Old Testament Exegesis

# COURSE INTRODUCTION

## Overview

The course Old Testament Exegesis provides theoretical and practical preparation for exegesis and interpretation of Old Testaments texts in Hebrew. It is organized into two sections:

* Part one: Theory and praxis of Old Testament exegesis: In this part the students learn the practical steps of OT exegesis, they also learn about their theoretical (hermeneutical) background.
* Part two: Selected texts for Old Testament exegesis: In the second part of the course the students apply the exegetical procedures on selected Old Testament passages; the passages are selected so that they represent various genres and forms of Old Testament literature.

## Course Requirements

In order to successfully pass the course, the students are required:

1. Read and learn the basic methods of Old Testament exegesis, as explained in the first part of the course (based on the document *Seven Steps in Old Testament Exegesis*).
2. Complete the tasks relating to the exegesis and interpretation of Old Testament passages in the second part of the course (see the Moodle course, Part Two). The specific texts are: Gen 12:10–20; Isa 5:1–7; Prov 30:15–23; Exod 20:1–17 (// Deut 5:1–22); Exod 21:22–27.
3. To prepare the complete exegesis of an Old Testament passages:
	1. Choose the passage and have it approved by the teacher of the course.
	2. Prepare a translation of the selected passage with grammatical and text-critical notes.
	3. Complete the exegesis and present it during the oral examination.
4. The oral examination consists mainly of the presentation of the exegetical paper. The student will present it, the questions will be asked on specific issues relating to the passages, as well as on broader issues (methods and approaches in OT exegesis).

## Literature

Aland, Barbara, Kurt Aland, Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, and Holger Strutwolf, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece: Based on the Work of Eberhard and Erwin Nestle*; Edited by Barbara and Kurt Aland and Others. 28th Revised Edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.

Baker, David L. *The Decalogue: Living as the People of God*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2017, 3-36

*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. 5th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.

Briggs, Richard. “"These Are the Days of Elijah”: The Hermeneutical Move from ‘Applying the Text’ to “Living in Its World ״.” *JTI* 8.2 (2014): 157–74.

Cotterell, Peter. “Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis.” In *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: An Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 131–57. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999.

Culler, Jonathan D. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Very Short Introductions. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 69-81.

Fox, Michael V., ed. Proverbs 10–31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. The Anchor Yale Bible 18B. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009, 862-873.

Hayes, John H. – Holladay, Carl R., *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook*, Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press 1987.

Houtman, Cornelis. *Exodus. Volume 3*. HCOT. Leuven: Peeters, 2000, 160-172.

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Satterthwaite, Philip. “Narrative Criticism: The Theological Implications of Narrative Techniques.” Pages 122–30 in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: An Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999.

Smelik, K. A. D. “The Witch of Endor: I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 A.D.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 33.2 (1979): 160–79.

Stuart, Douglas. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors*. 4th ed. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Waltke, Bruce K. “Textual Criticism of the Old Testament and Its Relation to Exegesis and Theology.” In *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: An Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 48–64. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999.

Walton, John H. “Principles for Productive Word Study.” In *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: An Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 158–68. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999.

## For further reading

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.

Bar-Efrat, Shimeon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989.

Barton, John. *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996.

Berlin, Adele. *Poetics and Biblical Interpretation*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994.

Childs, Brevard S. *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1970, 151–163.

Goldingay, John. *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995.

Joüon, Paul, and Takamitsu Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993.

Niccacci, Alviero. *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose*. JSOTSup 86. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.

# PART ONE - THEORY AND PRAXIS OF OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS

## EXEGESIS, HERMENEUTICS AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

### Overview

* + - What is exegesis?
		- Hermeneutics and biblical interpretation
		- Seven perspectives in Old Testament exegesis

### Comment

The task of Old Testament exegesis is explained as a thorough, analytical study of a biblical passage. The use of and preference for specific exegetical methods depends on given hermeneutic starting point. Hermeneutics is, therefore, explained as the theory of understanding. According to Oeming's useful diagram, the interpretation can start:

1) with the author and his world; 2) with the world of the text; 3) with the reader and his context; 4) with the thing to which the text refers.

Further are introduced seven perspectives in the process of Old Testament exegesis, which provide a guide in the exegetical process for the students.

### Literature for individual study

Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 5-32.

## I. BIBLICAL TEXT AS "TEXT"

### Overview

* + - Choosing the text, limits of the selected text, context
		- Preparing the text: reading and translating, division into sentences and clauses
		- Dealing with text-critical issues

### Comment

Already choosing the specific biblical text for exegesis is a matter of hermeneutic consideration. Does the exegete have some pre-understanding about the chosen text? Is such preunderstanding shaped by some specific tradition? The exegete has to critically evaluate these pre-understandigs. The traditional divisions into the verses is not always reliable. The reader must take into the account the broader context of the passage. Reading the passage in the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic), in ancient versions (Septuagint, Vulgate) and in modern translations (English and other available) often exposes the exegetical issues, with which the exegete must deal in the following phases of the exegetical task.

The task of textual criticism is to reconstruct the best original text of the passage. On the level of this course, the student must deal at least with the text-critical notes of BHS and with text-critical notes in the selected commentaries.

The practical steps in this phase include:

* + - choosing the text for exegesis, settings its limits
		- reading the passage in the original language, providing own tentative translation
		- reading the passage in ancient versions and modern translations
		- textual criticism: dealing with the critical apparatus of BHS, possibly also with own translations of the versions

### Literature for individual study

Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis,* 33-42.

Waltke “Textual Criticism of the Old Testament and Its Relation to Exegesis and Theology.”

### Verifying comprehension

* + 1. Have a look at Genesis 1-2. How would you divide it into meaningful units for exegesis?
		2. How would you define a textual unit for meaningful exegesis with regard to the story of the call of Abram (around Genesis 12)? Are there any reasonable alternatives to your first definition of the textual unit?
		3. Read book of Jonah in English. How important is the overal context of the book for the interpretation of so-called "Psalm of Jonah" in Jonah 2:2-10?
		4. Most modern English translations read Gen 20:13 similar to NRSV. However, the Bible in Czech Ecumenical Translation (CEP) has a different readings (an English paraphrase of CEP given below, after NRSV). Check the Hebrew text, check also the critical apparatus of BHS.  Try to explain the reasons for difference in these two translations.
			- NRSV: "And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her...."
			- CEP: "Když mě bohové po odchodu z otcova domu nechali bloudit, řekl jsem jí...." = "When gods caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her...."
		5. Compare the reading of 1 Sam 1:5 in NRSV and RSV. Check the critical apparatus of BHS and the reading of the Septuagint (LXX). Explain the difference in the English translations.
			- "but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb." (NRSV)
			- "and, although he loved Hannah, he would give Hannah only one portion, because the LORD had closed her womb." (RSV)
		6. Read Waltke's examples of unintentional and intentional changes of the biblical text (59-60). Write three types of unintentional changes and two examples of intentional changes.

## II. BIBLICAL TEXT AND ITS LANGUAGE

### Overview

* + - Lexical semantics: dealing with "difficult words"
		- Syntax: dealing with sentences and clauses
		- Macrosyntax: looking for the paragraph markers

### Comment

Students are introduced in selected theoretical aspects of lexical semantics. Five "myth" about word study are introduced and rebutted:

* + 1. The myth of point meaning.
		2. The etymological fallacy.
		3. The myth of aggregated meaning.
		4. The myth of unique denotation.
		5. The myth of totality transfer.

Further students learn some practical steps of word study in Old Testament exegesis, these include: identification of key expressions, poetic expressions, conventional combinations, use of synonyms and antonyms or the use of  idiomatic expressions.

Students are reminded of possible ambiguities in the area of Biblical Hebrew syntax and are referred to standard textbooks of Biblical Hebrew grammar and syntax.

Students are also introduced in some modern approaches, which pay attention to the discourse-level of the language, specifically of Biblical Hebrew.

### Literature for individual study

Cotterell, Peter. “Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis.”

Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 42-49.

Walton, John H. “Principles for Productive Word Study.”

### For further reading

Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*.

Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb*, 19-34.

### Verifying comprehension

* + 1. The search of all verbal forms of ברא (*BR’*), "create", in the BibleWorks software (WTM .ברא@\*) provides the following results of 46 occurrences of the verb: Gen. 1:1, Gen. 1:21, Gen. 1:27, Gen. 2:3, Gen. 2:4, Gen. 5:1, Gen. 5:2, Gen. 6:7, Exod. 34:10, Num. 16:30, Deut. 4:32, Jos. 17:15, Jos. 17:18, 1 Sam. 2:29, Ps. 51:12, Ps. 89:13, Ps. 89:48, Ps. 102:19, Ps. 104:30, Ps. 148:5, Eccl. 12:1, Isa. 4:5, Isa. 40:26, Isa. 40:28, Isa. 41:20, Isa. 42:5, Isa. 43:1, Isa. 43:7, Isa. 43:15, Isa. 45:7, Isa. 45:8, Isa. 45:12, Isa. 45:18, Isa. 48:7, Isa. 54:16, Isa. 57:19, Isa. 65:17, Isa. 65:18, Jer. 31:22, Ezek. 21:24, Ezek. 21:35, Ezek. 23:47, Ezek. 28:13, Ezek. 28:15, Amos 4:13, Mal. 2:10.
			- How are the occurrences of the verb distributed in various books of the Old Testament and their parts?
			- After you consult the standard Old Testament introductory textbook (such as Rendtorff's or other), how would you describe the importance of theology of creation in the books or their parts, where the verb typically and frequently occurs?
		2. What is the etymological fallacy? What, on the other hand, is justified use of etymology in Old Testament exegesis?
		3. Explain the "myth of totality transfer".
		4. How would you translate the expression ‎פְּלֹנִי אַלְמֹנִי (Ruth 4:1)? What is the function of this expression in the context of the Ruth narrative?
		5. Most English translation read strange word "Nephilim" in Gen 6:4. What is the Hebrew word? What is the reading of LXX in this passages? How would you translate the expression when considering also Num 13:33 (check LXX here as well)?

## https://elearning.jcu.cz/theme/image.php/jcu/core/1622618940/spacerIII. BIBLICAL TEXT AS LITERATURE

### Overview

* + - Text-oriented hermeneutics; structuralism, poetics of narrative.
		- Story and discourse: realizing the "how" of the narrative texts.
		- Aspects of narrative:
			* Repetitions and cross-textual allusions.
			* Narration and dialogue.
			* Presentation of events.
			* Ambiguity; persuasion.

### Comment

Especially since the last quarter of the 20th century, the Bible has been studied with the help of methods, which developed in the study of literature in general (and modern literature in particular). These methods usually work with the final form of the text and understand the text (mostly narrative) as a self-contained literary universe. It is important to explore the inner relationships between the events and characters of the text. The emphasis here is not on the historical author of the literary work, rather on the "narrator", which is the function derived again from the narrative itself.

Some of these approaches are based on structuralism and its terminology, other approaches are more intuitive.

The typical method of these synchronic approaches is the "close reading" of the text.

### Literature for individual study

Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 110-121.

Satterthwaite, “Narrative Criticism: The Theological Implications of Narrative Techniques.”

### For further reading

Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*.

Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*.

Berlin, *Poetics and Biblical Interpretation*.

### Verifying comprehension

* + 1. What are some travesties and other cross-textual allusions in the Old Testament? What kind of *implicit commentary* these allusions make in these specific texts?
		2. Give some examples of biblical texts, in which the literary character(s) in his/her/their speech express
			- same viewpoint, values or evaluation of the events as the narrator
			- different viewpoint from that of the narrator.
		3. What is the difference between the "narrated time" and the "narrative time"?
		4. What are some examples of narrative ambiguity in the OT narratives?
		5. Give an example of Old Testament narrative, where the narrative structure helps to make a theological point.

## IV. BIBLICAL TEXT AS A PRODUCT OF THE HISTORY

### Overview

* + - Author and his world - hermeneutical foundations
		- Overview of historical method in biblical exegesis
		- "How to" of historical-critical exegesis
			* When was the text written? Searching for historical data and historical background.
			* What are the literary forms and what could have been their historical social context (*Sitz im Leben*)?
			* Who could have been the author(s) and editor(s) of the text?
			* Unity or complexity of the text: possible marks of different sources, different historical contexts, various traditions
			* Any other historically relevant data: archaeology, social history, historical geography

### Comment

Understanding the biblical text as a product of the historical development can significantly contribute to its better understanding. The historically oriented hermenutics (that is, the kind of interpretation starting with the historical authors and their historical context in the broadest sense) had dominated the critical biblical scholarship until the second half of the 20th century. Many of its concepts as well as its terminology is still operative in exegetical and theological literature.

The main methods of this approach are:

* + - **Literary criticism:** the term includes the study of all literary aspects of the text, in biblical studies often it refers especially to the study of older documentary sources.
		- **Form criticism:** the study of literary forms and genres and their historical and sociological context (*Sitz im Leben*).
		- **Tradition criticism:** studying the stages behind the text; typically, but not limited to oral traditions.
		- **Redaction criticism:** the study of the final theological viewpoint impressed upon the text by the redactors.

### Literature for individual study

Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis,* 73-109*.*

### Verifying comprehension

* + 1. What do the following biblical passages reveal about the relative time of their composition?
			- "Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land." (Gen 12:6)
			- "Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh." (Exod 1:11)
			- "Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it forth to the end of the earth; say, 'The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob!'" (Isa 48:20)
		2. Quickly read the Joseph narrative (Gen 37-50), the book of Esther and the stories in Daniel 1-6. What are some common literary motifs in these narratives? What could be the *Sitz im Leben* of these narratives? Compare your thoughts with standard introductions to the Old Testament (for example Rendtorff, Rolf. *The Old Testament: An Introduction*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1991.)
		3. The stories in Gen 12:10-20 and in Genesis 20 are usually regareded as so called doublets, that is, two versions of the same story. There are obvious differences between them given their current function in Genesis. What are some other differences, which possibly betray the style and theological preferences of the original source? You can also compare the third version of the story in Gen 26:1-14.
		4. In the famous story about the "binding of Isaac" the angel calls on Abraham for the second time in Gen 22:15-18. This second speech of the angel does not seem to be critical for the resolution of the story, especiall with regard to the first speech of the angel in 22:11-12. What could have been the reason, why the hypothetical redactor of Genesis 22 included this second speech of the angel to Abraham? What was theologically important for this assumed redactor?
		5. What is the overall theological emphasis in the story of Exodus 16? What kind of theological redaction can be seen in it in terms of traditional Pentateuchal layers J, E, D, P?

## V. BIBLICAL TEXT AS AN IMPULS IN THE HISTORY

### Overview

* + - Reader oriented hermeneutics, history of interpretation and reception
		- How to study the history of interpretation:
			* in the New Testament
			* in Christian tradition: ancient, medieval, in the Western tradition both in the Protestantism and Roman-Catholic tradition
			* in Jewish tradition, possibly in islam
			* in secular West (philosophy, modern art, literature)
			* modern scholarly interpretations
		- Examples of history of interpretation and reception

### Comment

The text of the Bible is not only the product of historical circumstances. It has excercised significant influence in the history. It has been interpreted for thousands of years. Some of the interpretations have withstood the test of time, and are still considered foundational and inspiring. Some interpretations would today be perceived actually as misinterpretations. Nevertheless, this whole process of interpretation, reinterpretation and recontextualization is an important source for the evaluation of the text. It also leads to sef-critical understanding of one's own exegetical endeavour. As interpreters today, we do not start from the scratch. Similarly, we are not the last ones in the line, to provide the ultimate interpreation.

The reading for this section is from the textbook of Hayes and Holladay. It is devoted to the canonical criticism. As the authors of the assigned chapter rightly recognize, the canonical criticism (or, as B. S. Childs preferred to call it, "canonical approach") places emphasis on the interpretation of the Bible in the given community, typically the church (and also in the synagogue, for the comparison). Hayes and Holladay, again insightfully, realize, that this approach is also interested in the final form of the text (and so is close to the narrative criticism and synchronic reading, see the section III. BIBLICAL TEXT AS LITERATURE above). And as they note, it is also theological approach, which will be given room in the following section.

For the reception of the Old Testament in the New Testament compare the section *Loci citati vel allegati* in Nestle-Aland edition of the Greek text of the New Testament.

For the early reception in the church check relevant biblical commentaries (recently more and more attention is paid to the history of interpretation). Specialized commentary series  for Christian interpretation is *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*.

You can search for specialized articles on your specific biblical text, like that of Klaas Smelik.

### Literature for individual study

Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 122-130.

Aland, Aland, Nestle, Nestle, Strutwolf, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

### Verifying comprehension

* + 1. In what sense is the canonical approach interested in the history of interpretation?
		2. Read the attached article on 1 Sam 28 by Klaas Smelik. Summarize traditional Christian and Jewish interpretations of this text according to Smelik. What are the exegetical problems of the text, which lead to such different interpretations?

## VI. BIBLICAL TEXT AS THEOLOGY

### Overview

* + - What is theological interpretation of the Bible?
		- Theological interpretation in the context of TNK / Old Testament
		- Theological interpretation in the context of the Christian Bible

### Comment

The review of the canonical approach/criticism in the section on history of interpretation is in many respects important also for the theological interpretation of a given biblical passage. Further, two examples of theological interpretation are provided in the present section.

The first example is taken from the work of Brevard S. Childs, the proponent of the canonical approach to the Bible. On the example of exegesis of Psalm 8 Childs demonstrates, how he imagined the specific text could be interpreted in its original Old Testament context, but also, how the New Testament recontextualization of Psalm 8 in the epistle to Hebrews provides valid theological insight.

The second example is chosen from the work by a more recent author, that is, Walter Moberly. His detailed analysis of Genesis 12:1-3 illustrates not only, how linguistic considerations influence the theological interpretation of the text, but also how the text can lead to several acceptable theological recontextualizations in different contexts, namely Christian and Jewish.

### Literature for individual study

Review Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis,* 122-130 from the preceding seciton.

Childs, Brevard S. *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1970, 151-163

Moberly, R. W. L. *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*. Old Testament Theology. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 141-161.

### Verifying comprehension

1. What is, according to Childs, the meaning of Pslam 8 in the Old Testament context? What Old Testament texts with similar kind of theology Childs mentions?
2. In what aspect is the Septuagint translation of Ps 8:5-6 relevant for the recontextualzation of the psalm in Hebrews 2:6-9.
3. What kind of reading and understanding of Psalm 8 suggests Childs for the context of Christian theology? Why does he think, that his approach is superior to that of Luther or Calvin?
4. What is the crucial grammatical feature in Gen 12:1-3, according to Moberly, which leads to possibility of different translation? What are some examples of interpretation of this text in Christian and in Jewish traditions?

## VII. BIBLICAL TEXT AS THE WAY OF LIFE

### Overview

* + - Models of reading the Bible for the life
		- Reading as entering the world of the text
		- Examples of contextual interpretation of the Bible

### Comment

For Christians and Jews the Old Testament / Tenak represent the authoritative text to be relevant for daily life. It is important in this step, first, to review and integrate the results of exegesis. Hayes and Holladay distinguish three traditional modes of proclamation the message of the Bible:

* priestly
* prophetic
* advisory

All these aspects can be used in the context of preaching.

When reading the Bible for personal appropriation, the readers situate themselves "within the text". The critical stance assumed in the preceding exegetical procedures should not be suspended, but rather integrated with this kind of hermeneutic position.

### Literature for individual study

Briggs, Richard. “"These Are the Days of Elijah”: The Hermeneutical Move from ‘Applying the Text’ to “Living in Its World ״.” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 8.2 (2014): 157–74.

Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 131-159.

### Verifying comprehension

1. What is meant by Hayes and Holladay, when they differentiate between the "priestly", the "prophetic" and the "advisory" aspects in appropriating the biblical text?
2. What is the main point in Briggs' criticism of attempts "to apply the Bible" in our current context?
3. What is the significance of OLD-NEW dichotomy in the Bible? How is it important for Christian readers of the Bible, according to Briggs?

# PART TWO - SELECTED TEXTS FOR OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS

## EXEGESIS OF NARRATIVE TEXTS: Genesis 12:10-20https://elearning.jcu.cz/theme/image.php/jcu/core/1622618940/spacer

### Tentative translation of Genesis 12:10-20

Prepare a preliminary translation of Gen 12:10-20. You must use the text of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, taking into account its critical apparatus. Compare your translation to other modern translations (English, German). Keep your translation ready when working on further tasks relating to this text. You can continually improve the translation. The translation will be submitted after all other tasks on this text are finished.

### Exegetical issues of Gen 12:10-20

1. Explain the form מִצְרַיְמָה (Gen 12:10, 14).
2. Explain the text-critical note a in the apparatus of BHS in Gen 12:20.

### Literary questions of Gen 12:10-20

Read the following article:

Peleg, Yitzhak (Itzik). “Was the Ancestress of Israel in Danger? Did Pharaoh Touch (‎נגע) Sarai?” ZAW 118.2 (2006): 197–208.

1. How does Peleg explain the strategy of the narrator in Gen 12:10-20 in depicting the fate of Sarai after she was taken by Pharaoh?
2. What are some important expressions in the story, and how are they used to implicitly comment on the relationship between Sarai, Pharaoh, and Abram?
3. What is the relevance of the Plague narrative in Exodus for the interpretation of Gen 12:10-20?

### Submitting the translation of Gen 12:10-20

Submit the file with your translation of Gen 12:10-20. Include notes on difficult expressions, constructions or textual matters.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF HEBREW POETRY

### Overview

* What is poetry?
* Parallelism
* Meter and rhytm
* Simile and metaphor

### Comment

Significant part of the Old Testament is written as poetry. The main form of biblical Hebrew poetry is parallelism. While it is difficult to discover meter in Hebrew poetry (that is, some kind of rhytmic regularity), it is clear, that rhythm is not altogether absent from Hebrew poetry.

The biblical imagery is typically expressed by means of the simile or metaphor.

### Literature for individual study

Culler, Jonathan D. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Very Short Introductions. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 69-81.

Petersen, David L., and Kent Harold Richards. *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*. Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1992, 1-63.

### Verifying comprehension

1. Explain the mimetic theory of poetry.
2. What kind of parallelism can be found in Hebrew poetry?

## EXEGESIS OF HEBREW POETRY: ISAIAH 5:1-7

### Tentative translation of Isa 5:1–7

Prepare a preliminary translation of Isa 5:1–7. You must use the text of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, taking into account its critical apparatus. Compare your translation to other modern translations (English, German). Keep your translation ready when working on further tasks relating to this text. You can continually improve the translation. The translation will be submitted after all other tasks on this text are finished.

### Poetry and exegesis in Isa 5:1-7

Answer following questions and submit the answers in a document.

I.

1. Identify at least three instances of parallelism in Isa 5:1-7. Include the text in Hebrew, the parallel parts separate by // For example: שִׁמְע֤וּ שָׁמַ֙יִם֙ // וְהַאֲזִ֣ינִי אֶ֔רֶץ (Iz 1:2).
2. Find at least one case of recuring consonant, in the text, which could be considered a poetic device.

II.

1. Explain the expression בְּאֻשִֽׁים in 5:2. Why do translations differ in translating this expression? For example: "wild grapes"(NRSV), "worthless ones [i.e. "grapes"]" (NAS), ἀκάνθας (LXX), "labruscas” (Vulgate). A hint: BDB provides following explanation (and notice the mark "†" at the entry): † בְּאֻשִׁים n.[m.]pl. stinking or worthless things, wild grapes (NH n. unit. בְּאוּשָׁה) (perh. adj. om. עֲנָבִים cf. Di) Is 5:2, 5:4 of Yahweh's vineyard, Vulgae labruscae (v. further De).
2. Explain the variant reading in MT and LXX again in Isa 5:2 (see the critical apparatus of BHS): וַיְקַ֛ו (MT) vs ἔμεινα (LXX). What is the difference in meaning of these two readings?

### Interpreting Isa 5:1-7

Read the interpretation of Isa 5:1-7 in Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, 81-89. What do you find most interesting in this text? Write your observations and opinions.

### Submitting the translation of Isa 5:1–7

Submit the file with your translation of Isa 5:1–7. Include notes on difficult expressions, constructions or textual matters.

## EXEGESIS OF WISDOM LITERATURE: PROVERBS 30:15-23

### Tentative translation of Prov 30:15–23

Prepare a preliminary translation of Prov 30:15–23. You must use the text of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, taking into account its critical apparatus. Compare your translation to other modern translations (English, German). Keep your translation ready when working on further tasks relating to this text. You can continually improve the translation. The translation will be submitted after all other tasks on this text are finished.

### Exegetical issues in Prov 30:15-23

1. In Prov 30,15a the Czech ecumenical translation (CEP) of the Bible reads "vampire", where most English translations read "leech". Why does the CEP has the above reading? What would be your preferred translation? You can use the following information from BDB:

**7147** ] עֲלוּקָה7148) [Hebrew) (page 763) (Strong 5936( † עֲלוּקָה **n. f.** leech )perh. Aram. loan-wd.; > vampyre-like demon, Ew al. = Ar. *ï AulakÌ* We:Heid. 2, 149, or name of sage, as some Rabb.; v. discussion De Toy(; —לַ׳ְ שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת Pr 30:15.

1. The expression in biblical Hebrew can refer either to an eagle, or to a vulture. In our passage it is translated in v. 17 as "vulture" in modern English translations, but as "eagle" in v. 19 (but cf. "eagle" both in 17 and 19 in *New American Standard Bible* - NASB). Why, do you think, the translators translated as they did? BDB refers to Mi 1:16 as the only instance, where נֶשֶׁר requires translating as "vulture". Check your favorite translation of the Bible for the English equivalent of נֶשֶׁר in Prov 30:17, 19; Mic 1:16; Deut 32:11; Hab 1:8; Isa 40:31.
2. When describing the fourth wonderful thing in Prov 30:19, modern English translations read very similar to "the way of a man with a girl" in NRSV. Notice, however, the Hebrew reading וְדֶ֖רֶךְ גֶּ֣בֶר בְּעַלְמָֽה, especially the preposition בְּ. In light of this, what could be the alternative translation of this text? How could this effect the interpretation of the text? Notice also, the decent (and less explicit) reading in LXX: καὶ ὁδοὺς ἀνδρὸς ἐν νεότητι. Give the translation of the Greek text (or check some English translation of LXX, e.g. NETS: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>).
3. Compare the masoretic Hebrew text of Prov 30:20 with the Greek text of LXX. Write the translation of the relevant passage (in Greek: τοιαύτη ὁδὸς γυναικὸς μοιχαλίδος ἥ ὅταν πράξῃ ἀπονιψαμένη οὐδέν φησιν πεπραχέναι ἄτοπον). You can check your translation in the above database NETS.

### Interpreting Prov 30:15-23

Read the following commentaries by Murphy and by Fox on Prov 30:15-23. Write brief comparison of their main ideas on the interpretation of this text. Include also some specific interpretations, which you found especially insightful or noteworthy.

### Submitting the translation of Prov 30:15-23

Submit the file with your translation of Prov 30:15-23. Include notes on difficult expressions, constructions or textual matters.

## EXEGESIS OF APODICTIC LAW: EXODUS 20:1-17 // DEUTERONOMY 5:1-22

### Tentative translation of Exod 20:1-17

Prepare a preliminary translation of Exod 20:1-17. You must use the text of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, taking into account its critical apparatus. **Include also the variant reading in Deut 5:1–22.** Compare your translation to other modern translations (English, German). Keep your translation ready when working on further tasks relating to this text. You can continually improve the translation. The translation will be submitted after all other tasks on this text are finished.

### What is the Decalogue?

Read the chapter "What is the Decalogue?" (Baker, David L. The Decalogue: Living as the People of God. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2017, 3-36).

Write a short paragraph for each of the subsections (Shape, Form, Origin, Purpose) of the chapter, providing its brief characterization. You can also add a positive or negative evaluation of the author's arguments.

### Submitting the translation of Exod 20:1–17

Submit the file with your translation of Exod 20:1–17. Include notes on difficult expressions, constructions or textual matters.

## EXEGESIS OF CASUISTIC LAW: EXODUS 21:22-27

### Tentative translation of Exod 21:22-27

Prepare a preliminary translation of Exod 21:22-27. You must use the text of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, taking into account its critical apparatus. Compare your translation to other modern translations (English, German). Keep your translation ready when working on further tasks relating to this text. You can continually improve the translation. The translation will be submitted after all other tasks on this text are finished.

### Exegetical questions in Exod 21:22-27

Read the relevant part on this passage in Houtman's commentary (Houtman, Cornelis. Exodus. Volume 3. HCOT. Leuven: Peeters, 2000, 160-172).

1. What is Houtman's explanation of the expression ‎אָסוֹן (Exod 21:22-23)?
2. What is Houtman's view of so-called "lex talionis" ("eye for an eye") in this passage?

### Submitting the translation of Exod 21:22-27

Submit the file with your translation of Exod 21:22-27. Include notes on difficult expressions, constructions or textual matters.