



# ESF Workshop II on the Semantics of Classical Hebrew

## Introduction

Two years ago the editors of this journal were so kind as to give me the opportunity to introduce the work and aims of a new network of the European Science Foundation "The semantics of Classical Hebrew" (cf. "An ESF Network on the Semantics of Classical Hebrew", ZAH V (1992), pp. 85-86).

In this announcement I mentioned the three workshops and the symposium which were to be organized by the Network. During these meetings we wanted to realize our aims: the defining of the conditions for a semantic data-base in which the arguments and the results of semantic scholarly work in our field could be collected for each lexeme in *one* framework, no matter which scholarly method(s) was (were) used in the relevant publications.

The lectures from the first workshop (summer 1992) have by kind agreement of the editors already been published in ZAH VI/1 (1993). In these texts a thorough and helpful survey is given of the different types of semantic approach which are (or: can be) used for the study of Classical Hebrew and of the problems which arise when these approaches are applied to the semantic description of a language (phase) which we only know through a relatively small corpus of texts. An insight into these problems is a necessary precondition for answering one of the most important questions the Network has to solve: the question of the framework.

For a data-base as planned by the Network, a framework type which can be used for each lexeme is needed, in which the arguments and the results of semantic scholarly work can be collected. The decision about which type of framework to use was one of the main decisions to be made during the second workshop (Florence/Firenze 15th-17th April 1993). The undersigned presented a draft for such a framework. On the basis of this draft and full discussions on the subject, the Network Committee came to a decision about a more definitive form of the framework. The Committee was greatly helped in its considerations by two other lectures delivered by Dr. Jongeling and Prof. Serfaty and the responses to them by respectively Prof. Rütterswörden and Prof. Greenfield. Prof. Serfaty described the way he had devised an automatic Bible Concordance. Dr. Jongeling pleaded the case for using a multi-dimensional approach in computerizing the framework material and he indicated the consequences which such an approach has for the

framework presentation. His proposal to use a multi-dimensional approach was accepted by the Committee, because it offers possibilities for combining data from different parts of one framework and from different frameworks on the computer screen, while leaving the possibility to make print-outs of every lexeme entry. These three lectures will not be published because they are of a strictly technical/organisational nature and are to be considered as steps in the technical/organisational process of defining the conditions of a semantic data-base.

During this workshop Prof. Zatelli and Dr. Davies presented entry samples on the basis of the framework draft. (Unfortunately Dr. Swiggers, who was also to present such a sample, was prevented by illness from being present.) One of these samples, which helped the Committee in their decision on the framework type, is published in this fascicle of ZAH in so far as it presents material of a more general interest.

Also in the fascicle two other lectures given at the workshop (by Prof. Barr and Prof. Kedar-Kopfstein) are published. They discuss more general questions about semantic description and the approach of Classical Hebrew Semantics, which needed further discussion. The responses to these two lectures and the one of Prof. Zatelli (by respectively Prof. Muraoka, Prof. Müller and Prof. Lipiński) are also published here.

It is a pleasant duty for me to thank the editors of ZAH for giving us again the opportunity to publish lectures of general interest held in a workshop of our Network.

It is also a pleasant duty to thank here publicly the organizers of the Firenze workshop who did everything to make our stay there fruitful and pleasant. We are also greatly indebted to Mr. P. Colyer of the ESF whose assistance in all kinds of ways was a great help to us. In expressing these thanks we cannot omit the name of Mrs. Mabruk.

Last but not least, I wish to thank the secretary of the Network Committee, Dr. Davies, for the editorial revision of the manuscripts.

Leiden, 11 October 1993

Jacob Hoftijzer  
Chairman of the Network Committee