Frequently a scholar's interpretation of a prophetic pericope is intimately connected with his understanding of the extent of that pericope (its beginning, end, and progress of thought), of its function in the prophetic complex where it has been placed (i.e., its relationship to the pericopes surrounding it), and of the essential idea or ideas which it expresses. The celebrated "Bethlehem pericope" is no exception. Critics are by no means agreed as to where this pericope begins or where it ends. iv 14-v 5 is variously divided into two, three, or even four parts. The purpose of this paper is to offer some suggestions toward a solution of the problems just mentioned as they pertain to this pericope.

A number of exegetes have felt compelled to separate iv 14 from v 1 ff. 1). iv 14 is an oracle of doom in which the king of Israel (= Judah) is humiliated by an enemy, whereas v 1-5 is an oracle of hope in which the prophet announces that the coming ruler of Israel will be victorious over his adversaries 2). Furthermore, either iv 14 or v 1 ff. fits better at a place other than its present position in the book. J. M. P. SMITH 3), BRUNO 4), MOWINCKEL 5), and LINDBLOM 6) think that inadvertently or purposely iv 14 was separated from its original position after iv 9 or iv 10a. This rearrangement makes the sequence of thought smooth, and the "original" text of iv 14 is in the Qinah measure, as is iv 9-10. However, BEYERLIN considers iv 14 to be the "original" continuation of i 8-16, because the historical background, meter, thought, and style of the two passages are the same, and

1) The versification of the MT is used throughout the article.
2) Cf., e.g., J. LINDBLOM, Micha literarisch untersucht 1929, p. 156; and recently, B. RENAUD, Structure et Attaches litteraires de Michée IV-V 1964, p. 16.
4) LIZ. A. BRUNO, Micha und der Herrscher aus der Vorzeit 1923, p. 84.
5) S. MOWINCKEL, "Mikaboken", NTT, 29 1928, p. 34.
because the train of thought from i 16 to iv 14 is logical 1). And HALÉVY transfers iv 14 to a position between vi 12 and vi 13 because it breaks the logical sequence between iv 14 and v 1 and restores the original line of thought in vi 12 ff. 2) ELHORST conjectures that what is now the book of Micah was originally on four disconnected leaves. Chaps. iv-v were written in double columns, which may be reconstructed in this way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column II</th>
<th>Column I</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. v 1-7</td>
<td>A. iv 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. v 8-14</td>
<td>C. iv 9-14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

He maintains that the scribe who arranged the material in this way intended that pericope A in Col. I be read first, then pericope B in Col. II, etc. But unfortunately, copyists wrongly read the entire right column first in sequence, then the entire left column 3). So v 1-7 must be restored to its original place after iv 8, thus restoring the original sequence of thought: the kingdom of Jerusalem will be established (iv 1-4, 6-8) and the house of David will be restored (v 1-7) 4). HORTON 5) and NOWACK 6) also regard v 1 ff. as the original continuation of iv 8, but consider iv 9-14 to be a later insertion designed to contrast the present (iv 9-14) with the future (iv 8 and v 1 ff.). GIESEBRECHT argues that v 1 ff. originally followed iii 12 because this provides a contrast between proud Jerusalem (chaps. i-iii) and humble Bethlehem (v 1 ff.) 7).

1) W. BEYERLIN, *Die Kulttraditionen Israels in der Verkündigung des Propheten Michäa* 1959, pp. 18-19. Beyerlin’s six arguments to support this are: (1) i 16 refers to an old mourning custom of shaving the head bald, and iv 14 refers to an old mourning custom of making a cut. These two customs are mentioned together in Lev. xix 27-28; xxii 5; Deut. xiv 1. (2) Both i 8-16 and iv 14 are in the Qinah meter. (3) Both passages contain word plays. (4) i 16 and iv 14 both use feminine forms. (5) Both passages address Jerusalem, and the train of thought from i 16 to iv 14 is logical. (6) The historical background of both passages is Sennacherib’s invasion of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.


4) *Ibid.,* p. 81. W. H. KOSTERS, "De Samenstelling van het Boek Micha," *TbTijd*, 27 1893, p. 252, agrees with Elhorst that v 1 was the original continuation of iv 8, but denies that v 2-7 should be moved.

