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# The Society for Old Testament Study

## BULLETIN

### 2007

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**82nd WINTER MEETING**  
**3rd–5th January 2007**  
**University of Chester**  
Professor Philip Davies presiding

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**Professor Philip Davies (Sheffield)**

***Presidential Address: ‘Apocalyptic’: An Otherworldly Tour through the Hebrew Bible (and Beyond)***

In 1972 Klaus Koch’s *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* was (significantly) translated into English as *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, for H.H. Rowley and D.S. Russell had disposed of the problem: it was a product of prophecy born of persecution, originating with the book of Daniel, and with several distinctive features. But the elements in this definition have since been challenged or overturned: it is now 1 Enoch that seems more central than Daniel, and wisdom more helpful than prophecy; however, the relationship between ‘apocalypse’, ‘apocalyptic’ and ‘apocalypticism’ remains confused. A fresh attempt to explain apocalyptic literature and its cultural matrix employed the device of two ‘journeys’. The first explored the ancient Near Eastern culture of manticism, a priestly-scribal enterprise developed from the practice of divination that sought an empirical basis for prediction that also veered into the speculative. Astrology and dreams were used as examples. This culture was a major and mainstream current that must have been present also in ancient Israel and Judah. However, the biblical literature largely rejects divination. A second journey, comparing the figure of Enoch and traditions connected with him in Genesis and 1 Enoch, revealed an underlying dispute within early Judaism about mantic speculation and its claim that the divine will was foreseeable. The paper concluded that it was not ‘apocalyptic’ that constituted a peculiar cultural development, but the Hebrew Bible itself.

**Dr Eric Christianson (Chester)**

*'Lights, Camera, Achsah!': On Comparing the Hebrew Bible to Film*

A growing number of scholars are relating the Hebrew Bible to cinema in a comparative mode. The comparative step is at least in part enabled by a natural affinity between the media of Hebrew Bible and of film. This paper explored a number of those affinities and surveyed recent approaches to the topic as a whole. It was suggested that comparison is emerging in two modes of analysis: (1) intertextual conversation and (2) intertextual hypothesis. Both draw on the well established discipline of intertextuality, but have different end points. While the former seeks to see what 'conversation' emerges through the act of comparison, the latter has an explicit and determined historical dimension. It seeks to locate *a dimension of correspondence* between some historical or social aspect of the Bible and that of the mainly American cinema. A number of examples of this approach were offered in relation to the Deuteronomistic History, particularly where scholars had compared elements of it to the film genres of the Western and of *film noir*. An intertextual 'hypothesis' approach was also developed through a comparison of Judges 4 and *film noir*, with several film clips being played.

**Dr Ian Wilson (Cambridge)**

*Central Sanctuary or Local Settlement? The Location of the Triennial Tithe Declaration (Deuteronomy 26:13-15)*

This reading of the text argued for the eventual presence of the Israelite farmer at the central sanctuary in connection with the triennial tithe. It derived from two curious and largely unremarked features of the pericope: first, the Israelite's declaration that he has 'not eaten of the tithe while [he] was mourning' (v. 14), meaningful if he *has* partaken of the tithe but pointless if he had indeed set aside the whole of it for the poor; and secondly, his designation of what he has given away as the 'sacred portion' rather than the 'tithe' (v. 13). These features can be understood on the basis of the implied direct object pronoun in v. 12 ('I have given to the Levite' etc.). Such an omission is fairly common in Biblical Hebrew, the identity of the missing object generally being inferred from the preceding context. Here, modern translations assume that the *whole* tithe is intended. There are cases, however, involving an uncountable noun, where the omitted object refers not to the whole of such an antecedent, but only to part. This syntactical feature of Biblical Hebrew thus allows the possibility that, while setting aside most (the 'sacred portion') of the tithe for the disadvantaged, the Israelite farmer retained some for his own consumption. The latter was not allowed in his home town (or while he was mourning), but, according to Deuteronomy 12:17, must have taken place at the central sanctuary.

**Dr Dwight Swanson (Manchester)**

*The Qumran Bible: A Brief Survey of the Manuscript Evidence, with Some Implications for Biblical Studies*

This study attempted an inductive approach to the questions ‘What is “Bible” at Qumran?’ and ‘What does this tell us about the status of “Bible” in Second Temple Judaism?’ The starting point was the biblical manuscripts at Qumran (i.e. those texts that are recognised by us as ‘biblical’ or ‘scriptural’), and then some non-biblical manuscripts (texts which may have been considered ‘scripture’ by the Qumran community or by the wider Judaism of the time) were considered. The study pointed to the need to shift from thinking of ‘Bible’ as a fixed text to seeing it as an interpretative tradition which is a living corpus for a living community. The Qumran evidence reflects that relation to the text which went before the existence of that community. It was not a ‘free and lazy’ approach to the text. Texts such as 4QReworked Pentateuch<sup>c</sup> (4Q365) are as ‘biblical’ as 4QNumbers<sup>b</sup> (4Q27). The Temple Scroll continues in the tradition of exegetical updating of scripture that is seen within the biblical book of Leviticus. The fixing of the biblical text took place slowly, and was co-extensive with the increasing process of ‘canonization’ of texts which extended well into the first centuries of the Common Era.

**Dr Deborah Rooke (London)**

*A Gender Agenda: Deborah in Holy Writ and Handel*

The biblical narrative of Deborah has generated considerable interest among feminist scholars because of its reversal of traditional gender roles, particularly in Judges 4, and a gendered reading of Judges 4 and 5 demonstrates how Deborah is shown as a brave, authoritative initiator in contrast with a weak and cowardly Barak, while Sisera is emasculated by his death at the hands of the independent-minded and assertive Jael. However, in the libretto of Handel’s 1733 oratorio ‘Deborah’, the biblical gender roles are reworked, so that the way in which the characters play out their functions (prophetess, man-killer, soldier) coheres with contemporary upper-class notions of appropriate gender roles. Rather than a treacherous deceiver, Jael appears as a woman who craves nothing other than safety and solitude, but who seizes a God-given opportunity to rid Israel of a despicable foe; and the prophetess Deborah ‘mothers’ the whole people by her guidance and support, without needing to dominate a Barak who is bursting with patriotic fervour to fight for his country and who is her social and psychological equal. In addition to being influenced by contemporary gender models, the portrayal of Deborah and her relationship to Barak may be linked to the relationship between Caroline of Ansbach, Queen of England, to whom the libretto is dedicated, and her husband George II: Caroline was well known for having more political savvy than her blustering military-minded husband, just as the libretto’s

portrayal allows Deborah a subtly dominant role that nonetheless does not impinge upon Barak's manliness.

**Professor Athalya Brenner (Amsterdam)**

*Michal and David: Love between Enemies?*

In order to construct an ongoing sketch of Michal and David's relationship, we have to bring together passages that are variably placed within the books of Samuel. These texts are: 1 Samuel 14:49; 18:20-28; 19:11-17, 25, 44; 2 Samuel 3:12-17; 6:15-23 (to be compared with the shorter version of 1 Chronicles 15:25-29). A biographical or semi-biographical 'story' of Michal is even more difficult to construct, since information about her is fragmentary; and the fragments are embedded within a larger context whose subject is David. To use an idiom coined by Cheryl Exum, Michal is a 'fragmentary woman', whose story is an incidental component of the dominant histories recounting the men in her literary life. Those men are Michal's father, King Saul; Michal's brother, Jonathan; Michal's husband, King David; Michal's second husband, Palti[el]; and finally, once again, Michal's first husband, King David. Biblical authors seem not to have lent her much significance for her own sake: they present her mainly as relational to the lives and ambitions of her male blood- and societal kin. In order to construct a Michal-story, the fragments have to be brought together and somehow arranged in a way that will make sense for 'her', not for her male kin. This paper traced Michal's biography in the Bible and in some western visual art.

**Professor Ronald Clements (Cambridge)**

*The Enduring Value of the Old Testament: An Interesting Quest*

In this 90th year of SOTS (and the 50th year of membership of the speaker), this paper reflected on one of the key themes promoted by some of the Society's founding fathers — concerns about the Old Testament's 'abiding value' (Arthur Peake), 'religious value' (Robert Kennett), 'truth' (Stanley Cook), or 'relevance' to the modern world (Harold Rowley). The introduction in the early 20th century of defensive promotions about the uniqueness of the contribution of the Old Testament to human culture was due to the disturbing effect that modern critical explanations for the origin of the biblical literature had had upon Christian and Jewish communities over the preceding half-century. The idea of 'enduring value' replaced more explicit theological language concerning divine revelation, dispensed with the distinctive hermeneutical strategies through which comprehensive Christian and Jewish doctrines had been linked to the biblical literature, and sought to appeal to both religious and non-religious readers of the Bible by affirming its role as the formative groundwork of modern Western culture. Yet the 'enduring value' was defined rather narrowly under the influence of contemporary apologetic concerns, as evi-

denced by more recent publications that have looked at the immense variety of ways in which political, cultural and artistic achievements have built upon themes with a biblical origin. Since both ‘openness’ and ‘human interest’ are appropriate qualities to expect within a literary work, the theme of ‘continuity’ may be suggested as a useful way of embracing the extraordinary variety of ways in which the reception history of the Hebrew Bible belongs to its essential character as a work possessing ‘enduring value’. Its merit lies in drawing attention to the manner in which literature functions in a social context, frequently breaking the restraints imposed by traditional hermeneutical strategies that tend to become unduly authoritative and moribund.

### **Dr David Stec (Sheffield)**

#### *David the Prophet*

In the New Testament David is described as a ‘prophet’ at Acts 2:30, and he is closely linked with the prophets at Hebrews 11:32. The Hebrew Bible, however, never refers to David as a נביא, nor does it ever clearly and unambiguously present him as having engaged in prophetic activity, if by this one means anything that might be represented by the verb נבא. It is in literature that perhaps dates from about the first half of the first century CE (11QPs<sup>a</sup> and MS 798 of the Antonin Collection from the Cairo Genizah) that prophetic activity is first explicitly attributed to him. The roots of the belief that he exercised a prophetic role are, however, to be found already in the Hebrew Bible itself. In the passage concerning David’s Last Words (2 Samuel 23:1-7) we apparently have an (early?) example of a prophetic oracle attributed to David. But is it really as a consequence of the later development of the link between music and praise and prophecy that ultimately the whole of the Psalter came to be regarded as in effect representing the prophetic oracles of David? There are just a few hints that music and the ecstatic kind of prophecy were linked since an early date (1 Samuel 10:5; 2 Kings 3:15), though this link is not connected with David. But in the work of the Chronicler prophecy by means of music became a formal institution, and David is presented as being responsible for this (1 Chronicles 25:1ff.), and is even given the prophetic title of ‘man of God’ (Nehemiah 12:24, 36; 2 Chronicles 8:14). This perhaps explains the origin of the connection found in Targum Jonathan between prophecy and praise. The strong association of David with the Psalter meant that by the turn of the era the psalms came to be regarded as representing the word of prophecy.

A **reception** was given on the first evening of the Meeting by the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at the University of Chester. On 4th January there was an **outing** to St Deiniol’s Library, Hawarden.

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**83rd SUMMER MEETING**  
**9th–12th July 2007**  
**Tapton Hall, University of Sheffield**  
Professor Philip Davies presiding

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**Professor John Rogerson (Sheffield)**

*Arthur Samuel Peake and the Beginnings of the Society for Old Testament Study*

A.S. Peake was a founder member of the Society and between 1919 and his death in 1929 played a major part in establishing it as a recognizable force in the field of Old Testament Studies. Based largely upon unpublished correspondence between Peake and the Society's first secretary, T.H. Robinson, the paper outlined Peake's importance to Robinson as a mentor and advisor, as well as his crucial role in the following areas: the editing and publication of *The People and the Book*, the rapprochement with German scholarship after the First World War and the Society's support for the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, and the question of the Society's involvement with the University Extension Movement. For all of this time Peake was suffering from a hydatid cyst on his liver which caused anaemia and tiredness. His devotion to the Society's affairs was therefore all the more remarkable. After Peake's death Robinson wrote 'to describe his connection with the Society would almost be to write its history'.

**Professor Lyn Bechtel (Cwm Penmachno)**

*Is There a Feminist-Like Theology in the Book of Genesis?*

There has been a call among feminists of the Hebrew Bible for a 'feminist biblical theology', a theology of resistance and advocacy, which is grounded in the assumptions of group-orientation. Since the definition of biblical feminism has changed, the paper began by outlining the characteristics of a feminist biblical theology. The Hebrew Bible has conventionally been read as if ancient Israel has only one uniform, non-conflictual Yahwist theology, namely deuteronomic theology. However, the paper contended that there are two conflicting Yahwist theologies: what can be called genesis theology (found in Genesis, Ruth, Job, and Ecclesiastes) and deuteronomic theology (found in the rest of the books). The genesis theology may be seen as a Yahwist theology of resistance that forms the foundation of a mature understanding of how life and the divine function, that encourages people to question and think critically, that lacks a propensity for dualistic thinking, and that critiques and challenges

many of the assumptions of deuteronomic theology. However, if genesis theology is a theology of resistance that confronts the doctrine of deuteronomic theology, then the characteristics of deuteronomic theology that are being contested need to be understood. Finally, the paper interpreted the Genesis 1–3 myths and proposed that this theology qualifies as a feminist-like biblical theology.

**Dr James McKeown (Belfast)**

*Genesis among the Exiles*

Most scholars agree that it is highly probable that the book of Ezekiel is aware of and alludes to the blessing of Judah by Jacob in Genesis 49:8–12. The main allusion is in Ezekiel 19 where the themes of the Genesis passage are revisited with a high degree of shared vocabulary. Another alleged allusion to Genesis is found in Ezekiel 21:27 (Heb 32) which looks forward to one who will come after the demise of Zedekiah. This is possibly an allusion to the promise of one who would come, to whom would be the obedience of the nations, in Genesis 49:10. Obviously the blessing in Genesis is intended as a message of hope with its focus on the dominance and authority of the tribe of Judah, but in Ezekiel it is clearly part of an oracle of judgment. Thus the one to come (Genesis 49:10) is, according to Ezekiel, none other than Nebuchadnezzar. The future envisaged in the Judah blessing is one of a dominant Judah holding the enemy by the throat (or neck). For Ezekiel to give this tradition a messianic application would suggest the continued supremacy of Judah and future kings of the same calibre as those who had already gone into exile. Ezekiel, however, seems to have envisaged the end of this kind of kingship. He disapproved of the Judean monarchs and he believed that the sceptre was now about to depart from Judah and would be wielded by Nebuchadnezzar, whom he describes as ‘King of Kings’ (26:7). Although some passages in the book of Ezekiel mention a future Davidic ruler, he is not described in triumphalistic terms. He is described as one who would not promote the interests of Judah but would unite all Israel in a way that would blur the distinction between Judah and Ephraim.

**Dr Duncan Burns (Flayosc)**

*Putting the Cult of Ugarit on the Map: Incorporating Archaeological Data into the Study of the Ugaritic Texts*

This paper offered a broad-brush summary of a doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Sheffield in 2002. The paper identified a number of pervasive tendencies — recurring assumptions and methodological principles — that have contributed to a limited appreciation of the ‘religion’ (singular!) of Ugarit, and argued that a revised interpretative agenda and method could help in the formulation of a more satisfactory reconstruction of the ancient Ugaritic cult. Recognising that the unconditional preferring of textual evidence

over archaeological data is the most significant of these pervasive tendencies, the paper advocated a way of incorporating textual and non-textual evidence. The reconnection of the Ugaritic texts with their find-site information raises the possibility of recovering ancient archiving techniques, and with it a way of identifying nuances in the physical distribution of the textual corpus. The creation of a database of Ugaritic cult terminology was explained and tentative findings offered. The provisional conclusion was that while a good deal of commonality existed between the texts discovered in the 'House of the High Priest' and the Royal Palace, the texts from the 'House of the Hurrian Priest' display a level of distinctiveness that hints at some kind of religious plurality. Further work is needed to flesh out this provisional finding.

**Professor Tryggve Mettinger (Lund)**

*The Eden Narrative: Literary and Religio-historical Observations*

What is the theme of the Eden Narrative? In contrast to previous research, it was argued that a divine test of the first humans is the subject and that disobedience to the commandment and the ensuing consequences constitutes the theme of the Eden Narrative. This understanding is based on a narratological analysis and on a thematic discussion. Both special trees in Eden are important: the tree of knowledge as the test case and the tree of life as the potential reward. The genre is defined as myth, and a functionalist analysis is suggested as a worthwhile possibility. A traditio-historical analysis retrieves an 'Adamic myth' behind Ezekiel 28. The changes made by the Eden Poet serve to highlight his theme. Even this early Adamic myth contained wisdom and immortality. Israel shared with Mesopotamia (Adapa, Gilgamesh) the notion of wisdom and immortality as constituting divine prerogatives, marking out an ontological boundary between the divine and human spheres. Sound paradisiacal forestry requires a garden with two special trees, symbolizing the two divine prerogatives. Ideas of an original one-tree narrative do not make sense. The Eden Narrative dates from late, post-exilic times.

**Professor E.C. John (Bangalore)**

*Reading the Old Testament from a Dalit Perspective*

The word 'Dalit' has become current in India in recent decades, standing for such British colonial period terms as 'depressed classes' or 'scheduled castes', the so-called 'Untouchables'. Latin American scholars have drawn upon the theme of the poor in the Old Testament, but the special situation in India is that the Dalits are not only poor but also have the caste stigma of being regarded as untouchables. Strangely enough, even if they are converts to Christianity, as many of them are, the stigma does not disappear and discrimination is still practised. Much standard Old Testament interpretation is rejected by Dalit

Christians because it is felt to be too partial in its understanding and oblivious to what the Old Testament says about the poor and the oppressed. A careful examination of the legal texts, the pre-exilic prophets, Psalms and Wisdom literature shows that the subject of the poor and oppressed is a major theme. Although the Exodus theme is often also brought to bear in such discussions, it is problematic in view of the aspects of 'holy war' and conquest. Most productive are texts which speak of all humans being in the image of God and of those who were not 'my people' now becoming such, as well as the language of the psalms of individual lament. A closer look at the context of the many references to the poor and the oppressed in the Old Testament, especially in the pre-exilic prophets, may prompt the careful reader to raise questions such as 'How and why did some become poor in the first instance?', 'How are they being treated by the powerful and the rich?', and 'What roles are played by the kings and rulers, supposedly the guardians of justice, or what roles are they expected to play?' The contexts of the texts in question show unequivocally that poverty is against the justice of God.

**Dr Ian Young (Sydney)**

*'Late' Language, Loanwords and Linguistic Dating of Biblical Books*

Scholars have commonly suggested that 'Early Biblical Hebrew' (EBH), as found, say, in the Pentateuch or Joshua–Kings, is pre-exilic Hebrew, while 'Late Biblical Hebrew' (LBH), as found in Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles, is post-exilic. However, virtually all the prominent features of LBH are also found in EBH, just to a lesser degree, and EBH texts regularly exhibit an accumulation of LBH features, just a lower number than the core LBH texts. If LBH features really are 'late', then all the biblical texts, whether EBH or LBH, are post-exilic. If, rather, it is the degree of accumulation of LBH features which distinguishes LBH from EBH, then various post-exilic texts ranging from Zechariah 1–8 to the Qumran Peshier Habakkuk are in EBH. The existence of most LBH features in the pre-exilic period indicates further that texts with an accumulation of LBH features could have been produced early. EBH and LBH are not successive chronological phases, but co-existing styles of Hebrew: conservative and non-conservative. The distribution of Persian loanwords does not prop up the old chronological model. People of Iranian origin were near neighbours of Judah in the pre-exilic period. Various post-exilic texts avoid using Persian words. Finally scholars have presupposed that Persian loanwords cannot be found in EBH texts, and likely occurrences are explained away. It is therefore simply a circular argument to then claim significance for the fact that no Persian words are found in EBH texts.

**Professor Mario Liverani (Rome)**

*The Chronology of the Biblical Fairy-Tale*

In the ongoing debate about the chronology of Ancient Israel, it seems to be taken for granted that the archaeological chronology can shift (from high to low) but the biblical chronology cannot. Consequently, the adoption of one or another solution brings about a change in the attribution of the material remains to one or another king. The entire biblical system of dates and synchronisms, however, presents many minor and major inconsistencies that are usually 'corrected' in order to restore a postulated original and consistent archetype. But the presence of numbers of clearly fairy-tale nature (especially the 'seventh year' plus the 'forty years' motif) shows that some of the individual numbers go back to literary sources devoid of chronological exactness. The entire system is an imperfect construct, based on sources of different nature and reliability, and our task should be to evaluate the possible sources, and not to better accommodate the extant numbers. In addition, the standard of the deuteronomistic scholars cannot have been much higher than that of the contemporary Babylonian scribes. An analysis of their habits in treating time distances in the Babylonian past, and in treating synchronisms between Assyria and Babylonia, shows that such standard was quite poor, for a number of reasons. It is suggested that the biblical attempt to build up a coherent and precise system goes back to a rather late (Hellenistic) date, when standards had become higher but original sources were no longer available. Consequently the suggestion is advanced, to make use of a 'proto-historical' procedure, based on archaeological chronology plus external synchronisms, before entering the biblical dates in the picture. It seems that it is possible to accommodate the entire sequence (including the assumed 'United Kingdom') after Sheshonq's raid, and that a sound inner chronology can start for Israel not earlier than the late ninth century, and for Judah not earlier than the mid-eighth century, when the entire Mediterranean basin entered a properly 'historical' era.

**Professor Carmel McCarthy (Dublin)**

*'The Word is Very Near to You': Reflection on BHQ Deuteronomy*

In the thirty to forty years between the publication of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* in 1967/77 and that of *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* Deuteronomy in 2007, three significant developments illustrate some of the major differences between the two editions with respect to the quality of textual sources and resources: (1) *BHQ* is based on entirely new colour photographs taken in Leningrad in 1990 by the Claremont Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center; (2) new and better editions of the versions have been published since *BHS* first appeared; (3) the final publication of all the textual discoveries from the Judaean Desert in both microfiche and textual editions. As well as a diplomatic pre-

sentation of the biblical text of the Leningrad manuscript, the Masorah magna and parva of M<sup>L</sup> are also represented diplomatically, with obvious scribal errors indicated in the critical apparatus. With well over two thousand entries in the critical apparatus, only a tiny selection was chosen in this paper for illustrative purposes. One of the key new features of *BHQ* regarding text-critical cases in the apparatus is the featuring of *all* the relevant evidence for each case. In the four earlier *Biblia Hebraica* editions only variants were cited in the apparatus, thereby giving a visual impression that automatically screened out the fact that in many cases there were more witnesses in agreement with M than in disagreement. The final section of the paper focused on issues specific to Deuteronomy: (1) its formulaic nature, and the consequent propensity to assimilation and harmonization of passages; (2) the contribution of tefillin and mezuzot readings (included in the *BHQ* apparatus on a selective basis, particularly when they are alone among the witnesses in offering a Hebrew text as a variant); (3) the special format for presenting the Song of Moses (recognizing the impossibility of representing diplomatically the eccentric arrangement of M<sup>L</sup>, the layout incorporated in *BHQ* follows the majority tradition for the copying of the Song of Moses in a seventy-line stichographic format, preceded and followed by a prose introduction and epilogue of six lines each, in accordance with the rubrics prescribed in the *Masseket Soferim*).

**Dr James Linville (Lethbridge)**

*Landscaping the Heavenly Temple in Amos*

The poetic associations between the earthy and heavenly temples in Amos (with some references to other prophetic books) were explored to illustrate that in the poetic landscape the line between heaven and earth is often blurred or permeable. The prophetic character, as mediator between humanity and the divine, can enter the heavenly throne room, or have visions of the deity in an earthly temple. In Amos, apparent descriptions of the natural world often carry ritual or cosmic imagery, and this intensifies as the book continues. Some passages, such as Amos 9:1-2, implicate the prophetic character in the destruction of the cosmos through the commandment to assist in the destruction of the temple. It was argued that by poetically transferring the natural world to the heavenly sphere, the mythic transformations of the cosmos can be effected and a new creation be accomplished.

A ‘**Conversation** on the Past, Present and Future of SOTS’ was held at the Meeting.

Professor Hugh Williamson (Oxford) considered in particular the format of our sessions. He urged that we should make a virtue of our distinctiveness and not try to imitate other societies. Longer papers with full discussion, though risky, could bring rewards that other

formats could not. For the future, thought might be given to sometimes having brief prepared responses to major papers in order to provoke more detailed discussion. In addition, recent years had seen a welcome increase in the number of graduate students joining the Society. Means should be devised to enable them to present their research within the context of some supportive engagement and feedback.

Mrs Margaret Barker (Borrowash) commented that, looking back, the most important characteristic of SOTS has been the friendly, almost family, atmosphere, which has only been possible because the Society has remained relatively small; informal exchanges are possible between the newest members and the oldest, and so we learn from each other. It would be good, she thought, to develop a higher profile with the media, such that the Society could offer a spokesperson on relevant topics when they come into the news, as they so often do; the media always work under pressure and so tend to turn to known names, and the Society should be known as the best source of expert comment. Her biggest regret about the Society is that there has been little theological discussion in the meetings; the overwhelming majority of 'users' of the Old Testament are in faith communities, for whom its theology is the only reason for keeping it.

Professor David Clines (Sheffield) compared meetings of the past (he was elected a member in 1966) with the present. He reminisced about the communal bathrooms of the London venue in Vincent Square and the early morning sight of partially clothed elderly gentlemen lathering their faces. He noted the welcome presence today of many female members of the Society, with a consequent widening of the range of members' interests, both academic and social. And he commented on the 'retro' feel of some aspects of the Society even today, such as its nomenclature of Home and Foreign Secretaries; he confessed himself less averse to its quaint customs than he had been as a younger member.

Dr Diana Lipton (London) wished that the Society's rules of engagement were clearer, with SOTS actively seeking qualified applicants for membership, especially graduate students, and clarifying the role of referees. Since questions are not always forthcoming after papers have been presented at meetings, she would prefer it if feedback was structured, especially from experts in the field and especially to less experienced presenters; perhaps the chair could rotate between sessions according to the theme, and could be primed to stimulate discussion. And given that some members will never feel comfortable asking questions, she would like one or two interactive, small-group activities to be tried, such as text study guided by someone who has both control of the material at hand and questions that might be addressed by many heads. The Society should also consider how it

might contribute to collaboration and interdisciplinarity, which play increasingly significant roles in academic research.

Dr Anselm Hagedorn (Berlin) felt that the present style of meetings is very close to the ideal: the papers are generally stimulating and interesting, discussion is straightforward and the tone always polite, there is plenty of time to talk to colleagues, and the conference is small enough to have the chance to talk to everybody if one desires to do so. Improvements might be contemplated in four areas: more theme-oriented meetings (the Society regularly publishes state-of-the-art overviews of current trends in the field, but current developments on individual books or topics are seldom discussed at meetings); better venues for meetings (some university facilities do not conform to 21st-century standards); a greater external visibility for the Society (seeking to have SOTS recognised outside the small university world as the voice of British Old Testament scholarship); and exploring ways in which the Society can help to facilitate joint projects amongst its members.

A **reception** was given on the first evening of the Meeting by the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield; further receptions were given by Equinox Publishing Ltd (marking the publication of the English edition of Mario Liverani's *Israel's History and the History of Israel*) on the second evening and by Sheffield Phoenix Press (marking the re-launch of the *Readings* commentary series) on the third evening. On 11th July there was an **outing** to the Sheffield Millennium Galleries, the Graves Gallery and the Winter Garden, with tea by invitation of the President.



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## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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Among **honours** received by members of the Society: Professor John Bartlett has been elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy; Professor John Barton has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy; Professor Sara Japhet has been elected President of the World Union of Jewish Studies; Professor Takamitsu Muraoka has been elected an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, Jerusalem; Dr Hugh Pyper has been awarded a personal chair at the University of Sheffield; Professor Thomas Römer has been elected to the Collège de France; Dr Joachim Schaper has been awarded a personal chair at the University of Aberdeen; Professor Alberto Soggin has been awarded the British Academy's Burkitt Medal for Biblical Studies; and Dr John Tudno Williams has been awarded a DD by the University of Wales.

The Society has learned with regret of the **deaths** of Revd Professor James Barr (President of the Society in 1973), Professor Brevard Childs (Honorary Member), Mr John Eaton, Dr O. Lehman, Revd Neil McEleney, Mrs Aileen Mirsky (also known under the professional name of Professor Aileen Guilding), Revd Dr Harry Mowvley, Mr M.R. Maitland Müller, Revd Professor Roy Porter (President of the Society in 1983), and Revd Professor C. Sant.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Revd Dr George Athas, Mr Daniel Cochavy, Dr Michael Duggan, Dr Martin Hogan, Mr Clive Jobbins, Mrs Gwen Knight, Dr Yee-Von Koh, Mrs Elzbieta Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, and Revd Dr Silviu Tatu. At the Summer Meeting: Ms Jennifer Barbour, Ms Caroline Blyth, Revd Matthew Coomber, Mrs Cynthia Crewe, Revd John Durkan, Mr Douglas Earl, Dr Naomi Jacobs, Mr John McKeown, Dr Robert Miller, Ms Katherine Southwood, and Revd Bálint Zabán.

The **current Honorary Members** are Professors Bertil Albrektson (1983), Athalya Brenner (2002), Walter Brueggemann (1997), Henri Cazelles (1972), 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).

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## MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

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The **Winter Meeting 2008** will be held on 2nd–4th January at the University of Chester, and the **Summer Meeting 2008** will be held on 21st–24th July at Wadham College, Oxford, both meetings under the Presidency of Professor John Barton.

Members are reminded that the Programme Sub-Committee is pleased to receive proposals for papers — particularly for shorter papers (25 minutes), though longer papers (50 minutes) may also be proposed — as well as for workshops and other sessions. All proposals should be sent to the Home Secretary by the end of November (for a forthcoming Summer Meeting) or by the end of June (for a forthcoming Winter Meeting). Graduate students and their supervisors are advised that the Summer Meeting 2008 will include a workshop on graduate student work-in-progress, for which proposals of short presentations (15 minutes) on current doctoral projects are invited.

A **conference on the Bible and justice** will take place on 29th May–1st June 2008 at the University of Sheffield, bringing academics together from various parts of the world to discuss how biblical texts can address the social concerns of the 21st century. For further information, e-mail [bibleandjustice@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:bibleandjustice@sheffield.ac.uk).

A **conference on sex and gender in biblical and post-biblical texts** will take place on 4th–6th August 2008 at King's College London, under the title 'A Question of Sex: Embroidered Garments'. Programmed events include 'Group Texts', a creative Hebrew reading session, and 'comparing Notes: Ancient Sex and Gender in the British Museum', a tailor-made tour of the collections followed by a guided discussion. For more information, to register, and to propose a paper, visit [www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/trs/news/](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/trs/news/).

Two new volumes have appeared in the **SOTS Monograph Series**: *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Versions: Selected Essays of Robert P. Gordon* brings together the most important essays on these matters by the SOTS President of 2003, together with an introduction, which gives background comment and reflection on each essay, and indexes; and *The Old Testament: Canon, Literature and Theology: Collected Works of John Barton* brings together an invaluable selection of essays by the SOTS President of 2008 which seek to show how evocative and full of insight the biblical texts are and how they can contribute to modern concerns. 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](mailto:ashgate@bookpoint.co.uk)).

The Society has resolved to commission a **new series of Old Testament Guides** under the editorship of Dr Adrian Curtis.

The Society has made a **submission to the AHRC** (Arts & Humanities Research Council), in response to an invitation to comment on the AHRC's Vision and Strategic Plan for 2007–2012. The Council was informed that SOTS is 'happy to support the AHRC's strategy set out in its consultation document' and that it is 'particularly keen to endorse the recognition that research should be promoted for its intrinsic worth, as well as for its social usefulness'. Support was expressed for 'the AHRC's concern that distinctive aspects of research in the Arts and Humanities need protection: our own Society is acutely aware of the need to ensure that teaching of Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac and other Semitic languages to advanced level is adequately provided for, and that research in these languages is fostered and maintained. We are also concerned to ensure the safeguarding of languages such as Akkadian and Ugaritic: research in these languages and the cultures they represent often has direct relevance to the study of the Old Testament and the progress of research in that area.'

The Society also made a **submission to the DfES** (Department for Education and Skills), in response to a consultation document on the potential future use of metrics in the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise). The DfES was informed of 'the constructive and positive approach the Society wishes to adopt in these and any future discussions' and was provided with 'some proposals which we hope will be helpful, having initially made plain the distinctive character of our research and its particular needs'. The key points were expressed as follows: firstly, we emphasized the central importance of first-rate library facilities and IT resources for our work, much of which is carried out by individual researchers; secondly, we acknowledged the benefits of previous RAEs, while agreeing that they have engendered some problems which a metrics system represents an attempt to solve, but input metrics runs the risk of creating serious difficulties for our kind of research; thirdly, volume metrics and quality/output metrics were felt to present fewer problems than input metrics, with some advantages, but even so there are difficulties in adopting these systems; and fourthly, a preference for 'a streamlined and simplified' form of RAE, alluded to in the Department's discussion document, was expressed, together with some thoughts on the form such a revised RAE might take, noting that we are not persuaded that a metrics system alone will resolve problems identified in earlier RAEs.

**The Society's website** has been redesigned and updated. The Information Officer welcomes comments and suggestions. The website is located at:

**[www.sots.ac.uk](http://www.sots.ac.uk)**

## ACCOUNTS FOR 2006

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st October 2006

|                                   | <i>Bursaries</i> | <i>Book List</i> | <i>Confer-<br/>ences</i> | <i>General Fund</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>2005*</i> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                   | £                | £                | £                        | £                   | £            | £            |
| <b>Income</b>                     |                  |                  |                          |                     |              |              |
| Subscriptions and donations       | 51               | –                | –                        | 8488                | 8539         | 8368         |
| Income tax recovered              | –                | –                | –                        | 863                 | 863          | 1726         |
| Book List sales                   | –                | 51               | –                        | –                   | 51           | –            |
| Conference income                 | –                | –                | 24477                    | –                   | 24477        | 30814        |
| Other income                      | –                | –                | –                        | 102                 | 102          | –            |
| Dividends, interest and royalties | 319              | –                | –                        | 1914                | 2233         | 1942         |
| Total income                      | 370              | 51               | 24477                    | 11367               | 36265        | 42850        |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                |                  |                  |                          |                     |              |              |
| Printing and stationery           | –                | 125              | 10                       | 2155                | 2290         | 1989         |
| Postage and administration        | –                | 209              | 4                        | 876                 | 1089         | 663          |
| Equipment                         | –                | 255              | –                        | 1226                | 1481         | –            |
| Book List production              | –                | 3000             | –                        | –                   | 3000         | 6502         |
| Committee costs                   | –                | –                | –                        | 793                 | 793          | 236          |
| Conference costs                  | –                | –                | 23261                    | 665                 | 23926        | 25911        |
| Accountancy                       | –                | –                | –                        | 499                 | 499          | 470          |
| Bursaries                         | 735              | –                | –                        | –                   | 735          | 542          |
| Bank charges                      | –                | –                | –                        | 324                 | 324          | 412          |
| Total expenditure                 | 735              | 3589             | 23275                    | 6538                | 34137        | 36725        |
| Net surplus/(deficit)             | (365)            | (3538)           | 1202                     | 4829                | 2128         | 6125         |

\* Note that the 2005 comparative figures differ somewhat from those published last year, due to a reconfiguration of the presentation of information in the accounts.

### BALANCE SHEET at 31st October 2006

|                                             | <i>2006</i> | <i>2005</i> |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                             | £           | £           |
| <b>Assets</b>                               |             |             |
| Fixed assets (note 1)                       | 1           | 1           |
| Debtors                                     | 1834        | 800         |
| Bank accounts (note 2)                      | 55553       | 54430       |
| Investments at cost (note 3)                | 1053        | 1053        |
|                                             | 58441       | 56284       |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                          |             |             |
| Sundry creditors and reserves               | (499)       | (470)       |
|                                             | 57942       | 55814       |
| <b>Represented by</b>                       |             |             |
| Accumulated surpluses and reserves (note 4) |             |             |
| General fund                                | 56426       | 54183       |
| Bursary fund                                | 1516        | 1631        |
|                                             | 57942       | 55814       |

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS for the year ended 31st October 2006

|                                                                                                                                  |                           |                     |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| <b>1. Fixed assets</b>                                                                                                           | <i>Computer Equipment</i> |                     |              |
| Cost at 1st November 2005 and at 31st October 2006                                                                               |                           |                     | 984          |
| Depreciation at 1st November 2005 and at 31st October 2006                                                                       |                           |                     | 983          |
| Net book amount at 1st November 2005 and at 31st October 2006                                                                    |                           |                     | 1            |
| <b>2. Bank accounts</b>                                                                                                          | 2006                      | 2005                |              |
| Barclays Bank plc: Current Account                                                                                               | 293                       | 734                 |              |
| Higher Interest Business Account                                                                                                 | 22050                     | 21671               |              |
| National Savings Bank Investment Account                                                                                         | 33210                     | 32025               |              |
|                                                                                                                                  | 55553                     | 54430               |              |
| <b>3. Investment at cost</b>                                                                                                     |                           |                     |              |
| 549.6863 units, Friends Provident Stewardship Growth Fund retail accumulation shares (market value £4072.10 at 31st August 2006) | 1053                      | 1053                |              |
| <b>4. Accumulated surpluses and reserves</b>                                                                                     | <i>General Fund</i>       | <i>Bursary Fund</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| At 1st November 2005                                                                                                             | 54183                     | 1631                | 55814        |
| Surplus/(deficit) for the year                                                                                                   | 2493                      | (365)               | 2128         |
| Transfers                                                                                                                        | (250)                     | 250                 | –            |
| At 31st October 2006                                                                                                             | 56426                     | 1516                | 57942        |

## 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 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.

**Fixed assets and depreciation:** fixed assets that have no resale value are fully written off in the year of purchase; depreciation on other assets 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 2006 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

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## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES FOR 2008

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*President:* Professor John Barton, Oriel College, Oxford OX1 4EW (tel. 01865 276537, e-mail john.barton@theology.ox.ac.uk).

*Retiring 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).

*President-elect:* Professor Lester Grabbe, Department of Theology, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX (tel. 01482 465997, e-mail l.l.grabbe@hull.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, 3 The College, Durham DH1 3EQ (tel. 0191 375 7091, e-mail e.a.harper@dur.ac.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 Charlotte Hempel, Dr Ann Jeffers, Dr Nathan MacDonald, Dr James McKeown, Dr Andrew Mein, Professor Mary Mills, and Dr Francesca Stavrakopoulou.

*Programme Sub-Committee:* The President, President-elect, Home Secretary, and Foreign Secretary; plus Dr Adrian Curtis, Dr Andrew Mein, and Dr Stuart Weeks.

*Publications Sub-Committee:* The *Book List* Editor (Convener), Mrs Margaret Barker (as Monographs Editor), Dr Adrian Curtis (as Guides Editor), and Professor Hugh Williamson (as SOTS representative on the *OTS* Board); plus Professor Cheryl Exum, 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.)

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## PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY

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|                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1917-19 William Bennett        | 1967 Donald Coggan      |
| 1920 Archibald Kennedy         | 1968 Matthew Black      |
| 1921 Robert Kennett            | 1969 John Schofield     |
| 1922 George Gray               | 1970 Arthur Herbert     |
| 1923 George Box                | 1971 Edward Ullendorff  |
| 1924 Arthur Peake              | 1972 Peter Ackroyd      |
| 1925 Stanley Cook              | 1973 James Barr         |
| 1926 William Stevenson         | 1974 Dafydd Ap-Thomas   |
| 1927 David Simpson             | 1975 Eileen de Ward     |
| 1928 Theodore Robinson         | 1976 Douglas Jones      |
| 1929 Henry Wheeler Robinson    | 1977 Ronald Williams    |
| 1930 Claude Montefiore         | 1978 William McKane     |
| 1931 William Oesterley         | 1979 John Emerton       |
| 1932 William Lofthouse         | 1980 Donald Wiseman     |
| 1933 William Wardle            | 1981 Raphael Loewe      |
| 1934 Adam Welch                | 1982 Norman Whybray     |
| 1935 William Emery Barnes      | 1983 Roy Porter         |
| 1936 John Battersby Harford    | 1984 Wilfred Lambert    |
| 1937-38 Godfrey Driver         | 1985 Ronald Clements    |
| 1939-40 Herbert Loewe          | 1986 Barnabas Lindars   |
| 1941-45 Henry Wheeler Robinson | 1987 Robert Murray      |
| 1946 Theodore Robinson         | 1988 Ernest Nicholson   |
| 1947 Cuthbert Lattey           | 1989 John Rogerson      |
| 1948 Edward Robertson          | 1990 William Johnstone  |
| 1949 Christopher North         | 1991 Anthony Gelston    |
| 1950 Harold Rowley             | 1992 Andrew Mayes       |
| 1951 Samuel Hooke              | 1993 Richard Coggins    |
| 1952 John Barton               | 1994 John Gibson        |
| 1953 David Winton Thomas       | 1995 Gwilym Jones       |
| 1954 Norman Porteous           | 1996 David Clines       |
| 1955 Alfred Guillaume          | 1997 Rex Mason          |
| 1956 Aubrey Johnson            | 1998 Margaret Barker    |
| 1957 Norman Snaith             | 1999 Robert Carroll     |
| 1958 Leonard Elliott-Binns     | 2000 Joseph Blenkinsopp |
| 1959 John Mauchline            | 2001 Michael Goulder    |
| 1960 Cuthbert Simpson          | 2002 John Bartlett      |
| 1961 Jacob Weingreen           | 2003 Robert Gordon      |
| 1962 Hedley Sparks             | 2004 Hugh Williamson    |
| 1963 George Anderson           | 2005 Graeme Auld        |
| 1964 Bleddyn Roberts           | 2006 Robert Hayward     |
| 1965 Frederick Bruce           | 2007 Philip Davies      |
| 1966 Gwynne Henton Davies      |                         |