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ISAIAH 24-27
AND THE
ORIGIN OF APOCALYPTIC

BY
WILLIAM R. MILLAR

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For Donna,
Scott and Kim

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This study began as a seminar paper, was expanded into a doctoral dissertation and appears now as a thorough revision of the latter work. It is not the purpose of this study to present a comprehensive discussion of apocalyptic origins. The goal is simply to glean from Isaiah 24-27 material that is important to that discussion. In the process, it is hoped that light is shed on our understanding of these important chapters in Isaiah.

I am indebted to many who have given me support and encouragement throughout this project. A fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities enabled me to study Canaanite mythology. Thanks are due to Leander E. Keck who read the manuscript at one stage and offered thorough and helpful criticisms. The skills of Joann Burnich as a manuscript typist are superb. My special thanks go to Frank M. Cross whose discipline, insights and patience have introduced me to the world of ancient Israel's religion.

Wilmot Center, New Hampshire
January 24, 1976
The time is ripe for a fresh analysis of chapters 24-27 in the book of Isaiah. In spite of the fact that in this century there have been a number of detailed discussions of these chapters, there are still many points of controversy. Even the basic assumption that Isaiah 24-27 form a separate unit in the book of Isaiah has not escaped challenge. When one raises the problems of date, text, form, genre, historical setting and proposals for the so-called "destroyed city," one is impressed by the scholarly labor that has been expended to crack the mysteries of these chapters.

More important, however, the so-called "Isaianic Apocalypse" has a contribution to make to the current debate on the subject of apocalyptic origins. It is to this end that we feel another study is justified.

The secondary literature interpreting Isaiah 24-27 has centered again and again on three interrelated issues: A) the problem of literary genre; B) the problems presented by the text and its structure; and C) the difficulty in establishing the historical setting. The latter includes the problems of date, authorship and identification of the destroyed city.

A. The Problem of Literary Genre

At one extreme Isaiah 24-27 has been identified as a late post-exilic apocalyptic work. At another it has been read as pre-exilic prophetic judgment literature thoroughly at home in the work of eighth-century Isaiah. In between it frequently


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has been understood as prophetic eschatology, or more recently, early apocalyptic. 

An important part of the methodology often used has been to draw up a list of themes from late apocalyptic works such as the book of Daniel. These themes are then used to identify the genre of more debatable passages such as Isaiah 24-27. Rudolph Smend, for instance, drew up a list of apocalyptic themes which for him placed Isaiah 24-27, beyond a doubt, in the post-exilic period. There was the description of the destruction of the earth (24:18-20); the meal on Mount Zion (25:8); the notice of resurrection (26:19). There was the blowing of the great trumpet (27:13) and the use of the three beasts as veiled history (27:1). There was the concept of world judgment and the messianic era as a future event.

According to Smend, Isaiah 26:19 referred to a personal resurrection; therefore, the verse was to be dated later than the national resurrection he perceived in Ezekiel 37. Isaiah 27:1 was later than Isaiah 51:9 because the latter clearly referred to Babylon, whereas 27:1, characteristic of apocalyptic, was ambiguous. It was these themes and motifs that led Smend to date the chapters between 500-300 B.C.

Using many of these same criteria, Duhm isolated what for him was an apocalyptic oracle (24; 25:6-8; 26:20-27:1, 12-13) with later intrusions which included a song (25:1-5); a satirical song concerning Moab (25:9-11); a poem reflecting hope in the resurrection (26:1-19 and 25:12); and the song of the vineyard (27:2-5). "Die Orakel ist durchaus Apocalypse, zu deren Erklärung man die sybillinischen Bücher, Daniel, Henoch usw.,

doch nicht missen kann und die den pentateuchischen Priesterkodex ganz dogmatischer Weise benutzt." Duhm dated the apocalyptic oracle to 129 B.C. when, he suggested, Jerusalem was besieged by Antiochus Sidetes soon after John Hyrcanus acceded to the throne (135 B.C.).

Rudolph warned the reader to be cautious in unqualifiedly labeling the chapters apocalyptic. He argued the chapters were through and through eschatological. The central theme which revealed the eschatological perspective was the judgment of the world, linked with a sharp contrast between Yahweh's power and the world's power. But for Rudolph, the break with plain history was not complete. After the fall of the world city, the heathen would turn to Zion as the new power. The eschatology was "nationalistisch-partikularistische," that is, Judah would survive the world judgment and the faithful Jews would be assimilated into the new kingdom of God. Isaiah 26:21 announced the inbreaking of this new period of salvation. These themes, plus the notice of resurrection (26:19 and 25:8), the mention of elders rather than kings, and the apparent knowledge of the Priestly source (24:5, 18, 23) persuaded Rudolph that the chapters reflected a post-exilic setting. He suggested that the fall of Babylon in 330-300 B.C. to Alexander was the precipitating event.

Lindblom also argued that the chapters were eschatological rather than apocalyptic. For him apocalyptic meant

Transzendentismus, Mythologismus, kosmologische Orientierung; weiter pessimistische Geschichtsbetrachtung, Dualismus, Periodeneinteilung, die Lehre von zwei Äonen, Zahlenspieleri; schliesslich Pseudoekstatismus, gekünstelte offenbarungsansprücke, Pseudonymität und Geheimnistüeri.

But, for Lindblom, it was necessary also to note how these themes were used. Isaiah 24-27 was not to be regarded as


6. Ibid., pp. 199-200, 224.


8. Ibid., p. 172.

9. Wilhelm Rudolph, Jesaja 24-27, BWANT, LV, 10 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), 64 pages.

10. Ibid., p. 63.

apocalyptic literature because the eschatological portions were but expansions of historical events. Lindblom suggested it was important to recognize that prophetic language of the future may function simply to renew the present age and not at all imply a return to chaos and inauguration of a new age. One must, therefore, look beyond the language used to what was actually being talked about. "Eschatologische hat es mit dem sachlichen Inhalt, nicht mit der Form und dem Ursprung zu tun." Lindblom labeled the chapters the "Isaianic Cantata" and placed them closer to prophecy than to apocalyptic. He suggested the historical occasion for the chapters to be the fall of Babylon in 485 B.C.

Plöger has contributed to the discussion by pressing the search for apocalyptic origins further. The question with which he was concerned was an historical one. The national life of Israel was accompanied by many prophetic forms. In tracing the history of the prophetic movement, one notes a gap of about three centuries after the fall of Jerusalem, where presumably the prophetic spirit was forced into anonymity. In Daniel, however, one witnesses a new community life, Hellenism having spread through the ancient Near East in the interim. What happened to the descendants of the prophets? From whence did the piety, witnessed in Daniel, come? The eschatology of Daniel is apocalyptic. Is it possible to discover earlier traces of apocalyptic eschatology in the anonymous or, better, the pseudonymous literature tacked onto the prophets? For it is precisely here one witnesses the life of the prophetic spirit in the years after the exile, before Daniel. Plöger discussed three such "eschatological texts," one of which was Isaiah 24-27. The other two were Zechariah 12-14 and Joel.

However much Iranian dualism may have amplified apocalyptic, in discussing the origin of apocalyptic, Plöger set aside Iranian dualism as a primary source. The mediation of foreign ideas presupposed a certain open-mindedness within the Jewish community itself. "So müssen wir innerhalb der jüdischen Gemeinde mit bestimmten Voraussetzungen rechnen, die uns die bereitwillige Aufnahme und Aneignung fremder Vorstellungen erklären können." A structural change had taken place within Israel. They had moved from being a people to become a community—"from being a nation to become a theocracy. This change was evident on the level of eschatology which was one of the important links between prophecy and apocalyptic. The counterpart to the historical change was the shift from an actualizing to a dualistic eschatology.

Plöger divided Isaiah 24-27 into two sections. He dated chapters 24-26 roughly to the period of Antiochus the Great and the unrest caused by his rule. There did not yet exist the sharp dualism between the present and coming age in the Apocalypse. But the world judgment was a cosmic event. The notice of the resurrection of the dead would place this first section nearer to Daniel. The historical situation derived from the unrest in Syria-Palestine caused by conflicts between Seleucids and Ptolemies. Those responsible for these chapters were a conjectured group within the Jerusalem community who were making sharper eschatological divisions than the general community at large. Chapter 27 was an older piece deriving from the hopes for unification, in the Davidic sense, still alive in the early Persian period. It is to be placed after the work of Ezra and Nehemiah prior to the split with the Samaritans. Within Jerusalem there were growing two factions representing the emerging conflict between Jerusalem and Shechem. Chapter 27 was added to 24-26 and reflects the continuing hope, even within eschatological dogma, that one day Israel would be reunited.

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12. Ibid., p. 103.
13. Ibid., pp. 80-84.
15. Ibid., p. 37.
17. Ibid., p. 96.
18. Ibid., pp. 96-97.
Paul Hanson, in a recent study of apocalyptic origins,\(^1\) has developed this latter thesis of a group making sharper eschatological distinctions than the community at large, into a very convincing argument. Hanson has demonstrated that the oracles of so-called Third Isaiah and Second Zechariah reflect a tension between two groups within early post-exilic Israel. These two groups constructed alternate visions of the post-exilic reconstruction of Israel. A more visionary group, centered in Palestine, held Second Isaiah as their spiritual leader. Chapters 60-62 contain their vision of what the reconstruction of Israel would be. A more realistic, or pragmatic, group, centered in Babylon, held Ezekiel as their spiritual leader. Chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel, in part, contain their vision. Hanson connects the latter group with the Zadokite priesthood that went to Babylon during the exilic period.

Because the Zadokite priesthood held favor with the Persian establishment, they had political power on their side and worked to bring about the actual building of the second temple. As the Isaianic group more and more found themselves excluded from participation in the reconstruction events, the tension between the two groups mounted. The visionaries were increasingly forced to resolve their frustrations in fantasy, that is, in visions of a new age when matters would be set straight. It was in such a sociological situation, argues Hanson, that apocalyptic literature began to take shape.

He discussed Isaiah 24-27 in summary fashion by identifying it as among that literature which emerged out of these early post-exilic struggles. Refining what he called a contextual-typological method, which we will discuss further below, he identified Isaiah 24-27 as early apocalyptic.\(^2\)

There are scholars, however, who are not convinced we are dealing with an eschatological or apocalyptic work at all. The catholic scholar, Edward Kissane, saw Isaiah 24-27 as apocalyptic "only in a very wide sense."

The only characteristics of an apocalypse which it has are the description of a world-judgment, the veiled manner in which the victims of God's wrath are mentioned. Indeed, even critics who speak of it as an apocalypse find in it a reference to historical events of the post-exilic period.\(^3\)

Kissane's judgments were part of an extended argument to attribute the entirety of Isaiah 1-39 to eighth-century Isaiah. "The mere mention of world-judgment is no proof that the section deals with the end of time. Every intervention of God is a world-judgment."\(^4\) "His intervention has as consequences the punishment of the wicked and the reward or deliverance of the just." This is a theme common in the Psalter. There were two phases to the plan of world judgment: "the first resulting in the ruin of Judah and the preservation of a remnant, the second resulting in the destruction of Assyria and the establishment of the kingdom of Yahweh in Zion." According to Kissane, although Judah and Assyria are not specifically mentioned, there is nothing in the chapters which could not refer to events in eighth-century Palestine.

With respect to verses usually pointed to as containing apocalyptic ideas, "xxvi:19 does not refer to individual resurrection but to political revival, and xxv:8 means simply that violence and bloodshed will no longer be found in Zion."\(^5\)

As xxvii:1 has an allusion to the conquest of the monsters of Primitive Chaos, and as the ruin of Judah is also compared to a return to chaos, it is probable that there is an allusion here to the imprisonment of the monsters preparatory to their execution as narrated in the Babylonian epic (cf. Enuma Elish Tab. iv., lines 110-114).\(^6\)

In a similar vein, Yehezkel Kaufmann argued against labeling Isaiah 24-27 as apocalyptic. "The distinctive feature of apocalypse is its anxious inquiry into the secrets of the cosmos."\(^7\) The apocalyptic visionary is transmitted to the cosmic

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1. Hanson, Dawn, passim.
2. Ibid., pp. 313-14.
3. Ibid., p. 267.
4. Ibid., p. 267.
5. Ibid., p. 283.
6. Ibid., p. 283.
7. The quotations in this paragraph may be found in Kaufmann, Religion, p. 348.
realm of divine palaces, paradise, hell, etc., or he is projected through time unfolding the secrets of "the generations and ages to the end of time." "This perspective vision, as we may call it, is the very heart of apocalyptic." For apocalyptic these visions were an end in themselves. For classical prophecy, visions were connected to this-worldly events. The vision was designed ultimately, "to command or reprove in the name of God." Even the bizarre visions of Ezekiel, the father of the apocalyptic tour of space, served to enhance his mission to the earthly community of Israel.

In Isaiah 24-27, Kaufmann argued, one does not encounter at all the "perspective vision of historical ages." The judgment imagery directed against the hosts of the heavens (24:21) refers simply to "eclipses, as part of the terrors of the day of doom—a motif of early literature (e.g., Amos 4:13; 5:8; Hos. 4:3; Is. 13:10, 13), which the later apocalypse borrowed."26 The monsters of 27:1 have a Canaanite background. "Now that we know the Canaanite basis of such eschatological imagery there is no reason whatever to date it to late time."27 Isaiah 25:8 and 26:19 are to be read against the ancient theme of the death and revival of the sick, suffering and persecuted who "have descended into the pit" (Pss. 88:4ff; 143:3; Lam. 3:6, 54f). Ezekiel used such resurrection language to depict the exile and restoration of the nation (Ezek. 37). "The revival of the dead and the shades of 26:19 is but a figure for the deliverance of those who are in dire distress, who have come down to dust."28

Our survey, thus far, has revealed as important, the following methodological principles when dealing with the identification of apocalyptic as a literary genre. 1) A simple listing of apocalyptic themes, usually from later works, has not settled the question of genre identification. 2) Several critics have demonstrated that in any particular passage one must ask the question of function. How was the imagery used? Did the language serve to enhance the significance of God’s action in an historical event or had the internal power of the themes themselves broken loose from their mooring in historical event drawing the reader more and more into the realm of fantasy? 3) Some recent scholars have shown that literary genre, like pottery forms and alphabetic scripts, evolve over the years. Hanson, for instance, has demonstrated that the apocalyptic literature of the sixth and fifth century was different from the apocalyptic literature of the second century. Therefore, to understand fully this genre and its development, one must take a closer look at its prosody, literary form and particularly the transformations therein. This leads us to the next major unresolved problem in the study of Isaiah 24-27.

B. The Problems of Text and Structure

Concurrent with the lack of consensus concerning the genre of Isaiah 24-27 is a lack of consensus concerning matters of text and structure.

Smend was unimpressed by the poetry of these chapters. For him, they were not to be compared to the work of eighth-century Isaiah. Even allowing for stylistic variations, 24-27 presented an entirely different picture from eighth-century Isaiah. Smend read the paronomasia, alliteration, rhyme, and chiasm as "difficult, learned and forced."29 The author was clearly a later imitator whom he found dull, artificial and lacking in poetic "Sachung."30

Lohmann31 began his study of these chapters with the lyric sections. He proposed to treat them as individual units, noting if there was prophecy of some future event or a picture of an historical Vorgang. With close attention to textual data, he isolated nine lyrics: 26:4-6; 25:1-5; 24:7-12; 27:10, 11 (8); 25:9-12; 27:2b-5; 26:1b-3; 26:7-11; 26:12-19 (-17, 18). His next task was to study the rest of the Apocalypse, wherein

27. Ibid., p. 384.
28. Ibid., p. 385.
30. Ibid., p. 194.
there was just eschatological material, to see if it stood alone without the lyrics or if the lyrics belonged to it. Then would come the final problem of the meaning and the question of the origin of the entire Apocalypse. His death made it impossible for him to finish his plan of study.

Kissane has noted, however, that even on the matter of isolating the lyrics of the Apocalypse, there has been no consensus. He illustrated his point by comparing the lyrics that have been suggested for his unit spanning 24:1-26:6:

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In another direction, a very detailed textual study was made by Liebmann which in many ways is still helpful, especially in that he has gathered much of the textual data into one place. One weakness in his study, however, was the lack of adequate control in his not applying rules of poetic meter. Eduard Sievers sought to fill this gap by applying to Isaiah 24-27 his method of counting accent beat.

Sievers suggested there were three basic groups in Isaiah 24-27, identifiable by the number of accent beats to the line:

A) seven beats: 24:1-6, 18c-23; 25:6-12; 26:1a, 7-21; 27:1-13; B) 3+3: 24:4-12; 25:2-5; and C) six beats: 24:13-18b; 25:1; 26:1b-6. To Sievers, it was obvious that such an analysis yielded new divisions in the text. He argued that such a metric analysis had uncovered the original units which subsequently had been altered. The benefit to the exegete was that now he had a new control for use in penetrating to the history of the text's transmission in tradition.

Procksch built his study on the framework suggested by Duhm and the metrical research, with some variations, done by Sievers. He argued with Duhm that the basic division of the material in Isaiah 24-27 was between apocalyptic oracle and non-eschatological song. The thesis of Procksch was that the chapters consisted of two basic groups: A) apocalyptic oracles, "Siebenerapokalypse," characterized by seven-beat meter and B) later non-eschatological hymns, "Liederkreis," characterized by six-beat lines.

However, the subjectivity involved in counting accents has proven not to settle the questions involved, as is illustrated by the following chart which compares the meter count of chapter 24:1-17 made by Procksch, Rudolph, Lindblom, Kissane, and March. The textual emendations proposed to preserve the suggested meter have not been included. These general remarks, however, do apply. Rudolph radically rearranged the text after 26:13 to fit his system. Lindblom used the principle of anacrusis (upbeat) to level out the meter. Kissane separated the text into two major divisions: 24:1-26:6 and 26:7-27:13. The former was composed of five groups of three 4-verse strophes; the latter seven 6-verse strophes. Wallace March, who completed his dissertation in 1966, used the method of counting accents and has come up with still another result.

Fohrer made extensive use of yet another devise to separate the units, namely the rubrics, such as "in that day," and "for Yahweh has spoken." Our textual analysis, however, has revealed that such an approach is unsound, since in some cases

35. Ibid., pp. 152, 160-65.
36. Ibid., p. 151.
Lindblom, building on the works of Duhm, Procksch and Hylmö (who read chapters 25-26 as a prophetic liturgy) suggested that there is evidence of a liturgy throughout 24-27. Lindblom isolated four sections of Isaiah 24-27 as later additions: 24:21-23, the imprisoning of princes and the kingdom of Yahweh; 27:1, the destruction of the world; 25:10b-12, concerning Moab; and 26:15-19, a lament of the people. The rest of the "Apocalypse" he viewed as nine poems alternating between eschatological prophecy and songs of thanksgiving. The songs of thanksgiving, basically optimistic, derived from the attendant joy of the destruction of Babylon by Xerxes I in 485 B.C., the date he assigned to the Apocalypse. This historical event, however, was placed within a broader context as the first act of a great eschatological drama involving heaven and earth, affirming the supremacy of Yahweh, ultimately resulting in the return of the Jews to their homeland. Supporting Hylmö's attempt to see 25-26 as a liturgy, Lindblom criticized his definition of liturgy as being too narrow to be applied to this work. Lindblom discarded the term altogether as inappropriate to this context and suggested cantata. It was composed by a prophet working in the Jerusalem cult, and sung antiphonally by a lay and prophetic choir. It was perhaps sung at some festival involving a procession through the city gate. Which festival, however, one could not determine.

Fohrer, in a brief study, delineated three prophetic liturgies which made up the Apocalypse (24:1-20; 24:21-25:10a; 27:1-6, 12-13). Isaiah 26:1-6 and 7-21 were connecting pieces.

Wallace March, following clues from Fohrer, has read the chapters as a prophetic liturgy. Isaiah 24:1-3 is a "prophetic announcement of impending doom." Isaiah 24:4-15 show traces

41. Ibid., p. 71.
suggestions have been made to its identity. We will limit ourselves to the three proposals with the strongest evidence.

1. **An unknown city in Moab.**—The only historical reference in Isaiah 24-27 is to Moab (25:10-12). Isaiah 24:16-18, which appear verbatim in a collection of oracles against Moab in Jeremiah 48, reinforces this identification with Moab. Smend looked to Moab for the city. His reconstruction of the historical context began with the reference to the west in Isaiah 24:14-16. Alexander the Great came from a land west of Palestine. Smend argued that those in the diaspora, particularly inAsia Minor, were filled with the messianic hope. They recognized Alexander as the one bringing in the new age, hence the jubilation of 24:14-16. The author, living in Judah, suffered from Alexander's expedition into Palestine. He saw, however, that it was deserved because of the guilt among his own people. There was hope for the faithful, in that the present suffering was but a prelude to the joy of the new age. The author's specific joy was directed to the impending, or actual, fall of Moab, which at the time was exerting political pressure on Israel and was about to fall, as well, before the forces of Alexander.

It was Alexander's march through Syria-Palestine which precipitated the focal point around which two dominant themes crystallized: 1) Israel was being punished for her sins (24:1-13); but 2) there was ground for some rejoicing in that, at the same time, her dreaded enemy, Moab, was to succumb (24:14-23). The catastrophe took on overtones of world judgment when viewed from the perspective of God's purposes in the event. Israel's guilt was being atoned for, and the day was rapidly arriving when the messianic age would be established. These themes having been set, they were further developed by the author: 25:1-5: hope for the fall of the Moabite power; 25:6-8: hope for the restoration of the world. Isaiah 25:9-12 was a song in which the two themes were knit together: restoration of the faithful and destruction of Moab. Chapter 26, opening a chapter largely of prayers, treated the same themes. Verses 26:1-13 focused on the suffering and end of Israel; 26:14-27:1 elaborated on the ground of new hope which reached the peak in the notice of resurrection. This Smend regarded as more dialectic than poetic. Verses 27:2-13 were yet another song, this time sung by Yahweh himself, in which the joys of restoration and the destruction of Moab were celebrated.53

Eissfeldt was another who took seriously the references to Moab. Following the basic division between apocalyptic oracle and song, suggested by Duhm, he reversed the dating and regarded the songs as older than the eschatological prophecy. He suggested that the fourth century was the earliest possible date. He challenged the frequent choice of Babylon as the wicked destroyed city on the grounds that "in 26:6 the feet of the poor (i.e., the Jews) trampled it....We must therefore think of a city in the region of Judah."54 Further evidence included the fact that the mention of wine in the hostile city compared favorably with Isaiah 16:7-10. Also compare the Jewish hatred of Moab in Isaiah 16:16 with 25:10 and Zion as a place of refuge in 16:1-5 and 25:6-8. The songs were "occasioned by a disaster fallen upon Moab and its capital."55 The mythical beasts refer to the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms.

...24-27 may also be set side by side with 34-35, in that in both passages a judgment falling upon a particular people in the environment of Judah, in the one case Moab, in the other Edom, is extended into a world disaster, and provides an occasion for the promises of the glory of the kingdom of Yahweh on Zion.57

Mulder, too, developed the thesis that the destroyed city was connected with Moab. He proposed Dibon. According to his position, Isaiah 24-27 must have been written after the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (cf. 26:1ff), and since the ideas

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55. Ibid., p. 326.

56. Ibid., p. 326.

57. Ibid., p. 327.

expressed were more in harmony with later developments, Mulder suggested a date of ca. 270 B.C., a date subsequent to the Nabatean invasion of Moab, which he understood as the probable backdrop for this writing. 59

There have been attempts made to remove the problem of Moab textually, either by emending moab to '3y&m 60 or deleting the entire oracle as secondary. 61

We will argue that the mention of Moab in Isaiah 24-27 (and the mention of Edom in Isaiah 34) is symbolic, rather than literal. To be sure, the language used is very specific and probably had its origin in an oracle against historical Moab, but its place in the Apocalypse goes back to the theme of New Conquest revived by Second Isaiah. Moab and Edom are symbolic of the resistance met in the Transjordan area during the first conquest. The point in the Apocalypse is that all opposition to Yahweh's plan of renewing creation will be crushed. Zion will be re-established.

2. Babylon.--Babylon has been identified as the destroyed city by numerous scholars (among them Rudolph, Lindblom, Kessler, 62 Anderson, 63 Henry, 64 and Otzen 65) on the grounds that the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and carried the people in exile to Babylon. It is natural to expect that a deep hatred would be directed toward that city. The joy of 24:14-16 would have been occasioned by the city's take over in either

539 B.C. by Cyrus (though usually not suggested because the city was not then destroyed); 485 B.C. by Xerxes I (though the fighting in the city does not reach the extent described in the Apocalypse); or 331 B.C. to Alexander the Great.

The most recent elaboration of this view was by Marie Louise Henry. She was very sensitive to the diversity of material in Isaiah 24-27. Previous scholars had done well in dissecting the chapters using textual criteria, metrics, form-history, literary and historical criticism, and liturgical and theological presuppositions. She argued that the time had come to focus on its unity. What were those forces which produced the work? What were the religious and psychological motifs that provided the pressure to bring together into a unity the diversity of material that had been uncovered by the various scholarly studies thus far? 66

Henry recognized that Second Isaiah stimulated powerful religious motifs which spread through the exilic community. She suggested the poet in Isaiah 24-27 was moved to write primarily from a religious concern. He universalized from a particular event. Indeed, he was constructing the "event" from universal meaning. His presentation contained no history in the profane sense but he had interpreted an event as the fulfillment of divine purpose through which human purpose was set aside and the working out of the last worth between man and God was set out in a vision. Henry suggested that the terminus a quo for the Apocalypse would be 538 B.C., 67 the end of the Babylonian captivity, although it was likely to have been created later since the city was not in ruins nor had the foreigners turned to Yahweh as Lord. The fall of Babylon was connected with the hope for the divine rule of God, hopes begun for the exilic community, in Second Isaiah.

Henry's underlining of the importance of Second Isaiah for our understanding of the Apocalypse is useful. But the model of the formation of 24-27 as a literary deposit descending from as it were, and shaped by religious and psychological ideas can

60. Torry, HTK, XXXI (1938), p. 246.
61. Lindblom, March.
67. Ibid., p. 33.
be sharpened by working through the more concrete transformations of royal and prophetic forms and literary prosody first.

3. Jerusalem.—A third opinion in the identification of the destroyed city is Jerusalem itself, a choice which we, too, will defend. Of the recent studies, March selected Jerusalem after 587 B.C. His basic reconstruction was as follows. According to Isaiah 24:1-20, Yahweh had punished his own people for breach of covenant. The rejoicing of 24:14-15 stemmed from a "confident expectation of Yahweh's coming deliverance." This expectation was seen as an integral part of the communal lament form. "The prophet, however, sees unrelieved gloom and more extensive punishment. He may hope that his people will repent, but he expresses no confidence that this will happen or that the wrath of Yahweh will be turned away from them. The situation is unbearable, but it shall become even more severe." In Isaiah 24:21-27:1, the mood had changed. The city is still Jerusalem, but "more particularly Zion (24:23, 25:6, 7, 10)." "Attention is turned toward the coming end of the period of waiting." "Masked reference is made to the rival deities of Canaan, but the superiority of Yahweh is unquestioned." The cities of 25:2 and 26:5 are unidentifiable cities in hymns referring in general to "those who oppose, or who have not yet recognized, the power of Yahweh." If 24:1-20, then, is correctly dated to around 575 B.C., 24:21-27:1 is best understood as coming from around 560. This would provide for the change in mood that we have noted....

Hanson offers the suggestion:

"...if the city of chaos, the destruction of which is celebrated by the apocalyptic, is the Jerusalem controlled and defiled (in the eyes of the visionaries) by the hierocratic party, then the composition could stem from a point fairly late in the sixth century, perhaps from the period of the temple controversy, ca. 520."

We will want to test Hanson's hypothesis to see if our material can be fitted into some of the typological sequences he proposes for the early post-exilic period.

D. Summary

There are unsettled problems related to the interpretation of Isaiah 24-27. 1) Within this century, scholars have labeled the literary genre of Isaiah 24-27 as a late post-exilic apocalyptic work, pre-exilic prophetic judgment literature, prophetic eschatology, exilic or early post-exilic proto-apocalyptic and, recently, early apocalyptic. 2) There is still lacking a consensus as to what the basic structural divisions of the chapters are. This problem is rooted in the many textual difficulties we have inherited from tradition. 3) Whether the unnamed, destroyed city is Babylon, Jerusalem, one in Moab or some other is still a matter of conjecture and rests ultimately on how one puts all the pieces of the puzzle together.

This study proposes to advance our discussion of these questions. Chapter two will offer a fresh analysis of the text of Isaiah 24-27. From that work conclusions will be drawn as to its prosodic style. We are particularly interested to note where the style of 24-27 stands in relation to that of Second Isaiah and "Third" Isaiah.

Chapter three will offer a discussion of the structure of Isaiah 24-27 beginning with an analysis of its themes. We will want to determine whether or not there are patterns which can be compared with the same or similar patterns elsewhere in Hebrew tradition. At least part of this discussion will center on the Divine Warrior Hymn which we see as crucial to the understanding of Isaiah 24-27.

We recognize that the steps from theme to form to institutional setting to historical context are very precarious. When

69. Ibid., p. 268.
70. The quotations of this paragraph may be found in ibid., pp. 275-76, 284.
71. Hanson, Dawn, p. 314.
72. Our use of the designation of Third Isaiah refers simply to chapters 56-66 in Isaiah. We are not entering into the discussion of whether or not there was a Third Isaiah. For such a discussion, see Hanson, ibid., pp. 32-208.
working with a passage like Isaiah 24-27, the steps are doubly so. We feel, however, that by staying as close as possible to a typology of prosodic style, and to the history in tradition of thematic patterns we have reasonably objective grounds to offer a suggestion as to date, form and historical setting of these chapters. This will be the subject of chapter four.

II. THE TEXT AND PROSODY OF ISAIAH 24-27

A. Isaiah 24:1-16a

The metric structure of Isaiah 24:1-16a holds the alliteration, the assonance, the paronomasia, the chiasm, the climactic parallelism in a tightly woven pattern which responds beautifully to the poem's own content. The fine thread which holds the units together is an alternation between groups of tricola and bicola, all of which place these verses alongside the best in Hebrew poetic style.

The initial unit opens with three tricola, 3(b:b:b), followed by four bicola. The next unit returns to tricola, but with a reduction from three to two. The pattern b:b::l is known from Ugaritic and appears in verse seven as b:b:l:b:b:b. This unit is followed again by four bicola, 4(b:b). The entire unit is then closed with one tricolon. Noting the symmetry of tricola, as they reduce from three to one, Isaiah 24:1-13 scans as follows:

b:b:b::b:b:b::b:b:b
4(b:b)

b:b:l::b:b:b
4(b:b)

b:b:b

In this chapter, the term "unit" is used in a general way and will need to be understood in each instance by context. The more specific terminology to be used may be defined as follows: 1) A line is any single grouping of words which when labeled according to syllable count (see note 1, page 35) is called breve or longum. 2) A colon is any grouping of lines which stand in parallel with one another. Depending on the number of lines which stand in parallel with one another, the grouping will be called bicolon or tricolon. 3) A strophe is any grouping of cola within a poem which form a metric and thought unit. They will be indicated with such symbols as 4(b:b), 3(b:b:b), b:b:l:b:b:. 4) A poem is any collection of strophes which make up a metric and thought unit. These may or may not conform to established forms (Gattungen).

1. Isaiah 24:1-13

a. 3(b:b:b) (Isaiah 24:1-2)

Yahweh is emptying earth now!

He is leveling its surface!

He is scattering its inhabitants!

To analyze the poetic parallelism, a letter will be assigned to each word. Different grammatical forms of the same root will be indicated by the same letter. When a word in the same line or in a subsequent line stands in parallel with the initial word, it will be indicated by a sublinear number, that is, a, a, a. If a group of words express a concept which stands in parallel to the initial word, it will be indicated by a capital letter. The purpose of this analysis is to describe as closely as possible the prosodic style of Isaiah 24-27.

1. Syntactically, the הָנה of v. 1 and the הָיָה of v. 2 go together. According to Lambdin, a hinneh clause plus converted perfect interjects explanatory material into the main narrative. Thomas O. Lambdin, Introduction to Biblical Hebrew (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), pp. 169-70. A translation for verses one and two might be “Because Yahweh is emptying earth...it shall be as with the people, so the priest. ...” Both הָנה and הָיָה do break the exact symmetry of their lines. But since they both open a colon, are still part of lines that can be considered short, and do make sense, they are retained in the text.

2. One must be cautious in using the mention of כַּעַם כַּכָּה as an argument for a late date because the formula כַּעַם כַּכָּה appears in Hosea 4:9, an eighth century יִד context. Of course, it may have taken on an added dimension of meaning in its Isaianic context.

3. Reading כַּקָּנָה as expansionistic prosaizing of כָּה.

4. Reading כָּה as an Aramaism. There are manuscripts that read כָּה.

People and priest, Tenant and farmer, Maid and mistress, Buyer and seller, Lender and borrower, Creditor and debtor.
The hinnêh plus converted perfect formula controls the shape of the first strophe. After it was announced that Yahweh was destroying the earth, the poet inserted a catalogue of those who were to succumb under the impending disaster. In addition to the tight parallelism in the initial tricolon, note the rhyme of boqêq and boteq and the two lines ending in -êha.

The tricolon onomatopoetic, filled with bi-labials (b and p) plus the hard sounding q, which together suggest the gurgling sound of a bottle being emptied.

The catalogue as a device to expand on a point is ancient and known to us from Ugaritic sources. Note, too, the chiasm within the catalogue as those with power shift with those without power. The catalogue is brought to an end with a solid bò.

The repeated use of kò, internal rhyme, and exact parallelism mark this unit as excellent poetry.

b. 4(b:b) (Isaiah 24:3-6)

Emptied is earth!  
Plundered is world!

1. Retain the MT reading against the Greek for reasons of metrical symmetry and internal assonance paralleled in the preceding lines.

2. Read כי יהוה דבר את הדבר הזה as expansionistic.

3. Verse five appears in all the extant texts and versions. However, it is prosaic and reads very much like a moralistic gloss. An argument in favor of such a reading is that its deletion does not disturb the metrical symmetry of the poem. It is recognized, however, that there may be an original reading underlying the verse that has been distorted beyond recognition.

4. Although the internal parallelism of the next four lines is not as regular as in the preceding lines, the overall symmetry compares favorably to what has preceded and what follows. Read כ כ as expansionistic.

5. Following the Syriac reading. Another reading might be רדור. In Isaiah 41:5 ரைசை is used with வருடை but there are several occurrences of வருடை with people as the subject. See BDB, p. 353, for a list.
The paronomasia and alliteration of the first two bicola stand out and contribute to the hammer effect of the earth's demise. A new element is introduced with the mention of the curse. From that point on the tight parallelism is abandoned and the focus shifts from what is happening to the earth, to the cause and effect with respect to the inhabitants of the land. The last line leaves the reader with a glimpse of the desolation. This latter is an example, though not the best, of the many instances of climactic parallelism throughout the piece.

c. b:b:l (Isaiah 24:7-8)  

Wine mourns.  

Vine languishes.  

The joyous of heart all sigh.  

Timbrels are silent.  

The lyre is quiet.  

Festivity is gone.  

The reuse of the verbs and connects this strophe with the previous one. As indicated earlier, the b:b:l is a metric pattern known from Ugaritic. Both of the above cola are good examples of climactic parallelism. The latter is an

excellent example of the ancient pattern known as repetitive parallelism, abc::abd::efg.  

1. See the discussion in chapter one of William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*. He illustrates the pattern in Ugaritic and early Hebrew poetry.

2. The text is very corrupt with no solid clues for a reconstruction of the original reading.

3. Note the niphals and puals in common with verse ten.
poetry that may have been corrupted in transmission rather than bad poetry originally. The theme of the first bicolon is that of wine gone sour which would connect it with the previous strophe. Because it is a bicolon, it is being read with the following unit of bicola, rather than with the previous unit of tricola. The chiasm, reuse of the verb סתה, and play with סיה, רשת and יוד testify to its own internal unity. It can be understood as a transition verse between the motifs of soured wine and destroyed city.

The next bicolon shifts to the motif of the destroyed city. It stands nicely with the final bicolon with its parallel use of niphals and puals. The second lines of the two bicola are arranged in chiasm with respect to each other. The paronomasia of the last bicolon is excellent. The third bicolon has no solid clues for a reconstruction though its motif seems to deal with bad wine which would connect it with the first bicolon of this strophe.

e. b:b:b (Isaiah 24:13)

Thus it shall be throughout the land.

כז היה בצק ארצ

Among the people: like striking olives,

כעללת בציר

Like gleaning grapes.

כעללת לצור

This tricolon brings the first major unit to a close. It is a nice example of climactic parallelism. It brings together harvest imagery and the communal life of the people. This first unit has envisioned withering crops, and a destroyed city, both of which collapse under the wrath of Yahweh who has turned against the created order. A curse is devouring the land and no one or no thing shall escape.

2. Isaiah 24:14-16a

Isaiah 24:14-16a repeats the metric pattern of the last two units of the previous section: 4(b:b), b:b:b.

a. 4(b:b) (Isaiah 24:14-15)

They shout in victory.

They raise their voice.

In the presence of Yahweh

They shout from afar.

They worship Yahweh

The Name is Yahweh

1. The lifting up of the voice to shout is a common device familiar from Ugaritic sources to indicate a break or shift in the poem. See Ugaritic Text 3.D.32-33 for an example of the frequently occurring formula, תְּעַבֶ' וַקְלָם בְּגָאֹן יְהוֹה. The Masoretic text of verse 14a is apparently a conflation of two lines, since the reconstruction of the first bicolon, suggested by Cross in private conference, fits very nicely with what precedes and follows. See also Isaiah 52:8, 11 and 48:20.


3. Deleteעלเซ as conflation. יveal equals שֶׁלֶך. See IQIsa for the similarity of יוד and רשת.


5. For Yahweh's name, see Isaiah 48:1-2.
of praise in honor of Yahweh: "Honor to the Just One!" As in the earlier tricolon, the statement develops climactically.

B. Isaiah 24:16b-25:9

1. Isaiah 24:16b-18b

There is a shift in the meter. Only bicola are used. Judging from the content of this passage, b:b may be understood as a precursor to the later l:b, qánnáh meter, of lament. The basic alternation between two and three is retained in the number of bicola used: 2(b:b), 3(b:b).

a. 2(b:b) (Isaiah 24:16b-c)

Some say, "I am wasted!" 5 רמז רמי לי
"I am wasted! Oh, woe is me!" 5 הוהי לי אוי לי
"The treacherous are treacherous. 5 בגדים בגדו
With treachery, they are treacherous." 5 בגדים בגדו

24:16b-c 5 a b c 2(b:b)

5 b c b₁ c

5 d d₁

5 d₂ d₁

b. 3(b:b) (Isaiah 24:17-18b)

Pack and Snare and Pit 5 פחד ופחת ופח
Against you, inhabitants of the land 5 עליך יושב ארץ

1. Reading one bגד as dittography.
2. See Jeremiah 48:43-44.

As noted above, the lifting up of the voice to shout is a common device familiar from Ugaritic sources to indicate a break or shift in the poem. The close parallels with Second Isaiah's "New Song" will be discussed below. In the above strophe, note the rhyming -am closing the first three bicola. There is good use of chiasm and climactic parallelism.

b. b:b:b (Isaiah 24:16a)

From the ends of the earth 5 ℬנכת ארצ
We heard a song: 5 זמרת שמענו
Honor to the Just One! 5 צבי לצדיק

24:16a 4 a b b:b:b

4 c d

5 e f

This tricolon concludes this unit and is to be compared with the tricolon, verse 13, which concluded the first unit. They both open with an allusion to the geography of the land but whereas the previous tricolon envisioned the striking of olives and gleaning of grapes, this tricolon contains a shout

1. For the ends of the earth, see Isaiah 48:20, 52:12.
He who flees from the marauding Pack,
He falls in the Pit.

He who climbs out of the Pit,
He is caught in the Snare.

---

The paronomasia and alliteration are obvious in these two strophes. Note the internal parallelism in the second line of the first bicolon of the first strophe and of the first line in the second strophe.

2. Isaiah 24:18c-23; mixed meter

In the next section the return to chaos, a battle and a victory are described. The meter reflects this shift in tone by becoming mixed. Long lines are interspersed with short lines to express a growing crescendo and turbulence. The basic alternation, however, between bicola and tricola is retained.

---

The windows of heaven are opened.
The foundations of earth do tremble.

---

1. The article is included as a demonstrative pronoun. It is possible this was the way the article was introduced into poetry.
A sharp crescendo follows as the preceding pattern is repeated with extra-long lines. The long lines become very long and the short lines in another context might be considered long. The basic pattern of alternation between bicolon and tricolon is retained until the last line, when the climax is reached, expressed in a tricolon of extra-long lines. The bicolon that is built into the internal structure of the tricolon is surely not accidental.

But it shall be in that day:

It is as if the previous strophe reached such a poetic climax that the poet had to stop for breath. Recall Revelation's half hour of silence before the seventh seal was broken. The rubric "It shall happen on that day" prepares the reader for the battle itself wherein Yahweh breaks through in all his power and glory to defeat the enemy and re-establish himself as king at Zion. Note the *inclusio* as the verb *פקד* opens the first line of the strophe and closes the last line of the tricolon. Yahweh charges the gods in heaven and the kings on earth. Note the assonance of 'אֵל, בֵּין and רֶשֶׁת in the tricolon. The latter is another example of climactic parallelism.

The expected bicolon to close the strophe is lengthened to a tricolon as the writer approached the climax. He used internal parallelism in the first line. The affirmation of Yahweh's victory was made in the second line harkening back to the royal hymns of the temple. The last line stands in chiasm with this affirmation underlining the epiphany of Yahweh on his mount in Jerusalem. The mention of the elders recalls an earlier epiphany of Yahweh on Mount Sinai recorded in Exodus 24:11.

Put together, the units of chapter 24 look, metrically, as follows:

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<tr>
<th>24:21</th>
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<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
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</table>
3. Isaiah 25:1-4c

You have made the city a heap;
The fortified city a ruin.
The palace of aliens is nude;
Forever, it shall not be rebuilt.

---

In the first bicolon note the frequent use of 'aleph and the internal rhyme of -imkā in the second line. In the second line of the second bicolon the assonance of 'aleph and mem appears again.

The motif of a destroyed city was reintroduced with the third bicolon.

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1. Translated as if the reading were מַעְלָר. The current text is either in error or poetic license.

2. Reading מַעְלָר. כְּהוֹדָדָה מַעְלָר. The current text is either in error or poetic license.

3. Reading כְּהוֹדָדָה מַעְלָר. A naked, desolate place. See Nahum 3:5 where it is used to describe the desolation and exposure of Nineveh.

4. Delete כְּהוֹדָדָה as expansionistic from verse three.
For You are a refuge to the poor,
A refuge to the needy,
A shelter from the winter; shade from the heat.

Note the chiasm in the first bicolon, the assonance of -am and -im plus the rhyme of -uk. There is climactic and internal parallelism in the tricolon. The internal parallelism of the tricolon is to be compared with the internal parallelism of Isaiah 24:23.

The intricate manipulation of bicola and tricola in the next unit, holding together the characteristic paronomasia, alliteration, assonance, and chiasm, reveal once again the ancient canons of Hebrew poetry in full play. The meter scans as follows: 1:1
2(b:b)
2(b:b:b)
1:1

a. 1:1 (Isaiah 25:6a)

Yahweh of Hosts has made
For all peoples on this mount:

1. Verses 4d through 5 appear to be a gloss.
2. Following suggestions made by Cross in conference: Verse 6: "either rubric, or 1:1 (7:7) with caesura despite 'run-on.'" Verses 7-8: "Read as short lines with some run-on due to poetic license. See the Lament of David and Exodus 15."
It is the *inclusio* of *כלל* that gives this strophe shape. The lines are run-on, but the parallelism is obvious. The climax is reached with the swallowing of Death.

\[ d. \ 1:1 \ (b:b:b:b) \ (Isaiah \ 25:8b-c) \]

He will wipe the tears of 6 ירוחם דמעות ממה Chỉ 11 עלו

From all faces. 6 מכל פנים

The reproach of his people he will remove 6 מרמה עמר ירי

From all the earth. 4 ירי כל ארץ

Chiasm is used again in very long lines. The length is broken up, however, as the separate units within the lines stand in parallel with one another.

5. Closing Bicolon (Isaiah 25:9): 1:1

Our God, for whom we wait is here! 11 אלהינו זה קוינו לו

Let us sing, and rejoice in his victory! 11 נגילה ונשמחה בישועתו

Our study of the text and prosody of Isaiah 24:1-16a and 24:16b-25:9 will be helpful in dealing with the remainder of the Apocalypse. The text, so far, scans as follows:

1. Delete metre *causa*.
2. The variant reading, ירשע וגו וגו וגו וגו, has been conflated into the MT. ירה הֵוהָ נָלַג הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַбָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ הַבָּשׁ H H H

The analysis of the text of 24:1-25:9 has revealed an excellent example of Hebrew poetry. In addition to alliteration, rhyme, assonance, paronomasia and onomatopoeia, the author has made full use of chiasm: 24:2, 18c, 23; 25:8; chiasm with intervening lines: 24:10, 12; *inclusio*: 25:14 (יִּהְמֹל); 24:21, 22 (יִּהְמֹל). There are many examples of climactic parallelism. See 24:7, 8, 13, and 20 for the better passages. Frequent use of internal parallelism was made: 24:16b, 17a, 23; 25:4. The metric unit *b:b:*1, repetitive parallelism, cataloguing and the poetic device of lifting the voice to shout are ancient characteristics known in Ugaritic poetry. These all form an integral part of our passage.
C. Isaiah 25:10-26:8

1. Isaiah 25:10-12, Prose

Using the prosodic information gleaned from the material above, it is possible to bring to a relative state of order much of the remainder of 24-27. The text does, however, get progressively worse as one works through the material. The frequent occurrence of the 4(b:b) pattern and the alternation between bicolon and tricolon can be documented throughout. When the text diverges from these patterns, it is usually hopeless, metrically. When the text conforms to the patterns, the quality of the poetry is usually much better.

Textual analysis leads us to suggest that if there is poetry underlying the current text of 25:10-12, it has been prosaized almost completely. A reconstruction as poetry, therefore, is problematical. The versions are of no help since for the most part they follow the Massoretic Text.

The following textual remarks can be made about Isaiah 25:10: the imbalance in syllable count argues against the entire section being poetry; the internal rhyme of line 10b-c and the parallelism of the following two lines indicate, however, that it is at least poetic prose.

The support for the tentative reconstruction of Isaiah 25:12 comes from two directions: 1) the very short lines opening chapter 26 (4/5) and 2) the vocabulary of 26:5 wherein הש崰 is associated with מִשְׂמַר; מַעַר with יד; ומְצַו with וֹסֶף. The current status of 25:12 can be understood as a conflation of two verses:

The high stronghold He humbled;

The fortification, Your walls

He razed to the dust.

In this reconstructed passage, note that each bicolon begins with a noun of the miktab type. The hiphil is used frequently. There is internal parallelism in the first line of the second bicolon; alliteration in the second line.

2. Isaiah 26:1-8

With the unit opening chapter 26, we are back into the metrical patterns characteristic of chapter 24:

4(b:b)

b:b:b

4(b:b)

b:b:b

a. 4(b:b) (Isaiah 26:1-3)

Our city is strong!

Victory is established!

Walls and rampart (in place)

Open the gates!

Let the victors enter;

He who keeps faith,

He who is steadfast,

He who established peace.

1. It is interesting to note that the Vulgate identifies the city as Zion, that is, Jerusalem. Throughout, Jerome usually follows the MT to the word.

2. The Targum and Greek might be translating שאן at this point. The gender is changed to masculine to make grammatical sense.

3. Delete one שלום as dittography, following the Greek and Syriac.
"ayin and šin contribute to the assonance of the first bicolon; הָאָרֶץ in the second bicolon. Both bicola end with a long ִ vowel. In the next two bicola note the rhyming and cataloguing of qualities that describe the גוי צדיק.

b. b:b:b (Isaiah 26:4)
For in Thee they trust. יִכְרֶךְ בָּךְ בְּשַׁח 4/5
Yahweh, Forever! יִרְחָה עַד הַעָנָה 4/5
Yahweh, the Eternal Rock! יִרְחָה צַוְּרֵי עָלָם 6

26:4 4/5 a b c b:b:b
4/5 b₁ d e
6 b₁ d₁ e₁

c. 4(b:b) (Isaiah 26:5-7)
He humbled the haughty ones; יִכְרֶךְ פָּשַׁת עָרָר מָרְאָה 8
The exalted city. יִכְרֶךְ נָשִׂיב 5

1. The Greek preserves the metrical balance nicely:
   יִכְרֶךְ בָּכְרֶך 4/5
   יִרְחָה עַד עָנָה 4/5
   יִרְחָה צַוְּרֵי עָלָם 4/6
   יִרְחָה עַד עָנָה 4/6
   יִרְחָה עַד עָנָה 4/6
   יִרְחָה צַוְּרֵי עָלָם 4/6

a. Dittography in the Hebrew text. Such an interpretation is supported also by the Syriac and lQIsa² texts. b. The 2 on Yahweh is dittography. c. סְדוֹר בָּכְרֶך is dittography of יִכְרֶךְ בָּכְרֶך from the previous line. See lQIsa² for the similarity in orthography and script. The ַָּ indicates פ. d. Notice the frequent use of פ.

He razed it to the ground; יִשׁפָּלֶנָה עַד אָרֶץ 6
He reduced it to dust. יִשׁפָּלֶנָה עַד עָפָר 7
Feet of the poor trampled it; יִשְׁפְּלֶנָה עַד אֱלַע פָּר 8
Steps of the oppressed. יִשְׁפְּלֶנָה עַד עָפָר 5
The way of the righteous is smooth; יִשְׁפָּלֶנָה עַד עָפָר 6
The track of the victors, make straight! יִשְׁפָּלֶנָה עַד עָפָר 7

26:5 8 a b c d 4(b:b)
5 c₁ d₁
6 b₁ e f
-13 b₂ e f₁
7 b₃ g h
8 -13 g₁ h₁
5
-13 i j k
6
7 -13 i j k₁

This is a good example of climactic parallelism. The poet began with the mention of those living in high places. They were brought down by Yahweh. The "down" was expanded "to the ground." This, in turn, was expanded by describing the feet of the poor who trampled to the dust the exalted city. Such an image called to mind immediately the return across the highway.

1. One of the יִשְׁפָּלֶנָה may be deleted as dittography following lQIsa². The Greek has יִשְׁפָּלֶנָה וַיִּנִּיעָה עַד עָפָר. The יִשְׁפָּלֶנָה is to be retained for metrical balance. Its absence in the Greek can be explained by haplography.

2. See the Greek, Syriac, and lQIsa² for textual support in deleting יִשְׁפָּלֶנָה as dittography.

3. Reading the dittography of יִשְׁפָּלֶנָה מְשִׁרֵי מָרְאָה. The ד of מְשִׁרֵי belongs with פָּר. Repoint the consonants to read וַיִּשְׁפָּלֶנָה עַד עָפָר, a level place. The parallel with Second Isaiah's Highway in the desert as the processional way for the New Exodus seems clear (Isaiah 40:4).
in the desert of Second Isaiah. This is the highway alluded to in the final bicolon of the strophe.

d. b:b:b (Isaiah 26:8)

Yea, the Way of Yahweh is Justice!

We wait on Thy name;

Thy memory, for which our soul longs.

The first line appears to be a commentary on the last bicolon of the previous strophe. There is a nice example of chiasm in the last two lines of this tricolon. Isaiah 26:9 could be connected with verse 8. It would break, however, the pattern already established, yielding a b:b:b:1:1:1. Since the text is in rather bad shape at this point, we have decided to read 26:9 as a poetic expansion on the motif of the soul's longing for Yahweh mentioned in verse 8.

1. Following the Greek which preserves the metrical balance with the preceding material and makes sense.

2. The lack of suffix is supported in the Greek, the Targum, the Syriac and lQIsa. Its occurrence in the MT is due to dittography.

3. Following the MT to preserve the parallelism with לしまうך.

4. The plural suffix, following the Greek and Syriac, preserves the balance with קינאתך.

5. The first part of 26:9 is good poetry:

My soul longs for Thee in the night; 9

Yea, my spirit searches for Thee in the morning.

Because Thy justice is like light on the earth.

a. The text as reconstructed, of this and the preceding line is preserved in the Syriac. The למשתך אלרייך may have been lost by haplography in the Greek. b. Following the Greek which preserves a better balance with ומשתך אלרייך. c. Following the Greek. The יראה would not have appeared in the original text. דא makes good sense in this context and preserves the syllabic symmetry. An alternative suggestion, communicated in conference, is that of Talmon which retains the MT: "Like a straight path is thy Justice for the earth." 48

Put together, Isaiah 25:10-26:8 scans as follows:

Isaiah 25:10-12  
26:1-8  4(b:b)  
4(b:b)  
4(b:b)

D. Isaiah 26:11-27:6

Isaiah 26:9d and 10 do not fit into the passage metrically, nor do they make any sense. When compared with 24:5 (see note 3, page 27) and 24:20b (see note 2, page 35), these verses read much like a gloss to elaborate on what the righteous are to do. Verse 11 brings us back into the previous metric patterns. There is a repetition of the b:b:b:1:1:1, but the text is not in very good condition. The reconstruction is regarded as tentative. The subsequent unit of 4(b:b) followed by b:b:b is better poetry.

1. Isaiah 26:11-15

a. б:b:b (Isaiah 26:11-12)  
1:1:1

Yahweh, Thy hand is raised!

Let those who will not see, see! 6

Let the antagonists of Thy people be abashed!

1. That this might be dittography is very possible. The MT was retained because of metrical symmetry. The Greek either lacks יחזו or is homiletical: και ουκ εξελον γνωντες δε οιονυ informed.

2. The sense of this line is very difficult. Dahood translates מיב "antagonists" following Albright's discussion of מיב "to rival, oppose." See Dahood, Psalms III, p. 189. See also Albright, VT 9 (1959), p. 314.
Yea, with fire, consume Thy enemies!

Yahweh, spread peace in our midst;

Establish for us our deeds!

26:11

6 a b c b:b:b
6 d e f 1:1:1
6 f d e e1
8 ....
8 a b c d
9 e c1 b1 d

Dahood arranges two of the lines as follows:

The antagonists of your people will look and wither.

With your fiery wrath will you devour your adversaries.

The sense and metrical symmetry is excellent but it does not fit with the surrounding lines. As indicated above we regard our reconstruction as tentative.

b. 4(b:b) (Isaiah 26:13-14)

Oh Yahweh, our God!

Lord, Thou hast ruled us.

Apart from Thee, we know nothing.

Thy name alone, we acknowledge.

26:13

6 a a1 4(b:b)
7 b a2
6/7 c d e
7/9 c1 f e1 g
5 h i j
7 h1 i j1
7 k k1
7 k

1. As 12b now stands in the MT, it is too long. It reads very much like a conflation of two variant readings. All but the Greek versions follow the MT. Drawing the clue from the Greek, the variants could be: כ ל כל עצות בניון (מונתץ השב) and כל עצות בניון לבר מונתץ השב.

2. Following the Greek ἄλλον οὐκ οἴδαμεν. The ἄλλον is perhaps translating the בַּל of the next line.

The poetry of this strophe is not the best we have encountered in Isaiah 24-27. But the syllabic symmetry is regular and each bicolon is a unit unto itself.

c. b:b:b (Isaiah 26:15)

Yahweh, Thou hast increased the nation!

Thou hast increased the nation, Thou art honored!

Thou hast enlarged the horizons of the earth!

26:15

7 a b c b:b:b
8 a b d
7 e f g

1. The metric pattern of 4(b:b) followed by b:b:b is well documented in Isaiah 24-27 and accounts for the MT nicely.
This is a good example of repetitive parallelism, very similar in structure to 24:8. The first two lines begin with the phrase. The last line expands on what has been enlarged.

2. Isaiah 26:16-20; mixed meter
   a. 1:1 (Isaiah 26:16-18)
   2(1:1:1)
   Yahweh, in distress, we looked to Thee;
   In the throes of Thy chastisement of us,
   Like a pregnant woman about to give birth;
   She writhes and cries in her labor;
   So were we because of Thee, Yahweh.
   We were with child; we writhed;
   Victory we have not made for the earth;
   The inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

   b. 3(b:b) (Isaiah 26:19)
   Let Thy dead live!
   Let Thy corpses rise!
   Let them awake and shout in victory;
   The dwellers of the dust!
   Thy dew is the dew of the Fields;
   Let it fall on the land of Shades!

   26:19
   5  a  b
   7  b1  a1
   7  a2  a3
   5  b2  c
   6  d  e  d
   6  d1  e1  a4

   This strophe makes good use of chiasm. In the first bicolon even the rhyme is arranged chiastically. Note the internal parallelism of the first line of the second bicolon. Note, too, that dew and life are linked in Psalm 137.

   c. b:b::l::b:b (Isaiah 26:20)
   Go, my people!
   Enter your rooms!

   1. Dahood has made an intriguing suggestion concerning the translation of 'vr. Drawing on his extensive research into the impact of Canaanite mythology on Israelite religion, as reflected in the Psalms, he proposes a distinction between the homographs 'vr (‘vr), "light" and 'vr ('vr), "field." In our context the fields refer to the Elysian Fields, or the "abode of the blessed after death." Such a translation is reinforced by the fact it stands in parallel with the land of the Shades. Dahood lists many obscure passages which read much better with 'vr rather than 'vr. See Mitchell Dahood, Psalms I, pp. 222-223.
Lock the doors behind you!

Hide for a little while;

Until the wrath is past.

The suspense is maintained throughout this strophe by the use of imperatives and climactic parallelism. The grounds for hope is that Yahweh is fighting the forces of chaos. His victory will bring the dead to life. For a short while, however, the faithful must hide and wait.

3. Isaiah 26:21-27:1
   a. 2(1:1) (Isaiah 26:21)

Yahweh comes forth from his place now!

To punish the inhabitants of the land for their iniquity.

The earth will reveal her blood.

It will not conceal anymore her slain.

b. 1:1::1:1 (Isaiah 27:1)

In that Day, Yahweh will attack with his sword,

His fierce, great and strong (sword).

1. It is interesting to note that the mythological beasts are almost completely suppressed in the Targum. They are read as references to Pharaoh and Sennacherib, proto-types of cruel kings, the likes of whom are the object of Yahweh’s wrath and sword. Many scholars have attempted to establish the identity of the beasts. In Proto-Apocalyptic, however, this is of less concern than the recovery of the creation myth itself and its implications for the study of Israel’s religion.


3. Dittography. As the line stands, it is too long.

4. Deleting ה, the article, and יָשָּׁא as prosaisms.

5. Of the versions, the Greek diverges the most. The subject is a fortified city (πόλις σαφωθα πόλις πολυσκιουθη). All the allusions, however, are to the tending of a garden. The changing of לְעָרִי לְעָרִי נֵפֶרֶת to לְעָרִי נֵפֶרֶת (see 26:1); (cont)
Would that I were thorns, Briars in flame,
I would advance against it;
I would kindle it altogether.

Or, let them lay hold of my protection!
Let them make peace with me;
Peace, let them make with me!
In the future Jacob shall take root;
Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots.
And fill the whole world with fruit.

Although the parallelism does not extend from one tricolon to the other, each tricolon is a unit unto itself. The chiasm is very nice in the first tricolon. The second tricolon is a good example of the kind of climactic parallelism we have.

song. From this point on, Yahweh’s disappointment turns into wrath against the vineyard. The יִשָּׂעָה could easily explain the יִשָּׂעָה of the MT but the masculine gender raises a problem of why the יִשָּׂעָה is referred to in the feminine throughout the rest of the song. The resulting three-syllable line does not help the metrical symmetry. Wall (יִשָּׂעָה) is read by the Greek and Syriac, but does not help much.

1. Following Cross’s reading, suggested in conference. For the possible interchange of יִשָּׂעָה with יִשָּׂעָה and יִשָּׂעָה with יִשָּׂעָה, see lQIsa. The resulting symmetry, parallelism and good sense all argue in favor of this reading.
encountered many times in the Apocalypse. The expansion or climax builds internally. The tricolon begins simply by mentioning that Jacob will take root. In the second line Israel blossoms and sends forth shoots. And finally in the third line, fruit covers the face of the world. It is difficult not to draw the parallel with the feast on the mount motif and Second Isaiah’s rejuvenation of the desert when the exiles were to return home in victory.

E. Isaiah 27:12-13

Isaiah 27:12-13 is prose with strong support from the versions. However, a poetic undertone is still very noticeable. It stands at that point when poetry is breaking into prose. The syllabic symmetry is abandoned. Long lines are run on but the technique of poetic parallelism seems still to be exerting pressure on the writing of the poet.

And it shall happen in that Day,

And those banished in the land of Egypt.

Yahweh will thresh from the bank of the river (Euphrates) to the Wadi Egypt.

And they shall prostrate themselves before Yahweh on the Holy Mount in Jerusalem.

And it shall happen in that Day,

A blast shall be sounded on the Great Horn

And they will come: those lost in the land of Assyria;

and they shall glean, everyone.

And it shall happen in that Day,

And those banished in the land of Assyria.

and this is expansionistic.

F. Summary of Isaiah 24-27

Our analysis of the text and prosody of Isaiah 24-27 has revealed the following generalizations: 1) The elements of paronomasia, alliteration, assonance, chiasm, *inclusio* and climaxatic parallelism are in evidence throughout most of the Apocalypse. 2) The most common prosodic pattern is the alternation between bicola and tricola. The patterns 4(b:b) followed by b:b:b, with variations, are found in more than one context. The 1:1::1:1:1 is also frequent. 3) When the above metric patterns are abandoned, the poetry is usually bad and the sense secondary. When adhered to, the quality is usually very good. The following chart compares the prosodic patterns of the units which we suggest make up the Apocalypse.

It is not the purpose of this study to present a full prosodic analysis of Ugaritic poetic style or that of Second Isaiah. We include here, however, two representative samples, a passage from Ugaritic text 5 and Isaiah 51:9-11. In both cases the textual work has been done independently by another scholar. It is intended to show that the prosodic style we have encountered in Isaiah 24-27 has close affinities with what is generally recognized as good Hebrew poetry.

1. Isaiah 27:7-11 is left out of the current discussion because the text is corrupt and provides no solid clue for a probable reconstruction.


3. Greek: Ποταμομονόμον is a proper name.

4. Syriac: Egypt and Assyria are interchanged indicating poetic parallelism is still at work.
In terms of a chronology of prosodic styles, research done in the prosody of Early Apocalyptic has shown that established poetic patterns eventually dissolved until prose became the dominant literary form of apocalyptic. Thus, our textual study of Isaiah 24:1-27 leads us to conclude that this work, on prosodic grounds, needs to be placed early in the typological chronology, close to Second Isaiah. 

1. Isaiah 51:9-11
2. Awake, awake, clothe yourself in power, O Arm of Yahweh!
3. Awake as in the days of old; Generations of long ago!
4. Was it not Thou who smote Rahab; Who pierced Dragon?
5. Who made the depths of the Sea a Way For the Redeemed to pass over.
6. Was it not Thou who dried up Sea; The Waters of the Great Deep?
7. For the Redeemed to pass over. Who made the depths of the Sea a Way For the Redeemed to pass over. 
   For the Redeemed to pass over. 
   For the Redeemed to pass over.
The point develops climactically as key words are paralleled and expanded. This happens many times in the Apocalypse. Over all, the lines are very long, and can be scanned as 1:1::1:1::1:1. Each line breaks down into a l:b unit. Note the use of bicola and tricola. The motif of slaying the dragon is to be compared with Isaiah 27:1.

b. 1:1::1:1::1:1

The ransomed of Yahweh shall return.

They will come to Zion amidst shouts of victory.

Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.

They shall attain joy and gladness.

Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

When you (Baal) smote Lōtān, the ancient dragon,

Destroyed the crooked serpent,

Shilyat with the seven heads,

(Then) the heavens withered (and) drooped

Like the folds of your garments.

The tricolon is to be compared with Isaiah 27:1. See Isaiah 34:4 for a close parallel with the bicolon. On many levels, the writer of Isaiah 24-27, Second Isaiah and Canaanite poets, share commonalities. Not the least of these commonalities is the similarity in prosodic style.
III. THE STRUCTURE OF ISAIAH 24-27

A. A Thematic Analysis of Isaiah 24-27

To deal with the problem of structure, we have chosen to begin with a thematic analysis of these chapters. A close study of the themes of Isaiah 24-27 reveals the frequent use of portions or all of the following pattern: threat, war, victory and feast.

1. Isaiah 24:1-16a

Threat: ---------
War: 24:1-13
Victory: 24:14-16a
Feast: ---------

The two items always present are war plus victory as in Isaiah 24:1-16a. A brief synopsis of the scenes described in these passages is as follows. Yahweh is attacking the earth. As the surface itself is laid waste, no one is exempt. Those in positions of power (priest, master, mistress, creditor) are no less vulnerable than the average person (servant, maid, debtor). Yahweh's attack has gone beyond the simple punishing of an enemy of Israel. The earth itself is being emptied. The world shudders as a curse from God devours the created order. All signs of festivity are gone. Chaos has consumed the city. The city stands desolate as a ruin, a reflection of the plight of the entire land.

All is not black, however, for from afar come shouts of triumph. Yahweh is proclaimed victor and praised. He is the God of Israel, the Just One to be honored in this event. From the ends of the earth comes a song of joy.

2. Isaiah 24:16b-25:9

Threat: 24:16b-18b
War: 24:18c-23
Victory: 25:1-4c
Feast: 25:6-8
Here we have the fullest expression of the pattern. In our textual study of 24:16b-18b we noted a shift in meter at 24:16b and suggested, judging from content, that the bib pattern may be understood as a precursor to the later l:ib, qinah meter, of lament.

a. Threat (Isaiah 24:16b-18b)

There are those who are suffering. They are facing the threat of treacherous ones. The inhabitants of the land have been attacked as if by a pack of dogs. There is no escape from the marauders. One is encompassed about by Pit and Snare. A shout of anguish is raised: "I am wasted! Oh, woe is me!"

b. War (Isaiah 24:18c-23)

Such anguish, however, is but a microcosmic reflection of a cosmic catastrophe. The days of the ancient flood are returning. The windows of heaven open. The foundations of the earth tremble. The earth shakes, is rent asunder, is broken in pieces, sways like a drunk in the wind.

The poet's vision suddenly bursts forth with Yahweh, himself, the great cosmic Warrior, charging in battle against the gods in heaven, and against the kings of earth. They are vanquished and locked in a great pit-like Dungeon. The sun and moon themselves cringe in confusion. The enemies of Yahweh have been put down. Why? Because the kingship of Yahweh is to be recognized by all. Yahweh resumes his place at Zion. In Jerusalem his cloud of power and honor rests, reaffirmed in the faith of his elders.

c. Victory (Isaiah 25:1-4c)

The victory is celebrated with a song of praise: "Yahweh, You are my God. You have destroyed the fortified city. The palace of aliens is naked, never to be rebuilt. You are a refuge to the poor and needy. The powerful and haughty of the world will now worship only You."

d. Feast (Isaiah 25:6-8)

The songs of praise have a fuller context in that Yahweh prepares on his mount, for all people, a feast. This is a feast of fine oil and wine to celebrate his victory over the powers of chaos. Death, itself, is to be swallowed at this feast. Death's web, that brings tears of fear and anguish to his people, will be removed forever from all the earth. "Our God, for whom we wait is here! Let us sing and rejoice in his victory!"

3. Isaiah 25:10-26:8

Threat: 25:10-12
War: 25:13-14
Victory: 26:1-8
Feast: 26:9-15

The theme of 25:10-12 is war against Moab. Moab is trodden upon as is straw in a dung heap. Moab stretches out his arms as does a swimmer seeking safety. But Yahweh crushes the pride of Moab. The stronghold, the walls, the fortifications are all humbled before Yahweh, razed to the dust.

A victory hymn follows, acknowledging the strength of Yahweh's city. Walls and rampart are in place. The victors are invited to enter. Those who are steadfast in faith, and trust, of Yahweh, come before Him, their Eternal Rock.

As did the hymn of praise in 25:1-4, the reason for the joy is given. Yahweh has humbled the haughty ones. He has reduced the exalted city to the ground. The poor and the oppressed dare to trample it under feet. The Way of Yahweh is Justice. His righteous way has been established.

4. Isaiah 26:11-15

Threat: 26:11-12
War: 26:13-14
Victory: 26:15
Feast: 26:17-18

The poetry of 26:11-12 is not as good as we have encountered in other portions of the Apocalypse but the theme is
clearly one of war. Yahweh raises his hand against the antagonists of his people. With fire, he will consume his enemies. The deeds of his faithful ones are to be established.

Verses 13-14 of chapter 26 return to the frequently encountered pattern of 4(b:b), b:b:b and the themes of war plus victory are intact. "Yahweh, apart from Thee, we acknowledge no other gods. Attack the dead, the Shades, and wipe them out! Destroy all memory of them!" And then the affirmation of victory: "Yahweh, You have increased the nation, You have enlarged the horizons of the earth!"

5. Isaiah 26:16-27:6

Threat: 26:16-19
War: 26:20-27:1b
Victory: 27:1c
Feast: 27:2-6 (Rejuvenation of the Land)

The above sequence of passages appears to be put together secondarily from older materials. The meter is mixed. There are traces of a lament of the people, a salvation oracle, an ancient Divine Warrior hymn and a song of the vineyard. Each seems, however, to be modified by the current context. We suggest that it is the prevailing pattern of themes (threat, war, victory and feast) that has guided the creator or editor of these materials.

a. Threat (Isaiah 26:16-19)

There are many elements present in Isaiah 26:16ff which Westermann1 reconstructs for the communal lament.

Address: "Yahweh, in distress, we looked to Thee...."

Lament: "In the throes of Thy chastisement of us.... We were with child, we writhed, we brought forth wind.... Victory we have not made.

Petition: "Let Thy dead live! Let Thy corpses rise! Let them awake and shout in victory!" (This is a reference to themselves.)


Westermann also notes that in a number of the laments of the people which he studied, there was substituted for the vow of praise (which normally concluded the psalm of lament) a part which depicted God's answer to the supplication of his people. This substitution was particularly noticeable in prophetic works.1 Isaiah 26:20 could be such an oracle of salvation announcing God's intention on behalf of his people.

Go, my people!
Enter your rooms!
Lock the doors behind you!
Hide for a little while
Until the wrath is past.

b. War (Isaiah 26:20-27:1b)

This announcement of salvation moves the theme from one of lament in the face of threat, to the theme of Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, marching forth to punish the evil in the land. He comes forth from his place, a stock image frequently encountered in such war passages. He will punish the inhabitants of the land for their iniquity. The earth will reveal the blood of those unjustly slain. Isaiah 27:1 contains the battle scene quoting a passage which goes back at least to Ugarit wherein Baal is credited with slaying Lōtan, (= Leviathan), the Dragon of chaos.

c. Victory (Isaiah 27:1c)

"He shall slay the dragon which is in the Sea."

d. Feast (Isaiah 27:2-6)

The theme of celebrating Yahweh's victory through feasting was strong enough to transform the judgment intent of First Isaiah's use of the Song of the Vineyard. In Isaiah 27, the image becomes a vision of a rejuvenated and fertile land.

Yahweh sings of his delightful vineyard, Israel. He cares for it, watches over it. Suddenly the mood changes as in Isaiah 5. Yahweh becomes angry and turns against his vineyard in wrath. He would destroy it in flames.

1. Ibid., pp. 61-64.
The bicola in which the above theme was expressed then shift to tricola in verse 6. The mood changes again. This time Yahweh’s attitude of hostility changes to one of protection and peace. "Let them make peace with me....Jacob shall take root. Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit."

We suggest this shift in mood comes from the pressure throughout these chapters of the pattern: threat, war, victory and feast. The theme of feasting was strong enough to transform the hostile intent of the Song of the Vineyard inherited from First Isaiah, to a vision of his vineyard, Israel, taking root, blossoming, and putting forth shoots to fill the whole world with fruit. We will suggest below that this latter theme probably came from Second Isaiah who envisioned the coming to life of the desert to provide food and water for Yahweh’s exiles on their journey home on the triumphal way from Babylon.

6. Isaiah 27:12-13

The themes of war and victory, discussed above, are re-expressed in the prose of 27:12-13. Yahweh is threshing the nations from the Euphrates to the Wadi Egypt, gleaning the sons of Israel. At the sound of the victory trumpet, the lost will return home to Zion, to prostrate themselves before Yahweh’s holy Mount in praise.

7. Summary

The following chart summarizes our analysis of the basic thematic pattern we see in Isaiah 24-27.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat:</th>
<th>War:</th>
<th>Victory:</th>
<th>Feast:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24:1-16a</td>
<td>24:16b-18b</td>
<td>24:18c-23</td>
<td>25:1-4c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Thematic Patterns in the Baal-‘Anat Epic

Judging from the thematic pattern noted above, it would appear that ancient mythic themes were being reutilized in early apocalyptic expression. To understand these later developments, we turn now to a description of very similar patterns in Canaanite religion.

It is premature to become too dogmatic when it comes to Ugaritic studies. We recognize that the texts we now have, that can be used to reconstruct the mythic themes of Canaanite mythology, are fragmentary and sometimes reflect complex internal developments. We feel, however, there are enough data to propose what may be described as thematic patterns.

Such a study provides, as well, a necessary corrective by shifting our attention from Persian thought as the primary source of apocalyptic themes to the recognition that much material that appears late can be traced back to Canaanite religion.

The Kingship of Baal

Once upon a time, ages ago, a quarrel arose between two of the younger gods. Yamm, who...
controlled the powerful deeps of Ocean and the many fingers of River, thought he should be king. His father, 'El, was getting old and the rule would soon pass from his hands. 'El thought highly of Yamm and indeed it was rumored that he had already commissioned Kothar-wa-Hasis, the Craftsman of the gods, to build a palace for Yamm from which he would rule.¹

All would have gone well were it not for the ambitious and powerful god Baal, who controlled the rains and fertility. His storm cloud, accompanied by thunder and lightning, was a match for the roaring waves and flooding waters of Yamm.

**Threat**

One day, the gods were seated to dine.² Baal was attending to the needs of 'El. Yamm sent his messengers to the divine banquet hall and demanded that 'El turn over Baal to be his prisoner. The other gods, including 'El, overwhelmed by this blatant show of power, hid their heads in their laps. Only Baal, not to be intimidated by the messengers of Yamm, stood his ground.

But 'El was still king. Acting under threat, to be sure, he nevertheless ordered that Baal be handed over to Yamm. Baal would bring gifts. This was a fitting gesture toward this new pretender to the throne, Yamm.

**Combat**

Baal, however, was not to be so easily dismissed. Kothar-wa-Hasis chose to defend the position of Baal,¹ and made for him two magic clubs, clubs that would fly from Baal's hands striking deadly blows upon the adversary. The clubs were given names and charged to drive out Yamm, so that Baal might assume his place on the throne. The battle was fierce as anyone would know who had ever witnessed a dark thunder cloud charging at the surface of the sea. Lightning, wind and waves bore witness to a frightening struggle between these two powerful gods.

**Victory**

The victor was Baal. The flooding waters of sea and river receded back to their rightful place while Baal returned to his gentler activity of assuring fertility to the earth. A banquet, with sumptuous meat and drink, was prepared to honor Prince Baal.² There was music and song for Baal as he enjoyed the company of his daughters: Pdry, Tly and 'Arsy.

Baal had a sister. Her name was 'Anat.³ Above all, she loved the excitement and danger of war. Many feared her for she would slay and kill for pleasure. How many times had she waded through the blood and gore of slain troops to pile severed heads and hands as trophies. She derived her zest for life from such exploits. At the end of the day she would wash her hands and body in the fresh waters of rain and dew relishing the pleasures of the day.

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1. UT 1.3 ('nt pl. ix); UT 1.4.13-15 ('nt pl. x); UT 2.3.1-9 (129). The numbers refer to the collection of Ugaritic texts made by Andrée Herdner, Corpus des Tablettes en Cunéiformes Alphabétiques (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963). The numbers in parentheses refer to the numbering of Cyrus Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1965). Gordon places the 'nt pl. ix and x after the 'nt text (see UL, pp. 24-27) but the story seems to reflect a period when 'El favored Yamm over Baal as successor. See Marvin Pope's discussion in 'El in the Ugaritic Texts (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1955), pp. 91-93.

2. UT 2.4 (68).

But one day as she was resting about her house, she saw the messengers of Baal approach her abode. She was startled at first since so often messengers brought bad news. Had her brother been banished from his throne? Had Yamm once again threatened to attack? Had any of the numerous monsters and dragons who controlled the evil powers of chaos escaped to challenge the peace of the world?

When the messengers arrived, seeing that 'Anat was visibly shaken, they assured her that no harm had come to Baal. Rather he wished to speak with his sister. He had a matter of great importance that he would discuss with her. Could she hasten to meet with him so that peace and concord could continue to reign in the land.

She agreed to come and soon was in sight of her brother's mountain. He treated her to food as would any generous host. Then he revealed his concern:

Baal has no house like the gods; Nor a court like the sons of 'Asherah. It was only fitting that a king should have a palace. He had proven himself in battle against the raging power of Yamm. He must now secure for himself a place from which to rule. But even though many of the functions, originally performed by the old god, 'El, were being taken over by the younger Baal, permission to build a palace still had to be obtained from 'El. 'Anat in her impetuous way agreed to help. She announced that she would visit 'El and demand that a house for her brother be built. Indeed if 'El would not agree, she would kick him like a lamb to the ground and beat him until the grey of his hair and beard flowed red with blood!

'Anat made the trip to 'El but apparently she was not successful for soon we witness Baal and 'Anat making plans to visit 'Asherah, the wife of 'El. Baal and 'Anat arranged with the Craftsman god to have many special gifts made from silver and gold. These would be presents for 'Asherah, gifts to win her favor.

Like 'Anat before, when 'Asherah looked up from her chores to see Baal and 'Anat coming, she thought the worse. Well aware of Baal's youthful power and 'Anat's reputation for violence, she feared they might be coming to do harm to her and her children. As they drew closer, however, she saw they carried not weapons, but gifts. This assured her that perhaps their intentions were peaceful.

Baal told his story to 'Asherah. He wanted a house. It was unfitting that a king not have a palace. Indeed, the other gods were beginning to talk. It was becoming embarrassing for him to appear in public. 'Asherah asked why they didn't approach 'El directly, since it was he who made such decisions. They replied that they intended to do so, but decided first to approach his wife. They needed her to break the ice. 'Asherah agreed to talk with her husband. Having settled their business the three dined.

After a bit, 'Asherah had her servants saddle her donkey. She had them deck it out in its most splendid trappings. Then she mounted the animal and was led by a glowing star to the abode of 'El.

2. UT 3.IV E.1-2.
3. UT 4.3 (51).
4. UT 4.4 (51).
When she arrived, her husband was delighted to see her. He offered her food and drink. His love for her warmed the room. When she had rested from her trip, he asked her why she had come. She related to him Baal's concern for a palace. 'El granted his permission this time but stressed the fact that it was not he who should carry the trowel or 'Asherah who should make the bricks. That was work for others than the father and mother of the gods. 'Asherah was delighted with 'El's decision. She complimented her husband on his wisdom and noted that now the season of the rains would come. Baal's voice would sound in the clouds and his lightning would flash in the skies. The joy of his fertility would fill the earth and all would be well once more.

Kothar-wa-Hasis was commissioned by Baal to do the work. The materials were gathered and set in place. Then for six days the house burned in fire as the flames melted the precious metals. On the seventh day the fire went out; the gold and silver were poured into blocks and bricks. Thus the house, worthy of a king, was finished.

There was a discussion between Baal and the Craftsman god over whether or not to build a window in the house. At first Baal said no, but he later acceded to the suggestion. Some have thought this would anticipate the opening of the windows of the heavens themselves to let in the rains of Baal.

At the completion of the palace a great banquet was arranged. The gods were invited from near and far. Everyone ate and drank their fill as one would expect at the dedication of a new palace for a new king.

Soon after the celebration, dedicating the new palace of Baal, the windows of his house were installed. This pleased Kothar-wa-Hasis very much. Rains could now reach the earth. The thunderous voice of Baal would fill the sky. Indeed, so vivid was the presence of the new king, Baal, that his enemies fled in terror. The king had assumed his throne from whence he would rule.

All was not well, however, for deep in the nether reaches of the earth brooded another of the gods, Death, Möt. Because of his power to destroy and bring lifelessness, he saw himself as the most powerful of the gods. Should not he be king?

Perhaps anticipating some trouble, Baal sent messengers to Möt with word to the effect that he, Baal, was supreme. His palace was built. The silver and gold were visual testimony to his position. Baal warned his messengers, however, to be cautious in their descent into the underworld. It was hot and arid there due to the lack of rain. The sun was an agent of Möt and each night she would dip below the horizon to burn the nether regions with her incessant heat. Möt, himself, consumed all those who came too close, as one would consume a freshly slaughtered lamb.

The messengers carried Baal’s message to Möt who was not to be intimidated. Rather he sent the

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1. UT 4.5 (51).
2. UT 4.6.22ff (51).
3. UT 4.5.120ff (51).
messenger back to Baal with a threat of his own. Because Baal had slain the dragon, Lōtān, one of the many monsters of the Sea, the heavens drooped and withered. So now would Mōt destroy Baal by swallowing him as one would an olive. The rains with their life-giving power would stop. The heat of the sun would scorch the land. Mōt would reign supreme while fertility would vanish from the earth.

Baal knew that he must face Mōt and have it out with him. Recognizing the dangers involved in descending into the nether regions of the world, just prior to his journey, Baal made love to a young heifer which soon gave birth to a young lad. Some have suggested that this was Baal's desire to regenerate a bit of himself before entering the region of Death. There was the risk that he might not return from the powers of Mōt.

Baal then entered the lower regions at the base of a mountain and immediately the earth showed signs of dying. The worst was feared. Their god was dead. He had been swallowed by Mōt. Baal’s body was found fallen on the ground.

In grief, messengers brought the news to El who immediately entered a state of profound anguish. He slid from his throne, to his footstool, to the ground. He poured ashes of mourning on his head. He cut his arms, his chest, his back. He raised his voice and cried,

Baal is dead!
Woe, Oh people of Dagon’s Son!
Woe, Oh multitudes of Baal!

'Anat, too, grieved over the death of her brother. She searched far and wide for his lost body. With the help of Šamšu the body was found. 'Anat asked Šamšu to load Baal on her back that she might carry him to his mountain for a proper burial. After offering the appropriate sacrifices, she buried his brother, weeping bitterly over her loss.

In the meantime, El requested of his wife, 'Asherah, that she recommend another of her sons to be king. Someone had to take the place of Baal. She recommended 'Attar the Terrible. He was thought by some to be the god of irrigation. To be sure, he would be no match for the god of natural rain, that is, Baal, but he would give it a try. 'Attar attempted to ascend the throne of Baal but was too short. Neither did his feet reach the footstool, nor did his head reach the top of the chair. He came down from Baal’s mountain to rule on the earth instead.

'Anat had found and properly buried her brother's body. She continued her search for his life essence, his soul as it were. She encountered Mōt whom she expected as the one holding him prisoner. She demanded that Baal be released. Then, true to her warlike nature, she seized Mōt, split him with her sword, winnowed him with a sieve, burned him with fire, ground him with a millstone and planted his remains in a field.

Elsewhere, it was revealed to El in a vision that he would recognize the rebirth of Baal when the heavens once again rained oil and

1. UT 5.1 (67).
2. UT 5.5.17ff (67).
3. See the discussion of Kapelrud, Baal, p. 121.
4. UT 5.6.8ff (62).
5. UT 5.6.22-24 (62).
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REJUVENATION OF THE LAND

the wadies ran with honey. Then would he know that the Mighty Baal lived again. And so it happened. The heavens began to rain down oil and the wadies ran with honey. 'El, much relieved, sat back, put his feet on his footstool and laughed for joy. The Mighty Baal was alive again! The earth would be fruitful once more. 'Anat and Šamšu were sent to greet Baal.

COMBAT (BAAL-MÔT)

Baal had been released from the clutches of Môt with the aid of 'Anat. Once released, Baal himself attacked Môt. He beat him on the shoulder, smote him with a club, kicked him to the earth. The battle continued on the mount of Baal. They shook each other. They gored one another like buffaloes. They bit one another like serpents. They kicked like raging stallions.

VICTORY

It was Šamšu who intervened and threatened Death with a word from 'El, "Cease this fight against Baal or I will remove my support from your rule in the nether regions." This was enough to frighten Môt. The fight stopped and Baal returned to his throne from which he established his rule as the greatest of all kings.

KINGSHIP

There appear to be two major cycles of tradition in these stories: a Baal-Yamm cycle and a Baal-Môt cycle. The overriding theme of both is kingship. On one level, these stories describe and interpret events of nature. Yamm symbolizes the overt powers of sea and flood, that is, physical force, which, when unleashed and uncontrolled, destroy. Môt symbolizes the silent power of death which spreads disease, drought and sterility. In the mind of mythopoeic man, for one to be king, one must have the power to control these destructive forces.

On another level, the tension between Baal and 'El may reflect the political realities of a young pretender to the throne seeking to establish himself where an older, recognized king, once stood. Baal had to deal with the power of authority that 'El still enjoyed. As well, a new king must prove he can handle overt physical threat, either from nature or from an invasion of an enemy army (Baal-Yamm). And a king must prove he can control the powers of death (Baal-Môt). Once proving his ability in handling these various forms of power, the new king merits a house. Baal sought such a house. Once accomplishing the goal of establishing his kingship, there was much feasting and rejoicing.

The following chart summarizes the thematic patterns we have discerned in the Baal-'Anat epic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat</th>
<th>Combat (Baal-Môt)</th>
<th>Victory</th>
<th>Feast</th>
<th>Building of Abode</th>
<th>Theophany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baal-Yamm</td>
<td>Baal-'Anat-Môt</td>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>Rejuvenation of Land</td>
<td>Kingship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>Descent in Underworld</td>
<td>Search for lost Baal</td>
<td>Rejuvenation of Land</td>
<td>Kingship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would seem clear that the thematic pattern encountered in Isaiah 24-27 is ancient, perhaps even having its origin in Canaanite religion. We turn now to the subject of Israel's use of some of these themes and motifs in her religious tradition.

1. UT 6.3 (49+62).
2. UT 6.5-6 (49+62).
3. UT 6.6.12ff (49+62).
4. UT 6.6.24-29 (49+62).
5. UT 6.6.33-35 (49+62).

C. The Divine Warrior Hymn and the Processional Way in the Royal Theology of Hebrew Tradition

For purposes of discussion, we will label the basic thematic pattern of Yahweh as Divine Warrior, responding to a threat against his people, by entering into battle with the enemy, being victorious and then celebrating the reaffirmation of his rule, a Divine Warrior Hymn. Our reasons for calling it a hymn will become clear below. To anticipate the discussion, we feel the persistence of the pattern is evidence of its recurrent use in ritual re-enactment in the cultic life of Israel's religious history.

Exodus 15, from the period of the Tribal League, is a good example of the power of mythic themes to shape the expression of traditional material even within a theological setting in which God's action in historical events was central to the community's faith. Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, marched in battle against an enemy that was threatening his people. Although the imagery of the sea is still very much a part of the poem, Yahweh was not fighting Yamm, the god of chaos in Canaanite myth. The battle had shifted to the historical enemy, Egypt. The themes of Yahweh's victory, however, and the subsequent establishment of his mountain abode, from which he would rule as king, remain intact.

During the Royal Period, the pattern of the Divine Warrior Hymn was to enjoy a renewed life in the cult of the monarchy. Indeed, because there was now a temple, because there was a palace and a king involved in international affairs, the pressure was on to be like the other nations of the Near East. What more of an invitation was needed—even within a community where God's action in historical events was so important—for old mythic patterns, which originated in such a context, to arise once again to the surface. There is evidence that the epic traditions of the Tribal League were even in danger of being swallowed up by the firmly entrenched patterns of ancient Near Eastern myth. That such did not happen can be credited in large part to the work of the prophets during this period.

A motif which persists from the theology of the Tribal League to that of early apocalyptic is that of the processional way. This may account, at least in part, for the continuity in the use of the Divine Warrior Hymn in tradition. The processional way had been the route of liberating exodus and conquest. It had been the route of Yahweh's march to battle the forces of chaos and return in victory. It was the route of a Second Exodus, a way over which the exiles of Babylon would return to Jerusalem. It would be the processional way for the new Messiah.

To account for this persistence in tradition, we suggest there was in fact a processional way in Israel's cultic life over which the basic themes of threat, combat, victory and feast were re-enacted and celebrated. During the period of the Tribal League, these themes were used to celebrate the Exodus-Conquest event that created the nation. During the Royal Period, they were used to celebrate the building of Yahweh's abode on Mount Zion. And during the exile, particularly in the visions of Second Isaiah and his followers, they were used once again to reaffirm the basic faith that Yahweh was king. He

1. Many of the assumptions here are based on the extensive work in early Hebrew poetry and the religion of Israel's Tribal League done by Frank M. Cross. See, for instance, his "Song of the Sea..." or, more fully, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. See, also, Paul Hanson's use of the poem's outline in his discussion of apocalyptic origins in Dawn, p. 301:

   Combat-victory (Exodus 15:1-12)
   Theophany of Divine Warrior (15:8)
   Salvation of the Israelites: (15:13-16a)
   Building of the temple and procession (15:16b-17)
   Manifestation of Yahweh's universal reign (15:18)

2. Hanson has gathered a list of 18 psalms whose thematic pattern is threat, combat, victory procession, celebration of Yahweh's eternal reign. Dawn, pp. 305-308.

1. Note the cultic nature of many of the Joshua stories and the reference in Micah 6:5 to the route (processional way?) "from Shittim to Gilgal."

2. This is what we will reconstruct for the Royal Period.

3. See the processional way frequently referred to in Second Isaiah.

would rescue his lost ones and as of old make manifest to all, his kingship.

To elaborate on the use of the processional way as a central motif in the theology of the royal cult, we turn now to a discussion of this matter by Mowinckel and his critics.

Mowinckel proposed that we take seriously the cultic function of the psalms. Indeed, he argued, there is evidence "the psalms are—with very few exceptions—real cult psalms, made for cultic use." 1 He argued that to understand fully the nature of the psalms, one must ask the question of function. Could one visualize a psalm's use within an established ritual or festival?

Important situations in life tend to become hedged by fixed rituals....In the decisive situations of life, in life's supreme moments, it is necessary that something vital be created and obtained; and the means by which it was to be attained were efficacious rites and words.2

Myth and history blended to enable the cult to "regenerate" communal life.

The "world" is worn out if it is not regularly renewed, as anyone can see by the annual course of life and nature. Thus it is the "fact of salvation" which is actualized in the cult...salvation which takes place in a repetition of a first salvation which took place in the dawn of time.3

History in Israel's royal cult, according to Mowinckel, had been mythicized.

It is especially the historical facts of salvation which are "remembered," and thereby turned into new effectual reality by Yahweh's presence at the festival. All he formerly did, gave, and secured, he does, and gives and secures again when he "appears" at his festival.4

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2. Ibid., p. 27.
3. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
4. Ibid., p. 19.

For our purposes, it was Mowinckel's treatment of the so-called enthronement psalms that is of primary importance because of their possible connection to material in Isaiah 24-27. He postulated a "festival which has...been celebrated as a festival of the enthronement of Yahweh." 1 Rather than look for a new, as yet undiscovered festival, we are to notice the "hitherto unheeded aspect of the well-known and frequently mentioned feast of tabernacles in its character of new year festival." 2 Possibly on the seventh day of this festival, the climax was reached as the re-enthronement of Yahweh as king was celebrated. The formula introducing psalms that would be used in such a festival celebration was Yahweh mālāk. One is reminded of the similar formula, "Marduk is king," used in the akītu festival of Babylonian religion.

It is not a lasting condition that the poet describes with this expression....The poet's vision is of something new and important which has just taken place: Yahweh has now become king; hence the new song of joy and praise to be sung.3

The central event during this celebration of "Yahweh's Day" was the processional entrance of the Ark. Prior to the procession itself, Mowinckel postulated "ritual fighting games," and possibly a circumambulation of the city wall re-enacting Yahweh's fight with the dragon of chaos. Mowinckel suggested that Psalms 68, 132, 24 and 118 gave textual evidence for the procession. He saw Psalm 48:12-13, Nehemiah 12:31ff, and Psalm 118:27 reflecting the ritual act of circumabulation. In the latter, he interpreted ḥag as a circular dance, circumambulating either the altar or the city wall.

The suggestion of circumabulation of the city wall is intriguing, particularly in light of Isaiah 26:1-2, where ḫāmēt wāḥēl are mentioned. Yet, it must be admitted that the evidence for such an established ritual is tenuous. Nehemiah 12:31ff did involve a ritual celebration at the wall, but the ceremony had as its prime function the dedication of the newly
restored wall. This is slight evidence that they were rehearsing an ancient ritual that could be traced back to the royal cult. Psalm 118:27 appears to describe a procession to the altar. But even if we translate מָלַךְ in the sense of circular dance, the most that can be implied is a circumambulation of the altar. To use this as evidence for circumambulation of the city wall is hardly convincing.

Psalm 48 envisages the elevated, mythic mount of the north, associated with Zion (vv. 1-3). There is a threat to Zion (vv. 4-5). Verses 6-9 describe a battle and victory. A victory shout is raised in verses 10-12. And then the circling of Zion is described in verses 13-14. Rather than circumambulation, it may be sufficient, however, to read 48:13-14 as a reference to a procession through the city.

Although H. J. Kraus argued in favor of a royal Zion festival, he challenged Mowinckel's concept of it as an enthronement festival. His objections were as follows: 1) It presupposes a time when Yahweh was not king. H. Schmidt has made it unmistakably clear what the theological context of a "festival of Yahweh's enthronement" would have to be. Schmidt assumes that the God of Israel—like all other vegetation deities—"actually loses for a period" his supremacy in the natural rhythm of the seasons and declares that this is a myth similar to that of the periodic descent of the gods to the underworld and their resurrection....There is no evidence within the Old Testament of this idea of a "mythicizing" of Yahweh, the Lord of History. 2) The procession of the Ark into the temple was not a reenactment of Yahweh's enthronement, it was simply the introduction of Yahweh's throne into his temple. In Psalm 24:7ff, for instance,

There is no mention of Yahweh ascending the throne, but he comes in as the "King of Glory," and is therefore welcomed as the God who is already present above the throne. We could therefore speak of a royal entry by Yahweh above the divine throne of the Ark. 3) Kraus also took issue with Mowinckel's translation of Yahweh מָלַךְ. He drew on 1 Kings 1:18: וַאֲתָהּ הִנֵּה אֲדֹנִי-יָהָה מָלַךְ. "And now, behold, Adonijah is king." Kraus argued that the word sequence of Yahweh מָלַךְ suggests that it be translated "Yahweh is king" rather than "Yahweh has become king." "The reference is to a state, not an act." Kraus is correct in challenging Mowinckel's translation of Yahweh מָלַךְ. A well-known characteristic of Hebrew syntax is that word order indicates emphasis: "It is Yahweh who rules." There is no debate as to time. He is now, always has been and always will be king. The theme was theophany. The worshippers were looking for and affirming a remanifestation of Yahweh's presence as king.

It is true, too, that Yahweh, the Lord of history in Israelite religion, did remain supreme. In the Canaanite context, 'El submitted to Yamm's demand for Baal, thereby placing Baal, for a time, at the mercy of Yamm. In the Baal-Môt cycle, Baal was imprisoned by Môt. There is no suggestion of similar imprisonment of Yahweh in the Old Testament. But Kraus' comment, "there is no evidence within the Old Testament of the idea of a 'mythicizing' of Yahweh, the Lord of history," goes too far. There are many passages wherein personified chaos (Yamm/Nahar) threatened creation, calling forth Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, to do battle. Indeed, historical battles would have been interpreted mythically as the historical manifestation of war between the gods. We see, too, in Isaiah 25:8, a transformation of themes in the Baal-Môt cycle, as Yahweh swallows Death (Môt) at the victory feast on the Mount. It is true that the supremacy of Yahweh was preserved as myth was reworked in its Israelite context, but Kraus apparently has failed to underscore enough the real pressure from myth to transform epic...
traditions, particularly during the royal period. Yahweh, the lord of history was being mythicized, even though he was never quite engulfed by pure myth.

In reference to the procession of the Ark, we can agree with Kraus, Yahweh came not to become king, but because he was king. We would add that the wider context of the procession was Yahweh's victorious return from the field of battle, having reasserted himself once again as Warrior-King.

It is instructive, in passing, to note Kraus' reconstruction of the festival at Jerusalem during the royal period. It was a pilgrimage festival.

The journey was accompanied by songs of pilgrimage and even on the journey, particularly immediately outside the gates of the city of God, the "Songs of Zion" were sung.

The actual festival cult began with the solemn ascent of the Ark to the Temple mount... The procession began with an act of adoration "at his holy hill" (Ps. xcix. 9), and the first hymns were no doubt struck up here coming at their climax in the summons to enter the Temple.

By means of the cultic drama, the "two pillars" of the Royal Theology, the election of Zion and the election of David, were celebrated.

When the solemn procession was approaching the sanctuary and had reached the gates which opened into the courtyards the priests intoned the "Entrance Torah" (Ps. xv; xxiv A).

Only the Saddîqîm could enter.

After the "Entrance Torah" was completed, the "Entrance Liturgy" proper could begin. We see the connections between the two very clearly in Ps. xxiv. The climax of the ceremony was the mighty official proclamation of the sacred cultic name Yahweh. Yahweh is to be known as Yahweh ssbâ'at....The procession into the sanctuary came to its conclusion and its climax in the solemn act of adoration before Yahweh.

2. Ibid.

When the day came when the pilgrim had to leave the sanctuary, he did so with a "ceremony of departure" such as has come down to us in Ps. cxxi.

As we will note below, there are differences in our reconstruction from that of Kraus. Notably, we will argue that the central function of festival was a victory celebration of Yahweh, the Divine Warrior and King. Kraus does, however, support our general thesis that a regular festival procession of the Ark to the Temple did exist.

Based on his own work in the categories of the psalms, Westermann raised some important objections to the cultic interpretation of the psalms. A fundamental thesis of his work was that the true "Sitz im Leben" of the psalms was life itself. The exigencies of life led the worshipper either to lament or praise. This may have led the worshipper to public worship in the temple. But the spirit and force of that public worship did not originate in the cult, rather, it rooted in life. The psalms are first and foremost individual creations of praise or petition.

We can agree that the fundamental spirit of the psalms came from life and those events in life wherein God's action or non-action on behalf of his people was transparent. But the fact that the psalms have certain patterns, or forms, argues strongly that there must have been some institution central to the life of ancient Israel that taught and preserved these forms. These forms were to influence the work of many individual creators. The temple and its cult would be the logical source for many of the patterns evidenced in the psalms.

Westermann argued that "the enthronement psalms do not constitute a category, nor are the so-designated psalms united by regular marks of a category...we are dealing with mixed forms that are taken from quite varied categories." We would suggest, however, that it is the pattern of the Divine Warrior

1. Ibid., pp. 213, 218.
2. Claus Westermann, Psalms, pp. 15-35.
3. Ibid., p. 146.
Hymn that is the category searched for. The marks of the category are: 1) Yahweh's march to battle; 2) His fight with the forces of chaos which can be either an historical enemy or gods of chaos; and 3) His victory and triumphal return to his abode, where he is greeted by victory celebration. Westermann treats these themes under his categories of Eschatological Songs of Praise, Epiphany of God and Victory Song. Perhaps his fragmentation of these themes into separate categories, often using grammatical tense as the guide, has obscured the more basic unity of the Divine Warrior Hymn pattern.

To summarize our point thus far, because the motif of the processional way in Israel's religious tradition is persistent, and because of the recurrence in different settings of the thematic pattern we have labeled the Divine Warrior Hymn, we propose there was in fact a processional way along which were re-enacted in ritual celebration, the basic themes of threat, war, victory and feast. Within the Royal Theology, these themes were used to reaffirm the kingship of Yahweh and inviolability of Zion against all enemies whether they be foreign armies or gods of chaos.

We would cite Psalm 132 as a psalm which reflects the ideal pattern and meaning of such a ritual procession celebrating the kingship of Yahweh and his anointed one.

1. Threat-Battle

Listen! We heard of it in Ephrathah!  
שמענוה באפרתה
We found it in the fields of Ya'ar!  
מצאנוה בשדיי יער

2. Victory

a. The Processional Way

1. We are following the parallel passage in II Chronicles 6:41. The very regular syllabic symmetry is thereby retained. The word in the Psalm 132 context may have been influenced by 132:14. The translation is derived from reading "lamed" as either "to" or "from." In either case the Ark could have been used in procession. The "from" would refer to the resting place in which it was found (132:6) or from its resting place in the temple to be used in ritual procession.

Delbert Hillers has argued that the Ark was not used in "recurring cultic processions, into Jerusalem and into the Temple." D. Hillers, "Ritual Procession of the Ark and Psalm 132," CBQ XXX (1968), p. 48. Psalm 132:8 is the key to his argument since that is the verse most often cited in support of such a procession.

A better translation is easily obtained by taking "lamed" as meaning "from," a sense now attested in numerous biblical passages, including some in the Psalms: "Arise, O Yahweh, from your resting place, You and Your mighty Ark."

"Let us enter into his dwelling; let us bow down to his footstool," still refers to approaching the temple. But the specific cultic act or occasion with which the psalm was associated is no longer certain. Ibid., p. 52.

He suggested the psalm "is ultimately connected with traditional royal dedicatory inscriptions," (ibid., p. 55) paralleled in some Northwest Semitic inscriptions.

Perhaps, then, Psalm 132 was one of the "epigraphic" psalms, or since the parallels are mostly general rather than specific, at least descended from that type of psalm. This does not rule out the possibility that Ps. 132 was recited or sung at some point or points in the temple liturgy;... (ibid., p. 55)

Hillers' discussion of "lamed" in 132:8 may indeed be correct, but it does not follow that the ritual procession of the Ark has thereby been disproved. Hillers, himself, does not claim to have disproved the existence of a ritual procession of the Ark. "Some may still find this probable and the present writer knows of no evidence against the supposition. But it does seem that this cannot possibly be regarded as proven" (ibid., p. 52). We would argue differently. The translation (cont)
Let Your priests be dressed in Righteousness; Let Your faithful ones shout in victory.

b. Kingship

On behalf of David, Your servant, Do not turn from the face of Your anointed one. Yahweh swore to David; He will not go back on his word. "One of your sons I will establish in your place; Also their sons will sit on the throne, If your sons keep my covenant, And my testimonies which I shall teach them."


c. Yahweh's Abode

Because Yahweh has chosen Zion; He has desired it for his dwelling place. "This is my resting place forever; Here I will dwell because I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions; Her poor I will satiate with bread. Her priests I will clothe with victory; Her faithful ones will raise the victory shout.


d. The Abode of Yahweh's Anointed One

There I will raise forth royal power for David; I will arrange dominion for my Anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame. But upon him, his crown will sparkle."

Psalm 132, in its opening verses, refers to that time prior to the building of the temple: "Remember...how he swore to Yahweh...I will not enter my house...until I find a place for Yahweh, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob." The use of a portion of this psalm in II Chronicles 6:41 in

1. Reading רון as dittography. As it stands, the line is too long.
3. Ibid.
conjunction with Solomon's dedication of the temple wherein the Ark was brought, prayers were offered, and a feast was celebrated, suggests that Psalm 132 was used, probably periodically, in conjunction with a ceremony in memory of the building of the temple.

Below is a possible reconstruction of the ritual re-enacting Yahweh's battle with the forces of chaos, his victory and the subsequent celebration. The recurrent thematic pattern is the primary data used in the reconstruction. It can be amplified, however, from allusions made to ritual acts, found in the content of selected psalms.

1. Threat-Battle

A ritual searching for the Ark may have provided the context for Yahweh's battles. "Listen! We heard of it in Ephrathah!" Yahweh was gone. One is reminded of 'Anat's search for Baal. It is true that there is no indication that Yahweh has descended into the underworld but the theme of his being away at battle, fighting enemy kings, or even the gods of chaos, would not be out of place.

2. Victory

The recovery of the Ark would be a ritual affirmation of Yahweh's victory over the powers of destruction. "We found it in the fields of Ya'ar!" It would then be brought in procession to the temple. "Let us go to his dwelling place! Let us worship at his footstool!" Rise, Yahweh, go to Your resting place, You and the Ark of Your might!" He would be returned as victorious king. Psalm 24 suggests that perhaps there was a torah liturgy which determined those who were cultically pure, that is worthy to process with the Ark to the temple. "Let Your priests be dressed in Righteousness." These were the Righteous before whom the gates of the city would be opened (Ps. 118:19-20).

The victory procession provided the occasion to sing Yahweh's "New Song," or victory shout, sung to celebrate Yahweh's success over the forces of chaos (Pss. 118:15-18; 98:1-3; 144:9). "Let Your faithful ones shout in victory." The return of the Ark to the temple reaffirmed Yahweh's eternal kingship (Pss. 132; 118:26-27; 24:7-10; 68:24-25).

3. Feast

The climax probably was reached with a victory feast on Yahweh's Mountain, Zion. This could have included sacrifices to Yahweh and actual ritual banqueting (I Kings 3:15; 8:65; Amos 5:21; 8:10; Hosea 7:5; 2:15; Jer. 31:10-14; Is. 55:1-5). Recall, too, the covenant meal at Sinai, Ex. 24:11, and the feasting gods celebrating Baal's victory over Yamm and at the completion of the building of his abode.

D. Transformations in Second Isaiah

Two frequently encountered forms in pre-exilic prophecy were the prophetic oracle against the nation and the Divine Lawsuit (rib). The former described Yahweh's wrath against a foreign enemy, the latter depicted the wrath of Yahweh's judgment against Israel, herself, when she was guilty of breaking covenant with God.

These forms, plus the ritual pattern reconstructed for Israel's royal cult, were released from their institutional settings when Jerusalem was destroyed and her people dispersed into exile, in 587 B.C. The themes of these older forms were regrouped into a new synthesis by Second Isaiah. In a new time of war, the old pattern of the Divine Warrior Hymn was renewed in strength.

1. War

For Judah, the war was over. "Jerusalem had received from Yahweh's hand double for her sins" (40:2). A common prophetic interpretation of the difficult days Judah was

1. We understand the "New Song" to be indigenous to the psalm literature, a form which Second Isaiah used in his work, not vice versa. See below, pp. 111-12.
having to face, rooted in the covenant theology from the Tribal League. Judah had broken covenant and was suffering the curses unleashed by Yahweh against his own. But now, the punishment was over. In part, we see the conditional element of the Davidic covenant (Ps. 132:12) being overshadowed by the unshakable eternal covenant (ברית עולם) of myth. In the latter, the god was bound to be the protector of his creation. As in the old Divine Warrior Hymn, the warrior deity was expected to defend his own. Remembering the days of Noah (Isaiah 54:9-10), though the mountains depart and the hills remove,

My steadfast love shall not depart from you;
Nor shall the covenant of my peace totter.

The memory of great days under King David surfaced to influence the theology of Second Isaiah (Is. 55:3b).

I shall make with you an everlasting covenant;
(Like) the secure covenant bonds of David.

Isaiah blended the ancient themes of exodus and conquest, from the Tribal League, and the theme of Yahweh's defeat of the powers of chaos to defend his abode, from the royal period, to envision Yahweh as victorious king, leading his exiles home along his processional way. This time his "way" extended across the desert, from Babylon to Zion.

Isaiah 52:7-8

How beautiful are they upon the mountains;
The feet of him who brings good news,

1. Following a translation suggested by Cross, in conference.

The reporter of peace,
The bearer of good news,
The reporter of victory.
Who says to Zion:
"Your God reigns."
Your watchmen lift up their voice;
Together they shout in victory.
Because eye for eye they see
Yahweh in his return to Zion.

* * * * *

Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice crying:
In the wilderness, make clear the Way of Yahweh;
Make straight in the steppe, a Highway.
Before our God, every valley shall be lifted up;
Mountain and heights shall be made low.
The steep ground shall become a plain;
And rough places, a broad valley.
The Glory of Yahweh shall be revealed;
And all flesh will see it together.

2. Victory

We have noted that the march of the warrior God into battle, the defeat of the forces of chaos, and his return along
the processional way in victory are themes that have had a long history in tradition. In predominantly mythopeic societies, this pattern was cyclic, regularly repeated in ritual re-enactment. Within Hebrew tradition, it was the royal cult that came closest to reflecting this mythopeic perspective. This cyclical pattern, deriving from myth, however, was transformed by Second Isaiah in his unique use of the "New Song", or victory shout of the royal period. This song took on epic dimensions in the theology of Second Isaiah. It celebrated not only Yahweh's victory in battle, it became the song of the New Age. The battle of New Conquest issuing forth into a New Exodus had been, or was being, won once for all.

Isaiah 42:9-10
The former things have now come to pass. 7
New things I now declare; 7
Before they spring forth I make it known:

Sing to Yahweh a New Song! 8
His praises from the end of the earth! 6

Within this spirit of the New Song, the "old-new" themes clustered together around the image of the processional way:

1) New Conquest (Is. 42:13).
Like a warrior, Yahweh goes forth; 6
Like a soldier, he awakens fury. 6
He shouts in triumph, yea he roars. 5
He shows himself mighty against his enemies.

2) New Exodus (Is. 43:16-17).
Thus says Yahweh,
Who is making in the sea, a way;
In the mighty waters a path.

Who leads out chariot and horse, 6
Army and warrior together. 6
They lie down never to get up. 6
They are extinguished; like a wick they are quenched.

3) New Creation. To insure the safe arrival of the returning exiles to Zion, the victory feast on the mount of the royal period was expanded in Isaiah's theology to include an entire renewal of a desolate creation. 1 Waters and springs flowed again and the desert bloomed, to quench the thirst of Yahweh's chosen and to show that life was returning to that which was dead. "They did not thirst while he led them through the desert" (48:21). Indeed, the new age of feasting with Yahweh reverses an old age when Jerusalem drank from the cup of Yahweh's wrath.

Isaiah 51:22-23
Look! I took from your hand
The cup of reeling; the cup of wrath.
You shall drink of it no more;
I shall put it into the hand of your tormenters.

* * * *

Isaiah 41:18
I shall open on the bare heights, rivers;
In the midst of valleys, springs.

1. Recall the rejuvenation of the land after 'Anat's defeat of Mot and the release of Baal. This is one of the many examples of the recrudescence of mythic thought in Second Isaiah. For Isaiah, however, the arena of such activity was still within plain history.
I will make the wilderness into marshes; And dry land into springs of water.  
For Yahweh has compassion on Zion; He has compassion on all her waste places.  
He made its wilderness like Eden; And her steppe like the garden of Yahweh. 
Joy and gladness will be found in her, Praise and the voice of song.

Isaiah 51:3

Isaiah 51:9-11 may well serve as our parade example in which all these themes were beautifully wed: 

Awake, awake, clothe yourself in power, 0 Arm of Yahweh. Awake as in the days of old, Generations of long ago. Was it not Thou who smote Rahab, Who pierced Dragon? Was it not Thou who dried up Sea, The waters of the Great Deep? Who made the depths of the Sea a Way For the redeemed to pass over?

The ransomed of Yahweh shall return; They will come to Zion midst shouts of victory. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall attain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

As we noted in the Royal Theology, in Second Isaiah as well, we see layers of meaning clustered about the processional way. It was the route of the warrior deity marching forth to battle the dragon of chaos (51:9). It was the route of conquest as Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, marched on behalf of his people to destroy their enemies (42:13). Isaiah added a new dimension when it became also the route of a new exodus. A highway was envisioned, built in the desert for the redeemed to process to Zion (51:10-11; 43:1-2, 5-7; 49:11-12; cf. 45:22-23). Yahweh, in victory, was saving his righteous ones (51:7-8; cf. 40:31).

3. Feast

We noted above how Isaiah used the ancient motif of the land's rejuvenation to envision how the exiles would be fed on their long journey home across the desert. Once arriving at Zion, those to partake of Yahweh's feast on the mount were to be his suffering servants. The messianic figure had been democratized to include all Israel, now to share with Yahweh the eternal joys of the Messianic Feast on the Mount (Is. 55:1-5).

E. Summary

Our understanding of the structure of Isaiah 24-27 derives from the thematic pattern we have labeled the Divine Warrior Hymn. We suggest it is at least one line of continuity that extends from Ugarit to Second Isaiah and into apocalyptic. This is the thematic pattern of threat, war, victory and feast.

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1. Notice the frightened gods in 46:1.
To be sure, this basic structure was contracted or embellished as the occasion warranted. Because the motif of the processional way emerged again and again in Israel's religious tradition, we suggest there was, in fact, a processional way over which was re-enacted at religious festivals the themes encountered above. During the period of the Tribal League, these themes were used to celebrate the Exodus-Conquest event that created the nation. During the royal period, they were used to celebrate the building of Yahweh's abode on Mount Zion, a visual manifestation of his kingship and power. And during the exile, especially in the theology of Second Isaiah and his followers, the themes were used once again to reaffirm the basic faith that Yahweh was king. As of old, he would rescue his lost ones and would make manifest to all, his kingship.

IV. ISAIAH 24-27 AND THE ORIGIN OF APOCALYPTIC

This brings us to a discussion of Isaiah 24-27 and its place in the origin of apocalyptic. It is not our purpose to provide a comprehensive discussion of apocalyptic origins. Our goal is simply to glean from Isaiah 24-27 that material which we feel is important for such a discussion.

A. The Literary Context of Isaiah 24-27

In order to resolve some of the problems raised in chapter one of this study, we attempt now to establish a context in which the data provided by these chapters in Isaiah make sense. Frequently, it is a reference to some historical event or personage that establishes the context in which to understand a passage of scripture. Unfortunately, those data are lacking in our chapters.

Therefore we will attempt to use prosodic style and thematic pattern to establish the context. By relating these data to relevant material that comes before and after, we hope to suggest a setting that is at least reasonable, in that it makes sense of material we do have. Within this context certain typological developments can be discerned.

1. Prosodic Style


The poetry of 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8 can be compared with the best in Second Isaiah. The most common prosodic pattern is the alternation between bicola and tricola. Within a tight syllabic symmetry are couched many examples of paronomasia, alliteration, assonance, chiasm, inclusio, climactic and repetitive parallelism.

We would argue, then, on the basis of prosodic style, that 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8 form the earliest material of

1. Of the recent studies on the subject those of Plöger, Theokratie and Hanson, Dawn, provide helpful and provocative discussions.
the Apocalypse and is to be dated close to the time of Second Isaiah. The poetry of these sections compares with the poetry of Isaiah 60-62, in Third Isaiah, and Zechariah 9, which Hanson concludes is also very close in style to that of Second Isaiah.\(^1\)

b. Isaiah 26:11-27:6

Typologically, the prosodic style of Isaiah 26:11-27:6 would come later. The meter is mixed. There appears to be a \(b:b:b:1:1:1\). This is followed by the pattern \(4(b:b), b:b:b\) which we have encountered in the earlier portions of the Apocalypse. But then comes a \(1:1\) followed by \(2(1:1:1)\). Next is a \(3(b:b), then b:b:b:1:1:1\). Two bicola follow, \(2(1:1), then 1:1:1:1:1\). Finally there is a \(5(b:b)\) and \(2(b:b:b)\). The poetry is not as good as that encountered in the former units. See, for instance, the run-on lines of 26:20-21.

We would conclude, then, on prosodic grounds, that 26:11-27:6 was added later.

c. Other Passages

The prose of 27:12-13 would appear, then, to be later still. We have deleted verses 24:5, 24:20b and 26:9d-10 as editorial expansion. In each case they interpret what we propose is an earlier text.\(^2\) In comparison with what surrounds these passages, they are very prosaic and break into what is otherwise good poetry. We leave out of our discussion Isaiah 27:9-11, because, as yet, it does not yield to our analysis.

2. Themes

Our study of the themes of Isaiah 24-27 has revealed the frequent use of portions or all of the following thematic pattern: threat, war, victory and feast.

In 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8, this pattern conforms to the poem's own content, that is, the poems themselves seem to have been created with these themes in mind. This, again, would place them typologically prior to what we find in 26:11-27:6.

As noted earlier, in this latter sequence of material, there appear to be traces of a lament of the people, a salvation oracle, an ancient Divine Warrior Hymn and a modified Song of the Vineyard. They have been arranged, however, according to the basic thematic pattern we have discerned in the earlier material. We suggest, then, that the author or editor was re-adapting other relevant materials he had, according to the pattern suggested above. These materials probably circulated independently prior to their current use in the Apocalypse. This independent circulation would certainly be true of the Divine Warrior Hymn (Is. 27:1, see UT 5.1.1-5). It was probably true of the Song of the Vineyard (Is. 27:2-6, see Is. 5:1-7). And it could be true for the communal lament that begins at 26:11. The oracle against Moab (25:10-12) may also have been inserted at this time.

The various elements of this thematic pattern each have had a history in tradition and can be used to help establish a context for Isaiah 24-27.

a. War

A model example of the ancient war theme, deriving in Israel from the theology of the League, is Numbers 10:35-36 (see also Pss. 68:2; 18:15):

And whenever the Ark set out, Moses said:

\[
\text{Arise, Yahweh, let Thy enemies be scattered;}
\]

\[
\text{Return, Yahweh, with the myriads;}
\]

\[
\text{El with the thousands of Israel.}\]

\(^1\) For a discussion of this text and its liturgical use in the League cult, see Frank M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior," pp. 24-25. Cross has suggested subsequently, in private conference, that the second bicolon be read as:

\[
\text{שָׁמַע יָאָרָה שָׁמַע}
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Yahweh, symbolized with the Ark, led the armies of Israel to scatter (פוץ) the enemy in battle. As we have suggested, this procession of the Ark could well have had a cultic life during the periods of the Tribal League, the Monarchy and now again it is reflected in the theology of Isaiah 24-27.

An analysis of parallels to the war vocabulary of Isaiah 24-27 reveals that it is characteristic of that language used in the prophetic oracle against the nation. It can, therefore, be argued that the oracle against the nation was an important carrier of the war theme in tradition. A comparison of the parallel passages illustrates, however, that the context in which the author of Isaiah 24-27 used this language was different from that context established in the pre-exilic period.

The sense of formulae and vocabulary used to describe Yahweh's wrath against a specific historical enemy was transformed in Isaiah 24-27 by the return to chaos theme of myth. In Isaiah 24-27, the entire created order was being threatened by Yahweh, not specific historical enemies.

This shift was facilitated by the fact that the Divine Warrior Hymn had a separate life in the creation myth, a pattern which we suggest was enjoying a resurgence in this period. Note again Isaiah 27:1 with the important parallels in Second Isaiah (34:4 and 51:9-11; cf. UT 5.1.1-5).

Second Isaiah was shifting the traditional use of the war theme from that established in pre-exilic Israel. To do so he drew freely upon mythic themes. Specifically, he applied the return to chaos theme to events which were occurring in his own day. Using a Canaanite image, he envisioned the heavens rolling up like a scroll, with all the host of heaven falling out of the sky (Is. 34:4; cf. UT 5.1.4-5).

Isaiah incorporated this return to chaos theme, of myth, into the Tribal League theme of conquest. The result was to offer the interpretation that the current devastation Judah was having to face was a prelude to deliverance, a New Exodus, a New Creation. For instance, in Isaiah 41:16, פוץ, a verb used frequently in war passages, was used not to describe Yahweh's wrath against Judah or some other nation, but to portray Judah's scattering to the wind the chaff of mountains and hills about to be winnowed. The oracle opens with אל תירא (Is. 41: 14), standard holy war language. In the eyes of Second Isaiah, Yahweh was moving against elements of the created order. And yet, faithful to the prophetic stance, he was not falling back into the perspective of nature mythology. History was being periodized (Is. 42:9). Yahweh's destruction of creation was not a return to the beginning. He was ushering in a new age. In one sense it was the logical extension of the theology of the prophetic lawsuit. The curses of the covenant originally intended for Judah were being pulled over the entire creation which brought a period of history very near its end. War language was shifted from its then traditional use in lawsuit passages and prophetic oracles against the nations to its ancient use in the Divine Warrior Hymn. There was to be salvation for the Righteous ones on the other side of great war. The faith was that Yahweh was directing the changes toward a new creation, that is, salvation for the Righteous. It was this radical openness toward the future which preserved both Second Isaiah and apocalyptic from the cyclic character of nature myth.

Myth was turned to the service of history. To be sure, the specific particularity of prophetic forms, like the divine lawsuit (יִדוּ) and the oracle against the nation, was broken down. The war themes of these forms were released from their settings when combined with the return to chaos theme of myth to give expression to a theme of universal desolation. The mythic theme of return to chaos—new creation combined with the


The writer is grateful to Marvin Chaney who gathered these references in a seminar paper entitled Mythology and Holy War (Harvard, NELL, 1965).
epic theme of conquest. The overriding thrust of the war theme from Second Isaiah into apocalyptic was to describe Yahweh’s march in New Conquest, a message of hope to those who stood in the rubble of a destroyed community.

We suggest it was in this context that at least Isaiah 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8 were created. The destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. was to be understood as part of the inevitable fall-out from Yahweh’s march in new conquest. As part of the return to chaos, no one or no thing would be exempt. Gods, kings, cities, indeed, the entire earth was being emptied. There was hope in the devastation, however, in that after the war Yahweh’s kingship and power at his mount would once more be obvious to all (Is. 24:23).

Isaiah 41:16 would suggest that Second Isaiah, himself, already began this shift away from specific historical enemies and events for the arena of God’s activity. If Isaiah 34-35 does in fact come from the hand of Second Isaiah, this would be added textual support. It does appear, however, that the hold on plain history is weakening in Isaiah 24-27 beyond that noted in Second Isaiah.

In any event, we can conclude that the earlier portions of Isaiah 24-27 come from a close disciple of Second Isaiah as evidenced both by the prosodic style and now in his use of the war theme.

b. Victory

The language of Isaiah 24:14-16a is distinctly different in tone from what precedes and what follows. As noted above, the lifting up of the voice was a common device, known from Ugaritic sources, to indicate a break or shift in the text. The language of war and anguish was suddenly reversed to words of joy. We suggest that the reason for the shift can be understood best if the reader perceives the over-arching pattern of the Divine Warrior Hymn. These verses contain a victory shout sung as Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, marched out and was victorious in the field of battle.

The language used, in contrast to what precedes and follows, stands out sharply as being influenced by that of Second Isaiah.

1) Isaiah 48:20 (cf. Is. 24:14)

Go forth from Babylon!
Flee from Chaldea!
Declare!
Proclaim this!
Cause it to go forth,
To the end of the earth.
(Say)
Yahweh has redeemed
His servant Jacob.

Isaiah 52:8

Your watchmen lift up their voice;
Together they raise the victory shout.
Because eye for eye they see
The return of Yahweh to Zion.

2) Isaiah 54:1 (cf. Is. 24:14)

Shout in victory, barren one;
The one who is childless.
Break forth in shouts of success!
Cry aloud, you who have not given birth!

Isaiah 42:12 (cf. Is. 24:15)

Let them give to Yahweh honor!
Let them declare his praise among the isles!

3) Isaiah 54:1 (cf. Is. 24:15)
Given these strong parallels in the use of language with Second Isaiah, it would seem that the author had in mind Second Isaiah's "New Song" when he wrote this passage. Isaiah 42:10-13 suggests that this was an entirely appropriate choice since the New Song was the victory shout sung in celebration of Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, victorious in battle.

Mowinckel is certainly correct in insisting that much of what is found in Second Isaiah was dependent upon royal forms and not vice versa.

He (Isaiah) has consciously imitated and used them as a pregnant expression of the message he is bringing.

The idea of creation as the great achievement of Yahweh and the idea of his kingship are both indigenous in the cultic lyrics; that is where the two ideas have been knit together, and that is where Deutero-Isaiah has found thought content as well as thought forms.¹

An alternate interpretation of the New Song is that these psalms were dependent upon Second Isaiah and hence of late date.² But, as Mowinckel has noted, the sword can cut both ways. When we take into account Isaiah's archaizing use of language and prosody, it is logical to assume that rather than create new, unheard of, forms, he would draw on established forms to express his message.

Textual support for regarding the New Song as indigenous to the royal period is Psalm 144:5-11. Yahweh the Divine Warrior comes from the heavens to rescue the worshipper from the alien waters of chaos. Verse nine begins the New Song. It functions in the pattern as a victory shout sung in response to Yahweh's deliverance of "David, his servant" (v. 10). Myth was being used here in its regenerative sense. Psalm 98 connects ritual conquest and New Song in a similar manner.

Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, was protector of the faithful against the ravages of chaos. The New Song in its royal context was a victory shout celebrating Yahweh's rescue of the righteous from the hostilities of history. Zion was the

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2. See, for instance, Westermann, Psalms, p. 147.
impregnable fortress against the threat of chaos, a shield from harm. The New Song would have had a solid function in a procession of the Ark to the temple. We argue, then, that we have here the shout of victory in praise of Yahweh, the victorious king.

In the context of the literature of Second Isaiah, the New Song took on a new dimension. Isaiah 42:9, the verse immediately preceding a New Song, demonstrates the force of epic themes in Second Isaiah.

הארשבות התנה ביא 7

The former things are now past;

New things I now declare. 7

Before they spring forth, I proclaim (them).

The recrudescence of myth exerted a pressure to periodize history's events, a tendency strong in Second Isaiah. The New Song would naturally express that periodization. But Second Isaiah stopped short of falling into the cyclic pattern of nature myth. History still had a direction that was moving purposefully into the future. The function of the New Song in Second Isaiah was to be the song of the New Age. It was the shout of victory raised to announce that Jerusalem's warfare was ended. The dawn of New Creation (Is. 40:2) was at hand. The periodization would eventually develop into the conception of two ages yielding the characteristic dualism of the apocalyptic movement.

The function of the New Song in Isaiah 24 was similar to its function in Second Isaiah. In the face of all the terror to accompany Yahweh's march in New Conquest, there were still grounds for rejoicing. Evil was having its last stand. Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, would be victorious and stand again as King (Is. 24:23).

The author's use of the victory theme, therefore, can be added to that evidence that places the literary context of Isaiah 24-27 close to Second Isaiah.

c. Feast

Jeremias has an excellent discussion of how much of the inter-testamental and New Testament literature grew out of the picture of the "meal on the cosmic mountain." From this background all the references to meals in the New Testament are to be interpreted: the bridal feast, the feast of the good and faithful servant, the Passover of the Vollendung, all stemming, he suggests, from Isaiah 25 and passages like it. 1

Cross has gathered important parallels to this theme.

The familiar passage Is. 55:1-5 also received interpretation, rightly or wrongly, as the banquet of David redivivus (so in Rev. 22:17; cf. Ezek. 44:3). Another classical passage is Jer. 31:10-14.) And a whole kaleidoscope of ideas, the streaming of the nations to the exalted mountain of Zion (Is. 2:2-4, Micah 4:1-4, Ps. 74:12-17, esp. v. 14, and Is. 60. See also IQM 12:10-18), the feeding of the flocks (the children of Israel) on the "heights of Israel," (Ezek. 34:14-16), the healing and nourishing rivers issuing from the New Temple on its "very high mountain," (Ezek. 40:2; 47:1-12) were woven into apocalyptic fabric...It comes as no surprise...to discover these motives were at home among the Essenes. (Note the discussion of 4QPs 37 II, 10-11.) 2

The true antiquity of this theme becomes apparent when we recall the feast of the gods, enjoined when Baal of Canaanite myth, the victor in his battle with Yamm, completed the building of his abode. Isaiah 55:1-5 and Jeremiah 31:10-14 indicate that the theme of feasting in victory celebration was still active in sixth-century prophetic thought. I Kings 8:65 and the many poetic allusions to David would indicate that such a feast commemorating Yahweh's promises to the Davidic house had a festival setting in the royal cult.

There were a number of subthemes that flowed into this image. One was the elevation of Zion for all to see as people from the world over came to Zion (Is. 26:1 must certainly refer to this Jerusalem of faith). Coupled with this vast procession to Zion—a New Exodus for those in the bondage of exile—was the mythic theme of a sterile creation come back to life. Second Isaiah made use of that combination: "And he made its


wilderness like Eden, and her steppe like the garden of Yahweh" (Is. 51:3).

The themes of feast and renewal of sterile creation as employed in Isaiah 24-27 flow naturally from the theology of Second Isaiah. As we have suggested above, the force of these images was so strong that it transformed the Song of the Vineyard, from a song describing judgment (Is. 5) to one expressing new creation (Is. 27). Isaiah 5 envisions Yahweh's tender care of his vineyard, waiting and hoping for it to yield good grapes but instead it produced stinking grapes. It deserved nothing more than to be plowed into the ground. Then the parallel is drawn with Israel, Yahweh's vineyard. "He looked for justice (mîšpât) but behold, bloodshed (mîšpât); for righteousness (qudadqāh), but behold, a cry (qâ'aqāh).

In Isaiah 27, however, Yahweh's watchful care of his vineyard, Israel, is producing as it ought to produce. Within the liturgical pattern, this theme performed the same function as the Feast on the Mount and may be considered a subtheme along with the other themes flowing together around this image. New Creation is bursting with new life. We are called to Zion to share in the new found fertility of creation (Is. 27:12-13).

3. Genre and Date

Our study has not taken into account enough of the literature between Second Isaiah and Daniel to justify a discussion of divisions between proto-, early- and middle-apocalyptic. Nor do we propose to offer such a discussion here. We feel, however, the prosodic style of Isaiah 24-27 and its themes, both separately and in pattern, do establish a literary context for us to understand these chapters. The author emerges as one very much influenced by the work of Second Isaiah. For that reason, we would label the genre of Isaiah 24-27 proto-apocalyptic, recognizing that as our knowledge of the literature of the early post-exilic period becomes more complete, adjustments may have to be made.

We would argue that Isaiah 26:11-27:6 is typologically later than Isaiah 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8 and moving in the direction of what Hanson has described as early apocalyptic. But we do not see evidence of the salvation-judgment oracle or an advanced disintegration of prosodic style which would place our chapters late in Hanson's typology.

A sixth-century date is not unreasonable. We would place the earlier portions of the chapters closer to 587 B.C., the fall of Jerusalem, than to 520 B.C., the temple controversy. The author would be a disciple of Isaiah, one who shared in his visions for the reconstruction of Israel.

B. The Historical Setting of Isaiah 24-27

To move from the literary context to a reconstruction of the historical setting is difficult under the best of circumstances. The number of suggestions for historical setting that have been made for Isaiah 24-27 testifies to the ambiguity of the data. But having established, on relatively objective grounds, what we believe to be the literary context of Isaiah 24-27, we are in a position, now, to make some suggestions as to historical setting.

Otto Plöger and Paul Hanson have offered some helpful insights to understand literature from the period in which we place the Apocalypse.

In Plöger's reconstruction of the historical setting of Isaiah 24-27, he raised the problem in 24:14-16b of the identification of the "they" in verse 14,

They shout in victory.
They raise their voice.
In the presence of Yahweh
They shout from afar.

the "we" of verse 16a,

From the ends of the earth
We heard a song:
Honor to the Just One!

and the "I say" or possibly "one says" of verse 16a (we translate יאמר as "some say"),

Some say, "I am wasted!"
"I am wasted! Oh, woe is me!"

He argued there were two groups within the post-exilic Jewish community both of whom shared a general eschatological
perspective. But one of the groups was taking the eschatological prophecy of the end of the age much more seriously than the other. The "they" of verse 14 would refer to the other group who, in the eyes of the author, were rejoicing prematurely over Yahweh's reestablishment of his people. The "I" of 16b would be the author himself who wanted to drive home the point that the eschatological end of the age was still to be a future and traumatic event. The "we" of 16a connected with the "they" in that the "I" did see himself as sharing the basic eschatological perspective of the "they." But he was challenging them in what he saw to be premature rejoicing over "preliminary, pre-eschatological events" thereby detracting from the real eschatological activity of Yahweh.1 Plöger argued that "the eschatologically disinterested view...probably reflects the position of the ruling classes and especially the priests."2 The historical work of the Chronicler, for instance, would come from such a group. One can, on the other hand, recognize a later stage of the eschatological group in the full-blown apocalyptic literature of Daniel.

Hanson has further refined the thesis of two groups with the application of the contextual-typological method to the oracles of so-called Third Isaiah and Second Zechariah. In addition to tracing the breakdown of poetic canons of Hebrew poetry, such as the use of bicola and poetic parallelism, toward the use of prose as the vehicle of apocalyptic expression, he has identified the judgment-salvation oracle as a form unique to the post-exilic period.3 Salvation for Israel was not to apply to all Israel. Post-exilic oppressive leaders within Israel were to succumb under Yahweh's renewed wrath. The salvation-judgment oracle reflects, suggests Hanson, an emerging conflict between two post-exilic groups within Israel. One, using Ezekiel as its spiritual leader, enjoyed favor from the Persian establishment, experienced the Babylonian exile and is probably to be identified with the priesthood tracing its lineage back to Zadok. The other, using Second Isaiah as its spiritual leader, remained in Palestine during the exile, probably included priests who traced their lineage back to Levi and who suffered at the hands of the Zadokites in the internal power struggle over the reconstruction of Israel.

In dealing with Isaiah 24-27, Hanson recognized the ritual pattern transmitted via the royal theology and Second Isaiah which we have noted, independently. He places the Apocalypse late in his typology, however. He argues that the ties to the political realm have moved beyond that encountered in Second Isaiah. Yahweh is attacking the entire world, not an historical enemy. No human instrument is involved. Noting the formula of 24:2, wherein priest and people are contrasted and suggesting Jerusalem as the destroyed city, whose destruction was being celebrated, he concludes, "the composition could stem from a point fairly late in the sixth century, perhaps from the period of the temple controversy of 520."1 Jerusalem, from the perspective of the visionaries, was defiled, being controlled by the hierocratic party which took control after returning from Babylon.

1. Isaiah 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8

The strongest argument against placing Isaiah 24-27 so late in the typology is the prosodic style of particularly Isaiah 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8. The poetry of these chapters is excellent, to be compared with the best in Second Isaiah. The literary style of Zechariah 12-14 to which Hanson suggests we compare the Apocalypse is prose.2 We, too, would identify the destroyed city as Jerusalem, but the evidence that there is an open conflict between two parties within Israel is not that clear. The reference to priest and people is a formula paralleled in Hosea 4:9, an eighth-century document. In Isaiah 24, the formula is part of a catalogue—good poetic style that can be traced back to Ugarit—whose point is that none are being spared in the current destruction. The break

1. Ibid., pp. 313-14.
2. Ibid., pp. 314, 354-401.
with history was already begun in Second Isaiah (see 41:16). The use of the return to chaos theme is not necessarily a sign that we are late in the typology.

We suggest the following interpretation of the chapters, placing their origin closer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. That event touched off a profound search for meaning and explanation. Why would Yahweh allow his own city to be destroyed? The language appropriate to such a search for meaning was myth. The theologians of the day reached far back into the traditional past to discover answers to their questions. One witnesses in the literature of the period a ground swell in the use of mythic patterns and images to interpret the tragic events of the day. Second Isaiah was particularly instrumental in re-using mythic materials to interpret God’s action in the events.

The pattern of the Divine Warrior Hymn re-emerged with its full power. It provided an explanation for the destruction. Chaos was reasserting its destructive power. The fall of Jerusalem was part of the collapse of creation, a return to chaos. The Divine Warrior Hymn also provided hope in that the faithful could envision that day when Yahweh, the Warrior deity, would reaffirm his position as king on his mount, hence the shouts of victory. Hope for victory was held even within descriptions of the devastated city, Jerusalem, and a shuddering earth. From this mountain Yahweh would prepare a feast for all peoples, a feast at which the power of Death and chaos would be consumed forever.

The oracle against Moab followed by a processional hymn of victory would be an expression of this Second Conquest-Exodus motif. Just as Moab of old had to be conquered prior to the entrance into the land, so now Moab would be laid waste by Yahweh. Note the similar symbolic use of Edom in Isaiah 34 and 63.

We would argue, then, that Isaiah 24:1-16a, 24:16b-25:9 and 26:1-8 were composed by a disciple of Isaiah. He shared the visions of a restored Israel with Second Isaiah. He did move beyond the vision of the events taking place within plain history. The power of myth to see beyond the limits imposed by historical event was taking hold, but we do not see, as yet, the emerging conflict that Hanson documents through the early post-exilic period. Yahweh was preparing his feast for all people. All the kings of the earth were being caught up in this return to chaos that was to be a prelude to a new creation.

2. Isaiah 26:11-27:6

Isaiah 26:11-27:6, however, is another story. We noted earlier that the prosody is typologically later than 24ff. There is also a mixing of older forms to produce a new synthesis. In terms of content, though hard to prove, it seems that the tension and impatience of those waiting for the victory of Yahweh’s Day has increased: "Victory we have not made for the earth; the inhabitants of the world have not fallen" (26:18).

Who were these "inhabitants of the world" that the poet wishes were fallen? Were they the Zadokite priesthood who were assuming control of the post-exilic cult? Whereas the material of Isaiah 26 has not yet reached the stage where the leaders of Israel were openly attacked, there were people who were suffering and they were appealing to Yahweh for deliverance: "Let Thy dead live! Let Thy corpses rise!" (26:19).

The themes of judgment and salvation join in the Song of the Vineyard. This juggling of older forms around the themes of judgment and salvation may evidence early shifts in the literature toward what was to become the judgment-salvation oracle of the early post-exilic period.

Based on the evidence above, we conclude that Isaiah 26:11-27:6 was added to the earlier oracles as the delay of Yahweh’s victory, as perceived among Isaiah’s disciples, became apparent. The reference to the destroyed city of aliens, never to be rebuilt, the city trampled by the faithful, could be elements introduced into the earlier poems as the tensions between the contending parties in post-exilic Israel increased. The Jerusalem of reality and the Zion of faith, for the visionaries, remained far apart. As it became defiled by oppressive leaders, it deserved Yahweh’s continued wrath. The hope was held out, however, for that day when Israel would truly be restored.

1. See above, pp. 68-70.
We can with reasonable confidence date the entire Apoc
calypse to the last half of the sixth century B.C. It was in
the years of exile and shortly thereafter that the apocalyptic
movement was born. That movement was to assure that the epic
faith of ancient Israel would not be lost to history. The hope
carried in this literature was to help bring about the resur-
rection of a nation and eventually the birth of a new religion.

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