A *novum* HIPHIL Novum?

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At the turn of 2024, HIPHIL Novum has gone through some major changes. The founding editor, Prof. Nicolai Winther-Nielsen, has announced his retirement and has handed over the journal to a new board of editors. From very early on, Winther-Nielsen saw the need for a journal to publish detailed and technical papers on biblical linguistics, digital approaches, and modern pedagogical methods for language acquisition. The journal has become known for its innovative, data-driven research pertaining to the age-old study of the Hebrew Bible. Since the early days of HIPHIL, originally launched in 2004, much has changed in biblical scholarship. Biblical studies meet digital humanities, and the field is burgeoning with new experimental methods that complement and challenge existing knowledge and presuppositions. More than ever, there is a need for a journal to disseminate new research ideas, engage with long-debated questions from new perspectives, reflect on the hermeneutics of contemporary methods, and scrutinize the potential for biblical exegesis and translation.

HIPHIL Novum will retain its name, but I shall use this occasion to highlight some of the novelties at this turn of editorship. Firstly, to accommodate the need for sharing research ideas or results, or summarizing PhD-theses, we will begin publishing short papers with a length of maximum 2,500 words, beside regular papers. The short papers will ideally function as communication among researchers to suggest innovative ideas or debate existing ones, all of which within an editorial framework. Secondly, individual papers will now be published as soon as they have been accepted by the editors. By doing so, production time can be diminished, and the ongoing scholarly discussion thereby facilitated. Finally, the new editorial board has reconsidered and rephrased the scope of the journal. In the future, we will focus more narrowly on biblical linguistics (Hebrew, Greek, and related languages), but we will approach this area from all conceivable angles to explore the depth and breadth of how biblical linguistics may inform exegesis and bible translation.

The first paper of 2024 illustrates well a future – even contemporary – direction of biblical linguistics. In his "Uncovering Theological and Ethical Biases in LLMs: An Integrated Hermeneutical Approach Employing Texts from the Hebrew Bible", A.G. Elrod sets out to explore the ideological biases in Large Language Models (LLMs), including the well-known OpenAI's ChatGPT. Many scholars are already using LLMs for various tools, and it is not difficult to imagine a future where these tools are indispensable for all sorts of tasks. It is equally clear that LLMs do not produce texts "out of the blue" but uses acquired knowledge of texts to generate new ones. The author, then, tasks a variety of LLMs with generating texts related to particular parts of the Hebrew Bible, and employs qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the content and underlying biases of the output. The author thus sparks the debate on the creative potential of LLMs but also their (current) limits and potential risks.

On behalf of the editorial board, I am delighted to welcome the readers of this first paper.

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