SEMANTICS OF ANCIENT HEBREW DATABASE PROJECT

Minutes of the Meeting of the SAHD Executive Committee and Co-Workers held on Thursday 27 July 2017 in Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge

Present: G.I. Davies (Cambridge, who agreed to chair), A. Gray (Cambridge), D. Reimer (Edinburgh), K. Spronk (Amsterdam), R. Vergari (Strasbourg and Florence), H.G.M. Williamson (Oxford, Secretary), I. Zatelli (Florence)

Apologies: J.K. Aitken (Cambridge), G. Khan (Cambridge), K. Spawn (Regent University), J. Stökl (London), M. Vervenne (Leuven)

Professor Spronk was welcomed to his first meeting

1.   Minutes of the last meeting (Leiden 2016)

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2.   Matters arising
 The secretary reported that there could no longer be a Centre at Austin, TX, but that Professors Hackett and Huehnergard wanted to retain a personal interest in the project.

3.   SAHD and *Keli*.

Professor Spronk briefly recalled the history and current status of the *Keli* project. He reported that since last year colleagues with whom he had discussed possible close co-operation with SAHD were positive. He had raised some funding from within his university to fund R. de Hoop to improve formatting and interactive web facilities for the *Keli* articles. One example of his work had been electronically circulated in advance of the meeting. He had also suggested to his successor as President of the Dutch OT society that semantics in all its aspects might be the theme of the 2018 joint British-Dutch Society meeting.

    Discussion following noted that the revised paper still did not conform to SAHD format in several respects. It was also stressed that SAHD was meant first to be a database, which meant that fuller attention might be paid to bibliography, inclusion of data from the ancient versions, and so on. It was appreciated that in practical terms this might be difficult to achieve in some cases. How to combine data from texts and from *realia* was also discussed.

    Sources of possible funding were also considered. There are some British sources to which successful applications have been made in the past, but it was feared that post-Brexit these would not be available to colleagues in other

countries. Conversely, it might soon be the case that British scholars might not be able to be joint applicants for other European funds, though of course they (and colleagues elsewhere) could always be mentioned to show the international nature of the project. Possible European and specifically Dutch funding bodies were mentioned as well as the Eep Talstra Centre in Amsterdam.

As Professor Spronk had to leave the meeting early, there was some brief discussion after his departure. It was agreed that he should be given every encouragement and that other SAHD members would give whatever help and support that they could. It was noted that the 'terms of reference' that were agreed last year (attached here again as an appendix to these Minutes) remained the settled opinion of the committee, and not all these had yet been met as would be necessary if the two projects were to be fully merged or if *Keli* articles were to be cross-referenced on the SAHD website.

4. Reports from Centres

(a) *Florence*. Professor Zatelli reported that she hoped that from September onwards some completed entries would be delivered from Dr Marrazza (health and sickness), Dr Pecchioli (*temûnâ*) and Dr Funelli (lexemes related to the root *pll*). Meanwhile Dr Vergari, who had a one-year post-doctoral position, hoped to be able to give some of her time to words relating to sacred space (e.g. *tsel*, *'anan*).

(b) *Cambridge*. Professor Davies reported that he had been working to complete the 39 lexemes relating to deliverance, filling in gaps, converting the fonts to unicode (with assistance from Will Ross), checking all details and also inviting all colleagues who had undertaken the original drafts (some nearly twenty years ago) to make any final revisions that they wished. He was also revising the overview/introduction to the whole semantic field. It was hoped that all could be completed and ready for editorial approval within the next few months.

After this was completed, Professor Davies would step down from leadership of the Cambridge Centre, to be succeeded by Dr Aitken. He had written before the meeting, and Dr Gray also reported, that Cambridge remained very committed to the project and saw it especially as a means for recruiting and for training graduate students. They hoped to arrange workshops next year with this in view, and in principle these might be open to graduate students from other universities.

(c) *Oxford*. Professor Williamson reported that Ms Noll was close to submitting her D.Phil. thesis on lexemes for silence. She had written far more than could be included in the thesis and she was keen to convert all this work into database entries. Professor Williamson was planning to apply as an independent scholar for a 'small grant' from the British Academy in the next round (due this autumn)

so that Ms Noll could give some time to this work alongside her other part-time teaching positions.

(d) *Edinburgh*. Dr Reimer reported that Dr Kurtis Peters (cooking) and Dr Marilyn Burton (glory) had seen their theses published during the past year and also that Mrs Burton will be returning to live in Edinburgh in September. They were both in the process of preparing entries for the project based on this work. In addition Phil Foster was now working on the semantics of r^{cc} as a case of polysemy for his doctorate.

(e) *Dr Kevin Spawn* had no further specific progress to report.

(f) *Bonn*. Dr Zanella had submitted a first draft entry on ʾ*etnan* for consideration. Comments from two readers had been sent to him but there had been no further response. It was hoped that the comments were not too 'heavy' so that he might have been discouraged. Professor Williamson agreed to write to him after the meeting to inquire.

5.   Website

Dr Reimer reported on regular maintenance over the past year. Traffic to the SAHD website in the past year shows an incremental increase over the previous year, with 1770 page views (704 unique visits), with an average of 5 page views per day. He also reported that the website now enjoyed a fully consolidated Google search facility (including entries in pdf).

It was agreed that when the Cambridge lexemes were finally mounted it would be a good time to prepare an AGADE notice. This could also include some recent news, such as the Cambridge workshops. It would be good to raise the public profile of the project again.

6.   Resignation of Professor Gzella as chairman/editor

Professor Gzella's resignation left several gaps that need to be filled.

(a) *Archives*. It was agreed to ask Professor Spronk if he might be willing to collect the (modest) archives on the project from Professor Gzella and to store them (at least for the time being) in Amsterdam.

(b) *Editorial work*. It was agreed that submitted entries should first have been approved by the relevant Centre co-ordinator. They should then be reviewed by one other colleague with experience within the project (e.g. other co-ordinators

or former co-workers). For the time being Professor Williamson agreed to co-ordinate this as secretary.

(c) *Leadership*. There is a need to find somebody who can assume a leadership role for the project. Clearly she or he needs to have scholarly expertise in linguistic research and to have clear commitment to the project to the extent of raising its international profile and stimulating fresh activity. It would be beneficial if it were someone not already involved, so that s/he can come with fresh eyes and new perspectives. It was agreed that when these Minutes are circulated colleagues should be invited to send any suggested names in complete confidence to the Secretary in the first instance.

7.   Next Meeting

It was agreed to explore the possibility of a meeting at the same time as the joint British-Dutch meeting next year in the Netherlands. The Secretary agreed to take this forward.

Appendix: Previous year's agreement

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.