THE AUTHORSHIP AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH 35

JEFFREY K. KUAN

Pacific School of Religion/Graduate Theological Union
Berkeley, California 94709, U. S. A.

The authenticity of Isaiah 35 (as well as 34[1]) as a Proto-Isaianic text has long been called into question. H. Grätz in 1891 argued that chapter 35 is Deutero-Isaianic and originally belonged to chapter 51 between verses 3 and 4, claiming that the last verse of chapter 35 was copied from 51:11 when chapter 35 was detached from its context.[2] In 1915 and 1924 A. T. Olmstead argued that chapter 35 was originally the introduction to Deutero-Isaiah before the insertion of chapters 36–39.

---

[1]For a most recent review of the discussion of the unity/disunity of Isaiah 34 and 35, see C. R. Mathews, *Defending Zion: Edom's Desolation and Jacob's Restoration (Isaiah 34–35) in Context* (BZAW 236; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 11–20. Scholars who have argued for the chapters' unity include M. H. Pope, "Isaiah 34 in Relation to Isaiah 35, 40–66," *JBL* 71 (1952), 235–43; J. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique: Isaïe, I–XXXV, mirior d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël* (EB; 2 vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1977–78), 1. 439; R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 271–72; and Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 161–63. Scholars who have challenged the chapters' unity include H. Wildberger, *Jesaja* (BKAT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972–82), 1355–56; and O. H. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr: Jesaja 35 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und dem Zweiten Jesaja* (SBS 121; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985), esp. 48–59. There is still no consensus pertaining to the unity of these two chapters, although most scholars tend to read them together. For example, most recently, M. A. Sweeney, while recognizing that the two chapters lack "syntactical or generic connection," suggests that they "function together in that the prophetic instruction concerning YHWH's power over the nations in ch. 34 serves as the necessary premise for the prophetic oracle of salvation concerning the return of the redeemed to Zion in ch. 35" (*Isaiah 1–39; with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* [FOTL 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 434).

[2]H. Grätz, "Isaiah XXXIV and XXXV," *JQR* 4 (1891), 1–8.

Moreover, "the writer was clearly in Babylon."[3] R. B. Y. Scott in 1935 argued for the Deutero-Isaianic authorship of this chapter on the basis of vocabulary, style and subject matter.[4] This position dominated Isaianic scholarship for many decades and is still advocated by some scholars.[5]

A brief analysis of the vocabulary, style, and themes that earlier scholars used to argue for the Deutero-Isaianic authorship of chapter 35 is in order. Olmstead claimed that 87 percent of the vocabulary of 35:1–9 is found in Deutero-Isaiah, offering conclusive proof of its authorship.[6] Olmstead's statistic cannot be doubted. Yet, one has to acknowledge that they are neither words peculiar to Deutero-Isaiah nor words that do not occur elsewhere in Isaiah. In Scott's analysis, there is only one word that occurs only in this chapter *and* Deutero-Isaiah, namely שָׁרָב in v. 7 and 49:10.[7] In addition, צִיָּה, which escaped Scott's notice, occurs in v. 1 and 41:18 and 53:2 but nowhere else in Isaiah.

Nevertheless, there are numerous words that occur in chapter 35 and elsewhere in Proto-Isaiah but *not* in Deutero-Isaiah: for example, פֶּרַח in v. 1, 2 occurs in 17:11, a text which most scholars accept as genuine and relate to the so-called Syro-Ephraimitic alliance (also in 66:14); רָפָה in v. 3, used as an adjective here, but as a verb both in 5:24 and 13:7 (the latter is noteworthy as it is used in the same sense); v. 6—פָּסַח occurs in 33:23, נָחַל is used in 7:19, 11:15, 15:7, 30:28, 33, and 34:9 (also in 57:5, 6 and 66:12); v. 7—נָוֶה occurs in 27:10, 32:18, 33:20, and 34:13 (also in 65:10); v. 8—אֱוִיל occurs also in 19:11; v.

---

[3]A. T. Olmstead, "The Earliest Book of Kings," *AJSL* 31 (1915), 196, n. 4; "The First Chapter of Second Isaiah," *JAOS* 44 (1924), 174; see also C. C. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 279–301.

[4]R. B. Y. Scott, "The Relation of Isaiah, Chapter 35, to Deutero-Isaiah," *AJSL* 52 (1935/36), 178–91.

[5]So, for example, Pope, "Isaiah 34 in Relation to Isaiah 35," 235–43; J. D. Smart, *History and Theology in Second Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 35, 40–66* (London: Epworth, 1967), 292; J. L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (AB 20; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), xx, 11–12; J. Untermann, *From Repentance to Redemption: Jeremiah's Thought in Transition* (JSOTSup 54; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 42–46, 171–75.

[6]A. T. Olmstead, "II Isaiah and Isaiah, Chapter 35," *AJSL* 53 (1936/37), 251–53. Cf. K. Elliger's detailed examination of the vocabulary, style, and imagery in Isaiah 34–35 in comparison to Isaiah 40–55 and 56–66, which led him to date Isaiah 34–35 in the time of Trito-Isaiah (*Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis zu Tritojesaja* [BWANT 63; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933], 272–78).

[7]Scott, "The Relation of Isaiah," 179.

9—אַרְיֵה is commonly used in 11:7, 15:9, 21:8, 31:4, and 38:19 (also in 65:25). In addition, כַּרְמֶל לְבָנוֹן, and שָׁרוֹן occur together in a group elsewhere only in 33:9, and נִמְהֲרֵי־לֵב has its parallel only in 32:4 as לְבַב נִמְהָרִים.

Words which appear both in this chapter and Deutero-Isaiah but also in Proto-Isaiah are: v. 1, 2—גִּיל in 41:16 and 49:13 but also in 9:2, 25:9, and 29:19 (also 4 occurrences in Trito-Isaiah); v. 3—כָּשַׁל in 40:30 but also in 3:8, 5:27, 8:15, 28:13, and 31:3 (and 3 times in Trito-Isaiah); v. 8—טָמֵא in 52:1,11 but also twice in 6:5; תָּעָה in 47:15 and 53:6 but also in 16:18, 21:4, and 28:7.

In spite of Olmstead's argument, the foregoing analysis shows that one cannot argue that this chapter is Deutero-Isaianic on the basis of vocabulary. Neither can it be claimed to be Proto-Isaianic or Trito-Isaianic for that matter. In fact, Scott had admitted that "the evidence of vocabulary is not conclusive."[8]

Stylistically, Scott analyzed the parallels between chapter 35 and Deutero-Isaiah based on L. Köhler's work.[9] A rundown of his analysis immediately reveals glaring weaknesses. For example, he notes that "there are no interrogatives in chapter 35, as there are none in chapter 47 or chapter 54."[10] Are we to suppose that every chapter in Proto-Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah contains interrogatives? Another parallel cited is what is termed "quoted exclamations" in v. 4a as in 41:6, 7. Yet, we must note that they likewise occur in 7:4 and 8:12. "Pairs" and "triads" as other parallels are not missing in Proto-Isaiah either (see 6:9–10). This can only be expected, since most of the material in Proto-Isaiah is poetry. In the same way, "artistic variation" such as chiasmus, which Scott noted as occurring in this chapter and chapters 40 and 43, is in no way unique.

Thematically, Scott argued that "the subject matter of chapter 35 is identical with corresponding parts of chapters 40–55 to a remarkable degree."[11] However, this is only to be expected since the historical situation alluded to in this chapter resembles that of the context from

---

[8]Scott, "The Relation of Isaiah," 180.

[9]L. Köhler, *Deuterojesaja, stilkritisch Untersucht* (BZAW 37; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1923).

[10]Scott, "The Relation of Isaiah," 181.

[11]Scott, "The Relation of Isaiah," 191.

which chapters 40–55 were written. Because of the somewhat similar historical situation, it may even be argued that the author of chapters 40–55 is dependent on chapter 35 for his subject matter and that 51:11 is copied directly from 35:10.

M. A. Sweeney notes that there are two important motifs in Proto-Isaiah, namely, the Exodus and the Blind and the Deaf, which occur also in chapter 35.[12] Following R. E. Clements, O. Kaiser, and H. Wildberger, Sweeney associates the reference to the highway (מְסִלוּל) in v. 8 with the Exodus motif. While it is true that the highway imagery occurs frequently in Deutero-Isaiah,[13] it is not entirely absent in Proto-Isaiah (it appears as מְסִלָּה in 11:16, 19:23, 33:8). The usage in 11:16 is particularly close to that in v. 8, in that it will be a highway which people taken into captivity could take when they return. If v. 9a, which reads "There shall no lion be, nor any fierce animal go up on it; there it shall not be found," is a reflection of peace between humans and animals, we see a similar theme occurring in 11:6–9.

Clements has noted that the theme of Israel's blindness/deafness is a major theme in Proto-Isaiah which is developed further in Deutero-Isaiah.[14] In Proto-Isaiah this theme appears also in 29:18 and 32:3 as close parallels to 35:5. Clements is of the opinion that the blindness/deafness theme originates with Isa 6:9–10 where it occurs as an important element of Isaiah's prophetic commission. Finally, the Zion tradition is used frequently in Proto-Isaiah, as it is in Deutero-Isaiah. However, there is an obvious difference. In Deutero-Isaiah there is clear reference to Zion/Jerusalem as a devastated wasteland (as in 49:14–21; 51:3 and 52:3, 9). On the other hand, Proto-Isaiah's view of the Zion tradition is one in which Zion will never be destroyed (for example, 1:27, 2:3, 10:12, 18:7). There is no indication that Zion in the context of chapter 35 is a devastated place, as it is in Deutero-Isaiah. As such it is in line with the tradition in Proto-Isaiah. Thus, although 35:10 is paralleled by 51:11, their allusions to Zion are completely different, deriving from two very different historical periods. It is therefore not unlikely that Deutero-Isaiah copied 51:11 from 35:10.

---

[12]M. A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 18.

[13]See Isa 40:3–5; 42:14–16; 43:14–21; 48:20–21; 49:8–12; 51:9–11; 52:11–12; 55:12–13.

[14]See Isa 42:16; 42:18–25; 43:8; 44:18.

The Deutero-Isaianic authorship of chapter 35 is not the only position taken in critical study. More recent scholarship, influenced by redaction criticism, considers this chapter as a late composition. Arguing that this material is apocalyptic and dependent on chapters 40 and following, both Clements and Kaiser assign it to the post-exilic period.[15] Sweeney sees Isaiah 35 as "a transitional chapter between the first and second parts of the book," and argues that it draws on major themes from Proto-Isaiah, like the motifs of the Exodus and the Blind and the Deaf, which are then taken up in Deutero-Isaiah.[16] O. H. Steck views Isaiah 35 as a redactional bridge between Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah, written in Jerusalem during the turmoil of the struggles between the successors of Alexander the Great.[17] This is done on the basis of his supposition that this chapter is written in the context of a view of the judgement of the world in cosmic proportion, through which the people of God will be delivered and returned to the land. Finally and most recently, C. R. Mathews suggests that Isaiah 34–35 were added when the entire Isaianic collection, as well as Trito-Isaiah, were almost complete.[18]

Throughout his work, Steck recognizes the parallels of words, phrases, and ideas between Isaiah 35 and those of Proto-Isaiah, particularly chapters 32–34, and Deutero-Isaiah, especially 40:1–11.[19] Nevertheless, he argues for a special relationship between Isaiah 35 and 40:1–11 in that Isaiah 35 has been influenced in structure and content by Isa 40:1–11. Evidence of the close relationship between the two chapters include: (1) verbal and thematic similarities (for example, רָאָה + כְּבוֹד יהוה in 35:2 and 40:5, the parallelism of מִדְבָּר and עֲרָבָה in

---

[15]Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 271–72; O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 353. So also Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 1355–59, who is followed by W. Harrelson, "Isaiah 35 in Recent Research and Translation," in *Language, Theology, and the Bible: Essays in Honour of James Barr*, ed. S. E. Balentine and John Barton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 250–52. Wildberger, however, does not see the text as bearing marks of apocalyptic literature.

[16]Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, 18. In his *Isaiah 1–39*, Sweeney states that "Isaiah 34–35 plays an important role in the final form of the book of Isaiah in that this unit introduces the second part of the book in chs. 34–66" (p. 435). In his opinion, however, these two chapters were not composed at the same time, ch. 35 in the late 6th century and ch. 34 in the 5th century (see pp. 434–54).

[17]O. H. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr: Jesaja 35 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und dem Zweiten Jesaja* (SBS 121; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk); for a modification of Steck's position, see most recently, H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 211–21.

[18]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, esp. 161–63.

[19]Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, esp. 40–44.

35:1, 6 and 40:3); (2) the formulation הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם + אָמַר לְ in 35:4 and 40:9; (3) the sequence of the two texts (for example, the summons to non-humans in 35:1–2 and 40:3–5 is followed by the summons to humans in 35:3–4 and 40:9–11); and (4) the position of the two chapters in their respective Isaianic collection, namely that Isaiah 35 is "der letzte Logientext" of Proto-Isaiah and Isaiah 40 is *"der erste Logientext"* of Deutero-Isaiah.[20] Mathews's detailed criticism of Steck, however, has shown that while there are obvious similarities Steck tends to overstate his case. For instance, on the purported dependence of 35:1–2 on 40:3–5, Mathews notes:

> Steck seems to overlook the fact that in 35:1 the subject is both מדבר and צִיָּה, a term lacking in 40:3–5. Further, the subject of 35:2c, הֵמָּה, can hardly refer to the מדבר and צִיָּה of 35:1 . . . . Finally, it is doubtful that the verbs in 40:4a are to be read as jussives and thus as a summons, although grammatically, such a reading would be possible.[21]

Steck's argument that of the two texts Isaiah 35 is the dependent text is based on his analysis of its links with chapters 32–34 which are not shared by 40:1–11 and on how the literary context and function of chapter 35 account for its differences with chapter 40. To turn Steck's argument around, it is equally plausible to suggest that, with the points of contact that Isaiah 35 shares with chapters 32–34, Isaiah 35 is the lead text rather than the dependent text. Similarly, Isaiah 40's literary context and function, not to mention its new historical context, would account for its differences with chapter 35. Mathews is thus right to note that "[if] doubt is cast on [Steck's] conclusion that ch. 35 follows 40:1–11 in thought and structure . . . then his argument concerning how ch. 35 functions in one's reading of the larger book is undermined."[22]

What then of Mathews's position concerning Isaiah 35? At this point, a summary of her work is in order. First, following other scholars Mathews is of the opinion that "Isa 35 borrows from Second, Third, and First Isaiah."[23] Second, Mathews notes that Isaiah 34 and 35 are

---

[20]Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr*, 13–37. Mathews offers an extensive critique of Steck (*Defending Zion*, 140–56). Williamson, on the contrary, is more positively disposed to Steck's position (*The Book Called Isaiah*, 212–16).

[21]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 143.

[22]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 149.

[23]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 120.

"to be read in tandem, as two halves of one whole, [which] seems evident on the basis of the contrast between the poems brought about through their use of imagery, language, and literary technique."[24] Nevertheless, she acknowledges that, while chapter 35 has strong affinities with the language and thought of Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, chapter 34 does not show evidence of similar dependence. In fact, chapter 34 has its closest parallels with Isaiah 13 and 63. Thus, she admits "the possibility that ch. 34 at one time existed independently of its mate."[25] Third, she suggests that Isaiah 34–35 were added to the Isaianic corpus at the point when Trito-Isaiah and the work as a whole were almost complete. Her reasons are as follows:

> . . . ch. 35 draws not only on the themes and language of Second but on Third Isaiah as well; Edom and the nations resurface at ch. 63; ch. 34 exhibits connections with other texts suggesting a relatively late dating, and, finally; chs. 34–35 reflect the element of contrast so prominent in the last chapters of the book.[26]

Finally, she goes on to argue that these two chapters, by introducing material from Trito-Isaiah, enable the prophetic narratives of Isaiah 36–39

> to point even beyond the return of the exiles, to express that same hope—and assurance—found in 56–66: that in the future, YHWH will deliver Zion from all her enemies, whether they be those who threaten her as foreigners, from the outside, or those who threaten her from within.[27]

Mathews's proposal, while new and intriguing, presents several problems. First, C. R. Seitz has correctly noted that "[it] is notoriously difficult to determine the direction of influence when language parallels are tallied up and thus to conjecture about authorship and redactional development."[28] Thus, the borrowing could have happened the other way, namely, that Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah borrowed from Isaiah 35. Similarly, the connections that chapter 34 has with other texts does not necessarily suggest a late date. Second, Mathews's conceptualization of

---

[24]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 161–62.

[25]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 162.

[26]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 162–63; as mentioned in n. 1 above, Mathews read the two chapters together as a diptych, ch. 35 as a direct and intentional contrast to ch. 34.

[27]Mathews, *Defending Zion*, 178.

[28]C. R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 239.

the function of Isaiah 35 (and 34) is dependent on her assumption that the two chapters are a diptych. However, if they are not two halves of a whole, since she herself admits that there are differences between the two chapters and the influence of Isaiah 40–66 is less evident in chapter 34, then her understanding of the function of these chapters is undermined. Moreover, we need to acknowledge that our historical knowledge of Edom in the late eighth century BCE is less than complete. Proto-Isaiah may be referring to historical events relating to Edom that we are unable to reconstruct. Third, if indeed the function of chapters 34–35 was to articulate in futuristic terms how YHWH will deal with Israel's enemies, with its implied sense of finality, would not the chapters be more appropriately inserted at the end of the Isaianic collection?

The above analyses have both called into question assigning this chapter definitively to Deutero-Isaiah as well as to the post-exilic period and presented the possibility that Isaiah 35 is authentic Proto-Isaianic material. In view of the fact that linguistic evidences are not conclusive, we need to turn to historical allusions. Is there a rhetorical or historical background which might have supplied the occasion for such a message in the time of Proto-Isaiah?

Where there is any form of communication taking place, rhetoric is involved. According to the understanding of classical rhetorical theorists, the intent of rhetoric is to persuade. In his *De Oratore*, Cicero defined rhetoric as *dicere ad persuadendum accommodate* ("speech designed to persuade").[29] Similarly, Aristotle defined rhetoric as δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον τοῦ θεωρῆσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν ("the faculty [power] of discovering in a given case the available means of persuasion").[30] Thus, M. V. Fox suggests that "rhetorical criticism may be defined first of all as the examination and evaluation of such discourse for the nature and quality of its persuasive force."[31] An important persuasive

---

[29]Cicero, *De Oratore* (LCL; London: William Heinemann, 1948), I. §138.

[30]Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric* (LCL; London: William Heinemann, 1926), 1355b. On the classical understanding of *persuasion* in rhetoric, see further K. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 49–55.

[31]M. V. Fox, "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones," in *The Place is Too Small for Us*, ed. R. P. Gordon (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 177 (= *HUCA* 51 [1980], 1–15). On this form of rhetorical criticism, see further Y. Gitay, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, ed. S. R. Haynes and S. L. McKenzie (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 135–49. On the other form of rhetorical criticism, namely, that related to the art of composition (of the James Muilenburg

device used in rhetoric is "imagination." K. Burke suggests that "imagination can be thought of as reordering the objects of sense, or taking them apart and imagining them in new combinations . . . that do not themselves derive from sensory experience."[32] Thus Longinus could say that "the 'best use of imagination' in *rhetoric* is to convince the audience of the 'reality and truth' of the speaker's assertions."[33]

"Rhetoric is created as a response to a rhetorical situation, a situation felt to need change of the sort that discourse may accomplish," notes Fox.[34] In an article entitled "The Rhetorical Situation," L. F. Bitzer argues that situation is most basic to rhetorical activity and that a rhetorical discourse is created as a response to situation. He goes on to define a rhetorical situation as "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence."[35] In addition, J. H. Hayes and S. A. Irvine note that "a rhetorical situation involves an audience, a speaker, a topic or issue of mutual concern, a shared world of meaning, and an occasion for communication."[36]

Isaiah 35 is a rhetorical discourse created as a response to a particular situation with the intent of persuading the hearers to a particular course of action. In order to persuade effectively, images were created in the mind of the audience. It is evident from the text that a disastrous situation has occurred, which gave rise to this communication between the speaker and his audience. There has been devastation in the land. Through the use of grave images, the speaker notes that the land has been turned into a "wilderness," a "dry land," and a "desert" where there is no "blossom," "glory," nor "honor" (v. 1, 2). "Burning sand" and "thirsty ground" (v. 7) probably refer to its destruction by fire. The

---

"school"), see P. Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).

[32]Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 78–79. On the classical understanding of *imagination* in rhetoric, see Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 78–84.

[33]*Rhetoric of Motives*, 79.

[34]Fox, "Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision," 180.

[35]L. F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968), 6.

[36]J. H. Hayes and S. A. Irvine, *Isaiah, The Eighth Century Prophet: His Times and Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 61.

land has become the habitation of wildlife and plants (reading חָצִיר in v. 7 as "abode"). With the destruction of the land, people are taken as captives ("the redeemed shall walk there" and "the ransomed of the Lord shall return," v. 9b–10a).

What kind of an audience is addressed? Obviously, it is those people who have not been taken as captives. In view of the massive destruction alluded to above, the audience would probably be people that have not suffered devastation. Yet, because of such a situation, an exigency exists in which these people have been shaken by the event ("weak hands" and "feeble knees," v. 3) and now stand in a position to make some "hasty decision" (reading נִמְהֲרֵי־לֵב as "those who make hasty decision"). Those in the audience fear that a similar fate awaits them.

The speaker seems to be convinced that Zion will not be violated, that the captives will return to Zion (v. 10), and that God will save the audience the speaker is addressing (v. 4). It is on this basis that he creates this discourse to try to persuade the audience toward significant change in their attitude. Instead of being fearful, discouraged, and liable to make hasty decisions, the audience would be encouraged and would trust in God.

The rhetorical situation alluded to above is definitely one that involves destruction and captivity. This has led scholars to relate it to the Babylonian captivity. Yet if the rhetorical situation painted above is correct, the Babylonian captivity may not be the right historical background. For one thing, it is not explicit in the text that Zion/Jerusalem has fallen. Moreover, the Babylonian captivity cannot simply be assumed whenever there is allusion to captives that involves Judah. In dealing with a different text (1:4–9) that he dates to the aftermath of Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BCE, Sweeney is right to caution that one should not immediately think of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem whenever a term like שָׂרִיד is used. "Such a position," Sweeney says, "ignores the deaths that would have occurred in the Assyrian assault and the captives that were taken away to Nineveh."[37]

A more satisfactory historical background to this chapter is perhaps the one that concerns Sennacherib's western campaign in 701 BCE.

---

[37]Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, 127.

We know from the Oriental Institute Prism that during this campaign, Sennacherib claimed to have devastated 46 cities, walled forts and countless small villages in Judah "by means of well-stamped earth-ramps, and battering-rams brought thus near to the walls combined with the attack by foot soldiers, using mines, breeches as well as sapper work."[38] The cities involved were most probably in the Negev and the Shephelah. Lachish appeared to be the most important city destroyed.[39] Sennacherib claims that he counted 200,150 people (probably an exaggerated figure) as booty. In the Rassam Cylinder, Sennacherib noted that he divided the captives of that campaign among his whole army, his governors, as well as the inhabitants of his large cities.[40]

This destruction and captivity must have sent a wave of fear over the population in the other parts of Judah including Jerusalem. Thus "weak hands" and "feeble knees" are particularly apt descriptions of the people who have become fearful and discouraged. Moreover, those who are of a "hasty decision" refers accurately to those who are ready and quick to submit to the Assyrians. This is not what the prophet Isaiah had in mind. He urged the population to stand firm and not to submit to the Assyrians.[41] This is certainly consonant with Isaiah's notion of Yahweh's exclusive prerogative, an important element of the Zion tradition, which B. C. Ollenburger mentions as occurring in 2:6–22; 30:1–5, 15–17; and 31:1–3.[42] They are not to be afraid because God will come to save. Jerusalem will not fall (2 Kgs 19:6–7, 20–34). When God comes with vengeance, the casualties of war will be redeemed, the land will be restored, and those who have been taken as captives will return to Zion.

This new situation of massive devastation, one which Judeans in the eighth century BCE had never before encountered, called for a new kind of rhetoric, a re-imagining of what may yet be possible. A different

---

[38]*ANET*, 288.

[39]See 2 Kgs 18:14, 17; 19:18; Isa 36:2; 37:8. This invasion is also recorded in the Lachish reliefs from Nineveh. See D. Ussishkin, "The Destruction of Lachish by Sennacherib and the Dating of the Judean Royal Storage Jars," *TA* 4 (1977), 28–60.

[40]*ARAB* II, § 284.

[41]Hayes and Irvine (*Isaiah*, 64, 296–97, 376) argue that Isaiah supported the revolt in 705 BCE and that he continued his policy of non-submission.

[42]B. C. Ollenburger, *Zion, the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* (JSOTSup 41; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 107–29.

"language" and a new "imagination" were thus necessary to persuade a people that had been so utterly frightened and discouraged to hold on to their faith in God. When this chapter is interpreted against the background of Sennacherib's 701 BCE campaign, it makes good sense why it immediately precedes chapters 36–37, which relate how through Yahweh's protection of Zion, Jerusalem was not destroyed by Sennacherib.

To sum up, the vocabulary and style of Isaiah 35 are at best neutral and cannot be used to assign the chapter definitively to one or the other collection of Isaianic materials. Thematically, chapter 35 is consistent with Proto-Isaiah. Finally, setting aside redaction criticism, it is plausible on the basis of the rhetoric and the rhetorical situation reflected in the text that chapter 35 both relates to Sennacherib's campaign against Judah in 701 BCE and originated from the eighth-century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz.

ABSTRACT

The authenticity of Isaiah 35 as a Proto-Isaianic text has long been called into question. Following the lead of H. Grätz in 1891, a number of scholars have argued for the Deutero-Isaianic authorship of this chapter on the basis of vocabulary, style and subject matter. More recent scholars, influenced by redaction criticism, consider it as a late post-exilic composition. This article first reviews and critiques the evidence provided for these positions and then, on the basis of a rhetorico-historical analysis of the text, presents the possibility that Isaiah 35 is authentic Proto-Isaianic material, written in the aftermath of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 BCE.

撮 要

學者對以賽亞書第三十五章作為第一以賽亞書一直持懷疑態度。在1891年，以賈拉斯為首的一班學者根據文字、風格及題材，辯稱此章為第二以賽亞書。近期有更多學者在研究其編纂者背景後，認為這是擄後的作品。本文首先檢閱及評論前人的論據，然後依據第三十五章內容的修辭歷史分析，指出此章是第一以賽亞書，乃寫於西拿基立在公元前701年入侵猶大之後。