

SEMANTICS OF ANCIENT HEBREW DATABASE PROJECT

(1) Reports from Centres (in lieu of a meeting in July 2015)

(Please note that, in view of decisions taken at the 2014 meeting the list is now restricted to currently active centres)

(a) *Cambridge*. Graham Davies reports: My hopes expressed in last year's report have proved to be over-optimistic. On the positive side, Alison Gray was able to deliver the completed entry on the verb 'azar to me in December, but a very busy first year in her new job (including the vacations) has not allowed her so far to make significant progress with the related nouns. James Aitken has been unexpectedly and seriously ill (but is making a very good recovery) and I myself have not been able to find the time, among my various other commitments, to fill some of the gaps in the older entries and to organise a discussion about Cambridge's future role in SAHD. I hope (!) that we shall do better next year.

(b) *Florence*. No report has been received.

(c) *Oxford*. Sonja Noll is making steady progress with the study of her lexemes in the semantic field of 'silence'. Her D.Phil. is coming together well and includes much of the sort of data that SAHD would require. The hope is that when she has completed her thesis she will be able to prepare the lexemes (as listed on the website under 'Lexemes in Preparation') for the Database. Professor Jan Joosten is settling in well as my successor in the Hebrew chair, and Hugh Williamson will approach him during the coming year about his willingness to take over as coordinator for Oxford once Sonja has completed her work.

(d) *Leiden*. No report has been received.

(e) *Edinburgh*. David Reimer reports: It was satisfying to see another Edinburgh 'entry' mounted on the website in the Autumn: *tsalah* is one of the minor representatives of the semantic field belong to verbs for 'cooking', but that made it a good candidate to begin the series. Dr Peters intends to continue with the sequence in the coming months. Dr Burton's work on 'glory' lexemes has been on hold during her time outside the UK. However, with a recent move, she is now in striking distance of the Bodleian and the British Library. She intends to begin to develop her lexemes into SAHD entries over the summer.

Dr Peters' first contribution has raised in my mind a question about process, or 'approval route', for new lexeme entries, especially those coming from co-workers new to the project. Although I reviewed Dr Peters' entry, we had hoped that it would also have some 'external' scrutiny and feedback. This used to be provided by Professor Muraoka in times past. I wonder if there is scope for thinking about how the Project might use this process both to expedite mounting new material, as well as to encourage co-workers and refine their skills.

This is also in my thoughts as another Edinburgh PhD student (supervised primarily by Professor Lim) is coming up to submission on a reception-history project relating to Leviticus 19:18, 33-34. In the course of his work, the student has spent time looking at lexemes related to 'foreignness', especially: *ger, zar, nekar, nokri, toshab, tishbeh*. There is also the antonym, 'native', *'ezrach*. We would like to declare an interest in these lexemes, which he would develop as a post-doc project. It would be good to confirm that these are not already being treated at another centre.

We have also put some energy into the website, but this is covered in a separate report.

(f) *Dr Kevin Spawn* reports: In contrast with recent years I have made some progress on *k* in the past several months. I have refreshed my memory of the achievements of Ernst Jenni's *Die hebräischen Präpositionen*. Band 2: *Die Präposition Kaph* (Kohlhammer, 1994) and the relevant (introductory) bits of Band 1. Since I am still summarizing Jenni's accomplishments, this is not world-shattering news. I also need to review the guidelines of SAHD carefully. After an exhaustive bibliographic search, I'll begin to account for related resources, as time permits.

(g) *Bonn*. Dr Zanella reports that this past year he has been busy with the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, and on his second book (his *Habilitationsprüfung*, now completed) on Divine Retribution in Tannaitic Literature. He comments: 'After that, I think I will have more time to dedicate to my entries'.

(h) *Rome*. Professor Amadasi-Guzzo reports that she has written to Fiorella Scagliarini, so far without a reply. 'I hope that she will be able to finish her work. She has some health problems, which is the reason why she is so slow.'

(2) Technical/website report — 2015

David Reimer reports as follows: The Dokuwiki platform continues to serve our present needs well. There have been a couple of behind-the-scenes updates to this software, but it has been trouble-free since the University of Edinburgh's hosting service moved to a new platform, and I have had excellent support on the few occasions it has been needed.

One of the features we were lacking was a means of searching PDFs, as well as off-site material. I have mounted an experimental 'Google Custom Search Engine' which can address both of these *desiderata*. The search tool is not well integrated into the site cosmetically, but it is fully functional. It can be tested here:

<http://www.sahd.div.ed.ac.uk/info:sahdsitesearch>

There are two limitations: (1) At the moment it will only search material on the `ed.ac.uk` and the `orinst.ox.ac.uk` sites (others can be added). (2) It has brought to the surface another issue with our existing files: Google can only find what is actually there. It will find Unicode Hebrew, for example, but only *in the way it was encoded*, and then PDF'ed. Some PDFs have quite odd characteristics, it turns

out. Some have ‘backwards’ Hebrew when seen in the Site Search display, but which displays correctly in the PDF itself. Others have the vowels in odd places. This string, for example, will produce hits:

גְּרָח

But that’s not the way it ‘appears’ in the PDF, nor is it the way anyone would think to put it in the search box. Some of the older PDFs don’t use Unicode, but rather legacy true-type fonts like the old SP Tiberian, and this cannot be sensibly searched for at all.

So, progress of sorts, but it suggests a need for some serious work to consolidate our currently available material by:

- standardizing encodings in all SAHD files to Unicode;
- mounting files on the Edinburgh site; and/or
- ensuring it has a stable online location at the ‘producing’ centre.

The site itself continues to see a healthy flow of traffic, even though we had a slight drop in ‘unique visitors’ over the past year from the 2014 report, down from ~1,100 to 969, but with 1,895 unique ‘pageviews’, and an average of 6 pageviews per visit. Visitors came from 37 countries (up from last year’s 23), with the top ten (depending on which metric one is observing—this is for ‘sessions’) as UK (50%), USA (24%), and Italy (6%) followed closely by Canada, Brazil, and Israel, with a slight drop to Germany, Greece, Australia, and Czech Republic. Visits also came from, e.g., Egypt, China, Japan, Thailand, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Indonesia, and Algeria. By far the most ‘popular’ page is the Lexeme Index, viewed by over 40% of visitors to the site.

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30 June 2015