The part of the book of Isaiah which is conveniently described by the doubly questionable title 'the Isaiah Apocalypse' almost vies with the four Servant Songs in the variety of the hypotheses of which it has been the subject, and presents the exegete with problems which, however different in character, are equally elusive. At least three noteworthy comprehensive studies of these chapters have been published during the past generation: those by Rudolph, Lindblom and Mulder 1). Yet it probably remains true that writers on most of the critical questions involved may still be divided into two groups: those who differ from each other and those who hesitate to commit themselves. Even the view which at one time seemed to command general acceptance among Protestant critical scholars, viz., that the chapters are non-Isaianic and post-exilic, can no longer simply be taken for granted 2). Some thirteen years ago Beek 3) argued for their pre-exilic and Isaianic origin (with due allowance for minor expansions and insertions at later stages), taking what others have regarded as descriptions of a natural catastrophe at the end of the age to be allusions to the great earthquake in the reign of Uzziah (Am. i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5). In a comprehensive article on the composition of the book of Isaiah Eaton 4) suggests, though without detailed supporting arguments, that xxiv-xxvii, together with xiii-xxiii, represents a 7th century development by the Isaianic prophetic community of


2) Not all Roman Catholic scholars have maintained the pre-exilic and Isaianic origin of the section, but it has recently been advocated by the late E. J. Kissane, in The Book of Isaiah translated from a critically revised Hebrew text with commentary, Vol. I (I-XXXIX), (Dublin, 1960).

3) M. A. Beek, 'Ein Erdbeben wird zum prophetischen Erleben (Jesaja 24-27)', Archiv Orientální, xvii, 1, 1949, pp. 31-40.

'looser material inherited from Isaiah which lent itself to a more extended process of development'. Most recently Mauchline 1), in a brief summing up, allows for the presence in these chapters of a fair amount of authentic Isaianic material, and is even reluctant to deny to the 8th century prophet the promise of resurrection in xxvi. 19, which he interprets in the individual sense which has seemed to many scholars to make necessary not only a post-exilic but a late post-exilic date.

These recent hypotheses of an early date for all or a substantial part of the section lie at the other extreme from the theories, now somewhat outmoded, which assigned 'the Isaiah Apocalypse', or some major portions of it, to various dates in the 2nd century. Procksch's 2) view that what he calls the Liederkreis (xxiv. 8-18a, xxv. 1-5, xxvi. 1-6), xxvii. 2b ff.) refers to the fall of Carthage never had very much in its favour; and together with it even the somewhat better theories of a very late date must presumably be ruled out of court because of the Qumran evidence. Indeed, as Rudolph and others had maintained long before the Qumran MSS had been heard of, the history of the formation of the Old Testament Canon (as generally conceived) casts serious doubt on the more extreme suggestions of late dating. In all probability the date suggested by Mulder 3), viz., circa 270 B.C., is about as late as can on general grounds be tolerated. Thus, discarding the views of Duhrm 4), Lods 5), and Marti 6), that the chapters contain reflections of events in the time of John Hyrcanus, we are left with various hypotheses of Isaianic authorship on the one hand, and, on the other, the suggestions of sundry dates early in the Greek period (as in the studies by Rudolph and Mulder), with Lindblom's dating (viz., shortly after 486 B.C.) coming roughly halfway between the two extremes.

But to put the matter thus is grossly to oversimplify a highly complicated question. Bound up with the question of date, and, indeed, prior to it, is the question of structure and of unity. It has

2) O. Procksch, Jesaja I übersetzt und erklärt (KAT, IX, 1, Leipzig and Erlangen, 1922).
4) B. Duhrm, Das Buch Jesaja übersetzt und erklärt (HKAT, III, 1, Göttingen, 1922).
6) K. Marti, Das Buch Jesaja erläutert (KHC, X, Tübingen, 1900).