THE BABYLONIAN EXILE AS THE BIRTH TRAUMA OF MONOTHEISM

It was a "silent revolution" [1], but perhaps the most momentous in the history of religions, when Judean scribes first denied the existence of any gods other than Yhwh. The earliest evidence of this explicit claim is found in Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah [2]. Both texts are likely to have been composed around, or some time after, 539 BCE, when the downfall of Babylonia was sealed, the new imperial rule of Persia was established, and the restoration of Judea became a realistic possibility. The reasons that led to the transition from the promotion of the exclusive worship of Yhwh in pre-exilic Judah to the post-exilic formulation of 'theoretical monotheism'

[1] For criticism of the notion of "revolutionary monotheism" see B. PONGRATZ-LEISTEN (ed.), *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (Winona Lake, IN 2011), esp. the contributions of B. Pongratz-Leisten (1-40), M.S. Smith (241-270) and K. Schmid (271-289) in the same volume. "Silent revolution" here implies developments that lead to an initially hardly perceivable shift with important long term consequences. The notion was introduced with reference to value change in the 1960s and 1970s in R. INGLEHART, *The Silent Revolution*. Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics (Princeton, NJ 1977).

[2] "Deutero-Isaiah" is here used as a conventional reference to Isaiah 40–55 without implying its authorial unity. The question as to whether Deuteronomy 4 precedes Deutero-Isaiah is a matter of debate that will not be addressed in this article. G. BRAULIK, "Deuteronomy and the Birth of Monotheism", in IDEM, *The Theology of Deuteronomy* (trans. U. LINDBLAD) (BIBAL Collected Essays 2; N. Richland Hills, TX 1994) 99-130 (orig.: "Das Deuteronomium und die Geburt des Monotheismus", *Studien zur Theologie des Deuteronomiums* [SBAB 2; Stuttgart 1988] 257-300) argued for Deuteronomy 4 to be the origin of biblical monotheism. For the historical precedence of Deutero-Isaiah, see, among others, S. PETRY, *Die Entgrenzung JHWHs*. Monolatrie, Bilderverbot und Monotheismus im Deuteronomium, in Deuterojesaja und im Ezechielbuch (FAT II 27; Tübingen 2007) esp. 392; F. HARTENSTEIN, "Die unvergleichliche 'Gestalt' JHWHs. Israels Geschichte mit den Bildern im Licht von Dtn 4,1-40", *Die Sichtbarkeit des Unsichtbaren*. Zur Korrelation von Text und Bild im Wirkungskreis der Bibel (ed. B. JANOWSKI – N. ZCHOMELIDSE) (AGWB 3; Stuttgart 2003) 49-77, esp. 56; E. OTTO, *Deuteronomium 1,1 – 4,43* (HThKAT; Freiburg i.Br. 2012) 534.

have sparked considerable debate [3]. In what follows, I shall argue that the psychological and sociological dynamics of the collective and trans-generational trauma of the Babylonian Exile in conjunction with the need to rationalize the challenge of the overpowering Babylonian culture played an important — if not decisive — role in the emergence of monotheism. I shall do this, after a brief review of research, by sketching the contours of the Babylonian Exile as cultural trauma and analysing the key texts of Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah. Against this background, I shall explain the sense in which the Babylonian Exile can be described as the "birth trauma" of monotheism.

I. Theories on the Emergence of Monotheism

Theories on the emergence of monotheism have been proposed by historians of religion [4], and specifically in biblical scholarship. I shall here juxtapose the theories of biblical scholars with a quite distinct discourse — the theories of the traumatic origins of monotheism proposed by Sigmund Freud and Jan Assmann.

1. *Freud and Assmann on the Traumatic Origins of Monotheism*

In his last book, *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion* (*Moses and Monotheism*) [5], Sigmund Freud advanced some daring hypotheses. Moses was, Freud argued, an Egyptian who became the leader of the Israelites in Egypt and transmitted to them Akhenaten's monotheism that was repressed in Egypt itself [6]. This Egyptian Moses, however, was murdered by the Israelites in the desert [7]. Another Midianite Moses-figure

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[3] I understand "theoretical monotheism" as referring to the explicitly claimed or implicitly presupposed assumption that only one God exists, as opposed to the propagation of the exclusive worship of one deity that does not exclude the existence of others (usually called monolatry). For this use of "theoretical monotheism", see, e.g., J. SCHAPER, *Media and Monotheism*. Presence, Representation, and Abstraction in Ancient Judah (ORA 33; Tübingen 2019) 43-49, 129; G. BRAULIK, "Monotheismus im Deuteronomium: Zu Syntax, Redeform und Gotteserkenntnis in 4,32-40", in *Studien zu den Methoden der Deuteronomiumsexegese* (SBAB 42; Stuttgart 2006) 137-163 (= *ZAR* 10 [2004] 169-194) esp. 139-140.

[4] An early monograph dedicated to monotheism in non-biblical religions was R. PETTAZZONI, *Dio*. Formazione e sviluppo del monoteismo nella storia delle religioni. Volume I: L'essere celeste nelle credenze dei popoli primitivi (Roma 1922).

[5] S. FREUD, *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion* (Amsterdam 1939); ET: *Moses and Monotheism* (trans. K. JONES) (Letchworth 1939).

[6] FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 34-41.

[7] FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 59-60.

imparted the volcano god "Jahve" to the Israelites [8]. Only the prophets, "seized by the great and powerful tradition which had gradually grown in darkness", revived monotheism and "preached the old Mosaic doctrine" [9]. This reconstruction of the origin, disappearance and re-emergence of mono-theism allows Freud to construct analogies with his psychological theory. The dynamics of "Early trauma — Defence — Latency — Outbreak of the Neurosis — Partial return of the repressed material" [10] resemble not only the origin of religion as such, as Freud had argued in *Totem und Tabu* [11], but also that of monotheism. Elements of this analogy can be seen in the "traumatic experience" of the murder of the Egyptian Moses [12], the repression of "the memory of the fate that had befallen their leader and law-giver" [13], and, after a period of latency, the re-emergence of the old monotheistic religion [14]. While Freud's hypotheses about the history of Israel were not detached from biblical scholarship [15], they were so unusual that *Moses and Monotheism* was usually ignored by biblical scholars.

A reconsideration of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* in terms of its interest for the history of biblical religion was provided by the Egyptolo-gist and cultural theorist Jan Assmann. In his essay "Monotheism, Mem-ory, and Trauma: Reflections on Freud's Book on Moses" [16], Assmann rejected Freud's "hermeneutics of distrust" and his adventurous historical hypothesis [17]. Instead of seeking for the truth "archeologically" below the surface of the biblical texts, Assmann proposed to read them at face value, since they "speak of memory, remembrance, forgetting, and the repressed, of trauma and guilt" [18]. Deuteronomy is seen as a prime example of "mak-ing a memory" [19], with the curses of Deuteronomy 28 as an example of a "traumatized text", and the story of the rediscovery of the Torah book

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[8] FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 55-56.

[9] Both quotations from FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 82.

[10] FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 129.

[11] S. FREUD, *Totem und Tabu*. Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker (Leipzig 1913); cf. the summary in FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 130-135.

[12] FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 84.

[13] FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 110.

[14] FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 112-113.

[15] Freud refers, e.g., to the work of Eduard Meyer (*Moses and Monotheism*, 51-61) and Ernst Sellin (*Moses and Monotheism*, 59-60).

[16] J. ASSMANN, "Monotheismus, Gedächtnis und Trauma. Reflexionen zu Freuds Moses-Buch", *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis: Zehn Studien* (München 2000) 62-80, ET: "Monotheism, Memory, and Trauma: Reflections on Freud's Book on Moses", *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (trans. R. LIVINGSTONE) (Stanford, CA 2006) 46-62.

[17] ASSMANN, "Monotheism, Memory, and Trauma", 46-51.

[18] ASSMANN, "Monotheism, Memory, and Trauma", 51.

[19] ASSMANN, "Monotheism, Memory, and Trauma", 53.

in 2 Kings 22 an "allegory of cultural repression" [20]. The trauma behind monotheism is not, according to Assmann, the murder of Moses but the murder of the gods.

> "The trauma of monotheism is twofold. On the one hand, it is grounded in the duty, which is never quite fulfilled, to forget one's pagan faith, which keeps surfacing […] On the other hand, it is based on the destruction of the gods, who are excoriated as idols, on the deicidal power of the Mosaic distinction" [21].

Assmann applied Freud's psychological categories to phenomena that play an important role in the biblical texts and in the history of Israelite religion [22]. While the concept of "trauma" is used here in a quite abstract sense, the following argument will propose a more specific relationship between trauma and the emergence of monotheism.

2. *Biblical Scholarship on the Emergence of Monotheism*

Biblical scholars generally did not engage with Freud's speculations on the origin of monotheism [23]. In a wave of renewed interest in monotheism in the 1980s [24], biblical scholarship was, as Konrad Schmid pointed out, "returning in some respect to the state of the discussion at the very beginning of the twentieth century, which was mainly shaped by the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*" [25]. Robert Gnuse observed in 1997, after an ample

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[20] Both quotations from ASSMANN, "Monotheism, Memory, and Trauma", 55.

[21] ASSMANN, "Monotheism, Memory, and Trauma", 58-59. What is translated here as "deicidal power" could be more literally rendered "theoclastic violence" (cf. "theoklastische Gewalt" in ASSMANN, "Monotheismus, Gedächtnis und Trauma", 76).

[22] Assmann's reflections on trauma and biblical monotheism were independent from the reception of trauma theory in biblical scholarship. D. CARR, *Holy Resilience. The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (New Haven, CT 2014) esp. 55-56, refers to Assmann's theory. Far more extensive attention was paid to Assmann's theories on the "translatability" of divinity, esp. in M.S. SMITH, *God in Translation. Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (FAT 57; Tübingen 2008).

[23] An exception is David Carr (*Holy Resilience*, 121), who briefly refers to *Moses and Monotheism*, focussing on C. Caruth's discussion of it. See also CARR, *Holy Resilience*, 256-257, on Freud in the history of trauma theory.

[24] See esp. O. KEEL (ed.), *Monotheismus im Alten Israel und seiner Umwelt* (BiBe 14; Fribourg 1980); B. LANG (ed.), *Der einzige Gott. Die Geburt des biblischen Monotheismus* (Munich 1981); B. LANG, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority. An Essay in Biblical History and Sociology* (SWBA 1/1; Sheffield 1983); E. HAAG (ed.), *Gott, der Einzige. Zur Entstehung des Monotheismus in Israel* (QD 104; Freiburg i.Br. 1985); for the preceding history of research see LANG, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority*, 13-20; N. LOHFINK, "Zur Geschichte der Diskussion über den Monotheismus im Alten Israel", *Gott, der Einzige*, 9-25, esp. 9-18.

[25] K. SCHMID, "The Quest for 'God': Monotheistic Arguments in the Priestly Texts of the Hebrew Bible", *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (ed. B. PONGRATZ-LEISTEN) (Winona Lake, IN 2011) 271-289, 273; see also 274-275.

survey of research, a rising consensus according to which "monotheism appears to emerge as a culmination of several intellectual 'jumps' with a final major breakthrough in the exile" [26].

Cult centralization and tendencies towards monolatry in late pre-exilic Judah were important preconditions for the development of monotheism, alongside some pre-exilic theological elevations of the god of Israel, the most daring of which may be seen in Psalm 82, which declares the death of the other deities of the divine assembly [27]. The breakthrough of the explicit denial of the existence of gods other than YHWH, however, happened only after the end of the monarchy. "Without the loss of statehood that led the Israelites into direct subordination to foreign gods, the Yahve religion would probably have remained standing still in monolatry" [28]. The most explicit denial of the existence of other gods, marked by the expression "there is no other" (אין עוד) occurs first in Deuteronomy 4 (vv. 35, 39) and Deutero-Isaiah [29]. The use of the term "monotheism" for the history of religion expressed in the Hebrew Bible has been criticized [30], but good reasons have also been adduced in favour of its use [31]. Although the term as such did not emerge before the seventeenth century and the "monotheistic" passages in the Hebrew Bible still (have to) operate within the "language game" of poly-theism, the term makes sense as applied to some texts of the Hebrew Bible [32].

[26] R.K. GNUSE, *No Other Gods*. Emergent Monotheism in Israel (JSOT.S 241; Sheffield 1997) 347.

[27] See esp. P. MACHINIST, "How Gods Die, Biblically and Otherwise: A Problem of Cosmic Restructuring", *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*, 189-240. On early developments that prepared for the emergence of monotheism, see also J.C. DE MOOR, *The Rise of Yahwism*. The Roots of Israelite Monotheism (BEThL 91; Leuven 1990, ²1997).

[28] R. ALBERTZ, "Der Ort des Monotheismus in der israelitischen Religionsgeschichte", *Ein Gott allein?* JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer Monotheismus im Kontext der israeliti-schen und altorientalischen Religionsgeschichte (eds. W. DIETRICH – M.A. KLOPFENSTEIN) (OBO 139; Fribourg 1994) 77-96, here 92: "Ohne den Verlust der Staatlichkeit, der die Israeliten direkt unter die Abhängigkeit fremder Götter brachte, wäre die Jahwereligion wahrscheinlich bei der Monolatrie stehengeblieben".

[29] See esp. Isa 45,5.6.14.18.21.22; 46,9. For a helpful survey of related expressions (esp. לבד־, "alone", זולת־, "besides"), see M.S. SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*. Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts (New York 2003) 151-154.

[30] For the criticism of the term "monotheism", see, esp., O. LORETZ, *Des Gottes Einzigkeit*. Ein altorientalisches Argumentationsmodell zum "Schma Jisrael" (Darmstadt 1997); N. MACDONALD, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'* (FAT II,1; Tübingen 2003); N.B. LEVTOW, *Images of Others*. Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 11; Winona Lake, IN 2008) esp. 8-9, 43.

[31] Cf. E. OTTO, "Monotheismus im Deuteronomium oder wieviel Aufklärung es in der Alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft geben soll: Zu einem Buch von Nathan McDonald", *ZAR* 9 (2003) 251-257; OTTO, *Deuteronomium 1,1-4,43*, 583-585; BRAULIK, "Monotheismus im Deuteronomium"; SCHAPER, *Media and Monotheism*, esp. 38-51.

[32] On both aspects, see SCHAPER, *Media and Monotheism*, 38-51.

The formulation of "theoretical" monotheism is the most decisive step in the development of early Judaism, and it requires explanation. Most commonly, the rise of monotheism is described as a step in the history of religion anticipated by monolatry in late exilic Judah [33]. Matthias Albani explored the role of the astralization and, especially, the solarization of the divine in the emergence of monotheism [34]. Sven Petry arrived at the conclusion that monotheism was introduced in Deutero-Isaiah not earlier than the fifth century BCE, sympathizing with the theory that it was inspired by Zoroastrianism [35]. Joachim Schaper proposed that monotheism arose because of changes in the use of media such as the suppression of images and the valorisation of writing [36].

Early attempts to explain the rise of monotheism as a "response" to the Babylonian Exile as a political and religious crisis were made by Hermann Vorländer and Bernhard Lang [37]. This crisis had psychological implications [38] and led to theological "reflection" [39]. Mark Smith argued that the political context of empire in the seventh and sixth centuries "constitute the larger landscape of monotheistic discourse" [40] and, more concretely, that the development of monotheism was a response to these crises and a reaction to Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian imperial theo-politics [41].

[33] See, e.g., T. RÖMER, *The Invention of God* (trans. R. GEUSS) (Cambridge, MA 2015) esp. 216-221.

[34] M. ALBANI, *Der eine Gott und die himmlischen Heerscharen*. Zur Begründung des Monotheismus bei Deuterojesaja im Horizont der Astralisierung des Gottesverständnisses im Alten Orient (ABIG 1; Leipzig 2000) esp. 262-264.

[35] PETRY, *Die Entgrenzung JHWHs*, esp. 399-400; arguments against the influence of Zoroastrianism are summarized in SCHAPER, *Media and Monotheism*, 50-51.

[36] SCHAPER, *Media and Monotheism*.

[37] H. VORLÄNDER, "Der Monotheismus Israels als Antwort auf die Krise des Exils", *Der einzige Gott*, 84-113, 134-139, esp. 85-88; LANG, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority*, esp. 54; see also F. STOLZ, *Einführung in den biblischen Monotheismus* (Darmstadt 1996) esp. 184-187.

[38] STOLZ, *Einführung in den biblischen Monotheismus*, 187, characterized the redefinition of religion in the exilic period as a "coping strategy".

[39] M. WEIPPERT, "Synkretismus und Monotheismus: Religionsinterne Konfliktbewältigung im Alten Israel", *Jahwe und die anderen Götter*. Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des antiken Israel in ihrem syrisch-palästinischen Kontext (FAT 18; Tübingen 1997) 1-24 (repr. of *Kultur und Konflikt* [eds. J. ASSMANN – D. HARTH] [Frankfurt a.M. 1990] 143-179). Weippert emphasizes the intellectual process (p. 23): "In der Reflexion über die Ursachen des Exils […] konnten sie den entscheidenden Schritt tun und in Jahwe den einzigen Gott erkennen". Weippert's view was accepted by E. ZENGER, "Der Monotheismus Israels. Entstehung — Profil — Relevanz", *Ist der Glaube Feind der Freiheit?* Die neue Debatte um den Monotheismus (ed. T. SÖDING) (QD 196; Freiburg i.Br. 2003) 9-52, here 44.

[40] SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 164-165.

[41] M. SMITH, *The Memoirs of God*. History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel (Minneapolis, MN 2004) esp. 119-121. Moreover, Smith suggested that

Explicitly contextualizing this issue in the application of trauma studies to the Hebrew Bible, David Carr proposed a connection between the trauma of the Babylonian Exile and the development of "a purer form of monotheism than had previously existed" [42]. The following argument will adduce trauma theory and textual analysis in support of these ideas.

II. The Babylonian Exile as Cultural Trauma

In reconstructing the Babylonian Exile as cultural trauma, two aspects need to be distinguished: first, the actual historical experience of suffering by many Judeans in the Babylonian campaigns of 597/587 BCE and their aftermath; second, how such historical experience was transmitted to later generations and preserved in literature as a constitutive element for defining the new collective identity of Judah and "Israel" in the late exilic and postexilic period. The Hebrew Bible is the principal source for both directions of inquiry, but many additional sources are available for reconstructing the historical context. Before proposing such reconstruction, I shall introduce some basic terminology from psychological and sociological trauma studies.

1. *Trauma in Psychology, Literature, and Sociology*

Psychological trauma theory has its roots in emerging psychiatry in the nineteenth century and in Freud's psychoanalysis. It was further developed in the aftermath of World War I ("shell shock") and the Vietnam War ("post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]") [43]. Awareness of trauma, however, can be traced in earlier literature:

"All the famous moralists of olden days drew attention to the way in which certain events would leave indelible and distressing memories — memories

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the destruction of Jerusalem "was recalled as the greatest trauma of Israel's history" (*Memoirs of God*, 62), even before trauma studies were applied to biblical studies.

[42] CARR, *Holy Resilience*, 83, also 8 and 222. On the reception of trauma theory in biblical studies, see also E.-M. BECKER et al. (eds.), *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions. Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* (SANt2; Göttingen 2014); E. BOASE – C.G. FRECHETTE (eds.), *Bible through the Lens of Trauma* (Semeia Studies 86; Atlanta, GA 2016); J.-P. SONNET, "Writing the Disaster: Trauma, Resilience, and *Fortschreibung*", *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Rise of the Torah* (eds. P. DUBOVSKÝ – D. MARKL – J.-P. SONNET) (FAT 107; Tübingen 2016) 349-357.

[43] On this history of research see B.A. VAN DER KOLK – L. WEISAETH – O. VAN DER HART, "History of Trauma in Psychiatry", *Traumatic Stress. The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society* (New York 2007) 47-74; R. LEYS, *Trauma. A Genealogy* (Chicago, IL 2000).

to which the sufferer was continually returning, and by which he was tormented by day and by night" [44].

Since some aspects of the development of the diagnosis of trauma in the twentieth century are specific to their concrete contexts, reflection on trauma in antiquity should employ a general definition. In the following, individual psychic "trauma" is understood as severe psychic stress with long-term consequences that are likely to involve repression, avoidance, intrusive memories, and symptoms such as panic attacks and insomnia.

In recent decades, increasing attention has been paid to the transgenerational consequences of trauma, especially in research on the transmission of trauma in families affected by the Shoah. Research in other contexts has shown that transgenerational transmission of trauma is a phenomenon found in many cultures [45]. Major historical trauma is reflected in literature produced not only by those who have actually lived through it, but also by the second, third and subsequent generations [46]. Cathy Caruth's influential work on the literary representation of trauma has placed great emphasis on the notion of traumatic amnesia, that is, the incapacity (adequately) to remember traumatic experience [47]. Against the background of this theoretical assumption, trauma is expected to appear in disruption — distorted language and narrative lacunae. This assumption has recently been questioned by Joshua Pederson on the basis of the psychologist Richard McNally's work [48]. His studies suggest that traumatic experience can actually be remembered, although memory may be repressed. It seems appropriate, then, to expect the possibility of traumatic experience to be expressed both in lacunae and in explicit description.

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[44] P. JANET, *Psychological Healing*, 2 Vols. (trans. E. PAUL – C. PAUL) (New York 1925) I:589, quoted in VAN DER KOLK – WEISAETH – VAN DER HART, "History of Trauma", 47.

[45] See esp. Y. DANIELI (ed.), *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York 1998); J. PENNEBAKER – D. PAEZ – B. RIME (eds.), *Collective Memory of Political Events*. Social Psychological Perspectives (Mahwah, NJ 1997); G. ROSENTHAL (ed.), *The Holocaust in Three Generations*. Families of Victims and Perpetrators of the Nazi Regime (2nd revised edition; Opladen 2010).

[46] Cf. E.H. MCGLOTHLIN, *Second-Generation Holocaust Literature*. Legacies of Survival and Perpetration (Rochester, NY 2006); G. SCHWAB, *Haunting Legacies, Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma* (New York 2010); V. AARONS – A.L. BERGER, *Third-Generation Holocaust Representation*. Trauma, History, and Memory (Chicago, IL 2017).

[47] C. CARUTH, *Unclaimed Experience*. Trauma, Narrative, and History (Baltimore, MD 1996); C. CARUTH (ed.), *Trauma*. Explorations in Memory (Baltimore, MD 1995).

[48] Cf. J. PEDERSON, "Speak, Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory," *NARRATIVE* 22 (2014) 333-353; R.J. MCNALLY, *Remembering Trauma* (Cambridge, MA 2003).

Sociologists have developed the concept of "collective" or "cultural" trauma [49], which should be seen in the wider conceptual framework of "cultural memory" [50]. Jeffrey Alexander describes the phenomenon as follows:

> "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" [51].

Alexander maintains that "events do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma" [52]. Rather, trauma is "socially mediated attribution" [53] and thus "imagined" in the sense that "imagination is intrinsic to the very process of representation" [54]. Collective trauma is claimed by "carrier groups" in Max Weber's sense [55]. It has an important function in the construction of collective identity and, as Dominick LaCapra pointed out, of history: "All myths of origin include something like a founding trauma, through which the people pass and emerge strengthened; at least they have stood the test of this founding trauma" [56].

Psychological and sociological aspects of trauma will inform the following reconstruction of the history and biblical representations of the Babylonian Exile. While biblical discourse is unaware of the psychological theory of individual and collective trauma and its specific language, basic psychological and socio-psychological phenomena related to traumatic stress, that are today established by observations across cultures, can be expected for humans in antiquity. Since we do not have any access to the actual suffering of humans in antiquity, any imaginative reconstruction needs to be cautious and avoid psychological overinterpretation of the textual evidence.

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[49] See esp. K. ERIKSON, *A New Species of Trouble*. Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community (New York 1994); J. ALEXANDER, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma", *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (eds. J. ALEXANDER et al.) (Berkeley, CA 2004) 1-30. Sociological concepts of "cultural trauma" tend to be quite vague in psychological terms, which may leave psychologists dissatisfied. Cf. W. KANSTEINER – H. WEILNBÖCK, "Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma", *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook (eds. A. ERLL – A. NÜNNING) (Berlin 2008) 229-240.

[50] For a helpful introduction, see J. ASSMANN, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 109-118.

[51] ALEXANDER, "Cultural Trauma", 1.

[52] ALEXANDER, "Cultural Trauma", 8.

[53] ALEXANDER, "Cultural Trauma", 8.

[54] ALEXANDER, "Cultural Trauma", 9.

[55] ALEXANDER, "Cultural Trauma", 11.

[56] D. LaCAPRA, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD 2001, ²2014) 161.

2. *Traumatic Experience: Siege, Destruction, Deportation (597/587 BCE)*

The sieges and conquests of Jerusalem, and the subsequent deportations in 597/587 [57] are narrated soberly in 2 Kings 24–25, but many other biblical texts reflect the hardship and violence these events involved for the population of Jerusalem and Judah. Prominent examples include laments in the Book of Lamentations [58], Psalms and Jeremiah, and a late section of the curses in Deut 28,47-63 [59]. Ancient Near Eastern siege strategy aimed at weakening the resistance of a town through cutting off supplies to force the city to surrender [60] — a strategy that was successful in 597 (2 Kgs 24,12). Caught in the power-play between Babylonia and Egypt and falsely relying on Egyptian support, Jehoiachin risked disloyalty to Nebuchadnezzar, which provoked the latter's punitive expedition in 598/597 in view of Babylonian long-term strategic interests in the Levant. "The primary target was Egypt; the tiny rebel state of Judah was of secondary concern but had to be made a terrible example" [61]. The Babylonian Chronicle BM 21946 reports that this campaign started in Kislev of his seventh year (November/December 598), and Jerusalem was taken on the second of Adar of the eighth (ca. 16 March 597) [62]; the siege thus took two to three months. Jehoiachin's surrender spared the city destruction but not heavy plundering, reported both in 2 Kgs 24,13 and the Babylonian Chronicle. The city's elite were deported in 597. The deportees are likely to have suffered during the siege, and they may have witnessed some punitive violence during the conquest, but they were spared seeing the devastation that was still to come.

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[57] The year 587 is here accepted for the destruction of Jerusalem and the second deportation with R. ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*. The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E. (trans. D. GREEN) (SBLStBL 3; Atlanta, GA 2003) 81; for the issues related to this date and the alternative possibility (586), see ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 78-81.

[58] See N.C. LEE, *The Singers of Lamentations*. Cities Under siege, from Ur to Jerusalem to Sarajevo (BiInS 60; Leiden 2002).

[59] On the comparison between 2 Kings 25 and Deuteronomy 28, see J.-P. SONNET, "The Siege of Jerusalem between Rhetorical Maximalism (Deuteronomy 28) and Narrative Minimalism (2 Kings 25)", *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Rise of the Torah*, 73-86.

[60] On ancient Near Eastern siege strategy, see I. EPH'AL, *The City Besieged*. Siege and Its Manifestations in the Ancient Near East (CHANE 36; Leiden 2009); F. DE BACKER, *L'art du siège néo-assyrien* (CHANE 61; Leiden 2013).

[61] ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 53. For the geopolitical context see O. LIPSCHITS, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*. Judah under Babylonian Rule (Winona Lake, IN 2005) esp. 1-35. For a comparison of Assyrian and Babylonian imperial strategy and rhetoric, see D. VANDERHOOFT, "Babylonian Strategies of Imperial Control in the West: Royal Practice and Rhetoric", *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. O. LIPSCHITS – J. BLENKINSOPP) (Winona Lake, IN 2003) 235-262, esp. 235-250.

[62] ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 78.

Zedekiah revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, who had installed him [63]. This must have been perceived as an insult: no leniency was to be expected. The second siege started in January 588 and was successfully concluded with the breach of the wall on 29th July 587 [64]. Jerusalem was ravaged by starvation according to the biblical report: "The famine was severe in the city and there was no food for the people of the land" (2 Kgs 25,3; cf. Lam 5,10). Children and the elderly were especially affected (cf. Lam 2,11-12.19.21; 4,3-5) [65]. The most severe individual traumatic fate reported in the Bible is that of Zedekiah. He had to see the killing of his sons before being blinded (2 Kgs 25,7). The temple and the city were destroyed three weeks later [66]. Deuteronomistic historiography reports in some detail the plundering of the temple (2 Kgs 25,13-17) and the execution of elite in Riblah (2 Kgs 25,18-20), but no details are given about the fate of the general population during the conquest and destruction of the city. Comparative evidence suggests that the Babylonian troops proceeded with great violence [67], which explains the extreme fear of Babylonian revenge after Ishmael's attack (2 Kgs 25,26). It is not unlikely that atrocities were committed in plain sight as a means of psychological warfare [68]. Lamentations preserves memories of the killing of children (Lam 1,20), youth (2,21) and the elderly (4,16) [69]; the image of the wine press alludes to a

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[63] On the circumstances of the fall of Jerusalem, see LIPSCHITS, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 68-97.

[64] Cf. ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 55.

[65] On the fate of children during the conquest and deportation, see U. HÜBNER, "Sterben, überleben, leben. Die Kinder und der Tod im antiken Palästina", *Sprachen – Bilder – Klänge*. Dimensionen der Theologie im Alten Testament und in seinem Umfeld (eds. C. KARRER-GRUBE et al.) (AOAT 359; Münster 2009) 49-73, esp. 60-62; K. VOLK, "Von Findel-, Waisen-, verkauften und deportierten Kindern. Notizen aus Babylonien und Assyrien", *»Schaffe mir Kinder ... «*. Beiträge zur Kindheit im alten Israel und in seinen Nachbarkulturen (eds. A. KUNTZ-LÜBCKE – R. LUX) (ABIG 21; Leipzig 2006) 47-87. The image of teknophagy (eating one's own children) is a literary topos (Lam 2,20; 4,10; Deut 28,53-57). Still, it may reflect extreme historical experience as well.

[66] Ca. 25 August 587 according to ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 81.

[67] An example of the destruction caused by Babylonian troops under Nebuchadnezzar is the devastation of Ashkelon in 604 BCE. See L.E. STAGER, "Ashkelon on the Eve of Destruction in 604 B.C.", in *Ashkelon 3*. The Seventh Century B.C. (eds. L.E. STAGER – D.M. MASTER – J.D. SCHLOEN (Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon; Winona Lake, IN 2011) 3-11. The skeleton of a 30-40 year-old woman shows that her head was crushed, "which may have resulted from one or more blows from a blunt instrument": P. SMITH, "Human Remains from the Babylonian Destruction of 604 B.C.", *Ashkelon 1*. Introduction and Overview (1985-2006) (eds. L.E. STAGER – D.M. MASTER – J.D. SCHLOEN) (Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon; Winona Lake, IN 2011) 533-535, esp. 533.

[68] On strategies of psychological warfare in the Neo-Assyrian empire, see W. MAYER, *Politik und Kriegskunst der Assyrer* (ALASPM 9, Münster 1995) 478-482.

[69] The killing of the civilian population seems to be more affectively recorded in Lamentations than the death of soldiers. The latter may have been taken for granted.

bloodbath (Lam 1,15). Sexual violence was part of the strategy: "They raped women in Zion, virgins in the towns of Judah" (Lam 5,11) [70].

This tragedy was still to be witnessed by those members of the population who were subsequently deported to Babylonia (2 Kgs 25,11) [71]. For people weakened in health by the siege and battle, the enforced journey to Babylonia may have resulted in life-threatening situations. Some may have died on the way. Among the deportees, many will have lost family members, especially fathers who were killed in combat and children who could not withstand the famine. "We have become orphans, there is no father; our mothers are like widows" (Lam 5,3). The third group of deportees (582 BCE) was small in number [72]. Additional psychological challenges awaited the deportees. Having seen the destruction of all the major symbols of their political and religious collective identity — the temple and the city — and having lost all their immobile belongings, they had to settle in an alien and dominant cultural environment, from whose military representatives they had suffered violence [73].

One of the most impressive reflections of the haunting consequences of trauma in exile is found in the final section of the curses in Deuteronomy 28 (vv. 65-67) [74]:

[70] On the fate of women in the context of conquest and deportation, see A. KUHRT, "Women and War", *NIN Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2 (2001) 1-25, esp. 14-16; D. MARKL, "Women in War in the Ancient Near East and the War Captive Wife in Deuteronomy", *Sexualität und Sklaverei* (ed. I. FISCHER – D. FEICHTINGER) (AOAT 456; Münster 2018) 203-223, esp. 203-208.

[71] On Neo-Assyrian mass deportation (which was similarly employed by the Babylonians), see B. ODED, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden 1979).

[72] Cf. Jer 52,30 and ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 74-75.

[73] Moreover, deportees were forced into corvée labour and military service for the same regime that had caused their distress. Peoples from various regions including the Levant are explicitly mentioned as working on the restoration of the temple of Marduk (Etemenanki) under Nebuchadnezzar II; see C. UEHLINGER, *Weltreich und "eine Rede"*. Eine neue Deutung der sogenannten Turmbauerzählung (Gen 11,1-9) (OBO 101; Fribourg 1990) 552-554; D.S. VANDERHOOFT, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM 59; Atlanta, GA 1999) 111; A. BERLEJUNG, "Living in the Land of Shinar: Reflections on Exile in Genesis 11:1-9?", *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Rise of the Torah*, 89-111, here 100. For deportees as resource for the Babylonian recruitment of troops, see J. MACGINNIS, "Mobilisation and Militarisation in the Neo-Babylonian Empire", *Studies on War in the Ancient Near East*. Collected Essays on Military History (ed. J. VIDAL) (AOAT 372; Münster 2010) 153-163, esp. 159.

[74] Several reasons suggest that the final part of the curses of Deuteronomy 28 is unlikely to have been written before the Babylonian exile: the motif of exile "among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other" (28,64); the extreme formulation of God's delight in Israel's destruction (28,63), which is likely to have been written in view of its reversal in post-exilic restoration (30,9); and the motif of the anti-exodus (28,68) that has a counterpart in the deuteronomistic account of 2 Kgs 25,26. (English translations of biblical texts in this article are taken from NRSV and modified by more literal renderings where it is useful for the argument.)

"Among those nations you shall find no ease (לא תרגיע), no resting place for the sole of your foot. There Yₕwₕ will give you a trembling heart (לב רגז), failing eyes, and a languishing spirit (דאבון נפש). Your life shall be dangling before you; night and day you shall be in dread (פקדת), and you will not trust in your life (לא תאמין בחייך). In the morning you shall say, 'If only it were evening!' and at evening you shall say, 'If only it were morning!', because of the dread of your heart that you shall dread (מפחד לבבך אשר תפחד) and the sights that your eyes shall see."

This text is unusually rich in its language of emotional distress, which may well reflect some psychological symptoms of trauma: haunting memories (possibly the "sights that your eyes shall see"), psychosomatic heart problems ("a trembling heart"), loss of confidence ("you will not trust in your life"), insomnia ("if only it were morning!"), and panic attacks ("the dread of your heart that you shall dread"). While few individual fates are documented, there can be little doubt that hardly any of those who experienced the destruction of Jerusalem and deportation to Babylonia could have been spared severe or even traumatic psychological stress.

3. *The Babylonian Exile as Transgenerational and Cultural Trauma*

The sieges, the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem as well as the subsequent deportations were the cause of traumatic stress for Judeans who actually lived this experience. In what ways, however, were these diverse experiences communicated, transmitted to subsequent generations and represented as collective experience? While it is impossible to reconstruct these processes in detail, literature such as Lamentations, deuteronomistic historiography, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah clearly shows that the Babylonian conquest evoked intense reflection, discussion and writing [75]. Some of this literature may have started to emerge in the early phase of the Exile; certain authors may have had first-hand experience and access to the reports of eye-witnesses. Reflection on these events, however, continued through subsequent generations and well into the post-exilic period [76].

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[75] See, e.g., Aₗbₑrₜz, *Israel in Exile*, esp. 203-433; J. Kᵢₑfₑr, *Exil und Diaspora*. Begrifflichkeit und Deutungen im antiken Judentum und in der hebräischen Bibel (ABIG 19; Leipzig 2005); J.J. Aₕₙ, *Exile as Forced Migrations*. A Sociological, Literary, and Theological Approach on the Displacement and Resettlement of the Southern Kingdom of Judah (BZAW 417; Berlin 2011). On siege warfare reflected in conceptions of divinity, see E. Bₗₒcₕ-Sₘᵢₜₕ, "The Impact of Siege Warfare on Biblical Conceptualizations of YHWH", *JBL* 137 (2018) 19-28.

[76] Texts that envision restoration such as Jeremiah 31–32 are unlikely to have emerged before the late exilic period; for late reflections on Exile, see Kᵢₑfₑr, *Exil und Diaspora*, 230-436.

The exiles seem to have been haunted by the quest to find the reasons for the catastrophe and by guilt and its transgenerational consequences [77].

Historical evidence of Judeans in Babylonia suggests that some of them were able to build up agricultural businesses fairly quickly; second and third generation owners of well-run family businesses had little reason to migrate to Judea after 539 BCE [78]. At the same time, resentments about Babylonia's role in the destruction of Jerusalem and deportation were handed down through generations of certain carrier groups — most likely Judean elites located in urban centres [79] — as can be seen from the anti-Babylonian tendency in several biblical texts [80]. The Persian takeover of power in 539 and the possibility of return presented by the edict of Cyrus is reflected as a historical turn in biblical historiography [81]. At this point, most adult Judeans in Babylonia were children or grandchildren of the deportees of 597/587 [82]. They had no first-hand experience of the atrocities committed by the Babylonians in Judah, but stories about them were transmitted in their families and communities. The psychological impact

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[77] See, e.g., D. ROM-SHILONI, *God in Times of Destruction and Exiles*. Tanakh Theology (Jerusalem 2009) [Hebrew]; K. SCHMID, "Kollektivschuld? Der Gedanke übergreifender Schuldzusammenhänge im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient", *ZAR* 5 (1999) 193-222, esp. 214-219; W. GROSS, *Zukunft für Israel*. Alttestamentliche Bundeskonzepte und die aktuelle Debatte um den Neuen Bund (SBS 176; Stuttgart 1998) esp. 104-125; D. MARKL, "The Sociology of the Babylonian Exile and Divine Retribution 'to the third and fourth generation'", *The Dynamics of Early Judean Law*. Studies in the Diversity of Ancient Social and Communal Legislation (ed. S. JACOBS) (BZAW; Berlin, forthcoming).

[78] See, e.g., the families of Aḥīqam in Al-Yahudu (attested 561-504 BCE) and of Ariḫ in Sippar (attested 546-503 BCE): L.E. PEARCE – C. WUNSCH, *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer* (CUSAS 28; Bethesda, MD 2014) esp. 7-8; Y. BLOCH, "Judeans in Sippar and Susa during the First Century of the Babylonian Exile: Assimilation and Perseverance under Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Rule", *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 1 (2014) 119-172, esp. 127-130; M. JURSA, "Eine Familie von Königskaufleuten judäischer Herkunft", *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* 22 (2007) 23; MARKL, "The Sociology of the Babylonian Exile", paragraph 2.2. On the social integration of Judeans in Babylonia, see also C. WAERZEGGERS, "Locating Contact in the Babylonian Exile: Some Reflections on Tracing Judean-Babylonian Encounters in Cuneiform Texts", *Encounters by the Rivers of Babylon* (eds. U. GABBAY – S. SECUNDA) (TSAJ 160; Tübingen 2014) 131-146.

[79] On the "diversity of social location" of the Judeans in Babylonia, see WAERZEGGERS, "Locating Contact", esp. 132.

[80] For a survey of relevant prophetic texts, see VANDERHOOFT, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 135-202. On later perceptions of the ruins of Babylon as a consequence of biblical "curse", see M. LIVERANI, *Imagining Babylon*. The Modern Story of an Ancient City (trans. A. CAMPBELL) (Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records 11; Boston, MA – Berlin 2016) esp. 1-2.

[81] Cf. D. VANDERHOOFT, "Cyrus II, Liberator or Conqueror? Ancient Historiography concerning Cyrus in Babylon", *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. O. LIPSCHITS – M. OEMING) (Winona Lake, IN 2006) 351-372.

[82] See my attempt to reconstruct the sequence of generations in the Babylonian Exile in MARKL, "The Sociology of the Babylonian Exile", paragraph 2.

of traumatic experience was passed on in unconscious forms as well. The turn of 539 and the fall of Babylon allowed for a new perspective on history. The Exile could now be seen in the light of possible restoration and Babylonia, the grand victor, in the light of its defeat.

In retrospect, Exile came to be viewed as an experience of suffering that united those who had — or claimed to have — lived through it. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion" (Ps 137,1). In we-language, the turn of history is remembered as well: "When YHWH brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream!" (Ps 126,1). Returnees defined themselves as the "children of the deportation" (בני הגולה: Ezra 4,1; 6,19-20), the survivors or remnant of the Golah (cf. פליטה and שאר in Neh 1,2-3) [83]. Texts such as these show that experience of life in Babylonia was shaped by literary expression and employed as a description of collective identity. The post-exilic carrier groups perceived Exile now, to put it in Alexander's words, as "marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" [84]. The Babylonian Exile had become a "cultural trauma" [85]. These psychological and sociological aspects of the historical framework will enhance our reading of Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah.

III. Exile and Monotheism in Deuteronomy 4

Deut 4,1-40, a theological climax of Deuteronomy [86], revolves around three central themes [87]: first, the divine revelation at Horeb, where Moses was commissioned to teach Israel (vv. 5-14); second, the prohibition of idolatry and the worship of other gods (vv. 3-4, 15-22, 23-31), which

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[83] See also, e.g., the use of שאר ni., "to be left/spared", in Deut 4,27, and "remnant (שארית) of the house of Israel" in Isa 46,3. On the wider context of the construction of identity in postexilic interpretations of Exile, see G. KNOPPERS, "Exile, Return and Diaspora: Expatriates and Repatriates in Late Biblical Literature", *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature* (ed. L. JONKER) (FAT II 53; Tübingen 2011) 29-61.

[84] ALEXANDER, "Cultural Trauma", 1.

[85] Vamik Volkan's concept of "chosen trauma" could also be applied to the Babylonian Exile. See V. VOLKAN, *Bloodlines. From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York 1997); M.G. BRETT, *Locations of God*. Political Theology in the Hebrew Bible (Oxford 2019) 91-93.

[86] See, e.g., SCHAPER, *Media and Monotheism*, 127-128.

[87] The most detailed study of the style and structure of Deut 4,1-40 is G. BRAULIK, *Die Mittel deuteronomischer Rhetorik* (AnBib 68; Rome 1978). I give a fuller account of my view of the structure in "Divine Law and the Emergence of Monotheism in Deuteronomy", *Israel and the Cosmological Empires* (eds. N. SCOTTI MUTH – F. HARTENSTEIN) (München forthcoming).

leads to a monotheistic profession (vv. 35, 39); third, a parenetic frame-work, in which Moses exhorts Israel to obey the statutes and ordinances that he is about to pronounce (vv. 1-2, 40, as a conclusion of the parenetic scheme in vv. 32-40 [88]). Joachim Schaper has recently made the most of the correlation between the rejection of images and the appreciation of writing as representation of the divine in this chapter [89]. The monotheistic claim at the end of the chapter implies, as I argued elsewhere, the unsur-passable authority of the divine law proclaimed at Mount Horeb [90]. In the following, I shall concentrate on an aspect that has hitherto been under-explored: the intense relationship between the prophetic outlook on exile from a post-exilic perspective (vv. 23-31) and the promotion of mono-theism (vv. 32-39).

In a daring communicative move, the voice of Moses extends its you-address to Israel's descendants in the future, when they will live in the land and commit idolatry (4,25) so that they will lose the land (v. 26) and be scattered among the peoples (v. 27). Moses' address thus extends its relevance to addressees who know the reality of exile and who may now feel immediately spoken to by Moses [91]. The following selective quo-tation highlights the connections between this passage (vv. 23-31) and what follows (in vv. 32-39). The second person singular is indicated by "thou".

> "[Deut 4,27] YHWH will scatter you <u>among the peoples</u>; you will be left few in number <u>among the nations</u> which YHWH will lead you <u>there</u> (שמה). [28] <u>There</u> (שם) you will serve gods, the work of human hands, wood and stone, that do not see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. [29] <u>From there</u> (משם) you will *seek* (בקש) YHWH thy God, and thou will find him since thou will *search* (דרש) after him with all thy heart and all thy soul. [30] <u>In thy distress</u> (בצר לך), when all these words have come upon thee in the latter days, thou will *return* (שוב) to YHWH thy God and *listen* (שמע) to his voice. [31] For a merciful God is YHWH thy God, he will neither abandon thee nor destroy thee; and he will not forget the covenant of thy ancestors that he swore to them.

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[88] On the parenetic scheme, see G. BRAULIK, "Geschichtserinnerung und Gotteser-kenntnis. Zu zwei Kleinformen im Buch Deuteronomium", *Studien zu den Methoden der Deuteronomiumsexegese* (SBAB 42; Stuttgart 2006) 165-183 (= *L'Ecrit et l'Esprit*. FS A. Schenker [ed. D. BÖHLER] [OBO 214; Fribourg 2005] 38-57) esp. 177.

[89] SCHAPER, *Media and Monotheism*, 127-147.

[90] Cf. D. MARKL, "Gottes Gesetz und die Entstehung des Monotheismus", *Ewige Ord-nung in sich verändernder Gesellschaft? Das göttliche Recht im theologischen Diskurs* (eds. M. GRAULICH – R. WEIMANN) (QD 287; Freiburg i.Br. 2018) 49-67; IDEM, "Divine Law and the Emergence of Monotheism in Deuteronomy".

[91] A comparable operation of literary pragmatics occurs in Deut 30,1-10; cf. D. MARKL, "Deuteronomy", *The Paulist Biblical Commentary* (eds. J.E. AGUILAR CHIU et al.) (New York 2018) 147-193, 187.

[32] For *ask* (שאל) about the former days, which were before thee […]
[35] […] so that thou *understand* (לדעת) that YHWH, *he* is the God, there is no other besides him […]
[39] And thou shalt *understand* (וידעת) today and bring it back to thy heart that YHWH, *he* is the God in heaven above and on earth beneath, there is no other. [40] And thou shall *keep* (שמר) his statutes and his commandments […]"

Israel's future situation of exile "among the nations" (v. 27) is emphasized three times by the deixis "there" (שם, vv. 27, 28, 29) [92]. It is in *this* situation that Israel will recover the longing for their own God YHWH [93]. Israel's conversion "among the nations" is portrayed in two movements. First, against the background of the frustrating experience of worshipping lifeless idols (v. 28) they will "seek" (בקש) and "find" (מצא) YHWH, since this search (דרש) will be conducted with complete inner involvement ("with all thy heart and all thy soul", v. 29). Second, it will be specifically in the situation of distress (בצר לך) that the remnant of the people (cf. שאר in v. 27) will "return" (שוב, v. 30) to God, which is the prerequisite for obeying him (שמע בקלו). The expression צר ל- refers to intense emotional distress [94]. The meaning of "when all these words have come upon thee in the latter days" will become clear at the ultimate climax of Moses' discourses in Deut 30,1, where "these words" explicitly include the "curse" (of Deuteronomy 28) [95]. This veiled expression implies the extreme psychological suffering minutely described in Deut 28,65-67 (see above).

The culmination of Moses' discourse (Deut 4,32-40) presupposes the situation built up in the imagination of the addressees in vv. 23-31. The connection between the two sections is marked using several literary means. A strong link is created by the contrast between the "latter days" (v. 30)

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[92] While this deixis is primarily spatial, the expression "from there" (משם, v. 29) can also be read in temporal terms "from then (onwards)".

[93] Note that "YHWH" stands alone in the context of his violent action in 4,27; by contrast, "your God" is added in the context of conversion in vv. 29-30.

[94] E.g., in David's lamentation over Jonathan (2 Sam 1,26) in the context of bereavement; and after the divine announcement of punishment for the entire people (2 Sam 24,12), where it is likely to be associated with intense fear. The expression can be used to refer to a strategically hopeless situation because of an overpowering enemy's threat in battle (1 Sam 13,6) and the anxiety instilled by such a threat (2 Sam 22,7 // Ps 18,7). The Psalmist of Psalm 102 (v. 3) seems to suffer from different sorts of psychological, physical and social issues (vv. 1-12). In the refrain of Ps 107,6.13.19.28, the distress is identified as a situation in which people cry out to God. Ps 106,44 seems to employ the expression with specific reference to suffering in exile (cf. vv. 41, 46-47).

[95] Deut 4,30-31 appears like a condensed summary of the motif of conversion in exile that will be elaborately unfolded in Deut 30,1-10 (with seven occurrences of שוב). Cf. also the motif of divine mercy in 4,31 (אל רחום) and 30,3 (ורחמך). The cluster of motifs from Deut 4,31 — conversion in the time of distress — is re-employed as a theologoumenon in 2 Chr 15,4.

and the "former days" (v. 32). It is "in the latter days" (באחרית הימים, v. 30), the time of the implicit addressees who know the reality of Exile, that *they* are supposed to ask "about the former days" (לימים הראשנים, v. 32), the divine gifts of the Horeb revelation and the liberation from Egypt that Moses now calls to mind twice (vv. 33-34, 36-38). Additional links are created by the contrasts between the "gods" (אלהים) made by humans (אדם, v. 28) and the human being (אדם) created by God (אלהים, v. 32); the contrast between the idols that lack sense perception and Israel's sense perception of God at Horeb (cf. שמע in vv. 28, 33, 36; ראה in vv. 28, 35, 36); and the motif of Israel's hearing of God's voice (cf. שמע and קול in vv. 30, 33, 36). The continuous communication with the (exilic and postexilic) addressees of this discourse in both passages is underlined, as Eckart Otto has observed, through the *Numeruswechsel*. The change from the plural address "you" to the singular "thou" occurs in v. 29, where the exiles are supposed to recognise YHWH as "thy God" and find him [96]. This singular address can be heard both distributively, targeting the individual, and collectively. It is continued throughout to the end of the discourse (in v. 40).

Most importantly, however, the dynamics of seeking and finding (דרש, מצא, בקש, v. 29), returning and obeying (שוב, שמע, v. 30), are continued in the dynamics of asking (שאל, v. 32), understanding (ידע, vv. 35, 39) and, finally, keeping the statutes and commandments (שמר, v. 40). While the dynamics in vv. 29-30 and 32-40 are analogous — from human search via an intensified relationship with and recognition of YHWH to obedience — the verbs are meaningfully varied. The first dynamic is incited through suffering and leads from longing and searching to finding, from returning to listening. The second leads from rational theological reflection, characterised by asking and understanding, to keeping the commandments. The two dynamics are subtly connected through the expression "bring it back to thy heart" (והשבת אל לבבך, v. 39), which links the process of intellectual theological insight (ידע, v. 39) to the motifs of "return" and "heart", two key elements of the preceding process (לבב, v. 29, and שוב, v. 30) [97].

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[96] I agree, therefore, with Otto that the *Numeruswechsel* in Deut 4,29 helps to bind vv. 29-40 together: E. OTTO, *Deuteronomium 1,1 – 4,43*, 574-575.

[97] The setting of Deut 4,32-39 in (early) retrospection of Exile is further indicated by literary connections with Deut 30,1-4. The expression "bring it back to thy heart" (והשבת אל לבבך, 4,39) occurs identically in 30,1 (cf. also its reception in 2 Chr 6,37). The expression "end of heaven" connects in Deuteronomy exclusively 4,32 and 30,4 (cf. also its reception in Neh 1,9). And the motif that YHWH "takes" (לקח) Israel refers to the exodus in Deut 4,20.34 and to the return from Exile in 30,4.

Between these two movements stands the motif of divine mercy (v. 31) [98]. Historically speaking, this verse alludes to (post 539) restoration, which is fully unfolded in Deut 30,1-10. If this interpretation is correct, Deut 4,23-40 represents an interpretation of religious history: the experience of the collective trauma of exile led to a process of religious renewal (Deut 4,28-30), which, against the background of (the hope for) restoration (v. 31), resulted in theological reflection (v. 32), which in turn brought about the discovery of monotheism: "there is no other besides him" (vv. 35, 39). Deut 4,23-40 mirrors the history of the discovery of monotheism as the fruit of religious renewal instigated by the cultural trauma of exile and theological reflection at the brink of restoration.

IV. The "Black Hole" and Monotheism in (Deutero-)Isaiah

Deutero-Isaiah differs from Deuteronomy 4 in its stylistic representation of exilic suffering and its relationship with monotheistic claims. While Deuteronomy 4 is concise and explicit about Israel's suffering in Exile, Deutero-Isaiah abounds in the language of consolation and healing which addresses the background experience of exilic suffering mostly metaphorically and only occasionally in explicit terms. Klaus Koch argued that Deutero-Isaiah's monotheistic claims are related to the geo-political changes in the early Persian period, and that the prophetic scribe aimed at strengthening the Judean community's "will to survive" in Babylonia [99]. In a similar vein, I shall argue that the monotheistic claims in Deutero-Isaiah are a powerful instrument of resilience against the background of Exile as cultural trauma.

Isaiah 39 alludes to the coming Babylonian Exile, and Isaiah 40 presupposes it, but the Exile itself appears only indirectly in Isaiah [100]. Ulrich

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[98] The "merciful El" (Deut 4,31) contrasts with the "zealous El" (v. 23) whose indignation about the people's sins causes exile (vv. 25-27). For comparative material on the ancient Near Eastern scheme of divine wrath and mercy as causes of destruction and restoration, see D. MARKL, "Divine Mercy in the Ancient Near East and in the Hebrew Bible", *Raḥma. Muslim and Christian Studies in Mercy* (eds. V. COTTONI – F. KÖRNER – D.R. SARRIÓ CUCARELLA) (Collection "Studi arabo-islamici del PISAI" 22; Rome 2018) 39-48, esp. 42-44.

[99] K. KOCH, "Monotheismus und politische Theologie bei einem israelitischen Propheten im babylonischen Exil", *Egypt — Temple of the Whole World*. Ägypten — Tempel der gesamten Welt. Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann (ed. S. MEYER) (SHR 97; Leiden 2003) 187-216, esp. 201: "den Überlebenswillen einer Exilsgemeinde zu wecken" (with reference to Isaiah 45). See also the conclusion (p. 215), where Koch argues that the strong monotheistic argument found in Deutero-Isaiah was necessary because of the audience of an underprivileged community of exiles ("innerhalb einer unterprivilegierten Exilsgemeinschaft").

[100] This gap in the book of Isaiah is mirrored by the Babylonian Exile as "historical lacuna" in biblical historiography; see ALBERTZ, *Israel in Exile*, 3-4.

Berges suggested that the suppression of the Exile forms a "thematic centre" from which the entire book receives its orientation [101]. Francis Landy called Exile the "elephant in the room" in the book of Isaiah, and Frederik Poulsen, even more drastically, a "black hole" [102]. Moreover, "the exhortation not to remember the first events" in Isa 43,18 "may be read as a criticism of the Deuteronomistic obsession with the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile" [103]. The scarcity of direct reference to the sufferings of Exile may well be caused by unconscious repression, but it likely represents a deliberate literary strategy.

Deutero-Isaiah seems to avoid speaking about the wounds caused by the Babylonians at first sight, but the trauma of Exile looms large behind its predominant message of consolation and restoration. In fact, the black hole's edge is marked by explicit references to Babylon (Isaiah 39; 43,14; 47,1; 48,14.20). The implicit addressees "have become booty (בז) [...] and plunder (משסה)" (42,22) [104]. YHWH himself had poured upon them "the heat of his anger and the fury of war" (42,25). Israel, now a "worm", is exhorted not to fear since it has a "redeemer" (גאל: 41,14), a "saviour" (מושיע: 43,3) [105]. YHWH, Israel's redeemer, is universally elevated, while the Babylonian gods are mocked as idols [106]. This scenario becomes

[101] U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*. Komposition und Endgestalt (HBS 16; Freiburg i.Br. 1998) 537: "Im Buch Jesaja darf der Zion nicht fallen, darf der Tempel nicht brennen [...] Von dieser thematischen Mitte her bekommt das gesamte Buch seine Ausrichtung, trotz aller Spannungen in den Einzelzügen".

[102] F. LANDY, "Metaphors for Death and Exile in Isaiah", *Images of Exile in the Prophetic Literature*. Copenhagen Conference Proceedings 7-10 May 2017 (eds. J. HØGENHAVEN – F. POULSEN – C. POWER) (FAT II 103; Tübingen 2019) 9-25, here 9 n.1; F. POULSEN, *The Black Hole in Isaiah*. A Study of Exile as a Literary Theme (FAT 125; Tübingen 2019).

[103] RÖMER, *The Invention of God*, 220, with reference to J.-D. MACCHI, "'Ne rassassez plus les choses d'autrefois': Ésaïe 43,16-21, un surprenant regard deutéro-ésaïen sur le passé", *ZAW* 121 (2009) 225-241. Macchi emphasizes that the invitation to forget is surprising in the context of Deutero-Isaiah: "une invitation pour le moins étonnante dans ce corpus littéraire qui n'a de cesse d'appuyer sur les 'choses premières' son discours théologique" (p. 226).

[104] "To become booty" (היה לבז), when applied to persons, is a technical term for deportation (cf., e.g., Deut 1,39; Ezek 36,5); it occurs in parallel with משסה in 2 Kgs 21,14, a prophetic oracle that announces the Babylonian Exile because of Manasseh's sins.

[105] The exhortation not to fear occurs like a refrain in Isaiah 40–44: 40,9; 41,10.13.14; 43,1.5; 44,2.

[106] The universal power of YHWH (Isa 40,12-17.21-26; 41,1-5 etc.) is contrasted with the idols' ridiculous lack of life and power (40,18-20; 41,6-7.29; 44,9-20). For a concise summary on the Babylonian background to these polemics, see SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 182-188; still, these polemics are directed against the production of images among Judahites as well (cf. SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 193). The rhetorical energy that is used to ridicule the Babylonian deities, however, suggests that they are still attractive to Deutero-Isaiah's audience. See F. HARTENSTEIN, "Exklusiver und inklusiver Monotheismus. Zum 'Wesen' der Götter in Deuterojesaja und in den späten Psalmen", *Ich will dir danken unter den Völkern*. Studien zur israelitischen und altorientalischen

historically concrete as King Cyrus is named as YHWH's instrument to subdue nations (45,1) [107]. Judah is supposed to return; its towns are to be rebuilt (44,26). The Babylonian deities fall (46,1), and Babylonia is brought to shame (Isaiah 47). "The descent and exile of Babylon are contrasted with the ascent and liberation of Jacob/Israel" [108]. Emotionally laden language of honour and shame suggests that the defeat inflicted by the Babylonians was perceived as shameful for Israel as a collective, exposed to total destruction and reviling (cf. גדופים in 43,28). "You shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity" (Isa 45,17) presupposes the experience of shame and the desire to be rescued from it forever. Shame now awaits the enemy (41,11) and those who trust in idols (42,17; 45,16); Babylon's female nakedness is exposed (47,2-3). Israel who felt degraded like a "worm" will now be elevated to a position of violent power and jubilation (41,14-17) [109].

The expression of "theoretical monotheism" in Deutero-Isaiah, especially through the claim "there is no other" (אין עוד: Isa 45,5.6.14.18.21.22; 46,9) [110], emerges within this major thematic framework. As in Deuteronomy 4, the monotheistic claims are connected with the motif of recognition (cf. ידע, esp. in 45,6) and polemics against idolatry. In contrast to Deuteronomy 4, however, the message of monotheism addresses King Cyrus (Isa 45,1-7) and is to be recognised "from the rising of the sun and from the setting" (v. 6) and by "all the ends of the earth" (v. 22) [111]. The exclusivity and universality claimed for YHWH's divinity attributes indisputable power to Israel's saviour (44,24), who announces the reconstruction of Jerusalem and its temple (44,26-28).

Gebetsliteratur. FS B. Janowski (eds. A. GRUND – A. KRÜGER – F. LIPPKE) (Gütersloh 2013) 194-219, 207.

[107] For a comparison between the ideologies of the Cyrus Cylinder and the Cyrus oracle of Isaiah 45, see M. LEUENBERGER, *"Ich bin Jhwh und keiner sonst"*. Der exklusive Monotheismus des Kyros-Orakels Jes 45,1-7 (SBS 224; Stuttgart 2010) esp. 32-46.

[108] C. FRANKE, *Isaiah 46, 47, and 48*. A New Literary-Critical Reading (Biblical and Judaic Studies 3; Winona Lake, IN 1994) 263.

[109] KOCH, "Monotheismus und politische Theologie", 208, formulates, with refererence to Isa 41,15-16: "In einigen Abschnitten gewinnen sogar nationalistische Haßgefühle die Oberhand".

[110] Other expressions of YHWH's uniqueness include: "I am YHWH, that is my name; my glory I give to no other" (42,8); "before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am YHWH, besides me there is no saviour" (43,10-11); "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god" (44,6); "Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one" (44,8). For an overview see SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 180-182.

[111] U. BERGES, *Jesaja 40–48* (HThKAT; Freiburg i.Br. 2008), 435, suggests that "all the ends of the earth" does not refer to the diaspora, but to the largest possible audience ("die größtmögliche Zuhörerschaft").

Read against the historical background of the transition in power from
Nabonidus to Cyrus II [112], the psycho-sociological background of Deutero-
Isaiah's author(s) and carrier group can be reconstructed. The cultural
trauma of having lost Jerusalem's temple, the most powerful earthly sym-
bol of YHWH's presence in Judah, and being exposed to the overpowering
religious culture of Babylonia left two principal options for Judeans in
Exile. Either they accepted the defeat of their deity and started to worship
the Babylonian gods [113] or they developed a daring "counter-narrative".
Deutero-Isaiah provides an extraordinary example of the latter option [114].
Ridiculing the Babylonian deities, even "killing" them by declaring them
devoid of life, the texts express resistance and aggression towards Baby-
lonian religion [115]. YHWH is universally elevated as a powerful saviour [116].
Deutero-Isaiah provides a strong message of resilience.

The intellectual elite behind (the most ancient portions of) Deutero-
Isaiah may well have lived in or near a religious and cultural centre of
Babylonia. Their parents or grandparents were probably traumatised dur-
ing the Babylonian conquest and deportation and may have passed on (con-
sciously or unconsciously) a deep resentment against the dominating host
culture. If this reconstruction is correct, the high poetic art of Deutero-
Isaiah reflects inherited psychological wounds that have become a col-
lective, cultural trauma. The annihilation of the Babylonian gods and the

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[112] For the historical context of (the earlier texts of) Deutero-Isaiah, see VANDERHOOFT,
The Neo-Babylonian Empire, 169-188; BERGES, *Jesaja 40–48*, 43-45; ALBERTZ, *Israel in
Exile*, 376-425; M. ALBANI, "Deuterojesajas Monotheismus und der babylonische Religions-
konflikt unter Nabonid", *Der eine Gott und die Götter*. Polytheismus und Monotheismus
im antiken Israel (eds. M. OEMING – K. SCHMID) (AThANT 82; Zurich 2003) 171-201.
On Nabonidus, see P.-A. BEAULIEU, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556-539 B.C.*
(YNER 10; New Haven, CT 1989).

[113] Texts that refer to the exiles' worship of "idols" in exile (e.g., Deut 4,28; 28,36.64)
are evidence of such experience.

[114] ALBERTZ, "Der Ort des Monotheismus", 93: the step towards monotheism "hat mit
der ganz speziellen Erfahrung des Zusammenbruchs staatlicher Macht zu tun, die parado-
xerweise mit einer universalen Verabsolutierung Jahwes kompensiert wurde."

[115] D.S. IRUDAYARAJ, "Idol-taunt and exilic identity. A Dalit reading of Isaiah 44:9-20",
Myths of Exile. History and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible (eds. A.K. GUDME – I. HJELM)
(London 2015) 125-136, esp. 132, compares the function of ridicule in Deutero-Isaiah with
Dalit literature that ridicules Brahman religious privileges to affirm Dalit identity from a
marginalised perspective. Although the situation of contemporary Dalits in India differs
significantly from what we know about the situation of Judeans in sixth century BCE Baby-
lonia, the comparison is helpful in contouring the textual pragmatics of literature from a
(perceived) marginalised situation.

[116] On the liberating function of monotheism in Deutero-Isaiah, see also ALBERTZ, "Der
Ort des Monotheismus", 92: "Nun aber bekam die Behauptung der alleinigen universalen
Geschichtsmächtigkeit Jahwes und der Nichtigkeit aller übrigen Götter, die Deuterojesaja im
Exil verkündete, für die ohnmächtigen Exulantengruppen in ihrer fremdreligiösen Umwelt
eine neue befreiende Funktion".

proclamation of Yʜwʜ as universal suzerain serves to rescue those who feel profoundly defeated, a marginalized underdog. The turbulence of the tumbling Babylonian empire and the rise of Persia as a new imperial power that was perceived as liberating may have encouraged such bold claims. Yʜwʜ's divine uniqueness contrasts, on the cultic level, with the lifeless Babylonian idols, and plays out, in the political realm, in his use of King Cyrus to subdue Babylonia. The only God of the universe rescues Israel and shames the enemy. The "invention" [117] of the one and only God was a process instigated by psychological wounds and needs to which it helped to respond.

V. Tʜᴇ Bᴀʙʏʟᴏɴɪᴀɴ Exɪʟᴇ ᴀs ᴛʜᴇ Bɪʀᴛʜ Tʀᴀᴜᴍᴀ ᴏғ Mᴏɴᴏᴛʜᴇɪsᴍ

The historical scenario behind Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah is similar. In both cases, the misfortune of Exile is imagined in historical retrospect. The fall of the Babylonian and the rise of the Persian empire inspired the carrier groups behind Deuteronomy and (Deutero-)Isaiah to develop perspectives of hope for postexilic restoration [118]. The psychological and sociological processes behind Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah again involve similarities and dissimilarities. Both texts represent high literary art and reflection, and were probably produced by members of an intellectual elite who may not have suffered trauma themselves, but represented transmitted trauma. Both texts reaffirm a shaken collective identity, but in different ways. While Deutero-Isaiah involves polemics against the gods and fantasies of shaming and violence against the Babylonians, this trait is absent in Deuteronomy 4 [119]. Both texts suggest that the cultural trauma of the Babylonian destruction, especially of Yʜwʜ's temple in Jerusalem, and exposure to the overpowering Babylonian religion gave rise to a counter-conception that declared the Babylonian deities to be lifeless idols and Yʜwʜ the only ruler of the universe. While Deuteronomy 4 emphasizes

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[117] Cf. Röᴍᴇʀ, *The Invention of God*.

[118] Whether one dates the respective texts to the immediate context of 539 ʙᴄᴇ or to (redactional expansions during) later decades is not decisive for the present argument. In either case, the implicit historical scenario is represented — either as recent experience or as more distant memory. Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah reveal relatively much about their implied historical background. This may indicate that their authors were aware of the importance of this historical background experience for their presentation of the idea of monotheism.

[119] In Deut 4,32-39, Israel's unique experience of the liberation from Egypt and the Horeb revelation are the reason for Israel's uniqueness among the nations. Deut 30,7, in contrast, envisions that Israel's curse will come upon their enemies after Exile.

divine revelation as a reason for Israel's uniqueness among the nations (vv. 8, 33), Deutero-Isaiah emphasizes God's intervention in the geopolitical sphere.

"The glory of YHWH will be revealed" (Isa 40,5) may imply, through the double meaning of the root גלה [120], that "revelation, the plenitude of glory, only comes about through exile, through this immensely long and difficult journey" [121]. While the present argument does not imply that a reaction to cultural trauma was the sole reason for the emergence of theoretical monotheism, the analysis of Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah suggests that it may well be the principal reason [122]. If the preceding analysis is correct, the metaphor of the Babylonian exile as the "birth trauma" of monotheism may be useful to synthesise an extended psychological and sociological process — the transformation of multiple psychic traumas into cultural trauma, which resulted in emotional and intellectual processes that in turn resulted in monotheistic professions. The metaphor of birth trauma implies that the "child", monotheism, suffered a psychological injury at birth that left long-term consequences. Deutero-Isaiah's divine warrior, who is crying, gasping and panting "like a woman in labour" (Isa 42,13-14), could be read as a metaphor for the birth spasm of a new theology that cried out for an almighty, the one and only saviour.

The polemics and phantasies of violence that go with the monotheistic triumphalism in Deutero-Isaiah as literary imagination seems to have played out belatedly in the history of its consequences in actually violent terms. This confirms to a certain degree Assmann's view that the murder of the ancient polytheistic religion was the trauma of monotheism, which implies its violent potential [123]. Sigmund Freud, who developed his theory on the psycho-history of monotheism under circumstances of severe personal suffering [124], has irreversibly modified reflection on religion. While

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[120] It is unclear if the basic meanings of גלה that relate to the semantic fields of revelation and deportation have a common origin: D.A. MACHIELA, "גלה", *ThWQ* 1 (2011) 605-612, esp. 606. H.-J. ZOBEL, "גלה", *ThWAT* 1 (1973) 1018-1031, esp. 1020, argued for a common semantic origin, while homonymy is proposed in D.K.H. GRAY, "A New Analysis of a Key Hebrew Term: The Semantics of Galah ('to go into exile')", *TynBul* 58 (2007) 43-59.

[121] LANDY, "Metaphors for Death", 24, who remarks that "it is characteristic of poetry in general to find metaphorical links between unrelated homonyms" (n. 4).

[122] The task of discussing how the present proposal relates to other theories on the emergence of monotheism (cf. above I.2) goes beyond the scope of this article.

[123] ASSMANN, "Monotheism, Memory, and Trauma", 58-59; and J. ASSMANN, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (Munich 2003), with critical discussion by biblical scholars (193-286).

[124] Especially the prefatory notes in FREUD, *Moses and Monotheism*, 89-95, show that Freud's last work is a response to the fate of the Jewish people in the context of National Socialism and evolved around Freud's forced emigration from Vienna to London in June

his historical hypothesis cannot be sustained, his intuition to consider the relationship between psycho-sociological dynamics and the development of monotheism proves ingenious, since it can be corroborated through textual evidence and historical reconstruction. It is to be hoped that the insight into the wounds at the origins of monotheism and its violent potential that we owe to Freud and Assmann may help to raise the critical awareness of theologians and to work against any tendencies towards the use of violence in the name of monotheism.

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SUMMARY

   The reasons that led to the transition from the promotion of the exclusive worship of YHWH in pre-exilic Judah to the post-exilic formulation of 'theoretical monotheism', i.e., the denial of the existence of any god other than YHWH, have sparked considerable debate. This article adduces psychological and sociological trauma studies to argue that the Babylonian Exile appears in several biblical texts as "cultural trauma". The analysis of two key texts for the emergence of "theoretical monotheism", Deuteronomy 4 and Deutero-Isaiah, suggests that their reflections of the cultural trauma of Exile are causally linked with the promotion of monotheism. Against this background, the Babylonian Exile can be described as the "birth trauma" of monotheism.

1938. The Roman Catholic Church was incapable of preventing the national-socialist disaster in Austria as Freud had hoped (89-92). At the same time, Freud was suffering from the final stages of his cancer.