
THE SOCIETY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

BULLETIN 2021

96th WINTER MEETING
5th – 7th January 2021
Online
Prof Hugh Pyper presiding

Hugh Pyper

Old Testament Studies after Covid-19? Precedents for Dealing with the Unprecedented

This paper began by noting the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on our lives in general and therefore on universities and religious communities and the teaching of the Hebrew Bible. It was further observed that while the Bible may not propose an immediate cure for Covid-19, it does have something to say about the notion of the unprecedented. The Bible is a way-station for the transmission of stories which allow communities to retain memories of precedents that offer strategies for survival of what may seem unprecedented crises. One such story may be an unexpected precedent to the current situation. Faced with the collapse of the schools and libraries of the Roman world at the end of the sixth century, Cassiodorus Senator wrote his Institutes, which were designed to enable the next generation of scholars to transmit and interpret biblical texts without the aid of a teacher. In it he prescribes a course of reading which includes the great works of the classical world. Trained himself in the skills of rhetorical and textual

analysis that had been developed through the study of Homer, but which the new generation had no opportunity to learn, he sought to ensure that his students had the critical and exegetical tools to appreciate the sophisticated literary qualities of the biblical texts and to counter flawed interpretations. In the process, he happened to preserve the key texts of the classical tradition. His conviction that the rhetorical devices of the Greek and Roman writers had all been derived from the Bible may no longer hold water, but his work testifies to the importance of continuing to tell the stories of the remaking of stories. The threat of loss can become the spur to preservation. All those who are finding creative ways to enable the next generation to carry on ‘telling the story’ in the face of the many current threats to the humanities and to biblical studies deserve our thanks and may find in Cassiodorus a precedent for coping with the unprecedented.

Megan Warner

‘Are You Indeed to Reign Over Us?’ The Politics of Genesis 37–50

This paper explored the politics of the Joseph Materials. The paper argued that an originally northern saga was received in the south, where scribes included it in Genesis and subjected it to editing to serve southern interests. Building on work by Michael Fishbane, the paper focused most of its attention on Gen 37 and 49 (arguing that they are additional in their entirety) and editing within Gen 38, proposing that the southern additions facilitate an eclipse of the role of Joseph within the saga, promoting instead the claims of Judah to the position of ‘firstborn’. An important element of the argument is the narrative reliance on monarchic texts that can be seen in multiple levels of the text in its final form.

Mark Awabdy

Is Leviticus Ironic? Exploring Narrativ and Priestly Ironies in the Center of the Torah

This paper noted that to answer the question, ‘Is Leviticus Ironic?’ one must lay down a clear methodology, especially when the postmodernist reader can regard all ambiguity in literature as ironic. The approach adopted here was a minimalist one, restricting itself to only those

ironies that are, for most readers, *observable*, even though we may never know if the author *intended* to mark them as ironic. This study analyzed verbal, situational and dramatic ironies: first, in the editorial framework of Leviticus (Lev 1:1; 16:1); second, in the Priestly installation story of Lev 8–10; and third, in the Holiness (H) curses (Lev 26:34–35). The conclusion arrived at was that the editors, storytellers and the H scribes rarely appropriated irony from their literary repertoire, but when they did, they succeeded in incisively expressing their Yahwistic theology and ethics for the formation of the covenant people.

James Patrick

Target Practice with David's Bronze Bow: Reading 2 Sam 1:17–27
Concentrically

This paper began by noting that mature genres of oral composition prior to the eighth-century expansion of literacy have left only fossilised names in the superscriptions of some psalms. But in David's lament over Saul and Jonathan we seem to find one named survivor of ancient Israelite rhetoric, referred to in its introductory verses as 'a bow' (*qeshet*). When its last two verses, 26 and 27, are set apart from the primary structure, as is commonly proposed, the remaining seven verses form a perfectly balanced arc. Verses 19 and 25 are inverted in order to effect full closure, and identify Jonathan as the gazelle slain on the heights, alluding to his heroic cliff-scaling military exploit. In verses 20 and 24, the daughters of the Philistines and of Israel are contrasted in their reactions to distant reports. Moving toward the centre, verses 21 and 23 become aware of the battlefield itself on the 'high places', evoked through aural word-play with 'offerings' and 'in their deaths', though neither shields nor speed nor strength prevented Saul and Jonathan falling together. However, in verse 22 they are still powerfully alive, courageous and undefeated, without any allusion to their death, as if avoiding its painful reality. Structurally, the notch at the bow's centre is the word 'bow'. Verse 27 then triangulates the arrow of David's personal grief, verse 26, over the bow-string of warriors fallen and the central verse about weapons. Thus, *qeshet* seems eminently suitable as the original rhetorical term for what is commonly but imprecisely and anachronistically known as (odd-numbered) 'chiasmus'.

Douglas Earl

Divine and Human Violence in the Historical Books

It was noted from the outset that it has become commonplace to characterize the Historical Books as violent and to regard this characterization as posing a problem demanding a solution—one which is often arrived at through a repudiation of texts. It was, however, observed here that ‘violence’ is an interpretative concept supplied by readers and that such characterization was essentially absent prior to the 1990s. The paper then proceeded to analyse the nature of the concept of violence, arguing that its rhetorical and ideological force urges a repudiation or rejection of that which is described as violent. With reference to the Historical Books, the label of violence as an overall interpretative lens is often used ideologically to prevent appreciation and appropriation of the texts and the traditions that they represent. While this label should not therefore be simply accepted by Judeo-Christian readers, the localized use of the concept of violence can bring into focus some of the interpretative issues and challenges concerning particular stories.

Kyong-Jin Lee

Human Nature and Politics: A Modern Political-Theoretical Reading of Esther

The presenter began by observing that in international political theory, classical realists believe that national and international actors are bound to pursue their self-interest and concomitant political and economic goals. By contrast, the realist theory of international relations tends to operate on the presupposition that pervasive evil resides in human nature and political interaction. It was also noted that the question of human nature and morality in political dynamics is prominently featured in the book of Esther, in which an imperial legal system of checks and balances is simply a flamboyant formality and statewide decisions are reduced to arbitrary, private, and subjective judgments. Esther’s comedic novella of political and moral limitations urges a theoretical reflection on the implication of human nature in politics—a key concept which underlies the biblical writer’s scrutiny and critique

of power and authority. This paper offered an intertextual elucidation of the biblical author's political thought on human nature by applying the works of two of the twentieth century's most notable political theorists—Carl Schmitt (1888–1985) and Friedrich A. Hayek (1899–1992). It suggested that Schmitt's insight from constitutional philosophy and Hayek's from political economy demonstrate how hermeneutical tools from non-Jewish texts can contribute to a fruitful study of the book of Esther and Jewish diaspora life. Such insights into the egoistic nature of human beings and modern society's exaggerated confidence in reason and technology were seen to dovetail with the book of Esther's critique of the Persian Empire's glorification of power without a corresponding ethical framework.

Carol Newsom

Theory of Mind in Israelite Narrative and Its Implications for a History of the Self

This paper began with the observation that although the topic of the Israelite and early Jewish 'self' has been explored in a variety of ways, the role of 'theory of mind' in Israelite prose narrative has not received much attention. Although the category was developed in the fields of primatology and psychology, in literature it designates the ways in which narrative can represent states of mind, or make concealed states of mind central to the action, or represent characters making attempts at 'reading the minds' of other characters. Most traditional narrative cultures pay little attention to these topics, and that is to a large extent true of earlier biblical narrative. While it can be difficult to date some narratives, there appears to be a distinct increase in interest in theory of mind in narratives from the Persian and Hellenistic periods, suggesting an audience with an increasing interest in aspects of psychology that were previously not so culturally salient. This paper examines examples of theory of mind in 1 Samuel, the Joseph story, Esther, Ruth, Jonah, and Judith.

Magnar Kartveit

The Significance of the Pre-Samaritan Texts and the Mt Gerizim Finds for Biblical Studies

It was noted at the outset that the pre-Samaritan texts reflect the transmission and editing of the Pentateuch and that expansions are particularly found in connection with the work of Moses as he delivers divine messages or recounts history. It was suggested that this ‘Moses layer’ may be connected to the discussions in the Pentateuch about Moses as an archetypal prophet (Num 11; 12; Deut 18; 34) and that this text-type was the basis of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Turning to Mt. Gerizim, it was noted that the excavations there have unearthed a large city on top of the mountain, flourishing from around 200 to 110 BCE, but older than that. It had a place for sacrifices, perhaps a sanctuary or even a temple, although only scant remains of any such altar or building have been found. During the excavations, 395 inscriptions were found, most of them fragmentary, 389 in Aramaic or Hebrew script, 4 in Samaritan script. On paleographical grounds, they are dated to the first half of the second century BCE, or slightly earlier. They show connections to the Hebrew Bible and some scholars today think that the Pentateuch is a compromise or the result of a cooperation between Jerusalem and Gerizim. This might well explain why the cooperation or compromise resulted in two different text types, the proto-MT and the Samaritan text, and also in hostilities.

Olga Fabrikant-Burke

The Scribal Invention of False Prophecy of Salvation in the Book of Jeremiah

This paper began by noting the enduring puzzle in modern biblical scholarship of the so-called ‘false prophecy of salvation’, long thought to be found in the elaborate speeches which the Jeremianic tradition imputes to Jeremiah’s rivals (Jer 6:14; 14:13, 15; 23:17, 25; 27:9, 14, 16; 28:2–4, 10–11; 29:8, 26–28; 37:19). Noting the diversity of previous interpretations, the presenter sought to shift the focus from the historical circumstances of ancient Israelite prophecy to scribal hermeneutics—that is to say, from the putative *extra-textual* realities of prophecy in ancient Israel to the *textual* realities of the developing Israelite prophetic literature. In doing so, it was argued that false prophecy of salvation in the book of Jeremiah is best understood as a scribal construct. That is to say, it is a scribal literary invention and thus

a product of ancient exegetical imagination. What this suggests is that the Jeremianic false prophets are imagined *exegetical* opponents, and our scribal scholars engage in hypothetical exegetical polemics with them. The argument, in sum, is that the Jeremianic false prophecy of salvation is an integral part of the great and sprawling scribal project of scriptural interpretation in ancient Israel.

Philip Alexander

Recent Trends in the Study of the Aramaic Targumim

It was observed that thirty years of research on the Targumim has brought us to the cusp of a paradigm shift of which only a few aspects could be noted here. First the centrality of the MSS tradition was noted, both as a text critical witness but also as testimony to the nature of the Targumim's transmission and use. While noting that the received form of some Targumim (Neofiti 1 and Ps-Jon) may contain old traditions, it also testifies to the dynamic tradition of Targum in the Middle Ages. Second, it was noted that while it has been widely assumed that the parallels between the Targumim and the Midrashim reflect the fundamentally Rabbinic origin of the traditions, a much more nuanced picture is likely, in which the Targumim—perhaps preserved by priests—were embraced by the Rabbinic tradition but may also have been influenced by the Christian tradition in various ways. Third, the study of Jewish Aramaic in late antiquity in recent decades has confirmed that the dialect found in Onqelos-Jonathan has its origin in Second Temple times and that Targumic texts do not reflect unmediated Aramaic vernaculars because they are essentially literary texts. Finally, it was noted that Targum Studies in recent times have benefited greatly from reflection on how the study of the Targumim in the past has exerted considerable influence on the field up to the present day.

Rebekah Welton

'Know Well the Face of Your Sheep': Animals in Ancient Israelite Households

Observing that household animals such as sheep, goats and cattle were integral to the survival of ancient Israelite and Judahite communities, this paper explored the ways in which humans depended on animals and

the social bonds that developed as a result of the interdependent roles humans and animals shared. Given the familiarity that developed between humans and animals, animal sacrifice was perhaps more emotionally laden than has previously been thought. Most understandings of animal sacrifice have focused more on the death of the animal rather than the life of the animal, but the latter provides a deeper context for understanding the meaning and significance of sacrifice in the lives of ancient Israelites and Judahites. The paper explored such attitudes towards animals in texts such as 2 Sam 12:1–6 and Lev 17:3–4.

96th SUMMER MEETING

12th – 14th July 2021

Online

Prof Hugh Pyper presiding

Martti Nissinen

Female Voices in Akkadian Love Poetry and in the Song of Songs

The paper began with the observation that the most-discussed female character in ancient love lyrics is without doubt the woman in the Song of Songs. However, much less attention has been paid to female voices in love poems written in the Akkadian language, probably because these texts are rather poorly known and many of them have been edited only in recent times. Multiple female voices, both divine and human, can be found in the nineteen Akkadian texts deriving from three millennia BCE. In these poems, a female voice talks about herself, her feelings, her male beloved, and her lovemaking. The gender matrix of the Akkadian love poems is based on the patriarchal model, without, however, reproducing the patriarchal hierarchy in a simple, hegemonic manner. The woman's agency sometimes appears as strong and independent, sometimes as weak and submissive. It was further noted that the woman of the Song of Songs in many ways resembles her

Mesopotamian counterparts. The metaphors used in the Song of Songs are very similar to those in the Akkadian poetry, suggesting a common stream of tradition. At the same time, there are many differences between the Song of Songs and the Akkadian love poetry, mostly caused by the different socio-religious contexts. Nevertheless, whether in Akkadian or in Hebrew, the voice of the woman is heard loud and clear.

Alison Gray

Bringing a Dead Language to Life? Teaching and Learning Biblical Hebrew

It was observed that the past two decades have witnessed a steady rise of interest in questions about the most effective pedagogical methods and approaches for teaching Classical languages, including Biblical Hebrew (BH). In the case of BH this is evident not only in an increasing number of articles being written about the subject, but also from the proliferation of textbooks and on-line courses championing different pedagogical approaches, as well as discussions on social media. This trend seems to have arisen partly in response to a developing awareness of research into Second Language Acquisition, leading to questions and discussions about good teaching practice. In particular there has been a critique of the differences between the ways in which Classical languages are perceived to have been traditionally taught in the West—the so-called ‘Grammar Translation’ method—compared to contemporary practices in Second Language teaching—the ‘living language’ or immersive approach. While on-line ‘living language’ courses often make bold, unsubstantiated, and emotive claims that their particular method of teaching is more fun and effective than any other, this paper offered a critical evaluation of current research on teaching and learning Biblical Hebrew, and offered some suggestions for those looking for a guide through the maze of textbooks and courses on offer.

Bill Goodman

‘The Time of Singing has Come’: The Lure of the Song of Songs for Today’s Composers and Songwriters

Noting that the Song of Songs' opening words and title suggest that its musicality should not be ignored, this paper took up three contemporary musical appropriations of the biblical Song: one classical (by Howard Skempton), one pop/rock (by Sinéad O'Connor) and one rock-style worship (by Misty Edwards). After listening to each of these songs, the audience was invited to consider how they respond to the biblical Song: in particular which aspects of the text and its message they emphasise and which they ignore or diverge from. It was suggested that such a comparison helps highlight certain features of the Song of Songs and raises questions about how it may interact with the interests of those who value it today. Themes from the biblical Song which were seen to be drawn out in these contemporary versions included love as blissful serenity and harmony; love as intoxication, longing and anxiety; and love as demanding, exclusive, self-surrender.

Deborah Kahn-Harris

Bizarre Love Triangle: Reading the Book of Ruth in the 2020s

It was noted that though a wide range of scholars have posited much about the sexual relationships and identities of the main characters of the book of Ruth (Ruth and Boaz as heterosexual romance; Ruth and Naomi as lesbian romance; Boaz as homosexual; Ruth as bisexual), all of these readings have relied on a straightforward dyadic resolution to the tensions in the text. However, this paper sought to interrogate to what extent a dyadic resolution to the reading of the story has arisen from social and cultural conditioning that allows neither readers nor exegetes to be more imaginative with the triangular/triadic nature of the Naomi-Ruth-Boaz relationship. Attending to the textual lacunae as well as the textual clues in the Book of Ruth—including the use of the root *רסן*, the *kere ketiv* in chapter 3, and the function of Obed in the ending of the story—the paper argued instead for a triadic resolution to the story. In doing so, it explored the ways in which gender identity, cultural stereotypes, and disability may play into our readings of this narrative. In addition, it used contemporary ideas about polyamory to explore the ways in which Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz may interrelate to each other not as rivals for affection, but as a hidden transcript for a relationship of polyfidelity between the three of them, ultimately thereby sustaining a fertile and caring family unit.

SOTS Strategic Review Group Update

In this session the chair of the Strategic Review Group, Susan Gillingham, offered attendees an update of the progress made thus far while Catherine Quine presented the results of the survey undertaken as part of the review.

Mark Brummitt

Recovering Words: Resilience and the Writing of Wrongs in Jeremiah

This paper began by noting that trauma has become an established if nebulous interdisciplinary category and one which has the capacity to unite empiricists and post-structuralists despite the improbability of that feat. It was observed that the methodological interest in trauma has managed to revive a cohort of scholars long languishing in formalism since the decline of biographical hermeneutics. The paper sought to summarize the way in which notions of trauma have informed readings of Jeremiah before mooting a few further thoughts on this subject. The paper also considered the ways in which the notion of trauma aided commentators whose complicity with the death of this biblical author has long haunted them.

Matthew Coomber

Interpreting the Psychology of Privilege: The Modern Relevance of Contempt in the Hebrew Bible

It was observed that the subfield of Bible and poverty has produced a significant amount of work on connections and disjunctions between systemic poverty in ancient Palestine and today. While much has been done to compare and contrast systems that weaponize poverty to extract and to control, valuable insights could be gained through understanding the psychological state of the perpetrators. Recent research into the psychological effects of privilege reveal that humans, as well as some non-human primates, are predisposed to acting both contemptuously and also unethically toward those of lower status. Neurological in nature, this psychological trait transcends both social conventions and

time, offering a connecting thread between ancient and current actors. Drawing upon the psychology of privilege, this presentation revisited Hebrew texts that condemn elites for abusing their lower-class neighbors to illustrate how a psychological condition can help interpreters develop deeper understandings of biblical texts that resist exploitation, while highlighting the potential relevance of ancient stories, oracles, and legal texts in confronting abuses of power in other times, including our own.

Katherine Southwood

Can we talk of comedy in Job?

This paper noted that if it is possible to contemplate the ideas of Job and comedy in the same sentence then, inevitably, questions regarding genre and tone will emerge. In seeking to contemplate such ideas and consider such questions, the paper began by discussing the reasons why the idea of comedy in Job is met with such resistance. It then went on to consider various theories concerning comedy. Finally, the paper explored ways in which comedy is helpful for analyzing and interpreting Job. The key aim of this paper was to highlight how comedy helps audiences to recognize the lack of empathy in the advice of Job's friends to Job, and to show the problematic nature of their retribution-centered advice.

Constantin Jinga

A first Romanian Septuagint—long story short

The paper began with a brief review of the first biblical texts that were translated into Romanian and circulated as such, whether as handwritten manuscripts or in a printed form. These early attempts, dating from the sixteenth century, attest to the existence of a constant interest in this part of Europe in translating the Bible into the vernacular. The paper then sketched the biographical portrait of Nicolae Milescu—a fascinating political figure, outstanding scholar, and unexpected translator of the Bible in the seventeenth century. In addition to highlighting the circumstances in which Milescu ended up translating the Septuagint, but also his sources, textual selection and translation

approach, the paper traced the fate of his work, which included its eventual adoption by the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church and its use in producing the first complete translation of the Bible into Romanian: the Bucharest Bible (1688).

Paul Kurtz

How to Read the Bible Rationally: Making Exegesis ‘Critical’ in the early 19th Century

This paper examined changing standards of argumentation for interpretation of the Bible. Focusing on the formative period between the 1815 Congress of Vienna and the Revolutions of 1830, it surveyed the sorts of evidence, the types of explication, and the kinds of interlocutors that so-called rationalist interpreters not only permitted but also precluded for building arguments about the Old Testament literature. To do so, the inquiry focused on the case of W.M.L. de Wette. Ultimately, the paper argued that rationalist interpreters identified one particular mode of biblical reading (their own) with the rational, the scientific, and the modern over and against modes used by contemporary Catholics, Jews, and some Protestants which were largely dismissed as irrational, unscientific, and medieval. In this way, these figures not only looked back to the Enlightenment, with its vision of progress and an enlightened republic, but also looked forward to the claims of impartial science, the protestantization of the secular domain, and challenges to liberal Christianity as well as Judaism in the German Empire.

Jon Morgan

Blood and Soil: The Challenge of Ecofascism for Ecological Criticism

Despite remaining under-acknowledged, the increased prevalence of ecological rhetoric among far-right leaders and organisers in recent years is unsurprising given the longstanding tradition of classical ecofascism and the increased stresses placed on national and international politics by our current, multi-faceted environmental crisis. This emerging discourse poses a challenge to ecological biblical criticism, and to attempts to ground ecological ethics in biblical

interpretation. This paper picked up this challenge in relation to ecocritical interpretation of Hebrew Bible texts concerning land. It offered in part a self-critique, addressing ways in which the author's own previous ecocritical analysis of the theme of land in Leviticus had not sufficiently attended to contemporary ecofascism or guarded against potential co-option by its adherents—a risk mediated by the significant role of the Bible in current ethnonationalist and broader far-right discourse. The paper went on to argue that appropriate attention to these themes within ecological biblical scholarship is vitally important, highlighting as it does the need for more critical interrogation of certain biblical themes and suggesting the potential usefulness of others, both for contemporary ecocritical reflection and in relation to the wider, communal work of opposing fascism.

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 your password, you may set a new one through the website itself.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Society learned with regret of the **deaths** of Joseph Mulrooney, E.C. John, Ray Hobbs, Hallvard Hagelia, Terry Fenton and Bertil Albrektson.

The following were **elected to membership** of the Society at the Winter Meeting: Collin Cornell, Isabel Cranz, Atar Hadari, Dan'el Kahn, Pablo de Lima, Brett Maiden, Joanna Töyräänvuori and Veronica Vandervliet.

At the Summer Meeting: Karina Atudosie, Ingrid Breilid Gimse, A. Stefan Green, Paul Hocking, Emily Margaret James, Phillip M. Lasater,

Drew Longacre, Lindi Wells Martsolf, Du Nana, Roger Nam, Seng Hing Weng, Yanjing Qu, Kyle Young and Pieter van der Zwan.

The **current Honorary Members** are Professors Athalya Brenner (2002), Walter Brueggemann (1997), Tamara Eskenazi (2010), Michael Fox (2011), Norman Gottwald (2009), Norman Habel (2011), Sara Japhet (1999), Reinhard Kratz (2015), Bernhard Lang (1997), Tryggve Mettinger (2003), Johannes de Moor (2004), Carol Newsom (2013), Martti Nissinen (2013), 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 encouraged to 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 is pleased to make available an Essay Prize 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 4th to the 6th January 2022, Jubilee Campus, Nottingham and the next Summer Meeting (held jointly with OTW) is scheduled for the 25th to the 28th July 2022, Jubilee Campus, Nottingham.

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. 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 2020

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 30th September 2020

	General fund £	Bursary fund £	Legacy fund £	Total Funds 2020 £	Total Funds 2019 £
Income					
Activities for generating funds					
Subscriptions & Donations	8,075	3,150		11,225	11,035
Conference income	13,843			13,843	55,237
Centenary income					
Investment income					
Interest & Royalties	80			80	141
Total income	21,998	3,150		25,148	66,413
Expenditure					
Conference costs	15,623			15,623	60,473
Centenary costs					10,633
Book list grant	3,471			3,471	5,284
Bursaries		900		900	2,110
Printing, Postage, Stationery etc	602			602	1,029
Affiliation Costs	250			250	
Prizes	500			500	
Accountancy fees	1,014			1,014	924
Bank charges	21			21	
Total Expenditure	21,481	900		22,381	69,820
 Surplus/ (Deficit) for year	 517	 2,250		 2,767	 (3,407)
 Balance as at 1 October 2019	 53,170	 1,095	 17,943	 72,208	 75,615
 Balance as at 30 September 2020	 53,687	 3,345	 17,943	 74,975	 72,208

BALANCE SHEET as at 30th September 2020

	£	2020	£	£	2019	£
Cash at bank and in Hand						
Current Account	10,498			1,645		
Business Premium	64,527			60,447		
			75,025			62,092
Debtors: falling due within one year						
Prepayments & accrued Income			964			12,350
Creditors: falling due within one year						
Accruals & deferred income			(1,014)			(2,334)
			74,975			72,208
Reserves:			£			£
General Fund			53,687			53,170
Bursary Fund			3,345			1,095
Legacy Fund			17,943			17,943
			74,975			72,208

Notes to the Financial Statements (for the Year Ended 30 September 2020):

1. Accounting policies

Accounting convention

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

Going concern

In their assessment of going concern the committee has considered the current and developing impact on the Society as a result of the COVID-19 virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant, immediate impact on the Society's activity. Due to the lockdown restrictions the Society cancelled the July 2020 summer meeting and has planned for an online version of the January 2021 winter meeting to take place. It is not clear how long the current circumstances are likely to last and what the long term impact will be.

The Society is in a strong financial position and cash flow is not an immediate problem. The committee will continue to assess income and reserves and monitor expenditure. They therefore 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 financial statements. There are no material uncertainties about the Society's ability to continue as a going concern.

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 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.

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 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2020 £
Porter Legacy	17,943			17,943
	17,943			17,943

The Porter Legacy fund was used in part to cover costs of Centenary celebrations. Centenary celebrations are now complete and the committee will continue to consider various projects to support using the remaining balance of the fund.

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 2022

President: Professor Charlotte Hempel, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, England (email: c.hempel@bham.ac.uk)

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

President-elect: Professor Katharine Dell, Professor in Old Testament Literature and Theology, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9BS, England (email: kjd24@cam.ac.uk)

Treasurer: Ms Joanne Henderson Merrygold, 252 Tamworth Road, Sawley, Long Eaton NG10, England (j.hendersonmerrygold@sheffield.ac.uk)

Secretary: Rev Dr Richard Briggs, Honorary Research Fellow in Old Testament, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Durham, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RS, England (email: richard.briggs@durham.ac.uk)

Secretary for Honorary Members: 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@worc.ox.ac.uk)

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

Hospitality Secretary: Dr Janet Fyffe, 25 Birchlands Ave, Balham, London SW12 8ND, England (sotshospitality@gmail.com)

Book List Editor: Dr John Jarick, Regent's Park College, Pusey Street, Oxford OX1 2LB, England (email: john.jarick@theology.ox.ac.uk)

Information Officer: Dr Zanne Domoney-Lyttle, Theology and Religious Studies, University of Glasgow, 30 Ailsa St West, Girvan KA26 9AD, Scotland (email: Zanne.Domoney-Lyttle@glasgow.ac.uk)

Archivist: Professor Eryl Davies, School of Philosophy and Religion, Bangor University, Bangor LL57 2DG, Wales (erylwdavies@ic24.net)

Committee: The above plus: Dr Suzanna Millar, Rosalie Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh, Dr Sharon Moughtin-Mumby and Dr Katherine Southwood.

Programme Sub-Committee: The Secretary (Convener), President, President-elect, Hospitality Secretary, plus Dr Nathan MacDonald 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),

Professor George Brooke (as SOTS Wiki editor), and Professor Hugh Williamson (as SOTS representative on the OTS Board) plus Professor Cheryl Exum and Dr Andrew Mein.

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1920 Archibald Kennedy	1968 Matthew Black
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1923 George Box	1971 Edward Ullendorff
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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
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1963 George Anderson	2005 Graeme Auld
1964 Bleddyn Roberts	2006 Robert Hayward
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1966 Henton Davies	2008 John Barton

Past Presidents of the Society
(continued)

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2010 Cheryl Exum
2011 John Sawyer
2012 George Brooke
2013 Eryl W. Davies
2014 John Day
2015 Hans Barstad
2016 Adrian Curtis
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2018 Walter Moberly
2019 Susan Gillingham
2020 Walter Houston