

The Society for Old Testament Study

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 23rd July 2014 at the University of Oxford under the presidency of Professor John Day

1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed new members to their first Business Meeting of the Society. Apologies had been received from the following: James Aitken, Graeme Auld, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Duncan Burns, David Chalcraft, Cynthia Crewe, Eryl Davies, Katie Edwards, Anthony Gelston, Anselm Hagedorn, Elizabeth Harper, Charlotte Hempel, Brittany Melton, John Sawyer, David Shepherd, Kristin de Troyer, John Tudno Williams.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous Business Meeting (8th Jan 2014), which had been displayed, were approved by the meeting and signed by the President. There were no Matters Arising not already covered under the Agenda.

3. Reports from Officers

(a) The President, Professor John Day, reported that he had been delighted by the large number of people who attended the SOTS meeting in Durham in January 2014 and the similarly large number at this Summer Meeting in Oxford. Since his installation as President in January there had been no particular issues outside the Society that had required him to work on its behalf. He had co-operated with other office holders in making arrangements for future meetings. These had generally run smoothly, though there had been a hiccup over arrangements for the joint meeting with the Dutch/Flemish society (OTW) in July 2015, which had now been resolved. Finally, he wished to thank the other office holders, especially the Hospitality Secretary and Secretary, for all their support.

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

BANK & INVESTMENT ACCOUNT BALANCES

Barclays Current A/C	£19,016.80
Barclays IAS (Business Premium) A/C	£111,035.24
TOTAL	£130,052.04

As was always the case at this point in the year, the final figure included income in respect of the Summer Meeting, which would be paid out in due course. The current account balance was thus overstated by about £7,000. Both the Wiki project and the special celebrations for the centenary year would require withdrawals from the investment account, which was likely therefore to be significantly reduced.

Available assets (other than the legacy funds of about £58,000) were in the region of £55,000. While this was an encouraging reserve, it was not growing, and bank interest was effectively zero. The final accounts for the Winter Meeting in Durham 2014 were available and had been on display at this Meeting. The Treasurer still hoped to introduce a web-based card payment system; for the time being, card payments were processed at a charge of £1.50 for payments below £100, and £3 for all others.

There were currently twenty-two members in arrears with their subscriptions, including three new members who had not yet arranged for payment. Three of the former were now in the third year of default, and would cease membership at the end of this year if their payments were not forthcoming. Although he made every effort to contact members to ensure that they were aware of the situation, responses were mixed! The Treasurer recorded his particular thanks to Viv Rowett and James Patrick. Without wishing to absolve himself of responsibility for the care of the Society's funds, the task would be impossible without their expertise and assistance.

(c) The Secretary, Dr Hilary Marlow, reported that congratulations were due to the following SOTS members: Professor Judith Lieu who had been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy, Stuart Weeks who had been appointed to a personal Chair by Durham University and Katharine Dell who had been promoted to Reader in Old Testament Literature and Theology at Cambridge. Charlotte Hempel had been selected to join the AHRC Review College. The Secretary was pleased to report that, since the Winter Meeting 2014, she had not been informed of the deaths of any members of the Society.

She informed the meeting that, after much consideration, she had decided to step down as Secretary of the Society. This was due in part to timing complications in her current job, which made it impossible to attend SOTS Meetings on a regular basis. It was also to ensure a staggered change over of Officers of the Committee, particularly Secretary, Treasurer and Hospitality Secretary. A proposal for her successor would be brought to the Meeting under a

later agenda item. She was grateful for the understanding of Committee Members and for their support and cooperation in maintaining the work of the Society.

(d) The Secretary for Honorary Members, Professor Lester Grabbe, reported with regret the death of an Honorary Member, Professor Rolf Rendtorff on 1 April 2014. Professor Grabbe had not been able to find an address of a family member for condolences, either from his acquaintances or colleagues at the University of Heidelberg. This left the Society with 18 Honorary Members. Nominations for new Honorary Members should be given to the Secretary or the Secretary for Honorary Members.

Professor Grabbe also reported the following news from Honorary Members:

Professor Johannes De Moor had presented a paper in this meeting of SOTS.

Professor Athalya Brenner had been elected as Vice President of the Society of Biblical Literature. The normal expectation was that the Vice President would go on to become President the following year. Professor Grabbe had offered her congratulations on behalf of the Society.

Professor Kirsten Nielsen would shortly be publishing a volume of 40 sermons, called *The Old Testament on the Pulpit* (*Det Gamle Testament på prædikestolen*). She was also participating in a project for the anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, in which the consequences of the Reformation for the Danish church and culture would be considered. She was contributing on hymnwriting in the 20th century.

Professor Martti Nissinen was in charge of the Academy of Finland Center of Excellence's project, "Changes in Sacred Texts and Traditions". He also led one of the four teams, the one specifically on Society and Religion in the Ancient Near East. He described the project in an article, "Changes in Sacred Texts and Traditions: A Centre of Excellence of the Academy of Finland at the University of Helsinki". He also recently contributed to the Anneli Aejmelaeus *Festschrift* with an article, "Since When Do Prophets Write?"

Professor Carol Newsom had a commentary on Daniel coming out in the Old Testament Library series this autumn. Professor Walter Brueggemann sent his greetings to the Society.

(e) The Membership Secretary, Ms Vivienne Rowett, reported a current membership figure of 513 with a male/female of 359/154. This represented a net gain of 25 members over the same time last year, and 10 since the beginning of this year. Of this total, 157 were now life members; hence more than 30% of the Society's members were over 52 years of age. She would continue to monitor the age profile of the Society. She reported that 512 copies of the Book List were mailed to members this summer, meaning that only 5 were not sent copies. Alastair Hunter had continued Janet Tollington's success in keeping the number of non-receivers due to unpaid subscriptions at a very low number. She thanked Officers, members of the Committee and ordinary members of the Society for their help in making her work as Membership Secretary continue smoothly and pleasantly.

(f) The Hospitality Secretary, Mr James Patrick, reported that the Summer Meeting was running smoothly and included about 50 people who were non-resident. He thanked those who had relinquished en suite bedrooms and reported that he was looking for alternative badge holders that did not swivel. He thanked the President and other members of the Committee for their support over the course of the year and expressed his appreciation to Alastair Hunter, Hilary Marlow and his team of conference helpers.

(g) The Book List Editor, Dr Deborah Rooke, reported that the 2014 edition of the *Book List* was somewhat shorter this year than last, although hopefully no less edifying for readers. She had had an enthusiastic response to a circulation list of review books, so it was good to know that people were still willing to participate in the production. Once again she recorded her thanks to Holly Morse for registering the books when they arrived for review, preparing the headers and insert sheets in the books, and overseeing the mail out of reviewers' selected volumes. From the Publications Sub-Committee she reported that at this meeting they hoped to finalize a publisher for the new SOTS monograph series so as to launch it for the SOTS centenary year of 2017. She also reminded the Meeting of the urgent need to identify a successor as *Book List* editor and invited members to suggest names to her.

(h) The Information Officer, Dr Jonathan Stökl reported that, since taking over as information officer from James Aitken, he had looked into changing the hosting of the SOTS website. It was currently still held with the Computing Services at Cambridge University, which meant that in order to modify it one needed to have a Cambridge IT ID and to be physically within Cambridge's computing network. Since he did not have such sign in credentials, Dr Aitken had kindly agreed to maintain the website for the time being. Together with the changing of the hosting, the Information Officer was looking into changing the capabilities of the website as such to help other officers, notably the treasurer, the hospitality secretary and the membership secretary. He was in touch with a computer consultant who had advised similar organisations such as the European Association for Biblical Studies in their upgraded websites. He looked forward to hearing from him with an estimate of the involved costs, and hoped that things would start to be up and running in the not too distant future.

4. Elections

a) Officers and Committees

1. The Meeting unanimously elected Dr Adrian Curtis as President of the Society for 2016.
2. Following agreement reached at the last Business Meeting, the Meeting unanimously elected Professor Paul Joyce as President of the Society for 2017, the Centenary Year.
3. The Meeting unanimously elected Dr David Shepherd as Secretary of the Society from January 2015.
4. The Meeting unanimously approved the extension of Dr Katharine Dell's term on the Committee by a further year until the end of 2015.

5. The Meeting unanimously approved the extension of Professor Lester Grabbe's term on the Publications Sub-Committee until further notice.

b) New Members

A list of persons proposed for membership had been displayed, and the following were duly elected to membership of the Society: Dr Mark Awabdy Mr J. E Estrada, Dr Miriam Hinksman, Ms Jo-Ping (Grace) Hsiao, Dr Anja Klein, Rev John Kieran Maher, Ms Karen Kai-Wen Yuan.

5. Centennial celebrations

- a) Centennial Exhibition. Dr Jonathan Stökl reported that the Ashmolean Museum had finally rejected the proposal to host an exhibition on Jerusalem as part of the SOTS centennial celebrations. The planning group were in the process of revising their proposal for resubmission to smaller venues around the country and welcomed suggestions from members regarding suitable venues.
- b) Wiki Project. Dr Walter Houston reported that in the first 6 months of the project introductory articles on 22 books of the Hebrew Bible had been posted to the site. This was a good start although did not achieve his aim of seeing introductions to all 36 books of the Hebrew Bible completed. He proposed to expand the site to include articles on, *inter alia*, extra-biblical literature and writings, the LXX and Targums, biblical characters, and would like dozens of articles by the time the site goes live in 2017. Dr Houston was asked whether the SOTS Wiki Project had any connection with the SBL Bible Odyssey Project. He replied that these are complimentary rather than linked projects, since the SBL project cannot be added to or edited by its members. The President thanked Dr Houston for his work on the Wiki Project.

6. Future Meetings

The forthcoming Winter Meeting would take place at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge on 5th-7th January 2014. The 2015 Summer Meeting would be the triennial joint meeting with OTW (Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap) and would be held at Pollock Halls, Edinburgh on 20th-23rd July 2015.

There being no further business, the President thanked Mr James Patrick and those who had enabled the smooth running of the Summer Meeting, the Committee Members and all those who had read papers at the Meeting. He declared the Business Meeting closed.

Signed: Date:

