REDEFINED PROPHECY AS DEUTERONOMIC ALTERNATIVE TO DIVINATION IN DEUT 18:9-22

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Summary

Anthropological research has shown that no rigid distinction can be maintained between prophets, priests, diviners and necromancers. All of them function as religious intermediaries and act as repositories and interpreters of religious tradition and as sources of divine knowledge. In Deut 18:9-22 the link between diviners, soothsayers, sorcerers, necromancers and prophets is sometimes interpreted as an indication of a lesser view of prophecy in pre-exilic Israel. This paper advocates a more appreciative perspective of divination that acknowledges its close link with prophecy and accepts a much closer similarity between Canaanite and Israelite religion. The vehemence of the critique against divination presupposes the significant religious role played by diviners in Babilonian, Canaanite and Israelite society. This also caused a Deuteronomic redefinition of the office and function of the prophet in terms of the Torah to answer the exilic dilemma of having prophets as the most important remaining religious leaders in Babilonia and to enable the maintainance of power within the centralized religion of the post-exilic Jewish community in Palestine.

1. INTRODUCTION

Most religions contain conflicting, or at least diverging, methods of determining divine purpose (Hermisson 1995:121). Rigid and hierarchical distinctions between different religious functionaries must be avoided because the intermediary who claims divine inspiration can for example be a shaman or a prophet and be just as important as any ascetic or holy person (Dawson 1958:177-179).

There is a persistent trend in the study of ancient Israelite prophecy to emphasise the "uniqueness" of the prophets and to interpret any link between divination and prophecy as an indication of an unfavourable attitude towards prophecy (Fohrer 1973:223,237; Schmidt 1975:226). In rescent research Clements (1990:78) objects to the point of view that

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Deuteronomy 18:9-22 has a high opinion of prophets because, according to him, the prophets are closely linked to dream interpreters and are only a little better than diviners. Labuschagne (1990:134) argues in his commentary on Deuteronomy for a fundamental difference between the diviner who has insight about the future and the prophet who proclaims the word of YHWH.

In the study of Canaanite and Israelite religion, the differences between diviners and prophets have been stressed without giving enough attention to the similarities (Overholt 1989:117). A greater awareness of these similarities can contribute to the understanding of the ideological/theological account in the Hebrew Bible on how communication was facilitated between God and Israel. The choice for a specific way of determining the will of God or the gods in any given historical situation is not only religiously motivated, but must also be seen in its larger cultural and ideological context.

This paper will pay special attention to the relationship between divination and prophecy according to Deut 18:9-22 and will emphasize their similar functions as repositories and interpreters of religious tradition and as sources of divine knowledge. The proposal by Cryer (1994:327) will be considered that the Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic strictures against divination must not be seen as a blanket prohibition against divination, but "as a means of restricting the practice to those who were 'entitled' to employ it, that is, to the central cult figures who enjoyed the warrants of power, prestige ..."

The argument will be put forward that the "Prophetic law" in Deut 18:9-22 constituted a Deuteronomic redefinition of prophecy in terms of the Torah and with Moses as archetype . At first it constituted a critique against the prolific diversity of divination in Babilonia which endangered prophecy as the most important remaining means of communication between God and the exiles. At the same time the strong cohesion with the Torah enabled the priests in exile to continue their role as religious intermediaries. It will also be argued that during post-exilic times the centralizing of the cult in the second temple in Jerusalem led to a renewed critique of the manifestations of divination which resisted the centralizing process and proliferated all over Palestine.

2. EXEGETICAL NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 18:9-22

The so-called "prophetic law" in Deut 18:9-22 forms part of Deut 16:18-18:22 which deals with different authoritative figures in Israel, such as judges, priests/Levites, kings and prophets (Collins 1993:128-129).

Deut 18:9 starts with a historisizing introduction that alludes to the entry into Israel and it prohibits any imitation of the "abominations" or "detestable ways" found there. The use of *(to'ebot)* is frequently used in Deuteronomy to refer to religious and cultic objects that are repulsive to God (7:25-26; 12:31; 13:14; 14:3; 17:1,4).

The reference to child sacrifice in verse 10 might be associated with the Ammonite god Molech (Lev 18:21; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35) and with divination and sorcery (2 Kgs 17:17; 21:6). Recent research has also pointed to the association of the Molech cult with the worship or veneration of the dead (Heidner 1985; Day 1989). Then follows a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, list of forbidden forms of divination (18:10b-11):

- *qosēm qesāmîm* is a generic reference to "practitioners of divination" and the first of numerous necromantic allusions in verses 10-11 (Merrill 1994:271). According to Moore (1990:49) the root is fairly widely used in Ammon (Jer 27:3,9; Ezek 21:34), Phoenicia (Jer 27:3,9) and Philistia (1 Sam 6:2) with regards to knowing the future; it is also connected with false prophecy in Ezek 13:6 (Stacey 1990:252-253). It is significant that *qosēm* is used in the Balaam cycle (Num 22:7; 23:23) and when Saul asks the spirit medium of Endor to establish contact with the dead Samuel the root *qsm* is also employed (1 Sam 28:8). There are also interesting necromantic parallels between Saul and the Hittite Mursilli II (Moore 1990:47).

- *mᵉᶜōnēn* are "those who cause to appear" (assuming the *Poᶜel* participial form of *ᶜnn* is used) and these diviners or sorcerers had the ability to make things appear such as a group of people who looked like the shadows of a mountain - again the possibility of some necromantic form of divination (Judg 9:36-37). A similar Arabic root means "to speak through the nose" and might suggest ecstatic behaviour or

incantations (Mayes 1979:280-281). According to the Hebrew Bible this form of divination is not only attested in Israel (Lev 19:26; 2 Kgs 21:6; Mic 5:11) but also in Mesopotamia (Isa 2:6; Jer 27:9).

- *m^{e}naḥēš* is the interpreter of omens or augur who divined by means of a cup (Gen 44:5) or the words of others (1 Kgs 20:32-33). Again this practice is not only found in other countries (Gen 30:27; 44:5; Num 23:23; 24:1; 1 Kgs 20:33) but also in Israel - which would make sense of prohibiting it (Lev 19:26; 2 Kgs 17:17; 21:6).

- *m^{e}kašēp* points to someone who engaged in sorcery or witchcraft and was able to perform signs (Exod 7:11) and sometimes mislead people (Mal 3:5). Blenkinsopp (1995:13) suggests that it was predominantly a female specialization because it is generally associated with female persons or personifications (Exod 22:17; 2 Kgs 9:22; Isa 47:9,12; Nah 3:4). There is a possible link with the Akkadian *ki swpu* which designated the practice of magic and with rabbinical literature where it often refers to the casting of a spell (Cryer 1994:258).

- *ḥobēr ḥābēr* means literally "the binder with a band" and indicates how curses could be used by a charmer or spell caster to bring people under control (Ps 58:5; Isa 47:9,12). Ps 58:6 might allude to snake charming and Isa 47:9,12 refer to the occurence of this form of divination in Babylonia (Blenkinsopp 1995:13).

- *šo'ēl* is a medium who as the "asker of the spirit" communicated with and gained information from the dead like the spirit medium of Endor (1 Sam 28:3,8; Isa 8:19). There is a slight possibility that *'ôb* might refer to ancestor worship but the suggested revocalisation seems to be forced (Tropper 1989:312-316).

- *yidd^{e}ʿōnî* seems to be a spiritist and is also associated with necromancy like the medium (Lev 20:6,27; 1 Sam 28:3,9; 2 Kgs 21:6; Isa 8:19). The ambivalent attitude towards divination in Israel is well illustrated by these references to divinatory practices: Manasseh is reported to have dealt favourably with mediums and spiritists (2 Kgs 21:6), whilst Josiah got rid of them (2 Kgs 23:24). Saul is probably the personifica-

tion of this duality by "cutting off" mediums and spiritists and in the end taking recourse to them (1 Sam 28:3-25).

- *dorēš hammētîm* is someone "who consults the dead" and Merrill (1994:272) suggests that it might be used as a concluding or summary term for necromancy (Isa 8:19; 11:10; 19:3). It is significant that the list of eight divinatory practices end with this generic reference to necromancy. Five of the divinatory references have to do with the interaction between the living and the dead (Blenkinsopp 1995:11).

Deut 18:12 indicates that the preceding references to divination were "abominations" or "detestable to the Lord". The use of "abominations" in both verses 9 and 12 creates an interpretive frame for the catalogue of divinatory practices in verses 10-11 (Seitz 1971:239; Zobel:1992:193). Mayes (1979:281) is convinced that verses 9 and 12b function as a Deuteronomic framework for the "older material" in between.

My contention is that the prohibition of divination entails more than the provision of reasons for the loss of land in Israel's distant past. It is possible that it had an ironic message to the exiles in Babilon who had recently lost their land due to divinatory practices similar to the "Canaanites", and who were again surrounded by multiple forms of Babilonian divination.

Very little attention has been given to the possibility that the expected return from exile to Palestine was related to the narratives connected with the initial entry into the promised land. Much attention has been given to how Deuteronomy addresses the questions arising from the traumatic loss of land and temple with the exile. Almost no consideration has been given to the possibility of an exilic context for Deuteronomy that anticipates a return to the promised land in the near future and that this return is related to the initial entry.

The call in Deut 18:13 to be "blameless" or "upright" forms a strong contrast with the "abominations" of the preceding verses and constitutes the positive alternative (Merrill 1994:272). Although *tāmîm* is often used in Priestly literature (Gen 6:9;17:1; Ps 18:23,25), its usage in Amos prohibits the simple conclusion that it is a later addition to the text (Rüterswörden 1987:83). Seitz (1971:239-240) and Mayes (1979:282) con-

sider the use of *tāmîm* and the summary character of the verse enough evidence that it was a later addition. To my mind the contrast with the preceding verses and the anticipation of the following section argue against verse 13 being a later addition (Zobel 1992:196; Schäfer-Lichtenberger 1995:91). Braulik (1992:135) sees this verse as an expression of the essence of the prophetic message:"die vollkommene Gemeinschaft Israels mit seinem Gott".

The contrast between Israel and the nations mentioned in verses 9 and 12, is continued in Deut 18:14 and all three verses start with kî. Gradually the religious identity of Israel is expressed in opposition to the other nations and closely connected to this description of identity is the use of *šm*^{c} in verses 14,15 and 19 (Zobel 1992:196). Gertz (1994:31) identifies verses 14 and 15 as the most important part of the "prophetic law" where the promise of the prophet as God's alternative to the diviners is given.

A general reflection on the history and significance of Israelitic prophecy is found in Deut 18:15 (Mayes 1979:282). Both here and in verse 18 the sentences starts with *nābî'* in stark contrast to the previously mentioned diviners (Sawyer 1993:16). The "raising" of a prophet is interpreted in a distributive sense and therefore more than one prophet will be called in future and to all of them obedience (ie significant use of *šm*^{c}) are due (Rose 1994:102). These prophets will be "from your midst" (*miqqirb*^{e}*kā*), *"from your brothers" (me'ahekā)* and be "like me" (*kamonî*). By means of three narrowing concentric circles the identity of the future prophets are described as being Israelite/Jewish and "like Moses" (Schäfer-Lichtenberger 1995:93). At this point it is significant to keep in mind that the calling of Moses in Ex 3 is strongly reminiscent of the prophetic call narratives.

In Deut 18:16 Israel's fearful refusal at Horeb/Sinai to listen to God (Ex 20:18-21; Deut 5:23-27) is utilised as legitimation for the prophetic office (Phillips 1973:126). No direct communication with God is possible and by requesting Moses to act as mediator the necessity of an intermediary in general is emphasized (Craigie 1976:262).

Deut 18:17 corresponds closely to 5:28 and with the first half of verse 18 echoing verse verse 15, provide a good example of contextualized inner-biblical exegesis (Braulik 1992:136). The prophet is identified as the spokesperson for God in obvious distinction to the diviners (Craigie

1976:262). 'ᵃṣawwennû refers to the very personal communication between God and the prophet and is often used in so called "deuteronomistic" sections of Jeremiah (1:7,17; 14:14; 23:32; 26:2; 26:8; 29:23). At the same time it must be noted that the verb *ṣwh* is also utlized in Deuteronomy in connection with the giving of the law/torah. Thus an important equivalence between prophecy and torah is indicated (Rüterswörden 1987:86-87).

At the beginning of Deut 18:19 *wᵉhāyāh* suggests the start of a new section, but the content seem to be closer to the preceding discussion on true prophecy than to the following section on false prophecy (Mayes 1979:282). The office of the prophet commands so much authority that any disobedience towards the prophet would be understood as disobedience to God (Merrill 1994:273).

According to Deut 18:20 there seem to be two kinds of false prophets: the prophet who speaks without receiving a message from God and a prophet speaking in the name of another god (Deut 13:1-11). Both categories commit apostasy and have to be executed (Deut 13:5; Jer 28:15-17). Similar categories of false prophets are mentioned in Jeremia (23:13,21) and Ezekiel (13) and the reason for the second category might be a polytheistic context within Israel or the Babylonian society during the exile. This presupposes a "waw adversativum" in *waᵉšer*, while the more likely reading of a "waw explicativum" will refer to only one category seen from two perspectives (Schäfer-Lichtenberger 1995:98). Then there are not two categories of false prophets but the parallelizing of characteristics of the same type of false prophet.

The rhetorical question in Deut 18:21 articulates in the first person plural a concern about the ability to distinguish between true and false prophets and the criteria suggested presupposes an understanding of prophecy determined by the ability to "declare in advance what is to happen" (Mayes 1979:283). By concentrating on foretelling as the most important aspect of prophecy, very little difference between prophecy and divination can be distinguised - more about this aspect later in the paper (Rose 1994:104). Although the criteria seem to be clear the lack of any time-limit for the possible fulfilment of a certain prophecy makes it very difficult to apply in practice (Phillips 1973:126).

Deut 18:22 seems to suggest that the cases under consideration belong to the near future and that makes it possible to establish prophetic trustworthiness without undue delay (Driver 1902:230).

Schäfer-Lichtenberger (1995:102) distinguishes "four paragraphs" in Deut 18:9-22, without implying that 18:9-22 cannot be interpreted as a whole:

- 18:9-14 is a collection of prohibitions of diviners that is based on Israel's relationship with God;
- 18:15-18 point to the prophets as the intermediaries between God and Israel in direct contrast to the diviners;
- 18:19-20 consist of the consequences resulting from the previous prohibitions;
- 18:21-22 is the conclusion that corresponds to Deut 17:8-13.

Mayes (1979:219-283) has detected a continuity in Deut 12:29-18:22 which might be the result of careful editing by using the warning against the idolatry of the nations in the promised land as an introduction and by concluding with a similar warning against the divination practised by the same nations in Deut 18:9-14. A theme underlying the whole section is formulated in Deut 13:1, "See that you do all that I command you; do not add to it or take away from it" (Collins 1993:127-128). No final answer can be given to the question whether the continuity is the result of literary style or if it is an indication of a later (Deuteronomistic?) redaction.

It seems as if the traces of editorial activity is unmistakeble in Deut 18:9-22 but that it need not be understood as being part of the Deuteronomistic redaction or be linked to the Josianic reform. The general character of the instruction found in Deut 12-26 is much more of a religious or cultic nature and is not reminiscent of a state or political reform (Perlitt 1994:186-192). Rüterswörden (1987) is probably correct that it does not constitute a political program but that it concerns a religious community. This religious community could be either in exilic Babilonia or in post-exilic Palestine.

One should, however, be careful not to exclude the importance of power and hierarchical position within the Israelite religious community. If Deut 12-26 was written by members of the Israelite religious community, it was most probably written to their own advantage and at the expence of rivals such as the diviners - ie a matter a power and the maintenance of authority and influence. It is theologically significant how this maintainance of religious influence was achieved.

The recommendation of prophecy and the rejection of divination (with strong necromantic indications) in Deut 18:9-22 is positioned in the middle of Deut 12-26 (Blenkinsopp 1995:15). This is taken to be an indication of the theological and ideological significance of the juxtaposition of prophecy and divination and the resulting redefinition of prophecy in terms of Deuteronomic law/torah. The more immediate context of Deut 18:9-22 is the instruction concerning the impartiality of the judicial system (16:18-20), limiting the powers of the king (17:16-20) and establishing the economic independence of the levitical priests (18:1-8). This gives the impression that prophecy is now closely linked with and legitimated (in a redefined way) as one of the official offices that would function in the promised land (Blenkinsopp 1977:42).

An intriguing aspect of Deut 18:9-22 is the high frequency of necromantic references and it is possible that a cult of the dead or ancestor veneration and worship played an important role in divination. This possibility looks more likely if one keeps Kaufman's (1979:105-158) argument in mind that the sequence of the Decalogue was the organizing principle for the laws or instruction in Deuteronomy 12 - 16. This would imply that the references to prophecy in Deut 13:1-5 form part of the explication of the first commandment (no other gods), whilst the fourth commandment (honoring the parents) is presupposed in Deut 18:9-22 which form part of the deuteronomic scheme of leadership and the distribution of power (Olson 1994:64,84).

3. DIVINATION IN DEUTERONOMY 18:9-22

1. Divination in ANE and Israel

Israël has been depicted in recent research as a "magic society" and in many ways similar to other societies in the ANE where magic formed

the backdrop against which divination was practised (Cryer 1994:324). To take one example: sympathetic magic played a fundamental role in the religious festivals of the religions of the ANE and although research has been somewhat tentative in this regard, a similar trend can be discerned in Israel - ie the sacrifice for Azazael (Roberts 1977:182).

This tentative attitude towards interpreting Israel as a "magic society" is due to a resistance against the utilization of a socio-anthropological category "magic", which is considered theologically derogatory or even inferior (Cryer 1991:83-84). Old Testament research must face up to the fact that sometimes even Israelite prophets behave like magicians when they cause axe-heads to float and order bears to devour children (Hutton 1995:248).

Mesopotamian divination has been inadequately characterized as different methods of tricking or coercing deities into revelation. The typical Mesopotamian divination which examined the entrails of sacrificial animals (extispicy) entailed the discovery of some micro-cosmic reflection of the world in the entrails of the sacrifice (Goetze 1968:25-29).

Divination in the ANE was practiced by both priests and prophets and any distinction between the two groups of intermediaries anywhere in the ANE (including Israel) should be done with great circumspection. The traditional clear distinction between divination as a manipulative and technical activity and prophecy as something free and imbued with inspired charisma, cannot be upheld today with any real conviction (Barstad 1993:47).

In Syro-Palestine divination was geographically widespread and technically diverse and there is no reason why Israel should have been any different. Bronze arrowheads found in Phoenicia have been dated around the end of the second millenium and indicate for example the practice of some form of cleromantic divination (Moore 1990:47-8). Israelite divination was hierarchically organised with many competing forms of divination at lower levels of society and in some instances Israelite divination had access to the centres of power in society - like the king (Cryer 1994:329).

Balaam provides a good example of a religious practitioner ("seer/diviner/prophet") who saw and heard divine visions and thereafter laid

claim to the articulation of divine will (Num 22-23). The Aramaic or South Canaanite Balaam text from Transjordanian Deir 'Alla, (dated between 800-700), reports a prophecy of Balaam which he received from the gods and which concerns a meeting of the Divine Council in which the gods expressed their displeasure over the unnatural state of affairs on earth (Hackett 1984:125).

It should also not be taken for granted that in the ANE prophecy always had priority over and above divination. Although prophetic priority may be suggested by Deut 18:9-22, it must be remembered that diviners in Mari had to test the veracity of prophetic pronouncements (Enc of Religion vol 12 1987:8).

2. Critique against divination

In Deut 18:9-22 divination and prophecy are juxtaposed with the result that prophecy is redefined to provide an alternative to divination and magical practices. The impact of the juxtaposition can be appreciated when examples of an earlier equivalence between divination and prophecy in the Hebrew Bible is taken into consideration when soothsaying and fortune telling were seen as part of prophetic activity: Isa 8:16-23; Mic 3:5-8 (Carroll 1989:210; Pedersen 1991:125).

During the exile both Jeremiah (29:8) and Ezechiel (13:17-9,23; 22:28) bracket divination with prophecy. This may suggest that the existing Israelite form of prophecy (resembling divination in many ways) fought a losing battle against the allure of Babilonian divination and magic (Blenkinsopp 1984:182).

The Deuteronomistic and Priestly critique against divination must not be interpreted as a general prohibition against all forms of divination, but as method to restrict the practice to those who were entitled to employ it (Cryer 1994:327). A similar critical attitude against divination can be found in the Balaam traditions where Balaam is parodied as an "unseeing seer" (Num 22-23). Balaam is depicted as someone who fails the test of his profession when even the donkey can see the "angel of the Lord" (Marcus 1995:37).

4. PROPHECY IN DEUT 18:9-22

Any study concerning the history of Israelite prophecy must heed the warning that it is "riddle wrapped in a mystery" (Wilson 1987:1). After a brief general discussion of prophecy in the ANE and Israel, the specific view of prophecy in Deut 18:9-22 will be evaluated from three perspectives: the role of Moses as archetype, the difference between true and false prophecy, the influence of deuteronomic/deuteronomistic thought.

1. Prophecy in ANE and Israel

During the past century Israelite monotheism has been seen as the result of the prophetic message and the prophet was thought of as a divinely instituted office and as being the opponent to the king, the rich, the priest and false prophet in ancient Israel (Deist 1989:2). Historical criticism has led to this trend in scholarship that emphasized change in the Israelite notion of prophecy as something to be distinguished from other forms of intermediation.

Recent research has been more informed by the social sciences and has pointed to continuity between prophecy, intermediation in general and its social context (Petersen 1991:190-193). The seemingly obvious distinctions between prophecy and other forms of intermediation are in need of serious rethinking and the future study of Old Testament prophecy should be much more aware of the societal and ideological forces that influenced and shaped the message of the prophets (Deist 1989:15-18).

Many of the "obvious distinctions" presuppose a professional differentiation between diviners, prophets, priests and sages. Although religious functions can be distinguished, this in itself do provide enough evidence for the establishment of different religious "professions" (Grabbe 1993:59-60). Professions are established when similar functions are performed by a group of religious specialists sharing the same support group.

Prophecy should not be understood as one-way communication between God and Israel through the individual prophet. The prophet is not only an intermediary between God and his people, but also the articulator of what is accepted to be the will or word of God by a particular group. This identification of the word of God is part of the

group's self-understanding and reflects the ideologies inherent in that religious entity (Mayes 1993:39-40).

Deut 18:9-22 seem to understand prophecy as something which will happen in the future, correspond to priestly instruction and that will make the different forms of divination superfluous (Schmidt 1989:190).

2. Role of Moses as prophetic model or example

Deut 18:15-18 promises that future prophets will be like Moses and that God will speak through them. In general the attribution of legal material in the Pentateuch to Moses can be interpreted as an indication that it was "in the spirit of Mosaic regulations" (Fishbane 1985:537).

Who or what was Moses? This is not easy to answer because different aspects are highlighted in different parts of the Hebrew Bible. In Exodus his call narrative contained the usual prophetic elements of human hesitation and divine commission; he acts as messenger of God in his frequent communications with pharaoh and the people using the so-called prophetic formula; he acts as an religious intermediary by receiving the law and the covenant on Sinai/Horeb; but he also is depicted as a miracle worker.

Moses was also recognized as a prophet outside the Pentateuch - a good example is in the book of Hosea (12:13). This is significant because it stood in contrast with a certain disregard for prophets in Israel at that time (Hos 4:5; 6:5; 9:7).

It is significant that the so-called "prophetic law" in Deuteronomy explicitly uses Moses as a role model. Moses, the prophet, is depicted in Deut 18:16 as the intermediary who received the Torah at Sinai/Horeb and who was responsible for the proclamation of the Torah in the form of three Mosaic speeches on the plains of Moab (Miller 1990:154-56; Hermisson 1995:136).

There are several possible reasons suggested by recent research for the exceptional importance given to Moses in Deuteronomy. One of these was that he provided a fundamental alternative to a powerful monarchy (Clements 1990:77). Another possibility was that Moses was seen as the expounder of the dictates he as intermediary had communicated to Israel.

His speeches in Deuteronomy repeat what has already been said in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

I hypothesize that there was a power draining blurring of the religious functions of diviners and prophets in Israel and that the priestly community coopted the prophets to enhance their own power base by using Moses as a model to link prophets and priests - thereby eliminating diviners (Carroll 1992:91; Grabbe 1993:44-45). (A comparison between Moses and Balaam as prophetic figures will be a cause worthy of future endeavour).

3. True or false prophets?

Deuteronomy seems to provide clear criteria according to which one can distinguish between true and false prophecy. According to Deut 13:1-2 the performance of signs and wonders was important, while 13:3-5 indicate that conformity with previous revelation is the test (Kaiser 1989:32). In Deut 18 Israelite membership (18:18), speaking in the name of God (18:19) and the prediction of the near and distant future become the acid tests for prophecy (18:22). However, taken within the Deuteronomic context as a whole, the instruction or Torah of God (as reflected in Deuteronomy) become the most important criterium of "true" prophecy in Deut 18 (Hermisson 1995:136).

I would like to argue for the possiblity that Deut 13:1-2 reflects a pre-exilic view of prophecy that allowed for the overlapping with divination - ie the performing of signs and wonders. This overlapping is made impossible by the exilic juxtaposition of divination and redefined prophecy as corresponding to deuteronomic instruction in Deut 18.

The redefinition of prophecy against the background of maintaining power can also be described in relation to patronage - especially in Deuteronomy where the covenant is such an important theological concept. It is worthwhile to determine whether some of the characteristics of patron-client relations feature in Deut 18:9-22 (Chow 1992:30-33):

- There seem to be an "exchange relation" between God, the authors of Deuteronomy and the prophets. The prophet is recognized as one of the "officials" of Israel and prophetic authority is acknowledged (18:15

"you must listen to him"). In return divination and sorcery are not permitted and the prophet must only speak what God commands him/her to say.

- An "assymmetrical relation" exists between God (as well as the authors of Deuteronomy) and the prophets. The initiative is clearly on God's side who can decide what to command a prophet and determine if a prophetic pronouncement will come true.

What was the real test of true prophecy? The deuteronomic redefiners of prophecy provided an alternative to the usual: did it come true? To put it in anachronistic philosophical terms: the maintainance of the correspondence between the prophetic word and the eventual realities of history proved to be of little use, while the deuteronomic redefinition of coherence within the framework of existing instruction made much more sense.

Nohrnberg (1995:32) sees Deuteronomy as "packaged" prophetism by attempting to restrict prophecy to the words of a specific unified version of the instruction/Torah. This depiction of prophecy might ring true but it does not presuppose that Moses instituted some office of covenant mediator.

Deut 18:19-22 characterizes the Mosaic type of prophet as one whose oracles are fulfilled. Fishbane (1985:536) is of the opinion that this definition of a true prophet was not only intended as a principle for prophetic authenticity, but also served to dissuade the indiscriminate use of prophecy.

The directives concerning the use of prophecy and the characterization of prophecy are symptomatic of an attempt to control the power that went with religious intermediation in Israel. The question remains, by whom and for what purpose?

4. DEUTERONOMISTIC/DEUTERONOMIC TRADITION?

Some recent commentaries on Deuteronomy still adhere to de Wette's proposal in 1805 that part of Deuteronomy 12-26 functioned as basis for

Josiah's reform (Braulik 1992). The link between Deuteronomy and Josiah was later on identified with a first redaction during the late Judaean monarchy, which was then followed by a second exilic redaction (Cross 1973; Nelson 1981).

The assumption that the Josianic Deuteronomy can be traced in chapters 12-26 has been questioned by Steuernagel (1900), Minette de Tillesse (1962) and Lohfink (1965) due to a certain stylistic unity in the book as a whole. It is therefore not a foregone conclusion that Deut 18:9-22 was part of a Deuteronomistic redaction - be it Josianic or exilic (Christensen 1991:l -li).

Zobel (1992) proposes a process of adaptation in Deuteronomy that applied the prophetic teaching within new circumstances - the exile. Where the pre-exilic prophets proclaimed doom and gloom, Deuteronomy reshaped it into a summons to repentance. To my mind he oversimplifies pre-exilic prophecy as predominantly announcements of impending disaster, and the depiction of the Deuteronomic transformation into summonces of conversion does not take the redefinition of prophecy in Deut 18:9-22 into regard.

To answer why Deuteronomy redefined prophecy in Deut 18, one must decide whether the book was intended as the constitutional law for a future state after the return from exile, or as a homiletical work that tried to reform individual attitudes (Mayes 1993a:15). I would opt for the latter, but in a qualified way. The individual attitudes of the members of the religious community in exile are addressed and it is done in the form of religious propaganda against the practitioners of divination for the benefit of the priestly community, as the custodians of Israelite religion and culture (Frick 1995:79-80).

It is of interest to note that the seer/prophet/diviner in Chronicles also becomes an "official" of the state: advising kings (1 Chron 21:9), recording history (1 Chron 29:29), involved with music (1 Chron 25:5) and administrative tasks (1 Chron 9:22). This is also reflects a post-exilic trend to incoporate this type of religious practitioner within the central religious and political power structures (Moore 1990:60).

5. CONCLUSION

Despite all the obvious advantages to a comparative approach to divination and prophecy, Wittgenstein's warning must still be taken seriously: "comparison is, at base, never identity".

This paper argues that Moses as role model for prophets provided the link between prophets and priests that was sought by religious leaders who wanted to centralize power in the Jerusalem temple - before and especially after the exile. This was achieved by depicting their rival intermediaries, the diviners, as being detestable to God. At the same time prophecy was redefined to comply with the priestly instruction/torah as reflected in the book of Deuteronomy.

To conclude: if Barton (1986:270-273) is correct in his assumption that there was a break between "classical" pre-exilic prophecy ("a living and continuous tradition") and post-exilic prophecy ("a closed container in which the unalterable words of the prophets are preserved"); then much more attention must be given to the redefinition of prophecy in Deut 18:9-22 which linked "true" prophecy with priestly instruction and consolidated the religious power base of the Second Temple.

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