
Adamo, David Tuesday (Plen. 2)

(Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria)

A Reconstruction of the History of Ancient Israel in an African Perspective

A close examination of many books and articles on the history of ancient Israel reveals that most authors, in their construction of the history of ancient Israel, followed the process that I will call “biblical deAfricanization.” Despite the fact that no nation or people was mentioned so frequently in the Old Testament (which is the primary source of the history of ancient Israel) like nations of Africa and Africans, except Israelite themselves, the presence of Africa and Africans and their political, social, religious, military and economic contributions are either neglected or minimized. There is no nation or people on earth whose history and achievements have been attributed to other nations like that of Africa and Africans.

The purpose of this paper is to challenge the way the history of ancient Israel is written and taught in Africa, particularly in African higher institutions. Using a combination of the ancient Near Eastern and African historiographical methods, it is also my aim to attempt to suggest, and give examples of how the history of ancient Israel in the Old Testament can be reconstructed and taught Africentrically in African higher institutions instead of following the Eurocentric reconstruction verbatim. This process of reconstructing Africentric history of ancient Israel will involve the method of extension of the boundary of African history to include African Diaspora in ancient Israel. It is my hope that this will eventually grow to a textbook that will be used all over Africa and beyond.

Adamo, David Tuesday & Ademiluka, Solomon (Par. 14.2)

(Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria)

The Psalms as a Vehicle for Historiography

The history of interpretation of the book of Psalms is an interesting and long one. Traditionally, the book of Psalms was regarded as a book composed by individual persons as songs and prayers for the purpose of devotion and in response to particular event in life. The authorship of Psalms was determined by the use of the superscriptions. By the middle part of the 19th century historical critical scholars called into question Davidic authorship of the Psalm. The tendency is to date the book as late as possible. Form critical, “cult functional approaches,” rhetorical and canonical criticisms are good examples of approaches to the understanding of the Psalms. New Criticism, structuralism and deconstructionism were also applied to the Bible generally.

The purpose of this paper is not to rehearse these approaches above but to re-examine the book of Psalm and its use for historiography, that is, as source of historical data. Some specific passages in the book of Psalm such as 137, which presupposes an exile Jewish community in Babylon, Psalm 51, 74, 79, which recall the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonian warriors, and other passages will be examined. In the examination of these passages attempt will be made to answer some specific questions: (1) can literary craft describe historical personage and events? (2) How does one understand poetic and hymnal passages in the book of Psalms that describe historical events? (3) Do we consider that portion of the book of Psalm that recall actual event in the history of ancient Israel as “fictive imagination or “fictionalized history” or material for actual historical events? (4) Does the ideological progandistic and biased nature of the biblical material make it unfit for historical truth? (5) and lastly, does literary craft or concern for literary artistry by the biblical writers make biblical passages loose their historical viability?

Baloyi, M.E. (Ephraim) (Par. 1.1)

(Northwest University)

Genesis 1-11 as selective "historiography"

Anyone who is conversant on the debate as to whether or not the Hebrew Bible is historiography would know that the final word on the debate is not yet pronounced. The debate ranges from among others suggestions that the Hebrew Bible is a biased historiography through suggestions that the Biblical Adam and King David, for example, are mythological persons to suggestions that narratives in the Hebrew Bible do not necessarily reflect reality outside the text. All these suggestions have challenges. If narratives in the Hebrew Bible do not necessarily reflect reality outside the text, which narratives do and which ones do not? If the Biblical Adam and David are mythical persons, from who are the present Jews descended? If Hebrew Bible historiography is biased which historiography is not biased? This paper concedes that no answers to these questions could be conclusive, but that there are certain answers which are more probable than answers.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to suggest that the Hebrew Bible "historiography" (note that historiography is within quotations marks) is more probably a selective "historiography" rather than partiality, myth or creative writing. Genesis 1-11 which includes one of the debatable figures Adam is used as an example.

Baumann, Gerlinde (Par. 15.1)

(University of Marburg / University of Pretoria)

„Laziness“ in the Old Testament – and What It Can Teach Us

„Laziness“ in the OT is mostly a topic in wisdom literature. The way it is described differs from the Protestant ethos of laziness and also from present-time guidebooks. To be „lazy“ in the OT does not simply mean that a person does not work enough, but that someone does not work when work force is needed. In OT times, one can be „lazier“ in modern understanding without being considered „lazy“. We will have a closer look on the motif of laziness in Proverbs and the coordinates of the OT idea of laziness.

Boshoff, Willem (Par. 6.3)

(University of South Africa)

Taking control of nature: Royal centralizations of rural cults. A comparison of unrelated events

According to the Deuteronomists King Solomon erected a temple in Jerusalem that would be the centre of Israelite and Judahite religion for centuries afterwards. However, the presence and use of high places (bamot) in Israel and Judah are often criticized. Polemics against the high places indicate that they were associated with aspects of nature and fertility. A significant aspect of Israelite and Judahite religion history is the struggle for control of nature, in a conflict with Canaanite religion. Religious reforms by Hezekiah (726-697 BCE) and especially Josiah (604-609 BCE) in Judah, entailed the centralization of rural cults in the royal capital Jerusalem in order to eradicate all remnants of Canaanite Nature religion.

The religious dynamics in pre-exilic Israelite/Judahite religion can be compared to unrelated events in the Shashe-Limpopo Confluence Area (SLCA) in southern Africa. The area witnessed the development of stratified society between 980CE and 120CE. The separation of the royal family from the commoners was executed by shifting the royal living area from the heart of the community to a hilltop called Mapungubwe. In the process the pre-existing rain-making cultic centres scattered over the SLCA and situated on isolated hilltops seem to have been degraded and centralized on the royal hill of Mapungubwe. Excavations at some

of these rain-making sites suggest that while their role as royal cultic sites diminished they were not completely deserted. Material culture at the sites represents traits of the earlier material culture. It seems that the royal family officially took control of Nature, but that the traditional rural cult did not disappear completely.

Phenomenological aspects of the royal cults, the centralization of rural cults and the importance for kings to be seen to control Nature, will be compared and investigated, without losing perspective of the massive cultural and temporal divide between the two events.

Bosman, Hendrik (Par. 2.1)

(University of Stellenbosch)

A Nama “Exodus”? Assimilation and resistance according to a postcolonial reading of the diaries of Hendrik Witbooi

This study of Witbooi’s personal diaries indicates how he responded to colonial discursive practices by assimilation and resistance. The Exodus theme from the Bible was initially assimilated to mobilize the Witboois to relocate to a new territory and eventually used as a paradigm that resisted the colonizer by inciting an uprising against the German authorities.

The following brief biography provides the background against which this study took place: Hendrik Witbooi received his “Christian education” from the Rhenish missionary J Olpp from 1868 onwards and was renowned for his beautiful handwriting and fluent Dutch – be it with Afrikaans syntax! After a skirmish with Herero tribesmen in 1880 he claimed to have received a divine calling of messianic proportions, (“*The way has been opened... I have given you a difficult task...*”), that was interpreted as a command to lead the Witboois to a new land and a better lifestyle. In 1884 Witbooi and 200 followers embarked on a journey that would take them through Herero territory to their “promised” land. After several years of peaceful coexistence with the German colonial authorities a compatriot Stuurman Skipper proclaimed in 1904 that God wanted all whites to be driven from Africa and he influenced Witbooi to start an uprising against the colonial regime and the Boer farmers.

Botha, Phil J. (Par. 3.1)

(University of Pretoria)

Annotated History – The Implications of Reading Psalm 34 in Conjunction with 1 Samuel 21-24 and Vice Versa

In a late phase of redaction, some of the psalms in the first Davidic Psalter were supplied with headings which contain biographical references to David. One of these psalms is Psalm 34 which received the heading ‘*A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed*’ (verse 1). It has been shown that a connection was made between Ps 34 and 1 Sam 21-23 because the two contexts have certain keywords in common, and that these biographical headings constitute an invitation to the suppliant who reads the Psalter to ‘travel’ with David on a road of prayer that runs from difficulty to the experience of rescue by YHWH. The shared traits between Ps 34 and the account of David’s flight from Saul are investigated in detail in this paper and it is shown that 1 Sam 24 should be included in the comparison. The editorial effect of this link between David’s life and Ps 34 on the understanding of Ps 34 is discussed, and subsequently also the influence of reading Ps 34 in conjunction with this part of David’s history. The conclusion is reached that Ps 34 serves to characterize the figure of David as a normal human being who overcomes his fear through faith in YHWH and through upright conduct, so that he can take on the role of wisdom teacher and can serve as an example for fellow believers.

Coetzee, Johan (Par. 7.2)

(University of Johannesburg)

Psalm 104: A bodily interpretation of 'Yahweh's history'

Psalm 104 is one of the finest pieces of lyric poetry in the Old Testament, expressing the poet's emotions regarding 'Yahweh's history.' According to Israelite belief, creation was Yahweh's first act in history, the first fundamental deed setting the stage for Yahweh's involvement with his people. Yahweh's works and wonders in creation and his acts in the history of his people are often praised simultaneously. In this paper 'Yahweh's history,' as expressed in Psalm 104, will be examined from a bodily perspective.

Cook, Johann (Par. 12.1)

(University of Stellenbosch)

Interpreting the Septuagint: Exegesis, Theology and/or *Religionsgeschichte*?

The Septuagint has a complicated history of origin and transmission history. The various units in the LXX were translated in different contexts and times and subsequently transmitted. Individual books also exhibit divergent translation techniques. These issues must be taken into account by the hermeneut who plans to interpret this corpus. Scholars hold divergent views on the interpretation of the Septuagint. Some scholars (Pietersma and Sollamo) are of the opinion that it is not possible to find evidence of exegesis or a theology of the LXX too readily. Rösel and Schaper, to the contrary, have a maximalist approach, and have endeavoured to formulate "a theology" of the LXX. The differences between these approaches are clearly rooted in questions of methodology. Hence the following aspects will be addressed:

1. Clear definitions as to what is understood under the terms "exegesis, theology and *Religionsgeschichte*";
2. The complicated inception and transmission histories of the LXX;
3. The necessity of dealing with units individually (*an sich*);
4. The role of the translation technique followed by individual translators in the interpretation of the LXX;
5. The importance of a contextual-cultural approach towards this issue.
6. Sample texts from the more literally translated books (Pentateuch) and more freely rendered (Proverbs and Job) will be analysed.
7. Tentative suggestions as to the relevance of the LXX for OT historiography.

Cronjé, Fanie (Par. 8.1)

(Universiteit van Pretoria)

Kores Silinder en Deutero-Jesaja se "Herder, Messias": Implikasies vir lidmate in die kerkbank

Beide die Kores-silinder en Deutero-Jesaja verwys na Kores in terme wat dui op die guns / verkies deur God / die gode. In Deutero-Jesaja word hy onder meer "herder" en "messias" genoem. In die Kores-silinder word na Kores verwys as die gunsteling wat deur Marduk uitverkies is om hom in die jaarlikse prosessie te lei.

Binne die Ned Geref Kerk word hierdie verbande nie altyd in prediking of Bybelstudies / Bybelskole uitgelig nie. Dit kom dikwels nie eers as agtergrondinligting ter sprake nie.

Hierdie aanbieding wil poog om dié leemte aan die orde te stel. Daar gaan veral gefokus word op die implikasies van die verskil in perspektief tussen die Persiese en Judese skrywers op 'n bepaalde historiese gebeure, naamlik Kores se inname van Babel, vir ons multi-kulturele en multi-godsdiensige samelewings in Suid-Afrika.

Deysel, Lesley (Par. 11.1)

(University of Pretoria)

King lists and genealogies in the Hebrew Bible and in Southern Africa

Genealogies and king lists are important aspects of the oral historiography of various Southern African peoples. In the Hebrew Bible, we find written texts containing genealogies and king lists. This paper will look at king lists and genealogies in the Hebrew Bible and compare them in terms of historiographical style with similar lists in African oral tradition, concentrating especially on the Lemba people. Only one or two texts from each tradition will be focused upon. The texts' similarities to and differences from each other will be discussed, and possible reasons explored for any similarities that exist, including the possibility of feedback.

Fansaka Biniama, Bernard (Par. 2.2)

(Catholic Faculty of Kinshasa, DRC)

The translation as hermeneutic mark of dialogue between the Judaism and the African cultures. An exegetical analysis of Ex. 20:19

In the history of the translation of the bible's text they find in the biblical text emphasis, harmony between the text to be translated and the cultural demands of the new receiver this is not always bad. However, the study of all that is alive is subtitle. Life being essentially movement and spontaneity, bassoons in multiple and complex phenomena. Life of the word of god to be translated follows the same scheme. Liturgical translations, for examples often given without notes, neither further critic expose the text to some confusion, above all in case of a new translation. For our case, it is about the experience lived as the parish pried on liturgical translations where the adaptation to the new culture makes aside the flora the fauna and sometimes even Jewish traditions which h have revealed us the risks of textual and c ultra treacheries.

The medicine is in protecting the original element which is in Judaism. This research if jewfish influence in African biblical text is not yet a very conscious preoccupation of the translators (?) and above all of readers.

Thesis

1. The necessity of every one who translates the Bible to refer to Judaism as culture in which the law is revealed to Moses and to make then the translation as an hermeneutic step of long hermeneutical process which goes from SINAI in Ex 20, 19
2. In this way, the translation and interpretation claim a problem of the history of religions since in translating the Bible, they make two religions in position to **dialogue**: the Judaism and the A.T.R (African Tradition Religions) and so the cultures they bear. The **interdisciplinary dialogue** must liturgy. But in this contribution we limit at the **history of religions**.

How?

We will explain this **interdisciplinary dialogue between Judaism and African cultures** by the hermeneutic "straight back" of P. Ricoeur ("*detour*" herméneutique de P. Ricoeur). Starting from this "*straight back*", we can say that within a translation, the mosaic Toreh particularly, and generally the Bible is interpreted by the "straight back" of the new African culture in witch it's translated. Inversely, "the **translating community** interpreters herself in interpreting the treasure of "scripture". The Jewish people and its culture are also enriched. We will explore **Ex 20, 19 as translation of divine language (thunders) in the Jewish culture** thanks to the historico – critical method. From there paraphrasing the saying of St Augustin "*Novum Testamentum in vertere latef*", we affirm that "*Biblica Africana in Haebraica latef*".

Firth, David G. (Plen. 6)

(Cliff College, Calver, England)

David and Uriah with an Occasional Appearance by Uriah's Wife: Reading and Re-Reading 2 Samuel 11

Interpretation of 2 Samuel has been built around three points:

1. The primacy of the relationship between David and Bathsheba
2. Uriah dies in a cover up
3. The narrative is full of ambiguity

This paper explores the narrative from the perspective of the ambiguities employed, showing that the third point undermines the first two. This is achieved by drawing on Genette's theory of anachrony which emerges as an important historiographical feature in Samuel. The text is meant to be read and then re-read as each anachrony is encountered, thus coming to a clearer understanding of what is meant by the narrator's closing comment.

Gericke, Jaco (Par. 10.1)

(Northwest University)

What is history? Contemporary analytical philosophy of history and the metaphysical assumptions of ancient Israelite historiography

What is biblical history? What do we make of the fact that the term is nowhere encountered in ancient Israelite religious language? What are the metahistorical presuppositions taken for granted in biblical historiographies? In this paper some of the more interesting metaphysical and epistemological assumptions in ancient Israelite historiography are discussed from the perspective of recent developments in the philosophy of history. For though the Hebrew Bible is neither philosophy nor history (as we think of these) philosophers of history concern themselves not only with substantive or speculative approaches that focus on the actual past but also employ critical or analytical approaches primarily concerned with the ways in which human beings interpret, reconstruct and represent the past in the writing of historical narratives. Typical issues of interest include historical explanation, objectivity and evaluation, as well as narrative and interpretation – all of which are relevant to the congress theme. Additional philosophical concepts discussed in this paper include history and causality, transworld identity (identity across possible worlds and over time), the logic of belief-revision, magical realism, and the principle of sufficient reason. The objective is to demonstrate how philosophical perspectives on ancient Israelite historiography are able to discern subtleties in the texts that lie beyond the scope of traditional historical, social, anthropological, literary and theological approaches to the issues.

Gitay, Tzefira (Par. 5.3)

(Yizrael Valley College, Israel)

Orality and the Arts

The word, the voice of the speaker, the narrator is a powerful means in the Biblical literature and Biblical historiography as well. Nevertheless, the major question regarding the visual artists is to translate the word into the visual imageries. One can illustrate the scenes, the battles but the speeches?

As a result, the artists use a number of techniques in order to transform the words into the visual image. A well known technique includes the word itself within the frame of the visual imageries including copying the words themselves or creating visual scenes based on the

textual material transformed into artistic compositions.

This paper demonstrates the problems and the artistic solutions through a variety of artistic examples that use the visual language to integrate the spoken-written messages within the frame of the visual image in order to illustrate more profoundly the spoken message.

Gitay, Yehoshua (Par. 5.2)

(Free State University & Stellenbosch University)

Orality and the Biblical literature

There is an ample discussion on orality in the realm of Biblical literature and Biblical Historiography as well.

Nevertheless, the matter is revolved around the nature of the text, that is, Biblical poetics. Thus, the important distinction which characterizes the modern period (since the invention of the print) is confusing in terms of the ancient literature. Here, in the period of Antiquity, the rules are strict and they determine the nature of the writing, the presentation and the perception.

Orality is a dramatic presentation which elaborates on the human perception rather than on a logic and coherent order of the events. Hence, biblical historiography has

One major function: to justify God's deeds through a coherent sequence of events. However, it can not function given the matter of perception and memorization. Hence, it requires another literary medium: the oral presentation which is a familiar and intimate medium.

This paper seeks to clarify the two distinguished literary media and to demonstrate their distinct but mutual function regarding the presentation of Biblical historiography.

Human, Dirk (Par. 7.3)

(University of Pretoria)

Wisdom motifs in Book V: How the Psalter contributes to the ethics of the Torah

A selection of so-called Wisdom Psalms and psalms with wisdom motifs of Book V (107-150) of the Psalter will be analysed to see how these motifs function in the theology of their micro and macro contexts. The relationship between the wisdom traditions and the Torah in Book V of the Psalter would outline/concretise examples of Torah-ethical thinking envisaged in Psalm 1.

Jeremias, Jörg (Plen. 1)

(University of Marburg / Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, München, Germany)

The wrath of YHWH in Israel's historiography

Though rarely investigated, the "wrath of YHWH" is one of the central elements (oder besser: categories?) of dtr historiography. The terminology of "wrath of YHWH" is helpful for the research as well in dtr theology as in the way dtr redactors were handling their given material, because it is restricted (with very few exceptions) to redactional use. Yet, there is a remarkable tension. On the one hand, the dtr redactors favor formulaic speech to urge their readers to relate different texts and periods to each other. On the other hand, these redactors are using three completely different concepts of "wrath of YHWH" which they differentiate carefully. The paper will focus on these concepts and try to understand them.

One result of the investigation is: Dtr theology forces its received material much less than often supposed.

Jonker, Louis (Par. 13.2)

(University of Stellenbosch)

Solomon in an international arena: The significance of the King of Peace for Yehud in the Persian era

It has become customary to emphasize the influence of Greek historiography on the Books of Chronicles. Knoppers (2003), for example, has argued that one should not underestimate the influence of classical Greek writers on the Chronicler. Although he argues his point from the genealogical analogies between the first part of Chronicles and classical writers, he convincingly shows that one could imagine Greek influence in biblical writings far earlier than the enigmatic date of 332 BCE which is normally seen as a threshold for Greek influence on Judah. Traditional scholarship tended to interpret Chronicles exclusively within the cultic-religious conditions of the late-Persian / early Hellenistic province of Yehud – the Jerusalem community, in particular. With the acknowledgement of a wider sphere of influence during this time, it would make sense, however, to interpret the Books of Chronicles against the background of the international arena of the time. This paper will therefore attempt to show that our understanding of King Solomon, the King of Peace, can be enriched when we view his portrayal in Chronicles within the international arena of the late post-exilic era. The theme of peace, so closely related to Solomon, will be examined against the background of the relationship between Greece and Persia.

Kitoko-Nsiku, Edouard (Par. 1.2)

(United Bible Societies/ Universidade Eduardo Mondlane)

Was Cheikh Anta Diop¹ wrong? Daring to revisit Genesis 1-11 from Oral, Written and Historical Perspectives of Ancient Near Eastern, Mediterranean and African People

As time goes, more and more biblical scholars feel the need of resorting to historiography. As an intellectual tool; they refer to it to draw some new energy and ways enabling them to grasp with some sense of exactitude and confidence the complexity of the Old Testament texts' ideas. However, once related to the study of the Old Testament texts, historiography is also intrinsically related to oral tradition, written and cultural resources of Ancient Near Eastern, Mediterranean and African people.

This paper seeks to suggest some mechanisms which shall lead the scholars to rediscover one of the possible ways of interpreting the Old Testament as exposed by an African historiographer, Cheikh Anta Diop. Taking into account the fact that the writings of the Old Testament include 'image and text', the paper will be based on Genesis 1-11. These eleven chapters will be used as a framework which displays a mixing of oral culture, history and written sources of Ancient Near Eastern, Mediterranean and African people. Finally, the pertinence of the paper aims at two major points: the reconstruction of the true identity of African exegete and the use of African oral, written and cultural resources considering the historical, exegetical and above all hermeneutical crisis of our times.

¹ Cheikh Anta Diop was born in Senegal in December 1923 and died of a heart attack in February 1986. His entire life was devoted to scholarship and retrieving ancient Egyptian history as an intrinsic part of Black African history. He was a lone voice in a sea of opposition. His early education was at Muslim schools and he obtained the baccalaureat in Senegal before going to Paris to study mathematics. While at the Sorbonne, Diop also took courses in sociology, anthropology, ancient history, prehistory and linguistics under French scholars Andre Aymard, Gaston Bachelard, Andre Leroi-Gourhan, Marcel Griaule and Lille Homburger. Diop also studied hieroglyphics, Egyptology and nuclear physics. In 1966, at the world festival of Black arts in Senegal, Diop, along with W.E.B. DuBois, was voted the most influential scholar of the 20th century on the black world.

Klopper, Frances (Plen.4)

(Free State University)

**'Feminist historians recreate women in Ancient Israel in their own image.'
Social location as a way of exposing the myth of objective biblical history.**

Histories of women in ancient Israel are often coloured with objective certainty and become influential research resources. This paper argues that some of these histories tell us as much about the historian as they do about the subjects of inquiry. The reason being that authors as readers cannot avoid approaching the text from their social location which in turn determines their presuppositions and the way they view reality. A publication on nineteenth century women writing on women in Genesis (*Let Her Speak for Herself*, 2006. Edited by M. A. Taylor & H. E. Weir) serves as an example. From the way the stories of the various biblical woman characters are reconstructed, the historical and cultural contexts of the nineteenth century authors can effortlessly be pinpointed. The objective of my paper is to once again come to terms with the tentative nature of biblical historical inquiry and the consequences of reading the ancient texts without heeding its historical situatedness.

Krüger, Paul (PP) (Par. 6.1)

(Northwest University)

Recapitulating history: A closer look at deuteronomistic passages claiming to be a review of past events

The deuteronomist carefully judges the present, sometimes ponders about the future, but often takes his stance in Israel's past. One of the outstanding characteristics of the so-called Deuteronomistic History is the recollection of Israel's history at important junctures. These flashbacks may constitute major speeches or minor remarks, usually uttered by major characters in the narrative. They serve some rhetorical purpose, both in the context of the unfolding narrative and in the life setting of the initial addressees. The paper takes a closer look at the content of these revisions of Israel's history, as well as their textual and probable real life contexts. Provisional conclusions are drawn when comparing these passages.

Le Roux, Jurie (Par. 5.1)

(University of Pretoria)

To dream the impossible dream

We all employ the term 'oral' but often it is used in a very vague and general way. It refers roughly to a period before parts of the Pentateuch or Old Testament were written down but it seldom serves as a method or as a way of understanding the Pentateuch. Nowadays it has also become merely impossible to isolate and describe an oral tradition. We are too aware of all the problems attached to such an undertaking.

There was, however, a time when the oral phase of the Pentateuch really mattered and the artistic understanding of sagas was a prerequisite for the understanding of the Old Testament text (cf Gunkel). To penetrate the earliest history of Israel a scholar with a feeling for the artistic and a creative mind was required. This is all gone now but why was there such a phase in the history of Old Testament scholarship? And what were the consequences for our understanding of the Old Testament?

Le Roux, Magdel (Par. 11.2)

(UNISA)

The *ngoma lungundu*: an African ‘Ark of the Covenant’

The Lemba in Southern Africa are a very specific group with unique traditions regarding Israelite origins. Their oral traditions also contain significant information on the leading role which their priestly family played on their journey from the North into the Arabian Peninsula and eventually to Africa. They blazed their trail southwards into Africa as traders, with the *ngoma lungundu* (‘the drum which thunders’) playing a very similar role to that of the Ark of the Covenant. This study shows how the Lemba have constructed their own set of beliefs around Biblical myths in the context of marginalisation among other African communities. Their oral culture is constitutive of their world-view and self-understanding or identity. It incorporates the role of oral traditions, history and historiography. One could draw parallels between orality in early Israelite and African religions. The reciprocity between orality and inscription of traditions yields valuable information regarding the possible development of traditions in ancient Israel.

Levin, Christoph (Plen. 3)

(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München)

Israel and Canaan. The Origin of a Fictitious Antagonism

“Israel’s national self-consciousness ... is mainly based on the conviction of not being autochthonous in Palestine and of being completely different from the peoples living there, as well as from the other ancient civilizations” (Albrecht Alt). The ethnic and religious antagonism between the people of God and the inhabitants of the land has long been viewed as fundamental for understanding the distinctiveness of Israel and of its history. More recently, however, the evidence suggests that this concept of history is not the original one. The archaeology of the settlement raises the question of whether there was ever a “conquest” at all. It seems increasingly likely that Israel never entered the land as such but instead arose from the autochthonous population already present there.

Analogously, the literary sources for the monarchic period, as preserved within the Old Testament, presuppose that the people of Israel emerged from the entire population of the land.

Indeed, the concept of a settlement seems to presuppose the experience of the loss of the land as well and/or the resettlement of the Jewish diaspora in Palestine. Consequently the record of history as modelled by the redactors tells us that during Israel’s settlement, Yahweh had expelled or submitted all the peoples living there to the ban. Only later revision changes this outline. According to this newer concept, the conquest remained incomplete, so that Israel instead had to share the land with the Canaanites. Consequently, mixed marriages and the service to other Gods became a problem.

The present paper argues that the concept of an ethnically mixed population originates with the Yahwistic redaction of the patriarchal narratives. This redaction reflects the situation of the Jewish diaspora, mainly in Babylonia. Then, as the Yahwist’s history and the Deuteronomistic history merged within the later Enneateuch, it became necessary to correct the concept of the settlement. An important link between the two histories is found at Judg 2:1-5. Further texts relating to the problem are Exod 23:32-33; Exod 34:12-16; Deut 7:1-6; Josh 13:1-6*; Josh 23; Judg 2:20 – 3:6.

Lier, Gudrun E (Par. 4.1)

(University of Johannesburg)

Who was Ezra? – A Critical Overview

The person of Ezra has been reviewed by historians and theologians. Most researchers are of the opinion that doubts about Ezra's historicity are out of place. The famous leader is connected with Israel's return in 458 B.C.E. and/or 397 B.C.E. Notwithstanding; there is still no consensus on the identity of Ezra. This can be attributed to the fact that historical and theological views about Ezra continue to exist alongside each other. Historians admit that the Ezra-Nehemiah tradition exaggerates Ezra's influence and achievement by glorifying him as being the re-founder of the Jewish community and the rehabilitator of the Jewish faith. Theologians see in the account of Ezra's journey a highly theological interpretation of the events relating to the reforms carried out in Judah and Jerusalem. The purpose of this paper is to review what scholars have written about Ezra from both a historical and theological perspective, to integrate the different perspectives and to review who the person of Ezra is in the light of this integrated approach.

Lübbe, John (Par. 12.2)

(UNISA)

The importance of Hebrew syntax in the reading of Old Testament texts

In the field of Bible translation, Robert Longacre argued that translators should recognize the characteristics of ancient story telling. He proceeded to apply his theory to the story of Joseph. Everett Fox was one who argued that much of the Hebrew nature of the Old Testament is disregarded when translating dynamically, and that recognition of the Hebrew features in a text would enhance our understanding of the content and therefore the significance of these stories.

But how seriously should students of ancient Israelite history take such detailed syntactic analyses of the Hebrew text? Is it at all important to understand how the ancient writer emphasised any aspect in his account of tribal or national history? Is the structure of Hebrew narrative at all instructive in understanding ancient historiography, or were the ancient Israelite story tellers different from the ancient Israelite historiographers?

Mavinga, Joseph N. (Par. 8.2)

(UKZN)

The historiography of Jeremiah's book: A twofold aspect applied to the royal oracle (23:1-8; 33:14-26)

Historiography in the Hebrew Bible gives proof of editors who revised the book of Jeremiah as we have it. The Greek version of Jeremiah's earlier edition is shorter than the MT-Jeremiah. It means that both versions of Jeremiah (MT and LXX) are taken as being composed of different Hebrew manuscripts. It explains the different lengths of both versions of Jeremiah. The aim I attempt to achieve in this paper is to demonstrate that the twofold aspects of the historiography on Jeremiah's book could be understood as 'two sides of the same coin' in interpreting Jeremiah's texts, particularly, the royal oracle in 23:1-8. In so doing, I use a synchronic approach and focus on the Masoretic Text to understand both units, 23:1-8 and 33:14-26. This will be done in three related stages. First, I point out the two aspects of historiography of Jeremiah's book. Second, I show the link between both aspects, especially, on the first royal oracle related to the unit in 33:14-26 lacking in LXX-Jeremiah. Finally, I spell out the significance of the understanding of this oracle in the current Congolese leadership.

Deconstruction of Violence in the Daniel tales of Children's Bibles

Deconstruction is sometimes confused with an action with the intent to destroy, a negative approach to texts. But deconstruction does not stop with destroying relations within a text; it is concerned with exposing the role(s) power plays within the text and within the system(s) exemplified by the text. The result is that deconstruction can never be a value-free or relativistic approach but always a process driven by the values of respect and equality in all relationships between people. It follows naturally from a discontent with all abuse of power and a passion for empowering the marginalized. A theology of deconstruction is always involved socially and ethically in the community of the day. It always reads between the lines of all texts, whether written or defined by unwritten customs and habits, and does not accept the messages created by the influential as the truth without investigating its effect on the powerless. As a theology it tries to avoid being caught in the discourses of the majority and populism. Violence is a given within the Daniel tales. In this article the violence as portrayed in Children's Bibles is investigated in order to ascertain what the messages are that children receive when listening to these tales. A proposal is made for deconstructing such violence to contribute towards a society where violence is not accepted as part of daily life.

“Who moved the tower?!” Genesis 11:1–9 as and the dating of P – it could only have been a late-Exilic theologian

Since Wellhausen postulated the documentary hypothesis of the formation of the *Tôrâh*, the debate has raged as to who wrote and/or edited what when. While the work of the Priestly editors was dated to the Exile, more recent scholars have dated it to the post-Exilic (e.g. Van Seters) or Persian (e.g. Levin) periods. While some have questioned whether the formation of the Pentateuch is a worthwhile pursuit (e.g. Childs), to understand the history you must understand the historian (Brettler).

A reading of the first eleven chapters of Genesis leaves one with the sense that the story of the Tower of Babel is out of place, an anomaly noted by Calvin.

In this paper I argue that the story of Babel was included in the pre-historical narrative by Exilic *Yahwist* writers, as a building-block in their prologue. Priestly redactors, wanting the returning exiles to rebuild society on correct worship and cultic observance, added their worship and holiness traditions into the *Yahwist* story. However, believing that correct worship required an appropriate Temple rebuilt according to divine blueprints, (and aware that the only temples seen by the returnees were the impressive ziggurats of Babylonia), the story was moved out of its original position in order to bring it to the attention of the reader.

The only time in Israel's history that such a warning was appropriate was between the Edict of Cyrus (538BCE) and the start of the reconstruction of the Temple (520BCE). Thus the *Tôrâh* was completed by 520BCE.

Prinsloo, Gert T M (14.1)

(University of Pretoria)

Voices from the margins: the (re)application and (re)interpretation of Israel's historical traditions in Psalms 135-136 in the context of Book V of the Psalter

The paper investigates Psalms 135-136 on different levels as a (re)application and (re)interpretation of Israel's historical traditions. The two poems are analysed as 'twin' psalms and their function in their immediate context and the broader context of Book V of the Psalter is discussed. Their specific application and interpretation of Israel's historical traditions are analysed with reference to the so-called 'historical' psalms conspicuously present in Books IV and V of the Psalter (cf. Psalms 105, 106, 107, 108, 135, 136). It is argued that Psalms 135-136 represent the voices of a marginalised Levitical group excluded from the temple service by the priestly aristocracy during the later Persian period.

Schäder, Jo-Marí (Par. 3.2)

(University of Pretoria)

Historical references in some non-historical Psalms? Biblical historiography versus modern historiography

After the Enlightenment humankind developed a positivist world-view, which differed greatly from the Biblical world-view, especially regarding humankind's perception of what history is and what could be historically possible. Unfortunately, biblical scholars do not so often keep this difference between biblical and modern historiography in mind when approaching a text. Since the Enlightenment Psalms have been interpreted historically, eschatologically or messianically, or cultically. In this paper Psalms 46-48 will be used as an example of how mythological and eschatological language is not necessarily characteristic of fiction but that it could refer to traditions that precede its written form. It will also be pointed out how the dating of these Psalms is detrimental to their meaning and that they can acquire various meanings depending on their supposed *Sitz im Lebens* and datings. It will become clear that the traditional interpretations of the Psalms typify them according to modern categories of what history and history writing is.

Seidl, Theodor (Plen. 5)

(University of Würzburg, Germany)

Carchemish in the Near Eastern Historiography and in the Old Testament

After a short introduction about the importance of the North Syrian city of Carchemish in the history of the 3rd, 2nd and 1st millennium BC the paper deals with all three references to Carchemish in the Old Testament; it enters into the question how the historical events of the 1st millennium were expressed in the respective biblical texts:

1. Isa 10:5–14 might reflect the Neoassyrian expansion to the West during the 8th century. At first, the Assyrian king serves as a tool in the hand of YHWH against Judah and Jerusalem, "the godless nation". Later Assur becomes the object of divine wrath due to its arrogance and pride, perhaps a reflex on the decline of Assur in the 7th century.
2. In Jer 46:2–12, the first foreign oracle against Egypt, Carchemish is mentioned as the location of the famous battle of 605. The total defeat of Egypt is interpreted as YHWH's vengeance upon his enemies and as a "sacrifice by the river Euphrates".
3. The late reference of Carchemish in 2 Chr 35:20–25 mixes up the first and the second campaign of Pharaoh Necho II against the Neobabylonians in 609 and 605. This text

presents a religious aetiology of the death of King Josiah in the battle of Megiddo in 609: He died because of his disobedience against God's word.

Methodical reflexions will finally top off the paper, namely how Old Testament texts use and preserve historical dates and facts on the one side, but how they transform these facts according to their specific theological intentions on the other side. This particular issue will be explored by means of Carchemish and its attestations within Near Eastern and Old Testament texts.

Snyman, Gerrie (Par. 6.2)

(UNISA)

David and Shimei: innocent victim and perpetrator?

The paper intend to explore the question whether Shimei is the perpetrator and David the victim of his vitriol or whether Shimei is the innocent victim of David's grip to the throne. Shimei could very well be the underdog, suffering under the abuse of power. Shimei's abuse towards David challenged the power of the throne. He is removed from society in the end, despite David's mask of forgiveness. However, in as much as the story portrays him as a perpetrator, his fate serves as an example of what happens to perpetrators. He dies either as a perpetrator who challenged David's power or as an innocent victim of David's absolute claim to power, and killing any Saulide adversary. The story of David and Shimei is a play between innocence and perpetration, a theme that plays out in a real drama in South Africa when it comes to reconciliation and redress.

Steenkamp, Yolande (Par. 7.1)

(University of Zululand)

Past reinvented: the use of Israelite narratives of origin in the literary strategy of the historical Psalm 106

'We have erred, just like our ancestors. We have sinned, and we have done wrong' (Ps 106:6). So declares the psalmist before he assumes his retelling of the Israelite myths of origin. The psalmist recalls eight episodes from Israel's history, so as to illustrate just how the ancestors have rebelled against Yahweh. Times when they deserved destruction, but received mercy. Times when Yahweh acted fiercely and swiftly against these dissenters. In the end, throughout their history, the mercy of Yahweh, his $\square\square\square$, has prevailed. On these grounds, so goes the prayer, Yahweh is implored to save them, the 'us', just as he had done with their ancestors. The paper argues, however, that identification of the psalmist and his community with the sinful ancestors must not be taken at face value. It suggests that, instead of bringing a community to a confession of sin, it brings a community to a sense of identity: 'us' against 'them'. The ancestors of old have new faces: those from a contemporary group that is seen by the psalmist community as the sinful who bring God's wrath upon the nation. The psalmist community, in turn, has taken on ancient faces: those of the faithful servants from the past who interceded on behalf of the 'them'. Pointing to questions that arise when this Psalm is read, a case is also made for a multidimensional approach to the exegesis of historical texts.

Stipp, Hermann-Josef (Plen. 7)

(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München, Germany)

The Concept of the Empty Land in Jer 43

There are several passages in the Hebrew Bible which propagate the idea that during the time of the exile Judah was totally bereft of Judeans. The most well-known testimony to the

so-called “myth of the empty land” is 2 Chron 36:20-21. On the strength of that witness, many scholars hold that the idea of Judah’s depopulation was an ideological tool created by returnees from the deportation with the goal to enforce claims to the land against non-exiles. By implication, then, this concept could only have originated after the exile, and it represents an example of how the notions of Israel’s history were retrospectively manipulated under the guidance of interests typical of later periods. In contrast to this widely-held view, the paper offers an analysis of Jer 43 and its context, indicating that the concept of the empty land already emerged much earlier during the exilic era. Therefore, the search for the motives behind the idea must be reopened.

Usue, Emmanuel O. (Par. 4.2)

(University of Pretoria and Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria)

Ezra and Nehemiah historiographical traditions: an overview

This paper overviews selected historiographical traditions on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah that have formed part of the major concerns of scholarly investigation from the last twenty years. The subject matters include date and authorship, the relationship between 1 and 2 Chronicles to Ezra and Nehemiah, the composition and chronology of Ezra and Nehemiah, Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, the book of the Law, the ownership of the land of Judah, the political status of the state of Judah and the theology of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Van Deventer, HJM (Hans) (Par. 10.2)

(Northwest University – Vaaldriehoek Campus)

Did someone say “history”? In Africa we say “His story”!

Scholars on African soil who conduct their research from a consistent historical perspective probably will be quite comfortable with the idea that in the African context it seems as if the *Aufklärung* was missed. Indeed, the historical study of the Bible has created a huge gap between academic readers of the Bible and those who have not gone through the catharsis of viewing the Bible as a text that can only be understood by applying sound historical method(s). However, not one of the groups seems to take the results of a consistent literary approach to the text very serious. Without muddling the clearer waters that the purification systems of multi-dimensionality and inclusivity have provided, this paper proposes that a consistent literary approach to the text is a better model for understanding the Old Testament in an African context. This proposal will be motivated by considering the effect of introducing literature to (oral) communities and how this reflects in reading the Bible – even in academic settings. The paper also reconsiders the prospects a literary approach to the text hold in this context.

Van Heerden, Willie (Par. 13.1)

(UNISA)

Retelling history in the Old Testament: The case of the books of Chronicles

This paper explores the way the past was remembered and retold in the Old Testament. The first part of the paper will consist of a brief overview of examples that exemplify this phenomenon, for example psalms of historical recital (Ps 44, 78, 105, 106, 136), prophetic texts (Ezekiel 20, etc.), and the books Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. The second part of the paper focuses on the books of Chronicles, which exemplify the process of retelling history, especially in their relation to the books of Samuel-Kings. The retelling of history in the books of Chronicles has been described by scholars in terms of poor history-writing, historical narrative, interpretation of older traditions, reforming history, etc. An attempt is made to apply

narrative therapeutic concepts such as "restorying" and "thickening the story" to the books of Chronicles in an effort to provide a fresh angle from which the phenomenon of the retelling of history in the Old Testament could be explored.

Van Rooy, HF (Par. 14.3)

(Northwest University – Potchefstroom Campus)

Reading the Psalms historically. Antiochene exegesis and a historical reading of the Psalms

In Antiochene exegesis, especially in the commentaries on the Psalms by Diodore and Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Psalms were read historically. The commentators reconstructed a historical context for each Psalm and then interpreted the whole psalm against that historical context. This paper will present a discussion of Antiochene exegesis of the Psalter in general. This will be followed by a discussion of the interpretation of Psalm 46 by Diodore and Theodore, as well as the later interpretation of that Psalm in the commentary of Ishodad of Merv. These interpretations will then be evaluated against the background of the events in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

Venter, Philip (Par. 9.1)

History or His Story? Ideology of the Body in the First Creation Narrative

The creation narrative in Genesis 1:1-2:4a represents a discourse category that performs more than being an isolated indication of identity. Firmly rooted in the historical traditions of exilic and post-exilic Israel, it strives to inform, reform and transform politically and ideologically the regulatory body of those who regard this text as normative. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the category of gender as it features in the ideology of the body that infuses this history of origins. The focus will be on the creator God, Elohim, because it was precisely this hierarchical highest point of value and power that was threatened by the circumstances in which the community that gave birth to Genesis 1 found itself. The polemic rhetoric of Genesis 1 performs the personification of a creator god in order to counteract the god constructs in the dominant discourses of other cultures, with whom Israel now came into close contact. The purpose was to restore stability and solidarity in a community in which its ultimate values that constituted its very existence were challenged. A body critical analysis, guided by the philosophical departure point termed "embodied realism", in which it is recognised that our common capacity for metaphorical thought arises from the neural projections from the sensory and motor parts of our brain to higher cortical regions responsible for abstract thought, and guided by evolutionary epistemology, reveals Elohim as the perfect role model, a role model that is in its maleness a virtually perfect image of the intelligent and virile priest. Genesis 1 is **his story**, not history.