Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations

F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp

Yale University

Dating the Book of Lamentations is a nettlesome problem. The poetry is highly lyrical, consists of fairly conventional imagery and motifs, and is generally devoid of any kind of internal criteria which may be tied incontrovertibly to a specific historical period or date. On top of this, there are no obvious external means for adjudicating the question of date. Nevertheless, commentators have not been shy about speculating on the date of these poems. However, upon close inspection these speculations, when they do not simply assume a priori a given date, can be shown to suffer from either questionable methodology, or a dependence on data that are not well suited for the purpose of dating literary texts, or some combination of the two. And yet as early as 1894 M. Löhr showed the way out of this quagmire. He sought to date Lamentations based on its use of language,[1] and even though his study is flawed methodologically and therefore cannot be uncritically endorsed,[2] his judgment that it is the language of Lamentations that provides the only potentially datable criteria in these poems is sound.

Therefore, I propose to follow his lead and pursue the question of dating Lamentations from the vantage point of language and language change. The diachronic study of Biblical Hebrew (BH) has lately enjoyed a renewed interest on the part of biblical scholars. A. Hurvitz, R. Polzin, and others, following a line of inquiry first pioneered by the likes of Löhr, S. R. Driver, and A. Kropat,[3] have established that BH, like most languages of the world, evolved and changed with time.[4] Furthermore,

1. M. Löhr, "Der Sprachgebrauch des Buches der Klagelieder," *ZAW* 14 (1894), 31–50.

2. See already the perceptive criticisms of S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Cleveland, 1956 [1897]), 463.

3. Löhr, "Sprachgebrauch"; Driver, *Introduction*; A. Kropat, *Die Syntax des Autors der Chronik*, *BZAW* 16 (Giessen, 1909).

4. A. Hurvitz, *The Transition Period in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem, 1972) [in Hebrew]; "The Evidence of Language in Dating the Priestly Code," *RB* 81 (1974), 24–56; *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel* (Paris, 1982); "The Historical Quest for 'Ancient Israel' and the Linguistic Evidence of the Hebrew Bible: Some Methodological Observations," *VT* 47 (1997), 301–15; R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew*

these scholars have succeeded in identifying a whole range of typological features that characterize the two principal language phases reflected in the Hebrew Bible, pre-exilic or Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) and post-exilic or Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH).[5] Drawing on this body of research and assuming its general methodological orientation,[6] I show that Lamentations exhibits a mix of linguistic features consistent with a phase of the language that is transitional between Standard and Late Biblical Hebrew. As such, the typological profile of the language of Lamentations patterns in ways not dissimilar to that of the books of Jonah and Ezekiel, suggesting the strong likelihood of a sixth-century date for the composition of these poems, while manifestly excluding the possibility of pre-Exilic, late Persian, or Maccabean period dates.

Critique of Past Attempts to Date Lamentations

Proposals for dating Lamentations range from the sixth to the second centuries B.C.E. The vast majority of scholars believes that most or all of the poems were composed in the period shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6.[7] Among these, many

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Prose, HSM 12 (Missoula, 1976); E. Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Leiden,1982); G. Rendsburg, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of 'P'," *JANES* 12 (1980), 65–80; G. M. Landes, "Linguistic Criteria and the Date of the Book of Jonah," *EI* 16 (1982), *147–*70; A. Hill, "Dating the Book of Malachi: A Linguistic Reexamination," in C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor, eds., *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* (Winona Lake, 1983), 77–89; R. Bergey, "Late Linguistic Features in Esther," *JQR* 75 (1984), 66–78; S. Gevirtz, "Of Syntax and Style in the 'Late Biblical Hebrew'-'Old Canaanite' Connection," *JANES* 18 (1986), 25–29; M. F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*, *JSOT Supp.* 90 (Sheffield, 1990); C. L. Seow, "Linguistic Evidence and the Dating of Qoheleth," *JBL* 115 (1996), 643–66; M. Ehrensvärd, "Once Again: The Problem of Dating Biblical Hebrew," *SJOT* 11 (1997), 29–40.

   5. Terminology is still not completely standardized in the diachronic study of BH. The phase of the language that I am calling "Standard Biblical Hebrew" is sometimes also referred to as either "Classical Biblical Hebrew" (CBH) or "Early Biblical Hebrew" (EBH). One may identify an archaic phase of the language as well; cf. A. Hurvitz, "Continuity and Innovation in Biblical Hebrew—The Case of 'Semantic Change' in Post-Exilic Writings," in T. Muraoka, ed., *Studies in Ancient Hebrew Semantics* (Louvain, 1995), 2.

   6. For methodology, see esp. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 7–10; "Continuity and Innovation," 1–6; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 1–25; Bergey, "Esther," 66–69; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 1–21, 55–64; Ehrensvärd, "Once Again," 29–40.

   7. Among the standard introductions to the Hebrew Bible, see Driver, *Introduction*, 460–61; R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1941), 723; A. Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 4th ed. (Copenhagen, 1958 [1948]), 188; A. Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development* (New York, 1961), 306; O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (San Francisco, 1965), 503; G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. D. E. Green (Nashville, 1968 [1965]), 298; B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, 1979), 593; J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, 1980), 396; W. H. Schmidt, *Old Testament: Introduction*, trans. M. O'Connell (New York, 1984 [1979]), 314; R. Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia, 1986 [1983]), 269. Among the major commentaries, see H. Ewald, *Commentary on the Psalms and Lamentations*, trans. E. Johnson (London, 1881 [1866]), 99–100; M. Löhr, *Die Klagelieder des Jeremias* (Göttingen, 1891), 25–26 (with a summary of the positions of various nineteenth-century commentators, whom he generally follows); *Die Klagelieder des Jeremia*, HKAT 3/2/2 (Göttingen, 1893), xvi–xvii; K. Budde, *Die Klagelieder*, in K. Budde, ed., *Die fünf*

contend further that Lamentations 2 and 4 were probably the earliest of the poems to be written,[8] and Lamentations 3, the latest.[9] W. Rudolph offers a slight modification of this position, proposing that Lamentations 1, unlike the other poems, comes from the period just after the first Babylonian deportation in 598.[10] There is, as well, a smaller group of scholars who date some or all of the poems later than the sixth century. Several of these even place some of the poems as late as the Maccabean period: S. A. Fries puts Lamentations 4 and 5 in this period; S. T. Lachs, Lamentations 5; and M. Treves, all of Lamentations except chapter 2.[11] K. Budde thinks that Lamentations 3 may have been composed as late as the third century, and others are of the opinion that it is definitely not exilic in origin.[12] O. Kaiser is the only major contemporary commentator to date all of the poems late: he dates Lamentations 1, 2, 4, and 5 from the middle to the end of the fifth century and Lamentations 3 to somewhere in the fourth century.[13]

The whole discussion of the question of date suffers from a certain methodological näiveté. A common assumption on the part of many students of Lamentations is that the depictions and images in the poems must correspond in some straightforward way to actual events of history. For example, A. Soggin finds "historical interest" in Lamentations because, being the "only document" from the period after the fall of Jerusalem, it is able to provide access to the thoughts and feelings of the survivors.[14] A similar assumption appears elsewhere. One frequently reads that some of the poems,

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Megillot, *KHC* 17 (Freiburg, Leipzig and Tübingen, 1898), 74–77; W. Rudolph, *Das Busch Ruth, Das Hoe Lied, Die Klagelieder*, *KANT* 17, 3d ed. (Gütersloh, 1962), 193–94; M. Haller, *Die Klagelieder*, in M. Haller and K. Galling, eds., *Die fünf Megillot*, *HAT* 1/18 (Tübingen, 1940); T. J. Meek, *The Book of Lamentations*, *IB* 6 (Nashville, 1956), 5; H.-J. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, *BAT* 20; 3d ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), 11; A. Weiser, *Klagelieder*, *TAD* 16/2 (Göttingen, 1958), 43; N. K. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations*, rev. ed. (London, 1962), 21; O. Plöger, *Die Klagelieder*, in E. Würthwein et al., eds., *Die fünf Megillot*, *HAT* 1/18; 2d ed. (Tübingen, 1969); R. Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 3d ed. (New York, 1974), 126; H. Gross, *Klagelieder* (Würzburg, 1986), 6; C. Westermann, *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation*, trans. C. Muenchow (Minneapolis, 1994 [1990]), 54–55, 104–5; D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations*, *AB* 7a; 2d rev. ed. (New York, 1992), 9–10; R. B. Salters, *Jonah and Lamentations*, *OTG* (Sheffield, 1994), 98–99.

8. Driver, *Introduction, 461; Pfeiffer, Introduction*, 723 (560 B.C.E.); Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 503; Weiser, *Old Testament*, 306; Löhr, *Klagelieder des Jeremia*, xvii; Budde, *Klagelieder*, 75; Gordis, *Lamentations*, 126; Westermann, *Lamentations*, 105.

9. Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, 723; Eissfeldt, *Introduction*; Soggin, *Introduction*, 396; Löhr, *Klagelieder des Jeremia*, xvii; Budde, *Klagelieder*, 77; Meek, *Lamentations*, 5; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 11; Westermann, *Lamentations*, 105. Some feel that Lamentations 5 is the latest poem (Driver, *An Introduction*, 461; Bentzen, *Introduction*, 188; Weiser, *Klagelieder*, 43).

10. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 195 (followed by Haller, *Klagelieder*; Weiser, *Klagelieder*, 43).

11. S. A. Fries, "Parallele zwischen den Klageliedern Cap. IV, V und der Maccabäerzeit," *ZAW* 13 (1893), 110–24; M. Treves, "Conjectures sur les dates et les sujets des Lamentations," *Bulletin du Cercle Ernest-Renan* 95 (1963), 1–4; S. T. Lachs, "The Date of Lamentations V," *JQR* 57 (1966–67), 46–56.

12. Budde, *Klagelieder*, 77; Soggin (*Introduction*, 396) thinks Lamentations 3 is not exilic and Meek (*Lamentations*, 5), that it is probably postexilic.

13. *Klagelieder* in H. Ringgren et al., eds., *Sprüche, Prediger, Das Hohelied, Klagelieder, Das Buch Esther*, *TAD* 16; 3rd ed. (Göttingen, 1981), 300–304.

14. Soggin, *Introduction*, 397.

because of the "vividness" of their imagery, must come from the hands of actual eye-witnesses to the catastrophic events that are their subject,[15] and an inordinate amount of space in many commentaries is dedicated to spelling out the presumed historical referent of a given passage.[16] The date of composition is determined, then, by connecting the imagery of the poems with their putative historical referents. In some extreme cases, establishing a date for these poems consists of little more than glossing the text with a historical commentary.[17]

This kind of thinking is problematic in several respects. Lamentations is clearly not a historiographic document, much less an eyewitness account of a siege of Jerusalem and its aftermath. Rather, it is art. S. R. Driver makes this point most eloquently:

> Exquisite as is the pathos which breathes in the poetry of these dirges, they are thus, it appears, constructed with conscious art: they are not the unstudied effusions of natural emotion, they are carefully elaborated poems, in which no aspect of the common grief is unremembered, and in which every trait which might stir a chord of sorrow or regret is brought together, for the purpose of completing the picture of woe.[18]

Therefore, there is no reason to assume that the depictions within the poems, however vivid, are intended for anything more than mimetic effect. Moreover, as I. Provan observes, "Historical allusions do not of themselves lead us to the date of composition of a text. Texts may look back on events from a variety of later standpoints."[19] It is one thing to make general inferences about the setting of the plotted action in a fictional work or of the lyrical discourse in a poem, and quite another to use these inferences as the basic datum for establishing a time of composition. One ought not to simply assume that any of the images in Lamentations have a one-to-one correspondence with actual historical events, nor can one work out a date for Lamentations based on such a premise.

However, to question the habit of reading these poems as if they were some kind of a factual retelling of actual events is not to deny that they exhibit at every turn the imprint of their day. Unlike formalist critics of the past, "new" historicist

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15. See, e.g., Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, 723; Bentzen, *Introduction*, 188; Weiser, *Old Testament*, 306; Eissfeldt, *Old Testament*, 503; Fohrer, *Introduction*, 298; Schmidt, *Old Testament*, 314; Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 221, 250; Meek, *Lamentations*, 5; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 11; Gordis, *Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 126; Gross, *Klagelieder*, 6; Hillers, *Lamentations*, 9, 151.

16. As a representative example of this practice, which is replete in most commentaries, the identity of the *měšîaḥ yhwh* in Lam. 4:20 frequently becomes the principal focus of the comment; Westermann (*Lamentations*, 203–5) and Hillers (*Lamentations*, 151) see in it an allusion to the flight of Zedekiah, while Fries ("Maccabäerzeit," 112) and Treves ("Conjectures," 3) think the reference is to the High Priest Onias III (ca. 170).

17. This kind of practice is exemplified above all in the writings of Fries ("Maccabäerzeit," 110–24), Treves ("Conjectures," 1–4), and Lachs ("Date," 46–56).

18. Driver, *Introduction*, 459.

19. *Lamentations*, *NBC* (Grand Rapids, 1991), 11. As an instructive example, note the *Apocalypse of Second Baruch*, which is intentionally set in the period surrounding the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, and yet the work itself dates from a much later time; for a general discussion and bibliography, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "2 Baruch 54:1–22," in M. Kiley et al., eds., *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: a Critical Anthology* (London, 1997), 79–85. The same point has been made by A. Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered," *HTR* 67 (1974), 30–32.

literary critics stress the historical embeddedness of literary works.[20] One does not doubt that the poems of Lamentations were composed under the pressures of real-life events and were intended to resonate with real-life people. Therefore, it is legitimate to seek after the context of their origin. The question is, if these poems cannot be read simply as historical re-presentations, are there any telltale signs which would tie them to a particular historical period? Unfortunately, nothing in the poems has so far been linked unequivocally to a specific historical epoch. As R. Gordis observes, "it is of the nature of lyric poetry that they rarely refer to precise events."[21] That is, there simply is not much in the text with which to make deductions about chronology. The most that can be established on this basis is that the human occasion of the poems, the situation of their discourse, seems to presuppose the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, accompanied by the exile of some portion of the city's population. Such a scenario can be fitted to Jerusalem in more than one historical period. In fact, one of the chief successes of the work of Fries, Lachs, and Treves, in particular, is the demonstration that Lamentations can be read with plausibility against historical horizons other than that of the events of 587/6. However, the failure of these same critics to bring forward a single piece of evidence which *requires* the particular historical settings which they posit is even more telling. As Provan notes, "everything depends upon deduction" from what is "rather elusive language."[22]

The extreme lyricism of the poetry and the elusiveness of its language means that Lamentations is generally devoid of the usual elements, such as references to known persons or specific events, which could otherwise provide clues to its time of origin. Scholars have therefore been forced to rely almost solely on impressions of style, form, tone, authorial perspective, and the like in order to make estimates about the time of composition. However, these latter kinds of criteria are generally ill-suited to serve as indicators of date. To illustrate this point, I consider some of the "evidence" most frequently appealed to in discussions about the date of Lamentations. First, take the frequent references made to the "vividness," "concreteness," or "freshness" of the poet's observations. These qualities, which presumably could only be characteristic of an actual eyewitness account, are cited as the principal standard for dating Lamentations 2 and 4 (and sometimes 5) to a time relatively close to the events of 587/6. O. Eissfeldt is representative: "Since the second, fourth and fifth poems contain vivid recollections of the disaster itself, or vividly describe the terrible distress brought about by it, we must not bring them down too far from 587."[23] To be sure, the fact that these poems refer to the 587/6 destruction of Jerusalem is simply assumed. But the whole premise of the argument is itself

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20. For a fine introduction to this kind of literary criticism, see L. Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison, 1987).

21. Gordis, *Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 126.

22. *Lamentations*, 12.

23. Eissfeldt, *Old Testament*, 503; see Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, 723; Bentzen, *Introduction*, 188; Weiser, *Old Testament*, 306; Fohrer, *Introduction*, 298; Schmidt, *Old Testament*, 314; Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 221, 250; Meek, *Lamentations*, 5; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 11; Gordis, *Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 126; Gross, *Klagelieder*, 6; Hillers, *Lamentations*, 9, 151.

objectionable. As Provan notes, "the 'freshness' and 'vividness' of a poem may have more to tell us about the creativity and imagination of an author than about when he lived."[24]

Lamentations 3, which is understood by many proponents of early and late dates alike as the latest poem in the sequence,[25] provides another example. This judgment is motivated, on the one hand, by the poem's language,[26] which on the whole is rather stereotypical and nonspecific, and on the other hand, by its form and style,[27] which strike many as artificial. R. Pfeiffer speaks for many: "The third Lamentation is the most artificial of all, both in acrostic structure and in style, and we can rightly date it later than the other four."[28] A little later he adds that "the author lacks originality of thought and expression" and that the imagery, especially in the first half of the poem, is either "forced and unnatural" or is commonplace in the Psalter.[29] This tendency to date Lamentations 3 late is bolstered as well by the widespread influence of H. Gunkel's brand of form criticism, which construes generic mixture of the kind evidenced in Lamentations 3 as resulting from the late degeneration of once pure forms.[30] It is highly unlikely, however, that these kinds of criteria can be tied directly to the temporal proximity of a given event, as G. Fohrer, in particular, stresses.[31] It is beyond doubt that Lamentations 3 entails a modulation in genre and that the poem draws heavily on the kinds of genre forms well known from the Psalms. The individual lament is especially prominent. But there is absolutely no basis to assume that a particular event could not inspire poetic compositions in a variety of genres, nor is there any normative means to determine relative chronology based solely on genre. All that can be said with any conviction is that Lamentations 3 is generically distinct, especially in comparison to Lamentations 1, 2, and 4.

Moreover, the language of chapter 3, which so many find inelegant, especially as compared with the putatively vivid and finely detailed language of some of the other poems, is above all a function of genre. In the case of individual and communal laments, P. D. Miller, Jr., has stressed that the language of the psalms of lament

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24. *Lamentations*, 12; cf. Fohrer, *Introduction*, 298.

25. Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, 723; Eissfeldt, *Introduction*; Soggin, *Introduction*, 396; Löhr, *Klagelieder des Jeremia*, xvii; Budde, *Klagelieder*, 77; Meek, *Lamentations*, 5; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 11; Westermann, *Lamentations*, 55, 105; Boecker, *Klagelieder*. For the view that Lamentations 5 is the latest poem, see n. 9 above.

26. Meek, *Lamentations*, 5; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 11.

27. Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, 723; Budde, *Klagelieder*, 76; Löhr, *Klagelieder des Jeremia*, xvii; Meek, *Lamentations*, 5.

28. *Introduction*, 723.

29. Loc. cit.

30. H. Gunkel and J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen* (Göttingen, 1933), 400ff.; H. Jahnow (*Das hebräische Leichenlied im Rahmen der Völkerdichtung*, BZAW 36 [Giessen, 1923]) applies this same logic to an analysis of Lamentations, which she thinks represents the late deformation of the funeral dirge. On Gunkel's influence, see P. W. Ferris, Jr., *The Genre of the Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, SBLDS 127 (Atlanta, 1992), 2–6.

31. *Introduction*, 298.

is characteristically stereotypical, generalizing, and figurative.[32] More specifically Miller writes:

> The individual laments are in many ways strongly stereotypical. That is, in moving from one lament to the other, one can encounter much of the same structure and content repeated, with some variation in the images and primary metaphors used. The enemies themselves are talked about in very typical stereotyped language. Clichés of all sorts are used throughout the psalms.[33]

If this kind of language obscures individual identity or historical setting, it also opens up the possibility for a multiplicity of identities and settings. That is, because of the metaphorical and figurative nature of the language (it is poetry after all!) the language remains open for different people to use and appropriate in accordance within whatever situations they find themselves. That this was the understanding of the biblical writers would seem to be confirmed by the many times psalms are historicized and embedded in narratives (e.g., 1 Sam. 2:1–10; 2 Samuel 22; Isa. 38:10–20; Jer. 11:18–12:6; 15:10–12, 15–21; 17:14–18; 18:18–23; 20:7–13, 14–18; Jonah 2:3–10).[34] In such cases, the stereotypical language takes on a particularity that is imparted to it by the surrounding narrative context. Miller illustrates the phenomenon with reference to the well-known confessions of Jeremiah.[35] Thus, the frequent observation that there is "very little specific reference to the fall of Jerusalem" in Lamentations 3,[36] for example, should not be interpreted as necessarily casting doubt on the poem's historicity with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6. On the contrary, the language is a function of the particular genres utilized, and because of the language's stereotypicality it is open to appropriation in just such a context. Thus, the observations by H.-J. Kraus and Eissfeldt, that the best clue to the date of Lamentations 3 is the context in which it is embedded, namely within the book as a whole, are most appropriate.[37] An analogy may be drawn from the Polish victims of the German occupation during World War II who chose to express their grief, anger, and shame in texts composed specifically in highly traditional, even stereotypical, language.[38]

Finally, Gunkel's leading ideas about form criticism, especially his assumption that mixed genres are aberrant and necessarily late, can no longer be defended, if, in fact, it ever could.[39] As it turns out, generic mixture is the norm rather than the exception, and is as likely to be early as late. New genres just do not evolve *ex nihilo*,

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32. P. D. Miller, Jr., *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia, 1986), esp. 8, 46–47, 50–52.

33. Ibid., 50.

34. See ibid., 13.

35. Ibid., 57–63.

36. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 120.

37. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 11; Eissfeldt, *Old Testament*, 503.

38. M. Borwicz as cited by C. Milosz (*The Witness of Poetry* [Cambridge, 1983], 68); in more detail, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Tragedy, Tradition, and Theology in the Book of Lamentations," *JSOT* 74 (1997), 51–52.

39. For more extended critiques of these ideas, see T. Longman III, "Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical," *WTJ* 47 (1985), 46–67; Ferris, *Genre of Communal Lament*, 1–9; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the*

but begin most commonly as modifications of older, known genres. Therefore, one cannot deduce anything about chronology based on a composition's presumed purity of form, or lack thereof.[40]

The search for a *terminus ad quem* for Lamentations has also been adversely effected by the absence of historical referents in the text. For example, Löhr suggests that the acrostic form itself can serve as a guide to the poems' *terminus ad quem.* He states that the acrostic was not used after the exile.[41] Here Löhr has the biblical acrostics chiefly in mind. However, even if his dating of these poems is correct, the widespread use of the acrostic form in ancient Near Eastern literature—attested early in Mesopotamia, in Aramaic from Qumran, in Syriac, and in post-biblical Hebrew poetry, where it is an especially common form found in many *piyyutim*—tells strongly against such a restrictive dating based solely on form. Others have sought to prove that these poems must date prior to 538 based on the general dearth of explicit expressions of hope found in them.[42] Such an argument totalizes and homogenizes an entire age in a way that is plainly false. It is one thing to say that a particular literary work reflects the basic tenor of its day when that period is known, and another to use the work's patterns of thought as the primary datum for establishing said work's time of origin. Furthermore, Provan correctly observes that the later liturgical use of these poems on days of mourning by people who could not be described as lacking in future hope plainly defies this logic.[43]

C. Westermann seeks to discern the *terminus ad quem* based on the use made of Lamentations by other known authors. On the basis of passages such as Isa. 51:17–20, he suggests that Second Isaiah is directly dependent on Lamentations, thus establishing a *terminus ad quem* of ca. 550 for these poems.[44] But the question of literary influence, while a legitimate line of inquiry, is in itself no easy matter to decide, and the problem becomes doubly vexing when one attempts to ascertain as well the direction of the influence, as Provan rightly notes.[45] Even if we grant that Second Isaiah is drawing on imagery of the kind found in Lamentations, this need not *necessarily* entail that Second Isaiah was using Lamentations specifically, since the city-lament tradition, as represented in the Hebrew Bible, appears to have been known in Israel for at least two hundred years.[46] Second Isaiah's source, literary or oral, could easily be independent of Lamentations. As for the question of direction,

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Hebrew Bible, *Bib. Or.* 44 (Roma, 1993), 15–22; "Genre," *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, forthcoming).

40. A. Fowler's *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, 1982) remains the standard treatment of contemporary genre theory.

41. *Klagelieder des Jeremia*, xvii.

42. Eissfeldt, *Old Testament*, 503–4; Hillers, *Lamentations*, 9.

43. *Lamentations*, 12. This point is underscored by the similar liturgical use of the Mesopotamian *balag* laments to which Lamentations is generically related, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 11–15.

44. *Lamentations*, 104–5; see now P. T. Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah*, *SBLDS* 161 (Atlanta, 1997) who elaborates and greatly expands on this line of thinking. The major problem, however, is that Willey never questions the date of Lamentations.

45. *Lamentations*, 12; cf. Driver, *Introduction*, 383; cf. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 13–15.

46. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 157.

Budde, for one, thinks it is the other way around, with Lamentations 1 being dependent on Second (and Third) Isaiah, nicely illustrating the difficulty in judging the direction of influence, especially given the historical remove from which biblical scholars must operate and the general paucity of our data.[47]

Finally, the lack of historically verifiable data has on occasion given rise to conclusions about date based on arguments from silence. Rudolph's dating of Lamentations 1 is a parade example. His chief reason for dating this poem to the period after 597 instead of after 587 is the absence of any mention of the temple's actual destruction.[48] As D. R. Hillers observes, at best this is an argument from silence, and may be discounted on that basis alone.[49] But the logic can be faulted for other reasons as well. It imposes a homogenizing perspective which is indefensible: if the temple had been destroyed, then the poet must mention this fact. But why should this be so? If, as Rudolph believes, the poet responsible for Lamentations 1 is also responsible for the remainder of the poems, why should he be required to mention the temple's destruction in Lamentations 1 at all? It is obviously referred to elsewhere in Lamentations (e.g., 2:6–7; 5:18). Moreover, the imagery in many of the verses in Lamentations 1 (vv. 10, 17, 19–20) is surely compatible with the idea that the temple has been destroyed, as Fohrer has stressed.[50] Finally, the silence of Lamentations 1 with regard

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47. *Klagelieder*, 76. Other arguments based chiefly on literary comparisons are open to the same critique. It is on this basis that many have been especially critical of the attempts of Fries ("Maccabäerzeit," 110–24), Treves ("Conjectures," 1–4), and Lachs ("Date," 46–56) to date parts of Lamentations to the Maccabean period.

The only evidence for an absolute *terminus ad quem*, of which I am aware, is that furnished by the so-called *kaige*-Theodotion recension, witnessed in part of the LXX manuscript of Lamentations and dating to the first century B.C.E. (Hillers, *Lamentations*, 39–40; E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* [Minneapolis, 1992], 145), and by the several Qumran manuscripts of parts of Lamentations (3QLam^a: *DJD* III, 95; 4QLam^a: F. M. Cross, "Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse: The Prosody of Lamentations 1:1–22," in C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor, eds., *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* [Eisenbrauns, 1983], 129–55; 5QLam^a: *DJD* III, 174–77; 5QLam^b: *DJD* III, 177–78) and the related noncanonical works (4QapLam: *DJD* V, 74–76; 4Q501: *DJD* V, 79–80). The latter were all written in Herodian scripts and thus date somewhere between 50 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. However, the usefulness of these witnesses for establishing a realistic *terminus ad quem* is limited, since no one believes any part of Lamentations dates so late.

A more useful relative *terminus ad quem* is suggested by the absence of any mention of the temple's rebuilding in Lamentations. Though essentially an argument from silence, which by its nature is open to criticism, the silence is substantiated rather compellingly by a consideration of genre. The Mesopotamian city laments were originally composed specifically for ceremonies commemorating the rebuilding of destroyed temples. As such, these laments typically end with the gods and goddesses, who are depicted as abandoning their cities and shrines at the outset of these laments, returning to their cities and shrines, thus symbolizing renewal and rebirth. Lamentations, like the *Curse of Agade*, provides a tragic twist to this traditional ending. Instead of having Yahweh return to Jerusalem and reinhabit his temple, the poet vigorously underscores Yahweh's continued absence (Lam. 5:20, 22; for extended discussion, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, esp. 21–22, 92–94; "Tragedy, Tradition, and Theology," 32–34). Hence, it is reasonable to assume that Lamentations was not originally penned to celebrate the rebuilding of the temple, and as a further inference, one suspects the temple was still in ruins when these poems originated. In order to narrow this further, one needs a *terminus ab quo*.

48. *Klagelieder*, 193, 209–11.

49. *Lamentations*, 10; cf. Fohrer, *Introduction*, 298; Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 19–20.

50. *Introduction*, 298. One could, of course, add to this list, especially drawing on the host of images which find parallels in the Mesopotamian city laments, texts which themselves presume the destruction of

to the temple may be read differently. Treves, for one, takes it as part of his evidence for dating Lamentations 1 after ca. 169, after Antiochus IV had entered but not destroyed the Second Temple.[51]

   To summarize, I have questioned the methodological näiveté with which scholars generally pursue the question of date in Lamentations and have shown how the lack of historical specificity inherent to lyric poetry of the kind found in Lamentations often leads to a reliance on criteria whose relevance for the purposes of dating is highly questionable. Given these kinds of problems, the positivism with which the date of the various poems in Lamentations is typically discussed in the literature would appear to be unwarranted,[52] and it has been my aim to underscore this point through the criticisms offered above. Provan's analysis provides a similar corrective to the basic tone and drift of previous studies.[53] However, I am unable to follow Provan completely. He concludes on an intentionally agnostic note by claiming that "the book as a whole, may, with a degree of certainty, be dated between the 6th and 2nd centuries B.C.; but beyond this we may not go."[54]

   There are several lines of thought which, in my opinion, favor understanding the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem as the original historical setting memorialized in these poems. First, the tradition of Jeremianic authorship reflected in the Septuagint, Vulgate, Peshitta, Targum, and rabbinic sources assumes such a setting, even if the attribution of these poems to Jeremiah is ultimately mistaken. Second, though Jerusalem was destroyed, sacked, or attacked on more than one occasion, the events of 587/6 are unparalleled, especially in their consequences for the state of Judah. This was clearly a watershed event in the history of Israel and Judah, and it is this sense of incommensurability that is so palpable in so many aspects of the poetry of Lamentations. Finally, the fit between the poetry of Lamentations and the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem is satisfying and compelling. I assume that it is ultimately this well-fittedness which accounts for the fact that a large majority of scholars dates most or all of Lamentations to the sixth century. Still, I remain painfully aware that, however probabilistic I find a sixth-century date for these poems,

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temples and shrines; cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, ad. loc.; "The Syntagma of *bat* Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar," *CBQ* 57 (1995), 451–70.

   51. "Conjectures," 2.

   52. Some, like Pfeiffer (*Introduction*, 723) and Treves ("Conjectures," 3), even go so far as to provide rather exact dates for each of the poems, a practice which is indefensible.

	Pfeiffer	*Treves*
Lamentations 1	between 520 and 444	ca. 168
Lamentations 2	ca. 560	between 571 and 539
Lamentations 3	ca. 4th–3rd century	ca. 170
Lamentations 4	ca. 560	ca. 166
Lamentations 5	before 520–16	ca. 166

Others, like Gordis (*Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 126) are more reserved and do caution their readers about the difficulty one encounters when trying to date these poems.

   53. Provan, *Lamentations*, 11–19.

   54. Ibid., 19.

very little of a concrete nature has been brought forward to substantiate such a date. It is with this caveat in mind that I now turn to a historical analysis of the language of Lamentations.

The Linguistic Evidence

As Löhr is the only other scholar to seriously consider the evidentiary value of language in the debate about the date of Lamentations, I preface my own linguistic analysis with a review of his contributions to the subject. Lamentably, his linguistic arguments are ultimately no more satisfying than the literary-historical ones just reviewed. His principal article in this area, "Der Sprachgebrauch des Buches der Klagelieder," contains serious methodological flaws which compromise the value of his conclusions. Several of these may be briefly illustrated. First, the study is plagued by the same kinds of difficulties that confront all attempts to establish the existence and direction of literary influence in ancient texts. But even if we bracket this concern and focus more specifically on Löhr's linguistic analysis, problems still abound. Most seriously, Löhr is too indiscriminate in his assessment of the linguistic data. This is best illustrated from his comparison of the language of Lamentations with that of the Book of Jeremiah. Löhr's basic procedure is to methodically check every word in Lamentations in order to see if it occurs in Jeremiah. The results are presented in the form of a rather long list of lexical items shared by the two books.[55] This is followed in turn by a somewhat shorter listing of all the words in Lamentations not found in Jeremiah.[56] However, the usefulness of such lists are severely undermined because Löhr includes very common words, such as *bayit*, *bô'*, *'ap*, and *'ereṣ*, alongside potentially more significant words, such as *šeber* as it occurs in the phrase *šeber bat-'ammî*. Consequently, one can never be sure of the statistical significance of Löhr's comparisons. That is, Lamentations is bound to share a great deal of vocabulary with Genesis, or any other book of the Hebrew Bible, in that it draws on a common Hebrew lexical stock. No conclusions about date can be drawn from such comparisons. Moreover, because Löhr generally fails to consider the significance of phrases, like *šeber bat-'ammî*, for example, Westermann rightly feels that Löhr's "conclusions are clouded by a high degree of uncertainty."[57]

Löhr's assessment of Lamentations' relationship with works other than Jeremiah is better because he specifically ignores common words. But even here his analysis is beset by multiple problems. One is not always certain that the shared lexical items isolated are not more common than Löhr suggests. For example, *pāraś rešet* (Lam. 1:13b), while used commonly in Ezekiel (Ezek. 12:13; 17:20; 32:3), as Löhr contends,[58] occurs elsewhere as well (Hos. 5:1; 7:12; Ps. 140:6; Prov. 29:5; cf. Jer. 50:24), suggesting that the image is more common than Löhr allows—in fact, Hillers says that it is "an exceptionally common image in the Old Testament."[59] And again Löhr's

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55. Löhr, "Sprachgebrauch," 33–39.
56. Ibid., 39–41.
57. *Lamentations*, 25.
58. "Sprachgebrauch," 40.
59. *Lamentations*, 89. For other possible problems of this kind, see Driver, *Introduction*, 463.

routine failure to look beyond the level of specific lexemes leads to misinterpretations. For example, he suggests that the use of *lōʾ ḥāmal* in Lamentations 2 (vv. 2, 17, 21; cf. 3:43) is most reminiscent of Ezekiel's use of this same term.[60] However, under examination the comparison does not hold up. In Lamentations *lō ḥāmal* always occurs as a part of the following construction: verb plus (*w-*) *lōʾ ḥāmal* (e.g., *ṭābaḥtā lōʾ ḥalmaltā*, 2:21; *hāras wělōʾ ḥāmāl*, 2:17). In Ezekiel *lōʾ ḥāmal* never occurs like this. The closest parallels to the use in Lamentations, in fact, come from Job (16:13; 27:22). Finally, as Driver shows, Löhr's details are not always exact.[61] Given these and other kinds of problems associated with Löhr's methodology, one can hardly recommend his conclusions.

Still Löhr makes a number of positive contributions to the subject. First, his supposition that language holds the key to dating Lamentations is well founded, as my own analysis will attempt to show. Second, even though the specific dates posited for each of the given poems and the method utilized to generate these dates do not inspire confidence, one nevertheless can agree that Löhr has succeeded in demonstrating, at the very least, that the language of Lamentations shares a certain affinity with the language of the Psalms and of exilic prophecy (especially Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah). The exact nature of this affinity, of course, remains to be determined. Lastly, on occasion Löhr's observations provide a basis for identifying potentially genuine late features in the language of Lamentations.[62] These genuine contributions notwithstanding, a comprehensive linguistic analysis of Lamentations remains a desideratum.

The linguistic investigation carried out below follows from the basic premise that language is artifactual in nature, and therefore, like any other historical artifact, such as pottery or architectural style, it is amenable to typological analysis and dating. Over the last several decades scholars have been able to establish a diachronic typology of BH with rough chronological anchors. On the whole BH is a fairly conservative language, so that both early and late phases of the language have much in common. Therefore, the chief preoccupation of any diachronic investigation will be to isolate those linguistic features which are distinctively early and/or late. To this end the principles of linguistic contrast and distribution are consistently invoked. That is, features which evidence both some kind of linguistic contrast with their dialectical counterpart and the appropriate distribution pattern will be judged as compelling evidence

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60. Löhr, "Sprachgebrauch," 46.

61. *Introduction*, 463.

62. The most promising of these concerns is the use of the idiom *pāraś yad* in Lam. 1:10a and 17a, which, as Löhr contents ("Sprachgebrauch," 43), is most likely a late idiom (Isa. 25:11; 65:2; Ps. 143:6). It appears in the rabbinic sources as well. The idiom contrasts with *pāraś kap*, which appears throughout BH (Exod. 9:29, 33; 1 Kgs. 8:38, 54; Isa. 1:15; Jer. 4:31; Ps. 44:21; Prov. 31:20; Job 11:13; 2 Chr. 6:12, 13, 29; Ezra 9:5), at least once at Qumran (*prśty kpy*, 11QPs 24.2), and in the rabbinic sources, though less frequently than *pāraś yad* (3:1 in favor of the latter by my very cursory review of the concordances). Löhr also thinks *ʾănāḥâ* (Lam. 1:22c) and *niddâ* (1:17c), in its metaphorical sense (cf. Ezek. 7:19, 20; Zech. 13:1), are late lexemes. The former certainly is, as are other lexemes, derived from the root *ʾnḥ*; see Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 56; M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 82b; 1QH 5.33; 9:4). The only question is whether the root is diagnostically late. The possible appearance of *nʾnḥ* at Deir ʿAlla (II.12) may suggest that the root was known and used in earlier periods.

for historical change. In the present case, where the question of the possible lateness of the language of Lamentations is of primary concern, features judged to be diagnostically late exhibit a contrast with SBH and are found solely or predominantly in known LBH works and post-biblical sources, such as Ben Sira, Qumran (QH), and Mishnaic Hebrew (MH).[63] This linguistic evidence is discussed in five sections: LBH features used to the exclusion of their SBH counterparts; pairs of corresponding SBH and LBH features; SBH features used to the exclusion of their LBH counterparts; Aramaisms; and orthography.

One last preliminary concern must be addressed. Lamentations consists solely of poetry. In the past, diachronic studies of BH have intentionally shied away from treating poetry. This has not been an unreasonable practice, since most of the LBH corpus consists of prose, and there is a certain methodological soundness in comparing like with like, especially when the diachronic study of BH was in its infancy and the contrast between SBH and LBH was first being established. However, in the process the belief that somehow poetry is not amenable to typological study and analysis in the same way that prose is has entrenched itself in the field. This belief is patently false. It is true that our poetic remains in Hebrew are not as strategically distributed as one might ideally like and that one must allow for certain peculiarities which are especially characteristic of poetry (e.g., dearth of the so-called prose particles, higher incidence of archaisms),[64] but otherwise there is no sound basis for believing that at the linguistic level poetry differs substantively from prose.[65] In fact, the opposite is true. Poetry is simply a stylized form of prose, an artistic use and manipulation of the ordinary resources of the language.[66] Therefore, Hebrew poetry is just as susceptible to diachronic analysis as is Hebrew prose. No more, no less.

A. *LBH features used exclusively in Lamentations*

The four features discussed in this section are found in Lamentations to the exclusion of their known SBH equivalents. Their presence in Lamentations shows that the language of these poems represents a phase of the language that is typologically later than that of the pre-exilic literature of the Bible.

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63. Cf. Hurvitz, "Continuity and Innovation," 5–6, especially his criteria of biblical distribution, linguistic contrast, and extra-biblical sources. In most cases, especially where the feature under discussion has been treated previously, a feature's distribution in post-biblical sources is ascertained from the standard reference works, such as Jastrow, *Dictionary*; M. H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford, 1927); E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, HSS 29 (Atlanta, 1986). On those occasions, where previous discussions are judged to be deficient or where the identification of the late feature is original with me, I have made further recourse to the standard concordances and the original texts themselves. I use the term "Mishnaic Hebrew" (MH) according to custom, even though the source material is not always restricted to Tannaitic sources.

64. For a range of possible archaisms in Lamentations, see esp. T. F. McDaniel, "Philological Studies in Lamentations. I–II," *Bib.* 49 (1968), 27–53, 199–220.

65. Cf. Hurvitz, *Transition Period*, 56–58; "Prose-Tale of Job," 18.

66. R. Lass, *Historical Linguistics and Language Change* (Cambridge, 1997), 68; cf. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 40–44.

1. ʾănî

The pronoun *ʾănî* is the normal or preferred first person singular pronoun in LBH, QH, and MH—though it occurs in SBH as well.[67] It appears once at Arad (88.1) and is used exclusively in Lamentations (1:16a, 21a; 3:1, 63 [Lamentations 4 and 5 lack first person speech forms altogether]). By contrast, *ʾānōkî*, the preferred SBH form of the pronoun, never occurs in Lamentations or known late works (Song of Songs, Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, Esther, and Qoheleth), and occurs only one time each in Ezekiel, Daniel, Chronicles, Nehemiah, and Malachi (Ezek. 36:28; Dan. 10:11; 1 Chr. 17:1; Neh. 11:6; Mal. 3:23), rarely in QH, and only in biblical quotations or allusions in MH.

2. *hakketem haṭṭôb*

Qimron notes that the locution *zāhāb ṭôb*, which occurs in QH (11QT 36:11) and MH, is the LBH replacement for SBH *zāhāb sāgûr*.[68] The two occurrences of *zāhāb ṭôb* in the Hebrew Bible appear in the Chronicler's condensed and rewritten version of 1 Kings 6 and 7:15–22, detailing Solomon's building of the temple. In Kings the gold used is described as *zāhāb sāgûr* (esp. 1 Kgs. 6:20, 21), whereas in Chronicles it is *zāhāb ṭôb* (2 Chr. 3:5, 8). An Aramaic version of the idiom is attested in Dan. 2:32 (*dhab ṭāb*). The phrase *hakketem haṭṭôb* in Lam. 4:1a is the only other place in the Hebrew Bible which reflects the late idiom, although here *ketem* is used instead of *zāhāb* (which appears in the parallel line). The word *ketem* itself appears only in late or poetic texts (Isa. 13:12; Dan. 10:5; Ps. 45:10; Prov. 25:12; Job 28:16, 19; 31:24; Cant. 5:11).

3. *ḥăsādîm*

Polzin observes that LBH shows a general preference for plural forms of words and phrases which the earlier language used in the singular.[69] Some examples:

   a. *gibbôrê ḥayil* (Josh. 1:14)
      gibbôrê ḥăyālîm (1 Chr. 7:5)[70]
   b. *gāzēl* (Lev. 5:21)
      gāzēlôt (Ezek. 18:12)[71]
   c. *wĕḥārāšê ʿēṣ* (2 Sam. 5:11)
      wĕḥārāšê ʿēṣîm (1 Chr. 14:1)[72]

Hurvitz has specifically noted the preference for the plural of *ḥesed*, *ḥăsādîm*, in LBH, citing the contrast between *ḥesed ʿôlām* in Isa. 54:8 and *ḥsdy ʿlm* in 1QIsa.[73] Also contrast *ḥesed ʾĕlōhîm* (2 Sam. 9:3; Ps. 52:10) with *ḥsdy ʾlw[hym]*

67. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 169, n. 35; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 126; Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §§40, 119; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 72–74; Seow, "Linguistic Evidence," 661; Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 57; Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 39–40.
68. *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 90.
69. *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 42–43; cf. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 43–46; Rendsburg, "Late Biblical Hebrew," 67; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 75–77.
70. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 42.
71. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Evidence*, 43.
72. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 75.
73. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Evidence*, 44; cf. A. Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew* (Tel Aviv, 1967), 369 [in Hebrew]; 1QH 13.5; 4QSᵈ 4.1.1; 1QS 10.4.

(4QShirShabb^a 1.2.20). This development was already underway within the biblical corpus. For example, note the contrast between the use of *ḥesed* related to the Davidic covenant in early texts (d–g) and *ḥăsādîm* in late texts (h–i):

 d. "And my steadfast love (*ḥasdî*) will not depart from him" (2 Sam. 7:15).
 e. "And he shows steadfast love (*ḥesed*) to his anointed,
  To David and to his descendents forever" (2 Sam. 22:51).
 f. "And Solomon said, 'You have shown great steadfast love (*ḥesed*) to your servant David,
  my father . . .'" (1 Kgs. 3:6).
 g. " . . . keeping the covenant and steadfast love (*ḥesed*) for your servants" (1 Kgs. 8:23).
 h. "Remember the steadfast love (*ḥasdê*) for your servant David" (2 Chr. 6:42).
 i. "I will make for you an everlasting covenant,
  The sure, steadfast love (*ḥasdê*) of David" (Isa. 55:3).

This same development is reflected in Lam. 3:22 where "the steadfast love of Yahweh" is rendered in the plural instead of the singular:

 j. "The steadfast love (*ḥasdê*) of Yahweh never ceases,
  His compassion (*raḥămāyw*) never ends.
  They are new every morning,
  Great is your faithfulness (*ʾĕmûnātekā*)!"

The terms *ḥesed*, *raḥămîm*, *ʾĕmûnâ*, and *ʾĕmet* frequently cluster together in various combinations as divine attributes of Yahweh.[74] This language is especially common in the Psalms:

 k. "I hereby proclaim that (your) steadfast love (*ḥesed*) is established forever,
  Your faithfulness (*ʾĕmûnātĕkā*) is created in the heavens" (Ps. 89:3).
 l. "Steadfast love (*ḥesed*) and fidelity (*ʾĕmet*) go before you" (Ps. 89:15).
 m. "My faithfulness (*ʾĕmûnātî*) and steadfast love (*ḥasdî*) will be with him" (Ps. 89:25).
 n. "God will send forth his steadfast love (*ḥasdô*) and his fidelity (*ʾĕmet*)" (Ps. 57:4).
 o. "I declare your faithfulness (*ʾĕmûnātĕkā*) and your salvation,
  I do not conceal your steadfast love (*ḥasdĕkā*) or your fidelity (*ʾămittĕkā*) from the great
  congregation.
  O Yahweh, do not withhold your compassion (*raḥămeykā*) from me,
  Let your steadfast love (*ḥasdĕkā*) and your fidelity (*ʾămittĕkā*) guard me always" (Ps.
  40:11–12).
 p. "Has his steadfast love (*ḥasdô*) ceased forever?
  Has (his) word come to an end for all time?
  Has God forgotten to be gracious?
  Has he shut up his compassion (*raḥămāyw*) in anger?" (Ps. 77:9–10).
 q. "He who crowns you in steadfast love (*ḥesed*) and compassion (*raḥămîm*)" (Ps. 103:4).

That the plural *ḥasdê* in Lam. 3:22 evidences LBH's preference for plural forms is shown by contrasting the forms of the divine attributes in early texts (r–s) with those in late texts (t; note as well how the forms of *ʾĕmûnâ*, *ʾĕmet*, and *raḥămîm* remain constant throughout BH):

 r. "I will betrothe you to me in righteousness and in justice,
  In steadfast love (*ûbḥesed*) and in compassion (*ûbraḥămîm*).
  I will betrothe you to me in faithfulness (*beʾĕmûnâ*)

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 74. See *BDB*, 339a.

That you will know Yahweh" (Hos. 2:21–22).
r. "You will show fidelity (ʾĕmet) to Jacob
And steadfast love (ḥesed) to Abraham" (Mic. 7:20).
s. "I will recall the steadfast love (ḥasdê) of Yahweh,
Yahweh's acts of renown,
Because of all which Yahweh has done for us,
The great good which he has shown to the house of Israel
According to his compassion (raḥămāyw)
And according to the abundance of his steadfast love (kĕrōb ḥăsādāyw)" (Isa. 63:7).

Also compare *kwl ḥsdy rḥmym* (1QS 1.22) and *ḥsdy ʾmt* (4QBerᵃ 1.8). This change may be attested in Lam. 3:32 as well, if one reads *ḥăsādāyw* with the *qere*:

v. "For if he oppresses, he will have compassion
According to the abundance of his steadfast love (ḥăsādāyw)."

The plural form of the phrase matches that of the Third Isaiah passage cited above (Isa. 63:7; cf. Ps. 106:7) and commonly in QH (*rwb ḥsdym* [1QS 4.5]; *rwb ḥsdykh* [41QH 11.28; 2.5; 4QapPsᵇ 46:2]; *rwb ḥs[dyw]* [4QHodᵃ 7.2.13]), and it contrasts with the singular form which occurs in both SBH and LBH: *wĕrab-ḥesed* (Num. 14:18; Exod. 34:6; Pss. 86:5, 15; 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2) and *bĕrōb ḥasdĕkā* (Pss. 5:8; 69:14; Neh. 13:22).[75]

4. *qîmâ*

The lexeme *qîmâ*, "standing," in Lam. 3:63 is a hapax legomenon that is otherwise only attested in MH.[76] The form *qîmâ* represents the *qĕtīlâ* noun formation derived from a middle weak root. Segal notes that this noun pattern "is exceedingly common in MH as a *nomen actionis* for the Qal, taking the place of the old BH construct infinitive."[77] This is apparently exactly what has happened here. As Hillers notes, the phrase *šîbtām wĕqîmātām*, lit. "their sitting and their standing," is undoubtedly related to the common BH idiom "for the whole round of a person's daily activities."[78] However, elsewhere the merism is rendered with the infinitive construct of *qwm* (cf. Gen. 19:33, 35 [lit.?]; Deut. 6:7; 11:19; Ps. 139:2), thus nicely pointing up the contrast between the early and late forms of this idiom.[79]

There remain a number of linguistic elements in Lamentations that are suggestive of the late phase of the language but for which requisite corroborating evidence is lacking. For example, at the lexical level note *mārûd* (Lam. 1:7a; 3:19; Isa. 58:7), *zalʿăpôt* (Lam. 5:10; Ps. 11:6; 119:53), *šĕḥîtôtām* (Lam. 4:20a; Ps. 107:20), and the hapax legomenon *hikpîšanî* (Lam. 3:16).[80] Perhaps even more tantalizing is *mĕduq-qārîm* in Lam. 4:9b. Hurvitz shows that the *mĕquttāl* form becomes especially

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75. If one insists on reading the singular with the *ketib* of Lam. 3:32, then this feature would be placed in the section with combined SBH and LBH features below.

76. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 233; cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1362a.

77. *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 103, 165; cf. Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §213. As parallels, Hurvitz (*Transition Period*, 175, n. 305) cotes *šîbat* in Ps. 126:1 and *babbîʾâ* in Ezek. 8:5.

78. *Lamentations*, 119.

79. M. Wagner, *Die Lexikalischen und Grammatikalischen Aramaismen im Alttestamentlichen Hebräisch*, BZAW 96 (Berlin, 1966), 129, raises the possibility of Aramaic influence here.

80. These were suggested to me by Ed Greenstein.

popular in post-biblical Hebrew.[81] This pattern absorbs by "morphological meta-morphosis" roots which in SBH were prevalent in different forms and is a part of the general tendency for LBH and later dialects to prefer the Piel and Hiphil binyans over the Qal. He gives the following list of examples (BH :: MH): *ḥăsēr* :: *mĕḥus-sār*; *yāšān* :: *mĕyuššān*; *rab* :: *mĕrubbeh*; *šōneh* :: *mĕšunneh*; *nākôn* :: *mĕkuwwān*; *nikbād* :: *mĕkubbād*.[82] Hurvitz then discusses how Ezekiel uses the Piel passive participle *mĕrubbāᶜ* (40:47; 45:2) instead of the Qal passive participle *rābûaᶜ*, which P uses in similar contexts (Exod. 27:1; 28:15–16; 30:1–2; 37:25; 38:1; 39:8–9). Besides Lam. 4:9b, *mĕduqqārîm* only occurs elsewhere in Jeremiah (37:10; 51:4). In light of the prevalence of the *mĕquttqāl* form in LBH, it is tempting to attribute its use in Lamentations to the lateness of the language. As partial confirmation, Jastrow cites a single occurrence of this form in his dictionary.[83] Unfortunately, as with the other lexical items listed above, the root is generally not well attested in BH, and there is no obvious contrast with another form. Therefore, I have not counted it as a late feature, though, like the others, I suspect that it may well be.

B. SBH and LBH features in Lamentations

In five linguistic categories Lamentations contains both of the corresponding SBH and LBH features. The presence of these LBH features further underscores the relative lateness of the language. The fact that SBH features are also present, however, suggests that the language of Lamentations is not a fully mature form of LBH.

1. *ʾăšer/še-*

The particle *ʾăšer* occurs nine times in Lamentations (1:7b, 10c, 12b, c, 22c; 2:17a, b, 22c; 4:20b) and *še-* occurs four times (2:15c, 16c; 4:9; 5:18). Of the 136 occurrences of the particle *še-* in the Hebrew Bible, six are in passages of probable northern origin (Judg. 5:7, 7; 6:17; 7:12; 8:26; 2 Kgs. 6:110) and only one is in a clearly non-northern pre-exilic context (Gen. 6:3). All the rest (125 times, excluding the occurrences in Lamentations) occur in texts of a probably exilic or post-exilic origin (Jonah 1:7, 12; 4:10; Ezra 8:20; 1 Chr. 5:20; 27:27; Pss. 122:3, 4; 123:2; 124:1, 2, 6; 129:6, 7; 133:2, 3; 135:2, 8, 10; 136:23; 137:8, 9; 144:15 (2x); 146:3, 4, 5; 30x in Song of Songs; 68x in Qoheleth).[84] As C. L. Seow concludes, "It appears that *še-* is a feature of northern Hebrew that came to be used more frequently in Late Biblical Hebrew."[85] The form *še-* is the standard relative particle in MH as well.[86] By contrast, *ʾăšer* is the standard SBH and QH relative particle,[87] and it is

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81. *Linguistic Evidence*, 27–30.
82. Ibid., 28.
83. *Dictionary*, 320a.
84. Seow, "Linguistic Evidence," 660–61.
85. Ibid., 661; cf. Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §§45, 206.
86. Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 146; Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §206; cf. Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew*, 339.
87. It is unclear why *ʾšr* is preferred in QH Hebrew, cf. Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 82–83; Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §128a. Perhaps it is meant to be distinctively "biblical"; cf. Steven Weitzman, "Why Did the Qumran Community Write in Hebrew?" *JAOS* 119 (1999), 35–45.

the only relative particle used in the Lachish and Arad inscriptions (Lachish 2.6; 3.5, 11; 4.2, 4, 11; 9.7–8; 18.1; Arad 5.4, 10; 8.9; 18.7; 21.7; 29.7).

2. *bĕlî/bĕlōʾ*

   Both *bĕlî* and *bĕlōʾ* are used as negative adverbials meaning "without" or the like. The form *bĕlî* occurs throughout BH, both early and late, with and without prepositions:

   a. "the shield of Saul without (*bĕlî*) being anointed in oil" (2 Sam. 1:21)
   b. "one who kills his friend without (*biblî*) thought" (Deut. 4:42)
   c. "(Sheol) opened its mouth without (*liblî*) measure" (Isa. 5:14)
   d. "and they were scattered without (*mibbĕlî*) a shepherd" (Ezek. 34:5).

The form *bĕlōʾ*, on the other hand, is "chiefly poetic or late."[88] Of its 30 occurrences (twice in Lamentations, 1:6c; 4:14b), only eight come from possibly early contexts (Lev. 15:25; Num. 35:22, 22, 23; Deut. 32:21, 21; Pss. 16:1; 44:13). The remainder are probably late: Isa. 55:1, 1, 2, 2; Jer. 2:11; 5:7; 22:13; Ezek. 22:29; Job 8:11; 15:32; 30:28; Prov. 13:23; 16:8; 19:2; Qoh. 7:17; 10:11; 1 Chr. 12:18, 34; 2 Chr. 21:20; 30:18). Note these representative examples:

   e. "Woe to the one who builds his house without (*bĕlōʾ*) justice" (Jer. 22:13).
   f. "and he departed without (*bĕlōʾ*) regret" (2 Chr. 21:20).

Both *bly* and *blʾ* occur in QH, though *blʾ* is the more common particle;[89] and as A. Bendavid notes, only *blʾ* is used in the Mishnah, a point borne out by the concordances.[90] Clearly, this particle appears to be used more frequently in LBH and later dialects. That it in part replaces *bĕlî* is suggested by the contrast in the following passages:

   g. "Yahweh was unable (*mibbĕlî yĕkōlet*) to bring them to the land" (Deut. 9:28).
      "They were unable (*bĕlōʾ yûkĕlû*) to touch their garments" (Lam. 4:14b).

The parallelism in Job 8:11 also suggests a common sense between these two particles:

   h. "Can papyrus grow without a marsh (*bĕlōʾ biṣṣâ*)?
      Can reeds flourish without water (*bĕlî-mayim*)?"

Lamentations, like Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Qohelet, and Job, uses both particles.[91]

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88. *BDB*, 520a.

89. Cf. Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 77. *blʾ*: 1QH (11x); 1QMyst 1.2.6 (2x); 1QM 17.4; 4Q511 102.1.2; 4Q513 32.1.2; 4Q496 17.1.4. *bly*: 1QH 5.15; 4Q405 22.1.11; 4Q484 91.1; 4QtgJob 1.2.5 (Hebraism).

90. *Biblical Hebrew*, 32; cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 685a; C. Y. Kasowsky, *Thesaurus Mishnae: Concordautiae Verborum Quae in sex Mishnae Ordinibus Reperiuntur* (Jerusalem, 1958), which shows that *blʾ* occurs 17 times in the Mishnah, while *bly* is not attested. It is similar in both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds: *blʾ* occurs frequently, while *bly* only rarely (cf. C. J. Kasowsky, *Thesaurus Talmudis: Concordautiae Verborum Quae in Talmude Babylonico Reperiuntur* [New York, 1969]; *Thesaurus Talmudis: Concordautiae Verborum Quae in Talmude Jerusalem Reperiuntur* [Jerusalem]).

91. *bĕlî*: Jer. 2:15; Ezek. 14:15; 34:5; Job 8:11; 24:10; 31:39; 33:9; 34:6; 35:16; 36:12; 38:2; 39:16; 41:18; 42:3; Qoh. 3:11; Lam. 1:4a. *bĕlōʾ*: Jer. 2:11; 5:7; 22:13; Ezek. 22:29; Job 8:11; 15:32; 30:28; Qoh. 7:17; 10:11; Lam. 1:6c; 4:14a.

3. *hlk/hillēk*

The verb *hlk* in the Qal is used throughout the Hebrew Bible, and occurs commonly in Lamentations. However, the Piel is used only 25 times in the Hebrew Bible, and with one exception (1 Kgs. 21:27), occurs in only late or poetic passages (Isa. 59:9; Ezek. 18:9; Hab. 3:11; Ps. 38:7; 55:15; 81:14; 85:11, 14; 89:16; 104:3, 10, 26; 115:7; 131:1; 142:4; Prov. 6:11, 28; 8:20; Job 24:10; 30:28; Qoh. 4:15; 8:10; 11:9). The shift from Qal to either Piel or Hiphil is common in LBH and later dialects, and Hurvitz and Rooker specifically treat the shift from *hālak* to *hillēk*.[92] They cite the following texts to illustrate this shift:

> a. "the waters of Shiloah that flow (*hahōlĕkîm*) gently" (Isa. 8:6)
> b. "and the waters flowed (*wylkw*) from the spring" (*KAI* 189:4–5)
> c. "the waters which flowed (*mhlkym*) underneath them" (m. *Kelim* 22.9)
> d. "if you walk (*tēlēkû*) in my statutes (*bĕḥuqqōtay*)" (Lev. 26:3)
> e. "(if a man) . . . walks (*yĕhallēk*) in my statutes (*bĕḥuqqōtay*)" (Ezek. 18:9).

The form *hillēk* continues in post-biblical Hebrew, including QH, Ben Sira, and MH.[93] That the occurrence of *hillēk* in Lam. 5:18 reflects this same shift is suggested by the following contrast:

> f. "there where the lion prowls (*hālak*)" (Nah. 2:12)
> "foxes prowl (*hillĕkû*) over it" (Lam. 5:18).

4. *-ôtām, -ôtêhem*

The original morpheme of the third person masculine plural possessive suffix on feminine plural nouns in BH is *-ām*. But over time *-ām* is replaced by *-êhem*.[94] The direction of the change is clear, as Hurvitz notes, because the form *-êhem*, originally found only on masculine plural nouns,[95] when extended to feminine plural nouns, is tautological. That is, the feminine plural nouns become doubly marked for plurality, first by the feminine plural morpheme *-ôt*, and then again by the component *-ê-* (which reflects the masculine plural morpheme) in the new morpheme. The change appears to be in progress over an extended period of time, working its way through the lexicon on a word by word basis. As Qimron observes, the *-ôtām* morpheme is still generally dominant in QH.[96] Therefore, only the extremes in this process are well focused: the emergent morpheme is rare in SBH and dominant in MH. Lamentations would appear to reflect a stage at which this change is still very much in progress, though probably not at either of the extremes. The *-ôtām* morpheme appears five times, and the *-ôtêhem* morpheme only once:

> a. *ʾimmōtām* (2:12a, c)
>   *-ām*: Jer. 16:3
>   *-êhem*: m. *Taʾan.* 65.2, 2
> b. *maḥšĕbōtām* (3:60, 61)[97]

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92. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Evidence*, 48–52; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 153–55.

93. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 154–55; cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 352–53.

94. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 24–27; cf. *GKC* §91n.

95. Ibid., 25.

96. *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 63 and n. 81.

97. The word *maḥăšābâ* itself is chiefly late (*BDB*, 364), which shows that the change with regard to this lexeme is still in progress even at a relatively late date.

-ām: Jer. 6:19; Ps. 56:6; 1QH 2.17 ([*mḥ*]*šbwtm*); b. *Ber.* 17.1
-êhem: Isa. 59:7; 65:2; 66:18; 4QAgesCreat 2–4.2.10 (*mhšb*[*wtyhm*])
c. *šĕḥîtôtām* (4:20a)
    -ām: Ps. 107:20
d. *ᶜăwōnōtêhem* (5:7)
    -ām: Lev. 16:22; Ezek. 32:27; Isa. 53:11; 4Q493 1.1.8
    -êhem: Jer. 33:8; Ezek. 43:10; Ps. 107:17; CD 4.10

5. *-hen/-ām*

LBH shows an increased tendency to avoid using the third person feminine plural pronominal suffixes, preferring instead third person masculine plural forms.[98] This tendency persists in QH and MH as well.[99] Rooker offers the following parallel texts which illustrate well the diachronic change in view here:[100]

a. *wyšbw bhn* (1 Sam. 31:7)
   wyšbw bhm (1 Chr. 10:7)
b. *ᵓt hᶜrym hᵓlh wᵓt mgršyhn* (Josh. 21:3)
   ᵓt hᶜrym wᵓt mgršyhm (1 Chr. 6:49)
c. *hᶜrym hᵓlh ᵓšr yqrᵓ ᵓthn bšm* (Josh. 21:9)
   hᶜrym hᵓlh ᵓšr yqrᵓw ᵓthm bšmwt (1 Chr. 6:50)

In Lamentations, one generally finds that the third person feminine plural pronominal suffix is used with third person feminine plural antecedents: *rōᵓšān* "their (fp) heads" → *bĕtûlōt* "maidens" (2:10c); *gûrêhen* "their (fp) young" → *tannîn* "jackals" (4:3a); *yaldêhen* "their (fp) children" → *yĕdê nāšîm* "the hands of women" (4:10a). However, there is one time when the third person masculine plural pronominal suffix is used where one would otherwise expect the feminine form: *piryām* "their (mp) fruit" → *nāšîm* "women" (2:20b). The verb is appropriately feminine plural (*tōᵓkalnâ*), showing that the masculine form of the plural *nāšîm* did not fool the poet, and thus suggesting that here is a genuine case where the feminine form of the suffix has been superseded by the masculine form.

C. *SBH features used exclusively in Lamentations*

Because BH is a conservative language, one can expect to find many features which the two dominant diachronic phases share with one another. Therefore, the diagnostic significance of any SBH features found in Lamentations is limited. However, the seventeen SBH features briefly reviewed in this next section are either replaced or fall into disuse in the later phase of the language. Thus their presence in

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98. Kropat, *Syntax*, 61–62; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 52–54; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 78–81; Seow, "Linguistic Evidence," 662–63. Rendsburg ("Late Biblical Hebrew," 69–70) thinks this avoidance represents a colloquialism in the language, and not a characteristically late feature. Seow rightly counters that its origin as a colloquialism need not disqualify it as a characteristic feature of LBH. He writes, "This is simply a case where an earlier colloquialism becomes accepted as normative in later literary works" (Seow, "Linguistic Evidence," 663). Hurvitz's (*Linguistic Study*, 168–69) complaint, that "the chronologically indecisive nature of masc./fem. inconsistencies within BH" renders it doubtful that this tendency is necessarily characteristically late, remains unsubstantiated.

99. Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 62–63; Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 41.

100. *Biblical Hebrew*, 78.

Lamentations strongly suggests that the language is not as late as, for example, that of the Chronicler; otherwise the contrasting LBH features would have been expected to appear here.[101]

1. ʾak

This particle is almost completely lacking in Chronicles, and when it appears (1 Chr. 22:12; 2 Chr. 20:33; 30:11), it only has an adversative or restrictive meaning ("however, only").[102] It does not appear at all in Esther, Daniel, Nehemiah, Qoheleth, or MH,[103] and only one time in Ezekiel (46:17) and Ezra (10:15). In SBH ʾak has both adversative/restrictive and asseverative meaning. Polzin exemplifies the loss of this particle in LBH with the following parallel texts:

> a. ʾak bat-parʿōh ʿālĕtâ mēʿîr dāwīd ʾel-bêtāh (1 Kgs. 9:24)
> wěʾet-bat-parʿōh heʿĕlâ šĕlōmōh mēʿîr dāwîd labbayit (2 Chr. 8:11)
> b. wěhēmmâ ʾāmĕrû ʾak melek-yiśrāʾēl hûʾ (1 Kgs. 22:32)
> wěhēmmâ ʾāmĕrû　　　melek yiśrāʾēl hûʾ (2 Chr. 18:31)

In (a) the Chronicler chooses to rephrase the sentence without ʾak, while in (b) the Chronicler simply leaves the particle out of the text. The two occurrences of ʾak in Lamentations both have asseverative force:

> c. "surely (ʾak), this is the day we have longed for" (Lam. 2:16c)
> d. "surely (ʾak), against me he continuously turns/ his hand all day long" (Lam. 3:3).

2. ʾmr

Driver notes that commands in the later literature typically utilize the syntagma ʾmr l- (e.g., Dan. 1:3, 18; 2:2; 1 Chr. 13:4; 15:16; 21:18; 22:2; 2 Chr. 14:3; 29:21, 27, 30; 31:4, 11; 33:16; Neh. 8:1; 9:15; Esth. 1:17; 4:13; 9:14), while the earlier language prefers ʾmr followed by direct narration.[104] Lam. 3:57 (ʾāmartā ʿal-tîrāʾ) would appear to be of the earlier variety.

3. ʾet plus suffix

LBH shows a marked decrease in the use of the *nota accusativi* (ʾet) with a pronominal suffix.[105] By Polzin's count the ratios of verbal suffixes to ʾet plus suffix in LBH are as follows: Chronicles (in non-parallel texts) 141:14, Ezra 5:1, Nehemiah (non-memoir) 23:0, Nehemiah (memoir) 4:1, Daniel 22:0.[106] Given the general dearth of the *nota accusativi* in BH poetry, a decreased use of this morphological marker has no chronological significance for dating Hebrew poetry. The expectation is that Lamentations would make frequent use of verbal suffixes, and so it does. What is significant, however, is that of the six times that the *nota accusativi* appears in Lamentations (1:9c; 2:1a, 2a; 3:2; 4:11a; 5:1), one involves ʾet plus a pronominal

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101. This strong SBH layer in Lamentations accounts for T. F. McDaniel's observation that the language in Lamentations seems reminiscent of pre-exilic Hebrew ("Philological Studies," 217).

102. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 125–26.

103. For MH, see Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 124. Apparently ʾak is replaced in MH by ʾellāʾ and ʾăbal.

104. *Introduction*, 506; but see Landes, "Jonah," §165, nn. 38–39.

105. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 28–31; Rendsburg, "Late Biblical Hebrew," 66; Cf. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 86–87.

106. *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 30–31.

suffix (3:2). In light of this and the routine use of ʾet plus pronominal suffix in pre-exilic epigraphic texts (Lachish 3:12; 12:4; Arad 24:13), it would seem unlikely that Lamentations 3 is as late as so many scholars believe.

4. *ʾet*, *ʾăšer*, and *ha-*

    As has long been recognized, the particles *ʾet*, *ʾăšer*, and *ha-* are generally characteristic of prose and often lacking in poetry. An analysis of the frequency with which these particles occur throughout the Hebrew Bible confirms this fact.[107] And though frequency scores have a more limited utility for determining dates,[108] it does appear that the corpus of post-exilic prophetic works (Haggai, Malachi, Daniel, and Zechariah), Song of Songs, and most (six of eight) of the Psalms dated late by Hurvitz (Psalms 103; 117; 124; 125; 144; 145) all exhibit frequency scores of greater than 5% for the combined presence of these three prose particles. Therefore, it would be fair to conclude that Lamentations' notably low scores (all less than 3%, except Lamentations 4, which is less than 5%) is more reminiscent of earlier rather than later Hebrew poetry.

5. *běyad*

    Polzin suggests that SBH *běyad* with the meaning "by the agency or instru-mentality of" contrasts with LBH *ʿal yad*, which appears in 1 Chr. 25:2, 2, 3, 6, 6; 2 Chr. 26:13; 23:18; 29:27; Ezra 3:10; Jer. 5:11; 33:13 and in MH.[109] The SBH syn-tagma *běyad* possibly appears in Lamentations, but *ʿal yad* does not:

> a. "when her people fell by the hand (*běyad*) of the foe" (1:7c)[110]
> b. "princes were hung by their hands (*běyādām*)" (5:12).

Only *byd* is used at Lachish (9:6–7) and Arad (16.5–6; 17.9; 24.13–14).

6. *bêt-yhwh*

    The phrase *bêt-yhwh* is characteristic SBH (Arad 18:9; House of Yahweh ostra-con, 4). The corresponding LBH phrase is *bêt hāʾĕlōhîm*, occurring 51 times in Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel.[111] Lamentations uses *bêt-yhwh* (2:7c).

7. *hrs*

    Rooker contrasts the SBH preference for the Qal of *hrs* and *ntṣ* with the LBH preference for the Piel *nittaṣ*:[112]

> "that high place he tore down (*nātāṣ*)" (2 Kgs. 23:15)
> "the high places which is Father Hezekiah tore down (*nittaṣ*)" (2 Chr. 33:3).

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    107. F. I. Andersen and A. D. Forbes, " 'Prose Particle' Counts of the Hebrew Bible," in Meyers and O'Connor, eds., *Word of the Lord*, 165–83.
    108. Ibid., 167.
    109. *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 148; cf. Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 145.
    110. For the alternative reading "into the hand of," see Hillers, *Lamentations*, 69–70.
    111. Driver, *Introduction*, 535–36; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 130. The otherwise unique appear-ance of *bêt-hāʾĕlōhîm* in Judg. 18:31 does not necessarily cast doubt on the characteristic lateness of this phrase (as suggested by Gevirtz, "Of Syntax and Style," 25, n. 7), but only means that it may have orig-inated as a northern idiom.
    112. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 142.

Lamentations only has *hrs* (2:2b, 17b).

8. *znḥ*

The Qal of *znḥ* dominates in SBH, whereas in LBH the Hiphil replaces the Qal.[113] Lamentations uses *znḥ* only in the Qal (2:7a; 3:17, 31). In particular note the following comparison:

    a. *wattiznaḥ-m*[114] *šālôm napšî* "my soul rejected well being" (Lam. 3:17)
    b. *wšlwmy lᵓ hznḥth* "nor have you rejected my well being" (Hodayot 9:19).[115]

9. *ḥrh ᵓap, qṣp*

In LBH and post-Biblical Hebrew the classical idioms for anger, *qṣp* and *ḥrh* plus *ᵓap*, are replaced by *kᶜs* in the Qal.[116] In Lamentations, only the classical idioms are found (2:3a; 5:22).

10. *kî*

The relative particles *ᵓăšer* and *še-* are used with a subordinate clause with increasing frequency in LBH, replacing the particle *kî*:[117]

    a. "for you know that (*yādaᶜtā kî*) there is no one among us" (1 Kgs. 5:20)
    b. "for I know that (*yādaᶜtî ᵓăšer*) your servants know" (2 Chr. 2:7).

Neither *ᵓăšer* nor *še-* functions in this way in Lamentations, and *kî* is used in good SBH fashion as the subordinating particle following the verb *heᵓĕmîn*, "to believe that," in Lam. 4:12b, and possibly following *rāᵓâ*, "to see that," in 1:9c, 11c, and 20a and *šāmaᶜ*, "to hear that," in 1:21a (cf. *ydᶜ ky*, Lachish 4.10).[118]

11. *mamlākâ*

This is the SBH word for "kingdom," which appears in Lam. 2:2c.[119] The LBH term *malkût* does not appear in Lamentations.[120]

12. *min*

In most of BH the comparative construction is formed by using the preposition *min*, but the common MH counterpart for this construction, *yôtēr m-*, is already attested in Qoh. 12:12 and Esth. 6:6.[121] Lamentations has only the normal BH construction (4:6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 19a).

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    113. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 133–34.
    114. Reading as an enclitic *mem*; see Hillers, *Lamentations*, 114.
    115. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 134.
    116. Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 115–16; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 147–48.
    117. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 111–12; cf. Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 205; Seow, "Linguistic Evidence," 661.
    118. Frequently, the use of *kî* in poetry is subtle and hard to pin down. The passages involving *rāᵓâ* and *šāmaᵓ* in Lamentations are open to other interpretations (e.g., "because," "for").
    119. Though MT's *mamlākâ* is frequently rejected in favor of LXX and Syr (*malkāh*) or emended with similar results, MT makes good sense as it stands and is clearly the *lectio difficilior*; it should therefore be retained.
    120. Hurvitz, *Transition Period*, 79–88; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 142.
    121. Driver, *Introduction*, 475; Bergey, "Esther," 75–76; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 185.

13. *mippĕnê*

Instead of SBH's *mippĕnê*, LBH prefers *millipnê* for expressing a source or cause.[122] Lamentations uses only *mippĕnê* (5:9, 10). In particular compare Lam. 5:10 with 4Q501 6:

   a. *ʿôrēnû kĕtannûr nikmārû/ mippĕnê zalʿăpôt rāʿāb* (Lam. 5:10)
       "our skin has turned black as an oven/ because of the scorch of famine"
   b. [*nkmr*] *ʿwrnw wzlʿwpwt ʾḥzwnw mlpny lšwn gdwpyhm* (4Q501 6)
       "our skin is turned black and hot indignation seizes us because of their insolent language."[123]

14. *mšl*

LBH uses the root *šlṭ*, "to rule" (Ps. 119:133; Qoh. 2:19; 5:18; 6:2; 8:9; Neh. 5:15; Esth. 9:1),[124] while SBH uses *mšl*, which appears in Lam. 5:8.[125]

15. *nāʾ*

This emphatic particle, which typically accompanies imperatives, cohortatives, and jussives in SBH, rarely appears in LBH.[126] This particle is used in Lam. 1:18b and 5:16 (cf. Lachish 3.5; 6.5).

16. *naḥnû*

naḥnû only occurs five times in the Hebrew Bible. Four of the five are clearly SBH: Gen. 42:11, Exod. 16:7, 8, and Num. 32:32.[127] This form of the first person plural pronoun is developmentally earlier than the standard BH form, *ʾănaḥnû*, and reflects the form of the pronoun which is usually reconstructed for PS, **niḥnu/ū* (cf. Akk. *nīnu*, Arab. *naḥnu*, Eth. *neḥna*, BA *ʾănăḥnā*).[128] The prefixed *ʾaleph* form in BH and Aramaic is an innovation common to these Semitic languages, since there is no mechanism by which to otherwise explain the loss of the *ʾaleph* in the other languages. One can perhaps attribute its presence in BH and Aramaic to paradigmatic pressure. All the other first and second person forms have a prefixed *ʾaleph*. Significantly, *naḥnû* does not occur at all in QH or MH, only *ʾnḥnw* or, most commonly, *ʾnw*.[129] While the appearance of *naḥnû* in Lam. 3:42 was motivated, at least

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122. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 143–44; *BDB*, 818a.

123. The word *mlpny* is also attested in 4QapLam 2.6: *mlpny hwrp* "because of the winter."

124. On the use of *šlt* in LBH, see esp. Seow, "Linguistic Evidence," 653–54.

125. *BDB*, 1020b; Hurvitz, *Transition Period*, 134–36; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 185. For QH, see Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 96, and for MH, see Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1581. Note also that *mšl b-* in Lam. 5:8 contrasts as well with the QH idiom *mšl ʿl* (Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 92).

126. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 145.

127. Thus, Kutscher's designation of *naḥnû* as the "later form" is puzzling; *Hebrew Language*, §42.

128. See H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der Hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes* (Hildesheim, 1962 [1922]), §28o; C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin, 1908), §104b.

129. Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 58; Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 39–40. It is likely that the abbreviated form *ʾnw* was formed based on an analogy with either *ʾny* or the common suffix *-nû* (for the latter, see Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §42.

to some extent, by the demands of the acrostic, it nevertheless had to be a lexeme known to the poet, either as an archaism or a part of the everyday speech. That *nḥnw* appears in Lachish 26:10–11 (a letter!) suggests that the lexeme was known and used commonly at least as late as the sixth century.

17. Use of infinitives

Polzin argues that there is a marked decline in LBH in the widespread use of the cognate infinitive.[130] Rendsburg disputes the validity of this contention.[131] Regardless of who is right, Lamentations exhibits wide use of the cognate infinitive (1:2a, 8a [read with 4QLamᵃ], 20b; 3:52; 5:22). Polzin also reports the radically reduced use of the infinitive construct in LBH.[132] But the infinitive construct is well attested in all of its usual capacities throughout Lamentations (e.g., 1:11b, 14c, 15b; 2:8a, 11c, 12b, c, 14b; 3:34–46, 444; 4:15b, 16a, 18a, 22a; 5:6).

D. Aramaisms

The features discussed in this section either have been identified as Aramaisms, or can with varying degrees of probability be attributed to Aramaic influence. It used to be the case that the presence of Aramaisms was interpreted as clear evidence for the lateness of a particular work. Such an assumption can no longer be automatically made, as Hurvitz in particular has stressed.[133] Isolated Aramaisms appear in pre-exilic works, especially in texts originating in the North. Nevertheless, it remains the case that beginning with the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires Aramaic becomes increasingly dominant in the region. Its "critical point of contact" with BH dates from the time of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. When appropriately considered, the presence in a text of non-isolated Aramaisms which 1) are not attested in the early period, 2) contrast with an appropriate SBH feature,[134] 3) remain vital in later Hebrew and Aramaic dialects, and 4) are accompanied by other LBH features, may be taken as a sign of relative lateness.[135]

1. *ʾaryēh*

The noun *ʾaryēh*, "lion," occurs in Lam. 3:10 (reading with K) and may be Aramaic in origin,[136] but its frequency in BH, including many pre-exilic texts, and its attestation in OA (*KAI* 223 A 9) mean that it has no diagnostic value for determining questions of chronology. It of course is used in later Aramaic dialects as well, including BA, OffA, and Syriac.

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130. *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 43–44; Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 165; Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §§68, 122, 210.

131. "Late Biblical Hebrew," 67–68.

132. *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 45–46.

133. "The Chronological Significance of 'Aramaisms' in Biblical Hebrew," *IEJ* 18 (1968), 234–40.

134. As Hurvitz rightly notes ("Chronological Significance," 238–39), other linguistic considerations may be adduced in lieu of suitable SBH contrasts.

135. See Hurvitz ("Chronological Significance") for an extended discussion.

136. Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 29–30.

2. *z^cq*

The verbs *ṣ^cq* and *z^cq* are synonyms meaning "to cry out" and are used throughout BH. The form *ṣ^cq* is the preferred SBH term, but only slightly by a ratio of 37:33, according to Rooker, while *z^cq* predominates in LBH.[137] The dominance of the latter continues in QH and MH.[138] This preference for *z^cq* in LBH and post-Biblical Hebrew has been attributed to the influence of Aramaic, in which, beginning with OffA, *z^cq* is the common verb meaning "to cry out."[139] The latter does not occur at all in OA, and *ṣ^cq* occurs in OffA possibly only once in a very fragmentary text (Cowley 52:6). The form *ṣ^cq* occurs in Lam. 2:18a and *z^cq* in Lam. 3:8.

3. *ḥzh*

The verb *ḥzh*, which appears in Lam. 2:14a (*ḥāzû*) and b (*wayyeḥĕzû*), is the common verb meaning "to see" in Aramaic, but, like *^aryēh*, is well attested in pre-exilic BH and OA (e.g., *KAI* 202 A 12; 222 A 13), and therefore is diagnostically irrelevant for dating the language of Lamentations.[140]

4. *kĕlîlâ*

M. Wagner suggests that *kĕlîlat yōpî* in Lam. 2:15c is to be understood as "crown of beauty" instead of "perfection of beauty," as has usually been suggested.[141] The term is used in a variety of Aramaic dialects, including Hatran, JPA, CPA, Syriac, and Mandaic, and appears in QH (4Q405 23.5, 6; 1QS 4.7) and MH,[142] alongside *keter*, another term meaning "crown" derived from Aramaic.[143] Wagner's suggestion is attractive: *kālîl* in BH 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, *kālîl* putatively means "perfection." However, the idea of "perfection" is not etymologically required for the root *kll*, and in all four instances (as well as *miklal yōpî* in Ps. 50:2), the notion of a "crown of beauty" fits admirably well.[144] In fact, the LXX in Ezek. 27:3 and Lam. 2:15c specifically translates *kĕlîlâ* as "crown" (Gk. *stephanos*). M. Biddle has recently shown that mural crown imagery is frequently associated with the personified city motif in the Hebrew Bible (Isa. 28:1–5; 49:16; 54:11; 62:3; Jer. 13:18; Ezek. 16:12; 27:11; Mic. 4:8; Lam. 5:16).[145] The origins of this imagery lie in Mesopotamia, where the city walls were frequently likened to "a great crown adorning the head of the city and its deity."[146] The Akkadian term used

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137. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 134; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 137.

138. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 135–36; Jastrow, *Dictionary*.

139. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 137; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 135, 138.

140. G. R. Driver, "Hebrew Poetic Diction," in *Congress Volume* (Leiden, 1953), 30; Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 53.

141. *Aramaismen*, 64–65; cf. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 32.

142. Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 101; cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 642b.

143. Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 70; cf. Esth. 1:11; 2:17; 6:8; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 682b.

144. The possibility of word play in Lam. 2:15c should not be ruled out.

145. "The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification and Personification of Cities in the Ancient Near East," in K. L. Younger, Jr., W. W. Hallo, B. F. Batto, eds., *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective* (Lewiston, 1991), 178–79, 182–86.

146. Ibid., 178.

in these texts is *kilīlu*, or its dialectical variant, *kulīlu*, often translated as "circlet, crown" and by extension "battlement":[147]

    a. "I had a frieze and battlement made of red and blue built like a wreath all around (Esgalsiddudua's) crest."

    b. "Like a crown the temple is adorned with. . . ."

In several of the biblical passages that Biddle discusses, the phrase *ᶜăṭeret tipᵓeret*, "crown of beauty," is used:

    c. "you will be a crown of beauty in Yahweh's hand" (Isa. 62:3)

    d. "and I put a ring on your nose, earrings in your ears, and a crown of beauty on your head" (Ezek. 16:12)

    e. "Woe to the proud crown (*ᶜăṭeret*) of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of its glorious beauty (*tipᵓartô*)" (Isa. 28:1).

The four passages with *kĕlîlâ* (Ezek. 16:14; 27:3; 28:12; Lam. 2:15c) involve the personified city motif.[148] Three of the four have mural crown imagery elsewhere in their immediate context (Ezek. 16:14; 27:3) or in closely related material (Lam. 5:16). Ps. 50:2 may be likened to Ps. 89:39ff. and Zech. 9:16, which, as Biddle describes them, contain "imagery of the mural crown reduced to an impersonal symbol."[149]

If Wagner is right about *kĕlîlâ* in Lam. 2:15c, then Lamentations would contain another pair of SBH-LBH lexemes: *ᶜăṭeret*, the SBH term for "crown," is used in Lam. 5:16, and *kĕlîlâ*, one of the LBH terms for the same concept (the other is *keter*), is used in Lam. 2:15c.

5. *mĕdînâ*

The noun *mĕdînâ* is the common Aramaic word for "province," appearing in many of the later Aramaic dialects beginning with OffA (but not in OA),[150] and as Rooker notes, is surely a LBH term.[151] It appears in MH as well.[152] With the exception of the occurrences in 1 Kings (20:14, 15, 17, 19), *mĕdînâ* only occurs in late texts (Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Qoheleth, and Ezekiel), including Lam. 1:1c. However, for dating Lamentations, the 1 Kings passages are significant. The phrase *śārātî bammĕdînôt* in Lam. 1:1c is a very close parallel to the phrase *śārê hammĕdînôt* that appears in 1 Kings. This closeness of phraseology (as well as the lexeme's likely appearance in Ugaritic, see *KTU* 1.3.II.16) prohibits the exclusion of a possible pre-exilic origin for this lexical item as it appears in Lamentations.[153]

6. *maṭṭārāᵓ*

The word *maṭṭārāᵓ*, which occurs in Lam. 3:12 with the meaning "target," is doubly marked as an Aramaism.[154] Morphologically, the feminine ending *-āᵓ* is

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    147. See Biddle ("Figure of Lady Jerusalem," 178) for these and other references.

    148. Ezek. 28:11–19 is presumably a lament over the king of Tyre (28:11). However, the imagery is that of the personified city.

    149. "Figure of Lady Jerusalem," 185.

    150. E. Kautzsch, *Die Aramaismen im Alten Testament* (Halle, 1902), 48–50; Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 72.

    151. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 56.

    152. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 734a.

    153. Of course, Kautzsch (*Aramaismen*, 48–50) raises the possibility that the 1 Kings passages are late.

    154. See Driver, *Introduction*, 448–49; Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 230; Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 83–84, 128.

clearly Aramaic in origin and probably late. Originally, the distinction in spelling between the suffixed definite article, -*āꜣ*, and the singular feminine nominal marker, -*āh* (< **at*), was maintained, with only minimal confusion, if any.[155] It is only with the later Aramaic dialects (OffA and later) that these spelling conventions break down and one finds -*ꜣ* and -*h* more commonly as markers of both definiteness and the feminine singular nominal ending—though not usually in free variation. Etymologically, *maṭṭārāꜣ* derives from PS **nẓr*, "to watch" (Arab. *nẓr*, Akk. *naṣāru*, Heb. *nṣr*, Ph. *nṣr*, Ug. *nġr*), which is realized as *nṣr* in OA (*KAI* 222 B 8; C 15, 17) and *nṭr* in all later Aramaic dialects.[156] The latest examples in which PS **ẓ* is realized as *ṣ* in Aramaic are found in the Nerab stelae (*tnṣr*, *KAI* 225:12) ca. 700 and the Adon letter (*nṣr*, *KAI* 266:8) ca. 604–3.[157] Hug thinks that the shift **ẓ > ṭ* must have occurred at ca. 600.[158] Therefore, *maṭṭārāꜣ*, in its present form, is likely not to have been borrowed into BH much before the end of the seventh century or the beginning of the sixth century. Of the biblical passages cited by Wagner evidencing the root *nṭr* (Lam. 3:12; Cant. 1:6; 8:11; Jer. 32:2; Jonah 16:12; Neh. 12:39), only one is possibly early (1 Sam. 20:20).[159]

7. *mangînātām*

The noun *mangînātām*, "their song" (Lam. 3:63) is another hapax legomenon. If MT is to be retained, the simplest way to explain the unassimilated *nun* is in terms of the tendency for later Aramaic dialects, but not OA, to substitute nasalization for gemination:[160] **maggînâ > mangînâ*.[161] Compare the following examples:

  a. *ḥṭh* (*KAI* 215:6)
     ḥnṭh (Ahiqar 129)
  b. *ypq* (*KAI* 122 A 28)
     tnpq (Ahiqar 124)

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155. W. Randall Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000–586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia, 1985), 59–60, 87–89, 93–94; cf. R. Degen, *Altaramäische Grammatik der Inschriften des 10.–8. Jh. v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1969), §34.4; S. Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1975) §§5.2.2.4.5; 5.2.5.2.6–7; V. Hug, *Altaramäische Grammatik der Texte des 7. und 6. Jh. s.v. Chr.* (Heidelberg, 1993), 65; Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 128; F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, "*ALEPH* as a Vowel Letter in Old Aramaic," in D. N. Freedman, A. D. Forbes, and F. I. Andersen, eds., *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography* (Winona Lake, 1992), 79–90.

156. Degen, *Altaramäische*, §11; Segert, *Altaramäische*, §3.2.7.5.4–5; Hug, *Altaramäische*, 51.

157. See Hug, *Altaramäische*, 13, 15, and esp. 51.

158. *Altaramäische*, 51. Segert (*Altaramäische*, §3.2.7.5.4–5) cites a grave inscription from Sheikh Faḍl (*mṭꜣ*, 17.2) as the earliest example in which PS **ẓ > ṭ* (ca. 600). However, others date these inscriptions palaeographically to only the fifth century; J. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script* (Jerusalem, 1970), 40–41.

159. 1 Sam. 20:20 does not necessarily invalidate the conclusions just drawn about the projected time of borrowing for this root. Typically, diachronic change does not happen all at once, but occurs gradually over an extended period of time. 1 Sam. 20:20 may reflect an early, sporadic example of the shift PS **ẓ > ṭ* (depending in when one dates the books of Samuel). Moreover, the distinctive feminine marker in Lam. 3:12 suggests that the source of this borrowing was independent of that evidenced in 1 Sam. 20:20.

160. Degen, *Altaramäische*, §20a; Segert, *Altaramäische*, §§3.5.5.1–5; F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 6th rev. ed. (Weisbaden, 1995), 20–21; H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Kurzgefasste Biblisch-Aramäische Grammatik* (Hildesheim, 1965), 3; Hug, *Altaramäische*, 53.

161. For this analysis, see Bauer-Leander, *Historische Grammatik*, §61fη; H. Gottlieb, *A Study on the Text of Lamentations* (Århus, 1978), 55.

This change appears to have been in progress for approximately two centuries, from ca. 700 to ca. 515. The earliest attestation of nasalization occurs in the Nerab stelae (*tnṣr*, *KAI* 225:12) ca. 700,[162] and the latest example of the assimilated *nun* appears in the Meissner Papyri (*ʾṣl*, l. 14; cf. *ʾtnnhy*, l. 11 vs. *ʾntn*, l. 10; *hslty*, *KAI* 206:7) ca. 515.

8. *min*

In Lam. 1:6a MT reads *min-bat-ṣiyyôn*, lacking the normal assimilation of the *nun* before a noun without the definite article.[163] As Polzin observes, such a practice increases dramatically in LBH, probably due to the influence of Aramaic with its proclivity to substitute nasalization for gemination in the later dialects.[164] 4QLam[a] reads the expected classical form, *mbt* [*ṣywn*] (1.11), with assimilation, but whether this genuinely reflects the Qumran scribe's language or is a hypercorrection is hard to tell.

9. *nṭl*

In addition to its use in Lam. 3:28, *nṭl* appears only in Isa. 40:15 and 63:9.[165] The root is commonly used in Aramaic (but not yet attested in OA) where one would expect Hebrew *nśʾ*, and is found in QH and MH,[166] and in the Arad inscriptions (60:1).[167]

10. *sillâ*

The word *sillâ* appears only in Lam. 1:15a and Ps. 119:18 (in the Qal). The meaning usually suggested, "despised, flouted, rejected," is based on the Syriac and Aramaic (esp. JPA and CPA) usage of the root.[168] But this interpretation is not universally supported.[169]

11. *ʿawwātātî*

The form *ʿawwātātî* "my oppression" (Lam. 3:59) would appear to formally reflect the Aramaic Pael infinitive,[170] and as Segal and Hurvitz observe, the *qattālâ* noun pattern is especially characteristic of LBH and MH.[171] Most of the biblical

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162. Note that examples where the *nun* is assimilated are also present in this inscription, *yshw* (*KAI* 225:9).

163. *GKC* §102b.

164. *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 66.

165. 2 Sam. 24:12 is probably reading *nôṭeh //* 1 Chr. 21:10.

166. Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 102; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 899–90.

167. Citing the primary meaning of Syriac *nṭal*, Hillers suggests an alternative translation for Lam. 3:28: "when it is heavy on him" (*Lamentations*, 116). JPA exhibits both meanings ("to pick up, raise, bear; to be heavy") for this root; M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan, 1990), 348a.

168. Löhr, "Sprachgebrauch," 41; Kautzsch, *Aramaismen*, 68; Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 87; cf. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 208; Albrektson, *Studies*, 76; Provan, *Lamentations*, 51.

169. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 74–75; cf. Gordis, *Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 158.

170. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 255; Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 133; Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §123; cf. Rosenthal, *Grammar*, 49.

171. M. H. Segal, "Mišnaic Hebrew and Its Relation to Biblical Hebrew and to Aramaic," *JQR* 20 (1908), 706–7; Hurvitz, *Transition Period*, 150, n. 218; "Observations on the Language of the Third Apocryphal Psalm from Qumran," *RdQ* 5 (1964–66), 226–27.

exemplars of this pattern come from comparatively late sources: *baqqāšāti*, "my request" (Esth. 5:7, 8; 7:3; Ezra 7:6), *neʾāṣôt*, "blasphemies" (Neh. 9:18, 26; Ezek. 35:12), *baqqārat* "seeking" (Ezek. 34:12), *qallāsâ*, "a mocking" (Ezek. 22:4), *pārāšat*, "statement" (Esth. 4:7; 10:2), and *neḥāmātî*, "comfort" (Job 6:10; Ps. 119:50). In MH the noun pattern has mostly lost its significance as a *nomen actionis* and functions instead as a true abstract (e.g., *kappārâ*, "atonement," *kawwānâ*, "devotion"). Therefore, *ᶜawwātātî* should most likely be added to the list of late linguistic features in Lamentations.

12. *prq*

The verbal root *prq* in many of the Semitic languages, including Hebrew, has the basic meaning "to cleave, separate, tear apart" (Akk. *parāqu*, Ug. *prq*. Ar. *faraqa*, Heb. *pāraq*), but in the Aramaic dialects, including OA (*KAI* 222 B 34), its principal meaning is "to free, rescue, redeem." Therefore, Wagner suggests the possibility of Aramaic influence in Gen. 27:49, Ps. 136:24, and Lam. 5:8.[172] The root is used with the latter Aramaized meaning in MH.[173] But, as Wagner himself notes, an inner-Hebrew semantic development cannot be ruled out.

13. *raḥămāniyyôt*

In *raḥămāniyyôt* (Lam. 4:10a) Wagner calls attention to the preservation of *-ān* as a sign of Aramaic origin.[174]

14. *šômēmîn* and *tannîn*

The plurals *šômēmîn* (Lam. 1:4b) and *tannîn* (Lam. 4:3a) are marked with nunation, as in Aramaic of all periods, instead of with mimation, as in Hebrew.[175]

15. *Periphrastic Syntagma*

Lam. 1:11c and 16c may evidence the use of the periphrastic syntagma *hyh* plus participle, usually described as signifying durative or iterative meaning:

    a. *kî hāyîtî zôlēlâ* "for I am being distressed" (1:11c)
    b. *hāyû bānay šômēmîm* "my children are being destroyed" (1:16c)

This syntagma occurs chiefly in LBH,[176] where its increased usage is attributed to Aramaic influence.[177] The construction is well attested in OffA and later Aramaic

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172. *Aramaismen*, 951; cf. *BDB*, 830a; Kautzsch, *Aramaismen*, 74; Driver, "Poetic Diction," 28.

173. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1238b.

174. Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 106, 125–27, 134; cf. H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblische-Aramäischen* (Halle, 1927), §51y; Degen, *Altaramäische*, §30.2; Segert, *Altaramäische*, §4.3.5.5.

175. Wagner, *Aramaismen*, 134–35; cf. Rudolph, *Klagelieder*, 206; Westermann, *Lamentations*, 112, 196 ("Aramaizing plurals").

176. So G. Bergsträsser, *Hebräische Grammatik* (Hildescheim, 1962 [1918]), §13i; P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hĕbreu biblique* (Rome, 1923), §121g.

177. F. E. König, *Historisch-kritisches Lehrgebäude der Hebräischen Sprache* (Leipzig, 1881–97), §239c; Bergsträsser, *Hebräische Grammatik*, §13i; Joüon, *Grammaire*, §121g; B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, 1990), §37.7.1c; Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 49, n. 75; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 108–10.,

dialects, but not in OA.[178] Hug cites the Hermopolis letters (1.11, 2.14, 3.9, 7.14; ca. 500 B.C.E.) as the earliest attestation of this syntagma. It is frequent in QH and MH as well.[179] Rooker calls attention to the following contrast:

 c. "for the cherubim were spreading (*pōrĕśîm*) their wings" (1 Kgs. 8:7)
   "for the cherubim were spreading (*wayyihyû . . . pōrĕśîm*) their wings" (2 Chr. 5:8).

16. *sbl*

The verb *sbl* "to carry, bear" in Lam. 5:7 provides a final diagnostically relevant Aramaisms found in Lamentations. The root *sbl* is used in most Aramaic dialects (though not yet attested in OA) instead of Hebrew *nśʾ* (the Targum, for example, commonly translates with *sbl*, e.g., Deut. 24:15; 32:11; Job 21:3) and occurs commonly in MH.[180] Forms of *sbl* appear only a handful of times in BH, most notably in late sources (Gen. 49:15;[181] Isa. 46:4 (2x), 7; 53:4, 11; Ps. 144:14; Qoh. 12:5). The phrase *ʿăwōnōtêhem sābālnû*, "we bear their iniquities/punishments," in Lam. 5:7 would appear to be a late rendering of the more standard *nśʾ ʿwn* (e.g., Exod. 28:38, 43; 34:9; Lev. 5:1, 17; 7:18; 10:17; 16:22; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17, 19; Num. 8:31; 14:18, 34; 18:1, 23, 32; 30:16; Ezek. 4:4, 5, 6; 14:10; 44:10, 12; Hos. 14:3; Mic. 7:18; Ps. 32:5; 85:3) and *nśʾ ḥṭʾ* (e.g., Lev. 19:17; 20:20; 24:15; Num. 9:13; 18:22, 32; Isa. 53:12; Ezek. 23:49). Second Isaiah exhibits both standard and late versions:

  waʿăwōnōtām hûʾ yisbōl "and he will bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11)
  wĕhûʾ hēṭʾ-rabbîm nāśāʾ "yet he bore the guilt of many" (Isa. 53:12)

E. Orthography

Orthography, like any other linguistic element, is artifactual in nature and therefore susceptible to the processes of historical change and evolution. In theory, then, knowledge of the history of Hebrew spelling conventions should generate data relevant for establishing the date of biblical compositions. F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman in their pioneering *Early Hebrew Orthography* were able to show that Hebrew spelling conventions did change over time and that the tendency was for later texts to exhibit fuller spellings, i.e., more widespread use of *matres lectionis*.[182] All later studies, even those generally critical of Cross and Freedman's approach, confirm these broad conclusions.[183] However, we are still far from being able to accurately determine the date of composition based solely on the spelling practices reflected in the MT or other ancient versions. Since no original autographs of any

 178. Bauer and Leander, *Biblische-Aramäischen*, §§81i–j, p–q; Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik*, §6.6.3.6.1c; Hug, *Altaramäische Grammatik*, 118–19, 30; J. C. Greenfield, "The 'Periphrastic Imperative' in Aramaic and Hebrew," *IEJ* 19 (1989), 199–210; Garr, *Dialect Geography*, 186–87.

 179. Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 70; Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew*, 156–57.

 180. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 950.

 181. For the sense of *sbl* in this passage, see M. Held, "The Root ZBL/SBL in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Biblical Hebrew," *JAOS* 88 (1968), 90–96.

 182. *AOS* 32 (New Haven, 1952).

 183. See Kutscher, *Hebrew Language*, §118; Z. Zevit, *Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs*, *ASORMS* 2 (Cambridge, 1980); F. I. Andersen and A. D. Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, *Bi. Or.* 41 (Rome, 1986); J. Barr, *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford, 1989); Freedman, Forbes, and Andersen, *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography*.

biblical works have survived into modern times, the most that can be expected from an analysis of the orthographic practices revealed in the surviving textual traditions is to isolate the historical period in which a particular text was last copied—which, of course, may or (more often) may not coincide with the time of composition. But even this modest goal is usually frustrated. The crucial period for the history of the textual transmission of biblical texts is the Persian period, for which there are no surviving biblical manuscripts and only very few Hebrew inscriptions. Therefore, there is a gap of approximately 300 years (between the last pre-exilic Hebrew inscriptions and the oldest Dead Sea Scrolls) in our knowledge of Hebrew spelling conventions. Finally, it is now becoming evident that some spelling variables may not be solely attributable to historical development.[184] So one cannot always confidently map differences in orthography onto differences in chronology. Given these kinds of impediments, even a comprehensive orthographic analysis of the MT of Lamentations, which is well beyond the scope of the present study,[185] is likely only to be minimally useful for dating purposes.

Still, if MT is a good witness to the original orthography of these poems, then the spelling conventions reflected in it are consistent with that of the later books of the Bible. Lamentations, like the prophetic books, Job, Qoheleth, and Chronicles, has between 50% and 55% of relevant forms spelled *plene*.[186] The Psalms and Proverbs have between 55% and 60% *plene* forms, and in Song of Songs and Esther over 60% of relevant forms are spelled *plene*. This contrasts with the Pentateuch, Kings, and Ruth, which all have less than 40% *plene* spellings; Samuel and Jeremiah, between 40% and 50%; and Ezra, Daniel, and Nehemiah, which have just below 50% *plene* spellings. Yet, if the spelling conventions reflected in MT of Lamentations are late, they are still far more conservative than those reflected in both the canonical and noncanonical Lamentations manuscripts from Qumran. Combined, the several Qumran texts reflect or preserve portions of every poem in Lamentations. 4QLam^a, which contains the largest amount of material, preserving portions of three columns of Lamentations 1, is inscribed in a Herodian script and therefore may be dated paleographically between 50 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. However, the orthographic style of the manuscript has been characterized by Cross as "the late, full Palestinian type which developed in Maccabean times."[187] The orthographic conventions of the other Qumran texts (3QLam^a, 4QapLam, 4Q501, 5QLam^a, and 5QLam^b) follow more or less those of 4QLam^a. Here, then, we have fine exemplars of the Hebrew spelling conventions from the Maccabean period and they are far more fully developed than those of the MT of Lamentations, as the following comparison points up:

	MT	*DSS*
a. Reflections of PS *$*u$[188]		
i. *kl*		
	1:2b *mkl*	*mkwl* (4QLam^a 1.3; cf. 3.8)
	1:12a *kl*	*kwl* (4QLam^a 3.2)

184. See Barr, *Variable Spellings*.

185. Following the suggestion of Barr (*Variable Spellings*, 110–11), I do intend to carry out a comprehensive orthographic analysis in conjunction with the commentary I am writing on Lamentations.

186. All percentages are taken from Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, 161.

187. Cross, "Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse," 134.

188. See Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 17.

	1:13c *kl*	*kwl* (4QLamᵃ 3.3)
	1:15a *kl*	*kwl* (4QLamᵃ 3.6)

ii. *kḥ*

	1:6c *kḥ*	*kwḥ* (4QLamᵃ 2.2)
	1:14b *kḥy*	*kwḥy* (4QLamᵃ 3.5)
		kwḥḥ (4Q501 8)

iii. ᶜ*wllw* /ᶜ*ullô*/ "his yoke" (4QLamᵃ 3.5)[189]

iv. *qōtel* ← *qutl

	1:11c *bᵓkl*	*bᵓwkl* (4QLamᵃ 3.1)
v.	1:7a *zkrh*	*zkwrh* /*zokrâ*/ (← *zukr-) (4QLamᵃ 2.2)[190]
vi.	1:10c *ybᵓw*	*ybwᵓw* (4QLamᵃ 3.1)

vii. ᶜ*wllw* /ᶜ*ulalû*/ Qal passive Perf. 3mp (4QLamᵃ 3.3)[191]

viii.	1:15b *lšbr*	*lšbwr* (4QLamᵃ 3.7)
ix.	5:2 *nkrym*	*nwkrym* (5QLamᵃ 4.7)
x.	5:11 *btlt*	*btwlwt* (5QLamᵃ 5.7)

xi. *zkwr* (G Imv. ms; 4Q501 1; cf. Lam. 5:1)

xii. *hᵓmwnym* (4QapLam 2.10; cf. *hᵓmnym*, Lam. 4:5b)

b. *ō* ← *ā

i. *lᵓ*

	1:6b *lᵓ*	*lwᵓ* (4QLamᵃ 2.1)
	1:10c *lᵓ*	*lwᵓ* (4QLamᵃ 3.1)
	1:12a *lwᵓ*[192]	*lwᵓ* (4QLamᵃ 3.2)
	1:14c *lᵓ*	*lwᵓ* (4QLamᵃ 3.6)
	4:6b *wlᵓ*	*wl* (5QLam ᵃ 1.3)
	4:8a *lᵓ*	*lᵓ* (5QLamᵃ 1.5)
	4:22a *lᵓ*	*lwᵓ* (5QLamᵃ 4.3)
		lwᵓ (4QapLam 1.1, 12, 13)
		wlwᵓ (4Q501 9)

ii.	1:5a *lrᵓš*	*lrᵓwš* (4QLamᵃ 1.9)

iii. *qōtēl* ← *qātil

	1:2b *ᵓhbyh*	*ᵓwhbyh* (4QLamᵃ 1.3; cf. 3.8)
	1:2c *lᵓybym*	*lᵓybym* (4QLamᵃ 1.4)
	1:6c *rwdp*	*rwdp* (4QLamᵃ 2.2)
	1:7c ᶜ*wzr*	ᶜ*wzr* (4QLamᵃ 2.4)
	1:11c *zwllh*	*zwll* (4QLamᵃ 3.2)
	1:12a ᶜ*bry*	ᶜ*bry* (4QLamᵃ 3.2)
	1:13c *šmmh*	*šwmm* (4QLamᵃ 3.4)
	1:15b *mwᶜd*	*mw[ᶜd]* (4QLamᵃ 3.6)
	1:16a *yrdh*	*yrdh* (4QLamᵃ 3.9)
	1:16c *šwmmym*	*šwmmym* (4QLamᵃ 3.10)
		hšwmmym (4Q501 2)
	1:16c *ᵓwyb*	*ᵓwyb* (4QLamᵃ 3.10)
	4:13a *khnyh*	*kwh[n]yh* (5QLamᵃ 2.5)

iv. -*ōt* ← *āt

	1:13a *bᶜṣmty*	*bᶜṣmwty* (4QLamᵃ 3.4)
	4:5a *bḥwšwt*	*[bḥ]wšwt* (5QLamᵃ 1.1)
	4:5b *ᵓšptwt*	*ᵓšptwt* (5QLamᵃ 1.2)
		ᵓšpwtwt (4QapLam 2.7)

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189. MT is corrupt here. For this understanding, see Cross, "Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse," 146; Hillers, *Lamentations*, 73; Symmachus.

190. For this analysis, see Cross, "Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse," 140.

191. See Cross, Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse," 144.

192. Of course, almost nobody reads this as the negative particle.

| | | 5:1 | ḥrpwty[nw] (5QLamᵃ 4.6)[193] |
| | | 5:11 btlt | btwlwt (5QLamᵃ 5.7) |

> v. *qātōl ← *qatāl*

	1:8c ʾḥwr	ʾḥwr (4QLamᵃ 2.7)
	1:15a ʾdny	ʾdwny (4QLamᵃ 3.6)
	1:17c yhwh	ʾdwny (4QLamᵃ 3.8)[194]
	4:6a ʿwn	ʿwwn (5QLamᵃ 1.2)
	4:13a ʿwnwt	ʿwwnwt (5QLamᵃ 2.5)
	4:22a ʿwnk	ʿwwnk (5QLamᵃ 4.4)
	5:7 ʿwntyhm	ʿwnwtyhm (5QLamᵃ 5.4)
		ʿwwnwtynw (4QapLam 1.1)

> vi. wrḥwbwtyh (← *ruḥāb,[195] 4QapLam 1.9; cf. brḥbwt, Lam. 2:11c, 12b)

c. ʾrmnwtyh (4QapLam 1.10; cf. ʾarmĕnôteyhā, Lam. 2:5b, 7b)[196]

d. Geographical Names

i.		1:8a yrwšlm	yrwšlym (4QLamᵃ 2.5)
			yrwšlym (4QapLam 1.8)
ii.		1:17b lyʿqb	lyʿqwb (4QLamᵃ 3.8)
iii.		1:17a ṣywn	ṣywn (4QLamᵃ 3.7; cf. 3.9)

In terms of the general orthographic profile of MT, therefore, Lamentations is to be placed somewhere between the beginning of the sixth century and the end of the third century B.C.E., clearly ruling out the likelihood of a Maccabean date for Lamentations.

Conclusions

In the above study of the language of Lamentations at least eighteen late features have been isolated (A.1–4; B.1–5; D.2, 4, 6–9, 11, 15, 16). On the one hand, such a well evidenced late layer of the language precludes a pre-exilic dating of these poems. In fact, at least seven of these features are used to the exclusion of their SBH counterparts (A.1–4; D.6–7, 9). On the other hand, the total number of late features in Lamentations is far fewer than that found in known LBH works, such as Qoheleth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, indicating that the language is not classically LBH. This alone suggests that the late Persian and Maccabean period dates frequently posited for parts of Lamentations in the literature are untenable. Further support for this conclusion is to be found in the more conservative orthography of MT when compared to the various canonical and noncanonical DSS manuscripts of Lamentations (relevant for the Maccabean period only), the complete lack of Persianisms and Grecisms,[197] the paucity of genuinely late Aramaisms (D.2, 4, 6–9, 11, 15, 16),[198] and the use in Lamentations of 17 SBH features to the exclusion of their known LBH counterparts.

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193. Here 5QLamᵃ is reading a plural for MT's singular (ḥrptnw).

194. The variation between yhwh and ʾădōnāy is haphazard in both MT and 4QLamᵃ. In MT ʾădōnāy is always written defectively.

195. Bauer and Leander, *Historische Grammatik*, §61mβ.

196. For this spelling convention at Qumran, see Qimron, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 17.

197. Cf. Landes, "Jonah," *163.

198. Cf., e.g., the far greater number of Aramaisms found in Qoheleth, which dates from the Persian period; see Seow, "Linguistic Evidence," 650–54.

Furthermore, the typological misfit between Lamentations and both classic SBH and classic LBH strongly suggests that the language of Lamentations reflects a transitional stage between the two dominant phases of BH. As Hurvitz explains, "the term 'transitional period' implies that while it no longer includes all of the linguistic elements which typified the earlier period, at the same time it is still lacking some of the characteristic features of subsequent periods."[199] Other probable biblical sources evidencing this kind of transitional Hebrew include the books of Jonah and Ezekiel, both probably dating to the sixth century.[200]

In fact, the typological profile of the language of Lamentations finds its closest match in the language of the Book of Ezekiel. The two books share the following characteristics:

> 1) a relatively small number of late features when compared to classic LBH works (Lamentations, 18; Ezekiel, 37);[201]
> 2) even fewer late features which are used to the exclusion of their SBH counterparts (Lamentations, 7; Ezekiel, 6);[202]
> 3) Aramaisms which contribute significantly to the total number of LBH features (Lamentations, 9/16;[203] Ezekiel, 15/37);[204]
> 4) multiple cases in which the corresponding SBH and LBH features appear simultaneously (Lamentations, 8 pairs; B.1–5; D.2, 4, 8);[205]
> 5) a rather large number of SBH features used to the exclusion of their known LBH counterparts (Lamentations, 17; Ezekiel, 17).[206]

Thus, giving such striking similarities, it is reasonable to assume that, like Ezekiel, Lamentations should be dated to the sixth century. The general boundaries for this transitional period are marked by the Lachish and Arad inscriptions at one end and the post-exilic prophetic books of Malachi, Haggai, and Zechariah at the other end. The former obviously date to a time prior to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. These inscriptions share a number of isoglosses with Lamentations, all of which, with one exception (ʾny in Arad 88.1—and of course this pronoun is exemplified in other pre-exilic texts), involve SBH features. Thus, Lamentations must date after 587/86.

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199. *Linguistic Study*, 161.

200. For Ezekiel, see Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 160–62; Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 177–86. For Jonah, see Landes, "Jonah." A comprehensive linguistic study of the whole of Jeremiah, not to mention Second Isaiah, remains a desideratum. I have not had the opportunity to review A. R. Guenther's Ph.D. thesis ("A Diachronic Study of Biblical Hebrew Prose Syntax. An Analysis of the Verbal Clause in Jeremian 37–45 and Esther 1–10" [University of Toronto, 1977]), in which the author is reported to interpret the language of P as transitional between SBH and LBH (Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 171).

201. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 177. The greater number of late features in Ezekiel may at least be partially attributed to the book's larger size.

202. Ibid., 183–84.

203. Though all of the probable Aramaisms listed are compatible with a late dating, even if not all are diagnostically late.

204. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 177.

205. For Ezekiel, see Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, 162; cf. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew*, 183.

206. This is the number of features listed by Rooker in a chart of SBH (*Biblical Hebrew*, 185). However, since he does not discuss these in any detail, one is not sure if these are the only features of this kind in Ezekiel.

On the other hand, the post-exilic prophetic books have been dated on linguistic grounds to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century (ca. 520–460).[207] Lamentations would appear to predate these works. Therefore, one may conclude that the poems must have been composed in the period from 587/86 to 520 B.C.E. (or even perhaps somewhat later), confirming on a linguistic basis the opinion held by a majority of scholars, namely: that Lamentations dates to the general period following the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem.[208]

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207. Hill, "Malachi," 84–86.

208. In light of the isoglosses with the Lachish and Arad inscriptions, the numerous SBH features, and the clear contrast with other classic LBH works, such as Qoheleth, as well as other extra-linguistic considerations (for example, see now Willey's work on Second Isaiah [*Remember the Former Things*]), my own inclination is to date these poems earlier rather than later in this period. However, I would stress that linguistic data by itself rarely (if ever!) allows for precise dating, and certainly in the case of Lamentations, the linguistic evidence *alone* cannot be pressed much beyond the general parameters of the exilic period given above.