



Centre for Bible Interpretation and Translation in Africa

Department of Ancient Studies and
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Annual Report: 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2016

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

The Centre's activities in 2016 were focused especially on the following:

- The next translation of the Bible into Afrikaans;
- The use of Logos and the development of short courses in Greek and Hebrew;
- Upgrading the Centre's website.

The Mission Statement and Aims of the Centre that direct its activities may be read on: 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 2016.

Prof. I Cornelius acted as chair of the Management Committee, with Professors AE Feinauer, LC Jonker, AEJ Mouton, J Punt and Dr MJ Nel as representatives of the Faculty of Theology, and Professors I Cornelius and CHJ van der Merwe and Doctors Gideon Kotze and Johanna Steyn as representatives of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Rev. Masenyani Baloyi represented the Bible Society of South Africa and Mr H Raubenheimer the private sector. Prof. LJM Claassen and Dr NS Cezula functioned as co-opted members.

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 2016 by members of CEBITA or by some of their students:

ANDRASON A, LOCATELL C. The Perfect Wave: A cognitive approach to the Greek Verbal System. *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics* 2016; **5**:7-121.

ANDRASON A, WESTBURY JR, VAN DER MERWE CHJ. Left dislocation: An exploration in linguistic typology. *Spil Plus* 2016; **50**:1-20.

CEZULA, NS. The Chronicler as a Biblical Paradigm for a Theology of Reconstruction in Africa: An Exploration of 2 Chronicles 6:32. *Old Testament Essays* 2016; **29**(2): 277-296.

DE REGT LJ, WENDLAND E. *A Handbook on Numbers*. United Bible Societies, Miami, USA 2016:837 pp.

JONKER LC. *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles. Multi-levelled Identity Negotiation in Late Persian-Period Yehud*. FAT 106. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2016.

JONKER LC. "My Wife Must Not Live in King David's Palace' (2 Chr 8:11): A Contribution to the Diachronic Study of Intermarriage Traditions in the Hebrew Bible", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 2016; **135**(1):35-47.

JONKER LC. "Being both on the Periphery and in the Centre: The Jerusalem Temple in Late Persian Period Yehud from Postcolonial Perspective." In: *Centres and Peripheries in the Early Second Temple Period*, FAT. Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2016:243-267.

KOTZE GR. Comments on the uses and meanings of **יָא** in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible: Revisiting Vriezen. *Hebrew studies* 2016; **57**:17-38.

MOUTON AEJ. Jesus as healer in the Gospel of Matthew: In conversation with Alan Culpepper. *In die Skriflig* 2016; **50**(1):a2143, 6 pages.

MOUTON AEJ. Torah Reimag(in)ed between **σάρξ** and **δόξα**? Implied Household Ethos in the Fourth Gospel. *Neotestamentica: Journal of the New Testament Society of Southern Africa (NTSSA)* 2016; **50**(3):93-112.

NEL MJ. The Relationship between the Markan **ἀφίημι-chreia** and the Historical Jesus. *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 2016; **115**:1-17.

NEL MJ. The role of Matthew's **ἀφίημι**-logia in the decisions of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in post-apartheid South Africa. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal/ Stellenbosch Teologiese Joernaal (STJ)*. (Formerly NGTT: Ned Geref Teologiese Tydskrif) 2016; **2**(1):339-361.

PUNT J. A cultural turn in New Testament studies? *HTS Theological Studies/ Teologiese Studies* 2016; **72**(4):a3213, 7 pages.

PUNT J. Mr Paul: Masculinity and Paul's self-presentation (1 Cor 11-13). *In die Skriflig* 2016; **50**(2):a2001, 9 pages.

PUNT J. Paul, military imagery and social disadvantage. *Acta Theologica* 2016; **Supplement**

23:201-224.

- PUNT J. Paul's *Imperium*: The Push and Pull of Empire, and the Pauline Letters. *Religion & Theology: A Journal of Contemporary Religious Discourse* 2016; **23**(3-4):339-367.
- PUNT J. The accusation of 'world disturbers' (Acts 17:6) in socio-political context. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 2016; **37**(1):a1595, 8 pages.
- PUNT J. Conversations in Africa: Postcolonial and Marxist Hermeneutics, and a Psychoanalytic Fulcrum?. In: Liew TB, Runions E (eds.) *Psychoanalytic Mediations between Marxist and Postcolonial Readings of the Bible*, Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta, USA, 2016: 19-44.
- PUNT J. Dealing with Empire and Negotiating Hegemony: Developments in Postcolonial Feminist Hebrew Bible Criticism. In: Scholz S (ed.) *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect Vol. III: Methods*, Sheffield Phoenix Press, Sheffield, United Kingdom, 2016: 278-303.
- PUNT J. Paul's Jewish Identity in the Roman World: Beyond the Conflict Model. In: Boccaccini G, Segovia CA (eds.) *Paul the Jew: Rereading the Apostle as a Figure of Second Temple Judaism*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, USA, 2016: 245-270.
- PUNT J. The Bible and Others: Root of Violence in Africa?. In: Hunter J, Kügler J (eds.) *The Bible and Violence in Africa: Bible in Africa Studies Vol. 20*, University of Bamberg Press, Bamberg, Germany, 2016: 35-57.
- PUNT J. The Odds are Ever in the Empire's Favour: Postcolonial Subject Positioning in *The Hunger Games*. In: Copier L, Vander Stichele C (eds.) *Close Encounters between Bible and Film: An Interdisciplinary Engagement*, Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta, USA, 2016: 289-313.
- VAN DER MERWE CHJ. How 'direct' can a direct translation be? Some perspectives from the realities of a new type of church Bible. *HTS Theological Studies/ Teologiese Studies* 2016; **72**(3):1-11.
- VAN DER MERWE CHJ. Left Dislocation and its translation in some Germanic languages. *Spil Plus* 2016; **50**:159-184.
- WENDLAND E. Review Article: Translating the English Bible: From Relevance to Deconstruction. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 2016; **42**(1):87-104.
- WENDLAND E. Where was Korah killed and what difference does it make? A brief structural-thematic analysis of Numbers 16: 1-40. *Journal for Semitics/Tydskrif vir Semitistiek* 2016; **25**(1):99-126.
- WENDLAND E. Exploring The Lost World of Scripture: A Critical Review. *American Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2016; **1**(1):9-38.
- WENDLAND E. Poeticizing the Psalter in an African Language. *Open Theology* 2016; **2**:165-178.
- WENDLAND E. Re-telling the World Rhetorically: The Example of Shadreck Wame, a Chewa Itinerant Evangelist. *Open Theology* 2016; **2**:881-894.
- WESTBURY JR. Left Dislocation: a typological overview. *Spil Plus* 2016; **50**:21-45.

WESTBURY JR. A functional profile of Left Dislocation in Biblical Hebrew. *Spil Plus* 2016; **50**:65-90.

WESTBURY JR, ANDRASON A. Left dislocation: towards a new horizon. *Spil Plus* 2016; **50**:201-204.

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

ANSHISO, BD: Jesus and the Marginalized and the Liminal: The Messianic Identity in Mark (with Prof. J Punt as supervisor).

BIVIN WE (Maart 2017) The particle *'im* and conditionality in Biblical Hebrew revisited: A cognitive linguistic account" (with Prof. CHJ van der Merwe as supervisor).

CHEN, HC: The Law and the Gentiles in Acts 15: Divine Authority between the Scriptures of Israel and Jesus on the Law (with Prof. J Punt as supervisor).

ETUKUMANA, G: Reconciliation in the Gospel of Luke: A Socio-Historical Study (with Prof. MJ Nel as supervisor).

JACOBS, SM: Lukan prophetic discourse and social conflict in early Roman Palestine (with Prof. J Punt as supervisor).

MEKONNEN, ES: The Torah and Community Formation: A Comparative Study of Matt 22:34-40 and Rom 13:8-14 (with Prof. J Punt as supervisor; Prof. MJ Nel as co-supervisor).

MOON, SE: Pilgrimage as singing and walking in the way of the law of Christ? Interpreting "dying to the Law" in Gal. 2:19 (with Prof. J Punt as supervisor).

PHIRI, J (March 2017): Church and Culture? Exploring the reception of women's ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia in the light of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 (with Prof. E Mouton as supervisor).

RODRIGUEZ DL (March 2017) The Biblical Hebrew prepositions *taḥat*, *'al*, *'aḥar* and *lifnê/mifnê*: A cognitive linguistic account (with Prof. CHJ van der Merwe as supervisor).

4. New Afrikaans Bible translation

The editorial committee for this translation, on which Prof. van der Merwe also serves, met four times during 2016. The committee has two major tasks, which are related. First, it must check whether the translation teams are complying with the translation brief, and second, it must ensure that expressions in the source text are translated consistently by all the translation teams. In 2016 the following sections were completed: 2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Proverbs and Ezekiel. An average of 25 000 words per five-day workshop were checked.

Only the following books remain to be checked: Isaiah, Jeremiah and Job. The intention is to complete these in 2017. Feedback from church readers with regard to the Old Testament will be reviewed in 2018. The Bible Society envisages publishing the entire Bible in 2020.

5. Bible translation agencies and the Centre

In February 2016 Prof. van der Merwe once again attended a two-day workshop organised by the *UBS (United Bible Societies)* in Durbanville. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together participants in the *Marble* project (reported on in 2014-2015) to report on the progress being made by the various task groups. For example, good progress has been made with the digitalisation and categorising of all the resources and translations of the Bible available across the world. An extensive series of visual materials (in digital format) was also purchased in 2016. This will be made available to Bible Societies to be used in their preparation for Bible translations and related projects.

Dr de Blois, who manages the project, once again visited Stellenbosch during the weekend after the workshop. It is clear that the project is progressing well, but primarily in areas to which CEBITA cannot make a direct contribution. As in the past, CEBITA's contribution will focus mainly on those projects to which CEBITA members can provide academic input, e.g. the *Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (=SDBH)*.

For this reason Prof. Van der Merwe launched a research project investigating the Hebrew equivalents of the lemmas "hand" and "being strong". Dr de Blois visited Stellenbosch in April 2017 to discuss ways in which the results of this project can be incorporated into the SDBH – as well as the results of other recent postgraduate projects on Biblical Hebrew expressions undertaken in the Department of Ancient Studies.

The revised and expanded second edition of *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (of which Prof. Van der Merwe is the co-author) will be published by Bloomsbury (London) in September 2017. Part of the contract for this reference work is that it will be made available free of charge to Bible translators as part of *Paratext* (an electronic aid for translators of the *UBS*). The logistics of this will also be discussed during Dr de Blois's visit.

6. Short courses in biblical languages and Logos

Two two-day workshops on the effective utilisation of sources in the "Stellenbosch package" of Logos to allow the foundational Greek and Hebrew texts to come more into their own in the reading of the Old and New Testaments were presented under the auspices of *Communitas*. The first was presented to ministers in the Western Cape and was attended by 17 ministers. The second was held in the Eastern Cape and was attended by 30 ministers. Feedback indicated that both these workshops were highly successful.

In November 2016 Prof. Van die Merwe entered into negotiations with the owner of Logos to extend the special offer for Stellenbosch students to purchase Logos over a longer period – in the past this special offer had to be renegotiated on an annual basis. It was agreed that for the next three years 150 packages at \$100 each would be made available every year to Stellenbosch.

7. Seminar on biblical translation at the IOSOT conference

Prof. van der Merwe arranged a seminar on biblical translation held during the IOSOT conference held at Stellenbosch in September 2016. The programme is shown below.

Title: Bible Translation: A Discussion Across Continents

Participants:

Ernst Wendland, Lutheran Seminary Lusaka and Stellenbosch University

Gerrit van Steenberg, United Bible Societies

Samy Tioyé, United Bible Societies

Summary:

In this seminar three papers discuss different ways of bridging the cognitive, linguistic, and cultural disparities that exist between the Hebrew text of Scripture and several African settings.

First, Gerrit van Steenberg examines “Sacrifice in Leviticus 1-7 and Pökot Culture: Implications for Bible Translation.” This study investigates the similarities and differences between sacrifice in Leviticus 1-7 and in the Pökot culture. The key concepts of clean/unclean and holy/unholy, as well as the choice of animals that are suitable for use in sacrificial rituals, play a significant role. These aspects are considered from the perspectives of both the source and receptor cultures at a basic worldview level. The paper argues that the central worldview variable in the book of Leviticus is *causality*, while in the Pökot culture *relationship* is the dominant variable. In both cases, sacrifice is aimed at restoring the equilibrium with regard to the most central variable in the worldview system. The difference between the worldview systems implies that the nature and interpretation of sacrificial practices differ between the two cultures, which naturally impacts any translation of the Bible in Pökot.

Next, Samy Tioyé speaks from personal experience in “Bridging the Cultural Gap: The Issue of Blood.” As an African translator, he must deal with multiple cultural perspectives: the culture of the Bible, the culture of his western education, and his own culture. Thus, one is continually faced with cultural gaps that need to be bridged: between the context of the Bible and Western culture, between Western culture and the translator’s culture, and between African culture and the cultures of the Bible. The example used to illustrate these gaps concerns the issue of blood disposal in the Bible, with the focus on a cross-cultural understanding of two expressions: pouring the blood on the ground like water (Deut.12:16, 24; 15:23); and covering the blood with the soil (Leviticus 17: 13). Samy argues that bridging the gap requires having a clear understanding of the “relationship” between blood and ground in order to negotiate their translation into a local language.

Finally, Ernst Wendland considers the subject: “From Death to Life—דָּם in the Psalms: A Lexical-Semantic-Cultural Survey, with Special Reference to the Translation of ‘Blood’.” After a summary of the principal senses of דָּם in the Hebrew Bible, he reviews this word’s 21 occurrences in the Psalms and considers the translation of “blood” in Western and African settings. The greatest difficulty here does not appear to be lexical, i.e. having the right words available. It is rather conceptual, the problem of different world views and how to bridge the vast chasms that exists between the BH contextual environment and that of the secular, post-biblical Western world, on the one hand, and between the BH contextual environment and a religious, traditionally-influenced African mindset on the other. In certain Psalms passages in Chichewa it is argued that, instead of some expression relating to “death,” one that rather conveys the notion of “life” may well be more accurate and acceptable, especially when uttered in prayer or praise to the Lord.

8. Centre and the *Woordfees*

In March 2017 Prof. van der Merwe gave a talk at *Woordfees 2017* entitled: “Bybelvertaling is nie speletjies nie” [Bible translation is not a game]. The occasion was

sponsored by the Bible Society of South Africa and attended by about 20 people.

9. Finances

The Centre's short-term finances are sound. The details appear in the financial statement for 2016. The report is attached.

10. Acknowledgements

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



.....4 May 2017

Prof. I Cornelius

Chair: Management Committee



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Prof. CHJ van der Merwe

Director