The book of Genesis occupies a prominent place in the Qumran collection of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This is true for Genesis as simply a scriptural text, but also as Genesis is reworked, rewritten, and interpreted in other Second Temple Jewish works found at Qumran. This article will by necessity proceed through the various texts individually, discussing each one separately. I will then tie the texts and their themes together at the end of the article.

**Genesis Manuscripts**

Nineteen fragmentary manuscripts of Genesis itself were found in caves 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 at Qumran. The oldest, 6QpaleoGen, written in paleo-Hebrew script, dates paleographically between 250–150 BCE, while the latest, 4QGen, dates between 30–100 CE. The nineteen manuscripts between them cover parts of almost all the chapters of Genesis, beginning with 1:1–28 (4QGen) and ending with 50:26(?) (4QpaleoGen-Exod). In addition, four other fragmentary manuscripts of Genesis were found in other find sites in

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1 This article will refer almost entirely to the collection of manuscripts found in the eleven caves near the ruins of Qumran. Other Judean Desert find sites will be referred to occasionally.


the Judean Desert (two from Wadi Murabba’at, one from Wadi Sdeir, and one from Masada). These manuscripts all date paleographically to the late first – early second century CE. All of these manuscripts conform to the proto-Masoretic text-type in Genesis.

The relatively large number of manuscripts of Genesis preserved in the Judean Desert caves speaks to its importance as a scriptural text in the Second Temple period. We now turn to the use of Genesis in other compositions discovered in the Qumran caves, a use so extensive that it establishes Genesis as a seminal text for the sect that preserved the Qumran scrolls.

Rewritten Bible

Reworked Pentateuch

The first group of text reusing the book of Genesis for exegetical purposes is the group known as Reworked Pentateuch. The five manuscripts in this group, 4Q158 and 4Q364–367, are not copies of one another, but differ in extent and purpose. 4Q364 and 4Q365 self-present as complete manuscripts of the Pentateuch, albeit with a hyperexpanded text, while 4Q158, 4Q366 and 4Q367 are collections of Pentateuchal passages, some-

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5 Webster, “Chronological Index,” 438, 440.