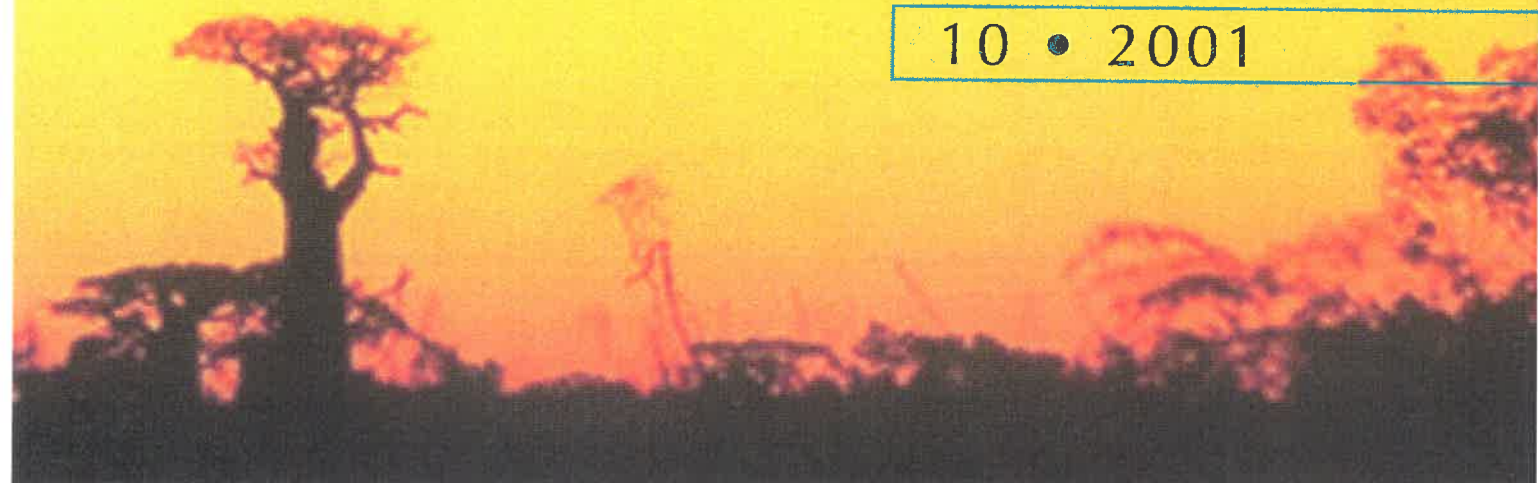


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Bulletin for Old Testament Studies in Africa (BOTSA) aims at being a forum for exchange of ideas and information about Old Testament studies in Africa. In brief articles *BOTSA* comments on pedagogical, methodological and research political questions related to Old Testament studies in Africa, and it also brings notices on research projects, teaching programs, books and conferences. The readers are encouraged to use it as a means of communication.

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The textbook situation

for Old Testament studies in Africa is focused in this issue of *BOTSA*. Earlier this year a questionnaire regarding the textbook situation was sent to a selection of universities and seminaries in Eastern, Western and Central Africa. The response to this questionnaire was, however, somewhat meager, and this has unfortunately prevented us from producing a general survey of the textbook situation.

The present issue of *BOTSA* is nevertheless able to present three reports about the textbook situation. Victor Zinkurature surveys the East African situation, offering a documentation of current preferences and options within the various genres of Old Testament textbooks. John O. Akao discusses the concept of textbooks from a West African perspective. And André Kabasele Mukenge offers a case study: organizing and textbooks of Old Testament studies at the Catholic Faculty in Kinshasa. Taken as a whole, these three reports demonstrate beyond doubt the need for further attention to the textbook situation.

Knut Holter

A survey of the textbook situation in East Africa

Victor Zinkurature

In this brief article I will try to summarize the result of our survey of the current textbook situation in East Africa. Unfortunately, the response to the questionnaires that were sent out was quite meagre. For this reason the survey is imperfect. But at least we received some response from each of the three countries of East Africa, namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, and also from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is therefore a limited sample; however, given the similarity of conditions in the region, it may well be indicative of the general situation. I am also adding my own contribution based on my knowledge and familiarity with the situation in the different institutions in and around the Nairobi area.

Introduction to the Old Testament

There is an abundance of good introductions to the Old Testament (and for the other sub-disciplines of Old Testament studies as well) available today in English, German and French. Most of the German ones have English editions. The survey shows that lecturers, as one would expect, have their individual preferences, usually determined by the academic traditions of the country and university where they studied. The denominational affiliation of the lecturer also has some influence on the choice of the textbook. In general they use more than one book, depending also on the availability. The following books are in current use:

- Anderson, G.W., *The Living World of the Old Testament*. Harlow: Longman, 1988.
- L. Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*. New York: Paulist, 1984.
- Cazelles, H., *Introduction critique a l'Ancien Testament*. 1973.
- Childs, B.S., *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. London: SCM Press, 1979.
- Eissfeldt, O., *The Old Testament: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1965
- Fohrer, G., *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: SPCK, 1976.
- Pfeiffer, R.H., *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1948.
- Kaiser, O., *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Presentation of its Results and Problems*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1975.
- Rendtorf, R., *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1985.
- Soggin, J.A., *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1989.

Expectations

The students are normally expected to read the book if it is available in the library. In most cases, however, there is only one copy and if the students are many it is not possible for them to read it. In such cases it is only the lecturer who has access to the book. The students take notes in class and may also be given some prepared notes (handouts) by the lecturer. The lecturer will of course mention other Old Testament introductions, if they are available in the library, and give the students references to the relevant sections for them to read.

Experiences

From the answers of those who responded, the academic and pedagogical profiles of the introductions to the Old Testament available are good, which is also my own experience. But when it comes to availability, the East African experience is practically the same everywhere: there is always a scarcity of textbooks. In most institutions the students are lucky if there are two copies of the book in the library. Many lecturers have their own personal copy, and those who don't will need to keep the library copy for preparing their class notes. Students who have enough personal resources may buy their own copy but not many can afford to do this. The majority will try to have photocopies of the most important sections of the book.

Contextual relevance

This is without doubt the element that is almost totally missing in all textbooks for the Old Testament. This is true not only with regard to Old Testament introductions but also to the rest of the Old Testament sub-disciplines as listed in the questionnaire for this project. Those who responded either omitted this item for lack of anything to say, or they pointed out that it is the lecturer who must try to bring out the contextual relevance of any study in the various Old Testament sub-disciplines. Since practically all the textbooks used in Africa for Old Testament studies are produced by western scholars in the historical critical tradition, it is understandable that the question of contextual relevance hardly ever arises. Yet for Africans this is an essential and indispensable aspect of any Old Testament study, as many scholars have repeatedly pointed out.

It was in view of meeting the need for contextual relevance that the Daughters of St Paul, an international religious congregation, initiated the African Bible project; cf. my "The African Bible Project", *Newsletter on African Old Testament Scholarship* 4 (1998) 7–9. The project culminated

in the publication of the *African Bible*, edited by V. Zinkurature and A. Colacrai, and published in 1999 by the Paulines Publications Africa. The contributors to this Bible attempted to write notes and comments that would have some relevance for African readers. In the general introduction to each biblical book there is always a section on the relevance of the book in the African context. It is brief but it gives a useful orientation to the reader. I understand there are other projects in progress in Africa that aim to contextualize the study of the Bible through commentaries and other kinds of publications. It is to be hoped that the present project on the current textbook situation is a first step that will eventually lead to the writing and publication of textbooks on the Old Testament, and indeed the entire Christian Bible, that will stress contextual relevance.

Exegesis: methodology and commentaries

The following commentaries and commentary series are in current use: Peake's Commentary, New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Anchor Bible Commentary, Old Testament Library, Word Biblical Commentary. The following metodological books are in current use:

- Guillette, P., *Introduction au methodes historico-critiques*. Montreal, 1987.
- Habel, N., *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
- Harrelson, W., *Interpreting the Old Testament*. New York, 1964.
- John Paul II, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993.
- Klein, W. & al., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993.
- McKenzie, S.L. & Haynes, S.R. (eds.), *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*. London: Chapman, 1993.
- Tucker, G., *Form Criticism of the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.

Expectations

Where these books are available the students are always encouraged to read them in order to deepen their understanding of what they get in class. To make sure that an important book is read students may be asked to write a review of it.

Experiences

Here again the survey shows that lecturers and students are generally happy with the academic and pedagogical profiles of the commentaries and the textbooks used for exegesis and methodology. In this section

more material is generally available in all seminaries and theological colleges, some having more than others. Library reference sections usually contain a variety of general commentaries and encyclopedias on the Bible. Many institutions also have Bible commentaries that are published in series. These are available to students. Books on exegetical methodology, however, are more rare and in many cases only the lecturer has a copy. With regard to contextual relevance, what I said above is true also for this section. It is the lecturer who has to add the contextual relevance.

Old Testament theology and hermeneutics

The following books are in current use:

- Alonso Schökel, L., *A Manual of Hermeneutics*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998 (The Biblical Seminar, 54).
 Childs, B.S., *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. London: SCM Press, 1992.
 Eichrodt, W., *Theology of the Old Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1961–1967.
 Osborne, G.R., *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
 Jacob, E., *Theology of the Old Testament*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1958.
 Rad, G. von, *Old Testament Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1979.

Experiences

The academic and pedagogical profiles of the books in this section are also said to be good. Concerning the availability of books for this section the survey and my own experience show that our libraries are quite poor, especially in books on hermeneutics. Many lecturers try to buy copies for themselves or to photocopy a particular book that is available in a neighbouring institution. In Nairobi we are lucky to have several theological institutions that share their book catalogues and have inter-library lending agreements. As far as contextual relevance is concerned many institutions are beginning to discover the availability of some books and articles on African biblical interpretation. This is in no small measure thanks to *Bulletin for Old Testament Studies in Africa*, which within its short life it has roused the interest of many African biblical scholars to engage in contextual biblical interpretation. It has also brought to light a lot of untapped material written by Africans on Old Testament topics in the form of doctoral dissertations, most of them unpublished (cf. issue 9 (2000) 6–21). There is great potential here for producing textbooks that have contextual relevance.

History of Israel

The number of books here is lower; the following ones are in current use:

- Bright, J., *A History of Israel*. London: SCM Press, 1981.
Bruce, F.F., *Israel and the Nations*. Exeter: Paternoster, 1983.
Hinson, D.F., *History of Israel*. London: SPCK, 1973.
Noth, M., *History of Israel*. London: SCM Press, 1983.
Soggin, J.A., *A History of Israel*. London: SCM Press, 1984.

Experience

These books have good academic and pedagogical profiles, according to the responses received. But they are not available in all libraries, and neither do they have any contextual relevance. It is up to the lecturer to point this out to the students.

Africa and the Old Testament

Only one of the respondents (from Tanzania) mentioned textbooks for this section:

- Dickson, K. & Ellingworth P., *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1969.
Ela, J.-M., *My Faith as an African*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988.

Experiences

Once again the academic and pedagogical profiles of these books are judged to be good, but the books are not easily available. The person who listed the two books says that they have contextual relevance in some instances. There are some recent publications that would be relevant under this heading, but they are not yet well known.

- Adamo, D.T., *Africa and the Africans in the Old Testament*. San Francisco: Christian Universities Press, 1998.
Getui, M., Holter, K. & Zinkurature, V. (eds.), *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa: Papers from the International Symposium on Africa and the Old Testament in Nairobi, October 1999*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001 (Bible and Theology in Africa; 2); also publ. as *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001 (Biblical Studies in African Scholarship Series).
Holter, K., *Tropical Africa and the Old Testament: A Select and Annotated Bibliography*. Oslo: University of Oslo, 1996 (Faculty of Theology: Bibliography Series; 6).

- Holter, K., *Yahweh in Africa: Essays on Africa and the Old Testament*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000 (Bible and Theology in Africa; 1).
- Kinoti, H.W. & Waliggo, J.M. (eds.), *The Bible in African Christianity: Essays in Biblical Theology*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1997 (African Christianity Series).

Biblical Hebrew

The following books are in current use:

- Kelly, P.H., *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992
- Kautzsch, A.E., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1980.
- Lambdin, T.O., *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. London: Darton, 1973.
- Seow, C.-L., *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.
- Weingreen, J., *Hébreu biblique*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1984.

Experiences

The people who use these books report satisfaction with their academic and pedagogical profiles. But unfortunately in most cases it is only the lecturer who has a copy of the text. Here again the contextual relevance is not in evidence, and the potential for learning Hebrew directly from an African language is accordingly neglected; for a discussion cf. my “Morphological and syntactical correspondences between Hebrew and Bantu languages”, in M. Getui & al. (eds.), *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa* (referred to above), pp. 217–226.

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Old Testament textbooks: A West African perspective

John O. Akao

In most universities in the West African sub-region, Christianity is taught as a subject in the humanities, although in some universities it is grouped along with subjects in the social sciences. In most countries, the subject is also taught in the polytechnics, in colleges of education, and in seminaries and theological colleges run by various church bodies.

Usually, the method of teaching the subject varies from one educational establishment to the other. While in secular establishments, it is taught as an academic discipline, in theological colleges and seminary settings it is taught in the context of an advocacy. This difference in approach determines to a large extent the nature of textbooks that are needed to give the students the expected orientation. The doctrinal or theological stance of the various church bodies also contributes to the differences noticeable in the type or nature of textbooks in use in the theological colleges and seminaries.

In the secular sector, the primary aim or objective of teaching the subject hinges on the desire to inculcate some moral values in the students, especially those at the lower levels. The kind of textbooks needed for this purpose is those which draw some moral teachings from the biblical texts. At the undergraduate level, books required to give students basic academic orientation and solid foundation in the area of biblical languages and literature are difficult to come by. Also at the postgraduate level there is a strong need for textbooks. In rare cases, where books are available, they are priced out of the reach of the students because of the weakness of the local currency, into which the foreign price of the books is converted at the point of sale.

As an alternative to the dependence on the expensive imported books, national scholars should engage in publishing for local requirements. However, the research that is needed to produce adequate textbooks is, generally speaking, difficult to achieve, mainly due to funding problems. Library facilities and research materials must be available for a scholar to do any meaningful research for purposes of writing in aid of students or contributing to scholarship. In the absence of basic facilities for a worthwhile research project, enthusiasm for scholarship is dampened, and the result is a paucity of textbooks for students and an unhappy resort to dependence on whatever is available.

This general problem is particularly acute in the field of biblical studies, where there is no encouragement for students to study the biblical languages, again because of the lack of textbooks. The challenge stares African scholars in the face to write and demonstrate the much talked about African slant in biblical theologization. In the light of this one would suggest as a panacea, an international cooperation amongst African biblical scholars and interested friends, to rally round to rescue budding African scholars from academic starvation.

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L'enseignement de l'Ancien Testament et des cours apparentés aux Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa

André Kabasele Mukenge

Le projet initial consistait à donner la situation de l'enseignement de l'Ancien Testament (A.T.) et des cours apparentés dans toute l'Afrique francophone. Les efforts que nous avons déployés pour recueillir les informations dans les différentes institutions (Facultés, Instituts supérieurs, Grands séminaires) sont restés vains. Nous avons à peine enregistré quelques réponses. Aussi me suis-je résolu de décrire la situation d'après ma propre expérience aux Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa (FCK) où j'ai été étudiant, jusqu'au niveau de la Licence, avant de poursuivre d'autres études à Louvain-la-Neuve et à l'Ecole Biblique et Archéologique française de Jérusalem, et où je suis actuellement professeur d'Hébreu biblique et d'A.T.

A la Faculté de Théologie des FCK, les cours sont organisés en trois cycles: *le cycle de graduat* (3 ans), qui vise à donner une formation générale dans les principales disciplines théologiques avec un accent particulier sur l'histoire et les méthodes de recherche scientifique propres à chaque branche; *le cycle de licence* (deux ans) qui vise l'approfondissement de l'ensemble de la théologie selon une des quatre orientations suivantes: biblique, dogmatique, morale et pastorale. Ici, les cours se spécialisent et les séminaires et travaux pratiques s'intensifient. Enfin, un *troisième cycle* de deux ans, vise à promouvoir la recherche personnelle et à préparer la conception et l'élaboration d'une thèse de doctorat. Ce cycle, de deux ans, conduit à un *diplôme d'études supérieures en théologie*, préalable à la présentation du doctorat.

Des cours obligatoires d'Ancien Testament

Au niveau fondamental—le graduat—les cours sont dispensés par le Professeur D. Tshidibi Bambila. Il donne d'abord un cours d'*Introduction à l'A.T.* (1^{re} année). L'objectif est d'introduire dans la mentalité et les grands courants théologiques de la révélation vétérotestamentaire. Le cours aborde, sous l'angle historique et théologique, les différents groupes de livres qui composent l'A.T. Le professeur met à la disposition des étudiants des notes polycopiées, parce que ceux-ci ne peuvent pas, vu leurs moyens matériels limités, se procurer de bonnes "Introductions à l'A.T." Généralement, le professeur se base sur la célèbre *Introduction critique à l'Ancien Testament* publiée sous la direction de H. Cazelles (Paris, Desclée, 1973). Mais il le complète avantageusement par des ouvrages plus récents qui renouvellent

certaines problématiques, notamment en ce qui concerne la discussion autour de la formation du Pentateuque, qui est aujourd'hui marquée par la remise en cause de la théorie documentaire.

On a, pour les 2^e et 3^e années, un cours cyclique de 45 heures, soit l'étude du Pentateuque et des livres prophétiques, soit les livres poétiques et sapientiaux. Ici encore le Professeur rédige des notes polycopiées pour les étudiants.

En Licence, je dispense le cours de *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (30 heures) où j'aborde un thème qui change chaque année. C'est un cours magistral, mais je prévois également des travaux pratiques où les étudiants approfondissent et présentent un aspect du cours. C'est dans ce cadre que j'ai donné un cours intéressant pour les objectifs du *Bulletin for Old Testament Studies in Africa: Lecture contextuelle de l'Ancien Testament*. Après avoir situé l'approche contextuelle parmi les autres méthodes utilisées dans l'étude de la Bible, le cours approfondit les concepts d'actualisation et d'inculturation. Ensuite, on se pose la question de la valeur permanente de l'A.T., avant de le mettre en dialogue avec les situations socio-culturelles et religieuses de l'Afrique et des minorités américaines. Cette confrontation se fait par l'analyse de quelques thèmes bibliques contextualisés: le thème de la souffrance dans le livre de Job (G. Gutiérrez), les poèmes du serviteur (C. Mesters), les figures bibliques dans les Negro Spirituals, la relecture de Gn 4 dans le contexte africain.

A part ce cours de théologie de l'A.T., on a un cours de *Questions approfondies de l'Ancien Testament* (30 heures) destinées à tous les étudiants de licence. Ce cours, dispensé soit par le Professeur M. Vervenne de Leuven (Belgique) soit par moi-même, traite d'une question précise, soit un livre, soit un thème. Le Professeur Vervenne y aborde souvent *La question de la violence dans l'Ancien Testament*, tandis que moi j'aborde l'étude approfondie d'un livre biblique. Par exemple: *Jérémie dans ses deux rédactions antiques (LXX et T.M.)* ou *Amos, comme initiateur du mouvement prophétique classique*. Les cours de Licence sont plus interactifs, car le professeur y attend également la contribution des étudiants, notamment par les travaux pratiques où ils font une recherche personnelle par rapport au cours, et par les discussions suscitées lors des séances magistrales.

Pour les étudiants qui suivent l'orientation biblique, il y a en outre un cours d'*Exégèse de l'Ancien Testament* (30 heures) que je dispense. C'est un cours plus technique où j'initie les étudiants à faire une analyse serrée des textes. Cette année j'ai donné "L'approche narrative des récits du Premier Testament". Enfin, il y a un *Séminaire d'Ancien Testament* (15 heures). Ici, je ne fais qu'introduire la problématique choisie, les étudiants préparent ensuite des travaux rédigés qu'ils présentent devant leurs collègues pour discussion. Mais, étant donné les lacunes que j'ai

observées dans le maniement des instruments de travail, comme les *Concordances*, l'*apparat biblique des Bibles*, je consacre également un séminaire tous les deux ans à ce sujet.

Il faut dire qu'au niveau de la licence, le professeur n'est pas tenu à faire des notes polycopiées, car le sujet change régulièrement. Et puis, les étudiants sont invités à prendre eux-mêmes des notes et à les compléter par l'exploitation de la bibliographie signalée en classe. Toutefois, il y a des difficultés réelles pour nos étudiants à mettre à profit ce système, car la bibliothèque n'est pas en accès direct et elle ferme tôt.

Des cours de langues bibliques

En ce qui concerne les langues bibliques, nous avons, pour le premier cycle, deux cours de *Grec du Nouveau Testament*, et deux cours d'*hébreu biblique*. C'est moi qui dispense les cours d'hébreu qui consistent en l'étude de la morphologie jusqu'au verbe régulier, en 1^{re} année, et en la conjugaison des verbes irréguliers par l'analyse des textes, en 2^e année. C'est ici que nous éprouvons de grandes difficultés. Les étudiants ont des moyens financiers limités; ils ne peuvent pas se procurer les instruments de travail indispensables pour suivre ces cours: *Texte biblique en hébreu*, *Grammaires*, *Dictionnaires*, *Concordances*. Et à la bibliothèque, ces instruments sont souvent en un seul exemplaire. C'est un vrai casse-tête. J'aurais souhaité par exemple que les étudiants aient, chacun, la petite grammaire abrégée de Touzard,¹ le manuel de Weingreen,² le dictionnaire de Sander-Trenel,³ et un exemplaire de la *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, même en petit format. Mais ils sont pauvres, et ne savent pas commander de tels ouvrages à l'étranger. Pour pallier à cette situation, j'ai confectionné récemment un manuel polycopié, mais qu'il faut encore améliorer. Je me suis, pour cela, appuyer sur les grammaires de Touzard et de Joüon ainsi que le manuel de Weingreen. Mes notes polycopiées comprennent quatre parties: la morphologie hébraïque, des photocopies de quelques textes tirés de la BHS, des paradigmes de conjugaisons photocopiés de Touzard, et un petit lexique des mots les plus usités.

En Licence, les cours de langues sont destinés seulement aux étudiants qui suivent l'orientation biblique: un cours de *Syntaxe hébraïque* (30 heures), avec analyse des textes, et un cours élémentaire d'*Araméen* (15 heures), qui s'appuie sur la Grammaire de Rosenthal.⁴

¹ J. Touzard, *Grammaire hébraïque abrégée* [édition refondue par A. Robert], Paris: Gabalda, 1981.

² J. Weingreen, *Hébreu biblique: Méthode élémentaire*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1984.

³ N.P. Sander & L. Trenel, *Dictionnaire Hébreu-Français*. Genève: Slatkine, 1982.

⁴ F. Rosenthal, *Grammaire d'araméen biblique*, Paris: Beauchesne, 1988.

Ces deux cours sont donnés par le Professeur R. Mugaruka. Mais le problème majeur reste l'acquisition, par les étudiants, des grammaires appropriées qui, d'ailleurs, ne sont pas vendues au pays. S'il faut les importer, cela va coûter trop cher par rapport aux maigres revenus des étudiants. Comme on le voit, il n'y a pas de cours de Grec de la LXX dans notre Faculté, ce qui est une lacune étant donné l'intérêt actuel pour la LXX⁵.

Des cours complémentaires à option

Depuis trois ans, une réforme dans l'organisation des cours est à l'essai dans notre Faculté. Cette réforme a prévu une série de cours à option dans le premier cycle. Pour ceux qui, au niveau du deuxième cycle, veulent suivre l'orientation biblique, l'occasion est ainsi offerte de suivre ces cours:

- Etude philologique des langues anciennes (Prof Mugaruka et Prof Mimbubu)
- Théorie de l'interprétation des textes (Prof Kabasele et Prof Buetubela)
- Histoire du Moyen Orient ancien (Prof Tshidibi)
- Archéologie du Moyen Orient ancien (Prof Mugaruka)

Toutefois, il faut signaler que cette réforme pose de nombreux problèmes dans son application; ce qui veut dire qu'après le temps d'essai, elle n'a pas beaucoup de chance de survie.

Considérations finales

La première considération est d'ordre méthodologique. L'on sait qu'aujourd'hui on assiste à un foisonnement sans précédent de méthodes et approches dans l'étude de la Bible. La méthode historico-critique reste comme la méthode de référence dans l'enseignement des cours bibliques à la Faculté. Mais on fait également attention aux méthodes d'analyse littéraire et aux approches contextuelles. Moi-même, j'enseigne la méthode structurelle dans le cadre du cours de "Théorie de l'interprétation des textes", ainsi que la méthode narrative et l'approche contextuelle. Mais je prends soin de montrer la complémentarité des méthodes dans l'étude des textes bibliques. Le professeur Mugaruka aborde dans son séminaire du Nouveau Testament les questions de "traduction de la Bible en langues africaines", et le Professeur Buetubela insère la méthode symbolique dans son enseignement comme dans ses

⁵ Voir par exemple le travail de l'équipe de Marguerite Harl qui édite en français le texte de la LXX, sous le titre: *La Bible d'Alexandrie*.

publications. Il faudra, peut-être, envisager une publication à mettre à la disposition des étudiants, sous forme de manuel, où l'on présente les différentes méthodes. Ce qui compléterait avantageusement le cours que tous les étudiants de 1^{re} année suivent auprès du Professeur J.-B. Matand intitulé: "Initiation aux méthodes d'exégèse biblique".

La deuxième considération concerne la documentation disponible pour les étudiants. En général, les professeurs eux-mêmes, ayant tous achevé leurs études en Europe, ont eu le temps et les moyens de se constituer une bibliothèque convenable pour élaborer leurs cours. Mais, nos étudiants manquent cruellement les instruments de travail indispensables. Je fais ici appel aux organismes et aux hommes de bonne volonté qui peuvent nous sponsoriser à ce propos. J'imagine deux formules complémentaires: acquérir, pour la bibliothèque, plusieurs dizaines d'exemplaires de documents suivants: la BHS, les Grammaires de Touzard et de Rosenthal, le manuel de Weingreen, et le Dictionnaire de Sander-Trenel. Ces ouvrages sont d'un bon niveau pour l'étude de l'hébreu et de l'araméen. Touzard est simple et complet. La méthode de Weingreen peut être contestable sur certains points, mais on y trouve beaucoup d'exercices. Le Dictionnaire de Sander-Trenel est parmi les moins chers de la catégorie et, comme il est en français, il serait accessible pour l'ensemble des étudiants. De tels ouvrages, propriété de la bibliothèque, seraient loués annuellement par les étudiants. Ainsi, on pourrait résoudre la question de l'acquisition des ouvrages, trop coûteux pour eux. Le fruit de la location servirait en outre au renouvellement progressif du stock. Une autre formule est un appui aux notes polycopiées confectionnées par les Professeurs. On pourrait les améliorer par traitement de texte, et avec bonne reliure si l'on obtenait un subside. Cela permettrait aux étudiants d'avoir, à prix réduit, un support qu'ils vont longtemps conserver.

La troisième considération concerne les lectures africaines de la Bible qui sont une des visées du *Bulletin for Old Testament Studies in Africa*. La plupart de nos étudiants ignorent tout ce qui se fait dans ce domaine en Afrique anglophone. Moi-même, de passage à Nairobi, j'ai découvert une littérature abondante sur le sujet, littérature complètement ignorée à Kinshasa où ils ne sont pas vendus. Cela est réciproque.

Pour terminer, je voudrais dire l'importance de l'étude scientifique de l'A.T. à un moment où des lectures fondamentalistes pullulent dans notre société, relayées souvent par les mouvements sectaires et favorisées par le contexte de crise qui caractérise notre situation aujourd'hui.

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Through the eyes of another

A research project on intercultural Bible reading

Louis C. Jonker

The aim of intercultural reading of the Bible is to be exposed to the reading of the Bible by people in completely different cultural circumstances than your own. Intercultural Bible reading offers the opportunity to read through “the eyes of another”, and to reflect on why you read the Bible similarly or differently.

Why an interest in this?

Culture is perhaps one of the most dominant, yet least noticed and studied factors in the reading of the Bible. Culture also provides us with some criteria to compare interpretations of biblical texts in different cultural contexts. Apart from the more academic/theoretical reasons, we are interested in intercultural reading of the Bible because we are convinced that it can facilitate a better understanding of the reading of others, and the dynamics of our own reading.

Who “owns” the project?

The research project was initiated by Dr Hans de Wit and the Faculty of Theology of the Free University of Amsterdam, and the Uniting Churches of the Netherlands are sharing the financial responsibility for it. But actually the project belongs to everyone who takes part in it. Every group that has indicated their willingness to take part, shares in it not as objects of investigation, but as true participants who should gain something from this project themselves.

Who are taking part?

More or less 120-150 Bible study groups from all over the world (\pm 30 countries), and from different cultural backgrounds, are participating. These groups are divided into different regions, each with a coordinator. Local contact persons, facilitators and researchers will help the regional coordinators with the process. The central coordination of the project will be done by the secretariat at the Free University in Amsterdam.

African participation

Four regions from Africa, each with a coordinator, participate in this project:

- Eastern Africa (Coordinator: Dr Mary Getui, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya)
- Western Africa (Coordinator: Dr Eric Anum, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana)
- Southern Africa (1) – including Malawi: (Coordinator: Dr Louis Jonker, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa)
- Southern Africa (2) – including Botswana: (Coordinator: Prof Gerald West, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa)

How is it going to happen?

The project will proceed in three phases: In phase 1 each group will be asked to read John 4 (the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman) in the way they normally do Bible study. After the first phase reports will be compiled on each group. In the second phase every group will be linked to another group (from a completely different cultural background). They will then receive the reports on their partner group, and vice versa. During this phase every group will be exposed to the reading of the other group, and they will get the opportunity to react to that. In phase 3 every group will receive the reaction of their partner group, and each group will be asked whether they want to continue with the process, and whether they would like to keep contact with their partner group and to do more Bible reading together.

What do we hope to achieve?

- We hope that this process will bring a better understanding of how cultural differences influence our reading of the Bible.
- We hope that groups will find it a stimulating exercise, and that they will gain insight in their own, as well as in their partner group's reading of the Bible.
- We also hope that this reading of the Bible through the eyes of another will facilitate ongoing contact between Christian believers all over the world.

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The Bible and Africa(ns), and Africa(ns) and the Bible

Grant LeMarquand

This article reviews the following three essay collections:

Gerald O. West & Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* [BA: TTT]. Leiden: Brill, 2000. xviii + 828 pp. ISBN: 90-04-10627-8. US\$ 147.00

Vincent Wimbush (ed.), *African Americans and the Bible: Sacred Texts and Social Textures* [AAB]. New York & London: Continuum, 2000. xx + 876 pp. ISBN: 0-8264-1293-9. US\$ 99.95.

Mary Getui, Knut Holter & Victor Zinkurature (eds.), *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa: Papers from the International Symposium on Africa and the Old Testament in Nairobi, Kenya, October 1999* [IOTA]. New York: Peter Lang, 2001 (Bible & Theology in Africa, 2.) ix + 246 pp. ISBN: 0-8204-4978-4. US\$ 57.95. Republished as *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*. Nairobi: Acton (Biblical Studies in African Scholarship). ISBN: 9966-888-14-4. US\$ 15.00.

A few years ago I met a former professor of mine at an academic conference. I had been in Africa teaching and had returned to my native Canada to study. He asked me what I was working on. "African biblical scholarship," I replied. He looked a bit puzzled, scratched his head and then suggested, "There isn't enough material, is there?" This was not a professor who was out of touch with biblical scholarship. He was, in fact, very interested in new modes and methods of attempting to understand biblical texts. Neither was he an unkind man. Like the disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus who didn't know that there was a Holy Spirit until Paul asked them (Acts 19:1-7) he simply did not know that there was an "African biblical scholarship".

Disturbed by my professor's response I immediately set out to demonstrate the existence of my field of interest! In a few days I mailed him a bibliography of some 15 pages. Of course much of the material I knew of was either published in Africa or was in the form of unpublished dissertations. Perhaps my former teacher could be excused for not knowing. That was over a decade ago.

With the abundance of recent publications by African biblical scholars and about African biblical scholarship, much of this material published in the "West", there is no longer any reason to claim that, "there isn't enough material." To paraphrase the Apostle, "they are without excuse, for what can be known [about the reading of the Bible in

Africa] is plain for all to see.” This is especially true since the production of the important volumes under review here.

Together these 2000 pages witness to the emergence of a new thing. The new thing is not that Africans (we are using the term “African” here to include both those living on the continent and those in the “diaspora”: in North America, the Caribbean and elsewhere) have suddenly discovered the Bible. These books in fact point to the existence of both old, enduring traditions and new and innovative examples of interaction between the Bible and Africans. The new thing is simply that these African ways of reading are now an “open secret”. Traditions of reading that have existed orally in ecclesiastical settings, or in written form in unpublished or locally published material are now being made available to other audiences. I was tempted to say that this material is now being made known to a “wider” audience. This is not necessarily the case, of course. Certainly these publications make known African and African American readings to *a scholarly western audience* that may not have known about the interactions between Africa and the Bible previously. But this audience can hardly be considered “wide”! The new thing about these texts is that they say to “the guild”: “Africa is also seriously engaged in reading biblical texts and these readings deserve to be heard and pondered and respected.” More importantly, perhaps, these publications alert African scholars themselves that they are a part of a growing community of African discourse on the Bible. Some time ago I visited a biblical scholar in one part of Nigeria and showed him some Nigerian journals of which he had been unaware. Clearly more communication between African scholars is needed. These volumes are evidence that some long needed interaction is beginning.

A short review cannot hope to do justice to the breadth and depth of these works, but several themes are striking. The following remarks all have to do, in one way or another, with the rhetoric of *the margin and the centre*. In 1991 R.S. Sugirtharajah published the first edition of his important compilation *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (London: SPCK). Although this welcome volume broke new ground in making the West aware of the presence of other voices in the scholarly biblical discussion, it struck me at the time that the book was not marginal enough. There were few African voices in the book, for example, and most of those were from South Africa and fit into the familiar paradigm of “liberationist” readings. A small but important part of the work dealt with “popular” readings of the Bible.

The volumes under review here take the work of including “marginalized” voices a step further in a number of ways. Ancient

African ecclesial traditions are included. Pauline Otieno's "Interpreting the Book of Psalms in the Coptic Orthodox Church of Kenya" *IOTA* (pp. 159–64) takes the reader into a tradition of devotional reading which is centuries old. Likewise, J.A. (Bobby) Loubser's "How Al-Mokattam Mountain was Moved: The Coptic Imagination and the Christian Bible" *BA: TTT* (pp. 103–26) explores the same tradition of reading by an ancient church from a very different angle. One essay investigates Ethiopian interpretation: Mark McEntire, "Cain and Able in Africa: An Ethiopian Case Study in Competing Hermeneutics" *BA: TTT* (pp. 248–59). Much more could be done in this area, of course. Nothing is heard here, for example, of the long passed Nubian and North African churches.

Other "marginalized" voices which are heard in these pages are those variously designated as "popular" or "ordinary" interpreters of the Bible. This area has been a special interest of Gerald West, an editor of one of these volumes. He has contributed an essay dealing with socially engaged reading of the Bible in South Africa in his "Contextual Bible Study in South Africa: A Resource for Reclaiming Land, Dignity and Identity" *BA: TTT* (pp. 595–610). In the same volume Justin Ukpung reports on an important study of done in Port Harcourt, Nigeria: "Popular Readings of the Bible in Africa and Implications for Academic Readings" (pp. 582–594). A number of studies investigate ways that the members of African instituted churches read the Bible. These include, Philomena Mwaura, "The Old Testament in the Nabii Christian Church of Kenya" *IOTA* (pp. 165–70); Nahashon W. Ndung'u, "The Role of the Bible in the Rise of African Instituted Churches: The Case of the Akurinu Churches in Kenya" *BA: TTT* (pp. 236–247).

Also encouraging is the presence of high percentage of women involved in these volumes. Each of the three has a women editor and each have women as authors or co-authors of important studies (eight articles by women in *IOTA*, at least six in *BA: TTT*, at least twenty-two in *AAB*).

Several essays in two of these works (*BA: TTT* and *IOTA*) contribute to the on-going discussion of "Africa in the Bible" providing evidence that the land and people of Africa have been marginalized in scholarly discussion of the Bible. Although present in the pages of the text, Africa and Africans are not always noticed. When they are acknowledged, their contributions are sometimes trivialized or "denigrated". See, Knut Holter, "Africa in the Old Testament" *BA: TTT* (pp. 569–81; Marta Høyland Lavik, "The 'African' Texts of the Old Testament and Their African Interpreters" *IOTA* (pp. 43–53; Tewoldemedhin Habtu, "The Images of

Egypt in the Old Testament: Reflections on African Hermeneutics” *IOTA* (pp. 55–64); David Tuesday Adamo, “The Images of Cush in the Old Testament: Reflections on African Hermeneutics” *IOTA* (pp. 65–74).

Clearly these volumes present us with studies which allow us to hear perspectives which have not always been heard. Here are voices from ancient African Christian traditions, here are the perspectives of modern African instituted churches, here are views of women, and here are both scholarly readings and scholarly studies of “popular” readings. But are we correct in continuing to refer to these as “marginal”? Hearing this chorus leaves one wondering whether it is not actually “western” scholarship which is marginalized in the global context. Certainly the language and traditions of modernist biblical studies, although appreciated for various reasons by many of the authors in these volumes, is not always lauded. For most of these authors the biblical text is not approached in the same way that most of western scholarship still approaches a text: as a neutral text under scientific investigation by objective practitioners of the scholarly exegetical craft. Rather, in these studies, the “reader”, or better, the reading community is prominent.

The privileging of the interpreter is an especially important theme in the volume edited by Wimbush. Note the word order of the title: *African Americans and the Bible*. This is deliberate. In fact, this volume may be the most frustrating of the three for anyone looking for “exegesis” of the Bible since most of the studies in this work investigate ways African Americans (and others) have appropriated and interacted with the Bible (and other sacred texts). For the Wimbush volume the text under investigation is the African American community and the Bible is simply the catalyst for that community’s self-reflection. The other two volumes are clearly *about* the Bible (and how Africans interpret it). *AAB* is *about* African Americans (and how they use the Bible). For all three volumes, however, both of the poles of the interpretive discussion—reader and text—are crucial. If African scholarship has done anything in the last few years it has trumpeted the idea that we come to the text not as neutral observers but as people-in-culture. For Africans on any continent this has meant that the culture of African peoples should not be thought of as a hindrance to understanding, but as an aid. Among the many examples of this approach (which will be familiar to most of the readings of *BOTSA*) see Sammy Githuku’s article, “Taboos on Counting” *IOTA* (pp. 113–18) which argues that an African eye can help us understand David’s guilt concerning doing a census in Israel.

Perhaps the most important aspect of these studies is that they remind us that real people come to the Bible with real needs and hopes,

that reading is about “surviving” and “coping” as well as “understanding”. Here is scholarship that reminds us that some people who read or hear stories of exorcisms in the Bible actually need deliverance from demonic powers (Solomon K. Avotri, “The Vernacularization of Scripture and African Beliefs: the Story of the Geresene Demoniac Among the Ewe of West Africa” *BA: TTT* [pp. 311–325]). Here is a mode of reading which confront us with the problematic of praying the Lord’s Prayer in a world of international debt, famine and global trade (Musa W. Dube, “To Pray the Lord’s Prayer in the Global Economic Era (Matt. 6:9–13)” *BA: TTT* [pp. 611–30]). Scholarship such as this should leave us wondering about the relevance of much which is called academic scholarship in the “West”.

Perhaps a reconsideration of the language of the *margin* and the *centre* is in order: Should scholarship which brings the real concerns of real people to the reading of the biblical text continue to be considered marginal? Should this not be a “central” concern in the reading of biblical texts?

A final note: this reviewer was responsible for the bibliography on pp. 633–800 of *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*. Obviously, this bibliography will soon need to be updated. I am happy to receive notices of any publications on the relationship between Africa and the Bible for inclusion in further bibliographical compilations.

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Conferences

Ilorin (Nigeria): The 14th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) will be held 10–13 July 2001 at United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) Theological College, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The theme of the conference is “Biblical Studies and Women Issues in Africa”. Six commissioned papers will be read: “Women ordination in the Christian Church” (M.A. Oduyoye), “The religious and social status of women in the Old Testament (A.C. Ariri-Chidomere), “The role of women in the New Testament church” (N. Onwu), “The gender of biblical Yahweh” (T. Okurire), “The impact of women in Christian ministry on Nigerian society” (D.O. Akintunde), “The role of women in the ministry of Jesus” (M.F. Akangbe). Other paper proposals are welcome. For information: Dr Caleb Ogunkunle, Secretary of NABIS, c/o Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, Oyo State, Nigeria; e-mail: Calebogunkunle@yahoo.com

Potchefstroom (South Africa): The 2001 Annual Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa (OTSSA) will be held 4–7 September 2001 at Potchefstroom University. The meeting is convened by the gender group of OTSSA, and it is organized as an international gender conference on “Suffering bodies in religious discourses”. For information regarding the conference venue and accomodation: Prof Paul Kruger, Potchefstroom Theological School, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, P.O. Box 20004, Noordbrug 2522, South Africa; fax: +27 18 294 8952; e-mail: sbbppk@puknet.puk.ac.za

Rome (Italy): The 2001 International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) will be held 8–12 July 2001 in the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. For information: Society of Biblical Literature, 825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 350, Atlanta, GA 30329, USA; e-mail: sblexec@emory.edu or you can visit the SBL website: <http://www.sbl-site.org/Congresses/IM/2001/>

Basel (Switzerland): The XVIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament (IOSOT) will be held 5–10 August 2001 in Basel; website: <http://iosot2001.theol.unibas.ch/>. President of the congress is Prof Ernst Jenni, and Congress secretary is Dr Beat Huwyler. Congress office: IOSOT XVII. Kongress Basel 2001, Postfach 112, CH-4011 Basel, Switzerland; telephone and fax: +41 61 267 27 96; e-mail: iosot2001@ubaclu.unibas.ch. The following accompanying congresses will be held: International Organization for Masoretic Studies (IOMS): 6 August; International Organization for Qumran Studies (IOQS): 5–7 August; International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS): 3–4 August; International Organization for Targumic Studies (IOTS): 2–3 August.

Denver (Colorado, USA): The 2001 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) will take place in Nashville, Tennessee, 17–20 November 2001. Amongst a large number of sections, groups, seminars, and consultations, one notices that one session of the Section on Bible in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean will focus G.O. West & M.W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 2000 (cf. G. LeMarquand’s review in this issue of *BOTSA*, pp. 18–22). The other session will be co-sponsored with the Feminist Hermeneutics of the Bible Section on the theme of interpretation of liberation. Of related interest are the sections on Bible translation and on African-American hermeneutics. For information: Society of Biblical Literature, 825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 350, Atlanta, GA 30329, USA; e-mail: sblexec@sbl-site.org or you can visit the SBL website: <http://www.sbl-site.org/Congresses/AM/index.html>

Book Reviews

W.S. Boshoff, E.H. Scheffler & I.J.J. Spangenberg, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Context*. Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2000. ISBN: 1-919-825-45-2. 239 pp.

This book, which is currently prescribed for first year Biblical Studies students at the University of South Africa (Unisa), introduces its readers to all the books of the Old Testament. The book has a clear focus on the contexts which need to be

considered if the reader wants to be informed and responsible Bible readers. The point of departure is that the Bible should be read according to its true nature as a religious book which originated more than two thousand years ago over a period of several centuries. The purpose of the book is to give Bible readers a broad framework of the historical context and circumstances surrounding every book of the Old Testament so that the Bible can come to life and the texts can be better understood.

The book, therefore, introduces its readers to both the world of the Bible and to the individual biblical books. Each biblical book is discussed with reference to its situation and message, while an overview of its contents is also provided in a separate rubric. The overview of contents can take many forms: a short list, more detailed examples where certain passages are quoted, or even very detailed lists, for example lists of all the texts which are associated with the Yahwist (J), the Elohist (E), and Priestly Writer (P). In addition, useful information on various other matters, maps, and illustrations are provided. True to the emphasis on context, the individual biblical books (including the Deutero-canonical or Apocryphal books) are not treated in the order in which they appear in the Bible, but according to the period in which they originated. The first two chapters put the reader firmly in a contextual frame of mind. They deal with "Reading the Bible in context" and "The world of the Ancient Near East" respectively. The remaining chapters (chapters three to nine) cover the biblical books against the background of the different periods in the history of Israel: Pre-monarchical times, Israel's United Kingdom, the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom, exilic times, the Persian period and the Hellenistic period.

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E.M. Conradie & L.C. Jonker, *Angling for Interpretation: A Guide to Understand the Bible Better*. Belville, South Africa: University of the Western Cape, 2001. Study Guides in Religion and Theology; 4. ISBN 1-86808-486-8. iv + 93 pp. [The book can be ordered (US\$ 7.00 + postage and banking costs) from Dr L.C. Jonker, Buitenkringweg 11, Stellenbosch, 7600 South Africa, e-mail: lcjonker@mweb.co.za].

Old Testament studies has traditionally focused on historical approaches to the texts (isagogics, exegesis, theology/religion, history), leaving the more hermeneutical questions to other disciplines, such as systematic theology and practical theology. I believe Old Testament studies itself has to devote more attention to hermeneutics, partly (negatively) to survive within the framework of theological education, and partly (positively) because Old Testament studies more than any other discipline should be able to offer relevant interpretations of the Old Testament! A growing number of textbooks in biblical hermeneutics are being produced to meet these concerns, and a recent one is Conradie & Jonker's *Angling for Interpretation*. The book is aimed at first year students of theology, and it gives a pedagogically well structured introduction to the theoretical study of interpretation. The book reflects its authors' South African context, but its theoretical discussion, of course, and many of its examples and exercises, would make it relevant in a broader African setting. The book is the first in a series of three; *Fishing for Jonah* will focus on exegetical methodology, and *Hooked on Hermeneutics* will focus on theological hermeneutics.

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K. Holter, *Yahweh in Africa: Essays on Africa and the Old Testament*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000 (Bible and Theology in Africa, 1) viii + 162 pp. ISBN: 0-8204-4934-2. US\$ 50.95.

This collection of nine essays by Knut Holter is the introductory volume to a new series "Bible and Theology in Africa". Holter is the series editor and the driving force behind *BOTSA*. Each of these activities forms part of a wide ranging and deep interest in African Old Testament scholarship. Holter is not only involved in creating a communication network among African Old Testament scholars, he is also a keen student of their writings. He believes that the absence of African scholars from meetings like those of the SBL and IOSOT, can be ascribed to economic reasons and not to the fact that they have nothing to offer. On the contrary, Holter states that the social awareness of African scholars can do much to help the somewhat sterile western Old Testament practice out of its misery.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to the theme "The Old Testament in Africa" and comprises six articles. The theme of the second part is "Africa in the Old Testament" and it comprises three articles. Almost all the articles were written for other collections or were previously published in various journals. This aspect of the collection leads to my most serious point of criticism: While I was reading through the articles, I experienced it as a loose collection of articles, rather than a systematic dealing with the subject of Yahweh in Africa (or even of Old Testament scholarship in Africa). From the outset it is clear that Holter did not mean to rewrite the articles into chapters of a monograph. In each article the footnotes and references are retained, as it was originally published. This is the case to the extent that several arguments, quotations and a wide range of bibliographic references are repeated in successive articles. I found these repetitions somewhat distracting, but ascribe it to a decision by the author not to tamper with the article character of each contribution.

As far as the contents are concerned, the book contains a spirited appeal to take African Old Testament scholarship seriously. Problems, such as the European or North American training of scholars and their endeavour to contextualize their knowledge, the lack of funds for postgraduate studies, the ecclesiastical and congregational situation in various countries and approaches to moral issues and to scientific Bible reading, are all confronted and discussed. At no point, however, does the reader get the impression that Holter thinks he has the final answers for his African audience. Contrariwise he engages in discussion with many African colleagues, by taking their writings as the basis for some of his articles. In the process he does not only engage in serious discussion, but he also introduces the uninformed reader to scholars from the African continent. This causes a need to become acquainted with the authors and the journals in which they publish, to get a first hand experience of their scholarship. Throughout the book the concepts "African scholarship" and "sub-Saharan Africa" mean Africa with the exclusion of South Africa. The disadvantage of such an approach is that it does not really cover all of Africa, south of the Sahara, (but the reason for this exclusion is given in the introduction to chapter 2, p. 27). One advantage of the approach is that many South African scholars are introduced to their northern colleagues with whom, for a variety of reasons, they do not have firm relationships. I have no doubt that many copies of *Yahweh in Africa* will find their way into South African libraries and the offices of South African scholars.

In part one, on the Old Testament in Africa, Holter focusses on Old Testament scholarship as it manifests itself today on the African continent, where the most remarkable growth of Christianity is experienced. The result of this development, compared to the secularisation of Europe, is that the Bible is not only used in congregational contexts, but that it is also studied in a growing number of university departments of religion and/or theology. Characteristic of this engagement with the Bible, specifically the Old Testament, are two kinds of foci: firstly comparative studies between customs or conceptions in Africa and in the Old Testament and secondly the engagement with societal issues and problems. Holter indicates various cases where the theme of a scholarly congress was a social problem, for example the 1995 theme of the NABIS (Nigerian Association of Biblical Studies) which was: "Biblical principles as moral foundation for the Nigerian society".

Holter tackles two relevant themes himself: firstly the relationship between "Ancient Israel and Modern Nigeria" (61–76) and secondly "Relating Africa and the Old Testament on the Polygamy Issue" (77–90). In the first case he evaluates two articles by Nigerian authors (G.O. Abe and C.U. Manus) and interprets them in terms of a wider debate. In the second article he draws attention to the fact that African scholars dealing with the polygamy issue, do so from a context where polygamy is not merely a theoretical issue, but where "it touches the lives of human beings of flesh and blood" (p. 90).

The second part of the book would have benefited most from a reworking of the three articles into a single chapter dealing with Africa in the Old Testament. The issue of Kush in the Old Testament is dealt with in each of the three articles. The many repetitions inevitably have a distracting effect on the reader.

Knut Holter has been active in the field of creating a network of relationships among African scholars and other interested scholars world wide for some time now. With this collection of articles, and with the launch of the new series Bible and Theology in Africa, he took a further step in his endeavour to render a service to Old Testament scholarship in Africa. Anyone interested in the Old Testament and its interpretation in Africa, or any scholar doing his or her work in Africa, should read Holter reflections on this situation. It is worth much more than a passing glance.

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Correction

In Willem Boshoff's article "Graduate students in Old Testament from other African countries at South African universities", *BOTSA* 9 (2000) 2–5, it was said that Mr M.W. Nupanga comes from the Central African Republic (p. 4) and that Rev N. Weanzana comes from Kenya (p. 5). The two happen to be the same person, Rev Nupanga Weanzana wa Weanzana. He originally comes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but at present he lives in the Central African Republic, teaching at Bangui Evangelical School of Theology. He is also doing a PhD with Prof Jurie le Roux at the University of Pretoria (South Africa), writing a dissertation on "The kingship concept in Chronicles".

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As the very idea of *BOTSA* is to be a forum for exchange of
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from the readers. Other scholars working with the Old
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meetings and conferences.

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