

CONTENTS

PREFACE

9

Chapter One: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East 15 and its Relation to Israelite Prophecy

- I. The Problem 15
- II. Navi' and Related Terms in the Bible 16
- III. Was There Prophecy in Egypt? 21
- IV. Prophesying in Phoenicia 30
- V. Seers and Prophesiers at Hamath 32
- VI. Prophesying in Mesopotamia
 - A. The Mari Letters 39
 - B. Pseudo-prophetic Chronicles 66
 - C. Assyrian Letters from Cappadocia 72
 - D. Balaam 76

Chapter Two: Moses

89

- I. Moses and Monotheism
 - A. The Problem in Modern Scholarship 89
 - B. The Essence of Monotheism 94
 - C. Moses and the Patriarchs 98
- II. Moses and the Sinai Covenant
 - A. Covenants in the Ancient Near East 127
 - B. Differences between Near Eastern and Sinai Covenant Traditions 129
 - C. Similarities between the Traditions of the Hittite Political Treaties and the Sinai Covenant Traditions 134
- III. The Traditions of the Sinai Covenant and the Kingship of God
 - A. The Narrative Framework (Ex. 23:20–33) 154
 - B. The Revelation Narrative (Chaps. 19–20) 157
 - C. The Covenant Ceremony Narrative (Ex. 24) 169

D. Evidence of the Poetic Sources	186
IV. Moses as Prophet in the Early Sources	196
Chapter Three: The Kingship of God and the Leadership of the Savior–Judges	206
I. The Time and Nature of the Kingship of God	206
II. Dialectics of the Ancient Kingship of God	214
III. The Figure of the Savior–Judge	217
IV. The Ark of the Covenant	230
V. The Prophets of Rebuke	233
VI. The Socio-Economic Structure	
A. The Sabbatical System	234
B. Sabbath, Sabbatical Year and Jubilee — Sources and Significance	239
Chapter Four: Samuel — The Man and His Achievements	254
I. The Literary Problem	254
II. The Figure of Samuel	263
III. Samuel’s Achievements	270
Chapter Five: The United Kingdom as Seen by Contemporary Prophets	285
I. David’s Court Prophets	285
II. The Prophetic View of Solomon’s Kingdom	302
III. Northern and Southern Prophets	308
Chapter Six: The Militant Prophets	315
I. Introduction	315
II. Ahab’s Foreign Policy and the Prophets (I Kings 20, 22)	316
III. The Elijah Cycle	
A. General Features	335
B. The Collections and their Redaction	340
C. The Historical Background of the Struggle with Baal	346
D. The Affair of Naboth the Jezreelite	368
E. History versus Legend	400
IV. The Elisha Stories	
A. Historical Background; Inner Chronology of the Narratives	414

B. Elisha and the Elisha Narratives	420
C. Legend and Historical Novella	465
D. Elisha and the Prophets	473
Chapter Seven: Mantic and Magical Elements in Early Prophetic Tradition	480
I. Seer and Prophet	480
II. Magic, Divination and Monotheism	484
III. The Figure of the Prophet in the Deuteronomic Law	490
IV. The Transition to the Prophetic Portent	491
V. The Mantic Background of the Moses Narratives	494
VI. Divination and Magic in Ancient Prophetic Historiography	497
VII. Epilogue	502
Appendix I: The Redaction of the Book of Judges	504
Appendix II: <i>Segullah</i> , 'am <i>segullah</i>	516
Abbreviations and Bibliography	530
I. Journals, Reference Books, etc.	530
II. Books	533
III. Supplementary Bibliography	548
Index of Authors	550
Index of Sources	557

functionaries. The present volume aims at a historical synthesis free of these and similar assumptions. As indicated, the constant self-scrutiny of scholarship has prepared the ground for my own approach. Particularly important in this respect are the lifework of Yehezkel Kaufmann and of Martin Buber, though neither produced a comprehensive account of the subject.

The nature of the material gave rise to a variety of methods, applicable to the various historical phases of prophecy. The first two chapters employ mainly comparative techniques, with an eye to linking the beginnings of prophecy in Israel with similar phenomena in the Ancient Near East; in that context it is, of course, necessary to devote considerable attention to prophesying in Mari — a culture with predominantly West-Semitic features — and its ties with early Hebrew prophecy. In the second chapter, which revolves around the figure of Moses, I have tried to trace the historical core of the relevant pentateuchal traditions. It was not my purpose to take up the complicated — and rather barren — issue of source analysis, as it has evolved over the past few decades. Admittedly, the Pentateuch is made up of a variety of traditions and sources, though I do not accept the classical critical tenet that these sources may be classified as belonging to certain complete compositions or collections. On the other hand, I reject the atomistic approach, which dissects and dismembers self-contained literary units in order to solve textual or other difficulties, real or imaginary. Moreover, my main interest lies not in the traditions or sources themselves, but in their common historical background. I do not accept the theories that reject the historicity of the Moses narratives and date the birth of the Israelite nation to the period of the Settlement, as if the stories in question were nothing but late popular traditions, lacking any basis in fact. On the other hand, I reject the dogmatic approach that considers every narrative or legend a reliable historical source.

It is indeed particularly difficult to separate the historical core from late legend or tradition in the case of Moses, whose dominant personality presented an opportunity to the creative genius of popular tradition. Fortunately, we possess a good philological-stylistic criterion: in recent years scholars have changed their appreciation of the Moses stories, as the language of Hittite vassal treaties from the second half of the millennium has turned out to be surprisingly similar

to the style of the pentateuchal sources relating to the covenant between Israel and its God. I have tried to present the situation briefly, adding something of my own, and to draw the necessary historical conclusions from the theopolitical meanings of the covenant.

In this context, I could not avoid relating to one other question: the genesis and nature of monotheism. Did it emerge in Moses' time, before him or after him? Is the link with the patriarchal faith to be ascribed to late authors, as scholars have been saying — with varying degrees of emphasis — since Wellhausen? or should one indeed seek the roots in the period of the Patriarchs? My own view, as presented in this volume, is that monotheism actually predated Moses; though in this question, too, I do not accept the dogmatic, fundamentalist approach, nor adhere blindly to conventions. On this basis, I have devoted a brief discussion to the relationship between the Mosaic faith and the religion of the Patriarchs. Moreover, now that the latest research has largely abandoned the evolutionary theory of the Wellhausen school, I have seen fit to resolve the conflict between Kaufmann's approach, which rests on a certain anthropological assumption, and the existential–sociological explanation of Buber. The chapter on Moses prepares the ground for a discussion of the unique social regime that took shape in Israel under the influence of monotheism — the early Kingdom of God. This regime, and the character of its charismatic leaders, are discussed in Chapter Three. The last section of this chapter, written specially for the English edition, is a brief discussion of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee, which are intrinsically connected with the early Kingdom of God and with similar social institutions in the Ancient Near East.

With the collapse of this special theocratic system and the establishment of the monarchy, the figure of the early prophetic leaders, as it were, bifurcated: secular authority became the province of the king and his court, while the prophet became the spiritual leader who, despite holding no secular position, might rebuke kings and nobles. It will be our goal to show, in Chapter Four, that the character of the prophet under the first monarchs was an outcome not of Canaanite influence, as thought by most scholars since Hölscher, but of social processes taking place within the nation.

The broad subject of the long sixth chapter is the attitude of the prophets to the monarchy. The path here leads from Samuel's

reluctant and hesitant concurrence to Nathan's idealization of the monarchy. From there we go on to the prophets as advisors in the royal court, and finally to the militant prophets, who made their contribution to the split in the kingdom and, under Ahab and his sons, fomented a civil war to foil Jezebel's attempt to implant the cult of the Tyrian Baal in Israel. The account ends with a description of the internal crisis that gripped the prophets during the reign of Jehu, when, faced by the enormity of Jehu's atrocities, they began to doubt the inner justification of violence as a means of achieving their goals. This was the spiritual ground for the evolution in the eighth century of classical prophecy, which eschewed subversive activity and decided in favor of educational methods. This radical about-turn in the pursuit of prophetic aims is, to my mind, the real background of the great changes that occurred in the understanding of prophecy and the content of its message from the time of Amos and later.

While the first two chapters resort, as stated, to comparative methods, our emphasis in the rest of the book lies rather on inner literary analysis of the biblical sources, though here too I have drawn as far as possible on extra-biblical, Near Eastern material in order to illuminate the various episodes. As I approach the Elijah-Elisha cycle of stories, philological-historical criticism and esthetic-literary theory had to be combined, for the narrative genres in the stories of the cycle, ranging from the novelistic and eminently naturalistic story to the miracle legend, force one to reconsider the historical aspects. Here, too, I have found it necessary to argue at some length against the common thesis of the alleged Deuteronomistic redaction which, it is claimed, altered the inner features of the narratives and their protagonists.

It transpires that most of the narratives were written not far in time from the events, and that, though reworked, they did not undergo significant changes. Moreover, one can speak of late Deuteronomistic editing only if one assumes that the book of Deuteronomy was written during Josiah's reign. If one rejects this rather dubious assumption,* there is no need to divide up the organic

* See B. Uffenheimer, "On the Centralization of the Cult in Israel," *Tarbiz* 28 (1959): 138-153 (Heb.).

literary units of the text, to whose texture the Deuteronomistic style also made its contribution; all the more so, as the basic elements of this style may already be traced in the Cappadocian letters from the nineteenth century B.C.E. (see Chapter One).

The last, seventh chapter discusses the ambivalent attitude of the champions of monotheism, including the prophets and the authors of the books of Prophets, to popular divination and magic. The prophets' loathing of violent methods and their preference for educational rebuke, rather than punishment, was final and unequivocal, while the conflict with divination and popular magic continued, in various guises, well into the period of classical prophecy. The classical prophets' struggle with the mantic heritage, as implicit in the prophecies against nations and in the ancient miracle stories, explains, to some extent, the theoretical background to the historical deliberations about theodicy in Israelite history in relation to the surrounding nations.

The volume concludes with two appendixes. The first is a literary analysis of the major sources of the book of Judges, the second a new discussion of the concept of *segullah* in the light of Ancient Near Eastern parallels.

I have not touched at all on the question of classical prophecy, the conditions of its emergence or the message conveyed by its literary traditions. Nor have I considered, aside from a hint, the question of the prophetic experience. These problems will be treated in my study of classical prophecy, which will relate, historically speaking, to the period from Amos to the apocalyptic prophecy of Second Temple times.

The present translation is based on a revised and updated version of the second edition of the original Hebrew book. Wherever I have shortened, augmented or otherwise modified the original text, I have taken into account only publications of immediate relevance to the subject. On the whole, the changes are of minor importance, as I see no reason to deviate from my basic conceptions.

A comment is in order regarding the translation of biblical passages. Quotations from the Bible are generally based here on *The Holy Scriptures*, first published in Philadelphia in 1917 by the Jewish Publication Society of America, in a slightly modernized version. I

have departed significantly from that translation only when it is at variance with my own interpretation of the text.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Academic Board of the Magnes Press in Jerusalem, to its director, Mr. Dan Benovici, for his sympathetic assistance, to the Perry Foundation for Biblical Research and to its former secretary, Mr. Ben-Zion Segal. Last but not least, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Mr. David Louvish for his outstanding, painstaking translation.

I hope that this edition will arouse sympathetic interest on the part of English-speaking scholars and students of the Bible.

B. Uffenheimer

CHAPTER ONE

PROPHECY IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ITS RELATION TO ISRAELITE PROPHECY

I. The Problem

Any study of the nature of Israelite prophecy must address itself to the sources and origins of the phenomenon, to its changing role in society from its inception until its disappearance at the beginning of the Second Commonwealth period, to the question of the internal structure of prophetic consciousness and the teachings of the prophets. Our first concern will be with the historical roots of prophecy and the degree to which it constitutes an integral part of the culture of the Ancient Near East. We shall not deal in detail with the various theories once common in Bible scholarship, such as that linking the beginnings of prophecy with Canaanite influence which became dominant during the period of the Settlement; or the view that attributes the origins of prophecy to the historical turmoil in Israel toward the end of the period of the Judges.¹ These and similar theories,² which see prophecy as a foreign element that fundamentally transformed Israel's "original" religion, have inspired provocative

- 1 Künen, *Einl. AT*², II, pp. 5ff.; idem, *Prophets*, pp. 552ff.; Wellhausen, *Isr. u. Jüd. Gesch.*², pp. 51, 72ff.; Cornill, *Prophetismus*, pp. 13ff.; Duhm, *Propheten*, pp. 81ff.; Hölscher, *Propheten*, pp. 125ff., 140ff.; Weber, *Religionssoziologie*², pp. 114ff. More recently, Lindblom has endeavored — without too much success — to revive this theory: J. Lindblom, "Zur Frage des kanaanäischen Ursprungs des altisraelitischen Prophetismus," in *Eissfeldt Festschrift* (1958), pp. 89–104; idem, *Prophecy*, pp. 29–32.
- 2 For the most recent surveys of the main views of current scholarship on the origin and nature of prophecy, see: H.H. Rowley, "The Nature of Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study," in *Servant of the Lord*, pp. 97–134; G. Fohrer, "Neuere Literatur zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie," *Theologische*