

Editorial

GERRIE SNYMAN (EDITOR)

The current issue of *Old Testament Essays* presents the reader with a diversity of perspectives and topics from a wide variety of scholars: four from Europe, two from the rest of Africa and eleven from South Africa. You can read on Pentateuchal studies and Genesis in particular, the Prophets, Psalms, some deuterocanonical books, all from various perspectives, such as traditional historical-critical studies, gender studies, theological interpretations, textual studies, suffering bodies, cognitive linguistics, and ideological criticism.

Hans Ausloos reviews the argument of Brekelmans and Lohfink that the style and rhetoric/ideology of Deuteronom(ist)ic literature underwent a long development. He concludes that the hypothesis of a proto-Deuteronomistic redaction of the Pentateuch currently does not dominate Pentateuch studies, but he adds the following provision: that the quest for solid criteria to characterise the relationship between elements of Genesis-Numbers and the so-called Deuteronomistic "canon" remains valid. Hulisani Ramantswana looks at the first text of the Pentateuch, Genesis. He argues that Gen 3 is part of the creation process. The second creation story and Gen 3 is the "undoing" of the negatives in Gen 2:5. Theodor Seidl illustrates the ethical value of the Patriarchal narratives in Genesis by looking at the way the narrators of the stories establish moral standards for Israel.

In a very different mode Juliana Claassens shows the marks the subjugated of patriarchy is bearing. She reads the story of Jephtha's daughter from the point of view of human dignity and tries to find hints of female resistance in a text of terror. Roger Scholtz's reading of Job's wife constitutes a rehabilitation of her. She moves from a minor position to one where she is acknowledged as a woman of strength. Funlola Olojede moves the focus from women of strength (women with a cause) to children. Similar to women's efforts to perpetuate the names of their husbands, there is a topos of women with a cause that involves children, crying out for justice for them, because they are the starved, orphaned, disease-ridden and illiterate children in Africa.

Alluding to another African theological theme, Bosman's argument is that Psalm 114 is a reinterpretation of the Exodus during and after the exile in contrast to some African and Third World theologians who see in the exodus political and economic oppression. Bosman argues that in Ps 114 there is a reinterpretation of the exodus as a rescue from cultural oppression of the exile as experienced by the exiles and other subjugated people. Phil Botha provides a canonical perspective on Ps 53. He argues that it is imperative to take various contexts into consideration for a full understanding of the psalm, such as its differences with Ps 14, its link to Pss 52-55, its connection to Proverbs and its links with the history of David in 1 Samuel. In line

with the interconnectivity between the Psalms, Bernard Gosse enquires into the intricate relationship between Pss 40/69, 18/68, 70 and 110 as well as Numbers, 2 Samuel and Proverbs. Gert Prinsloo looks at the problem of suffering with the help of Ps 13 and the "Assyrian Elegy" (K890) while drawing on spatial and body theories. He concludes that the involvement of the individual in laments implies that the experience of suffering is expressed through body language.

Jacobus de Bruyn links up with Prinsloo's utilisation of spatial theory, but De Bruyn situates it within cognitive linguistics, a relative new approach, to read Daniel 5. Cognitive linguistics focuses on the complex relationship between language and the mind. With the help of a spatial-body frameset, De Bruyn shows how the author of Daniel 5 utilised spatial concepts, especially with regard to the deity of Israel, whom he regards as not bound to humanly structured god-spaces.

With the focus on space and body, Pierre Jordaan writes on a deuterocanonical book, 2 Maccabees, exploring the war between the deities in their respective spatialities. Also focusing on a deuterocanonical text, Judith, Helen Efthimiadis-Keith makes the literary genre of autobiographical texts (in literature) useful within the study of the Bible and related texts.

Alphonso Groenewald addresses the question of universality. He looks into the word "Torah" in Isaiah. It refers to the teaching of Yahweh on Zion that has reached universal status. Thus one has a priestly teaching available to foreign people. Johanna Erzberger links up with Isaiah 55:3's closest parallel, Jer 33:14-26 in order to explore the context of the redactors for whom the text remained significant. Willie Wessels has Jer 14:10-16 in his sight, looking at prophetic conflict in the text. The latter was caused by Zion theology, and the text makes Jeremiah the true prophet. Matthew Michael also addresses the problem of conflict. In his case, he looks at the way the author of Samuel utilises Achan as the traditional villain in his polemics against the house of Saul. In this narrative, Saul becomes like Achan with the text revealing a parodying intent.

Gerrie Snyman (Editor)

University of South Africa, P.O. Box 392, UNISA, 0003. South Africa. *Email:* snymagf@unisa.ac.za.