to differ, but both commentaries are outstanding achievements, and will be standard references for scholars for many years to come.

Brian E. Kelly


This monograph is a revised dissertation from the University of Nottingham, supervised by Stephen Travis. It sets out to examine whether the tradition of a Chaoskampf (defined as ‘the battle of the warrior god with the monstrous forces of chaos’) was alive and well in the period from the restoration after the Exile to the end of the second century CE. The opening chapter surveys the literature on the Chaoskampf in the Hebrew Bible. Then four chapters are devoted to: (a) the Qumran texts, (b) apocryphal and pseudepigraphical psalms, prayers, and wisdom literature, (c) apocalyptic literature, gospels and testaments, and (d) Jewish historiography. Such texts as Deutero-Isaiah and Isaiah 42–47, which almost everyone would date to this period, are grouped instead with the Old Testament, and consigned to the background.

Angel sets out his method in detail (pp. 30–35): in order to show that the tradition was alive, the following criteria must be met: ‘date, cultural provenance, geographical proximity, similarity, reference, creativity, number, multiplicity of sources and continuity.’ In the case of the texts discussed, date and provenance are in doubt only in the case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, but Angel’s criteria are so broad that the doubts do not matter: the Testaments are either Jewish or Christian, and date somewhere between 200 BCE and 200 CE. The crucial criterion is similarity, as this is what determines whether we have an allusion to the Chaoskampf at all. The Chaoskampf tradition is defined by its imagery. The primary motif, we are told, is that of the Divine Warrior battling against the chaos waters or chaos monsters. But again, Angel construes this criterion broadly. Any reference to a Divine Warrior will do, even if there is no representation of chaos, and equally chaotic waters will suffice, even if there is no reference to the Divine Warrior. Passages in the Hodayot, where the hymnist compares his opponents to the roaring of turbulent waters, are taken as instances of the Chaoskampf. Sir. 43:8–26, which mentions the monsters of Rahab in the sea, but has no conflict at all, is another example. Mention of ‘newly-created unknown beasts full of rage, or such as breathe out fiery breath’ in Wis. 11:18–19, qualify on the grounds that they should be identified as dragons.

These examples cry out for a stricter definition of the Chaoskampf. Ancient religion is full of stories of battles between gods and monsters of some kind. Angel never makes clear whether he is discussing a broad phenomenon, which might be illustrated independently in several traditions and religions, or whether he is focusing on a specific literary tradition, related to the Ugaritic Baal Cycle and the Enuma Elish. Since Gunkel, the Chaoskampf has usually been understood in the latter sense. Angel never argues for a broader usage, but in fact several of his examples are related to this tradition only tangentially. Even his first example, the Qumran War Scroll, is arguably indebted to Persian dualism rather than the Chaoskampf; it does not use the imagery of sea-monsters for the adversaries of God. The treatment of divine warfare in this literature requires a more nuanced treatment.

None of this is to question the continued vitality of Chaoskampf traditions in the late Second Temple period, as evidenced especially in Daniel and Revelation, but also in several other texts. One of the more praiseworthy aspects of Angel’s discussion is his
criterion of creativity. The fact that a text like Daniel 7 does not correspond exactly to Ugaritic myth, or to any biblical precedent, does not show that it does not stand in a tradition. It only shows that the author used the tradition in a creative way. Also praiseworthy is Angel's discussion of the relevance of this tradition to the debate about the 'Son of Man'. Rather than ask whether Daniel 7 and 4 Ezra 13 are evidence for a 'Son of Man' figure, he suggests that what they show is that within the Chaoskampf tradition 'there was an image of a man-like figure to which some characteristics of the Divine Warrior might be attributed' (p. 207). Some of his other conclusions, however, are questionable.

One conclusion is that diverse strands of Judaism drew on this tradition: 'The author of Dan. 7.2–14 and the author of Sir. 43.8–26 were both Palestinian, Jewish and near contemporaries. Indeed, they are separated only by one or two decades. However, the use they made of the HCT (Hebrew Chaoskampf Tradition) imagery could not be more different' (p. 204). But to say that Ben Sira was using Chaoskampf imagery at all is to stretch the category to the point where it ceases to be helpful.

Angel's most surprising conclusion, however, is 'that there is little to no warrant for thinking that the imagery has been eschatologized in this period' (p. 200). He allows that Daniel 7 may be eschatological, if a reference to resurrection is implied (p. 108), but he seems to think that any passage that relates to the outcome of historical events is not eschatological. This is obviously a matter of definition. Angel is operating with a much narrower definition of eschatology than most scholars, but he never spells it out or defends it. It is true that use of the Chaoskampf tradition was not exclusively eschatological in this period, but all the stronger examples adduced by Angel (Daniel, the Gospels, Revelation, 4 Ezra) are thoroughly eschatological by most definitions of the term.

Angel's monograph is at once too loose in its definition of the Chaoskampf tradition, and too narrow in its focus on determining whether any motif associated with the tradition is present in a given text. It is useful as a catalogue of possible examples of Chaoskampf imagery, but it is quite limited.

JOHN J. COLLINS


Daniel Hillel is an environmental scientist by profession, trained to explore the interaction between physical, biological and human systems. His early years were spent in pre-WW2 Palestine, in the Valley of Jezreel, where he learned a deep appreciation for the surrounding countryside as the setting for the biblical story. In this book he brings his scientific expertise together with his love for the landscape of Israel to bear on the world of Hebrew Bible, and the result is a book which paints a unique picture of the ancient Israelites and their environment. The format packs in a huge amount of data, with the main text being interspersed with boxes containing detailed supplementary information on a wide range of subjects, plus line drawings and black and white photographs. Three appendices provide reflections on the historicity of the Bible and Israelite perceptions of the natural world, plus an extensive selection of biblical texts relevant to each part of the book.

Reading the Bible as an ecologist produces a very different account from that of biblical scholarship, since rather than being primarily concerned with the text, his focus is, in Hillel's own words, 'the context, the milieu, or (why beat around the burning bush?)