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NOTES AND STUDIES

FOREIGN INFLUENCES IN HEBREW PROPHECY.[1]

WE may assume that there were prophets in all the civilized religions of western Asia; their existence is especially well attested in Phoenicia. Of the international relations of the prophets we hear very little, but the few references that we have are enough to shew that these relations existed. In the time of Ahab the prophets of Yahweh encountered the prophets of Baal whom Jezebel had brought with her from Tyre to Samaria (1 Kings xviii 19). The two soon adopted that open hostility towards one another which inevitably arose from their rivalry; the Israelite prophets felt themselves set aside, supplanted, their very existence threatened, and they did not rest till they had put their opponents to death. It was not without reason that Ahab called Elijah the 'destroyer of Israel' (1 Kings xviii 17); for Elijah, or his pupil Elisha, was partly responsible for the extermination of the Phoenician community in Samaria. By this deed Jehu destroyed the 'brotherhood' between Israel and Phoenicia (Am. i 9). No wonder that the Phoenicians took their revenge. But when Amos later charged the Phoenicians with having forgotten 'brotherhood', he failed to remember that Israel had been the first to do this at the instigation of its prophets. Naturally, however, before the outbreak of this war of extermination there were also friendly relations between the Israelite and the Phoenician prophets. Elijah fled from the famine in Samaria to 'the brook Cherith' (1 Kings xvii 7 ff), that is, probably, to Syria, and then to Sarepta, on Sidonian soil, where he probably had a friendly reception even as an Israelite prophet, though the Saga does not stress this aspect of the story.

We see in the Elisha narratives that the prophets of Yahweh were renowned even amongst the Syrians. Naaman, the commander-in-chief of an unnamed king of Damascus, heard of Elisha through a slave-girl taken in war, was cured by him of leprosy, and then became a proselyte to the religion of Yahweh (2 Kings v). The sick king Benhadad had heard of Elisha before he came to Damascus, and sent Hazael to him merely to procure an oracle (2 Kings viii 7 ff). Elisha took this opportunity, at least indirectly, of inciting Hazael to assassinate his king; a somewhat similar story was also told of Elijah (1 Kings xviii 15). These narratives are the more credible inasmuch as the revolution of Jehu also is to be traced back to the influence of Elijah or of Elisha.

[1] A paper read before the Society for Old Testament Study, in London, Jan. 6, 1926.

The fact that the outbreaks of revolution in Samaria and in Damascus were approximately simultaneous certainly points to some international association in which the proletariat and the prophets went hand in hand. The decisive factor, however, was neither the social nor the religious ideal, but the selfish aims of Jehu on one side and of Hazael on the other. These men used the proletariat and the prophets simply as welcome means to secure power for themselves. Here the existence of international relations in which the prophets played a part cannot be denied, though the nature of the Sagas makes the relevant details completely obscure to us (1 Kings xix 16, 2 Kings ix 11). Hence we may conjecture the existence of international connexions with the prophets of different countries, probably with Egypt through Phoenicia, and with Assyria and Babylonia through Damascus. We must, then, ask, What do we know of prophets or of prophecy in these two centres of the civilization of the nearer East?

I.

At present it is only from Egypt that we know of any quantity of prophetic literature.[1] In extent, it is true, the sources are comparatively scanty, but they yet suffice to establish the reality and the developement of Egyptian prophecy. We may distinguish the following types:—

1. In the folk-tales sagas and legends of the colloquial literature we sometimes meet with oracles which may be compared with Messianic prophecy. They, however, form only one of a number of *motifs*, and almost entirely disappear amongst the fantastic miracles of the epic imagination. The oldest illustration is *The Story of the Miraculous Birth of the Sons of the Gods* in the Westcar papyrus, which comes from the Hyksos period. It contains a prophecy on the first kings of the fifth dynasty, who are mentioned by name. It is thus a *vaticinium ex eventu*, a spurious oracle which does homage to the new royal family which came to the throne about 2750 B. C. In its present form, then, the story dates from somewhere about 2650.

2. A second group is formed by the prophecy on Ameni, those of the potter and those of the lamb. It is significant that all these are connected with folk-tale; but here the narrative serves only as a frame for the oracle, and even though it may have claimed the reader's greatest interest, there can be no doubt that the author regarded the prophecy as the most important feature. The *Oracle on Ameni* or Amenemhet I (about 1980 B. C.) is now known to us in six forms, and must, therefore, have been a special favourite; our principal source is the Papyrus

[1] Cf. Adolf Erman *Die Literatur der Aegypter*, Leipzig, 1923, pp. 130 ff; Hermann Ranke in Gressmann's *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*[2], Berlin, 1926, pp. 46 ff.

Golenischeff. This prophecy, too, is based on earlier historical events; its purpose also is to glorify the reigning king, who liberated Egypt from the chaos which followed the collapse of the old empire, and who may be regarded as the founder of the Middle Kingdom. The *Oracle of the Potter* has come down to us only in papyrus fragments of the second or third century A. D. It claims a potter of King Amenophis as its author, but is apparently a combination of two prophecies. The older of these probably goes back to the period of the New Kingdom, whilst the younger certainly belongs to the Hellenistic age, for in it a patriotic Egyptian announces the coming destruction of the hated Greek city of Alexandria. So we have in this younger prophecy, at any rate, a genuine oracle, and no *vaticinium ex eventu*. The *Lamb Prophecy*, handed down in a demotic papyrus, takes us into the period following the death of Bokchoris, about 700 B. C. It claims to come from the sixth year of his reign, and contains a curse on Egypt, which is to suffer affliction for nine hundred years. Here, again, we have a genuine prophecy which does not correspond to actual fact.

3. To a third group belongs the *Demotic Oracle-Commentary*, formerly (though quite incorrectly) known as the *Demotic Chronicle*, which was compiled at the end of the third century B. C. The text consists of incomprehensible oracular terms, which in turn are followed by the phrase 'that means', and so are applied to the events of the Persian and Greek periods. The spurious prophecy, which clothes the calamities of the recent past in the garb of a vision of the future, finally developes into real prophecy.

4. It is doubtful whether we ought to include here the invectives and the *Admonitions of the Wise Ipuwer* and the allied *Lamentations of Chacheper-re-seneh*, both of which were written somewhere in the twelfth dynasty, about 1900 B. C. Like the prophets of Israel both complain of the calamity which either has already befallen Egypt or is now soon about to do so.

5. If we glance over this oracle literature we are struck by certain peculiarities. In the first place we have *the close connexion between prophecy and folk-lore*. It is not merely that the miracle-working prophets, the magicians, the artisans and beasts are presented as in folk-lore, but the whole framework in which the oracles are usually set is that of folk-lore. As a rule the narratives which form this framework are no merely external additions, but are organically connected with the prophecies. This is especially clear at the end, which either predicts or describes the death of the prophet. Thus the Potter breaks off in the middle of the last sentence and the Lamb dies as soon as his curse is completed, both thus proving that they have spoken the truth. They have to die because they have betrayed a secret of the gods. The

oracles themselves, too, often bear a fantastic stamp which is impressed even on Nature. So, for example, it is foretold that the Nile shall be dried up and that men shall be able to cross it on foot, or that the sun shall shine no more, and that therefore men shall be unable to tell when it is noon. No great distinction is made between the prophet and the magician as the Old Testament often suggests. He who can foretell the future must also be able to work miracles, and vice versa. So the prophets can give signs, either from heaven or from hell, and make the shadow on the sun-dial go backwards. They charm victory with their arrows, capture souls in their nets, and revive the dead with their staves. Their practices are those of the Shamans; prophecy is a branch of magic. Hence folk-lore, which deals with the magician by preference, cannot overlook the prophet. The Westcar papyrus is the best illustration of this: a magician who brings slaughtered animals to life may be trusted to visualize correctly the future still centuries away. Here the dominant feature is the delight in the variegated material of folk-lore and in its gay adventure. But this soon vanishes, and its place is taken by a concentration on the vision of the future, as it appeals to the political mind. The oracle becomes a specialized activity of that same epic fancy which created folk-lore. Prophetic utterances, the oracle, spurious and genuine, enchain the spirit of the politician and of the poet, ever receptive to external circumstances, and so belong to colloquial literature, even though they gradually lose the stamp of folk-lore, and more and more approximate to a sober description of coming events.

6. A second peculiarity of the Egyptian oracle is the typical *combination of threat and promise.* The order of events is understood and therefore left unstated: first must come calamity, then prosperity; the threat always precedes the promise. Except in details the two parts are antithetic, and they are as truly complementary as the two shells of the mussel. Doubtless the stress is laid on the promises, whilst the threats ultimately serve only as a contrast. There is, however, an unmistakeable distinction: in the genuine oracles, which usually foretell calamity, the prophet feels the need of applying a salve to the wound which he has inflicted; the promise cannot, it is true, annul the threat, but it may make it bearable, for it developes a hope in a coming happiness. Here the threat is the logical *prius*, which must of necessity be followed by the promise, in so far as the prophet loves his country. Exactly the opposite procedure is followed in the spurious oracles, for the promises refer to the glorious present, while the threats, on the contrary, are only intended to recall to memory a past now happily surmounted. Here the promise is the logical *prius*, the threat (earlier in time) is imperatively demanded to heighten the present.

7. This leads to a third characteristic of the Egyptian oracles: their aim is generally *patriotic*. That always remained the chief consideration for the Egyptian state, even when the prophets announce calamity for a time. The Messiah whom they predict is almost exclusively the Egyptian ideal king, who will fulfil the political hopes and wishes of his people. This must not be exaggerated; there is no lack of a moral and religious point of view. The promise made to Amenemhet will serve as an illustration: 'There shall come from the south a king named Ameni, the son of a Nubian woman, and of a native of Upper Egypt. He shall wear the white crown and the red crown; he shall unite the two mighty (diadems) and delight the two lords (Horus and Set) with that which they love.' The first thought, then, is the reunion of Upper and Lower Egypt under a single sceptre. 'Rejoice, ye men, in his time. The son of an (illustrious) man shall make himself a name for all eternity. They that do deeds of evil and think thoughts of enmity shall no more dare to speak for fear before him. The Asiatics shall fall before his slaughter, and the Libyans before his flame. His enemies fall before his assault, and his rebels before his power. The royal serpent upon his forehead, *that* stills his rebels.' This proclaims the overthrow of all his enemies at home and abroad, especially the Asiatics and the Libyans, but also all those who plan evil against the king. 'The princes' walls shall be built, and never again shall the Asiatics be allowed to enter Egypt. They beg for water, according to their prescribed custom, to give their cattle to drink.' Again the *motif* is that of external politics; an important event of the period was the erection, or rather the restoration, of the princes' walls to the east of the Delta, to keep the Semites at a distance. But at the end it is said, 'Justice shall come to its place, and injustice shall be driven out. Let him be glad that seeth this, and him who then may serve the king.' Even though the ideas of 'justice' or 'truth' and 'injustice' or 'falsehood' here have a patriotic tinge, an ethical note is faintly heard. As in this illustration, the moral note is struck sometimes elsewhere also in the threats and promises of the Egyptian prophets, but it always remains low and scarcely audible.

8. A fourth peculiarity of the Egyptian oracle is the *dynastic interest*, which is closely related to political patriotism. The spurious prophecies were delivered at the court in honour of the reigning king, and therefore they paint the present in shining golden colour, the past in gloomy black. The court poets took their colours from the palette of the court prophets, who ate of the king's table, and had to prophesy to suit him. With the glorification of the reigning dynasty there is sometimes associated an antidynastic point aimed at the royal family which has been overthrown. An example may be seen in the story of the Birth of the

Divine Children, where the prophecy is obviously directed against the House of Cheops. It not only casts Cheops into deep sorrow, but also charges him with numerous attempts to falsify the oracle. The conclusion of the papyrus is lost, but we may supply the motive of the murder of the children, which meets us again in the Saga of the exposure of Moses—that, too, was originally a royal Saga—and in the murder of the Babes of Bethlehem. The principal features are always the same: the reigning king is disturbed by a Messianic oracle which foretells the overthrow of his dynasty by a child who has just been born; he makes an effort to stave off destiny by having all the children killed, but in vain; Fate is stronger than the will of man, stronger than even the mightiest despot. This antidynastic aim is sharpest in the Proverbs of Ipuwer, where the sage attacks the reigning king, if not exactly with a threat, at least with an invective, and holds him responsible for the disasters of his country. He charges him with incapacity, and calls him 'a slumbering pilot': he expresses the hope that the king himself may taste something of the misery through which Egypt is passing. This is very significant, even though we are dealing with nothing more than a literary fiction. The amazing audacity of the speech of a Nathan to a David is known to us only through the Sagas; however much the stories may modify and edit the facts, they do, nevertheless, accurately represent the sharp opposition between king and prophet. Ipuwer seems to hold up, as a model to his king, Re, the first lord of Egypt, under whom conditions were ideal. This corresponds exactly to the threat against Nefer-rehu which precedes the promise to Ameni: 'What is done is as if it never had been done, and Re can once more begin to lay his foundations', i. e. he can start his creation afresh.[1] The coming doom is comparable to returning Chaos, the coming salvation comparable to returning creation, the coming king comparable to returning Re, the king of Paradise.

9. In spite of the gaps which still exist in our knowledge of the Egyptian oracle, the tradition does allow us to recognize a certain *evolution*. First in the primitive adventure stories of the folk-lore type, which tell of the birth of the Divine Sons, about 2650 B. C., we meet with the *motif* of the ideal king, who is foretold as the unexpected and undesired successor of the reigning lord. Here, as far as we yet know, it is the kings of a new dynasty—the fifth—who are greeted as Messiahs of prophecy. Similar conditions are repeated in the twelfth dynasty, about 2000 B. C., with Amenemhet, the founder of the Middle Kingdom. The same thing happened, certainly often and probably regularly, when a new family claimed the throne for itself; the oracle presents history as accredited by Destiny, in opposition to the fallen dynasty. So

[1] Cf. Erman *Literatur* p. 154 at top.

prophecy serves the purposes of national and dynastic politics, which take possession of the 'colloquial' literature, in order to push propaganda suitable to themselves and to glorify the new king as God-appointed. It is only in the younger tradition that we find the genuine oracle alongside of the spurious, but the model must, of course, always precede the copy, so that it is only an accident that no genuine oracles of the earlier period have yet reached us. We have as yet no specimen of Messianic prophecy, in the strict sense of the word, which does not apply to a historic king. At the end of the evolution stands the demotic Oracle-Commentary, which has remarkably close affinities with the Book of Daniel. Its author has the same point of view, and handles history in the same apocalyptic style. This remarkable method of clothing history in the form of mysterious oracles has the same object in both cases; it seeks to inspire confidence in the latter part of the text, which contains only visions of the future. The agreement, however, goes farther; in both Daniel and the Oracle-Commentary the same events are often predicted, so that we can place parallel sections side by side, and analyse the documents into apparently independent pamphlets.

It is true that the Egyptian oracle cannot be further compared with the remarkable developement of Israelite prophecy, but it would be quite a mistake to treat the prophecies of the Egyptians as an absolutely unalterable whole which remained unaffected by the passage of centuries. Though the available material must be called scanty compared with the amount which has presumably been lost, yet in spite of all the persistent and unchanging elements certain *lines of progress* may be recognized. In the earlier period the spurious oracles seem to play a larger part than the genuine. The Messianic promises are very early converted into Messianic threats. Originally prophecy is more closely allied to the phantasy of folk-lore; later it is filled, as in Israel, with the apocalyptic spirit. The uniformity of the evolution becomes still clearer when we observe that the same theory of retribution was predominant in later Egypt as in contemporary Judaism. It is, indeed, not in Daniel but in Chronicles that we meet with exactly the same view as in the demotic Oracle-Commentary: if the king prospers, then he is righteous; if he suffers, then he is impious. In both cases the criterion is that he 'follows', or does not 'follow', the law. The Egyptians, like the Jews, had ceased to be a political nation, and had become an 'ecclesiastical sect'.

It can hardly be denied that there were *connexions between Israelite and Egyptian prophecy*. There can be no doubt that, as in Egyptian literature, in the Old Testament the spurious oracles, which hailed a *historical king as the Messiah*, were older than the genuine oracles.

From the Blessing of Jacob (Gen. xlix 8 ff) and Balaam's spell (Num. xxiv 15 ff) it is clear that even during his lifetime David was glorified as the Messiah. This corresponds exactly to the Egyptian custom of proclaiming the founder of a new royal family as the long promised and divinely appointed lord, so legitimizing the new dynasty. The process is repeated in later Israel once more, in the case of Zerubbabel after the Exile.

In the second place, we can quote the *Messianic threat* in Israel just as in Egypt, as a means whereby the promise of a Messiah is sharply aimed at the reigning dynasty. This is not so easily recognizable in the Saga of the exposure of Moses, but is obvious in the Saga of the slaughter of the Babes of Bethlehem, and in Israel's prophecy of Immanuel (Isa. vii); for it is formally uttered over the unbelieving king Ahaz, whose dynasty is threatened and will be superseded by that of Immanuel.

In the third place, the *connexion between the threat and the promise*, which is just as characteristic of the Egyptian oracle as it is of the Israelite, cannot possibly be understood by itself. Though in many places it is still obvious that threat and promise are necessarily connected and are as complementary as the two shells of the mussel, yet in the Old Testament the connexion between them is already loosening. There are, indeed, scholars who deny the existence of this connexion, though, in my opinion, they are wrong. For the prophetic literature of the Egyptians has preserved this association still more clearly, and we are forced to conclude that it represents an older, more original stage in the evolution.

In the fourth place, the outstanding question is as to whether it is necessary to assume foreign influence in order to explain Israelite prophecy. Could it not have become what it did entirely by itself? Is not the resemblance to Egyptian prophecy simply due to the similarity of the phenomena, which may be explained by reference to similar historical events or to the same type of human temperament? This is improbable, for two reasons: Micah (ch. v) calls *David* ruler 'from of old, from everlasting', and Isaiah (ch. xi) thinks of the returning David 'from the root of Jesse' also as the lord of Paradise, for with him begins afresh the primeval peace of the animal world. That is very remarkable, for the Israelite monarchy was much too young to be carried back into Paradise. In Paradise, according to Israelite belief, they were only two individuals, Adam and Eve, with neither king nor nation. This contrast between the earliest and the last times is most easily explained if we conjecture that *Israel borrowed the motif of a primitive monarchy from elsewhere*, from one of the ancient monarchies of the East, which knew of a king even in Paradise.

The conception would then be translated into history, and so out of the returning king of Paradise grew the returning David, because David was the first king of Israel. The evolution of eschatology probably consists merely in this, that mythological views are translated into history. So the returning 'Antichrist' becomes the returning Nero or Napoleon, the returning 'Messiah' becomes the returning David or Barbarossa, the returning 'Chaos', with its 'dragon', becomes the destroying Assyrian, Greek, or Roman. This much we can conclude from the Israelite tradition itself—it looks back past itself to oriental predecessors.

Now we have seen, not only that the Egyptians recognized in Re the primeval lord of Paradise, but that in the prophetic lament of Ipuwer this primeval king is held up before the reigning monarch as an ideal. In the same way there are some illustrations of the idea of the return of '*Chaos*' in Egypt. It is true that we have no Messianic text, in the strict sense of the term, from Egypt, but it is possible that the reason for this is that eschatology had no meaning for Egyptian religion. It is just here that it differed from Israelite religion, which, more than any other, reached out into the future and lived in yearning and hope, for Israel's political ideal never had been fulfilled and never could be fulfilled. Nevertheless, it seems to me possible that the Israelites in this matter were *led by Egyptian conceptions to develope their peculiar Messianic belief*—unless better models can be discovered in Babylonia or Assyria, or possibly evidence found for an eschatology which was universal throughout the nearer East.

II.

10. What do we know of Babylonian prophecy? As in dealing with Egypt, so here also we can leave on one side the technical oracles, which were obtained with the help of external means—the observation of heavenly or earthly events, through the inspection of the liver, oil, or the stars. It is, on the other hand, very probable that there were also *inspired oracles*. We may conjecture that maḫḫu or šêḫanu was the name of the prophet who unveiled the future without omens through his god-filled spirit.[1] But what we know of their prophecies through literature is still very little. We have two *collections of oracles*, which should probably be included here.[2] These come from the time of Esarhaddon. Through the mouths of prophets or, more generally, prophetesses, courage is awarded to him and endless years of victory and happiness are promised to him in the name of Ishtar of Arbela.

[1] Meissner *Babylonien* ii p. 243.

[2] Text in Meissner ii p. 281, and in Ebeling in Gressmann's *Texte*[2] pp. 281 ff.

The other oracles likewise come from Assyria. They are generally concerned with the calamities of the country and announce its salvation or its doom; no connexion of the various sentences is recognizable, and so it seems to me certain that we have here traditional formulas which were applied to occasional omens, though no omens are mentioned. These scanty sources do not enable us to write a history, but nevertheless the bare fact that prophets did appear in Babylon and Assyria is valuable.

11. In the second place we may also add myths to the prophetic literature. There is, first, a small cuneiform fragment which depicts *the coming judgement of Babylon*,[1] a political catastrophe which is to break over the city, whose wealth shall be given to Subartu and Assur. We may probably connect this text with the *Fra-myth*.[2] This recounts how the Plague-god Fra devastates the whole world, including Babylon; though the city is guiltless, she is not spared. It is not clear whether this event is to take place in the immediate future or at the very end. But included in it is an oracle which foretells a general uprising of the peoples: 'Then shall the Sea-country relentlessly slay the Sea-country, Subartu slay Subartu, the Assyrian slay the Assyrian, the Elamite slay the Elamite, the Kassite slay the Kassite, the Sutaean slay the Sutaean, the Qutaean slay the Qutaean, the Lullubaean slay the Lullubaean, one land slay another, one house slay another, one man slay another, one brother slay another. Then shall Akkad arise and shall fell them all, shall fling them all down together.' So out of the world-war shall the Akkadians, i. e. the Babylonians, emerge as conquerors; so shall Babylon be restored, and to her shall world-dominion be assigned. In this passage the name of the poet is inserted in the text—'Kabti-ilani-Marduk, son of Dabibu', and it is added that he has seen these events 'as a vision of the night; when he arose in the morning he omitted not a line, and no single part did he add thereto'. It is patriotism which has inspired him, and we easily understand that because of these verses, which so set their desires, the Babylonians sought to honour the name of the poet and prophet. Thus, though it is not certain, it is yet probable that the Babylonians expected a coming catastrophe. In the tumult of the nations Babylon too will be ruined, but she will rise again to new strength, even to world-dominion. Very striking is the agreement with the so-called 'Prophecies against the Nations' of Isaiah; we might, for example, recall the Ariel prophecy of Isaiah xxix. But as long as the Fra-myth remains isolated, and its significance uncertain, its con-

[1] *CT.* 49; cf. Winckler *OLZ.*, 1907, pp. 347 ff.
[2] Meissner *Babylonien* ii 185 ff.

nexion with Israelite prophecy also cannot be accurately defined. It is, however, clear that the idea of world-dominion, which can only have arisen in a great nation like the Babylonians, has found eloquent expression in the Fra-myth. Finally, the Adapa-myth[1] should be mentioned. As compensation for the loss of eternal life, the first man receives world-dominion for all time. So the Babylonians, like the Egyptians, recognized a king in Paradise. But no evidence of an eschatological meaning has yet come to light.

12. More important than any external testimony is the internal evidence of the prophetic literature of Israel itself, which points to a foreign origin. It is not easy to discover such traces in the Old Testament, because the vigorous originality of the prophets enables them to transmute all foreign elements into their own spirit. But he who, like myself, is convinced that Israel was linked up with the life of the nearer East, will allow both the question and the attempt to find an answer to it. I beg you to notice that it is only an attempt, a hypothesis which I put forward for discussion.

According to Jeremiah, 'to be a prophet' means 'to have stood in the counsel of God' (xxiii 18). The conception of a *divine Council* goes farther back than Amos, for we meet it first in Micah ben Imlah (1 Kings xxii). We often find it again later in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Where else do we know of such divine assemblies? In Egypt they are completely unknown, but they are quite common in Babylon: we hear of them in the myths, in the hymns, and in the ritual. Let us picture the Babylonian views to ourselves.[2] According to the Creation-myth, Marduk is appointed king of the gods by the bestowal of the tablets of Destiny, and becomes the god of Destiny. Every year, on New Year's Day in *Duku*, a cosmic spot situated 'in the waste of waters', he determines the destinies of heaven and earth at the head of the assembly of the gods, whilst Nabu fulfils the office of Scribe. Later nearly every god became 'arbiter of destiny', and it is especially instructive to notice that the Assyrians too celebrated their national god Assur in the same way. The climax of the New Year festival in Babylon was reached in the ceremony where 'on the eighth and eleventh days (of Nisan) *the king* of the gods of heaven and earth takes his place in the Duku, the place where destinies are fixed, the gods of heaven and earth in awe do homage to him and stand bowed in his presence, while he himself assigns the fortunes of distant days'.

In Israel, too, when Yahweh is enthroned as president of the

[1] Meissner ii 188f; Ebeling, *op. cit.*, pp. 143 ff.
[2] Meissner *Babylonien* ii 97, 124f.

heavenly Parliament and determines the destiny of the world, he is called 'the King', though the gods have become angels or 'the host of heaven': 'Mine eyes shall behold *the King*, Yahweh Zebaoth' (Isa. lxv). Even the scribe-god or scribe-angel is not entirely absent; he is once clearly described by Ezekiel (ix 2) amongst the six heavenly 'men', as clothed in white linen with the inkhorn at his side, and in the later literature Enoch is called the heavenly scribe. But as a rule—and this is especially true of pre-exilic prophecy, of the time when Monotheism was strongest—Yahweh Himself fulfils the office of scribe. The tablets of Destiny are replaced by the 'Book of Life', which is just as significant in the later prophecy as in the younger Apocalyptic: 'every one who is written down for life in Jerusalem' (Isa. iv 3). We may probably conclude that this happened on New Year's day from Isa. xxix 1 'Add year to year, let the festivals go their round'. נְקֻפוּ is connected with תְּקוּפָה, a specifically astronomical term for the 'circuit' of the sun or of the year.

Isaiah mentions the *Seraphim* amongst Yahweh's *entourage*; he describes only their six wings. According to Philo of Byblos [1] the artist amongst the gods created for Bel-Kronos of Byblos, who also was a 'king' (a melek), 'four eyes in front and behind as tokens of *royal dominion*, (two open) and two closed, and on the shoulders four wings, two spread and two folded. The thought was that Kronos sleeping saw and seeing slept, and so too the wings indicated that he flew while resting and rested while flying.' He had besides 'two wings at his head', so that he had six wings in all, exactly like Isaiah's Seraphs. So, too, is he depicted on coins of Byblos,[2] the oldest city of Phoenicia, which he himself had founded,[3] just as Marduk had founded Babylon. So, too, Marduk, according to the Creation-epic, had four eyes and four ears, which befits the all-seeing god of destiny. Dare we suggest that the Seraphs in Israel also, beside their six wings, had four eyes, and that features which were originally proper to the principal figure are transferred to these subordinate beings? Such a transference is by no means unusual in the history of religion, and is directly demonstrable in the composite form of Aion-Kronos.[4] Is it an accident that *sārāph* is connected with the very verb *sāraph*—'burn', which is used to indicate the offerings of men and children made to Melek-Kronos-Marduk,[5] in short, to the god of destiny?

In Ezekiel the place of the Seraphs is taken by the Cherubs, which,

[1] Eusebius *Praep. Ev.* i 10, 36 f, p. 39 a.
[2] Fig. in Gressmann *Gestirnreligion* (Beiheft zum AO. 5), 1925, Plate IV. 10.
[3] Eusebius, *op. cit.*, p. 37 a.
[4] Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
[5] Cf. Baudissin, 'Moloch' *PRE*³. xiii 274 f.

as the heavenly watchmen of the enthroned God, have four heads, therefore eight eyes, or whose body, according to another account (x 2), is covered with eyes. Zechariah (vii 10) speaks frankly of the 'seven eyes of Yahweh', an expression which is quite comprehensible when applied to the God of heaven and the lord of the planets, as Bel-Marduk was. It is more and more generally recognized that the Cherubs are Babylonian astral beings, whilst their name is proved to be Babylonian. But a supplementary or alternative conception to that to the Lord of the planets is that of the 'Pole'. So, in addition to Ezekiel's Cherubs, we have the wheels which move of themselves, a reflexion of the heavenly spheres. Reitzenstein rightly recalls the figure of Aion in Nonnos (Dionys. 10, 102):

εἰσόκε μίμνῃ
Αὐτομάταις ἀψῖσιν ἑλιξ κυκλούμενος Αἰών.

The heavenly scribe with his inkhorn at his side suits this picture well, and the Adapa-myth forms an admirable parallel to Zechariah iii. Adapa and Joshua, or originally Zerubbabel, both appear in the heavenly court, mourning, clad in filthy garments; both are accused by the Satan, and both receive the advocacy of an angel. Both are transformed into kings. Yahweh's precious stone, on which the name of Zerubbabel is inscribed as that of the Messiah, finds an exact parallel in the diamond of Ishtar: 'I cause the light of the diamond to shine upon Esarhaddon, king of Assyria; I watch over him as over the crown of my head.'[1] Like the king of heaven, the queen of heaven wears a crown, with a diamond on which is engraved the name of the reigning king, as elsewhere on Yahweh's signet-ring.[2] The king of heaven is characterized by 'the seven eyes upon the stone'.

Most clearly does Daniel, ch. vii, the vision of the Son of Man, bring us into the chamber of destiny, which is set (like Marduk's chamber of destiny) 'in the waste of the waters', for the beasts (and the Son of Man) come out of the sea. 'Thrones' are set, the 'Ancient of Days' appears, the 'Judgement' takes place, and 'Books' are opened. The Anunnaki come for judgement before the 'counsellor of the gods'.[3] Even Diodorus knows of the twenty-four star-gods as 'the judges of the Universe'[4]; they are, therefore, those who form the court of judgement. The 'Books', again, correspond to the tablets of destiny, on which the heavenly scribe writes the decisions. The four beasts (the four Diadochi-kings) are deposed, the Son of Man, i. e. 'the Holy One of the Most High', is installed, so we have again a heavenly enthrone-

[1] Meissner ii 281; Ebeling, p. 282.
[2] Gressmann *Gestirnreligion* p. 21.
[3] Meissner ii 124.
[4] *Id.* ii 399.

ment of the king of the world, the 'Most High God', the god of destiny. And if any still be doubtful, let him read the heathen parallel to Daniel vii, the *poem of Claudian in honour of Stilicho*.[1] He describes the twisted caves made by a serpent for the primeval god, who rules over the 'endless Aion' (*Aevum immensum*). This Time-god is, like the 'Ancient of Days', a venerable old man; he sits and writes eternal laws, while he appoints to the stars their path, and is, therefore, the god of destiny with the book of destiny. Beside him thrones are seen, obviously appropriated to the other gods, the assessors of the divine assembly, and the Ages (*saecula*), distinguished by metals. Then appears the youthful gleaming Sun-god, and takes a piece of gold on which he inscribes the name of Stilicho, who thus becomes king of the golden year. Let this suffice.

13. Let us look back. Pre-exilic prophetic literature does but dimly hint at the Babylonian council of the gods under the presidency of the god of destiny, standing behind the council of the year. Babylonian traces become clearer first in Ezekiel and Zechariah, but are clearest of all in Daniel. This is due to the gradual failure of the originality of Israelite prophecy, which ebbs with the course of time, with the result that foreign elements force their way steadily to the surface. If I have rightly estimated the developement, we must recognize Babylonian influence on one of the central ideas of Israelite prophecy. This, however, in no way detracts from its greatness. That the Assyrians should think of their chief god Assur as a Marduk, and so raise him to the level of a god of destiny, is not surprising in view of their political world-dominion. But the same fact must appear almost as a miracle in Israel. What a giant faith this tiny nation must have possessed, to make their God the king of the world, the Lord of heaven and of earth! The eternal value of Israelite prophecy does not rest on the conceptions which we have mentioned here, but on the nobility and on the spiritual profundity of the ethical religion.

I would not be misunderstood. I do not mean that Isaiah's idea of Yahweh contained any astrological element. But we win a new background for Isaiah's thinking. Henceforth it is quite impossible even to discuss so low a conception of Yahweh as that which was suggested to some scholars of an earlier generation by negro-religion. We can no longer think of Yahweh as a little local god dwelling in Mount Sion. To Isaiah he was the heavenly king who reigns over the whole world, not lower but greater than Marduk. And this is my judgement too.

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[1] *De Consulat. Stilichonis* ii 424 ff.