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Women's Voices in the Book of Micah

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Zusammenfassung:

Viele Exegeten und Exegetinnen nehmen an, dass die Kapitel Micha 6 und 7 eine literarische Einheit nord-israelitischer Herkunft darstellen. In Micha 7,10 stoßen wir auf einen unangenehmen Streit zweier weiblicher Stimmen. Die Hauptstimme in Micha 6-7, die in Micha 7,10 in der zweiten Person Femininum Singular angesprochen wird, verwendet einen der anspruchvollsten Fälle eines geschlechtlichen Chiasmus in der Bibel (Micha 7:5-6). Die Hauptstimme, deren Echo wir in 1 Chronik 5,29 vernehmen, siedelt Miriam auf einer Ebene mit Moses und Aaron an. Diese weibliche prophetische Stimme, die auch anderen Frauen eine Stimme verleiht, gehört einer bisher nicht erkannten Prophetin. Daraus folgt, dass ihre Rivalin in Micha 7,10 eine weitere, bisher unbekannte Prophetin ist. Die hier postulierte (erste) Prophetin übt bemerkenswerter Weise Kritik an dem religiösen Glauben und den Praktiken einiger Männer in Micha 6,8: "Ein Mann hat dir gesagt, was gut ist / aber was erwartet der Herr von dir?"

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In the summer of 2005 at the Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting in Singapore, Singapore, at a session entitled "Unbinding the Binding of Isaac," organized by Mishael Caspi, someone stated, "Mothers bear children, and fathers sacrifice them." Indeed, this assumption would seem to be corroborated by the biblical accounts of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac son of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 22); the sacrifice of a son by King Mesha of Moab according to 2 Kings 3:27; and the sacrifice of an unnamed daughter by Jephthah in Judges 11. My immediate reaction was to recall one of the most well-known passages in Hebrew Scripture, Micah 6:6-7:

Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
 Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my womb [KJV body] for the sin of my soul?¹

Indeed, “womb fruit” designates “progeny” in Psalm 132:11, “The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of thy womb fruit [King James Version: fruit of thy body] will I set upon thy throne,” as also in the blessings in Deuteronomy 7:13; 28:4, 11; 30:9 and in the curses in Deuteronomy 28:18, 53 all of which are addressed to collective Israel employing the 2d person masculine singular. In addition, in Job 19:17 Job uses the expression *bēnê bītnî* to denote “my children”. Nevertheless, a sense that the speaker in Micah 6:6-7 must be a woman is borne out not only by the simple fact that whenever *beten* denotes a reproductive organ in Hebrew Scripture it is invariably the womb and not part of the male reproductive system² but also by the fact that in Micah 6-7, which has long been seen as a discreet unit within Hebrew Scripture,³ the principal human speaker is addressed by another speaker employing the second person feminine singular in Micah 7:10.⁴

There we read as follows:

Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy [second person feminine singular] God? Mine eyes shall behold her; now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

It is widely recognized that Micah 7:1-7 belongs to the genre of “the lament of the individual.” From Targum Jonathan at the beginning of the Common Era through Ehud Ben Zvi in the year 2000 C.E.,⁵ it is commonly understood that the two female voices – the speaker in Micah 7:1-7 and the enemy whom she quotes as addressing her sarcastically in Micah 7:10 – represent two cities, the capitals of two kingdoms, the first of which (Micah 7:1-7) is Jerusalem while the second of which, who is quoted in Micah 7:10, must be one or another of Judah’s traditional enemies.

My late and revered teacher H. L. Ginsberg belonged to a group of scholars who have been arguing for almost a century that the provenance of Micah 6-7 is Samaria.⁶ Reasons for this contention include the following: 1) the geographical locations mentioned in these chapters belong to the Northern Kingdom; and 2) these chapters abound with subjects such as the Exodus, the narrative of Balaam and Balak, and the crossing of the Jordan which are especially characteristic of the northern prophets of the 8th century B.C.E. Consequently, Ginsberg assumes that the two female voices in Micah 7:1-10 are personifications of Samaria, capital of Israel, and Damascus, the capital of Aram.

Hermann Gunkel also took the female speaker in Micah 7:1-7 as the personification of a city, for he noted “We never find female speakers in the dirges of the Psalter.”⁷ That may or may not be true. However, it is equally true that we find lamentations composed by women in the biblical Book of Lamentations,⁸ and reference is made to the composition of lamentations as typically women's work in Jeremiah 9. In addition, we find in Psalm 113:7-9 an unattributed composition, which has strong affinities to Hannah's thanksgiving hymn found in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Even if there were empirical evidence that the Book of Psalms contains only poetry written by males, one could not deny that other books of Hebrew Scripture contain ample testimony to poems composed by women. Consequently, the suggestion that Micah 7:1-7 must have been written by a male prophet personifying a city tells us more about Hermann Gunkel's reticence to recognize in Hebrew Scripture compositions composed by women than it does about Micah 7:1-7. Johannes C. de Moor in his “Micah 7:1-13: The Lament of a Disillusioned Prophet,” almost got it right when he asked, “Does not the form *elohayik* [with second person feminine suffix] in Micah 7:10 prove beyond any doubt that the speaker of Micah 7:1-10 must have been a woman?” However de Moor was led astray by his assumption that Micah 7:1-10 is from the pen of Micah of Moresheth, who is referred to as male in Micah 1:1 and Jeremiah 26:17-19. Consequently, de Moor changed all the feminine forms in Micah 1:1-10 to masculine, and he construed the argument between the two prophetic voices in Micah 1:1-10 as an argument between Micah of Moresheth and his prophetic contemporary Isaiah son of Amoz.⁹

All of this shows the reluctance of what Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza calls malestream biblical scholarship¹⁰ to recognize for what it is a dialogue between two prophetesses in Micah 1:1-10. All too many femalestream biblical scholars have bought into the male chauvinist reading of Hebrew Scripture. Consequently, Judith E. Sanderson, “Micah,” in *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, writes as follows concerning Micah 7:1-10:

“Jerusalem speaks as a woman to her enemy, represented as another woman, about God, represented as a man. [...] God is a good and just and forgiving male, while the people is at worst an evil and corrupt female and at best a repentant female.”¹¹

It appears that modern biblical scholarship, both of the malestream variety and of the feminist variety, shares in a serious lapse of long-term memory with respect to three sets of data that would make it perfectly reasonable to accept at face value the presence of

two female prophetic voices in the 7th Chapter of the Book of Micah. The first set of data consists of the fact that Hebrew Scripture refers to four named canonical prophetesses – Miriam (Exodus 15:20); Deborah (Judges 4-5); Huldah (2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34); and Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14). Moreover, Isaiah 8:3 refers to the wife of Isaiah son of Amoz as “the prophetess,” which suggests that Isaiah and his wife were “partners in a two-career family, both receiving messages from heaven and rebuking and/or comforting the people of Judah and surrounding lands with their words.”¹² The second set of data, which is ignored by valiant attempts to avoid the possibility that the Book of Micah actually records a dialogue between two prophetesses is that the Rabbinic Sages, who declare in Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 14a that there were, alternatively a) forty-eight prophets and eight prophetesses who prophesied to Israel; b) two hundred prophets; c) prophets numbering twice the number of the Israelites who left Egypt (603,550 adult males not counting the Levites, according to Numbers 2:32), take it for granted that there were more prophetesses than the four named above. A third datum is the declaration of the Prophet Joel speaking in the name of God in Joel 3:1-2: “I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; Your sons and daughters shall prophesy [...]. I will even pour out My spirit upon male slaves and female slaves in those days.” A fourth set of data is the abundant evidence for prophetesses alongside of prophets in the ancient Middle East.¹³ The reticence to pay attention to the voices of previously unrecognized women in Hebrew Scripture reflects the phallo-centric thinking from which both men and women in modern western society suffer. Objectively, the stubborn refusal to accept new data concerning women in antiquity makes no more sense than the refusal to accept new etymologies that were unknown to the older dictionaries of Biblical Hebrew that preceded the deciphering of Akkadian and Ugaritic and the discovery of ancient Phoenician and Aramaic texts in the course of the last two centuries. On several occasions, when I presented the data here discussed scholars in Israel begged me not to state that I am convinced that two women speak to each other in Micah 7 but to state instead that it is vaguely possible that two women speak to each other in Micah 7 but not necessarily so. Had I adopted this approach in my philological studies,¹⁴ I would have had to follow each of my philological proofs of the meaning of a word or expression with the mantra: “It is vaguely possible that I am right, but it is possible that I am wrong since no one ever said this before.” That would be simply silly, and it would not be expected of anyone writing about any subject other than women in antiquity (or modernity).

The tendency to ignore female voices by turning them into personifications is reflected in the contention that the five daughters of Zelophehad who secured the right of women to inherit real estate were, in fact, five tribes.¹⁵ If we can go beyond the malestream reading of Micah, which literally stands on its head not to recognize a debate between two prophecies, and return to the literal meaning of Scripture, to attempt to recover forgotten and sorely needed data, which has been lost, what we should see in Micah 7:1-10 is the personal lament of a prophetess, who, like Jeremiah, found herself in jail and who was taunted by another prophetess, who was fortunate enough not to find herself incarcerated.

In Micah 7:8-9 our prophetess states:

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy [*'oyabti*—the form is feminine]; though I fell, I shall arise; while I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light; and I shall behold his righteousness.

In this text as in Isaiah 42:7, a sojourn in prison is described as dwelling in darkness while release from jail is described as having one's eyes opened to the light. Indeed, prior to the introduction of electric lights in modern times, prisons were characteristically windowless chambers where one indeed sat in darkness for the duration of one's sentence. In Micah 7:1-10 as in Jeremiah 26:7,11 the incarceration of a person who is to us a canonical prophet was a cause of great rejoicing for her/his rivals/esteemed colleagues, who disagreed with our canonical prophets and prophetesses as to what it is that God wants. An important difference between Jeremiah 26:7,11 and 32:2-3 on the one hand and Micah 7, on the other hand, is that while Jeremiah and his supporters would have us believe that Jeremiah landed in prison because he was an innocent victim of the forces of evil, our prophetess in Micah 7:9 admits that she bore "the indignation of the LORD because I sinned against him."

If, as we have seen, there is every reason to understand Micah 7:1-10 as the words of a prophetess, and if, as is widely held, Micah 6-7 constitute a unit, it is reasonable, indeed, to see the rhetorical question in 6:7, "shall I give the fruit of my *beten* in payment of my sin?" as the question posed by a female voice who answers her own question stating, "A man¹⁶ told you what is good,"¹⁷ possibly referring to the idea that child sacrifice is reasonable and proper, "but," she continues, "what does the LORD

require of you. Only to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.” “Only this,” says God speaking through our prophetess. Of course, turning women, children, and men into victims – sacrifices – is much easier.

Now it should not be surprising that when our prophetess refers to the human agents of God's redeeming Israel from Egypt she mentions not only the salvation *history* but also salvation *herstory*. Consequently, she mentions not only Aaron and Moses but the triad that includes Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (Micah 6:4).¹⁸ No less unexpected is our prophetess's brilliant poetic composition featuring a rare form of gender-matched chiasmic parallelism¹⁹ in Mi 7:5-6.

There we read as follows:

v. 5 **a-b Trust** no *friend*,

a-b Rely on *no intimate*;

b Be guarded in speech

c With her who lies in your bosom.

v. 6 *b-b For son spurns father*,

c-c Daughter rises up against mother,

c-c Daughter-in-law against mother-in-law---

a-b The people of *his own house* are

a-b the enemies of *his*.

As the printed design indicates, the gender-matched synonymous parallelism employed by our prophetess creates the following pattern:

common plural/masculine singular;

common plural/masculine singular;

masculine singular

feminine singular

masculine singular/ masculine singular

feminine singular/ feminine singular

feminine singular/ feminine singular

common plural/masculine singular;

common plural/masculine singular

Esther Fuchs argues that the recent proliferation of literary and rhetorical criticism of biblical texts, which highlight the aesthetic aspects of Hebrew Scripture, reinforces the dominance of women by men advocated by biblical texts written by men.²⁰ Micah 7:5-6 affords persons, who are reluctant to praise the aesthetics of texts penned by men, to revel in the beauty of an intricate poetic composition, which must have been penned by the same woman who is addressed in the second person feminine singular in Micah 7:10. That especially a woman writer would have employed gender-matched synonymous parallelism is not surprising given the abundance of gender-matched synonymous parallelism in the Book of Proverbs in which knowledge itself is none other than Lady Wisdom.

Indeed, Micah 6-7 brings together three rare and related phenomena: 1) a woman who eschews a man's suggestion that she sacrifice the fruit of her womb; 2) this woman, it turns out, is a prophetess, who is taunted by a rival prophetess; 3) like Miriam in Exodus 15:21, Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, and Deborah in Judges 5, our prophet is a highly gifted and original poet. It is not fortuitous that our unnamed prophetess makes it clear that Miriam no less than Moses and Aaron was responsible for Israel's safe departure from Egypt (Micah 6:4). Moreover, just as Hannah's song of thanksgiving (1 Samuel 2:1-10) is sung in the synagogue as part of the prophetic lection on the first day of the Jewish New Year, so is our prophet's short prayer of supplication in Micah 7:18-20 repeated in each of the five services of the Jewish Day of Atonement, which is celebrated on the tenth day of the Jewish Year. No better tribute could be given to one of the greatest poetesses of all time. What was her name?

Ginsberg referred to the author of Micah 6-7 as “a Northern Micah”²¹ to distinguish *him* from the Judean Micah of Moresheth. I would suggest that henceforth Micah of Moresheth be called Mike (a masculine form, at least in English) to distinguish him from the prophetess of Micah 6-7, whom I would call Micah, which can be construed as a feminine form ending in *ah*. After all, in Late Modern Hebrew a baby-naming ceremony for a girl is called *britah* using the grammatically marked (frequently with a final *ah*) gender to refer to the ceremony of naming the unmarked (i.e., the female) sex. The latter Hebrew term is adapted from the grammatically unmarked (i.e., masculine) *brit*, which refers to the covenant of circumcision, which literary leaves a mark upon the male.

Hopefully, my addition to the Rabbinic Sages list of 48 prophets and 7 prophetesses, two additional prophetesses, who are quoted in Micah 7 will encourage other scholars go get out of the malestream maelstrom and discover additional female voices in Holy Scripture.

¹ With the exception of the substitution of ‘womb’ for ‘body’ in the rendering of Heb. *beten*, this translations follows the King James Version (hereinafter KJV). Indeed, the assumption that *beten* may mean ‘body’, which is reflected in Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 106 and Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum alten Testament*, 3d ed (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), vol. 1, p. 117 is an attempt to solve the difficulty presented by the fact that, on the one hand, as an organ of reproduction, *beten* refers to the womb while, on the other hand, ‘womb fruit’ is attributed to individual males in Psalm 132:11 and Job 19:17. My late and revered teacher, Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation and Special Studies* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), sought to solve the difficulty presented by Job 19:17, in which Job says, “I am repulsive to my wife//and loathsome to the children of my womb [Heb. *bēnē bīṭnī*],” in the following manner: “‘Children of my womb [is] a breviloquence for ‘the children I have engendered.’” Naftali Herz Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job: A New Commentary*, rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967), p. 201 takes the phrase *bēnē bīṭnī* in Job. 19:17 to mean literally ‘the children of my mother’s womb’, i.e., ‘my siblings’. I admit that I was influenced to see in “fruit of my womb” an expression that would like be employed by a woman by the Roman Catholic prayer,

“Hail Mary,” in which we find the expression “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed be the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

² Typical of the use of Hebr. *beten* to denote ‘womb, uterus’ are the following: “The LORD said to her (Rebekah), “Two nations are in your uterus [*biṭnēk*], and two peoples shall take leave of your reproductive system (*mē‘ayik*) (Genesis 25:23); “When her days for giving birth were fulfilled, indeed there were twins in her uterus (*biṭnâ*) (Genesis 25:24); “Jacob was enraged at Rachel, and he said, ‘Am I in God’s stead, who has withheld from you uterine fruit?’” (Genesis 30:2); “It so happened that when she gave birth, there were twins in her uterus” (Genesis 38:27); see also Numbers 5:21-22,27; Judges 13:5,7; 16:17; Isa.13:18; 44:2, 24. It should not be surprising therefore, that the two terms *beten* ‘uterus’ and *reḥem* ‘womb’ appear in synonymous parallelism, *inter alia*, in Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 46:3; Psalms 22:10-11; 58:4; Job. 31:15,18. Typical of these is Jeremiah 1:5: “Before I created you in the uterus I knew you, and before you exited from the womb I dedicated you. ...” Concerning the employment of the terms *beten* and *reḥem* in synonymous parallelism in Isaiah 40-66 see now, Hagit Taragan, “Rhetoric and Prophecy: Rhetorical, Stylistic and Linguistic Aspects in Isaiah 40-66” (Ph.D. dissertation, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheva, Israel, 2006), pp. 253-255. It is worth noting that, unlike the anatomical terms *beten* and *reḥem*, which refer exclusively to the female womb, the Hebrew term *mē‘ayim* refers slightly more often to the male reproductive system than to the female reproductive system; on this observation and the relevant data see Mayer I. Gruber, “The Motherhood of God in Second Isaiah,” in *The Motherhood of God and Other Studies*, University of South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, no. 57 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), p. 5, no. 5.

³ See, *inter alia*, Harold Louis Ginsberg, *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982), p. 27; Francis Crawford Burkitt, “Micah 6 and 7 A Northern Prophecy,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 45 (1926), pp. 159-161; John T. Willis, “A Reapplied Prophetic Hope Oracle,” *Studies on Prophecy*, *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 26 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), pp. 64-76; Johann T. Beck, *Erklärung der Propheten Micah und Joel* (Gütersloh, 1898), p. 61; A van Hoonacker, *Les douze petits prophètes* (Paris, 1908), pp. 352, 394, 409; Adam S. van der Woude, *Micah*, (Nejkerk 1976); for additional bibliography see Willis, p. 70, n. 2; p. 71, n. 2; Delbert R. Hillers, *Micah*, *Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), pp. 89-90,

⁴ Johannes C. de Moor, “Micah 7:1-13: The Lament of a Disillusioned Prophet,” *Delimitation Criticism: A New Tool in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Marjo C.A. Korpel and Joseph M. Oesch, *Pericope 1* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000), p. 166 writes as follows:

“Does not the form *elohayik* [with second person feminine suffix] in Micah 7:10 prove beyond doubt that the speaker of Micah 7:7-10 must have been a woman? Because Micah was a male prophet (Micah 1:1; Jeremiah 26:17-19) – one has to be explicit in these matters nowadays – the only remaining possibility is to make Lady Zion the speaker of these verses”; see below.

⁵ Herbert Gordon May, *Micah*, OTL (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), p. 158: “Both speaker and enemy are feminine figures. [...] The gender represents the dramatic personification of corporate groups as women.” Ehud Ben Zvi, *Micah*, *The Forms of the Old Testament Literature*, vol. XXIB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 168: “[...] it is likely that this feminine voice is understood as Daughter Zion/Jerusalem the city. To be sure, reading the text with a human speaker still remains a valid option.” Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Micah*, Anchor Bible, vol. 24E (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 576: “Neither the speaker nor the enemy is identified, but both are female – most likely the reference is to two countries or two cities (the capitals of two kingdoms).”

⁶ See above, n. 3.

⁷ Hermann Gunkel, “The Close of Micah: A Prophetical Liturgy – A Study in Literary History,” in Hermann Gunkel, *What Remains of the Old Testament and Other Essays*, translated by A. K. Dallas (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1927), p. 26.

⁸ Meir Bar-Ilan, *Some Jewish Women in Antiquity*, Brown Judaic Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), pp. 58-62; Athalya Brenner and Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), pp. 83-90.

⁹ de Moor (see above, n.4), pp. 162-165.

¹⁰ Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), p. 3

¹¹ Judith E. Sanderson, “Micah,” in *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1992), p. 216.

¹² Mayer I. Gruber, “Women in the Ancient Levant,” in *Women's Roles in Ancient Civilizations: A Reference Guide*, ed. Bella Vivante (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 130.

¹³ Concerning the various classes of prophetesses at 18th century B.C.E. Mari, see Bernard Frank Batto, *Studies on Women at Mari* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 119-127. Moreover, at Emar the goddess Ishkara is designated “the divine patroness of the prophetesses.” Simo Parpola, *Assyrian*

Prophecies (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2003), p. XLVIII points out that nine of the thirteen prophetic persons named in Neo-Assyrian texts were women.

¹⁴ See, for example, Mayer I. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East*, Studia Pohl, no. 12 (2 vols.; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980).

¹⁵ Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1968), p. 207; Shmuel Ahituv, *Joshua*, Mikra Le-Yisrael (Jerusalem: Magnes/Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1995), p. 60 (in Hebrew).

¹⁶ In my “Women in the Cult According to the Priestly Code,” in *The Motherhood of God and Other Studies*, p. 63, I showed that in standard biblical Hebrew the term *’ādām* frequently refers to a human being of either sex. In the Phoenician Inscription of Azitawadda from Karatepe (8th century B.C.E.), however, the term *’ādām im ’men* is contrasted with *’iššot* ‘woman’. It is reasonable, therefore, to suggest that our Northern prophetess may here be employing a Northern dialectical usage in which *’ādām* designates a male of the human species who gives very bad advice, which our prophetess seeks to correct.

¹⁷ The interpretation of the clause to mean “A man told you what is good” is taken from Arnold Ehrlich, *Mikra Ki-Pheschuto* (3 vols.; Berlin: Itzkowski, 1899-1901), 2:439.

¹⁸ See below.

¹⁹ Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 224-225; id., *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984), p. 32; id. “Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry,” *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1999), p. 135 refer only to the parallelism in v. 6. However, as I demonstrate here, the unique form of gender-matched synonymous parallelism spans vv. 5 and 6. I look forward to a detailed study of this phenomenon by my former student, Dr. Hagit Taragan.

²⁰ Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), pp. 34-35.

²¹ Ginsberg, *Israelian Heritage*, p. 25 refers to Micah 6-7 as Micah C, which he contrasts with Micah 1-3 (Micah A) and Micah 4-5 (Micah B). However, in his presentation of this material at various conferences he referred to the prophet, whose words are recorded in Micah 6-7 as “a Northern Micah.” This Northern Micah berates the people of the Northern Kingdom, saying, “Yet you have kept the laws of Omri and all the practices of the House of Ahab,” referring to the dynasty founded by Omri, who was succeeded by Ahab (see 1 Kings 16:23-33), who is said (there, v. 33) to have

angered the LORD the God of Israel more than any of the kings of Israel who preceded him.

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Who wrote the book? The prophet Micah identified himself by his hometown, called Moresheth Gath, which sat near the border of Philistia and Judah about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. The book of Micah provides one of the most significant prophecies of Jesus Christ's birth in all the Old Testament, pointing some seven hundred years before Christ's birth to His birthplace of Bethlehem and to His eternal nature (Micah 5:2). Surrounding Micah's prophecy of Jesus's birth is one of the most lucid pictures of the world's future under the reign of the Prince of Peace (5:5). This future kingdom, which scholars call the millennial kingdom, will be characterized by the presence of many nations living with one another in peace and security (4:3-4) and coming to Jerusalem.

