

# SEMANTICS OF ANCIENT HEBREW DATABASE PROJECT

Minutes of the Meeting of the SAHD Executive Committee and Co-Workers held on  
Thursday 3 September 2009 in the University of Florence

Present: Committee: M.G. Amadasi (Rome), G.I. Davies (Cambridge), H. Gzella (Leiden, Chairman), D.J. Reimer (Edinburgh), H.G.M. Williamson (Oxford, Secretary), I. Zatelli (Florence).

Co-Workers: A. Funelli (Florence), M. Marrazza (Florence), C. Masi (Florence), A. Pecchioli (Florence), J. Stökl (Oxford)

Apologies: J.K. Aitken (Cambridge), J. Hartley (Azusa), F. Scagliarini (Rome), K. Spawn (Simpson University), I. Young (Sydney), F. Zanella (Bonn).

On behalf of the University, the Dean graciously welcomed members to Florence. It was reported that the previous chairman, Professor T. Muraoka, had in particular sent best wishes for the meeting, and all those present warmly thanked Professor Zatelli and her assistants for the arrangements for the present meeting.

## 1. Minutes of the last meeting (Leiden 2008)

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

## 2. Matters arising and not taken elsewhere

*Archive* [Leiden 2 (b)]. It had been agreed that Dr Reimer and Professor Williamson would weed and amalgamate the materials they held suitable for retention. Professor Gzella then agreed to the further proposal that they should be deposited in Leiden thereafter.

**ACTION: HG, DR and HGMW**

## 3. Reports from centres

(a) *Cambridge*. (i) The main project at present was to complete the 'salvation' group. Good progress on completing the individual lexemes had been made and Professor Davies was working on an introduction to the whole, suitable for publication as well as for the database. He was confident that this would be completed during the coming year. (ii) Dr Aitken had secured a permanent appointment in Cambridge in a field closer to that of the project than his present position, so that it was hoped that he would therefore be able to continue with his previously much appreciated support. (iii) A. Gray was continuing to contribute to *ThWQ* on *g'l*. Agreement had

been reached with Professor Zatelli and Mr Masi that Mr C. Thomson might contribute entries on nominal forms from the *tsedeq* group while Mr Masi would focus on the adjective and verb.

(b) *Florence*. Dr Sciumbata has now left and will not be able to continue with work for the project. Dr M. di Giulio's thesis is being published and he hopes in due course to submit his entries for the database. There are four students currently working on lexical fields, all of whom were present at the meeting: Funelli (prayer), Marrazza (health and illness), Masi (justice), and Pecchioli (image). There were some entries which had been completed previously (and translated into English by Professor Davies) which should be submitted to the Chairman for approval and then be mounted on the website.

**ACTION: IZ**

(c) *Oxford*. (i) Dr Salvesen's entries on kingship and related terms are now all complete and available (by a link) on the website. (ii) Professor Williamson had secured a research grant that should allow Dr Stökl to prepare entries (based largely on his recently approved doctoral dissertation) for nouns relating to prophets.

(d) *Leiden*. (i) Professor Gzella is currently on the advisory board of *ThWQ* and is himself editing volume 9 of *ThWAT* (on Aramaic); he hoped that some of the material from either project would be valuable to us and that authors might be encouraged to contribute. (ii) Mr W. Dekker is working for a doctorate on God and violence, including some attention to the semantics of words for war and the like, but progress at present is slow. (iii) All present sent congratulations to Professor Muraoka on the publication of his Septuagint Lexicon.

(e) *Harvard*. Professors Huehnergard and Hackett had recently moved to new positions at the University of Austin in Texas. Harvard would therefore no longer be a Centre (even of the recent virtual variety), and the secretary was asked to inquire whether in their new position they would be interested in picking up again on participation in the project.

**ACTION: HGMW**

(f) *Rome*. (i) Professor Amadasi agreed to encourage F. Scagliarini to submit material for her entry on *'abbir* even if it was not finally complete so that the work she had undertaken would not be lost. (ii) She and Professor Gzella both agreed to approach G. Gianto (PBI) to see if he would be interested in joining the project in his own right, and perhaps with others as co-workers.

**ACTION: MGA, HG**

(g) *Azusa*. Congratulations were extended to Professor Hartley on the news that his volume on colour terms was now with the publisher. The secretary should inquire about possible further projects.

**ACTION: HGMW**

(h) *Edinburgh*. (i) A new doctoral student was starting a textually based study on 'glory', especially in Isaiah, which might eventually lead to an entry for the database. (ii) Dr Frydrych had now completely given up academic work; Dr Reimer agreed to check that he would therefore relinquish his lexemes and inform the chairman accordingly. (iii) Dr Reimer's own contribution would continue to be development of the website and database (see 4 below).

**ACTION: DR**

(i) *Paris*. No news had been received from Professor Lemaire.

(j) *Sydney*. Professor Young had recently tried to contact Dr Jordan [see Leiden 3 (j)] but without success so far. He would continue so to do. As with other centres, it was agreed that it was important to mount as much new material as possible, even if it was not always complete, in order to maintain the momentum of the project.

**ACTION: IY**

(k) *Israel*. No news had been received [see Leiden 3 (k)]. The secretary agreed to contact Professor Talshir in order to ascertain what the position was.

**ACTION: HGMW**

(l) *Dr Kevin Spawn* apologized that he had not made any progress with the preposition *kaph* this past year.

(m) *Dr Zecharias Kötze*. No further news had been received. The secretary agreed to contact him to see if he was still planning to contribute to the project.

**ACTION: HGMW**

(n) *Bonn*. It was noted that F. Zanella had left Florence and was now working on the *ThWQ* in Bonn [see Leiden 7 (1)]. He reported in writing that Professor Fabry was content that he should contribute to SAHD provided it was not at the expense of his paid employment; he had offered to write on lexemes relating to 'knowledge' or 'exclusion'. Members present unanimously agreed that the lexical field relating to knowledge was not available, since Dr Sciumbata in Florence had worked on that (and indeed, some had already been published), but that Dr Zanella might explore possibilities relating to other semantic fields with the chairman; the secretary would write to him to clarify the position.

**ACTION: HGMW**

#### 4. Website and Database

In a tabled paper, Dr Reimer explained that the website had been dormant during his year's leave of absence but that he hoped to update it shortly. A large number of entries (many of which have been published in hard copy) are not included there in the list of lexemes because they are in a format which cannot be converted to normal systems without each Hebrew and Greek letter being changed manually. He also recommended that we should look again at using a wiki approach to compiling our database; both the technology and the systems for editorial control have improved considerably since we last considered and rejected this approach, and he thought it would now be suitable.

In discussion, the following points were agreed:

(a) The need to make the list of lexemes complete is urgent, and if the software does not allow the many unlisted entries to be mounted as such, they should be listed with a reference to the published version.

**ACTION: DR**

(b) There are quite a number of entries which are complete or nearly complete which have never been submitted for editorial approval and mounting on the website. These should be submitted to the chairman as soon as possible. If a co-worker has undertaken research for an entry but is no longer able to be active, then as much of their work as possible should still be mounted, with a note that further work needs to be done. As this is primarily a database, not a research journal, any collection of data, even if not finalized, is helpful to other workers.

**ACTION: ALL**

(c) There is now enough work to be done to justify seeking to employ somebody to work on the website for a period (a year?). Much material is available that needs to be converted to our standard system and all the entries need to be brought together to start to create a genuine and searchable database. Such a person might also be able to contribute some entries in their own right. Professors Davies and Williamson and Dr Reimer thought that they might be able to collaborate in applying for research funding for this purpose from the British Academy or the AHRC, while Professor Gzella thought that the NWO might be a possible source of much larger funding for the project, which could include database development. They all agreed to put out feelers and liaise at the end of the year with a view to taking one or other scheme forward.

**ACTION: GID, DR, HGMW; HG**

(d) The minutes of the Leiden meeting could now be mounted on the website. In order to avoid a full year's delay, it was agreed that this year's could be added one

month after they had been distributed, provided no objections or serious corrections had been notified to the secretary.

## **5. Chairman's Report**

Most items had already been discussed previously. The chairman agreed in addition to follow up an expression of interest in participation by Dr Riley. A suggestion of an entry on *kos* had also been proposed; this too could be explored further, though the desirability of working in semantic fields was emphasized.

**ACTION: HG**

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next meeting would coincide with the meeting of the IOSOT in Helsinki (1-6 August 2010). Usual practice on such occasions had been to meet after lunch on the Friday (the last day). The Chairman regretted that he would not be able to attend, however. The secretary agreed to contact the Congress organizers about use of a room.

Professor Davies offered to give a paper on the salvation group of lexemes, and it was agreed that if possible one full session of short papers should be devoted to SAHD issues. There could be an introductory talk on the project as a whole and then three or four papers on specific topics, including that of Professor Davies. The secretary would invite papers from all involved in the project and liaise with the Congress secretary.

**ACTION: HGMW**

## **7. Other Business**

Attention was drawn to the SIL semantics website. Their material was much briefer and orientated towards their specific objectives, but liaison would be desirable. Dr Reimer agreed to make an initial contact with Dr Reinier de Blois about this.

**ACTION: DR**

After the lunch break M. Marrazza read a paper arising from his research on some words for illness; discussion followed.