

1894; and two Judæo-Spanish papers, "La Alborada" and "El Amigo," have been published there for some time.

In 1904 the Jews of Rustchuk numbered 4,030 in a total population of 48,000. They are chiefly engaged in commerce and banking.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Franco, *Hist. des Israélites de l'Empire Ottoman*, p. 213; *Ha-Maggid*, 1868; *Bulletin Annuel de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle*, 1903; *Revue des Ecoles de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle*, Paris, 1901.

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RUSTICANUS. See BERTHOLD OF REGENSBURG.

RUTH, BOOK OF: The Book of Ruth, which is poetically idyllic in character, although the narrative is in the form of prose, contains an episode from the period of the Judges. For this reason it is placed in the Septuagint after the Book of Judges; and this order is followed in the Vulgate and in the English translations. In the Hebrew Bible, however, Ruth is found in the "Ketubim," or third part of the canon, where it stands next after the Song of Solomon, being the second of the Five Megillot. In Spanish manuscripts and in one Bible of 1009 Ruth comes first (Buhl, "Canon of the Old Testament," i., § 10; see BIBLE CANON). This position, as will be noted more fully below, probably accords better with the date of the book; for it was written so long after the date of which its story treats that many of the customs to which it refers had become antiquated.

—**Biblical Data:** The book takes its name from one of its characters, who, with her mother-in-law, Naomi, shares the honor of being its heroine. The story is as follows: Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem-judah, with his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, went in time of famine and sojourned in the land of Moab. There Elimelech died, and the two sons married, Mahlon taking Ruth as his wife, and Chilion taking Ophra—both women of Moab, where both sons likewise died. In due time Naomi heard that the famine in Judah had passed, and determined to return thither. Ruth, in spite of the dissuasion of Naomi, accompanied her mother-in-law to Bethlehem, and cast in her lot with the people of Judah. The two women arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. Naturally they were in a state of dire poverty. Elimelech had had an inheritance of land among his brethren, but, unless a Go'EL could be found, Naomi would be compelled to sell it (in Ruth iv. 3 מְכַרָּה should be pointed מְכַרֵּה = "is going to sell"; comp. "Am. Jour. Semit. Lang." xix. 145). Elimelech had a prosperous relative in Bethlehem whose name was Boaz, and who, like others, was engaged in the harvest. Naomi sent Ruth to glean in his fields, and, after he had spoken kindly to her and shown her some favors, she, still acting upon the advice of her mother-in-law, approached Boaz at night and put herself in his power. Boaz was attracted to her, but informed her that there was a kinsman nearer than he who had the first right to redeem the estate of Elimelech, and that it would be necessary for this kinsman to renounce his right before he (Boaz) could proceed in the matter. Accordingly he called this kinsman to the gate of the

city before the elders, and told him of the condition of the wife and daughter-in-law of Elimelech, and of his (the kinsman's) right to redeem the estate and to marry Ruth. The kinsman declared that he did not desire to do so, and drew off his shoe in token that he had renounced his rights in favor of Boaz. Boaz thereupon bought the estate from Naomi, married Ruth, and became by her the father of Obed, who in due time became the father of Jesse, the father of King David.

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—**Critical View:** It should be noted that in the narrative of the Book of Ruth there are several points which are not quite clear. In certain parts, as i. 12–14, the action seems to presuppose the existence of the levirate law (comp. Gen. xxxviii. and Deut. xxv. 5 *et seq.*), while in other parts, as iv. 3 *et seq.*, the redemption of Elimelech's estate for his widow seems to be the chief point in the discussion. This seems to presuppose the extension to wives of the law concerning the inheritance of daughters (Num. xxxvi.). Again, from the general course of the narrative one receives the impression that Boaz is the Go'EL; but in iv. 13 *et seq.* the go'el seems to be Obed (comp. Nowack, "Handkommentar zum Alten Testament," p. 199, s.v. "Richter," "Ruth," etc.; Bertholet, in "K. H. C." *ad loc.*). Finally, if the levirate law had been really fulfilled, Obed should have been counted the son of Mahlon, the son of Elimelech, whereas he is really called (iv. 21) the son of Boaz.

Bewer (in "Am. Jour. Semit. Lang." xix. 143 *et seq.*) points out that four steps in the development of the levirate are met with in the Old Testament: (1) the go'el need not be a brother, but may be any kinsman of the deceased, as in Gen. xxxviii.; (2) he must be a brother (although this form is not actually found, it is necessarily presupposed by the following); (3) only such brothers as have lived with the deceased are required to perform the duties of the levirate (comp. Deut. xxv. 5 *et seq.*); and (4) no man is allowed to take his brother's wife (Lev. xx. 21). According to this classification, the form of levirate in the Book of Ruth is the oldest of all, but here is encountered the difficulty that the described form of purchase of the estate of Naomi does not at all accord with any form of levirate, but with the law of Lev. xxv. 25 (Holiuss Code, cited hereafter as H). Bewer therefore concludes that the levirate idea is not an original part of the Book of Ruth, but that the work was first composed on the basis of Lev. xxv. 25, and that it was afterward interpolated to some extent to ingraft upon it the levirate idea. The phenomena of the book, however, may quite plausibly be explained in another way, as will be pointed out below.

According to Bewer the Book of Ruth is later than H., i.e., it is post-exilic. This view of the date is for other reasons held by many scholars (e.g., Kuenen, "Historische Bücher des Alten Testaments,"

i., part 2, p. 195; Cornill, "Einleitung," p. 241; Nowack, *l.c.*; Bertholet, *l.c.*; and Kautzsch, "Literature of the Old Testament," p. 129). The days of the Judges are referred to as a time far past (i. 1), and even the law of Deut. xxv. 5 *et seq.* is referred to as a custom now obsolete (comp. Ruth iv.

7); the language of the book contains several Aramaisms (*e.g.*, *יָנַח נִישִׁים*, i. 4; *עָנָה יִשְׁבֵּר*, i. 13; and *קִים*, iv. 7); the interest in the genealogy of David (iv. 20 *et seq.*) is thought to indicate a date when David had become the ideal of the nation; and the evident interest of the author in the marriage of an Israelite with a Moabitess—an interest in sharp contrast to the law of Deut. xxiii. 3 *et seq.* as well as the procedure of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra ix., x., and Neh. xiii. 23 *et seq.*)—indicates that the author of Ruth was a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah and wrote the book to show that their opposition to foreign marriages was contrary to ancient and most honorable precedent.

Although Driver ("Introduction," p. 427) urges that the general beauty and purity of style of Ruth indicate a pre-exilic date, holding that the Davidic genealogy at the end is probably a later addition, the post-exilic origin of Ruth seems to be confirmed by its position among the "Ketubim," in the third part of the canon. The view which makes it a tract against the marriage policy of Ezra and Nehemiah seems most probable.

Bewer (*l.c.* xx. 205 *et seq.*) holds that the work was written at that time and for that purpose, and that in its original form, without any reference to the levirate, it was a more effective weapon in the controversy than it is now. His view is that some friend of Ezra added the levirate interpolations in order to make it appear that the foreign marriage of Boaz was not a precedent for ordinary people, as the levirate compelled him to act thus.

If the book was written at the date supposed, it is clear from the law of H (Lev. xx. 21) that the levirate had passed away. It is too much, therefore, to expect an absolutely clear and accurate account of its workings. That the writer should mingle its provisions with those of Lev. xxv., which refer to the redemption of the estates of the poor, would at this date be very natural. Confusion, too, as to who the go'el actually was would also be natural. Bewer's theory of interpolations seems, accordingly, unnecessary. Cheyne's view ("Encyc. Bibl." *s.v.*) that Elimelech was a Jerahmeelite, and that he went to sojourn in the land of Mišsur, is one of the curiosities of his Jerahmeel-Mišsur theory.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: In addition to the works cited in the article, Bleek, *Einführung in das Alte Testament*, ed. Wellhausen, 1893; König, *Einführung*, 1893; Strack, *Einführung*, 4th ed., 1895; Oettli, *Ruth, in Kurzgefasster Kommentar*, 1889.

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RUTH RABBAH (called also **Midrash Rut**): A haggadic and homiletic interpretation of the Book of Ruth, which, like that of the four other scrolls ("megillot"), is included in the Midrash Rabbot. This midrash, divided into eight chapters or sections ("parashiyot"), covers the whole text of the Biblical book, interpreting it verse by verse, now in its literal, now in an allegorical, sense. The first chapter terminates with Ruth i. 2; the second, with i. 17; the third, with i. 21; the fourth, with ii. 9; the fifth, with iii. 7; the sixth, with iii. 13; the seventh, with iv. 15; and the eighth, comprising only two verses, with iv. 19, verses 16 and 17 of ch. iv. being omitted. Like Ekah Rabbati, the commentary proper on the

Book of Ruth is preceded by a long introduction ("petiḥta"), which consists of several proems having no connection with one another.

The commentary itself, except in ch. i. and vii., where it follows directly upon the Biblical text, is generally introduced by one or more

Introduction of the Palestinian haggadists, its main **and Proems.** sources being the Jerusalem Talmud, Bereshit Rabbah, Wayikra Rabbah, and Ekah Rabbati. It would seem, moreover, that its author was opposed to the Babylonian Talmud; for in his interpretation of iv. 7—a passage which is omitted in the printed editions—he disparages that work. It is true that parallel passages are found in Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah, which this midrash closely resembles as regards arrangement and mode of interpretation, and in Kohelet Rabbah. But as to the former, nothing proves that it is anterior to Ruth Rabbah, while the latter is recognized by modern scholars to be posterior to this midrash. It apparently contains no Babylonian haggadot, and, although in i. 3 (= ii. 4) it gives the haggadic interpretation of I Chron. iv. 22, which is also found in B. B. 91b, it may be seen that the source in the latter treatise is a baraita and not a Babylonian haggadah. Thus Ruth Rabbah is one of the earlier midrashim, composed about the same time as or shortly after Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah. According to Zunz ("G. V." ed. Brüll, p. 277, Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1892), Ruth Rabbah, as well as Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah and Kohelet Rabbah, was one of the sources of the Yelammedenu, Debarim Rabbah, Pesikta Rabbati, and Shemot Rabbah, being a medium between these midrashim and the older haggadah (comp., however, Friedmann, introduction to his edition of the Pesikta Rabbati, p. 25).

Ruth Rabbah is specially interesting from a cultural-historical point of view in that it endeavors to throw light on the habits and conditions of the time in which the incidents of the Book of Ruth took place. Thus, interpreting the very

Examples of Haggadah. first words of the book, "in the days when the judges judged" (Ruth i. 1), as "in the days when the people judged their judges," the author wishes to show that there was a time when the judges perverted their judgments so that they were held responsible by the people. But when was there such a time, and who were those judges? According to Rab, the judges were Barak and Deborah; according to R. Huna, Deborah, Barak, and Jael; and according to Joshua b. Levi, Ehud and Shamgar. The famine is circumstantially described; it was one of the ten great famines which afflicted the entire world.

Elimelech is represented in an unfavorable light, his name being interpreted as meaning "one eager for royalty." He left the land of Canaan not because he would himself suffer from the famine, but because he was afraid that the people might apply to him for help. In interpreting i. 14, the author of this midrash expresses his views with regard to kissing. According to an anonymous authority, kisses are permitted on three occasions only: (1) on conferring a high office, as when Samuel kissed Saul