

‘My Tongue is the Pen of a Skilful Scribe’: Poetics, Performance, and Philology

A conference co-convened by Hindy Najman, Arjen Bakker, and Rebekah Van Sant
26-27 April 2026, Oriel College, University of Oxford (Harris Lecture Theatre)

Sunday, 26 April (Day 1)

8:30: Coffee

9:00–9:45: Hindy Najman (Oriel College, Oxford), “Poetry and Pluriformity in Ancient Jewish Literature”

9:45–10:30: Emmylou Grosser (University of the Free State), “Building on Unparalleled Poetry: Contributions and Ongoing Research Questions for Biblical Hebrew Poetry”

10:30–11:15: Hans Decker (Zurich), “Poetic Brevity and the Idealised Imagination”

11:15–11:30: Coffee

11:30–12:15: Chip Dobbs-Allsopp (Princeton Theological Seminary), “Song into Lament: A Reading of Psalm 137”

12:15–13:00: Yovella Ball (Oriel College, Oxford), “‘The Sound of my Weeping’: The Use of Speech and Sound in Lament Psalms”

13:00–14:00: Lunch

14:00–14:45: Pierre Van Hecke (Leuven), “The Hermeneutics of Metaphorical Networks: Case-Studies from Classical Hebrew Poetry”

14:45–15:30: Elaine James (Princeton Theological Seminary), “Poetry and Plants in Hosea”

15:30–16:15: Dorota Molin (AMES, Oxford), “Inner landscape and dislocated self: space poetics in the Song of Songs”

16:15–16:30: Coffee

16:30–17:15: Judith Newman (Toronto), “Poetry and Prophecy: Rethinking Early Jewish Poetics”

17:15–18:00: Rebekah Van Sant (Worcester College, Oxford), “Ambiguity and Poetics in Prophecy: The book of Isaiah”

Monday, 27 April (Day 2)

Harris Lecture Theatre, Oriel College.

8:30: Coffee

9:00–9:45: Arjen Bakker (Cambridge), “Between Poetry and Prayer: Composition and Collection of Hymns in the Late Second Temple Period”

9:45–10:30: Noam Mizrahi (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “Discerning Order in the Chaos: Poetic Form, Thematic Content, and Historical Context in Deutero-Zechariah”

10:30–11:15: Irene Zwiep (Amsterdam), “From speech to song to poem: the prosody of emotion in early Hebrew poetics”

11:15–11:30: Coffee

11:30–12:15: Elisabeth Hollender (Frankfurt), “Choices and Agency in Medieval Ashkenazic Liturgy”

12:15–13:00: Aaron J. Koller (Cambridge), “Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Use of Poetry in Northern France: Polemical Uses of a Literary Form”

13:00–14:00: Lunch

14:00–14:45: Wout van Bekkum (Groningen), “Modern Studies of Hebrew Hymnology as Literature: Conditions and Wishes”

14:45–15:30: Joachim Yeshaya (Tilburg), “Hebrew Homonymy in the Oeuvre of Yosef ben Tanhum ha-Yerushalmi: Between Exegesis, Lexicography, Poetry and Rhymed Prose”

15:30–15:45: Coffee

15:45–16:30: Benjamin Pollock (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “Towards a Poetics of Spoken-Word Bible Translation: Colometry in the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible”

16:30–17:15: Oliver Geffen Obregon (Oriel College, Oxford), “Poetry in Translation: The Task of the Translator, Scripture, and the Word of God”

17:15: Reflections: Hindy Najman, Arjen Bakker, and Rebekah Van Sant