

Editorial*

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It is a great pleasure to inform our readership that *Old Testament Essays* (*OTE*) is now also indexed with Scopus. For our contributors and readers in the South African context, note that while *OTE* no longer appears in the list of South African journals maintained by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), this does not imply that the journal is no longer approved. *OTE* appears in two indices which are accredited by the DHET: SciELO SA and now Scopus.

I would also like to draw your attention to a recently released report by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAF) entitled "Twelve Years Later: Second ASSAF Report on Research Publishing in and from South Africa." The report can be accessed online: <http://research.assaf.org.za/handle/20.500.11911/114>. The report among other things presents an analysis of South Africa's scholarly publications through journals, books and conference proceedings from 2005 to 2014. During this period, there was an annual increase in publication of journal articles, moving from 6 662 article units a year in 2005 to 13 361 article units in 2014. The increase in these publications is welcome, but certain challenges have arisen as well. Among these challenges is the issue of predatory journals and unethical behaviour of authors. Taking into consideration the challenges, it is incumbent upon *OTE* to maintain its stature as a reputable and quality journal. This requires scholars to submit quality work and the *OTE* article review process to be thorough, for which we rely on our reviewers to provide us with useful feedback.

This issue contains twelve articles. The article by Botha provides a social scientific analysis of Psalm 32. Botha's central argument is that rather than view Ps 32 as a thanksgiving psalm which contains wisdom elements, it should rather be viewed as a wisdom-teaching psalm mimicking a thanksgiving psalm. The communicative intention of the psalm was to exhort the author's inner circle to maintain their position as the blessed (healthy and prosperous) in society through the practice of confessing their sin to YHWH.

Leow's article is focused on Psalm 132, which he reads through what he refers to as "a complex antiphonal reading", which puts emphasis on the structure of the psalm. Following the minority view on the structure of Ps 132, which sees

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a break in v. 9 of this psalm, he argues that the psalm is thus a particular complex antiphony, which he refers to as a "steady responsa".

In his article, Leder examines the issue of city and altar building in the book of Genesis. For him the book of Genesis depicts two contrasting views on city and altar building on the ordering of life—temple-city building under a curse versus temple-city building under a blessing: the pre-patriarchal city building as projected in the episode of the building of the tower of Babel is a temple-city built under the Edenic curse, whereas the patriarchal temple-city construction, reflected in building of the altars, which anticipate Israel's temple construction during the monarchic period, is done under the patriarchal blessing.

Kassa, in his article, which is focused on Genesis 19:1-11, interrogates the theme of brotherhood. His reading is a contextual reading of the text in light of the concept of brotherhood held by the Tangale people of Nigeria. For Kassa, the story of Lot reflects a post-exilic call to the Yehud community to show hospitality towards the "other" ("all nations") by developing relationship based on mutual respect.

Coetsee's article is a thematic study of the concept of life in the book of Deuteronomy with particular reference to YHWH and Israel. His special interest is to show how the concept of life as encapsulated in the Hebrew term *חַיִּים* is used in relation to YHWH and Israel.

In his article, Jenei argues that the treatment of strangers in the Deuteronomistic Code is different from the picture projected in the deuteronomistic narratives in Joshua-Judges. For him, while the Deuteronomistic Code makes a distinction between different types of strangers—the non-assimilated stranger (*יִנְקֵר*) and the semi-assimilated stranger (*גֵּר*), the deuteronomistic narratives project three strategies of inclusion of strangers into Israel: first, inclusion through assimilation (Josh 2 and 6, Rahab's inclusion); second, inclusion through maintaining peaceful relations with neighbours (Judg 4–5, the Kenites); and third, inclusion through subordination and oppression (Josh 9, the Gibeonites).

Kagunge reads 1 Sam 24-25 as story which portrays David as a person of pity and non-violence in light of his action of choosing not to eliminate king Saul when he had several opportunities to do so, as well as his choice to spare Nabal. Kagunge finds the attitude of pity and non-violence to be applicable even in our modern-day context of wars, conflict, hatred, vengeance and terrorism.

Spoelstra focuses on the motif of vestments, with a particular focus on Mordecai's vestments in Esther 8:15. For him Mordecai's vestment is infused with both princely and priestly symbolism, which he regards as representing the messianic hope of the Jews living in diaspora during the Persian period.

Widder's article engages in a narrative analysis of Daniel 4 focused on the way that the first person is used in this text. He concludes that the way the first person is used with reference to Nebuchadnezzar portrays this character taking responsibility for his greatness and failures as a king, and also acknowledging hierarchal view of kingship, which has God at the top of the hierarchy and human kings below.

In his article, O'Kennedy focuses on Zechariah 1-8, which he regards as a neglected text in recent commentary publication. He particularly pays attention to the way that the following themes are discussed in this prophetic book: divine presence and temple rebuilding; the lordship and sovereignty of YHWH; sin and punishment; repentance and obedience; the return of YHWH's grace, love and forgiveness; eschatology and future hope; Israel and the nations; and, finally, leadership.

Kavusa's article is a reflection on developments within ecological hermeneutics and interpretation. This article engages the voices of both the pro-ecological and the anti-ecological readings of the Bible and further highlights some of the pitfalls which should be avoided moving forward.

In his article, Kilchör offers a response to Esias E. Meyer's article, which appeared in *OTE* 30/3 (2017) and in which Meyer evaluated Kilchör's dissertation. Kilchör draws attention to how he and Meyer differ in their view of the concept of *pater familias* as it relates to the slave laws in the Pentateuch. This kind of scholarly engagement is useful in clarifying issues and further portrays the divergent views that characterises scholarly engagements.

The Akan proverb states, "Knowledge is like a baobab tree: no one individual can embrace it." Enjoy reading this issue, which brings many hands together to embrace the biblical text.

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