
The Society for Old Testament Study

BULLETIN

2009

84th WINTER MEETING
5th–7th January 2009
Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge
Professor Lester Grabbe presiding

Professor Lester Grabbe (Hull)

Presidential Address: The Case of the Corrupting Consensus

Consensus is a wonderful thing — cannot we all just agree? But not in scholarship. A consensus can be useful, since we cannot always be starting from first principles, but there is a danger that a consensus becomes an excuse to regard a matter as resolved and not subject to further debate. Also, those who may have helped establish a consensus have a vested interest in maintaining it. The basis of good scholarship is a healthy sense of scepticism; unfortunately, this can easily become a means of stifling new ideas, especially the more radical ones. If we look at the field over the past century, we see a great deal of change. This can come about only when we are willing to challenge the consensus. A consensus is only a theory that quite a number of people are willing to tolerate — for a variety of reasons, some rational and some not always so rational. Look at the number of once strongly supported theories that have now been abandoned in recent times (e.g., the ‘substantial historicity’ of the patriarchal narratives). We should never be afraid to attack a consensus if there is evidence against it, and we should never use consensus as a pretext for rejecting a new argument.

Professor Mark Geller (London)

Divination in Ancient Palestine: The View from Babylonia

A small number of divination texts from the Cairo Geniza and Qumran Cave 4 in Aramaic deal with astrological and physiognomic omens, and these texts can be shown to have earlier prototypes in

Akkadian. These texts all have certain common features. The astrological omens have a familiar ('if ... when') format, and the omen apoduses all provide predictions affecting the entire nation or land, such as famine, impending warfare, or the death of the king. The Aramaic and Akkadian physiognomic omens also show marked similarities in form and content. These texts represent complex systems of divination requiring experts to interpret the results. The supposition is that Akkadian 'scientific' texts were translated into Aramaic and ended up in a library in ancient Palestine, for use by the ruler, who was the only person to whom the omens were relevant and who would have access to the necessary expertise to interpret the texts. The most likely period for Akkadian texts of this kind to appear in Judea would be after Seleucid control of the region, from 200 BCE, or possibly during Hasmonean rule after 160 BCE, which fits the paleography of the Qumran manuscripts.

Professor Kristin De Troyer (St Andrews)

David's Affair with Bathsheba: Text-Critical Remarks

With 2 Samuel 11:1, the first *kaige* section in the Greek books of 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings starts. This first *kaige* section more or less coincides with the Succession Narrative. In other words, for the Succession Narrative, no Old Greek text exists. The Old Greek text, however, can be reconstructed from under the *Kaige* and the Antiochian texts. The reconstruction of the Old Greek text might throw some different light on the development of the Hebrew text of 2 Samuel 11:1–2 Kings 2:11, and more specifically on the development of the Succession Narrative and the Deuteronomistic literature. As 4QSam^a does not align with the Masoretic text of 2 Samuel, especially in the *kaige* sections, but instead seems to be closer to the Antiochian text, the reconstruction of the relationship between all the witnesses is complex. A first study of the Bathsheba pericope demonstrates that there might be a different perspective on Bathsheba and her role in the establishment of Solomon as king and her position next to him. In other words, the Masoretic text might be an attempt at pitching differently, even downplaying the role of Bathsheba. These exegetical differences must be tested by further investigation of the translation technique of all versions, including Josephus and Vetus Latina, and further study of each *Vorlage*.

Dr James West (Petros)

Tangled Web: The Internet, the Old Testament, and You

This paper attempted to address the three parts of its title by discussing, in order, the massive growth of the internet as a source of information for both students and scholars; how some materials on the internet use and abuse the Old Testament; and how scholars such as those

who belong to SOTS should — and in the presenter's estimation are obligated to — construct an online presence in order both to counteract the massive misinformation online and to offer proper materials for surfers and seekers. Specifically, the presentation strove to encourage scholars to participate in the dissemination of useable and accurate information by means of this extraordinarily important medium. There are countless sites on the internet which discuss, in whole or in part, the Old Testament, and the presentation gave examples of the good, the bad, and the ugly. The presenter encouraged scholars to construct personal websites, to participate in one of the discussion lists related to the field of Old Testament studies, and/or to establish a web presence via the booming blog methodology. Weblogs, like personal websites, are free to establish and easy to organize and maintain, and they can be a profound tool for the dissemination of information. It might also be appropriate for SOTS to establish a 'Computer Committee' to look at the promotion of the Society's involvement in the dissemination of knowledge on the world-wide web.

Three **responses** were made to Dr West's paper.

Dr Margaret Barker (Borrowash) raised the question of how to identify reliable information. Having heard the President's paper on the need to think outside the consensus, what was the difference between such thinking and unreliable information? She expressed anxiety that the internet with its information of varying quality could soon bring about a 'learning crunch' comparable to the credit crunch precipitated by untested forms of financial management. There could soon be a need to 'recapitalise' our seats of learning with real learning. She also noted the conflict of interest between making information freely available online and keeping publishers in business, and the need for publishers to use better quality paper if books were to be the permanent repository for knowledge.

Dr Philip Jenson (Cambridge) noted that the internet emphasizes the immediate and the visual, whereas the majority of scholars still work in an oral and written tradition. A positive appreciation of the OT is made all the harder in our post-Christian society by a general attitude of scepticism, scorn and suspicion. Good internet sites may help in countering this, but they will not achieve a profound reorientation. This is more likely to take place through contact with those who impart not just skills and knowledge, but also a deep personal appreciation of the significance of the text for the present as well as the past. The internet is becoming an impressive resource for communicating this significance in a visual and lively way. This, after all, is the intent of much of the OT itself through its rhetoric, poetry and imagery.

Dr James Aitken (Cambridge) commented on the positive aspects to which the internet could be applied. Wikipedia could be utilized for

teaching students how to read critically, and setting exercises to improve the content allowed the students to embed their learning from classes and to improve Wikipedia at the same time. Attention was drawn to the possible collaborative nature of the internet, acting both as a portal for connecting researchers around the world (as the Biblical Lexicography website now does) and as an environment in which scholars may contribute to projects from wherever they are based (using wiki software, for instance).

Dr Helen Leneman (Gilly)

Saul's Tragedy Re-Told through Drama and Music

A new opera by Italian composer Flavio Testi based on Andre Gide's play *Saül* premiered at the Macerata Festival in 2007. This paper discussed the libretto and music, including analysis of a live performance in Rome in 2008. Musical excerpts and PowerPoint slides of the production were included. Gide's *Saül* was written in 1898, but premiered as a play only in 1922. It confronts the issue of homosexuality which some commentators consider subliminal in the David narratives, by suggesting Saul's attraction to David along with a very suggestive relation between David and Jonathan. Saul's 'demons' in the biblical narrative are never explained, and Gide fills the gap by depicting Saul as an older man tormented by his attraction to a much younger one. Gide's play is seldom performed and little known. The fate of the opera remains to be seen. Testi's musical idiom is completely personal and original. The production of this opera left no doubt in the audience's mind of both Saul's and Jonathan's strong sexual attraction to David. This provocative gap-filling will surely lead to a fresh reading of the original story, through a new and different lens.

Dr Diana Edelman (Sheffield)

From Prophets to Prophetic Texts: Fixing the Divine Word

Why were prophetic books only produced in Judah/Yehud when prophecy and the consultation of the divine were widespread practices in the ancient Near East? Similar to the Pentateuch, the prophetic literature allows the assertion that the divine will for the *qahal yisra'el* has already been revealed in the past to the ancestors, eliminating the need for additional, ongoing revelation. Behind this development is an implicit rejection of formerly legitimate means of determining the divine will that had been commonplace as well as the cultic personnel who executed them. It is suggested that the biblical *nabi* is an artificial, literary construct representing an amalgam of a number of formerly functioning omen priests, divinatory personnel and ecstasies in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, many of whom correspond to a range of cultic personnel who operated in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Prophetic books are literary projects containing the same scheme of

punishment at the hands of foreign oppressors for not worshipping Yahweh correctly found in 'Deuteronomistic' narratives. Their authors apparently selected archived predictions concerning the fall of Jerusalem and Samaria and oracles against enemies made by a range of cultic specialists and in most cases set them in a framework typical of laments or psalms: a threat and the overcoming of the threat, or threat, defeat and forgiveness/restoration. In the late Persian or more likely the Hellenistic period, the prophetic collections were understood by some to be literal guides of what should have happened. The author of Ezra 1–6 has used every canonical prediction concerning the rebuilding of the temple as a source for his account of who restored the temple, and when.

Professor Heather McKay (Ormskirk)

How False Scenarios Can Be Used to Manipulate Biblical Characters

Several biblical narratives depict the outmanoeuvring of a powerful character by one who is much less powerful: Rebekah tricked Isaac to dispossess Esau and favour Jacob, daughter-in-law Tamar exacted justice from Judah and the Wise Woman of Tekoa (acting as Joab's agent and pretending to beg for her own son's life) gained forgiveness for Absalom. Males too operated such deceptions, most notably Amnon against his half-sister Tamar. The manipulation of the 'victim' occurs via the distracting drives of human appetites, whether of sexual desire, hunger, or 'honour', however conceived. Using approaches encompassing Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber 2004), Information Manipulation Theory (McCornack 1992, et al.) and Social Manipulation Theory (Peterson 2004), and relying on the earlier work of Beeman (1986) and Goffman (1965, 1974, 1977), this paper analysed just how the false scenarios superbly created by the manipulators produce the misperceptions and responses that they wanted to create in the subsequent actions of their 'victims'. Each 'victim' was lulled by their senses, of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste, along with their expectations of truthfulness and basic loyalty to commonly held values from their interlocutors into 'seeing' an unthreatening situation when they were, in fact, most at risk of manipulation.

Professor Philip Alexander (Manchester)

Was the Ninth of Ab Observed before 70 CE? Reflections on the Concept of Continuing Exile in the Second Temple Period

The paper traced the theme of mourning for Zion in the post-exilic period and used it to illuminate a variety of rejectionist attitudes towards the Second Temple. There is clear evidence that some groups, despite the rebuilding of the Temple, continued to mourn for the destruction of 586, and to regard a valid restoration as never having occurred. These groups regarded Israel as still in exile, presence in the

Land on its own not being sufficient to satisfy the covenantal promises to Israel in the deuteronomic tradition. One such group appears to have been the Dead Sea Sect, and it is in this context that we should place both the copies of canonical Lamentations and the new lamentation texts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Psalms of Solomon (probably rightly seen as Pharisaic) also evince the rejectionist line. The Hasmonean party, on the other hand, clearly tried to promote their revolution and their rededication of the Temple as a genuine restoration and as finally bringing the exile to an end. The paper ended by drawing analogies to different attitudes within the present-day Jewish community to the State of Israel.

Professor Judith Hadley (Villanova)

*What Inscriptions Can (and Can't) Tell Us about the Hebrew Bible:
The Newly Discovered Bullae of Gedalyahu ben Pashhur and Yehukal
ben Shelemiah*

In July of 2005 a bulla (clay seal impression) was discovered in the City of David excavations, bearing the name Yehukal son of Shelemiah son of Shobi. Three years later, in July 2008, and in the same vicinity, another bulla was discovered, bearing the name Gedalyahu son of Pashhur. Both of these bullae date to the end of the 7th or beginning of the 6th century BCE. In addition, both of these names are found in Jeremiah 38:1-6, as two officials of the city who call for Jeremiah's death because he is encouraging the city to surrender to the Babylonians. This paper first discussed these two bullae, as well as a third one found 25 years previously in the City of David, bearing the name Gemaryahu son of Shaphan, a name which also occurs in Jeremiah 36. The excellent state of preservation of all three of these bullae leaves little doubt that the readings are correct. Then followed a brief discussion of the relevant passages in Jeremiah, together with an analysis of the title 'official of the city', which is found on seal impressions. That these three bullae were discovered in a controlled archaeological excavation is of immense importance, since numerous unprovenanced finds from biblical periods especially have been proven to be forgeries (including the bulla of Berekyahu son of Neriyahu the scribe). Finally, the paper turned to a discussion of possible and proposed relationships between the people who bore these names and the book of Jeremiah, and concluded that, at the very least, the author of Jeremiah was using names which were known historically at the time in which the story was set.

A **visit** was made on 6th January to the Taylor–Schechter Geniza Research Unit at the Cambridge University Library, where a talk on the history and work of the Unit was given by its Head, Dr Ben Outhwaite, and a display of items from the collection was available for viewing.

**85th SUMMER MEETING
(14th SOTS/OTW JOINT MEETING)
27th–29th July 2009
University of Lincoln**

Professors Lester Grabbe (SOTS)
and Bob Becking (OTW) presiding

Professor Axel Knauf (Bern)

The End of History

The ‘end of history’, as repeatedly and speciously proclaimed, is basically a biblical concept — a concept derived from biblical literature. Only stories can have an end. If ‘history’ is perceived as a non-idiosyncratic perception of the past, history will end with time (or the death of the last perceiver). The use of history in biblical studies has, however, entered a critical phase. Some applications of history to the Bible, prominent in the last two centuries, might no longer be feasible; others will have to be continued out of sheer necessity.

Professor John Bartlett (Dublin)

Mercator in the Wilderness: Numbers 33

This paper (illustrated) explored the sixteenth-century exegesis of the Exodus-Wilderness story as revealed by the work of the cartographers of the period. Particular attention was paid to the scholarly work of Jacob Ziegler and Gerhard Mercator, together with maps from Lucas Cranach the Elder, Coverdale’s Bible, and Wolfgang Wissenburg. The paper marked their contribution to biblical and cartographical scholarship in the Reformation period of the sixteenth century.

Professor Ed Noort (Groningen)

The Historiography of the Settlement

For decades three lines of thinking with some variation dominated the field of settlement/conquest studies (Alt, Albright, Mendenhall). Only in recent times have they disappeared from students’ textbooks. The theme of this paper was not the settlement itself, but the historiography. Concerning the language of violence used in the narratives and their theoretical framework, scholars favoured a connection with Neo-Assyrian royal ideology. In the debates on newer Pentateuch theories and the rethinking of the Deuteronomistic History, the narratives of the conquest are linked to models of re-entering the country after the Babylonian Exile. Focusing on some case studies, these theories were tested.

Dr Meindert Dijkstra (Utrecht)

The Origins of Israel between History and Ideology

The Old Testament contains a variety of stories about the origins of Israel in Egypt and Canaan. Such ancient biblical stories are not simply convertible into modern history. How do we reconstruct Israelite origins between ancient Near Eastern history and culture and Old Testament visions of the past? This contribution attempted a somewhat simplified but practical approach to the problem: Egyptian presence in Canaan seen as the negative of Israelite and Judean political emergence. The emergence of independent 'early states' in the region of the southern Levant only became possible after the gradual withdrawal of Egypt's military and administrative rule from the 11th century BCE onward, and perhaps even later.

Professor Klaas Spronk (Kampen)

The Book of Judges and History

This paper explored two particular questions. Firstly: What do we really know about the historical background of the stories told in the book of Judges and of the one telling these stories? And secondly: How can we distinguish fact and fiction in the biblical texts and in the scholarly literature about these texts?

Professor Andrew Mayes (Dublin)

Pharaoh Shishak's Invasion of Palestine and the Exodus from Egypt

The invasion of Palestine by Pharaoh Shishak is recorded both in 1 Kings 14 and on a wall beside the Bubastite Portal of the temple at Karnak. Each account has been used in different ways in the reconstruction of the event, the Egyptian record being variously taken as purely conventional or as preserving a historical account. The focus of this paper was on the significance of the event within the wider historical context of the foundation of the northern state of Israel with its 'charter myth', the exodus from Egypt.

Professor Keith Whitelam (Sheffield)

Resisting the Past: Ancient Israel in Western Memory

Why have particular images of ancient Israel become so ingrained in Western popular and political imagination that they appear so natural as to be self-evident? Why has recent research on the history of ancient Israel and Palestine found it so difficult to disturb these images? The paper explored some of the deep-seated images that are part of western collective memory, their resistance to analysis, and the assumptions that underpin dominant memories of the past within biblical studies.

Professor Bob Becking (Utrecht)

David between History and Ideology

Already within the Hebrew Bible images of David can be found that are shaped by tradition. The focal question of this paper was: Can we get beyond these images and reach the 'real David'? In seeking to answer that question, circumstantial evidence was investigated from landscape, archaeology, epigraphy, and climatology before the biblical traditions were monitored.

Professor Nadav Na'aman (Tel Aviv)

Does Archaeology Really Deserve the Status of a 'High Court' in Biblical Historical Research?

From the earliest days of its modern research, archaeology has played an important role in biblical-historical studies. Recently its impact has increased dramatically, due to the progress made in the field of archaeology and the development of a sharply critical approach to the Bible as a historical source. Some scholars have gone so far as to place archaeology in the position of a 'high court' in all biblical-historical controversies. But does archaeology really deserve this elevated status? To consider this important issue, the paper examined a series of test-cases in which there is disagreement between the historical documents and the results of archaeological research. The sites examined were Jerusalem (in the Late Bronze Age, the Iron Age and the Persian period), Gibeah (Tell el-Ful) and Bethel. In the light of this comparison, it was pointed out that in multi-strata highland sites in periods of urban culture decline (such times as the 'United Monarchy' and the Babylonian and Persian periods), the results of the archaeological excavations should be treated with great caution. Only the skilful use of the documents and the archaeological findings can lead to a balanced evaluation of the ancient reality.

Dr Jill Middlemas (Aarhus)

The Additions to the Book of Esther: What They Offer to Those in Search of History

The two Greek versions of the Esther scroll (the Alpha Text and the Septuagint Text) invite historical readings exactly because they convey historical similitude within material not found in the Hebrew version of the story. Yet it remains difficult, nevertheless, to determine the exact socio-historical setting and provenance that gave rise to the Greek versions and their differences (see, for example, the conflicting conclusions reached in recent discussions by Linda Day [1995], Karen Jobes [1996], and Charles Dorothy [1997]). This paper included an analysis of the ways the Greek versions of the Esther story contribute to historical and other questions. The writers and editors of these scrolls were interested in defining history according to a biblical

norm and present three views of history: (1) the God of the Jews acts in history; (2) the story of Esther, Mordecai and the Persian Jews aligns with, and even parallels in some cases, the traditions of ancient Israel; and (3) the past is presented as an ongoing event contemporaneous with the recipients of the story. What the evidence of the Greek texts of Esther contributes to a discussion about the search for the history of ancient (better, biblical) Israel is that writers and editors in antiquity seem to have had different types of historical questions at the forefront of their minds than those often applied by biblical critics in the modern and postmodern period. An understanding of how writers in a biblical mode approached the reconstruction of events illuminates a more fluid definition of history than just the search for whether or not events happened in the past as recounted. Indeed, the way the Greek versions of the Esther scroll deal with history draws attention to the need for the critical awareness, indeed analysis, of a biblical traditional norm written as history (however factual) in mind. This is a principal of analysis that might be applied fruitfully to analyses of biblical literature more generally.

Dr Harm van Grol (Tilburg)

Visions of the Chasidim and History

This paper discussed the well-known description of the *Chasidim* in 1 Maccabees 2:42 ('then a group of Hasideans joined them, mighty warriors, each of them zealously devoted to the law'), its historical trustworthiness and its relation to later Psalm collections (Psalms 138–145 and 146–150), possibly texts of the *Chasidim* themselves, focusing on the militant character of this movement.

Dr Marinus Koster (Bathmen)

The Old Testament as a Diachronic Corpus

Not only does the Old Testament as a whole, but also most of its constituent parts, testify to a historical development of sometimes considerable length, which is reflected in the history and literature of Israel's neighbours. This being embedded in the historical reality of its *Umwelt* (instead of being a *Fremdkörper*), contributes effectively to its living and 'true' character.

The papers will be published in the series *Oudtestamentische Studiën*.

The SOTS/OTW Joint Meeting was held in coordination with the **2009 Annual Meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies** taking place at the University of Lincoln on 26th–30th July under the presidency of Professor Philip Davies (Sheffield). SOTS and OTW members were welcome to attend EABS sessions, and EABS members were welcome to attend SOTS/OTW sessions. Professor

Davies' EABS Presidential Lecture was on the subject of 'Europe and the Bible', and concluded with the following challenge: 'We biblical scholars are the people best placed to sustain biblical literacy. We are, of course, doing just that within our own circles, through teaching and publishing. But is that enough? ... Perhaps we should be looking for ways to secure a proper recognition of the Bible's role in Europe's civilization and identity..., to persuade our governments and our educational authorities that the Bible is not religious education — it is part of European identity and needs to be known, used and respected by us all.'

The following papers were presented by SOTS members at sessions of the EABS Meeting: Dr Elie Assis (Bar-Ilan), 'The Vision of the Ephah (Zechariah 5:5-11) as an Anti-Samaritan Polemic'; Professor Hans Barstad (Edinburgh), 'History and Memory'; Professor Joseph Blenkinsopp (Notre Dame), 'Ideology and Utopia in 1-2 Chronicles'; Professor David Chalcraft (Derby), 'Is Sociology Also Among the Social Sciences? Problematising Social-Science Criticism in Biblical Studies' and 'Sociology and the Book of Chronicles'; Professor Philip Davies (Sheffield), 'From Moses to Abraham: Jewish Identities in the Second Temple Period'; Dr Diana Edelman (Sheffield) (with Dr Lynette Mitchell [Exeter]), 'The Chronicler and the Attitudographers'; Dr Elizabeth Hayes (Bothell), 'Creation, Creator and Conceptual Metaphor in Psalm 19'; Dr Ingrid Hjelm (Copenhagen), 'Deuteronomy 12 and Temple Ideology in Samaritan and Jewish Sources'; Dr Kristin Joachimsen (Tromsø), 'Law and Boundaries in Flux in Nehemiah 8'; Professor Francis Landy (Edmonton), 'Reading and Writing the Book of Isaiah'; Professor Hugh Pyper (Sheffield), 'When Jesus Was (Nearly) a Scot: Judaism and Its Alternatives in Biblical Interpretation'; Professor Thomas Römer (Lausanne), 'Abraham and the Exodus'; Professor Thomas Thompson (Copenhagen), 'Genesis 4 and the Pentateuch's Reiterative Discourse: Some Samaritan Themes' and 'Virtual Memories of Abraham in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods'; Dr Leigh Trevaskis (Brisbane), '"Imitation of God" as Rationale for the Ethical Teaching of the Hebrew Bible'; and Dr Catrin Williams (Bangor), 'Group Identity, Group Demarcation, and Abraham as a "Figure of Memory" in John 8:31-59'. Professors Hans Barstad (Edinburgh) and Philip Davies (Sheffield) were Panelists in a discussion of 'Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis'; and Professor Hugh Williamson (Oxford) was Respondent to presentations on 'Israel and the Production and Reception of Authoritative Books in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods'.

On the evening of 27th July a combined **reception** for the coordinated meetings was jointly sponsored by the University of Hull (the home institution of SOTS President Professor Lester Grabbe) and Equinox Publishing.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Among **honours** received by members of the Society: Professor George Brooke has been awarded a DD by the University of Oxford; Dr Robert Murray has been awarded a DD by the University of London; and Professor Kirsten Nielsen has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the Norwegian School of Theology in Oslo.

The Society has learned with regret of the **deaths** of Professor Henri Cazelles (Honorary Member), Dr Glyn Doran, Professor John Gibson (President of the Society in 1994), Dr Edward Herbert, Professor C.A. Keller, Dr Simeon Lowy, Revd Bryan Paradise, Dr Joseph Rhymer, and Professor Graham Stanton.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Dr William Barker, Professor Eberhard Bons, Dr Máire Byrne, Ms Helen Jacobus, Mr Kevin Joensen, Mr Bjørn Kvam, Dr Hetty Lalleman, Revd Dr Eun-Woo Lee, and Dr Diana Woodcock. At the Summer Meeting: Mr John Adey, Mr Bradford Anderson, Mr Edward Bridge, Revd David Cotter, Mrs Alison Gray, Professor Francis Landy, Mr Christopher Meredith, Mr James Patrick, Dr Adam Silverstein, Dr Angela Thomas, Dr Leigh Trevaskis, and Professor Norman Gottwald (Honorary Member).

The **current Honorary Members** are Professors Bertil Albrektson (1983), Athalya Brenner (2002), Walter Brueggemann (1997), Frank Moore Cross (1988), Norman Gottwald (2009), 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 2010** will be held on 5th–7th January at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and the **Summer Meeting 2010** will be held on 19th–22nd July at the University of Sheffield. Both meetings will be under the Presidency of Professor Cheryl Exum, and both will include presentations on the theme of ‘The Bible and Culture’, though neither meeting is exclusively devoted to that theme. The Summer Meeting is being extended into an optional additional day (22nd July) in honour of the late Professor Aileen Guilding, with papers on her interests of the Septuagint and of the Old Testament in the New Testament.

The **20th Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament** will be held on 1st–6th August 2010 in Helsinki, Finland, under the presidency of Professor Raija Sollamo. Further information about the Congress (and the related meetings of the International Organizations for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Masoretic Studies, Qumran Studies, and Targumic Studies) is available on the internet at <www.helsinki.fi/teol/pro/iosot/>.

A **conference on the interpretation of the Psalms in Jewish and Christian tradition** will be held on 22nd–24th September 2010 at Worcester College, Oxford. The brochure included in the mailout to SOTS members has further information.

Seven proposals were made for the Society’s **centennial project**, each of them worthy in its own way to be adopted as the official project for 2017, but two of the proposals were approved in principle by the Summer 2009 Business Meeting to go forward for continuing development, one regarding SOTS and the Web (a proposal to establish a SOTS ‘Wiki’ website for the display of reliable information on the Old Testament) and the other regarding SOTS and the British Museum (a proposal to undertake a joint endeavour with the Museum for an exhibition, to be accompanied by public lectures or a conference, on ‘The Fall of Jerusalem, 587 BCE’).

Three new volumes have appeared in the **SOTS Monograph Series**:

Contradiction in the Book of Proverbs: The Deep Waters of Counsel, by Peter Hatton, sees Proverbs not as a book of ‘conventional wisdom’ but as a challenging work that aims to provoke a critical appropriation of wisdom and in which diverse sources have been skilfully brought together by a creative final editor to form a complex unity.

Hebrew Life and Literature: Selected Essays of Bernhard Lang offers insights into the ancient Hebrew mentality in terms of the three strata of the ancient society — peasants (with their common concerns of fertility and happiness), warriors (with their martial pursuits), and the wise (prophets, priests, and sages).

The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple, by John Welch, offers new insights into the ‘Sermon’ by seeing it in the shadow of the all-pervasive Temple in Jerusalem. Matthew 5–7 is analysed with perspectives drawn from biblical and Jewish backgrounds, ritual studies, and oral performances in early Christian worship.

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).

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 Secretary by the end of November (for the forthcoming Summer Meeting) or by the end of June (for the forthcoming Winter Meeting).

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

Members are further reminded that they may submit to the Committee (via the 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. Each year sees the election of a new President-elect, as well as two new Committee members, and in most years there is also need for a new Programme Sub-Committee member and/or a new Publications Sub-Committee member. A new Honorary Member is also to be elected in 2010.

INFORMATION FOR NEWCOMERS

The following 'Information for Newcomers' has been prepared as a means of informing potential first-time attendees about aspects of SOTS Meetings, and is now displayed on the Society's website. Existing members of the Society are encouraged to draw the attention of prospective newcomers to this information.

Newcomers are very welcome at SOTS meetings. SOTS is a friendly group with newcomers always present, and everyone will be glad to get to know you. To help in navigating your first visit, the following information may provide a few answers to common questions.

Format: The Society meets twice each year for Summer and Winter meetings. The format of these meetings is different from a very large conference, since there are no parallel sessions, so everyone is generally at everything at the same time. After delivering a paper, each speaker normally takes questions. The question time is usually fairly short because time is limited, but speakers will be only too pleased to discuss any further questions at another time. The programme of papers is circulated in advance, and is available on the SOTS website.

Meals are taken together and provide a good opportunity for mixing, so please sit wherever you find a space and introduce yourself to someone unfamiliar; they will be glad to meet you. There is usually at least one drinks reception sponsored by academic departments and/or publishers, and a bar in the evenings, which also provide opportunities to put names to a wider circle of faces. There is also the opportunity during the Summer Meeting to spend more time with fellow participants at an organised outing to a place of local interest; these outings are usually well attended.

Dress: There is no strict dress code. As at any professional gathering, people tend to wear the sort of work clothes they might wear for teaching.

Membership: You are welcome to attend a meeting or two as the 'guest' of a member of the Society before deciding if you would like to become a member yourself, though equally you do not have to have attended a previous meeting before seeking membership. It is not difficult to become a member: there is a short form to fill in, downloadable from the SOTS website, which requires the support of two members of the Society. The annual membership fee is modest, and the benefits of membership include useful mailings, discounts on

books and journals, and the chance to write reviews for and receive the annual *Book List*.

Papers: Any member of the Society is eligible to present a paper at a meeting, and proposals are particularly welcome from new members. The procedure for proposing a paper is to write to the Secretary, giving a title and brief summary of the proposed paper, by the end of June (for the forthcoming Winter Meeting) or by the end of November (for the forthcoming Summer Meeting).

A special word for postgraduate students: Postgraduate students in Hebrew Bible and cognate fields are also very welcome at SOTS meetings, and can enjoy a reduced price for accommodation and meals in return for minor duties (such as assisting with bookstalls, registration, or the distribution of handouts) at the meeting. As with other newcomers, you can if you wish attend a meeting or two simply as the ‘guest’ of a SOTS member (normally your supervisor) in order to see what the meetings are like before deciding on whether to seek membership; then, when you do apply for membership, your supervisor would normally be one of your two ‘supporters’. You do not need to have completed your doctorate to become a member of the Society; nor, once you have taken up membership, do you need to have completed your doctorate to propose a paper for a forthcoming meeting.

Further information: The SOTS website (www.sots.ac.uk) has useful information on the Society and its meetings, as well as other resources for biblical studies. If you have further questions relating to your attendance at a forthcoming meeting, the best person to contact is Elizabeth Harper, the Hospitality Secretary (e.a.harper@dur.ac.uk).



ACCOUNTS FOR 2008

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 31st October 2008

	<i>Bursaries</i>	<i>Book List</i>	<i>Confer- ences</i>	<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>2007</i>
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income						
Subscriptions and donations	735	–	–	9993	10728	8587
Income tax recovered	–	–	–	854	854	849
Book List sales	–	26	–	–	26	48
Conference income	–	–	28807	–	28807	25087
Dividends, interest and royalties	294	–	–	3412	3706	3253
Gain on disposal of investments	–	–	–	–	–	3540
Legacies	–	–	–	45000	45000	4000
Other income	–	–	–	93	93	50
Total income	1029	26	28807	59352	89214	45414
Expenditure						
Printing and stationery	–	–	–	571	571	3191
Postage and administration	–	674	–	540	1214	1824
Equipment	–	–	–	–	–	1
Book List production	–	3000	–	–	3000	3000
Committee costs	–	–	–	475	475	135
Conference costs	–	–	37016	555	37571	27144
Accountancy	–	–	–	546	546	529
Bursaries	2211	–	–	–	2211	551
Bank charges	–	–	–	379	379	311
Total expenditure	2211	3674	37016	3066	45967	36686
Net surplus/(deficit)	(1182)	(3648)	(8209)	56286	43247	8728

BALANCE SHEET at 31st October 2008

	<i>2008</i>	<i>2007</i>
	£	£
Assets		
Debtors	2857	2100
Bank accounts (note 1)	107606	65099
	110463	67199
Liabilities		
Sundry creditors and reserves	(546)	(529)
	109917	66670
Represented by		
Accumulated surpluses and reserves (note 2)		
General fund	60701	65272
Bursary fund	216	1398
Legacy fund	49000	4000
	109917	66670

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS for year ended 31st October 2008

1. Bank accounts	2008	2007
Barclays Bank plc: Current Account	103	73
Higher Interest Business Account	–	65026
Business Premium Account	107503	–
	107606	65099

2. Accumulated surpluses and reserves	<i>General</i>	<i>Bursary</i>	<i>Legacy</i>	
	<i>Fund</i>	<i>Fund</i>	<i>Fund</i>	<i>Total</i>
At 1st November 2007	61272	1398	4000	66670
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(571)	(1182)	45000	43247
Transfers	–	–	–	–
At 31st October 2008	60701	216	49000	109917

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.

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.

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 2008 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 2010

President: Professor Cheryl Exum, Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 45 Victoria Street, Sheffield S3 7QB (tel. 0114 222 0503, e-mail j.c.exum@sheffield.ac.uk).

Retiring President: Professor Lester Grabbe, Department of Theology, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX (tel. 01482 465997, e-mail l.l.grabbe@hull.ac.uk).

President-elect: Professor John Sawyer, Via della Pallotta 16, 06124 Perugia PG, Italy (tel. +39 075 372 2402, e-mail john.sawyer@libero.it).

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

Secretary: Dr Francesca Stavrakopoulou, Department of Theology, University of Exeter, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter EX4 4RJ (tel. 01392 264290, e-mail f.stavrakopoulou@exeter.ac.uk).

Secretary for Honorary Members: Professor David Clines, Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 45 Victoria Street, Sheffield S3 7QB (tel. 0114 222 0505, e-mail d.clines@sheffield.ac.uk).

Membership Secretary: Mrs Vivienne Rowett, The New Vicarage, Beck Hill, Barton-upon-Humber DN18 5EY (tel. 01652 632202, e-mail vivrowett@aol.com).

Hospitality Secretary: Ms Elizabeth Harper, Flat 4, 69–70 Crossgate, Durham DH1 4PR (tel. 0191 375 7091, e-mail e.a.harper@dur.ac.uk).

Book List Editor: Dr Deborah Rooke, King's College, Strand, London WC2R 2LS (tel. 020 7848 2393, e-mail deborah.rooke@kcl.ac.uk). Books for review should be sent to her c/- Regent's Park College, Pusey Street, Oxford OX1 2LB.

Information Officer: Dr James Aitken, Faculty of Divinity, West Road, Cambridge CB3 9BS (e-mail jka12@cam.ac.uk).

Committee: The above Officers of the Society plus Dr Eric Christianson, Dr Charlotte Hempel, Dr Ann Jeffers, Dr Hilary Marlow, Dr James McKeown, Dr Andrew Mein, Dr Jonathan Stökl, and Dr Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer.

Programme Sub-Committee: The President, President-elect, Secretary, and Secretary for Honorary Members; plus Ms Elizabeth Harper, Dr Andrew Mein, and Dr Stuart Weeks.

Publications Sub-Committee: The *Book List* Editor (Convener), Dr Margaret Barker (as Monographs Editor), Dr Adrian Curtis (as Guides Editor), and Professor Hugh Williamson (as SOTS representative on the OTS Board); plus Professor Robert Gordon, Dr Anselm Hagedorn, and Dr Walter Houston.

Editorial Board of the SOTS monograph series: Dr 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 Dr Barker at The White House, 24 Gordon Road, Borrowash DE72 3JX.)

PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY

1917-19 William Bennett	1968 Matthew Black
1920 Archibald Kennedy	1969 John Schofield
1921 Robert Kennett	1970 Arthur Herbert
1922 George Buchanan Gray	1971 Edward Ullendorff
1923 George Box	1972 Peter Ackroyd
1924 Arthur Peake	1973 James Barr
1925 Stanley Cook	1974 Dafydd Ap-Thomas
1926 William Stevenson	1975 Eileen de Ward
1927 David Simpson	1976 Douglas Jones
1928 Theodore Robinson	1977 Ronald Williams
1929 Henry Wheeler Robinson	1978 William McKane
1930 Claude Montefiore	1979 John Emerton
1931 William Oesterley	1980 Donald Wiseman
1932 William Lofthouse	1981 Raphael Loewe
1933 William Wardle	1982 Norman Whybray
1934 Adam Welch	1983 Roy Porter
1935 William Emery Barnes	1984 Wilfred Lambert
1936 John Battersby Harford	1985 Ronald Clements
1937-38 Godfrey Driver	1986 Barnabas Lindars
1939-40 Herbert Loewe	1987 Robert Murray
1941-45 Henry Wheeler Robinson	1988 Ernest Nicholson
1946 Theodore Robinson	1989 John Rogerson
1947 Cuthbert Lattey	1990 William Johnstone
1948 Edward Robertson	1991 Anthony Gelston
1949 Christopher North	1992 Andrew Mayes
1950 Harold Rowley	1993 Richard Coggins
1951 Samuel Hooke	1994 John Gibson
1952 John Barton	1995 Gwilym Jones
1953 David Winton Thomas	1996 David Clines
1954 Norman Porteous	1997 Rex Mason
1955 Alfred Guillaume	1998 Margaret Barker
1956 Aubrey Johnson	1999 Robert Carroll
1957 Norman Snaith	2000 Joseph Blenkinsopp
1958 Leonard Elliott-Binns	2001 Michael Goulder
1959 John Mauchline	2002 John Bartlett
1960 Cuthbert Simpson	2003 Robert Gordon
1961 Jacob Weingreen	2004 Hugh Williamson
1962 Hedley Sparks	2005 Graeme Auld
1963 George Anderson	2006 Robert Hayward
1964 Bleddyn Roberts	2007 Philip Davies
1965 Frederick Bruce	2008 John Barton
1966 Gwynne Henton Davies	2009 Lester Grabbe
1967 Donald Coggan	