

attention and which is now taken a stage further by P. Welten (*Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* [Neukirchen, WMANT 42, 1973]), that the development of apocalyptic owes something also to the particular style of approach which is to be found in the Chronicler.

Hanson is right to protest at the oversimplifying of the post-exilic period, the tendency to treat its literary products as an easily harmonizable unity. The division of its thought into two so sharply divided areas is, however, less than adequate. That the break of the exile, with its problems of identity and of continuity, should be followed by various types of appraisal, and various claims to authenticity, would suggest a more complex interplay of ideas, as I have recently been endeavoring to draw out in a discussion of "Continuity and Discontinuity" as a contribution to a volume [on *The Theology of Tradition*, being edited by D. A. Knight and] to be published later this year [by the Fortress Press]. It must be by the fuller analysis of *all* the writings involved—and it is strange to find no discussion, other than the odd reference, of Malachi or of Joel which must surely represent yet other possible lines of approach—that the complexity of this vitally important moment in the life of Judah and in Jewish thought is to be assessed. But for the stimulus of a provocative discussion, we must all be grateful to Hanson.

## DIVINE PROVIDENCE OR HUMAN PLAN?

*Ruth*, A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary, by EDWARD F. CAMPBELL, JR., *Anchor Bible* 7; Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1975. 189 pp. \$8.00. Reviewed by Jack M. Sasson, professor of Old Testament, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

IT IS NOT TOO OFTEN that a prestigious series of biblical commentaries elects to devote a full volume to the Book of *Ruth*. Despite its brevity and its seemingly simple story with an apparently flowing narrative, *Ruth* is nevertheless not devoid of linguistic difficulties for the translator and of crucial ambiguities for the interpreter. The editors of *Anchor Bible*, therefore, should be congratulated on their decision to reserve *Volume 7* for a new translation of this tale, accompanied by extensive notes and comments. In Edward F. Campbell, Jr., a scholar was chosen who was determined not to allow the technical apparatus, elaborate as it became, to interfere with the pure enjoyment of a wonderful story that has delighted millions for centuries. Campbell is a gifted writer, blessed with the enviable knack of retaining the interest and attention of his reader through even the most harrowingly technical discussion.

Campbell offers a good-sized "Introduction" (pp. 1-36) which discusses the following subjects: "What is the Book of Ruth?", "The Date of Composition," "The Theology," "Canonical Status and Canonical Place," and "The Text." It should be kept in mind, however, that many points alluded to in the Introduction receive more ample treatment in the extensive "Notes" and "Comments" sections which

follow his translation. The last, appropriately enough, is divided into seven main segments. The reviewer confesses that, try as he might, he was not able to catch the *jeu de mots* behind the title of Campbell's third segment: "Amid *Alien* Corn?" Perhaps it is nothing but a bit of errant Britishism. Additionally, Campbell might have added a question mark (?) to the title of his seventh segment: "A Genealogical Appendix." This reviewer has tried to show [IDB Supplement, *sub* "Generation: seventh" (forthcoming)] that the genealogy of *Ruth* 4:18-22 must have been tailor made to fit the context of the preceding narrative.

In "What is the Story of Ruth?" and in "The Artistry of the Story-Teller," Campbell carefully builds up a thesis. After dismissing (too hastily in my opinion) as unproductive the search for literary antecedents for *Ruth*, and after some unfocused statements on the nature and extent of the "poetic" remains in the text, Campbell devotes some good pages on word-play, inclusio, chiasm, symmetry in design, and other literary devices which abound in the narrative. These last, he feels, could be considered as "building blocks" which the "Hebrew Singer of Tales" employed (orally) to transmit a story originally composed in an elevated prose style. These "singers", possibly Levites or "wise women," practiced mostly in the countryside rather than in the royal courts, spreading the word and law of God in a form accessible to the multitudes.

This infectiously romantic reconstruction is very plausible. However, a word of caution might be in order. Campbell's main stimulus for developing such a hypothesis originated in modifying the theory of Millman Parry and Albert Lord. Especially in the last's *The Singer of Tales*, an elaborate theory was developed which tried to explain the "formulaic" quality of the Homeric sagas. Lord's proposal has been, in the last decades, applied to the older literatures of Islam, India, Japan, Africa. Biblicists, no less than other literary scholars, are fond of the "big" theory which solves problems that have heretofore not yielded to modern research. Before Campbell's thesis acquires a wide audience, it might be noted that Parry and Lord's reconstructions have been seriously questioned, most recently by those who were first to accept them: the classicists. This, after it was demonstrated that Lucretius and Livy, as fine pen-and-ink writers as one can have, display a much larger percentage of "formulaicity" than either Homer or Hesiod. As to the role of wandering Levites, it should be stated that almost everything we know about ancient Near Eastern societies tells us that the average man and woman "in the countryside" hardly shared in the divine cult and worship. Priests would not have felt it necessary to spread divine instruction, whether in accessible form or not.

I recommend the reading of Campbell's section on "The Date of Composition" as containing a particularly sane argument against the widely dissiminated position which considers *Ruth* a post-exilic polemic directed at the narrow nationalistic tendencies of Ezra and Nehemiah. In addition to being a notion which, as Campbell asserts, has too modern a ring to it, it may also have originated as a nineteenth century genteel diatribe against so-called "Jewish isolationism."

Campbell writes on the "Theology of Ruth." He seems to favor R. M. Hals' *The Theology of the Book of Ruth* and argues that God's activities are not always obviously stated in the text; rather they are indicated by the subtle touches of the story teller. Should it not be considered as a shade too subtle, however, when too often, the *absence* of God in crucial passages, such as 2:3, is considered as positive proof of his "providential control"? Campbell's remarks on the "Theology" of the book might be more *à propos* were he to link them to later *midrashic* elaborations which sought to account for the place of a "secular" book, such as *Ruth* is, in the Hebrew canon. Whether or not any "Theology" is to be found in *Ruth* when it was last edited into a complete story is another issue entirely, one which Campbell dismisses too easily when he chose not to investigate *Ruth's* Near Eastern antecedents. This reviewer would like to urge, parenthetically, that the Hebrew not be thought of as an individual constantly worried about the presence of God, ceaselessly pondering, with knitted brows, the ways of heaven and earth. Occasionally, as one ought to, the Hebrew was pleased to tell stories for the sake of entertainment and, perhaps, to transmit some "historical" information. He was able to distinguish between "true" history, and "false" history, of course. But much as Hellenistic man, he recognized a third category, one which spoke of *events such as might have happened*. For this, all that the Hebrew demanded was a great degree of verisimilitude in the accounts he heard, and, above all, to be edified by their contents. For one, it does not surprise nor shock me that some of his stories gave very little role for God to play. On the contrary, it reassures me that my ancestor was able to tell a story, and tell it well, without having to hide God behind sheaves, threshing floors, and city gates.

It could easily be noted that this review has so far avoided making any comment on Campbell's translation. This, of course, does not mean that there are no points of disagreement, or that there are no moments where Campbell should be congratulated for resolving long-standing difficulties in the text. It is just that the reviewer, engaged as he is in a commentary which differs markedly from Campbell's, does not think it *bushido* to peddle his own wares, so to speak, without benefit of space to lay out his own evidence for others to counter-criticize. Nevertheless, since I do broach the subject of *Ruth* as a "secular" text, I might be permitted to lightly document an alternate understanding of *one episode* often cited as evidence of God's hidden activity. The battery of proof-texts and other paraphernalia of biblical scholarship will have to await another occasion.

It seems to me that one of the basic problems which faced Ruth upon her introduction to Bethlehemite circles is her status of being a *nokriyyāh*, a "foreigner." Now, as it has often been observed, the term "foreigner" does not refer exclusively to non-Hebrews, but rather to anyone who, because of unusual circumstances, has abandoned his own tribe or clan. It becomes crucial, therefore, for anyone in such circumstances to find acceptance in a new clan in order to derive benefits and protection in times of hardship. In the case of Ruth, her relationship to Naomi in

no way assured her of benefits that even a *šifhāh*, “a maidservant” could rely upon. Her first meeting with Boaz, a *gibbôr hayil* with wide power within the clan, is destined to ameliorate her condition, to change her status from that of a *nokriyyāh* to that of a *šifhāh*. In the first two verses of chapter 2, I propose the following translation: “Now there was an acquaintance [Campbell’s “covenant-brother” for *myd* will surely be regarded, in the future, as a product of this decade’s biblical scholarship] of Naomi’s husband, a man of means, belonging to Elimelech’s clan; his name was Boaz. Ruth of Moab said to Naomi: “I am going out to the field to glean among the sheaves *in order to find favor in his eyes . . .*” The *his* of the last sentence, of course, refers to Boaz. Ibn Ezra had, in his commentary to *Ruth*, recorded but chose not to adopt this rendering. It could be defended on the following grounds: (1) In only *two* cases out of *thirty* recounted in the Old Testament in which a sentence ends with: “. . . and his name was PN” do we have *no* resumption of narrative immediately after that statement. In other words, it is very unlikely that the mention of Boaz in 2:1 was to be left hanging in mid-air. (2) We do not know of examples of *māšā hēn b<sup>e</sup>ēnāyw* (*X*) which leaves undetermined, the person(s) whose favor is sought. Thus, the *waw*, should be considered as referring to Bcaz. (3) *’ahar ’ašer*, and the better attested *’ah<sup>a</sup>rē ’ašer* are used in Old Testament context where a translation “since, because” is required. (4) The fact that we are dealing with two forms of discourse, direct and indirect, does not seem to affect our explanation.

If accepted, this translation would bolster our resistance to “theologizing” much of *Ruth*. For it would imply that at the outset Ruth had a purpose in mind which did not exclude a role for Boaz. That her “luck” [and this translation of *miqrehāh* of 2:3 is recognized as daring even by Campbell (pp. 92 and 112)] brought her to the field of Boaz requires an explanation. Ancient Near Eastern fields consisted of large tracts of land, divided among the various owners by very unobtrusive demarcations. This is to avoid wasting valuable arable space. Furthermore, various individuals owned tracts, within these large areas, which did not necessarily have to be contiguous or adjoining. Chapter 2, verse 3 makes it clear that Ruth did not even have to waste valuable time, since she found herself in Boaz’s tract upon her arrival to glean. In this context it should be emphasized that the tempo of activity in *Ruth* is quick, spreading over two months at most, from the harvesting of barley period through that of threshing and winnowing.

In order to meet with Boaz, Ruth had recourse to a ploy. She went to the overseer and asked permission to glean *and* to collect among the heaped barley. Now according to well-known custom, a widow, even a foreigner, did not need permission to glean behind the reapers. But, as is clear from verses 15-16, for a *nokriyyāh* to collect among the piles of grains, she required permission from the “boss.” Thus, after Boaz came, and after he exchanged his greetings with his workers, the first order of the day for him was to judge the request of a young lady standing on the side, *waiting* [*’āmad* in v. 7] to see him since daybreak.

With elaborate curtsies, Ruth first asks Boaz the reasons for his kindness toward

her. This despite the fact that in ordering his men to allow her water, Boaz had done little more than custom and tradition demanded. The matter might have ended there, with Ruth *not* obtaining permission to collect between the heaped barley. However, when Ruth wonders loudly about herself not even being a *šifhāh*, it becomes obvious to Boaz that the girl was asking much more than he had expected. He does not reply immediately, but ponders the matter until noontime. By his reply to Ruth, by his act toward her, and by his orders to the harvesters, it becomes clear that Ruth's wish was to be satisfied. She receives food as she sits with Boaz's workers; she is permitted to glean at will; she is granted protection from harm and is asked to join with Boaz's girls. In short, she is accepted into Boaz's clan and regarded as a *šifhāh*, the lowest state to which a female might belong within a community. But this must certainly have been preferable to Ruth than to have remained a *nokriyyāh*. With this act, the stage will be set for the next scene. How and why, following Naomi's advice, Ruth managed to raise herself from the status of an *'āmāh*, a "handmaiden" to that of an *'ēšet hayil*, a woman worthy of marrying a *gibbôr hayil*, could be the subject of another long discourse. In turn, why and how Boaz succeeded in outwitting "Mr So-and-So," in purchasing Elimelech's land, and in marrying Ruth would demand even longer discussion. But we have already sorely tried the patience of this issue's book editor.

## A STUDY IN CONTRAST

*Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*, by SALLIE McFAGUE TeSELLE. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1975. 186 pp. \$4.25 (paper). *The Parables of the Triple Tradition*, by CHARLES E. CARLSTON. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1975. 249 pp. \$11.95. Reviewed by JACK DEAN KINGSBURY, associate professor of New Testament, Luther Theological Seminary.

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE two books on the parables of Jesus as being more dissimilar than these. In aim and content, they contrast sharply with each other. Carlston focuses on the sixteen parabolic units he finds in Mark and, to the extent possible, interprets each one in its respective context in Matthew, in Luke, in Mark, in the pre-Markan tradition, and in the ministry of Jesus. TeSelle, in turn, argues the case for doing theology in a parabolic mode, that is, for attending to the parables of Jesus as models of theological reflection. Carlston's book, therefore, is a study in exegetical theology. TeSelle's book is a study in what she terms "intermediary" theology, which occupies the middle ground between the parables of Jesus themselves and such highly discursive theological systems as those of Barth and of Tillich.

Carlston indicates in the preface that he regards his work as something of a corrective to that of Jeremias, and indeed it is. In scope, Jeremias' book is broader, for he discusses virtually all the parables of Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels and does not limit himself simply to those of the triple tradition. But Jeremias, in treating any given parable, has one, overriding goal in mind: to repristinate it in the form in