

FIFTY YEARS
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE
STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND
*VETUS TESTAMENTUM**

by

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In the millennium-drunk year 2000, a number of small anniversaries are in danger of being overlooked. Among them is the fact that the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament was founded fifty years ago. The Editorial Board of *Vetus Testamentum* has decided to preface the first issue of the fiftieth volume with a brief retrospect. Naturally, this retrospect can call to mind only some small part of this history.

For us today it goes without saying that serious scholarship must at least in principle be an international undertaking. This was not always the case. The 19th century, the century of national movements, was more familiar with competition than co-operation, and the First World War put an end to a number of promising developments. In scholarship too it dug trenches, which for the first time seemed unbridgeable. But gradually a number of things were done to alleviate this situation, especially on the part of the victorious Anglo-Saxon countries.

Among Old Testament scholars the decisive initiative came from the Society for Old Testament Study. For its Winter Meeting in London on 5-7 January 1926 it invited a German, the Editor of the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Hugo Greßmann. A contributory factor in the survival of this journal, the leading organ in the field, was the fact that a Swiss, Karl Marti, was its Editor during the war and in the immediate post-war years, and in the short time of his editor-

* Translated by David E. Orton.

ship, Marti's successor Greßmann succeeded in fostering good relations with all nations and denominations.¹ Greßmann reported to his readers, obviously as something worthy of imitation: "The British scholars in the field of the Old Testament have joined together as a SOTS, elect each year their most capable member as President, have a standing secretary (Rev. T.H. Robinson, Cardiff) and meet together several times a year." As for himself, he considered it "his duty to mention that as representative of German Old Testament scholarship he was received respectfully and cordially and that the wish for good relations between the scholars at home and in Germany expressed by SOTS was met with vigorous applause."² The encounter was extended by a considerably broader circle of people when SOTS invited its German, American and French colleagues to its 18th Meeting at Keble College, Oxford, 27-30 September 1927, presenting the meeting as an "International Gathering of Old Testament Scholars".³ The photograph taken in front of the college entrance shows 54 persons, including 10 Germans; they were to have been joined by Hermann Gunkel, who was indisposed and whose paper was read by the secretary, Robinson. Robinson was in fact celebrated on all sides. He stuck rigidly to time limits on the lectures and solved the language problem that was evidently acutest among his compatriots by "summarizing the papers given in German or French in such a clear and concise manner that the trilingual 'conversation' could proceed without hold-ups. Trilingual abstracts of the lectures themselves were available."⁴

As Greßmann had been in 1926, so too the German participants in the SOTS meeting of 1927 were very impressed, and thus in the same year, Otto Eißfeldt proposed in their name the formation of "a society similar to that in England" for Germany, the tasks of which, alongside the promotion of the *ZAW* and of the conference for Old Testament scholars attached to the orientalist conferences, would include "concourse between German Old Testament scholars and those from abroad, in particular the English Society for O.T. Study". Alongside Eißfeldt and the incumbent President, Paul Volz, the Catholic Lorenz Dürr and Harry Torczyner (later Tur-Sinai) made themselves avail-

¹ Cf. O. Eißfeldt, "Sechs Jahrzehnte alttestamentlicher Wissenschaft", *Volume du Congrès Genève 1965* (VT.S 15, Leiden 1966, pp. 1-13), p. 10.

² H. Greßmann, "Mitteilungen des Herausgebers", *ZAW* 44 (1926), pp. 67-79 [76].

³ Cf. J. Hempel, "Bemerkungen des Herausgebers", *ZAW* 45 (1927), p. 160; Eißfeldt (see n. 1), p. 11.

⁴ J. Hempel, "Chronik", *ZAW* 45 (1927), pp. 228-30 [229f.].

able for the receipt of expressions of opinion on the matter—for there were of course also religious, denominational boundaries as well as national ones to be overcome.⁵ And it was there that the plan failed: the Catholics were refused participation in a permanent interdenominational association. There was thus no German counterpart to the SOTS, that could have issued invitations to a conference such as the Oxford meeting of 1927. Making appeal to private remarks by Robinson, Johannes Hempel of Göttingen, editor of *ZAW* after Greßmann's death, took matters into his own hands and issued an invitation to Göttingen for 3-10 September 1935, with Volz as Protestant and Friedrich Stummer as Catholic; there was no longer any reference to a Jew. The unofficial name of the occasion was “Zweiter Internationaler Alttestamentlertag” [Second International Conference of O.T. Scholars],⁶ the organisation of which was modelled on Oxford 1927. Almost 100 participants came from 13 countries;⁷ as in Oxford there were 25-minute papers with discussion and evening lectures without; in some simultaneous German-English translations were given, in others summaries in three languages were distributed. The Congress Volume was as presentable as its Oxford precursor.⁸ And when T.H. Robinson spoke for the guests in the opening session and Augustin Bea did the same in the concluding session, everything seemed to be in good order from both international and interdenominational points of view. Hempel was able to state with some satisfaction that “concerns” had previously been expressed, “fearing at a time of strong political and ecclesiastical tensions that current problems might be brought in from outside the world of scholarship, which could disrupt the conference”; but “nothing of the sort” had occurred. Rather, it was decided that there should be another gathering in five years' time, in a Scandinavian or Dutch university town.⁹

The gathering took place, in a Dutch university town, but not after five years but fifteen: in 1950 in Leiden. In the meantime the “current problems from outside the world of scholarship” had painfully affected Old Testament scholarship and its international character. I

⁵ Cf. O. Eißfeldt, “Mitteilung”, *ZAW* 45 (1927), pp. 314-5.

⁶ Cf. O. Eißfeldt, “Der Zweite Internationale Alttestamentlertag”, *ThBl* 14 (1935), pp. 233-49.

⁷ Eißfeldt (see note 6), p. 233 gave a lower count: “almost 70”.

⁸ *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments*, ed. P. Volz, F. Stummer, J. Hempel (*BZAW* 66, Berlin, 1936).

⁹ The preceding information is according to J. Hempel, “Chronik”, *ZAW* 53 (1935), pp. 293-310.

myself have heard eyewitnesses say that already in 1935 things were not quite as Hempel fondly imagined, and that Hempel himself bore the responsibility for this. Whatever his own view of the matter, it is evident that Hempel aligned himself increasingly with National Socialism as time went on, and that he made statements in the *ZAW* that were to discredit the journal in the international scholarly world.¹⁰ His revocation after the war¹¹ was not such as to change things as fundamentally as should have been the case. There were also German colleagues who never again published in the *ZAW* after that. In this situation there emerged the initiative of a group of Dutch scholars whose aim was not only to establish a new journal but also an organizational basis for future international co-operation. Their leader was P.A.H. de Boer, of Leiden, who together with others was involved in resistance during the years of the German Occupation, at great personal risk, and had at the same time managed, from 1942, to establish *Oudtestamentische Studiën* as a respectable series of scholarly publications. On behalf of the Dutch Society for Old Testament Study, De Boer issued an invitation to an “International Meeting of Old Testament Scholars” from 30 August to 2 September 1950 in Leiden. It had certainly not been forgotten that a similar attempt a quarter of a century earlier had been a failure: for 2-9 April 1926, a year and a half before the Meeting in Keble College, four Dutch scholars, namely B.D. Eerdmans (Leiden), H.T. Obbink (Utrecht), F.M.T. Böhl (Groningen) and J. de Groot (The Hague), had “after preparatory discussion with representatives of the Society for Old Testament Study and the German Old Testament scholars” issued an invitation to Leiden, which “could not take place because of insufficient participation”.¹²

Leiden 1950, however, was a great success. We have a lively report on it from the hand of C.R. North, which gives a sense of the overwhelming nature of such an event after the privations of the war and the post-war period.¹³ The gathering took place in the university, participants relaxed in the Botanical Gardens and ate together in the “De Doelen” restaurant—“our meals were much more leisurely affairs than

¹⁰ Cf. esp. “Chronik”, *ZAW* 59 (1942/43), pp. 209-15.

¹¹ “Chronik”, *ZAW* 61 (1945/48), pp. 231-54 [231-2].

¹² Cf. H. Greßmann, “Internationaler Alttestamentlertag”, *ZAW* 43 (1925), p. 302; K. Budde, “Das Deuteronomium und die Reform König Josias”, *ZAW* 44 (1926), pp. 177-224 [p. 177*].

¹³ “The International Congress of Old Testament Scholars. Leiden, 1950”, *ET* 62 (1950), pp. 48-50. It goes on to give the following information.

most of us, in this country at least, have lately been accustomed to". Guests from abroad were accommodated in private houses. The number of participants was close to 100,¹⁴ approximately one third of them Dutch, 15 Britons, and further representatives from the United States, Canada, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Palestine (sic North). The author of the report was particularly impressed by a number of individuals: "Perhaps the most striking and picturesque figures were Professor Ludwig and Frau Köhler, of Zürich. Professor Köhler, a born speaker and a lively wit, is *in medias res* with a new Hebrew Lexicon, of which several parts have already been published. Professor Walter Baumgartner, of Basel, who is responsible for the Aramaic section of the Lexicon, is another lively person, and I managed to get a good snapshot of him and Köhler in animated conversation. Comparatively few of us English had ever before met Professor Martin Noth, of Bonn, who has published a number of important books during the past dozen years, the latest, just to hand as I write, a History of Israel. He was brim-full of good spirits, and looked more like a gentleman farmer than anything I had anticipated of him. Professor G.J. Thierry of Leiden, who presided at one of the sessions, was geniality itself, and handled discussion almost as if he were conducting a Dutch auction." North further mentions the names of Wilhelm Vischer, Millar Burrows, Bentzen, Engnell and Puukko, "the veteran scholar of Helsinki". A broad spectrum indeed! Missing were Alt, of Leipzig, and Eißfeldt of Halle, who were unable to obtain a visa. There were receptions with the Rector Magnificus, with the Lord Mayor and at Brill's, where among other things, cigars were distributed: "Most of us, as we smoked the cigars, persuaded ourselves that we had, in a sense, earned them by our past and future patronage of Brill publications." Then there was an exhibition of oriental manuscripts and books in the University library and an excursion on a motor boat into an area of lakes, "where, as well as discussing the Old Testament, we were able to admire the typically Dutch scenery". It should not be concluded from all this, however, "that the Congress was mainly a social function". There were a dozen papers, "and our Dutch hosts generously assigned all but one of them to their guests". They were read from proofs, and on the last day it was pos-

¹⁴ Here too, another reporter gives a variation downwards: "approximately 80" (M. Noth, "Internationaler Alttestamentlertag in Leiden", *ThLZ* 75 [1950], pp. 637-8).

sible to buy the finished volume, *Oudtestamentische Studiën* VIII, for 15 guilders, which even included a pasted-in group photograph which had been taken two days earlier.¹⁵ So was it at all worthwhile to have come? Yes, North answers: “To be sure it was; the value of these Conferences lies not so much in the papers read, as in the contacts made with fellow-workers overseas, which often develop into lifelong friendships.” A statement which recurs in a comparable form in practically every report of the following conferences!

At the end there was a Business Meeting. The meeting brought into being The International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, with its seat in Leiden and with Professor T. Jansma as Secretary, and with the task of “co-operating in connection with Unesco for the promotion of the knowledge of the Old Testament”. As the venue for the first Congress of the Organization, Copenhagen was selected—thus the Scandinavian university town, after all!—and as its President up to the time of that Congress, Professor Aage Bentzen. In addition, it was decided, to publish a quarterly journal containing “articles, short notes and reviews”. This was evidently the main concern of De Boer. As guest of the SOTS he had previously discussed the idea and found “much approval but not enough to realize the foundation of a new quarterly”. Thereupon he had gained the support of such authorities as H.H. Rowley, L. Köhler, J. Muilenburg and I.L. Seeligmann, and won over the house of Brill to take upon itself the publishing and printing. On the evening before the Business Meeting he assembled in a restaurant with the auspicious name “De Harmonie”, Messrs. G.W. Anderson, A. Bentzen, Millar Burrows, H. Cazelles and M. Noth, who were instituted the next day as the Editorial Board, and who in January 1951 met for the first time as such in his house in Oegstgeest near Leiden. On the table were the galley proofs of the first issue, with contributions by Alt, Anderson, Bentzen, de Boer, Cazelles, Driver, Kahle, Noth, Rowley and others.¹⁶ A good beginning!

After 49 years, one may dare say that the journal has fulfilled the expectations placed in it. Certainly issues with such a preponderance of prominent authors were not the general rule. But even a glance at the Index which appeared in 1995¹⁷ and in particular its regular use show how many authors were involved and how much work was done.

¹⁵ It is again to be found in *VT* 25 (1975), following p. 260.

¹⁶ Cf. P.A.H. de Boer, “Preface”, *VT* 25 (1975), pp. 257-60.

¹⁷ J. Holleman, *An Index to Vetus Testamentum Volumes 1-45 (1951-1995)*, (Leiden, 1996).

In 1975, about halfway between the founding of the journal and the present day, P.A.H. de Boer listed as the main areas: “exegetical studies, aspects of the text and its translations, of their transmission, of grammar, syntax, historical and archaeological problems and, in particular, contributions on comparative religion”.¹⁸ This is how things have remained, and what has also remained, or indeed been maintained even more consistently, is that in general specialized areas which are catered for by periodicals of their own, are not accommodated. From the very beginning *Vetus Testamentum* has had to maintain itself between journals serving Old Testament (or biblical) studies; their number has increased further in this half-century. Internationalism, and breadth of topic and viewpoint, and the concern for quality can no doubt be viewed as characteristic features of *Vetus Testamentum*. The languages of the articles published remain, as before, English, French and German, with a growing preponderance of English; occasional forays into further languages have not met with success. As with other journals, the number of manuscripts submitted has grown steadily. The selection is the responsibility of the Editorial Board, which has grown in membership from an original 6 to 10. The effective editor, not specially elevated as such above his colleagues in the credits, but who is charged with by far the greatest share of the work, was J.A. Emerton from 1976 to 1997, following the retirement of P.A.H. de Boer, and in 1998 his place was taken by A. van der Kooij and R.P. Gordon, the first responsible for articles and short notes, the latter for reviews and the book list. Special responsibility was and is borne by A. Lemaire for the Supplement series, and an American member of the Editorial Board (currently Ph.A. Bird, following W.L. Holladay), to whom submissions of articles from the USA and Canada are made in the first instance. The Editorial Board is supported by the currently 26-member Advisory Committee, which meets every three years at the I.O.S.O.T. Congress. Despite all its continuity in form and content, the history of *Vetus Testamentum* is also a story of cautious innovations, of which one might at least mention the increase in the extent of the journal, the development of the book list, the constant efforts to achieve brevity so as to be able to include a greater number of articles, and most recently the addition of abstracts to the articles and short notes.

On the title page, *Vetus Testamentum* is called “Quarterly published

¹⁸ “Preface” (see note 16), p. 258.

by the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament". The journal was one of the two main purposes of the establishment of the Organization in Leiden in 1950, the other being the Congresses.¹⁹ The Organization is very much in evidence in them. At the Business Meeting of the first Congress, in Copenhagen in 1953, under the chairmanship of Martin Noth, it was decided that: "The Organization acts only through its congresses and its executive committee. There is neither individual nor group membership. The congress, to be held once every three years, appoints the executive committee of the Organization. Members are re-eligible. The executive committee consists of two members, a president and a secretary. It is charged with the daily affairs of the Organization and the arrangement of the congresses in co-operation with the special staff of each congress. The staff of the congresses consists of scholars and assistants from the country where the congress will be held."²⁰

The most striking characteristic of the Organization is its lack of a membership structure. This could have been a natural step, particularly in view of the national and denominational religious divergences, but unlike SOTS or the Society of Biblical Literature would have had the disadvantage that it would scarcely be possible for a continuous working association to emerge. The institutional continuity is given above all in the person of the Secretary, especially when the latter is at the same time Editor of *Vetus Testamentum* (Emerton from 1976, van der Kooij since 1990); by virtue of its composition, which is as balanced as possible (completed in 1981 with an Israeli member) the Editorial Board has the de facto function of a standing committee. As its President, SOTS elects each year its "most capable" (*den Tüchtigsten*) member, and the I.O.S.O.T. elects every three years the person who is to set up the next congress, though the deliberations generally are concerned more with the suitability of the venue rather than the candidate. The Staff, the Organization committee, is put together by the elected President in his own place, according to his own requirements.

The first congress, Copenhagen 1953, was overshadowed by the sudden death of its President, Aage Bentzen, shortly before. His widow, Edith Bentzen, supported by her daughters and the "Staff", carried the prepa-

¹⁹ The Leiden Peshitta Project was added later, the progress of which is reported regularly in the Business Meeting.

²⁰ As recorded in the duplicated Agenda for 28 August 1953 (kindly made available to me by Prof. B. Otzen of Aarhus).

rations through to completion in an admirable way, took part in the events “as a lively focus”²¹ and later graced the congresses in Strasbourg, Oxford, Bonn, Geneva and Rome with her presence. Elected in Copenhagen as President of the Organization for the three-year period from 1953 to 1956, was G.R. Driver, and G.W. Anderson as Secretary, who filled this office until 1974. Further, Strasbourg was chosen as the venue for the 1956 conference, with R. de Vaux as President, the Strasbourg staff, consisting of E. Jacob and C. Hauret, being determined at the same time. The triumvirate was maintained one further time: the President of the Organization from 1956 to 1959 was W.F. Albright, and the President of the Oxford Congress in 1959 was G.R. Driver. Thereafter there was regularly for three years a President of the Organization, who also chaired the Congress, the standing Secretary of the Organization and in each case a Secretary of the Congress, appointed by the incumbent President. The procedure that became established for the choice of President and venue (Business Meeting Edinburgh 1974) is as follows. In the April issue of *Vetus Testamentum* in the year before the Congress, there is a call for suggestions for the next presidency and the following congress venue, to be given to the Secretary of the Organization, on the basis of which the Editorial Board proposes a President and the venue for the next Congress at the Business Meeting of the Congress.

The Congresses and Presidents after Oxford were: Bonn 1962 (M. Noth), Geneva 1965 (J.J. Stamm), Rome 1968 (R.A.F. McKenzie), Uppsala 1971 (H. Ringgren), Edinburgh 1974 (G.W. Anderson), Göttingen 1977 (W. Zimmerli), Vienna 1980 (W. Kornfeld), Salamanca 1983 (L. Alonso Schökel), Jerusalem 1986 (B. Mazar), Leuven 1989 (C. Brekelmans), Paris 1992 (A. Caquot), Cambridge 1995 (J.A. Emerton), Oslo 1998 (M. Sæbø); sights are now set on Basel 2001 (E. Jenni). It may be of interest to compare the numbers of participants:²² Copenhagen 137, Strasbourg 252, Oxford 265, Bonn 232, Geneva 274, Rome 229, Uppsala 249, Edinburgh 306, Göttingen 404, Vienna 330, Salamanca 337, Jerusalem 458, Leuven 433, Paris 413, Cambridge 363, Oslo 405.

²¹ Johannes Hempel, “Kopenhagen 1953”, *ZAW* 65 (1953), pp. 294-6 [p. 294].

²² Complete accuracy is unattainable, but also unnecessary. I have added up the names in the official lists of participants and taken account of added corrections where these were given, but not counted the “accompanying persons”, since they are omitted in several of the lists; the number of these, where it can be ascertained, ranges from 25 (Strasbourg) to 83 (Edinburgh).

Only someone who has participated in all these congresses could describe them adequately. Each of them had its own atmosphere, conditioned by the character of the venue, the quality of the organization, the exhibitions, the encounters in the breaks and in the framework programme, but also, one hopes, in the main events, the scholarly papers and discussions. Certainly no one can be blamed for remembering the playing of the bagpiper at the Edinburgh banquet, or the harpist at the opening in Jerusalem, as fondly as many a paper that was heard, and one of the most pleasant memories was surely of the scholar who was responsible for giving the first main paper at the Congress and thereafter, *re optime gesta*, immediately disappeared, to be seen, to the end of the conference, only in the street, by the river and on the excursion. But he was excused on account of his hearing impediment. The main focus always remained the main focus, despite everything.

The scholarly results of the congresses are available in 16 impressive volumes of the *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*. The Leiden procedure, where the Congress Volume was already available on the last day, did not last long. In Copenhagen it was repeated, but this meant that a number of papers contained in the volume “were never delivered: Auerbach did not come, for some reason; Bič was not given a permit to leave Prague; Parrot did not come; Engnell had half-committed himself earlier to Bentzen (they were enemies), did not submit a manuscript, and telephoned just before the congress to say that he might come and finish off his paper in the train from Stockholm, and finally called to say that he would not be coming! De Vaux then stood in for Engnell and gave a report on the newest developments in the Qumran questions.”²³ Later it became customary for manuscripts to be handed to the Editor before the end of the Congress, so that the volume could appear the following year. But this was far from being successful every year: there were manuscripts that were received only long after the Congress, or not at all; some were published in other journals. Publication after one year was less and less achievable as time went on.

A good argument against an over-hasty printing, which emerged already following the Copenhagen Congress, was “so that speakers were given an opportunity to take account of the most important points of the discussion and incorporate them in their articles. The work done

²³ Information given in a letter from Prof. B. Otzen (9.8.1998).

at the Congress itself, never insubstantial, would thus be of immediate use to scholarship and would not have to take the roundabout route through reviews of the printed publication.”²⁴ In Uppsala there was even an intention to give an account of the most important discussions in the Congress Volume. Though this was not realized *in toto*, a discussion speaker, R.C. Culley, was encouraged to work his *Votum*, which was regarded as particularly significant, into a regular article, which was then published in the Congress Volume, following the article to which it related.²⁵ Almost all the congresses meet with the complaint that discussion already suffers in the congresses themselves, since insufficient time is allowed for it and those giving papers frequently do not keep to their time limits. An obvious way to deal with this is to reduce the number of papers. Thus, in the report on the Business Meeting at the Geneva Congress, at which 27 papers had been given, we read with reference to the following Congress: “Le nouveau président élu a été autorisé à établir pour cette occasion un programme restreint, en vue d’un échange d’idées plus détaillé.”²⁶ As a result, in Rome there were 17 papers—a number that has almost always been exceeded since. A risky experiment, but a largely successful one, was the introduction of the Panel Discussions at Oslo. In all, for good or ill it will probably stay with the situation as expressed in a report on the Leuven Congress: “The list of main papers reads—and at such a Congress it could scarcely be any different—like a guide to the main areas of OT scholarship.”²⁷ Each participant can supplement this with a selection from the Short Papers or by attending one of the conferences of related specialist organizations that now regularly directly precede or follow the Meeting: the IOSCS, the IOQS, the IOTS and the IOMS.²⁸

In Oslo Prof. D.J.A. Clines gave a Short Paper, which under the title, “From Copenhagen to Oslo. What Has (And Has Not) Happened at IOSOT?” placed under scrutiny “what has been happening in Old

²⁴ J. Hempel, *ZAW* 65, p. 295.

²⁵ Cf. P.A.H. de Boer, *Congress Volume Uppsala* (VT.S XXII, Leiden, 1972), p. vii and Culley’s article, *ibid.*, pp. 129-42.

²⁶ P.A.H. de Boer, “Préface”, *Volume du Congrès Genève 1965* (VT.S XV, Leiden, 1966), p. vii.

²⁷ H.-J. Fabry, “Bericht zum XIII. Kongreß der IOSOT”, *BZ* 34 (1990), pp. 148-50 [p. 148].

²⁸ The International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies / for Qumran Studies / for Targum Study / for Masoretic Studies.

Testament studies as reflected in these meetings". He asked: "Has the world of Old Testament scholarship been changing as dramatically as some think, or do all things continue much as they have since the creation? How innovative and creative have papers at the IOSOT meetings been? What changes have taken place in the prevailing areas of interest, what methods have fallen into disuse and what have become dominant? Have Old Testament scholars acquired any interests in intellectual fields outside their own professional specialisms, have they any sense of the social responsibility of the discipline, do they care about the usefulness of Old Testament criticism? How truly international has the IOSOT been? How gender-sensitive? What new formats for scholarly interchange have been developed over the years? And what kind of teachers are Old Testament scholars if their IOSOT papers are anything to judge by?"²⁹

The reader of these questions will not find it difficult to imagine many of the answers which Professor Clines gave to them, and will in many cases fully or partly agree with them. But perhaps too, especially if he or she does not live in the proximity of Sheffield, the reader will not necessarily share the same notions of "innovative and creative" and not be able necessarily to presuppose them among the many Congress participants either. In all openness to innovation, he will not give up the tried and tested without due consideration, and if he must grant the right to divergent interests, will allow it in the broadest possible scope. Each President, who after his election, is free to accept or reject the advice of the Editorial Board and other experts, and put together a programme of his own choice for the next Congress, stands before a task that is sometimes like squaring the circle, but which has its fascination precisely in that. Each President has solved this problem in a different way and has indirectly also given it a colouring of his own. Such colouring is evident time after time in the Presidential Addresses, but also in the individual papers particularly of eminent scholars who are given a special position in the programme of the Congresses and in the Congress Volumes. From the references contained in these texts it would no doubt be possible to put together a good picture of Old Testament scholarship in the last half-century. There were, always in a broad horizon and with contemporary interest, and much less easily classifiable than may appear in the follow-

²⁹ This is the main part of the résumé in the Congress issue, p. 104.

ing list, retrospects on the distant or more recent past in scholarship (De Vaux in Copenhagen, Baumgartner in Bonn, Eißfeldt in Geneva), invocations of the *genius loci* (Nyberg in Uppsala, Anderson in Edinburgh, Kornfeld in Vienna, Sæbø in Oslo and last but not least Mazar in Jerusalem), discussions in the fields of philology (Driver in Strasbourg, Emerton in Cambridge), in the history of religions (in general terms, Vriezen in Rome, and in particular Caquot in Paris), in exegesis (Brekelmans in Leuven), in methodology (Alonso in Salamanca), in general and specific theological questions (De Vaux in Strasbourg,³⁰ Zimmerli in Göttingen), and there was in Martin Noth's Presidential Address in Bonn, which was unfortunately not published, the unassuming but beautiful sentence: "Sensations tend to be the end result of decades of continuous research."

I conclude with an anecdote, the historicity of which I can vouch for. On the boat trip that formed the excursion in 1962, the Congress Secretary, exhausted by his efforts in preparing the meeting, stared rather morosely into the murky waters of the Rhine and said to a neighbour, an eminent Professor: "Wouldn't it perhaps be a good thing for scholarship if this ship sank?" Quick as a flash the answer came: "No, there are not enough of Von Rad's students on board." The ship did not sink, and our hope is that the ship of the I.O.S.O.T. and of *Vetus Testamentum* will not sink in the next half-century, but will offer space and a safe passage to all who will board it, whatever school they belong to.

³⁰ "A propos de la Théologie Biblique", *ZAW* 68 (1956), pp. 225-7. The rest can be found in the Congress Volumes in *VT.S.*