Images of Exile
in the Prophetic Literature

Edited by
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FREDERIK POULSEN,
and CIAN POWER

Mohr Siebeck

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Copenhagen Conference Proceedings
7–10 May 2017

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Table of Contents

Preface

The fifteen articles in this volume were presented at the conference *Images of Exile in the Prophetic Literature*, which was held from 7–10 May 2017 at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen. The conference was made possible by a generous grant from the Independent Research Fund Denmark and its *Sapere Aude* programme. We want to thank the Fund for its financial support and the speakers and participants at the conference for stimulating discussions and a warm and enthusiastic atmosphere. A special thanks to Dr. Cian Power for his indispensable efforts in editing and revising the language of the papers and to Dr. Paul Joyce for proof-reading one of the contributions. Thanks also to Mohr Siebeck and the editors of the FAT series for including this volume.

Jesper Høgenhaven and Frederik Poulsen
Copenhagen, May 2018

Introduction

Images of Exile in the Prophetic Literature

Jesper Høgenhaven, Frederik Poulsen,
and Cian Power

Exile is a central concern in the Hebrew Bible. According to biblical ac-
counts, the exile in Babylon was a decisive turning point in the history of
Israel. There are several other stories and discourses of exile in addition to
this particular one: Adam and Eve are forced to leave Eden, Abraham and
his family travel as strangers, and the miraculous story of exodus emerges
from the captivity in Egypt. Exile in the Hebrew Bible, it seems, does not
only echo or reflect traumatic historical events, but is also a literary theme
that is taken up and reworked in a variety of ways by biblical authors.[1]

In the prophetic books, there is a dense use of poetry and metaphors
and reflection on exile is central to almost all of them. Yet the images
they use are diverse. Some speak of exile with images of captivity and
slavery. Others interpret exile as infertility and abandonment as when a
man leaves his wife. Exile can be a state of spiritual death from which the
people must be raised. Interestingly, the images that the prophets employ
colour the concept itself, thereby expanding the range of meanings of a
life in exile.

At an international conference in Copenhagen in May 2017, eight-
een scholars gathered to investigate and discuss images of exile in the
prophetic literature. Some chose to deal with a specific passage or biblical
book, while others approached the issue by comparing different books or
by looking more closely at a particular image or theme. A recurrent ques-
tion was what role language and metaphors play in the prophets' attempts
to express, structure, and cope with experiences of exile. This volume
collects fifteen of the eighteen papers presented at that conference.

We have grouped the articles in three major sections. The contri-
butions in the first section focus on exile in Isaiah, while those in the

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[1]See e. g. A. K. d. H. Gudme and I. Hjelm, eds., *Myth of Exile: History and Metaphor in the
Hebrew Bible* (CIS; London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

second section treat this issue in Jeremiah and Ezekiel as well as possible links between the two books. The third section collects contributions on various themes, including nature and agricultural imagery for exile, deportations from the Northern Kingdom, and the prophet Jonah as a perpetual refugee.

In Section I, *Francis Landy's* essay, which was also the opening lecture of the conference, reflects on the ways in which the theme of exile is present in the meta-narrative, message, and structure of the book of Isaiah as a whole. Landy draws attention to the association of death with exile and argues that exile throughout the book becomes an existential condition: even at home, one does not feel at home. *Frederik Poulsen* analyses the motif of scattering and dispersion in Isaiah. After a brief overview of this literary theme in the Hebrew Bible, Poulsen offers a close reading and comparison of Isaiah 11:11–16 and 27:7–13. *Hyun Chul Paul Kim* detects metaphors of exile in Deutero-Isaiah, including the images of darkness-blindness-prison, drought-hunger, and daughters-sons of Zion. In addition to this analysis, Kim presents some astute reflections on the relation between metaphor, memory, and reality in the poetry of Deutero-Isaiah. The relation between historical realities and figurative interpretations is also taken up by *Ulrich Berges*, who discusses the theme of exile in Trito-Isaiah. Looking at Isaiah 55 and 58 in particular, he argues that exile becomes individualized and associated with ethical concerns; in short, exile is transformed from an external movement into an ethical reordering, a way out of one's own egoism.

The first article in Section II examines literary relations between the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In addition to the theology of judgement, *Paul M. Joyce* offers a careful analysis of three shared motifs: dry bones as a metaphor for exile and death; sour grapes and the question of guilt; and theological geography and the figurative dimension of journey imagery. *Else K. Holt* deals with Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Jeremiah 29 and its rather positive description of the conditions of daily life for the deportees in Babylon. Taking similar language in Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Psalms into consideration, she discusses the function, purpose, and possible historical context of expressing a prophetic message by means of correspondence by letter. *Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor* examines the poems in the Book of Consolation (Jeremiah 30–31). She demonstrates that the images of men in labour, of a wounded woman, and of the mourning of Rachel, all of which turn exile into an enduring existential condition, deliberately draw from and re-contextualize earlier Jeremianic traditions. *Sonja Ammann* studies the Jeremiah narrative in Jeremiah 37–43. Examining three

short episodes (Jer 37:11–16; 40:1–6; 43:6), Ammann discusses whether the prophet's action – his attempt to leave the city – serves as a political message to his fellow citizens, and she offers a critical perspective on the assumptions often made by scholars regarding these narratives.

Jesper Høgenhaven examines the notion of the mobility of YHWH's glory, central to Ezekiel. Analysing key chapters in the book (Ezek 1; 8–11; 43), he demonstrates the subtle play at work on the motifs of divine absence and presence and stresses that, rather than indicating God's dislocation into exile, divine mobility points to the inescapability of judgement upon the sinful people. *Søren Holst* discusses the thorough ambiguity of exile in the book of Ezekiel. He shows that while, on the one hand, exile is a place of punishment for the people's crimes, on the other, it is a place of purification by means of which the purified people can return to the blessings of their homeland. *Anja Klein* offers an overview of the key verb גלה and its use in Ezekiel before turning to a detailed reading of Ezekiel 16 and 23. She draws attention to the close association in these chapters of exile with sexual violence and, more broadly, with social issues such as honour and shame and gender roles.

In Section III, *Dalit Rom-Shiloni* introduces five biological-ecological fields to detect, group, and interpret distinctive images of exile: fauna, flora, water sources, landscape characteristics, and climate systems. She furthermore demonstrates the potential of this enterprise by examining a series of texts from Isaiah. *Göran Eidevall* focuses on prophetic texts that liken the removal of people to moving a plant. The rationale behind this metaphor, he argues, is the immobility of plants (if they are removed they die) and plant imagery is thus capable of expressing feelings of uncertain futures in unknown territories. *Cian Power* looks at the Neo-Assyrian deportations from the "Northern" Kingdom of Israel in the late eighth century BCE. Examining references to this event in Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, he provides a critical comparison of these books with regard to the language employed and to the supposed meaning of exile. *Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer* concludes the volume with a reading of the book of Jonah. Drawing attention to vocabulary shared by the story of Jonah and that of Adam, Eve, and Cain in Genesis, she argues that Jonah embodies the pain of alienation; he is cast as a perpetual refugee. Finally, she shows how this motif is also present in two twentieth-century novels by Jewish authors that draw on the story of Jonah.

Part I
Isaiah

Metaphors for Death and Exile in Isaiah

Francis Landy

At the centre of Isaiah, between 39:8 and 40:1, is the exile. Everything in the book points to it, either by anticipation or retrospection, and yet it is a null point, an interruption, in which nothing is spoken.[1] Two hundred years intervene between Isaiah's prediction of exile to Hezekiah in 39:6–7, at the end of the long narrative of the deliverance of Jerusalem in chapters 36–38, and the message of comfort in 40:1. The disjuncture means that the book is fundamentally discordant, despite the immense effort at unification. The juxtaposition of Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah is not an accident, as still occasionally proposed, but it nonetheless contrasts two entirely different poetic and imaginative worlds, whose congruence is uncertain and incomplete. The book purports to tell a story, from creation to redemption; it is the classic metanarrative, like the *Odyssey*, in which the hero, Israel or God, leaves home, has adventures, and comes home; and as in the classic metanarrative, home is never quite what one remembers. In the case of Isaiah, the metanarrative is the more exigent because it corresponds to the story of the Hebrew Bible, and because it claims universal significance and truth; it is the story of the world. The metanarrative is in fact that there is a metanarrative, that history has a

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[1]U. Berges (*Jesaja: Der Prophet und das Buch* [Biblische Gestalten 22; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2010], 92) argues that the gap is caused by a wish to emphasize the deliverance from Sennacherib and the hope of return in 40:1–2. S. K. Kostamo ("Mind the Gap: Reading Isa 39:8–40:1 within Early Second Temple Judah," in *History, Memory, Hebrew Scriptures: A Festschrift for Ehud Ben Zvi* [ed. D. V. Edelman and I. D. Wilson; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015], 215–228) proposes that it serves to bracket the exilic period and demarcate the distant monarchic past from the restoration period. E. Ben Zvi ("Isaiah a Memorable Prophet: Why Was Isaiah so Memorable in the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Periods? Some Observations," in *"Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination"* [ed. D. V. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013], 365–383, 377) similarly thinks that the absence of explicit references to the exile marginalizes it. On the contrary, my position is that the silence concerning the exile makes it an all-important "elephant in the room", to which virtually everything in the book points. See F. Landy, "Exile in the Book of Isaiah," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 241–256.

plot and that everything is for the best – as long, that is, as you are not one of the sinners at the end of the book. The question of the coherence of the book is then that of the coherence of history. The alternative is that history is not teleological, that exile will continue for ever. The book leaves us with hope, and that perhaps is the sole reason why it is written: "YHWH has anointed me to proclaim to the humble" (61:1). But the hope is always against the background of despair, or, as David Carr says, of trauma.[2] The sceptical voice is evoked, always to be dismissed. But it keeps coming back.

Death and exile correspond throughout the book, as the twin fates of the victims of the catastrophe. Death may be a metaphor for exile, or vice versa. Exile is a living death, augmented by associations of Babylon with the underworld in chapter 14; death is the ultimate antagonist of life and of YHWH, the final exile, separating us from God and the living; hence the anxiety surrounding death, the insistence that it is in fact return, to the ancestors, to the earth; hence the fear of being outcast, dying in a strange land, and the hope of resurrection. Death is beyond human discourse; the null point at the centre, portending death and exile, is also a caesura from which all the words of the book emanate. They are a resistance to it, since death and exile threaten all language and all meaning. Once the Temple is destroyed, the entire symbolic and sacred structure of Judah / Israel becomes a memory, and the people itself loses its political and imaginary identity, becomes adrift among a sea of nations, and risks or welcomes absorption or annihilation. If there is a new Temple, as in Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, what will it be, and what will be its relation to the First Temple? To what extent is repetition possible? And to the extent it is possible, what is it that we will repeat? We begin in chapter 1 with the Temple as the place where God is not at home, and we end in chapter 66, with the Temple as a home for everyone – the eunuch and the stranger – where God is unable to find a resting place, and where the glorious future is uneasily juxtaposed to a disconcerting and sacrilegious present.

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[2]D. M. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). Carr (74–76) argues that the exile was "a gap in the midst of biblical history", which could not be addressed directly, but which produced a fundamental reevaluation of what it meant to be a Judean, and hence a proliferation of scriptures. His thesis is that trauma affects memory and behavior in indirect ways (7). On the relationship of history and trauma, as well as the dangers in an over-emphasis on aporia and unreadability, see D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2nd ed. with new preface; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

Metaphor has been the subject of an enormous amount of philosophical and literary discussion from antiquity on, not least in biblical studies.[3] It may be a transposition from one subject to another, from death to exile and vice versa; a declaration of likeness between unlike things; an elementary constituent of mind, of ordering and mapping of the world, as in cognitive theory; it may be complex or simple. Poetry uses metaphor to exploit the possibilities of the imagination, to sharpen perception, to give us a sense of seeing something for the first time. Metaphor is unpredictable, highly context dependent, and takes us in unexpected directions; it offers us unlimited interpretive opportunities. Roman Jakobson saw metaphor as foundational to what he called the poetic function, perceiving equivalences across time;[4] it thus has a syncretic, synchronic aspect; through it the unfolding corpus of Isaiah becomes whole, as we read one passage in light of another, remote one. Of course, this is only one half of the story: metaphor can be differential, disjunctive and what I call deconstructive; it can split the atom. By this I mean that as much as we construct a poetic (and everyday) world through metaphor, we simultaneously open it to alternative possibilities, to ambiguity, and to further questions.

In Isaiah, all metaphors speak for the unspeakable; the primary metaphor is the transfer from silence and ineffability into speech. It is a drama repeated every time the prophet opens his mouth. Derrida writes (or speaks) several times about his fascination with the *vouloir dire*, "wishing or meaning to say", with the moment, without content, between the

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[3]For a comprehensive account of ancient and modern philosophical theories of metaphor, see D. Hills, "Metaphor," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (ed. E. N. Zalta; Fall 2017 Edition: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/metaphor/). Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor (*Enduring Exile: The Metaphorization of Exile in the Hebrew Bible* [VTSup 41; Leiden: Brill, 2011], 16–21) provides a succinct summary of approaches to metaphor in the Hebrew Bible. See also P. van Hecke, ed., *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (BETL 187; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005). An important early contribution was C. V. Camp and C. R. Fontaine, eds., *Women, War, and Metaphor: Language and Society in the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Semeia 61; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), especially Camp's introductory essay, "Metaphor in Feminist Biblical Interpretation: Theoretical Perspectives," 3–36. A cognitive approach is introduced by H. Løland, *Silent or Salient Gender? The Interpretation of Gendered God-Language in the Hebrew Bible, exemplified by Isaiah 42, 46 and 49* (FAT II/ 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 1–57.

[4]R. Jakobson, "Poetics and Linguistics: A Concluding Statement" in *Style and Language* (ed. T. Sebeok; Cambridge: MIT, 1960), 350–378, 358. For Jakobson metaphor and metonymy are the two vectors of poetry and prose respectively, the former finding equivalences across the sequence. For a thorough-going Jakobsonian analysis of biblical poetry, see A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

urge to utter, or the reluctance to do so, and the speech itself.[5] If death and exile are characterized by silence, non-being, and cultural disintegration, language may resuscitate the dead, at least by restoring a cultural tradition, and give names to the nameless. The poetry of the book is also metaphorical in that it translates the language of God into human speech. In the commissioning scene of chapter 6, Isaiah complains that he is of impure lips among a people of impure lips; after he is purified by the seraph, his language is implicitly different from all others, an incommensurability confirmed by the instruction to mandate and instil incomprehension. The strangeness of prophetic language is a motif throughout the book, and has been the subject of essays by the French critic Maurice Blanchot and by Herbert Marks.[6] Moreover, while revelation, the opening of the eyes, is promised, it never actually happens, at least within the book. So every word – including those referring to blindness and deafness – potentially conceals a mystery, is a challenge to interpretation. It may mean other than that which it says. God, in particular, is אל מסתתר, a God who conceals himself (45:15), one who hides his face from the house of Jacob, המסתיר פניו מבית יעקב (8:17) and this is the condition for writing the book, or at least one version of the book (8:16–17), if that is what it means to "seal Torah in my disciples".[7] The aspect I wish to highlight is the possibility of strangeness and inexhaustibility in metaphor, an estrangement of language from its familiar meanings and contexts, especially in poetic metaphor. Maurice Blanchot writes of prophecy as the "naked

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[5]Derrida's fascination goes back to his *Of Grammatology* (trans. G. C. Spivak; Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) and is rendered explicit in an interview in his *Positions* (trans. A. Bass; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 14. Furthermore, he circles round the question in the essay "Literature in Secret," in *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret* (trans. D. Wills; 2nd ed.; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 119–158.

[6]M. Blanchot, "Prophetic Speech," in *The Book to Come* (trans. S. Cornell; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 79–86; H. Marks, "On Prophetic Stammering" in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory* (ed. R. Schwartz; Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), 60–80.

[7]Many scholars take this literally, as referring to a written document. See, for example, J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 232, 243–244; W. A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 1–12* (trans. U. Berges; HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 231–232. Others read it metaphorically, referring to the teachings stored up in the disciples' memory e. g. H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12* (trans. T. Trapp; Continental Commentary; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 366. See also R. E. Clements, "Written Prophecy: The Case of the Isaiah Memoir," in *Jerusalem and the Nations: Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (HBM 16; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 53–65. A previous version of Clements' article appeared in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and M. H. Floyd; SBL Symposium Series; Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 89–101.

encounter with the Outside",[8] by which he means something beyond all human experience, and its necessary translation into human language. The prophet and his children, in the passage quoted above, are "signs and portents" from YHWH of Hosts, but we do not know what they are signs and portents of, except to signify his hidden presence.[9] The book is a חזון, a "vision", a word used for prophetic, clairvoyant experience, and hence for a clarity that sees beyond appearances, into the far future for instance. The language of the book is a transposition and obscuring of that vision, which, as I have written elsewhere, turns into hearing and speech.[10] It is a rendering of the invisible deity, the source of all words and images, into language, which conceals his presence, his "face". An example of this is the transgressive vision of chapter 6, where what we see is precisely what we do not see.

If there is a mystery beyond words – and this is a dimension of metaphor often overlooked in biblical studies – the book is self-evidently not metaphorical in large part; or rather, metaphoricity implies literality, something to which metaphor refers, if only indirectly. Death and exile are real events, horizons of human and cultural experience. Many passages are not metaphorical, or only use conventional metaphors; often it is hard to decide whether a description, like the paradise of the animals in 11:6–8, is meant to be literal or metaphorical. There is recourse to subsets of metaphor like simile or comparison or other figures of speech, such as metonymy, and sometimes they intertwine. The ציץ נבל, "the fading diadem/flower", of 28:1 is an example. As a flower, it is a metaphor for transience as well as beauty; as a diadem, it is a metonymy for sovereignty, especially in parallel with עטרת, "crown". Trauma is surrounded by thickets of language, by endless displacements, and sometimes by the breakdown of language, for example in weeping. There is the huge poetic effort to accommodate, explain, and create something beautiful out of tragedy, and the interminable risk of failure.

Once I tried a psychoanalytic approach to some of this material (the Oracles against the Nations) with reference to the French psychoanalytic critics Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous. I argued that the conventional term משא, "burden", used for the Oracles against the Nations, suggested

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[8] Blanchot, "Prophetic Speech," 80.

[9] The indeterminacy of the signs is reinforced by the ambiguity of the children's symbolic names. That of She'ar Yashuv will be discussed below.

[10] F. Landy, "Vision and Voice in Isaiah," *JSOT* 88 (2000): 19–36. Reprinted in F. Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma and Other Essays in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 312: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 371–391.

a depressive weight on the prophet, and an effort to express inconsolable grief that manifested itself, for example, in obsessive wordplays. I am ever more cautious about this approach; nonetheless, I am attentive to what is unknown in writing.[11] Poets write in response to something, which may be a Muse or a divine voice, and the prophetic text, as Blanchot says, is a dialogue between the prophet and a terrifying or mysterious alterity. What is the role of the unconscious in writing, at the intersection of the individual and the collective? And how should one attend to it? For that reason a certain degree of tentativeness accompanies all my work, a sense of not quite knowing where I am going.[12] One has to be attentive to precisely what one cannot know, the minute intonations of the writer, the imaginative world – in Lacan's terms, the *imaginaire* – that he or she allows us to enter. Writing, reading, and criticism are sensual, tactile activities; one feels the words on the tongue. The beauty, or, contrarily, the ugliness, of language is infused with the fantasies of the writer, with intimate pleasures and fears. In Isaiah's terms, criticism, at least interesting criticism, requires a certain "hearing beyond the hearing of the ears" (11:3). I have been influenced by the work of the psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, who argued for the growth of a "play space", initially between mother and child, as the location of all cultural experience, in which the child can experiment with the possibilities of being.[13] I am interested in the experience of writing, and its relation to the experience of a world that has become alien, as is surely the case with every prophet. Cixous writes of writing as being an encounter with death and the dream world.[14] It deals with the elementary drives of life and death, with the working through of trauma, and with primary relations, notably those of parent and child, husband and wife, with all their attendant ambivalences

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[11]I have talked about this in an interview with Ian D. Wilson: "Paradoxes, Enigmas, and Professorship" in *University of Alberta Religious Studies Spring Newsletter 2014* (see https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:12927/). Some of the following discussion is adapted from the interview.

[12]F. Landy, "Reading, Writing, and Exile," in Ben Zvi and Levin, *The Concept of Exile*, 257–273, 259–260. See J. Hillis Miller, "What Do Stories about Pictures Want?" *Critical Inquiry* 34 (2008): 59–97, on the blindness of writing, and R. P. Carroll, "Blindsight and the Vision Thing," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition. Volume 1* (ed. C. C. Broyles and C. A. Evans; VTSup 70/1; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 79–93, who argues that only a blind, or, even stronger, a blinded, critic can properly read visionary poetry like Isaiah.

[13]F. Landy, "On Metaphor, Play, and Nonsense," in Camp and Fontaine, *Women, War, and Metaphor*, 219–237. Republished in Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma*, 252–271.

[14]H. Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (trans. S. Cornell and S. Sellers; New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

and transpositions. Israel, for instance, is son, daughter and wife; God is father, mother, and husband, evoking primal fantasies of love and death. Through it we have access to the "dream world" of ancient Israel and Yehud, its alternative realities.

Metaphors for death and exile refer back to the gap between the monarchic and restoration periods, and thus to an abyss, a black hole, which threatens to consume, as I have mentioned, the entire metanarrative. The abiding fantasy is of being dead while alive, and alive while dead. Metaphors are both displacements of the trauma – attempts to render the unspeakable in language – and ways of pointing to fundamental connections, realities and relations. Death and exile thus are both used metaphorically, often in relation to each other, to signify the world the poet/prophet imagines, and reciprocally everything in the book points, through relations of analogy, contrast, and association, back to those events. Both, moreover, are encompassing, universal conditions; the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation are examples of the fate of all nations, of the sense of estrangement, of bereavement, loss, and nostalgic desire. Jerusalem is every city, as Robert Carroll commented, the city of chaos as well as the city of God.[15] It represents the entire human aspiration, and the critique, from within, of the attempt to secure a perfect world. Outside the book as well as at its centre there is death and its associated images: the pit, the desert, etc. God writes his book, the book of YHWH (34:16), and outside it there is nothing (everything is in it, it says), or else there are readers, space travellers if you will, come from far away to make sense of this past which also, somehow, includes themselves. So exile is the condition of interpretation.

I will focus on images of exile, given the theme of this volume, that intersect with those of death. Isaiah is remarkable, as I have intimated, for its lack of direct representation of exile, in contrast to Amos and Hosea, in both of which death and deportation are the twin and alternating fates awaiting Israel; and to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which actually live through it.[16] Exile does appear in disguise, however, or transferred to others, rec-

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[15]R. P. Carroll, "City of Chaos, City of Stone, City of Flesh: Urbanscapes in Prophetic Discourses," in *Every City Shall Be Forsaken: Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East* (ed. L. Grabbe and R. D. Heck; JSOTSup 330; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 45–61.

[16]J. Nogalski, "Isaiah and the Twelve: Scrolls with Parallel Functions in the *Corpus Propheticum*" (unpublished paper), notes that the Book of the Twelve has a similar gap at the centre.

ollected or anticipated as coming to an end,[17] and yet persisting as an
unassuageable wound. The dead will never come back; the past, and the
Davidic dynasty, will never be restored.

The first reference to exile is as complex as any, and neatly twins the
motifs of death and exile: גלה עמי מבלי דעת, "my people is exiled with-
out knowledge", from the series of woe oracles in chapter 5. Exile here
may be literal, but it is followed immediately by the descent into Sheol:
"Therefore Sheol has stretched its throat and gaped its mouth without
limit …" (5:14).[18] So exile is descent into Sheol, but it is also ignorance;
"my people is exiled without knowledge" may mean that they do not know
that they are exiled, or that they are unaware of YHWH's work, as it says in
5:12: "the deed of YHWH they have not looked on, the work of his hands
they have not seen." Then exile is from the recognition of God's acts,
and all the associated commonplaces that make them into "my people";
exile is from knowledge of their proper allegiance, a motif that goes back
to the beginning of the book (1:2–3). The context is a denunciation of
drunkards: "Woe to those who rise early to pursue drink, staying up
late; wine lights up for them" (5:11); exile would then be a metaphor
for their taking leave of their senses. All these connections inform each
other: drunkenness = ignorance = exile = death, and so on, and they are
amplified by the many links between them, as when the revellers continue
their party in Sheol, unaware that they have died, or as the men of hunger
(מְתִי רעב) are also dead of hunger (מֵתִי רעב), the living dead. Of course,
drunkenness is also a metaphor for the various evils castigated in the woe
oracles, all of which reflect each other – injustice, land appropriation, the
inversion of wisdom. The whole passage is characterized by systematic
reversals. The drunkards are parched with thirst (5:13); Sheol imbibes
the drinkers. Here exile may refer to deportation, but also to an internal
condition. Sheol opens up a void in the midst of society which swallows up
and annuls everything: the nobility, described as כבודו in 5:13, the system
of justice, conventional wisdom (5:21–22), and the intoxication of power
(5:22).

Similar ambiguities pervade the commissioning scene in chapter 6,
which I see as a metapoetic key to the book. The glory of YHWH, pro-
claimed by the seraphim in 6:3 as immanent in the world, is manifest in

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[17]For example in the injunction to "Go out from there" in 52:11.
[18]One may note the range of reference of נפש, here somewhat conventionally translated
"throat". It may also mean "appetite," evoking the proverbial insatiability of death (Prov
30:15–16), or "life-force", suggesting an oxymoron, that death is animate.

desolation and deportation (6:11–12), in its perceived absence, and thus in the metanarrative. The ambiguity turns on the different meanings of שוב, which may mean "repent" or "return", in 6:10 and 6:13. In 6:10, the command to prevent understanding precludes the people's return to God and "healing." In 6:13 it may refer to the return from the exile predicted in 6:12,[19] as well as to restoration to YHWH.

In 7:3, Isaiah is accompanied in his confrontation with Ahaz by his son, She'ar Yashuv. She'ar Yashuv may be one of the "signs and portents" constituted by Isaiah's sons, but if so he is a silent onlooker in the unfolding scene. Isaiah entreats Ahaz to request a sign from YHWH, presumably that the Aramean-Ephraimite coalition will be defeated, but the sign is already there. The sign that Ahaz is given willy-nilly, the birth of Immanuel, portends the failure of the Davidic dynasty and a new era. YHWH accompanies us, for good or ill, through every catastrophe, such as the advent of the Assyrians in 7:17. The future in the land it holds out, impoverished or felicitous, is in tension with the trajectory of exile and return symbolised by She'ar Yashuv. What is She'ar Yashuv doing there? He is a witness perhaps, who can transmit knowledge of the scene to the future, and thus ensure the survival of prophecy, but he is also the embodiment of an alternative destiny, which may be hopeful – a remnant shall return – or derisory – only a remnant shall return. She'ar Yashuv is a loose end in the narrative, but stands for the greater one, for the overall perspective and future of the book. Metaphorically, the story is the child of prophecy,[20] and the prophet and his sons become metaphors, parables, for the divine program. We find this repeatedly in prophetic narratives, in which prophets exemplify the difficulties of divine communication. She'ar Yashuv, as the future, may stand in some kind of relation with that presented by Immanuel, Maher-Shallal-Hash-Baz, the Davidic heir of 9:5–6 and 11:1–10, the other children in the book; it may be the same or different. He may be a reader or interpreter, in whom the book is sealed or may be read or unread, according to the parable of 29:11–12. The question, moreover, is Isaiah's challenge to Ahaz: שאל לך אות מעם ה' אלהיך העמק שאלה, "Request a sign for yourself … be it deep as Sheol"

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[19] In fact, 6:12 is more ambiguous, since "Great is the abandonment in the midst of the land" might simply refer to depopulation, the decimation predicted in 6:13.

[20] In 8:1–4, Isaiah has intercourse with a "prophetess," who gives birth to the child Maher-Shallal-Hash-Baz. That both its parents are prophets gives it an inherent prophetic status. See F. Landy, "Prophetic Intercourse," in *Sense and Sensibility: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll* (ed. A. G. Hunter and P. R. Davies; JSOTSup 348; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 261–279.

(7:11). The pun suggests a correlation between questioning and Sheol; as if Ahaz's refusal to ask questions is because of his fear of death, or Sheol is the source of the deepest human questions, of a sense of foundationlessness. Ahaz momentarily betrays the sceptical voice, precisely through his pious dissimulation.[21]

She'ar Yashuv comes back, as a revenant, in 10:21–22, verses usually seen as supplementary. There, however, it becomes a prediction of a return to God, שאר ישוב שאר יעקב אל אל גבור, "A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to God the mighty" (v. 21) in a passage in which the motifs of destruction, depopulation, and exile combine with ethical transformation. אל גבור, however, also recalls one of the titles of the Davidic heir in 9:5.[22] Royal and divine attributes interfuse; the return may be to an idealised Davidide, with all that that may mean, as well as to YHWH.

In chapter 20, the prophet is once again "a sign and portent", this time of the exile of Egypt and Ethiopia (20:4). Here the motif of the exile is deflected onto other nations, figures of remoteness, ancient splendour, and power, whose deportation anticipates and distracts from that of Judah. The prophet symbolically participates in their humiliation, by walking naked for three years. Nakedness is a sign of marginality; the prophet, as throughout the Oracles about the Nations, identifies with the victim.[23] Exile is acted out in his body, through his dramatically stripping himself of his dignity, subjecting himself to the pornographic gaze to which the Egyptians and Ethiopians are exposed, especially given that the text draws attention to the buttocks. He becomes a prophet to the nations, representing, for a moment, the universality of the prophetic commission, and an abstraction from Israel. If clothing represents culture, social status, and aesthetic refinement, nudity reduces the prophet (and the nations) to

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[21]As H. Liss (*Die Unerhörte Prophetie: Kommunikative Strukturen prophetische Rede im Buch Yesha'yahu* [Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 14; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2003], 89) says, Ahaz is acting in accordance with the constraints of his historical and religious context, in which doubting the will of God is sacrilegious. This characterizes him as belonging to the uncomprehending people of the commission of 6:9–10. Hence the irony of the passage. Parallels with Gideon's testing of YHWH are frequently made.

[22]For the interconnections in this passage, see Beuken, *Jesaja 1–12*, 280. One might note that Marvin A. Sweeney (*Isaiah 1–39 with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* [FOTL 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 208) thinks it is a midrashic development of earlier texts by Isaiah, following the fall of Samaria.

[23]On 'queerness' in this passage, see R. Graybill, *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4–11.

bare humanity. Exile becomes a metaphor for cognitive estrangement,[24] and also for Israel's (and the prophetic) mission to the world. This leads directly to the dialectic between the first and second parts of Isaiah, and the problem of what the return and exile mean.

Exile figures too in the last of the prophetic stories in Isaiah. Hezekiah shows the Babylonian emissaries who visit him on his recovery from his sickness all his treasures; consequently, Isaiah predicts, these treasures will be carried off to Babylon and Hezekiah's sons (or at least some of them) will be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. This is the most direct reference to exile in Proto-Isaiah, and immediately precedes the prologue to Deutero-Isaiah. It portends the end of the Davidic dynasty at the moment of its apparent apogee, with the miraculous deliverance from the Assyrians. Hezekiah's lapse is inexplicable and fatal, like Josiah's a century later; even his reaction, like Josiah's, suggests acceptance of transience: *après moi, le déluge*. The Davidic dynasty, the focus of so much attention in Proto-Isaiah, and so many utopian fantasies, will die out, sterilely, in the Babylonian court. Except that there is a future: "let not the eunuch say, 'I am a dry tree'" (56:3).[25] This at least suggests a different kind of progeny, perhaps indeed a different tree from that in 11:1–10.

Exile appears also in the previous chapter, in Hezekiah's prayer: דורי נסע ונגלה מני כאהל רעי, "My generation is plucked up; it is exiled/removed from me like a shepherd's tent" (38:12). Hezekiah's prayer, like everything in the presentation of Hezekiah in these chapters, constructs him, as it were, as a post-monarchic king, a Davidide of the Psalms rather than history. His only action, apart from his moment of folly, is prayer. In the poem, he laments his mortality; even the fifteen years' grace God grants him is only a temporary reprieve. I read דורי as "my generation" rather than "my dwelling,"[26] in parallel with יושבי חדל, "inhabitants

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[24]Isaiah does not speak throughout this passage, and there is no indication that he understands the meaning of his strange action. He drops out of language, just as he is stripped of all the accoutrements of culture. Cf. Liss, *Die Unerhörte Prophetie*, 196.

[25]The relationship between 39:7 and 56:3 is often noted. Jacob Stromberg (*Isaiah after Exile: The Author of Third Isaiah as Reader and Redactor of the Book* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 218) thinks that the reference to eunuchs was projected back into Isa 39 by the editors of Trito-Isaiah.

[26]The only other instance in which דור may have this meaning is Isa 53:8a, though I think it is dubious (cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 481). W. A. M. Beuken (*Isaiah 28–39* [trans. B. Doyle; Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven: Peeters, 2000], 397), suggests that it refers to "a circular form of settlement," associated for instance with כדור, "ball", but there is little supporting evidence. The main grounds for rejecting the common meaning of "generation" is contextual; "my dwelling" makes a good parallel with the "shepherd's tent".

of the ceasing world" in the previous verse;[27] נגלה combines different meanings of the root גלה – exile, remove, reveal – on which more later; נסע may evoke travel as well as the plucking up of tent pegs, as in 33:20. The shepherd's tent is clearly a metaphor for transitoriness, compounded perhaps by sacred associations. The poem expresses the isolation and fear of a man on the edge of death, without any royal trappings (one might contrast David's last words in 2 Sam 23). That his generation has been plucked up (or has travelled) suggests his solitude; he is already separated from his cohort. The metaphorical equivalence of death and exile is reversed; for the dying self, life is disclosed or removed, it is an exile from death. Moreover, his generation, his circle, is also passing, each on his or her own path. It is a kind of epitaph for the old world, that of Proto-Isaiah, and a harbinger of the new world, proclaimed in chapter 40.

Elsewhere I have written about what I call spectrality in Deutero-Isaiah, especially in its prologue.[28] By this I mean that it echoes motifs and preoccupations of Proto-Isaiah, in this case the call vision in chapter 6, but from the other side of the disaster. We have no temple, no seraphim, the glory of YHWH is to be revealed in the future, but is not manifest in the present, there is merely a wilderness in which the way is to be opened. The herald announces YHWH's imminent coming, but he never arrives, at least in the book. The poet/prophet despairs about the possibility of meaningful speech, in contrast to the eagerness of the prophet in 6:8.

The exile, גלות, is referred to explicitly as such in 45:13, for the only time in the book. הוא יבנה עירי וגלותי ישלח, "he will build my city and send forth my exile." Cyrus is the new Davidide;[29] but Jerusalem

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However, if one sees it in continuity with יושבי הדל, that objection is removed. For a similar argument, see A. L. H. M. van Wieringen, "Notes on Isaiah 38–39," *BN* 102 (2000): 28–32, 29. Michael L. Barré (*The Lord Has Saved Me: A Study of the Psalm of Hezekiah (Isaiah 38: 9–20)* [CBQMS 39; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 2005], 81) thinks it means "lifetime."

[27]The term חדל, "cessation", is sometimes emended to חלד, "world"; there is little reason for this, as Beuken notes (*Isaiah 28–39*, 380). There are at least two instances of word play between חדל and חלד: Pss 39:5–6 and 49:2, 9. חלד always has a connotation of transitoriness. See further M. Dahood, "הָלֶד 'Cessation' in Isaiah 38:11," *Bib* 52 (1971): 215–216.

[28]F. Landy, "Spectrality in the Prologue to Deutero-Isaiah," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. J. Everson and H. C. P. Kim; Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 131–159. An earlier version was published as "The Ghostly Prelude to Deutero-Isaiah," *BibInt* 14 (2006): 332–363.

[29]L. S. Fried ("Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1," *HTR* 95 [2002]: 373–393) argues for the full transference of Davidic theology onto Cyrus. For the tension with the Deuteronomic law of the king (Deut 17:14–20), see I. D. Wilson, "Yhwh's

will be part of the Persian Empire. Cyrus does not know YHWH; God is concealed (45:15); his work is invisible.[30] The entire rhetorical force of Deutero-Isaiah is directed against this pervasive reality. Return from exile coexists with the persistence of exile; God acts so that he should be known by the entire world from east to west and particularly by Cyrus, but he remains unknown and perhaps unknowable. The exile is the place from which one comes, especially given the merging of the paths of Abraham and Cyrus, corresponding to their awakening, their journey to consciousness. Exile is the origin; we do not know where we are at home. So there are a number of persistent metaphors: exile is home, the beginning, the matrix, and so on. Conversely, Deutero-Isaiah is characterized by its panoply of interwoven metaphors for the return from exile: the new Exodus, the new Creation, birth from the divine mother, victory over chaos, awakening. The metaphors themselves suggest a poetic endeavour, a passage to the word that lasts for ever, the only thing that lasts for ever, when the imperial powers have faded.[31] One might see here the beginnings of Judaism as a diasporic religion, what Jonathan Z. Smith called "utopian" religion, a dialectic between here, there and anywhere.[32] Jerusalem and the exile, being at home and not-at-home, interchange. The metaphor is then the equivalence of Jerusalem and the world, the new Davidide's mission to build the city and the establishment of the Persian Empire. There is a recurrent transfer of imagery and ideology. We find this, for instance, in the redefinition of the prophet's and Israel's task

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Anointed: Cyrus, Deuteronomy's Law of the King, and Yehudite Identity," in *Political Memory in and after the Persian Empire* (ed. J. M. Silverman and C. Waerzeggers; Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 325–362.

[30]Ian D. Wilson ("Yhwh's Consciousness: Isaiah 40–48 and Ancient Judean Historical Thought," *VT* 66 [2016]: 346–361, 348) argues that the repeated ידעתני אל in Isa 45:4 and 5 refers to the past, on the grounds of the contrast with the *yiqtol* forms that precede it. However, I think that the structure of the sentences, in which the phrase ידעתני אל is climactic, suggests that it is the (non) result of the processes previously described. Despite all that YHWH has done for him, Cyrus still does not know him. It accords with the dialectic of not knowing/knowing and blindness/vision which pervades these chapters.

[31]John Goldingay ("Isaiah 40–55 in the 1990s: Among Other Things Deconstructing, Mystifying, Intertextual, Socio-Critical, Hearer-Involving," *BibInt* 5 [1997], 225–246, 229) notes that the utterly intangible and ephemeral word only lasts through writing.

[32]J. Z. Smith "The Wobbling Pivot," in *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978), 88–103; and "Map is Not Territory", in *Map is Not Territory*, 288–309. Smith subsequently revised his views in "Here, There, and Anywhere," in *Relating Religions: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 323–339. An excellent application of Smith's theory to the motif of exile in Deutero-Isaiah is J. Linville, "Playing with Maps of Exile: Displacement, Utopia, and Disjunction," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 275–293.

as being a light to the nations in 42:6 and 49:6, the superimposition of the return on the map of the Empire in 11:11 and 66:19, the pervasive ambiguity as to what constitutes Israel: does it include the sinners? Does it include the nations? Is it defined ethnically or by allegiance to YHWH? Is it a regime of truth or a political institution? Is the Temple real or metaphorical, as in 28:16–17?

The last text I want to discuss is 49:14–21, especially the last verse. ואמרת בלבבך מי ילד לי את אלה ואני שכולה וגלמודה גלה וסורה ואלה מי גדל הן אני נשארתי לבדי אלה איפה הם, "And you said in your heart, 'Who bore these for me? And I was bereaved and forlorn, exiled and wandering, and these, who raised them? I was left solitary and these, where are they?'" Zion was in exile; the exile is both that of her children, so that a hypostatized Zion accompanies the exiles on their wanderings, like the later Shekhinah, and suggests too that she is exiled from her children and her home, an implication amplified by the image of divorce in 50:1–2. She is the bereaved mother, a familiar figure of lament; the exile is conflated with death. We are back to the metaphorical equivalence of exile and death with which we started. The exiled children are metaphorically dead, or they are the survivors of the dead, who are mourned, for instance, in 51:17–21. As survivors, they are spectral, ghosts of an irrecoverable past; the fantasy is the mother who imagines that her children have come back to her. According to the familiar psychoanalytic theory of mourning, one leaves part of oneself with the dead; this is especially so with traumatic catastrophes, like the Shoah. The irony, however, is that it is the dead children themselves who are ventriloquizing their mother grieving for them, through the prophet. Mother Zion, moreover, is really dead, only surviving through the laments of her dead children.[33] The dead children lament for the dead mother, who laments for them.

Except that the mother is also alive, whether metaphorically, as the exiled children, or through Cyrus' rebuilding program and thus as the Persian imperium, or in God's dreams. The children imagine being re-united with the lost mother. However, the fantasy of the mother's death is combined with one that is even more terrifying: that of the mother who forgets her children. This is how the passage begins in v. 15: "Will a woman forget her infant? … Yes, even these will forget …". There of course it is presented rhetorically as an impossibility, but here it becomes actual: "Who gave birth to these? … Who raised them? …Where are they?" The

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[33]Moreover, as John Goldingay (*The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* [London: T & T Clark, 2005], 387) points out, she herself is a child in v. 15.

mother who does not recognize her children or even remember giving birth renders home alien in an absolute sense, in that the children are orphans from birth. Exile is forgetfulness. The passage is framed by joy, in part because it is God speaking, claiming parental responsibility, and telling Zion that they are the children of her bereavement (בני שכליך), and partly because Zion's apparent disclaimer is clearly preliminary to their acknowledgement. She says, as it were, "I can't believe it! It's not true!" But it is true.

Nevertheless, in the next verses the nations take over the maternal function, as they do in the parallel passage in the final chapter of the book (66:12–13). So who then is the real mother? It may be God, the super-mother, who remembers when everyone else has forgotten. But God too is the subject of anxiety and grief. Zion thinks God has forgotten her; God holds the memory of Zion's walls "before me for ever" (v. 15): the walls that signify its desolation. For God too, Zion is an empty space. Moreover, God is ambivalent, creating darkness and evil (45:7), ultimately responsible for the desolation for which he grieves. So we have three mothers, all of whom signify a different kind of exile. God brings death as well as life, destroys the matrix where his children are born; exile is from the womb as well as death. Zion is the spectral mother, who cannot remember her maternity. The nations are surrogate mothers, figuring Israel as foster-children.

I have looked at metaphors for exile and death, and how exile and death function as twinned metaphors, to distract from the central trauma, the gap at the centre of the world of Isaiah, and I have explored how they permeate the imaginary landscapes and linguistic domains of the book. For example, in chapter 5 exile and death characterize the entire corrupt and normative world of Judah; the command to prevent communication in chapter 6 delays comprehension until the final parousia. In particular, the metaphors systemically transpose the poetics and politics of the first part of the book onto the second, so that Cyrus becomes the new Davidide, Zion is in exile, Judaism is diasporic as well as locative, the glorious return and the grand metanarrative is superimposed on the persistence of exile, estrangement and the inclusion of the nations. Home is never where we started from.

The root for exile, גלה, is the same as that for revelation, though