My friends like to kid me that I have been working on this commentary on Isaiah 1–39 for even more years than the eighth-century BCE prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem, remained active as a prophet. There is some plausibility to the charge. I began my serious work on Isaiah in a joint seminar led by my colleague at Johns Hopkins, Delbert R. Hillers, in the mid-1970s, and I accepted a contract to write a theological commentary on Isaiah 1–39 in 1978–79, while I was teaching at the University of Toronto. During the first half of a year-long sabbatical in Austin, Texas, in the late 1980s, I produced a long manuscript of this Isaiah commentary, but when the editors rejected the manuscript as insufficiently theological, I switched to the minor prophets and completed my OTL commentary on Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. On returning to Princeton Theological Seminary following the sabbatical, I was eventually offered the contract to produce the Hermeneia commentary on Isaiah 1–39, and I have been working on the commentary ever since. So I have been seriously working on this commentary for about thirty-five years. The ministry of Isaiah of Jerusalem, however, was actually slightly longer than that, depending on the disputed dates of its beginning and end. If Uzziah died in 738 BCE, as I argue, Isaiah's ministry began in that year at the latest, and it continued through at least 701 BCE, and perhaps to as late as 686 BCE. At the shortest, Isaiah's ministry lasted some thirty-eight years, but it was perhaps as long as fifty-two years. In either case, Isaiah was active as a prophet longer, even if not by much, than I was active in my work on this commentary.

The length of my work on this commentary has some bearing on the finished product. Early on I tried to read everything written on Isaiah. At Johns Hopkins and the University of Toronto I had access to fine libraries, and as a full Professor at Princeton Theological Seminary for twenty-five years, I had access both to an excellent research library and to the help of graduate assistants. At a certain point, however, I had to make a choice, as one of my teachers, G. Ernest Wright, once put it, whether to be a reader or a writer. The choice was less difficult when I retired from Princeton Theological Seminary and eventually found myself in Grand Haven, Michigan, far removed from a decent research library. I have tried to keep up with the literature on Isaiah, but discerning readers will probably detect gaps of important literature that I have missed entirely or to which I have given insufficient attention. Given the long gestation period between the beginning of my research and the final product, it is also likely that I have forgotten the ultimate sources of some of the ideas that have shaped my thought on Isaiah. Any scholar stands on the shoulders of those who preceded him or her, and even where I may inadvertently fail adequately to credit the ultimate sources of my ideas, I am under no illusions that my ideas are genuinely original. Original ideas in a field with a history of interpretation of more than two thousand years are few and far between.

In a related way, the length of Isaiah's ministry has a significant bearing on the way in which one should look at the collection of Isaiah's oracles. If Isaiah continued his ministry for fifty years, or even only for some thirty-eight years, that is a long ministry. His inaugural vision is dated to the year of Uzziah's death, in my view 738 BCE, and a number of his oracles were originally given during the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimitic War in 735–732 BCE. Others clearly date to the Ashdod crisis of 715–711 BCE, and still others are linked to the death of Sargon II in 705 BCE, or to Sennacherib's third campaign in 701 BCE. If Isaiah remained active over that long a period of time, it is likely, as any preacher should acknowledge, that the prophet would have had occasion to reedit and reuse older oracles, or, at the very least, to reuse the same themes, motifs, and vocabulary, in later, somewhat analogous contexts. Isaiah 28:1-6 is the perfect example of such a reuse of an early oracle in a later context, and it is by no means the only example. Jeremiah is reported to have dictated a scroll to his scribe Baruch in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (c. 605 BCE) that included all the oracles he had given from the beginning of his ministry in the time of Josiah until the day of his dictation of the scroll. One cannot help but wonder how much his earliest oracles were reshaped by the prophet to be more relevant to the time of his dictation (Jer 36:1-3). When that scroll was burned, Jeremiah is reported to have dictated another scroll with all the same material plus the addition of many similar words (Jer 36:32). Again one is faced with the question how much the earlier oracles were reshaped by the prophet to make them more relevant for the time of their publication. In the case of Isaiah, we are told that he sealed a scroll, presumably with oracles associated with his children with symbolic names during the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis (Isa 8:16-18), and that he again wrote down his oracle(s) at the time of Hezekiah's rebellion

against Sennacherib as a witness for the future (Isa 30:8-9). Given Isaiah's very long ministry, it is not just later editors and redactors who may have altered the prophet's oracles; Isaiah himself may have, and most probably, did reedit and update many of his earlier oracles to make them relevant again to new situations in the life of the people to whom he ministered. Any such reworking, unless it is done in an almost impossibly thorough manner, is likely to leave awkward traces that allow one in some cases to intuit the earlier context that the oracle originally served.

Methodology

The previous paragraph bears on the dominant methodology adopted in this commentary. In my opinion, the methodology one adopts is largely contingent on the nature of the document one is interpreting. Apart from the Isaiah Apocalypse in chaps. 24–27 and similar material in chaps. 34–35, Isaiah 1–39 is marked by a whole series of chronological notices connecting Isaiah's oracles to a specific time or specific events—Isa 1:1; 6:1; 7:1-2; 14:28; 20:1; 36:1. Moreover, even oracles lacking such precise chronological notices are often so clearly linked by their content to these particular crises or to other events well known from the historical record of the period that they obviously refer to them. In most cases, the contents of the oracles suggest that the oracles actually date to the general period of those background events rather than being much later references back to a far earlier setting. Thus, many oracles may be dated with a fair degree of certainty and accuracy. Given this situation, the dominant approach of this commentary is the classic historical-critical method. Historical reconstruction does involve hypotheses, as any reconstruction does, but at least it is based on material in the public record. Historical events were public events, and no matter how differently they may have been interpreted by different participants in these events, there was a public aspect to them that is to some extent still preserved in the Israelite, Assyrian, Egyptian, and other sources that reflect these events.

In contrast, this commentary spends relatively little time on the editorial process by which the material in Isaiah 1–39 reached its present shape. Much contemporary scholarship focuses on the complete book of Isaiah (chaps. 1–66) as a unified literary composition and attempts to unravel the centuries-long editorial and redactional process by which the book grew into its final form. One could point to any number of books (e.g., Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* [HBS 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998]; Brevard Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004]; Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney, eds., *New Visions of Isaiah* [JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996]; Jacques Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique* [2 vols.; EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1977–78]; and H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1994]).To take a different example, Marvin A. Sweeney in his commentary (1996) reconstructs a historical development involving four major editions of Isaiah: (1) the final form of the book produced in relation to the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah in the mid- to late fifth century BCE; (2) a late-sixth-century edition produced in conjunction with the return of Babylonian exiles to Jerusalem and the building of the Second Temple; (3) a late-seventh-century edition written to support King Josiah's reform; and (4) various texts that stem from the eighth-century prophet, though this earliest written material may never have constituted a single unified written edition. In part, my unwillingness to get deeply embroiled in this discussion about the larger book and the process of its formation is no doubt due to the historical accident that my commentary covers only chaps. 1–39, not the whole book of Isaiah. On the other hand, I have deep reservations about many of the underlying assumptions undergirding this quest. I am not convinced that the ancient Judean and Jewish audiences that heard or, in rarer cases, read the oracles in the Isaianic collection in whatever edition were as enthralled by elaborate book-length literary coherence as modern scholars and contemporary readers are,[1] and I am

1 See David M. Carr's astute observations on the differences between ancient and modern readers, "Reading Isaiah from Beginning (Isaiah 1) to End (Isaiah 65–66): Multiple Modern Possibilities," in Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney, eds., *New Visions of Isaiah* (JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 189–218, esp. 193–96.

amazed at the confidence with which scholars can reconstruct the editorial growth of a biblical book over the centuries with the barest minimum of actual evidence. It is not that I consider this process unimportant or uninteresting; it is more that I consider the details of this process to be largely unrecoverable. In general, in the absence of a trail of early datable and evolving manuscripts, the editorial process behind a particular book is both private and largely unrecoverable. Even with modern books that go through several editions, where each datable edition is available for comparative study, it is often difficult to determine why certain changes to the books took place. The confidence with which many modern scholars, who lack any datable manuscripts earlier than the final form of Isaiah, reconstruct hypothetical redactors living at particular periods, who make particular editorial changes in the service of some equally hypothetically reconstructed theological interest, strikes me as extreme hubris. If it were true, how could one know it? Even when it comes to the rationale and history behind the structure and shaping of discrete smaller units consisting of more than one oracle, whether of Isaiah 2–4 (Sweeney), Isaiah 1–12 (Peter Ackroyd, Yehoshua Gitay), Isaiah 2–12 (A. H. Bartelt), or any other extended unit, such reconstructions are often mutually exclusive and seldom convince more than a small circle of adherents.[2] For this reason I have focused primarily on individual oracles, not on larger literary structures, and only occasionally, when I thought the text justified it, on a small collection of related oracles. There are places in Isaiah where I think one can detect secondary editorial work on an original oracle, and I am quite willing to reflect on the nature of that secondary editing, but I think one's claims about such editing, particularly as it involves larger and larger blocks of material, should be quite modest.

The Eighth-Century Isaiah of Jerusalem and the Book of Isaiah

Nonetheless, even if the redactional and editorial process behind the present form of the book of Isaiah is unrecoverable in precise detail with the evidence at hand and the degree of genuine coherence in the book qua book remains disputed, that does not deny that the growth of the book was complex and took place in stages. Since the groundbreaking work of Bernhard Duhm,[3] it has come to be generally recognized today that not all of the book of Isaiah stems from the eighth-century BCE prophet from Jerusalem. Chapters 40–55 of Isaiah, because of their two references to Cyrus the Great (44:28; 45:1) and their message of comfort to a discouraged Jewish community portrayed as in bondage in Babylon, which is seen as the dominant enemy in this section of the book (47:1), are normally dated somewhere between 550 and 539 BCE.[4] Cyrus the Persian first came to prominence by his defeat of his Median overlord Astyages (550 BCE), and his imminent threat to Babylon became blindingly obvious only with his surprisingly rapid conquest of the Lydian empire (545 BCE). Moreover, his audience's obvious resistance to the prophet's message makes more sense before 539 BCE, when Cyrus's conquest of Babylon and his following edict allowing the Jewish exiles in Babylon to return home would appear to have confirmed the broad outlines of the Second Isaiah's message.[5] Chapters 56–66 are normally dated even later, after 539 BCE, because they seem to presuppose an audience and a writer (or writers) who are no longer in Babylon but once again resident in the

2 Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988); P. Ackroyd, "Isaiah I–XII: Presentation of a Prophet," in *Congress Volume: Göttingen 1977* (VTSup 29; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 16–48; Yehoshua Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience: The Structure and Meaning of Isaiah 1–12* (SSN 30; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1991); Andrew H. Bartelt, *The Book around Immanuel: Style and Structure in Isaiah 2–12* (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 4; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995).

3 Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (3rd ed.; HKAT 3.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914; 1st ed., 1892).

4 See Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja* (KAT 10.2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999) 57, though Baltzer himself dates the section somewhat later, between 450 and 400 BCE. For the more common dating, see R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* (NCB; Greenwood, NC: Attic Press, 1975) 20–23.

5 Hans Barstad argues for a Judean setting for the author and audience of this material, but his views remain a distinctly minority and extreme position (*The Babylonian Captivity of the Book of Isaiah: "Exilic" Judah and the Provenance of Isaiah 40–55* [Oslo: Novus: Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning, 1997]).

Judean homeland.[6] The historical context presupposed by these two blocks of material are totally different from that of Isaiah 1–39, and the literary style of this material is also quite distinct from that characteristic of chaps. 1–39.

It is also true, however, that not everything in Isaiah 1–39 may be attributed to Isaiah of Jerusalem. Chapters 24–27, the so-called little Isaiah Apocalypse, is normally dated later than Isaiah of Jerusalem, though there is little agreement on its precise date.[7] The material is difficult to date because of a lack of unambiguous historical allusions, but my inclination is to date it to the end of the seventh and beginning of the sixth century, approximately seventy-five to a hundred years later than the eighth-century prophet. Isaiah 34–35, which has points of contact with both chaps. 40–55 and 24–27, also appears to be later than Isaiah of Jerusalem. The mainly prose traditions about Isaiah in chaps. 36–39, though they may contain some genuine words of Isaiah, also date from sometime after the death of Isaiah. In their present form, which mentions the death of Sennacherib, which occurred at least five years after the death of Isaiah, they could not be the work of the eighth-century prophet but probably represent traditions about him codified by disciples as much as a generation after his death. Within the remaining material in chaps. 1–23; 28–33, there are other passages, both large and small, that many scholars dismiss as later, non-Isaianic expansions, glosses, and later reinterpretations, but apart from chap. 13 and some minor expansion at the beginning of chap. 14, I am far more reluctant to late date any of this material. Some of it is problematic and questionable, as will be discussed in the commentary, but far more of it can be attributed to Isaiah of Jerusalem than is often admitted.

Theological Influences on Isaiah of Jerusalem

People who grow up in a religious culture are influenced by the dominant theological currents of their day, and Isaiah of Jerusalem was no exception to that rule. Isaiah was a Jerusalemite with close contacts to the royal court, and therefore the major influence on his thought appears to have been the royal theology cultivated in the Davidic court, the theological construct that I refer to as the Zion Tradition.[8] This was a political as well as a theological construct, originally created in the days of the Davidic imperial expansion to legitimate that expansion theologically, then maintained and refined under Solomon, and preserved by Solomon's Judean successors as the ideal despite the breakup of the empire and the collapse of the political reality that had initially given credence to the construct. There were three main points to this construct: (1) Yahweh was the imperial God, king of all the gods and ruler over all the nations; (2) Yahweh had chosen David as his earthly vice-regent and had made an eternal covenant with him that one of his descendants would always sit on David's throne as Yahweh's ruler on earth; and (3) Yahweh had chosen Jerusalem as his imperial capital and earthly dwelling place. Each of these points was developed and elaborated in the theology. The first point was linked to the earlier motif according to which Yahweh had chosen Israel as his special people (Deut 32:8-9), and the gods of the other nations were reduced to mere members of Yahweh's court, the heavenly host or armies (צְבָאוֹת, *ṣĕbāʾôt*) of Yahweh of Hosts (*YHWH ṣĕbāʾôt*). If they rebelled or failed in carrying out the divine emperor's judgments, even though they were gods, they were still subject to the imperial God's judicial imposition of the death penalty (Psalm 82). In a similar manner, the human rulers of these other nations were expected to submit to the imperial God and his chosen Davidic ruler (Psalm 2). On point 2, there were expectations about the moral nature of the rule that David's descendants would exercise, since they were supposed to render the judgment of Yahweh (Ps 72:1-4) and share in his conquest of the powers of chaos and evil (Ps 89:26). There were also expectations about the exaltation and fertility of Jerusalem as the dwelling place of Yahweh. Most especially, the security of the city was assured, since Yahweh dwelled there and, as the imperial deity, was expected to defend his city against all its enemies (Psalms 46; 48; 76; 132).

6 See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003) 43.

7 See the discussion and bibliography in that section of this commentary.

8 See my "Public Opinion, Royal Apologetics, and Imperial Ideology: A Political Portrait of David, 'A Man after God's Own Heart,'" *Theology Today* 69 (2012) 116–32, and the earlier articles cited there on p. 131 n. 37.

In Isaiah's inaugural vision, he sees the divine king, the huge and majestic Yahweh of Hosts, whose glory fills the whole earth, sitting on a high and exalted throne in the temple in Jerusalem (Isa 6:1-5). This Yahweh founded Zion (14:32) and lives in Mount Zion (8:18). His choice of David and Zion means that the plots of Rezin of Damascus and the son of Remaliah of Samaria will come to nought (7:7-9), for Yahweh is with his people in Zion (Immanuel—God is with us—Isa 7:10-17; 8:8b-10; cf. Ps 46:8, 10—Yahweh of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold). Even the sins that necessitate the purification and refining of Jerusalem will not nullify God's choice of his city (Isa 1:21-28) any more than Isaiah's unclean lips nullified God's choice of him as his prophetic messenger (6:5-7). When Jerusalem, in the process of its purification by fire (1:25-26), is on the very brink of death at the hands of the hated Assyrians, Yahweh will intervene to punish the arrogant Assyrian club, which God used merely to discipline Zion (10:5-12), miraculously delivering his chosen city in the process (14:24-27; 29:1-8; 31:1-9). In days to come, Yahweh's choice of and elevation of Zion will be evident to the whole world (2:2-6), and the nations in order to inquire of Yahweh will come to Zion and to the root of Jesse that remains standing as a signal flag (11:10). This new David and his royal officials will rule with the justice of Yahweh (9:1-6; 11:1-10; 32:1-8) on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it forever (9:6). Where Isaiah differed from his contemporaries in the appropriation of this theological construct is in his insistence that the Davidic rule must be marked by the justice of God, that God's city must be kept pure and fit for the divine king to reside in it. Justice and righteousness were the crucial measurements for Yahweh's firm foundation of Zion (28:16-17). These elements of responsibility were also a part of the theological tradition, but there was a tendency in the popular tradition, perhaps particularly in the royal court, to highlight God's commitments, not the equally important obligations and duties of the king and his court. Why else would Isaiah feel compelled to characterize God's judgment against Jerusalem as Yahweh's "strange" work (28:21-22)?

It is striking, however, that Isaiah has far less to say to the royal court of his day about a false, uncritical trust in the Zion Tradition than the later Jeremiah did (Jer 7:1-15). Isaiah is far more inclined to attack the royal advisors of his day, whether those of Ahaz or those of Hezekiah, with the charge that they did not believe their own theology. If they trusted the promises of Yahweh to David and Zion found in their own theological tradition, they would not in sheer terror be running with tribute to Assyria or to Nubian Egypt for help against whatever foe currently threatened them. Instead, they would stand in awe of Yahweh and by faith wait in quiet confidence for his deliverance (Isa 7:9; 8:11-15; 14:32; 18). Isaiah's opponents at court were not the fanatical religious upholders of a purely positive Zion Tradition but pragmatic statesmen who were more concerned with the number of cavalry, chariots, and infantry that they and the allies they could buy could muster against the dangerous enemies who threatened them. They were not outwardly antireligious or even a-religious (see Isa 29:13), but their diplomatic and military plans paid little attention to the promises found in the dominant religious tradition, and far more to the size of their military and the strength of their defensive fortifications (Isa 22:8-11). To them Isaiah was an infantile religious fool and an irritating security threat. They tried to keep their plans secret from him (Isa 29:15-16; 30:1-2; 31:1), though they were only partially successful, and Isaiah was as bitterly critical of them as they had been of him, accusing them of being drunken, scoffing idiots (Isa 28:7-8). The bitterness of this debate was probably exacerbated by the fact that Isaiah was one of them, a member of the Jerusalem elite, educated in the same wisdom tradition as the royal counselors he opposed. Isaiah's strong emphasis on God's plan, work, deed, and wisdom is probably a reflection of the influence of this wisdom tradition on his religious thought. Isaiah's own profound religious and prophetic experiences, however, had reshaped his outlook so that he took the promises in the religious tradition far more seriously than any of his opponents.

The Zion Tradition was the main theological influence on Isaiah's thought, but one also finds traces of a secondary influence of the Deuteronomistic Mosaic covenant theology. Isaiah 1:2-20 contains an elaborately developed covenant lawsuit, and traces of the same form are found in Isa 3:13-15. It is fashionable in some circles to date the Deuteronomistic covenant theology quite

late,[9] and hence for those who adopt this dating, there is a tendency either to deny the obvious covenant lawsuit elements in these Isaianic passages or to date these Isaianic passages late as well.[10] Neither move is necessary in my opinion. Covenant theology connected with written laws, with the mention of both בְּרִית (*bĕrît*, "covenant") and תּוֹרָה (*tôrâ*, "law"), is already found in the late-eighth-century northern prophet Hosea (Hos 4:6; 6:7; 8:1, 12; 10:4), and it is likely that this "Deuteronomistic" theology came south with northern refugees after the collapse of most of the northern state in 732 BCE. It is even possible that an early prototype of Deuteronomy came south with the northern refugees as well.[11] It is striking that Hezekiah's religious reform in 715 BCE seems to have followed Deuteronomistic concerns (2 Kgs 18:3-6), and the Chronicler suggests that Hezekiah's reform involved an attempt to bring the north back under Davidic hegemony (2 Chronicles 29–31). It may even be that the old scroll of the law found in the temple in the time of Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8-13), which provoked a second religious reform similar to Hezekiah's (2 Kgs 23:1-25), had served a similar function under Hezekiah and had been deposited in the temple during his reign, only to fall into oblivion in the reign of the reprobate Manasseh. That such covenant theology, important to Hezekiah's reform activity, would have had some influence on Isaiah in the latter half of his ministry is not at all surprising, particularly since he seemed to share the same animosity as the Deuteronomist toward many of the same external cult objects, such as sacred trees, asherim, and the altars and incense altars that marked the numerous high places (Isa 1:29-31; 17:7-8, 10-11).

Text

The sheer number (more than twenty) of Hebrew scrolls of Isaiah that have turned up at Qumran, whether in more complete or very fragmentary condition, place Isaiah alongside the pentateuchal books Genesis, Exodus, and especially Deuteronomy, and the book of Psalms as one of the most popular biblical books at Qumran.[12]

9 Lothar Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (WMANT 36; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969); Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (AnBib 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963; rev. ed., 1978); Ernest W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986) 56–117.

10 For the latter view, see Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe,* 1:70–71.

11 The debate over the compositional history of both Deuteronomy (see S. Dean McBride, "Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy," in John T. Strong and Steven S. Tull, eds., *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005] 17–33) and the Deuteronomistic History (see Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* [Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 8; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003]) remains very controversial and unsettled, though views similar to those presented here involving an early Hezekian edition of the Deuteronomistic History have been suggested in a number of Robert R. Wilson's works (*Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980] 157; "Introduction" and "Notes" on 1–2 Kings in *The HarperCollins Study Bible,* ed. Wayne A. Meeks et al. [New York: HarperCollins, 1993] 590; and "The Former Prophets: Reading the Books of Kings," in James Luther Mays, David L. Petersen, and Kent Harold Richards, eds., *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present, and Future. Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1995] 91).

12 J. J. M. Roberts, "The Importance of Isaiah at Qumran," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Princeton Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Scripture and the Scrolls 1; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006) 273–86. There is the very famous, relatively complete 1QIsa[a] (Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery,* vol. 1, *The Isaiah Manuscript and the Habakkuk Commentary* [New Haven: ASOR, 1950]), the more fragmentary 1QIsa[b] (1Q8), originally published by E. L. Sukenik (*The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1955]) and supplemented by additional fragments published later (D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 1* [DJD 1; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955] 66-68). One also has the small fragment 5QIsa (5Q3) from cave 5 (M. Baillet, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, eds., *Les "petites grottes" de Qumrân* [DJD 3; Oxford: Clarendon, 1962] 173) and the fragment from Murabbaʿat (P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, eds., *Les grottes de Murabbaʿat* [DJD 2; Oxford: Clarendon, 1961] 79–80. Finally, from cave

This abundance of new Isaiah scrolls far earlier than any of the texts of Isaiah known before the discovery of the Qumran material is quite welcome; but despite this wealth of new textual evidence, its payoff for the textual criticism of the book of Isaiah is more limited than one would have hoped. Unlike the situation with regard to the book of Samuel or the book of Jeremiah, where Qumran manuscripts reflecting a textual family distinct from the proto-Masoretic text tradition appeared, all of the Isaiah manuscripts from Qumran appear to belong to the proto-Masoretic family. There are interesting variants to be sure, but these variants are by and large quite minor and hardly differ in kind from the type of variants found in medieval manuscripts.[13]

Compounding this disappointment is the fact that the Greek translation of Isaiah in the LXX is quite free compared to the literal word-for-word rendering characteristic of the Greek translator of Jeremiah. The Greek translator of Isaiah does not impress this commentator as very competent. It is clear that he often had no idea what the Hebrew text meant, and he constantly took refuge in loose paraphrases or summaries. Hebrew parallelism was apparently a bore to him, so he often omits lines he regards as redundant, reducing his workload. Some of these omissions may be accidental haplographies, since the poetry of Isaiah has many parallel lines that repeat the structure and much of the vocabulary of previous lines, setting up a careless scribe with the ideal conditions for accidental haplographies by homoioarcton or homoioteleuton. Indeed, the Hebrew text of Isaiah has suffered a number of such haplographies that may reasonably be restored (see the commentary at 7:8-9; 8:12; 28:12), and the Greek text is even more defective. Nonetheless, the Greek translation, as by far our earliest translation of the Hebrew, occasionally offers some help in understanding a Hebrew idiom or in suggesting a possible emendation of a difficult Hebrew text.

The Vulgate, in contrast, tends to follow the MT rather slavishly, except where it shows a different understanding of Hebrew syntax from what is common among modern scholars. Both the LXX and the Vulgate seem more sensitive to the phenomenon of direct address and the need to mark that in translation with second person forms even where the Hebrew predominantly uses syntactically conditioned third person forms. Syriac often follows the lead of the LXX, but it usually remains closer to the Hebrew because, like Hebrew, it is a Semitic language. The Targum is far looser and more interpretive or homiletical in its renderings, so it is the least helpful of the translations for text criticism Even so, it is sometimes helpful in getting at the original meaning of the Hebrew text. The lack of non–proto-Masoretic Hebrew textual witnesses, the looseness of the LXX translation, and the relative lateness of the other ancient translations do mean, however, that critical work on the Hebrew text of Isaiah must depend far more on creative conjectural emendation than would be the case in New Testament studies, where the abundance of early textual material from competing textual families allows far more reliance on preserved textual evidence. To dismiss all conjectural emendation would be to settle for a clearly corrupt and defective text. There is no virtue in teasing a bogus meaning out of an obviously corrupt text.

4 come fragments of some eighteen or so additional scrolls of Isaiah, 4QIsa^{a-r} (4Q55–69b), one of which, pap4QIsa^{p} (4Q69), was written on papyrus (P. W. Skehan and E. Ulrich, "Isaiah," in E. Ulrich et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.X: The Prophets* [DJD 15; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997] 7–144.) In addition to these scrolls or fragments of scrolls from Isaiah, the Qumran literature also contains a large number of citations from Isaiah in other literature from Qumran (Roberts, "Importance of Isaiah," 275; Francis J. Morrow Jr., "The Text of Isaiah at Qumran" [PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1973] 205–13) as well as commentaries on Isaiah (Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* [CBQMS 8; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of Americ a, 1979]; Horgan, "Pesharim," in James H. Charlesworth et al., eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Texts with English Translations,* vol. 6B*, Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents* [PTSDSSP 6B; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002] 1–193).

13 Patrick Skehan's judgment still rings true: "There remains only a single channel of transmission of this book, narrowly controlled from 300 B.C.E. until much later" ("IV. Littérature de Qumran: A. Textes biblique," *DBSup,* 9 [1978] 813).

Commentaries

There is no end to commentaries on the book of Isaiah,[14] and over the years I have read most of those written in English, German, Dutch, and French, while dabbling in the earlier works in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and only occasionally dipping into those in languages less familiar to me. I have learned from all of them, though in many ways the magisterial Biblischer Kommentar of Hans Wildberger has probably been the most influential on my own thought. As any reader of Wildberger's commentary and my present work will soon discover, I often disagree with Wildberger, but even where I disagree, I have been informed by his work. I was also profoundly influenced by William L. Holladay's little book, *Isaiah: Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). I served on the NRSV revision committee with Holladay for several years during which, among other books, we revised the translation of Isaiah, and his contributions to that work and to my own thoughts on Isaiah were significant. John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine's small Abingdon commentary on Isaiah, *Isaiah, the Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching*, should be mentioned as well. John is a longtime friend and adversary. Though I very often disagree with the conclusions he reaches, I almost always agree with the questions he insists on raising, and his arguments, even when I ultimately reject them, force me to rethink and refine my own arguments. I mention these three scholars, not because they were the only influences on my thought but simply to indicate that I am thoroughly aware how much my work has been influenced by other students of Isaiah, the Bible, and the ancient Near East, including my teachers and colleagues, my contemporaries and my predecessors, my supporters and my opponents. Any reader of this commentary thoroughly at home with the literature on Isaiah will quickly recognize my dependence on others, these and many unnamed, simply by reading what I have written, even when I do not specifically cite the views of earlier scholars with whom I agree. As a longtime reader of commentaries, perhaps not the most scintillating genre of literature ever devised, I confess that I am not fond of commentaries that insist on summarizing every contrasting opinion on every disputed point in the text. I often discover, after wading through such seemingly interminable discussions that, while I might now have some sense of the wide variety of viewpoints on the particular text being discussed, I have no clear sense of the commentator's own interpretation of the text in question, or how it coherently flows in his or her understanding from the preceding text and leads into the following text. If I want to know what everyone else thinks about the text, I prefer to read their works for myself. I am more interested in the commentator's coherent explanation of the text in question. As a result of my own preferences, readers will find that I often provide no detailed and annotated summary of all the other interpretations offered in the literature. I am more interested in clearly articulating the interpretation that I find the most compelling. For some this will appear a fault; for others, on the assumption that I am not a minority of one, this may appear a virtue. In any case, it is the choice I have made.

With regard to this commentary, I should also note that I write unapologetically as a Christian interpreter of the text. My primary exegetical interest lies in the historical-critical meanings that the text would have had to its first, clearly pre-Christian, audiences contemporary with Isaiah and his earliest disciples. Hence, I believe that, despite my Christian commitments, Jewish and other non-Christian readers interested in the earliest meanings of the text may profit from my exegetical observations. As a Christian interpreter, however, I have also addressed questions as to possible meanings of the text for contemporary Christian believers when I felt that the text called for such reflection. Not every text raised such issues for me, and I have made no attempt to gloss every text with such theological reflections. Such reflections, when they do not arise integrally from the preceding exegetical discussion but are simply tacked on at the end to satisfy an editorial or stylistic demand, often come across, at least to me, as superficial and ad hoc. No doubt some readers will regard my theological reflections as equally superficial or wrong, but I hope that at least these reflections, where they occur, will not appear to be a disappointing or irritating addendum, added only because the editors expected a "theological application."

14 See the section "Commentaries" in the Reference Codes in the front matter of this book.