The Isaianic Denkschrift and a Socio-Cultural Crisis in Yehud

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The Isaianic *Denkschrift* and a Socio-Cultural Crisis in Yehud

Abstract

The Isaianic *Denkschrift* and a Socio-Cultural Crisis in Yehud: A Rereading of Isaiah 6:1–9:6[7]

The foundational question that provided an entry point for the present work was whether Isaiah 6:1–9:6 (9:7 in most Western editions of the Bible) is, minor exceptions notwithstanding, an inherently integral, single-layer text. Some influential exegetes of the early twentieth century maintained that such indeed was the case, while their later colleagues generally discarded that view. Based on a fresh reading of the material, the present author asserts that the continuity within it extends significantly farther than was previously thought. The rich, multi-faceted coherence of the discourse presents ample grounds to reject the theory of a composite origin of the Isaianic *Denkschrift*. Approaching the text with the help of several socio-anthropological models, the present author outlines the pragmatic structure of the discourse. That structure, combined with the analysis of linguistic and thematic correspondences between the target text and some other Isaianic and non-Isaianic materials, allows the present author to propose a historical setting for Isaiah 6:1–9:6 that ties in with recent studies of the trajectories of development of Judaean literature in the Persian period. The present work calls for a rethinking of the literary history of Isaiah 1–39 and entails possible repercussions for the historiography of the Israelite religion.
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Alexander V. Prokhorov
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Abbreviations


CCSL Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953-


DtrH The Deuteronomic Historian

ESV The Holy Bible, English Standard Version

ET English translation


JPS Tanakh Jewish Publication Society’s Hebrew-English Tanakh

JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament

KJV The Holy Bible, King James Version
Abbreviations

MT   Massoretic text
NASB The Holy Bible, New American Standard Version
NIV  The Holy Bible, New International Version
NJB  The New Jerusalem Bible
NKJ  The Holy Bible, New King James Version
NRSV The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version
OT   Old Testament
RSV  The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
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Alexander V. Prokhorov, The Isaianic Denkschrift and a Socio-Cultural Crisis in Yehud
1. Introduction

The discovery of Isaiah scrolls in the Judaean Desert demonstrated that the Book of Isaiah has been at the very centre of biblical studies for over two millennia. Within that book, the unit 6:1–9:6 (MT) has constituted a pivotal piece of text—not only for the Hebrew Bible scholarship but also across a wide range of disciplines related to religion and theology. Numerous methodological strands of biblical studies have mined this relatively short material, extracting from it prime examples and test cases for various hypotheses.

Why then another study of this text would be considered necessary? The reason is two-fold. First, it is now nearly a quarter of a century since the latest book-size exegetical treatments of this text appeared in English,1 while the amount of literature in other languages has steadily increased;2 it is time for this lacuna to be addressed. Second, though Isaiah 6:1–9:6 (or the Denkschrift) has been studied from so many different angles, there remain potentially fruitful approaches that as yet have not been brought in contact with this material.

This work presents an exegetical analysis of the Denkschrift. It is carried out on several levels, starting with the translation of the Hebrew text, proceeding with an examination of the discourse and proposing an interpretation based on insights of several important socio-anthropological theories.

1.1 A Brief Overview of First Isaiah Research3

In the beginning, there came a claim that the distinctions between First Isaiah and the remaining material were too great to regard the Book of Isaiah as a

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1 Laato 1988; Irvine 1990.
3 The term "First Isaiah" is used in the present study as a conventional way of referring to chs. 1–39 (cf. Seitz 1992: “the term ‘First Isaiah’ is helpful as a literary classification for chaps. 1–39 because they appear first in the book of Isaiah. As a historical or sociological term, however, it must be used with caution, lest one presume an identity of author and literature”). The use of the term implies that at least a few remarks regarding the relationship between chs. 1–39 and the material following it ought to be made. A few relevant examples from studies of non-Isaianic literature will also be provided.

The amount of secondary literature on First Isaiah is too great to compile an overview that is even remotely comprehensive; therefore, only several milestone developments can be presented. Helpful summaries and bibliographies of First Isaiah research can be found in recent
unity. The claim ripened at a time when the Pentateuch scholars launched a search of diverse sources underlying the present form of Genesis-Deuteronomy. However, a definitive hypothesis concerning diverse sources to which the Book of Isaiah goes back did not emerge until more than a century later. Immediately following Wellhausen’s proposal of the source theory for the Pentateuch, his fellow-scholar Duhm advanced a similar theory for the Book of Isaiah, arguing that chs. 1–39, 40–55 and 56–66 were initially composed as separate works and unified by a later editor. The thesis of three sources of the Book of Isaiah dominated through most of the twentieth century. The latest version of this theory is represented by Steck, who, nevertheless, deviates from Duhm by attributing chs. 56–66 not to any specific “source” but to an editorial addition which accompanied or followed the merging of First Isaiah and Second Isaiah.

The source theory could not explain one major problem: the lexical, thematic and sequential resemblance of First and Second Isaiah. Following J. Becker’s and especially Clements’s contributions, this resemblance gradually occupied centre stage in Isaiah studies. The most common solution has been to transform the “source theory” into the “dependence theory”: Second Isaiah uses First Isaiah’s

commentaries and in specialised studies, such as Tate 1996; U. Becker 1999; Höffken 2004, Melugin 2006 and Hays 2011.

Apart from the mediaeval Jewish author Abraham Ben Meir Ibn Ezra (see Simon 1985, pp. 266–271) and, possibly, his predecessor Moisés Ben Samuel Ibn Chiquitilla (whose works on the Prophets are accessible only via citations in Ibn Ezra and other writers [see Poznański 1895, pp. 98–102, 135–149]), the first scholars to propose this were Eichhorn (1780–1783) and Doederlein (1788). In 1821, Gesenius proposed the designation of chs. 40–66 as “Pseudo-Isaiah” or “Second Isaiah”.

As early as 1711, Hennig Bernhard Witter proposed that the Pentateuchal sources should be distinguished on the basis of the use of different divine names. According to Blenkinsopp (1994), this was the first methodological proposition for the problem of the sources of the Pentateuch, as articulated by Richard Simon in *L’Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1678). This name-based theory was refined by Jean Astruc in 1753, so that eventually documents such as E, J, D and P were postulated.

The first edition of Duhm’s *Jesaia* appeared in 1892. Three years earlier (1889), a prominent conservative scholar Franz Delitzsch finally accepted the Second Isaiah hypothesis in the ultimate edition of his Isaiah commentary (see Delitzsch 1892, 35). Duhm’s further contribution to the study of prophetic literature was consistent with the theory: in his 1901 commentary on the Book of Jeremiah he likewise argued for three distinct sources.


Steck 1991; idem 1992. Vermeelen (1989) takes this approach a step further and claims that the composition of most of Isaiah 40–55 and 56–66 was the product of the same editors who unified the core of chs. 40–55 with the First Isaiah. Yet he still maintains that the First Isaiah (excluding ch. 1, which he attributes to the very same editors) and some core of the Second Isaiah were composed independently of each other; he therefore remains associated with the source theory.


See Albertz 1990.
motifs and vocabulary.\textsuperscript{11} The dependence theory may be understood as an application of the general thesis of biblical \textit{Fortschreibung},\textsuperscript{12} or midrashic rethinking and reworking,\textsuperscript{13} to the tradition that imitates and responds to First Isaiah.\textsuperscript{14} In turn, redaction theories offered another approach to the problem.

The first attempts to demonstrate two or more redactional stages in the composition of a given piece of Isaiah’s text can be traced already to Duhm and Procksch,\textsuperscript{15} although they dealt only with sporadic, rather than programmatic, emendations. The chief incentive for redaction-critical studies arose from the observation of substantial diversity of form and perspective within First Isaiah’s material.\textsuperscript{16} The extent of this diversity laid to rest the dependence theory, which in essence presupposes a unity of First Isaiah.\textsuperscript{17} Instead of imitating First Isaiah’s themes and sequences, all subsequent redactors, including Second Isaiah, are conceived in this new model as confidently intruding into First Isaiah’s texts and interspersing them with new ideas and formulae. The previous claim that

\footnotesize{\begin{enumerate}
\item Nurmela (2006) presents a very detailed study in this regard.
\item Albertz (1990) plainly designates Second Isaiah as a \textit{Fortschreibung} of First Isaiah. The term “relecture” has also been used to refer to the same phenomenon (see Vermeylen 1989, 23).
\item The use of the term in the discussion of the process of composition of OT texts (in this case, the Books of Chronicles) goes back to Wellhausen (1885, 227).
\item A major weakness of the dependence theory is the insistence that Second Isaiah was particularly influenced by First Isaiah—in other words, that Second Isaiah is essentially a response to, and a development of, First Isaiah. This claim is plainly, though perhaps unintentionally, refuted by Sommer’s 1998 study. Fully embracing the concept of \textit{Fortschreibung}, Sommer widens the scope of Second Isaiah’s literary and ideological dependence so as to include in it various psalms, laments, Pentateuchal texts and traditions going back to Jeremiah and other prophets. The outcome of this analysis, though unmentioned by Sommer, is that the range of this indebtedness pronounces a definitive end of the dependence theory of the formation of the Book of Isaiah by developing this theory \textit{ad absurdum}. If Sommer’s view if correct, then Second Isaiah is influenced by a wide variety of texts and thus cannot be understood to have relied on First Isaiah exclusively or even primarily. Accordingly, he is to be designated as “a prophet” in general (Sommer does precisely that [ibid., 4]), rather than referred to by a misleading term “Second Isaiah”. The merging of what is known as First and Second Isaiah is then to be understood in the manner proposed by the source theory—as a subsequent and independent event. Further critique of the dependence theory may be found in Eslinger 1992, 52 and Kugel 1987, pp. 275–276 (see also P. Davies 1997, 105).
\item E. g. the treatment of Isaiah 23 in Duhm 1914 and Procksch 1930.
\item If Eichhorn (1783, pp. 101–104, as quoted in Seitz 1992) is correct about the reasons why the Babylonian Talmud (\textit{b. Bat.} 14a) places Isaiah after Jeremiah and Ezekiel, then redactional approaches to the Book of Isaiah actually pick up an old understanding of the history of composition of this book. Eichhorn argues that the decision of the Talmudists was based on the fact that the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel were understood to have been produced by these two prophets, respectively, while the Book of Isaiah was perceived to be a collection of oracles delivered by diverse persons in diverse periods. Talmudic reference to “Hezekiah’s assembly” as the author of the Book of Isaiah (\textit{b. Bat.} 15a) seems to imply an editorial committee working with antecedent material.
\item Clements 1982, pp. 122–123; idem 1985, 98.
\end{enumerate}}
“[i]t is now almost universally recognised that Isaiah 40 ff. *cannot* come from the prophet with whom chs. 1–39 are concerned” is thus radically reversed. As a result, the term “First Isaiah” becomes quite meaningless, since only a few original nuclei are seen as going back to an “older” source while later “hands” are responsible for the bulk of the material in chs. 1–39. In this model, Second Isaiah is often considered to be the central figure in the process of formation of the Isaianic tradition, although there have been attempts to identify significant stages of the composition of First Isaiah that are not related to Second Isaiah’s activity. Detailed and engaging studies of the *Denkschrift* completed recently by Barthel and Wagner rely on redaction criticism, although the latter work succeeds to present the text as a coherent discourse that is held together by the theme of Yahweh’s sovereignty. A major implication of redaction criticism is expressed by Perrin and Duling: “[o]nce it was recognised that the final author was in fact *an author* and not merely a transmitter of tradition, it became natural and *inevitable* to inquire into his purpose and theology, not only into his redaction of previously existing tradition” However, this implication may be fatal to the method from which it stems, since what one ultimately confronts in the final form of the text is largely a result of the final author’s activity; the idea of “redactions” if thus undermined. Redaction criticism met a formidable challenge from Childs and Barton, among others. The former author points to an “unresolvable tension” between the commitment to “a meaningful reading” and the task of tracing the stages of the redactional reinterpretation of the text. The latter scholar identifies a deep-seated flaw in the logic of redaction criticism:

18 Rendtorff 1986, 193 (emphasis added).
19 Sweeney 1984, 185: “the early Isaianic tradition, found in chapters 1–39, was interpreted, supplemented, edited and presented in relation to Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah. In essence, the concerns of the latter part of the book dictated the final redaction of the first part”. See also Clements 1980, Williamson 1994.
20 E. g. the theory of an “Assur-redaction” (H. Barth 1977; Sweeney 1996; de Jong 2007). For a brief critique of the theory, see below (2.3.1). Not being associated with the theory of an ‘Assur-redaction’, Stipp’s view falls in the same category. According to this author, due to inner tensions and manoeuvrings designed to curb the efforts of the opposition, “Jes 6–8 gilt ein- hellig als literarisch zusammengesetzt” (Stipp 2003, 326). Among the “later” additions to the suggested original core he identifies the sections 6:12–13; 7:8; 7:15; 7:18–25 and 8:9–10 (ibid., 327).
21 Barthel 1997 (a very substantial part of his work is dedicated to the *Denkschrift*); Wagner 2006.
22 In Wagner’s model, the coherence of the discourse should be understood as a product of redactional activity.
23 Perrin and Duling 1982, 236 (emphasis added).
24 A related problem is that of the identification of the “final version”, in relation to which all subsequent interventions are supposed to be treated as “corruptions”. Blum argues that there are no adequate criteria for discerning the “final redaction”, even though he accepts that the term has been somewhat useful (Blum 2010, pp. 207–217).
25 Childs 2001, 43.
The redactors who allegedly produced these patchwork books must have believed that people would regard them as acceptable... But our reason for thinking they are a patchwork normally rests on the premise that no-one would deliberately write a book so full of inconsistencies as the Pentateuch or the prophets: that is how we justify identifying contradictory passages as coming originally from different sources. But if the patchwork was acceptable to the redactor and the redactor's audience, why should it not have been acceptable to the original author and that author's audience? In other words, self-contradiction is not a valid criterion for detecting the presence of disparate sources if one lives in a culture in which there is no literary convention against works containing contradictions in the first place.26

The final group of studies represents approaches that centre on various didactic or ideological motives as primary incentives for the formation of the Isaianic tradition. According to Kaiser, the nucleus of this tradition was formed when some prophetic oracles (viz. Isaiah 1* and Isaiah 28–31*) were assembled at the beginning of the Second Temple period under the influence of the Deuteronomic view of history—first of all, of the catastrophe of 587 BCE.27 The assembly was thus a theodicy-oriented reflection on the collapse of Judah. Hardmeier's 1990 study builds on an earlier work by the same author, in which he associates the emergence of the Schriftprophetie in ancient Israel with the context of internal political struggle.28 His view lends support to Kaiser's theory, even though Hardmeier considers himself to be Kaiser's opponent.29 Hardmeier argues that the material of 2 Kings 18:9–19:37 is a piece of historical fiction created by Jeremiah's political opponents with an ideological purpose: a tendentious narration of the peril allegedly avoided in the days of Hezekiah was supposed to raise nationalistic sentiments and a Zion-centred triumphalism around 588 BCE, when an Egyptian intervention caused a temporary break in the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. Hardmeier as a historical critic thus affirms the same values as Kaiser by regarding the identification of the rhetorical and pragmatic function of the text and its specific communicative situation to be the starting point of exegesis.30 In line with this approach, P. Davies's study of the Book of Amos identifies...

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26 Barton 1998, pp. 7–8 (original emphasis). He uses the term “inconsistencies” to refer to discrepancies in the texts that can be demonstrated through historical-critical or literary-critical analysis.

27 Kaiser 1983.

28 Hardmeier 1983.


30 A major weakness of Hardmeier’s argument is that, even in his model, the “prophetic confrontation” of 588 BCE did not last for many days and already a year later it would become apparent for Jeremiah’s opponents that the latter’s position had indeed been correct. Hardmeier explains the subsequent survival of the failed propagandist material in 2 Kings 18 to be the consequence of a later, naïve reinterpretation of the same as a genuine historical document that describes the events of 701 BCE (ibid., pp. 427–431). However, this claim is entirely speculative. In a similar context, Müller (2012, 90) notes that Hardmeier’s theory regarding the origin of
in it an ideological agenda of contrasting Bethel with Jerusalem in order to advocate the status of the latter city as the sole legitimate seat of the Yahwist cult—an agenda that corresponds to a wider trend of the Hebrew Bible, “the claim of Judah to be the legitimate survivor of an ‘Israel’.”31 The suggestion that the Book of Isaiah was composed at the Achaemenid period in order to present Judah’s political and social reality “as God’s purposed plan for his people” was made already in Watts’s important study.32

There are two main reasons leading the present author to model his method of examining the text on the last mentioned group of approaches. First, the Pentateuch scholars have recently focused on the Persian period not only as a time when different strands of tradition were brought together in one composition,33 but also as a cradle of many key texts and concepts in that composition, created in response to the socio-political situation of the community of Yehud.34 The study of the Book of Isaiah has always been closely related to the study of the Pentateuch,35 and it is thus only natural to attempt to follow the lead offered by the latter branch of biblical studies. Second, an approach that focuses on the ideological trends of ancient texts and on the underlying social, economic and political circumstances of the communities that generated these texts corresponds to a well-known general principle that relates individual consciousness (whether that of the author or that of the receiver of a text) to the ideological matrix of the respective society and, ultimately, to the material, down-to-earth dimension of existence of that society. In Bakhtin’s words,

written prophecy in Ancient Israel (Hardmeier’s claim being that written prophecy initially was, in essence, “the literature of the opposition”, see Hardmeier 1983) is both romantic and groundless. This does not negate the merit of Hardmeier’s approach, viz. the idea that both the narrative and the poetic texts in the n’t bi’tîm collection can be studied from the perspective of their relationship to various debates and conflicts within the society of ancient Israel/Judah.

31 P. Davies 2006, 130.
32 Watts 1985, xxviii. Watts wakes a scintillating observation regarding the aesthetic design of the plot of the Book of Isaiah (1–66): the duration of the action corresponds to the lifetime of twelve generations (ibid.)
33 Blum 1984; idem 1990; Frei 1996; idem 2001; Schmid 2007. The idea that the Pentateuch as such first appeared in the Achaemenid period goes back to Meyer (1896, pp. 216–218).
34 Cf. Mullen (1997, pp. 72, 82 [emphasis added]):
It is clear that the Persian hegemony over the province of Judah, included in the Trans-Euphrates satrapy “Beyond the River,” produced the type of environment in which emerging Judaism could begin to develop and redefine its existence as an ethnic entity distinct from those surrounding it. […] To fulfill their responsibilities to develop the ethnic and legal material required by the Achaemenids and to secure their positions of power in the temple community created and sustained by the Persians, the scribal elements of the restoration period created the Tetrateuchal materials to supplement the narrative traditions contained in the deuteronomistic history.
35 It can be shown that many major changes of direction in the Isaianic research (beginning with the source theory [see above]) followed the emergence of new theories regarding the Pentateuch.
Идеологическая действительность — непосредственная надстройка над экономическим базисом. Индивидуальное сознание — не архитектор идеологической надстройки, а только жилец, приютившийся в социальном здании идеологических знаков.

The ideological reality is a superstructure that rests upon, and is inseparable from, its foundation — the economy. Individual consciousness is not the architect of the ideological superstructure: it is merely a tenant taking shelter in the social edifice of ideological signs.36

A detailed presentation of the approach of the present study to the text of the Denkschrift is made below (2.3.2). The following section outlines the position of the present study with regard to the Denkschrift-hypothesis.

1.2 The Denkschrift-Hypothesis and the Position of the Present Study

The twentieth-century debate concerning the Denkschrift was initiated by Duhm’s suggestion: “[a]ller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach liegt ihr (i.e. “der Sammlung” [6:1–9:6]) ein älteres von Jesaia selbst redigiertes Buch zu Grunde, das jetzt jedoch teils verstümmelt, teils vermehrt ist”.37 Duhm also referred to this text as “eine Art Testament”.38 Budde attached the label die Denkschrift to this piece of text and presented his hypothesis regarding its origin. In agreement with Duhm, he proposed that it represents “der älteste Kern der ganzen Sammlung” and, in contrast to Duhm, he considered it to be “das von Jesaja selbst mit seinem Ich niedergesetzte Buch”,39 composed at the reign of King Ahaz, shortly after the Syro-Ephraimite War.40 This view implied that the Denkschrift was regarded as an independent (“selbständig”) composition already at the early stages of the development of the Isaianic tradition.41 This, in turn, meant that the compilers of First

36 Bakhtin 2000, 357 (the present author’s translation). This principle can be understood as an explication of Marx’s concise statement “their social existence determines their consciousness” (Marx 1970, 21).
37 Duhm 1914, xi.
38 Ibid., 41.
39 Budde 1920.
40 Ibid.; idem 1928, v. Although Duhm used the term “Büchlein” to refer to the material that in subsequent research came to be known as the Denkschrift, he considered it to be a composite text: “[v]on Jes. hat es aber die gegenwärtige Gestalt nicht erhalten, denn in mehreren Stücken, besonders c. 7, 8, 17, 18 ff. macht sich die spätere Hand sehr bemerkbar; vielleicht ist umgekehrt auch echt jesaiisches Gut ausgefallen (s. zu c. 7,3”). (Duhm 1914, 41; he applied the term “Büchlein” to Isaiah 24–27 as well [ibid., xiii]).
41 Similarly, Duhm talks about a respectful attitude of the editor of Isaiah 1–12 towards this “schon halbwegs ‘kanonische’ Schrift” (ibid.)
Isaiah placed the *Denkschrift* among more recent texts; thus the *Denkschrift*-hypothesis from the start involved a claim that 6:1–9:6 is a redactional interpolation into an otherwise coherent text (the content of the interpolation being more antique than the material it interrupts). The hypothesis also implied that 6:1–9:6 reproduces (in Budde’s view, accurately, whereas in Duhm’s view, only in part) the original composition which existed and circulated as a coherent unit already during Isaiah’s lifetime. In sum, the existence of such an early composition and its subsequent insertion into a body of later texts constitute the two foundations of the *Denkschrift*-hypothesis.

Both these foundations were challenged in subsequent research. The existence of an original and coherent Isaianic composition was effectively denied in redactional studies which fragmented the composition into various diachronic strata. The *Denkschrift*-hypothesis was also criticised by those who saw a lack of formal and thematic integrity in the material of 6:1–9:6. In particular, it was affirmed that the third-person account in Isaiah 7 is inconsistent with the first-person narratives in chs. 6 and 8. The existence of an early Isaianic composition was also rejected by those who tried to establish an ideological function of the texts within Isaiah 6:1–9:6 and concluded that the most likely solution was to regard them as an apology for Judah’s national catastrophe in 587 BCE. The idea that the *Denkschrift* was inserted into the material of Isaiah 5–9 was declared wrong on the basis of differences between the function of the phrase “in all this his wrath has not subsided and his hand remains outstretched” in 5:25 and in ch. 9.

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42 Fohrer 1967, 125.
43 E. g. Barth 1977, pp. 179–180 (assigning Isaiah 8:9–10 to a later compositional stage than the material around it); ibid., pp. 195–202 (performing the same operation concerning Isaiah 6:12–13, 7:8b, 7:17, 7:18, 7:20, 8:7 and 8:8b, respectively). See also W. Dietrich 1974; Kilian 1986.
45 Haran presents some of the most recent critique of the *Denkschrift*-hypothesis on account of this problem: “the attempts to force 7:1–17 into Isaiah’s ‘memoirs’, in order to create a continuity from the beginning of chapter 6 to 8:18, are groundless” (Haran 2010, 103). A fair response to Haran’s position can be found in Stipp (2003, 328): Der Mittelteil [i. e. ch. 7] bietet deshalb ein Paradox: Einerseits widerspricht er durch den Deixiswechsel seiner Umrahmung, andererseits erfüllt er darin als Illustration der Effekte des Verblendungsbefehls eine kontextgerechte Aufgabe. Freilich liegen altorientalische Analogien vor, wonach solche Deixisverschiebungen gar nicht als störend empfunden wurden.
47 Brown 1990. However, his statement that “one can no longer hold to the traditional view that the ‘Denkschrift’ material was inserted into the middle of an extended poem” contains a logical fallacy (that of denying the antecedent). Whereas the presence of identical “refrains” im-
Attempts have been made to demonstrate that the removal of the Denkschrift from Isaiah 5–9* does not bring the remaining text into a coherent state.48

Budde’s hypothesis is almost universally abandoned in recent research; however, the Denkschrift is far from having scholars lose all interest in it. A new wave of studies focuses on the function of this unit as a vital compositional core around which the material of chs. 1–12 is concentrically aligned.49 These insights imply that the idea of redactional layers within the Denkschrift probably ought to be reconsidered. Another, though similar, strand of recent studies has emphasised thematic and linguistic coherence of the Denkschrift, both internally and within its literary context of Isaiah 1–12.50 These properties of the material engender questions that differ from those which were relevant to Budde. Instead of asking mediately before and after the material of the Denkschrift, if such were the case, would indeed provide a reason to consider this unit as disrupting the flow of an earlier version of chs. 5–9*, the absence of such refrains is insufficient to claim that no such insertion took place.

48 Irvine 1992, pp. 218–222. However, his view has not gained acceptance (see e.g. Tull 2010, 137).

49 Blum 1996; idem, 1997. Similarly, Berges (1998, pp. 93–94) shows symmetrically arranged series of images and themes around the Immanuel section (7:10–17): Isaiah’s sons (7:1–9 and 8:1–4), Isaiah’s “call” (die Berufung, 6:1–11 and 8:11–18) and the “darkness” (5:30 and 8:22). Berges’s case is slightly weaker than that of Blum, since neither ch. 6 nor 8:11–18 is presented explicitly as “a call”, and their relationship is thus a result of subjective interpretive decisions.

The theory of the Denkschrift acting as a literary hub for the early chapters of Isaiah goes back to L’Heureux (1984) who argues for intentional organisation of the material in Isaiah 5 and Isaiah 9–10 around the “Emmanuel Booklet” (6:1–9:6). Though a cumbersome array of mathematical calculations conducted by Bartelt (1996) is designed to demonstrate the same point, it cannot be taken into account since Bartelt’s method is based on arbitrary postulations concerning the norms of Hebrew poetry (on this topic, see Hrushovski 1981). However, Bartelt’s 2004 article exhibits a radical improvement of methodology and an ample defence of L’Heureux’s thesis.

50 Tull (2010, 137) considers the “focus on kingship” to be a sign of such coherence of the Denkschrift, so that the unit “seems meant to be read together”. De Jong (2007, 54) notes that, taken as an independent composition, Isaiah 6:1–8:18 presents a remarkably cohesive account of Isaiah’s prophetic ministry. He also points out the resonance between the imperative šim‘û-nă‘ (“hear”, 7:13) and the figura etymologica in 6:9 (šim‘û šāmōa‘ [ibid., 58]).

De Jong’s analysis may be complemented as follows. The same type of lexical correspondence, in addition to common references to Rezin and the son of Remaliah, links chs. 7 and 8: the verb ya‘as (“to devise”, 7:5) is paralleled by the figura etymologica in 8:10 (“ūṣū ēṣāh”). A less obvious link connects ch. 7 with ch. 6 through the lexical unit šūb (6:10b, 13a), which forms a part of Shear-yashub’s name (7:3).

That the Denkschrift is a coherent composition follows also from Benzi’s study (2007, pp. 326–327). He argues that the neat chiastic structure of the unit does not stem from a desire to produce an aesthetically appealing text but flows organically from the harmony of various concepts found within the discourse. Additional internal thematic and linguistic resonances of the Denkschrift are indicated below (2.1.1).