

2 Baruch and the Syriac Codex Ambrosianus (7a1):

Studying Old Testament Pseudepigrapha in Their Manuscript Context

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The history of research on 2 Baruch, also known as the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, starts in 1865.¹ It starts with Antonio M. Ceriani's publication of the first Latin translation of the text, based on his retrieval and identification of the book² in the 6th or 7th century Syriac Codex Ambrosianus, kept at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan where Ceriani served as prefect. Seven years later, in 1868, Ceriani also published an edition of the Syriac text,³ and in the decades that followed, the Syriac text of 2 Baruch was republished,⁴ translated into English by Robert H. Charles and into German by Victor Ryssel,⁵ and soon further exegetical and philological studies of the book appeared,⁶ establishing the Codex Ambrosianus copy as the witness *par excellence* to the text of 2 Baruch.

For forty years, from 1865 until 1903,⁷ the copy in the Codex Ambrosianus was the sole known source to any part of the text and, for more than a hundred years it was the only

¹ Antonio M. Ceriani, "Apocalypsis Baruch, olim de graeco in syriacum, et nunc de syriaco in latinum translata," in *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim Bibliothecae Ambrosianae* 1.2 (Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosianae Mediolani, 1866), 73–98. Note the confusion of dates of these volumes, both in the editions themselves and in the research literature. The part containing 2 Baruch was published in 1865, but the larger volume is often dated 1866. The reason for the confusion is probably that already circulating, smaller, parts were collected, bound and republished. I am indebted to Stefano Serventi for his kind assistance.

² In this article the term "book", alternatively "book unit," is applied to denote a discrete textual entity in a manuscript.

³ Antonio M. Ceriani, "Apocalypsis Baruch Syriacae," in *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim Bibliothecae Ambrosianae* 5.2 (Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosianae Mediolani, 1868), 113–80. Fasc. 5.2 is not dated in the volume, Fasc. 5.1 is dated 1868. The catalogue in the Ambrosian Library has 1868, but the publication of the volume in its present form may have been in 1871. Ceriani also published a facsimile edition of the codex (*Translatio Syra Pescitto Veteris Testamenti ex codice Ambrosiano, sec. fere VI photolithographice edita* [vol. 2; Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosianae Mediolani, 1883], 364–66), and his Latin translation was republished by Otto F. Fritzsche, *Libri Apocryphi Veteris Testamenti Graece* (Lipsiae: F. A. Brockhaus, 1871).

⁴ Michal Kmosko, "Apocalypsis Baruch filii Neriae, translatus de graeco in syriacum," in *Patrologia syriaca* (ed. R. Graffin; 3 vols.; Paris: Firmin-Didot et Socli, 1907), cols. 1068–300.

⁵ Robert H. Charles, *The Apocalypse of Baruch, Translated from the Syriac, Chapters I–LXXVII from the Sixth Cent. MS in the Ambrosian Library of Milan, and Chapters LXXVIII–LXXXVII – the Epistle of Baruch – from a New and Critical Text Based on Ten MSS and Published Herewith. Edited, with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (London: Black, 1896); idem, "II Baruch," in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (vol. 2; ed. Robert H. Charles, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913); Victor Ryssel, "Die syrische Baruchapokalypse," in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* (2 vols.; ed. Emil Kautzsch; Tübingen: E. Rothstein, 1900), 404–46; Bruno Violet, *Die Apokalypsen des Esra und des Baruch in deutscher Gestalt* (GCS 32; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1924).

⁶ For instance, Joseph Langen, *De Apocalypsi Baruch anno superiori primi edita: Commentarion* (Freiberg: Herder, 1867); Richard Kabisch, "Die Quellen der Apokalypse Baruchs," *Jahrbuch für protestantische Theologie* 18 (1892): 66–107; Ferdinand Rosenthal, *Vier apokryphische Bücher aus der Zeit und Schule R. Akiba's* (Leipzig: Otto Schulze, 1885).

⁷ A Greek fragment containing 2 Bar 12:1–13:2 and 13:11–14:3 was found in the Egyptian town of Oxyrhynchus. This fragment, P. Oxy. III 403, was published in 1903 by Bernhard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt ("403.

manuscript assumed to provide scholars with anything close to a complete text. Even after the find of an Arabic manuscript containing large parts of the text in 1974,⁸ the copy in the Codex Ambrosianus has continued to serve as the preferred text witness, since it remains the oldest and fullest copy available. Thus, it is no exaggeration to claim that the Codex Ambrosianus has played a major role throughout the history of research on 2 Baruch. This 6th/7th century Syriac copy has thoroughly shaped the academic study of 2 Baruch, generally approached in scholarship as a 1st or 2nd century Jewish composition.

Given the importance of this text witness to the history of research on 2 Baruch, it is striking that no comprehensive study of the place of the copy of 2 Baruch in the Codex Ambrosianus has yet been published. To the extent that questions as to the place of 2 Baruch in this codex have been raised, they have primarily been raised by scholars interested in Syriac manuscript traditions and not by scholars of 2 Baruch.⁹ With some exceptions,¹⁰ and although the text of the copy has been scrutinized in great detail, scholars of 2 Baruch have generally treated the copy of 2 Baruch in isolation from the rest of the codex, using it to discuss the, hypothetical, early Jewish text. This focus is the necessary result of a disciplinary discourse which has privileged this early context, but unfortunately this discourse leaves the 6th/7th century manuscript context of the copy in the dark.

As has been pointed out by, among others, Robert A. Kraft, a methodologically cautious way of approaching a later manuscript copy as a witness to an early text would be to first study it in the immediate material and cultural context in which it is preserved, before eventually turning to the hypothetical early text – if defensible.¹¹ Such a procedure would in fact be

Apocalypse of Baruch, XII-XIV,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Part III. Edited with Translation and Notes* [London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903], 3-7).

⁸ In 1974 Wilhelm Baars discovered a copy of 2 Baruch in the 10th-11th century Mt Sinai Arabic Codex 589. Cf. P.Sj. van Koningsveld, “An Arabic Manuscript of the Apocalypse of Baruch,” *JSJ* 6 (1974/5): 205-7. The Arabic text was published in 1986 (Fred Leemhuis, Albertus F.J. Klijn and Geert J.H. van Gelder, *The Arabic Text of the Apocalypse of Baruch: Edited and Translated with a Parallel Translation of the Syriac Text* [Leiden: Brill, 1986]).

⁹ Cf., e.g., Sebastian Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition* (Gorgias Handbooks 7; 2nd rev.ed.; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 43 115-17; Muriel Debié, “Les apocalypses apocryphes syriaques: des textes pseudépiographiques de l’Ancien et du Nouveau Testaments,” in *Les apocryphes syriaques* (ed. Muriel Debié, Alain Desreumaux, C. Julien and F. Julien; Études syriaques II ; Paris: Geuthner, 2005), 111-46, at 114-17; Wido van Peursen, “Introduction to the Electronic Peshitta Text,” (Preliminary version; available on Academia.edu https://www.academia.edu/12601080/Introduction_to_the_Electronic_Peshitta_Text [Accessed 25.04.2016]), 1-19, at 5, 12-13; idem, “La diffusion des manuscrits bibliques conservés: typologie, organisation, nombre et époques de copie,” in *L’Ancien Testament en syriaque* (ed. Françoise Briquel Chatonnet et Philip le Moigne; Études syriaques V; Paris: Geuthner, 2008), 193-214, at 203-04 ; Philip M. Forness, “Narrating History through the Bible in Late Antiquity: A Reading Community for the Syriac Peshitta Old Testament in Milan (Ambrosian Library, B 21 Inf),” *Le Muséon* 127:1-2 (2014): 41-76, at 59-60.

¹⁰ Cf., Pierre M. Bogaert, *L’Apocalypse Syriacque de Baruch: Introduction, traduction du syriaque et commentaire* (SC 144-45; 2 vols.; Paris: Cerf, 1969); Mark Whitters, *The Epistle of Baruch: A Study of Form and Message* (JSPSup 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003); Martin Leuenberger, “Ort und Funktion der Wolkenvision und ihrer Deutung in der Syrischen Baruchapokalypse,” *JSJ* 36 (2005): 206-46; Liv Ingeborg Lied, “Nachleben and Textual Identity: Variants and Variance in the Reception History of 2 Baruch,” in *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction after the Fall* (ed. Matthias Henze and Gabriele Boccaccini; JSJS 164; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 403-28; idem, “Between ‘Text Witness’ and ‘Text on the Page’: Trajectories in the History of Editing the Epistle of Baruch,” in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology* (ed. Liv Ingeborg Lied and Hugo Lundhaug; TUGAL 175; Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming).

¹¹ Robert A. Kraft, “The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of the Jewish Pseudepigrapha* (ed. John C. Reeves; SBLEJL 06; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1994), 55-86 and idem, “The Pseudepigrapha and Christianity, Revisited: Setting the Stage and Framing Some Central Questions,”

particularly commendable to the study of 2 Baruch, precisely because the text of this book survives in full in only one witness and because of the status this witness has held in the history of research. It has not only dominated all academic research, but also the scholarly imagination of the book and its contents. When only one major witness to an assumed early text survives, a conception of textual stability tends to arise¹² and the text of the copy will easily come to stand in for the early text.

The present article can only serve as a point of departure and as a first attempt to remedy this situation, discussing three hypotheses that may shed light on the place of 2 Baruch in the Codex Ambrosianus.¹³ Each of these hypotheses explains possible aspects of the place, that is, the inclusion and location of the book in the codex. I see the three hypotheses as potentially complementary – they need not be mutually exclusive. The first hypothesis is that 2 Baruch fills a void in the chronological organisation of the books of the Codex Ambrosianus. The second hypothesis is that 2 Baruch is copied as the (Greek) Book of Baruch. The third hypothesis is that 2 Baruch was copied from the same exemplar¹⁴ as 4 Ezra, and that the location and inclusion of 2 Baruch in the codex may have been affected by this situation of copying.

The aspects of the codex I will scrutinize to discuss these hypotheses are the following: I will study the overall plan of the codex as it has come down to us in the shape of the order of books. This focus implies that the order, and the inclusion, of books in the Codex Ambrosianus is not seen as coincidental, but rather as a purposeful organisation which may potentially reveal information about its constituent parts.¹⁵ I will also explore paratextual features such as titles and end titles of book units and collections, headings of subsections and special paragraphs in the books, as well as running titles in the top margins identifying the books and collections copied on these pages. “Paratexts” have been defined as textual, liminal devices that mediate a book to a reader.¹⁶ I apply the term to refer to texts sharing the page with the main body of text, which were designed to communicate between the scribe/those who produced the codex and those who later read and engaged with the codex. Paratexts such as titles and end titles served to identify, single out, and book mark textual units, and for us

JSJ 32.4 (2001): 371-95, online: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rak//publics/pseudepig/sntsnew.html>. (Accessed 18 April 2016). Cf., also, Marinus de Jonge, “Christian Influence in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” *NovT* 4 (1960): 182-235; James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, Or Other?* (JSJSup 105; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 5, 228; Liv Ingeborg Lied, “Text – Work – Manuscript: What is an ‘Old Testament Pseudepigraphon’?” *JSP* 25:2 (2015): 150-65.

¹² Hugo Lundhaug, “An Illusion of Textual Stability: Textual Fluidity, New Philology, and the Nag Hammadi Codices,” in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology* (ed. Liv Ingeborg Lied and Hugo Lundhaug; TUGAL 175; Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming)

¹³ This present focus on the inclusion and location of 2 Baruch suggests that I am exploring the codex *qua* a result of the production phase. This warrants a brief methodological reflection, since the provenance of the Codex Ambrosianus is unknown. It is neither the goal of this paper to reconstruct this milieu of origin, nor to identify the intents of its producers. The present analysis is restricted to studying the surviving traces of the production process in the ways and the extent to which it is still visible in its outcome, the codex, and which may explain the occurrence of 2 Baruch in it.

¹⁴ I will use the terms “exemplar” and “Vorlage” interchangeably in this article, to refer to the assumed written model/the manuscript on which the scribe based his copying of the text.

¹⁵ This approach is not novel. Cf., e.g., Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 117; Whitters, *Epistle of Second Baruch*, 21-23; Michael P. Penn, “Monks, Manuscripts, and Muslims: Syriac Textual Changes in reaction to the Rise of Islam,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 12:2 (2009): 235-57, at 249; Forness, “Narrating History,” 42-43.

¹⁶ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Literature, Culture, Theory 20; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xviii, 7.

today paratextual features may be a window into the recorded conceptions of the identifications of books by those who copied them.¹⁷ Furthermore, I will explore page layout and unit organisation in order to identify traces that may fruitfully be understood as remains of the influence of the assumed Vorlagen.¹⁸

The aim of this article is to contribute to the discussions about the provenance, transmission and transformation of the so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha – 2 Baruch in particular – claiming the importance of studying them in the manuscript contexts in which they are copied. The article will also be a contribution to the further study of the Codex Ambrosianus and the engagement with 2 Baruch among Syriac Christians.

The Codex Ambrosianus

Before turning to the discussion of the hypotheses, however, an initial description of the Codex Ambrosianus is warranted. The so-called Syriac Codex Ambrosianus, B 21 Inf and B 21 bis Inf of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, is commonly described as the oldest, full, Peshiṭta Old Testament codex that has survived. The codex is widely known under the siglum 7a1, serving as the main manuscript source for the editions of the Peshiṭta Old Testament, published by The International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament and the Leiden Peshiṭta Institute in the series *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshiṭta Version* since 1966 (1972).¹⁹ However, studies of the material aspects of this codex, that is, its codicological features, page layout and text organisation, as well as its history, are still relatively few.²⁰

Codicological Features, Page Layout, Unit Organisation and Unit Delimitation

The Codex Ambrosianus is a large *deluxe* parchment codex, measuring approximately 36 cm by 26 cm.²¹ The codex is organized into thirty five quires, mostly *quinions*.²² 330 folios

¹⁷ Cf., Liv Ingeborg Lied, “Do Paratexts Matter? Transmission, Re-identification, and New Philology,” (paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 23 November 2015); idem, “Between ‘Text Witness’ and ‘Text on the Page’.”

¹⁸ This study is based on my inspection of the codex in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 28 June 2011, 27–29 June 2014, 23–26 November 2014, and 14–18 March 2016, as well as my work on Ms B 21 ter Inf and the 2013 re-edition of Ceriani’s photolithographical edition (Antonio M. Ceriani (ed.), *A Facsimile Edition of the Peshiṭta Old Testament Based on Codex Ambrosianus (7a1)* [introduction by Emidio Vergani; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013]). I am indebted to Federico Gallo and Emidio Vergani for their kind assistance during my stays in Milan.

¹⁹ Cf., P.A.H. De Boer, “Towards an Edition of the Syriac Version of the Old Testament,” *VT* 31 (1981): 346–57; idem, “Praefatio,” in *Institutum Peshittonianum Leidense, Vetus Testamentum Syriace iuxta simplicem syrorum versionem* (Vol.1, fasc. 1; Leiden: Brill, 1977), v–xiv.

²⁰ Some important studies are, Antonio M. Ceriani, “Le edizioni e i manoscritti delle versioni siriane del Vecchio Testamento,” in *Memorie del R. Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere* XI:III (Milano: Bernardoni, 1869), 1–28; idem, “Praefatio,”; Leo Haefeli, *Die Peschitta des alten Testaments mit Rücksicht auf ihre textkritische Bearbeitung und Herausgabe* (Altestamentliche Abhandlungen 11:1; Münster, 1927); Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch I*, vCesare Pasini, “La Siro-peshitta dell’Ambrosiana,” in *Storia, cristologia e tradizioni della Chiesa Siro-orientale* (ed. Emidio Vergani and S. Chialà; Atti del 3° Incontro sull’Oriente Cristiano di tradizione siriana; Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2006), 13–25; an Peursen, “Introduction”; idem, “Diffusion des manuscrits”; Emidio Vergani, “An Introduction to Ceriani’s Reprint of the Ambrosian Manuscript B 21 Inf. (Codex Ambrosianus 7a1),” in *A Facsimile Edition of the Peshiṭta Old Testament Based on Codex Ambrosianus (7a1)* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013), vii–xiii; idem, “Il colofone della Syro-Pṣiṭtā Ambrosiana,” in *Studi orientalistici in Ambrosiana nella cornice del IV centenario, 1609–2009* (Orientalia Ambrosiana 1; Roma: Bulzoni, 2012), 264–88 [preprint version]; Forness, “Narrating History.”

²¹ Ceriani, “Praefatio,” 7. The Ambrosiana Catalogue (available online: <http://ambrosiana.comperio.it/opac/detail/view/ambro:catalog:28063>. Accessed 18 April 2016) says 37 by 27.

survive, in addition to paper guard leaves and a frontispiece, which were added in the 18th century.²³ According to the frontispiece, the codex was originally a single tome codex. The codex was divided into two volumes in 1774, and this is the way we find it in the Ambrosian library today.²⁴

The Codex Ambrosianus is remarkably well kept. It has been rebound several times during the course of its long history.²⁵ The quires and the surviving leaves are mostly intact.²⁶ With the exception of the folio that contained Num 3:23-5:10 (between folios 39 and 40), and the folios containing two sections in Chronicles (I, 12:18-17:25; II, 13:11-20:3), which are missing,²⁷ the codex has generally been considered complete. There are scattered holes in several folios throughout the codex,²⁸ in some folios at the beginning of the codex the edges are worn, and some discolouring caused by mould appear in the upper parts of the last three folios.²⁹

In preparation for the inscription of the text, the codex was pricked,³⁰ and subsequently ruled vertically. There is no horizontal ruling in the codex, which is not to be expected, since Syriac

²² *Quinions* are quires consisting of five bifolios, the most frequently appearing quire format in Syriac manuscript production in the early centuries (Pier G. Borbone, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, and Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, "Syriac Codicology," in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction* (Ed. Alessandro Bausi et al; COMSt; Hamburg: Tredition, 2015) 252-66, at 255); cf., also, William Wright, "Preface," in *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Part III (3 vols.; London: British Museum, 1872), i-xxxiv, at xxvi. The exceptions are quires lamedh-alaph and kaph-dalath which apparently are *quaternia* (consisting of four bifolios).

²³ The title and the first sentences of the frontispiece reads: "Testamentum Vetus Universum cum Historia Machabæorum caractere, et stylo Syro. Sic olim inscripserat Antonius Giggeius, qui primus Orientales Bibliothecæ Ambrosianæ Codices tractavit." In addition to the frontispiece in B 21 Inf., two lists of books are added, one in each of the volumes. The frontispiece and the list of books are on paper.

²⁴ Line two of the frontispiece reads: "Unicum antea Volumen in duo divisum, et religatum est anno MDCCLXXIV."

²⁵ The two volumes are currently bound in modern museum bindings from 2008. A note on f. 330r, left column, says that the codex was rebound in 1416. In addition to the rebinding in 1774, the two volumes were also rebound in 1911 and, finally, in 2008. It may well be, and it is indeed likely, that the codex was rebound on more, unknown, occasions before 1774. Cf., further, Pasini, *La Siro-peshitta dell'Ambrosiana*, 14-15.

²⁶ The quires display some irregularities, but the ones mentioned here have not led to loss of inscribed folios: Quire alaph has possibly lost the first folio, which was probably serving as a guard sheet (the bifolio marking in this quire is mixed up). Quire teth consists of four bifolios and two single folios. Quire yod-dalath, consists of three bifolios and two single folios. Quire yod-gammal consists of four bifolios and a single folio added at the beginning. Quire lamad-beth consists of four bifolios and one single folio added at the end. One folio, the latter half of folio heh, has been cut out of quire kaph-gammal. Likewise, in quires lamad and lamad-dalath, a folio has been cut, in both cases the latter part of bifolio beth. Quire lamad-heh consists of seven folios altogether.

²⁷ Some quires have lost sheets or folios on later stages, leading to a certain loss of inscribed folios. Quire Heh has lost the first folio. Quire kaph-heh has lost one folio, probably the last one. Quire kaph-waw has probably lost the entire bifolio aleph and the second folio (beth), given that it was a *quinion*. Quire kaph-zayin has lost the first folio. The loss of sheets in Chronicles among the outer sheets of the quires may suggest that they disappeared at a time when the binding of the codex was weak.

²⁸ The large majority of these holes are the result of the preparation of the parchment, which means that the holes were there when the pages were inscribed.

²⁹ The Codex Ambrosianus has been repaired on several occasions. Occasionally sheets have been repaired, for instance in f. 202 where a piece of the sheet has been cut out and a repair sheet has been added and overwritten. In some sheets conservators have at some point added bands of parchment to repair a tear in the parchment, for instance in f. 257. These bands were removed during the conservation campaign in 2008 and glued, sometimes aided also by the addition of Japanese paper (Conversation with the conservator, Br Andrea Oltolina, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 17 March 2016). On the conservation of the codex, cf. Cesare Pasini, "Catalogazione e conservazione nel fondo manoscritto dell'Ambrosiana," *ABEI* 8:1 (1999); 46-54, at 49.

³⁰ The pricking is still visible in each of the four corners of the columns in many of the sheets.

codices were generally not ruled horizontally until the 12th-13th century.³¹ The margins are generous, and the text of the writing area is organised into three columns, each containing between 50 and 70 (52—67) lines of text, all reflecting the page design of a *deluxe* codex.

According to the scholarly consensus, the copying of the text of the codex is the work of a single scribe.³² The script is a regular, partly pointed³³ Estrangelo. The inscription of the text is relatively tight and the margins kept straight. The body of text is inscribed in a brownish black ink.

The scribe organised, singled out, and marked the various units of the codex by inscribing book titles and end titles, a system of running titles in the upper margins, as well as the occasional subsection heading. These titles and headings were inscribed in red ink.³⁴ The scribe skipped some lines after each book unit. Subsections are generally singled out simply by the heading, but occasionally also by the skipping of one or a few lines.³⁵ Furthermore, rosettes in various shapes and numbers were used to mark paragraphs, and possibly also larger units, in the body of text. The codex displays some variation in the execution of paragraph marks, and hence the use is not to be regarded as uniform.³⁶

The scribe made his share of mistakes in the copying process. Although some of them remain uncorrected, many of them are corrected, either by the scribe, a reviser involved in the production of the codex, or a later hand, by erasure, by marking the letters and words in question, or by adding missing text³⁷ in margins and intercolumns.³⁸ Later hands are also responsible for some further features of the codex. In some pages where the text has faded, the text has been overwritten.³⁹ In a handful of passages, a later hand has also added vowel signs.⁴⁰ Some additional notes and marks are found in the margins and intercolumns. The marginal notes that are not corrections are mostly additional paragraph marks, notes

³¹ Marlia M. Mango, "The Production of Syriac Manuscripts, 400–700 AD," in *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio* (eds. Guglielmo Cavallo, Giuseppe de Gregorio and Marilena Maniacci; Spoleto, 1991), 161–79, at 174; Borbone et al., "Syriac Codicology," 256.

³² This was not necessarily common in the production of old Syriac manuscripts (cf., Borbone et al., "Syriac Codicology," 263).

³³ According to de Boer it is uncertain when and by whom diacritical and vocalization points were added, and the system used is inconsistent ("Preface," ix).

³⁴ This use of red ink for these purposes is highly common in Syriac manuscripts. Cf. Borbone et al., "Syriac Codicology," 254.

³⁵ Cf., for instance, the line skipped before the "Hymn of Judith" on f. 223r.

³⁶ Cf. Johannes C. de Moor, "Unit Division in the Peshitta of Micah," *Journal for the Aramaic Bible* 1 (1999) 225–247; Konrad D. Jenner, "The Unit Delimitation in the Syriac Text of Daniel and its Consequences for the Interpretation," in Marjo Korpel and Josef Oesch, *Delimitation Criticism: A New Tool in Biblical Scholarship* (Pericope 1, Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000) 105–29; Sebastian P. Brock, "Text Division in the Syriac Translation of Isaiah," in A. Rapoport-Albert and G. Greenberg (eds.) *Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Texts: Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman* (JSOTSup 333, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 200–21; idem, "Text History and Text Division in Peshitta Isaiah," in *The Peshitta: Its Early Text and History* (ed. P.B. Dirksen, M.J. Mulder; Leiden, Brill, 1988) 49–80. Cf., also, Konrad D. Jenner, "De perikopentitels van de geïllustreerde syrische kanselgijbel van Parijs" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 1993).

³⁷ That is, the text an active reader found to be missing.

³⁸ Cf., for instance, the use of two three-dot graphemes to correct a metathesis in f. 263v, col 3, line 33, and an erasure, which has later been overwritten in f. 261r, mid column, line 27, and an erasure that has not been overwritten, e.g., on f. 262v, first column, line 49. Cf., further, Wright, "Preface," xxvii–xxviii; de Boer, "Preface," viii–ix.

³⁹ Cf., e.g., f. 135r, first column.

⁴⁰ For instance in folio 6v, lower mid and upper left column.

highlighting particular passages and contents, or liturgical notes.⁴¹ Compared to many other Syriac codices, however, annotations in this codex are few and, in addition, many of them have later been attempted erased.⁴²

The expanses of skipped lines between the book units, which vary considerably in size, are on many occasions decorated with colourful bands filled with interlaces and geometrical figures.⁴³ Otherwise, the decoration in the Codex Ambrosianus is relatively sparse.⁴⁴ The décor consists mainly of configurations of black and red dots, making up paragraphing graphemes in the body of text in the columns, as well as combinations of dots and dashes, as well as dotted wavy lines, adorning titles, end titles, subsection headings and running titles.⁴⁵

It should be noted that a partial shift in the page layout and unit organisation appears in quire kaph-beth (22). This shift concerns smaller features, which are introduced gradually in this quire. However, the fact that a series of changes takes place in the same section of the codex and, the fact that they are, with some exceptions, consistent throughout the latter part of the codex, makes this shift potentially significant although each shift may be minor *per se*. Among these features is the occurrence of a quadruple-dot grapheme⁴⁶ added to mark out the first line of each column, starting on folio 209r. The rosette, the most consistent paragraph mark of the codex, is accompanied by a two-dot grapheme in the margin or intercolumn on the right hand side of the column, starting at the same page (folio 209r). The décor is missing in many of the open spaces between book units and in the embellishment of end titles, from folio 223v (maybe, 218v) to folio 286r.⁴⁷ The crafting of the quire marks changes too, both the ductus and the decoration. And importantly, the system of running titles of the codex,

⁴¹ Cf., e.g., the set of partly erased liturgical notes in ff. 1v-11v; additional liturgical notes in red ink in ff. 6v and 117v, as well as two notes in black ink on ff. 42v and 44v; a set of notes (partly erased) referring to the Consecration of the Myron running through the codex, starting on f. 8v. Cf. also the ܠܬܠܬ note (“written”), appearing for the first time on f. 6r and continuing throughout. An example of a correction in the form of an addition in the intercolumn is found on f. 8v. Cf. below for the *kephalaia*-marks and additional paragraph marks.

⁴² Cf., in particular, the attempted erased liturgical notes in the margins and intercolumns of folios 1v-11v. These partly erased notes, which are added by a second hand, are likely to have been inscribed and erased relatively early, at least they were both inscribed and erased before the inscription of the *kephalaia*-marks, which are found in large parts of the first part of the codex (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, but not in Deuteronomy, Psalms, Kings, Proverbs, Wisdom of Solomon, Sapientia Magna, Qohelet, Jeremiah (but cf. folio 171v, first intercolumn). The *kephalaia*-marks were added by a later hand, probably imitating their use in C 313 Inf (Ceriani, “Praefatio,” 8; Brock, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 47-48). Cf. f. 7v, second intercolumn, where the *kephalaia*-mark has been moved slightly to the right because its preferred space was already occupied by the erased note.

⁴³ Yellow, red and green are the most frequently appearing colours in the bands.

⁴⁴ Syriac codices are generally relatively sparsely decorated (Mango, “Patrons and Scribes,” 3. Cf. further Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, “Syriac Decorated and Illuminated Manuscripts: A Codicological Approach,” in *Manuscripta Syriaca: des sources de première main* [ed. Françoise Briquel Chatonnet and Muriel Debié; Cahiers d’études syriaques 4; Paris: Geuthner, 2015], 321-41, at 339, for a more comprehensive study). The decorations are not likely to be the work of the scribe, but were probably added later. Cf., for instance, the décor before and after 4 Maccabees which contains the title of the book (ff. 313v and 320r). This additional book title, embedded in the décor, is clearly by another hand.

⁴⁵ Borbone et al, “Syriac Codicology,” 259-60. Balicka-Witakowska, “Syriac Decorated and Illuminated Manuscripts,” 325-27.

⁴⁶ Cf. Borbone et al, “Syriac Codicology,” 257. However, the use of the grapheme in the Codex Ambrosianus is not consistent with their general description of its use in Syriac manuscripts.

⁴⁷ Note also that in the latter part of the codex there are several examples of unfinished rosettes.

which is used consistently from quire alaph to quire kaph-alaph, disappears, to reappear only in quire lamad-gammal.⁴⁸

The Provenance and History of the Codex

Unfortunately, the Codex Ambrosianus does not contain a colophon or other notes providing the date of completion of the copying process.⁴⁹ The scholarly consensus holds that the codex was produced in the late 6th or early 7th century.⁵⁰ The main arguments for a 6th or 7th century dating are codicological and palaeographical. First, the codex is large compared to most other Syriac codices and, the text is organised in three columns. As William H.P Hatch, William Wright, and Marlia M. Mango have argued, Syriac codices of this format and organisation of the writing area are not commonly found after the mid-7th century, although some exceptions should be noted.⁵¹ Second, the Estrangelo script of the codex has also been dated paleographically to the 6th-7th century.⁵²

Some additional features could be mentioned. These features do not help us establish a more accurate dating, but they all tend to corroborate the date of the codex. The ruling of the page and organisation of the quires both suggest an early dating.⁵³ And as has been pointed out repeatedly before, the books of the codex contain a pre-textus receptus form of the texts.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the fact that the codex neither contains the order of books of the Beth Mawtbē

⁴⁸ For this latter point, cf. Forness, "Narrating History," 45. Note however, that the top margin of f. 259r, located in the segment that lacks running titles, contains an erasure that might have been a running title, alternatively a preliminary working note added by a binder. The erased area is located on the first folio (the recto page) of quire kaph-heth, and hence situated where running titles would normally appear. Traces of letters are still visible, but difficult to read with the bare eye. The appearance of this erasure is interesting to scholars of 2 Baruch because the erasure is situated in the top margin of the copy of 2 Bar 20-21, and would probably have contained a title by which a binder would recognize this work and thus order the quires containing this book in the correct order. Hence, this erased area would potentially give us access to an identification of the book. A discussion of this erasure will appear in my work in progress-book, *The Transmission and Transformation of 2 Baruch*.

⁴⁹ Compared to many other manuscript traditions, Syriac codices relatively often contain colophons. According to Mango, 85 of 300 Syriac manuscripts produced before 640 contain colophons/notes ("Production," 165; idem, "Patrons and Scribes," 3. Note that Mango does not seem to discriminate between colophons and additional notes in this overview). Brock has pointed out that many biblical manuscripts do not have colophons providing the date of the completion of production (Brock, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 44) and, it should be noted that although many manuscripts may originally have included a colophon, it may have been lost due to its vulnerable location at the end of a codex (Borbone et al., "Syriac Codicology," 263-4).

⁵⁰ Cf., e.g., Ceriani, *Le edizioni e i manoscritti*; idem, "Prefatio," 7; Charles, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, xxii-xxiii; Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch I*, 33-35; de Boer, "Preface," vii; Sven Dederig, "Apocalypse of Baruch," in *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version 4.3* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), i-iv, 1-50, at ii; Pasini, *La Siro-peshitta dell'Ambrosiana*, 14, 18-19; Debié, "Les apocalypses apocryphes syriaques," 114; Brock, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 115; Vergani, "Introduction," x. A 9th to 10th century dating was also suggested early on, but this hypothesis has later been rejected (G.B. de Rossi, *Variae Lectiones Veteris Testamenti* [Vol. 1, Paris, 1784], clix, in Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch I*, 34 note 1).

⁵¹ William H.P. Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Boston, 1946), 13-14, 45; Wright, "Preface," xxvii; Mango, "Production," 175-76. Cf., also, Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch I*, 35 and Borbone et al., "Syriac Codicology," 258. There are some notable later exceptions, for instance the 12th century Cambridge Ms Oo. I. 1,2.

⁵² Cf., Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch I*, 34; [Willem Baars], *List of Old Testament Peshitta Manuscripts (Preliminary Issue)* (ed. Peshitta Institute Leiden University; Leiden: Brill, 1961); Pasini, *La Siro-peshitta dell'Ambrosiana*, 19; Brock, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 42; Vergani, "Il colofone," 282.

⁵³ Horizontal ruling is not found in Syriac codices until the 13th century. The quire composition (*quinions*), were common in the 6th/7th century (Mango, "Production," 163, 167). Note however, that although Mango suggests that quire numbers were normally not decorated until after 640 ("Production," 177), the quire marks of the Codex Ambrosianus are indeed decorated.

⁵⁴ Cf., e.g., Brock, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 46; Vergani, "Introduction," x.

collection,⁵⁵ nor the Odes as a discrete unit in its own right, suggests a dating before the 8th/9th century.⁵⁶

The origin of the Codex Ambrosianus is unfortunately not known. We do not know where it was copied, nor the identity of the persons and institutions involved in the manufacturing process.⁵⁷ Neither do we know who commissioned the codex, nor the explicit purpose for which it was produced. However, it has been suggested that the codex may have been produced in Mesopotamia, and more specifically that it originates, or at least at one point was brought from, Takrit, since a donor note in the mid column of folio 330r informs us that the donor, Abu Ali Zechariah, was a Takritan, or a benefactor belonging to a community of Takritans living in Egypt.⁵⁸ An owner note situated to the left of the donor note adds that the codex was once in the possession of a certain Abdelmessiah of Damascus, and hence Damascus has also been mentioned as a possible place of origin.⁵⁹ Anyhow, as suggested by the donor note in the mid column, the codex was brought to the Dayr al-Suryan, the Monastery of the Syrians, in the Wadi al-Natrun in Egypt, probably during the first decade of the 11th century as one among five manuscripts dedicated to the Monastery in, or shortly after, the year 1007⁶⁰ by the same donor, Abu Ali Zechariah. As suggested by another ornamental owner note on folio 1r, which also includes a curse against thieves, the codex was kept there and considered the property of the monastery.

Finally, a more recent Latin note on folio 330v says that “Codex hic avectus ex Aegypto, emptus a Monast[er]io S. Mariæ Matris Dei in deserto Schytin.”⁶¹ A similar expression appears in the frontispiece.⁶² According to the Catalogue of the Ambrosian Library, the codex

⁵⁵ The collection known as the Beth Mawtbē (“sessions”) is special to the Syriac tradition, and are found particularly in East Syriac manuscripts. The collection contained Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Qohelet, Ruth, Songs, Job and Ben Sira (Cf. Willem Baars, “On the Order of Books in a Beth Mawtabhe,” (Peshitta Institute Communications V), VT 17 (1967):132-33; van Peursen, “Diffusion des Manuscrits,” 197, *idem*, “Introduction,” 3).

⁵⁶ The Beth Mawtbē is known from manuscripts dating from the 9th century and onwards. Likewise, the earliest surviving manuscripts containing Canticles/Odes as a distinct book unit stem from the 8th century. Cf. H. Schneider, “Canticles or Odes,” *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version*, Part IV, fascicle 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), i-xvi; 1-35, at ii.

⁵⁷ For a broader overview of the known origins of early Syriac manuscripts, confer Mango, “Patrons and Scribes,” 3-6, 8.

⁵⁸ Cf., e.g., Pasini, *La Siro-peshitta dell'Ambrosiana*, 17; Vergani, “Il colofone,” 267, 272, 286; *idem*, “Introduction,” ix; Forness, “Narrating History,” 67. The general contact and transfer of manuscripts between Mesopotamia and Egypt is well documented. Cf. e.g., Wright, “Preface,” iii-v; Sebastian Brock, “Without Mushē of Nisibis, Where Would We Be? Some Reflections on the Transmission of Syriac Literature,” in *Symposium Syriacum VIII* (ed. R. Edibed and H. Teule) *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56 (2004), 15-24.

⁵⁹ It is neither clear at what point the codex might have been in the ownership of Abdelmessiah, nor of the assumed owner whose name is erased in this note. Pasini, *La Siro-peshitta dell'Ambrosiana*, 18; cf., further, Ceriani, “Praefatio,” 7; Vergani, “Colofone,” 279-80; Vergani, “Introduction,” x.

⁶⁰ The other four manuscripts are British Library (BL) Add 12146, 12147, 12148 and 12149, described by Wright (*Catalogue* III, 258-269). According to the colophons in Add 12148 and Add 12149, 1007 refers to the year these manuscripts were finished, not the date of the donation to the monastery. However, the manuscripts may of course have been donated shortly after their completion. Cf. further, Haefeli, *Die Peschitta des alten Testamentes*, 77; Pasini, *La Siro-peshitta dell'Ambrosiana*, 17.

⁶¹ The note is probably penned by Antonio Giggi, Doctor of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (d.1634) (Wright, “Preface,” v; Ceriani, “Praefatio,” 8).

⁶² The third sentence of the frontispiece says: “Codex avectus ex Aegypto, et emptus ab Scetensi Coenobio S. Mariæ Matris Dei in solitudine Nitriæ.” A note in the margin explains that the source of this information is Ioseph S. Assemani, pages 6 and 11 of the praefatio to *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, as well as Stephanus Evodius, *Acta Martyrium Orientalium*, praefatio, page 31. The existence of the manuscript in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana was

Chronological Ordering, Biblical Figures, the Fall of Jerusalem, and the Tribes of Israel

As pointed out in the above presentation of the codex, the Codex Ambrosianus is generally referred to in scholarship as the oldest surviving Syriac Old Testament *pandect* (full bible manuscript) known to us. The general title of the Codex Ambrosianus is found in the form of a superscript title in the upper margin of folio 1v. This title tells us how those who produced the codex identified it.⁶⁴ The title of the codex reads, ܐܠܗܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ “By the strength of our Lord we begin to write this pandect of the whole Old [Testament] and of the New [Testament].” The first part of the title, “By the strength of the Lord we begin to write,” is formulaic and highly common in Syriac codices.⁶⁵ The use of the Greek loanword “*pandect*” is less common, and serves as a main indication of the format of the codex. The title further suggests that the codex contains the full Old Testament, as well as the New Testament.⁶⁶ The New Testament, however, is not part of the codex, at least not in the way it has come down to us, and it should be noted that it has occasionally been argued that the end part of the original codex might be missing.⁶⁷

The books included in the extant codex are, in their order of inscription and in established nomenclature,⁶⁸

B 21 Inf	B 21 Bis Inf
Genesis	Epistles of Jeremiah and of Baruch
Exodus	Ezekiel
Leviticus	Twelve Prophets
Numbers	Daniel, Bel, Dragon
Deuteronomy	Ruth
Job	Susanna
Joshua	Esther
Judges	Judith
Samuel	Wisdom of Ben Sira
Psalms	Chronicles
Kings	2 Baruch, the Epistle of Baruch
Proverbs	4 Ezra
Wisdom of Solomon	Ezra-Nehemiah
Qohelet	1 Maccabees
Song of Songs	2 Maccabees
Isaiah	3 Maccabees
Jeremiah, Lamentations	4 Maccabees
	Josephus, Jewish War, book 6

The Codex Ambrosianus includes both features that are common in a 6th/7th century biblical codex and features that are more unusual. On the one hand, the codex contains most of the books you might expect to find in a Syriac Old Testament pandect. Furthermore, some books that are known as two books in other manuscript traditions are copied as one book in the Codex Ambrosianus. This concerns 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Daniel-Bel-Dragon. However, this is not particular to this codex. Rather, it is typical for Syriac Old Testament manuscripts.⁶⁹

Compared to other Syriac pandects produced in the period from the 7th to the 13th century, one might infer that there are books that are missing from the Codex Ambrosianus. From such a comparative perspective one could expect to find Tobit, the Prayer of Manasseh, Psalms of Solomon, Apocryphal Psalms, Canticles/Odes and 1 (3) Ezra.⁷⁰ Some of these omissions can readily be explained, for instance by the early age and by the overall plan of the codex, to which I return below.⁷¹

⁶⁸ This figure reflects the current division of the codex into two volumes, but it should be kept in mind that the division is a modern one.

⁶⁹ de Boer, "Introduction," xii. Note that many Syriac biblical manuscripts would also copy Jeremiah-Lamentations-Epistles of Jeremiah and of Baruch as one book unit. In the Codex Ambrosianus the organisation of the Jeremianic material is a matter of discussion, since the shift between Lamentations and the Epistles of Jeremiah and of Baruch concurs with the shift from quire yod-heth to quire teth. The most likely suggestion is that in this particular codex the material is organized into two separate units, first, since the two units have different running titles and, second, since no general end title referring to Jeremiah occurs after the three epistles. Compare the end of Twelve Prophets (f. 206v); the end of Daniel (f. 213r); and the end of Maccabees (f. 330r).

⁷⁰ De Boer, "Preface," vii-viii; Van Peursen, "Introduction," 3.

⁷¹ As pointed out above, the Codex Ambrosianus should for instance not be expected to include Canticles/Odes as an autonomous entity. The earliest surviving manuscripts containing Canticles/Odes as a unit stem from the 9th century, and hence, the expectation of finding it in a 6th/7th century codex would be anachronistic.

On the other hand, some features of the codex are indeed more surprising. The most striking feature, which has been pointed out in scholarship on several occasions already, is the fact that the Codex Ambrosianus contains three books that are seldom found in Syriac biblical codices: 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra and Jewish War, book 6. As the above overview shows, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra are found in the latter part of the Codex Ambrosianus, following after Ben Sira and Chronicles, and before Ezra-Nehemiah. The sixth book of Jewish War, located at the very end of the codex, is attested in another, assumedly biblical, manuscript as well (Ms DS Syr 9) but is otherwise rarely seen.⁷² 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra are not found in any other known Syriac Old Testament codices.⁷³

Another unexpected feature that deserves mention is the fact that the Epistle of Baruch is copied twice, both as a part of 2 Baruch and as part of the Epistles of Jeremiah and of Baruch. The two copies share much of the text,⁷⁴ but are identified, organised and contextualised differently in the codex. Finally, the order of the books in the codex may certainly come as a surprise, displaying several uncommon traits, for instance the location of Job after Deuteronomy and the placement of the Psalter after Samuel. These unexpected features, however surprising, are in fact important to the understanding of the place of 2 Baruch in the Codex Ambrosianus and will be discussed in the following.

When the aim is to understand the inclusion and location of 2 Baruch in the Codex Ambrosianus, the first feature that deserves our attention is the overall order of the books. As pointed out above, the order of the books in this codex differs both from other early Syriac codices as well as from biblical manuscripts produced in other manuscript traditions. However, as among others Sebastian Brock, Emidio Vergani, and Philip Forness have noted, the organisation of the codex and its selection of books make sense if we understand them as ordered chronologically, with primary reference to the main protagonists of the books in question.⁷⁵ With some exceptions,⁷⁶ the books of the Codex Ambrosianus are ordered by reference to the place of the main figure and the storyline connected to him or her in the extended biblical narrative. As Brock has pointed out, the otherwise unfamiliar location of Psalms between Samuel and Kings, for instance, makes sense when we keep in mind that they are ascribed to David. Likewise, the location of Job after the Pentateuch reflects a tradition of associating Job with Jobab, placing him in the time of the patriarchs.⁷⁷

⁷² According to Bogaert, Josephus's Jewish War is also mentioned as part of an Old Testament by 'Abdisho b. Berika (*Apocalypse de Baruch*, 38 note 2). See also Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn 1922), 26 note 6.

⁷³ Excerpts from 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra do appear in later lectionary manuscripts as readings from the Old Testament (Cf. BL Add 14686, Add 14687, Ms DS Syr 33, and Ms 77 of the A. Konat Library in Kerala). 4 Ezra appears also in BL Add 14736. Cf. Lied, "Nachleben and Textual Identity."

⁷⁴ According to The Textual Comparison Module on Logos Bible Software, accessed on Logos Bible Software 18 April 2016, the two copies share 81,2% of the text. Thanks are due to Matthew P. Monger for his assistance.

⁷⁵ Brock, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 43-44, 117; Forness, "Narrating History," 57-58; Vergani, "Introduction," x. Cf., also, Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1985), 195 and Michael van Esbroeck, "Les versions orientales de la Bible: une orientation bibliographique," in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia* (ed. Jože Krašovec; JSOTSup 289; Sheffield, 1998), 399-507, at 487.

⁷⁶ Note for instance, the locations of the books of Ruth, Susanna, Esther, and Judith. Their collocation and place in the codex probably reflects the fact that they circulated together as the Book of Women in Syriac traditions (Cf., Forness, "Narrating History," 50).

⁷⁷ Brock, *Bible in Syriac Tradition*, 117.

the codex know the genre of the book that follows and introduces its main figure, Baruch bar Neriah. The title of 4 Ezra reads .ܐܠܟܬܐ ܕܥܙܪܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܒܪܚܐ “The Book of Ezra the Scribe, Who is Called Salathiel” (folio 267r). Just like the title of 2 Baruch, the main focus in the title of 4 Ezra is the protagonist of the book, Ezra, who is described both by his office as scribe and by reference to his other name, Salathiel (cf., 4 Ezra 3:1). As has already been pointed out by Brock, and in light of the larger chronological context of the codex and its use of ascription of books to biblical figures, it is likely that Baruch and Ezra and their location in the shared biblical narrative were important tools in the paratextual communication of biblical chronology. Baruch was in all due likelihood known as Jeremiah’s scribe, operating during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Ezra is likely to have been known as, e.g., the scribe who aided the exiled people in Babylon. By referring explicitly to these names in the titles, biblical narratives associated with them would probably be invoked and the location of the books in the codex would seem chronologically relevant.⁸¹

Hence, summing up the finds so far, based on an initial exploration of the order of the books in the codex and the titles of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, it is likely that 2 Baruch was included in the Codex Ambrosianus due to its narrative focus on the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, as well as the destiny of the tribes of Israel. The book is located where it is due to its placement in the chronology of the larger biblical story line, and this chronological location is communicated by means of the reference to its protagonist, Baruch bar Neriah. Hence, it is likely that the first hypothesis may fruitfully shed light on the place of 2 Baruch in the Codex Ambrosianus.

Exploring End Titles: Connecting Book Units, *Esdra alpha* and the Book of Baruch

The second hypothesis presented in the introduction proposed that 2 Baruch was copied in the Codex Ambrosianus as the (Greek) Book of Baruch. In order to discuss this hypothesis, the end titles of the books of the Codex Ambrosianus deserve attention. As has been pointed out in the above presentation of the end title of Jewish War, book six, these paratextual features may provide helpful information as to the role the book unit in question is ascribed in the context of the codex.

In the following, I will first look closer at the end titles of 4 Ezra and the sixth book of Jewish War. These books are the other two unexpected books of the Codex Ambrosianus and studying them provides comparative material, as well as a point of departure, for understanding how those who produced the codex fitted these books into the larger context. Second, I will discuss whether the end title of 2 Baruch may help us to further understand the inclusion and function of 2 Baruch in the codex.

In the above description of the chronological scope of the codex, I referred to the general end title of the Maccabean corpus, which describes Jewish War, book 6, as a discourse on the final destruction of Jerusalem. As pointed out in that description, this general end title reflects the overall plan of the Codex Ambrosianus. However, this end title may also provide us with an

⁸¹ It is possible that the titles are not the invention of those who produced the codex, but that the books were entitled as such because this was the way in which they were already known. This does not rule out the possibility that the titles were also adding/sharing chronological information, serving as reading aids for those who engaged with the codex.

indication as to how paratextual features are used in order to tie an otherwise unexpected book to an adjacent corpus, and this is relevant now. The end title explicitly refers to Jewish War as ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “the fifth”, and hence suggests that this is the fifth unit in a row of related units, linking it to the preceding four. This is a link and an identification that is repeated also in the running title on folios 328v and 329r, which says ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “The fifth discourse relating to the last destruction of Jerusalem.” The running title on folios 323v and 324r, however, adds yet another aspect to the identification of the book unit that further relates it to the other four volumes. This running title identifies it as ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “The fifth discourse of Josephus on the destruction of Jerusalem.” In this running title, the association of this book with Josephus is made explicit, and probably also associating all the five discourses with him. The link between a Maccabean book and a Josephus/Josippus is found in other Syriac manuscripts as well, which suggests that the ascription of the corpus, or one or more of its books, to this figure is not unique to the Codex Ambrosianus.⁸² Summing up, in the Codex Ambrosianus, Jewish War, book 6, is linked to the other four Maccabean books by explicitly being identified as “the fifth”; by the reference to Josephus; by being copied in the immediate proximity of the other four; and by being followed by a general end title that through its very existence and location signals that these five volumes belong together.

Now, when we turn to 4 Ezra, it becomes evident that those who produced the codex have made a similar move, binding 4 Ezra paratextually to the book unit that follows immediately after it, Ezra-Nehemiah. As noted above, 4 Ezra is identified as “The Book of Ezra the Scribe, Who is Called Salathiel” in the title on folio 267r. The end title, however, reads ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “Ended is the first discourse of Ezra” (folio 276v). 4 Ezra is followed by Ezra-Nehemiah on folio 277r, and interestingly to the present discussion, Ezra-Nehemiah is entitled ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “The Second Discourse, of the Same Ezra.” The end of Ezra-Nehemiah, moreover, is followed by the end title ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “Ended is the Writing of the Book of Ezra the Scribe” on folio 286v. Probably, this end title should be understood as a general end title, serving to mark the end of a two volume-book of Ezra and, 4 Ezra and Ezra-Nehemiah are seen as the first and second discourse of Ezra, respectively.

Thus, the paratextual features of 4 Ezra and Ezra-Nehemiah display a similar strategy as the one found in Jewish War, book 6/5 Maccabees: the book that might appear to be an unexpected addition is paratextually related to an adjacent book in the codex. Hence, two out of three “odd books” are identified in general end titles to their accompanying books. It should be noted, also, that the linking function is served precisely by these end titles, but not by the introductory title of either book.⁸³

Now, will the end title of 2 Baruch provide us with a similar solution? The end title of 2 Baruch reads ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “Ended is the Book of Baruch bar Neriah.” Unlike the end titles of 4 Ezra and Jewish War, book 6, this end title does not provide any explicit

⁸² Cf., e.g., Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) Ms 11, ff. 329v and 337r and Ms. Egerton 704, f. 351v, which associate 4 Maccabees with Josephus. Cf also Ms DS Syr 9, f. 31r, associating Josephus with 3 Maccabees. Cf. van Peursen, “La diffusion,” 202; Forness, “Narrating History,” 51-52; Sebastian P. Brock and Lucas van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)* (OLA 227; Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 42-43.

⁸³ The title of Jewish War, book 6, is ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ “The Discourse on the Last Destruction of Jerusalem.”

paratextual link, neither to the book unit that precedes it (Chronicles), nor to the book unit that follows it (4 Ezra, alternatively understood as the two-volume unit The Book of Ezra the Scribe).

However, the end title of 2 Baruch may still provide us with yet another key to the understanding of the inclusion of this book in the codex. We have just seen that 4 Ezra and Ezra-Nehemiah are identified as the first and second discourse of Ezra. In the book *The Syriac Version of Ezra-Nehemiah: Manuscripts and Editions, Translation Techniques and Its Use in Textual Criticism*, Claudio Balzaretto has suggested that this identification may be fruitfully explained as a reference to the Greek tradition of including two books of Ezra in an Old Testament. Since Ezra-Nehemiah was considered one book among Syriac Christians, one more book of Ezra was still needed. According to Balzaretto, “[...], the necessity of always publishing the two books of Ezra, as in the Greek tradition, is confirmed by the fact that in 7a1 the place of the translation of Esdra alpha is occupied by the translation of 4 Ezra.” In a footnote he contends, further, that “[p]robably the scribe of 7a1 did not have available the translation of 1 Esd but was aware of the arrangement of books according to the LXX.”⁸⁴ Hence, following Balzaretto, those who produced the Codex Ambrosianus allowed 4 Ezra to stand in for 1 Ezra, or they assumed that 4 Ezra was *Esdra alpha*.

Turning to 2 Baruch, scholars have long argued that both 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch were at some point translated from Greek into Syriac.⁸⁵ The indications that this is correct are strong. However, besides being translated from Greek, paratextual information in the Codex Ambrosianus also renders it likely that those who produced the codex *conceived of* 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra as books stemming from a Greek context, and possibly also modelled on a perceived Greek *biblical* context. As pointed out above and drawing on Balzaretto, it is likely that 4 Ezra is standing in for the Greek *Esdra alpha* in the Codex Ambrosianus, fueled by the knowledge that in the Greek tradition there should be two books of Ezra in an Old Testament. Moreover, the second part of the title of 2 Baruch, “translated from Greek to Syriac,” may not (only) be a reference to the actual circumstances of translation. It may also be a reference to the conception its copyists engaged about this book, whether this title originated with this particular codex or not: this is a book that was assumedly known from, possibly authenticated by, and continuing to be associated with, the Greek context.⁸⁶

In light of this possible conception of a Greek link, we should turn our attention to the end title of 2 Baruch again. Whereas the title of 2 Baruch renders it an apocalypse, a book of revelation, associated with Baruch, the end title simply says that this is the end of the book of Baruch bar Neriah. Hence, it is possible that those who produced the codex understood/misunderstood 2 Baruch, or let 2 Baruch stand in for, another book associated with Baruch, namely the Book of Baruch. The Book of Baruch was known from the Greek tradition, where it was commonly copied with Jeremiah, Lamentations and the Epistle of

⁸⁴ Claudio Balzaretto, *The Syriac Version of Ezra-Nehemiah: Manuscripts and Editions, Translation Technique and Its Use in Textual Criticism* (Trans. Michael Tait; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2013), 17, and 17 note 42.

⁸⁵ Charles, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, viii; xliii-xliv; Violet, *Apokalypsen*, lxii-lxvi; Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch I*, 353-55; Matthias Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel: Reading Second Baruch in Context* (TSAJ 142; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 22. Further, Violet argues that 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra were translated by the same translator (*Apokalypsen*, lx-lxi).

⁸⁶ Similar information is provided in the title of the Psalter, which says that the psalms were ܡܬܬܪܝܡ ܡܢ ܗܒܪܝܝܬ ܒܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ “translated from Hebrew into Greek, and from Greek into Syriac” (f. 99r).

Anyhow, the point that matters to the present discussion is the fact that in Peshiṭṭa manuscript traditions 1 Baruch is never identified as the Book of Baruch. It is consistently, and already in the earliest available manuscripts,⁹¹ identified as the Second Epistle of Baruch, implying that it was in all due likelihood conceived of as such at the time when the Codex Ambrosianus was copied. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that the (First) Epistle of Baruch was copied twice in the Codex Ambrosianus. This doubling makes sense if we assume that both contexts of copying and both unit identifications were already well established at the time the codex was produced, and hence the scribe decided to include both.

Summing up, the implication of this argument is that there was in fact no other Peshiṭṭa book laying claim to the cognitive placeholder, the Book of Baruch. To a milieu of production familiar with (but not necessarily with detailed knowledge of) the Greek biblical traditions, 2 Baruch might fill this open slot. Just like 4 Ezra is cast in the role as (the Greek) *Esdra alpha*, 2 Baruch features in the codex as the (Greek) Book of Baruch.

2 Baruch and 4 Ezra: Copied from a Common Vorlage?

The third and final hypothesis now deserves our attention: is it likely that 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra were copied from the same Vorlage, and hence that the location, and possibly also the very inclusion, of 2 Baruch could also be explained as a result of the exemplar available to the scribe?

As pointed out in the introductory description, the Codex Ambrosianus is a pandect. Pandects were generally rare at the time when the Codex Ambrosianus was produced. They were expensive to produce, they would have been bulky and difficult to use, and due their size the spine of such codices would easily break. In fact, only four Syriac pandects from the 6th/7th to the 13th century survive until today.⁹² Given the fact that the Codex Ambrosianus is a pandect, and thus a relative rarity in this period of Syriac manuscript culture, it is likely that those who took part in the production of the codex would have had to consult a selection of Vorlagen – applying the more commonly found biblical codices containing one book, pairs of books, or a group of biblical books⁹³ – and that hints of this assumed condition of copying may still show in the codex as it has come down to us.

The stratum of the Codex Ambrosianus in which 2 Baruch is found consists of books that share a common feature: in the period before the 9th century they were all circulating either alone or in pandects.⁹⁴ In other words, the books copied in the immediate proximity of 2 Baruch were neither circulating with other books, nor were they conceived of as parts of collections and copied as such in dedicated, bound codices. Before the appearance of the Beth Mawtbe collection in the 9th century, Ben Sira appears only in pandects and in separate codices.⁹⁵ Likewise, based on the material available to us up until the 13th century, Chronicles, as well as Ezra-Nehemiah, would also appear either in pandects or copied as the only book in

⁹¹ Cf. BL Add 17105.

⁹² Cf., Brock, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 115; van Peursen, “Diffusion des manuscrits,” 195-96.

⁹³ Cf. Brock, “Versions syriaques,” 29; *ibid*, *Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 44-45.

⁹⁴ Baars, “Order of Books,” 132-33; Forness, “Narrating History,” 56.

⁹⁵ Outside of the Codex Ambrosianus, Ben Sira is also found in BnF Ms Syr 341, BL Add 12142, and Cambridge T.-S. 12743.

a bound codex.⁹⁶ Hence, this particular stratum of the Codex Ambrosianus brings together three books that are attested to circulate alone, and adds 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra. This general situation suggests that the scribe has probably used different Vorlagen for these different books in this particular section, and we may be relatively confident that the scribe did not copy 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra from the same exemplar as Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah. However, since we have no contextual information about the Syriac circulation of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra before the 6th/7th century, we do not know if the scribe would have copied them from the same Vorlage or from separate Vorlagen.

On the one hand, it could be argued that the most likely situation was that these two books were also circulating alone, just like the other books in this part of the codex, and that the scribe copied them in proximity to each other due to their overlapping contents and thus their place in the overall chronological plan of the codex. On the other hand, some features may indicate that the two books could have been copied from the same Vorlage. As pointed out in the above description of the codicological features of the Codex Ambrosianus, the second part of the codex displays a slightly different page layout than the first part. While many of the similarities of layout shared by 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra may be explained simply by their joint placement in this latter part of the codex, two features pertaining to the paratextual layers and the text organisation of the two book units may imply that this is not necessarily a fully satisfactory solution.

A first indication is the similarities of the format of the titles of the two books, presented above. Unlike the books that frame them in the codex, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra are both identified by reference to their main protagonists. Both protagonists are described with a full name, and in the case of 4 Ezra, by an additional name, drawing attention to the figure with which the book is associated. And while this may be interpreted as part of the larger strategy of producing a chronologically organized codex, as I have suggested above, it may also indicate that these two books were seen as related, or that they were in fact copied from the same exemplar.

A second feature concerns the marking of prayers as subunits in 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra. Three prayers of Baruch are singled out and identified with headings in red ink in 2 Baruch, on folios 259r, 261v and 263r. Two prayers of Ezra, similarly marked, are found in the copy of 4 Ezra, on folios 268v and 272r, respectively. Finding prayers marked with headings in red ink in a Syriac manuscript is in itself not surprising. Rather, this is a relatively common feature⁹⁷ found even in the earliest surviving Syriac biblical manuscripts.⁹⁸ In the Codex Ambrosianus we find, in the addition to the prayers of Baruch and Ezra, The “Prayer of Hannah” on folio 82r,⁹⁹ the “Prayer of Jeremiah” on folio 175v, the “Prayer of Jonah” on folio 199v, the “Prayer of Habakkuk” on folio 202r, and the “Prayer of Hananiah and His Friends” on folio 208r. Altogether ten prayers are thus singled out and identified with headings in red ink in this codex. The feature that is interesting is not the fact that the prayer headings are there, but rather the amount and frequency of identified prayers in 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra: five out of ten

⁹⁶ In addition to the Codex Ambrosianus, both Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah appear in BnF Ms Syr 341, Florence Med.Laur., Or. 58 and in Cambridge Ms Oo. I. 1,2. Ezra-Nehemiah appears also, as the only book copied, in BL Or. 8732. Chronicles is found, alone, in BL Add 17104.

⁹⁷ Cf. e.g., Cambridge Ms Oo. I. 1,2 f. 161r.

⁹⁸ Cf., e.g., BL Add 17105, f. 115v.

⁹⁹ The full title reads “The prayer of Hannah, lection for the Great Sunday” (f. 82r, first column, lines 14-15), suggesting that this is one of the few examples of liturgical titles inscribed in the columns of the codex.

prayers in the codex are found in 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra. Moreover, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra are the only books in the entire codex that contain more than one prayer ascribed to the same figure within the confines of one and the same book. This is uncommon and, it is noteworthy, then, that these two books are located next to each other.

Two other examples of scribal practice in the Codex Ambrosianus suggest that the scribe was indeed affected by what he saw in his exemplar and may thus strengthen the hypothesis. The first example is the layout and text organisation of Chronicles. Chronicles differs markedly from both the preceding and the following book in the way paragraph and subunit division are carried out. Whereas the paragraph division in the books of the Codex Ambrosianus is generally marked by the use of rosettes, crafted in black and red ink, and in the second part of the codex also by the use of the two-dot grapheme in the margin and intercolumn to the right of the column, Chronicles contain neither of these, displaying the use of other, alternative paragraphing mark, for instance, a series of black dots.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the paragraph marks in this book are generally very few¹⁰¹ and, unlike many other books, not a single subsection is marked out with subsection headings. The page layout of Chronicles, thus, stands out from the rest of the codex, adding to the likelihood that Chronicles was indeed copied from another Vorlage than Ben Sira on the one end and 2 Baruch on the other (as suggested above), as well as to the fact that although the scribe of the codex was relatively consistent in the way he inscribed the texts, he was not immune to the peculiarities of the exemplars.

Pointing to the same end are the occurrences of the occasional liturgical titles in the columns containing the body of text of Job, Proverbs and Samuel.¹⁰² Although the Codex Ambrosianus in general does not contain liturgical titles in its running text, a handful of such titles do occur in these particular books.¹⁰³ A likely explanation, suggested already by Ceriani,¹⁰⁴ is that the scribe copied what he saw in his Vorlage, although these features were not in agreement with the general layout of the codex he was producing.¹⁰⁵ As such, this would be yet another indication that features found in the Vorlage would affect the copying of a book.

The paratextual and organisational features of the copies of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra in the Codex Ambrosianus pointing in the direction of a singular Vorlage are far from conclusive. It can for instance not be ruled out that the two books may simply have been understood as belonging together due to their shared contents, the chronological focus of their narratives, or as the result of a conception of the two books' common history of transmission and that this is the reason why they are copied together in the codex.¹⁰⁶

A hypothesis of a shared, materialized, circulation is however interesting when we take *later* known development into account. All later Syriac lectionary manuscripts that include excerpts from 2 Baruch also include excerpts from 4 Ezra. Furthermore, the single Arabic codex that

¹⁰⁰ Cf., e.g., 243v, first column, line 39.

¹⁰¹ This lack of paragraphing marks has inspired several later hands to add additional paragraph marks, of different types, in the margins. Cf. for instance f. 241r.

¹⁰² Jenner, "Perikopentitels," 460.

¹⁰³ See, ff. 61v, 62v, 63r, 82r, 132v, 133v, 135r (Jenner, "Perikopentitels," 455-56, 460).

¹⁰⁴ Ceriani, "Praefatio," 8.

¹⁰⁵ Ceriani, "Praefatio," 8. Cf. Konrad D. Jenner, "A Review of the Methods by Which Syriac Biblical and Related Manuscripts Have Been Described and Analysed: Some Preliminary Remarks," *ARAM* (1993): 255-66, at 256-57.

¹⁰⁶ It should be noted, though, that from a comparative point of view these factors would typically be the factors that prompted scribes to copy books together or adjacent to each other in a manuscript.

preserves a copy of 2 Baruch includes two books only – these books are, precisely, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra.¹⁰⁷ This implies that in the period after the production of the Codex Ambrosianus the two books were indeed circulating together. Whether this was already the case before the 6th/7th century, or whether we should rather assume that the co-locations of the two books in codices such as the Ambrosianus would in fact have contributed to the *shaping* of a conception among Syriac and Arabic Christians of the two books belonging together, is for another paper. The important point to the present discussion, though, is that if we assume that 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra were in fact circulating together in the Syriac context also before their inclusion in the Codex Ambrosianus, the possibility is that 2 Baruch was included *because* it circulated with 4 Ezra. As noted above, it is 4 Ezra that is explicitly linked to Ezra-Nehemiah, and it may well be that the scribe lacked another manuscript Vorlage for *Esdra alpha*, as Balzaretto has suggested, and since 2 Baruch was inscribed there too, the scribe copied the exemplar as he found it.

If we were to engage the idea that 2 Baruch was inscribed in the Codex Ambrosianus in the place where we find it primarily *due to* its co-circulation with 4 Ezra, and hence to some extent let this third hypothesis challenge the first hypothesis of this article, we should probably also assume that a larger degree of textual change has taken place in the first part of 2 Baruch in order to adjust it to the preceding book, than if we assume that it was copied after Chronicles due to its already existing narrative contents. This issue, as well as a closer look at 2 Baruch's introductory chapters in particular, deserves further scrutiny.

The Place of 2 Baruch in the Codex Ambrosianus

In this article I have argued that three hypotheses are likely to shed light on the place, that is, the inclusion and location, of 2 Baruch in the Codex Ambrosianus. Each of these hypotheses explains aspects of the inclusion and, I see them as potentially complementary rather than mutually exclusive.¹⁰⁸

Summing up, it is likely that 2 Baruch was included in the codex, and at this particular location in the codex, first, because it filled a thematic void and provided additional information to the biblical story about the fall of the first temple and the further destiny of the tribes of Israel. Second, I have argued that 2 Baruch was scripted as the Book of Baruch, and thus serving in the place of this (Greek) biblical book in the context of the codex, in the same way as 4 Ezra is identified and scripted as *Esdra alpha*. This identification of 2 Baruch as the Book of Baruch was probably facilitated by the fact that early Peshitta manuscripts conceived of 1 Baruch as the Second Epistle of Baruch. Third, it cannot be ruled out that 2 Baruch was included in the Codex Ambrosianus because it already circulated together with 4 Ezra and hence that these two books were found in the same manuscript Vorlage, prompting the scribe to copy both.

This conclusion may matter, firstly, to the ongoing discussion of the Codex Ambrosianus. The status of this codex and, the status of its latter part in particular, has been a matter of debate among scholars of Syriac biblical texts and manuscripts for a long time, traceable already in

¹⁰⁷ Cf., e.g., Adriana Drint, "The Mount Sinai Arabic Version of IV Ezra: Text, Translation and Introduction" (PhD diss., Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1995), 7.

¹⁰⁸ For a different point of view, cf., Balzaretto, *Syriac Version*, 15 note 42.

Ceriani's preface to the photolithographical edition of the first part of the codex in 1876.¹⁰⁹ It has been argued, probably most vehemently by Jean-Claude Haelewyck, that the segment of the latter part of the codex, starting with Chronicles and ending with Ezra-Nehemiah, enjoyed a lesser status. Haelewyck argues this point of view by referring to its location towards the end of the codex and the appearance of the somewhat doubtful books Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah in it. However, according to Haelewyck, the inclusion of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra in association with Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah is particularly telling: "Non seulement ils sont rangés à la fin, mais ils apparaissent en mauvaise compagnie, à savoir en compagnie d'apocryphes (Apocalypse syriaque Baruch et 4 Esdras)."¹¹⁰ In other words, and importantly, an *a priori* judgement of the status of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra as inherently "apocryphal" is here applied to argue the point of the lesser status of the segment of the codex.¹¹¹

To this ongoing debate, the current article would add that it might be mistaken to suggest that 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra are apocryphal (or worse) *by default*. The above analysis has rather shown that there is reason to believe that the two books were identified and scripted as the Book of Baruch and *Esdra alpha*, respectively, and that they filled important voids in the extended biblical narrative about the fall of Jerusalem and its temples.¹¹² Hence, at the time of the production of the Codex Ambrosianus they may rather have been understood as appropriate and even necessary books for this particular Old Testament pandect.¹¹³

The conclusion of the current article may matter, secondly, to the continuing study of 2 Baruch and, by extension, the study of other so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. For one, the inclusion of 2 Baruch, *qua* the Book of Baruch, in the Codex Ambrosianus could be interpreted as an indication of the continuing success of the strategy of pseudepigraphy – beyond the 1st/2nd century context.¹¹⁴ The ascription of this text to a biblical figure, Baruch bar Neriah, was probably one of the features that ensured 2 Baruch's transmission among Syriac Christians and eventually its inclusion in the Codex Ambrosianus. The inclusion could possibly also be understood as the result of a mix up of the various books ascribed to Baruch, or alternatively a readiness to let one book stand in for the other, due to their shared ascription to the same biblical figure.

¹⁰⁹ Cf., e.g., Ceriani, "Praefatio," 8; Haefeli, *Peschitta des Alten Testamentes*, 30; Willem Baars, "Neue Textzeugen der syrischen Baruchapokalypse," *VT* 13:4 (1963): 476-78, at 477 note 3; Debié, "Les apocalypses apocryphes syriaques," 115; David Philips, "The Reception of Peshitta Chronicles: Some Elements for Investigation," in *The Peshitta: Its Use in Literature and Liturgy: Papers Read at the Third Peshitta Symposium* (Monographs of the Peshitta Institute Leiden 15; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 259-95, at 262; van Peursen, "Diffusion des manuscrits," 203-04; idem, "Introduction," 5-6.

¹¹⁰ Haelewyck, "Le canon," 143.

¹¹¹ Cf. further, Ceriani, *Monumenta* 1.2, ii; idem, *Monumenta* 1.1, i; Baars, "Neue Textzeugen," 477 note 3; Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, 195-96; Van Peursen, "Diffusion des manuscrits," 204 note 58; Van Peursen, "Introduction," 5-7.

¹¹² The present article has also suggested that a partial shift in page layout and unit organisation appears in quire kaph-beth. The possible implications of this shift to our understanding of the latter part of the codex, and possibly also of its "status," have not been exhausted and deserve further attention.

¹¹³ This would add to the points already made by Balzaretto concerning the status of Ezra-Nehemiah in the Syriac traditions (*Syriac Version*, 15-21). The question as to whether 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra are thereby to be considered "canonical" in the Syriac tradition is quite another debate, which I will not enter into here.

¹¹⁴ Hindy Najman, with Itamar Manoff and Eva Mroczek, "How to Make Sense of Pseudonymous Attribution: The Cases of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch," in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism* (ed. Matthias Henze; Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2012), 308-30, at 325-30; Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism*, 87-102.

Furthermore, the conclusion may matter to ongoing discussions of the provenance of 2 Baruch, and by extension, the provenance of the Pseudepigrapha. The current consensus in scholarship holds that 2 Baruch is a Jewish text and, the lack of Christian interpolations in the text is one of the features scholars refer to in order to argue that it is not Christian. However, this debate has tended to neglect the manuscript context of the transmission of 2 Baruch. The question as to what the main manuscript containing this writing *is*, and how that may matter to our analysis, has not been raised. In other words, the fact that the Codex Ambrosianus is a Christian Old Testament has had no implications for this discussion of the provenance of 2 Baruch. It may well be the case that 2 Baruch is not Christian by origin. However, as suggested above, 2 Baruch is copied as a biblical book in an Old Testament, inscribed between Chronicles and 4 Ezra, because this is the point in the extended biblical storyline where it adds information and where it is assumed to fit. It is a fact that Christians took over scriptures that were originally part of the Hebrew Bible. They translated and transformed, re-identified and reorganized these writings, transmitting them as their own as Christian, Old Testament scriptures. However, explicit Christian interpolations in these scriptures are not necessarily to be expected, and hence we should not expect them in 2 Baruch either. If we were to look for potential changes to the text of 2 Baruch added in the process of transmission, which we certainly should, it would be more reasonable to look for changes that would align 2 Baruch to the adjacent texts, Chronicles and 4 Ezra, or features that would add to and improve the part of the storyline where 2 Baruch is explicitly set. The lack of any explicit Christian interpolations, thus, may tell us something about the context of transmission of 2 Baruch, but it is not a viable argument, neither for claiming the Jewishness of 2 Baruch, nor for assuming that Christians did not change the text during the history of transmission.

The conclusion also adds new perspectives to the long-standing scholarly debate about the relationship between 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra.¹¹⁵ This debate has been thoroughly framed as a 1st/2nd century discourse. The debate has, as far as I know, not taken the history of manuscript attestation of the two books into account. Since so little is known about the (hypothetical) early text of 2 Baruch, in particular, we do not know how this co-circulation might have affected 2 Baruch during the transmission of the text, and methodologically this is problematic when the two books are consistently compared and discussed as finished products of the first centuries CE. We have no way of controlling that the similarities between the two are products of these early centuries – for all we know 2 Baruch’s similarities with 4 Ezra may, at least in parts, be the result of later joint transmission.

However, the most important consequence of the conclusion of the current article concerns the paradigms that shape the disciplines that have traditionally been studying 2 Baruch. In this article I have argued that 2 Baruch could fruitfully be explored in the immediate material context in which it has in fact come down to us, that is, as a legitimate and necessary part of the Syriac Codex Ambrosianus. So far, 2 Baruch has by default been studied as a book belonging to the context of 1st/2nd century Judaism, whereas the Syriac 6th/7th century copy has solely been used as a decontextualized and abstract witness to that early text. This perspective could arguably be turned on its head: 2 Baruch could be studied in its own right in the material and cultural context in which it is found. In this particular context, it is a biblical book in the sense that it belongs to the oldest extant complete Syriac Christian Old Testament. This does not mean that 2 Baruch was necessarily always understood as such, neither by all

¹¹⁵ For a convenient overview and important input to the debate, see Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism*, 148-86.

Syriac Christians nor by others, but in the context of this codex and keeping those who engaged with the codex in mind, this is a reasonable interpretation.

The perspective is important also to scholars interested in 2 Baruch's assumed early Jewish context, because it is this particular manifestation of the book in this material context that has, consistently and throughout the history of research on 2 Baruch, been used as "the witness" – in order to grasp, to substantiate, and to imagine the hypothetical text of a composition that according to the consensus is 500 years younger, Jewish, and non-canonical. As suggested above, it is likely that 2 Baruch has been changed during these centuries of transmission. This situation should have methodological implications for the ways in which we apply the surviving copy to grasp the early text – to the extent to which we find it defensible to do so.

Summing up, it is indeed a telling indication of the shaping force in the discipline of the dominant historical-critical paradigm that so little attention has been given to the manuscript context of 2 Baruch. 2 Baruch has never been studied as an integral part of the codex in which it survives, the possible reasons why 2 Baruch was included in the codex has attracted no attention, nor has the book been explored as a product of the manuscripts culture of Syriac Christians, who arguably produced the Codex Ambrosianus. The implication of this scholarly practice is that questions as to how the copy might have been shaped by its inclusion in an Old Testament, as well as more generally by Syriac manuscript production and its practices have so far not been raised. In fact, as the history of research has amply shown, we owe the very existence of 2 Baruch as a book that has survived and that is being studied until today to this particular codex and its material qualities. The Codex Ambrosianus was a valuable *deluxe* edition of the Old Testament, and hence its owners cared for it and kept it remarkably intact.¹¹⁶ This status of the codex has certainly affected its chances of survival.¹¹⁷ Hence, if it were not for these features and the status of the Codex Ambrosianus as a material artefact, we might not have known 2 Baruch at all.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Cf., the owner note on f. 1r and the binder note on f. 330r.

¹¹⁷ Cf., Roger S. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 27.

¹¹⁸ I am grateful to Philip Forness, Eystein Gullbekk, Matthias Henze and Alison Salvesen for their responses to an early draft of this article.