

# SEMANTICS OF ANCIENT HEBREW DATABASE PROJECT

Minutes of the Meeting of the SAHD Executive Committee and Co-Workers held on Friday 9 August 2013 in the University of Munich

Present: J.K. Aitken (Cambridge), C. Masi (Florence/Berlin), H.G.M. Williamson (Oxford, Secretary and Chairman of the meeting), I. Zatelli (Florence).

Apologies: G.I Davies (Cambridge), H. Gzella (Leiden), D. Reimer (Edinburgh), K. Spawn (Simpson University), J. Stökl (London), F. Zanella (Bonn).

## 1. Minutes of the last meeting (Leiden 2012)

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

## 2. Matters arising and not taken elsewhere

It was noted that no approach had yet been made to Peeters about the possible electronic mounting of the printed volumes and that there remained a need to confirm any possible links with the *keli* project.

**ACTION: HG**

It was also noted that Professor Zatelli and Dr Masi had presented papers at the current IOSOT congress on topics related to the project.

## 3. Chairman's report

Professor Gzella reported in writing that (i) Christian Stadel, now at BGU, has some experience in lexicography, which could make him a valuable contributor to our project. (ii) He drew attention to a number of relevant articles in the BZAW 427 volume devoted to Wilhelm Gesenius. (iii) He undertook to look carefully at Aaron Koller's recent dissertation, entitled *The Ancient Hebrew Semantic Field of Cutting Tools: A Philological, Archaeological, and Semantic Study*, was published in 2012 (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 49; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America) in order to see whether the author should be invited for collaboration.

**ACTION: HG**

## 4. Reports from centres

(a) *Cambridge*. Professor Davies reported in writing that (i) Dr Alison Gray, having now completed her doctorate, was working to fill in gaps in the coverage of entries on words for 'deliverance' and that she hoped to be able to complete this in the next few months. Some checking of the material already drafted would then be undertaken. This (together with an introduction already written by Professor Davies) should all be complete and this whole major project mounted on the website within the coming year. (ii) Dr Nathan Macdonald, recently appointed to a lectureship in Old Testament studies in Cambridge, has expressed a particular interest in assessing the wider impact of the project by way of its website in particular. He was in discussion with Dr Aitken on this in particular. Dr Aitken reported that there were some continuing problems with the Cambridge website and that he was working to resolve these without any loss of data.

**ACTION: GID, JKA and others**

(b) *Florence*. Professor Zatelli reported that (i) she is now in a new, larger department. The technician was preparing a new departmental website which should include a SAHD page where material currently hosted in Edinburgh could eventually be moved. (ii) Alberto Legnaioli is working on a Masters thesis on substantives relating to 'time' but that she was still waiting to hear from the

Chairman if the relevant lexemes were free for him to prepare database entries on this basis. (iii) C. Masi (now resident in Berlin) was continuing his research on *tsdyq* and *rsh'* which should eventually include database entries. (iv) Dr Pecchioli has now completed her doctorate and is starting to prepare database entries based upon it. (v) Dr Marrazza has completed his doctorate on adjectives for health and illness and has promised to prepare some entries. (vi) A. Funelli is now writing a doctorate on substantives for prayer.

**ACTION: IZ, HG and others**

(c) *Oxford*. Professor Williamson reported that (i) his doctoral student Sonja Noll was progressing with her thesis on the semantic field of silence; she remains keen to prepare database entries arising from this. (iii) His paper about the project delivered last summer at a conference on lexicography in Strasbourg was now in process of publication.

**ACTION: HGMW**

(d) *Leiden*. Professor Gzella reported on further good progress with ThWQ and TWAT ix, both of which were demanding more of his time than originally envisaged. Sigrid Kjær has recently completed her Leiden M.Phil. dissertation (supervised by HG) on the semantics of certain Aramaic and Arabian legal terms in the documentary texts from Naḥal Ḥever. She has a background in Hebrew Bible Studies and will embark on doctoral research at the University of Austin, Texas (where she has been awarded a scholarship), after the summer. While her work does not yet directly relate to the SAHD project, team members may find it useful to be aware of her activities.

(e) *Edinburgh*. Dr Reimer reported in writing that the project by Marilyn Burton on 'glory' will be submitted in a couple of weeks' time (lexemes treated are listed in 2012 minutes). The intention is that it will form the basis of SAHD entries, provided the lexemes are available (confirmation of this is still awaited). The other project (Kurtis Peters, 'cooking vocabulary') continues.

**ACTION: HG**

(f) *Dr Kevin Spawn* reported that he had not been able to undertake any further research this year.

(g) *Bonn*. Dr Zanella reported that he had not been able to complete his first entry yet, as hoped, but that he remained committed to the project. The availability of the lexemes he plans to treat remains to be confirmed.

**ACTION: HG**

(h) *Austin, Rome, Azusa, Paris, Sydney, Israel*. No news; see item 8 below.

## 5. Website

Dr Reimer reported in writing that the new 'Dokuwiki' based site gives many advantages and possibilities for growth and enhancement; our Spring 'crisis', then, bore good fruit! Dr Reimer will continue development, as some links in the old site still have not been restored. The easy-to-remember link is: <http://j.mp/SAHDproj> (case sensitive). As of the morning of 6 August there had been 466 'unique' visits since the Agade announcement the previous week; 'steady state' looks like about 50 hits daily, coming from 34 countries; roughly 50% of hits come from the top 3 countries (USA, UK, Netherlands). (The full list is quite encouraging!)

In discussion it was agreed to ask Dr Reimer if (i) he could introduce a page in which lexemes completed could also be displayed as grouped by semantic field (since this is a fundamental element in our working procedures). (ii) It would be helpful if a contact point could be more prominently displayed so that readers could send in suggestions such as updated bibliography for completed entries and so on. Ideally this would be into a box that could be accessed on an occasional basis by the chairman/editor, as obviously he would have to approve 'publication' of anything new.

**ACTION: DJR**

## 6. Database

Dr Reimer reported that although Dokuwiki does not provide the full capabilities of a proper relational database, its infrastructure and design mean that it is fully searchable. It does go some way, then, to meet this goal. For file-based lexeme entries, Dr Reimer has adopted the numbering convention\* used in a valuable

LexicalIndex.xml compilation from the Hebrew Lexicon data from the Open Scriptures project (keying BDB, Strongs, and TWOT in a single, sorted XML listing). Details can be found here, if anyone is interested: <http://j.mp/OSHebLex>

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\* example: fyd\_kerub\_Wood-A\_Edi\_2006.pdf

- fyd = unique lexeme identifier from LexicalIndex.xml (allows reliable 'alpha' sort on all Hebrew lexemes);
- kerub = naturalized transliteration of lexeme with alef as ' and ayin as `;
- Wood-A = author (surname - initial)
- Edi = centre
- 2006 = initial year of publication
- .pdf = filetype

## 7. List of Lexemes

The Chairman had provided a scanned copy of the list of assigned lexemes as last updated in November 1999 (this had been circulated with the Agenda). It is therefore very seriously out of date, and this fact is inhibiting progress in several centres, as noted above. Completed entries need to be removed from the list, those no longer active need also to be removed, and new assignments need to be added. As the chairman does not currently have the time to do this, the Secretary agreed to prepare a completely new list of lexemes which are the subject of active current study and to submit this to the Chairman for approval. All colleagues should therefore submit to him lists of current work (lexemes and name of co-worker). Consideration should then be given to putting this list on the website. Requests come in from time to time by scholars elsewhere offering to help and this should be encouraged in principle, but at present it has not been possible to know whether the material they wish to work on is available.

**ACTION: HGMW and ALL**

## 8. Centres listed in 4 (h) above

It was recognized that these centres had either completed their assignments or appeared not to have been active for a long time. The Secretary therefore agreed to contact them all to see if there was any continuing activity. If not, they might wish no longer to receive committee circulations but should be encouraged to visit the website for updated information at any time.

**ACTION: HGMW**

## 9. Next meeting

It was suggested that it would be best to meet in Leiden next year if possible so that Professor Gzella could attend. A date in the second half of July that did not clash with known conferences would probably be best. The secretary agreed to try to co-ordinate with Professor Gzella and Dr Aitken to find a suitable date which could then be circulated as soon as possible.

**ACTION: HGMW, JKA and HG**

[The date was subsequently arranged for Thursday 31 July]