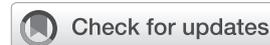


# The problematic Hebrew word 'ועבר' Nahum 1:12: The study of ancient translations

**Author:**Philip S. Chia<sup>1</sup> **Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Old Testament and Hebrew Scriptures, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

**Corresponding author:**

Philip Chia,  
pchia275@students.sbts.edu

**Dates:**

Received: 03 Apr. 2025

Accepted: 14 June 2025

Published: 01 Aug. 2025

**How to cite this article:**

Chia, P.S., 2025, 'The problematic Hebrew word 'ועבר' Nahum 1:12: The study of ancient translations', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 46(1), a3505. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v46i1.3505>

**Copyright:**

© 2025. The Author.  
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

What is the meaning of 'ועבר' found in Nahum 1:12? The textual tradition is divided. The Septuagint (LXX) omits this Hebrew word, while the Vulgate translates literally as 'et pertransibit' in Nahum 1:12. Although the Peshitta has a similar translation with the Masoretic text and the Vulgate, it differs on the subject: they will go through or 'מַחֲבֵה'. Targum, on the other hand, interprets the Hebrew word as 'ויעברון על פרת ית' or 'they passed on the Euphrates'. This disagreement raises important questions about the original wording of the verse, its interpretation and the sources of the various readings that emerged during its transmission.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** This article employs textual criticism as its primary method, examining manuscript evidence, evaluating the chances of transcription and translation differences and considering contextual and linguistic factors. The aim is to determine the most likely original text and to investigate the possible reasons for the inconsistencies found among these ancient sources.

**Keywords:** textual criticism, word study, LXX, dead sea scrolls, Peshitta, Vulgate, Targum, Masoretic text, Nahum, ועבר.

## Introduction

Ancient translations of Nahum 1:12 are categorised into four primary interpretations. Firstly, the Greek Septuagint (Rahlfs 2006) omits this Hebrew word. Secondly, the Latin Vulgate (Fisher & Weber 1994) and the Masoretic text (Elliger & Rudolph 1997) translate literally as 'et pertransibit'. These ancient translations understand the Lord as the subject of the Hebrew verb 'ועבר' found in Nahum 1:12. Conversely, the Syriac Peshitta (the Leiden Peshitta Edition 2012) renders the people of Nineveh as the subject of 'מַחֲבֵה'. The Aramaic Targum (Gordon & Cathcart 1989) is also troubled by the problematic Hebrew word 'ועבר' and interprets it as 'ויעברון על ית פרת' or 'they passed on the Euphrates'. In other words, both the Peshitta and the Targum understand the people of Nineveh as the subject of 'ועבר'. This variation underscores the absence of agreement among the ancient texts. The purpose of this article is to address this discord by employing textual criticism as its main approach.

## Methodology

Textual criticism is frequently described as a harmonious blend of artistic creativity and scientific inquiry. It is categorised as a science because it relies on data analysis, the study of the genealogical connections between manuscripts and a comprehensive understanding of copying methods. Nevertheless, it is also regarded as an art form, necessitating a sharp sense of judgement and critical evaluation throughout the process (Boltzman & Tuly 2016:138). This discipline has two main objectives. The first is to uncover the theological implications present in various translations. The second is to reconstruct the most precise and authentic version of the biblical texts as they were originally composed. This task entails the comparison and analysis of numerous manuscripts, versions and textual evidence to detect errors, inconsistencies and modifications that have arisen over time (Barthélemy 2012:92). This research focuses on the second objective.

There are three primary methodologies in textual criticism: rigorous eclecticism, reasoned eclecticism and the majority text approach. This article embraces reasoned eclecticism, which considers both external and internal evidence. The assessment of external evidence involves a comprehensive examination of the manuscripts' age, reliability and geographical distribution, with older manuscripts typically being viewed as more authoritative. Conversely, internal evidence pertains to transcriptional probability, evaluating the likelihood of what a scribe would have written or copied, as well as intrinsic probability, which considers what the original author might have created, factoring in elements such as context, stylistic preferences

**Read online:**

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

and theological implications. This internal evaluation often adheres to principles like *lectio difficilior*, *lectio brevior* and harmonisation (cf. Chia 2025:5–16).

## ***Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* and the evaluations**

*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) apparatus demonstrates the reading of the LXX only in which the LXX omits the Hebrew word 'ועבר' (Elliger & Rudolph 1997:1045). A notable criticism of the BHS apparatus is its omission of complete ancient texts, including those from the Peshitta, the Targum and the Vulgate. Additionally, it has been pointed out that the BHS apparatus lacks a suggestion for the original reading (see Elliger & Rudolph 1997:1045).

In his commentary on *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ), Gelston offers an analysis of the LXX's translation. He suggests that the Greek verb 'διασταλάσσονται' may be intended to correspond to both Hebrew verbs: 'נגזז' and 'ועבר'. This interpretation implies a similar contextual assimilation as seen in the Peshitta and the Targum (Gelston 2010:110). A significant point of criticism is that Gelston erroneously suggests that the Peshitta and the Targum exhibit a contextual alignment similar to that of the LXX. Although the Peshitta is troubled by 'נגזז וינן', the Peshitta translates it as 'גזזו >גזזו'. Targum interprets 'נגזז' as 'דגלת יגוזן על ית' or 'they go across Tigris'.

Therefore, this article seeks to achieve two goals. Firstly, this research aims to enhance the sources both in the BHS and the BHQ by integrating readings from Nahal Hever XII Greek scroll (8Hev XII gr = Rahlfs 943), Murabba'at 88 (the Mur 88), the Hexapla and 4QXII<sup>b</sup>. Secondly, this article endeavours to provide an evaluation of those witnesses and ascertain the original reading of 'ועבר' Nahum 1:2 by employing textual criticism as its methodological approach.

## **Historiography of the textual problem 'ועבר'**

There are multiple issues associated with the Hebrew verb 'ועבר'. Firstly, both the Peshitta and the Targum interpret the people of Nineveh as the subject of 'ועבר'. Consequently, these translations utilise 'ועבר' instead of 'ועבר'. Longman (2019:798) explains that this emendation occurs because the subsequent word 'וענתך' starts with the conjunction 'ו'. As a result, the plural ending of 'ועבר' was omitted because of haplography or an error in word division. Secondly, another scholar maintains the consonantal text and identifies the people of Nineveh as the subject of 'ועבר' but reinterprets the form as an infinitive absolute: 'they will be cut off, passing away' (Cathcart 1973:21). Thirdly, advocate for the reading of the Masoretic text and address the issue by proposing a transition from a plural reference (the Assyrians) to a singular one (either God or the Assyrian king). This is illustrated in the phrases: 'they shall be cut down, when he passes through' (KJV) and 'they will be cut off and he will pass over'

(Barthélemy 1992:795–796; Smith 1984:77). Fourthly, the other scholars propose that the singular form operates as a collective: 'They will be cut off and [they] will pass away' (Maier 1959:206). Table 1 summarises the problematic word of 'ועבר'.

## **External evidence**

This external evidence involves evaluating the age, reliability and geographical distribution of the manuscripts. Generally, older manuscripts are regarded as having more authority. Table 2 displays the ancient translations along with their respective texts and translations, including their estimated *vorlage* and dates.

The table presented above indicates that the Hebrew term 'אמשימים' is not referenced in the Origen hexapla (Field 1875:1001) and Nahal Hever XII Greek scroll (8Hev XII gr = Rahlfs 943) as it is so fragmentary (Tov, Kraft & Parsons 1990:44–45). On the other hand, the Mur 88, also referred to as MurXII or the Wadi Murabba'at Minor Prophets Scroll, contains similar reading with the Masoretic text, although the text is fragmentary (Benoit, Milik & De Vaux 1961:197). This manuscript is dated to the early 2nd century CE, specifically around 132–135 CE. Key fragments of this manuscript, which include the complete text of the Twelve Minor Prophets, were discovered in a rock crevice located a short distance upstream from the larger refuge caves of Wadi Murabba'at. The presence of human bones and clothing found in the same location indicates a burial, likely that of a man laid to rest with a biblical scroll. Discovered during the rainy season, the scroll appeared as a large, flattened bundle with an irregular shape. The skin of the scroll had deteriorated significantly because of moisture, resulting in a soft, gelatinous texture akin to a sponge, with only a few areas of intact material remaining. Insects had damaged a considerable portion of both the inscribed surface and the reverse side. Furthermore, the entire scroll was heavily covered in dust and fine gravel. The careful handling by the Ta'amreh, who transported the manuscript from Wadi Murabba'at to Bethlehem, along with Kando's subsequent transfer to the Palestine Museum, played a crucial role in its preservation. The treatment it received at the Museum, while not highly technical, was conducted with great attention to detail, ensuring that the scroll was largely safeguarded for academic study. A thorough cleaning or systematic dusting of the inscribed surface was avoided, as removing the grains of sand that were firmly adhered to the fragile material posed a risk of further damaging the letters and reducing the manuscript's legibility. Additionally, the significant shrinkage of the skin because of decomposition and

**TABLE 1:** The summary of Historiography of the textual problem 'ועבר'.

Variable	Emendation	Non-emendation	Omission
The subject (plural)	Targum, Peshitta, Longman	Maier	LXX
The subject (singular)	-	Vulgate, Masoretic Text, Barthélemy, Smith	-
Infinitive absolute	Cathcart	-	-

TABLE 2: Ancient texts.

Source	Text	Translation	Vorlage	Dates
Masoretic Text	וְעָבַר	And he (it) will pass	וְעָבַר	Aleppo Codex: 930 C.E Leningrad Codex: 1008–1010 C.E
Septuagint	÷ (omission)	(no translation)	(unknown)	Around the 2nd century B.C.E
Nahal Hever XII Greek scroll (8Hev XII gr = Rahlfs 943)	( <i>lacunae</i> )	(no translation)	(unknown)	Late 1st century B.C.E or early 1st century C.E. Around 50 B.C.E – 50 C.E.
Peshitta	וְעָבַר	And they will pass	וְעָבַר	Around 2nd – 3rd Century C.E
Vulgate	<i>et pertransibit</i>	And he (it) will pass	וְעָבַר	Late 4th Century C.E
Targum	וְיַעֲבִירוּן	And they will pass	וְיַעֲבִירוּן	Around 13th–14th Century C.E
Hexapla	(no available information)	(no translation)	(unknown)	230–245 C.E
Murabba'at 88 (the Mur 88)	וְיַעֲבִירוּן	And he (it) will pass	וְעָבַר	Around 132–135 C.E
4QXII <sup>a</sup>	( <i>lacunae</i> )	(no translation)	(unknown)	The last third of the first century B.C.E (Late Hasmonean or Early Herodian period)

the periodic drying of the organic material made it impossible to flatten the inscribed surface as intended. Consequently, the lines of writing are sometimes challenging to discern in photographs (Benoit et al. 1961:181). The text of Mur 88 largely adheres to the structure of the Received Text (*Textus Receptus*) as it is divided into *haftarot*, with exceptions noted in column VII 1 (Am 7:34), column VIII 18 (Am 9:6–7) and column XXIII 7 (Haggai 2:13–14) (Benoit et al. 1961:182). Composed several decades after the Received Text was established, Mur 88 presents several variations when compared to the original Hebrew Bible. Many of these differences – such as instances of plene versus defective spellings, or *qere* versus *ketiv* – are likely the result of occasional oversights by the scribe, who was otherwise quite meticulous. Additionally, some grammatical adjustments may stem from unintentional errors (Benoit et al. 1961:183). Concerning 4QXII<sup>a</sup>, the condition of the book of Nahum is notably deteriorated, which greatly impedes effective study of the text. Firstly, numerous fragments have several layers of the scroll adhered together. Because of the degradation, letters that appear adjacent may not actually form a single word; they could originate from different layers or sections of the scroll prior to its deterioration. Secondly, in certain fragments, the ink from one layer has created a mirror-image impression on the reverse side of the layer above, adding to the difficulty of interpretation. Thirdly, much of the text has faded to the point where it is illegible to the naked eye. Consequently, even when examining the original manuscript in a museum, the usual corrections that would assist in verifying interpretations based on photographs are not available (Ulrich 1997:270–271). As a result, Nahum 1:12 is absent from 4QXII<sup>a</sup>, which is highly fragmented and includes only Nahum 1:7–9; 2:9–11; and 3:1–3.17 (Ulrich 1997:272, 315, 321). The lack of this information will render Nahum 1:12 unexaminable.

External evidence excludes the LXX, the hexapla, Nahal Hever XII Greek scroll (8Hev XII gr = Rahlfs 943) and 4QXII<sup>a</sup> because of insufficient information regarding Nahum 1:12. Three witnesses support 'וְעָבַר' as their *vorlage*, including the Masoretic text, which presents it as with 'וְעָבַר', the Latin Vulgate rendered as '*et pertransibit*', and Murabba'at 88 (the Mur 88), which features 'וְיַעֲבִירוּן'. Two ancient translations, the Peshitta and the Targum, have 'וְעָבַר' as their *vorlage*. Thus, their translations are 'וְעָבַר' and 'וְיַעֲבִירוּן', respectively.

External evidence supports the reading 'וְעָבַר' as the original text, as it is confirmed by the earliest known source: Murabba'at 88 (the Mur 88), which dates to around 132–135 C.E.

## Internal evidence

This internal evidence often relies on principles such as *lectio difficilior*, *lectio brevior* and harmonisation (cf. Chia 2025:5–16). *Lectio difficilior*, a Latin term meaning 'the more difficult reading', is a key concept in textual criticism. It suggests that when confronted with multiple versions of a text, the one that is more complex or obscure is likely the original. This idea assumes that scribes typically simplified or clarified challenging passages rather than complicating them. As a result, the more difficult reading is often considered more authentic, as it is less likely that a scribe would have modified it in such a way (Tov 2015:307–310). *Lectio brevior*, which translates to 'the shorter reading', serves as another guiding principle in textual criticism. It asserts that when presented with different versions of a text, the more succinct reading is often the original. This belief arises from the understanding that scribes tended to enhance texts by adding material for clarity, consistency or explanation, rather than omitting it. Therefore, shorter readings are frequently viewed as more authentic, as they are less vulnerable to alterations made by scribes (Tov 2015:307–310). Harmonisation in textual criticism refers to the practice of scribes or copyists modifying a text to ensure its consistency with another related passage or to resolve perceived discrepancies. This phenomenon commonly occurs in works that feature multiple versions or parallel accounts, such as the Gospels in the New Testament or similar narratives in the Hebrew Bible. The harmonisation process may involve changing specific words, phrases or even entire sections to align them with another text that the scribe considers authoritative or more familiar (Tov 2015:307–310).

### *Lectio difficilior*

In the context of the problematic Hebrew word 'וְעָבַר' in Nahum 1:12, the principle of *lectio difficilior* rules out the LXX, the hexapla, Nahal Hever XII Greek scroll (8Hev XII gr = Rahlfs 943) and 4QXII<sup>a</sup> because there is inadequate information concerning 'וְעָבַר'.

Both the Peshitta and the Targum offer an easier reading, as the *vorlage* 'ועבר' maintains the narrative continuity, indicating that the inhabitants of Nineveh (in plural form) are the recipients of God's punishment.

The Masoretic text, the Vulgate and Murabba'at 88 (the Mur 88) present the more challenging reading for several reasons. Firstly, the inclusion of 'ועבר' disrupts the transition from the plural representation of the people of Nineveh to a singular form. Secondly, this Hebrew verb raises questions about the identity of the subject of the verb – whether it continues to refer to the people of Nineveh (Longman 2019:798; Maier 1959:206) or shifts to God or the event (Barthélemy 1992:795–796; Smith 1984:77). Thirdly, the use of 'ועבר' complicates the narrative flow, shifting from 'they' to 'he', then to 'I' and finally to 'you' in a feminine form. Consequently, the principle of *lectio difficilior* suggests that the Latin Vulgate, the Mur 88 and the Masoretic text contain the original reading.

### Lectio brevior

In the realm of the Old Testament textual criticism, the original reading supports the principle *lectio brevior*. Again, *lectio brevior* excludes the LXX, the hexapla, Nahal Hever XII Greek scroll (8Hev XII gr = Rahlfs 943) and 4QXII<sup>5</sup> because of insufficient information regarding 'ועבר'. Table 3 indicates that the Mur 88, the Peshitta, the Vulgate and the Masoretic text align with the principle of *lectio brevior*.

### Harmonisation

This section presents lexical analysis for assessing the original text. This methodology entails an analysis of the key terms from the source, specifically 'ועבר' and 'ועבר'. This segment will explore both Hebrew terms within the context of the book of Nahum. As shown in Table 4, the Hebrew verb 'ועבר' is found four times within Nahum. Apart from its occurrence in Nahum 1:12, 'ועבר' consistently appears in the singular form, associated with various subjects, including the flood (1:8), the wicked (2:1) and the afflicted (3:19). Therefore, the lexical analysis indicates that the *vorlage* 'ועבר' is indeed favourable.

### 'ועבר' in Nahum 1:12

Both external and internal evidence, especially *lectio difficilior* and harmonisation, favour the reading 'ועבר'. Table 5 indicates that 'ועבר' is never employed to denote 'it' (contrary to Barthélemy 1992:795–796). While the Hebrew verb 'ועבר' may refer to the Lord, the context consistently and explicitly mentions the Lord (or God) as the subject (cf. 1:9, 1:12, 1:14). As Nahum 1:12 does not explicitly clarify the subject of 'ועבר', then it must refer to a wicked counsellor. Table 5 summarises the usage of persons in a near literary context in Nahum 1:9–14.

Contextually, Nahum 1:10 indicates the people of Nineveh as 'they', while Nahum 1:11 speaks of a wicked counsellor as

**TABLE 3:** Depiction that the Mur 88, the Peshitta, the Vulgate and the Masoretic text align with *lectio brevior*.

Ancient Translation	Text(s)	Word count
LXX	÷ (omission)	0
Hexapla	(No available information)	(?)
Nahal Hever XII Greek scroll (8Hev XII gr = Rahlfs 943)	(No available information)	(?)
4QXII <sup>5</sup>	(No available information)	(?)
Masoretic Text	ועבר	2
Peshitta	ܘܥܒܪܝܗ	2
Vulgate	et pertransibit	2
Mur 88	[ועבר]	2
Targum	ויעברון על ית פרת	5

**TABLE 4:** The verb 'ועבר' in the singular form and the subjects it relates to.

Bible text	Reference
Nahum 1:8	Flood
Nahum 2:1	The wicked ones
Nahum 3:19	The sufferer

'he who plots evil against the Lord'. Thus, Nahum 1:12 repeats these two evil subjects – the inhabitants of Nineveh as 'they will be cut off' and a wicked counsellor as 'he will pass away' – in the context of God's punishment. In other words, Nahum 1:12 provides the wholeness of God's punishment to an individual (a wicked counsellor) and the communal (the people of Nineveh).

Historically, Nineveh utilised a network of dams and sluice gates to manage the waters of the Tebiltu and Khoser Rivers that traversed the city (Thompson & Hutchinson 1982:120–132). In addition to Nineveh's water defenses, Nahum 2:8 illustrates that Nineveh resembled a pool of water during its days.<sup>1</sup> However, the Tebiltu River often exceeded its banks within the city, threatening the stability of palaces and other buildings. To address this flooding problem, Sennacherib altered the river's path within the city boundaries. Furthermore, he built a dam on the Khoser River outside the city, establishing a reservoir that regulated the water supply to Nineveh through an advanced system of double sluice gates (Luckenbill 1927:99–100; Reade 1978a:47–72, 1978b:157–180).<sup>2</sup> Thus, Nahum draws a parallel between the downfall of the powerful Assyrians and the gradual receding of once-mighty waters. The Hebrew verb 'ועבר' metaphorically carries significant rhetorical weight, as the Assyrians frequently claimed to overpower their foes like a deluge. Thus, it is particularly

1. Nahum 2:8 is fitting as Nineveh was renowned for its man-made pools, several of which catered to the royal gardens. Additionally, the city was traversed by two rivers: the Tebiltu and the Khoser. The Hebrew noun 'בִּרְכָה' typically denotes a man-made water reservoir that is supplied by aqueducts, as opposed to a natural body of water (HALOT 161 s.v.). For instance, it is applied to artificial water reservoirs associated with royal gardens (Ec 2:6; Neh 2:14) and to those in Jerusalem, some of which were sourced from aqueducts (2 Ki 18:17; 20:20; Is 7:3; 22:9, 11; 36:2; Neh 3:15, 16). Additionally, it refers to the pool of Gibeon (2 Sm 2:13), the pool of Hebron (2 Sm 4:12), the pool of Samaria (1 Ki 22:38) and the pools of Heshbon (Song 7:5). The pool of Siloam, constructed by Hezekiah and supplied by the underground aqueduct known as Hezekiah's Tunnel, is referred to as בְּרִיקָה in 2 Kings 20:20 and in the Siloam Inscription (line 5).

2. According to classical sources (Diodorus and Xenophon), just prior to the fall of Nineveh, a series of intense rainfalls inundated the region. The Khoser River overflowed, leading to the breach of the reservoir. The resulting surge overwhelmed the canal system, creating a gap in the city wall that measured 20 stades (approximately 2.3 miles or 3.7 km) wide, which allowed water to flood the city. Once the waters receded, the Babylonians invaded and captured Nineveh (Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica, 2.26–27, particularly 27.1–3; Xenophon, Anabasis, 3.4.12; Haupt 1907:65–83). This account appears to be supported by archaeological findings (Olmstead 1923:637).

**TABLE 5:** Summary of the usage of persons in a near literary context in Nahum 1:9–14.

I (am)	You (Feminine singular)	You (Masculine singular)	You (Masculine plural)	He (His)	She	They
'וענתך' or God (1:12)	'ממך' or Nineveh (1:11)	'עליך' or Nineveh (1:14)	'תחשבוך' or Nineveh (1:9)	'הוא' or the Lord (1:9)	'צרה' or Distress (1:9)	'אכלו' or Nineveh (1:10)
'אענך' or God (1:12)	'וענתך' or Judah (1:12)	'משמך' or Nineveh (1:14)	-	'חשב' or the wicked counsellor (1:11)	-	'נגו' or Nineveh (1:10)
'אשבר' or God (1:12)	'אענך' or Judah (1:12)	'אלהיך' or Nineveh (1:14)	-	'אמר' or the Lord (1:12)	-	-
'אנתק' or God (1:13)	'מעליך' or Judah (1:13)	'קברך' or Nineveh (1:14)	-	'מטהר' or Nineveh (1:13)	-	-
'אכרית' or God (1:14)	'ימוסרתך' or Judah (1:13)	'קלות' or Nineveh (1:14)	-	'צודה' or God (1:14)	-	-
'אשים' or God (1:14)	-	-	-	'זורע' or Nineveh (1:14)	-	-

ironic that they would soon diminish to a mere stream. Furthermore, this imagery is fitting considering the historical annihilation of Nineveh, which was foretold by the prophet (Nah 2:7–9) and documented by ancient historians.

## Conclusion

The analysis of ancient translations of 'ועבר' or 'עבר' in Nahum 1:12 indicates that both external and internal evidence favour the Hebrew verb 'ועבר'. External evidence substantiates the Hebrew verb 'ועבר' as the original text, with the earliest known reference being Murabba'ât 88 (Mur 88), dated around 132–135 C.E. Internal evidence further corroborates the reading 'ועבר'. The principle of *lectio difficilior* supports this reading, which is found in the Latin Vulgate, Mur 88 and the Masoretic text. While the principle of *lectio brevior* offers limited information, harmonisation reinforces the preference for 'ועבר'.

Contextual analysis and Table 5 demonstrate that a wicked counsellor serves as the subject of the Hebrew verb 'ועבר'. Nahum 1:12 emphasises two malevolent subjects: the inhabitants of Nineveh, described as 'they will be cut off', and a wicked counsellor, referred to as 'he will pass away', within the framework of divine retribution. This verse illustrates the comprehensive nature of God's judgement, affecting both an individual (the wicked counsellor) and a collective (the people of Nineveh). Nahum intentionally establishes a comparison between the decline of the powerful Assyrians and the diminishing of once-mighty waters, utilising the Hebrew verb 'ועבר', which carries profound rhetorical significance. The Assyrians often boasted of their ability to overwhelm their enemies like a flood, making it particularly ironic that they would soon be reduced to a mere trickle. Additionally, this imagery resonates with the historical destruction of Nineveh, a fate predicted by the prophet (Nah 2:7–9).

## Acknowledgements

### Competing interests

The author reported that they received funding from the University of Pretoria, which may be affected by the research reported in the enclosed publication. The author has disclosed those interests fully and has implemented an approved plan for managing any potential conflicts arising from their involvement. The terms of these funding arrangements have been reviewed and approved by the affiliated university in accordance with its policy on objectivity in research.

## Author's contribution

P.S.C. is the sole author of this research article.

## Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

## Funding information

The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the publication of this article. This work was supported by the University of Pretoria.

## Data availability

The author confirms that the data supporting this study and its findings are available within the article.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The author is responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

## References

- Barthélemy, D. & United Bible Societies Committee of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project, 2012, *Studies in the text of the Old Testament: an introduction to the Hebrew Old Testament text project*. Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Ind., viewed 07 March 2025, from <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10562010>.
- Benoit, P., Milik, J.T. & De Vaux, R., 1961, *Les grottes de Murabba'ât*, vol. 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Boltzman, E.R. & Tully, E.J., 2016, *Old Testament textual criticism: A practical introduction*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Cathcart, K.J., 1973, *Nahum in the Light of Northwest Semitic*, Biblical Institute Press, Rome.
- Chia, P., 2025, 'Analysis of מִצְמָא [mšim] in the Hexapla', *Collectanea Theologica* 95(1), 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2025.95.1.01>
- Elliger, K., Rudolph, W., Rüger, H.P. & Schenker, A., 1997, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia Quae Antea Cooperantibus A. Alt, O. Eissfeldt, P. Kahle Ediderat R. Kittel*. Editio funditus renovata adjuvantibus H. Bardtke [und weitere], cooperantibus H.P. Rüger et J. Ziegler, ediderunt K. Elliger et W. Rudolph; textum Masoreticum curavit H.P. Rüger; Masoram elaboravit G.E. Weil; ed. quinta emendata opera, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, Hebrew Bible.
- Field, F., 1875, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt, sive veterum interpretum Graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta; post Flaminium Nobilium, Drusium et Montefalconium, adhibita etiam versione Syro-hemiplari, concinnavit, emendavit, et multis partibus auxit Fridericus Field*, 2 vols., Clarendon, Oxford, Sixfold.
- Fischer, B. & Weber, R., 1994, *Biblia Sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Latin Bible.
- Gelston, A., 2010, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta: Twelve prophets*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Durham. (= BHQ).

- Gordon, R.P. & Cathcart, K.J. (transl.), 1989, *The Targum of the minor prophets*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.
- Haupt, P., 1907, 'Xenophon's account of the fall of Nineveh', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 28, 99–107. <https://doi.org/10.2307/592761>
- Longman, T., 2019, *Confronting Old Testament controversies: pressing questions about evolution, sexuality, history, and violence*, Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Luckenbill, D.D., 1927, *Ancient records of Assyria and Babylonia*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Maier, W.A., 1959, *The Book of Nahum, a commentary*, Concordia Pub. House, Saint Louis.
- Rahlf's, A., Hanhart, R. & Bibelgesellschaft, D., 2006, *Septuaginta: Id Est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.
- Reade, J., 1978, 'Studies in Assyrian Geography, Part II: The Northern Canal System', *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 72(1), 157–180.
- Reade, J., 1978, 'Studies in Assyrian geography: Part I: Sennacherib and the Waters of Nineveh', *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 72(1), 47–72.
- Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden. Peshitta-Instituut and International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, 2012, *The Old Testament in Syriac: according to the Peshitta Version*, eds. by ter Haar Romeny RB and van Peursen WT, E. J. Brill, Leiden.
- Smith, R.L., 1984, *Micah-Malachi*, Word Books, Waco, TX.
- Thompson, R.C. & Hutchinson, R.W., 1982, *A century of exploration at Nineveh*, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Tov, E., 2015, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint*, Brill, Leiden.
- Tov, E., Kraft, R.A. & Parsons, P.J., 1990, *The Greek minor prophets scroll from Nahal H̄Ever: 8 H̄Ev XII Gr. Discoveries in the Judaeae desert*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Ulrich, E., 1997, *Qumran Cave 4. X: The prophets*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.