

Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.226.01pre>

Pages vii–10 of

Semitic and Indo-European: Volume II: Comparative morphology, syntax and phonetics

Saul Levin

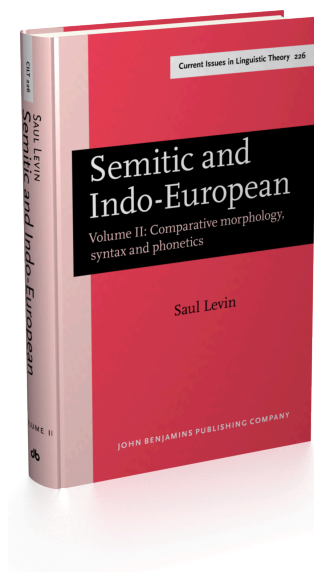
[*Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 226]

2002. xviii, 592 pp.

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PREFACE

This book is a sequel to my *Semitic and Indo-European: The Principal Etymologies (with observations on Afro-Asiatic)*. When the five lengthy chapters were finished, I was urged by my wise friend John Pairman Brown to get this substantial part of my research published as soon as possible, rather than waiting until I could complete the comparative grammar, which was to be based upon those etymologies. But during the time that I was arranging with Dr. Konrad Koerner and the John Benjamins Publishing Company (in Amsterdam) to bring out that etymological work of mine as a separate book standing on its own, I proceeded into the new chapters dealing with morphology.

The numbering of the chapters unites this volume with its predecessor. This one begins with Chapter VI, "The Structure of Roots and of Uninflected Words". But I present each topic here along with the supporting evidence, so that my reader is not constantly obliged to check cross-references (such as "cf. 1.Aa"). But for the sake of completeness many cross-references are given throughout Chapter VI and thereafter; and the first citation of a word from any language carries with it one of these signals (the same as listed in *Principal Etymologies*, Introduction, p. 1):

- √ Definitely known from one or more texts or from actual current usage.
 - † Doubtless available for use in the language, but apparently — through mere accident — unattested in the corpus.
 - § Probably to be found somewhere in the corpus, but not accessible to me.
Whatever I have only from a lexicon or a grammar will be marked either
√ or §, depending on my judgement of the authors and their methods.
- These other signals, before a word, indicate scholars' constructions, in descending order of value; they should never be omitted:
- * Methodically reconstructed for a prehistoric or other unattested stage.
 - ? Merely hypothetical—with no standing as evidence for comparative grammar.
 - ?? Cited by me for the sole purpose of discreditation.

I hoped to get through my plan for the comparative grammar while still teaching at the State University of New York. But in the midst of Chapter XI

“Corresponding Consonants” I suffered a stroke in 1998 (while recuperating from spinal surgery); and I decided to retire as promptly as I could from teaching, and to give priority to this research for as long as my powers of body and mind would last. I finished Chapter XII in 2000 and was ready to treat it as the end of *Semitic and Indo-European: Comparative Morphology, Syntax, and Phonology*, which came to more than 500 camera-ready pages in length.

As an afterthought I have added the epilogue “Echoes of Prehistoric Life and Culture”. This, to some readers who may have felt overwhelmed by the multitude of technical details from Chapters VI through XII, will serve as a reminder that this sort of linguistic inquiry opens up to us a world of human experience, waiting to be recovered from long oblivion. However, when the last few pages of the epilogue had been drafted but were not yet in final form, I suffered my second stroke. In the course of my convalescence those pages were salvaged.

But I must apologize for not carrying out one part of the original plan, a set of indices on the same scale as in the previous volume. But J. P. Brown (whose own esteemed work *Israel and Hellas* — in three volumes — besides all its other merits is an excellent model of meticulous, systematic indexing) kindly volunteered to assemble for me an index of subjects and of scholars cited; and he went on from there to assemble still other index pages, more and more of them, as anyone can see at the end of this book.

I cannot thank enough my dear Jock, and Tom Blake and those others of my family and friends who have particularly helped me through this difficult time. Last but not least among them is the graphic artist Stanley Kauffman; when the character is not to be found on any font, he is the one that knows how to reproduce it.

To handle everything else typographical before the entire work in correct camera-ready form was ready for the publisher in Amsterdam, I had the good luck to be introduced to Mrs. Kelly Pueschel. She has devoted many months to endless dozens and hundreds of details to make the pages come out literally just right, from top to bottom. She is the ultimate perfectionist; it is her eyes and her fingers that enable me to take pride in now showing my work to the public.

S. L.

Binghamton, November 2001

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