



Centre for
Biblical
Interpretation
and
Translation
in Africa

Department of Ancient Studies
and

Department of Old and New
Testament

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Annual Report: 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2012

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

In 2012 the activities in the Centre – over and above those devoted to its normal research projects, which will be dealt with later in the report – focused especially on the following:

- The next translation of the Bible into Afrikaans;
- Presentation of Short Course 3350 in Nairobi;
- Strengthening UBS links.

The Mission Statement and Aims of the Centre that direct these activities may be read on: http://www.cebita.org/About_Profile.htm.

2. Staff

The Centre has no permanent staff members.

Management Committee:

In 2012 Prof. CHJ van der Merwe was responsible for the Bible Translation component, Prof. LC Jonker for the Biblical Interpretation component and Prof. J Punt for the Communication and Appropriation component. Prof. CHJ van der Merwe will act as the Director of the Centre for the period 201-2012.

Prof. HL Bosman acted as chairperson of the Management Committee, with Professors LC Jonker, AEJ Mouton, N Koopman and J Punt as representatives of the Faculty of Theology, and Professors AE Feinauer, MW Visser, I Cornelius, CHJ van der Merwe and LG de Stadler as representatives of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Ds Ephraim Baloyi represented the Bible Society of South Africa and Mr H Raubenheimer the private sector.

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 Departments. Dr Charlene van der Walt, who holds the postdoctoral fellowship attached to CEBITA, also serves as a collaborator.

3. Current Academic Projects

The following projects were ongoing during 2011. These projects are launched and managed by the departments/individuals concerned, but at the same time operate under the “umbrella” of the Centre. Not one of the projects was specifically initiated as a CEBITA project.

SOURCE LANGUAGE AND BIBLE TRANSLATION

- A new generation of Biblical Hebrew reference works (CHJ vd Merwe)
- A hypertext Bible for translators and exegetes (CHJ vd Merwe)
- Teaching Biblical Hebrew (CHJ vd Merwe)
- Biblical translation as intercultural communication: a theoretical and practical reflection (CHJ vd Merwe)
- Translation and ownership of the Bible in Africa (J Punt)
- The Septuagint and hermeneutics (J Cook)

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

- The reinterpretation of the Book of Exodus in Africa (HL Bosman)
- The interpretation of the Bible in Africa (HL Bosman)
- Prophetism in the Old Testament and in Africa (HL Bosman)
- Fundamentalism and religious conservatism (HL Bosman)
- Old Testament theological perspectives on land in the midst of poverty and wealth (HL Bosman)
- A theological exposition of the Decalogue on the basis of African Proverbs (HL Bosman)
- “From multiculturalism to interculturalism: The case of Biblical hermeneutics”: Intercultural reading of the Bible (LC Jonker)
- Commentary on Chronicles (LC Jonker)
- "Reforming history": The relation between historiography and identity formation in the Second Temple Period (LC Jonker)
- The postcolonial Bible in Africa (J Punt)
- Religion, sacred scriptures and identity (J Punt)
- Biblical hermeneutics and the Pauline letters (J Punt)
- An interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) in its literary and topological contexts (JC Thom)
- Memory in search of dignity: Exploring the transformative potential of New Testament texts (in Africa), with special reference to God-language and human dignity (E Mouton)

COMMUNICATION AND APPROPRIATION

- The New Testament and cultural studies (J Punt)
- The Bible between the academy and faith communities: an exploratory study of points of contact between academic and non-academic engagement with the Bible (C van der Walt)

Additional information on these academic projects is available on <http://www.cebita.org/Projects.htm>.

4. Research Output: Papers Delivered

Summary

Members of the Centre delivered a total of 19 (OT/NT = 14 and Ancient Studies = 5) papers at South African conferences, while 12 (OT/NT = 11 and Ancient Studies = 1) papers were presented at international subject conferences.

Full information on the papers delivered by members of the Centre during 2012 is available on: http://www.cebita.org/Research_Papers.htm.

5. Research Output: Publications

Summary

Members of the Centre produced the following publications (Key: *: accredited; #: non-accredited; SA: South African publications; Int: international publications):

	Books		Articles				Popular Publ		TOTAL
	SA*	Int*	SA*	SA#	Int*	Int#	SA#	Int#	
A Andrason			4			7			11
J Cook		2 (1 ed)							2
C vd Merwe			1			1			2
ER Wendland		2	4			4			10
HL Bosman			4						4
LJ Claassens	2 (2 ed)	1	2		1		1	4	11
LC Jonker			4				1		5
AEJ Mouton	1 (1 ed)		2		1	1			5
J Punt			5		6		1		12
C vd Walt			3						3
TOTAL	3	5	29	0	8	13	3	4	65

In total 45 accredited and 20 non-accredited publications appeared in 2012. Of these, 35 appeared in South African publications and 30 in international publications.

Full information on the academic publications of members of the Centre during 2012 is available on: http://www.cebita.org/Research_Publications.htm.

6. Research Output: Doctoral Dissertations

Summary

There were 37 current doctoral projects during the year under review, 13 at the Department of Ancient Studies and 23 at the Department of Old and New Testament; 1 student is shared by the two departments.

A total of 2 doctoral candidates obtained their doctorates in 2012, 1 from Ancient Studies, 1 from Old and New Testament.

Full information on the doctoral students (including the titles of their research projects) is available on: http://www.cebita.org/Research_Dissertations.htm.

7. New Afrikaans Bible Translation

The Centre is still involved, through its individual members, with the new Afrikaans Bible Translation project of the Bible Society of South Africa (BSA). Christo van der Merwe not only serves on the executive and management committees of this project, but he is also involved (along with Hendrik Bosman, Johann Cook, Louis Jonker, Paul Kruger, Jeremy Punt, Elna Mouton, Johan Thom and other colleagues in the participating academic departments) as exegete and/or specialist in the source languages. Almost all these colleagues finalised their work on individual books in 2012.

The editorial committee, on which Prof. Christo van der Merwe also serves, met four times during the course of 2012 ((20-24 January, 5-9 April, 29 June-3 July and 26-30 October). This committee has two related main tasks. Firstly, it must check whether the translation teams are complying with the translation commission, and secondly, it must ensure that expressions in the source text are translated consistently by all the translation teams. In 2012 the following sections were completed: Gen 25-50, Song of Solomon, Lamentations and Psalms 1-27.

8. United Bible Societies (UBS) and the Centre

8.1 The presentation of speed courses in biblical languages

The Centre presented Short course 3350 at the request of the UBS to 11 translators from Africa (Malawi, Botswana, Uganda, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Brazzaville Congo) from 24 May to 22 June and 5 to 30 November 2012 outside Nairobi. The 32-credit course is the equivalent of BH 214 and 244, adapted to the needs of the Bible translators. In the first two weeks of June the facilitators from the UBS were Dr Margaret Muthwii Dr Anastasia Malle, and in the last two weeks Dr Gerrit van Steenberger and Mr Samy Tioyé. In November Dr Misheck Nyirenda, Dr Gerrit van Steenbergen Mr Tioyé represented the UBS. On both these occasions (June and November) the Centre was represented by Prof. van der Merwe.

All the students completed the short course successfully. Their average percentage was 73%. This performance level is higher than the average final mark for the modules BH 214 and 244. Factors which contributed to the sound performance of the group are the following: (1) the students were highly motivated, (2) training was done in small groups, (3) the course was designed in the light of recent developments in translation theory, applied linguistics and cognitive linguistics, (4) the students felt empowered in that they were guided to use their laptop computers optimally in the critical analysis of Biblical Hebrew texts.

It appears from the feedback that the students found the course very meaningful. It also seems that the successful presentation of a "speed" course such as this one is largely dependent on the extent to which the facilitators are trained in, and familiar with, the content and manner in which the course is presented. One of the facilitators of the November session could not attend the May session. According to the students' feedback, they did not always experience the particular facilitator's way of doing things as positive.

Seeing that a good final mark does not always correlate with the ability to apply the knowledge acquired successfully in day-to-day practice, in 2013 a research project is being launched to determine how students implement their knowledge and ability to utilise electronic resources in the critical analysis of Hebrew texts in the translations in which they are involved. This project is being undertaken by Dr Gerrit van Steenbergen from the UBS.

8.2 Visits to New York and Misano

Prof. van der Merwe visited the Nida Institute in New York in September 2012 and was afterwards also invited to be part of a think tank considering the compilation of a comprehensive course for Bible translators in Misano, Italy from 6 to 11 December 2012.

9. Centre's Publication Series

Sales of the publication series are still sluggish.

10. Postdoctoral Fellowship

Dr Charlene van der Walt completed her postdoctoral term in July 2012. Four accredited journal articles were produced from the project (1 in 2011 and 3 in 2012). The project was completed successfully, although she is currently still preparing some publications stemming from the empirical study. Because of her involvement in the project, she has also been invited to publish her thesis in an international series on Intercultural Reading of the Bible (currently in preparation), and has been elected to the executive committee of an international project on the same subject that is being coordinated from Amsterdam (VU). On completion of the postdoctoral award she was appointed on a contract basis as lecturer in the Theology Faculty to coordinate the new MTh programme with a focus on Gender, Health and Theology.

11. New initiatives

CEBITA members have already held discussions on the possibility of presenting (i) short courses in Hebrew and Greek at the Stellenbosch campus for postgraduate students who need to upgrade their knowledge of source language, and (ii) courses in collaboration with Communitas for ministers on the use of LOGOS software in congregational practice (including exegesis for sermons). These possibilities will be investigated in the next term.

12. Finances

The Centre's short-term finances are sound. The details appear in the financial statement for 2012. The report is attached.

13. Acknowledgements

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



.....25 April 2013

Prof. HL Bosman

Chair: Management Committee



.....25 April 2013

Prof. CHJ van der Merwe

Director