that is, the opponents of the servants or אִיבָיו “his enemies.” In this case, v. 17 thus specifies who is meant by כָּל-בָּשָׂר “all flesh” in v. 16.⁴⁵¹

2.8.3 66,18-24: About the Future Community

As we shall see below, based on thematic considerations, this section could be divided into two parts: vv. 18-21 and vv. 22-24.⁴⁵² The former is focused on YHWH's gathering of all nations through the work of the “survivors,” and the latter is on the eternal character of the community.

⁴⁴⁹ P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 166. Motyer stated, “Even if verse 17 had a point of origin distinct from verses 15-16, it is neatly integrated into its present place both by topical suitability and by the fact that *they will meet their end* (ʾsûp) forms an inclusio with *whirlwind* (sûpâ) in verse 15b.” J.A. MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 539; E.U. DIM, *The Eschatological Implications*, 166.

⁴⁵⁰ Thus, Westermann, for example, understood v. 17 as an independent unit that has no natural connection with what comes before and after it. Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 422; R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 288; J.D. SMART, *History and Theology*, 290-291, and others.

⁴⁵¹ K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 196. 202. Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 112; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 512. Actually, Duhm has already arrived at such a conclusion when he stated “...der Vers denkt gar nicht an die ganze Erde und meint mit 'allem Fleisch', jederman, in Wirklichkeit nur die Feinde der Tempelgemeinde.” B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 454-455. Though v. 17 is considered as a later addition, Blenkinsopp also argued that v. 17 serves to make it clear that those referred to in 15-16 who are to be subject to judgment by fire and sword are the devotees of deviant cult. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 311. Smith, on the other side, still holds that the enemies referred to in v. 14 are probably both the nation (and particularly Edom), but also the apostate Jews. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 166.

⁴⁵² Such a division could also be based on the literary form: vv. 18-21 could be properly read as a prose, while vv. 22-23 is a poem.

Verse 18a states the intention of YHWH, "I, knowing their deeds and their thoughts, am coming to gather all nations and all tongues."⁴⁵³ We can even say that this verse functions as a program, of which the fuller explanation is going to be developed in the following verses. Thus in v. 19 we find *the manner* and *the purpose* by and for which the program in v. 18 would be executed.⁴⁵⁴ YHWH will set a sign and send survivors to the nations to declare his glory.

Though this rendering seems simple, an attentive reading, however, would reveal that the first part of v. 19 (וְשִׁמַּתִּי בָהֶם אוֹת וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי מֵהֶם פְּלִיטִים אֶל־הַגּוֹיִם) "I will set among them a sign and from them I will send survivors to the nations") is not as straightforward as it appears. From this half-verse, there are, at least, three points that need clarification: the meaning of אוֹת "sign," the reference of the suffixes third pers. pl. masc. (בָּהֶם and מֵהֶם), and the identity of the survivors (פְּלִיטִים). We believe that these questions are closely interconnected, so that the answer of each question will throw light for understanding the other questions. Compared to the other two questions, the term פְּלִיטִים "survivors" seems more specific and is less used. Thus, in order to clarify the problems, we shall start with examining this term.

This פְּלִיטִים is actually a *qatil* form from the root פֿלט which means "escaped one," "fugitive,"⁴⁵⁵ hence "survivors." This word is normally used to refer to those who have survived a catastrophe (Ezr 9,8:14; Neh 1,2). In the context of Isaianic tradition, a connection between 66,19 and 45,20a seems apparent. There we find three

⁴⁵³ This verse actually presents several textual problems that lie precisely in its first four words: וְאֶנְכִי מֵעֲשֵׂיהֶם וּמַחְשְׁבֹתֵיהֶם בָּאָה - literally translated as, "I their deeds and their thoughts she/it comes." This reading is definitely unintelligible. Various solutions have been proposed. There is a solution to move the words וּמַחְשְׁבֹתֵיהֶם וּמֵעֲשֵׂיהֶם to v. 16 (BHS) or v. 17 (Blenkinsopp, Westermann). However, ancient versions (1QIsa^a, LXX, Vulg, Tg, Syriac) attest the presence of these words in v. 18 and not elsewhere. Thus, we prefer to retain the MT text. As regards the connection of these two nouns in their context, it seems better to supply a verb *to know* there as also in the ancient versions (LXX and Syriac cf. also Targumic rendering, "And before me are their deeds and their thoughts revealed") or to understand that a certain verb might have been withheld (*aposiopesis*) (cf. Vulgate). The feminine participle בָּאָה does not fit in the context. Therefore, we shall follow many commentators by emending it into masculine participle בָּא (Duhm, Koole, etc.), and thus, the "I" (וְאֶנְכִי) becomes the subject (so the ancient versions, such as, LXX, Vulgate, Syriac). The supposedly silent subject like עַתָּה "time" has indeed been suggested. Cf. Barthélemy's translation, «Quant à moi - étant donné leurs actions et leurs desseins - le moment vient de rassembler toutes les nations et toutes les langues... ». D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique Textuelle*, 464. But, the final infinitive לְקַבֵּץ would render such a suggestion difficult to accept. See J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 517.

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI," 210; also L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 112. Beuken wants to position v. 19 between v. 18a and v. 18b, because the sign of YHWH and the sending of the survivors form the first phrase of the gathering of the nations and occur before their coming and seeing. However, we think this is not necessary as long as we consider v. 18 as a programmatic verse, which does not need to be understood chronologically.

⁴⁵⁵ BDB, 812; HALOT; also G. HASEL, "פֿלט," 551-567.

words that also appear in 66,19 (פְּלִיטֵי הַגּוֹיִם), the root קִבַּץ and בָּא.⁴⁵⁶ In 45,20 this word represents those who survived from the collapsed Babylonian empire.⁴⁵⁷ So, if this word presupposes a catastrophe, then, in the context of ch. 66, what catastrophe should be the background of these *survivors*? Or, in other words, from what did they survive? We believe that the key to understanding this term depends on the interpretation of the context, especially vv. 15-16. Many scholars indeed argued that the survivors are those who are from among the *nations* that have been spared from YHWH's judgment by fire and sword *because* they read vv. 15-16 as a judgment against the nations. But, as we have demonstrated above, in the context of ch. 66 (vv. 3b-6; 14b-17) there is no explicit statement of judgment falling upon the nations from which there could be survivors to escape; the only divine judgment found in this context is the judgment against YHWH's enemies from *within* the Israelite community and *not* upon foreign enemies.⁴⁵⁸ Thus, it would fit the context better to see that these פְּלִיטֵי are actually the small group within the community that survived when YHWH punishes his enemies.⁴⁵⁹ It is *they* who will, in the future, become the missionaries sent by YHWH to everywhere and shall bring "the brethren from all the nations"⁴⁶⁰ to Jerusalem (v. 20). This word would recall to 56,7 in which YHWH promised that his house will be called a house of prayer for all people!

Having established the identity of these survivors, we shall now proceed to another problem, namely, the meaning of אִוֶּה "sign." It is true that, elsewhere, the word אִוֶּה *sign* is used with a wide range of meanings (cf. Isa 7,14; 19,19-20; 55,13 etc.).⁴⁶¹ There are many suggestions proposed by scholars. For example, this word could here mean a sign post showing those whom God sends the way or even the

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. W.A.M. BEUKEN, "Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI," 212.

⁴⁵⁷ L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 112; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 520.

⁴⁵⁸ Whybray cautioned that "there is no reference in this passage to a divine judgment or other catastrophe." R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 290; cf. J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 688. Indeed, if one holds that vv. 18-24 is an independent addition that is later attached to ch. 66, then it is possible to understand the *survivors* as those who escape from YHWH's final judgment in the context of an apocalyptic thinking. However, when vv. 18-24 was positioned in its actual place, then the new context should also be taken into account for interpretation.

⁴⁵⁹ Close to our interpretation is the reading proposed already by Duhm that here פְּלִיטֵי has a technical sense: they are "Fremdgeborene, die zu Jahves Heiligtum zutritt haben." B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 456; cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 314. This idea is then developed by G.M. RINALDI, "Gli Scampati," 109-118. It could be noted that the root פִּלַט also appears in Isa 4,2 - though in feminine form פְּלִיטָה - to indicate those who survive YHWH's judgment in Jerusalem. Cf. J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 688.

⁴⁶⁰ "Your brethren" (אֶחָיִכֶם) in this verse is clearly not the same as "your brethren" in v. 5. In the context of an inclusive community that is proclaimed by Third Isaiah, "these brethren" is better to be understood as those among the nations who join the new community.

⁴⁶¹ For a complete survey, see F.J. HELFMEYER, "אִוֶּה," 167-188.

sending of the messengers or “survivors” themselves⁴⁶² or something which God gives as an enduring reminder of his presence or activity,⁴⁶³ and many others. Though the text is often considered as giving no hint that allows a more precise interpretation, we still believe that the context needs to be taken into account in order to grasp a comprehensive meaning of this word. The context makes us aware that this “setting the אֹת ‘sign’” stands so close to the sending of the survivors to the nations so that a connection between these two actions seems undeniable. If this could be justified, then we shall argue that this “sign” is something that renders the sending of the survivors possible. In other words, since the word “survivors” means a remnant which has escaped a catastrophe, as we have seen above, then this “sign” should refer to the divine intervention among the people, that is, the execution of the divine judgment upon the wicked in the community that, at the same time, will spare the survivors!

We believe that our understanding above finds support from some of the OT texts. In Ex 10,2; Jer 32,20; Ps 78,43; Ps 105,27, to cite some examples, the word אֹת “sign” refers to God’s punishing and liberating activity among the Egyptians.⁴⁶⁴ It could also be noticed that in these texts, אֹת “sign” also stands as the object of the verb שִׁים “to set,” while the preposition ב “among” is also used. It is true that in these texts, the noun אֹת “sign” is always used in the plural form אֹתוֹת. In this case, we could perhaps understand the singular form as a slight variation from the plural form, which is attested elsewhere. Interestingly, however, the LXX and !QIsa^a have the plural form (σημεία and אֹתוֹת respectively), a fact that could be understood as an effort to conform 66,19 with the other passages.

The problematic expression in v. 18 (מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם וּמַחְשַׁבְתֵּיהֶם “their works and their thoughts”) seems to lead us also to such an interpretation. As elsewhere in Third Isaiah, these two words are to be taken in a pejorative sense (cf. 57,12; 59,6-7; 65,2).⁴⁶⁵ Accordingly, the suffix third pers. pl. masc. must here point to the rebels in the community. It would mean, therefore, that YHWH’s intervention must have to do with the situation of the community that is characterized with the works and thoughts of the wicked. In the context of chs. 65-66, this intervention of YHWH must specifically refer to the destruction of the wicked. This is the “sign” that YHWH is going to perform.

⁴⁶² C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 425.

⁴⁶³ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 290.

⁴⁶⁴ J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 519.

⁴⁶⁵ See J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah III/3*, 516.

After settling these two questions, we believe that the third one could also be understood without difficulty. First, we shall remember that the third pers. pl. masc. suffix is not only found in v. 19, but also in v. 18. In v. 18, as we have just stated, this suffix refers to the wicked members of the post-exilic community. Thus, considering the whole context, it seems reasonable to understand the suffixes third pers. pl. masc. in v. 19 as referring to the Judean community, rather than to the nations as many scholars have suggested. As we have previously examined, in the present context, there is no hint of the divine judgment upon the nations. Moreover, it does not make any sense that the survivors come from among the nations, and then are sent to the nations.⁴⁶⁶ Thus, in our understanding, מִבֵּינֵם “among them” points to YHWH’s actions executing his punishment upon the (wicked members of the) community, while מִמֵּנֵם “from them” will also refer to the community upon which the divine punishment will fall and from which the other members of the community will survive. Also here, we find the double effect of YHWH’s intervention: punishment for the wicked and salvation for the righteous!

In this line of thought, also the difficult and disputed word מִמֵּנֵם in v. 21 can be better understood. Grammatically, this third person pronoun could have *the survivors* in v. 19 or *the nations* as antecedent. However, the latter seems to be the most probable interpretation since the whole emphasis is upon them. It is also difficult to understand it as referring to the Israelites, since they would have already divided by heredity into laymen, priests, and Levites. There would be no need for YHWH to take (לִקַּח) priests, that is, select or appoint them.⁴⁶⁷ This is indeed a radical reversal of the traditional attitude towards foreigners, but it is not the only place where such an idea could be found in Third Isaiah. We have already seen it right at the beginning of Third Isaiah, namely, 56,1-8.

We can now sum up our discussion on 66,18-21 by asserting that this section puts an emphasis on the future community that will be gathered (קִבְּץ) by YHWH himself. It would include all nations and tongues. Thus כָּל-אֶחָיְכֶם “all your brothers” in v. 20 does not necessarily mean the diaspora Jews that have to be gathered again around Jerusalem, but rather the fellow members of the future inclusive community in which blood relationship is no longer important.⁴⁶⁸ At this point, it should be

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. E.J. YOUNG, *The Book of Isaiah, III*, 531-532.

⁴⁶⁷ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 291-292. This radical interpretation is also followed by many commentators. J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 690; F. DELITZSCH, *Commentary* [CD ROM]; J. MUILENBURG, “Isaiah 40-66,” 772; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 426; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 211; E. ACHEMEIER, *Community and Message*, 148, etc.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. L. RUSZKOWSKI, *Volk und Gemeinde*, 113-117.

remembered that YHWH's gathering all nations again echoes his word in 56,8 "Thus says the LORD God, who gathers (קִבֵּץ) the outcast of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered (קִבֵּץ)." By including all nations and tongues into the community, the *spatial* dimension of the future community is thus underlined.

We now turn to the following verses, vv. 22-24. If the previous section has to do with the *spatial* aspect of the community, considering the structure of this unit, we believe that the main thrust of this section is the *temporal* aspect of this future community. In v. 22 the absolute and uninterrupted continuance of the community is emphasized: your descendants and your name shall *remain* (יָעֹמֵד), like the new heavens and earth shall *remain* (עֹמְדִים) before YHWH. WHYBRAY again here took notice that this phrase resembles 56,5, which, though not addressed to proselytes, occurs in a passage (56,1-8) which is of a distinctly liberal character.⁴⁶⁹

This enduring aspect of the community is also highlighted in the following verses: "From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath" in v. 23a and "their worm that shall not die (מִוֶּרֶם) and their fire that shall not be quenched (כִּבְיָה)" in v. 24. The former is a description that all flesh shall come to worship before YHWH from time to time; while the latter is a description of the eternal fate of those who have rebelled against YHWH. Thus, in v. 23-24 we have two parallel statements that emphasize the enduring aspect of the subject being discussed:⁴⁷⁰ the continuance of worship and of judgment. Or as WESTERMANN said, "Verses 23 and 24 develop aspects of this final, everlasting persistence, everlasting worship (v. 23) and everlasting judgment (v. 24)."⁴⁷¹

Now, we shall ask: Who is being addressed in these verses? Who is meant by the second person pronoun in v. 22? In the light of vv. 18-24, we shall suggest that this *you* would be better understood as referring to the future community, which according to vv. 18-21 would consist of the Jews and the nations. The criterion applied in vv. 22-24 is no longer based on blood relationship, rather between those who come to worship before YHWH (v. 22) and those who rebel against him (v. 23).

Our analysis of the last section of Third Isaiah (vv. 18-24) would then conclude that this literary unit presents the description of the future community formed by YHWH's initiative. It would be characterized by its openness, that is, it would also include the nations, and by its continuance. In other words, the *spatial* and *temporal* aspect of this community is here underlined. We shall argue that such

⁴⁶⁹ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66*, 292; cf. also J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 316.

⁴⁷⁰ J. VERMEYLEN, *Du Prophète Isaïe*, 502.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 428.

characteristics of the community presented in vv. 18-24 correspond with that found in the opening section of Third Isaiah, namely, 56,1-8. This emphasis on the nations is a reprise of the thought of the opening verses of this division (56,1-8).⁴⁷² There too the promise to the community is marked by the preoccupations of the foreigners (*spatial* aspect of the community) and the eunuch (*temporal* aspect). Our analysis would then confirm the idea that 66,18-24 forms the counterpart of the opening section of Third Isaiah, namely, 56,1-8.⁴⁷³

2.8.4 Result

As in chapter 65, so also in this chapter the division within the community and the different fates of each group are again presented. The wicked, namely, those who participated in illegitimate cult practices (vv. 3-4, 15-17), are punished; while the righteous, who are now identified by another designation **הַיִּרְדָּיִם** “those who tremble at his word,” receive the promise of salvation (vv. 7-14).

The promise of salvation is a reassurance of the old promise that seems unfulfilled. By means of the image of miraculous birth (vv. 7-9), skepticism that might have emerged because of the failure of the previous prophecy is here countered. In addition, the speed and immediacy of the fulfillment of the promise is put forward. “...as soon as Zion was in labor, she brought forth her children” (v. 8bβ). We could also notice that the fulfillment of the promise remains in the sphere of the present world: it is the promise of prosperity! (v. 12). As in 65,18-19, the invitation to rejoice also colours this section (cf. vv. 10-11).

Another point that comes up from our reading of this last chapter is the idea of the future community willed by YHWH himself (vv. 18-24). It should be an inclusive community that would embrace all nations and tongues together (vv. 18-21). Such a community will endure forever, that they will witness the punishment upon the wicked (vv. 22-24). At this point, we should pay attention to the fact that in building the future community, the *survivors* (**פְּלִיטִים**) - whom we identify as the righteous Israelites who survive from the divine judgment - play a decisive role since they serve as the missionaries among the nations. More than this, the emergence of these survivors presupposes the destruction of the wicked from which they are spared. By emphasizing the role of the survivors, again the prophetic author demonstrated his

⁴⁷² J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 687.

⁴⁷³ The relationship between 56.1-8 and 66,18-24 has been detected by many commentators. See, for example, K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde*, 206; G.T. POLAN, *In the Ways of Justice*, 79-87; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 28, 212; S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 53; P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 162,388-389.

conviction before his audience that, finally, YHWH's intervention will definitely come!

In order to pursue the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy – and not to write a commentary on Third Isaiah -, we have now completed our long journey throughout chs. 56-59 and 63-66 of the Book of Isaiah. We have tried to listen to the texts attentively, but only from a particular perspective. It would mean that not every single detail of the texts is investigated with the same degree of attention. Some texts are deeply and meticulously examined; while some others are just left out. The result of our examination is now presented in this present chapter. But this is not the end of the work. The subject matter we are pursuing, namely, the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy, is still scattered here and there throughout this chapter. What we need now is a synthetic-comprehensive vision of those responses, so that we may have a clear and distinct idea about the matter under discussion. This will be the focus of the next chapter, to which we shall now turn.

CHAPTER V
THE PROPOSED RESPONSE TO UNFULFILLED PROPHECY II:
A SYNTHETIC VIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

As we have demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy cannot simply be answered by pointing the finger to others and assigning the blame that their sin must have been the reason why the prophecy of Second Isaiah have failed to come true - a typical response that is perfectly represented by Isa 59 (cf. particularly vv. 1-3) - because such a response would inevitably bring unsatisfactory consequences. As we have previously seen, this kind of response could become an additional psychological oppression for the people who are expecting the fulfilment of the promise. It also deepens their sense of guilt and decreases their self-esteem and dignity, all of which adds to the psychological disorders,¹ though this psychological aspect is impossible to assess. Therefore, more positive responses to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy have to be excavated beneath the surface of the text throughout the book. In the previous chapter, we have undertaken a considerable long journey throughout Third Isaiah minus chs. 60-62 in order to discover the appropriate responses to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, rather than just blaming the victim.

The preceding chapter was dedicated to a meticulous exegetical analysis of the texts, since we believe that only in that manner the hidden and subtle responses of Third Isaiah could be unearthed. As our examination demonstrates, Third Isaiah does not offer a single-uniform response to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, but rather it provides us with various answers with different emphases and perspectives. At this point, however, the results of our investigation spread out here and there along our journey so that it is not easy to see them as the unified answer to the problem that we are looking for. For the sake of clarity and convenience, therefore, we are now trying to organize them so that the result of our analysis could be presented in a systematic and synthetic way.

This chapter will consist of two parts. The *first* part will present the synthesis of Third Isaiah's responses to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy as have been discovered in the preceding chapter. In the *second* part, we shall evaluate the proposal of ROBERT CARROLL who has previously attempted to solve the problem of the failure of prophecy by employing a socio-psychological theory coined by LEON FESTINGER,

¹ Cf. J. SOBRINO, *Where Is God?*, 56.

namely, the theory of *cognitive dissonance*. As far as we know, CARROLL is the only biblical scholar that seriously discussed the problem of unfulfilled prophecy with considerable length and profundity, and particularly, by using a cross-disciplinary approach².

1.1 THE RESPONSE TO UNFULFILLED PROPHECY: THIRD ISAIAH

In this part, we attempt to present a synthesis of the examination of the passages of Third Isaiah undertaken previously. We try to avoid unnecessary repetition of what has been discussed before; but sometimes it is often unavoidable. Basically, this part will consist of two sections. The *first* section is a discussion about the prophet; while the *second* offers the presentation of his message found throughout our exegesis of chs. 56-66.

1.1.1 The Quest for the Prophet

In approaching the prophetic tradition, CARROLL suggested what he called the logic of question and answer. This approach involves seeing prophecy as the response of the prophets to the questions posed by their time and society.³ If we presuppose that chs. 56-66 together constitute a pattern of dissonance resolution though the various oracles found in these chapters date from different periods and belong to various literary genres, then we could also assume that to a certain extent, the disconfirmation of Second Isaiah's prophecy might have caused dissonance among the post-exilic community that needed to be handled. Such a situation must have created difficulties for the prophet who attempted to respond to the failure of prophecy, whose composition is now found in Isa 56-66. It would be extremely difficult to deliver his message before an audience who has just experienced the bitter problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Moreover, we shall also remember that, as members of Judean community, they possessed a rigid criterion taken from Deut 18,21-22 that condemns a prophet whose prophecy did not come true as a false prophet. This disappointing experience

² This is not to say that other scholars do not recognize and mention it as one of the problems in Isaianic tradition. They do mention and even discuss it in their works. But Carroll is the only scholar who has particularly dedicated his attention to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy; while for the others this problem is not the main focus of their investigation. Carroll's major work in this subject is his book, *When Prophecy Failed* (London: SCM Press, 1979). He also wrote several short articles with the same topic, such as "Ancient Israelite Prophecy," 135-151; "Second Isaiah," 119-131; "Prophecy and Dissonance," 108-119; "Eschatological Delay," 47-58.

³ See R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 77-84.

may have swept away the people's confidence in a prophet and his prophetic words. Consequently, in such a circumstance, it is necessary for the prophet to regain first the audience's confidence before delivering his message which is intended to explain the failure of the previous prophecies.

As we have seen, Isa 59,21, a verse that serves as the signature of a prophetic author,⁴ functions as a means of rehabilitating the prophet's credibility. Our analysis of 59,21 has demonstrated that by means of several allusions to various passages in the biblical tradition, this verse powerfully attempts to demonstrate or to prove the authenticity and reliability of the prophet as God's spokesperson.

We noticed that in this verse, it is not the prophet who spoke but YHWH himself. It means that the prophet did not authenticate himself, but it is YHWH who testified for him. The reference to Deut 18,18 (cf. וְנִתְּחִי דְבַרְי בְּפִיו in Deut 18,18 and וְדִבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי בְּפִיךָ in 59,21) is a dangerous undertaking. By employing the deuteronomistic view of the prophet that must also include the prophetic rule in Deut 18,21-22, the author of 59,21 has made a bold and risky proclamation, because he directly confronted his audience by applying to himself a criterion of falsification. As if he wanted to say, "Trust me this time! If my words do not come true then I am a false prophet." But, in front of an audience that was suffering from the failure of prophecy and almost losing their confidence in the prophet, could there be any better way to regain their conviction than to label his prophetic words with such a straightforward, but at the same time an extreme, concept?

Two other small references support the prophet's endeavour to legitimize his role as YHWH's authentic prophet. We have already noted that in 63,1 the author described himself as the one who functions as a watchman. Though the word "watchmen" (שֹׁמְרִים) does not appear here, this passage could be understood as a reference to 62,6 in which YHWH promised that he would appoint the watchmen to stand upon Jerusalem's walls. There the word "watchmen" (שֹׁמְרִים) is explicitly used. The second passage: by means of the use of the word זָכַר "to remember" in 63,7, we could understand that the author carried out the task of הַמְזַכְּרִים ("the remembrancers")⁵ in 62,6. These two references thus show that the prophetic words in chs. 60-62 are now fulfilled. In turn, such a confirmation has two significances: first,

⁴ We borrow this expression from Blenkinsopp. According to him, however, it is 61,1-3 that is marked as the signature of prophetic author of chs. 60-62. Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 39.61.

⁵ It is true that our analysis of הַמְזַכְּרִים in 62,6 has shown that these *remembrancers* are *not* the prophet but the followers or disciples of the prophet. The most important thing here is that the word זָכַר used in 63,7 served to prove that the prophecy of 62,6 is now fulfilled. It is the fulfillment of the previous promise that is here underlined.

the prophet-speaker is the true messenger of YHWH so that his words are reliable; and the second, since the divine oracles have now come true in the person of the prophet-speaker, there is no reason for the people to doubt why the other prophecies would not also be fulfilled in the near future!

Thus, in various ways, the author of chs. 56-66 (minus chs. 60-62) tried to demonstrate that he is really an authentic prophet of YHWH and therefore, his messages should be accepted as reliable since they represent the divine words. This is an important step for him before he could carry on his task to explain the failure of the previous prophecies to his audience.

Another point that should now be discussed is the manner in which Third Isaiah treated the older material at his disposal to deliver his message to his audience. In addition to the original composition of the prophet, which is naturally intended to confront the new circumstances, our exegesis carried out in the previous chapter has also demonstrated many cases of intertextualities, namely, the passages that have references to other biblical passages, particularly - but not limited to - Second Isaiah.⁶ In his attempt to counter the failure of the previous prophecy, Third Isaiah did not quote literally the older passages, but reinterpreted and re-elaborated them in such a way that the original force of the previous prophecies was then altered or received additional nuances or even corrected. In brief, reinterpretation of the older material in order to fit with the need of a new audience is an important device used frequently by Third Isaiah. This is in accord with the principle proposed by CARROLL in his study: dissonance gives rise to hermeneutic. That is, the experience of dissonance forced individuals or groups to reinterpret their basic material or the contemporary events so as to avoid dissonance.⁷

In this section we have discussed how the prophet attempted to regain his trustworthiness before the people who have lost their confidence due to the disconfirmation of the previous prophecy. We shall now turn to the content of his message in the context of responding to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy.

1.1.2 The Quest for God and his Community

By its very definition, the primary task of a prophet is to deliver the message of the deity to the third party who constitutes the actual recipient of the message. A biblical prophet thus never receives the divine message for himself, but rather is called to

⁶ See, for example, 42,1. 61,1 for 59,21; 46,12-13.51,5 for 56,1; Ezek 44,7-16 for 56,3-8; 40,3.62,10 for 57,14; 49,8.61,2 for 58,5; 52,12b for 58,8b; 41,18. Jer 32,12b for 58,11b; 61,4 for 58,12a; 43,18 for 65,17b, etc.

⁷ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 110 and *passim*.

transmit it to God's partner of dialogue. To some extent, he remains an instrument through whom God communicates his message, though this does not necessarily deny the fact that a prophet always remains a person with his full personality, capacity and sensibility. Therefore, we could say that in the context of such a communication, there are three groups involved: God as the source of communication, the people as the addressee and the prophet as the medium of communication. This also happens with the divine message found in Third Isaiah.

Ideally, we should examine all the parties involved. However, prophetic words that are always in the context of communication between God and human beings, would inevitably speak about God *and*, at the same time, about the people as well. Needless to say that it is not an easy task to distinguish these two dimensions and treat them separately. Thus, we shall treat them together in one context; and only tentatively we shall make a distinction between the prophetic words that speak about God from those that speak about community.

First of all, we shall here once again remember that the common and typical solution to unfulfilled prophecy as it is found in 59,1-3, which points out to the people's sins as the cause of the failure of prophecy, is inadequate and should be regarded as one-sided solution since it could not satisfy the whole community. Those who were oppressed and led astray by their fellows are clearly overlooked or, even worse, are again ironically victimized by this prophetic word. The oppressed, poor and marginalized then become the victimized victims! As we have seen, this is the problem with which we have to deal when we are trying to find out the proper response when the old prophecy failed.

Now, as we proceed to examine God's self-understanding - as long as it could be traced throughout Third Isaiah as our examination has attempted to demonstrate - it could be found that it is twice clearly declared that YHWH stands, precisely, on behalf of the poor, those who are in lowly states (57,15; 66,2). We have already noted that the "crushed" (דכא) and "humble" (שפל) spirit in 57,15 whom YHWH will revive are not the devout who voluntarily surrender to him, but rather those who become the victim of oppression! Thus, our objection in adopting 59,1-3 as the main response to unfulfilled prophecy finds strong support from this fundamental attitude of YHWH! The textual witness thus confirms our objection and, at the same time, directs us to discover a better response.

This basic position of YHWH implies two further aspects. *First*, since according to Third Isaiah, the lowly ones are a group within the post-exilic community that suffered oppression from their fellow brothers because of injustice or, perhaps, religious motives as 66,5 indicates, YHWH's preference to be with them

would inevitably create a division within that community,⁸ a division between the righteous and the wicked. To choose is indeed a matter of an *either-or* decision. Thus, choosing the chosen one unavoidably means excluding the other. It means that one who has chosen to be with the oppressed cannot, at the same time, go along with the oppressor. As we have already noticed, this division within the community is hinted in the whole Third Isaiah. Sometimes it appears very clear as in 65,13-14; in other occasions, however, it is described in a very subtle way. Throughout Third Isaiah, this sharp dichotomy is further manifested in YHWH's actions toward both groups. To the wicked YHWH declares the coming of punishment, while to the righteous he promises salvation.

This brings us to the *second* consideration. YHWH's choice to be with the lowly ones does not remain on the level of mental discourse, but it is also translated on the level of action. YHWH is going to break his silence and is ready to repay the wicked (65,6). Now he is about to intervene as the avenger (נקם) and redeemer (גאל) of the people (cf. 59,20; 63,4)! In this way, YHWH challenges the people's skepticism which questions his willingness and/or his ability to save his people (cf. 63,1-6; 66,7-17).

Since he has already decided to be with one group, and thus inevitably set apart the other group accordingly, his intervention would necessarily have two dimensions which are characterized by a sharp contrast as well. Thus, his intervention will become a punishment for the wicked (59,18-19; 63,1-6; 65,8-10.11-12); and, on the contrary, it will be experienced by the righteous as a promise of salvation.

Since YHWH's dealing with these two different groups imply some subtle aspects that may shed light on the understanding of the message of Third Isaiah, we shall now further examine them closely. Thus, this section could be divided into two unbalanced parts: YHWH's dealing with the righteous, which would take more space because of its full-nuanced content, and his dealing with the wicked respectively, which is far much shorter than the former.

1.1.2.1 *YHWH's dealing with the Righteous*

Broadly speaking, the promise of salvation for the righteous takes the forms of reassuring the old promise and granting new designations. This is carried out either by picking up the elements from the older materials, particularly from Second Isaiah, and modifying and elaborating them in order to fit the new circumstances or by

⁸ Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 351-352; also C.R. SEITZ, "Isaiah 40-66," 542.

formulating new messages. Here we shall first deal with the first promise, namely, reassurance of the old promise, which could be divided into two types of elaboration: the emphasis on the nearness of the fulfillment and the adding of conditionality of the promise.

a) Reassurance of the Old Promise

1) *The Nearness of Fulfillment*

One conspicuous aspect in re-elaborating the old promise is the emphasis on the nearness of their fulfillment. As our analysis has demonstrated, this is done by means of various subtle ways. However, it should also be noted that notwithstanding the nearness or immediateness of the realization of the promise is clearly underlined, the fulfillment of the promise remains in an undetermined future. In no case the exact time of fulfillment is given!

Thus, in 56,1 we find the word קְרוֹבָה “near” that highlights the nearness of the coming of YHWH’s salvation. In this case, we have demonstrated that the undeterminedness of this adjective actually depends on the execution of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה within the community. The reference to זֶרַע “seed” and יִרְשׁ “inheritor” (65,8-16) also indicate the future. We have also seen that the choice of verbal form in some places gives particular nuances to the impact of the passage. Thus, the use of the verbal construction הִנְנִי + participle in 65,17 implies that the event announced is imminent or *futurum instans*; while the use of future imperfect rather than prophetic perfect in 59,18-20 hints that the future here indicated is an undetermined future. Through the figures of the growing plant (58,5-9) and women who are giving birth (66,7-14a) it is demonstrated that the fulfillment of the promise is again assured. The people are even invited to rejoice (65,17-19a; 66,10-11) as if the accomplishment of the promise is already at hand!

It is therefore clear that Third Isaiah tried to convince the people that the old promise is still valid. Moreover, it is somehow about to come true now. However, since the fulfillment of the promise lies in the future, the message of Third Isaiah would necessarily imply a nuance of indeterminateness. Its fulfillment remains open in the future!

2) *From Unconditional to Conditional Prophecies*

One important aspect that could be noticed in Third Isaiah is that to the promise of salvation certain conditions or requirements have now been added. In 56,1-2 it is said that *salvation* (יְשׁוּעָה) and *deliverance* (צְדָקָה) is *near* (קְרוֹבָה). However, as we have observed, this coming of salvation depends on the realization of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה in the sphere of social life. In other words, the execution of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה thus becomes the condition for the fulfillment of the promised salvation. In 58,5-14, fasting taken as an example of religious activities is rejected in so far as it represents an *ex opere operato* theology. In order to be acceptable to YHWH, fasting should be accompanied with concrete acts of solidarity toward their fellow brothers. In other words, the realization of solidarity within the community becomes the condition or requirement for the effectiveness of their religious activities.

As we could see, the condition added to the promise of salvation has a strong ethical characteristic. A thorough reflection would now demonstrate further implications of this device.

First of all, we should not fail to notice that the conditions put forward as the requirement for the fulfillment of the promise are actually none other than the content of the salvation itself. The coming of fulfillment does not happen one after the other when the conditions are fulfilled. Thus, the fulfillment of the conditions, which means the execution of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה within the community, would be experienced as the coming of salvation, because, in itself, the promise of salvation consists of well-being for the community, which is firstly marked by the presence of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה in the community. Understood in this way, the conditions added are not something imposed independently from outside; apart from the fulfillment of the promise but themselves are parts of the fulfillment of the promise. This logic of thinking would then lead to something else; namely, that the fulfillment of the promise depends on the community themselves, because it is upon them that the execution of the conditions depends. As we shall see, the idea that the community becomes the agent of fulfilling the promise of salvation is a fundamental idea in Third Isaiah for the response to unfulfilled prophecy.

Another dimension that could also be noted is that ethical conditions added to the promise would also open the possibility that it could nevertheless fail. In this case, the human failure in practising the required ethical condition would give way to a direct intervention of the divine. This is also an important aspect that will be developed later.

In addition to what has been said above, our understanding of conditionality of the promise also provides a different nuance for the word קְרוֹבָה “near.” It does not merely indicate the undetermined future in which the promise would come true, but it also persuades and triggers the community to carry out the conditions in order to accelerate the coming of salvation. That word thus becomes an appeal to concretize the whole dynamic of condition and fulfillment.

It is often noted that the conditionality of prophecy is one aspect that could save the prophecies from being falsified because its fulfillment depends on the change of the behavior of the people.⁹ This is formulated clearly, for example, in Jer 18,7-10. However, this device is mainly found in the oracle of doom, of which the case of Jonah is a perfect example.¹⁰ We could see that in our case, this traditional calling for repentance is formulated in a more positive way. The prophet invited his audience to give up evil not in order to avoid the divine punishment, but rather in order to enjoy the salvation promised.

b) From New Designations to New Community

We have already demonstrated that YHWH's decision to be with a particular group in the post-exilic community inevitably brings a formal division within that community. As the consequence, from that point onward, the meaning of some titles applied to the people need to be clarified.

The use of the traditional designations, such as, the “servants” (עֲבָדִים 65,8.9.13-14.15) or the “chosen ones” (בְּחִירִים 65,9.15.22) are now used in a more restricted way. No longer do they refer to the whole people, as in the context of Second Isaiah (cf. 42,1; 43,20; 45,4), but rather only to a particular segment in the community, namely, the righteous or “the people who sought me” (65,10b).

This new reinterpretation of the traditional titles is important, because it affirms that the people, though not the whole people are now intended, still belong to the traditional streamline. They are still the inheritors of the old-promise now renewed; and even now they are the sole recipients of that promise, while others are to be discarded. The continuity with the older tradition is thus maintained. Despite this

⁹ See for example, MARTIN BUBER, *Prophetic Faith*, 103-104; cf. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 21-22.

¹⁰ However, as Carroll has already noted, the motif of repentance is a complicated matter and cannot be absolutized in the way that the deuteronomists or the author of the book of Jonah constructed it. It does not *always* work automatically. Thus Carroll concluded, “Beyond conditionality there was a theology of transcendence in which the decrees of Yahweh functioned as absolutes and man's activity was dismissed as being of no consequence (cf. Isa 2,22; 40,6-8.12-17).” R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 68-69.

continuity, however, there is also a discontinuity because of this division within the community. The new titles, such as, those “who tremble at his word” (הַחֲרִירִים) 66,2.5) or the “survivors” (פְּלִיטִים) 66,19) mark this group as a new entity within the entire community as the result of YHWH’s decision. It could be noted here that these new designations are formulated in terms of the relationship between the group and YHWH. They are those “who tremble at this word,” and thus, depend on and are faithful to him; and consequently, they will *survive* when YHWH comes to execute his judgment over the wicked.¹¹

c) New Community as the Agent of Fulfillment

At this point, we shall proceed by further describing this community. We believe that the ethical consideration required as conditions for the fulfillment of the promise brings important consequences in determining the shape of the new community.

First of all, we have noticed that the condition for the fulfillment of the prophecy lies in the execution of moral-ethical requirement on the part of the people (cf. for example 56,1-2). Such a criterion would inevitably change the manner by means of which one’s membership of the community should be determined. Applied to the post-exilic Israelite community, this fact decisively marks the shape of the community. It is no longer the blood-relation that makes one be a member of the community, but rather his or her personal ethical choice. It would also mean that there is a radical shift from a *chosen* community, namely, Israel as YHWH’s chosen people, to a *choosing* community. Instead of being chosen by God so that they could belong to the community, it is the people’s choice of God that makes them to be the member of the new community.

Such a shift of paradigm would unavoidably bring far-reaching consequences too. Since the fulfillment of moral-ethical requirements could be achieved by everybody, it means that everyone has the possibility to become the member of the community. In the most extreme way, in Third Isaiah, this is represented by groups that according to Jewish Law should be excluded from the congregation, namely, the “eunuch” (סְרִיס) and the “foreigners” (בְּנֵי-הַנְּכָר) (56,1-8). Instead of being an

¹¹ According to some scholars, this group fulfils the conditions of being a sect. A sect is not only a minority, and not only characterized by opposition to norms accepted by the parent-body, but also claims, in a more or less exclusive way, to be what the parent-body claims to be. Indeed, for some scholars, the division within the post-exilic Judean community is seen as the essential precondition for the emergence of Jewish sects that later fully developed in the period of early Christianity. See, among others, J. BLENKINSOPP, “Interpretation and the Tendency”; ID., “A Jewish Sect”; ID., *Opening the Sealed Book*, 56-88; A. ROFÉ, “The Onset of Sects”; also S. TALMON, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism.”

exclusive community such as one constituted by blood-tie relationship, a community based on ethic and moral then becomes an inclusive community that would embrace everyone as long as they are willing to follow the requirements. Another aspect that should also be noticed in Third Isaiah is that only in such an inclusive community can the missionary works among the gentiles as these are carried out by the “survivors” (פְּלִיטִים 66,19) make sense.

This missionary enterprise (66,18-21), which is a rare idea in the OT,¹² could also have another significance.¹³ As we have seen, this activity would be carried out by those who will survive from YHWH’s ultimate judgment (פְּלִיטִים 66,19), and therefore presupposes such a judgment that would happen prior to it. In other words, announcing that the survivors will execute a kind of missionary work would imply that the divine punishment upon the wicked would surely come true, otherwise there will be no survivors! In a very subtle way, therefore, the coming or realization of divine judgment is emphasized. A reassurance of the divine promise is again delivered.

We have already seen above that the content of the promise and the condition as the requirement for its fulfillment is exactly the same thing. The promise of salvation is actually the same as the execution of the ethical-moral requirements of the condition. If the fulfillment of the condition depends on one’s personal choice, then at the same time, the fulfillment of the promise also depends on his or her decision in

¹² Actually, there are two concepts of the community that emerge from our reading of Third Isaiah: inclusive (cf. 56,1-8 and 66,18-21) and exclusive community (cf. the emphasis on the servant’s community in 65,13-16). From historical perspective, there are reasons to believe that the idea of an exclusive community was realized later period (cf. Ezra’s reform). Moreover, as we have indicated in the previous note (n. 11), scholars detect the possible root of Jewish sectarianism in the Third Isaiah’s exclusive community. On the contrary, of course, there is no trace that the missionary activities (66,18-21) and the admission of the foreigners (56,1-8) into the Judean community have ever become a major theme in the history of the post-exilic community, let alone the prophecy that YHWH will take the priests and the Levites from the nations (66,21). On this point, Blenkinsopp commented, “What these texts express are attitudes, even dreams and fantasies, entertained in one segment of post-exilic Judaism. ...But it is also true to our experience to affirm that projections of a possible future, especially when emitted with the passion and power of conviction often attested in these chapters, can actually create a future, even if the reality is never quite the same as the projection.” J. BLENKINSOPP, “Second Isaiah,” 98-99. Further, he argued that Isa 66,18-19, though not cited in the NT, may have helped to shape the understanding of mission among the first generation of Christians. It is the first Christians who carried out the prophecy of Third Isaiah! J. BLENKINSOPP, *Opening the Sealed Book*, 132-133. This fact would lead us to conclude that, historically, the idea of an exclusive community prevailed. The concept of an inclusive community seems to be merely a rhetorical device that was never realized. In this case, the idea of missionary activity in Third Isaiah is close to the conclusion drawn by Leon Festinger in his theory of cognitive dissonance which will be discussed later.

¹³ According to Wodecki, the sending of the missionaries is the peak of the proclamation of Third Isaiah about the universal salvation. See, B. WODECKI, “Der Heilsuniversalismus”; ID. “‘šlḥ’ dans le livre d’Isaïe.”

front of that condition. Then it would mean that the community itself finally becomes the agent of the fulfillment of the promise. They are not just passively expecting the fulfillment of the prophecy, but actively cooperate in realizing it. The prophecy then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy! This is a kind of what Karl Popper has once called *Oedipus effect* of prophecy,¹⁴ namely, predictions have an influence on the predicted event.

Now it seems proper to consider once again a passage that we have often mentioned previously. Until now we are judging Isa 59,1-3, which is often seen as the answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, as being inadequate because it overlooks the dialectic between the oppressor and the oppressed. Now, at this point, we believe that this blaming-the-victim stratagem could also be understood somewhat differently. By placing the fault on the shoulder of the community, it is indicated that the problem of the failed prophecy lays *not* upon something beyond human competence, for example, the problem of the deity, but *within* the range of human capacity. This is indeed an effective coping strategy of a people in crisis. If one's suffering is because one's own oversight, and not because of the deity's lack of power, then this holds out considerably more hope about a future restoration, given appropriate spiritual recovery.¹⁵ The realization of the promise is then possible provided that changes of behavior take place. Seen from this different perspective, the blaming-the-victim strategy, as Isa 59,1-3 clearly represented, would then again underline the possibility that the community could become the agent of fulfillment of the prophecy.

This fact then brings further consequences.

- *First*, since the fulfillment of the promise depends on the decision of the community itself, and not on other parties, and therefore, the community becomes the agent of the fulfillment, then the fulfillment of the promise would naturally take place in the life of the community. It means that the promise of salvation would be experienced by the community as a historical, tangible event.
- *Second*, since the community is the first agent of the fulfillment of the prophecy, the intervention of YHWH should here be understood as an indirect intervention, namely, YHWH acts through the people who are

¹⁴ Oedipus knowing that he was supposed to kill his father and marry his mother took steps to avoid such terrible actions but only succeeded in achieving them. Thus prediction can be the cause, in some sense, of the event it predicts. By suggesting the reactions such predictions help to create them. Thus predicting the future can be an attempt to create that future. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 33; cf. K. POPPER, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 12-17.

¹⁵ Cf. D.L. SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 81.

inspired by his words given through the prophet. If the community is the agent of the fulfillment of the prophecy, then one could naturally question the role that God might play. Such a question will be dealt with later.

Third, by placing the responsibility to concretize the prophecy of salvation on the human decision, Third Isaiah avoids the possibility of being falsified, when the re-stated prophecy would, just in case, fail again. From now on, the prophecy cannot be disconfirmed because it is now found in the frame of conditions which have to be fulfilled first by the community. It is not the prophecy that fails, but rather the ability to persuade the community to follow the prophetic word that could fail.

Though this represents the major thrust, it should be added that it is not the only voice heard from the analysis of the message of Third Isaiah in front of the failure of prophecy. The eschatological aspect of the prophecy and the direct divine intervention, as we shall see, are not completely absent as a device to counter the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Even these two aspects bring their proper importance as responses to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. They could be found, interestingly enough, in Third Isaiah's way to deal with the wicked, to which we shall now turn.

1.1.2.2 *YHWH's dealing with the Wicked*

As HANSON has once suggested, one of the characteristics of Third Isaiah, which for him becomes a criterion to determine its rough date of composition, is the so-called "salvation-judgment oracle," in which the salvation and judgment oracles are juxtaposed together. Thus we found in Third Isaiah the oracle of judgment inserted among the promise of salvation, and the other way around (59,15b-19; 63,1-6; 65,6.11-14; 66,5b-6.15-17.24).

First of all, it could be noticed that from linguistic point of view, all texts that describe the divine judgment upon the wicked employed figurative language. Thus YHWH is described as a warrior (63,1-6), clothed in battle equipments (59,15b-19) who comes in fire on his chariot and sword (66,15-17). It is unlikely that such divine interventions are really expected to take place in a manner described in the text. Rather, it is more likely that the description of YHWH by means of the divine warrior figure would point to an ultimate eschatological action. Thus, instead of describing what will exactly happen when YHWH comes to intervene in the future and how he will intervene, the use of such a mythical language seems to merely represent a

conviction of the prophet that somehow, YHWH will come to intervene. It is indeed difficult to figure out an event that could represent the divine punishment that could reach only the intended target, namely the wicked, and at the same time, would spare the righteous. Therefore, this must be a kind of unimaginable, unprecedented, miraculous action performed only by YHWH.

It could also be noted that in all those texts, the actions described will be carried out by YHWH alone. In those texts, YHWH is the only subject; even those who survive from his ultimate judgment would only watch the wicked suffering of eternal punishment (66,24). They do not participate in the execution of the judgment which is YHWH's absolute privilege. It is true that elsewhere we find that YHWH executes his judgment using the nations as his instruments (cf. Cyrus in Isa 45,1 who is called מְשִׁיחוֹ "his anointed"). However, since a war or an aggression carried out by foreign nations as YHWH's instruments can never make a distinction between the wicked and the righteous among the victims, we therefore conclude that the emphasis that YHWH is acting alone is not caused by the lack of agents who should help him to execute his judgment for the wicked. As we shall see below, YHWH's loneliness has to be understood differently.

In two blocks of texts, 59,15b-20 and 63,1-6, that are often considered parallel if one sees a chiasmic structure in the arrangement of Third Isaiah,¹⁶ it is clearly emphasized that YHWH acted alone (59,16; 63,3) because *no one* (אֵין) comes to help. The presence of the particle of negation אֵין in these two texts is intriguing and thus deserves more attention. It appears no less than six times there (59,15b.16 (2x); 63,3.5(2x)). The so-frequent use of this word in such short verses seems to be intended to show its importance in the context. In all but one occurrence this particle is always used to indicate the absence of *somebody* who could assist YHWH to establish justice (מִשְׁפָּט) in the society. And we cannot fail to notice that the absence of justice in 59,15b is formulated with the particle of negation אֵין. Thus, it is the absence of justice (מִשְׁפָּט) in the social-life and the absence of human agents (מִפְּנֵי) אֵין "no one to intervene," אֵין עֹזֵר "no one to help," אֵין סוֹמֵךְ "no one to give support") who are supposed to restore it that have actually driven YHWH to intervene alone! As we have previously said, this is *not* the absence of, say, the nations as his instruments to concretize his punishment.

This understanding would then bring two important significances. *First*, this would link to the previous point, namely, the conditionality of the prophecy. Once the

¹⁶ Cf. for example, G.I. EMMERSON, *Isaiah 56-66*, 20; J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah*, 462; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 61.

fulfillment of the promise is made dependent on the ethical-moral consideration, the possibility that it might fail is then introduced. The community could fail to fulfill the ethical-moral conditions required for the realization of the promise. It is in such a case that YHWH will intervene directly for the sake of his community. According to our interpretation of the texts, YHWH's direct intervention will come when human beings fail to fulfill their duty to establish justice in the social life.¹⁷ This direct intervention then fills the gap left by the moral requirement of prophecy put forward as a condition for the fulfillment of the promise.

Second, emphasizing the moral force of prophecy would naturally recognize that human response plays a decisive role in creating the future. This could lead to a pure humanistic ideology, in which the divine no longer has a place among human beings. In this case, to avoid the impression that the future depends *solely* on human decisions, this 'humanist' approach should then be supplemented with the transcendental dimension of prophecy, namely, a direct intervention of YHWH himself¹⁸.

The prophetic words about the direct divine intervention, though they are addressed to the wicked, have their importance in constructing the response to the problem of disconfirmed prophecy. Since the prophet believes that he is the mediator between YHWH and his people through whom the divine words should be delivered to the people, his final expectation should therefore be anchored in YHWH himself as the source of all prophecy. At least that was the hope of Third Isaiah; that the transcendental dimension would resolve the problem.

1.2 THE RESPONSE TO UNFULFILLED PROPHECY: THE ATTEMPT OF ROBERT P. CARROLL

Now it is time to discuss the work of the late Robert P. Carroll, a biblical scholar from The University of Glasgow, entitled *When Prophecy Failed*. His book deserves attention for two reasons: *First*, it deals with an unusual subject which has rarely, if any, been tackled before, namely, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Thus, Carroll wrote in the introduction of his book, "This book is an attempt to examine the prophetic traditions in terms of their predictive elements and the responses to the failure of the expectations aroused by them"¹⁹. *Second*, in his work, Carroll also took the book of Isaiah, - which is also the subject of our work - as an example of how the

¹⁷ Cf. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 154.

¹⁸ Cf. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 142 see also note 5 above.

¹⁹ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 2.

problem of the failure of prophecy was handled. Since we are working on the same topic, comparison and evaluation seems thus justifiable, and even necessary.

It should be noted from the outset that talking about Carroll's treatment on the topic of unfulfilled prophecy, one cannot fail to mention the name of Leon Festinger since his influence stands powerfully at the background of Carroll's work. Therefore, at the beginning of this section, it is appropriate to introduce Festinger's works first before we discuss the work of Robert Carroll.

1.2.1 LEON FESTINGER and his *When Prophecy Fails*

There is an impression that, among biblical scholars, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy of the biblical prophets seems not to be considered as an important or popular topic that deserves much attention. This could be deduced if we notice the scarcity of the scholarly publications on that topic that appear until now.²⁰ The situation is somewhat different when we move from the biblical prophets to, say, the *non-biblical* prophets. Particularly after 1960, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy has become a hot discussion among scholars in the social-psychological field. Indeed, it could not be denied that this phenomenon was first of all triggered by the publication of the work of LEON FESTINGER, a professor of psychology, and his colleagues, HENRY W. RIECKEN and STANLEY SCHACHTER, entitled *When Prophecy Fails* (1956).²¹ This work is actually an example or application of the theory of cognitive dissonance, a socio-psychological theory first coined also by FESTINGER himself in his work *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*.²²

According to the theory of cognitive dissonance, when the beliefs, values, or opinions individuals hold (that is, their cognitions) come into conflict with one or another in the experience of reality then cognitive dissonance arises. The central element in the theory is the claim that the presence of dissonance produces discomfort

²⁰ It could be suspected that this fact has to do more with ideology rather than exegesis. As we have hinted earlier, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy could put the authority of the Bible as the Word of God at stake. For those who hold that the Bible as the Word of God will never fail, the idea of unfulfilled prophecy never exists. At all cost, they would try to explain that all biblical prophecies have, in one way or another, been fulfilled. See, among others, R.N. WITHERUP, *Biblical Fundamentalism*, 17-30. Nevertheless, this effort could actually be regarded as one of many devices to reduce the problem caused by unfulfilled prophecy.

²¹ Published by University of Minnesota Press in 1956.

²² Published by Stanford University Press in 1957. Festinger actually presented the first version of his theory "Social Communication and Cognition: A Very Preliminary and Highly Tentative Draft" in January of 1954 in a graduate seminar at the University of Minnesota. In his book, a brief outline of the theory could be found in Chapter 1. L. FESTINGER, *Cognitive Dissonance*, 1-31.

and, correspondingly, gives rise to pressure to reduce or eliminate the dissonance.²³ In general, if dissonance exists between two elements, this dissonance can be eliminated by changing one of those elements. This would include behavior changes, changes of cognition, and circumspect exposure to new information and new opinions.²⁴ CARROLL summed up the ways used to reduce dissonance in three important elements: The importance of explanatory or rationalization schemes, the avoidance of sources of dissonance arousal and the centrality of the social group.²⁵ It should be noted that in all these cases, establishing a social reality by gaining the agreement and support of other people is one of the major ways in which a cognition can be changed when the pressures to change it are present. In other words, the importance of social support is here underlined as Festinger marked, “The social group is at once a major source of cognitive dissonance for the individual and a major vehicle for eliminating and reducing the dissonance which may exist in him.”²⁶

In his *When Prophecy Fails*, Festinger applied the theory of cognitive dissonance to the problem of disconfirmation of prophecy. It is assumed that the experience of the failure of prophecy would give rise to a dissonance state because there is a gap between expectation and reality. On the one hand, there is a great expectation caused by a prophecy which is regarded as never failing since it comes from an allegedly credible source (in many cases, this prophecy is also supported by scriptural data that is considered authoritative); but on the other hand, the reality is completely different. In his work, Festinger and his colleagues dealt with a question: What happens when prophecy fails? How do individuals and movements respond to failed prophecy?

Based on their observation on several cases - some were taken from a distant past such as the cases of Montanus, the Anabaptists, Sabbatai Zevi, the Millerites²⁷, another is an event from their contemporary, such as the case of Mrs. Keech which is actually the focus of the study -, Festinger concluded that under certain conditions, the

²³ Cf. L. FESTINGER, *Cognitive Dissonance*, 18.

²⁴ Cf. L. FESTINGER, *Cognitive Dissonance*, 31. A full treatment on this topic is given in p. 18-31.

²⁵ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 93.

²⁶ L. FESTINGER, *Cognitive Dissonance*, 177. In his book, Festinger dedicated three full chapters (Chs. 8-9-10) for discussing the role of social support.

²⁷ Festinger also briefly attempted to read the very beginning of Christianity in the light of the cognitive dissonance theory. However, the result was not conclusive; and he did not go further because he thought to be “at the risk of using highly unreliable data.” L. FESTINGER, *When Prophecy Fails*, 23-25. There were several other attempts to understand the origin of Christianity by means of Festinger’s theory. It could be mentioned, for example, H. Jackson who suggested that the resurrection belief was actually a response to the failure of prophecy and U. Wernik who proposed that the christology found in the Gospels constitutes the resolutions of the cognitive dissonance caused by Jesus’ death. See, H. JACKSON, “The Resurrection Belief”; U. WERNIK, “Frustrated Beliefs.”

failure of prophecy does not shake the faith of the believers; on the contrary, it even drives them to reduce the dissonance by actively proselytizing, that is, by telling people that their prediction had in fact been correct. If believers succeed in convincing outsiders the truth of their message, perhaps persuading them to become members or supporters, this will reaffirm their beliefs. In Festinger's words,

"The dissonance cannot be eliminated completely by denying or rationalizing the disconfirmation. But there is a way in which the remaining dissonance can be reduced. If more and more people can be persuaded that the system of belief is correct, then clearly it must, after all, be correct. ... If the proselytizing proves successful, then by gathering more adherents and effectively surrounding himself with supporters, the believer reduces dissonance to the point where he can live with it."²⁸

In this case, however, successful conversion of all nonbelievers does not seem to be a necessary component of dissonance reduction. Rather, it is the proselytizing activity itself – the proclamation of their beliefs to outsiders – that serves to confirm the faith²⁹. In fact, the reasoning is circular: those who hear and believe will be saved, but those who do not believe are already lost.

Thus by increasing the number of believers through missionary activity, social support is then strengthened. In turn, a strong social support will provide an endless supply of possible reinterpretations or rationalizations available for neutralizing dissonance. Additional cognitive elements, i.e. more people joining the group, may be added to the group thereby increasing the power base of its cognitions³⁰. And finally, by creating an exclusive group, the members are detached from other groups whose views are different and thus avoid the source of dissonance. Therefore, it is clear that all three forms of dissonance reduction go together in missionary activity or proselytizing.

However, considering that not all groups experiencing dissonance seek to reduce it through proselytizing, Festinger and his team put forth five conditions under which, in similar cases, their thesis would hold true. These five conditions are the following:

1. A belief must be held with deep conviction and it must have some relevance to action, that is, to what the believer does or how he behaves.

²⁸ L. FESTINGER, *When Prophecy Fails*, 28. The discussion on the importance of mass proselytizing is also found in L. FESTINGER, *Cognitive Dissonance*, 200-202. 246-259.

²⁹ Cf. J.R. STONE (ed.), *Expecting Armageddon*, 6.

³⁰ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 95.

2. The person holding the belief must have committed himself to it; that is, for the sake of his belief, he must have taken some important action that is difficult to undo. In general, the more important such actions are, and the more difficult they are to undo, the greater is the individual's commitment to the belief.
3. The belief must be sufficiently specific and sufficiently concerned with the real world so that events may unequivocally refute the belief.
4. Such undeniable disconfirmatory evidence must occur and must be recognized by the individual holding the belief.
5. The individual believer must have social support. It is unlikely that one isolated believer could withstand the kind of disconfirming evidence we have specified. If, however, the believer is a member of a group of convinced persons who can support one another, we would expect the belief to be maintained and the believers to attempt to proselytize or to persuade nonbelievers that the belief is correct³¹.

Festinger's theory has proven to be one of the most influential and stimulating theories in social psychology and has generated hundreds of study projects and research programmes³². This situation could be summed up in the statement, "No theory on social psychology has stimulated more research than the theory of cognitive dissonance... If there is any one theoretical formulation that has captured the imagination of social psychologists during this decade, it is beyond any doubt Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance."³³ During the course of time, this theory has stimulated many scholars not only to refine but also to criticize it harshly.³⁴ And indeed, Festinger himself in 1987 remarked, "No theory is going to be inviolate... The only kind of theory that can be proposed and ever will be proposed that absolutely will remain inviolate for decades, certainly centuries, is a theory that is not

³¹ L. FESTINGER, *When Prophecy Fails*, 4.

³² R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 86.

³³ R.B. ZAJONC, "Cognitive Theories," 359.

³⁴ We shall here mention, for example, a collection of essays on the topic of unfulfilled prophecy, *Expecting Armageddon. Essential Readings in Failed Prophecy* which is edited by J.R. Stone. There are no less than 15 essays from the period of 1956-1997 collected in this book. This anthology displays the development of Festinger's thesis on the theory of cognitive dissonance and the problem of unfulfilled prophecy; how it is refined and criticized. In addition, one can also consult LORNE L. DAWSON, "When Prophecy Fails and Faith Persists," 60-82. Dawson still held the importance of proselytizing activity but added two other strategies after a failed prophecy: rationalization (or reinterpretation) and reaffirmation.

testable. If a theory is at all testable, it will not remain unchanged. It has to change. All theories are wrong."³⁵

1.2.2. ROBERT P. CARROLL and his *When Prophecy Failed*

One of the scholars who was attracted and stimulated by Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance was undoubtedly ROBERT P. CARROLL, who attempted to make use of Festinger's approach to interpret biblical prophetic tradition, particularly, in its predictive aspect. In addition to various essays that have been published,³⁶ Carroll's enterprise was then realized in his book entitled *When Prophecy Failed*, which stands so close to that of Festinger's *When Prophecy Fails*.

This book consists of three major parts: *I. Interpreting the Prophetic Traditions*, in which he offers an introduction to the materials relevant to the study of prophecy, with an especially informative discussion on prophetic language. In order to understand prophecy it is necessary to understand the language in the ways the prophets used it,³⁷ lest the problem of unfulfilled prophecy would merely become a pseudo-problem. In part *II. Dissonance Theory and the Traditions*, Carroll briefly described the theory of cognitive dissonance and its possible applicability as a device to interpret the biblical prophetic traditions in its predictive aspect. Adopting Festinger's idea, Carroll presented three important devices to reduce the community's dissonance aroused when the experienced reality differs from the expectation: avoidance techniques, explanatory systems and social support. For the context of biblical scholarship, these three categories are in turn transposed into more familiar terms: avoidance techniques are transferable to groups' exclusivity and the avoidance of various cultural practices common to other groups; social support is parallel to community life and the existence of smaller groups within the larger community, and explanatory systems could be associated with hermeneutical systems.³⁸ This is the

³⁵ These last words of Festinger on dissonance theory were transcribed from a tape recording of comments he made as a discussant in *Reflections on Cognitive Dissonance: 30 Years Later*, a symposium conducted at the 95th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association in 1987. See L. FESTINGER, "Reflections of Cognitive Dissonance," 382-383.

³⁶ See. Note n. 2 above.

³⁷ For this topic on the linguistic dimension see also Carroll's remark in "Second Isaiah," 119-131.

³⁸ In his another article, Carroll formulated these three categories as exclusivity of grouping, hermeneutical systems, and *various form of missionary activity* in the place of a broader term, social support. R.P. CARROLL, "Ancient Israelite," 140. In this case, the missionary activity is one of the activities that can be carried out in order to achieve social support. Missionary activity is a method of adding new cognitive elements to the group. Each new convert is one more person who thinks in a similar way. R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 95-96. Festinger argues that more elements could be added "by persuading more and more persons that

central thesis of his book: dissonance gives rise to hermeneutic, that is, the reinterpretation of prophecy as responses to the failure of expectation. Part *III, Hermeneutic of the Traditions*, brings the prophetic materials and dissonance theory together. The Isaianic traditions and the books of Haggai-Zechariah are then investigated with the help of cognitive dissonance theory. Since we are also dealing with Third Isaiah, Carroll's treatment on the Isaianic tradition, more specifically chs. 56-66, would receive particular attention.

Due to its composite nature, the book of Isaiah would be an ideal material to examine the reinterpretative response to dissonance that has constructed the book up to its present form. Thus, Carroll distinguished three relevant layers of the Isaianic tradition:

1. the core of Isaiah of Jerusalem's oracles, particularly the material in chs. 6-9;
2. the reinterpretive elements to be found scattered throughout Isa 10-39;
3. the salvation oracles of Second Isaiah (chs. 40-55) and the responses to his vision of his circle of followers in chs. 56-66.³⁹

Carroll argued that each layer contains dissonance-reducing passages as responses to the expectation of the preceding layer that failed to realize. Chs. 10-39 have passages that responded to the failure of the prophecy found in chs. 6-9; the prophecy of Second Isaiah now found in chs. 40-55 dealt with the failure of the expectation put forward in the previous period; and chs. 56-66, in turn, responded to the failure of the grandiose prophecy of Second Isaiah. Even in the same layer, the so-called core of Isaiah of Jerusalem (chs. 6-9), there are reinterpretive passages from the prophet himself that come from a relatively later period of his ministry and function as his reactions to the failure of his own proclamations (cf. for example 6,9-13; 8,16-18; 9,7). Thus, with regard to the third part of the book of Isaiah (chs. 56-66), Carroll clearly stated that "although the various oracles in 56-66 date from different periods and belong to various literary genres together they constitute a pattern of dissonance resolution which clearly indicates some of the problems caused by the failure of the predicted salvation."⁴⁰

According to Carroll's observation, Third Isaiah's devices to reduce the dissonance could be categorized into three principal forms.⁴¹ *First*, the nearness of the realization of the promise is again reemphasized by the employment of the word קָרוֹב "soon" or "near" (56,1). On this strategy, Carroll noted, "Perhaps this was the first

the belief system is true, that is, by proselyting and obtaining converts." See L. FESTINGER, *Cognitive Dissonance*, 202.

³⁹ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 132.

⁴⁰ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 152.

⁴¹ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 152-154.

confident explanation for the non-appearance of the expected salvation but as the years passed the explanations turned to accusing the community of being at fault.⁴² *Second*, the failure of the prophecy was caused by the various sins committed by the community (56,2-7; 58,1-5.13; 65,4; 66,17; 57,3-10.13; 65,1-7; 59,1-15). It is observable that, in Carroll's view, most of TI passages are intended to respond to the dissonance problem by blaming the other. *Third*, the other is again to be blamed as the cause of the problem. The Servants-group (cf. 65,13-14) accused their opponents - presumably the cult leaders in Jerusalem - that their policies, that is, excluding them from the sanctuary, were one of the reasons for the delay of their expectations.⁴³ All of them can be rightly categorized as explanatory strategy or hermeneutic.

In addition to the above mentioned strategies used in dealing with the problem of dissonance, Carroll also noted that the element of direct divine action could be found in the oracles of Third Isaiah (cf. 63,1-6; 65,17-25; 66,12-16). No human effort was adequate to the task so that the deity himself acted and brought about the victory. At least that was the hope of the interpreters of Second Isaiah, that the transcendental dimension would overcome the difficulty.⁴⁴

1.2.3 Some Notes on Carroll's Work

Notwithstanding its laudable endeavor to handle the unusual and unpopular topic, that is, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy by means of social-psychological theory, in this case, the theory of cognitive dissonance, some critical notes on Carroll's work on Third Isaiah seem now appropriate.

1.2.3.1 *A Hermeneutic Controlled by Social Science?*

In the *Introduction* of his book, Carroll asserted that his book is "an attempt to examine the prophetic traditions in terms of their predictive elements and the responses to the failure of the expectations aroused by them."⁴⁵ This purpose is then carried out by employing the theory of cognitive dissonance as a means of analyzing the texts - though Carroll himself was really aware and acknowledged the limits of the application of the social theory into exegesis. "There can hardly be a straightforward transference of research material from the field of social psychology to that of biblical

⁴² R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 153.

⁴³ It seems that on this point Carroll heavily drew upon the reconstructions of the post-exilic Judean community undertaken by P.D. Hanson in his *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*.

⁴⁴ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 154.

⁴⁵ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 2.

studies.”⁴⁶ But when we read *When Prophecy Failed*, we seem to get a different impression. Methodologically, Carroll actually did not set out from the text, but from some previous assumptions built by the theory of cognitive dissonance. Thus, rather than analyzing the prophetic texts as they stand and letting them speak in their own rights, Carroll’s reading was heavily dictated by the theory he adopted. He just read the texts within certain frames, namely, the categories of reducing dissonance that are derived from the theory of cognitive dissonance, such as, avoidance techniques, explanatory systems and social support; and then he tried to fit the texts into these frames. In other words, his reading of the texts is above all directed by the theory he adapted. Instead of searching what the texts want to convey, his exegesis is meant to test the applicability of the dissonance theory. Hermeneutic is then controlled by social science.

As the result of his desire to apply the theory to approach the biblical texts or to read the texts with the framework of the dissonance theory, Carroll’s exegesis seems to ignore many details in the texts. Too much attention given to the theory would then mean less attention given to the texts. This would naturally impoverish his reading.⁴⁷ As we shall try to show below, there are some important details of the texts that left unnoticed by Carroll. Had Carroll gone beyond the surface of the texts, he would have discovered their deeper nuances!

1.2.3.2 *Lack of Detailed Exegesis*

In this sub-section we are not willing to make a verse-by-verse comparison with Carroll’s exegesis, which would mean repeating the long journey of our exegetical task already carried out in the previous chapter, in order to demonstrate the points in which Carroll’s reading would seem to be less satisfactory as the responses to the problem of the failure of prophecy. Rather, we shall point out as examples several features that we consider important for our discussion.

First of all, we shall here mention Carroll’s treatment on the word קָרוֹב “soon” or “near” in 56,1. He argued that this is *the first* explanatory device to handle the problem of the non-appearance of the expected expectation. In this case, we judge that the weak point of Carroll’s reading is that it depends only on the analysis of one single word קָרוֹב “soon” or “near”. This word has been detached from its immediate context. As our analysis has demonstrated, the meaning of that word in the context of the whole statement in 56,1 is much richer than merely a temporal indication.

⁴⁶ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 11.

⁴⁷ Carroll’s treatment on T1 covers only four pages.

To understand קָרוֹב as a temporal indication apart from its context would bring at least two difficulties. First, this suggestion would mean that the realization of the promise would depend solely on the divine initiative. In this way, it becomes less effective as a response to the problem of the failed prophecy because it could not last long. After some time perhaps the people cannot wait any longer for the manifestation of this קָרוֹב! Carroll was also aware of this difficulty as he wrote, "Perhaps this was the first confident explanation for the non-appearance of the expected salvation but as the years passed the explanations turned to accusing the community of being fault."⁴⁸ But this statement must face the second difficulty since it would imply that 56,1 would come from the earliest stage of the composition of Third Isaiah, a suggestion that many scholars could not easily agree with.⁴⁹

On the other hand, we believe that a close examination of the word קָרוֹב "soon" or "near" in its context could produce a more satisfactory solution to the problem of the failure of prophecy, in addition to its function as temporal indication as emphasized by Carroll. As our exegesis has tried to demonstrate, the realization of קָרוֹב does not depend on the divine initiative, and thus lies beyond human capacity, but depends on the realization of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה within the community. This could be achieved only if the entire context within which the word קָרוֹב appears is taken into consideration.

Second observation: the second step following the קָרוֹב-strategy according to Carroll's reconstruction is putting the blame for the failure of the promise on the sinfulness of the community. At the surface, this device is indeed the easiest and the commonest reaction in front of such a problem. The future *we* have proclaimed has failed to appear because *you* are such miserable sinners! Carroll thus suggested that Third Isaiah laid down demands that had to be met by the community. Ethical conditions are thus added into the restated promise. To a certain extent, we could indeed agree with this proposal. As we have seen, the shift from unconditional to conditional promise is indeed one of the strategies employed by Third Isaiah to handle the problem of the disconfirmation. However, when we thoroughly observe the passages purposely cited by Carroll, we should be attentive not to stop at their

⁴⁸ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 153.

⁴⁹ From the perspective of redaction criticism, it is often considered that the block 56,1-8 comes from the last stage of the composition of TI. Together with 66,18-24, this block is intended to be the frame of TI. Cf. for example, P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 388; O. H. STECK, *Studien zu Tritojesaja*, 34-44; K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie*, 222-224; S. SEKINE, *Die tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 66-67; C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah 40-66*, 307. Differently, P. A. SMITH suggested that 56,1-8 is the earliest block of TI. P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction*, 60. 182.

appearance but should go further to the implied meaning of the texts. Two objections could then be put forward.

First, for this issue, Carroll mentioned several texts - practically a major part of Third Isaiah - that seem to indicate the sin of the community that was regarded as the cause of the disconfirmation of the expected salvation. Carroll mentioned some texts, such as, 65,4; 66,17 and 57,3-10.13 and 65,1-7 which he called the dietary offences and the sin of immorality and idolatry respectively. However, our investigation on those texts has put into question Carroll's suggestion. It is not immediately clear whether those sins, which belong to the domain of religious sins, *have caused* the delay or, on the contrary, *were actually caused* by the delay of the arrival of the salvation. Though this is not clearly stated in the texts, we would even suggest the latter: it is the non-appearance of the fulfillment of the promise that has led the people to return to their old-fashioned ways! Second, as we have repeatedly argued, blaming the community's sinfulness as the cause to the failure of prophecy (cf. 58,1-5.13; 59,1-15) would inevitably overlook a particular segment within the community, namely, those who become the victims of the oppression committed by their fellow members.

Thus, the blaming the victims strategy is not a satisfactory response to the problem of disconfirmation. We then suggest that this device could only be used in the restricted, supplementary sense: because human sin is something from which the people could turn away, the mention of human sin is an attempt to earth the possibility of the realization of the promise. It is not something that depends solely on the divine initiative, which is beyond human domain, but rather on the human capacity, that is the realization of *נְשֻׁבִים* and *צְדִיקָה* within the community.

The third note on Carroll's proposal focuses on his use of Festinger's theory. Though Carroll was heavily influenced by Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, it is rather conspicuous that he did not detect the presence of proselytizing activity behind the texts like 56,1-8, which deal with the admission of the foreigners, and, particularly, 66,18-21, which clearly prophesied the missionary activity among the nations, as a means to respond to the problem.⁵⁰ As we have mentioned above, according to Festinger, the proselytizing activity is the main stratagem to reduce the

⁵⁰ Strangely, with regard to Second Isaiah, Carroll noted "such a scenario (*that is, missionary activity*) is a tempting way to read Second Isaiah because it would provide evidence of dissonance response in the prophetic tradition but I hesitate in putting it forward because the existence of a missionary motif in Second Isaiah is a highly questionable reading of the text. The idea of a mission to the nations would certainly fit in well with dissonance theory analysis but must remain not proven with the reference to Second Isaiah's oracle." R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 119-120. *Italics mine*. This is perhaps true for Second Isaiah, but what about Third Isaiah?

dissonance aroused by the failure of the prophecies.⁵¹ Carroll also failed to see the exclusivity of the servant community (cf. the distinction between the Servant-group and their opponents as clearly expressed in 65,13-14) as a form of gaining social support, an aspect which is also important in the context of dissonance theory. Re-interpretation, re-contextualization and re-elaboration of the older materials, which, as we have seen, are also common in Third Isaiah, found no place in Carroll's elaboration.

We believe that further examples could still be added. However, it seems enough to demonstrate that this lack of detailed exegesis is the result of Carroll's overemphasis on the dissonance theory. Though he has stated from the outset that his book wanted to examine the biblical text with the aid of the dissonance theory, the fact is somewhat different: it is the theory, and not the texts, that determined his reading. So now we shall ask...

1.2.3.3 *Is The Theory Necessary?*

The central thesis proposed by Carroll in his works and which is adapted from Festinger's theory is that dissonance gives rise to hermeneutic, which is equal to explanatory scheme in the terminology of the dissonance theory. However, our exegesis carried out without the help of the theory of cognitive dissonance has also demonstrated that reinterpretation, re-adaptation, re-contextualization of the older material has proven to be the main device to handle the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Following Crenshaw's words in his review of Carroll's book we could then say that the application of dissonance theory to prophetic texts merely reinforces conclusions reached by other methods,⁵² and it might even limit or impoverish the interpretation of the texts! Despite all of these considerations, Carroll's proposal is

⁵¹ It is indeed true that in the social-psychological field, Festinger's thesis is contested by other latter scholars. Thus Jon Stone in the Introduction to the anthology which he edited concluded that "much of the problem with the Festinger thesis...seems to stem from its overemphasis on proselytism as a means of relieving dissonance..." J.R. STONE, *Expecting Armageddon*, 23. The scholarly studies after Festinger have successfully shown that active proselytizing as a response to failed prophecy is but one of a range of ways by which believers attempt to reduce dissonance, and not the only way. Even scholars stated that only under certain conditions could missionary activities happen as a response to the disconfirmation. See, for example, articles by J.A. HARDYCK - M. BRADEN, "Prophecy Fails Again," 55-63 on the Church of the True Word; J.F. ZYGMUNT, "Prophetic Failure and Chiliastic Identity," 65-85; R. SINGELBERG, "It Separated the Wheat," 191-209; M.N. SCHMALZ, "When Festinger Fails," 233-250; R. WATTERS, "When Prophecies Fail" <http://www.freeminds.org/psych/propfail.htm> [accessed on 15.06.2005] These last four articles deal with the Jehovah Witness.

⁵² J.L. CRENSHAW, "Book Reviews," 117.

informative and stimulating like the original theory of cognitive dissonance which is also stimulating in the field of social-psychology.

2. SUMMARY

In this last chapter, we have done two things. *First*, we have tried to organize the result of our exegesis on the book of Isaiah chs. 56-66 so that it could be presented in a synthetic and systematic way. And in the *second* part, we have presented the work of Robert Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, that also deal with the same topic, namely, the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. A comparison between Carroll's treatment of some passages of Third Isaiah with our examination of the same texts has produced some critical notes to his work.

The first part is actually intended as Third Isaiah's answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy in a summarized way, since it gathers up the results of our analysis of the whole Third Isaiah. Nevertheless, as we shall see, Third Isaiah's response to the problem cannot be expressed in a single brief sentence because his response does not take a response from a single direction, but various responses from various perspectives.

Having reached this point, practically, we have also arrived to the end of this study. However, this does not mean that this study has exhaustively provided the answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. There is still much to be reflected on, whether in the biblical field or in the post-biblical field, namely, in our modern world. Some points of reflection would be presented in the following part, which is the very last part of this work.



GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work is actually triggered by a perplexing, but at the same time, intriguing question: What will happen when prophecy fails? How would the community respond to such an experience? Now, at this point of arrival of this study, having undertaken a long and winding but also fascinating road through the passages of Third Isaiah, we shall review again our point of departure, by asking: What is the answer to our principal question? We shall now point out some important points as conclusions of our examination. In addition, as our work does not pretend to offer exhaustive responses to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, some suggestions for future research will also be given at the end of this section.

We started our study by noting that in our daily parlance, the common, spontaneous, and also the easiest answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy is to say that one's sins have become the cause of such disconfirmation. Such a strategy could also be found in Third Isaiah (cf. 59,1-3), the part of the Book of Isaiah, which we have chosen as the object of our study in attempting to discover the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy. However, as it has been frequently noted, such a simplistic response is not acceptable because it overlooks the victim. Therefore, in order to find out the appropriate and thus, acceptable response(s), we had to carry out a long investigation throughout the passages of Third Isaiah.

Without intending to repeat what has been discussed at considerable length before, particularly in the previous chapter, we could just state here that the responses of Third Isaiah in the face of the problem of unfulfilled prophecy cover three important points. They are to found in the discourse about the prophet, about the community, and about God. The prophet has to demonstrate his credibility as YHWH's authentic spokesperson to justify his task to deliver his message to his contemporaries. Third Isaiah also underlines the importance of the community as the agent of the fulfilment of the divine promise. However, to avoid the impression that the realization of the salvation depends solely on human beings, the final word is then anchored in YHWH himself.

At this point, as a general line, we could affirm that hermeneutic is the principal strategy practised by Third Isaiah in dealing with the problem of prophetic disconfirmation. This could mean interpreting the actual situation by using and re-elaborating the older already-existing materials, in this case the oracles of Second Isaiah, and also by formulating the message unique to Third Isaiah. Therefore, we shall agree with CARROLL's thesis that dissonance gives rise to hermeneutic. Nevertheless, as our analysis has already demonstrated, there is no single

straightforward answer to the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. What we found through a thorough examination of the texts is multifaceted responses from different perspectives with various emphases. It is true, indeed, that the response comes out differently in each text. In a certain text it appears powerfully, while another it is less clear.

The practice of reinterpreting the older materials that was carried out by Third Isaiah constitutes one of the earliest stages in the chain of the uninterrupted history of the interpretation of the Isaianic tradition. Thus, as BLENKINSOPP said, the history of the interpretation of Isaiah actually begins in the book itself,¹ when such a commentary could still be incorporated in the book. Also in this case, we witness the shift from direct inspiration to the inspired interpretation of earlier prophecy.²

We do not know how effective the responses of Third Isaiah may have been to tackle the problem of dissonance. CARROLL suggested that such responses "probably convinced some of Second Isaiah's circle to their own satisfaction sufficiently for them to have preserved the oracles of the prophet along with their own interpretations."³ However, we do not possess a text that could be called, hypothetically, the "Fourth Isaiah". Were it exist, perhaps we could have understood how the responses of Third Isaiah might have taken effect among the members of the community.

However, the fact that there is no "Fourth Isaiah" may lead us to think in another direction that perhaps could also enrich our understanding of the problem of unfulfilled prophecy and the responses to it. As Third Isaiah followed Second Isaiah as the response to the failure of Second Isaiah's oracles, so the "Fourth Isaiah" should have followed Third Isaiah as well, as the (re-)interpretation of Third Isaiah. Indeed, as far as we know, there is no indication from historical evidences that the prophecy of Third Isaiah would have come true as well. The dynamic of reinterpretation of the prophetic materials by the prophet's later adherents should actually rescue the prophecy from being terminated. Prophecy and its reinterpretation should carry on uninterruptedly so that new prophecies should always be produced. However, this does not happen. At a certain point, prophecy ceased. This fact would perhaps indicate that in the post-exilic community, prophecy did not possess a central role. As it is often suggested, it is the Torah that stands in the centre of the life of the community. As again CARROLL stated, "There may have been some awareness of

¹ J. BLENKINSOPP, *Opening the Sealed Book*, xvii. 7. The earliest interpretation of Isaiah is the Isaiah *pescharim* found in Qumran, of which we only possess the fragments. See, J. BLENKINSOPP, *Opening the Sealed Book*, 106-128.

² J. BLENKINSOPP, *History of Prophecy*, 3.

³ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 154-155.

dissonance among prophetic circles but for the average Judean citizen such esoteric matters were relatively unimportant because keeping the regulations of Torah was the focus of life."⁴ Predictive prophecy is simply part of a larger system of beliefs or the total gestalt of a movement.⁵

The disconfirmation of prophecy remains a very complex problem. This present study deals with the problem of unfulfilled prophecy from a very limited perspective. It does not pretend to be exhaustive in solving – if there ever be such a solution – the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Therefore, though we are now at the conclusion of this present work that attempts to explore the response of Third Isaiah to the problem, it could still be admitted that there are many more aspects in the prophetic tradition that should be thoroughly investigated. Two points, though not only these, perhaps deserve attention for further reflection in the future.

Remarks for Further Research

Time, space, and above all, relevancy to our topic, do not permit us to explore every single element in the prophetic tradition from the point of view of the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. During our journey throughout the passages of Third Isaiah, we have indeed encountered some interesting points that we could only suggest to be in need of further development. We believe that they have some importance and relevance that deserve our attention, especially when we are to deal with the problem of unfulfilled prophecy, whether in the biblical field or in our modern age.

1. Searching for More (Biblical) Responses

As the title of this present work indicates, the object of our study is to discover the prophetic response to unfulfilled prophecy. It means, therefore, that for this purpose, the book of Isaiah chapter 56-66 has been chosen from among other prophetic traditions as an example from which we tried to demonstrate the response(s) of Third Isaiah to the problem of disconfirmation, through a close analysis of the texts. Therefore, what we have here discovered as the responses to unfulfilled prophecy is restricted only to the perspective of Third Isaiah. In other words, our work cannot be regarded as representing the response of the biblical prophets and, accordingly, the whole arsenal of prophetic devices available to tackle the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. Consequently, more investigations of other prophetic writings seem

⁴ R.P. CARROLL, *When Prophecy Failed*, 122.

⁵ Cf. J. GORDON MELTON, "Spiritualization and Reaffirmation", 147.

necessary so that more strategies in dealing with the problem could also be discovered. Admittedly, however, not all prophetic books could be the object of this kind of study. Nevertheless, we believe that the more this study is done, the richer we become in confronting the problem of disconfirmation of prophecy.

In addition, we consider that this topic is also important for our modern world. As we have once noted, the most influential proposal upon this topic has been Festinger's social-psychological theory which was the result of his study, not on the biblical world, but on a particular event happened in our modern era. As Carroll has brought the dissonance theory back to ancient biblical world; now we shall ask whether an interpretation of biblical texts could also throw light to the situation of our modern world, which is also characterized by the presence of the "modern predicting prophets." Could an analysis of biblical prophetic texts offer a contribution to this modern world?

2. Official – Popular Religion

Analysis of some particular passages of Third Isaiah has demonstrated the presence of, say, non-orthodox cults practised in the post-exilic Judean community. Indeed, up to some years ago, the existence of such cults in the post-exilic period has been doubted by scholars who reasoned that those passages are the remnant of pre-exilic practices embedded in a post-exilic composition. Consequently, they should be understood symbolically, rather than literally. What stands behind this reasoning is an assumption that Josiah's reform successfully abolished or radically suppressed those practices so that they quickly died out. However, this kind of analysis could no longer be maintained. The recent revisionist understanding, which is supported particularly by archaeological findings, has demonstrated that in addition to Yahwism as the official religion, there were also some forms of popular religions in the post-exilic community. Indeed, though the passages under discussion are not so clear, we even argue that these popular religions have become an attractive option for those who suffered from the failure of prophecy!

We suggest that this polarity between the official and popular religion could also become an important theological issue that deserves close attention. It is true that the existence of the so-called popular religions⁶ remains hidden underground, but

⁶ Popular Religion could be defined as "an alternate, nonorthodox, nonconformist mode of religious expression. It is largely noncentralized, noninstitutional, lying outside state priests or state sponsorship. Because it is nonauthoritarian, popular religion is inclusive rather than exclusive; it appeals to minorities and to the disenfranchised...; in both belief and practice it tends to be eclectic and syncretistic." W.G. DEVER, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know*, 196.

cannot be denied. When the people need them because the official religion fails to satisfy them, the popular religions may have become an attractive choice, to which the people would eagerly, but often silently, turn. This situation will, of course, render the effort to answer the failure of prophecy more difficult.

If we jump from biblical period to this modern world, it seems that the situation does not differ too much. Also in our period which is highly coloured by the culture of pluralism, the popular religions, which I would suggest to include the so-called new religious movements (NRMs), some of them were characterized as millennialism groups that also involve the act of prophesying, go hand in hand with the official religions; though in some places their existence is not so apparent. We can say that our present world is characterized by a highly competitive religious "market," in which every religion offers to the people what they need and what they look for. It often happens that believers from a certain organized religion then step across into a particular popular religion that they think more suitable for them because they can get there what they cannot get from their former religion, spiritually and also materially. Thus, PHILIP JENKINS wrote, "New religions flourish by providing believers with what they cannot obtain in the mainstream organization of the day: sects and cults live on the unpaid bills of the churches"⁷.

One of the possible sources of the people's dissatisfaction is "the failure of prophecy" understood in the broadest sense of the word. Often believers expect something from religion, whether it is something beyond this world or something mundane such as prosperity, well-being, etc. Though religion is not supposed to fulfil all their expectations, if this happens too much then disappointment would inevitably overwhelm their believers. We believe in this case, that discovering the response to the failure of expectation - or better, to the failure to give reasonable and acceptable explanations as to why their expectation does not materialize - becomes important, especially, in such a circumstance in which popular religions are already ready to offer something lacking in official religion. Christ's words to the Father could perhaps inspire us, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me" (Jn 18,9).

After a long journey, now we arrive at the very end of this work. Our research on the problem of unfulfilled prophecy indeed ends at this point, but at the same time, it opens toward further explorations in the future, at least, upon two aspects. First, in the theoretical level: some points that cannot be elaborated in this present work are

⁷ P. JENKINS, *Mystics and Messiahs*, 21.

waiting for scholarly examination. Second, from the practical level: How could this study be useful for practical purpose? I write this work from the perspective of a pastoral minister of a religious institution; therefore, my personal future task is to implement the result of this research into my pastoral ministry, directly and/or indirectly. Nevertheless, for a broader audience, I hope that this work could also become a small contribution in the biblical field, particularly, with regard to the topic of the problem of unfulfilled prophecy.

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