

“Rewritten Bible”:
A Generic Category Which Has Outlived its Usefulness?

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בהגיעו לגבורות, For Geza Vermes

Introduction

I wished that Professor Geza Vermes had been in the audience during the presentation of the lecture on which this paper is based, so that, before proceeding with my lecture on the question whether the term “Rewritten Bible,” which he invented forty years ago, has outlived its usefulness, I could have thanked him for having given us such a useful tool for classification, one which has been employed for over four decades. There is no doubt that *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*, first published in 1961, has been one of the most influential works in a number of the fields which were represented at the congress at which this paper was originally read, particularly those of Qumran and early biblical interpretation. This presentation, which was originally solicited for a session which was to be entitled “The Bible and the Reworked Bible in the Qumran Scrolls,” is a further treatment of two themes which I have discussed on other occasions: (1) the impact of the Qumran discoveries on the development, one might even say the discovery, of the field of early biblical interpretation as an academic discipline, on the one hand, and (2) the importance of nomenclature, what we call the texts and genres which we are studying, on the other.¹ They are each necessary components of any

* Plenary address at the 13th World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, Israel, August 2001. I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Shani Berrin, Prof. Sidnie White Crawford, and Dr. Michael Segal for reading critically and commenting on a variety of early drafts of this essay.

¹ For the former, see now my “The Contribution of the Qumran Discoveries to the History of Early Biblical Interpretation,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (ed. H. Najman and J.H. Newman; JSJSup 83; Leiden/Boston:

attempt to delineate the ways in which our picture of early biblical interpretation has developed over the last half century.

The initial employment of the term “rewritten Bible,” if Vermes was indeed the first to use it (and I have no evidence of prior usage), post-dates the Qumran discoveries, although it did not owe its inception to the Qumran corpus. Certainly, the term as employed by Vermes in *Scripture and Tradition* did not include very much in the way of texts from Qumran (as we shall see shortly). But the utilization and scope of the term “rewritten Bible” have expanded in diverse and divergent ways as the deciphered and published Qumran corpus has grown, and especially as works that had been ignored in the pre-Qumran period attracted further study. It is the development of this usage and its effectiveness that I shall discuss in this essay. In this regard, the evolution of “rewritten Bible” as a technical term and the range of its employment in description of ancient works about the Bible mirrors in a sense the way modern scholarship on early biblical interpretation developed in the wake of the Qumran discoveries.

A brief sketch of the history of that scholarship may prove valuable to our analysis. Two concomitant phenomena had prevented the recognition of the major role which biblical interpretation, defined loosely, played in Judaism in its various manifestations during the crucial late Second Temple era. The apparent scholarly neglect of the discipline of early Jewish biblical interpretation in the “pre-Qumran era,” by which I mean the first half of the twentieth century, the period before the Qumran discoveries, was due partly to the paucity of relevant material which could only be, and eventually was, remedied by the discovery of new texts. The other, and perhaps more significant, factor was the failure of scholarship to recognize the variety of generic forms which biblical interpretation could adopt. This failure then led to the classification of a variety of works that are basically exegetical or interpretive under diverse generic rubrics, thus placing in

Brill, 2004) 215–238; for the latter, “Contours of Genesis Interpretation at Qumran: Contents, Context and Nomenclature,” in *Studies in Ancient Midrash* (ed. J.L. Kugel; Cambridge: Harvard Center for Jewish Studies, 2001) 57–85.

distinct pigeonholes material which should have been brought under a common analytical compass.

A further deterrent to scholarly interest in Jewish biblical interpretation in late antiquity was the fact that the form of biblical commentary with which we are most familiar and which is most recognizable as commentary, i.e., the lemmatized type which cites a biblical text and supplies a comment upon it, appeared to be lacking from Jewish antiquity. To be sure, such a form existed in Philo and, later on, in rabbinic midrash, but each of those ancient sources had qualities which allowed them to be further discounted or ignored. Philo fits the time frame, but his interpretations of scripture from a philosophical perspective could easily be considered idiosyncratic and atypical because they are commentaries written with a goal other than the explication, exegesis and interpretation of the text in mind, namely Philo's dressing the pentateuchal story in the garb of Neoplatonism. Furthermore these philosophical works represent a Diaspora perspective, differing geographically (Alexandria) and linguistically (Greek) from the primary objects of our investigation which happen to be works written in Hebrew or in Aramaic in Eretz Yisrael.

The other corpus containing formal commentary, rabbinic literature, had the obvious disadvantage of being later, and often in final form much later, than the Second Temple period. Although it has much stronger links than Philo to the earlier documents of biblical interpretation from this period, as has been demonstrated by scholars ranging from Vermes to Kugel, to choose but two significant voices, rabbinic biblical exegesis in commentary form nevertheless appeared to stand much more in isolation from other early Jewish interpretation before the Qumran discoveries.² In this paper, I shall examine the definitions and descriptions of "rewritten Bible" proffered by Vermes and several subsequent scholars, in order to delineate

² Cf., for example, G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (2nd edition; Leiden: Brill, 1973) and J.L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), *The Bible as It Was* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1997), and *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1998).

the variety of ways in which the term is currently employed and to make some suggestions for how we might use it more clearly and definitively in the future.³

Geza Vermes (1961)

Vermes saw that it was not the familiar commentary form alone which embodied biblical commentary, and with this observation I arrive at the focal point of this essay. The significant insight which perhaps generated the term under discussion in this essay was the observation that much early biblical interpretation achieved its goal by rewriting the biblical story rather than by writing lemmatized commentaries. The works which Vermes had available and used in his categorization of “rewritten Bible” must of course form the basis for any discussion of the subsequent development of the spectrum defined by the term. Vermes’ brief description and characterization of these works is well worth citing. Having examined the late medieval *Sefer HaYashar*, and arguing that, because it contains pre-

³ Although the thrust of my treatment in this essay will be the need to constrict the usage of the term “rewritten Bible” in response to its expansive employment by many scholars, I must note that, quite on the other hand, some scholars forbear to use the term “rewritten Bible” at all because of the implications it appears to have regarding the canonicity and authority of the “Bible” during this period. Despite their concerns, I believe that it is too useful an expression to give up provided that it is used with care. My working assumption is that any composition that appears to be based on what we now call the Bible and meets the criteria set out in this essay can be said to belong to the category “rewritten Bible.” Whether or not the Bible that was being rewritten had the same textual form or canonical shape as that decided upon in Judaism or Christianity is not the point at issue. What is important is that the text being “rewritten” was sufficiently significant as to be rewritten and interpreted in the rewriting. Whether the later work might also have some significant (“biblical,” “canonical”) status does not at all affect its classification as “rewritten Bible.” As can be observed later on in my discussion, I am fully aware of the alternate term “parabiblical” which is often used interchangeably with “rewritten Bible,” and believe that it can be employed profitably to delineate a group of works whose relationship to “Bible” is less close than that of “rewritten Bible.”

rabbinic interpretive traditions, its late date of composition should not preclude students of early Jewish exegesis from studying it, he writes,

This examination of the Yashar story fully illustrates what is meant by the term “rewritten Bible.” In order to anticipate questions, and to solve problems in advance, the midrashist inserts haggadic development into the biblical narrative—an exegetical process which is probably as ancient as scriptural interpretation itself. The Palestinian Targum and Jewish Antiquities, Ps.-Philo and Jubilees, and the recently discovered ‘Genesis Apocryphon’..., each in their own way show how the Bible was rewritten about a millenium [*sic*] before the redaction of Sefer ha-Yashar.⁴

I should stress the key terms “haggadic development” and “biblical narrative” in Vermes’ description or definition. Let us survey rapidly the paradigmatic members of this genre according to Vermes’ classification.

Josephus, in the first century CE, retells in detail in *Jewish Antiquities* 1–11 virtually the whole of the narrative of the Hebrew Bible and is probably the most extensive example of this genre of biblical “commentary” (please note the quotation marks around that last word). He introduces material that solves real or perceived exegetical difficulties, sometimes giving an

⁴ Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 95. Sefer ha-Yashar is a medieval Jewish rewritten Bible which tells the biblical story overlaid with midrashim, i.e., it fits the most rigorous definition of “rewritten Bible.” It is interesting that Vermes did not see fit to include in his list the biblical book of Chronicles, certainly an example of rewritten Bible by his definition. P.S. Alexander, “Retelling the Old Testament,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF* (ed. D.A. Carson and H.G.M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 99–121 (99), furnishes a longer list of works which he believes that Vermes has categorized as “rewritten Bible” based on the section “Biblical Midrash” in the revised Schürer (E. Schürer, G. Vermes, and F. Millar, *The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ [175 B.C.–A.D. 135]* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986] III.1.308). It includes 4QAmram, 4QTQohat, 4QVisSam, and the Martyrdom of Isaiah. My reading of Vermes’ remarks there sees a distinction between those works and the ones he calls “rewritten Bible.” Alexander’s article is one of the few attempts to confront the issue of the genre of “rewritten Bible” head-on, and it appears to have been motivated by a frustration similar to mine with the lack of clarity in the general scholarly employment of the term. I shall return to some significant specifics in Alexander’s discussion during the course of my analysis.

ideological twist to the narrative. Material perceived as “offensive”, in a like fashion, may be omitted or de-emphasized. Pseudo-Philo retells, with extensive “midrashic” additions, parts of the biblical narrative from Genesis to Samuel, although the choice to include details of particular portions of the biblical account and not others may strike us as idiosyncratic, to say the least. Jubilees covers Gen 1 through Exod 12, retelling the biblical story with the addition of “midrashic” details to the narrative and, of equal if not more significance, with the insertion of biblical laws whose commandment and/or observance has been retrojected to the period of the patriarchs. Some of the additional material is exegetical, while a good deal of it seems to be ideologically motivated. The Genesis Apocryphon, one of the original seven scrolls from Cave 1, contains within its fragmentary surviving 22 columns narrative material belonging to the stories of Lamech, Noah, and Abraham, some of it close enough to the biblical text to perhaps merit the appellation targum, some responding to exegetical stimuli within the biblical text and more analogous to rabbinic midrash, and some apparently constituting freely composed additions.

These works have in common their recapitulation of the *narrative* (and it is clear that Vermes focuses on biblical stories) of the whole or a large part of the biblical story. We might note that the Palestinian Targum (which to Vermes means Neofiti, Fragment Targum, Geniza fragments and pseudo-Jonathan) and Josephus contain rewriting of large amounts of legal material as well, although I do not know whether Vermes anywhere explicitly includes texts which are primarily legal in his term “rewritten Bible.” This may become a significant issue when dealing with such texts as 11QT, the Temple Scroll. All of these treatments share a certain scope and comprehensiveness, and it is both of these features, I think, which impelled Vermes to confer upon them the term “rewritten Bible.” It is furthermore the disregard of these features in a variety of ways which has led to the overuse of the nomenclature “rewritten Bible” and its concomitant vitiation as identifying a specific form or genre.

I should actually begin my own demurrer from Vermes’ initial grouping on the grounds of his inclusion of the Palestinian targum in the category

“rewritten Bible,” for almost any translation which is not hyperliteral could merit such an appellation. Indeed, most subsequent lists of works which should be subsumed under the classification Rewritten Bible do not include the Palestinian targumim.⁵ Although it is tempting to suggest that a translation into Aramaic like that of pseudo-Jonathan contains enough non-biblical material supplementary to its translation that it might be considered rewritten Bible, I believe that we should exclude *ab initio* two groups of texts from the category “Rewritten Bible” (and it is here that I suspect that not all of my audience at the presentation of this paper agreed): (1) biblical texts (however we shall define them; I assert, if it *is* [or was intended to be] a biblical text, then it is not rewritten Bible), and (2) biblical translations. In the case of biblical texts, of course, matters of canon and audience may play a role. One group’s rewritten Bible could very well be another’s biblical text!

In my view, in order to achieve greater methodological precision in our work on the ways in which the Bible is transmitted, translated, retold and interpreted in early Judaism, our classifications must be as sharply drawn as we can make them. Only after marking that which distinguishes literary forms from one another can we proceed to compare those features in divergent genres which appear to draw them together. Subsequent scholarship, however, did not maintain the somewhat rigorous “definition” or “description” of “rewritten Bible” which I believe Vermes intended, and I should like to examine (roughly in chronological sequence) a range of discussions of the issue of “rewritten Bible” in order to clarify my difficulties with the current state of the question.⁶ The reuse or redefinition

⁵ Perhaps the only exception is George J. Brooke, who, in the last sentence of the entry “Rewritten Bible” in the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L.H. Schiffman and J.C. VanderKam; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 2:780b, writes “Once both the form and the content of the biblical books were fixed in Hebrew, “rewritten Bible” continued only in the Targums.”

⁶ Philip Alexander’s article referred to above (n. 4) is the one detailed attempt to lay down standards for inclusion under the rubric “rewritten Bible,” rather than merely to list works which belong to the category without specifying why. His goal, like mine, was “to advance the definition of the rewritten Bible type of text—to establish criteria for admission to, or exclusion from the genre” (99), although his

of the term “rewritten Bible” has moved in two radically different directions, as we shall see.

Daniel J. Harrington (1986) and George W.E. Nickelsburg (1984)

First of all, two of the standard summaries of Second Temple Jewish literature, published at about the same time, offer lists of rewritten Bible texts that do not coincide with each other, but have in common their divergence from Vermes in both theory and practice.⁷ Daniel Harrington lists as the most important examples of rewritten Bible, in addition to Vermes’ four non-targumic examples, the Assumption of Moses and the Temple Scroll. He concedes that “the restriction to Palestinian writings taking the flow of the biblical narrative as their structural principle is admittedly artificial, since there is a good deal of possible biblical interpretation in *1 Enoch*, the other Qumran writings, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, etc. Some of the writings of Philo of Alexandria could conceivably be included....”⁸ By way of postscript, he writes subsequently, “three short narratives that might qualify as examples of “rewritten Bible”: *Paralipomena of Jeremiah*, *Life of Adam and Eve/Apocalypse of Moses*, and *Ascension of Isaiah*. Though these documents are less obviously keyed to the structure and flow

goal was not to examine the proliferation of works which have been subsumed under this genre due to imprecise definition. At the conclusion of his discussion, which is based on Jubilees, Genesis Apocryphon, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, and *Jewish Antiquities*, he answers the question “Does our analysis of these four texts justify the conclusion that they represent a literary genre?” with “an emphatic yes” (116). Alexander then proceeds to give a detailed list of the characteristics of the genre “rewritten Bible” with which I am largely in agreement (116–118). I shall return again briefly to Alexander’s essay when I discuss the case of the Temple Scroll later in this article.

⁷ D.J. Harrington, “The Bible Rewritten (Narratives),” in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (ed. R.A. Kraft and G.W.E. Nickelsburg; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986) 239–247.

⁸ Harrington, 239.

of the biblical narrative than the other works treated here, they are in considerable debt to it.”⁹

I am struck by Harrington’s focus on narrative, on the one hand, which seems faithful to Vermes’ original classification, and by his inclusion of the Temple Scroll, on the other, since it is not a narrative, and can therefore be included under the rubric “rewritten Bible” only if we expand its boundaries from those implied by Vermes’ initial remarks and seconded by Harrington’s title. What is more problematic, however (and I believe that Harrington’s assumptions are not at all atypical of the way in which scholarship had begun and has continued to employ the term “rewritten Bible”), is his implication that the inclusion of biblical interpretation in a work could make it automatically eligible for inclusion under our rubric if we did not adopt the artificial structural principle that it must follow the flow of the biblical narrative. I believe that all rewritten Bible is biblical interpretation, but not all biblical interpretation needs to be subsumed, or should be subsumed, under the classification “rewritten Bible.” Even the inclusion of the Assumption of Moses, which is based on a very brief segment of Deuteronomy (31–34) and is a narrative of future history, not really a rewriting of biblical material, is questionable if we adopt a strict sense of “rewritten Bible.”

Harrington seems fully cognizant of the issues which I am raising, and perhaps actually answers the questions which I have posed in a very important passing comment. In my view, although his response makes a very important point about Second Temple Jewish literary activity, it does not satisfy my need for more precise nomenclature of literary forms. He writes

In fact, it seems better to view rewriting the Bible as a kind of activity or process than to see it as a distinctive literary genre of Palestinian Judaism....while taking most of their content from the Bible, *Jubilees* and *Assumption of Moses* are formally revelations or apocalypses.... In conclusion, it is tempting to place all these

⁹ Harrington, 246.

books, as well as others, under the broad literary genre of “rewritten Bible,” but unfortunately the diversity and complexity of the materials will not allow it.¹⁰

Pace Harrington, when “rewritten Bible” becomes a *process* rather than a *genre*, much of the value of Vermes’ tight descriptive classification has been lost.¹¹

George Nickelsburg divided his discussion of narrative literature produced by the post-exilic Jewish community into two parts, “Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times” and “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded.”¹² Omitting the targumim and Josephus (which are incorporated under other rubrics within the volume *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* which contains these essays), Nickelsburg includes, in addition to Vermes’ other examples, 1 Enoch, Adam and Eve, Philo the Epic Poet,

¹⁰ Harrington, 243.

¹¹ Betsy Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible: Land and Covenant in Postbiblical Jewish Literature* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994) 4, summarizes nicely the divergent ways in which scholars employ the term “rewritten Bible,” “loosely as a designation for a type of literary technique, process or activity,” or “as a designation for a specific genre of literature.” She identifies, p. 130, nn. 7–8, those positions with Harrington and Nickelsburg, on the one side, and Alexander on the other. In her descriptive definition of the genre, she, too, emphasizes the narrative nature of the text. Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House*, 264, adds to Vermes’ list the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Joseph and Aseneth and *Paraleipomena Ieremiou* as “present[ing] a great deal of biblical interpretation...retell[ing] biblical stories with the ‘interpretations’ included in the retelling.” This he calls “Retold Bible,” a term clearly modeled on Vermes’. While focusing on the narrative aspect of the term, Kugel seems willing to include works which do not contain much actual retelling of the Bible, but rather use the Bible as a springboard for the tale that they tell, which happens to include some biblical interpretation in the retelling. In my terms, although the genre of these documents is not “rewritten Bible,” rewriting of the Bible plays an important role in them.

¹² G.W.E. Nickelsburg, “Stories of Biblical and Post-Biblical Times” and “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (ed. M.E. Stone; Assen/Philadelphia: Van Gorcum/Fortress, 1984) 33–87 and 89–156, respectively. I note that two of the works which Harrington suggests for inclusion in his postscript, *Ascension of Isaiah* and *Paralipomena of Jeremiah*, are included by Nickelsburg in the former category, not the latter.

Theodotus the Epic Poet, Ezekiel the Tragedian, David's Compositions (a brief piece of 11QPs^a), and several works belonging to the Apocrypha which supplement biblical material, such as the Additions to Esther and Daniel, and Baruch. It is clear that for Nickelsburg, as well, "rewritten Bible" is not a literary genre, since he writes,

It is clear that these writings employ a variety of genres: running paraphrases of longer and shorter parts of the Bible, often with lengthy expansions (*Jubilees*, Genesis Apocryphon, *Biblical Antiquities*); narrative blocks in a non-narrative genre (stories about the flood in the apocalypse or testament known as *1 Enoch*); a narrative roughly shaped by a non-narrative genre (the quasi-testamentary *Apocalypse of Moses*); poetic presentations of biblical stories in epic and dramatic form (Philo the Elder, Theodotus, Ezekiel the Tragedian).¹³

If "rewritten Bible" is itself not a genre, what is it? Can it be defined or described in a meaningful *and* useful fashion?

Since both Harrington and Nickelsburg are open about the fact that "rewritten Bible" has much more scope as a term for them than it had for Vermes, I cannot fault their use of the term merely on the grounds that they have modified its meaning. I do, however, suggest that the freer use of the term "rewritten Bible" has not aided in focusing scholarly attention on the unifying vs. divergent traits of some of these early interpretive works. Note further that in our analysis to this point the only substantial Qumran work to have been added to Vermes' list was 11QT, the Temple Scroll, so that these discussions do not respond to my earlier remarks about the importance of Qumran in our evaluation of the development of early biblical interpretation. Harrington's and Nickelsburg's analyses are largely concentrated on works surviving in Greek and Latin (or daughter translations) which have some loose connection with the Bible.

The Qumran discoveries, and particularly works published in the last decade and a half (after the publications by Harrington and Nickelsburg), have expanded the range of what some scholars have referred to as "rewritten Bible." The texts which have been loosely described as

¹³ Nickelsburg, 89–90. He discusses the apocryphal supplements to biblical books separately from the "rewritten" material.

“parabiblical,” another term that is too unspecific in my view but may provide us with a useful replacement for “rewritten Bible” in the broad sense, now occupy four volumes in the series Discoveries in the Judean Desert.¹⁴ A broad variety of texts exemplifying many ways of interpreting, relating to, and touching upon the Hebrew Bible are included. The titles that they have been given, however, are very often not sufficiently informative regarding their content, form or scope.¹⁵ They are called by names such as “pseudo-Jubilees,” “Paraphrase of Genesis-Exodus,” “Exposition on the Patriarchs,” “Genesis Commentary,” “Admonition Based on the Flood,” and, of course, “Reworked Pentateuch.” Many of these have been given the nomenclature “rewritten Bible” by one scholar or another and have thus been introduced into the genre whose parameters we are examining in this essay.

Emanuel Tov (1994)

Emanuel Tov, in an essay published in 1994 (which is a long time ago given the increased speed of Qumran scholarship in the late 1990s), turned his attention to biblical texts from Qumran which have been reworked, expanded or rephrased.¹⁶ In presenting the genre question front and center at the outset of his discussion, Tov sets out his working definition, which I believe diverges radically not only from that of Vermes but also

¹⁴ H. Attridge et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam, *Qumran Cave 4, VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* (DJD 13; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); M. Broshi et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam, *Qumran Cave 4, XIV: Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* (DJD 19; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995); G. Brooke et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam, *Qumran Cave 4, XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (DJD 12; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); D. Dimant, *Qumran Cave 4, XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (DJD 30; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001).

¹⁵ Cf. Bernstein, “Contours of Genesis Interpretation”.

¹⁶ E. Tov, “Biblical Texts as Reworked in Some Qumran Manuscripts with Special Attention to 4QRP and 4QparaGen-Exod,” in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. E. Ulrich and J.C. VanderKam; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 111–134.

considerably from those of Harrington and Nickelsburg discussed above. He writes,

In our terminology a distinction is made between *reworking/rewriting* which involved a limited intervention in the biblical text, and *rephrasing* involving a major intervention, often in such a way that the underlying biblical text is hardly recognizable. Adding exegetical comments to the biblical text is a form of *rewriting*.¹⁷

Note that for Tov it is *only* “biblical texts” which are reworked, rewritten and rephrased, and he thus explicitly excludes from his classification the Genesis Apocryphon because it was written in Aramaic. Although my own taxonomy might not agree with Tov’s on this point, I am pleased to note that we are in agreement that manuscripts which are biblical texts cannot be considered under any of these rubrics. Of course, as we suggested earlier, one person’s reworked Bible text is another’s Bible. Tov is concerned with compositions which are based on the Bible, providing “a running text of one or more biblical books, with additions, omissions, rearrangements, and/or changes.... The organizing principle in our analysis is the degree of closeness of the exegetical composition to the biblical text.”¹⁸ It should be clear that when Tov speaks of rewriting the Bible he means something very different from what Vermes or Harrington or Nickelsburg described.

Tov begins his discussion with 4QReworked Pentateuch, five MSS which he asserted were copies of the same “rewriting” of the Pentateuch. The question whether 4QReworked Pentateuch should be considered rewritten Bible is indeed an interesting one (and I exclude from my own discussion here 4Q158, since I believe that it is substantially different generically from 4Q364–367). The answer is not immediately clear to me. Granting, for the sake of argument, Tov’s assumption that 4QRP covered the entire Pentateuch, and thus has the scope needed to be classified as rewritten Bible, do the limited additions, omissions and slight changes, all characteristics of these texts, really put them into this category? Note that

¹⁷ Tov, 112. (The emphases are mine. MJB)

¹⁸ Tov, 113. Note the repeated references to “text” and “biblical text.”

Tov quite correctly in my view excludes from consideration as not being significant to the classification of 4QRP those deviations from MT found in 4QRP which are of the sort that is found in the Samaritan Pentateuch.¹⁹

If the slight differences from MT do move 4QRP into the category “rewritten Bible,” then Tov has expanded Vermes’ definition in the direction opposite to that in which Harrington and Nickelsburg did. If we include under this generic rubric a text like 4QRP which contains far less “rewriting” than any of Vermes’ examples, then we have given up almost completely on his “definition.” 4QRP does not *often*, as Vermes’ definition demands, “in order to anticipate questions, and to solve problems in advance...insert haggadic development into the biblical narrative.” The few significant rearrangements in 4QRP, however, do seem to have as their goal, in a limited fashion, the creation of a smoother biblical narrative which is

¹⁹ Tov, 114. One could claim that those exegetical features in the Samaritan Pentateuch should include it, too, in the category “rewritten Bible.” The fact that it is a canonical biblical text for a particular social group should perhaps not exempt it from such classification. Does the second of successive editions of a biblical text constitute rewritten Bible? Does the initial text have to be “canonical” before its reworking falls into this category? I think that it does, and perhaps the second “edition” of Jeremiah would not fall into this category, because there *may* have been no sense that it was a revision of a canonical text. On the other hand, E.C. Ulrich maintains that “it is possible that yet a third edition [other than MT and SP] of the Pentateuch was circulating within Judaism in the late Second Temple period. It is arguable that the so-called ‘4QRP’ (4Q364–367 plus 4Q158) is mislabelled and should be seen as simply another edition of the Pentateuch” (“The Qumran Biblical Scrolls: The Scriptures of Late Second Temple Judaism,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* [ed. T.H. Lim et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000] 76; See also M. Segal, “4QReworked Pentateuch or 4QPentateuch?” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery 1947–1997* [ed. L.H. Schiffman, E. Tov, and J.C. VanderKam; Jerusalem: IES and The Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 2000] 391–399). Ulrich is of the opinion that the variants between MT and SP are “exactly the types of variants occurring between the MT and ‘4QRP’.” In a forthcoming article I hope to show that, at least from the perspective of the way in which specifically legal material is handled, 4QRP goes well beyond the method and guidelines of SP, making it very unlikely that it, too, is to be considered as an edition of the Pentateuch.

also the aim of rewritten Bible and I can therefore much more easily subsume 4QRP under the “classic” rewritten Bible than many of Harrington’s and Nickelsburg’s examples which are based on very different guidelines. Rearrangement with the goal of interpretation is probably an earlier stage in the development of biblical “commentary” than supplementation with the goal of interpretation.

The same may be said of the completely invented additions to the pentateuchal text found in 4QRP, like the Song of Miriam in 4Q365, and the expanded dialogue surrounding Gen 28:6 in 4Q364.²⁰ These are much more analogous to the type of rewriting we see in Jubilees or in the Genesis Apocryphon, and can be suitably included according to my understanding of Vermes’ criteria. I am still uncertain myself, however, of the genre of 4QRP as a whole, and feel virtually trapped between the Scylla of calling it a biblical text and the Charybdis of referring to it as a biblical commentary form of “rewritten Bible.” I am comfortable with asserting that it is not a biblical text, but believe that further work on it is necessary before deciding in which generic pigeonhole it belongs. On the spectrum of types of rewriting the Pentateuch, it stands closer to the biblical text than any other.²¹

On the other hand, since I, too, have referred to the Temple Scroll in some of my earlier work as legal rewritten Bible, I should stress here that such a classification also expands Vermes’ category in a direction unintended (by him), as I intimated above. Certainly, as Tov has indicated, parts of the

²⁰ The material referring to the Wood and Oil Festivals in 4Q365 23 4–12 is of a legal nature, and therefore does not match Vermes’ initial guidelines. It would succeed or fail the test of inclusion in the genre roughly on the same grounds as the Temple Scroll.

²¹ White Crawford, in an email communication of 4 October 2002, formulated the dilemma of 4QRP as follows, “4QRP sits in a gray area between ‘biblical’ (for want of a better term) and ‘rewritten Bible.’ It is neither fish nor fowl. I am also very puzzled as to what its audience thought of it.” The last observation is similar to one which has bothered me for a long time; why bother to rewrite a biblical text only to make the sorts of limited changes which RP makes from the “Pentateuch?” I am thus puzzled also by what its author intended with it.

Temple Scroll are even closer to the biblical text than 4QRP is, while other parts contain an amalgamation of different pentateuchal treatments of the same laws. Those treatments, I believe, are the legal equivalent of what narrative rewritten Bible does according to Vermes. But there are also portions of the Temple Scroll which are completely independent of the Pentateuch, the sort of completely independent section which has caused scholars arbitrarily to separate 4Q365a, which otherwise appears to be a piece of 4Q365 Reworked Pentateuch, from 4Q365, if the latter is to be classified as Reworked Pentateuch. In other words, for them Reworked Pentateuch can only be, quite literally, "reworked Pentateuch," and anything which goes beyond the mere reworking of the Pentateuch, adding completely new material, cannot be subsumed under the heading Reworked Pentateuch. My difficulty with that position should be obvious.²² Since Tov's terminology depends on the way in which the reworked text handles the biblical text, he might come to different conclusions regarding Temple Scroll than I would, since my employment of the term "rewritten" is not dependent on the literal dependence of the new composition on the Bible. I shall return to a brief discussion of 11QT at the conclusion of this essay.

It is interesting that Tov's spectrum moves from 4QRP and 11QT to reworkings which he describes as "paraphrasing, evidenced in the compositions in different gradations of intensity."²³ He does not intend to include in this category works which are often referred to as "paraphrases" such the Palestinian targumim, the Greek translations of Esther and Daniel, Josephus, the Genesis Apocryphon and the book of Jubilees, in other words, the very works which Vermes included under his initial rubric "rewritten Bible." Vermes' definition is no longer operative at all for Tov since the latter is avowedly concerned only with "works which either follow the

²² Brooke, "Rewritten Bible," 778b, formulates the difficulty well, "whether this is the correct editorial judgement remains to be seen, since it seems to be based on certain assumptions concerning how close the RP should be to the biblical base text."

²³ Tov, 116.

sequence of the biblical text or rearrange that text in some way."²⁴ I do not believe that the definitions of "rewritten Bible" furnished by Tov and Vermes are even remotely compatible, and we need to choose between them simply for the purposes of clarity. As may already be evident, I believe that Vermes' classification is functionally more useful.

Furthermore, since I believe that Vermes' classification is the one which is of major value for our understanding of the forms of early Jewish biblical interpretation, I think that it is essential to use it to distinguish between works which are rewritten Bible (and if it had enough scope 4Q225 "pseudo-Jubilees^a" might have qualified for inclusion) and those which are commentary in form, such as 4Q252. Tov's analysis of 1994, which does not discriminate between 4Q252 Genesis Commentary A and 4Q225 "pseudo-Jubilees," thus blurs what I believe to be a significant generic difference between those works.²⁵

George J. Brooke (2000)

In a more recent discussion, George J. Brooke, in the article "Rewritten Bible" in the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* employs the term for "any representation of an authoritative scriptural text that implicitly incorporates interpretive elements, large or small in the retelling itself."²⁶ He further highlights the difference between Vermes' generic definition and Nickelsburg's looser inclusion of a variety of genres under this rubric.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Tov, 117–118. On my distinction between rewritten Bible and commentary forms, see "Contours of Genesis Interpretation at Qumran," 82–84. I also cannot agree with Tov's consideration of the possibility of texts like "pseudo-Ezekiel" being rewritten Bible. According to my view, which begins with Vermes' classification, only narrative and legal texts fit the category; it is difficult to think how a rewriting of a prophetic text would accomplish the goals which Vermes sets out for the genre, even though I am willing to include 11QT as a fundamentally legal text which satisfies the definition.

²⁶ Brooke, "Rewritten Bible," 777.

²⁷ Ibid., 777–778

Brooke himself accepts for his article a loose definition, but it is interesting that in his opening words he writes of “retelling,” a term which is quite suitable for Vermes’ description of narrative texts. Brooke stresses that in rewritten Bible “the interpretation is never formally explicit,” a sentiment with which I agree thoroughly, and one which highlights the difference between rewritten Bible and commentary genres. He actually raises the possibility that any inexact copy of a biblical book produces a rewritten Bible text, but concludes that “it can generally be said that Rewritten Bible texts are those which follow closely their scriptural base text and which clearly display an editorial intention that is other than or supplementary to that of the text being altered.” I believe that I can subscribe to Brooke’s definition, but not to his applications of it.

Brooke further classifies “rewritten Torah” in the Qumran corpus as being of three types: (1) Rewritten Pentateuchs, (2) Rewritten pentateuchal narratives, and (3) Rewritten pentateuchal laws. In the second category, Brooke includes, in addition to the Genesis Apocryphon, 4QExposition on the Patriarchs (4Q464), other texts called Apocryphon of Moses and pseudo-Moses (2Q21 and 4Q375–376), Jubilees and pseudo-Jubilees, and the Enoch material. They do not all relate to the pentateuchal narrative in the same way, with the same scope or with the same goals. Brooke is quite candid in asserting that “Not all of these were deliberate attempts to rewrite the biblical narrative; sometimes a short biblical passage is used as a springboard for an extensive work of another kind.” In my view, that last half-sentence vitiates the effectiveness of the category “rewritten Bible.” Once again, a legitimate looser employment of terminology makes it less meaningful and useful from a descriptive perspective.

Brooke’s discussion of rewritten prophetic texts gathers together material of disparate natures, once again demonstrating what is in my view the danger of casting the definitional net too broadly. He suggests that MT Joshua might be considered rewritten Bible if 4QJosh^a is more original than MT. According to both Tov’s view and my own, by Brooke’s definition we should refer to the Samaritan Pentateuch as rewritten Bible. The fragmentary remains of material related to the former prophets which

Brooke gathers can perhaps be said to fit his loose characterization of “Rewritten Bible,” but they may not place a priority on the retelling of the biblical story, a feature which I believe is paramount when the biblical text being “rewritten” is a narrative. If the “Apocryphon of Joshua” is a single work represented by 4Q123, 4Q378–379, 4Q522, 5Q9 and Mas 11, as Tov has suggested, then it is quite suitable for inclusion under the rubric “rewritten Bible” as I have defined it, and it would then represent one of the new Qumran contributions to this classification.²⁸ Vis-à-vis the latter prophets, Brooke’s definition includes the so-called apocrypha of Jeremiah and pseudo-Ezekiel texts edited by Dimant under the rubric “rewritten Bible”; it should be clear now that my employment of the term cannot be so inclusive as to encompass without further rigorous definition texts whose goal is not to explicate prophetic material but to supplement it in some other fashion.

One of Brooke’s concluding remarks characterizes magnificently the position regarding “rewritten Bible” which I find unemployable,

Rewritten Bible texts come in almost as many genres as can be found in the biblical books themselves. Rewritten Bible is a label that is suitable for more than just narrative retellings of biblical stories. It is a general umbrella term describing the particular kind of intertextual activity that always gives priority to one text over another.²⁹

If this description were to be accepted, we would turn “rewritten Bible” from a narrowly defined genre into an excessively vague all-encompassing term. We would have given up a fairly accurate definition of a single genre (for which we should now have to find a satisfactory substitute) in exchange for what is in my view a far less valuable overarching label.

²⁸ E. Tov, “The Rewritten Book of Joshua as Found at Qumran and at Masada,” in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 May, 1996* (ed. M.E. Stone and E.G. Chazon; STDJ 28; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 233–256.

²⁹ Brooke, “Rewritten Bible,” 780b.

Sidnie White Crawford (1999 and 2000)

Sidnie White Crawford has devoted two recent essays to “The ‘Rewritten’ Bible at Qumran.”³⁰ She, too, is sensitive to the varying definitions of “rewritten Bible” which have been applied to the Qumran corpus and writes,

This grouping has been rather loosely defined, but the criteria for membership in this category include a close attachment, either through narrative or themes, to some book contained in the present Jewish canon of Scripture, and some type of reworking, whether through rearrangement, conflation, or supplementation of the present canonical biblical text.³¹

The texts which she examines are 4QRP, 11QT, and Jubilees, all of which I have considered as possible candidates for inclusion under the “rewritten Bible” rubric with which I am working following in the footsteps of Vermes, but at least one of which, Jubilees, does not fit Tov’s criteria as discussed above. White Crawford asserts, “All three are closely attached to the text of the Pentateuch, or Torah, and all three contain a more or less extensive reworking of the present canonical text of the Pentateuch.”³² She explicitly excludes from consideration, as I would, “works such as Pseudo-Ezekiel or Pseudo-Daniel...since, although thematically related to a biblical text...they do not reuse the actual biblical text.”³³

³⁰ Sidnie White Crawford, “The ‘Rewritten’ Bible at Qumran: A Look at Three Texts,” *Erlsr* 26 (1999) [F.M. Cross Festschrift] 1*–8* and “The Rewritten Bible at Qumran,” in *The Hebrew Bible and Qumran* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth; N. Richland Hills, Tx.: BIBAL, 2000) 173–195. References are to the former, unless specified otherwise.

³¹ White Crawford, 1*. In “The Rewritten Bible at Qumran,” 174, she distinguishes “rewritten Bible” “from the ‘parabiblical’ texts, which may be tied to some person, event, or pericope in the present canonical text, but do not actually reuse extensively the biblical text.” Her examples of the latter category include many of the works which we should also not include under the rubric “rewritten Bible.”

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

In addition, White Crawford raises the issue of how to define what is biblical at Qumran in light of the pluriformity of biblical texts, and how that question has further impact on the description of the genre “rewritten Bible.” The lion’s share of her discussion pertains to 4QRP. After presenting the argument in favor of Ulrich’s contention that 4QRP is merely another edition of the Pentateuch (at the far end of a continuum of pentateuchal texts from “short, unexpanded texts such as 4QDeut^s) rather than a “changed Pentateuch” or “a Pentateuch plus additions,”³⁴ she counters with the claim that “the scribal intervention in the text of 4QRP is drastic enough to call its divine authority in the Community that preserved it into question.” Since 4QRP adds material which is not merely taken from elsewhere in the biblical text, but is completely new, it forfeits its claim to be authoritative and hence “biblical.”³⁵ White Crawford concludes that

4QRP was perceived not as a biblical text, but as a commentary, an inner-biblical commentary on the text of the Torah. 4QRP took a relatively stabilized base text, in this case probably the already expansionist proto-Samaritan text, and inserted its comments and interpretations, particularly its new material, with no clear separation between text and comment.³⁶

If her basic analysis is accepted (although I cannot accept her implication that there is inner-biblical commentary in a text which is not biblical), then those texts of 4QRP which manifest the qualities she indicates can be considered rewritten Bible according to several sets of criteria. We may still debate the question whether there is *enough* new material for this appellation to be appropriate, or, to put it differently, “how different from the biblical original need a text be before we call it ‘rewritten Bible’?”

³⁴ White Crawford, 2*, referring p. 6* n. 11 to E. Ulrich, “The Qumran Scrolls and the Biblical Text,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years After Their Discovery* (ed. L.H. Schiffman, E. Tov and J.C. VanderKam; Israel Exploration Society and Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum: Jerusalem, 2000) 51–59. Cf. also n. 19 above.

³⁵ White Crawford’s argument is actually considerably more complex than my summary.

³⁶ White Crawford, 4*–5*.

It is interesting that White Crawford takes it for granted that Jubilees and Temple Scroll are rewritten Bible, with the former, “an extensive reworking of Genesis 1–Exodus 12,” doubtless authoritative at Qumran, and the latter, “a reworking of parts of the biblical text from Exodus through Deuteronomy with a clear theology,” perhaps not.³⁷ She does not consider whether the virtually completely legal nature of 11QT precludes its being rewritten Bible in some sense; the definition of “rewritten Bible” with which she is working, while not as loose as some we have seen, certainly would allow for the Temple Scroll to be included as rewritten Bible generically.

Michael Segal (forthcoming)

In a forthcoming essay entitled “Between Bible and Rewritten Bible,”³⁸ Michael Segal approaches the genre “rewritten Bible” with the intention of distinguishing between works belonging to that genre and those which are “only” revisions of the biblical text, and which can therefore still be described as “Bible.”³⁹ His goal is to “identify those characteristics that distinguish ‘Rewritten’ biblical compositions from biblical manuscripts themselves.” He selects for his analysis works which “closely follow the biblical text, but introduce changes into their source,” including Chronicles, the Temple Scroll, Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon, Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* and pseudo-Philo’s *LAB*.⁴⁰ All these are revisions of earlier works whose goal is the transformation of the message of the earlier work into his

³⁷ Ibid. 5*.

³⁸ M. Segal, “Between Bible and Rewritten Bible,” in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. M. Henze; Eerdmans) 10–28 (in press). I thank Dr. Segal for sharing this essay with me in advance of its publication and allowing me to integrate it into my analysis. He also responded to an earlier version of my critique via email in order to clarify points of agreement and disagreement between us.

³⁹ Examples of “revised Bible,” according to Segal, are the MT version of Jeremiah, the Samaritan Pentateuch and 4QReworked Pentateuch.

⁴⁰ Note that this is Vermes’ original list with the addition of Chronicles, which Vermes may not have considered because of its canonical nature, the Temple Scroll which was not available to him, and the Palestinian Targum.

own; “the rewritten texts ask the reader to accept the authority of their sources, but to understand those sources according to the rewritten text’s interpretation.”

Segal’s mission to distinguish revised biblical texts from rewritten Bible impels him to ask a variety of questions which may be enlightening to our inquiry. “If the category ‘Bible’ also includes the editions produced as a result of a process of continual scribal intervention into the biblical text, and further literary development of the compositions, what is the meaning of the term ‘Rewritten Bible?’” “Was the division between these two genres, as used by modern scholars, recognized in antiquity?” Segal focuses on the boundary between “biblical” and “non-biblical,” and thus is concerned with the same end of the spectrum of “rewritten Bible” as is Emanuel Tov, as opposed to Daniel Harrington and George Nickelsburg who extend the employment of the term in the opposite direction to include many items which could never be confused with the biblical text.⁴¹ Because of Segal’s emphasis on the end of the spectrum closest to the biblical text, works like Enoch and the *Assumption of Moses* never even enter into consideration for the rubric “rewritten Bible.” Furthermore, unlike Tov, Segal excludes even 4QReworked Pentateuch as well from the rubric “rewritten Bible” because he believes that it more properly belongs to the category of “revised biblical text.”⁴² It is not necessarily that Segal’s spectrum of “rewritten Bible” in general is very narrow, but that only that end of the spectrum which is closest to “revised Bible” is under investigation.

For Segal,

the phenomenon of rewriting assumes that readers can identify the source text underlying the revision; otherwise the author/rewriter could just have easily composed a completely new work. The dependence upon biblical compositions in the process of creating new works is a product of the author’s desire to impute

⁴¹ In an email of 21 November 2002, he wrote, “the texts on the ‘rewritten’ side of the boundary are only one category of ‘rewritten Bible’ texts.”

⁴² He compares 4QRP with the MT (2nd) edition of Jeremiah where the textual framework of LXX is preserved, albeit rearranged, and is expanded by new material.

authority to his work; by associating his composition with the holiest of texts, the new work was also granted the same sense of authority.

Segal records a number of external criteria which revised Bible and rewritten Bible share, and argues that, despite the overlap in those areas, the two genres can be distinguished by internal criteria. One external characteristic which Segal demands of this type of "rewritten Bible" is that, like "revised Bible," it must be in the same language as the original which is being rewritten. This criterion excludes from consideration in his discussion (although not necessarily from inclusion in the genre) at least two of Vermes' original paradigm, the Genesis Apocryphon and Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 1–11 (as well as, of course, the Aramaic targumim which never enter into consideration for Segal).

Segal's internal criteria which "define a rewritten composition as a new work, and not merely as a further literary edition of the source," include (among others) a scope which need not match exactly that of the biblical text being rewritten and therefore creates a new literary unit, a new narrative frame, a different narrative voice, the presence of expansion as well as abridgment in relation to the original, and a tendentious editorial layer. The first of those criteria is a sufficient, but not necessary, condition for exclusion of a work from being considered "revised Bible;" if the scope of the rewritten work differs from that of the biblical "original," it cannot be considered a "revision" of that biblical book. Thus the scopes of Jubilees, Chronicles, and *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* do not correspond exactly to that of "any one biblical book or to any collection of works," although Segal agrees that there could be a rewritten Bible which adhered closely to the scope of a single biblical book, for example, a sort of book of Jubilees whose ending would coincide with that of the book of Genesis.

The stipulation that rewritten Bible requires a new narrative frame and a new narrator is reasonable (providing that we recall Segal's insistence on excluding Reworked Pentateuch from this category), as is the observation that we should find in rewritten Bible both expansion and abridgment side-by-side. The composer of a rewritten Bible selects what parts of the story to include, to omit, to expand and to contract. It is debatable, however,

whether “rewritten Bible” must have a “tendentious ideological layer” which distinguishes the rewritten work from the biblical original. The fact that rewriting of the Bible was carried out in the Second Temple period largely to convey ideological messages should not make ideological novelty a necessary condition for inclusion in the genre.

Segal’s final criterion for the recognition of “rewritten Bible” is that it may contain explicit references to the source composition, such as the reference in Jubilees to the “first law.” This feature, of course, cannot occur in a biblical manuscript. Once again, Segal’s principles indicate that he is focused on distinguishing “revised Bible” from “rewritten Bible.” He does not claim that such back-referencing of the biblical original needs to be demanded of all “rewritten Bible” texts in order to be included under this generic rubric.

Even though his goal is to draw a line between “revised” Bible and “rewritten Bible,” at one end of a generic spectrum, several of Segal’s criteria are useful in drawing a line at the other end of the spectrum as well, between works which rewrite the Bible and those which are more loosely parabiblical and whose relationship with the Bible is much more tenuous. We are both engaged in attempting to restrict the range of the term “rewritten Bible,” but whereas I am interested in delimiting both ends of the potential spectrum, Segal’s parameters operate only on one end of it. As far as the boundary at that end is concerned, we are largely in agreement.

The Temple Scroll: A Brief Excursus

The Temple Scroll presents, in my view, a unique dilemma regarding its possible classification under the rubric “rewritten Bible.”⁴³ On the one hand, it does not respond to Vermes’ criteria, cited above, which we are inclined to accept for this genre, “In order to anticipate questions, and to solve problems in advance, the midrashist inserts haggadic development into the

⁴³ My perspective on the Temple Scroll and the category “rewritten Bible” was sharpened by a series of perceptive questions posed by Mr. Philip Green in a Spring 2002 course in Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation at Yeshiva College.

biblical narrative." The Temple Scroll does not contain narrative, and, as such, might be *ab initio* disqualified from entry into this category. All of Vermes' other examples of the genre are fundamentally narrative works, and thus the Temple Scroll is unlike them in this very significant regard.

But to exclude the Temple Scroll *a priori* from membership in the class "rewritten Bible" on these grounds is to ignore a variety of other characteristics it manifests. In fact, consideration of the candidacy of the Temple Scroll for this genre should allow us to make modifications in its definition in a way which is still faithful to Vermes' initial guidelines (and we should recall that Vermes had nothing like 11QT available to him at the time he developed his definition). What makes the Temple Scroll look like rewritten Bible is, quite simply, the fact that it is a rewriting of portions of the Pentateuch, albeit legal, and not narrative, ones. This fact allows it to be classified as "rewritten Bible" in all of the diverse systems of classification which we have discussed with the exception of Nickelsburg's.⁴⁴ In fact, because its language and style are so closely modeled on that of the Pentateuch, it is more formally similar to the Pentateuch than any of the works in Vermes' initial classification (with the possible exception of parts of Jubilees). Thus we are pulled in one direction by the absence of narrative material in the Temple Scroll, and in the other by its very close dependence on scriptural language. If we revise Vermes' criteria minimally to include

⁴⁴ Nickelsburg, 89, writes, "the order of our treatment reflects developing ways of retelling the events of biblical history," and the Temple Scroll is thus automatically excluded. But we should remember that the volume in which Nickelsburg's essay appears includes an essay by Devorah Dimant on Qumran sectarian literature in which, 526–530, we find a discussion of the Temple Scroll. Some of Alexander's nine rather strict criteria (116–118) for inclusion in the genre "rewritten Bible" might also exclude Temple Scroll, which is not narrative, might be intended to replace the Bible, and does not follow the biblical text in order. But since Alexander was deriving his criteria from the four paradigmatic examples, Jubilees, Genesis Apocryphon, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, and *Jewish Antiquities*, he perforce could not have arrived at a generic description which would have included Temple Scroll. In our last brief conversation on this question (November 2003), Alexander did not adopt a firm position on the inclusion of Temple Scroll under this generic rubric.

legal texts, we shall observe that the juxtaposition of laws on similar topics, the clarification of missing details in the laws, and the resolution of implicit contradictions within the laws function in the same fashion in legal contexts as rearrangements, harmonizations, and interpretive additions have in narratives. It is too strict, therefore, in my opinion to limit the employment of the term “rewritten Bible” to narratives, and I believe that the Temple Scroll and any other texts of its ilk which may be discovered need to be included under this rubric in the future.

Conclusion

So, in the end, is the term “Rewritten Bible” still a productive category? In short, I do not believe that the term in Vermes’ sense has outlived its usefulness, but rather that it still furnishes a valuable classificatory device, provided that we employ it in a disciplined fashion. It is necessary to distinguish between the process “rewriting the Bible” and the genre “rewritten Bible”; the former, unlike the latter, is not a literary classification. Most important, I believe that we must all “be on the same page” in the employment of the term “rewritten Bible,” keeping in mind that the more specific the implications of the term, the more valuable it is as a measuring device. The looser the definition, the less precisely it classifies those items under its rubric. It is not sufficient, in my opinion, merely to be aware of how different scholars employ the term with different nuances.

My own preference, it should be clear, is for a Vermes-like narrowness in the employment of the term, demanding comprehensive or broad scope rewriting of narrative and/or legal material with commentary woven into the fabric implicitly, but perhaps *not* merely a biblical text with some superimposed exegesis. For one end of the range, Segal has furnished some productive guidelines in the way in which we limit our classification. But the overall contribution of the Qumran texts to this genre is thus more limited than some scholars have led us to believe, although the caves have furnished us with the first exemplar of legal rewritten Bible, the Temple Scroll. Some of the 4QRP manuscripts, if, as I believe, they do not as a group

represent a single text, will qualify for the title, while others might not.⁴⁵ The "Apocryphon of Joshua" may preserve fragmentary remains of another narrative example. The result of re-adopting this nomenclature will be the restoration of "rewritten Bible" to its proper place as a subcategory of biblical interpretation in antiquity, one way of the ancient author's putting forth his reading of the Bible.

What then do we lose by returning to this narrow utilization of the term "rewritten Bible"? We shall no longer be able to use it to describe 1 Enoch or the Life of Adam and Eve, or the Qumran Apocryphon of Jeremiah or pseudo-Ezekiel. I believe that that loss is far outweighed by the more precise meaning which the term will then maintain. There is then, of course, a concomitant need to find both broad and narrow typologies which work for other kinds of texts, such as finding more appropriate names for the fragmentary remains of documents from Qumran, and refining the categories which we use when we speak of the many ways in which the Bible was handled by Jewish writers in the Second Temple period. I believe that the term "parabiblical" employed by White Crawford (above n. 31) in contrast to "rewritten Bible" may be the appropriate category for many of these works which are more loosely connected to the Bible. If, on the other hand, we were to give up the category "rewritten Bible" as a genre by using it in the looser sense employed by many scholars, then we shall simply have to find another generic term to replace its narrow usage, an exercise which I do not believe to be worth the effort.

⁴⁵ 4Q158 appears to include enough non-biblical textual material not to be considered "revised Bible," to borrow Segal's terminology. Regarding the other exemplars of Reworked Pentateuch, one of the key questions which needs to be answered is that regarding scope. If they did not cover the entire Pentateuch, but omitted either legal or narrative material, then those changes would be sufficient for me to consider them under the rubric "rewritten Bible."