sophic and kabbalistic ideas. In a remarkable aside, he relates part of a disquisition on the tabernacle cherubs that he allegedly delivered "in the palace of the pope." Elsewhere, he tells of a conversation with a Christian cleric regarding a midrash about the "Suffering Servant poems" in Isaiah.

Bibliography: ■ E. Lawee, "Graven Images, Astromagical Cherubs, and Mosaic Miracles," *Spec.* 81 (2006) 754–95.

Eric Lawee

Abrabanel, Isaac ben Judah

→Abarbanel, Isaac ben Judah

Abraham

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

1. Etymology. The name Abraham (MT *ʾAbrāhām* and *ʾAbrām*; LXX Αβρααμ and Αβραμ; Arab. *Ibrāhīm*; etymologically identical with *ʾĀbirām*) is most probably West-Semitic in origin and represents a name-clause with the meaning, "the (clan) father/ancestor is exalted/eminent" (formed from *ʾb*[*y*] "father/ancestor" and *rw/ym* "to be exalted," cf. Gröndahl: 315, 360; Huffmon: 154, 261–62). Accordingly, the original form is Abram. The etymology suggests the existence of the same ancestor cult in early Israel that was widespread throughout the ancient Near East (Schmidt), though suppressed in the wake of the Deuteronomistic movement (cf. Deut 18:9–14). The longer form of the name, Abraham, seems to be, as Gen 17:5 presents, a name change for theological reasons without a philological (onomastic) basis (see below).

2. Past Research. The scholarly study of the figure of Abraham is closely aligned with that of the other patriarchs. Therefore, the following review treats only the most essential points of interest.

Since the inception of source criticism, scholars have increasingly recognized that the traditions in the Pentateuch do not provide a reliable basis for a critical reconstruction of Israel's origins. Summarizing the critical work on the Pentateuch in the 19th century, Julius Wellhausen (1905: 316–26) remarked that the Pentateuchal sources project various conceptions from later periods back to Israel's beginnings; this applies equally to the Abraham traditions.

In contrast to Wellhausen, Hermann Gunkel (1910: XIX–XXVI, XXXIX–LIII), an exponent of the research on Saga-History, was confident that the literary tradition could be used to reconstruct the figures of the oral tradition, which purportedly contains many reminiscences from pre-Israelite times. Gunkel's approach was continued by Albrecht Alt (1966a and 1966b), Gerhard von Rad (1966) and Martin Noth (1972), who argued that tradition history could establish a semi-nomadic milieu of the patriarchs and a "religion of the fathers" practiced by them. Such research into the oral precursors of the presumed earliest source, the Yahwist, understood the oral traditions surrounding Abraham to be later than the traditions surrounding Isaac and Jacob.

These attempts to trace the patriarchal traditions far back into the early history of Israel fuelled the concern to accumulate more historical information. With this aim in view, scholars sought ancient Near Eastern analogies to corroborate elements of the Abraham and other ancestral stories. Some found such corroboration in West-Semitic personal names in the Mari texts from Old Babylonian period (Huffmon) and evidence in Nuzi for the juridical institution that a female slave could bear children for her mistress (cf. ANET 220; Gen 16:1–4; Gen 30:1–13; see Speiser). Using such analogies, some argued for a dating of the patriarchs in the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, rather than the second (Albright 1946; Cross; de Vaux).

Disappointments followed soon thereafter. Thomas L. Thompson and John Van Seters (1975) voiced penetrating criticisms with regard to the search for analogies, which was becoming ever more careless. Moreover, they called for a more intensive analysis of the texts in Genesis. Although the approach of illuminating the Abraham traditions with external evidence from the ancient Near East is still practiced (Kitchen; Millard/Wiseman 1983), the literary analysis of the text of Genesis has long since occupied the focus of attention (Blum 1984; Carr; Köckert 1988; Levin; Van Seters 1992). In the course of this research, Abraham has become thus 500 years – if not a whole millennium – younger. His status as chief patriarch appears to be a later development still. Even the sequence of the periods of the patriarchs and the Exodus – and the conception of a unified salvation history – is difficult to conceive as a pre-exilic development (Schmid).

3. Biblical Evidence. The Abraham story is found in Gen 12:1–25:18. After this literary unit, the Hebrew Bible contains no more stories about Abraham. This agrees with the frequency with which the forms Abram and Abraham appear: the former occurs 61 times, while one encounters the latter 175 times. In Gen 17:5, Abram's name is changed to Abraham. Aside from Gen 11:26, 27, 29, 31,

1 Chr 1 : 27 and Neh 9 : 7, the form Abram is employed exclusively in Gen 12 : 1–17 : 5. The form Abraham appears 108 times in Gen 17 : 5–25 : 18 and 25 times in Gen 25 : 19–36 : 43.

References to Abraham accumulate again only in Exodus and Deuteronomy. In these books, Abraham is, however, mentioned solely in the stereotypical triad, "(God of) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Israel instead of Jacob in Exod 32 : 13 and in 1 Chr 1 : 34; 29 : 18; 2 Chr 30 : 6). This triad appears 16 times (Exod 2 : 24; 3 : 6, 15, 16; 4 : 5; 6 : 3, 8; 32 : 12; 33 : 1; Deut 1 : 8; 6 : 10; 9 : 5, 27; 29 : 12; 30 : 20; 34 : 4; also Num 32 : 11; similarly Lev 26 : 42), while otherwise one finds only scattered references to the patriarchs. All of the mentioned references belong to texts of advanced Deuteronomism, already influenced by the Priestly theology of promise in the patriarchal narratives. This is supported by the fact that Abraham is only mentioned in late supplements to the Deuteronomistic History (Josh 24 : 2–3; 1 Kgs 18 : 36; 2 Kgs 13 : 23). The image of Abraham in Josh 24 : 2–3 is already developing toward that found in *Jub*. 11–12, which depicts Abraham departing for Canaan in order to abandon the idolatry practiced by his family.

The prophetic writings mention Abraham seven times (Isa 28 : 22; 41 : 8 [Abraham as a friend of God, cf. also 2 Chr 20 : 7]; Isa 51 : 2; 63 : 16; Jer 33 : 26; Ezek 33 : 24; Mic 7 : 20). All of these occurrences belong to exilic or later expansions of the prophetical books. These texts present Abraham as the recipient of the divine promise, according to which his progeny would become a great people. Abraham, as with the other patriarchs, is a representative of the "days of old" (Mic 7 : 20). In gradually becoming a figure of mythical proportions that established Israel, he provides the theological foundation for all later periods. As the bearer of the promise, he can be compared only to David (Jer 33 : 26; Ps 47 : 10 [MT]; Ps 105 : 6, 9, 42).

Finally, the Septuagint contains several other references to Abraham (Add Esth 4 : 17–18 [= Vg. 13 : 15]; 4 : 17y [= Vg. 14 : 18]; Jdt 8 : 26 [= Vg. 8 : 22]; Tob 4 : 12; 14 : 7; 1 Macc 2 : 52; 12 : 21 [Jews and Spartans from the lineage of Abraham]; 2 Macc 1 : 2; 3 Macc 6 : 3; 4 Macc 6 : 17, 22; 7 : 19; 13 : 17; 14 : 20; 15 : 28; 16 : 20, 25; 17 : 6; Job 42 : 17c [Job as the descendant of Abraham]; Sir 44 : 19–21 [MT and LXX]; Bar 2 : 34; Pr Azar 35 [= LXX Dan 3 : 35]; without explicitly mentioning his name: Wis 10 : 5; cf. 4 Macc 9 : 21; 18 : 1, 20, 23).

All of the mentioned texts strongly suggest that the figure of Abraham did not develop into a theologically important figure until later periods of Israelite history. These developments presuppose a version of the Abraham story already dominated by programmatic accounts of promise and its endangerment. This increasing emphasis on Abraham has also influenced the development of the Primeval History. Though the latter once existed as an independent account of primeval origins, it has now been brought into a linear historical relationship with the Abraham narrative in Genesis, connecting the history of the world's beginnings (Gen 1–11) with that of Israel's beginnings (Gen 12 : 1–25 : 18).

4. The Abraham Story in Gen 12 : 1–25 : 18. Although it is no longer possible to precisely reconstruct the pre-exilic remains of the Abraham story, they are most likely to be found in the non-Priestly portions of texts such as Gen *12 : 1–8; *13 : 7–18; *16; 18 : 1–15; *19; *21 : 1–7; *25 : 8, 11. Initially, such earlier material probably served the sole purpose of imparting to the Jacob story a longer genealogical prehistory with familiar narrative features (relatives in the Aramean region, wanderings, barrenness of the ancestress, the mistress giving birth to a son). At some point, the story of Abraham was augmented with narratives modeled on the older narratives concerning Isaac (cf. Gen 12 : 10–20; 20; 21 : 22–34 with Gen 26). Yet what allowed the Patriarch to exercise theological influence was not the coordination of his depiction with those of his progeny, but the gradual expansion of the Abraham story through ever increasing focus on God's promise to (and eventual covenant with) him.

The introduction to the narrative in Gen *12 : 1–8 depicts Abraham coming from the space and time of primeval history and wandering in a strange land. Formerly, this text was thought to be the Yahwist's programmatic introduction to the patriarchal story, yet it is increasingly difficult to ascribe the network of promises beginning here to a single source document. According to Gen 12 : 2–3, Abraham will become a great "nation" (*gôy*, not *ʿam* ["people"]), be given a "great name" (cf. Gen 6 : 4; Gen 11 : 4), and be given superlative divine protection and blessing. The promise concludes with an unclear statement regarding the "clans of the earth" (*kol mišpĕḥot hāʾădāmâ*). Though some, following the LXX and/or Paul (Gal 3 : 8) have understood this to be a promise that the clans of the earth shall "be blessed through Abraham," others have understood this promise (on analogy with Gen 48 : 20) to be a promise that Abraham will be so blessed that other nations will "bless themselves by Abraham," that is look to him as a paradigm of blessing (Blum 1984). In either case, these promises, apparently modeled on similar royal promises (e.g., Ps 72 : 17), give support and hope to exiles and later Jewish audiences after the loss of their national existence and the attendant threats to their religious and ethnical identity.

The promise to Abraham that he would become a great nation seems, however, to remain unfulfilled. Abraham and Sarah's deliverance from the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen 12 : 10–20) is depicted according to the pattern of the story of the

plagues in Exodus. Despite the burlesque tone, the danger to the ancestress has a quite serious background (cf. Gen 20:7 for a variant, Abraham presented as a prophet [cf. Ps 105:15 = 1 Chr 16:22]). So too, the problems in Gen 13 between Abraham and Lot regarding the distribution of land endanger the promise. What should become of the bearer of promise who henceforth settles in the much less fertile South near Hebron? In stark contrast to the imperiled stagnation, the promise is renewed and increased infinitely in Gen 13:14–17. The relatively modest land promise in Gen 13:17 originally continued directly with the story of the birth of Ishmael in Gen 16, which represents the first fulfillment – even if it is not the envisioned one. Later readers, however, have inserted material into the narrative, probably first Gen 15 and then Gen 14.

In Gen 14, one of the later parts of the Abraham story, Abraham rescues Lot who has been taken captive in battles between legendary kings of Elam, Babylonia, Asia Minor and Syria-Palestine. Afterwards, Abraham accepts the blessing of Melchizedek, the king and priest from Salem (= Jerusalem) and grants him the gift of tithes (Gen 14:17–24). In this way, the story links Israel's Abrahamic beginning to the city of Jerusalem.

Gen 15, also an exilic or post-exilic text, returns to the theme of promise. In two scenes (Gen 15:1–6 and Gen 15:7–21), Abraham brings his concerns to God. In the first, he implies that Sarai's barrenness renders God's promise meaningless (Gen 15:2–3). God, however, brings Abraham to the starry heavens in order to provide him with a view of his future progeny. The doubting Abraham trusts. His trust is also given a name: he believes (*he'ĕmîn*), which is quite rare and late in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. God reckons this to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). Abraham believes here not without knowledge of the Torah, as Paul later thought (Rom 4; Gal 3:3–9). On the contrary, Abraham foreshadows faith and obedience as they will be taught and expected by the Torah.

In the second scene, Gen 15:7–21, however, Abraham does not yet believe everything. Here Abraham inquires skeptically and urgently about evidence for the land-promise made to him. The answer is sobering. The fulfillment will be preceded by 400 years of living as a stranger, which is an allusion to Israel's stay in Egypt (cf. Exod 12:40). Although Abraham will not witness the final realization of the land-promise, the promise does not diminish. God even reinforces it in a frightful way by employing the self-curse from the ancient Near East treaty ratification ceremonies (for the rite in various contexts, cf. Hallo 1997, 2000: I, 160–61; II, 214 = *TUAT* I/2, 181–82; cf. also 155–56). The implicit self-curse (cf. Deut 2:8; 4:31; 6:10; 7:8; 11:9, 21; 34:4 etc.) as an element of a covenant-ceremony stresses the reliability of God's promises to Abraham.

Gen 16, which probably belongs to the oldest layer of the Abraham story, tells of the birth of Hagar's son, Ishmael, who is recognized as the child of the infertile Sarah, but not as the son of promise. As Abraham's firstborn, however, he nevertheless has a share in the promise (cf. Gen 16:10 with Gen 13:16; 15:5; 17:2, 20).

In Gen 17, the Priestly version of the promise covenant, Abram becomes Abraham (interpreted as the "father of a multitude of nations," Gen 17:4–6) and Sarai becomes Sarah (interpreted as "princess of nations," Gen 17:15–16). Through these changes, the nations of the world form a large and all-embracing Abrahamic unity. This chapter also confirms the special role of Ishmael. Although he is not the recipient of the covenantal promise, he is the first one with whom Abraham performs the covenantal sign of circumcision. At the conclusion of the Abraham story, Isaac and Ishmael bury their father together (Gen 25:9–10). Thereafter, Ishmael's descendants are enumerated: 12 Arabian tribes (Gen 25:12–18). Here, the collective name "Arabians" does not appear, yet is employed often in later texts (cf. 2 Chr 9:14; Neh 4:1; Isa 13:20; Jer 25:24; Ezek 27:21).

The Priestly promise in Gen 17 is now placed before the non-Priestly account of God's promise of a son in Gen 18:1–15, presenting the latter account as an unfolding of God's covenant with Abraham. These paired promises of a son are then followed by several texts – late parts of the Abraham tradition – which depict Abraham playing a role among the nations and thus acting out his newly attained standing. In Gen 18:16–33, Abraham enjoys God's trust to such a great extent – a consequence of Gen 15:1–6 – that he can perform the role of an intercessor for the unrighteous in Sodom and Gomorrah. His intercession is, however, unsuccessful (Gen 19). Against the evil of this part of the world, even Abraham is powerless, yet by means of his intercession a righteous nation is saved from dubious wrongs (Gen 20; cf. esp. Gen 20:4, 7, 17).

It is astonishing how laconic the Abraham story is with regard to the realization of the promised son in Gen *21:1–7, the original continuation of Gen 18:1–15. Above all, it is the Priestly source that dominates the present text, followed by two remarks about the laughter that prompt the name Isaac (Gen 20:6); the plenary form of the name was probably *Yiṣḥāq-ʾēl* ("God laughs"). After the definitive separation between Isaac and Ishmael (Gen 21:8–21), as well as the proof for Abraham's cleverness in surviving among the foreign nations (Gen 21:22–34; cf. 26:26–33), something unimaginable happens; God himself calls the further fulfillment of the promise into question.

It is the inscrutable story of Abraham's temptation by God in Gen 22 (cf. Kundert: 29–82; Veijola). This text stands as the climax of the Abraham com-

position, linking in multiple ways with its beginning. Just as the story begins in Gen 12 : 1 ff. with, "Go … to the land that I will show you," so it ends with, "Go into the land Moriah [identified in 2 Chr 3 : 1 with the temple-mount in Jerusalem] and offer him [= Isaac], your only beloved son [Gen 22 : 2; cf. Gen 22 : 12], there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of" (Gen 22 : 2). The way that formerly began with great promise appears now to end, with God's requirement of the end of the promise. Abraham obeys once again. This story does not advocate a general replacement of human sacrifice with animal sacrifice (Gunkel; cf. Levenson). Nor is it a test of faith. Rather, it stresses the importance of obedience amidst unclarity. Abraham – and all of his descendants – learn anew the meaning of fearing God; allowing God to command and to act without demanding and explaining.

Abraham emerges from the trial with a new promise (Gen 22 : 15–18), which presupposes all of the great texts of promise in the Abraham story. God's oath, on the one hand, and Abraham's belief and obedience, on the other, are the pillars of the future of Israel. Gen 23 : 1–25 : 18 treats the necessary loose threads of the Abraham story so that the tale of blessing and promise can continue: the death of Sarah and the purchase of the cave of Machpelah as the family grave (Gen 23; the burial place as a foretoken of the future possession of land), the search for a bride for Isaac amongst the Mesopotamian relatives (Gen 24; YHWH as God of heaven and earth in Gen 24 : 3 as in Gen 14 : 19), the death and burial of Abraham, as well as the genealogies from Abraham's liaisons with Keturah and Hagar (Gen 25 : 1–18).

Bibliography: ■ W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore, Md. ^{2}1946). ■ W. F. Albright, "Abraham the Hebrew," *BASOR* 163 (1961) 36–54. ■ W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (London 1968). ■ A. Alt, "The God of the Fathers" in *Old Testament History and Religion* (New York 1966a) 1–77; trans. of id., *Der Gott der Väter* (BWANT III/12; Stuttgart 1929) = id., *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* 1 (München 1953) 1–78. ■ A. Alt, "The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine" in *Old Testament History and Religion* (New York 1966b) 133–69; trans. of id., "Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," *PJ* 35 (1939) 8–63 = id., *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* 1 (München 1953) 126–75. ■ E. Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984). ■ E. Blum, "Abraham. I. Altes Testament," *RGG*^{4} 1 (Tübingen 1998) 70–74. ■ D. M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis* (Louisville, Ky. 1996). ■ R. E. Clements, "ʾĀbrāhām," *TDOT* 1 (Grand Rapids, Mich.) 52–58. ■ F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass./London 1973). ■ F. Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit* (StP 1; Rome 1967). ■ H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (HK I,1; Göttingen ^{3}1910); trans. of the introduction: *The Legends of Genesis* (New York 1965). ■ W. Hallo (ed.), *The Context of Scripture*, 3 vols. (Leiden 1997, 2000, 2002). ■ R. Hendel, *Remembering Abraham* (Oxford 2005). ■ H. B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts* (Baltimore, Md. 1965). ■ K. A. Kitchen, *The Bible in Its World* (Exeter 1977). ■ M. Köckert, *Vätergott und Väterverheißungen* (FRLANT 142; Göttingen 1988). ■ M. Köckert, "Verheißung: I. Altes Testament," *TRE* 34 (Berlin/New York 2002) 697–704. ■ L. Kundert, *Gen 22,1–19 im Alten Testament, im Frühjudentum und im Neuen Testament,* vol. 1 of *Die Opferung/Bindung Isaaks* (WMANT 78; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1988). ■ J. D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son* (New Haven, Conn. 1993). ■ C. Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen 1993). ■ R. Martin-Achard, "Abraham I. Im Alten Testament," *TRE* 1 (Berlin/New York 1977) 364–72. ■ G. E. Mendenhall, "The Nature and Purpose of the Abraham Narratives" in *Ancient Israelite Religions*, FS F. M. Cross (eds. P. D. Miller Jr. et al.; Philadelphia, Pa. 1987) 337–56. ■ A. R. Millard, "Abraham," *ABD* 1 (New York 1992) 35–41. ■ Id./D. J. Wiseman (eds.), *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives* (Winona Lake, Ind. ^{2}1983). ■ M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1972); trans. of id., *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart 1948). ■ G. von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York 1966) 103–71; trans. of id., *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs* (BWANT IV/26; Stuttgart 1938) = id., *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (TB 8; München 1958) 9–86. ■ T. C. Römer, "Recherches actuelles sur le cycle d'Abraham," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. A. Wénin; BEThL 155; Leuven 2001) 179–212. ■ K. Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999). ■ B. B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead* (FAT 11; Tübingen 1994 [= Winona Lake, Ind. 1996]). ■ E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AncB 1; New York, N.Y./London 1964). ■ T. L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives* (BZAW 133; Berlin 1974). ■ J. Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, Conn./London 1975). ■ J. Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Zurich 1992). ■ R. de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1978); trans. of id., *Histoire ancienne d'Israël* (Paris 1971). ■ T. Veijola, "Das Opfer des Abraham – Paradigma des Glaubens aus dem nachexilischen Zeitalter," *ZThK* 85 (1988) 129–64. ■ M. Weippert, "Abraham der Hebräer?," *Bib.* 52 (1971) 407–32. ■ J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin ^{2}1883; quoted version: Berlin ^{6}1905 = reprint Berlin/New York 2001; translation: *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh 1885 = New York 1957). ■ C. Westermann, *Die Verheißungen an die Väter* (FRLANT 116; Göttingen 1976).

Hermann Spieckermann and David M. Carr

II. New Testament

Although the New Testament recalls Abraham and his story for several reasons, its chief interest lies in the patriarch's status as father of the people of God. This is because, for early Judaism as for early Christianity, the people of God are identified precisely as the children of Abraham.

1. The Synoptics. ***a. Abrahamic Descent.*** The genealogies in Matt 1 : 2–17 and Luke 3 : 23–38 both name Abraham. Luke, despite the emphasis upon the promises to Abraham in Luke 1 : 55, 73, does not highlight his name. In Matthew, by contrast, the genealogy is preceded by reference to Jesus as "the son of Abraham" (Matt 1 : 1); it begins with Abraham begetting Isaac (Matt 1 : 2), and it mentions Abraham at the end (Matt 1 : 17). For Matthew, Jesus as the son of Abraham is the fulfillment

of the sacred history that begins in Genesis. At the same time, Jesus as the son of Abraham also brings salvation to Gentiles (cf. the Gentile women in the genealogy). Abraham could be associated with Gentiles as well as Jews because he was a Gentile by birth (cf. *bHag* 3a) and because the Old Testament promises that "all the nations" will be blessed in him (Gen 12:3; 18:18; etc.).

Despite the importance of Abrahamic descent in both Matthew and Luke, the two gospels preserve a programmatic saying of John the Baptist which relativizes such descent. Matt 3:8 = Luke 3:8 (Q), after demanding fruit worthy of repentance, warns people not to depend upon being descended from Abraham, for "God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham." This probably alludes to Isa 51:1–2, where Abraham is the rock from which Israel has been hewn. The saying denies that Abrahamic descent guarantees salvation, and it attacks something like the rabbinic notion of *zakuth* or "merit."

b. Abraham as an Eschatological Figure. Matthew 8:11–12 = Luke 13:28–29 (Q) foresees many coming from "east and west" (Matthew) or from "east and west" and "north and south" (Luke). We may think of Abraham's dispersed children returning to the land, or of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles, or of both. The patriarchs, in any case, preside over the eschatological banquet. A related image appears in Luke 16:19–31, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where a poor man is carried away by the angels to "Abraham's bosom." Here, the patriarch seems to be in charge of the afterlife.

Abraham is also an eschatological figure in Mark 12:18–27 par., where Jesus defends the resurrection by quoting Exod 3:15 and urging that God is not the God of the dead but of the living. The argument seems to come down to this: God, speaking long after the death of the patriarchs, does not say, "I was the God of Abraham, etc." but "I *am* the God of Abraham, etc." They therefore cannot have ceased to be but belong to God's eschatological future.

2. The Gospel of John. Abraham appears on John's stage only in the last half of chapter 8 (John 8:31–59). The section begins with Jesus saying to "the Jews who had believed in him" (probably a cipher for John's Jewish Christian opponents) that his disciples know "the truth" which will bring freedom (John 8:31–32). This draws a protest: "We are descendants [σπέρμα] of Abraham, and have never been slaves to anyone" (John 8:33). Responding, Jesus asserts that those who sin are slaves to sin (John 8:34), the implication being that his opponents are slaves because they sin. Also, while acknowledging their Abrahamic descent (John 8:37), he observes that they seek to kill one who speaks from the Father (John 8:38). This causes his opponents to reiterate their Abrahamic descent (John 8:39), which Jesus then immediately calls into question: "If you were really Abraham's children [τέκνα], you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me" (John 8:39–40). The upshot is that being the physical, genetic seed (σπέρμα) of Abraham does not guarantee being the spiritual children (τέκνα) of Abraham (cf. Matt 3:8 = Luke 3:8 and Matt 8:11–12 = Luke 13:28–29).

In John 8:48, as the topic shifts and the antagonism increases, Jesus says that keeping his word circumvents death (John 8:49–51). His opponents retort that he is possessed, because not even Abraham escaped death (John 8:52). It is unclear whether this comment assumes knowledge of some form of the *Testament of Abraham*, where Abraham fails to escape death and where God delivers a long speech affirming that there is no exception to the rule of death (*T. Ab.* 8). However that may be, Jesus goes on to relate himself to Abraham as fulfillment to prophecy: "Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). Here Abraham is a prophet (as in *L.A.B.* 23:6; 4 Ezra 3:13–15; *Apoc. Ab.* 9:10; etc.) and he sees the eschatological future, as in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and *CN* 1 Gen 15:17. Jesus ends his speech by declaring his divinity and pre-existence with reference to Abraham: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Jesus measures Abraham, not vice versa.

3. Acts. Three speeches name Abraham: Acts 3:12–26 (Peter in the temple), Acts 7:2–53 (Stephen), and Acts 13:16–52 (Paul in Pisidian Antioch). Abraham's name serves as a frame for the first speech. Peter opens by referring to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Acts 3:13; the title is not common in early Christian literature), and he approaches his conclusion by speaking of the covenant God made with Abraham to bless all the families of the earth (Acts 3:25). Whether "your descendants" is a reference to Israel or to Jesus, the quotation from Gen 22:18 = 26:4 is clarified by the comment that God sent Jesus "first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wickedness" (Acts 3:26). In this way, the covenant with Abraham, which includes the Gentiles, becomes an opportunity for repentance rather than a guarantee of salvation.

Stephen's survey of Jewish history in Acts 7 begins with Abraham (Acts 7:2–8). Surprisingly missing from this overview are the stories in Gen 18 (the visit of the three angels) and Gen 22 (the sacrifice of Isaac); also absent are Abraham in Egypt, Lot, Hagar, Ishmael, Sodom, and all extra-biblical legends. The focus seems to be on the promise of the land. Yet Acts 7:6's modification of Gen 15:13–14 (which speaks of great possessions) by Exod 3:12 (which is about worship) marks a novel reinterpretation; what matters is not the land but freedom for true worship.

The long speech attributed to Paul in Acts 13:16–47 mentions Abraham in v. 26. The striking thing here is that the sons of Abraham are placed beside "others who fear God." This makes explicit what has been implicit in the speeches in Acts 3 and 7, which is that the privilege of the Jews has been demoted to a chronological priority; with regard to salvation, the same opportunity now comes to all.

4. Paul. Abraham is named in three Pauline epistles: Rom, 2 Cor, and Gal. The reference in 2 Cor 11:22 is of no importance, but Abraham is central to the arguments in Romans and Galatians.

a. Galatians. Paul's opponents in Galatia must have invoked the patriarch's example to promote the notion that Gentile Christians should undergo circumcision and keep Torah. They probably recalled Abraham's fabled obedience, taught that he observed the law before Moses (cf. *Jub.* 15:1–2; 16:20; Sir 44:20), claimed that he made proselytes (cf. CD XVI, 4–6; *ARN* A 12), and contended that the blessings God promised through him would come upon those who imitated his example (Martyn 1997). Paul angrily responds by making a novel distinction between hearing with faith and works of the law (Gal 3:5), and he interprets Gen 15:6 and 12:3 (cf. 18:8) to mean that God justified Abraham by faith alone and that the promise of Gentile blessing comes by faith (Gal 3:6–9). For Paul, Abraham's faith and consequent righteousness have their parallel in believing in Jesus and receiving God's Spirit. Among the arguments designed to support this thesis are these: the promise to Abraham came before the law and so is superior (Gal 3:15–18; the argument is not Jewish but has a distant parallel in Mark 10:5–9); the promises were to Abraham's "seed," a (collective) singular that refers to Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16; cf. 3:19); the covenant with Abraham was communicated directly through him whereas the Torah came through multiple intermediaries and so is inferior (Gal 3:19–22; cf. Acts 7:58, 53).

b. Romans. Romans 3:27–4:25 develops the main thesis of Rom 1:1–3:26, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe. Paul (anticipating that Abraham might be a counterexample to his thesis) urges that Abraham is no exception, for he was justified not by works of the law but by faith (Rom 4:1–8); that Abraham's justification occurred before he was circumcised (Rom 4:9–12); that faith (open to all) and the law (for Israel) are two different things, and if the promise is through faith, it cannot be through law (Rom 4:13–15); that God's promise to Abraham was for all peoples (Rom 4:16–18, citing Gen 17:5); and that, just as Abraham believed that God could raise up descendants from his "dead" body and received in return the benefits of his faith, so Christians believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead and in turn are justified (Rom 4:17–25). The covenant with Abraham does not establish Jewish privilege but is rather available to all peoples.

As in Gal 3:6, Paul makes much of Gen 15:6 (see Hahn: 90–107), argues from a temporal order in the Pentateuch (the promise to Abraham precedes the Torah to Moses), uses Abraham as the great exemplar of faith, and contends that all with faith are Abraham's children, whether Gentile or Jew. Unlike Galatians, the argument of Rom 3:27–4:25 develops without explicit mention of Jesus Christ, who appears only at the end (Rom 4:24), and Paul does not urge that the singular "seed" refers to Jesus Christ or that the law came through multiple intermediaries.

Paul speaks of Abraham again in Rom 9–11. Here he insists that not all descended from Abraham are Abraham's children (Rom 9:6–9, quoting Gen 21:12 and 18:10). He nevertheless goes on to insist that physical descent from Abraham still counts, for in chapter 11 the belief that God's promises will not fail entails that all of Abraham's descendants will finally be saved (Rom 11:25–32; cf. *mSan* 10:1).

5. Hebrews. Abraham makes multiple appearances in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He is first mentioned in passing in Heb 2:16, which declares that the Son of God became flesh and blood in order to help, not angels, but "the seed [σπέρματος] of Abraham." In this context, "the seed" probably refers not just to Abraham's physical descendants but also to his spiritual children.

Abraham next appears in Heb 6:13–20, which promotes trust in God's promises. The author recalls the aborted sacrifice of Isaac (cf. Heb 11:17–18), after which God, in response to Abraham's obedience, swore that the patriarch's offspring would be numerous (Gen 22:16–17). The text underlines that it was precisely Abraham's patient endurance that obtained the promise (Heb 6:15). Abraham is implicitly, as in so much Jewish and Christian tradition, here held up as an exemplar of utter obedience.

Hebrews 6:13–20 introduces Heb 7:1–10, which uses the story of Abraham and Melchizedek to show Jesus' superiority to the Levitical priesthood. Here, Abraham matters because of his subservient relationship to Melchizedek. This section, in part a midrash upon Gen 14:17–20, seeks to establish the existence of a non-Aaronic priesthood in contrast to the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham proves, since the inferior is blessed by the superior, that he is greater than the Levites, descendants of Abraham. This is confirmed by Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek (Heb 7:4–10; cf. 1QapGen XXII, 17 and Josephus, *Ant.* 1.181).

Hebrews 11:8–19 concerns itself with Abraham's exemplary faith and endurance, common

themes in Jewish sources (cf. Neh 9:7–8; Sir 44:19–21; Wis 10:5; 4 Macc 16:20–17:6; etc.). Such faith enabled him obediently to leave his home not knowing where he was going (Heb 11:8), to sojourn in a foreign land in tents (Heb 11:9; cf. Gen 12:1–8), to look forward to God's eternal city (and not literal possession of the land of Israel, Heb 11:10; cf. *2 Bar*. 4:4; *BerR* 44:21), to receive the power of procreation in old age (Heb 11:11–12; cf. Rom 4:19–21, which also uses the phrase, "as good as dead"), to greet the future realization of God's promises (Heb 11:13–16; cf. John 8:56), and – this is the last and climactic point – to offer his son Isaac (Heb 11:17–19; cf. Gen 22:1–10). When offering Isaac, Abraham "considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead – and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back" (Heb 11:19). Because Abraham had already determined to kill his son, he was dead in his own mind; thus when God stopped the sacrifice, it was a return from the dead, a kind of resurrection.

6. James. James 2:18–26 is an exhortation to do good works. There is a type of faith that is nothing more than belief (Jas 2:19), as well as a superior sort of faith, one that must manifest itself in works and be completed by them (Jas 2:21–26). Such was the faith of Abraham, exemplified in his sacrifice of Isaac (Jas 2:21–22). As scriptural warrant, the author cites Gen 15:6 and declares that Abraham was God's "friend" (Jas 2:23; cf. 2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8; *Jub*. 19:9; CD III, 2; etc.). The conclusion is that a person "is justified by works and not by faith alone" (Jas 2:24).

The language of Jas 2:14–26 at many points echoes Paul, whose teaching about faith, works, justification, and Abraham were all controversial (cf. esp. Jas 2:21 with Rom 4:2, Jas 2:23 with Rom 4:3, and Jas 2:24 with Rom 3:38 and Gal 2:16). It is hard to avoid surmising that Jas 2:14–26 contains some sort of reaction to Paul and his arguments about Abraham and justification. Perhaps James was fighting Paulinists, whom he may or may not have understood aright, Paulinists who may or may not themselves have fully understood Paul, or maybe James was responding to the publication of Paul's letters. Another possibility is that, despite the parallels with Paul, James was not responding to the latter; rather both were adopting common Abraham traditions from the synagogue. Abraham is often a model of faith or faithfulness in Jewish sources. Furthermore, 1 Macc 2:51–52 recalls the "works" of Abraham, seems to allude to the sacrifice of Isaac, and cites Gen 15:6, all of which is very close to James.

7. 1 Peter. 1 Peter 3:6, exhorting wives to submit to the authority of their husbands, appeals to the example of Sarah: "Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters [τέκνα] as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you." If, in John and Paul, those who believe and act rightly are the children of Abraham, here women who behave properly, that is, exhibit obedience (despite being married to pagan men), are daughters of Sarah. The text recalls Gen 18:1–15, where Sarah calls Abraham "lord" despite her laughter and then becomes afraid. Isaiah 51:2 ("Look to Sarah who bore you"), the intertext of the Baptist's saying in Matt 3:8 = Luke 3:8, may also be in the background.

Bibliography: ■ M. Cranford, "Abraham in Romans 4," *NTS* 41 (1995) 71–88. ■ N. A. Dahl, "The Story of Abraham in Luke-Acts," in *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis, Minn. 1976) 66–86. ■ M. Dibelius, *James* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, Pa. 1976) 168–74 [excursus on "The Abrahamic Example"]. ■ C. H. Dodd, "Behind a Johannine Dialogue," in id., *More New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1968) 41–57. ■ F. Hahn, "Genesis 15:6 im Neuen Testament," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie*, FS G. von Rad (ed. H. W. Wolff; Munich 1971) 90–107. ■ G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians* (JSNT Supplement Series 29; Sheffield 1989). ■ J. D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son* (New Haven, Conn. 1993). ■ H. E. Lona, *Abraham in Johannes 8* (EHS.T 65; Bern/Frankfurt a.M. 1976). ■ J. L. Martyn, *Galatians* (Anchor Bible 33A; New York 1997). ■ M. Neubrand, *Abraham* (FzB 85; Würzburg 1997). ■ J. S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews* (Louisville, Ky. 1991).

Dale C. Allison, Jr.

III. Judaism

■ Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism ■ Rabbinic Judaism ■ Medieval Judaism ■ Modern Judaism

A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism

Abraham was a popular figure for many Greco-Roman Jewish authors since many Jews believed he was the founder of their religion. Because Hellenistic ideas had permeated their culture and religion, Jews looked to interpretations of Abraham for a sense of identity as his ethnic and spiritual descendants. Through their interpretations of Abraham, Hellenistic Jewish authors were able to provide evidence of the glory and antiquity of their religion as well as its compatibility with, or superiority to, Hellenistic philosophies.

1. Abraham as Founder of Colonies, Cultures and Astrological "Science." Some of the earliest Greco-Roman Jewish authors on Abraham wrote that he founded colonies and brought aspects of culture and religion to various regions. For example, in the fragment that remains of his work, Cleodemus Malchus (2nd cent. BCE) deals with three sons of Abraham's slave, Keturah, that are not found in the biblical text (cf. Gen 25:1–6): Afera, Surim, and Iafra (Josephus, *Ant*. 1.15; Eusebius, *Praep. ev*. 9.20). According to Cleodemus Malchus, Africa and the city of Afra were named after the first and third sons, while Assyria was named after Surim. The Jewish Egyptian historian, Artapanus (2nd cent. BCE), supported the idea that the best Greek ideas were actually derived from the Jews.

According to Artapanus, Abraham was a cultural benefactor who taught the Egyptians astrology (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.18.1; 9.27–37). For Artapanus, Arabs were descended from Abraham in addition to Joseph (*Praep. ev.* 9.23.1–4). The author who is called Eupolemus or Pseudo-Eupolemus (2nd cent. BCE) adapted the biblical text to show how Abraham discovered astrology, otherwise known as "Chaldean" science, and taught the Phoenicians and Egyptians astrology and "many new things" (*Praep. ev.* 9.17.1–9; 9.18.2). The theme of visits by Greek philosophers to Egypt for the purpose of philosophical inquiry and instruction recurs frequently in Hellenistic writing (Holladay: 1.184, n. 26). Pseudo-Eupolemus shows Abraham teaching not only Egyptian priests but also Pharaoh, demonstrating that Abraham's knowledge and philosophy are superior to those of the Egyptians and form the foundation for their subsequent philosophical pursuits. Josephus also portrays Abraham as the founder of culture. As a result of his philosophical debates with the Egyptians, Abraham teaches the Egyptians astronomy (astrology) and arithmetic (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.167–168) that he learned in Chaldea. According to Josephus, the Egyptians then passed these sciences on to the Greeks.

2. Abraham as the First Monotheist, Proselyte and Rejecter of Idolatry. One of the major ways that Hellenistic Jewish authors reinterpreted the Abraham narrative (Gen 12–25 : 11) was by depicting Abraham as the first proselyte to Judaism. According to the author of the *Book of Jubilees* (2nd cent. BCE), of all of the people of the earth, Abraham was the first to leave behind idolatry for faith in the one God (cf. Josh 24 : 2–3). In the eyes of the author of *Jubilees*, the separation of Abraham from his idolatrous family is symbolic of the separation of the people of God from the Gentiles and idolatrous Jews. In fact, in *Jubilees* Abraham reasons that idols are worthless (*Jub* 12 : 2b–5) and, in contrast to authors mentioned above who portray Abraham as having introduced astrology to important centers of learning, *Jubilees* portrays Abraham as seeing beyond astrology and recognizing the creator God (*Jub.* 12 : 17–20; 22 : 16–18). In this way the author, through Abraham, warns 2nd-century BCE readers of the worthlessness of idolatry as compared to faith in the one God. The author of the *Sibylline Oracles*, also 2nd century BCE, alludes to Abraham and his race as those who do not practice astrology although Chaldea, their homeland, is known for astrological practices (*Sib. Or.* 3 : 219–230).

For Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE–40 CE) Abraham is an exemplary figure, the prototype of the proselyte (*Virt.* 219; cf. Gen. 15 : 6; *Her.* 93–95) whose migration from his homeland is both physical and allegorical (*Migr.* 184–85; 194–95). For Philo, Abraham's true migration was from Chaldean astrological determinism in search of the true God (*Abr.* 68–70; *Virt.* 212–13; *Migr.* 177–79). Abraham reasons towards the existence of God through the observation of himself (*Abr.* 71; 74–75; cf. Diogenes Laertius vii. 138–139) and natural phenomena (*Abr.* 84; 88) in the fashion of Stoic philosophy. Even his change of name signifies this migration from his former belief in astrology to his recognition of the one who governs the world (*Abr.* 81–84; 88).

In contrast to *Jubilees*, where Abraham is strikingly different from his family because of his worship of one God (*Jub.* 11 : 16–17), Pseudo-Philo says that Abraham's family, unlike all others who inhabited the earth, did not participate in idolatry (*L.A.B.* 4 : 16–17). Thus, while the author of *Jubilees.* is concerned to warn unfaithful Jews of the folly of their ways, the author of the *Biblical Antiquities* contrasts faithful Jews with Gentiles who follow idolatrous practices (Calvert-Koyzis: 45).

Pseudo-Philo also gives the Abraham narrative a unique slant by including Abraham in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11 : 1–9). Abraham and 11 men refuse to participate in the building scheme because they believe that by contributing to the tower they would deny their monotheistic faith. Why this would be construed as idolatry is not clear in the text; perhaps participating in a Gentile scheme, particularly one intended to glorify the Gentiles themselves (*L.A.B.* 6 : 1), is understood to be idolatrous. This would be especially true if *Biblical Antiquities* was written during the time of the Jewish wars (66–70 CE), when many Jews believed that the faithful among them should not associate with Gentiles.

In any case, because of their refusal to participate in the building scheme, Abraham and his friends are thrown into prison with the understanding that, should they repent, they would not be thrown into the fire with the bricks. Abraham's friends escape the prison but Abraham alone chooses to stay and face the furnace because of his trust in God. A great earthquake occurs and Abraham is saved while those around the furnace are killed (*L.A.B.* 6 : 6–18). Abraham's rejection of idolatry is later referred to in *L.A.B.* 23 : 5 when Pseudo-Philo states that, in contrast to other people on the earth, "Abraham believed in me and was not led astray with them."

Josephus describes Abraham as the prototypical monotheist and premier philosopher. For Josephus, Abraham was a man of superior rhetorical ability who reformed universal ideas about God by declaring, "that God, the creator of the universe is one" (*Ant.* 1.155; cf. 1.161). In contrast to the Stoics, whose teleological arguments rested on the regular movement of the stars and planets, Abraham reasons that since the movement of the planets and stars are irregular, then there must be a "commanding sovereign" or a God (*Ant.* 1.154–56).

While Josephus, like Philo, portrays Abraham as leaving behind astrological determinism, he is not as concerned with the practice of astrology itself but the tenet that the phenomena themselves determine what happens on earth and not God (Calvert-Koyzis: 59).

Josephus attributes one of his sources to Hecataeus of Abdera, who he states left a book composed about Abraham (*Ant*. 1.159). Most scholars today believe that the book about Abraham was not actually written by Hecataeus but by a Jewish propagandist they have called Pseudo-Hecataeus (ca. 1st cent. BCE–1st cent. CE). In a fragment from this book entitled "On Abraham and the Egyptians" that Clement of Alexandria cites (*Strom*. 5.14; cf. Eusebius, *Praep*. *ev*. 13.13), Pseudo-Hecataeus lauds the truth of monotheism while deprecating the vanity of idol worship. The subjects of monotheism and the rejection of idolatry in the poem are associated with Abraham. It is possible that some of the non-biblical material about Abraham in Josephus may derive from this source.

The author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (late 1st cent. CE) portrays Abraham much like the author of *Jubilees* In the narrative section of the *Apoc*. *Ab*. (1–8), Abraham turns from the idolatry of his family (his father makes idols) to faith in the one God. In chapter seven, which is probably a later redaction, Abraham argues that one should not believe in the changeable, created, subduable things, including astrology, but in the God who created them (*Apoc*. *Ab*. 7 : 1–12).

3. Abraham and the Mosaic Law. For the author of *Jubilees*, because God is faithful to his covenant with Israel, one must obey covenant stipulations that are found in the eternal, heavenly tablets. Although according to the biblical text the Mosaic Law had not yet been received by the time of Abraham, Abraham is portrayed as abstaining from idol worship (*Jub*. 12 : 2b–5; *Jub*. 17–20) and celebrating feasts (*Jub*. 15 : 20–31). As is found in the Genesis account, Abraham also circumcises his sons and his household (*Jub*. 15 : 23–34; cf. Gen 17 : 9–27) in *Jubilees* as a sign of covenant membership. For the author of *Jubilees*, circumcision is an eternal ordinance; whoever is not circumcised faces annihilation and destruction (*Jub*. 15 : 25–27).

Somewhat earlier, in the Hellenistic style of epic poetry and meter, Theodotus (3rd to 2nd cent. BCE) glorifies Abraham saying that God called "noble" Abraham out of his fatherland from heaven and commanded his family to circumcise themselves. For Theodotus, the command remained unchanged (Eusebius, *Praep*. *ev*. 9.22.7).

For Philo of Alexandria, a fundamental problem regarding Abraham was that if the Mosaic Law was divine, how could Abraham have flourished without it? Philo answers this question by postulating that the Law of Moses, which had God as its author, is the only true natural law. Abraham then obeyed the natural law that the Mosaic Law later copied (*Abr*. 3–6; *Abr*. 275–76; *Migr*. 129–30; cf. Gen 26 : 5). While Philo usually gives circumcision an allegorical meaning (*QG* 3.46) or an etymological meaning (*QG* 3.49), he still maintains that the practice itself is important. For example, he states that, although circumcision has a symbolic meaning, "let us not on this account repeal the law laid down for circumcising" (*Migr*. 92). Parents who do not circumcise their sons deserve a severe penalty because they show contempt for the Torah and jeopardize the survival of Judaism (*QG* 3.52). For Philo, Abraham provided a prime example of one for whom circumcision symbolized conquering passions, but who nevertheless went through with the act (*QG* 3.45–50).

In his discussion of Abraham and circumcision, Josephus makes Abraham and Sarah the explicit models for subsequent generations (*Ant*. 1.214; cf. Gen 21 : 4), while explaining the origin of the practice to his non-Jewish readers. For Josephus, the covenant with Abraham was not central to the practice of circumcision; instead circumcision was instituted to prevent Abraham's descendants from mixing with the members of other nations (*Ant*. 1.192; cf. 1.214). In Josephus' portrayal of Abraham and Sarah, he contends that Sarah was Abraham's niece rather than his half-sister (*Ant*. 1.150–51). Marrying one's sister or half-sister was considered to be an abomination according to the Mosaic Law (Lev 20 : 17). Josephus' intention is to portray Abraham as law abiding; marrying one's niece was well within the Law (Lev 18 : 12–14; 20 : 19–21). It is interesting that, in contrast to Josephus, the Qumran community strictly prohibited uncle-niece marriages (cf. 11QT; CD).

4. Abraham and the Covenant. Abraham is depicted as central to Israel's covenant with God in a number of Greco-Roman Jewish documents. For example, in *Jubilees*, Abraham is a central transmitter of God's covenant with Israel (*Jub*. 14 : 20; 15 : 1–20; 22 : 1, 10–24). In the *Psalms of Solomon* (1st cent. BCE), a relationship exists between God's covenantal relationship with Abraham and God's election of Abraham and his descendants (*Pss*. *Sol*. 9 : 9; 18 : 3). In Ezekiel the Tragedian (2nd cent. CE), Abraham is a source (along with Isaac and Jacob) of promises to his ancestors (Ezek. Trag. 104–106) from which they gain a sense of their election and covenant with God. The Prayer of Manasseh (2nd cent. BCE–1st cent. CE) contains statements that imply God's covenantal unity with Israel is due in part to Abraham (Pr Man 1, 8). The author of *Pseudo-Jubilees* (4Q225) is also concerned with the covenant that was made with Abraham (4Q225 I, 4).

5. Apocalyptic Treatments of Abraham. In the revelatory section of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (9 : 32; late 1st cent. CE), Abraham receives a revela-

tion from God because he did not succumb to idolatry but searched for the true God (*Apoc. Ab.* 9:5–10). The revelation occurs when Abraham falls asleep (cf. Gen 15:12) amidst the sacrificed animals (cf. Gen 15:9–11). The author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. explains that the birds were not cut in half because they are to be Abraham's vehicle to heaven (*Apoc. Ab.* 12:9–10). As Abraham ascends into the heavens he recites a hymn that the accompanying angel has taught him and prays for the revelation of God that has been promised to him (*Apoc. Ab.* 17:7–21). Abraham then sees a vision of a throne and heavenly creatures (*Apoc. Ab.* 18–19; cf. *T. Ab.* 10–14). The voice of God calls Abraham by name and he answers (*Apoc. Ab.* 20:1). As a result of the sacrifice, Abraham's search for the true God is over. While he is in heaven, Abraham sees visions of the future that generally have to do with the judgment and destruction of those who have not remained faithful to Abraham's God (*Apoc. Ab.* 21–30) and the triumph of those who have remained faithful (*Apoc. Ab.* 31:4).

Other apocalyptic treatments of Abraham include the *Sibylline Oracles* where Abraham is depicted as participating in the last judgment (*Sib. Or.* 2:245; 1st cent. BCE–1st cent. CE). In 4 Ezra (late 1st cent. CE), Abraham sees visions and God reveals himself to Abraham secretly by night and makes an everlasting covenant with him (4 Ezra 3:12–15; 6:7–8). In 4 Macc (1st cent. CE), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will receive the seven brothers (2 Macc 7) after their martyrdom for keeping the Mosaic Law and following divine reason (4 Macc 13:17).

6. Miscellaneous Treatments of Abraham. In Josephus' *Antiquities*, as in the biblical account of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt (Gen 12:10–20), Abraham fears Egyptian reprisals because of Sarah's great beauty (*Ant.* 1.162). Abraham pretends to be her brother and instructs Sarah to play the part of his sister. Everything happens as Abraham predicted (*Ant.* 1.163–65); Pharaoh takes Sarah but his desire for her is thwarted by an outbreak of disease and political disturbances sent by God. Pharaoh then confesses his intentions, but in contrast to the biblical account, Josephus omits Pharaoh's complaint against Abraham for telling him that Sarah was his sister (Gen 12:18–19; cf. 20:9–10). Although Josephus is adapting the account so that Sarah and Abraham come out looking blameless, in the context of the story Josephus is most concerned to show that Abraham is the supreme Hellenist philosopher who originally traveled to Egypt in order to examine the Egyptians' beliefs about their gods and convert them to his own beliefs should his beliefs prove superior (*Ant.* 1.161). In the course of their debates, Abraham's beliefs are indeed shown to be superior (*Ant.* 1.166–168).

In the *Genesis Apocryphon* (Qumran; 1st cent. BCE–1st century CE), the reason for Abraham's insistence that Sarah should act as his sister in Egypt is explained; he had a dream. In this dream he was a cedar and Sarah was a beautiful date palm that was instructed to say they were both from one family, thus saving the cedar (1QapGen XIX, 16). In this way, the author preserves Abraham's reputation. In the same story, Abraham acts as an exorcist who is able to cure Pharaoh and his household of the evil spirit at the root of the plague that had come upon him for taking Sarah into his house (1QapGen X, 28–29).

The major theme of the *Testament of Abraham* (1st to 2nd cent. CE) is Abraham's refusal to die and accompany the God-sent archangel, Michael, to heaven (e.g., *T. Ab.* rec. A, 7:12). Abraham requests to see the inhabited world (*T. Ab.* 9:6). During the tour, the sinless Abraham calls down death upon those engaged in a variety of sins (10:6–12) but is stopped because he has no mercy on sinners, unlike God who does (10:12–14). Abraham is called to repentance over those he destroyed through observing the judgment of souls (11–14) according to a universalistic soteriology. Finally, Death tricks Abraham and takes his soul to heaven (20:8–15).

Bibliography. ***Primary:*** ■ J. H. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y. 1983). ■ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (LCL; London 1931). ■ J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1* (Rome ^{3}2004). ■ C. H. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors,* 4 vols. (Chico, Calif. 1983). ■ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities Books 1–4* (LCL; Cambridge, Mass. 1978). ■ Philo, *Philo in Ten Volumes (And Two Supplementary Volumes)* (LCL; Cambridge, Mass./London 1968–1985).

Secondary: ■ N. Calvert-Koyzis, *Paul, Monotheism and the People of God* (JSNT.S 273; London 2004). ■ J. H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research* (SBLSCS 7S; Chico, Calif. 1981). ■ J. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews* (Louisville, Ky. 1991). ■ M. E. Stone, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT; Assen/Philadelphia, Pa. 1984).

Nancy Calvert-Koyzis

B. Rabbinic Judaism

As is to be expected from Abraham's importance in the Torah, he is one of the biblical figures most frequently mentioned in rabbinic literature, most commonly as "Abraham our father" (*Avraham Avinu*). A wealth of traditions developed around his person and became ever more detailed. Elements present from the very beginning are the importance of his circumcision and his observance of the whole Torah: "Great is circumcision, for with all the commandments which Abraham our father fulfilled, he was not called perfect until he circumcised himself as it is said: 'Walk before me and be perfect' (Gen 17:1)" (*mNed* 3:11; *tNed* 2:5). When a child is circumcised, his father blesses God "who has commanded us to bring him into the covenant of our father Abraham" (*tBer* 6:12). "We find that our father Abraham kept the entire Torah before it was given, since it says: 'because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments,

my statutes, and my laws (*torotai*)' (Gen 26:5)" (*mQid* 4:14). The Tosefta adds: "It does not say 'my law' (*torati*), but 'my laws' (*torotai*). This teaches that to him were revealed the reasons of the Torah and all its finest details" (*tQid* 5:21 MS Vienna; MS Erfurt: "the words of the Torah and the words of the scribes").

The text insists on the anticipated revelation of the Torah to Abraham since the early rabbis sharply opposed the idea of an autonomous recognition of the Torah or an autonomous ethics. Only late texts say that Abraham "learned the Torah by himself as it is said: 'a man is good on his own'" (Prov 14:14, as understood in the context: *Tan Wa–yiggash* 11). The very late text, *BemR* 14:2, repeats this tradition and adds that Abraham was one of four men who recognized God on their own (the others are Job, Judah, and the Messiah). *BerR* 38:13 takes up the pre-rabbinic tradition that Abraham's father, Terah, was an idol manufacturer and merchant. Once he put Abraham in charge of the shop, but Abraham would rebuke prospective customers; he finally destroyed all the idols but one, in whose hand he placed a cudgel, claiming that they had gotten into a quarrel over a sacrifice and that the survivor had smashed the others. Terah was infuriated and handed Abraham over to Nimrod; the latter threw Abraham into a fiery furnace, but God saved him (based on Josh 24:2–4 and Gen 15:7).

While some rabbis would like to limit the commandments fulfilled by Abraham to the seven commandments enjoined to the children of Noah and circumcision, the general opinion is that *torotai* includes both the written and the oral Torah. According to some rabbis, "Abraham recognized his creator at the age of 48 years," but most commonly they maintain that Abraham fulfilled the commandments for 172 years (based on the numerical value of *ʿqb*, "because" in Gen 26:5); he thus must have recognized God already at the age of three (*BerR* 64:4; *bNed* 32a; according to *BerR* 95:3, already at one year; according to others, at 48 years).

According to *SOR* 1, Abraham was 48 years old at the time of the Dispersion (Gen 11:8). Most other dates in Abraham's life mentioned in this rabbinic chronography are found in the biblical text, but the 'Vision between the Pieces' (Gen 15) is dated to age 70, thus five years before Abraham left Haran at 75. It is from this date that the 430 years of Egyptian bondage (Exod 12:41) have to be counted, whereas the 400 years of Gen 15:13 begin with the birth of Isaac when Abraham was 100 years old (thus explicitly *SOR* 3).

Rabbinic texts also speak of Abraham as an expert in astrology, a topic known already in the Second Temple period. "In all things" (*ba-kol*; Gen 24:1) is understood as referring to "an astrological instrument, on account of which everybody came to him" (*tQid* 5:17). The topic is central in the interpretation of Gen 15:4, when Abraham objects to the promise of a son since he had seen by means of his astrology that he would not engender a son. But God "brought him outside" (Gen 15:5) of the sphere of the stars to tell him that "Israel is not subject to astrology" (*bShab* 156a). "You are a prophet, not an astrologer" (*BerR* 44:10).

The 318 "trained men, born in his house" (Gen 14:14), with whom Abraham pursues the kings who have taken captive his nephew Lot, are interpreted in *PesRK* 8 by gematria as nobody else but his servant Eliezer alone since the numerical value of the letters of his name is exactly 318. On his return, Abraham encounters Melchizedek who "brought out bread and wine" (Gen 14:18): "He revealed to him the laws governing the priesthood. The bread stands for the show-bread, and the wine stands for the drink-offerings" (*BerR* 43:6). "The Omnipresent removed [the priesthood] from Shem and handed it over to Abraham … 'You are a priest forever after the matter of Melchizedek' (Ps 110:4). It is on account of the matter of Melchizedek" (*WayR* 25:6). Ps 110 as a whole is applied to Abraham who is invited to sit at God's right hand and is conferred the priesthood which qualifies him to carry out the sacrifice of Isaac (*BerR* 55:6; Abraham's blessing is the first of the Eighteen Benedictions recited three times daily – only the second benediction on resurrection refers to God).

This element of the Abraham story, the ʿAqedah, is important in rabbinic tradition from its very beginnings. According to *mAv* 5:3, it is one of "ten trials" with which "Abraham our father was tried and he withstood them all"; the ram eventually offered instead of Isaac is one of "ten things created at twilight [lit. 'between the suns']" (on the sixth day of creation, i.e., predestined from the beginning of the world; *mAv* 5:6). In the liturgy of fast days, the prayer leader intones: "He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah will answer you and hear the voice of your cry this day" (*mTaan* 2:4; *tTaan* 1:13). Abraham's willingness to offer his son is the basis of the efficacy of every Jewish cultic act. It is the prime example of the "merit of the fathers" (*zekhut avot*) which sustains Israel. Whatever good Abraham did, God repays many times over to his children. Every single act Abraham performed while receiving his angelic visitors (Gen 18) finds its echo in God's care for Israel in Egypt and in the desert (e.g., the wells of water Num 21:18, the manna Num 11:8, etc.: *tSot* 4:1–6; other examples based on Gen 22: *MekhY Be–shallaḥ* 3–4). Concerning, "[Abraham] will be a blessing" (Gen 12:2), God tells Abraham: "I shall provide a blessing for you in the 18 Benedictions," and "your [blessing] comes before mine, since people say first '… the shield of Abraham,' and only afterward they say, '… who resurrects the dead'" (*BerR* 39:6).

A motif frequent in rabbinic literature is Abraham making converts to the one God, based on Gen

12:5 that when Abraham left Haran, he took "the persons whom they had acquired (lit. 'made') in Haran": "Now is it not the case that if everyone in the world got together to create a single gnat and ensoul it, they could never do so? [The text rather] teaches that Abraham our father made converts and brought them under the wings of God's presence" (*Sifrei Deut* 32). Abraham circumcised himself only at 99 years of age, "for had he circumcised himself at the age of 20 or 30, no stranger could have been able to convert to Judaism unless he was under the age of 30" (*MekhY Neziqin* 18). "I have made you the father of a multitude of nations" (Gen 17:5) is understood as meaning that Abraham "is the father of the whole world who entered under the wings of God's presence" (*MidTan* Deut 26:3). "Before Abraham our father came into the world, it was as if the blessed Holy One was king only over heaven alone … But when Abraham our father came into the world, he made him king over heaven and also over earth" (*Sifrei Deut* 313, based on a comparison of Gen 24:7 and Gen 24:2). "Abraham planted a tamarisk tree (*eshel*) in Beer-Sheba, and called there on the name of the Lord" (Gen 21:33) is interpreted as meaning that he founded an inn (*eshel* understood as an acronym for *akhilah, shetiyyah, lewayyah*: 'eating,' 'drinking,' and 'company'; thus explicitly *MidTeh* 37) where he received all who passed by, gave them something to eat and to drink, and when they wanted to thank him, he made them call [reading *wa-yaqri* instead of *wayiqra*] on the name of God since they "ate what belongs to the God of the world" (*bSot* 10a–b). Abraham thus becomes not only "the father of the proselytes" (*TanB Lekh* 6), but also an example of hospitality and of regular prayer. He is said to have ordained the recitation of the Morning Prayer (*bBer* 26b, based on Gen 19:27 where "standing" is understood as referring to the recitation of the Prayer; the Amidah or 18 Benedictions).

Because of Abraham's faith in God, God split the sea for his children; as a reward for his faith, Abraham inherited both this world and the world to come (*MekhY Be–shallaḥ* 3 and again in 6 in the context of a long passage on the merits of faith). This text is quoted in some later midrashim in the context of the Exodus story (*ShirR*; *Tan*). Thus, the nearly complete absence of the motif of Abraham's faith in *BerR* and the Talmudim is striking; it is possible to see in it a reaction to the Christian emphasis on Abraham's faith which justified him even before he had received the commandments. Such a reaction can also be detected in certain details of the interpretation of the ʿAqedah, whereas, in other elements of the rabbinic traditions about Abraham (e.g., the interpretation of Ps 110 and Abraham's priesthood, or also the visit of the three angels [Gen 18]), the contrast with Christian interpretation is better understood as an independent inner-rabbinic development based on the intertextual reading of the Torah.

Bibliography: ■ K. Appel, "Abraham als dreijähriger Knabe im Feuerofen des Nimrod," *Kairos* 25 (1983) 36–40. ■ G. Bodendorfer, "Abraham zur Rechten Gottes, " *EvTh* 59 (1999) 252–66. ■ M. Delcor, "La portée chronologique de quelques interprétations du Targoum Neophyti contenues dans le cycle d'Abraham," *JSJ* 1 (1970) 105–19. ■ L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia 1909–38). [Esp. 1, 185–308; 5, 207–69] ■ C. T. R. Hayward, "Abraham as proselytizer at Beer-Sheba in the Targums of the Pentateuch," *JJS* 49 (1998) 24–37. ■ A. Houtman, "The Role of Abraham in Targum Isaiah," *ArSt* 3 (2005) 3–14. ■ E. Kessler, *Bound by the Bible* (Cambridge 2004). ■ P. Mandel, "The Call of Abraham," *Proof* 14 (1994) 267–84. ■ G. Oberhänsli-Widmer, *Biblische Figuren in der rabbinischen Literatur* (JudChr 17; Bern 1998). ■ G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (StPB 4; Leiden 1961) 67–126. ■ N. Zohar, "The Figure of Abraham and the Voice of Sarah in Genesis Rabbah," in *The Faith of Abraham* (eds. M. Hallamish et al.; Ramat-Gan 2002) 71–85. [Heb.]

Günter Stemberger

C. Medieval Judaism

In medieval rabbinic Judaism, Abraham is portrayed as autodidact and iconoclast, missionary and martyr. He faithfully and patiently suffers divine trials, and through his suffering accrues merit. This "merit of Abraham" has eschatological and apocalyptic significance. It will aid the Jews in the future, in this world and the next. These motifs and images, found already in classical rabbinic literature, were repeated, developed, and elaborated upon in the Jewish Middle Ages, under the influence of Christianity, Islam, philosophy, and mysticism.

1. Abraham in Medieval Midrash. *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eliezer* (*PRE*; 8th or 9th cent., Islamic East) 26–31 retells the stories of Abraham according to his "ten trials":

1) Abraham was hidden at birth, to escape the decree of wicked King Nimrod, who had ordered the murder of all Jewish male children.
2) Abraham was imprisoned – and later thrown in a fiery furnace – for smashing his father's idols and challenging royal authority.
3) After miraculously escaping Nimrod's furnace, God commanded Abraham to abandon home and family.
4) But no sooner had he arrived in Canaan than he was forced to flee once again due to famine, this time to Egypt, where
5) His wife Sarah was taken by Pharaoh.
6) During the war with the four kings, Abraham's nephew Lot was captured, forcing Abraham to collect a military force to redeem him. Even Abraham's covenants with God were trying:
7) He was shown his descendants' Egyptian bondage in the covenant of the pieces;
8) And his own physical weakness in the covenant of circumcision. The final two trials of Abraham, according to *PRE*, were

9) His exile of Hagar and Ishmael, and
10) The trial par excellence – the command to sacrifice Isaac.

Although *PRE* is based on earlier rabbinic texts, there is evidence of Islamic influence as well. For example, in *PRE* 30, when discussing the trial of Hagar and Ishmael, the author or compiler recounts Abraham's travels east. With Sarah's permission, Abraham visited Ishmael, but when he arrived he was greeted by Ishmael's wife Aisha, who refused him food and water, in response to which he left a message for his son: "Remove the doorstep of your house." Abraham returned three years later to find a new wife, named Fatima, who attended to him according to the highest standards of hospitality. In response to this Abraham left a second message: "Keep the doorpost of your house."

This story is clearly borrowed from the Islamic cycle of stories about Abraham, and seems to preserve a Shiʿite polemic against Sunni Islam. How it entered this late midrashic text, however, and what purpose it could have served in a Jewish context, are questions that have not yet been fully answered.

Several other medieval midrashim borrow from and build upon the stories and motifs found in *PRE*. Three short narratives (*Maʿaseh Avraham*, *Maʿaseh Avraham Avinu*, and *Midrash de-Avraham Avinu*) focus on the early life of Abraham, as do two 12th-century compilations: *Sefer ha-Yashar* and *Sefer ha-Zikhronot*. The latter collects and synthesizes passages from *PRE*, together with other sources (including a Hebrew version of Pseudo-Philo's, *Biblical Antiquities*). The same stories are repeated, expanded, and elaborated in *Pesiqta Rabbati* and *Tanna de-vei Eliyyahu,* although within a more straightforward homiletical and liturgical context, and with greater emphasis on the eschatological "merit of Abraham."

2. Abraham in Maimonides. Abraham is a central figure, perhaps *the* central figure, in the writings of Moses Maimonides (Rambam: 1138–1204). Maimonides himself has justly been called "Abrahamic man." Abraham is the key figure in Maimonides' schematic history of religion; and nearly every work by the Master – including each part of the *Guide of the Perplexed* – begins with a motto drawn from Gen 21:33: "In the name of the Lord, God of the world."

In Maimonides' code of law, *Mishneh Torah* (in ch. 1 of the "Laws of Idolatry and Idolaters"), Abraham plays a central role in his history of religion. There Maimonides describes a linear decline from monotheism to idolatry, beginning with the generation of Enosh, when the people directed their prayers towards representatives of God rather than God. In the succeeding generations, God, the first cause, was completely forgotten. Instead, people considered the celestial bodies the only rulers of the sublunar world. This continued until the birth of Abraham, who, through his rational explorations of nature – without any teacher – recognized that there is one God, the final cause of celestial motion (as Maimonides presents it, Abraham knew God through the "cosmological proof" of medieval theology). Abraham then devoted himself to spreading his doctrines throughout the ancient Near East, challenging the orthodoxies of his time, writing books to disseminate his views, attracting converts, and teaching his principles to Isaac, who taught them to Jacob, who created a religious community based on the true belief of monotheism.

In *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides' brief history of religion is modified and elaborated in important ways. In light of an Arabic book entitled *Nabatean Agriculture* – a work of magic purporting to represent the beliefs of "Sabian" idolaters at the time of Abraham – Maimonides, as historian and anthropologist, attempted to reconstruct the exact social setting of Abraham's preaching and polemics. For example, in *Guide* 3:29, after briefly describing the star-worshipping religion of the Sabians, Maimonides summarizes a text from the *Nabatean Agriculture*, which describes Abraham's disputations with his contemporaries:

> When Ibrahim, who was brought up in Kutha, disagreed with the community and asserted that there was an agent other than the sun, various arguments were brought forward against him … [which] set forth the clear and manifest activities of the sun in what exists. Thereupon he … told them: You are right; it is like an axe in the hands of a carpenter. Then they mention a part of his argumentation … against them. At the conclusion of the story they mention that the king put Abraham our Father … into prison [where … he persevered for days and days in arguing against them. Thereupon the king became afraid that he would ruin his polity and turn the people away from their religions and therefore he banished him toward Syria after having confiscated all his property …

Abraham reappears in several additional passages in the *Guide*. In *Guide* 3:22, Maimonides explains Gen 22 in detail. In *Guide* 3:51, Abraham, together with Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, is singled out not as philosopher, polemicist, and champion of the faith, but as a Sufi sheikh of sorts, who creates a political community, while not allowing his bond with God to be broken; he continues political engagement in this world without compromising in any way his mystical attachment to God.

Maimonides' representation of Abraham had significant influence on all later Jewish discussions of Gen 12–25, exegetical and philosophical alike. His reconstruction of ancient paganism in light of the *Nabatean Agriculture* continued to influence biblical scholarship even into the early modern period. The conception of Abraham's philosophical contemplation of God was repercussive as well as it was controversial. Later opponents of philosophy, such as Hasdai Crescas (ca. 1340–1410/11), attempted to undermine Maimonides' rational reli-

gion through a re-reading of the same biblical and rabbinic texts singled out by Maimonides. According to Crescas, Abraham recognized the existence and unity of God not through philosophy and theoretical speculation, but through prophecy and revelation. For Crescas, in other words, divine revelation and prophecy – as represented by the first call to "get thee out" – marks the beginning of a religious life of obedience rather than the end of a philosophical life of speculation.

3. Abraham in Naḥmanides. Gen 12–25 was explicated in the Jewish commentary tradition as well, in the foundational commentaries by Saadiah ben Joseph Al-Fayyumi, Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Rabbi Solomon Yitsḥaqi (Rashi). Most creative, however, was the work of Moses Naḥmanides (Ramban; 1194–1270).

Naḥmanides' commentary on the Torah builds upon midrash, Rashi and Ibn Ezra, borrows from and criticizes Maimonides, but introduces new ideas as well. Like the midrashim and Maimonides, Naḥmanides introduces legends about the early life of Abraham in Haran and Kutha, elaborating upon them in light of the *Nabatean Agriculture*. But he appeals to other sources as well, including Near Eastern geography, based on reports by contemporary travelers to the cities of Abraham's youth. Naḥmanides also introduces one distinctive idea of his own theology – "concealed miracles" – to help explain why Abraham's early-life conflicts with Sabians and Nimrod are alluded to but not clearly reported in Scripture; God works concealed miracles for the righteous, to save them from difficult situations.

Naḥmanides was one of the few medieval Jewish exegetes to use typology or prefigurative exegesis, a method which was popular among Christians rather than Jews. For example, citing a rabbinic maxim – "everything that happens to the patriarchs is a sign to the children" (*maʿaśeh avot siman la-banim*) – he explains Abraham's descent into Egypt as prefiguring the Egyptian bondage, the war with the four kings as alluding to the four eschatological kingdoms described in the book of Daniel, and Melchizedek King of Salem, priest of the most high God, as prefiguring the high priest in the future temple in Jerusalem. This sort of prefigurative exegesis also helps him to find extra meaning in the text's seemingly insignificant details. Thus, Abraham's lie about Sarah was actually a cause, a parallel foreshadowing, of the difficult trials in Egypt. Here the lie is not ignored or dismissed apologetically, but is rather fit into a typological reading of redemption history, which takes seriously the implications (really cosmic implications) of moral action.

A detailed criticism of Maimonides is found in Naḥmanides' commentary on Gen 18 : 1. The biblical text itself is problematic. God first appears to Abraham, followed by three men who are later called angels. Does the text represent one God in the form of three (as in Christian interpretations), a single divine epiphany followed by the separate visit of three angels, or a divine revelation followed by the visit of three "men" who are like angels? Maimonides had resolved this problem by fiat. God's appearance to Abraham at Gen 18 : 1 marks the beginning of a single prophetic dream or vision, which means that all subsequent events in the narrative are internal psychic experiences. But this reading of the text creates additional problems; when does the dream end and reality begin? After the prophecy about Isaac? After the argument with God? After the destruction of Sodom? In his commentary, Naḥmanides responded to all these problems. Nevertheless, after rejecting the philosophical reading of Maimonides, he proceeds to introduce a kabbalistic explanation in its place. According to him, the angels are called "men" because they take on a fine corporeal garment allowing them to be recognized in the human world. This, he says, is the "secret of the garment."

As in so many other areas, the rival explanations of Gen 18 by Maimonides and Naḥmanides served as foundation for later reflections and controversies. For example, Rabbi Yom Tov ben Abraham al-Ishbili (Ritba, 1250–1330) devoted ch. 3 of his *Sefer Zikkaron* to reconciling the two great masters of medieval Judaism.

4. Abraham in the Zohar. Naḥmanides was one of the earliest biblical exegetes to introduce kabbalistic notions into a biblical commentary. In general, however, he was reserved in his use of Kabbalah. In the following generation, the stories of Abraham were explained in detail in the *Zohar* (late 13th cent.), which would become the most influential work of Kabbalah.

In the *Zohar*, Abraham's life and travels are explained with constant reference to the *sefirot*. Abraham himself is *ḥesed* (grace, love) or an individual who seeks to rise to *ḥesed* through his spiritual quests. His travels to Canaan were self-motivated; he began the journey and only then did God say: "Get thee to Canaan." In Canaan he conjoined with the *Shekhinah*, the lowest *sefirah*, but had to descend into Egypt, the realm of evil, in order to refine himself. Only if he could withstand the forces of evil could he rise to a higher level still. Although he traveled frequently, he was always traveling toward the Negeb, which means south, and represents the *sefirah ḥesed*.

Concerning the lie about Sarah being his "sister," according to the *Zohar* Abraham did not really lie, for Sarah is *Shekhinah*, and *Shekhinah* and *ḥesed* are siblings in the world of the *sefirot*, children of *ḥokhmah* ("wisdom"). The sacrifice of Isaac is also explained with reference to the *sefirot*. Abraham, qua *ḥesed*, was all grace and love, therefore he

needed to combine with *din/gevurah* ("severe judgment") – Isaac – in order to achieve a proper balance. In other words, Abraham took on the form of Isaac in order to bind Isaac, while Isaac, by submitting peacefully to the sacrifice, took on the form of Abraham – passive love and grace. Only by this merging of love and judgment can Jacob, true divine compassion, come to be.

The most interesting aspect of the Zoharic Abraham concerns circumcision, which is discussed at much greater length than any other subject in the Abraham narrative. Circumcision, of course, was a central practice in rabbinic Judaism; the rabbinic sages were especially concerned with this single commandment, in response to Christian polemics. With the *Zohar*, however, the concerns are somewhat different. The mystical experience, in the *Zohar* as in other traditions, is often represented as a union between male and female. In the *Zohar*, this applies from above and below; the mystic's union with *Shekhinah* from below and the union of *tiferet* ("adornment") with *Shekhinah* through *yesod* ("foundation") from above. For the Jewish mystic, moreover, this sexual-mystical union must take place in a pure state. Thus, it is only after circumcision that there can be a true vision of the divine world. In other words, for the author(s) of the *Zohar*, circumcision is a prerequisite for mystical union.

Bibliography. ***Primary:*** ■ *Ma'aseh Avraham Avinu*, in *Bet ha-Midrash* (ed. A. Jellinek; Jerusalem 1938) vol. 1, 25–34. ■ *Ma'aseh Avraham*, in *Bet ha-Midrash* (ed. A. Jellinek; Jerusalem 1938) vol. 2, 118–19. ■ *Midrash de-Avraham Avinu*, in *Bet ha-Midrash* (ed. A. Jellinek; Jerusalem 1938) vol. 5, 40–42. ■ *The Book of Memory, that is the Chronicles of Jerahme'el* (ed. E. Yassif; Ramat Aviv 2001). [Heb.] ■ *The Chronicle of Jerahmeel* (New York 1971).

Secondary: ■ R. Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands* (Albany, N.Y., 1990). ■ M. Hallamish et. al. (eds.), *The Faith of Abraham* (Ramat-Gan 2002). ■ S. Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather* (diss.; Chicago 2002). ■ M. Saperstein, "Jewish Typological Exegesis after Naḥmanides," in "*Your Voice Like a Ram's Horn*" (Cincinnati, Ohio 1996) 23–36. ■ E. R. Wolfson, *Circle in the Square* (Albany, N.Y. 1995). ■ E. R. Wolfson, "The Secret of the Garment in Naḥmanides," *Da'at* 24 (1990) 25–49. ■ E. R. Wolfson, "'By Way of Truth'," *AJSR* 14 (1989) 103–78.

James T. Robinson

D. Modern Judaism

In many ways, the thinker who decisively bridges the gap between medieval Jewish thought and modernity is Benedict (Baruch) de Spinoza (1632–1677). A student of Cartesian thought, Spinoza's philosophical teachings concerning God and scriptures made him one of the most prominent Jewish heretics of the early modern period. According to Spinoza, "prophecy depends upon imagination alone," and thus cannot provide any kind of certainty unless it "be assisted by something, and that something is reason" (Spinoza: 28). Reason requires a sign to show that a prophecy is from God – Abraham serves here as a primary case. When God promises to make a great nation of him, Abraham demands a sign. While Spinoza argues that this illustrates the inferiority of prophetic knowledge to reason, which requires no such signs for its certainty, he does allow that prophecy, bolstered by signs, does offer moral certainty (ibid.).

Abraham further exemplifies Spinoza's understanding of prophecy as limited not only by a prophet's imagination but also by his own mind, conditioned by his environment. Abraham had a more profound understanding of God than Adam, not surprising given that Abraham was born into a fairly advanced culture. But Abraham seems ignorant of certain aspects of God's nature, "that God is everywhere and foreknows all things," for instance (ibid.: 35). The ultimate project of naturalizing prophecy and rationalizing biblical studies, renders the Bible useless as a tool of political oppression; in the process, Spinoza laid a rudimentary groundwork for modern biblical studies (Preus: 1–6, 208–11).

Moses Mendelssohn, a contemporary of Immanuel Kant, had a deeply philosophical conception of the role of Abraham (and the patriarchs generally) in history. In the ancient world, rampant idolatry led to the degradation of human nature; at various points in history, philosophers sought to intervene, first "through public or secret instruction," then by attempting to separate "man's abstract concepts from their representation in images or imaginary configurations and expressing them, instead, by symbols that by their very nature could not be mistaken for anything else: namely, by *numbers*" (Mendelssohn: 87–88). But all philosophical attempts failed to hold back the corruption of idolatry and magical thinking. It was in this religious-historical context that Abraham and his descendants would be set apart by remaining "faithful to the Eternal and [trying] to preserve pure religious concepts free of all idolatry" (Mendelssohn/A. Jospe: 89). The existence of this people descended of Abraham stands as a beacon, not of conversion, but to "call wholesome and unadulterated ideas of God and his attributes continuously to the attention of the rest of humanity" (ibid.).

For Hermann Cohen, whose ethics are deeply rooted in Kantian moral universalism, thinkers like Spinoza and Mendelssohn give away far too much to the critics of Judaism; both argue that the laws of Judaism are applicable only to that particular people (Melber: 39–40). Cohen will struggle, in his interpretations, to overcome the view that Abraham originated a parochial, particularist religion. For Cohen, like Mendelssohn, the particular fate of the Jewish people arises out of the context of Abraham's resistance to idolatry. Where holiness had been defined merely as separateness, "ever since

Abraham resisted the cult of the Sabeans, monotheism developed another conception of holiness … there emerged this parallelism: 'You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy' (Lev 19:2). With this correlation, the mythic meaning of holiness was all at once converted into a new meaning of morality" (Cohen 1971: 140). Mendelssohn, however, had denied both Judaism's desire to be propagated by the generation of proselytes (Mendelssohn/A. Jospe: 117, 133ff.) and the applicability of its laws outside of the Jewish nation (Mendellssohn/E. Jospe: 126). For Cohen, both Judaism and the moral law embedded in the Torah are universal in both claim and significance. According to Cohen, Abraham both recognized God as God of the whole universe and tried to convert as many as possible to monotheism, i.e., attempting to universalize his faith (Melber: 40). Abraham's attempt to spread his religion beyond the bounds of his family bears an implicit messianic seed, seeking as it did to turn all people to recognize the truth of the religion and its morality, but Judaism seeks its universality not through violence but through reason and argument (Melber: 355–56). The grounding for this method is illustrated in Cohen's humane reasoning: "Monotheism itself prevents any inner partition between believers in monotheism and all nonbelievers. The Israelite is a son of Noah before he is a son of Abraham" (Cohen 1972: 119). The universality of Cohen's monotheism, unlike that of Christianity as he experiences it, must welcome all comers (even, or especially, the stranger) given that it must forsake coercion, having forsaken any ground for differentiating the believer from the unbeliever for such purposes.

For Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham stands at the head of revelation. God's encounter with the created world, prior (in nature) to Abraham, is like a monologue; echoing the philosophy of his friend, Martin Buber, Rosenzweig asks, "where is the Thou, independent and freely confronting the concealed God … There is a material world, there is the self-contained self, but where is there a Thou … ? So God asks too" (Rosenzweig: 175). But God reaches out "in a supreme definiteness that could not but be heard, [and] now he answers, all unlocked, all spread apart, all ready, all-soul: 'Here I am'" (Rosenzweig: 176). Rosenzweig refers to this as Abraham's second birth, an event that individual Jews, unlike individual Christians, do not require. For the Jew, such rebirth "is not a personal one, but the transformation of his people for freedom in the divine covenant of revelation … The patriarch Abraham heard the call of God and answered it with his 'Here I am,' and the individual only in Abraham's loins. Henceforth the individual is born a Jew."

Abraham stands as the father, and archetype, of a people that stands outside of both time and place, an "eternal people" who "never loses the untrammeled freedom of a wanderer who is more faithful a knight to his country when he roams abroad … this people has a land of its own only in that it has a land it yearns for – a holy land" (Rosenzweig: 300). The choice of the phrase, faithful knight, cannot but call to mind the formulation Kierkegaard had given to Abraham, 'knight of faith', in philosophical challenge to the universalistic, Kantian challenge to Abraham's morality. But Rosenzweig's words strike at the heart of both camps. Abraham is neither the lonely knight suspending the ethical nor a sign of a universal, mechanical morality; Abraham is the *father* of a people, and "the will to be a people dares not cling to any mechanical means; the will can realize its end only through the people itself" (ibid.).

For Martin Buber, the philosopher who formulated the 'I-Thou' relation, Abraham, the intimate of God, must have been of particular interest. Three things, according to Buber, trace back to Abraham: the origin of the people, the community of nations, and prophecy (1956: 305). In his article, "Abraham the Seer," Buber identifies seven prophetic instances in the career of Abraham, but it is the final – the Binding of Isaac – which Buber sees as completing and fulfilling Abraham's spiritual journey. Here we see the 'I-Thou' relation fully at work between God and a man: "God sees man, and man sees God. God sees Abraham, and tests him by seeing him as the righteous and 'whole' man who walks before his God, and now, at the end of his road, he conquers even this final place, the holy temple mountain, by acting on God's behalf … now the reciprocity of seeing between God and man is directly revealed to us" (ibid.: 304). No matter how the face of Abrahamic religion changes, in and through Abraham, "this 'correlation' of guidance and devotion, revelation and decision, God's love for man and man's love for God, this unconditional relationship between Him and man remains" (Buber 1960: 36).

Bibliography. ***Primary:*** ▪ M. Buber, "Abraham the Seer," *Jdm* 5 (1956) 291–305; trans. of id., "Abraham der Seher" (1939). ▪ M. Buber, *The Prophetic Faith* (New York 1960); trans. of id., *Der Glaube der Propheten* (Zurich 1950). ▪ H. Cohen, *Reason and Hope* (New York 1971); selections from: id., *Jüdische Schriften* (Berlin 1924). ▪ H. Cohen, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism* (New York 1972); trans. of id., *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (Frankfurt a.M. ^{2}1929). ▪ M. Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem and Other Jewish Writings* (ed. A. Jospe; New York 1969). ▪ M. Mendelssohn, *Selections from his Writings* (ed. E. Jospe; New York 1975). ▪ F. Rosenzweig, *His Life and Thought* (ed. N. N. Glatzer; New York ^{2}1961). ▪ B. de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (Cambridge 2007); trans. of id. *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (Amsterdam 1670).

Secondary: ▪ H. Abramovitch, "The Psychobiography of a Dialogue," *Jdm* 34 (1985) 401–16. ▪ L. E. Goodman, *God of Abraham* (New York 1996). ▪ J. Melber, *Hermann Cohen's*

Philosophy of Judaism (New York 1968). ■ J. Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* (Cambridge 2001).

James A. Grady

IV. Christianity

■ Greek and Latin Patristics and Orthodox Churches ■ Medieval Times and Reformation Era ■ Modern Europe and America ■ New Churches and Movements

A. Greek and Latin Patristics and Orthodox Churches

Patristic and early medieval appropriations of Abraham drew squarely on the images of Abraham found in Jewish tradition as mediated by the Christian scriptures. Thus, Paul's notion of Abraham as father of the Christian faithful, or as one who modeled Christian faith apart from circumcision and the Jewish law (e.g., Rom 4; Gal 3), or the image of finding rest after death in the bosom of Abraham (Luke 16), or Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac as a foreshadowing of God's actual sacrifice of his son (Gen 22; Heb 11) were all readily picked up by Patristic and early medieval Christian authors.

1. Christological Readings of Abraham. Early Christian authors continued the New Testament tradition of reading the Abraham story in light of Christian faith. The *Epistle of Barnabas* made use of gematria (finding symbolic meaning in numbers) to show how Abraham bore witness to Christ. When Gen 17:23 (cf. 14:14) indicates that Abraham circumcised 318 men from his household, Barnabas seized upon the number 318 (in Gk.: TIH). As it was common to abbreviate names with the first two letters, Barnabas took the IH as a reference to ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (Jesus), with the T standing for the cross of Christ. Thus Barnabas viewed Abraham's circumcision of 318 men as a hidden reference to a deeper meaning, the salvific death of Jesus on the cross.

Similarly, in the mid-2nd century, Justin Martyr drew extensively on Abraham in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. According to Justin, since Abraham was counted righteous by God before he received physical circumcision, the real circumcision was of the heart (*Dial*. 43.2), which now, for Justin, corresponds to Christian baptism. The continued practice of physical circumcision among the Jews was intended by God as a mark of God's curse upon those who put Jesus to death (*Dial*. 16.2–4). God's promise that Abraham's descendants would be "as the sand that is on the seashore" (Gen 22:17) became for Justin an indication that, like sand on the beach, the Jews would be "barren and fruitless" apart from Christ (*Dial*. 120.2). As would be common in later Christian tradition, Justin also used the story of the theophany to Abraham at Mamre (Gen 18) as proof of Christ's pre-existence (*Dial*. 55–59). Finally, for Justin, Gentile Christians are the true descendants and children of Abraham, not the Jews (*Dial*. 119–120). Such Christianizing of Abraham was common in the early and medieval church.

Towards the end of the 2nd century, Melito of Sardis developed an explicit link between the Aqedah (the near-sacrifice of Isaac, Gen 22) and the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. In his *Peri Pascha* (Homily on the Passover, fragment 9), Melito stated that "Christ underwent the suffering and Isaac did not, for he was only a prefiguration of him who would suffer." It is no accident that in early Christian art the image of the sacrifice of Isaac was one of the most popular depictions.

2. Abraham as Model Believer. Abraham also served as a model believer to the faithful Christian. His unwavering trust in God was paradigmatic. As Ambrose of Milan reflected on the story of Abraham: "You are commanded to believe, not permitted to inquire. To Abraham it was counted righteousness that he sought not reasons, but believed with most ready faith. It is good that faith should go before reason, lest we seem to exact a reason from our Lord God as from a man" (*Abr*. 1.21). Similarly, Origen (*Hom. Gen*. 4.2), Chrysostom (*Hom. Gen*. 46), Athanasius (*Festal Letter* 6 on John 8), and Augustine all praised Abraham for his steadfast faith. Indeed, Augustine reasoned that Abraham had such faith that, even as he was about to sacrifice his only son Isaac, he trusted that God could raise him from the dead (*Civ*. xvi.32). This faith also anticipated God's sacrifice of his only son Jesus and raising him from the dead. For Augustine, Abraham marked the beginning of a new era of revelation that foreshadowed the ultimate coming of Christ, his death, and resurrection (*Civ*. xvi.12). Throughout early and medieval Christianity, Abraham remained a model of steadfast faith. Abraham was also praised as a model for Christian hospitality on the basis of his reception of the angelic figures at Mamre (Gen 18; cf. Origen, *Hom. Gen.* 4.2; Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen*. 46).

3. Resting in the Bosom of Abraham. The story from Luke 16 of the rich man and poor Lazarus received much attention from patristic and medieval commentators. In the story, the rich man dies and goes to Hades, while poor Lazarus goes to rest in the bosom of Abraham. In torment, the rich man asks Abraham to have Lazarus bring him water and to warn his brothers, but Abraham remarks that a great barrier is set between them, and that Lazarus is receiving his reward while the rich man is receiving his just punishment. The notion of repose in the bosom of Abraham led to great speculation about the nature of the place where Abraham received Lazarus. According to Irenaeus, the bosom of Abraham served as a temporary resting place for souls awaiting the Day of Judgment, at which point they would inherit a resurrected body (*Haer*. ii.34.1). Similarly, Tertullian argued that this story shows how rewards to the faithful were not imme-

diately conferred. Rather, the souls of the departed, even Christians, went first to Hades to await judgment. Tertullian made it clear, however, that the faithful found rest in Abraham's bosom, which is a separate place from Hades, or a separate upper region of Hades that can be seen from Hades below (*An*. 7.4; 55). Augustine's approach to the story of the rich man and Lazarus was far less materialistic than Tertullian's notion. Augustine identified the metaphor of Abraham's bosom with paradise (cf. *Div*. *Quaest*. 53; 57.22; *Conf*. ix.3.6). Moreover, Augustine disputed the notion that "Abraham's bosom" was in any way located in or affiliated with Hades (*Gen*. *litt*. 33.64–65). Augustine was less concerned with the exact location of the repose in Abraham's bosom, and more interested in the image of comfort and paradise it suggested. Medieval Christians regularly interpreted Luke 16 and the reference to "Abraham's bosom" (*sinus Abraham)* as a symbol of heaven and the resurrected life. Indeed, Thomas Aquinas viewed the bosom of Abraham as a reference to the highest heaven (*Summa Theologiae*, Supp., Qu. 69, art. 4). A common image in medieval Christian art was not only Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham (cf. the 10th-cent. *Liuthar Gospels*), but whole communities of the saved in Abraham's bosom (cf. the 12th-cent. *Hortus Deliciarum*, the Pamplona Bible, and the central portal of the Bourges Cathedral, west facade).

Bibliography: ■ J. Baschet, "Medieval Abraham," *MLN* 108 : 4 (1993) 738–58. ■ J. L. van der Lof, "Abraham's Bosom in the Writings of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Augustine," *AugSt* 26 : 2 (1995) 109–23. ■ J. S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews* (Louisville, Ky. 1991). ■ I. Speyart van Woerden, "The Iconography of the Sacrifice of Isaac," *VigChr* 15 (1961) 214–55. ■ R. Wilken, "The Christianizing of Abraham," *CTM* 43 (1972) 723–31.

Jeffrey Siker

B. Medieval Times and Reformation Era

Christian theology and spirituality in both medieval times and in the Reformation era treated the patriarch Abraham in continuity with the early Church and Patristic literature. Abraham was an important biblical figure in attempts to prove the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. Abraham thus became one of the proofs of true Christian faith.

Abraham appears in several settings in medieval Christian traditions:

a) In commentaries on the whole Bible or on the Pentateuch and the book of Genesis as *glossa interlinearis, glossa ordinaria* and the Postilla of Nicholas of Lyra;
b) In dogmatic theological treatises, where key stories about Abraham are used as biblical testimonies for central Christian beliefs (the blessing given to Abraham [Gen 12; 18]; the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek [Gen 14]; the justification of Abraham by his faith [Gen 15]; the appearance of God to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre [Gen 18]; the offering of Isaac [Gen 22]; the promise given to Abraham [Gen 12; 17; 22]; and Abraham's Bosom [Luke 16 : 22]);
c) In Christian iconography, where these stories are essential material.

In addition to commentaries on the whole Bible, several medieval authors treated Abraham in their Genesis or Pentateuch commentaries; e.g., Isidore of Seville, Bede, Walafrid Strabo, Remigius of Auxerre, Alfonso Tostado and Rupert of Deutz. In these commentaries the text of Genesis is interpreted in connection with the passages dealing with Abraham in the New Testament. This resulted in a christological interpretation of the blessing and promise given to Abraham; the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations are to be blessed, was identified with the coming of Christ. A prefiguring of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is seen in the offering of Isaac. The three men who visit Abraham by the oaks of Mamre are seen as prefiguring the Eucharist, but also as representing the triune nature of God.

In medieval theological discussion on doctrinal questions, some key stories about Abraham acquired an argumentative role. For instance, the offering of Melchizedek and the sacrifice of Isaac served as biblical testimony for the offering of the Mass, "Abraham's Bosom" was used as a biblical basis for the doctrine of *limbus patrum* (a part of hell), and God's command to sacrifice Isaac was used in the discussions between the thomistic and scotistic traditions about the immutability of the will of God.

The theologians of the Reformation used and discussed patristic, medieval and rabbinic material in their interpretation of Abraham. Abraham was treated for the most part in sermons, lectures and commentaries. Abraham is the key figure in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament providing support for the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

In Luther's interpretations of Abraham (WA 9; 14; 24; 42–44), Abraham is the paradigm for his theology as a whole. Above all, Abraham is for Luther the father of faith. The promise given to Abraham is a promise of the coming Christ and therefore identical with the Gospel. Abraham is not only the most important witness in the Old Testament for justification by faith, but also a paradigm for hope and love. In his worship, Abraham is the typos of the "true Church"; in his office, he is also priest, bishop and "true monk." For Luther, Abraham is *pater fidei sanctissimus,* who in his holiness replaces traditional legendary hagiology. Sarah and Hagar also have an important role in Luther's exegesis. Hagar especially is a paradigm for Luther's "theology of the cross."

Zwingli and Calvin interpret Abraham in their commentaries on Genesis (CR 100 and CR 23) as

embodying in general the common lines of the Reformation, seeing in Abraham's faith the basis of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Zwingli's interpretation is more typological, while Calvin prefers a historical and literal approach. Calvin agrees with Luther in many respects but also differs in some details. Calvin's interpretation emphasizes God's covenant considerably more than Luther's. For both, the story of Abraham is directive in the life of the Church.

Bibliography: ■ J. Baschet, "Medieval Abraham," *MLN* 108 : 4 (1993) 738–58. ■ J. Forsberg, *Das Abrahambild in der Theologie Luthers* (Stuttgart 1984). ■ D. Lerch, *Isaaks Opferung christlich gedeutet* (Tübingen 1950). ■ E. Lucchesi Palli, "Abraham," *LCI* 1(Freiburg 1968) 25–30. ■ R. C. Zachmann, "Calvin as Commentator on Genesis," in *Calvin and the Bible* (ed. D. McKim; Cambridge/New York 2006) 1–29.

Juhani Forsberg

C. Modern Europe and America

In the modern era, the œuvre of I. Kant, the German Idealists and S. Kierkegaard have had an immense influence on the history of theology. In addition, these thinkers guided Christian reception and interpretation of Abraham. One of the main problems they discussed is the compatibility between revelation and reason. The Aqedah, above all, casts this question as unavoidable.

Kant and J. G. Fichte agree that reason gives the guidelines to judge every (supposed) revelation. On this account, Kant criticizes Abraham several times. Abraham should have exposed the voice that speaks to him in Gen 22 : 2 as the voice of an idol. However, in obeying the voice and taking it for God's order, Abraham instead acts "gewissenlos" (Kant: 187), i.e., "without conscience."

Although impressed by Kant, the young Hegel did not restrict his examination of Abraham to the Aqedah. Referring to Gen 12–24, G. W. F. Hegel describes Abraham's life in "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal" (1798–1800). He interprets Abraham as the "wahren Stammvater der Juden" (Nohl: 243; "true ancestor of the Jews") and uses him as a paradigm for the dialectic of freedom and love. Leaving his relatives, his fatherland and the gods of his fathers, Abraham tries to become independent. He is not breaking away because he is attracted by someone else, rather – and that is specific to Hegel's interpretation – "Abraham wollte nicht lieben und darum frei sein" (ibid.: 246; "Abraham did not want to love and therefore to be free"). The God of Abraham is a monotheistic ideal, an idea, which is rooted in Abraham's "Verachtung gegen die ganze Welt" (ibid.: 247; "contempt of the entire world").

To a lesser extent, F. W. J. von Schelling draws attention to Abraham rather to the self-revealing God. In his 29th lecture of the "Philosophie der Offenbarung" (1841/42), he exposes the tension that gives God himself his vitality. Schelling focuses on the names of the revealing God (Elohim and Malach YHWH). As an exclusive principle, the dark side of God (Elohim) is indeed demonic, but at the same time, before Malach is able to appear, the dark side has to be transcended by Malach YHWH (cf. Rosenau: 259–60).

While writing about Abraham, Kierkegaard spent time in Berlin and listened to Schelling's lectures. Schelling's speculative thoughts, however, seem hardly to affect him. Instead, Johannes de Silentio, Kierkegaard's pseudonym, again discusses the compatibility between revelation and reason. He verbalizes a contradictory position to those of Kant and Hegel. In Gen 22, de Silentio finds evidence that there is an absolute duty to the Absolute (God), which is in the concrete moment more evident to the individual as the universal law of reason. An individual like Abraham is a religious exception. Abraham's devotion to God is his passion. As a passion it is non-communicable and others are not able to comprehend it. This non-communicable passion, however, is somehow heard in the few words that Abraham utters in Gen 22 : 8. This verse points nearly ironically at what de Silentio calls the "Dobbeltbevægelsen i Abrahams Sjæl" ("double movement in Abraham's soul"; Kierkegaard: 183). In an act of resignation, Abraham sacrifices his son, and at the same time he expects to retain him. This latter movement is called "Troens Bevægelse i Kraft af det Absurde" ("movement of faith in the power of the absurd," ibid.). Again and again, the pseudonym deals with the question of how to preach the movement, that which is empowered by the absurd. In this way, Kierkegaard unites poetry, philosophy and theology. All of these three areas of 20th-century thought echo the thought of "Fear and Trembling" (1843).

The philosophical interpretation of Abraham – influenced by Kierkegaard but mainly returning to the position of Kant – continues in the works of M. Buber, J. Sartre, S. de Beauvoir and L. Kolakowski (cf. Tschuggnall: 75–79). J. Derrida reads Gen 22 as an insight into the history of religions. In the 'Binding of Isaac', he locates the distinction between "magischen Ritualität und mythischen Religion" (Deuser: 6; "magic rituality and mythic religion"). The religion of Abraham focuses on his inwardness and holds him responsible for his decision. Furthermore, Derrida generalizes the situation, arguing that in every true decision, such as during one's own dying, a human being becomes a self-responsible individual (cf. ibid.: 7).

In the 20th century, systematic theology focused not only on Gen 22, but also on Gen 12 : 1–2, 15 : 6 and 17 : 4. As an emigrant himself, P. J. Tillich developed a special view on the wandering Abraham. The God in whom Abraham believes reveals himself as the God of time; in other words "die

Götter des Raums und des Heidentums und des Polytheismus" prove to be idols (Tillich: 144). In 1937, D. Bonhoeffer sees the unavoidable "Bruch mit den Unmittelbarkeiten" ("break with immediacies") prefigured in Abraham. But unlike Abraham, most people treat this break ("Bruch") as invisible. Similar to Luther, Bonhoeffer reads the stories of Abraham explicitly as Christian stories (Bonhoeffer: 92–94). On the basis of critical exegesis, however, E. Hirsch argues against a Christian reading of Abraham. For Hirsch, Gen 22 shows the typical Hebrew Bible/Old Testament image of God. Even though the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament is historically close to Christianity, its relationship between God and men should be displaced (cf. Hirsch: 66). In recent years, theologians like K.-J. Kuschel have referred affirmatively to the God of Abraham, wanting to rediscover an Abrahamic ecumenism inclusive of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Being decidedly critical of Abraham's sacrifice-tradition, F. Hinkelammert has developed a liberation-theological approach.

Bibliography. ***Primary:*** ■ D. Bonhoeffer, *Nachfolge* (1937), Werke IV (Munich 1989). ■ F. J. Hinkelammert, *La Fe de Abraham y el Edipo occidental* (San José [Costa Rica] 1989). ■ E. Hirsch, *Das Alte Testament und die Predigt des Evangeliums* (ed. H. M. Müller; GW 32; Waltrop 2006) [First edition Tübingen 1936]. ■ I. Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, AA VI (Berlin 1907) [First edition Königsberg 1793]. ■ S. Kierkegaard, *Samlede Værker* (eds. A. B. Drachmann et al., 2nd ed., vols. 1–15, Copenhagen 1920–1931). ■ K.-J. Kuschel, *Abraham* (New York 1995); trans. of id., *Streit um Abraham* (München 1994). ■ H. Nohl (ed.), *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften* (Tübingen 1907). ■ P. Tillich, "The Struggle between Time and Space," in *Theology of Culture* (ed. R. C. Kimball; New York 1959) 30–39; trans. of id., "Der Widerstreit von Zeit und Raum," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6 (ed. R. Albrecht; Stuttgart ^{2}1963) 140–8.

Secondary: ■ H. Deuser, "'Und hier hast Du übrigens einen Widder'," in *Opfere deinen Sohn!* (eds. B. Greiner et al.; Tübingen 2007) 1–17. ■ H. Rosenau, "Die Erzählung von Abrahams Opfer (Gen 22) und ihre Deutung bei Kant, Kierkegaard und Schelling," *NZSTh* 27 (1985) 251–61. ■ P. Tschugnall, *Das Abraham-Opfer als Glaubensparadox* (Frankfurt a.M. et al. 1990).

Matthias Wilke

D. New Churches and Movements

Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, published the *Book of Abraham* in 1842. He claimed that among four mummies which he purchased from Michael Chandler, a traveling antiquities dealer in Kirtland, Ohio in 1835 was an original and hitherto lost papyrus text written in Egypt by the patriarchal ancestor of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and that he could translate it. It is now found in the *Pearl of Great Price*. Its five chapters became part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or Mormon scripture in 1880, though many Latter-day Saint Restoration communities do not recognize its authority. The *Book of Abraham* contains details about Abraham's early life, his ordination to the priesthood and his fight against the idolatry of Egypt and even of his own family. It records that pagan priests of Pharaoh tried to sacrifice him, but an angel rescued him. It includes information about God's covenant with Abraham, the guarantee of a Promised Land, many descendants, priesthood authority, the choosing of a Redeemer, and the second estate of man. There is a vision about astronomy, and an account of humanity's premortal existence as spirits, and of the creation of the world by Gods (in the plural) who organized and formed the heavens and the earth. Smith copied three drawings (he called them facsimiles) from the scrolls and published them with commentary as part of his translation of the *Book of Abraham*. He interpreted the first as depicting an idolatrous Egyptian priest about to slay Abraham. The second is a hydrocephalus, representing, so Smith believed, the star or planet Kolob, which is near to the throne of God. The third was, he maintained, Abraham sitting on Pharaoh's throne, lecturing courtiers on astronomy. In 1856, Smith's widow Emma sold the mummies and the papyri, and it was assumed that the Abraham papyrus was destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871. But ten fragments were discovered in 1966 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's archives, and another in the LDS Church Historians' office. Contemporary Egyptologists give quite different translations of the text and interpretations of the facsimiles than Smith, and regard the papyrus as a funerary text from about the 1st century BCE, about 2,000 years later than Smith declared it to be.

Mormons agree with the apostle Paul that Abraham is the father of the faithful, not of those who claim natural descent from him. But they give this a twist: God's promises to Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant, are for all who are worthy to be grafted in to the House of Israel, which means that it is for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Moreover, later Mormon revelation drawn from the *Book of Abraham* has cast light on aspects of Abraham unknown to the biblical tradition, and touches explicitly or implicitly on beliefs that distinguish Mormon from mainstream Christian theology: Abraham was given divine revelation about the planetary system, the creation of the earth, and the pre-mortal activities of the spirits of humankind. He was chosen to be a leader in the kingdom of God before he was born into this world. Because of his faithfulness he is now exalted and sits upon a throne in eternity.

Bibliography: ■ D. J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge 2003). ■ J. Grooters (dir.), *The Lost Book of Abraham* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 2002; www.bookofabraham.info, accessed April 7, 2009). ■ *The Book of Abraham: Translated from the Papyrus by Joseph Smith* (http://scriptures.lds.org/abr, accessed April 7, 2009).

Martin Forward

V. Islam

Abraham (Arab. *Ibrāhīm*) is a figure of great spiritual importance in Islam. He is acknowledged as a precursor of the Prophet Muḥammad and the founder of the annual pilgrimage to Makka (Mecca), and above all as a strict monotheist who put devotion to God above everything, including his ties with his own father and son.

1. Abraham in the Qurʾān. Abraham is mentioned in over 240 verses of the Qurʾān, more than any figure apart from Moses. These are found in 25 chapters, one of which, *Sūra* 14, is named after him. They comprise both passing references and also longer narratives that sometimes parallel stories in Genesis or post-biblical and other traditions. Taken together, they present a picture of a radical monotheist who anticipates in many of his characteristics the Prophet of Islam.

Abraham is given a number of epithets in the Qurʾān, including tender-hearted and forbearing (S 9 : 114), truthful (S 19 : 41), and one who paid his debt (S 53 : 37). Among them, *khalīl* (S 4 : 125) and *ḥanīf* (S 2 : 135, S 3 : 67 etc.) are particularly significant.

Khalīl, which is usually translated as "friend" (the whole verse reading "Allah chose Abraham for friend"), indicates a special closeness to God. To some minds it suggests a unique privilege that even strains the fundamental Islamic distinction between the divine and human. In fact, the mystic Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), drawing upon a meaning of its root verb *khalla* 'to penetrate', suggested that it indicates Abraham penetrated God's essence and was in turn penetrated by God in his essence (Ibn ʿArabī: 40).

Ḥanīf is taken in the Muslim tradition to mean "monotheist," and the *ḥanīfs* who were known in Makka at the time of Muḥammad are regarded as having affirmed this belief in a polytheistic milieu (Ibn Isḥāq: 99). Verses such as S 2 : 135, S 3 : 67, S 4 : 125, S 6 : 161, S 16 : 120 and S 16 : 123 appear to endorse this meaning, but many of them suggest an additional quality that is made clear in S 3 : 95 and S 6 : 79, that Abraham resisted associating other deities with God.

One of the main narrative clusters about Abraham illustrates this quality in his breaking with the traditions of his family. As a youth (S 21 : 60), he criticizes his father Āzar for worshipping idols, is rejected by his people (S 6 : 74, S 19 : 42–6), and smashes all their idols except the biggest (S 21 : 57–8, S 37 : 93), taunting them that this idol was the culprit and forcing them to see that they worship impotent images (S 21 : 63–7, cf. S 37 : 91–6). The reason why Abraham made this break is graphically told in S 6 : 75–81, where he first takes a star as Lord until it sets, then the moon and the sun until they set, and then he finally recognizes the One who has created all of them and asserts that he will not be one who associates others with God. His monotheistic fervor rouses his people to condemn him to be burnt, but God rescues him from this and other attempts against him (S 21 : 68–9, S 29 : 24, S 37 : 97–8). While there are no biblical parallels to this episode, many details can be found in Jewish traditions (Ginzberg 1: 185–286, and notes in Ginzberg 5: 207–55).

Partial parallels to biblical narratives include Abraham's departure from his native land (S 21 : 71, S 29 : 26, S 37 : 99), his entering into a covenant with God and establishing a place of worship to him (S 2 : 124–5, S 33 : 7), his being reassured that God can revive the dead by witnessing portions of birds he had cut up being reunited and flying to him (S 2 : 260), his being visited by messengers who inform him of the birth of a son and go on to destroy the people of Lot, and his being ordered to sacrifice his son. The two latter references comprise further substantial narrative clusters that exemplify Abraham's singular dedication to God and his implicit trust in him.

In the first, messengers from God (their identity is unknown to Abraham and his unnamed wife) visit him and he serves them a roasted calf. But when they do not eat he grows suspicious of them, and they have to reassure him that they have come with the good news that he will have a son (S 15 : 51–3, S 51: 24–8), or, in one version, two sons named as Isaac (*Isḥāq*) and Jacob (*Yaʿqūb*) (S 11 : 69–71, cf. S 6 : 84, S 21 : 72, S 29 : 27). His wife reacts to this by laughing or striking her face because she and Abraham are too old (S 11 : 71–2, S 15 : 54–5, S 51 : 29–30), but when the messengers affirm that they bring this news from God, Abraham attests his belief in God's mercy (S 15 : 56). The similarities between this and the Genesis account (as well as the differences) are evident, as is the further detail that when Abraham is reassured about these messengers he pleads for the people of Lot (*Lūṭ*) (S 11 : 74, S 29 : 31–2).

In the second (Aqedah), the motif of Abraham's implicit faith in the one God suffuses the narrative of the sacrifice of his son so fully that the dramatic and psychological tension of the Genesis parallel is completely absent. Here the childless Abraham prays and is granted a "forbearing son." When this son reaches working age, Abraham tells him that he has dreamt that he must offer him in sacrifice. The son unquestioningly complies with what he sees as a command from God, and the two obediently prepare. When Abraham forces his son down to kill him, God orders him to stop, telling him he has already "fulfilled the dream." The narrative is concluded with the explanation that this was a trial, and that Abraham will be remembered by later generations for being a believing servant of God. In place of the son, "a tremendous victim" is substituted (S 37 : 100–111).

The name of the son is not given in this narrative, though, since Isaac (*Isḥāq*) is named immedi-

ately afterwards in S 37:112, some interpreters have taken this as an indication that he is involved in the incident. Others, however, have seen this reference as an indication that Isaac was born after the sacrifice, and have preferred Ishmael (*Ismāʿīl*) as the son whom Abraham was commanded to slaughter. Ishmael is associated with Abraham in several places (S 2:136, S 2:140, S 3:84, S 4:136, also S 2:133), and is identified as Abraham's close helper in working on the kaʿba in Makka (S 2:125, S 2:127). In one place he is mentioned with Isaac as Abraham's son (S 14:39), but nowhere is either he or Isaac named as the child of the sacrifice.

Abraham is of major significance in the Qurʾān for his relationship with the kaʿba, and the ceremonies of the annual Muslim pilgrimage that are associated with it. According to S 14:35–41, Abraham settles members of his family in a valley without cultivation near God's "holy house," so they can establish proper worship. He prays that people's hearts may be filled with love for them and that God will feed them, or, in a parallel version in S 2:126, that this region may be a place of peace, and that God will feed believing people there.

God commands Abraham and Ishmael to purify the house, and they raise its foundations (S 2:125, S 2:127, S 22:26). This is the first house that was "appointed for people," a place of security (S 2:125, S 3:97) and the goal of pilgrimage for people from all directions (S 3:97, S 22:27). Abraham himself declares the pilgrimage to people (S 22:27) and is shown the rites of pilgrimage (S 2:128), circumambulation, standing, bowing and prostrating, and performing retreats (S 2:125, S 22:26). The "Station of Abraham" is situated near the house (S 3:96–7).

The Qurʾān makes it abundantly clear that neither Jews nor Christians can speak authoritatively about Abraham because their scriptures post-date him (S 3:65). He was, in fact, neither a Jew nor a Christian but a *ḥanīf muslim* (S 3:67), and so the precursor of Islam which is a reversion to the primordial faith from which other faiths have deviated.

As a radical monotheist, Abraham is portrayed like other messengers of God as the recipient of a revelation (S 2:136), which is called the *ṣuḥuf* ("scrolls"), the same as was given to Moses (S 53:36–7, S 87:18–19). It is strongly implied that the message and intention of this revelation is identical with other revealed scriptures, and supremely the Qurʾān.

Abraham is thus seen as the ancestor of all true believers in the one God. These are people who show the same implicit trust in God as Abraham did and surrender to God's will in the same way, and do not automatically include his own offspring unless these remain true to his inspired faith (S 2:124, S 4:54–5, S 37:113, S 57:26). As a believer in the one God and a prophet (S 19:41), he looks forward to a prophet from among his descendants who will "recite to them your signs and instruct them in the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them" (S 2:129). There can be little doubt from this that Abraham is portrayed, like Jesus after him (S 61:6), as anticipating Muḥammad, the last divinely-sent messenger and the bearer of the ultimate and complete revelation.

The Ḥadīth of Muḥammad include a number of references to Abraham that agree with this portrayal, and add that his picture hung in the kaʿba in Muḥammad's own day (e.g., al-Bukhārī Book 55: "Prophets").

2. Abraham in Islam. These details, which are scattered throughout the Qurʾān without reference to chronology or their mutual connection, became the basis of stories about Abraham that are particularly found in universal histories and in the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* ("Stories of the Prophets"), books that tell of the line of prophets leading up to Muḥammad. In these accounts, the separate incidents and references given in the Qurʾān are combined with other information, usually of biblical and Jewish origins, into connected biographies.

The earliest substantial instance of this literature survives from the 8th century, forming part of Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq's (d. 767) history of the Prophet Muḥammad and his predecessors. Although the original of this work has been lost, it can be reconstructed from later sources (Newby: 8–16). Here, Abraham features after Noah and the qurʾānic prophets Hūd and Ṣāliḥ, and his story includes those of Ishmael, Isaac and his children (Newby: 67–82).

Ibn Isḥāq begins by identifying Abraham's birthplace as Kūthā, near Kūfa in what was the kingdom of Nimrod (*Namrūd*), and goes on to tell how his mother hid his birth from his father, Āzar, who was Tārikh (or, by a small orthographic change, Tāriḥ = Terah), because the king, having been warned by his astrologers that a child born at a certain place and time would uproot his religion, ordered all boys born at that time to be killed. So Abraham was born in a cave and remained there until he grew, although "a day for Abraham … was like a month and a month like a year." When he emerged from the cave he saw a star, then the moon and the sun, and he took each as his Lord until they set, whereupon he put his trust in the one God (S 6:75–81; Newby: 67–68). His job was to sell the idols his father made, but, armed with this faith, he made fun of them and smashed them (S 37:91–3). Nimrod confronted Abraham, boasting that he was lord of life and death, but Abraham asked God for reassurance, and was shown the miracle of the birds he cut up and scattered being made whole and coming to him (S 2:260). Nimrod condemned him to be burnt, but Abraham sat un-

harmed in the fire for days, supported by an angel, whereupon Nimrod began to realize his own error (Newby: 68–71).

Ibn Isḥāq goes on to tell how Abraham, with his wife (who is named Sarah [*Sāra*]) and Lot, migrated "for his Lord" to Ḥarrān (Haran), and then Egypt, and finally the Syrian desert, where he settled in Palestine, dug a well and made a place of worship. When he moved from there the well dried up, but he gave the people of the area seven goats which drank from it and it flowed again (Newby: 72–73).

God sent angels to destroy the people of Lot. When Abraham entertained them they would not eat without paying. Then they told him about a son and Sarah laughed. But this son did not come immediately, so Abraham slept with Hagar and she bore Ishmael. Abraham took them with him when he was commanded to visit the kaʿba and declare the pilgrimage; he settled them in the valley without cultivation and left them. Ishmael grew thirsty, and Hagar, in anxiety, ran between the hills of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa in search of water. When she returned, her son had scratched a spring with his hand, known ever since as Zamzam (Newby: 73–74).

Abraham and Ishmael built the kaʿba, and, when they had finished, Gabriel came and told Abraham how to perform the rites of the pilgrimage in and around Makka, and then ordered him to announce the pilgrimage, which he did in a voice that reached the whole world. He performed the rites and taught them to Ishmael and others (Newby: 74–76).

The son whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice was, according to this tradition, Ishmael not Isaac. When father and son were on their way to the place of sacrifice, the devil tried to dissuade first Abraham, then Ishmael, and then Hagar, but without success. Ishmael acquiesced in his father's action, but God prevented the sacrifice from being carried out (Newby: 76–78). Abraham finally died in Syria.

It will readily be seen how Ibn Isḥāq weaves qurʾānic references in with details from the Bible and elsewhere into a connected narrative that gives context and meaning to the disparate verses.

Later Muslim authors follow the same pattern, often quoting from Ibn Isḥāq and adding details in the name of other early experts. In the 10th century, for example, the historian Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), in his *History of Messengers and Kings* (Brinner: 48–131), compiles a long narrative of the major incidents in the prophet's life, carefully listing different (and sometimes, contrary) reports in a careful exercise that leaves readers to decide the most likely course of events. He gives al-Sūs, Babylon, Kūthā and al-Warqāʾ as sites of Abraham's birthplace (Brinner: 48–49); he identifies Sarah as the daughter of the king of Ḥarrān, and explains that Abraham married her because, like him, she had rebelled against her people's religion (ibid.: 62); he says that Hagar was given to Abraham by Pharaoh (ibid: 63); and he identifies the place where he sacrificed his son as about two miles from Bayt Īliyāʾ (ibid.: 68; Jerusalem). Understandably, he writes at length about the building of the kaʿba and the establishing of the annual pilgrimage (ibid.: 69–82), and about which son took part in the sacrifice (ibid.: 82–97). He concludes with the detail that Abraham was buried at Sarah's tomb in Hebron (ibid.: 130), and with a brief mention of some of the proverbs and parables he says were contained in the "scrolls" revealed to the prophet (ibid.: 130–131).

As with Ibn Isḥāq's account, the many details included by al-Ṭabarī give context and continuity to the references in the Qurʾān, while the stream of comments he quotes from earlier authorities shows the popularity and importance of the Abraham story in early Islam. Later historians and authors of *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, among whom Abū Isḥāq al-Thaʿlabī (d. 1035), Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Kisāʾī (before ca. 1200) and Abū al-Fidāʾ Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) stand out (Tottoli: 146–55, 172–5), continued to add details to the story, though many were often uncritical and fanciful with little of the detachment and carefulness shown by al-Ṭabarī.

3. Abraham and the Annual Pilgrimage. The figure of Abraham is intimately connected with the *ḥajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Makka. When Muslims perform this fifth pillar of Islam they come close in spirit to their ancestor in faith as they enact observances they believe he first proclaimed, and recall experiences he underwent.

The qurʾānic basis of Abraham's association with Makka is clear: he settled his family there and was ordered to build God's house, he declared to humankind the pilgrimage there and they were ordered to pray at the "Station of Abraham," and he was instructed in the rites of the pilgrimage. Thus, when pilgrims chant the *talbiya*, the call of obedience to God, circumambulate the kaʿba, worship and pause in contemplation near it, or when they pray at a spot where a stone said to bear Abraham's footprint is encased (the "Station of Abraham"), they are directly repeating what the Qurʾān says he instituted.

In addition, when pilgrims hurry between the low hills of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa and drink from the well of Zamzam, they re-enact the actions of Hagar and Ishmael – it is, in fact, believed the two are buried in the Ḥijr, the semi-circular enclosure at one end of the kaʿba (Brinner: 133). When they throw pebbles at the three pillars, they repeat Abraham's repelling of the devil when he tried three times to stop him from sacrificing his son, and when they sacrifice an animal on the last day of the

pilgrimage they re-enact Abraham's sacrifice of the victim given to him in place of his son. The connections are unavoidable. Many may even remember Abraham at the climax of the pilgrimage when they stand for hours on the plain of ʾArafāt, for it is here that he was asked by the angel whether he now knew (*ʾarafa*) the rites he had enacted.

Bibliography. ***Primary:*** ■ Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. ■ Ibn Isḥāq, *The Life of Muhammad* (Oxford 1955); trans. of id., *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. ■ Ibn Kathīr, *Al-bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut 1990). ■ Al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, 2 vols. (ed. I. Eisenberg; Leiden 1922–1923). ■ Al-Kisāʾī, *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisāʾī* (Boston, Mass. 1978); trans. of id., *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*. ■ G. Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet, a Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad* (Columbia, S.C. 1989). ■ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*. ■ Al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. III, *Prophets and Patriarchs* (Albany, N.Y. 1987); partial trans. of id., *Taʾrīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*. ■ Al-Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (Beirut 1994).

Secondary: ■ L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia, Pa. 1909–1936). ■ Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-hikam* [*The Wisdom of the Prophets*] (Aldsworth 1975). ■ Y. Moubarac, *Abraham dans le Coran* (Paris 1958). ■ R. Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qurān and Muslim Literature* (Richmond 2002); trans. of id., *I profeti biblici nella tradizione islamica* (StBi 121; Brescia 1999).

David Thomas

VI. Ecumenical Discussion

In addition to ethical considerations surrounding Abraham and his role in the Aqedah, the figure of Abraham has emerged in the modern period as a common reference point in interreligious dialogue (or so-called "trialogue") among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. To be sure, each of these Abrahamic faiths claims this prophet as their own. For Jews, he is primarily the patriarch of the children of Israel, to whom God promised numberless descendents and the land of Canaan (Gen 17:1–8). For Christians, Abraham is the ancestor of Jesus Christ (Matt 1:2–17; Luke 2:23–38) and the model of faith (Gal 3:6–9; Heb 11:8–12). Muslims emphasize Abraham as a friend of God (S 4:125), the "first Muslim" or first true monotheist (S 2:135, 3:67, etc.), a man of true faith, neither a Jew nor a Christian (S 3:67), and the one who, with Ishmael, rebuilt the kaʿba and establishes true worship in Mecca (S 2:125, 2:127, 22:26).

Interfaith trialogue concedes these and multitudinous non-canonical rival views of Abraham but affirms shared aspects of his spiritual character. Abraham is acknowledged as a universal figure who believed in the one true God, exhibited righteous behavior, modeled faith and humility, and was the one through whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3b). Indeed, because Abraham preceded Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, he is seen as a source and symbol for these monotheistic religions.

Serious interfaith discussions between Christians and Jews ensued after World War II, and among all three faith traditions in the wake of the Second Vatican Council in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The writings and influence of Louis Massignon (1893–1962), the French Catholic and scholar of Islam, were seen as pivotal for the Catholic view of Islam expressed in the epoch-making declarations of the Council, *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium*. Both documents identify the Islamic religion with Abraham, recognizing that Muslims submit to God "just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own," and that they "profess to hold the faith of Abraham." These declarations inspired Catholics in Europe and the U.S. to open a trialogue with Muslims and Jews, and by 1969 the World Council of Churches broadened the discussion among other Christians engaging in interfaith dialogue. Then and now, trialogues inevitably return to the figure of Abraham who, in obedience to and with faith in God, offers a common source for mutual understanding, joint endeavor, and peaceful coexistence.

Bibliography: ■ B. Feiler, *Abraham* (New York 2002). ■ B. Hinz/I. Omar (eds.), *Heirs of Abraham* (Maryknoll, N.Y. 2005). ■ K.-J. Kuschel, *Abraham* (New York 1995); trans. of id., *Streit um Abraham* (Munich 1994). ■ N. Solomon et al. (eds.), *Abraham's Children* (London 2005) 9–39.

David W. Kling

VII. Other Religions

A few Enlightenment thinkers, notably Voltaire, speculated that Abraham and Brahma were to be identified, on the naïve basis of an approximation of their spelling in modern western European languages. Whatever cultural links there might have been between Hinduism and Judaism, however, cannot be proved from this simplistic assumption.

Bahá'í scriptures contain many references to Abraham, and their texts often call him "Friend of God" and "Father of the Faithful." The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are regarded by Bahá'ís as among his descendants. He is a divine messenger or a "Manifestation of God." Bahá'ís have no angelology or demonology, except in a spiritual or symbolic sense. There exists: God, manifestations of God, and humans. Manifestations, unlike ordinary mortals, pre-existed in the spiritual world before their birth into this world. Like all such messengers, Abraham taught the essential Bahá'í truths of a progressive revelation, appropriate to his time and people, that would inevitably but gradually lead to the establishment of a universal human community.

Bibliography: ■ K. E. Bowers, *God Speaks Again* (Wilmette, Ill. 2004). ■ F. Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary* (New York 1984); trans. of id., *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (Paris 1764).

Martin Forward

VIII. Literature

Aside from his role in the Aqedah, which, of all Genesis episodes involving him, has been the one most often treated in Western poetry, drama, and

fiction, Abraham figures in Western literature as a paragon of absolute faith (cf. Gen 15:6; Heb 11:8) and as Jesus' ancestor (Matt 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38). Aggadic legends and the Qur'an feature him as the first monotheist and idoloclast, whom Nimrod ordered cast into fire; the latter legend, filtered apparently through a Zoroastrian source, informs the "Fire-Worshippers" section of Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (1817), where "pitying Heav'n to roses turn'd / The death-flames that beneath him burn'd." Medieval Christian literary artists additionally associate Abraham with ideas drawn from Christian typological and allegorical exegesis.

Chief among these is the notion of Abraham as a primordial recognizer and explicator of the Trinity. For example, as Bede, alluding to Abraham's supplication to his visitors at Mamre (Gen 18:1–5), interjects that "seeing three men, he adored one" (*tres viros videns, unum adoravit*; PL, 91:238A–B), so the Old English poem *Andreas*, set in the Christian era, shows Abraham rise from the grave to testify to the Jews that he knew Christ (= *se ilca ealwalda God* [the same omnipotent God], line 751) in times of yore. Later, as the *Biblia pauperum* construes the Mamre visitation as prefiguring Christ's Transfiguration (with Abraham foreshadowing Jesus' awed disciples), and hence as reflecting the Trinity, so does the Middle English poem *Piers Plowman* (late 14th cent.; B 16–17) recount an allegorical dream in which Abraham expounds doctrinal subtleties of the Trinitarian Godhead while himself embodying one third of the Trinity of Christian virtues, "faith." Composed around the same time as *Piers*, the Middle English poem *Cleanness* likewise echoes Bede in telling that Abraham greeted his three visitors at Mamre as though they were one Divine Being.

While there emerged by the 12th century a Hebrew tale about Abraham's fabrication of a *golem* with Shem, Abraham also appears in medieval Christian literary adaptations of the legend, immensely popular then, of Christ's descent into hell to release the captive souls of Old Testament heroes. Whereas Dante's Virgil lists "Abraàm patrïarca" among those whose shades he saw taken by "un possente" (Christ) from Limbo and made blessed (*Inferno,* 4.53, 58), a still extant version of the Middle English poetic mystery play, *The Harrowing of Hell*, actually depicts Christ's encounter with the patriarch in hell; Christ tells Abraham he knows that his mother descended from Abraham's line, and he promises that Abraham will be released to ascend to paradise. Abraham's bearing upon Christ's infernal descent is further expanded in *Piers*. There, before that event (recounted in B 18), Abraham proves himself Christ's "herald on earth and in hell" (B 16.247) by announcing that John the Baptist has already alerted him and the other souls in hell of Christ's intention to free them (B 16).

Abraham is featured in other English mystery plays, such as the *Histories of Lot and Abraham*, one of the plays in the Chester Mystery Cycle, which recounts his associations with Lot and Melchizedek, the divine covenant with Abraham, and the Aqedah. French examples include F. Belcari's *Abramo ed Isaac* (1449) and *Le Mistère du Viel Testament* (ca. 1450). In Spain, Abraham was portrayed in some of the *autos sacramentales*. His two main dramatic depictions in the 16th century were a tragedy by the French Protestant and humanist, Théodore de Bèze (Theodore Beza), *Abraham sacrifiant* (1550), and a work produced in Italy six years later, the *Rappresentazione de Abram e di Sara sua moglie*. In the next century, the Marrano poet Moses ben Mordecai Zacuto (ca. 1620–1697) left incomplete the earliest known scriptural dramatic poem in Hebrew, the *Yesod Olam*, depicting major events in Abraham's life based upon Midrashic tales: his idoloclasm in the home of Terah, his condemnation by Nimrod, his deliverance from the flames, and the death of Haran. Beginning in the Renaissance, Abraham's relation with Hagar was the subject of tragic dramas in Europe.

Abraham's literary images, including that of Abraham's Bosom, can hardly be dissociated from his distinction as primal patriarch. The conception of him as the common ancestor of Jews, Christians, and Muslims unquestionably, if only implicitly, informs the timeworn "parable of the three rings," whose most celebrated rehearsals occur in G. Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1.3) and G. E. Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* (3.7). The divine assurance that he will be made "a great nation" through whom all nations shall be blessed (Gen 12:2–3) is universalized by J. Milton, for whom Abraham's "seed" becomes the "great Deliverer, who shall bruise / The Serpent's head," and "Not onely to the Sons of *Abrahams* Loines / Salvation shall be Preacht, but to the Sons / Of Abrahams Faith wherever through the world" (*Paradise Lost*, 12.149–50, 447–49). Though distorted through the claim by C. Marlowe's Jewish anti-hero, Barabas, that worldly possessions comprise "the blessings promised to the Jews / And herein was old Abram's blessing" (*The Jew of Malta*, 1.1.106), Abraham's promise is given a Baptist twist centuries later in J. Baldwin's novelistic depiction of Deacon Gabriel Grimes, an African American Abrahamic figure who dreams of his own "seed" as the "elect," but who, in a subsequent phantasmagoric scene that harks back to the Aqedah, is envisioned trying to stab his stepson with a knife (*Go Tell It on the Mountain* [1952], pt. 2, prayer 2; and pt. 3). The poet P. Celan, registering post-Shoah Jewish trauma, finds Abraham's patriarchal "root" to bear ambiguous associations with "the root of Jesse" (Isa 11:1) and "nobody's root" and "our root": "Wurzel. / Wurzel Abrahams. Wurzel Jesse. Niemandes / Wurzel – O / unser" ("Radix, Matrix," 1963).

Literary allusions are often made to Abraham's hospitality (Gen 18), as in H. Vaughan's poem "Religion" (1650; "In *Abr'hams* Tent the winged guests / … / Eate, drinke, discourse, sit downe, and rest / Untill the Coole, and shady *Even*"); and to Abraham's faithful willingness to sacrifice Isaac, as in Alfred Döblin's novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929). Yet Abraham's literary reputation is not exclusively positive. G. Chaucer's Wife of Bath cites his polygamy to defend her own serial marrying (*The Canterbury Tales*, Ellesmere MS, Frag. III, D, 55–57), while two characters in W. Scott's novel *Kenilworth* (2.5 [ch. 22]) disagree over the moral propriety of his deliberate obfuscation of his marriage to Sarah (Gen 12:13).

Aside from his matchless obedience, Abraham's itinerancy in alien lands, and hence his adumbration of the legendary Wandering Jew, are among those of his aspects that literary artists most emphasize, from, in poetry, James Thomson's romanticization of "What Time Dan *Abraham* left the *Chaldee* Land, / And pastur'd on from verdant Stage to Stage" (*The Castle of Indolence* [1748] 1.37), through Edwin Muir's eulogies of him as "The rivulet-loving wanderer" ("Abraham") and "The old Chaldean wanderer, / … / … like a star / That is in love with distances" ("The Succession"). In T. Mann's novelistic tetralogy, *Joseph und seine Brüder*, Abraham haunts the story's past as the mythic "moon-wanderer" (*Mondwanderer*), prompted to journeying by spiritual unrest and a need of God. Among other explicitly Abrahamic wandering figures are: Parson Abraham Adams in H. Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*; W. Faulkner's Flem Snopes, who, having been introduced in a novel titled *Father Abraham*, is likened to Abraham in *Sartoris*; and Reb Moshe Ber, the protagonist of I. B. Singer's Yiddish short story known in English as "The Old Man," who marks the end of his own nomadism by comparing himself to Abraham and naming his newborn son Isaac.

Abraham makes frequent appearances in modern Israeli literature. The novelist A. B. Yehoshua, in an essay, describes Abraham as "the first Jew … [and] the first *ʿoleh*, the first immigrant to [the Land of] Israel," but also "the first *yored*, the first emigrant from the country," who "immediately set out for Egypt" once the economic situation in Israel deteriorated. Israeli poets present Abraham in a wide variety of ways, often negatively, as a madman, a religious fanatic, a representative of philandering husbands or of fathers unable to acknowledge their inability to shelter their offspring fully from harm. In his poem "*'Avraham*," the secularist Meir Wieseltier criticizes him for being overly obsessed with the divine: "The only thing in the world that Abraham loved was God. / … / He refused to take anything from anyone or to give anything to anyone, / except God. This one, if He only came to ask / He would get. Anything. Even Isaac the only one, the young heir" (Jacobson: 46, 213–16, 244–45). As exemplified here, Abraham's "binding" of Isaac is an especially controversial and recurrent motif in Israeli literature.

Bibliography: ■ R. M. Ames, *The Fulfillment of the Scriptures: Abraham, Moses, and Piers* (Evanston 1970). ■ D. C. Jacobson, *Does David Still Play Before You? Israeli Poetry and the Bible* (Detroit 1997) ■ J. Michman, "Zacuto, Moses ben Mordechai. *Yesod Olam*," in *EJ*^{2} 21 (Detroit 2007) 436. ■ P. Rogers, "Abraham," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (ed. D. L. Jeffrey; Grand Rapids, Mich. 1992) 9–11. ■ H. Rosenau, "Abraham: In the Fine Arts," *EJ*^{2} 1 (Detroit 2007) 287–88. ■ Y. Zaluska, "Abraham," in *The Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* 1 (Chicago 2000) 7–8.

Eric Ziolkowski

IX. Visual Arts

1. Description of Normative Figure of Abraham. The visual paradigm for Abraham was a tall and muscular patriarchal figure signifying physical strength, and whose patrician bearing connotes his stature in the world. His handsome, albeit weather-beaten, face represented his time in the wilderness and the desert, while his white or graying full beard and long hair signify simultaneously masculinity, sagacity, and age. Abraham was dressed typically in the flowing robes of a desert chieftain, though medieval artists rendered him as a knight in full armor.

2. Attribute and/or Symbol. Abraham was the visual symbol of unconditional obedience, faith, and trust in God. His most common accessory was a large knife in allusion to the Aqedah as a visual metaphor for the act of sacrifice and the initiation of the rite of male circumcision. Additionally, he was often accompanied or signified by the ram which connoted both the ritual of sacrifice and the sacrificial replacement for Isaac. Medieval artists portrayed Abraham as the "warrior king" or the "knight of God," dressed in full armor, signifying both his meeting with the priest-king, Melchizedek, and the victory of God's army.

3. Scriptural Episodes. The presentation in one location of the full narrative cycle of all the scriptural episodes in the life and story of Abraham is rare. His narrative cycle is complicated by the necessary inclusion of the satellite stories of his nephew Lot, his concubine Hagar, and his son Isaac. Abraham is one of the few Old Testament figures (the others being Adam and Eve) who are depicted in the visual traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; all of these visualizations were rooted in the Bible.

The Hebrew scriptural episodes related to the story of Lot in which Abraham was represented in the Fine Arts were: Journey to Canaan and Egypt; Separation from Lot as Abraham settles in Canaan and Lot in Jordan; Capture of Lot; Defeat of enemies of and restoration of Lot and his family; Cele-

bration of Victory in the Meeting with Melchizedek; Angel warns of the destruction of Sodom and signals for Lot to escape. For the Christian scriptural episode referencing Abraham, see Abraham's Bosom. The Hebrew scriptural episodes related to the story of Hagar with reference to Abraham were: Sarah's barrenness and the dispatching of Hagar to Abraham; Meeting of Abraham and Hagar; Birth of Ishmael; Expulsion of Hagar; and Hagar in the wilderness/desert. Similarly, the Hebrew scriptural episodes in the narrative of Isaac including Abraham in the Fine Arts were: Annunciation of his birth (Philoxeny/Hospitality of Abraham); Birth of Isaac; Aqedah; and the Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. Abraham was found in the imagery related to the narrative of Sarah such as: the Meeting of Abraham and Sarah; Marriage of Abraham and Sarah; Philoxeny/Hospitality of Abraham; Birth of Isaac; and Death and Burial of Sarah.

4. Frequent Iconographic Motifs of Abraham. There were three crucial episodes in the Abraham narrative – Meeting with Melchizedek (*see* →plate 1.b), Philoxeny/Hospitality of Abraham, and the Aqedah – which were represented throughout the history of Christian art.

a. Meeting with Melchizedek (Gen 14:18–21). The priest-king Melchizedek's offering of the gifts of bread and wine, sometimes replaced or accompanied by a crown and a chalice, was received by the victorious warrior Abraham as God's champion. This scriptural episode was a rich and multivalent foretype of Jesus as the Christ, the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Priesthood of Christ, the Adoration of the Three Kings (or Magi), and the Mystic Meal. Popular in the Christian visual tradition from the 4th century into the modern period, the rendering of this episode in the 6th-century mosaics in the Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, reflected its early importance and multivalency. Located on the north wall of the high altar, the mosaic of the Meeting with Melchizedek effected the significance of this Abrahamic episode in the liturgy, doctrine, and devotional life of Western Christianity. Conjoined with the offerings of Cain and Abel around the central altar in this mosaic, the figures of Abraham and Melchizedek were seen in mimesis of the liturgical actions of the celebrant at the actual altar of San Vitale. Furthermore, the placement of this mosaic in relation to the neighboring panel of the liturgical procession of virgins (led by the Empress who carried the eucharistic chalice and wore a garment decorated with the motif of the Adoration of the Magi), affirmed the story's sacramental significance. Moreover, this figuration of Abraham was placed diagonally across from his participation in the sacrificial offering of the Aqedah as illustrated on the opposite wall.

b. Philoxeny (Hospitality) of Abraham (Gen 18:1–15). This popular topos was also identified as the Three Angels at Mamre and "played" upon the significance of hospitality in the indigenous pre-Christian culture and its almost sacramental continuation in early and medieval Christianity. Visualizations of this episode were found throughout the history of Christian art. There were three possible scenes which signified this story: Apparition of the Three Angels, Washing of the Angels' Feet (as an act of hospitality), and the serving or eating of The Meal. The three identical male figures (same body types, stature, visage, posture, and costume) were a foretype of the Christian Holy Trinity and the visual focus of this motif. However, in any of the three scenes, a female figure representing Sarah was seen usually in the background or in a shed-like structure. Her gesture of covering her mouth with her open right hand is significant as the artistic convention for laughter. When Sarah overheard the Angels' announcement of her miraculous pregnancy, being past the age of childbearing she laughed, and the Philoxeny became a foretype of the Annunciation to Mary. Following the Counter-Reformation period, the artistic emphasis in rendering this story was on the religious significance of hospitality in distinction from the liturgical or historical importance. Eastern Orthodox Christianity interpreted the Philoxeny of Abraham as a foretype of the Holy Trinity, as attested most beautifully in Andrei Rublev's now-classic, *Icon of the Holy Trinity*.

Works: ■ *Cycles of Abraham*: Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome; San Vitale, Ravenna; San Apollinare en Classe, Ravenna; Vienna Genesis; San Zeno, Verona; Nicolas de Verdun, Enamel Altar; San Marco, Venice; St. Savin, Poitou; Capella Palatina, Palermo; Ghiberti, Bronze doors, Baptistero, Florence; Tapestries after Bernard Orley, Hampton Court Palace; Museo del Prado, Madrid. ■ *Meeting with Melchizedek*: San Vitale, Ravenna; San Apollinare en Classe, Ravenna; Santa Maria Maggiore; Vienna Genesis, Theo GR 31, f. 7; St. Savin, Poitou (nota bene: cross inscribed on round bread); Port Nord, Notre-Dame, Chartres; Port Nord, Notre-Dame, Amiens; Konrad Witz, Museum, Basel; Tintoretto, Scuola di San Rocco, Venice; Peter Paul Rubens, Musée du Louvre. ■ *Philoxeny of Abraham*: San Vitale, Ravenna; Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome; Nicolas de Verdun, Altar, Klosterneuberg; Doors, San Zeno, Verona; Psalter of S. Louis; Window, Cathedral at Ulm; School of Raphael; Rembrandt van Rijn, Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Bartolomeo Murillo, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Andrei Rublev, The Trinity Icon, Tretyakov Museum, Moscow.

Bibliography: ■ D. Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art* (New York 1994). ■ G. Duchet-Suchaux/M. Pastoureau. *La Bible et les Saints* (Paris 1994). [Esp. 12–14] ■ E. Goodenough, "Dura Europos" in id., *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (Bollingen Series 37; New York 1953). ■ E. Martin, "Abraham: Iconography," *NCE* 1 (New York 1967) 34. ■ P. Murray/L. Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (New York 1996). [Esp. 2–3] ■ He. R., "Abraham in the Arts," *EJ* 1 (Corrected Edition Jerusalem 1986) 122–25. ■ L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien. Livre III: Les Patriarches et Joseph. Chapitre Premier, I: Abraham*. (Paris 1955–59); 2.2: 125–38. ■ G. Sed-Rajna, *L'ABC-*

daire du Judaisme (Paris 2000), esp. 23–25. ■ H. van de Waal, *Iconclass* (Amsterdam 1973–85; electronic updates from 1986–87).

Diane Apostolos-Cappadona

X. Music

In medieval liturgy, Abraham's temptation (Gen 22 : 1–18) was the first reading during the Vigil of Pentecost. However, chants based on the Abraham narratives are not frequent. According to the 12th-century monk Rupert of Deutz, the Feast of Pentecost celebrated the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham for his obedience (Gen 22 : 16–17). Rupert also made the point that, since the Bible does not mention Abraham singing in response to the Lord's blessing, there was no tract (a chant genre) after this reading.

Among medieval chants referring to Abraham, the Offertory for the medieval Mass of the Dead (*Domine Jesu Christe*) may be the most influential for the musical reception history of Abraham. It prays for deliverance of the faithful departed, referring to the mentioned promise: "[…] let the holy standard-bearer Michael lead them into the holy light, as Thou didst promise Abraham and his seed." This text has been set to music by numerous composers since the 15th century. Since ca. 1800, Requiem Mass settings have increasingly also been performed at (sacred) concerts.

Vernacular Christian and Jewish hymns (and songs) form a kind of reception of a medieval liturgical heritage, including musico-literary receptions of Abraham. Medieval liturgy also influenced the musical reception of Abraham in more complex ways. Polyphonic settings of various liturgical texts featuring Abraham were produced since the 15th century. In subsequent centuries, composers continued to write motets and sacred songs of various kinds based on such texts, often referring to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob (for instance, Exod 3 : 6; Exod 4 : 5; Regis, Waelrant, Bouzignac, H. Schütz, Johann Michael Bach and others).

Altogether, the musical reception of Abraham is heavily concentrated on the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac. Occasionally, however, other Abraham narratives have been represented in music, especially Luke 16 : 19–31 incorporating the image of Abraham's Bosom, but also (in an oratorio by the 19th-century American composer, Isaac Baker Woodbury) the narrative concerned with Abraham's son Ishmael, by Hagar (Gen 16–21).

A different Abraham reception (treating Abraham as a symbol of the Jewish people and religion) is manifest in two experimental works of the 20th century which are neither operas nor sacred musical works. Kurt Weill's *Der Weg der Verheißung*, a stage work created in collaboration with Max Reinhardt and Franz Werfel (1934) and produced in New York (1935) as *The Eternal Road*, treats the history of the Jewish people from Abraham to the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. Steve Reich's *The Cave* (1990–93), for voices, percussion and string quartet, is a kind of documentary music video, made in collaboration with Beryl Korot (his wife), which centers on the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, the burial place of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 23; Gen 25 : 9–10), with metaphorical, political implications.

Cuando El Rey Nimrod, a Ladino song about the birth of Abraham (drawing largely from Christian traditions surrounding the birth of Jesus) has become well known across the Jewish community. In addition, *L'chi lach*, by American composer Debbie Friedman, combines English verses with passages in Hebrew based on Gen 12 : 1–2; Friedman's modern gloss adds the feminine forms of the original Hebrew text to include Abraham's wife, Sarah (here: Sarai) as part of the covenant.

In modern popular music L. Cohen (1969) formulates his answer to Gen 22 and to the people of his time, echoing I. Kant: "You who build these altars now to sacrifice these children, you must not do it anymore. A scheme is not a vision and you never have been tempted by a demon or a god."

Bibliography: ■ R. of Deutz, *Liber de divinis officiis*, 4 vols. (Freiburg 1999). ■ G. Massenkeil, *Oratorium und Passion*, 2 vols. (Laaber 1998–1999). ■ H. E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, 4 vols. (Chapel Hill, N.C. 1977–2000).

Nils Holger Petersen and Marsha B. Edelman

XI. Film

Even though he remains a prominent biblical character, the figure of Abraham has seldom found a role in motion pictures, especially curious given his abundant imagery in painting and sculpture. One or two straightforward character films have been done, most notably the made-for-television film *Abraham* (dir. Joseph Sargent, 1984; starring Richard Harris). For various reasons, however, Abraham has not been adapted into film in the way characters such as David or Moses have. Much more popular than the patriarch himself is that critical event in his life, the Aqedah.

S. Brent Plate

See also →Abraham (Sura 14); →Abraham, Apocalypse of; →Abraham, Testament of; →Abraham's Bosom; →Aqedah

Abraham (Sura 14)

This chapter of the Qurʾān, named for Abraham because of his prayer (vv. 35–41; inserted rather abruptly into a passage denouncing human ingratitude to God and threatening eschatological punishment), demonstrates several of the scripture's typical stylistic and thematic features. Its structure is characteristic of the middle to late Meccan period (Neuwirth). These show clearly how the