

Commentary on Micah

(1Q14, 4Q168)

Tiny fragments from Cave 1 (1Q14) represent an exposition of Micah (*DJD*, I, 77–80). Although the prophet's words are intended to castigate both Samaria and Jerusalem, the Qumran commentator interprets Samaria as alluding to the 'Spouter of Lies', the enemy of the sect, but relates Judah and Jerusalem to the Teacher of Righteousness and his Community. Further fragments of Micah iv, 8–12 are given the title 'Commentary on Micah (?)', in 4Q168 (*DJD*, V, 36), but since neither the word *pesher*, nor any interpretative material is extant, the manuscript may be biblical.

[All this is] for the transgression [of Jacob and for the sins of the House of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob?] Is it not [Samaria? And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? I will make of Samaria a ruin in the fields, and of Jerusalem a plantation of vines] (i, 5–6).

5 Interpreted, this concerns the Spouter of Lies [who led the] Simple [astray].

And what is the high place of Judah? [Is it not Jerusalem?] (i, 5).

[Interpreted, this concerns] the Teacher of Righteousness who [expounded the law to] his [Council] and to all who freely pledged themselves to join the elect of [God to keep the Law] in the Council of the Community, who shall be saved on the Day [of Judgement] ...

Commentary on Nahum

(4Q169)

Substantial remains of a Nahum Commentary were retrieved from Cave 4 (4Q169) and published in *DJD*, V, 37–42. They cover parts of chapters i and ii of the biblical book, and the first fourteen verses of chapter iii. Their historical significance has been discussed in Chapter III (pp. 55–62). It is worthy of note that the commentator employs not only cryptograms (Kittim, furious young lion, etc.), but the actual names of two Greek kings (Demetrius and Antiochus). Reference to 'the furious young lion' as one who 'hangs men alive' shows that 'hanging', probably a synonym for crucifixion, was practised as a form of execution. It is also legislated for in the Temple Scroll (LXIV, 6–13), where it is the capital punishment reserved for traitors. In biblical law, by contrast, only the dead body of an executed criminal is to be hanged, that is, displayed in public as an example (Deut. xxi, 21).

On palaeographical grounds the manuscript is dated to the second half of the first century BCE.

Frs. 1–2

[In whirlwind and storm is his way and] cloud is the dust of his feet (i, 3).

Its interpretation] ... The [whirlwinds and the storm]s are (from) the fir[mam]ents of his heaven and of his earth which he has cre[ated].

He rebu[kes] the sea and dri[es it up] (i, 4a).

Its [int]erpretation: the sea is all the K[ittim who are] ... to execut[e] judgement against them and destroy them from the face [of the earth,] together with [all] their [com]manders whose dominion shall be finished.

[Bashan and] Carmel have withered and the sprout of Lebanon withers (i, 4b). 5

Its interpretation ... [will per]ish in it, the summit of wickedness for the ... Carmel and to his commanders. Lebanon and the sprout of

Lebanon are [the priests, the sons of Zadok and the men of] their [council] and they shall perish from before . . . the elect . . . [a]ll the inhabitants of the world.

The mountains quake before him and the hills heave and the earth [is lifted up] before him, and [the world and all that dwell in it. Who can stand before his wrath? And who can arise] against his furious anger? (i, 5-6a).

[Its] in[terpretation] . . .

I [*Where is the lions' den and the cave of the young lions?*] (ii, 11).

[Interpreted, this concerns] . . . a dwelling-place for the ungodly of the nations.

Whither the lion goes, there is the lion's cub, [with none to disturb it] (ii, 11b).

[Interpreted, this concerns Deme]trius king of Greece who sought, on the counsel of those who seek smooth things, to enter Jerusalem. [But God did not permit the city to be delivered] into the hands of the kings of Greece, from the time of Antiochus until the coming of the rulers of the Kittim. But then she shall be trampled under their feet . . .

The lion tears enough for its cubs and it chokes prey for its lionesses (ii, 12a).

[Interpreted, this] concerns the furious young lion who strikes by means of his great men, and by means of the men of his council.

[And chokes prey for its lionesses; and it fills] its caves [with prey] and its dens with victims (ii, 12a-b).

Interpreted, this concerns the furious young lion [who executes revenge] on those who seek smooth things and hangs men alive, . . . formerly in Israel. Because of a man hanged alive on [the] tree, He proclaims, 'Behold I am against [you, says the Lord of Hosts]'.
 5

[I will burn up your multitude in smoke], and the sword shall devour your young lions. I will [cut off] your prey [from the earth] (ii, 13).

[Interpreted] . . . your multitude is the bands of his army . . . and his young lions are . . . his prey is the wealth which [the priests] of Jerusalem have [amassed], which . . . Israel shall be delivered . . .

[And the voice of your messengers shall no more be heard] (ii, 13b).

[Interpreted] **II** . . . his messengers are his envoys whose voice shall no more be heard among the nations. 10

Woe to the city of blood; it is full of lies and rapine (iii, 1a-b).

Interpreted, this is the city of Ephraim, those who seek smooth things during the last days, who walk in lies and falsehood.

The prowler is not wanting, noise of whip and noise of rattling wheel, prancing horse and jolting chariot, charging horsemen, flame and glittering spear, a multitude of the slain and a heap of carcasses. There is no end to the corpses; they stumble upon their corpses (iii, 1c-3).

Interpreted, this concerns the dominion of those who seek smooth things, from the midst of whose assembly the sword of the nations shall never be wanting. Captivity, looting, and burning shall be among them, and exile out of dread for the enemy. A multitude of guilty corpses shall fall in their days; there shall be no end to the sum of their slain. They shall also stumble upon their body of flesh because of their guilty counsel. 5

Because of the many harlotries of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of seduction, she who sells nations through her harlotries and families through her seductions (iii, 4).

Interpreted, this concerns those who lead Ephraim astray, who lead many astray through their false teaching, their lying tongue, and deceitful lips – kings, princes, priests, and people, together with the stranger who joins them. Cities and families shall perish through their counsel; honourable men and rulers shall fall through their tongue's [decision]. 10

Behold, I am against you – oracle of the Lord of Hosts – and you will lift up your skirts to your face and expose your nakedness to the nations and your shame to the kingdoms (iii, 5).

Interpreted . . . cities of the east. For the skirts are . . . **III** and the nations shall . . . among them their filthy idols.

I will cast filth upon you and treat you with contempt and render you despicable, so that all who look upon you shall flee from you (iii, 6-7a).

Interpreted, this concerns those who seek smooth things, whose evil deeds shall be uncovered to all Israel at the end of time. Many shall understand their iniquity and treat them with contempt because of their

5 guilty presumption. When the glory of Judah shall arise, the simple of Ephraim shall flee from their assembly; they shall abandon those who lead them astray and shall join Israel.

They shall say, Niniveh is laid waste; who shall grieve over her? Whence shall I seek comforters for you? (iii, 7b).

Interpreted, this concerns those who seek smooth things, whose council shall perish and whose congregation shall be dispersed. They shall lead the assembly astray no more, and the simple shall support their council no more.

Are you better than Amon which lay among the rivers? (iii, 8a).

Interpreted, *Amon* is Manasseh, and the *rivers* are the great men of Manasseh, the honourable men of . . .

10 *Which was surrounded by waters, whose rampart was the sea and whose walls were waters?* (iii, 8b).

Interpreted, these are her valiant men, her almighty warriors.

Ethiopia [and Egypt] were her [limitless] strength (iii, 9a).

[Interpreted] . . .

[Put and the Libyans were your helpers] (iii, 9b).

IV Interpreted, these are the wicked of [Judah], the House of Separation, who joined Manasseh.

Yet she was exiled; she went into captivity. Her children were crushed at the top of all the streets. They cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound with chains (iii, 10).

Interpreted, this concerns Manasseh in the final age, whose kingdom shall be brought low by [Israel . . .] his wives, his children, and his little ones shall go into captivity. His mighty men and honourable men [shall perish] by the sword.

5 *[You shall be drunk] and shall be stupefied* (iii, 11a).

Interpreted, this concerns the wicked of E[phraim . . .] whose cup shall come after Manasseh . . .

[You shall also seek] refuge in the city because of the enemy (iii, 11b).
Inter[preted, this concerns . . .] their enemies in the city . . .

[All your strongholds shall be] like fig trees with newly ripe figs (iii, 12a).