

Terminological questions

The term „rewritten Bible” is the subject of scholarly debate since Geza Vermes introduced it to designate a group of Jewish literary texts, which he thinks belonging together by some definable characteristics. But what does this term mean? Can we speak of Bible in early Judaism, when the Bible was not yet canonised, or contained not the same books as today? And what we understand on rewriting, which texts could belong to this category, since we know such examples even from the Old Testament itself and also centuries later, such as the *Sefer ha-Jasar* or maybe even *Joseph and his brothers* by Thomas Mann? Do we have to reject this expression because of these problems and find a new one, like rewritten Scripture, parabiblical texts etc., or is it just an artificial category of texts, which if we want, can belong together, or by regrouping them, can make a brand new selection with a new label?

Inner Biblical rewritings

We can find rewritten passages also in the Old Testament, the most evident examples are the Decalogue and the whole Book of Chronicles. What could be the historical, political or theological background of these rewritings? How could the authors justify the reason of the changes or do they have to do that at all? What can we do with the clear contradictions which may modify the exegesis? Is there a typical method of retelling stories, forming a new reading on the base of the original text? Was this kind of inner biblical exegesis already a well-known technique during the formation of the canonical collection which the later rewritten works used as starting point?

Group specific works— Qumran, Christian, Samaritan

We know the most of the so-called ’rewritten Bible” texts from the Qumran library. They show a quite wide variety in the base text and in style, like Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon and the Temple Scroll, but their aim seems to be the same, to actualise the text and to incorporate in it the teachings of the sect. What was the authoritative status of these works and what do they think about the text and the content of the Torah if they feel themselves free to make changes on it, omit and add passages? Were these rewritten texts known by the Samaritans and Christians, or they just have the same idea in mind when composing similar works? Talking about rewritten Bible we usually deal only with Jewish writings, but what about the synoptic gospels or the Byzantine chronographies?

Other Jewish rewritten texts

The works of Josephus and Pseudo-Philo doesn't belong to a specified Jewish group or sect, but have their own characteristics. What was their aim with retelling the stories of the Hebrew Bible, what kind of audience was in their mind when composing these works? Did they have also written sources, targums maybe, which contained the stories and names not known from the Old Testament? How can we relate these passages, haggadics and halachics also, to the later rabbinic tradition since there are plenty motifs which turn up even centuries later in the Mishna and midrashim.