
**THE SOCIETY FOR
OLD TESTAMENT STUDY**

BULLETIN

2019

94th WINTER MEETING
7th - 9th January 2019
Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge
Prof Susan Gillingham presiding

Susan Gillingham (Oxford)

Bifocal Reading: Textual Analysis and a Critical Imagination in Biblical Studies

The paper first discussed (in conversation with the work of John Barton) the theory of *textual analysis*, arguing that it had both a diachronic and synchronic remit, challenging not only the intellect but also the imagination. The paper then examined what was meant by a *critical imagination*, offering as an illustration of imaginative enquiry a dialogue between ancient iconography and a biblical text. The contributions of Othmar Keel, Silvia Schroer, Izaak de Hulster and Joel LeMon were important here, alongside William Brown's work on the theology of metaphor in biblical poetry. The final section, on the *praxis* of bifocal reading, began with a textual analysis of Ps. 19:5, with its two similes of the sun as a 'strong man' and 'bridegroom'. This was then read in the context of ancient iconographical representations on cylinder seals of the sun-god Shamash. This imaginative visual engagement with the world 'before' the psalm was

contrasted with a similar engagement with the world ‘beyond’ the psalm, exemplified in the specific iconographical depictions of Ps. 19:5 in three related Psalters, which when read bifocally reveal a complex relationship between mythology and poetry in Ps.19:5, evident in both its ancient setting and its later reception. Returning to the initial theme of the importance of inclusivism in the Society, the paper concluded that we need to celebrate such plurivalency and diversity in our present scholarship, and it was anticipated that the following papers as well as those in the July meeting would indeed achieve this.

John Goldingay (Oxford)

On Reading Genesis 49

The paper began by noting that two lengthy monographs on the Testament of Jacob by Raymond de Hoop and Jean-Daniel Macchi, published in the same year, come to quite different views on the origin of Genesis 49 and also illustrate the diversity of scholarly views on the exegetical questions it raises. It was suggested that this double aporia can be reduced if we take more account of the fact that the Testament is a piece of poetry and a piece of rhetoric. Poetry doesn’t have to be syntactically neat; it may be allusive and elliptical. It likes anaphora; suggestions about emending the text to remove repetition are questionable. The Testament likes metaphor and likes paronomasia, and likes to play with double meanings; the Joseph blessing is the most complex and sophisticated in this respect. These features do raise the question of how the poetry with its subtlety was communicated. But they also reflect the fact that the Testament is an exercise in rhetoric, in persuasion, though Father Jacob’s approach to persuasion is very different from Father Solomon’s in Proverbs 1 – 9. Whatever the Testament’s date, it offers Israel some account of how all twelve clans may be understood, and its inclusion in the Torah implies that in this connection it continued to be significant for the people of God. It is indeed a high point in Genesis, a climax to the book, a sometimes enigmatic poem that is animated and vibrant, thought-provoking and suggestive, significant and challenging.

Siobhán Dowling-Long (Cork)

An Exploration of Biblical Pathos Through Music

This presentation explored the theme of pathos in Ps. 139, Ps. 137, and 2 Sam. 18:33 as interpreted by composers and musicians. It began with a performance of the 'Introit for Easter Day (*Resurrexi*)' based on Ps. 139: 5, 6, 1-2 by the Benedictine monks of the Abbey of Notre-Dame de Fontgombault. It illustrated how this setting, which has been interpreted since the ninth century to refer to Christ's awakening at his resurrection, reflects not the joyfulness of the resurrection but rather the suffering of Christ through its mournful setting in Mode 4. The second excerpt, 'On Willows and Birches' (A Concerto for Harp and Orchestra) (2009) by John Williams, based on a setting of Psalm 137, illustrated the lament of the Israelite people through the music of their harps which hung upon the willows and which refused to remain silent as the wind wafted through their strings. The final piece of music focused on David's lament for Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33) through Eric Whitacre's poignant work 'When David Heard' (1999). The presentation argued that music, above any other artistic medium, has the power to open up the biblical text in ways that touch the heart beyond any need for words.

Ekaterina Kozlova (London)

Acedic Kingship in ANE: Gilgamesh and David as Paradigmatic Kings of 'Unfocused Energy'

This paper began by discussing the phenomenon of 'restlessness' in ANE and HB sources in general, showing how it was viewed as an extreme misfortune often inflicted on people by their gods. It then proceeded to examine this phenomenon in relation to ANE kingship arguing that a monarch's unfocused and unchecked energy could be both personally and communally damaging. Focusing on two well-known kings, Gilgamesh and David, already compared in the work of Susan Ackerman, this paper argued that these kings' 'restless/acedic rule' and 'restless/acedic slip-up' respectively led to severe repercussions for their subjects. The discussion focused on Gilgamesh and David's deviant *eros*, as well as its group consequences, as seen specifically through the lens of 'restlessness'. While Gilgamesh's 'restless heart' leads him to exploit the people of Uruk, David's

neglect of his royal duties (2 Sam. 10-11) and restlessness (2 Sam. 11:2-3), leads to an extramarital affair with Bathsheba, one of his subjects (2 Sam. 11:2-5) which unleashes a series of devastating events within David's own family and his kingdom, and eventually climaxes in a civil war.

Katharine J Dell (Cambridge)

'The Lord loved Him' (2 Sam. 12:24): Solomon as idealized character and paradigm for character ethics within the 'Solomonic' canon.

This paper argued that in describing the infant Solomon, the writer's assurance that 'The Lord loved Him' (יהוה אהבו) in 2 Sam. 12:24 is definitive for understanding the presentation of King Solomon in I Kings 1-11. This divine ratification, accompanied by the repetition of the same principle to his father, David, echoes across the account, right up until chapter 11 where the divine favour is withdrawn. This paper also argued that the character of Solomon remains flat and idealized throughout (until the last chapter) and that, whilst he is characterized by his wisdom (the nature of which develops as the account proceeds) and role as temple builder, these descriptions remain superficial. Even when Solomon does speak, much of what he says is moralistic and pious. He is essentially a moral paradigm and this view of him is perpetuated in the canon by the 'Solomonic' writings that bear his name.

Holly Morse (Manchester)

Seeing Sense: Prophetic Visuality as a Response to Trauma

Noting that the Bible is a visual document which insists on the role of the reader's imagination as part of the meaning making process that converts written word into vibrant message, this paper explored the trauma art of twentieth century German artist, Anselm Kiefer, analysing how the artist appropriates Hebrew prophecy in his attempts to see sense in his own post-war, post-Holocaust cultural context. Noting with Martin O'Kane that it is essential to consider the 'very creative ways [artists have worked] in order to portray the intense personal and communal suffering so eloquently articulated in the

Bible’ – this paper advocated looking at biblical representations of personal and communal suffering that have supplied a visual language for later artists to work through their own experiences of pain, not least because reception criticism should be about more than a forward trajectory, tracking the way artists have, *after* the text, converted word to image. The paper suggested that we might also think about how engagement with contemporary artistic appropriations of biblical trauma can allow us as modern readers to see biblical texts anew and how their encounters with biblical vision in the context of trauma can provoke us to consider whether the visuality of ancient biblical prophecy might also be bound up with its own setting of collective cultural and national trauma.

John Jarick (Oxford)

God as Gambler

This paper explored one of the less-commented-upon pictures of God in the Old Testament, namely that of the deity as not only an instigator of ‘games of chance’ for humans to live by (the casting of lots and the deployment of *urim* and *thummim*) but also as a practitioner of decidedly chancy pursuits himself (in his activities of creation, election, and testing of mortals). It investigated: the divine sanction for the ‘games of chance’ in human affairs (including a discussion of the permutations of an *urim-or-thummim* dichotomy and the implications of the casting of lots over the two goats on the Day of Atonement); the great gamble of creation in the second chapter of Genesis and beyond (such aspects as the creator’s uncertainty about what he is creating and how it could be made to work properly, and whether the second toss of the coin after Noah is any more likely to succeed than the first toss of the coin with Adam); the ongoing gambling on patriarchs, priests, and princes (with a consideration of the considerable number of times that those on whom God had pinned his colours failed to perform adequately); and the preeminent case of the heavenly wager taken out on the figure of Job (including a discussion of the implications for God’s gambling character in the divine speeches at the end of the poetic section of the book).

Joseph Blenkinsopp (South Bend)

Re-Reading Isaiah in the Light of Psalms

Given that both Isaiah and the book of Psalms are compilations of texts gathered over a long period by many contributors and together constitute the most substantial unit in the Hebrew Scriptures, this paper offered a close intertextual study highlighting themes common to both texts. In Psalms, the focus was on those compositions attributed in the psalm titles to members of the musical guilds in the Second Temple, together with similar untitled psalms, while in Isaiah, the focus was on psalms which occur throughout the three main sections of the book, and do so with much greater frequency than in any other prophetic book. Of the common themes and motifs, the most prominent is Zion which is named seventy-nine times in Psalms-Isaiah but only rarely in other prophetic books, including Ezekiel, Haggai and Malachi, despite their concern with Jerusalem and its temple. The intertextual reading offered here brought to light a way of experiencing and articulating commitment to the fundamentals of the faith of Israel which had its own distinctive character vis-à-vis torah religion in both its Deuteronomistic (D) and Priestly (P) formulations and even more so vis-à-vis the reflective and didactic compositions in the Ketuvim and elsewhere in the canonical writings. The paper concluded with an invitation to critically test the theory of Ulrich Berges that exiled members of the temple musician guilds were responsible for the core of Isaiah 40-55, especially 40-48, which were brought back to Jerusalem by them as a message of hope for the survivors who escaped exile.

James Aitken (Cambridge)

The idea of the Septuagint

The paper began by observing that many theories have circulated about why the Septuagint was produced, but that the assumption of a loss of knowledge of Hebrew has been dominant. It observed further that new discoveries in Egypt of Greek papyri had shed light on varying registers of Greek and the social significance of language at the time. Having identified natural Greek usage within the Septuagint, the paper argued that the translators had native competence in Greek, and that comparison of the Septuagint with Greek literary

compositions in Egypt indicated the important role of Greek even for Egyptians who still spoke their native Demotic and the value of Greek as a cultural marker of some significance for the Jewish translators as well.

Alastair Hunter (Glasgow)

Transports of Delight: Adventures in Psalms Translation

This paper described an ongoing project focused on the translation of groups of psalms. Accordingly, it was suggested that the Psalms of Ascents depend to a high degree on formal devices, have as their shared locus the liturgy of pilgrimage and betray an intensity which may be illustrated by means of the conventions of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Instead of reading the first two books of Psalms in the context of the life of David, the paper borrowed from the tropes of Greek epic poetry to parallel the far from saintly David with the cunning but successful Odysseus. The analysis of book three of Psalms paired them with Donne's Holy Sonnets and focused on the role of these psalms in addressing the seeming failure of everything held dear by the community.

95th SUMMER MEETING
22nd – 25th July 2019
Worcester College, Oxford
Prof Susan Gillingham presiding

Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen)

The Masoretic and the Septuagint Psalter: Status quo and Issues for Future Research

This paper began by noting that the Psalter, as attested in its Masoretic and Greek version(s), is the result of a long-term process of collecting and selecting hymns, prayers, and other texts to provide helpful tools in the wide realm of religious activities: cult, divine and royal, individual and collective cultic requirements, individual devotion and reflection. The paper stressed the multiplicity of texts for every kind of requirement and how unsurprising it was that literary traces would remain and testify to different kinds of usage. It was argued that formal critical terms like ‘Sitz im Leben’ and ‘Sitz in der Literatur’ should be abandoned and that formal characteristics and formulas were less characteristic of the psalms than variety and variation. The paper challenged what it saw as the present tendency to ascribe overarching theological themes to major sections of the Psalter in its final form, specifically taking issue with the alleged five-fold structuring of the Psalter according to the five-fold Torah, and the supposed two-fold structuring of the Psalter according to messianic (Ps. 2-89) and theocratic (Ps. 90-150) ideas. The paper concluded by instead encouraging attention to the remarkable identity of the Masoretic and Septuagint traditions of the Psalter, compared with what can be reconstructed from the evidence provided from Qumran.

Jenni Williams (Oxford)

Righteous betrayal: the people who helped David

This paper examined the complex characterisation of those who support David in the narratives of his rise to power in 1 and 2 Samuel. It was suggested that the value of such an approach is that it shifts the focus away from how the narrative speaks of David and onto how the characters experience David. This functions as a way to voice the author's anxieties about the experience and the cost of having a king. The paper considered that, for each of these characters, the need to betray an existing relationship or alliance is fundamental to their actions. This betrayal is portrayed as righteous in the narrative. The question of bloodguilt comes to the fore with the absolute necessity that David be prevented from incurring such guilt. It was observed that in the surrounding narratives of 1 Sam. 24 and 26 he is able to exercise restraint himself but in 1 Sam. 25, Abigail protects him by re-situating judgment in the divine realm. In this way, David's enemies are articulated as YHWH's enemies also. Abigail thus betrays her husband to save David. The paper considers that this dynamic can also be seen in other characters with a major role to play such as the Saulides. The tragedy of Jonathan is that he believes he can avoid betraying either his father/king or his friend. Thus, these narratives are a variation of the warnings in 1 Sam. 8 about what a king will 'take', as loyalty to the king supersedes other loyalties.

Adam Hensley (North Adelaide)

A Closer Look at the Postscript of Psalm 72:20

It was observed that Ps. 72:20, '*Ended are the prayers of David, son of Jesse*' (כָּלֵו תַּפִּלֹּת דָּוִד בֶּן־יֵשׁׁי), has been variously explained in view of further Davidic psalms in the Psalter (86, 101, 103, 108–110, etc.). After a brief survey of such explanations, this paper contended that the genealogical qualifier '*ben Jesse*' offers an important clue as to how 72:20 was understood in a Psalter large enough to encompass subsequent Davidic psalms. Verse 20 of Psalm 72 marks a shift in focus: Davidic psalms pre-Ps. 72 chiefly have the historical David *ben Jesse* in view, and by implication Davidic psalms and 'David' thereafter largely have a future or eschatological 'David'/Davidic monarchy as their chief referent. Such an understanding of the

postscript's *meaning* helps to explain its editorial retention and *reuse* while leaving room for various theories about its possible *origins* in the Psalter's composition-history. It was argued that it also accounts for important data that other theories often fail to explain adequately; e.g., the distribution of superscriptional 'historical notes' in the Psalter and Childs' observations concerning 72:20's semantic effect on Pss. 71–72; and Ps. 86's identification as a '*prayer* (תְּפִלָּה) of David.' While the paper noted that scholarly accounts of Books III, IV, and V vary greatly, the 'genealogical explanation' shed light on how David appears in those books. Accordingly, the paper concluded by examining 'David' in Book III in order to further explore questions relating to the identity/signification of David in the Psalter and identify other diachronic and synchronic implications.

Stefan Attard (Malta)

Overturning Laments – An Assessment of the So-Called Prophetic Perfect Formulations in the Psalms

It was noted that from a form critical perspective, formulations of positive outcomes reported at the end of laments beg the question: what import do such formulations have on the particular psalm in which they appear? While it was noted that synchronic readings have interpreted them as prophetic Perfects, such an interpretation has always been limited to the analysis of individual psalms. If the *Gesamtinterpretation* proposed by a canonical reading is to be taken seriously, one must not read the prophetic Perfects only in relation to the respective psalms in which they appear. Rather, it was suggested here that their influence on larger portions of the Psalter, and indeed, on the whole book must be gauged. The paper thus proposed a canonical reading that takes the whole Psalter into consideration in order to evaluate not so much the veracity of such positive expressions as the import of the laments that feature throughout the whole collection. The internal dynamics of the Psalter point to an increasing awareness that the whole collection is a celebration of God's power and not a statement concerning the psalmist's abject state. Moreover, it was argued that the impact of the introductory Psalms, particularly Ps. 2, and their effect on the lament psalms that follow must be carefully gauged in order to better understand the relevance of the positive formulations in such a genre, as not only speaking to matters

of faith, however important these may be in the creation of psalms and Psalter, but primarily matters of truth.

Melody Knowles (Alexandria, VA)

Politics in a Paraphrase: The Treatment of Ps. 132 by Mary Sidney Herbert

This paper argued that in her metrical paraphrase of the psalter, begun by her celebrated brother Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, extended the possibilities of English poetics and undergirded the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. It noted that the paraphrase of Ps. 132 in particular is a parade example of poetry promoting politics. As Mary Sidney Herbert re-wrote the ancient poem that tells of the vows of David and YHWH, she recast her own childless queen into YHWH's chosen and prolific ruler. She also stretched the poetry of the original text into a work that could resource English lyric and Calvinist theology. Employing an interdisciplinary corpus of evidence (including biblical commentary, congregational songs, political speeches, and paintings), this presentation traced a particular reception of Ps 132 that both reflected and aimed to influence the political discourse of the day.

Deborah Rooke (Oxford)

Handel-ing the Psalms: A Reception-Historical Consideration of Handel's *Chandos Anthems*

The paper began by recounting that G.F. Handel's eleven *Chandos Anthems* were produced during Handel's period as composer-in-residence to James Brydges, Earl of Caernarvon and later Duke of Chandos, whose country residence was at Cannons in Middlesex. Composed in 1717-18 they employed both vocal and instrumental forces, and their text (in English) was taken from the Psalms, using a mixture of the 1539 translation by Miles Coverdale that was employed in the *Book of Common Prayer* and the metrical paraphrases of the Psalms published by Nahum Tate and Nicolas Brady in 1696. The paper proceeded to examine texts from the *Anthems* in relation to their musical settings, focusing particularly on which texts are used from which translations, why such choices might have been made, and what

the texts in that combination might have meant to their eighteenth-century audience.

William P. Brown (Decatur, GA)

Job and the ‘Comforting’ Chaos

This paper began by acknowledging that the book of Job is a masterpiece of literary complexity culminating in Job’s encounter with YHWH (chs. 38-42), observing too that Job’s final words in 42:3-6 are rife with interpretive possibilities, as the history of commentary attests all too well. Noting that how one interprets Job’s last words has much to do with how one interprets YHWH’s final words in the poetry and vice versa, the paper argued that Job’s final response conjoins two seemingly conflicting affects: awe and comfort reflecting both ‘Therefore, I declared what I did not understand, things *too wonderful* for me, which I did not know’ (v. 3) and ‘Therefore, I relent and am *comforted* over dust and ashes’ (v. 6). How these two sentiments coexist is not a problem psychologically, as recent studies in the ‘science of awe’ attest. Moreover, Job’s acknowledgment of being ‘comforted’ (v. 6b) prompts a more nuanced reading of YHWH’s answer to Job, which indeed suggests something ‘comforting’ about chaos vis-à-vis Job despite the harshness of divine rebuke. In such cosmic chaos, Job finds a surprising connection to himself that, in turn, both affirms and transforms him, as indicated in the epilogue.

Alun Thomas (Dublin)

Out of Order! Cases of Non-obligatory Transpositions in Qumran Aramaic and Old Greek Job

It was suggested that the Aramaic fragments of a translation of Job from Caves 4 and 11 from Qumran afford a rare glimpse into a period of biblical translation thought previously to be solely witnessed to by Old Greek Job (OGJ). It was also noted that previous studies of Qumran Aramaic Job (QAJ) had been mainly limited to synoptic comparisons with later Aramaic translations such as the Rabbinic *Targumim* and Syriac Peshitta, leading to the conclusion that unlike the Rabbinic *Targumim* which are typically careful to render each

element of the Hebrew text and follow the order in which they occur in the source text, QAJ (like the Peshitta of Job) more readily accommodates the Hebrew source text to the demands of Aramaic idiom. Given their comparable antiquity, this paper suggested that the time was ripe for a cross-linguistic comparison of the Old Greek Job and Qumran Aramaic Job and went on to consider departures in QAJ and OGJ from the word order of MT which do not appear to reflect the linguistic constraints of the respective target languages, in contrast to later Rabbinic targumim and Greek translations which more closely represented the word order of the Hebrew.

Zanne Domoney-Lyttle (Glasgow)

Of Matriarchs and Motherhood: Patriarchal Strategy in the reception of Mothers in the Hebrew Bible

This paper discussed the reception of the Matriarchs of Genesis in light of Esther Fuchs' argument that literary strategies of biblical patriarchy prevent 'the mother figure from becoming a fully-fledged *human* role model' – within the Hebrew Bible. It argued that while the patriarch Abraham is remembered outside of Genesis for his role as father, receiver of covenantal promises and friend of God, the mothers who produce his children (enabling him to be remembered for those particular roles) are nearly completely erased from biblical texts outside of Genesis. It went on to offer an analysis of 1 Chr. 1:32-33 and Isa. 51:2 with a view to assessing the impact of patriarchal strategies employed by ancient writers to limit the role of mothers within those verses.

Neil Morrison (Belfast)

Mapping the Chronicler's doctrine of retribution within the Hebrew Bible

This paper observed that the theme of divine retribution is one of the most distinctive and widely-recognised features of the Chronicler's work. In the past it has been common for scholars to understand this motif vis-à-vis the Deuteronomistic History and to focus on the fact that the outworking of retribution in Chronicles is often more immediate and directed more particularly towards individuals than is

evident in the parallel accounts in Samuel-Kings. It was noted that while this comparative approach has been helpful in uncovering the didactic purpose of retribution in Chronicles, it fails to take account of how the Chronicler interacts with other strands of retributive thought within the Hebrew Bible. The paper then sought to address this gap by exploring points of contact between Chronicles and contemporaneous literature of the Second Temple period, considering parallels between Chronicles and the view of retribution espoused in wisdom literature where the corollaries of reward and punishment are often presented in stark terms without ever becoming a ubiquitous principle. It went on to propose that the approach of the post-exilic prophets, who utilize retributive rhetoric in order to elicit support for the rebuilding and maintenance of the Second Temple, may have influenced the Chronicler's perspective – a thesis which was supported by examining the Chronicler's citation of prophetic sayings during key speeches within the work which call his contemporaries to take action in support of the temple and its priesthood.

Zoltan Schwab (Spurgeon's College, London)

Finding Creation in Ecclesiastes: Chasing after Wind?

This paper began by admitting that Ecclesiastes lacks explicit references to primeval creation or a focus on the 'createdness' of natural phenomena as may be seen elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. However, it went on to argue that studying the theme of creation and natural images enriches our understanding of the main concerns of Ecclesiastes. The paper drew attention to both the beginning of the book (Eccl. 1:4-11) and the 'end' of it (11:1-6) where we find meditations on natural phenomena. In addition, it noted that the movement of air (wind, breath) is a key metaphor for the human condition in the book. It suggested that analysing these nature-metaphors and admittedly passing references to God's continuous (creative) activity do reveal one of the main concerns of the book: how to live in the face of life's predictability (the wind will return to its origin; all of us will die) but also its unpredictability.

Laura Quick (Oxford)

Through a Glass, Darkly: Mirrors and the Self

This paper began by surveying the material evidence of mirrors as well as the literary texts that describe them from across the ancient Mediterranean as a means of fleshing out our picture of ancient mirrors. It observed that mirrors were understood to be a feminine product, being associated with women across a variety of archaeological and literary domains. Noting that mirrors were frequently utilized as votive offerings by women, it was suggested that mirrors in the ancient world had a religious, ritual aspect that allowed for a particularly female form of religious expression. It was noted that unlike mirrors today, which embody and signify accuracy in the reflection of the image, bronze mirrors from the first millennium BCE did not provide a particularly accurate reflection – which in turn shaped discourses about visual experience and the self in the ancient world. Because mirrors did not accurately reflect the image of the viewer, self-image was always mediated through the visual experience of the other. It was argued that integrating this recognition into our understanding of how the self is viewed in biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts, allows us to explore ancient conceptions of personhood and the self.

SOTS Website

Don't forget to visit 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: Professor Takamitsu Muraoka awarded the British Academy's Burkitt Medal 'for his outstanding contribution to the study of Hebrew grammar and syntax, and the Septuagint' (2017) and Professor Christopher Rowland 'for his services to Biblical Studies' (2018).

The Society learned with regret of the **deaths** of Edmée Kingsmill, John Rogerson, John Earp, Stanley McIvor and John Snaith.

The following have been **elected to membership** of the Society. At the Winter Meeting: Rev Dr Stefan Attard, Mr Rory Balfour, Dr Vasile Condrea, Dr Alinda Damsma, Rev Dr Melody Knowles, Dr Paul Kurtz.

At the Summer Meeting: Mr Moritz Adam, Mr Peter Atkins, Mr Robert Brown, Mrs Ellena Lyell, Dr Andrew Perrin, Dr Stefano Salemi.

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 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 will be held from the 6th to the 8th January 2020, at the Jubilee Campus, University of Nottingham and the Summer Meeting from the 20th to the 23rd July 2020 at Hulme Hall, Manchester.

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 2018

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 30th September 2018

	General fund £	Bursary fund £	Legacy fund £	Total Funds 2018 £	Total Funds 2017 £
Income					
Activities for generating funds					
Subscriptions & Donations	8,530	3,441		11,971	11,624
Conference income	35,025			35,025	40,893
Centenary income					1,251
Investment income					
Interest & Royalties	136			136	13
Total income	43,691	3,441		47,132	53,781
Expenditure					
Conference costs	38,294			38,294	39,751
Centenary costs			10,633	10,633	25,653
Book list grant	4,459			4,459	5,595
Bursaries		2,335		2,335	3,639
Printing, Postage, Stationery etc	1,105			1,105	973
Accountancy fees	894			894	870
Bank charges	314			314	559
Total Expenditure	45,066	2,335	10,633	58,034	77,040
Surplus/ (Deficit) for year	(1,375)	1,106	(10,633)	(10,902)	(23,259)
Balance as at 1 October 2017	57,960	(1,109)	28,576	86,517	109,776
Balance as at 30 September 2018	57,585	87	17,943	75,615	86,517

BALANCE SHEET as at 30th September 2018

	2018		2017	
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in Hand				
Current Account	3,331		5,082	
Business Premium	72,306		81,170	
		75,637		86,252
 Debtors: falling due within one year				
Prepayments & accrued Income		872		1,135
 Creditors: falling due within one year				
Accruals & deferred income		(894)		(870)
		75,615		86,517
 Reserves:		£		£
General Fund		57,585		58,960
Bursary Fund		87		(1,019)
Legacy Fund		17,943		28,576
		75,615		86,517

Notes to the Financial Statements (for the Year Ended 30 September 2018):

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 2017 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2018 £
Porter Legacy	28,576		(10,633)	17,943
	28,576		(10,633)	17,943

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 2020

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

Retiring 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)

President-elect: Professor Hugh Pyper, Professor of Biblical Interpretation, Department of Philosophy (Biblical Studies), University of Sheffield, 45 Victoria Street, Sheffield S3 7QB, England (email: pyper@sheffield.ac.uk)

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Membership Secretary: Dr Janet Tollington, 118 Balland Fields, Willingham, Cambridge CB24 5JU (email: jet40@cam.ac.uk)

Hospitality Secretary: Dr Janet Fyffe, 25 Birchlands Ave, Balham, London SW12 8ND (jfyffe@btinternet.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, Dr Katherine Southwood and Professor Nick Wyatt.

Programme Sub-Committee: The Secretary (Convener), President, President-elect, Hospitality Secretary, plus Dr Jessica Keady, Dr Nathan McDonald 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, Professor Cheryl Exum and Dr Andrew Mein.

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