

# Preface

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**Development of Tense/Aspect in Semitic in the Context of  
Afro-Asiatic Languages**

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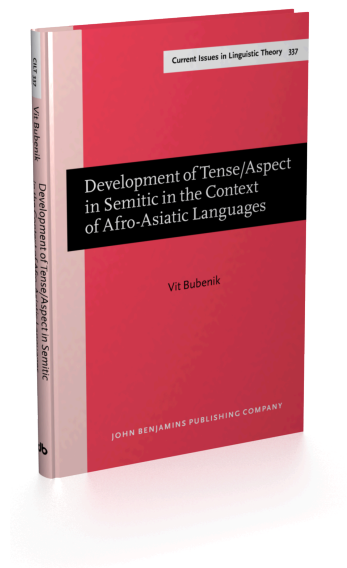
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## Preface

This study is based on my research in the area of Semitic linguistics going back to the seventies; some of its results were published during the last fifteen years (1979, 1998b, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2011, 2012, 2013 et al.). In the nineties I was pre-occupied with the theory, typology and diachrony of tense, aspect and diathesis in the ancient Indo-European languages (Hittite, Indic, Iranian, Armenian, Hellenic, Baltic, Old Slavic) and later on (1999 – 2004) with the issues of case and adpositions (prepositions, postpositions) in the same languages. In this field I co-authored two major monographs (1997 and 2006). The issues surrounding the morphological and semantic universals of the development of verbal systems was one of the driving principles in my more detailed work on Indic, Hellenic and especially Semitic languages (Akkadian, Aramaic, Arabic) in their larger Afro-Asiatic context. Numerous fascinating parallels in their paths of grammaticalization will be discussed in this study.

Over the years I have been presenting my ideas on the development of verbal systems in Indo-European and Semitic languages in various forums (North American conferences on Afro-Asiatic linguistics, international conferences on functional grammar, international conferences on historical linguistics, world Sanskrit conferences, annual meetings of the Department of Linguistics, University of Thessaloniki) and would like to use this opportunity to thank many scholars whose sincere comments sharpened my perception of the pertinent historical and theoretical issues involved: Henning Andersen, Raimo Anttila, Ahmed Assiri, David Bell, M. Lionel Bender, Shmuel Bolozky, Hans H. Hock, Guy Deutscher, Bernd Heine, John Huehnergard, Brian Joseph, Hermann Jungraithmayr, Olga Kapeliuk, Alan S. Kaye, Maarten Kossmann, Saul Levin, Derek Nurse, Osama Omari, Harold Paddock, Robert Ratcliffe, Chris Reintges, Mauro Tosco and Andrzej Zaborski.

I started working on the present study in 2006, generously supported by the External Research Grant of Canada Council (for the period 2005–2008). My work in the field of Semitic linguistics slowed down during the period of 2010–2013 when I worked as a co-editor of *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics* (for E. J. Brill, Leiden). It was only during the summer of 2014 that I was able to finalize the first draft of the present study.

I wish to express my special thanks to my research associates: Dr. El Mountassir (in matters of Berber linguistics and for his help during my fieldwork on Tashelhiyt in Morocco in 2006), Dr. J. Hewson (in theoretical issues) and Chris Wood, M.A. (Coptic). I also received a number of helpful and critical comments from the participants in two seminars (conducted at Memorial University during the Fall and Winter Semester 2014–2015) who were exposed to some of my new proposals regarding aspect and ablaut in Afro-Asiatic and Indo-European languages.

In the final revision of my manuscript I was guided by the reports and comments of several anonymous reviewers of John Benjamins Publishing Company.

It is needless to say that none of the above scholars is any way responsible for any remaining imperfections in my work. They remain my sole responsibility.