

## Foreword

With the first edition of my tenure as editor of *Old Testament Essays* I wish to express gratitude towards the previous editor, Prof. Phil Botha of the Department of Ancient Languages of the University of Pretoria. He fulfilled the role of editor for more than twelve years. Under his editorship *Old Testament Essays* expanded considerably in terms of subscription as well as the number of articles published in each volume. Phil is known for his meticulous and detailed reading of ancient texts (as can be seen in his article in this volume) and thorough administrative abilities. He used these fine capabilities in his editing of the articles the guild submitted for publication, ensuring that volume after volume readers experience a high quality publication. His thoroughness guaranteed prompt publication of each volume, enabling the members of the Old Testament Society of Southern Africa to comply with their respective institutions' own administrative rules of subsidy within the South African tertiary educational system. Moreover, the prompt appearance of each volume contributed to the stature of the journal within academia.

The current volume unwittingly exhibits a theme related to the reading of the Old Testament within an African context. Texts under scrutiny are Psalms, the Book Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the Books of Chronicles.

David Adamo's article reflects on a different interpretation of Psalm 109 within African Christianity, namely as a psalm of protection, success, healing and, mostly, as a prayer to God to get up and fight for the righteous and the poor instead of leaving the fight to the sufferer visiting witch doctors, herbalists, or evil ones. In similar vein, Liswaniso Kamuwanga compares some Psalms with Lozi traditional prayers regarding protection. Zooming in on a particular African context, Matthew Michael investigates the nature of Old Testament angelology in the enigmatic form of a Divine Council of Yahweh and the mild divine monarchy in the traditional African understanding of the spirit world. Hans van Deventer takes a critical look at the *African Bible Commentary*'s presentation of the Book of Daniel, suggesting the contribution fails to exhibit an African approach because it is informed by an outdated form of modern (Western) epistemology.

Phil Botha and Randall Gauthier pick up on the Book of Psalms which forms the basic texts for Adamo and Kamuwanga's articles. Botha concludes that Psalm 34 does not only serve to present David as an example and object of identification for those who read the Psalms, but that he also lends authority to the exhortations directed at believers to stay true to the code of conduct of the poor pious people. Gauthier's article examines the use of the Psalms within the Psalms, which he illustrates with examples from the Masoretic text, the Septuagint and the Psalm Targum, indicating instances of formulaic expression, allusion, rewriting, and even quotation.

Juliana Claassens and Louis Jonker's articles relate to the issue of empire. Claassens investigates the way in which the book Isaiah is used in politics, especially the context of the USA under former Pres. George W. Bush. She considers the relationship between Bible and empire in Isaiah 40-48, arguing that in the midst of the brutal reality of empire in the biblical traditions there are a few texts that represent a counter or subversive rhetoric. Jonker looks at the Chronicler's portrayal of Solomon as the King of Peace within the context of the international peace discourses within the Persian Empire. His intention is to situate Chronicles in an international arena of the late post-exilic period of the Persian Empire, not to repudiate traditional inner-Yehudite interpretations of the book, but rather to create an awareness of the multidimensional nature of the communication that readers witness in this literature.

Willie Wessels' article considers ethical issues raised by a prophetic poetic text (Jeremiah 5:26–29). His intention is to relate the biblical text to his context (and thereby picking up on the issue of context alluded to by the previous articles), while realising that there is not a direct correlation between the two. This implies that the Old Testament cannot be used as a precept when it comes to ethics, although it makes a valuable contribution in terms of the examples it offers.

Enjoy the volume.

Gerrie Snyman (editor: OTE)