

# SEMANTICS OF ANCIENT HEBREW DATABASE PROJECT

Minutes of the Meeting of the SAHD Executive Committee and Co-Workers held on  
Thursday 7 July 2016 in the University of Leiden

Present: H. Gzella (Leiden, Chair), G.I. Davies (Cambridge), D. Reimer (Edinburgh),  
R. Vergari (Strasbourg and Florence), H.G.M. Williamson (Oxford, Secretary), I.  
Zatelli (Florence)

Apologies: J.K. Aitken (Cambridge), A. Gray (Cambridge), G. Khan (Cambridge), C.  
Masi (Florence/Berlin), K. Peters (Vancouver), K. Spawn (Regent University), J. Stökl  
(London), M. Vervenne (Leuven), F. Zanella (Bonn)

Dr Vergari was welcomed at her first meeting. She is currently associated with both  
Strasbourg and Florence and she plans to undertake post-doctoral research on cultic  
architecture; she is keen to contribute relevant entries to the database in due course.

## 1. Minutes of the last meeting (Leiden 2014) and of the 'virtual meeting' (2015)

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

## 2. Matters arising

The Chairman welcomed the proposal that there might be something resembling an  
editorial board to help him with the assessing and approving of submitted database  
entries before they are added to the website. He said he would send material to  
suitable readers as it was received.

**ACTION: HG**

## 3. Chairman's report

The Chairman reported that J. Lundberg had completed a Masters with him on the  
semantics of the causative theme in the Genesis Targums. Mr Lundberg had now  
moved to Cambridge to develop this work in a doctorate with Professor Khan and  
he hoped it might prove useful for the project. He also reported that the Aramaic  
volume of the *ThWAT*, which he had edited (and much of which he had written), had  
now been published, and also that the final volume (of three) on the Qumran  
material should appear very shortly.

#### 4. Reports from Centres

(a) *Florence*. Professor Zatelli reported on the doctoral theses in semantics completed or in progress under her supervision. Dr Marrazza has completed his doctorate on health and illness and Dr Pecchioli has completed hers on images and idols. They would both like to prepare database entries on the basis of their research, but finding adequate time was a problem at the moment. Ms Funelli should soon submit her thesis on prayer and Mr Masi on justice not too much later, and again they would like to prepare entries when able. A new student, Alberto Legnaioli, had just begun to do doctoral research on time. Professor Zatelli had herself written an article recently on *kpr* and hopes to be able to devote more time to the project once her current administrative roles come to an end soon.

(b) *Cambridge*. Professor Davies commented on progress with the group of lexemes relating to deliverance. He had undertaken himself to complete those entries which remained unfinished and expected to complete that work by September. The whole would then need final revision and formatting (with which Dr Aitken would help), and he estimated that it should be ready for final submission within the next six to twelve months. Professor Davies noted that this would be his final contribution to the project but was encouraged that there were several younger colleagues in Cambridge who could maintain the work there and that they would be meeting in the autumn in order to agree what to do next.

(c) *Oxford*. Professor Williamson reported that Ms Noll was approaching completion of her thesis on words for silence, her research all through having been undertaken very much with the Database principles and methods in mind. He hoped he might be able to secure a 'small grant' from the British Academy that would give Ms Noll support for a few months in order to turn her work into database entries. He noted that this would be his final contribution to the project.

(d) *Edinburgh*. Dr Reimer reported that two of his former students remained keen to prepare entries based on their doctoral theses (Dr Peters on verbs relating to cooking [he has already submitted one entry; a second arrived on the day of the meeting] and Dr Burton on 'glory'), but time was at a premium with all the usual demands on early career scholars. He also reported that so far Dr Kengo Akiyama had not been able to make progress as a post-doc with the lexemes listed in last year's report. Meanwhile, he was looking forward to welcoming two new doctoral students to Edinburgh in the autumn, both of whom have expressed an interest in relating their doctoral work to the SAHD project, and this in part is what attracted them to Edinburgh. One project has its focus on 'truth', the other on *r'/r''* (which do not appear in the current 'Lexemes in Preparation' list under 'Righteousness and its

antonyms'). Consequently, Edinburgh would like to declare an interest in these lexemes, and looks forward to the work developing in due course.

(e) *Dr Kevin Spawn* had reported in writing that his teaching load had increased and this had prevented any further work on *kaph* this past year.

(f) *Bonn*. No report had been received from Dr Zanella. [He wrote soon after the meeting to say that he had just been successfully examined for his Habilitation and that he hopes now to turn to the preparation of material for the Database.]

Though no longer a centre of the project, colleagues at Austin had written to say that unfortunately their application for further funding for the revised BDB had been unsuccessful, so that this Dictionary project was effectively at an end. The Secretary was asked to inquire whether there might be anything for the database project to be salvaged from the wreckage, so to speak.

**ACTION: HGMW**

## **5. Website**

Dr Reimer reported on routine maintenance over the past year. The Dokuwiki platform has seen two version updates in the past year, and these have been applied to the SAHD site as they come available. A minor detail was to ensure the site was fully compliant with the current understanding of the EU 'cookie law'; an unobtrusive 'pop-up' now greets first-time users of the site to inform them of our use of 'cookies'. Otherwise, functionality remains unchanged from the last report except that the 'find' system has been enhanced, making possible a search that includes pdfs housed at Centres rather than on the main website. Website usage continues to be steady, in spite of the lack of new content. This latter factor may account for the slight but steady drop off in visitors since our 'busiest' year, which was 2013. In the year from July 2015 to July 2016, Google Analytics records 513 visitors, of whom 318 were 'new', and 195 'returning' visitors. On average they viewed 3 pages per 'session', for a total of 1,589 page views. Visitors came from 45 countries, with a sharp drop off from the top two—USA and UK. (A full demographic table is appended to these Minutes.) In the light of these statistics it was agreed that a brief announcement should, if possible, be made at this summer's IOSOT and that a short note might be published in *ZAW*, *Biblica*, and on AGADE. Possible triggers might be collaboration with the *keli* project and/or the mounting of the new material from Cambridge when it is made available.

**ACTION: HG, DR, HGMW**

## 6. The *keli* project

In preparation for the afternoon meeting, some written comments from those unable to attend the meeting were noted and there was some general discussion about the basis on which the proposed collaboration with the *keli* project might be approached. There was a general consensus that the *keli* project had its own distinctive strengths and that in so small a field of research collaboration would be very desirable, not least with regard to fundraising. SAHD has well established methods and procedures, however, and its aim to be as comprehensive a database as possible should not be forgotten. Current *keli* articles could not just become part of the SAHD corpus as they stand, therefore, and it remained to be seen what our colleagues would propose in detail as a way forward.

## 7. Next meeting

The Secretary undertook to try to make suitable arrangements by circulation after the meeting.

**ACTION: HGMW**

## SAHD AND KELI

In the afternoon we were joined by colleagues from the *keli* project, namely M. Dijkstra, M. Korpel, and K. Spronk. They were invited by the Chairman to explain to the meeting what they had in mind. In response, Professor Spronk, with the support of his colleagues, outlined the history of the project and its current status, and showed full awareness of the distinctiveness of the SAHD project. Nevertheless they hoped for some form of mutual recognition, the prospect of revising material not yet published (and any new work to be commissioned) along lines that would conform with the SAHD methods, principles and style of presentation, and a joint fundraising approach to European schemes. A wide-ranging discussion followed, as a result of which the following points of agreement/topics to be taken further were agreed:

- Each website would add a cross-reference to the other. So far as the SAHD website was concerned the lexemes on the *keli* site could be included individually provided it was made clear that they were in a different category from the current list of SAHD lexemes.

- Authors of *keli* articles which had not yet been published (some of which were now years out of date) would be approached to ask if they were willing to revise them in accordance with SAHD guidelines. The practical difficulties of this being done by scholars in full positions vis-à-vis full-time funded researchers was acknowledged, but they should at least be asked in the first instance.

- Any new *keli* commissions would be expressly required to work to SAHD's standards and methods.

- It would be advisable for the *keli* project to try to identify some colleagues who would be willing to form centres at universities, preferably in Belgium as well as in the Netherlands. This would be necessary if funds were to be raised through EU channels or the like, and it is also the way in which SAHD organizes its work, so that doctoral and post-doctoral co-workers have proper support and guidance.

- With support from SAHD, colleagues on the *keli* project would initiate a major fund-raising drive. In doing so they might find it helpful to know that (a) SAHD had European funding for its initial methodological discussions chaired by Professor Hoftijzer and that the work was very warmly commended at its conclusion with words that were expressly said to be available for use in future fund-raising; (b) between them SAHD and *keli* have centres in quite an extensive range of European universities in several different countries; (c) SAHD has several post-docs who do not currently have funding for work on the project but who have well-researched material ready to be turned into database entries; (d) 'digital humanities' is currently an attractive buzz-word, and through Amsterdam we jointly have access to distinguished leaders in this field; and (e) funding might be sought in total for some doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers, website development (including the need to bring some older files up to date), and expenses of conferences and steering group meetings.

It was acknowledged that our *keli* colleagues now need to consult with the wider membership of the Dutch SOTS. If there was agreement, Professor Spronk was assured of as much help and co-operation from SAHD colleagues as possible.

## SAHD Web Demographics – July 2015 to July 2016

Country	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages/Session
United States	148	75.00%	111	56.76%	2.4
United Kingdom	140	52.14%	73	30.71%	4.31
Italy	34	58.82%	20	29.41%	4.53
Greece	33	0.00%	0	84.85%	1.15
Australia	21	42.86%	9	38.10%	2.14
Germany	18	66.67%	12	61.11%	4
Netherlands	15	86.67%	13	26.67%	3.73
Israel	12	91.67%	11	50.00%	4
Norway	11	27.27%	3	18.18%	1.91
Canada	9	100.00%	9	33.33%	3.33
Russia	8	62.50%	5	87.50%	2
India	6	100.00%	6	100.00%	1
France	5	40.00%	2	20.00%	6.8
Denmark	4	50.00%	2	50.00%	3.25
Spain	4	100.00%	4	50.00%	2.75
Belgium	3	66.67%	2	33.33%	2
Philippines	3	33.33%	1	33.33%	2
Poland	3	66.67%	2	66.67%	1.33
Brazil	2	100.00%	2	50.00%	1.5
Czech Republic	2	100.00%	2	50.00%	2
Haiti	2	50.00%	1	50.00%	2
Ireland	2	100.00%	2	50.00%	2.5
Jordan	2	50.00%	1	100.00%	1
Japan	2	100.00%	2	0.00%	4.5
Kenya	2	100.00%	2	100.00%	1
South Korea	2	100.00%	2	0.00%	3
Turkey	2	50.00%	1	100.00%	1
Austria	1	100.00%	1	0.00%	2
Burkina Faso	1	100.00%	1	0.00%	5
Switzerland	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Chile	1	100.00%	1	0.00%	5
China	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Ecuador	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Ethiopia	1	100.00%	1	0.00%	2
Finland	1	100.00%	1	0.00%	4
Hong Kong	1	100.00%	1	0.00%	2
Indonesia	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1

<b>Country</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>% New Sessions</b>	<b>New Users</b>	<b>Bounce Rate</b>	<b>Pages/Session</b>
Iraq	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Iran	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Luxembourg	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Malta	1	100.00%	1	0.00%	3
Mexico	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Malaysia	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Pakistan	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1
Taiwan	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1