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MOSHE J. BERNSTEIN

PESHER MICAH. See *Minor Prophets*.

PESHER NAHUM. Like Peshet Habakkuk (1QP Hab) and Peshet Psalms^a (4Q171), Peshet Nahum (4Q169), is a well-developed specimen of the *peshet* genre, a type of contemporizing biblical exegesis peculiar to Qumran. Peshet Nahum features an even balance of quoted biblical text and *peshet* interpretation, numerous exegetical devices, and a substantial amount of historical allusion.

Peshet Nahum exists today in only a single copy. It is one of the few documents of certain Qumran origin that exhibits more negative than positive evidence of "Qumran scribal practice" as described by Emanuel Tov (1980). This manuscript is dated to the first century BCE by its very legible late-Hasmonean to early-Herodian formal script. It consists of a total of five fragments that comprise five fairly well preserved columns of text, as well as

a fragment from a sixth column. It is probable that each column originally consisted of twelve lines. Fragments 1 and 2 contain little historical information, but the four columns of fragments 3 and 4 have provided much material for historical inquiry.

Peshet Nahum atomizes its biblical base text, exegetically transforming individual elements into a picture of impending final judgment against all enemies of God and the community. This "true" eschatological import of the original prophetic text is expressed through typical *peshet* techniques, such as allegory, textual variants, and paraphrase. Thus, Nahum's depiction of God's powerful effects upon nature is taken as a symbol for God's intervention against political entities, with rivers, for example, representing governing powers. The mention of a lion in Nahum 2.12 presents an opportunity for the use of the sobriquet "Lion of Wrath" (3-4, col. 1, lines 5-8), applied no doubt to the Hasmonean King Alexander Jannaeus here as well as in Peshet Hosea (cf. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.372-384). In general, Peshet Nahum uses such typical Qumran code names as "the elect" for the members of the sect and "Kittim" for their foreign enemies. Peshet Nahum is distinctive among Qumran texts in that, in addition to its use of sobriquets, it explicitly names two historical individuals, Demetrius and Antiochus. Modern scholars identify these figures as Demetrius III Eukerus (95-88 BCE), and Antiochus III (223-187 BCE) or Antiochus IV (175-164 BCE).

Especially important cryptic appellations in Peshet Nahum are Ephraim and Manasseh (3-4.iii, 3-4.iv.4). In the Bible, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, represent the renegade ten northern tribes of Israel who broke away from Judah, the Davidic monarchy, and the Temple. Since the Qumran community regarded itself as the true traditionalists, they termed their Jewish opponents *Ephraim and Manasseh*. Scholarly consensus associates the former, also named seekers after smooth things, with the Pharisees, who, according to Josephus, and the Talmud had great appeal for the masses. The group named Manasseh, described in Peshet Nahum as noblemen and rulers of the city, is taken to be the Sadducees. These identifications account for two of the three known major Jewish sects of the Second Temple period. Opposition to them in the Dead Sea Scrolls thus has been taken as support for the contention that the Qumran community is the third major sect described by Josephus, the Essenes. The apparent Sadducean *halakhah* of the Qumran sect as evidenced in Miqtsat Ma'asei ha-Torah (4Q394-399) has precipitated a reassessment of the usual Essene identification. Though the threefold division is still useful, the nature of each group is no longer seen as static and monolithic. It must be stressed that Peshet Nahum describes a mobility among and within the divi-

sions, anticipating, of course, a final time when all who survive will be those who recognize the truth of the sect. Peshet Nahum supports the current tendency to recognize a dynamic fluidity and evolution in the sociopolitical and religious groupings of Jewish antiquity.

The most controversial passage in Peshet Nahum refers to the "hanging alive" of Jewish opponents by the "Lion of Wrath." Textually, this line tantalizes the reader with a small lacuna that has provided room for voluminous debate about whether the author approved or disapproved of the executions. The historical significance of this datum is that it corroborates Josephus's depiction of the cruel revenge exacted by Alexander Jannaeus upon his Pharisaic enemies. The Qumran community certainly welcomed the punishment of the Pharisees, but their view of Alexander Jannaeus is the subject of debate. From the perspective of religious concerns, the words "hang alive," which may imply crucifixion, have been scrutinized as a possible indication that the community accepted crucifixion as a legitimate mode of execution. This has been argued on the basis of Temple Scroll¹ (11Q19) 1xiv.6-13, which interprets *Deuteronomy* 21.22-23 as imposing the penalty of hanging upon traitors as a means of execution, rather than as a post-mortem hanging of the corpses of certain criminals, as interpreted in rabbinic texts. The acceptance of crucifixion within an ancient Jewish legal system, even a system upheld by those who rejected the Jerusalem center, could potentially impact upon the modern understanding of the crucifixion of Jesus. However, in fact, it has been the scholars' theological and social preconceptions that have impacted upon their textual reconstructions and interpretations. It is likely that Peshet Nahum, even in its original state, would not have contributed substantially to the debate. It is not a simple case of the *peshet's* approval or disapproval of Alexander Jannaeus's actions. Even a theoretical advocate of "hanging alive" as a legitimate form of execution, appropriate even for these particular victims, might have deplored the magnitude of the killings or the environment in which they were carried out. (Josephus describes Alexander Jannaeus as feasting with his concubines while viewing the crucifixion of these men and the strangulation of their wives and children [*Jewish Antiquities* 13.380].) More significantly, the focus of the *peshet* is Pharisaic downfall. Approval of Alexander Jannaeus's actions may have indicated gratification regarding Pharisaic persecution and even a sense of justice in the broad application of the Deuteronomic law to them, without offering a legal evaluation of the specific means of execution.

The relative abundance of historical material in Peshet Nahum provides data that generally are understood to correspond with the paleographic dating. Column 1 al-

most certainly relates to Alexander Jannaeus's repression of the Pharisees in the eighties BCE. Column 2 has been associated with Pharisaic dominance during the reign of Shelamzion Alexandra (76-67 BCE) (Josephus, *Antiquities*) 13.405-432. Columns 3 and 4 appear to allude to the subsequent civil strife in Judea as Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, the sons of Alexander Jannaeus and Shelamzion Alexandra, contended for the throne (Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.1-79). Their conflict was ultimately "resolved" by Pompey in 63 BCE, when the general annexed Judea to Rome, ending the Hasmonean dynasty and thereby curtailing both the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Columns i and ii clearly describe events that predate the composition of the text. It is possible that the author has already witnessed the Roman takeover as well. Alternatively, though, the *peshet* may have been composed during the time of Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II and predicted their defeat. The *peshet* seems deliberately to refer to past, present, and future historical details, perhaps to emphasize the imminence of the final fulfillment of the prophecies. It has been proposed that Peshet Nahum may show signs of subtle modification aimed at maintaining the validity of the work as particular predictions failed to be fulfilled.

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SHANI L. BERRIN

PESHER ON THE PERIODS. See Ages of Creation.

PESHER PSALMS. Three of the Qumran *pesher* manuscripts (1Q16, 4Q171, 4Q173) are designated *pesherim* on the biblical *Book of Psalms*. The most substantial surviving *pesher* on *Psalms* is Pesher Psalms^a (4Q171), which originally contained commentary on at least four psalms. Fragments of four consecutive surviving columns contain major portions of a commentary on Psalm 37, which was clearly preceded by some other material and is followed by the beginning of a *pesher* on Psalm 45. Fragment 13 contains a citation from Psalm 60.

Because of the considerable remains of Pesher Psalms^a, we are in a better position to comment on it than on virtually any Qumran *pesher* other than Pesher Habakkuk (1QP^aHab) or Pesher Nahum (4Q169). The *pesher* of Pesher Psalms^a is not as full of general historical references as Pesher Habakkuk or Pesher Nahum, which may be a consequence of the nature of its biblical text. Psalm 37, with its constant contrast of righteous and wicked and encouragement of the former to hold fast to their beliefs, despite the success of the latter, is exceptionally well suited to the ideological *pesher* exegesis of the Qumran community; its language triggers the interpretations in the *pesher*. There are no references to the *Kittim* or to any non-Jewish group in Pesher Psalms^a (4Q171), with the exception of the "ruthless of the nations" (1-10.i.20; 1-10.iv.10), and the *pesher* does not give any sense of a broader historical context.

The "wicked" of Psalm 37 is taken to refer to the opponents of the Qumran group, while the author sees himself and his colleagues as the "righteous." The tension in the biblical text is between the prosperous wicked whose good fortune, according to the psalmist, is ultimately transient, and the impoverished, hopeful righteous who keep faith with the Lord. The *pesher*, employing coded

terminology to describe (presumably) the Qumran sect and its opponents, predicts the survival of the former and the ultimate destruction of the latter.

The sequence of the psalm determines the order of the *pesher*, and, as a result, the arrangement of the *pesher* is not chronological. Probable references to near and distant future (including the eschaton) are intermingled, and the same term in the biblical text does not always generate the same reference in the *pesher*. One of the ways in which the psalm is linked to the contemporary context of the author of the *pesher* is by the identification of the groups mentioned in the psalm with individuals or groups in his own day. "The man of lies," appears both early and late in the *pesher* (1-10.i.26 and 1-10.iv.14), as the concretization of "the doer of wiles" (Ps. 37.7) and "the arrogant wicked one" (Ps. 37.35), while the "wicked priest" appears between those allusions (1-10.iv.8) as the *pesher* of "the wicked one" (Ps. 37.32). The former term recalls the "preacher of lies," Pesher Habakkuk x.9 and CD i.14 and viii.13. These are presumably epithets for specific, unique individuals.

Other references to "the wicked" in Psalm 37 are not linked to specific figures, but to groups of opponents of the author: "the ruthless ones of the covenant who are in the house of Judah" (1-10.ii.14), "the wicked of Ephraim and Manasseh" (1-10.ii.18), and "the ruthless ones [of the covenant]" (1-10.iv.1-2). Ephraim and Manasseh in the *pesherim* have usually been taken to refer to Pharisees and Sadducees, respectively, although that identification may have to be reexamined in light of suggestions that the Qumran sect itself is "Sadducee" in some fashion. Those who "will pass away like smoke" (Ps. 37.20) are "the princes of wickedness" (1-10.iii.7), while those described by the psalm as "cursed by Him" (37.22) are identified with "the ruthless ones of the covenant, the wicked of Israel" (1-10.iii.11-12).

There is much greater variety in the terminology that is employed for the author's group and their allies. Of the individual leaders of the group, we find "the priest and the men of his council" (1-10.ii.19) who are attacked by the "wicked of Ephraim and Manasseh," and three fairly certain references to the "teacher of righteousness," one of which (1-10.iii.15) refers to him as "the priest." It is clear that we are dealing with the leader of the Qumran group who was vexed by a variety of antagonists. The "interpreter of knowledge" (1-10.i.27) is the victim of the "man of lies" who leads his followers astray. We cannot be certain of the historical reference of the former term, which occurs only once more in Qumran literature at Hodayot^a (1QH^a) ii.13, although its antithesis, "interpreters of lies" (cf. "man of lies") occurs at Hodayot^a (1QH^a) ii.31 and iv.8.

The Qumran sect thought of itself and its leaders as