REVIEWS

THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

MARTTI NISSINEN:
Ancient Prophecy. Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives.
xix, 448 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. £95. ISBN 978 0 19 880855 8.
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The text of this long book is divided into three parts: theory (chapter 1), sources (chapters 2–4), and comparative essays (chapters 5–9). It subsumes a version of some of the author's previous publications, of which 43 are listed in the bibliography; among them is *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* for the Society of Biblical Literature in the series Writings from the Ancient World (2003). Appendix 1 lists prophets and deities in the ancient Near East by gender. Appendix 2 is a catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern documents concerning prophecy, curiously arranged. The detailed bibliography (pp. 367–421) is followed by four indexes, but there is no general index.

This review concentrates mainly on the cuneiform material from Mesopotamia, which is more plentiful than Hebrew or Greek sources. The importance of cuneiform lexical lists for a group of professions linked to prophecy is usefully recognized on pp.57–60. The author elaborates details from texts of c. 1700 BC found at Mari on the Middle Euphrates, and neo-Assyrian texts of the 7th century, both groups on well-trodden ground, as the full references in footnotes show.

Omitted from the discussions are some important texts from central Babylonia such as the bilingual report of an oracle to Hammurabi, contemporary with the Mari material (see Wasserman, RA 86, 1992, 1–18, not in the bibliography), an oracle of Zababa to Samsu-iluna son of Hammurabi, slightly later than the Mari texts, and Enki / Ea's prediction of the Flood made through the rustling of a reed hut in *Atrahasis* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The latter would have made an interesting comparison with the rustling trees of some Greek oracles (p. 192). Enki / Ea is thus omitted from the list of gods who give oracles on p. 315. The omissions give the impression that the author has not quite re-evaluated the old notion, suggested in 1987 but now surely to be discarded, only briefly mentioned in note 62 on p. 267, that prophecy was of western semitic origin, borrowed into Assyria. Early oracles and the lexical lists, from central and southern Babylonia, give grounds for abandoning this view. The old understanding resurfaces at the end of the last chapter, in which prophecy is recognized as "an Eastern Mediterranean prophetic phenomenon". In no way can Babylonia be included as "East Mediterranean".

In the case of Greek texts, since the author mentions Berossus, who was known as a Sibyl in Late Antiquity, it is surprising to find no mention here of the Sibylline Oracles, in one of which Jane Lightfoot (*The Sibylline Oracles*, Oxford, 2007) has made a comparison with a section of Berossus' text. Since the author mentions the Phrygian Montanists of the early Christian era, indicating that the date is within the period covered by this book, one might expect the Sibyls to rate at least a mention.

The Hebrew material of early Old Testament books is discussed in much greater detail than the later prophets. For instance, the two Jonahs son of Amittai might be expected around pp. 350–1. One wonders if the Assyrian collections of oracles made in the 7th century (see pp. 101 ff) might have influenced the sequence of Minor

Prophets that ends with the second Jonah in which Nineveh is ruled by a king, even though one can only agree that they may have been "recontextualized" (p. 149), perhaps not "completely". One might compare, e.g., no.1 in the collection of *Babylonian Oracle Questions* published by Lambert in 2007; the volume is in the bibliography but texts are not listed in the Index of Near Eastern Sources.

A general index would have been useful, for instance for collecting together scattered references to music as an inspiration for prophecy, or alerting the editors to repeated information where cross-references are preferable to repeated main text, such as the prophecy recorded in the *Astronomical Diary* for 133 BC (pp. 180–1, and p. 349); the discussion of *assinnu* p. 60 n.9 and p. 298. In the discussion and listing of Mari prophecies, ARM XXI/192 is a curious omission, as it gives the information that Ishtar of Nineveh (Ninet) was a goddess of oracles at that early date. Zababa is wrongly listed as a female deity on p. 316.

The difficulty of combining many separate articles to produce a coherent book should not be underestimated. The title implies a much more comprehensive and wide-ranging overview of prophecy in the ancient world than this volume, useful though it is, offers.

Stephanie Dalley
University of Oxford

PIOTR TARACHA:
Two Festivals Celebrated by a Hittite Prince (CTH 647.I and II–III). New Light on Local Cults in North-Central Anatolia in the Second Millennium BC.
(Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten 61.) xix, 222 pp. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017. ISBN 978 3 44710799 0.
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The book under review is dedicated to a festival performed in Spring by the Hittite Prince (DUMU.LUGAL). Its composition probably dates back to the Middle Hittite period when the older manuscripts in our possession were composed. This festival tradition lasted until the Empire period. During this phase the festival was apparently reworked as a local AN.TAḪ.ŠUM-festival.

Piotr Taracha provides us with a thoughtful and comprehensive reconstruction and edition of the manuscripts and their sequence, both for the Middle and the Late Hittite periods. The book is organized in four chapters. Chapter 1 (The Sources) analyses the manuscripts and explains the order of the texts, to discern the relationship between manuscripts on single-, and on two-, and eventually three-column tablets (perhaps only the tiny fragment KBo 58.120). What I find particularly interesting is that the author investigates the relationship between fragments in Late New Script of version CTH 647.II, which was originally an MH festival, and the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM version CTH 647.I. He demonstrates how this edition was prepared for a single-column tablet and only in some parts the scribe had had CTH 647.II as a model. It would be very interesting, starting from his proposal, to analyse the connections among late Hittite festival texts by basing one's observation not only on the content but the shape of the tablets. Clearly, some Late Hittite festivals were written on single-column tablets and this shape was not an imitation of older models but a way to prepare some specific festival texts in order to