REWRITING TORAH
IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

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As the current volume demonstrates impressively, the connection of Wisdom and Torah is prevalent not only in the Hebrew Bible but also in the extra-biblical literature. My contribution can be seen as a continuation of the debate about the role of Wisdom in Deuteronomy, as I would like to look at the reception of Torah within the Hebrew Bible and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. My biblical examples are taken from the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy, while the Serekh ha-Yachad and the Damascus Document shall serve as my textual basis for the reception of Torah in the extra-biblical literature. Wisdom plays an important role in these texts insofar as not only the biblical legal corpora but also the two rules of the community of Qumran—and here especially the “Penal Code” found in both documents—are shaped by wisdom traditions and, at the same time, understand themselves as an explicit reception of the Torah.1 My contribution does not, however, center on the relationship of Wisdom and Torah. Instead I would like to look at the literary relationship between the legal corpora shaped by wisdom. As the reception of Torah in wisdom literature, so is the reception of the Torah in legal corpora within and outside the Hebrew Bible characterized by the phenomenon generally labelled rewriting. This phenomenon can also be detected when one evaluates the relationship between the biblical and non-biblical examples. These literary relationships beyond the borders of the Hebrew Bible have thus far been neglected. As there is an extensive debate on the phenomenon of rewriting, let me proceed as follows: First, I will present the textual

* This article originated as a lecture delivered to learned audiences in Toronto, Yale, and San Francisco. Especially I would like to thank Hindy Najman, John Collins, Steve D. Fraade, and Joel Baden for their important comments, which have significantly improved the published version. Anselm C. Hagedorn (Berlin) helped to bring the article into acceptable English. As the article fuses several areas of my research on which I have published elsewhere, I may be forgiven when I—due to the constraints of space—simply refer to my own publications. There the reader will find further bibliography as well as more detailed discussions of scholarship.

evidence (1); in a second step I scrutinize the phenomenon of rewriting and define how I understand the term (2); and finally, I will look at some textual examples in an attempt to show the dynamics of composition and interpretation within the process of rewriting (3).

1. The Textual Evidence

The starting point for any explanation of an ancient text should be the version that was handed down to us in the early manuscripts. For our work this has several implications. So we should refrain—as far as it is possible—from any form of analysis and pre-critical, historical-critical, or postmodern presuppositions. Additionally we should equally refrain from any canonical constriction suggested by the Hebrew Bible itself.

Rather, one has to see the early biblical manuscripts in the context of the whole range of literature of ancient Judaism including Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, etc. It is because of this that I have chosen two examples from the two realms—one from within and one from outside the Hebrew Bible. Here, we will not only have to investigate the relationship of two versions of the same material inside or outside the Hebrew Bible but also how biblical and non-biblical sources relate to each other.

a) The first example taken from the Hebrew Bible is the relationship between the Covenant Code in Exodus 20–23 and the Book of Deuteronomy. It is obvious that the two legal corpora are somehow connected. The close relationship between the two corpora can be demonstrated by many structural examples as well as further details. The closest connection between the two blocks of texts, however, exists on the level of the narrative context that links the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy. According to the historical retrospect in Deuteronomy 1–11, stylized as a farewell speech of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy presents itself as a repetition of the Covenant Code.²