

The Semitic Languages

Second Edition

Edited by John Huehnergard
and Na'ama Pat-El

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THE SEMITIC

LANGUAGES

The Semitic Languages presents a comprehensive survey of the individual languages and language clusters within this language family, from their origins in antiquity to their present-day forms.

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- new introductory chapters on Proto-Semitic grammar and Semitic linguistic typology
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to

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PREFACE

The first edition of this book, edited by the late Robert Hetzron, appeared just over two decades ago, in 1997, shortly after Hetzron's untimely death. When Routledge asked us to prepare a second edition, we decided to take a different approach from the original edition, which is still valuable. We invited a new cohort of scholars, most of them from a younger generation, to contribute not revisions of the chapters in the first edition, but rather newly written chapters. Thus the present edition, while it bears the same title, is a completely new work, which is not meant to replace the original volume, but to complement it.¹

One of our primary aims in preparing this new edition has been to make the Semitic languages and their features accessible to as many linguists as possible.² Contributors were therefore asked to provide examples with a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss, using the Leipzig Glossing Rules, and use common linguistic terms, rather than idiosyncratic Semitistic terminology. Contributors of the chapters on the modern Semitic languages were also asked to represent forms in the International Phonetic Alphabet where possible, rather than traditional Semitistic transcription systems.³ The phonetic realities of the ancient Semitic languages, however, are generally uncertain, and so we felt that it would be misleading to use the IPA for examples in those chapters; instead, the sections on phonology use the IPA to describe the most plausible phonetic interpretations of phonemes, but elsewhere in those chapters the standard Semitistic transcription is used. A word limit was also set, in order to keep the volume from growing too large. We are extremely grateful to our contributors for adhering to these guidelines, which not infrequently differed from the usual way of presenting the Semitic languages.

The present edition comprises 27 chapters. An introductory chapter presents a synopsis of the Semitic languages according to our interpretation of the subgrouping of the family. This is followed by an overview of Afro-Asiatic, the phylum to which the Semitic family belongs; and chapters on Proto-Semitic and on the Semitic family from a typological perspective. Each of the other 23 chapters describes a representative dialect of an ancient or a modern Semitic language. It has, of course, not been possible to cover every ancient language attested, nor to cover more than a few of the many modern forms of Ethio-Semitic, of Modern South Arabian, of Aramaic, or, especially, of the vast continuum of modern Arabic. Thus, for the ancient languages, we opted to include those with large corpora and well-understood grammar; for the modern languages, we aimed for diversity of coverage.⁴ The order of presentation of the individual language chapters (5 through 27) follows the subgrouping model of the family that is advocated in the introductory chapter. In order to enable readers to compare features across the various languages, the contributors of these chapters were asked to prepare them according to a template:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Writing system
- 3 Phonology: IPA-style consonant grid; vowel phonemes and allophones; syllable structure; stress

- 4 Morphology: pronouns; nouns (including adjectives); numerals; verbs; particles
- 5 Syntax: word order; synthetic/analytic expression; noun modification; definiteness; agreement; negation; interrogative sentences; subordination
- 6 Lexicon
- 7 Sample text with morpheme-by-morpheme glossing and a translation
- 8 References: standard grammars, textbooks, dictionaries, survey articles

Each of these chapters includes a map showing the location of the language or dialect. The chapters on the ancient languages also include a photograph of a representative text.

It is our pleasant duty to express our gratitude to a number of individuals, in addition to our contributors, for their help in seeing this volume to completion. We want to thank Sarah Lynn Baker, who reviewed the Leipzig glosses in each chapter to ensure that they were both consistent and canonical; Patience Epps and Danny Law for their helpful comments on Chapter 4; Wayne T. Pitard, who provided the photograph of a Ugaritic text that accompanies Chapter 19; Jack Weinbender, who prepared the maps that accompany the chapters; and Jo Ann Hackett, for a steady stream of good advice and good humor. We are also very grateful to the ever-helpful, ever-patient editors and editorial assistants at Routledge and Apex CoVantage who guided the preparation of the volume with consummate professionalism: Samantha Vale Noya, Camille Burns, Laura Sandford, Rosie McEwan and Jennifer Bonnar.

John Huehnergard and Na'ama Pat-El
Austin, Texas
July 2018

NOTES

- 1 We wrote to the contributors of the first edition to explain our decision, and we were very gratified by the gracious and encouraging response that we received from most of them. The first edition remains widely available in libraries, and so those scholars' still-valuable contributions can continue to be consulted alongside the new chapters of the present edition.
- 2 The goal of making the Semitic languages more accessible to general linguists was a major impetus for us to take on this project, especially given the relatively recent publication of another work entitled *The Semitic Languages*, edited by Stefan Weninger (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2011), an exemplary volume of 74 chapters by leading scholars, which, however, employs the usual Semitistic systems of transcription and does not systematically provide a morphemic glossing of examples.
- 3 Throughout the volume we have deviated from the standard IPA representations in one respect, writing affricates as ligatures (e.g., *ts*, *dz*, *tʃ*, *kʃ*) rather than with a tie-bar (*ts̰*, etc.).
- 4 See Chapter 1 for a full description of the attested ancient and modern Semitic languages.

GLOSSING AND

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
A	in modern Ethio-Semitic languages (Chapters 7–10), one of three basic (lexical) verb stems
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
ACT	active
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb(ial)
ALL	allative
ANA	Ancient North Arabian
APPL	applicative
ART	article
ASA	Ancient South Arabian
AUG	augment
AUX	auxiliary
B	in modern Ethio-Semitic languages (Chapters 7–10), one of three basic (lexical) verb stems
BEN	benefactive, beneficiary (applied object)
BND	bound form (see Chapter 1, §4)
C	common (gender)
C	unspecified consonant; causative verb stem, except, in modern Ethio-Semitic languages (Chapters 7–10), one of three basic (lexical) verb stems
CAUS	causative
CIRC	circumfix
CNTR	contrastive
COL	collective number
COM	comitative
COMP	complement(izer)
COMPAR	comparative
COND	conditional
CONJ	conjunction
CONT	continuous (verb marker)
COP	copula

Cp	causative verb stem with passive vocalization
CS	Central Semitic
CST	construct noun form (see Chapter 1, §4)
Ct	reflexive or passive of the causative verb stem
CVB	converb
D	verb stem with doubled middle root consonant
DAT	dative case
DEF	definite (article)
DEI	deictic
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner, determined (noun form)
DIM	diminutive
DIR	directional
DIST	distal
DISTR	distributive
DN	divine name
Dp	D verb stem with passive vocalization
Dt	D verb stem with infix <i>t</i>
Dtn	D verb stem with iterative <i>-tan-</i> infix
DU	dual
DUR	durative
ENCL	enclitic (particle)
ES	East Semitic
EXIST	existential particle/copula
F	feminine
FACT	factive
FOC	focus
FUT	future (tense)
G	basic verb stem (German <i>Grundstamm</i>)
GEN	genitive
GN	geographical name
GOAL	goal (verbal prefix)
Gp	basic verb stem with passive vocalization
Gt	basic verb stem with infix <i>t</i>
Gtn	basic verb stem with iterative <i>-tan-</i> infix
H	causative verb stem with prefix <i>h</i>
Hp	H verb stem with passive vocalization
IMM	immediate future
IMP	imperative
IND	indicative
INDET	indeterminate (noun form)
INDF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INF.ABSL	infinitive absolute (verbal noun form in some Northwest Semitic languages)
INS	instrumental
INT	interrogative
INTERJ	interjection
INTR	intransitive

IPFV	imperfective
IPP	independent personal pronoun
IPRF	imperfect
JUSS	jussive
LOC	locative
M	masculine
MSA	Modern South Arabian
N	verb stem with prefix <i>n</i>
NACC	nonaccusative
NBND	nonbound (see Chapter 1, §4)
NCST	nonconstruct (see Chapter 1, §4)
NEG	negator, negated
NMLZ	nominalizer/nominalization
NOM	nominative case
NPST	nonpast (tense)
NSC	new suffix conjugation
Ntn	N verb stem with iterative <i>-tan-</i> infix
NWS	Northwest Semitic
OBJ	object (marker)
OBL	oblique case
OPT	optative
OSC	old suffix conjugation
PASS	passive
PC	prefix conjugation
PCL	long prefix conjugation
PCS	Proto-Central Semitic
PCS	short prefix conjugation
PCT	prefix conjugation with infix <i>t</i>
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PN	personal name
PNWS	Proto-Northwest Semitic
POL	polite register
POSS	possessive
PRED	predicative
PREP	preposition
PRES	presentative (particle)
PRET	preterite tense
PRF	perfect
PRO	pronoun
PROG	progressive
PROH	prohibitive
PROX	proximal, proximate
PRS	present (tense)
PRSP	prospective (aspect)
PS	Proto-Semitic
PST	past (tense)
PTCP	participle

PURP	purposive
PWS	Proto-West Semitic
Q	quadriradical verb stem
Q	question marker
RECP	reciprocal
REF	referential (object marker)
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative (marker), relativizer
RESTR	restrictive
Š	verb stem with prefix <i>š</i>
SBJ	subject
SBJV	subjunctive
SBRD	subordinate
SC	suffix conjugation
SG	singular
Šp	Š verb stem with passive vocalization
Št	Š verb stem with <i>t</i> infix
Štn	Š verb stem with iterative <i>-tan-</i> infix
t, T	verb stem with infix or prefix <i>t</i>
TAM	tense–aspect–mood
tC	C verb stem with prefix <i>t</i>
tD	D verb stem with prefix <i>t</i>
TERM	terminative
tG	basic verb stem with prefix <i>t</i>
TOP	topic
TR	transitive
V	unspecified vowel
VENT	ventive
VOC	vocative
VOL	volitive
WS	West Semitic