

**Biblical Law Section**  
**Abstracts for 2009 Session on Law and Narrativity**  
**Monday, November 23, 9:00-11:30 a.m.**

James W. Watts

*The Rhetorical Function of Exodus 32-34 in the Pentateuch*

In the Pentateuch, the contrast between law and narrative, or more precisely, ritual instructions and ritual narrative, is nowhere more stark than in the relationship between the Golden Calf story (Exod 32-34) and the instructions for building the Tabernacle (Exod 25-31, 35-40). The former vilifies Aaron by placing him at the center of the idolatrous event while the latter celebrates Aaron and his sons as divinely consecrated priests. Though source criticism has long since distinguished the authors of these accounts, it does not explain the intentions behind a literary juxtaposition that is too stark to be anything but intentional. Nor can it explain why the Aaronide dynasties who controlled both the Torah and the Second Temple allowed this negative depiction of Aaron to stand. Rhetorical analysis of the function of Exodus 32-34 in the Second Temple period provides a basis for seeking answers to these questions.

Eckart Otto

*Revisions in the Legal History of Covenant Code, Deuteronomy, Holiness Code, and the Legal Hermeneutics of the Torah*

There existed a continuity of legal hermeneutics beginning with the revision of the Covenant Code by the preexilic book of Deuteronomy down to the final formation of the Pentateuch. The intention of revision was not replacement of the revised text but supplementation. The revising text became the hermeneutical key for the interpretation of the revised text, the book of Deuteronomy for the Covenant Code. The postexilic literary history of the Pentateuch made this relation explicit.

Christophe Nihan

*Sacral Law and Narrative in Leviticus: The Case of Leviticus 24:10-23*

Although Leviticus mostly consists of legal and cultic instructions, with only a minimal narrative framework, one major exception is H's version of the lex talionis in Lev 24:10-23. In this passage "(sacral) law" and "narrative" are significantly interwoven. The account in Lev 24:10-23 raises several fascinating issues, making its overall interpretation rather difficult. Specialists of biblical law have tended to focus on v. 17-21 the talionic law itself discussing the meaning of that passage from a comparative and inner-biblical perspective. By contrast, the problem of the relationship between H's talionic law and the overall account of Lev 24:10-23 is less frequently addressed, and remains somewhat unclear in many treatments. A comprehensive treatment of Lev 24:10-23 should therefore combine a study of the place of H's lex talionis in the history of biblical and ancient near-eastern law with a discussion of the relationship between v. 10-15a, 15b-16 and 17-21 from a literary-critical and a legal-hermeneutical perspective. In particular, this

paper will argue that Lev 24:10-23 is a late insert in H evincing some interesting parallels with similar \"sacral laws\" in Numbers (especially Num 9:6-15; 15:32-36 and 27:1-11). It is against such historical and literary background that the nature of the topics addressed in Lev 24 as well as the kind of inner-biblical exegesis developed throughout this legislation need to be assessed. In addition to being a case-study in legal methodology, therefore, such an approach also has significant implications for understanding the legal hermeneutics of the late, post-Priestly editors of the books of Leviticus and Numbers.

Reinhard Achenbach

*Zippora and Kosbi: Two Cases of Exogamy in the Pentateuch*

The legal status of gerîm and of nâkhrîm and of the related peoples in Israel's neighborhood (Edom, Ammon, Moab etc.) has been an issue of permanent discussion among scholars. One of the main questions is the amount of „exclusivism“ of „inclusivism“ in the traditions of the Pentateuch and the correlation between priestly, deuteronomistic and non-priestly/non-dtr layers. The debate concerns also the relation between Israel and remote foreign ethnic groups and the possibility of exogamic relations. From the point of view of the endtext of the Pentateuch we have two cases of exogamic relations with Midianites: Moses legally acknowledged marriage to Zippora, whose children could even become Levites in the service of the sanctuary (1 Chr 23,15.17), and the case of illegal intercourse of Simri ben Salus with Kosbi (Num 25,5-18). The paper will discuss synchronic and diachronic aspects of the story as part of the Torah.