

Editorial

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Old Testament Essays underwent an audit by the Academy of Science of South Africa in which the issues of 2006-2008 under the editorship of Prof. Phil Botha were adjudicated. The auditing was the result of a recommendation at the launch of the ASSAf-led National Scholarly Editors' Forum on 25 July 2007, to take the lead in implementing a system of quality assurance for the country's journals that are accredited by the Department of Education. The quality assurance exercise was conducted through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed peer review panels. They were drawn from the ranks of researchers and experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case.

The consensus review on *Old Testament Essays* was as follows:

- The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET "list" of accredited journals.
- The publisher/editor should be invited to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.
- The editor should seriously consider the comments and recommendations made in this review, particularly those aimed at the improvement of an already strong journal.

The auditing result is an important milestone for the journal, as the result not only affirms its value and status as the publishing platform for Old Testament related studies in Southern Africa, but also safeguards the journal for the next five years in terms of accreditation. The invitation to become part of SciELO SA is of particular importance. The Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) SA is South Africa's premier open-access (free to access and free to publish) searchable full-text journal database that is servicing the South African research community. SciELO SA is managed by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), funded by the South African Department of Science and Technology and endorsed by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

This means that *OTE* needs to become readily accessible on an online platform to everyone. The journal has now received the green light from the Old Testament Society of South Africa as the publisher of the journal to explore the new possibilities while at the same time, for the time being at least, keeping its current publishing model afloat. Furthermore, you will observe slight changes to *OTE* over the next few months as the editorial team implements the recommendations of the auditing of *OTE*.

The earliest copies of *Old Testament Essays (New Series)* are now available online at African Journal Archive (www.ajarchive.org). The African Journal Archive is a project funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York that digitised full-text articles of journals published in Africa. The project is retrospective in that it makes those articles printed in the era before electronic publishing available. For *Old Testament Essays* it means that those volumes that reflected the papers of the annual meetings of the Old Testament Society of South Africa since 1957 up to the beginning of *Old Testament Essays (New Series)* as well as those issues of *OTE* that have not been digitised (up to 2001), are now openly available on the website of the African Journal Archive. Moreover, the first five years of the precursor of *Old Testament Essays (New Series)* can also be read on this archive. It is simply called *Old Testament Essays*.

In 2012 the journal published 39 articles with at least 15 authors from outside of South Africa. There were three articles from Austria, five from Germany, seven from the USA, and one each from Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Four women published and about seven young and upcoming researchers were helped to publish in the journal. Not every article submitted is accepted for publication. About a third of received articles are rejected with about a further 50 percent articles accepted with changes. Very few articles are accepted without any changes.

It is with joy that I present the second volume of 2013. It is clear that the focus on Africa and African readings of the Old Testament takes a dominant place in this issue. Equally important appears to be a focus on the text itself. In this issue it is clear that these two trends are not limited to particular cultural spheres of influence. The focus on the text is important for readings on the African continent too.

David Adamo's study of Potiphar's wife which he calls The African wife of Potiphar, argues that she is pivotal to the survival of the Hebrews in Egypt. Her seduction initiated the event that brought the family of Jacob to Egypt, thus setting the stage for one of the major themes of the entire Bible, the Exodus or deliverance. Yaw Adu-Gyamfi reads Judges 22 as a way to prevent civil war. He argues that African ethnic groups can prevent civil wars if they learn the lesson of managing allegations the proper way through representation, dialogue and trust. Joel Biwul argues that the acrostic poem in Proverbs 31:10-31 finds close affinity with the characteristic attributes of the cultured traditional as well as the godly M̄ship woman of Nigeria. Bungishabaku Kathu enquires into Jeremiah 29, trying to answer a very difficult question: how could exiles seek the peace of their enemy? He analyses Jeremiah 29:4-9 in the context of Africa, where it is not uncommon to learn that refugees (exiles) are creating problems for the cities in which they live. Nambalirwa Helen Nkabala examines the contribution of African women towards a gender-sensitive ethical

reading of the OT texts. She looks at the story of Moses' African wife who is rejected by her in-laws in Num 12, as well as Talitha Cum hermeneutics as an example of African women's gender-sensitive ethical readings of biblical texts, that is the practice of living daily in confrontation with international oppression, gender oppression, physical wounds and confrontation with sickness and death.

In Hulisani Ramantswana and Daniel Simango's essays the focus is more on the text than the readers' context. Ramantswana asks why is humanity not singled out as "good," as with most of the creation activities. He suggests that the answer may rest in the dialogic relationship between the two creation narratives, Gen 1:1–2:4a and Gen 2:4b–3:24. Simango intends to prove that the image of God (God-likeness) is an important theme in the OT. He argues that the idea of God-likeness (i.e. moral-likeness to God and a relationship between God and humankind like that between parent and child), seen in Gen 1-11, is also seen in Exodus-Deuteronomy.

The following articles also focus on the text by exploring textual problems and features. Gunnar Begerau looks the highly disputed structure of Psalm 62. He is of the opinion that the word *תְּ* plays a significant role in the formation of Ps 62. Pieter De Vries also provides a structural analysis. He reads Isaiah 61 and argues that the structure suggests that the whole hymn consists of fifty cola, a number that corresponds with the number of the Jubilee. His aim is to show that the structure of the poem undergirds its priestly message and character. Aron Pinker reads Qoh 8:1-3. He intends to provide a novel approach for the interpretation of Qoh 8:1. According to him, Qoh 8:1-3a is dealing with a person's demeanour – in particular, advice regarding one's facial and oral expression when in an audience with a high ranking official. Wendy Widder looks at thematic correspondences between texts of Zedekiah and Jeremiah. She argues that argues that the Jeremiah-Zedekiah encounters of Jer 37–38 correspond thematically to the Zedekiah Cycle of chs. 21–24.

A few contributions explore theological options within the field of the study of the Old Testament. Alluding to Walter Brueggemann's thesis that a biblically informed theology must be "bipolar," Jimmie Loader posits that the wisdom of the sages represented in the Book of Proverbs pushes at the limits of wisdom's rational basis in such a way as to question its own possibilities. Jaco Gericke employs a comparative-philosophical inquiry to explore divine freedom in the Old Testament. He argues that although YHWH is typically characterised as able to do whatever he pleases, it can be demonstrated that his will was itself assumed to be governed by both intrinsic and extrinsic determinants. Annette Evans investigates how to link the traditional understanding of God's activity in the world in Genesis 1 with the scientifically established mechanisms of evolutionary change determined by random mutation and natural selection. Ernst Wendland and Stephen Pattemore engage bible translators in

their review of Roland Boer's recent wide-ranging critique of Eugene A. Nida's theory and practice of "dynamic equivalence."

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Remember IOSOT 2016:

The 22nd meeting of the *International Organisation for the Study of the Old Testament* will be held in

2016 at the

University of Stellenbosch

President (IOSOT): Prof Johann Cook (email: Cook@sun.ac.za)

Conference Secretary: Prof Louis Jonker (email: lcj@sun.ac.za)