

Lindblom, J., Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Oxford, Basil Blackwell) 1962 . Reprinted 1963

p. 29 The authors of the books of Kings were cognizant of the existence of ecstatic prophets in the Semetic world outside Israel. The god of Carmel (perhaps fused with Baal Shamen, Baal of Heaven)had his prophets. So had Asherah and the Tyrian Melkart.⁵¹

Now we are in possession of literary documents which give evidence of the existence of such prophets in different parts of the ancient Near East. The story of Wen-Amon's journey to Phoenicia (about 1100 B.C.), related in the famous Golenischeff Papyrus, contains an episode that witnesses to the existence of prophetic phenomena in ancient Phoenicia.⁵² . . .

p. 30: Among the documents found by Professor Parrot in ancient Mari in Mesopotamia there are some which contain very remarkable notices about oracles and prophetic men and women from this region. A cuneiform tablet, deciphered and interpreted by Professor G. Dössin, refers to men and women whose task it was to 'give answers', i.e., impart divine oracles. Because there is no hint of signs and omens of any kind, we have probably to think of oracles obtained in a state of inspiration. . .

On other tablets, transcribed and translated by von Soden, the god Dagan is the god who inspires. A prophet transported by Dagan in an ecstasy utters an oracle ordering that sacrifices must be offered to Yahdunlim, the king's dead father. The term used for 'prophet' here is muḥḥūm. A similar oracle about sacrifices is found on another tablet. A third oracle contains a command to construct a city gate.⁵³

The term used here, muḥḥūm, is the same as mahḥū mentioned in some Accadian texts. This word means 'frenzied', 'one out of his senses', which exactly corresponds to the term 'ecstatic', or one possessed by a god . . . A mahḥū had the power to communicate oracles. The god spoke through him as through his mouthpiece. . . .

51 1 Kings xviii; 2 Kings x. See Eissfeldt, Der Gott Karmel; Alt, Das Gottesurteil auf dem Karmel.

52 ANET², pp. 25 ff.

(Ancient Near East Texts Relating to the Old Testament, edited by J. B. Pritchard, Princeton, 1955.)