In 1992, Florentino García Martínez examined the implications of the Aramaic Enoch fragments for understanding the history of 1 Enoch.\footnote{F. García Martínez, “Contributions of the Aramaic Enoch Fragments to our Understanding of the Books of Enoch,” in *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran* (STDJ 9; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 45–96; originally published as “Estudios Qumránicos 1975–1985: Panorama Crítico (I),” *EstBíb* 45 (1987): 127–73; pp. 47–60 of the English version relate to AB.} In the section he devoted to AB, he raised an insightful question regarding the existence of a coherent astronomical book in Aramaic at an early period. Earlier, Milik had contended that a fully-coherent AB already existed in the late third century B.C.E., while in response Black argued that astronomical material in Aramaic existed only as scattered pieces of information, and that a full “astronomical book” was first produced by a Greek scribe, who collected various translated fragments and edited them into a more-or-less meaningful sequence.\footnote{The debate is neatly summarized by García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic*, 50–53.} García Martínez subsequently raised a series of additional questions with regard to AB. Although he provides no absolute answers to all the issues involved, García Martínez is inclined to accept Milik’s basic argument, if not all its details. He concludes that a coherent astronomical composition did exist at an early stage, although its identity as an apocalypse was only created later, through the addition of the narrative and admonition in chapters 80–81.

Since the publication of *Qumran and Apocalyptic*, the study of AB has made considerable progress. Two of the most important copies of 4QEnastr have been republished in the DJD series, together
with a substantial monograph dedicated to AB and its cultural roots. While Milik relied on the references to Enochic astronomical compositions in pseudo-Eupolemos and *Jub* 4:17ff in order to claim that a full AB already existed at an early stage, it is clear today that these references cannot be used to prove the actual extent of the early Enochic composition. Instead, attestation for the early existence of AB must be sought from within the textual witnesses themselves.

This is by no means an easy task. The text in AB is not uniform, since a great variance exists between the Aramaic fragments and the Geez text, especially with respect to lunar theory. Furthermore, being twice removed from the original (Aramaic-Greek-Geez), the Geez version is often awkward and muddled—to the extent that its original signification becomes nearly impossible to reconstruct. In several cases it must be assumed that later Ethiopic authors modified the Geez text, requiring an additional consideration of traditional Ethiopic interpretations of the Enochic text. A basic clarification of the nature of the text of AB in its various versions is thus called for as a prerequisite for the present discussion.

Milik has demonstrated the resemblance between the Aramaic fragments from Qumran and the Geez of *1 Enoch* 76–79, 82. Since

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5 Despite the views prevalent in earlier research, we concur here with VanderKam’s opinion that the Geez version was produced from a Greek translation and that the Ethiopic scribe did not have access to an Aramaic original: see J.C. VanderKam, “The Textual Base for the Ethiopic Translation of 1 Enoch,” in his *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (JSJSup 62; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 380–95.