

SOCIETY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 27th July 2016

**at Hulme Hall, Manchester
under the presidency of Dr Adrian Curtis**

1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed members to the Business Meeting of the Society and those members for whom it was their first business meeting were invited to stand and be welcomed by the membership. The Secretary noted that apologies had been received from the following:

Graeme Auld, Penelope Barter, John Barton, Kirsi Cobb, Jeremy Corley, Juan Cruz, Eryl Davies, Anthony Gelston, Elizabeth Harper, Charlotte Hempel, Jo-Ping (Grace) Hsiao, John Job, Anja Klein, Helen Kraus, Walter Moberly, Hector Patmore, Eva Pinthus, Zoltán Schwáb, Chris Thomson, Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, Kristin de Troyer, Wilfred Watson, Jim West, David Wulstan.

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 Dr Adrian Curtis. There were no matters arising which did not appear on the agenda.

3. Any Other Business

Margaret Barker asked that the matter of what the Hospitality Secretary announces be added to the agenda under any other business.

4. Reports from Officers

(a) The President, Dr Adrian Curtis reported as follows: It was a privilege, and a pleasure, to preside over the Society's Winter meeting in Durham in January, and I was touched by the warmth with which I was welcomed into the Presidency. The actions I have undertaken hitherto on the Society's behalf have been to convey greetings to the Irish Biblical Association on reaching their 50th year, and also to send a message for a book of good wishes to mark Janet Tollington's retirement, acknowledging in particular her contribution as Treasurer. Being President makes one appreciate more than ever the debt of the Society to its Officers for all the work which goes on, often behind the scenes, to maintain our activities. We are indeed fortunate to have such capable people willing to devote time and effort for the Society's, and our subject's, well-being.

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

1 BANK & INVESTMENT ACCOUNT BALANCES (as at 24/7/2016)

Barclays Current A/C	£23,066.19
Barclays IAS (Business Premium) A/C	£102,144.04
TOTAL	£125,210.23

The final figure includes income of about £15,000 in respect of the Summer Meeting against which will be set the balance owed to the University of Manchester. Payments for work on the Wiki project continue. A major investment in the Centenary Project has now been agreed, though so far only minor expenses have been met.

The detailed position with regard to subscription income was as follows:

1. Full paying members	348
2. Life members	154
3. Honorary members	18

Life members continue as before to contribute voluntarily to the Bursary Fund – a total this year so far of £1492.

Members who are paid up: 48 are on the low income rate of £15; of these all but 5 have paid at the new rate. Net contribution to the fund is £43.

260 are on the full rate of £30; of these 180 have paid at the new rate and 80 have continued on the £24 rate. Net contribution to the fund is £360.

Members in default: There are 40 members in default. 11 of these pay the reduced rate and 29 the full rate. Hence the total shortfall in subscription income is:

From those continuing to pay £24	£480	(Bursary £160)
Reduced rate non-payers	£165	(Bursary £11)
Full rate non-payers	£870	(Bursary £80)
TOTAL LOSS IN INCOME	£1515	(Bursary £251)

Total income to the Bursary Fund this year is £1939 to date. Gift aid will add around £750, giving an anticipated total of £2689. The budget anticipated £3000 – the shortfall is largely accounted for by the various defaulters; a proportion of that will be recovered by the end of the financial year.

2 BUDGET FOR 2016-17

Copies of the proposed budget for 2016-17 were circulated prior to the meeting, together with comparative figures from previous years.

The Treasurer also expressed his thanks to the Membership Secretary at the conclusion of her term.

The approval of the budget for 2016-17 was moved and seconded by members of the Society and carried unanimously.

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

It is my unhappy duty as secretary to report the passing of several members since our last meeting, including John Sandys-Wunsch, Leslie McFall, Preben Wernberg-Moeller and Ephrem Lash.

On a happier note, I wish to offer congratulations, on behalf of the Society, to the following SOTS members: Sue Groom appointed Archdeacon of Wiltshire, Chris Meredith appointed Academic Director of Theology at St. Mary's Twickenham, Charlotte Hempel, appointed Professor of Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism at the University of Birmingham and Eryl Davies, appointed a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales. If any further items of "Membership News" are known to the Society, I'd be grateful if they could be made known to me at the conclusion of our meeting, so that they might be included in the minutes of this meeting. Finally, I continue to appreciate the support and cooperation of the officers and other committee members in maintaining the work of the Society.

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

The Society was pleased to welcome our newest Honorary Member Reinhard Kratz to the meeting in Manchester. He also delivered one of the evening papers, with the title "Creating National Identity: The Promises to the Patriarchs".

Our honorary members continue to produce outstanding research, sometimes even in retirement. Here is a summary of their comments and information provided this past June:

Athalya Brenner finished a gruelling stint as President of the SBL. In spite of the SBL work and some subsequent illness leave, she has produced a fifth volume in the Texts@Contexts series, on the Historical Books (Samuel, Kings, Chronicles), edited with Archie C. C. Lee, that is about to be published by Bloomsbury T & T Clark (which has taken it over after Sheffield Phoenix ceased production).

Michael Fox has been elected Vice-President of the Society for Biblical Literature for 2016. Under normal circumstances, the Vice-President becomes the President the following year.

Johannes de Moor (with co-author Marjo Korpel) reports that the Dutch edition of Adam, Eve and the Devil has appeared (*Adam, Eva en de Duivel: Kanaänitische mythen en de Bijbel, Vught: Skandalon* (2016 [12+324 pages])). Although it is a popularised version, it contains much new material which was not included in the English edition (published by Sheffield Phoenix Press). So, if this is your research area, you might want to take some lessons in Dutch.

For the past two years, Kirsten Nielsen has been one of the editors of a new collection of Danish hymns. This has now been published in April: *100 salmer. Et salmebogstillæg* (Eksistensen: Frederiksberg C, 2016; *100 Hymns: A Supplement to the Hymn Book*). She

comments that in Denmark, there is a hymnbook authorized by the queen, but now and then groups within the church publish such supplements with new hymns. She is currently writing parts of a commentary to the 100 hymns.

Walter Brueggemann sends his greetings and reports that he has a new book, *Money and Possessions in the Bible*, out in the autumn. Sara Japhet and Bertil Albrektson also send their greetings. Carol Newsom also sends her best wishes to the meeting and reports that she has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences this past spring.

Finally, we have had problems obtaining information on Edward Nielsen. However, I am happy to say that we now have a report from Professor Jesper Høgenhaven in Copenhagen that Professor Nielsen is now 93 but is well for his age.

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Heather McKay asked whether the Society responds to Honorary Members' news and Lester Grabbe confirmed that he does so on behalf of the Society.

(e) The Membership Secretary, Ms Vivienne Rowett, reported that the total membership now stands at 523, which is 3 more than at this time last year.

New Ordinary members in 2016: 11 (6M/5F)

Resignations in 2016: 3 (3M).

Deaths in 2016: 1 (1M) This was actually a death which occurred in 2015 which I had not recorded until this year, Philip Potter.

Male/female ratio: 371M/152F, being 70.9%M/ 29.1%F.

Promoted to Life Membership in 2016: 0 . Strangely, my records show no members being elected in 1987.

Members by country of residence:

I am recording these figures in two forms, the 2016 version, and what I call the 1917-style version, which I am sure will be understood, i.e. the latter includes the 14 current members in the Republic of Ireland in the UK total.

2016 version: UK:349 (66.7%) Europe: 65 (12.4%) N America: 66 (12.6%) Rest of world: 43 (8.2%)	1917-style version: UK:363 (69.4%) Europe: 51 (9.8%) N America: 66 (12.6%) Rest of world:43 (8.2%)
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Membership by type:

Ordinary members: 356

Life members: 149

Honorary members: 18

The proportion of Ordinary/Hon + Life members is 68%/32%, thus the proportion of newer members to long-standing members is slightly up on the 66% of last December.

Book list mailing: 460 were sent out in the June mailing.

Postal receivers of the Bulletin: Most members receive by email, with 132 paper copies sent out to officers of the Society and those who have requested, as agreed.

After the demise of the SOTS database last Summer, I surprised myself in being able to reconstruct an .xls file of current members, and so to create the necessary address lists for the sending of the Bulletin and Book List. Jon Stokl has created an online database, and I will be working with him to transfer all data onto this so that it can be the primary database, and I wish it every success. My own records thus consist of an .xls file of all addresses and mailing preferences, the Autumn Address List for printing, separately-kept files of the email addresses to which SOTS round robin emails are sent, and a spread-out printout of the Autumn Address List which is updated and annotated by handwriting, a method which has proved helpful in averting total catastrophe in the past. These are in as good order as possible in hope that they can be smoothly handed on to the next Membership Secretary.

I would like to thank all of SOTS for their kindness during times of personal upheavals and for much friendly correspondence, apologise for my failings which I do not need to list, and assure my successor that I will give help as may be needed in the coming months.

The President, Dr. Adrian Curtis, expressed his heartfelt thanks on behalf of the members to the Membership Secretary for her service to the Society.

(f) The Hospitality Secretary, Mr. James Patrick, expressed his hope that the meeting arrangements had been generally satisfactory and offered both his and Hulme Hall's apologies for the catering mistake and the alarm going off unexpectedly and any other issues which members had. He noted that he will bear in mind comments regarding shared accommodation and thanked Julie Cockroft of Hulme Hall for her efficiency. He encouraged members to ensure that they book in advance in future, expressed thanks to the Society on

behalf of the recipients of low income concessions and bursaries and finally offered his personal thanks to the Officers and members of the Society and especially to the Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and President.

Paul Joyce updated the Society regarding plans for the London meeting next July by noting that we will be meeting on the Waterloo site of King's College London.

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

My first duties as the new *Book List* Editor are to thank the Society for entrusting this important aspect of its life into my hands—it is an honour to stand on the shoulders of the giants who have held this office before me—and to pay tribute to my immediate predecessor, Deborah Rooke, whose sure and steady stewardship of the past seven editions of the *Book List* (from 2010 to 2016) has been a sterling service to the Society.

The last edition under Deborah's editorship, the 2016 issue, has just been printed and distributed. It contains 346 reviews across the usual breadth of our field, distilled from the labours of 98 members of the Society. All is impeccable within the volume, and all is now well also in terms of the cover: regrettably our publishers/distributors at Sage Publications erroneously placed the JSOT cover rather than the SOTS cover on many of the copies that they sent out to SOTS members this year, but they swiftly rectified this situation by sending out the correctly-covered versions to our members—and I can reassure you that neither the incorrect nor the correct distribution cost the Society any money, as distribution costs are covered by Sage.

Action is already underway for the first edition under the new Editor, with a first batch of 92 books having been sent out to reviewers as a result of the Spring 2016 invitation, and some energetic members have already sent in their reviews, which gladdens an Editor's heart. A further 42 books were available for potential reviewers at this Summer Meeting 2016, and of course more will be on offer in the Autumn 2016 invitation and (for very prompt reviewers only) at the Winter Meeting 2017, before the ledger is closed on the 2017 edition. Meanwhile it is a pleasure to record the excellent work already being done by the new graduate-student Assistant to the Editor, Holly Thompson, a doctoral candidate at Oxford who has stepped smoothly into the shoes previously worn so skilfully by Holly Morse. Members may know that the previous Holly is now Dr Morse, having completed her doctorate around the same time as the 2016 edition of the *Book List* went into production.

In my capacity as Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee I have three items on which to report.

The first is a change of publisher for the Old Testament Guides series. Members will probably be aware that Sheffield Phoenix Press is stepping back from new publications, but

that Bloomsbury under its T&T Clark imprint is willing to take up many of the projects that had been in the Phoenix stable. Happily for the Society, our Old Testament Guides series will continue unabated under those new auspices.

The second item also involves the same publishing handover, insofar as our Centennial Essays volume, which was to be published by Sheffield Phoenix Press, will now be published by Bloomsbury T&T Clark, in the LHBOTS series. This volume is indeed now in production, and will be available at a very special discount price to members who plan on attending the ‘Centennial Meeting’ of the Society, the Winter Meeting 2017 in Nottingham. A Special Offer form for pre-ordered copies of the volume has been distributed at this Summer Meeting 2016 in Manchester, and I encourage all members present who anticipate also attending the following Winter Meeting to place an order with the Society’s Treasurer. The form gives fuller information about the Centennial Essays, to seek to entice members into committing to purchase a copy, but in essence the volume comprises seven essays covering the past and the present—and even the future—of SOTS, written by seven long-serving Officers of the Society.

The third publications item for report at this time is that the papers from the SOTS/OTW Joint Meeting of 2012 have now been published, under the title *Goochem in Mokum / Wisdom in Amsterdam: Papers on Biblical and Related Wisdom Read at the Fifteenth Joint Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study and the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap, Amsterdam, July 2012*, edited by George J. Brooke and Pierre Van Hecke with the assistance of Bob Becking and Eibert Tigchelaar (OTS, 68; Leiden: Brill, 2016). The volume comprises twelve papers, seven of them by members of SOTS and five by members of OTW. The intriguing title ‘Goochem in Mokum’ is taken from the Amsterdam Jewish dialect in which *goochem* (from Hebrew *hokmah*) means ‘wisdom’ and *Mokum* (from Hebrew *maqom*) means ‘the place’, namely Amsterdam. The publication of this volume on Wisdom from the Amsterdam Joint Meeting is much to be welcomed.

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

Due to being on Parental Leave for a considerable amount of time earlier this year I have only made minor progress on the website. I have, however, maintained it and made sure that it is up to date. I have also tried to find a new web designer to help with the last parts of the website that need to be built before it is fully operational. An initially positive reply has not materialised and I have recently contacted a number of designers. I am currently awaiting a response from them.

I have also contacted a number of hosting companies that have permission to host [.ac.uk](http://www.sots.ac.uk) addresses, which would allow us to retain our previous—and in my mind preferable—web address: www.sots.ac.uk.

There is also the matter of fonts. Tarah van de Wiele has been advising me on a number of good fonts. I attach the four fonts which I think I best, as word and as pdf.

(i) The Archivist, Professor Eryl Davies, reported via the President that he had nothing to report at the present time, but had drawn on the archives extensively in writing his contribution to the Centenary volume.

5. Centenary Celebrations

a) **SOTS Wiki** – Dr Walter Houston reported as follows:

Some progress has been made since the Winter Meeting. I have listed below pages added or significantly updated. I am indebted for this listing, as for much of the routine work on the Wiki, to Hedy Hung, whose hard work has kept the site well interconnected, and also to some extent improved its external connections. I myself have written a number of the new pages.

Nevertheless we are still missing pages on three books of the Hebrew Bible —Lamentations, Ezekiel and Malachi—as well as on most of the Apocrypha. I am at present editing a contribution on Judges, which should be in place by the time of the Summer Meeting, and I have been promised work on Ezekiel by the end of the year. Nearly all the other books have been assigned to writers, but in many cases they promised their pages would come in months or years ago. Many ancillary pages were assigned at the Winter Meeting, and the great majority of these have not appeared. We are struggling against the familiar academic problem of too much work and too little time to do it in. But we are getting there gradually!

Pages added in recent months: 1 Maccabees, Additions to Daniel, Allegory, Covenant, Diaspora, Elijah, Genre, Gentiles, Hezekiah, Ishmael, Mount Gerizim, Pentateuch (substantially), Qur'an and the Bible, Rabbi, Rabbinic Judaism, Temple, Ten Commandments Yehud

b) **Exhibition** – Dr Carly Crouch reported (on behalf of herself and Jonathan Stökl) as follows:

Since the Winter Meeting the project has made good progress, with a memorandum of agreement regarding the financial arrangements between SOTS and Nottingham signed in June. The details of the digital platform have been confirmed with Nottingham's Digital Arts team; they will be providing training on the platform over the summer and further support as required over the course of the project.

We've recruited a team of postgraduate and postdoctoral research assistants to contribute to the project, with individual remits covering parts of the biblical texts, archaeology and reception history. A few senior members of the Society will also be asked to make contributions in areas of particular expertise.

A meeting with the RAs occurred in Manchester, with the expectation that work on the project will begin thereafter. The intention is to have the site up and running by spring 2017, but certainly in time for the Summer Meeting in London.

6. Nominations

The following were proposed and elected: Prof Walter Moberly as President for 2018, Dr Janet Tollington as Membership Secretary, Dr Anja Klein and Dr Doug Ingram as Ordinary Members of the Committee.

7. Proposals for New Members

The following were proposed for and accepted into membership:

Fr Josef Mario Briffa, Rev Fleur Houston, Rev Dr Brian Howell, Dr Thomas Judge, Dr Katharina Keim, Rev Catherine Lewis-Smith, Ms Suzanna Millar, Miss Aysha Musa, Ms Rosalie Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh, Rev Robert Parkinson, Ms Cat Quine, Dr Megan Warner

8. Any Other Business

Margaret Barker expressed a wish that the Society would consider the rationale for certain announcements (e.g. the bar being open) being made by the Hospitality Secretary and other announcements (e.g. prayers) being made by others.

Heather McKay suggested that the Society had in the past agreed that the announcement of prayers would be included in the 'information' (rather than the 'programme') section of the Meeting leaflet but not communicated orally.

Adrian Curtis suggested that the Committee had considered this recently but would do so again.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Winter Meeting will be held from the 3rd to the 5th of January 2017 at Cripps Hall, Nottingham and the Summer Meeting, 17th to the 20th of July 2017, King's College London.

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

Signed: Date: