

---

# **The Society for Old Testament Study**

## **BULLETIN**

### **2005**

---

**80th WINTER MEETING**  
**5th–7th January 2005**  
**Manor House, University of Birmingham**  
Professor Graeme Auld presiding

---

**Professor Graeme Auld (Edinburgh)**

*Presidential Address: Voices from the Past*

This address excerpted from some of the near 800 letters and cards sent to Professor Norman Porteous by colleagues and friends over some 80 years, now in New College in the care of Edinburgh University Library. Ten of the correspondents quoted had been or would be Presidents of SOTS: Archibald Kennedy, Adam Welch, David Winton Thomas, Alfred Guillaume, Aubrey Johnson, Godfrey Driver, Christopher North, John Mauchline, Gwynne Henton Davies, and James Barr. Rather fuller attention was paid to six of Porteous's large circle of overseas colleagues: Otto Eissfeldt, Albrecht Alt, Martin Noth, Gerhard von Rad, Walther Eichrodt, and Rudolf Bultmann. He had met several of these at the International Congress of Old Testament Scholars in Göttingen in 1935. The lecture, which is available on the Society's website, was illustrated by a few portraits and facsimiles of some of the correspondence.

**Dr Yvonne Sherwood (Glasgow)**

*Reading Backwards: Early and Medieval Christian Amplifications of Sarah's 'Voice'*

Contrary to prevailing stereotypes, pre-modern interpretation can sometimes be freer than its contemporary counterparts in ethical critique of biblical texts. An inviolable frame, in which God and the text incontrovertibly are, leaves pre-critical interpreters paradoxically freer to adopt a more vulnerable and experimental mode of writing

within the frame. Responding to scripture *as writing*, and using all the resources of writing in order to do so, ancient Jewish and Christian interpretation teaches us that Abraham's sacrifice is neither straightforwardly fulfilled nor straightforwardly negated. Rather, Genesis 22 affirms that Abraham *would have sacrificed*, and sets up an indelible act of testimony in the conditional or subjunctive tense. This in turn, opens up the possibility of scripting a counter-subjunctive, which 'happens' only as surely (or un-surely) as the sacrifice 'happens'. Critique can be 'expressed', as it were safely, by exploring what Sarah *would have* done or said. By looking at examples from ancient Syriac interpretation and medieval morality plays, the paper explored how much was once risked in the hypothetical speeches of Sarah. Because the sacrifice has not yet turned potentially anthropocentric, and so tragic, ancient Christian Sarahs 'say' much more than in modern interpretation to date.

**Dr Craig Ho (Hong Kong)**

*The Book of Genesis in the Holiness Code*

In the so-called Holiness Code, the laws prior to Leviticus 19 and after Leviticus 20 are thematically arranged, while those in Leviticus 19–20 (with the exception of the laws dealing with illicit sexual incidents reported in Genesis which are grouped together in Leviticus 20:1-21) show repetition and are not related to each other. On the one hand, this paper affirmed Calum Carmichael's proposal that the laws in Leviticus 19–20 are responses to narratives in the Hebrew Bible, but on the other hand, it disagreed with his view on where the lawgiver got his inspiration — mainly from the Jacob story and the Joseph story in Genesis, sometimes from Judges and Samuel–Kings. Where one can agree with his explanations for the link between a law and a proposed narrative, a similar if not more appropriate narrative can sometimes be found earlier on in Genesis. The alternative hypothesis put forward in this paper is that the legislator of Leviticus 19–20 responded to the book of Genesis and formulated pertinent laws as he read from Genesis 1 more or less chapter by chapter until the end of the book. For example, the Sabbath commandment is mentioned twice (Leviticus 19:3, 30) because the world is created 'twice' — once in Genesis 1 and then in the flood story (Genesis 6–9). Between them are laws that can be linked to narratives between the two 'creation' stories. Thus, the laws against stealing and lying (Leviticus 19:11) are responses to the stealing of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and Cain's lie to Yahweh when asked about the whereabouts of his brother. The law that forbids partiality in judgment (Leviticus 19:15) is a response to Yahweh's (problematic) protection of Cain upon his complaint about the harshness of the judgment he received. The last law in Leviticus 20:27 on the death penalty for mediums and wizards is directed to Joseph the diviner (Genesis 44:5, 15).

**Dr Kieran Heskin (Leeds)**

*Qoheleth's God*

Part one dealt with God's activity, which — more than his attributes — is the subject of Qoheleth's attention. This activity is mainly depicted as endogenous, arbitrary, incomprehensible and unchangeable. Even in the few instances where it is depicted as reactive, it is not depicted as warm, protective, or loving. The emphasis placed on endogenous divine activity inevitably highlights God's sovereignty and superiority to man and leads to a cold depiction of God. The various limitations that God has placed on the human condition further contribute to the cold theological atmosphere of the book. Part two regarded the book of Ecclesiastes as marking a stage of development rather than a break with Old Testament thought. It is rooted in the tradition that produced Job and Proverbs. It also seems to have been greatly influenced by the first chapters of Genesis. Part three saw Qoheleth not only as a critical thinker but also as a man of faith, who appreciated both aspects of God's dealings with his creatures: the endogenous aspect and the reactive aspect. He depicts them side by side without making any effort to reconcile the difference between them or to resolve the problem of determination and free will.

**Revd Roger Tomes (Manchester)**

*'Scripture its own Commentator': A History and Evaluation of Cross-Reference Bibles*

In 2003 Oxford University Press published a cross-reference edition of the NRSV. The paper traced the history of cross-reference Bibles in English from the invention of printing and the first vernacular translations, through the various Oxford and Cambridge editions of the King James Bible, to the 1898 edition of the Revised Version, with glances at the work of independent compilers such as John Canne, John Brown of Haddington and the Bagster *Comprehensive Bible*. It investigated the motivations of the various compilers and the kind of references they supply. The new Oxford edition of the NRSV was compared with its main present-day competitors: the editions with the references originally compiled for the *Harper / Eyre & Spottiswoode Study Bible*, and the NIV cross-reference edition / *NIV Study Bible*. Some reservations about the value of cross-reference Bibles were considered, particularly the charge that they perpetuate an understanding of the Bible as prophecy and fulfilment.

**Dr Timothy Lim (Edinburgh)**

*The Book of Ruth and its Literary Voice*

By a study of the speeches in the book of Ruth, this paper further explored the intriguing line of research on the literary voice of the book. It began by examining Richard Bauckham's gynocentric her-

meneutics, Mary Lefkowitz's gendering of classical literature, and Athalya Brenner and Fokkele van Dijk-Hemmes' theory of the *F* (feminine/female) and *M* (masculine/male) voice in the Hebrew Bible. Arguing for a more precise definition of 'voice' as speech in Ruth, the paper then showed that the focus of the narrative is primarily determined by dialogue between Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, as well as the minor figures of Orpah, the women of Bethlehem, all the people of the gate and the elders, the anonymous redeemer, the male harvesters (but not the female gleaners), and the young male overseer. The conclusion drawn was that the voice of the book of Ruth, as far as gender is concerned, is balanced between female and male.

**Professor Philip Davies (Sheffield)**

*What Is 'Minimalism' and Why Do So Many People Dislike It?*

'Minimalism' is widely presented as a radical approach, and has been subjected to often quite vicious attack. The paper argued that although there was no 'minimalist' or 'revisionist' school, a number of scholars shared the same ideas because these ideas were a logical extension of many trends in biblical scholarship generally. 'Minimalism' was largely created by fundamentalist-conservative groups and by those wedded to biblical archaeology who are alarmed at the threat it poses to their hold on popular understanding of the Bible and wish to try and distance these views from 'mainstream' biblical criticism. The extreme language in which the discussion is often couched should remind biblical scholars of the sharpness of the threat that it faces from external constituencies, aided by an alarming ignorance on the part of the public about what it is that we do and why; and should also warn us not to flinch from the implications of our own work. We should understand how far 'minimalism' is, far from being a radical assault on traditional practice, a mainstream position that is securely embedded in the long history of the discipline, and, whether or not in the end its conclusions are accepted, forms an intrinsic component of current discussion about the origin and nature of the biblical literature.

**Professor Thomas Römer (Lausanne)**

*Israel's Sojourn in the Wilderness and the Construction of the Book of Numbers*

The present debate on the Yahwist and the link between the Patriarchs and Exodus reveals that it is very difficult to maintain the idea of a pre-priestly document which would have constituted a Proto-Pentateuch of a sort. The debate on the extension of the original Priestly document allows the postulation that the original had its conclusion at Sinai (Exodus 40 or Leviticus 9). The consequence is therefore that neither the so-called Yahwist nor the original Priestly document contains a narrative strand that comprises the whole Pentateuch. This paper suggested that, at the beginning of the process which led to the

formation of the Torah, there was a priestly ‘Tritoteuch’, which covered the narrative from the creation of the world to the installation of Israel’s worship, and the book of Deuteronomy, related to the Former Prophets. This means that the book of Numbers was created during the Persian period in order to integrate the latest texts of the Torah. The few wilderness narratives in the book of Exodus were originally positive accounts, revealing the same ideology as the allusions to the wilderness in Hosea and Jeremiah. This view is also represented by the priestly document. Post-priestly redactors transformed these positive accounts in Exodus 15–17 into stories of complaint. The invention of a ‘cycle of rebellion’ in the book of Numbers presupposed this transformation and radicalized the negative view of Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness. This was shown through an analysis of Numbers 11 and 12. Numbers 11 reveals the concerns of post-exilic charismatic prophecy; Moses is presented in a somewhat ambiguous way; and prophecy can exist without his mediation. Numbers 12 presents Moses as the incomparable mediator between Yahweh and Israel to whom the priestly as well as the prophetic functions are clearly subordinated. The author of Numbers 12 tries to correct ideas expressed in Numbers 11, in responding directly to the main assertions of the foregoing chapter. Despite their ideological differences, all texts in Numbers 11–20 agree on the idea that Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness was a time of ongoing rebellion. In this sense Mary Douglas is certainly right to claim that the book of ‘Numbers complements the other books [of the Pentateuch] by presenting a coherent mythic background for Judah’s political situation after the exile’.

**Dr Martin O’Kane (Lampeter)**

*Visualizing The Man of Sorrows: Artistic Understandings of Isaiah 53*

The paper offered an appreciation of the Servant Song of Isaiah 53 through its visual imagery. Its starting point was the analysis of the poem by David Clines (*I, He, We, and They* [JSOT Supplement 1], 1976), who argued that the poem is essentially about modes of *seeing* the servant. The perspective of Hans-Georg Gadamer — the merging of the horizons of author, text and reader — applied to the relationship between painting and viewer (*Truth and Method*, 1973) facilitates a range of interpretations as to the role and mission of the servant; in this paper, a particular aspect of Gadamer’s hermeneutical aesthetic was highlighted, namely his notion that each visual instance of a (biblical) subject matter provides a *coming forth* (*Darstellung*), an *epiphany*, in the life of the viewer. Thus each instance of Isaiah 53 offers a distinctive and original interpretation of the poem and extends the nature of the subject matter itself. Three paintings were used to illustrate the argument: *The Man of Sorrows* by Andrea Mantegna (figurative), *Still Life with Open Bible* by Vincent van Gogh (non-figurative) and *The Tale is Told that Shall Be Told* by Patrick Hall

(abstract). The horizons of the artists together with their distinctive interpretations of Isaiah 53 help illumine the mindset of the author of the poem and underline the important role of the viewer in interpreting and appropriating it.

A **reception** (at which the Society's new web domain *www.sots.ac.uk* was toasted) was held on the first evening of the Meeting; and a further reception was given on the second evening by Ashgate Publishers to mark the launch of the new series of SOTS Monographs.

---

**81st SUMMER MEETING**  
**18th–21st July 2005**  
**Pollock Halls of Residence, University of Edinburgh**  
Professor Graeme Auld presiding

---

**Professor Bernard Jackson (Manchester)**

*Human Law and Divine Justice in the Methodological Maze of the Mishpatim, Or: Why Is God Interested in Goring Oxen?*

The history of the Mishpatim of Exodus 21:1–22:16 is often seen as a movement from secular to covenantal law. But what evidence is there of an original secular legal system in ancient Israel? This paper argued that the metaphor of divine justice served as a means to remedy some of the institutional weaknesses of secular law. In this context, we may distinguish different forms of divine justice: direct, institutional, charismatic and delegated. Charismatic divine justice (guiding the intuitions of royally appointed judges) appears to have been the earliest form, followed by institutional divine justice, whereby religious officials consulted the deity through specialised means such as the oracle, leading finally to delegated divine justice (through the revelation of covenantal law), the form in which the divine metaphor finally returned to its human source and remedied its institutional weaknesses. A similar model may be used to explain the growth of jurisdiction. Finally, some examples were considered of the impact of the transition from customary 'Wisdom-Laws' to covenantal law on the meaning attributed to the content of the laws: why did God become interested in goring oxen?

**Professor Hans Barstad (Oslo)**

*Has a Paradigm Shift Taken Place in Old Testament Studies?*

Major changes in the humanities during the last third of the 20th century led to a shift from 'historicism' to 'textuality', as well as to com-

pletely new and different views of the role of the reader when it comes to creating meanings in texts. Other, related important developments followed the raised hermeneutical awareness in the wake of the publications of philosophers like Gadamer and Ricoeur. It has been claimed, following Kuhn, that biblical studies have undergone major changes during recent decades. However, it represents a major oversimplification to claim that biblical studies have gone through any radical changes. The truth is rather that the ways and methods of biblical scholarship have changed very little, and that much of what is going on in the field must be characterized as fundamentally rooted in historicist categories and mentalities of the 18th and 19th centuries. It will be a major task for the future to replace Gunkel's genres with new ways of relating text-internal reality to text-external reality. In addition to familiarity with classical Hebrew, genre knowledge represents the most important asset to present-day students of the Hebrew Bible who want to change the field in accordance with recent developments in academia.

**Dr David Reimer (Edinburgh)**

*The Quality of Mercy: Law and Forgiveness in the Hebrew Bible*

Law and forgiveness are usually considered to be incompatible, so in what ways does it make sense to talk about biblical law in relation to forgiveness, or forgiveness in terms of biblical law? The strategy taken in this paper was to look for cues in current legal theory, much as literary theory has been suggestive for readings of biblical narrative or poetry. Three strands were developed. First, the seminal work of Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton (*Forgiveness and Mercy* [Cambridge University Press, 1988]) was described. Their association of forgiveness with forswearing resentment points towards such elements in biblical law (e.g. the *lex talionis*, or aiding an enemy, in Exodus 23:3-4). The second strand attends to punishment theory, since punishment is often thought to preclude forgiveness. Here, biblical evidence remains difficult to square with forgiveness, in spite of nuancing capital punishment formulae. The observation that punishment pertains to perpetrators, while forgiveness belongs to victims, points to a third strand. 'Restorative justice', especially as developed by Howard Zehr (*Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* [Herald Press, 1990]), takes a victim orientation and places resolution of crimes in a personal or community context. Among other texts, Exodus 21:18-19, the law concerning men who quarrel, was read with such a legal framework in mind. While the task of relating forgiveness to biblical law remains problematic, attempts to make such a connection in modern legal theory suggest that the project is not futile, and that the 'restorative justice' framework in particular holds promise for further thought.

**Professor Kirsten Nielsen (Aarhus)**

*Metaphors and Biblical Theology*

Studies in personal and non-personal metaphors have provided the background for the presenter's interest in Biblical Theology. This paper dealt with two non-personal metaphors: Yahweh as a lion and Yahweh as a rock. Both metaphors were analyzed in their literary context, where it is clear that Yahweh is described not only as a lion but also as a shepherd and as a pasture for Israel; and not only as a rock that Israel can rely on but also as a rock that gives birth (cf. Mother Earth). The point of origin was therefore the images of God in the Bible, with emphasis on the plural (*images*), but it was also noted that images have a history: they can be reapplied with the possibility of new meaning, since an image does not contain an *a priori* fixed meaning. Biblical Theology, in the presenter's view, therefore consists of studies in central Old Testament metaphors and their reuse in the New Testament. The following definition of Biblical Theology was put forward: 'Biblical Theology is a construction that is based on the premise that together the Old and New Testaments constitute a unity in the use of the Christian Church.'

**Dr Charlotte Hempel (Birmingham)**

*Maskil(im) and Rabbim: From Daniel to Qumran*

This paper addressed the much-discussed issue of the relationship of the book of Daniel to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The standard textbook account of the relationship of the *Maskilim* in Daniel 11–12 and the Qumran community runs as follows: the *Maskil* appears as a key community functionary in the sectarian scrolls and the community itself which he leads has adopted the designation *ha-rabbim* representing an institutionalization of the terminology we find in Daniel. The paper argued that the evidence is more complex than often portrayed, and offered a fresh assessment of the *Maskil* traditions in the Community Rule that takes into account the complex literary history of this text. This individual appears in a number of different contexts, some universalistic, others with rudimentary communal requirements, and a third group of texts that are quite developed and employ *Yahad* terminology. In addition the *Maskil* is found in headings throughout the Community Rule manuscripts and must have been an authority figure both in a number of early traditions and at the point of the *End-redaktion* of the manuscripts. The closest points of contact between these traditions and the Danielic *Maskilim* are found somewhere along this line of development, probably near but not at the beginning.

**Dr Diana Lipton (Cambridge)**

*Bezalel in Babylon? Anti-Priestly Polemics in Isaiah 40–55*

Religious practitioners are notoriously preoccupied with the details of

their own religion, yet uninterested in the internal dynamics of others. An apparent Hebrew Bible exception is the author of Deutero-Isaiah's anti-idol polemics (40:18-20; 41:6-7; 44:9-20; 46:1-7), who seems to engage in detail with Babylonian religion. This paper suggested that Deutero-Isaiah's primary target was not Babylonian idol-makers, but Israel's priestly cult. Moshe Weinfeld (*Tarbiz*, 1968) noticed polemical allusions in Deutero-Isaiah to Priestly texts in Genesis. The present paper identified a second set, concentrated in and around Deutero-Isaiah's idol texts and alluding to the tabernacle narratives (Exodus 25–31 and 35–40). Given the difficulty of determining that allusions are real and intentional, eight guidelines were offered — six semantic and two theoretical — and the examples were organised accordingly. It was suggested that Deutero-Isaiah's criticisms of idolatry function as veiled polemics against the Priestly worldview, whose material focus was incompatible with his notion of transcendence. A particular concern was the prediction of future events. For Deutero-Isaiah, divine intentions are revealed not through signs in the external world or human representations of it, but through the historical experiences of a personified Israel. The paper tried to show that he emphasises this contrast by reshaping Exodus patterns in the light of *mis pî*, the Babylonian mouth-washing/opening ritual for 'enlivening' idols (see, e.g., Isaiah 41:17-20). Deutero-Isaiah's God, then, is not quite beyond compare. Counter-intuitive as it may seem, God is like a Babylonian idol-maker with a difference: Israel is his living idol.

#### **Ms Kristin Joachimson (Tromsø)**

##### *Steck's Five Stories of the Servant in Isaiah 53, and Beyond*

Since the arrival of Bernhard Duhm's Servant Song thesis in 1892, that thesis has had a paradigmatic status for more than a century. *Gottesknecht* has become a technical term, *Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder* a genre, *Stellvertretung* an established theological concept, and 'Servant Song Research' a particular discipline within Old Testament scholarship. The present paper made use of Odil Hannes Steck's reading. Steck outlines an inner-Isaianic reception of the 'songs' in five levels dated from the time of Second Isaiah to the Ptolemaic period (that is, from 539 to 270 BCE). In the original version, he identifies the servant mentioned outside the 'Servant Songs' *collectively* as Israel, whereas the servant within the 'Servant Songs' is identified *individually* as the prophet. On the remaining four redactional levels, the servant of Isaiah 53 is collectively identified as Zion, as those who have returned from exile, as those who remained at home in Judah, and as the true Israel (which includes other peoples). After a presentation of Steck's reading of Isaiah, the paper discussed features of reading related to historicisation, theologisation, and textualisation, as well as the increased attention brought to different forces at work in the text and in the reading of it, where a variety of possible focuses has come to the fore.

Finally, a narrative reading of Isaiah 53 was offered, with a focus on the literary trope of personification.

**Professor Terje Stordalen (Oslo)**

*Dialogue and Dialogism in the Book of Job*

Recent scholarship has applied elements of Mikhail Bakhtin's criticism and philosophy to reading the book of Job. This paper attempted to identify specific elements of Dostoevsky's poetics (as described by Bakhtin) to Job. First, it was briefly argued that there are several *prima facie* similarities between Dostoevsky and Job. Secondly, three elements in Bakhtin's poetics are more fully described in the book of Job: (1) a non-hierarchical representation of characters (*ideas*) and their voices; (2) the nature of *voices* in Job, and the way of inter-relating them; (3) a non-narrative dimension of the book. In the course of this argument it was claimed that the voice of *tradition* is perhaps the most conspicuous 'other' to which characters in Job make their 'sideward glance' (Bakhtin). The paper also claimed that certain characters (in particular Job) represent several mutually incommensurable voices (*ideas*). It also argued that the author devised certain overarching dialogical topics, on which every character in the book speaks (including the narrator, Hassatan and Mrs Job).

**Dr Elie Assis (Bar-Ilan)**

*The Unity of Lamentations*

The book of Lamentations includes five poems that lament the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 587 BCE. Each of the five poems is clearly defined by the acrostic form that governs it. This paper discussed the unity of the book, making a necessary distinction between unity of authorship and literary unity. Differences in content, historical background, style and metre indicate multiple authorship to some scholars, while for others similarities between the poems in vocabulary, themes, structures and Jeremianic characteristics prove single authorship. This paper suggested that the differences between the laments cannot prove multiple authorship, because a single author may choose to adopt various styles. Similarly, uniform characteristics cannot prove single authorship because conventional styles may be adopted by various composers. While the question of unity of authorship is not crucial for an understanding of the book, the question of the literary unity of the book is a precondition for its comprehension. Is the book a collection of poems that deal with one topic, or are the poems a single literary unit? Is each of the poems a self-contained and complete composition or one component of a larger literary unit? The second option is established if it can be demonstrated that the poems are placed in a pre-planned order. Scholars have discovered that the poems are organized in a concentric structure: the first poem corresponds to the fifth, the second corresponds to the fourth, and the third

is the pivot of a formation. Scholars who have adopted this pattern tend to believe that it is the work of the editor of the book. This paper sought to establish that every pair of poems is tied by means of exclusive themes, motifs, and vocabulary. These interconnections indicate that the book is not a collection of poems but an integral literary piece.

**Dr Anne Gardner (Melbourne)**

*Decoding Daniel: The Four Beasts of Daniel 7 with the Second Beast in Close Focus*

A number of aspects of Daniel 7:5 have proved puzzling to scholars, and these cannot be resolved until the source of Daniel's imagery of the four beasts is discovered. Further, conservative and critical scholars assign the second beast a different identity: Media and Persia in the former case and Media in the latter. While not sharing the presumptions of conservative scholars, this paper recognised that their claim that the second beast should be identified with Media and Persia is logical, for these two powers are identified as one composite beast in Daniel 8:20. Previous theories regarding the source of Daniel's vision include the Enuma Elish or related texts; Canaanite mythology; Egyptian, Greek and Iranian mythology; astrology; treaty curses; Mesopotamian birth omens; the Assyrian 'Vision of the Netherworld' and ancient Near Eastern iconography. These were rejected as a primary source because none of them accounts for the descriptions of all four beasts. The Bible as a source has been suggested before but generally either in a perfunctory way (i.e. where an individual biblical verse is reminiscent of a particular detail in Daniel) or in terms of one individual text as the background to the vision of Daniel 7 (e.g. Psalm 89). Neither of these approaches explains the choice of beasts or the detailed descriptions of them. John Day's suggestion that Hosea 13:7-8 lies behind the choice of beasts was accepted, although it does not account for their individual features. A close examination of the second beast illustrated that the Bible is indeed the source of the vision in Daniel 7. Isaiah 13:5, which predicts the downfall of Babylon, was the author's starting point. Key phrases in that text led to other biblical texts which are alluded to in Daniel 7:5 and account for the detailed description of the bear, identified as both Media and Persia, and its activities. This, in turn, indicates the need to review the identities of the third and fourth beasts.

**Dr Edgar Conrad (Brisbane)**

*Looking into Vision: See-sawing in Prophetic Books*

This paper took another look at vision in the Latter Prophets, arguing that the paucity of vocabulary of English words for 'seeing' tends to obscure the richer Hebrew vocabulary for 'vision' in the Old Testament. The different ways of seeing in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Zechariah, which have all been understood as 'vision,' tend to

singularize a more plural set of realities of experiencing the alien world constructed by the community who produced the Hebrew prophetic scrolls. To dismiss the 'vision of Isaiah' as information of a late redactor is to ignore significant information for the reader of that scroll. To understand the 'visions of God' only as something Ezekiel sees is to overlook that Ezekiel is seeing what God is seeing. To interpret the visions of Jeremiah and Amos as typical of the prophets is to take no notice of the extraordinary claims they make about what they have seen. A central key for comprehending these different ways of seeing is the temple, which is an important feature for gaining perspective on what Zechariah sees at night.

**Computer workshops** on various software of interest to Old Testament scholars were run by Dr Philip Jenson and Ms Elizabeth Harper (Bristol), by Dr David Reimer (Edinburgh), and by Dr Stuart Weeks (Durham).

A **reception** was given on the first evening of the Meeting by the Continuum Publishing Group to mark the rebranding of the former *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* Supplements Series as the Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies; and a further reception was given on the second evening by New College to mark the meeting of SOTS in Edinburgh under Professor Auld's presidency. Earlier on that second day there had been an **outing** to the new Scottish Parliament building, and tea at New College by invitation of the President.

---

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

---

Among **honours** received by members of the Society: Professor Philip Alexander has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy; Dr Timothy Lim has been awarded a personal chair at the University of Edinburgh; and Professor John Rogerson has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Jena.

The Society's nominees for membership of Research Assessment Exercise panels have all been appointed to the respective panels by the RAE authorities: Professors John Barton and Cheryl Exum to the Theology & Religious Studies panel and Professors Robert Hayward and John Healey to the Middle Eastern & African Studies panel.

The Society has learned with regret of the **deaths** of Revd Professor Peter Ackroyd (President of the Society in 1972), Revd Professor J. Neville Birdsall, Revd Henry Hart, Revd David Lane, Revd Dr Henry

McKeating, Professor Robert Oden, Dr Alan Robinson, and Dr Martin Selman.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Mr Yong-Ho Jeon, Mr Renato Lings, Revd Michael Stead, and Dr Ka-Leung Wong. At the Summer Meeting: Revd Professor Bill Arnold, Mrs Judit Blair, Mr Charles Echols, Mrs Helen Kraus, Dr Lydie Kucova, Dr Tamlin Lizius, Mr Hector Patmore, Revd Dr James Robson, Dr Jacqueline de Roo, Revd Jenni Williams, Dr Gregory Wong, Ms Alice Wood, Dr Ian Young, and Professor Erich Zenger (Honorary Member).

The **current Honorary Members** are Professors Bertil Albrektson (1983), Athalya Brenner (2002), Walter Brueggemann (1997), Henri Cazelles (1972), Brevard Childs (1979), Frank Moore Cross (1988), Menahem Haran (1981), Sara Japhet (1999), Otto Kaiser (1992), Bernhard Lang (1997), Avraham Malamat (1976), Tryggve Mettinger (2003), Johannes de Moor (2004), Eduard Nielsen (1988), Kirsten Nielsen (2000), Helmer Ringgren (1973), Rudolf Smend (1979), Jan Alberto Soggin (1992), and Erich Zenger (2005).

---

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

---

The **Winter Meeting 2006** will be held on 4th–6th January at Manor House, University of Birmingham, and the **Summer Meeting 2006** will be held on 17th–20th July at University College, Durham, both meetings under the Presidency of Professor Robert Hayward.

The next **SOTS/OTW Joint Meeting** (the 13th Joint Meeting of the Society and the Dutch–Flemish Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap) will be held on 21st–24th August 2006 at a venue in the Netherlands, under the joint presidency of Professors Eric Peels and Robert Hayward, and with the theme ‘Psalms and Prayers’. Further information about the Joint Meeting will be distributed to SOTS members early in 2006.

Advance notice of the next **IOSOT Congress** (the 19th Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament): The congress is to be held on 15th–20th July 2007 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, under the presidency of Professor Joze Krasovec. Further information about the Congress and related meetings is available on the internet at <[www.iosot2007.si](http://www.iosot2007.si)>.

Any members who have not yet correctly set their Standing Order for the **SOTS membership subscription** at £24 on 1st January each year (that is, any who have a smaller amount of money or a later time of

year set for their Standing Order) are requested to see to these arrangements with their bank without further delay. You may wish to note that under the new system of *Book List* distribution put in place by the new publishers of the *List*, Sage Publications, it is unlikely that any SOTS members falling some months behind on their membership dues will receive a copy of that year's *Book List*, so there is every incentive for members to keep their subscriptions up to date. Members who pay tax in the United Kingdom are reminded that they can Gift Aid their subscription, which creates a further benefit for the Society. The Treasurer is happy to advise about methods of payment and related questions.

Members are reminded that the Society is able to award each year a number of '**bursaries**', or '**conference grants**', to assist those who would otherwise be unable to attend a Meeting. You should bear in mind that grants are for paid-up members (or for persons who are seriously considering membership) rather than for occasional guests, that they are intended to meet cases of genuine need (and so are not normally available to those who are in full-time employment), and that they are intended to 'top up' resources rather than provide the bulk of costs (and so the normal maximum for a grant is the package price minus the booking fee). An application form is available on the SOTS website, or alternatively applicants may write to the Home Secretary at least one week before the cut-off date for discount-price bookings for the relevant Meeting.

Oxford University Press has announced that it will be offering a 20% **on-line discount** on its Religion & Theology books to members of SOTS. The Society has agreed to facilitate the scheme through a link from the SOTS website to the relevant page on the OUP website.

**The Society's website** has now been located on a dedicated domain, namely <[www.sots.ac.uk](http://www.sots.ac.uk)>.

---

## **PUBLICATIONS and PAST PAPERS**

---

The **SOTS Monograph Series** was officially relaunched at the Winter Meeting 2005, and the first several volumes in the revived series have now appeared. All are available from Ashgate Publishing Direct Sales, 130 Milton Park, Abingdon OX14 4SB (tel. 01235 827730, fax 01235 400454, e-mail [ashgate@bookpoint.co.uk](mailto:ashgate@bookpoint.co.uk)).

*Samuel at the Threshold: Selected Works of Graeme Auld* brings together the current SOTS President's work relating to Samuel and the Former Prophets (and related pieces on the Pentateuch) in an invaluable

able single volume, exploring some of the fresh perspectives that he has helped to open up in the reading of these books.

*Isaiah as Liturgy*, by Michael Goulder, posits that the book of Isaiah is a sequence of oral prophecies in eight themed sections, each adapted for liturgical use in a series of full-day rituals implied for the annual festival in the Psalms; the author (SOTS President in 2001) engages with principal Isaiah scholars throughout.

*Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles about the Nations*, by John Geyer, illuminates these oracles in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel as originating in the ancient laments, as belonging to the sphere of worship, and as making a theological (mythological) rather than political statement.

*Wisdom: The Collected Articles of Norman Whybray*, edited by Katharine Dell and Margaret Barker, confirms the place of the late SOTS President of 1982 as one of the foremost contributors to scholarship on wisdom literature in the last decades of the 20th century; the collection provides a useful resource, and inspires afresh.

*'There's such Divinity doth Hedge a King': Selected Essays of Nicolas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* discusses the mythic and ritual expressions and various literary treatments of royal ideology in ancient Israel, viewed from a comparative perspective that detects the influence of broader cultural patterns.

*Saul and the Monarchy: A New Look*, by Simcha Shalom Brooks, offers a more positive biblical presentation of King Saul of Israel and a more realistic view of the culture of the period extending from Saul to the schism.

Two of the Society's published works which had fallen out of print are now being reprinted. *Documents from Old Testament Times*, edited by David Winton Thomas and originally published by Thomas Nelson and Sons in 1958, is being brought back into print by Wipf & Stock Publishers in their Ancient Texts and Translations series. *Tradition and Interpretation*, edited by George Anderson and originally published by Oxford University Press in 1979, has been included in OUP's new Print-on-Demand programme, and so is also now available to a new generation of book-buyers.

Two previously unavailable **abstracts of past papers** have now been received, and are given here in the *Bulletin* for the first time:

'Playing the Whore: Gender Performance and Basic Instinct in Genesis 38' was delivered at the Winter Meeting 2003 by Dr Sarah Nicholson (Glasgow). The paper raised the question of the plausibility of the Tamar story and asked why she risks assault and even death by

her encounter with Judah. Using Judith Butler to challenge the system of binary opposites that has been used to explain the story, it may be argued that subtle dimensions emerge in Tamar's performance of prostitution. The traditional answer that she was socially and materially bereft without a son does not fully explain the reason for her action. It makes more sense when we consider the possibility that she desires Judah. A brief exploration of evolutionary psychology also points in this direction.

'Repetition, Variation, Metaphor: Some New Insights into the Nature of Biblical Parallelism' was delivered at the Summer Meeting 2004 by Dr Knut Heim (Birmingham). The paper noted that for the last 250 years or so the theory of 'parallelismus membrorum', first proposed by Robert Lowth in 1753 and 1778, has dominated scholarly interpretation of Hebrew poetry. Stated briefly, the theory recognised that parallelism constitutes the essential formal characteristic of Hebrew poetry and proposed three basic types of parallel poetic lines: synonymous, antithetic and synthetic. Its attraction lay in three areas: (1) it appeared to describe *all* Hebrew poetry in one elegant and simple system; (2) it created the illusion that a given poetic line had been described and understood adequately when the general idea of the first half-line had been paraphrased; and (3) the Lowthian paradigm seemed to provide an almost fool-proof access to numerous unknown or obscure Hebrew words by equating a given word with its 'synonym' or by contrasting it with its 'antonym' in the parallel half-line. Recently, however, there has been a growing sense of unease with the theory, visible in the work of M. O'Connor (1980), J. Kugel (1981), W.G.E. Watson (1984, 1994), A. Berlin (1985), R. Alter (1985), L. Alonso-Schökel (1988) and S. Gillingham (1994). The basic limitations of the theory are that it has deflected attention away from the meaning of the actual *half*-lines, from the relationship *between* the actual half-lines and from the relationship between the poetic lines and their *context*. In response, the analysis of 'variant repetitions' (instances where a given poetic line reappears elsewhere in slightly altered form) may provide new insights. For example, in the book of Psalms the idea 'the Lord hears the psalmist's prayer' is expressed in well over thirty different ways. Similarly, in the book of Proverbs over 200 of its 930 verses (well over 20%) are involved in variant repetition. Examples from the book of Proverbs (Example 1: 10:13 // 26:3 // 19:29; Example 2: 24:24a // 17:15a – 17:15b // 20:10b) demonstrate that poetic half-lines can be paralleled in a variety of ways. This suggests that modern study of Hebrew poetry needs to go beyond 'parallelismus membrorum'. New approaches need to find ways that explain not only parallel elements in biblical parallelism but also those elements that have no corresponding counterparts. Systematic study of variant repetitions is one way of achieving this goal.

## ACCOUNTS FOR 2004

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st October 2004

|                                                         | <i>Bursaries</i> | <i>Book</i> | <i>Confer-</i> | <i>General</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>2003</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
|                                                         | £                | List        | ences          | Fund           | £            | £           |
| <b>Income</b>                                           |                  |             |                |                |              |             |
| Subscriptions and donations                             | 54               | –           | –              | 7778           | 7823         | 8577        |
| Income tax recovered in respect<br>of deeds of covenant | –                | –           | –              | –              | –            | 796         |
| Conference income                                       | –                | –           | 26876          | –              | 26876        | 26178       |
| Dividends and interest<br>received and receivable       | –                | –           | –              | 412            | 412          | 1101        |
| Total income                                            | 54               | –           | 26876          | 8190           | 35120        | 36652       |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                                      |                  |             |                |                |              |             |
| Printing and stationery                                 | –                | –           | 33             | 2087           | 2120         | 2560        |
| Postage and administration                              | –                | –           | –              | 694            | 694          | 3449        |
| Committee expenses                                      | –                | –           | –              | 587            | 587          | –           |
| Conference expenses                                     | –                | –           | 23355          | –              | 23355        | 25248       |
| Accountancy                                             | –                | –           | –              | 555            | 555          | 253         |
| Bursaries                                               | 196              | –           | –              | –              | 196          | 311         |
| Bank charges                                            | –                | –           | –              | 303            | 303          | 430         |
| Total expenditure                                       | 196              | –           | 23388          | 4226           | 27810        | 32301       |
| Net surplus/(deficit)                                   | (142)            | –           | 3488           | 3964           | 7310         | 4351        |

### BALANCE SHEET at 31st October 2004

|                                             | <i>2004</i>  | <i>2003</i>  |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                             | £            | £            |
| <b>Assets</b>                               |              |              |
| Fixed assets (note 1)                       | 1            | 1            |
| Debtors                                     | –            | 800          |
| Bank accounts (note 2)                      | 49105        | 40775        |
| Investments at cost (note 3)                | 1053         | 1053         |
|                                             | <u>50159</u> | <u>42629</u> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                          |              |              |
| Sundry creditors and reserves               | (470)        | (250)        |
|                                             | <u>49689</u> | <u>42379</u> |
| <b>Represented by</b>                       |              |              |
| Accumulated surpluses and reserves (note 4) |              |              |
| General fund                                | 48131        | 40979        |
| Bursary fund                                | 1558         | 1400         |
|                                             | <u>49689</u> | <u>42379</u> |

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS for the year ended 31st October 2004

|                                                               |                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1. Fixed assets</b>                                        | <i>Computer Equipment</i> |
| Costs at 1st November 2003 and at 31st October 2004           | 984                       |
| Depreciation at 1st November 2003 and at 31st October 2004    | 983                       |
| Net book amount at 1st November 2003 and at 31st October 2004 | 1                         |

|                                          |             |             |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>2. Bank accounts</b>                  | <i>2004</i> | <i>2003</i> |
| Barclays Bank plc: Current Account       | 489         | 2571        |
| Higher Interest Business Account         | 17634       | 7356        |
| National Savings Bank Investment Account | 30982       | 30848       |
|                                          | 49105       | 40775       |

|                                                                                                                                  |      |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| <b>3. Investment at cost</b>                                                                                                     |      |      |
| 549.6863 units, Friends Provident Stewardship Growth Fund retail accumulation shares (market value £2946.34 at 31st August 2004) | 1053 | 1053 |

|                                              |                     |                     |              |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| <b>4. Accumulated surpluses and reserves</b> | <i>General Fund</i> | <i>Bursary Fund</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| At 1st November 2003                         | 40979               | 1400                | 42379        |
| Surplus/(deficit) for the year               | 7452                | (142)               | 7310         |
| Transfers                                    | (300)               | 300                 | –            |
| At 31st October 2004                         | 48131               | 1558                | 49689        |

### PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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 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; the Society's investments are held in the Friends Provident Stewardship Growth Fund Retail Shares and any distributions due are now being reinvested in the fund.

**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

We have prepared the accounts and notes for the year ended 31st October 2004 without audit. We confirm that the accounts are in agreement with the books and information supplied to us.

Hardcastle Burton, 90 High Street, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 8FE

---

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES FOR 2006

---

*President:* Professor Robert Hayward, Department of Theology, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RS (tel. 0191 334 3950, e-mail c.t.r.hayward@durham.ac.uk).

*Retiring President:* Professor Graeme Auld, Nether Swanshiel, Hobkirk, Bonchester Bridge, by Hawick TD9 8JW (tel. 01450 860 636, e-mail a.g.auld@ed.ac.uk).

*President-elect:* Professor Philip Davies, Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN (tel. 0114 281 8214, e-mail p.davies@sheffield.ac.uk).

*Treasurer:* Dr Janet Tollington, Westminster College, Cambridge CB3 0AA (tel. 01223 741091, e-mail jet40@cam.ac.uk).

*Home Secretary:* Dr John Jarick, St Stephen's House, 16 Marston Street, Oxford OX4 1JX (tel. 01865 432298, e-mail john.jarick@theology.ox.ac.uk).

*Foreign Secretary:* Professor David Clines, Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN (tel. 0114 222 0505, e-mail d.clines@sheffield.ac.uk).

*Membership Secretary:* Dr Deborah Rooke, King's College, Strand, London WC2R 2LS (tel. 020 7848 2393, e-mail deborah.rooke@kcl.ac.uk).

*Hospitality Secretary:* Ms Elizabeth Harper, WEMTC, University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ (tel. 0117 959 1743, e-mail elizabeth@wemtc.freemove.co.uk).

*Book List Editor:* Professor George Brooke, Religions & Theology, Humanities Lime Grove, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL (tel. 0161 275 3609, e-mail george.brooke@manchester.ac.uk). Matters for the 2007 *Book List* should be directed to the Editor-elect, Professor John Day, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford OX2 6QA (tel. 01865 274380, e-mail john.day@theology.ox.ac.uk).

*Information Officer:* Dr Philip Jenson, Ridley Hall, Cambridge CB3 9HG (tel. 01223 741080, e-mail philip.jenson@blueyonder.co.uk).

*Committee:* The above Officers of the Society plus Professor Cheryl Exum, Dr Kieran Heskin, Dr Walter Houston, Dr Nathan MacDonald, Dr Andrew Mein, Dr Mary Mills, Ms Judith Shiel, and Professor Gordon Wenham.

*Programme Sub-Committee:* The President, President-elect, Home Secretary, and Foreign Secretary; plus Dr James Aitken, Dr Adrian Curtis, and Dr Jennifer Dines.

*Publications Sub-Committee:* The *Book List* Editor (Convener), Mrs Margaret Barker (as Editor of the SOTS monograph series), and Professor Hugh Williamson (as SOTS representative on the OTS Board); plus Professor Graham Davies, Dr Nathan MacDonald, and Dr David Reimer.

*Editorial Board of the SOTS monograph series:* Mrs Margaret Barker (Editor), Mr Edward Ball, Dr Eryl Davies, Dr Katharine Dell, and Dr Paul Joyce. (Proposed manuscripts for the series should be sent to Mrs Barker at The White House, 24 Gordon Road, Borrowash DE72 3JX.)

---

## PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY

---

|                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1917-19 William Bennett        | 1966 Gwynne Henton Davies |
| 1920 Archibald Kennedy         | 1967 Donald Coggan        |
| 1921 Robert Kennett            | 1968 Matthew Black        |
| 1922 George Gray               | 1969 John Schofield       |
| 1923 George Box                | 1970 Arthur Herbert       |
| 1924 Arthur Peake              | 1971 Edward Ullendorff    |
| 1925 Stanley Cook              | 1972 Peter Ackroyd        |
| 1926 William Stevenson         | 1973 James Barr           |
| 1927 David Simpson             | 1974 Dafydd Ap-Thomas     |
| 1928 Theodore Robinson         | 1975 Eileen de Ward       |
| 1929 Henry Wheeler Robinson    | 1976 Douglas Jones        |
| 1930 Claude Montefiore         | 1977 Ronald Williams      |
| 1931 William Oesterley         | 1978 William McKane       |
| 1932 William Lofthouse         | 1979 John Emerton         |
| 1933 William Wardle            | 1980 Donald Wiseman       |
| 1934 Adam Welch                | 1981 Raphael Loewe        |
| 1935 William Emery Barnes      | 1982 Norman Whybray       |
| 1936 John Battersby Harford    | 1983 Roy Porter           |
| 1937-38 Godfrey Driver         | 1984 Wilfred Lambert      |
| 1939-40 Herbert Loewe          | 1985 Ronald Clements      |
| 1941-45 Henry Wheeler Robinson | 1986 Barnabas Lindars     |
| 1946 Theodore Robinson         | 1987 Robert Murray        |
| 1947 Cuthbert Lattey           | 1988 Ernest Nicholson     |
| 1948 Edward Robertson          | 1989 John Rogerson        |
| 1949 Christopher North         | 1990 William Johnstone    |
| 1950 Harold Rowley             | 1991 Anthony Gelston      |
| 1951 Samuel Hooke              | 1992 Andrew Mayes         |
| 1952 John Barton               | 1993 Richard Coggins      |
| 1953 David Winton Thomas       | 1994 John Gibson          |
| 1954 Norman Porteous           | 1995 Gwilym Jones         |
| 1955 Alfred Guillaume          | 1996 David Clines         |
| 1956 Aubrey Johnson            | 1997 Rex Mason            |
| 1957 Norman Snaith             | 1998 Margaret Barker      |
| 1958 Leonard Elliott-Binns     | 1999 Robert Carroll       |
| 1959 John Mauchline            | 2000 Joseph Blenkinsopp   |
| 1960 Cuthbert Simpson          | 2001 Michael Goulder      |
| 1961 Jacob Weingreen           | 2002 John Bartlett        |
| 1962 Hedley Sparks             | 2003 Robert Gordon        |
| 1963 George Anderson           | 2004 Hugh Williamson      |
| 1964 Bleddyn Roberts           | 2005 Graeme Auld          |
| 1965 Frederick Bruce           |                           |