

ØYSTEIN LUND

Way Metaphors  
and Way Topics  
in Isaiah 40–55

*Forschungen  
zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe*

28

---

**Mohr Siebeck**

# Forschungen zum Alten Testament

## 2. Reihe

Herausgegeben von

Bernd Janowski (Tübingen) · Mark S. Smith (New York)

Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen)

28





Øystein Lund

Way Metaphors and Way Topics  
in Isaiah 40–55

Mohr Siebeck

ØYSTEIN LUND, born 1967; studied Theology at MF Norwegian School of Theology; 2004 Dr. theol.; Director of Research and Studies at MF Norwegian School of Theology.

e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-151126-4

ISBN 978-3-16-149087-3

ISSN 1611-4914 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 2. Reihe)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

© 2007 by Mohr Siebeck Tübingen, Germany.

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form (beyond that permitted by copyright law) without the publisher's written permission. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage and processing in electronic systems.

The book was printed by Gulde-Druck in Tübingen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Held in Rottenburg.

Printed in Germany.

With gratitude to  
Helene, William and Frederic



## Preface

This monograph is a revised version of a dissertation delivered at MF Norwegian School of Theology. Particularly heart-felt thanks go to Professor Terje Stordalen who has been the supervisor for the project. Stordalen has, throughout the work, conveyed a real interest in the project and has, with his competence in the field, contributed to heighten the standard of the monograph and to focus on the potential for improvement in the various elements of the book. He has, further, succeeded in combining a powerful critical perspective with a large amount of inspiration.

I am also thankful for the valuable comments from Professor Kirsten Nielsen in Aarhus, Denmark, and Professor Fredrik Lindström in Lund, Sweden. They have also allowed me to present parts of the project at research seminars at their respective faculties. Further, I wish to express my gratitude to colleagues at the MF Norwegian School of Theology, and participants at the research seminar run by the faculty and other co-operating faculties. In particular, the professors Karl William Weyde and Kåre Berge have contributed with valuable comments at various stages in the process. I am also thankful for fruitful conversations with Professor Magne Sæbø and the now deceased professor Arvid K. Tångberg. Additionally, I have valued the good will, forbearance and competence of the staff at the library of the institution. The monograph has been translated by cand. philol. Andy Mason. With regard to the finished product, I remain, of course, accountable for all remaining errors, deficiencies and inconsistencies. For the translation of the book, the author has received financial support from the Research Council of Norway.

My family has also participated in the work it is to write a Monograph. Heart-felt thanks to my dear Helene, who has both facilitated my writing of the monograph, and has also contributed with helpful conversation and comforting words. The Monograph is dedicated to her and our two boys William (7) and Frederic (5). May they all experience that the ways of the Lord are made visible for them in their future lives.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of the series *Forschungen zum Alten Testament*, Professor Bernd Janowski, Professor Hermann Spieckermann, and Professor Mark Smith for accepting this work for publication.

Oslo, May 2007

Øystein Lund





# Table of Contents

<i>Chapter 1: Introduction</i> .....	1
1. Previous reading of the way-passages in Isaiah 40–55 .....	3
a) ‘Spiritual reading’ of the way-passages.....	3
b) A second Exodus? .....	4
2. Alternative approaches to the way-passages.....	9
a) The conception of a “second Exodus” is toned down.....	9
b) Horacio Simian-Yofre .....	11
c) Ernst Haag .....	13
d) Erich Zenger .....	15
e) Hans M. Barstad.....	16
f) Enrique Farfan Navarro.....	18
g) John N. Oswalt .....	18
h) Some concluding comments .....	19
3. The main goal of the monograph .....	22
4. Isaiah 40–55 .....	25
a) The structure of the monograph .....	27
 <i>Chapter 2: Methodological considerations</i> .....	 29
1. Definitions of imagery .....	30
a) Metaphor.....	30
b) Metaphor and context .....	34
c) The function of metaphors .....	34
d) “New”, “conventional”, and “retired” metaphors.....	36
e) Groups of metaphors .....	39
f) Symbol .....	41
g) Figures of speech that are related to the metaphor .....	42
h) Other non-literal figures of speech.....	43
2. Identification of Imagery .....	44
a) Incongruence.....	45
b) Conventionality.....	47
3. Practical questions and working procedure .....	50
 <i>Chapter 3: Ways in the Old Testament – and in Isaiah 40–55</i> .....	 53
1. Earlier studies of the way lexemes and way metaphors .....	54
2. Semantic considerations .....	55
a) The lexical field .....	55
b) The presentation of the most important way-lexemes .....	56

c) Excursus: The way passages in Isaiah 40–55 in Marcus Phillip Zehnder .....	60
d) Syntagmatic field .....	60
3. Selection of passages .....	61
a) Introductory investigation.....	62
b) Passages analyzed in the following chapters .....	65
4. Summary .....	65
 <i>Chapter 4: ‘The Way of YHWH’ – Isaiah 40:1–11 .....</i>	 <i>67</i>
1. Introductory remarks .....	67
a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	68
b) Literary characteristics and structure .....	70
2. The way of YHWH – in the desert, Isaiah 40:3–5 .....	73
a) Introduction .....	73
b) The desert symbolizes the people’s difficult situation.....	74
c) Drawing together the present line of argument.....	81
3. “In the wilderness prepare the way of YHWH...” .....	85
a) YHWH arrives to the desert of Jerusalem.....	86
b) “The way of YHWH” denotes his salvific acts and other acts in history .....	89
c) V. 5b: “... for the mouth of YHWH has spoken”.....	93
d) A literal way in the desert? .....	93
e) Summary .....	94
4. Imagery in vv. 3–5 in the context of Isaiah 40:1–11.....	95
a) Verses 1–2 .....	95
b) Verses 6–8 .....	97
c) Verses 9–11 .....	99
5. The relationship to other ‘way’ passages in Isaiah 40–55.....	100
6. Summary .....	101
 <i>Chapter 5: ‘Right’ and ‘way’ – Isaiah 40:12–31 .....</i>	 <i>103</i>
1. Introductory remarks .....	103
a) The literary characteristics and structure of Isaiah 40:12–31 .....	103
b) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	108
2. Analysis of way metaphors in Isa 40:27–31 .....	110
a) V. 27: “My way is hidden from YHWH” .....	110
b) The statement in v. 27 in light of the context.....	113
c) What kind of response does Jacob’s/Israel’s allegation get?.....	117
d) The way further for Jacob/Israel – Isa 40:29f .....	118
3. The relationship to other way passages in Isaiah 40–55 .....	120
4. Summary .....	124
 <i>Chapter 6: “By a road they do not know” – Isaiah 42:10–17.....</i>	 <i>125</i>
1. Introductory remarks .....	125
a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	125

b) Literary Characteristics and Structure.....	125
2. The way metaphors in Isaiah 42:16.....	128
a) ‘The blind’.....	134
b) “I will lead ... by a road...”.....	136
c) “... by paths they have not known ...”.....	138
d) “I will turn the darkness before them into light”.....	139
e) “...crooked things straight”.....	140
f) Summary.....	141
3. The relationship of the imagery to the context.....	142
4. Isaiah 42:16 and other way passages in Isaiah 40–55.....	144
5. Summary.....	145

*Chapter 7: “In whose ways they would not walk” – Isaiah 42:18–25* ..... 147

1. Introductory remarks.....	147
a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	147
b) Literary characteristics and structure.....	148
2. Text analysis of Isaiah 42:18–25.....	153
a) V. 18–20: The blind and deaf people.....	153
b) V. 21–23 the intention of YHWH – and the people’s response.....	157
c) Isaiah 42:24–25.....	159
3. The relationship between Isaiah 42:18–25 and other passages in Isaiah 40–55.....	164
4. Summary.....	166

*Chapter 8: “When you pass through the water, I will be with you...”*  
– Isaiah 43:1–7 ..... 167

1. Introductory remarks.....	167
a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	168
b) Literary characteristics and structure.....	168
2. Way Metaphors in Isaiah 43:2.....	169
3. The relationship of the imagery to the context.....	173
4. Literal interpretation?.....	174
5. The relationship to other way passages in Isaiah 40–55.....	176
6. Summary.....	177

*Chapter 9: Way in chaos – Isaiah 43:16–21* ..... 179

1. Introductory remarks.....	179
a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	179
b) Literary characteristics and structure in Isaiah 43:16–21.....	179
2. Textual analysis of Isaiah 43:16–21.....	181
a) Earlier reading of Isaiah 43:16–21.....	181
b) Verses 16–17: YHWH’s strength and superiority.....	186
c) Excursus: Way through chaos in Isaiah 51:9–11.....	187

d) V. 18: “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old” .....	187
e) V.19: “Look, I am doing something new, ...” .....	189
f) Vv. 19b–21: “Yes, I am making a road in the desert...” .....	191
g) Summary .....	197
3. The relationship to other way passages in Isaiah 40–55 .....	198
4. Summary .....	199
 <i>Chapter 10: “In the way you should go ...” – Isa 48:17–22</i> .....	201
1. Introductory remarks .....	201
a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	201
b) Literary characteristics and structure .....	202
2. Analysis of Isaiah 48:17–22.....	209
a) Isaiah 48:17–19.....	209
b) Excursus: King Cyrus’s ways – Isaiah 41:2; 45:13 and 48:15.....	217
c) Isaiah 48:20–22.....	220
d) Excursus: Isaiah 52:11–12 .....	227
3. Isaiah 48:17–22 within Isaiah 40–55.....	227
4. Summary .....	229
 <i>Chapter 11: “Along the roadways they will graze – Look! Here they come from far away.” – Isaiah 49:7–12</i> .....	231
1. Introductory remarks .....	231
a) Translation with text-criticism and philological comments .....	231
b) Literary characteristics and structure .....	232
2. Way metaphors in Isaiah 49:7–12 .....	234
a) Previous reading of Isa 49:7–12 .....	234
b) Vv. 7–9a – The task of the Servant .....	236
c) Way and journey in vv. 9b–12 .....	239
d) Both figurative and literal? .....	246
3. Relationship with other way passages in Isaiah 40–55 .....	246
4. Summary .....	248
 <i>Chapter 12: “...each turning to his own way” – Isaiah 53:4–6</i> .....	249
1. Introductory remarks .....	249
a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	249
b) Literary characteristics and structure .....	250
2. Way metaphors in Isaiah 53:6.....	250
3. The relationship to other way passages in Isaiah 40–55 .....	253
4. Summary .....	254
 <i>Chapter 13: “... so are my ways higher than your ways” Isaiah 55:6–13</i> .....	255
1. Introductory remarks .....	255

a) Translation with textual criticism and philological commentary.....	256
b) Literary characteristics and structure.....	258
2. Way metaphors in Isaiah 55:6–13 .....	265
a) Isaiah 55:6–7.....	265
b) Isaiah 55:8–9; Introduction and history of scholarship.....	269
c) Isaiah 55:10–11.....	277
d) Isaiah 55:12–13.....	278
e) Isaiah 55:1–13 as epilogue.....	288
3. Summary .....	289
 <i>Chapter 14: The Significance of the Way Metaphor in Isaiah 40–55 .....</i>	 293
 Bibliography .....	 305
Source Index .....	319
Author Index.....	326
Subject Index .....	330



## Abbreviations and Signs

Textual criticism in the monograph uses the same symbols as the text-critical apparatus in Elliger, K., *et al.*, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1978 [Third improved edition].

Sections from the Hebrew Bible are rendered in accordance with *codex Leninogradensis* – but then without vowel signs and accents. Verse and chapter references are also given in accordance with the Masoretic text (*BHS*). Discrepancies in verses and chapters between *BHS* and English translations are stated.

References to books of the Bible use the abbreviations from the Chicago Manual of Style.

All literature is noted in abbreviated form [Author, title, (year)]. Comprehensive bibliographical data is reproduced in the bibliography at the end of the monograph.

The monograph has, for the most part, sought to avoid using abbreviations. The list below covers, in the main, the abbreviations that are used:

### *General abbreviations:*

vol.	volume
f	following (verse/page)
ff	the following (verses/pages)
cf.	confer
m	masculine
op. cit.	[opere citato] “the cited work” (the same as in the previous note)
p.	person or page
par	parallel(e)
pl.	plural
sg.	singular
v. (vv.)	verse(s)
	parallel (to)

### *Bibliographical abbreviations:*

CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
DBI	Dictionary of Biblical Imagery
DCH	The Dictionary of classical Hebrew
HAL	The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis
THAT	Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament
TWAT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft





## Chapter 1 Introduction

A number of verses in Isaiah 40–55 are concerned with ‘ways’. There are references, in these 16 chapters, to ‘way(s) of YHWH’, the way of justice, the way of wisdom, ‘the people’s way(s)’, an unknown way, way in the desert, way through the waters, the way of YHWH to Zion and Cyrus’s ways (Isaiah 40:3; 40:14; 40:27; 41:3; 42:16; 42:24; 43:16, 19; 45:13; 48:15; 48:17; 49:9, 11; 51:10–11; 53:6; 55:7–9). In addition, we find a number of verses that seem to assume a way in that the verses speak of conditions that are normally associated with travelling on a road.<sup>1</sup> What kind of ways do these verses describe? What message is being conveyed by these way-passages? And, to what extent can a connection between these way-passages be established?

Previous exegesis has, in the main, sorted the aforementioned verses into two distinct groups, and these two groups of verses are treated in different ways and with clearly varying interest. In the first group one finds verses that, one assumes, help to create an implied story. This story imagines and describes a forthcoming second Exodus from Babylon to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> It is assumed that the relevant way-passages in this interpretation refer to physical roads, preferably in an actual desert between Babylon and Jerusalem. It is assumed, further, that these verses predict that YHWH will transform this actual desert into fertile land to give the people water. In addition, YHWH will provide roads in the desert to ease the people’s journey between Babylon and Jerusalem. One assumes, in this interpretation, that the main intention of the book is, primarily, to convince the people that YHWH both can and will lead them back to Jerusalem, and, further,

---

<sup>1</sup> This is the case, first and foremost, with Isaiah 40:9–11 (YHWH *comes*, the flock (the people) are *led*); 40:30–31 (those who *stumble* and become weary gain new strength to *walk, run* and mount on wings like eagles); 43:2 (YHWH is with his people in their *journey* through water and fire); 48:12 (YHWH *leads* his people through the desert); 49:10 (YHWH *guides* and *leads* his people to a water source); 52:11–12 (the people are urged to *go* in procession with YHWH as both the figure leading, and as the rearguard); 55:12–13 (the people are urged to *leave* and are *led forth* by YHWH).

<sup>2</sup> This group of texts normally includes Isa 40:3; 42:16; 43:1–7; 43:16, 19; 48:20–21; 49:8–12; 52:11–12; 55:12–13.

that the people are to be ready now to go at the command of YHWH. There is a large amount of research that follows this interpretative tradition.<sup>3</sup>

The remaining way-passages in Isaiah 40–55 are viewed by the same exegetical tradition as disparate metaphorical expressions, without any significant connection with each other or with the aforementioned “Exodus verses”.<sup>4</sup> It is striking that the amount of specialist literature on these verses is far less than for the other way-passages.

This monograph has four concerns. *Firstly*, the monograph problematizes the aforementioned interpretative tradition when it comes to the interpretation of the so-called “second Exodus” verses. *Secondly*, analysis of the text makes it probable that most of the way-passages should, primarily, be interpreted as metaphorical. Moreover, the analysis shows how the verses *can* be interpreted if a metaphorical reading is assumed. Such a reading has previously been advanced and defended by a small group of individual scholars, and an overview of the history of this scholarship will be presented below.<sup>5</sup> Following on from these contributions, this monograph will gather, systematize and elaborate on the argument that the majority of way-passages in Isaiah 40–55 should be understood metaphorically. The monograph, in addition, takes the discussion further with regard to what these metaphorical verses communicate.

*Thirdly* – and here we probably find the most innovative contribution of the monograph when it seeks to show that most of the way passages in Isaiah 40–55 are related to each other, and that these verses, with varying

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ZILLISSEN, “Exodus” (1903), FISCHER, “Exodus” (1929), ANDERSON, “Exodus Typology” (1962), BEAUDET, “La typologie” (1963), ZIMMERLI, “Neue Exodus” (1963 [1960]), BLENKINSOPP, “Exodustradition” (1966), KAPELRUD, *Et folk* (1964), WESTERMANN, *Jesaja 40–66* (1966a), SNAITH, “Isaiah 40–66” (1967), MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah* (1968), STUHLMUELLER, *Creative redemption* (1970), BONNARD, *Le Second Isaie* (1972), WHYBRAY, *Isaiah* (1975), MELUGIN, *Formation* (1976), ELLIGER, *Deuterojesaja* (1978), BEUKEN, *Jesaja Iia* (1979), MERENDINO, *Der Erste* (1981), GITAY, *Prophecy and persuasion* (1981), WATTS, *Isaiah* (1987), WATTS, “Consolation” (1990), HILL, *Reading* (1993/1997), OORSCHOT, *Babel* (1993), DURHAM, “Isaiah 40–55” (1995), WAGNER, “Ruf Gottes” (1995), KOOLE, *Isaiah 40–48* (1997), KOOLE, *Isaiah 49–55* (1998), BRUEGGEMANN, *Isaiah 40–66* (1998), BUCHANAN, “Isaianic Midrash” (1998), BALTZER, *Deutero-Jesaja* (1999), CHILDS, *Isaiah* (2001), SEITZ, “Isaiah” (2001), BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 40–55* (2002). STUHLMUELLER, *Creative redemption* (1970), 272, also includes a table of verses which various exegetes consider to be among the “Exodus verses”.

<sup>4</sup> This group of verses includes, at any rate, Isa 40:14; 40:27; 42:24; 48:17; 53:6; 55:7–9.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. KIESOW, *Exodustexte* (1979), SIMIAN-YOFRE, “Exodo” (1980), HAAG, “Weg” (1982), ZENGER, “Der Gott des Exodus” (1987), BARSTAD, *A Way* (1989), NAVARRO, *El desierto* (1992), OSWALT, *Isaiah 40–66* (1998), BERGES, “Der zweite Exodus” (2004).

approaches and perspectives, develop a theme connected to the problematic ‘way-situation’ of the people. The monograph will attempt to show that this theme is developed throughout all sixteen chapters. The ‘way’ theme is introduced in the collection’s prologue, and, in the ensuing passage (Isa 20:12–31) a set of problems are posed by the people’s comment on the relationship between YHWH and their ways. Thereafter, this set of ‘way problems’ is pursued throughout a number of passages before the various lines of discussion are drawn together in the concluding chapter Isaiah 55. The monograph will show that such a connected reading of the way-passages makes good sense of the text and that it is consistent with the rest of the message in Isaiah 40–55, and, further, it contributes in clarifying the main message of the book. *Fourthly*, a connected reading of these way-passages makes, moreover, a considerable contribution to the uncovering of the pragmatics of Isaiah 40–55. The text, through the use of various traditions and pictures, seeks to move the reader to re-establish a worldview that makes possible hope for the future and renewed fellowship with YHWH. The monograph will not, primarily, address this issue in a direct way, but will, throughout, be conscious of the issue of pragmatics in Isaiah 40–55, and will, hopefully, highlight this in the analysis of the text.

## 1. Previous reading of the way-passages in Isaiah 40–55

### a) ‘Spiritual reading’ of the way-passages

One reading that has been normal throughout the whole of the history of interpretation of Isaiah 40–55, but particularly in the period before historical-critical reading made a decisive impact, was the ‘spiritual’ and a-historical reading. Such a reading often had an ecclesiastical aim with an unproblematic incorporation of a Christological interpretation.<sup>6</sup> The goal with this kind of reading was, then, not to delineate what the text meant for the first reader, but rather to delineate what the text might say to a reader (or listener) in the actual context of interpretation. Early historical-critical interpretation was somewhat in opposition to such a reading and, with the focus on authorial intent; the debate among many scholars became one of whether the text of Isaiah 40–55 should be understood literally *or* spiritually. The tendency in Biblical scholarship from the end of the 1800s has, then, been to defend a literal historical interpretation of the texts in opposition to a universal spiritual-*allegorical* interpretation that was not grounded in the historical context of the original communication.

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. UMBREIT, *Praktischer* (1841–1842), RAWLINSON, *et al.*, *Isaiah* (189?), 65–66, 119, 139, etc. More recently, such interpretations are found in HESSLER, “Struktur” (1965), SMART, *History* (1965) and YOUNG, *Isaiah 40–66* (1972).

When I, in what follows, speak of the figurative nature of the text I am not intending such a spiritual-allegorical interpretation. That does not mean that I automatically brand the earlier reading as illegitimate. The difference is that I, in this monograph, am dealing with a historically-orientated problem concerned with how the first reader could have read and understood the text. Another issue that needs comment, by way of introduction, is the fact that, though texts function as pictures and metaphors, that does not mean that these texts can not refer to definite, physical or historical realities. *Both* literal and figurative speech can refer to literal, physical or historical realities. The difference lays only in *how* this occurs. My analysis seeks to show that the potentially figurative language in the way-passages in Isaiah 40–55 is grounded in the historical context of the original communication.

*b) A second Exodus?*

As mentioned above, traditional exegesis has previously read most of the way-passages within the framework of an expected Exodus from Babylon to Jerusalem. This interpretation of the way-passages in Isaiah 40–55 probably reached its zenith early in the 1960s in the articles of Bernhard W. Anderson, Roland Beaudet, Walther Zimmerli and Joseph Blenkinsopp.<sup>7</sup> Specialist studies of “The Exodus motif in Deutero-Isaiah” had previously been published by, amongst others, Alfred Zillesen, Johann Fischer, J. Guillet, and B. J. Van der Merwe.<sup>8</sup> More recently, specialist studies have been advanced by Carroll Stuhlmueller, Bernhard W. Anderson, Michael Fishbane, Dale A. Patrick, Johannes Marböck, Rikki E. Watts, John E. Hamlin, John I. Durham, Richtsje Amba and George W. Buchanan.<sup>9</sup> Further, the vast majority of commentaries/studies on Isaiah 40–55 have assumed that a “second Exodus” is a central theme (or *the* central theme) in Isaiah 40–55, and have undertaken exegesis of the relevant passages on this basis.<sup>10</sup> It is, in my opinion, striking how little justification has been

---

<sup>7</sup> ANDERSON, “Exodus Typology” (1962), BEAUDET, “La typologie” (1963), BLENKINSOPP, “Exodustradition” (1966), ZIMMERLI, “Neue Exodus” (1963 [1960]).

<sup>8</sup> ZILLISSEN, “Exodus” (1903), FISCHER, “Exodus” (1929), GUILLET, “Le thème” (1949), MERWE, *Pentateuchtradisies* (1955), 146–246.

<sup>9</sup> STUHLMUELLER, *Creative redemption* (1970), 59–98, ANDERSON, “Exodus and Covenant” (1976), FISHBANE, “Text and texture” (1979), PATRICK, “Epiphanic” (1984), MARBÖCK, “Exodus” (1990), WATTS, “Consolation” (1990), HAMLIN, “Reinterpretation” (1991), HILL, *Reading* (1993/1997), DURHAM, “Isaiah 40–55” (1995), AMBA, “Travelling” (1997), BUCHANAN, “Isaianic Midrash” (1998).

<sup>10</sup> SNAITH, “Isaiah 40–66” (1967), 147, makes an apt comment: “The Return is not merely one of the themes [...]. It is the prophet's dominant theme. [...] basically the Return is this prophet's ONE theme, and all else is subservient to it.”. Cf. besides DUHM, *Jesaja* (1914), MUILENBURG, “Isaiah” (1956), RIGNELL, *Isaiah 40–55* (1956),

advanced for the traditional way of understanding the texts, and, conversely, how there has been, to a large extent, an absence of any problematization of that interpretation.

In addition to the aforementioned contributions we find, within another stream of scholarship, scholarly contributions that have discussed lexemes for the ‘way’ in the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup> These contributions have also, largely, gathered a series of way verses in Isaiah 40–55 under the heading of “second Exodus”. But this scholarship has also failed to test independently whether or not its interpretation is, in fact, legitimate.

That the passages speak of a second Exodus is, in the traditional reading, taken to be self-evident. To the extent that that there has been discussion of whether or not the verses should be understood literally or figuratively, it has, most often, been in opposition to an a-historical spiritual reading of the way motif e.g. in J. Fischer:

“Aber ist in Is 40–55 wirklich von einem neuen Exodus die Rede? Ist das, was der Prophet vom neuen Exodus sagt nicht etwa *rein geistig* zu deuten auf die Erlösung von der Sünde oder ähnlich? Darauf ist zu sagen, die rein geistige Ausdeutung ist für einen Exegeten, dem es darauf ankommt, den *Wortsinn* der Prophezeiung festzustellen, einfach unmöglich.”<sup>12</sup>

Fischer notes several relevant passages that he thinks undergird this point, and concludes accordingly:

“Wer all die angeführten Stellen aufmerksam betrachtet wird sich kaum der Ueberzeugung verschließen können, daß eine *rein geistige* Ausdeutung des neuen Exodus unmöglich ist. [...] Es wird verheißen: die Befreiung aus Babel, und zwar nicht aus einem idealen Babel, sondern aus dem *wirklichen* Babel.”<sup>13</sup>

Certain other exegetes have, to an extent, become open to a figurative interpretation of particular elements in the Exodus passages but have, at

---

MORGENSTERN, “Message” (1958/59), FOHRER, *Jesaja* (1964), KAPELRUD, *Et folk* (1964), WESTERMANN, *Jesaja 40–66* (1966a), MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah* (1968), STUHLMUELLER, *Creative redemption* (1970), BALTZER, *Ezechiel und Deuterocesaja* (1971), BONNARD, *Le Second Isaie* (1972), SCHOORS, *I am God* (1973), WHYBRAY, *Isaiah* (1975), MELUGIN, *Formation* (1976), PREUSS, *Deuterocesaja* (1976), BEUKEN, *Jesaja Ila* (1979), MERENDINO, *Der Erste* (1981), WATTS, *Isaiah* (1987), OORSCHOT, *Babel* (1993), KOOLE, *Isaiah 40–48* (1997), BRUEGGEMANN, *Isaiah 40–66* (1998), BALTZER, *Deutero-Jesaja* (1999), CHILDS, *Isaiah* (2001), ZAPFF, *Jesaja 40–55* (2001), BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 40–55* (2002). In New Testament studies, the same interpretation is assumed for studies such as MARCUS, *Way* (1992) and PAO, *Acts* (2000).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. MULENBURG, *The Way of Israel* (1961), NÖTSCHER, *Gotteswege* (1958), GROS, *Route* (1961), SAUER, “דרך” (1971/76), KOCH, “דָּרֶךְ” (1978), MICHAELIS, “ὁδός” (1967), ZEHNDER, *Wegmetaphorik* (1999).

<sup>12</sup> FISCHER, “Exodus” (1929), 113.

<sup>13</sup> op. cit., 117.

the same time, maintained that this use of metaphor serves to foreshadow a second Exodus.

Commonly, the initial approach to the text has been, firstly, to place the passage in a supposed specific historical context; that is, the last phase of the Babylonian captivity (before 539 BC). This Babylonian captivity – where the people are unable to leave the city – is understood by most scholars as itself the main problem in Isaiah 40–55. Most of the passages in Isaiah 40–55 are related to this problem. Isaiah 40–55 preaches, as an answer to this problem, that YHWH, with the help of his anointed Cyrus, will defeat Babylon, set the people free and lead them through the desert home to Jerusalem. Isa 52:11–52 and 48:20–21 have, according to a number of scholars, functioned as passages that introduce the theme by exhorting the people to leave Babylon. It has been common, then, to use Isa 43:14–21 and 51:9–11 to support the idea that a desert journey is being foreshadowed.

A necessary assumption in this interpretation is that an anonymous prophet (“Deutero-Isaiah”) is active amongst the exiles in Babylon, or, possibly, that Isaiah 40–55 as a book has the people in Babylon as addressees. Another important characteristic of previous scholarship regarding Isaiah 40–55 is the relatively small amount of attention given to reading the way-passages in light of the immediate literary context. This is probably due to the legacy of previous form critics who assumed that Isaiah 40–55 was composed of a large number of disparate and originally independent units, with the result that relatively little attention was given to reading the text in light of its literary context.<sup>14</sup> The only element that was supposed to unite the book was the historical prophet or possibly a later editor. Thus, a *reconstructed historical context* and a *specific reconstructed situation* became important for the interpretation of each passage.

---

<sup>14</sup> GRESSMANN, “Literarische Analyse” (1914), claims, in his study of the prophets, that we must give up any idea of a *book* as the primary unit for the prophetic message because the prophetic ‘books’ consist primarily of shorter speech-acts, seldom longer than a chapter (258). Given the assumption of several units more or less being randomly put together, the task of the form critic was to uncover the small original units that were (probably) originally pronounced by the prophet. Gressmann concludes, then, that Isaiah 40–55 comprises 49 independent speech-acts that have nothing to do with each other apart from the fact that they were once pronounced by the same prophet. Gressmann seems to maintain Isaiah 40–55 as a literary unity, but then only with the prophet as the uniting factor. Cf. also KÖHLER, *Deuterocesaja* (1923), BEGRICH, *Studien* (1939) and MOWINCKEL, “Komposition” (1931). Mowinckel claimed that the collection was arranged in reference to theme, catchwords, assonance and homophonic introductory formulations. He attributes little significance to these factors when it comes to deciding whether or not the book was composed as a conscious whole, and concludes that there is no planned composition.

It was another common premise in the traditional interpretation that one assumed the first Exodus to be a deeply ingrained experience in the people's consciousness, and that Deutero-Isaiah revitalizes this key tradition to engender faith that YHWH will, again, lead his people out of slavery and home to a future with Him. Joseph Blenkinsopp has commented accordingly:

Die konkrete geschichtliche Situation, in welcher sich Israel befand, und der Platz, den das Exodusthema damals in der Überlieferung einnahm, mußten zum Vergleich mit der Lage, wie sie ursprünglich in Ägypten vorlag, geradezu drängen, und deshalb überrascht es nicht, wenn in diesen Kapiteln häufig Auszugsmotive anzutreffen sind. Doch die Situation des Exils war nicht einfach eine Wiederkehr der Lage, wie sie siebenhundert Jahre zuvor in Ägypten bestanden hatte. Nicht nur hatte die räumliche und zeitliche Perspektive, in der die Situation gesehen wurde, sehr an Tiefe gewonnen, sondern es kam zudem zu einer über Kräfte gehenden Glaubenskrise.<sup>15</sup>

Subsequently, it has been pointed out that the many allusions to the Exodus create, together, a coherent narrative of departure, desert journey and homecoming in Zion. Most of the scholars that interpret the passages in this way admit that we do not find an explicit reference to such an Exodus anywhere in Isaiah 40–55. All the same, they maintain that all the indications of a new Exodus from Babylon to Jerusalem create, together, a clear picture, cf. Walther Zimmerli:

Obwohl hier in ungleich vollerer Streuung über die verschiedenen Prophetenworte hin vom neuen Exodus die Rede ist, finden wir an keiner Stelle eine ruhig erzählende Entfaltung dieses Theologumenons [...]. Dabei verrät die Vielzahl von Einzelnen Worten, die je eine Episode, ein Bild, eine Hindeutung auf das große Geschehen des neuen Exodus aufleuchten lassen, mit unüberhörbarer Deutlichkeit, wie zentral diese Ankündigung für die Predigt Deutero-Jesaja ist.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> BLENKINSOPP, "Exodustradition" (1966), 764.

<sup>16</sup> ZIMMERLI, "Neue Exodus" (1963 [1960]), 197–98. Zimmerli takes God's acts of judgment towards Babylon (Isa 47; 43:14f and 46:1f) as the background for his treatment of the departure from Babylon. The passage, then, that calls for a march out of Babylon in Isa 52:11f is said to be the passage initiating the whole departure. Subsequently, Zimmerli takes Isa 43:16–21 and 51:9–11 as passages that make use of the first Exodus as a model for predicting a new one. Common for both these passages is the fact that they speak of a "way", and this way is understood to be a literal way through the desert that divides Babylon from Syria. He is of the opinion that these passages create an implicit story of departure, desert journey and homecoming. He subsequently uses this implicit story about a new Exodus as the horizon for interpreting a number of other, in themselves obscure, passages in Isaiah 40–55. The picture of God as shepherd and warrior is understood by Zimmerli in the framework of this imagery i.e. God guiding his people through the desert (Isa 40:10–11; 42:13; 49:10). Since God guides the people, the way is also coloured by his glory (Isa 40:5). The way is built by heavenly powers (Isa 40:3) and in this divine work of building, mountains are made low and valleys lifted up (Isa 40:4; 42:16). During the journey YHWH provides for his people and acts as a good shepherd.



The result was that one described the “second Exodus” in analogy with the “first Exodus”,<sup>17</sup> and, further, by extension, one found a number of indications that such a connection was there.

A characteristic of the traditional “second Exodus” interpretation is that scholars that have advocated such an interpretation have, only to a limited extent, related passages that are classified as Exodus passages to other way-passages in Isaiah 40–55.<sup>18</sup> To the extent that this has been done, the obviously metaphorical passages have been built on to the Exodus ‘construction’. A revealing example is Roy F. Melugin’s discussion of the way passages in Isaiah 42 and 43:

Admittedly, in 42:14–17 by itself the image would not necessarily have to be understood as a reference to the traditional Exodus-Wilderness theme; in 42:18–25, when standing alone, *dæræk* (v. 24) was certainly not a reference to the tradition of Exodus and wandering in the desert. But in the context of 43:16–21 (cf. v. 16), all references to the ‘way’ or ‘path’ in 42:14–43:21 must be understood in terms of the Exodus-desert theme of the collector’s theology.<sup>19</sup>

W. A. M. Beuken, as well, in his thorough commentary on Isaiah 40–55, has related a number of the supposed metaphorical way passages to the

---

Furthermore he gives them water (Isa 41:17–21; 43:16–21); yes even water from the rock (Isa 48:21). God’s new creation in the desert in order to provide for his people encompasses even more. Springs burst forth in the desert and give the people necessary water (43:19f; 41:18). People who live in desert regions see this and praise God (42:10f), as do the animals in the desert (Isa 43:20). Nature itself also rejoices when this transformation takes place (Isa 55:12). Zimmerli claims that all these descriptions have their roots in the tradition of the Exodus. Zimmerli reckons that the following group of passages speak of Exodus: Isa 40:3–5; 40:9–11; 41:17–20; 42:10–13; 43:16–21; 44:1–5; 48:20f; 49:8–12; 51:9–11; 52:7–10.11f; 55:8–13. ANDERSON, “Exodus Typology” (1962), 181–82, claims that the new Exodus is “the specific subject” in the following passages: Isa 40:3–5; 41:17–20; 42:14–16; 43:1–3; 43:14–21; 48:20–21; 49:8–12; 51:9–10; 52:11–12; 55:12–13. BLENKINSOPP, “Exodustradition” (1966), identifies the Exodus motif in Isa 40:3–5, 10; 41:10; 41:17–20; 43:2; 43:14–21; 44:27; 48:20–22; 49:8–13; 50:2; 51:9–10; 52:10; 53:1; 55:12. For a further overview of “Exodus passages” amongst various exegetes see STUHLMUELLER, *Creative redemption* (1970), 272.

<sup>17</sup> DELITZSCH, *Commentar* (1869), 455: “...die Erlösung aus Aeg. ist Vorbild und Gewähr der zu erwartenden Erlösung aus Babel.”, BUHL, *Jesaja* (1894), 549, 598, FISCHER, “Exodus” (1929), 117: “Der neue Exodus wird geschildert nach Analogie des ägyptischen”, DUHM, *Jesaja* (1914), 289 and 326–7, BENTZEN, *Jesaja* (1943), 46: “Exodus og udgang fra Babel forholder seg til hinanden som type and antitype”, cf. also BEGRICH, *Studien* (1939), 85: “Diese Stilisierung der Anspielung auf die Schilfmeerkatastrophe als Gegenbild des Neuen zeigt ziemlich deutlich...”, MULENBURG, “Isaiah” (1956), 399: “Again and again Yahweh’s advent is described in language drawn from the first Exodus (e.g., 43:19–20; 48:21; 52:11–12” cf. also p. 404–5.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. something of this is seen STUHLMUELLER, *Creative redemption* (1970), 67.

<sup>19</sup> MELUGIN, *Formation* (1976), 114.

overall framework of the Exodus.<sup>20</sup> According to Beuken the prologue (40:1–11) introduces the people's return through the desert from Babylon to Jerusalem. Isa 40:27 subsequently informs of the two main themes in Isaiah 41–44 i.e. the way and right. When YHWH in 40:31 promises those who wait for him a future journey, the allusion is to Israel's coming journey through the desert and must not be taken as "pure and clear imagery."<sup>21</sup> In addition to the normal "second Exodus-passages", Isa 42:16 and 43:2 are, according to Beuken, about the journey through the desert.<sup>22</sup> Neither should the way in Isa 48:17, according to Beuken, be understood as a metaphorical way, but, on the contrary, as the literal way YHWH will let his people journey on out from Babylon.<sup>23</sup> Isa 53:6 is related to YHWH's new (literal) way from Babylon to Zion,<sup>24</sup> and in Isa 55:6–9 the people's own way is set up against God's new way from Babylon to Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup>

## 2. Alternative approaches to the way-passages

### a) *The conception of a "second Exodus" is toned down*

The idea of "the second Exodus" as a central part of the message in Isaiah 40–55 was first carefully challenged in some studies presented towards the end of the 1970s. In the studies of H. C. Spykerboer and J. M. Vincent in 1976 and 1977, the role and significance of the Exodus motifs were toned down with regard to understanding the problem, and thus solution, of Isaiah 40–55.<sup>26</sup> Both the authors claimed that the addressees of the book found themselves in Jerusalem and not in Babylon, and thus some of the basis for assuming that the book held out the prospect of a coming Exodus fell away. In addition, both scholars pointed out that the (various) problems that were key to the book were related to the situation in Jerusalem

---

<sup>20</sup> BEUKEN, *Jesaja IIa* (1979).

<sup>21</sup> op. cit., 56.

<sup>22</sup> op. cit., 147–49 and 163. Isa 42:24 is not related to the other way-passages in Isaiah 40–55. On the other hand, Beuken views this verse as secondary and alien to the context, cf. p. 158.

<sup>23</sup> op. cit., 295.

<sup>24</sup> BEUKEN, *Jesaja IIb* (1983), 218–19.

<sup>25</sup> op. cit., 292f.

<sup>26</sup> SPYKERBOER, *Structure* (1976) and VINCENT, *Literarischen Eigenart* (1977).

and not to the situation in Babylon.<sup>27</sup> In spite of their theories not winning general acceptance, both Spykerboer and Vincent contributed to starting a new debate with regard to the problems Isaiah 40–55 was concerned with.

Spykerboers and Vincents monographs actually had neither the way-motif nor the Exodus-motif in Isaiah 40–55 as their main theme. The monograph of Klaus Kiesow *Exodustexte im Jesajabuch*, did, however, have that as its theme.<sup>28</sup> Kiesow claimed, in his introduction, that previous depictions of the Exodus motifs in Isaiah 40–55 had made the erroneous assumption that the image of the Exodus is consistent throughout the whole of Isaiah 40–55.<sup>29</sup> Kiesow sought to show the differences in the image and claimed that the texts emphasize the different sides of the Exodus traditions, and that it is not possible to fit the passages together into a coherent narrative that envisages a second Exodus. Kiesow claimed that several passages have their roots in Exodus traditions, but that the use of the Exodus motifs does not in any way function as a simple outward analogy between the Exodus from Egypt and the “the new Exodus” from Babylon. The elements within the Exodus traditions that are emphasised are not primarily the *being led* out from the land or the place where the people are *led*, but rather the creation of *a way* and protection on this way.<sup>30</sup> Kiesow showed that several of the so-called Exodus passages resist a literal

---

<sup>27</sup> SPYKERBOER, *Structure* (1976) tones down the significance of an Exodus from Babylon (it is there) and thinks that the main message is that Zion’s inhabitants will get to experience YHWH’s return to the city. Isaiah 40–55 is therefore to be understood as a “letter of comfort” to Zion. Spykerboer, in his analysis of the so-called “Exodus passages” (p. 182–3, 163–5), has laid emphasis on the rebuilding of Jerusalem being the main point of focus, not an Exodus from Babylon, cf. Isa 40:3–5; 49:8–12, even though a new Exodus also is a theme, cf. Isa 43:16–21 (p. 107–8). The renewal and transformation of the desert (e.g. Isa 41:17–20), with the resulting fertility and habitable environment, does not need to be understood in the framework of a new Exodus, but should rather be understood as images expressing the new things YHWH will do for his people. Thus they are not necessarily words of comfort to the exiles. The passages that, according to Spykerboer, spoke most clearly of a repeated Exodus (48:20–21; 52:11–12 and 55:12–13) are to be understood as secondary additions to the text. VINCENT, *Literarischen Eigenart* (1977) claims that the book consists of short prophecies with an origin in the cult in Jerusalem, and he assumes that the book’s origins are in oral prophecies of a mystical character, which were written down after the fall of Jerusalem. The relatively few references to the situation of exile can be explained by this. Vincent looks at several of the so-called “Exodus prophecies” (Isa 42:10–17; 51:9–11; 55:12–13) and claims that none of them can be said to speak of a forthcoming Exodus. In addition, he claims that neither do Isa 43:16–21; 48:20–21; 52:11–12 refer to a new Exodus, even though he does not mitigate the fact that 48:20f, in particular, constitutes a problem. This passage is not, however, according to Vincent, sufficient to constitute a major element in the message of Isaiah 40–55.

<sup>28</sup> KIESOW, *Exodustexte* (1979).

<sup>29</sup> *op. cit.*, 19f, 190ff.

<sup>30</sup> This is particularly the case in Isaiah 40–48.

reading and that the passages should, therefore, rather be understood figuratively. Nonetheless, he claimed that the passages, at the end of the day, exhort to a departure from Babylon:

Der Weg der Geschichte ist einzig Jahwehs Weg, und darum eröffnet sich für Israel ein Weg aus der Not. Die Wegtheologie steht im Dienst des Rufs zum Auszug, ist also in dieser Hinsicht Aufbruchstheologie. Das Schlußstück 48:20 zieht die Konsequenz, indem es Israel dazu auffordert, sich auf dem Weg zu machen.<sup>31</sup>

Kiesow was, in the main, concerned with the traditional Exodus passages and was, in his main analysis, only marginally concerned with the other way-passages. In his concluding chapter, however, he widened the perspective so as to encompass these passages as well. Kiesow points out here how that the way-motif is used within a metaphorical framework in Isa 42:16 and 43:1–3a.<sup>32</sup> In Isa 40:12–31, as well, the passage plays on the equivocal meaning of the leading word דרך ‘way’. Kiesow claimed here that the Exodus traditions in Isaiah 40–55 are combined with the figurative use of ‘way’ as ‘way of life’ and ‘human journey’. In connection with this, he says, amongst other things:

Auf diesem Hintergrund wird plausibel, wieso die Exodusthematik in Kap. 40–48\* im Wesentlichen auf das Thema “Weg” reduziert ist. Wo Jahwes “Gott-Sein” einziges Kontinuum der Geschichte ist, da lässt sich von der Zukunft nur dieses eine Sagen – es ist allerdings das Entscheidende –: sie wird Weg mit Jahwe sein, der “der Erste und noch mit dem Letzten ist” (41,4; vgl. 44,6; 48:12).<sup>33</sup>

Kiesow claimed, accordingly, that it is probably more adequate to speak of a way-motif in Isaiah 40–55 rather than an Exodus motif. Kiesow does not, unfortunately, develop these initial thoughts further.

#### b) *Horacio Simian-Yofre*

Subsequent to the studies of Vincent and Kiesow, Horacio Simian-Yofre in 1980/81 pointed out, in two consecutive articles, that the overwhelming majority of exegetes had too simply adopted the idea of “the new/second Exodus” without there being an explicit justification for this hypothesis.<sup>34</sup> Simian-Yofre pointed out, further, that previous scholarly literature had, to a large extent, only accentuated the literary and theological features that speak *in favour of* a connection between the Exodus story and Isaiah 40–55, while it had not seriously considered indications of the opposite, and investigated whether or not traditions could originate from other groups of motifs. In my opinion, Simian-Yofre puts his finger on something central

<sup>31</sup> KIESOW, *Exodustexte* (1979), 193.

<sup>32</sup> *op. cit.*, 190ff.

<sup>33</sup> *op. cit.*, 195.

<sup>34</sup> SIMIAN-YOFRE, “Exodo” (1980), SIMIAN-YOFRE, “La teodicea” (1981).

to the scholarly discourse that has developed in this field. There seems to be a tendency to *show* how the Exodus motif develops in the text without any explicit *justification* for one's reading.

Simian-Yofre claimed that there were a number of indications that the actual passages should be read as metaphorical expressions. Firstly, he has advanced the idea that the passages contain lexemes (and combinations of lexemes) that elsewhere in the Old Testament are used only in figurative passages. This is particularly the case in Isa 40:3–4; 41:17–20; 42:14–17 and Isa 43:16ff.<sup>35</sup> According to Simian-Yofre, the command to establish the way of YHWH in Isa 40:3 is to be understood as a command to the people to adopt a special attitude/special behaviour towards YHWH. He reads Isa 42:16 and 43:16 in the same way, where the occurrence of the lexeme *נתיבה* means that these passages, as well, must be understood within the sphere of attitude/action.

Secondly, Simian-Yofre argued that 'desert' is not to be understood as a geographical place, but as a symbol of the people's situation. The semantic field for desert in Isaiah 41:17–20 points, according to Simian-Yofre, in such a direction. Simian-Yofre claimed that in Isa 40:3 and 43:16, as well, the actual desert can not be understood as a literal geographical place, but as a symbol of a negative situation and as the place for a confrontation between YHWH and his enemies (water and other chaos powers).<sup>36</sup>

Thirdly, Simian-Yofre was of the opinion that those texts that exhort to leaving (48:20–21; 49:9, 12; 52:11–12) show that the location of the one who is exhorting to leave is not among the exiles in Babylon, but rather a place further away (Jerusalem?). The texts' exhortation to leave is, therefore, to be understood within a more rhetorical – possibly liturgical – setting.<sup>37</sup> The central point of these passages (as well as in Isa 43:1–7) is, above all, Jerusalem's re-building as YHWH's city. In addition, Simian-Yofre claimed that the motif of return is more prominent than the motif of Exodus. Simian-Yofre claims that, in Isa 43:1–7, the passage's main aim is not to describe an Exodus but to assure the people that YHWH will be present and help his people through potential dangers.<sup>38</sup> Even the description of YHWH as shepherd in Isa 49:7–13 has, according to Simian-Yofre, roots outside the Exodus traditions. As in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, this image is applied to describe YHWH's leading of his people in a metaphorical sense (presence and help). Simian-Yofre has, therefore, concluded that

---

<sup>35</sup> SIMIAN-YOFRE, "Exodo" (1980), 531, 534, 537–39, 541–45.

<sup>36</sup> Isa 51:9–10 is also primarily concerned, according to Simian-Yofre, with YHWH's battle with the forces of chaos, and not directly with a possible forthcoming Exodus, cf. op. cit., 548–51.

<sup>37</sup> op. cit., 545–47, 552.

<sup>38</sup> op. cit., 540.

Isaiah 40–55 seems, primarily, not to be concerned with a forthcoming Exodus from Babylon. Simian-Yofre claimed further that there exists metaphors in the so-called “Exodus passages” that must be pressed hard if they are to be understood within the framework of Exodus. He mentions here YHWH screaming like a woman giving birth, the people travelling like an army, and the people grazing like sheep.

If, according to Simian-Yofre, one is liberated from the obligation to interpret the passages with reference to a “new Exodus”, the “abundance of possible connotations” is revealed. In his second article Simian-Yofre then sought to construct what he thought to be the theological and literary horizon of Isaiah 40–55.<sup>39</sup> He pointed out here that Isaiah 40–55, in particular, has a lot in common with passages that describe YHWH’s power meeting the ‘waters’ and other chaos powers.<sup>40</sup> Simian-Yofre claimed that these passages, similarly to Isaiah 40–55, present YHWH metaphorically as a warrior. The passages focus on the actual battle between YHWH and the chaos powers, where YHWH fights in favour of his people in spite of being hard-pressed. The passages are, additionally, preoccupied with the prosperity YHWH brings his people as a result of the battle. It is in the light of this theological and literary horizon that the passages in Isaiah 40–55 must be interpreted.<sup>41</sup> According to Simian-Yofre Isaiah 40–55 is seeking to convince the people that YHWH is still a powerful God who is capable of action, which is the foundation of the promised comfort. However, in spite of a number of interesting observations made by Simian-Yofre, we cannot agree with all the conclusions.

### c) Ernst Haag

Ernst Haag also challenged the idea of the motif of the Exodus being the main source of material for Isaiah 40–55.<sup>42</sup> Haag began his critique by claiming that previous interpretation of the so-called “Exodus passages” rests upon assumptions that are established before the interpretation of the text. Similarly to Simian-Yofre Haag sought to demonstrate the connection between the traditional Exodus passages by presenting a thoroughly alternative tradition history as the background for the passage’s figurative speech. On the basis of observations of a number of passages in Isaiah 40–55, Haag maintained that he could demonstrate a “*Paradise motif*” in Isaiah 40–55. The starting point for Haag’s reading was the story of Paradise and

---

<sup>39</sup> SIMIAN-YOFRE, “La teodicea” (1981).

<sup>40</sup> op. cit., 56–59. The passages that Simian-Yofre advances as a backdrop for the passages in Isaiah 40–55 are, in particular: Ps 24:2, 8; 68:5, 8; 77:12–21; 78:15f, 40, 52; 93:1, 3; 106:14; 107: 4, 33, 35; Hab 3:3, 8–15; Judg 5:4, 12; Nah 1:4.

<sup>41</sup> op. cit., 69–71.

<sup>42</sup> HAAG, “Weg” (1982).