
**THE SOCIETY FOR
OLD TESTAMENT STUDY**

BULLETIN

2016

91st WINTER MEETING
4th - 6th January 2016
Collingwood College, Durham
Dr Adrian Curtis presiding

Adrian Curtis (Manchester)

Presidential Address: From *People and Book* to *Text in Context*:
Volumes That Speak Volumes

In preparation for a contribution to the volume planned to mark the Society's centenary, the paper surveyed the five volumes produced under the auspices of SOTS which sought to offer a broad overview of aspects of the study of the Hebrew Bible, namely *The People and the Book* (ed. A.S. Peake 1925), *Record and Revelation* (ed. H. Wheeler Robinson 1938), *The Old Testament and Modern Study* (ed. H.H. Rowley 1951), *Tradition and Interpretation* (ed. G.W. Anderson 1979), and *Text in Context* (ed. A.D.H. Mayes 2000). They cover the bulk of the 20th century, with three-quarters of a century between the dates of publication of the first and the last. Shifts in emphasis and in areas of interest were noted, both in terms of what topics were included and the approaches which were adopted. It was suggested that the volumes contain not only a wealth of scholarship, but ample evidence that the subject has not been static, has accepted changes of emphasis—perhaps sometimes rather slowly—and has not been inward looking insofar as it has attempted to take onboard insights from other disciplines. They also reflect the Society's ongoing

concern to make the fruits of scholarship more widely accessible and available beyond the academy. The volumes reveal changes in the Society as well as changes in scholarship. Trends noted include a shift away from the feeling of a necessity to include specific essays on relevance for Judaism and Christianity, and an acknowledgement that commitment to the study of the Old Testament is not confined to the confessional. The male/female ratio of contributors is now a matter of history and would probably not even have been noticed, let alone commented on, when lists were drawn up for the earlier volumes. The fact that it is now something of an embarrassment reflects a significant change!

David Firth (Nottingham)

Disorienting Readers in Joshua 1:1 – 5:14

Although the poetics of narrative in the Old Testament have been widely studied in recent years, the book of Joshua has largely been marginalised, appearing only rarely in discussions of narrative. Reasons for this are unclear, but it means that issues in its interpretation remain unclear. As a result of this, conflicting readings of parts of the book have emerged. This paper noted three variant readings of Joshua 2 that in various ways contradict each other. But rather than arguing for one against the others or rejecting them all, it argued that each is a plausible reading of the text depending on the level at which it is read. This possibility emerges through the application of the concepts of anachrony and focalisation as developed by the narratologist Gerard Genette. Using these as a grid, it emerges that these chapters deliberately create an unstable narrative world that readers cannot fully resolve until later and to which they must return for subsequent reading after various external anachronies are introduced.

Bernard Jackson (Manchester)

The Whodunit Underlying the Plot of the Book of Ruth

This paper examined literary dimensions of the Book of Ruth, corresponding to what in some forms of linguistics is termed the syntagmatic axis: the flow of the story in its sequence. It argued that

taking the syntagmatic axis separately entails taking seriously what the text itself implies regarding the legal relationships involved, without imposing interpretations derived externally. It insisted that this also raises the question of audience and that the audience of the book was surely not one of biblical scholars; it was rather a popular audience to whom the author assumes that the legal practices (s)he describes would have been familiar. On the other hand, the overall plot is not something the audience is taken to know in advance. Rather, there are elements of ‘whodunit’, which keep the audience interested. Throughout, we have to ask: who knows what and when, and this question must be posed not only to the characters in the story, but also to its audience. The paper suggested that we are confronted at the outset by a major puzzle: what happened to the land of Elimelekh when the family left Bethlehem for Moab? Only later is this revealed, largely through analysis of the name of a character who appears on the scene only in the last act (ch.4). What is the relationship to this of the growing relationship between Ruth and Boaz in chapters 2-3? And how is the issue finally resolved (an issue involving a difficult textual problem in 4:5), and for whose benefit? Have Naomi and Boaz been in cahoots (behind the scenes) from the moment the women returned? The answers this paper offered may be found at greater length in a pre-publication version (still liable to change) of the author’s ‘Law and Narrative in the Book of Ruth: A Syntagmatic Reading’, available on both SSRN and [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu).

Heather McKay (Ormskirk)

Clothing, Adornment and Accoutrements in the Historical Books

This paper introduced the members to Goffman’s ‘personal front’, which is composed of: facial expressions, body language, attitudinal positions and movements, clothing, cosmetics, hairstyles, adornments and the assumption—or not—of accoutrements. Hence, humans assume clothes that mark their gender, status and, often, a particular assumed role. People can also change their mood by a change of clothes; they can disguise their feelings, intentions—even themselves—and for a variety of reasons and purposes, ranging from benign to nefarious. This paper sought to show that biblical authors/editors often say more than is immediately apparent when they refer to clothing, adornments and accoutrements: first, because

the role of these items often indicates more subtle features of the plot and of the characters, and secondly, because by repeatedly referring to these items they show where the deeper interests of those authors/editors lie. Those items that touch the skin of human beings, whether for hours on end, such as their clothes, or are briefly held in the hands—ornaments, tools or weapons—become extensions of that person, of their desires, aims and goals. Noticing the role/s played by them helps readers to notice the human characters in a more cognizant and understanding way. Such careful attention also helps readers to see something of the aims and desires of the writers. Although the stories are in fact merely stories that could be told in different ways—as may be witnessed in the Chronicler's retelling of stories from the earlier Histories—the meaning for the readers will always lie in 'the way they tell them'.

Nicholas Wyatt (Edinburgh)

The Rumpelstiltskin Factor: Explorations in the Arithmetic of Pantheons

This paper addressed the very different enumerations of deities in ancient Near Eastern cultures. Examples were drawn from Ugarit, Mesopotamia, Hatti, Egypt and Israel-Judah. While pantheon-lists often appear to contain precise numbers of deities, the modern reader is quite often left with a sense of deliberate imprecision, the various computations, triads, tetrads, pentads, ogdoads, enneads (and even thirty-three in three of the Ugaritic lists), disguising rather than revealing the mystery of the godhead, and perhaps expressing unity in an image of plurality. Even the seventy of Deut 32:8 seems to be rather slippery. After a general survey of various ancient Near Eastern systems, the paper turned to the revelation narrative of Exodus 3. Analysis of this complex text suggested that far from revealing the name of the one true god, the narrative at best puts obstacles in the way of perceiving the reality of God, and at worst presents him as a heptad!

Julie Woods (London)

Flaming Symbols: A Study of Fire as a Symbol of God's Presence and Word in the Pentateuch and Jeremiah.

This paper began by reminding members that fire is a primary symbol of the Divine presence in the Pentateuch, especially at Sinai / Horeb, notably, in the burning bush of Exod 3 and the theophany of Exod 19-20 and Deut 4-5. Indeed, fire seems a pertinent symbol to depict the LORD, more broadly, in both the Pentateuch and the Latter Prophets. Moreover, both fire and God's presence engender the responses described by Rudolph Otto as *mysterium tremendum et mysterium fascinans*. The paper suggested that the Prophets are consistent with the Pentateuch in the way that they use fire to symbolise God's presence and in the way humans react to that presence, as Isaiah's and Ezekiel's call narratives demonstrate. Also, as God's presence and his word are sometimes indistinguishable in the Pentateuch, so are they in Jeremiah (see Jer 7; 26; 17:12-18). The paper observed that in Jeremiah, fire is used to symbolise God's word, which is appropriate given that God's word is a source of *mysterium fascinans* to Jeremiah, and both fire and the word maybe advantageous or destructive. The paper noted that God's word and fire collide, combine and combust in Jer 36, but not in the way that Jehoiakim expects when he burns the scroll in order to put an end to God's words. It is unsurprising that his quest fails since burning fire with fire only creates a better fire. Instead of being destroyed, the word is simply rewritten (with additions) as it had been at Sinai (Exod 34). Finally it was observed that while the king of Judah fails to destroy God's words, the king of Babylon would succeed in fulfilling them and destroying Judah. Now, however, instead of simply ruining the city, as had been prophesied and as Jehoiakim had feared, the rhetoric of the surrounding chapters (chs 34, 37-39) declares that he would burn 'this city' with fire as Jehoiakim had burned the scroll with fire.

Thomas Römer (Lausanne/Paris)

Yhwh, a god of the wilderness? The question of the origin of the Exodus tradition

This paper began by observing that the Hebrew Bible contains several texts that reflect a tradition according to which Yhwh was a god

residing on a mountain three days journey away from the land of Egypt. This location fits nicely with another tradition that places the encounter between Israel and its god in a Midianite territory. To this one may add four poetic texts that locate Yhwh in Seir or Teman. The motif of the Hebrews who want to sacrifice to Yhwh in the wilderness, which occurs at several places in the book of Exodus reflects a different tradition from the 'official' Exodus tradition which is about a definitive departure of the Hebrews from Egypt. The paper suggests that although most of these texts underwent later reworking they probably conserve an historical memory that can be supported by extra-biblical evidence: Yhwh was, in the beginning, a 'Southern god' residing in the wilderness.

Maria Cioatǎ (Manchester)

Moses Gaster and the Study of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

This paper noted that, as a nineteenth century scholar, Moses Gaster (1856–1939) did not separate what are now regarded as two distinct fields. Much of his work was dedicated to apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, folklore, magic and mysticism. Using examples from his work, this paper illustrates the different ways in which Gaster used the terminology and how he perceived this literature. Throughout his publications, Gaster's use of terminology connects apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, saint's lives, medieval rewritten bibles, folklore as well as magical and mystical literature. Regarding Gaster's contribution to the modern study of the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, this paper concludes that his views on the antiquity of certain compositions and manuscripts now known to be medieval may be safely discarded. The same is true for his emphasis on heretics (particularly Bogomils) as responsible for the transmission of apocrypha. Nevertheless, it also concludes that Gaster made an important contribution by bringing to light many Jewish and Christian medieval compositions. In addition to his work on actual manuscripts, Gaster's contribution may now be appreciated for its interest in and understanding of the history of reception of the ancient texts.

Donn Morgan (Berkeley)

The Writings as Post-exilic Canonical Literature: Problems, Challenges, Significance

This paper began by tracing a history of scholarship devoted to the Writings as canon and scripture over the past fifty years, beginning with the work of T. Henshaw *The Writings* (1962) and ending with Steinberg and Stone (eds.) *The Shape of the Writings* (2015) and the forthcoming Oxford University Press *Handbook on the Writings* (2018). It noted the centrality during this period of Qumran literature, which has resulted in new assessments of canon formation and history and the methods used to examine them. It also observed that the climate and the context for the study of scripture and canon has changed, with new emphases on holistic reading and on things post-modern, post-colonial, et al. emerging alongside a growing interest in the reception history of the Bible. The paper proceeded to offer views on: (1) the dating of the final formation of this canonical division and its consequences; (2) the significance of the order/sequence of the books; (3) the ongoing pertinence of the post-exilic context for the Writings; and (4) the significance of ‘new’ ways of reading and interpreting the Writings (canonical, reception history, etc.). It concluded by affirming that biblical scholarship over the past fifty years bears witness to the specialness of the Writings as canon and scripture and it called members of SOTS to become apologists to wider communities of faith where the import of this literature is not yet recognized.

Margaret Barker (Borrowash)

The First Englishing of the LXX

This paper introduced the work of Charles Thomson, the first person to translate the LXX into English, a work published in 1808. His northern Irish family went to settle in America, but he was left an orphan. He was taught Greek by a local clergyman, and this remained a life-long interest, even while his political career flourished in the then-colonies. Eventually becoming the first Secretary of the Congress, he then spent his retirement working on the translation. He made some interesting choices: he chose ‘cotton’ for Greek words usually translated ‘fine linen’. He also marked the margins of parts of

the prophets, suggesting that he imagined them as a script for a Greek-style drama: two actors and a chorus. The actors were the Lord and the prophet, and the chorus was the people of Jerusalem. It was considered whether, if the practice of the Jerusalem temple had been a factor in the development of Greek drama, some priests might have worn masks as they did in Egyptian temples, or indeed whether the four living creatures by the throne in Ezekiel's vision were inspired by the masked priests he knew in the temple.

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On the afternoon of 5th January a **‘Research in Progress’ Seminar** was held at which PhD students and early career researchers presented their work and received feedback from members of the Society.

92nd SUMMER MEETING
25th – 27th July 2016
Hulme Hall, Manchester
Dr Adrian Curtis presiding

Yvonne Sherwood (Kent)

If only Joshua had a theodolite: ancient texts, modern states, and the problem of the land

This paper argued that we tend to fabulously exaggerate the powers of pre-modern Gods, Bibles and Empires—particularly their ability to give land and to actualise that gift on the ground. These narratives of absolute divine power are an offshoot of the stories that we tell, in secular contexts, about what it means to be ‘secular’ or ‘modern’. According to a widely-held secularisation narrative, modern liberal politics emerged when we rebelled against the absolute power of the gods and divine right kings. The emancipatory narrative of secularism leads us to magnify the old religious powers beyond any height or coverage that they actually achieved. Ironically, we tend to ascribe to the ancient gods and emperors powers of which they themselves could never dream—or only dream. Joshua, Judges, and Deuteronomy tell a different story: a story without the military powers and administrative structures that modern states and modern imaginations take for granted. Joshua has no theodolite. In order that Moses can ‘view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites for a possession’ (Deut 32.48), God takes him to the top of a very high mountain to see as far as he can see. It could prove to be a politically important move to reverse the secularisation story and compare the massively amplified powers of modern states to the more limited capabilities of the ancient gods, including Yhwh. The famously tortured biblical story of the occupation of the land, with its shifting borders, delays and losses, is the perfect expression of the limits of ancient media and military techniques.

Alan Millard (Liverpool)

Floating around in Ancient Arks

This paper drew to members attention, *The Ark before Noah* (2014) in which Irving Finkel published a previously unknown cuneiform tablet of c. 1700 B.C., expanding the description of the 'ark' in the Babylonian Epic of Atrahasis. In this text the 'ark' is shown to be round, a huge bitumen-coated coracle, built of reeds, about 70m in diameter, with a deck and cabins. Its ground area was nearly the same as Noah's Ark (14,400 sq. cubits vs. 15,000). Animals entered 'two by two'! The 'ark' is called a 'boat, ship', whereas Genesis uses 'container, box', borrowing an Egyptian word; the paper suggested that Finkel's argument for a Hebrew borrowing of a rare Babylonian word is unconvincing. The paper observed that the biblical ark needed neither rudder nor oars, keel nor prow, as it was not intended to make a voyage, but to be a floating refuge and further suggested that a flat-bottomed vessel, perhaps with its sides sloping inwards from the base, would float well. The paper noted that Finkel saw the Hebrew narrative as based on exilic-period Babylonian sources, but the speaker suggested that a relationship in the Late Bronze Age or even earlier may also be envisaged.

Andrew Macintosh (Cambridge)

The meaning of Hebrew תְּשׁוּקָה

The paper sought to define the meaning of the rare word תְּשׁוּקָה, which occurs three times in the Hebrew Bible and seven times in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The evidence of the ancient versions and of certain Rabbinic commentators was reviewed in respect of the biblical passages. Where the occurrences of the word in the Dead Sea Scrolls are concerned, the standard English translations by Vermes and Garcia Martinez were considered as well as the opinions of Israeli scholars such as Yalon and Licht. The evidence of comparative philology, and in particular of Arabic, proved to be important and this was illustrated by a number of relevant verses from the Quran. The speaker concluded that the word, in the MT as in the DSS, means 'concern, preoccupation, (single-minded) devotion'.

Pekka Pitkänen (Cheltenham)**The Structures of Numbers**

This paper began by observing that discerning a cohesive structure for the book of Numbers has on the whole remained a challenge. The book contains a mixture of narrative and legal materials, however, it has been difficult to conceptualize how these may constitute a coherent whole. This paper submits an explanation that sees the book as part of a wider and essentially coherent literary work of Genesis-Joshua, with particular reference to the work of Jacob Milgrom in terms of its thematic-literary coherence and the concept of ancient settler colonialism as its unifying ideology. The paper then proposes that the narrative continuity and stylistic discontinuity in the literary transition from Numbers to Deuteronomy can be accounted for by postulating two authors working together, with the first essentially responsible for Genesis-Numbers and the second for Deuteronomy and Joshua. Within this context, the book of Numbers can be seen as progressing from Sinai to Moab in terms of its plot, with a threefold division between Sinai, wilderness and Moab on the one hand, and a conceptual division of the book between the first generation at Sinai and the second generation at Moab, in line with what has already been suggested by past scholarship. Further observations were offered regarding the relationship between narratives which advance the plot, legal-instructional materials and miscellaneous episodes all of which serve to propel the larger narrative of Numbers more or less smoothly.

Kathy White (Manchester)**A 'Stanislavskian' approach to reading Jeremiah 8:23 [ET 9:1]**

This paper explored the water references in Jer 8:23, drawing on elements of an approach developed by Stanislavski (1863-1938) for his acting classes which involved a close examination of the text in search of a character's motivations, objectives and obstacles. Motivation considers everything that has gone on that causes a character to react the way he/she does. Objective has a future focus – what does the character hope will be influenced or changed by his words? For Stanislavski, the way a character responds to obstacles provides great insight into that character. However, the paper observed that the identity of the speaker in Jeremiah is ambiguous.

Who is expressing this frustrated wish for a head full of water and the capacity to shed more tears than is humanly possible? A number of scholars have argued that we are meant to understand the speaker to be God. Taking aspects of water-metaphor and symbol into account, the paper suggests that the speaker is seeking to offer up his life-essence even to the point of death on behalf of 'my people' by pouring out tears of lamentation, even though he knows he can never weep enough. Previous research describes the ancient concept of tears as the outcome of physical changes going on inside the body as the weeper is literally dissolving from within. The rhetorical impact of the opening words מִי־יִתֵּן is that of an anguished wish that cannot be fulfilled. The paper's application of a Stanislavskian approach yields a reading of this verse as the profoundly human expression of a prophet in distress because he finds himself in an impossible situation, though it is acknowledged that Stanislavski's method presupposes that characters will be people and focuses on dramatic integrity rather than on theology or literary devices.

Cynthia Crewe (Manchester)

Plant Motifs on Jewish Ossuaries and Sarcophagi in Palestine in the Late Second Temple Period: Their Identification, Sociology and Significance

This paper began with an examination of the nature of an ossuary and its decoration before demonstrating the range of plant motifs found on Jewish ossuaries and sarcophagi. Much of the speaker's previous work has been devoted to identifying the whole range of plant motifs on ossuaries which have never been systematically investigated and identified before, but the stylised nature of much of the ornamentation has made it a difficult task. After a brief overview of the religious, ideological and sociological implications of ossuary use, illustrations of similar motifs found in non-funerary Jewish contexts were presented, followed by examples of possible external influences on the development of Jewish funerary art. In the light of all this evidence, the question of symbolic interpretation of plant motifs was addressed, taking into account further evidence from biblical and apocryphal texts and the possible use of Dionysiac imagery on ossuaries and sarcophagi. Ultimately, it was argued that, through a process of

acculturation, a ‘type of symbolism’, which is not necessarily religious, may be inherent in the motifs.

Reinhard Kratz (Göttingen)

Creating National Identity: The Promises to the Patriarchs

The main subject of this paper was the promises to the patriarchs and their role in the composition of the Pentateuch, asking whether the criterion of narrative coherence in analysing the relationship between Gen 12:1-3, Gen 15 and Gen 17 leads us to the documentary hypothesis as Baden (2013) claims. The paper came to the conclusion that narrative coherence is a major criterion, indeed, but certainly not the only criterion for the analysis of the Pentateuch and that this criterion does not lead us automatically to the division of the Pentateuch into three or four independent sources. Rather, narrative coherence must be combined with other criteria such as wording, form, position in the context, and tendency. Only by means of this combination of criteria is it possible to discern different literary layers in the Pentateuch, mainly those of Priestly and non-Priestly traditions. It was argued that Gen 12:1–3 represents the oldest discernible literary stratum of a pre-Priestly composition of the primeval and patriarchal narrative, prior to its connection with the exodus-settlement narrative. Gen 17 and Gen 15 presuppose the connection and spell it out in different ways. Thus the paper argues that we are dealing with not three independent sources but rather a pre-Priestly base text (both in Genesis and Exodus to Joshua), which was continuously reworked both within the same corpus and—with P—perhaps also in a separate scroll. This process of permanent reworking reflects the discourse of Israel’s national (or ethnic) identity in the Pentateuch, which may have its origins in the late 8th or 7th century BCE and lasted until the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods.

William Tooman (St. Andrews)

The Evolution and Redeployment of Intermarriage Law in the Hebrew Bible

In this paper, the speaker sought to offer a description of the explicit biblical laws on the subject of intermarriage and their redeployment in

selected narratives. His aim was to better understand how the intermarriage laws within the Hebrew Bible were interpreted and implemented, and in particular, to understand the *legal reasoning* of their writers. The paper observed that not only were the laws progressively widened to include more and more people and more and more circumstances, but numerous laws that are not obviously related to the topic of inter-marriage were interpreted in such a way that they filled out the explicit laws, making them ever more complete. Numerous legal texts were interpreted as relevant to the issue of intermarriage, providing the legal basis for a comprehensive law on the subject. It seems that the biblical writers assumed that the Torah *must be* functionally complete. An essential part of legal, exegetical art, therefore, was to unfold the whole law, the Torah unabridged.

Mervyn Richardson (Leiden)

*per ardua ad ****: managing conjectural emendations in MT lexicographically

The paper began by noting that a basic source of conjectural emendations of the MT is found in the margins of *Biblia Hebraica*. S.R. Driver had been enlisted as a collaborator for the first edition. He died before SOTS was founded, but all subsequent editions have had some input from at least one of our members. Before BH¹ another substantial list of emendations was published by Brill: A. Kuenen *et al.*, *Textus hebraici emendationes quibus in vetere testamento neerlandice vertendo* (1900). These had been embedded in a controversial Dutch translation of the OT prepared essentially in the theological faculty of Leiden University: *De Leidsche Vertaling*. This Bible was condemned by the conservative Dutch church authorities, and had Kuenen not died before it was published he would almost certainly have been ostracized from his church. The speaker noted that a few years earlier Charles Briggs had been excommunicated from his church for expressing similar liberal views at Union Theological Seminary. But Briggs was saved for his vocation by being accepted for ordination as an Episcopalian, probably through his involvement with BDB and thanks to the D.Litt. Oxford awarded him. To dally with conjectural emendation at the beginning of the 19th century entailed the risk of being branded a heretic. But modern text critics

regard the MT as an example of several variant texts circulating among the community of the time, so many older cases for emendation can be ignored, as has been effectively explained by Emanuel Tov in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Chapter 8). Nevertheless, modern lexicographers still find they deserve attention. To illustrate this a close comparison was made of how two problematic lexemes are treated in scholarly dictionaries of today: philological evidence for describing Judah's eyes as 'red' or as 'dark' in Gen 49:12, and grammatical evidence for changing the pointing of certain words in Job 20:26.

George J. Brooke (Manchester)

Manchester and the Dead Sea Scrolls

This illustrated presentation had three parts. In the first, there was a review of some of the work of the first generation of Manchester scholars, including especially Meir Wallenstein, H.H. Rowley, Preben Wernberg-Møller, John Allegro, and F.F. Bruce. Particular attention was paid to Allegro's contributions as a manuscript editor for the series of principal editions (*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*), including his innovative practice of publishing preliminary editions, his major role in the opening of the Copper Scroll in Manchester in 1955-1956, his skills as a photographer, and his engaging enthusiasm for popularising the Scrolls. In the second part, there was a brief description of highlights from the last 30 years: the Temple Scroll Symposium (1987); the Scrolls and Septuagint Symposium (1990); the Manchester-Sheffield Centre for Dead Sea Scrolls Research (1995-2005); the Copper Scroll Exhibition (1996-1997); the Copper Scroll Symposium (1996); further contributions to the official editions of *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* (by P.S. Alexander and G.J. Brooke); and multiple other publications of various kinds. In the third part of the presentation some ongoing projects and resources were mentioned: the T & T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls; the electronic catalogue of the William H. Brownlee archive and ongoing scientific research on the Ronald Reed Dead Sea Scroll fragments at the John Rylands Library; the digitisation of the Allegro archive at Manchester Museum; the revision of *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert V* for Dead Sea Scroll Editions; the place of the scrolls in the Profiling of Jewish Literature in Antiquity Database; the production of

a Database on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament; and the ongoing publication of revised versions of their dissertations by Manchester doctoral graduates.

Hindy Najman (Oxford)

Lamentations and biblical traditions of recollection, recovery and radical hope

How are we to understand the call to the reader to remember and what is the performative achievement of that call? This paper focused on Lamentations chs. 4 and 5, Psalm 137 as well as Apostrophe to Zion and 4Ezra—texts which all share in the practice of recollection/remembering and recalling as a kind of performance. The speaker noted that these texts call upon us as readers to participate and that there is also a call for change—for response and perhaps, we might say, for the ethical. It went on to observe that the use and incorporation of earlier textual traditions in response to historical exigencies and a hope which is radical (insofar as it creates new hope and new tradition and even new writing out of the embers of destruction) are precisely the elements that should interest us in the composition and unlocking of texts from our biblical antiquity. The call to the reader in the texts to respond to the exigencies of the time invokes past and prays for a better future. The paper noted that we live neither in the past we study nor in the future into which some of the texts we study catapult us. However, when we are called upon to exercise what Jonathan Lear has described as our imaginative capacity to overcome the loss and destruction of our own worlds, we can do so productively through re-performing the texts by interpretation and philological analysis. The recollection texts call upon the reader to overcome the gap between the past and the future. The paper concluded that the work of recollection and memory can prove to be healing insofar as it offers radical hope, insofar as it sustains a past history, and insofar as it actualizes the formation of text, individual and community.

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In a session on the afternoon of the 26th of July, a panel of SOTS members offered their responses to the question: What should the

relationship be between biblical scholarship and faith communities in the 21st century? In addition to receptions sponsored by the Centre for Biblical Studies, University of Manchester and the Journal of Semitic Studies, members enjoyed an outing on the afternoon of 27th of July to Jodrell Bank, where they also enjoyed the President's Tea.

SOTS Website

Don't forget to look at the 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: Willem Smelik, appointed Professor of Hebrew and Aramaic Literature at University College London, Sue Gillingham awarded the Doctor of Divinity by the University of Oxford, Lena Tiemeyer, appointed Reader at the University of Aberdeen; Carly Crouch, appointed Associate Professor at the University of Nottingham, David Clines, awarded the Burkitt Medal for biblical studies by the British Academy for his significant contribution to the study of the Hebrew Bible and Hebrew lexicography, Sue Groom appointed Archdeacon of Wiltshire, Chris Meredith appointed Academic Director of Theology at St. Mary's Twickenham, Charlotte Hempel, appointed Professor of Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism at the University of Birmingham and Eryl Davies, appointed a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales.

The Society learned with regret of the **deaths** of Herbert S. Wentz, Peter Robson, Cyril Rodd, John Emerton, John Sandys-Wunsch, Leslie McFall, Preben Wernberg-Møller and Ephrem Lash.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Mr Yan Anderson, Ms Jennifer Andruska, Dr David Janzen, Dr Jessica Keady, Rev Gordon Kennedy, Dr Matthew Lynch, Mrs Zanne Lyttle, Miss Joanne Merrygold, Mr Andrew Niggeman, Mr Alun Thomas, Miss Rebekah Welton. At the Summer Meeting: Fr Josef Mario Briffa, Rev Fleur Houston, Rev Dr Brian Howell, Dr Thomas Judge, Dr Katharina Keim, Rev Catherine Lewis-Smith, Ms Suzanna Millar, Miss Aysha Musa, Ms Rosalie Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh, Rev Robert Parkinson, Ms Cat Quine and Dr Megan Warner.

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).

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.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

Centenary Volume

The volume of essays which will be published to mark the centenary of the Society in 2017 will be available to order at a pre-publication discounted price until 1st of November. To take advantage of this opportunity, please contact the editor, John Jarick (john.jarick@theology.ox.ac.uk), for an order form.

Subscription reminder

A reminder from the Treasurer: There are still 71 members of SOTS whose subscriptions have remained at the old rates of £24 (full) and £12 (low income). That adds up to a loss to the Society of at least £350 each year. It is requested that those who have not yet amended their standing orders please do so in time for the payment date in January 2017. The new rates (agreed by the Business Meeting in July 2015) are £30 (full) and £15 (low income).

Essay Prize

The Society has agreed to establish an Essay Prize, value £500. Members of the Society who are doctoral students and early-career members (normally within five years of completion of PhD), and who are members at the time of submission are eligible to apply. The call for essays, to be of a publishable standard, and not more than 15,000 words in length, will be made in the autumn mailing each year; essays should be submitted to the President by 31st December of the following year. It is expected that essays will be concerned with topics related to Old Testament/Tanakh/Hebrew Bible. Co-authored essays may be submitted. If the winning essay is co-authored the prize money will be shared equally amongst the authors. Each essay submitted will be reviewed by a small group of qualified SOTS members to be selected by the President assisted by the immediate past and incoming Presidents. The ad hoc group thus established will be expected to reach a recommendation in time for an announcement at the Summer Meeting of the same year. However, the Society reserves the right not to make an award if no suitable submission is received. It is anticipated that an offer of publication in JSOT will be made, subject to the consent of the author(s) and editors; further, the winner(s) will be encouraged to offer a version of the paper suitable for presentation at SOTS, such a proposal to be given priority by the programme committee.

Call for Essays

Qualified members are invited to submit essays concerned with topics related to Old Testament/Tanakh/Hebrew Bible, as per above, to the President-elect for 2017, Prof Paul Joyce (paul.joyce@kcl.ac.uk), by 31st December, 2017.

Future Meetings

The **Winter Meeting 2017** will be held on **3rd – 5th January** at Cripps Hall, Nottingham and the **Summer Meeting 2017** will be held on **17th – 20th July 2017**, at King's College, London. Both meetings will be under the presidency of Prof Paul Joyce.

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 in order to be considered for presentation at some future meeting. 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.

Financial support for carers to enable members to attend meetings is available on a trial basis. The grant is limited but may be put toward the cost of employing a carer or toward additional expenses incurred in a partner's attendance. Applications must be received 5 weeks prior to the meeting for which support is requested and should be submitted to the Secretary, Dr David Shepherd (shepherd@tcd.ie).

IMPORTANT REMINDER TO ALL SOTS MEMBERS

As the SOTS Bulletin, Winter and Summer Meeting programmes 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 communicated to the Membership Secretary, Dr Janet Tollington, at the address at the end of this Bulletin.

ACCOUNTS FOR 2015

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 30th September 2015

	General fund £	Bursary fund £	Legacy fund £	Total Funds 2015 £	Total Funds 2014 £
Income					
Activities for generating funds					
Subscriptions & Donations	7,264	2,232	-	9,496	11,704
Conference income	41,956	-	-	41,956	40,509
Other income	-	-	-	-	155
Investment income					
Interest & Royalties	55	38	-	93	181
			-		
Total income	49,275	2,270		51,545	52,549
Expenditure					
Conference costs	45,339	-	-	45,339	41,407
Book list grant	10,518	-	-	10,518	3,000
Bursaries	-	2,849	-	2,849	3,039
Committee costs	293	-	-	293	1,195
Printing, Postage, Stationery etc	964	-	-	964	2,115
Accountancy fees	820	-	-	820	800
Project costs	-	-	555	555	-
Bank charges	644	-	-	644	754
Total Expenditure	58,578	2,849	555	61,982	52,310
 (Deficit)/ Surplus for period	 (9,303)	 (579)	 (555)	 (10,437)	 239
 Balance a/a 1 November 2014	 60,250	 30	 57,850	 118,130	 117,891
Balance a/a 30 September 2015	50,947	(549)	57,295	107,693	118,130

BALANCE SHEET at 30th September 2015

	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand				
Current Account	(752)		7,880	
Business Premium	106,105		111,050	
		105,353		118,930
Debtors: falling due within one year				
Prepayments & accrued income		3,162		-
Creditors: falling due within one year				
Accruals		(822)		(800)
		107,693		118,130
Reserves:	£		£	
General fund	50,947		60,250	
Bursary fund 2	(549)		30	
Legacy fund 2	57,295		57,850	
	107,693		118,130	

Notes to the Financial Statements For the Period Ended 30 September 2015

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 receivables basis.

Expenditure

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

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.

2. Legacy fund

	At 1 November 2014 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2015 £
Porter Legacy	57,850	-	555	57,295
	57,850	-	555	57,295

The Porter Legacy fund 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 2017

President: Professor Paul Joyce, Department of Theology & Religious Studies, King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS (email: paul.joyce@kcl.ac.uk)

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

President-elect: Professor Walter Moberly, Department of Theology, University of Durham, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RS, England (email: r.w.l.moberly@durham.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: Dr Janet Tollington, 118 Balland Fields, Willingham, Cambridge CB24 5JU (email: jet40@cam.ac.uk)

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)

Archivist: Professor Eryl Davies, School of Philosophy and Religion, Bangor University, Bangor LL57 2DG (rsse03@bangor.ac.uk)

Committee: The above Officers of the Society plus Dr Carly Crouch, Prof Sue Gillingham, Dr Anselm Hagedorn, Dr Doug Ingram, Dr Sandra Jacobs,

Dr Anja Klein, 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 Jessica Keady, 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

2015 Hans Barstad