Instruction Shall Go Forth

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Studies in Micah and Isaiah

John T. Willis

edited by

Timothy M. Willis
and Mark W. Hamilton

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Introduction

The first redactor of the book of Qoheleth describes the work's author as someone who "was wise and moreover taught the people knowledge by hearing, considering, and arranging proverbs. . . . Finding pleasing words, and accurately writing reliable words" (Eccl 12:9–10). Such a description fits our honorand, John T. Willis, perhaps with less irony than its original subject. While his métier has not been the proverb, John has distinguished himself over many years as one who takes the Hebrew Bible with the utmost seriousness and unaffectedly seeks to make it understandable, believable, and livable to a modern audience. As a master teacher over many decades, as an expert in the Hebrew prophets, and as an author of popular works (especially for his religious tradition), he has always distinguished himself—and we should by no means speak only in the past tense!—as a scholar whose life has been given to the worthy cause of educating a broad audience in the ways of Scripture.

As his former students and now colleagues, we are privileged to present to a larger scholarly audience a selection of Willis's work on the prophets. Written over a period of more than four decades and thus reflecting the changing habits and values of our guild over that time, the collection stands as a consistent witness to the contemporary search for coherence in the elegant jaggedness of the prophetic books. Seeking to study these texts *as texts*, but more than that as religious literary works that have been disseminated and passionately perused because they reflect not only the concerns of their own world, but the concerns of humankind writ large, Willis has tried to let the Bible be heard on its own terms.

In similar fashion John displays a remarkable willingness to honor the views of the scholars who preceded him, and those who walk alongside him. And if we might sometimes wish that he had been a little less deferential and a bit bolder in going his own way, this reticence reflects a view of scholarship that is all too rare in our own time. Willis's work, without stating the claim overtly, operates on the twin assumptions that

knowledge is best advanced one careful step at a time and that this caution shows a respect for other practitioners of the discipline, a respect that in the long run will create a culture of learning that promotes genuine understanding more surely than a culture of agonistic strife. Rather than making sweeping claims that disintegrate with the passing of the next-to-last fashion, he has preferred a kind of scholarly craftsmanship that finds reliable results, however small, so that the community of scholars may grow in its understanding. Perhaps such an approach deserves wider practice than it sometimes enjoys.

Before describing the collection that follows, we do well to say a few words about John Willis the human being. He has been famous at his home institutions, first David Lipscomb College and then primarily Abilene Christian University, as the professor who knows the names and birthdays of hundreds of undergraduate students and remembers them years after they graduate and turn gray-haired. This phenomenal memory, fueled by a genuine care for others, has combined with an extraordinary generosity to make his classes and his home oases for young people far away from home. Generations of graduate students have experienced John as rigorous but fair, thorough but expansive of thought, and willing to work hard with those who share that drive. For the editors in particular, he has modeled the old Roman ideal of the *vir bonus*, the good man who carries out his profession well. And for one of us, he has succeeded masterfully in coupling the task of academic mentor to his personal role of *paterfamilias*.

The essays collected in this volume constitute the bulk of John's published work on Micah and Isaiah. All the entries save one—an essay on the structure of Isaiah 1–5—have appeared in print previously. The editors explored the possibility of including several other unpublished papers investigating the prophets, but space considerations and Willis's own unease with putting into print that with which he is not yet satisfied compelled us to limit this work to the selected items. We gave similar thought to the inclusion of both published and unpublished works on various psalms and other sections of the Hebrew Bible, but a desire to bring focus to the collection likewise precluded further expansion of the volume. What follows is a brief summary of the main theses of Willis's works on Micah and Isaiah, with some minor speculation on its place in the scholarly conversation.

Overview of Contributions to Micah Studies

John T. Willis entered into his scholarly career with his doctoral dissertation, "The Structure, Setting, and Interrelationships of the Pericopes in the Book of Micah," which he successfully defended before the faculty of Vanderbilt Divinity School in 1966. He proceeded to disseminate his conclusions further in a series of ten articles published in peer-reviewed journals between 1967 and 1970, and a Seminar Paper in the Proceedings of the 1978 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. The articles provide a mix of thorough treatments of the structure of the book of Micah and detailed analyses of selected crucial passages among its contents (e.g., 2:1; 2:6–8; 4:14—5:5).

The approach that Willis adopts primarily revolves around the redaction history of the book. He begins by outlining some of the typical examples of this approach produced over the preceding decades. Most involved the positing of certain assumptions about what an eighth-century prophet like Micah would or would not have said, identifying the passages that confirmed those assumptions and labeling them as the original pieces, and then reconstructing how the book was redacted from those original pieces through various expansions and alterations in response to historical and theological developments in Israel/Judah until it reached its final form somewhere between the fall of Jerusalem in the early sixth century and the early stages of the canonization of the Hebrew Bible in the late Hellenistic period. The standard proposal, formulated by Stade and championed more recently by commentators like Wolff, limits the contributions of the eighth century prophet to the first three chapters, with two or more epigones expanding the book in subsequent centuries with blocks of oracles during times of national crisis.[1] A common alternative regards the contents as more fragmented groups of oracles gradually brought together into a single, loosely-arranged book through a long process of transmission.

Willis enters into this field of study dominated by proposals of fragmentation and offers a very different reconstruction. He argues that one should start with the final form of the book and seek to discern its overall structure and flow. Once a structure and flow are established, the redaction critic can then work backwards from the final redaction and attempt to reconstruct the book's preceding redactional layers. Like others before

1. Stade, "Bemerkungen über das Buch Micha"; Wolff, *Micah*.

him, Willis identifies as main guideposts the location of the summons, "Hear!" in Mic 1:2; 3:1; and 6:1. These guideposts suggest three blocks of oracles in the book: chapters 1–2, 3–5, and 6–7. Willis breaks some new ground in the way he sees a common progression in each section, a progression from doom oracles to hope oracles (1:2—2:11 + 2:12–13; 3:1–12 + 4:1—5:15; 6:1—7:6 + 7:7–20). Having established a possible structure, Willis then identifies verbal and thematic linkages that run both "horizontally" and "vertically" throughout the sections of the book. In other words, he finds significant similarities between the language (catchwords, etc.) and message of the doom oracles in all three sections, and significant similarities between the language and message of the hope oracles in all three sections. Moreover, one can show that the descriptions and justifications for the punishments in the doom oracles of each section indicate that the punishments are the necessary prerequisites for the promised times of restoration given in each corresponding set of hope oracles.

Willis attributes the structure to a compiler(s) living during the Babylonian crisis, when the longstanding signs of Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh were swept away. A redactor presents the prophet's message anew to a generation of believers that shared many of the same attitudes and experiences of Micah's original audience during the Assyrian crisis. Willis contends that the contents of the individual oracles need not have changed much in the process of being redacted for later audiences, and the primary difference is in refinements to the repeated doom-hope structure of the book.

The most profound element of the analysis, though, comes in the theological rationale Willis proposes for the doom-hope structure. Source and redaction critics often assume that it would be unlikely for a single author to place doom and hope oracles side by side, as one would seem to undermine the other. Many redaction critics thus regard hope oracles in Micah as secondary additions to a prophetic collection of doom oracles. Willis proposes that the repeated juxtaposition of doom oracles and hope oracles was essential to the message that Micah presented to his original audience, and that it was a primary reason for redactors to reuse and expand Micah's work to later generations. The juxtaposition illustrates the principle of *jus talionis*—Yahweh sends punishments that befit the offenses. Moreover, he does this within the larger context of a long-term relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel. Careful comparisons of the language and imagery of the doom and hope oracles in each

section demonstrate the thematic elements they share in common. These common elements show that Yahweh is responsible for both destruction and restoration, for death and life. If it were not so, then the people could conclude that their collective suffering came from a source that existed outside the realm of Yahweh's power and authority, which would make it truly frightening. And if Yahweh were to act solely with wrath, he would be untrue to his divine character. Because both destruction and restoration come from Yahweh, the people can be reassured that the devastation endured by Israel and Judah will not be the final word. It is in hope and anticipation of the future restoration that the people can endure the present punishment, but only if they understand that the one promising future restoration has authority over the forces of the present punishment. In fact, both destruction and restoration result from the same premise—that Yahweh is in covenant relationship with Israel. The same motivation—the desire of a righteous and loving God to dwell among and exist in intimate relationship with His chosen people—prompts both actions, destruction as a response to willful sin and reconstruction as a response to genuine repentance and obedience.

There is a real beauty to this analysis that imitates the beauty it proposes for the book of Micah itself. Not only does it show a balanced literary structure, that structure is employed in the service of the prophet's theological message, which gives an equally balanced portrayal of Yahweh's character (see, for example, Exod 34:6–7 and related passages; Ps 78:32–39). It would be inaccurate to assert that this analysis of the book's structure has won widespread acceptance. Some subsequent commentaries on Micah follow this proposal in its main contours, but others maintain the more fragmented reconstruction formulated by Stade.[2] It would be more appropriate to say that Willis represents an early voice among several recent studies that attribute a well-developed and balanced theological perspective to Israel's eighth-century prophets, rather than postponing that until the days of the Exile.

2. Among English-speaking commentators of the recent past, the closest adherent to Willis's proposal would be Bruce K. Waltke (*A Commentary on Micah*), and Leslie C. Allen does not diverge greatly (*The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*). A couple of studies minimize the significance of 2:12–13 to the book's structure and see all of Micah 1–5 as a block (Hagstrom, *The Coherence of the Book of Micah*; Jacobs, *The Conceptual Coherence of the Book of Micah*). The basic outline of Bernhard Stade and Hans Walter Wolff holds sway with others, such as William McKane (*The Book of Micah*) and Philip Peter Jenson (*Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*).

The Book of Isaiah

If his extensive early work on Micah invited interpreters to see the book as a well-wrought theological whole, his ongoing research on Isaiah has done that and more. Over the past four decades he has published a commentary[3] and a series of articles on literary, historical, and theological issues, the chief of which are included in this volume. All of this work shows meticulous attention to detail in the biblical text, a preference for the MT but with thorough attention to alternative ancient versions, careful documentation of all scholarly views, and a suspicion of unnecessary emendation or fanciful readings. In every case, this work clears away much previous sloppy thinking and misuse of evidence and draws conclusions that deepen our understanding of the pericope in question, and thus of Isaiah as a whole.

Professor Willis has been a fixture in the long-running discussion of Isaiah at the Annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, where he continues to be active. The years of his activity have coincided with a revolution in scholarship on the book, including publications of major commentaries by Childs, Beuken, Koole, Blenkinsopp, Paul, Baltzer, Sweeney, and others, all of which are well known. The revolution that has occurred over the past four decades has focused much greater attention on Isaiah as a book with both a long and rich interpretive history and an internal coherence and intricacy that reflects a very complex yet deliberate and artistically sophisticated process of creation over a period of generations. Far from being a loose collection of oracles from Isaiah of Jerusalem and anonymous epigones, the book has come to seem a great work of art singular in scope and focus. As Blenkinsopp puts it with characteristic sophistication, "Isaiah, a collection of many 'scraps' and several compilations differing in linguistic character and theme, therefore much closer to the *Dodekapropheton* than to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, is nevertheless presented as a unity, *a book*."[4] Professor Willis's work has played a role in the growth of such an understanding.

Collectively these essays address major aspects of the structure of Isaiah 1–39, sorting through the role of the book's opening(s) and a major transitional point in its overall structure. The first four essays address questions regarding the construction of chapter 1, which serves as more

3. Willis, *Isaiah*.

4. Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book*, 6. Emphasis in the original.

than a précis of the First Isaiah's work, but rather as an introduction to the entire book. In a motif that echoes a main theme in Micah, the author(s)/redactor(s) set up the overall work's dialectic between doom and hope, and thus Isaiah 1 anticipates much that follows it. In a related vein, Willis shows that the placement of chapter 5 is deliberate and that the complex use of multiple literary genres in that pericope serves as a foretaste, again, of the book as a whole.

On the whole, these essays mark an advance, characteristic of recent Anglophone and to some extent European scholarship, in understanding Isaiah as a deliberately constructed artistic whole. Unlike the fragmenting approach of the previous generation of redaction critics, Willis's work thinks of Isaiah as a "book" that can be engaged (read, enacted) as a whole. This approach does not move into a purely synchronic reading, since the text does reveal evidence of its own disparate origins. Yet at the same time, by addressing the function of individual text units within the larger entity called "Isaiah," the articles collected here open the door to a richer understanding of the multiple affects and ideas that the prophetic book proposes.

Similarly, Willis's essays on chapter 22 do more than elucidate an interesting text. They illustrate how the development of that text, in the historical situation of the eighth century and later in the formation of the entire book of Isaiah, could shape its interpretation even centuries later. Some of Willis's conclusions in these essays might surprise some modern readers (particularly the Protestant ones, as when he concludes that Jesus' gift of the keys to Peter draws on a set of imagery suggesting Peter's role as his "major domo" in the heavenly kingdom). But such essays illustrate Willis's commitment to let the Bible be heard on its own terms rather than just those of later generations. In other words, they provide an example, one of several possible ones, of the very process of interpretation and reinterpretation that Brevard Childs, in his last book, felicitously called "the struggle to understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture."[5]

A Note on the Editing of This Work

To conclude this introduction, we should explain the editorial approach underlying it. With few exceptions, we have represented these essays as they originally appeared. Aside from obvious typographical errors in the

5. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture*.

original published articles, changes are limited to a standardization of the footnotes in the contemporary SBL style. We have not updated the bibliography because doing so would have meant substantial rewriting in places. Nor have we eliminated various elements of the text that reflect older scholarly conventions (such as references to Canaanite Baalism or other constructions of the history of Israelite religion) or non-gender-inclusive language. In general, these items occur so rarely and are of so little consequence to the overall argument that we believed that change was unnecessary. We crave the reader's indulgence on the rare occasion when a sentence or two seems dated or ill-judged in view of subsequent scholarship. Our belief is that presenting the articles in their original form allows the reader to trace the development of Professor Willis's work and, more importantly perhaps, to recall the ways in which the studies of the prophets have evolved over the past few decades.

Finally, we thank a number of persons who have made this work possible. In addition to John Willis himself, we must thank his gracious and supportive wife Evelyn, whose partnership with John is a thing of beauty in its own right. We also thank our own universities for their support. A number of our students and staff colleagues also did significant work at various stages of the editing of this volume, especially Morgan Philpott and Matt Fredrickson at Abilene Christian University and Tiffany Ferguson at Pepperdine. Moreover, we are grateful to J. J. M. Roberts and Rick R. Marrs for their contributions to a recent seminar session on Professor Willis's contributions to the study of the eighth-century prophets. Their observations and support for the present project have been of incalculable value to the quality of the work.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
AJT	*American Journal of Theology*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*
ANQ	*Andover Newton Quarterly*
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen*
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BAT	Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments
BDB	Brown, Driver, and Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BeO	Bibbia e oriente
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BH^3	*Biblia Hebraica*^{3}
Bib	*Biblica*
BibLeb	*Bibel und Leben*
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BibS(N)	Biblische Studien (Neukirchen, 1951–)
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BR	*Biblical Research*
BRev	*Bible Review*
BW	*Biblical World*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*

BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
CMQ	*Canadian Methodist Quarterly*
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CTQ	*Concordia Theological Quarterly*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DOTT	*Documents from Old Testament Times*
DTT	*Dansk teologisk tidsskrift*
EB	Echter Bibel
EBib	*Etudes bibliques*
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
EI	*Eretz-Israel*
Enc	*Encounter*
EstEcl	*Estudios Eclesiásticos*
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen
FT	*Folia Theologica*
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HeyJ	*Heythrop Journal*
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSAT	Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
ITC	International Theological Commentary
ITQ	*Irish Theological Quarterly*

JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Scoiety*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JOTT	*Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics*
JPT	*Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHAT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KVHS	Korte verklaring der Heilige Schrift
LASBF	*Liber annuus Studii biblici franciscani*
LD	Lectio Divina
LQ	*Lutheran Quarterly*
MelT	*Melita Theologica*
NCB	New Century Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NKZ	*Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift*
NTT	*Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift*
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
POut	De Prediking van het Oude Testament

Proof	*Prooftexts*
PSB	*Princeton Seminary Bulletin*
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
RB	*Revue biblique*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RHB	Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
RivB	*Rivista Biblica*
RSém	*Revue de Sémitique*
RSPT	*Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*
RTP	*Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*
SB	Sources bibliques
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SBOT	Sacred Books of the Old Testament
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
Scr	*Scripture*
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
SEÅ	*Svensk Exegetisk* Årsbok
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
ST	*Studia Theologica*
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TeU	Tekst en uitleg
ThEv	*Theologia Evangelica*
ThT	*Theologisch tijdschrift*
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
TRu	*Theologische Rundschau*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TThSt	Trierer Theologische Studien

TTZ	*Trierer theologische Zeitschrift*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VD	*Verbum Domini*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WD	*Wort und Dienst*
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZBK	Züricher Bibelkommentare
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZS	*Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

PART ONE

The Book of Micah

1

The Structure of the Book of Micah[1]

A Survey of Analytical Approaches to the Book of Micah

Hand in hand with the increasing persistence of form criticism and traditio-historical criticism, there has been a growing awareness that the scholar's first duty in approaching a piece of literature is to analyze it as it now stands to determine whether it has some sort of meaningful arrangement and if so to attempt to understand the purpose of the message which such a significant structure might exhibit. During the past century, five basic explanations of the present arrangement of the book of Micah have emerged, each differing in details in harmony with the particular interpretation of the individual critic.

(1) Several scholars find that the final form of the book of Micah is hopelessly incoherent as a result of accidental or intentional disarrangement of the original material in transmission. They seek to restore the original coherence by rearranging the pericopes in their original order. Haupt and Hanon[2] represent attempts to organize verses and pericopes in the order that they became a part of the book chronologically, while Elhorst and Halévy[3] represent attempts to organize the material logically by

1. Due to limitations of space, a lengthy defense of many statements in this paper is impossible. The reader is invited to examine my dissertation, "The Structure, Setting, and Interrelationships of the Pericopes in the Book of Micah," Vanderbilt Divinity School, 1966, and my other articles on various aspects of Micah studies alluded to in the notes below. The versification throughout this paper follows the MT.

2. Haupt, "The Book of Micah," 26:201–52; 27:1–62; Steinmann and Hanon, *Michée,* 12–14.

3. Elhorst, *De Prophetie van Micha*, 66–96; Halévy, "Le Livre de Michée," 12:97–117, 193–216, 289–312; 13:1–22.

grouping similar subject matter. The differences between the "original order" of the book as it is restored by each scholar who has advocated this approach is ample evidence of its inherent subjectivity.

(2) The most common explanation of the final form of the book of Micah (and especially of chs. 4–7) is that it is a collection of pericopes that arose at different times and in different situations, which came together in piecemeal fashion. Thus the book is composed of several disconnected incoherent pericopes, like Hosea and in fact all the prophetic books.[4] Budde has gone so far as to suggest that Micah 4–7, like Zechariah 9–14, served post-exilic editors of the prophetic corpus as a "catch-all" for late eschatological oracles.[5] Several scholars exhibit a modified form of this view when they explain the supposed incoherence of the book by arguing that it contains summaries of the prophet's message or perhaps oracles delivered by the prophet on different occasions, which were subsequently poorly arranged.[6] In my opinion, the "incoherence" which many critics find in the book of Micah is imaginary, and grows out of the propensity of modern man to judge the literature of ancient man according to his own rigid criteria.

(3) A number of critics think that the present book of Micah is a compilation of originally independent collections of prophetic oracles, although they do not agree as to their extent. Most scholars who offer this explanation find between two and four large groups of oracles in the book. Ewald and recently Kraeling[7] find two collections: chs. 1–5 and 6–7. W. R. Smith and T. H. Robinson discover three,[8] but the extent delineated by each scholar differs, Smith dividing the book into 1–5; 6:1—7:6, and 7:7–20, but Robinson dividing it into 1–3, 4–5, and 6–7. Baudissin and recently Pákozdy see four original collections,[9] the former suggesting 1–3, 4–5, 6:1—7:6, and 7:7–20, but the latter suggesting 1–3, 4:1—5:9, 5:10—7:7, and 7:8–20. However, if it can be demonstrated that there are

4. Cf. i.e., Wade, *The Books of the Prophets*, xx; Cheyne, *Micah*, 10; Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch*, 328; and Gautier, *Introduction*, 502, 506.

5. Budde, "Verfasser," 157.

6. See Driver, *An Introduction*, 325–26.

7. Kraeling, *Commentary*, 325–26.

8. Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, 365, 427 n. 3, 428 n. 5, 439 n. 13; Robinson, *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten*, 127–28.

9. Baudissin, *Einleitung*, 525–26, 529, 532–33. Pákozdy, "Michabuch," col. 1211.

interrelationships between the different parts of the book, it would be incredible to think that two or more different collectors, each working independent of the other, could produce two, three, or four separate works as similar in structure, contents, and sequence of thought, and as interdependent as the present form of the book of Micah seems to be.

(4) Another view which is somewhat related to this explanation maintains that while the present form of the book of Micah is not a compilation of originally independent collections, it is the end product of a long literary history. This began with a nucleus of original Mican oracles. As these were handed down, several redactors from different historical eras revised the original book and added new material to it, each in order to contemporize it for his own community, or to make it reflect his own theological biases, or for other reasons, some of which may not be discoverable.

At least four theories of how this process took place have been promulgated. (a) Principally in order to explain apparent contradictory teachings in the pericopes of chs. 4–5, Stade advanced what might be called the "two epigone" hypothesis.[10] He maintains that originally the book of Micah was composed of 1:1—2:11; 3. But since this work contained only doom oracles, it was in constant danger of being eliminated from the Jewish tradition, and would have been if Micah had not received such high commendation in Jer 26:17ff. In the post-Jeremian period, one epigone added 4:1–4; 4:11—5:3; 5:6–8, 9–14. "Der Grund, aus welchem jener Epigone seine Ausführungen hinter 3,12 einschaltete, war ohne Zweifel dieser, dass er an der Einseitigkeit des Inhalts von Kap. 1–3 einen nicht unberechtigten Anstoß nahm."[11] Later, a second epigone, thinking that the additions of the first epigone were Mican, added 4:5–10 and 5:4–5 to promote the view that Israel's enemies would be defeated. (b) Marti believes that the original material in the book of Micah is 1:5b, 6, 8, 9, 16; 2:1–3, 4(?), 6–11; 3:1, 2a, 3a, 4, 5a, 2b, 5b–8, 9–12. The rest of the material in the book (except for the additions in chs. 1–3) was grouped around two "poles" or "cores," viz., 4:1–4 and 6:6–8. About 500 BCE, 4:1–4 was added to the original corpus to modify the negative impact of 3:9–12. Shortly afterward, 6:6–8 was added to 4:1–4, the two pericopes being connected by the transitional verse 4:5.

10. Stade, "Bemerkungen," 161–72.

11. Ibid., 170.

Between the fifth and second centuries, the other passages in chs. 4–7 were added at different times and under various circumstances, some accruing to 4:1–4 and some to 6:6–8.[12] (c) The most common view of the gradual growth of the book of Micah outlines three stages through which the material passed: the period of collecting and writing down the genuine oracles, a rather long nebulous period in which various additions and changes were made, and the period in which the book reached its final form. G. B. Gray seems to have been the first scholar to advance this view,[13] and he has been followed by several outstanding critics. The original materials for Gray are 1:2–2:11; 3; 4:14; 5:9–13; 6:1—7:6.[14] They provide a summary of Micah's teaching and were possibly written down by the prophet himself. Jeremiah 26:17ff. indicates that it was this form of the book (containing only doom oracles) which was known in Jerusalem at the end of the seventh century BCE. Between that time and the third century BCE, the original material was re-edited, provided with an expanded title, and enlarged by a collection of prophetic pieces both of pre-exilic and post-exilic origin. The book of Micah reached its final form toward the end of the third century, when it was incorporated into the Book of the Twelve. (d) G. Hylmö offers a very complex reconstruction of the development of the book of Micah. He thinks the prophet himself edited chs. 1–3. Also Micah's friends and disciples preserved a few genuine oracles which were later incorporated into the book: 4:9–10a; 4:14—5:1; 5:9–12a, 13b. But Jer 26:18 shows that the book of Micah ended with 3:12 in the time of Jeremiah, indicating that these passages were inserted after that time. The person who added these verses to Micah's own edition also inserted 2:12–13 in its present position. Later, another redactor inserted 4:1–4, 5, 8. Near the Greek period, another redactor added 4:6–7, 11–13; 5:2–3, 4–5, 6–7, at the same time "retouching" 4:6–7, 10a, so that they would correspond to 4:1–4 and. 2:12–13. A later redactor had in his possession some early detached pericopes, viz., 6:1–4, 6–8, 9–15; 7:1–4, which he appended to 5:9–13. All of these earlier passages except 6:6–8 originated in the seventh century. They had probably already been connected by 6:5, 16; 7:5–6, before their insertion into the Mican corpus. Later, another redactor added

12. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten*, 262–64.

13. Gray, "Micah, Book of," 614–15.

14. In his later work, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, 219, Gray rejects the authenticity of 4:14; 5:9–13; and 6:1—7:6.

7:7–10, 11–13, 14–20, and either he or still another redactor added 5:8, 14 to complete the book.[15]

Surely, it must be agreed that the present form of the book of Micah is the end product of a rather long and complex evolution. But, as is now becoming increasingly apparent with biblical literature in general, this evolution involves oral as well as written transmission,[16] and the abridgement of originally longer oracles as well as the expansion of earlier material.[17] It must also be kept in mind that some, if not much, of the material in the present book (and some possibly in its present order) shaped the thinking of the final redactor. Thus, while it is true that the theology of the "final redactor" must have determined the shape of the final form of the book, the material with which the redactor worked must have shaped his theology and made a determinative impression on him as he sought to make the traditional material in his possession relevant to the problems of his contemporary situation. Furthermore, it needs to be realized that as one attempts to reconstruct the history through which the materials passed from their original oral delivery to the final form of the book, the impression which the book as a whole makes on him influences his decisions with regard to the evolution of this material in its oral and written stages. Therefore, in my opinion, the proper method of approach to biblical literature in general (and to the book of Micah in particular) must begin with the final form of the literary piece and from this work back through the written and oral stages of transmission to the "original" form of its component parts, which was sometimes written and sometimes oral.[18]

(5) A few leading scholars defend the view that the book of Micah was put together on the basis of chronological considerations. Perhaps the most ingenious and certainly the most stimulating presentation of this analysis is that of A. van Hoonacker.[19] He argues that chs. 1–3 were writ-

15. Hylmö, *Kompositionen*, 286–88.

16. With regard to the book of Micah, we may call attention to the treatment of 4:1–5 by Ringgren, "Oral and Written Transmission," 34–59; and to the analysis of chs. 4–5 by Nielsen, *Oral Tradition*, 79–93.

17. Cf. e.g., Budde, "Eine folgenschwere Redaktion," 218–29; and Willis, "A Note on ואמר," 51–52.

18. See the important work by Koch, *Was ist Formgeschichte?* and on this point esp. 54.

19. Hoonacker, *Les douze petits prophètes*, 339–411.

ten in connection with Shalmaneser V's invasion of Palestine (725–722 B.C.E.). Jeremiah 26:18 assigns Mic 3:12 to the reign of Hezekiah, but 2 Kgs 18:9–10 indicate that Hezekiah's reign began in 727. Furthermore, the corrupt text in Mic 2:8 should be emended to *šlmn'ṣr*, "Shalmaneser."[20] The oracles in chs. 4–5 come from the period after the fall of Samaria. The Assyrians had left Palestine and the Judeans had occasion to rejoice because the threat was lifted. Since Judah had been spared from the invasion of Shalmaneser V, no promise would be too astonishing for the people to believe. Now Micah would not have spoken the things preserved in chs. 4–5 unless Judah has repented of the evils which he had condemned in chs. 1–3. Jeremiah 26:18–20 speaks of just such a repentance led by Hezekiah. It is logical to believe that chs. 4–5 represent encouragements that Micah gave those who participated in this reform. Van Hoonacker's treatment of chs. 6–7 is very complicated. This material is Mican and comes from the period after the fall of Samaria. It is composed of two parts: 6:1—7:6, 7:11b–13, and 7:7–11a, 14–20. The prophet's major concern here is with Samaria's spiritual response to the invasion of Shalmaneser V. Micah urges the city to interpret this disaster as Yahweh's chastisement intended to bring her to repentance. To accomplish this, he creates a dramatic fiction in which he identifies himself with Samaria. His own repentance and confession are a way of representing Samaria's repentance. His action is the action he hopes to evoke from Samaria. But this passage assumes that the overthrow of the Northern kingdom had already taken place. Now the two parts of chs. 6–7 are inseparable, so the entire section must be a prophetic fiction. Thus, the chastisements which seem to be in the present or immediate future are actually in the past. The past tense is used in 6:12–13 because the author forgot momentarily that he was presenting a fiction. 6:6–7 and 7:4ff. show that the writer knew the trials through which the people had passed. The fallen city had already resigned herself to her chastisement (7:9), although 6:9ff. and 7:4bff. present the chastisement as still in the future. 6:1ff. describes Yahweh's intervention as a present reality, but 7:7ff. as a coming event. The purpose of the whole section is to show Samaria that her punishment and humiliation were the result of her sins.

The view that the various sections of the book of Micah contain oracles grouped together because they belong to the same general

20. For an extensive treatment of the text of Mic 2:8, see my article, Willis, "Micah 2:6–8," 72–87.

chronological period is to be rejected. There is just not enough objective evidence in the individual pericopes with regard to date to justify such an analysis, and often unnatural explanations of the text are necessary to support it.

The Horizontal Coherence of the Book

Under the growing influence of form criticism and traditio-historical criticism, within the past fifteen years a number of scholars have called attention to the coherent structure of the book of Micah. We may mention such names as A. George,[21] A. Weiser,[22] von Ungern-Sternberg,[23] Kapelrud,[24] and Schilling.[25] But as far as I am able to learn, no critic has undertaken the task of providing an extensive demonstration of this coherence.[26] The purpose of this paper is to try to demonstrate that this book has a basic coherence, which would indicate that its arrangement is the result of a well devised purpose, and to invite dialogue to correct flaws in the presentation or to present a radically different alternative so as to further illuminate the nature and purpose of the present form of this prophetic work.

It seems most natural to divide the book of Micah into three major sections: 1–2 (I), 3–5 (II), 6–7 (III).[27] Each section then begins with *šimʿû* (1:2; 3:1; 6:1), and we have three doom sections (1:2—2:11; 3; 6:1–7) followed by three hope sections (2:12–13; 4–5; 7:7–20). The symmetry of this analysis of the book may be demonstrated in broad outline by the following chart.

21. George, "Michée (Le Livre de)," cols. 1252–63; George, *La Sainte Bible*, 11–12.

22. Weiser, *Das Buch der zwölf Kleinen Propheten*, 231, 263, 267, 269; Weiser, *The Old Testament*, 255.

23. Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Rechtsstreit Gottes,* 24, 26, 84–85, 93–94, 118, 123, 133.

24. Kapelrud, "Mikas Bok," col. 106.

25. Schilling, "Michäas," col. 391.

26. Ladame, "Les chapitres IV et V," 446–61; Nielsen, *Oral Tradition*, 79–93; and Renaud, *Structure*, have provided rather extensive attempts to demonstrate the coherence of chs. 4–5.

27. In my essay, "The Structure of Micah 3–5," 191–214, there is a lengthy discussion of the various views of the major divisions of the book of Micah, and I have given my reasons for rejecting divisions other than chs. 1–2, 3–5, and 6–7. As pointed out in that essay, the two major problems are: (1) Should a major division be made between chs. 3 and 4 or between chs. 2 and 3? (2) At what point should a major division be made between chs. 5 and 6?

Structure of the Book of Micah

Type of Oracle	Part I Chs. 1–2	Part II Chs. 3–5	Part III Chs. 6–7
Doom	1:2—2:11 Extensive	Ch. 3 Brief	6:1—7:6 Extensive
Hope	2:12–13 Brief	Chs. 4–5 Extensive	7:7–20 Brief

Such an arrangement gives the impression of being the result of a well-conceived plan, and we may assume that the person (or persons) responsible for this structure had a specific purpose in mind when he produced this work. The general doom-hope arrangement as well as the passages in the book which exhibit a liturgical character (in my opinion, these are 2:12–13; 4:5; 5:8; 6:9b; and 7:7–20)[28] seem to justify the conjecture that its final form was intended to be used by a specific worshipping or cultic community which was struggling with a particular type of problem in its own historical situation.

Now if the book of Micah was purposefully arranged, we may expect to find striking parallels in form and ideology within the three sections of doom on the one hand and within the three sections of hope on the other. In other words, there should be a *horizontal* coherence in the book.

Affinities in the Doom Sections

All three doom sections begin with "Hear" (see above). Sections I and III begin with a covenant lawsuit (1:2–7; 6:1–8), and each contains a lament (1:8–16; 7:1–6) and an oracle giving the reasons for the impending doom (2:1–11; 6:9–16). Furthermore, the structures of the lawsuits in these two sections have interesting similarities. (a) Each begins with a summons to witnesses to hear Yahweh's accusation against his people. In the former, the summons is to the peoples and the earth (1:2a),[29] and in the latter to the mountains, hills, and foundations of the earth (6:1–2). (b) In both passages, Yahweh himself appears as Israel's accuser (1:2b–4; 6:3–5). (c) Both pericopes present general (rather than specific) accusa-

28. For a discussion of this point, see my dissertation, Willis, "The Structure, Setting, and Interrelationships," 123–35.

29. Cf. Willis, "Some Suggestions," 372–79.

tions which Yahweh brings against his people (1:5; 6:3–5). (d) In both lawsuits, Yahweh announces impending judgment on his hearers (1:6–7; 6:13–15).[30]

The central section of the book of Micah has a different structure. Whereas chs. 1–2 and 6–7 are predominantly oracles of doom, chs. 3–5 are primarily oracles of hope. Unlike the doom oracles in Sections I and III, ch. 3 is composed of three parallel pericopes of approximately equal length (vv. 1–4, 5–8, 9–12) and of similar structure.[31] Therefore, we seem driven to the conclusion that the book of Micah exhibits and A–B–A pattern. And the fact that the arrangement of ch. 3 is different from that of 1:2—2:11 and 6:1—7:6 argues *in favor of* a well-conceived plan in the book, *not against it*.

The three doom sections of the book all describe Yahweh's punishment of Israel's sins according to the principle of *jus talionis*. In section I, we are told that because Israel had heaped up riches for her sanctuaries by sacred prostitution, their riches would be carried into a foreign land to be used for sacred prostitution (1:7). And because the rich had "devised evil" against the poor, Yahweh will "devise evil" against them (2:1, 3). Just as the rich had seized the fields of the poor, so Yahweh will send an enemy to seize the promised land from them (2:2, 4–5). The rich had driven the poor out of their houses, therefore Yahweh will send an enemy to drive them out of their land (2:9–10). In section II, it is announced that since the leading classes in Israel had consumed the flesh of the poor, their flesh also would be consumed (3:2b–3). Again, because Israel's rulers had not hearkened to the cries of the poor, Yahweh will not hearken to them when they cry unto him (3:2–4). The popular prophets had not used the gift of prophecy with responsibility, therefore Yahweh will deprive them of this gift (3:5–6). The Judean leaders had built up Zion with blood and iniquity, so Zion shall be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become heaps, and the temple mountain a forest sanctuary (3:10–12). In section III, the point is made that as the rich had deprived the poor of the necessities of life, they themselves will be deprived of prosperity, food, and security from the invader (6:10–15). There is a word play in 7:4 which seems to involve the principle of *jus talionis*. Since even the

30. I have offered a limited defense of the unity of Micah 6 in my "Review of *Micah 6, 6–8*," 273–78.

31. On the similarity of the structure of vv. 1–4 and 9–12, see Westermann, *Basic Forms,* 174–75.

most upright in Israel are as a thorn hedge (*mimmĕsûkkāh*), they will suffer perplexity (*mĕbûkātām*). It is significant that 7:9 (in the final section of hope) assumes that indignation is the natural consequence of sin.[32]

The three doom sections emphasize the extreme severity of the impending punishment. Section I declares that Samaria will become as a heap of the field, as a place for planting vineyards. Her stones will be poured down into the valley, her foundations will be uncovered, her graven images will be beaten to pieces, her Asherim burned, her idols made desolate, and the rich ornamentation of her sanctuaries carried into captivity (1:6–7). Her punishment will be like an incurable wound inflicted by Yahweh that spreads as far as Jerusalem (1:9, 12). Yahweh brings the Assyrian army into the land to overthrow the fortified cities that had been built to protect Jerusalem. The enemy marches up to the gate of Jerusalem (1:9, 12), besieges the city, and carries away many of the inhabitants of the land into captivity (1:16). The destruction will be complete ("we are utterly ruined," 2:4), and the enemy will take over the land for its own possession and distribute it to its own people (2:4–5). The rich oppressors will be carried into exile, and Israel will suffer "a grievous destruction" (2:10). In section II, the prophet states that the rich oppressors will be treated shamefully because of their treatment of the poor (3:3). Yahweh will intentionally turn his face away when they cry to him for help (3:4). The popular prophets will be completely divested of their visions, and shamefully exposed before their clients (3:6–7). And like Samaria (1:6), Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become heaps, and the temple mountain will be reduced to a forest sanctuary, presumably by an invading army (3:12). In section III, the impending punishment is compared with a grievous wound (6:13), as in 1:9. The enemy army will completely desolate the land (6:13, 16). That which the people attempt to save will be given over to the sword (6:14), and the enemy will enjoy the harvest of Israel's labor (6:15). The divine visitation will bring great perplexity to Israel (7:4), and a portion of the inhabitants of the land will be carried into captivity.[33] The following table

32. See Willis, "On the Text," 539–41.

33. A partial captivity is implied by *hašmeēm* (6:13) and *lĕšammāh* (6:16). One thing involved in making a land desolate was carrying some of its inhabitants into captivity. See Isa 6:11–13; Mic 1:7 (in which it is implied that idols are made desolate by their ornamentation being carried away by the conqueror); Jer 6:8; 9:10; 34:22. *mĕbûkātām* (7:4) also seems to include a captivity of some of the inhabitants of the land, as a comparison with Isa 22:5 (with its surrounding context) would seem to suggest.

summarizes the striking similarities between the doom sections with regard to punishment.

Similarities in the Emphasis on Severe Punishment in Micah's Doom Sections

Description of Punishment	Section I	Section II	Section III
Principle of *jus talionis*	1:7; 2:1, 3; 2:2, 4–5; 2:9–10	3:2b–3; 3:2–4; 3:5–6; 3:10, 12	6:10–15; 7:4; 7:9
Type of Oracle	Part I Chs. 1–2	Part II Chs. 3–5	Part III Chs. 6–7
Doom	1:2–2:11 Extensive	Ch. 3 Brief	6:1—7:6 Extensive
Hope	2:12–13 Brief	Chs. 4–5 Extensive	7:7–20 Brief

The concept of sin is the same throughout the doom sections in Micah. *peša'* and *ḥaṭṭā't* occur together in all three sections (I—1:5, 13; II—3:8; III—6:7). The only place that either of those words occurs without the other in the doom sections is in 6:13.[34] Throughout the doom sections, sin is understood as failure to practice *mišpāṭ*, which is used in Micah as a summary for all the law, and has to do primarily with man's responsibility to man.[35] The word *mišpāṭ* itself appears in sections II (3:1, 8, 9) and III (6:8), but the specific sins condemned in all three sections indicate that this idea underlies what is said of sin in section I, even though the word itself does not occur there.

The specific sins condemned in the doom sections are so similar that they can be discussed together. The people are reproached because they feel no responsibility to treat one another justly. The "haves" mistreat the "have-nots" by seizing their fields, homes (2:2, 9), and clothing (2:8) and by oppressing the poor (2:2; 3:2–3; 6:12; 7:2), the orphans, and the widows (2:9). But these oppressors are religious people. They demand prophets after their own heart, who will declare Yahweh's mercies and mighty acts (2:6, 11), but without applying their meaning to them (6:3–5) or reproaching them in any way (2:6–7). They approach Yahweh willing to offer sacrifices of the greatest quantity and quality (6:6–7), but

34. These two words also occur together in the last hope section 7:18–19.

35. See Lindblom, *Micah*, 172.

unwilling to experience a real transformation of life (6:8). Their main concern is their own gain at any cost. They wrest possessions from the poor by practicing iniquity and bribery in the courts (3:9, 11; 7:8). They use false weights and measures to cheat their customers (6:10–11). No one can be trusted, not even the most intimate members of one's family (7:5–6). And yet, these very people expect Yahweh to intervene in their behalf whenever they wish. After all, they are God's people (2:7), and thus are worthy of his help in any time of distress (1:12; 3:4, 11).

All three sections of doom single out the capital as the center of corruption in Israel and Judah (I, 1:5, 6, 9, 12, 16; II, 3:10, 12; III, 6:9). This is implied in passages which single out leaders of the people as guilty of heinous crimes against society (I, 2:1–2, 8–9, 11; II, 3:1, 5, 9, 11; III, 6:10–12, 16; 7:3). The capitals, Samaria and Jerusalem, are apparently intended as representatives of the whole land.[36] With this in mind, it is especially significant that in all three doom sections, the people of the land are said to be as guilty as the capital for Judah's corruption. It is through Lachish that the corruption of North Israel has come into Judah (1:13). "This family" against whom Yahweh devises an evil (2:3) evidently refers to the people of Judah as a whole, and not to Jerusalem alone. The expression placed in the mouths of the people, "We are utterly ruined," (2:4) suggests a punishment of the whole land. The reason that the popular prophets are able to continue to proclaim their lies is because "this people" sanctions it (2:11). To be sure, these prophets are guilty because they cause the people to err, but still "the people" do err (3:5). Micah feels that his task is to declare to *Jacob* his transgression, and to Israel, his sin (3:8), and this includes more than the capital. Yahweh's controversy is with "his people," and not merely with the capital (6:2), for it is this same people that he brought up out of Egypt, not merely the people who lived in the large city (6:4). Surely, the leaders are guilty, and perhaps carry a greater responsibility than the common people for the impending disaster (7:3), but the people themselves are far from being free from guilt (7:2, 4–6).

All three doom sections in the book of Micah are connected by the fact that they trace "external" sins to "internal" corruption of the sinner.

36. "Wer sehen will, was Israels, was Judas Schuld ist, der muss nach Samaria oder nach Jerusalem blicken; diese Städte *repräsentieren* das" (italics mine). Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Rechtsstreit Gottes,* 29. Porteous, "Jerusalem–Zion," 235–52, points out that Jeremiah often uses "Jerusalem" in this way.

The wicked practice the evil they *devised* on their beds (2:1). They seize the fields they had *coveted* (2:2). The rich oppress the poor because in their hearts they *hate* the good and *love* the evil (3:2) and *abhor* justice (3:9). The rich mistreat the poor because of the evil *desire* of their soul (7:3). The best in Israel is as a brier and the most upright as a thorn hedge *inwardly* (7:4).

Now the concepts of sin and punishment are closely related to the representation of Yahweh and his activities in the doom sections of the book of Micah. The predominant name for the deity is "Yahweh" (I, 1:1, 2, 3, 12; 2:3, 5, 7; II, 3:4, 5, 8, 11 [twice]; III, 6:1, 2 [twice], 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). *ʾădōnāy* occurs only twice, and that in the same verse (1:2), and the first time it seems to be a later addition.[37] *ʾĕlōhîm* occurs only three times in the doom sections: once in synonymous parallelism with Yahweh (6:6, on the lips of the people), once to avoid using Yahweh repetitiously (6:8), and once in a phrase which seems to have been adapted from Canaanite religion (3:7).

The book of Micah does not describe Yahweh abstractly, but always in relationship, as a God who *acts* with *his* people[38] in mind. His activity is represented by verbs with Yahweh as subject (usually in the first person singular), and by verbs in the passive voice (where Yahweh is apparently the motivation). Two basic assertions are made concerning Yahweh's activity. First, he appears (1:2–4) to punish his people for sin. In section I, we find these statements "I will make (*wĕśamtî*) Samaria a heap of the field," "I will pour down (*wĕhiggartî*) her stones into the valley," "I will uncover (*ʾăgalleh*) her foundations" (1:6). All her graven images will be *beaten to pieces* (*yukattû*)," "all her hires shall be burned (*yissārĕpû*) with fire," "I will make desolate (*ʾāsîm šĕmāmāh*) all her idols" (1:7). "Evil is *come down* (*yārad*) from Yahweh" (1:12). "I will bring (*ʾābîʾ*) the possessor to you" (1:15). "I will *devise* (*ḥōšēb*) an evil against this people" (2:3). In section II, similar assertions occur. When the leaders of the people cry unto Yahweh, he will not *answer* (*yaʿănēh*) them (3:4). It is Yahweh who will bring night and darkness upon the popular prophets, and cause the sun to go down and the day to be black over them (3:6).

37. (a) It is omitted by the LXX and Aquila (according to Deissler, *Les petits prophètes*, 302). (b) By an eye mistake, a copyist may have accidentally inserted it here from the following line. (c) It may be a gloss on "Yahweh."

38. "This people"—2:11; "his people"—6:2; "my people"—1:9; 2:4, 8, 9; 3:3; 6:3, 5, 16.

It is he who causes the seers to be put to shame and the diviners to be confounded (3:7). It is by his power that Zion will be plowed as a field, that Jerusalem will become heaps, and that the temple will be reduced to a forest sanctuary (3:12).[39] Section III describes Yahweh's activity in a similar manner. "I have begun (*haḥillôtî*) to smite you." "I have *made* you *desolate* (*hāšēm*)" (6:13). "That which you save, I will *give up* (*'ettēn*) to the sword" (6:14). "I will make (*tittî*) you a desolation" (6:16). It is Yahweh who will be responsible for the day of visitation. It is he who will cause Israel to suffer perplexity (7:4). Secondly, the doom sections also assert that Yahweh interprets the meaning of and the reason for the approaching punishment to his people. Thus all three sections are concerned with what Yahweh says (אמר) (I, 2:3; II, 3:5; III, 6:1). Yahweh enters into a lawsuit with Israel and *strives* (*yitwakkāḥ*) with his people (6:2). He reminds them of his *righteous acts* (*ṣidqôt*) in their history: "I *brought* you up (*he'ĕlîtîkā*) out of the land of Egypt," "I *redeemed* you (*pĕdîtîkā*) from the house of bondage." "I *sent* (*wā'ešlaḥ*) before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (6:4). It is Yahweh who turned Balaam's curse into a blessing for Israel, and who led them across the Jordan River from Shittim to Gilgal (6:5). When the people respond to this accusing appeal by asking what kind of sacrifices Yahweh would accept for appeasement of his wrath (6:6–7), the prophet declares that Yahweh had already shown (*higgîd*) them what was good, and that he requires (*dôrēš*) that they practice justice and faithful love and walking wisely with God (6:8). The voice of Yahweh calls unto (*yiqrā'*) the city to hear this proclamation (6:9).

These passages emphasize the vital connection between Yahweh and his people, in whose interest he acts. The idea of the "people of God" is essentially the same in all three doom sections. "Israel" occurs eight times in the doom sections. It means "all Israel" in 1:14, 15 (I); 3:1, 8, 9 (II); and 6:2 (III). In 1:13, it probably means the Northern tribes in a constitutional sense in contrast to "Judah" in 1:9. The idea here is that the sins of the Northern kingdom have infected the South. The meaning of "Israel" in 1:5b is debatable. But it seems most natural to consider lines a and b as parallel, and lines c and d as parallel. If so, "Jacob" and "Israel" in lines a and b are comprehensive terms for all Israel. "Jacob" occurs

39. In describing the fall of Samaria, the writer uses the first person singular (1:6), and in describing the fall of Jerusalem, the passive (3:12). But he also uses the passive of Samaria (1:7).

six times in the first two sections of doom. With the exception of 2:7, it always appears alongside "Israel." In 1:5a; 3:1, 8, 9, it is a comprehensive term for all Israel, but in 1:5c it refers to North Israel in distinction to the Southern kingdom, as the reference to Samaria shows.

ʿam occurs eleven times in the doom sections. In 2:4, 11; 3:5; 6:2, 3, 5, 16, it is a comprehensive term for all Israel. "His People" and "Israel" are used interchangeably in 6:2. In 1:9, "my people" refers to the Southern kingdom as distinguished from North Israel. The point is that the sin of the Northern kingdom had spread to Judah, and so the punishment which North Israel had suffered would also come upon the south. But the most significant thing about the use of "people" in the book of Micah is that sometimes it refers to only a part of Israel, i.e., it divides Israel into two groups: those who claim to be God's people but are not, and those who are genuinely God's people. This appears to be the significance of "my people" in 2:8. A similar distinction is made in 2:9. The same phrase is used for the oppressors in v. 8 and for the oppressed in v. 9. Its use in v. 8 is derived from the claims made by Micah's opponents and so is ironical, while its use in v. 9 is straightforward and represents Micah's own position. Verses 8 and 9 vividly distinguish between two groups in Israel. And the same distinction appears in 3:3, where "my people" is identical with the oppressed.[40] Now *gôy* occurs only in the hope sections of the book of Micah (4:2, 3 [three times], 7, 11; 5:7, 14; 7:16), and refers to Israel only once (4:7). Speiser argues that *ʿam* is used in the Old Testament primarily in a subjective and personal sense, and is usually associated with a strong feeling of kinship, whereas *gôy* is used objectively and impersonally, and applies primarily to a loosely knit superorganization by which people are externally bound together.[41] Yahweh's deep concern for his "people" reflected in the book of Micah supports such a distinction. And the identification of "this people" (2:11) with "this family" (*mišpāḥāh*) (2:3) indicates that "people" conveys the concept of intimate relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

With the exception of 7:14, *ʿam* occurs exclusively in the doom sections of the book of Micah. It means pan-Israel except in 2:8–9 and 3:3. But this word is not used to assure Israel of her inviolability as God's people. This was the view of Micah's opponents, and is explicitly rejected in 2:6–9; 3:4, 11 (cf. similarly Amos 3:1). Rather, the book of Micah calls

40. For an extensive treatment, see my article referred to in note 20.

41. Speiser, "'People' and 'Nation' of Israel," 157–63, especially 158–59.