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## The Songs of Zion as a Literary Category of the Psalter

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The appellation 'Songs of Zion' draws its origin from Ps. 137:3. To the Israelites who had been led into captivity by Nebukadnezzar the Babylonians made the request: 'Sing to us one of the Songs of Zion,'<sup>1</sup> but they, painfully aware as they were of their presence in a pagan land which by definition was polluted and impure, found it impossible to comply with the wish of their captors. In fact, how could the true believers 'sing Yahweh's song in a foreign land'? From this tiny fragment of tradition, hailing from the bitter days of the exile, we come to know that the ancient Israelites possessed a special collection of songs which they were accustomed to sing when they were living in the holy land, when Solomon's temple was in existence, and which they were also wont to designate as Yahweh's songs. And some of these songs, whose power of attraction and fascination was such as to capture the fancy of the Babylonians, are preserved in the Psalter, and consequently when we speak of the Songs of Zion as a special literary category of the Psalter, we are on safe ground and are but following the wake traced out by a well-known and clearly-defined tradition of the chosen nation.<sup>2</sup> In order to understand fully the meaning of

<sup>1</sup> H.-J. Kraus is therefore quite right when he interprets the phrase *šyr šywn* as 'Gattungsbezeichnung' (cf. *Psalmen* (Bibl. Kom. XV), Neukirchen, 1960, p. 906. Cf. too H. Gunkel-J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, Göttingen, 1933, p. 42).

<sup>2</sup> Which then are *šyr šywn* found in the Psalter? They are Pss. 46, 48, 76 and 87; to this group some exegetes also add Pss. 84 and 122 (e.g. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, *ibid.* H. Gunkel-J. Begrich, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*), but as these Pss. include some of the formal characteristics of the Pilgrimage Pss., it would be more accurate to assign them to this special category. Numerous studies have of late appeared on the Songs of Zion,

this special type of Pss., we must first study briefly the various O.T. traditions concerning Zion, for, as a matter of fact, it is this complex theological thought focused on the holy city that has given birth to the peculiar genre the authors of Ps. 137 style as the Songs of Zion.

### I. ZION IN THE O.T.

The expression 'Mount Zion', recurring often in the O.T. as part of Israel's theological vocabulary, designates the hill-top on which there stood the special place of worship in the Jebusite city of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> The unique position this place of cult occupied in the religious history of the Israelites has its antecedents, on the one hand, in the pre-monarchic traditions connected with the amphictyony and, on the other, in the special significance that accrued to the city of Jerusalem after it was conquered by David and made into the capital of united Israel. An examination of these traditions is certainly most imperative.

*The amphictyonic city.*—The Israelite tribes, in the age between the occupation of Palestine and the establishment of the monarchy under Saul, constituted a sacred confederacy or amphictyony, i.e. a community of people living around a particular

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which attests the special interests modern exegetes are showing in them; we add here the most important studies of the post-war period. A. Colunga, 'Jerusalén, la ciudad del gran rey', *Estudios Bíblicos*, 14 (1955), pp. 255-279. M. Dahood, 'The Language and Date of Psalm 48 (47)', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 16 (1954), pp. 15-19. A. Deissler, 'Der anthologische Charakter des Ps. 48', *Sacra Pagina*, Louvain, 1959, pp. 495-503. *Id.*, 'Das lobpreisende Cottesvolk', *Sentire Ecclesiam* (Festschr. H. Rahner), Freiburg, i. B., 1961, pp. 43-47. O. Eissfeldt, 'Psalm 76', *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 82 (1957), pp. 801-808. *Id.*, 'Luther's "Eine feste Burg" und der 46 Psalm', *Kleine Schriften*, I, Tübingen, 1962, pp. 76-83. P. Häring, 'Gross ist der Herr in unserer Stadt (Ps. 47)', *Erbe und Auftrag*, 36 (1960), pp. 26-42. H. Junker, 'Der Strom, dessen Arme die Stadt Gottes erfreuch (Ps. 46 : 5)', *Biblica*, 43 (1962), pp. 197-201. L. Krinetzki, 'Zur Poetik und Exegese von Ps. 48', *Biblische Zeitschrift*, 4 (1960), pp. 70-97. *Id.*, 'Der anthologische Stil des, 46. Psalms und seine Bedeutung für die Datierungsfrage', *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift*, 12 (1961), pp. 52-71. *Id.*, 'Jahwe ist uns Zuflucht und Wehr. Eine stilistisch-theologische Auslegung von Psalm 46 (45)', *Bibel und Leben*, 3 (1962), pp. 26-42. J. Morgenstern, 'Psalm 48', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 16 (1941), pp. 1-95. N. H. Snaith, *Hymns of the Temple*, London, 1951. M. Weiss, 'Wege der neuen Dichtungswissenschaft in ihrer Anwendung auf die Psalmenforschung. Methodologische Bemerkungen, dargestellt am Beispiel von Ps. XLVI', *Biblica*, 43 (1961), pp. 255-302. In the monumental Einleitung of H. Gunkel-J. Begrich the Songs of Zion have not been subjected to an exhaustive analysis and so an elaborate study will never be out of place; the author of this paper wishes to acknowledge his great indebtedness to the investigations of A. Alt, H.-J. Kraus, M. Noth and G. von Rad, whose names will frequently recur in the course of the study.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. Noth, *The History of Israel* (English translation), London, 1958, p. 190.

sanctuary;<sup>4</sup> the sacred and symbolical number twelve, in spite of the variations and modifications borne out by the O.T. traditions, was essential to this organization, and the concrete bond that kept united the individual tribes scattered here and there in the holy land in the midst of the native population was by its very nature a religious one, namely, faith in Yahweh, the God of the tribes, who had liberated them from bondage in Egypt and finally brought them to and made them settle down in the land He had promised to their ancestors. And the worship of Yahweh, the God of the Fathers, was itself carried on by the tribes at the amphictyonic sanctuary which was also in possession of the sacred ark of the covenant. The ark, a wooden chest which served as a portable shrine and was counted as Yahweh's throne and the visible sign of His invisible presence in the midst of His people,<sup>5</sup> was at first deposited at Shekem,<sup>6</sup> whence, at some time and for some reasons unknown to us, it was transferred to Bethel,<sup>7</sup> thence to Gilgal<sup>8</sup> and finally to Shiloh<sup>9</sup> where it was still standing when Samuel was a young boy; it remained there till the city's destruction in the age of Eli (cf. 1 Sam. 4 *passim*).

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\* For a detailed study, cf. M. Noth, *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels* (Beitr. z. Wissensch. v.A.u.N.T. IV, 1), Stuttgart, 1930. For a summary of the views expressed in this important and original work, cf. *Id.*, *The History of Israel*, pp. 85-108. *Id.*, 'Die Gesetze im Pentateuch', *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, 2. Aufl., Munich, 1960, pp. 42-53.

<sup>5</sup> On the significance of the ark in the religion and cult of ancient Israel, cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Gottesdienst Israels. Grundriss einer Geschichte des alttestamentlichen Gottesdienstes*, 2, v.neub. Aufl., Munich, 1962, pp. 149-152.

<sup>6</sup> This is quite clear from Josh. 24 where we have the record of the ceremony of covenant-renovation and the proclamation of the divine law at the amphictyonic shrine. For a discussion, cf. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 161-166. E. Nielsen, *Sechem. A Traditio-Historical Investigation*, Copenhagen, 1955, pp. 86-141. (This author follows the peculiar views of the Uppsala school). M. Noth, *Das Buch Josua* (Handb. z. A.T., I/7), 2, verb. Aufl., Tübingen, 1953, pp. 135-140. *Id.*, *The History of Israel*, pp. 91-93.

<sup>7</sup> The fact of the transfer is clearly attested by Judges 20:26-27 and Gen. 35:1-7; this second text is closely connected with Josh. 24:14-23. For a discussion, cf. A. Alt, 'Die Wallfahrt von Sichem nach Bethel', *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, Munich, 1953, pp. 79-88. Cf. too G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose* (Das A. T. Deutsch 2/4), 5, Aufl., Göttingen, 1958, pp. 293-295.

<sup>8</sup> The special rôle the ark plays in Josh. 3:5 is best explained when we concede that Gilgal was once the amphictyonic shrine. On this point, cf. H.-J. Kraus, 'Gilgal—ein Beitrag zur Kultgeschichte Israels', *Vetus Testamentum*, 1 (1951), pp. 181-199. M. Noth, *Josua*, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> It is to be noted that Shiloh, unlike Shekem, Bethel or Gilgal which were celebrated Canaanite shrines of antiquity, was not a place of particular prominence and, if it became important in Israel's history, it was only because of its possession of the ark of the covenant; in this case too the reasons for the transfer thither are unknown to us. Cf. M. Noth, *The History of Israel*, p. 95.

We must never forget that for the members of the confederacy the worship at the central sanctuary—at the amphictyonic sanctuary—was indispensable. Accordingly the various tribes and even pious individuals<sup>10</sup> made pilgrimages to the central sanctuary at fixed times in the course of the year, and these pilgrimages were also characterized by such special functions as the renovation of the covenant<sup>11</sup> and the proclamation of the divine law which was to guide and govern the life of the tribes.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the amphictyony had also special sets of laws—the amphictyonic laws—which were to be most faithfully observed by the individual tribes and, were any tribe to violate them, the other tribes would flock to the central sanctuary, consult God and then mete out proportionate punishment to the delinquent member, thus to ward off the divine wrath which would otherwise affect all the members of the organization.<sup>13</sup> Thus we see that in the pre-monarchic age the amphictyonic shrine and city occupied a prominent place in the life and thought of the Israelite tribes after their settlement in the promised land, and the locality in which there stood the central sanctuary remained without doubt the principal city of the tribes. The cultico-religious traditions that arose in ancient Israel in conjunction with the amphictyony were not to be forgotten or lost sight of with the stabilization of the monarchy under David, rather they were all transferred to and linked with the city of Jerusalem

<sup>10</sup> The best proof for this is the tradition concerning Elkannah's pilgrimage to Shiloh where he also offered *proskynesis* to Yahweh of hosts and sacrificed to Him victims (1 Sam. 1:3); this annual pilgrimage took place in all probability at the beginning of the year, i.e. on the occasion of the feast of booths. Cf. M. Noth, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>11</sup> Josh. 24 is best understood and interpreted in the light of the tribes' renovation of the covenant with Yahweh, the God of the Fathers, at regular intervals; A. Alt is of opinion that this function took place every seven years (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 328), and to substantiate this view he appeals to the Deuteronomistic prescription that the law should be publicly read 'at the end of every seven years, at the set time of the year of release, at the feast of booths, when all Israel comes to appear before Yahweh . . . at the place which He will choose' (Deut. 31:9-13); G. von Rad even thinks of an annual repetition of the rite (cf. 'Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch', *Gesammeltes Studien zum Alten Testament*, 2, Aufl., Munich, 1958, pp. 42-47), but M. Noth seems to be most accurate when he affirms that the ceremony took place at regular intervals (cf. *The History of Israel*, p. 92. *Josua*, p. 139).

<sup>12</sup> This has been thoroughly demonstrated by A. Alt in his study, 'Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts', *op. cit.*, pp. 278-332. Cf. too M. Noth, 'Die Gesetze im Pentateuch', *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 42-53. It is now commonly recognized by exegetes that the discourses in Pss. 50, 81 and 95, which embody expressions derived from law and covenant theology, have their 'Sitz im Leben' in the pilgrimages mentioned above and in the ceremonies connected with them. Cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, pp. 372-374, 563-564, 660-661.

<sup>13</sup> In Judges 19-21 there is an instance of this procedure: the Benjaminites commit a foul deed, for which the other tribes, after consulting Yahweh, proceed against them and inflict upon them a crushing defeat. Cf. M. Noth, *The History of Israel*, pp. 104-105.

which henceforth was to be the capital of the nation of united Israel.

*The emergence of Jerusalem.*—The city of Jerusalem makes its appearance all of a sudden in Gen. 14 which, according to the verdict of most scholars,<sup>14</sup> represents a very old and unparalleled tradition of Israel, and this unexpected mention of the celebrated Canaanite city and its king serves also to make the reader acquainted with the godhead worshipped there, viz. 'El 'Elyôn<sup>15</sup> whose high priest was the king of the city himself. From the fragmentary but ancient and precious data preserved in Gen. 14 we can draw the following conclusions: (1) From time immemorial the Canaanite population of Jerusalem, or the Jebusites as they are at times called in the O.T. (Gen. 15:21; Exod. 3:8, 17, etc.), were the worshippers of 'El 'Elyôn. (2) Like any other ancient city which had its own god and cult Jerusalem, too, in the pre-Israelite age, had its own specific corpus of cultic and sacral traditions which were kept alive and handed down faithfully from generation to generation by its inhabitants. (3) An interesting feature of the cult in Jerusalem was that the ruler of the city acted as the high priest of the city's god. And it was this city, possessing its own cultic and sacral traditions which had nothing to do with those of the Israelite amphictyony, that was destined to become the capital of united Israel under David.

After the consolidation of his power one of the principal pre-occupations of King David was to have a capital for his kingdom<sup>16</sup> and his choice, which must certainly be termed most felicitous and opportune, fell upon Jerusalem, the city located in the centre of the land but outside the territory of the tribes and as such open to no objection either from the people of the north or from those

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<sup>14</sup> For example, cf. J. Chaine, *Le livre de Genèse*, Paris, 1951, pp. 197-198. G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose*, p. 147. R. de Vaux, 'Les patriarches hébreux et les découvertes modernes', *Revue Biblique*, 55 (1948), pp. 321-347. Some have thought that this chapter is a later fabrication meant to extol Abraham, the ancestor of Israel, but this view fails to do justice to the peculiarities of the text. 'Son style particulier, les mots rares ou uniques qu'il contient, les noms des personnes qui ne sont pas inventés, les noms de lieux qu'il a fallu glosser, tout cela suppose un document ancien' (cf. R. de Vaux, *Genèse (La Bible de Jérus.)*, Paris, 1953, p. 78, n.c.).

<sup>15</sup> It is true that Gen. 14:18 identifies 'El 'Elyôn with Abraham's God and later Biblical traditions use the appellation 'Elyôn vis-à-vis Yahweh, but from the historical viewpoint it is beyond all doubt that 'El was the supreme god of the Canaanite pantheon who is mentioned often in the Ugaritic texts; in these documents 'Elyôn too recurs as an epithet of Baal. Cf. C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual (Anal. Orient., 35)*, Rome, 1955, pp. 236-237 (No. 108), pp. 304-305 (No. 1402). R. de Vaux, *Genèse*, p. 80, n.c. What is of moment for our study is the transfer of the Jebusite traditions connected with the god of Jerusalem to Yahweh and His cult in the monarchic age.

<sup>16</sup> We may here note that it had never occurred to Saul to have a capital, and the peasant that he was, he was satisfied with his own city. Cf. J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 178.

of the south.<sup>17</sup> It is not quite clear how David captured the city,<sup>18</sup> but in any case, ever after this, Jerusalem came to be counted as the great leader's own possession and accordingly received also the name 'the city of David' (2 Sam. 5:9). The new political capital of the newly-founded kingdom, it was true, had its own long-standing sacral traditions, but these were not enough to make it the religious capital of the tribes who were always accustomed to think in terms of the amphictyonic city and shrine<sup>19</sup> and David who was quite aware of the sensibilities and susceptibilities of his subjects decided to make provision for the legitimation of his city; he therefore transferred the ark of the covenant, the concrete religious object that served as the bond of union among the tribes, to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6 *passim*) and thus with one stroke he linked the state he had created with the amphictyony.<sup>20</sup> And henceforward Jerusalem came to be counted as the amphictyonic city and the shrine there, the amphictyonic shrine.

It should be borne in mind that David also incorporated the Jebusite traditions of his capital into the body of the traditions proper to Israel.<sup>21</sup> The true Yahwist that he was, he, of course, established on a firm footing the cult of Yahweh in Jerusalem in place of the worship of the Canaanite godhead, and he also took care to appoint a descendant of Eli as high priest (2 Sam. 8:17); nevertheless, he also assumed the special rôles traditionally played by the priest-kings of the city: thus, he girded himself with the priestly ephod (2 Sam. 6:14), offered sacrifices and, like Melchizedek of old, also blessed the people at large as well as his own household (2 Sam. 6:17-20); moreover, he also appointed his own

<sup>17</sup> This fact is stressed by all historians; cf. J. Bright, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179. M. Noth, *op. cit.* (n. 13), pp. 189-190.

<sup>18</sup> The text in 2 Sam. 5:6-10 (= 1 Chron. 11:4-9) is corrupt and it is not clear how David's men gained entrance into the stronghold; it might be that they entered the city through the underground tunnel, but we cannot be sure of this as the word *šmwr* (V. 8), which is not to be found in the parallel text in 1 Chron., remains obscure; on the word, cf. L. Koehler-W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Leiden, 1953, p. 808. F. Zorell, *Lexicon Hebraicum et Aramaicum Veteris Testamenti*, Rome, 1954, p. 696.

<sup>19</sup> How deep-rooted these traditions were and how they persisted even after more than two centuries of life under kings becomes clear from the book of Deuteronomy which represents an attempt to have the amphictyonic order restored even at a later period. Cf. G. von Rad, *Das fünfte Buch Mose (Das AT Deutsch 8)*, Göttingen, 1964.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. J. Bright, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180. M. Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 190. Perhaps David might also have thought of appeasing the Benjaminites, who were certainly not well disposed towards him, by choosing Jerusalem; cf. K. Leimbach, *Die Bücher Samuel (Die Hl. Schr.d.A.T., III/1)*, Bonn, 1936, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> This is generally admitted by exegetes; cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, pp. 197-201. M. Noth, 'Jerusalem und die israelitische Tradition', *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 174-176. H. Schmidt, 'Jahwe und die Kulttraditionen von Jerusalem', *Zeitschrift für die Alttest. Wissenschaft*, 68 (1955), pp. 168-197. For the negative view, cf. R. Lack, 'Les origines re 'Elyôn, le Trèshaut, dans la tradition culturelle d'Israel', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 24 (1962), pp. 44-64. T. C. Vriezen, *Jahweh en zijn stad*, Amsterdam, 1962.

sons as priests (2 Sam. 8:18) whose relationship, however, with the official, institutional priests is not altogether clear.

In close conjunction with this development there also arose in Jerusalem what M. Noth has called a 'Hoftheologie'<sup>22</sup> which ultimately rested on the historical fact of the divine election of David and Zion (1 Kings 8:16/LXX/11, 13, 22; 2 Chron. 6:6); according to the court-theology of Jerusalem, Yahweh did choose David to be the ruler of His people and Zion would remain his dwelling place for ever (Ps. 132:11-14). This fact confers upon David's city which, by reason of the possession of the holy ark, was already the amphictyonic centre and as such occupied a prominent place in the eyes of the believers in Israel, a special consecration, an unparalleled excellence, a singular position in the history of salvation, for it is in point of fact the city of Yahweh.

The foregoing considerations bring us quite naturally to the study of the royal feast of Zion which has been most thoroughly investigated by H.-J. Kraus in several publications.<sup>23</sup> In antiquity the monarch was responsible for the official worship at the royal sanctuary, and when David transferred the ark to Jerusalem, the pious folk in Israel found its legitimation ultimately in Nathan's oracle: Yahweh chose David and his dynasty, and with this theologoumenon was also coupled the other confession of faith, namely, that He did also choose Jerusalem as His abode.<sup>24</sup> Now this significant event of the double choice, being the 'hieros logos' of the Jerusalem cult, made imperative its annual re-enactment, a cultic re-presentation of the fact of Yahweh's election of David and Zion, and thus there came into being what Kraus has most appropriately called a 'königliches Zionfest'. The most important remnant of this feast is Ps. 132<sup>25</sup> which, in the usual cultic fashion, actualizes the twofold choice of Yahweh which had long since become a salvation-historical happening in Israel's theology. The date of this feast is nowhere indicated in the O.T. but 1 Kings 8:1-2 certainly gives us a clue to it: in the month of Ethanim, i.e. in the seventh month, the sacred ark was solemnly brought and deposited in the newly erected temple, from which one can surmise that the royal feast of Zion was celebrated in Jerusalem on the first day of the feast of booths.<sup>26</sup> According to

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. M. Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament. Untersuchungen zu den Liedern von Jahwes Thronbesteigung* (Beiträge z. hist. Theol., 13), Tübingen, 1951. *Id.*, *Psalmen, passim*. *Id.*, *Gottesdienst in Israel, passim*. We give here a gist of Kraus' conclusions.

<sup>24</sup> On Nathan's oracle (2 Sam. 7 *passim*), cf. J. L. McKenzie, 'The Dynastic Oracle: 2 Sam. 7', *Theological Studies*, 8 (1947), pp. 187-218. M. Noth, 'David und Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 7', *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 334-345. On the parallel text in 1 Chron. 17, cf. H. van den Bussche, 'Le texte de la prophétie de Nathan sur la dynastie Davidique', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 24 (1948), pp. 354-394.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, pp. 879-883 (Exkurs 6). *Id.* *Gottesdienst in Israel*, pp. 215-220.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel*, pp. 217-218.

Kraus' reconstruction of the feast, the ark was taken in procession to the temple at the beginning of the feast and put in its place in the holy of holies, and this was a cultic re-enactment of what took place under David; Nathan's oracle was proclaimed anew by priests, prophets and poets, and the climax of the feast was the *proskynesis* before Yahweh who had His throne on Zion.<sup>27</sup>

Our investigations have brought to our notice two distinct currents of tradition in ancient Israel concerning Zion, the city of Yahweh: on the one hand there is the amphictyonic current hailing from the pre-monarchic times which came to be connected with the holy city after the transfer of the ark thither and on the other, the non-amphictyonic current that included the usages and beliefs of the Jebusites; and this second line of tradition, which was fused with the fact of Yahweh's choice of Zion and of the Davidic dynasty, was further developed above all by Isaiah of Jerusalem, whose thought we must now briefly survey.

*Jerusalem in Isaiah's theology.*—In the centuries after David and Solomon when, as a result of the division of their kingdom, there ensued a political as well as religious schism, Jerusalem which was in possession of the magnificent temple with the ark deposited there retained its prominence and also served as the basis for further theological thinking in the south, especially in the prophetic circles, and among the men responsible for the theological elaboration of the holy city's significance in the history of salvation we must first and foremost mention Isaiah of Jerusalem (750–700 B.C.). Acquainted though this great prophet was with the amphictyonic traditions, though some of these traditions have even left their traces in his utterances, it remains true that his theological thinking about the city was pronouncedly *un-amphiktyonisch*,<sup>28</sup> and therefore the sources of his thought must

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 218. A very good parallel to the royal feast of Zion is the Egyptian feast known as *sed*, whose details cannot unfortunately be fully reconstructed because of the fragmentary character of the sources. The jubilee at the Pharaoh's accession to the throne was celebrated at fixed times, and this function was above all a renewal of the monarch's power and rule; it was also characterized by a procession of the ruler, the status of the gods and the people at large, with offerings to the gods (cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 883). In Mesopotamia we have the case of Gudea of Lagas who, on the orders of the godhead Ningirsu, built a temple, and after its completion the king together with the people went in procession to the new sanctuary; this ceremony of dedication was annually re-enacted and during this re-enactment the monarch was also assured of the permanence of his throne by a divine oracle (cf. A. Scharff-A. Moortgart, *Aegypten und Vorderasien im Altertum*, Munich, 1950, pp. 274–280). All these traditions will certainly help us to grasp the close connection between the throne and the sanctuary in antiquity, and in the light of this bond the feast of Zion, too, becomes quite understandable.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II. *Die Theologie der prophetischen Ueberlieferungen Israels*, 3. Aufl., Munich, 1962, p. 167. The same writer also takes cognizance of the ideological relationship between the Songs of Zion and the theology of Zion as developed by Isaiah (cf. *op. cit.*, *ibid.*).



be looked for elsewhere, namely, in the theology resting upon the fact of Yahweh's choice of Zion as well as in the body of the Jerusalemite traditions derived ultimately from the Jebusite times. Let us therefore analyse these two currents of tradition in Isaiah's theology of the city of God.

According to Isaiah Yahweh has founded Zion (14:32), but the city's full glory will be revealed only in the eschatological times (2:2-4=Mic. 4:1-3).<sup>29</sup> The prophet foretells that in the end-time the mountain on which Yahweh's house stands will emerge from its obscurity, and the glory that will accrue to it in the last times which will be contemporaneous with the dawn of Yahweh's eschatological rule will be so spectacular as to attract all the gentiles to it, who will also come in pilgrimage thither; they will then learn the divine law which is proclaimed there on the occasion of the annual pilgrimages, and there will finally ensue the age of perfect peace. While thus describing Zion's glory in the last times, Isaiah envisions the holy city not as the amphictyonic centre of the Israelite tribes but as the focal point of Yahweh's rule, as the capital of His newly established kingdom which includes even the gentiles. The perspectives here are basically universalistic and undeniably eschatological, and hence they are also certainly *unamphictyonisch*. The description of Zion as Yahweh's mountain, for instance, has in the last analysis its roots in the Jebusite traditions and not in the theology connected with the amphictyony; similarly the conception of Zion as the centre of Yahweh's royal rule in the last times has its source in the *Hoftheologie* of Jerusalem which always accentuated the city's divine election.

Another line of the non-amphictyonic traditions in Isaiah's thought is represented by the theme of Zion's marvellous deliverance from foes, and this peculiar idea of the prophet is the result of the fusion of the old Semitic myth, cherished and handed down by the pre-Israelite population of Jerusalem, concerning the deity's victory over the forces of chaos typified by the ocean with the theological certitude that Yahweh would never allow the abode He chose as His own to be desecrated or destroyed by Israel's foes; in other words, the Israelite belief in Yahweh's solicitude for Zion and the city's invincibility resulting from it, which is

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<sup>29</sup> On Isa. 2:2-4, cf. G. von Rad. 'Die Stadt auf dem Berg', *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 215-217. H. Wildberger, 'Die Völkerwallfahrt zum Zion', *Vetus Testamentum* (1957), pp. 62-81. It is true that some exegetes have called into question the Isaianic origin of this text, but, 'Dass der Text . . . jesajanisch ist, kann nicht wohl bezweifelt werden' (G. von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 215. Cf. too the same author's remarks on the texts under consideration in *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II, p. 307). It is true that the same prophecy is also found in Mic. 4:1-4, but this presence of the same oracle in two different books is a problem by itself, which we cannot and need not discuss here; what is of moment for our study is that the two traditions thus attested by two books show that there was in ancient Israel a vigorous theological thinking about the holy city and its place in the eschatological times.

concretely expressed with the help of the imagery borrowed from Semitic mythology, is another non-amphictyonic trait in Isaiah's theology of Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup>

We shall now mention in passing two more texts which illustrate the point we are discussing. According to 10:27b-34<sup>31</sup> the enemy 'shakes his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem' (v. 32), but Yahweh will rout him with terrifying power (vs. 33-34). The same thought is enunciated in 17:12-14:<sup>32</sup> the thundering of many peoples who thunder like the thundering of the sea and the roaring of many nations who roar like the roaring of many and mighty waters is heard, but Yahweh, the mighty God who subdued the forces of chaos in the primordial times, rebukes them and they flee far away (v. 13). 'At evening time, behold, terror! Before morning, they are no more' (v. 14)!

In the texts we have just adduced and in others of the same vein<sup>33</sup> there comes to expression an important element of Isaiah's theology, viz. the inviolability and invincibility of Yahweh's city, despite the fact that it is threatened on all sides by numerous and anonymous foes; Yahweh invariably intervenes and saves His city which He has Himself founded and which is destined to become the centre of His kingdom in the eschatological times.

We may bring this section to a close with a brief mention of Deut. and Ezekiel. The Deuteronomists made a concerted attempt to have the order of the amphictyonic age restored, and hence we find them speaking of the place which Yahweh would choose to make His name dwell there (Deut. 12:11, etc.); their endeavour no doubt succeeded to a certain extent, thanks to the vigorous reform measures of Josiah, and consequently Jerusalem once again came to be counted as the amphictyonic centre of all Israel.<sup>34</sup>

When he describes Gog's onslaught on the city of God in the eschatological times, Ezekiel is following the line of thought we

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<sup>30</sup> Isaiah here draws upon what G. von Rad has called the *Chaosdrachenkampfmythus* (cf. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II, p. 167). On this mythological theme, cf. O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Aegypten, Ugarit und Israel* (BZAT 78), 2, Aufl., Berlin, 1962. L. Legrand, 'La création, triomphe cosmique de Yahvé', *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 93 (1961), pp. 449-470. Here we have also to reckon with the influence of the traditions concerning holy war, which were specifically amphictyonic; in the holy war, cf. R. Smend, *Jahwekrieg und Stämmebund*, Göttingen, 1963. G. von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel*, Zurich, 1951. R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel. Its Life and Institutions*, London, 1962, pp. 258-267. In the influence just made mention of we have also an instance of the impact of the amphictyonic traditions on a prophet whose theology is fully *unamphiktynisch*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II, p. 168.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. G. von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>33</sup> For example, cf. 14:24-27; 29:8; 30:27-33; 31:1-8. These texts are studied by G. von Rad, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-179.

<sup>34</sup> For a penetrating account of Deut.'s 'Sitz im Leben', cf. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I. *Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Ueberlieferungen*, 4, Aufl., Munich, 1962, pp. 232-244. Cf. too *Id.*, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (English Translation), London, 1956.

have already come across in Isaiah's theology (cf. chs. 38-39). Exegetes are now agreed in regarding Gog as a personification of all the enemies of God and His people rather than as any determined historical figure; Gog is the name of the ruler of the last times who will oppress the people of God,<sup>35</sup> but what is of moment for our study is the prophet's presentation of the crushing defeat Yahweh inflicts on Gog and his hordes and the subsequent establishment of His royal rule in the holy city. Ezekiel thus bears witness to the holy city's inviolability and its significance in the eschatological times.

*Conclusions.* From what has been so far said we may draw a few conclusions which are most relevant for our understanding of the Songs of Zion. (1) In the age of David Jerusalem became the legitimate successor to the amphictyonic city of the pre-monarchic times, to the old order of things that existed in Israel before the emergence of the monarchy. (2) The city acquired further significance in the court-theology of the monarchic age: Yahweh chose David and his family and also Jerusalem as His abode for ever and consequently it became the city of God *par excellence*; nay, more, it would also be the centre of Yahweh's rule in the last times. (3) The old Jebusite traditions, too, came to be incorporated into Israel's theology of the city of God; Zion is invincible and inviolable, and the enemies who approach it will be repelled by Yahweh Himself. This complex of ideas, constituting as it does a veritable theology of the city of God, we say, is the ideological background against which the Songs of Zion are to be interpreted.

## II. THE DATE AND SETTING OF THE SONGS OF ZION

At present exegetes as a rule assign a pre-exilic date to the Songs of Zion and G. von Rad even goes to the extent of considering them as 'vorjesaja-janisch' in all likelihood.<sup>36</sup> However, some exegetes have of late begun to consider them as post-exilic productions,<sup>37</sup> adducing as their main argument the anthological character of these songs: their vocabulary has numerous parallels in the post-exilic sections of the O.T. and their authors who were quite familiar with the earlier and contemporary writings made

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<sup>35</sup> To this effect J. Ziegler writes, 'Gog ist weder eine mythische Gestalt noch ein Deckname für Babel oder symbolischer Name für "Finsternis", sondern der apokalyptische Name des Fürsten der Endzeit, der das Volk Gottes bedrängt' (*Ezechiel/Echter-Bibel*, Würzburg, 1947, p. 112).

<sup>36</sup> He writes, 'Dass diese Psalmen vorjesajanisch sind, ist wahrscheinlich; sind sie es nicht, so würde das nicht viel ändern' (cf. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II, p. 168).

<sup>37</sup> This is the view of A. Deissler and L. Krinetzki (for their publications, cf. n. 2 above). Cf. too P. Auvrey, 'Les Psaumes', *Introduction à la Bible*, I, Paris, 1957, p. 608. R. Tournay, 'Recherches sur la chronologie des Psaumes', *Revue Biblique*, 65 (1958), pp. 321-347; 46 (1959), pp. 161-190.

copious use of these and thus have given the anthological trait to their poems';<sup>38</sup> to the argument that the Songs of Zion contain Canaanitisms which presuppose an early date, these exegetes make answer that in the post-exilic times a deliberate attempt was made by the O.T. writers to give an archaic colouring to their language and style, and with this end in view they employed archaisms.<sup>39</sup>

What shall we say about this tendency? Well, this post-exilic dating seems to be unlikely, for the arguments adduced in support of it are not fully conclusive and decisive; the anthological style, for instance, can very well originate in the pre-exilic age since the Biblical writers invariably make use of earlier and contemporary traditions, both written and oral, as well as the various literary forms in vogue in their nation; again, Canaanitisms are more likely at a time when the Canaanite culture was flourishing, or, in other words, in the pre-exilic period. It would therefore be quite reasonable to hold fast to the pre-exilic origin of the Songs of Zion.

More important certainly than the question of date is the problem of the setting of the Songs of Zion in the religious life of ancient Israel. The point is not at all clear, and hence several views have been put forward; earlier exegetes for their part linked all these or at least some of these songs with the disaster that befell Sanherib and the consequent deliverance of the holy city from the Assyrians,<sup>40</sup> but this view is improbable for the simple reason

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<sup>38</sup> In this connection the remarks of A. Deissler are worthy of special note: 'Denn sicher war in der nachexilischen Zeit der Psalter das offizielle Gebet- und Liederbuch des zweiten Tempels. Damit soll natürlich nicht behauptet werden, die Psalmen seien fast durchweg nachexilische Dichtungen. Ihre minutiöse Durchprüfung auf ihre vokabularischen und ideellen Parallelen zu den andern biblischen Schriften-dies überaus mühsame Arbeit scheint in den bisherigen Kommentaren nur mit Ausnahme geleistet! —wird freilich öfters zu einem Fragezeichen an der wieder modern gewordenen vorexilischen Datierung führen' (cf. *Sentire Ecclesiam*, p. 20).

<sup>39</sup> This point is stressed by M. Dahood, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 18-19. R. Tournay, for example, writes: 'Les hagiographes israélites témoignent donc, comme les scribes païens, d'un certain goût pour l'archaïsme, et cela à partir du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, le siècle de l'exil. Cela n'est sans doute pas par snobisme . . . Tout au contraire! Ils veulent se faire comprendre de leurs auditeurs et parlent le langage humaniste de leur époque, ce qu'ils n'auraient pu faire auparavant' (*Revue Biblique*, 70 (1963), p. 592). For a different view we may cite J. Bright, 'The fashion of regarding the Psalms as largely post-exilic has all but vanished; to date any of them in the Maccabean period seems little short of impossible. The bulk of them are of pre-exilic origin, and some of them are very archaic indeed' (cf. 'Modern Study of Old Testament Literature', *The Bible and the Ancient Near East/Festschr. W. F. Albright*, New York, 1961, p. 27).

<sup>40</sup> Among recent commentators E. J. Kissane still connects Pss. 46:8 with the invasion of Sanherib and its failure; apropos of Ps. 46 he notes: 'This psalm and the two which follow were written to celebrate the deliverance of Jerusalem from capture by heathen foes. The close affinity in thought with the prophecies of Isaiah has led most scholars to the conclusion that they refer to the period of the Assyrian invasion . . .' (cf. *The Book of Psalms*, I, Dublin, 1953, pp. 202-208).

that there is nothing in the Songs of Zion which points to any specific historical event.<sup>41</sup> S. Mowinckel, quite understandably enough, thinks of the New Year Festival as the 'Sitz im Leben' of our Pss.<sup>42</sup> and the exegetes of the Myth and Ritual School interpret them in terms of the celebrated pattern of cult.<sup>43</sup> In all probability, we say, the Songs of Zion have their setting in the annual pilgrimages to the holy city and in the ceremony of *proskynesis* before Yahweh who has His abode in it.<sup>44</sup>

### III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SONGS OF ZION

The first part of our essay was concerned with the ideological background of the Songs of Zion; now it remains for us to examine the various characteristics of this genre. Curious to remark, there is no special introduction comparable to the ones found in most of the hymns, in the Pss. of Yahweh's kingship or in the lamentations; the Songs of Zion begin rather abruptly with the praises of Yahweh and Zion, i.e. with the body as such which may commence with a nominal clause (46 : 2; 48 : 2) or with the participle (76 : 2); the construction of 87 : 1 is unique. The opening clause may be followed by another clause in the indicative mood which may elicit a practical conclusion with 'therefore' (46 : 3); there may also be a simple assertion (76 : 3) or finally a participle clause (87 : 2). In any case, the authors of the genre we

<sup>41</sup> F. Nötscher certainly represents the modern view when he observes: 'Eine Anspielung auf ein bestimmtes Ereignis wie die Bedrohung Jerusalems im syrisch-ephraimitischen Krieg . . . oder durch Sanherib . . . lässt sich nicht erkennen' (cf. *Die Psalmen|Echter-Bibel|*, Würzburg, 1953, p. 91).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Psalmenstudien*, II. *Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie*, Oslo, 1921. In this connection it may be recalled that H. Gunkel has accused S. Mowinckel of finding 'Helena in jedem Weibe' (cf. *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, p. 104).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. I. Engnell, *Gamla Testamentet. En traditionshistorisk inledning*, I, Stockholm, 1945, pp. 54-56, 109-118. Cf. too C. Hauret, 'L'interprétation des psaumes selon l'école "Myth and Ritual"', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 33 (1959), pp. 321-342; 34 (1960), pp. 1-34.

<sup>44</sup> The three annual pilgrimages to the holy city are mentioned in all the pre-exilic calendars of Israel: thus, according to J (Exod. 34:18-26) three times a year all males shall appear before Yahweh's face, viz. on the occasion of the feast of unleavened bread, of the feast of weeks and finally of the feast of ingathering at the end of the year (for a study, H.-J. Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel*, pp. 42-44); similarly E too speaks of the feast of unleavened bread, of harvest and of ingathering (Exod. 23:10-19). For a discussion, cf. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-42). Finally according to the D legislation (Deut. 16:1-17) all males are to appear before Yahweh at the place which He will choose for the feast of unleavened bread, for the feast of weeks and for the feast of booths (on the D legislation, cf. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-47. Cf. too F. Horst, *Gottes Recht|Gesammelte Studien zum Recht im AT|*, Munich, 1961, pp. 106-125). Of these three pilgrimages the one connected with the New Feast or the Feast of Booths was the most important and we may not therefore be far from the truth if we link with it the Songs of Zion. In this interpretation we have of course a modified form of S. Mowinckel's brilliant hypothesis.

are studying are not worried about the conventional forms of introduction, but there are several characteristics, a number of typical features, in the body of their poems, which go to constitute them as a special category, and it is our intention to investigate them in some detail.

(1) *The praises of Zion, the city of God.*—The memory of Zion's election by Yahweh pulsates with force in these Pss.; thus, Yahweh is said to have established His abode in the holy city (76:2); He 'loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places' in the whole land of Israel, for Zion is the city He has Himself founded on the holy mount (87:1-2); Yahweh is in its midst and so it shall never be moved (46:6). It is beautiful beyond measure, magnificent and built firmly together and hence the pilgrims who flock to it are exhorted to go round and view its numerous towers and ramparts and citadels (48:13-14); evidently, the purpose of this sightseeing is not the satisfaction of idle curiosity, but the proclamation of Yahweh's greatness to the future generations (48:14-15). The city's foremost title to glory is obviously Yahweh's presence in it, but this presence cannot be thought of apart from the temple which, too, is therefore mentioned by the poets (48:10).<sup>45</sup>

The appellation 'Zion' may recur, of course, with all its theological nuances,<sup>46</sup> as the subject of clauses: 'Let Mount Zion be glad' (48:12); it may also appear in apposition to other synonyms: 'His holy mountain . . . Mount Zion, in the far north' (48:3). The sacrosanct name occurs also as the predicate: 'His dwelling place is in Zion' (76:3. Cf. 87:5); finally it may be the object of the verb: 'Yahweh loves (in Hebrew *'oheb*, which is a participle) the gates of Zion' (87:2).

Splendid and varied titles are often predicated of Zion: the city of God (46:5; 87:3), the city of our God (48:2-9),<sup>47</sup> the city of the great king (48:3),<sup>48</sup> the city of Yahweh of hosts (48:9), the holy dwelling of 'Elyôn (46:5),<sup>49</sup> the holy mountain (48:3),<sup>50</sup> His

<sup>45</sup> The mention of the temple in 48:10 is important for our understanding of the 'Sitz im Leben' of the Songs of Zion: the community of believers is assembled in the temple of Jerusalem and is offering cult to Yahweh; cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 359.

<sup>46</sup> The theological significance of Zion is clear, but not its etymology; cf. L. Koehler-W. Baumgartner, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 802. F. Zorell, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 690.

<sup>47</sup> The thought of Israel's election and the covenant pulsates in the phrase 'our God'. We must never forget that as a result of the covenant on Mount Sinai Yahweh became Israel's God and Israel, His people, and consequently when the expression *our God* is used in a context where the thought of the election of Zion and David stands in the background, there is had an instance of the fusion of Israel's varied and distinct traditions.

<sup>48</sup> The title great king is but the Hebrew translation of the Accadian title *šarru rabu* in vogue among the kings of Assyria and Babylonia.

<sup>49</sup> With the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem the city became Yahweh's own abode and He also inherited the title 'Elyôn; here we see how a Canaanite epithet is transferred to Israel's own God.

<sup>50</sup> The holy mountain is again a mythical image; cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, pp. 342-345.

foundation upon the holy mountains (87:1), the gates of Zion (87:2), etc. It is situated in the north (48:2), i.e. precisely in the place where according to the ancient Semitic conceptions the gods were wont to assemble together,<sup>51</sup> and there is moreover a river encompassing it which may be compared to the one that irrigated Paradise (Gen. 2:10) and which also gladdens the city of God (46:5).<sup>52</sup> 76:3 is quite unique as it uses the name Shalem, no doubt with the express purpose of introducing Zion as the city connected with Abraham and Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18).<sup>53</sup> Finally, glorious things are predicated of the city of God, but they are going to be realized only in the eschatological times (87:4-7).

(2) *The praises of Yahweh, the God of Zion.*—Yahweh, Israel's God who has chosen Zion as His abode for ever, is great (48:2) and renowned (48:4); He is the God of righteousness, for 'His right hand is filled with righteousness' (48:11); as in so many texts in the Psalter and in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah, here, too, the term righteousness means salvation, Yahweh's salvific activity on behalf of His people,<sup>54</sup> and we may therefore adequately convey the Psalmist's thought by saying that the God of Zion is the Saviour of His people. His name, the best equivalent of His august person, reaches to the very ends of the earth, and His praises, too, are in the same way extending to the farthest borders of the globe (48:11). The worshippers assembled together in the temple of Jerusalem recall to mind His 'hèsed' or steadfast love for them manifested above all by His salvific deeds (48:10)<sup>55</sup> and also sing His praises (48:11).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

<sup>52</sup> According to the Ugaritic texts 'El, the supreme god of the pantheon, dwells in the region of the two streams (cf. W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, Baltimore, 1953, p. 72), and this idea is transferred by the authors of the Songs of Zion to their own God. The same idea is to be found in Ezek. 47:1. For a discussion of this text, cf. G. A. Cooke, *Ezekiel (International Critical Commentary)*, Edinburgh, 1951, pp. 518-519). J. Ziegler, *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 142.

<sup>53</sup> In the use of this special name theological considerations are no doubt at work: 'man muss dann annehmen, dass der volle der Stadt absichtlich vermieden wurde, weil er zu stark mit den spezifischen Glaubensvorstellungen der späteren Zeit verbunden war. Auch Salem ist ein künstlicher Name' (cf. G. Von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose*, p. 151).

<sup>54</sup> On the meaning of this term in the theology of the O.T., cf. W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I, 5, Aufl., Göttingen, 1947, pp. 155-162. G. Quell, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum N.T.*, II, pp. 176-180. G. von Rad, "Gerechtigkeit" und "Leben" in der Kultsprache der Psalmen', *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 225-247. *Id.*, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I-II, *passim*.

<sup>55</sup> The term 'hèsed' must be understood in conjunction with Yahweh's righteousness. The fundamental idea conveyed by the word is the mutual relationship and solidarity existing between father and son, husband and wife, master and servants, and between friends (cf. L. Koehler-W. Baumgartner, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 256), but when transferred to the sphere of Yahweh's relationship with Israel, it means in the final analysis the gift of salvation He imparts to His people (cf. F. Zorell, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 256). For a discussion, cf. R. Bultmann, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum N.T.*, II, pp. 475-479. W. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-155.

The God who rules in Zion is a mighty warrior (48:4)<sup>56</sup> who is able to put to flight the numerous foes who march against His city (48:5-8); He reduces them to smithereens, 'the flashing arrows, the shield, the sword and the weapons of war' (76:2); He is also the great victor over the forces of chaos (46:3-4). He comes all resplendent from the everlasting mountains<sup>57</sup> and at His appearance even the stout-hearted warriors lose heart and find it impossible even to lift up their hands (76:5-6), and finally at His word of rebuke the horse and the rider fall down stunned (76:7). Truly, the God of Zion is terrible, and His anger is such that no man can resist Him (76:8). Being such an irresistible warrior, He is His people's sure refuge (46:2) and consequently they have nothing to fear (46:3); they even invite the whole of creation to come and witness His mighty works in the eschatological times (46:9-10), and the practical sequel to this contemplation of Yahweh's works is the spirited oracle inviting them to elicit a confession of faith (46:11).<sup>58</sup>

(3) *The theme of Yahweh's victory over chaos.*—This theme comes to the foreground in the most conspicuous fashion in the Songs of Zion and, as has already been remarked, it is part of the non-amphictyonic tradition derived ultimately from the Canaanites.<sup>59</sup> The outbreak of the forces of chaos, their open rebellion, is described as follows: the earth quakes and the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; the waters roar and foam, and the mountains tremble with its tumult (46:3-4), but Yahweh is in the midst of His city which, precisely on this account, has nothing to fear (46:6). At times the poets prefer to describe the revolt and the onslaught of the chaotic powers in terms of the rage of the mighty nations of the earth: the kingdoms of the earth totter, but utters His voice,<sup>60</sup> and the earth simply melts away (46:7). According to 48:5-8 the forces of chaos make their appearance as a group of powerful kings marching against Zion, but as they approach the city, a numinous and mysterious terror, whose author is undoubtedly Yahweh Himself, takes hold of them and they flee in confusion. 76:4-7, too, is no less a striking formulation of the

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<sup>56</sup> This is again a primitive idea of the Israelites derived from the myth of the godhead's victory over chaos, from the experience of Yahweh's mighty interventions on behalf of His people and finally from the traditions connected with the ark which was counted as a war-palladium (cf. Num. 10:34-36).

<sup>57</sup> Here there is a reference to the Sinai theophany; for a discussion, cf. A. Weiser, 'Zur Frage nach den Beziehungen der Psalmen zum Kult', *Bertholet-Festschrift*, Tübingen, 1950, pp. 513-531.

<sup>58</sup> We must consider this oracle as being uttered by some charismatic personage under the tremendous impact of the Spirit (cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 356); it is an oracle of salvation.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II, p. 167.

<sup>60</sup> The ancient Semites thought of thunder as the voice of the god(s) and so Yahweh's voice here means the sound of thunder that He emits. On this peculiar conception, cf. W. F. Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity*, 2nd. ed., New York, 1957, pp. 195-196.



theme of Yahweh's triumph over the forces of chaos along the lines just indicated.

The framework of thought in all these instances is undeniably mythical, and this remark holds good with regard to the other themes recurring in the Songs of Zion; e.g. the streams flowing around the city (46:5), the north (48:3), the mountain of God (48:3), Rahab (87:4), etc., but let us never forget that the imagery borrowed from myth is most successfully utilized by the Psalmists to enunciate a religious truth which is anything but mythical: Yahweh is truly God, exalted among the nations, exalted in the earth (46:11).<sup>61</sup>

(4) *Eschatology*.<sup>62</sup>—The transition from the foregoing to eschatology is quite easy and natural, for, on the one hand, the last times are invariably thought of in the Bible as a recurrence of the initial times<sup>63</sup> and, on the other, protology and eschatology are so connected in the perspectives of the O.T. that the transition from the idea of God's victory in the primordial times to the one of the last times is the most normal thing imaginable.<sup>64</sup> Eschatology in the O.T., as we are well aware, comprises several fixed and determined elements which are often dwelt upon with predilection by the prophets of Israel in the course of their preaching, and these are to a great extent to be met with in the Songs of Zion as well.<sup>65</sup>

The authors of these songs describe with colour and passion the cosmic disturbances which inspire fear and terror in the hearts of men; thus, the earth turns topsy-turvy and the mountains are

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<sup>61</sup> What we have just said is recognized by all exegetes who adopt the historico-critical method of exegesis, and in the use of images borrowed from pagan mythology there is nothing derogatory to the sanctity and authority of the Bible. In fact, this phenomenon only serves to accentuate the truth that the Bible is the word of God but clothed in the word of man. On this point, cf. J. Levi, *The Bible, the Word of God in Words of Men* (English translation), London, 1961. On the problem of myth in the Bible, cf. the sober remarks of G. E. Wright, *God who Acts. Biblical Theology as Recital*, London, 1956, pp. 116–128.

<sup>62</sup> Here we understand eschatology in the broad sense, without touching upon the numerous complicated problems connected with it.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. J. L. Mckenzie, 'Myth and the Old Testament', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 21 (1959), p. 275; the same writer has also summarized on pp. 275–276 of his study the various instances of mythical conception and language in the O.T. at large.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I, pp. 149–153. *Id.*, *Das erste Buch Mose*, pp. 34, 50–53.

<sup>65</sup> For a convenient outline, cf. H. Gunkel-J. Begrich, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 358–361. Cf. too J. Begrich, *Studien zu Deuterjesaja*, Munich, 1963, pp. 74–79, 80–90. According to J. Begrich the following are the chief elements in the eschatology of the prophets and the Psalms: (1) the disturbance of the people's peace and their scattering as a result of wars and other catastrophes; (2) Yahweh's battle with the nations and His glorious victory over them; (3) the subsequent destruction of the kingdoms of this world; (4) the special place of the holy city and the people of Israel in the eschatological period (cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 81–82). All these elements are to be found in the Songs of Zion as well.

shaken; there is the uproar of the foaming waters which makes the very mountains tremble as they hear it (46:3-4). These calamities in the realm of visible creation seem to be a prelude to the reduction of the whole earth to the chaotic state of the primordial times; and to add to all this confusion, there is also the furore of the gentile nations (46:7) which march against the city of God (48:5-8). It is when the forces of chaos are the most active that Yahweh finally intervenes: He appears in all His majesty and splendour and breaks all the weapons of the foes and reduces them to impotency and inactivity (76:4-7; 48:5-8).

It is to be noted that the chaotic powers are represented as the gentile nations and their rulers (46:7; 48:5) who wage war on Zion but are repulsed by the mysterious terror that Yahweh despatches against them (48:7)<sup>66</sup> and this victory of His is envisaged at the same time as His execution of judgement (76:9-10); this judgement which brings about the destruction of all the foes of God's people is salvific inasmuch as it also brings necessarily in its train the salvation of the just (76:10), and as far as the Psalmists are concerned, this saving deed is also the revelation of Yahweh's 'hèsed' and an exercise of His righteousness (48:10-11) which are a source of joy for Zion (48:12).

In short, the hostile forces are subdued; the foes are judged and the people of God are saved; what is going to ensue hereafter? On a transfigured earth, on an earth free from all that is opposed to Yahweh and His salvific will, yes, in the very city of Zion, there is going to be established God's kingdom of perpetual and everlasting peace. It is Yahweh's own work and hence the poets of Israel tender the invitation: 'Come, behold the works of Yahweh . . .' (46:9-10). It is when this happy state of affairs is an accomplished fact that the glorious things said of Zion will also be fulfilled: such pagan nations as Egypt,<sup>67</sup> Babylon and Philistia will accept Yahweh as their God, and then will they come to be reckoned as the citizens of Zion (87:4); they will address Zion as their mother<sup>68</sup> and of each of them it will be recorded in the register of citizens to be drawn up by Yahweh Himself: 'This one was born<sup>69</sup> there' (87:6); to crown all, the new citizens of Zion will dance together, singing in the

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<sup>66</sup> This mysterious terror must be understood in the light of the traditions concerning holy war which always stress the rôle the numinous panic despatched by Yahweh has to play in the defeat of Israel's foes (cf. G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, pp. 45-59); besides, the mythical idea of the godhead's victory over chaos, too, comes to expression here.

<sup>67</sup> In 87:4 Egypt is designated with the name of the mythical monster Rahab; cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 604.

<sup>68</sup> Such is a reading attested by the LXX and one is justified in accepting it as original; cf. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

<sup>69</sup> The Hebrew text has the passive form *yullad* (cf. Vv. 4, 5) which, on the basis of Isa. 9:5, must be considered as a periphrasis of God's action; this interesting coincidence may also serve as an indication of the early date of Ps. 87 which generally is regarded as post-exilic.

meanwhile: 'All our abodes<sup>70</sup> are in you' (87:7). This is indeed a grandiose delineation of the eschatological hopes of the authors of the special genre we have been investigating.

Our investigation is at an end, but it is anything but complete; to be complete it must include a study of the idea of the city of God in ancient Oriental literature as well as of the influence of Songs of Zion and their theology on the O.T. and the N.T. and finally over non-Biblical literature; such an investigation will demand a special book.

## Rambles in Septuagint Lexicography

HENRY S. GEHMAN

Students of the Old Testament are sadly aware of the dearth of adequate lexical aids for studying the Greek version of the Old Testament. The Lexicon of J. F. Schleusner in five volumes (Leipzig, 1820-21) still has great value for Septuagint studies and cannot be ignored as an antiquated piece of work. It is written in Latin, the universal language of scholarship in his day, but unfortunately in the present age, when many students of divinity have small Greek, less Hebrew, and no Latin, it remains a sealed book. This work, however, has recently been reprinted, and accordingly this monument of erudition will be available to scholars for a number of years to come, and incidentally it may encourage the study of Latin by theological students.

If a student, however, cannot read Latin and uses Schleusner in his researches, he will not be without help in the study of the Septuagint. The *Concordance* to the Septuagint, edited by E. Hatch and R. A. Redpath (Oxford, 1897-1906), consists of two volumes of 1,504 pages with a Supplement of 272 pages. This work enables the student to assemble the evidence for the translation of a certain Hebrew word or root in various books of the Old Testament, and accordingly it can frequently take the place of a Septuagint lexicon. Occasional help in meanings can be found in the notes of F. Field's edition of the *Fragments of Origen's Hexapla*, two volumes (Oxford, 1875). Naturally, we can find a great deal of aid in Liddell and

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<sup>70</sup> Another variant is 'sources'; but the one accepted here seems to be more suited to the context: the citizens of a new city are inclined to think of their new homes and rejoice! Cf. H.-J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 603.