



# ESF Workshop on the Semantics of Classical Hebrew

## Introduction

In the spring of 1991 a new European Science Foundation Network was started: „The Semantics of Classical Hebrew“. The editors of ZAH kindly gave me the opportunity to introduce the work and aims of this Network: „An ESF Network on the Semantics of Classical Hebrew“, ZAH 5, 1992, 85-86.

Since the publication of this note the first of the three Workshops planned by the Network has taken place: from 29th June to 1st July 1992 in Bischofsheim near Strasbourg.

In the present issue of ZAH the lectures given at this first Workshop and the responses to them are published. There were eight lectures, two of a more general nature, the others of more specialized types on the different kinds of semantic approach. The workshop was successful in that a clear picture arose of the different approaches and their problems, more especially in relation to languages and language phases which are known to us only through a relatively small corpus of texts. Thus it was a good and necessary introduction to the work of the second Workshop: the designing of a lexematic framework in which the results of scholarly research (and the arguments leading to those results) can be inserted. (In the third workshop the problems of computerizing such a framework will be discussed.) The lectures and the discussions of the first Workshop were also a helpful introduction to another important task of the second Workshop: finding a neutral, uniform way for describing the results of scholarly research (which have to be inserted into this framework) without distorting in any way the ideas of the scholars in question, who used completely different kinds of semantic approach.

Since an important aim of the Network is to produce in the future a database in which the results and arguments used in scholarly literature on the semantics of Classical Hebrew are collected in a systematized way, it may seem slightly peculiar that some of the lectures of this type of the first Workshop were concerned with modern semantic methods, which are not used, or only rarely so, for semantic research in the field of Classical Hebrew. However, the inclusion of lectures of this type in the first Workshop was intentional.

A database such as the one planned by the Network gives information about what has been done in the field and in this way it can be a great source of information and help to future scholars. But, if it is designed in the right way, it will also indicate where no work or insufficient work has so far been done, and in this way it can be a

stimulus for future research. If in designing the framework, we take into account more modern methods like those mentioned here, there will also be an indication where work of this more modern type can and must be done. A database as planned by the Network could in such a way be a strong stimulus not only for doing new research, but also for applying modern methods.

It goes without saying that we are thankful to the ESF, which makes the work of the Network possible. I want to mention especially the name of Mr. Peter Colyer of the ESF, who was always present and assisted the Network committee in many ways. Naturally we also express our gratitude to the editors of ZAH, who made the publication of the lectures of the first Workshop in one of their issues possible.

Jacob Hoftijzer (Leiden)

Bibliographische Dokumentation  
In the spring of 1991 a new European Economic Community Network was started. The seminar on 'Classical Hebrew: The Semantics of the Network' gave us the opportunity to introduce our work and aims of the Network. ZAH 5 (1991) 225-232 is the result of this seminar. Since the publication of this note the first of the first Workshop was planned for the Network has taken place from 20th June to 1st July 1991 in Bielefeld near Münster.  
In the present issue of ZAH the lectures given at this first Workshop and the responses to them are published. There were eight lectures and six workshop sessions, the others of more specialized types on the different kinds of semantic approaches. The workshop was successful in that a classification of the different approaches and their problems were especially in relation to language and language phases which are known to us only through a relatively small corpus of texts. This was a good and necessary introduction to the work of the second Workshop: the designing of a semantic framework in which the results of scholarly research (and the arguments leading to those results) can be inserted. (In the third workshop the problems of computing such a framework will be discussed.) The lectures and the discussions of the first Workshop were also a helpful introduction to another important task of the second Workshop: finding a neutral, uniform way for describing the results of scholarly research (which have to be inserted into the framework) without distorting in any way the ideas of the scholars in question who used completely different kinds of semantic approach.  
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