

# FOREWORD

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To look upon any text from a different perspective or a place in time can be most beneficial to both the researcher and the common reader. The biblical Book of Job is no exception here; the kaleidoscope of voices found in this text offers ample grounds for revelations of the most profound kind. The authors of the articles in this special edition of *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri*<sup>1</sup> (the journal of the Estonian Academical Theological Society) have all carefully listened to and analysed these voices (or lack thereof), and tackled the challenges they pose with various established methodologies. From psychology to literary studies, linguistics and theology, the nine articles included in this volume cover the history of the Book of Job, its language, literary features and contemporary interpretations, as well as its place in the wider canon of Ancient Near Eastern (wisdom) literature.

The articles featured in this journal were first presented at the conference “Job Intertextually: Synchrony and Diachrony across Creative Debate” held at the University of Tartu on 5–7 August 2018.<sup>2</sup> The event, first in a series of conferences on wisdom literature held at Tartu, was a small, intimate gathering of scholars. The range of themes discussed, however, was not narrow by any standard. With research expertise from five academic institutions (University of Pretoria, University of South Africa, University of Tartu, University of Vienna, University of Winchester, University of Zürich) the quality of discussion demanded high proficiency in the subject matter from all participants. As a result, the compact event proved to be extremely fruitful for delving into topics dissected further in the current volume. In addition to paper presentations the conference also offered a workshop on the Testament of Job, led by Anu Põldsam and Ergo Naab (both from the University of Tartu).

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Their research on this text is represented in this volume by two opposing articles on the emergence of the Testament of Job.

As indicated before, the articles cover a wide range of topics and approaches. Tobias Häner (University of Vienna) scrutinizes the literary feature of irony in the opening of God's first speech to Job (Job 38:2–3), Diana Tomingas (University of Tartu) analyses the word order of the bicola in the poetic sections of the Book of Job from an information structure perspective, Pieter van der Zwan (University of South Africa) dissects (the role of) Job's physical body using the toolbox of psychoanalysis, Stefan Fischer (University of Vienna) analyses power struggles in the Ancient Near Eastern context made visible by silence and silencing in the Book of Job, JiSeong James Kwon (University of Zürich) looks at the Aramaic Ahiqar and the Book of Job intertextually, Anu Põldsam (University of Tartu) and Ergo Naab (University of Tartu) put forward juxtaposing theories on the possible emergence of the Testament of Job (Põldsam from the perspective of Rabbinic Judaism, Naab from the perspective of early Christianity), Christo Lombaard (University of South Africa) revisits Timo Veijola's research into the relationship between the Book of Job and Genesis 22, and June Boyce-Tillman (University of Winchester) highlights the palimpsestuous elements in different artistic creations inspired by the Book of Job.

The journal would not be here without the encouragement and help of two co-organisers of the conference: Christo Lombaard (University of South Africa), and Stefan Fischer (University of Vienna). Their feedback, expertise and trust have helped us shape the volume into the form it has today. For this, we express our deepest gratitude.