

Chapter 3: Genesis Pseudepocryphon

Introduction:

3.1 THE GENESIS APOCRYPHON

As one of the first seven scrolls discovered in the Judean desert beginning in 1947, the Genesis Apocryphon is one of the more well-studied works among the Dead Sea Scrolls. When the scroll was initially analyzed by scholars, it could not be fully unrolled and only a small portion of the outer layer of the scroll could be read. These visible portions, however, written in Aramaic, referenced the ante-diluvian Lamech, the father of Noah, and his wife, Batenosh, known from the book of Jubilees. The text appeared to be written in the first-person from the perspective of Lamech leading Trevor to conclude that the scroll was a copy of the so-called “Book of Lamech” listed as an apocryphal work by a 7th century CE Greek canon list.¹ Once the scroll was completely unrolled, however, it became obvious that the scope of the scroll contained more than just a first-person account from Lamech and instead contained additional first-person accounts from figures found in the Genesis stories including Noah and Abram.

1. This fact led Trevor to refer to the scroll as the “Ain Feshkha Lamech Scroll” and J.T. Milik to refer to it as the Apocalypse of Lamech for the publication of the fragment in DJD 1. See John C. Trever, “Identification of the Aramaic Fourth Scroll from ‘Ain Feshkha,” *BASOR* 115, 1949, 8–10 and “Apocalypse de Lamech” in DJD I, 86–87

Thus, the more descriptive title, *A Genesis Apocryphon*, was given to the scroll by Avigad and Yadin in 1956 for the publication of its *editio princeps* in 1956.²

Although much of the scroll was very badly damaged, illegible, or missing,

This chapter has three parts.

First, I will describe the ways that the Genesis Apocryphon is typically treated with respect to the Bible and how this approach, fits into the paradigm of "memory."

Second, I will describe recent work on the Genesis Apocryphon with respect to literary approaches to the work and how these, too, can be incorporated into a holistic approach to Genesis Apocryphon

Finally, I will discuss Genesis Apocryphon as an example of pseudepigraphy and argue that this fits into a memory paradigm.

The advantage that Memory Studies has, in this case is that it offers a way to talk about the manifold ways that Genesis Apocryphon both builds from its social location and speaks back into it at a number of discursive levels and into a number of discursive spaces.

2. Heb: מגילה חיצונית לבראשית. See Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea* (1956). While the name Genesis Apocryphon remains in wide use, it is notable that the name has been criticized and a number of, perhaps more descriptive, titles have been suggested: "Book of the Patriarchs" (Mazar), "Memoirs of the Patriarchs" (Gaster), ספר אבות (Flusser), and כתב אבהן (Milik; note also Fitzmyer's emended כתב אבהתא).

Bibliography

- Avigad, Nahman, and Yigael Yadin. *A Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea*. 1956.
- Barthélemy, Dominique, and Józef T. Milik, eds. *Qumran Cave 1*. DJD I. Oxford: Clarendon, 1955.
- Trever, John C. "Identification of the Aramaic Fourth Scroll from 'Ain Feshkha." *BASOR* 115, 1949, 8–10.