

only when, if I may adapt what St Thomas says, men study God, but do not strive to live together in communities.

A Survey of Old Testament Studies

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Contemporary study of the Old Testament appears to be dominated by three trends, associated with three broad groups of scholars. For practical purposes these groups may legitimately be described as 'schools', but only in a sense broad enough to allow for the intellectual independence of each individual scholar. The designation 'school' is often resented and repudiated nowadays.

The first group, led by the German scholars, A. Alt, M. Noth and G. von Rad, is usually called the 'History of Tradition' school. The second, consisting primarily of Scandinavian scholars with S. Mowinckel and J. Pedersen at their head, is sometimes described as the 'Comparative Religion' school. For reasons which will appear later I personally prefer to call it the 'Palaeo-anthropological' school. The third general trend is that of 'enlightened orthodoxy'. It is characteristic of the new awakening of Catholic Old Testament scholarship, especially in France, and here the leader is unquestionably R. de Vaux. The approach of certain American scholars such as W. Albright, G. E. Wright and J. Bright is markedly similar to that of the French, and it would not be wholly inaccurate to classify these too under the same general heading of 'enlightened orthodoxy'. Let us very briefly consider the distinctive approaches of each of these schools as exemplified in their most important and most representative works.

The characteristic approach of the German school may be described by means of a double simile. The enormously complicated amalgam of tradition which we call the Old Testament is regarded as a sort of snowball. The nucleus of the snowball is constituted by the *Grundlage*, the

central 'pan-Israelite' traditions recording the events of the exodus, Sinai and the entry into the promised land. Under the impact of history this nucleus rolls down the years accumulating fresh layers of tradition about itself as it goes. Many of these fresh layers are considerably older than the *Grundlage* themselves, having existed independently as local or tribal traditions long before the *Grundlage* were formulated. The earlier 'layers' consist of aetiological stories, 'cult-legends', ethnic and tribal sagas, 'grave-traditions' etc., while the later ones consist of history-writing in the true sense as exemplified in the pentateuchal sources J and E, established by earlier scholars, in the history of Solomon's succession to the throne etc. Other types of tradition material are accumulated in the same way as the 'snowballing' process continues. To take another simile, the Old Testament is like an archaeological tell, in which the expert's initial task is to establish the successive layers or strata of tradition. The theological import of these tradition-strata deepens as they become broader and more all-embracing, the later strata absorbing and bringing into significant correlation the earlier ones, in the light of a more profound and more unified theological perspective. Thus the Old Testament scholar is faced with three basic tasks: firstly, he must reconstruct the history reflected in and pre-supposed by the Old Testament, both in its political and social aspects. Here the original researches of the late Albrecht Alt, recently published in the three volumes of his *Kleine Schriften*,¹ are unquestionably supreme. In the same field, M. Noth's *History of Israel*,² newly translated into English, not only synthesizes the researches of Alt, but also epitomises the original contributions which Noth himself has made in the same field. The second task for the Old Testament scholar is to establish the tradition-strata. For this a profound knowledge of the 'forms of tradition' characteristic of the Semitic world in general and of Israelite culture in particular is needed. In this sphere Noth's two volumes, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*³ and *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*⁴ are the classic and indispensable authorities, so that the publishers are warmly to be congratulated on recently

¹*Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel I-III*, C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München, 1959; 179s.

²*The History of Israel*, 2nd English edition, 1960, A. and C. Black, London; 42s. In this second edition the translation has been carefully revised following some severe criticisms of the first edition.

³M. Noth: *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, Stuttgart, 1948; reprinted 1960, Kohlhammer; Stuttgart; 41s.

⁴*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, Tübingen, 1943; reprinted 1957; Max Niemeyer Verlag; 43s.

re-issuing both works. Having reconstructed the history reflected in the Old Testament and established the successive layers of tradition of which it is composed, the Old Testament scholar must assess the theological message of each tradition-stratum at each stage in the 'snow-balling'. He must show the essential continuity of the process, how the later strata absorb and deepen the theological message of the earlier, and how the total theological message constituted by Israel's deepening awareness of her Covenant God grows under the impact of history. Here the two volumes of von Rad's *Theologie des Alten Testaments*,⁵ the second of which appeared only a few months ago, set the seal upon years of patient and brilliant research into the theology of the tradition-strata, and finally establish their author's title as the master theologian of this school. In fact von Rad's *Theologie* is generally recognised as one of the two greatest Old Testament theologies ever written, the second being the earlier work of W. Eichrodt. A new edition of this is also being published.⁶

In sharp contrast to the methods of the German 'History of Tradition' school, is the 'palaeo-anthropological' approach of the Scandinavians. The term 'palaeo-anthropological' here designates the principles of anthropology as applied to the literature of ancient peoples for the purpose of investigating their psychology, their customs and their beliefs. The supreme exponent is the late W. Grönbech, and his *The Culture of the Teutons*⁷ is a classic example of the method as applied to nordic saga material. Exploiting the vast quantity of extra-biblical literature of the Ancient Near East which has been made available by archaeology over the last century, the leading Scandinavian scholars have applied the principles of palaeo-anthropology and of comparative religion to the Old Testament with startling results. J. Pedersen's *Israel I-IV*⁸ constitutes a comprehensive 'palaeo-anthropological' investigation which has affected the whole course of modern Old Testament study, and which continues to exercise an immense influence, especially in Scandinavia and in this country. The primary interest of the 'palaeo-anthropologist' is to reconstruct the 'setting in life' or 'living context' (*Sitz-im-Leben*) in which the Old Testament traditions were originally

⁵Chr. Kaiser Verlag München; Band I, 1957; 43s. Band II, 1960; 43s.

⁶W. Eichrodt: *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. 5e Neubearb. Auflage; Band I, Göttingen 1957; Band II-III not yet published.

⁷*Culture of the Teutons*. English translation, 1931. This work is unfortunately quite unprocurable now and no longer available to me.

⁸Vol. I-II, Geoffrey Cumberlege, London, 1926; reprinted 1954; 60s. Vol. III-IV, 1940; reprinted 1953; 60s.

formulated. It has become a cardinal principle with the adherents of this school, that the Israelite cult or liturgy constitutes the primary and central *Sitz-im-Leben* of the sacred traditions preserved in the Old Testament. More specifically, the New Year festival, interpreted as a ceremonial re-actualization of Yahweh's enthronement after victory, is regarded as the *Sitz-im-Leben* par excellence, and an increasing number of Old Testament traditions are related to elements in the ceremonial of this feast.

Of primary importance here is the role played by the king as Yahweh's representative in the ceremonies. Let us briefly consider the theory of S. Mowinckel on this point, since he is unquestionably the originator of the idea, and the leading figure in the Scandinavian group as a whole. Working mainly from the analogy of Babylonian kingship, and the role assumed by the king in the Babylonian *akitu* festival, Mowinckel visualizes the Israelite king as playing a similar role in an (hypothetical) New Year festival, and so performing a similar function in Israelite society. This Israelite New Year festival would have been a ritual re-enactment of Yahweh's victory over the forces of chaos and death, and of his triumphant enthronement, by which creation was renewed, and fertility, prosperity and security were ensured for the coming year. Embodying in his own person as he did the life of the community as a whole, the king was at the same time most intimately associated (though never identified) with Yahweh himself in this supreme creative moment of the festival. Through the cultic drama of the feast, in which he played the leading part, the whole community actually experienced Yahweh's primordial victory and enthronement, and actually received through him, their king, the fruits of that victory in the form of God-given harmony and justice, elemental life-force issuing in security, fertility, power over enemies and prosperity in every sphere of life. Mowinckel emphasises, however, certain radical modifications which this ritual pattern of renewal had to undergo before it could become in any sense an expression of Yahwistic religion. 'To the renewal of nature there has been added another element of increasing importance, the renewal of history. It is the divine acts of election and deliverance which are re-lived in the festival'. Again, 'What the king obtains in the cultic festival is not primarily new life and strength, but the renewal and confirmation of the covenant, which is based on Yahweh's election and faithfulness, and

depends upon the king's religious and moral virtues and constancy,'⁹ To the 'enthronement festival' thus reconstructed are attached five 'cult-myths' or traditional explanations (which may or may not recount historical events) of the meaning of the cultic re-enactment. These 'cult-myths' evolve in successive stages of 'historification' from the 'creation and dragon' myth to the 'fight with the gods', the 'exodus myth', the 'fight with the peoples', and the 'judgment myth' in which the fates are ceremonially decreed for the coming year. Mowinckel's definitive work on this subject, *Psalmstudien I-VI*, has been quite unprocurable for years. It is heartening to learn that it is to be re-issued next year, though unfortunately at the almost prohibitive price of about nine guineas.

The third trend which we have to consider, that of 'enlightened orthodoxy', is far more broadly conceived, and correspondingly more difficult to define. Most of its exponents are archaeologists, and this is of course supremely true of the two leading figures, R. de Vaux and W. Albright. The characteristic approach of this group is marked by an insistence on the importance of archaeology conceived in the widest sense, and including those extra-biblical documents which are investigated from a different point of view by the palaeo-anthropologists. These documents, it is argued, confirm the essential reliability of the Old Testament as a record truly reflecting the history and beliefs of a real people, which broke their way into Palestine about 1250 B.C., but whose forebears had dwelt there as semi-nomads from the first half of the second millenium B.C. On the one hand the exponents of 'enlightened orthodoxy' regard as unwarranted the scepticism which often characterizes the work of the German school, especially with regard to the history of the patriarchs and the exodus. On the other, most of them would reject as unscientific and ill-founded the more elaborate reconstruction of *Sitz-im-Leben*, and especially that of the New Year festival, evolved by the Scandinavians. Their own chief contribution has so far consisted of a rigorously disciplined scientific assessment of the archaeological evidence, and of the light which this throws on the bible. A superb example of this is de Vaux's *Les Patriarches Hébreux et les Découvertes Modernes*, which originally appeared as a triple article in

⁹S. Mowinckel: *He That Cometh*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1956; 45. cf. p.82 and the same author's *Religion und Kultus*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1953, 18s., pp. 72-73. For a definitive statement of the 'Enthronement Festival' hypothesis, the second volume of Mowinckel's *Psalmstudien I-VI*, Jacob Dybwad Kristiana, 1921-24, remains indispensable. On the 'cult-myths' associated with the feast cf. *Psalmstudien II*, pp. 45-80.

the *Revue Biblique*,¹⁰ and which was last year published in book form in a German translation. Involving as it does original research of the utmost importance, this work constitutes what is probably the finest defence of the historicity of the patriarchs ever put forward. Another brilliant example of this trend is Yehezkel Kaufmann's *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine*¹¹ directed specifically against the oversceptical conclusions of Noth. And this work reminds us that several Jewish scholars, notably Kaufmann himself, Y. Yadin and Y. Aharoni, are making brilliant and original contributions in the same general direction of 'enlightened orthodoxy'. A comprehensive work which is quite indispensable as a representative of this trend is Albright's *From the Stone Age to Christianity*,¹² now made available in a cheap paper-backed edition. Other works, such as Millar Burrows' *What Mean These Stones?*¹³, C. R. Gordon's *Introduction to Old Testament Times*,¹⁴ and more recently G. Wright's *Biblical Archaeology*¹⁵ are perhaps at a rather more popular level, but marked by the same disciplined and thoroughgoing scholarship. Again L. Grollenberg's epoch-making *Atlas of the Bible*,¹⁶ and now his *Shorter Atlas of the Bible*¹⁷ are superb examples of what the 'enlightened orthodox' approach can achieve at a relatively synthesized and popular level.

This school also makes full use of the science of field anthropology, and is responsible for important anthropological studies on the culture and customs of nomads and Arabs, as these throw light on the Old Testament. Here Jaussen's *Coutumes des Arabes*¹⁸ still remains an indispensable classic. Again we may contrast the disciplined sobriety of Jaussen and other anthropologists of the 'enlightened orthodox' school with the rather slapdash approach of many of the Scandinavians. The former group insist on confining themselves to the ambit of the Near East, and they are field anthropologists in the true sense. They investigate at first-hand the beliefs and customs of living Near Eastern societies

¹⁰Vol. liii, 1946, pp. 321-348, lv, 1948, pp. 321-347, lvi, 1949, pp. 5-36.

¹¹Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1953; 11s. 6d.

¹²2nd edition, Doubleday, Anchor Books, New York, 1957.

¹³First published in 1941, reprinted without alteration in 1957 in Meridian Books, Thames and Hudson, London; 12s. 6d.

¹⁴Ventnor Publishers, Ventnor, New Jersey.

¹⁵G. E. Wright: *Biblical Archeology*, English edition, Duckworth, London, 1957.

¹⁶English translation, Nelson, London, 1956; 70s.

¹⁷Nelson, 1959, 15s.

¹⁸A. Jaussen: *Coutumes des Arabes au Pays de Moab*, Gabalda, Paris, 1908, reprinted 1948; cf. the same author's *Coutumes Palestiniennes: Naplouse et son District*, Paris, 1927.

whose way of life may reasonably be supposed to be extremely close to that of Israel in her nomadic and semi-nomadic phases.

It must be admitted that this approach has to some extent been brought into discredit by the exaggerated and rather sensational claims made by certain less well-qualified popular writers, to the effect that archaeology has proved the bible to be true in most of its historical details. Archaeology has not and cannot do this. But this should not blind us to the magnificent and solid achievements which biblical archaeologists have to their credit, or diminish our confidence in checking the biblical data by the conclusions of archaeology.

For all the excellence, and often the brilliance of their historical researches, Catholic exponents of the 'enlightened orthodox' approach have made a relatively small contribution in the field of biblical theology. A Catholic Old Testament theology comparable in scope to those of Eichrodt and von Rad is something which the Catholic world of scholarship is crying out for, and so far in vain.¹⁹ However the consistently high standard evinced in such encyclopaedic works as the recent volumes of the *Supplément à la Dictionnaire de la Bible*²⁰ and the second edition of *Introduction à la Bible I*²¹ give grounds for hoping that such a work cannot be much longer delayed.

Against this general background let us consider three books recently submitted to BLACKFRIARS for review. The first is *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* by T. Boman, professor of Oslo.²² Though the characteristic Scandinavian flavour is apparent enough in this book, it is in fact too original in subject and too independent in method to be clearly assignable to any one school. The German original has been acclaimed as pioneer work of the highest order, and has gone through three editions in six years. Working primarily from the basis of philology, but taking due note of the relevant historical and archaeological factors, Dr Boman treats of his subject under five main headings: 'Dynamic and Static Thinking', 'Impression and Appearance', 'Time and Space', 'Symbolism and Instrumentalism', 'Logical Thinking and Psychologi-

¹⁹The first two volumes of P. van Imschoot's *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, Desclée, Tournai, Vol. I, 1954, Vol II, 1956, do go some way towards filling this gap. But the plan and division of the material here is not such as will commend itself to scholars with a real sense of the historical evolution of religious ideas.

²⁰Ed. Pirot-Robert-Cazelles, Letouzey, Paris.

²¹Ed. Robert-Feuillet-Cazelles, 2e édition revue et corrigée, Desclée, Tournai, 1959; 37s. 6d.

²²English translation by Jules M. Moreau, S.C.M. Press, London, 1960; 21s.

cal Understanding'. One of his principal points is that Hebrew conceptions take their rise from the subjective impact of 'other being' dynamically apprehended (impression), while Greek thought, essentially speculative in character, is based rather on objective observation (appearance). I personally feel that this point is over-generalized, especially in the treatment of time. Not one, but at least three distinct notions of time have to be allowed for in Hebrew thought, and the concept varies according to the immediate living context in which it is formulated. Some recent criticisms of W. Eichrodt,²³ to the effect that this author defines the Hebrew concept of time too exclusively in terms of subjective experience, appear entirely justified. One or two of Dr Boman's more daring comparisons are somewhat unconvincing, as for example his treatment of Hebrew collective concepts and Platonic ideas. Nevertheless he offers many profound and original suggestions, often in areas of thought which have never before been adequately explored.

The translation tends to be almost over-literal and over-conscientious. Strained idioms and neologisms (e.g., 'unitariness' p. 204) are introduced in a laudable attempt to achieve accuracy. One feels that the translator has a perfect command of the original German, but a far less perfect grasp of English. The translation does lose in clarity because of this, and in a few passages, such as the subtitle on p. 129 where 'Unbrauchbarkeit' is rendered 'uselessness,' the sense of the original has been almost completely lost. Generally, however, the translation is reliable if inelegant.

Unlike Dr Boman's book R. de Vaux's *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament I-II*²⁴ is supremely and superbly representative of their author's school: not only, that is to say, of the trend of 'enlightened orthodoxy' in general, but more specifically of the École Biblique itself, with all its unsurpassed contributions to biblical learning. This work will undoubtedly rank as one of the very greatest of them all. In it, a past and proven master has synthesized the conclusions of historical, archaeological, geographical and anthropological research into one superbly argued and comprehensive social history. 'The institutions of a people,' explains Père de Vaux in his first volume, 'are the forms of social life either accepted by custom, established by common choice, or received from authority among that people'. That first volume, dealing with nomadism, familial and tribal organization and civil institutions in

²³In his article, *Heilserfahrung und Zeitverständnis im Alten Testament Theologische Zeitschrift*, 1956, pp. 103-125: cf. especially p. 112.

²⁴Éditions du Cerf, Paris. Vol. I, 1958; 14s. 3d. Vol. II, 1960; 31s.

Israel, has already been generally recognized as one of the most deeply significant contributions since Pedersen's *Israel*. Higher praise could hardly be given. At the same time it was realised that the more controversial part of P. de Vaux's work was still to come, and the second volume has been awaited with corresponding eagerness. It is here that P. de Vaux defines his position on such crucial issues as the 'Enthronement feast' hypothesis (he remains firm in his rejection of this for lack of objective evidence), the 'holy war' as an ancient Israelite institution (here he seems to give unqualified approval to the reconstruction of von Rad), the meaning of sacrifice, the exact connection between the ark and the tabernacle (here he argues against von Rad's hypothesis of two originally quite separate cult-objects), and the Israelite priesthood and leuitism. The first part of the book deals with military institutions. It includes such topics as the organization of conscript and professional armies, fortified towns and the conduct of sieges, armament, and war. The chapter on the 'holy war' (pp. 73-85) is particularly interesting, and includes brief considerations of the wars of the Maccabees and the 'Rule of War' at Qumran. The second part of the book, entitled '*Institutions Religieuses*,' is far more interesting, and it is here that the most controversial issues are touched upon. The sanctuaries of Israel, the temple and the centralization of the cult are considered. Priesthood, leuitism and sacrifice are discussed at length, and this part of the book closes with an important explanation of the feasts and sacred times in Israel. This second volume will certainly arouse more controversy than the first, for in it P. de Vaux finds himself compelled to disagree with some of the central tenets held by the Scandinavian and German schools respectively. One has the impression that he stands closer to the latter than to the former.

Yet no fair-minded reader could deny that the qualities which characterise all P. de Vaux's work appear supremely here. The absolute mastery of his subject in all its ramifications, the concise lucidity of his exposition, the objectivity and balance of his evaluation, and the trenchant penetration of his final judgment have perhaps never been seen to better advantage than here, where he takes his stand on the most crucial and controversial issues in contemporary discussion of the Old Testament'. As a comprehensive social history of Israel, these two volumes of the *Institutions* stand between Pedersen's *Israel* and Alt's *Kleine Schriften*, and rank in significance with either of those two classics.

A far slighter and more popular work, still representative of the same trend of 'enlightened orthodoxy' is Fr R. Murphy's *Seven Books of*

Wisdom.²⁵ This book fills a glaring gap in popular literature on the bible for English-speaking Catholics. The seven books are Psalms, Canticles, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Sirach and Wisdom. The author's clear and brief expositions of the theological message of each are informed with sound and unobtrusive scholarship, and he has several new insights to offer—as when the seven columns of Wisdom's house are identified with sections of the text of Proverbs, 1-9 (p. 14). Fr Murphy rightly insists on the importance of the 'Gunkel categories' for the psalms, and gives a clear explanation of these. His comparison of the imagery in Canticles with Egyptian love poems is particularly striking. The highly sophisticated language and style of Canticles do suggest, however, that it derives from a more cultivated and cosmopolitan post-exilic milieu than appears to be suggested here. The impracticability of reading Sirach through from start to finish is frankly faced, and a plan for reading based on a division according to topic, as in *Introduction à la Bible I*, will be found particularly useful. In a final conclusion the author briefly indicates the projection of the sapiential tradition from the Old Testament into the New.

Welsh Opinion: Ecumenical Developments

The most useful way of classifying religious bodies in Wales is according to their organization as Churches. The first main division is between the episcopal and the non-episcopal Churches. The former class contains the Catholic Church and the disestablished Church in Wales, while among the latter we may distinguish the denominations that have authoritative bodies at a level higher than that of the individual congregation, and those that do not. Among the former are the Presbyterians (formerly the Calvinistic Methodists) and the Wesleyan Methodists, while the latter include the Congregationalists and the Baptists. This classification, while not being exhaustive with regard either to the numbers of denominations in Wales or to the differences between them, nevertheless yields a grouping that coincides with important theological differences and includes the most important bodies. Where a Church is concerned, a rigid distinction between doctrine and organization cannot be consistently maintained: the very existence of a hierarchy presupposes a certain view of the relationship between God and His Church. To be more specific: the organization of the

²⁵R. E. Murphy: *Seven Books of Wisdom* Bruce, Milwaukee, 1960; \$3.75.