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doi https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.81.toc

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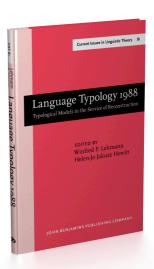
Language Typology 1988: Typological Models in the Service of Reconstruction

Edited by Winfred P. Lehmann and Helen-Jo Jakusz Hewitt [Current Issues in Linquistic Theory, 81] 1991. vi, 182 pp.



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his book, based on the meeting held in Leningrad, June 13-15, 1988, represents the last in the series of linguistic conferences inaugurated by IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board) in 1984.

The four conferences have dealt with an area of linguistics in which scholars of the USSR have major interests and to which they have made notable contributions. As reviews have stated, at least one segment of Soviet linguistics has been made available in the West through the conferences and subsequent publications. Though less hampered by monolingualism, Soviet linguists may also have found the exchanges useful.

Attention to historical topics in Leningrad follows up the second conference, held in Austin in 1986. Greatly expanded through support from the University of Texas, the papers given at that conference are being prepared for publication under other editorship. Many of the authors represented here also participated in the 1986 conference, so that attention to principles of reconstruction in historical linguistics supplements the wider range of the presentations there.

For support of the conferences we are grateful to IREX and its sources of funding, notably the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are also grateful for the hospitality of the sponsoring institutions and their representatives. Vice-Director Domanshnyev of the Leningrad branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences was our host during the conference of 1988, Dr. Viktoria Nikolayevna Yartseva once again during the remainder of our stay in Moscow. We are also grateful to the staff of John Benjamins for making the three books available, and to the Linguistics Research Center for its facilities in the extensive requirements for editing the papers and producing the print-ready copy. As her listing on the title page indicates, Dr. Hewitt has added considerably to sharper presentation as well as, in cooperation with Maryrose Hightower-Coyle, to supervision of work-study students who did initial inputting: Lisa Besa and Colette Nicholl.

While the publications may not provide as brilliant insights into culture as the magnificent Scythian treasures in the Hermitage that illustrate the fourth book of Herodotus's history, they attempt to extend our knowledge of peoples of the present and the past through improved understanding of their languages and the texts they have produced. In a small way then we hope to have fulfilled Herodotus's aim of preserving information on tà genómena—on what has taken place in the past.

Winfred P. Lehmann September 12, 1990