Ancient Jewish writings, New Philology, and manuscripts that belong to someone else

Liv Ingeborg Lied

7 September 2018

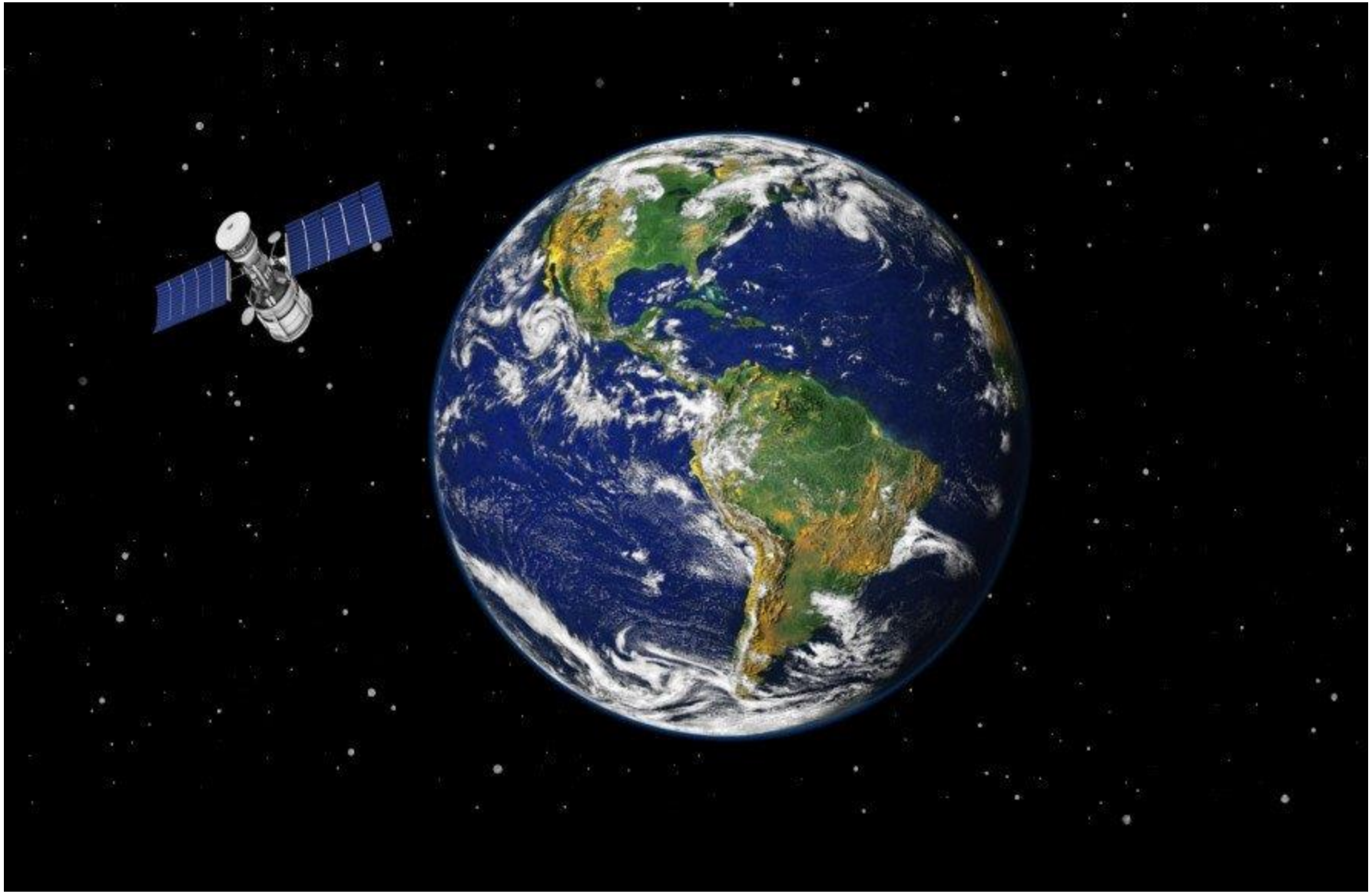
Dear OTSEM participants,

I am sharing with you my lecture notes and the slides i presented at the OTSEM-meeting in Oslo, 7 September 2018. I have removed the pictures I don't have the right to share. Feel free to use this lecture, but if you do, please refer to it.

Liv I. Lied, «Anceint Jewish writings, New Philology, and manuscripts that belong to someone else.» Lecture at the OTSEM-meeting, MF Oslo, 7 September 2018.

Best wishes,

Liv



Prelude:
Three contexts/communities/periods







2 Baruch – a rough guide to the current scholarly imagination

Assumed to be:

- 1st-2nd cent CE, Jewish. Apocalyptic text. Palestine
- Long and complex. Narrative frame: Baruch; the destruction of the first temple
- Explored as: Jewish reaction to the fall of the second temple
- Surviving mainly in: Syriac mss

Used as:

- Source to Jewish ideas after the fall of the second temple
- Christian origins. Mining
- 4 Ezra's "little sister"

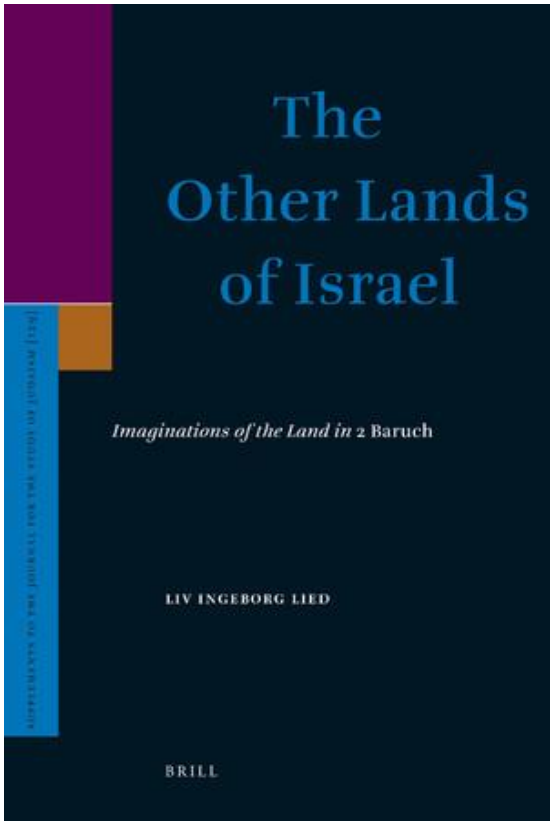
Assessed as:

- "Old Testament Pseudepigrapha"
- "A non-canonical, historical loser"



Twenty years of research – two phases in my reserach

1. The idea of the Land in a 2nd cent Jewish text (1999-2008)
2. The engagement with 2 Baruch among Syriac Christians (7th-13th cent), exploring the manuscripts that contain the text (2005 to date)



Surprise! (at least to 2005-me)

The manuscripts that preserve 2 Baruch:

- Greek P.Oxy. 3 403
- Syriac Codex Ambrosianus
- Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 589
- British Library Add 14686 and 14687
- Dayr al-Suryan Syr 33
- Konath Collection Ms Syr 77

Map and territory

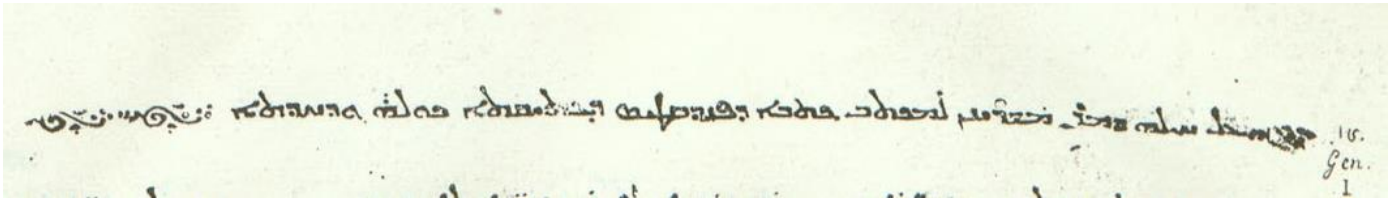
Manuscripts are

- [unknown] high quality papyrus fragment (4th cent)
- Oldest complete Syriac **OT** (7th cent)
- Arabic **OT** (11th cent?)
- Lectionary ms (1255 and 1256) (**OT**, Epistles and Acts)
- Lectionary ms (13th cent)
- Lectionary ms (1425)
  - *Tendency?*

Scholars say that 2 Baruch is



Codex Ambrosianus, f. 1v



Pentateuch
Job
Joshua
Judges
1-2 Samuel
Psalms
1-2 Kings
Proverbs
Wisdom
Qohelet
Song of Songs
Isaiah
Jeremiah and Lamentations
Epistles of Jeremiah and Baruch
Ezekiel

12 Prophets
Daniel, Bel and Dragon
Ruth
Susanna
Esther
Judith
Ben Sira
1-2 Chronicles
2 Baruch
4 Ezra
Ezra-Nehemiah
1-5 Maccabees
(5 Macc = Josephus, JW 6)

My fruitful challenges (remember the three contexts)





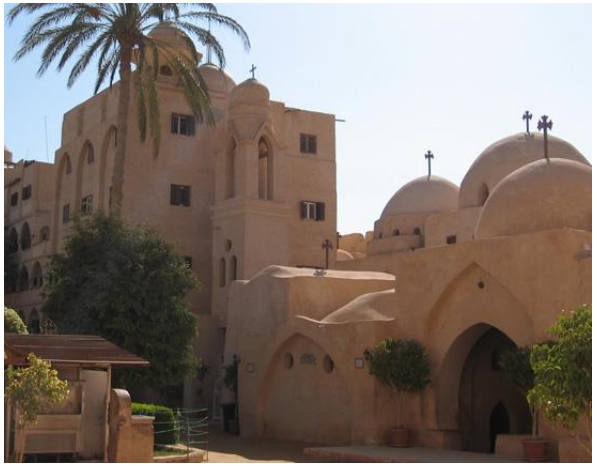
Manuscripts containing so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha are:

- Typically late
- Typically produced and engaged by Christian communities
- A variety of collections
- A variety of formats, identifications, company

  - *which means that 2 Baruch is quite typical*

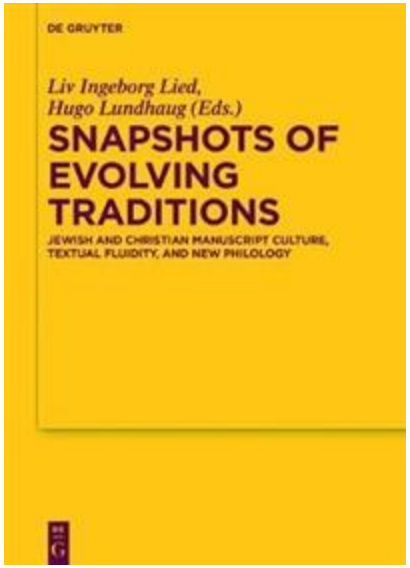
Mind the Gap – Let's signpost it

1. A gap in time: assumed origin – preserved text
2. Christian transmission – Jewish texts??
3. «Collections»: Modern editions vs. historical plurality
4. The «same», or «other»? Layout entities, paratextual identification, etc.



The Monastery of the Syrians, Wadi al-Natrun, Egypt

New Philology – in a Nutshell



New [Material] Philology is

- A **perspective on** textual philology/editorial theory
- A **model** for exploring texts, text production and transmission/reception
- An **approach** that stresses the materiality of the text, texts in the manuscript context

Note: «New Philology» is no longer «new», but neither is «New York»

The aims of New Philology

(1) To study texts as material texts, exploring them as situated, integral parts of preserved manuscripts, and thus to

(2) interpret the texts in light of the manuscripts' (various) historical contexts,

(3) adding to and challenging the privilieged focus on the early text and its context, and assumptions of texts as immaterial literature

This means that…

- *Manuscripts* are studied in their own right
- *Manuscripts* are explored as someone's cultural artefacts
- *Texts* are explored as part of the manuscript
- The material shape is seen as part of their «meaning»
- *Manuscripts* provide **«snapshots»** of evolving *text* traditions

The roots of New Philology

Medieval studies; French, Norse; emblematically:

- Cerquiglini, Bernard. *Éloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie.* Paris: Seuil, 1989.
- Nichols, Stephen. "Philology in a Manuscript Culture," *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 65/1 (1990):1-10.

Both are inspired by…

- Zumthor, Paul. *Essai de poétique médiéval*. Paris: Seuil, 1972.
- https://www.academia.edu/12026818/_New_Philology_-_in_a_Nutshell_

A reaction to….



- Dominant philological and editorial paradigms *at the time*
  - both Lachmann's stemmatic model and Bédier's best manuscript practice
- Assumed neutral notions of a craft: «sufficient light and a good magnifying glass»
- The division of labour in relevant fields: the invisibility of material artefacts
- Paradigmatic assessment schemes in the academy

This means that New Philology reacted to…

- Favouring the early text *only*
- The dominant focus on the early context as the only interesting context of the text
- Using manuscripts solely as immaterial witnesses to early texts
- Seeing texts as finished and stable
- Seeing change as «corruption»
- Discarding signs of later engagement as irrelevant/ clutter
- Forgetting that manuscripts are circulation object

Copy right: Kipp Davis

Why the reaction?

- The experienced difference between text editions and manuscripts
- Print culture vocabulary - manuscript culture practices: «finished», «published», «variant»
- The source material of the medievalist as «faint copies» of ancient texts
  - «The copy», «corruption» and «textual disturbance» among the primary materials of the medievalist: why not study it in its own right?

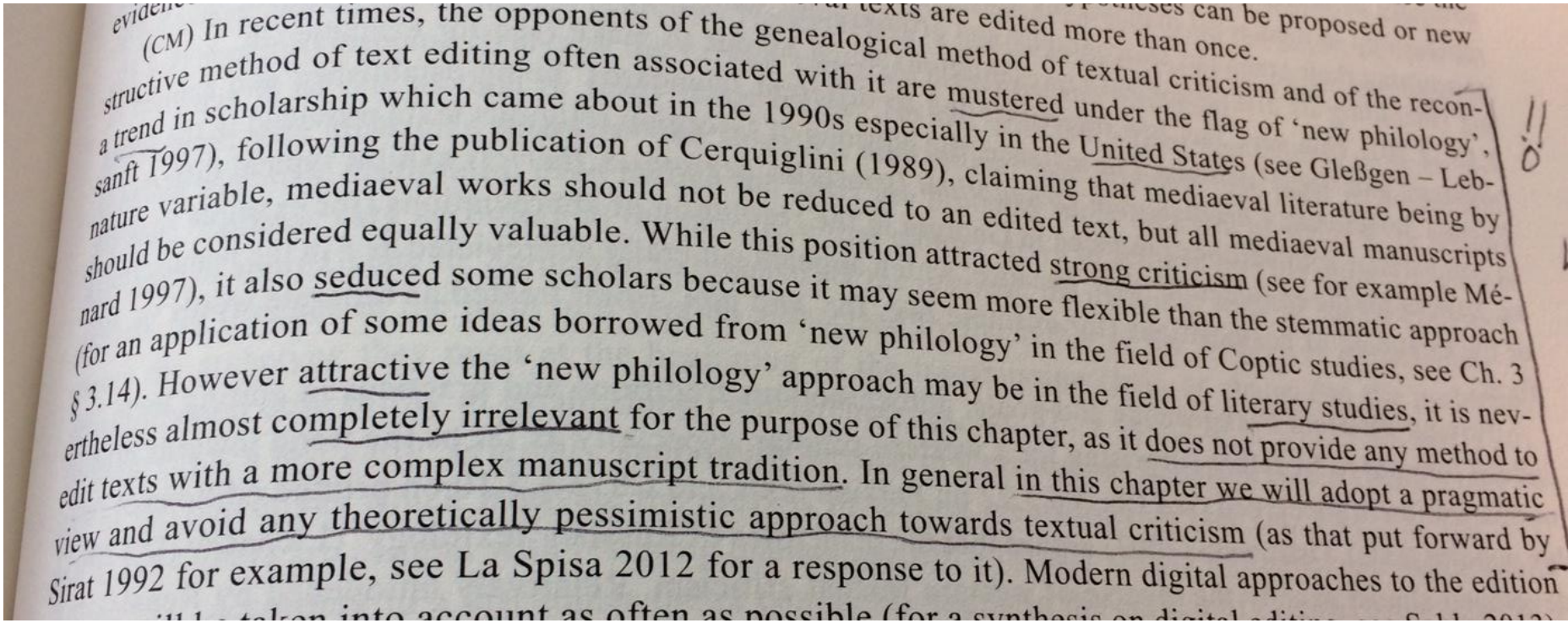
Not an island…

New Philology in context

- Book History
- Reception History
- Social History
- A multi-disciplinary, developing, textual criticism
- Material Culture Studies
- Literary and Medieval Studies

- The focus on the manuscript and the material text in a manuscript culture

Love and hate…



evide… texts are edited more than once. …theses can be proposed or new
(CM) In recent times, the opponents of the genealogical method of textual criticism and of the recon-
structive method of text editing often associated with it are mustered under the flag of 'new philology',
a trend in scholarship which came about in the 1990s especially in the United States (see Gleßgen – Leb-
sanft 1997), following the publication of Cerquiglini (1989), claiming that mediaeval literature being by
nature variable, mediaeval works should not be reduced to an edited text, but all mediaeval manuscripts
should be considered equally valuable. While this position attracted strong criticism (see for example Mé-
nard 1997), it also seduced some scholars because it may seem more flexible than the stemmatic approach
(for an application of some ideas borrowed from 'new philology' in the field of Coptic studies, see Ch. 3
§ 3.14). However attractive the 'new philology' approach may be in the field of literary studies, it is nev-
ertheless almost completely irrelevant for the purpose of this chapter, as it does not provide any method to
edit texts with a more complex manuscript tradition. In general in this chapter we will adopt a pragmatic
view and avoid any theoretically pessimistic approach towards textual criticism (as that put forward by
Sirat 1992 for example, see La Spisa 2012 for a response to it). Modern digital approaches to the edition
…taken into account as often as possible (for a synthesis on digital editing …

Applicability of New Philology to the study of ancient Jewish writings



New Philology is not the answer to life, the universe and everything

- Not designed for aiding textual criticism (CoMST)
- Manuscripts are not everything: just *one* medium of transmission
- Not the new singular: we need a *plurality* of perspectives
  - Choose methods that fits your project goal, but listen in on alternative perspectives



1. Critical potential: pointing out some side effects of the historical-critical perspective

- *How do we get to the ancient text, why is that where we want to go, and what insights are lost on the way?*

- The received materials are our only source materials
- The development of the texts is intertwined with its receiving contexts



Example: One or two Epistles?

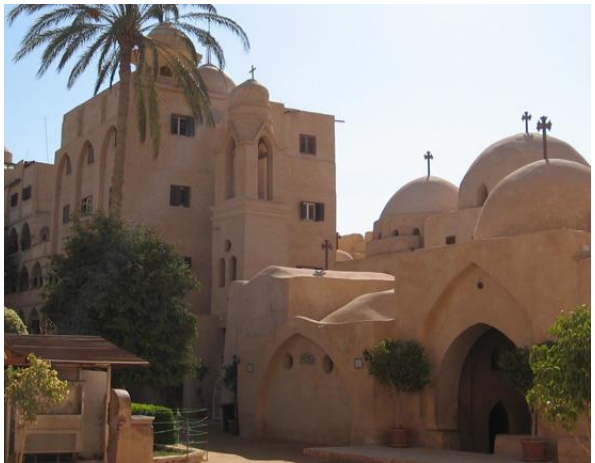
Pentateuch
Job
Joshua
Judges
1-2 Samuel
Psalms
1-2 Kings
Proverbs
Wisdom
Qohelet
Song of Songs
Isaiah
Jeremiah and Lamentations
Epistles of Jeremiah and Baruch, incl
The First Epistle of Baruch the Scribe
Ezekiel

12 Prophets
Daniel, Bel and Dragon
Ruth
Susanna
Esther
Judith
Ben Sira
1-2 Chronicles
2 Baruch, incl:
The Epistle of Baruch bar Neriah
4 Ezra
Ezra-Nehemiah
1-5 Maccabees
(5 Macc = Josephus, JW6)

2. Constructive potential

Example:

- Study other contexts of engagement than the assumed 1st/2nd cent
- Reading 2 Baruch on Easter Sunday



BL Add 14687: «From Baruch», Easter Sunday

Example: *Bible as Notepad* (de Gruyter, 10 September 2018)

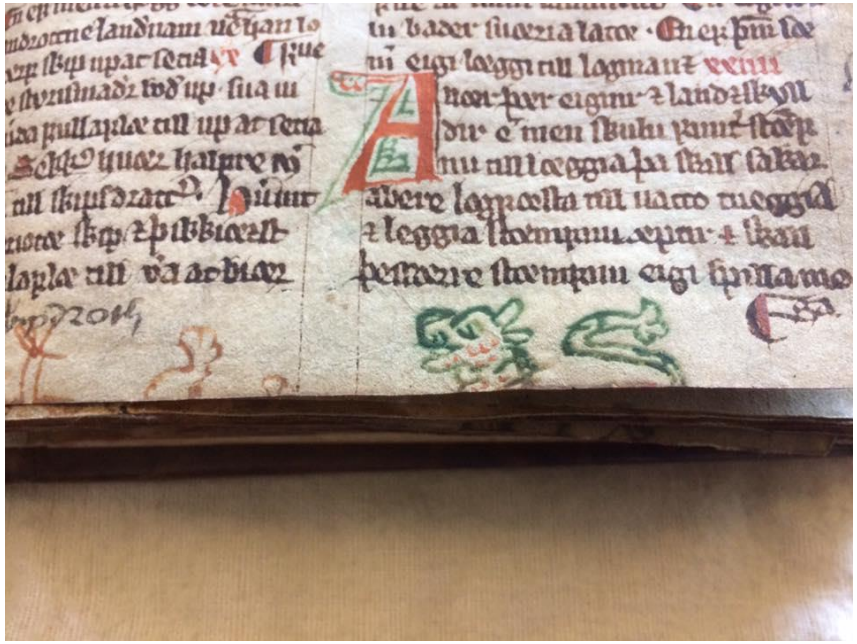
- Manuscripts are more than text containers
- The circulating object – how have active readers engaged with it?
- Exploring manuscripts as dialogical objects
- Annotations



3. Ethics: how do textual scholars treat the cultural heritage of others?



- That third party…
- Manuscript-steward relationships. Manuscripts that matter
- Corruption-language
- Invisibility of heritage artefacts
- «Remember me». Or not.
- «Immaterial literature»: the debates we missed out on



Example:
2 Baruch – map and territory

Manuscript materials

- Old Testament book?
  - In the Codex Ambrosianus
  - Read as such in select places on Easter Sunday
- Engaged due to its description of the fall of the first temple – why did Christians engage this narrative?

Scholarly imagination

- Non-biblical pseudepigraphon
- Historical loser
- Explored as response to the fall of the second temple
- *Systematically at odds*