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# Simulated Similarities: The Intricate Relationship between the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah

Baruch 1:1 introduces the figure of Baruch as “son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah ...”. As far as we have extant texts, the only possible source for this is Jeremiah 32:12. In the Book of Baruch, however, the filiation is heavily extended; it is continued with “son of Zedekiah, son of Hasadiah, son of Hilkiah”. The very beginning of Baruch thus displays three typical features of the book: it emphasizes the *importance* of its main figure, Baruch; it further indicates the *close relationship* between the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah; and, at the same time, it shows already initial signs of their *differences*, as the Book of Baruch goes “beyond” the Book of Jeremiah in adding much more weight to Baruch.<sup>1</sup> I will investigate the connections between the two books under various aspects.

## 1 The Figure of Baruch

### 1.1 Baruch in the Book of Jeremiah

Baruch appears in the Book of Jeremiah in four chapters.<sup>2</sup> The first mention of him is Jeremiah 32:12. He takes over the deeds of the purchase of the field in Anathoth and is commanded to put them into a vessel so that they may be preserved for a long time (32:14). He is presented as an *amanuensis* for the prophet Jeremiah. At his next appearance, he writes down Jeremiah’s words on a scroll (Jer 36:4) and is told to read it in the temple (36:5–6). He does so (36:9–10),<sup>3</sup> and is, as a consequence, invited to an interview with high officials (36:13–19). They immediately perceive the *danger* inherent in the prophet’s message and Baruch’s reading of it (v. 19), anticipating correctly the reaction of King Jehojakim who, in v. 26, seeks to seize them both, though because of God’s protec-

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<sup>1</sup> Adams, Baruch, 51: “The occurrence of a six-generation genealogy is distinctive”. I am grateful to Mrs. Felicity Stephens for having corrected the English of this article.

<sup>2</sup> The counting of the text of Jer follows the Hebrew version, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 36:8 already states that Baruch did all that Jeremiah had commanded him. This remark anticipates the following obedient execution of the prophet’s orders.

tion (v. 32), the king's attempt fails. Baruch's life is very closely connected with that of his master.

It is only in Jeremiah 43 that we hear again from Baruch. The people had asked for a divine answer as to whether they should stay in the country or leave for Egypt (Jer 42). Jeremiah, who had pleaded the case for remaining in Judah, is accused of answering שקר "deceit", because of having listened to Baruch (43:2–3). This runs counter to the preceding text which does not have any trace of Baruch's influence, but attributes Jeremiah's answer entirely to his having waited and listened for God's revelation in this case (see esp. 42:7), and perverts the roles of "prophet" and his "secretary", making the latter dominant with regard to the former. Both are *taken to Egypt*, against their will and against the advice of God and Jeremiah (vv. 6–7).<sup>4</sup> Once again, Baruch shares the fate of the prophet.

The last mention of Baruch in Jeremiah is in chapter 45. A divine word is communicated to Jeremiah, to console his confidant in his sorrow (v. 3); yet the word makes clear that Baruch is *aspiring too high*, given the desolation all around (vv. 4–5).<sup>5</sup> There may be yet another, indirect, hint to Baruch towards the end of Jeremiah, in 51:59, where Seraiah, who accompanies King Zedekiah to Babylon, has the same filiation in two generations: "...son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah". Most probably this is an indication that he is a *brother of Baruch*.

Baruch in the Book of Jeremiah is a figure close to the prophet, *completely subordinate* to him. He receives orders from Jeremiah, executes them faithfully, and serves him in everything. Baruch is entirely dependent on the prophet; he does not carry out any autonomous individual action in the Book of Jeremiah, besides complaining about his pains and sorrows (Jer 45:3).

## 1.2 Baruch in the Book of Baruch

The portrayal of Baruch in the Book of Baruch is different from that in the Book of Jeremiah. It starts in Baruch 1:1 with the fivefold filiation (see above), and the same verse contains two other pieces of information that are difficult to reconcile with Jeremiah. Baruch 1:1 attributes the writing of a scroll of his own to Baruch, independently of the prophet Jeremiah. This changes his image from that of a secretary to that of an *author*. The other difference is in regards to the place of

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<sup>4</sup> Pace Stipp, *Verschleppung*, who argues that they were not forced to immigrate to Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> For an interpretation of Jer 45 focusing on the figure of Baruch, see Scalise, *Baruch*, esp. 302–307.

composition, namely “in Babylon”, which is in obvious opposition to his “biography” in Jeremiah, which only knows of his sojourns in Judah and, finally, in Egypt.<sup>6</sup>

The indication of the *date* in Baruch 1:2 “in the fifth year, on the seventh of the month” presents a conundrum. It is incomplete, regarding the month, and the reference point for the counting of the years is unclear. As the latter part of the verse refers to the “burning” of Jerusalem, the most probable starting point is 587 BCE,<sup>7</sup> the 18<sup>th</sup> year of King Nebuchadnezzar according to Jeremiah 52:29. Consequently, the “fifth year” would correspond to his 23<sup>rd</sup> year, mentioned in Jeremiah 52:30, for a third deportation of Judeans, most likely to be connected with Ishmael’s murder of the governor Gedaliah and the subsequent flight of Judeans to Egypt (Jer 41–43). Jeremiah 43:6 mentions that both Jeremiah and Baruch were taken there by the emigrating group (cf. above 1.1), creating a tension with the indication here in Baruch 1:2 that Baruch was in Babylon in the same year.

Baruch 1:3–4 reports Baruch’s personal reading of his scroll<sup>8</sup> in Babylon. The *audience is illustrious*, starting with King Jehoiachin, and encompassing all the people, including the influential ones and the “sons of the kings”. The fivefold repetition of “in the ears of” enhances the presence and attention of the whole assembly. Jeremiah, in his entire (recorded) lifetime, never made such an appearance, or gave a reading in such company, which included the entire community from the king to the lower subjects.<sup>9</sup>

The *last mention* of Baruch occurs in Baruch 1:8. He is said to have taken the temple vessels, in order to return them to Jerusalem where they had been taken from. This information makes him resemble Sheshbazzar who received them

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<sup>6</sup> Perdue, Baruch, 284, too, points out this discrepancy in the locations.

<sup>7</sup> Feuerstein, Nicht im Vertrauen, 264, assumes the year 592 BCE, obviously reckoning with King Jehoiachin’s exile as the beginning of the counting. This would create a connection with Ezek 1:2, and also a closer link to Jer 29 which, though without precise date, could be set to this time. However, it runs counter to the mention of setting “fire” to Jerusalem which only happened in 587 BCE.

<sup>8</sup> The exact nature of the βίβλος/βίβλιον—Baruch uses both forms in 1:3—“paper, book” is a matter of dispute. The contents and ancient scribal practice indicate a “scroll”; the narrative frame, especially its sending to Jerusalem (1:14), also allows for it to be understood as a “letter”.

<sup>9</sup> The merism “(from) small—(to) great” in Bar 1:4 indicates totality and occurs most frequently in Jeremiah. See Stipp, Konkordanz, 118, which is a very useful tool for comparisons of word usage, as he also cites the relevant passages of Baruch.

from the Persian King, Cyrus (Ezra 1:7–11).<sup>10</sup> The motif of the “temple vessels” is prominent in Jeremiah too; however, in the opposite direction. In Jeremiah 27:16–22 Jeremiah announces that even the vessels still remaining will be taken to Babylon. The prophet Hananiah counters this announcement in Jeremiah 28:3, proclaiming that all of them will return “to this place” (i. e. the temple in Jerusalem) within two years. The end of the Book of Jeremiah debunks Hananiah’s statement and gives credence to the prophet Jeremiah: all the remaining vessels, including other precious items, are also brought to Babylon (Jer 52:17–23, in parallel to 2 Kings 25:13–17, and extending it).

Baruch 1:8 is the very last note about Baruch. There is no further occurrence of his name, nor is there an “I” referring to him to be found thereafter. This means that his figure *merely serves, in the introduction, to create a link* with a “biblical personage” known from an important scroll, namely Jeremiah. The choice of “Baruch” might have been influenced by two factors. On the one hand, Jeremiah is one of the main sources for Baruch. On the other hand, Baruch and Jeremiah share many similar motifs (see below 2.1 and further on).

“Baruch” in the Book of Baruch thus seems to be the *creation* of a fictitious figure related to prophecy, especially to Jeremiah, as well as to the period of Jerusalem’s fall. One of the functions of his selection is to provide a setting for the book. It might also be intended to confer a certain authority on the Book of Baruch, although not at the highest level.<sup>11</sup>

“Baruch” in the Book of Baruch appears as the *author* of a book. Relying primarily on Baruch 1:1–14 as a basis, Baruch is portrayed as a pious man who exhorts his fellow exiles to pray (1:11, 13) and attends to the return of the temple vessels. He also relates, in a similar vein, the support given by the exiles to the cult in Jerusalem with money and offerings (1:5–6, 10); this may be regarded as indirect evidence of Baruch’s own interest in it. The content of his book (Bar 1:15–5:9) contains further hints at the profile of its author, which will show up in the main body of this chapter.

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**10** Baruch never describes that the vessels were actually brought back to the temple. It is a kind of “blind motif” within the book. The indications of the material “silver” and of their production under King Zedekiah have no confirmation in the Hebrew Bible.

**11** The choice of the figure of Baruch, in some ways, may also be an expression of “humility”. Instead of attributing this scroll to Jeremiah as, e. g., the Letter of Jeremiah (Bar 6), the *Vita Jeremiae*, or the *Paralipomena Jeremiae*, the Book of Baruch receives its authority through an “intermediary”. This might indicate a consciousness of a lower level of authority, and also indicate a time setting, when scriptural prophecy had ceased.

### 1.3 The different profiles of “Baruch”

The Books of Jeremiah and Baruch display contrasting images of the “same” figure: “Baruch (1)” in the Book of Jeremiah is totally subservient to the prophet, whereas “Baruch (2)” in the Book of Baruch is an *independent, pious scribe and author*, whose presentation is based on his (literary) “predecessor” in Jeremiah, but is extended here. He is conversant with many other biblical scrolls<sup>12</sup> and uses them for a message of his own.

Another argument for a *deliberate deviation* of the character of Baruch from the description in Jeremiah may be the fact that the name of the prophet “Jeremiah” is never mentioned in Baruch, although the book often quotes him and uses the Book of Jeremiah as a main source.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, several *other names* do occur. King Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned in Baruch 1:9, 11–12, his “son” Belshazzar<sup>14</sup> also in 1:11–12, Moses in 1:20; 2:2, 28, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in 2:34. This “silence” with respect to Jeremiah goes together with the increased importance given to Baruch in the Book of Baruch.

## 2 Different Theologies

Just as the Book of Baruch differs from Jeremiah with respect to its main figure, so it differs also in its theology, although there is much common ground between the two books. I will first deal with elements shared by both, and then present their specific characteristics.

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<sup>12</sup> Ballhorn, Sekretär, 209 and 221, calls him a “schriftgelehrter Weiser”. Steck, Apokryphe Baruchbuch, 306, speaks of “professionelle Schriftgelehrsamkeit” and demonstrates the wide range of biblical quotations, especially in the penitential prayer (pp. 81–93). Adams, Reframing, discusses the use of “citation” by exegetes, analyzes several of them in Bar 2, and reflects on their function in Baruch.

<sup>13</sup> Even in the passage in Bar 2:21–26, where the author quotes and combines texts of Jeremiah most intensively, he only refers to the undetermined plural “your servants, the prophets” (2:24).

<sup>14</sup> Adams, Baruch, 59, discusses the various options for Belshazzar’s designation as “son” of Nebuchadnezzar. His solution is to understand it in a broad sense as “descendant” and applicable also to other Babylonian rulers.

## 2.1 Common elements

The Books of Jeremiah and Baruch share many ideas about God. This is “normal”, as both are *rooted in Israel’s faith*, and it also unites them with other biblical books. Thus, for example, God is portrayed as universal and also as creator (Bar 3:32–35; Jer 5:22; 10:12; 23:24). He loves Israel especially (Bar 3:37; Jer 31:3), although the people are sinful and rebellious (Bar 1:13, 19; 2:10; Jer 2:20–24, 29, and elsewhere). God has addressed them frequently, also through his prophets, but has had no success (Bar 1:18, 21; 2:20, 24; Jer 7:23–28; 11:7–8, etc.). Nevertheless he is full of mercy and gives his people a future (Bar 2:27; 3:2; 5:9; Jer 31:20; 33:26; 42:12).

Besides these features common to many books of the Old Testament, there are *some specific traits* linking the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah.<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah 2:13 (//17:13) refers to God as “the source of living water”, and the people are accused of having “forsaken the source of living water”. Similarly, Baruch 3:12 talks about Israel, having “forsaken the source of wisdom”; the following context, leading to Baruch 4:1 with its equation of wisdom with the book of God’s commandments, suggests a close connection between the “source of wisdom” and God himself. Thus, although using different terms, the two passages in Jeremiah and Baruch are very close to one another.<sup>16</sup>

A second “exclusive link” between the Books of Jeremiah and Baruch exists in God’s “*giving fear into the human heart*”. Yhwh, in his response to Jeremiah’s prayer, promises to do so (Jer 32:40). The only other instance of this motif is Baruch 3:7; there it is acknowledged that God has done so and fulfilled his pledge. The affirmation of *Yhwh’s uniqueness* is not exclusive to the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah, but rare. The strongest attestation for it in Jeremiah is in the confrontation with other divinities in Jeremiah 10. Therein, מאין כמותך (“Absolutely nobody is like you!”) is the frame for the first passage referring to Yhwh (10:6–7), thus emphasizing his matchlessness. Close to it is Baruch 3:36, “This is our God; no other can be compared to him!”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Some expressions are only found in these two books and thus connect them “exclusively”; see Fischer, Baruch, 140–42.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremiah frequently uses the phrase “to abandon Yhwh” (with עזב, as in 2:13; cf. Stipp, Konkordanz, 102–103) and refers often to the worship of other gods, e.g., in Jer 16:13 and 44:3 with עבד “to venerate”, similar to Bar 1:22 which has ἐργάζεσθαι.

<sup>17</sup> This is the rendering of the NRSV. *Septuaginta Deutsch* translates: “Dieser ist unser Gott, kein anderer wird neben ihm anerkannt werden.” (= no other will be recognized besides him). The Greek verb λογίζομαι “to count, to attribute, to consider” may be interpreted in both directions. Interestingly, this quote from Bar 3:36 is attributed to the prophet Jeremiah in the mosaic of the

These are some of the motifs in which the theologies of Baruch and Jeremiah concur. On this basis, we can now go on and detect the individual theological features of each of these books.

## 2.2 Theological language and motifs in Baruch

The phrase ὁ αἰώνιος, the “*Eternal one*”, is a favorite designation of Baruch for the biblical God. It occurs first in Baruch 4:10,<sup>18</sup> and seven times more up to Baruch 5:2. This insistence on God’s eternity marks Baruch out, distinguishing it from all other biblical books. Jeremiah 10:10 had called Yhwh “eternal king” and uses עולם “eternal” several times for God (e.g., Jer 2:20; 3:5, 12); however, Baruch goes beyond this usage in making it a title for Yhwh.

Another designation for God used in Baruch is παντοκράτωρ “*ruling everything, almighty*” (Bar 3:1, 4). It is frequently found in the Twelve Prophets, especially Amos, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, but also in Job and 2 Maccabees, and is the standard equivalent for the Hebrew אלהי צבאות “God of hosts”, found also in Jeremiah 5:14 and 15:16, etc. However, “almighty, all-powerful” in Greek says something different and thus contributes to Baruch’s theology a nuance not so clearly attested in the original Hebrew version of Jeremiah.<sup>19</sup>

A unique concept of Baruch is the designation of the universe as “*God’s house*” (Bar 3:24). It fits well with the foregoing ideas of God ruling everything and of his eternity, adding to them the new aspect of the cosmos as his dwelling,<sup>20</sup> with which he has a personal bond. God in Baruch does not only rule everything, he is also “*the one knowing everything*” (Bar 3:32). This concept occurs very seldom in the Bible. The only other attestations are in the Greek additions to the Book of Daniel, in the narration about Susanna.<sup>21</sup>

Baruch 4:8 brings another unique designation for God, using the extremely rare verb τροφεύω<sup>22</sup> to present him as “*the one who nourishes you*”. There are

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triumphal arch above the apsis in San Clemente in Rome (ca. 1,200 CE). As was usual in former times, Baruch and Lamentations were reckoned as “Jeremianic literature”.

**18** Here, and in Bar 4:14, it functions as subject of the phrase. These are the first two instances; the other ones are: Bar 4:20, 22 [2x], 24, 35; 5:2. See further Bar 4:8 with “the eternal God”.

**19** Steck, *Apokryphe Baruchbuch*, 251, and Kabasele Mukenge, *L’unité*, 384–90, demonstrate in detail and at length that Baruch used the Hebrew and not the Greek text of Jeremiah.

**20** Similarly, Adams, *Baruch*, 107.

**21** Susanna affirms that God knows everything. The LXX version of Dan brings it already in Dan 13:35, the version of Theodotion has it in 13:42.

**22** The only other occurrence within the LXX is Exod 2:7, where it is applied to Moses’ mother, for breast-feeding him.

similar ideas, for example, in Psalm 104:27–28 and 145:15–16; the exact wording, however, is different, and it has no parallel in Jeremiah’s theology.

The latter is also true for the motif of divine *glory for Jerusalem*. It has roots in Isaiah 58:8 and 60:1–2, and the author of Baruch develops this idea extensively, at the end of his book, using it rather like a cornerstone for it. The word, δόξα “glory”, corresponding to Hebrew כבוד, occurs seven times in Baruch 4:37–5:9. It comes from God, and is given to Jerusalem (5:1, 4). This sets Baruch apart from Jeremiah which, although being much longer, uses כבוד only five times,<sup>23</sup> and describes Jerusalem’s destruction in its final chapter. The indications given above are clear signs that Baruch has a specific theology, with marked accents of its own. It is distinct from other biblical books, and also from Jeremiah.

### 2.3 The theology of the Book of Jeremiah

Looking at the *peculiar features* of the theology of the Book of Jeremiah confirms Baruch’s theological difference from the other direction.<sup>24</sup> The Book of Jeremiah portrays God, in several respects, in a manner not encountered in Baruch. Jeremiah 9:1 describes God’s wish to leave his people, preferring a lodge in the desert to staying longer with them. Jeremiah 12:7 goes a step further; God has already left his house and repudiated his heritage. One verse later, he talks about his hatred for it (12:8). In Jeremiah, *God radically distances himself* from his people in a manner seen rarely elsewhere;<sup>25</sup> the Book of Baruch, although speaking about divine wrath (e. g., Bar 1:13; 2:13, 20), never goes so far.

The Book of Jeremiah is unique in portraying a *weeping God*. Three times tears are ascribed to him: in Jeremiah 9:9 [English 9:10] God claims that he will weep for the destruction of the mountains and wilderness, in Jeremiah 14:17 his tears are flowing night and day over his people, and in Jeremiah 48:32 he weeps over Moab’s adversity. In this respect, Jeremiah is different from all other books of the Bible, not only from Baruch.

The use of the hiphil שכם in connection with an action verb, to do something “*incessantly*”, is a specific trait of the theology of the Book of Jeremiah. It occurs

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<sup>23</sup> Jer 2:11; 13:16; 14:21; 17:12, and 48:18. With the exception of the last passage “glory” always refers to God in Jeremiah.

<sup>24</sup> I will deal here only with a few special features; for a broader picture, see Fischer, *Theologien*, 87–95.

<sup>25</sup> The only other passage in the Hebrew Bible speaking of God’s hatred against his people is Hos 9:15. For his desire to leave his people in Jer 9:1 [9:2] cf. Ezek 8–10 where Yhwh’s glory leaves the temple.



first in Jeremiah 7:13 where God declares himself to have spoken tirelessly, trying to persuade the people to listen to him. In Jeremiah 7:25 he says that he has sent his “servants, the prophets” without ceasing, yet with the same negative result. All in all, Jeremiah has ten passages devoted to this continuous divine effort.<sup>26</sup> Besides Jeremiah, the only other instance of this phrase being used in the same sense is in 2 Chron 36:15.

God’s word in Jeremiah has special qualities: it is *burning*, and it has tremendous *force*. Three times “fire” is connected with it: in Jeremiah 5:14, which is a continuation and intensification of 1:9; in 20:9, Jeremiah’s last confession; and in 23:29, God’s charge against false prophets. In the same verse he also compares his word with a forging hammer capable of crushing rocks into pieces; shortly before, in 23:28, he associates it with wheat, able to nourish substantially.

Jeremiah 7:16 introduces another unique feature of the book’s theology: Jeremiah is no longer allowed to pray for his people. The *prohibition of intercession* is repeated thrice<sup>27</sup> and marks a new, final stage in the deterioration of the relationship between God and his people. It is only later that this rupture is overcome, as in Jeremiah 29:7 for those exiled, and in 42:1–7, where Jeremiah’s pleading for the group of survivors on the way to Egypt is answered by God. The exhortation to pray for the שלום of the city in 29:7, Jeremiah’s letter to the Golah in Babylon, is the closest parallel and probable source for the request to pray for Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar in Baruch 1:11.

There are still further aspects where the theology of the Book of Jeremiah is different from that in Baruch.<sup>28</sup> Decisively distinct are *God’s emotions* in Jeremiah, specifically, his weeping. In Jeremiah 25:30 he shouts and sings at the universal judgment, like those treading wine. He questions his affection for Ephraim in 31:20, confessing his inner turmoil.<sup>29</sup> The Book of Jeremiah allows the readers a glimpse into some of the innermost feelings and thoughts of God.

Certainly the Books of Jeremiah and Baruch talk about the “same” Yhwh, but they emphasize different aspects. Whereas the Book of Jeremiah portrays him as inwardly moved, zealous, the author of Baruch emphasizes his para-

<sup>26</sup> The other texts are Jer 11:7; 25:3, 4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14–15; 44:4; for the interpretation of this expression, see Bartelmus, Unermüdlichkeitsformel.

<sup>27</sup> Also in Jer 11:14; 14:11; and 15:1, yet there in other terms; Rossi, L’intercessione, offers the most recent and detailed study of it.

<sup>28</sup> The phrase “from near ... and from afar” (Jer 23:23), the list of opposite verbs (“to pluck up and to tear down, ... to build and to plant”, Jer 1:10 and more often), the expression “thoughts of שלום” (Jer 29:11) are not encountered in Baruch, although the latter concept is generally true also for Baruch, which describes a way to salvation.

<sup>29</sup> Literally: “my bowels make noise”.

mount qualities, like “all-knowing”, “all-powerful”, and “the Eternal one”. This contrast mirrors a shift in theology: the Book of Jeremiah presents a deeply affected God, as a source of consolation, and a challenge. The Book of Baruch similarly wants to provide solace to the community, but places more stress on God’s power as basis for it.

## 3 Further Differences between the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah

### 3.1 The roles of Jerusalem and its temple

It is obvious that Jerusalem and its temple are *key motifs in both books*. The Book of Jeremiah deals almost entirely with Judah’s capital, mentioning the exile of its population for the first time in Jeremiah 1:3, and dedicating the very last chapter to its downfall.<sup>30</sup> These negative poles at the beginning and the end also correspond to the main thrust of Jerusalem’s portrayal in Jeremiah, which offers, in large part, a bleak portrayal of this city.<sup>31</sup> It is similar with the *temple*; in Jeremiah 7:11 God calls it, uniquely, a “den of robbers”. Jeremiah 26 reports the refusal of God’s invitation to repent there; on the contrary, the temple becomes the place where Jeremiah is threatened with being put to death. Previously, in Jeremiah 20:1–3, the prophet had been tortured and humiliated there. Accordingly, it is no wonder that the temple is finally destroyed and emptied (Jer 52:13, 17–23).<sup>32</sup>

The presentation in Baruch is very different from that in Jeremiah. The twelve occurrences of *Jerusalem* in Baruch start with a reference to its burning by the Chaldeans (Bar 1:2), but then, soon after, Baruch 1:7 reports the financial support of those exiled to their home city and its population.<sup>33</sup> The clearest deviation occurs in the final part of the book. Baruch 4:8 introduces the imagery of Jerusalem as a mother who has been grieved; in the next verse, she starts to

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<sup>30</sup> Jer 52 is taken from 2 Kings 24:18–25:30, as is widely accepted. However, it places special emphases: cf. Fischer, *Jeremia* 52.

<sup>31</sup> Jeremiah also envisages a positive role for Jerusalem in the future, as is clear, for example, in Jer 3:17; 30:18; 31:23; 32:44; 33:6. However, these are mostly short hints, not as elaborated as at the end of Baruch.

<sup>32</sup> For the negative role of the temple in Jeremiah, see further Fischer, *Relativierung*.

<sup>33</sup> Bar 1:7 is the only verse in Baruch with two occurrences of the name “Jerusalem”. Bar 1:9 links it with King Jehoiachin’s exile, and the beginning of the prayer in 1:15 has the “men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” as self-references of those praying.

speak, and continues until 4:29. This personification of the city takes several forms: Jerusalem is perceived as “mother,”<sup>34</sup> “widow,”<sup>35</sup> and even as Queen.<sup>36</sup> In attending to the address of her neighbors and her children, *she herself is encouraged*. The four last occurrences of “Jerusalem” are all connected with imperatives. Baruch 4:30 exhorts her to be confident, 4:36 to look toward the East, 5:1 to doff the garment of grief and misery, and 5:5 to get up and to climb a height.<sup>37</sup> The verse before, 5:4, indicates with the new name “peace of justice, and glory of (the?) fear of God” her changed identity, now completely positive.<sup>38</sup>

The only occurrence of *ναός* “*temple*” is in Baruch 1:8. It refers to the cultic vessels removed from there, yet mentions at the same time their restitution to Jerusalem. The equivalent expression “house of the Lord” is repeated in 1:14; there the temple is the place where “the book” sent by the exiles is read and becomes the source and the motivation for the long prayer following immediately afterwards. Baruch 2:26 has the phrase “the house upon which your name is called”, taken from Jeremiah 7:10, and probably refers to its destruction, without, however, being explicit about it.<sup>39</sup>

This short review of the roles of Jerusalem and the temple in Jeremiah and Baruch has shown *decisive differences* between them. For Jerusalem, the overall movement in Jeremiah goes towards its nearly complete destruction; in Baruch the dynamic brings a reversal of the city’s fate at the end: Jerusalem is honored and full of joy. Whereas in Jeremiah the temple is a place of concealment for evildoers and of the persecution of God’s prophet, in Baruch the people of Jerusalem assemble there to pray and ask divine mercy for their sins and those of their ancestors.

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**34** Simian-Yofre, Jerusalem, based on the frequent use of “children” and her address of them, in Bar 4:10, 12, 14, 19, 21, 25, 27.

**35** This designation for Jerusalem’s role in Baruch has been proposed by Calduch-Benages, Jerusalem, and again newly in Calduch-Benages, Name, 52.

**36** Thus Häusl, Kunderin, 118 (“königliche Mutter”) and 120 (“Königin”). She emphasizes, following Steck’s lead, that Jerusalem supports Baruch by interceding for her children, and in picking up his admonition to pray (p. 104).

**37** The context of all these four verses contains further imperatives connected to those mentioned here. This emphasizes the strong hortatory character of this final address to Jerusalem, as an intensive encouragement.

**38** Kabasele Mukenge, L’unité, 377, sees in this turn a fulfillment of Jeremianic salvation messages. However, this ending of Baruch stands in marked opposition to Jeremiah’s closure in its final chapter.

**39** For the relationship with Jer 7 and other passages of Jeremiah, see Fischer, Baruch, 149; “as it is this day” seems to indicate within the context “... der zur Zeit des vorbetenden Baruch desolate Zustand des Tempels.” Steck, Baruch, 42.

### 3.2 Language and motifs

It is not my intention to be exhaustive here; my scope in this section is to demonstrate some examples of how the Book of Baruch is close to Jeremiah, while at the same time being quite different from it. This procedure points to *two attitudes combined*: on the one hand taking the prophet's words and ideas as inspiration and model (cf. already above in 2.1 the common elements), on the other hand developing its own thoughts and expressions.<sup>40</sup>

The king at the very end of the Davidic dynasty is Jehoiachin, exiled to Babylon in 597 BCE, and pardoned in 561 BCE by Nebuchadrezzar's successor Evil-Merodach. Whereas in the Greek text of 2 Kings his name is, like that of his father, Ἰοακίμ,<sup>41</sup> the name Jer-LXX uses for him is mainly Ἰεχονίας, which corresponds much more closely to the Hebrew original.<sup>42</sup> Baruch 1:3, 9 uses the same name, and may have taken it from Jeremiah.<sup>43</sup> This is quite probable, as the author of Baruch often uses Jeremiah as a source.

Some further common features are: (i) The pairing of “house Israel ... (and) house Judah” is typical for Jeremiah.<sup>44</sup> The only other passages using it in the same sense, to link both parts of the people within one verse, are Zechariah 8:13 and Baruch 2:26. As Zechariah depends on the Book of Jeremiah<sup>45</sup> and the Book of Baruch rarely uses Zechariah, once again the Book of Baruch apparently seems to draw on Jeremiah. (ii) The expression לב רע “evil heart” occurs six times in Jeremiah, and elsewhere only twice, both in Proverbs.<sup>46</sup> The Book of Baruch uses the same phraseology as Jeremiah in Baruch 1:22 and 2:8. (iii) The exhorta-

**40** The judgment of Meyer, Baruch, 590, “Kein Satz im Buch ist originell”, has to be relativized. As the parts on Baruch's theology and on the role of Jerusalem in Baruch above showed, the Book of Baruch has specific ideas, phrases, and emphases that testify to a genuine message. Häusl, Kunderin, 114, notes the new combinations and different contexts of Baruch.

**41** 4 Kgdms 24:6, 8, and various times till 25:27.

**42** The passages are Jer 22:24, 28; 24:1; 34:20; 35:4 and 36:2 (in the numbering of the LXX). The King's name in Hebrew varies; it is normally rendered as יהויכין, e.g., in Jer 52:31 (dependent on its source 2 Kings 25:27), but there are by-forms like יויכין (Ezek 1:2), כנייה (only Jer 22:24, 28, and 37:1), יכניה (thus six times in Jer, starting with Jer 27:20, and besides 1 Chron 3:16–17 and Esther 2:6), and יכניהו (only Jer 24:1).

**43** Other options are the occurrences of the Greek name Ἰεχονίας for the Judean King at the end of the Davidic monarchy in 1 Chron 3:16; 2 Chron 36:8–9; 1 Esd 1:9, 32; 8:89; and Esth 1:1.

**44** Stipp, Konkordanz, 64, lists eight occurrences in Jeremiah, between 3:18 and 33:14; the sequence of both expressions may vary.

**45** Nurmela, Prophets, among others, argues for this direction of dependence.

**46** For the passages, see Stipp, Konkordanz, 73. Proverbs 25:20 can also be interpreted as “sad heart”; then Prov 26:23 would be the only instance sharing with Jeremiah and Baruch the ethical sense of this phrase.

tion to serve the Babylonian king (most markedly in Jer 27:6–14) occurs again in Baruch, there as a desired attitude (Bar 1:12).<sup>47</sup> Undoubtedly there are *many similarities* in language and ideas between the Books of Jeremiah and Baruch.<sup>48</sup> Sometimes the shared vocabulary is even exclusive, which underlines the enormous influence of the Book of Jeremiah on Baruch and that the Book of Jeremiah was an important source for Baruch.

Yet, Baruch is also *distinct from Jeremiah*. This starts with the very opening of the books. Jeremiah begins with “The words ...” (Jer 1:1), only later on mentioning written documents (e.g., Jer 29:1; 30:2). Baruch starts with “And these are the words of the scroll/letter...”, by this already indicating its different literary character.<sup>49</sup> The Book of Jeremiah uses the parallelism of שמע “hear, listen” and נטה און (hiphil) “bend the ear” exclusively negated and in this sequence,<sup>50</sup> differently from all other biblical books. The prayer in Baruch 2:16 does not side with the Jeremianic tradition, but sticks to the common usage: “Bend, o Lord, your ear, and hear!”, which is in the *obverse arrangement, and positive*.

*Intercession* is another issue that unites and divides the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah. We find prayer on behalf of foreigners in both books: in Jeremiah 29:7 for the welfare of the city where the exiles have been deported, and in Baruch 1:11 for the King Nebuchadrezzar and his “son” Belshazzar. Distinctive, however, is intercession for the people themselves. Whereas God prohibits Jeremiah from praying for his people on several occasions (see above 2.3), the exiles ask in Baruch 1:13 “... and pray also for us to the Lord our God” in their document sent to Jerusalem. This indicates a complete change in the relationship with God. Formerly it was not possible to address him, pleading forgiveness for sins, not even by the great intercessors of the past.<sup>51</sup> Now there is confidence that the priests and people of Jerusalem can achieve once again God’s mercy for the exiled ones and their iniquities.

Jeremiah is, uniquely, called to be a “prophet for the nations”, and this mirrors the *international, open aspect* of his book, which attributes salvation even to

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47 Asurmendi, Baruch, 196, sees in Jeremiah’s “option for submission to the Babylonians” the starting point for Baruch. Marttila, Power, 108, interprets it thus: “Baruch recommends political quietism.”

48 For further points of contact, see Corley, Transformation, 240–46.

49 Schreiner, Baruch, 45.

50 Stipp, Konkordanz, 139.

51 Jer 15:1 mentions Moses and Samuel. They, too, like Jeremiah himself, would not have been able to change God’s mind in favor of the people.

people outside of the Israelite community.<sup>52</sup> The Book of Baruch does not follow this orientation, as is made clear in Baruch 4:25: “... Your enemy has persecuted you, but you will soon see his destruction and step upon their necks.” The last phrase, indicating such submission and violent humiliation of the enemy, is unimaginable in Jeremiah.<sup>53</sup>

Another motif separating the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah is the issue of *guilt*. Jeremiah 5:1–5; 6:13 and several other texts in Jeremiah lay blame on all the people, without exception. In Baruch, there is an ambiguity in the confession, “we have sinned before you” (3:2), as those praying refer to themselves two verses later as “the children of those who sinned before you” (3:4) and declare afterwards that they have distanced themselves from “all the iniquity of our parents who have sinned before you” (3:7). This may be interpreted as creating a divide between the sinful former generations and their present offspring, who do not engage in the vices of the past.<sup>54</sup>

It is always tricky to argue with “*lacunae*”. In Baruch, the Davidic dynasty is not important for its author.<sup>55</sup> This is quite different in Jeremiah, where it has a prominent place in several instances<sup>56</sup> and a new future “David” is promised (Jer 30:9).

On the various levels of expressions, ideas, key themes used, there are common areas as well as *significant differences* between the Books of Baruch and Jeremiah. Taken together, this is a sign of Baruch’s dependence on Jeremiah and at the same time of its author’s desire to communicate a genuine, distinct message.

### 3.3 Communication structure, setting, and dynamic

This final topic of comparison encompasses various related aspects; therefore I deal with them together and treat the two books one after the other. The Book of

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<sup>52</sup> See esp. Jer 12:14–16; the end of 46:26; 48:47; 49:6, 39. Jeremiah is marked by its universal horizon: Fischer, *Horizonte*, and idem, *Blick*.

<sup>53</sup> Ballhorn, *Weisheit*, 277–78, addresses this issue under the heading “Verneinter Universalismus?”. However, Jeremiah also knows about bringing shame on former enemies (e.g., Jer 48:26) and about their destruction (the fall of Babylon, Jer 50–51, being a model case for it).

<sup>54</sup> Steck, *Apokryphe Baruchbuch*, 112. Similarly, and surprisingly, Jerusalem is portrayed as “completely innocent”: Caldich-Benages, *Jerusalem*, 159.

<sup>55</sup> Marttila, *Ideology*, 342–43, sees the Davidic dynasty as the “only noteworthy Dtr view that is missing” in Baruch.

<sup>56</sup> E.g., the promises in Jer 17:25; 23:5–6; 33:15–17, 20–21, 25–26; the exhortation in 22:2, etc.

Jeremiah is mainly presented by a “*narrator*”. In Jeremiah 1:1–3, he introduces the reader to contents, significant individuals, time, and a final event. He distributes the voices of the characters, for example, in Jeremiah 1:4 to the prophet Jeremiah (“... to me”), and in 7:2 to God, etc. At the end of the book, in Jeremiah 52, he narrates the fall of Jerusalem, slightly varied with respect to its source of 2 Kings 24:18–25:30. The corpus of the book is filled with speeches and narrations; the “implied audience” is not directly addressed.

The *setting* of Jeremiah is within a time frame from 626 to 587 BCE, mostly in Jerusalem. There are deviations from this, the longest one in Jeremiah 40–44 which deals with the aftermath of the destruction, focusing on the group fleeing to Egypt. The *dynamic* of Jeremiah shows a clear development towards the negative ending. In the first half, options are still open;<sup>57</sup> in Jeremiah 25 divine judgment is announced and from Jeremiah 36 onward it takes place in the foreseen order. The final chapter stresses Jerusalem’s downfall, which has already been reported in Jeremiah 39.

It is quite different with the Book of Baruch. Its *communication structure*, especially at the beginning, is very complicated.<sup>58</sup> In Baruch 1:3 Baruch reads a scroll; the response of the listeners leads them to support those in Jerusalem (1:5–10), to ask for their prayers (1:11–13) and to demand their reading of the same “book” there (1:14).<sup>59</sup> The confession starts in 1:15 with a report, but switches in 2:11 to addressing God directly. From 3:9 onwards Israel is the addressee; within that, Jerusalem starts to speak in 4:9, and is herself addressed in 4:30 and the following verses. As a surprise, *God enters the scene* in 4:34 with “I”—the only occurrence in the whole book.<sup>60</sup>

The “book” thus appears as an *intricate mixture* of a prayer of confession (Bar 1:15–3:8), an instruction on wisdom, identified with eternal law (3:9–4:4), and exhortations to various addressees (4:5–5:9). One main focus

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57 Stulman, *Order*, has convincingly explained the relationship of the two halves of Jeremiah, attributing to the first part (Jer 1–25) the heading “death and dismantling of Judah’s sacred world” (p. 23).

58 For Baruch’s special features in this regard, see Ballhorn, *Kommunikation*, esp. 236–43.

59 Haag, *Umkehrbekenntnis*, 87–88, and Asurmendi, *Baruch*, 193, present good reasons that the scroll/letter sent to Jerusalem (Bar 1:14) is identical with the one read by Baruch in Babylon (1:3).

60 Steck, *Apokryphe Baruchbuch*, 226, interprets this as a mistake of the author who was influenced by his source texts: “... daß an dieser Stelle stilwidrig sogar die Ich-Rede Gottes mit übernommen wird”. In my estimation, the use of the first person for God at this point heightens the authority of this consoling passage for Jerusalem, which is the first one ever in the book for her. The divine speech might even start earlier in 4:30, and last till v. 35; 4:36–5:9 often have “God” and are therefore better attributed to another speaker.

lies on “Israel” (3:9, 24; 4:5), also emphasized in its predilection (3:37; 5:7–9). The other focal point is Jerusalem; she receives a speaker’s role in 4:9 and various encouragements (from 4:30 onward). In contrast to Jeremiah, Baruch has a much more direct approach to its intended audience.

The *setting* of Baruch is similarly complex, and fictitious. Baruch 1:2 mentions the “fifth year” (see above 1.2) and the “seventh day of the month ... in which the Chaldeans had taken Jerusalem and burnt it with fire”. According to 2 Kings 25:9, the temple was burnt then, too; however, Baruch 1:14 presupposes its existence and its function as a place for reunions. Another tension is the *dichotomy in the locations*.<sup>61</sup> The scroll originates in Babylon, and there are various allusions to a situation of exile, most clearly in Baruch 3:7–8. On the other hand, the main focus lies on Jerusalem, as is visible in the direction of the narrative frame at the beginning and also in the development of the entire book, leading to her encouragement and renewed splendor.

“From the distress of the exiled Jews to rejoicing”<sup>62</sup> may summarize the *dynamic* of Baruch. At the beginning there are several indications of affliction: the exiles, the (need to) support, the reference to the burning of Jerusalem, the hints at calamity especially in the confessional prayer. In the middle section this atmosphere is already being overcome, and the last part ends with confidence and expectation of renewed glory.

The comparison of the Books of Jeremiah and Baruch in the aspects treated here reveals probably the *strongest differences*. With respect to their presentation and development, the two books share very little in common. Jeremiah is a prophetic book, full of speeches, accusations, and focused on understanding Jerusalem’s downfall and its implications. Baruch, on the other side, is more of a “wisdom” book, trying to foster hope and communicating more directly with the supposed addressees.

## 4 Conclusion: Simulated Similarities

The obvious linking of the Book of Baruch to that of Jeremiah by giving to its author and initial main figure the name of a “side character” from Jeremiah simulates *closeness* between the two books.<sup>63</sup> As seen above, this is true in various

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<sup>61</sup> Ballhorn, *Kommunikation*, 243–44, calls it “Doppelte Perspektive: Exil und Jerusalem”.

<sup>62</sup> Thus Corley, *Transformation*, 226.

<sup>63</sup> Feuerstein, *Nicht im Vertrauen*, 266, captures the delicate relationship well: “Baruch als Garant der Überlieferung des Jeremia und seiner Verkündigung kann sehr wohl als Verfasser eines solchen Textes gelten, bzw. anders herum, ein solcher Text verlangt nach einem Verfasser, von



respects. For some intentions, vocabulary and phrases, theology, etc. Baruch stands in the “footsteps” of the prophet Jeremiah and the book carrying his name.

Yet, there is also a *deliberate distancing* from Jeremiah in Baruch. Jeremiah does not occur in person; instead, Baruch receives the central role, becoming an author, prayer leader,<sup>64</sup> and an intermediary between those receiving revelation, like Moses and Jeremiah, and the people.<sup>65</sup> The choice of his person is very fortunate, as he is a witness and survivor of the worst catastrophe that befell Jerusalem.<sup>66</sup>

Besides the differences mentioned already, there are further distinct accents in Baruch, which *separate it from Jeremiah and show other interests*. The strong linking of wisdom and law<sup>67</sup> is absent from Jeremiah, but stays close to Sirach 24. On the other hand, the Book of Baruch does not care much about ethics or social behavior,<sup>68</sup> whereas Jeremiah insists on it (e.g., Jer 7:3, 5–6, 9).

The picture of the relationship between the Books of Jeremiah and Baruch is thus *ambivalent*. Baruch continues, in part, concerns of Jeremiah, such as prayer, conversion, insight into one’s guilt, and even expands these issues in its large penitential prayer, but it also has its own agenda. The Book of Jeremiah thus serves as a source of inspiration, becoming fruitful once again in Baruch.

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dem eine besondere Nähe zu Jeremia auch und gerade in dessen deuteronomistisch gefärbter Predigt bekannt ist.”

64 Ballhorn, Sekretär, 218–19.

65 Ballhorn, Weisheit, 262.

66 Haag, Umkehrbekenntnis, 96, sees Baruch’s role thus: “Als Sachwalter des Propheten und Überlebender des Zorngerichts Gottes an Zion/Jerusalem ist Baruch ein hochqualifizierter Zeuge und Ratgeber, der Israel am Anfang seines Weges in das “große Exil” mit dem Umkehrbekenntnis eine theologisch notwendige Glaubensweisung vermitteln will.”

67 Cf. Milani, Rilettura, 109–31, and de Vos, Forsaken.

68 Feuerstein, Nicht im Vertrauen, 288.

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