Walls of Zion and Ruins of Jerusalem

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Conclusions

In chapter 1 of this study, the question is addressed of how a current reader of the Old Testament acquires access to an ancient text such as Isa 40-55. Should a modern interpreter concentrate on the information from outside these texts, or can an exegete also detect signals within these texts that are helpful for their interpretation? Furthermore, how should an exegete deal with the diverse signals in a prophetic text like Isa 40-55? In addition to morphological, lexical, and syntactic features, an interpreter also finds semantic connections and literary structures in this chapter.

In the first part of chapter 1, attention is devoted to the methodological route that is followed in this study in order to do justice to all the signals that are present in Isa 40-55. In line with the thinking of the 'Werkgroep Informatica' at the VU University Amsterdam, it is claimed that a proper examination of Isa 40-55 should take linguistic observations concerning this text as its starting point. At the end of the first part, a step-by-step approach is presented that can be applied to the prophetic text Isa 40-55. The proposed route runs from observations on the level of syntax, via analyses of discourse and participants, up to the level of the literary composition. The value of this corpus-linguistic approach is that is built up clearly so that its results can be verified to a great extent. The observations made on the lower levels of syntax and discourse provide a firm foundation for discussing the higher levels of participants and literary composition. Furthermore, this approach has the advantage of taking into account both linguistic and literary features in the text. In taking linguistic observations concerning the text of Isa 40-55 as its starting point, this approach runs little risk that linguistic signals in these chapters are overlooked. The value of this method of working is that it opens up the possibility of seeing how the linguistic and literary signals cooperate in this poetic text. Finally, the presented step-by-step approach does not restrict itself to specific phenomena in the text or to particular parts of the text. Its purpose is to cover the whole range of signals that are present in Isa 40-55 and to read the various chapters as a cohesive text. In the present study, the role of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in the composition of Isa 40-55 is used to put this purpose to the test.

The second part of chapter 1 is devoted to the concept of valency. The concept of valency is presented as a useful instrument for describing the syntax of both nominal and verbal clauses in Isa 40-55. The proposed description of valency patterns in Isa 40-55 is important for three reasons. First, it offers a systematic arrangement of the various patterns that are used in these chapters. Unlike current Hebrew dictionaries, the lists of patterns at the end of this study offer a full description of all the patterns that are found

in Isa 40-55. Second, the lists of syntactic patterns in nominal and verbal clauses are very helpful for the interpretation of poetic texts. On the basis of these lists, it becomes clear where the clause boundaries are located and how the various clauses are built up. The presentation of these insights is of importance, because many biblical scholars simply skip these linguistic observations concerning poetic texts. Third, the survey of syntactic patterns provides insight into the language of Isa 40-55. It is striking that the interchange of prepositions in Isa 40-55 is bound by clear rules. That conclusion confirms the assumption that Isa 40-55 is a cohesive text.

In the third part of this chapter, the various decisions for describing the syntactic features of Isa 40-55 in the appendices at the end of this study are considered. Attention is given to both the linguistic features of the text and the tradition of the text. In that way a useful instrument is developed that can be applied to other texts in the Hebrew Bible as well, both to narrative texts and poetic texts. On the basis of these considerations, it is possible to create a valency dictionary of larger parts of the Old Testament. In an electronic form such a lexicon may be added to a following edition of the *Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible*. The systematic arrangement of all the syntactic patterns in a text is helpful for exegetes who focus on the interpretation of the text as its stands, as well as for those who are interested in the development of this text.

In chapter 2, the proposed corpus-linguistic approach is applied to those passages in Isa 40-55 in which Zion/Jerusalem is present. Only those passages in Isa 40-55 are analyzed where clear references to this participant are found. The first section of this chapter discusses the criteria that a passage should meet to be examined. On the basis of that criteria, the following 12 pericopes were selected: Isa 40.1-11; 41.21-29; 44.24-28; 45.9-13; 46.1-13; 48.1-11; 49.13-26; 50.1-3; 51.1-16; 51.17-23; 52.1-12; and 54.1-17. The remaining sections of this chapter offer linguistic analyses of the above-mentioned passages. Those sections are all built up in the same way. After some introductory notes, a hierarchical structure of the particular passage is presented. Next, syntactic observations concerning the text of the passage are examined. Then, observations concerning the discourse structure of the passage are discussed. Finally, the position of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in the passage is considered.

A summary of the main observations is presented at the end of chapter 2. Here, attention is drawn to four points that illustrate the claim of this study that the signals within the text should be investigated first, before attention is given to the literary skills of the author, the canonical context of the Old Testament, or the historical background; furthermore, the syntactic regularities and text-syntactic patterns of these texts should be examined first

before attention is paid to its literary devices, such as semantic connections and literary structures.

1. The first observation to be considered is that Isa 40.1-11 does not reveal the identity of the anonymous plural audience that is ordered to comfort Jerusalem at the beginning of the passage (see vv. 1-2). The impression that the identity of Jerusalem's comforters is not revealed in this passage is strengthened by the observation that Jerusalem is still deprived of comfort at the end of Isa 40-55 (see Isa 51.19; 54.17). It is likely, therefore, that Isa 40.1-11 consciously does not fill in the identity of Jerusalem's comforters. By concealing the identity of Jerusalem's comforters, a reader of Isa 40-55 is challenged to think about their identity. Who are the ones that are given the task of speaking to the heart of Jerusalem? It therefore seems to be no coincidence that the first reference to Jerusalem's comforters is found at the beginning of Isa 40-55. To answer the question of who is ordered to comfort Jerusalem at the beginning of Isa 40-55, a reader is stimulated to continue reading.

The identity of the audience addressed in Isa 40.1-2 is revealed in Isa 50.1-3. On the basis of the correspondences between the passages, Isa 50.1-3 and 40.1-2, it is claimed that the addressees in Isa 40.1-2 are best identified as the children of Jerusalem. Given the depictions of Jerusalem's children in Isa 50.1-3 and 51.17-23, however, it is unlikely that these children are able to comfort their mother. That suggestion is underscored by the observation that Jerusalem is still deprived of comfort in Isa 51.19. Yet there is good reason to assume that Jerusalem will be comforted in the ensuing chapters. In these chapters we find two references to the glorious rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. The first reference to her rebuilding is in Isa 52.9, where the ruins of Jerusalem are called on to burst into song. The second reference is in Isa 54.11-13, where Jerusalem receives the promise that she will be gloriously rebuilt (vv. 11-12) and that all her children will be disciples of Yhwh (v. 13). Those observations indicate that, at the end of Isa 40-55, Yhwh has taken over the role of Jerusalem's comforter from her children.

This line of thought shows that, after the identification of the anonymous audience in Isa 40.1-2 as the children of Jerusalem, the question of 'who is ordered to comfort Jerusalem' is replaced by the question of 'who is able to comfort Jerusalem'. To answer that question a reader of Isa 40-55 is challenged to read up to chapter 54. The literary patterns presented above show that someone who starts reading at Isa 40.1 is stimulated to continue reading up to at least Isa 54. That means that Isa 40-55 can be understood well as a cohesive text. In addition to the presence of certain themes and motifs in these chapters, this is demonstrated by the literary strategies that are observed in Isa 40-55.

2. The second observation is that two lines of argument occur in Isa 40-55. One is related to the name 'Zion' and puts emphasis on the return of the Babylonian exiles. The other is related to the name 'Jerusalem' and focuses on the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. The first place where these lines are found is Isa 41.27, in which Yhwh announced to Zion, "See, see there they are", and to Jerusalem, "I give a herald of good tidings". The two lines of argument detected in Isa 41.27 become more visible in Isa 45.13. This verse talks about the rebuilding of 'my city' and the liberation of 'my exiles' by Cyrus. The distinction between the two lines of arguments sheds light on the titles, 'captive daughter Zion' and 'Jerusalem, the holy city', in Isa 52.1-2. The discrepancy between the designations for 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' at the beginning of Isa 52 has presented various exegetes with a problem. In their opinion, the designations, 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem', are used interchangeably in Isa 40-55. It is not surprising, therefore, that the critical apparatus of the BHS proposes to emend the Masoretic Text of Isa 52.2 by reading 'captive Jerusalem' for 'take your seat, Jerusalem'.

In this study, it is claimed that the discrepancy between the titles, 'captive daughter Zion' and 'Jerusalem, the holy city', in Isa 52.1-2 is best explained by relating them to the two lines of argument found in Isa 40-55. The title, 'captive daughter Zion', on the one hand, alludes to the announcement that the exiles will return from Babylon to Zion. The title, 'Jerusalem, the holy city', on the other hand, calls to mind the announcement that the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt. The same argumentation is also used to interpret the paradoxical depiction of Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 52.7-10. Whereas v. 8 tells us that Zion's watchmen lift up their voice, v. 9 mentions that Jerusalem is no more than a heap of ruins. The contrast between the watchmen of Zion's walls and the ruins of Jerusalem has often been explained by pointing to the literary skills of the author of Isa 40-55. The contrast between the depictions of 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' in this passage, however, can be explained more satisfactorily by relating them to the two thematic lines mentioned above. It is plausible that the watchmen of Zion should not be connected with her city walls but must be connected with the return of the exiles from Babylon to Zion. Thus, the main task of these watchmen is not to watch the walls, but to be on the lookout. The reference to the ruins of Jerusalem is in line with the promise that the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt.

The observations discussed above clearly illustrate that the contrasting depictions of Zion and Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 can be explained well within the framework of the text. There is no need to make an appeal to the literary techniques of the author of Isa 40-55 here. This conclusion confirms the basic assumption of this study that the signals in the text should be examined first before one turns to an authority outside of the text.

3. The third observation has to do with the holiness of the city of Jerusalem in Isa 40-55. When reading through Isa 40-55, it becomes clear that the temple is referred to only three times in these chapters: once explicitly and twice implicitly. The explicit reference is in Isa 44.28, where the noun 'temple' is used. The implicit references are the word 'holiness' in the phrase, 'princes of holiness', in Isa 43.28 and the phrase, 'the objects of Yhwh', in Isa 52.11, which has usually been taken as a reference to the temple vessels. Given the limited attention to the temple in Isa 40-55, it can be argued that the temple holds a minor position in these chapters. Unlike the Book of Ezra and the end of 2 Chronicles, where the restoration of the Jerusalem temple is stressed, Isa 40-55 puts emphasis on the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem (see Isa 45.13). That observation is confirmed by the proposed syntactic reading of Isa 44.28. On the basis of syntactic arguments, it is claimed that the latter part of v. 28 runs as follows: 'and to say of Jerusalem, "She will be rebuilt, and she will be founded *as* a temple"' The consequence of this interpretation is that the temple in Isa 44.28 is not referred to as an independent entity but only in connection with the city of Jerusalem. The conclusion that, in Isa 40-55, the temple is subordinated to the city of Jerusalem is underscored by the interpretation of the expression 'the objects of Yhwh' in Isa 52.11. In chapter 2, it is brought to the fore that in Isa 52.1-12, there is a semantic connection between the expression, 'the objects of Yhwh', in v. 11 and the call to Jerusalem, the holy city, to put on her beautiful clothes in v. 1. On the basis of that semantic connection, it is claimed that the phrase, 'the objects of Yhwh', in Isa 52.11 does not refer to the temple vessels, but refers to the treasures that must be carried to Jerusalem with a view to her rebuilding. With the help of these gifts, Jerusalem will be rebuilt as a holy city.

It is worth noting that Isa 52.1-12 puts emphasis on the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a holy city. It is likely, therefore, that in Isa 40-55 holiness is not restricted to the Jerusalem temple but is applied to the city as a whole. In that light, it is not surprising that Isa 44.28 announces that Jerusalem will be founded *as* a temple. That interpretation fits the context of Isa 40-55 very well. The proposed reading, however, runs counter to the traditional interpretation of this verse, which has been influenced highly by the depiction of the temple's restoration in the Book of Ezra and the end of 2 Chronicles (see Ezra 1.2; 4.3; 5.13, 17; 6.3; 2 Chr 36.23). The syntactic interpretation of Isa 44.28 thus makes clear that observations concerning the text itself should be examined first before attention is paid to interesting parallels in the context of the canon of the Old Testament. In addition, it shows that the supposed connection between Isa 40-55 and the Book of Ezra should be called into question. It may be regarded as more likely that Isa 40-55 must be connected with the Book of Nehemiah. An indication of the

connection between Isa 40-55 and the Book of Nehemiah is the use of the phrase 'the holy city' in Isa 48.2; 52.1 and in Neh 11.1, 18.

4. The last observation concerns the presence of two groups of people connected with the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55. The first time that the two groups are clearly distinguished from one another is in Isa 48.1-22. The audience of the first part of this chapter, vv. 1-11, is addressed as 'the house of Jacob, who call themselves by the name of Israel' (v. 1), while the audience of the second part, vv. 12-22, is spoken to as 'Jacob and Israel, whom I called' (v. 12). The most significant distinction between the two audiences is, however, that they are located at different places. The people addressed in Isa 48.12-22 are undoubtedly dwelling in Babylon. In v. 20, they are ordered to go out from Babylon and to flee from Chaldea. The people addressed in Isa 48.1-11, on the other hand, should be located most probably in the region of Egypt. With regard to these addressees, it is said that Yhwh chose them 'in the furnace of adversity' (v. 10). The noun 'furnace' is used several times in the Old Testament as a reference to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt (see Deut 4.20; 1 Kgs 8.51; Jer 11.4). The distinction between the two audiences in Isa 48.1-22 serves as basis for the claim two groups of Israelites are portrayed in Isa 40-48: the first group that is addressed as 'the house of Jacob, who call themselves by the name of Israel', must be located in the region of Egypt; the second group that is addressed as 'Jacob and Israel, whom I called' must be located in Babylon. From Isa 49 onwards, the two groups of people are designated with other terms. While the first group is referred to as the children of Zion (see Isa 49.13-26), the second one is designated as the children of Jerusalem (see Isa 51.17-23).

The clear distinction between the two groups of Israelites in Isa 40-55 raises the question as to whether that distinction holds true for groups of people outside of the text as well. Can the proposed distinction also be applied to the people of Israel at the time that Isa 40-55 was composed? To give a full answer to that question is beyond the scope of this study. It is, however, noteworthy that current studies on Isa 40-55 pay little attention to the group of Israelites that fled to the region of Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. Generally, they concentrate on the historical background of the Babylonian exiles because Isa 40-55 contains clear references to 'Babylon' and 'Chaldea'. In my view, it is better to examine the mutual relationships of the participants within Isa 40-55 first, before one turns to its historical context. The advantage of this approach is that the people that are not explicitly identified in these chapters are taken into account as well. In addition, the examination of the unidentified participants may shed light on the first addressees of Isa 40-55. It is very possible that the group of people that is not defined clearly in the world of the text refers to

the first audience of the text. Viewed in that light, it is likely that the anonymous people addressed in Isa 40.1-2, who were identified as the children of Jerusalem, stand for the first addressees of Isa 40-55.

Chapter 3 of this study pays attention to the role of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 as a whole. The examination of this role is meant as a test case to see whether a coherent view on Zion/Jerusalem emerges from Isa 40-55 if one starts from linguistic observations concerning the text of these chapters. In the first part of chapter 3 the role of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 as a whole is considered. After introducing the existing views of Abma, Laato, and Berges, a corpus-linguistic view on Zion/Jerusalem is offered on the basis of the results of the linguistic analyses of chapter 2. In discussing the views of Abma, Laato, and Berges, attention is paid to three aspects of this participant:

1. The various designations for the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55.
2. The distribution of the references to Zion/Jerusalem in the composition of Isa 40-55.
3. The relationships between the participant Zion/Jerusalem and other participants such as her children, Yhwh, and the Servant of the Lord.

When examining the approaches to Isa 40-55 mentioned above, it becomes clear that they hold different views on the position of Zion/Jerusalem in this text. It can be seen that the different points of departure for their analyses of Isa 40-55 lead to different views on the role of Zion/Jerusalem in these chapters. From that it can be deduced that the role of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 serves as a good test case for the examination of these chapters. That conclusion confirms the assumption of this study that the examination of the role of Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 can be used to put the proposed step-by-step approach to Isa 40-55 to the test.

1. The first question as part of the examination is how a corpus-linguistic approach deals with the various designations for the participant Zion/Jerusalem in these chapters. That question is answered in this study by suggesting that the names 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' in Isa 40-55 must be regarded as two sides of the same coin. While the designation 'Zion' is used to refer to the return of the Babylonian exiles and to the return of Yhwh himself to this place, the designation 'Jerusalem' is used to allude to the rebuilding of this city. On the basis of that distinction, the different depictions of the participant Zion/Jerusalem can be understood well. Zion, on the one hand, is portrayed as a barren woman who was left alone by her husband, Yhwh. As the consequence of the absence of her husband, Zion is not able to give birth to children. Jerusalem, on the other hand, is depicted as

a mother who was sent away by her husband because of the rebellion of her children. Her children, however, refuse to go back to their mother to comfort her. In Isa 54.1-17, those two portraits of the participant Zion/Jerusalem are closely connected. The female figure addressed in this passage is spoken to as 'you barren one who did not bear' at the beginning of the first part (v. 1), while she is addressed as 'you not comforted' at the beginning of the second part (v. 11). The close connection between the two depictions of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 54.1-17 is underscored by the absence of the names, 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem', in this passage. Given the absence of these names, it is likely that the distinction between the designations, 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem', is falling away at the end of Isa 40-55. These considerations lead to the conclusion that in Isa 40-55 the various designations for the participant Zion/Jerusalem are not used indiscriminately, but they are applied to illuminate two aspects of the same entity: the return of the former inhabitants and the rebuilding of the city. On the basis of that distinction, which can be deduced from the text, it is possible to offer a coherent view on the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55.

2. The second question discussed is whether a corpus-linguistic approach sheds light on the distribution of the references to Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 as a whole. In the previous chapters, it has been made clear that two lines of argument can be traced in Isa 41-48. The first line, which is related to the name 'Zion', concentrates on the return to Zion (cf. Isa 41.27; 45.13; 46.13; 48.20). The second one, which is related to the name 'Jerusalem', focuses on the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem (cf. Isa 41.27; 44.26, 28; 45.13; 48.2). The two lines of argument reach a provisional climax in Isa 48.1-22. From Isa 49 onwards, the two lines of argument are visible in Isa 52.1-2, where the participant Zion/Jerusalem is spoken to as 'Jerusalem, the holy city' (v. 1) and as 'captive daughter Zion' (v. 2). Furthermore, the two lines appear in Isa 54.1-17. In the first part of this passage, allusions to the depiction of Zion in the previous chapters are found, while the second part contains references to the depiction of Jerusalem in those chapters.

The detection of the two lines of argument in Isa 41-48 and in the ensuing chapters is very helpful for gaining insight into the distribution of the references to Zion/Jerusalem in the composition of Isa 40-55. First of all, it can be seen that the two thematic lines shed light on the arrangement of the references to Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 41-48. With the help of these two lines, the various references to the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 41-48 can be satisfactorily explained. Second, the provisional climax reached in Isa 48.1-22 is an argument supporting the division of Isa 40-55 into two major parts: Isa 40-48 and 49-55. Additional arguments supporting this traditional division are the observations that the depictions of the participant Zion/Jerusalem as female figure are only found in Isa 49-55 and that only

these chapters refer to her children. Third, it is worth noting that the two lines of argument are traced up to Isa 54.1-17. The observation that the two thematic lines are clearly present in the body of the text provides an additional argument for reading Isa 40-55 as a cohesive text. Finally, as was indicated above, the two lines of argument appear from Isa 41 onwards. That means that the references to Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40.1-11 did not quite fit into the two lines of argument. From that it can be deduced that Isa 40.1-11 holds a special position in Isa 40-55 as a whole. The function of this passage in the literary composition of Isa 40-55 is dealt with in the second part of chapter 3.

3. The third question concerns the relationship between Zion/Jerusalem and the other participants in Isa 40-55. The first relationship to be considered here is the one between Zion/Jerusalem and Yhwh. With regard to that relationship, it is important to note that in Isa 40-55 the participant Zion/Jerusalem is portrayed in two different ways. Zion, on the one hand, is portrayed as a barren woman who was abandoned by her husband Yhwh (see Isa 49.13-26). The consequence of his absence is that Zion is not able to have children. To this barren woman, it is said in Isa 54.1-10 that the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of one who is married (see v. 1). Furthermore, Yhwh promises her that she will forget the disgrace of her widowhood because her Maker marries her (see vv. 4-5). Jerusalem, on the other hand, is depicted as a mother who was sent away by her husband, Yhwh, because of the rebellion of her children (see Isa 50.1-3). The children of Jerusalem, however, refuse to go back to their mother to comfort her. To this woman deprived of comfort, it is said in Isa 54.11-17 that Yhwh will rebuild her with precious stones (see vv. 11-12). Furthermore, Yhwh promises her that all her children will be his disciples (see v. 13). The proposed distinction is helpful for understanding the relationship between Zion/Jerusalem and Yhwh. On the basis of that distinction, it can be claimed that the two portraits of Zion/Jerusalem as female figure in Isa 40-55 illuminate two aspects of the relationship between Zion/Jerusalem and Yhwh. Her depiction as barren woman touches on the promise of Yhwh that the exiles from Babylon will return to this place. Her portrait as mother, on the other hand, touches on the promise of Yhwh that this city will be rebuilt.

The second relationship to be considered is the one between Zion/Jerusalem and her children. In the previous chapters, it was brought to the fore that there are two groups of people connected with the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55. The first group is referred to as 'the children of Zion' (cf. Isa 49.13-26). The second group is designated as 'the children of Jerusalem' (cf. Isa 51.17-23). Besides the different names for the two groups, a striking difference between the children of Zion and the children of

Jerusalem is found in Isa 40-55. It stands out that a main feature of the
children of Zion is that they will run to their mother. In Isa 49.17, Yhwh
announces to Zion: 'your children have hastened'. A main feature of
Jerusalem's children, on the other hand, is that they are powerless. In Isa
51.20, it is said to Jerusalem: 'your children fainted; they lay at the head of
every street like an antelope in a net, filled with the wrath of Yhwh, the
rebuke of your God.' Furthermore, it has been claimed that both groups of
children are present in Isa 54.1-17: the children of Zion are referred to in v. 3
('your offspring'), while the children of Jerusalem are mentioned in v. 13
('your children'). The proposed distinction between the two groups of people
connected with the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 helps in
understanding the relationship of the participant Zion/Jerusalem to her
children. On the basis of that distinction, it is likely that two groups of
Israelites are portrayed in Isa 40-55. The children of Zion, on the one hand,
refer to the people of Israel who were deported to Babylon. The children of
Jerusalem, on the other, refer to the people of Israel who fled to the region of
Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE.

The third relationship that merits attention is the one between
Zion/Jerusalem and the Servant of the Lord. This relationship has not been
discussed at length in the previous chapters. The main reason for that is that
the Servant plays only a small part in the passages of Isa 40-55 that are
analyzed in this study. In the examined passages references to the Servant of
the Lord occur only in Isa 40.6 and 44.26. In addition to these texts, it has
been claimed that the herald of good tidings promised to Jerusalem in Isa
41.27 stands for the Servant of the Lord, who is introduced in the next
passage, Isa 42.1-4. Furthermore, an allusion to the Servant of the Lord is
found in Isa 54.17, where the children of Jerusalem are designated as
'servants of the Lord'. The various references to the Servant of the Lord in
these texts have one striking thing in common, namely that they show that
the Servant is closely connected with Jerusalem. Most obviously, that
connection is expressed in Isa 41.27, where the Servant of the Lord is
portrayed as the herald of good tidings to Jerusalem. However, it is
noteworthy that the Servant does not speak to Jerusalem, but keeps silent (cf.
Isa 42.2). The reason why the Servant keeps silent becomes clear in Isa
44.24-28, where it is said that Yhwh himself will fulfil the word of his
Servant concerning Jerusalem by means of King Cyrus.

In addition to the connection between the Servant of the Lord and
Jerusalem, a link between the Servant and the children of Zion occurs in Isa
49.9 where the Servant is given the task of saying to the prisoners, "Go out,"
and to those who are in darkness, "Show yourselves." It is reasonable that
these prisoners must be identified as the children of Zion that are referred to
in the ensuing passage, Isa 49.13-26. An argument favouring that
identification is the depiction in Isa 51.11, where it says that 'the ransomed

of Yhwh return, and they will come to Zion with singing.' In the next passage, Isa 52.1-12, the ransomed of Yhwh are portrayed as the herald of good tidings to Zion who announces to Zion that her God has become King (see v. 7)

The observations discussed above show that the Servant of the Lord is connected with Zion/Jerusalem in two different ways. On the one hand, there is a direct link between the Servant and Jerusalem. The Servant is depicted as the herald of good tidings to Jerusalem who proclaims that the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt. On the other hand, there is an indirect link between the Servant and Zion. The Servant is given the task of inciting the children of Zion to return to their mother. The two connections between the Servant and Zion/Jerusalem well illustrate the concern of the proposed distinction between the designations of 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' in Isa 40-55. Only with the help of that distinction is it possible to describe the relationship between Zion/Jerusalem and the Servant of the Lord in a coherent way. On the basis of the proposed distinction, it can be explained why the Servant of the Lord acts as the messenger to Jerusalem in Isa 41.27, but does not act as the messenger to Zion in Isa 52.7. Furthermore, the proposed distinction is helpful for explaining why only the children of Jerusalem are called 'servants of the Lord' in Isa 54.17, and the children of Zion are not designated in that way. Both observations seem to indicate that the Servant of the Lord is associated more closely with the city of Jerusalem and her children than with Zion and her returning children.

In the second part of chapter 3, a proposal for the discourse structure of Isa 40-55 is presented. With regard to that proposal, three remarks must be made. The first remark concerns the function of Isa 40.1-11 in the literary composition of Isa 40-55. As indicated above, Isa 40.1-11 takes up a special position in Isa 40-55 as a whole. Unlike in Isa 41-54, the two lines of argument related to 'the return to Zion' and 'the rebuilding of Jerusalem' are not found in this passage. That observation is in keeping with the traditional view that the first eleven verses of Isa 40 function as prologue to Isa 40-55. Another argument for regarding Isa 40.1-11 as the prologue to Isa 40-55 is the observation that the passage conspicuously does not fill in the identity of Jerusalem's comforters. As was made clear in the previous chapters, the identity of the people addressed in Isa 40.1-2 is revealed in the course of Isa 40-55. The consequence of that literary technique is that a reader of Isa 40-55 is stimulated in Isa 40.1-11 to continue reading. In the first passage of Isa 40-55, a reader is presented with the question of who will provide consolation to Jerusalem. A full answer to that question is not given before Isa 54.11, where Zion/Jerusalem is still addressed as 'you not comforted'. That means that someone who starts reading in Isa 40.1-11 is challenged to read up to at least Isa 54.1-17. That conclusion is in line with the view that

the first eleven verses of Isa 40 serve as general introduction to the ensuing chapters. A main purpose of this prologue is to present the readers of Isa 40-55 with the question of who will provide comfort to Jerusalem.

The second remark concerns the distribution of the references to Zion/Jerusalem in the composition of Isa 40-55. It is striking that the participant Zion/Jerusalem is referred to at crucial positions in the literary composition. Its first section ends with the announcement that Jerusalem will be founded as a temple (see Isa 44.28). At the end of the second section, the Israelite exiles are called to go out from Babylon, that is, to come to Zion (see Isa 48.20). The end of the third section refers to the arrival of the Babylonian exiles at Zion (see Isa 51.16). Finally, at the end of the fourth section the glorious rebuilding of Jerusalem is announced (see Isa 54.11-12). The observation that Zion/Jerusalem is mentioned at crucial positions makes clear why the references to the participant Zion/Jerusalem are well distributed in Isa 40-55 as a whole. It appears that Zion/Jerusalem occupies a significant position in the various parts of Isa 40-55. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the name 'Jerusalem' is not used in sections II and III. In these two sections, the participant Zion/Jerusalem is designated as 'my city' (Isa 45.13), 'the holy city' (Isa 48.2), and 'your mother' (Isa 50.1). The absence of the name 'Jerusalem' in the middle two sections seems to be no coincidence. It was probably meant to emphasize the connection between the foundation of Jerusalem in the first section and her glorious rebuilding in the last section.

The last remark concerns the position of Isa 55.1-13 in the discourse structure of Isa 40-55. In the previous chapters, it has been argued that, serving as epilogue to the composition of Isa 40-55, Isa 55.1-13 brings closure to the discourse of the previous chapters. An argument supporting this view is the claim that the group of people addressed in Isa 55.1-13 is the same as the group people spoken to in Isa 40.1-2, namely the children of Jerusalem. That conclusion offers help for understanding the purpose of the final discourse unit of Isa 40-55 and, in addition, for understanding the purpose of the discourse of Isa 40-55 as a whole. As was shown, there is a striking connection between the appeal 'to go out from there' in Isa 52.11 and the departure depicted in Isa 55.12-13. In the first verse, the children of Jerusalem are called to go back to their mother in order to take part in her rebuilding. In that light, the joyful departure of the people addressed in Isa 55.1-13 can be well understood. The latter passage promises the children of Jerusalem that their journey back to their mother will be blessed by Yhwh. He himself tells the addressees that they will safely arrive in Jerusalem. That means that there is nothing that could restrain the children of Jerusalem from going back to their mother. On that basis, the discourse of Isa 55.1-13 can be viewed as the ultimate appeal to the children of Jerusalem to go back to their mother, Jerusalem.

That conclusion brings us to consider the second point, namely the purpose of the discourse of Isa 40-55 as a whole. The previous chapters showed that the children of Jerusalem are ordered to comfort their mother, Jerusalem, at the beginning of Isa 40-55. In the ensuing chapters, however, it appears that these are unable to provide comfort to Jerusalem. For that reason, Yhwh himself takes over the role of Jerusalem's children as her comforter. In Isa 54.11-13, Yhwh promises Jerusalem that she will be gloriously rebuilt and that all her children will be his disciples. These considerations shed light on the invitation to the children of Jerusalem at the beginning of Isa 55.1-13. In Isa 55.1, the children of Jerusalem are summoned once again to go back to their mother, Jerusalem. In this verse, however, the children of Jerusalem are not ordered to comfort their mother, but they are invited to come to the waters. In other words, they are invited to be comforted in Jerusalem. As a consequence of Yhwh's taking over their role as Jerusalem's comforter, the children of Jerusalem are no longer given the task of comforting, but they are called to receive consolation. That means that in the last passage of Isa 40-55 the tables have been turned. Those who were ordered to comfort Jerusalem in Isa 40.1-2 are invited here to be comforted themselves. By confronting his readers with that reversal, the author of Isa 40-55 wants to convince his readers of the need for taking part in the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

In the last part of chapter 3, attention is paid to the similarities and dissimilarities between the portrait of Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 and her depictions in other parts of the Old Testament. This investigation consists of three parts. The first part focuses on the designations for the participant Zion/Jerusalem used in Isa 40-55 and in other biblical books. It is observed that there is an interesting connection between Isa 40-55 and the Book of Nehemiah because in the Book of Nehemiah the expression 'the holy city' is applied to Jerusalem as well (Neh 11.1, 18). Furthermore, it comes to the fore that, outside of Isa 40-55, the title 'city of God' is usually related to the name 'Zion', and not to the name 'Jerusalem'. An exception to this rule is the use of this title in Dan 9.16, 19. In light of the fact that in most biblical books the title 'city of God' is applied to Zion, it can be argued that in Isa 40-55 the terms for designating the participant Zion/Jerusalem are consciously used. That conclusion is supported by the observation that the designation 'captive daughter Zion' is used only in Isa 52.2 and does not occur in other parts of the Old Testament.

The second part of the examination concentrates on the presence of the themes, 'return to Zion' and 'rebuilding of Jerusalem', outside of Isa 40-55. Attention is especially paid to post-exilic biblical books such as Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra and Nehemiah. When looking for those themes, it is observed that the return of the exiles to Zion and the return of Yhwh himself

are explicitly mentioned in Zech 1-8. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, on the other hand, is not referred to in these chapters. This is also true for the Books of Haggai end Ezra. Unlike Isa 40-55, Ezra, Haggai and the first part of Zechariah put emphasis on the restoration of the Jerusalem temple. Explicit references to the rebuilding of Jerusalem are in the Book of Nehemiah. That observation confirms the connection between Isa 40-55 and Nehemiah mentioned above. Besides the links of Isa 40-55 to the first part of Zechariah and to Nehemiah, an interesting connection between Isa 40-55 and Jer 30-31 is found. Chapters 30-31 of Jeremiah contain references to both the return to Zion and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Given these thematic parallels, it is likely that Isa 40-55 and Jer 30-31 are closely connected.

In the last part, the similarities and dissimilarities between the depictions of Zion/Jerusalem as female figure in Isa 40-55 and her portrait as female figure in other parts of the Old Testament are examined. In particular, attention is given to the depictions of Zion/Jerusalem as female figure in the last part of the Book of Isaiah, Isa 56-66. Reading through these chapters, it becomes clear that the portrait of Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 66.7-11 differs slightly from her depictions in Isa 40-55. While Zion is portrayed as a barren woman in Isa 40-55, she is depicted as a mother giving birth to children in Isa 66.7-9. And while Jerusalem is depicted as a mother in Isa 40-55, she is portrayed as a wet nurse, who nurses the children of Zion, in Isa 66.10-11. The depictions of Zion/Jerusalem as female figure in Isa 40-55 and 66 show that the two parts of the Book of Isaiah are closely connected. At the same time, it should be noted that Isa 56-66 puts its own interpretation on the position of Zion/Jerusalem. Isaiah 56-66 no longer focuses on the barrenness of Zion/Jerusalem, but on the miraculous manner in which she gives birth to children. The interpretation of that shift may shed light on the connection between the two major parts of the Book of Isaiah.

The comparison between the portrait of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 and her depictions in other biblical books shows that the depiction of Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 fits well into the context of the Old Testament. Examining the references to Zion/Jerusalem in other parts of the Old Testament, it becomes clear that most of the designations for Zion/Jerusalem used in Isa 40-55 are found in other biblical books as well. Furthermore, other books in the Old Testament also relate the names 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' to the return from Babylonian exile and to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Finally, both the children of Zion and the children of Jerusalem are also mentioned in other biblical books. At the same time, this comparison makes clear that the two-sided portrait of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 has no parallel in other parts of the Old Testament. The unique character of the depiction of Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 indicates that the two-sided portrait was depicted consciously. The underlying ideas that lead to this two-sided depiction of Zion/Jerusalem in

these chapters can be explained as follows. First, there are two main themes in Isa 40-55, namely the return of the exiles from Babylon and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. By relating the return of the exiles to the name 'Zion' and relating the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem to the name 'Jerusalem', the author of Isa 40-55 made it clear that both themes are equally important. The plan of Yhwh to put an end to the Babylonian exile by means of King Cyrus involved not only the return of the exiles from Babylon to Zion, but also the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Furthermore, Isa 40-55 makes a distinction between two groups of Israelite people. The first group is located in Babylon. They are designated as 'the children of Zion'. The second group is located in the region of Egypt. They are spoken to as 'the children of Jerusalem'. By depicting the first group as 'the children of Zion' and the second one as 'the children of Jerusalem', the author of Isa 40-55 showed that the two groups are not identical to each other. At the same time, the author indicated that both groups are connected with the participant Zion/Jerusalem. The designations 'children of Zion' and 'children and Jerusalem' leave no doubt about the place where these people originally came from. Though these two groups have been through different experiences, they are both called to return to their hometown Zion/Jerusalem. Both the exiles in Babylon and the fugitives in the region of Egypt are invited to be part of God's continuing story with this city.

The conclusions of the various chapters presented above lead us back to question raised in the introduction to this study concerning whether the examination of the linguistic signals in the prophetic text Isa 40-55 is helpful for the interpretation of this text. To answer that question, this study proposes to follow the route from syntactic observations, via discourse analysis and participant tracking, up to the examination of the literary composition of Isa 40-55. The advantage of this corpus-linguistic approach is that the lower levels of syntax and discourse structure are examined first, before attention is paid to the higher levels of participants and literary composition. This study does not view the text of Isa 40-55 from a general linguistic perspective or from a literary viewpoint, but it starts from observations concerning the text itself. That means that there is no need to regard some clauses as later additions because they disturb a general linguistic pattern or they do not fit into the literary structure. The first task is to describe the syntactic structure of those clauses. The question as to whether they should be regarded as inserted elements is deferred until the analysis of the text as a whole is completed. The proposed route affects not only the interpretation of syntactic constructions and text-syntactic structures, but also the identification of participants. There is no need to fill in the identity of anonymous participants in the text from a semantic point of view or from a theological perspective. The identification of the participants

is mainly based on the signals that are present in the text. That means that in some cases it is better to leave blank the identity of an unspecified participant, and try to fill the identity in on the basis of the indications in the ensuing chapters. The value of this method is that it does not provide a framework for the interpretation of the text, but that it attempts to follow the lines of thought that are present in the text and tries to illuminate the relationships between the participants within the text.

To put the proposed route from syntax to the literary composition to the test, this study concentrates on the role of the participant Zion/Jerusalem in the composition of Isa 40-55. The question to be answered is whether a coherent view on this participant emerges from Isa 40-55 if linguistic observations serve as starting point for the examination of this prophetic text. As was shown above, this question has to be answered in the affirmative. The view on Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40-55 presented above confirms that the proposed step-by-step approach is helpful for the interpretation of this prophetic text. That means that the route proposed in this study is worth following and may be applied to other poetic and prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible as well.