Typology of Semitic Grammaticalization
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This study is the first to focus exclusively on the typology of grammaticalization across Semitic in a number of domains. Guided by Kuryłowicz's classic definition of grammaticalization, Lehmann's grammaticalization parameters and recurrent crosslinguistic grammaticalization clines, along with the works of typologists (e.g., Gensler 2011; Waltisberg 2011; Greenberg 1995, 2005; Croft 2003; Ramat 1987) this study uncovers certain functional typological features of grammaticalization within Semitic that hitherto have not received sufficient scholarly attention.

Prior grammaticalization research in Semitic (e.g., Hardy 2014, Halevy 2011, Chrzanowski 2011, Esseesy 2010, Rubin 2005, Cook 2002, Voigt 1999, Rubba 1994, Givón 1991 among others) has shown the widespread manifestation of grammaticalization across various grammatical domains. Still, much insight is gained from intragenetic comparisons that highlight the direction and constraints of diachronic change by grammaticalization within Semitic. Conspicuous typological features resulting from grammaticalization are observed in Semitic, such as the preference of suffixation: the shifting from prefixing past and non-past markings on verbs in East Semitic (i.e., Old Akkadian) circa 2350 BC to suffixing past tense in West Semitic (e.g., Hebrew, Arabic); as well as suffixed case, gender, number, indefiniteness, possessive, and object pronouns. Another notable typological shift is from aspectual (perfective, imperfective) categories in older Semitic languages (e.g., Classical Arabic) to tense (past/non-past) in Modern ones (e.g., Modern Arabic dialects)—all adhering to the expected unidrectionality of change, which is central to grammaticalization. However, certain remarkable typological features of Semitic such as word order neutrality (both VSO and SVO are conditioned by pragmatic discourse factors) in some members of the Central Semitic subgroup warrant further examination within the gramaticalization framework. Moreover unevenness in the inflectional paradigms marking number on verbs vis-à-vis nouns, the so-called broken plurals, in the South Semitic group warrants typological and grammaticalization scrutiny to account for their unusual multiplicity.