

THE TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT LECTURE, 1978

SOME LITERARY AFFINITIES OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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The task of setting the literature of the Old Testament against its environment becomes more formidable with every decade, as scholars in the related fields of Near Eastern literature publish texts which directly or indirectly shed light on the world of the third, second and first millennia B.C. Needless to say each text raises questions of interpretation, if not also of translation, but nevertheless it is a privilege to have access to documents of great antiquity, thanks to the devoted work of experts in these fields.

It has happened recently that, in the course of publishing their texts, a number of scholars have indicated parallels between certain so-called prophetic works and the book of Daniel. The purpose of this paper is to look in more detail at these suggested parallels in order to assess their relevance and possible bearing on our understanding of that book. Half a century ago J. A. Montgomery wrote of Daniel, 'its essential value lies in its reflection of the conditions of that Oriental complex of life on which we are too ill informed. This dominant interest of the book has been too much overlooked by both radical critic and apologist in their zeal for attack or defence, and the religious and literary merits of the book have accordingly suffered. What is here said refers almost entirely to cc. 1-6'.<sup>1</sup> The research of the last fifty years has done much to supply the knowledge of the ancient Near East which was then lacking. The Babylonian background of chapters 1-6 has been confirmed, and on some literary features of chapters 7-12 the Akkadian 'prophecy texts' shed their light.

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1. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1926) 76.

When Montgomery was writing his commentary the closest parallel to these chapters known to him was the so-called Demotic Chronicle from third century Egypt. Its obscure prophecies are presented as though they were composed under king Tachos (360 B.C.), and describe in veiled terms Egypt's history under the Persians and Greeks, after which Egyptian national religion would be restored. The implication is that, between 360 B.C. and approximately 250 when the writer was at work, history was being presented as if it were still future. 'The parallelism particularly with Daniel 10-11 is evident', wrote Montgomery. 'Here the alleged writer of the 6th cent. presents the series of the ostensibly future Persian and Greek kings in a veiled way, but entirely intelligible to one possessing the key of history. The visions of Dan. appear then to belong to a definite *genre* of religious literature exemplified very clearly in Egypt in the 3d cent.'/2/ About the same time in Germany a 'kind of Greek history in future form' was being identified in the oriental-Greek Sibylline literature/3/ and in the resistance of Asia to Roman military advance in the second century B.C./4/

The genre, now known as *vaticinium ex eventu*, or history written as though it were prophecy, had been recognized in the Jewish literature of the inter-testamental period when R. H. Charles was preparing his monumental work, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, first published in 1913. 1 Enoch 83-90, 'The Dream Visions', purports to be a prediction made to Methuselah by Enoch of the outstanding events of Bible history from the Flood to the Maccabean revolt and final judgment. The use of the old patriarchal name Enoch was a necessary part of the fiction forced upon the truly prophetic author, so Charles believed, because the idea had become fixed by the second century, when he was writing, that prophecy was complete./5/ The Jewish

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2. *Ibid.*, 78.

3. J. Geffcken in E. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*<sup>2</sup> (Tübingen, 1924) 400; cited by Eva Osswald, 'Zum Problem der Vaticinia ex Eventu', *ZAW* 75 (1963) 28.

4. Eva Osswald, *op. cit.*, 28.

5. R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* II 9.

Sibylline Oracles, the Apocalypse of Baruch and II (or IV) Esdras all contained sections of 'history written as prophecy' and, though these three examples were almost certainly later than Daniel, it has been usual to relate Daniel 10 and 11 to this literature. When Eva Osswald was writing her paper on *vaticinia ex eventu* in 1963, this was the extent of her references outside the Bible.

The publication of 'Akkadian Prophecies' by A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert in 1964 was an important landmark in the development of the subject for, though not all the texts were being published for the first time, the collection of 'prophecies' was new in the sense that they were being presented as a definite genre.<sup>6/</sup> Four major texts were so classified and were referred to as Texts A,B,C,D. Since there were many phrases and ideograms typical of omens in these texts, a distinction had to be established which would make clear the identification of the new genre. Whereas omens consisted of natural phenomena which were thought to portend certain political events, in 'prophecy' the major interest was in history, though 'the references are usually so vague that at best only an approximate period of time can be offered as the setting for the described events'.<sup>7/</sup>

Subsequent to the publication of this paper certain modifications were made. On reflection Grayson withdrew Text B from the genre on two grounds: (i) it had a mythological introduction and (ii) it had connections with astrological literature.<sup>8/</sup> With regard to texts C and D Professor Grayson later acknowledged, 'Thanks to Borger's keen observation these two texts, the Marduk and Shulgi prophetic speeches, have been properly pieced together'.<sup>9/</sup> The enlarged texts provide important evidence in support of the thesis that there was a recognizable genre which may appropriately be called Akkadian prophecy.

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6. *JCS* 18 (1964) 7-23.

7. A. K. Grayson, *ibid.*, 9.

8. A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies 3 (1975) 15.

9. *Ibid.*, 15 n. 8. The enlarged texts were published by Rykle Borger, *BO* 28 (1971) 3-24.

Two more texts with a claim to be included have come to light during this decade. One, known as the Uruk Text, was found by the German Warka Expedition in 1969 in Uruk and published as 'A New Akkadian Prophecy Text' in 1975. /10/ The other, included in A. K. Grayson's *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* under the title 'The Dynastic Prophecy', appeared in the same year. There are thus to date five texts which claim attention in this paper: Text A, the Marduk prophetic speech, the Shulgi prophetic speech, the Uruk prophecy and the Dynastic prophecy. We shall consider them in that order and assess the relevance of each one to prophecy in the book of Daniel, for there is some question whether these texts form a single literary genre at all, and in any event they differ greatly the one from the other. /11/

## I

## 1. Text A

This first text is by no means new to the scholarly world, for it was first published in 1919, and translated into German in 1926 by E. Ebeling. /12/ An English version was included in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*<sup>2</sup>, translated by R. H. Pfeiffer and in the third edition by R. D. Biggs. /13/ The translation by W. G.

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10. Hermann Hunger and Stephen A. Kaufman, *JAOS* 95 (1975) 371-375.
  11. S. A. Kaufman, *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies Jerusalem 1973* (1977) 225; cf. W. W. Hallo, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 234. A possible Sumerian prototype of Akkadian prophecy, pointed out by Dr. J. van Dyke, is mentioned by Hallo, p. 242 n. 79. Though this has been published it is not yet available in translation.
  12. Text: *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, Fasc. ix, 421; translation *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament*<sup>2</sup> (Berlin and Leipzig, 1926) 283-284.
  13. J. B. Pritchard, *ANET*<sup>2</sup> (Princeton, 1955) 451, 452; *ANET*<sup>3</sup> (1969) 606-607.

Lambert, together with his transliterated text, appears in 'Akkadian Prophecies',/14/ and yet another translation of selected sections from the German of H. Schmökel is published in *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*./15/ Text A, therefore, has been available for many years, but its significance is now enhanced by the possibility that other texts of a similar nature may shed light on its contents, and that together they may have a bearing on Old Testament literature.

This text was found at Assur and is generally well preserved, though unfortunately the beginning and end are missing. It is divided by a horizontal line into sections, each of which begins 'A prince will arise and rule for x years', the only exception being 'A prince will arise but his days will be short'. The first of the reigns is prosperous, but during the second an attack by Elam on Akkad will bring confusion and disorder. After that comes the short reign referred to above, followed by another reign of three years, and then there is a large lacuna. When the text takes up again it is at the end of a good reign: 'The king will rule the Four Quarters, his people will fare well, offerings will be re-established for the Igigi-gods, there will be favourable weather and a healthy agriculture.'/16/ The last side contains a troubled rule of three years, followed by one of eight years which R. H. Pfeiffer interpreted as prosperous but which Grayson and Lambert interpret as a time of hardship. There are incongruities in the text of this section which are not easily reconcilable.

The date of the original is not known but the tablet on which it has become known to us is from the seventh century B.C. In the text at present available the tense is future throughout, but there is no hint of the writer's standpoint, and the only way of finding the relation between the text and historical reality is to identify the reigns. Though different suggestions have been made and certainty is impossible, some period in

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14. *JCS* 18 (1964) 12-14.
  15. Walter Beyerlin (ed.), Transl. John Bowden, (London: SCM, 1978) 119.
  16. Grayson and Lambert, *JCS* 18 (1964) 10.

the late second millennium is generally agreed./17/ It is not seriously doubted that this is an example of a pretended prediction, a *vaticinium ex eventu*. Hallo writes: 'The allusions are just vague enough to suggest the style of predictions, but at the same time they are not nearly vague enough to escape the suspicion that they were inspired by actual historical events that had already transpired in the remote or not-so-remote past.' /18/

What then would distinguish a genuine prophecy? As A. K. Grayson says, even the gods of Babylon 'normally announced their intentions in advance', and it would be surprising if their prophecies never took any form other than that of omen texts./19/ If this was not a genuine prediction, and in the case of Text A perhaps the question should be left open, what would have been the motive of the writer in recording history as though it were still future? Grayson suggests it was 'an attempt to prove his close connection with his god. If he could prove this then other prophecies of his (which were really of the future) would be all the more convincing. This may have been one of the motives behind *Akkadian Prophecies*'./20/ Strictly speaking, however, in the case of this particular text there is no means of knowing that the section preserved is not the prediction part of the work.

With regard to the bearing of this text on the Bible its most obvious relevance is to Daniel 8:23-25 and 11:3-45, where individual rulers are predicted and characterized by their policies. The very idiom of Text A occurs, at least in translation: 'a king ... shall arise' (8:23); 'three more kings shall arise' (11:2). On the other hand the book of Daniel does not predict the length of coming reigns. This interest in chronology recalls rather the books of Kings and

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17. Hallo, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 236, argues in favour of four reigns in the Second Dynasty of Isin. W. G. Lambert prefers the view of E. Weidner, *AfO* 13 (1939/40) 236, who names the kings of Babylon Melišipak, Merodach-baladan I, Zababa-šuma-iddina and Enlil-nādin-aḫi.
18. *Op. cit.*, 235.
19. *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 4.
20. *JCS* 18 (1964) 10.

Chronicles. Whether the Babylonian author was referring to history or to future events, without doubt the subject was of deep concern to him. If he was looking back he not only had access to information himself; he was also counting on the general knowledge of his readers to verify his facts and credit him with prophetic gifts, for the fiction would necessitate that he had been long dead.

## 2. *The Marduk Prophetic Speech*

The sorting and publication of the many fragments from Nineveh and Assur which now make up the most complete edition of this speech have been going on since 1934. /21/ Whereas Güterbock described it as *narû*-literature (forged inscriptions) Grayson designates this first-person narration by kings of their experiences 'pseudo-autobiography'. Sections of both the Marduk and Shulgi prophetic speeches, translated into English, are included in *Near Eastern Religious Texts*, /22/ but the complete version is that of Rykle Borger in German.

This speech is addressed by Marduk to the high gods and, according to Borger, sets forth the only autobiography of a god in cuneiform literature. By using extremely idiosyncratic, sometimes cryptographic spelling the author has created the impression he thought appropriate for a divine speech. The god reminds his audience of the three journeys of his statue from Babel, depicted here as intended by him. The first was to Hattu, the land of the Hethites, the second to Assyria and the third to Elam (at the fall of the Cassite dynasty about 1160 B.C.), and his presence blessed these lands, although in the end there was disaster in Elam which made the god long to be back in Babel. Thus far the speech is in the past tense and gives an overview of history, but then there comes a switch to the future tense to tell of 'a king of Babel [who] will arise' and bring 'salvation'.

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21. H. Güterbock, *ZA* 42 (1934) 19-21; O. R. Gurney, *Anatolian Studies* (1955) 93; J. J. Finkelstein, *JCS* 15 (1961) 101; Grayson and Lambert, *JCS* (1964); R. Borger, *BO* 28 (1971) 21 and n. 1.
22. Pages 120-122.

The hope is that the statue of Marduk will be returned to Babel and the temple of Marduk and those of related gods adorned. If this is done then harvests will flourish, society will become law-abiding and 'this ruler will reign over all the lands'. Now the king who carried out the restoration of Marduk's statue and who was responsible for the elevation of this god to the first place in the pantheon was Nebuchadrezzar I (c. 1127-1105) and there is little doubt that the speech was addressed to this king by priests of Marduk, anxious to achieve this end.

The Marduk speech does not necessarily contain a *vaticinium ex eventu* because past history is related as past and future tenses are meant to be taken as future. The only question is whether at the time of writing the statue of Marduk had already been restored to Babylon. If it had then that small section of the work would be *ex eventu*, but the 'prophecy' is entirely understandable without recourse to this device. The suggested reason for writing makes good sense, though the ulterior motive does somewhat undermine confidence in the promised rosy future. It was indeed a pious fraud which evidently deceived Nebuchadrezzar, for fragments belonging to the eighth century B.C. were found both in Assur and in the library of Ashur-banipal in Nineveh, which proves that copies were being made some four hundred years after the original was written. The fame of the prophecy made it important for posterity.

There is an interest in history here, but it is limited to one city and in particular to one deity specially revered in one city. Moreover the text opens a window on religious hopes for the future in twelfth century Babylon. As Hartmut Schmökel points out, some of these hopes can be paralleled in Old Testament writings./23/ Isaish 30:23f, for example, promises bumper crops and prolific animal stock; like Ezekiel 11:17 the Marduk prophecy speaks of gathering together those who are scattered (IV 5) and Leviticus 26:4,5 have an echo in the promise 'the winter grass will last until the summer, and the summer grass will be enough for the winter'. (III 8,9) But these similarities are hardly surprising in farming communities, dependent on the

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23. *Near Eastern Religious Texts*, 121 note g.

fertility of animals and soil. The future is the immediate future of the reigning monarch and the ideal is stability in family and state. There is nothing resembling biblical eschatology. Indeed Professor Grayson emphasizes that there is no evidence in Babylonian thought of any eschatology. 'In fact there was no word for "history" in their language'. 'The ideal was a long and pious reign.'/24/

This lack of any sense of a goal to history marks a major difference between these Babylonian texts and their biblical counterparts. Despite some superficial likenesses it is a difference which would inevitably affect the whole concept of prophecy. 'An Akkadian prophecy', writes A. K. Grayson, 'is a prose composition consisting in the main of a number of "predictions" of past events. It then concludes either with a "prediction" of phenomena in the writer's own day or with a genuine attempt to forecast future events. The author, in other words, uses *vaticinia ex eventu* to establish his credibility and then proceeds to his real purpose, which might be to justify a current idea or institution or, ... to forecast future doom for a hated enemy.'/25/ That biblical prophecy is of an altogether different nature hardly needs to be argued. The literary prophets of the Bible were validated by their conviction that the Creator God, in covenant with his people, expected loyalty to the terms of that covenant and would himself remain true to his promise. Foretelling is characteristically, though not exclusively, directly related to the faithfulness or otherwise of Israel in keeping the covenant terms. The ethical thrust is primary and unmistakable. There is, therefore, a distinction to be made in content, and this would be carried over into apocalyptic, but that would not rule out similarities of wording, figures of speech or literary form.

### 3. *The Shulgi Prophetic Speech*

The piecing together of text fragments described under the last heading is true also of this text, of which

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24. *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 4.

25. *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 6.

Rykle Borger's publication and translation into German is the most complete so far./26/

The speech begins, 'I god Shulgi, favourite of god Enlil and of goddess Ninlil - the hero god Shamash has spoken to me, my lady goddess Ishtar has entrusted to me a revelation'. The remainder of column 1 consists of broken lines. Shulgi was a famous king of Ur toward the end of the third millennium B.C., who was already divinized in his lifetime and was occasionally worshipped after his death. Into his mouth was put this lengthy speech, which evidently occupied just over five columns in cuneiform. Column 2 describes Shulgi very much in the style of the royal inscriptions, his domain extending to 'the four borders of the earth'. Borger is of the opinion that this section rings true and suggests that it was taken from a genuine Shulgi inscription./27/ There is a historical mistake in line five, where it says that Shulgi founded Nippur. Though he built there he did not found the city.

The preserved sections of columns 3, 4 and the first half of 5 contain a survey of Babylonian history during the second millennium B.C. written as Shulgi's prophecy of the future. Most of this is as yet unidentifiable historically, but in column 5 there is a reference to the possessions of Babylon being taken to the land of Assyria. This event Borger identifies as taking place in the reign of the Assyrian king Tukulti Ninurta I (1244-1208). This whole section is looked upon as a *vaticinium ex eventu*, since 'in reality Babylon still played no kind of role at the time of Shulgi'./28/ The 'prophecy' would not have been written earlier than this, and since the remainder of column 5 (lines 16-30) foretells a time of rebuilding cities and temples, a restoration which may have been carried out by one of the late Cassite kings, the text probably belongs a few decades earlier than the Marduk prophecy, though it is arranged as its sequel.

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26. BO 28 (1971) 20. English portions in *Near Eastern Religious Texts*, 119, 120.  
 27. BO 28 (1971) 22.  
 28. H. Schmökel, *Near Eastern Religious Texts*, 120 note Y.

The style of learned obscurity in which it is written makes this text less clear than the Marduk speech. The purpose of this *ex eventu* 'prophecy' would be to validate the genuine prediction which begins at 5 15b, the general import of which is that the gods will be honoured by the renewal of their temples, and the broken text would probably have gone on to promise rewards for the faithful.

Borger points out that in this text there are identifiable sections: genuine past history, which he thinks the author may have borrowed from an inscription; a *vaticinium ex eventu* covering about a millennium; and a genuine prophecy. The *vaticinium ex eventu* is recognized by the fact that at least part of the prophecy can be documented by subsequent events, while the genuine prophecy indicates the hopes and intentions of the writer. Borger suggests that Shulgi, who subjugated Elam, serves as an ideal for a later Babylonian king fighting Elam. At the very least the author wants to see the prosperity of Babylon restored and to that end he recommends the service of the gods.

The alternating salvation and disaster predicted in the Shulgi prophecy are said by Schmökel to be reminiscent of the biblical book of Daniel (11:4,6,8f; 12:1).<sup>29</sup> The references are not specific, however, but reflect the universal experiences of war and its results. An extract from column 4 in *Near Eastern Religious Texts* reads:

'Under his rule brothers will consume one another,  
the people will sell their children  
for money.  
All the lands will be thrown into confusion.  
The husband will leave the wife  
(and) the wife the husband.'

From column 5 (translated from the German of Borger):

'Friends will cast one another to the ground  
with the sword.  
Comrades will destroy one another with the sword.'

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29. *Near Eastern Religious Texts*, 120 note z.

[The lands?] will together be ruined.'  
'Nippur will be destroyed.'

More significant than verbal similarities is the correspondence between the form of this work and the alleged *vaticinium ex eventu* in Daniel 11, according to which the general Babylonian setting gives the appearance of a work written in the sixth century B.C. The author's true standpoint is to be discerned at the moment of transition, when history can no longer be demonstrated to correspond to the events prophesied. By this criterion the book was written at the height of the career of Antiochus Epiphanes about 165 B.C., and prophecy proper begins from verse 40. The review of the centuries under Persian and Greek rule is then a *vaticinium ex eventu*, written as if it were a prophecy of sixth century Daniel.

The Shulgi prophecy thus proves to be significant for Daniel studies, though, like Text A and the Marduk speech, it originated in Babylon hundreds of years before the Exile.

#### 4. *The Uruk Prophecy*

This text, first published by H. Hunger in 1972 in Berlin, has now been reproduced and translated into English, together with comments, by Hunger and Kaufman. /30/ It was found as recently as 1969 during excavations at Uruk/Warka in a residential area of the early Achaemenid period, that is, c. 530, in a library thought to have belonged to a magician and diviner. The obverse, which is badly damaged, appears to have been made up of omen-like sentences together with the author's notes, while the reverse, which is almost complete, continues with the apodoses. Hunger and Kaufman point out that the similarity in tone and style between this text and much of the apocalyptic literature seems even stronger than in some of the other so-called prophetic texts.

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30. 'A New Akkadian Prophecy Text' *JAOS* 95 (1975) 371-375. Cf. P. Höffken, *Die Welt des Orients* 9 (1977) 57ff.

The eighteen line 'prophecy' mentions six reigns, The characteristic of the second king is his injustice, especially in removing the protective goddess of Uruk and replacing her by another who did not belong there. His successor will be equally unjust. A repeated 'ditto' in line 8, first taken to indicate the passing of reigns but thought by W. G. Lambert to refer to only one, leads into the statement that the property of Babylon will be taken to Assyria./31/ After another unjust king 'a king will arise in Uruk who will provide justice for the land' ... 'He will remove the ancient protective goddess of Uruk from Babylon and let her dwell in her own sanctuary in Uruk'. 'He will rebuild the temples of Uruk and restore the sanctuaries of the gods.' (11-14) The final reign is that of his son, who will exercise kingly rule in Uruk and become master of the world. His dynasty will be established for ever and exercise rulership like the gods.

A clue to the historical interpretation of the text is the reference to the goddess of Uruk, for Nabonidus told that her statue was removed from Uruk to Babylon by Erība-Marduk in the mid-eighth century B.C. Kaufman thinks the good king is Nebuchadrezzar II, that the text originated late in his reign, and that lines 1-15 are a *vaticinium ex eventu* to cover the period between Erība-Marduk and the new Chaldean dynasty. The purpose of the real prediction in the last three lines would be to support the predicted rule of Amēl-Marduk, son of the good king, who found opposition to his succession and was assassinated after two years by his successor Neriglissar. W. G. Lambert identifies all the kings and thinks the good king is Nabopolassar, whose son Nebuchadrezzar II would then be the potential master of the world.

Whatever the exact identification of the Uruk prophecy and its kings, it is of special importance for Daniel studies because it belongs exactly to the period of the Exile from which the prophecies of Daniel purport to come. In view of Daniel's close involvement with the

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31. Professor Lambert commented on Text A, the Uruk text and the Dynastic prophecy in his 1977 Ethel M. Wood lecture, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (University of London Athlone Press, 1978).

court he could even have been familiar with the document. Its main interest is clear: the prosperity of the city of Uruk. Though coming kings are to rule the world there is scarcely a world vision, for the one locality that matters is Uruk. If the intention of the author is to legitimate and reinforce the rule of the king of Babylon this is a very oblique way of doing it. I would also submit that the prophecy is very vague, so vague that, given the removal of Uruk's goddess the rest hardly needs to be *ex eventu*. So far as the writer's future hope is concerned, Kaufman has pointed out in connection with the last few lines of the prophecy, '... the Mesopotamian idea of the ideal future would seem to be (for those in power, at least) nothing more than an indefinite continuation of the status quo'.<sup>32/</sup> It is in form, therefore, rather than in content that this text resembles Daniel 11, where concern is with the God of gods and his intervention 'at the time of the end' (11:40).

#### 5. *The Dynastic Prophecy*

This text, described by Professor Grayson as 'one of the most unusual and significant pieces of Babylonian literature to be published in many a decade', describes in the future tense the rise and fall of dynasties.<sup>33/</sup> It is preserved on one broken tablet from the British Museum (BM 40623), where it has been awaiting publication since 1881. Its provenance is unknown, but it is probably from Babylon.

The first column of the tablet is defective, the first six lines being too broken for translation and only the line ends of the rest being legible. Nevertheless the names Assyria and Babylon, together with such verbs as 'will attack', 'he will seize' appear in lines 10 and 13, and Grayson conjectures that this section contained a description of the fall of Assyria and the rise of the Chaldean dynasty. The reference at the end of the column to bringing booty into Babylon, and to building in this and other cities, leads Grayson to conjecture that the reign of Nabopolassar is in mind. Unfortunately the

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32. *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1973* (1977) 226.  
 33. *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 24.

years of his reign are missing. A horizontal line concludes the section. Nebuchadrezzar does not seem to feature in the extant text and the first recognizable monarch in column II is Neriglissar (560-556) who is to rule for three years and whose son 'will not [be master of the land]', though he ascends to the throne. Lines 11-16 are better preserved and refer to a rebel prince who can be recognized from his seventeen year reign and other details as Nabonidus.

At line 17 a change of dynasty is recorded: 'A king of Elam will arise ...' who will remove the previous king and 'will settle him in another land'. In this way the writer marks the beginning of Persian rule under Cyrus. After a long gap the next recognizable kings faced the eastward march of Alexander the Great between 338 and 331 B.C. His army is referred to under the archaic name *Hanû* instead of Thrace. If the identification is correct the subsequent section which predicts the defeat of the Hanaeans (III 17) must presumably have been a genuine prophecy which turned out to be incorrect. Grayson thinks this unlikely, though he has no answer to the problem. The reason he cannot accept the defeat of the Hanaeans as part of a real prediction is that the traces of column IV seem to be describing further reigns./34/ But is this entirely out of the question? Professor Grayson is reasonably certain that III 9-23 refer to Alexander the Great: 'The context as well as internal clues strongly indicate that iii 9-23 describe the invasion of Asia by Alexander the Great.'/35/ It may be that we underestimate the boldness of these Akkadian prophets in predicting the future, for they believed that their gods gave them unusual powers for this very purpose (Is. 43:9).

From the point of view of history writing, this text, with its special interest in the rise and fall of dynasties, gets away from the mere sequence of reigns. Each of the first three columns describes in turn the fall of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and, on evidence that he admits to be tenuous, Grayson suggests that column IV may have contained the unwelcome capture of Babylon by Seleucus I. 'If this was the case then the Dynastic

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34. *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 27 n. 14.

35. *Ibid.*, 26.

prophecy is a strong expression of anti-Seleucid sentiment.'/36/ It follows that he must be considering the whole of the extant text as a *vaticinium ex eventu*, with a date of writing during the Seleucid period.

The excitement of Professor Grayson over this Dynastic prophecy was occasioned by the 'startling new light' it sheds on the relation between Akkadian prophecies and Jewish apocalyptic. In particular he mentions Daniel 8:23-25 and 11:3-45. 'In style, form and rationale there is a striking resemblance. The appearance of the Dynastic prophecy now adds significant evidence of this close connection. In the Dynastic prophecy the concept of the rise and fall of empires, which must have its roots in the dynastic tradition of Mesopotamian chronography, is mirrored by the same concept in Daniel. /37/ Indeed this concept is unmistakable in Daniel 2 and 7, as well as in the chapters he mentions. If it does indeed have its roots in the dynastic tradition of Mesopotamian chronography that same tradition is the very factor that unites the two halves of the book, and we noted earlier that the Babylonian 'complex of life' was remarked upon by Montgomery as prominent in Daniel 1-6. In style and form chapters 7-12 now prove to have Babylonian literary affinities.

## II

I would question, however, whether the *rationale* of the Babylonian prophecies closely resembles that of Daniel. If by that is meant the reason for its existence, I maintain that in this respect the book of Daniel is quite different from its Babylonian counterparts. As was noted earlier the Babylonian language had no word for history and its literature contained no thought of eschatology. Yet these particular chapters of Daniel all point to a cataclysmic end to history, which throughout the book is seen to be under the control of the God of heaven. This same God is not only supreme

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36. *Ibid.*, 17; Grayson builds on the theory that the founders of the dynasties were reckoned alternately good and bad.
37. *Ibid.*, 21.

but righteous, and demands righteousness from all men. The disasters predicted for the various dynasties are not capricious but a just retribution on human pride and self-sufficiency. A deep ethical seriousness underlies the whole book, whereas in the Babylonian literature the nearest approach to this is a desire for stability and order in society. A marked contrast is to be noted also in the scope of interest. Because Babylonian gods were partisan their intervention was seen as limited to particular areas, whereas in Daniel the supreme and only God is concerned with all history and with all mankind. It follows that the rationale of the book is distinctive. It represents a totally different world view, based on a totally different theology, which gives rise to an understanding of history unknown in Babylon.

What are we to say then about the element of prediction which the book of Daniel purports to contain and on which the Babylonian literature is said to shed light? There is ample evidence that Babylonian writers took note of the course of events which they believed to be directed by the express will of their gods. The 'prophecies' were religious texts and their predictions were attributed to their gods. Shulgi, for example, claimed that Shamash and Ishtar had entrusted to him a revelation. The fact seems to be that knowledge of the future came to Babylonian seers and diviners through mantic techniques and interpretative manuals. They observed the stars and could interpret their omens; they would sleep in the shrine of their god in anticipation of a meaningful dream./38/ The sequels to dreams and omens were recorded and classified until it could be seen that certain signs were followed by the same events, and the collection of cases established a kind of 'law'. After all, this is not very different from the method used today in long range weather forecasting. Sometimes it produces the right answer!

That portents were followed by predictable events did not necessarily imply a cyclical or deterministic view of

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38. A. L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series 46 (1956) 189,190.

history, as Professor Grayson explains: 'Omens are nothing more than divine messages foretelling in a general way what the gods have decided to do. The gods themselves act freely.'/39/ The gods were also regarded as consistent in the sign language through which they spoke.

On the two occasions when Israelites came into contact with kings who had had dreams their meanings were construed as significant messages. The Pharaoh of Joseph's day had been given a true revelation (Gn. 41: 25); Pharaoh's problem had been that the dream books of Egypt did not have the key to this particular dream. Similarly in the case of Nebuchadrezzar: 'A great God has made known to the king what shall be hereafter.' (Dn. 2:45; cf. 28) There is no doubt that dreams might be the true bearers of God's warnings, nor are diviners and soothsayers assumed to be powerless in all cases. Israel had simply been forbidden to consult them (Dt. 18:14) and any need to do so was removed because Israel would have prophets like Moses to whom the Lord spoke face to face (Ex. 33:11). Thus a distinction in kind is made between the mantic arts in all their forms and the prophet who speaks all that God commands him. As W. W. Hallo has picturesquely expressed the point, 'All such mantic practices were considered so alien to the Biblical mind as to serve it as very earmarks of Babylonian culture, while conversely the very term Chaldean conjured up in Hebrew and Aramaic, as it did in Greek, the image of the astrologer and diviner'./40/ The writer of Daniel was as aware of this distinction as the prophet; indeed the impotence of the Chaldeans to interpret the king's dream is expressly pointed out (2: 2-11). Like the prophets Daniel and his friends were representative of a godly way of life, and their call to repentance and godliness did not resemble the popular horoscope. Like Israel's prophets they too became hunted men, victimized by upholders of the status quo.

Now it may well be that Babylonian writers developed the *vaticinium ex eventu* in order to express their understanding of some pattern in the course of events, or to validate an ability to prophesy, or to

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39. *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 21 n. 34.  
40. *IEJ* 16 (1966) 232.

demonstrate by a hoax that they had the ear of their god. It may be that on occasion they had some premonition of future events and were proved right. Be that as it may, the biblical writers needed no such device to demonstrate that there was meaning in the course of history, for the fact dominates the whole Old Testament. They might use a summary of past history in order to bring out their own slant on its meaning, as did Ezekiel (16,20,23), and the prophets made extremely skilful use of the manifold figures of speech and literary genres known to them. There is no example in Scripture, however, of a prophet pretending he had foretold an event in order to vindicate his role as a prophet or his standing with his God. Such a motivation would be entirely out of keeping with the integrity required in the person who spoke as the mouthpiece of the living God. It was a mark of the false prophet that he passed off as the Lord's word what arose in his own mind (Je. 23: 25-32) and at least two who did so died an untimely death (Je. 28:15-17; Ezk. 11:13).

The question arises whether there is some way of accounting for the alleged *vaticinia ex eventu* in Daniel which would be compatible with the integrity of character and motive required of the person who has been entrusted with God's word. The nearest I have come to finding such an understanding of it is the contention that the literary form was recognized and that it deceived no one.<sup>41</sup> My major difficulty is that I find no evidence in Daniel to suggest that any *vaticinium ex eventu* was intended. Dates are given which would have to be reckoned as part of the fiction, the prayer of chapter 9 would likewise have to be regarded as artificial, as would the reactions of Daniel to his angelic revelations (7:15,28; 8:27; and most of chapter 10). The result would be a kind of novel, pseudepigraphic fiction. Now it is conceivable that fiction might have a part in revelation; parables are a powerful teaching medium used supremely in the teaching of Jesus, and they would probably be so classified. But I come back to the complete absence of evidence that the

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41. H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic* (London: Lutterworth, 1944) 39: 'It is hard to believe that their first readers were under any illusions as to the antiquity of the books.'

writer of Daniel was bringing us fiction. There is also the fact that those who advocate the *ex eventu* theory are not of one mind as to the rationale behind it. Was it after all so well understood?

The assumption underlying the *ex eventu* approach is summarized by John Goldingay: 'Daniel did not prophesy the second century in the sixth because this would be impossible and irrelevant.'/42/ Whether or not it would be impossible depends on one's theology, its relevance on one's understanding of the second century B.C. in relation to Israel's earlier history. In previous centuries enemy attacks and devastations had been interpreted as God's judgments on Israel's apostasy; in the Greek period (Dn. 8:23-25; 11:3-39) a Bold king was going to make war on God's people for no other reason than that it suited him to destroy their allegiance to the true God, and put to death those who stood firm. Was it not fitting that such irrational persecution should be foretold? Jesus was to give similar warnings to keep his disciples from falling away (Jn. 16:1). Though the purpose of the prediction in Daniel of 'trouble such as never has been since there was a nation till that time' (12:1) is not explained in so many words, we can safely conjecture that it was to prepare believers for intense persecution in advance of this new development. It is surely sufficient reason to prove that the prophecy was not irrelevant. Indeed, without the book of Daniel and its prophecies the faith might not have survived this first attempt to exterminate it by mass persecution.

In short, I do not believe that the book of Daniel contains *vaticinia ex eventu*, nor that it is pseudonymous. Indeed the two go together. If there are no forged prophecies there is no point in arguing either for a second century or for pseudonymity. If the predictions are genuine there is no reason why Daniel should not have been their author in the sixth century B.C. Again I make the point that the rationale of Daniel is quite different from that of the Akkadian prophecy texts, though I agree fully with Professor Grayson's statement that in form and style there is a striking resemblance.

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42. *Themelios* 2.2 (1977) 48.

This resemblance proves to be a considerable embarrassment to those who accept a second century date for the writing of Daniel. How did a Jewish author in Palestine at that time become so fully acquainted with Babylonian texts? Professor Lambert in his 1977 lecture grappled with this question at some length, aware that 'the formidable cuneiform script would prevent any first hand acquaintance'.<sup>43/</sup> Maybe there was an antecedent author, or a Greek source. Lambert says, 'In Greek I have not discovered any fully comparable texts antedating Daniel. It remains, then, to show that this Babylonian genre could have been disseminated in a form intelligible to Jews.' The book of Daniel provides a very simple answer, namely that its author drew upon the literary background which he had studied in Babylon, and so introduced to his own people, and maybe through the translation of his book to the Greek speaking world, this genre of oriental literature.

The large number of pseudepigraphic works which mushroomed between c. 200 B.C. and A.D. 200, purporting to have been written by such revered ancestors as the Patriarchs, or Enoch, Baruch or Esdras, often contained a *vaticinium ex eventu*. I intend to look at one outstanding example in the Book of Enoch 85-90, to which reference has already been made, and assess its relationship to Daniel. Under the imagery of bulls and cows, horses, elephants, camels, asses, the story of Genesis 2:4-6:4 is first retold. As is often the case in pseudepigraphic literature particular interest is shown in the fallen angels and their punishment. Enoch proceeds to relate his dream, in which Noah was born a bull but became a man. Events from the flood to the Maccabean revolt are sketched in, using in place of people many different species of animals and birds. The narrative is complicated and the symbolism not entirely consistent. In the course of the story there are reminiscences of Daniel. Seventy shepherds are to pasture the sheep, apparently an extension of the concept of seventy years in Jeremiah and of the seventy periods in Daniel, while between the fall of Jerusalem and the Messianic kingdom are four periods (cf. Dn. 2 and 7). The end is final judgment as in Daniel, but in Enoch there are added features such as

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43. *Op.cit.*, 13-16.

the abyss of condemnation, full of fire. Angelology is more fully developed in Enoch, with its seven archangels (87.2) who punish the fallen angels by casting them into the abyss.

These few details are sufficient to indicate that, by comparison with Daniel, the eschatology of Enoch 85-90 is much more elaborate. The writer of Enoch appears to borrow concepts from Daniel and develop them. Although the two writers could in theory be drawing from a common source or *Zeitgeist*, if simplicity is any guide, and we usually reckon that the simple precedes the complex, Daniel must be considerably earlier than this Enoch apocalypse. Doctrinally and ethically the book of Daniel is in line with the law and the prophets, whereas the Book of Dreams deviates on certain issues. Evil, for example, is attributed to angelic rebellion which in turn arose from sexual desire. The Old Testament does not locate sin in any one human activity, and the author of the Enoch apocalypse thus reveals that he belongs to another thought world from that of mainstream Old Testament teaching.

The Dream Visions of the Book of Enoch are unquestionably a *vaticinium ex eventu*. Whatever the date of writing the author cannot have been the Enoch of Genesis 5. The dream which he relates in Aramaic and which recapitulates the history of the world from Adam to the judgment could hardly have deluded his contemporaries. According to J. T. Milik, 'The author of the Book of Dreams began to compose his work under the overwhelming impact of this direct intervention by God in the affairs of his people .. during 164 B.C., probably in the early months of the year, during the few weeks which followed the battle of Bethzur'.<sup>44</sup> The oldest of the four manuscript fragments which include this section is from the third quarter of the second century B.C., and so cannot be far removed from the original manuscript.

It is the date of writing which makes this apocalypse of importance in the study of Daniel because, on the usually accepted date of Daniel's composition, they are virtually contemporary. Milik thinks the Book of Dreams

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44. *The Books of Enoch*, Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4 (Oxford, 1976) 44.

was composed one year before the book of Daniel./45/ Others would date both books in 164 B.C. because in their view the standpoint of the writer in the *vaticinia ex eventu* is in both cases the onslaught of Antiochus IV, the desecration of the Temple and the revolt of the Maccabees. Even if both were written in the same year the differences between the two works preclude the possibility of their coming from the same theological circle. How then did one influence the other? If, however, the prophecies of Daniel are not *vaticinia ex eventu* but genuine prophecies the differences would be accounted for, and the dependence of the author of the Book of Dreams on the book of Daniel, thus made possible, would explain the apparent borrowing of ideas.

To sum up, the book of Daniel, and in particular the predictions of the book, can now be seen in a wider context. It can be related not only to the second century pseudepigrapha but also to Babylonian writings of great antiquity. In theological standpoint and ethical emphasis Daniel is distinct from both these collections of literature, and shows continuity with the books of the Old Testament. In style and form, however, there are resemblances to certain literary features of the Babylonian 'prophecy' texts, which point in the direction of a Babylonian origin, not only of chapters 1-6 but also of the whole book. By comparison with the Book of Dreams, which comes from the date alleged to be that of the writing of Daniel, Daniel shows every sign of coming from an earlier period. Moreover, while it is by no means easy to account for knowledge of this cuneiform literature in second century Palestine, Israel would have had Babylonian influences on all sides during the Exile. In view of the fact that the book of Daniel claims to come from the sixth century B.C., the possibility should be granted that it originated during that century in Babylon, and the evidence further explored.

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45. *Ibid.*, 254.