
**THE SOCIETY FOR
OLD TESTAMENT STUDY**

BULLETIN

2018

93rd WINTER MEETING
2nd - 4th January 2018
Newark Hall, Jubilee Campus,
University of Nottingham
Prof Walter Moberly presiding

Walter Moberly (Durham)

Presidential Address: Thinking about God: A Reading of Psalm 82

This essay attempted a fresh reading of Psalm 82 as a resource for Christian theology. Characteristic premodern and modern readings – that the psalm is an admonition to human judges, and that the psalm depicts a move from polytheism to henotheism or monotheism – were briefly noted, by way of setting the context for suggesting that the psalm can be read as offering a conceptual analysis of the Hebrew term for deity, *ʾelohim*. Read thus, the psalm depicts justice as constitutive of the nature of true deity. Attention was also given to the psalm’s poetic literary form, and to the implications for reader or hearer of being given access to a “heavenly” scenario.

Rebecca Watson (Cambridge)

‘Thrown into the Sea’: An Ecologically Damaging Concept in the Hebrew Bible?

This paper examined the passages (Ex. 10.19; 15; Jon. 2.4; Mic. 7.19; Zech. 9.4; Neh. 9.11) in which someone or something is ‘thrown into the deeps’, seeking to ascertain whether they presuppose that the sea can ‘wash away’ or ‘dilute’ evil and assessing their implications for an ecological perspective. Close attention to these allusions indicates that casting in the sea is a rare outworking of divine intervention. They may relate to experience of loss in deep water and knowledge of the destructive power of the sea, but concern for proper rites of burial, cosmological concepts of the underworld lying beneath the sea and even juridical aspects to a water ordeal may have had an influence. However, the most significant aspect of casting into the sea is its association with descent to Sheol, as is shown by careful examination of the associated language in many of the passages examined (Ex. 15, Neh. 9.11, Jon. 2.4), though military reality (Zech. 9.4) and even beliefs about locusts’ life cycles (Ex. 10.19) could have an influence. However, these references do nothing to counter modern environmental concern, nor to justify disposal in the sea.

Philip Jenson (Cambridge)

Is there a Holiness Code and does it matter?

This paper began by noting that the traditional historical-critical approach to Leviticus 17–27, the Holiness Code (H), is that there was a distinct law code which was later integrated by the Priestly editors into their own account (P). More recently, largely inspired by Israel Knohl, the direction of influence has been reversed, so that (using his terms) the Holiness School was responsible for a late redactional layer that incorporated the Priestly Torah. There is, however, a third school which is skeptical about the independent existence of H in any meaningful sense. The result has been a wide range of views about how H and P relate to each other, both in content and stance (are they complementary or in conflict?). The main arguments concern the structure of Leviticus, the ethical character of the two parts of Leviticus, and the nature of holiness. In each of these areas there is evidence that the differences have been exaggerated. The complex

discussions about the underlying sources or redactions continue to matter to historical critics. However, for others it is making sense of the book of Leviticus as a whole that is of primary interest. The proposal that H and P are at least complementary invites reflection on a priestly vision of the world that is all the richer for the tensions and differences.

William Ford (Belfast)

‘You shall not marry a Canaanite!’ Endogamy, (Canaanite) Exogamy and Theology in Genesis 12–50.

In Genesis 12-50 the interactions between the patriarchs and the Canaanites are more positive than in the later Hebrew Scriptures, with the exception of the ban on marriage. This paper examined the relevant passages in Genesis (24:1-9; 27:41-28:9; 34 and especially 38), reading them canonically, particularly in light of the patriarchal promises which form an underlying theme of the patriarchal narratives. It argued that while Genesis as a whole discourages Canaanite exogamy, the situation is more complex than a simple ban. In Genesis 24 exogamy is preferable to leaving the land. In Genesis 28 avoiding exogamy is arguably not the main reason for leaving. Reading Genesis 34 in the light of 49:5-7 suggests that massacring is an inappropriate response to exogamy. In Genesis 38 it is strongly implied that Tamar is Canaanite. However, she is not only the heroine in Genesis 38 but elsewhere explicitly identified as an ancestor of David and Jesus. A brief comparison with the conquest narratives suggested that this complexity is also evident there, and that the focus is not on ethnicity but on one’s attitude to YHWH.

Penelope Barter (Tilburg)

Inquiring of YHWH in the Book of Ezekiel

In the Book of Ezekiel, the elders sit before the priest-prophet three times (8.1; 14.1; 20.1), with a progressive revelation that they have come to "inquire" (*drš*) of Yhwh through Ezekiel. What is not revealed, however, is the content of their inquiry and why it angers Yhwh, who refuses to be consulted by them, but ultimately responds with an oracle (14.3-4; 20.3-4). This paper investigated the use of the

expression in the Hebrew Bible, arguing that the locution has a wide range of uses and connotations before establishing which of these many interpretations of *drš* are utilised in Ezekiel, with particular attention to the linguistic links to Exodus 18. These connections offer a lens through which to interpret both the elders' request and Yhwh's anger, and further our understanding of Ezekiel's prophetic role.

Douglas Ingram (Nottingham)

What is Good in Ecclesiastes?

This paper began by noting that the question in 2.3, 'what is good for mortals to do under heaven during the few days of their life?' is a key theme in Ecclesiastes which has been given too little attention by scholars. It then went on to consider the use of the word 'good' (טוב) in the book, noting that it is one of the most frequently occurring words in the book and is used much more frequently here than anywhere else in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. However, this is often 'hidden' in English translations where a range of other words are used to translate טוב – including where it first appears in 2.1 and the uses of the word in the 'call to enjoyment' verses. The translation of the expression ראה בטוב (literally something like 'look into good') in 2.1 as 'enjoy yourself' (or similar), along with similar renderings of טוב elsewhere in the book, convey a sense of 'pleasure-seeking' in the use of the term. Qohelet, though, engages in serious exploration of what 'good' means for people living under the sun. The paper proposed that the chapter divisions between ch. 1 and ch. 2 further complicate matters by separating the first few verses of ch. 2 from the introductory verses in 1:12-18. If 2.1-3 are viewed as part of an introduction – rather than being linked only with the following verses – then the themes of 'all that is done under the sun' (1.13-15), 'wisdom, knowledge and folly' (1.16-18) and 'what is good' (2.1-3) can be seen as the main themes in Ecclesiastes. This corresponds with the most frequently occurring words in the book ('deed'/'to do', 'good'/'be good' and 'wisdom'/'be wise') and when these words and associated words are taken into account, the three themes account for most verses in Ecclesiastes.

Graham Davies (Cambridge)

Sources and Redaction in Exodus 1-18: A Partly New Synthesis

This paper presented an overview of the author's conclusions about the composition of Exodus 1-18 in his nearly complete ICC commentary on these chapters. Contrary to much recent Continental research, he noted that he has found the best explanation of the evidence to be the use by the compilers of two independent non-Priestly narratives, the Song of Moses (all pre-exilic) and a separate Priestly narrative (from a later period) which followed the outline of the older accounts as far as ch. 16. Some redactional additions could also be noted. The identification of the Priestly texts (with expansions in ch. 6 and ch. 12) was straightforward and had long been agreed. In the non-P text, duplicate narratives were traced from ch. 3 to ch. 14 and reasons could be given, on the basis of narrative continuity and coherence, for associating most of ch. 1-2 and 15-18 with one or other of the strands isolated. The most novel aspect of the analysis was the proposal that in the non-Priestly sections of ch. 7-12 the main narrative, which had traditionally been attributed to J, should be ascribed to E and the remnants of a shorter alternative version belonged to J. This made for a more plausible connection with what precedes and follows and implied that the redactor who combined J and E (unusually) preferred the E version in the plagues narrative, presumably because it was fuller and more vivid. The case for an independent E source was strengthened as a result.

Meir Lubetzki (New York)

A Careless Scribe or Learned Scribe in I Chronicles 8:34?

This paper observed that enigmatic 1 Chr. 8:34 and 9:40 are due a fresh investigation. The Chronicler names the royal grandson of Saul either as מריבעל or מריבבעל. While the suffix has been treated adequately in the literature, biblical scholars have been completely at a loss to account for the meaning of *mry* and then the change from מרי into מריב in the prefix. In addition, a seemingly shorter version of the name, מר-בעל, appears on a Samaria trapezoidal ostrakon (#2 ln. 7) as well. That Baal is the theophoric component is transparent. The etymology and meaning of the prefix, however, is uncertain. This paper attempted to clarify both forms of

the same name found in Chronicles that had not previously been explained satisfactorily. It argued that sources, especially Late Egyptian literary texts, might offer a novel approach in explaining the etymology of the prefix *mry* or *mryb* within biblical onomastics. This, in turn, might establish an alternative, perhaps more accurate meaning of Saul's grandson's royal name. The paper also highlighted an unknown aspect about Hebrew scribes: they knew how to transcribe alien names correctly.

Alison Salvesen (Oxford)

'They did not settle in the land of the Lord: Ephraim settled in Egypt' (LXX Hos. 9.3): returning to Egypt in Greek scripture and other Hellenistic Jewish works

This paper began by noting that the portrayal of Egypt in the Hebrew Scriptures is almost wholly a negative one. For Israel, Egypt is the land of servitude (e.g. Deut. 26:5-9), unbridled sexuality (Gen. 12:10-20; 39:7-18; as a metaphor, Ezek. 16:26; 23:8, 19-27), idolatry (e.g. Ezek. 20:5-11; Jer. 44:7-8), political unreliability (Isa. 31:1; Ezek. 17:15). As Diana Lipton notes, Egypt is the archetypal 'other' contrasted with the blessed and God-given land of Israel. Voluntary return to Egypt is forbidden (Deut. 17:16), while the threat in Deut. 28:68 that God himself will send the people back there is the climax of the curses, reversing the foundational event of the exodus (Hos. 13:4, versus Hos. 8:13; 9:3; 11:5). Yet large numbers of Jews did settle in Egypt, from the sixth century BCE to the early second century CE, and again in the medieval period. The paper explored how Egyptian Jews may have reconciled their situation with the negativity towards Egypt of the religious writings of Judaism. The paper offered answers to the following questions: since Jewish settlers came to speak Greek, and from the mid-third century BCE, the scriptures began to be rendered into Greek, did the translators nuance passages dealing with Jewish immigration to Egypt? And to what extent did literary works composed in Egypt view contemporary Jewish experience there through the lens of the exodus event?

Thomas Renz (Barnet)

Luther's Lectures on Habakkuk as an Example of Participatory Exegesis

The paper opened with the observation that Martin Luther, with his focus on the literal meaning of Scripture independent of church authority, is sometimes counted among those who started the journey toward historical-critical research on the Bible. But Luther still saw himself as a participant in the history and realities to which Scripture testifies and therefore brought his own experience and understanding of God and the world to bear in his exegesis in ways which would become unacceptable in historical-critical exegesis. The paper suggested that Luther's exegesis remains thought-provoking because of this "participatory" aspect. A first example, Luther's discussion of the opening of Hab. 1:5, demonstrated both his linguistic competence and his limitations. While exegesis understood solely as a philological-historical endeavour has little to gain today from Luther, the presentation proceeded with seven examples which suggest the abiding value of Luther's participatory exegesis for reflection on the subject matters of the biblical text as well as the pitfalls of his approach. The paper argued that seeing a lack of response to the prophet's preaching as the background to Habakkuk's complaint is not as absurd as it appears at first, but led to a misreading of Hab. 2:1. It also maintained that Luther consistently kept the focus on rulers as the target of condemnation and that news of the brutal suppression of the peasants' revolt led Luther to change his interpretation of "desert/evening wolves" in Hab. 1:8 between his 1525 Latin lectures and his 1526 German publication. The conclusion highlighted that Luther's conflation of concerns which we are used to keeping separate is capable of generating genuine insights, even if it can trip up the interpreter.

94th SUMMER MEETING
16th – 19th July 2018
St John's College, Durham
Prof Walter Moberly presiding

Brent Strawn (Atlanta)

What Is Missing from Ancient Israelite Religion?

The paper argued that what is missing from scholarly reconstructions of ancient Israelite religion is attention to religious experience and emotional affectivity. The paper explored some recent reconstructions of early Israelite religion that seem (on the face of it) entirely devoid of experience and emotions. It then took up two case studies: one on love (which is seen as both covenantal and emotional) and one on fear (shown to be both emotion and response, real and religious, active and affective). In the end, it was argued that to separate emotion from other cognitive functions is to make Descartes' error in the Iron Age.

Carly Crouch (Nottingham)

Duelling Dynasties: Ezekiel's Sign-Act of the Two Sticks

This paper began by observing that Ezekiel's sign-act of the two sticks is an interpretive quagmire. The difficulty of the passage, which begins at Ezek. 37:15 and continues for an indeterminate number of verses, is indicated not least by the apparatus of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, which appends no fewer than thirty footnotes to the first nine verses. Interpretive issues include the association of 'Israel' with both sticks (v. 16); the use of the name 'Joseph' to identify the entity associated with the second stick (vv. 16, 19) and the interest in a defunct northern kingdom which this is thought to reflect; the intended relationship between the entities represented by the two sticks (v. 19); the meaning of the key terms *š* (vv. 16, 17, 19, 20) and *šbt* (v. 19); and the unexpected use of *mlk* (v. 22). The paper aimed to resolve a

number of these issues and to suggest the cause of certain others, arguing that the sign-act concerns the competing claims of the two royal lines created by the deportation of Jehoiachin to Babylon and the appointment of Zedekiah in Jerusalem. It should therefore be understood as part of a wider corpus of texts attesting to an ideological and practical struggle between the Babylonian golah and those left behind in the land.

Simon Stocks (West Malling)

Lament and the Construction of Identity in the Psalms

The paper explored how the psalms of lament shaped the self-understanding of the Israelites who used them in worship. In doing so it took issue with Amy Cottrill's *Language, Power and Identity in the Lament Psalms of the Individual*, which adopts the shame/honour framework and discerns two competing discourses: of powerlessness and of dominance. This analysis was critiqued for a lack of eschatological perspective, its equation of God's violence with human violence, and its inadequate consideration of the emotive, poetic nature of the genre. The paper then focused on the alleged de-humanisation of the enemies by turning to the dialogical framework of Martin Buber's 'Ich-Du' or 'I-Thou' and a consideration of whether the psalmist treats the enemies as 'You' or 'It'. This was found to be particularly significant since Buber asserts that it is not possible to relate to God genuinely as a 'You' whilst also 'utilizing the world' and rendering others as an 'It'. Arguing from the social setting of the lament psalms and a re-construction of the perspective of the psalmist the paper concludes that the 'enemies' of the psalmist are specific, known individuals, since to be actively shaming the psalmist the enemies must be part of the same community. It also suggested that the psalms of lament construct an identity of the psalmist who is in real relationship with both God and the enemy and which treats them as genuine relational beings.

Kai-Wen Karen Yuan (Taipei)

The Drama of the Pursuit of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9

This paper offered a fresh approach to the pursuit of wisdom in

Proverbs 1–9 in its final form by treating it as a drama and analysing the dynamics of that drama in selected texts. This approach suggested a new conceptual metaphor, which explains the abstract concept of pursuing wisdom in the concrete image of a journey and reveals the sequence of events which construct that drama. It then offered an analysis of motions and emotions as indicators delineating the transformations in dyadic relationships by focusing on: (1) imperative expressions, denoting anticipated movements of the audience, (2) declarative clauses, indicating physical movement, (3) words of emotion, denoting psychological movements in the dyad and (4) pathos, referring to the emotion generated or anticipated in the audience. The study observed both a chronological sequence and a plot and argued for a gradation in intimacy and distance, indicated respectively by love and hate, between Woman Wisdom and the Young Man who is the recipient of the teachings and stands in the place of the actual reader. It looked too at physical movement and gradation in the Strange Woman’s advances toward the Young Man. Finally, it concluded that the Young Man’s partaking of Woman Wisdom’s banquet in her house, in Proverbs 9, is the high point of the “I-Thou” encounter and the climax of the progressive relationship between them.

Leigh Trevaskis (Brisbane)

Did Ehud change his mind? The significance of idols in Judges 3:12–30

This paper contends that Judg. 3:12–30 affirms Ehud as an anti-idolatrous leader. The argument relies on two key assumptions. First, the Moabite King’s name Eglon can mean either a “Calf-like one” worthy of adoration (i.e. a “Bovinity”) or a “small-calf” appropriate for slaughter. Second, the narrator has used sacrificial language to describe Israel’s sending of Ehud to offer an “offering” to Eglon (vv. 15c–18). Whereas Israel attends to Eglon as a “Bovinity”, Ehud’s making a sword (v. 16) declares his intention to slaughter him as one may a “small-calf.” The narrative amplifies the implicit contrast made between idolatrous Israel and anti-idolatrous Ehud in verses 15c–18 by framing the latter’s independent killing of Eglon between twin references to the “idols that were at Gilgal” (vv. 19, 26). Ehud’s anti-idolatrous leadership liberates Israel from foreign oppression by removing the object of its idolatrous attention. The paper concludes by

commenting on a rabbinic reading of Judges 17-21 that contends that God used “left-handed” Benjamite warriors to punish idolatrous Israelites.

Hywel Clifford (Oxford)

yhwh *’ḥd*: Divine ‘oneness’ in the *Shema* in its ancient Near Eastern setting

The paper began by observing that the comparative analysis of ANE terms for ‘one’ remains relatively underdeveloped, indicated by remarks in Lohfink and Bergman (*’ḥd* TDOT 1974) and Smith (God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World 2008). It then considered three major approaches to Deut. 6:4 (“monotheism”, “monolatry”, “monoyahwism”), highlighting how scholars’ selective citation of ANE texts sits within a series of interrelated exegetical questions. It was then argued that the translation ‘is one’ is grammatically preferable, encouraged by early reception (e.g. Nash Pap, LXX, NT, Syr, Vg; cf. Halbuturn amulet); and that ‘one’ is best read within its pericope (6:4-9), in conjunction with other HB texts (e.g. Deut. 33:1-5; Jer. 32:36-41). This allows for an understanding of YHWH as ‘one’ (unitary, unique, unity) without imposing extended dogmatic or mystical content – a widespread modern concern. As for its ANE setting, that YHWH is ‘one’ appears much less in HB texts (cf. Mal. 2, Zech. 14) from Israel than elsewhere (e.g. Egypt), inviting consideration as to why (e.g. greater emphasis on covenantal *ḥesed*). Finally, it was suggested that in Second Temple Judaism – when theological uses of ‘one’ blossomed (e.g. DJD phylacteries, Ps.-Sib. Or., Philo, NT) – ‘one’ became a node around which major claims clustered, whether or not the *Shema* was formally quoted. These later traditions play to type, but they share the idea of primal divine uniqueness and it is thus this period that more obviously gave a self-conscious “monotheism” to the world, signalled lexically by developed uses of ‘one’. The paper concluded that this example was a reminder of the need to distinguish received beliefs and practices from initially minimal (but hardly inauspicious) origins – in this case: the *Shema*.

Richard Briggs (Durham), Deborah Rooke (Oxford), Walter Houston (Macclesfield), and Brent Strawn (Atlanta)

Discussion of Richard Briggs' *Theological Hermeneutics and the Book of Numbers as Christian Scripture* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2018)

This session constituted a panel review of the named book, which had just been published. Richard Briggs introduced the book with a brief account of its contents and his goals in writing it. Responses to the book were given by Walter Houston, Deborah Rooke, and Brent Strawn. Their comments ranged from appreciation of the book's integration of hermeneutical and theological commitments, and its commitment to tackling difficult texts from Numbers; through to raising several questions about how to properly balance trust and suspicion in interpretation, and about concerns over the best handling of texts concerning violence, or the treatment of women. Richard Briggs then offered brief responses, thanking the reviewers for their positive responses, and also for their appropriate probing of various challenging interpretative issues. The discussion was then opened to the floor, resulting in considerable reflection on the challenges of handling Old Testament texts well in the present academic and broader cultural climate.

Marian Kelsey (Fife)

The Relenting of God in the Book of Jonah

The book of Jonah describes the remarkable sparing of a wicked foreign nation, surprising not least because Nineveh was long destroyed when the book of Jonah was most likely written. Moreover, the book contains both a declaration of a relenting God (Jon. 4:2) and yet repeated allusions to episodes in biblical history in which God did not relent. The picture thus painted is that God has the freedom to relent or not, bound by neither human understanding of his character nor past behaviour. The network of inner-biblical allusions repeatedly hints at the fate of Jerusalem, suggesting that this city rather than the extinct Nineveh is the true target of the book. By using the hypothetical situation of a city far away and long ago, the author is able to imply that the absolute divine autonomy seen in God's obliteration of Sodom and sparing of Nineveh must also be applied to

the destruction of Jerusalem. At the same time, awareness of Nineveh's eventual destruction indicates God's freedom to reverse his judgment, which holds out hope for a ruined Jerusalem.

Stephen Campbell (Durham)

Life Worth Living: A Case for Rhetorical Coherence in Deut. 4:1-8

The paper began by noting that Deuteronomy 4 is generally regarded as a coherent paraenesis, with an introduction (vv. 1–8), a core (vv. 9–31), and a conclusion (vv. 32–40). While the introduction itself has been the subject of much discussion, not least because of the well-known “canon formula” of 4:2, with few exceptions, this particular verse has been understood in isolation from its context within the introduction to chapter 4. The paper observed that this interpretive decision is usually taken for two reasons. First, Deut. 4:2 is often read as a disturbance in the otherwise flowing language of Deut. 4:1, 3–8. Secondly, the scholarly interests in the verse are often derived from elsewhere; Deut. 4:2 is most commonly used either in discussions relating to the ancients's self-understanding of canon, or else Deuteronomy's place within a growing biblical canon. In light of this, the paper attempted a fresh reading of the paraenesis's introduction with particular emphasis on how vv. 1–8 can be read coherently as they now stand in the MT. Particular attention was given to rhetorical concerns including repetition and logical parallelism. In light of these, it was argued that in the context of vv. 1–8, Deut 4:2 can be understood as a key element in the introduction's creation of a parallel between how one treats the “words” of God through Moses and how one treats God himself.

Suzanna Millar (Edinburgh)

Dining on Destruction: The Pedagogical Power of a Metaphorical World in Proverbs

This paper observed that from Lady Wisdom's feast (Prov. 9:1-6) to King Lemuel's “strong drink” (31:4-7), imagery of food abounds in the book of Proverbs. Often it is used metaphorically and scholars have particularly highlighted how the book depicts the wisdom and edifying words the disciple must ingest. This paper examined a

converse manifestation of the metaphor, arguing that over the course of the book, a network of mutually-interpretive proverbs develops, in which “food” is not wisdom, but wickedness. This metaphor has a double thrust. An individual “eats” evil as a foodstuff, which in turn empowers their activity, energising their wicked deeds. And yet it also proves a poison in that they dine on their own destruction. This network of metaphors is didactically significant. It develops into a world where one’s “act” (internalising wickedness) intrinsically corresponds to the “consequence” (being poisoned), and thus it becomes a powerful disincentive to being wicked. By chewing over this imagery – in individual proverbs and across the book as a whole – this paper highlights the pedagogical power of the emerging metaphorical world.

J. Cheryl Exum (Sheffield)

Adventures and Misadventures in Song of Songs Research

The term ‘Adventures’ in the paper’s title referred to relatively new territory in Song of Songs research that, in the speaker’s view, was exciting and worthy of further exploration. After dealing briefly with discoveries she had made about gender and poetics in her own work on the Song of Songs, the paper considered other adventures that explore new terrain (e.g., the nature of looking, which calls for further theorizing; the metaphoric descriptions of the body; space and the relation of the city to the garden; the role of the reader; reception criticism and deconstruction). Among important studies discussed were Fiona Black’s *The Artifice of Love*, Christopher Meredith’s *Journeys in the Songscape* and Elaine James’s *Landscapes of the Song of Songs*. The paper concluded with some ‘misadventures’ (e.g., repeatedly investigating questions that are not new, dating the Song on linguistic grounds alone, neo-allegory, failure to appreciate the plurisignificance of poetic imagery and potential disruptive elements in the Song, historicizing or naturalizing events in the Song, paying inadequate attention to the poet as distinct from the characters in the poem, and assigning Song 8.8-9 to the woman’s brothers, whose only role in the poem is a blind motif in 1.6).

Robert Hayward (Durham)

Psalm 30 and the Offering of First-fruits

The paper noted that the chanting of Psalm 30 by Levites is prescribed by Mishnah Bikkurim 3:4 for the procession of first-fruits through the Temple court. This seems an unusual text to be associated with joyful celebration, given that it expresses thanks for recovery from life-threatening disease, or perhaps deliverance from enemies, referring to rescue from She'ol and the Pit (verses 4,10) after urgent pleas for divine help (verses 9-11). The paper observed that the Mishnah legislates for activities mentioned by Deut. 26:1-11, systematised in three stages: the selection of first-fruits and their transport to Jerusalem; their entry into Jerusalem and procession through the Temple court; and the worshipper's presentation of them to the priest. Each stage requires the recitation of Scriptural words. Jer. 31:6 accompanies the first stage: it is entirely appropriate for first-fruits, like the whole section Jer. 31:1-14. The second stage involves Psalm 30. The third demands recital of Deut. 26:3-10, including the words "a wandering Aramaean was my father" (Deut. 26:5). However, it was noted that ancient Jewish interpretation (Targum, Midrash, Passover Haggadah), took Deut. 26:5 to mean "Laban the Aramaean sought to kill my father". Given this, Psalm 30's place in the ceremony becomes clearer, since first-fruits can be tied to the rescue of Israel's eponymous ancestor from death. In Rabbinic texts, this Psalm is construed as having national significance, being listed as one of "Ten Songs" bound up with crucial events in Israel's history. In some lists it is called "the song of Solomon", noting its heading in MT: "A Psalm. A Song of the Inauguration of the Temple. For David". It was suggested that Ps. 30:11's reference to wailing being turned into dance, reversing language of exile pictured in Lam 5:15 (see also Jer. 31:4, 13), perhaps hints at Rabbinic hopes for restoration of the Temple Service.

SOTS Website

Don't forget to look at the SOTS website (<https://www.sots.ac.uk>) for news updates and details of forthcoming meetings. Copies of Previous Bulletins as well as the members' address list and minutes of past business meetings can be found on the secure members' area. If you have forgotten it, you may set a new password through the website itself.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Among **appointments, promotions and honours** received by members of the Society were the following: Dr Carly Crouch appointed as David Alan Hubbard Chair of Old Testament at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California.

The Society learned with regret of the **deaths** of Peter Addinall, Richard Coggins, Philip Davies, Gwilym Jones, Otto Kaiser, Ora Lipschitz, Alan Lowe, Enid Mellor, Robert Murray and Ernest Revell.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Mr Stephen Campbell, Rev Dr Lyndon Drake, Prof Federico Giuntoli, Dr Bradley Marsh, Jr., Dr Eric Ortlund, Mr Richard Rohlfing, Jr., Mr William Ross, Mr Joseph Scales, Ms Elisabeth Sawerthal, Mr Joseph Triolo, Dr Norman Wilson and Mr Hei Yin (Johnson) Yip. At the Summer Meeting: Dr Robert Allan, Dr Arjen Bakker, Miss Christie Broom, Dr Marieke Dhont, Dr Johanna Erzberger, Dr Sylvia Gourley, Dr Adam Hensley, Mr Iain Jamieson, Dr Andrew Langley, Mr Wen-Pin Leow and Mr Simeon Whiting.

The Society elected Prof Thomas Römer to Honorary Membership.

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), Thomas Römer (2018) and Rudolf Smend (1979).

For information on the nomination of Honorary Members see:
<https://www.sots.ac.uk/about-the-society/honorary-members/>

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. 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.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

Essay Prize

The Society has revised the awarding of its essay Prize (value £500) as follows:

1. Eligibility: 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.
2. Call: The call for essays, to be of a publishable standard, and not more than 10,000 words in length, will be announced verbally during the Winter meeting, and circulated on its own electronically and posted on the Society's website immediately after that meeting. A further reminder of the closing date will be circulated electronically in March. Essays should be submitted to the current President by 30th of June and the winner will be announced at the following Winter meeting. 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.

3. Review Process: 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) who will forward the group's recommendation to the Secretary by the middle of December for approval by the Committee and subsequent communication to the Programme Sub-Committee (see below). However, the Society reserves the right not to make an award if no suitable submission is received.
4. Publication: It is anticipated that an offer of publication in JSOT will normally be made, subject to the consent of the author(s); 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 Sub-Committee, where possible.

Future Meetings

The **Winter Meeting 2019** will be held on **7th – 9th January** at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge and the **Summer Meeting 2019**, will be held on **22nd – 25th July**, at Worcester College, Oxford. Both meetings will be under the presidency of Prof Susan Gillingham.

Members wishing to read a paper or conduct a workshop or other session at a forthcoming Meeting should write to the Secretary (shepherd@tcd.ie), giving a title and brief summary of the proposed paper or session, by the end of June (for the Meeting the following summer) or the end of November (for the Meeting the following Winter). The Programme Sub-Committee will respond to all proposals received. For academic papers, offers of shorter presentations (25 minutes) are particularly welcome, but longer presentations (50 minutes) may also be proposed. 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 2017

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 30th September 2017

	General fund £	Bursary fund £	Legacy fund £	Total Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2016 £
Income					
Activities for generating funds					
Subscriptions & Donations	8,720	2,904		11,624	11,212
Conference income	40,893			40,893	39,125
Centenary income			1,251	1,251	
Investment income					
Interest & Royalties	13			13	51
Total income	49,626	2,904	1,251	53,781	50,388
Expenditure					
Conference costs	39,751			39,751	37,978
Centenary costs			25,653	25,653	
Book list grant	5,595			5,595	46
Bursaries		3,639		3,639	2,715
Printing, Postage, Stationery etc	973			973	1,880
Accountancy fees	870			870	846
Project costs					4,317
Bank charges	559			559	610
Total Expenditure	47,748	3,639	25,653	77,040	48,392
Surplus/ (Deficit) for year	1,878	(735)	(24,402)	(23,259)	1,996
Balance as at 1 October 2016	57,082	(284)	52,978	109,776	107,780
Balance as at 30 September 2017	58,960	(1,019)	28,576	86,517	109,776

BALANCE SHEET as at 30th September 2017

	2017		2016	
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in Hand				
Current Account	5,082		9,456	
Business Premium	81,170		102,157	
		86,252		111,613
Debtors: falling due within one year				
Prepayments & accrued Income		1,135		
Creditors: falling due within one year				
Accruals & deferred income		(870)		(1,837)
		86,517		109,776
Reserves:	£	£		
General Fund	58,960	57,082		
Bursary Fund	(1,019)	(284)		
Legacy Fund	28,576	52,978		
	86,517	109,776		

Notes to the Financial Statements (for the Year Ended 30 September 2017):

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 book lists or general stationery.

Fixed Assets and Depredation

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.

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 October 2016 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2016 £
Porter Legacy	52,978	1,251	(25,653)	28,576
	52,978	1,251	(25,653)	28,576

The Porter Legacy fund was 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 2019

President: Professor Susan Gillingham, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford, Gibson Building, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6GG, England (email: susan.gillingham@theology.ox.ac.uk)

Retiring President: 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)

President-elect: Revd Dr Walter J Houston, 35 Brock Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 1DL, England (walter.houston@mansfield.ox.ac.uk)

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

Secretary: Dr David Shepherd, School of Religion, 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 Siobhán Dowling-Long, Dr Alison Gray, Professor Charlotte Hempel, Dr Sandra Jacobs, Dr Anja Klein, Dr Holly Morse and Professor 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 Gwen Knight.

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 Professor George Brooke, Dr Matthew Collins, Professor Cheryl Exum and Dr Elizabeth Hayes.

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	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	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	Emery Barnes	1983	Roy Porter
1936	Battersby Harford	1984	Wilfred Lambert
1937-38	Godfrey Driver	1985	Ronald Clements
1939-40	Herbert Loewe	1986	Barnabas Lindars
1941-45	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	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	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
2016 Adrian Curtis
2017 Paul Joyce