
The Society for Old Testament Study

BULLETIN 2015

90th WINTER MEETING

5th - 7th January 2015

Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge

Professor John Day, presiding on behalf of Professor Hans Barstad

Hans Barstad (Edinburgh)

Presidential Address: The Bible in the University: SOTS and the Academy

This paper began by noting that according to folklore, and also in parts of academia, the future of Old Testament Studies, the very core activity of SOTS is not at all promising. However, such negative “rumours” are simply not true. As part of the humanities in general, knowledge of classical Hebrew will always remain important. In reality, the patient is alive and kicking, and not at all in need of blood transfusion. Or, with Mark Twain, “The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.” Scholarly activity in SOTS ranges from frontline international scholarship to high quality national research. Members publish abundantly in international peer reviewed journals and monograph series. Both nationally and internationally, society members serve on numerous editorial boards, as well as on doctoral and search committees. The society enjoys outstanding respect among peer societies abroad. Quite a few members of the Society are elected members of national academies like the British Academy and The Royal Society of Edinburgh, or similar institutions abroad. Last, but not least, with around five hundred scholarly active members, SOTS

has now also achieved “critical mass.” However, when we look upon the marvellous academic resources that do exist within SOTS, the word “underused” also springs to mind. In my view, it is important that all members consider possible ways of improving SOTS in order to make this excellent organization even more visible to the public. The governing body should look into this issue and suggest priorities. In my view, among several possible projects, SOTS should prioritize a Bible translation project. There are many reasons why SOTS should look more closely into translating the Bible into English. Since there is a huge market, it is quite unproblematic to find publishers. Similar projects in other countries are successfully brought to an end with far less impressive resources than those of SOTS. It is realistic to think of the SOTS Bible Translation Project in terms of a twelve year scheme, subdivided into four, three year periods (2016–2018; 2019–2021; 2022–2024, and 2025–2027). An independent, international committee should evaluate all aspects of the activity after each three year period.

Anja Klein (Edinburgh)

Praying Biblical History: The Phenomenon of History in the Psalms

The paper noted that a number of texts in the Hebrew Bible are characterised by their interpretation of Biblical History (Exod 15; Ps 78; 105; 106; 114; 135; 136). The question is how Biblical History was reformulated in these so-called “Historical Psalms” and how this poetic re-reading can be explained. It can be demonstrated that the Historical Psalms are to be aligned in a literary historical development that starts with the Song of the Sea in Exod 15, which figures as the literary birthplace of the fusion of hymn and history. Here, the literary development bears witness to how Biblical History was transformed into a prayer. It is then carried into the Book of Psalms, where the Historical Psalms continue the reception with different emphases. This dynamic exegetical process can be described as Biblical Judaism’s search for identity, in which the people assure themselves of their history with their God. The literary genre of prayer texts evokes a cultic context and allows for the individual to appropriate and consummate their collective identity.

Christopher Thomson (Cambridge)

Was the Exile a Payment of Debt? The Supposed *ršh* II in Lev 26 and Isa 40:2

This paper observed that the verb *ršh* is commonly supposed to mean “pay a debt” in a few passages, namely Lev 26:34, 41, 43; Isa 40:2; and 2 Chr 36:21. The majority of scholars follow Siegmund Fraenkel in seeing in these passages a distinct root *ršh* II meaning “pay,” unconnected with the more common *ršh* I meaning “accept, be pleased with.” Although some scholars have questioned whether the distinction is necessary, none has rebutted the supposed evidence in its favour from Middle Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Akkadian, and Old South Arabian. This paper argued that this supposed evidence does not in fact point to a distinct *ršh* II. It also critiqued Gary Anderson’s argument that the single verb *ršh* can mean “pay” in the qal stem, and showed that the relevant texts are intelligible on the basis that *ršh* has its usual meaning “accept, be pleased with.” In Lev 26:41, 43 and Isa 40:2 *ršh* *‘āwōn* refers to the people’s reception and acceptance of punishment. Whereas Gillis Gerleman defended a similar position on the basis that the verb can have a neutral sense, it more likely denotes a positive reception, with literary factors, in particular irony and allusion, explaining its unusual use in connection with punishment in these texts. This has implications for the conceptualisation of sin in the Hebrew Bible. Rather than representing sin as a debt to be paid off by sinners, these passages conform to the more common pattern noted recently by Joseph Lam (who sees them as exceptions), namely that God is the one who repays sin through punishment.

Kris Sonek (Melbourne)

The Abrahamic Traditions of Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity: A Window into the Past

This paper noted that Jewish rabbis did not merely elaborate on the biblical material. They developed, or even rewrote, the story of Abraham in response to the cultural and theological challenges of the time. The post-biblical and re-invented Abraham fights against idolatry, practices the whole written and oral Torah, and learns that astrology is pointless. Christian interpreters are familiar with this rewriting of the patriarch’s biography, but their interpretation is

governed by a different set of theological concerns. Both groups develop their own theology, and, more often than not, exchange heavy blows. There are many Jewish and Christian texts which illustrate that mutual process, and Gen 15:5 is an excellent case in point. The reception history of this verse by ancient interpreters not only discloses a complex cultural world, where Jewish rabbis and patristic theologians are in dispute with each other, it also helps us understand the impact of scriptural interpretation on the subsequent development of Western civilisation. This paper examined Jewish and Christian commentaries written between 200 and 500 AD. In particular, it examined the Abrahamic traditions in both *Talmudim*, in *Genesis Rabbah*, and in the works of the most representative theologians of the Alexandrian and Antiochian schools of biblical exegesis to show that the interpretation of the image of the stars in Late Antiquity indirectly influenced the development of science and technology in the Middle Ages.

George Nicol (Fife)

The Bible as a Document of the Church – A Personal View

Following some general remarks on recent significant trends in biblical studies, this paper noted that these will exacerbate the gulf between church and academy respecting biblical interpretation. A brief introduction to the official documents of the Church of Scotland showed that they provide little indication of how the Bible should be interpreted as a document of the Church. In view of the ideological nature of many of the biblical texts an argument against too ready a recourse to theological interpretation was outlined and the paper concluded with the suggestion that priority should be given to biblical studies in the context of the general theological degree that is aimed towards preparation for ministry and that an integrated approach that brings biblical studies into a closer dialogue with the other theological disciplines is desirable.

Nathan Macdonald (Cambridge)

Priestly Families and the Maccabean Revolt

This paper suggested that the long-standing theory that there was a conflict between Oniads and Tobiads finds no foothold in our oldest

sources, 1 and 2 Maccabees. The idea originates with Josephus and we may question whether this genuinely represents the dynamics of the second century BCE. There are reasons for doubt. First, questions have long been raised about the historicity of the Tobiad romance, with its folkloric elements attracting particular suspicion. Second, the connection between the Tobiads and the Maccabean revolt seems to be the result of Josephus attempting to integrate the sources at his disposal in *Antiquities* 13–14. In particular, Josephus identifies the Tobiads of the Romance with the ‘renegades’ of 1 Macc 1:11. This tendentious equation is probably the result of Josephus superimposing his own experience during the Judean War of internal factional strife, often along family lines.

Alexander Rofé (Jerusalem)

Sectarian Corrections in Biblical Manuscripts: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots

This paper observed that sectarian corrections in the texts of the Hebrew Bible constitute a significant segment in the field of theologically motivated textual interventions. Pharisaic corrections, noted long ago, are found in the MT of Proverbs 14:32; Psalms 49:12 and Qohelet 3:21 (vocalization). To these the presenter added the example of the MT reading of Qohelet 5:5. A Sadducean addition is extant in 1 Samuel 7:6 LXX which relates to the sectarian quarrel in the Jerusalem temple concerning the water libation in the Succoth festival. Scholars have pointed out Essene textual reworkings in Isaiah 53:11 (LXX and Qumran MSS); 8:11 (Qumran MS) and 9:14 (all textual witnesses). A pre-Zealot textual correction was carried out in Hebrew texts of the Pentateuch: *melek* was substituted by *nasi*, prince (cf. LXX and the Damascus Document, CD 5:12). This reflects an anti-monarchic attitude in the name of the kingship of the Lord. All in all, sectarian interventions in the Biblical texts are few in number, which attests to an attitude of respect vis-à-vis the Biblical texts already by Hasmonean times.

Judith Hadley (Villanova)

False Reading, False Reporting, and Just Plain False: Some Problems with Hebrew Inscriptions

This paper discussed some problems often encountered when dealing

with Hebrew Inscriptions: namely problems with the readings of the inscriptions themselves, problems with the reporting and publication of the inscriptions, and the ever increasing problem of forged inscriptions. First were the Ketef Hinnom amulets: two silver scrolls discovered in 1979 which, when deciphered, were found to contain a version of the Priestly Benediction, also found in the Bible in Numbers 6:24-26. This discovery was intimately known to the presenter, as she herself found the larger of the two amulets under discussion. The case of the amulets bears on all aspects of the paper, since the story of the discovery of the amulets has been told in various forms over the years, and there are inaccuracies concerning the reporting in print of the discovery and the reading of the amulets. In addition, the authenticity of the scrolls has been questioned, because they seem "too good to be true", but their discovery in a sealed archaeological context by the presenter has put that question to rest. Also discussed was the Siloam Inscription, especially the presence of smoothed, blank panels above and below the inscription, and its connection to other smoothed, blank panels in the tunnel. Turning to the category of forgeries, bullae (clay seal impressions) and seals were presented, together with statistics concerning unprovenanced finds of this sort, and a comparison of these with stamped jar handles. This was followed by a presentation of the unprovenanced Jerusalem pomegranate and the James ossuary. The paper concluded with a discussion of the Temple Mount Sifting Project, directed by Dr Gabriel Barkay, which is sifting through material that had been illicitly removed from the area beneath the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Lester Grabbe (Hull)

Why the Exodus Could Not Have Been in the 15th Century BCE (if There Was an Exodus)

The paper began by noting that the traditional dating of the exodus, based on 'Bible chronology', was the 15th century BCE. It was Albright who changed it to the 13th century, and this has remained the conventional scholarly dating. However, several scholars are still willing to maintain the 15th century. By surveying the history of the Egyptian New Kingdom, with a special focus on the Amarna texts, this paper showed that the Pharaoh was firmly in control of the Palestinian region from 1500 to 1200. (It makes no presumption as to

what form or even whether an exodus took place.) The only exception was possibly a few years after the death of Akhenaton, but this was in the 14th century. The 15th century was dominated by Thutmose III, who ruled much of that century and made a number of military expeditions into Syro-Palestine. When we come to the Amarna letters, we find a situation that ill fits the settlement of Israel in the land of Canaan. No one can read the Amarna letters carefully and reconcile them with the situation described in Joshua and Judges. The 15th century seems to be ruled out for an exodus or settlement anything like that described in the Bible, when we look at the history of the New Kingdom and its control of Canaan. But, then, so is the 13th century!

Kristin de Troyer (St Andrews)

The Textual History of the Book of Joshua

In this paper, it was argued that the minuses, pluses and variants found in OG and MT of the Book of Joshua are in some cases due to the different Hebrew *Vorlage* from which the OG of the Book of Joshua was translated. As an example the case of 8:13 was discussed. First, an analysis of the translation technique was offered. It was demonstrated that the OG is a faithful rendering of the Hebrew text and that the solution for the minus of 8:13 needs to be found in the *Vorlage* of the text, rather than sought in the intervention of the translator. Next, the witness of 4QJosh^a and Josephus was studied—both pointing to the absence of 8:13 in their *Vorlagen*. It was then argued that the omission of 8:13 in the OG was actually a plus in the MT, with the literary critical analysis supporting this view. Finally, with the help of the early Jewish reviser, Theodotion, it was argued that the *Vorlage* of the OG became the MT before Theodotion started with his revision, as the latter had added 8:13 to his OG in order to align the OG with the then current MT text.

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On the afternoon of 6th January a ‘**Research in Progress**’ Seminar was held at which PhD Students and early career researchers presented short summaries of their work and received feedback from members of the Society.

91st SUMMER MEETING

20th – 23rd July 2015

Pollock Halls, Edinburgh

Professor Hans Barstad presiding; held jointly with the
Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap

Koert van Bekkum (Kampen)

Geography in Numbers 33-34 and Recent Pentateuchal Theory

It was noted in this paper that both earlier and recent discussions of the composition, genre and historical background of the itinerary in Numbers 33:1-49 and of the description of the Promised Land in Numbers 34:1-12 have highlighted the pre-exilic nature of these texts and it was considered what challenge this poses to recent theories of the formation of the Pentateuch. On one hand, it is still difficult to detect the specific sources behind the itinerary list of Numbers 33. On the other hand much information is available with regard to the tradition history of the geographical concept that is used in Numbers 34:1-12, Josh 13:2-6, Judg 3:3 and Ezek 47:15-20. In addition, this pre-exilic material turns out to be remarkably well integrated into Numbers 26-36 as a whole. These observations pose serious problems for several literary-critical criteria and for the suggestion that the chapters belong to a post-priestly compositional layer. They suggest that different, less deductive alternatives, including exploring the possibility of a tradition regarding an earlier blending of D- and P-like vocabulary and style, need to be found.

William Johnstone (Aberdeen)

The Influence of the Decalogue on the Shape of Exodus

This paper argues that Deuteronomy 5's reminiscences attest that its "Horeb" Decalogue was once present in Exodus 20 (cf. the repeated cross-reference "as YHWH your God commanded you"). A number of considerations confirm the presence of the Horeb Decalogue in the original version of Exodus: the narrative surrounding its revelation in

Exodus matches that in Deuteronomy; Deut 5:31 confirms the role of the Book of the Covenant (B, Exod 20:22–23:33) as exposition of the Horeb Decalogue and as code for the covenant in Exod 24:3-8; twice over, the reaffirmation of the covenant in Exod 34:5-26 uses the figure of speech of “merismus” to confirm that the terms of the covenant are unchanged. The first merism (34:5-16) begins with citing Word I in the Horeb version and ends with a free play on the conclusion of B in Exod 23:20-33; the second (34:17-26) also begins with citing Word I in the Horeb Decalogue and ends with a parallel version of B’s concluding legal stipulations in Exod 23:14-19. P’s “Sinai” edition of the Decalogue that now stands in Exodus 20 affirms that the Decalogue may indeed function as a formative influence on the shape of Exodus provided it is interpreted in cosmic terms, as in its most radical change: the motive for observing Sabbath.

Pieter van der Lugt (Dokkum)

The People of Israel as a Worshipping Community and the Design of the Song of the Sea (Ex.15:1-18)

This paper suggests that, from a thematic point of view, the ‘Song of the Sea’ has a linearly alternating design, an undulating movement: explicit praises of God alternate with portrayals of the fate of the enemies. This design coincides with a pattern of linearly alternating verbal recurrences. The *staircase parallelism* which highlights the opening lines of the second, third and fourth cantos (vv. 6, 11a-b and 16c-d) neatly fits this pattern. The design is also supported by a strict regularity in terms of cantos and strophes. There are three 6-line cantos, which divide into two 3-line strophes each; these cantos are concluded by a ‘half-long’ canto of 3 lines of poetry: vv. 1-2.3-5|6-8.9-10|11-13.14-16b|16c-18 > 6.6.6.3 > 3.3|3.3|3.3|3 lines of poetry > a.b|a’.b’|a’’.b’’|a’’’. The linearly alternating correspondences demonstrate that the apex of the ‘Song of the Sea’ is to be found in the concluding Canto IV (vv. 16c-18): God guides his people to their inheritance and his holy abode. The poet who composed the hymn envisaged the Reed Sea event in the context of its ultimate goal, the praise of God as King of the world by his people in the temple of Jerusalem (after the exile). The outcome of this investigation differs from the results of other (more or less recent) studies on several points, including its undermining of the view of Maribeth Howell (1989) and many others that, in terms of subject matter, the ‘Song of

the Sea' consists of two unbalanced stanzas, 'clearly indicated by a change of event': vv. 1-12 (about the destruction of the Egyptians at the sea) and 13-18 (about the wilderness wanderings and the conquest).

Anselm Hagedorn (Berlin)

The Biblical Laws of Asylum between Mediterraneanism and Postcolonial Critique

The paper compared some biblical laws of asylum (Ex 21:12-17; Deut 19:1-13) with inscriptions from the Greek world (Gortyn/Crete and Oropus). Noting the similarities and differences it was argued that the Hebrew Bible and ancient Greece both share the institution of asylum, making the Bible part of the Mediterranean world. The shape of the institution, however, differs – as is expected in a similar geographical region. The perspective of the paper was then broadened in asking whether the ancient evidence may have any relevance for our world today. Despite the dangers of such applications, the paper considered it possible to list three aspects of the ancient laws that might help to shape the debate about asylum in the 21st century: 1. The biblical innovation that every case of asylum needs a verified legal and procedural basis. 2. The extensive literary development of the laws of asylum in the Bible points to the fact that every regulation regarding asylum is in need of revision and innovation. 3. Asylum has to remain an individual right that is independent from status, person and gender and this would require the integration of the Greek element.

Bob Becking (Utrecht)

Covenant, Agreement and Law: the Social Code underlying the Book of Nehemiah

This paper scrutinized the concept of the social code in the Book of Nehemiah. It observed that the prayer in Neh. 1 stresses the basic intention towards God's commandments. Neh. 5 argues for the appropriation of the concept of 'remission' in a period of economic decline caused by drought. The presentation of the law in Neh. 8 urges the reinstatement of the Feast of Booths. In Neh. 13 the new community is marked by specific regulations on exogamous marriages and the celebration of the Shabbat. The Book of Nehemiah cannot play a role in the discussion of the formation of the Pentateuch, since

Nehemiah offers not a reflection on the whole of the Torah, but presents the *Gebot der Stunde* for the new community in and around Jerusalem.

Jacques van Ruiten (Groningen)

Interpreting Torah: Strategies for Producing, Circulating, and Validating Authoritative Scriptures in Early Judaism

This paper argued that in antiquity, especially in early Jewish literature exemplified by the book of *Jubilees*, displaying your knowledge was an important strategy for sustaining Jewish society. An imitation of texts from the past was valued even more highly than individual originality and innovation. However, when looking at strategies of copying and rewriting, one often discovers important steps of innovation veiled in a traditional form. The book of *Jubilees* presupposes material that can be found in the scriptural text, presents it mostly in the same sequential order, and includes in its composition nearly all the relevant pericopes. At the same it changes and innovates by rewriting the material (e.g., harmonisations), adding other material (e.g., Enochic traditions; halakic material), and by putting knowledge into a new framework (chronology). Although *Jubilees* acknowledges the Torah as an authoritative body of knowledge, it seems to claim the same, or even a greater authority for its own revelation than for that of the Torah. This display of knowledge by means of absorbing earlier authoritative texts is a means of sustaining society. It gives authority to a new text, and at the same time appropriates an ancient tradition by means of production, validation, *and* circulation.

Willem Smelik (London)

The Rabbinic use of Languages

This paper observed that the question of how much Hebrew was spoken by the Jewish population of Roman Palestine in the first few centuries CE in the context of contemporary multilingualism continues to be debated. Unfortunately, our understanding of the Jewish vernaculars at this crucial time and place still tends to remain stuck in models of diglossia or similar classifications of the attested languages on the one hand and in a single-minded view of the Jewish

theory of language in view of the Holy Tongue on the other hand. It noted that the attested existence of multiple dialects of any of the three main languages involved—Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew—and the diverse ways in which the Aramaic and Hebrew languages relate to one another in the extant literature and documents have so far been incompletely developed and understood. The paper then concerned itself with the linguistic reality of the knowledge transfer of rabbinic culture as evident in the Talmud Yerushalmi, with particular attention to code-switching and the unfolding functional differentiation of the languages in writing. The results of the paper shed new light on the characteristics of the vernaculars in the early rabbinic period, the textual unity of bilingual communication, the non-diachronic aspects of code-switching, and the rabbinic perception of languages.

Hedy Hung (Aberdeen)

The Kingship Motif in Isaiah 61:1-3

This paper observed that Isa 61:1-3 is generally taken to be a prophecy about the ideal servant, or the prophet claiming to be the servant, who works for the restoration of post-exilic Jerusalem. It suggested that two reasons account for this interpretation: one, the passage inherits the servant motif from the Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah; two, the fact that Israel has come under Persia's shadow makes restoration to Davidic kingship seem impossible. It was argued that it was not likely that this text is limited to the reading of an ideal servant nor that history has dictated the thoughts and expressions of the Isaianic writing communities. It was further suggested that Isa 61:1-3 has a kingship motif and that this motif is seen to be intricately related to the servant motif in the Servant Songs by comparing the literary features of 61:1-3 with those of the Servant Songs as well as those of ch. 11. The paper explored the continuity and the transformation of the kingship and the servant motifs in different contexts and how the eschatologically important category of myth functions in this text.

Samuel Balentine (Richmond)

'I am God and not a Human Being'; The Divine Dilemma in Hosea

This paper relocated Tertullian's question, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" by focusing on Hos 11:9: What does Hosea have to do with Homer (or Hesiod)? If Hos 11:9 is the answer is to some sort

of divine dilemma – “I am God [or ‘a god,’ *‘el*] and not a human,” that is, “I am *this kind of god* but *not that kind of god*” – then what were the presenting metatheistic and metaethical questions that shaped the world of the text? The exploration comprised three parts: 1) generic concepts of divinity (“El-ness”) in Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Greece in the eighth to sixth centuries, especially connections between Hosea’s El-God and Homer’s Zeus-god; 2) transcultural distinctions between divine and human portfolios, especially descriptions of divine judgment exercised by Zeus and YHWH/El; and 3) the interface between divine moralizing and moralizing about the divine. The paper concluded by suggesting that Hosea provides his readers with an education in divine moralizing (“How can I give you up, Ephraim,” 11:8) while he himself is at the same time moralizing about the divine. Hosea’s YHWH-God can transcend even divine limitations, a sort of self-transcendence in which divine compassion exceeds divine anger. YHWH is *both* more than human-like *and* more than God-like. In Hosea’s world we might say that YHWH is more El than any other El but also more YHWH than any other YHWH. How does one describe a God who is able to transcend divinity without forsaking divinity? The paper suggested that in a pre-Socratic world, where the formal conceptualization of philosophy (love of learning) is as yet unarticulated, Hosea’s author is already doing pre-moral, philosophical work.

Klaas Spronk (Amsterdam)

Teamwork in the Study of the Old Testament: 75 years of Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap and 15 Joint Meetings

This paper began by noting that in 2014 the OTW celebrated its 75th anniversary. On the occasion of previous anniversaries, De Boer had remarked that it was disappointing that the many meetings of the society hardly ever resulted in joint undertakings in their field of research. Later also Vriezen and Van der Woude pointed to the need for the theological faculties to cooperate and put more effort into teamwork. De Boer and Van der Woude’s own initiating of projects on the Peshitta and the Dead Sea Scrolls were offered as good examples of such teamwork. It was noted that various projects in which OT scholars participate have since been initiated in the Netherlands and Belgium, including those launched by, amongst others, Talstra, De Moor, Hoftijzer, Lust, and Ter Haar Romeny.

Special mention was also made of *The Dictionary of Deities and Demons* edited by Becking, Van der Toorn, and Van der Horst (1995, rev. ed in 1999) and the project ‘כלי – Utensils’ organized by De Moor on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the OTW. The fact that the latter project is still under way (the results are published on the website of the OTW) also shows the complications of teamwork. It was noted that it was in that the OTW and SOTS decided to start their joint meetings, which was facilitated by the very good contacts between De Boer and a number of his British colleagues. The first meeting was held in the Netherlands, at Woudschoten. Since then there has been a meeting every three years, alternately in the Low Countries and in Britain. While teamwork is still the exception to the rule in our field, it was suggested that if we want biblical studies to survive this has to change.

Jaap Dekker (Apeldoorn)

The Concept of Torah in the Book of Isaiah

This paper noted the scholarly difference of opinion regarding whether Torah in the book of Isaiah should be understood as referring to the Mosaic Torah or in a more general sense be seen as indicative of prophetic instruction. It was argued that in the first part of Isaiah תורה refers to prophetic instruction as a general reference to the concept of justice and righteousness. In the second part it substantively refers to the realizing of the Lord's salvific righteousness. This latter concept is already indicated in the programmatic vision of Isa. 2:1-4. Nothing indicates that a Torah-revision afterwards has altered this understanding of תורה or consequently the overall message of the book. While the paper did not argue that the final form of the book requires that all references to תורה be seen as referring to Mosaic Torah, it was suggested that, from a wider canonical perspective the closure of the segment of the נבאים in Mal. 3:22 makes clear that in the end, both the Law and the Prophets are to be read in accordance with each other. Thus whenever Christian theology interprets prophecy as ‘diametrically opposed to the legal context of the Pentateuch’, it was suggested (with Sweeney) that this reads against the grain of the present canonical form of the Hebrew Bible.

Graeme Auld (Edinburgh)

Did the Assyrian envoy know the *Venite*?

The paper began by noting that there is no conflict between the Chronicler's report of Hezekiah's reform and that offered by the Assyrian envoy. But in Kings, altars were *not* included in the narrator's list of four destructions practised by Hezekiah, while the envoy makes a feature of altars being removed and 'this' altar being chosen. The possibility of the envoy's independence from the narrator raises the question of his credibility. The narrator in Isaiah offers no reform report, and in the shorter Greek text (Isa 36:7-8) none is provided even by the envoy. The Greek rendering of the envoy's advice ('mix with my master') marks him as a figure of fun; and this may also be intended by 'prostrate before this/one altar' of the majority tradition, for prostration before an altar is neither commended nor reported anywhere else in HB. The corrections in both Kings and Chronicles to the report of Solomon standing to pray may be correlated with the emphasis on prostration before Yahweh in Book IV of the Psalms, and especially the *Venite*.

Michaël van der Meer (Amsterdam)

The Greek Translation of the Pentateuch in the Light of Contemporary Hellenistic Philosophy

In response to contemporary discussion in Septuagint studies concerning the possible influence of philosophical (often: Platonic) influence upon the Greek translators of the Hebrew scriptural books, this paper argued that the Greek version of Genesis may reflect the influence of Greek philosophy, but only in an indirect way. It suggested that a number of unusual Greek renderings in the creation stories can be seen as deliberate attempts to avoid hedonistic concepts known from Epicureanism and its Cyrenaic predecessors. These expressions concern the translation of Hebrew *gan-Eden* with Greek *paradeisos tes truphes* instead of *kepos tes hedones* in order to avoid associations with the garden of Epicurus, the avoidance of the concept *hedone* and *epithumia* in Gen 18:12 (Hebrew *ednah*) and Gen 3:16 and 4:7 (Hebrew *teshuqah*) as well as the idea of an empty (Greek *kenos*) universe (Gen 1:2 *tohu*).

Deborah Rooke (Oxford)

Leviticus from a gendered perspective

In this paper it was observed that in both the making and the maintaining of cult and priesthood in Leviticus, there is a clear masculine gender-bias. In Exodus, the cult itself is instigated by a male (Moses) at the behest of the divine male (YHWH), and those who bring most of the raw materials and transform them into cultic apparatus are males. The regulations for the cult personnel in both Exodus and Leviticus designate a particular group of males (sons of Aaron) as priests and thus as holy, able to operate in a space that is nearer the divine presence than is permissible for non-holy males and any female. The priests' rites of initiation are carried out by a male (Moses), and their entitlement to cultic privilege depends on their male blood-line. In this overwhelmingly androcentric conception, women bring some of the raw materials for the cultic apparatus, and are required for reproductive purposes to maintain the priestly line. But they are excluded from the arena of the holy, and any holiness that they appear to have as a result of either their birth from or marriage to a priest disappears when their connection or proximity to the priest ends or is superseded. Indeed, far from being holy, women can threaten priestly holiness, specifically by virtue of their sexuality; this is evidenced by the restrictions on priests' marriage partners, the severe condemnation of a priest's daughter who becomes a prostitute, and the ban on priests mourning their wives and married sisters alone of all their close relatives. Priests who fail to observe these restrictions risk profaning themselves and/or their offspring, thereby losing their priestly status. At the same time, the cult as presented in Exodus and Leviticus could not exist or continue without women. Under these circumstances, the paper concludes that the nature of cultic holiness in this material is clear: it is constructed, performative, and provisional, like the notions of gender that underlie it.

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On the evening of 21st^h July a **reception** for the meeting was sponsored by Brill at which Professor Barstad was presented with a Festschrift. The **outing and President's tea** on 22nd July was a memorable visit to Edinburgh Castle with tea and refreshments served at the New Club on Princes Street.

SOTS Website

Don't forget to look at the new SOTS website (<http://sots1917.org/>) 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 were the following: Professor Hugh Williamson was awarded an OBE for services to scholarship and Theology. Dr Casey Strine (of Sheffield) was awarded the 2015 Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise. Professor Eryl Davies was awarded a personal chair at the University of Bangor and Professor Cheryl Exum was awarded a ThD honoris causa by the University of Uppsala.

The Society learned with regret of the **deaths** of John Austin Baker, Father Ian Brayley, and Revd Dr Philip Potter, Professor Menahem Haran and Professor John Emerton.

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

At the Winter Meeting: Revd Dr Adam Carlill, Mrs Janet Fyffe, Dr Katie Heffelfinger, Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, Revd Levente Lörík, Dr David Mitchell, Dr Elizabeth Robar, Dr Zoltan Schwab, Ms Tarah van de Wiele, Revd Dr Kevin Walton. At the Summer Meeting: Revd Dr Juan Cruz, Mr Nathan French, Professor Robert Gnuse, Ms Achita John, Professor Jan Joosten, Mr William Kelly, Revd Tsaurayi Mapfeka, Dr James Mulroney, Professor Hindy Najman, Revd Dr William Stalder.

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), Sara Japhet (1999), Otto Kaiser (1992), Reinhard Kratz (2015), 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 2016** will be held on **4th – 6th January** at Collingwood College, Durham, and the **Summer Meeting 2016** will be held on **25th – 28rd July 2016**, at Hulme Hall, Manchester. Both meetings will be under the Presidency of Dr Adrian Curtis.

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 2014

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 31st October 2014

	General fund £	Bursary fund £	Legacy fund £	Total Funds 2014 £	Total Funds 2013 £
Income					
Activities for generating funds					
Subscriptions & Donations	8,649	3,055		11,704	9,229
Conference income	40,509			40,509	35,438
Other income	155			155	153
Investment income					
Interest & Royalties	56	125		181	178
	49,369	3,180		52,549	44,998
Total income					
Expenditure					
Conference costs	41,407			41,407	34,099
Book list grant	3,000			3,000	3,000
Bursaries		3,039		3,039	2,601
Committee costs	1,195			1,195	1,730
Printing, Postage, Stationery etc	2,115			2,115	3,830
Accountancy fees	800			800	780
Bank charges	754			754	550
Total Expenditure	49,271	3,039	-	52,310	46,590
Surplus/ (Deficit) for year	98	141	-	239	(1,592)
Bal a/a 1 Nov 2013	60,152	(111)	57,850	117,891	119,483
Bal a/a 31 Oct 2014	60,250	30	57,850	118,130	117,891

BALANCE SHEET at 31st October 2014

	Notes	2014	2013
		£	£
Cash at bank and in hand			
Current Acc't		7,880	7,677
Bus. Premium		<u>111,050</u>	<u>110,994</u>
		118,930	118,671
Creditors: falling due within one year			
Accruals		(800)	(780)
		<u>118,130</u>	<u>117,891</u>
Reserves:		£	£
General fund	2	60,250	60,152
Bursary fund	2	30	(111)
Legacy fund	2	<u>57,850</u>	<u>57,850</u>
		<u>118,130</u>	<u>117,891</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 October 2014

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 – funds that can only be used for the particular restricted purpose as specified by the donor.

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

2. Legacy fund

	At 1 Oct 2013 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 31 Oct 2014 £
Porter Legacy	57,850	-	-	57,850
	<u>57,850</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>57,850</u>

The Porter Legacy will be used in part to cover costs of Centenary celebrations.

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES FOR 2016

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

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

President-elect: Professor Paul Joyce Department of Theology & Religious Studies, King's College London, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS, England [paul.joyce@kcl.ac.uk]

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

Secretary: Dr David Shepherd, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology, 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 H Rowett, 15 Seaview Cottages, Grimsby Road, Louth LN11 0ED, England [vivrowett@aol.com]

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

Book List Editor: Dr John Jarick, Regent's Park College, Pusey Street, Oxford OX1 2LB (email: john.jarick@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 Katie Edwards, Prof Sue Gillingham, Dr Anselm Hagedorn, Dr Sandra Jacobs, Dr William Tooman, Dr Rebecca Watson, Prof Nick Wyatt.

Programme Sub-Committee: The Secretary (Convener), President, President-elect, Secretary for Honorary Members and Hospitality Secretary, plus Dr Kirsi Cobb, 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

2014 John Day