MULTILINGUALISM IN ANCIENT CONTEXTS

Perspectives from
Ancient Near Eastern
and Early Christian
Contexts

EDITORS

Louis C. Jonker
Angelika Berlejung
Izak Cornelius

7

THE MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT OF EARLY JUDAISM

Lamentations 2:15 as a Case Study on Its Importance for Textual Criticism

Gideon R. Kotzé
North-West

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The cultural study of early Judaism, like other fields of historiographical research, is based on available resources. The available resources for the study of the ideas, beliefs, worldviews, and values of Judaism from Persian domination in the 6th century BCE to the revolts against Rome in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE include material culture, iconography, and different types of texts.¹ Both documentary writings and literary works count amongst the textual resources. These textual resources, especially the literary writings, which circulated in various versions, existed in more than one language. It is a tribute to the skill of scribes that they were able to put the subject matter of the literary writings (and the ideas, beliefs, worldviews, and values embodied and expressed by the subject matter) into the words of several languages. The multiversional and multilingual nature of the multiple textual resources makes textual criticism indispensable for the cultural study of early Judaism.

Textual criticism is the discipline that is specifically devoted to the examination of textual representatives of literary writings as the products of ancient scribes, the similarities and differences in the wordings of the textual representatives, especially the variants and debated readings,² and the potential meaningfulness of the wordings of textual representatives with their unique combinations of readings. The ancient scribes of course did not practise their trade in a historical vacuum and text critics have to consider the larger cultural and intellectual environment, including the language situation, in which the scribes produced the textual representatives and rewrote the wordings of writings. In order to better understand the language situation

- 1 For the purposes of this contribution, Judaism refers to the religion, the ways of believing, viewing the world, and living, of Jewish people. The time of early Judaism includes the Second Temple period and extends beyond it to the Second Revolt against Rome. In other words, I use “early Judaism” as an umbrella term for the rich diversity and shared elements in the thought-world and practices of Judaism from ca. 539 BCE to 135 CE. Cf. James C. VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); James C. VanderKam, “Judaism in the Land of Israel”, in *Early Judaism: A Comprehensive Overview*, eds. John J. Collins & Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 70-94; and Part One of *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner & Loren T. Stuckenbruck (London: T&T Clark, 2020).
- 2 Variants are differences in the details of readings, the formulation of passages, and versions of literary writings that are reflected by the wordings of textual representatives. Debated readings are forms, words, phrases, sentences, and other sense units whose authenticity and appropriateness are disputed by modern readers.

in the various geographical areas and communities during the period of early Judaism, text critics can learn from their linguist colleagues.³ The work of these colleagues shows how complex the language situation was. Jerusalem and its environs are a good example.⁴

-
- 3 To be fair, it is a two-way relationship. Research on ancient languages is based on the wordings of textual representatives. Text critics study these textual representatives and how scribes in antiquity preserved and developed the wordings during the processes of transmission. Rezetko and Young, for example, emphasise the relevance of the complex production history of literary writings in the Hebrew Bible corpus, including the transmission of the texts, for diachronic linguistic research. Such research requires the cooperation of textual criticism, historical criticism, and historical linguistics. Cf. Robert Rezetko & Ian Young, *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps Toward an Integrated Approach*, Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near East Monographs 9 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 9-10, 26-29, 44, 59-116; Robert Rezetko & Ian Young, "Currents in the Historical Linguistics and Linguistic Dating of the Hebrew Bible: Report on the State of Research as Reflected in Recent Major Publications", *HIPHIL Novum*, 5/1 (2019): 14-37. Seeing as language is part of the larger cultural and intellectual environment of early Judaism and the study of the latter is not based only on textual resources, linguists and text critics will do well to work together with archaeologists, historians, experts in iconography, and other scholars who research non-textual resources from antiquity, such as material culture and visual images. Only by studying language, textual and visual resources, as well as other material evidence in conjunction (first independently and then combined), can modern scholars come close to a complete cultural picture of early Judaism.
- 4 At least since the beginning of early Judaism and especially in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but also later in Byzantine times, "the Jews of Palestine, including the rabbinic sages and their followers – however few or many they may have been – lived mainly in villages and cities of mixed populations, religious cultures, and languages; the three main languages were Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek (including sub-dialects of each), with lesser exposure to others as well. In those villages and cities they would have heard and seen a variety of languages. The relative proportions of *frequency* of use of those languages to one another, their *functional mix* (that is, which language was used for which task), and the degree of *fluency* (oral, aural, reading, and writing) amongst mixed populations and diverse social strata, varied from place to place, even within a relatively narrow geographical range, as likewise over time. In short, the multilingual context was extremely complex but unavoidable." (Steven D. Fraade, "Language Mix and Multilingualism in ancient Palestine: Literary and Inscriptional Evidence", *Jewish Studies*, 48 [2012]: 2*). If "Ashdodite" in Neh 13:24 is understood as a code word for the different languages that were spoken by the diverse and intermingled populations of the West, the evidence of the passage suggests that not all strands of thought in early Judaism were enamored of the multilingual and multicultural context of Jerusalem and its environs. Cf. Angelika Berlejung, "Was ist eigentlich 'Aschdodisch'? Überlegungen zu Neh 13,23f. und Sach 9,6", in *Nächstenliebe und Gottesfurcht: Beiträge aus alttestamentlicher, semitischer und altorientalischer Wissenschaft für Hans-Peter Mathys zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Hanna Jenni & Markus Saur, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 439 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016), 13-25.

This was a multilingual context where Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were used,⁵ literary writings were available in more than one language,⁶ scribes did not follow the same approach when they transmitted literary writings,⁷ there were different traditions of spelling and pronunciation,⁸ and the language competence of people varied depending on factors, such as education, occupation, social position, locality, mobility, sex, and personal history.⁹ To complicate the picture more, linguists interpret the evidence of

- 5 The Dead Sea scrolls, the hundreds of fragmentary manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek that were discovered in caves near Qumran and at other sites in the Judean desert provide valuable evidence of some degree of multilingualism in the region during the period of early Judaism. The Aramaisms in the Hebrew writings and the Hebraisms in the Aramaic writings also point to the bilingualism of the scribes who produced these texts. Cf., e.g., Christian Stadel, *Hebraismen in den aramäischen Texten vom Toten Meer*, Schriften der Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg 11 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2008); Steven E. Fassberg, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Their Contribution to the Study of Hebrew and Aramaic", in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Texts, Languages, and Cultures*, eds. Armin Lange, Emanuel Tov & Matthias Weigold, 2 vols., Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 140/1-2 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1:138; Steven E. Fassberg, "Which Semitic Language Did Jesus and Other Contemporary Jews Speak?" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 74 (2012): 274; Steven E. Fassberg, "The Nature and Extent of Aramaisms in the Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls", in *Hebrew of the Late Second Temple Period: Proceedings of a Sixth International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, eds. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar & Pierre van Hecke, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 114 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 7-24; James Barr, "Which Language Did Jesus Speak? Some Remarks of a Semitist", in *Bible and Interpretation: The Collected Essays of James Barr*, vol. 2, *Biblical Studies*, ed. John Barton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 239; George J. Brooke, "Scrolls and Early Judaism", in *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. George J. Brooke & Charlotte Hempel (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 121; Holger Gzella, "Languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek", in *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. George J. Brooke & Charlotte Hempel (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 192-203. A special issue of the journal *Orientalia* (89/1 [2020]) is devoted to the topic "On the Languages of Roman Palestine at the Time of Jesus." I completed the contribution before the articles in this issue were available to me.
- 6 Most of the textual representatives of religious writings that were found in the region are in Classical Hebrew. I follow Rezetko and Young and use Classical Hebrew as a broad term for the language of four pre-Mishnaic corpora of texts: the Hebrew inscriptions, the writings of the Hebrew Bible, Ben Sira, and the Dead Sea scrolls. Rezetko & Young, *Historical Linguistics*, 10.
- 7 Cf., e.g., Sidnie White Crawford, "Understanding the Textual History of the Hebrew Bible: A New Proposal", in *The Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Nóra Dávid, Armin Lange, Kristin de Troyer & Shani Tzoref, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 239 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 60-69; Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd Ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 184-85.
- 8 Cf. Geoffrey Khan, "The Languages of the Old Testament", in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to 600*, eds. James Carleton Paget & Joachim Schaper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6-12.
- 9 James Barr, "Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in the Hellenistic Age", in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 2, *The Hellenistic Age*, eds. W. D. Davies & Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 112; Willem Smelik, "The Languages of Roman Palestine", in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, ed. Catherine Hezser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 132; Gzella, "Languages", 200-201: "[T]he actual distribution of Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew in Hellenistic and Roman Palestine across regions, social strata and domains of life remains a mystery. In a scribal milieu like Qumran, a better knowledge of these languages would be of little surprise. Yet it is impossible to say to what extent this

the available resources in different ways and therefore disagree over a number of issues regarding the language situation, especially in Jerusalem and its environs during the period of early Judaism. I highlight only three of these debated issues here by way of illustration: (1) what dialect of Hebrew was used in the region and was it superseded by Aramaic as the most commonly spoken language; (2) does the language variation in early Jewish writings written in Hebrew reflect a distinct period in the chronological development of the language; and (3) to what extent was Greek used for religious purposes in Judea?

1. Although scholars generally agree that Hebrew was a living language during the period of early Judaism, they do not see eye to eye on the dialect that was spoken in Jerusalem and its environs. One of the candidates is Mishnaic Hebrew (more specifically, Tannaitic Hebrew),¹⁰ which is widely recognised as a vernacular form of Hebrew or the descendent of colloquial dialects,¹¹ but scholars also argue that the language reflected by the Hebrew manuscripts from Qumran better approximates the dialect spoken in the region of Jerusalem.¹² Moreover, while some scholars

multilingualism surfaced in daily life, and which part of the population consisted of true Aramaic-Greek bilinguals, let alone Aramaic-Hebrew-Greek trilinguals, who could effortlessly switch between these different idioms independent of the speech situation.”

- 10 Segal argues that Mishnaic Hebrew is a popular, colloquial dialect and a continuation of the Hebrew that was spoken in earlier times. It is the language spoken by Jews in Jerusalem and Judea from the Hellenistic period to the end of the wars against Rome (ca. 400 BCE–150 CE). See Moses H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 6-14. Cf. also Miguel Pérez Fernández, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 8.
- 11 Some Dead Sea scrolls, such as 4QMMT, the Copper Scroll, and the Bar Kochba letters from Wadi Murabba'at, share some features with Mishnaic Hebrew. These features are taken as support for the view that Mishnaic Hebrew was a spoken language. For example, Milik, who published the Hebrew letters of Bar Kochba, states unequivocally: “La thèse ... d’après lesquels l’hébreu mishnique a été une langue parlée par la population de la Judée aux époques perse et greco-romaine, n’est pas plus une hypothèse, elle est un fait établi.” See Pierre Benoit, Jozef T. Milik & Roland de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabba’at*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 70. Cf. also Eduard Yechezkel Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 117; Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 164, 166-67; Ian Young, Robert Rezetko & Martin Ehrensverd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (London: Equinox, 2008), 1:231, 241, 242-43; Uri Mor, “Language Contact in Judea: How Much Aramaic Is There in the Hebrew Documents from the Judean Desert?” *Hebrew Studies*, 52 (2011): 213-20; Fassberg, “The Dead Sea Scrolls”, 138; Fassberg, “Which Semitic Language”, 272-75; Barr, “Which Language”, 239; Khan, “Language”, 13.
- 12 Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Harvard Semitic Studies 29 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 116-18; Elisha Qimron, “The Nature of DSS Hebrew and Its Relation to BH and MH”, in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, eds. Takamitsu Muraoka & John F. Elwolde, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 232-44. Morag argues that at least some features of Qumran Hebrew can be attributed to dialects. Shelomo Morag, “Qumran Hebrew: Some Typological Observations”, *Vetus Testamentum*, 38/2 (1988): 148-64. According to Talshir, Qumran Hebrew is closely affiliated to Late Biblical Hebrew. It was the language of the local inhabitants and, possibly, in Judea during the Persian and Hellenistic

maintain that Hebrew was commonly spoken by many people at the time, others contend that Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the dominant language in the daily life of people during the Persian period.¹³ On this view, Hebrew became confined to

periods until the time of Hasmonean rule, when it was replaced by proto-Tannaitic Hebrew, a contemporaneous dialect that developed separately in the lowlands. David Talshir, “The Habitat and History of Hebrew during the Second Temple Period”, in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, ed. Ian Young, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 369 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 262-69. There are, of course, other interpretations of the nature of the Hebrew of the Dead Sea scrolls as well. Cf., e.g., Eric D. Reymond, *Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology*, Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study 76 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 13-21. In addition to the view that the Dead Sea scrolls reflect a spoken dialect of people in Jerusalem and its environs, some scholars see the Hebrew of the Dead Sea scrolls as a literary language that continues the literary language of Hebrew Bible writings, but also shows influences of spoken vernaculars (a Hebrew that is close to Mishnaic Hebrew and Aramaic), as well as other factors, such as scribal traditions, personal preferences, genres, and fashions. Cf. Joshua Blau, “A Conservative View of the Language of the Dead Sea Scrolls”, in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, eds. Takamitsu Muraoka & John F. Elwolde, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 20-25. Other scholars use the sociolinguistic concept of an “antilanguage” to describe Qumran Hebrew (the language of the scrolls written by the sectarian movement). See William M. Schniedewind, “Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 118/2 (1999): 235-52; William M. Schniedewind, “Linguistic Ideology in Qumran Hebrew”, in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, eds. Takamitsu Muraoka & John F. Elwolde, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 245-55; William M. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins through the Rabbinic Period* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2013), 178: “Several lines of evidence point to the conscious creation of an antilanguage by scribes within the *yahad* community. These include the use of code and symbolic terminology, the avoidance of Aramaic and popular language (for example, R[abbinic] H[ebrew]), pseudoclassicizing tendencies, and orthography and paleography. Taken together, this evidence points to the use of language within the *yahad* community as another vehicle for differentiating the group from other Jewish groups in the late Second Temple period.” Cf. also Gary A. Rendsburg, “Qumran Hebrew (with a Trial Cut [1QS])”, in *Dead Sea Scrolls at Sixty: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni*, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman & Shani Tzoref, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 217-46.

- 13 Cf. e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.”, in *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 25 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1979), 38; Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer samt den Inschriften aus Palästina, dem Testament Levis aus der Kairoer Genisa, der Fastenrolle und den alten talmudischen Zitaten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 55-58; Ingo Kottsieper, “‘And They Did Not Care to Speak Yehudit’: On Linguistic Change in Judah during the Late Persian Era”, in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers & Rainer Albertz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 95-124; John C. Poirier, “The Linguistic Situation in Jewish Palestine in Late Antiquity”, *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, 4 (2007): 55-110; Holger Gzella, “Ancient Hebrew”, in *Languages from the World of the Bible*, ed. Holger Gzella (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 77; Holger Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam*, Handbuch der Orientalistik I 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 181, 190-93, 225-29; Holger Gzella, “Das Hebräische als Sprache Israels und Judas”, in *Sprachen in Palästina im 2. und 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, eds. Ulrich Hübner & Herbert Niehr, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 43 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 265; Angelika Berlejung, “Palestine”, in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*, ed. Herbert Niehr, Handbuch der Orientalistik I 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 362.

the domain of religion (the temple cult, the production of religious literature, and discussions in religious circles over matters of law and interpretation) and also served as a national symbol during the wars against Rome.¹⁴

2. The language of Classical Hebrew corpora exhibits a great deal of similarity,¹⁵ but there is also noteworthy variation and the corpora are not linguistically uniform.¹⁶ A variety of factors are responsible for the variation in the Hebrew of the available textual representatives.¹⁷ Changes in the language over time certainly account for some, but certainly not all of the variation.¹⁸ This much is clear; however, scholarly opinions are divided over issues of language periodisation, specifically whether the linguistic variation in the Classical Hebrew corpora reflect different strata of the language that neatly divide into distinct chronological phases.¹⁹

14 Gzella, *Cultural History of Aramaic*, 226-27.

15 Cf. Barr, "Hebrew", 81.

16 Gzella, "Hebräische", 272, 294 remarks on the non-uniformity of the language of the Hebrew inscriptions and Hebrew Bible, respectively, while Muraoka mentions the non-uniformity of Qumran Hebrew. See Takamitsu Muraoka, "Hebrew", in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls Volume 1*, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman & James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 344.

17 Rezetko & Young, *Historical Linguistics*, 45-49; Gzella, "Hebräische", 272-79.

18 Gzella, "Hebräische", 275.

19 Several scholars maintain that the writings of the Hebrew Bible corpus are written in different "chronolects", Archaic and Early Biblical Hebrew (pre-monarchical and monarchical periods), Transitional Biblical Hebrew (Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods), and Late Biblical Hebrew (mid-Persian and Hellenistic periods), and that dating the writings on the basis of their language, in combination with other data, is possible. Cf., e.g., Aaron Hornkohl, "Biblical Hebrew: Periodization", in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics, Volume 1*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 315-25; W. Randall Garr & Steven E. Fassberg, eds. *A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew, vol. 1, Periods, Corpora, and Reading Traditions* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016). With good reason and arguments, other scholars have criticised neat conversions of linguistic typology into chronology. They challenge the presupposition that the Hebrew Bible corpus provides evidence of distinct, well-defined, chronological phases in the development of Classical Hebrew, one phase that is early and another phase that is late, with a transitional phase in between, as well as the principles and methodologies of endeavours to date writings in the corpus based on the linguistic profiles of the versions represented by the Masoretic text. Cf. e.g., John F. Elwolde, "Developments in Hebrew Vocabulary between Bible and Mishnah", in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira: Proceedings of a Symposium held at Leiden University 11-14 December 1995*, eds. Takamitsu Muraoka & John F. Elwolde, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 26 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 17-55; Philip R. Davies, "Biblical Hebrew and the History of Ancient Judah: Typology, Chronology and Common Sense", in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, ed. Ian Young, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 369 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 150-63; Young, Rezetko & Ehrensverd, *Linguistic Dating*, 1:45-141. Rezetko & Young, "Currents in the Historical Linguistics", 3-95 provide an up-to-date discussion of diachronic linguistic study of Biblical Hebrew, as well as an extensive bibliography. With regard to the Dead Sea scrolls, Muraoka notes that "it is too simplistic to characterize Qumran Hebrew in terms of a linear chronological development" from early Biblical Hebrew to Mishnaic Hebrew. Muraoka, "Hebrew", 344; Cf. also Morag, "Qumran Hebrew", 161-63; Qimron, "Nature of DSS Hebrew", 238.

3. The degree of Hellenisation in Judea remains a matter of debate and the available textual resources are interpreted in more than one way.²⁰ Therefore, scholars differ in their estimations of the extent of people's knowledge of the Greek language and its use for religious purposes. The Greek inscriptions from Jerusalem²¹ and the predominance of Greek in the epigraphic material of Roman Palestine are probably not a reflection of the vernacular in the region,²² but it may point to a measure of multilingualism amongst the population.²³ It is also noteworthy that at least some of the Greek translations of literary writings, and their revisions, were made in Judea²⁴ while the presence of Greek manuscripts of religious texts at Qumran and Naḥal Hever hints at the possibility that the people who left the scrolls in the caves were able to read and use them.²⁵

20 Hellenisation here refers to a complex cultural process involving the adoption of aspects of Greek customs and practices, as well as the preservation of native cultural heritage. The Greek language was central to the process. Hellenisation affected the whole of the Near East, but it was not homogenised. On the one hand, "Hellenization was a centuries-long process in which all were engaged and from which no one escaped; therefore, all peoples of the Near East, the Jews included, were part of the Hellenistic world, were included in this process, and were from this point of view Hellenized. On the other hand, one could also speak of degrees of Hellenization in the sense of how far one went in consciously imitating and adopting Greek ways. From such a perspective it would be legitimate to talk of a particular individual as being 'more Hellenized' or 'less Hellenized' than another and Hellenization in this sense represents a spectrum encompassing many shades of Greek influence from the limited to the intense". See Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, vol. 2, The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE)*, Library of Second Temple Studies 68 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 163.

21 Cf. Hannah M. Cotton, Leah Di Segni, Werner Eck, Benjamin Isaac, Alla Kushnir-Stein, Haggai Misgav, Jonathan Price & Ada Yardeni, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*, vol. I 1 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

22 Smelik, "Languages", 135-36.

23 Pieter W. van der Horst, "Greek in Jewish Palestine in the Light of Jewish Epigraphy", in *Japheth in the Tents of Shem: Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 32 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 17-18 notes that "the epigraphic material itself should not be considered in isolation. Papyri, the legends of coins, and the literary sources also suggest strongly that many Jews in Judaea and the Galilee were able to speak or understand Greek, even if they did not belong to the upper classes". He concludes that "Roman Palestine was a largely bilingual, or even trilingual, society – alongside the vernacular Aramaic (and, to a much lesser extent, Hebrew) Greek was widely used and understood – but we have to add that the degree of use and understanding of the Greek language probably varied strongly according to locality and period, social status and educational background, occasion and mobility. As far as we can see, however, opinions will remain divided over this issue". See Van der Horst, "Greek in Jewish Palestine", 26.

24 Cf., e.g., Martin Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1989), 24-25; Marguerite Harl, Gilles Dorival & Olivier Munnich, *La Bible grecque des Septante: Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* (Paris: Cerf, 1994), 105-107; Johann Cook & Arie van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 68 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 3-5; Emanuel Tov, "Reflections on the Septuagint with Special Attention Paid to the Post-Pentateuchal Translations", in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays, Volume 3*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 167 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 429-48.

25 Some scholars are not convinced that Greek was actively used by the residents at Qumran or

The disagreements over debated issues undoubtedly make it difficult for text critics to find their feet in the shifting sands of linguistic research. There are, however, several reasons why it is important for them to put in an effort to better understand the multilingual context of early Judaism. In this contribution, I elaborate on only two of these reasons by means of a case study. My discussion of the case study shows, firstly, that information about the larger linguistic situation can help to make sense of

that Greek versions of religious literature were transmitted by the sectarian movement. Cf., e.g., Heinz-Josef Fabry, “Die griechischen Handschriften vom Toten Meer”, in *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta. Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel*, eds. Heinz-Josef Fabry & Ulrich Offerhaus, Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament 153 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 133; Emanuel Tov, “The Greek Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert”, in *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, and Qumran: Collected Studies*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 121 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 342-43; Stephen Reed, “The Linguistic Diversity of the Texts Found at Qumran”, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and the Concept of a Library*, eds. Sidnie White Crawford & Cecilia Wassen, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 153. Other scholars, however, allow for the possibility that some members of the sectarian movement studied the Greek versions of religious literature or even produced copies of them. There might have been a few Greek-speaking members as well. Cf., e.g., Alfred R.C. Leane, “Greek Manuscripts from the Judaean Desert”, in *Studies in New Testament Language and Text*, ed. J. Keith Elliot, Novum Testamentum Supplements 44 (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 283-300; Leonard J. Greenspoon, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Greek Bible”, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, eds. Peter W. Flint & James C. VanderKam (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1:111-13; Martin Hengel, “Qumran and Hellenism”, in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. John J. Collins & Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 50; Timothy H. Lim, “The Qumran Scrolls, Multilingualism, and Biblical Interpretation”, in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. John J. Collins & Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 70; James C. VanderKam, “Greek at Qumran”, in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, eds. John J. Collins & Gregory E. Sterling (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 178; Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Developmental Composition of the Bible*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 169 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 165-66. Amongst the Greek manuscripts from Qumran, there are copies of LXX Exodus, LXX Leviticus, LXX Numbers, LXX Deuteronomy, and the Letter of Jeremiah. A copy of a Greek version of the Twelve Minor Prophets was also found at Nahal Hever. These are books of which the Greek versions probably originated in Alexandria. Harl, Dorival and Munnich, *La Bible grecque*, 105. It is interesting that reworked copies of Greek versions of Egyptian provenance have been found in more than one site in the Judean desert. Although it is not certain that the copies were made in Judea and not simply brought there from elsewhere, their presence amongst the Dead Sea scrolls does suggest that the Greek versions of religious writings were not transmitted in only one location. This, in turn, raises the possibility that the Greek versions were kept by people who could use them for study and other religious purposes. Such a scenario seems likely in view of Sidnie White Crawford’s compelling argument that the Qumran settlement was the scribal centre of the sectarian movement and the collection of scrolls was a library with an archival component that was tended by the sect’s scribes. See Sidnie White Crawford, “The Qumran Collection as a Scribal Library”, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and the Concept of a Library*, eds. Sidnie White Crawford & Cecilia Wassen, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 109-31; Sidnie White Crawford, *Scribes and Scrolls at Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019). Tov notes that the documentary texts that were discovered at Nahal Hever show that the people who left the documents behind actively used Greek. It may therefore be assumed that they used the Greek Minor Prophets scroll as well. Tov, “Greek Biblical Texts”, 342.

details in the wordings of textual representatives, and, secondly, that it has important implications for the goal of textual criticism as a branch of the cultural study of early Judaism.

For the case study, I have chosen to discuss the rendering of the phrase כָּלִיל יָפִי in the Hebrew text of Lamentations 2:15 by στέφανος δόξης in the Septuagint version of Lamentations. My discussion will unfold as follows: I first look very briefly at how כָּלִיל is used in Classical Hebrew literature, especially in the writings from Qumran and Ben Sira. I take this evidence as representative of כָּלִיל's semantic potential in Classical Hebrew during the period of early Judaism. Next, I survey the renderings of the phrase כָּלִיל יָפִי in the ancient translations of Lamentations 2:15 on the assumption that LXX Lamentations and the other translations of the Hebrew text give expression to interpretations of כָּלִיל that were contemporary in early Judaism. The renderings of these ancient translations provide the same picture of כָּלִיל's meanings as the Hebrew writings from Qumran and Ben Sira.

Finally, I mention and criticise the explanations that text critics have put forward in the past to account for στέφανος δόξης, which departs from how other ancient translations and many modern researchers interpret כָּלִיל יָפִי. On the back of the discussion of the case study, I identify an implication of information about the language situation during the period of early Judaism for the goal of textual criticism.

7.2 CASE STUDY: LAMENTATIONS 2:15

7.2.1 Making Sense of a Reading in the Septuagint Version

In the corpora of Classical Hebrew literature, כָּלִיל functions syntactically as a noun, an adjective, and an adverb.²⁶ Regarding the Hebrew Bible writings, Dobbs-Allsopp notes that כָּלִיל “typically is used either as a substantive meaning ‘entirety, whole’ or a sacrificial term for ‘whole offering’.” There are only four exceptions: Ezek. 16:14, 27:3, 28:12, and Lam. 2:15c. In these latter passages, *kālil* putatively means ‘perfection.’²⁷ וְהָאֱלִילִים כָּלִיל יִחָלְףוּ (“The idols shall utterly pass away” [NRSV]) in Isa 2:18 is a case where the word is used adverbially. Although כָּלִיל refers to a whole offering in some of the Hebrew documents from Qumran,²⁸ it undoubtedly denotes a crown in other

26 Cf. Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver & Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 483; Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner & Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:479; Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 18th Ed. (Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), 550.

27 F.W. (Chip) Dobbs-Allsopp, “Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations”, *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*, 26 (1998): 26.

28 4Q174 6-7 5; 4Q175 18 (both texts are similar to Deut 33:10); 4Q405 23 i 5, 6; 11Q19 LV 9.

passages. This is the meaning normally associated with the counterpart of כָּלִיל in Aramaic,²⁹ as exemplified by the Aramaic writings amongst the Dead Sea scrolls.³⁰ The first noteworthy instance where כָּלִיל in a Hebrew document from Qumran calls a crown to mind can be found in the *Community Rule*.

According to the passage in question, the reward for all those who walk in the spirit of truth is a crown of honour, וְכָלִיל כְּבוֹד, in addition to other earthly and eternal blessings.³¹ The phrase כָּלִיל כְּבוֹד occurs in the *Thanksgiving Hymns* (*Hodayot*) as well. In a passage where the speaker lists adversities that will turn into advantages, he includes the contempt of his foes, which will become a crown of honour for him: וְבוֹ צָרִי לִי לְכָלִיל כְּבוֹד.³² The very fragmentary text of 4QEschatological Work B mentions a crown of glory, לְכָלִיל תְּפָאֶרֶת,³³ and the same phrase appears in the Hebrew text of Sirach 45:8 (MS B) in connection with the investiture of Aaron: וַיְלַבִּישֵׁהוּ כָלִיל תְּפָאֶרֶת.³⁴ Here, however, כָּלִיל תְּפָאֶרֶת can also mean “perfect glory”, similar to the Greek version, ἐνέδυσεν αὐτὸν συντέλειαν καυχήματος (“He clothed him in perfect splendor” [NRSV]).³⁵ The evidence from the Hebrew texts of Dead Sea scrolls and Ben Sira

29 Cf. Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Title Publishing, 1943; reprinted by Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 642; Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, 606; Edward M. Cook, *Dictionary of Qumran Aramaic* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 115.

30 References to crowns are found in the fragmentary texts of 11QNew Jerusalem ar, וְכָלִיל אֶשְׁמָא (“the fifth crown”) and וְכָלִיל שְׁשִׁיתָא (“the sixth crown”) (11Q18 14 ii 2 and 3), as well as in 4QJews at the Persian court (4QProto-Esther^{a-f}), כָּלִיל דְּהַבָּ לְהַקְמוֹתָהּ (“a crown of gold for his [install]ation”) (4Q550 Frg. 6 + 6a + 6b + 6c 3). Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar & Adam S. van der Woude, *Qumran Cave 11 II: 11Q2-18, 11Q20-31, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 327; Émile Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4 XXVII, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXXVII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 31. כָּלִיל also appears as an adjective in the Aramaic text of the *Genesis Apocryphon*. The passage in question describes the comeliness of Sarai (1Q20 XX 2-7). In lines 4-5, the description lingers over the beauty of her hands: “And her hands, how perfect and [how] alluring is the whole appearance of her hand[s]! How lovely are her palms and how long and slender are all the fingers of her hands!” (Donald W. Parry & Emanuel Tov, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, 2nd Ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1:534.

31 1QS IV 7; 4Q257 V 5. Parry & Tov, *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, 1:10; Philip S. Alexander & Geza Vermes, *Qumran Cave 4 XIX: Serekh ha-Yahad and Two Related Texts*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 78. וְכָלִיל also appears in the broken text of 1QSb IV 2.

32 1QH^a XVII 25. Hartmut Stegemann, Eileen Schuller & Carol Newsom, *1QHodayot^a*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XL (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 227.

33 4Q472 2 7. Parry & Tov, *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, 2:870.

34 The variant reading תְּפָאֶרֶת is also given in the margin of the manuscript. Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 68 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 79.

35 Joseph Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach*, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum XII, 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 336. Interestingly, כָּלִיל is also used as an adverb (“utterly, completely”) in Sirach 37:18.

suggests that the two homonyms, כָּלִיל, “crown”, and כְּלִיל, “entirety, whole offering”, were known and used during the period of early Judaism. Some scholars maintain that the former entered the Hebrew lexicon by way of Aramaic.³⁶ Indeed, Fassberg identifies it as one of the limited number of lexical Aramaisms in the Hebrew Dead Sea scrolls.³⁷ Be that as it may, by the time of the Dead Sea scrolls and Ben Sira, at the very least, both words were part of Classical Hebrew vocabulary.

The scholars who see in Hebrew כָּלִיל the influence of Aramaic also identify cases of this word in Hebrew Bible writings, especially in Lamentations 2:15.³⁸ The rhetorical question of the passers-by quoted in the final strophe of this verse, הֲזֹאת הָעִיר שִׂיאָמְרוּ, כְּלִילֹת יָפִי מִשׁוּשׁ לְכָל הָאָרֶץ, would then assert that Jerusalem is the city that, in the past, was known as “crown of beauty” and “joy of the whole earth”.³⁹ The Septuagint and its daughter translations, such as the *Vetus Latina* and the Coptic versions, render the wording of the strophe along these lines. To be sure, the textual representatives of LXX Lamentations preserve slightly differing wordings of 2:15c of which I would only like to mention εἰ αὕτη ἡ πόλις, ἣν ἔροῦσι στέφανος δόξης, εὐφροσύνη πάσης τῆς γῆς; (“Is this the city, of which they will say, ‘crown of glory’, ‘joy of the whole earth’?”) and αὕτη ἡ πόλις, ἔροῦσιν, στέφανος δόξης εὐφροσύνης πάσης τῆς γῆς (“‘This is the city,’ they will say, ‘crown of glory of joy of the whole earth’”).⁴⁰

It is not necessary to belabour here the details of these renderings, but it is noteworthy that the Old Latin and the Bohairic versions are closer to the first of the Greek readings, while the Sahidic version is nearer to the second one.⁴¹ The equivalents of

36 Cf., e.g., Max Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 96 (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1966), 64-65; Dobbs-Allsopp, “Linguistic Evidence”, 26-27.

37 Fassberg, “Nature and Extent of Aramaisms,” 13.

38 Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 64-65; Dobbs-Allsopp, “Linguistic Evidence”, 26-27. In a later study, Dobbs-Allsopp assumes the traditional understanding of כְּלִילֹת יָפִי as “the perfection of beauty”, but he also recognises that it is possible to interpret the phrase as “the crown of beauty”. F.W. (Chip) Dobbs-Allsopp, “R(az/ais)ing Zion in Lamentations 2”, in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, eds. Bernard F. Batto & Kathryn L. Roberts (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 25 n. 18.

39 The consonantal wording is that of the Masoretic text represented by Codex Leningradensis. Rolf Schäfer, “Lamentations”, in *General Introduction and Megilloth*, eds. Adrian Schenker, Yohanan A.P. Goldman, Arie van der Kooij, Carmel McCarthy, Gerard J. Norton, Stephen Pisano, Rolf Schäfer, Jan de Waard & Richard D. Weis, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* 18 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004), 61.

40 The variant wordings of the textual representatives are recorded in the critical apparatus of the edition prepared by Joseph Ziegler, *Jeremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Jeremiae*, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum XV, 3rd Ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 477-78.

41 Cf. Pierre Sabatier, *Bibliorum sacrorum latinae versiones antiquae, seu Vetus Italica, et caeterae quaecunque in codicibus manuscriptis et antiquorum libris reperiri potuerunt* (Remis: Reginaldum Florentain, 1743), 2:726; Henry Tattam, *Prophetae majores, in dialecto linguae*

כָּלִיל in the other ancient translations that were based on Hebrew source texts, the Peshitta (*gmyrt šwpr*'), the Vulgate ([*urbs*] *perfecti decoris*), and the two recensions of the Targum (היא גמירת נוי ושופרא [Western version] and היא יאות שפרתא [Yemenite version]),⁴² however, reflect an understanding of כָּלִיל as the adjective with the meaning "entire, whole, complete".⁴³ Notwithstanding that these translations of Lamentations postdate the period of early Judaism, it can reasonably be assumed that they bear witness to an interpretation of כָּלִיל that would have been current at that time. On this assumption, the Hebrew word כָּלִיל, in the literary context of Lamentations 2:15 was understood as either the noun, "crown", or the adjective, "perfect", during the period of early Judaism.⁴⁴

With regard to στέφανος δόξης in the wordings of the Septuagint, more than one commentator explains this Greek reading as a rendering after the Aramaic word כָּלִילָא or its Syriac counterpart, *klyl*'.⁴⁵ Albrektson goes so far as to call the Greek rendering a mistranslation and Schäfer states that the Septuagint misunderstood the Hebrew word

Aegyptiacae Memphitica seu Coptica (Oxford: Typographeo academico, 1852), 1:552; Frank Feder, *Biblia Sahidica: Ieremias, Lamentationes (Threni), Epistula Ieremiae et Baruch*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 147 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), 205.

42 The wordings of the translations are quoted from the editions of Étan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations* (New York: Hermon Press, 1976), 40; Albert van der Heide, *The Yemenite Tradition of the Targum of Lamentations*, Studia post-biblica 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 17*; Robert Weber, *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 1251; Bertil Albrektson, Sven E. Dederling, Donald M. Walter, Konrad D. Jenner & Geert Jan Veldman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations, Epistle of Jeremiah, Epistle of Baruch, Baruch*, The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version III, 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 214.

43 Cf. also the reading *dmšmly' bšwpr*' ("perfect in beauty") that is attributed to Aquila in the Syro-hexapla. Frederick Field, *Origenis hexaplorum quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875), 2:752 n. 36.

44 It is noteworthy that the Septuagint and Peshitta texts of Ezekiel 28:12 also reflect an understanding of כָּלִיל, in the phrase וכליל יפי, as the noun "crown", καὶ στέφανος κάλλους ("and crown of beauty") and *wklyl' dšwbh*' ("and crown of glory"), while the Vulgate, *et perfectus decore* ("and perfect in beauty"), and Targum, וּמִשְׁכַּל בְּשׁוֹפְרָא ("and perfect in his beauty") represent interpretations of it as an adjective. Here, and in Lamentations 2:15, both renderings make good sense.

45 Cf., e.g., Wilhelm Rudolph, "Der Text der Klagelieder", *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 56 (1938): 108; Godfrey Rolles Driver, "Hebrew Notes on 'Song of Songs' and 'Lamentations'", in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag*, eds. Walter Baumgartner, Alfred Bertholet, Otto Eissfeldt, Karl Elliger & Leonhard Rost (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1950), 144-45; Bertil Albrektson, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations with a Critical Edition of the Peshitta Text* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1963), 113; Schäfer, "Lamentations", 123*; Robin B. Salter, *Lamentations*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 159-60; Christl M. Maier & Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, "Threnoi / Threni seu Lamentationes / Die Klagelieder", in *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament Volume 2*, eds. Martin Karrer & Wolfgang Kraus (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 2835; Klaus Koenen, *Klagelieder (Threni)*, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament 20 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2015), 161.

in the sense of the Aramaic or Syriac cognates.⁴⁶ These explanations and evaluations do not consider the evidence that the noun כָּלִיל, “crown”, was part and parcel of Hebrew vocabulary by the time the wordings of the Septuagint were penned. In view of this evidence, כָּלִיל in Lamentations 2:15 was most probably understood as a feminine form of this noun, and, accordingly, there is no pressing reason to suppose that the Greek wording was influenced directly by the Aramaic or Syriac counterparts of the Hebrew noun. In other words, the phrase στέφανος δόξης does not have to be taken as a case where the early Jewish scribes’ knowledge of multiple languages made them apply a meaning of a word in one language to its cognate in another language; rather, like the Hebrew writings from Qumran and the ancient translations of other writings, this reading in LXX Lamentations 2:15 provides evidence that the noun כָּלִיל, “crown”, was an established part of the Hebrew vocabulary during the period of early Judaism.

7.2.2 The Goal of Textual Criticism as a Branch of the Cultural Study of Early Judaism

The case study implies that the language situation during the period of early Judaism is important for reflections on the goal of textual criticism. More often than not, the latter is said to be the construction of an original text, *Urtext*, archetype, or final form. Irrespective of the designation and whether it refers to the one or more version(s) that represent(s) the finished literary product, the earliest recoverable version from which all the known variants developed, or an authoritative version,⁴⁷ the sought-after text basically boils down to an idealised wording that is an aggregate of preferred readings. The idea seems to be that such an idealised wording provides modern readers with a solid textual basis for translations, interpretations, and linguistic, literary, thematic, theological, historical, and other kinds of research. There are ample reasons, however, why the construction of an idealised wording can hardly be the goal of textual criticism as a branch of the cultural study of early Judaism.⁴⁸ It would be methodologically suspect for research into an ancient culture to single out one (hypothetical) version

46 Albrektson, *Studies*, 113; Schäfer, “Lamentations”, 123*.

47 Cf., e.g., Arie van der Kooij, “Textual Criticism”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, eds. J.W. Rogerson & Judith M. Lieu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 583-84; Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 167; Emanuel Tov & Eugene Ulrich, “The Search for an Original Text”, in *Textual History of the Bible*, eds. Armin Lange & Emanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1A:19; Paul D. Wegner, “Current Trends in Old Testament Textual Criticism”, *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 23/4 (2013): 474-77; Ernst Würthwein & Alexander Achilles Fischer, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 168-69.

48 *Urtexte* are also impracticable or undesirable as a goal for the textual criticism of other ancient Near Eastern literature. Cf., e.g., Richard B. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 262-63; Paul Delnero, *Textual Criticism of Sumerian Literature*, Journal of Cuneiform Studies Supplement Series 3 (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2012), 9-11; Martin Worthington, *Principles of Akkadian Textual Criticism*, Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 41-44. The

of a textual resource when others are also available; rather than privileging an ideal, the cultural study of early Judaism has to come to terms with the warts and all textual plurality in the extant literary resources.

During the period in question, different versions of literary writings co-existed in several languages. The versions were created by an unknown number of scribes over an indeterminate length of time in more than one setting. The Dead Sea scrolls and ancient translations, especially the Septuagint, are witness to this textual plurality. The evidence of the available textual representatives suggests that early Jewish scribes did not follow a single approach to the transmission of literary writings. Some changed and adapted the wordings of source texts that they copied or translated. These changes and adaptations range from orthographical and morphological features to individual letters, words, and phrases, as well as bigger blocks of text, such as sentences, paragraphs, and large sense units. The motivations for the reformulations of passages by scribes are not always immediately clear to text critics and this underscores the need for thorough analysis and interpretation of the readings so as to identify the most plausible understanding and explanation of the textual data. It is clear, of course, that not all of the changes and adaptations of the wordings are scribal errors and they do not spoil the subject matter of passages. Therefore, the text-historical conclusion that a particular reading, parsing, or sense is more “original” or earlier than others does not mean that this reading, parsing, or sense is superior to or more “correct” in terms of the subject matter of passages than its equivalents in the available textual representatives. Stated differently, from the viewpoint of the subject matter of literary writings, text-historical evaluations of readings do not equal value judgments. Indeed, the textual plurality reflected by the available manuscripts demonstrates that the subject matter of literary writings that serve as resources for the cultural study of early Judaism was not confined in a single linguistic cast. As mentioned above, it is a tribute to the skill of ancient Jewish scribes that they were able to convey the ideas, beliefs, worldviews, and values associated with the subject matter of literary writings in several languages. One of the problems with an idealised wording as the goal of textual criticism is that it seeks to reduce the extant textual plurality to a make-believe singularity. Another problem is that such a singularity would be of little relevance to the cultural study of early Judaism, which is based on as many of the available resources, textual and otherwise, as possible. The creation of an idealised wording is also problematic from the perspective of the language situation of early Judaism. It presupposes that there are preferable readings with preferable meanings and, therefore, that not all the parsings and senses of words reflected by the textual representatives are equally suitable.

search for *Urtexte* has also been criticised in the study of medieval literature. Cf., e.g., Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), 57-69.

This presupposition is, however, contradicted by cases such as Lamentations 2:15c, where the Hebrew phrase כְּלִילַת יָפִי has been rendered in different ways by the textual representatives, but they are all legitimate in terms of Classical Hebrew and the subject matter of the passage. Concerning the latter, whether the phrase is understood as “the crown of glory” (as in LXX Lamentations 2:15 and its daughter translations), “the perfection of beauty” (as, for example, in the Peshitta, the Vulgate, and the Western version of the Targum), or “the excellence of loveliness” (as in the Yemenite version of the Targum),⁴⁹ this epithet of Jerusalem, together with the accompanying one (“the joy of the whole earth” or “the joy of all the inhabitants of the earth”), points to the former high esteem of the city. This former high esteem of Jerusalem is contrasted with its subsequent approximation of a ghost town, signified by the apotropaic handclapping, whistling, and head-shaking gestures of those who pass by the city that is mentioned in the first part of the stanza. In cases such as this, where two or more equally suitable representations of a passage presumably circulated during the period of early Judaism, it will not do for text critics to single out one as preferable or the standard whereby the others are judged. If the construction of an idealised wording is impracticable as the goal of textual criticism, then what may be suggested as a viable alternative for this area of the cultural study of early Judaism? I submit that the main aim of textual criticism is to make sense of the variants and debated readings in the textual representatives and how the conglomerations of similarities and differences in the wordings affect the subject matter of passages. In order to achieve this aim, text critics can profitably make use of information about the larger cultural and intellectual environment of early Judaism, including the language situation, which may be inferred from the relevant material, visual, and textual resources.⁵⁰

7.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The multilingual context of early Judaism is complex and there are a number of issues, especially about the language situation in Jerusalem and its environs that remain debated by specialists. Nevertheless, it is important for text critics to study this context because information about the cultural, intellectual, and language environments of

49 The translation of יְאוֹת שְׁפָרְתָּא is by Philip S. Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, The Aramaic Bible 17B (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007), 195.

50 It goes without saying that the knowledge and knowhow of the early Jewish scribes who transmitted the literary writings played a part in how they formulated the wordings of passages in the copies and translations they produced. This includes their command of various languages. Seeing as it is impossible for text critics to ascertain the language proficiency and skills of every scribe who was involved in the processes of transmission, they have little choice but to draw on information about the larger intellectual, cultural, and language environments in which the literary writings were copied and translated in order to make sense of individual readings in the available textual representatives.

the period in question is potentially of great help in making sense of readings in the available textual representatives. Indeed, the discussion of the rendering of כְּלִילַת יָפִי by στέφανος δόξης in LXX Lamentations 2:15 shows how imperative it is for text critics to consult the relevant resources of such information when they attempt to make sense of readings. In this case, the writings from Qumran reveal that the noun כְּלִיל, “crown”, was part of Hebrew vocabulary during the period of early Judaism. It may very well have been borrowed into Hebrew from Aramaic, as some scholars suggest.

The important point is that by the time scribes put the Septuagint wordings of Lamentations 2 into writing, they could legitimately interpret the form כְּלִילַת in the Hebrew source text of v. 15 in the sense of “crown”. Therefore, it will not do to explain στέφανος δόξης in LXX Lamentations 2:15 as a mistranslation or a misunderstanding of the Hebrew phrase כְּלִילַת יָפִי under the influence of Aramaic or Syriac. Moreover, from the perspective of the subject matter, there is nothing to choose between readings in cases such as Lamentations 2:15c where textual representatives preserve more than one equally suitable representation of a passage’s wording that, presumably, circulated during the period of early Judaism. This is just one of the reasons why the construction of idealised wordings is not an appropriate goal for textual criticism as a branch of the cultural study of early Judaism.