

Message from the Second Editor (1996-2007)

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During my tenure as the general editor of *Old Testament Essays* from 1996 to 2007, a concerted effort was made to speed up the process of publishing articles in the field of Old Testament studies. A substantial number of submissions each year were received only after the completion of the annual conference of the Old Testament Society in South Africa, which usually took place during September. Papers that were read at the conference and were submitted for publication were generally processed and published in the last edition of that year. This policy had the effect that it increased the number of submissions for publication. The average number of articles per issue rose from eight in 1996 to 16 in 2007. This means that the size of the issues doubled during those years. The quicker the articles could be processed, the more submissions were received, especially also from overseas contributors who were sometimes desperately looking for a journal which did not have a waiting period of two or three years. It unfortunately also had an effect on the production costs and postage. Since page fees were required from South African authors who were connected to South African universities, and these could be increased, the rise in production costs could be absorbed. The overall effect was that more articles from the U.S.A., Europe, and the rest of Africa could eventually be published, a fact that also increased the subscriptions.

The nature of the articles published during the period mentioned above also changed somewhat. During 1996, various aspects of research into the Old Testament, the associated Apocrypha and other Ancient Near Eastern topics were addressed in articles on specific texts, whole books of the Old Testament, and more general themes such as "power in the Second Temple Period," the "geography and archaeology" of the Holy Land, and "spatial awareness as an essential element of historical understanding in Old Testament Studies." There was in that year one article which reflected on the role the Old Testament could play in the new democratic society that came into being in South Africa in 1994 (and article by M. le Roux). If this 1996 volume is compared to that of 2007, it seems that two changes took place in the intervening years – the number of women who contributed to the publication increased from one in 1996 to 11 in 2007, and the number of contributions from the rest of Africa also increased exponentially. There also was a marked shift in focus from "pure" exegetical studies towards a study of the impact of the Old Testament on modern society.

An effort was made to get *Old Testament Essays* included into the ATLA and ISI lists, but this was not successful – not because the quality of the research it published was not good enough, but because the ATLA list was

suddenly closed for new entries, and because the focus was too narrow for the ISI list. There remains work to be done in this regard, since *Old Testament Essays* does not yet receive the recognition it deserves. Since the articles it publishes became available online through the auspices of *Sabinet*, its utility and the frequency with which it is consulted have also increased tremendously. This journal, which is the official mouthpiece of the Old Testament Society in South Africa still has a bright future and a major role to play in the publication of research in the field of Old Testament studies. I therefore wish it well for the sake of all its readers and for Old Testament science in general.

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