



# Centre for Biblical Interpretation and Translation in Africa

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## Annual Report: 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2018

### 1. Introduction: Focal points in the light of the Centre's aims

The Centre's activities in 2018 were focused especially on the following:

- The next translation of the Bible into Afrikaans; and
- The development of more effective teaching programmes for Biblical Hebrew and their integration into modules in OT.

The Mission Statement and Aims of the Centre that direct its activities may be read on: [http://www.cebita.org/About\\_Profile.htm](http://www.cebita.org/About_Profile.htm).

### 2. Staff

The Centre has no permanent staff members.

Management Committee:

Prof. CHJ van der Merwe acted as director in 2018.

Prof. I Cornelius acted as chair of the Management Committee, on which Professor AE Feinauer represented the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; Professors LC Jonker, J Punt and MJ Nel represented the Faculty of Theology, and Professors I Cornelius, CHJ van der Merwe, PR Bosman and Johanna Steyn represented the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Dr Masenyani Baloyi represented the Bible Society of South Africa. Dr NS Cezula functioned as co-opted member.

Collaborators:

Staff members of the Departments of Ancient Studies and of the Old and New Testament who are engaged in related research serve as collaborators in the Centre, as do Professors Extraordinary etc. who are associated with these two Departments.

### 3. Research output and PhD projects

The following articles and chapters in books directly related to Bible translation and

interpretation were published in 2018 by members of CEBITA, or by some of their students or collaborators:

- BIVIN, WE. Building Spaces: Reevaluating the Particle **בא**. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 2018; **44**(2):1-21.
- CEZULA, NS. 2018. The Concept of 'the Holy Seed' as a Coping Strategy in Ezra-Nehemiah. *Acta Theologica* 2018; **38**(1):15-36.
- CEZULA, NS. ... Then Towards the Rebuilding of Our Societies Now in Ruins. In: *Religion and Social Reconstruction in Africa Studies in World Christianity and Interreligious Relations*. Edited by Elias Kifon Bongmba. 2018; Taylor & Francis Inc, 171-182.
- COOK J. Recent Developments in Septuagint Research. *HTS Theological Studies/ Teologiese Studies* 2018; **74**(3):5002, 8 pages.
- JONKER, LC. Chronicles in an (Un)changing World: The 'Persian Context' in Biblical Studies. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 2018; **42**(3): 267-283.
- JONKER, LC. Anything new under the sun?! Exploring further avenues for writing another commentary on Chronicles. *Acta Theologica Supplement* 2018; **26**: 327-350.
- JONKER, LC. Further Interrogation of the Comparative Paradigm in African Biblical Scholarship: Towards an Analogical Hermeneutics for Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa. In: *Reading Writing Right. Essays Presented in Honour of Prof. Elna Mouton*. Edited by Jeremy Punt and Marius J. Nel. 2018; Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 73–97.
- NEL, MJ 2018. The pathos of New Testament interpretation: reproof and reconciliation in Matthew 18:15-20. In: *Reading Writing Right. Essays Presented in Honour of Prof. Elna Mouton*. Edited by Jeremy Punt and Marius J. Nel. 2018; Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 217-234.
- PUNT, J. Postcolonial perspectives on religion and nation, and its relevance for biblical studies? *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* 2018; **35**(1): 64-81.
- PUNT, J. Gender studies and biblical interpretation in Southern Africa: (How) Does theory and method matter? *African Journal of Gender and Religion* 2018; **24**(2): 68-94. <http://epubs.ac.za/index.php/AJGR>
- PUNT, J. Paul the Jew, power of evil and Rome. *Scriptura* 2018; **117**: 1-17. doi :<https://doi.org/10.7833/117-1-1389>
- PUNT, J. 2018. Plotting Pauline travels in an imperial setting. In: *Reading Writing Right. Essays presented in honour of Prof. Elna Mouton*. Edited by Jeremy Punt and Marius J. Nel. 2018; Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 273–289.
- PUNT, J. 2018. Postcolonial biblical criticism and queer studies. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*. Edited by RS Sugirtharajah. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190888459.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190888459-e-8>.

- STEIN DES. Cognitive Factors as a Key to Plain-Sense Biblical Interpretation: Resolving Cruxes in Gen 18:1-15 and 32:23-33. *Cognitive Linguistics* 2018; **4**:545-589.
- VAN DER MERWE, CHJ. The Polysemous Relationships between the Senses of the Verbal Root **קָרַן**. *Biblica* 2018; **99**(3):311-333.
- WENDLAND, E. A Discourse Structural Overview of the Prophecy of Micah. *The Bible Translator* 2018; 69(2):277-293.
- WENDLAND, E. How Wide are 'The Gates of Zion?' - A Textual, Translational, and Performative Study of Psalm 87. *Oral History Journal of South Africa* 2017; **5**(2):#4000, 17 pages.
- WESTBURY JR and WERESZCZYNSKI AM. Towards a Complex Analysis of *WAYHÍ* + T Constructions in Biblical Hebrew. *Asian and African Studies [Bratislava]* 2018; **27**(1):50-80.

5 PhD projects that have direct implications for Bible interpretation and translation were completed:

- AMEVENKU, M (Supervisor: J Punt) The reinterpretation of the law in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount: exploring its contextual interpretation among the Ewes of Ghana (April 2019)
- BURRELL, KO (Supervisor: LC Jonker) 'From Beyond the Rivers of Cush': Negotiating Ethnic Identity and Cushite-Israelite Interrelations in the Hebrew Bible
- SINDO, V (Supervisor: J Punt) The interrelationship between leadership and identity formation in the Corinthian correspondence: A study of 1 Corinthians 1-4 (Dec 2018)
- SLABBERT, SJP (Supervisor: LC Jonker; Co-supervisor: J Punt) Μαράνα θά as a Hermeneutical Key to (Re-)interpret the Imprecatory Psalms
- SMUTS, R (Supervisor: J Punt) Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42): A paradigmatic encounter for discipleship (μαθητής) and witness (μαρτυρία) (April 2019)

#### **4. New Afrikaans Bible translation**

The editorial committee for this translation, on which Prof. van der Merwe also serves, met four times during 2018 (6 day-sessions)

During 2018 the feedback from religious readers on the Old Testament was scrutinised. After that a number of checks for consistency were carried out. The purpose of these checks was to ensure that expressions with the same meaning in the same kinds of contexts were always translated in the same way in each case. This was a time-consuming process, as it was always necessary to take into account the fact that the conceptual worlds of the people associated with the different biblical books could have changed over the course of time. In some cases this required systematic investigations of particular expressions. See van der Merwe, The Polysemous Relationships between the Senses of the Verbal Root **קָרַן**. *Biblica* 2018; **99**(3):311-333.

The project will be "signed off" on 30 June 2019 and the Bible Society envisages launching the entire Bible on 30 November 2020.

There is an agreement in place with the editorial board of *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* to devote an entire issue to this translation project in 2020. Prof. Herrie van Rooy, Emeritus Professor from North-West University, and Prof. CHJ van der Merwe will act as guest editors.

## **5. Bible translation agencies and the Centre**

Dr Reinier de Blois from the UBS (United Bible Societies) was appointed Associate Professor Extraordinaire in the Department of Ancient Studies in 2018.

In December 2018 Dr de Blois was appointed Director of the Nida Institute, located in Philadelphia, USA. The Nida Institute is the translation division of the American Bible Society. Dr de Blois's appointment to this influential position could have far-reaching consequences for the Centre.

Dr de Blois has already indicated that Stellenbosch is one of the institutions that the American Bible Society wants to use to train its translators and consultants.

## **6. Teaching the biblical languages and greater integration of contents with modules in Old and New Testament studies**

In 2018 Professors Jonker (OT) and van der Merwe (Biblical Hebrew) to a large extent succeeded in coordinating OT 213 and BH 214 with one another. This certainly contributed towards an improvement in the through-flow rates of Biblical Hebrew BH 214 as well as BH 244.

One of the mechanisms utilised for this purpose is to link all the relevant information and topics for discussion as hypertext to the prescribed electronic library, Logos. This "enriched" Hebrew text is then stored in cyberspace and made accessible to both Biblical Hebrew students as well as to colleagues in the Department of Old and New Testament.

An additional long-term aim in the preparation of these "enriched" Hebrew texts, which represent a kind of hybrid learning, is that they could be used for short courses in Biblical Hebrew for second-career theology students.

## **7. Finances**

The Centre's short-term finances are sound. The details appear in the financial statement for 2018. The report is attached.

## 8. Acknowledgements

The Centre wishes to thank the Management Committee and the Executive Committee for their support.



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Chair: Management Committee



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Prof. CHJ van der Merwe  
Director