

Editorial

HULISANI RAMANTSWANA (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA)

The current issue contains eight articles. The first three articles are focused on prophetic literature. Boloje's article is on Micah 6:6-8 with a focus on the issue of rituals and the interplay with ethics. For Boloje the prophet Micah was weary of ritualistic tendencies which were devoid of social justice or responsibility, and therefore, called for "a truly ethical religion." Redelinghuys' article engages on the issue of Bible translation with a particular interest in ecological matters, and he, therefore, argues for eco-conscious translation of biblical texts. To exemplify an eco-conscious translation, Redelinghuys applies his approach to Jonah 3:1–10. In his article, Ademiluka attends to one of the divisive issues during the post-exilic period within the Jewish community, the question of divorce. He reads Malachi 2:16 not so much as a condemnation of divorce from God but as a condemnation treachery and abuse of the Jewish men who abandoned their wives in order to take other marry foreign women. Ademiluka finds his reading of the Malachi 2:16 applicable in the Nigerian context in which men are abandoning their wives in pursuit of other women.

The next two articles, one by Lier and the other by Dickie, venture into the issues pain or trauma. In her article, Lier analyses the phenomenology of childbirth within the Hebrew Bible as a metaphor of pain. She does so from a linguistic perspective by pointing to various Hebrew words and concepts which deal with the birthing process. Dickie in dealing with the matter of trauma, limits her scope to laments psalms. From an empirical perspective, Dickie finds that the use of laments to express one's struggle with pain may result in personal, social, and biological healing. Lier's article bemoans the silencing of pain through the propagation of silence as therapeutic and regarding screaming as a disturbance which needs to be suppressed. Dickie's article highlights the therapeutic significance of lamenting, which allows the pain inside to be voiced out and thereby functioning as a way of dealing trauma memories.

In his article, Decker reads the book of Ruth with three ways in which the return from exile happen: First, Orpah represents a return to paganism; second, Naomi represents the Jews who return influenced by pagan culture; and third, Ruth represents those who return retaining covenant faithfulness and loyalty. Surprisingly, Decker does not commit to reading this text as one which originated during the post-exilic period but is open to the possibility that the book could have originated much earlier in the pre-exilic period.

* To cite: Hulisani Ramantswana, "Editorial." *Old Testament Essays* 32 no. 3 (2019): 798-799. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2019/v32n3a2>.

Adamo's article is more on the use of the biblical text in African context. For Adamo the Yoruba people of Nigeria read Psalm 35 a psalm with mysterious powers which bring about defence, victory, and protection. Therefore, in the Yoruba context, Ps 35 is memorised and chanted as a way of expressing their faith in the God who can perform miracles in the here and now.

Finally, Giffone article pertains to the complex identity of the tribe of Benjaminite. Based on Genesis 35–50, Giffone argues that this text highlights the complexities involved in Israel's identity during the pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic periods. For Giffone, Gen 35–50 is a compromise text as Benjamin came to assume a place of importance in the struggle between the Josephites (full brothers) and the Judahites (half-brother). The text reflects several textual layers; however, the final layer which is a Judahite layer attempts to pull the Josephites and Benjamin towards Judah as a way of reconciling the tribes together under the leadership of Judah.

Enjoy!

Prof Hulisani Ramantswana, University of South Africa, Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies, P.O. Box 392, UNISA, 0003; Email: ramanh@unisa.ac.za; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6629-9194>.