

THE SOCIETY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 6^h September 2023 at the Summer Meeting in Cambridge under the Presidency of Prof Katharine Dell

1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed Members to the Business Meeting of the Society.

There were approximately 70 people present.

The Secretary noted that apologies had been received from Margaret Barker, Kirsi Cobb, Eryl Davies, Nana Du, Janet Fyffe, Alec Gilmore, Anselm Hagedorn, Marian Kelsey, Anja Klein, Reinhard Kratz, Hilary Marlow, Jonathan Stökl, Pieter van der Zwan.

There was no notification of items for Any Other Business.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous Business Meeting (5th January 2023, Sheffield), which had been displayed and posted on the notice board, were approved by the meeting. A physical copy was signed by the President.

3. Matters Arising

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

4. Reports from Officers

4.1 The President, Prof Katharine Dell reported as follows:

The 2023 Winter Meeting was held at Endcliffe Village Campus at the University of Sheffield, 3rd–5th January. It was a very successful meeting and it was good to be fully back ‘in person’ for a Winter Meeting, enjoying not only the papers but all the conversations that take place over coffee, over meals and at the book stalls. We had a good range of papers across the two days of the conference, and a couple of mini-themes emerged including the psalms and the place of covenant in Old Testament theology. We had two drinks receptions, the first kindly sponsored by Sheffield Phoenix Press and the second thanks to the legacy of Elizabeth Harper.

I would like to thank all those who gave papers, to thank the officers of the Society for a smooth-running meeting and to thank all those who were able to come to what is, for now at least, the last in-person Winter Meeting to be organized. It is good to have everyone here at St Catharine’s College, Cambridge this week, again in person, and to have a number of members from abroad giving papers. We look forward to a one-day online Winter event next January. We also look forward to a SOTS/OTW joint meeting next year in July as well as our main meeting next September.

4.2 The Treasurer, Dr Joseph Scales, reported as follows:

BANK & INVESTMENT ACCOUNT BALANCES at 2nd September 2023

		(Jul 2021)
Barclays Current A/C	<u>£35,709</u>	<u>£14,833</u>
Barclays IAS (Business Premium) A/C	<u>£72,031</u>	<u>£70,531</u>
TOTAL	<u>£107,740</u>	<u>£85,364</u>

The funds are in good health. Year on year we seem to be accruing money in the IAS account. As far as I am aware, payment has not yet been made for the next meeting.

SUBSCRIPTION SITUATION

At the time of writing, we have 31 members who remain on the legacy rate. The online payment system continues to function, although the use of PayPal as an intermediary takes a proportion of our income for little gain. When large sums are paid into the PayPal during the meeting bookings, this fee for PayPal transactions is much more noticeable.

AUDITED ACCOUNTS

From my predecessor, we have no obligation to audit the accounts. This should be something we decided as a committee/society, the practice of auditing and the regularity with which we conduct audits. The recommendation of the previous treasurer is to seek independent advice on how we govern the society from a financial perspective.

OFFICIAL MATTERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

[RB adds: *JS advised the Business Meeting that several suggestions for the future were in his full report to the Committee, so although these were not brought to the Business Meeting they are reproduced here for members to be aware.*]

It would be suitable to have a UK address for the society to use as a banking address and for other postage. It might make sense to locate this at a PO box, or attach it to a professional college with which the society has a relationship.

Regarding the constitution of the Society as a business/charity, this has caused some issues with handover and our banking arrangements. It would be helpful to ensure that this is properly constituted to smooth handovers in the future.

If independent financial advice regarding our structure is to be sought, we should seek approval from the membership. It may also be helpful to widen the responsibility for the bank accounts (the signatories associated with the accounts) in the event of unexpected circumstances. Perhaps the members at large might be suitable for such responsibilities, but this can be run past the committee/members. The current signatories should be ratified by the society, or at least the society provided with the information that the following persons are signatories to the accounts.

The bursary fund seems to be hidden away somewhere in the main account. It would be helpful have a good handle on this and to have some clear guidance on what payments should be added

into the fund. At the moment, the accounts are healthy enough that I am open to granting most requests for bursaries, but we can address this as a committee or amongst the membership.

To become the contact person on PayPal, I also require a letter of authorisation, which includes a business letterhead and is signed by the committee (template circulated).

Finally, many of the payments made through our website come through Braintree. I currently cannot seem to get access to this so cannot file the majority of these payments properly. The username for Braintree which seems to get notifications is associated with Alastair, which Jo forwards to the SOTS accounts. The details of these payments cannot be seen without logging into the Braintree account directly.

[RB adds: *The Committee has agreed to convene a Finance Working Party to bring recommendations back to the committee, and then to a future Business Meeting – to consist of JS, RB, and other invited past treasurers.*]

2024 AIMS

My intentions for 2024 are to auto-generate reminders for members whose dues are not paid by the end of the first week of January. This should mean that members who have automatic payments are not reminded unduly, while others are sent reminders in good time. I have been lax this year in chasing these, given the problems with seeing the full list of members and the lack of access to the Braintree payments. Jo has been able to file most of these up until the end of June, but the second half of 2023 must also be filled.

APPRECIATION AND THANKS

I have been greatly helped in this role by my predecessor, Jo Henderson-Merrygold. Alastair Hunter has also been on hand for questions. Those who have referred members to the treasurer email, or my personal email have also helped the members with the change, so my thanks go to them. Finally, Janet Fyffe has made my work extremely easy with her work on the summer meeting.

4.3 The Secretary, Dr Richard Briggs, reported as follows:

It was encouraging to have the face-to-face Winter Meeting at Sheffield in January 2023, and this provided a good occasion where several people offered to serve in committee roles. It may be that a resumption of face-to-face meetings will alleviate the recent difficulties in filling roles.

In advance of the 2023 Summer Meeting we received requests for, and administered, three bursaries.

Since our last meeting, the Society has been notified of the passing of Johannes de Moor, one of our honorary members, and of James (Jim) Aitken. Condolences have been passed on.

I am not aware of having received notification of any honours for members.

4.4 The Secretary for Honorary Members, Prof Susan Gillingham, reported as follows:

Correspondence with Honorary Members has been very positive, with only one member failing to make any contact yet again, perhaps raising questions as to whether they are any longer interested in the Society. The more specific news below will be uploaded onto the website after our Summer Meeting.

Athalya Brenner-Idan has completed a Psalms Volume, *My Psalm, My Context* (Vol. 8 of the Texts@Contexts series), co-edited with Gale Yee, with some fifty contributors. This will be profiled at SBL in November.

Reinhard Kratz was awarded with an Invitation as Visiting Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Department of Bible and Orion Center), and Fellow of the Israeli Fund for the Advancement of the Humanities and Social Sciences, supported by The Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities. This was from March to May 2023. A study on the role of the Torah in the so-called “Maccabean” revolt is due to appear by the end of the year (with Mohr Siebeck), as also a collection of articles on the Pentateuch (with de Gruyter).

Bernhard Lang has finally had published *Handbook of the Vulgate Bible and Its Reception: Annotated Bibliography – Latin Glossary – Textual Notes* (Vulgata in Dialogue. Second Special Issue 2023), Chur: The Vulgate Institute, 2023. 778pp. ISSN 2504-5156 <https://vulgata-dialog.ch> (open access) where the pdf can be consulted and downloaded. This is a comprehensive account of Vulgate research over the last two centuries (ca. 1820–2023) in the form of a thematically arranged annotated bibliography of more than 4000 titles. The work contains explanatory introductions, excerpts of relevant texts from Jerome’s work (generally in translation, but also in Latin), and chronological tables. Of particular note are the annotated alphabetical glossary of linguistic and stylistic terms (pp. 89–126), the glossary of the Latin vocabulary of the Vulgate (pp. 282–472), and the notes on individual biblical texts from Genesis to the book of Revelation and the appendices of the Vulgate (pp. 511–723). The final section is devoted to the cultural impact of the Vulgate in the church, in language, literature, and art, with particular attention to evidence from English, German, French, and Italian literatures and languages. Indexes of names and subjects as well as a detailed table of contents conclude the work.

Thomas Römer finally received, in June, from the French Minister of Culture, the decoration ‘commandeur des Arts et des Lettres’, which is the highest distinction in the field of cultural affairs.

Bernd Schipper is President of IOSOT (2022–2025), which will culminate in the next IOSOT Congress in Berlin from August 11–15, 2025.

It is most encouraging to see some of our Honorary Members at our Cambridge Meeting, and indeed one (Bernd Schipper, Berlin) is giving a paper. We warmly extend an invitation to others to join us next year in Oxford.

[RB adds: *Discussion followed regarding an invitation to propose Honorary Members. To do so please follow the ‘Guidelines for the nomination of honorary members’ that may be found on the Members’ Space of the website. Following the death of Johannes de Moor there are now 16 HMs, and the Rules of the Society allow for up to 20.*]

4.5 The Membership Secretary, Dr Alastair Hunter, reported as follows:

The total membership now stands at 498, unchanged since the last report. We welcomed 2 new Ordinary members in January (both male), and 2 deaths have been recorded (both male). At the time of writing I do not have information regarding any lapses through non-payment.

Will members please keep me informed of any changes to their postal addresses and e-mails. It is open to anyone to update their details on the member database on the SOTS website. If you choose to do this, please let me know, since there are other records which require to be updated at the same time.

The male/female ratio is 341M::157F, being 68.5% M and 31.5% F. This balance has remained virtually unchanged over the last few years; it fluctuates within 1% either way.

Members by country of residence. These figures are limited to members in the UK and Ireland on the one hand, and in the rest of the world. The proportions are UK & Ireland 328 (65.9%) and the rest of the world 170 (34.1%)

I have endeavoured to present regular mailings to members in such a way as to make the contents as clear as possible. I would be more than happy to receive any comments on presentation which would help to make this service better.

Finally, my thanks to fellow officers for their help and cooperation, particularly in the pursuit of updated information about a minority of members who sometimes seem determined to evade our best efforts at keeping in touch! I am especially indebted to Janet Tollington, my predecessor both as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. She has been an unfailingly helpful and supportive mentor as I undertook both of these roles.

4.6 The Book List Editor, Dr John Jarick, reported as follows:

The 2023 edition of the *SOTS Book List* contained reviews of 323 books, presenting evaluations made by 92 members of the Society. As the first edition to have been published after the retirement of long-term production editor Elaine Bingham, there were naturally a number of hiccups at the production phase as the new in-house production team at Sage Publications came to terms with the specifics of our Issue 5 component of the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, but hopefully none of those delays in the production process caused any discomfort to members of the Society, who, I trust, received their SOTS-branded copies of the *Book List* not too long after the customary distribution time.

In the earlier phases of commissioning and assembling the reviews for the 2023 edition, I was ably assisted, under the SOTS Graduate Student Assistant to the Editor scheme, by Seth Stadel, who has now moved on to the post-doctoral phase of his career; and in the process this year of the first phase of commissioning reviews for next year's edition, I have been equally ably assisted, under the same scheme, by Christine Rosa de Freitas, who is currently pursuing her doctoral studies at Oxford.

In my capacity as Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee, I am pleased to report the publication of the latest volume in the Study Guides to the Old Testament series, namely Zoltan Schwab's guide to *Proverbs*, under the banner of 'Wisdom Calls'; and also the latest volume in the SOTS Monograph Series, namely Andrew Davis's *The Book of Amos and Its Audiences*.

Since this is my last report as Editor of the *Book List* (and convener of the sub-committee) — in view of the imminent election of my successor in this office — allow me to express my thanks to the Society for having entrusted me with this privilege over the past several years, and my thanks to all the many members who have laboured so splendidly on the reviewing enterprise throughout that time — not least during the pandemic period, when normal operations were severely compromised. The seven editions that I've had the honour and pleasure of overseeing have seen 2,327 books expertly assessed by a considerable constituency of our members, thus furthering the *Book List*'s immensely useful project of bringing to the scholarly world an authoritative guide to the new publications in our field each year, and so to all of you I say: Thank You.

[The President expressed the thanks of the Society to JJ for his service as BL editor.]

4.7 The outgoing Conference Secretary, Dr Janet Fyffe, was unable to be present, and a brief oral report was offered by Dr Julie Woods, who had again agreed to take on many of the Hospitality Secretary's duties. JW thanked JF for all her work in preparing the conference, and the Committee on behalf of JF. It was noted that JF had written a document proposing some changes to the practical organisation of Conferences (and especially booking), which was being considered by the Committee with a special sub-group set up to consider detailed suggestions. JW outlined the intention that there would be a period of transition to the incoming Conference Secretary, working alongside both JF and JW.

[The meeting thanked JW for her on-site managing of the conference.]

4.8 The Information Officer (–) *In the absence of there being an Information Officer, an interim update was received from Dr Suzanna Millar, who had been serving in an acting capacity in this role since Jan 2023:*

Though not yet elected to the role, I have been informally doing the duties of the Information Officer since the winter meeting in Jan '23. I have not made substantial changes to the website, but have tidied it up where information was missing or out of date. The most substantial addition has been the newly-digitized booklists from 1979–1992, which are now available in the members' area. A decision was made this year to not include virtual book exhibits on the website, due to the high workload and minimal usage of this facility in previous years. If any SOTS member has ideas for the best way to use the website, I would be happy to hear them (if I am elected to this role).

[RB adds: SM was duly elected, see below.]

4.9 The Archivist, Prof Eryl Davies, was not able to be present, so the Secretary read Prof Davies' report as follows:

The archive at Bangor University continues to digitise the *Book List* and some of the past volumes have already been uploaded on the SOTS website. Happily, volumes of the *Book List* which were recorded as missing in my previous report have now been safely deposited in the archive, thanks to members who were willing to donate their own copies.

RB adds: It was noted that in future it was expected that reports would be received in addition from the Society's Social Media Rep, and EDI Rep.

5. Proposals for New Members

The following nine people were proposed and elected into membership of the Society: Mrs Jules Allin, Mrs Megan D. Alsene-Parker, Revd Jack Day, Mr Kengoro Goto, Mrs Rachel Lillycrop, Professor Gearard Ó Floinn, Mrs Anne E. Todd, Ms Ellie M. Wiener, and Mr Andrew A.T. Wilson.

The Secretary noted that while the Society wished to encourage membership applications from those at pre-doctoral level, it was appropriate to suggest that a nominee should have reached at least a research/dissertation/thesis component of Masters level study. Proposers and seconders would normally be expected to be aware of such a dissertation or thesis component of such study, e.g. a title or proposed focus.

6. Nominations

The proposals brought forward from the committee were accepted, namely:

1. President (for 2025) – Stuart Weeks
2. Book List Editor – Samuel Hildebrandt
3. Conference Secretary – Nathan Eddy
4. Information Officer – Suzanna Millar, effective immediately
5. EDI Representative – *no nomination, but it was hoped that one is forthcoming by the next meeting*
6. SOTS Wiki Editor – David Firth
7. General Committee Posts – Nathan MacDonald
8. Programme Subcommittee – Hywel Clifford
9. Publications Sub-Committee – Charlotte Hempel and Deborah Rooke.
10. Other Posts – *no nominations, but it was noted that the Society continued to look for an Arts and Humanities Network rep*

All those accepted would take up the relevant term of office on Jan 1st 2024 (except where otherwise noted).

7. Proposals and Items of Interest

7.1 Nature of ‘Conference Secretary’ Role

The Committee proposed that the Conference Secretary post be considered an ‘Officer’ post under Rule 17 of the Society, with the practical point being that this extends the term from ‘up to 4 years’ to ‘3 to 8 years’ and more naturally involves the Conference Secretary in discussions relevant to the evolving shape of meetings. The Business Meeting voted to accept this proposal.

7.2 Adjustments to Programme Rhythms in light of move to one in-person meeting/year

The Programme Sub-Committee proposed some modifications to the Society’s practice in light of the practicalities of implementing the decision to move to one on-line and one in-person meeting each year, with the in-person meeting being the Summer Meeting.

- (i) That the Presidential paper be given during the Summer face-to-face meeting.
- (ii) That the Presidential term begin with the Summer Meeting, rather than in January
- (iii) That uniquely, in order to facilitate point (ii), the present Presidential term of Prof Katharine Dell be extended to approximately 18 months, to run up until the Summer Meeting in Oxford in September 2024, at which point Dr John Jarick

would then take over as President for a term of office to be designated as ‘2024–25’ (or, in certain contexts, as ‘beginning in 2024’). Future Presidential terms would then be for approximately 12 months beginning with each year’s Summer Meeting.

In discussion it was noted that these were largely common-sense proposals, with some small implications that could be ironed out in due course – e.g. the nature of the calligraphy noting the date of term of office in the Presidential Bible, and any issues arising from the fact that the Presidential term would not be exactly 12 months, especially in cases where, for example, the Summer Meeting was in September in one year and July the next year. No practical problems were foreseen. The Secretary noted that it was possible that one word would need to be changed in the Society’s rules (regarding the term ‘calendar year’ for the Presidential term of office) in the event of which there would be a need to reaffirm this decision in a future Business Meeting. It was also noted that Committee Reports would henceforth be annual, at the Summer Meeting, with a reduced online Business Meeting in January not receiving such reports except in matters or urgent or interim business.

The Business Meeting accepted all these proposals (with KD and JJ excusing themselves for the vote).

7.3 Calling for Papers

Further re-iterating previous calls for papers, the Programme Sub-Committee reminded the Meeting of the opportunity to propose papers for the forthcoming joint OTW/SOTS meeting.

8. Any Other Business

In discussion one member asked for all BM votes to be by secret ballot. The Secretary offered to take this request to the Committee for consideration.

Another member congratulated the Secretary on achieving a record number of misprints in the Conference Programme. Appropriate celebrations followed.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The Society intends to hold future meetings as follows:

Winter 2024 - Online 1-day event – Thurs 4th January 2024

Joint SOTS/OTW Meeting – Tilburg Uni, NL, Wed 24th – Fri 26th July 2024

Summer 2024 – Mansfield College, Oxford, Mon 2nd – Thurs 5th September 2024 – noting that the intention is that this Meeting will (as is usual) begin with a Monday evening dinner and paper, but that it will be extended to include papers on the Thursday morning also, ending with lunch on the Thursday.

Winter 2025 – Online 1-day event tbc

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

Signed:

Date: