

THE SOCIETY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 18th July 2018 at St John's College, Durham under the presidency of Prof Walter Moberly

1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed Members to the Business Meeting of the Society and invited new Members attending the meeting for the first time to stand and introduce themselves. He also invited those who had been Members for at least 50 years to stand and be recognized. The Secretary noted that apologies had been received from the following: Bradford Anderson, Jennifer Andruska, Juan Cruz, Katharine Dell, Douglas Earl, Alec Gilmore, Alison Gray, Mel Gray, Charlotte Hempel, Christine Hoffman, Jo-Ping (Grace) Hsiao, Sandra Jacobs, Ann Jeffers, John Job, Jessica Keady, Edmée Kingsmill, Rex Mason, Chris Meredith, Hindy Najman, Anthony Phillips, John Sawyer, Joachim Schaper, Casey Strine, Dwight Swanson, Chris Thomson, Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, Nicolas Wyatt.

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 signed by the President.

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 Walter Moberly reported as follows:

It was a privilege and a pleasure to preside over the Society's winter meeting in Nottingham in January. I am deeply grateful to the other officers of the Society, who do the necessary work to keep the Society flourishing. Thank you!

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

BANK & INVESTMENT ACCOUNT BALANCES at 26th June 2018

	(Jun 2017)	
Barclays Current A/C	£26,744	£ 23,374
Barclays IAS (Business Premium) A/C	£81,264	£102,169
TOTAL	108,008	£125,543

The final figure includes as income in respect of the Summer Meeting which will be paid out in due course. Unusually, the invoice for the Winter Meeting (£15,198.10) has only just been presented at the time of writing; that sum should be deducted from the Current Account total. The significant decrease in the Premium account results from continuing payments from the Porter Legacy in respect of Centenary projects – specifically, the balance due for the virtual Jerusalem website, and continuing Wiki payments, as follows:

1. Administrative support for the wiki project during 2018 to June was £1800
2. Final payments in respect of the Jerusalem project totalling £8104.46

My personal thanks as ever to all who help to facilitate my duties as Treasurer – in particular David Shepherd, James Patrick, and Janet Tollington.

In response to the issue of under- and non-paying Members the following proposals (agreed by the Committee) were approved by the Business Meeting:

It is the normal practice of the Society that:

(a) the Book List is withheld from those who have either not paid or have underpaid their subscriptions by the 31st of May; if their payment is made by the 31st of August they will be given access to the online edition, but will not normally receive the print version. However Members admitted at the Summer Meeting will receive a print copy (if they wish) if their subscription is paid by that date.

(b) the membership of anyone whose subscription has not reached the Society by the 30th of November automatically lapses, and may only be resumed by application to the Membership Secretary and payment of outstanding subscriptions.

Heather McKay queried how widely gift-aid was used by Members of the Society for its benefit. The Treasurer offered a brief update and reminded Members of how gift-aid may be used to benefit the Society.

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

It is my unhappy duty as Secretary to note the passing of several Members of our Society since we last met in January. Since the new year, I have offered condolences on behalf of the Society with regard to the passing of: Peter Addinall, Alan Lowe, Enid Mellor, and three former Presidents of the Society: Robert Murray, who was President in 1987, Gwilym Jones, President in 1995 and Philip Davies, President in 2007. (He read an email received from Philip Davies' wife, Birgit, thanking Members for their condolences following Philip's death). Even as we mourn the loss of longtime Members of the Society, we also celebrate the achievements of current Members and I am delighted to offer congratulations to Dr Carly Crouch on her appointment to the David Allan Hubbard Chair of Old Testament at Fuller

Theological Seminary, whose previous holders include Francis Anderson and John Goldingay.

The Secretary invited the Business Meeting to join him in offering congratulations to Prof Crouch.

(d) The Secretary for Honorary Members, Prof Lester Grabbe reported as follows:

Norman Gottwald reports that in 2011 he and two other retired biblical scholars founded the Center and Library for the Bible and Social Justice on the grounds of Stony Point Center in Stony Point, New York (about 30 miles north of Manhattan). The three initially donated nearly 1000 volumes from their personal libraries, though the holdings have now grown to 12,000 volumes. The purpose of the centre is to bridge the gap between biblical scholars and social activists. It sponsors educational programs on such topics as Politics in the Two Testaments, the Import of Biblical Prophecy for Today, Milestones in the Work of Martin Luther King, and Celebration of the Life and Work of Walter Wink. Stony Point Center offers lodging and meals at modest cost, and anyone from abroad traveling to or stopping over in New York City is welcome to visit. It offers a quiet space to research, write or relax. For information, consult the website: www.clbsj.org. Professor Gottwald reports the publication of three volumes of essays, lectures, reviews, and tributes to colleagues under the title, *Social Justice and the Hebrew Bible*, and a smallish volume on *Ideology and Class in the Hebrew Bible*, all with Wipf & Stock. He also informs us that he greatly enjoys receiving SOTS reports and news, and sends greetings to the meeting.

Johannes de Moor is sorry to miss the Summer Meeting but hopes to meet many British colleagues at the Joint Meeting, 22-24 August, in Groningen. In addition to working on a commentary on the book of Micah, which will appear in the series Historical Commentary on the Old Testament (Peeters, Leuven), he reports the following publications:

- Review of Kenneth H. Cuffey, *The Literary Coherence of the Book of Micah*, JTS 67 (2016 [2017]), 685-687.
- ‘The Boundary between Isaiah 63 and 64 in Manuscripts and Bible Translations’, in M.C.A. Korpel and P. Sanders (eds), *Textual Boundaries in the Bible: Their Impact on Interpretation* (Pericope, 9; Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 77-93.
- ‘Section Division of Micah 4-5 in Eight Dutch Bibles: Forcing an Interpretation on the Reader by Sectioning’, in M.C.A. Korpel and P. Sanders (eds), *Textual Boundaries in the Bible: Their Impact on Interpretation* (Pericope, 9; Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 143-154.
- ‘Converted Demons: Fallen Angels Who Repented’, in K. Spronk and E. van Staalduine-Sulman (eds), *Hebrew Texts in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Surroundings* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 9-22.

He conveys his greetings to the colleagues attending the Summer Meeting in Durham. Several other Honorary Members have sent their greetings to the meeting: Sara Japhet, Reinhard Kratz, and Carol Newsom.

The Secretary for Honorary Members proposed the election of Prof Thomas Römer, who was duly elected by the Members.

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

The total membership now stands at 521, which is an increase of 2 since December 2017 (but it is likely to reduce significantly when the list is culled in the autumn of those who haven't paid their subscriptions).

Although we welcomed 12 new **Ordinary Members** in January (11M/1F) there have been 5 **deaths** (4M/1F) and 5 **resignations** (4M/1F). 5 Members 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. Several people no longer receive the round robin e-mails because messages sent to the e-mail address on the database have bounced back, so I have deleted them from the circulation lists.

Male/female ratio: 365M/156F, being 70.06% M and 29.94% F. The % of women is marginally down.

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	349 (66.99%)
Rest of the world	172 (33.01%)

Membership by type:

Ordinary Members: 349
Life Members: 155
Honorary Members: 17

Book list mailing: 415 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 2018 Book List until arrears have been paid to the Treasurer. Such people will be included in the second Book List mailing towards the end of 2018.

Julie Woods asked the Membership Secretary what additional means existed to track Members whose contact details were incorrect. The Membership Secretary noted that it was Members' responsibility to let her know of changes of contact details, but that if Members were aware of others having moved, she would be grateful to receive this information.

(f) The Hospitality Secretary, Dr James Patrick, reported as follows:

He commended the Members on a good meeting and apologised for infelicitous comments regarding the northerliness of Durham (which he admitted is not so northerly as some other parts of the UK!). He also apologized for the shortage of lanyards and asked that any missing badges and lanyards be returned (with the promise of absolution). He offered his thanks to St John's and its conference staff but invited Members attending the meeting to pass on constructive comments to him to pass on to St John's. He offered his thanks to other Officers, especially the Secretary, Information Officer and Treasurer and also to those offering practical assistance at this meeting. Finally, he offered a vote of thanks to the contributors to the bursary fund, which is much appreciated by those who benefit from it. He noted that he would be happy to speak to any who would consider serving as Hospitality Secretary.

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

Although the publisher is regrettably late in distributing this year's issue of the *SOTS Book List*, I can report that it is a bumper edition, with 462 books reviewed across 292 pages, filling out the maximum number of pages permitted in terms of issue 5 of the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. In that respect it equals the previous bumper editions of the *Book List* in 2007 and 2013; but in one statistic it goes further than any previous edition, in that it incorporates the work of 147 reviewers, a greater number than in the past and — at more than a quarter of the Society's membership — a tribute to the active involvement in the Society's operations of such a wide range of Members. On the Society's behalf I would like to thank each and every reviewer, and indeed everyone who in sundry ways assists in the smooth operations of the *Book List*.

In my capacity as Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee, I am pleased to report that an agreement has now been reached with Cambridge University Press that protects certain interests of the Society in regard to the new SOTS Monographs series, namely that the appointment of any Series Editor shall be by mutual agreement between the Society and the Press, that all decisions to include works in the series shall be made by mutual agreement between the Series Editor and the Press, and that the Press shall supply the Society's Archive with a presentation copy of the hardback edition of each work published in the series. The Memorandum of Agreement has been signed by Editorial Director Beatrice Rehl on CUP's behalf and by Secretary David Shepherd on SOTS's behalf.

I can also report that the sub-committee has recently expanded the publications information

made available to SOTS Members and other interested parties on the SOTS website. Members and others can now access details and explore links concerning all of the Society's publishing ventures, including the *Book List*, the Monographs series (past and present), the Guides series (past and present), Oudtestamentische Studiën, the Society's occasional publications, and of course the SOTS Wiki and the Jerusalem project. In the cases of Society volumes that are currently available for purchase by interested parties, direct links to the respective publishers' websites are at hand to ease that process. The sub-committee is grateful to the Society's Information Officer Jonathan Stökl for facilitating this upscaling and updating of the publications information on the website, and we encourage all Members to visit the site to discover — or rediscover — the extent and variety of the Society's publishing activities.

Let me also note that a new volume by a member of SOTS has just appeared in the Oudtestamentische Studiën series, namely Brittany Melton's *Where is God in the Megilloth? A Dialogue on the Ambiguity of Divine Presence and Absence* (volume 73 in the series).

I have a proposal to bring before the Business Meeting, on behalf of the General Committee and with the full endorsement of the Publications Sub-Committee. The committee and sub-committee recommend to the Society that the SOTS Wiki, which had come into being as a centennial project of the Society, should now in the post-Centenary context come under the ongoing oversight of the Publications Sub-Committee, and that its Editor should become an *ex-officio* member of the sub-committee.

The proposal was agreed by the Business Meeting.

There is one further matter to report concerning the Wiki Editorship. Members will recall that George Brooke was elected to this position at the previous Business Meeting, to succeed the retiring Foundation Editor, Walter Houston. George has requested that it be known that he is an 'interim editor', happy to take this role for a relatively short period, but that we are looking for a somewhat longer-term successor. Accordingly, we will be pleased to hear from any middle-ranking to senior Member of the Society who is willing to contemplate taking on this important role for the Society in the coming years.

(h) The Information Officer, Dr Jonathan Stökl, reported as follows:

Since the end of the winter meeting our website has been accessed c. 7,500 times, no doubt helped by the fact that the site can now handle payments for both membership dues and for the meeting itself. I would like to thank Alastair and James very much for their good spirits in trialling the new system.

Related to the new payment system for memberships, i.e. that the treasurer decided to discontinue the use of separate credit card payments, some Members fell into arrears. I sincerely hope that the renewed amount of interest and contact that this has already elicited

will continue in a positive and productive sense by getting Members to engage more with the Society.

In very positive news I have been informed by JISC, the UK's Higher Education management body for all matters related to the Internet, that we are back in control of our old web address, which Cambridge University Computing Services had kindly kept safe for us during the intervening years so that no other organisation might claim it. It will likely take some weeks before our website will be fully available via that address again but it should not take too much longer.

Following suggestions by John Jarick we have implemented a 'publications' section on the website. I am immensely grateful to him for all his suggestions and for writing the copy for the section. Any suggestions for improvements are always welcome.

Also, the end of my tenure as Information Officer is not too far off. Any member of the society who is interested is herewith invited to contact either me or David Shepherd to discuss the work involved with this.

Hedy Hung asked whether it would be possible to receive the handouts for papers delivered at the meetings electronically either via the website or via email.

The Officers agreed to consider this request.

(i) The Archivist, Professor Eryl Davies' report was read on his behalf, as follows:

Our Archivist, Eryl Davies wishes to report his appreciation to Dr Adrian Curtis for ensuring that T & T Clark send all published copies of the Study Guides to the Old Testament were sent to him so that they could be included in the archive and a similar thanks to Dr Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer for ensuring that the first copy of the SOTS Monograph series (Katherine Southwood's volume) was sent to him.

5. Nominations

The following were proposed and elected: Dr Walter Houston as President for 2020, Prof Charlotte Hempel as an Ordinary Member of the Committee, Prof Cheryl Exum as a Member of the Publications Sub-Committee and Dr Gwen Knight as a member of the Programme Sub-Committee.

The Secretary noted that the terms of the current Hospitality Secretary and Treasurer would shortly be concluding and invited Members with an interest in either of these roles to contact the current office holders with any questions they might have about the roles.

6. Proposals for New Members

The following were proposed and elected into membership: Dr Robert Allan, Dr Arjen Bakker, Miss Christie Broom, Dr Marieke Dhont, Dr Johanna Erzberger, Dr Sylvia Gourley, Dr Adam Hensley, Mr Iain Jamieson, Dr Andrew Langley, Mr Wen-Pin Leow, Mr Simeon Whiting.

7. AOB

Other business:

Heather McKay put it to the meeting that because Members are living longer, it might be advisable to expand the number of honorary Members. It was noted that we currently have 18 and might fill our complement before considering expanding the number. Certain practical and financial ramifications of expanding the number of honorary Members were noted.

Paul Joyce gave notice that Gordon Lynch would be convening regional meetings about the REF as follows:

Monday 3rd September: King's College, London

Tuesday 4th September: University of Bristol

Thursday 6th September: University of Edinburgh

Thursday 13th September: University of Manchester

8. Future Meetings

The Secretary confirmed that the Winter Meeting will be held from the 7th to the 9th January 2019, at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge and the Summer Meeting from the 22nd to the 25th July 2019 at Worcester College, Oxford.

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

Signed: Date: