

Mirror, Mirror

Some Remarks on Structuring Devices in the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*

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Abstract: The Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*, also known as the *Advice to a Prince*, has attracted scholarly interest because it provides guidelines for royal behaviour and describes the consequences if these guidelines are not followed. While the content of this text has been amply discussed, the literary quality of the *Fürstenspiegel* has received decidedly less attention. In this paper, I examine some structural devices in the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* and analyse their potential for enriching our understanding of the text. I first discuss the literary nature of this text and its relationship with divinatory texts, particularly the terrestrial omen series *Šumma ālu*. I then analyse some structural devices employed in the text through two case studies. In the first case study, I argue that structural devices are used to make the text cohere as a literary whole, with implications for its wider meaning. In the second case study, I argue that the text's micro-structure, especially in relation to the text's overall structure, can be used to add emphasis, providing another layer of meaning to this text.

Keywords: Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*, *Advice to a Prince*, *Šumma ālu*, literature, structure, structural devices, repetition, parallelism, construction of meaning, creativity

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The Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*, also known as the *Advice to a Prince*, is a text which has been known for almost 150 years. The first manuscript of the *Fürstenspiegel* was discovered in 1873 as part of the library of Assurbanipal (DT 1) (Böhl 1937: 1), and an autograph copy was first published in 1875 (IV R 48 [55]). A second manuscript was excavated in 1973 in Nippur (Cole 1996: 1).¹ The text covers 59 lines in Neo-Assyrian script in the version from Nineveh, and 60 lines in Neo-Babylonian script in the second manuscript from Nippur. The composition advises the king and his entourage, warning them against improper behaviour and

¹ IM 77087. A transliteration of this text was first published by Civil as an appendix to Reiner 1982: 324–326. A full edition with copy was provided by Cole 1996 as OIP 114, no. 128. DT 1 and IM 77087 show some variation, mostly in spelling, but also in content. One of the more obvious variations concerns a section in DT 1, lines 7–8, where the Nippur manuscript (same line count) gives a longer apodosis. The passage in question has been interpreted either as a positive or a negative consequence by different editors (e.g., Böhl 1937: 8, von Soden 1990: 171, Foster 2005 [1996, 1993]: 867, Paulus 2014: 245⁺²⁴⁷, and, most extensively, Hurowitz 1998: 42–44).

actions by illustrating the consequences. Many of the actions described relate to the rights and privileges of the three cities of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon. The text covers a vast array of topics, from these cities' freedom from corvée labour and conscription down to details such as the sanctity of their horse fodder. The text uses if-then phrases reminiscent of divinatory texts, curses and legal texts and therapeutic medical texts,² although it deviates from these genres by changes in grammar and by omitting the initial *šumma*, 'if', at the start of its individual protases.³

The literary qualities of the text have long been of secondary interest. Instead, it has received much attention with regard to its content within the context of political history, the identification of the king upon whom the text was supposedly based,⁴ and the circumstances which led to the writing of the individual manuscripts (e.g., Diakonoff 1965, Cole 1994), and its dating (e.g., Böhl 1937: 23, 28–35, Lambert 1996 [1963, 1960]: 111, von Soden 1990: 170f., Cole 1994: 252, Paulus 2014: 248f.). Notable exceptions which focus on the literary qualities of this text are Reiner (1982), who discusses a quote from the *Fürstenspiegel* in a Neo-Babylonian letter to Esarhaddon (CT 54, 212), showing that the text was in

² On this, see, for instance, Paulus 2014: 249⁺²⁸⁰. A more extensive discussion of this issue, with a special focus on the relationship between the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* and curses, particularly private curses on Middle Babylonian *kudurrus*, can be found in an unpublished article by Paulus, “Wenn der (babylonische) König die Rechtsprechung missachtet” – Herrscherkritik im Spannungsfeld von Norm und Narration”. I thank Susanne Paulus for sharing her article with me.

³ For instance, curses use the precative to express the hoped-for consequences of actions, while the *Fürstenspiegel* conforms to what we know from omen texts by using the present tense in most apodoses. The protases in roughly the first half of the *Fürstenspiegel* employ the preterite, as is known from protases in omen texts. As a literary composition, however, the *Fürstenspiegel* shows more stylistic freedom than the divinatory genre. For instance, the text also contains infinite forms which seem to function as finite forms, see, e.g., von Soden 1990: 170, Lambert 1996 [1963, 1960]: 316f. as well as the references in the previous footnote. For this usage, cf. also the apodosis expressed in line 22, which reads *i-ru-[bu]* in the Nippur manuscript, but *šu-ru-bu* in the Nineveh manuscript.

⁴ Böhl 1937: 28–35 (end of the first reign of Marduk-apla-iddina II, p. 30), Diakonoff 1965 (events under king Marduk-apla-iddin II, but written up at the beginning of the reign of Sennacherib), followed by, e.g., Foster 2005 [1996, 1993]: 867; also Labat 1970: 316f., who suggests that it was written up between 700 BCE and 694 BCE. According to Diakonoff (1965: 343³), there is also an unpublished study by Brinkman from 1962 suggesting that the text refers to Marduk-apla-iddina II, but in a publication two years later, Brinkman (1964: 48) attributes this dating of the text to Böhl (1937). Lambert (1996 [1963, 1960]: 111) does not suggest a specific king, but still thinks of an existing king in the period from 1000 to 700 BCE. Several authors have rejected the idea that a historical king is meant, e.g., Paulus (2014: 249) and Biggs (2004).

wider circulation than the two extant manuscripts suggest,⁵ and that it played a role in the corpus of literary texts known to scribes. She also stresses its literary nature (pp. 320, 322, following Landsberger 1935/36: 142). Hurowitz (1998) supplies us with the most extensive treatment of literary devices in the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* to date, though it is not exhaustive. Biggs (2004: 2) argues that the text may be a literary composition, or that it may have served the purpose of a “deliberate political fraud”: as the text deals with city privileges, he suggests that the *Fürstenspiegel* was meant to support these rights as ancient and divinely ordained, based partly on content, but especially on the occasionally archaising style of writing. Although these latter treatments, especially Hurowitz (1998), have made progress in treating the *Fürstenspiegel* as a literary text, much can still be said about a text as rich as this composition, especially with regard to its interpretation and layers of meaning. We will demonstrate that a close reading of the text, keeping in mind the creativity with which it is imbued, combined with a focus on structural devices, can unlock further layers of meaning within the *Fürstenspiegel* and enrich our understanding even further.⁶ To achieve this goal, this paper first comments on the literary nature of the *Fürstenspiegel* and offers some thoughts on its relationship with divinatory texts, in particular the terrestrial omen series *Šumma ālu ina mēlē šakin* ‘If a city is set on a height’, and its implications for the creative process in the composition of our text. We then discuss the structural devices employed in the text through two case studies. In the first case, we argue that structural devices are used to present the text as a literary whole, with implications for its wider meaning, framing the detailed clauses in the *Fürstenspiegel* in the context of a more general moral code or even of a divinely ordained world order. In the second case, we argue that the text’s structure, even that of its smaller units, can be used to express emphasis, providing another layer of meaning to this text which, in turn, provides new insights into scribal identities.

1) The Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* and *Šumma ālu* Tablet 53

As noted above, the *Fürstenspiegel* shows links to divinatory texts. For instance, von Soden (1990: 170) remarked that the first lines of the text might have been taken from an omen compendium. Both Böhl (1937: 11, 21–27) and Diakonoff (1965: 343⁺⁷) noticed a link to the large terrestrial omen compendium *Šumma ālu ina mēlē šakin* (henceforth *Šumma ālu*), particularly to Tablet 53. Until recently, only the incipit of this Tablet was known, which deals with the king, and even this was partly reconstructed based on what is assumed to be a quote of this omen in

⁵ The Nippur manuscript likely stems from the context of scribal education (Cole 1996: 9), which also suggests that the text was in wider circulation.

⁶ Already Reiner (1985: 99) noted, “The perception of the linguistic structure is a necessary prerequisite for reading a poem on different levels.”

Tablet 11 of *Šumma ālu*.⁷ It reads ‘If the king pays attention to the law, his reign will be long, he will constantly walk with a happy heart’.⁸ The first line of the *Fürstenspiegel* takes up the same protasis, but in reverse: ‘If the king has no regard for the law, his people will be thrown into chaos, his land will be devastated.’⁹ Because of this similarity, Böhl (1937: 11) suspected that the first lines of the *Fürstenspiegel* may contain, in part, literal quotes from this divinatory Tablet.¹⁰ Recently, Nicla De Zorzi identified a fragment of the beginning of *Šumma ālu* Tablet 53 in the British Museum: BM 38680. The tablet is rather abraded, and it only preserves the apodoses of the first few lines on its obverse.¹¹ While we cannot yet know whether the protases were related to the *Fürstenspiegel*, we can compare the preserved apodoses for similarities. This comparison shows that the *Fürstenspiegel* does not quote this Tablet directly, although the pattern of positive and negative consequences in Tablet 53 would – in theory – allow for this: as far as we can tell from our fragment, the omen tablet also seems to switch to actions with negative consequences after the first, positive line. The first lines of the *Fürstenspiegel* concern themselves with negative consequences to actions. Nonetheless, we are not dealing with literal quotes, but with a more intricate phenomenon.

The links between the *Fürstenspiegel* and *Šumma ālu* Tablet 53 work, to some extent, on the graphic level. The same signs and sign clusters, BAL(-su), SÙH,

⁷ Frank Simons was kind enough to conduct a search of the eBL Fragmentarium (April 13, 2022), which showed that several additional fragments of Tablet 53 are now known, all of which are so far unpublished. None of these fragments seem to preserve the first lines of Tablet 53.

⁸ Attested incipits of Tablet 53 according to Freedman 2017: 94: *Assur Catalog* iii 21: DIŠ LUGAL *ana di-ni₇ i-qu_l*; *Nineveh Catalog* r.7: DIŠ LUGAL [...]; Sm. 772 (CT 40, 9): [...] *di-ni₇ i-qu_l* BAL.BI *a-ri-ik TA DÙ[G...]*; VAT 14591 (LKU 131): [...] *a-ri-ik TA DÙG ŠÀ DU* [...]. *Šumma ālu* Tablet 11, 17' may be a quote of this passage, reading: [DIŠ LUGAL] *di-nim i-qu_l* BAL.BI *a-ri-ik TA [DÙG ŠÀ DU.DU-ak]*. My translation is based on preliminary material made available to me by Nicla De Zorzi; she should not be held responsible for mistakes, see note 11.

⁹ LUGAL *a-na di-ni la i-qúl UN.MEŠ-šú SÙH.ME-a KUR-su in-nam-mi*. Translation my own.

¹⁰ Böhl (1937: 11): ‘Mit grosser Wahrscheinlichkeit lässt sich darlegen, dass er absichtlich und zum Teil wohl auch wörtlich an eine der Tafeln des kanonischen Vorzeichenwerkes anknüpft’.

¹¹ This text will be edited in full by Nicla De Zorzi. For this paper, Nicla De Zorzi has granted me access to her preliminary work on the tablet, for which I am grateful. Because of the future publication of this text, I limit the excerpt to the parts which are informative for my argument. According to the online catalogue of the British Museum, the tablet was acquired by the British Museum in 1880 after H. Rassam excavated it in Babylon (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1880-1112-564, access 27.04.2022).

KUR(-*su*) and UŠ.MEŠ-šú, recur at the beginning of both texts (i.e., within contiguous lines). Below, we give a transliteration of the first three lines of BM 38680 and the first lines of the *Fürstenspiegel* in both extant manuscripts, with the signs in question – as well as the congruent parts of the first line from *Šumma ālu* Tablet 53 – marked in bold.

BM 38680 (1880,1112.564) obv. 1–3

- 1) [DIŠ LUGAL **ana di-ni i-qul** BAL.BI *a-ri-i*]k TA DÙG ŠÀ DU.DU
 - 2) [...] ḫx x x¹ BAL SÙH UŠ.MEŠ-šú
 - 3) [...] **KUR-su pal-ha-as-su**
- 1) If the king pays attention to the law, his reign will be long, he will constantly walk with a happy heart.
 - 2) [...] ... will rebel, confusion will follow it/him persistently.
 - 3) [...] his land will fear/revere him.

Fürstenspiegel

DT 1, 1 **LUGAL a-na di-ni la i-qúl UN.MEŠ-šú SÙH.ME-a KUR-su in-nam-mi**

IM 77087 **LUGAL a-na di-ni NU ME UN.MEŠ-šú SÙH-a KUR-su** 'in'-nam-ma

DT 1, 2–3 **a-na di-ni KUR-šú la i-qúl ḫé-a LUGAL NAM.MEŠ** (3) šim-ta-šú ú-ša-an-ni-ma *a-hi-ta* UŠ.ME-šú

IM 77087 **a-na di-ni KUR-šú NU ME ḫé-a LUGAL NAM.MEŠ** šim-taš ú-šá-an-ni-ma' / (3) *a-hi-ti* UŠ.MEŠ

DT 1, 4 **a-na NUN.ME-šú la i-qúl U4.MEŠ-šú LUGÚD.DA.MEŠ**

IM 77087 **a-na NUN.ME-šú NU ME U4.MEŠ-šú LÚGUD.DA.MEŠ**

DT 1, 5 **a-na UM.ME.A la i-qúl KUR-su BAL-su**

IM 77087 **a-na um-ma-a-nu NU ME KUR-su BAL-su**

DT 1, 6 **a-na is-hap-pi i-qúl UMUŠ KUR MAN-ni**¹²

IM 77087 **a-na is-hab-ba ME UMUŠ KUR MAN'-ni**

- 1) If the king has no regard for the law, his people will be thrown into chaos, his land will be devastated.
- 2–3) If he has no regard for the law of his land, Ea, the king of destinies, will change his fate and he will constantly hound him with misfortune.
- 4) If he does not listen to his princes, his days will be cut short.
- 5) If he does not listen to his advisor, his land will rebel against him.
- 6) If he listens to a scoundrel, the land will change (its) mind.¹³

We see that this new fragment of Tablet 53 confirms the connection with *Šumma ālu* that was previously suggested based only on the similar incipit. It also shows, however, that these links are not straightforward quotations, but rather display creative engagement with the text. The signs marked in bold characters are used in both texts, but partly in different functions. For instance, the sign SÙH is used

¹² The sign sequence MAN-su KUR-su seems to be preserved at the end of BM 38680, line 9.

¹³ The translation is my own.

as a noun in Tablet 53, but as a verbal form in the *Fürstenspiegel*, both from the same semantic field. This does not have to be the case, as the usage of the sign BAL shows. BAL is used logographically in both texts, but Tablet 53, line 3, additionally uses it for its syllabic value, here in the reading *pal-*, immediately after KUR-su. Line 5 of the *Fürstenspiegel* uses the same sign after KUR-su, but as a logogram; in both cases, the usage of BAL is complemented with -su at the end of the respective words. Another aspect is the way the signs occurring in both texts are used with regard to the respective texts. The sign KUR is used in both texts, but the *Fürstenspiegel* shows it in marked usage as it is repeated several times in these first few lines and even beyond (see below). Since we know little about when the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* was composed in the form we know today, nothing can be said about the direction in which the influence and textual engagement went between these two texts.¹⁴

The analysis of this short passage of text and its links to *Šumma ālu* Tablet 53 shows that we need to approach this composition as a literary text imbued with creativity and complex forms of meaning making. For reasons of space, this paper does not aim to treat all of the structural aspects of this text exhaustively, but focuses on two instances which show that attention to the text's structure unlocks new layers of meaning within this literary composition.

2) Reading the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* from a structural perspective

2a) Structure and layers of meaning in the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*

Already early on in the *Fürstenspiegel*'s publication history, scholars divided the text into segments. Böhl's (1937) edition divides the text into three parts, distinguished chiefly by the content and style of the individual sections, lines 1–8, 9–44, and 45–59 (based on the only manuscript known at that time, DT 1 from Nineveh). With regard to content, Böhl (1937: 13) sees the first section, lines 1–8, as focusing on moral guidelines, tying the king to law and due process as well as to his advisors. Böhl's second section, lines 9–44, focuses on the city privileges of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon which could be infringed by the king and his officials. He remarks that lines 9–44 represent the quintessence of the *Fürstenspiegel* ("seinem eigentlichen Thema", p. 15). His final section (p. 20), lines 45–59, focuses on the misdeeds of royal officials and representatives. With regard to form, Böhl notes that the beginning of the text, especially the first section, is closest in

¹⁴ All known manuscripts of *Šumma ālu* 53, except for BM 38680, stem from Kouyunjik (see note 7) and therefore postdate the Nippur manuscript of the *Fürstenspiegel*, but the transmission history of the text is still poorly understood. A similar idea about the unclear direction of influence between the *Fürstenspiegel* and *Šumma ālu*, though still based on older scholarship that postulated a closer relationship with Tablet 53, was raised by Susanne Paulus in an unpublished article (see note 2), to which I gained access only after pondering this possibility.

style to divinatory texts (“Form, die wohl z.T. wörtlich an das grosse Vorzeichenwerk anknüpft”, Böhl 1937: 13), but that this feature becomes less prominent in the course of the second section (p. 15), with the last section deviating the most stylistically from omen texts and taking on prophetic characteristics instead (p. 20–22).

This basic classification and segmentation can be found in several other publications of the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*. In a recent publication, Finn (2017: 89) also suggests distinguishing between lines 1–8, 9–44 and 45 to the end of the text, based on content and style, though without reference to Böhl’s earlier work (Finn 2017: 89f.). She further designates the middle section with its focus on city privileges as “the ‘original’ text” (p. 90), though this seems to be at odds with her contention that “the literary structure of *Advice to a Prince* indicates that in fact the scholar is a main subject of the text” (p. 89). In accordance with her main interest in the text, the role of scholars, she topically distinguishes individual sections, with the first and last sections focusing on scholars and officials.

Von Soden’s (1990: 170) categorisation deviates from the tripartite structure, dividing the text into two parts, lines 1–37 and lines 38–59, again based on the then known Nineveh manuscript. He separated the text into these two parts because of a difference in grammatical tense, preterite in the first section and present in the second section. Nonetheless, von Soden (1990: 170) also arrives at a tripartite structure in the end when he further subdivides the first section into lines 1–8 and 9–37 based on content. He also understands the passages that deal with the cities of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon explicitly as the core of the text.¹⁵ Paulus (2014: 244–250), in her treatment of the *Fürstenspiegel* in relation to Middle Babylonian texts, also sees it as being built from different pieces (p. 249), but provides little information as to where she considers the exact boundaries to fall. She mentions grammar as a factor, with lines 1–21 in the preterite, followed by lines in the present tense, and remarks that different topics are covered in different sections of the text (p. 249²⁷³). Her main argument is that parts of the composition date back to the Kassite period and that the text is not only close to omens but also to curses (p. 249).

Considering these categorisations, it is apparent that lines 9–10 have been perceived as the beginning of a separate section, with the text’s first eight lines understood as somehow different from the rest of the text. Our first case study will therefore focus on lines 9–10 and their structural significance. The lines read:¹⁶

¹⁵ Meijer (2015), an article aimed at the general public, shows a similar approach, stating that the first lines represent “a general introduction, after which the author of the text arrives at his main point of interest and the actual theme of the ‘Fürstenspiegel’” (<https://www.achaemenid-taxation-project.nl/test.html>, accessed 21.04.2022). She only gives general references for this piece, but it is likely that this particular view is based on Böhl (1937: 13).

¹⁶ The line count for both manuscripts is the same in this case.

*mār Sippar idāšma aḥām idīn Šamaš dayyān šamē u eršeti dīna aḥām ina mātīšu
išakkānma rubū u dayyānū ana dīnim ul iqullū*

‘(If) he (the king) improperly convicts a Sipparean, but judges a foreigner (properly), Šamaš, the judge of heaven and earth, will establish foreign law in his land, and princes and judges will not pay attention to the law.’

In the following, we consider the structure of this passage from three different angles. In the first place, we look at “horizontal” links between the protasis and the apodosis, i.e., internal links within these two lines. We then proceed to discuss “vertical” links connecting these lines to the preceding eight lines, i.e., the beginning of the *Fürstenspiegel*, before considering links to the immediately following lines. This elucidates our point that these lines play a crucial role within the larger structure of the *Fürstenspiegel*.

2a1) Internal (horizontal) links

As is well known from divinatory texts, protases and apodoses of if-then-clauses can be linked in various ways, usually based on similarity and similitude.¹⁷ These notions of similarity can take different forms, and often multiple forms at the same time. Not all mechanisms for these links have been well understood so far, but they have received renewed attention in recent scholarship.¹⁸ Some of these mechanisms are present in lines 9–10, which show a similar multitude of forms. Several elements link each half of this passage to the other, or they work within the indi-

¹⁷ E.g., De Zorzi 2019: 179⁷⁶. Similarity or similitude can work on the graphic, phonemic or semantic level, cf., e.g., *Šumma izbu* 11: 65’ for an example based on the phonetic level, quoted from De Zorzi 2011: 68: “šumma izbu uznāšu naḥūrišu **kašdā** rubū māta lā šuātu qassu **ikaššad** “if the ears of a malformed foetus reach its nostrils – the prince will conquer a land which does not belong to him”” (bold and italics in the original). An example for the graphic level (in addition to a strong connection based on sound, De Zorzi 2011: 68) is *Šumma izbu* 3: 68, quoted from De Zorzi 2011: 68: “šumma sinništu ulidma išar(GIŠ[= UŠ])-šú lā ibbašši bēl bīti ul inneššir rīd(UŠ) eqli “if a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has no penis – the owner of the house will not prosper (and/or) confiscation of the field”” (bold, italics and diacritics in the original). An example of a semantic link is *Šumma izbu* 22: 120, quoted from De Zorzi 2021: 1: “šumma šahū qanā naši tibūt nūnī u iššūrī /iššūrī nūnī / erbī nūnī ibbašši : tibūtu ibbašši “If a pig carries a reed – there will be a swarming of fish and birds (var.: of locusts and fish); there will be a swarming (of animals)””, which is based in part on the semantic field of “rising” of both *našū*, ‘to carry’ in the protasis, and *tibūtu* ‘swarming’ in the apodosis, see De Zorzi 2021: 2.

¹⁸ For example, in two recent projects at the University of Vienna under principal investigator Nicla De Zorzi: the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum: Tieromina im Alten Mesopotamien, which concluded in March 2022, and in a work package of the ongoing ERC-project REPAC: Repetition, Parallelism and Creativity: An Inquiry into the construction of Meaning in Ancient Mesopotamian Literature and Erudition.

vidual halves, all based on the idea of repetition: phonetic elements, direct repetition and possibly graphic elements. With regard to content, we see an association of action and reaction on the basis of reciprocation, where the misdeed in the protasis connects with the consequences in the apodosis by something akin to a like for like connection. A frequent characteristic of such punishments are links established through semantic parallelism and through the different forms of repetition, especially of phonetic and lexical elements.¹⁹ In our case, the offense is the unfair judicial treatment of a Sipparean, an inhabitant of Babylonia, combined with the fair treatment of a foreigner, i.e., a disregard for correct treatment and due process according to Babylonian standards. This misdeed is punished by the introduction of foreign standards in Babylonia and a disregard of due process by Babylonian dignitaries.

The internal links are clearest if we consider the passage in transliteration, following the Nineveh manuscript. Elements creating phonetic links are highlighted in bold, and those building links through repetition are underlined:

(9) DUMU UD.KIB.NUN^{ki} *i-da-as-ma a-ha-am i-din* ^dUTU DL.KUD AN u KI (10)
di-ni a-ha-am ina KUR-šú GAR-ma NUN^{me} u DL.KUD^{me} *ana di-nim* NU ME.ME

The passage shows a chiastic arrangement of phonetic elements and lexical items: *a-ha-am i-din* (*ahām idīn*) in the protasis is taken up chiastically in the apodosis through *di-ni a-ha-am* (*dīna ahām*), and it is also reflected by the repetition of a lexical item, *ana di-nim* (*ana dīnim*), in the second part of the apodosis. In addition, we find direct repetition between the first and the second part of the apodosis. The epithet judge (*dayyānu*) of the god of justice, Šamaš, is taken up by judges as actors in the second part of the apodosis. There may be additional links on the graphic level, though they are limited to the manuscript from Nineveh. The writing for Sippar, UD.KIB.NUN^{ki} contains the sign NUN, which also occurs in the second part of the apodosis as *rubū*, written with the logogram NUN.²⁰ This may

¹⁹ See, e.g., Schaudig 2012: 435–438, who calls this type of punishment “Spiegelstrafen”; see also De Zorzi 2019: 178f. The anonymous reviewer suggested that the chiastic arrangement here is based on legal principles rather than literary ones, with a reference to “Spiegelstrafen”. This is unlikely. As the examples in the references given here show, this type of punishment does not automatically lead to a phrasing in a chiastic arrangement. The basic idea of mirroring, however, may have been associated with this literary device. For another treatment of “Spiegelstrafen” from a literary standpoint, cf. De Zorzi’s article in this volume.

²⁰ The Nineveh manuscript reads UD.KIB.NUN^{ki}, the Nippur manuscript reads *sip-par*^{ki}. Both these writings contain the sign UD, which is also used to write the city god of Sippar, Šamaš, in the apodosis. In the first spelling, this graphic reference to Šamaš is attested in much earlier writings, see Woods (2005a and b) for a more general discussion of the genesis of the writing UD.KIB.NUN for Sippar, who convincingly argues that adding UD to KIB.NUN served to include a reference to the city god in the writing of the city itself. The writing *sip-par*^{ki} in the Nippur manuscript is combined with the

have provided an additional link between the protasis and second part of the apodosis for some audiences.²¹ It is clear that the passage is internally structured in a coherent manner: semantic parallelism connects protasis and apodosis, in addition to repetition as well as the arrangement of lexical items and, possibly, signs.

2a2) External (vertical) links

2a2a) Vertical links to preceding lines

In addition to internal links, we can also discern strong external (vertical) links which relate to the perceived segmentation of the text outlined above, between lines 9–10 and 1–8, as well as between lines 9–10 and 11–18. We begin with an analysis of links to the first eight lines of the text. These are presented here according to the Nineveh manuscript and arranged by protasis and apodosis. In all cases, we are dealing with repetition with variation, working on different levels. We first discuss direct repetition (bold), then phonetic repetition (underlined) and finally structural parallels (shadowing). Other markings are discussed further below.

(1–8)

<i>šarru ana dīni lā iqūl</i>	<i>nišūšu inneššā <u>māssu</u> innammi</i>
<i>ana dīn mātišu lā iqūl</i>	<i>Ea šar šīmāti šīmtašu ušannīma <u>ghīta</u> irteneddīšu</i>
<i>ana <u>rubēšu</u>(/apkalli) lā iqūl</i>	<i>ūmūsu ikarrū</i>
<i>ana ummāni lā iqūl</i>	<i><u>māssu</u> ibbalakkissu</i>
<i>ana isħappi iqūl</i>	<i>tēm <u>māti</u> išanni</i>
<i>ana <u>šipir</u> Ea iqūl</i>	<i>ilū rabūtu ina šitūlti u ḥudāt mīšari irteneddūšu²²</i>

spelling NUN^{meš} in the apodosis, which means that the sign ME, read as *sip*, does not build any link to it. At most, this could link to the logographic writing of the verbal form at the end of this manuscript, ME (the same logogram used in the protases of the first eight lines).

²¹ The presence of a device in one manuscript but not the other does not necessarily negate its effect where it is present. In a recent and extensive discussion of literary devices, especially word play, Worthington (2020: 139–150) covers the identification of literary devices, linking it to questions of authorial intent and the reception by audiences. He shows that the question of authorial intent is difficult to answer for modern scholarship, and that a focus on the various audiences of a text and their possible different understandings of a text is more fruitful. Similarly, we do not aim to determine the intention(s) of the writer or compiler(s) of this manuscript, but to focus on links which may have been perceived by some audiences of the text, or in this case, of one of the manuscripts of the text. The writing of the city name, therefore, may or may not have been intentional on the part of the scribe, but regardless it could have been perceived by some of the readers of the tablet.

²² The Nippur manuscript reads the apodosis differently, but since the protasis remains the same as in the Nineveh manuscript, this does not affect our argument.

(9–10)

*mār Sippar (UD.KIB.NUN^{ki}) idāšma ahām idīn Šamaš dayyān šamē u erseti dīna
ahām ina mātišu išakkanma rubū u dayyānū ana dīnim ul iqullū*

The most salient feature connecting these lines is the repetition of the preterite of the verb *qālu*, with and without negation, in all the lines leading up to the passage under discussion (lines 9–10). In the first two lines, this repetition is combined with a repetition of *ana dīni* and *ana dīn*. These elements are also taken up phonetically in lines 9–10, where we find *idīn* in the protasis and *dīna* in the first part of the apodosis. At the same time, they serve as an internal link to the second half of the apodosis, where we find the fully combined *ana dīnim ul iqullū* at the end of line 10, which brings us back to the most striking repeated elements of the first eight lines. In addition, there is a structural similarity between these two passages (lines 2–3 and 9–10) at the beginning of the respective apodoses; both mention a deity and his epithet: Ea as the king of destinies in line 2 and Šamaš as the judge of heaven and earth in lines 9–10.

But there is more. To begin with, we find another element repeated several times throughout these lines, i.e., the word *mātu* (double underlining). It occurs mostly in the apodoses of the first eight lines, but also in one of the protases. It is employed twice in the form *māssu* and once as *māti* in the apodoses, and as *mātišu* in the protasis of lines 2–3. Again, this is taken up in lines 9–10, in this case by *ina mātišu* in the apodosis. There are several less obvious links between these two passages as well, which use the same mechanisms we have observed for internal links, like the phonetic connection mentioned above. The repetition of *ahām* establishes a link within lines 9–10, but also links back phonetically to *ahīta* in lines 2–3 (wavy underlining). We also find another case of repetition (dashed underlining). The third section opens with *ana rubēšu*, which is taken up in the second part of the apodosis of lines 9–10 through *rubū*. Here, again, the manuscripts deviate slightly. The Nippur manuscript clearly gives NUN^{mes}, while the Nineveh manuscript is ambiguous, writing NUN ME. This can be understood as the logogram NUN.ME, to be normalised to *apkallū*, as suggested, e.g., by Diakonoff (1965: 347⁺²⁰) or Reiner (1961: 9)²³, but it can also be read as NUN^{me}, as other translators suggested even before the Nippur manuscript was discovered, e.g., Lambert (1996 [1963, 1960]: 112), who read “*rubīme*” (sic!).²⁴ There may even be

²³ Note that both these treatments pre-date the publication of the manuscript from Nippur.

²⁴ This ambiguous writing has led to some discussion about which reading should be preferred. For instance, Hurowitz (1998: 49²³) is aware that the singular form of *apkallū* has some appeal, but follows Lambert and the Nippur manuscript in his rendering of the text, remarking that the reading *apkallū*, as an abstract notion of a sage, not an actual human being, would necessitate a metaphorical reading of the text. Lenzi (2008: 114–116), on the other hand, interprets this variation between the manuscripts as a – possibly erroneous, but more likely intentional – means to link the *ummānu* of the next line with the *apkallū* in this line. Kristin Kleber (personal communication) remarked

yet another link, again pertaining to the phonetic level, between *šipir* in the protasis of the last section (lines 7–8), and Sippar in the protasis of lines 9–10,²⁵ marked with dotted underlining.

Taking all these aspects together, it is clear that the links between lines 9–10 and the preceding eight lines of the text are extensive. This raises the question why some scholars perceive line 9 as the beginning of a new section in the *Fürstenspiegel*. The reason for this separation becomes clear when we consider the links between lines 9–10 and the immediately following lines, which, as we will see, are just as manifold and just as strong as the links between lines 9–10 and the beginning of the text.

2a2b) Vertical links to the following lines

We now focus on the links between lines 9–10 and the following lines 11–14. These links extend even beyond lines 11–14, which we show by partially extending our analysis into lines 15–18, insofar as this helps elucidate the structural role of lines 9–10 and its relationship to lines 11–14. The lines in question concentrate on Nippureans (lines 11–14) and Babylonians (lines 15–18). In combination with the Sipparan referred to in lines 9–10, these ten lines represent the first mention in the text of these three cities. The section following lines 18 even includes a mention of the three cities directly next to each other.²⁶ Below is a transcription of lines 9–18,²⁷ with features important for our discussion marked in bold or underlined.

(9–10)	<i>mār Sippar idāsma ahām idīn Šamaš dayyān šamē u erseti dīna ahām</i> ina mātišu išakkanna rubū u dayyānū ana dīnim ul iqullū
(11–14)	<i>mārī Nippuri ana dīnim ubluniššuma kadrā ilqēma idāssunūti Enlil bēl</i> mātāti nakra ahām idakkāššumma ummānātišu ušamqati rubū u šūt rēšīsu ina sūqi zilulliš išanundū ²⁸

that we may be dealing with an instance of intentional ambiguity to enrich the text by allowing for multiple interpretations, which is of course a possibility.

²⁵ I thank Nicla De Zorzi for suggesting this possible link.

²⁶ The beginning of the protasis of lines 19–22 in the Nineveh manuscript reads *mār nippuri sippar bābili* (DUMU 'EN'.LÍL^{ki} uru*sip-par* TIN.TIR^{ki}, line 19), the Nippur manuscript reads DUMU *sip-par^{rkī}* EN'.LÍL^{ki} ube 'KÁ.DINGIR¹[R]A^{rkī}' (line 20) which in itself is another literary device holding these lines together. These connections are not discussed here for reasons of space. For a treatment of some literary devices in the text, such as inclusios and alliteration, see Hurowitz 1998.

²⁷ The line count follows the Nineveh manuscript.

²⁸ '(If) they bring citizens of Nippur to court to him and he takes a gift but improperly convicts them, Enlil, the lord of the lands will mobilise a hostile enemy against him and defeat his troops, princes and *šūt rēši*-officials will roam in the street like peddlers.'

- (15–18) *kasap mārī Bābīlē ilqēma ana makkūri ušēribu dīn Bābilāya išmēma
ana qāli turru Marduk bēl šamē u erṣeti ayyābišu elīšu išakkanma
būšašu makkūršu ana nakrīšu išarrak²⁹*

At the beginning of these individual sections there are parallel structures marked in bold above. At the same time, these parallel elements are partly repeated and gradually expanded. We first hear of the citizen of Sippar in the singular (*mār Sippar*), then of the citizens of Nippur in the plural (*mārī Nippuri*), and this plural is finally expanded further by a status constructus for the silver of the citizens of Babylon (*kasap mārī Bābīlē*). The verbal forms in the protases of these passages also expand (and repeat, see below). They are underlined in the text given above. We first find a singular preterite plus enclitic *-ma* combined with one verbal form (*idāšma... idīn*) in lines 9–10. In the second section, another verb extends this chain (*ublūniššuma... ilqēma idāssunūti*). The third section extends the sequence of verbal forms of the protasis even further: two pairs of verbs connected by an enclitic *-ma* are followed by another verb, each in a different form (*ilqēma... ušēribu, išmēma... turru*). This short discussion of only a few elements shows that on a structural level, these lines are clearly connected in an intricate and close manner. We will now zoom in on lines 9–10 and their relationship with lines 11–14, though it is important to note that the links do not end there, but extend further into the text.

- (9–10) ***mār Sippar** idāšma ahām idīn Šamaš dayyān šamē u erṣeti dīna ahām
ina mātīšu išakkanma rubū u dayyānū ana dīnim ul iqullū*
- (11–14) ***mārī Nippuri** ana dīnim ublūniššuma kadrā ilqēma idāssunūti Enlil bēl
mātāti nakra ahām idakkāšsumma ummānātīšu ušamqati rubū u šūt
rēšīšu ina sūqi zilulliš issanundū*

In addition to the marked connections just discussed, we have now marked similar structures within the apodoses in both sections with shadowing. Both sections have apodoses consisting of two parts, and both apodoses mention a deity plus epithet at the beginning of the first part of the apodosis, a similarity which we also observed above with regard to the connection between lines 9–10 and the preceding lines. In this case, the similarities extend further to the verbal forms of the first parts of the apodoses, in both cases a third person form plus enclitic *-ma* (*išakkanma, idakkāšsumma*), which are then succeeded by a set of actors in the second parts of the similarly built apodoses (*rubū u dayyānū, rubū u šūt rēšīšu*). These

²⁹ ‘(If) he (the king) takes the silver of the citizens of Babylon and adds it to (his) estate, (if) he hears a case of Babylonians, but *makes* (them) turn back to being silent, Marduk, the lord of heaven and earth, will place his (the king’s) enemies above him (the king) and he (Marduk) will hand over his movable property and his estate to his (the king’s) enemy.’

structural similarities are underlined with a wavy line. As shown above, the second apodosis of lines 11–14 is extended, but it is still similarly built from a structural perspective. The latter parts of both apodoses present two actors (once in the plural, once in the singular) connected by the conjunction *u*, followed by a prepositional phrase, and concluded by a third person plural verb at the end of the section. The direct repetition of *rubû u* at the beginning of the second part of the apodoses, both in 9–10 and 11–14 (doubly underlined), further strengthens this connection.

Further bonds are created by direct repetition, either in the same parts of the sections, i.e., both protases or apodoses, or as a crossover, in the protasis of one section and the apodosis of the other. The first case can be seen in the direct repetition of the verb *dâšu*, *idâšma* in the protasis of lines 9–10, and *idâssunūti* in the protasis of lines 11–14. The latter instance features not only a third person plural suffix instead of an enclitic *-ma*, but also an interesting change to the last position in the verbal chain of the protasis (*ublûniššuma ... ilqēma idâssunūti*), as opposed to the previous passage, where *dâšu* takes the first position in the verbal chain of the protasis (*idâšma ... idîn*). The adjective *ahâm* is directly repeated in the first parts of both apodoses. The latter case, a crossover link, is represented by the direct repetition of *ana dînim* both at the end of lines 9–10, in the apodosis, and at the beginning of lines 11–14, in the protasis. In this case, there is also a phonetic component to the link. As we have seen above, both *idîn* and *dîna* present phonetic connections to *ana dînim* – in this case, not only horizontally to the *ana dînim* in the apodosis of lines 9–10, but also vertically to *ana dînim* in the protasis of lines 11–14.

With regard to content, we do not see a full topic change towards the three cities of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon, which, as outlined above, have been seen as the main topic of the *Fürstenspiegel*. Although this section focuses on the three cities, members of the royal entourage, prominent in the first eight lines of the text, still play an important role in this passage. The apodoses mention princes and judges as well as princes and courtiers, respectively.

In sum, lines 9–10 show strong ties both to the preceding and to the following lines. These lines should be understood to act structurally as a “pivot line”. Pivot lines are a phenomenon known from magic, but they have also been noted in literature (see below), and, as the workshop at the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Turin from which this article originated has shown,³⁰ they are also prominent in other genres such as divination. They seem to have a similar function in all these genres, thereby constituting an important element of Mesopotamian compositional creativity which deserves further study. But what exactly consti-

³⁰ See the other articles of this workshop published in this volume, especially those by De Zorzi, Pfitzner and Simons.

tutes a pivot line? A good example of a pivot line is given in Reiner (1985), dealing with the composition *The Heart Grass*. She notes a line functioning as a pivot line (though she does not designate it as such). The passage reads:³¹

4	<i>ana şeri u bamāti aqbīma işşabat libbi şeri u bamāti</i>
5	<i>ana şadî u harri aqbīma işşabat libbi şadi u harri</i>
6	<i>ana asalluhi bēliya bēl āśipūti aqbīma umma libbī lippašir</i>
7	<i>kīma libbī ippašir libbi šamaš lippašir</i>
8	<i>kīma libbi šamaš ippašir libbi umāmi lippašir</i> ³²

Dealing with this text, Reiner (1985: 95) states, “Line 6, beginning with *ana* and ending with *lippašir*, forms the bridge between the sequences of anaphoric and epiphoric lines, and has the double function of closing the first sequence and opening the next.” In the case of this text, the line is the pivot in the change from the “narrative” part of the text to a “wish” (Reiner 1985: 95). When we look at how the line fulfils this function, we see that the salient features of the preceding section, the repetition of *ana* at the beginning of the lines and of *aqbīma* in the middle of the lines (lines 2–6), is combined with the salient feature of the following lines (lines 6–10, i.e., even beyond our short excerpt), *lippašir* in final position, thereby connecting the two parts and bridging the gap between the change expressed by the content.³³ The element which would be expected structurally after the repeated *aqbīma*, *işşabat*, is instead replaced with the change to *lippašir*, which has also moved from immediately following *aqbīma* to the end of the line.³⁴

Pivot lines are not limited to the genre of magical texts. Their presence has also been detected in the context of literature, for instance, by Zgoll (1997) in her

³¹ STT 252, ll. 6–8 (“The Heart Grass”, e.g., Reiner 1985: 95)

³² Taken from Reiner 1985: 94; translation on p. 94f.: “I spoke to the fields and plains—it seized the hearts of the fields and plains. I spoke to the hills and vales—it seized the hearts of the hills and vales. I spoke to my lord Asalluhi, the lord of exorcism: Let my heart be soothed. As my heart is soothed, so may the heart of Šamaš be soothed. As the heart of Šamaš is soothed, so may the hearts of the beasts be soothed.”

³³ Despite having a similar name, what we call here a pivot line is not identical to what has been called “pivot word or phrase” (Sivan & Yona 1992: 443) in Biblical and Ugaritic Studies, defined as “a word (or expression) which concludes the first parallel stich and simultaneously opens the second one” (Sivan & Yona 1992: 443). This construction is also known as “double-duty modifier” (Dahood 1967: 574) or as “pivot pattern” (Watson 1975: 489). Additionally, the function of a pivot line as described here must not be confused with the so-called Janus parallelism (originally named by Gordon 1978: 59), where “a single word is found in a pivotal position which parallels what precedes it with one meaning and what follows it with yet another meaning. It literally faces both ways, but in a polysensuous fashion.” (Paul 1992: 459). The pivot line discussed here is not bound to a single word or phrase, and it is neither dependent on a double reading nor on a polysemous reading of words or phrases.

³⁴ This change is also already indicated by adding an epithet to Asalluhi, which is not employed for Šamaš in line 2 of the poem.

treatment of the Sumerian composition *Nin-me-šara*. She calls these lines “Schwellenzeilen” (e.g., p. 56, 171 and *passim*) noting that their style is particularly artful (“in welch kunstvolles Gewand die zu übermittelnde Botschaft gekleidet wird”, p. 56) and that they deserve attention. Zgoll defines the function of these lines as announcing new elements and separating them from the previous element, while at the same time leading each towards the other, similarly to temple gates.³⁵

We can, then, understand a literary device which is used actively at points in the narrative which would otherwise be liable to being seen as separate parts, and which stitches them together closely and embeds them in the larger text, counteracting the differences in meaning or content on a structural level, thereby preventing them from being taken apart. The same function is performed by our lines 9–10, which also takes up the salient features of the first lines of the text and the lines following it. This can be clearly seen through an analytical presentation of lines 1–14 (Nineveh manuscript), focusing on the salient features reflected in the pivot line:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| (1) | <i>šarru ana dīni lā iqūl nišūšu inneššā māssu innammi</i> |
| (2–3) | <i>ana dīn mātišu lā iqūl Ea šar šimāti šimtašu ušannīma ahīta irteneddīšu</i> |
| (4) | <i>ana rubēšu(/apkalli) lā iqūl ūmūsu ikarrū</i> |
| (5) | <i>ana ummāni lā iqūl māssu ibbalakkissu</i> |
| (6) | <i>ana išappi iqūl tēm māti išanni</i> |
| (7–8) | <i>ana šipir Ea iqūl ilū rabūtu ina šitūlti u tudāt mīšari irteneddūšu³⁶</i> |
| (9–10) | <i>mār Sippar idāsma ahām idīn Šamaš dayyān šamē u erṣeti dīna ahām</i>
<i>ina mātišu išakkanma rubū u dayyānū ana dīnim ul iqullū</i> |
| (11–14) | <i>mārī Nippuri ana dīnim ubluniššuma kadrā ilqēma idāssunūti Enlil bēl</i>
<i>mātāti nakra ahām idakkāšsumma ummānātīšu ušamqati rubū u šūt</i>
<i>rēšīšu ina sūqi zilulliš išanundū</i> |
| (15–18) | <i>kasap mārī Bābīlī ilqēma ana makkūri ušeribu dīn Bābilāya išmēma</i>
<i>ana qāli turru Marduk bēl šamē u erṣeti ayyābišu elīšu išakkanma</i>
<i>būšāšu makkūršu ana nakrīšu išarrak</i> |

The salient feature of the first lines are underlined: the repetition of elements of *ana dīni lā iqūl* in line 1 with variants, *ana dīn mātišu lā iqūl* (line 2) and (*lā*) *iqūl* (lines 3–8), which is taken up chiastically and placed at the end of lines 9–10 with *ana dīnim ul iqullū*. At the same time, the beginning of lines 9–10 repeats the salient feature of the beginning of the following lines, *mār Sippar*, with its extensions *mārī Nippuri* and *kasap mārī Bābīlī*, highlighted in bold. These features mark lines 9–10 as a pivot line, intricately linking the preceding and following sections of text. Although it does not represent a change in function, as in the example from *The Heart Grass*, where we saw a change from the “narrative” part

³⁵ Zgoll (1997) does not analyse the pivot lines in her text in detail with regard to literary devices linking them to the previous and following lines.

³⁶ See note 22.

of the text to the section focusing on “a wish” (Reiner 1985: 95), lines 9–10 stand as a pivot between different topical foci of the text, with lines 9–10 opening a section on the three cities of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon. The contextual change in focus is not fully contrastive – important figures at court still play a role in the section focusing on the cities. In conclusion, our analysis shows that these sections have stronger ties than the previous scholarly discussion of segmentation would suggest. This should be considered when we interpret the *Fürstenspiegel* (see the conclusions below).

2b) Structure used to express emphasis

In the second case study, we focus on lines 45–50, a passage towards the end of the text. It deals with the royal entourage and its behaviour towards the cities and inhabitants of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon. It reads:

*ummān u šūt rēši manzaz pān šarri amāssun ulamman tāssun imahhar ina qibūt Ea
šar apsī ummān u šūt rēši ina kakki imuttū ašaršun ana namē ikkammar arkassun
šāru itabbal epšessun zaqīqiš immanni*

‘(If) a scholar or a *šūt rēši*-official, (who is) a royal servant, slanders them, (but) receives a bribe from them, at the command of Ea, the king of the Apsū, the scholar and *šūt rēši*-official will die by a weapon, their place will be heaped up to deserted land, the wind will carry away their estate, their deeds will be counted as nothing/wind.’³⁷

This passage of the *Fürstenspiegel* likely stood out to some audiences of the text because of its structural peculiarity.³⁸ The passage has the longest apodosis of the entire text, not only with regard to the number of parts – four consequences stacked without enclitic *-ma*, stylistically unique in the text – but also when compared to the apodoses of the rest of the text and their relationship to the individual protases. Considering the *Fürstenspiegel* as a whole, we see a relationship between the offense committed and the consequences – always punishments, with the exception of lines 7–8 in the Nineveh manuscript – which are divinely inflicted on the perpetrators. As stated above, the repercussions for the described misdeeds usually work on a means-for-a-means-level, and therefore also show a certain quantitative regularity when it comes to the misdeeds and the punishments that follow. This can be expressed as a ratio. For instance, the first section of our text reads ‘(If) the king has no regard for the law, his people will be thrown into chaos, his land will be devastated.’ This shows a ratio of 1:2 – one offense with two consequences. The same ratio is present in lines 2–3.³⁹ Lines 4–8 present four

³⁷ There is a certain play between wind and nothingness at work here. On wind as a motif in our text, with special regard to the role of scholars, see Finn 2017: 92.

³⁸ On this, see note 21.

³⁹ Here and in the following, the line count for the sections follows the Nineveh manuscript.

sections with a ratio of 1:1 each.⁴⁰ Other passages which we have already treated show a similar, roughly balanced ratio – lines 9–10 have a ratio of 2:2, with two offenses and two consequences, lines 11–14 show a ratio of 1 (or 2):2 (or 3) between misdeeds and repercussions, depending on how one delimits these elements in the protasis and the apodosis. Lines 15–18 mentioned above have a ratio of 2:2. Other attested ratios are 2:2 (lines 19–22), 2 or 3:2 (lines 23–28, followed by explanatory lines 29–30), 1:1 (lines 31–34), 1 or 2:2 (lines 35–37), 3:1[+x] (lines 38–39), 1:1 (lines 40–44), 4:2 (lines 51–54), 1:2 (lines 55–59). The passage in question, however, lines 45–50, has a ratio of 1:4.

What is remarkable about this structural outlier is that, in a text which is mostly looked at with a focus on the king and on the privileges of cities,⁴¹ the gravest and most extensive punishment of the entire *Fürstenspiegel* is a consequence of the misdeeds of officials, who are threatened with not only death but the complete annihilation of their “afterlife” on earth. Not only are their lives taken, but everything they own and everything they have done will also be eliminated. This structural peculiarity is therefore another element which should be considered when we interpret this text (see below).

Conclusions

In this paper, we have shown that the relationship between the *Fürstenspiegel* and divinatory literature, namely *Šumma ālu* Tablet 53, is an intricate and creative one – it was not simply the result of haphazardly placing some building blocks of text side by side, but rather of creative interplay based on graphic elements. With regard to the entire composition, we see a structural and thematic continuity between sections – sections which may, of course, reflect creative engagement with different sources of different ages. The text shows an intricate net of horizontal and vertical links based on the repetition of sounds, graphemes and structures. Additionally, we have seen an example of the use of structural indicators to express emphasis, in this case on a section which focuses not on the king but on his royal entourage.

Taking such structural aspects into account enriches our understanding of the *Fürstenspiegel*. In the first case study (2a), the perceived breaks in the text are elaborately connected to the entire composition, which demonstrates the importance of reading the text as a whole. This lends new importance to what previous scholarship has sometimes more or less dismissed as a later addition, the introductory lines of the text. There is a dense web of interconnections between this section, which contains general advice on good behaviour to the king in a wider sense, and the following section, which focuses on city rights and privileges.

⁴⁰ Lines 7–8 read differently in the Nippur manuscript (same line count), but this does not change the ratio of 1:1 for this passage.

⁴¹ With the exception of, e.g., Finn (2017: 85–95), see below.

These privileges can sometimes be very detailed, for instance in lines 31–34, which deals with fodder for horses.⁴² By structurally linking these detailed rights to more general ethical guidelines at the beginning of the text, these individual privileges are framed in the same context of a more general moral code.⁴³ Because the punishment is usually divinely inflicted, we can even connect them to the notion of a world order that is divinely maintained. Further support for such a framing of the text comes from another structural outlier already identified by Hurowitz (1998: 46f.), which “encapsulates the theological background of the dire predictions” (p. 46). At the quantitative centre of the text, an important point in many compositions (lines 29–30 in the Nineveh manuscript, lines 30–31 in the Nippur version), we hear of the reason that these cities enjoy their privileges – a divine decision to exempt the inhabitants of the cities of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon from corvée labour. This exception was established by An, Enlil and Ea in their divine assembly. Hurowitz (1998: 46) saw this passage as central to a key topic of the text, i.e., the divine nature of the rights of the cities’ inhabitants is a key topic of the text. Taken together with the function of our pivot line (lines 9–10), both these structural elements stress the notion of a divinely ordained world order in which the rights of these cities should be placed, though with different nuances in the foreground in both cases.

This larger understanding of the text ties in with, for instance, Biggs’ (2004: 2) suggestion that the aim of the *Fürstenspiegel* may have been “to provide a seemingly very old proof that the special exemptions claimed by Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon were divinely sanctioned by the old chief deities of the pantheon, Anu, Enlil, and Ea, sitting in the divine assembly.” Whether one agrees with his suggestion of “a deliberate political fraud” (p. 2) or not, his focus on the divine aspect of this text receives support by the structural analysis we have presented here.

This is not to say that individual passages cannot convey specific or additional meanings. In the second case study, we have looked at the structure of a short passage compared to the same structurally significant markers in the rest of the text, i.e., the ratio between offenses and punishments. This shows that the direst, but also the most extensive consequences in the *Fürstenspiegel* are reserved not

⁴² Lines 31–34 (Nineveh manuscript), lines 32–34 (Nippur manuscript): *mār sippar nippuri u bābili imrāšunu ana mūr nisqi šarāki mūr nisqi šūt imrāšunu ikulū ana šimitti ayyābi irreddū*, ‘If he (the king) gives the (lit. their) fodder of a citizen of Sippar, Nippur or Babylon to (his) thoroughbreds, the thoroughbreds which ate their fodder will be driven away to the enemy’s yoke.’

⁴³ Contra Böhl (1937: 28), who, despite being aware of the potential inherent in the allusions to the omen series at the beginning of the text, sees it fully counteracted by the text’s focus on an individual prince and his misdeeds (seeing the text as “trotz des dem Omen-Schema entlehnten Scheines der Allgemeingültigkeit in den Dienst des Einmaligen und Aktuellen gestellt”).

for the king, but for the royal entourage, scholars and courtiers, in a text which is often primarily studied for information on the king. This is also of interest for approaches to the text which do not focus on the king, e.g., that of Finn (2017: 89–95), who looked at this text with an interest in scribal identity. She states that “the scholar is a main subject of the text” (p. 89), and interprets the beginning and end of the *Fürstenspiegel* as having a focus on “general concerns of the scholar and officials in the royal court” (p. 89), which she suggests “are later additions, which correspond to a greater sense of scribal identity”. In the interplay of royal power and scribal identity, the harsh – or, to be exact, harshest – punishment for scholars and royal officials provides a new perspective on the relationship between scribal identity and this text, and also on inner-scribal mentalities,⁴⁴ as scribes not only produced and copied this text, but also used it to support their arguments in a letter (see above), indicating that the text played a role in active life. This new perspective is based on data which goes beyond mere content and it indicates a possibly more complicated relationship than Finn’s (2017: 92) analysis, limited to the wind motif in this passage, can suggest.

In sum, with these short case studies, we have shown that a structural analysis of literary texts, taken together with their content, can enrich our perspective on these texts and open up new and fruitful avenues of interpretation, even for texts which have been known to Assyriology for as long as the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*.

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