PLENE WRITING OF THE QÔTEL PATTERN IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

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The use of the matres lectionis in Hebrew in general, and in the Dead Sea Scrolls in particular, is a complex issue. Many scholars stress the fact that the Scrolls use these vowel letters much more than does the Masoretic Text (MT),1 but there is as of yet no comprehensive study of this phenomenon in the Scrolls. This paper2 investigates the use of the vowel letter waw in one specific group of forms: the Qal participle of the strong verb (including III-י and III-ʾ roots) in the qôtel pattern. The plene writing of this pattern, which developed after the Canaanite shift from the form *qāṭil, is widespread in the Scrolls, although not employed consistently. This paper describes the distribution of the spellings קוטל and קטל in the Scrolls (biblical and nonbiblical; from Qumran and from other Judean Desert sites). It includes lexicalized words in the qôtel pattern, most of which can be explained as participles with an independent semantic development.3

The distribution of defective writing in the Scrolls shows significant tendencies: (i) some manuscripts use defective writing more than do most of the other manuscripts; (ii) some roots are more often defective than others; (iii) many defective forms are found in fragmentary scrolls or in reconstructed contexts; (iv) some defective forms might be explained by a defective Vorlage; (v) nearly all of the defective forms for which the explanations (i)–(iv) do not fit are in the plural. There does not seem to be a connection between plene writing and the state—absolute or construct—of the participle.

1 E.g., E.Y. Kutscher, The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa*) (STDJ 6; Leiden: Brill, 1974), 5; or E. Qimron, The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls (HSS 29; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), §100.2.
2 This paper is part of a broader study on the Hebrew participle in the Dead Sea Scrolls, “The Participle in the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls” (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009 [in Hebrew]), which I wrote under the supervision of Prof. S. Fassberg; it has been published as Das hebräische Partizip in den Texten aus der judäischen Wüste (STDJ 101; Leiden: Brill, 2012).
I. Distribution according to the Manuscripts

In the nonbiblical scrolls, there are almost 1,000 participles preserved to a degree to which *plene* or defective writing is discernible (examples: *plene*: אִובָד, 1QHª 12:10; defective: לָבֶשׁ, 4Q273 4 i 6). Of this total, almost 80 participles are defective. Some manuscripts tend towards defective writing. In the following manuscripts more than 50% of the qōṭēl participles are defective: 4Q372 (defective 13; *plene*: 6); 4Q381 (defective 12; *plene*: 2); 4Q385a (defective 6; *plene*: 1); 4Q387 (defective 6; *plene*: 0); 4Q408 (defective 3; *plene*: 0). In all of these manuscripts the tendency towards defective writing is not confined to participles. All of them are dated to the early Herodian period or before. None of these manuscripts exhibit the “Qumran Scribal Practice.” Generally speaking, manuscripts of sectarian texts do not differ from other nonbiblical scrolls in respect of the defective writing.

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4 All the defective occurrences in this manuscript are nouns in the form of a participle (e.g., כְּהֵן). The only *plene* written form—[וָהֵנָט], K 2—is very fragmentary.

5 All occurrences in this manuscript can be considered nouns in the form of a participle, except for [וֹהַנָט] (2 ii 10).


7 The palaeographic dating of these manuscripts is, 4Q372: “late Hasmonaean/early Herodian hand, c. 50 BCE” (Schuller and Bernstein, DJD 28:165); 4Q381: “approximately 75 BCE” (Schuller, DJD n.88); 4Q385a: “late Hasmonaean or early Herodian (50–25 BCE)” (Dimant, DJD 30.132); 4Q387: “transition period from the Hasmonaean to the early Herodian […] between 50–25 BCE” (Dimant, DJD 30.174); 4Q408: “rather early in Hasmonaean times” (Steudel, DJD 36:301).