
The Society for Old Testament Study

BULLETIN

2006

81st WINTER MEETING
4th–6th January 2006
Manor House, University of Birmingham
Professor Robert Hayward presiding

Professor Robert Hayward (Durham)

Presidential Address: Targum, Biblia Hebraica Quinta, and Jewish Biblical Interpretation

Recent publication of the first fascicle of *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* containing the *Megilloth* allows a preliminary assessment of the editors' engagement with the Targumim. In general, these editors show familiarity not only with the most recent critical editions of Targum texts, but also with the latest advances in research into Targumic genre, translation techniques, and exegetical comprehension of the Hebrew text they seek to expound. Consequently, the critical apparatus in *BHQ Megilloth* is replete with references to Targum, which massively outnumber such references in earlier critical editions of the Hebrew Bible. While some of the editors' evaluations of Targumic readings in individual verses might be challenged (for example, descriptions of methods of dealing with divine titles as 'indeterminate' renderings of the Hebrew), decisions to include so much Targumic material may generally be justified. In particular, the apparatus of *BHQ* allows the student immediate access to points where Targumic material appears to agree with Hebrew readings extant in Qumran biblical manuscripts, which agreement can be of crucial significance not only for text-critical purposes; and the juxtaposition of Targumic translations with those of other versions, not at all easily obtainable from earlier editions of the Hebrew Bible, permits a relatively straightforward reconstruction of Jewish exegesis of the passages in question. Given the nature of the *Megilloth*, the editorial

decision to include a measure of traditional Jewish interpretation of the books may prove far-sighted and imaginative.

Dr Jeremy Corley (Durham)

Biblical Allusion and the Characterization of Judith

Although the book of Judith is a Hellenistic-Jewish novella rather than a Greek tragedy, Aristotle's theory of characterization can usefully be applied to shed light on the portrayal of Judith's character. Much of the characterization in the book of Judith is achieved through allusion to biblical models. Judith herself resembles heroic female figures from Israel's history (Miriam, Jael, Deborah, Esther). She also exhibits similarities to male Israelite leaders (Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel). After discussion of the characterization, the paper considered whether the book was written to glorify Queen Alexandra Salome, who reigned 76-67 BCE in Jerusalem.

Dr Sarah Pearce (Southampton)

Philo and the Greek Bible: Egyptian Atheism and Nile Veneration

The works of Philo of Alexandria have great potential as an entry into the world of first-century Alexandria and its religious life. Because of the nature of the very fragmentary documentation and buried archaeology for this period in Alexandria's history, it is remarkably rare to have — as we have in Philo — an insider witness to that world. This paper focused on Philo's construction of the veneration of the Nile and activity which, like Egyptian animal worship, Philo associates with the unprecedented title of 'the Egyptian atheism' (ἡ Αἰγυπτιακὴ ἀθεότης). Perhaps because what he says about the Nile is found mainly in one of his most neglected works (*De Vita Mosis*), there seems to have been little discussion of Philo's attitude to the veneration of the Nile. Compared with what we know of earlier traditions about Nile veneration, however, Philo's view looks very original — in both a Graeco-Roman and a Jewish context. Taking his starting point from passages in the Greek Pentateuch (the birth of Moses, the first plague, and the half-Egyptian blasphemer), Philo evaluates Nile veneration as the expression of materialist atheism, marking a clear boundary between the practices of Judaism and practices opposed to it.

Mr Renato Lings (Birmingham)

The Fusion of 'Knowing' and 'Rape': A Critical Reflection on Judges 19

From the outset Judges 19 has been a text of terror. In biblical times it served as a scathing attack on Saul and his tribe Benjamin. Post-biblical interpreters have used it against gay men, and in recent decades it has been reread by feminist scholars. This paper addressed a major linguistic problem in the pericope 19:22-25. The role of the

Hebrew verb ידע 'to know' is under-researched. According to the current consensus, ידע is to be taken in a sexual sense. Two other verbs in the same passage clearly describe sexual violence: ענה 'to oppress, humiliate' (19:24) and עלל 'to abuse, make sport of' (19:25). This raises a major question: does ידע lose the connotation of 'knowing' in a context of sexual violence? Put differently, is it justified to make 'knowing' interchangeable with 'rape'? The paper examined the approaches taken to ידע by thirty-two contemporary English Bible versions. Only one-third retains the notion of 'knowing' in their renderings while two-thirds opt for sexual terminology. Within the latter group more than half turns ידע into an active carrier of violence in 19:25, and five do so in 19:22. The brutality of the context seems to have impacted upon the translators. They have lost sight of the fundamentally non-violent nature of ידע in the Qal Conjugation. The Hebrew verbal paradigm admits intensification of ידע, cf. יידע in 8:16 (Hiphil, possibly 'taught'). However, transforming a peaceful verb operating in the simple Qal Conjugation into an agent of violence is difficult to justify from a linguistic perspective.

Dr Helen Leneman (Rome)

Music as Midrash: The Love Duets of Ruth and Boaz

The extensive amount of dialogue in the scroll of Ruth makes it very adaptable to dramatic and musical treatment. The librettist and composer may use several approaches to a biblical text: altering particular passages; juxtaposing several different biblical passages; using non-biblical texts as commentary on the biblical text; specifically highlighting individual words or phrases by various musical techniques. All of these approaches are seen in Ruth oratorios and operas. Investigation of a dozen musical works based on the scroll of Ruth reveals that each librettist reflected his own preconceptions and agenda by omitting, expanding, or altering scenes found in the scroll. Some librettos foreground the Ruth–Boaz relationship; others, the Ruth–Naomi friendship. The composers reinforced these choices with a range of musical techniques. The thesis was presented that music can be considered midrash because it retells the story in a different language. Music has the power not only to read between the lines of a text and fill in the gaps, but to create an inner world of the heart and mind. While librettos fill in various gaps from the original story, the music continually, but wordlessly, fills in the gaps of how people are feeling and reacting. One significant alteration found in many musical settings of the scroll of Ruth is the addition of a love interest between Ruth and Boaz, represented by a love duet. The paper described this gap-filling midrash in the librettos and music of several works, illustrated with short musical excerpts.

Dr Walter Moberly (Durham)

The Mark of Cain — Revealed at Last?

Most interpreters of Genesis 4:15 assume that the text does not specify the nature of Cain's mark, so that one must make intelligent guesses. The thesis of this paper was that the mark is specified within the biblical text, and is the words of the LORD addressed to Cain: 'Whoever kills Cain will suffer sevenfold vengeance'. There are three prime reasons for this. First, the preposition depicting the relation of the mark to Cain is not *'al*, which would be the idiom for a bodily mark (cf. Deuteronomy 6:8, Ezekiel 9:4), but *le*, which implies that the mark is non-corporeal, 'for' Cain. Secondly, the LORD, though addressing Cain, says 'whoever kills Cain...' rather than 'whoever kills you...', which implies that the LORD is using words that will be spoken about Cain by others. Thirdly, the idiom *kol-horeg* is an idiom naturally implying a plurality of agents (cf. *kol-makkeh-nephesh*, Numbers 35:15, 30); if a plurality of killings of Cain is envisaged, then Cain here represents a group of whom he is the eponymous ancestor. This group's fearsome reputation is specified by the LORD to be that which protects them. It is suggested that the LORD speaks thus because Cain embodies over-reaction (the preferential treatment of Abel receives killing, killing receives multiple killing). His situation can be seen in the light of Genesis 4:7 to be consumed by sin and resentment, an archetypal degradation of human life. Contemporary appropriation of the LORD's mark/sign to Cain might best think in terms of its intensification by Lamech (Genesis 4:24) and its inversion by Jesus (Matthew 18:22).

Dr Willem Smelik (London)

Adam in Eden: Notes on the Complexity of Scriptural Interpretation in the Talmud

In tractate Sanhedrin of the Babylonian Talmud we find four traditions attributed to Rav Yehudah in the name of Rav, about the First Adam. These four traditions follow loosely in the wake of an extensive discussion of Adam's creation in Sanhedrin, triggered by the claim in Mishnah Sanhedrin that man was created alone. Whilst they are introduced by a mnemonic marker, it is not at all obvious what these four traditions are doing here, and why they are here instead of somewhere else. They prompt the questions whether they belong together at some level and how they fit in with the Bavli's deployment of scriptural interpretation. The importance of foreknowledge for the rabbinic act of interpretation emerges from the brief way in which the interpreted text is quoted; a word is enough to the wise. Without chapter and verse numbers, a reference was not easy to find. Written texts were not always around. Scrolls had to be rolled forth and back, hence did not lend themselves easily to explain Scripture by Scripture; anyone wanting to participate in the debate would need a memorised

version of the Torah. Ready knowledge of any biblical verse is only a first requirement to follow the intricacies of the discussion; any scholar would also need a thorough knowledge of traditional exegesis on the one hand, and of halakhic concepts and terminology on the other hand. Sages quoted from a vast array of traditions, and selected those parts which proved useful for their arguments. In many instances, the relevant part of the reference is not even quoted, but must be supplemented to make sense of the argument. The Talmud is not, by default, a commentary of the Bible, taking its cue from biblical verses; rather, it follows its own logic which determines the selection of quotations. The Torah, then, would circulate, and so would its interpretation, and interpretative traditions and motifs lent themselves to be reused in new discursive contexts. An example of such reapplication of traditions may well be found in Sanhedrin 38b, where we find four traditions about the First Adam attributed to Rav Yehudah in the name of Rav. These short passages demonstrate how richly layered and allusive the interpretation of Scripture in the Talmud can be. In many quotations, what has not been said is at least as important as what has been stated explicitly. And even where verses are stated explicitly, their interpretation is brief to the point of being esoterical. But the series of interpretations in Sanhedrin 38b were not a cardboard box of indexes turned upside down on the face of the page. Here we have a midrash in four parts, commenting upon the creation of humanity in the light of m. San. 4.5, and humanity's solitary creation in particular. It carefully explores humanity's creation in the image and likeness of God, touching upon sensitive issues, all along retaining the universalistic implications of the First Adam.

Professor Nicolas Wyatt (Edinburgh)

Og and his Ilk

The biblical Og, king of Bashan, is an elusive legendary figure, representing the past swept aside as Israel enters into its allotted territories. Talmudic sources tell us that he was a survivor of the flood. The additional information we have about him, that he was 'the last survivor of the Rephaim, who reigned in Ashtarot and Edrei', points us to the Ugaritic texts, which speak of the god Rapiu 'reigning in Athtarat and ruling in Edrei', suggesting that Og and Rapiu are to be seen as one original person. The latter serves as the eponym of the Rapiuma, a community of divinized dead kings involved in the Ugaritian royal cultus. They are known collectively as 'the assembly of Ditanu'. Following clues which lead in two directions, to the Ditanu or Didanu who appears in the Assyrian and Babylonian royal genealogies, and to Greek tradition, where the flood-hero Ogygos, a reflex of Og, was a king of the Titans and founder of Thebes, we can reconstruct a hypothetical biography of Og. Now seemingly reduced somewhat dismiss-

ively to human and royal status in the Bible, he appears rather to have been originally of divine status, one of the primordial gods, indeed the embodiment of the primaeval cosmic ocean. Thus the war against him appears to have been a version of the *Chaoskampf* tradition.

Dr Stuart Weeks (Durham)

The Limits of Form Criticism

Increasingly, form criticism is being called on to serve as an interpretative, literary-critical tool, rather than as the essentially diachronic, historical method which it was originally designed to be. It is true that many of the presuppositions which informed early form criticism have been brought into question, especially with regard to assumptions about the relationship between oral and written materials. The approach has also faced practical difficulties, both in terms of faulty application and, more fundamentally, in dealing with the transfer of forms to secondary contexts. As an approach to historical questions, however, there is a theoretical legitimacy in the form-critical emphasis on extracting and delineating ‘basic forms’, even if it offers informed speculation more often than secure data. When transferred to the literary-critical sphere, however, this approach aligns form criticism with classic, Aristotelian assumptions, the serious limitations of which have long been recognised by literary theorists. The re-application of form criticism in this way involves a confusion of aims and categories which does few favours either to form criticism or to any serious study of genre and convention in the biblical texts.

Dr Robert Murray (London)

How Was Jerome So Convinced that Rachel Died in Springtime?

The account of Rachel’s death in Genesis 35:16-20 and Jacob’s reminiscence in Genesis 48:7 both use the word כְּבֵרֶת followed by אֶרֶץ (ח). The only other instance is in 2 Kings 5:19. Both parsing and meaning of כְּבֵרֶת are ancient ‘cruces’. The contexts in Genesis and 2 Kings suggest that it is a *spatial* term, implicitly a *short distance*. Rashi affirms this, and probably all subsequent exegetes and translators agree. Yet before him, the Peshitta alone has a spatial term, the Syriac form of ‘parasang’; the LXX translator simply floundered. A *temporal* interpretation of כְּבֵרֶת, specifically evoking *spring*, is first urged by Jerome. In *Hebraicae Quaestiones in Genesim* he argues for ‘a choice time’ (as if related to בָּחַר), and explains this as ‘springtime’; in his version of Genesis he gives this both times. He cites no rabbinical authority for this, but could have found it in Palestinian targums and in tannaitic readings cited in *Genesis Rabba*. The fragment targums, Targum Neofiti and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan all have, in the place of כְּבֵרֶת, אִישׁוֹן or אִישׁוֹן, which refer to a special time, like καὶρός. A Genizah fragment inserts (perhaps by metathesis?) בּוֹכֵרֶת, ‘first fruits’, and this seems to lead the way to the dicta in *Genesis Rabba* alluding to Song

of Songs 2:11 and the spring barley harvest (with a hint of Naomi and Ruth?). The paper was followed by a poetic expansion of Jacob's words, inspired by the hauntingly emotive power of the 'springtime' theme.

A **reception** was given on the first evening of the Meeting by the Department of Theology & Religion at the University of Birmingham; and a further reception was given on the second evening by Sage Publications to mark their role as the new publisher of the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (and therefore also of the *SOTS Book List*).

82nd SUMMER MEETING
17th–20th July 2006
University College, Durham
Professor Robert Hayward presiding

Mr Edward Ball (Nottingham)

'Seeing' and 'Believing' in Habakkuk 2:4

After some initial comments on the critical and interpretive questions raised by the book, and the nature of the 'difficulty' they express for reading and responding to Habakkuk as a (scriptural) text, especially in the setting of academic biblical studies, the textual problems of 2:4 (especially v. 4a) were considered, and the thematic and syntactical links of vv. 4 and 5 noted. A new proposal for the textual reconstruction of v. 4a and consequently for the interpretation of the whole line was then offered. The significance of this understanding was examined, first in its immediate context alongside vv. 1-3, where particular attention was given to the nature of this passage, to the sense of the divine command in v. 2, and to the 'identification' of the 'vision' spoken of, before considering briefly the wider context within the book. After some brief observations on the interpretation of v. 4b, an outline, exploratory theological reflection on the verse, in the light of the suggested reconstruction and its larger context, was tentatively proposed.

Dr Francesca Stavrakopoulou (Exeter)

Bones, Burials and Boundaries in the Hebrew Bible

Archaeological and anthropological studies suggest that within traditional societies graves or other mortuary symbols might serve to mark the boundary of a given place or to signal ownership of a territory. As

such, the marking and maintaining of boundaries is often closely associated with ancestor veneration. This paper explored the ways in which traces of this traditional form of marking boundaries are reflected in the Hebrew Bible. It was argued that some of the ritual and ideological dimensions of this practice are particularly prominent in three key traditions: Jacob and Laban's territorial agreement (Genesis 31:43-54), in which symbols and practices associated with cults of the dead serve to signal the division and possession of land; Josiah's burning of bones at Bethel (2 Kings 23:15-20), in which the ancestral pedigree and protection of the hated Bethel cult is wiped out; and Abraham's purchase of the burial ground at Machpelah (Genesis 23:1-20), in which Israelite distinction and separation from the Hittites and their territory is artfully articulated.

Dr John Job (Chesterfield)

Does the Ghost of Zerubbabel Haunt the Pages of Jeremiah?

After stating by way of introduction a conviction that there really was a historical figure called Jeremiah, although the book contains much important later redaction, the suggestion was made on the basis of Jeremiah 22:24-30 that this passage bears evidence of (a) an early stage of development which manifests a hostile attitude to the monarchy; (b) a second stage, which could reflect enthusiasm for restoration of the monarchy at the time of Zerubbabel; (c) a third stage, when this revision was vehemently rebutted; and (d) in the light of Jeremiah 33:24-26, a final swing of the pendulum, not even represented in the Septuagint, again evincing strong hopes of restoration for the Davidic line.

Professor Karl William Weyde (Oslo)

Characteristics of Prophecy in the Second Temple Period

Continuity between post-exilic and pre-exilic prophecy occurs in words and visions as a medium of divine communication. Connecting themes are, e.g., Yahweh's presence in the Temple, Jerusalem as the centre of pilgrimage of all nations, and messianic hopes expressed for a descendant of David (Zerubbabel). Ethical demands, too, are in several respects similar to those of the pre-exilic prophets. There are changes, however, in post-exilic prophecy: messengers are presented as interpreters of words and visions, and messianic expectations are connected to the high priest Joshua whereas Zerubbabel fades. The priest becomes Yahweh's messenger (Malachi 2:7). The increasing importance of the priests appears also in Malachi 1:1, where the term 'my messenger' probably refers to a cultic figure interpreting traditions. This view can be substantiated by the occurrence of מַשָּׁח in Malachi 1:1 and Zechariah 9:1; 12:1, since, in Chronicles, the term is applied to different kinds of spiritual activities carried out by priests and Levites, including teaching and exposition of the law. Prophecy

changed, but did not decline. The change is probably due to the termination of kingship, and to an increasing literary activity, and also to the fact that words of the pre-exilic prophets were confirmed by the Exile and became reliable guides for the future. Thus, prophecy in the Second Temple period took on more the nature of exegesis of earlier authoritative words. However, prophecy in the old sense did not completely disappear; Chronicles relates *ad hoc* prophetic utterances by figures who were affected by the spirit (רוח) of Yahweh/God.

Dr Tomas Frydrych (Falkirk)

*The Legislative Function of Narrative in the Pentateuch:
A Case Study*

Law gains its significance from the way in which a community makes use of it, and this significance can depart far from that suggested by the semantic meaning of the legislative utterance — the significance of law does not reside in what the law says, but in what the community says about the law, the narrative context it creates around it. The command to observe the Sabbath in the two biblical accounts of the Decalogue, while virtually identical in wording, gains radically different significance by its juxtaposition with the creation narrative on the one hand, and the story of deliverance from Egypt on the other; in one, the law becomes a primary eternal principle for humans to submit themselves to, in the other a divine gift in the midst of Israel's history, a secondary response to existing human need — it is impossible to speak meaningfully of the Sabbath, and by implication of any law, without reference to a narrative context. Narrative contexts are, however, arbitrary, and law can, therefore, only function by a conventional association with a specific narrative context. This raises serious questions about any attempt to reconstruct the significance of the biblical legal system which does not pay attention to the narrative that the legal material is embedded in.

Dr Edmée Kingsmill (Oxford)

*'Flee, My Beloved, and Be Like a Gazelle or a Young Hart'
(Canticles 8:14)*

At Canticles 2:9 the female states: 'My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart'. At 2:17 she exhorts him: 'Be like a gazelle or a young hart'. And at 8:14 she commands him: 'Flee, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young hart'. This final verse has baffled commentators from earliest times. But if, as this commentator thinks, the Song is the apex of the wisdom literature, and is charged with messianic expectation; and if the clue to these animals lies in the four references in Deuteronomy which pair them and allow them for food (12:15, 22; 14:4-5; 15:22), then the female may here be the heavenly Sophia sending the Beloved into the world to be its food. That a Messiah is born in *Beth Lechem*, laid in a *manger*, and in due course claims

‘whoever eats me will live because of me’ (John 6:57; cf. the claim Wisdom makes at Sirach 24:21) is not understood to demonstrate the poet’s prescience but is seen as the realization of his understanding of Wisdom as food. Both the male and the female in the Song are thus seen to represent Wisdom: the female as earthly and heavenly Wisdom, the male as sent forth to be Wisdom incarnate.

Professor Doron Mendels (Jerusalem)

Did People in the Hellenistic Period and Beyond Believe in Their Past?

The paper had four themes: the relationship of societies, groups and individuals to their past; an attempt to classify modes of use of antiquity in Antiquity; the junctures at which people use the past in Antiquity; and the agents that transmitted antiquity in Antiquity. The conclusion was that in the Hellenistic period and beyond, we find various kinds of strategies concerning the use of the past that operate alongside each other. If we examine attitudes towards the past in groups within a society at a particular moment, we will get a disharmonious and chaotic picture. Certain groups considered the mythological past (this includes the Old Testament) as holy and yet altered it, or parts of it, according to new cultural, political and social circumstances. Others that manipulated the past actually destroyed much of it and did not leave it in its original for posterity. Therefore one can speak of destructive currents concerning the attitude of societies in the Hellenistic period and beyond towards the past as we in modern times understand historiography and other agents that preserve an accurate picture of our pasts. Societies, groups and individuals were imbued with fragments of their past, but did not respect their histories in their totality. The picture drawn here accords with the analysis in Mendels’ *Memory* book, namely that societies in the Hellenistic world live with memories and inscribed traditions, fragmented, comprehensive, collective and individual, false and true, embodied through temples, art and literary output as well as in bureaucracies and regimes. (A full version of this paper will be published in Peter Schaefer [ed.], *Antiquity in Antiquity*, forthcoming from Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tübingen, 2007.)

Dr David Shepherd (Belfast)

‘Strike His Bone and His Flesh’: Reading Job 2 from the Beginning

Following the destruction of Job’s children and possessions in Job 1, traditional readings of chapter 2 understand the Satan to be demanding that Job himself be struck down as a test of his disinterested piety. Instead, this study builds on earlier observations of the importance of Genesis for the writer of Job by arguing that the Satan’s language in Job 2, and in particular his use of the expression ‘his bone and his flesh’, invites us to read this passage from ‘the beginning’ (Genesis

1–3). When we do, the Satan is seen to be demanding the elimination of Job’s wife and, with her, any possible perpetuation of Job’s life in the shape of new progeny. While such a reading makes better sense of particular obscurities in Job 2, it also complicates traditional characterizations of Job’s wife by suggesting that she was not merely the Satan’s tool (so Augustine, John Calvin and others) but also his target.

Dr Jennifer Dines (Cambridge)

Greek Daniel’s Debt to Isaiah — but which Isaiah?

Hebrew-Aramaic Daniel contains many reminiscences of other texts, including Isaiah. When the Septuagint translation of Daniel was made, did the translator recognize the Isaian allusions? How might we be able to tell, in places where the translation matches the source-text (approximating to the Masoretic Text)? One clue might be provided if the wording is close to that of LXX Isaiah, a version which I.L. Seeligmann claimed was known to the translator of LXX Daniel. This claim was tested by looking at several passages where striking similarities are found between LXX Daniel and LXX Isaiah. The direction of influence was discussed, since the dating of both texts is uncertain, but it was concluded that LXX Daniel does indeed draw occasionally on LXX Isaiah. In some places, the translator has created new echoes not found in the Masoretic Text. Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether the translator is aware of an allusion, and sometimes he seems to have drawn on other passages of scripture rather than Isaiah. The situation is complex, but it looks as if the translator drew on the whole Isaian corpus and knew it in Greek as well as Hebrew. The answer to ‘Which Isaiah?’ could be ‘all three’ and ‘both’.

Professor Joseph Blenkinsopp (Notre Dame)

The Sealed Book of Isaiah 29:11-12

The cryptic saying in Isaiah 29:11-12 about a sealed book which two categories of readers are invited to read is ostensibly a prose comment on the immediately preceding passage that condemns public indifference to prophetic preaching (29:9-10). It also refers back to the sealed prophetic testimony and teaching of Isaiah 8:16, but now interpreted as referring to the book of Isaiah, but the book of Isaiah read in the light of the prophetic-apocalyptic perspective in evidence elsewhere in the book. It therefore illustrates the shift from oral to written prophecy and from prophetic eschatology to the apocalyptic eschatology of the book of Daniel. In Daniel and other apocalyptic writings from the late Second Temple period, including the Qumran sectarian texts (e.g. 4QMysteries) and early Christianity (e.g. Revelation 22:10), the Isaianic sealed book serves as a fundamental symbol for the revelation of supernatural mysteries, analogous to the idea of revelation as the decryption of a coded message. In these writings, the interim period during which the book remains sealed is the time of the hiddenness or

anger of God, a time therefore of spiritual disorientation and blindness. The two categories of readers refer respectively, on this reading, to those who do not share the eschatological consciousness which alone renders the book of Isaiah intelligible, and those deaf to any kind of prophetic discourse. Neither has the key to crack the code, and so for both the offer falls on deaf ears.

A **symposium** on ‘Where are Hebrew Bible Studies Today and Where are They Going?’ was held at the Meeting.

Dr Katharine Dell (Cambridge) presented a short introduction to the subject. She based her discussion around four changes charted by G.E. Wright in an article in 1960 (‘Old Testament scholarship in prospect’, *JAAR* 28), notably the rise of new philosophical systems which go on to have a profound influence on interpretation, the call to expose the assumptions underlying the quest for objective Old Testament scholarship, the rise of archaeology and our knowledge of the ancient Near East, and the application of ever-fresh methods. Forty-six years on from the publication of this article she asked whether this blueprint for the future still has merit and found that it did. In this context she aired issues such as the influence of post-modernism in its celebration of diversity and plurality upon Old Testament interpretation and the corresponding dangers of relativism, the tension between the quest for ‘history’ (and related secular and anti-historical approaches) and the pursuit of theological ‘truth’, the use of archaeology and the ancient Near East in the modern context, the trend towards specialization and yet the value of interdisciplinary approaches, the value in older methods despite the objective/subjective debate, and the importance of imparting the fruits of scholarship to faith communities. Continuing lively debate was seen to fuel fresh possibilities for the future of our discipline.

Dr Hugh Pyper (Sheffield) based his thoughts on the future of biblical studies on two recent conference sessions. One was a session at the International Meeting of SBL in Edinburgh on ‘The End of Biblical Studies’ where the argument had been put forward that the alienness of the Bible and its implication in violence and oppression meant that it should be discarded. On the contrary, Pyper argued, in the current political climate it is precisely the issue of how to deal with the alien and disturbing in our common culture that most needs to be addressed; the simplistic response of rejecting what we find alien is profoundly dangerous. At the same conference, Jacques Berlinerblau had pointed out that, although this may be a poor time for biblical studies, it is a great time for the Bible: outside Theology and Biblical Studies departments, the cultural influence of the Bible is more important than ever and a wide range of scholars are waking up to this; there is a great future for study of the Bible, but it is happening in other disciplines

and in new forums. The challenge is to embrace this while maintaining the disciplinary rigour that traditional biblical studies can bring. The second session had been at a conference on teaching theology and religious studies. Pyper pointed out how Old Testament studies in particular have historically been pushed to the margins in the curricula of both theology and religious studies, but he argued that Old Testament studies belonged at the centre of both. The same texts have validly been read either with theological questions in mind or by applying the disciplines of religious studies, thus forming a unique resource for demonstrating the distinctiveness but also the interdependence of the two approaches. Interdisciplinarity, which is a much-vaunted but often rather meaningless slogan in contemporary academia, is actually practised in Old Testament studies and this is something the discipline should have the confidence to assert and to model for other disciplines. All in all, there is an exciting future for the student of the Bible; the question is whether those who teach in academic biblical studies can have the confidence and flexibility to respond to these possibilities.

Dr Adrian Curtis (Manchester) offered anecdotal evidence that there is great interest in, but actual ignorance of, the Old Testament in faith communities and educational establishments. Teachers and preachers have not, apparently, been meeting that need, so there must be potential for those who teach the teachers and preachers to communicate an enthusiasm for the subject which can be passed on. The shape of many degree programmes means limited time for the Bible and biblical languages. However, the increasing stress on integration and looking for links across areas taught within Theology and Religion programmes provides an opportunity for demonstrating the range of approaches and methods which make up Old Testament study. The fact that languages do not loom so large may actually be encouraging students to take them! Taught Master's programmes may increasingly provide the tools for research. The advancing of the discipline through cutting-edge research is vital. But so is the provision of the much maligned 'popular' work which helps to foster interest and enthusiasm. SOTS has a vital role in holding together the interests of those who must have an eye to the next Research Assessment Exercise and those who must have an eye to nurturing the next generation of biblical enthusiasts.

A **reception** was given on the first evening of the Meeting by the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Durham. On 19th July there was an **outing** to the Bowes Museum in the town of Barnard Castle, with tea by invitation of the President.

13th SOTS/OTW JOINT MEETING
21st–24th August 2006
Apeldoorn

The 2006 Joint Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study and the (Dutch-Flemish) Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap was held at the Theological University of Apeldoorn and at the Hampshire Hotel Apeldoorn. The meeting was conducted under the joint presidencies of Professor Eric Peels (Apeldoorn), President of OTW, and Professor Robert Hayward (Durham), President of SOTS, with sessions also chaired by the respective secretaries of the two Societies, Professor Gert Kwakkel (Kampen) and Dr John Jarick (Oxford), and by Professor Arie van der Kooij (Leiden) and Professor John Day (Oxford). The theme of the meeting was 'Psalms and Prayers'.

The following papers were delivered: Professor Gordon Wenham (Bristol), 'Prayer and Practice in the Psalms'; Professor Eep Talstra (Amsterdam), 'The Discourse of Praying: Reading Nehemiah 1'; Dr Susan Gillingham (Oxford), 'Psalm 8 through the Looking Glass: Reception History of a Multi-faceted Psalm'; Dr Jan Holman (Tilburg), 'Psalm 139:20'; Professor John Day (Oxford), 'The Ark in the Psalms'; Dr Marjo Korpel (Utrecht), 'The Demarcation of Hymns and Prayers in the Prophets'; Dr Jonathan Magonet (London), 'The Eternal Rules: Analysing a Temple Liturgy'; Dr Jan Fokkelman (Leiden), 'Psalm 103'; Dr Alistair Hunter (Glasgow), 'The Dove that Flew: Psalm 55 and the Book of Jonah'; Professor Panc Beentjes (Utrecht), 'Prayers in the Book of Chronicles'; Dr John Elwolde (Valladolid), 'Text-critical Contributions of the Hodayot's Use of the Psalter'; Dr Jaap van Dorp (Haarlem), 'The Prayer of Isaiah (2 Kings 20:11)'; Dr Adrian Curtis (Manchester), '"Our Father...": An Inherited Title and its Presence (or Absence) in the Psalms?'; Dr Paul Sanders (Delft), '"Argumenta ad Deum" in the Pestilence Prayers of Mursili II and in the Book of Psalms'; Professor Howard Wallace (Melbourne), 'King and Community: Joining with David in Prayer'; Revd Roger Tomes (Manchester), 'Sing to the Lord a New Song'; and Professor Gert Kwakkel (Kampen) with Dr Christiane de Vos (Münster), 'Psalm 69: The Psalmist's View of Himself, his God and his Enemies'. The papers will be published in the series *Oudtestamentische Studiën*.

In addition to the academic programme, there was a visit to the Palace 'Het Loo' in Apeldoorn (with lunch in the Restaurant 'Het Theehuis') and a social evening in the environs of the Castle 'De Cannenburgh' in Vaassen (with dinner in the Restaurant 'Het Koetshuis').

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Among **honours** received by members of the Society: Professor Graeme Auld has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; Professor Hans Barstad has been appointed to the chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies in the University of Edinburgh; Professor Philip Davies has been elected President of the European Association of Biblical Studies for 2007-09; Dr Anthony Gelston has been awarded the Cross of St Augustine by the Archbishop of Canterbury; Dr Mary Mills has been appointed Professor of Biblical Studies at Liverpool Hope University; Dr Walter Moberly has been awarded a personal chair at the University of Durham; Professor Ellen van Wolde has been elected a Member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences and Arts; and (late notice that) Dr Nicolas Wyatt was awarded a personal chair at the University of Edinburgh.

The Society has learned with regret of the **deaths** of Professor John Bowman, Revd Cyril Cave, Revd Professor Kenneth Grayston, Dr Benedikt Isserlin, Rabbi Louis Jacobs, Revd Canon Professor Douglas Jones (President of the Society in 1976), Revd Canon Dr John McHugh, Professor Simon Parker, Dr David Patterson, Revd Dr John Thompson, and Professor Meir Wallenstein.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Mr Jonathan Benson, Revd Elizabeth Hayes, Mrs Sandra Jacobs, Dr David Lamb, Dr Robert Rezetko, and Dr Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer. At the Summer Meeting: Dr Hywell Clifford, Dr Jamie Grant, Revd Dr Peter Hatton, Professor Alison Lo, Dr Peter Lockwood, Mrs Hilary Marlow, Dr Christophe Nihan, Revd Dr Roger Ryan, Revd Dr Joachim Schaper, Mr John Wigfield, and Ms Julie Woods; in addition, Professor Rolf Rendtorff was elected to Honorary Membership and Dr Peter Addinall to Life Membership.

Several members are currently '**address unknown**'; the Membership Secretary would be glad to receive information about them: G. Doran, R.S. Fyall, C.A. Keller, G. Law, O. Lehman, A. Mirsky, P.M.K. Morris, P. Potter, D. Price-Williams, J. Rhymer, C. Sant, J.F.X. Sheehan, and M.G. Wilcox.

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), Rolf Rendtorff (2006), Helmer Ringgren (1973), Rudolf Smend (1979), Jan Alberto Soggin (1992), and Erich Zenger (2005).

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

The **Winter Meeting 2007** will be held on 3rd–5th January at the University of Chester, and the **Summer Meeting 2007** will be held on 9th–12th July at Tapton Hall, University of Sheffield, both meetings under the Presidency of Professor Philip Davies.

The **19th Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament** will 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>.

Two new volumes have appeared in the **SOTS Monograph Series**: *The Personification of Wisdom*, by Alice Sinnott, identifies how and why the complex character of Wisdom as a female figure was introduced into the Israelite tradition, and concludes that personified Wisdom functioned to reinterpret and transform that tradition; and *Jeremiah's Kings: A Study of the Monarchy in Jeremiah*, by John Job, shows that the treatment of rulers contemporary with the prophet varied greatly from one part of the book to another, indicating great redactional complexity. All volumes in the series are available from Ashgate Publishing Direct Sales, 130 Milton Park, Abingdon OX14 4SB (tel. 01235 827730, e-mail ashgate@bookpoint.co.uk).

Back copies of certain issues of the **SOTS Book List** are currently available. The editions of 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 are available at a cost of £4 each including postage and packing. The edition of 2004 is available at a cost of £20. Orders should be sent with a cheque (in pounds sterling on a UK bank) payable to SOTS, to the former *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).

Sage Publications have indicated that the ***Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*** is available to members of SOTS at a 30% discount.

Members are reminded that they may submit to the Committee (via the Home Secretary or President) the name of any person thought appropriate to be considered for office in the Society or for Honorary Membership of the Society. You may wish to note that the term of office of the current Home Secretary concludes next year, and so a new incumbent will need to be identified for this office (to serve from 2008), in addition to a new President-elect (to be President in 2009).

ACCOUNTS FOR 2005

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st October 2005

	<i>Bursaries</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Confer-</i>	<i>General</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>2004</i>
	£	List	ences	Fund	£	£
Income						
Subscriptions and donations	53	—	—	10041	10094	7823
Income tax recovered in respect of deeds of covenant	—	—	—	—	—	—
Conference income	—	—	30814	—	30814	26876
Dividends, interest and royalties	362	—	—	1580	1942	412
Total income	415	—	30814	11621	42850	35120
Expenditure						
Printing and stationery	—	6538	—	2609	9147	2120
Postage and administration	—	—	—	7	7	694
Committee expenses	—	—	—	236	236	587
Conference expenses	—	—	25911	—	25911	23355
Accountancy	—	—	—	470	470	555
Bursaries	542	—	—	—	542	196
Bank charges	—	—	—	412	412	303
Total expenditure	542	6538	25911	3734	36725	27810
Net surplus/(deficit)	(127)	(6538)	4903	7887	6125	7310

BALANCE SHEET at 31st October 2005

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2004</i>
	£	£
Assets		
Fixed assets (note 1)	1	1
Debtors	800	—
Bank accounts (note 2)	54430	49105
Investments at cost (note 3)	1053	1053
	56284	50159
Liabilities		
Sundry creditors and reserves	(470)	(470)
	55814	49689
Represented by		
Accumulated surpluses and reserves (note 4)		
General fund	54183	48131
Bursary fund	1631	1558
	55814	49689

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS for the year ended 31st October 2005

1. Fixed assets	<i>Computer Equipment</i>
Costs at 1st November 2004 and at 31st October 2005	984
Depreciation at 1st November 2004 and at 31st October 2005	983
Net book amount at 1st November 2004 and at 31st October 2005	1

2. Bank accounts	<i>2005</i>	<i>2004</i>
Barclays Bank plc: Current Account	734	489
Higher Interest Business Account	21671	17634
National Savings Bank Investment Account	32025	30982
	54430	49105

3. Investment at cost		
549.6863 units, Friends Provident Stewardship Growth Fund retail accumulation shares (market value £3554.30 at 31st August 2005)	1053	1053

4. Accumulated surpluses and reserves	<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Bursary Fund</i>	<i>Total</i>
At 1st November 2004	48131	1558	49689
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	6252	(127)	6125
Transfers	(200)	200	–
At 31st October 2005	54183	1631	55814

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 2005 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 2007

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

Retiring President: Professor Robert Hayward, Department of Theology, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RS (tel. 0191 334 3966, e-mail c.t.r.hayward@durham.ac.uk).

President-elect: Professor John Barton, Oriel College, Oxford OX1 4EW (tel. 01865 276537, e-mail john.barton@theology.ox.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 John Day, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford OX2 6QA (tel. 01865 274380, e-mail john.day@theology.ox.ac.uk).

Information Officer: Dr James Aitken, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA (tel. 01223 335139, e-mail jka12@cam.ac.uk).

Committee: The above Officers of the Society plus Professor Cheryl Exum, Dr Ann Jeffers, Dr Nathan MacDonald, Dr James McKeown, 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 Andrew Mein.

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 Walter Houston, and Dr Nathan MacDonald.

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	2006 Robert Hayward