The conventional title, Genesis Apocryphon, assigned by the original editors, is a misnomer; it says nothing about the literary form of the writing. Although the Aramaic at times translates literally the Hebrew text of Genesis (e.g., Gn. 14.1–24 in 1QapGen xxi.23–xxii.24), it more frequently renders the biblical text freely. Phrases literally translated then become part of an expanded paraphrase. Hence, the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) is scarcely a Targum, not even one like the later paraphrastic Targums. Some of its expansions resemble elements found at times in classical midrashim of the later rabbinic period, but as a whole the text is not a midrash on Genesis. It is a form of parabiblical literature, resembling Jubilees (on which it depends); part of 1 Enoch, and Pseudo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities. A more appropriate title was suggested by B. Mazar, “The Book of the Patriarchs,” which in Aramaic would be Ketav Avahata.

The Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) narrates in expanded form the story of two biblical patriarchs: Noah (x–xvii?) and Abram (xviii–xxii). [See Abraham; Noah.] The first well-preserved part recounts Lamech’s anxiety about the conception of the remarkable child, Noah, born to his wife Bitenosh, and his consultation of his father Methuselah and of Enoch (i–iii). It then tells of Noah’s family and God’s message about the Deluge, Noah and his family’s entrance into the ark and eventual sacrifices (vi–vii, vi–xi, xvii–xviii) have preserved a few words or a few lines. To this text also belongs 1Q20 (“Apocalypse de Lamech”), which in a recent identification by Bruce Zuckerman and Michael O. Wise has been shown to be part of column 0, as well as the seven-line so-called Trever fragment, now lost, which still awaits official publication.

Written in a late Herodian script, this copy is dated palaeographically to 25 BCE through 50 CE (plus or minus twenty-five years). It has not been subjected to radiocarbon dating. [See Carbon-14 Dating.] That date may also serve as the time of composition of the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen), because this copy may be the autograph; no other copy has been found. If it is not the autograph, then the date of composition might be pushed back to the early first century BCE because of its literary dependence on Jubilees and 1 Enoch. L. F. Hartman (Catholic Biblical Quarterly 28, 1966, 497–498) has shown that the chronology of Abram’s life is a development of Genesis 16.3 but closely tied to the “weeks” chronology of Jubilees. The text was composed in the Palestinian form of Middle Aramaic now known from other Qumran texts, which is transitional between the Aramaic of Daniel and that of the earliest of the classical Targums (Onkelos and Jonathan; Kutscher, 1958, p. 22).

The better preserved second part paraphrases the story of Abram in six sections:

- Abram in Ur and Haran (xviii–?)
- Abram in Canaan (xviii–xxi.10a)
  - Journey to Bethel (xix.6)
  - Journey from Bethel to Hebron (xix.7–10a)
- Abram in Egypt (xix.10b–xx.33a)
  - His descent into Egypt because of the famine in Canaan (xix.10b–13)
  - His dream about the cedar and date palm on entering Egypt (xix.14–23a)
  - The visit to Abram by three Egyptian courtiers (xx.23b–27)
  - Sarai’s beauty described to Pharaoh by the courtiers (xx.2–8a)
  - Sarai’s abduction to Pharaoh and Abram’s grief (xx.8b–11)
- Abram’s prayer that Sarai not be defiled (xx.12–16a)
  - A plague strikes Pharaoh and his household (xx.16b–21a)
Pharaoh’s cure by Abram’s prayer and exorcism
(xx.21b–31a)
Pharaoh sends Sarai and Abram out of Egypt
(xx.31b–33a)
- Abram in the Promised Land (xx.33b–xxi.22)
  Abram’s return with Lot to Bethel (xx.33b–xxi.4)
  Lot’s departure from Abram and settlement in
  Sodom (xx.5–7)
  Abram’s dream about the Promised Land (xxi.8–14)
  Abram’s exploration of the extent of the Promised
  Land (xxi.15–22)
- Abram’s defeat of the four invading kings (xxi.23–
  xxii.26)
  The war of the four kings against the five Canaanite
  kings (xxi.23–34a)
  Lot is taken captive (xxi.34b–xxii.1a)
  Abram learns of Lot’s capture and his pursuit of the
  four kings (xxii.1b–12a)
  The kings of Sodom and Salem meet Abram on his
  return from the defeat of the kings (xxii.12b–17)
  Abram’s refusal to retain any of the booty of the king
  of Sodom (xxii.18–26)
- Abram’s vision of God, who promises him an heir
  (xxii.27–7)
  Eliezer will not inherit him (xxii.27–34) [lost]

Despite claims to the contrary, the Genesis Apocryphon
(QapGen) is not a sectarian composition; it contains
nothing related to the tenets or the dualistic theology
of the Qumran community such as are expressed in its sec-
tarian writings (rule books, hymnbooks, the War Scroll,
[IQM] or the pesharim). Moreover, this text is composed
in Aramaic, whereas the Qumran sectarian writings were
composed in a form of postbiblical Hebrew. The Genesis
Apocryphon represents, then, a text composed by Jews,
which was found acceptable for reading and study in
the Qumran community. Although it does show some relation
to Jubilees and part of I Enoch, that relationship ex-
plains only why it would have appealed to the members
of the Qumran community. As do those writings, the
Genesis Apocryphon reveals a way that biblical writings
themselves were being interpreted among Palestinian
Jews of the pre-Christian era. The text paraphrases the
biblical story of two paragons of righteousness: Noah (is-
ha’adiq, Gn. 6.9) and Abram (va-yehshevka lo tsedagah,
Gn. 15.6).

Two elements of the Genesis Apocryphon are notewor-
thly: the insert into the Genesis story about Sarai’s beauty
(QapGen xx.2–8a) and the insert about Abram’s explora-
tion of the Promised Land (QapGen xxii.15–22). The first
insert enables Egyptian courtiers who have visited Abram
to laud Sarai’s extraordinary beauty before the Pharaoh
so that he abducts Sarai to be his wife. The poetic ac-
count of her beauty has been related to the literary genre
known in Arabic literature as watsf, “description,” which
extols the personal charms of a loved one. Outside of the
Song of Songs, this may be the only instance of such a
form in Jewish writings. It is far more extensive than any
of the statements about Sarai’s beauty in later rabbinic
literature (B.T., Sanhedrin 8.69b; Tanhuma, Lekh 5; Gen-
esis Rabbah 58.1).

The second insert tells how Abram went from Bethel,
where he was living, to explore the land that God in a
dream promised to give him and his posterity. God had
instructed Abram to climb up to Ramath-Hazor, north of
Bethel, to the highest spot in the Judean mountains, from
which he would gaze to the east, south, west, and north.
Abram did that on the day following his dream and gazed
from the River of Egypt (the Nile) to Mount Lebanon and
Senir (Mount Hermon), from the Great Sea (the Mediterra-
nean) to Hauran (the plateau between the Pharpark and
Yarmuk Rivers), at all the land of Gebal (Seir) as far as
Kadesh, and at all the Great Desert (Syrian Desert) to the
east of the Hauran as far as the Euphrates. God told Ab-
ram to travel through this area, which he proceeded to
do. The insert itself (QapGen xxii.15–22) tells how Abram
started at the Gihon River (part of the Nile), moved along
the (Mediterranean) Sea to the Mount of the Ox (Taurus
mountain range), then from the Great Sea to the Euphrates
River, then down along the Euphrates to the Red Sea
(Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean), then along the Red Sea
to the tongue of the Reed Sea (tongue-shaped Gulf of
Suez), then back to the Gihon River, whence he started.
Then he returned to Hebron, where he feasted with his
Amorite friends. What is noteworthy in this description
of Abram’s travels is the distinction of Yamma simmoqa,
“Red Sea,” from the lissam yam suf, “the tongue of the
Reed Sea.” Josephus (Jewish Antiquities 1.39) also knows
that the Tigris and the Euphrates empty into the Red Sea
(Erythraan ithalassan), as do other ancient writers. Also re-
markable is the geographical extent of what the Promised
Land was to be.

Likewise important is the treatment of the king of
Sodom and Melchizedek in the Genesis Apocryphon
(QapGen) xxii.12–23, which purports to be a rendering of
Genesis 14.17–24. First, it tells of the king of Sodom
coming to “Salem, that is Jerusalem” (QapGen xxii.13).
This equation stands in contrast to Hebrews 7.1–2, where
Melchizedek himself is called “the king of Salem,” which
is said to mean “king of peace,” a popular etymology cur-
rent in the first century CE. The identification of “Salem”
with “Jerusalem” is to be traced to the tradition preserved
in Psalms 76.2, where Salem stands in parallelism to Zion
(cf. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 1.180). It stands in con-
flict, however, with the opinion of some modern scholars
(Hermann Gunke, W. F. Albright), who maintained that
Genesis 14.18–20 originally had nothing to do with Jerusalem. In the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) xxii.14–15, Melchizedek is said to have brought out “food and drink for Abram and all the men who were with him”; so the “bread and wine” of Genesis 14.18 are interpreted. This agrees with the paraphrase of this Genesis text in Josephus’s Jewish Antiquities 1.181 but differs from the sacrificial interpretation given to it by some patristic writers. Again, Genesis 14.20 records that after Melchizedek blessed Abram “he paid him a tithe of everything.” Ever since the time of Jerome (Epistles 73.6; Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 55.20), the ambiguity of the statement about tithes has been noted: Who paid whom? No subject of the verb is expressed in either the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint, and the subject of the preceding verb is Melchizedek. The Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) xxii.17, however, solves the problem: “And he gave him a tenth of all the flocks of the king of Elam and his confederates.” Thus Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek, and so the ambiguous text gets the same interpretation as Hebrews 7.2, where Abraham has been inserted.

When Melchizedek exercises his priestly office in blessing Abram, he invokes not “the most high God, the creator of heaven and earth” (Gn. 14.19) but “the most high God, lord of heaven and earth” (1QapGen xxii.16). The latter title is undoubtedly venerable in Jewish tradition but not often found (see Tb. 7.17; Septuagint mss. B.A [unfortunately not preserved in Tobit 14:4Q196–200]). It has its Greek counterpart in Matthew 11.25 and Luke 10.21. Lastly, when Abram swears that he will take none of the booty of the king of Sodom, he raises his hand “to the most high God, the lord of heaven and earth” (1QapGen xxii.21), and the Tetragrammaton of Genesis 14.22 (el YHVH d’elayon) is lacking. It thus confirms the suspicion of modern scholars who have regarded YHVH as a gloss in the Masoretic Text, since its counterpart is absent in the Septuagint and Peshitta.

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JOSEPH A. FITZMYER, S.J.

GENTILES. The view of the non-Jewish nations, known as gentiles, in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period embodies both the deprecation of paganism and the universalism inherent in prophetic teaching. This duality may already be illustrated in the later components of the Book of Isaiah, where the nations are esteemed as nothing before the Lord (Is. 40.17), yet the foreigner is beckoned not to remain separate but to join his covenant with Israel (Is. 56.3–8). Hellenistic Jewish literature comprises not only cosmopolitan works, such as the Letter of Aristeas, in which the Torah is portrayed as compatible with the finest gentile ethics and wisdom, but also works such as 3 Maccabees, which has a point of view characterized as narrowly Jewish and antigentile. Among Judean writings the latter view is most prominent in the Psalms of Solomon, where the depiction of gentiles reflects the oppression by the Roman conquerors. Jubilees (23.23) likewise describes the “sinners of the nations” who have no mercy for old or young. Qumran writings have many affinities with these works and share their pejorative estimate of pagan culture. Among heathen “abominations,” Temple Scroll singles out their burial of the dead in homes (11Q19 xlviii.12), the cult of Molech (lx.17), and necromancy (lx.19). The savagery of the Kittim, who are generally identified as the Romans, is vividly portrayed in Pesher Habakkuk (1QpHab).

As one might expect, the deprecation of pagans is most pronounced in the War Scroll (1QM), where expressions such as “nations of wickedness” and “nations of futility”