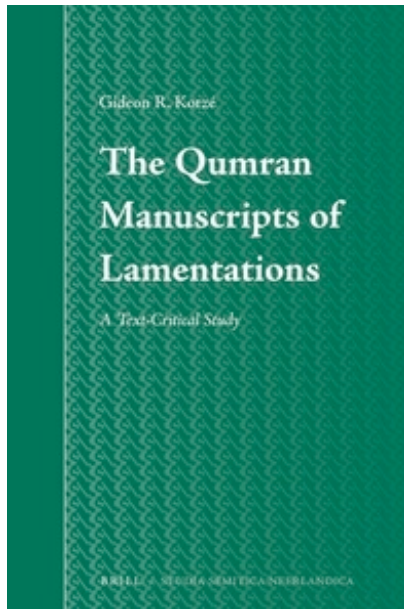


RBL 09/2015



**Gideon R. Kotzé**

***The Qumran Manuscripts of Lamentations: A Text-Critical Study***

Studia Semitica Neerlandica 61

Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. xii + 212. Hardcover.  
\$133.00. ISBN 9789004236844.

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This book is a revised version of Kotzé's doctoral dissertation, which was defended at the University of Stellenbosch in 2011. Its purpose is "to gain a better understanding of how the four Lamentations manuscripts from Qumran present the content of the passages that have been preserved in them" (15). In chapter 1, Kotzé offers a brief introduction to Old Testament textual criticism and outlines how the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has shaped the development of this discipline. In the same chapter he presents the topic and aims of his study. Kotzé describes his approach as an analytical text-critical one, which is geared toward assessing how the contents of the book of Lamentations are presented in its textual witnesses rather than toward the establishment of its earliest recoverable text. To this end, Kotzé investigates variant readings in the Hebrew witnesses and ancient translations (LXX, V, P, T<sup>w</sup>, and T<sup>y</sup>) of Lamentations as well as difficult readings in its Hebrew textual witnesses. His analysis proceeds in four phases: (1) a transcription and description of the four Qumran Lamentations manuscripts 3QLam, 4QLam, 5QLam<sup>a</sup>, and 5QLam<sup>b</sup>; (2) a comparison of the Qumran Lamentations manuscripts with other textual witnesses to the book of Lamentations in order to catalogue variant and difficult readings; (3) an explanation of these variant and difficult readings; (4) a survey of the effect of these variant and difficult readings on the contents of Lamentations as it is presented in its Qumran manuscripts.

Chapter 2 offers a transcription of the four Qumran Lamentations manuscripts and a description of their physical characteristics. These are accompanied by an apparatus listing the variants between the Qumran fragments and other witnesses to the text of Lamentations. His transcriptions lead Kotzé to exclude 3QLam (which preserves only small parts of Lam 1 and 3) and the traces of Lam 2:5 in 4QLam from further analysis, due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence.

Chapter 3 subjects Lam 1:6–17 as it is presented in 4QLam to a text-critical analysis. Apart from variant and difficult readings in these verses, Kotzé discusses the different acrostic sequences in Lam 1:16–17 in 4QLam and MT: the Qumran manuscript has the order *pe-‘ayin*, whereas MT has *‘ayin-pe*. Kotzé does not express a preference for either one of these sequences but does illustrate how the order of scriptural material in MT and 4QLam affects its contents. Kotzé’s text-critical analysis of Lam 1:6–17 demonstrates that the scribe of 4QLam consciously engaged with the contents of these verses in various ways. Most conspicuously, the scribe of this Qumran manuscript alters the perspective of the scriptural material he is copying. While in MT both Jerusalem and the narrator are presented as speakers in the first person, in 4QLam “words which were intended to be spoken by the personified city are placed in the mouth of the narrator by means of subtle changes to the original wording” (118).

Chapter 4 is devoted to the presentation of verses from Lam 4 in 5QLam<sup>a</sup> and 5QLam<sup>b</sup>. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of Lam 4:17, 18 in 5QLam<sup>b</sup> and Lam 4:19 in 5QLam<sup>a</sup>. Kotzé correctly observes that 5QLam<sup>a</sup> and 5QLam<sup>b</sup> reflect the acrostic order attested in Codex Leningradensis, but he confuses the *pe-‘ayin* sequence of Codex Leningradensis and the Qumran manuscripts with the *‘ayin-pe* sequence in P and some other Masoretic witnesses when he remarks that “the wordings in both manuscripts had the *‘ayin/pe* order that is also found in Codex Leningradensis” (124). The remainder of this chapter deals in a more elaborate fashion with Lam 4:7, 14, 15 in 5QLam<sup>a</sup>. The chapter also contains an excursus on the scribal mark in the bottom margin of 5QLam<sup>a</sup> II, which Kotzé argues might be related to the preceding Lam 4:15 and expresses the concerns of the Qumran scribe copying this manuscript with purity.

Chapter 5 treats the presentation of Lam 5:1–3, 9–13 in 5QLam<sup>a</sup>. The chapter also includes an excursus on the space that follows Lam 5:13 in this manuscript. Chapter 6 concludes the book. Kotzé summarizes his findings for 4QLam and 5QLam<sup>a</sup> in two tables, listing each case discussed in the previous chapters as a reading more original than MT (orig.), a scribal error (err.), a change introduced by a scribe (scr.), or an interpretative insertion (int.). In both manuscripts, most readings seem to result from conscious scribal activity. Hence, Kotzé concludes that “more than anything else, 4QLam and 5QLam<sup>a</sup> exhibit the creative activity of the scribes who transmitted manuscripts of Lamentations

during the Second Temple period and the modifications to the wordings of the chapters which these scribes brought about resulted in subtle, but noteworthy changes to their content” (179).

Kotzé’s text-critical argumentation is thorough and persuasive. Two minor points of criticism may be raised concerning his selection of evidence and his explanation of the scribal mark beneath 5QLam<sup>a</sup> II. First, in chapter 4, Kotzé subjects two words from Lam 4:17–18 as they are found in 5QLam<sup>b</sup> to text-critical analysis. In his final chapter, however, 5QLam<sup>b</sup> is not discussed separately, as the evidence for this manuscript is too fragmentary to allow for firm conclusions. One may wonder, therefore, what exactly Kotzé’s discussion of Lam 4:17–18 contributes to the aims of his book, especially because he omits the variant reading in Lam 2:5 according to 4QLam<sup>a</sup> from his analysis. Second, even if we accept the existence of the scribal mark beneath 5QLam<sup>a</sup> II, it is problematic to assume a connection between the last verse of Scripture in that column and the Qumran community’s concern with purity. There is no evidence for a connection between the scribe of 5QLam<sup>a</sup> and the Qumran community, and neither the so-called “sectarian” writings nor the Qumran scrolls as a whole seem to point to any particular appeal Lam 4:15 may have had for their producers or collectors. However, these critical remarks should not distract from that fact that Kotzé makes an important contribution to our knowledge of the textual development of the book of Lamentations and scribal activity in Second Temple Judaism.