A Discussion of the Canaanite Mythological Background to the Israelite Concept of Eschatological Hope in Isaiah 24-27

Beth Steiner
Lady Margaret Hall
Candidate Number: 876533

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Declaration

Name: Beth Steiner

College: Lady Margaret Hall

Candidate Number: 876533

Year of Examination: 2013

Dear Chair of Examiners,

I, Beth Steiner, declare that the accompanying thesis is all my own work and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree — either from the University of Oxford or another institution.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature of Candidate)

Name of Supervisor: Prof. John Day

College of Supervisor: Lady Margaret Hall

As supervisor of this thesis, I endorse the candidate's declaration above.

(Signature of Supervisor)

Short Abstract

The thesis begins with an overview of views concerning the dating of Isa 24–27 and its place within the genres of apocalyptic and eschatology, before stating its aim as showing how Canaanite myths were used by the author to give future hope rooted in cultic ideals. The second chapter looks at the image of the divine warrior, with particular emphasis on the chaos enemy as the dragon/serpent/sea, and the remarkable similarities between Isa 27:1 and the Ugaritic *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5. A possible cultic setting of the combat myth is examined, together with the question of why the myth appears here in an eschatological manner. The following chapter discusses the Israelite and Canaanite traditions concerning the holy mountain and divine banquet. Zion motifs are compared with those of Mt. Zaphon, and the nature of cultic feasts considered in Israelite and Canaanite literature, as well as later traditions. Chapter Four argues that the verses concerning death and resurrection represented exile/oppression and restoration, at a time when ideas of resurrection and judgment after death were emerging. The Israelite imagery of Mot/Death and Sheol are examined in relation to the nature of Ugaritic Mot, showing how Canaanite traditions were used to demonstrate Yahweh's might and the possibility of individual and universal restoration. The following chapter places Israelite religion within the context of Canaanite fertility cults and popular practices. That myth and cult are connected is the basis for the view that the themes in Isa 24–27 were passed down to the post-exilic era via cultic activities and the reuse of myths to promote Yahweh, whether the author was aware that he was using ancient, mythological ideas or not. The sixth chapter gives a short overview of hope in the Hebrew Bible, before demonstrating how the universalism of Isa 24–27 combines with the ancient mythic themes to provide an eschatological hope in an all-encompassing deity. The paper concludes that the author of these chapters deliberately used Canaanite mythology to show how the final victory, rule, and celebration of Yahweh would bring about a personal and moral victory for all nations.

Long Abstract

The thesis begins with an introduction to the topic, commencing with an overview of scholarly commentaries and works on Isa 24–27 from the end of the 19th Century until the present day. The question of how to date the chapters is addressed, and the argument put forward for the late 6th or early 5th Century BCE, a dating which the rest of the paper takes into consideration. Then follows a discussion of the nature of apocalyptic literature, and whether or not the chapters should be considered an 'apocalypse', concluding that whilst they should not be compared with apocalyptic texts such as Daniel, they can nevertheless be seen as a revelation of eschatological events and be understood as influencing apocalyptic literature as early post-exilic eschatological prophecy. The term 'eschatology' is also defined, and understood within the broad definition as referring not to the last things of the world, but to the future point in which circumstances can be irrevocably changed without having to leave their historical framework. A basis for arguing that there was a transmission of Canaanite myths to Israelite literature is then established, including a brief outline of views on the area as multicultural, theories on the conquest/infiltration and the united monarchy as a time of cultural exchange. The aims of the paper are laid out as looking for the Canaanite mythological background to Isa 24–27, and investigating what this background has provided for the text. Building on the work of others who have noted the use of myths in these chapters, this work investigates how the myths were used to give a sense of eschatological hope to the Israelite audience, relating to traditional and cultic ideals.

The second chapter begins with a general overview of the myth of the divine warrior in the Hebrew Bible and the wider ancient Near East, before looking at the occurrences of the myth in Isa 24–27, including the violent punishment of both earthly and divine foes (24:1; 25:2–3; 27:1, 4). There follows a discussion of the traditions of the storm god which can be seen in connection with the divine warrior, where this occurs in the chapters being looked at (including flood mythology, 24:1, 5; 24:14–15,18–19), and how this and other references to God as a warrior represent His ultimate victory and what it will bring. As a key verse for this theme, Isa 27:1 is given special attention here. The concept of the chaos enemy as the dragon/serpent/sea in the ancient Near East is investigated, including the defeat of Tiamat by Marduk in *Enūma eliš* and the possible link with the biblical תְּהוֹם (including a look at how the term should be understood), the Hittite stories of Illuyanka and Ullikummi (and their effect on Greek mythology), and Baal's conflict with Yam at Ugarit. Differing views are considered, but it is proposed that the chaos powers of the ancient Near East should often be identified, noting the parallelism and identification of Yam and Nahar, and possibly his helpers, at Ugarit, and the dragon, the serpent, and the sea (including Leviathan and Rahab) in the Hebrew Bible. The storm god is viewed in his connection with the combat with the sea, with the rebuking of the sea seen as part of the myth, and the thunder and glory of the deity as related to the weapons described as part of the traditions in the Near East. Whilst no standard creation text such as we find in the Hebrew Bible has been found at Ugarit, creation in terms of ordering of chaos can be seen as part of the theomachy myth in both Ugarit and Israel, and thus the combat with the sea is seen in terms of creation in both cultures, and of the Exodus in the latter. A brief look at the language of Isa 27:1 and *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5 examines the differing translations of these texts, discussing the often noted remarkable similarities in language and proposing the possibility that Leviathan was the cause of the darkening of the sun. The Israelite god could not lose, however, like Baal, and unlike at Ugarit, the biblical dragon(s) was not divine and the idea that it may

have represented one or more earthly kingdoms is reviewed. A possible cultic setting of the combat myth is examined, as a hypothetical component of the enthronement festival proposed by some, together with the creation traditions associated with the New Year festival and the Baal cycle as a part of the seasonal festival at Ugarit. Finally, the eschatological nature of Isa 27:1 is looked at, in comparison with the temporal perspectives of the myths in Mesopotamia and Canaan, and the question raised of why the author of Isa 24–27 chose to write in this way.

The following chapter starts with a look at the Israelite traditions concerning the holy mountain, including Rohland's motifs of Zion, ideas of the mountain as sacred and the place of the abode of the deity (Carmel/Tabor/Gerizim/Sinai), and descriptions of the mountain as paradise/the garden of god and the goal of the pilgrimage of the nations. The Israelite traditions concerning the divine banquet are then examined, covering the bountiful feast of the nations and the feast involved in everyday and cultic life, including the Enthronement and Autumn festival(s), the covenant meal (looking especially at Exod 24:1–2, 9–11), and the marriage banquet. Turning to the Canaanite traditions, the mountain as the dwelling/meeting place of the gods is considered, together with the equation of Zion (and Ḫazzi) with Zaphon, and the latter's status in the Ugaritic cult as the mountain of victory and the centre of the cosmos. Canaanite traditions of the banquet include victory and enthronement feasts, the New Year festival and the connection with sacrifice and the restoration of fertility, and there will be a brief look at the concept of the *marzēaḥ* and the Hittite *Purulli* festival. The chapter finally discusses how such concepts came to be used in Isa 25:6 and other eschatological traditions, including the eating of flesh and mountain ideology in intertestamental literature, the Qumran communal meal and its relation to the Messianic banquet, Rabbinic eschatological visions and Christian Messianic feasts and their links with earlier Israelite festivals.

It has sometimes been proposed that Isa 25:8 and 26:19 are later additions to the chapters, and this view is examined in Chapter Four. These verses are usually seen as late on the basis that no previous tradition of an afterlife or resurrection existed in either the Hebrew Bible or the ancient Near East, a view which has much evidence to support it. On the other hand, many contend that Isa 25:8 and 26:19 do not portray beliefs in an afterlife, but simply describe exile and return or oppression and restoration in terms of death and resurrection, and therefore these verses may have been written at the same time as those surrounding them. This view is more likely than that these passages represented a real afterlife, either for the faithful only or for everyone. However, this paper concludes that ideas of afterlife, suggested especially in Psalms, together with emerging ideas of bodily resurrection and the reapplication of fertility traditions to the people are what allowed the author to describe the restoration of Israel in such an idealistic and eschatological manner. The imagery of Mot/Death and Sheol in the Hebrew Bible are examined in relation to Mot in the Ugaritic texts. Mot's nature as less than a full deity, and his myths as simply variants of those concerning Yam are discussed, as are his characteristic swallowing throat and dwelling. The view that the myth of the conflict between Baal and Mot is simply seasonal, connected with an annual, sabbatical, or seasonal cult, is considered and rejected, as is the view that Mot was a vegetation deity, 'harvested' by Anat as part of the rite of the first sheaf. Mot appears clearly in the Ugaritic texts as an opponent of fertility, associated with aridity, the sun and the sirocco, and his enemy, Baal, is a Near Eastern dying and rising god who renews fecundity and rebirth. Anat's actions can be interpreted as symbolic (perhaps of a ritual form of religious 'destruction', cf. Exod 32:20), not agricultural, and the Baal cycle seen

as not merely seasonal but concerned with chaos and life, a view supported by the conflict between the deities as only reaching a truce. These ideas were reused in the Hebrew Bible but only here is death completely defeated, a tradition adapted by the Israelites to demonstrate the might of their god and the possibility of individual and universal restoration.

Chapter Five sets out the belief in the interconnected nature of myths and cultic activities, and the similarity therefore of Israelite and Canaanite shrines, festivals, and religious personnel. Israelite religion is seen within the context of Canaanite religion, including fertility cults and popular practices. The origins of rites and sacrifices are considered, and the Israelite holocaust and communion sacrifices seen to have arisen within the Canaanite culture, although the Israelites may have distinguished themselves from their neighbours through certain actions such as not 'feeding' God with their sacrifices. That myth and cult are connected is the basis for the view that the themes in Isa 24–27 may have been passed down to the post-exilic era via cultic activities retained within the mind of the population and the reuse of myths to promote the Israelite patron deity. The possible connection of the divine warrior and combat with the sea with the Autumn/New Year festival, the enthronement psalms and Feast of Tabernacles, and the Day of Yahweh, could explain how these ideas were still so prevalent in the 5th Century BCE. Dying and rising myths within fertility cults led to elaborated versions of the pilgrimage and banquet of the nations and the kingdom of God, and the traditions of the mountain as divine abode, place of sacrifice, and location of paradise and the temple meant that it could be seen as the peak of both the restoration and the eschaton. This section ends with a consideration of whether or not the author of Isa 24–27 was aware that he was using ancient, mythological ideas, or whether they were so well integrated into Israelite tradition that he did not notice.

The sixth chapter begins with a short overview of hope in the Hebrew Bible, both as a personal aim and as a literary device. The theomachy myth is shown to have been used often to demonstrate God's might and power in the past, present and future, and to give hope for the struggle over current powers, and achieve a unique moral victory in later salvation traditions. The defeat of the nations in biblical struggles resulted in glory for Israel, but the universalism of Isa 24–27 brings conversion and peace to all who wish to join in. God's enthronement brings about his eternal reign, on his earthly mountain, providing for the people both a transcendent deity and a real physical presence, and the defeat of death shows that God's victory will be ultimate. Yahweh's characteristics as warrior, storm god, provider, and bringer of fertility, all borrowed from Canaanite mythology, are used to show Him to be the all-encompassing deity. Combined with His roles as judge and creator, they demonstrate that He is the only object of dependence for the Israelites, for whom his divine plan brings about a personal eschatological victory, unlike for the Canaanites, but also show him as the universal deity for all nations who will look to him as the ruler on Zion.

Abbreviations

AAAS	*Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes*
AJBA	*Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*
AO	*Archiv Orientální*
AOSup	Archiv Orientální Supplements
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit*
CBOT	Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CTA	*Corpus des Tablettes Cunéiformes Alphabétiques*
CTH	*Catalogue des Textes Hittites*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JPS	*Jewish Publication Society*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplements
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*
KBo	*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*
KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*
KUB	*Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*
MIO	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
Or	*Orientalia*
RHR	*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*
SBL	*Society of Biblical Literature*

SEA	*Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*
SGV	Sammlung gemeinveständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
TZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testament Supplements
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

Table of Contents

Declaration *ii*
Short Abstract *iii*
Long Abstract *iv*
Abbreviations *vii*

Chapter One: Introduction 1
A Survey of Research on Isaiah 24–27 and the Possibility of a Genre 1
A. Dates 1
B. Style 4
C. Setting in the Book of Isaiah 6
D. Genre 8
The Israelites' Entry into the Land, and Neighbourly Cultural Exchange 12

Chapter Two: The Myth of the Divine Warrior, with Specific Reference to Isaiah 27:1 18
Some Notes on the Divine Warrior in the Hebrew Bible 18
The Canaanite Mythological Background to Isaiah 27:1 21
A. Introduction to Isa 27:1 21
B. The Concept of the Chaos Enemy as the Dragon/Serpent/Sea in the Ancient Near East 22
C. The Identification of the Chaos Powers 25
D. The Storm God in Connection with the Combat with the Sea 27
E. The Myth of the Combat with the Sea in Connection with Creation 29
A Brief Look at the Language of Isaiah 27:1 and *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5 31
The Nature of the Powers of Chaos 34
The Possible Cultic Setting of the Myths 37
The Eschatological Nature of the Myth in Isaiah 27 and Later Traditions 39
A. Temporality in the Myths 39
B. Israelite Eschatological Development 41

Chapter Three: The Israelite and Canaanite Backgrounds to the Holy Mountain and the Divine Banquet 44
An Introduction to Isaiah 25 44
The Background to the Israelite Traditions concerning the Mountain 45
A. Mt. Zion in Israelite Tradition 45
B. The Holy Mountain as the Moral Garden 47
The Background to the Israelite Traditions concerning the Banquet 48

A. The Joyful Banquet 48
B. The Cultic Banquet 51
C. The Covenantal Banquet 53
The Canaanite Traditions concerning the Mountain 57
A. Mountain of the Gods 57
B. Mountain of Victory and Paradise 59
The Canaanite Traditions concerning the Banquet 62
A. The Divine Banquet in Ancient Near Eastern Texts 62
B. The New Year Banquet 64
C. The Sacrificial Banquet 67
Later Use of the Mountain and Banquet Motifs and Eschatological Traditions 69

Chapter Four: The Canaanite Background to the Themes of Death and Resurrection 73
Are 25:8 and 26:19 Additions to the Isaiah 24–27? 75
A. The Verses Seen as Late on the Basis of No Previous Tradition of Afterlife 77
B. The Verses Seen as Contemporary because there was No Intention of True Afterlife 78
C. The Verses Seen as Representing a Real Afterlife 81
D. The Possibility that an Afterlife Tradition already Existed 83
The Canaanite Background to Death and Resurrection 85
A. Mot in the Canaanite Tradition 86
B. Mot as the Swallower 89
The Seasonal Pattern in the Conflict between Baal and Mot 90
A. Was Mot a Vegetation Deity? 92
B. Mot as a Deity of Death, Baal a Deity of Vegetation 94
The Cycle as Not Merely Seasonal, but Concerned with Chaos and Life 100

Chapter Five: How Canaanite Myths may have been Transmitted to Isaiah 24–27 103
The Connection between Myths, Cult, and Religious Activities 103
A. Ideals, Shrines and Syncretism 103
B. The Origins of Israelite Sacrifices 109
C. The Transmission of Myths through the Cultic Festivals 114
The Transmission of the Myths found in Isaiah 24–27 118
A. The Myths of the Divine Warrior and the Combat with the Sea 118
B. The Concepts of Resurrection and the Divine Banquet 122
C. Myths concerning the Mountain, the Temple, and the Garden 125
The Canaanite/Israelite Nature of the Themes of Isaiah 24–27 129

Chapter Six: The Author's Use of Canaanite Mythology to Inspire Eschatological Hope 132
Hope in the Hebrew Bible 132
Hope Inspired by the Myth of the Divine Warrior 134
Hope Inspired by the Universal Banquet 137
Hope Inspired by the Holy Mountain and the Kingship of God 138
Hope Inspired by the Ultimate Defeat of Death 140

Chapter Seven: Summary and Conclusions 143

Bibliography 149

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

***Four Quartets* T. S. Eliot**

Chapter One: Introduction

A Survey of Research on Isaiah 24–27 and the Possibility of a Genre

A. Dates

There is virtually no scholarly agreement on Isa 24–27 concerning its date, author, structure or function. Although the very late dating, to the late 2nd Century BCE, of those such as Duhm[1] and Procksch[2] can be ruled out as a result of the discovery of *1QIsa*[a], dating from the 2nd Century BCE, many scholars have still claimed a late post-exilic date for the passage. Plöger argued that chapters 24–26 were written during the time of Antiochus the Great (ruled 222–187 BCE) by a Jerusalem group who favoured eschatological ideas, although he felt that ch. 27 came from just after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah,[3] whilst Eissfeldt felt that the identification of a Moabite city with the destroyed city put the text in the 3rd Century BCE.[4] On the basis of such potentially apocalyptic themes as the destruction of the earth (24:18–20), the feast on Zion (25:8), resurrection of the dead (26:19), the great trumpet (27:13) and three beasts as veiled history (27:1), Smend placed these chapters anywhere between 500 and 300 BCE.[5] Rudolph, however, argued that this text should be seen as eschatological but not making a complete break with history, and so dated it to 330–300 BCE with the fall of Babylon to Alexander, and scholars such as Herbert also support a 4th Century BCE setting.[6] Barton argues that the late 5th or early 4th Century BCE is probably where the chapters found their present form,[7] whilst others agree that some[8] or all of the passage dates from the 5th Century.[9] Going further back, Hanson suggests that chs. 24–27 may have arisen in the late 6th Century BCE, perhaps from around the time of the temple controversy in 520

[1] Duhm 1922, pp. 172–194.
[2] Procksch 1930, p. 345.
[3] Plöger 1959, pp. 96–97.
[4] Eissfeldt 1965, pp. 61–64.
[5] Smend 1884, pp. 199–200.
[6] Herbert 1973, p. 144. He does argue, however, that Isa 25:10b–12 is an older doom oracle on Moab, p. 152.
[7] Barton 1995, p. 92.
[8] Lindblom 1938, pp. 67–71, 80–84.
[9] Clements 1980, p. 8.

BCE,[10] and Johnson dates ch. 26 to just before the fall of Babylon in 539 BCE.[11] Millar places the earliest parts of the chapters closer to the start of the 6th Century,[12] and points out that research into the prosody of early apocalyptic demonstrates that prose took over from established poetic patterns as the primary literary form for apocalyptic writing, so on prosodic grounds Isa 24–27 should be considered "early in the typological chronology, close to 2nd Isaiah".[13] Dating the passage to the 6th Century now seems to be a popular opinion,[14] and one which I support (see below), although there have always been those who argue for a very early setting. Kissane noted that themes found in the chapters can also be seen in the Psalter, and so felt that Isa 24–27 could be pre-exilic prophetic judgment from 8th Century BCE Palestine,[15] as did Kaufmann,[16] and Hayes and Irvine believe the text comes from Judah's revolt against Sargon in 705 BCE.[17]

One of the most controversial points in these chapters is the question of the identity of the anonymous city, appearing first as קִרְיַת־תֹּהוּ in Isa 24:10, and this has affected opinions concerning the date of the passage. In addition to Eissfeldt,[18] others have argued that the city is Moabite,[19] primarily on the basis of the mention of Moab in 25:10, and the dissolution of these people in the 3rd Century BCE may give an indication of setting. Lindblom felt that the description here is of the celebration of the destruction of Babylon by Xerxes in 485 BCE,[20] with the focus on this event as a miraculous act of Yahweh, which would also bring in new world age.[21] Johnson points out, however, that this viewpoint only works if we ignore all the apparent futuristic tones of the destruction, and that those who argue for this explanation have to ignore this or excise phrases and regard them as additions.[22] Vermeylen also proposes that the city is Babylon because it is named in Isa 13:9, and Isa 13 and 14 can be seen as influencing Isa 24:1–13. He interprets it symbolically, however, viewing Babylon as a representation of pagan

[10] Hanson 1979, pp. 313–314.
[11] Johnson 1988, pp. 69–70.
[12] Millar 1976, pp. 114–115. See also Watson 2005, p. 272.
[13] Millar 1976, p. 61.
[14] Johnson 1988, p. 16.
[15] Kissane 1960 vol. I, pp. v, 262, 282.
[16] Kaufmann 1960, pp. 348, 384–394.
[17] Hayes and Irvine 1987, pp. 295–299.
[18] Eissfeldt1965, pp. 61–64, 326–327.
[19] E.g. Smend 1884, pp. 193–195, 215–224; Mulder 1954, pp. 91–93.
[20] Lindblom 1938, pp. 72–84.
[21] Ibid., pp. 69ff.
[22] Johnson 1988, pp. 13, 15.

empire,[23] and Otzen supports this, as he sees both here and in Isa 13, "a strange connection between eschatological descriptions of the imminent world-catastrophe and the fall of the city of the world-power".[24]

Johnson thinks that we have in 24:10 the destruction of Jerusalem, which is being interpreted in the light of the prophecies of First Isaiah,[25] because only the downfall of Yahweh's city could cause such chaos: "the pivotal role of the city in the description of the reversion of the cosmos to chaos makes sense if the city is Jerusalem. The people of God are taken into exile, the dwelling place of God is destroyed, and Yahweh himself must leave".[26] March also believes that the city in ch. 24 is Jerusalem,[27] and Johnson provides support with his argument that מְשׂוֹשׂ הָאָרֶץ (v. 11) can be an epithet for Jerusalem (see Lam 2:15 and Ps 48:3), and is used in this verse in conjunction with גָּלָה which refers to going into exile.[28] Wildberger, however, states that the phrase here does not refer to Jerusalem anymore, but needs to be reinterpreted, due to the context, to apply to the entire earth.[29] This view makes sense considering the framework, although I would question whether perhaps מְשׂוֹשׂ הָאָרֶץ could refer to people (see Isa 65:18), either locally or universally.

Clements sees the קִרְיַת־תֹּהוּ as representing unspecific cities, a 'vanity fair',[30] following for example Plöger who understands the term to mean "city life…in general".[31] Kaiser does not think we should try to identify the city in these chapters as they have eschatological meaning, and therefore the references are to no particular, historical city or past event, but are prophecies of "coming world-wide catastrophe and its effects".[32] The imagery in ch. 24 he believes is a description of the fate of all cities.[33] Whilst there is almost certainly a deeper, eschatological layer to the depictions in this

[23] Vermeylen 1974, pp. 6–8.
[24] Otzen 1974, p. 206. See also Blenkinsopp 2001, who sees Isa 24–27 as "kind of universalizing and eschatologizing commentary on the named cities in chs. 13–23", and because Babylon is prominent here he sees the anonymous city as "a paradigmatic, emblematic, and symbolic Babylon", p. 41
[25] Johnson 1988, p. 25.
[26] Ibid., pp. 30, 45.
[27] March 1966, pp. 37–42, 267–268, 275–276, 284.
[28] Johnson 1988, p. 30. See also Hanson 1979, p. 314.
[29] Wildberger 1992, p. 489.
[30] Clements 1980, p. 202.
[31] Plöger 1968, p. 56.
[32] Kaiser 1974, p. 177–181.
[33] Ibid., p. 185.

chapter, this is not necessarily incompatible with the possibility that a specific city is referred to in vv. 10, 12,[34] and Wildberger thinks that the description is most suited to a particular city, but one which is now representative of future, not historical, time.[35] Hibbard claims that the author of this passage reconfigured the idea of the historical cities in Isa 13–23 into the anonymous city we find here,[36] and I agree with his proposal that the anonymity of the city contrasts with the previous oracles of the nations, suggesting that it is "intentionally vague and ambiguous".[37] Johnson points out that "it is important to note that the intended translation [of קִרְיַת־תֹּהוּ] is not 'city of chaos' as it is commonly rendered" but on the basis of LXX, the Peshitta and the Targum we should see תֹּהוּ as part of the predicate and therefore referring not to "the character of the city, but to the fate which the city will experience when the advancing armies execute Yahweh's judgment".[38] This emphasises not only the eschatological nature of the coming judgment but, considering that the use of תֹּהוּ evokes Gen 1:2, also the textual connection to the primeval history,[39] leaving the city both nameless and timeless.

B. Style

Of course the style and setting of Isa 24–27 are extremely important when attempting to date or understand the chapters, and scholars since Liebmann have examined the textual data in great detail.[40] Sievers looked at counting accent beats,[41] and has since been followed by others, including Procksch who also split the chapters into apocalyptic oracles and later hymns.[42] However, examining accents and meter rarely seems to solve arguments as no one can agree on the division of units, as shown by Millar's comparative chart,[43] and whilst the study of meter is important for a text's analysis, it cannot be the determining factor for interpretation and exegetes can be tempted to alter the text in order to force it to fit their arrangement.Some have also tried to pick out the lyrical passages in order to determine if they had a separate existence, but

[34] See Johnson 1988, p. 13.
[35] Wildberger 1992, p. 489.
[36] Hibbard 2006, p. 7. Cf. Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 348; Vermeylen 1974, pp. 36–38.
[37] Hibbard 2006, p. 32.
[38] Johnson 1988, p. 29 n. 60.
[39] Hibbard 2006, p. 59.
[40] Liebmann 1902–1905.
[41] Sievers 1904.
[42] Procksch 1930, pp. 305–346.
[43] Millar 1976, p. 12. Cf. Procksch 1930; Rudolph 1933; Lindblom 1938; Kissane 1960 vol. I; March 1966.

again there has been no consensus on this matter.[44] Lindblom built on the views of Duhm, Hylmö and Procksch, who viewed the chapters as being related to prophetic liturgy,[45] suggesting that references to a great eschatological drama had been added to liturgical sections which he called cantata, composed by a Jerusalem cultic prophet perhaps to be sung at a festival.[46] He was followed by Fohrer,[47] and by March who drew attention to the connection between the liturgical nature of Isa 24–27 and its parallels with the enthronement psalms.[48]

Those who attempt to pull apart these chapters have often concluded that at no point prior to our current text were the different parts intended to be together. In particular, Rudolph, Kaiser and Wildberger assert that writers and editors over several centuries were responsible for the chapters we now have.[49] The majority view is one of a redactional history of the text in this passage,[50] and the advantages of Wildberger's assertion that it underwent a 'process of growth' seem entirely appropriate for the book of Isaiah: "in its favour, this viewpoint argues that there was a text which spoke about a great turn of events, close at hand, a message that occasioned intensive reflection, adaptation to new situations, and thus new interpretations".[51] Others such as Johnson have argued against such a slow development process, on the basis that it could not have resulted in "such a well-ordered composition".[52] Whilst this objection does not work if you take the view of Blenkinsopp that Isa 24-27 is made up of loosely connected passages in no obvious logical order,[53] it is apparent to me that we do find evidence of "the unity of a prophetic response to a particular situation",[54] but there is no reason why such a composition could not have arisen as the result of a growth process.

On the other hand, many scholars have argued that the text as a whole was either written or put together deliberately. Among these, Herbert noted that prophecy and psalm were so well joined in Isa 24–27 that they must have been brought together by one

[44] See Lohmann 1917/1918; Kissane 1960 vol. I, pp. 260, 271–272.
[45] Duhm 1922; Hylmö 1929; Procksch 1930.
[46] Lindblom 1938, pp. 67–71.
[47] Fohrer 1963, pp. 34–35. Cf. Barton 1995, p. 91.
[48] March 1966, pp. 134–135.
[49] Rudolph 1933, p. 64; Kaiser 1973, pp. 141–145; Wildberger 1978, pp. 893–905, 910–911.
[50] Hibbard 2006, p. 31.
[51] Wildberger 1992, p. 451.
[52] Johnson 1988, p. 15.
[53] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 346.
[54] Anderson 1963, p. 122.

writer who was influenced by the flood narrative of Gen 6–9,[55] and Millar suggested that sections of the chapters were either created with the themes of threat, war, victory and feast in mind, or were readapted by the author to fit this pattern.[56] Others have used literary style and structure to defend the unity of the final text,[57] whilst Day's observation that Isa 26:13–27:11 may well have been dependent on Hos 13:4–14:10 lends weight to the argument for a unified composition.[58]

Although chapters 24–27 are some of the most obscure in the Book of Isaiah, the majority of scholars agree that they have an intertextual nature. Hibbard argues that to see intertextuality in a passage we must find thematic coherence, shared vocabulary, and a textual relationship which is both meaningful and chronologically appropriate.[59] In addition, there are several reasons why a biblical passage may interact with another text. It might aim to add to, or subtract from, the earlier writing, to apply it to a new situation, to reinterpret it or simply echo its message.[60] Polaski denies the existence of any exegesis in these chapters as this would cause them to be dependent, which would diminish the authority of the text.[61] Whilst I do believe that Isa 24–27 aims to reinterpret earlier passages of the Hebrew Bible, it seems clear that its dependence on other texts does nothing to lessen the value of its message.

C. Setting in the Book of Isaiah

When attempting to date and classify Isa 24–27 it is obviously important to take into account its position within the Book of Isaiah as a whole.[62] Early on, commentators such as Smend argued that the poetry of the text was not at all like the 8th Century Isaiah, but that the writing was "difficult, learned and forced", by a later imitator who lacked poetic "Schwung" (momentum, flourish).[63] Clearly this is somewhat subjective, but whilst it is nevertheless almost universally agreed that Isa 24–27 should be attributed to a

[55] Herbert 1973, pp. 144–145.
[56] Millar 1976, pp. 65–71, 104–105.
[57] E.g. Watts 1985, p. 311.
[58] Day 1980a, pp. 310–319.
[59] Hibbard 2006, p. 5.
[60] Ibid., p. 7; Sommer 1998, pp. 22–30. Cf. Vermeylen 1974, pp. 36–38; Biddle 1995, pp. 5–12; Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 348.
[61] Polaski 2001, p. 357.
[62] See Skjoldal 1993, pp. 163–172.
[63] Smend 1884, pp. 193–194.

later author(s), the view that it is still connected to the surrounding chapters has become more popular.[64] Similarities and parallels with the preceding oracles against the nations can be drawn, although clearly this theme has been somewhat transformed. The emphasis has moved from God's judgment on the nations and the promise of redemption for Jerusalem to a judgment on all the evil of the world and the promise of redemption of a remnant,[65] be that a remnant of the Judahites or of all peoples. The dramatic desolation of chapter 24 can be compared to that of chapter 13,[66] and Davies notes that Isa 24–27 adds to the judgment and punishment of enemies that it takes from chs. 13–23 the judgment and punishment of Jerusalem found in Isa 1, 2, 3 and 5.[67] It can be argued, then, that the redactor of Isa 24–27 attempted to universalise the previous chapters by reinterpreting the specific nations mentioned as symbolising all enemies of Yahweh,[68] a device we find later in Isaiah too, in chs. 34–35: "in both passages a judgment falling upon a particular people in the environment of Judah…is extended into a world disaster, and provides an occasion for the promises of the glory of the kingdom of Yahweh on Zion".[69] Similarly it can be argued that Isa 28–31 applies the judgment of the earth from the preceding chapters back to the specific setting of Jerusalem.[70]

Barker observes that the earlier tendency to view Isa 24–27 as a somewhat disjointed collection of liturgical and prophetic passages has been replaced by the view that it should be seen as more of a literary and theological unity,[71] and I aim to support this view from a thematic perspective. Regardless of whether the text was constructed at once or over time, I agree with Hibbard when he states that all of the passages should be read and understood in the light of the eschatologically-oriented prophetic material which holds the chapters together.[72] Isa 24–27 certainly appears to show a literary style that differs from that of First Isaiah, and the exile seems to be presupposed in 27:8[73] (cf. 25:8 and 26:19). At the same time, the implication that the Asherim are still standing in

[64] See Barker 2007, p. 6; Beuken 2010, p. 25.
[65] Brueggemann 1998, p. 188.
[66] Quinn-Miscall 2001, p. 30.
[67] Davies 1989, p. 100.
[68] Jenkins 1989, p. 250. Cf. Watts 1985, pp. 348–349, who interprets this almost in reverse, correlating the fall of Tyre in ch. 23 with the defeat of Leviathan in 27:1.
[69] Eissfeldt 1965, p. 327.
[70] Beuken 2010, p. 43.
[71] Barker 2007, p. 3. Cf. Doyle 2000, pp. 23–24.
[72] Hibbard 2006, p. 72.
[73] Day 2000b, pp. 122, 124.

27:9 suggests that this was written not long after the exile, leading me to date Isa 24–27 at the end of the 6th Century BCE.

D. Genre

Over the last century, Isa 24–27 has been given many labels, including late prophecy, late post-exilic apocalyptic, early apocalyptic, and exilic or early post-exilic proto-apocalyptic.[74] Smend created a list of aspects which he felt set the chapters in the post-exilic era on the basis of apocalyptic tendencies,[75] and Duhm referred to the four chapters as apocalyptic literature (including an oracle, songs, and poems) which he dates to 129 BCE.[76] For a long time afterwards, Isa 24–27 was often put in the apocalyptic category, and scholars such as Brueggemann still argue that it should be, as Israel's understanding of life and Yahweh have here been "pushed to the cosmic, because the truth of God's gospel can no longer be resolved or enacted in what is available of human history".[77] Plöger marks the path of apocalyptic from this text through Zech 12–14 and Joel, and believes it shows the post-exilic link between the prophets and the book of Daniel.[78] As such he suggested the chapters could be called early apocalyptic.[79] Hanson also uses this designation, and assigned Isa 24–27 to an eschatological group in Palestine who followed Deutero-Isaiah's vision of reconstructed Israel (Isa 60–62), on the basis of universal divine punishment and a lack of specific historical enemy.[80] Cross asserted that the change in prophetic elements combined with the reemergence of mythical ideas should lead us to designate the chapters proto-apocalyptic,[81] a position with which Millar agrees, although he notes that as our knowledge of early post-exilic literature grows this label may need to be adapted.[82] Certainly we can see such typical markers of the movement towards apocalyptic as the combination of God's universal judgment with his nature as the divine warrior.[83]

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[74] See Millar 1976, p. 21.
[75] Smend 1884, pp. 199–200.
[76] Duhm 1922, pp. 172–194.
[77] Brueggemann 1998, p. 188.
[78] Plöger 1968, p. 96. In this he follows Vriezen 1953, p. 227.
[79] Ibid., pp. 60–78.
[80] Hanson 1979, pp. 313–314. Cf. Plöger 1968, p. 96.
[81] Cross 1973, p. 343.
[82] Millar 1976, pp. 71, 81.
[83] Lang 2002, p. 63, 72; Skjoldal 1993, p. 166.

Millar notes that poetry gave way to prose as the primary literary form of apocalyptic writing,[84] and certainly some of the characteristic features of the apocalyptic genre are found in Isa 24–27: the imprisonment of heavenly beings (24:22), the defeat of death (25:8) and the resurrection of the dead (26:19).[85] Whether or not this latter theme is meant literally has affected the debate over dating, as a metaphorical reference need not imply apocalyptic literature, and I shall discuss this further below (see Chapter Four). On the other hand, apocalyptic features such as an explicit dualism and periodization of history are not present,[86] and the definition of an apocalypse is still very much debated.[87] Johnson asserts that "it has become the *communis opinio* that the initial transformation of prophetic eschatology into what would eventually become full-blown apocalyptic is to be found in Isa 24–27…and a few other passages",[88] and it has been noted that these chapters release some of the hold on history found in Deutero-Isaiah.[89] This distinction may be inappropriate, as a key feature of Israelite eschatological ideas is their connection with their history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*), and Henze points out that texts such as the Apocryphon of Jeremiah can be seen as both apocalyptic and historical.[90] Millar has pointed out that simply listing apocalyptic themes does not settle the debate over the genre of Isa 24–27, and that we need to ask how imagery in the text was used.[91] Von Rad argues that Isa 24:21–23 depicts an absolute end of current existence,[92] and Quinn-Miscall suggests that the chapters leave history to look "into a distant future, or into a never-never time, for the final judgment of the wicked, the vindication of the righteous".[93] Certainly these chapters show a very developed eschatology, which is usually attributed to the exile. Plöger argues that the growth of apocalyptic eschatology had to be a result of social conflict in post-exilic Israel, but he still contends that we see in Isa 24–27 "different types of expectation" which demonstrate that this dissension had not yet reached its climax.[94] Similarly, others have been wary about seeing any apocalyptic notions here, as the present world still plays a part in the conflict with God,

[84] Millar 1976, p. 15.
[85] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 346. Cf. Cook 1995, pp. 93, 178.
[86] Ibid.
[87] See Collins 2008, pp. 45–48.
[88] Johnson 1988, p. 11. Such is the view of e.g. Millar 1976; Cross 1973, pp. 345–346; Hanson 1979, p. 313; Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 363.
[89] Millar 1976, p. 108.
[90] Henze 2009, pp. 30–31.
[91] Millar 1976, pp. 8–9. Cf. Hanson 1979, pp. 6–7.
[92] Von Rad 1965, p. 347.
[93] Quinn-Miscall 2001, pp. 25–26.
[94] Plöger 1968, pp. 111-112. Cf. Hanson 1979, pp. 314–315.

and the eschatological language serves to renew the age, not create a new one.[95] In addition, acts of God as world judgment (with appropriate divine reward and punishment) and the establishing of God's kingdom on Zion are ideas found early in the Psalter,[96] and it can be argued that there is no active attempt to reveal knowledge about the cosmos in these chapters.[97]

It is now generally agreed that Isa 24–27 should not be labelled as apocalyptic, but it is important to keep in mind its importance to the discussion of apocalyptic origins, as has been demonstrated by Hanson and Millar.[98] The future orientation of the passage does not seem in doubt, however, even though Kissane rightly points out that "the mere mention of a world-judgment is no proof that the section deals with the end of time. Every intervention of God is a world-judgment".[99] Isa 1–39 has a strongly developed eschatology which can be compared with that of any of the later apocalyptic texts,[100] and the concept of portents marking the end has been traced back to such passages as Isa 26:16–19.[101] The salvation prophesied in Isa 24–27 is based on the establishment of God's rule on Zion (24:21–23) and of a new world order as part of God's plan (25:1).[102] This has led to the passage being given such classifications as 'prophetic eschatology',[103] and together with Zech 12–14 and Joel may have been inspired by the reduction in prophetic spirit since the exile.[104] Certainly conflict appears to have prompted the author's reintroduction of mythical and universal ideas, but unfortunately there is not enough reliable evidence for Plöger's theory of social schism in post-exilic Israel, a movement which he places in the late Persian period. He himself refers to his proposition as a "terrible simplification",[105] and it is clearly very difficult to make suppositions about the undoubtedly complex relationship between any parties with differing ideologies which existed in post-exilic Israel. In addition, it is impossible to say with any certainty

[95] Rudolph 1933, p. 63; Lindblom 1938, pp. 102–103.
[96] Kissane 1960 vol. I, p. 267.
[97] Kaufmann 1960, p. 348.
[98] Hanson 1979; Millar 1976.
[99] Kissane 1960 vol. I, p. 259. He also suggests that the author uses the 'prophetic perfect', to describe current events in future terms, p. 271.
[100] Barton 1995, p. 81.
[101] Cf. Hos 13:13; Mic 4:9–10; Mark 13:8; Rev 12:1–6, Court 1979, p. 46.
[102] Clements 1980, p. 22; Sweeney 1996, p. 315.
[103] E.g. Lindblom 1938, pp. 62–71. Cf. *idem* 1962, p. 415.
[104] Plöger 1968, p. 37.
[105] Ibid., pp. 108–109. For a development of Plöger's views see Hanson 1979, pp. 32–208.

that Isa 24–27 was written by a disciple of Deutero-Isaiah,[106] although this provides an adequate explanation for the chapters' position within the Book of Isaiah and the eschatological tendencies.

There is still debate among those who see eschatological ideas here over whether the author leaves the realm of history completely, or whether the coming destruction of the city will bring in a new age.[107] Wildberger argues that the sections in Isa 24–27 "are each directed toward a particular, historical situation, but the events about which the authors speak are apparently to be understood as focusing on the time when a *universal*, eschatological-apocalyptic *turn of events* would be taking place",[108] and Kaiser similarly thinks that the songs are more symbolic of Yahweh's destruction of disorder than of specific future events.[109] In studies in the Hebrew Bible, the more common, 'broad' definition of eschatology is that it refers not to the last things of this world, but to the future point in which circumstances can be irrevocably changed without having to leave their historical framework.[110] This is the most appropriate way to view Isa 24–27, as Biblical eschatology is always linked with history, because the future-coming God already manifests himself, and this is why the prophets spoke of his expected Day in terms of his previous acts.[111] The eschatological Day of Yahweh is unique because it contains "the idea of the necessity of change in the existing world",[112] not outside or after it. In addition, we can see that, whilst the judgment of the world is eschatological, we do not find a complete break with history because the period of salvation introduced in these chapters describes redemption for the faithful of Judah within the current age.[113]

[106] Millar 1976, p. 108; Hanson 1979, p. 313.
[107] Johnson 1988, p. 16.
[108] Wildberger 1992, p. 446.
[109] Kaiser 1974, p. 177.
[110] Jenni 1976, p. 126. Cf. Boer 2009, who asserts that the concern of eschatology "is with the transition from the present, somewhat undesirable age to another that is qualitatively better by means of an external agent, who usually turns out to be God", p. 18.
[111] Jenni 1976, p. 127.
[112] Černý 1948, p. 98.
[113] Rudolph 1933, p. 10.

The Israelites' Entry into the Land, and Neighbourly Cultural Exchange

The discussion of Isa 24–27 as an eschatological text replete with mythological themes is not a new one, and the aim of this work is not to provide a comprehensive answer to how or why eschatological literature grew in importance in post-exilic Israel. These chapters are clearly important to this conversation, however, and many have noted the somewhat strange concentration of Canaanite mythological ideas here.[114] I shall address these ideas, together with how they may have reached the author of Isa 24–27 and for what reason they were utilized, but in order to argue that there is a connection between the themes of Isa 24–27 and those of Canaanite myths, it needs to be demonstrated that such a transmission was possible, or even likely. For this reason I shall begin by giving a brief overview of the Israelites' early interaction with the surrounding peoples in order to establish a basis for supporting the idea of this communication of traditions.

Pottery dating from the very beginning of the early Canaanite period (c. 3100–3000) found in houses underneath the Middle Bronze II city wall of Jerusalem demonstrates that these people were always active in the area later occupied by the Israelites,[115] and that their languages and culture were influenced from the 3rd millennium onwards by all the civilizations of the ancient Near East —Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Aegean, Hurrian, Hittite, Canaanite, Mycenian, Greek and Roman — has been shown by excavations at Ugarit.[116] The popularity of traditional unified military conquest theories such as those proposed by Albright[117] and Wright[118] has declined in recent years, as it became "increasingly clear that the main Canaanite centres were not wiped out in a single campaign, but rather that they succumbed gradually over the course of at least a century".[119] Archaeology has also demonstrated that the earliest Israelite hill settlements were not fortified, which suggests that their infiltration into the area was peaceful, not a violent invasion of the Canaanite towns.[120] This supported Alt's

[114] E.g. Millar 1976, pp. 24–120; Day 1985, pp. 141–151, 177, 165–188; Johnson 1988; Hibbard 2006; Barker 2007, pp. 23–174.
[115] Shiloh 1986, p. 27.
[116] Worden 1953, p. 274, cf. de Langhe 1945, p. 124.
[117] Albright 1935 and 1939.
[118] Wright 1940.
[119] Finkelstein 1988, p. 300. Cf. Noth 1938, p. 20; Usshiskin 1985, pp. 223–224.
[120] Day 2000a, p. 430. Cf. Usshishkin 1985, p. 216.

ground-breaking peaceful infiltration theory which suggested that pastoral groups moved between the desert fringe and the central hill country before gradually settling in sparsely populated areas of the latter.[121]

Criticism of this theory came largely from the so-called Sociological School, which noted "the inability to trace the origins of the pastoral groups in the steppe, outside the country".[122] This school was developed primarily by Mendenhall[123] and Gottwald,[124] who argued that the conflict which occurred was not between the nomads or pastoralists and the sedentary peoples, but between the villages and the cities.[125] Using as a model the apparent *'Apiru* revolts during the Amarna period,[126] they suggested that the exploited peasants rebelled against the oppressive rule of the royal Canaanite city-states.[127] The spreading, militant religion of Yahweh as king could have been the catalyst for this social revolution,[128] which caused villagers to leave and become nomadic pastoralists who coexisted, not conflicted, with their sedentary neighbours.[129] Finkelstein argues that the claim "that the people who settled in the hill country in Iron I came *directly* out of the social framework of the sedentary Canaanites in the lowlying regions must be rejected",[130] since the sparsely populated horticultural areas suggest pastoralists not sedentary peoples escaping Canaanite rule, who would surely head for inaccessible areas of the hill country, and not stay in the hospitable areas close to the Late Bronze Age cities they rejected.[131] The change in material culture between the Late Bronze and Iron I Ages in the hill country also seems to rule out a direct link between the Late Bronze lowlying centres and Iron I hill country sites,[132] although some have argued that the non-sedentary nature of those leaving the cities would make them archaeologically invisible until later technological advancements meant that they could settle down.[133] There is, however, no clear archaeological basis for a conflict between villages and

[121] Alt 1925, pp. 121ff., and 1939, pp. 128ff., 155ff.
[122] Finkelstein 1988, p. 304.
[123] Mendenhall 1962.
[124] Gottwald 1979, especially pp. 191–333. Cf. Dever 1980.
[125] Mendenhall 1962, p. 70; Gottwald 1979, p. 461.
[126] Gottwald 1979, pp. 212-213.
[127] Mendenhall 1962, p. 81; Gottwald 1979, p. 214.
[128] Gottwald 1979, pp. 224-226.
[129] Ibid., pp. 436–442, 448–451.
[130] Finkelstein 1988, p. 307.
[131] Ibid., p. 310. His survey suggests that there were Israelite settlements close to cities such as Schechem, Bethel, and Tappuah.
[132] Ibid., p. 312. Cf. de Geus 1976, however, who thinks the Israelite pottery is of the same kind as that of some earlier and later Canaanites, p. 167.
[133] Lemche 1985, pp. 416–432; de Geus 1976, p. 167.

towns,[134] and Callaway notes that the theory is attractive but lacks evidence from inscriptions or excavations and argues mostly from historical analogy.[135] In addition, I agree with de Geus that the idea of an established nation formed on the basis of social revolt, class war, and a mass religious conversion is far too idealistic,[136] and even the accounts of the conquest in Joshua and Judges do not describe wars against other deities or cults.[137]

That the Late Bronze hill country did not really have any permanent settlements shows that the settlers did not entirely originate from previous rural groups there,[138] and there was a striking increase in settlements in previously isolated or barely inhabited parts at the beginning of the Iron Age.[139] Finkelstein notes that prior to the domestication of the camel as a herd animal, large groups of nomads and pastoralists could not have lived deep in the desert and so must have lived close to sedentary groups, with whom "their relationship was characterized by symbiosis rather than by confrontation".[140] The material culture and settlement patterns in the Iron Age I hill country suggest that those who settled there came from a pastoralist background, and mostly inhabited areas suitable for cereal crops and pasturage, with a proliferation of silos typical of formerly nomadic societies in the process of sedentarization.[141] We know that sheep pasturage and production of wine and barley were important aspects of the Israelite settlement,[142] and Callaway suggests that the highlands were infiltrated not by nomads but by farmers and small flock herders with ideas of village life, who settled in isolated and difficult areas with new technologies of cisterns and agricultural terraces.[143] He argues that they came not from the east but from the west of the hill country, probably on account of the pressure of warlike newcomers such as the Sea Peoples,[144] and Halpern agrees that, even without a peasants' revolt, it is very likely that some came as refugees from lowland

[134] Finkelstein 1988, p. 311.
[135] Callaway 1985, p. 33, cf. Mendenhall 1962, p. 73.
[136] De Geus 1976, p. 186.
[137] Smith, M. 1987, p. 14.
[138] Finkelstein 1988, p. 311; de Geus 1976, pp. 172–173; Halpern 1983, p. 239.
[139] De Geus 1976, p. 166.
[140] Finkelstein 1988, pp. 336–337.
[141] Ibid.
[142] De Geus 1976, pp. 165–166.
[143] Callaway 1985, p. 33. Cf. de Geus 1976, pp. 172–175, who notes that the term often used by scholars, 'semi-nomads', should be abandoned as this idea can be seen as simply the seasonal transhumance of shepherds.
[144] Ibid.

towns in the Bronze Age, especially after the conquests of Thutmose III.[145] Callaway proposes that people settled in the mountains of Lebanon at the same time, as we find cisterns, agricultural terracing and hillside vineyards there too, near Ugarit.[146] Whilst it seems likely that some escaped from the Egyptian domination and the Sea Peoples, who may also have been responsible for the destruction of cities previously attributed to the Israelite conquest,[147] as stated above it appears that the Israelite settlements could not have been created entirely from the existing towns. In line with the Hebrew Bible, then, a group of settlers descended from the inhabitants of pastoral areas of the central mountain ridge, probably returned to join their relations.[148] Others may have come from Transjordan, and Halpern points out that it is most likely impossible and irrelevant to say whether the people of the Exodus and Conquest were the same because they joined in the hill country, distinguishing themselves from their Canaanite city neighbours through agricultural practices, 'history' and religion (cf. Deut 23:4–9).[149]

This leads me to agree with Noth[150] and Finkelstein, in that the "Israelite settlement was multifaceted and strongly regional in character, as is clear from the settlement patterns arising from surveys all over the country and from the material culture at Israelite Settlement sites in various regions. In each area, the course of Israelite Settlement was directly affected by geographical conditions, economic potential, the strength of the Canaanites in the vicinity, and the nature of the links forged with them. Every region, therefore, was practically unique".[151] The Hebrew Bible itself tells us that those who left Egypt were a mixed multitude (Exod 12:38), and that they associated with Midianites (Num 10:29–34) and Moabites (Num 25:1–5) in the desert, and were joined by Gibeonites (Josh 9; 2 Sam 21), Jebusites (Josh 15:63; Judg 1:21), Jerahmeëlites (1 Sam 27:10; 30:29), Kenites (Judg 1:16; 4:11) and Hebrews (1 Sam 14:21) in the promised land. This mix of peoples married the women of Canaan and worshipped their gods (Judg 1; 2; 10 etc.), and so some of the Israelites assimilated into Canaanite groups and incorporated their areas into the tribes.[152] Such a varied group is difficult to define.

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[145] Halpern 1983, p. 239.
[146] Callaway 1985, p. 44. Cf. Stager 1982, pp. 115–116, and *CTA* 23:10–11.
[147] Usshishkin 1985, pp. 223–224.
[148] De Geus 1976, p. 172; Halpern 1983, p. 239.
[149] Halpern 1983, pp. 239–240.
[150] Noth 1938, pp. 21–22.
[151] Finkelstein 1988, p. 350.
[152] Smith, M. 1987, p. 12. See also de Vaux 1961, p. 6.

Finkelstein notes, "it is doubtful, for example, that an inhabitant of Giloh in the 12th century BCE would have described himself as an 'Israelite'; nonetheless, *we* refer to this site and its material culture as 'Israelite'",[153] and so we take Israelites to mean anyone whose descendants between the first half of the 11th Century BCE and the beginning of the monarchy described themselves as Israelites, bearing in mind the important fact that "a group of people living in Canaan at the end of the 13th century BCE was described in the Merneptah Stele as 'Israel'".[154]

Nevertheless, Morton Smith notes that we hear very little about any assimilation, or about the relationships which must have resulted from David establishing a court in a Jebusite city and the subsequent settlement of foreign mercenaries, queens and staff.[155] Solomon's reign also brought in foreign merchants and craftsmen, particularly for the temple, and the sanctuaries which he built for his wives to Milkom and Chemosh (1 Kgs 11:7; 2 Kgs 23:13), although outside the city, would have had personnel attached who had contact with the Israelites.[156] Craigie refers to this time as one of the most cosmopolitan in the Israelites' history, and believes that mythologically-themed texts were influenced by the period, which was "a time when Jerusalem was a centre of cultural interchange (1 Kings 4:34; 10:1). It was a time for the exchange of ideas, for broad vision and international spirit".[157] It was the people of this area, then, whose ideas, religions and mythology the Israelites would have experienced and inherited, as we know from their history that they, as many peoples were, tended to be influenced by the peoples of their surroundings.[158] It is for this reason that Coogan presupposes that Biblical religion, a form of Israelite religion, is a subset of Canaanite religion,[159] but others feel that we cannot conclude that the Israelites borrowed rites and rituals simply because they took from Canaanite sources.[160] In addition, our best texts from the area for comparison with the Hebrew Bible are those from Ugarit, which some scholars argue should not be identified as 'Canaanite'.[161] However, as Mark Smith notes, "the diversity of later reflexes of material attested in the Ugaritic texts shows that mythic narratives

[153] Finkelstein 1988, p. 27.
[154] Ibid., pp. 27–28.
[155] Smith, M. 1987, p. 12.
[156] Tigay 1986, p. 11 n. 29.
[157] Craigie 1983, p. 78.
[158] Worden 1953, p. 276. Cf. Petersen 1982, p. 2.
[159] Coogan 1987, p. 115. See also Smith 2002, pp. 22–25.
[160] Worden 1953, p. 276.
[161] E.g. Healey 1986, p. 496; Grabbe 1994.

were transmitted in the areas labelled in the Bible as Canaan and Israel",[162] and the term 'Canaanite' is convenient when referring to those who lived in Bronze Age Syria-Palestine and their cultural successors.[163] In the light of the evidence, then, we can conclude that Canaanite traditions and mythological concepts would have been part of Israelite culture at an early stage. I shall return to the question of how and why they may have remained in the Israelite consciousness until after the exile, after demonstrating the presence of these myths in Isa 24–27.

The intention of this work is to attempt to determine how the author of Isa 24–27 used the ancient mythological themes to instil a sense of eschatological hope in his readers. As mentioned above, this is not a new field of study, but to date I do not know of a work which has analysed all the Canaanite mythical aspects contained in these chapters with a view to showing how they might have inspired the Israelite people to have faith in a new, coming age. I have approached the subject thematically, and aim to demonstrate how these ideas were transmitted through the Israelite cult, and how the growth of eschatological ideas during and after the exile caused such themes to be used as images of a future national and universal hope.

[162] Smith 1994a, p. 301. Cf. Burnett 2001, p. 74.
[163] Hillers 1985, p. 254.

Chapter Two: The Myth of the Divine Warrior, with Specific Reference to Isaiah 27:1

Some Notes on the Divine Warrior in the Hebrew Bible

In the light of the extensive research already undertaken on the topic of the Divine Warrior in ancient Near Eastern and Israelite literature since the work of von Rad,[1] I shall not reiterate what has been written about the extensive connections between this theme in the Hebrew Bible and Near Eastern texts. It is clear, however, that the image of the Divine Warrior extends from the mythologies of the surrounding cultures through Isaiah and into apocalyptic literature,[2] and Yahweh fights to protect his people and creation from the powers of chaos (see below) in a similar manner to the other patron deities of the Near East.[3] The nature of Yahweh as Divine Warrior is also a topic too broad to cover here in its entirety, but I shall briefly address some points relevant to the discussion of this thesis.

As has been noted often, the description of the apparently historical conflict with Egypt in Exod 15:1–18 is replete with mythological language concerning the divine victory over chaos and the establishment of kingship.[4] Russell argues, however, that there is no reference to the Exodus in this poem, and that all the imagery is drawn from Near Eastern kingship ideology.[5] He suggests instead that Exod 15:1–18 describes the tour of the people of Yahweh as they travel to his sanctuary to establish his monarchy.[6] Russell admits himself that he argues somewhat from silence, and his view is not convincing considering how well the text fits into the context of the Exodus, but it does raise the issue of how the Exodus and the ritual journey to the sanctuary, or the processional way, were connected. The processional way probably represented the route into, and conquest of, the land of Israel (Millar notes the cultic nature of various Joshua

[1] Von Rad 1959; Gaster 1961; Speiser 1969, pp. 60–67; Wilson 1969, pp. 6, 11–12; Cross 1973; Miller 1973; Longman and Reid 1995; Wyatt 1996, pp. 117–219; Hoffner 1998; Tsumura 2005.
[2] Millar 1976, p. 101.
[3] Crouch 2009, p. 178 n. 15. *Contra* Miller 1973, pp. 164–165.
[4] See Cross 1973; Millar 1976, p. 82; Hanson 1979, p. 301.
[5] Russell 2009, pp. 158–159. This supports his idea that Exod 15 is an early Judahite text, whereas the Exodus is an early Israelite tradition.
[6] Ibid., p. 176.

stories and the reference to the 'route' in Mic 6:5), as well as the march of Yahweh to and from victorious battle.[7] It may well have had its basis in the image of God as conquering king which encouraged the Israelites as they fought their neighbours, and which was symbolised by the Ark's role in battle (e.g. Num 10:35–36).[8] There is some textual evidence for the procession in Pss 24, 68, 118 and 132,[9] and Mowinckel asserts that Pss 48:13–15 and 118:27, and Neh 12:27:31 portray a ritual circumambulation.[10] Certainly the image of the processional way was taken up by the prophetic tradition in the context of the return from exile (e.g. Isa 40:3; 43:19) and the way of the coming Messiah (cf. Zech 9:9),[11] and this cultic ritual may well help to explain why the image of the Divine Warrior continued to be used in post-exilic and apocalyptic literature to portray the victory of Yahweh and Zion.

It has also been suggested that the ritual procession of the Ark was the main event on the cultic Day of Yahweh.[12] Much of modern scholarship concerning the Day of Yahweh has focussed on its *Sitz im Leben*, and one of the most important works in this area is that of von Rad.[13] The increasing tendency of Biblical authors to emphasise the divine aspect of war, the frequency of polemic against the nations in passages concerning the Day, and the use of the motifs we find in the traditional war stories (e.g. Josh 24:7; 1 Sam 7:10)[14] led von Rad to conclude that the Day of Yahweh originated in the concept of holy war.[15] He states that texts such as Isa 13 demonstrate war on such a vast scale, undertaken not by soldiers but by entire nations and Yahweh's holy host (vv.3–4), that we must see the Day as one of "sacral war",[16] and he concludes that it "encompasses a pure event of war, the rise of Yahweh against his enemies, his battle and his victory".[17] Whilst this can perhaps be supported by the existence of the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscription,

ובזרח...אל וימסן הרם...בים מל ח[מה]

[7] Millar 1976, pp. 83–84. Cf. Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 18–19.
[8] Ibid., pp. 88, 105; Cross 1966, pp. 24–25.
[9] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 170–181. Cf. Millar 1976, p. 90.
[10] Ibid., pp. 182–187. Millar 1976 argues that there is not sufficient evidence for this, and that Neh 12:31–43 refers to the dedication of the restored wall (cf. Isa 26:1–2), pp. 85–86.
[11] Millar 1976, p. 83.
[12] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 19.
[13] Von Rad 1959.
[14] Ibid., p. 100.
[15] Weinfeld 2005 points out, however, that von Rad had already developed an interest in emphasising the centrality of holy war, which he believes is exaggerated, in the Israelite mind (von Rad 1951), p. 78.
[16] Von Rad 1959, p. 99.
[17] Ibid., p. 103.

When God shines forth…mountains will be dissolved…on the day of wa[r][18]

(cf. Mic 1:3–4), and the descriptions of Ezekiel, Joel and Zechariah of the Day as a "war to end all wars",[19] I think that these latter texts also show the eschatological dimension of the concept. In addition, von Rad's theory also does not accommodate two of the most important prophetic descriptions of the Day of Yahweh, Amos 5:18–20 and Isa 2:12–22, as they do not contain any references to war, which seems unacceptable in a study of the relevant texts,[20] and Cross notes that von Rad does not examine the mythological elements present in the holy war tradition, and reused elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.[21] It appears that the image of the Divine Warrior came to be used in an eschatological manner in connection with the Day of Yahweh, as well as with the processional way and the Exodus, which was linked with the return from exile via combat mythology in such passages as Isa 51:9–11.[22] Furthermore, the destruction of the temple may have allowed the cultic setting of certain literary forms to be reinterpreted in the mythological ideal of the post-exilic era.[23]

The theme of the Divine Warrior can be found in biblical literature from all periods, but it may have become especially prevalent in the 6th Century BCE as a result of the exile, as can be seen in the way in which the author of Isa 24–27 adapts the imagery to represent Yahweh's struggle against universal chaos.[24] It is interesting to note that in these chapters God is violent and punishing towards both earthly (Isa 24:21; 25:2–3; 27:4) and heavenly foes (24:21, 23; 27:1).[25] The nature of the elders in Isa 24:23 is still disputed, as they could be members of the divine court,[26] simply leaders among the postexilic community,[27] or representatives of the whole earth.[28] In other uses of the

[18] Davies 1991, p. 82.
[19] Weinfeld 2005, p. 82.
[20] Cathcart 1978, p. 50.
[21] Cross 1973, p. 89.
[22] Barstad 1989, p. 73. Cf. Ringgren 1966, p. 115 and Ludwig 1973, p. 352 and n. 37 on the 'mythologizing' of the historical event of the Exodus. See also Barton 2004, who argues that the concept of the Day of Yahweh did not develop over time, but that it was always eschatological within the confines of a new world order, p. 283.
[23] Millar 1976, pp. 89, 95–97.
[24] Ibid, pp. 101, 106.
[25] Kissane 1960 vol. I, p. 275 argues that the 'host of heaven' in 24:21 refers to the pagan gods, and that the imprisoning of the gods and kings in v. 22 is an allusion to the imprisonment of the monsters before their destruction in *En el* IV.110–114.
[26] Watts 1985, p. 330; Willis 1991, pp. 375–385.
[27] E.g. Procksch 1930, p. 315; Kaiser 1973, p. 158; Wildberger 1978, pp. 949–950; Hibbard 2006, p. 78 n. 34.

elders in Isaiah (e.g. 3:2, 14; 47:6) it is clear that human leaders are meant, but the context of Isa 24:21–23 and the reference to other, possibly patron, deities in 26:13–14 suggest that heavenly council members are the ones being punished here. Although in the post-exilic era these figures would almost certainly not have been thought of as gods, remnants of their former divinity may well have lingered to demonstrate Yahweh's authority. The war vocabulary used in Isa 24–27 has reminded scholars of the language used in oracles against the nations, and it may well be that this textual tradition, in combination with the divine lawsuit, helped to carry forward the theme of the Divine Warrior and express universal judgment in these chapters.[29]

The Canaanite Mythological Background to Isaiah 27:1

A. Introduction to Isa 27:1

The nature and position of Isa 27:1 has been much debated, but it can be seen as a Divine Warrior hymn,[30] as it carries the poetic language and syntax of a 'rhythmic prose'.[31] In any case, it is a clear example of the Divine Warrior theme within Isa 24–27. It is often considered to be a late addition to the text, and Watson notes that ch. 24 makes it clear that the desolation is caused by God (v. 1) and is due to the guilt of the people (vv. 5–6, 20), an image which appears to be at odds with that of an earth which is cosmologically threatened by a chaos dragon, and one where "judgment by God is not an enemy to be externalised and overcome by him".[32] However, Quinn-Miscall argues that in the defeat of Leviathan in 27:1 "chaos is overcome and the cosmic destruction [of ch. 24] reversed",[33] and certainly the universalizing and forward-looking tendencies of Isa 24–27 can account for both Israelite error and mythological evil becoming one under the umbrella of 'chaos'. On the basis that some scholars view Isa 27:1 as an introduction to the somewhat disparate elements of ch. 27,[34] whilst others assert that it fits better with ch. 26, either in connection with the mythological connotations of v. 19 or as part of

[28] See Wildberger 1978, pp. 949–950; Welten 1982, pp. 135–136.
[29] Millar 1976, pp. 106–107.
[30] Ibid., p. 105.
[31] Gunkel 1895, p. 45 n. 2.
[32] Watson 2005, p. 332 and n. 257.
[33] Quinn-Miscall 1993, p. 71.
[34] Polaski 2001, pp. 285–289.

Yahweh's response to the communal lament in vv. 20–21,[35] in its present position the verse can be seen as a uniting element between the two chapters, whether this was the intention of the author or not. As is often noted in texts where prophecy and early apocalyptic meet, this verse has clearly been framed in mythological language familiar to us from the ancient Near East. The earliest known occurrence of the combat with the sea/sea dragon motif is on an Akkadian cylinder seal, found at Tell Asmar and now in the National Museum of Iraq,[36] dating from approximately the 24th Century BCE.[37] The Egyptians' depiction of the slaying of the serpent Apophis, however, may well also have predated the Akkadian stories. Whilst most of the extant references to this myth come from the Middle Kingdom *Coffin Texts* and the later *Book of the Dead*,[38] Wilson suggests that the text which begins 'The Book of Knowing the Creations of Re and of Overthrowing Apophis', preserved in xxvi–xxviii of Papyrus Bremner-Rhind, is dated about 301 BCE but "makes a deliberate attempt to preserve a language two thousand years older than that date. There is no doubt that the basic material derives from a relatively early period".[39]

B. The Concept of the Chaos Enemy as the Dragon/Serpent/Sea in the Ancient Near East

Mark Smith notes that, in contrast to the anthropomorphic or theriomorphic nature of many benevolent deities in the Near East, destructive deities often appear as monstrous, with the serpent/dragon as a common cosmic enemy, and that "such divine opponents are manifest in incantations as enemies of humans (as in *CAT* 1.82.i), whereas mythological contexts describe divine opponents in the same forms yet on a cosmic scale".[40] In particular, the dragon enemy was often connected "with (unusual) natural phenomena like storm, flood or drought".[41] The Babylonian *Enūma eliš* was probably recited during the state New Year Festival in the temple of Marduk in Babylon in order

[35] Millar 1976, p. 69; Johnson 1988, pp. 81–84; Anderson 1994, pp. 9–10; Blenkinsopp 2000, pp. 371–372; Hibbard 2006, pp. 122–123.
[36] Pritchard 1969, p. 221.
[37] Gordon 1966, p. 4. For Lambert's view that Leviathan was sometimes seen as a snake of a natural form as depicted on Syrian Seals see Lambert 2003, pp. 147–154.
[38] Wilson 1969, p. 12.
[39] Ibid., p. 6. See also Hooke 1963, pp. 66–75.
[40] Smith 2001, pp. 32–33. Cf. Court 1979, p. 123, who states that "beasts and dragons are almost universal features of mythology".
[41] Van Henten 1999, p. 265.

to glorify him as the national god,[42] and an important part of this worship was the description of his defeat of Tiamat, the personified primeval water (*En el* IV:87–104), and the subsequent ordering of the world.[43] In his major work on the connection between these Mesopotamian chaos myths and those of the Hebrew Bible, Gunkel in particular showed the connection between Tiamat and the Hebrew תְּהוֹם, meaning 'the deep'.[44] It is now generally believed that there is a linguistic connection between the two words, supported by the Hebrew retention of the undetermined feminine form which suggests it was originally used as a proper name.[45] Tsumura, however, argues that whilst the words are etymologically connected, it would be almost impossible to conclude phonetically that תְּהוֹם (*tĕhôm*) could have been borrowed from the Akkadian Tiamat, expecting something more like *tĕ'omā́(h)*.[46] He claims that morphologically *tĕhôm* corresponds to the Ugaritic *thm*, which was probably read *tahāmu*, and that these two words, together with Akkadian *tiāmtum/tâmtum*, Arabic *tihāmat*, and Eblaite *ti-'à-ma-tum*, are reflections of a common Semitic term (perhaps *tihām*). This etymological connection, he feels, does not suggest the Hebrew depersonalization of a divine name, and supports his argument with the occurrence of the Ugaritic *thm* both as part of a compound divine name in *KTU* 1.100.1, and as a common noun in *KTU* 1.23.30 for example.[47]

In addition, Fenton argues that 'chaos' as we have it in Gen 1:2 should be understood as symbolising nothingness rather than disorder, confusion, or even 'unformed matter'.[48] This may well be the case, but the earth was not completely empty at this time, but covered with waters, and so the raging waters which Yahweh defeats in the underlying myth (e.g. Ps 104:6–9) could be considered 'chaotic' even if this is no longer the case in Gen 1:2. In addition, the 'deep (תְּהוֹם) that lies beneath' in Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13 uses a verb, רָבַץ, which has a particularly animalistic background, most

[42] Schmökel 1978. p. 81.
[43] Gunkel 1895, p. 84, suggests that Job 41:17 [Eng 25] implies that, before Yahweh, the other gods tried to fight Leviathan and failed, which is very reminiscent of the council choosing Marduk as the only god who can defeat Tiamat in *En el* IV:1–18. The text is ambiguous, however, and could imply that the other gods, or angels as they were probably considered by the time of Job's author, were simply too afraid to fight.
[44] Segert 1997, p. 203 defines *thmt* in the Ugaritic glossary as '(primeval) Ocean, Deep' in e.g. *KTU* 1.3.iii.25.
[45] Hooke 1963, p. 36. This idea is disputed, however, by scholars such as Tsumura 1989, who claims that the derivation of the latter from the former is phonologically impossible, pp. 45–47.
[46] Tsumura 2005, p. 37. See also Fretheim 1994, p. 356.
[47] Ibid., pp. 43–44.
[48] Fenton 1993, pp. 202–203. For similar views see Tsumura 1989 and Sutcliffe 1934.

notably throughout Isaiah (cf. especially Ezek 29:3, in which it is the great dragon who is lying down). Clearly the Hebrew תְּהוֹם has threatening connotations appropriate to a sea monster, as is evident in the flood narrative (e.g. Gen 7:11; 8:2), and Wakeman sees "vestiges of personality" in such expressions as תְּהוֹם רַבָּה.[49] In addition to the Mesopotamian stories, there are also two Hittite versions of the conflict between the weather god and the dragon Illuyanka,[50] which seem to serve as aetiologies of the Hattian *Purulli* festival with regard to the restoration of order and fertility, and were probably told during the course of the festival.[51] Although we only have copies from 500 years later, these myths probably date back to the Old Hittite Kingdom (c. 1750–1500 BCE),[52] and whilst in the first story Illuyanka lives in a hole in the ground, *KUB* XVII:5, the second (later) version clearly situates the conflict in the sea, *KBo* III:7:iii:20–24. There is also an account of how the storm god fights the rock monster Ullikummi, who has grown in the sea in order to overthrow his enemy's reign, at the end of *KUB* XXXIII 106:iv, although Ullikummi's final defeat is apparently contained in lines which are now completely destroyed.[53]

Since the discovery of the tablets from Ugarit, however, it is generally accepted that the Israelite depictions of Yahweh's combat with the sea and sea dragon were influenced by Baal's battle with Yam in *KTU* 1.2.iv.15–32 (cf. Anat's description of her conflict with Yam in *KTU* 1.3.iii.35–39) and *KTU* 1.5.i.1–3, 27–30. The latter passages in particular are strikingly similar to Isa 27:1. Wyatt criticises the opinion of those who feel that many of Yahweh's characteristics are derived from Baal, because the Hebrew Bible shows much antipathy towards Canaanite cults, particularly those of Baal, and asserts that Yahweh is described in non-specific cosmological clichés.[54] However, the evidence seems fairly convincing that Yahweh was influenced heavily by Baal traditions, and that we can view him as having taken on the Canaanite god's roles in the Hebrew Bible without being directly identified with him, although certain passages suggests that

[49] Wakeman 1973, pp. 87–88.
[50] Güterbock 1961 notes that Illuyanka is not a proper name but the common noun meaning 'dragon' or 'serpent', p.150.
[51] Hoffner 1998, p. 9.
[52] Ibid., p. 11.
[53] Goetze 1969, p. 125.
[54] Wyatt 1986, p. 379. He argues that "if a case is to be made for the identification of Yahweh with any Canaanite deity, there is only one serious candidate, and that is El", and goes so far as to postulate a lost myth in which El killed the sea dragon, pp. 380–381, but there is no basis for this.

the two may sometimes have been identified (e.g. Hos 2:18–19 [Eng 16–17]).[55] There is still debate about the extent of the knowledge which Near Eastern societies would have had of each other's traditions, and Day argues that "such common themes as exist between *Enūma eliš* and the Baal-Yam conflict cannot be attributed to direct influence but must rather be attributed to a common intellectual background".[56]

On the other hand, Jacobsen's assertion that the myth spread eastwards from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia is plausible,[57] and can perhaps be supported by the 18th Century Mari text (*A.1968*) in which the storm god defeats the sea, as this would have been along the mythology's route. In addition, the depiction from the Egyptian-Canaanite temple at Lachish of a god with a lance over his head is understood as a combination of Baal and Seth in their positions as serpent-slayers, an amalgamation which caused the Egyptian serpent, as a symbol of the danger of night, and the Canaanite serpent, as a symbol of the stormy sea, to represent general danger — "the god who could defeat such a creature is treated as a saviour, pure and simple".[58] This suggests that there was some interaction between different mythological traditions, and that knowledge of the characteristics of foreign gods caused them to be identified with local deities. At the same time, the nature of Israel's religion meant that their one deity could be both judge and saviour, enemy and champion, as a part of the transformation of the age depicted in Isa 24–27.[59]

C. The Identification of the Chaos Powers

The Ugaritic texts seem to show that Yam was considered to be the counterpart of the Babylonian Tiamat[60] and the seven-headed serpent (*KTU* 1.3.iii.39–43). Yam was also termed "Prince Sea" or "Judge River" (e.g. *KTU* 1.2.i.20–35), although these may

[55] Day 1985, pp. 27–30. See also Kloos 1986.
[56] Day 1985, p. 12.
[57] Jacobsen 1968, pp. 106–108. See also Smith 1994b, pp. 108–114 and *idem* 2008, pp. 86–87.
[58] Keel and Uehlinger 1998, pp. 76–78. Uehlinger 1999 also asserts that before Baal was identified with Seth, the weather-god was associated with Horus whom we find on scarab seals and representations from the 1st Millennium fighting with a crocodile, p. 513. It is often stated that Leviathan in Isa 27:1 is a symbol of all rebellion or enemies of God, see for example Stacey 1993, p. 162 and Watson 2005, p. 329.
[59] Linville 2004, p. 102.
[60] Clifford 1972, p. 40; Gibson 1978, p. 7.

have been considered to be separate manifestations of the god,[61] and in the same way most scholars agree that there is identification between the sea and the rivers in the Israelite texts (e.g. Ps 114:66; Hab 3:8).[62] Litan (or Lotan)/Leviathan[63] can also be seen as the representation of Yam, as *KTU* 1.83.5 has Yam with a forked tongue, showing his dragon/serpent-like appearance, and 1.83.8 depicts him with a fish tail (or perhaps 'double tail'[64]), and de Moor argues that we have to assume that the fleeing/coiling serpent is identical to Leviathan in Isa 27:1.[65] The Tannin sometimes appear as the helpers of Yam/Nahar,[66] but de Moor points out that Yam and his associates also "seem to be identified" in *KTU* 1.83,[67] and Gunkel argues that the 'dragons in the sea' in the company of Leviathan in Ps 74:12–13 should be seen as the same as the 'children of pride' of Job 41:26, the 'helpers of Rahab' from Job 9:12, the 'enemies of Yahweh' in Ps 89:11 and the 'terrifying things' of Ps 104:25.[68]

Day asserts that the sea and the dragon in the Ugaritic texts are associated but distinct, and are involved in different conflicts with Baal,[69] on the basis that Anat describes several enemies in her conflict with the dragon in *KTU* 1.3.iii.37ff., the fact that Yam and Leviathan never appear in parallel and because Yam is never explicitly said to be a dragon.[70] Wyatt, however, argues that Yam might never occur in parallel to Leviathan because they were considered to be equated, and because the possibility that Yam is a dragon remains open we can consider all four creatures — Yam, River, Dragon, and Serpent — to be the same figure.[71] He supports this with his proposal that Ps 74:13–14 has a chiastic structure which shows "we have an interaction between the parallelism within each verse and the reverse parallelism between the verses. This demands the

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[61] Bernhardt 1978, p. 198 n. y. He also notes that *nhr* could be translated as 'swell' or 'wave'. Jacobs 1977 points out that b. B. Bat. 74b has Yam's title in the form 'Prince of the sea' (*śar ĕl yam*), p. 2.
[62] Cross 1973, pp. 138–140.
[63] "The generally accepted theory is that the Ugaritic word was pronounced *lōtān*, more precisely *lōtānu* (with a case ending)", Emerton 1982, p. 328. However, he discusses the difficulties which this raises, and proposes that "it is better to try to relate the word more closely to Hebrew *liwyātān*, and I have suggested the following development: **liwyatānu* > **līyitānu* > **lītānu* (spelled *ltn*)", p. 331.
[64] Heider 1999, p. 835.
[65] De Moor 1987, p. 69 n. 325. See also Gunkel 1895, pp. 45–46.
[66] Bernhardt 1978, p. 198 n. z.
[67] De Moor 1987, p. 182 n. 3.
[68] Gunkel 1895, p. 69. Stolz 1999 claims that "the powers dominating history are offsprings of the sea" in eschatological texts, p. 741, but this is more poetic than substantiated.
[69] Day 1985, p. 4.
[70] Ibid., pp. 13–14. Watson 2005 claims that her research shows that there is no reason to identify Leviathan or Rahab with the sea, or to connect them with creation or chaos in either Ugarit or Israel, pp. 330–331, but this seems to be a very narrow approach to the texts.
[71] Wyatt 1986, p. 377.

equation of the various designations".[72] This seems unlikely, as it is precisely when different terms are used for the same creature that we find their names in poetic parallelism, but Gunkel also claims that Rahab and Leviathan are parallel to תְּהוֹם in Isa 51:9–10; Ps 89:10–11; Job 26:12 and Ps 74:12–13, so we should view the dragons as the mythic personifications of the ways of the sea.[73] Whilst Leviathan and Yam may not be explicitly equated and seem to have some differences, both the Hebrew and Ugaritic texts connect the two to such an extent that we may see Leviathan as "the dragon typifying Yam",[74] and assume that where one is mentioned the other would be brought to mind.

D. The Storm God in Connection with the Combat with the Sea

Because Isa 27:1 shares many similarities with Isa 17:12–14, it has been suggested that God's defeat of the sea dragon here was influenced by the cosmogonic and mythic overtones in the depiction of the peoples, as the sea, being sent back by the deity who is seemingly a storm-god (17:12–14).[75] Yahweh's characterisation as a storm-god was also probably heavily influenced by the Baal Cycle,[76] as can be seen by the commonly translated phrase 'Him who rides the clouds' in Ps 68:5 [Eng 4].[77] Whilst thunder does not seem to play an obvious part in the battle with the sea/dragon in either tradition,[78] Kloos suggests on the basis of Gunkel's observation that Yahweh's rebuking of the sea was part of the myth[79] that we can infer from Ps 104:7, גַּעֲרָתְךָ is used in

[72] Ibid., p. 378.
[73] Gunkel 1895, p. 69.
[74] Driver 1956, p. 103.
[75] See Sweeney 1987, p. 55.
[76] Gottlieb 1980 argues that in Ps 18, where we find imagery of the storm god, that in pre-Israelite times this motif was attached to El Elyon and secondarily transferred to Yahweh, because the former is referred to in v. 14 [Eng 13] whereas Baal is not, p. 80. This seems unlikely, however, as the motifs of storm god and Divine Warrior (vv. 3, 16–19 [Eng 2, 15–18]) are so clearly derived from Baalistic characteristics.
[77] Day 1994 suggests that whilst this phrase is related to Baal's 'rider of the clouds' it is distorted, and should be 'rider through the deserts' on the basis of the context of Ps 68 and the standard understanding of עֲרָבָה, which always refers to deserts, although that Yahweh is riding on a cloud is probably implicit here, p. 45.
[78] A possible exception is the famous Baal Stela found at Ugarit, in which Baal is holding a spear and club which might be stylized lightning and thunder, whilst what could be the sea is under his feet. See Pritchard 1969, pp. 168, 307.
[79] Gunkel 1895, p. 97.

parallel to קוֹל רַעַמְךָ, that the term refers to the roaring of the thunder.[80] This is supported by Emerton, who refers to thunder as the 'divine voice',[81] and by Stolz, who proposes that Yahweh's rebuking the sea was "possibly an anthropomorphic interpretation of the thunder emanating from the weather god",[82] suggesting that this function of the deity was a part of the theomachy myth.

Whilst Kloos feels that Ps 29 could be used to show that glory (כָּבוֹד) was associated with Baal (or the traditions concerning him borrowed by the Hebrew Bible), she nevertheless denies that there is any connection between כָּבוֹד and the presentation of the storm god.[83] However, Isa 24:15 and 25:3 use this term to talk of the glorifying of God, and the latter is followed by two verses concerning his power over the weather, which suggests that the coming glory of the storm-god was a part of the tradition which led up to the victory over chaos. Certainly the coming of a storm or clouds often accompanies the theophany in the Hebrew Bible.[84] In addition to having the storm at his disposal, Yahweh is also described as using a 'cruel and great and strong sword' in Isa 27:1. Within the theomachy tradition we find him being armed in Isa 51:9, and he has a hook and line in Job 40:25, fishhooks in Ezek 29:4, and a net and snare in Ezek 32:2.[85] Marduk's weapon in his battle with Tiamat is also mentioned in *En el* IV:130[86] and, more importantly, much emphasis is given to Baal's weapons, often understood as axes, in *KTU* 1.2.iv.10–25.[87] The Divine Warrior motif is one which extends from the Ugaritic texts through to apocalyptic,[88] and echoes of Baal's conflict with Yam have been seen in conjunction with this motif in the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15. Craigie notes that after God's victory and incomparability have been proclaimed (v. 11), conflict returns in the anticipation of future enemies (vv. 14–16), much like the threat of Mot after Baal's

[80] Kloos 1986, p. 50. Cf. Eaton 1979 on Isa 50:2, "his 'rebuke' of the sea is his thunder-word which conquered his enemy in the beginning (Ps 104:7; Job 26:11–13), and is heard anew in the annual storms which precede the new springing of life", p. 67.
[81] Emerton 1958, p. 237.
[82] Stolz 1999, p. 740.
[83] Kloos 1986, p. 56.
[84] Emerton 1958, p. 229; Day 1985, p. 105.
[85] Gunkel 1895, p. 85.
[86] We also find here head-crushing very reminiscent of Ps 74:14.
[87] Day 2000b also notes the Mari text *A.1968* from the reign of Zimri-Lim, in which the storm god Adad mentions the weapons he used to battle with Sea, p. 99. The weapons of the storm god seem to be interchangeable with, or representative of, thunder and lightning – see for example the traditions concerning the double-headed axe surrounding Teshub, Adad, and Zeus Labraundos (cf. 13th Century rock reliefs from Yazilikaya near Hattusa).
[88] Millar 1976, p. 101.

defeat of Yam, but then victory is assured and order resumed in God's eternal kingship (vv. 17–18).[89]

E. The Myth of the Combat with the Sea in Connection with Creation

The function of the combat myth in Israelite texts is not simply to honour Yahweh, but also to help define the kind of deity the Israelites believed him to be: "God's role as faithful covenant partner rests upon the ancient tradition of God the mighty warrior-creator…all significant roles in which Yahweh is involved with Israel…intertwine with this primeval role of the deity as creator who defeats the forces of chaos, frequently personified as a watery monster."[90] Whilst this is in keeping with the idea of Baal as a protective patron deity, many scholars do not see any creation in the Ugaritic conflict between Baal and Yam: "Der Kampf zwischen Baal und Jam setzt offensichtlich die Welt selbst bereits voraus. Der Sieg begründet das Königtum Baal's über die Erde, aber er schafft diese Erde nicht".[91] Certainly there is nothing comparable to Marduk's creation of the universe from Tiamat's divided body in *En el* IV:129–140, although Westermann points out that this creation story was only combined with the combat myth in the later, Babylonian version.[92] Kloos actually concludes that we cannot say the combat with the sea was a battle of creation in the Hebrew Bible either, because "we do not hear of any splitting of the sea or creating heaven and earth out of it".[93] This seems to go too far, as does Schmidt's assertion that Isa 51:9–11 has no connection with creation,[94] and Kaiser's decision that the battle with Rahab occurred at creation whilst the conflict with Leviathan took place later, on the basis of seeing the latter monster as an embodiment of clouds in Job 26:13.[95] Following Day's logic, the number of passages which link the creation with Yahweh's controlling of the primordial waters is so great, despite the late dating of many of them, that we may conclude that the conflict with the sea dragon was believed to have been contemporaneous with the cosmogony. [96]

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[89] Craigie 1983, pp. 88–89. See also Hanson 1979, p. 301.
[90] Niditch 1997, p. 58.
[91] Kaiser 1962, p. 76. Also Schmidt 1961, p. 53; Pope and Röllig 1965, p. 309; Kapelrud 1980, pp. 3–9.
[92] Westermann 1974, pp. 39–48.
[93] Kloos 1986, p. 85.
[94] Schmidt 1961, pp. 39–40, cf. Barstad 1989, p. 73.
[95] Kaiser 1962, pp. 140–152.
[96] Day 1985, pp. 3–4.

Gibson claims that we do not find creation in the Ugaritic texts in the same way as we find it in the Mesopotamian and Israelite stories because the sustaining of seasons and order was a more important function of a deity than an original creator.[97] On the other hand, scholars such as Fisher,[98] Cross[99] and Grønbæk[100] argue that this view of creation is too narrow, and that we can see cosmogony in the ordering of chaos, the securing of kingship and the care of society. Fisher asserts that "conflict, kingship, ordering of chaos, and temple building are all related to an overarching theme that I would call 'creation'. However this is not a theogony or a creation of the El type. Rather it is cosmogonic and is of the Baal type."[101] He claims that Baal's achievement of eternal kingship as a result of his victory over Yam would have been understood as a facet of creation, both in the Ugaritic texts and in the corresponding idea in the Hebrew Bible, and that Mot's claim that he died when Baal defeated Leviathan in *KTU* 1.5.i.1–4 should be understood as saying that the death of Mot is a way of expressing 'order out of chaos'.[102]

Day calls it a misuse of language to say that the ordering of the cosmos is a creation, and points out that it would still not explain why we find the combat myth associated with ultimate origins in the Hebrew Bible.[103] Wyatt, however, notes that in nearly all mythological accounts we do not find *creatio ex nihilo* but instead "the normal principle appears to be that matter is neither created nor destroyed, but is instead transformed from one mode of existence (chaos) into another (cosmos)",[104] and it can be argued that God's primary creative acts in Gen 1:3–27 were "the ordering of already existing reality".[105] Clifford sees this in the establishment and continuation of the society of Ugarit as a result of the political stability and fertility offered by Baal's victory,[106] and argues that the Hebrew Bible also shows examples of cosmogony in which "Yahweh's defeat of sea inaugurates a 'world in order', i.e., with primordial forces such as the waters, primordial darkness, arranged so as to support community" (e.g. Pss 74:12–17;

[97] Gibson 1978, p. 7.
[98] Fisher 1965, p. 316.
[99] Cross 1976, p. 333.
[100] Grønbæk 1985, pp. 35–36.
[101] Fisher 1965, p. 316.
[102] Ibid., pp. 317–320.
[103] Day 1985, p. 10.
[104] Wyatt 1986, p. 377.
[105] Fretheim 1994, pp. 342–343.
[106] Clifford 1984, p. 201.

77:12–21; 89:10–15; 104).[107] Certainly the divine control of, and victory over, the waters seem to suggest that the earth already exists in inchoate form, in contrast to Marduk's creative acts using the body of Tiamat (*En el* IV:129–140). The significance of echoes of the combat myth in Exodus 15 should also be mentioned here, as the Exodus was undoubtedly considered to be both an escape from Egypt and Yahweh's creation of a new people.[108] Ultimately I agree with Wyatt that there seems no good reason for completely rejecting the possibility of creation in the Ugaritic texts from which we argue that the rest of the myth was borrowed, since there is no need to announce that a cosmogony is in process for it to be counted as such a text.[109]

A Brief Look at the Language of Isaiah 27:1 and *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5

In order to examine these two texts, I shall first provide a standard translation of the two passages:

Isa 27:1:

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִפְקֹד יְהוָה בְּחַרְבּוֹ הַקָּשָׁה וְהַגְּדוֹלָה וְהַחֲזָקָה עַל לִוְיָתָן נָחָשׁ בָּרִחַ וְעַל לִוְיָתָן נָחָשׁ עֲקַלָּתוֹן וְהָרַג אֶת־הַתַּנִּין אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם

On that day the Lord with his cruel and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea.[110]

KTU 1.5.i.1–5:

k tmḫṣ.ltn.bṯn.brḥ

tkly.bṯn. ʻqltn.

[107] Ibid., p. 186, 199. See Pyramid Texts 229, where we have evidence of Atum's victory over the serpent (as the Provider of Attributes) which 'put an end to the uproar in Hermopolis' i.e. "the old age of confusion, the time of the Primeval Waters", Clark 1959, pp. 52–53, and note that "in Egyptian lore all serpents tend to merge into one another", so the serpent which had to be defeated before the world could be ordered is identified with Apophis and with Sito, a serpent god who encircles the world, representing eternity and the ocean which surrounds the earth, ibid., pp. 239–241.

[108] Craigie 1983, p. 89.

[109] Wyatt 1986, p. 376.

[110] *NRSV* translation.

šlyṭ.d.šb‘t.rašm
tṯkḥ.ttrp.šmm.krs
ipdk

When you smite Lôtan, the fleeing serpent,
  finish off the twisting serpent,
  the close-coiling one with seven heads,
The heavens wither and go slack
  like the folds of your tunic.[111]

On the basis of the links between the battle with the sea and creation, Albright suggests that נָחָשׁ בָּרִחַ in Isa 27:1 should be translated as ‘the Primeval Serpent’, noting the Arabic and Egyptian cognates, and pointing out that this understanding would help to explain the term ‘Ancient Serpent’ in conjunction with ‘dragon’ in Rev 12:9 and 20:2.[112] This seems unlikely, however, and others prefer the translation ‘convulsive’ or ‘tortuous serpent’,[113] a reading which is supported by Jerome’s *tortuosus* and Symmachus’ συγκλείων, and by Gunkel’s suggestion that לִוְיָתָן could mean ‘wreath-like’, on the basis of the translation of לויה as ‘wreath’ and the circular ocean in the Hebrew view.[114] In addition, “the meaning of the root is believed to be ‘to turn, twist’, like the Arabic *lawā(y)*: Leviathan is a twisting, coiling snake”.[115] De Moor agrees with Gunkel’s proposal, and argues that Leviathan is called ‘the fleeing one’ “because it perpetually tries to catch up with its own tail”.[116]

The Ugaritic passage which is so remarkably similar to Isa 27:1 (*KTU* 1.5.i.1–5) is also notoriously difficult to translate. The very first word, *k*, has been variously

[111] D. Pardee’s translation in Hallo and Younger 1997, p. 265.
[112] Albright 1941, p. 40 n. 5.
[113] Day 1985, p. 5 n. 8. He also notes that whilst בָּרִחַ can mean ‘to flee’, one of its basic meanings in Semitic languages is ‘to twist’, which is a better parallel for עֲקַלָּתוֹן, ‘crooked’.
[114] Gunkel 1895, p. 46. He also notes that Rashi contends that the נָחָשׁ עֲקַלָּתוֹן in Isa 27:1 surrounds the whole earth, from Grünbaum, M. 1877. ‘Beiträge zur vergleichenden Mythologie aus der Hagada’ in *ZDMG* 31, p. 275, on p. 47 n. 1. Bernhardt 1978 suggests that we should understand ‘wounded snake’ in both the Ugaritic and Israelite texts, p. 198 n. a, presumably on the basis of the conflict.
[115] Emerton 1982, p. 328.
[116] De Moor 1987, p. 69 n. 323 and 324.

understood as 'although',[117] 'when',[118] 'for all that',[119] and 'because',[120] and then some go on to view the heavens as the subject, whilst others see a 2nd person singular, in lines 4–5.[121] Various scholars understand these lines, which are repeated in lines 31–32, as describing the wilting/drooping/slacking/coming loose of the heavens,[122] in some cases compared with the girdle of a cloak.[123] This translation comes from the use of *ttrp*, which is thought to be a form of *rpy*, to be slack, to droop, or perhaps to derive from the same root as the Judeo-Aramaic *trp*, 'to be dissolved'.[124] Those who see the verse as something to do with a garment, emend *krs* to *kr(k)s*. If there is no emendation, we can translate *krs* as something such as 'belly', or as two words *k* and *rs*, leading to e.g. 'like a drop of sweat' (from Hebrew *rss*, 'to sprinkle')[125].[126] Other scholars interpret the lines as a depiction of the skies/heavens becoming hot or burning,[127] which Kloos asserts is on the basis of the root *ṯkḥ* appearing both here and also in *KTU* 1.11.1–2 and 1.24.4, where it is in combination with 'to embrace'.[128]

There is no real agreement on this passage, but if we take the lines to read 'Because you smote Litan…the heavens will be hot (and) will shine[129]' then perhaps we can see a further link between this text and that of Isa 27:1. Spitta asserted that it is Leviathan who causes the darkness of the sun and moon in Job 3:8 (see vv. 4–9), 26:13 (see vv. 9–13), and Isa 27:1,[130] an idea which may have some connection with the Egyptian serpent Apophis, who tried to obstruct Ra's light by day as well as at night.[131]

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[117] Ibid., p. 69 and Wyatt 2002, p. 115.
[118] Driver 1956, p. 103 and del Olmo Lete 1981, p. 213.
[119] Gibson 1978, p. 68.
[120] Day 1985, p. 13.
[121] Kloos 1986, p. 44.
[122] E.g. Gibson 1978, p. 68.
[123] Driver 1956, p. 103; del Olmo Lete 1981, p. 213 and de Moor 1987, p. 70 and n. 326, who sees the heavens as Baal's mantle, comparing e.g. Isa 40:22, Ps 18:12, and argues that because to be uncovered unwillingly was a humiliation, comparing 2 Sam 10:4, Isa 20:4, Amos 2:16, this text shows that Baal's victory was only a Pyrrhic one.
[124] Kloos 1986, p. 44.
[125] Caquot, Sznycer and Herdner 1974, pp. 239–240.
[126] Kloos 1986, pp. 44–45.
[127] Caquot, Sznycer and Herdner 1974, pp. 239–240, Day 1985, p. 13 and Wyatt 2002, p. 115.
[128] Kloos 1986, p. 44.
[129] From the Arabic *raffa*, 'to shine, glisten', see Emerton 1972, pp. 62–66.
[130] Spitta, F. 1889. *Das Offenbarung des Johannes* (Halle: Waisenhaus), p. 302, as cited in Gunkel 1895, p. 243. Watson 2005 also suggests that Rahab is a kind of eclipse dragon, which swallows or wraps itself around the moon or sun, p. 307.
[131] Kaiser 1962, pp. 140–152. Uehlinger 1999, however, thinks the idea that Leviathan derives from Apophis is "most improbable, since Apophis has no relationship to the Sea, which in turn is essential for Leviathan", p. 513. Cooper 1873, p. 21 proposed that texts such as Isa 27:1 were derived from the Apophic myth, which seems unlikely. On the other hand, whilst he asserts that Apophis was based on "a large and

In *KTU* 1.6.vi.45–52 we are told of Shapash's journey through the underworld in which she requires help to defeat the sea monsters, and de Moor suggests that the sun-goddess and her companions "have to surmount considerable difficulties before they reappear triumphantly in the East".[132] Although Isa 24:23 describes the sun and moon as 'ashamed' rather than shining, and this verse may be simply referring to a theophanic cosmic change,[133] it is nevertheless possible to propose that both in this text and in *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5 we have the idea that the sea monster was responsible for causing celestial darkness (a common image of chaos, and one particularly appropriate for stormy skies at sea), and that his defeat ensured the return of the heavenly bodies.[134]

The Nature of the Powers of Chaos

It is clear, however, that there are differences between the Ugaritic and the Israelite versions of the battle with the sea. The power of the enemies against the hero is emphasised in the Ugaritic texts, as we can see from "the stalemate between Baal and Mot in 1.6.vi.16–22, as well as the depiction of Baal apparently slumped beneath Yamm's throne in 1.2.iv.6–7",[135] whereas Yahweh would never suffer defeat in the mythology of the Israelites, "even though evil times may be embarrassing and difficult to explain".[136] This difference is probably due to the fact that Yam, Mot and other cosmic enemies had divine status in the Ugaritic stories, as seen in River's epithet 'great god' (*ʾil rbm*) in *KTU* 1.3.iii.39, the theophoric name *ym ʾil* in *CAT* 4.75.v.14 and 4.183.ii.2, and Mot's title *bn ʾilm* in *KTU* 1.4.viii.45–46.[137] In contrast, the sea and the dragon are never described as deities in the Hebrew Bible, although it is possible that they were

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unidentified species of coluber" which "once inhabited the Libyan desert" on the basis of Hanno and Lucan, pp. 6–7, he also notes a tradition in which Apophis lived in the sea on which the Baris, the boat of the sun, sailed, p. 33. Clark 1959, p. 240, also points out that Seth defeats a serpent monster representing the sea in *Medical Papyrus Hearst* II.13.

[132] De Moor 1987, p. 99 n. 479. Day 1985 suggests that in Ps 46:6 [Eng 5] and Isa 17:14 the deliverance from the enemy comes at dawn after a threatening night, and that "since both passages equate the enemy with the chaos waters one might conjecture that the night threat derives from the myth of the conflict with the chaos waters", on the basis that the Ugaritic chaos monsters of the sea pose a threat during the time when Shapash is in the underworld, pp. 101–103.

[133] Cf. Plöger 1968, p. 59; Day 1985, p. 108.

[134] Cf. Watson 2005, p. 312.

[135] Smith 2001, p. 37.

[136] Fisher 1965, p. 324. Note also that Ullikummi probably originally defeats the storm god in the gap between *KUB* XXXIII 106:I and II, as does Illuyanka in *KBo* III:7:7–10 1st col. and III:7:1–3 3rd col., Goetze 1969, pp. 124–126.

[137] Smith 2001, p. 37.

once regarded as divine but were demoted during redaction. For example, the name Yemuel in Gen 46:10 and Exod 6:15 could be the Hebrew equivalent of *ym'il*,[138] and Gunkel states that the Jews were certainly aware of Chaos as a pagan god who may have influenced their traditions.[139] However there does not seem to be much evidence for any remnants of divinity on the side of chaos in the Hebrew Bible, as seen from the way in which the Tannin are simply another part of creation in Gen 1:21,[140] although we do see Yahweh punishing members of the heavenly host, who doubtless retain some divine status in many passages, in texts such as Isa 14:12–15 and Isa 24:21–22.

In addition to promoting monotheism, this attitude towards Yahweh's enemies was probably an attempt to emphasise his transcendent nature. Baal's conflict with Yam as described in the Ugaritic texts is "discernibly more anthropomorphic than any biblical descriptions of Yahweh's conflict against cosmic enemies. The Ugaritic texts describe gods locked in hand-to-hand combat."[141] We see similar imagery in some early texts concerning God's heavenly armies (e.g. Judg 5), but it is likely that divinity and anthropomorphism underwent some editing as time and Israelite religion progressed.[142] This may well have had an influence on the way in which later and apocalyptic texts used chaos and monstrous enemies to depict not gods, but earthly empires and worldly powers.[143] The dating of Isa 24–27 has been greatly debated, mostly on account of its proto-apocalyptic nature, but Day's suggestion of an early post-exilic date because the exile is presupposed but the Canaanite Asherim still standing (27:8–9) seems appropriate,[144] and is supported by scholars such as Sweeney, on the basis of the universal tone of the text, the affinities with Second Isaiah, and the citation of other prophets e.g. Hosea and Jeremiah.[145] This setting could explain the reason why earthly powers, a very real danger in the fresh light of the exile, might be described in the terms of an eschatological myth which helped to support the newly present hope for freedom.

[138] Ibid.
[139] Gunkel 1895, p. 88.
[140] Smith 2001, p. 38.
[141] Ibid., p. 175.
[142] Ibid. Gunkel 1895 posits that Job 41:17 [Eng 25] suggests that the other gods tried to fight Leviathan and failed, before Yahweh, p. 85.
[143] See Gunkel 1895, p. 88 and Smith 2001, p. 35.
[144] Day 1985, p. 144.
[145] Sweeney 1988, pp. 39–41.

For a long time scholars felt that Leviathan in Isa 27:1 should be identified with the pagan kingdoms, as it was considered that "the mythological names are code words for the realm of the present, just as Rahab designates Egypt in Ps 87:4 and Isa 30:7".[146] Three current world powers were seen to be represented here,[147] possibly in connection with the kings of the earth from 24:21,[148] and Gunkel argued that the code names meant that "Judaism has deposited its hatred and its scorn, together with its hope and its faith, on the names of these primordial creatures".[149] More recently, exegetes have asserted that we should not be looking for three historical entities here,[150] and Day argues that the Ugaritic counterpart shows that there is only one dragon, which he assumes is symbolic of the current world power, or possibly Egypt, which will be defeated at the end of time.[151] On the other hand, Fishbane argues that those who see Leviathan as historical kingdoms are unnecessarily attempting to demythologize the prophecy.[152] In broad terms, Scholl sees in v. 1 'code speech' for general evil,[153] and following Frye and Macpherson's "principles of metaphor", sea monsters can be continually seen to represent all evil or rebellious persons and nations.[154] In keeping with the universalizing tendency of Isa 24–27, the passage may be transferring Yahweh's anger towards specific enemies onto the whole of created order by using the mythological theme of the return to chaos,[155] but there is no reason to assume that such a symbol as Leviathan could not represent both a real and present enemy and a metahistorical enemy (see e.g. Dan 7, and compare also Rev 12–13). The exile and return were both a personal issue and symbolic of something much greater, and if our dating is correct then Childs is appropriate in saying that it is the "historicizing move of interpreters [which] seeks to provide a specificity that is precisely missing in the biblical text. In fact, it is the representative presentation of earthly human power, locked in deadly conflict against the entrance of God's righteous reign, that is constitutive of the function of these chapters".[156]

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[146] Gunkel 1895, pp. 45–46 (2006, p. 30).
[147] Gunkel 1895, p. 47.
[148] Whitehouse 1905, p. 286.
[149] Gunkel 1895, p. 48 (2006, p. 32). I agree with this sentiment, but it does not seem to require the dragon to be symbolic of world powers.
[150] Hibbard 2006, p. 165.
[151] Day 2000b, p. 106.
[152] Fishbane 2003, p. 57.
[153] Scholl 2000, pp. 151–152.
[154] Frye and Macpherson 2004, p. 82.
[155] Millar 1976, p. 106.
[156] Childs 2001, p. 179.

The Possible Cultic Setting of the Myths

Whether or not the warrior-god was overcoming a divine foe, both the Israelite and Ugaritic texts show that Yahweh (e.g. Ps 93:1) and Baal (*KTU* 1.2.iv.10, 31–32), like Marduk (*En el* IV:28) were proclaimed king as a result of the combat with the dragon.[157] This is in keeping with the fact that divine kingship was often formed in the ancient Near East as a result of a 'cosmic' or 'mythical' act of salvation,[158] and has led to the suggestion that the combat myth was part of an enthronement festival in Ugarit and Israel.[159] There is more evidence for the latter, but Mowinckel argues that the basis of the kingship of a god was often creation in the Near East, and therefore presumes that "the mythical conception of creation as a fight against dragons and against the primeval ocean must have belonged to the ideas of the festival of enthronement from the beginning".[160] There is no agreement on the subject, but it is possible that psalms such as 104, 93, and 29 (which is very like *KTU* 1.4.vii.42–44)[161] functioned as hymns or mythological chants as part of some kind of enthronement ritual.[162] Whilst some deny the existence of such a ritual, Gunkel asserts that "from the very beginning, the myth was a hymn to YHWH. The YHWH-hymn was, therefore, the peculiar place where the dragon myth was customarily cited",[163] which allows for the possibility that the combat myth was used for general worship of god as king. On the other hand, the idea of Yahweh as the only king in 24:21–23, the description of the feast in 25:6[164] and the emphasis on cultic practices in ch. 27 suggest that some form of enthronement cult may be in the background here.

It is generally believed that the Mesopotamians and Hittites recited their versions of the theomachy myth at seasonal festivals, and it is possible that the concept of creation, as both establishment of the universe and continuation of world order, is linked to the

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[157] Marduk is in fact promised the kingship before his battle with Tiamat, but it is on the basis of his victory that he is able to request it, *En el* III:58–64.
[158] Mowinckel 1962, p. 110.
[159] That the Autumn Festival in Israel involved a celebration of victory over chaos waters at creation and enthronement was first argued by Volz in 1912 then (independently) by Mowinckel in 1922.
[160] Ibid., pp. 145–146.
[161] See particularly Kloos 1986.
[162] Miller 1973, p. 36.
[163] Gunkel 2006, p. 59 (1895, p. 88).
[164] Note that Baal organises a feast for the gods as part of his victory over Yam in *KTU* 1.4.VI.44–59, and the Hittite storm god has his own banquet as part of his conflict with Illuyanka in *KBo* III:715–20.

New Year festival in Israel as well. [165] It seems clear that the Baal Cycle is connected with the cycle of the seasons, as Yam would be Baal's rival for power during the winter storms at sea.[166] As sea-farers the people of Ugarit would be particularly aware of the powerful tides of Yam and the victory of Baal when they were calmed every spring.[167] In the Israelite texts, Gunkel claims that the significance of the beasts and birds eating the corpse of Leviathan in Ezek 29:4–5 and 32:4 and Ps 74:14 (see also the righteous eating him in 2 Esdras 6:52 and 1 Enoch 60:7–9, 24) is that he is not being buried properly, and in Ezek 32:6 the earth and springs fill up with Leviathan's blood: "the water is the vanquished enemy. The earth cannot bring forth fruit until the water is driven away, but the water is also the reason for the fertility of the dry land…thus we recognize the reason why the myth so emphatically expresses the feature of the non-burial of the dragon. The reason is the etiological explanation of the natural cycle, an explanation which the myth provides".[168]

Watson suggests that the defeat of the dragon may merely be a motif to demonstrate the power and supremacy of the deity, and argues that the similarity of the language in Isa 27:1 and *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5 points to a later adoption of the image, as an earlier application to Yahweh would have caused it to be adapted by Israelite forms of expression and perhaps given it a more central theological role.[169] It appears just as likely, however, that the motif was retained in quite specific linguistic terms because of its ties with the cult. The experience of a ritual in which "Yahweh slew Leviathan *anew* and repeated the creation event"[170] can be seen in God's sustaining power of Ps 74:12 and in Ps 104:10–18, and the link between his control of the cosmic waters and the provision of rain and fertility is found throughout the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ps 144:12–15; Hab 3:17–18).[171] Gibson argues that it is likely that the Baal Cycle was recited at an agricultural and fertility festival, but points out that any theories which assert that there was a ritual enactment have no basis in the texts, leading him to conclude that we should see these

[165] Day 1985, pp. 17, 45, 82.
[166] See e.g. Kaiser 1959, p. 65f.; Goetze 1969, p. 125 n. 2; de Moor 1971, pp. 141–142; Bernhardt 1978, p. 203 n. p and Day 1985, pp. 9–10.
[167] Gibson 1978, pp. 7–8.
[168] Gunkel 2006, p. 49 (1895, p. 77). Watson 2005 suggests that the uncovered slain in Isa 26:21 may be comparable to the body of Leviathan left in the open to be consumed in Ps 74:14b, p. 330 n. 249.
[169] Watson 2005, pp. 331, 395.
[170] Gottlieb 1980, p. 68.
[171] Day 1985, p. 105.

myths as oral 'formulaic' literature not for cultic performances.[172] Similarly, scholars such as John Gray think it is likely that Isa 24–27 is related to the liturgy of the Autumn festival,[173] but accept that this is very difficult to determine, and Worden notes that just because the Israelites used the Canaanite myths does not mean they also took on their "religious notions and rites".[174] Wyatt accepts that there was a seasonal dimension to the Ugaritic cult, but denies that the Baal Cycle is a literary construct reflecting ritual,[175] on the basis that it is old fashioned to consider myth and ritual inseparable.[176] Whilst I agree with this view, there nevertheless still seems to be the possibility that the theomachy myth in both Ugarit and Israel could have been used as part of a liturgical attempt to praise the patron god, whether as a formal part of a seasonal festival, influenced by the ideas expressed by such a festival, or simply as everyday worship.

The Eschatological Nature of the Myth in Isaiah 27 and Later Traditions

A. Temporality in the Myths

Although the connection with creation places the conflict with the dragon/sea in primordial time, Isa 27:1 is the earliest known example of the theme being projected into the eschaton,[177] and necessitates a discussion of the timing of this myth in general. In the Mesopotamian myths, the present time seems to be the era of the deities, whilst the ancient period of the monstrous enemies (including Tiamat) preceded this.[178] Similarly, Gibson asserts that the people of Ugarit projected back their hopes and fears into the primeval past in the form of combat myths,[179] but de Moor notes that *KTU* 1.82.1 asks for Baal to smite *tnn*, suggesting that the sea monsters continued to be a threat to the people because the victory was not seen as final.[180] The Ugaritic texts suggest that Yam and Mot were seen "not as subjugated foes of the past but as enemies whose struggles

[172] Gibson 1978, p. 6 and n. 4.
[173] Gray 1979, p. 203.
[174] Worden 1953, pp. 276–277.
[175] Wyatt 2002, p. 35.
[176] Wyatt 1986, pp. 378–379.
[177] Day 2000b, p. 105.
[178] Wiggerman, F. A. M. 1992. *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts* (Cuneiform Monographs 1; Groningen: Styx and PP), pp. 207–220, as cited in Smith 2001, p. 28.
[179] Gibson 1978, p. 6.
[180] De Moor 1987, p. 175. He compares the dreaded demon 'Leviathan the Tannin' in Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls (nos. 2:4; 7:7, 9 in Isbell 1975).

with Baal never seem to quite end", as Mot returns after seven years to renew the conflict in *KTU* 1.6.v.8–10 and Yam appears after his defeat in *KTU* 1.4.vii.14.[181] The myths seem to take place in the present, perhaps either as timeless or repetitive, as part of Baal's ongoing work and kingship, and Mark Smith states that there is no comparable Mesopotamian or Israelite text with this idea.[182] However I do not think that this is the case. Leviathan is still alive on the sea bed under Yahweh's control in Amos 9:3, Ps 104:26, Job 3:8, 7:12, 40:25–41:26 [Eng 41:1–34], is lying in streams in Ezek 32:2, and simply subdued in Isa 30:7.[183] Gunkel notes that "whether the dragon is dead or is allowed by the deity to live – the distinction is explained by different views of nature, i.e., whether or not one sees in the sea of the present a continuation of the primordial sea",[184] and the worship of Yahweh as a sustaining force in Ps 104:30 in connection with the theomachy myth[185] implies that the continual existence of the chaos dragon is part of the plan. Such texts, Levenson suggests, "share with the story of the Flood a conviction that the habitable, life-sustaining world exists now only because of God's continuing commitment to the original command. Absent that command, the sinister forces of chaos would surge forth again".[186]

On the other hand, Isa 27:1 may be looking to a future conflict because Yahweh "has not yet exercised complete mastery over the cosmos",[187] but that day will come at the end of time. This recapitulation of primal time, when 'Urzeit wird Endzeit', is part of Mowinckel's 'formal principal of eschatology', in which "the world at the end of the ages is described in terms of the first creation out of the original chaos at the beginning".[188] It is commonly accepted that the Ugaritic texts are completely devoid of eschatology, and that the eschatology of the Hebrew Bible was unique to the history and religious experience of the Israelites,[189] although it may well have been influenced by Babylon, Egypt and Zoroastrianism.[190] On this basis Černý raises the question why eschatology only arose in Israel from the cultic festival it apparently borrowed from

[181] Smith 2001, p. 28 n. 5.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Gunkel 1895, pp. 81–86.
[184] Ibid., pp. 86–87.
[185] Miller 1986, p. 72.
[186] Levenson 1988, p. 16.
[187] Smith 2001, p. 39.
[188] Mowinckel 1922, p. 229.
[189] Frost 1952a, pp. 74–75.
[190] Černý 1948, p. 45.

others,[191] and argues that we therefore cannot relate eschatology to enthronement rituals.[192] Whilst we can argue that monotheism developed only in Israel within borrowed conceptions of divinity, perhaps it is better to assume that such eschatological passages have simply drawn on the same ideas as the enthronement psalms,[193] although Cross suggests that looking to the future was present in the cult, where "the primordial events…are recited or re-enacted…to actualize the 'eschatological' Kingdom of God."[194] Similarly, Mowinckel states that the prophets used the ideas of the enthronement festival, and that "when eschatology had emerged, it was the restoration of Israel and the fulfilment of the eschatological hope to which the community looked forward and of which it was reminded at the autumn festival".[195]

B. Israelite Eschatological Development

In addition to Isa 27:1, we find an eschatological use of the combat myth in Isa 51:11,[196] Pss 68:31, 1 Enoch 60:24–25, 4 Ezra 6:52, 2 Apoc Bar 29:4, and Rev 12–13, in which the arrangement of ideas may owe something to Isa 26–27,[197] and the beast with seven heads combines the features and heads of the beasts from Dan 7 (and probably harks back to earlier mythology).[198] Gunkel posits that because we cannot explain from our knowledge of Israelite history how the myth transferred from the primordial time to the end time, we must assume that there was some understanding of eschatology in the pre-Israelite myth.[199] However, from our understanding of Israelite religion we can suggest why the eschatological dimension came to be part of the myth. Whereas the Baal Cycle implies that the conflict with chaos had to be repeated, Isa 27:1 shows the final and permanent defeat of the cosmic enemy, and Yahweh's complete victory.[200] Fohrer suggests that the mythological motif functioned only as a correlative aid, "because at the

[191] Ibid., p. 46.
[192] Ibid., p. 73.
[193] Mowinckel 1962, p. 111.
[194] Cross 1966, p. 15.
[195] Mowinckel 1956, p. 142.
[196] And perhaps Ezek 29, 32 and Dan 7.
[197] Court 1979, p. 112.
[198] Ibid., pp. 123–124. Watson 2005 also argues that the futuristic and apocalyptic-symbolic use of the dragon in Isa 27:1 can be seen as an advance in the direction of Rev 12:9, where the dragon is identified with Satan, p. 331. For the use of Leviathan in literature from the Second Temple Period see Whitney 2006, pp. 31–92.
[199] Gunkel 1895, p. 87.
[200] Lang 2002, pp. 63, 73.

eschaton something utterly unheard of and scarcely conceivable will take place",[201] whilst others see not an eschatological victory but the supremacy of Yahweh at both temporal poles.[202] The use of the theomachy myth would certainly have reminded the Israelites what their deity was capable of, and the eschatological dimension ensured that the "myth now articulates the shape of hope, not just its ancient memory".[203] The drawing in Judaism of esoteric names from the myth in Isa 27:1 shows it to be the beginning of apocalyptic interpretation of prophetic literature,[204] and the abstract, eschatological nature of Leviathan here is what demonstrates the theological developments made since the Canaanite myths.[205]

Černý argues that we should understand the two most important characteristics of Yahweh in the eschatological Day of the Lord as furious and righteous, traits he shares with other deities in the Ancient Near East.[206] However, Hibbard notes that the point in Isa 27:1 is "not simply that a primordial pattern is replicated in the future, but that in defeating chaos moral order is restored", and that this responds to the lack of righteous order in 26:7–19.[207] This seems to be an understanding of the combat myth which is extremely significant and completely unique to the Israelites, as their eschatological salvation added a moral dimension to the traditions which they inherited from the Canaanites, for whom the combat myth offered no personal victory.[208] The compassion and ethical integrity of the God of the Israelites is shown in the fact that "between creation and chaos, life and death, there stands neither human righteousness (which continues to be deficient) nor God's intrinsic unchangeability (which…many…biblical stories belie), but only God's covenantal faithfulness".[209] In addition, another dimension is added to the Canaanite myth which may help to explain its adoption by the Israelites in proto-apocalyptic and later texts. Whilst Baal's defeat of Yam was necessary as part of establishing order for nature and society, there is little to suggest that it was ever part of a divine plan. Yahweh's ability to recreate the primordial conflict resulting in his final victory, in a text which announces his eternal kingship over not only the Israelites but all

[201] Fohrer 1970, p. 89.
[202] Fishbane 2003, p. 36.
[203] Ibid., pp. 56–57.
[204] Gunkel 2006, p. 89.
[205] Watson 2005, p. 391.
[206] Černý 1948, p. 66 and n. 81.
[207] Hibbard 2006, pp. 164–165.
[208] Robinson 1956, p. 46.
[209] Levenson 1988, p. 14.

peoples, demonstrates his control over both ends of the temporal spectrum and renews his people's faith in his commitment and constancy.

Chapter Three: The Israelite and Canaanite Backgrounds to the Holy Mountain and the Divine Banquet

An Introduction to Isaiah 25

Chapter 25 is the shortest of this group of chapters, and the change of tone and content in v. 1 has sometimes led to the conclusion that it should be considered as a separate section from ch. 24.[1] The two chapters do appear to have connections, however, which are "primarily discernible through a shared emphasis on God's activity on Zion" (e.g. enthronement, banquet),[2] and the references to the anonymous city in 24:10 and 25:2. For a while it was the *communis opinio* that 25:1–5 was a secondary interpolation,[3] and some scholars still hold that 25:6–8 should follow directly on from 24:21–23.[4] Rudolph first challenged this view, however, suggesting that vv. 1–5 were composed for their current setting on the grounds that v. 4 presupposes Yahweh reigning on Zion and so must link to 24:23,[5] and Millar agrees on stylistic grounds that 24:1–25:9 were composed by same author.[6] Beuken also thinks that vv. 6–8 are directly connected to vv. 1–5, arguing that a two-dimensional temporal perspective present in 24:17–20 and 21–23 can also be seen in 25:1–5 and 6–8.[7] In addition, Childs' view that 25:1–5 is well shaped to fit its position in the chapters seems accurate,[8] as the unnamed city in v. 2 connects with 24:10, and the apparent use of Isa 4:5b–6 by 25:4–5 fits well with the way in which Isa 24–27 reworks Isaianic traditions.[9] On the other hand, some suggest that the punishing of earthly and heavenly powers in 24:21–23 is the newest part of the tradition of Yahweh's intervention,[10] whilst Plöger believes that both 24:21–23 and 25:6–8 are separate, independent traditions.[11] However, he seems to agree with Beuken's idea of two-dimensional time, as he views 24:22a as the disarmament of God's opponents from

[1] Duhm 1922, pp. 148–149; Procksch 1930, pp. 306ff.
[2] Hibbard 2006, p. 71.
[3] Duhm 1922, pp. 148–149; Procksch 1930, pp. 306ff.; Lindblom 1938. Cf. Johnson 1988, p. 57.
[4] E.g. Delcor 1979, p. 122, and Hibbard 2006, p. 72, who states that vv. 6–8 have no thematic connection with vv. 1–5.
[5] Rudolph 1933, pp. 34–35.
[6] Millar 1976, p. 43.
[7] Beuken 2000b, pp. 139–141.
[8] Childs 2001, p. 184.
[9] See Sweeney 1988, pp. 45–46.
[10] Amsler 1989, p. 271.
[11] Plöger 1968, pp. 59–60.

v. 21, but v. 22b as their final punishment which is distinct in time. Since 25:6–8 concerns the effect on the nations whose rulers have been disarmed, he asserts that there is a lapse of time between the banquet and the disarmament, so the banquet coincides chronologically with the final judgment on the enemies.[12] Despite disagreements over authorship, it is clear that the themes of judgment and enthronement in 24:21–23 are connected to those of redemption and feasting in 25:6–8, whether or not they were joined by a redactor, and create a sequence unparalleled in the Hebrew Bible in events and emphases.[13]

The Background to the Israelite Traditions concerning the Mountain

A. Mt. Zion in Israelite Tradition

The description in Isa 25:6 opens with the claim that Yahweh will prepare a banquet 'on this mountain' (cf. v. 10 and 27:13). I will begin by discussing the Israelite traditions associated with this mountain, understood as Mt. Zion in connection with 24:23. Brueggemann sees Zion in this verse as "the precise antithesis of the city made a heap" in v. 2,[14] and the emphasis on the mountain here is in keeping with the "focus on Zion as the ultimate locus of redemption" found throughout Isaiah.[15] Whilst it has been argued that the significance of Zion in this verse accounts for the exemption of Israel from the great eschatological punishments which is not apparent in the opening, universal verses of ch. 24,[16] it seems that Isa 24–27 does include the Israelites in its judgment, but that Zion here represents the special status they will always hold in the eyes of Yahweh (cf. 24:23; 25:9; 27:6, 9, 12–13). In 1956 Rohland set out what are commonly accepted as the four motifs of the Zion tradition: that Zion is the peak of Zaphon, the highest mountain (see Ps 48:3–4 [Eng 2–3]), that the river of paradise flows from it (see Ps 46:5 [Eng 4]), and that it was the setting for the defeat of both the chaos waters (see e.g. Ps 46:3–4 [Eng 2–3]) and the kings and the nations (see Pss 46:7; 48:5–7

[12] Ibid., p. 60.
[13] Hibbard 2006, p. 75; Brueggemann 1998, p. 189.
[14] Brueggemann 1998, p. 198.
[15] Hagelia 2003, p. 87.
[16] Plöger 1968, p. 62.

[Eng 4–6]; 76:4–7).[17] This combines the celebration of Yahweh's kingship on his mountain with rejoicing over the security of Zion under his protection.[18] The latter two traditions, seen in these chapters primarily in 24:21–23 and 27:1, have been discussed above in connection with the tradition of Yahweh as the Divine Warrior and victor over the sea monster.

The association of Zion with Zaphon (to which I will dedicate more time when looking at the Ugaritic myths) can be observed most clearly in the Hebrew Bible in Ps 48.[19] Clifford refers to this psalm as one of the 'songs of Zion' and claims that it demonstrates the belief in the mountain's inviolability,[20] a theme he also sees in 2 Sam 5:6, in which the blind and lame seem reminiscent to me of the poor and needy of Isa 26:6.[21] In addition, the psalm connects the 'holy mountain' (v. 2 [Eng 1]) with Zion, Zaphon and kingship (v. 3 [Eng 2]), and the assembled kings of nations (v. 5 [Eng 4]). V. 7 [Eng 6] also describes the kings' anguish as like a woman about to give birth, which is very similar to the words of Isa 26:17. The idea of a sacred mountain is frequent in the Hebrew Bible. Mt. Carmel and Mt. Tabor were sacred from ancient times, but we do not know what deity was believed to reign there (Ps 89:13 [Eng 12]; Jer 46:18; Hos 5:1), and Mt. Gerizim was the setting of blessings proclaimed in Deut 27.[22] Clifford notes that Exod 15:17 mentions the 'mount of heritage', but he considers the passage to be too early to refer to Zion, and believes that it must have originally meant the hill country of Canaan.[23] Whilst it seems unlikely that this text is earlier than Zion traditions, nevertheless "some psalms appear deliberately to invoke the Sinai traditions of revelation in storm. This theophany language, at home in the traditions of Mount Sinai, was utilized in the Jerusalem cultus to impress upon the worshipper that the God of Sinai reveals himself anew on Mount Zion".[24] This can be supported by the apparently universalist recreation of the meal which the elders have before God on Mt. Sinai in Exod 24:9–11,

[17] Rohland 1956, p. 142.
[18] Cf. Isa 9:3; 24:8; Zeph 2:15, Ollenburger 1987, p. 46.
[19] The Aramaic version of Ps 20, written in Demotic on the Papyrus Amherst Egyptian 63.xi.11–19, has the term *ṣpn*, which suggests that the reference to Zion in v. 3 of the Masoretic Text may have been to Zaphon in an older, and possibly Northern, tradition, Smith 2002, p. 89 and 70, n. 22 and 23. For a translation of the psalm see Steiner, R. C. 1997. 'The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script', in Hallo and Younger 1997, pp. 309–327.
[20] Clifford 1972, pp. 142–143.
[21] Ibid., p. 142 n. 61. Of course, in the former text Zion will not be captured, whereas in Isa 25–26 the image is of revival *after* capture.
[22] Ibid., pp. 134–135.
[23] Ibid., pp. 138–139. This is not the consensus view, however.
[24] Ibid., p. 154.

which we find in Isa 25:6. I shall discuss the relationship between these two passages below, but it is clear that there are echoes of the events on Sinai in the description concerning Zion.[25]

B. The Holy Mountain as the Moral Garden

Psalm 24 tells us that those who wish to ascend Yahweh's hill must have moral integrity to do so (vv. 3–4), which shows that he is judge as well as creator (vv. 1–2),[26] he has sovereign rule over both nature and the moral realm.[27] This may well be connected with the way in which God's mountain became the place from which the rivers of paradise flowed (Rohland's second motif of Zion).[28] Ezekiel 28:13–14 is the only place in the Hebrew Bible in which the 'garden of God' and the 'holy mountain of God' are unmistakably associated, and it is possible that the passage was not composed by a single author and so we should be cautious when making this connection.[29] However, Kaiser links Ezek 28 with Gen 2 as texts which describe paradise, the dwelling place of God in the garden/on the mountain which is the source of life-giving waters,[30] and Clifford asserts that Zaphon in Isa 14:13 is parallel not to the mount of assembly, but to the 'high clouds'.[31] Although it seems to me that Zaphon here is parallel to the mount of assembly, this still allows for the clouds in v. 14 to refer to the same place, and Clifford relates this to Job 26:7, suggesting that Zaphon should be understood as 'heavens', which would surely suggest that the mountain was understood as truly God's abode and paradise.[32]

Wildberger proposed that the pilgrimage of the nations should be considered as the fifth motif of the Zion tradition.[33] Whilst others disagree with this idea,[34] it is clear that the Biblical concept of many peoples coming to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh and

[25] Clements, p. 208.
[26] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I notes that 'to judge' in Hebrew in general terms means "setting conditions on earth in the right order" which, as noted above, can be understood as a form of creation, p. 108.
[27] Johnson 1967, p. 73. Vv. 7 and 9 also tell the gates to open for the king, similar to Isa 26:2.
[28] See Speiser 1964, p. 17 for an attempt to give specific geographic locations for the rivers of paradise, and also Neiman 1977, pp. 321–328.
[29] Clifford 1972, p. 172 n. 94.
[30] Kaiser 1962, pp. 107–112.
[31] Clifford 1972, pp. 161–162 n. 85.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Wildberger 1957, pp. 62–81.
[34] Ollenburger 1987, pp. 15–16.

receive salvation finds expression in the new order described in Isa 25:6–8, in which Israelites and nations sit side by side, "the nations being characterized by death and God's people by the misunderstanding of its very right to exist (v. 8: 'disgrace')".[35] We find a very similar description of nations travelling to God's mountain and being judged in Isa 2:2–4 (= Mic 4:1–3), and perhaps the foretelling here of the end of all wars is a more limited account of the end of death in 25:8. Plöger claimed that there is "a measure of inconsistency in referring to many nations in connection with the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Mount Zion (Isa 2), when according to 24:6 there are only a few survivors from the cosmic catastrophe", but this seems to miss the point of Isa 24–27.[36] Passages such as Zech 9 speak of a return to Jerusalem, peace and restoration which is for the Israelites alone,[37] but Isa 24–27 is an account of universal judgment, and therefore in 25:8 "not just a remnant is redeemed, but the chapter recounts the salvation of all peoples who share in the celebration of God's new order when death is banished forever".[38] Day also argues that Ps 87:4 shows a vision of the nations partaking in an eschatological worldwide worship with Zion as its centre, which he compares to Isa 2:2–4 and 25:8, as well as the Zion traditions in Zech 8:22–23, Jer 3:17 and Ps 47:10 [Eng 9].[39]

The Background to the Israelite Traditions concerning the Banquet

A. The Joyful Banquet

Hibbard sees a connection between Isa 25 and Isa 52:7–10, on the grounds that both show salvation through the deliverance of Zion (25:9; 52:7, 10, also God reigns in 24:23 and 52:7) which will affect all people (25:6–10; 52:10), and both refer to singing (25:1–5; 52:8) and rest (25:10; 52:9). The difference between the passages, he notes, is that while the nations are observers in Isa 52, they participate in the meal in 25:6.[40] The participation in the banquet is a seminal part of Isa 24–27, as supported by Polaski, who

[35] Beuken 2000b, p. 151.
[36] Plöger 1968, p. 61.
[37] Hanson 1979, p. 323.
[38] Childs 2001, p. 173.
[39] Day 1985, pp. 90–91.
[40] Hibbard 2006, pp. 88–89.

affirms that the sequence in 24:21–25:12 has a chiastic structure which focuses on the feast.[41] Discrepancies in tense and person might argue against this, as does the fact that whilst 25:1–5 may be a hymn of praise, vv. 9–10a do not seem to be, and the judgment of Moab in 25:10b–12 is surely not comparable to the punishment of the earthly kings and heavenly host in 24:21–23. Nevertheless, there is certainly a clear pattern of punishment, praise and protection surrounding v. 6. Hibbard also disagrees with the opinion that there is a chiasm here, but he does consider the banquet to be the emphasis, because even though it "is not the only positive note sounded in this sequence, the additional acts of salvation on behalf of the people are presented in the context of the banquet",[42] and Plöger states that we expect no further development after the climax of the meal.[43]

It is a common view that the joyful banquet of the nations has no parallel in the Hebrew Bible,[44] but there is certainly evidence of traditions in the background. Beuken suggests that there is related metaphorical language in Isa 12:3's drawing water from the well,[45] and Ps 23:5 describes God preparing a table for the pious.[46] Although the latter is clearly only for an individual, it probably still represents an ideal for all the faithful. Normally מִשְׁתֶּה refers to drinking, usually to wine, but more generally it can signify a banquet or a festival in which there is eating and drinking; "C'est le *symposion* des Grecs. Ici *mištēh šemanîm* doit se traduire 'festin de viands grasses'".[47] A major banquet of the time would have been characterised by the consumption of wine and rich foods,[48] and the repetition in v. 6 confirms the generous and bountiful nature of the meal.[49] It is perhaps also significant that wine is mentioned in this verse as a contrast to the earth's desolation in 24:4–13 depicted by the absence or bitterness of new wine.[50] Such a feast would also have been used to mark an important development or change in the cult, as we can see from Melchizedek's instatement in Gen 14:18.[51]

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[41] Polaski 2001, p. 162.
[42] Hibbard 2006, p. 75.
[43] Plöger 1968, p. 61.
[44] Hagelia 2003, p. 85. He claims that Israel was not invited to the banquet with the foreign nations, but this does not take into account the presence of 'all peoples' in v. 6, and 'his people' in v. 8.
[45] Beuken 2000b, p. 147.
[46] Korpel 1990, p. 413.
[47] Delcor 1979, p. 123.
[48] Ross 1962, p.348.
[49] Clements 1980, pp. 208–209.
[50] Ollenburger 1987, p. 47.
[51] McCree 1926, p. 121.

On the other hand, the feast was also a part of ordinary life in Israel, in which a meal was prepared for the poor when healing or emancipation occurred (Ps 22:27 [Eng 26], the following verses also show universal acclamation of God's kingship), and in general "nourishment in the face of enemies is a powerful gesture of support and care" (2 Sam 17:27–29; Ps 23:5).[52] The food and drink in 25:6 is more than sustenance, however, as it represents life in contrast to the veil and covering in v. 7, which represent death.[53] Whilst these symbols are usually understood to be a universal vision of hope, Caquot put forward an alternative view. He proposed that מְמֻחָים in v. 6 comes from מָחָה meaning 'to efface', because the standard philological derivation from מֹחַ, 'marrow', cannot be justified, and asserted that שְׁמָרִים מְזֻקָּקִים should not be seen as dregs, purified, but the 'pure dregs', and therefore something disgusting.[54] In addition, he translated 'les visages voilés' in v. 7,[55] representing those who were blind to Yahweh and his victories, so that "le verset 7 ne signifie pas que Dieu éliminera toute cause de deuil, symbolisé par le le voile, mais des hommes aveuglés, des 'infidèles', en qui force est de reconnaître les représentants des nations de la terre convoqués au banquet". In the light of this, he saw it as appropriate to read the Hebrew in v. 8 as 'death has swallowed' (which can be compared with the 'death has prevailed and swallowed' of the Septuagint), representing the troubles which the Israelites had faced in the past and the punishment awaiting those who had caused them, and so "au lieu d'un banquet de victoire le Seigneur leur servira un festin dérisoire, qui représente une variation sur le thème de la coupe de colère, et à cette occasion les anéantira".[56] Whilst this argument is sound, Caquot does not account for the rich food offered, which is clearly not a disgusting punishment, or for the universal and positive outlook which Isa 24–27 offers for all nations in the time after the final judgment.

[52] Brueggemann 1998, p. 199.
[53] Herbert 1973, p. 152.
[54] Caquot 1989, pp. 111–113.
[55] For the use of interesting grammatical forms applied for alliterative effect here see Williamson 1995, p. 6.
[56] Caquot 1989, pp. 115–118.

B. The Cultic Banquet

The great banquet of Isa 25:6 in conjunction with the defeat of enemies and the commencement of God's rule on Zion has led many scholars to state that we have a "clear connection between the reign of Yahweh and its celebration with rejoicing in the festival cult" in this text.[57] It is possible to see here an annual celebration of the kingship of Yahweh which demonstrates his choice and protection of Zion (cf. Isa 9:2 [Eng 3]; Zeph 2:15),[58] and Hibbard suggests that these verses have a relationship with the enthronement psalms but does not believe that the banquet for all the peoples was derived from them.[59] Whether or not there was an enthronement festival of Yahweh in Israel is still debated, but it is clear that we have enthronement traditions in the Hebrew Bible, especially in Pss 47, 93, and 96–99, which some feel represent a cultic day of God at which he ascended his throne to bring about the salvation of the people.[60] In place of an annual feast, Gressmann understands Isa 25:6 as a coronation banquet at which Yahweh is crowned at the end of time,[61] and Wildberger compares the sacrifices and celebration at the coronation of Saul in 1 Sam 11:15,[62] although it could be seen as the event towards which the festival looked. Fieldhouse asserts that festivals often "occur at vital points in the human and cosmic lifecycle and themselves incorporate a cycle of events which represent or reflect the society's philosophy of history",[63] and it is clear that a key feature of Yahweh's kingship, and the proposed enthronement festival, was the defeat of the chaos waters used to show his power and supremacy.[64]

There is little evidence in the Hebrew Bible of royal feasting in connection with military victory,[65] but we do have a Megiddo ivory from 1350–1150 BCE which depicts the king feasting whilst music is played and prisoners are brought before him, suggesting a celebratory banquet following a victory,[66] and the concept of a victory feast may well

[57] Ollenburger 1987, p. 47; Day 1985, p. 148; Hibbard 2006, p. 83.
[58] Ollenburger 1987, p. 46.
[59] Hibbard 2006, p. 85.
[60] See Mowinckel 1922.
[61] Gressmann 1905, p. 277.
[62] Wildberger 1977, pp. 378–379.
[63] Fieldhouse 1986, p.92.
[64] E.g. Welten 1982, pp. 129–146; Amsler 1989, p. 271; Hibbard 2006, p. 85.
[65] Hibbard 2006, p. 83 n. 56.
[66] Pritchard 1969, no. 332.

be present in our text.[67] The gathering of the nations and the idea of a victory banquet has led some to link Isa 25 with the sacrificial feast of enemies in Ezek 39:17–20. Although the sacrifice is eaten by the birds and beasts, Gressmann understood the feast as a transformation of the eschatological, joyous feast,[68] and Clifford agreed that "possibly, the banquet for the victorious on the mountain and the slaughter-sacrifice of the enemies are one and the same – the celebration of the life and the kingship of the deity on the mountain site of his temple".[69] Priest argues that the emphasis in Ezekiel is on the slaughter, not the communion of people and their participation in the meal,[70] but Charlesworth notes that 'sacrifice' in 1 Enoch 62:12 is literally 'memorial feast',[71] and others see in passages such as Zech 9:9–17 the combination of the judgment of enemies, their slaughter, and the feast of the redeemed,[72] so it is possible these ideas were linked in the Israelite mind and cult.

It has been suggested that the Israelite cult also linked the presence of God as king in Zion with the Autumn festival on the basis of passages such as Jer 8:19–21,[73] and certainly the Autumn festival which has often been proposed has much in common with the establishment of Yahweh's reign which we find in Isa 24–27.[74] Johnson affirms that – "it is generally agreed that the festival in question must have been the last and most important of the three great harvest festivals of the Israelite year, i.e. 'The Feast' *par excellence*" (cf. Judg 21:19; 1 Kgs 8:2, 12:32) which is the earlier 'Feast of Ingathering' (Exod 23:16; 34:22) and the later 'Feast of Tabernacles/Booths' (Lev 23:34–36, 39–44; Deut 16:13–16).[75] Although no study has succeeded in reconstructing the nature of the Israelite New Year festival,[76] it is generally accepted that it was a part of the Autumnal harvest festival which took place 'in the going out of the year' (Exod 23:16) or 'at the turn of the year' (Exod 34:22), a view supported by the Gezer Calendar which begins its monthly order of agricultural operations with 'Ingathering'.[77] Although this may present a difficulty to some, as the festival is at the beginning of the year and at the end, it

[67] Millar 1976, pp. 112–113.
[68] Gressmann 1905, p. 141.
[69] Clifford 1972, p. 177.
[70] Priest 1992, p. 235.
[71] Charlesworth 1983, p. 44.
[72] Hanson 1979, p. 316; Priest 1992, p. 236.
[73] Ollenburger 1987, p. 47.
[74] See Johnson 1967, p.108.
[75] Ibid., p. 55.
[76] Morgan 1974, p. 112.
[77] Johnson 1967, pp. 56–57.

appears not only possible but likely that it marked the point at which one year ended and the new one began.[78] As time progressed, this festival became known and remembered as Tabernacles, and it "is by this name that the feast became a symbol of the great eschatological hope of the nations".[79] We can see this from Zech 14:16–19, a text which many compare with Isa 25:6–8,[80] and which contains the compulsory pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles. The nations are told that if they do not go to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh as king they will get no rain, and –"it seems reasonable to infer that such an eschatological picture…is based upon what was already the established complex of ideas associated with this festival in the form which had been current in Jerusalem" i.e. that Tabernacles was connected with the gift of rain and the worship of Yahweh as universal king.[81] The celebration of the feast of Tabernacles can be understood, then, as the modification of the pilgrimage to Zion and the great banquet,[82] with the eschatologizing aspects as either a late development or an older tradition connected with the ancient practice of water-drawing and God's gift of rain.[83] Ulfgard suggests that Zech 14:16–19 and Isa 25:6 may be the basis for such an eschatological understanding, and that John 7:37–38, in which the water of life is connected with the festival, can be seen as early evidence of it.[84] Such passages, then, constitute "nothing less than the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; 18:18–19): the blessing of all the nations".[85]

C. The Covenantal Banquet

That the festal banquet can be understood as the fulfilment of a promise is supported by the common view that we have a covenant meal in v. 6. The sharing of a meal is an effective way of celebrating a reconciliation and general bonding,[86] and McCree highlights the special significance it would have for the Israelites: "to the nomad

[78] See Day 1990, pp. 67–69, and below, ch. 5.
[79] Armerding 2003, p. 303.
[80] E.g. Ibid.; Ulfgard 1998, p. 274. In the post-exilic period the first of Tishri was a memorial day to be celebrated with the sounding of a trumpet or horn (Lev 23:24–25; Num 29:1–6), Johnson 1967, p. 57, which may help to explain why we have a trumpet blowing in Isa 27:13.
[81] Johnson 1967, p. 59
[82] Plöger 1968, p.91.
[83] Rain was considered to be released from the cosmic sea at Yahweh's discretion for the help or destruction of mankind, and the 'bronze sea' in the Solomonic temple may have been a replica of this and played a part in the cultic ritual (1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Kgs 25:13), Johnson 1967, pp. 59–60.
[84] Ulfgard 1998, p. 274.
[85] Armerding 2003, p. 312.
[86] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 358.

or to the semi-nomad or even to the descendants of nomadic tribes the mention of food immediately suggests a covenant relationship between the partakers".[87] The setting of v. 6 may also be an important factor, as Hagelia argues that v. 9 is a confession in response to vv. 6–8, expressing 'spiritual surrender' to Yahweh and confirming the covenantal nature of the text.[88] However, Hibbard notes that vv. 9–10a are part of an Isaian exegetical tradition concerning waiting and salvation, although these verses are the only example in which the nations have a positive and active role, not merely a subservient one.[89] This latter point is probably connected to the fact that, if a covenant is being made here, it is made with all peoples, which Polaski claims (on the basis of Gen 29, Judg 14 and 2 Sam 3) is linked to "the occasional use of מִשְׁתֶּה in the Hebrew Bible to signal an ethnic meeting-ground".[90] The covenant meal is the idea most commonly seen in vv. 6–8, and is a tradition known from ancient Near Eastern texts such as the Mari documents ARM 8:13 and Amarna letters EA 162:22–25, but Hibbard contends that apart from the meal there are no shared themes or language.[91] We also find such themes in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Gen 26:26–33; 31:43–54; Josh 9:11–15; 2 Sam 3:12–21), and some scholars see a relation to the motif in Deut 28:1–14, 30:1–20,[92] and Neh 8:9–12 (the renewal of the covenant post exile).[93] In Isa 55:1–5 we find a banquet for the hungry and an eternal covenant at Zion,[94] which J. J. M. Clifford calls "an instance of the form of invitation to a feast where life, or proximity to the deity, is proffered…proximity to the deity in the deity's shrine [at Zion]".[95]

Many scholars consider Exod 24:1–2, 9–11 to be an early account of a covenant meal between Yahweh and Israel on the mountain of God.[96] The most ancient part of the tradition is probably the seventy unnamed elders who ascend the mountain,[97] and Nicholson argues that the most significant aspect of the passage is that they survive

[87] McCree 1926, p. 120.
[88] Hagelia 2003, p. 92.
[89] This tradition includes passages from Isa 33, 49, 51, 59, 50 and 64, Hibbard 2006, pp. 109–110.
[90] Polaski 2001, p. 166.
[91] Hibbard 2006, p. 77.
[92] Steffen 2006, p. 2.
[93] Priest 1992, p. 235.
[94] Hagelia 2003, pp. 90–91. He also sees Isa 28:15–18 as related to Isa 24–27, because we see a curse, a covenant, and the abolishment of death.
[95] Clifford 1983, p. 91 n. 48.
[96] Lloyd 1990, p. 188.
[97] Noth 1972, pp. 162, 179.

seeing God.[98] It is the oldest mountain theophany, and he calls it "the theophany tradition par excellence in the Old Testament",[99] even though there is much agreement among scholars that vv. 1–2, 9–11, and 3–8 were originally independent and combined by a later redactor.[100] The two passages can then be seen as two different accounts of the ratification of the covenant, the first in vv. 3–8 concerning sacrifice and blood rites and the second in vv. 9–11 describing a covenant meal.[101] Nicholson, however, does not see a covenant feast in these verses, because he feels that the emphasis in the passage is on the theophany and its survival and there is no specific mention of a covenant, and so he concludes that the eating and drinking before God is just standard cultic rejoicing.[102] On the other hand most do understand Exod 24:9–11 as representing a covenant meal,[103] which can be seen as a tradition affecting Isa 25:6. Millar notes that there is minimal thematic similarity between the text in Exodus and that in Isaiah,[104] and they differ in that there is no covenant ratification in the latter,[105] unless we take Polaski's view that the broken covenant from 24:5 is being ratified anew here, which seems unlikely.[106] In addition, we do not have the word for a covenant in ch. 25, which makes it difficult to call it a covenant text, but the people accept Yahweh as God and he announces what he will do for them, i.e. a promise.[107]

The banquet in Isa 25:6 is commonly seen as enlarging on the earlier meal in Exod 24:9–11, as well as concluding the celebration of Yahweh's enthronement,[108] and we can see the former evoking the latter in the motifs of the elders (Isa 24:23; Exod 24:9), the glory of God (Isa 24:23; Exod 24:16–17) and the partaking of food on the holy mountain (Isa 25:6; Exod 24:11).[109] Watson also notes the possibility that Isa 26:20 contains an echo of the tradition in Exod 12.[110] The difference between the two texts is their temporal perspective, so we see God's revelation to the elders at both the founding

[98] Nicholson 1986, p. 130.
[99] Nicholson 1974, p. 93, see also Nicholson 1975, pp. 69–79.
[100] Nicholson 1986, pp. 121–122.
[101] Nicholson 1974, p. 79.
[102] Nicholson 1986, pp. 126–131.
[103] E.g. Hagelia 2003, pp. 79–80.
[104] Millar 1976, p. 37.
[105] Hibbard 2006, p. 79.
[106] Polaski 2001, p. 166.
[107] Hagelia 2003, p. 89.
[108] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 358.
[109] Hibbard 2006, p. 78. See also Kaiser 1962, p. 193.
[110] Watson 2005, p. 329.

of the nation and in the final time,[111] suggesting that the later passage is an eschatological reinterpretation of the Exodus pattern.[112] With this idea as support, I agree with Hibbard's proposal that "both meals function as rites of passage resulting in the participants' change of status", in that the people in Exod 24 now have covenantal status, whereas in Isa 25 the "meal inaugurates a new era of relationship between God and the nations, one in which God moves beyond mere judgment".[113]

Doyle asserts that "the notion of covenant as a means of expressing Israel's relationship with YHWH is often presented in the OT as a metaphor for marriage", and thus sees the breaking of the covenant in Isa 24:5 as the subsequent experience of widowhood, and the banquet in 25:6 as the wedding banquet for reconciliation between husband and adulterous wife.[114] He argues that death in v. 8 is not the loss of life, but the 'devouring curse' of 24:6 because adultery means widowhood,[115] and notes that Isa 26:13 confesses being 'ruled over' by or 'married to' other gods.[116] Because of the similarity of the roots בָּלַע 'to swallow' and בָּעַל 'to husband', "the act of 'swallowing up' death is to be understood as a reference to the restoration of marital status: YHWH is going to be his people's husband once again in place of death", and this includes the act of restoring marital status by providing food, future, comfort, and dignity for his people.[117] Doyle claims that vv. 6–9 call to attention the people's relation to Yahweh in a metaphorical transition from widowhood to marriage, which was considered to be a covenant between man and wife.[118]

The relationship and possible covenant with Yahweh helps to explain why the Messianic banquet is sometimes represented as a wedding banquet in conjunction with kingship, vindication for the righteous and the pilgrimage of the nations, such as we find in Isa 54:5–55:5.[119] Whilst these traditions may have affected the thoughts behind Isa 24–27, there does not seem to be enough evidence for viewing Isa 25:6 as a marriage

[111] Clements 1980, p. 206.
[112] Scholl 2000, p. 82. He also notes that the Exodus text emphasises the partaking of the meal, while the Isaiah text accents the amazing menu, p. 79.
[113] Hibbard 2006, p. 79.
[114] Doyle 2003, p. 173.
[115] Ibid., p. 175 n. 39.
[116] Ibid., p. 178.
[117] Ibid., p. 176.
[118] Doyle 2000, pp. 256–257.
[119] Smith 1992, p. 790.

banquet, and Hibbard argues that there is no covenant here at all. He suggests that the "textual and ideological world of Exodus 24" has been evoked, but that perhaps Isa 24:5 is a clue that we should not think of the relationship between God and Israel as a covenant any more because it is now with all the nations, even though Israel will always be special (24:23; 25:8).[120] A pointed lack of covenant does seem appropriate here, and in keeping with the seemingly deliberately anonymous city to allow for some open reinterpretation. Perhaps the essential understanding of 25:6 is not greatly affected by whichever tradition is considered to be in the foreground,[121] as they have all contributed to the picture: "the meal on Zion, the banquet of YHWH which is an imperial fete, a coronation ritual, a covenant meal and sacrifice, is the future of all YHWH's people, indeed all the people on the earth".[122] Nevertheless, it seems most clear that Isa 25:6 would suggest to its audience a sacrificial feast in connection with the enthronement of Yahweh, which had great significance for the people due to its background in the Canaanite celebratory feasts following cosmic victory.

The Canaanite Traditions concerning the Mountain

A. Mountain of the Gods

I shall now examine the mythological motifs which the Israelites borrowed from their neighbours, which affected the depiction in Isa 25:6 of the mountain, and the banquet. In his examination of mountains in the ancient Near East, Clifford denies the existence of a *Weltberg* or *Länderberg* which has been supported in the past, but demonstrates that mountains in Canaan and Israel were seen as the dwelling or meeting place of gods (sometimes with man), the source of water and fertility, a divine battleground, the place where heaven and earth meet and where decrees are issued – "in these senses, the mountains are cosmic, that is, involved in the government and stability of the cosmos".[123] The divine assembly and its members in the Hebrew Bible is perhaps best shown by Ps 89:6–9 [Eng 5–8], in which the קְהַל קְדֹשִׁים and the סוֹד־קְדֹשִׁים are

[120] Hibbard 2006, p. 80.
[121] Clements 1980, p. 208.
[122] Polaski 2001, pp. 191–192.
[123] Clifford 1972, pp. 2–3.

linked with the בְּנֵי אֵלִים and the צְבָאוֹת. We find similarities to this in the tablets from Ugarit, as we can see such terms as בְּנֵי אֵלִים and קְדֹשִׁים paralleled in the Ugaritic *bn ’il*/*bn ’ilm* (e.g. *KTU* 1.4.iii.14) and *bn qdš* (e.g. *KTU* 1.2.iii.20). El’s gods congregated on a mountain (*KTU* 1.2.i.19–20, where the gods are also eating at table) which has been compared to the בְּהַר־מוֹעֵד of Isa 14:13.[124] It is likely that the divine recipients of portioned lands convened on this mountain, seen in the ‘original’ text of Deut 32:8, which is now mostly considered to be that of the LXX and *4QDeut*^{j}. Emerton contends that the occurrence of הַר־אֱלֹהִים in Ps 68:16 [Eng 15] cannot just be a superlative,[125] so it is possible to conclude with Clifford that “the use of Canaanite themes for Sinai indicate that Israel was working out its Yahwistic faith in contact with Canaanite religion long before the Conquest”.[126]

As discussed above, Zion is sometimes equated with Zaphon in the Hebrew Bible, and is therefore often the focus of Baal traditions.[127] Wyatt rejects the apparent identification of Mts. Zaphon and Zion in Ps 48:3 [Eng 2] as an argument for Yahweh’s borrowing from Baal,[128] on the grounds that the expression *ǵr il* (read for *ǵr ll* in parallel with the mount of assembly in *KTU* 1.2.i.14, 20) is also used to describe Zaphon in *KTU* 1.3.iii.29 and 1.3.iv.19. Therefore we could equate the mountains and assume that Zaphon is also the mountain for the whole assembly of gods, supported by the fact that they are probably described as the ‘gods of Zaphon’ in *KTU* 1.47.1.[129] On the other hand, most scholars do not feel the need to emend *ǵr ll*, and Mt. Zaphon is clearly the location of Baal’s palace (*KTU* 1.4.v.54–55) and throne (*KTU* 1.3.iv.1–3), and Athtar’s failed attempt to replace Baal causes him to cry out that he cannot be king on Zaphon (*KTU* 1.6.i.63). M. S. Smith argues that the mountain is the centre point of human and divine order in the Ugaritic texts,[130] and Hunt asserts that the geographical and meteorological phenomena of Zaphon, as well as the literary evidence, show that it would have been the centre of the Ugaritic cult, especially with regard to Baal’s status as the storm-god.[131] Eissfeldt originally argued that Zaphon should be seen as the classical Mt. Casius and the

[124] Page, Jr., 1996, p. 25 n. 19.
[125] Emerton 1993, p. 29. See also Day 1985, p. 116.
[126] Clifford 1972, pp.122–123.
[127] Ibid., p. 141.
[128] Day 1985, p. 99,127.
[129] Wyatt 1986, pp. 380–381.
[130] Smith 2001, p. 29.
[131] Hunt 1991, pp. 103–115.

modern Jebel el-Aqra‘,[132] and Day asserts that Baal traditions lie behind Zeus’ battle with Typhon on Mt. Casius as related in Apollodorus (*The Library* 1.6.3), Strabo (16.2.7) and Herodotus (3.5).[133] Albright also noticed that Zaphon is apparently aligned with the Hittite Mt. Ḫazzi in Ugaritic administrative tablets,[134] and others note that they are corresponding terms in the alphabetic divine list in *KTU* 1.118.4.[135] It is not surprising, then, that we see the transfer of Baal’s Zaphon traditions to Zion (and those from Ḫazzi), to which Clifford ascribes the term *translatio*, usually used to describe the transfer of a saint’s relics or qualities to another.[136]

B. Mountain of Victory and Paradise

The description of the ‘pavement of sapphire stone’ underneath Yahweh’s feet in Exod 24:10 seems somewhat ambiguous, but it has been suggested that “painted or glazed pavements may have been known in ancient Israel, especially as part of the ornamentation of sanctuaries”.[137] Clifford points out that this sounds very much like the lapis lazuli used in the construction of Baal’s palace on Zaphon in *KTU* 1.4.v.19, 35,[138] and in an Akkadian inscription from the Boghazköi archives there is a description of a slab of lapis lazuli which apparently served as a footstool for the king.[139] Like Zion, Zaphon is the setting for the deity’s kingship, as a result of the divine combat which took place there, as seen in Isa 27:1. Anat mentions Zaphon in connection with the battle with Yam in *KTU* 1.3.iv.1, and Baal and Mot fight on Zaphon 1.6.vi.12–34. In addition, Zaphon is often referred to as the ‘mountain of victory’ (e.g. *KTU* 1.101.2, 1.3.iii.30–31, 1.10.iii.28, 31), which reminds us that it was Baal’s defeat of Yam which secured this as his home.[140] Exodus 15:17 shows God’s eternal kingship and victory through the establishment of his temple on the mountain, and because מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ only elsewhere appears in 1 Kgs 8:13, Day suggests that this is Baal mountain language.[141] This

[132] Eissfeldt 1932, pp. 1–48.
[133] Day 1985, p. 107, although he argues that the myth was mediated through the Hurrian-Hittite Ullikummi tradition, p. 33 n. 92. Vieyra 1970 also connects the Typhon myth with the Illuyanka story, and says that the name of Typhon is clearly an adaptation of Mt Zaphon, p. 529.
[134] Albright 1950, p. 2.
[135] Clifford 1972, p.39; Tsumura 2005, p. 25 n. 87.
[136] Clifford 1972, pp. 131–132 n. 37.
[137] Nicholson 1974, p. 92.
[138] Clifford 1972, p. 112.
[139] Nicholson 1974, p. 92. See also Weidner 1922, pp. 69, 74.
[140] The Heights of Lebanon also seem to have adopted this combat in 1.83.
[141] Day 1985, pp. 98–99.

expression is parallel to ‘mountain of inheritance’, which is probably influenced by the language found in *KTU* 1.3.iii.29–32, in which we find ‘mountain of my heritage’ in parallel with ‘throne on which he sits’ and ‘hill of victory’. This shows that “*nḥlt* in the myths is a place where power is exercised”, and the god’s territory - “*Ǵr nḥlty*, then, is a mountain possessed inalienably, a patrimony, with the possible overtone of possession by conquest”.[142] Whilst it is possible that these expressions in Exod 15:17 originally referred to earlier traditions,[143] Day argues that they came to signify Jerusalem, and that the people were planted not just on the mountain but actually in the temple, on the basis of Ps 92:14 [Eng 13].[144]

In the light of the connections between the Israelite mountain of God and paradise noted above, it is interesting that Baal’s mountain is also referred to as ‘pleasant place’ (*n‘m*)[145] in *KTU* 1.3.iii.29 which M. S. Smith suggests is “perhaps garden language that, in biblical texts, is a recurring motif for the centre point of the cosmos”.[146] He uses as his basis the spatial distinctions noted by Wiggermann and Schloen that in all mythological texts there is a ‘centre’ and a ‘periphery’,[147] as well as a ‘beyond’, and that “within the centre or area of human cultivation and civilization, deities are accorded sacred mountains or cult sites, but cosmic enemies are not”.[148] The fertilizing waters which flow from the temple on Zion in Ezek 47:1–12, Zech 14:8, Joel 4:18 [Eng 3:18], and the four rivers of Eden in Gen 2:10–14, associated with the holy mountain in Ezek 28:14, 16, are likely a reflection of El’s dwelling at the source of the cosmic waters (e.g. *KTU* 1.3.v.6–8, see also the Hittite version in *KUB* XII 61.5), which may well have been in the mountains of Armenia.[149] Clifford argues out that Gen 2–3 has a Mesopotamian setting, not West Semitic, and that “the different regional origins argue against anything

[142] Clifford 1972, pp. 71–72.
[143] Ibid., pp. 138–139.
[144] Day 1985, p. 99.
[145] Wyatt 2002 translates this ‘Paradise’, p. 78.
[146] Smith 2001, p. 29.
[147] Wiggermann 1996, pp. 207–220; Schloen 1995, p. 245 n. 1. These concepts are based on the oppositional terms for the environment: ‘sown’ (*mdr‘*) versus ‘outback’ (*mdbr*), in Xella 1973. For the argument that in rituals and myths these terms cover not only the environment but also corresponding oppositions in the nature of the deities as well as the components of the divine feast see Smith 2006, pp. xiv–xv, 107.
[148] Smith 2001, pp. 27–28. Interestingly, he also points out that, although gods, Mot and Yamm are ‘beyond the periphery’ by location – the underworld and the ‘waters beyond’ – and do not have holy mountains like the beneficent gods, p. 29. See also Wyatt 1996, pp. 27–28.
[149] See Day 2000b, pp. 30–31 and n. 51 for this view and a discussion of others.

except a general similarity",[150] but the connection between Eden and El's home (and the latter's location at the head of the Euphrates in the Elkunirsha myth[151]) suggest a background of Canaanite mountain traditions.

Stordalen raises the question of whether garden imagery came from the Ugaritic texts, as *KTU* 1.23.66–76 may assume an enclosed garden complete with a 'watchman',[152] an idea we can see in the vineyard allegory in the verses immediately following Isa 27:1. Perhaps then what we have here is the idea that the elect will dwell in a holy mountain garden following the defeat of chaos, received from Canaanite traditions, which can be supported by Clifford's point that "unlike Baal, [Yahweh] is not a seasonal deity who suffers periodic defeat by Mot. His mountain is therefore impregnable and becomes a symbol of the secure place".[153] However, he does not consider the 'pleasant place' to be the paradisiacal garden, but thinks that *n'm* here refers to a sacred place, parallel with *qdš*, and that in "designating a place [the term] is perhaps related to the use of the word in the *Krt* epic and in proper names. The god has shown favour to a particular place and has set it apart for himself".[154] Yahweh's abode on Zion clearly combines the cosmic features of El's mountain - the divine assembly, the source of water, the issue of decrees - and those of Baal's: divine combat, victory, and enthronement. Hittite traditions are also clearly connected, as we often see gods standing on mountains in Hittite art,[155] and it is from Mt. Ḫazzi that Ullikummi is seen rising out of the sea in *KUB* XXXIII 87, supporting its link with Zaphon as the location of the theomachy.[156] In addition, a cylinder seal found at Ras Shamra depicts the Hittite storm-god atop a mountain, which is very reminiscent of both Israelite and Canaanite imagery.[157] It is quite possible that Canaanite myths permeated the Hittite religion as they did that of the Israelites, as both came into close contact with Syria, and the Hittite

[150] Clifford 1972, pp. 101–103.
[151] See Goetze 1969, p. 519.
[152] Stordalen, 2000, pp. 30f., 156ff.
[153] Clifford 1972, p. 153.
[154] Ibid., pp. 70–71.
[155] Ibid., p. 32.
[156] Goetze 1969, p. 123. See also Hoffner 1998, p. 4 and Day 2000b, p. 94 n. 7. It seems likely that this story lies behind the Greek Typhon myth, see Hesiod *Theogony* 820ff. See above, ch. 2.
[157] Schaeffer 1956, p. 24.

religion is seen as "strongly syncretistic and open to foreign influence, mixing Proto-Khattic, Hurrian, and Akkado-Sumerian gods and myths in a bewildering fashion".[158]

The Canaanite Traditions concerning the Banquet

A. The Divine Banquet in Ancient Near Eastern Texts

I will discuss the subject of Israelite dependence on Canaanite myths in detail later on, and concerning the theme in Isa 25:6 Lloyd asserts that "it is more likely that the theme of the divine banquet was part of the cultural continuum of the ancient West Semitic peoples, rather than occurring independently in each one of them".[159] Nevertheless, Isa 25:6–8 contains many striking similarities to the Baal Cycle,[160] which imply that the Canaanite traditions had an effect on those of the Israelites. Victory feasts following divine combats which lead to the enthronement of Marduk and Baal occur in *Enūma eliš* 3:129–4:2 and *KTU* 1.4.vi.44–59 respectively:[161]

They made ready to leave on their
journey,
all the great gods who decree the fates.
They entered before Anshar, filling
[Ubshukinna].
They kissed one another in the Assembly.
They held converse as they [sat down] to
the banquet.
They ate festive bread, poured [the wine],
they wetted their drinking-tubes with
sweet intoxicant.

[158] Clifford, p. 1972, p. 29. He also argues that the Hurrians played a part, as they "served as intermediaries between foreign religion and the Hittites. The way of borrowing went from Syrian via Cilicia, where Hurrian scribal schools flourished, to the Hittite capital", p. 31.
[159] Lloyd 1990, p. 186.
[160] Day 1985, p. 148.
[161] Wildberger 1978 also sees a banquet for Baal's enthronement in *KTU* 1.22.ii.13ff., pp. 900, 960, but this passage in the Rephaim texts is unclear, and may well have nothing to do with Baal's accession.

As they drank the strong drink, [their
bodies swelled].
They became very languid as their spirits
rose.
For Marduk, their avenger, they fixed the
decrees.
They erected for him a princely throne.
Facing his fathers, he sat down,
presiding.
En el 3:129–4:2[162]

He invited his brothers into his house,
his kinsmen into the midst of his palace;
he invited the seventy sons of Athirat.

He gave wine to drink to the ram-gods;
he gave to drink to the ewe-goddesses.

He gave wine to drink to the ox-gods;
he gave to drink to the cow-goddesses.

He gave wine to drink to the siege-gods;
he gave to drink to the throne-goddesses.

He gave wine to drink to the amphora-
gods;
he gave to drink to the jar-goddesses.

While they ate the gods drank.

Then they were served suckling animals,

[162] Speiser 1969, pp. 65–66.

with a jaw-shaped knife fillets of
[fat]ling.

From gob[lets they drank wi]ne,
[from cu]ps of gold the jui[ce of grapes].
KTU 1.4.vi.44–59[163]

It is commonly believed that the banquet on Zion in 25:6 drew on imagery from Baal's feast on Zaphon in particular.[164] Hibbard notes that not only was victory, enthronement, feast a common pattern in the ancient Near East, but that it was apparently applicable to various eras – in *Enūma eliš* it was set in primordial time, in the Ugaritic texts it is ambiguous and possibly cyclical, and here in Isaiah we have an eschatological setting.[165] The finality of the Israelite passage is emphasised by Yahweh's swallowing of death in v. 8, and Day points out that the fact that Baal's kingship was associated with his victory over Mot and followed his feast on Zaphon shows that this verse is appropriately positioned after v. 6.[166] Delcor suggests that we have a similar situation when Anat offers Aqhat immortality alongside a banquet to which he is invited – "il s'agit donc en Isaïe, d'un banquet d'immortalité qui est en même temps, semble-t-il, un banquet d'intronisation de Yahvé, si on lit Is 25, 6–9 à la suite d'Is 24, 23".[167]

B. The New Year Banquet

Because of Baal's status as god of rain and fertility, it is common to see the banquets following his victories over Mot and Yam as part of the New Year Festival. Some scholars see *KTU* 1.3.i as simply a banquet to celebrate Baal's defeat of Yam,[168] but de Moor argues that it is a New Year feast for Baal's reinstatement, because he sees new wine given to Baal in l. 16 by translating the root *ḫmr* as 'to ferment, to foam'.[169] Wyatt, however, translates this term as 'winevat',[170] and Lloyd agrees that a container

[163] Wyatt 2002, pp. 107–108.
[164] E.g. Day 1985, p. 99.
[165] Hibbard 2006, p. 84.
[166] Day 1985, p. 150. The myth of the disappearing deity in *CTH* 671 may also describe a comparable situation, as it seems that the storm-god goes down into 'the pit' and then comes back, but it is unclear.
[167] Delcor 1979, p. 128.
[168] E.g. Lipiński 1970, p. 75, and Gibson 1978, p. 8.
[169] De Moor 1971, pp. 75–78. This view is supported by Korpel 1990, p. 401 and n. 267.
[170] Wyatt 2002, p. 71. In agreement with Dahood 1964, pp. 408–409.

for wine is more likely than the interpretation of de Moor, whom he asserts has been led astray by his desire for the seasonal pattern of the myth.[171] However, in the following line Wyatt takes the cup to be the subject,[172] but the text works better if the god (*prdmn*) is the subject (as he is in the rest of the section) and he is taking measurements of wine. Using the approach of del Olmo Lete[173] and on the basis of Arabic and Phoenician cognates, it seems most likely that the term *ḫmr* here should mean the wine in the container, with some allusion to the fermentation process.[174] In *KTU* 1.4.vi.47–54 we have a list of gods who attended the banquet, and Gaster says the lines "define the guests as the deities who preside over the livestock, the civil authority, and the vintage – the three aspects of topocosmic life and activity upon which attention is especially concentrated at the autumn festival, when the god of the rains (Baal) resumes dominion over the earth".[175] The temporary death of Baal "signifies a loss of bounty and concomitant well-being, and his life heralds the restoration of life",[176] as demonstrated by the symbolism of flowing oil and honey marking his return to life (*KTU* 1.6.iii.5–13), and we see similar beliefs in the Hittite myth of the disappearance of the storm-god when all the gods at the feast ate and drank but stayed hungry and thirsty, on account of his absence (*CTH* 325).[177] The two Hittite versions of the conflict between the weather god and the dragon Illuyanka (*KUB* XVII:5 and III:7:20–24) seem to serve as aetiologies of the Hattian *Purulli* festival with regard to the restoration of order and fertility, and were probably told during the course of the festival.[178] On the whole, the Hittites connected myths with prayer and ritual, in worship and magical treatment,[179] and *Purulli* was almost certainly a seasonal festival to re-invigorate the earth after winter,[180] "dont il n'est pas impossible qu'elle soit une fête qui se célébrait au début du printemps, lorsque renaît la nature. Les premiers mots du texte ne laissent guère de doute à ce sujet".[181]

[171] Lloyd 1990, pp. 179–181. He offers no real support for his interpretation, however.
[172] Wyatt 2002, p. 71 n. 10.
[173] Del Olmo Lete 1992, p. 128.
[174] See also Smith 2006, pp. 36–37.
[175] Gaster 1961, p. 178.
[176] Smith 2001, p. 100.
[177] Hoffner 1998, p. 21.
[178] Ibid, p. 9.
[179] Hoffner 1975, p. 142.
[180] Gurney 1990, p. 127.
[181] Vieyra 1970, p. 526, see also Hoffner 1975, p. 138.

Mt. Zaliyanu, mentioned at the end of the later Illuyanka myth, was celebrated for providing rains for Nerik, which was one of the cultic centres for the storm-god,[182] and perhaps this, or Mt. Ḫazzi was the location of the meeting of the gods required to solve the crisis of the initial defeat of the storm-god.[183] Another allusion to an assembly of gods which suggests a New Year festival possibly connected to *Purulli* is in *KUB* XXXVI.97, and concerns the gods eating, drinking, and 'fixing the fates'.[184] That all the gods are invited to the banquet which formed a central part of the earlier Illuyanka tale corresponds to the members of the feast in the Ugaritic tablets. Day first noted that the seventy sons of Asherah invited to the feast in *KTU* 1.4.iv.46 signify "the totality of the divine pantheon, [and] account for the universality of the banquet in Isa 25:6, where 'all peoples' come", and the seventy members of the host of heaven (cf. Deut 32:8; 1 Enoch 89:59–60; 90:22) correspond to the supposed seventy nations (Gen 10) and are the same as those referred to in Isa 24:21–22.[185] Nicholson explains that the number seventy was symbolic in the ancient Near East for 'totality' or 'completeness' and so would represent the collective entity Israel in Exod 24,[186] but Lloyd argues that we may have here the remnants of an older tradition in which seventy gods feasted on the mountain.[187] The translation of אֲצִילֵי (v. 11) in the LXX - ἐπιλέχτων ('chosen ones') - may support this idea,[188] but many contend that the passages in Exod 24 and Isa 25 differ from the Ugaritic texts because those invited to the banquets are people, not gods, on account of Yahwistic monotheism.[189] The main roles of the members of Yahweh's assembly in the Hebrew Bible are as rulers of nations (e.g. Deut 32:8–9), protectors of humanity (e.g. Zech 1:10–12), heralds of Yahweh's kingship (e.g. Ps 29) and judges (Ps 82), and it may be that there was no need for deities to attend the banquet in Isa 25:6, because these functions had all been performed by Yahweh within 24:21–25:5. On the other hand, perhaps v. 6 simply shows that it was all the faithful people who were invited to participate in the cultic meal, as Mazoyer suggests was the case at Hittite sacrifices.[190]

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[182] Vieyra 1970, p. 528.
[183] Hoffner 1975, p. 136.
[184] Gurney 1990, p. 127. See also Vieyra 1970, p. 526.
[185] Day 1985, pp. 149, 174–175. That the seventy members of the heavenly host may have had a link to the Ugaritic traditions was first suggested by Tournay 1949, p. 53, and followed by Albright 1959, pp. 343–344.
[186] Nicholson 1975, p. 78.
[187] Lloyd 1990, p. 188.
[188] Nicholson 1974, p. 83.
[189] Nicholson 1976, p. 158; Wildberger 1977; pp. 378–379; Hagelia 2003, p. 87.
[190] Mazoyer 2002, pp. 86–87.

C. The Sacrificial Banquet

Lloyd maintains that the important aspect of a banquet myth is not the eating or drinking but the events which occur whilst the meal is taking place.[191] This can be seen in the fact that "in celebration of the victory and in acknowledgment of the universal sovereignty of the Divine Warrior and King, a bloody sacrifice-banquet is held. This is an essential element in the mythic pattern with which we are dealing, and betrays the original fertility function of the ancient cult".[192] In other words, victory alone will not restore fertility; a sacrifice of the enemy warriors is required to release the earth's fecundity, and is supported by the Hittite 'foyer sacrificiel', which was associated with fertility.[193] Pope notes that in *KTU* 1.114.1 the subject of *dbḥ*, 'sacrifice', is a deity, and so it can only be translated as the offering of a banquet or feast:[194] 'in his house El gave a feast of game'.[195] He argues that the root *qṣ* in line 2, if taken as an infinitive, would refer to a technical term for a sacral meal, and compares the Syriac final weak root *qĕṣā*, which "is used of the breaking of bread, especially in the celebration of the Christian Eucharist, or Holy Communion".[196] The idea that a sacred offering as part of a meal had its background in the eating and drinking amongst gods supports the proposal that Isa 25:6 can be seen as having aspects of a sacrifice. Mazoyer describes the ritual of Hittite sacrifices as being remarkably like a banquet (*KUB* 17:28, 2:53–54), as a great quantity of animals can be sacrificed accompanied by libations of wine, with music played as the gods were honoured, and "le banquet sacrificiel constituait l'acte final et le complement nécessaire à de nombreux sacrifices".[197] Nicholson points out that in Exod 24 "there is no mention of any part of the meal being offered up sacrificially to God after the manner, for example, of the so-called communion sacrifice, which would have been a means of God's 'partaking' of the meal",[198] and the same could be said of Isa 25. In fact Deut

[191] Lloyd 1990, p. 171.
[192] Hanson 1979, p. 322.
[193] Mazoyer 2002, p. 87.
[194] Pope 1994a, p. 156.
[195] Wyatt 2002, p. 405. He notes that *dbḥ* literally means 'slaughter' but that it contains "the contextual senses of 'feast' or 'sacrifice'…and includes the whole process from preparation to consumption…the divine feast is the theological paradigm of the procedures of the cult, in which, with human personnel as the subjects, *dbḥ* has the specialized sense of 'perform a sacrifice'", p. 405 n. 5. See also Virolleaud 1968, p. 549, Pardee 1988, pp. 24–26, *idem* 2002, p. 168 and p. 185 n. 4, and Bordreuil and Pardee 2009, p. 194.
[196] Pope 1994a, p. 159.
[197] Mazoyer 2002, pp. 81–86.
[198] Nicholson 1974, p. 86.

32:38 seems to mock the pagan gods who were seen to eat and drink their offerings.[199] On the other hand, all animals which were slain by the Israelites for food were seen as sacrifices to God,[200] and surely any eating and drinking before God was seen as providing a sense of communion, especially if covenantal rites were understood as taking place. De Moor understands *KTU* 1.3.i.29 as referring to a covenant in conjunction with the great banquet of the previous lines, but this is not generally accepted.[201] However it is clear that when humanity ate the food which was consecrated to the gods, it was understood that they were eating with them, and "en mangeant le chair de la victime offerte au dieu, ou confortait les liens qui unissaient les dieux et les hommes".[202]

Although Isa 25:6 and other Israelite banquet passages do not seem to use formulae in their descriptions,[203] it is interesting to note those employed by the Ugaritic texts. Lloyd observes that the "preparation scene is used to describe the preparations of banquets given by gods [*KTU* 1.1.iv.30f., 1.4.vi.40f.], or prepared for supernatural beings, such as Danel's banquet for the Rephaim [*KTU* 1.22.i.12f.]", and that the verb *ṣḫ* is used for inviting (e.g. *KTU* 1.1.iv.2, 1.4.vi.44).[204] In addition, he claims that the location of the banquet, *bt*/*hkl*, is a formulaic pair (*KTU* 1.4.vi.44–45 and 1.21.ii.2–3,9–11), as are the terms for the guests, *aḫ*/*ary* (*KTU* 1.4.vi.44–45 and 1.5.i.23–25).[205] *KTU* 1.4.vi.40ff. is an example of an Ugaritic banquet text which contains both the preparation and feasting formulae, and uses both the parallel pairs of house/palace and brothers/kinsfolk.[206] Similarly, del Olmo Lete notes that the banquet itself can be summed up using the word pairs *šlḥm/ššqy*, which refers to the host giving guests food, and *lḥm*/*šty*, which refers to the guests eating and drinking,[207] and Tsevat argues that the paralleling of *šlḥm* with *šqy* in *KTU* 1.3.i could be because it is a ritual text and has been influenced by the Hittite word *ekuzi*, which originally just meant 'to drink' but came to mean 'to give to drink' in ritual contexts.[208] I agree with Lloyd that whether or not this

[199] Korpel 1990, p. 408.
[200] McCree 1926, p. 128.
[201] De Moor 1987, p. 2. See also Hagelia 2003, pp. 75–76.
[202] Mazoyer 2002, p. 86, 89.
[203] Lloyd 1990, p. 191.
[204] Ibid., pp. 173–174.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid., p. 183.
[207] del Olmo Lete 1981, p. 36.
[208] Tsevat 1986, pp. 346–347.

assumption is right, the obvious parallelism here must mean 'to give to eat/drink'.[209] The Hittite Illuyanka myths do not contain any comparable formulae, but the events and motifs are remarkably similar. In the older version, we have preparation (*KBo* III 7.15), inviting (*KBo* III 7.10–14, *KUB* XVII 5.5–8) and instructing to eat and drink (*KUB XVII 5.8*), as well as a banquet on grand scale (*KBo* III 7.15). All of the gods are invited, and whilst they are not called 'brethren' it is likely that they were considered to be kinsmen, as Kumarbi is known as the father of all the gods e.g. *KUB* XXXIII 96.i. Strictly speaking, the feast is part of the storm-god's defeat of the dragon, not after the victory, but Inara refers to it as a 'celebration' (*KUB* XVII 5.7–8), and she constructs a house after the conflict which she (eventually) presents to the king (*KBo* III 7.15). If we assume that Canaanite myths were transmitted to the Hittite people and not the other way around (see above), then this account is a good example of how their myths were used in the traditions of other cultures, similar to the adoption of the Israelites.

Later Use of the Mountain and Banquet Motifs and Eschatological Traditions

If the Hittites borrowed the tradition of combat, victory, and feast, it was to serve as an aetiological myth for the *Purulli* festival. The Israelites, on the other hand, used the myths and motifs of the Canaanites to illustrate their eschatological ideals, not only in the prophetic, proto-apocalyptic chapters of Isaiah, but for centuries afterwards. Isaiah 25:6 is our first reference to the eschatological banquet, but the idea was used much more frequently in the intertestamental literature. In 4 Ezra 6:52, 2 Bar 29:4 and 1 En 60:24 the elect are described as feasting on the flesh of Leviathan in the future banquet, which is almost certainly an echo of the defeat of the chaos monster in Isa 27:1, and the enthronement banquet which was seen to follow it.[210] Priest also mentions 2 Enoch 42:5, 3 Enoch 48:10 in connection with our theme, and notes that they retain the elements of judgment and joy together, in keeping with Isa 24–27.[211] We also find the continuation of the mountain ideology seen behind Isa 25:6 in 1 Enoch 25:4–7, 90:24–42, where it seems that Zion came to be seen as the abode of the just, in the same way that

[209] Lloyd 1990, p. 171.
[210] Day 1985, p. 150.
[211] Priest 1992, p. 227. The same is true of Rev 19:17–21, p. 232.

Gehenna/the valley of Hinnom was the place of the punishment of the unjust.[212] 2 Baruch 29:1–8 states that the eating of the Messianic meal and the gifts which go with it will not take place on a single occasion but 'every day' — "both Enoch and Baruch agree that the Messianic banquet not only marks the beginning of the eschatological age but is a feature of it in perpetuity".[213] The Testament of Isaac 6:22 and 8:5–7 also imply that the banquet is a continuing one, and the latter passage mentions the covenant in conjunction with the meal,[214] implying that the promises which were made and sealed will continue to be upheld in the eschaton.

The Qumran 'Rule of the Congregation' (1QSa), attached as an annexe to 1QS (the Community Rule text), and 1QS 6:4–6 describe the protocol for a recurring communal meal. Whilst the latter seems to be simply a normal, communal, possibly sacramental meal, 1QSa 2:12, 14, 20 contains the presence of the Messiah. Whilst this may refer to the eschatological banquet, it does not account for the absence of Messianic themes in 1QS,[215] and Davies argues that "if the scrolls are not unanimous in depicting either community organization or eschatological doctrine, but both fluctuate, there remains little ground for identifying a common perception of reality, and even less ground for assuming that this perception remained constant throughout the history of the community".[216] Nevertheless, there are doubtless elements of eschatology in 1QSa, and the reason for the repetition of the meal can be seen as an allusion to its continued observance throughout the Messianic era,[217] acting as "a proleptic anticipation of the feast of the age to come".[218] Cross asserts that "the full significance of the common meal of the Essenes becomes clear" in the Rule of the Congregation, and that its heading refers to the eschatological community, warning that the reader must remember that the sect was the future congregation of the elect and the foreshadowing of the new age.[219] He also notes that it would be unsurprising if the *Sitz im Leben* of the protocol is the gathering of all the camps for the annual covenant renewal at Pentecost.[220] At the same

[212] Clifford 1972, p. 186.
[213] Priest 1992, p. 224.
[214] Ibid., p. 226.
[215] Priest 1963, pp. 95–96.
[216] Davies 1985, p. 41.
[217] Denoted by the rubric in 2:11f., Priest 1963, p. 97.
[218] Priest 1992, p. 229.
[219] Cross 1995, pp. 75–76 and n. 8. Cf. Brown 1957, pp. 78f.
[220] Ibid., p. 77 n. 5. In addition, he points out for the first time that 4QpPs 37:2.10–11 also refers to the banquet, as the expositor thought that Ps 37:11 was a reference to the eschatological meal, pp. 78–79 n. 7.

time, Priest observes that it is surprising, in the light of the traditions seen in Isa 24–27, that there is no mention of a meal in the War Scroll (1QM), as it is concerned with the eschatological defeat of enemies, and warns that we cannot make the assumption that these two motifs were always seen together in this period.[221]

Rabbinic literature also used the mythic motifs of these chapters for eschatological visions, as seen in the consumption of the flesh of Leviathan in *b*. B. Bat 74b,[222] and the deterministic statement in Pirke Aboth 3:20 that 'everything is prepared for the banquet'.[223] The former text retains a sense of threat which implicitly refers back to the primordial conflict, at the same time as the narrative shifts to the eschatological feast by the preservation of the beasts, in much the same way as the Pseudepigraphical books, and the mythological themes brought up by Isa 24–27.[224] In addition, the 'Cup of Blessing' in the Jewish Qiddush can be seen as a development of the ancient communal feast in much the same way as the Christian Eucharist,[225] and remnants of a fertility cult and paradisiacal motifs found in Isa 24–27 are evident in the increase of references to the Garden of Eden as the setting for the Messianic Banquet.[226] Pope points out that participants in the Jewish festival of Sukkot beat palm branches on the ground, probably to produce rain (cf. Mishnah Sukkah III.9 and IV.6), and that this is also a practice in death rites,[227] and it is possible that this is a late reminder that fertility was connected with the abolition of death in the Canaanite and Israelite myths. The Sukkot festival became orientated towards not only the following year, but towards an entirely new age: "if ever it had its roots in a complex of myth and ritual which was primarily concerned with the cycle of the year…this had been refashioned in terms of the Hebrew experience of Yahweh's…creation of a new world order and the introduction of an age of universal righteousness and peace".[228] The psalms associated with the festival may therefore have had eschatological interests from their conception,[229] and this dimension can be seen in both Isa 25 and Zech 14:15–19, in which "Tabernacles has become the feast to end all

[221] Priest 1992, p. 229.
[222] Day 1985, p. 150.
[223] Priest 1992, p. 233.
[224] Whitney 2006, pp. 131–132.
[225] Pope 1994a, p. 179.
[226] Steffen 2006, p. 10.
[227] Pope 1994a, pp. 162–163.
[228] Johnson 1967, pp. 61–62 n. 1.
[229] Ibid.

feasts and represents the full flowering of God's promises, through Israel, to all the nations".[230]

The motif of the pilgrimage of the nations to the final banquet also became "the rallying cry for the emerging gentile church", and was re-interpreted to demonstrate that the Christians would take Israel's place at the table, although all the faithful would sit alongside Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29).[231] Whilst waiting for the kingdom of God to come on earth, the heavenly banquet was to be regularly anticipated by the Eucharist (Luke 14:15–24, 22:14–20),[232] to which the term 'sacrifice' was applied with its background in the eating and drinking of the ancient gods at their communal feasts, similar to the setting of Isa 25:6.[233] The Messianic banquet used food as a symbol of the immortality and joys to be received in the end time by the righteous, as seen in the fact that "the widespread fish symbolism that occurs in Jewish and Christian art…as well as in the NT…has been interpreted to signify fish as a numinous or eschatological food, an idea developed at least partially from the Leviathan myth".[234] Other mythic themes also seem to have been borrowed from Isa 24–27. Luke 5:27–30 tells us that Jesus invited sinners and outcasts to dine with him, which is reminiscent of the protected poor and needy of Isa 25:4, although they have been transformed here into the spiritually poor. Rev 7:9–17 appears to use Isa 25:4–8 as one of its models, as we find the gathering of the nations (v. 9), God as shelter (v. 15), the satisfaction of the hungry (v. 16), and the wiping of tears from eyes (v. 17), and whilst the victory over death is not mentioned here, ch. 21:4 seems to be a clear reference to this idea in Isa 25:7–8.[235]

[230] Armerding 2003, p. 312.
[231] Smith 1992, p. 789. See also Priest 1992, p. 231.
[232] Brueggemann 1998, p. 199.
[233] Pope 1994a, p. 157.
[234] Smith 1992, pp. 788–789.
[235] Ulfgard 1989, pp. 98–99.

Chapter Four: The Canaanite Background to the Themes of Death and Resurrection

The verses of Isa 25:6–8 have drawn much attention to themselves from Biblical scholars, as the images of royal feasting in a military setting and the abolition of death are unusual in both the Hebrew Bible and the wider ancient Near East. Nevertheless, it is possible that what we have here is a familiar enthronement festival, on the basis that we see God reigning and the presence of the elders in 24:23, a great banquet and the defeat of his enemies.[1] Whilst Blenkinsopp suggests that v. 7 jumps theme somewhat, but that this is understandable because "since apocalyptic prose specializes in combining disparate and sometimes incongruous images, it is no surprise to pass from the banquet to the idea that the time for mourning is now past",[2] it seems to me that this verse is quite in keeping with the imagery of victory and celebration. The chief feature of the postulated enthronement festival inherited from mythology was the idea of creation as God's defeat of chaos,[3] something we clearly see in Isa 25. In addition, we find some similarity in the idea that there will be no more weeping (v. 7) in Isa 30:19, and it has been suggested that the swallowing of death in v. 8 is a direct counter to Isa 5:13–14.[4] Hibbard refers to the defeat of death as the *coup de grâce* of vv. 6–8, and the victory climax,[5] an importance which is perhaps highlighted by the expression 'For the Lord has spoken', which Beuken claims marks passages in the book of Isaiah "as oracular in which God does not speak under the first person".[6]

There has been much discussion on the question of to what extent the ancient Israelites believed in a continuation of life after death, and how they felt about the status of those who had passed on. Many scholars feel that there is evidence in the Hebrew Bible of ancestor cults and necromancy which has led them to the conclusion that the Israelites maintained a belief in the supernatural powers of the dead, derived from the

[1] Hibbard 2006, p. 83.
[2] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 359.
[3] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 181–182.
[4] Quinn-Miscall 2006, p. 86.
[5] Hibbard 2006, p. 72, 81 n. 48.
[6] Beuken 2000a, p. 141 n. 86.

surrounding Amorite and Canaanite cultures.[7] Whilst Mowinckel's assertion that "primitive ideas about the divinity of the dead (a fundamental feature in all ancient Semitic religion) were suppressed in Israel"[8] may be overstating the point, it certainly seems likely that practices and beliefs concerning the dead were deemed inappropriate with the rise of Yahwism, and that we can find more on this subject in the realm of popular lore and practice, than in formal doctrine.

Many have attempted to discern beliefs about the 'life' of the dead by looking at what is written about the underworld, שְׁאוֹל. The Hebrew texts seem to show disagreement here, as it is variously located under mountains (Jonah 2:6), under the earth (Num 16:30), and under the waters (Job 26:5, cf. also Job 38:16–17),[9] although it does appear to be a quiet, dusty realm with gates[10] which represent separation from God. In any case, it is the "lowest spatial realm in ancient Israelite mythical conceptions".[11] Furthermore, although official religion sought to separate Yahweh from death, and Tromp notes that the realm of the dead and the living God are mutually exclusive — it is שְׁאוֹל only because Yahweh is not there[12], and it seems out of his jurisdiction in Pss 6:6, 30:10, and 88:5–6 — the view that he nevertheless holds some power over it is still present (e.g. Job 26:6; Ps 139:8; Amos 9:2). The Ugaritic texts also contain little direct information concerning human death and afterlife, and most of our evidence comes from mythological texts concerning the gods. However, these stories reflect ideas on human death, and we can learn from the mythological language and allusions to this topic in the Hebrew Bible too, which are found throughout the Hebrew texts.[13] At the same time, it is possible to infer from such texts as Eccl 3:21 and *KTU* 1.17.vi.35–36 that there was a great degree of uncertainty about the human fate after death in ancient Israel and Canaan, as there is now.

[7] Schmidt 1994, p. 1.
[8] Mowinckel 1956, p. 86.
[9] 1 Enoch 22:1–5 also locates the underworld where the sun goes down.
[10] Lewis 1992, pp. 101–105.
[11] Fishbane 2003, p. 80.
[12] Tromp 1969, p. 199.
[13] Ibid., pp. 2–3.

Are Isaiah 25:8 and 26:19 Additions to Isaiah 24–27?

If 25:8 and its destruction of death is one of the high points of Isa 24–27, then 26:14 with its description of a community as dead is surely the opposite,[14] although it is swiftly countered by v. 19, which contains what Wildberger refers to as the big 'however' following vv. 17–18.[15] Such dramatic nature and the removal of death have often been seen as marks of apocalyptic features.[16] This has led some to suggest that 25:8aα is a later addition, together with the possibility that the belief in a meaningful existence after death is implied here, which most do not think appeared until later in Judaism. Whether or not we are dealing with a true afterlife or resurrection here, or in 26:19, will be discussed in detail later, but Clements has argued that the clause is a gloss in any case, because the original description of the removal of all suffering (especially that experienced by Israel during the exile) has been widened to include the suffering of death itself.[17] He adds that "the picture seems to imply, although it does not explicitly state that there will be a return of the Jews in Diaspora to Mount Zion",[18] which if true would also point to quite a late date, and others argue for the chronological priority of ch. 26 over ch. 25.[19] This is far from certain, however, and some feel more strongly that 26:19 is out of place.[20] Childs notes that whilst it is true that the 'heavenly' nature of the abolition of death is unique in these chapters, it is virtually impossible to date accurately the introduction of a new theme, and we cannot rule out the possibility that the reign of God with no death and sorrow was not part of the intention of Isa 24–27, as "the hope of a radical new world order apart from evil and sickness has been adumbrated throughout the entire Isaianic corpus".[21] Millar argues on stylistic grounds that all of 24:1–25:9 was written by the same author,[22] whilst Wildberger calls v. 8 an 'authentic' addition, late only in comparison with the short, basic groundwork of the chapters.[23] Similarly, Plöger

[14] Hibbard 2006, p. 119.
[15] Wildberger 1992, p. 567.
[16] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 346.
[17] Clements 1980, pp. 208–209.
[18] Ibid.
[19] E.g. Plöger 1968, pp. 70–71 and Kaiser 1974, p. 204.
[20] E.g. Hibbard 2006, pp. 17, 132.
[21] Childs 2001, p. 185.
[22] Millar 1976, p. 43.
[23] Wildberger 1978, pp. 963f.

sees no reason to consider the resurrection verses of ch. 26 as independent from the rest of the passage.[24]

Another argument for the originality of 25:8 is its Canaanite mythological background, which I shall discuss later, as Day points out that the battle between Baal and Mot occurred immediately after the former's enthronement feast, which would make this verse a perfect fit in its current place,[25] and Clifford notes that commonly the "judgment of enemies (and allies) follows the victory" in combat myths.[26] The universal nature of this verse fits with this view, too, as death must surely be destroyed for everyone, which is appropriate in a context which describes that, amazingly, "*all* peoples are invited to the banquet, the mantle of mourning will be removed from *all nations*, and the tears will be wiped from *every face*, unconditionally, with no restrictions or reservations".[27] Despite this sense of inclusion, however, God's people still get a specific mention. This is typical of Isa 24–27, in which the universal vision of Yahweh as king of all the nations nevertheless retains the exaltation of Israel,[28] and so it is reasonable to assume that it was a genuine part of these chapters. The verse can also be seen to fit well with the preceding one. Quinn-Miscall suggests that v. 7 shows that "to remove a cover exposes those beneath to the blazing sun and allows judgment to fall upon them; to remove a shroud removes a sign of death and allows the once dead to feast",[29] whilst others have seen a metaphorical veiling,[30] referring to blindness or ignorance of God, or the inferiority of time before the new age — "until that day dawns, the whole world is in the shadows".[31] Whilst such views are attractive and poetic, it seems appropriate to me to agree with those who see the veil not as one of ignorance but as a mourning garment, perhaps to be replaced by one of celebration,[32] in the context of the abolition of death and the drying of tears from v. 8 and therefore representative of the end of mourning for

[24] Plöger 1968, p. 66.
[25] Day 1985, p. 150.
[26] Clifford 1998, p. 8.
[27] Blenkinsopp 2000, pp. 359–360.
[28] Cf. Ps 98:3, Hibbard 2006, pp. 85, 91.
[29] Quinn-Miscall 2006, p. 86.
[30] Stacey 1993, p. 153.
[31] Motyer 1993, p. 171. Hagelia 2003 notes *En el* IV:20–29 in connection with the veil in v. 7, as Marduk "spoke and clothes disappeared and appeared on his words, which made the people proclaim him king with sceptre, throne and government", p. 88.
[32] Childs 2001, p. 185.

the dead "during which, as we know, it was the custom to cover the head and face (2 Sam 15:30, 19:5, Jer 14:13–14, Esth 6:12)".[33]

A. The Verses Seen as Late on the Basis of No Previous Tradition of Afterlife

It is possible to propose similarly that 26:19 is an appropriate part of its setting, as Day's third comparison of this chapter with Hos 13 observes that, following the references to childbirth, both texts contain an image of deliverance from Sheol which symbolizes national restoration. Although Hos 13:14 actually rejects the notion of resurrection, commentators often follow the positive translations of the ancient versions, and Day concludes that it would not be surprising if the author of Isa 24–27 also viewed this verse in this way.[34] It is often considered to be more likely that the verse was a later addition if it is concerned with personal resurrection, as some believe,[35] and the same is true of 25:8 if the abolition of death was truly meant.[36] This is because it is often stated that there is no tradition of resurrection in the Hebrew Bible, which is why Herbert refers to 26:19 as "one of the most remarkable reversals in the Bible, the more so in that there was nothing which could prepare the mind for this affirmation".[37]

In the wider ancient Near East, too, "the realization that there is no return from death was noted again and again".[38] *Enūma eliš* VI:120 tells us that death was in existence even before the creation of the universe,[39] and the Old Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh epic states that the gods assigned death to mankind when they were created, keeping immortality for themselves (10.iii.3–5).[40] On the other hand, *Atra-hasīs* suggests that the human life-span was unlimited until misdemeanour caused the imposition of death,[41] similar to the way in which the Hebrew Bible uses death not just "in the sense that every life is to some extent blighted by transience, but principally as

[33] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 359. See also Clements 1980, p. 209; Beuken 2000a, p. 151; Mackay 2008, p. 530.
[34] Day 1980a, pp. 311–312.
[35] Martin-Achard 1956, pp. 106ff.; Lindblom 1962, pp. 414–415; Stacey 1993, pp. 158–159.
[36] Plöger 1968, pp. 61, 113. See also Rudolph 1933, pp. 62–64.
[37] Herbert 1973, p. 156.
[38] Wildberger 1992, p. 564.
[39] Heidel 1963, p. 138.
[40] See Lambert 1980, p. 53.
[41] Ibid., p. 58, see also Heidel 1963, p. 143.

the primary evidence of the curse imposed in consequence of sin".[42] Although Tammuz annually died in summer and rose in spring, and Ishtar was deprived of life in the underworld before being set free, we have no evidence that the Mesopotamians had any hope of resurrection of the body.[43] In Ugarit, too, it seems that death was seen as an inevitability, as demonstrated by Aqhat's words to Anat suggesting that the deity had no power to delay or prevent it (*KTU* 1.7.vi.25–38). Gibson says that this is reminiscent of the attitudes seen in the Hebrew Bible, since although such texts as Amos 9:2 and Ps 139:8–12 show Yahweh's continuing pursuit of judgment and mercy on his people, Ps 88:11–12 [Eng 10–11] shows that Yahweh can do nothing for the dead.[44] Job 14:12 also states that there is no rising from the dead, and even though Ps 17:15 suggests a belief in resurrection to be with God, it is likely that this is the psalmist's conviction, not that of the general population,[45] and Mowinckel notes that we must see such Psalms against the background of a belief in the powers of life and death, not in an afterlife.[46] Wildberger asserts that Isa 26:14 is "simply an apodictic statement that there is no hope for any who are dead".[47]

B. The Verses Seen as Contemporary because there was No Intention of True Afterlife

As has often been noted, however, resurrection does eventually appear in the Hebrew Bible in Dan 12:2, which Rowley suggests the author was driven to include by his circumstances, especially the apparently unfair deaths of the Maccabaean revolt.[48] The late development of the belief in resurrection surely accounts for the Sadducees' rejection of it (Acts 23:8, Josephus *Antiquities* XVIII.i.4), although it came to be accepted by the Pharisees,[49] and the Qumran sect (see 4Q521, 1QS 3.13–4.26). The latter may support Josephus' description of the Essenes as the most 'fatalistic' of Jewish sects (*εἱμαρμένη*, *Ant* XIII 172) and Hippolytus' reference to their "doctrine of world judgment, resurrection of the body (as well as immortality of the soul), eternal

[42] Motyer 1993, pp. 171–172.
[43] Heidel 1963, pp. 207–208.
[44] Gibson 1979, pp. 151–152.
[45] Heidel 1963, p. 210.
[46] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 240–241.
[47] Wildberger 1992, p. 554.
[48] Rowley 1956, p. 167.
[49] Ibid., p. 153.

punishment of the wicked, and the destruction of the (old) world in a cosmic conflagration" (*Refutatio* IX 27).[50] Paul uses elements of such ideas in 1 Cor 15, and it may be that this had become more acceptable once the threat of Baalism, with which the concept was associated, had ceased to be an issue.[51]

Sawyer notes that the technical term for the resurrection of the dead found in the Mishnah and the Talmud, תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים, is not attested in Biblical Hebrew but is quite common in later Hebrew literature, and is first found in the second of the "Eighteen Benedictions" in Mishnah Berakhot v. 2.[52] Nevertheless, as in this Benediction, "the חָיָה and its causative stems חִיָּה and הֶחֱיָה in many contexts occur in the sense of rising from the dead or raising someone from the dead", as we see in Isa 26:14 and 19.[53] This leads to the possibility that there is a tradition of resurrection in the Hebrew Bible behind these verses. However, scholars often compare Isa 26:19 with Ezek 37,[54] and Johnson argues that we must have national resurrection here because the situation is the exile, it is a national lament concerned with the entire people (vv. 11, 13, 15, 16), and we have the images of childbirth as exile/restoration (vv. 17–18) and of repopulation of the land as deliverance (v. 18).[55] He asserts that resurrection imagery was used because of the Isaianic tradition of associating exile with death (e.g. 5:13, 14) and the mythological background of Isa 24–27: "as in primeval time when Yahweh created life out of chaos, so now Yahweh, the king, will re-create life out of the chaos of the exile. The finality of the destruction required the originality of a new creation, a resurrection".[56] Day also notes that Isa 27:8 explicitly refers back to the exile, which supports seeing 26:19 in this light.[57] Many scholars believe that v. 19 is simply symbolic of national restoration and resurrection,[58] justified by the fact that "after the chastisement and hopelessness had been

[50] Cross 1995, pp. 79–80.
[51] De Moor 1988, pp. 99–100.
[52] Sawyer 1973, p. 220. He points out later that the language here is more personal than in Isa 26:19, and that it is reminiscent of Targum Isa 26:19, 'you are he who brings the dead back to life', *idem* 1993, p. 314.
[53] Ibid. Cf. also Hos 6:2; 1 Kgs 17:22.
[54] See Day 1996, p. 243.
[55] Johnson 1988, p. 80.
[56] Ibid., p. 81.
[57] Day 1996, p. 244. See also idem 2010, p. 216.
[58] E.g. Kissane 1960 vol. I, p. 262; Day 1980a, pp. 311–312; Doyle 2000, pp. 319–320; Hogeterp 2009, p. 256.

described in such vivid detail, the portrayal of the radical change in fortune had to be depicted by using the most radical imagery one could find".[59]

Others also argue that 26:19 does not represent true resurrection, but describes the proposed deliverance of those who have suffered great distress, "who have come down to dust",[60] which may have paved the way for the idea of personal resurrection.[61] The dead in v. 14 have also been seen as symbolising the community under oppression, to fit with v. 19.[62] Hibbard, who takes this view, is required to understand 'them' in v. 14 as referring to the lords of v. 13 (but not the dead) to support his opinion that there is "wordplay on זכר which occurs at the end of v. 13: while the community has continued to memorialize (נזכיר) YHWH's name, all remembrance (זכר) of the foreign rulers will cease".[63] Johnson states that there are two understandings of the dead in this verse on the the basis of the idea of the finality of death in the ancient Near East: that the people will die if the oppression continues so God must act now, supported by national restoration as a response in v. 19, or that death is irreversible so the request is to inflict this on the oppressors.[64] Many understand the dead to be the lords from the preceding verse within the context of vv. 7–19,[65] the oppressive heathen rulers,[66] and their 'death' can be interpreted as referring to the end of their influence and dominion,[67] or their destruction without remembrance,[68] and Wildberger argues that v. 14 would have been a familiar quotation.[69] It is also possible that the implication that the lords of the nations would not rise once dead aided the spread of the idea that, in contrast, the Israelites would.[70] Similar to the common understanding of 26:19, Day posits that we are probably dealing with collective restoration rather than individual resurrection in 25:8.[71] Johnson supports this position,[72] as does Hibbard,[73] who also asserts that resurrection from the dead would

[59] Wildberger 1992, pp. 567–568.
[60] Kaufmann 1960, p. 385.
[61] Rowley 1956, pp. 166–167.
[62] E.g. Kaiser 1974, p. 212; Hibbard 2006, pp. 143–144.
[63] Hibbard 2006, p. 144.
[64] Johnson 1988, p. 77.
[65] E.g. Wildberger 1992, pp. 564–565; Sweeney 1996, p. 340; Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 370; Polaski 2001, pp. 238–239.
[66] Herbert 1973, p. 156.
[67] Mackay 2008, pp. 548–549.
[68] Quinn-Miscall 2006, p. 88.
[69] Wildberger 1992, p. 564.
[70] Cf. Spronk 1986, pp. 226–227.
[71] Day 1985, p. 150.
[72] Johnson 1988, p. 64.

serve no purpose here, and would have been more explicitly expressed by the author.[74] Stacey also argues that we should not see any resurrection in v. 8, but his view that people will no longer go down to Sheol, whilst those already dead will not be dealt with,[75] seems to have little basis and proves very difficult to reconcile with the context of Isa 24–27.

C. The Verses Seen as Representing a Real Afterlife

On the other hand, the terms for 'live', 'arise', and 'awake' have eschatological overtones, especially where we also find 'dead', 'corpse', 'dust', and 'shades' (cf. Dan 12:2), and so the concentration of such vocabulary and imagery may separate Isa 26:19 from passages which describe national restoration.[76] It may, then, be the source of the texts which explicitly describe the belief in resurrection which became so important to Jewish dogma,[77] the introduction of "a focus on physical resurrection pointing to the fact that it is only in the life of the age to come that the perplexities besetting the people are ultimately resolved".[78] It has been suggested that we must see this verse as describing revitalization in the light of 25:8,[79] and some scholars believe that what we have in this verse is personal resurrection,[80] an idea perhaps supported by the use of 'corpse' instead of 'shade' to emphasise physicality.[81] Sawyer also notes that the Septuagint describes the dew in 26:19 as healing people, and Tertullian's Latin text adds 'healing to their bones', emphasizing even more the idea of physical resurrection.[82] In addition, the Greek text uses the future tense, corresponding to the imperfects of 1QIsa^{a} 26:19a, which suggests a more definite outcome in contrast to the somewhat metaphorical-sounding Masoretic imperatives. If this verse does represent individual resurrection, Hibbard points out that it shows a positive but unexpected answer to the lament, as the current crisis will not be dealt with, but hope will come in the future.[83]

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[73] Hibbard 2006, p. 81 n. 48.
[74] Ibid., p. 82 n. 50.
[75] Stacey 1993, p. 153.
[76] Sawyer 1993, p. 314.
[77] Slotki 1949, p. 121.
[78] Mackay 2008, p. 554.
[79] Motyer 1993, p. 173.
[80] Smend 1884, pp. 199–200; Lindblom 1938, pp. 47ff., 63ff. (and see *idem* 1962, pp. 414–415); Martin-Achard 1956, pp. 106ff.; Kaiser 1974, pp. 215–220; Hasel 1980, p. 272.
[81] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 371.
[82] Sawyer 1993, p. 314.
[83] Hibbard 2006, p. 147.

Whilst the wider context of Isa 26:11–14, 21 can be seen to show the fate of the wicked as well as the righteous,[84] we do not have the double resurrection which we find in Dan 12:1–3, in which those being punished will be resurrected to 'eternal shame' which is worse than not being resurrected at all.[85] Many scholars argue that what is described in 26:19 is only the resurrection of the faithful,[86] a view supported by the pronoun of 'your dead', which may show those who had a special relationship with God in life or in death, possibly implying those who were martyred for their faith.[87] The meaning of 'my body' in v. 19 has also been much debated. It has often been emended to the 3rd person plural suffix,[88] but Hibbard follows Beuken's 'my bodies', as this could fit with the idea of the dead as the Israelites in v. 14, and suggests "if we take this to be an example of a kind of incremental eschatological reinterpretation of earlier passages in this chapter, then it would be similar to the relationship between 26:21 and 27:1".[89] Wildberger puts forward two other possible interpretations which require no emendation, suggesting that 'my body' could be an addition by someone who wished to specify himself as one of those who would be resurrected,[90] or that the phrase, spoken by God, "is supposed to make the point that the 'dead' of Israel are, at the same time, Yahweh's corpses, which means that Yahweh does not stay off at a distance, undisturbed by the death of his people".[91] Whilst the latter makes the verse somewhat clumsy, the former view of an author who wishes to identify himself with God's people,[92] or who out of fear or piety needs to demonstrate his belief in individual resurrection for the faithful, is very plausible and is strengthened by the fact that 1QIsa[a] has the singular 'my corpse'.[93] However, Quinn-Miscall points out that 'dwellers in the dust' can be mourners or the dead, Israelites or foreigners (2:9, 19; 26:5),[94] and that some of the non-believing dead will rise may be implied in 26:21, perhaps as part of a universal resurrection.[95]

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[84] Sawyer 1993, p. 315.
[85] Plöger 1968, pp. 48–49.
[86] E.g. Mackay 2008, p. 555.
[87] Heidel 1963, p. 218; Sawyer 1993, p. 315.
[88] E.g. Wildberger 1992, p. 556; Clements 1980, pp. 216–217.
[89] Beuken 2000a, p. 141; Hibbard 2006, pp. 146–147.
[90] Wildberger 1992, p. 556.
[91] Ibid., p. 567.
[92] Heidel 1963, p. 219.
[93] Sawyer 1993, p. 315
[94] Quinn-Miscall 2006, p. 88.
[95] Heidel 1963, pp. 219–222.

D. The Possibility that an Afterlife Tradition already Existed

If we assume that Isa 24–27 does contain description of true afterlife, whether just for the faithful or more generally, then I agree with Blenkinsopp that we cannot immediately judge the passage to be as late as truly apocalyptic literature on these grounds,[96] as we need to look for an earlier tradition of resurrection in the Hebrew Bible. Sawyer argues that Isa 24–27 refers to an eschatology which included resurrection of the dead, and can be seen in passages such as Ps 1:5 which has been understood in this way as far back as can be traced, even though many of the Hebrew Bible's references to resurrection may only have become such through the context given to them by the Masoretes.[97] If we understand the dead in Isa 26:14 to be the lords from the previous verse, then perhaps they are said not to rise because this is what was expected of the faithless, political oppressors,[98] and whilst Isa 24–27 seems to be the first explicit hope of resurrection in the Hebrew Bible, there are hints of it in various psalms (e.g. Pss 49:14–15; 73:24).[99] Nielsen claims that the latter "should not be interpreted as a belief in a life after death, but as a confession that the Lord will forever be close to him, the psalmist, and to Israel",[100] but Mowinckel notes that even though there is no true resurrection or eternal life in the psalms, the description of communion with God after death in Ps 73 comes very close.[101] Day suggests that these two psalms demonstrate the beginning of the synthesis between the retention of belief in cosmic order and the recognition of the problem of theodicy by a vindication after death. Logan proposes that resurrection was already in the mind of Abraham, in God's everlasting pledge of the Promised Land to him and his seed,[102] but this view seems unnecessarily forced,[103] as does the interpretation of the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:6) as depicting God restoring the dead to life rather than the more common understanding of him as the cause of both life and death.[104]

[96] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 359.
[97] Sawyer 1973, pp. 231–232, see also *idem* 1993, pp. 307–308.
[98] Spronk 1986, pp. 226–227.
[99] Stacey 1993, p. 153.
[100] Nielsen 1993, p. 279.
[101] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 24–241, see also *idem* vol. II, p. 128.
[102] Logan 1953, pp. 165–170.
[103] Rowley 1956, pp. 153–154, cf. TB Sanhedrin 90 b.
[104] Brown, Driver and Briggs 1979, p. 311 b.

It is often thought that the catalyst for the Israelite view of resurrection was the influence of Persian ideas[105] (even though the Persians never spoke of death as a sleep unlike the Hebrew Bible), but Blenkinsopp notes that it is "arguable that, while the idea of individual resurrection is not clearly attested before the persecution launched by Antiochus IV (Dan 12:2), a less clearly delineated conviction of survival after death was emerging long before that time".[106] Some have argued that the resurrection in Dan 12:2 does not reflect Persian influence because it is selective rather than universal, which may also apply to Isa 24–27 (see above), and that the cult of Osiris, together with the shared pattern of the Babylonian Tammuz and Canaanite fertility cults,[107] can also not be connected because their resurrection rites were at odds with the fundamentals of Israelite religion.[108] In addition, Isa 26:19 describes not just the immortality of the soul but a full resurrection so that the land will be filled with the people of God,[109] and possible references to fertility cults such as Hos 6:1–2 probably symbolise the revival of the nation, not the revivification of a god or individual.[110] Nevertheless, whether the author of the latter passage spoke with irony or a polemical attitude, he reapplies imagery from the cult of Baal.[111] This shows that his audience would have been familiar with such ideas, as does the weeping for Tammuz in Ezek 8:13–14, the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in Zech 12:11, and the possible reference to Adonis gardens in Isa 17:10.[112] Although it could be said that human resurrection is a far cry from the maintenance of the fertility of family and agriculture, Healey argues that the ability to rise from the dead was most likely passed from the god representing such fertility to the monarchy (cf. *KTU* 1.16.i.10–15), and so "rather than a radical departure, this development is a democratization of what was formerly a royal prerogative".[113] Day criticises this view on the basis that only Ps 73 of the psalms which Healey cites in support of his argument contains a reference to afterlife and it is not royal, whilst the others simply use hyperbolic language,[114] but it is possible that the king's lack of divine status in Israel meant that traditions associated with the fertility god were reapplied straight to the

[105] E.g. Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 241.
[106] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 371.
[107] Hvidberg 1962, pp. 15, 66.
[108] Rowley 1956, pp. 161–162.
[109] Herbert 1973, p. 156.
[110] Ibid., p. 164.
[111] De Moor 1988, p. 100; Spronk 1986, pp. 272f.; Day 2010, pp. 218–219.
[112] Rowley 1956, p. 163. Kissane 1960 vol. I, pp. 192–193 rejects this last view.
[113] Healey 1984, p. 254.
[114] Day 1996, p. 235.

nation. In any case, the language used in passages such as Isa 26:19, Ezek 37 and Hos 6:2 "stands in contrast with biblical passages that negate even the theoretical possibility to conceive of resurrection",[115] which suggests a diversity of views concerning the afterlife in post-exilic Israel.

The Canaanite Background to Death and Resurrection

This leads us to the investigation of whether or not we can see the Canaanite ideas of the revivification of Baal and/or the defeat of Mot behind these verses in Isa 24–27. Day states that the imagery related to life after death in Dan 12:2 can be traced back through Isa 26:19 to Hos 13:14; 14:6 and before that the Ugaritic *KTU* 1.5.v.10–11; 1.6.iii.2–13.[116] While some criticise this for being fanciful,[117] as mentioned above the metaphor is appropriately positioned, especially in combination with 25:8, as it precedes Yahweh's defeat of Leviathan in 27:1, which is comparable to the dragon threatening Baal immediately following his rise from the dead and defeat of Mot in *KTU* 1.6.vi.51–3.[118] In addition, Zion is the setting of Yahweh's defeat of Mot in 25:8, which is somewhat reminiscent of the fact that Baal is buried on top of his mountain in *KTU* 1.6.i.17, and in lines 19–29 we have a 'lavish funeral wake', which may have helped to inspire the heavenly banquet of v. 6.[119] Mot (*māweth*, *moth*), Sheol and the general abode of Death are personified several times in the Hebrew Bible, seen as a robber (Jer 9:20 [Eng 21]), as a gaoler (Ps 18:6 [Eng 5]; Hos 13:14[120]), an enemy in battle (Ps 13:3–5 [Eng 2–4]), a king (Job 18:14), a shepherd (Ps 49:15 [Eng 14], cf. *KTU* 1.4.viii.17–20 which mentions consuming sheep), and an insatiable swallower (Num 16:32; Prov 1:12; Isa 5:14; Hab 2:5; Job 18:12–13; Ps 33:19).

It has also been suggested that the equation of the psalmist's enemies with lions or wild beasts (e.g. Ps 7:3 [Eng 2]; 17:2) is a remnant of the same personification of

[115] Hogeterp 2009, p. 256.
[116] Day 1996, p. 245.
[117] Hibbard 2006, p. 17.
[118] Day 1985, pp. 150–151.
[119] Note also 'funeral feasts' in Ps 106:28 connected with the worship of Baal Pe'or, Margalit 1980b, p. 140 and n. 2.
[120] Tromp 1969, pp. 163–164 sees Death/Sheol as a person with servants here.

death,[121] and we may have a similarly personal account of death in Ps 73:9.[122] Although scholars such as Healey point out that these images may be independent of the Canaanite Mot myths,[123] I am more inclined to agree with Gibson's assertion that we should see them as demythologized forms of the Canaanite ideas, not original Israelite thoughts.[124] Of course, there may well have been traditions which had not become demythologized. The place name (Ezra 2:24; Neh 7:28) and personal name (2 Sam 23:31; 1 Chr 12:3; 1 Chr 27:25) עַזְמָוֶת, 'Death is strong/ strong as Mot', and the name אֲחִימוֹת, 'my [divine] brother is Death' (1 Chr 6:10),[125] together with the claim in Song of S 8:6, may represent beliefs about Mot which had continued from such descriptions as *KTU* 1.6.vi.16–22.[126] This is supported by a line in a private letter from Ugarit which states that 'the hand/love of the gods here [is] like Mot/Death exceeding strong' (54:11),[127] and the possibility that Sheol itself may be a shaphel of the root *'wl*, 'be strong'.[128]

A. Mot in the Canaanite Tradition

It has been suggested that Isa 25:8 recalls the Ugaritic text *KTU* 1.5.vii–ix, in which Mot swallows Baal, and certainly the motif seems too similar to be coincidental. That it is God swallowing Death in Isa 25:8 may serve as polemic against the Canaanite religion, but certainly emphasizes the power of Yahweh, especially if we understood his foe to be a god. Smit argues that Mot here is a deity, because we would expect God to kill (and eat) his enemies,[129] and Isa 28:15, 18 shows Mot as a divine being in direct rivalry to Yahweh,[130] which Blenkinsopp feels is in contrast to the true shelter of God described in 25:4.[131] Although Healey suggests that Mot's absence from local pantheons

[121] Gibson 1979, p. 156 n. 1.
[122] Ringgren 1953, p. 268.
[123] Healey 1999a, p. 210; 1999b, p. 601.
[124] Gibson 1979, pp. 155–156.
[125] Smith 2002, p. 88 n. 83; Břeňová 2002, p. 484.
[126] Gibson 1979, p. 162.
[127] Pope 1994d, p. 131.
[128] Margalit 1980b, p. 203 n. 1.
[129] Smit 2002, p. 47. Korpel 1990 points out that Yahweh's consumption of his enemies in Num 24:8 (cf. Ps 21:10) is also reminiscent of Mot, p. 409.
[130] Healey 1999b, p. 601. On the basis that scholars cannot provide evidence of a cult of Mot in Judah at the time of the Assyrian threat, Day 1989 proposes that we understand the deity in these verses to be Molech, as this cult would be understandable in the face of the threat and is supported by 2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6, pp. 62–63. Cf. Lehmann 1953, who identifies Molekh with Mot, p. 366
[131] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 395. He sees similar mythological themes to those in ch. 25 in Isa 28:17–18, as the language (שׁוֹט - here 'flood', but often 'whip') is reminiscent of Baal-Hadad, consistent with an enemy of Mot, but this may be wishful thinking, cf. Gese 1970, pp. 127–134. Day 1989 argues that we should

and offering lists implies that he is more than just the personification of death, but not a worshipped deity in the full sense,[132] ^{d}*mu-tu* does appear as a death deity in later Assyrian verse, and Eusebius describes Mot (*Μώτ*/*Μούθ*) as a son of Kronos seen by the Phoenicians as Death and Pluto (*PE* 1.10.34). In general, however, the Hebrew Bible "renders the power of death as demonic and not a full-fledged deity",[133] and sometimes he and his helpers were merely Yahweh's instruments (Deut 32:24).[134] Whilst some see no allusion to the Canaanite death god in the Hebrew Bible, as Yahweh is the only recognized ruler of Sheol,[135] and Wildberger claims that Mot in Isa 25:8 represents not a deity but any power that denies life,[136] it seems clear that the Israelites would have picked up on the mythic background and understood its significance. Healey notes that the reversal of the myth implies awareness of it,[137] and in more general, less polemical terms, it is quite possible that "foreign ideas simply provided the material with which to recognize and describe the existing situation better".[138]

Mot has often been seen to feature in Jer 9:20, as the image of death climbing in through windows is reminiscent of Baal's refusal to put a window in his new palace lest Mot attack him that way (*KTU* 1.4.v.120–vi.13).[139] However, Healey prefers to see a death demon in this verse,[140] and Břeňová compares the Mesopotamian demon Lamaštu who attacked children and pregnant women through windows and מַשְׁחִית in Exod 12:23.[141] In addition, many scholars think that Baal is afraid of Yam entering through the window, not Mot,[142] and Gibson suggests that perhaps the author of Jer 9:20 transferred to death something which had previously referred to the chaos waters.[143] This raises an interesting question, as Margalit has asserted that the differences between Mot and Yam

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understand the term as 'scourge', p. 59 and n. 101, which might be compatible with the idea of the sirocco in connection with death/Mot (see below).
[132] Healey 1999b, pp. 598–599.
[133] Smith 2002, p. 203 n. 5.
[134] De Moor 1988, p. 106.
[135] Heidel 1963, pp. 178, 182, see also Gibson 1979, p. 155.
[136] Wildberger 1992, pp. 532–533.
[137] Healey 1999a, p. 209.
[138] Plöger 1968, p. 50.
[139] Cassuto 1971, pp. 22–23, 63; Petersen and Woodward 1977, p. 239 and n. 20. Margalit 1980b, pp. 45–46 also takes this view, although he reverses the common position to have Baal ignoring Kothar and Khasis' advice by insisting on having windows (so that his friend is not responsible for what happens), by understanding the particle *al* as asseverative and *bl* as negative throughout the passage.
[140] Healey 1999b, p. 602.
[141] Břeňová 2002, p. 484. See also Paul 1968, pp. 373–376 for a discussion of the Babylonian figure of Death entering via the window.
[142] E.g. de Moor 1971, p. 54; Healey 1999b, p. 602.
[143] Gibson 1979, p. 165 and n. 1.

have been greatly exaggerated, and that they should be seen as alter-egos, the sea-serpent of *KTU* 1.5.i as living in the sea and a henchman of Mot.[144] He supports this idea by saying that the Western Ocean and the Netherworld are identical from a phenomenological standpoint, because it was the entrance to the underworld where the sun sank,[145] and by translating *KTU* 1.4.vii.35–44 as the invasion of Baal's home and his receiving a fatal snake-bite from either Mot or his commander-in-chief,[146] whom he also sees in the serpent in *KTU* 1.5.i.1–2.[147] His philological explanation of *KTU* 1.4.viii.5–6, which apparently describe the snake-bite, seems fairly sound, but this leads him to make conclusions about Mot's nature on the basis that "since we have reason for assuming that Baal is dying of snake-bite it is logical…".[148] Margalit rejects the common emendation of *KTU* 1.5.i.19–20 to 'with both hands' because snakes have no hands, but explains away Mot holding sceptres of bereavement and widowhood in *CTA* 23:8–9 as a different, less ophidic tradition about the god.[149] He also has no problem with Mot trampling/stamping in his fight with Baal in *KTU* 1.6.vi.20,[150] even though this would surely be very difficult for a serpent! Nevertheless, the sequence and actions of Baal's conflicts with Yam and Mot are very similar, and may therefore be variants of the same myth,[151] or perhaps the latter began as a story of a hero's death, remodeled on the former to become a conflict between the hero and personified death.[152] Watson also puts forward some arguments which may support Margalit's case, as the serpent is well known for its prolific swallowing abilities,[153] and Leviathan and death are connected in Isa 26:19–27:1.[154] In any case, it seems most unlikely to me that Yam and Mot should be seen as identical, as they form different parts of the seasonal overtones of the Baal cycle and do not appear to have any cultic correlation, but in the eschatology of Isa 24–27 they are almost equated, since the final defeat of chaos comes at the same time as the final defeat of death.

[144] Margalit 1980b, p. 54 n. 2.
[145] Ibid., p. 125.
[146] Ibid., p. 52.
[147] Ibid., p. 90.
[148] Ibid., pp. 93–95.
[149] Ibid., p. 103 and n. 2.
[150] Ibid., p. 189.
[151] Clifford 1998, pp. 22–23.
[152] Smith 2002, pp. 87–88 n. 83.
[153] Watson 2005, p. 286.
[154] Ibid., p. 309.

B. Mot as the Swallower

The opening image of Isa 25:8, in which Yahweh swallows up Death forever, is what has prompted many to compare this verse with the Ugaritic texts. The verb בָּלַע is the polysemic verb used in Isaiah to describe leaders who swallow those they lead (3:12; 9:16), and to depict God confounding Egypt's plans (19:3),[155] and is used in the context of destruction in e.g. Isa 9:16; 49:19; Jer 51:34; Lam 2:2, 5, 8. We also find the verb in connection with death in Num 16:30–32 and Prov 1:12, and references to the 'mouth', 'throat' or 'lips' of Death or Sheol in Hab 2:5, Isa 5:14, Pss 73:9 and 141:7. This is very reminiscent of *KTU* 1.4.viii.17–19, which can be translated,

'lest he [Mot] make you like a lamb in his mouth
like a kid in his gullet's breach you be crushed',[156]

and Smith asserts that from such texts we can say that "the picture of Mot's insatiable appetite was a standard West Semitic motif".[157] The descent into Mot's throat is the equivalent of going down into the underworld, and is also representative of the wetness found there.[158] The term for his oesophagus in *KTU* 1.5.i.6–8 is *mhrmt*, understood as 'watery pit/ooze' whilst indicating a part of the body, a place of pouring down.[159] The same root is found in the description of Mot and his surroundings in *KTU* 1.4.viii.1–10, and in reference to his abode has been variously translated by such evocative words as 'slushy',[160] 'miry',[161] 'muddy',[162] and 'oozy', on the basis of a relationship with מַהֲמֹרוֹת in Ps 140:11 [Eng 10] "(slimy) 'pits' from which one cannot rise",[163] and the Arabic *hamara*.[164] Pope notes that "the watery character of the infernal region is

[155] Quinn-Miscall 2006, p. 85.
[156] Pope 1994d, pp. 129–130. Margalit 1980b goes against the consensus of translating *qnh* as 'reed', representing Mot's windpipe or gullet, and claims that it should be understood as fangs, pointing again to his serpentine nature as a giant viper with a massive elastic mouth, pp. 82–83.
[157] Smith 2006, p. 107.
[158] Margalit 1980b, p. 95.
[159] Břeňová 2002, p. 481 n. 2.
[160] Pope 1994e, pp. 140–141.
[161] Gibson 1979, p. 156.
[162] Wyatt 2002, p. 113.
[163] Pope 1994d, p. 130; *idem* 1994b, p. 142.
[164] Pope 1994e, p. 141. This goes against Held 1973, pp. 173–190 who argues that the Hebrew and Ugaritic terms denote a pit or grave, cf. Pope 1994b, pp. 145–150.

abundantly attested in the OT",[165] and Rosenberg suggests that the formulas in Jonah 2:3–6 [Eng 2–5] and Pss 42:8 [Eng 7]; 69:2–3 [Eng 1–2]; 88:7–8 [Eng 6–7] show watery imagery in connection with divine judgment.[166] This also ties in with Philo of Byblos' interpretation of *Μώτ* as 'a putrescence of watery compound', which can be plausibly linked with Arabic *māṯa*, 'steeped, soaked, drenched, dissolved in water, mixed'.[167] This brings to mind the watery manure pit in which Moab is to end up in Isa 25:10,[168] and it is possible that this imagery was prompted by the traditions surrounding Mot.[169] Such ideas may well have been incorporated into popular language,[170] which was cleverly reversed by the author of Isa 25:8 to make nonsense of the Canaanite myths,[171] and emphasise the way in which time and creation will be reversed in the eschaton.[172]

The Seasonal Pattern in the Conflict between Baal and Mot

Unlike the way in which the defeat of death is connected with the eschaton in Isa 24–27, the conflict between Baal and Mot has often been understood as seasonal in the Ugaritic texts. The three-sided contest apparently takes place between Baal, controlling the rainfall, Yam, representing the ocean and rivers, and Mot whose domains are the barren wastes and the underworld, and certainly this makes sense of much of the mythical cycle.[173] In particular, with regards to the theme of death, "it is clear that Mot is in the ascendant when Baal appears to be dead and *vice versa*. This alone is sufficient to make us conclude that Mot's role is somehow connected with the agricultural cycle".[174] De Moor states that a seasonal understanding of the myths means "any interpretation which implies that the whole text or part of it refers to annually recurring climatic, agrarian or cultic events".[175] Some, however, such as Gibson, feel that importance of the

[165] Pope 1994e, p. 139.
[166] Rosenberg 1980.
[167] Pope 1994e, p. 140. Philo uses the name *Μουθ* for the god Mot, distinct from this compound.
[168] Ibid, p. 139.
[169] Mackay 2008, p. 534, however, suggests that the term for dung-pit, מַדְמֵנָה, "may be a derisive play on the Moabite town of Madmen (Jer 48:2)".
[170] Herbert 1973, p. 152.
[171] Healey 1999b, p. 601.
[172] Smith 2001, p. 36.
[173] Gaster 1948, p. 185.
[174] Healey 1999b, p. 600.
[175] De Moor 1971, p. 9.

seasons in the cycle has been greatly exaggerated,[176] and Ginsberg ended up rejecting any seasonal significance of the Baal myths.[177] Those who consider Baal's death to be an upset in the regular order of the cosmos can also make a case against this interpretation,[178] but this does not seem to hold up against the view that Baal goes down to the underworld of his own free will and returns only after an appropriate length of time, suggesting that these events were predetermined by an order of nature superior to the gods.[179]

The cyclical nature and inevitability of the events which take place point to the annual change of seasons.[180] Gordon argued that the cycle of myths cannot be seasonal because there is no specific mention that Baal's death and revival were annual, no part of the year in Canaan was sterile, and the cycle tells us that the deaths lasted seven years, and so he favours a sabbatical pattern.[181] Others have pointed out that, whilst these points are valid, mythical time is symbolic and cannot be relied upon to refer to the stated period,[182] and considering the tradition of seven year famines in the ancient Near East (e.g. Gen 41:25–30), perhaps this myth was seasonal but provided some aetiological explanation for this tradition. A convincing case has been made in connection with the common pattern of death and resurrection in the Near East for a cultic use of these myths at the annual autumnal New Year festival.[183] Whilst some believe that this included an element of imitative magic,[184] others state that any cultic re-enactment is too far and that the myth was simply narrated,[185] and Gaster argues that the texts are just literary descriptions of the seasonal pattern signified by the rituals.[186] This issue may never be resolved, but it seems clear that, if only in tradition, Mot played a role in the annual renewal of Baal's cult.[187]

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[176] Gibson 1979, p. 159.
[177] Ginsberg 1950, p. 157.
[178] Petersen and Woodward 1977, p. 240.
[179] Rosensohn-Jacobs 1945, pp. 93–95.
[180] Cf. Worden 1953, p. 275.
[181] Gordon 1949, pp. 3–5.
[182] Gray 1965, p. 86; de Moor 1971, p. 33.
[183] E.g. Hvidberg 1962, pp. 50ff.; de Moor 1971, p. 9.
[184] Břeňová 2002, p. 482.
[185] Gibson 1979, p. 163 and n. 1.
[186] Gaster 1961, pp. 12–13.
[187] Healey 1999b, p. 600.

A. Was Mot a Vegetation Deity?

It has also been proposed by many that Mot represents an even more important aspect of the Canaanite seasonal year, in that the killing of the god (*KTU* 1.6.ii.26–37) is the killing of the ripe corn.[188] On this basis the actions of Anat have usually been interpreted as preparing Mot as fertilizer or seed for the next year's crop,[189] or as harvesting him in a desacralization rite of the current crops.[190] The latter is the view of many scholars, who compare the rite to that of the offering of the first sheaf, in the form of crushed grain parched with fire, in Lev 2:14.[191] Dussaud also took this view, and connected the ritual with the seasonal Festival of Unleavened Bread in Israel,[192] suggesting that it took place either around the time of the grain harvest, like the Hebrew Passover, or about the time of the fruit harvest, like the feast of Tabernacles,[193] and similar rites involving the slaying of the 'spirit of the grain' occur in many different agricultural societies.[194] The 'birth of the gracious gods' (*KTU* 1.23) is the only other poem to speak about Mot, and seems to symbolize him as the vine, although Finkel notes that this text is more abstruse and perplexing than the others, as the rites in it are not homogenous or connected with a single event or festivity.[195] In it, the figure of Mot is cut and bound like a vine, and "weighed down by [the scepters of] bereavement and widowhood",[196] which Kosmala argues is in accordance with ancients' view that there is no life or fertility without death, which must be overcome (cf. John 12:24; 1 Cor 15:55–57).[197]

On the strength of these passages, Mot has been considered to signify not only the curtailing force of death, but also a generator of fertility as the 'bread of life' complementing Baal's 'water of life'.[198] Virolleaud stated that "si Môt est un dieu

[188] Hvidberg 1962, p. 51.
[189] E.g. Lehmann 1953, p. 362; Cross 1968, p. 6.
[190] Watson 1972, p. 61.
[191] Albright 1953, pp. 86f.; Habel 1964, p. 104; Gray 1965, pp. 68f.; Kapelrud 1969, p. 69; Pope 1994d, p. 131.
[192] Dussaud 1931, pp. 388–390.
[193] Dussaud 1932, p. 123.
[194] Astour 1980, pp. 230–231.
[195] Finkel 1953, p. 29. He also asserts that the pair *Mt* and *Šr* is a dual divine appellation, meaning 'man' and 'chieftain/prince', and is comparable to אָדָם and שַׂר in Ps 82:6–7, pp. 30–31, but that it does have additional suggestiveness of being death, and possibly Mot himself, p. 49.
[196] Ibid., p. 31.
[197] Kosmala 1964, p. 150.
[198] Rosensohn-Jacobs 1945, p. 79.

Pasteur, il est aussi le dieu de la végétation; il est la végétation même. Môt, c'est l'épi que l'on coupe pour en faire du pain; mais c'est Aussi le grain de blé que l'on met en réserve et qui contient dans sa frêle enveloppe le germe des moissons futures", limiting 'Al'iyn (whom he distinguished from Baal) to the rain-god of the winter.[199] As the god of corn, Mot therefore undergoes the same fate as the crops,[200] and whilst some argue that *mt* cannot mean death and the spirit of the corn and must therefore signify something like 'warrior'[201] or not represent grain,[202] there is support in the central and eastern European 'carrying out death' ceremony which had a fertilising influence.[203] V. and I. Rosensohn-Jacobs point out that it was common in antiquity for things to be seen to go down into the earth and rise back out, particularly in the case of chthonic deities who also increase the fruits of the earth.[204] They note that Tammuz is represented at Harran as dying when grain cast upon him had been ground between stones, and yet is also the 'lord of the underworld', and Nergal, Enmasarra and Osiris are all netherworld deities who are also associated with the provision and multiplication of earthly fertility.[205] They propose that both Mot and Baal are generators of fertility, because the latter's life-force falls down with the rain to be sucked up by the former who then flourishes as the grain,[206] and this makes Baal unhappy as he has to die so that Mot can produce crops. It is this, they assert, which prompts Baal to proclaim that he alone rules over gods and men and satisfies them (*KTU* 1.4.vii.50–52), because he wishes Mot just to be a sterile underworld force and leave the crops to him.[207] They conclude by saying that, whilst they agree with the view that Baal and Mot are rival and complementary deities,[208] and that they represent the alternation of the seasons, "such statements fail to convey an adequate idea of the complexity of the process by which the two gods are brought together, interfused, separated, and presumably reunited in moving rhythms of constant regularity. Ba'al, the expending force, and Môt, the absorbing, are not rivals for the same throne."[209]

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[199] Virolleaud 1931, pp. 172–173.
[200] Rosensohn-Jacobs 1945, p. 79.
[201] Dussaud 1937, pp. 122f.
[202] Gaster 1961, pp. 131ff.
[203] Frazer 1922, pp. 351, 357–372.
[204] Rosensohn-Jacobs, p. 81.
[205] Ibid., pp. 80–83. For Osiris as a dying and rising god who has cultic associations with corn see Mettinger 2001, pp. 167–172.
[206] Rosensohn-Jacobs, pp. 87–88.
[207] Ibid., pp. 89–90.
[208] Moret 1935, pp. 339f.
[209] Rosensohn-Jacobs, p. 108.

B. Mot as a Deity of Death, Baal a Deity of Vegetation

On the other hand, de Moor says that the Rosensohn-Jacobs must be wrong in seeing Mot as a grain deity, as they do not take into account *KTU* 1.5.ii.5–7 in which Mot apparently threatens the vegetation, and because it would result in his final combat with Baal (*KTU* 1.6.v–vi) signifying the crops fighting against the autumnal rains they would clearly need, which makes little sense.[210] In fact, Mot is apparently portrayed in the texts as the opponent of all fertility and vitality, and Watson points out that if there is a grain god at Ugarit it would be Dagan, who we know had a temple and is prominent in the sacrificial lists.[211] Instead of having a dual character like some other chthonic deities, I agree with Pope that there is "no corroborative evidence in the Ugaritic texts for beneficent fertility function on the part of Mot. Destruction and sterility are his concern and fear is the natural response to Mot, both for gods and people".[212] Mot can be seen as connected with grain only in the description of his death, and so it is hard to justify harvest customs such as that of the last sheaf,[213] and there is no evidence for seeing him as a positive result of agricultural actions.[214] In addition, Watson notes that a comparison of this passage with Lev 2:14 reveals that the grain in the latter is 'parched' or 'roasted', (Heb *qālūy*, *qlh*), in preparation for grinding, whilst the term used to describe Mot is 'burned', (Ug *šrp*; Heb *śrp*), usually to the point of destruction (cf. Amos 2:1).[215] This also argues against the view that the grain was to be used as seed or fertilizer, as it would be of little use in that state,[216] and the emphasis of the ritual seems to have been on the disposal of the grain to the wild creatures,[217] possibly to restore fertility on earth by 'killing' Death.[218]

Others have maintained that not all of Anat's actions can be seen as agricultural, especially the sowing of Mot in the sea (*KTU* 1.6.v.18–19),[219] and even though Kapelrud

[210] De Moor 1971, p. 31.
[211] Watson 1972, p. 62.
[212] Pope 1994d, p. 131.
[213] Gibson 1979, pp. 160–161.
[214] Healey 1999a, p. 207 n. 5.
[215] Watson 1972, p. 61.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Gray 1965, p. 68 n. 3.
[218] Watson 1972, p. 64.
[219] E.g. Loewenstamm 1962, p. 79; Gibson 1979, p. 160.

suggests this can be resolved if we translate *bym* as 'on the day' rather than 'in the sea',[220] this has not satisfied many scholars. De Moor sees a reference to the gardens of Adonis in the sowing in the summer and the sea,[221] but this would require Mot to be an Adonis type god which does not seem to fit with his nature.[222] He also takes the view that Anat's handling of Mot is maltreatment,[223] which is noted by others who interpret her actions as the purely destructive elements of treating grain, comparing 1 Sam 17:44 and the treatment of Apophis ('The Beginning of the Book of Over-throwing Apophis, the Enemy of Re and the Enemy of King Wen-offer'[224]).[225] Loewenstamm proposed that we understand Mot to have been 'scattered' rather than 'sown', and so utterly destroyed in a way similar to the golden calf in Exod 32:20.[226] Although attempts to demonstrate a primary, non-agricultural meaning for the root *dr'*, 'scatter', have not been convincing,[227] it does seem that Anat is annihilating Mot rather than harvesting him, in a figurative ritual like the destruction of the golden calf,[228] and I agree with Margalit that the 'scattering on the face of the waters' in both the passages implies a common, cultic *Sitz im Leben*.[229] Similarly, it is possible that the pruning of Mot like a vine in *KTU* 1.23 is "an apotropaic ritual to protect the deities who are to be born".[230]

In opposition to the view of V. and I. Rosensohn-Jacobs, who claim that Mot needs the heat of the sun, Shapash, to flourish as grain,[231] it is commonly thought that the sun-goddess was connected to the dead and the underworld at Ugarit (e.g. *KTU* 1.161 and 1.6.vi.45–49) because the sun's journey at night was through the netherworld.[232] The Babylonian and Alalakh sun-gods were also rulers of the spirits of the dead for this reason,[233] and Mot's statement that 'the skies will be hot and shine' (*KTU* 1.5.i.4)[234]

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[220] Kapelrud 1963, p. 128.
[221] De Moor 1971, p. 214.
[222] Mettinger 2001suggests that the allusion to Adonis Gardens in Isa 17:10–11 refers to sterility, as was common in Greece, but that in the Levant the connotation was dying and rising gods, pp. 126–127, 146–148. For an overview of Adonis as a dying and rising god see ibid., pp. 113–154.
[223] De Moor 1971, p. 213.
[224] Wilson 1969, pp. 6–7.
[225] Healey 1999b, p. 600; Smit 2002, p. 46.
[226] Loewenstamm 1962, pp. 87–88.
[227] Margalit 1980b, p. 159.
[228] Watson 1972, pp. 63–64; Gibson 1979, p. 161.
[229] Margalit 1980b, pp. 161–162, 185 and n. 1.
[230] Healey 1999a, pp. 207–208.
[231] Rosensohn-Jacobs 1945, p. 88.
[232] E.g. Healey 1980, p. 240, cf. Lewis 1999, pp. 227–228.
[233] Gaster 1961, p. 227–228; Heidel 1963, p. 171.
[234] Emerton 1978, p. 74, cf. Wyatt 2002, p. 115.

when he swallows Baal implies that there was a link between the two gods, although there is not enough evidence to say that Mot has dominance over Shapash.[235] Nevertheless, the god of the underworld symbolises "the death-dealing sterility associated, at least in part, with the summer heat and drought", demonstrated perhaps by Shapash's burning hotly because of Mot's ascendancy (*KTU* 1.6.ii.24),[236] and seen by the people of Ugarit in the summer drought which scorched their produce.[237] The characteristics of sterility and aridity make the Semitic etymological explanation of Mot as the personification of Death much more plausible than 'man, hero' as a derivation from the Akkadian *mūtu*.[238] Whilst the Rosensohn-Jacobs argue that we cannot see Mot as the god of dryness and drought because he does not take over Baal's throne, whereas Athtar rules in Baal's place and is therefore the lord of the rainless sky,[239] others have seen in *KTU* 1.4.vii.55 the sirocco (or perhaps a solar eclipse[240]) as a manifestation of Mot.[241] The sirocco in Nah 1:2–8, Isa 19:1–7, 50:2–3, and Jer 51:34–45 seems to be connected with nature myths,[242] and the phenomenon is also connected with disease,[243] which strengthens its association with death. The juxtaposition of death and the east wind (sirocco derives from the Syrian Arabic *šarqīyah*, 'the easterly (wind)')[244] in Hos 13:14–15 has been seen as an echo of this mythological background,[245] and the *qṭb*, 'sting/destruction', seen in v. 14 is connected with the very hot weather in Ps 91:6, supported by the Babylonian Talmud Pesaḥim 111b and the Midrash on Psalms.[246]

We also find in Hos 13:13 the reference to being in labour but not giving birth which is echoed in Isa 26:18, seen also by some in Mic 6:14 and which is "a standard feature of times of famine and disaster".[247] The same motif has been noted in the Hittite Telepinus myth, because the grain does not grow and the animals are not able to breed

[235] Gibson 1979, p. 157. He argues that this dominance is the only element of *KTU* 1.4.viii alien to the Hebrew Bible, but in fact Yahweh demonstrates his power over the sun in Isa 24:23.
[236] Healey 1999b, p. 599.
[237] Gibson 1979, p. 159.
[238] As for example Ginsberg 1938, p. 211.
[239] Rosensohn-Jacobs 1945, p. 96.
[240] Wyatt 2002, p. 112 n. 173. In both fact and Biblical text the sirocco darkens the sun and moon, cf. Nah 1:8; Isa 13:10; 34:4; 50:3; Jer 4:23, 28; Joel 2:2, 10; 3:4; 4:15; Zeph 1:15; Amos 5:18, 20; Exod 10:21–29; Ezek 30:18, Fitzgerald 2002, p. 182.
[241] De Moor 1971, p. 173.
[242] Fitzgerald 2002, pp. 27–43.
[243] Ibid., p. 25, 131–133.
[244] De Moor 1971, p. 115 n. 4.
[245] Smith 2002, p. 88; Fitzgerald 2002, pp. 25–26.
[246] De Moor 1988, pp. 101–103.
[247] Pope 1994e, pp. 134–135 n. 4.

when the fertility god disappears (*KUB* XVII.10.14–20), similar to 'the two great goddesses who were pregnant but did not bear' in the Egyptian Magical Papyrus Harris.[248] This is comparable to the way in which gods and men cannot be satisfied whilst Baal is dead, and perhaps the author of Isa 26:18–19 had this in mind when he wished to demonstrate that there will be life only after the end of death. Gaster described the combat between Baal and Mot as the annual expulsion of the spirit of blight before the return of the fertile season, connecting Baal with Arabic *ba'l*, 'watered by fountains or seasonal rains', and Mot with Arabic *mawāt*, 'uncultivated soil'.[249] Lehmann added to this that the likely association of a cult of Mot with the term שְׁדֵמָה (e.g. Isa 16:8) meant that 'Field of Mot' became "technically synonymous with barren and arid soil",[250] whilst Smith notes that the contrasting Mishnaic phrases 'house of Baal' and 'field of the house of Baal' refer to a well-watered field (*Seb'it* 2:9, *Terumot* 10:11, *Baba Batra* 3:1).[251] However, Stager points out that Lehmann skims over several philological problems in linking שְׁדֵמָה with a Mot cult,[252] and it seems likely that the connections between these phrases and the deities are loose at best.[253]

If Baal's name were intrinsically linked with watered land, then it is easy to see how de Moor came to the conclusion that the 'gardens of Adonis' were once the 'gardens of Adon Baal' (cf. the metaphor of the seed in 1 Cor 15:42–44),[254] on the basis that he is a dying and rising fertility god. Adonis was Frazer's paramount example of a 'dying god', together with Osiris, Tammuz and Attis, and he claimed that the Egyptians and West Asians "represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetation life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead".[255] The concept of dying and rising gods has taken some knocks in recent years, however, especially from J. Z. and M. S. Smith.[256] Some believe that Adonis only became a 'rising god' because of Christian interest[257], or as a rationalization of why he was mourned anew

[248] Ibid.
[249] Gaster 1934, p. 678, cf. *idem* 1961, p. 124.
[250] Lehmann 1953, p. 363, cf. Tromp 1969, pp. 50ff.
[251] Smith 2002, p. 78 n. 44.
[252] Stager 1982, p. 118 n. 30.
[253] Cf. de Moor 1971, p. 31.
[254] De Moor 1988, p. 99 n. 1.
[255] Frazer 1914, pp. 3–4, 6.
[256] Smith, J. Z. 1987, 521–527; Smith 1994b, pp. 69–73 and *idem* 1998, pp. 257–313. Cf. Mettinger 2001, p. 15; Gordon 2010, p. 48.
[257] Barstad 1984, pp. 148–150; Smith. J. Z. 1987, p. 522.

every year,[258] and that all 'dying and rising gods' can be seen as merely disappearing deities.[259] It has been suggested that Baal is simply a god who disappears then reappears,[260] since he travels to the Underworld only 'as if he is dead' and then returns,[261] and when he reappears we have no idea how.[262] However, I agree with Day that this is a rather weak argument,[263] and that Baal is clearly said to be dead and then alive several times.[264] Entombment in the Underworld must mean that Baal is, to all intents and purposes, dead to the land above.

The creation and occupation of his palace probably signifies that Baal had regulated the rainfall so that there would be a fertile season,[265] in order to combat Mot's forces of sterility,[266] and his actions with a heifer in *KTU* 1.5.v.17–25 are often cited as evidence of his nature as a fertility god.[267] Hvidberg proposes that Baal is the last sheaf which is buried in *KTU* 1.6.i.12–18,[268] but while there is little evidence for this, it is clear that even though El has the ultimate power over fertility (in his role as the bestower of progeny, e.g. *KTU* 1.23) he is "quite surpassed, or even superseded, by the 'acting god'…weather and fertility god par excellence", i.e. Baal.[269] He is also given meteorological epithets (e.g. 'Rider on the Clouds', *KTU* 1.4.iii.11; 1.4.v.60), and it is possible that his consort, Anat, also achieves some sort of control over fertility through her actions to bring him back from the dead.[270] Moscati notes that, as the god of fertility, Baal assumes the role of the Mesopotamian Tammuz in his death and resurrection because of Mot, which forms the central part of the cycle.[271] Perhaps we can also see a parallel with 'and I know that Aliyn Baal is alive' (has risen from the dead, *KTU* 1.6.iii.8) in Job 19:25, although this is most likely accidental.[272] It has been noted that the possibility that Baal cheats death by giving Mot a substitute victim (*KTU* 1.6.vi.10) ought "to dampen not a little the enthusiasm of those who theorise about a dying and

[258] Müller 1997b, p. 4.
[259] Barstad 1984, pp. 150–151; Smith, J. Z. 1987, p. 522.
[260] See Smith 2001, pp. 104–131.
[261] Smith, J. Z. 1987, p. 523.
[262] Müller 1997a, p. 77.
[263] Day 2000b, pp. 117–118.
[264] Day 2010, p. 217. In *CTH* 671 the Hittite storm-god also goes down into 'the pit' and later returns.
[265] Dussaud 1932, pp. 250, 298–300, *idem* 1935, p. 7.
[266] Gray 1965, p. 53.
[267] E.g. Pope and Röllig 1965, p. 225.
[268] Hvidberg 1962, p. 66.
[269] Engnell 1943, p. 171.
[270] Petersen and Woodward 1977, p. 241.
[271] Moscati 1958, pp. 135, 141.
[272] Heidel 1963, p. 214 n. 241.

rising god", but the text is unclear, and he may be simply ensuring a successor in the case of his death.[273] As Mettinger points out, Baal himself must die, or the subsequent events and the effect on nature make little sense,[274] and Day asserts that the substitution theory "is completely baseless and without any support in the Ugaritic Baal myth where it is clear that Baal is really and not merely seemingly dead".[275] His revival is clearly related to Anat's actions towards Mot, and it may be that this was the main focus of the passage, not the 'death' of the latter,[276] as it is this which heralds the renewal of fertility seen in the flowing of oil and honey on his return (*KTU* 1.6.iii.5–13).[277] Baal's resurrection was probably seen as coinciding with the first autumnal rains and appearance of the grain, and he is explicitly described as the son of the corn, Dagan (*KTU* 1.2.i.19, 35), and responsible for the 'ploughed furrows' (*KTU* 1.6.iv.3).

Gibson nevertheless points out that Baal should not be seen as a fertility god in the same way as Tammuz because, although as a weather god he supplies the conditions for vegetation, he is not directly connected with it.[278] This may well be correct, but he certainly makes the plants grow and flourish because he provides not only the rain but also the dew (e.g. *KTU* 1.19.i.38–46). In addition, his daughter is named *ṭly*, 'dewy' (e.g. *KTU* 1.3.i.24), which Blenkinsopp notes is reminiscent of Isa 26:19.[279] The expression in this verse, טַל אוֹרֹת, usually translated as 'dew of lights', has been much debated, and various translations have been put forward.[280] On the basis of the connection between dew and life in the ancient Near East (cf. Ps 137), and Canaanite homographs Millar follows Dahood's translation as 'fields' in place of 'lights', which he thinks fits well with the land of the shades.[281] Wildberger also discusses the importance of dew in the Near East in its connection with fertility and rain, and says it is possible in the light of the Ugaritic *pdry bt ar* (*KTU* 1.3.i.24) and the Arabic *ary*, that טַל אוֹרֹת could refer to a kind of dew, but since we do not find this anywhere else it is best to remain with 'dew of lights',[282] and concludes that we should understand here "life-providing, salvation-

[273] Gibson 1979, p. 160 and n. 1, cf. de Moor 1971, p. 188.
[274] Mettinger 2001, pp. 59–60, cf. Waterston 1989, p. 431.
[275] Day 2010, p. 217.
[276] Albright 1953, p. 86.
[277] Watson 1972, p. 62; Smith 2001, p. 100.
[278] Gibson 1979, p. 161 n. 1.
[279] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 371.
[280] For an overview of how 'lights' is understood here, see Day 1978, p. 266.
[281] Dahood 1966, pp. 222–223; Millar 1976, p. 53 n. 1. The JPS *Tanakh* similarly has 'fresh growth' here.
[282] See also Day 1978, p. 266.

bringing, good-fortune-creating dew", as the people will rise up to enjoy full life.[283] The dew can also be seen as life-giving because light and life are sometimes interchangeable (Ps 56:14; Job 3:20; 33:30),[284] and was understood as the heavenly source of life after the dry season.[285]

Day also thinks that we should leave the translation as 'dew of lights', seeing אוֹרֹת as the intensive plural of אוֹרָה, and that it should be understood as 'the dew of dawn' (אוֹר means dawn in Judg 19:26 and Neh 8:3).[286] He connects this with Hos 14:6 [Eng 5] as the fifth of his links with this passage, in which Yahweh revives the people as the dew revives vegetation.[287] Day notes that, in addition to the rebirth of the people, we see dew and dawn connected with the rebirth of the king in Ps 110:3, which is probably linked to "the deliverance of Zion at dawn in Ps 46:6", and in which we have an association with the defeat of the waters of chaos (v. 4), just as we will see soon in Isa 27:1. This leads to his observation that in 26:19 we may have imagery from the Feast of Tabernacles, at which Yahweh's victory over chaos was celebrated, perhaps linked to the punishment of the host of heaven in 24:21–23, and to his speculation that "the imagery of the dew from the womb of dawn in Ps 110:3 goes back beyond the Israelite Feast of Tabernacles to Canaanite and specifically Jebusite mythological conceptions".[288] In support of this link to Canaanite myth is the fact that 'dew of lights' is an image of morning, beginning and life, the idea that the destruction of the preceding chapters can be overcome by resurrection,[289] which is what Baal symbolizes in his return from death to fructify the earth.

The Cycle as Not Merely Seasonal, but Concerned with Chaos and Life

As a patron deity, however, it is unfair to limit Baal to just his fertility role, and I agree with scholars such as Wyatt who believes that no attempts to prove that the Baal

[283] Wildberger 1992, pp. 569–570.
[284] Heidel 1963, p. 219 n. 250.
[285] Mackay 2008, p. 556.
[286] Day 1978, p. 267.
[287] Day 1980a, p. 312.
[288] Day 1978, pp. 267–268.
[289] Quinn-Miscall 2006, p. 88.

cycle of myths should be seen as simply a ritual, seasonal allegory, have been successful.[290] Instead, he feels that the myths focus on "cosmic management and the warding off of chaotic powers",[291] and thinks that texts like *KTU* 1.4.vii.30 imply that "Baal transcends nature. He is not simply a 'nature god'".[292] Margalit[293] and Cassuto[294] also consider it impoverishing to reduce the cycle to a battle between vegetation and summer heat, because we should see Baal as representing all kinds of life, and Mot as all forces which oppose them.[295] The second battle between the two gods (*KTU* 1.6.v.10–vi.35) supports this because a seasonal conflict should have finished after Baal's return, and so this section is primarily theomachic,[296] with Mot symbolizing not just sterility but all death and chaos. In contrast to the battle between Baal and Yam, which has definite connections to a struggle for sovereignty, the conflict with Mot is much more concerned with life and death. On the other hand it is difficult to limit the fight with Yam to simply a seasonal overcoming of the winter seas, and we should certainly see here connotations of the chaos waters which surround the world.[297]

We find desolation, תֹּהוּ, in Isa 24:10, where it probably does not have connotations just of primeval lack of form but also of the arid and barren desert we see in Deut 32:10 and Ps 107:40,[298] which may be a reference to Mot's sterile force. Although Anat appears to annihilate Mot completely, he recovers and carries on and the cycle ends in a truce with the death god undestroyed.[299] This may be because he can only return to the underworld: "Death can be a dying god only in a Pickwickian sense; 'Anat's destruction of Mot is the destruction of one of his modes or phases, not of his substance",[300] or perhaps because he is a permanent personification of death,[301] which is eternally continuous and uninterrupted.[302] This is the main way in which the concept of Mot in the Hebrew Bible differs from that of the Ugaritic texts, as in the latter there is no

[290] Wyatt 2002, p. 35.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid., p. 109 n. 155.
[293] Margalit 1980b, p. 204.
[294] Cassuto 1938, p. 266.
[295] Ibid., p. 269.
[296] Gibson 1979, pp. 163–165.
[297] Ibid., p. 164.
[298] Clements 1980, pp. 202–203.
[299] Margalit 1980b, pp. 161, 201–202; Gibson 1979, p. 163.
[300] Rosensohn-Jacobs 1945, p. 98.
[301] Astour 1980, p. 230.
[302] Margalit 1980b, p. 203.

defence against the power of Death, but in the former this is all changed by the final victory of Yahweh as described in Isa 25:8.[303]

[303] Cf. Pope 1994d, p. 131.

Chapter Five: How Canaanite Myths may have been Transmitted to Isaiah 24–27

The Connection between Myths, Cult, and Religious Activities

A. Ideals, Shrines and Syncretism

It has been argued that mythological narratives were inseparable from rituals, the situations in which they were re-enacted,[1] and that cultic festivals, in which mythological time meant that past, present and future were one, held the true significance of these stories.[2] Although scholars such as Wyatt claim that it is old fashioned to consider myth and ritual inseparable,[3] I agree with the position of Anderson, who suggests that even those who cannot accept the traditional Myth and Ritual school view that most myth has "an explicit cultic reflex" find it hard to deny that there is a connection between myths and rites (see for example the establishing on earth of what was in heaven in *Enūma eliš* VI.110–120),[4] since the two can surely be related without the former necessarily describing a re-enactment of the latter.[5] Caquot proposes that myth was disassociated from ritual in Israel because the religion's national salvation history became its own kind of mythology,[6] but I take the common view that history and myth do not necessarily constitute separate categories in biblical (or extra-biblical) texts,[7] and so the two could easily work side by side in connection with the cult. Perhaps an example of this can be seen in 2 Sam 5:20, where Baalistic storm imagery seems to be used to describe David's historical victory, and the establishment and naming of a cultic place.[8] The idea that there is a link between myth and religious activities is supported by the description of Aichelle *et al.* of myth as "not merely a community's charter; it is the community's taken for granted common sense and the hermeneutic through which the community defines

[1] Hooke 1933, p. 3.
[2] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 113–116. For problems concerning the difficulty of defining myth in Biblical and Near Eastern scholarship see Smith 1994a.
[3] Wyatt 1986, pp. 378–379.
[4] Anderson 1987, pp. 45–46.
[5] For the idea that some myths are clearly related to rituals to which they are nevertheless not official accompaniments see Smith 2006, p. 130.
[6] Caquot 1988, p. 38.
[7] Smith 1994a, p. 297.
[8] Ibid., p. 311.

life, truth, rationality, and justice. Myth is the metanarrative (and attendant perspective) that establishes and defends the communal status quo. Such myth supports the interests of the dominant group in the community by repeating itself *ad nauseam* throughout society and by portraying the ideological preference for the elite in the society as part of the natural order of things".[9] It is interesting to note here that, in general, it appears to have been the royal and priestly groups who were the primary preservers of mythic material at Ugarit and Israel.[10]

Archaeology has suggested to scholars that the worship of Yahweh always had a tendency towards monolatry, and that from its beginning it rejected the use of anthropomorphic images.[11] Whilst some claim that it is this which distinguishes the Israelite cult from those of its neighbours,[12] we also find the refusal to use such images amongst the Nabataeans, Arabs, Phoenicians and in some Bronze Age Syrian and Palestinian cities,[13] and Jeroboam I's golden calves can be viewed as theriomorphic depictions of Yahweh.[14] What does, perhaps, distinguish the earliest Israelite cult from those surrounding it is the idea that a human king could not rule in the place of a divine patron, who was for them the only monarch.[15] It seems that the only obvious parallel to the monotheism which came to define Israel was that of Akhenaten in the 14th Century BCE, but this brief religious phase centred on a solar deity and had no ethical dimension similar to the worship of Yahweh, and so is unlikely to have had any influence on the latter.[16] On the other hand, as early as 3000 BCE there is evidence of patron gods of Egyptian towns who were seen as the sole "creator of the world, founder of the town, sustainer (of fertility) mortuary god, and leader in war",[17] and it has been argued that the Israelites limited their cultic activity to a single patron deity in much the same way as, for example, the Moabites focussed their cult on Chemosh.[18] Scholars have suggested

[9] Aichelle *et al.* 2009, p. 388.
[10] Smith 1994a, p. 331. A tell-tale sign of this may be the occurrence of such precious things as lapis lazuli (in Baal's palace and under Yahweh's feet in Exod 24:10, see Chapter Three above), the appreciation of which may well have been limited to the elite classes.
[11] Day 2000a, p. 430.
[12] E.g. Harrelson 1969, pp. 58–59.
[13] Mettinger 1995, p. 191.
[14] Day 2000a, p. 439. Mettinger 1995, however, argues that they are postament animals for the deity, pp. 19, 137.
[15] Anderson 1987, p. 58.
[16] Day 2000a, p. 437.
[17] Redford 1992, p. 9.
[18] Anderson 1987, p. 3.

that this indicates that Israelite religious behaviour was not very different from that of the Canaanites, and that the Bible itself makes this observation.[19]

It is possible that syncretism is implied very early on in Israel's religious history, as Abraham pays homage to Melchizedek, the priest of El Elyon, in the cultic form of a tithe in Gen 14:20. This passage has struck some people as difficult, but Anderson points out that "in an epic story it would be quite appropriate for the patriarch to offer homage to the priest-king of Jerusalem through the cult. To recognize the cult of a city as legitimate and worthy of one's offerings and maintenance is tantamount to recognizing its political power as well".[20] Unlike the more idealized book of Joshua, Judges clearly recognises the syncretistic nature of early Israelite religion with regard to Canaanite fertility cults (e.g. 2:11–13; 3:6–7) and may therefore be seen as the more historically reliable of the two accounts.[21] It seems likely that the sacred personnel at the Israelite shrines during the ancient period were virtually indistinguishable from those at the Canaanite shrines, in that their tasks and behaviour, as well as the activities they supervised, were very similar.[22] Harrelson suggests that the priests' teaching of the Torah (Deut 33:8–11) would have distinguished them from the men who served at Canaanite shrines,[23] but the latter may well have taught an oral law which has been lost, or perhaps the mythological and ritual texts which have been found were the basis for the instructions of these priests.[24] Morton Smith supposes that the worship of Yahweh was established in the cities and holy sites of the Canaanites without pushing out the existing cults, and that the important festivals of Yahweh (Unleavened bread, Weeks and Booths) were absorbed by those of the Canaanite agricultural year, with fertility rites performed in the Israelite major shrines.[25] Psalms such as 29 clearly combine the old traditions of Sinai (see especially the reference to Kadesh in v. 8) with the imagery of the Canaanite writers,[26] and Richardson claims that we should see non-Hebrew literature as having had the same amount of influence on the Israelite texts as non-Ugaritic literature had on the ideas of the Ras Shamra court.[27] If myth and cult are linked then such influences would

[19] De Vaux 1964, p. 44, and Anderson 1987, p. 3.
[20] Anderson 1987, p. 89.
[21] Dever 1987, p. 236.
[22] Harrelson 1969, p. 46.
[23] Ibid.
[24] See Wyatt 2002, pp. 20–22.
[25] Smith, M. 1987, p. 15.
[26] Margulis 1970, p. 346.
[27] Richardson 1994, p. 291.

clearly have had affected the religious activities of the Israelites, and both archaeological and literary evidence demonstrate that the Israelite cult had significant Canaanite elements, some of which were too old to be rejected by those who undertook them and some which were newer and seen by a proportion as intrusions.[28]

With David's decision to establish his court at Jerusalem came the centralization of the people and their religion at a Canaanite shrine, and the idea was put forward by Mowinckel,[29] and developed by Rowley,[30] that Zadok was qualified to be chief priest there because of his "familiarity with religious rites and customs in the city of Jerusalem prior to David's taking the city".[31] Cross, however, asserted that many of the arguments for Zadok as a Jebusite priest are very weak, and that we should be wary of biblical genealogies[32] as the element *ṣdq* is extremely common in Hebrew, Canaanite, Ugaritic, and Amorite names.[33] He states that a better argument would be to consider the Canaanite influences which shaped national rites and royal ideology, the establishment of the cult and the concept of kingship under Solomon as only partly due to Zadok even if he were of Jebusite origin. On the other hand, Solomon's relations with Tyre and the dominant patterns of Canaanite kingship would have assisted the influence of El and Baal cults on Israelite thought,[34] and Cross agrees with Haran's hypothesis that Zadok was attached to the house of Aaron in Hebron,[35] meaning that David chose his two priests very diplomatically: "Abiathar of the Shilonite house of Eli which claimed descent from Moses, Zadok from the Hebronite clan which traced its line to Aaron".[36] Day supports this view, noting that since Abiathar came from the North (1 Kgs 2:27), it would be odd for Zadok to have been a Jebusite, not a Southerner, especially as the South was David's home, and it is likely that he already had a priest when he ruled in Hebron whom he kept on.[37] Nevertheless, the Israelites under David probably interacted with the Jebusite priesthood and mixed their royal ideology with that of the Jebusites and

[28] Segert 1967, p. 159.
[29] Mowinckel 1916, p. 109 n. 2.
[30] Rowley 1939, pp. 113ff.
[31] Harrelson 1969, p. 51, cf. Ringgren 1966, pp. 60ff.
[32] Rowley 1963, p. 206 and n. 2, pp. 264–265.
[33] Cross 1973, p. 209.
[34] Ibid., pp. 210–211.
[35] Haran 1961, p. 161.
[36] Cross 1973, pp. 214–215.
[37] Day 1998, pp. 77–78. 1Chr 12:29 [Eng 28] says Zadok already supported David in Hebron, but this is a late text. For a summary of views concerning Zadok see Cody 1969, pp. 88–93, and de Vaux 1961, pp. 372–376.

the cult of Elyon (cf. Ps 110:4), leading to Yahweh's acquisition of the term Elyon and its Canaanite characteristics, seen in the river imagery reminiscent of El's dwelling at the source of rivers in Ps 46:5,[38] and the Most High ruling Zaphon in Isa 14:14.[39] The settling of the Israelites' cult at Jerusalem established it as the successor of the Jebusite religion, and controlled the practice of Canaanite cultic activity by focussing it at one place and in the service of Yahweh.[40] Nevertheless, Solomon not only built high places to foreign gods (1 Kgs 11:4–8; 2 Kgs 23:13) but also worshipped at them (1 Kgs 3:4),[41] and with the imitation of a Canaanite temple built by Phoenician craftsmen came Canaanite language to describe and praise Yahweh.[42] This is hardly surprising, since Israel borrowed from the culture of the city-states around her during the transition to statehood, and it could also have been anticipated that some would reject this.[43]

Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern kingdom, gave to the shrines of Bethel and Dan images of Yahweh in the form of golden bulls (1 Kgs 12:28–33). It is possible that the Egyptian bull cults influenced Jeroboam because Solomon's queen was Egyptian (1 Kgs 3:1), he himself had been an exile in Egypt (1 Kgs 11:40), and Palestine was overrun by the Egyptians during his reign (1 Kgs 14:25),[44] but it is more likely that the symbolism was derived from the traditions of the Canaanite El.[45] During the same period in the Southern kingdom the people built high places and sacred pillars to Asherah, kept prostitutes and followed 'all' the Canaanite rituals (1 Kgs 14:23–24).[46] The socio-religious background to Jehu's revolt against Ahab in the 9th Century suggests that there were two groups involved: the worshippers of Baal and the servants of Yahweh (2 Kgs 10:18–28). Many of the latter, however, would also have been the former, and the revolt probably "had the clear intention of the astute and violent destruction of the leading confessional class of Baalism; it was not directed against the syncretistic behaviour of the Yahwistic faithful".[47] Certainly the Baalistic and fertility cults continued despite

[38] Day 1998, pp. 73–79. He also argues that the psalm's themes of Yahweh's protection of Zion and conflict with the nations are borrowed from the Jebusite cult.
[39] Day 1994, p. 44.
[40] Segert 1967, p. 158.
[41] Smith, M. 1987, p. 16.
[42] Del Olmo Lete 1994, p. 263.
[43] Anderson 1987, p. 78.
[44] Smith, M. 1987, p. 16 and n. 53.
[45] Cross 1973, pp. 73–75; Day 2000b, pp. 34–39 and 2010, pp. 215–216.
[46] Smith, M. 1987, pp. 16–17.
[47] Del Olmo Lete 1994, pp. 267–268.

these revolutions because they are denounced by Hosea in the 8th Century, and Zephaniah and Jeremiah in the 7th.[48]

Although Saul had named one son for Baal and one for Yahweh, who then named his son for Baal (1 Chron 8:33–34),[49] Tigay notes that there are only 8 theophoric names with the likely element בַּעַל in the Masoretic Text, with those from Judges and Chronicles replaced by בֹּשֶׁת or אֵל in Samuel.[50] Similarly, the official Hadoram (Haddu is exalted) in 2 Chr 10:18 and Adoram in 2 Sam 20:24 and 1 Kgs 12:18 is called Adoniram (my Lord is exalted) in 1 Kgs 4:6, and the Prince of Hamath, Hadoram in 1 Chr 18:10, is Yoram in 2 Sam 8:10 (the LXX and Josephus *Ant.* 7:107 support (H)adoram). We also find pagan forms of seemingly innocent names in the LXX of 1 Chr 2:32; 8:4; 11:11; 24:13, and Tigay claims that the 8th Century Samaria Ostraca support the view that this was editing, as they mention at least five names with the element בַּעַל, suggesting it was more popular and in use for longer than the Masoretic Text implies.[51] Nevertheless, he concludes from the inscriptional evidence that from the 8th Century polytheism was not very prevalent,[52] but Day observes that most of this epigraphic evidence comes from the latter part of the pre-exilic period and predominantly from the Southern Kingdom, and so questions whether we can see the complete picture from this alone.[53] In addition, he notes that there would have been a tendency to prefer names which invoked the chief deity even if others were worshipped, pointing out that Asherah is virtually absent from Canaanite/Ugaritic names even though we know that she was a worshipped divinity.[54] The account of Josiah's reform a century later (2 Kgs 23:1–25) would definitely have us believe that cultic activities towards Baal, Asherah, the host of heaven, and the sun, moon, and planets were being practised still at both high places and in Yahweh's temple.[55]

[48] Smith, M. 1987, p. 17.
[49] Ibid, p. 16.
[50] Tigay 1986, pp. 7–8, c.f. Gray 1896, pp. 121–122.
[51] Tigay 1986, pp. 8–9, c.f. Noth 1928, p. 120.
[52] Tigay 1986, pp. 37–41.
[53] Day 2000a, p. 438.
[54] Day 2000b, pp. 227–228.
[55] Smith, M. 1987, pp. 17–18.

Whilst some scholars see the Canaanite themes of the Hebrew Bible as having come from a rival religion,[56] the exilic revision of texts seems more likely to represent the result of viewing past religious behaviour as unsuccessful.[57] As Morton Smith notes, "that constantly recurrent national apostasy should be made the leitmotif of an entire literature is something unparalleled in antiquity; it requires explanation", suggesting that the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests alone are not justification for this attitude and so it should be seen as the view of a minority who kept seeing their ways turned over by the majority,[58] until the centralized cult of Jerusalem had finally assimilated all practices into one stable position.[59] That such separatism and revision were necessary confirms the existence of a Baalistic religion "not only on the level of 'popular' praxis, as a prevarication or degradation, but also as an institutionalized form of official religion",[60] and it is likely that, on a practical level, the religion of the Israelites and that of the peoples surrounding them had no clear boundaries.[61] Although many old Canaanite festivals and rituals lost some of their original significance when they were interpreted with reference to the Israelite *Heilsgeschicte*,[62] the practices were a significant part of the Hebrew religion and, as Engnell asserts, "the argument that Israel took over the Canaanite cult and all its external furnishings, but not the ideas associated with this cult, cannot be successfully defended. The argument implies an abstraction which cannot be assumed in an era when cult and religion were to a great extent synonymous ideas".[63]

B. The Origins of Israelite Sacrifices

In some cases, scholars' attempts to trace the origin of Israelite traditions back to Canaanite cultic activity has led to mistranslation and confusion. When Virolleaud first published *KTU* 1.23, he translated line 14 as 'fais [cuire un che]vreau dans le lait',[64] which Ginsberg then asserted shed light on Deut 14:21 (and Exod 23:19), substantiating the view of Maimonides in *The Guide for the Perplexed* that the prohibition against

[56] Hillers 1985, p. 254.
[57] Del Olmo Lete 1994, p. 264. See also Garbini 1988.
[58] Smith, M. 1987, p. 36.
[59] Ibid., p. 62.
[60] Del Olmo Lete 1994, p. 273.
[61] Smith, M. 1987, p. 20.
[62] Segert 1967, p. 159.
[63] Engnell 1969, pp. 39–40.
[64] Virolleaud 1933, pp. 128–151.

boiling a kid in its mother's milk was a reaction against a pagan cultic custom (III.48).[65] Sadly, this view has since been completely discounted, even though for a while it was still believed that the text referred to rejected Canaanite 'magic',[66] as the word translated as kid, *gd*, should probably be understood as something like 'coriander'.[67] Whilst there have been many interpretations of this verse, including traditional Christian[68] and Karaite[69] understandings, Maimonides' original suggestion is still plausible (although speculative), since the meaning of this biblical text is still elusive and may well have been understood in reference to a Canaanite cultic custom.[70]

The Hebrew Bible presupposes that Passover was already celebrated before the Israelites had left Egypt, on the basis that they claimed it was necessary to go to the desert to sacrifice to Yahweh (Exod 3:18; 5:3; 8:4, 17, 21–24) to celebrate a feast in honour of him (Exod 5:1), which could represent an early Passover.[71] This sacrifice could therefore not have arisen as a result of Canaanite influence, but de Vaux points out the similarities between Passover and ancient nomadic Arab sacrifices which are unlikely to be coincidental, so it may well have started as a semi-nomadic shepherds' sacrifice for their flock.[72] It only appears in the later additions to the calendars in Exodus (23:18 and 34:25) where it is called a pilgrimage (חַג), and it was certainly not a family feast until settlement and the monarchy caused a loosening of tribal ties.[73] Whilst the original agricultural and pastoral significance of Passover was obliterated by its connection with Exodus traditions,[74] it is the only sacrifice of which we have evidence before the settlement, since the holocaust and זְבָחִים in Exod 18:12 are offered by Jethro, who was not an Israelite, and those in Num 23 by the king of Moab. The Israelites do offer

[65] Ginsberg 1935, pp. 45–72. Cf. Frazer 1919, pp. 117–118.
[66] Gaster 1961, pp. 97, 423; Gray 1965, p. 97.
[67] Anderson 1987, p. 8 n. 33.
[68] See Moorhead 1997.
[69] See Nemoy 1992, and cf. Haran 1979 and Keel 1980 for a complete survey of opinions.
[70] Craigie 1983, p. 76; Day 2000a, p. 440. Labuschagne's suggestion that the prohibition is based on the assumption that the mother's milk contained blood because of the reddish colour of the beestings, within the prescriptions for festival sacrifices and purity laws (1992 pp. 13–17), is extremely attractive but sadly has little textual basis.
[71] De Vaux 1964, p. 18. The argument of Weiser 1962, p. 26 n. 2 that this feast cannot refer to Passover as this would have been celebrated in the people's homes is therefore rejected.
[72] Ibid., p. 17.
[73] Ibid., pp. 1–2.
[74] Segert 1967, p. 160.

holocausts and שְׁלָמִים in Exod 32:6–8, but these are condemned because they are offered to the golden calf, in worship most likely copied from the Canaanites.[75]

Pre-Islamic Arabia does not seem to have had an equivalent to the holocaust or communion sacrifice, but we do find them in Canaan, and de Vaux notes that "according to the Bible, Canaanite sacrifices were distinguished neither by their principal rites nor by their names from Israelite ones".[76] The holocaust offering in 1 Kgs 18:23–24 is prepared in exactly the same way by both Elijah and the Baal prophets, and the story of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:17) suggests that it is not how the rite is executed but to whom it is offered that is important.[77] In addition, Jehu offers זְבָחִים and עֹלוֹת in the temple of Baal in Samaria, following the specific Canaanite rituals (2 Kgs 10:24). The term עוֹלָה, *'ôlāh*, is not present in any Canaanite texts, but we do have *šrp* which is translated as 'burnt offering',[78] and the Ugaritic *šlmm* are found in conjunction with this and, like the biblical שְׁלָמִים, consisted of animals and had royal characteristics, making them one of the closest parallels to Israelite sacrifices which we know.[79] Keret's sacrifice (*KTU* 1.14.iii.55–iv.10) has also been taken to be a holocaust, because he offers cereal and wine with the animal victim before returning to prepare separate food for the city.[80] In addition, there is textual evidence that the Hittites sacrificed goats which were burnt whole and not consumed (*KBo* 3.63.ii.3–8),[81] which implies that they observed similar cultic traditions.

The communion sacrifices, שְׁלָמִים, were not found amongst Arabs, Egyptians, or the people of Mesopotamia, but they do seem to have existed in Canaanite, Moabite, Ammonite, and Greek societies, and they may well also have been represented by the sacrificial term זֶבַח for which we have the corresponding term *dbḥ* in Ugaritic texts.[82] The rite was a regular festival offering in tribal period (1 Sam 10:8) and a special

[75] De Vaux 1964, p. 19.
[76] Ibid., p. 44. A depiction of Amenophis III roasting a bird before a divine statue at the Temple in Luxor (see Wilkinson 2000, pp. 87–88) could represent an Egyptian holocaust, but there is no evidence for this.
[77] Anderson 1987, pp. 3–4.
[78] De Vaux 1964, p. 47.
[79] Levine 1971, pp. 34–35; Anderson 1987, pp. 36–37; Pardee 2002, pp. 28–33.
[80] De Vaux 1964, p. 47.
[81] Collins 1995, p. 88 n. 56.
[82] De Vaux 1964, pp. 20 n. 74, 46–47. For a list of uses of this term in texts connected with sacrificial ritual see Pardee 2002, p. 297.

sacrifice in wartime (1 Sam 13:9; 11:15) and at the harvest festival (Exod 23:14–17) but changes by the time of Solomon turned it from a pan-tribal gathering to a palace festival (see 1 Kgs 3:15), which became a significant theme in the prophetic critique of royal religious rites,[83] although the people were still involved in Canaanite sacrificial meals (Exod 34:15–17). Communion with God was achieved through the remainder of the sacrifice being consumed by offerers (cf. 1 Cor 10:18, 20), and from derivatives and parallels שְׁלָמִים is understood as "a tribute given to God to establish or re-establish good relations between Himself and His faithful", which means it is seen as a covenant sacrifice.[84] This is supported by the close connection with eating and festal celebrations which were important in the context of covenantal ritual in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 26:30; 31:54; Deut 27:7; Josh 9:14) and in the wider ancient Near East.[85]

A Hurrian hymn found at Ugarit contains the words *el brt . el dn*, translated as 'El of covenant, El of judgment' (RS 24.278.14–15), which Craigie asserts is evidence of syncretism between the high god Mithra, the deification of covenant (also worshipped in India), and the high god El.[86] This is rather speculative, but the pre-Hebrew place El-berith in the Shechem area in Judg 9:46 supports the possibility that the Israelites were not alone in associating their god with a covenant.[87] The Ugaritic communion sacrifice also "presumes an environment of friendly accord as the participants share a common meal" which gave it a covenantal quality,[88] and the 'Great Assembly' at the KI.LAM festival of the Hittites includes a state level cultic meal which may represent a similar practice.[89] A text concerning the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival also describes preparations for a ritual feast in the temple of ZABABA (*KBo* 4.9.i.11–24),[90] and during his offering Keret 'served Baal with his sacrifice, the Son of Dagan with his food' (*KTU* 1.14.iv.7–8),[91] which raise the question of whether we should see the communion sacrifice as a meal taken with god, an idea developed by W. R. Smith.[92]

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[83] Anderson 1987, p. 50.
[84] De Vaux 1964, p. 38. Pardee 2002 notes, however, that we can only guess at the theology of such sacrifices in Ugaritic texts from "the structure of the texts and from comparisons with other cultures", p. 26.
[85] Anderson 1987, pp. 49-50.
[86] Craigie 1983, pp. 82–84. See also Mendenhall 1955, pp. 29–30, on Hittite suzerainty treaties.
[87] See Ringgren 1966, pp. 35–36, 118, 192–193.
[88] Anderson 1987, p. 51.
[89] Collins 1995, p. 91.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Wyatt 2002, p. 198.
[92] Smith, W. R. 1927, pp. 226–227.

The Canticle of Moses (Deut 32:38) tells of the gods of the Canaanites who 'ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their libations', and the gods of Ugarit seem to eat the same food as those offering the sacrifices,[93] so a similar explanation has been offered for Israelite sacrifices.[94] The altar is referred to as the 'table of YHWH' (e.g. 1 Kgs 7:48), sacrifices are sometimes 'YHWH's food' (e.g. 1 Sam 21:7), and their burnt aroma is 'a sweet savour to YHWH' (e.g. Lev 1:9, 13, 17). A common offering is bread, oil, and wine, (e.g. Num 15:1–12) which are the usual elements of a meal, and we also see divine messengers partake of sacrificial meals (Gen 18:8).[95] In addition, salt (seasoning in every meal) was added to cereal offerings (Lev 2:13) and to sacrifices (Ezek 43:24), and it is possible that these rites and cultic terms are remnants of the belief that Yahweh could nourish himself on sacrifices, supported perhaps by the rite of the shewbread in the time of Saul (1 Sam 21:4–7 [Eng 4–6]), and by the statement that wine cheers gods and men (Judg 9:13).[96] However, this phrase probably comes from a Canaanite setting, and Ps 104:15, which seems to be inspired by either this saying, the Canaanite idea, or both, states only that wine gladdens the heart of man. The terms 'food of Yahweh' and 'table of Yahweh' were introduced in a Babylonian environment in exile and may be examples of the Israelites borrowing the terms of a foreign cult for their own ends, and the first incidence of the 'sweet savour' is found in Gen 8:21 where it may simply be an echo of the Babylonian flood epic (*Atra-Ḫasīs* III.v.34; Gilgamesh Epic XI.161–163).[97] The holocaust and communion sacrifice do have the appearance of a meal with or for God, but since they are most likely adopted from the Canaanites, they may not have retained this connotation, and the meal turned into a holocaust in Judg 6:18–22; 13:15–20, suggests that the idea of Yahweh being able to feed on sacrifices was rejected. Although popular religion may have interpreted sacrifices as divine food under Canaanite influence, it should be noted that in the communion sacrifice only the blood and fat are offered, the flesh is not shared as a meal with God,[98] so it seems that Israelite sacrifice had a fairly unique dimension in this regard (cf. Ps 50:12–14).[99]

[93] De Vaux 1964, p. 39, cf. Herrmann 1960, pp. 205–216.
[94] Wendel 1927, pp. 32-56; Oesterley 1937, pp. 153, 181–187.
[95] Anderson 1987, p. 15.
[96] De Vaux 1964, p. 40.
[97] Ibid., pp. 40–41. For the Old Babylonian flood myth see Lambert and Millard 1969, p. 99; George 1999, pp. 88–94 and 2003 vol. I, p. 518.
[98] Ibid., pp. 41–42.
[99] Anderson 1987, p. 15.

C. The Transmission of Myths through the Cultic Festivals

We can conclude, then, that there was a very close similarity between Canaanite and Israelite sacrificial terms and practices, which suggests continuity between Ugarit and the Canaanite religion found in Palestine during the biblical period,[100] and possibly into the later period on the basis of the Punic Marseilles Tariff which contains similar sacrificial terminology.[101] It is still necessary to determine whether the linked myths and cultic activity borrowed by the Israelites affected their later literature, but I agree with Emerton's assertion that biblical imagery traced to non-Israelite sources is only satisfactory if enough attention is paid to points of contact between the images and earlier Israelite tradition, and preferably other influences of this source on Israel.[102] It is generally understood that the concept of the deity as king was borrowed by the Israelites from the Canaanites (and influenced by the Egyptians and Mesopotamians),[103] and many have argued that passages such as Ps 29 were taken directly from the Canaanite cultus of Baal,[104] although it seems more likely to be an Israelite composition based on the language from the Baal cult,[105] perhaps as a deliberate imitation to convey greatness.[106] Prophetic texts such as Isa 6:1–2 have also been seen to show a Canaanite influence on Yahweh's royal position,[107] but it is the so-called 'enthronement psalms' which most clearly demonstrate the connection between God's enthronement and the performance of great deeds (47:3–9 [Eng 2–8]; 93:1–4; 96:10; 97:1–5; 98:1–6), seen throughout the ancient Near East in the formation of kingship through cosmic or mythical acts.[108] Mowinckel states that "the picture seen by the poets is that of a great celebration which they present with the same features as that of the enthronement of a terrestrial monarch, only on a magnified mythical scale and with unearthly splendour",[109] and the fear and worship of not only all peoples (Pss 47:1, 8–10 [Eng 7–9]; 96:1, 3; 97:1, 6, 9; 98:3–6) but of all other gods (Pss 95:3; 96:4; 97:7, 9) suggests that we are dealing with themes of a pre-Israelite pantheon.

[100] Day 1994, p. 52, de Vaux 1964, p. 50.
[101] Anderson 1987, p. 4 and n. 14, cf. Dussaud 1941 and Caquot 1988, p. 36.
[102] Emerton 1958, p. 228.
[103] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 114; Gadd 1948.
[104] E.g. Gaster 1946–1947, pp. 55–65; Cross 1950, pp. 19–21; Miller 1973, p. 36; Fitzgerald 1974, pp. 61–63. V. 10 is particularly reminiscent of *KTU* 1.101.1–3a.
[105] E.g. Day 2000b, p. 98.
[106] Craigie 1983, p. 71.
[107] Greenfield 1985, p. 896.
[108] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 107, 110.
[109] Ibid., p. 107.

David Wengrow proposed that only myth can explain the paradox which exists in the transcendent dimensions of cosmos present in the ritual performance of local moral order,[110] and Mowinckel argued that the typically Near Eastern attitude to a divine kingly rule "arose from the annual cultic experience of an ever-recurring time of chaos and new creation".[111] He asserts that the only possible interpretation of psalms which are concerned with both "the actual and the future, the historical and the cosmic, together with the primeval element" is a cultic one,[112] in which an event or act symbolising Yahweh's enthronement was described in mythological terms,[113] and posits on this basis the existence of an Israelite enthronement festival, whereby Yahweh's kingship and victorious acts renewed the people's historical salvation.[114] Mowinckel was not able to produce conclusive evidence for this annual festival, but the theory is nevertheless very feasible,[115] and whilst there is no agreement on the subject, it is possible that psalms such as 104, 93, 96–99 and 29 (which is very like *KTU* 1.4.vii.42–44)[116] functioned as hymns or mythological chants as part of some kind of enthronement ritual.[117] In support of this, the presence in Isa 24–27 of the idea of Yahweh as the only king amongst the elders in 24:21–23, the great banquet and defeat of his enemies in ch. 25,[118] and the emphasis on cultic practices in ch. 27 suggest that some form of enthronement cult may be in the background here. The enthronement psalms certainly seem to reflect a pre-exilic Jerusalem cult[119] which could have been adapted from a pre-Davidic Jebusite rite.[120] Whilst I still have not seen enough evidence of a cultic re-enactment of primeval victory to be convinced of its existence, the festal coronation procession of the Lord implied by Ps 47:6 [Eng 5],[121] and most likely based on those of other Near Eastern gods,[122] seems likely. In any case, there seems little doubt that Pss 29, 93 and 104 are based on cultic

[110] Wengrow, D. 2011. *Cosmology and Commerce in the Ancient Near East* Lecture; London: British Museum.
[111] Mowinckel 1956, p. 128, *contra*. Gressmann 1905.
[112] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 112.
[113] Ibid., p. 107.
[114] Ibid., pp. 129–130.
[115] Gray 1956, p. 278. Cf. Day 1990, pp. 67–87.
[116] See particularly Kloos 1986.
[117] Miller 1973, p. 36. Margulis 1970 refers to Ps 29:10 as "possibly the oldest unambiguous statement in the O.T. literature of a divine enthronement ritual", dating it to the second half of the 10th Century BCE, pp. 343, 348.
[118] Hibbard 2006, p. 83.
[119] Day 1990, p. 73.
[120] Emerton 1958, p. 240.
[121] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 115.
[122] Eaton 1979, p. 15.

mythology and went on to inspire texts such as Isa 27:1, even if such passages were never an active part of liturgy.

That the enthronement of Yahweh was also religiously and ideologically linked with other liturgical situations, seen from the parallelism of Pss. 81 and 95, was also noted by Mowinckel,[123] who then argued convincingly that the Israelite enthronement festival was connected with a New Year Festival, supported by the coronations of Anu, Enlil, Marduk and Ashur as part of the Babylonian New Year cult,[124] and the celebration of enthronements as part of New Year festivities in the wider Near East.[125] It is generally agreed that the Babylonian Creation Epic, in which Marduk is crowned king, was recited at the New Year Festival in his honour,[126] and Day points out that, in addition to passages about Yahweh's kingship (*Malkiyyoth*) including Pss 93:1 and 24:7–10, passages concerned with his enthronement and the blowing of the shofar (*Shofaroth*), including Pss 47:6 [Eng 5] and 98:6 were, and still are, recited at the New Year Festival in post-biblical Judaism.[127] The Feast of Tabernacles, an autumn festival held at the ingathering of fruit, wine and oil, and almost certainly appropriated from the Canaanites,[128] was also associated with the epiphany of Yahweh and the enthronement psalms,[129] as well as Ps 29,[130] and the declaration in Neh 8:10 that the 1st of Tishri was a special feast day of Yahweh supports the link between Tabernacles and New Year.[131] Kutsch's survey of parallel expressions shows that when *yṣ'* is used of day, night, month or year in biblical Hebrew and Akkadian it refers to the end,[132] so בְּצֵאת הַשָּׁנָה (Exod 23:16) should be 'at the going out of the year',[133] but because we see in Exod 34:22 that Tabernacles is at תְּקוּפַת הַשָּׁנָה 'the coming round of the year', it clearly marks the end of one year and the beginning of the next.[134]

[123] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 106.
[124] Ibid., p. 115.
[125] Ibid., p. 123.
[126] Von Soden 1994, p. 191.
[127] Day 1990, p. 70. Cf. Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 122. See e.g. *Massechet Sof'rim* 19:2.
[128] Day 1990, p. 67.
[129] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 95, 106–107, 120–121.
[130] Day 2000b, p. 96.
[131] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 122.
[132] Kutsch 1971, pp. 15–21.
[133] Day 1990, p. 68.
[134] Ibid.

Mowinckel also argued that it was "this appearance and enthronement day of Yahweh which originally was called 'the day of the Lord'",[135] the day of his revelation as king (Hos 7:5) and special feast (Hos 9:5)[136] at the New Year Festival, which is why its first mention in Amos 5:18 was swiftly followed by the denunciation of festivals in vv.21–23.[137] This notion may well have derived from the Israelite cult,[138] as supported by passages such as Jer 46:10 and Isa 34:6, in which the Day of Yahweh appears to be connected with a sacrificial feast, and the similarity of the imagery of the Day in Joel 2:1 to that of the enthronement in Ps 47:6 [Eng 5]. Whilst the reference to 'in that day' in Isa 2 seems to picture a definite occasion,[139] and an absolute eschatology in such passages as has been proposed[140] might not be very reassuring to a pre-exilic audience, I think that Gray is correct in understanding such texts as "relatively eschatological in the sense that they allude to the decisive issue of the conflict between Cosmos and Chaos… established in the eternal order. The day of their God, for all its relationship to an annual seasonal festival, had for the Hebrews a sacramental value" (cf. Deut 26).[141] Cathcart argues that the poem in Isa 2 is a speech from a temple festival, most likely the New Year festival,[142] and it may well be that such cultic texts carried the inspiration for Isa 24–27.

That "all the elements in the future and in eschatology can be traced back to corresponding conceptions in the enthronement festival",[143] is suggested already in the enthronement psalms' eschatological overtones (e.g. Pss. 96:13; 98:9) and allusions to creation (e.g. Pss 93:1; 96:10),[144] and the later prophets seem to have used the ideas of the enthronement festival to remind the community of the restoration and hope which was coming, at the autumn feast.[145] Passages such as Zech 14:16–19, Micah 3:11–12 and Jer 7:1–14, show that the ideals of the autumn and enthronement festival were still very much alive,[146] and the themes of threat, combat, victory and coronation banquet seen in

[135] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 116.
[136] Ibid., p. 119.
[137] Mowinckel 1956, pp. 132–133.
[138] Ollenburger 1987, p. 184 n. 153.
[139] Gray 1956, p. 278.
[140] Frost 1952b, pp. 32–34.
[141] Gray 1956, p. 278. Cf. Brueggemann 1998, p. 195. *Contra* Mowinckel 1956, pp. 130–131.
[142] Cathcart 1978, p. 53.
[143] Mowinckel 1956, p. 143.
[144] Day 1990, p. 81.
[145] Mowinckel 1956, p. 142.
[146] Gray 1979, p. 191; Day 1990, pp. 70-71, 74.

the psalms can be found throughout texts such as Isa 24–27.[147] Exilic experience and redaction doubtless had an influence on the use of Canaanite myths known from the cultic festivals, as "the old naïve origin-stories…collected and arranged by the priestly historians of Israel, glowed with the light of hope",[148] and the close association with cultic activities seen in Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. Isa 40:27; 49:14) and the exilic fasts mentioned in Zech 7:3–5 and 8:19[149] demonstrate the truth of Mowinckel's theory that post-exilic eschatology was derivative from the pre-exilic cult. The victory and enthronement celebrated at the New Year Festival played a decisive role in the rise of prophetic eschatology,[150] and it may well have been that the loss of identity and cultic stability during the exile forced the Israelites to project their ritual traditions onto an idealized future. Thus the enthronement feast was a leading channel by which Canaanite mythological imagery reached prophetic and apocalyptic writers.[151]

The Transmission of the Myths found in Isaiah 24–27

A. The Myths of the Divine Warrior and the Combat with the Sea

Miller suggests that the narrative contexts of passages such as Num 21:1–4 and Judg 11:30–32 might connect the prayer/vow and sacrifice of the king to Baal in a time of attack (*KTU* 1.119) with some of the complaint psalms which "may reflect the involvement of the king in sacrifice and other ritual to secure the help of the deity".[152] Other stories of royal sacrificial activity may also have affected the Hebrew Bible. In the myth of Aqhat, Danel offers sacrifices for six days (*KTU* 1.17.i.1–31) which, as part of his nature as a judge and exemplar of wisdom and righteousness, may have contributed to the traditional character of the Daniel from Ezek 14:14, 20 and 28:3, Jub 4:20, and possibly the book of Daniel, as well as the figure in the apocryphal book of Susannah[153] and, much later, Shylock's famous line, "a Daniel come to judgment" in *The Merchant of*

[147] Millar 1976, pp. 65–71, cf. Hanson 1979, pp. 305–308.
[148] Hooke 1947, p. 1.
[149] Davies 1989, p. 101.
[150] Bentzen 1955, pp. 39ff., 74ff., 109f.
[151] Emerton 1958, pp. 230–231, 233.
[152] Miller 1987, p. 62.
[153] See Spiegel 1945-1946; Grabbe 1994, p. 120.

Venice.[154] Many biblical texts use myths concerning the Divine Warrior similar to the Baal Cycle,[155] and it needs to be demonstrated that cultic activity had the potential to pass these traditions down to the author(s) of Isa 24–27. As noted above, it is generally believed that the people of Mesopotamia and the Hittites recited their versions of the theomachy myth at seasonal festivals,[156] and many think it likely that the Baal Cycle was recited at an agricultural and fertility festival. Others have argued against this, however. The lack of extant ritual or administrative texts connected with the New Year festival means that we can never be sure of what took place,[157] and because the Baal Cycle is "a single, coherent story which makes sense outside a cultic context" there are many possibilities for its significance.[158] Of course, we can never disprove that there was a connection between the mythological texts and the festival either.

Gibson points out, however, that any theories which assert that there was a ritual enactment have no basis in the texts, leading him to conclude that we should see these myths as oral 'formulaic' literature not for cultic performances.[159] Similarly, scholars such as John Gray think it is likely that Isa 24–27 is related to the liturgy of the Autumn Festival,[160] but recognize that this is very difficult to determine, and Worden notes that just because the Israelites used the Canaanite myths does not mean they also took on their "religious notions and rites".[161] Whilst Gunkel's assertion that "from the very beginning, the myth was a hymn to YHWH. The YHWH-hymn was, therefore, the peculiar place where the dragon myth was customarily cited"[162] allows for the possibility that the combat myth was used for general worship of god as king, as shown above it seems likely that myths and cultic activity were linked. In addition, the idea of Yahweh as the only king amongst the elders in 24:21–23, the description of the feast in 25:6,[163] and the emphasis on cultic practices in ch. 27 suggest that a form of enthronement cult may be in the background here.

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[154] Day 1995, p. 59. See also *idem* 1980b, pp. 183–184.
[155] Such myths may go back to a very ancient period in which the Divine Warrior is identified fully with the natural elements in the theophany, of which we no longer have evidence. See Lambert 1988, p. 128; Smith 1994a, p. 303.
[156] Schmökel 1978. p. 81; Hoffner 1998, p. 9.
[157] Smith 1994b, pp. 62–63.
[158] Petersen 1998, p. 93.
[159] Gibson 1978, p. 6 and n. 4.
[160] Gray 1979, p. 203. Cf. de Moor 1971, p. 244 n. 8.
[161] Worden 1953, pp. 276–277.
[162] Gunkel 1895, p. 88.
[163] Note that Baal organises a feast for the gods as part of his victory over Yam in *KTU* 1.4.VI.44–59, and the Hittite storm god has his own banquet as part of his conflict with Illuyanka in *KBo* III:7.15–20.

In support of this idea, Maertens notes that the term תְּרוּעָה, used for the call of the horn on the first day of the seventh month for the new year, was also used for the cry, like the roll of thunder, raised when the Ark was carried to victory, and in honour of the Ark as Yahweh's throne (1 Sam 17:20, 2 Sam 6:15), so it symbolised God as king and warrior.[164] The Divine Warrior's victory over the sea was also connected with his status as king in the Ugaritic and Mesopotamian texts,[165] and it is possible that the concept of creation, as both establishment of the universe and continuation of world order, is linked to the theomachy myth at the New Year Festival in Israel, Ugarit and Babylon.[166] That the Autumn Festival in Israel centred on enthronement and creation as victory over chaos was first argued by Volz,[167] and then Mowinckel,[168] and we can see evidence of this in Isa 25. That the festival also featured the dominion of the Divine Warrior over other gods can be seen from the enthronement psalms, in which the latter fear and revere Yahweh (Pss 95:3; 96:4; 97:7, 9), and in psalms such as 29:1–2, 82 and 89:7–9 [Eng 6–8], where "it is notable that the unique ascendancy of Yahweh is thus expressed through the concept of numerous 'gods'",[169] as it was in the enthronement ideologies of Ugarit and Mesopotamia.

Collins notes that the reign of God on Zion seen in Isa 24:21–23 "evidently presupposes a mythical story that is not explicit in the text and raises the possibility that Enoch's concept of the prison for the host of heaven [1 Enoch 18:14] is derived from a tradition that was at home in the Jerusalem cult",[170] which may well have been Yahweh's cultic kingship over the other deities. The resemblance of the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1–18) to the enthronement psalms has also been noted, which Mowinckel asserts is support that the *Sitz im Leben* was at the Autumn Festival.[171] This poem contains the central motifs of both the Baal Cycle[172] and of later Divine Warrior imagery, seen in God's victory in combat (vv. 1–12), the theophany of the warrior (v. 8), the salvation of the Israelites (vv. 13–16a), temple building and procession (vv. 16b–17), and Yahweh's

[164] Maertens 1967, pp. 57–58.
[165] Emerton 1958, p. 228.
[166] Day 1985, p. 17, 45, 82.
[167] Volz 1912.
[168] Mowinckel 1922.
[169] Eaton 1979, p. 13, cf. Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 108.
[170] Collins 1987, p. 548.
[171] Mowinckel 1962 vol. II, p. 247. Cf. Day 1985, pp. 100–101.
[172] Craigie 1983, p. 88.

universal reign (v. 18).[173] These actions of the Divine Warrior celebrate creation in both Canaanite and Israelite traditions and festivals, in the sense of giving order to the world and the people,[174] but it may be that, like the Passover story in Exod 12, the Song of the Sea represents a cultic legend which preserves not only the memory of the cult but also a stage in the salvation history[175] which would have been passed down to the later prophets.

Mowinckel suggests that the heathen also stand with the gods over whom Yahweh reigns,[176] but in such psalms as 47:2–3, 8–10 [Eng 1–2, 7–9], 96:1, 3-5, 97:1, 6, and 98:3–9, we see that God's dominion is over all peoples, a universalistic idea which is compatible with both the creation and the trends found in Isa 24–27. Eaton notes that "in the festival the theme of Yahweh's roar against the chaos-foe (Pss 18:16 [Eng 15]; 68:31 [Eng 30]) covers also the defeat of enemy nations (Pss 9:6 [Eng 5]; 76:7 [Eng 6]; Nahum 1:4)",[177] and it is possible that a cultic reinterpretation of the myth with the king serving as vice-gerent on Zion opposite the submitting nations was a part of the festival (cf. Pss 2 and 110). The setting of Baal and Yahweh's combat with the chaos forces on the cosmic mountain influenced the New Year Festival and the cultic situation of the psalms, which in turn created prophetic descriptions of God overthrowing those who attack Jerusalem (Isa 17:12–14; Zech 12–14; Joel 3; Ezek 38–39).[178] This interpretation of the combat myth as an attack by the nations on Zion, adapted for both the present and the eschaton, can be seen in the way Ps 65, a psalm associated with Tabernacles and still sung at harvest festivals today, moves from primeval victory over chaos in water to victory over chaos in the contemporary form of the powers of enemy nations.[179] Mark Smith notes that it is not surprising that apocalyptic literature used mythical enemies, as they had been used to describe historical enemies for a long time.[180]

The possibility that the sea/chaos monster was responsible for causing celestial darkness (Isa 24:23, cf. *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5) could suggest an aetiological dimension to the combat myth which might explain its continuance into later literature, and Gray asserts

[173] Hanson 1979, p. 301.
[174] Fisher 1965, p. 316; Craigie 1983, p. 89.
[175] De Vaux 1964, p. 21.
[176] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 108.
[177] Eaton 1979, p. 67.
[178] Emerton 1958, p. 234.
[179] Day 1990, p. 82.
[180] Smith 1994a, p. 313.

that the use of the Baal myth, in which conflict precedes kingship, by Isa 27:1 shows the independence of this passage from the Israelite enthronement cult and true eschatology.[181] However, Gunkel's proposal that Isa 27:1 falls into what he sees as the *Gattung* between prose and poetry, a 'rhythmic prose' which has "the logical relationship which prevails between the half-lines and the elevated diction of poetry but which drops the poetic counting of beats"[182] supports the idea that an oral transmission, perhaps based on a liturgical tradition, preserved the story. The combat myths and themes associated with the enthronement festival had a significant impact on the Israelites' cultic and salvation histories, so that during and after the exile these traditions were preserved to maintain hope and faith in their patron. They were also subsequently utilised by those who wished to portray the Divine Warrior as enforcing his judgment on heavenly, earthly, and Israelite peoples: "as the sole divine power, God can be both enemy and champion. The combat myth motifs are only part of a greater mythic complex which centres on the transformation of the earth *and* Yahweh".[183]

B. The Concepts of Resurrection and the Divine Banquet

The later traditions concerning dying gods and resurrection can also be traced back through the Hebrew Bible. A Canaanite ritual to mourn the death of Baal, combined with sacrifices and meals (*KTU* 1.5.vi.11–25; 1.6.i.20–30) may help to explain the language of Deut 26:14, although Tobit 4:17 and Sir 30:18 imply that there was a custom of offering bread to the human dead. In addition, we find lamenting for Tammuz[184] as rites of a fertility ritual in Ezek 8:14,[185] as well as ritual mourning for Hadad-rimmon in Zech 12:11, so these traditions were clearly still around in the post-exilic era.[186] Some scholars argue that the mythic tradition of resurrection was known but not attested as used by monarchy, priesthood or other authoritative groups until the Persian period.[187] However, Hos 10:5–6 mockingly expresses the sorrow of the Israelites who worship the

[181] Gray 1979, p. 205.
[182] Gunkel 2006, p. 301 n. 47 (1895, p. 45 n. 2).
[183] Linville 2004, p. 102.
[184] Mettinger 2001, pp. 185–209 points out that whilst Tammuz was originally a Sumerian god of shepherding, he became a deity of vegetation connected with mourning rites who may well have been identified with Baal.
[185] Worden 1953, pp. 291–292.
[186] Day 1994, p. 43.
[187] Greenspoon 1981, pp. 247-321; Smith 1994a, p. 308 n. 58.

golden calf at Bethel in terms of Canaanite traditions of lamenting the death of Baal,[188] and verses such as 1 Kgs 18:28 and Hos 7:14 show a similarity between the mourning rites in Israel and those performed by the gods in the Ugaritic texts (e.g. *KTU* 1.5.vi.15–22). It is also possible that Jeremiah was aware of the oath 'as Baal lives' from his dying and rising traditions (12:16), which imply that the people were well acquainted with these ideas. Hos 4:15 supports this, as his rejection of the phrase 'as the Lord lives' may be a reflection on his awareness of the tradition and its associations.[189]

Passages such as Isa 26:17–19 and Ezek 37 may visualize restoration from the Diaspora, but they have traditional mythic pre-exilic roots in Israelite popular religion comparable to ideas from royal level of Ugaritic texts,[190] and Mark Smith notes that some cultic customs connected with the dead seem to have hibernated within biblical and early rabbinic texts and traditions.[191] Day suggests that Hosea's allusion to Baal as dying and rising in 13:1 may be ironic, as it is followed by ch. 14, in which he points out that it is Israel which dies and rises to dew and fertility because of Baal worship,[192] and it can be asserted that "the conception which was so characteristic of the Canaanite Baal, namely that the defeat, death and resurrection of the god precede his final victory and ascension, was wholly incompatible with Yahweh's essential character".[193] On the other hand, it may be that only this extreme mythic description of death and life can represent the desire for fertility and plenty,[194] and, as stated above, the position of this theme in Isa 24–27 is an appropriate fit for the cultic enthronement traditions influenced by the Baal cycle.

Some earlier biblical scholars aimed at showing that the Israelite popular religion was predominantly a syncretistic fertility cult with its roots in the general Near Eastern pattern of fertility religions found among the Egyptians, Syrians, Assyrians and Babylonians.[195] Lev 23:10 shows that the Israelites possessed no first fruits rite before they entered the Promised Land and did not introduce it into Canaan but adopted it once

[188] Hvidberg 1962, pp. 98–100.
[189] Jeppesen 1980, pp. 102–103.
[190] Cf. Healey 1984, p. 254; Day 1996, p. 235.
[191] Smith 1994a, p. 308 n. 58.
[192] Day 1994, p. 42; Day 1996, pp. 240-248. Cf. Hos 6:2-3.
[193] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 136.
[194] Jeppesen 1980, p. 106.
[195] E.g. May 1932, p. 73; Brooks 1941, p. 227.

there, and whilst we have no evidence in the Hebrew Bible of a ritual which could compare to that sometimes associated with the treatment of Mot in the Ugaritic texts (*KTU* 1.6.ii.31–37, v.13–19), it is possible to see remnants of one in Josephus (*Ant. Jud* III.x.5) and the Mishnah (Tr. Menaḥoth 10.2–4.65a and 66a).[196] In addition, the 'scattering on the face of the waters' of both Mot and the golden calf in Exod 32:20 suggests a background of cultic ritual from which perhaps only the associated mythic traditions were passed down to later texts.[197] De Vaux argues that the way Mot is treated could be "the mythological transposition of a ritual action which was recurrent in worship: a human sacrifice to assure fertility" supported by the Gibeonites' execution of Saul's descendants in 2 Sam 21:1–14 which he sees as a religious fertility action, but he himself notes that the Gibeonites are Canaanite descendants, not Israelites,[198] and so we cannot take this as evidence of Israelite behaviour. However, the banquet celebrating the Divine Warrior and king can be seen as a cultic fertility sacrifice[199] and an annual feast as part of the New Year Festival. As discussed above, the great banquet in Isa 25 may be connected with a covenant tradition, and Weiser (building on the work of von Rad)[200] posited that covenant renewal was the main theme of the Autumn Festival.[201] The Jewish tradition associates the New Year Festival with Ps 81, which seems to presuppose covenant renewal, and the Priestly source of the Pentateuch associates the Mt Sinai covenant with the feast of Weeks (cf. Exod 19:1) and Jubilees. Therefore Day suggests that the rabbinic tradition which connects covenant renewal with Tabernacles may well go back to an earlier tradition, supported by Deut 31:9–11,[202] and Eaton notes that "in the festal hour the divine work of salvation is re-experienced. Yahweh overpowers chaos, takes his kingship, makes right order, sends forth life, and enters into intimate communion with his liberated people".[203]

[196] Worden 1953, pp. 293–294.
[197] Cf. Loewenstamm 1962, pp. 87–88; Watson 1972, pp. 63–64; Gibson 1979, p. 161; Margalit 1980b, pp. 161–162, 185 and n. 1.
[198] De Vaux 1964, pp. 61–62.
[199] Hanson 1979, p. 322.
[200] Von Rad 1938.
[201] Weiser 1962, pp. 26–35, 35–52. Mowinckel 1927 had already suggested that covenant renewal was a part of the festival, which was the origin of the Decalogue.
[202] Day 1990, pp. 82–83. Cf. Harrelson 1969, pp. 24–25.
[203] Eaton 1979, p. 12.

C. Myths concerning the Mountain, the Temple, and the Garden

The prophetic literature clearly does show awareness of fertility traditions. Day asserts that the Baal referred to in Hos 2 definitely shows continuity with the Baal known from Ugarit, since we see in vv. 7 [Eng 5], 10 [Eng 8] and 14 [Eng 12] that he was considered the source of fertility, v. 7 being comparable with *KTU* 1.16.iii.12–16, and that "there was considerable continuity in the cult of Baal over both time (second and first millennia BCE) and place (Syria and Palestine)".[204] Aspects of a fertility cult can also be seen in Ezekiel's assertion that the return of Yahweh, and fertility, to Jerusalem requires a properly built temple with Zadokite priests, an altar and official sacrifices (40–48).[205] The interest of Haggai and Deutero-Zechariah in a proper Zadokite priesthood and cult was probably inspired by Ezekiel's words,[206] as seen in Haggai's use of the common Near Eastern fertility curse (1:5–6), and Zech 14:16–17 which claims that all nations are welcome to worship, but if they do not then they will receive no rain.[207] In the light of the fact that the later prophets seemed determined to reject all remains of Canaanite fertility practice, it seems odd that Haggai and Deutero-Zechariah so explicitly link the building of the temple with the renewal of the abundance of the land (e.g. Hag 2:18).[208] Their declaration that fertility will return once work begins on the temple seems completely irrational in an 'ethical' religion — "a magical understanding of natural causality in a Frazerian analysis".[209] However, if we understand that a functioning temple was representative of a stable society and economy — "just as in Hezekiah's reform so also in the reigns of Kilamuwa [*KAI* 24.5–7], Panammu [*KAI* 214.9] and Bir-Rākib [*KAI* 215.9–10], the land 'ate and drank' because the borders were safe and grain collection mechanisms were in place" then we can see how such curses and threats bridged the gap between real history and symbolic myth.[210] In addition, the connection in Zech 14:16–19 between Tabernacles, the feast of Yahweh צְבָאוֹת as king, and the coming of the rain, shows how the Israelites saw in the rain the renewal of their country, the defeat of chaos and death and the arrival of peace and prosperity, and so they "wanted to use the strongest expressions in praise of the Lord and found them in the

[204] Day 2010, pp. 205–206.
[205] Anderson 1987, pp. 94-95.
[206] Hanson 1979, pp. 228–262.
[207] Anderson 1987, pp. 96–97.
[208] Petersen 1985, p. 54.
[209] Anderson 1987, p. 105.
[210] Ibid., p. 123.

symbols of the enthronement and the kingdom and the new creation",[211] explaining why the powerful myths of the New Year Festival would have stayed in the popular mind.

Levenson argues against de Vaux's assertion that the key to understanding the Israelite temple lies not in myths or cosmology but in history[212] on the basis that it "propounds a false dichotomy", citing the example of the Sabbath which had equally important cosmological and historical aetiologies (Exod 20:8–11; 31:12–17 and Deut 5:12–15).[213] It is possible that the consecration of the temple at Tabernacles (1 Kgs 8) in the seventh month coincided with Baal's triumph, as the rites of pouring water established a connection with this cult,[214] and we see the streams of living water feeding fruit trees coming from the renewed temple in Ezek 47:1–12 (cf. Isa 33:20–24) which has clear roots in the myths of cosmic mountains.[215] Psalms such as 48:1–3 [Eng 1–2] show that "both temple and city are…ultimately subsumed under the name of Zion",[216] and temple and mountain are combined in mythology in Zech 14:6–8, where the Divine Warrior and living waters go forth from Jerusalem on the day of victory, and Joel 4:16–18 [Eng 3:16–18], in which the Divine Warrior roars from Zion whilst the mountains and valleys flow with wine, milk and water from the temple.[217] This is reminiscent of the connection between Baal's sacred mountain and temple, as shown when he opens the window in his house/temple to shout/thunder from his mountain (*KTU* 1.4.vii.26–30).[218]

Cross suggested that the Israelites joined 3 traditions concerning divine mountains — the home of the heavenly council, the abode of the god at the meeting point of the waters, and the palace of the storm god — together with ideas of paradise, and others have followed this view.[219] Smith points out that the meeting of the waters is not attested in biblical descriptions of the divine mountain (although it is in underworld descriptions), and that Gen 2–3 does not actually place paradise on the mountain of god,[220] but Fishbane has noted that a mountain at the source of rivers is suggested

[211] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, pp. 119, 134–135.
[212] De Vaux 1961, p. 329.
[213] Levenson 1988, p. 82.
[214] Worden 1953, p. 287 n. 2.
[215] Anderson 1987, p. 95; Wallace 1985, p. 77.
[216] Gottlieb 1980, p. 72.
[217] Wallace 1985, pp. 77–78.
[218] Emerton 1958, p. 237.
[219] Cross 1973, pp. 36–39; Wallace 1985, pp. 70–88; Smith 1994a, p. 323 n. 122.
[220] Smith 1994a, p. 323 n. 122.

indirectly by the streams' downward flow in Gen 2:10–14.[221] It is also possible to see a link between sacred mountains and gardens in the similar (inappropriate) religious activities which take place there in Isa 57:1–10 and 65:1–12, and all the trees in Eden (Gen 2:9), in contrast to outside the garden (Gen 3:18), have been compared to the luxuriant cedars on the mountain abode of the gods in the Assyrian Gilgamesh tablet V.i.6–7 (cf. also the garden in IX.v.47–vi.35).[222] Ezek 28:13–16 is the first direct instance of combining the Garden of Eden with the mountain motif, followed by 31:8–9, 47:1–12, and Zech 14:1–21 (cf. Isa 33:20–24, 51:3), leading some to assert that the association must be a late one.[223] However, I agree with Day's assertion that there is strong evidence that Canaanite traditions of El's abode lie behind the Garden,[224] and with those who feel that the Eden narrative would have been naturally associated with local traditions of sacred mountains, especially in Israel where the Gihon served as a link between Jerusalem-Zion and the Garden of Eden,[225] as they would have been linked by their nature as a divine dwelling-place.[226]

That Eden is the abode of Yahweh is insinuated by Gen 3:8, and Ezek 28:13, 31:8–9 (cf. the desert places as the domain of demons in Isa 13:21, 24:11–14),[227] and we can compare the 4 rivers of the garden with El's dwelling at the source of the rivers (e.g. *KTU* 1.3.v.7), El-Kunirsha's abode at the well-spring of the Mala (Euphrates) river,[228] and the watery, fertile setting of Dilmun in Enki and Ninḫursag.[229] Wyatt feels that the position of El's home is representative of his all-encompassing authority: "This is the omphalos, the place of true reality, the still centre of the turning world. El, the absolute deity, is immovable, and all the other deities revolve around him",[230] a powerful image reminiscent of Yahweh's seat in both the temple and the divine council. Levenson proposes that the creation of the world in Gen 1:1–2:3 and the creation of the Tabernacle

[221] Fishbane 1998, p. 17.
[222] Wallace 1985, p. 70. He also draws attention to traditions of sexual union in gardens, such as Enki and Ninhursag in Dilmun (ANET p. 39, ll. 73–75) and Zeus and Hera in Ida (Iliad 14.292–351), and sees a background of sex and fertility myths behind Gen 2–3, pp. 143–172.
[223] Clifford 1972, p. 159.
[224] Day 2000b, pp. 26–29.
[225] Levenson 1976, p. 29.
[226] Wallace 1985, p. 86.
[227] De Vaux 1964, p .97. His view is that the destination of the Day of Atonement scapegoat, *ʿᵃzā'zēl* (Lev 16), is the demon Azazel, as it was understood by the Syriac, the Targum and 1 Enoch 9:6, 10:4–8 as the prince of demons relegated to the desert.
[228] Goetze 1969, p. 519.
[229] Kramer 1969, pp. 38–41.
[230] Wyatt 2002, p. 52 n. 64.

in Exod 25–40 show enough correspondences to suggest the depiction of the sanctuary as a world, and the world as a sanctuary, so that the temple can be seen as a microcosm, connected with mythic cosmogony,[231] and some have also seen the king's throne in Jerusalem as symbolic of the world-mountain.[232] This is certainly plausible, especially taking into consideration the description of the temple in 1 Kgs 7:21–39, but it seems clear that the temple was identified with the garden at the time of creation, and texts such as Gen 2:10 and Isa 51:3, in which the desert of Zion is restored to fertility like Eden, suggest that the temple was part of the model for the latter.[233]

In the search for the original meaning of Eden,[234] Friedrich Delitzsch suggested on the basis of the cuneiform tablet *Syllabary B* (S^b) from Nineveh that the Hebrew *'ēden* was connected with the Sumero-Akkadian term *edin*, 'plain, steppe'.[235] But whilst this term is common in Sumerian, "both the problem of the initial phoneme and the absence of *edinu* from any Akkadian text except one lexical list militate against the derivation of Hebrew *'ēden* from an East Semitic and ultimately Sumerian word".[236] Greenfield looks to the Tell-Fakherye inscription to better understand the root *'dn*, seen in *KTU* 1.4.v.68–69, as we find in the opening praise of Hadad of Sikan the equation of the Akkadian *mutahhidu*, used widely "with the nuance of fertility and fecundity", with the Aramaic *m'dn*.[237] It is clear from biblical verses (Isa 51:3; Ezek 31:9, 16, 18; 36:25; Joel 2:3) that עֵדֶן was seen as a luxuriant and well-watered place, and contrasted with the wilderness (מִדְבָּר and עֲרָבָה) and desolate areas (שְׁמָמָה),[238] and so a derivation from the root *'dn*, 'fertility, abundance, luxuriance', seems more appropriate. This echoes the feasting in the temple in Ps 36:9 (cf. Jer 51:34; Neh 9:25), and appears in the Baal Cycle in connection with the storm god describing his fertilizing rains (*KTU* 1.4.v.6–7), so Eden can be seen as "the terrestrial sacred mountain fertilized by the storm-god and in this sense a 'garden'".[239] Day suggests that Isa 14:13–14, in which we find both Yahweh

[231] Levenson 1988, pp. 82–99.
[232] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 54, cf. Gressmann 1905, pp. 257ff.
[233] Smith 1994a, pp. 323–325. In addition, the temple in Jerusalem was not considered to be the centre of the world, it was built by foreigners in the place of a Canaanite shrine, and even after its destruction the Israelite god was still able to protect the remnant, Harrelson 1969, p. 37.
[234] See Westermann 1974, pp. 286–287 for a review of various theories.
[235] Delitzsch 1881, pp. 4, 6, 79f. See S^b I 90f., Oppenheim 1958, p. 33 and cf. Speiser 1964, p. 16.
[236] Millard 1984, p. 104.
[237] Greenfield 1984, p. 221.
[238] Ibid., p. 224.
[239] Smith 1994a, p. 324 and n. 125, cf. Wallace 1985, p. 84.

dwelling on Zaphon and a use of the epithet Elyon, may show the transfer of mountain terminology through the Jerusalem Jebusite cult,[240] and certainly the Israelite cult passed down the traditions of mountain and garden to the later prophets. Combining its characteristics as holy sanctuary, divine abode and source of fertility the Garden of Eden becomes the perfect symbol for hope and life for the whole land in the context of the return from exile (e.g. Ezek 36:33–36).[241]

The Canaanite/Israelite Nature of the Themes of Isaiah 24–27

Whilst it may seem obvious, it is important to remember that "writers are also readers and listeners. Consequently, the words a person writes may well be influenced by the words a person reads and hears",[242] and that a writer may allude to the words or message of an earlier oral or written text for many reasons.[243] The Hebrew Bible prophets are seen as defenders of what is Israelite, but much of what they represent comes from their Canaanite surroundings, including, perhaps, the very institution of prophecy.[244] The cult prophets may well have helped to teach the significance of ritual actions,[245] as their Canaanite counterparts did, and texts such as Isa 24–27 were probably modelled on cultic prophecy.[246] With regard to Isa 66:1–5 (cf. 1 Kgs 8:27), we should probably see not a rejection of the temple cult, but emphasis on the superior importance of the transcendence of Yahweh and obedience to him,[247] and Anderson notes that "a sensitive appreciation of the social role of the cult can make sense of the rhetoric of the post-exilic reformers".[248] Zech 14 sees the final coming of God's kingdom in language borrowed from the enthronement psalms, and projects on to the eschaton the psalmic motifs of conflict with the nations (vv. 1–3, cf. Pss 46; 48; 76), the mythical river of Jerusalem (v. 8, cf. Ps 46:4), and gathering of the nations (vv. 16–17, cf. Ps 47:9),[249]

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[240] Day 1994, p. 44.
[241] Wallace 1985, p. 85.
[242] Craigie 1983, pp. 68–69.
[243] See Sommer 1998, pp. 22–30; Hibbard 2006, p. 7.
[244] Jeppesen 1980, p. 95.
[245] Rowley 1967, p. 174.
[246] Engnell, I. 1948. *Svenskt Bibliskt Uppslagsverk* vol i, col. 1031, as cited in ibid., pp. 169–170. See also Davies 1989, p. 101.
[247] Greenfield 1985, p. 897.
[248] Anderson 1987, p. 24.
[249] Day 1990, p. 80.

describing the culmination of the cult in terms which would resonate most strongly with his audience.

On the basis that myths and cults are inextricably linked, elements of one would doubtlessly accompany the other if it were adopted by a particular people, although sometimes other parts of the tradition fall away. We can see this in the way that myths sometimes preserve a term's meaning not current in colloquial prose, such as the Hebrew term שַׁי, which lacks the cultic specialization it had in Canaanite and instead is found in poetic texts of Divine Warrior receiving tribute (Isa 18:7, Pss 68:30, 76:12),[250] or in cultic institutions which we no longer understand.[251] Whilst some rituals and practices were rejected for their foreign nature, in their writing the prophets "appear never to consider whether one or another mythological notion is genuinely Israelite or not; rather, it seems to be more important to them that the theology and world-view of a particular myth should correspond to their own position", or that it could offer impact by being used in a new and startling way,[252] as we can see in Isa 25:8. Ancient myths were borrowed by Israelite thinkers and applied as theological statements about God, but with a certain amount of restraint, and if "the distinction between the historicization of myth and the mythical presentation of history appears as a question of the degree of emphasis in the work of individual writers",[253] then the author of Isa 24–27 has chosen to present both history and the future in mythical terms which impressed his audience, and reminded them of both Yahweh's limitless transcendence and his roots in their cult.

The sacrifices and cultic practices borrowed from the Canaanites brought with them myths of new life, fertility, and divine characteristics and abodes, but it would be absurd to suggest that those who re-used these myths could do so without being influenced by their current historical or political situation.[254] As Israelite religion progressed, it adapted its understanding of divinity and anthropomorphism, and incorporated more of its apparently unique concept of eschatology into its literature. We

[250] Anderson 1987, pp. 34–35.
[251] Cf. Smith, M. 1987, pp. 6–7: "the Israelite religious amphictyony of which the sacred ark was the movable, central shrine, the annual ceremony of the renewal of the covenant, the annual enthronement festival, are examples of such hypothecated social entities for which there is, in the preserved literature, no reliable evidence".
[252] Jeppesen 1980, pp. 95–96.
[253] Court 1979, pp. 164–165. Cf. Smith 1994a, p. 305.
[254] Gottlieb 1980, p. 75.

can see a transformation of mythic ideas most clearly in late texts, such as the relationship of El and Baal becoming that of the Ancient of Days and the one like the son of man in Dan 7, or the seventy sons of God being demoted to angels in 1 Enoch,[255] images which even now have an impact on those who know nothing of their origins. But the readers of Isa 24–27 would have known the significance of the older ideas to their festivals and rites, and would have felt the impact of the exilic idealization of cultic traditions. In this way, the prophets kept alive the mythic traditions once attached to the activities they so often opposed, in order to pass on their understanding of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, giving warnings and hope for the future to their people.

[255] Day 2000b, pp. 232–233.

Chapter Six: The Author's Use of Canaanite Mythology to Inspire Eschatological Hope

Hope in the Hebrew Bible

Unlike the Greek New Testament,[1] the Hebrew Bible does not have a clear or fixed concept or terminology of hope, and so translators have tried to understand the various aspects of our idea of hope in Hebrew words.[2] Nouns derived from the roots שׂבר, 'to inspect, examine' (e.g. Ruth 1:13), and נבט, 'to look, watch expectantly' are translated this way, as are מִקְוֶה and תִּקְוָה from the root קוה (e.g. Prov 19:18), and תּוֹחֶלֶת from the root יחל (e.g. Prov 10:28), both of which are usually understood to mean 'wait'. So whereas the English language can use hope to refer to something which is happening currently, the Hebrew Bible understanding of hope appears to carry with it an attitude of waiting for that which is to come, an expectation of the future. In its repeated association with Yahweh, and as demonstrated by the terminology of the LXX, this waiting also has connotations of passivity — it is God who calls on the Israelites to trust and hope.[3] For these reasons it is not surprising that a passage which contains much eschatology and description of the fantastic, mythical acts of God could have been constructed to inspire hope in its readers.

A large amount of scholarship on apocalyptic literature subscribes to a form of what is known as 'Deprivation Theory', in which the visions of the future act to compensate for the loss felt as a result of poverty or oppression.[4] It is easy to see why it has been argued that deprived peoples are particularly attracted to a promise of a future in which they can have what they now lack, or become what they cannot currently be,[5] even if that promise comes from outside the current age.[6] Scholars such as Cook, however, have argued against this theory on the basis that priestly circles in a

[1] The noun 'hope' does not actually appear in the gospels, but is quite frequent in Paul's writings and those who follow him.
[2] Zimmerli 1971, p. 7.
[3] Ibid., pp. 5–9.
[4] E.g. Hanson 1979.
[5] Weber 1963, p. 106.
[6] Boer 2009, p. 19.

comfortable position of power are responsible for some apocalyptic writings, such as Zech 1–8, and so anticipation of the future cannot just be seen to be for the marginalised or oppressed.[7] There is nothing to say, on the other hand, that these texts could not have been written *for* those who suffered, and the logic of the theory still holds. It also seems clear that this idea comes into play not just in apocalyptic writings, but also in passages which contain an earlier, broader eschatology, no doubt often as a result of political or religious distress. As Zimmerli so succinctly puts it, "when a man lives in quiet peaceful circumstances and has all that he outwardly needs, he will as a rule talk less about hope than when he is cast into utter extremity and inner and outer temptation and when everything becomes overwhelmingly uncertain. Here he is confronted unavoidably with the question as to whether this danger means that he is lost or whether he still has a future and something to anticipate in this future".[8]

As a defining moment in the Israelite history of suffering, the Babylonian exile is thus something of a watershed for the concept of hope in the Hebrew Bible. The land, temple and the monarchy, key symbols of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, had been removed, causing identity and faith to fall away, together with their associated traditions and rites.[9] Isa 24–27 describes a world and a people in great confusion, in the midst of a cosmic upheaval. In a situation where there seems little basis for optimism, the prophets often turned to the only traditions which could not be destroyed by their enemies, the mythic ones, and "when they place intolerable destruction and loss into the transcendent realm, they create hope amidst Judah's fractured existence and mobilize energy to rebuild the community".[10] Many of the prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible concern those who can be seen to be deprived as a result of the exile, and I shall attempt to demonstrate that Canaanite mythological themes were used deliberately by the author(s) of Isa 24–27 to give a sense of hope for both the immediate future, and the eschaton.

A discussion of myth and hope should almost certainly begin with a brief look at the concept of time. The older school of literary criticism held that future hope did not become an important part of the Israelite consciousness until after the fall of the

[7] Cook 1995, p. 153. Cf. Collins 2002, p. 27.
[8] Zimmerli 1971, p. 31.
[9] O'Connor 2011, pp. 15, 25.
[10] Ibid., p. 121.

Northern and Southern kingdoms, and that the pre-exilic prophets wrote only about contemporary historical issues.[11] Indeed, some scholars still maintain that the Hebrew Bible contains no true eschatology even after the exile.[12] It seems clear, however, that passages such as Mic 4 and Isa 2 depict a hope for an almost heavenly, ageless future, and that the post-exilic prophets were concerned with the eschaton appears impossible to deny. The Book of Isaiah uses familiar myths from the very start of the prophet's proclamations, sent as he was by the Lord of Hosts who 'dwells on Zion' (8:18), and quick to combine historical events, monarchical ideals and Canaanite traditions.[13] Baumann notes that when discussing mythological ideas in the Hebrew Bible, we are sometimes faced with the opinion that myth cannot hold the same weight or portray the same importance as history or *Heilsgeschichte*,[14] but the post-exilic literature in particular shows how important mythical traditions were. Deutero-Isaiah drew upon ancient myths to demonstrate that historical events were not proof of Yahweh's weakness or lack of fidelity, and "he achieved this without abrogating the historical perspective which the earlier prophets had struggled to develop and safeguard against repeated encroachments of Baalism, for in a delicate manner he was able to dovetail the motifs of myth and those of Israel's historical credo, reapplying both to the historical events of his time".[15]

Hope Inspired by the Myth of the Divine Warrior

Naturally it is not just in the prophets that we find the themes of mythical time and hope. Ps 74 is generally understood as an exilic psalm, on the basis of the destruction of the temple by enemies (vv. 3–7) and the lack of signs and prophets (v. 9), and it uses both temporal (vv. 1, 2, 18, 22, 23) and mythological (vv. 2, 11–15) terms to demonstrate that the hope of Israel lies in the God who is in command of both space and time.[16] It is often accepted that, in contrast to the cyclical concept of mythological time in Western Mediterranean traditions, the Israelites portrayed Yahweh to be the God of a linear

[11] See Mowinckel 1956, pp. 126–127.
[12] E.g. Becking 2002, pp. 44–59. He does, however, believe in the existence of 'prophetic futurology', which seems to be a case of simply renaming eschatology.
[13] Zimmerli 1971, pp. 98, 104.
[14] Baumann 2007, p. 91.
[15] Hanson 1979, p. 312.
[16] Baumann 2007, pp. 92–100.

history. In such eschatological passages as Isa 24–27, however, it is clear that there is some understanding of cyclical events even in a linear description, as the whole notion of restoration relies on circumstances being put back as they were. Whilst this does not necessarily point to the *Urzeit*, nevertheless "the future Golden Age is frequently portrayed as a repetition of primordial or primeval events",[17] and the remarkable similarity between the language in Isa 27:1 and *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5 indicates that the Israelites would have absorbed the connotations of a continuous cycle. It can thus be proposed that the author intentionally used the timeless nature of the *Chaoskampf* myth because salvation would come through the victory of the Divine Warrior who delivers his people from, not through, historical experiences.[18]

Isa 24 depicts Yahweh as a God of fury and power, and clearly a deity who will lay waste the earth (vv. 1–3), halt all joy (vv. 7–9, 11), shake the land (vv. 18–20), punish earthly and heavenly beings (vv. 21–22) and shame the celestial bodies (v. 23) is one who will inspire much awe and fear. It can be hard, then, to understand how such a divinity can provide hope for his people, but as we can see from Hab 3:16 the faithful, although terrified of the Divine Warrior's actions (vv. 8–15), 'wait quietly' with complete trust. An angry God demonstrates that, as a result of the Israelites' disloyalty and treachery (Isa 24:5, 16), he is still the strong, just, and omnipresent deity whom the exile called into question, and who restores order to the chaos.[19] Millar states that "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", as the destruction of Jerusalem was both necessary and positive, because "after the war Yahweh's kingship and power at his mount would once more be obvious to all" (Isa 24:23).[20] In addition, the actions of the Divine Warrior were used to push the boundaries of the current age. While a punishing deity may bring reassurance to those in contemporary distress, one who transforms nature and cosmic order (24:23; 25:8; 26:19) promises comfort for the eschaton, and the cultic connotations of the battle against chaos provide hope for the continuation of Israelite traditions, rites and beliefs.[21]

[17] Gaster 1962, p. 484.
[18] Hanson 1979, p. 315.
[19] O'Connor 2011, p. x.
[20] Millar 1976, p. 108.
[21] Cf. Collins 1987, p. 548.

Lindblom notes that when we find theophany and cosmic change combined with post-exilic hopes which began to adopt eschatology, it can become impossible to differentiate between literal and metaphorical sense,[22] and nowhere can we see this more clearly than in Isa 27:1. Although over the years many have argued for understanding Leviathan as a symbol of a particular oppressive nation (see above, Chapter Two), and there can be little doubt that the injustice of the exile was an inspiration for the passage, in mythological literature monsters "are threatening figures of anomaly within the well-established and accepted order of things…[they] stand for what endangers one's sense of at-homeness, that is, one's sense of security, stability, integrity, well-being, health and meaning".[23] Although affected by the universalizing touch of Isa 24–27, however, there is no reason why the dragon here cannot represent a real and symbolic enemy, the defeat of which portrays "God's meta-historical overturning of current reality, which has itself become a chaos".[24] In any case, the combat myth has been used in this verse to demonstrate unequivocally that Yahweh was a victorious deity, reigning on his mountain, and should be worshipped as such.

Barker argues that the use of Ugaritic myth in Isa 24–27 was both deliberate and structured, acting as a 'cosmic polemic' against the false gods Baal and Mot.[25] Whilst his acknowledgement of the implications of an intentional use of the myths here is both thorough and insightful, it is only in 25:8 that Yahweh inverts the Canaanite myth as opposed to merely adopting it, and I must agree with Kloos that the passages here which ascribe Baal's characteristics to Yahweh without any obvious anti-Canaanite leanings would not have been polemical texts.[26] On the basis of a early post-exilic dating, the author's use of these myths to encourage the weakened Israelites seems more likely. However, the need to be faithful to Yahweh is present in these chapters (e.g. 24:5), because a human and moral dimension is added to the mythological ideas. Crouch has recently argued convincingly for the late insertion of the concept of *lex talionis* into

[22] Lindblom 1962, p. 415.
[23] Beale 2002, pp. 4–5.
[24] Niditch 1997, pp. 62–63.
[25] Barker 2007, pp. 188–189. He contends that Isa 27:1 is a part of the polemic against Mot because he and Leviathan are Underworld allies, p. 147, but there is little to suggest this in the Ugaritic texts. In addition, his argument that the position of 27:1 after 26:19–21 shows that the battle with Leviathan was the 'clean up' in the Underworld after the real battle with death had been won, p. 150, seems to create an anti-climax in the text and misunderstand the importance of the battle with the sea dragon in cultic tradition.
[26] Kloos 1986, pp. 95–98.

Ezekiel's oracles against the nations, suggesting that the prophet's previous attempt to defend the status of Yahweh on the basis of cosmological mythological motifs was unsuccessful.[27] However, I feel that the use of *lex talionis* in these chapters is to bolster the myths with a sense of universal morality. This is what ultimately differentiates the myths of Israel from those of their neighbours, and the personal hope for the righteous can be seen in Isa 24–27 in the equality of mankind (24:2), the protection of the poor (25:4), the joyous banquet for all (25:6), the judgment of God (26:7–10) and the vindicating return from diaspora (27:12–13).

Hope Inspired by the Universal Banquet

The luxurious feast for all in Isa 25:6 is the most obviously optimistic and joyful verse in these chapters. Based on Israelite banquet traditions, it would almost certainly have brought to mind the celebration of the cultic festivals. Baal's victory feast (*KTU* 1.4.vi.44–59) can be seen in the background here, in connection with Yahweh's defeat of Leviathan in 27:1 and death in 25:8, and as explained above there is a strong case for arguing that this myth was connected to the New Year festival in Ugarit, as its counterparts were for the Babylonians and possibly the Hittites. Why such an image would inspire hope needs little explanation then, as the celebratory nature of the enthronement psalms, the sense of communion with God gained through sacrifice, and the reminder of Yahweh's eternal victory and kingship are all aspirational connotations. In addition, the author has taken the victory feast out of its mythological setting and placed it into the eschaton, creating not an annually occurring festivity but a final, future triumph.

Whilst a ceremonial meal in the Hebrew Bible often has a connection with a covenant (e.g. Gen 26:26–33; Exod 24:1–2, 9–11), the feast in Isa 25:6 provides no obvious clues to a similar link. Lindblom suggests that the covenant in 24:5 "applies to all mankind, i.e., the general moral order which from earliest times was valid for all peoples and not only for Israel",[28] but the broken agreement here probably belongs to the unfaithful Israelites. Hope is also a difficult concept to apply to a covenantal text, as the

[27] Crouch 2011, pp. 480–492.
[28] Lindblom 1962, p. 405, cf. *idem* 1938, pp. 15–16.

bond requires mutual obedience, and it may well be that Isa 25:6 portrays a future wherein God's relationship is with all peoples, although Israel will always hold a revered place (24:23; 25:8).[29] It has been pointed out that in Isa 24–27, as also in the Books of Haggai and Zechariah, we can see a progression from the current strife of the Israelites to a wondrous future through the understanding that the present age will not be transformed by a local occurrence, but by a universal transformation.[30] It is in this understanding that we can most clearly see how the author used the image of the victory banquet to inspire his readers. Beuken notes that the prayer of thanksgiving in 25:9–10a was written not only to represent those participating in the banquet, but also for those who read and interpreted the prophetic account, calling on them to praise God in advance of the eschaton and giving them hope for what was to come.[31] Importantly, both these groups are to include the peoples of other lands. Davies suggests that we understand vv. 9–10a as referring to the conversion of the nations, similar to Isa 51:5 in which we find them 'waiting', יְקַוּוּ, for God,[32] and 27:6 also supports this idea that the "idealized 'people of God', even more so than in the authentic oracles of Isaiah…has the potential of spreading not just throughout Palestine but everywhere in the world".[33] This beautiful picture of universal celebration and worship is the high point of these chapters, but is one which is sadly not often replicated.[34]

Hope Inspired by the Holy Mountain and the Kingship of God

The inspiring feast in Isa 25:6 takes place 'on this mountain', which refers to Mt. Zion, the earthly abode of God. That Zion is associated with the Canaanite Zaphon throughout the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ps 48:3–4 [Eng 2–3]) is commonly accepted, and the author of Isa 24–27 used this to his advantage. The Ugaritic mountain is the focal point of heavenly order and cultic traditions,[35] ideas which were transferred to the Israelite texts in the images of Zion as Yahweh's home and stronghold. In addition, the

[29] Hibbard 2006, p. 80. See also Barker 2012, p. 323.
[30] Anderson 1963, p. 124; Amsler 1989, p. 263.
[31] Beuken 2000b, p. 154.
[32] Davies 1989, p. 100, cf. Millar 1976, p. 101.
[33] Barton 1995, p. 114.
[34] See Barker 2012, p. 323, on the Targumic interpretation of the banquet which he describes as something of a 'macabre fête noir', containing for the Israelites consoling vengeance against their oppressors and "eschatological hope for their ultimate demise and final ruin".
[35] Smith 2001, p. 29; Hunt 1991, pp. 103–115.

congregation of the nations on the mountain appears to be inspired by the Canaanite depiction of the gods congregated on El's mountain (*KTU* 1.2.i.19–20), meaning that the depiction in 25:6 would represent the ultimate locus for a hope of the final redemption and worship of the glory of God. Mt. Zion is also connected with the flow of the fertilizing waters of Eden (Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 14:8; Joel 4:18 [Eng 3:18]; Ezek 28:14, 16), a vision borrowed from El's home at the meeting of the waters (e.g. *KTU* 1.3.v.6–8), and the readers of Isa 24–27 would be very familiar with this association. That Baal's mountain was considered to be a heavenly place (cf. *KTU* 1.3.iii.29) is also probably in the background here, and there can be little better cause for hope than a real or metaphorical, future or eschatological, return to Eden. In the light of the recent return from exile, the associations of divine dwelling and meeting place, source of fertility and cultic home make the paradisiacal mountain the ideal symbol for future hope.[36]

Dominion in the ancient Near East was often understood in terms of space and territory, both for humans and gods,[37] and we can see clear echoes of Zaphon as the location of Baal's reign (e.g. *KTU* 1.3.iv.1–3) in Yahweh's rule on Mt. Zion (Isa 24:23). We may never settle the question of whether or not there was an enthronement festival in Israel, but Isa 24–27 clearly links Yahweh's kingship on his mountain with his victory over the powers of chaos, as is the case with Baal in the Ugaritic texts (e.g. *KTU* 1.101.2, 1.3.iii.30–31). Some have argued that the mythical nature of God's sovereignty was of particular importance during the royal period,[38] but it seems just as likely that this idea would be emphasised in the post-exilic period. In the absence of both a temple and a monarchy, the cultic kingship of Yahweh would be a vital tradition and inspiration for the prophet to invoke.[39] Because order and kingship are inextricably bound, the rule of Yahweh in the eschaton takes on the same unique, Israelite sense of ethics, and Isa 26:7–10 shows that the final judgments of God were something to be anticipated.[40] In focussing the readers' eschatological eyes on Zion, the author of Isa 24–27 was able to combine the propitious imagery of fertility, order, victory and just dominion.

[36] Wallace 1985, p. 85.
[37] Clifford 1984, p. 192. Cf. Kaiser 1962, p. 47.
[38] Millar 1976, pp. 87–88.
[39] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 118.
[40] Beuken 2010, p. 28.

Hope Inspired by the Ultimate Defeat of Death

It can obviously be argued that God's ultimate victory in these chapters is the one over death, whether that takes the form of raising the dead to life or 'swallowing' death itself. It is possible to see the Canaanite and Israelite traditions of death as relatively similar, and Gibson suggests that both Ugaritites and Israelites learned to live with mortality because of the conviction that Baal, El and Yahweh were more powerful, even marginally, than death.[41] This does not quite seem to be the case, however, as Mot clearly returned to his own, eternal kingdom in the Ugaritic texts, whereas in contrast to this (and Babylonian and Assyrian views), "the God of the Hebrew Bible cannot die; he is from everlasting to everlasting (Ps 90:2)".[42] The final defeat of death seen in Isa 25:8 would not have been possible in the cyclical time frame of the Canaanites, but provided hope to the teleological perspective of the Israelites,[43] for whom the victory became irreversible and personal.[44] The swallowing performed by Yahweh is a clever use of the Canaanite traditions associated with Mot, turning a depressing image of scarcity and inevitability into one of promise and hope. With Yahweh as the subject it has here both punitive and salvific connotations,[45] and can truly be seen as "a swallowing that permits life".[46] The action is a definitive one, seen in the term *lāneṣaḥ*, 'for ever', which is not the usual expression for everlasting but one which blends 'duration and splendour' to make the meaning here "in splendid, brilliant and victorious perpetuity" referenced by Paul's 'in victory' in 1 Cor 15:54.[47] In addition, vv. 24–26 of this chapter may well have Canaanite overtones, as Christ as true king and regent of God is reminiscent of Baal,[48] and we see Death as a devourer in the descent in Hell passage of the Acts of Pilate (Gospel of Nicodemus).[49] Whilst passages such as Ps 73:9 seem to depict the ungodly in mythical terms of the powers of chaos,[50] which would have brought to mind familiar Canaanite ideas but still focused on the one 'true' God,[51] the advent of apocalyptic (or proto-apocalyptic) writing allowed primordial enemies to be depicted as powerful, or

[41] Gibson 1979, p. 165.
[42] Heidel 1963, p. 142. Cf. Delcor 1979, p. 129.
[43] Gibson 1979, p. 166.
[44] Stacey 1993, pp. 153–154.
[45] Doyle 2003, pp. 174–175.
[46] Brueggemann 1998, p. 196.
[47] Mackay 2008, pp. 530–531.
[48] Gibson 1979, p. 167.
[49] Healey 1999a, pp. 212–213.
[50] Ringgren 1953, p. 268.
[51] Craigie 1983, p. 79.

even divine, so that Yahweh could demonstrate his might when he defeated them at the eschaton.[52]

Plöger asserts that we have to understand the intensification of eschatology in Israelite literature against the background of differences within the Jewish community,[53] and suggests that the division seen in Daniel can be traced back through Isa 24–27, Zech 12–14 and Joel, with Isa 26:7–10 in particular showing a contemporary conflict between the righteous, who are awaiting the coming of God, and those who do not believe in the correct 'eschatological expectations'.[54] This view has been criticised by Johnson, who feels that vv. 11–18 show that the enemy is not within the Jewish community but is contrasted with it, and that a lack of tension within the community is demonstrated by the 1st person plural in v. 8, the nation depicted as a homogenous group in v. 15, and by the national resurrection in v. 19.[55] Certainly there does not seem to be enough evidence to view the enemy as those who are "doubting or not paying attention to eschatological conviction",[56] and chs. 24–27 portray Yahweh as interacting with all the nations, within which the righteous contrast with wicked, regardless of nationality.[57] In addition, whilst the Israelites still hold a unique position, we see the people contrasted with the world and the earth (vv. 9, 18, 21), so that "the poem therefore encompasses the destiny of Israel within a broadly universal perspective".[58] Nevertheless, difficulties and conflicts clearly contributed to the belief in individual restoration at the victory over death,[59] and Plöger may be correct in his claim that Isa 26:12–19 was aimed at eschatologically minded groups who could be convinced that personal resurrection would come to those who stayed loyal to their eschatological beliefs.[60]

On the other hand, it is difficult to ascertain if any conviction in resurrection existed in this period, and the destruction of death in 25:8 may represent something as simple as peace in Jerusalem.[61] In the metaphorical sense, death can be seen as all that

[52] Gibson 1979, p. 166.
[53] Plöger 1968, p. 112.
[54] Ibid., pp. 65–66, 76.
[55] Johnson 1988, p. 75.
[56] Plöger 1968, p. 65.
[57] Hibbard 2006, pp. 138–139; Polaski 2001, pp. 242–243.
[58] Blenkinsopp 2000, pp. 368–369.
[59] Plöger 1968, pp. 112–113.
[60] Ibid., pp. 76–77.
[61] Kissane 1960 vol. I, pp. 262, 277.

limits life and humanity,[62] the "obliteration of the future and so also of any human hope",[63] and this reversal of the power of Mot in Canaanite myth appears here in a similar capacity to Ezekiel's revitalising of the dry bones: to provide the Israelites with the hope needed to survive their current distress. In Hag 1:7–11, drought and scarcity are caused by the Israelites' failure to rebuild the temple in the post-exilic era,[64] and it is likely that the resurrection language is used in Isa 26:19 to express the reversal of infertility,[65] as it is for Baal in the Ugaritic texts. There is hope inherent in fertility religions, and general agricultural life, and so it is unsurprising that this imagery appears. We find a connection between the fertilizing dew and the dawn in 26:19 (see above, Chapter Four), and this imagery is especially appropriate here as the idea that preceding destruction can be overcome by resurrection is what Baal symbolizes in his return from death to fructify the earth. Interestingly, dawn is used as a metaphor for hope in Isa 8:20, and in Prov 24:13–14 we are told that honey is wisdom to the soul, which provides a future and never-ending hope.[66]

[62] Wildberger 1978, p. 967.
[63] Zimmerli 1971, p. 45.
[64] Smith 2002, p. 90.
[65] Doyle 2000, pp. 309–310, 314–318.
[66] Compare Baal's revival and the renewal of fertility seen in the flowing of oil and honey on his return (*KTU* 1.6.iii.10-21).

Chapter Seven: Summary and Conclusions

It is notoriously difficult to say anything definitive with regards to the authorship, structure or function of Isa 24–27, but on the basis of a semi-poetic style, eschatological tendencies and temporal markers such as 27:8–9 the text seems to fit best into the period just following the return from exile. With the support of Day's investigation into Hos 13–14 and Barker's assertions that borrowed ideas were inserted systematically and deliberately, I have approached the text, cautiously, as a unified composition placed in an appropriate setting within the Book of Isaiah. It seems clear, too, that the chapters aim to reuse and reinterpret other Biblical texts, especially those from the earlier corpus of Isaiah, and on the basis of archaeological and literary evidence it is reasonable to assume that the Canaanites (who for the sake of ease included the Ugaritites) would have greatly influenced such Israelite literature. Whilst Isa 24–27 is, correctly, no longer often referred to as an apocalypse, it does appear at the beginning of the movement towards such literature, and certainly looks towards an eschaton which is teetering on the edge of the current reality. There have been no labels which perfectly describe these chapters, but as I contend that they have been put together with the intention of inspiring hope in a distressed audience I suggest, very tentatively, that they can be seen in this light as something like 'auspicious eschatology'.

The Divine Warrior has many roles in the Hebrew Bible, linked as he is with the creation of the world, the Exodus from Egypt, the concept of holy war and a representation of cultic victory. This mythological image may have been particularly important in the post-exilic era, and in Isa 24–27 we have portrayals of the warrior destroying both enemies and Israelites, punishing heavenly hosts and defeating the monsters of chaos. The symbolism in eschatological literature can be very tough to crack, and it seems likely that Leviathan in Isa 27:1 represents both earthly oppressors and the more abstract forces of darkness and chaos. Certainly the battle is removed from its Canaanite seasonal setting and pushed into the eschaton, although the language between this verse and *KTU* 1.5.i.1–5 is so similar that there must be some form of cultural dependency. This probably occurred through cultic traditions and, whilst there is no reference to creation in Isa 24–27, order is most definitely restored, keeping the myth

in contact with the New Year and enthronement festival. The theomachy is the mythical way of describing the constant need to maintain world order, and in this manner the mythical themes can be seen as just as important as 'historical' events.[1] The use of the Divine Warrior motif emphasises the people's total dependence on their God, and his battles here uniquely show how Yahweh's victory was complete at times of crisis, in the continuous nature of their salvation, and at both ends of the temporal spectrum.

Israelite banquet traditions lie behind the feast in Isa 25:6, but it is also apparent that this theme is connected with the defeat of enemies and God's subsequent kingship. The celebration here is most likely connected with cultic feasting, and may represent an annual enthronement banquet or a coronation feast projected into the eschaton. Victory feasts follow the theomachies of both Marduk and Baal, and it is possible that some aspect of sacrifice is included in the thinking behind Isa 25:6 on the basis that all animals slain for food were sacrifices to God which provided communion, and that the sacrifice of the enemy was required for the release of fertility. The cult, including the Feast of Tabernacles, certainly seems to have been connected with the gifts of rain and fecundity, and with the worship of Yahweh as the universal king, which were known from the Canaanite myths. Whilst the pattern of victory, enthronement, feast is known throughout the ancient Near East, it seems to be only in Isa 25:6 that we first find it in a truly eschatological setting, and the food and drink at the banquet clearly represent a higher level of sustenance, symbolising a future time of universal hope.

The Israelite Mt. Zion is clearly equated with the Canaanite Zaphon (and the Hittite Mt. Hazzi), and as such is the setting for the combat with the chaos waters and the earthly kings and nations, and the divine enthronement. Zion also became the divine garden and the place from which the rivers of paradise flow, which is probably connected with the Canaanite cosmic waters and the idea of Zaphon as the centre of the cosmos. This image also demonstrates Yahweh's control of both the natural and moral realms. The pilgrimage of the nations to Zion and the end of all war forever in Isa 2:1–4 (and Mic 4:1–4) has clearly influenced Isa 25:6 and the depiction of Zion as the symbol of redemption and salvation. This has been combined here with the features of both El and Baal's mountains to portray the Israelite mountain as an emblem of kingship and

[1] Baumann 2007, pp. 100–101.

fertility from which Yahweh protects the Israelites and the nations. The Canaanite myths provided the basis for eschatological ideals in Isa 25, and continued to do so throughout the developed religions. The Canaanite motifs present in Isa 25:6 were taken up by the authors of the intertestamental literature, the Qumran texts, the Rabbis and the Christian church. These texts make it clear that the promises which had been made to the Israelites would be upheld, and the eschatological slant given to feasts which had their roots in cultic settings was obviously influenced by the cosmic and universal nature of Isa 25:6. This may be part of the Israelites' unique moral dimension of mythology, in which the author demonstrates that they are still the idealized people of God, but in which one day all nations can hope to come together to worship and celebrate on Zion.

On the basis of a potentially unified text, appropriate positioning and much thematic continuity, it seems unnecessary to regard 25:8 and 26:19 as late additions to Isa 24–27. Although the latter verse almost certainly represents a metaphor for the return from exile and the subsequent revivification of population, religion, and life with God, it nevertheless may have affected the gradual, and segregated, movement towards a belief in resurrection which had probably already begun to appear in the Israelite community and literature. Many characteristics of death and Sheol in the Hebrew Bible are shown to have been inherited from Canaanite customs, and Mot's swallowing of Baal undeniably lies behind Isa 25:8 in a witty reversal of roles to demonstrate Yahweh's ultimate power. Likely seasonal aspects of the Baal Cycle, together with the division of victory between Baal and Mot, suggest that there was some form of agricultural sequence in this part of the Ugaritic myths. Nevertheless, the evidence for viewing Mot as any kind of vegetation deity is far too weak, but Baal can be seen as a fertility god in that he provides the rain and the dew for fecundity and life, and is part of the Near Eastern tradition of dying and rising gods.

This aspect of Baal and his relationship with Mot influenced Isa 24–27 in its role as representing not just the seasonal changes but the constant struggle between life and chaos. It is notable that Yahweh can never adopt the dying and rising characteristic of Baal because his victory must be understood as complete, and because of this the mythological theme was allowed to grow into something far beyond the everyday. If we understand the eschaton as falling within the bounds of time, then we can see Isa 25:6–8

as transferring a mythological theme into the historical realm,[2] but we also need to understand the mythical connotations of the destruction of death as representing "something more than a punctual event, as a force of disorder, negativity, and aridity, morally and physically, in connection with which the actual dying of the individual is episodic and incidental".[3] Isa 25:8 may show a solution to problems different from that of Isa 26:19, because the disappearance of death, and therefore Sheol, indicates an action which affects the cosmic structure itself and which is therefore as significant as the creation,[4] and Smith similarly suggests that the reversal of Mot's powers is a reflection of the resetting of God's creative victory over Leviathan at the end of time.[5] At the same time, Isa 26:19 transcends all recurring revivification myths and all the promises of Second Isaiah to show that, for the Israelites, a personal, final victory over death was possible because "the promised life in God's kingdom extends even beyond the grave".[6]

Although archaeology suggests that Israelite religion was always generally monolatrous, it was nevertheless very similar to the worship of patron deities in the surrounding areas, both intrinsically and through syncretism. The Israelite sense of salvation history undoubtedly affected some of the old significance of festivals and rituals, but these practices were a significant part of the Hebrew religion, and whilst myth and ritual may not always have been as inseparable as they were once seen to be, it is virtually impossible to extricate one from the other entirely. Sacrifices and customs cannot often be satisfactorily traced back to their roots, but it is clear that the Israelites and Canaanites had very similar terms and practices. This may have been particularly significant with regard to the enthronement and New Year festival, as the enthronement psalms, God's formation of kingship through cosmic acts and the theophanic Day of the Lord all appear to be connected with this event. Although it can be difficult to ascertain whether references in the Hebrew Bible to this Day are to an experienced theophany, a cultic representative day, or an expected age, Mowinckel points out history is mythicized in the cult and so all three forms of salvation can be present at once.[7]

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[2] March 1966, p. 110.
[3] Blenkinsopp 2000, p. 359.
[4] Stacey 1993, p. 154.
[5] Smith 2001, p. 36.
[6] Childs 2001, pp. 191–192.
[7] Mowinckel 1962 vol. I, p. 19.

We have no way of telling if Isa 24–27 had any practical, liturgical use, but it certainly has these rhythmic and inspirational overtones, and such myths as it contains would have been passed down through the cultic memories of the community, whether through festal dramas or exilic reminiscences.[8] By the post-exilic era, it would have been unimportant whether or not the mythological motifs were originally Israelite or seen to be so, as the purpose they served was far more significant. To preserve traditions about their God during and after the exile, the Israelites used myth as a language in which human and divine characters could interact, and wherein the transcendental nature of Yahweh and his actions could be described.[9] In addition, mythical motifs provided a language to describe the hope which was needed for the survivors.[10]

Undoubtedly those who saw historical events as proof of Yahweh's lack of ability or will to save required a symbol of hope which could last them through the foreseeable future, which had little to commend it. The author of Isa 24–27 achieved this by reminding the people of Yahweh's past victories, both mythical and historical, and projecting them into the future. Mythical time is flexible, and certainly eschatology does not always overshadow a current crisis, but the imagery borrowed from Canaanite myths to give readers hope often depicts a watching, waiting, for something more. Nevertheless, whilst myths were an important part of the cultural heritage which had the same status as historical events, and the cosmic elements found in the Yahwistic tradition enhance some of the earliest traditions, at some point the forces of evil which could never really be beaten came to be shown as suffering a final and permanent defeat. It is hard to say exactly why this happened, especially since we can never understand what an eschatological promise can mean to a people living in a historical time to which it will bear no relation, but it is possible that an amalgamation of belief in cosmic order and the recognition of a desire for eventual or eternal vindication had begun; a hope for all seasons. Perhaps most surprising, however, given the experience of the exile, is that as texts such as Isa 24–27 moved towards eschatology, historical enemies disappeared and the whole world became involved in the combat, in a universal transformation. As stated above, this may be part of the Israelites' unique moral dimension of mythology, in which

[8] Eaton 1979; Davies 1989, p. 101.
[9] Schutte 2007, pp. 1–3.
[10] Cf. O'Connor 2011, p. 103.

they are still the idealized people of God, but in which one day all nations can hope to come together to worship on Zion.

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