

SEMANTICS OF ANCIENT HEBREW DATABASE PROJECT

Minutes of the Meeting of the SAHD Executive Committee and Co-Workers held on
Thursday 31 July 2014 in the University of Leiden

Present: H. Gzella (Leiden, Chair), G.I Davies (Cambridge), H.G.M. Williamson
(Oxford, Secretary).

Apologies: J.K. Aitken (Cambridge), G. Khan (Cambridge), C. Masi
(Florence/Berlin), D. Reimer (Edinburgh), K. Spawn (Regent University), J. Stökl
(London), M. Vervenne (Leuven) F. Zanella (Bonn), I. Zatelli (Florence).

1. Minutes of the last meeting (Munich 2013)

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2. Chairman's report

The Chairman reported that (i) he had been in touch with Peeters about electronic availability of project materials already published by them. This was not their usual practice and they could only usually consider it if the material were somewhat different from the printed version. He undertook to find out from them how much they might ask for the material being 'bought out' by the project in order to make it electronically available. (ii) He had looked carefully at Aaron Koller's recent dissertation, entitled *The Ancient Hebrew Semantic Field of Cutting Tools: A Philological, Archaeological, and Semantic Study* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 49; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2012). It had particular strengths in the field of post-Biblical Hebrew but he was not sure that, as it stood, it would be the basis for contributions to the Database.

ACTION: HG

3. Revision of List of Active Centres

Over the past year the Secretary had received definite word that Leuven, Paris, and Sydney were no longer active Centres and that any assigned lexemes could be reassigned. In addition, work at Azusa (J. Hartley) had been completed. PBI Rome, Ben Gurion Israel, and South Africa (Koetze) had never even started work on the project and had not responded to recent circulars. Of co-workers, it was further ascertained the Caterina Moro and Marco di Giulio were no longer active and had no plans to re-engage with the project. The following were therefore the currently active Centres: Oxford, Rome, Florence, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Bonn, Regent USA, Austin TX, and Leiden.

It was agreed that it was important that the list of active Centres should be realistic rather than merely aspirational. Furthermore, material such as the Minutes of meetings were now regularly posted on the website, so that people could keep

themselves informed if they had interest. Those involved at the Centres that were not active would be sent these Minutes and told that they would not receive any further circulars from the Secretary unless they explicitly asked to be kept on the circulation list. Naturally, this did not preclude any of them from becoming active in the future (something which in principle they should be encouraged to consider), in which case they would obviously be restored to the list of active participants.

ACTION: HGMW

4. Update on list of assigned lexemes

The completely revised list, based on recent returns from active Centres, was received. [For committee members only (not for public display) the full list is attached.] Following discussion, it was agreed that this should be mounted on the website in two forms: (i) The Cambridge list should be mounted under the heading 'Under preparation for publication'. (ii) The remainder of the list should be mounted in an anonymised form, i.e. 'List of lexemes under current research', with the lexemes grouped in their semantic fields but without reference to the Centre or Co-worker involved.

ACTION: HGMW and DR

5. Reports from Centres

(a) *Cambridge*. (i) Professor Davies reported that Dr Alison Gray's work on the 'zr' group of lexemes had been interrupted earlier this year but that she hoped to complete her work by the end of September. He and Dr Aitken would then need to revise and check through the whole of the 'deliverance' group in order to finalize it for editorial approval and mounting on the website. (ii) While he indicated that the completion of this assignment would mark the end of his own involvement with the project, he was hopeful that Cambridge would continue as an active Centre; Dr Nathan Macdonald was interested in working with Dr Aitken to this end, and they would also be able to involve Dr Gray, Dr Peter Williams and possibly Dr Aaron Hornkohl as well.

ACTION: GID and JKA

(b) *Florence*. Professor Zatelli reported that a number of her graduate students were actively working on a range of semantic fields (see the revised list of lexemes for details). There had been a problem with establishing a website due to the resignation of the technician, but she hoped that two of her students would be able to establish a website during the coming year.

(c) *Oxford*. Professor Williamson reported that Sonja Noll was making steady progress with the study of her lexemes in the semantic field of 'silence'. He said that he would be retiring at the end of September and would no longer be resident near Oxford. While he would continue to oversee Ms Noll's work he could not himself

maintain Oxford as an active Centre after that; much would depend on the willingness of his successor, Professor Jan Joosten, to do so, but this has not yet been discussed. He undertook to continue for the time being as secretary of the project.

(d) *Leiden*. Professor Gzella reported that he had completed his work on the *ThWQ* (contributing over 30 entries) and that the work should all be published by the end of the year. This would now enable him to make more progress with the Aramaic dictionary, the first fascicle of which should also be completed by the end of the year.

(e) *Edinburgh*. Dr Reimer had reported that the two doctoral projects on which he had reported previously had now been completed and he hoped that both would lead on to the preparation of entries for the Database, one on the topic of 'cooking' (Peters) and the other relating to nouns on glory (Burton). It was noted that with regard to *kabod* this appeared also in Pecchioli's list (Florence) on 'image and idol'. It was agreed that this lexeme was central to Burton's semantic field but secondary in Pecchioli's. Burton should therefore be encouraged to complete her entry, to which Pecchioli's entry on this lexeme might cross-refer. Given the difficulty Burton now has in regard to access to full bibliographical resources, it was also agreed that it would be quite acceptable to mount entries with NRM at relevant points (as already with some other elements of the database) and that the anticipated greater interactive nature of the project (see item 6 below) should enable such gaps in coverage to be more easily remedied.

(f) *Dr Kevin Spawn* had indicated that he had no further progress to report.

(g) *Bonn*. Dr Zanella reported that he had made some progress with the entry on '*tnn*'. He had raised a question as to the suitability of including observations from usage in post-Biblical Hebrew. It was emphatically confirmed that this was highly relevant as comparative material (indeed, often more so than the equally standard references to other less closely related Semitic languages) and that it should be included as such.

(h) *Austin*. No recent report had been received from Profs. Huehnergard and Hackett, but the committee was keen to hear if there might be material forthcoming over the course of time in connection with their major project on the revision of BDB.

6. Website and Database.

Dr Reimer reported that after a considerable period of serious difficulties with implementation the website was now fully set up (as from June) on the Dokuwiki platform. This would now allow easy addition of new material as well as including an effective built-in search facility and the possibility for user accounts to be created that would allow other co-workers to add or edit content on the site. It was therefore now time to consider future policy to exploit this potential. He also reported that,

even with the difficulties earlier on, there had been 1,100 unique visits to the site over the past year (an average of about three per day) and that in relation to the last four months these had come from 23 different countries (about 35% each from UK and USA, 12% from Germany, 5% from the Netherlands, and so on).

In discussion it was agreed that additions and up-dates from any other scholars would be welcome. It was agreed that at this stage of the project they should be added at the end of entries (not integrated), so that the original author's work retained its integrity. The procedure should be that such proposed additions should be submitted to the Secretary, who would contact both the original author of the entry for comment and the Chairman for editorial approval. Once agreement was reached, he would arrange for the new material to be added. This suggested procedure should be reviewed in the course of time to see how it was working and if it could be improved.

It was also agreed that we should seek out others with expertise in the management of data to co-operate supportively with Dr Reimer. Prof. Davies said he would speak with some in Cambridge and the Secretary would raise this also with Dr Stökl.

ACTION: HGMW, DR, and GID

7. Next Meeting

It was noted that SOTS would be meeting in Edinburgh next summer, so that Dr Reimer's offer to host the next meeting there was welcomed. It would be at some point in (roughly) the middle of the day on Thursday 23 July, the time partly dependent on when Prof Gzella (who would be teaching in a summer school then) would be free to join the meeting remotely (for which the facilities are readily available in Edinburgh). The possibility of others joining in the same way if not able to attend in person should be actively explored.

ACTION: DR and ALL

8. AOB

It was agreed that, as an indication of respect and appreciation, Professor Muraoka should be included in future main circulations for information.

ACTION: HGMW