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# Rewriting Scripture In Second Temple Times (Studies In The Dead Sea Scrolls And Related Literature)



## Synopsis

The biblical manuscripts found at Qumran, contends Sidnie White Crawford, reflect a spectrum of text movement from authoritative scriptural traditions to completely new compositions. Treating six major groups of texts, she shows how differences in the texts result from a particular understanding of the work of the scribe -- not merely to copy but also to interpret, update, and make relevant the Scripture for the contemporary Jewish community of the time. This scribal practice led to texts that were "rewritten" or "reworked" and considered no less important or accurate than the originals. Propounding a new theory of how these texts cohere as a group, Crawford offers an original and provocative work for readers interested in the Second Temple period.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Benjamin G. Wright • Lehigh University "In this book Sidnie White Crawford illuminates the variety of creative ways that Jews told and retold their scriptural stories. A leading scholar of the Dead Sea Scrolls, she brings erudition and clarity to the issue of how the Jewish scriptures were rewritten; from harmonization and expansion at one end of the spectrum to brand-new compositions, some of which claim scriptural authority for themselves, at the other end. *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* offers new and fresh insights that are sure to change the shape of the debate. Specialists and nonspecialists alike will want to read this engaging study." Emanuel Tov • Hebrew University, Jerusalem "This monograph contains a

creative combination of instructive, innovative background material on the rewriting procedures and thorough text analyses. Very well written, the book is a must for all those interested in the history of Scripture exegesis, Qumran studies, and textual criticism."Eugene Ulrich *Journal of Biblical Literature* • University of Notre Dame "The Scriptures were still developing and their boundaries shifting until the early Christian era. Sidnie White Crawford, having edited scrolls of both biblical and debatably parabiblical status, is uniquely qualified as a guide to the compositions along that newly illumined but ill-defined border. She provides a balanced, judicious, and eminently readable account of how a spectrum of recently discovered ancient authors developed their traditional Scriptures."Bibliotheca Orientalis "An instructive and very stimulating discussion of procedures of `rewriting&#39; Scripture at Qumran."Reviews in Religion & Theology *Journal of Theological Studies* "This book would certainly appeal to students interested in literary and exegetical studies of the Hebrew Bible, as well as Qumran studies and the Second Temple Period. . . . A very interesting read!"Society for Old Testament Study Booklist "The format of the book, a well-written account, is consistently argued with a bibliography for each chapter, making this book a welcome addition to the series."Journal of Biblical Interpretation "This is a highly readable book that presents complicated textual observations of Dead Sea Scrolls study in impressively lucid terms."Journal of Near Eastern Studies "This volume is characterized by clarity in its presentation and judiciousness in engaging with the scholarly issues. . . . An indispensable resource for students and scholars interested in the history of the Hebrew Bible and ancient scriptural interpretation."Journal of Biblical Literature

Lets face it, once we have read the Pentateuch and then read other writings from the Second Temple Period we reread similar stories, themes and ideas in these books. It's soon obvious that scribal copying took place with omissions or additions occurring inside these writings. It's assumed the first five books of Moses (TORAH) was written first then later came these additional books many of which were found in Qumran. Such "Rewritten Bible" texts were first of all termed as such by Geza Vermes (1961) but our author Sidnie White Crawford will prefer "rewritten scripture" due to its nonanachronistic sense of not using "Bible" (as many of these writings had not reached canonical scriptural status and as such much interpretative fluidity still occurred. 9 ). Crawford will focus on five writings she thinks have this rewritten status: "Reworked Pentateuch" (Chapter 3); "The Book of Jubilees" (Chapter 4); "The Temple Scroll" (Chapter 5); "The Genesis Apocryphon" (Chapter 6); and in chapter 7 she discusses "4QCommentary on Genesis A." Of course the Scribes were the ones who either added, subtracted or interpreted previous material. What they did was perfectly the norm

according to Crawford and to do, as in the case of the Jeremiah texts we have, was "to rework the existing tradition into a new, perhaps updated, edition" (4). Thus some of the underlying themes Crawford argues for in this book is scribal intervention, interpretation, insertions and harmonization (40). Nevertheless, she argues "their tradition of interpretation was accepted as authoritative by one stream of Judaism in the Second Temple period" (57). Thus when she discusses the "Reworked Pentateuch" she notes how outside material was brought into these texts along with "a scribal tradition of harmonizing exegesis" (40 & 42). However when we look at Jubilees and the Temple Scroll we see new compositions different from the Pentateuch. Crawford discusses therefore, if these books had scriptural status at Qumran and answers after much important evidence that Jubilees achieved divine, authoritative status among the Qumran sect (82), while the Temple Scroll was composed as a "new book of the law" and was meant to stand beside the Pentateuch as "equally authoritative", "there is no solid evidence that the TS ever gained community acceptance...as a work of Scripture. Its status as Scripture remains at best uncertain." (102) Crawford spends the remaining pages discussing the Genesis Apocryphon and 4QCommentary on Genesis A because she sees further development and transition taking place. The GA because it was the "farthest removed from the scriptural text being written in Aramaic and it made no claim to divine authority as Jubilees and the Temple Scroll did. 4QCommentary finally is seen utilizing its explicit exegesis of "citation plus comment" later becoming in vogue (130). All in all Crawford does an excellent service for us in beginning with the text of the Pentateuch and as a narrowing river constantly narrowing, ends her book with stating that Philo's "liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum was the latest example of Rewritten Scripture. All other forms disappeared except citation plus commentary as later Jewish texts and the NT proves (142).

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