

# The drum and its significance for the interpretation of the Old Testament from an African perspective: Part one

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Recent developments in South Africa opened the doors of opportunity for Old Testament scholars to position themselves in terms of Africa and to allow the African context to play a more explicit role in the interpretation of the Bible. An awareness of the significance of the (South) African context for the interpretation of the Old Testament in South Africa can inform the construction and refinement of the comparative paradigm as a reading strategy. In consequence, it might not only serve the communication of the message, but also facilitate a dialogue between the text and the contemporary reader and imbue the comparative method as a reading strategy. Being aware of the significance of music and its function regarding expression of African religion and spirituality, the article explores aspects of music and its potential to inform a particular 'reading', with specific reference to the drum. (Whilst the focus in Part 1 is more on some hermeneutical aspects as pertaining to a specific reading strategy, Part 2 is to explore the significance of music for the interpretation of the Old Testament with specific reference to Psalm 150).

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** The contribution attempts to illustrate that, in our encounters with the biblical text, we need to move beyond a historical descriptive analysis of the text or defining its significance in linguistic terms only. In so doing, the 'comparative paradigm' is augmented by allowing insights from various disciplines to inform the reader.

Christianity in (South) Africa, in order to take up its legitimate place in the history of the Church, needs to establish its own identity with due recognition of its uniqueness, specifically in terms of its own cultural heritage. (Martey 1993:55)

Music ... will help dissolve your perplexities and purify your character and sensibilities, and in time of care and sorrow, will keep a fountain of joy alive in you. (Bonhoeffer 2013:n.p.)

## Introduction

### One finger cannot play the drum alone ...

For many years South African society was shaped and is continued to be influenced by the coexistence of two worlds, that is, the 'first world' and the 'third world' where, to a certain extent, the first world consists of the 'white part of the society' and the other the 'black or non-white part'. Despite their coexistence, these two worlds were kept apart through a political system that turned them into strangers to one another. The political system of *apartheid* influenced every aspect of life of the people of South Africa (Oosthuizen 1998:12).

It is already well attested that Old Testament Scholarship in South Africa, born in the cradle of European and American scholarship and with its focus on methodology (Deist 1994:36; Hovland 1993:99), ignored the significance of the African context. As indicated by Holter (1998:20), 'Contemporary biblical scholarship is increasingly acknowledging that there is no "innocent" interpretation of the Bible; all interpretation reflects some of the ideological, historical and material context of the interpreter'. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that two strands of biblical scholarship are being identified in South Africa (Ukpong 1999):

What one finds in Africa today is two strands of biblical scholarship. One is of Western orientation and uses Western critical tools without openly and directly relating the biblical text to the African context. The other is African in orientation, Western biblical tools are used, but the text is interpreted in relation to the African context. Both strands exist side by side, and the same African authors are often found publishing in both. (p. 2)

The impact of the African context on the interpretation of the Bible (West 1997b:99) comes amidst the crisis of orientation in Old Testament exegetical studies on the one hand (Utzschneider 1996:2)<sup>1</sup> and

1. Although Utzschneider (1996:1–23) is referring specifically to Europe, this crisis of interpretation is also evident in South Africa in so far as Old Testament scholarship was influenced by Europe (Deist 1994:34). A clear indication of the impact of the sociopolitical developments in South Africa on Old Testament scholarship is the white to black ratio of 155:3 of the membership of the Old Testament Society of Southern Africa (Deist 1994:43).

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the question regarding the validity of the historical (descriptive) explanatory models (De Villiers 2003:278) on the other. The demise of historical criticism<sup>2</sup> as well as the methodological openness that characterises biblical scholarship in South Africa today carries a lot of promise for the development of an authentic African Old Testament scholarship (West 2005:48; Human 1997:572). Recent developments in South Africa opened the doors of opportunity for Old Testament scholars to position themselves in terms of Africa, that is, 'to rethink Old Testament studies' (Deist 1994:42) by allowing the African context to play its legitimate role in the interpretation of the Bible<sup>3</sup>. The realisation that 'our interpretation of the Bible emerges from the encounter between the ancient texts on the one hand and us and our context on the other hand' (Getui, Holter & Zinkurature 2001:1) is gradually filtering through the discipline, as far as Old Testament Scholarship in South Africa is concerned<sup>4</sup>. One aspect of this debate hinges on the question regarding the 'African-ness' of 'white'<sup>5</sup> South African scholars' participation in this debate (Boshoff 2002:2)<sup>6</sup>.

The purpose of this article, however, is not to enter the debate regarding the interpretation of the Old Testament in Africa and to justify my contribution along ethnocentric or racial lines!<sup>7</sup> As previously indicated, 'My own interest as an Old Testament scholar is focussed more on the possibilities "locked away" of inculcating the (South) African context for the interpretation of the Old Testament in South Africa, for South Africa' (Oosthuizen 1998:16; 2006:56). In consequence, it might not only serve the communication of the gospel but also facilitate a dialogue between the text and the contemporary reader (Adedeji 2003:17).

Reading the Bible from an African perspective is indeed an appropriate starting point of an African Christian theology. In so doing, care must be taken not to define the 'authenticity of the academic pursuit' merely in terms of a specific exegetical approach or procedure, that is, such as historical criticism. A reliance on method often brings about a sterile situation, which fails to reach its anticipated constituency in

2. Utschneider identifies the lack of consensus regarding the validity of certain historical explanatory methods as one of the three focuses of the 'crisis of orientation' in European/German Old Testament Scholarship

3. Despite some significant sociopolitical changes, the situation with regard to the Old Testament studies, specifically, has not experienced the benefit of or is yet to benefit from a more explicit African engagement with the Hebrew Bible (Masenya & Ramantswana 2012:630).

4. However, in terms of sociopolitical realities of South Africa, the transition of power from the former National Party to the African National Congress following 1994 elections is gradually changing society in its entirety, albeit not without serious debate regarding the various participants and their role in this emerging new, post-apartheid South Africa (Boshoff 2002:2).

5. According to Boshoff (2002), Dr Madipoane Masenya of Unisa the University of South Africa (UNISA) recently remarked that "white" South Africans can almost by definition not produce "African" scholarship. Bulletin for Old Testament Studies in Africa – Issue 12 (May 2002)

6. In this regard, a distinction is being made between 'African' and 'Africanist' (Mugambi 2003:9), where 'white' scholarship is being regarded as Africanist – even though the difference between the two concepts is not clearly demarcated except with reference to the 'authenticity of the academic pursuit'!

7. Apart from noting the current white or black membership ratio of the current Old Testament Society of South Africa (Masenya and Ramantswana 2012:632), one might want to ask *why* is this the case (apart from using the often mentioned *apartheid* past as the reason/explanation for this situation in one way or another?) and *how* can or should this matter be addressed?

as far as the relevance of a particular interpretation of the text is concerned<sup>8</sup>.

## Contextual exegesis

Amidst the plethora of approaches that characterises the discipline, today African Christianity is in need of an exegetical starting point<sup>9</sup>; it also needs to define theoretically or methodologically the interplay between the African context and the Bible<sup>10</sup>. The influence of Western interpretive strategies (historical criticism) on African biblical scholarship cannot be underestimated. However, attention given to the historical and sociological dimensions of the text enabled African scholarship to explore the 'religio-cultural and socio-political contexts in the biblical past that are similar to the religio-cultural and socio-political contexts of the African present' (West 2005:50).<sup>11</sup>

The quest for a 'contextual exegesis' is not new<sup>12</sup>. What is new in recent years is the way in which this approach coincided with socio-historical and political developments in South Africa and the deliberate attempts to allow 'interpretive interests' and 'life interests' to inform the comparative paradigm as a reading strategy. The fact of the matter is that 'in dealing with a text, a reader does not only receive and create, but also sets in place a new entity – an interpretation or reading' (Lawrie 2001:404). In this act of (re-)interpretation, the comparative paradigm as a reading strategy can be enhanced whilst (new) knowledge is being constructed (Lawrie 2001:413).

The basic assumption of African Old Testament scholarship is the awareness of 'some sort of correspondence between the African experience and the OT' (Holter 2006:386). It comes as no surprise that the 'comparative paradigm' came to be recognised as 'the most pervasive interpretive framework in African biblical scholarship' (West 2005:48)<sup>13</sup>.

Similarities<sup>14</sup> in world view, concepts and rituals may function as a hermeneutical key to open up the text for an African audience and, in so doing, not only provides a new or fresh

8. Lombaard (2011:215) raised this concern with reference to methods according to which 'Christian spirituality is to be studied' and the issue concerning the 'refinement of technique' in the methodological debate.

9. Prof. Louis Jonker's discussions regarding the 'communal approach' (2001b) provide a useful 'hermeneutical map', allowing the exegete to consider various aspects in the interpretation(s) of biblical texts.

10. As early as 1972, Dickson (1972:156) alerted to the fact that South African scholarship needs to move beyond comparative studies, despite its pedagogical value.

11. 'The problem with the historical critical method—bracketing out the issues that surrounded its origin—is that it has been seen as an end in itself rather than as a tool' (Ukpong 1999).

12. Various attempts at contextual exegesis can be found, that is, buffalo/ white/ liberation/ black, and so forth (see also Utschneider 1996; Pontifical Biblical Commission 1994).

13. West alerted to the fact that the 'comparative paradigm' recognized the fact of 'a significant affinity between the religio-cultural/sociopolitical world of and behind the biblical text and the African contexts' and rightfully pointed out the need of clarifying the implications and significance of the comparative paradigm and its demands on African biblical scholarship (West 2005:58).

14. Conradie (2001:431) acknowledges the analogies/similarities between the text and the contemporary context as the basis for a specific reading strategy.

perspective regarding the interpretation (translation)<sup>15</sup> of the biblical text but also enables the reader to appreciate the significance of the text. In so doing a new reading strategy<sup>16</sup> emerges that seems to be more relevant to the African context (West 2005):

With respect to interpretive interests, interests to do with the different dimensions of text, African biblical interpretation has been dominated by historical and sociological interests. African biblical scholarship has been strongly shaped by the historical-critical interests of Western biblical scholarship, and this includes the full array of historical-critical methodology: text criticism, form criticism, source criticism and redaction criticism...What makes African biblical interpretation distinctive are the life interests that African interpreters bring to the text and the prominent role assigned (to?) these life interests in African biblical hermeneutics. (pp. 49, 51)

The basic source of African theology is the Bible<sup>17</sup>. It is self-evident that the interpretation of the Biblical text belongs not only to 'the academy' but also to 'the church' and 'the community' as well (West 2001:43). With reference to the lifeworld of the 'ordinary reader' (West 1997a:329), African religion, in many ways, concerns a world of experience that approaches the Old Testament's world of experience much more closely than does European's or American's experience (Burden 1983:49; Adamo 1997:8; Oosthuizen 1997:49; Oosthuizen 2006:55). What comes to the fore, in other words, is a common outlook on life and human existence (Burden 1983:49).

Holter (1999:1) mentioned that 'the importance of the traditional methodological questions of "what", "why" and "how" should certainly not be neglected, but there is also a growing understanding of the importance of the questions of "where" and "with whom", that is, "what are the implications of the (geographical, institutional, sociological, cultural, ideological) location of our scholarship, and who are our interlocutors or dialogue partners?'. The partners in this instance are to be seen or defined in terms of the symbolic universe and the text should not be isolated from its context (i.e. context in a comprehensive or holistic sense of the word). In this regard, experience is to be seen as an essential component of the interpretation of historical texts (De Villiers, 2003:282)<sup>18</sup>. It is in contextualisation that theological interpretive exegesis is brought to the local level of another society other than that which forms the background of the Bible. However, through the integration of the

15. Various attempts at contextual exegesis can be found, that is, buffalo/ white/ liberation/black and so forth (see also Utzschneider 1996; Pontifical Biblical Commission 1994).

16. With reference to Sanneh's notion of translation, it is noteworthy that the so-called translatability of the bible ... 'provides the potential for the revitalisation of both the biblical message and the receptor culture' (West 2005:55).

17. In this regard, Utzschneider (1996:4ff.) not only distinguishes between the synchronic and diachronic, but also the fact that the text as an aesthetic subject is open for perception in the present. See also the distinction between 'interpretive interests' and 'life interests' (West 2005:49).

18. One of the issues, however, which needs to be addressed concerns the role and 'interpretation of the Bible', as it seems as if it is exactly at this level where African scholarship has failed to establish or develop a thorough exegetical procedure or method (Dickson & Ellingworth 1974:204; Gitau *et al.* 1997:6). This situation can partly be ascribed to a lack of interest or the inability of studying the 'foundational documents' in its original language (Getui 2001:184; Fashole-Luke 1975:80). After all, the Masoretic text remains the aesthetic subject of exegesis (Utzschneider 1996:7).

'traditional questions and methods' (Ukpong 1999:2-5) and in dialogue with contextual approaches, acknowledging the 'aesthetics of reception' (Utzschneider 2006:3), a self-critical awareness can emerge that could contribute towards the construction of a system of coordinates that could serve as an exegetical starting point for African Christian theology.

Noteworthy is the observation of Kalimi (2010) that:

... a biblical narrator uses sounds of musical instruments and/or voices of people in order to focus the attention of his audience from one place or group of people to the counter-part. (p. 568)

An attempt is made to plead for an awareness and a better understanding of music and the various aspects (emotional/ritual/spiritual) associated therewith and to illustrate how, in our engagement with the text<sup>19</sup>, this can contribute towards 'reconceptualising the comparative perspective' (West 2005:60). A mere description of musical instruments and musical terminology does not do justice to the significance and role of music as part of the religious experience of a particular community.<sup>20</sup> This exercise involves more than a 'quick cross-disciplinary venture' but reflects 'at least sensitivity towards historical spiritualities which lie behind the text, as they found reflection within the texts' (Lombaard 2011:216, 218).

## Old Testament world of experience (with specific reference to the drum)

The significance of music for our understanding of the Old Testament cannot be underestimated, considering that 'of all ancient literary and historical monuments, the Bible contains the fullest information about the musical instruments that existed in those remote times' (Kolyada n.d.:22).

Despite the numerous references to music and musical instruments, the earlier studies of music and music instruments in the Old Testament were based primarily on textual analysis (Burgh 2000-2014, online) and along the lines of historical criticism. The role and significance of music were mostly explained in historical, descriptive terms, that is, focussing on the description of musical instruments.<sup>21</sup> Musical instruments in the Old Testament came to be defined according to the main classes of 'strings, wind instruments, and percussion' (Kolyada n.d.:23).<sup>22</sup> The only membranophone that we encounter is the drum/(תוף) (*tof*), which is also referred to as a frame drum.

19. 'Die gebruik van ervaring as hermeneutiese sleutel word vergemaklik indien dit teoreties geanaliseer word' (De Villiers 2003:283).

20. Apart from the aforementioned concerns with regard to historical descriptive methods, they also prevented scholarship to allow for the spiritual/ritual realities of the Old Testament world of experience to play a rightful place in the interpretations of the text. De Villiers acknowledged this awareness of the religious - spiritual character of the Biblical texts, in view of the emergence of the so-called new historicism (2003:277). Lombaard (2012:929) alerted to the importance of acknowledging the importance of recognising the 'faith impulses' regarding Biblical spirituality and the impact of the text on its audience.

21. Lombaard (2012:932) explored the link between spirituality and a community of faith and the role of the text in connection with experience (*geloofsbelevenis*), focussing on the importance of 'silence' as expression of Christian spirituality.

22. Burgh (2000-2014) identifies the following instrumental grouping systems that we encounter in the Old Testament: (1) Chordophones or stringed instruments (1 Chr 16: 4-7); (2) Aerophones or wind-blown instruments (Lev 23:24); (3) Idiophones, that is, self-sounding instruments (2 Sam 6:5); (4) Membranophones, which consist of a membrane stretched across an opening and the surface is struck, that is, the drum (Ex 1 תוף [Psa 150:4 WTT] 5:20) (McCorkle 2007).

The frame drum is regarded as 'one of the most popular instruments in ancient Israel' (Kolyada n.d.:109).<sup>23</sup> For the purpose of this contribution, attention is being given to the drum<sup>24</sup>, bearing in mind the significance of the drum in Africa, as well as in the Old Testament. The importance of the drum/frame drum is clearly acknowledged in the text of the Old Testament<sup>25</sup>, as is clear from the following two examples<sup>26</sup>:

and Miriam (the prophetess, the sister of Aaron) took the *frame-drum* in her hand; and all the women went out after her with *frame-drums* and with dances. (Exodus 15:20 [own emphasis])  
... David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. (2 Samuel 6:5)

Noteworthy is the *absence of music* within the 'oracle of doom' in the following example:

The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. (Isaiah 24:8)

The importance of the frame drum/(תוף) in ancient Israel is also recognised in the archaeological<sup>27</sup> record (Frühauf 2009:125):

A central subject of the Iron Age is the various occurrences of the female drummer as seen in the many terra-cotta plaque figurines found in the region (pp. 124–129)

The well-known Carchemish Relief of Musicians, c. 800BC, portraying musicians playing the horn and drum speaks for itself (see Bible-History 2014).

The drum/frame drum is:

a large, thin drum, generally associated with female players, primarily used in secular celebrations and in conjunction with the dance. The frame drum was held with the left hand and was played by striking the head of the drum with the alternating thumb and forefingers of the right hand in various rhythmic patterns. (McCorkle 2007)

The significance of the drum must not be underestimated, given the scanty 17 references<sup>28</sup> to the word 'tof' in the text of the Old Testament (Kolyada 2009:109). Apart from a brief

23.Kolyada (n.d.:23) identifies the drum (membranophone) and idiophone as two subclasses belonging to the class of percussion instruments. See also Braun (2002) regarding the musical instruments mentioned in the Hebrew Bible.

24.The drum is used to illustrate the significance of allowing the reader's context to play a role in the analysis or reading of the text; that is, to allow the 'religious experience' of the reader to inform the reading process and, in so doing, participate in the construction of knowledge more appropriate to contemporary society. During the Iron Age, many changes occurred within the musical culture of Israel or Palestine, largely affecting instruments that disappeared, were played differently or caused a change of form. Still, others simply continued as before and, finally, completely new instruments appeared (Frühauf 2009:125).

25.Genesis 31:27; Exodus 15:20 (2x); Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 10:5, 18:6; 2 Samuel 6:5; Isaiah 5:12, 24:8, 30:32; Jeremiah 31:4; Ezekiel 28:13 (a setting for jewelry); Nahum 2:7 (2:8 JPS); Psalm 68:25 (68:26 JPS), 81:2, 149:3, 150:4; Job 21:12; 1 Chronicles 13:8.

26.Dawid en die hele Israel het uitbundig voor die ark van die Here gedans, begelei deur liedere, liere, harpe, tamboeryne, ratels en simbale. (2Sa 6:5 A83) & Die tamboeryne sal nie meer gehoor word nie, daar sal nie meer 'n oeslied wees nie, die lier sal nie meer gehoor word nie (Ies. 24:8).

27.'Archaeomusicology, a field that explores past music cultures through archaeological artefacts and texts, provides a unique perspective through which to research and comprehend previous societies and their musical lives' (Frühauf 2009:124ff.). *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archaeological, Written, and Comparative Sources* (Review).

28.Genesis 31:27; Exodus 15:20 (2x); Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 10:5, 18:6; 2 Samuel 6:5; Isaiah 5:12, 24:8, 30:32; Jeremiah 31:4; Ezekiel 28:13 (a setting for jewelry); Nahum 2:7 (2:8 JPS); Psalm 68:25 (68:26 JPS), 81:2, 149:3, 150:4; Job 21:12; 1 Chronicles 13:8.



Source: McCorkle, D.F., 2007, 'FRAME-DRUM (tof) [H8596]', viewed 22 August 2012, from <http://www.musicofthebible.com/drum.htm>

FIGURE 1: Frame drum.

description of the different musical instruments from the ancient Near East, not much attention is given to the role of music in terms of the emotional, spiritual, experiential and theological significance thereof, amongst others.

With respect to the reconstructions of the historical context, scholars accepted the fact that 'any attempt to reconstruct the temple ceremonies of the religion of the Old Testament has to face a deplorable lack of evidence' (McCullough 1955:5). It comes as no surprise that Weiser – apart from the reference to the significance of the cult (1962:23ff.), and amidst the acknowledgement that the 'singing of hymns accompanied the Old Testament religion from its beginnings' (1962:53) – is not paying much attention to the role of music in this regard.

## Music and religious meaning

The impact of music is obviously not to be defined in linguistic terminology and categories only:

Music ... will help dissolve your perplexities and purify your character and sensibilities, and in time of care and sorrow, will keep a fountain of joy alive in you. (Bonhoeffer 2013:n.p.)

The prominent reference to music and musical instruments in the Bible/Old Testament (De Bruyn OT Texts), for example, in Psalm 150, necessarily calls forth the question as to the function of music in relation to the text, as well as the manner in which it (music or the reference to musical instruments) might have influenced the reader and his or her perception of a particular text. Why did the author deliberately include references to music or specific musical instruments (instrumental music)? Did it perhaps open up the possibility of a specific text to be accompanied by music? Did it serve as a kind of 'text painting', and as such serve 'as a vehicle to capture human emotion, and innovated the *leitmotiv* to signify and transform dramatic and emotional ideas using musical motives that interact an overlap with

sung text' (Duffy 2007:2). Music and musical instruments, in the case of the Biblical text, allowed for such interaction – thus allowing music to ascribe new meaning to the text. The remarks of Kalimi (2010) are noteworthy in this regard:

The biblical storytellers used sounds of musical instruments and/or human voices being raised emotionally (either in joy or in sorrow, mourning, or fear) and their being heard somewhere else as a literary device of transitioning the reader from one place or group of people to another. (p. 565)

Furthermore, the usage of sounds of musical instruments by the storyteller focussed 'the attention of his audience...' and '... enhanced its literary quality without harming its information', thus contributing to its appeal and effect (Kalimi 2010:569)<sup>29</sup>. Of importance here is the realisation that the so-called non-historical aspects – and this would include the world of experience – should not be ignored in the analysis and interpretation of the text (Jeanron 1998:242). If this is done, it depreciates the spiritual value of not only reason itself, but also the religious documents that we rely on (Blachowicz 2002:512). In recognising the fact that the text functions within a socio-historical context(s) that carries a significant spiritual and experiential character, it opens up a reading strategy that strives to encompass this spiritual dimension of the text (Kim 2005:241, 247). As indicated by Jonker (2001a:421), 'various variables determine who the readers/hearers are'.

Through the creative encounter between readers and hearers and texts, a new perspective emerges that is of relevance for the South African reader. One aspect that is of significance in this regard, a musical point of contact if you wish, is the awareness of a spiritual experiential reality, opening up the possibility of a creative strategy of interpretation (Lawrie 2001:414) which is more appropriate to the South African context. Exegesis can no longer ignore the significance of religious experience or perceived emotional significance in the analysis of religious documents such as biblical texts<sup>30</sup>.

In connection with the appropriation of these ancient texts for contemporary readers (Jonker 2001a:425), the significance of music provides a critical/tactical mechanism within a reading strategy where a link is being established:

between some aspects in the biblical text and some aspects in the world, in which we live (Conradie 2001:429-430), and as such, provide one with a platform for a creative encounter with the text and the construction of meaning. (Conradie 2001:429)

Noteworthy is the comment by Adamo (2001:9) that the meaning or value of a particular religious teaching cannot, from an African perspective and with reference to the 'textualisation of the word of God' as well as the debate regarding the colonisation/decolonisation of African Biblical

29. The use of sounds of musical instruments and/or human voices being raised emotionally as literary device appears amongst other sections, in royal contexts and/or contexts related to conflict (Kalimi 2010:570).

30. *Die religieuse ervaring in hierdie aanbieding en die religieuse ervaring in die analise van hierdie aanbieding kan nie meer in verantwoordelike Bybeluitleg geignoreer word nie* (De Villiers 2003:284).

studies, be restricted to its 'written form' (Adamo 2001:9). It speaks for itself that 'music's meaning is enigmatic; unlike other modes of expressions, it tends to shy away from translation in a linguistic sense' (Duffy 2007:1). Be that as it may, the impact of music is often neglected, although it must have played a significant role in the reception (past and present) of a particular text (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1994):

Classical rhetoric distinguished accordingly three factors which contribute to the quality of a discourse as an instrument of persuasion: the authority of the speaker, the force of the argument and *the feelings aroused in the audience*. (p. 10 [own emphasis])

In this regard, the comment by Yemi Olaniyan (2013:94), 'Music, a multi-dimensional art from possesses many factors capable of fulfilling many functional roles among people in any given society', is significant. Music enhances effective productivity at work. It brings about a sense of satisfaction in worship, celebration of life rite events, organisation of the society and healing, to mention just a few, and furthermore 'functions as a mediator between human body and soul among people'. The nature and potential of music to speak to 'spiritual experience', also of the post-modern reader (Schutte 2011:1), cannot be underestimated because the text, as religious text, must also be appreciated as a 'spiritual text' (Schutte 2011:1). The reference to sensory aspects, including sound (Petty 2010:69), is not always appreciated.

Noteworthy are the comments by Petty (2010:72) regarding the 'strength' of music, the fact 'that it involves our entire being, both the visible and invisible parts', and furthermore, 'music in community is the one expression that allows all of us to join together ...' (Petty 2010:72). Understanding the significance of music and musical instruments in the Bible or Old Testament can certainly play a significant role in our attempts to better understand 'religious experience' (Veldsman 2004:278), with the realisation that our knowledge is multidimensional and '... is built up like a patchwork in which the individual parts are derived from different contexts of life but still have to resonate within the overall orchestration of human experience' (Gregerson 1998:182). As such, it requires a broader concept of rationality (Blachowicz 2002:512).

## Conclusion

After all, 'the encounter between Africa and the Bible has always been more than an encounter with a book' (West 2000:47). An important aspect with regard to the importance and significance of the biblical text in informing a particular community of faith is also the often neglected aspect of 'experience' and how a particular passage might influence behavioural and spiritual (emotional) expressions of communities of faith. Furthermore:

African readers are far better placed to interpret [*and appreciate*] the real subject matter of biblical texts – the mythical and the magical – because the questions that Bible addresses are similar to the questions ordinary Africans ask in their African contexts. (West 1997b:100)<sup>31</sup>

31. See also West (2004:71–82, 2005:58, 2010:140–164); Oosthuizen (1993:193) and Nyjawung (2013:3) amongst others.

Being aware of the significance of music and its role or function regarding expression of African religion and spirituality, music as literary device (Kalimi 2010:568), and also in recognising attempts to broaden our concepts of rationality (Veldsman 2004:281), exegetes of biblical texts are to be involved or drawn into a creative interpretative process, also in terms of their reactions, emotions, commitment and association therewith (De Villiers 2003:283)<sup>32</sup>. In so doing, this contribution (as well as the envisaged follow-up article where the focus will be on the drum and its significance for the interpretation of a specific Old Testament text) seeks to allow for a unique 'musical' perspective to be explored and play a role in informing the comparative paradigm<sup>33</sup> and also contribute towards the reconceptualisation of African Christianity (West 2005:61). After all, 'in Africa theology is not thought out but danced out' (Van Zyl 1995:425; Anderson 1991:32–34; Muzorewa 1985:77–84).

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32. Bearing in mind that developments in Archaeomusicology allow for the development of cross-cultural strategies regarding archeomusicological theory and method in research, the role of music regarding religious experience in Africa may shed some light of the role of music in the Old Testament.
33. It is widely acknowledged that 'the comparative paradigm is the most pervasive methodology of African Old Testament interpretation' (Kotzé 2011:612).
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