Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period

Negotiating Identity in an International Context

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ODED LIPSCHITS, GARY N. KNOPPERS,
and MANFRED OEMING

From Ezekiel to Ezra–Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology

DALIT ROM-SHILONI
Tel Aviv University

Introduction

Perceptions of exclusivity and core-periphery interactions illuminate vivid negotiations within and between the divided people of Judah throughout the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. This study focuses on issues of group identity or, more accurately, on strategies of reidentification recorded in exilic and postexilic biblical literature. I would like to return to Frederik Barth's important observation concerning the socioanthropological phenomenon that nations, or groups within a nation, tend to redefine their collective identity on specific occasions, particularly under threat or distress (Barth 1969: 1–38). This occasional process of reidentification constantly involves reconstructing boundaries of otherness within and between groups. Hence, using the social-psychology categories of ethnicity and in-group/out-group definition (often called "inclusion" and "exclusion"), the present study focuses on the ideological sphere, that is, on Babylonian exilic ideology as the arena for the constant process of ethnic reidentification over the course of about 150 years.[1]

Babylonian exilic ideology is defined here according to two different-yet-intertwined contexts deriving from the term *exilic literature*. As *locative terminology*, "exilic literature" specifies exile as the place of writing, compiling, and editing literary compositions. This designation thus pertains to the large corpus of biblical literature authored or edited in Babylon during the sixth century (and probably beyond).[2] "Exilic lit-

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1. The basic dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion serves Ben Zvi 1995: 96–149. Focusing here on the ideological sphere in biblical sources, I will not address the actual historical-social contexts of this polemic. This and previous volumes contain many up-to-date contributions on that topic.

2. See Thomas 1961: 33–46. Though there is general agreement that the Deuteronomistic compositions, like the editorial strata of Jeremiah and other prophetic

erature" may also be used to designate a category of *authorship*, that is, literature written by exiles, such as the prophetic books of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah.[3] By this definition, the term also includes literature written by Repatriates in Achaemenid Yehud.[4] Within this category of repatriate authorship fall the late sixth-century prophetic books of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 and likewise the fifth-century historiography of Ezra–Nehemiah.[5] The following study is thus based on the understanding of Babylonian exilic ideology as comprising the ideologies reflected in the literature written (and/or compiled) *both* by exiles in Babylon *and* by repatriates in Achaemenid Yehud. One of the best examples would be the collection of oracles attributed to Deutero-Isaiah, which presumably first took shape in Babylon (Isaiah 40–48) but continued to develop in Yehud (Isaiah 49–66), directed to the community of exiles-now-turned-repatriates.[6] The chronological range starts as early as the first wave of Judean exiles to Babylon in the Neo-Babylonian

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collections, gained their final shape and diverse additions under the circumstances of the Babyolonian Exile, most of these writings are recognized to have earlier strata originating in Judah (and to lesser extent even earlier, in Israel). For the gradual growth of Kings (as but one example), see Lemaire 2000: 446–60.

3. For other compositions written in Babylon during the Persian period, see Albertz 2003: 15–44.

4. Ackroyd (1975: 12–13) emphasizes the extensiveness of this Exilic Period, in which he included "the time of Judah's collapse," and "the dark years of exile," as well as the Restoration period. Compare to Albertz (2003), who discussed the exilic literature down to Deutero-Isaiah but did not include the repatriate literature of the late sixth century in his thorough discussion.

5. This definition of Babylonian exilic literature/ideology stands independently of the reasonable assumption that literary creativity had also continued during the Exilic Period among Judeans who remained in the land. See Jannssen 1956 and Williamson's discussion of the penitential prayer in Neh 9:6–37 (1988: 117–31; 1990: 12–17, 44). My study focuses on the biblical (literary and ideological) mainstream voice, which is clearly governed by the Babylonian Exile and repatriate communities. My assumption is that in late sixth-century Yehud, authors from (at least) two Judean communities (repatriates and "nonexiled" groups) were active, writing from independent, even antagonistic, perspectives (on this I would also counter Ackroyd's insistence on continuity throughout the period; see Ackroyd 1975: 232–56).

6. On this literary division of Deutero-Isaiah (40–48, 49–66) I follow Paul (2008: 3–11), who assumes a single prophet who has started his prophetic activity in Babylon and was among the returnees to Zion, where he continued to prophesy to them. Compare to Albertz (2003: 381, 399–404, 428–33), who finds Isaiah 40–66 to be the product of two editorial groups both active in Yehud, DtIE[1] (521 B.C.E., pp. 381, 399–404) and DtIE[2] (after 515 and early in the fifth century B.C.E., pp. 429–30). I would oppose Albertz's assumption that on return to Judah the DtIE[1] group changed its audience and now addressed those who had stayed in Judah in an attempt to enfold them into the Repatriate enclave (Albertz 2003: 403–4, 432).

era (that is, the Jehoiachin exile, 597 B.C.E.)[7] and concludes with the later waves of return, those of Ezra and Nehemiah (458–432 B.C.E.) deep in the Persian period. Accordingly, the geographical spectrum encompasses both literature produced in exile (Ezekiel and Isaiah 40–48) and repatriate literature written in Yehud (Isaiah 49–66, Haggai and Zechariah 1–8, Ezra–Nehemiah).

Ezra–Nehemiah's perceptions of group exclusivity have long been a major target of scholarly criticism.[8] Scholars have mustered valuable data from biblical and mostly extrabiblical sources that illustrate the continuation of Judean existence, albeit in reduced measure, throughout the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods (Lipschits 2005: 258–71). This contrast between history and archaeology on the one hand and the repatriates' exclusive ideology on the other has dictated the scholarly categorization of Ezra–Nehemiah's perspective as deliberately biased, reflecting a great postexilic polemic thought to have flared up in Yehud during the Restoration period (Blenkinsopp 1988: 60–70).

I would like to address further this ideological, indeed, biased internal polemic but with a somewhat different approach, by examining Ezra–Nehemiah's positions in a wider context. Synchronically, within early Persian-period literature, Ezra–Nehemiah illustrates only one opposition between "the people," that is, the repatriates, and all "other" communities residing in Yehud. Another and different opposition is set up in the prophecies of Zechariah (chaps. 1–8). Diachronically, I argue that these two oppositions should be examined by looking back to the context of the Babylonian exilic literature/ideologies. While several ideological shifts may be discerned during this transitory period, Babylonian exilic ideology itself shows clear lines of ideological continuity with Ezekiel. This prophet of the Jehoiachin exiles may have laid the foundations for exilic ideologies that operate throughout the Neo-Babylonian and the Persian periods, in both Babylon and Yehud—or from an internal biblical perspective, the time span encompassed by the books of Ezekiel and Ezra–Nehemiah. So Ezra–Nehemiah does not mark the beginning of the internal polemic in Yehud; this book rather

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7. Dan 1:1 (as also 2 Chr 36:6) opens with mention of an exile that took place within Jehoiakim's third year, 606/5 B.C.E.; though there is no way to corroborate this historical event (see Albertz 2003: 20), Hartman (1978: 29–42) suggests that "the seer of the Book of Daniel is among the exiles in Babylon" (p. 34).

8. Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 have received much less attention in this scholarly debate. I do not accept the suggestion that Haggai advocates an inclusive all-Israel ideal and thus poses a clear contradiction to the separatist, exclusive position of Ezra–Nehemiah. The latter view is set forth by Japhet 1983: 103–25; Bedford 2001: 270–92; and Kessler 2002: 236; and see pp. 136–137 nn. 30–31 below.

carries on and transforms a long-lived polemic initiated in the early sixth century B.C.E.

Establishing Exclusivity:
Changing Oppositions in Babylonian Exilic Ideology

Exclusivity: The Product of Boundary Setting

The exclusiveness of one's own community is the major consequence of setting boundaries between groups.[9] National groups establish their self-identities by utilizing relative categories of distinction, through which they narrow down their "shared characteristics" by the process of *differentiation*.[10] Exclusivity constitutes a perception of superiority in prestige and rank of one group over any other, and particular stereo-typed characteristics symbolize the differences between the antago-nistic groups.[11] Motivated by current circumstances, reidentification involves retrospective reflections, which produce new narratives of the groups' respective histories, based on shared historical traditions (Barth 1969: 32–37; Sparks 1998: 18). Hence, exclusivity operates by processes that continually set in opposition *social designations* and *counterdesigna-tions*, as well as *arguments* and *counterarguments* advanced to legitimize the status of one group and delegitimize the status of the other(s). Fi-nally, the opponents employ *social strategies* and *counterstrategies* to en-act the changes advanced in their identities.

Two Distinct Oppositions in the Persian Period

Though time progresses from earlier to later, in discussing ideologi-cal shifts I will go from last to first. This reversed sequence seems to be demanded by the evidence, because postexilic (early Persian) biblical literature written by repatriates advances two distinct perceptions of group exclusivity. We open, then, with what seems to be a significant difference between the historiography and the prophetic compositions, Ezra–Nehemiah and Zechariah 1–8.[12]

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9. I discussed these socioanthropological and sociopsychological categories of "otherness" and their relevance to exilic ideology in 2005a: 1–45; see pp. 5–8. On the process of identity formation, see Berquist 2006: 53–65, especially pp. 63–64.

10. See Horowitz 1975: 111–40. According to Horowitz's model of identity change, groups may widen or narrow their group boundaries, using two contradic-tory strategies, *assimilation* (*amalgamation* or *incorporation*) and *differentiation* (*division* or *proliferation*).

11. For this definition of "otherness," see Smith 1985: 3–48; Green 1985: 49–69, especially p. 50.

12. With this distinction I call for a more delicate differentiation within the body of repatriate postexilic literature than suggested, for instance, by Carroll 1992: 79–93; and, following him, Grabbe 1998: 136–38.

Ezra–Nehemiah

Ezra–Nehemiah articulates diverse connections between the repatriates and two different communities. First, the remainder of their in-group, the Babylonian Diaspora, has now become the group left behind, וכל הנשאר מכל המקמות אשר הוא גר שם "those who stay behind, wherever he may be living" (Ezra 1:4), that is, in Babylon. Nevertheless, as of the first return and throughout the Persian period, the repatriates considered themselves part of this community of Babylonian exiles.[13] The Repatriates are those who had once experienced the exile or, more probably, the community descended from exiles. Even after they had already been long resettled in Yehud (for three or four generations), this group continued to identify itself as the Remnant who had returned from exile (and see Neh 8:17: כל הקהל השבים מן השבי).[14] These

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13. Both earlier and later waves of returnees refer themselves to the Babylonian exile carried out by Nebuchadrezzar; see Ezra 2:1, 3:8, and Neh 7:6, for the return under Zerubbabel and Joshua; and again, in reference to Sheshbazzar, see Ezra 5:11–16. Similarly, the later returnees under Ezra (Ezra 7:6, 8:1) identify themselves as coming from Babylon and upon arrival are labeled הבאים מהשבי בני הגולה, "The returning exiles who arrived from captivity" (8:35). To these returnees in their different waves of return belong these terms: בני הגולה (Ezra 4:1; 6:16, 19, 20; 8:35); הגולה (9:4, 10:6); בני ישראל השבים מהגולה (10:8); קהל הגולה (6:21); בני גלותא (6:21). Ezra 4:12, די יהודיא די סלקו מן לותך עלינא אתו לירושלם, "the Jews who came up from you to us have reached Jerusalem," is considered by Blenkinsopp (1988: 113) to refer to an "aliyah" during the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–424 B.C.E.) and not following the Edict of Cyrus. Finally, the reference to the exiles as returning from captivity appears also in Nehemiah's memoir, referring to the situation in Jerusalem (Neh 1:1–3, 7:5–6).

14. All these designations clearly refer to the repatriates and do not encompass any of the people who remained in Judah after the Babylonian Destruction. This is contra Wright (2004: 62–65), who argues that Nehemiah himself is interested in "those remaining in the province and thus [who] escaped deportation" (p. 64), whereas only "the authors of the texts" in Nehemiah 1, 8–9 and the final editors of Ezra–Nehemiah are responsible for this exclusive exilic/repatriate terminology (p. 65). It is also contra Japhet (2006: 432–50, especially pp. 438–39), who finds a common use of the term *remnant* in Haggai, Zechariah, and Nehemiah to refer to "the people who survived destruction and captivity and remained in Judah" (p. 439). The remnant terminology and conception, however, are relative rather than fixed terms, used by both communities, and thus their meanings change with the speakers. The key term that identifies the "remnant" in these books as the repatriates of earlier returns is השבי "captivity," used regularly in Ezra–Nehemiah in the phrases "those who return from captivity" (השבים מן השבי) and "those who come from captivity" (הבאים מהשבי; see Ezra 2:1 and Neh 7:6; Ezra 3:8, 8:35; Neh 8:17, 9:7); in addition, as Wright (2004: 299) acknowledges, Ezra 9:8 and 13–15 refer to the repatriates as the remnant (פליטה, שארית), in complete accord with Neh 1:2. Hence, Nehemiah's geographic location should not confuse scholars. Nehemiah's mission is focused throughout on his community of repatriates in Yehud, although the in-group designations differ from those mentioned in Ezra.

designations are further validated by three arguments of exclusivity that are frequently used in Ezra–Nehemiah:

(a) Claims of *continuity* assert that the in-group is the only successor to past group history. The repatriates are אנשי עם ישראל ("the men of the people of Israel," Ezra 2:2, Neh 7:6; בני ישראל: Neh 1:6, twice; 2:10; 8:14, 17: זרע ישראל; Neh 9:1, 2), who have returned and resettled, each in his or her own city (איש לעירו, Ezra 2:1, 70). The repatriates' spokespeople further reembrace the terms עם יהודה (Ezra 4:4) and ישבי יהודה וירושלים, "the residents of Judah and Jerusalem" (4:6 and 5:1), or in Aramaic: שבי יהודיא, "the elders of the Jews" (Ezra 5:5; 6:7, 8, 14). Nehemiah uses היהודים (translated "the Jews," Neh 1:2; 3:33, 34; 4:6; 5:1, 8, 17; 6:6) or בית יהודה (4:10) as he emphasizes that his contemporaries descend from "those who were the first to come up" (העולים בראשונה, Neh 7:4–5).[15]

(b) Claims of *entirety* insist that the in-group completely encompasses all heirs to that history. The repatriates claim to be the entire people of Israel, כל העם, "all the people" (Neh 10:9, 13), or simply העם, "the people" (Ezra 3:1, 11–13³).[16] Another and even more powerful device to advocate *entirety* is the common use of lists in Ezra–Nehemiah; the repatriates are categorized within specific subgroups, the totality of which builds a complete community. In Ezra–Nehemiah, 21 times the community is listed according to its components. Of these, 17 lists follow this pattern: Israel (בני ישראל, "the chiefs of the clans of Judah and Benjamin"), priests, and Levites (ראשי האבות ליהודה ובנימן והכהנים והלוים, Ezra 1:5; 3:8, 12; 6:16, 20; 7:7, 13, 24; 8:29; 9:1; 10:5; Neh 8:13; at times complemented by other temple personnel: singers, gatekeepers, and servants, הכהנים והלוים ומן העם והמשררים והשוערים והנתינים . . . וכל ישראל; Ezra 2:70; Neh 7:72; 10:29, 35–40; 11:3).[17] And 4 lists in Nehemiah mention the rest of the people: Jews, priests, nobles, prefects, and other officials (וליהודים ולכהנים ולחרים ולסגנים וליתר עשה המלאכה; Neh 2:16; 4:8, 13; 7:5).[18] These lists seem to be more than a stylistic feature in the histori-

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15. On genealogy as a genuine focus for continuity, see Albertz 2003: 106–7.

16. "(All) the people" (העם / כל העם): Neh 4:7, 8, 13, 16; 5:1, 15, 19; 7:4; 8:1; and in parallel to Israel: 8:3, 5 (3 times), 6, 7 (twice), 9 (3 times), 11–13, 16; 10:35; 11:1 (twice), 2; 12:30, 38; 13:1.

17. Williamson (1985: 15) mentions this tripartite division as "the regular sociological division of the people in the Persian Period," understanding the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi "as the only true community" (p. 15).

18. Following Williamson (1985: 191), I understand היהודים to stand for "the population at large"; i.e., not designating a closed specific circle of leaders that then follow. In addition to this second pattern, the former subgroup division (Israel, priests, and Levites, which dominates Ezra) occurs in other descriptions in Neh 7:6–72; chaps. 9–12. See Neh 10:1: officials, Levites, and priests; mentioned together with Israel in 9:1–5; as also 10:2–34, 35–40; 11:3–36; 12:1–30, 31–47. Though nobles and

ography of Ezra–Nehemiah. Their ideological significance is substan-
tiated by their appearances in highly important contexts (such as the
reinstitution and dedication of the sanctuary, Ezra 3; dedication of the
temple, 6:13–22; reading the *torah*, Neh 8:13; and so on). Although they
mention different subgroups, these lists express the self-reliant status
of the repatriates—a clear inclusive tendency, which embraces all the
people, embraces all Israel. But this inclusiveness is actually a genuine
rhetorical strategy that restricts the community only to the repatriates'
group, הגולה, and excludes all others.[19] In sociological terms, *entirety* is
the most accurate and detailed conceptual framework by which to es-
tablish in-group/out-group categories, to designate who is considered
part of the community and who is not.

Finally, (c) *annexation* marshals religious institutions and historical
traditions in the service of a group's claims. The repatriates reconstruct
and appropriate religious institutions: the sanctuary, the Temple with
its vessels and personnel (Ezra 1–6); the city wall (Nehemiah 3–4); the
high festivals of Passover and Sukkoth (Ezra 3; Nehemiah 8);[20] the
practice of reading from the Torah on the initial days of the seventh
month and daily in Sukkoth (Nehemiah 8); legal obligations specifically
determined by adhering to תורת) משה ספר), "the scroll of the teaching
of Moses" (Neh 8:1, 9:14; and 13:1).[21] The repatriates revive national
conceptions (the remnant as standing for all of Israel) and actualize
historical traditions (such as the exodus, the settlement under Joshua).
Casting themselves as the heirs to and the guardians of historical tra-
ditions, these repatriates build a powerful argument advocating their
exclusive status as the one and only legitimate community of Judeans,
Jews, people of Israel, people of God.

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prefects are mentioned in Neh 13:11, 17, the overall national subgroups remain the
three major ones: Jews, priests, and Levites (13:1–3, 11–12, 28–30). For the sake of
the present discussion it is not necessary to delve deeper into the differences behind
these two list patterns. While they may indeed reflect levels of literary evolution (as
suggested for instance by Wright 2004: 298–301, and passim), both patterns desig-
nate the community as a whole throughout Ezra–Nehemiah.

19. For הגולה as a designatory term, see n. 13 above (p. 131).

20. Each wave of repatriates reinstituted festivals and daily cultic customs:
Zerubbabel and Joshua were responsible for the reinstitution of the Passover (Ezra
6:19–21); Ezra reinstituted the Sukkoth festival (Neh 8:13–18; 9:1–5), the reading and
interpretation of the Torah (Neh 8:1–12), and the reestablishment of the covenant
with God (Nehemiah 10); finally, Nehemiah reorganized the ritual institutions of
the Jerusalem temple (Neh 12:44–47; 13:1–13, 28–31), emphasized the Sabbath (Neh
13:15–22), and advanced social aspects of moral obedience to God (Nehemiah 5).

21. Japhet 1988: 99–115. See also "the book of their God" (Neh 9:3).

Counterdesignations as well as counterarguments play equally important roles in Ezra–Nehemiah. Throughout the three waves of return, the "others" are never known as Judean Yahwists or even Yahwistic Israelites.[22] They are constantly delegitimized and categorized as foreigners, Gentiles, "the peoples of the land" (עם הארץ, עמי הארצות).[23] Because this topic has been so much discussed, it suffices only to call attention to the fact that Ezra–Nehemiah applies three major yet different "non-Judahite" identifications to those "peoples of the land."

First, in referring to the return of Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 1–6), the actual identity of the amalgamated groups designated as עמי הארצות, "the peoples of the land," or the singular עם הארץ, is obscured ("The people of the land," who appear as adversaries of העם "the people," Ezra 3:3, or "the people of Judah," that is, the repatriates, 4:4). The only characteristic they do explicitly hold (and hold *in common*) is their being "of the land."

According to the self-designation צרי יהודה ובנימין, "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin," quoted in Ezra 4:1–4 (and vv. 9–10, 17), these peoples are the descendants of multiethnic deportees brought from afar to the Assyrian province of Samaria; they are not even of a single national group.[24] The author uses the argument of *continuity* against these peoples, put into their own mouths. They cannot even claim to be the ancient (autochtonic) residents of the land. They themselves are deportees of foreign nationalities who had no previous connection to God, to the land, or to the people of Israel. Moreover, they themselves recognize the continuing relationship of Yʜwʜ to the repatriates (כי צרי יהודה)—God is their (the repatriates') God, while כי (ככם נדרוש לאלהיכם)—God is their (the repatriates') God, while צרי יהודה ובנימין only "offer sacrifices to Him" (ולא | אנחנלו זבחים | ולא v. 2; *Qere*: ולו).[25]

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22. Exceptions to this categorical dichotomy may only occur in Neh 5:8, 17, but see Williamson 1985: 239–40, 244–45. This opposition suggested in Ezra–Nehemiah does not recognize any of the other Yahwistic communities that were in existence as of the early sixth century; for instance, the community of Judeans in Egypt. See Albertz 2003: 134–35.

23. On the possible meanings of these designations, see Nicholson 1965: 59–66; Blenkinsopp 1988: 108; and the recent but less persuasive Fried 2006: 123–45.

24. Although the exact historical reference in this passage to Esarhaddon as the Assyrian king who brought foreign peoples to Samaria does not accord with 2 Kgs 17:24–41, it is quite enough rhetorically (in terms of the present discussion) to substantiate the foreign origin of the "other" peoples currently living in the land. For the possible historical background, see Blenkinsopp 1988: 105–7.

25. The *Qere/Ketiv* tradition (*Ketiv*: ולא, *Qere*: ולו) tells of the theological/ideological difficulties the Masoretes faced in reading it. See Williamson 1985: 42; and compare to his reconstruction of the tension between the "native" Judahites and the returnees as political, based on 4:3 (pp. 49–50). Zerubbabel interprets King Cyrus' decree to the returnees as restricting the personnel authorized to join the project.

Second, in reference to Ezra's return to Jerusalem (Ezra 7–10), outside groups are mentioned only in the context of the issue of intermarriage (chaps. 9–10). "The people of Israel" or "the holy seed" (9:1–2) did not separate themselves from "the peoples of the land" (9:2, 11), who are characterized as acting in continuity with the behavior of a detailed list of former foreign peoples: the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians (v. 2).[26] As much as the typological nature of this list of ancient peoples gives it no historical credibility and can hardly shed light on the contemporary identity of these peoples of the land, these very characteristics are extremely valuable for their implicit ideological statement: these peoples of the land are foreigners, as foreign as can possibly be, peoples with whom interrelationships are legally forbidden: the Canaanites, the Transjordanian peoples, and the people of Egypt.

Third, Nehemiah 1–13 suggests two distinct counterdesignations. Chapters 9–10 use the obscure and general terms and set up an opposition between "the stock of Israel" and "all foreigners" from whom they are to separate (Neh 9:2); and the oath the repatriates take to follow "the Teaching of God," his commandments, rules, and laws opens with the demand to cut themselves off from "the peoples of the land" (Neh 10:31, 32). In Nehemiah's memoir, however, Nehemiah's opponents are very clearly marked and defined by personal name and national identity: Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab (Neh 2:10, 19; 6:1–9, 11–19; 13:1–13). The conspiracy against the people in Jerusalem headed by Sanballat and Tobiah is joined by the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites (4:1–2).[27] Similarly, Nehemiah's list of "foreign women," unlike Ezra's (9:2), includes only Ashdodites, Ammonites, and Moabites (Neh 13:23).[28]

The overarching opposition in Ezra–Nehemiah is thus posed between the repatriates and the peoples of the land, which the sources

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26. Other general references to the foreign women: "the peoples of these abominations," Ezra 9:14; "foreign women from the peoples of the land," 10:3, 11, 17, 44. Ezra 9:1 (and 12) alludes to legal materials and creates an "exegetical blend" out of Deut 7:1–4, 23:4–9 (thus Blenkinsopp 1988: 175–76); and see Exod 23:23–24, 34:11–16; Lev 18:1–5, which adds the abhorrent deeds of Egypt to those of Canaan (so Williamson 1985: 129–31). See Japhet 2007: 379–401.

27. On the geographic orientation of this list of adversaries, see Blenkinsopp 1988: 247; Williamson 1985: 225.

28. While the Ashdodite women are the focus of this incident (Neh 13:24), the mention of Amonite and Moabite women seems to follow Deut 23:4–8. Together with the reference to Solomon's sins (1 Kgs 3:12–13, 11:1–6), both texts supply an appropriate context to exhort the present community. On the application of these authoritative texts, see Blenkinsopp 1988: 363–64.

introduce as of different amalgamated nationalities. The absence of any reference to Judeans or Israelite-Yahwistic communities in the land is noteworthy in a context that intentionally obscures other national identities; the three major perspectives on "the peoples" are marked by inconsistencies and deviations and feature among them the anachronistic mention of the ancient peoples of Canaan and its surroundings. Hence, Lester L. Grabbe (1998: 138) observes correctly that "the text simply refuses to admit that there were Jewish inhabitants of the land after the deportations under Nebuchnezzar. . . . One can only conclude that many, if not all, these 'people of the land' were the Jewish descendants of those who were not deported."[29]

Accepting what seems indeed to be an inevitable conclusion, I would call attention to the ideological strategies that advance this position. *Amalgamation* (a + b = c) serves in Ezra–Nehemiah as an overall strategy to unify and denigrate outsiders. In contrast, the repatriates separate themselves from this amalgamated mongrel "other" population by advocating their own genuine and distinctive (versus "amalgamated") status; in religion, culture, national history, law, and politics, the repatriates are "the Judeans (Jews)"—or should we say "the [true] Judeans (Jews)."

Placed in a wider, roughly synchronic context, the exclusivizing perceptions noted in Ezra–Nehemiah illustrate but one type of opposition; another quite-different opposition is established in the prophecies of Zechariah (1–8).

Zechariah 1–8

Zechariah 1–8 testifies to the perspective found among the repatriate community in Yehud under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua (Zech 3:1, 4:9).[30] The two small prophetic collections Zechariah 1–8 and

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29. See also Williamson (1985: 46): "The possibility of true Jews being among them is simply not envisaged in these books." Studies of the historical-sociological reality of this presentation have empowered the assumption that any Yahwistic communities of either Judeans or Israelites were disregarded. Dor (2006: 94–98, 245–52) arrived at this same conclusion, arguing that six different ceremonies of separation are described in Ezra–Nehemiah.

30. Due to space limitations, I discuss here only Zechariah 1–8. Nevertheless, I should comment on Haggai's independent positions in reference to group identity issues. I would agree with Kessler (2002: 263–64) that "the *absence of conflict* evidenced in Haggai is highly striking. Simply put, the book contains *no other'*—that is to say, *no denigrated population distinct from 'true Israel.'*. . . The book deliberately obscures whatever divisions may have existed and presents a stylized and schematic portrait of the community as *acting in concert* in obedience to the word of Yahweh through the prophet Haggai." I would, however, challenge Kessler's conclusion that

Haggai cover a very short time span (522–520 B.C.E., but only three months within 520 B.C.E. in Haggai) and tell of prophets who no doubt addressed the community of the repatriates from the Babylonian captivity in Yehud.[31]

Zechariah's prophecies focus on the return, which he designates first and foremost as the return of God after a long period of anger and absence (Zech 1:7–17, 2:14–16, 8:1–3). Having returned to Zion, His city, God brings the people, Judah, and resettles them in the land (1:16–17), in their previous territorial allocation: ונחל ה׳ את יהודה חלקו על אדמת הקדש "The LORD will bestow Judah upon his portion in the Holy Land" (2:16; also 8:4–8).[32] The repatriates are now to fill the towns of Judah again (1:17) and specifically Zion (8:6–8). The restoration of the temple was the major mission of the time articulated by both prophets (Zech 4:9; 6:9–14; 7:1–7; 8:9, 18–19; also Hag 1:2–14; 2:1–9, 10–19).

This setting within the repatriate community goes hand in hand with the way Zechariah conceptualizes the state of the land of Judah during the Exile. The prophet describes a single prior deportation that left Judah in complete desolation (Zech 1:7–17, 7:14). Hence, in contrast

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Haggai was a nonrepatriate, or at least did not return with Zerubbabel (for a similar suggestion, see also Bedford 2001: 273). For differences between Haggai and Zechariah on identity issues, see Japhet 2006: especially 433–37. Contra Kessler, Bedford, and Japhet, however, I would consider Haggai's purported ignorance of—or failure to mention—any "others" as a consciously excluding strategy and not as evidence of the prophet's inclusive outlook.

31. The proposition that these collections address the repatriates, and only them, is substantiated by (a) other biblical testimony: Ezra–Nehemiah mentions the two prophets together as encouraging the Jews in Jerusalem to complete the reconstruction of the temple (Ezra 5:1, 6:14); (b) the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 3–4), who are (c) the major addressees of Zechariah's prophecies (Zechariah 3, 4); (d) other persons mentioned by name (Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Josiah son of Zephaniah), who are designated (via an inclusio) as part of הגולה "from the exiled community," people "who have come from Babylon" (Zech 6:9–14). Petersen (1984: 18–19) has aptly emphasized that "Haggai's own life history remains enigmatic"; nevertheless, Petersen (1984: 55–60) holds to the position that Haggai addressed both repatriates and nonexiled Judeans. I would challenge Haggai's connections with the nonexiled Judeans.

32. Compare to the NJPSV: "The LORD will take Judah to Himself as His portion in the Holy Land," which understands the portion as an apposition to Judah—the people, not the territory (see also Meyers and Meyers 1987: 162, 169; on linguistic and semantic grounds, I would object to the parallels drawn by Meyers and Meyers between Zech 2:16 and *naḥal* in Exod 34:9 and Ps 82:8). I have suggested above a different translation, in which the portion is a second object to the verb *naḥal*, following the common biblical phrase that otherwise uses the causative (Hiphil), "YHWH/PN *hinhil ʾet*-(Nation/PN) *ʾet*-(land)," as in Deut 3:28, 21:16; Josh 1:6; Prov 8:21.

to Ezra–Nehemiah, Zechariah articulates an opposition between the re-patriates and an empty city and land.[33] This conception of the land as a "vacuum" encompasses nonexiled Judeans as well as any other peoples. Zechariah 1–8 has no counterdesignations for any resident population of Yehud.[34]

Whereas at face value these two lines of opposition reveal a major distinction between the historiography of Ezra–Nehemiah and the prophetic perspective of Zechariah (and implicitly Haggai), it is im-portant to notice that these repatriate-exilic ideologies share the same basic excluding tendency. The repatriate-exilic community of the Per-sian period styles itself as the one and only people of Judah, people of God, confronting on its return either an empty land or foreign peoples. Independently of each other, these two perspectives convey a complete disregard for any other Judean/Israelite-Yahwistic communities, in Ye-hud or elsewhere.

These diverse excluding presentations lead me to suggest that ex-clusivity was not an innovation of the Restoration period or an inven-tion introduced for the first time in Yehud on the repatriates' return.[35] To discover the origins of this exclusive ideology, which intentionally ignores the existence of other Judean communities, we must make a diachronic survey and continue our investigation of Babylonian exilic ideology backward to its earliest phase.

Ezekiel's Two Oppositions

Ezekiel brings us to the beginnings of Babylonian deportations from Judah. The first deportation, the Jehoiachin Exile (597 B.C.E.) was fol-

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33. This is then a clearly divisive presentation that demonstrates Zechariah's repatriate-exilic position in this conflict as well. Contra Bedford 2001: 264–68. 2 Chr 36:20–21 suggests this same opposition, explicitly drawing on Jeremiah's prophecies of judgment, which projected total annihilation within the land for 70 years (see for instance Jer 25:11).

34. The only opposition we find is between God's people (the deportees) and their enemies: Babylon, the symbol of evil (5:1–11); or those peoples who had previ-ously afflicted Judah as God's agents but carried their mission too far and thus are doomed to God's judgment (1:15, 2:12). Zechariah, then, ignores the existence of any residents in the Holy Land of God, the land of Judah.

35. Contra Blenkinsopp (1988: 60) and Smith (1989: 179–200), who considers the return as the point of clash and reformulation. Bedford (2001: 20) noted that the roots of the social conflicts known in the Persian period were laid already within the Neo-Babylonian era, but he did not discuss the actual relationship between these two periods. Bedford (2001: 147–66) negated the possibility of an actual internal conflict during the Neo-Babylonian and the early Persian periods and argued that it had come into existence only by the time of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century (2001: 150–51).

lowed by 11 years in which Judeans were compulsorily divided into two independent communities—of exiles and of people who remained in the land/in Jerusalem. The Destruction in 586 B.C.E. introduced a second (and then a third) wave of deportations (Jer 52:28–30). The trauma of this first dislocation of the Jehoiachin exiles and the need to reestablish the ethnic-national identity of this community independently of the Jerusalemites stand at the core of Ezekiel's prophetic activity (Rom-Shiloni 2005: 8–10).

Ezekiel's in-group is clearly his compatriots, the Jehoiachin exiles. The prophet resides among them (1:1–3, בתוך הגולה), and he counts the years in his prophetic activity from this crucial point in history, "Our exile" (לגלותנו, Ezek 33:21, 40:1).[36] The exiles, laymen as leaders, approach him constantly (as evidenced in 33:30–32; and 8:1, 14:1, 20:1), and even when he reproves them, his adherence to this community regularly shows itself.[37]

The prophet considers the Jehoiachin exiles in Babylon to be "Israel," "the House of Israel" (בית ישראל, as in Ezek 3:1, 4), and "the children of Israel" (בני ישראל, as in 2:3).[38] They are the people of God and are consistently addressed with sympathy, thus they are the addressees of future consolation and hope (Ezek 11:15–21, 33:10–20, 37:1–14, etc.).[39]

In light of these self-designations, one cannot ignore the clear counterpositions Ezekiel advances. The people who remained in Jerusalem

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36. The Jehoiachin Exile serves as chronological reference at the opening of 14 prophecies (1:1–2; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17; 33:21; 40:1). Although this is considered an editorial convention, it is significant that most of these chronological references appear as part of the prophet's first-person testimony.

37. For example: "Go to your people, to the exile community" (בא אל הגולה אל בני עמך, 3:11), or "your brothers, your brothers, men of your kindred [LXX: "your brothers and the men of your exile (οἱ ἀδελφοί σου καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς αἰχμαλσίας σοῦ)]", all of that very house of Israel," האחיך אחיך אנשי גאלתך וכל בית ישראל כל (11:15).

38. For the 83 occurrences of בית ישראל in Ezekiel and the 11 occurrences of בני ישראל, with the differences between the MT and the various Greek translations, see Zimmerli 1983: 563–65. On בית ישראל as a marker of exclusion, see Joyce 1996: 45–58. In the present discussion, the two phrases testify indistinguishably to the phenomenon pointed out above.

39. There are several exceptions to this sympathy. When God *sends* Ezekiel to the exiles, they are designated as the "sons," descendants of generations of sin; they themselves are "brazen of face and stubborn of heart" (2:4); they are "a rebellious house" (2:5, 6, 8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:2 (twice), 3, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6; NJPSV: "a rebellious breed"; transgenerational sins are also mentioned in 20:5–31). And the prophet characterizes his compatriots in exile as those who "have turned their thoughts upon their fetishes" (14:1–11). This nevertheless stands in clear contrast to the fury, the specific accusations, and the calamitous future Ezekiel prophesies against Jerusalem itself, as we will see below.

hardly ever appear as "Israel."[40] The prophet quotes statements (rebellious ones, I should mention) from the homeland, which he presents as having been said "upon the soil of Israel"(18:2, 12:21, על אדמת ישראל). The remaining Judeans/Jerusalemites are called at times "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (11:15, ישבי ירושלים), or "those who live in these ruins in the land of Israel" (33:24, ישבי החרבות האלה על אדמת ישראל); but above all, the repeated designation by which Ezekiel refers to those who remained is through the metonymy of "Jerusalem"—as the sinful city, the adulterous wife (Ezek 16:1–43, 44–58; 23:1–49; 24:1–15), and the major target of judgment throughout chaps. 1–24, 33.

In fact, in constructing the opposition between the exiles and those who remained behind, Ezekiel introduces two characterizations of Jerusalem that serve later in the Persian-period sources (with some significant modifications): Jerusalem as equivalent to the (ancient) Canaanite people(s) of the land and Jerusalem as doomed to total annihilation, to becoming an empty city and land. The first analogy employs the argument of *continuity*; the second uses the assertion of *entirety*.

Continuity: Jerusalem Is of the "People(s) of the Land"

Ezek 16:1–43 portrays Jerusalem "by origin and birth" as "from the land of the Canaanites—your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite" (מכרתיך ומלדתיך מארץ הכנעני אביך האמרי ואמך חתית, Ezek 16:3).[41] With this genealogy, Ezekiel goes a significant step beyond both the common prophetic accusation of Israel as disobedient and idolatrous in her embracing of Canaanite worship (as does, for instance, Jer 2:20–28), and the pentateuchal exhortations that demand that the people of Israel refrain from *any* contact with the Canaanites in order to avoid participating in their cult (such as Exod 23:23–26; Lev 18:24–30, 20:22–24; Deut 7:1–6). Ezekiel uses the argument of *continuity* to condemn Jerusalem as the biological descendant of the three major Canaanite peoples, הכנעני האמרי והחתי.[42]

Identifying Jerusalem with these ancient peoples of the land is only half of the analogy Ezekiel employs in regard to the two Judean communities after 597 B.C.E. On the other side of the dichotomy, Ezekiel

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40. The two exceptions are in Ezek 9:8 and 11:13, where the prophet cries out to God: "Ah, Lord God! Are You going to annihilate all that is left of Israel?" a cry that symbolizes the completeness of Jerusalem's judgment.

41. For a full discussion of Ezek 20:1–38 and Ezek 16:1–43, see Rom-Shiloni 2005a: 20–31.

42. The mention of this specific genealogy is thus intentional and is based on the literary position occupied by these three major peoples in lists of the Canaanite nations; see Ishida 1979: 461–90.

puts the Jehoiachin exiles, whom he considers to be the direct descendants of the "stock of Jacob," chosen by God in Egypt to be his people (Ezek 20:5). Ezekiel projects God's present and future reconstitution of the covenant relationship with *this* people, outside of the land of Israel, in exile (Ezek 20:33). Hence, for the community of the Jehoiachin exiles, Ezekiel appropriates the exodus narrative—including the covenant traditions.

This analogy portraying the dichotomy of Jehoiachin exiles versus Jerusalem as Israel versus the foreign peoples of Canaan is based on historical national traditions, which Ezekiel for the first time "annexes"/appropriates/manipulates as ideological devices in an internal conflict. Moreover, Ezekiel employs legal materials pertaining to concepts of land and of exile (that is, loss of the land) to advocate his exclusion of the Jerusalemites from membership in the people of God.

In his denigration of Jerusalem, Ezekiel draws on the Holiness Code's strategy of separation, suggested in Leviticus 18 and 20.[43] These two chapters exhort Israel to distinguish their own practices from those of the previous nations that have inhabited the land, by posing antagonistic differences between God's laws and the practices of the land of Canaan (כמעשה ארץ מצרים . . . לא תעשו, וכמעשה ארץ כנען . . . לא תעשו ובחקתיהם; Lev 18:3–4, לא תלכו. את משפטי תעשו ואת חקתי תשמרו ללכת בהם, 22:20–24, את כל חקתי ואת כל משפטי ועשיתם אתם . . . ולא תלכו בחקת הגוי). "The abhorrent practices" (חקות התועבות, Lev 18:30) that characterize the nations of the land are idolatry and specifically (cultic) bloodshed (20:2–6), together with sexual offenses (18:6–23, 20:10–21). All these had defiled the land to the point that it had vomited out its previous inhabitants and spurred God to expel and wipe out those peoples of the land before the face of Israel (Lev 18:24–30, 20:22).

Echoing the language of Leviticus 18 and 20, Ezekiel builds the judgment prophecy of Ezek 16:1–43 as a criticism of Jerusalem on three cardinal points: its origin, its sins, and its judgment.[44] In origin, Jerusalem is the deserted daughter of an Emorite and a Hittite, whom God saved upon her birth in the land of the Canaanites (16:2–8). In her misconduct Jerusalem follows the abominations of the nation(s) of Canaan, combining adultery and idolatry (vv. 15–34). The apex of her crimes is the cultic bloodshed when she took "the sons and daughters that you bore to Me and sacrificed them to those [images] as food" (ותקחי את בניך ואת בנותיך אשר ילדת לי ותזבחים להם לאכול, 16:20). Jerusalem is thus accused of the

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43. For a discussion of the allusions to Leviticus 18 and 20 in Ezek 33:23–29, see Rom-Shiloni 2005a: 18–20.

44. Ezekiel also alludes to and adapts Leviticus 18, 20 for his disputation against Jerusalem in Ezek 33:24–29; see Rom-Shiloni 2005a: 27–29.

two capital crimes characteristic of Canaanite practice in Lev 20:2–6, 9–21, that is, adultery and cultic murder (ושפטתיך משפטי נאפות ושפכת דם, "I will inflict upon you the punishment of women who commit adultery and murder," Ezek 16:38). According to Ezekiel, Jerusalem's sins are not merely the result of acculturation or environmental influence but are part of her genuine heritage. Therefore, given her inheritance and practices, Jerusalem is destined to death, to total annihilation (vv. 38–43).[45]

The Holiness Code's distinctions between the holy people (Lev 20:26) and the previous peoples of the land (Lev 18:27, 20:23–24) supply the legal basis for completely excluding Jerusalem from the people of God. Drawing on this analogy, the prophet emphasizes the geographical difference between the communities. Jerusalem resides from birth to death in the land. She is Canaanite, she behaves like a Canaanite, and here she will be sentenced and die. However, as of the time of the Jehoiachin Exile, the (real) people of Israel reside far from the land but not at all far from God (11:16–20), in continuity with the constitutive period when God first revealed Himself to His chosen people in Egypt, away from the land (20:5).

This dichotomy between the peoples of the land and the people of God, then, is crucial for Ezekiel and his fellow Exiles, as it allows this dislocated community to rebuild its national and religious status in the face of very prominent preexilic concepts, according to which residence in the land was a precondition for the worship of God and for the inclusion in God's people (see Deut 28:36, 63; see also 1 Sam 26:19).

Entirety: Jerusalem as the Empty City and Land

Complementing this denunciation of the people who remained in Jerusalem, Ezekiel refers constantly to the desolation of Jerusalem and of the land of Israel/Judah. Descriptions of desertion and annihilation in both urban and rural areas regularly conclude Ezekiel's prophecies of judgment against Jerusalem (Ezek 6:11–14; 12:19–20; 14:13, 15, 17, 19; 15:8; 21:1–5; 33:27–29; also 38:8). Along the same lines, the prophet presents restoration in the land as a new revival of the empty, desolate mountains of Israel, in preparation for the return of the gathered exiles, who are called "My people" (עמי ישראל, 36:5–12). Ezekiel uses the theme of the empty land—a theme that had originated in descriptions of pu-

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45. For the use of metaphor in expressing Jerusalem's guilt and judgment, see Day 2000: 285–309. Ezekiel deviates from the analogy when he does not prophesy exile against Jerusalem, whereas Lev 20:22–23 prescribes dislocation. The prophet applies to Jerusalem the individual death penalty of the murderer and the adulterous person (Lev 20:9–21), and foresees that total calamity will be visited upon the land (Ezek 16:38–41).

nitive total destruction brought about by God—to construct a definitive end to an era and to a community, that of sinful Jerusalem and Judah.[46]

The theme of the empty land is thus a second ideological device Ezekiel borrows to advance a clear distinction between the two geographically separated Judean communities. The representation of total destruction, which is to leave Judah empty and annihilated, strengthens the Jehoiachin exiles' claim of *entirety*. Since no one is going to be left in the land, the Jehoiachin exiles *are* the entire people of Israel. Indeed, Ezekiel's consolation prophecies envision the Exiles as the sole heirs to a hopeful future.[47] Any projected restoration of the people of God is restricted to the exiles (repatriates-to-be) who will be saved and gathered back into the land (Ezek 11:17–21, 20:32–44, etc.); and only those Jehoiachin exiles have God's authorization to reinherit the land (as in Ezek 11:17–20).

Ezekiel is the first exilic prophet to mobilize the theme of the empty land in the service of this divisive internal conflict between Judean communities, a conflict already in place by the early years of the sixth century.[48] Strategically, this is a clear, narrowly divisive position that is not even open to accepting other Judean exiles of any succeeding Babylonian deportation into the reconstituted people of God.[49]

Ezekiel is thus the originator of a well-rounded separatist ideology, crafting the exclusive position of the Jehoiachin Exiles by completely delegitimizing the Judean community left in the land. The two major components in this delegitimizing ideology are, first, a complete national-religious exclusion of the Jerusalemites from the "Judeans" / God's people by identifying those who remained as Canaanites and, second, the assurance of the impending annihilation of Jerusalem, which would leave an "empty land" behind. For Ezekiel, these two components complement each other.

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46. See Ezekiel's prophecies against the nations (Ezek 25:5, 13; 35:3–4, 7–9) and Jeremiah's prophecies against Israel and against the nations (as in Jer 9:9–11; 51:26, 62). In Mesopotamian sources, the image of empty, annihilated land characterizes descriptions of punitive destructions brought about by the gods; see Dobbs-Allsopp 1993: 66–72; Michalowski 1989: lines 300–330.

47. For the Jehoiachin Exiles as the sole addressees of Ezekiel's promises of present and future hope, see Block 1997: 53–57. Inclusive prophecies in Ezekiel (as in 37:15–28) may stem from the later Ezekiel tradition, which may be closer to Deutero-Isaiah's inclusive positions.

48. Contra Carroll's late date for this contention (1992: 79–93); also Barstad 1996.

49. This very definitive break between the Jehoiachin exiles of 597 B.C.E. and the Jerusalemites who remained in the city afterwards continues to be relevant for Ezekiel even after the Destruction of 586; see Ezek 14:21–23, 24:15–25.

Furthermore, Ezekiel's polemic supplies us with the ideological motivations for this internal conflict among the Judeans, which may be fully understood only in the context of the early sixth century B.C.E. During these constitutive years of the first Judean dislocation to Babylon, we find references to a discourse among the Jehoiachin exiles and the prophet as the exiles voice their desperation at being detached from the land and possibly rejected by their God.

Ezekiel's rhetorical strategies demonstrate the first crucial confrontation with the reality of dislocation. The exiles were to reconsider their national/communal status as the people of God in face of well-accepted preexilic concepts of exile, both deuteronomic and Priestly (Holiness Code), which take the fact of exile as evidence of God's rejection and punishment (as in Deut 28:36, 63; Lev 26:14–38).[50] This is the background to the plea of the elders of Israel quoted in Ezek 20:32: נהיה כגוים כמשפחות הארצות לשרת עץ ואבן ("We will be like the nations, like the families of the lands, worshiping wood and stone"; and see 33:10, 37:11).[51] Ezekiel had to transform traditional concepts of land and of exile in order to enable his compatriots, the Jehoiachin exiles, to continue to understand themselves as God's people away from their land. He effected this transformation by utilizing arguments of continuity and entirety to position the exiles as the true people, just as he mobilized historical and prophetic traditions to cast those who remained in the land *outside* of the national history.

At its earliest phase, then, setting boundaries of exclusion and otherness between the two Judean communities was a major tactic in reconsolidating the Jehoiachin exiles' identity. Later crafters of Babylonian exilic ideology inherited these excluding designations and arguments as obvious, without questioning their foundations. I will conclude with some observations on the overall ideological shifts within Babylonian exilic ideology.

Conclusions: Ideological Shifts within Babylonian Exilic Ideology

This journey backward from the Persian period to Neo-Babylonian times illustrates shifts in designations and in the excluding arguments applied by the exilic communities to both in-group and out-group (see table 1).

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50. For deuteronomic concepts of exile reevaluated by Ezekiel, see Rom-Shiloni 2008: 101–23.

51. See Rom-Shiloni 2005a: 21–22; 2005b: 194–205.

Table 1. Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology

Exclusivity: The Oppositions			Core-Periphery	
Period	1	2		
Early Exile (ca. 597–586 and after)	Ezekiel Jehoiachin Exiles (Israel, Jacob) versus Jerusalem (by origin is Canaanite, of the land)	Ezekiel Jehoiachin Exiles versus Jerusalem will become desolate, empty land	Ezekiel Core: Jerusalem Periphery: Babylon Babylon will gain core.	
Exilic Diaspora (ca. mid-sixth century and after)		Deutero-Isaiah Babylonian exiles versus Empty land	Deutero-Isaiah Core: Babylon Periphery: Jerusalem	
Persian (ca. late sixth–fifth century)	Ezra–Nehemiah Repatriates Foreign people(s) of the land	Zechariah (and Haggai) Repatriates versus Empty land	Ezra–Nehemiah Core: Babylon Periphery: Yehud	Zechariah (and Haggai) Core: Babylon Periphery: Jerusalem restores its central position

Concerning the definition of the in-group, a first shift occurs as early as Deutero-Isaiah, who does not give a special prominence to the Jehoiachin exiles but refers in general terms to the exiles in Babylon.[52] This more inclusive definition of the exiles, comprising both those in Babylon and those who return to Yehud, remains the operative conception of the exilic community in the repatriate literature, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, and Ezra–Nehemiah.

Definitions of the out-group present an even more complicated picture. Nevertheless, Babylonian exilic ideology both in Babylon and back in Yehud reveals several clear common denominators in its treatment of

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52. This change in addressee between the presumed words of the prophet and the diverse additions by disciples and later developers of the tradition may also have appeared within the book of Ezekiel, but this deserves a separate discussion.

"others." The first might be called "land orientation," which throughout is the focus of Babylonian exilic ideology. The exiles in Babylon continued to negotiate their status in relation to Judeans remaining in the land of Israel, rather than in relation to "proximate others"—the diverse national groups present in Babylon.[53] Second, Babylonian exilic ideology totally excluded the possibility of the continuing existence of *any* Judean/Israelite community (or communities) from preexilic times; the "peoples of the land" are by definition not Israel. These two common denominators, which originated in exile, are carried back by the repatriates as they struggle to reestablish their position as the only people of God in Yehud. These foundational conceptions are given rhetorical force through the designations, the arguments (continuity, entirety, and "annexation" of national traditions), and the divisive strategies and counterstrategies that unite Babylonian exilic ideology from Ezekiel to Ezra–Nehemiah.

This study sheds light on the important position Ezekiel occupied in establishing this Babylonian exilic ideology. Active as a prophet in the Exile, Ezekiel not only collected the "broken pieces" of that catastrophe, but with great aptitude he laid the foundations for the Babylonian community's self-perception as the only people of God. In so doing he formulated the "takeover" strategy of this Diasporan community by which it became the core community of "Judah" within just a few decades. Exilic authors, prophets and historiographers carried on and developed further Ezekiel's oppositions between the (Jehoiachin) exiles and the people who remained in Jerusalem. The major shift in the Babylonian exilic ideology is the evolution of an independent status for each of the two parts of Ezekiel's unified argument. Ezra–Nehemiah used the analogy in which the "others" are the foreign peoples of the land, thus echoing Ezekiel's designation of Jerusalem and its inhabitants as the Canaanites / foreign peoples of the land. Deutero-Isaiah, on the other hand, used the imagery of Zion as the empty land and the exiles as the people of God who would fill it, the path which Zechariah the son of Iddo (and implicitly Haggai) would follow (seen in the similarities between Isa 49:15–21 and Zech 8:1–15).[54]

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53. On the possible interactions between the Babylonian exiles and other deportees or Babylonians, see Albertz (2003: 106–9), who mentions various strategies of survival by which the Babylonian *golah* is assumed to have distinguished its members from other communities in exile. What seems to be worth noting is that the exilic biblical literature is hardly interested in these social-national aspects of the exilic life. The one topic that gets explicit attention is the polemic against other gods in Deutero-Isaiah.

54. Compare to Albertz (2003: 303–4), who considers the Deutero-Isaiah group to address those who remained in Judah with a consoling message meant to smooth

On the basis of this long view of Babylonian exilic ideology, I believe we can safely see its latest manifestation in Ezra–Nehemiah as an ideological delegitimization of *Judeans who remained in the land*, a denigration that the repatriates inherited from their exiled ancestors and brought to Yehud on their return. Its manifestations by the early Persian period in Yehud are not the *beginning* of an internal conflict but another phase in a trajectory of polemic that goes back to the very first Babylonian deportations, to the constitution of Babylonian exilic ideology, and specifically to the reshaping of the exiles' group identity as early as the beginning of the sixth century.

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Excursus:
Further Challenges for This
Study of Babylonian Exilic Ideology

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This study of Babylonian exilic ideology, with its references to the conflicts between Judean groups, leaves several very challenging and unanswered questions concerning the constitution of the in-group.

Did the Jehoiachin exiles loose their prestigious position as the exclusive exilic group? The memory of the Jehoiachin Exile may still be in the background of Zerubbabel's special position (especially in Hag 2:23–27), and it appears as a short note in the patronymics of Mordechai (Esth 2:4) from the fifth and probably fourth centuries B.C.E. But, may we assume that a general inclusive tendency overpowered Ezekiel's extreme exclusive positions and crystallized the several waves of Judeans who were gradually deported to Babylon into a single homogeneous community, as early as the first decades of the Babylonian Exile? While the evidence is scant, we should bear in mind the possibility of a heterogeneous Babylonian exilic ideology on the issue of in-group identity. It may be of interest to explore further the relationship between Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah on this issue. Is the latter prophet (and/or the Deutero-Isaiah circle) a descendent of the Jehoiachin exiles and thus close to Ezekiel? Or might he(/they) have descended from the 586 Judean deportees? If the latter is more probable, then we will find Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah to be representatives of distinct prophetic perceptions that may point to an internal conflict among the exiles in Babylon.[55]

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the repatriates' return. The texts illustrate an opposite picture, in which Judeans who had remained behind were totally disregarded and clearly discouraged from joining the community returning to Zion.

55. This latter option may be substantiated by the many similarities and literary allusions in which Deutero-Isaiah draws on Jeremiah; see Sommer 1998: 167–73, 315–31; and Paul 2008: 40–41.

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