

THE SOCIETY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 13th July 2021

Online

under the presidency of Prof Hugh Pyper

1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed Members to the Business Meeting of the Society and particularly those attending the meeting for the first time. The Secretary noted that apologies had been received from Adrian Curtis, Siobhán Dowling-Long, Jo Henderson-Merrygold, Irene Jones, Chris Thomson, Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer and Deborah Rooke.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous Business Meeting, which had been displayed and posted online, were approved by the meeting and a physical copy will be signed by the President at the next in-person meeting.

There were no matters arising that would not appear on the agenda.

3. Notification of Any Other Business

There was no notification of any other business.

4. Reports from Officers

(a) The President, Prof Hugh Pyper reported as follows:

First and foremost, I want to thank the Committee and especially its officers for the smooth running of the online winter meeting. Their generosity with their time and expertise meant that this was an enjoyable and instructive occasion and this bodes well for the Summer Meeting to come. A special thanks must go to Jonathan Stökl who, as Information Officer, found his responsibilities suddenly multiplied and who stepped up to the mark at a particularly taxing time. My thanks are also due to the previous President, Walter Houston, for sharing the duties of presiding in such a seamless way and to the contributors who willingly adapted to the circumstances. The Secretary, Hospitality Secretary and Information Officer, in particular, have had to make arrangements for this Summer Meeting and subsequent meetings in the face of considerable uncertainty and I would like to thank them for the patient and thoughtful way in which they have dealt with what has cropped up. In my private capacity, I wrote in support of colleagues in Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester who were facing compulsory redundancy. This letter was interpreted by the organisers of the protest as having the endorsement of the Society, which I had never implied. The good news is the threat of compulsory redundancy has since been lifted and I hope that retrospectively the committee would be happy to be associated with this effort. Also in my private capacity, I have been asked to serve on the committee charged with

updating the QAA benchmark for Theology and Religious Studies and so am in a position to ensure that our subject area is well represented.

(b) The Treasurer, Dr Alastair Hunter reported on the financial affairs of the Society as follows:

BANK & INVESTMENT ACCOUNT BALANCES at 2nd July 2021

		(2020)
Barclays Current A/C	£14,833	£ 10,930
Barclays IAS (Business Premium) A/C	£70,531	£ 64,517
TOTAL	£85,364	£ 75,448

One effect of the pandemic lock-down has been a recovery in the Society's finances, largely explained by the as-yet undisbursed income from two online meetings and very little call on the bursary fund.

Under- and Non-Paying Members

The core of members who have yet to upgrade to the new subscription rates now stands at 14. Our de facto policy is to withhold both the print and the online copies of the Book List from them. In addition there are 19 members whose subs are still to be received. Both of these figures are noticeably lower than in recent years.

Thanks

My personal thanks as ever to all who help to facilitate my duties as treasurer – in particular David Shepherd, Janet Fyffe, and Janet Tollington. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome my successor Jo Henderson-Merrygold, and to wish her all the best as she undertakes this responsibility.

c) The Secretary, Dr David Shepherd reported as follows:

In a year in which the virus has continued to take a toll, I am glad that we have lost only two members since our last meeting: Terry Fenton and Bertil Albrektson, who was made an honorary member in 1983. On a happier note, I am delighted to report that Prof George Brooke President of our Society in 2012 will serve as President of the European Association of Biblical Studies from 2021 until 2024 – something from which we may take some encouragement in light of recent political ructions between the UK and Europe. This will be my final meeting as Secretary of the Society. My first meeting as Secretary coincided with a President who was absent and at this, my 14th consecutive meeting as Secretary, all of us are absent, though hopefully not for much longer. Between January 2015 and July 2021 it has been a pleasure to serve the Society during the best of times (like the Centennial Meeting in 2017) and more recent ones, which have felt like the worst of times for many. Through all

the changes—changes of rules, programmes, committee members, officers and ways of working – it has been a pleasure to be Secretary of the Society because of the people, the members of the Committee who have come and gone over my time and the members of the Society, who have made this job so easy for the last 6 and a half years. I trust that my successor will feel just the same way and look forward to supporting them as they take on the role. Many thanks to all of you.

(d) The Hospitality Secretary, Dr Janet Fyffe, reported as follows:

Apart from the registration procedure and some liaison with publishers, the organisation of the present meeting has once again fallen to our Information Officer, who is now Zanne Domoney-Lyttle. My thanks are due to her and to the other Society Officers, including the President and President-elect, for their support during this period. As this is our second online meeting, and as we may have more of these from time to time in future (preferably not under emergency conditions) I should be grateful for any feedback and suggestions about the booking process for online meetings. It was originally designed to seem as similar as possible to our conventional booking system, but now that most people have more experience of registration for online meetings could it perhaps be made simpler, especially for SOTS members? Turning to future meetings, for Winter 2022, we are still holding an option on a booking at Nottingham for Tuesday 4th to Thursday 6th January 2022. Planning for this meeting is under fairly intensive discussion at present, both with Nottingham and within the Committee. A residential meeting is looking more and more feasible, but we are also looking at other forms of access. We will keep the membership informed as soon as possible. For the Summer Meeting, our normal practice would have been to hold this in Birmingham, under Charlotte Hempel's Presidency. Fortunately for Birmingham, but unfortunately for us, the Edgbaston Campus is to be the Athlete's Village and an event centre for the Commonwealth Games, and is fully booked for the whole of July and August. As a result there proved to be no viable booking at Birmingham at a time which would work for us and for our guests from OTW and OTSSA. Charlotte Hempel has kindly agreed for us to hold the meeting at Nottingham and we now have a confirmed booking for their Jubilee Campus for 25-28 July 2022. We hope that the existing strong links between Birmingham and Nottingham, and the popularity of that venue with SOTS members, will contribute to making next summer's meeting a true success. I hope that by 2023 we will be able to arrange the Summer Meeting at our traditional time of the third week in July.

John Jarick asked whether the Society's view should be sought regarding whether OTSSA should be included in the Society's existing bilateral relationship with OTW. David Shepherd responded that we have sought clarification regarding OTW's wish in this regard and that once this clarification has been provided, the Society will need to form a view. Heather McKay noted that the proposed scheduling of the joint meeting in July may exclude school teachers who are working at that time. Sharon Moughtin-Mumby noted that the system in which she is involved does allow teachers to attend

conferences. Hugh Pyper noted that scheduling is a challenge and all the more so in an extraordinarily busy summer arising from conferences delayed by the pandemic.

(e) The Secretary for Honorary Members, Prof Susan Gillingham reported as follows:

I have communicated with almost all our honorary members, introducing myself as the successor to Lester Grabbe. This is a summary from those who wished to communicate their news:

Athalya Brenner (Professor Emerita of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament at the University of Amsterdam and Professor in Biblical Studies at Tel Aviv University) has co-edited, with Professor Gale Yee, *Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, Vol. I*, published by Bloomsbury Publishing in their Texts@Contexts Series.

Norman Habel (Professorial Fellow at Flinders University, Adelaide) notes, 'I am 88 but still writing. A new volume entitled *The Wisdom Trinity* (ATF Press) has just been published.'

Reinhard Kratz (Professor at Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen) awaits final approval of funding by DFG for the continuation of the Göttingen Qumran Lexicon project (to be published first digitally, then in German and English). The project on the Critical edition of the Greek Psalter has also received further funding by the Academy. The project Scripta Qumranica Electronica, which Reinhard has been working on with Israeli partners Yonathan Ben-Dov and Nachum Dershowitz, Tel Aviv, funded by the Israel Antiquities Authority in Jerusalem, is nearing completion, linking the Göttingen Qumran-lexicon textual database with the Leon-Levy-Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library of the IAA: it is hoped to launch the beta-version at SBL in November. Reinhard has completed his book on *Qumran and the Origins of Biblical Judaism* and similarly finished a revised and enlarged edition of his book on the Prophets. He is now completing a publication on the Maccabean revolt and the beginnings of the Hasmonean kingdom, reconstructing the events without the assumption that the Torah of Moses (Pentateuch) was already the fundamental document for Judaism: if anyone in SOTS is interested in this project Reinhard would like to hear from them.

Bernard Lang (Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies, University of Paderborn) is currently preparing a vast annotated bibliography on research relating to the Vulgate Bible, thus far comprising nearly one thousand items, ca. 1800 to the present. He has also been working on a new section his bibliography of the *Psalterium Pianum* and has been writing several articles for the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*.

Johannes de Moor (Emeritus Professor of Semitic Languages and Cultures of the Ancient Near East at the Protestant Theological University at Amsterdam) has recently had his commentary on *Micah* published in the Historical Commentary on the Old Testament Series (Peeters, Leuven).

Thomas Römer (Professor of the Old Testament, University of Lausanne) is currently serving as the "Administrateur" (chair) of the Collège de France. He has produced a short introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament entitled *L'Ancien Testament (Que sais-je)* (Paris: Humensis, 2019). A book written with Jacqueline Chabbi about the God of the Bible and the God of the Qur'an, *Dieu de la Bible, Dieu du Coran. Entretiens avec Jean-Louis Schlegel*, was published by Editions du Seuil in 2020. Very recently he received the University of Lausanne prize, 'Dies academicus 2021': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftmG9KDepJk>.

Finally, Charlotte Hempel would like to propose Professor Bernd Schipper (Humboldt University of Berlin) for consideration as an Honorary SOTS member. He is at present working with an interdisciplinary research team on project DEMBIB (From Texts to Literature. Demotic Egyptian Papyri and the Formation of the Hebrew Bible) who are linking findings on the emergence and literary form of Demotic literature with theories on the literary history of the Old Testament. This comparative approach builds on the assumption that Egypt and ancient "Israel" in the 5th-3rd centuries BCE were equally determined by foreign domination and international influences, which had a direct impact on the literary elites of the time. The research project promises new insights into the literary techniques of the ancient scribes who transmitted and transformed their respective scriptural traditions into historical, prophetic and wisdom works. A full CV (in English) including list of publications may be found here:

https://www.theologie.hu-berlin.de/de/professuren/stellen/gi/personen/prof.%20dr.%20dr.%20schipper/cv_schipper_english_06-05-2021.pdf

Hugh Williamson noted that a general call for nominations for honorary members is usually made. Janet Tollington noted that a call had been circulated, and Hugh Pyper reiterated the Committee's openness to further nominations. It was also noted that the current honorary members' names are listed on the website. James Aitken noted his preference for a list of nominees from which to choose to ensure that the membership is more diverse. Janet Tollington noted that recent appointments have included more women. Lester Grabbe observed that the guidelines had been issued, the procedure had been followed and that we do want younger, more active honorary members. He recommended that we should accept or reject the name which has been proposed.

The Society approved Professor Schipper's honorary membership and Hugh Pyper noted that we will seek to have a broad pool from which the meeting may choose in future.

(f) The Membership Secretary, Dr Janet Tollington, reported as follows:

The total membership now stands at 490, which is a decrease of 4 since December 2020

Although we welcomed 7 new Ordinary members in January (5M/2F) there have been 2 deaths recorded (both male) and 3 resignations (all male). 6 members (2M/4F) were removed from the roll for failure to pay their annual subscriptions.

6 members (3M/3F) have been elevated to the status of Life Member having been subscribing members for 30 years.

Will members please keep me informed of any changes to their postal addresses and e-mails. A few people no longer receive the round robin e-mails because messages sent to the e-mail address on the database have bounced back for various technical reasons.

Male/female ratio: 339M/151F, being 69.18% M and 30.82% F. This balance has remained virtually unchanged over the last few years.

Members by country of residence: As was agreed at the 2017 Summer Meeting I am now only showing these figures in terms of the United Kingdom & Ireland (reflecting the Society's origins and historical associations) and the rest of the world grouped together.

UK & Ireland	327 (66.73%)
Rest of the world	163 (33.27%)

If I disregard the Honorary members (who are *de facto* from RoW) these statistics become

UK&I 69.13% and RoW 30.87%

Membership by type:

Ordinary members: 314

Life members: 159 (only 25 are female – 15.72%)

Honorary members: 17

Book list mailing: 462 were sent out to Members in the June mailing but Ordinary members should note that anyone whose subscription has not been paid at the correct, updated, annual amount will not be receiving the 2021 Book List. At the time of writing there are 19 members in default.

Heather McKay asked whether we have any sense of how and where members are employed. Janet Tollington noted that we don't hold that information and that if we did, ensuring that it would be kept up to date would be a challenge. Charlotte Hempel noted that we had collected some information on this in the Strategic Review Group survey. Zanne Domoney-Lyttle wondered whether we needed to do more to attract women to the Society. Janet Tollington noted that women need to do more and Zanne Domoney-Lyttle suggested that men also need to do more. Susan Gillingham observed

that the Strategic Review Group has some ideas to which it will allude at the session later on in the day. Heather McKay reminded members that the percentage of female members has increased from 25% to the current number and that this is a higher percentage than the Society of Biblical Literature, though it is good to be reminded of the need to do better.

(g) The Book List Editor, Dr John Jarick, reported as follows:

The 2021 edition of the *SOTS Book List* contained reviews of 254 books, presenting evaluations made by 75 members of the Society. Attentive readers of this edition will have noted that on this occasion there was also a lengthy list of Books Also Received, with an introductory note to that list which read: “In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, the *Book List* operated mostly with e-books (and the Editor is grateful to publishers and reviewers who continued their good work through that medium, thus facilitating the emergence of a relatively normal *Book List* in 2021 despite the unprecedented conditions throughout 2020). Even so, a good number of print books were able to be received in between lockdowns, and although it did not prove feasible for the works listed here to be distributed to reviewers in time for reviews to be prepared for the 2021 edition, it is hoped that reviews of all the following books will appear in the 2022 edition.” The list then followed, and members will be aware that each of those works was made available to them in the recent Summer Offer of books for review, along with various recently-published e-books.

Attentive readers will also have noticed that this year’s edition was produced without the assistance of a graduate student. This too was an unfortunate aspect of the pandemic, in that the disruption to the normal functioning of academic life militated against the appointment of a new Assistant to the Editor, to succeed Moritz Adam, who completed his studies in Oxford at the end of the previous academic year and went on to new studies in Zurich. I am very grateful to Moritz for his labours on *Book List* matters in that previous year, and indeed this latest year without an Assistant has made it all the more evident to me just how useful it is to the Editor to have such assistance. I very much hope that Oxford will be returning to normal functioning in the forthcoming academic year, and that it will be possible once again to have an Assistant at hand to help with the smooth running of the *Book List* enterprise.

In my capacity as Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee I am pleased to report several recent or imminent publications under the Society’s auspices: in the Study Guides to the Old Testament series, Philip Jenson’s guide to *Leviticus*, and Lesley Allen’s guide to *Chronicles*; in the SOTS Monograph Series, Hanne Levinson’s *The Death Wish in the Hebrew Bible: Rhetorical Strategies for Survival*, and Carly Crouch’s *Israel and Judah Redefined: Migration, Trauma, and Empire in the Sixth Century BCE*; and in the Oudtestamentische Studiën series, the papers of the 2018 joint meeting of OTW, SOTS, and OTSSA in Groningen, edited by Jacques van Ruiten and Koert van Bekkum, under the title *Violence in the Hebrew Bible: Text and Reception*. This last work includes essays by four members of SOTS: David Clines, Matthew Lynch, Tsaurayi Mapfeka, and Heather McKay.

(h) The Information Officer, Dr Zanne Domoney-Lyttle, reported as follows:

This report marks the first of my tenure as the Society's Information Officer. I would like to expressly thank Jonathan Stökl for leaving the website in excellent condition, ensuring the handover and my first few months in the role have been fairly smooth. I have spent those first few months becoming familiar with the website and its intricacies and have not made any substantial changes, as well as preparing for this Summer Meeting which is to be held fully online. That preparation has not been without its obstacles which have thankfully been overcome. Thanks to the Secretary and the Hospitality Secretary for their support in the past few weeks in overcoming those obstacles. Looking forward, the next project is to investigate the possibility of holding a hybrid conference – that is part-online, part in-person – in Winter 2022 as we continue to traverse the tumultuous landscape carved out by the Global Pandemic. Additionally, as I become more familiar and comfortable with the website, I will explore increasing and promoting the Society's profile via social media as well, for example via Twitter.

(i) The Archivist, Prof Eryl Davies, reported via the Secretary as follows:

Further to my last report to the Society I can confirm that the remaining volumes of the SOTS Monograph series have now been sent to me by CUP for inclusion in the archive. Since both the archive and the library remain closed, I have been unable to continue discussions as to whether the library can be prevailed upon to house the numerous SOTS related publications that remain for the time being in my study at home. As soon as normal service is resumed, I will continue my discussions with the librarian, and I hope that the matter can be satisfactorily resolved and that I will be able to report a positive outcome to the Meeting in due course.

5. Nominations

The following were proposed and elected: Dr Katharine Dell as President for 2023, Dr Richard Briggs as Secretary, and Dr Rosalie Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh and Suzanna Millar as Ordinary Members of the Committee.

6. Proposals for New Members

The following were proposed and elected into membership of the Society: Miss Karina Atudosie, Ms Ingrid Breilid Gimse, Dr A. Stefan Green, Mr Paul Hocking, Ms Emily Margaret James, Dr Phillip M. Lasater, Rev Dr Drew Longacre, Rev Lindi Wells Martsof, Rev Du Nana, Dr Roger Nam, Mr Seng Hing Weng, Ms Yanjing Qu, Mr Kyle Young, and Dr Pieter van der Zwan.

7. Future Meetings

It was confirmed that the Society intends to hold the 2022 Winter Meeting in person from the 4th to the 6th January 2022, at the Jubilee Campus, University of Nottingham and the Summer Meeting (jointly with OTW) from the 25th to the 28rd July 2020 at the same venue.

There being no further business, the President declared the Business Meeting closed.

Signed: Date: