Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets : a comparative study of the earliest stages of the Isaiah tradition and the Neo-Assyrian prophecies

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CHAPTER 6

FROM PROPHECY TO LITERATURE

This chapter explores the early stages of development of the Isaianic material and compares it with the development of the Assyrian prophecies. In the first part it will be argued that a substantial revision of the Isaianic material can be situated in the late seventh century during the reign of Josiah. The revision was carried out against the background of the decline of Assyria's power and its loss of grip on Syria-Palestine, which fuelled an anti-Assyrian, nationalistic spirit. Those responsible for the revision believed that the events of their time, Assyria's decline and Judah's relative independence under Josiah, proved the prophet Isaiah right. The revision of the Isaianic material turned the prophet Isaiah into a mouthpiece of state ideology, glorifying the reign of Josiah as an ideal time. This development of the Isaiah tradition will be explored from two angles. First, from the angle of the early prophetic material: through the revision, the prophetic material developed into literature. Second, from the angle of the revision material: the revision has a literary character, but resembles or imitates the prophetic genre. It can be qualified as a literary derivative of prophecy.

In the second part of this chapter I discuss the prophetic material from seventh-century Assyria,[1] from the same two angles. First, the development of prophecy that becomes literature will be explored. The texts to be discussed in this respect consist of prophetic oracles that once were orally delivered and afterwards found their way into literature. Examples of this development include the formation of oracle collections, the inclusion of oracles in royal inscriptions, and the elaboration of oracles into literary texts. Second, the phenomenon of literary texts deriving from prophecy will be discussed. This concerns texts that are literary in origin but that closely relate to the genre of prophetic oracles. These texts may be regarded as literary derivatives of prophecy. In addition, some attention will be paid to a handful of texts that may be designated as pseudo-prophecy or pseudo-predictions. These are to some extent literary imitations of prophecy.

This chapter will conclude that there is a strong analogy between the Isaiah tradition and the Assyrian prophetic texts with regard to their respective development. The first parallel concerns the phenomenon of prophecy becoming literature. In both cases we find originally

[1] Among the other examples of prophecy becoming literature, the Deir 'Allā plaster inscriptions take an important position. Weippert (1991: 177-178) refers to them as a literary collection, providing an analogy to the Assyrian collection tablets of SAA 9 1 and 2; for recent views on the Balaam inscription: Weippert 1991; Dijkstra 1995; Lemaire 2001b: 96-101.

orally delivered oracles that were documented, preserved, and included in collections or compendia. In both cases we see examples of prophecy finding its way into literature, in the form of elaborations of oracles or as prophetic texts. Whereas oracles originally referred to a specific situation, secondarily they became part of a broader perspective. The second parallel relates to the phenomenon of literary derivatives of prophecy. In both cases we see texts that are literary in origin that resemble or imitate the prophetic genre. In both cases these texts provide interpretations of historical events by means of the thesis that it is God – be it Aššur, Ištar, or Yahweh – who decides the course of the events. Both the Assyrian texts and the revised Isaiah tradition express a close relationship between the king and the gods. The texts depict an ideal situation in which the reign of the king is in complete agreement with the will of the gods and, in this way, represent official ideology.

6.1 The Development of the Isaiah Tradition in the Seventh Century

6.1.1 The Hypothesis of a Seventh-Century Revision

The suggestion of a late seventh-century revision of the Isaianic material was put on the exegetical agenda by Hermann Barth,[2] and has played a role ever since in the study of First Isaiah (see chapter 1.1.2). The suggestion makes sense for the following reasons.

1) It is commonly agreed that the Isaianic material, the prophetic heritage from the eighth century, was developed and expanded during the exilic and post-exilic periods. It is likely that this process of development already started as early as the pre-exilic period. Instead of passing from the eighth century to the sixth, scholars should take into account the seventh century as a stage in the development of the Isaiah tradition.[3]

2) A range of passages from First Isaiah reflects, as will be argued below, the circumstances of the late seventh century.[4] The passages are characterised by two motifs: (a) the downfall and destruction of Assyria, and (b) the restoration of Judah, in particular the appointment of a new Davidic king. Both aspects are presented as the work of Yahweh. These passages are likely to be of a pre-exilic origin. The motif of the downfall and destruction of Assyria reflects the historical situation of the late seventh century. Since the Isaiah tradition has its roots in the Assyrian period it is reasonable to understand 'Assyria' as Assyria (not as a *chiffre* for some later empire), in particular where Assyria is portrayed as a political-military superpower.[5] Furthermore, the passages focusing on the reign of the ideal king (9:1-6, 11:1-5 and 32:1-2) are likely to be pre-exilic as well because of their connection with the Davidic kingship ideology and their interest in human kingship.[6]

3) The passages under examination are to be attributed to a later (seventh-century) revision of the Isaiah tradition, because they cannot be plausibly related to the earliest layer,

[2] Barth 1977.
[3] See in particular Barthel 2003: 135.
[4] The list of texts I attribute to the seventh-century revision (Isa 9:1-6; 10:10-11*.16-19.26a.27a.33-34; 11:1-5; 14:24-27*.28.32; 18:1-6; 30:27-33*; 31:4-5.8-9; 32:1-2, and see chapter 2.4), to a significant extent corresponds with that of Barth, Clements, and others; see chapter 1.1.2. In the first part of this chapter, I proceed with the hypothesis of a seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition by presenting my analysis of this revision.
[5] Höffken 2004: 133-134.
[6] Williamson 1998a: 10-11.

consisting of prophetic material relating to historical episodes of the late eighth century. There are essential differences, with regard to both form and content, between the eighth-century material and the seventh-century revision. Whereas the eighth-century material goes back to prophetic words that initially were orally delivered, the revision material consists of scribal texts without any oral background. Furthermore, whereas the eighth-century material describes Assyria as the current superpower, the seventh-century revision focuses on Assyria's downfall. This difference will be elaborated in 6.1.5.

4) Any reconstruction of the development of the Isaiah tradition is necessarily hypothetical. In this chapter however I hope to demonstrate that the late seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition is more than just an attractive possibility, by taking the following steps. 1) I discuss the earliest version of the story of Hezekiah and Sennacherib (6.1.2), because here we find portrayals of the prophet Isaiah and Assyria that clearly date from the seventh century. It will be argued that the seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition continued the development started by this story, which makes the late seventh century a plausible setting for the revision. 2) I present the historical circumstances of the seventh century, focusing on the reign of Josiah (6.1.3). It will be shown not only that the motifs of the revision fit the situation of the late seventh century, but also that Josiah's reign is otherwise marked as well as a 'new beginning', just as is the case in the passages portraying the reign of the ideal king. 3) An analysis of the passages attributed to the seventh-century revision demonstrates that they form a thematically coherent and consistent whole (6.1.4). Furthermore, it is plausible that the Isaianic material was revised in the form of three compilations (see chapter 2.4). 4) As will be argued in 6.1.5, the texts attributed to the seventh-century revision bear a clear redactional imprint. It will be argued that they cannot belong to the same level as the eighth-century prophetic material. 5) The traditio-historical background of the revision is found in the state ideology of monarchic Judah (6.1.6). This supports a) the pre-exilic provenance of the revision; b) the likelihood of a scribal origin of the revision; c) the difference between the seventh-century revision and the eighth-century prophetic material, since the latter is less close to the imagery of Judah's state ideology. 6) Finally, it will be shown that the development of the Isaiah tradition in the seventh century and later, from a historical point of view followed a logical course (6.1.7). These steps show, in my view, that the suggestion of a seventh-century revision is the most plausible explanation for the earliest stages of development of the Isaiah tradition.

6.1.2 The Story of Hezekiah and Sennacherib

Clements was the first to point out a close connection between the Hezekiah stories (2 Kgs 18-20, Isa 36-39) on the one hand,[7] and the presumed seventh-century redaction of the Isaiah tradition on the other.[8] For the argument of this chapter, the connection is relevant. One part of the Hezekiah stories, dealing with Jerusalem's deliverance, is often labelled the B1-story (2 Kgs 18:17-19:9a.36-37; the term B1 is explained below). This story dates, as

[7] The relationship of the two parallel versions and the question of which version is primary has been the subject of ongoing debate. Gonçalves (1999) argues that the version of 2 Kings is older; see also Van der Kooij 2000: 107, note 1.

[8] Clements 1980b; 1991. Neither Barth (1977) nor Vermeylen (1977-78) discusses this connection. Cf. Barth 1977: 4, note 5.

we will see, from the seventh century. The story provides insight into the seventh-century image of the prophet Isaiah, the view of Assyria, and Judah's state ideology of the time. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated, the revision of the Isaiah tradition, to be situated in the late seventh century, in important respects corresponds to the seventh-century reception of 701 as it appears in the B1-story. The relevance for the present survey is the following. Since the B1-story dates from the seventh century, and since the material from First Isaiah on which the first part of this chapter focuses can be seen as being in continuity with the B1-story, the suggestion to regard this material as a seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition becomes all the more likely.

According to a well-known view, the story of Hezekiah and Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18-19) consists of three different parts, which have been labelled part A (18:13-16), B1 (18:17-19:9a.36-37), and B2 (19:9b-35).[9] Although the account as a whole, 18:13-19:37, can be read as an ongoing story,[10] it clearly consists of three distinct parts.[11] Whereas part A contains an early account of the events of 701 (see chapter 4.1.7), 18:17-19:37 presents a later literary account. The earliest part of this literary account is the so-called B1-story, which dates from the seventh century BCE. The passage 19:9b-35 (B2) is a later extension to the B1-story,[12] which in all likelihood dates from the sixth century.[13] For the present purpose I concentrate on the B1-story. This story narrates the threat posed to Jerusalem in 701 and the city's rescue through Yahweh's intervention. The climax of the story is the murder of Sennacherib, back in Assyria (19:37), which happened in 681 (see chapter 4.2.1). According to the story, Sennacherib was murdered in his country because he offended Yahweh and threatened Jerusalem.[14] This can be shown by an outline of the story:

18:17-35	The Rabshakeh boasts on behalf of Sennacherib and threatens Jerusalem: - Egypt cannot save Jerusalem - Yahweh cannot save Jerusalem
19:1-5	Hezekiah reacts in shock; the prophet Isaiah is consulted
19:6-7	Isaiah delivers a prophecy of encouragement: - Sennacherib will return to Assyria because of a rumour he hears - He will die violently in his own country
19:8-9a.36-37	Thus it happens: - Rumour of the coming of Taharqa of Cush causes Sennacherib's retreat - In Assyria he is murdered by his sons

The murder of Sennacherib is presented as Yahweh's punishment for an offence committed in 701: Sennacherib's threat to Jerusalem and insult of Yahweh.[15] The connection between the events of 701 and 681 makes sense in light of the logic of the time: a negative fate for a

[9] See particularly Gonçalves 1986: 351-354 and 355-487.
[10] See Van der Kooij 2000: 107-111, esp. 109; Smelik 1992: 101-123.
[11] Van der Kooij 2000: 107-108.
[12] Van der Kooij 2000: 108-109; Van der Kooij 1986: 107-108.
[13] Na'aman 2000: 393-402; Na'aman 2003: 201-220; Clements 1991; Gonçalves 1986: 480.
[14] Van der Kooij 2000: 118; cf. Clements 1994: 242-243.
[15] Van der Kooij 2000: 118.

king was seen as a sign of divine wrath for a grave offence.[16] Yahweh punished Sennacherib because of his arrogant provocation.[17]

It was of course a bold claim that Sennacherib's death in 681, in the temple of his own god and by the hands of his own sons, was due to Yahweh's intervention.[18] In my view, the events of 701 could only be re-interpreted this way if the concept of Yahweh as sovereign king of the earth protecting Zion against enemy threat, already existed. The fact that Jerusalem was spared in 701 may of course have added to Jerusalem's status, and the re-interpretation of the events in the Hezekiah story (B1) may have given an impulse to the belief of Jerusalem's inviolability. Nevertheless, this re-interpretation of the events was only possible because the belief that Yahweh protected Zion, and by implication Jerusalem, already existed.[19]

Since the view of 701 as expressed in the B1-story was provoked by the violent death of Sennacherib in 681, the story should be dated not too long after Sennacherib's death, around the middle of the seventh century BCE.[20] The story presents an image of the prophet Isaiah as a supportive figure, who encouraged Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem in the threatening situation of 701. Furthermore, it presents an image of the Assyrian superpower headed by Sennacherib, as being arrogant and offensive towards Yahweh; Yahweh however frustrates the Assyrian campaign and causes the violent death of Sennacherib (19:7). Finally, the story is revealing regarding Judah's state ideology, in presenting Hezekiah as a pious king and Yahweh as sovereign king of the earth, who protects Jerusalem and punishes those that threaten her. The B1-story shows points of connection with the Isaiah tradition, in particular with the seventh-century development of the Isaiah tradition.

First, the B1-story can to some extent be seen as being in continuity with the eighth-century Isaianic material. The B1-story contains motifs and themes that play an important role in the earlier prophetic sayings attributed to Isaiah. At the heart of both the B1-story and the critical sayings of Isaiah lies the conviction that only Yahweh can save. The boast of the Rabshakeh closely resembles that of Assyria in Isa 10:8-9.13-14 (cf. in particular 2 Kgs 18:34 and Isa 10:8-9). Further points of resemblance are the scornful depiction of Egypt as a worthless ally (2 Kgs 18:21, 24; Isa 28:15-18; 30:1-5*.6-8; 31.1.3*) and the

[16] The inscription of Nabonidus explains Sennacherib's murder as Marduk's revenge for Sennacherib's violence against Babylon in 689 (Babylon Stele l. 1'-41'; Schaudig 2001: 515-516, 523); see Van der Kooij 2000: 118.

[17] See 2 Kgs 19:4, 6. Ollenburger (1987: 79) points out that arrogance towards Yahweh is the proverbial sin according to the Zion tradition.

[18] 2 Kgs 19:7b, 'I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land'.

[19] Contra Clements 1980b: 83-84; Amit 2003: 367; Wanke 1966a: 93-99. Since Jerusalem in 701 BCE was blockaded but not assaulted by storm and frontal attack (see Van der Kooij 1986: 93-109), it is quite unlikely that the events of 701 led to the invention of the *Völkerkampf*-motif and the concept of Jerusalem's inviolability.

[20] Gonçalves 1986: 440-441; Van der Kooij 2000: 116-117. Furthermore, as Van der Kooij (2000: 114) shows, the B1-story plays with the role of Egypt/Cush. Whereas the Rabshakeh boasts that Egypt cannot save Jerusalem, the mere rumour of the coming of Taharqa, king of Cush, suffices for the Assyrian retreat. Taharqa's title 'king of Cush' points to the seventh-century provenance of the B1-story, since Taharqa was king from 689-664 BCE, and in this capacity was considered a fearsome opponent by the Assyrians.

criticism of Judah's plan (עֵצָה) to rebel against Assyria (2 Kgs 18:20; Isa 29:15; 30:1-2). However, a huge difference is that Isaiah's criticism of 705-701 is put into the mouth of the enemy, and that it is through a rumour about the Cushite king of Egypt that Yahweh saves Jerusalem. Furthermore, there is tension between Isaiah's critical sayings relating to 705-701 (28:7b-10.15-18*; 30:1-5*; 31:1-3*) and the portrayal of Isaiah in the B1-story. On the other hand, Isaiah's role in the B1-story is in complete agreement with his role during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, reflected by the oracles of 7:4-9a*, 14b.16, 8:1-4 (see chapter 4.1.2). The composer of the B1-story may have been familiar with (some of) the prophetic words attributed to Isaiah, but used them in a creative way for his own purposes. In the B1-story, the prophetic role is incorporated into a perspective of state ideology, with Yahweh as sovereign king of the earth and Hezekiah as a pious king. Isaiah is depicted as a supportive, encouraging prophet. This is not in complete disagreement with the eighth-century Isaiah tradition,[21] as appears from the oracles relating to 734-732. The difference in outlook from his critical sayings of 705-701 can be explained as resulting from the development of a seventh-century reinterpretation of the events of 701, which cast Isaiah in a particular role in conformity with the current state ideology.

Whereas the B1-story can be dated round the mid seventh century, a revision of the Isaiah material is best situated in the late seventh century. This late seventh-century revision is consistent with the perspective of the B1-story. Whereas the punishment of Assyria in the B1-story is restricted to the frustration of the campaign and the violent death of Sennacherib, the revision of the Isaiah tradition expands this to a general destruction of Assyria. This development reflects the historical situation of the late seventh century. The gradual decline of Assyria's power and its loss of grip on Syria-Palestine (see below) reinforced an anti-Assyrian view in Judah. Furthermore, a significant similarity in outlook between the B1-story and the revision of the Isaiah tradition lies in the portrayal of Isaiah. In both traditions, the figure of Isaiah has become a mouthpiece of the official, royal perspective. In the B1-story, Isaiah encourages the king ('do not fear', 2 Kgs 19:6) and announces rescue and an evil fate for the aggressor. In the revision of the Isaiah tradition, the destruction of Assyria makes room for a Judaean king, presented as an ideal ruler, which effectively makes the prophet Isaiah a spokesman for the glorification of the king. I like to emphasise that this portrayal of Isaiah is not inappropriate, as it is in agreement with the role of prophets in the ancient Near East in general and with Isaiah's role during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis in particular. The incorporation of Isaiah within a royal ideological perspective however meant a limitation of the prophetic role to that of supporter of the king and his politics. In reality, prophets were more than that, as appears from the evidence from Mari, Assyria, and, not least, from Isaiah's sayings from 705-701. Significantly, a similar process of narrowing down the prophetic role to that of mouthpiece of the royal perspective is apparent in Assyria, as will be shown in the second part of this chapter. Both the B1-story and the seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition are marked by a royal ideological perspective. This suggests that both are likely to originate from a royal scribal milieu, just as most of the prophetic texts from Assyria.[22]

[21] Contra Smelik 1992: 126; Blenkinsopp 2000b: 21.
[22] Cf. Van der Kooij's suggestion (2000: 117) that the B1-story was composed by members of the intellectual elite in Jerusalem.

The B1-story is important for the discussion of a seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition. The B1-story brings us to the mid-seventh century and offers glimpses of the seventh-century image of Isaiah, of Assyria, and of the state ideology. The revision of the Isaiah tradition is consistent with the B1-story, but goes one step further, in the light of the historical developments of the late seventh century, to which we turn presently. Because of this continuity, the B1-story offers considerable support to the plausibility of a late seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition.

6.1.3 History of the Seventh Century and the Reign of Josiah

The International Scene

After Sennacherib's campaign of 701 Hezekiah reverted to a submissive stance towards Assyria, in which his successors followed.[23] In the seventh century, Judah went through a process of recovery, enjoying the economic prosperity shared by the entire region under Assyrian rule.[24] During his long reign, Manasseh was submissive to Assyria and apparently considered a loyal vassal by both Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.[25] Judah's dependence on Assyria implied sharing in the *Pax Assyriaca* and profiting from international trade.[26]

Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal conducted several military campaigns against Taharqa, ruler of the Cushite (25th) Dynasty,[27] whose policy of interference in Palestine and Phoenicia brought him into conflict with Assyria (see chapter 4.2.4).[28] After the successful campaign in 671, local rulers of Lower Egypt were brought under Assyrian rule. Among them was Necho I (671-664) of Sais.[29] After Taharqa re-established his rule in the Delta region, Ashurbanipal defeated him during his first campaign (667 BCE). Afterwards, Delta rulers that had taken the side of Taharqa were punished by Ashurbanipal, but Necho's position was strengthened by his appointment as governor of Memphis.[30] When Taharqa's successor Tanwetamun invaded Egypt and took Memphis,[31] Necho opposed him but was killed. In his second campaign to Egypt (664/663) Ashurbanipal conquered Thebes. Tanwetamun fled Nubia and the 25th dynasty of Egypt ended.[32] Necho's son Psammetichus I ascended the throne as a vassal of Assyria. He succeeded in extending his rule to the

[23] Evans 1980: 166.
[24] Lipschits 2005: 10-11; Finkelstein 1994.
[25] Manasseh occurs in Esarhaddon's inscriptions in a list of twenty-two kings characterised as 'kings of the Ḫatti-lands and the sea-coast' (Borger 1956: 60, Nin. A-F v 55). These kings transported materials and treasures to Nineveh for the building of a palace. A similar reference to the 'kings of the Ḫatti-lands and the sea-coast', relating to the building of an Assyrian trade centre in Phoenicia, probably includes Manasseh again (Borger 1956: 48, Nin. A ii 65-82). In Ashurbanipal's inscriptions Manasseh appears again in a list of the same twenty-two kings, who joined Ashurbanipal's first campaign against Taharqa (Borger BIWA: 212, Prism C ii 60-67).
[26] Lipschits 2005: 11.
[27] For the Cushite (25th) dynasty, see Morkot 2000; cf. also Schipper 1999: 199-228. For the reign of Taharqa, see Török 1997: 171-184.
[28] Schipper 1999: 218-221.
[29] Lipschits 2005: 21-22.
[30] Taylor 2000: 359; Onasch 1994: 151-154; Lipschits 2005: 22.
[31] For the reign of Tanwetamun, see Török 1997: 184-188.
[32] Onasch 1994: 91-145, 154-158; Schipper 1999: 223-224; Lipschits 2005: 23.

entire Delta, and by 656 he had brought Upper and Lower Egypt under his control.[33] Officially an Assyrian vassal he effectively founded the Saite (26th) Dynasty.[34] Psammetichus became increasingly independent and at a certain point ceased paying tribute to Assyria.[35] Yet, he apparently remained an ally of Assyria, and there is no evidence of hostility between the two kingdoms.[36] Assyria was preoccupied with Babylonia and Elam and did not take action against Psammetichus but accepted him as king of Egypt.[37]

Due to gaps in our sources the political events of the second half of the seventh century are difficult to reconstruct.[38] At the point where the Babylonian Chronicle resumes (626 BCE), Assyria no longer is a supreme imperial force, but a monarchy struggling for survival.[39] It is difficult to ascertain at which point Assyria had to give up its rule of Syria-Palestine. The last clear evidence of Assyrian rule dates from the 640s,[40] but it is mostly assumed that Assyria's control over Syria-Palestine ended after the death of Ashurbanipal (631).[41] The years following his death are marked by a struggle for the throne in Assyria. In the mean time, the Chaldean Nabopolassar became king of Babylonia, and Assyrian efforts to defeat him failed. In 623, the Assyrian prince Sin-šar-iškun eliminated his rival Sin-šum-lišir and acceded to the throne in Assyria. However, he was not able to restore Assyria's supremacy. Assyria's withdrawal from Syria-Palestine is usually connected with this troubled period (c. 630-623).[42]

Na'aman has suggested that after Assyria withdrew from the region, Egypt established its rule in Syria-Palestine as a 'successor state'. In his view, Egypt inherited Assyria's territory beyond the Euphrates in exchange for military aid in the war against the Babylonians and the Medes.[43] This explains why Psammetichus in 616 and 610,[44] and Necho II in 609 came to the aid of the Assyrians.[45] Despite Egyptian support, Assyria was overrun by its enemies. After the cities Assur and Nineveh had fallen, the last Assyrian king, Assur-uballiṭ for some years held out in Harran. Necho II came to his aid, but Assur-uballiṭ was defeated in 609, which ended the Assyrian empire.[46]

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[33] Schipper 1999: 228; Lipschits 2005: 23-24.
[34] Taylor 2000: 371.
[35] Psammetichus' detachment from Assyria is reflected in an inscription of Ashurbanipal referring to Psammetichus as 'who had thrown off my yoke' (Prism A ii 114-115; BIWA: 31). Cf. Onasch 1994: 158. This however did not lead to Assyrian sanctions.
[36] Lipschits 2005: 24.
[37] Schipper 1999: 229.
[38] The archives of the second part of Ashurbanipal's reign (640 BCE onwards) are not preserved. The Assyrian Eponym Canon breaks off at 648 BCE, and the Babylonian Chronicle has a lacuna between 669 BCE (accession of Šamaš-šum-ukin) and 626 BCE (accession of Nabopolassar); see Grayson 1975a: 10, 86-88.
[39] Stern 2001: 131.
[40] Stern 2001: 4.
[41] For this dating, see Na'aman 1991c: 243-267; Lipschits 2005: 13, with note 39.
[42] Na'aman 1991b: 38.
[43] Na'aman 1991b: 33-41; cf. Lipschits 2005: 27-29.
[44] See Smith 1991: 108; but cf. Lipschits 2005: 25, note 99.
[45] Na'aman 1991b: 38-40; Schipper 1999: 230.
[46] Veenhof 2001: 275-276; Lipschits 2005: 17-20. Dalley (2003: 25-28) challenges the view of the 'end' of the Assyrian empire and the 'beginning' of the Babylonian empire. In her view, Nabopolassar and his successors continued the tradition of the late Assyrian kings and regarded

Josiah's Reign: Questions of Territorial Expansion and Religious Reform

Earlier studies describe Josiah's reign (640/39-609 BCE) as a golden age characterised by huge territorial expansion and great religious reform, but more recently it has been argued that this picture needs correction.[47] When Assyria withdrew from Syria-Palestine in the last third of the seventh century, Egypt established its rule in the region.[48] The view that after Assyria's withdrawal Josiah took advantage of the political vacuum by expanding his kingdom in all directions, does not hold.[49] According to Na'aman's reconstruction,[50] under Josiah, Judah's northern border was extended a little northward from the Geba-Mizpah line to the Bethel-Ophrah line.[51] However, it is unlikely that the northward expansion extended as far as to the Samarian hill country.[52] Furthermore, expansions to east, south, and west are unlikely or at least uncertain.[53] The overall situation suggests that Josiah's territorial achievements were only modest.[54]

The image of Josiah as a reformer king whose religious reformation was a decisive stage in the development of Israelite religion, needs reconsideration too. Whereas part of the description of Josiah's reform in 2 Kgs 23 is likely to go back to an early source,[55] the portrayal of Josiah's actions as a religious reformation and the supposed link with the book of Deuteronomy, belong to a later editorial stage.[56] It has been suggested that within 2 Kgs 23:4-20 distinction can be made between purification or reorganisation of the Jerusalem temple cult on the one hand, and measures pertaining to cult centralisation and the abolition of 'high places' on the other.[57] Various literary-critical studies have shown that the early account of Josiah's reform deals with the purification and reorganisation of the temple cult, whereas a later composer/editor inserted additions concerning the illegitimate character of the 'high places' (23:5.8-9.13-14.19-20) and references to specific kings (Manasseh, 23:12; Solomon, 23:13; Jeroboam, 2315).[58] The early account was more or less the following:[59]

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themselves as heirs to their throne. Dalley is right that the Assyrians did not completely disappear from the scene, but the Assyrian empire evidently was brought to an end (Kühne 2002). Cf. Nabopolassar's view on his achievements: 'The Assyrian, who had, because of the wrath of the gods, ruled the land of Akkad and who had oppressed the people of the land with his heavy yoke (...), with the mighty strength of Nabû and Marduk my lords, I chased them (the Assyrians) out of the land of Akkad and caused (the Babylonians) to throw off their yoke' (translation Al-Rawi 1985: 5, i 28-ii 5).

[47] In particular Na'aman 1991b.

[48] Lipschits 2005: 27, following Na'aman 1991b: 40.

[49] Lipschits 2005: 136, with note 7; Na'aman 1991b: 41-51.

[50] Na'aman 1991b, and the recent update by Lipschits 2005: 135-140.

[51] Na'aman 1991b: 25; Lipschits 2005: 135.

[52] Lipschits 2005: 137-138.

[53] Na'aman 1991b: 41-50; Lipschits 2005: 135-140; cf. also Schipper 1999: 232.

[54] Na'aman 1991b: 55-58; Lipschits 2005: 136. In the reconstruction of Judah under Josiah, town lists from the book of Joshua (Josh 15:21-62; 18:21-28), play an important role (Lipschits 2005: 135-136, with note 3; Na'aman 1991b: 8-13). De Vos (2003: 527-528, 532-533) however argues that the basic layer of Josh 15:21-62; 18:21-28, is better connected with the reign of Manasseh than with that of Josiah.

[55] See Knoppers 1994: 176-181.

[56] Uehlinger 1995: 71, note 64; Würthwein 1976: 414-415.

[57] See particularly Uehlinger 1995: 71-74.

[58] Arneth 2001: 206-207, with note 52; Würthwein 1976: 418.

[4*] The king commanded the high priest Hilkiah, the priests of the second order, and the guardians of the threshold, to bring out of the temple of Yahweh all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron
[5*] He deposed the *kĕmārîm*-priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained (to make offerings) to the sun, the moon, the constellations, and all the host of the heavens.
[6*] He brought out the image of Asherah from the house of Yahweh, outside Jerusalem, to the Wadi Kidron, and burned it at the Wadi Kidron.
[7] He broke down the houses of the *qĕdēšîm* that were in the house of Yahweh, where the women did weaving for Asherah.
[11] He removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of Yahweh, by the chamber of the eunuch Nathan-Melech, which was in the precincts; then he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.
[12*] The altars on the roof (of the temple), which the kings of Judah had made, the king broke in pieces.

Uehlinger has shown that most of the measures mentioned in this account from a religious-historical point of view can be plausibly situated in a late seventh-century context.[60] Although the precise content of the account remains a matter for debate,[61] in particular the measures mentioned in verses 5, 11 and 12 have been plausibly connected with a temple 'reform' under Josiah.[62] Significantly, it is exactly in these verses that the actions of Josiah are presented in contrast to the deeds of his predecessors, 'the kings of Judah'. The account does not simply contain a series of measures, but presents a programme. Josiah discontinued various practices that were introduced by his predecessors.

Broadly speaking, Josiah's reform can be understood as the elimination of cultic practices that had lost plausibility in the light of major changes on the political map and the accompanying economic and cultural reorientation.[63] However, an explanation of the reform out of purely economic motives downplays its religious and political significance.[64] The measures reflect a restriction of the state cult to the service of Yahweh. The contrastive references to 'the kings of Judah' (verses 5, 11 and 12) point to the innovative character of the measures. Josiah abolished certain cultic elements that had been introduced into the Jerusalem temple cult by his predecessors. This reorientation is likely to be connected with the discontinuation of Assyrian rule. The reform account to some extent presents Josiah's cultic measures as the mark of a new era, which coincided with a new political situation of relative independence. The new era was contrasted with the preceding period, characterised by Assyrian supremacy and cultic innovations of 'the kings of Judah' that had now been abolished. This is not to say that these cultic practices had been imposed on Judah by

[59] I am grateful to Arie van der Kooij (Leiden) for giving me his analysis of 2 Kgs 23:4-20 (unpublished), which generally resembles the view presented here.
[60] Uehlinger 1995: 74-83.
[61] Cf. Uehlinger (1995: 83, note 116) doubting the early provenance of 23:4*; Hollenstein (1977: 325-335), reducing the early account to 24:4, (5), 11-12.
[62] Uehlinger 1995: 74-83.
[63] Uehlinger 1995: 80.
[64] Cf. Arneth 2001: 208-209, note 61. Contra Uehlinger 1995: 80.

Assyria,[65] nor that the reform account is anti-Assyrian propaganda.[66] Rather, the measures represent a new orientation exclusively focusing on Yahweh as the national god. The reform is anti-Assyrian in an indirect way: the demand of exclusive loyalty to the Assyrian king and his god Aššur secured by the loyalty oath was turned into an exclusive loyalty to Yahweh.[67] By contrasting Josiah's cultic measures to the deeds of his predecessors, who had been under Assyrian dominion, the account presents Josiah's reign as a new era.

Josiah's Reign: Ambitions and Ideology

Josiah's reign was, in all likelihood, perceived as a glorious time. First of all, Assyria lost its supremacy and withdrew from Syria-Palestine. With the collapse of Assyrian rule Judah regained part of its political independence. It has been suggested that after Assyria's withdrawal, Egypt established its rule in Syria-Palestine.[68] However, since Egypt's main interest lay in the coastal areas of Philistia and Phoenicia,[69] Josiah had room to manoeuvre. For two decades (c. 630-610) Judah enjoyed a relative freedom and independence, which ended with the reign of Necho II (see below). The collapse of Assyrian dominion and regaining of independence were the ingredients of the portrayal of Josiah's reign as a glorious time. However small the territorial achievements, Josiah's political ambitions may have been considerable.[70] A boost to nationalistic ideology may have fuelled the hope, however unrealistic, of a Judaean takeover of regions abandoned by the Assyrians. It is quite likely that at this stage, the image of the Davidic king as the guardian of justice and righteousness and overlord of the surrounding nations was popular, and that the hope of a 'Great Israel' was blooming.[71]

The early account of Josiah's 'reform' can be understood from a similar perspective. This account presents the deeds of Josiah in contrast to that of his predecessors and hence characterises Josiah's reign as a new and felicitous era. The relative political freedom following the Assyrian withdrawal was enough to portray Josiah's reign as a new beginning: the yoke of the oppressor had been broken, a new king ruled in glory. This is precisely the perspective of the revision of the Isaiah material to be situated in this period, as will be shown in the following section.

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[65] The view that the Assyrians imposed their cults on the people they subjected, has been refuted by Cogan 1993; Smelik 1997; Holloway 2002.

[66] Contra Arneth 2001.

[67] This view concurs to some extent with the thesis of Otto (1998), that the covenant theology of Deuteronomy and Exodus originated from an application of the *adê* (loyalty oath) with the Assyrian king to Yahweh. Otto situates this development, the transfer of exclusive loyalty from the Assyrian king to Yahweh, during the reign of Josiah, and suggests a connection with the reform of Josiah. See Otto 1998: 42-50, 60-63.

[68] Na'aman 1991b: 33-41; cf. Lipschits 2005: 27-29.

[69] Lipschits 2005: 25-29, 137. According to Schipper (1999: 230-233), during the reign of Psammetichus I, Egypt's rule of Palestine was restricted to Philistia and the Negev.

[70] Sweeney 1996b: 110, with note 20.

[71] See the royal ideology as expressed in Psalms 2 and 72, and the image of Solomon as 'sovereign over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, even to the border of Egypt' (1 Kgs 4:21). Cf. Finkelstein 2003: 89, 91.

When Necho II ascended the throne (610 BCE) the political situation changed.[72] Necho's efforts to intensify Egyptian rule in Syria-Palestine involved Judah too.[73] Josiah's death, described in 2 Kgs 23:29, can be understood in the light of the changes in Egyptian policy:

> In his (i.e. Josiah's) days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria,[74] to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him (וַיֵּלֶךְ לִקְרָאתוֹ), but as soon as he (Necho) saw him, he killed him, at Megiddo (וַיְמִיתֵהוּ בִמְגִדּוֹ כִּרְאֹתוֹ אֹתוֹ).

The view that Josiah tried to block off the Egyptian army that came to the aid of the Assyrians, and that he lost his life in battle (cf. 2 Chron 35:20-24) is unlikely. First of all, 2 Kgs 23:29 does not refer to a battle.[75] Furthermore, Josiah had no reason to attempt to stop Necho passing through, since Judah was not threatened and would not stand a chance against Egypt.[76] Another interpretation is preferable.[77] In 610 Necho had succeeded Psammetichus. On his way to the Euphrates to aid the Assyrians, he took the opportunity to let Palestine rulers make obeisance to him,[78] and perhaps to make them join his army with their troops. Josiah went to Megiddo because he was obliged to pay his respects to Necho, but as he appeared before him, Necho had him executed. The motive for this probably was Necho's dissatisfaction with the amount of freedom Josiah had taken. Josiah had taken advantage of the power vacuum following the Assyrian retreat by strengthening his kingdom and perhaps modestly expanding it. His political ambitions and the nationalistic propaganda that thrived irritated the Egyptian king. With Josiah's execution, Necho showed that under his rule the bonds of vassalage would be tightened. This was not an incident but part of Necho's vassal policy. After the war of 609, Necho set up his quarters in Riblah and from there probably established his rule over the Levant.[79] Jehoahaz of Judah, who had succeeded his father Josiah, was ordered to Riblah. Necho took him prisoner to Egypt and he appointed Eliakim, another son of Josiah, to the Judaean throne (2 Kgs 23:33-34). To conclude, Josiah's death can be seen in light of the clash between Judah's political ambitions and nationalist ideology, and Necho's policy of tightening his grip on Syria-Palestine.

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[72] Lipschits 2005: 25.
[73] Schipper 1999: 233; Lipschits 2005: 29.
[74] The expression עלה עַל here not means 'to march against', but 'to come up to'. According to the Babylonian Chronicle, the Egyptians came to the aid of the Assyrians (Grayson 1975a: 19, 96).
[75] As Schipper (1999: 235) points out, וַיֵּלֶךְ לִקְרָאתוֹ in most cases is not used in a military sense; in the few cases it is used in a military sense, it denotes the marching out of the army, never a military clash. Schipper concludes that it 'sicherlich nicht zu Kampfeshandlungen gekommen ist'.
[76] Williamson (1982b; 1987) argues that 2 Chron 35:20-25 goes back to an earlier source, according to which Josiah died while opposing Necho in battle (cf. however the criticism by Begg 1987; Na'aman 1991b: 54, note 69). Even if this is accepted, it must be questioned whether this source is reliable or rather a digression of 2 Kgs 23:29-30. On the other hand, if Josiah *did* attempt to block off Necho's army, it confirms the overconfident and nationalistic mood that characterised his reign.
[77] Following Na'aman 1991b: 51-55.
[78] Na'aman 1991b: 51-52.
[79] Lipschits 2005: 32. Cf. 2 Kgs 23:33.

6.1.4 Themes and Motifs of the Seventh-Century Revision

The prophetic sayings of Isaiah relate to various episodes of the late eighth century (see chapter 4.1). It is likely that his words were preserved in writing and kept in an archive in Jerusalem.[80] The Isaianic material was presumably preserved in the form of several small collections of oracles and sayings,[81] each of which pertained to a particular period: 1) the prophetic words of Isa 7*, 8* and 17:1b-3 relate to 734-732; 2) the words of Isa 10* and 14:29.31; 28:1-4 relate to 720; 3) the words of Isa 28-31*, 18-19*, 22*, and 5:8-23*; 10:1-2 relate to 705-701.

The initial written accounts of Isaiah's words may have involved some editorial activity.[82] However, I focus on what may be regarded as a first substantial revision of the Isaiah material. In my view, such a revision can be detected and attributed to the late seventh century. This section contains a survey of the textual material from First Isaiah that reflects the circumstances of the late seventh century and can be attributed to a revision of the Isaiah tradition. The material is characterised by two central themes: the destruction of Assyria carried out by Yahweh, and the reign of a new Judaean king. After this thematic survey, section 6.1.5 deals with the redactional character of this material, focusing on the seventh-century material as a revision of the earlier, prophetic material. Finally, in section 6.1.6 the traditio-historical background of the revision is explored.

The present discussion of the seventh-century revision builds on (and corroborates) the suggestion of the three compilations, discussed in chapter 2.4. The discussion is not repeated here, but a schema of the three compilations is presented.

	compilation 1	compilation 2	compilation 3
Dating formula	6:1	14:28	20:1-2*
Prophetic commission	6:1-8	14:28-32	20:1-5*
Early prophetic words	7:2-3a*.4-9a*, 14b.16, 20; 8:1-4; 17:1-3*	28:1-4; 10:5-15*, 24-25*, 28-32*	28:7b-18*; 29:15; 30:1-8*, 15*; 31:1-3*; 18:1-2*; 19:1b-4; 22:15-18; 5:8-23*; 10:1-2
Comments	8:9-10; 17:12-14	14:24-27; 10:11, 16-19, 26-27*, 33-34;	18:1-6; 30:27-33; 31:4-5.8-9
Portrayal of ideal king	9:1-6	11:1-5	32:1-2

Destruction of Assyria

The first motif of the revision is the destruction of Assyria through Yahweh's intervention (9:3-4; 10:16-19; 10:33-34; 14:25; 30:31-33; 31:8-9). Yahweh destroys Assyria; no human

[80] Cf. Nissinen 2005: 170-172. On archives, or a library, in Jerusalem, see Davies 1998: 62; Na'aman 2006.

[81] See Davies 2000: 72-76; Knauf 2000: 3. For the existence of other kinds of collections, cf. Prov 25:1.

[82] An example of this may be 10:5-15*: the original word of 10:5-9.15a was at an early stage extended to 10:5-9.13-15 (see chapter 2.3.2).

agent is mentioned. The principal means of destruction is fire: Yahweh burns Assyria down.[83] Furthermore, he smites Assyria with a rod (30:31) and raises a whip against Assyria (10:26).[84] 30:27-33 in particular describes Yahweh's violent intervention, by means of fire, cloudburst, tempest and hailstones (30:27-28a, 30). Other motifs of destruction are the imagery of Assyria as wood or trees being destroyed by Yahweh (10:18-19; 10:33-34), Yahweh breaking the yoke (9:3), removing the burden (10:27), and breaking and trampling the Assyrians (14:25).

In Assyrian imperialistic ideology the 'yoke', *nīru*, is an important metaphor.[85] In Assyrian inscriptions 'the yoke' (either that of the king or that of the god Aššur) always is the Assyrian yoke depicting Assyria's dominion.[86] The 'yoke' in Isa 9:3, 10:27, and 14:25b,[87] similarly reflects Assyria's dominion. However, in these texts the Assyrian yoke is not just thrown off, but 'broken' (9:3) and 'destroyed' (10:27). This can be regarded as a counter-ideology to the Assyrian yoke imagery.[88]

An important aspect of these texts is the fundamental difference between Yahweh and Assyria. Assyria is wood, Yahweh a mighty axe (10:34); Assyria is not destroyed by man, but by the sword of someone not a man (31:8). Assyria is powerless against the might of Yahweh. When Yahweh takes action Assyria falls (10:34; 31:8). The contrast between Yahweh and Assyria is manifest in the use of חתת: Assyria is deadly afraid of the voice of Yahweh (מִקּוֹל יהוה יֵחַת; 30:31), but Yahweh is not at all afraid of their (Assyria's) voices (מִקּוֹלָם לֹא יֵחַת; 31:4).

Assyria's destruction is set in an international perspective. Yahweh's actions against Assyria are presented as integral part of his worldwide rule. Yahweh's dealing with Assyria (14:24-25; 30:30-33; 31:8-9) is connected with his worldwide authority and supremacy over the world of the nations (14:26-27; 30:27-29; 31:4-5). 8:9-10 and 17:12-14 can be understood in this light too. These passages, describing the fate of the enemy nations, are marked by an international perspective too. Assyria's 'roar' (הֲמוֹן 31:4) resembles that of the nations (הֲמוֹן 17:12). Both Assyria and the nations are deadly afraid of Yahweh (חתת 30:31; 31:9 and 8:9), and both Assyria and the nations flee when Yahweh intervenes for the sake of his people (נוס 31:8 and 17:13). Yahweh's dealing with Assyria is part of his worldwide dealing with enemies threatening Judah. 8:9-10 and 17:12-14 leave open the

[83] The words used are 'fire' (9:4; 10:16, 17; 30:27, 30, 33), a 'fire' that 'consumes' (10:17; 30:27, 30), 'fire' and 'furnace' (אוּר and תַּנּוּר in 31:9). Cf. also the connection of 'light' (אוֹר in 9:1 and 10:17) with the fire motif.

[84] For עור po. 'to set in motion', 'to arouse', cf. Akk. *êru* D (*kakki*) 'to waken, to arouse (weapons)'.

[85] From Tiglath-pileser III onwards, the yoke-metaphor occurs with increasing frequency in the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings, indicating Assyria's worldwide dominion (see Ruwe and Weise 2002). By contrast, of the Neo-Babylonian kings only Nabonidus uses the yoke-metaphor in this way (see Vanderhooft 1999: 25, note 75).

[86] In the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser, Sargon and Sennacherib the yoke-metaphor is used for people who have been brought under Assyrian dominion. In the inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, the motif of 'throwing off the yoke', indicating rebellion against Assyria, occurs as well. In various contexts the yoke is imposed on people, they drag it, they are submitted to it, and, occasionally, are accused of throwing it off. See Ruwe and Weise 2002: 281-291.

[87] Whereas 9:3 and 10:27 belong to the revision, 14:25b could be a later elaboration based on 9:3 and 10:27 and added when 14:24-27 received its present position separate from the material of Isa 10.

[88] Ruwe and Weise 2002: 297-301.

identity of 'the nations' involved, for the following reason. These passages comment on the prophetic material of 7:4-9a, 7:14b.16 (8:9-10) and 17:1b-3 (17:12-14). Since these prophecies deal with Aram-Damascus and Ephraim-Samaria as Judah's enemies, they are implied in the commentary of 8:9-10 and 17:12-14 as well. Furthermore, however, as part of the seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition, 8:9-10 and 17:12-14 apply to Assyria too.[89] This becomes evident in 9:1-6, which likewise belongs to the revision of the Isaianic material relating to 734-732. In 9:3-4, the enemy is not specified either, but the description leaves no doubt that Assyria is in mind. The message is that all aggressors will be dealt with in like manner. From the perspective of the eighth-century prophetic material, this means Aram and Ephraim; from the seventh-century point of view this means Assyria.

In the descriptions of the fate of Judah's enemies, focusing on Assyria, the so-called *Völkerkampf*-motif figures prominently.[90] Assyria is cast in the role of the 'enemy nations' typical of the *Völkerkampf*-motif. This motif, part of the Jerusalem cult traditions of the monarchic period is applied to Assyria (see 6.1.6 below). The seventh-century revision presents Yahweh's actions against Assyria as demonstrating his worldwide dealings. His intervention follows from the protection of his abode Zion, and, by extension, Jerusalem (31:4-5), that is threatened by the aggressors. This traditio-historical background may explain why the Assyrian downfall is located in the land of Judah, more precisely in Zion and Jerusalem (14:24-25; 31:8-9). A central conviction of these texts is that Yahweh governs the international scene. Important in this respect is the reference to Yahweh's plan. This plan, which involves his dealing with the whole world, will be executed; no one can block it off. Yahweh's plan is contrasted with the evil plans of the nations, which are annulled by Yahweh (14:24, 26-27; 8:10). Yahweh's plan for Assyria is part of his plan concerning the whole world (14:24-27).

Assyria's punishment is followed by a joyous celebration of the Judaean people. The disappearance of the Assyrians leads to a cultic celebration, in 30:27-33 (verses 29, 32) and in 9:1-4. The motif of 'happiness' (שִׂמְחָה) occurs in 9:2 and 30:29. In 9:2 this is qualified as happiness *before Yahweh* (שָׂמְחוּ לְפָנֶיךָ), corresponding with the joyous celebration of 30:29, 32. The celebration is compared to 'the joy of the harvest', and the happiness of dividing booty.[91] Both in 9:3 and 10:26 the fate of Midian functions as an image to emphasise the terrible destruction of Assyria. According to 9:3, Yahweh has crushed Assyria's power 'as on the day of Midian', whereas in 10:26, Yahweh raises a whip against Assyria 'like the slaughter of Midian at Rock Oreb'. 9:3 and 10:26 present parallel phrases marked by a similar ideology. The defeat of Midian functions in a similar way in Psalm 83, a hymnal expression of the *Völkerkampf*-motif.[92] In this psalm, 'the enemies' conspire against 'Yahweh's people' in order to 'wipe them out as a nation' (83:3-6). Mentioned are Judah's neighbours, e.g. Edom, Moab, Ammon and the Philistines, and 'also Assyria has joined them' (83:9). After the description of the threat posed to Yahweh's people, there follows in verses 10-13:

[89] Cf. Van der Kooij 1990: 7-8.
[90] For this motif, see Steck 1972: 17-19; Janowski 1989: 185-187.
[91] The shared point is the reaping or collecting of both harvest and booty.
[92] Weber (2000: 72-75) dates this psalm to the Assyrian period, and situates it in Jerusalem.

> Do to them as you did to Midian, as to Sisera and Jabin at the Wadi Kishon, who were destroyed at En-dor, who became dung for the ground. Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, 'Let us take the pastures of God for our own possession.'

Both in 9:3 and 10:26 and in Psalm 83, the focus is on Yahweh's intervention: he is to destroy the enemy nations that threaten his people as he once destroyed Midian. In both cases, Yahweh's violent intervention is rooted in his position as sovereign king of the world (Ps 83:19). It seems clear from 9:3, 10:26 and Psalm 83 that, at least by the late seventh century, the destruction of Midian served as a paradigm for the terrible fate of Judah's enemies.

Judah's Restoration

In addition to the motif of Assyria's destruction, the seventh-century revision is characterised by the theme of Judah's restoration. The main aspect of Judah's restoration is the reign of a new king, in 9:5-6, 11:1-5, and 32:1-2. Here as well, it is Yahweh who achieves this.[93] By eliminating Assyria, Yahweh creates room for a new Judaean king. Significantly, the king is presented only after Yahweh has broken the power of Assyria: 9:5-6 follows 9:1-4, 11:1-5 follows 10:33-34, and 32:1-2 follows 31:8-9. In 9:1-6, the connection between Assyria's removal and the new king's rule is marked by the parallel of 9:3 and 9:5: after the Assyrian yoke is removed from the *shoulder* (9:3), authority is put on the new king's *shoulder* (9:5). In the case of 10:33-34 and 11:1-5, there is a syntactical connection: first, Yahweh cuts down the majestic Lebanon (i.e. Assyria, 10:33-34), then the shoot of Jesse comes out (11:1, *wĕqatal*) on whom Yahweh lets his spirit rest.[94] Finally, in 31:8-9 and 32:1-2, although there is no syntactical connection, the sequence is similar. The beginning of 32:1-2 (*hēn*) reacts to the *woe*-sayings that prominently figure in the compilation of which 32:1-2 forms the conclusion. With regard to its content, 32:1-2 continues 31:8-9: after Yahweh has cleared the way by eliminating Assyria, there is room for a new Judaean king.[95]

Whereas Yahweh brings about Assyria's destruction, the new king is described as an ideal king, who rules in justice and righteousness. The king rules in conformity with Yahweh's governance, as the executor of Yahweh's just rule (11:2-3), as Yahweh's deputy.[96] Where Yahweh smites Assyria with a rod (30:31), the righteous king smites the oppressors with the rod of his mouth (11:4). Furthermore, the just rule of the king conforms to Yahweh's standards with respect to the care for the weak. In 14:32, Zion is presented as a refuge for the needy founded by Yahweh, and in 30:29, Yahweh is referred to as the 'Rock of Israel'. Similarly, the ideal king is a hiding place and a shelter for his people, and a rock (32:1-2). The king is the rightful heir to the throne: he represents the continuation of

[93] This is explicated in 9:6b, 'this the zeal of Yahweh Zebaoth will do'. The demonstrative זאת refers to the infinitives of 9:4-5, that are presented as Yahweh's actions; Ruwe and Weise 2002: 298-299.
[94] Beuken 2002: 18, 22.
[95] According to 31:9, Assyria's rock (סֶלַע), its king, shall pass away in terror, and its functionaries (שָׂרִים) shall flee. In 32:1-2, the Judaean king and the officials (שָׂרִים) are like a protective rock (סֶלַע).
[96] Williamson 1998b: 259.

the throne and the kingdom of David (9:6). According to 11:1 the king is not only descended from the house of David, but a new David himself.[97] Furthermore, the king is presented as wise, pious, and righteous. He is attentive to Yahweh's will and executes Yahweh's standards. He is powerful and a guardian of the peace.

Whereas Yahweh is presented as sovereign king governing the world, the ideal king is presented as ruling his people. 11:4 distinguishes between two categories: the poor and needy protected by the king, and the wicked and oppressor eliminated by him.[98] The ideal king protects the poor and the meek.

6.1.5 The Redactional Character of the Revision

Literary Character of the Revision

In contrast to the eighth-century prophetic material which goes back to orally delivered words, the texts belonging to the revision do not have an oral background, but are literary in character. The three compilations are to be regarded as literary compositions, originating from a scribal milieu. The eighth-century material is the written record of prophetic words that originally were orally delivered. This is clear in the case of the words pertaining to 734-732 BCE,[99] those pertaining to 720 BCE,[100] and those pertaining to 705-701 BCE.[101] The texts belonging to the revision, by contrast, do not seem to have an oral background.

The revision material of compilation 1 consists of 8:9-10; 17:12-14 and 9:1-6. None of these can be regarded as (going back to) a prophetic word addressed to a third party. 8:10 is a construct of three phrases from the earlier material (7:5, 7, 14b), a product of scribal activity; 9:1-4 addresses Yahweh and thus can hardly be regarded a prophecy; 17:12-14 may look like a *woe*-saying, but it does not address a specified subject. In all three texts a first plural person occurs (8:10; 9:5; 17:14), which in each case offers an explanation: the aggressive plan of the enemies will come to nothing, 'for God is with us' (8:10); the aggressive enemies will be chased off by Yahweh; 'this is the fate of those who despoil us' (17:14); the people have gone from darkness to light, 'for a child has been born to us' (9:5). This is not reminiscent of prophetic style, but rather of a hymnal style. The first-plural references are based on the name 'Immanuel', which occurs in the prophecy of 7:14b.16. In the seventh-century revision, this prophecy is interpreted as the announcement of the destruction of Judah's enemies (8:9-10; 17:12-14) and of the glorious reign of a new king (9:5-6). The events of the late seventh century are presented as the outcome of Isaiah's prophecy and Josiah is glorified as the announced son Immanuel.

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[97] Williamson 1998b: 259; Williamson 1998a: 55. In ancient Near Eastern language, a (royal) descendant could be referred to as 'sprout', 'shoot', or 'offshoot'; for examples, see Barth 1977: 70, note 304. The metaphor of the king as a shoot or branch was popular (cf. Jer 23:5), because it suggested the antiquity of the dynasty (Weinfeld 1995: 65-66). As a contrast to 11:1, 10:33 refers to the פְּאֵרָה 'branch' of Assyria. *Per'u* is a royal Assyrian epithet, which is probably used here deliberately depicting Assyria's broken power (Weinfeld 1998: 30).

[98] See chapter 2.3.2. Similar contrasts are in Ps 10:2; 37:14; 82:4; 147:6; Isa 25:4; Prov 29:7.

[99] 7:4-9a*; 7:14b.16; 7:20; 8:1-4*; 17:1b-3* (see chapter 4.1.2).

[100] 28:1-4*; 14:29.31; 10:5-9.15a; 10:24-25*; 10:28-32* (see chapter 4.1.4).

[101] The *woe*-sayings in 5:8-23* and 10:1-2*; 18:1-2*; 19:1b-4*; 28:7b-10*; 28:14-18*; 29:15; 30:1-5*.6-8* and 31:1.3a* (see chapter 4.1.8).

The revision texts of compilation 2 consist of 14:28.32; 14:24-27; 10:11; 10:16-19; 10:26a.27a; 10:33-34 and 11:1-5. The passages that respond to the earlier prophecies of 10:5-9.15a; 10:24-25*; 10:28-32*, provide a commentary in which Yahweh is referred to in the third person: 10:16-19; 10:26a;[102] 10:33-34 and 11:1-5. The theme is that Yahweh strikes Assyria (whereas in the earlier prophecies Assyria is accused of its self-willed 'striking') and that Assyria's brutal rule is changed for a glorious reign of the ideal king. Within 14:24-27, we find divine speech, not as a prophecy, but as an oath sworn by Yahweh. In verses 26-27 the oath is explained: every event in the world happens according to Yahweh's plan (cf. 8:10; 17:14).

The revision texts of compilation 3, 18:1-6; 30:27-33; 31:4-5.8-9 and 32:1-2, focus on the role of Yahweh: his violent intervention and his protection of Zion and Jerusalem. 18:1-6 is a reworking of earlier, prophetic material (18:1-2*; 18:4). The portrayal of Yahweh's epiphany in 30:27-33 begins with *hinnê*, which reminds of Yahweh's interventions announced in the earlier prophetic words included in this compilation, 28:16 *hinĕnî* and 19:1b *hinnê*.[103] 30:27-33 gives a third person description in mythological dress of Yahweh's violent intervention. It is true that in verse 29 the people or Judah are addressed as part of the contrast between Assyria's destruction and the joyful celebration at Zion, but this does not make 30:27-33 a prophecy. 31:4-5.8-9, although introduced (31:4a) and concluded (31:9b) as a divine word, is a literary unit. Not only is Yahweh referred to in the third person throughout, but more importantly, the 'word' does not have an addressee. Furthermore, 31:4-5.8-9 is a literary unity (see chapter 2.2.4) which elaborates on the earlier prophetic word of 31:1.3*. In addition, 32:1-2 explicitly relates to 31:9: the rock that passes away in terror (i.e. the Assyrian king) is succeeded by a king who is like a rock that provides protection (i.e. Josiah). In this way, 32:1-2 is also presented as fulfilment of 28:16: the stone in Zion is interpreted as the new king. In order to mark this connection, 32:1 *hēn* alludes to 28:16 *hinĕnî*. The exclamation *hēn* in 32:1 furthermore responds to the exclamation *hôy*, which prominently figures in the early material included in the third compilation. The *hēn*-passage provides a positive counterpart to the critical *woe*-sayings addressed to the bad leaders. In order to complete the contrast, the 'leaders' are presented together with the ideal king, in 32:1. Neither 31:4-5.8-9 nor 32:1-2 contains an addressee; instead, the passages describe Yahweh's intervention and the glorious situation established thereafter.

In general, the revision texts respond to the earlier prophetic words. Whereas the earlier material is likely to go back to prophecies and sayings that were orally delivered, the revision texts are to be seen as scribal products. As far as these texts are presented as prophecy, it is a form of literary prophecy. Each compilation concludes with a portrayal of the ideal king. In the second part of this chapter (6.2.3) it will be shown that a similar feature occurs in literary prophecies of Mesopotamia. Some of these texts too conclude with a portrayal of the ideal king, which is fictitiously presented as part of a prophecy. A predictive style is used, but it contains glorification of the current king.

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[102] 10:27a is a different case: it adds a new 'prophecy' through the formula 'on that day'.

[103] In 19:1b, the coming (בוא) of Yahweh is referred to as well as in 30:27. Contrary to 30:27-33, 19:1b-4 and 28:15-18 are likely to go back to prophetic oracles.

Contrast and Coherence

The revision poses two thematic contrasts to the earlier material. The first is the juxtaposition of Yahweh's rule (revision) with Assyria's rule (early material). Whereas in the prophetic words Assyria is presented as a powerful entity, in the revision Assyria has become powerless. This difference, which causes a huge difficulty if the texts are regarded as all belonging to the same level, can easily be explained from a difference in historical circumstances between the late eighth and the late seventh century BCE. In the eighth-century material Assyria figures as a rod that strikes; in the revision Assyria is the one that is struck by Yahweh.

The second contrast is found in the opposition between the ideal king in the revision, and the bad leaders criticised in the earlier material. Again, it is difficult to explain both sets of texts on the same level. In the critical sayings of Isaiah the king is not explicitly referred to. The reason for this is, that Isaiah, although harshly opposed to Judah's state policy of 705-701, did not reject Hezekiah. Isaiah supported the king of Judah, as appears from his oracles pertaining to 734-732, and when he rejected Judah's policy, he did not reject the king but focused his criticism on the political leaders advocating rebellion. In the light of this position it is highly unlikely that Isaiah announced the reign of a new Judaean king. Read as eighth-century prophecy, the portrayals of the ideal king (9:5-6; 11:1-5; 32:1-2) would imply a rejection of the current king, and this was not part of Isaiah's message. Both contrasts are worked out.

Yahweh contra Assyria

The main connection between the prophetic material and its revision is that Assyria from the one that strikes others (prophetic material) becomes the one that is struck (revision). Whereas Assyria is the agent of Yahweh's anger in 7:20; 8:1-4; 10:5-15*; 28:1-4, in the revision it becomes the victim of his anger. This retribution is marked by the adoption of similar terminology:

- In 28:15.18 Assyria is a destroying 'whip' (שׁוֹט) for the bad leaders of Judah, whereas in 10:26 Yahweh raises a 'whip' (שׁוֹט) against Assyria to strike it.
- In 10:24 Assyria smites the people of Zion with a rod and in 14:29 Assyria smites the Philistines, whereas in 30:31 Yahweh smites Assyria.
- In 20:5 the people who see Assyria's powerful actions will be afraid (חתת), whereas in 30:31; 31:9 (cf. 8:9) Assyria is afraid.
- In 10:5-15* Assyria is the rod of Yahweh's anger, an instrument of Yahweh, an axe and saw in his hand (in 7:20 a razor), whereas in 10:34 Assyria becomes the victim of Yahweh's saw.
- In 14:29.31 the Philistines are forbidden to celebrate the death of the Assyrian king: 'do not rejoice because the rod that struck you is broken'; but in a context of similar terminology describing the end of Assyria's dominance (the 'rod of the oppressor' is 'crushed', 9:3) happiness is appropriate (9:2; 30:29).
- An important element of Assyrian imperialism is looting (8:1-4, 10:6, 10:13). By contrast, Yahweh's intervention not only puts an end to the enemies' looting of Judah (17:14), but also brings 'happiness as with dividing loot' (9:3).

Clearly, both perspectives cannot belong to the same layer; either Assyria is active as a superpower (whether presented as Yahweh's instrument or not), or Assyria's power has come to an end. The best explanation is that the first view of Assyria belongs to the eighth century and the second to the late seventh century.

It is true that already in the Isaianic material a threat is posed to Assyria, in the prophecies of 10:5-15* and 10:24-25*. In 10:5, the threat is implied in the exclamation *hôy*, and in 10:25 Yahweh announces: 'For in a very little time the limit will be reached, and then my anger will be directed at their destruction'. This unspecified announcement got a partial fulfilment with the violent death of Sargon II (705 BCE). However, it was only the late seventh-century perspective that considered this announcement as having come true, and expanded on the theme of Assyria's destruction. At this later stage the theme of Yahweh's punishment of Assyria was elaborated:

- In 10:5-15*, Assyria was accused for following its own 'mind' (10:7), which is now contrasted with Yahweh's superior mind, 14:24.
- In 10:5-15* Assyria went astray by turning a specific task into a worldwide expansion; this is contrasted with Yahweh's worldwide authority (14:26-27).
- In 10:5-15* Assyria is no more than Yahweh's instrument (cf. also 31:3a). This contrast between 'man' and 'God' is substantiated in the revision: Yahweh destroys Assyria (e.g. 31:8).

In this respect, the revision does not so much contrast with the earlier prophecies of 10:5-15* and 10:24-25*, but expands on them. Threat and announcement are elaborated into clear descriptions of Yahweh's destruction of Assyria as part of his worldwide governance. Again, the two perspectives, although not entirely contrastive, are too different to be explained as on the same level.

Ideal King versus Bad Leaders

Judah's restoration is characterised by values that form a marked contrast to the description of the bad leaders in the polemic sayings of the late eighth century. The rule of the ideal king is characterised by 'justice and righteousness' in 9:6, 11:5-6, and 32:1. It is clear from his critical sayings that Isaiah accuses his opponents of neglecting exactly these values. In the oracle of 28:15-18, accusing the rulers of bad leadership, Yahweh's standard of justice and righteousness is introduced as a contrast to the standards of the bad leaders (28:17).

The values of justice and righteousness are closely connected with the protection of the poor and the weak. The bad leaders are accused in 10:2: 'the poor of my people are robbed of their right'. This is contrasted by 14:32, which presents Zion as a refuge founded by Yahweh for 'the poor of his people'. Furthermore, whereas the bad leaders provide a hiding place and a shelter that are false (28:15-18), the ideal king and his officials provide true shelter (32:2). In particular 32:1-2 directly responds to the critical sayings against the bad leaders. In 28:16 Yahweh announces that he is about to 'lay a foundation stone in Zion'. This meant, originally, that Yahweh would provide a secure refuge at Zion, characterised by justice and righteousness, in contrast to the false and deceptive shelter of the bad leaders. However, in the context of the seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition, 28:16 was read as announcing the reign of a new king, which according to this revision, was fulfilled

with Josiah's reign (32:1-2). If both perspectives were to be on the same level, one would expect criticism of the current king, which is however absent. Instead, for the revisers, the 'new king' of 32:1-2 is the current king, i.e. Josiah.

Yahweh's Plan

Yahweh's plan is opposed to all human planning and plotting. In the revision, Yahweh is pictured as king of the world whose plans are superior to all human plans (14:24-27). This poses a contrast to the plans of the human beings criticised in Isaiah's prophecies: the enemies of Ahaz (7:5-6), the bad leaders (5:19; 29:15; 30:1), Egypt (19:3), and Assyria (10:6-7). None of these plans came true, because they were opposed to Yahweh's will. Evidently, already the prophetic sayings point to the failure of these plans (7:7; 10:5.15; 19:3; 28:18). The revision however takes two further steps: first, in contrast to all the plans that fail there stands Yahweh's superior plan for the world which comes true (14:24-27), and second, the rule ('counsel and might') of the ideal king is based on, and in accordance with, the plan of Yahweh (9:5; 11:2). Whereas the view of Yahweh's superior, worldwide plan is entirely in agreement with the prophetic material, the second step – the rule of the ideal king as based on, and in accordance with, Yahweh's plan, clearly adds a new perspective. The most likely explanation for this new step is that it belongs to a different stage.

As has been argued in the discussion of the three compilations (chapter 2.4), each passage concerning the ideal king echoes the prophetic material included in the compilation it concludes, but also expands on it. Although the portrayals of the ideal king are presented as the logical outcome of Isaiah's prophecies, and in fact are attributed to Isaiah through the seventh-century revision, they can, in themselves, hardly be characterised as prophecy. 9:1-6, 11:1-5, and 32:1-2 are marked by a perspective of royal ideology.

6.1.6 Traditio-Historical Background of the Josiah Revision

State Ideology of Monarchic Judah

The seventh-century revision of the Isaianic material originates from a scribal milieu and is characterised by a perspective of state ideology, as will be argued in this section. The state ideology of monarchic Judah may be formulated as follows.[104] Yahweh dwells in Zion as sovereign king of the earth and the Judaean king, the son of David, is the legitimate executor of Yahweh's rule. He is Yahweh's deputy, whose government is seen as running parallel to Yahweh's governance.[105] Yahweh's kingship is grounded in his deeds of creation, that is, his victory over the powers of chaos, and in his securing of a stable world.

[104] With 'state ideology' I mean the tradition-complexes centred around 'Zion' and 'David'. The precise relationship between these complexes is difficult to establish. Ollenburger (1987: 59) proposes to regard 'David' and 'Zion' as the central symbols of two closely related but nevertheless distinguished tradition-complexes. For the Zion tradition, see Dekker 2004: 208-233; Ollenburger 1987: 15-19; Steck 1972: 13-25; Roberts 2002c; Albertz 1994 I: 132-138. For the David tradition, see Albertz 1994 I: 116-122; Roberts 1973. The origin of Judah's state ideology, the 'Zion' and 'David' traditions, has been a subject of persistent scholarly debate. For the present analysis it suffices to say (as is widely agreed) that it existed in the Assyrian period.

[105] Ollenburger 1987: 30-31.

Yahweh protects the order against cosmic and historical forces.[106] The enemy kings and hostile nations that threaten the order, can be typified as the waters of chaos (Ps 46:3-7; 48:6-8, also in Isa 17:12-13).[107] The values that secure the order against the threats of chaos are justice and righteousness; Yahweh's maintenance of justice and righteousness allows the world to thrive.[108] The king on the throne of David is held to be directly appointed by Yahweh; his rule accords with Yahweh's governance of the earth. The Davidic king is furthermore regarded as the 'son of Yahweh' (Ps 2:2-8; 89:27; 110:3; cf. Isa 9:5). As Yahweh's deputy, the king secures justice and righteousness: he guards the rights of the poor and delivers the weak from the hand of the oppressors.[109] From Yahweh's dwelling in Zion, it followed that Zion, and by extension Jerusalem, was a place of special protection (cf. Isa 14:32). Zion is the refuge *par excellence* against the forces of chaos, either in terms of the primeval waters or the enemy kings.[110] Zion's privileged status as a divinely protected place led to the belief that Zion, and by extension Jerusalem, could not be harmed.[111] Violating Zion (Jerusalem) was considered an offence against the order destined by Yahweh.[112]

Psalms

The link of the seventh-century revision with the state ideology of Jerusalem appears from resemblances with Psalms in which the Jerusalem traditions are expressed. The main examples include the Zion Psalms (Ps 46; 48; 76), the Royal Psalms (Ps 2; 18; 20; 21; 72; 89;[113] 101; 110), the Enthronement Psalms (Ps 24; 47; 93; 96-99), and various others (Ps 29; 59; 65; 68; 82; 83; 108).[114] Without attempting to be exhaustive, I present some important parallels.

1) The portrayal of Yahweh as sovereign king of the world in 14:26 (עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ), resembles the expression in Ps 47:3 (similarly Ps 83:19; 97:9; 108:6), 'Yahweh the most high is the great king of the world' (עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ). Yahweh's rule clashes with the wicked plans of the nations of the world (Ps 2:1-3; 21:12; 89:10-11.22-23), which is resembled in 8:9-10 and 17:12-14. The 'wicked plan' implies aggression against Zion, but Yahweh subdues and destroys the aggressors and annuls their plans (Ps 47:4; 83:2-19; 97:9; 108:7-14).

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[106] Ollenburger 1987.
[107] Roberts 2002c: 679.
[108] Roberts 2002c: 680-681.
[109] Roberts 2002c: 682-683.
[110] Roberts 2002c: 685.
[111] Cf. Ps 46:6, 48:4, 76:3-4, Mic 3:11; see Ollenburger 1987: 66; Van der Toorn 1996b: 51.
[112] The belief in the inviolability of Zion, and by extension Jerusalem, was not unique to the state cult ideology of Judah. Main cults of the Mesopotamian cities had as their central conviction that the holy temples represented the midst of the earth, the dwelling-place of the city god as Lord or as Lady of the world. Because of the presence of the god, the temple and by extension the city were divinely protected places. See Van der Toorn 1996b; Maag 1980: 332-336; Clements 1980b: 77-78.
[113] Ps 89 is likely to date from the exilic period, but contains references to pre-exilic royal traditions; cf. Day 2004: 226, 240.
[114] For the pre-exilic provenance of these Psalms, see Day 2004: 225-237; Seybold 1986: 108-114; Steck 1972: 9-10.

2) Yahweh defeats the powers of chaos. The image of powerful, roaring waters occurs in Ps 89:11, 'You crushed Rahab like a carcass, you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm'. Yahweh brings these powers to a stop by rebuking them (גער/גַּעֲרָה Ps 18:16; 68:31; 76:7), which is paralleled in Isa 17:13. The enemy nations are identified with the defeated power of chaos. The roar of the waters, just as the uproar of the nations, is eliminated by Yahweh (Ps 46:3-4, 7; 59:7, 15; 65:8; 83:3; terms המה or הָמוֹן), as it is in Isa 17:12-14 and 31:4. Both Ps 18:10 and Isa 31:4 describe Yahweh's violent intervention with ירד, 'to come down'.

3) One of the principal means with which Yahweh destroys the enemies is fire, see Ps 18:9, 13-14; 21:10; 29:7; 46:10; 68:3; 83:15; 97:3. The fire motif figures prominently in the revision of the Isaiah material too: Isa 9:4; 10:16-17; 30:30.33; 31:9. The term 'furnace' (תַּנּוּר) appears both in Ps 21:10 and Isa 31:9 as a means of destruction of the enemies.

4) Yahweh is the light of his people, in Ps 18:29; 76:5; 89:16; 97:4, 11, and paralleled in Isa 9:1; 10:17, over against the darkness of the enemy. Both in Ps 18:29 and Isa 9:1, a light-darkness contrast is made. Connected with this is the motif of 'rescue in the morning' (Ps 46:6; 59:7,15, 17; 101:8), which is also found in Isa 17:14.[115]

5) The people of Yahweh joyfully celebrate the defeat of the enemies that threatened them. The motif of their happiness (שִׂמְחָה; שׂמח) is found in Ps 21:2.7; 46:5; 48:11; 68:4; 97:8 and furthermore in Isa 9:2 and 30:29; or, with the related term גיל 'to exult', in Ps 21:2; 48:12; 65:13; 89:17; 97:8 and Isa 9:2. Related to the 'joy' is the motif of dividing spoil (חלק שָׁלָל), which occurs in Ps 68:13 and in Isa 9:3.

6) The values of justice and righteousness, which are closely connected with the protection of the poor and the weak (Ps 18:27; 72:2.4), are a principal motif both in these Psalms and in the revision (9:5-6; 11:1-5; 32:1). The image of the righteous king and his just rule is the focus of Isa 11:1-5 and Psalm 72.[116]

7) In 14:32, the special character of Zion is emphasised: 'Yahweh has founded Zion, and the needy among his people will find refuge in her'. The motifs of divine foundation of Zion and the protective character of Zion as the place where Yahweh dwells and from which the king as Yahweh's executor rules, are found in the Psalms (Ps 2:6; 20:2; 48; 76; 78:68-69; 87; 110).[117] The motif of the divine foundation of Zion-Jerusalem reflects the special status attached to Jerusalem and its temple. The motif of divine foundation is similarly attested for important cities such as Babylon and Nineveh. The supreme role of these cities is presented as a cosmic arrangement: the city is portrayed as a cosmic datum, like the stars, the mountains or the sea. As a consequence, challenging the supremacy of the city is madness, as much as an attempt to defy nature and the elements.[118] In particular in the seventh century, when Jerusalem had become an important city, traditions concerning its special status prospered.[119] The revision of the Isaiah tradition can be seen in the light of

[115] See Janowski 1989: 180-191, relating this motif to the Jerusalem cult tradition (p. 185-187).
[116] See Wagner 2006: 208-212, on the 'צדק-Tradition' of pre-exilic Jerusalem, and 213-217, on Isa 9:6 in connection with Ps 72:1-7.
[117] For the motifs of the gods as founders of temples and cities and the cosmic dimensions of cities and temples, see Hurowitz 1992: 332-337; Bolin 2003: 172-175; Weinfeld 1998: 33.
[118] Bolin 2003: 175.
[119] See Steiner 2003a: 79: 'It was the only town in the wide region that had not been taken by the mighty Assyrians. It had grown to huge dimensions, mainly because of the many refugees fleeing to

the outburst of nationalistic ideology during the reign of Josiah. The state ideology of monarchic Jerusalem is the background to the revision of the Isaianic material.[120]

Ideal King

In 9:5-6, 11:1-5 and 32:1-2 the ideal king is depicted as a Davidic king (9:6; 11:1), as son and child (9:5), as new shoot or branch (11:1) and as a guardian of justice and righteousness.[121] In each passage the ideal king is characterised by his exceptional qualities, which in general terms resembles the portrayal of the king for instance in Psalms 2 and 110. Although the reference to the king as 'son' in 9:5 does not necessarily mean 'son of Yahweh' (as in Ps 2:6), the king is portrayed in 9:5-6 in conformity with the Davidic ideology.[122] The king is presented as Yahweh's agent, whose rule inaugurates and maintains God's ideal for Judah.[123] The rule of the king closely coincides with Yahweh's rule. This explains why in 32:2, the reign of the king and his officials is depicted in imagery normally used to depict Yahweh's role towards his people (e.g. the king as refuge and protective rock).[124] The royal names of 9:5, indicating the almost godlike appearance of the king, can be understood from the close association between Yahweh and the ideal king as

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this "safe haven". All economic and political power of the country was concentrated within its walls. This "special status", in so many respects, could have given rise to a change in religious significance and importance as well.'

[120] Barth (1977: 272-323) suggests a fourfold traditio-historical background for the revision. 1) First and foremost, Barth identifies the influence from the Jerusalem cult traditions, such as the *Völkerkampf* motif, royal ideology, epiphany and intervention of Yahweh, the motif of Yahweh's fire at Zion, and Zion as refuge. 2) Furthermore, Barth proposes influence from 'altisraelitisch-altjudäische Traditionen' (1977: 228-229), evident in a 'gesamtisraelitische Interesse', such as the motifs of the throne of David and the 'Day of Midian' (9:4). 3) Barth sees the influence of the wisdom tradition; and 4) Barth discerns a 'prophetische Prägung' of the Josiah revision. However, Barth's second point, the 'gesamtisraelitische Interesse' pertains to elements that, by the seventh century, had become integrated in the traditions of the state ideology. The ideal of a great Israel under Davidic rule had become part of the Jerusalem tradition, and Psalm 83 testifies that in the Assyrian period the tradition of Midian's destruction was integrated into the Jerusalem cult tradition (Barth [1977: 176, note 237] acknowledges that at the time of Josiah the Jerusalem cult tradition was 'in altisrealitische-landjudäischem Sinne neuakzentuiert'). Barth's third point, the wisdom tradition, may be correct, but does not detract from the state ideological traditions either. The main motif in this respect is Yahweh's plan (e.g. Isa 14:26), which points to his position as the sovereign king. The motif of Yahweh as sovereign king whose plan governs the earth, belongs to state ideology. Barth's final point, the 'prophetische Prägung' of the revision, may be disputed. A revision of prophetic material is not necessarily prophetic itself. As far as the revision is prophetic, it is a form of literary prophecy, which originated from a scribal milieu. To conclude, the principal traditio-historical background of the revision is the Jerusalem state ideology.

[121] Williamson (1998a: 30-72) makes a strong case for the pre-exilic character of the three ideal king passages, 9:1-6, 11:1-5 and 32:1-5 (in my opinion to be restricted to 32:1-2, see chapter 2.2.4).

[122] See Williamson 1998a: 35-42; Williamson (1998b: 255-257) points out that 9:5-6 is close to 2 Sam 7:12-17 and Ps 72. Barth (1977: 169-170) argues that 9:5-6 refers to a historical king (not to a messianic figure), and that the names have general parallels in the Jerusalem cult ideology e.g. 2 Sam 23:5, Ps 20:5; 21:5; 45:7; 72:3-5.

[123] Williamson 1998a: 35, 50.

[124] Williamson 1998a: 66.

well. These names 'wonderful decider',[125] 'mighty god',[126] 'eternal father',[127] and 'prince of peace',[128] are to be understood against a background of ancient Near Eastern royal titulary.[129] The three passages must be connected with each other, for two reasons. First, each of them forms the conclusion to a compilation of earlier, prophetic material in a revised form (see chapter 2.4). Second, all three of them present the king as being in close association with Yahweh.

The ideal king passages are different in outlook from the eighth-century prophecies – both from the encouraging oracles (such as 7:4-9a), and from the critical sayings – and are clearly marked by royal ideology. The thesis of this chapter is, that the ideal king is most plausibly identified as Josiah. The suggestion that the words 'shoot' and 'branch' (11:1) refer to Josiah as a juvenile king (cf. 2 Kgs 22:1) is to be rejected, since 'shoot' and 'branch' simply mean descendant.[130] However, behind the expression 'stump (גֵּזַע) of Jesse' (11:1) one might suspect a reference to the murder of Josiah's father Amon (2 Kgs 21:23). The tree of David was cut, but from the stump a new branch came out: Josiah. He is presented as a second David, his reign as a new beginning.[131] This at least fits the ideology of Josiah's reign. The identity of the king is not explicitly revealed, because the portrayals of the ideal king are presented as prophecies of Isaiah. The fiction of the revision is that the prophet Isaiah announced the glorious reign of Josiah.

6.1.7 The Josiah Revision

Evaluation

The reign of Josiah provides the most plausible setting for a revision of the Isaiah tradition. During the seventh century Jerusalem became an important city, the economic, political and

[125] The term יוֹעֵץ is to be understood as 'planner', 'decision-maker'. The title means: 'he who takes decisions, based on divine (secret) knowledge'; cf. Wildberger 1972-82: 381-382; Wagner 2006: 223.
[126] Or 'godlike hero' (cf. Ezek 32:21). This title resembles the Assyrian royal epithet *ilu qarrādu*; Seux 1967: 108; Carlson 1974: 134; Wagner 2006: 224.
[127] De Boer (1955: 58) suggests understanding 'father' as 'he who makes decisions' and 'eternal' as 'with regard to the future'. See further Wagner 2006: 224.
[128] According to Wagner (2006: 225) this echoes the Assyrian word for king (*šarru*); the 'prince of peace' forms a counter-image to the Assyrian kingship characterised by military expansion and war.
[129] Wagner (2006: 227) concludes that the names can be understood as deriving from Assyrian royal epithets, but the parallels he mentions (2006: 222-225) are to some extent rather general. In addition, various glorifying descriptions from Ashurbanipal's court poetry may be mentioned, as a general parallel to Isa 9:5-6: 'representative', 'deputy' of Aššur (SAA 3 1 r. 8, 26:1), 'warrior king' (*šarru qarrādu*, SAA 3 27:4); 'May eloquence, understanding, justice and righteousness be given to him as a gift! (...) Ashurbanipal is the [representative] of Aššur, the creation of his hands. May the great gods make firm his reign, may they protect the life [of Ashurba]nipal, king of Assyria! May they give him a straight sceptre to extend the land and his people! May his reign be renewed, and may they consolidate his royal throne for ever!' (SAA 3 11:8, 15-18); 'creation of Aššur [and] Šamaš (...) the vast in understanding, the fa[thomless] mind, the competent, the ord[erly], the wizard, (...) the king of righteousness' (SAA 3 25 r. 17'-23'). Translations based on Livingstone SAA 3.
[130] See the discussion and criticism of this view in Williamson 1998a: 53, note 41.
[131] Williamson 1998a: 70.

social centre of Judah,[132] and Judah had developed into a centralised state.[133] The B1-story reveals the thinking in seventh-century Jerusalem: Yahweh had protected his city against the Assyrian aggression, and punished Sennacherib for his offences. In c. 630-623, Assyria lost its dominion of Syria-Palestine and Judah enjoyed several decades of relative independence during Josiah's reign. The reform account 2 Kgs 23:4-7*.11-12* shows that the reign of Josiah in contemporary ideology was presented as a period of revival. The account portrays Josiah's measures of purification and reorganisation of the Jerusalem temple as the opposite of what his predecessors, 'the kings of Judah', had done.[134] During Josiah's reign Judah probably had the ambition of enlarging its territory and extending its rule over (parts of) the former Northern Kingdom. The political ambitions were supported by political-ideological propaganda, in which Josiah was presented as the new David (cf. 11:1).[135]

The hope, ambitions and ideology of the time provide a plausible setting for the revision of the Isaianic material.[136] The two main topics of the revision, the liberation of Judah from the Assyrian yoke and the independent rule of a Judaean king, both point to the time of Josiah.[137] The ideological message of the revision is that the reign of Josiah was a turn for the good: through Yahweh's intervention a troubled period was brought to an end and a new time began characterised by the reign of a new king. The theme of a new and glorious time after a period of trouble is a prominent feature in royal ideology.[138]

Logic of the Development of the Isaiah Tradition

The revisers of the Isaiah tradition believed that the historical events of their time, Assyria's retreat and Judah's relative independence under Josiah, proved Isaiah right. Through their revision they attempted to show that Isaiah's words had been fulfilled. Isaiah's prophecies against Assyria (10:5-9.15a, 10:24-25) were believed to be fulfilled with Assyria's withdrawal from Syria-Palestine and the grave troubles it was facing at home. Furthermore, the announcements concerning the son Immanuel (7:14b.16) and the foundation stone at Zion (28:16) were applied to Josiah. Finally, according to the revisers, history had proved that Isaiah was right not to trust in Egypt but to leave things to Yahweh: it was Yahweh who put an end to Assyria's oppression thereby creating room for a new Judaean king.

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[132] Steiner 2003a: 75-79; 2001: 109-111; Geva 2003; Reich and Shukron 2003; Killebrew 2003: 335-338.

[133] Na'aman 1991b: 23-33.

[134] Whereas the B1-story from the mid-seventh century and the revision of the Isaiah tradition from the late seventh century are best located in the circles of the royal court, the early reform account can be associated with temple circles.

[135] E.g. Laato 1992: 364; Sweeney 2001: 238; cf. Christensen 1984. In general terms I agree with the ideas presented in these studies. However, Laato and Sweeney are, in my view, too confident with regard to the biblical description of Josiah's reform, and take too much from the prophetic books as material from the pre-exilic period.

[136] See Barth 1977: 174-175, 205 with note 12, 228, 237, and 255.

[137] This is Barth's main argument and it has not lost its plausibility (1977: 176-177, 250-260); cf. similarly, Collins 1993: 38-39.

[138] With regard to Josiah, this theme is apparent in the early account of the reform (2 Kgs 23:4-15*) and in the revision, in particular in Isa 9:1-6. This theme appears prominently in the so-called literary prophecies, which will be discussed in 6.2.3.

Yahweh had not only caused Sennacherib's retreat in 701 and his violent death in Nineveh (the B1-story), but also the decline and fall of the empire as a whole.[139]

The purpose of the seventh-century revision was to provide ideological support for the position of Josiah and to add to the glory of Yahweh and his king. Significantly, in the revision Josiah's kingship is glorified not so much in terms of political expansion or in terms of cultic reform, but in terms of his legitimacy as Yahweh's deputy and in terms of social justice. These are the particular accents of the Josiah revision. The revision can be regarded as promoting state ideology, but with specific accents emphasising the close ties between Yahweh and his king.[140]

In the seventh century, the authority of 'Isaiah the prophet' was rising. At that time, Isaiah had the reputation of having been right, and the preserved oracles and sayings attributed to him were republished as part of a Josiah revision, emphasising Assyria's downfall and glorifying Yahweh and his king. This is reflected both by the revision of the prophetic material attributed to him, and from his role in the B1-story. In the seventh century, the image of the prophet Isaiah was unambiguous: both in the Hezekiah story and in the revision the prophet is portrayed as a supporter of king and state.

The image of Isaiah changed drastically in the later period, due to the disastrous events of the sixth century. The disasters caused a profound political and religious crisis,[141] as they falsified the current state ideology.[142] Afterwards the catastrophe was interpreted, explained and justified in theological terms.[143] Significant parts of the biblical prophetic books can be understood as resulting from this kind of interpretation, explanation and justification of what had happened. Many texts from the prophetic books present the disastrous events as the result of Yahweh's punishment of the sins of his people. These texts are better regarded as the product of reflection rather than as the message of the 'classical prophets'.[144] The general concepts of 'blame to all' and 'total punishment' implying the collapse of the social order, are difficult to imagine at a time when society, temple, cult, and king, were functioning. The concept of a complete destruction of a corrupt society is likely to be of a retrospective character. Importantly, theological explanation and justification of historical events occur not only in the Old Testament, but also in the literature of the ancient Near East.[145] Experiences of misfortune were afterwards explained in theological terms. Reflection followed historical events, which were explained, interpreted or justified. It is unlikely that in the preaching of the 'classical prophets' reflection preceded the events, whereas in the rest of the ancient Near East it followed the events (cf. the discussion of the 'classical prophets' in chapter 5.2.2).

The sixth-century catastrophe did not mean the end of the Isaiah tradition, but a new and decisive step in its development. In response to the disastrous events the Isaiah tradition

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[139] Cf. Clements 1980b: 83.
[140] Barth (1977: 230-231, with note 34) proposes a liturgical setting for the Josiah revision (the use of the prophetic tradition for liturgical purposes).
[141] Pohlmann 2002: 40-60, esp. 40-41. The ideological crisis can be grasped from e.g. Psalms 74 and 79.
[142] Steck 1972: 46-51.
[143] Pohlmann 2002: 43-48.
[144] Pohlmann 2002: 48-50.
[145] Van der Toorn 1985: 56.

underwent a transformation, through which the prophetic image and his message became revised and adapted to the new situation.[146] The deployment of Isaiah's authority for a theological explanation of the sixth-century disasters was a crucial step in the development of the Isaiah tradition into the later book. Characteristic of the exilic reworking of the Isaiah tradition was, first, the view that, like Israel, Judah too had been punished for its sins, and second, the generalisation of specific criticism against Isaiah's opponents, the leading class of Jerusalem, applying it to the people as a whole. In particular Isaiah's sayings against his political opponents were a useful handle for retrospective explanations for the disasters that had befallen Judah.

I discern a development of the Isaiah tradition consisting of three stages prior to Second Isaiah. First is the prophetic material from the later part of the eighth century. This material contains both an encouraging, supportive component and a critical component (comparable to prophecy elsewhere in the ancient Near East). As a second stage, I discern a literary revision of the Isaianic material, to be dated to the late seventh century. This revision is in continuity with the supportive component of Isaiah's prophecies and provides a positive counterpart to his critical sayings. Thirdly, an exilic reworking of the Isaiah tradition sought to explain the disasters that had befallen Judah as Yahweh's punishment of the grave sins of the people. As a result, Isaiah was turned into a prophet of judgement. This reworking took up and expanded the critical sayings of Isaiah, and provided a negative counterpart to his encouraging prophecies. Each stage, the eighth-century prophetic words, the seventh-century royal-ideological revision, and the exilic reworking, closely related to the historical events of the time.

This survey supports the view that the origins of prophetic literature are to be found in the last two centuries of the Judaean monarchy, but that it is from the exilic period onwards that literary prophecy increasingly took flight.[147]

6.2 Assyrian Prophecy in Literature

The development of Assyrian prophecies has been described by Nissinen as follows:

> Under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, Assyrian prophecy apparently developed from spoken performance into an established written tradition that became a source of intellectual inspiration and scholarly interpretation. … The process was too short to bear fruit comparable to the blossoming of the prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible; nevertheless, this development already demonstrates the initial phases of emergence of prophetic books.[148]

Previous surveys of the development of Assyrian prophecies have been restricted to the so-called oracle collections (SAA 9 1 and 2). In the section 6.2.1, I adopt a broader approach: apart from the formation of oracle collections, I discuss some examples of oracles referred

[146] Collins 1993: 39-40.
[147] Van Seters 2000: 88; similarly Collins 1993: 16, 37-40. I agree with Clements (1997: 9) that 'it is the rise and fall, and subsequent re-establishing after 587 BCE, of the cult ideology of Jerusalem that explains the peculiar shifts and apparent incongruities in the book (i.e. the book of Isaiah).'
[148] Nissinen 2000a: 254; similarly Weippert 2002: 35.

to in letters, the inclusion of oracles in royal inscriptions, and the development of oracles into literary texts. In this way, I explore the different ways in which prophetic oracles that once were orally delivered afterwards found their way into literature.

In section 6.2.2, I deal with another group of texts, namely texts of literary origin closely resembling prophetic oracles. These texts, from seventh-century Assyria, can be considered as literary derivatives of prophecy. There are close connections between the oracles that found their way into literature (discussed in 6.2.1) and the literary derivatives of prophecy (discussed in 6.2.2). SAA 9 9, a prophetic oracle in a literary garb (6.2.1), is particularly close to SAA 3 13, a literary derivative of prophecy (6.2.2); and SAA 3 44, a literary text resembling the prophetic genre (6.2.2) shares important traits with SAA 9 3.3, which is part of a literary reworking of prophecies (6.2.1). From seventh-century Assyria we have on the one hand prophetic oracles that enjoyed a second life as part of a collection or in a literary, elaborate form, and on the other hand texts that were produced that were literary in origin, but that adopted or imitated the prophetic genre. These two sets of texts, which because of their shared characteristics should be studied together, evidence the development from prophecy into literature in seventh-century Assyria.

A final group of texts, discussed in 6.2.3, consists of examples of literary texts containing pseudo-predictions. These texts include imitations of prophecy. They deploy a predictive, prophetic form for expressing a royal ideological perspective. Unlike the texts discussed in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, the texts discussed in the third subsection date from different periods and can be regarded as exponents of the 'stream of tradition'.[149] Several of these texts were known, probably well-known in scribal circles, in the Assyrian period, in particular during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. This additional set of texts is taken into account in order to provide a counterpart to the seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition as a literary phenomenon.[150]

My discussion of the phenomenon of prophecy becoming literature is thus not restricted to the Assyrian prophetic oracles, but also takes some literary texts into account. I have chosen this broader approach for two reasons. First, there is as will be demonstrated a close relation between reworked oracles (6.2.1) and literary derivatives of prophecy (6.2.2); these two kinds of texts form part of a similar phenomenon, and must not be discussed in isolation from each other. The second reason pertains to the comparative purpose of this chapter. In 6.1 the revision of the Isaiah tradition was approached from two angles: the prophetic material being revised and the literary-redactional character of the revision. To the first aspect, the material discussed in 6.2.1 forms a counterpart, whereas 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 form a counterpart to the second aspect.

6.2.1 The Prophetic Oracles

This section explores the literary afterlife of the Assyrian oracles. Originally, oracles are part of the situational communication between god and man (in the oracles at our disposal mostly the king). Oracles belong to specific moments and relate to particular, often critical, situations. They were written down, at least occasionally, in order to facilitate their

[149] For this term, cf. Oppenheim 1977: 13.
[150] See the discussion at the end of chapter 1.2.3, on the importance of comparative study of prophecy as a *literary phenomenon*, with the quotation from Grabbe 1995: 94 (chapter 1, note 218).

communication to the king.[151] In the case of the Mari prophecies, the process of recording the prophetic oracles remained mostly limited to this initial stage. These prophecies are reports of newly received oracles that were recorded in letters to the king.[152] Most of the Assyrian oracles, however, are preserved as secondary records.[153] After the oracles had been used in the political decision-making, they could be preserved for memory in a written document. At least during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, prophetic oracles were written down for a second time. Whereas oracles originally belonged to a particular situation, at a secondary stage they were dissociated from their original context and divinatory frame and became part of a new constellation of meaning. The oracles exceeded their original, situational perspective and became part of a wider perspective, looking back on a longer episode of connected events.[154] Thus, after deliverance Assyrian prophetic oracles sometimes served a longer-term purpose. This second stage is characterised by editorial selection and stylisation of the oracles. Prophecies were reused for new situations and became part of the written tradition.[155] As part of this process, I will discuss the collections of oracles, some examples of oracles referred to in letters, oracles included in royal inscriptions, and the oracles integrated into literary texts.

Collections of Oracles

The corpus of Assyrian prophecies contains two compendia of oracles (SAA 9 1 and 2) and a fragment of a third one (SAA 9 4).[156] The texts are compilations of previously delivered and recorded oracles. The compilations seem to imply that the divine promises made in the oracles were regarded as being still operative. As part of a collection, the oracles transcended the original historical situations and received a more generally applicable meaning.[157] The compendia are not to be seen as mere anthologies, but rather as compositions.[158] The oracles included enjoyed a second life, as part of a more general perspective, illustrating the close relation between king and gods.

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[151] Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 267-268; Nissinen 2000a: 239-242, 268-269. It is furthermore possible that oracles sometimes were recorded after deliverance, for the sake of remembrance or later checking.

[152] Parker (1993: 60) however argues that authors sometimes took considerable freedom in formulating the prophetic oracles they reported. Schart (1995) mentions examples of Mari letters reporting prophecy that show traces of reworking or reshaping of the oracles by the author of the letter. Furthermore, among the Mari texts an example has been found of a prophetic oracle included within a literary text: the Epic of Zimri-Lim (see Nissinen 2003a: 90).

[153] The Assyrian material contains some examples of firsthand records of prophecy. Several letters to the king report a prophetic oracle in order to inform the king (listed in chapter 3.1.2). Within the SAA 9 corpus, texts 6, 10 and 11 can be regarded as containing reports of oracles, either as part of a letter (10, 11) or as an independent report (6).

[154] Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 283.

[155] Nissinen 2003a: 98; Nissinen 2000a; Van der Toorn 2000b.

[156] SAA 9 3 is not a collection of prophetic oracles (see chapter 3.1.1 and see below).

[157] Nissinen 2000a: 254; Schart 1995: 92.

[158] The suggestion that the compendia functions as a source of oracles for other compositions, such as royal inscriptions (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2003: 42), is unlikely. There are no matches between the oracles from the compendia and those incorporated into other compositions. Furthermore, whereas the compendia date from the reign of Esarhaddon, literary compositions that include prophetic oracles mostly stem from Ashurbanipal's reign.

The first collection (SAA 9 1) has as its theme the divine protection of Esarhaddon against all enemies, internal and external, that threaten his royal position. The annihilation of the enemies and the protection of Esarhaddon's kingship is referred to in almost every oracle. A crucial referential point is the intervention of Ištar in the struggle for the throne of Assyria (oracle 1.8) as the example *par excellence* of Esarhaddon's divine protection. At the same time, various oracles emphasise that just as the gods have protected Esarhaddon in the past (i.e. in the struggle for the throne), they will protect him against his enemies in future (i 15'-16'; ii 34'-37'; vi 7-12). The combination of oracles concerning the struggle for the throne (e.g. 1.8) and from later moments of Esarhaddon's reign (e.g. 1.1, 1.6) emphasises that Esarhaddon in all his actions is guarded and protected by the gods. The final sentence of the last oracle (1.10), 'Your son and your grandson shall rule as kings on the lap of Ninurta', which had its original setting shortly after Esarhaddon's accession to the throne, may indicate the compositional purport of the compendium. Parpola suggested to connect SAA 9 1 with the Nineveh A inscription (673), and to regard both texts as being connected with Ashurbanipal's appointment as the crown prince in 672 BCE.[159]

The second collection (SAA 9 2) has as its main theme the stabilisation and consolidation of Esarhaddon's reign. Recurrent motifs are the reconciliation with the gods, and the care for Babylon and the Babylonian gods. Parpola's suggestion that this composition may be related to Esarhaddon's Assur A inscription (679 BCE) is unlikely.[160] Alternatively, the composition of collection 2 may be connected with a version of Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscription.[161]

In both compendia the oracles are presented with uniform colophons.[162] The uniform presentations betray an editorial hand. To what extent the oracles themselves have been edited is difficult to determine. Since many of them are considerably longer than the average length of oracles reported in letters, it might be suspected that they were embellished by the composers of the collections.[163] The oracles cannot self-evidently be taken as the *ipsissima verba* of the prophets. On the other hand, the great variety in address of Esarhaddon, the introduction of the deity, and references to past and future, suggests that they were to some extent merely reproduced. In any case, the oracles were presumably carefully arranged. Although the editing may have been limited, the oracles are displayed in a new, compositional garb.

Quotations of Oracles in Letters

In various letters addressed to the king prophetic oracles have received a second life. These letters do not report a new prophetic oracle, but refer to, or quote from, an earlier oracle. The purpose of a quotation or paraphrase of prophetic oracles in letters is to support the

[159] Parpola 1997: LXIX-LXX. See for this also chapter 4.2.4.
[160] Parpola 1997: LXIX-LXX. SAA 9 2 is unlikely to date from before 675, as appears from unit 2.4, discussed in chapter 4 2.3.
[161] For the dating of Esarhaddon's inscriptions, see Porter 1993: 169-176. If the proposed connection with the Babylon inscription makes sense, it is perhaps with the later C/F version (674 or later).
[162] SAA 9 1: *ša pî*, 'from the mouth of', followed by a personal name and city name; separated from the oracle and the following oracle with single rulings. SAA 9 2: *issu pî*, 'from the mouth of', followed by a personal name and city name; separated from the following oracle by a single ruling.
[163] For this view, see Villard 2001: 75-78.

author's standpoint before the king. The divine word is used secondarily as an argument. A main characteristic is that no reference is made to the intermediary, the prophet or prophetess, as is normally the case when a new oracle is reported. Only the content of the oracle, formulated in condensed wording, matters. These quotations from, or references to, prophetic oracles mean a reuse or a recycling of prophecy. The prophecies are secondarily adapted to a new situation.

In the letter SAA 10 109 Bel-ušezib reminds Esarhaddon that it was he who reported an oracle in which Esarhaddon's kingship was announced and again quotes from the oracle (13'-15'): 'Esarhaddon will rebuild Babylon and restore Esagila and [*honour*] me'. The reason of this reminder is that Bel-ušezib wants Esarhaddon to pay attention to the request.

In the letter SAA 10 111, Bel-ušezib quotes from an oracle of Marduk concerning Esarhaddon's supremacy (r. 23-26). The letter as a whole deals with the war against Mannea, and concludes with the quotation: 'Bel has said: "Esarhaddon, king of Assyria (sits) on the throne like Marduk-šapik-zeri, and while he is seated there I will deliver all the countries into his hands".' The original oracle probably did not relate to the Mannean war, but presented Esarhaddon as legitimate king of Babylon and supreme ruler of the world. Bel-ušezib applied the oracle to a new situation.[164]

In the letter SAA 10 284, Nabû-nadin-šumi, a high-ranking scholar, reminds the king of a prophecy of Ištar of Nineveh and Ištar of Arbela: 'We shall root out from Assyria those who are not loyal to the king, our lord!' On the basis of this prophecy, Nabû-nadin-šumi urges the king concerning a presumed troublemaker: 'really, let him be rooted out from Assyria'. The letter does not contain an exact quotation of an oracle but a concise paraphrase.[165] The author uses the divine announcement to reinforce his standpoint that a supposed troublemaker should be punished. The original oracle is lifted from its original situation and adapted to a new one.

The royal official Nabû-reḫtu-uṣur in various letters warns Esarhaddon against a supposed coup d'état (SAA 16 59-61). He quotes or paraphrases several prophetic oracles in favour of the king, which he apparently had at his disposal. These quotations or paraphrases, fluently integrated into the argument, serve as reinforcement of his position that the supposed rebels must be immediately executed (for the oracles, see chapter 4.2.5).

These cases show that prophetic oracles were used secondarily in support of one's position and could be applied to new circumstances.[166] The formulation of the prophecies was probably adapted to serve a new purpose.

In addition to these examples, one case may be mentioned in which the quotation of an oracle has become integrated into a letter with a literary-ideological purpose. In the letter SAA 10 174 (dated to 667 BCE), Marduk-šumu-uṣur the chief haruspex reminds Ashurbanipal of an oracle of the god Sin of Harran to his father Esarhaddon, announcing the conquest of Egypt (l. 10-16). This text is an exposition of the ideology supporting

[164] A similar re-use of a prophetic oracle is found in the letter ABL 839 (published by Mattila 1987).
[165] The goddesses' address to Esarhaddon as 'the king, our lord' (r. 6) must be Nabû-[nadin]-šumi's formulation, as this is how functionaries address the king.
[166] The flexibility with which authors applied oracles to certain events is comparable to the flexible dealing with astrological omens in letters that attempt to give the king good news; for this, see Lanfranchi 1989: 111.

Ashurbanipal's kingship, focusing on the divine favour of his dynasty, in the form of a letter:

> [1-6] To the king, lord of kings, my lord, and Aššur, the highest [god], [who] by his holy and unchangeable command [... has ordered] a thousand years of life for the king, my lord: your servant Marduk-šumu-uṣur. [May] Sin and Šamaš [attend to] the health of the king, my lord! May Nabû and Marduk [give] name and seed to the king, my lord! May the Lady of Nineveh and Ištar of Arbela guide [you] like a mother and sister!
> [7-9] Aššur, in a dream, called the grandfather of the king, my lord, a sage. The king, lord of kings (i.e. Ashurbanipal), is an offspring of a sage and Adapa: you have surpassed the wisdom of the Abyss and all scholarship.
> [10-16] When the father of the king, my lord, wen[t] to Egypt, a temple of cedar was bu[ilt] outside the city of Harran. Sin was seated upon a staff, with two crowns on (his) head, and (the god) Nusku stood before him. The father of the king, my lord, entered; he placed (the crowns) on his head (and it was said to him): 'You will go and conquer the world with it!' [So he we]nt and conquered Egypt. The king, the lord of kings (i.e. Ashurbanipal), will conquer the rest of the countries [which] have not submitted to Aššur and Sin.
> [17-23] [May] Aššur, Sin, Šamaš, Adad, Bel and Nabû, Ninurta, [Nergal] and Nusku, Ištar of Nineveh, Ištar of Arbela [give] an everlasting throne, a l[ong] reign, [...] peace and prosperity [...], arrow [...]. (*break*)
> [r.] [...] your [royal] fathers [...] come before the king, lord of kings [...] a thousand years, Aššur and the [great] gods [...] the king, the sun of the people [...] Aššur [...] witness [...] to fear you [...] before Aššur and the great gods [....].[167]

The introduction (l. 1-6) is remarkable: not only the king but also the god Aššur is addressed. The blessing formula differs from that of the other letters by the same writer (cf. SAA 10 173, 175-177). The second part (l. 7-9) refers to a dream of Sennacherib and applies this to Ashurbanipal: since Sennacherib was called a sage (*apkallu*) by Aššur, Ashurbanipal is an offspring of a sage (Sennacherib), and hence an offspring of Adapa, legendary sage and ancestor of the sages.[168] The next part (l. 10-16) refers to an incident from Esarhaddon's reign. On campaign to Egypt, he received a supportive divine message in the temple of Sin of Harran (see chapter 4.2.4). Marduk-šumu-uṣur reminds Ashurbanipal that it happened as predicted (Esarhaddon defeated Taharqa in 671), and extrapolates this to Ashurbanipal: Ashurbanipal will conquer the rest of the world that has not yet submitted to Assyria. This is a free use and far-reaching application of the earlier divine announcement. The fourth part (l. 17-23) contains blessings for Ashurbanipal. Finally, the partially preserved reverse glorifies Ashurbanipal's kingship, in reference to the reign of his predecessors. The writer of this letter uses a dream and a divine message, probably a prophetic oracle, in order to serve his purposes. He wants to emphasise the close bond between the gods, and Ashurbanipal and his forefathers, and the divine favour bestowed on the royal dynasty and on Ashurbanipal in particular.

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[167] Translation from Parpola in: SAA 10 174.
[168] For the motif of the Sargonid kings as sages, see Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 309-316.

Oracles included in Royal Inscriptions

The royal inscriptions of Ashurbanipal contain various (prophetic) oracles integrated into the chain of events. The primary purpose of these oracles is to show that the actions of the Assyrian king were in agreement with the will of the gods. A hidden intent may be to legitimise the violent actions of the Assyrians that follow in the narration. It has been argued that the oracles included in royal inscriptions serve a new purpose.[169] Originally, prophetic oracles belonged to the situational communication between god and king and were connected with specific circumstances. At a second stage however some oracles found their way into the royal inscriptions. These messages were not repeated for their own sake, but functioned as support for the overall demonstration of the close bond between the king and the gods and of the divine order behind the king's achievements. However, the authenticity of these oracles cannot be taken for granted; they could be free reformulations or literary imitations of oracles.[170]

Prism A iii 4-10 (BIWA: 35), a word (*amātu*) of Ištar of Arbela announcing the death of Aḫšeri: 'I will, as I said, take care of the execution of Aḫšeri, the king of Mannea' (see chapter 4.2.6), called by Nissinen a reminder of a divine promise.[171] Whereas the report of the death of Aḫšeri also occurs in the F, B and C versions, the prophecy of Ištar is found only in the (late) A version. Only at this late stage was the death of Aḫšeri presented as the outcome of a promise made by Ištar and carried out by her. Aḫšeri's servants, who actually killed him, are portrayed as agents of Ištar.

Prism A vi 107-117 (also F, T; BIWA: 57-58), a word (*amātu*) of Nanaya announcing her return to Uruk:

> Nanaya, who 1635/1630/1535 years (ago) became angry, went away and settled down in Elam in a place unworthy of her – in those days she and the gods, her fathers, appointed me to the kingship of the lands. She entrusted me with the returning of her godhead (saying): 'Ashurbanipal will take me away from evil Elam and bring me back to Eanna'. (This) word, her (their) divine command that she (they) had spoken since distant days, she (they) now revealed to the coming generation. I grasped the hands of her great divinity, and she, heart full of joy, took the shortest way to Eanna.[172]

This conforms to a prediction-fulfilment pattern, which to a great extent resembles the literary predictions (see 6.2.3 below). It is likely to be an *ex eventu* prediction composed by a scribe.

Prism B v 29-45 (C vi 22-44; BIWA: 99-100). Confronted with a threat from the Elamite king Teumman, Ashurbanipal supplicates Ištar of Arbela. He presents himself as a pious worshipper of the goddess and blames Teumman. Ištar of Arbela gives an encouraging reply: 'Fear not! (...) Because of the prayer you said with your hand lifted up, your eyes being filled with tears, I have compassion for you'.[173] The oracle of

[169] Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 283.
[170] Nissinen 1998: 58-60.
[171] Nissinen 1998: 52.
[172] Translation based on Nissinen 1998: 40.
[173] Nissinen 2003a: 147.

encouragement was confirmed by a dream received by a visionary. In the dream, Ištar of Arbela appeared as a divine warrior, ready for battle. To Ashurbanipal she gave the following order: 'You stay here in your place! Eat food, drink beer, make merry and praise my godhead, until I go to accomplish that task, making you attain your heart's desire. You shall not make a wry face, your feet shall not tremble, you shall not even wipe the sweat in the tumult of war!'[174] The goddess makes clear that Ashurbanipal is under divine protection, and that she herself will destroy the Elamites.[175] To what extent this goes back to an actual prophecy and dream-report is uncertain.

Ashurbanipal's votive inscription to Marduk (l. 24-26) contains a message (*šipru*) of Marduk announcing the defeat of the enemy (BIWA: 202):

> According to your divine message, which you sent, saying thus: 'I will scatter (or disperse) the band [of .....] Sandakšatru, his son, his own offspring, which they had appointed in his position, I [....]'. When I heard this, I praised Marduk, the Hero, and the name of Eru[...]

Ashurbanipal received a message from Marduk in which the god, speaking in the first person, announced his intervention in an important political issue. Sandakšatru, a loyal vassal of Assyria, had been replaced by his son in a rebellion against Assyria. Marduk presents himself as the one who governs the international scene.

As far as these oracles are scribal adaptations or creations, they evidence the transition from prophecy into literature in seventh-century Assyria.

Oracles that received Literary Elaboration

Among the texts from seventh-century Assyria we find several cases of prophetic oracles that have been elaborated into larger texts. These texts are important examples of the development of prophecy into literature. The first three cases are only dealt with briefly. The last two cases, in my view the best examples, are more fully discussed.

1) Within SAA 9 2 the unit 2.4 is included as if it were one oracle. However it seems to consist of various oracles, which are introduced as divine words (ii 30'; 38'). The opening (ii 29') functions as a heading to the divine words: 'Thus you shall answer the disloyal ones',[176] which may indicate that what follows is some sort of anthology (cf. chapter 3.1.1; chapter 4.2.3).[177]

2) SAA 3 47 is a divine message secondarily copied on an archival tablet and characterised as a 'message (*šipirtu*) of Ninurta'. The divine message may go back to a prophetic oracle that originally was orally delivered. The divine message is largely lost, but it is clear that Ninurta is very angry.[178] The dating of this message is unknown. The reason

[174] Nissinen 2003a: 147-148.
[175] Nissinen (1998: 54) points out that Ištar's order to Ashurbanipal to remain inactive conforms to the ancient Near Eastern war ideology.
[176] Also possible: 'This is how she (i.e. the goddess) answers the disloyal ones'.
[177] For a prophetic word secondarily presented as an 'answer' to be given to certain people, cf. Isa 14:32.
[178] L. 6-9: 'I am in distress, I am angry and furious [...] I am in distress [....] I am angry [....] I am furious in my temple'.

for Ninurta's anger remains a matter of speculation.[179] Whatever it was, it was something the addressed king was supposed to solve, as this would be the intent of the message.[180] The message was probably at a later stage expanded and reworked in a literary style and preserved on an archival tablet. SAA 3 47 contains various features indicating its literary character, such as the lengthy designation of the royal addressee: 'S[ay] to the prince, [my] outstretched hand, to the one who has received sceptre, throne, and [regnal insignia], to the governor, appointed by my own hand'.[181] The classification of the message as *šipirtu* of Ninurta (r. 3') may go back to the scribe.[182] The secondary copy of the divine message on a library tablet shows that Ashurbanipal regarded Ninurta's message as of importance.

3) SAA 9 5 is a divine word (*abutu*) of Ištar of Arbela. The text is a literary derivation of prophecy, comparable to SAA 9 3.4 (see below). Ištar of Arbela appears as intercessor for Esarhaddon, mobilising divine support for him (see chapter 3.1.1).

4) The text SAA 9 9 will be presented in full because of its importance as literary text containing a prophetic oracle in an elaborate form. It consists of four elements: introduction, main part, blessing, and colophon:

> 1-7 [Oracle/promise of protection][183] of Mullissu, […] of the Lady of Arbela! [They] are the strongest among all gods. They [lov]e and constantly bestow their love [upon] Ashurbanipal, the creation of their hands. They [encou]rage him (literally: his heart) for the sake of his life.
> 8-28 I roam the wild desiring your life. I continually cross rivers and seas, I continually pass mountains and tops, I continually cross all rivers. Droughts and showers devastate me, they ruin my charming figure. I am exhausted, my whole body is restless.[184] I have pleaded for your life in the assembly of all the gods. My arms are strong and will not let you fall before the gods. My hip is alert and will keep carrying you. For you, with my l[ip]s I keep desiring your life. […….] your life. You shall surpass the life of […] […] Nabû, may your lips rejoice! [In the assembly of] all the [gods I incessantly ple]ad for your well-being. I roam the wild [desir]ing [your life]. [In woe I will r]ise and slau[ghter] your enemy. […] will retur[n] to his country. *c. 4 lines lost*
> *reverse: space of c. 8 lines, not inscribed.*
> 1'-3' May Mullissu and the Lady of Arbela keep Ashurbanipal, the creation of their hands, alive for [e]ve[r]! *blank line*
> 4'-7' By mouth of Dunnaša-amur [a woman from Arbe]la. Nis[an] 18, eponymy of Bel-šadu'a, governor of Tyre (650). *Rest of tablet not inscribed.*

SAA 9 9 is a literary text in which a prophetic oracle has been incorporated. Both the colophon and several phrases in the main part indicate that the text goes back to a prophetic oracle. The colophon contains the prophetic formula *ša pî* ('by mouth of'). Phrases

[179] Cf. the discussion of the various suggestions in Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 230-232.
[180] A parallel may be found in the oracle of Ištar of Arbela in SAA 9 3.5, where the goddess in harsh words poses her demands to the king.
[181] See further Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 229-230.
[182] The message is followed by a colophon, which has been qualified as an abbreviated form of a standard Ashurbanipal-colophon; see Hunger 1968: no. 319.
[183] Nissinen (2003a: 130-131) follows Parpola's restoration [*kidin*]*nu*, and interprets this as 'oracle of protection', see 131, note a. *Kidinnu* may also be interpreted as 'promise of protection'.
[184] For this interpretation, see Weippert 2002: 53.

characteristic of oracles in the main part are: 'my arms are strong and will not let you fall before the gods. My hip is alert and will keep carrying you,' and the announcement of the destruction of the enemy. Based on the colophon, the oracle can be dated to 650 BCE, in the midst of the war between Ashurbanipal and his brother Šamaš-šum-ukin (for the oracle and its historical setting see chapter 4.2.8).

In its present form however it is not an oracle report but a literary text. This is clear from the shape of the tablet,[185] its beautiful inscription,[186] and the framing of the introduction and conclusion in hymnal rather than oracular language. The main part of the text contains divine speech, but is not a straightforward oracle but an oracle in elaborate form. The goddess speaking, either Ištar of Arbela or Mullissu, emphasises how hard she struggles for Ashurbanipal's life. It has been noted that the goddess models her quest for Ashurbanipal's life on the quest for life of Gilgameš.[187] The following parallels can be discerned.

i) Gilgameš' wandering searching for life after the death of Enkidu, is recurrently expressed as *rapādu ṣēra*, 'roaming the wild', e.g. tablet 9 l. 1-5:

> Gilgameš was weeping bitterly for his friend Enkidu, roaming the wild. 'I shall die, and shall I not then be like Enkidu? Sorrow has entered my heart. I am afraid of death, so go roaming the wild.'[188]

Gilgameš' roaming the wild, out of fear for death, is paralleled by the goddess' roaming the wild, for the benefit of Ashurbanipal's life.

ii) Gilgameš faces great troubles and hardships on his quest for life:

> I thought, I will go and find Ūta-napišti the Far-Away (...). I went journeying through all the lands. Time and again I passed over arduous mountains, and time and again I crossed all the seas. My face did not have enough of sweet sleep, I scourged myself by going sleepless.[189]

The constant passing over mountains (*etēqu šadî*) and crossing of seas (*ebēru tiāmtu*) is repeated in SAA 9 9, as well as the motif of sleeplessness (*dalāpu*). Because of the hardships suffered, both Gilgameš and the goddess look exhausted.[190]

iii) Finally, Gilgameš finds Ūta-napišti, 'he who stood in the assembly of the gods and found life,'[191] but Ūta-napišti disappoints him: 'But now, who will bring the gods to

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[185] Parpola 1997: LIII.
[186] Parpola 1997: LXI. According to Weippert (1981: 72, note 2), the language of this text is a 'stark assyrisierendem Neubabylonisch'.
[187] Parpola in SAA 9: 41; already Zimmern 1910: 168-171. The allusions to the Gilgameš epic go further than has been previously noted.
[188] Translation based on George 2003: 666-667. Cf. Gilgameš' statement: 'I grew fearful of death and so roam the wild' (tablet 10 l. 62, 139, 239; George 2003: 680-681, 686-687, 692-693).
[189] Tablet 10 l. 250-255; translation by George 2003: 692-693.
[190] See tablet 10, l. 40-45, 113-118, 213-218: 'Why are your cheeks hollow, your face sunken, your mood wretched, your features wasted? … Why is your face like one who has travelled a distant road? Why is your face burnt by frost and sunshine, and you roam the wild?' (George 2003: 680-681, 684-685, 690-691).

assembly for you, so you can find the life you search for?'[192] Gilgameš will not find the eternal life, for this can only be granted by the assembly of the gods, and there is no one to gather the gods on Gilgameš' behalf. By contrast, the goddess encourages Ashurbanipal: 'I have pleaded for your life in the assembly of all the gods.'

The allusions to the Gilgameš epic are more than a literary device. Gilgameš' quest for life is provoked by, and contrasts with, the death of his friend Enkidu. Likewise, the quest for Ashurbanipal's life mirrors the death of his brother Šamaš-šum-ukin. The parallel becomes even stronger when it is noted that Gilgameš and Enkidu are described as brothers too.[193] Moreover, in both cases it is the gods that decide on the life and death of the brothers. When Gilgameš and Enkidu become too audacious together, the gods decide that one of them must die; this is Enkidu.[194] Similarly, the gods have ordained Šamaš-šum-ukin's death and Ashurbanipal's life.[195] The text skilfully ties up the fate of Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šum-ukin with that of Gilgameš and Enkidu. The leitmotif of SAA 9 9 is the life of Ashurbanipal,[196] which through the Gilgameš-parallel mirrors the death of Šamaš-šum-ukin.

Since the text as a whole is a scribal piece of work, a literary text, the allusions to Gilgameš are to be attributed to the composer rather than to the prophetess of the oracle.[197] Whereas the colophon situates the original oracle in 650 BCE in the midst of the war, the text in its reworked form, including the allusions to Gilgameš, is best situated after the death of Šamaš-šum-ukin in 648 BCE. The focus on the life of Ashurbanipal, which as I have argued mirrors the death of his brother, reflects the outcome of the war: the death of Šamaš-šum-ukin. However, although the outcome of the events of 648 was known to the composer, he maintained the perspective of the original oracle, of 650 BCE. The promises of the original oracle were fulfilled, but the oracle had not become meaningless. Through reworking it received a more general meaning: the glorification of the king and the goddesses protecting him. Furthermore, SAA 9 9 probably served as a justification of the violent events. The war between the two brothers ended with the death of Šamaš-šum-ukin, and the military actions against Babylon caused an interruption of the religious cult – the *akītu* festival was not celebrated for three years. SAA 9 9 and other Assyrian texts that retrospectively describe this period (e.g. SAA 3 13 and SAA 3 44, see 6.2.2 below) refer to the gods' decisions and adhesions that are to be understood as attempts to justify what had

[191] Tablet 9 l. 75-76 (George 2003: 670-671).
[192] Tablet 11 l. 207-208 (George 2003: 716-717).
[193] In tablet 3 l. 127-128 Gilgameš' mother Ninsun says: 'I myself hereby adopt Enkidu, whom [I love], as a son, let Gilgameš in [brotherhood] treat Enkidu with favour!' (George 2003: 580-581). Cf. tablet 6 l. 149-150 'they stepped back and prostrated themselves before Šamaš, both the brothers sat down' (George 2003: 628-629, translates 'both of them (then) sat down together', but cf. his note 35). And cf. tablet 7 l. 139, where Gilgameš is called Enkidu's 'friend' and 'brother'; George 2003: 640-641.
[194] The gap at the beginning of tablet 7 can be partly filled with help of the Hittite version (Stefanini 1969). Here, Enkidu relates his dream to Gilgameš, in which he saw the assembly of the gods, deciding that one of the two friends must die: Enkidu.
[195] According to Prism A iv 46-52, the gods threw Šamaš-šum-ukin into the fire; Frame 1992: 153-154.
[196] See the word *balāṭu* in l. 8, 16, 20, 21, [25], cf. 6 and r. 3'.
[197] Contra Weippert 2002: 52.

happened (see also SAA 13 139, discussed in chapter 4.2.8). By maintaining the perspective of 650 BCE, the outcome of the events, Ashurbanipal's life and Šamaš-šum-ukin's death, is presented as the decision of the gods.

5) The text SAA 9 3 consists of two main parts, which are separated from each other by a double ruling.[198] The first part is a tripartite text focused on the god Aššur and the king (3.1, 3.2, 3.3). The second part contains two units that are both presented as an *abutu* (word) of Ištar of Arbela (3.4, 3.5). The first part is a ceremonial-cultic text. The units 3.2 and 3.3, labelled as *šulmu*, 'message of well-being' (ii 8-9; ii 26), are embedded in a description of a ceremony for Aššur (i 14-26) and an *adê*-ceremony (ii 27-32). The purpose is the exaltation of Esarhaddon as victorious king and Aššur as king of the gods. The Aššur-cycle is a literary text, not a compilation of prophetic oracles.[199]

The unit 3.1 is badly fragmented. It contains a blessing, '[Hail t]o heaven and earth, [hai]l to Ešarra, [hail] to Esarhaddon, king of Assyria!' (i 9-11), and perhaps a description of a procession or ritual in the city of Assur. The unit 3.2 seems to contain a prophetic oracle (i 35-ii 2) incorporated in a frame that refers to king and god in the third person. The language of the frame-text is hymnal.[200] In this respect, 3.2 can be compared to SAA 9 9, which also is an oracular text incorporated into a hymnal framework.

> [List]en, Assyrians! [The king] has vanquished his enemy, [you]r [king] has put his enemy [under] his foot, [from] sun[se]t [to] sun[ris]e, [from] sun[ris]e [to] sun[se]t!
> 'I will destroy […..], [I will de]stroy […..], [……..], I will deliver[201] the Cimmerians into his hands, and set the land of Ellipi on fire'.
> Aššur has given to him the totality of the four regions, from sunrise to sunset. There is no king equal to him, he shines as bright as the sun.[202]

The unit ends with the description: 'This is the message of salvation (*šulmu*) placed[203] before Bel-Tarbāṣi,[204] and before the gods.'

In unit 3.3, the god Aššur looks back at the struggle for the throne of Assyria between Esarhaddon and his brothers in 681 BCE:

> At this moment these (well-known) rebels[205] incited against you, came out against you and surrounded you, you opened your mouth, thus: "hear me, Aššur!" I heard your cry. I issued forth

[198] Parpola, attempting to interpret SAA 9 3 as one 'covenant-text', belittles the importance of the double ruling: 'we do not know what it stood for' (1997: LXIV). This is however contradicted by his own comment on the double ruling in SAA 9 1: 'the text before it differed in nature from the rest of the tablet' (1997: LVI).
[199] This is confirmed by the absence of a reference to a prophetic figure in this part of the text.
[200] Cf. SAA 3 4 [r. i 3'], r. ii 13' 'Hear, O world, the praise of Queen Nanaya!'; Cf. SAA 3 17 26.
[201] Weippert (2002: 44) proposes the meaning 'to finish', 'to settle'.
[202] My translation of 3.2 largely follows Parpola's (SAA 9).
[203] For a different interpretation, see Weippert 2002: 16; cf. note 209 below.
[204] On this name, see note 210 below.
[205] For *sar-sar-a-ni*, 'rebels', see Nissinen 2003a: 120-121, note a; Weippert 2002: 45-46.

> as a fiery glow from the gate of heaven, to throw down fire and have it devour them,[206] while you are standing in their midst. I took (them) from your presence, I put them on a mountain and I rained stones and fire on them. I slaughtered your enemies and filled the river with their blood. Let them see it, let them praise me for what I am: Aššur, Lord of the gods.

In this text, the god Aššur is presented speaking, just as in other texts of this period (SAA 3 44, 45, 46, see below). The same episode is described in Esarhaddon's Nin. A inscription.[207] There, Esarhaddon is presented as the legitimate successor to Sennacherib, threatened by his elder brothers who want to take the throne of Assyria. In the inscription the brothers are typified as 'rebels' too.[208] Esarhaddon prays to the gods – Aššur is mentioned first – who listen to him, and who order him to march to Nineveh, while they accompany him. Esarhaddon claims that from his place of refuge he marched back to Nineveh without taking preparations, not minding the cold weather, and thanks to Ištar even without a real fight (i 63-86). The Assyrians chose the side of Esarhaddon, the rebels made off to a far-away land, and Esarhaddon peacefully entered Nineveh and ascended the throne.

At first sight the perspective of Aššur in SAA 9 3.3 seems to be quite different from that of the Nin. A inscription. However, both texts serve a similar goal. In reality, a bitter fight had taken place between Esarhaddon and his brothers (see chapter 4.2.1), and Esarhaddon was far from innocent. One way to wipe out this blot was by presenting the events as if no blood had been shed, as does the Nin. A inscription. Before a civil war broke out, Ištar made the Assyrians of the enemy camp join Esarhaddon's side, which left the rebel brothers in isolation. They are described as corrupt criminals, Esarhaddon as being totally innocent. The other way to wipe out Esarhaddon's violent actions was to make the god Aššur responsible for the bloodshed, as does the prophetic text 3.3. Both texts serve a similar ideological goal. Both the Nin. A inscription and SAA 9 3.3 reflect a later view of the events of 681. In 3.3, the episode of the fight for the throne is summarised from the perspective that it was Aššur who governed the scene and who decided the course of history.

In the concluding words, some sort of colophon, the text is typified thus: 'This is the message of salvation (*šulmu*), that is (placed) before the *ṣalmu* (statue of Aššur).'[209] Like 3.2, this unit is qualified as *šulmu*, a message of salvation. After this follows a colophon that refers to the first part of the tablet as a whole, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3: 'This *adê*-tablet of Aššur enters in front of the king on a *cushion*. Fragrant oil is sprinkled, sacrifices are made, incense is burnt. In front of the king it is read aloud' (*ina pān šarri isassiū*). The units 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 together are qualified as 'tablet of the *adê* of Aššur'.[210]

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[206] Here I follow Parpola's interpretation. For a discussion of this phrase, see Parpola's annotations in SAA 9 and Weippert 2002: 44-45 (cf. also Nissinen 2003a: 121, note e). Weippert takes ii 10-18 as a quotation from an earlier oracle and ii 20-23 as its fulfilment, but I regard the text as a whole as retrospective (apart from the concluding appeal to praise Aššur).

[207] Borger 1956: 40-45.

[208] Nin. A i 46, 82, *ḫammā'e*, 'rebels'.

[209] Weippert 2002: 16, with note 63: 'Dies ist das Heilsorakel, das vor der Statue ergangen ist'.

[210] The expression *adê ša Aššur* means *adê* sworn to, and guarded by, Aššur (see Prism A ix 72; BIWA: 68, and cf. *adê ilānī rabûti*, in Watanabe 1987: 10-23). It is a loyalty oath for Esarhaddon

The two following two units, presented as *abutu* of Ištar of Arbela (3.4 and 3.5), are of different kinds. 3.4 is a description of an *adê*-ritual hosted by Ištar of Arbela on behalf of the king. Although Ištar appears speaking, it is not a prophetic oracle, but a prophetic text (comparable to SAA 9 5 – for this text, see 3.1.1). 3.5 is formulated as a prophetic oracle. Ištar of Arbela directly addresses Esarhaddon, reminding him of what she has done for him, and demanding food and drink for a banquet. The end of the oracle probably includes a divine promise for the king. Furthermore, the unit ends with a reference to a prophet (*raggimu*), no doubt suggesting that this prophet delivered the preceding oracle (3.5). Yet, the oracle is remarkably long, and part of it may contain a description of past events hardly expected in a prophetic oracle (iv 3-13). 3.5 probably is a prophetic oracle in a somewhat elaborate form.

SAA 9 3 as a whole is a literary compilation.[211] The prophetic oracles preserved in this text (within 3.2 and 3.5) are reworkings of oracles that previously had been orally delivered and reported, and afterwards were inserted in an elaborate form into a new context. This compiled text shows that prophetic texts and reused oracles were closely related. On the one hand, prophetic oracles received a second life in a reworked form (3.2, 3.5). On the other hand, texts were produced that were literary in origin, but closely resemble the genre of prophetic oracles (3.3, 3.4).

6.2.2 Literary Derivatives of Prophecy

In this section, I discuss four texts from seventh-century Assyria that can be qualified as literary derivatives of prophetic oracles. Although these texts bear close resemblance to the genre of prophetic oracles, they are unlikely to go back to orally delivered words. Instead, they can be qualified as literary compositions.

SAA 3 13

SAA 3 13 is a fictive dialogue between Ashurbanipal and the god Nabû, situated in the temple of Ištar of Nineveh. Although in part strongly reminiscent of oracular language, SAA 3 13 probably is a literary text.[212] The text shares important similarities with SAA 9 9, and it is quite likely that both belong to the same historical context.[213] Like SAA 9 9, SAA 3 13 focuses on the life of Ashurbanipal (SAA 3 13 l. 2, 18, 21, 24, r. 5), which is threatened. Ashurbanipal, in a threatening situation, went to the temple of Ištar of Nineveh to implore Nabû for support. This can be related to the war with Šamaš-šum-ukin. Ashurbanipal implored Nabû's help against his 'ill-wishers' (*ḫādiānu*) and 'adversary' (*bēl ṣālti*), which refers to Šamaš-šum-ukin and his supporters (l. 2, 6, 22, r. 3, 4, 5, 9). SAA 3

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taken by the Assyrians. The first *šulmu* (3.2) is placed before Bēl-Tarbāṣi, 'the Lord of the courtyard'. The courtyard of Ešarra was the place where oath-swearing ceremonies were held (see SAA 1 76, 13-r. 7). The second *šulmu* (3.3) is placed before the *ṣalmu*; Dalley (1986: 99) points out this was a divine symbol on which loyalty oaths were sworn.

[211] The reason for this combination may be found in the shared reference to a loyalty oath (*adê*) for King Esarhaddon (ii 27; ii 36, iii 11, 14). So also Villard 2001: 80.

[212] Pongratz-Leisten (1999: 75) qualifies this text as a 'literarische Kreation in Anlehnung an die Gattung der Prophetensprüche'.

[213] Cf. Parpola 1997: LXXI. For the similarities between SAA 9 9 and SAA 3 13, see Hilber 2005: 70-74.

13 can be regarded as a literary representation of a scene that actually may have taken place at some point during the war against Šamaš-šum-ukin. The lines 24-26, which read like a prophetic oracle, are introduced as a word of Nabû, spoken by a *zāqīqu*:[214]

> A *zāqīqu* answered from the presence of Nabû, his lord: Fear not, Ashurbanipal! I will give you long life, I will entrust pleasant breezes with your soul; my pleasant mouth shall ever bless you in the assembly of the great gods.[215]

After a response of Ashurbanipal (r. 1-5), a similar divine speech is given, which concludes the text (r. 6-11)

> You were a child, Ashurbanipal, when I left you with the Queen of Nineveh; you were a baby, Ashurbanipal, when you sat in the lap of the Queen of Nineveh! (...) Your ill-wishers, Ashurbanipal, will fly away like *pollen* on the surface of the water. They will be squashed before your feet like *burbillātu* insects in spring! You, Ashurbanipal, you will stand before the great gods and praise Nabû![216]

SAA 3 13 is reminiscent of oracular language, but composed as a literary text. Both SAA 9 9 and SAA 3 13 attest to the importance of divine encouragement of Ashurbanipal during the war against Šamaš-šum-ukin. Both texts maintain the perspective of the time of the war; SAA 9 9 through the colophon, SAA 3 13 through the divine promise that Ashurbanipal's enemies will be destroyed. Yet, both texts were probably composed after the events, and *ex eventu* present the outcome of the war as according to the will of the gods. Since SAA 3 13 probably is a literary text imitating oracular language – contrary to SAA 9 9, containing an elaborate oracle in literary dress – it is discussed here. The correspondences between both texts show however that literary elaborations of prophetic oracles and literary texts imitating the oracular style were intimately related.

SAA 3 44

SAA 3 44, 45 and 46 are to be qualified as compositions of divine words.[217] Here, I present SAA 3 44 as a whole, for two reasons. First, it is one of the best examples from seventh-century Assyria of prophecy as literature. Second, it is an important text that has not received the attention it deserves.[218] In Livingstone's edition three of the horizontal rulings

[214] *Zāqīqu*/*zīqīqu* is the name of a dream god, but can, according to Butler (1998: 83), occasionally denote 'a professional, who may have prophesied'.
[215] Translation from: Livingstone SAA 3.
[216] Translation from: Livingstone SAA 3.
[217] Contra Livingstone (1989: XXX) who shares these texts among the 'letters from gods'. This category applies to SAA 3 41-43, but not to 3 44-47. In the latter texts, the divine voice does not quote from, or respond to, a royal report. These texts are not divine letters but compositions of divine words.
[218] This text is discussed by Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 249-260. Her discussion is helpful, but not without problems. First, in her presentation of the text (1999: 252-253) she follows Livingstone's edition, which contains some mistakes (see below). Second, she regards this text as a 'letter from

dividing the different sections of this composition are erroneously omitted.[219] With the rulings in place, the text appears to consist of some 27 sections, divided into three main parts (l. 1-15, l. 16-r. 2, and r. 3-29'). The three parts are separated from each other by empty sections: sections 6 and 17. I have included the two empty sections in my numbering, because this is in agreement with the numbering as it appears on the tablet: the sections 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, and 14 are numbered on the tablet, which shows that the empty section 6 was counted as well.[220] The numbering of sections on the tablet demonstrates that SAA 3 44 is a deliberately composed text.

Part I (l. 1-15) mainly deals with accusations against Šamaš-šum-ukin. The accusations against Šamaš-šum-ukin (sections 1, 3 and 5) are presented in contrast to Ashurbanipal, who is pious and just (sections 2 and 4). Part II (l. 16-32 and r. 1-2) focuses on the divine measures taken against Šamaš-šum-ukin (sections 7-9), which are identified as deeds of Ashurbanipal at the command of the god (sections 10-14). Finally, part III (r. 3-29') deals with the exaltation of Ashurbanipal (sections 18, 27'), who is presented as obedient and pious (sections 25', 26'), in contrast to Elam and Šamaš-šum-ukin, who suffer a terrible fate (sections 19, 20). The text concludes with a divine promise of support (r. 26'-27'): everyone who rebels against Ashurbanipal will be punished like Šamaš-šum-ukin.

In the composition, different perspectives have been combined. First, we find a range of words referring to Šamaš-šum-ukin in the third person, which deal with divine actions against him (sections 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, and 20). These sections deal with Šamaš-šum-ukin's transgressions and punishment. Ashurbanipal is not addressed (only referred to in line 8); rather, the god explains the cruel events that have happened from a sin-punishment perspective. Second, we find words that address Ashurbanipal in the second person, emphasise his deeds, and deal with the defeat of enemies and restoration of cults in general terms (sections 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 24', 25', 26'). These sections do not mention Šamaš-šum-ukin, but in general terms deal with Ashurbanipal's privileged position: he takes care of the divine cults, rules the people, and defeats the enemies. The enemies are consistently referred to in the plural (l. 11, 22-23, 26, 29, r. 1-2, 4, 6). Only in part III is there some specification: Elam is mentioned (r. 5), the [*land of Akkad*] (r. 12), and 'those gods' (r. 15). Ashurbanipal's actions against Babylonia and Elam are an exponent of his royal and military supremacy in general. Third, the sections 1, 11 and 27', deliberately positioned at beginning, middle and end of the composition, combine the two perspectives and shape the text into a meaningful composition. In the following presentation, the material combining the two perspectives (sections 1, 11, 27') is marked as type A; the words addressed to Ashurbanipal are marked as type B; and the words referring to Šamaš-šum-ukin are marked as type C.

Evidently, the text was composed out of divergent material. A clear indication for this consists of the suffixes that in their present context miss an antecedent: '*their* cities', '*their*

God', which it is not. Pongratz-Leisten (1999: 251-253) divides the text into 'historical descriptions', 'legitimation formulae', and 'commands to cultic service'.

[219] From inspection of the tablet it appears that horizontal rulings are to be added directly after line 15, directly after line 32, and directly preceding r. 11. These rulings were noted in CT 35 13-14 (only the ruling directly preceding r. 11 is somewhat unclear).

[220] For this numbering on the tablet, see CT 35 tablet 14 (mistakenly indicated as reverse).

booty' (-*šunu*, l. 22-23), '*his* warriors' (-*šu*, l. 24), '*his* predecessor' (-*šu*, r. 7). The demonstrative '*those* gods' (*šá-a-tu*-[*nu*], r. 23') has no clear antecedent either.

sec.	l.		type
		PART I.	
1	1 2 3 4	By my great support, with which I gave [you] confid[ence, ...] who rival with you [for the kingship .....] Because of these evil deeds [which Šamaš-šum-ukin] committed against you, I pulled out the foundations of his royal throne, over[threw] his reign and [comma]nded the destruction of the entire land of Akkad.	A
2	5 6	To perfect the shrines of the great gods, to renew [...] the offerings, to venerate my divinity (and) a good reign of [....] I decreed as your fate.	B
3	7 8 9 10	As for Šamaš-šum-ukin, who did not keep my *adê* but sinned against the kindness of Ashurbanipal, my beloved king, I confined him in harsh prisonment and bound [.....] I placed nose-ropes on his magnates and [led] them to [...?] presence.	C
4	11 12	To give kings military support, to overthrow enemies, to resettle [....] sanctuaries, I appo[inted you] as the shepherd of justice of the subjects of Enlil.	B
5	13 14 15	Of ruining his life and destroying the land of Akkad, the words of the gods, which [.....] Šamaš-šum-ukin [*neglected*] my lordly curse with which I had cursed him, and did not take seriously good [couns]el regarding his life [.....].	C
6		empty section	
		PART II.	
7	16 17	[.....] he aroused [the anger of] all the gods and [....] performed evil deeds which were to cost him his life.	C
8	18 19	[As for Šamaš-šum-ukin], who carried off the property of the gods, [..... I] decreed his fate as evil.	C
9	20 21	Because of these evil deeds [which] he kept on perpetrating, at my command[221] his own gods became angry, abandoned him, and took to foreign parts.	C
10	22 23	At the command of my great divinity you conquered their cities and took their heavy booty as plunder from them to Assyria.	B
11	24 25	By my great support you brought about the defeat of his warriors. The rest you [handed over] to me alive, in Nineveh, city of your lordship you killed them with weapons.	A
12	26	I sent before you my fierce weapons to defeat your enemies.	B

[221] Livingstone's reading [*b*]*i-tu-u-a* is strange (*bītu*, locative, and suffix; literally 'in my house', translated 'on my account'). Pongratz-Leisten (1999: 252) adopts Livingstone's reading, but takes it with the previous line ('Wegen jener üblen Taten, die er immer wieder beging gegen mich'), which is unconvincing too. I adopt Bauer's suggestion: [*qí*]-*bi-tu-u-a*, 'auf mein [G]eheiß' (1933: 79, 81).

13	27	At the mention of your name, which I made great, your troops go victoriously wherever there is fighting with weapons.	B
14	28 29	Because of your in[cessant] prayers and supplications [with which] you beseeched my great divinity, I stood at your side and [poured out the blood] of your enemies.	B
15	30 31 32	[....] of [.....] the citizens of Assyria [.....] him and [.....] his kingship.	C
16	r. 1 2	[..... who had not] kept [my *adê*] and had sin[ned against] your [ki]ndness, you [took] with your hands like sheep, and slaughtered like lambs.	B
17		empty section	
		PART III.	
18	3 4	In the enactment of my utterance, the [Igigi] and Anunnaki pay attention to his command! All the kings seated on thrones bow down [before] you and kiss your feet.	B
19	5 6	I smashed the [bo]ws of Elam, and strengthened your bow. I made your weapons stronger than those of all (your) enemies.	B
20	7 8 9 10	I decreed for him [the fate] of his predecessor Išdu-kin, king of B[abyl]on, and in his time his people were seized by famine; they chewed leather straps. I made [.....] to seize the people of Akkad, and I made them eat each other's flesh [....].	C
21'-23'	11'-18'	break of approximately 8 lines, 3 sections	
24'	19' 20'	[You ..... the word of] my [great] divinity, eased my [*angry* heart and made *the land of Akkad* conclude peace] with me.	B
25'	21' 22'	[.....] forgiveness and [...] are in my hands. I spoke to you with my divine word and you acted.	B
26'	23'	I commissioned you to renew those gods and [to prov]ide for their shrines.	B
27'	24' 25' 26' 27' 28' 29'	They heard (this) in their assembly, blessed your kingship, and commended your good deeds greatly in my presence. [Any oth]er enemy who does not fear my great divinity, I will deliver into your hands in like manner. You sent a tablet of good tidings and peace to the presence of my [god]head!	A
	30'	[Co]py of the words [of ……]	

Pongratz-Leisten has shown that the text bears a literary character.[222] SAA 3 44 contains many parallels with Ashurbanipal's royal inscriptions relating to 652-648 BCE: Prism C

[222] Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 254-255.

(647 BCE) and particularly Prism A (643 BCE).[223] SAA 3 44 must have been composed after the war, just as the royal inscriptions. Its purpose probably was the same as that of the accounts of the war in the Prisms C and A: legitimisation and justification of the violence, the suffering of the people of Babylon, and the sacrilege committed against the gods of Babylon. The events are narrated from a divine point of view. It is explained that the god destined everything as it happened: the fate of Ashurbanipal was to be king (l. 5-6), for Šamaš-šum-ukin an evil fate was destined (l. 19). The concrete actions against Babylon and Šamaš-šum-ukin are presented as actions of the god. The main point of the text is the contrast between Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šum-ukin.[224] Because Ashurbanipal is pious and good, the deity supports him and grants him victory. By contrast, because Šamaš-šum-ukin committed evil and violated the will of the gods, the deity decreed his fate as evil and caused his death. The contrast between life (Ashurbanipal) and death (Šamaš-šum-ukin), which plays an important role in SAA 9 9 and SAA 3 13, appears also in SAA 3 44. Here, the focus is on Šamaš-šum-ukin losing his life: 'ruining his life' (l. 13), not taking seriously good counsel regarding his life (l. 15), he 'performed evil deed which were to cost him his life' (l. 17).

The deity speaking in this text probably is Aššur.[225] The closest counterpart to SAA 3 44 is in fact SAA 9 3.3. Both texts are literary derivatives of prophecy; both present an account of major historical events from a divine perspective (681 BCE and 652-648 BCE respectively); and in both accounts, the deity speaking takes full responsibility for the violent events. In SAA 9 3.3, the god Aššur makes clear that it was he who annihilated Esarhaddon's rivals. Similarly, in SAA 3 44 it is the god who is responsible for the destruction of Babylon. Here too, it is likely to be Aššur, who, after the events, asserts that it was he who decreed and acted. In both cases, violence and bloodshed among members of the royal family took place, which afterwards needed justification; this is the purpose of SAA 9 3.3 and SAA 3 44.

In r. 30', '[co]py of the words [of/that] ....', the preceding text is qualified as 'words' (*dibbī*). This term is more often used to indicate divine words. In SAA 9 8 line 1, 'words (*dibbī*) [concerning the Elam]ites', and in SAA 9 2.3 22'-23', 'these words of mine (*dibbīya*) from Arbela, collect them inside your palace'. The term *dibbī* was thus used to indicate divine oracles. Although SAA 3 44 is a literary composition, the term *dibbī*, suggests as if the text consists of divine oracles. Furthermore, at the end of the text, r. 26'-27', the perspective changes from past to future: '[any oth]er enemy who does not fear my great divinity, I will deliver into your hands in like manner.' This is a divine declaration of support, often found in prophetic oracles. The fate of Šamaš-šum-ukin and his allies is turned into an example, precisely as was the case with SAA 9 1, where the divine support of Esarhaddon in his struggle for the throne was broadened to divine support of Esarhaddon against whatever enemy would rise against him.

[223] Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 249-251. A remarkable element, pointed out by Pongratz-Leisten (1999: 256) is that both Prism A and SAA 3 44 include Elam within the Šamaš-šum-ukin episode; in both cases the reference to Elam is immediately followed by the motif of Babylon suffering from a famine.
[224] Cf. Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 259.
[225] So also Livingstone, SAA 3; Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 249.

SAA 3 45

SAA 3 45 is a composition of divine words of encouragement relating to Ashurbanipal's war against Teumman.[226] The deity speaking probably is Aššur. His words addressed to the Assyrian king are separated from each other by horizontal rulings. The king is consistently addressed in the second person. In the first section, Aššur states he made Ashurbanipal supreme king, honoured by all other kings. The second section (l. 6'-8') is as follows:

> [The magnates] of Elam tremble and shake b[efore you]. [By] your [... and] the good fate which I decreed for you, [you will sm]ite [her], and her governors will sway to and fro like reeds in the tempest.[227]

In the next section, a contrast is made between Ashurbanipal, whose closeness to Aššur is emphasised, and 'they', perhaps the Elamites, who have taken something to Elam and have sinned. Text 45 is substantially shorter than 44, it consistently addresses the king in the second person, and it clearly refers to the future. It could be a written oracle, sent to the king before the events actually took place.

SAA 3 46

SAA 3 46 is a fragment of a text similar to 3 44. In Livingstone's restored reading, the text begins as 3 44, '[By the support] of my great divinity, with which [I gave you confidence]'. In the first section, Aššur formulates his commission of the Assyrian king to conquer a disobedient land (l. 1-3). In the second section, Aššur states that at his command the entire world has become subjected to Assyria; the rulers of the earth come to Ehursaggalkurkurra to honour Aššur and his king. Since Ehursaggalkurkurra is the chapel of Aššur in his temple Ešarra in the city of Assur,[228] it can be regarded as certain that the deity speaking here is Aššur.[229] In the third section, the Assyrian king is addressed: 'I desired you, I picked you out for shep[herdship .... and *sent* you with] mighty weapons, sharp arrows, and flaming [*swords*] to fell [*my*] enemies.'[230] In this text, Aššur defines the commission of his king: to fell the enemies, to conquer the disobedient land, to rule the world, so that all rulers come to Assur to revere Aššur's supreme divinity.

The four texts discussed in this section are characterised by a perspective that is broader than that of individual oracles. This is a feature they share with the oracles that were elaborated into literary texts, discussed in 6.2.1. Both the reworked oracles and the literary derivatives of prophecy testify to the phenomenon of prophecy finding its way into literature. Furthermore, both served similar purposes: to emphasise the close relationship between king and god, and to present episodes of major political importance as being governed by the gods.

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[226] It cannot be a reply to Ashurbanipal's account of the battle, because it contains announcements concerning the war.
[227] Translation from: Livingstone, SAA 3: 113.
[228] George 1993: 100.
[229] This counters Grayson's suggestion that Šamaš is the divine speaker (1983: 147-148).
[230] Translation from: Livingstone, SAA 3: 114.

6.2.3 Literary Predictions

In this section I present five examples of literary predictions. These texts contain announcements of events that will take place in future, but are in fact *ex eventu* compositions that fictitiously use prediction as a form (these texts are introduced in chapter 3.3). With these examples I like to show how the form of prediction – divine announcement of future events – was used within literary texts, in order to provide a counterpart to the seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition.

Marduk Prophecy

This text consists of two main parts.[231] In the first part, mostly in the past tense,[232] Marduk relates about three periods he spent abroad, in the land of Ḫatti, in Assyria, and in Elam.[233] Whereas the first two journeys function as an introduction in which Marduk presents himself as a traveller who leaves and returns as he wishes, the third journey forms the main topic of the text: Marduk's stay in Elam. The second part of the text, in the future tense, deals with the glorious reign of the Babylonian king who takes Marduk back from Elam to Babylon.

Marduk presents himself as: 'I am Marduk, the great Lord ... The one who roams about all the lands, from sunrise to sunset, am I (i 7-12).' The first illustration of this is his stay in the land of Ḫatti (i 13-19): 'I gave the command that I go to Ḫatti (...). I stayed there for 24 years and I established the trade of the Babylonians'. In the next section, Marduk relates his return to Babylon. The beginning of this section poses a problem. In Borger's edition the fragmented lines run: [23].... ˹E$_{11}$˺ (*īlâm*)-*ma* [24].... DIB˹?˺-*ma*,[234] which Borger restores and translates as '[ein König von Babel[?]] stand auf, und fasste[?] [meine Hand[?]]'.[235] This is possible but not convincing. First, no Babylonian king from this period is known that took Marduk back from Ḫatti. Moreover, in the final lines of this section Marduk states: 'I returned home' (i 35). This is strange if a king already brought him home. The description of Marduk's return (i 35-37) has a parallel in the section that follows, where Marduk returns from his stay in Assyria (i 15'-17'). Here no king is involved either: Marduk himself returned from Assyria. For this reason the common interpretation of i 23-25 is unlikely.[236] The Marduk Prophecy does not contain a sequence of kings, but a sequence of travels. Only in the case of the third journey is a king involved: the king whose reign is idealised in the second part of the composition (see below). The second illustration of

[231] For the text, see Borger 1971: 5-13.
[232] Cf. Sommerfeld 1982: 188, note 2.
[233] Usually, this is interpreted as referring to three deportations of Marduk's statue, by the Hittite king Mursilis (1594), the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I (c. 1243-1207), and the Elamite king Kudur-Naḫḫunte (1155). Whereas the third journey to Elam, the main topic of the text, indeed reflects the deportation of the statue by Kudur-Naḫḫunte, followed by its return under Nebuchadnezzar I, the precise historical background of the first two journeys is a matter of debate. According to Dalley (1997: 165-166), it is uncertain whether Mursilis took Marduk's statue to Ḫatti, and, if he did, when it was returned; furthermore, the statue deported by Tukulti-Ninurta was still in Assyria when Kudur-Naḫḫunte deported Marduk's statue to Elam. Evidently, there was more than one statue (Dalley 1997: 163-166).
[234] Borger 1971: 6.
[235] Borger 1971: 16.
[236] The extant signs, ˹E$_{11}$˺-*ma* ... DIB˹?˺-*ma*, can be interpreted in a variety of ways.

Marduk as a traveller deals with his sojourn in Assyria, described in remarkably positive terms.[237] The first two journeys set the stage for the main topic: Marduk's stay in Elam and his return to Babylon. The introduction concludes with the following self-presentation: 'I am Marduk, the great prince .... Who has ever undertaken such a journey? From the place where I went, I returned.[238] I was in command!' (i 18'-21'). Marduk asserts that he returned as he went; as yet no king is mentioned.

Marduk's stay in Elam is described as follows: 'I went to Elam, all the gods went (with me). I was in command!' (i 22'-23'). The absence of the gods in Babylonia results in chaos and disaster. The temple cults are discontinued, people get sick and die, morals fall short, crimes abound (i 24'-ii 11). The section ends with Marduk's desire to go home: 'I fulfilled my days, I fulfilled my years. Then I longed for my city Babylon and Ekur-Sagila (i.e. Esagila). I called all the goddesses together. I commanded: Bring your tribute, O you lands, to Babylon' (ii 12-17). Marduk's stay in Elam is described in much more detail than the first two journeys. Furthermore, the deplorable situation of Babylon after the gods had left is depicted. Finally, Marduk does not conclude with 'I returned home', but 'I longed for (*libbi wabālu*) my city Babylon and Ekur-Sagila'.

The second part of the text contains a glorifying description of the reign of king who brings Marduk back to Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar I)

> A king of Babylon will arise. He will renew the temple of wonders, Ekur-Sagil. The plans of heaven and earth he will draw in Ekur-sagil. He will change its height. He will establish tax exemption for my city Babylon. He will grasp my hand and bring me forever in my city Babylon and in Ekur-Sagil.

This describes a reversal of fortune in reaction to the deplorable situation that was created because of Marduk's absence. Various subsequent sections refer to cultic restorations and divine blessings of the reign of this king. The deeds of the king include the restoration of the procession ships of Marduk (ii 28-33) and Nabû (2'-8'), the restoration of Ekur-Gišnugal, the temple of Sîn and Ningal of Ur (Ass. iii 9'-16'), of Ekur-Egalmaḫ, the temple of Ištar of Isin (Ass. iv 6-7), and the return of Anu to his temple in Dēr (iii 25'-30'). Each section ends with a blessing of the king, such as: '[This prince] will experience divine grace. [The years] of his reign will be long' (Ass. iii 7'-8'); 'This prince will be powerful; he will not have rivals' (Ass. iv 4); 'This prince will rule the lands in their totality' (iii 20').

Further actions of the king include gathering the dispersed (Ass. iv 5), feeding the land with abundance of crops (iv 12), and gathering the dispersed land and making its foundation firm (iv 21-22). The reign of this king is idealised, by the reversal of the deplorable situation described earlier. Evil will turn to good and people will live harmoniously together. In the final section Marduk states 'I have reconciled all the gods with him. He will destroy Elam, he will destroy its cities, he will [destroy] its strongholds.' The fourth column contains a listing of products, perhaps an offering list for Marduk's cult, and concludes: '(every) month, day and year ... I will bless him'.

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[237] Most remarkable in this respect is the phrase 'I blessed Assyria' (i 12').
[238] Cf. Sommerfeld 1982: 188, note 2.

The background of this text is, in all likelihood, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I. In his inscriptions the return of Marduk's statue from Elam is a prominent topic.[239] The statue was deported to Elam by Kutir-Naḫḫunte, who put an end to the Kassite dynasty in Babylon (c. 1155 BCE). One inscription contains a prayer of Nebuchadnezzar: 'O lord of Babylon, how long will you dwell in the land of the enemy? ... Turn your face back to Esagila!' Marduk answers: 'by my own mouth I spoke to you ...: Take me [from E]lam to Babylon!'.[240] In general, the inscriptions present Marduk as being in command, Elam as the evil enemy, and Nebuchadnezzar as the superior king who reversed the deplorable state of affairs.[241] Since the main theme of the Marduk Prophecy is concurrent with the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar, it is likely that this text was composed during his reign.[242]

The text probably was composed during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I, but various later Assyrian kings seem to have had a particular interest in its theme. One of the pious deeds described in the text has a parallel in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon. According to iii 25'-30', 'the Great King of Dēr (Ištaran) ... he (i.e. the king) will grasp his hand, and bring him in Dēr and Ekur-dimgalkalamma forever'. This closely resembles a phrase repetitively occurring in Esarhaddon's inscriptions, which presents Esarhaddon as 'the one who brought Great Anu (Ištaran) in his city Dēr and in his temple Edimgalkalamma and let him dwell in his dais forever.'[243] Furthermore, Esarhaddon's Babylon inscription presents a sequence of motifs similar to the Marduk Prophecy: (i) absence of the Babylonian gods (the gods ascended to heaven)[244] led to chaos (Bab. episodes 7 and 9); (ii) when the days of absence were fulfilled (*malû*, ii 12; Bab. episode 10b:19) a reversal takes place: a king is commissioned to restore and renew Esagila;[245] (iii) the gods are brought back,[246] Babylon's tax exemption (*zakûtu*) is restored,[247] and the dispersed Babylonians are gathered by the king.[248] Furthermore, Esarhaddon's inscriptions often mention the return of Marduk to Esagila (which actually took place in 668 BCE). Ashurbanipal, in his inscriptions, continued the themes of the completion of Esagila and the return of Marduk to Babylon. In addition, during his reign the wars with Elam were a principal concern. The destruction of

[239] For the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar I, see Frame 1995: 11-35.
[240] See Frame 1995: 18, l. 8-10, 13-17. Another text describes the conquest of Elam under Kudur-Naḫḫunte and Marduk's absence as a disastrous period (text 6 in Frame's numbering). Furthermore, two texts that belong together describe Marduk's anger with Babylon and his leaving to Elam and his pity and return to Babylon (text 8 and 9 in Frame's numbering).
[241] For the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I, see also Roberts 1977b; Lambert 1964.
[242] This concurs with the colophon of the text, reconstructed by Borger, which refers to 'the copy from Babylon' (see Borger 1971: 13).
[243] Esarhaddon, Uruk A 20-21 (Borger 1956: 74). See further Borger 1956: 25 36:c:8, 122 C E Chr., 84 42ff; Frame 1995: 176:10, 178:19-20, 183:20-21; Glassner 2004: 201:44-45; 209:6.
[244] Marduk Prophecy i 25'; Bab. episode 8a:45-46; b:14.
[245] Marduk Prophecy ii 19-24; Bab. episode 26c:18-28 'Esagila I built ... anew, I made it greater, higher and more beautiful than before. I made it shining like the stars'.
[246] Marduk Pprophecy ii 26-27; 'the looted statues of the gods I have returned to their places from Assyria and Elam' (Bab. episode 36c:5-9).
[247] Marduk Prophecy ii 24-25; Bab. episode 37a:37.
[248] Marduk Prophecy Ass. iv 5; Bab. episode 37a:22. The motif of long reign and prosperous time occurs in Marduk Prophecy iii 6'-10'; Bab. episode 39.

Elam, referred to in the Marduk Prophecy (iii 22'-24'), is the topic of a prophecy from the reign of Ashurbanipal: 'I will destroy Elam' (*ḫepû*, SAA 9 8:8-9; as in iii 22'-24').

For Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, the restoration of Esagila and the return of Marduk, and the enmity with Elam, were interrelated. They presented themselves as patron of the Babylonian cults in order to bind Babylonia to Assyria and to prevent it from forging an alliance with Elam. Because of these concerns, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal probably were profoundly interested in the Marduk Prophecy. The Marduk Prophecy as we have it, may result from an elaboration during the reign of Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal. Part of the Assyrian elaboration may have been the remarkably positive description of Marduk's stay in Assyria: 'I blessed Assyria' (i 12') and an extension of the description of the actions and blessings of the ideal king.

The Marduk Prophecy was never intended as a real prophecy, but as a glorification of the 'king of Babylon', Nebuchadnezzar, later probably applied to the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.

Šulgi Prophecy

The Šulgi Prophecy is badly preserved.[249] The narrator is Šulgi, a Sumerian king of the third dynasty of Ur (at the end of the third millennium), who is presented as a deified king: ^{d}Šulgi.[250] In the first lines, Šulgi presents himself as someone who has received divine knowledge: 'I am (god) Šulgi, beloved of Enlil and Ninlil; the hero Šamaš has spoken to me, Ištar my lady has revealed (this) to me' (i 1-4). From the perspective of Šulgi, the text deals with the future, and is presented as a divine revelation. King Šulgi describes himself as king of the earth, and as founder of Nippur. He furthermore states: 'When I spoke, the gods would listen to me. At my own expense,[251] I built this wall and made it firm' (6'-9'). The reference to 'this wall' suggests that the Šulgi Prophecy presents itself as a wall inscription, which means that the text (fictitiously) claims to be of ancient provenance and was placed into the wall of Nippur during Šulgi's reign.[252]

In the extant fragment of the third column, Šulgi refers to a ruler who will 'walk around in "woe!" and "alas!",' apparently because he was negligent to the citizens of Nippur and Babylon and did not provide justice for them (11'-16'). The following fragments describe a terrible period to come. A ruler will endure misery. During his reign fighting and war will not cease. Brother will devour brother, there will be complete chaos. Furthermore, 'the possessions of Babylon will go to Subartu (i.e. Assyria) and the land of Assyria. The king of Babylon will deliver to Assur the possessions of his palace to the ruler of Assur. For ever and ever Baltil (i.e. Assur) ...' The fragment of column v seems to continue the description of the deplorable situation of Babylonia: 'friend will slay friend with a weapon, companion will destroy companion with a weapon, [the lands] will be totally destroyed' (5-7). Furthermore, Nippur will be destroyed (9). Finally, however, 'At the command of Enlil the reign of the king of Babylon will come to an end' (13-15). The final part of the fragment (v

[249] For the text, see Borger 1971: 13-15.
[250] Šulgi also appears in Mesopotamian chronicles as one of the deified kings; see Glassner 2004: 124-125: 11, 156-157: 22, 268-269: 70, 270-271: 28, 288-291: 3, 10, r. 3'.
[251] So Foster 1993: 270.
[252] Borger 1971: 22.

19-30) describes a reversal of the disastrous situation. A new king will carry out a restoration: he will rebuild the sanctuaries of the gods and maintain the (food)offerings of the great gods. He will rebuild the temples of Nippur and Isin (19-28).

The Šulgi Prophecy in some respects resembles the Marduk Prophecy: a divine speaker presents himself and gives a self-description by way of introduction; the main topic is introduced – the picture of a deplorable situation – and subsequently a reversal of fortune during the reign of a restorer-king is predicted. The Šulgi Prophecy is literary fiction too. Šulgi is depicted as narrating a revelation of the gods concerning the future. It is difficult to ascertain to which events the text alludes. The most distinctive element is the transportation of the Babylonian (royal) possessions to Assyria. Borger suggested a connection with Tukulti-Ninurta I's conquest of Babylon (1225 BCE) and his robbing of the royal palace.[253] It is impossible to establish how long, according to the Šulgi Prophecy, the period of chaos continued, and to identify the restorer king. He could be Nebuchadnezzar I again, but this is uncertain. In any case, it is likely that the text was composed with a particular king in mind, whose identity escapes us. Its rather general character however made this text applicable to later kings as well. It is conceivable that Assyrian kings such as Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal had an interest in this text too, as it deals with the ideal image of the king as protector/restorer of the Babylonian cults. In particular Esarhaddon, according to his own inscriptions, went to great lengths attempting to reverse the deplorable cultic situation of Babylonia.

Uruk Prophecy

The Uruk Prophecy is known from a single tablet from Uruk written between the fifth and third century.[254] The obverse contains 24 lines, but only their ends have been preserved; the reverse contains 18 lines, which have been almost entirely preserved. The reverse presents a sequence of eleven kings, of which the second and tenth are most specifically described.[255]

king 2 (r. 3-7)	king 10 (r. 11-15)
[Aft]er him (i.e. king 1) a king will arise. He will not provide justice for the land. He will not make the right decisions for the land. The old protective goddess of Uruk he will take away from Uruk and make her dwell in Babylon. He will make dwell in her sanctuary a protective goddess not belonging to Uruk and dedicate to her people not belonging to her. He will impose a heavy tribute on the people of Uruk. He will lay Uruk waste, fill the canals with silt, and abandon the cultivated fields.	After him (i.e. king 9) a king will arise *in Uruk*. He will provide justice for the land. He will make the right decisions for the land. *He will establish the rites of the cult of Anu in Uruk.* The old protective goddess of Uruk he will take away from Babylon and make her dwell in Uruk, in her sanctuary. He will dedicate to her people belonging to her. He will rebuild the temples of Uruk, he will restore the sanctuaries. He will renew Uruk. He will rebuild the gates of Uruk with lapis-lazuli. He will fill the canals and the cultivated fields with plenty and abundance.

[253] Borger 1971: 23.
[254] Beaulieu 1993: 44.
[255] Translations from: Beaulieu 1993: 43.

The likeliest identification of these two kings is with Erība-Marduk (c. 770) and Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562), respectively.[256] Nebuchadnezzar in his inscriptions claims to have restored the cult of Ištar of Uruk: 'I reinstalled the original cultic features and the former rites of Ištar of Uruk. I returned to Eanna its beneficent protective goddess (*lamassu*)'.[257] This is confirmed by an inscription of Nabonidus:

> Ištar of Uruk ... whose cult the Urukaeans changed during the reign of Erība-Marduk ... left Eanna in anger to dwell in a place not her dwelling. They made dwell in her cella a protective goddess not belonging to Eanna. He[258] appeased Ištar, re-established her shrine for her ... the inappropriate Ištar he removed from Eanna and returned Innin (i.e. Ištar) to Eanna, her sanctuary.[259]

It appears that the protective goddess (*lamassu)* and Ištar of Uruk are identical. According to the Uruk Prophecy, things went wrong under the reign of Erība-Marduk when the statue of Ištar was taken to Babylon and an illegal substitute took its place. Nebuchadnezzar however put an end to this deplorable situation.

Whereas king 1, from the Sealand, and king 3, a bad king without any specification, are difficult to identify, the interpretation suggested is supported by r. 8 (following king 3): 'Idem, idem, idem, idem, idem, he will take the property of the land of Akkad to the land of Subartu (i.e. Assyria).' This can be taken as an ingenious summary of the Assyrian domination of Babylonia, from Tiglath-pileser III to Ashurbanipal.[260] The king that will reverse the evil situation and restore the cult of Uruk, is Nebuchadnezzar II. The text however mentions one more king: '[Af]ter him a king, his son, will arise in Uruk and rule the four quarters. He will exercise [ruler]ship[?] and kingship in Uruk. His dynasty will endure forever. [The king]s of Uruk will exercise rulership like the gods'. That Amel-Marduk, Nebuchadnezzar's son, reigned for only two years and was not very successful need not hinder this interpretation. The glorifying depiction of Nebuchadnezzar suggests that the text was composed during his reign. The final passage is to be read as a divine promise. The text ends with a real prediction aiming to legitimate and support the predicted rule of the son of the good king.[261]

Beaulieu has argued that the text in its present form shows a concern from a later period. The first phrase in the description of Nebuchadnezzar's restoration, 'He will establish the rites of the cult of Anu in Uruk', in Beaulieu's view betrays a third-century interest.[262] Whereas the basic layer of the text focuses on the contrast between Erība-

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[256] This was proposed by Hunger and Kaufman 1975. Lambert (1978: 10-12) and Goldstein (1988) propose alternative interpretations, but Beaulieu (1993: 44-49) makes a convincing case for the earlier interpretation.
[257] Langdon 1912: Nebukadnezar nr. 9, ii 50-59.
[258] This must be Nebuchadnezzar. The passage refers to a predecessor of Nabonidus. Theoretically, it could refer to Nabopolassar, but that king does not mention any building activities or the return of any cultic statue to Uruk in his inscriptions.
[259] Schaudig 2001: 516-517, 523-524.
[260] So Beaulieu 1993: 47.
[261] See Kaufman 1977: 224-225; cf. Heintz 1992, who discusses this text from the angle of 'royal messianism'.
[262] Beaulieu 1993: 48-49.

Marduk and Nebuchadnezzar with respect to the cult of Ištar, the later edition presents Nebuchadnezzar as an exemplary ruler of the past, who restored the cults of Uruk and rebuilt her temples. The purpose of this was to gain support for the restoration of the Anu cult of Uruk in the Seleucid period; the newly edited Uruk Prophecy aimed to show the Seleucid rulers the proper royal conduct towards the city of Uruk.[263]

If this is correct, the Marduk Prophecy and the Uruk Prophecy present analogous cases. Both were composed during the reign of a king who was glorified as the restorer of the Babylonian cult, Nebuchadnezzar I and Nebuchadnezzar II respectively. Both texts probably were at a later stage reedited from later interest, seventh-century Assyria and Seleucid Uruk respectively. In the re-edition, the restorer king becomes a model for the contemporary ruler. The Uruk Prophecy in its final shape supports the establishment of the cult of Anu as reorganised in the third century and presents the ruler who will promote this cultic revival as a new Nebuchadnezzar (II).[264] Likewise, the Marduk Prophecy presents the king who will stimulate the restorations of the Babylonian cults as a new Nebuchadnezzar (I). A final similarity may be proposed. The first line of the obverse of the Uruk Prophecy ends with the word 'my signs' (IZKIM.MEŠ(*itātu*)-*ú*-*a*). This might suggest that the Uruk Prophecy like the Marduk Prophecy is related by a divine speaker.[265]

Dynastic Prophecy

The Dynastic Prophecy is known from a single, fragmentary tablet.[266] Although Grayson's interpretation of this text has met with general acceptance,[267] it is in some respects problematic, as I will argue. After a presumed introduction, which is lost,[268] the first column is believed to deal with the Babylonian takeover of the Assyrian empire (the column ends with a horizontal ruling). The next part, ii 1-10, points to a king who reigned for three years, perhaps Neriglissar (559-556), whose son Labaši-Marduk did not succeed in ruling the land. After another horizontal ruling, the text continues with the seventeen-years reign of a usurper who established the 'dynasty of Harran'. Although the designation 'dynasty of Harran' is unfamiliar, it must refer to Nabonidus, whose reign is judged as bad: 'He will plot evil against the land of Akkad' (ii 16). The following section describes the takeover by a king of Elam, which refers to Cyrus,[269] whose reign is evaluated as 'All the lands [*will bring him*] tribute. During his reign Akkad [will (not) enjoy] a peaceful abode' (ii 23-24).[270] In column iii, according to Grayson's interpretation, a king is mentioned who,

[263] Beaulieu (1993: 49-50) mentions Antiochus I as the most probable candidate.
[264] Beaulieu 1993: 49. Beaulieu tentatively suggests that the Uruk Prophecy may have been cast as an oracle of Anu.
[265] Cf. Beaulieu 1993: 49. The divine speaker may have been Anu or Ištar of Uruk.
[266] For the text, see Grayson 1975b: 28-37.
[267] Grayson 1975b: 24-27.
[268] In Grayson's edition, obv i 1 and 2 end with *–inni*. This is not a sound base for arguing that the Dynastic prophecy has a first-person introduction; contra Longman 1991: 152, 162-163.
[269] Cf. Potts 1999: 306-311, for an explanation of Cyrus, 'king of Anšan' as an 'Elamite' king.
[270] It is difficult to decide whether the description of the reign of Cyrus is positive or negative. Some elements point to a positive evaluation, but the phrase 'that king will oppress the land' (l. 22) appears to be negative. Dijkstra (2002: 75) opts for a positive description, translating 'that king will be stronger than [of] any land'; but the same phrase also occurs in l. 14, referring to Nabonidus, where it is clearly negative.

after a reign of two years, is murdered by a eunuch. His successor reigned for five years. This must refer to Arses, murdered by the eunuch-general Bagoas, and succeeded by Darius III. The latter is predicted to suffer a setback against the army of the Hanaeans, i.e. the Macedonians.[271] The curious fact that the text jumps over some 200 years from Cyrus, at the end of column ii, to Arses, at the beginning of column iii, can be solved by Lambert's suggestion to suppose an extra column on both the obverse and reverse in between.[272] The description of the reign of Darius III continues as follows:

> Afterwards (i.e. after an initial setback against the Macedonians), he will refit [his] army and ra[ise] his weapons. Enlil, Šamaš, and [Marduk?] will go at the side of his army [and bring about] the overthrow of the Hanaean army. He will carry off its extensive booty and [bring it] into his palace. The people who [have suffered] misfortune, [will enjoy] happiness. The mood of the land [will be happy ...] tax exemption [...][273]

This passage, describing Darius' victory over the Macedonians, cannot be solved in Grayson's interpretation.[274] On the one hand, Grayson agrees that it is 'extremely unlikely' that the author of the text falsified the outcome of the battle of Gaugamela, but on the other, he rules out the possibility that it is a real prediction, since traces of column iv (column vi, if Lambert's suggestion is followed) seem to describe three further reigns.[275] Although the final column is effectively lost, four horizontal rulings, marking five different sections, are visible. Since the first three are believed to describe further reigns, they are supposed to refer to Seleucus I, Philip Arrhidaeus and Alexander IV. Grayson assumes that these kings are described negatively, and that the Dynastic Prophecy thus is 'a strong expression of anti-Seleucid sentiment'.[276] This is however based on a text that has not been preserved.

The problem may be solved as follows. The passage concerning the defeat of the Macedonians only makes sense as a divine promise to a contemporary Persian king. It evidently forms a climax to the succession of reigns, comparable to the climaxes in the literary prophecies discussed above. This is confirmed by the fact that no king of the Hanaeans is mentioned; the sequence ends with the Persian king, and the Hanaeans merely are the enemies that are to be destroyed.[277] The last column need not contradict this interpretation. Two of the presumed historical sections of this last column consist of one

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[271] The term Hanaeans (*ha-ni-e*) occurs in various Hellenistic chronicles (Alexander Chroncicle l. 6'; Arabia Chronicle l. 4'; Diadochi Chronicle l. 36; Antiochus and India Chronicle l. 12'; Invasion of Ptolemy III Chronicle l. 6', and the Babylonian king list of the Hellenistic period l. 8). The term Hanaeans in the Hellenistic period is apparently a designation of the Macedonians, or by extension the Greeks and Macedonians. For the chronicles and the term Hanaeans, see http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/chron00.html (texts in preparation, Bert van der Spek). Dalley (2004b: 431) suggested for *ha-ni-e* the reading *ha-lí-i*, 'Hellenes'.
[272] Lambert 1978: 12-13.
[273] Translation based on Grayson 1975b: 35.
[274] Grayson 1975b: 26: 'The problem, of course, is how to reconcile the defeat of the Hanaeans with historical fact – the victory of Alexander at Gaugamela! For this I have no answer.'
[275] Grayson 1975b: 26-27, with note 14.
[276] Grayson 1975b: 17.
[277] Following Grayson's interpretation, the text not only falsifies the outcome of the Persian-Greek war, but also ignores Alexander the Great.

line (line 3) and three (lines 4-6). This is much shorter than any of the sections on the preceding columns, and arguably too short to describe the reign of further kings. It seems likely that this column does not contain descriptions of further dynasties, but describes aspects of the rule of the Persian king introduced in the second half of the penultimate column.[278] An analogy to this is found in the Marduk Prophecy, where the glorious deeds and prosperous years of the restorer king are described in the final part of the text, divided over various sections. The Dynastic Prophecy describes a long sequence of reigns. If Grayson's interpretation of columns i-iii (i-v, Lambert) is followed, the climax consists of the supportive promise to Darius III, that the Babylonian gods will assist him in his fight against the Macedonians.

Various scholars have pointed out that the depictions of the ideal king in the literary prophecies resemble the portrayals of the ideal king as found in the Old Testament.[279] Whereas Nissinen, in this respect, refers to Jer 23:5-6 and Zech 6:12-13, the ideal king passages from First Isaiah, Isa 9:1-6, 11:1-5 and 32:1-2, can be mentioned as well.[280] This is not to claim that these biblical passages are dependent on the Akkadian literary prophecies.[281] Rather, the idealising portrayals of a king, in First Isaiah and in the Akkadian literary prophecies, share a more general *topos*. It is a general characteristic of royal ideology to present the king as a restorer of long-time lapses, and his reign as a period during which a deplorable situation reverted to a glorious time. However, two further features may be mentioned that are shared by the ideal king passages from Isaiah and those from the Akkadian literary predictions: first, their literary character and second, the anonymity of the ideal king. Both the texts from First Isaiah that form part of the seventh-century revision and the Akkadian literary predictions are literary, scribal products.[282] Furthermore, both take the form of divine or prophetic announcements – predictions concerning the future – and for that reason, the ideal king remains unidentified. Both can be seen as a form of pseudo-prophecy. The *Heilszeit* is characterised by a symbiosis between the king and the gods. The purpose of these texts is to glorify the reign of a particular king and to provide divine legitimacy for his actions.

Literary Prediction in the Poem of Erra

A final example of literary prediction stems from the Poem of Erra.[283] The date of this composition is controversial,[284] but the poem was popular in the Assyrian period and

[278] The fragments of the final column accord with this. L. 2 [...] *ippuš*^{uš}, cf. i 24 'he will build the palace of Babylon' or something similar; iv 3 Dt-stem of *elēlu* 'they will be purified'; iv 4 'and he will seize the land'; iv 6 *i-bé-el-lu* perhaps from *bêlu* 'they will govern'.
[279] Nissinen 2003c: 141; Höffken 1977; Beaulieu 1993: 51; Weinfeld 1998: 28.
[280] Cf. Höffken 1977: 69, note 50.
[281] The Marduk, Šulgi, Uruk and Dynastic Prophecies differ from the biblical ideal king passages in that they are predominantly concerned with events in Babylonia and show a cultic concern. An important theme is the connection between the absence of the deity with the failure of legitimate and correct rule, and the return of the deity with restoration (Ellis 1989: 175).
[282] Höffken (1977: 69) rightly points at this characteristic, but in my view is wrong to exclude Isa 9:1-6 and 11:1-5 from this (1977: 69, note 50).
[283] See Cagni 1969.
[284] Suggestions range from the eleventh to the seventh century. Von Soden (1971: 255-256) proposes the date of 764 BCE, but his argument is merely based on tablet 4:52-62, dealing with disturbances in

later.[285] The poem narrates how the god Erra, after Marduk has left his dwelling, causes a terrible ravage. Erra ruthlessly goes on the warpath against mankind in general and against Babylonia in particular. His advisor Išum attempts to keep the butchering within limits. Marduk abandons his throne,[286] thereby leaving the world to chaos and the people to destruction. The chaos and destruction are vividly depicted in tablet 4. Erra formulates his ambitions of worldwide ravage (4:131-136) as follows:

> Sea people shall not spare sea people, nor Subartian (spare) Subartian, nor Assyrian Assyrian. Nor shall Elamite spare Elamite, nor Kassite Kassite. Nor shall Sutean spare Sutean, nor Gutian Gutian. Nor shall Lullubean spare Lullubean, nor country country, nor city city. Nor shall tribe spare tribe, nor man man, nor brother brother, and they shall slay one another. But afterwards a man of Akkad shall rise up (*tebû*). He will fell them all and shepherd all of them.[287]

After this, Erra's destructive ambitions are carried out (4:139-150). Tablet 5 pictures the gods as being horrified by the terrors. Erra explains to them that it is thanks to Išum that there are some people left. Išum advises Erra to calm down: he has shown his power and the gods will serve him. Erra settles in Emeslam, his dwelling in the temple in Kutha, and Išum restores the order: 'Išum, in a loud voice, spoke the sign (*ittu*), he conveyed the instruction concerning the scattered people of Akkad, 5:23-38:

> May the reduced people of the land become numerous again. May the short man and the tall man go along its paths. May the weak man of Akkad fell the strong Sutean. May one man drive way seven (of them) as if they were flocks!
> You shall make their towns into ruins and their hills into wildernesses. You shall bring their heavy spoils into Šuanna (i.e. Babylon). You shall bring the country's gods who were angry safely back into their dwellings. You shall Šakkan and Nissaba let descend into the country.[288]
> You shall let the mountains bear their wealth and the sea its produce. You shall let the meadowlands, which have been devastated, bear their produce!

Uruk, a less prominent and not completely understood passage within the poem. Lara Peinado (1989: 114-115) dates the composition to the eleventh century, when the Suteans ravaged the Babylonian cities and connects the deplorable period of chaos with the reign of the usurper Adad-apla-iddina. However, the term 'Suteans' may have been incorporated to lend an air of antiquity and hence authority to the poem (Dalley 2000: 282). An eighth-century date may be likely (although older material may have been incorporated), since, as Dalley (2000: 284) points out, the family to which the author of the poem (Kabti-ilani-Marduk, son of Dabibi) belongs, is first attested in 765 BCE. A phrase from the poem (5:35, 'then the governors of all cities, every one of them, haul their heavy tribute into Šuanna') has a parallel in Merodach-baladan II's cylinder inscription l. 34 (Brinkman 1984: 49, note 230). Besides, the Suteans often occur in Sargon's inscriptions as archaising term for nomadic plunderers that threaten civilisation (see Fuchs 1994: 459; Heltzer 1981: 96-97).

[285] Machinist 1983b: 221.

[286] See Machinist 1983b: 222 and Lara Peinado 1989: 112, for Marduk's motive to leave his throne.

[287] Translation based on Dalley 2000: 308-309.

[288] The disappearance of Šakkan and Nissaba to heaven (paralleled in the Marduk Prophecy, i 25'; Borger 1971: 7) indicates a disastrous situation; their descent into the land marks the reversal of fortune.

> Then let the governors of all cities, every one of them, haul their heavy tribute into Šuanna. Let the temples, which were allowed to become damaged, lift their heads (up) as high as the rising sun. Let the Tigris and Euphrates bring the waters of abundance. Let the governors of all cities, every one of them, deliver up to the provider of Esagila and Babylon![289]

This 'oracle' (*ittu*) of Išum corresponds with Erra's announcement that after the destruction 'a man of Akkad' will bring about a reversal: the announcement that 'the man of Akkad will fell them all' (4:136) resembles the announcement that 'the weak man of Akkad will fell the strong Sutean' (5:27).[290] Furthermore, the middle part of Išum's speech (5:29-34) is a second-person address, which in all likelihood addresses the very same person: the 'man of Akkad' who will rule as king of Babylon. The poem ends with a description of the ideal king, who will carry out the restoration. This king is again referred to in Išum's final words: 'Let the governors of all cities (…) deliver up to the provider of Esagila and Babylon!' (5:38). The provider (*zānin Esagila u Bābili*), a royal epithet,[291] must be the restorer king.

The Poem of Erra shares some important themes with the literary predictions discussed above. The absence of Marduk from his throne leads to chaos and destruction, but after a deplorable situation, a reversal of fortune takes place, carried out by a Babylonian king. The poem contains a similar pseudo-prophetic element. Since the composition as a whole is presented as a divine revelation,[292] the prediction of a new Babylonian king is presented as a divine announcement.

The Poem of Erra has been qualified as a mythologisation of specific historical circumstances.[293] The poem describes the events of an interregnum during which Erra is in power with Marduk's consent.[294] A clue to what this meant at the historical level may be found in the description at the beginning of the fourth tablet: 'You (Erra) changed your divine nature and made yourself like a man'. Erra in the shape of a braggart wandered around in Babylon instigating the people to revolt and make havoc. This probably is the mythologisation of a rebellion in Babylon, which led to chaos and destruction.[295] The absence of Marduk in the poem may reflect the situation of a deportation of Marduk's statue. His absence creates room for Erra with devastating consequences.[296] The end of the Erra poem pictures the recovery of Babylonia after a deplorable and troubled period, including the restoration of its royal dynasty and victory over its enemies.[297]

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[289] Translation based on Dalley 2000: 310-311.
[290] In both cases *maqātu* (Š) 'to fell' is used.
[291] See Seux 1967: 372-375.
[292] See tablet 5:42-46 (Dalley 2000: 311).
[293] Machinist 1983b: 221; Lara Peinado 1989: 110.
[294] Lara Peinado (1989: 115) argues that Marduk plays an indirect role, but nevertheless appears as sovereign and supreme king of gods and people. It is Marduk who permits and justifies Erra's actions.
[295] Machinist 1983b: 221.
[296] The disastrous situation during Erra's rule is analogous to the motif of the 'wrong Ištar' in the temple of Uruk and the accompanying deplorable situation in the Uruk Prophecy. The absence of the right god and presence of the wrong god on the throne necessarily led to chaos and terror. Misfortune is more often explained as the work of Erra; e.g. in a royal inscription of Nabuchadnezzar I, a military setback against Elam is described as: 'Against the will of the gods, the god Erra, (most) powerful of the gods, smote my [war]riors', see Frame 1995: 20, r. 10b-11.
[297] Cf. Lara Peinado 1989: 116.

6.2.4 Function and Purpose of the Texts

6.2.1 dealt with the reuse and literary afterlife of the Assyrian prophetic oracles. Most of the extant oracles are preserved in a secondary shape. These oracles, not surprisingly, to a great extent resemble an official royal ideological point of view. From oracles directly reported in letters however we know that this was not necessarily the case. The same prophetic voice that encouraged and legitimised the king could also make demands on him or even choose the side of his adversaries. The phenomenon of 'royal prophecy' is the result of the development of prophecy under royal auspices. Through reuse and elaboration, the prophetic oracles were lifted out of their original situational character.

In 6.2.2, various texts were discussed that can be seen as literary derivatives of prophecy. The texts closely resemble the genre of prophetic oracles, but bear from the outset a literary character. In these texts, divine legitimation and support of the king is an important theme. Furthermore, as is particularly apparent from SAA 3 44, these compositions are marked by an episodic perspective that is broader than the situational perspective of prophetic oracles. The oracles that received a literary development (6.2.1) closely resemble the literary derivatives of prophecy (6.2.2). Both sets of texts share the same themes and purposes. The development of prophetic oracles, such as the formation of oracle collections, must therefore not be regarded as an isolated phenomenon but as part of the broader development of prophecy becoming literature. The third section (6.2.3) dealt with the literary predictions. In these texts the concept of divine legitimation and commissioning of the king is an important theme. Furthermore, these texts have a particular agenda: the glorification of the reign of the king.[298]

All texts discussed in the second part of this chapter are characterised by an official, ideological point of view. They illustrate the close bond between king and god and in this way glorify the reign of the king and emphasise that the gods govern the historical scene.

6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 Prophecy in Literature

This chapter dealt with the reuse, development and expansion of prophecy: the prophetic words of Isaiah in 6.1 and the Assyrian prophecies in 6.2. At both sides, the development took on similar forms. Both in Assyria and in Judah we have to reckon with prophetic oracles that were recorded and documented. Whereas the primary documentation of prophetic oracles and sayings presumably served their communication, we see on both sides a further development. Prophecy, at least in some cases, was preserved in archives. This was certainly the case in Assyria; for the Judaean side this is plausible. The secondary development of prophecy in Judah and Assyria took on similar forms.

A first similarity is found in the reapplication, republication, reworking, and elaboration of prophetic oracles. Prophetic oracles were republished and preserved in the form of collections.[299] Prophetic material was furthermore elaborated: literary reworking of the

[298] Ellis 1989: 172.

[299] Cf. Knauf 2000: 3, comparing the prophecies of Isa 7* and 8*, as 'die Sammlung "734"' with the oracle collections of SAA 9. According to Knauf, both had a similar function: 'die gegenwärtige

archived material was undertaken. A second point of similarity relates to the composition of new texts that resembled or imitated the form and genre of prophecy. Both the seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition and several texts from seventh-century Assyria (6.2.2) can be seen as literary derivatives of prophecy. Furthermore, the examples of literary prediction (6.2.3) are characterised by a pseudo-prophetic, predictive style, similar to that of the revision of the Isaiah tradition. Both the literary predictions and the revision of the Isaiah tradition contain depictions of the reign of the ideal king. This is a general ancient Near Eastern theme.[300] However, the revision of the Isaiah tradition and the literary predictions share one more trait: the ideal king remains anonymous. This is because the reign of the ideal king is presented as something of the future, in prophetic, predictive veil.

With regard to the textual format an important difference may be pointed out. On the Assyrian side, we have discussed various forms of literary afterlife of the prophetic oracles (6.2.1), the literary derivatives of prophecy (6.2.2) and the literary predictions (6.2.3). These different examples of the phenomenon of 'prophecy in literature' however are all found in separate texts. On the Judaean side we have seen similar developments, which as part of the revision of the Isaiah tradition are found within one and the same text. The Isaiah tradition in its revised form probably consisted of three compilations, which took the form of three separate documents. Each compilation was to some extent a hybrid text; much more than the Assyrian texts discussed in this chapter. From its earliest literary development onwards the Isaiah tradition became an expanding and enlarging tradition.

6.3.2 Development of Prophecy and Royal Ideology

Both in Judah and Assyria we discern the phenomenon of prophecy becoming incorporated into a royal ideological perspective. Examples of this development on the Judaean side are the B1-story of Hezekiah in which the prophet Isaiah figures, and the late seventh-century revision of the Isaiah tradition. On the Assyrian side, this applies to virtually all the texts discussed in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2. Prophecy in transmission could take the form of 'royal prophecy'. This development is of course not too surprising, since prophecy in the ancient Near East often was supportive of the king. However this development constricted prophecy to one, though admittedly main, aspect. In the process of preservation, transmission, reuse and reworking, prophecy became tightly connected with the royal perspective. In practice, prophecy had a broader function: as one of the means of the gods to support *and* to criticise the conduct of the king. Divine support of the king was not self-evident in the ancient Near East.[301] Although prophets functioned within the existing order and can be qualified as guardians of the state, this did not mean that they always agreed with the king and his politics. The interest of the cosmic and social-political order transcended the interests of the individual king. The gods could even go as far as taking the

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Politik durch den Rückblick auf ihre göttlich abgesegneten Anfänge zu legitimieren', and a similar *Sitz im Leben*: 'das Staatsarchiv'.

[300] A common pattern in ancient Near Eastern tradition is that a king is presented as the one under whose reign a deplorable situation came to an end after which a joyful period began. This relates to the divine mandate of the king, since it is the gods that initiate the beatific time; the king is executor of their decisions.

[301] The relationship between god and king was one of mutual obligations, a *quid pro quo* contract. The gods' long-term concern was with the state not with the individual king. See Ellis 1989: 176-182.

side of the king's adversary. In the *development of prophecy* however, as described in this chapter, god and king became inextricably connected. The elaborate prophecies and literary derivatives of prophecy emphasise and glorify the close bonds between king and god. Through this development, prophecy became captured in a royal, ideological perspective. The official ideological stamp of the literarily developed prophecies, in Judah and Assyria, is likely to indicate the provenance, purpose and function of the literary reworking of the prophecies. The development of prophetic oracles into collections, elaborated texts, royal inscriptions, and literary compilations occurred under royal auspices and served a royal interest. Its aim was to support and glorify the ruling king by expressing the close connection between the gods and the king. The king enjoyed divine support and divine authority. The late seventh-century revision of the Isaiah material is to be understood from this perspective as well, in relation to the royal ideology concerning Josiah.

In the ancient Near East, the king was held to create order and to represent religious, political and moral authority.[302] Idealising portrayals of the king and his reign were a common phenomenon,[303] in Assyria,[304] as well as in Judah.[305] According to the ideal image, the king was endowed with great wisdom and understanding. He was able to give wise counsel, to discern the words that were in the heart and to determine true and false. The king's duty to establish justice and righteousness implied to protect the weak and the poor and to abolish evil and oppression from the land.[306] The ideal images of the king in the revision of the Isaiah tradition and in the Assyrian texts are exponents of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology. An additional similarity between the ideal king passages of the Isaiah revision and the Akkadian literary-predictive texts is that both present a nameless king. On both sides, as I have argued, specific kings were intended. The anonymous idealisation of the king followed from the prophetic, predictive style of the texts. Both in the Assyrian texts and in the Isaiah revision, the people share in the blessings of the rule of the ideal king. In Isa 9:1-6 and 11:4 the people are explicitly referred to, whereas in 32:1-2 they are obviously implied since the king is like a protective rock for his people. On the Assyrian side, the people are explicitly referred to as the profiting party in SAA 9 2.4; SAA 9 3.2; SAA 3 44, l. 12 ('I appo[inted you] as the shepherd of justice of the subjects of

[302] Baines 1998: 50. A royal task was to protect the country against chaos; Baines 1998: 44, 49.
[303] Baines 1998: 49. Lambert (1998: 69-70) argues that kingship in the ancient Near East was 'messianic', since according to the ideal image, the king was to bring about messianic blessing.
[304] E.g. the idealising depiction of Ashurbanipal's reign in the letter SAA 10 226, 5-r. 3: 'There is a fine reign: days of security, years of justice, very heavy rains, massive floods, low prices. ... Old men dance, young men sing. Women and girls are happy and rejoice. ... The king my lord pardons him whose crimes condemned to death. You have released the prisoner sentenced to many years. Those who have been ill for many days have recovered. The hungry have been satisfied, parched ones have been anointed with oil, the naked have been clothed with garments.' Translation from: Lambert 1998: 69-70.
[305] E.g. the royal Psalms; see further Weinfeld 1995: 45-74, esp. 59.
[306] Weinfeld 1995: 45-74; Kramer 1974: 173-174. In the ancient Near East, 'justice and righteousness' denote the divine order of the cosmos, which was to be upheld and to adhered to in all aspects of life. The king was commissioned as patron *par excellence* of order and justice. Attributing 'justice and righteousness' to the king is part of the ideal picture, which stressed the bond between human and divine authority; see Nell 2000: 144-146.

Enlil');[307] and in portrayals of the ideal king in the Marduk Prophecy, the Uruk Prophecy, the Dynastic Prophecy and the Poem of Erra.

6.3.3 Historical-Theological Perspective

Characteristic of the literary development of prophecy is a broadening of perspective. Whereas prophetic oracles relate to particular situations, as described in chapter 4, in a developed form they are characterised by a more comprehensive perspective. Once the outcome of the events is known, the events retrospectively are perceived from a broader view. In distinction from the situational view of the prophetic oracles, the perspective of the elaborated texts and literary derivatives of prophecy can be called the episodic view. On the Assyrian side, the following episodic views prominently occur: (i) The struggle for the throne of Assyria after the death of Sennacherib, from the subsequent perspective of Esarhaddon as legitimate heir to the throne and ever-winning king. (ii) The (cultic) restoration of Babylon from the perspective that the gods had chosen Esarhaddon as king in order to bring about the reversal of a deplorable situation. (iii) The rivalry between Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šum-ukin, from the perspective of the former as a pious, god-fearing king and the latter as a rebel justly punished by the gods. (iv) The Elamite wars, or the Babylonian-Elamite wars, fought by Ashurbanipal.

Whereas prophetic oracles often were delivered in a critical situation, the literarily developed texts look back at longer episodes. In the literary-predictive texts the time perspective is still more comprehensive. The Uruk Prophecy for instance focuses on a time-span from Erība-Marduk (c. 770) to Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562).[308] The seventh-century revision of the Isaianic material presents an episodic view of the period of Assyrian oppression from the late eighth to the late seventh century. The three compilations are characterised by extrapolations and generalisations similar to those found in the Assyrian material. In the first compilation, the prophecies concerning the destruction of Judah's enemies Aram and Ephraim are broadened in such a way as to include Assyria as well. In the second compilation, a particular confrontation with Assyria – Sargon's campaign of 720 BCE – becomes a paradigm for Assyrian imperialism in general. And in the third compilation, the polemic words relating to a particular crisis in Judaean politics become a more general portrayal of ideal leadership. The episodic perspective, characteristic of prophecy in its developed forms, is also found in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.[309] In the same line of thinking lies the connection between the violent death of Sennacherib (681 BCE) and Sennacherib's campaign of 701, which forms the basis of the B1-story of Hezekiah (6.1.2). This shared characteristic indicates that the literary development of prophecy and the composition of prophetic texts are to be situated in a (royal) scribal milieu.

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[307] In contrast to the terrible suffering of the people of Šamaš-šum-ukin (l. 13, r. 8-10).

[308] In the case of the prediction of Nanaya (in the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal), concerning her return from Elam, it is claimed that Ashurbanipal had been destined for kingship and commissioned to bring her back, a long time earlier (1635/1630/1535 years).

[309] See Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 240-245; examples of the episodic perspective in the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal are the presentation of the wars against the Arabs in connection with the war against Šamaš-šum-ukin, and the interconnection between the wars against Elam and Babylonia (Prism C).