
The Society for Old Testament Study

BULLETIN 2014

89th WINTER MEETING
6th - 8th January 2014
Collingwood College, Durham
Professor John Day presiding

Professor John Day (Oxford)

Presidential Address: Problems in the Interpretation of the Story of the Garden of Eden

This paper discussed many of the problems of interpretation raised by the Eden story. It was argued that Eden means “delight”, not “steppe, plain”, and that it was understood as a real place located not, as most often supposed, at the flat, southern Persian gulf end of the Tigris and Euphrates, but rather in mountainous Armenia at the northern end of these rivers. This is shown by the fact that a river flowed out of Eden before becoming four headwaters (*ra’shim*), and the Israelites knew rivers flowed down, not up. (For Eden as set on a mountain see Ezek. 28:14, though here it is probably located in Phoenicia; cf. Ezek. 31:8, 16). The common view that the first man was originally a sexless “earth creature” prior to the creation of Eve is mistaken, since in Gen. 2:23 Eve is stated to have been made “out of man (*’ish*)”, which clearly means a male. Eve’s being a “helper” to the man involves more than simply being able to procreate, contrary to the claim of one scholar. The humans in Eden are most accurately described neither as mortal, nor immortal, but as potentially immortal, since they are not yet debarred from eating of the tree of life, though they have not got

round to doing so. The serpent is possibly a reworking of the serpent in the Gilgamesh epic, tablet 11, which is similarly instrumental in depriving Gigamesh of immortality and is likewise associated with a plant or tree of life. Various explanations of the non-immediate death of the first humans, contrary to God's threat, were considered, the most likely being that it was an act of grace on God's part. The knowledge of good and evil does not denote knowledge of everything (Gen. 3 provides an aetiology of the human condition, and human beings are not omniscient). Nor does it denote merely sexual knowledge, but in keeping with its meaning elsewhere in the Old Testament, ethical discernment (Deut. 1:39; cf. Isa. 7:15-16). Such wisdom is spoken of positively elsewhere in the Old Testament; the first humans' error was in disobeying God's explicit command instead of seeking wisdom through humble obedience to God (cf. Prov. 1:7; 9:10). There was, however, an alternative view that the first man was omniscient (cf. Ezek. 28:3; Job 15:7-8). The recent view that the story is an allegory of the exile is to be rejected: Eden is not Jerusalem (cf. Gen. 2:10-14) and seeking after the knowledge of good and evil does not correspond to the sin of pre-exilic Judah referred to elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Dr David Reimer (Edinburgh)

The Language of Psalm 119

Psalm 119 is (in)famous for its relentless acrostic pattern and repeated use of a few 'key terms' for the law. This has led to dismissive judgments of the poet's artistic ability, as well as assertions of his linguistic limitations. But the language of this poet has more to commend it than critics have claimed, whether in the vocabulary generally employed, the choice of 'acrostic' words, or the use of the eight 'key terms' (*tôrâ*, *dāḇār*, *mišpāt(im)*, *'ēdōt*, *mišwōt*, *piqqûdīm*, *ḥuqqīm*, and *'imrâ*). This paper focused on the latter aspect. The leading term is often identified as *tôrâ*. However, a close examination of the distribution and relationship of the terms placed a question mark over this common claim. A detour into linguistics returned with useful tools in the concepts of hyponyms and hyperonyms. Assessing the poet's usage of the key terms in light of the linguistic discussion, the case was made that *dāḇār* is the more likely to be the superordinate term, even as the poet intentionally blurs the taxonomic

boundaries between the key terms. *tôrâ* may still be a ‘basic’ term, but *dābār* is the more significant structurally. This suggested in turn a shift in perception of Psalm 119’s leading theme.

Dr Stuart Weeks (Durham)

Googling Qohelet

This paper observed that projects by Google and others had brought unprecedented access in the last few years to early books and articles from libraries around the world. This potentially enabled us not only to understand the history of reception and interpretation much better in general terms, but also to avoid reliance on existing selections and summaries, which tended to project on to the past the agendas and concerns of the period at which they were created: Christian Ginsburg's influential 1861 survey of scholarship on Ecclesiastes provided an important example of the extent to which modern scholarship can still be shaped in this way by nineteenth-century debates. The paper suggested that amount of information now available also enabled us to look in a more sophisticated way at the history of reception, setting individual works in a broader context, and making a better assessment of their actual influence. All this required us, however, not only to impose order on a great mass of data, but also to have a much greater knowledge and understanding of books and of the early publishing industry, since it was very easy for the uninitiated to be misled. The paper concluded by noting that we have been offered an extraordinary opportunity, but if in order to grasp it we must equip ourselves properly with the bibliographical tools and skills that we shall need.

Dr Madhavi Nevader

On Reading Adam Royally

Dr Sandra Jacobs (King’s College London)

Methodological Paradigms and “Parallelomania” in the Study of Comparative Biblical Law

This paper set out to indicate why the study of comparative biblical law was one of the most exciting and rewarding areas of scholarly

inquiry, and how it could refine our understanding of the development of authoritative, sacred, traditions in early Judean antiquity. While Samuel Sandmel's charge of "parallelomania," raised understandably justifiable concerns over the integrity of this method, there were some extremely effective approaches that did successfully avoid the pitfalls he warned against. By applying the methodological process advanced by Jeffrey Tigay to a specific, limited, issue - such as the underlying purpose of female corporal punishment - it was possible to gain new insights into the rationale and pre-history of the relevant biblical laws. This use of the comparative method afforded additional opportunities for breaking new ground in several inter-disciplinary arenas: notably in terms of gender relations, but also (admittedly unexpectedly) in relation to contemporary theories of evolutionary biology.

Professor John Bartlett (Dublin)

Burchard of Mt Sion: A Thirteenth Century Baedeker

Burchard was a thirteenth-century Dominican from Magdeburg, whose *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, written c. 1283, was a forerunner of Baedeker's *Palestine and Syria*. Burchard was well versed in earlier scholarly writings on the Holy Land. This paper followed Burchard's description of the land in 4 *Quartae* and 12 *Divisiones*, each *divisio* clearly being based on one of Burchard's own itineraries from Acco and Jerusalem. Burchard's concern to identify biblical (especially OT) sites (e.g., his identification of the sites of Jeroboam's golden calves), his knowledge of the land (Transjordan apart), and his interest in the topography of Jerusalem, and its water supplies, walls and gates, were fully discussed. After the section on Jerusalem, Burchard's scheme of *quartae* and *divisiones* in the south and west is less clearly presented and the arrangement seems disturbed; this paper suggested a reconstructed original scheme. Finally, the paper commented on Burchard's use of the OT, and compared his work not only with Baedeker's *Palestine and Syria* but also with George Adam Smith's *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, noting that Burchard would have made a good member of SOTS.

Professor Peter Machinist (Harvard)

Royal Inscriptions in the Hebrew Bible: A Problem and Its Significance

This paper began by noting that royal inscriptions were among the most prominent manifestations of rulership in the ancient Near East, testifying in rhetorically emphatic ways to the ruler's achievements as pious devotee of his kingdom's gods and caregiver of his subjects through his prowess as warrior and builder. Among the earliest texts to be recovered and studied in modern investigation of the ancient Near East, these inscriptions remained a frequent and much debated source on its history. They were found all over the region, but arguably the largest, longest attested, and most diverse collection was from Mesopotamia. But what of ancient Israel? Here the evidence was sparse, both biblical and archaeological, yet that had not impeded discussion of whether and how Israelite and Judean kings employed royal inscriptions, what knowledge of other inscriptional traditions, especially the Mesopotamian, Israel and Judah had, as manifest particularly in the Hebrew Bible, and what role, if any, such inscriptions played as sources for the great works of biblical historiography, namely, the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles. The paper briefly reviewed these issues, and then focused on several biblical texts which, it was proposed, are not simply reflections of inscriptional language, but efforts to play with and polemicize against the very category or genre of royal inscription. The paper then went on to consider a number of central questions: why they should be doing this, what parallels there may be for such play in other inscriptional traditions, and what was the larger significance of this.

Dr Charlotte Hempel (Birmingham)

The Power of Posthumous Leadership in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls

This paper began by emphasizing that not too much ought to be made of the lack of reference to the figures of Ezra and Nehemiah in the writings of the Qumran movement. Our access to both figures, literary or historical, is marred by a long and complex composition history both in the MT and the LXX and beyond. The complexity of the evidence has given rise to scholarly hypotheses suggesting Ezra material has been added to the Nehemiah material and vice versa of the Nehemiah Memoir deliberately being omitted from the account of

1 Esdras. There is certainly no general agreement on either of these illustrative scenarios. The evidence of the Qumran materials is therefore no more than another ripple in the very choppy compositional and reception history of the literary footprints of Ezra and Nehemiah. If Ezra was a historical figure whose literary record was amplified by subsequent authors and editors it is clear that we have a circle sympathetic to the Ezra materials to thank for this part of the Hebrew Bible. Taking Ezra 7:10 as a focal point, it was suggested that the Ezra tradents share key concerns and interests with seminal groups reflected in the Scrolls, even in some perhaps unexpected places.

Professor Philip Alexander

The Polemical and Apologetic Context of the Rabbis' Choice of Text-type for their Scriptures

Why does rabbinic tradition spread over some 400 years and, emanating from two widely separated geographical regions (Palestine and Babylonia), uniformly reflect only a proto-Masoretic text-type? The paper argued that this remarkable fact cannot be explained by supposing that other forms of the text were unknown to the Rabbis: they knew of textual variants in the LXX, in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and in Sifrei Minim (in the sense of Hebrew Torah scrolls written and used by non-rabbinic Jews). They had, therefore, alternative texts to hand, but chose to go with the MT instead. The reason for this was that the MT was by their day an old and venerable text, probably going back a recension of the Torah produced under Maccabean auspices in Second Temple times. Content-wise it suited their theological position, and its antiquity allowed them to make more easily the case in polemic against Christians, that they had the word of God in its original form, in contrast to the corrupt LXX on which the Christians relied. The success of this polemic is shown by the Hebraica Veritas debate within Christianity, which in effect internalized the Rabbis position within the Church.

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On the afternoon of 7th January a **‘Research in Progress’ Seminar** was held at which PhD Students presented short summaries of their work and received feedback from members of the Society.

90th SUMMER MEETING
21st – 24th July 2014
St Hilda's College, Oxford
Professor John Day presiding

Professor John J Collins (Yale)

Torah and Jewish Identity in the Second Temple Period

According to Second Maccabees, the decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes made it impossible to keep the Sabbath, to observe the ancestral festivals, or openly confess oneself to be a *Ioudaios*. For the author, to be a *Ioudaios* was not only a matter of ethnic descent but was defined by “the ancestral laws,” which included observance of the Sabbath and the festivals, and the practice of circumcision. These laws had been recognized as the expression of a distinctive way of life already by the Persians, and had been explicitly recognized by Antiochus III at the beginning of the second century. The reforms of Jason undermined the status of those laws by changing the constitution of Jerusalem, but did not try to suppress them. Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to put an end to the distinctive Judean way of life. The reaction by the Maccabees and Hasmoneans led to reaffirmation of the ancestral laws, but also to much greater attention to the details of the written laws than had been in evidence prior to the revolt.

Professor Kevin Cathcart (Dublin)

“The Rainbringers”: Weather-God Imagery in the Psalms and Semitic Inscriptions

The choice of topic for this paper arose from a closer study of the first part of the Tell Fakhariyah bilingual inscription, which is dedicated to the storm-god known as Addu or Adad in Akkadian and as Hadad in Aramaic. The paper noted that Daniel Schwemer’s *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen* (Wiesbaden, 2001) provided scholars with an exhaustive presentation of all that has been discovered about storm-gods in the ancient Near East and this work should be consulted

before describing a deity as a ‘weather-god’ or a ‘storm-god’. In ancient Israel agriculture relied to a large extent on rainfall. Unlike Adad, Hadad and Baal, Yahweh was not a weather-god. The first five lines of the Tell Fakhariyah inscription merit comparison with weather-god imagery found in the Bible, especially in Job and Psalms. In this paper particular attention was given to Psalms 29, 65, 68, 104 and 147. Psalm 29, which is well known for its storm-god imagery, does not mention rain, though *qôl*, ‘voice’ or ‘thunder’ occurs frequently. The view that Psalm 29 was originally a Canaanite hymn to Baal (Ginsberg, Cross) must be rejected. Much of the psalm’s vocabulary (including *h^adarah*, ‘vision’) is not even attested in Ugaritic or Phoenician. Psalm 68, which describes Yahweh as ‘Rider of the Clouds’ (v. 5) and ‘Rider in the Ancient Heavens’ (v. 13), speaks of his pouring out rain in abundance upon the land of his inheritance. Psalm 65, which begins with a prayer to God on Zion (vv. 2-5) has a description of God the creator in vv. 6-9, and speaks of God as the bringer or giver of rain in vv. 10-14. Verses 10-11 should be compared with lines 2-3 of the Tell Fakhariyah inscription: ‘who sends down abundance and provides pasture and watering-place for all the lands’, and with lines 4-5, ‘who makes all the lands luxuriant, merciful god to whom it is good to pray’. Psalms 104 and 147 both present the attributes of Yahweh as creator and provider. The paper concluded that the picture of ancient Israel’s God as ‘rainbringer’ was a Hebrew one which shares some characteristics with portrayals in Semitic literature generally and with West Semitic literature in particular.

Dr Helen Jacobus (London)

Noah's Flood Calendar (Gen 7.10-8.19) in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q252 and 4Q254a)

This paper set out to demonstrate that the biblical Flood calendar and chronology in the 4Q252 (*4QCommentary on Genesis A*) that exegetes Gen 7–8 does not precisely fit the calendrical paradigm proposed by Annie Jaubert in 1953 although it is very close. The paper further explored why the flood calendar of 4Q252 omits the raven and only uses the flights of the dove. It argued that the raven narrative in 4Q254a (*4QCommentary on Genesis D*) is exegeting the Septuagint version of the raven’s story and may be a form of interpretation at Qumran. It concluded that the Deluge calendar of 4Q252 and the

narrative of the raven in 4Q254a are probably influenced by ancient Near East narratives and contain particular intertextual elements that do not exist in the Hebrew and Greek biblical versions of the story.

Dr Alison Gray (Cambridge)

Psalm 144: A New Song?

The paper began by noting that Psalm 144 is frequently described as a ‘patchwork’ or ‘anthology’. It draws its ideas and phrases predominantly from Psalm 18, but reverberates with discernible echoes from Psalms 8, 33, 39 and 104. The interpretation of the psalm is complicated by its unusual form: it divides into two unequal sections of a very different character, style and form, leading to strong doubts about its original unity. A closer look at the relationships between the words, pictures and their conceptual associations would not only shed light on the author’s message but would also suggest an explanation for the psalm’s current structure. The paper went on to demonstrate the ways in which the author’s re-use of words and pictures from other psalms reveals his reflection on his current situation, and how a blend of modified ‘word-pictures’ from the past has been re-framed to form a unique, distinctive and compelling message of hope. Finally, the paper explored how the flexibility of metaphors within the psalm facilitate multiple interpretations according to different ‘frames’ and readers.

Dr Charlie Hadjiev (Belfast)

The Bad King, the Good liar, and the Dead Man of God: Role models for the exilic readership of 1 Kings 13

This paper looked at 1 Kings 13 from the standpoint of the exilic audience of the book of Kings. It argued that the main characters in the story were meant to be taken as types embodying different aspects of the experience of its first readership. The death of the man of God symbolised the Babylonian exile, whilst king Jeroboam stood for the idolatry and rejection of the prophetic word in the past. The paper suggested that the most important character was the old prophet from Bethel who outlived his Judean ‘brother’ and took over his message of doom against Bethel. By doing this, and in spite of his earlier shortcomings, he was able to affect some limited form of ‘salvation’ for himself (when the punishment upon Bethel was unleashed his

bones were not desecrated by Josiah). The old prophet stood for the possible future of the exilic readership of Kings. By means of this character the readers were challenged to accept the message of judgement of the book of Kings.

Professor Anthony Frendo (Malta)

Burning Issues: *mlk* revisited

The paper began by noting that, basing themselves on Otto Eissfeldt's 1935 work on the Phoenician-Punic sacrifice known as *molk*, many biblical scholars had followed in his footsteps and opted to substitute the biblical deity *Mōlek* in the Hebrew Bible with this sacrificial term. However there had always been other scholars who disagreed with this position. Recently there had been a renewed surge of interest in the problem as to whether the Carthaginians had literally burnt their children in sacrifice to their gods. Since this problem touches on related issues found in the Hebrew Bible, the paper suggested that it was necessary to look again at some biblical texts to see whether children in ancient Israel were indeed sacrificed by burning. When the various ways of vocalizing the Semitic word "*mlk*" with its basic meaning of "king" were taken into account alongside the fact that in west Semitic there are words which can be used either as the names of deities or simply as their epithets, it became more plausible to uphold that, although the biblical word "*Mōlek*" does indeed refer to a deity, in a number of texts it was most probably originally vocalized as *melek* and used as an epithet with reference to different gods including Baal and Yahweh himself. The paper went on to note that, furthermore, composite divine names could be encountered, one component of which functioned as an epithet. Often it was idolatrous child sacrifice that was condemned in the Hebrew Bible and not the sacrifice of children made to Yahweh. However it seemed that there was also a non-Tophet group in Israel, which condemned the sacrifice of children tout court, whether offered to Yahweh or to foreign deities, and this was reflected in certain texts, such as Deuteronomy.

Professor Hugh Williamson (Oxford)

In the Shadow of S. R. Driver: A Centennial Appreciation

S. R. Driver died on 26 February 1914, having been Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford and a canon of Christ Church since 1883. In addition to some general biographical details, partly culled from unpublished letters, the paper focused in particular on his early career.

Although his first degree was in Classics and mathematics, he already knew Hebrew when he arrived at New College, Oxford. Becoming a tutor in Classics there after graduation, it was clear from his earliest publications as well as from other correspondence that his main teacher was Adolf Neubauer, who worked in the Bodleian Library. Three of Driver's first four books related to rabbinical Hebrew, the fourth being his book on Hebrew Tenses, which was initially prepared for teaching purposes. His only publication relating directly to the Old Testament during those years was an article to refute the suggestion that the late date of P could be proved on linguistic grounds. It was several years after Gladstone nominated him for the chair over three other possible candidates that his Introduction first appeared, showing that he had taken a long time carefully to work through the arguments for and against a fully 'critical' position (of which Gladstone would not have approved). Other evidence showed that he was a shy and nervous person, so that his honesty in publishing the results of his careful weighing of the academic evidence stands out the more clearly.

Dr Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (Aberdeen)

Zechariah 1-6: Between Redaction Criticism and Form Criticism

The paper explored the genre category of vision report, with focus on the textual relationship within a periscope between the account of the visual impression and the accompanying divine oracles. The present investigation was limited to Amos 7:1–3; 7:4–6; 7:7–9; 8:1–3, and 9:1–4, and to Zech 1:8–6:8. The paper noted that several scholars have argued that the form of Amos' vision report informs on the redaction-critical formation of Zechariah's vision report. As each of Amos' vision account ends with a divine word, the argument goes, so should Zechariah's. It follows, these same scholars maintain, that the oracular material within Zech 1–6 is the natural and integral continuation of the preceding vision account, without which the vision account cannot be understood properly. The paper went on to demonstrate that this type

of comparison was partly flawed. Form-critical and redaction-critical considerations must go hand-in-hand when seeking to determine the textual development of a given text. Furthermore, the paper maintained that the two sets of vision reports in Amos and Zechariah display the *same* type of relationship between vision report and oracle. In both cases, the oracular material constitutes a later addition that interprets and in some cases also redefines the message of the earlier account of the vision.

Dr Hywel Clifford (Oxford)

Biblical Monotheism and Early Greek Philosophy

This paper suggested that early Greek Philosophy (EGP) had been deployed in traditional ‘diffusionary’ and modern ‘developmental’ accounts of biblical monotheism. The traditional narrative grew out of ancient Jewish and Christian apologetic that defended the universal truth, to which EGP bore witness, of the one God versus other gods or idols. The famous fragments of Xenophanes (‘one God, greatest among gods and men’) in Clement’s *Stromata* (late 2nd Century), in a list of fourteen Greek poets and philosophers on divine incomparability, are quoted after a question from Isaiah (‘To whom then will you compare me? says the LORD’) to show that the one God is known by all, albeit in a ‘true periphrasis’ by the Greeks. The paper went on to note that the modern narrative is dominated by ANE evidence, but scholars continue to quote EGP with similar intent. Xenophanes’ fragments are compared to near-contemporary biblical texts in Halpern’s essay ‘Late Israelite Astronomies and the Early Greeks’ (2003), which, influenced by Jasper’s Axial Age hypothesis, proposes that Xenophanes and Deutero-Isaiah were both ‘self-conscious monotheists’. The paper suggested that similarities between their ideas, especially their rejection of polytheistic conceptions, showed an ‘international conversation’ at work. The weaknesses of these two narratives were a lack of detailed engagement with EGP (it is not obvious Xenophanes was a ‘monotheist’ – whether or not that category describes Deutero-Isaiah) and conceptual latitude: they work only because the comparative bar is set sufficiently low. The paper concluded that it is thus important to examine EGP on its own terms, to pursue comparative studies with greater care, and to open up both diffusionary and developmental accounts of biblical monotheism to ideological critique.

Professor Johannes de Moor (Kamper) And Dr Marjo Korpel (Utrecht)

Adam, Eve and the Devil: A New Beginning

The paper noted that it has long been recognized that certain passages in e.g. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 reflect what has been dubbed an 'Adamic Myth' that is older than the biblical creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2{3. However, thus far no convincing parallels for this 'Adamic Myth' had been adduced from the ancient Near East. In the opinion of the presenters, some poorly understood Ugaritic tablets provide this lacking background. Originally Adammū, the divine prototype of humanity, was an androgynous deity. Far from being the first to sin, the Ugaritic myth reveals that he was the victim of a decision of the divine council to send him to the vineyard of the great gods on the earth with the assignment to undo the damage inflicted by Ḫorrrānu, a rebel god who had been thrown out of heaven. The rebel's revenge seems to have been the destruction of the tree of life in the vineyard of the great gods. As a result immortality was lost and the whole cosmos suffered. The paper suggested that the serpent he instructed to guard the tree was the Leviathan, one of many indications that the primordial history of humankind should be viewed as a macrocosmic chain of events. As for Eve, the Ugaritic myth intimates that through her the immortality of the human race was guaranteed by the process of continuous procreation. This started with the mother goddess, consort of Adammū, and was set forth by all mothers afterwards. Since the Ugaritic texts involved do not contain any indication that she was blamed for the first sin, the presenters raised the question why the Hebrew Bible in its canonical form hanged the first transgression on Eve. The paper went on to suggest that many elements in the primordial history as related in the Bible and parabiblical literature appear in a totally fresh light as a result of what they had found which had emboldened them to append the subtitle 'A New Beginning' to their book 'Adam, Eve, and the Devil' which had appeared recently in the Swiss series *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*. The presenters explained that the reason for the choice for this series was that they wanted to honour Othmar and Hildi Keel for their groundbreaking work on iconography and the Bible because they believed they had identified the first second millennium BCE pictures of 'Adam' and 'Eve'.

Professor Ronald Hendel (Berkeley)

Toward a Plural Poetics of Genesis: Style, Source and Intertextuality

There is currently a bifurcation in the field between those who practice source criticism and those who practice literary criticism. This paper argued that these two practices are logically inseparable, and that it is necessary to synthesize the two practices in order more fully to achieve their goals. The examples given were the Tamar story in the context of the Joseph story, and the journeys of Abraham in Genesis 12-13. The literary features of the sources (J and P) in the latter case could also elucidate the large-scale structure of the sources and the composite Pentateuch.

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On the afternoon of 23rd July four PhD students presented summaries of their work and received feedback at a **‘Research in Progress’ Seminar**.

On the evening of 21st July a **reception** for the meeting was sponsored by Oxford University Press. The **outing and President’s tea** on 22nd July was a memorable visit to the Ashmolean Museum with a cream tea served in the Museum’s cafeteria.

Abstract from the Winter Meeting 2013, not included in the 2013 Bulletin:

Dr Christopher Meredith (Sheffield)

On Lovers and Labyrinths: Revisiting Space in the Song of Songs

The paper used a variety of critical tools to think about urban spatiality in the Song of Songs. It argued for a narrative equivalency between the erotic doorstep scene of 5:1-6 and the infamous violence of the city watchmen in 5:7; both play with the idea of physical boundaries, the power of the male ‘hand’, and the interplay of the body and the city as sites of emotional experience in the poem. The paper suggested that the stark distinctions made by scholars between the ‘good’ garden and the ‘sinister’ city are not always sustainable, then, since the city is itself a confusing and ambiguous territory that recycles eroticism as violence, and violence as eroticism. Exploring

the city as a complex mixture of light and dark, as a narrative that engages with opacity, transparency, and their contradictory organisation in the lovers' exchanges, allowed scope for putting Freud's notions of the Unheimlich into conversation with the Song of Songs. The paper suggested that reading the Song's poetry itself produces among readers a kind of uncanny experience that rather duplicates that of the lovers; the process of reading is a sort of repetitious labyrinth that recycles thrills and disquiet to produce its emotional response.

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SOTS Website

Don't forget to look at the SOTS website (<http://www.sots.ac.uk/>) for news updates and details of forthcoming meetings. Copies of Previous Bulletins as well as the members address list and minutes of past business meetings can be found on the secure members area. If you have forgotten it, the password is obtainable from the Information Officer, Dr Jonathan Stökl (jonathan.stokl@kcl.ac.uk).

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Among **honours** received by members of the Society: Professor Judith Lieu has been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy and Charlotte Hempel has been selected to join the AHRC Review College.

The Society has learned with regret of the **deaths** of Professor Ernest Nicholson, Rev Dr Leslie C Green and Honorary Member Professor Rolf Rendtorff.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society.

At the Winter Meeting: Professor John Ahn, Mr Kengo Akiyama, Miss Penelope Barter, Professor Thomas M Bolin, Mr Daniel Crowther, Revd Megan Daffern, Ms Michele Freyhauf, Dr Angela Harkins, Mr Samuel Hildebrandt, Mrs Brittany Melton, Dr Alexander Prokhorov, Miss Tiffany Webster, Miss Katie Woolstenhulme.

At the Summer Meeting: Dr Mark Awabdy, Mr J. E Estrada, Dr Miriam Hinksman, Ms Jo-Ping (Grace) Hsiao, Dr Anja Klein, Rev John Kieran Maher, Ms Karen Kai-Wen Yuan.

The **current Honorary Members** are Professors Bertil Albrektson (1983), Athalya Brenner (2002), Walter Brueggemann (1997), Tamara Eskenazi (2010), Michael Fox (2011), Norman Gottwald (2009), Norman Habel (2011), Menahem Haran (1981), Sara Japhet (1999), Otto Kaiser (1992), Bernhard Lang (1997), Tryggve Mettinger (2003), Johannes de Moor (2004), Carol Newsom (2013), Martti Nissinen (2013), Eduard Nielsen (1988), Kirsten Nielsen (2000), Rudolf Smend (1979).

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

The **Winter Meeting 2015** will be held on **5th – 7th January** at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and the **Summer Meeting 2015** will be held on **20th – 23rd July 2015**, at New College, Edinburgh. Both meetings will be under the Presidency of Professor Hans Barstad.

Two of the Society's published works which had fallen out of print have recently been included in Oxford University Press's print-on-demand programme, and so are now available to a new generation of book-buyers. They are *Archaeology and Old Testament Study* (edited by David Winton Thomas, originally published in 1967 as a 'Jubilee Volume' for the Society's 50th anniversary) and *Peoples of Old Testament Times* (edited by Donald Wiseman, originally published in 1973).

Information about SOTS and related activities can be found on the Society's **website** (www.sots.ac.uk). This has a secure **members area** where various documents are stored including **Minutes of Business Meetings**, past **Bulletins** of the Society and **information for new members**. Access to this is via a user name and password obtainable from the Information Officer, Dr Jonathan Stökl (jonathan.stokl@kcl.ac.uk)

Members are 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.

The Programme Sub-Committee is pleased to receive **proposals for papers** — particularly for shorter papers (25 minutes) — as well as for workshops and other sessions. All proposals should be sent to the Secretary at least four weeks in advance of a Meeting of the Society. Due to fluctuation in the number of programme slots available, if a

proposal is accepted by the Programme Sub-Committee, it may be scheduled for a Meeting some distance in the future.

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.

IMPORTANT REMINDER TO ALL SOTS MEMBERS

As the SOTS Bulletin, and Winter and Summer Meeting programme and booking form are now sent out electronically (as pdf files), **please ensure that the email address we hold for you is up to date.** Changes to this and other contact details should be notified to the Membership Secretary, Mrs Vivienne Rowett, at the address at the end of this Bulletin.

ACCOUNTS FOR 2013

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 31st October 2012

	General fund £	Bursary fund £	Legacy fund £	Total Funds 2013 £	Total Funds 2012 £
Income					
Activities for generating funds					
Subscriptions & Donations	7,211	2,018	-	9,229	9,982
Income tax recovered	-	-	-	-	693
Conference income	35,438	-	-	35,438	32,432
Other income	153	-	-	153	112
Investment income					
Interest & Royalties	56	122	-	178	129
Total income	42,858	2,140	-	44,998	43,348
Expenditure					
Conference costs	34,099	-	-	34,099	31,683
Book list grant	3,000	-	-	3,000	-
Bursaries	-	2,601	-	2,601	1,831
Committee costs	1,730	-	-	1,730	1,569
Printing, Postage, Stationery etc	3,830	-	-	3,830	4,432
Equipment	-	-	-	-	499
Booklist production	-	-	-	-	540
Accountancy fees	780	-	-	780	696
Bank charges	550	-	-	550	556
Legacy	-	-	-	-	420
Total Expenditure	43,989	2,601	-	46,590	42,226
(Deficit) / surplus for year	-1,131	-461	-	-1,592	1,122
Transfer between funds	-	468	-468	-	-
Net movement after transfers	-1,131	7	-468	-1,592	1,122
Balance as at 1 November	61,283	-118	58,318	119,483	118,361
Balance as at 31 October 2013	60,152	-111	57,850	117,891	119,483

BALANCE SHEET at 31st October 2013

	Notes	2013	2012
		£	£
Cash at bank and in hand			
Current Account		7,677	2,039
Business Premium		<u>110,994</u>	<u>118,140</u>
		118,671	120,179
Creditors: falling due within			
Accruals		<u>-780</u>	<u>-696</u>
		<u>117,891</u>	<u>119,483</u>
Reserves:			
General fund	2	60,152	61,283
Bursary fund	2	-111	-118
Legacy fund	2	<u>57,850</u>	<u>58,318</u>
		<u>117,891</u>	<u>119,483</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 October 2013

1. Accounting policies

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Going concern

The Society has cash resources and has no requirement for external funding. The Committee have a reasonable expectation that the Society has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. They continue to believe the going concern basis of accounting appropriate in preparing the annual financial statements.

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows.

Income

All income is accounted for on a receipts basis.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure is inclusive of VAT.

Income Tax Recoverable

No account is taken of any income tax recoverable but not yet received in respect of subscriptions under Gift Aid due to uncertainty until claims are settled.

Stocks

No account is taken of unused stocks of books 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 useful lives. The rate applicable is 20% per annum.

Fund accounting

Funds held by the Society are either:

- General fund – monies which can be used in accordance with the Society's aims at the discretion of the Committee.
- Bursary fund – monies for the payment of costs in support of members in need of financial assistance.
- Legacy fund – these are funds that can only be used for the particular restricted purpose as specified by the donor.

A deficit on the Bursary Fund is carried forward where there is reason to believe funds to negate the deficit will be received in the next accounting period.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each legacy fund is included in the notes to the financial statements at note 2.

2. Legacy Fund			
	At 1 October 2012		At 31 October 2013
	£	Income £	Expenditure £
Porter	57,850	-	-
Legacy			
Hart	468	-	-468
Legacy			-
	<u>58,318</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-468</u>
			<u>57,850</u>

Independent Examiner's Report

Based on the work described above we consider that:

- a) The Society has an adequate accounting system;
- b) The attached Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet are in agreement with the Society's accounting records and information as provided.

Hardie Caldwell LLP
Independent Examiner Chartered Accountants
Citypoint 2, 25 Tyndrum Street
Glasgow, G4 0JY

Dated: 20 December 2013

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES FOR 2015

President: Professor Hans Barstad, School of Divinity, New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2LX (email: h.barstad@ed.ac.uk)

Retiring President: Professor John Day, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford OX2 6QA (email: john.day@theology.ox.ac.uk)

President-elect: Dr Adrian Curtis, 5 Hurstville Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 8DJ (email: adrian.curtis@manchester.ac.uk)

Treasurer: Dr Alastair Hunter, 487 Shields Road, Glasgow, G41 2RG (email: alastair189@live.co.uk)

Secretary: Dr David Shepherd, Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2, Eire (email: shepherd@tcd.ie)

Secretary for Honorary Members: Professor Lester Grabbe, Department of Theology, The University, Hull HU6 7RX (email: l.l.grabbe@hull.ac.uk)

Membership Secretary: Mrs Vivienne Rowett, 3 Newhouse Close, Wardle, Rochdale, Lancs OL12 9LW (email: vivrowett@aol.com).

Hospitality Secretary: Mr James Patrick, Mansfield College, Mansfield Road Oxford OX1 3TF (email: sotshospitality@gmail.com)

Book List Editor: Dr Deborah Rooke, Regent's Park College, Pusey Street, Oxford OX1 2LB (email: deborah.rooke@theology.ox.ac.uk)

Information Officer: Dr Jonathan Stökl, King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS (email: jonathan.stokl@kcl.ac.uk).

Committee: The above Officers of the Society plus Dr Carly Crouch, Dr Katharine Dell, Dr Katie Edwards, Dr Anselm Haagedorn, Dr Hugh Pyper, Dr David Sheppard, Dr William Tooman, Dr Rebecca Watson.

Programme Sub-Committee: The Secretary (Convener), President, President-elect, Secretary for Honorary Members and Hospitality Secretary, plus Dr Carly Crouch, Dr Katharine Dell and Dr Casey Strine.

Publications Sub-Committee: The Book List Editor (Convener), Dr Adrian Curtis (as Guides Editor), Dr Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (as Monographs Editor), and Professor Hugh Williamson (as SOTS representative on the OTS Board); plus Dr Matthew Collins, Dr Elizabeth Hayes and Dr Ann Jeffers.

PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY

1917-19 William Bennett	1967 Donald Coggan
1920 Archibald Kennedy	1968 Matthew Black
1921 Robert Kennett	1969 John Schofield
1922 George Buchanan 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	2008 John Barton

Past Presidents of the Society

(continued)

2009 Lester Grabbe

2010 Cheryl Exum

2011 John Sawyer

2012 George Brooke

2013 Eryl W. Davies