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The Society for Old Testament Study

(Founded 1917)

BULLETIN FOR 2002

President: Professor John Bartlett

WINTER MEETING

The seventy-seventh Winter Meeting of the Society was held from Wednesday 2nd to Friday 4th January 2002 at Halifax Hall, University of Sheffield.

The retiring President, Professor Michael Goulder (Birmingham), installed as President for 2002 Professor John Bartlett (Dublin), who delivered his Presidential Address on the subject 'Between Scylla and Charybdis: The Problem of Israelite Historiography': In this paper, Scylla represented the extreme 'revisionist' view that biblical history-writing had more to do with literary artistry than with historical fact, and Charybdis the conservative view that assumed the basic trustworthiness of the biblical historians' accounts. The background to and the substance of the revisionist case were presented. Central to the problem was the evaluation of the Deuteronomistic History as an historical source; it was argued that the biblical historians did have a realistic sense of historical perspective and could not be dismissed as presenting 'bogus' history. Both revisionists and conservatives of whatever religious belief could and should agree on historical method in interpreting ancient texts. Modern historians needed better to understand the mindset of the ancient historians, to assess their motives and to date their texts, in order to evaluate them fairly as sources for the history they would write.

The following papers were delivered:

Professor Michael Knibb (London), 'The Book of the Watchers in a Wisdom Context': The picture of Enoch that is presented, both within *1 Enoch* itself and in the wider circle of Enochic writings, is essentially that of a scribal figure, a learned man known for his wisdom and knowledge, particularly astronomical knowledge. This picture was discussed in the light of the long-standing debate concerning the relationship between the apocalyptic writings and the wisdom tradition, particularly the view that the origins of 'apocalyptic' are to be found in mantic wisdom. It was noted that Enoch himself is hardly presented as a mantic, and that there are significant differences

between the Book of Enoch and the wisdom writings in the Hebrew Bible and the Apocrypha. Furthermore, a number of scholars have recently argued that there are passages in *Sirach* that indicate it was written in polemical opposition to writings such as *1 Enoch*. However, the corpus of wisdom writings from Qumran, and in particular 4QMysteries and 4QInstruction, has been seen to provide important parallels to *1 Enoch*. Both 4QMysteries and 4QInstruction emphasize the mysterious and heavenly character of knowledge, and both are concerned with the themes of cosmology and judgement, while in 4QInstruction these themes provide a theological framework for the traditional wisdom instructions it contains. Against the background of the presentation of Enoch as a scribal figure and the connections between *1 Enoch* and writings such as 4QMysteries and 4QInstruction, the paper examined the wisdom characteristics of the Book of the Watchers. Amongst other things, attention was drawn to the theme of the revelation by Enoch of cosmological and eschatological mysteries, and the contrast that is drawn between this revelation and the revelation of the heavenly secrets by the angels, which are described as ‘a worthless mystery’ (cf. 16:3-4). It was suggested, in conclusion, that while *Sirach* may well provide evidence of a critical attitude towards the possession of esoteric knowledge, 4QInstruction and 4QMysteries do present us with wisdom writings the perspective of which is much closer to that of *1 Enoch* and underline the view that its author belonged in sapiential circles.

Professor Robert Hayward (Durham), ‘Days without Number: Jacob, Israel, and Jesus ben Sira’: The textual witnesses to Ben Sira/Sirach 37:25 contrast the life of human beings consisting of few days with that of Israel, which is for days without number; and the verse attracts commentators’ attention because of its textual variants and its uncertain position within chapter 37 as a whole. It is widely regarded as secondary. This paper argued that the verse is part of a larger complex of ideas, attested elsewhere in the textual witnesses to Ben Sira/Sirach, concerning the future hope of Israel. Important here is the appearance of the rare title for Israel ‘Jeshurun’ as a variant reading in Hebrew manuscripts of Ben Sira, a title which LXX significantly rendered as ‘beloved’, having ‘messianic’ overtones. This parallels a similar textual ‘instability’ in verses of Ben Sira/Sirach which describe Israel as in receipt of either ‘blessing’ or ‘first-born sonship’, verses which are central to the sage’s thinking about the divine gift of land to Israel. It was suggested that Joachim Schaper’s recent researches on LXX Psalms might illuminate the different traditions about Israel’s future hope attested by the various textual traditions of key verses in Ben Sira/Sirach, offering the possibility (*contra* Schaper) that the sage’s own attitudes towards Israel’s future might not have been as ‘conservative’ as sometimes supposed.

Dr Thomas Brodie (Limerick), ‘Towards Tracing the Unity of

the Primary History (Genesis–Kings)’: Building on recent claims about the unity of specific biblical texts, particularly the presenter’s own studies on the dialogue-like unity of Genesis and of 1 Kings 16:29–2 Kings 13 (*Genesis as Dialogue* [OUP, 2001] and *The Crucial Bridge: The Elijah–Elisha Narrative as an Interpretive Synthesis of Genesis–Kings...* [Liturgical Press, 2000]), this paper proposed both that the entire Primary History (Genesis–Kings) forms a unity — a unity that is complex and dialogical rather than linear — and that it is the result of a single process of composition. This need not mean just one writer. It is possible that several authors, using hundreds of sources, worked for decades; but if so, they worked in coordination to produce a single work. The evidence for unity falls under three broad headings: the unity within individual books; the continuity between books; and the continuity within the Primary History as a whole. Elements of overall continuity include: external plausibility; coherence of content; coherence of structure, particularly between the Primary History’s beginning, centre, and end; and the way in which the entire narrative is systematically mirrored in the Elijah–Elisha account. If Calum Carmichael is correct, the entire narrative, including the Elijah–Elisha narrative, is also mirrored in some complex way in Mosaic law. Accordingly, apart from initial drafting and final editing, the process of composition seems to have been essentially three-part: the writing of the basic narrative, from creation to the fall of Jerusalem; the distilling of that history into prophetic language (the Elijah–Elisha narrative); and finally, the interweaving of the entire narrative into the corpus and language of Mosaic law (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).

Professor Alan Millard (Liverpool), ‘Books in Ancient Israel’: Whereas Babylonia and Egypt provide examples of books, that is, written narratives of enduring value created for edification or amusement, from the third millennium BCE onwards, the oldest copies of Hebrew books visible are the Dead Sea Scrolls, raising the question, ‘Were there books in Iron Age Israel and Judah?’ Currently it is asserted there was no literature there before the Assyrian period, or that there is no real evidence for literacy. Four counter-arguments were offered. Firstly, ample evidence exists for the use of writing for administrative purposes throughout the Monarchy, in major towns and also in small settlements and forts. Secondly, books are absent from the neighbouring kingdoms, yet they have yielded narrative texts on stone (e.g., the Mesha and Tel Dan Stelae, the Byblos inscriptions, the Sefire treaties), texts hardly novel when inscribed, nor likely to be written only on stone, implying other examples existed on papyrus, leather, or waxed tablets. The Siloam Tunnel Inscription and fragments from Jerusalem and Samaria prove that Hebrew monuments existed. Thirdly, the use of perishable materials is responsible for the absence of books. This appears from comparison of the Ugaritic texts

with contemporary documents from Canaan and from considering the types of texts written on papyrus and on ostraca at Elephantine. Fourthly, rare examples of Hebrew literary texts suggest more existed. The 'Priestly Benediction' on the Ketef Hinnom plaques, Arad Ostrakon 88, a Horvat 'Uza ostrakon, and the Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom graffiti show people were writing Hebrew prose and verse. The Tell Deir 'Alla Balaam text, painted on plaster before 800 BCE as a column of a roll, is the final demonstration. These sources give sufficient basis for accepting that books were written and read in Israel and Judah during the Monarchy period. Some of them may survive in the Hebrew Bible.

Professor Amnon Ben-Tor (Jerusalem), 'Observations from Tel-Hazor': The archaeological excavations at Hazor are of considerable interest to Old Testament scholars because of the sequence of events which can be observed at that particular site. A huge Canaanite city, the 'head of all those kingdoms' (Joshua 11:10), is violently destroyed by fire. Who destroyed Canaanite Hazor and when can at present not be determined with certainty. The only written record regarding this event is the one given in Joshua 11:10-14. Admittedly, this account is centuries later than the events described, yet some historical memory, based perhaps on oral traditions, should not automatically be ruled out. In this context the Merneptah stele (approximately 1210 BCE), in which one finds the earliest mention in any external record of the name 'Israel' (as a people!), is noteworthy. Following a period of about two centuries of abandonment and sporadic occupation, a period during which there appears to be no central authority in the land, the site rises from the ashes. At this stage the settled area is much smaller than that of the previous Canaanite city, and only half as large as that which would follow. Hazor of the 10th century BCE (following the traditional chronology) is still an 'embryonic city', sparsely built, extending over an area of only about 8 acres, but already impressively fortified by a casemate wall and a six-chambered gate (cf. 1 Kings 9:15). In the 9th century BCE Israelite Hazor reaches its peak: it doubles in size; a citadel, public installations such as huge waterworks, storehouses, and new fortifications are built. Decline gradually sets in during the 8th century BCE, resulting in part from Aramean and Assyrian pressure. In the middle of that century Hazor is partially destroyed by an earthquake (cf. Amos 1:1; Zechariah 14:5), and then it is finally destroyed in the third quarter of the 8th century. Evidence for this violent destruction, which should most probably be attributed to the devastating conquest of the Galilee by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 BCE (cf. 2 Kings 15:29-30), was uncovered throughout the city. One does not necessarily have to be a 'fundamentalist' in order to see the great correspondence between the sequence of events as described in the Old Testament and that uncovered by the spade at Hazor. The inevitable conclusion is thus that those who wrote and edited the texts

(admittedly, centuries after the events described, though exactly when is beyond the scope of the present paper) knew what they were doing. That knowledge was probably based on oral or perhaps written traditions, which they had at their disposal.

A reception was given on the first evening of the Meeting by the Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, and on the second evening Sheffield Academic Press hosted a reception in celebration of the silver jubilee of the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*.

At the Business Meeting of the Society, on the final morning of the Winter Meeting, the Treasurer presented the Society's accounts for the year ended 31st October 2001 (as printed in the centre pages of this Bulletin). They were approved by the Meeting.

SUMMER MEETING

The seventy-eighth Summer Meeting of the Society was held from Monday 22nd to Thursday 25th July 2002 at Trinity College, Dublin, Professor John Bartlett presiding.

The following papers were delivered:

Professor William Dever (Tucson), 'Histories and Non-Histories of Ancient Israel: What Archaeology Can Contribute': This paper addressed the historiographical challenge posed by recent 'revisionist' or 'minimalist' schools of Old Testament scholarship. According to these schools, the Hebrew Bible contains little more than a 'social construct' of Hellenistic Judaism, not a history of any Israel in the Iron Age of ancient Palestine. In particular the views of Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas Thompson of Copenhagen, and Philip Davies and Keith Whitelam of Sheffield, were examined. These views were then challenged on the basis of methodological inadequacies and ideological biases as well as the overwhelming archaeological evidence of a real Israel in the 12th–6th centuries BCE. As an example of the sort of archaeologically-based histories of ancient Israel that are now possible, the 8th century BCE was taken as a case-study. This 'axial age' is brilliantly illuminated by a wealth of archaeological data, which demonstrate how balanced, well-documented, satisfying histories are feasible.

Dr Diana Edelman (Sheffield), 'Adieu Asherah, Divine Consort of Yahweh': The disappearance of Judean pillar figurines from southern Cisjordan in the Persian period and the failure of a new, locally-made form of female fertility figurine to replace them provides archaeological evidence for the forceful imposition of early Judaism within the province of Yehud. A review of the find spots in the Iron II (monarchic) period suggests their probable use as votive offerings, amulets, and possibly statuettes in home shrines. Their sudden elimin-

ation within the territory of Yehud strongly implies that they no longer were deemed legitimate objects. Had they been used in the cult of Yahweh, seeking human fertility and safe childbirth from him, they would not have posed a problem. By implication, they were connected with the cult of a female fertility goddess whose worship was being forcefully suppressed. The Khirbet el-Qom and Quntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions identify Asherah as Yahweh's divine consort; it is plausible to suggest that the figurines were used in the cult of Asherah. 1 Kings 6 contains two conflicting accounts of the interior decoration of the main sanctuary of Solomon's temple. One overlaps closely with the exilic-era description in Ezekiel 41 of the proposed decoration for the restored temple and also with the post-exilic description in 2 Chronicles 3 of Solomon's temple. In all three, cherubs and palm trees are used extensively to create a background pattern. The palm tree was a symbol of a fertility goddess in the western Levant and Asherah was represented by a tree within the Jerusalem temple (Deuteronomy 16:21; 1 Kings 15:13). A logical implication of this set of data is that Asherah's symbol was 'neutralised' by being made a decorative element divorced from the goddess in the Persian-era temple, as were the cherubs, to reflect the new theology of monotheism. Set beside the elimination of the Judean pillar figurines, the change in temple decoration in the Persian era reflects conscious measures to eliminate Asherah as a viable divinity in favour of a single godhead, Yahweh.

Dr Simcha Shalom Brooks (London), 'Gibeon as a Major Cultic Centre in the Time of Saul': Saul's biography is so brief in the biblical text that it is difficult to evaluate his place in Israelite history. The dominant impression created is that Saul was a failure. It is feasible that this negative presentation was due, not to a lack of availability of contemporary material, but to a deliberate and selective editing by the pro-Davidic writers. In attempting to show a more realistic picture of Saul, the paper took into consideration the inscribed jar handles discovered at modern el-Jib (biblical Gibeon); the link between the names inscribed on these jar handles and Saul's genealogical lists in 1 Chronicles (8:29-40; 9:35-44) establishes the probability that Saul's ancestral home was at Gibeon. The textual evidence also suggests that Gibeon was 'a large city, like one of the royal cities' (Joshua 10:2), and later the largest place of worship in the time of Solomon (1 Kings 3:2). The argument was presented that Gibeon was the largest place of worship throughout the period of Samuel, Saul and David. It was also proposed that not only was the 'Tent of Meeting' at Gibeon, but also the Ark which David later removed to Jerusalem. The biblical writers excluded this information about Saul and Gibeon in order to diminish any importance relating to Saul and to justify David's transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem.

Dr Seth Kunin (Aberdeen), 'Experimenting with Women's Roles in the Book of Judges': This paper developed a structuralist

analysis of the use of women in the book of Judges. The paper initially examined two interrelated texts, Judges 9 and Judges 11 — focusing on the death of Abimelech and the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter. It argued that these two narratives are structurally inverted, that is, the mythemes or structural elements found in Judges 9 are exactly inverted in Judges 11. The paper then placed the underlying structural patterns into the broader context of biblical underlying structure, suggesting that the structure is a recapitulation of that found in Genesis 22 (although not suggesting that it knew of or was based on that text, rather that it arose from the same cultural context). The recapitulation in Judges, however, was demonstrated to be defective, that is, the texts do not fully or adequately reproduce the underlying structure. The paper then suggested that all of the texts in the book of Judges, save perhaps one text (Judges 1:11-15), dealing with women are similarly defective. The paper developed two main arguments from this structuralist analysis, the first concerning the ideological use of the text and the second the theoretical status of this type of text. The first argument relates to the possible use of the book of Judges in relation to the concept of dynastic kingship. The significant aspect that is defective in most of the texts relates to the denial of the descent and chosen line model. This ideological construction may relate to either a denial or attack on dynastic kingship as a whole or as an argument against any dynasty other than that of the Davidic line. Although there is not strong evidence in either direction, the use of a non-defective text in relation to the tribe of Judah at the beginning of Judges and an attack on the tribe of Benjamin in the conclusion of the book gives some weight to the second possibility. The second argument relates to the status of the book as myth. Levi-Strauss has argued that myth dies when it is historicised. This contention, however, is not supported by the data; many myths are found in an historical style. It is possible, however, that Levi-Strauss' suggestion can be changed to ideologised rather than historicised. This would be demonstrated in the defective nature of the texts found in the book of Judges.

Dr Alastair Hunter (Glasgow), 'Only Fools and Children: Reflections on Psalms 8–14': Following on the presenter's earlier work on the Psalms of Ascents as a group, this paper sought first to appraise the external and internal evidence for a similar approach to Psalms 8–14 and then to evaluate the implications of such an approach. While the evidence is much more tenuous than for Psalms 120–134, a study of word use and themes gave some weight to the proposition. A significant number of words and phrases were (on a rough statistical analysis) characteristic of the putative group. On the basis of this preliminary assessment, the paper then explored the thesis that the group in part functioned as a response to the problem posed by the radical theology of Psalm 8, with subsequent psalms displaying a tendency to undermine and 'correct' what *[continued on page 10]*

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st October 2001

	<i>Bursaries</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Confer-</i>	<i>General</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>2000</i>
	£	List	ences	Fund	£	£
Income						
Subscriptions and donations	–	–	–	8208	8208	7399
Income tax recovered in respect of deeds of covenant	–	–	–	725	725	462
Sales of literature	–	–	–	–	–	–
Conference income	–	–	18394	–	18394	21438
Bursaries	–	–	–	–	–	46
Dividends and interest received and receivable	–	–	–	1207	1207	1116
Total income	–	–	18394	10140	28534	30461
Expenditure						
Printing and stationery	–	161	2311	396	2868	3028
Postage and secretarial expenses	–	2595	–	976	3571	4130
Conference expenses	–	–	16129	–	16129	20914
Accountancy	–	–	–	214	214	298
Bursaries	45	–	–	–	45	–
Bank charges	–	–	–	12	12	9
Total expenditure	45	2756	18440	1598	22839	28379
Net surplus/(deficit)	(45)	(2756)	(46)	8542	5695	2082

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS for the year ended 31st October 2001

1. Fixed assets

	<i>Computer Equipment</i>	
Costs at 1st November 2000 and at 31st October 2001	864	
Depreciation at 1st November 2000 and at 31st October 2001	863	
Net book amount at 1st November 2000 and at 31st October 2001	1	

2. Bank accounts

	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Barclays Bank plc: Current Account	1175	679
Higher Interest Business Account	23604	18893
National Savings Bank Investment Account	9426	9003
	34205	28575

3. Investment at cost

546.44 units, Friends Provident Stewardship Unit Trust (Market Value £2890 at 5th December 2001)	1000	1000
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4. Accumulated surpluses and reserves

	<i>General</i>	<i>Bursary</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>Fund</i>	<i>Fund</i>	
At 1st November 2000	28905	636	29541
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	5740	(45)	5695
Transfers	(1010)	1010	–
At 31st October 2001	33635	1601	35236

BALANCE SHEET at 31st October 2001

	2001 £	2000 £
Assets		
Fixed assets (note 1)	1	1
Debtors	305	290
Bank accounts (note 2)	34205	28575
Investments at cost (note 3)	1000	1000
	<u>35511</u>	<u>29866</u>
Liabilities		
Sundry creditors and reserves	275	325
	<u>35236</u>	<u>29541</u>
Represented by		
Accumulated surpluses and reserves (note 4)		
General fund	33635	28905
Bursary fund	1601	636
	<u>35236</u>	<u>29541</u>

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES for the year ended 31st October 2001

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The principal accounting policies of the Society are substantially unchanged from the previous year and are set out below.

Subscriptions and donations received

These represent amounts received during the year and no account is taken of any subscriptions due but unpaid at the date of the balance sheet.

Income tax recoverable

No account is taken of any income tax recoverable but not yet received in respect of subscriptions under Gift Aid or Covenant or investment income received during the year.

Stocks

No account is taken of unused stocks of book lists or general stationery.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis and aims to write down the cost of fixed assets over their expected normal lives. The rate applicable is 20% per annum.

Investments

Investments are included in the accounts at historic cost and no account is taken of unrealised investment gains and losses.

Accumulated surpluses and reserves

The recognition of separately designated funds is primarily for the purpose of administration and control, and any accumulated surpluses shown are part of the general reserves of the Society and, as such, are unrestricted in application.

ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

We have prepared the accounts and notes for the year ended 31st October 2001 without audit. We confirm that the accounts are in agreement with the books and information supplied to us.

TUNSTALL & BLACKBURN, Accountants
Kiln Hill, Market Place, Hawes, North Yorkshire

[continued from page 7] may have appeared to be a work of heterodox popular theology implying an uncharacteristically optimistic view of the relationship of Yahweh to humankind.

Professor George Brooke (Manchester), 'Psalms and Psalters at Qumran: Issues of Pluriformity and Canon': The paper first presented some of the manuscript evidence for psalters at Qumran, stressing the diversity of how the psalms were presented and that it is not always clear whether a manuscript deserves to be counted as a copy of a psalter, especially since some of them, such as 4QPsⁿ, are better described as containing excerpted texts. The argument was then put forward that there were four or more forms of the psalter in the late second temple period, each of which might have had some authority. In addition to the so-called 'biblical' psalms manuscripts, some could be found in collections such as are presented in 4Q380, 4Q381 and 4Q448; another (akin to 11QPs^a) seems to have been deliberately associated with David and might be referred to in the so-called canon note in 4QMMT C.10-11. The interest in David is also discernible in the process of historicisation apparent in the titles given to some psalms in some manuscripts found at Qumran. The paper concluded with some brief comments on the use of the psalms in the Qumran sectarian compositions and confirmation that many of the psalms were viewed as authoritative and as a demonstration that the contents and order of the first three books had largely stabilised by the second century BCE.

Professor Charles Conroy (Rome), 'The Case of the Disappearing Redactor in Second Isaiah': The paper summarised some important aspects of the very complex situation of (Second-)Isaian studies in the past decade or so, and suggested a possible framework for accommodating the various orientations, especially composition criticism and redaction criticism, which are often perceived and presented as antagonistic and mutually exclusive. Composition criticism falls within the general area of final-form study and is represented in Second-Isaian research by two main types of analysis: dramatic analysis (Beuken, Leene, Watts, and Baltzer) and structural analysis (Laato, O'Connell, Korpel, and De Moor). While there are considerable differences between the scholars in each of these groups, their contributions were evaluated briefly in general terms. Redaction criticism of Isaiah 40-55 in its more recent phase has been dominated by four monographs: Kratz (1991), van Oorschot (1993), Berges (1998), and Werlitz (1999). Their contributions were presented in very broad lines, and a significant measure of convergence was noted, which has also been stressed by Rainer Albertz in his recent work *Die Exilszeit* (2001). Finally it was proposed that the adoption of a two-phase model for exegetical work (first a detailed literary study of the final form of the text; then a historical study of its genesis) will allow both composition criticism and redaction criticism not only to co-exist but

also to interact fruitfully in the interests of a better understanding of Isaiah 40–55 within the book of Isaiah.

Dr Deborah Rooke (London), ‘On the “Handel-ing” of 1 Maccabees’: The Handelian oratorio *Judas Maccabæus* was produced in 1746 as a compliment to the Duke of Cumberland for suppressing the Jacobite rebellion. The writer of the libretto, a clergyman named Thomas Morell, used the book of 1 Maccabees as his major source, and in Parts II and III of the libretto he followed the source material relatively closely. But Part I owes very little to the source material, raising the question of why Morell structured the libretto in this way. An answer is suggested by a sermon preached by Morell in 1739/40, entitled ‘The Surest Grounds for Hopes of Success in War’, in which Morell lays out a ‘theology of successful war’: war must only be undertaken for a just cause or at the divine command, and must be preceded by prayer carried out in the proper fashion and in the proper place. Then, and only then, God will favour the troops against their enemies. In Part I of *Judas Maccabæus*, all of Morell’s criteria for a successful war are met, including those that are not met in the source text of 1 Maccabees. It therefore seems likely that Morell has altered his source to reflect these criteria, in order to portray the Maccabæan campaign, and therefore the anti-Jacobite campaign with Cumberland at its head, as having unequivocal divine favour.

Dr Walter Houston (Oxford), ‘The Role of the Poor in Proverbs’: The paper considered first the social background of the writing of Proverbs. It was concluded that the writers belonged to a cadre of scribes associated with the court (or courts), the upper levels of which were landowners with a private income. The book may therefore be expected to display the attitudes of the upper classes. It was next considered what attitudes it displays towards the poor, and the argument of J.D. Pleins that it attacks the poor as responsible for their own poverty through laziness was examined and rejected. The tone of the sentences which speak of the poor is either objective or sympathetic, urging the practice of charity. These attitudes, though typically aristocratic, were common to the whole of society. Theologically speaking, the value of the book is focused on those sentences which ground the appeal to generosity on creation.

A reception was given on the first evening of the Meeting by the School of Hebrew, Biblical & Theological Studies of Trinity College, Dublin. On 24th July there was an outing to the Chester Beatty Library, with tea by invitation of the President.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Among honours received by members of the Society: Professor Menahem Haran has been made a corresponding member of the Norwegian

Academy. Professor Avraham Malamat has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Vienna. Professor Geza Vermes has been elected a member of the European Academy of Arts, Sciences and Humanities. Dr Jonathan Webber has been appointed to the UNESCO Chair in Jewish and Interfaith Studies at the University of Birmingham. Several SOTS members have been honoured by the University of Cambridge, namely Dr Graham Davies (personal chair), Dr Nicholas de Lange (personal chair and D.D.), and Professors Robert Gordon and Stefan Reif (both Litt.D.).

The Society has learned with regret of the deaths of Revd Professor George Anderson (President of the Society in 1963), Revd Professor John Gray, and Revd Professor John Wansbrough.

The following have been elected to membership of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Dr Mark Bredin, Revd Andrew Brown, Revd Dr Mary Cotes, Professor Robert Hubbard, Mr Nathan MacDonald, Dr Karl Möller, Revd Patrick Mossop, and Revd Katherine White. At the Summer Meeting: Professor Athalya Brenner (Honorary Member), Dr Edgar Conrad, Dr Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley, Dr Lesley Grant, Ms Jill Middlemas, Dr David Shepherd, and Dr Rebecca Watson.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

The seventy-eighth Winter Meeting of the Society will be held from Monday 6th to Wednesday 8th January 2003 at Manor House, University of Birmingham, under the Presidency of Professor Robert Gordon and with the theme 'The Hebrew Bible against its Ancient Near Eastern Background'. This theme will be continued at the seventy-ninth Summer Meeting (the twelfth Joint Meeting of the Society and the Dutch-Flemish Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap), which will be held from Monday 21st to Wednesday 23rd July 2003 at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. Participants in the Summer Meeting will also have the opportunity of extending their conference participation into the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature taking place in Cambridge at that time.

A conference to mark the 250th anniversary of two major milestones in the study of the Old Testament, Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* and Jean Astruc's *Conjectures on Genesis*, will be held from Tuesday 8th to Thursday 10th July 2003 at St Catherine's College, Oxford, under the title 'Sacred Conjectures: The Context and Legacy of Robert Lowth and Jean Astruc'. The brochure included in the mailout to SOTS members has further information.

A symposium on 'Anthropology and Biblical Studies: The Way Forward?' will be held from Tuesday 8th to Wednesday 9th July 2003 at the University of St Andrews. The symposium will explore inter-

disciplinary links, innovations and developments between the two disciplines. Further information is available from the Faculty of Divinity (fax 01334 462852, e-mail divinity@st-andrews.ac.uk).

The Society has recently made arrangements whereby members can pay their annual membership subscription by credit card. The scheme is intended for the benefit of members living outside the United Kingdom who have experienced inconvenience in making payment to the Society; a banker's standing order remains the best method of payment for UK residents. On account of the extra costs incurred by the Society on credit-card transactions, the annual subscription by such method will be £25, while the subscription by standing order or cheque remains £24 at present. Members who wish to pay in future by credit card should write to the Treasurer, requesting him to charge their credit card £25 at the beginning of each year and itemizing the type of card (MasterCard or Visa) and the card number and expiry date, as well as the cardholder's name, address and telephone number; this procedure will need to be repeated each time a card expires and a new card is issued, if you wish to continue to pay the subscription by this method. Members who could pay by standing order, but who have not yet made arrangements to do so, are also asked to contact the Treasurer. Those who elect to continue to pay by cheque are reminded that membership subscriptions fall due on 1st January annually, and that cheques should be sent direct to the Treasurer and made payable to 'The Society for Old Testament Study'.

The attention of members is drawn to the Society's website (www.trinity-bris.ac.uk/sots), where several new features have been added in recent times, including a membership proposal form, Professor John Rogerson's *Short History* of SOTS, and details of a number of publications sponsored by the Society. Also on the web, at the British Academy's website (www.britac.ac.uk), is the report on the British Academy's review of graduate studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, to which SOTS along with 30 other subject associations and many academic institutions and representative bodies had made submissions.

The Society's archivist, Professor John Rogerson, is keen to acquire for the archives copies of the translations of the Old Testament into modern speech produced by the Society in the 1920s and '30s in connection with the National Adult School Union. Any members in possession of such documents are asked to contact Professor Rogerson.

A Biblical Studies Centre has been established at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, under the auspices of the Dominican order. The Centre, which aims to boost biblical studies in the west of Ireland, would appreciate donations of individual volumes — or indeed a full private library looking for a new home. Dr Thomas Brodie will be pleased to hear from any SOTS members able to help.

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