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Recensioni

Talmy Givón is 'Distinguished Professor' (*emeritus*) of Linguistics and Cognitive Science at the University of Oregon. He is also widely known for a series of important publications on Semitic, Amerindian, Austronesian, Sino-Tibetan, and other languages. Very well-known are his theoretical-philosophical books *On Understanding Grammar* (1979) and *Syntax: An Introduction* (2001).

With this new book on adpositions (henceforth ADPs) he examines a problem well-known to the Indo-Europeanists – but from a completely non-traditional point of view. Unlike traditional Classical scholarship, «obsessed» with the Comparative Method (p. 36), this book relies primarily on the theory-laden method of Internal Reconstruction, matching the Homeric Greek (henceforth HomGk), which constitutes the five core chapters, with diachronic data derived from different family languages (see *Preface*, p. xii). By 'Internal Reconstruction' Givón refers to the method of reconstructing earlier stages in the history of languages using only language-internal evidence.

Consequently, the crucial hypothesis of the book is that Internal Reconstruction makes it possible to explain how nominal case-markers became verbal affixes in HomGk. From this perspective, the typological comparison with non-Indo-European languages exhibiting the same development plays a crucial role. Accordingly, drawing from his vast competence on the language families mentioned above, Givón dedicates the first chapter to a large sample of languages with pre- or postpositional nominal-attached case-marking ADPs, for example, Akie, a Southern Nilotic language from Tanzania (p. 9):

(1) *till-e*   *pányee*   nen   *síílelee*
     cut-IMPF   meat   LOC   knife
     "He cut the meat *with* a knife (Instrumental)."

Moreover, Akie has prepositions (PREPs) clearly derived from nouns denoting position, like Engl. *in front of (the house)* (p. 9):

(2) *ká*   *ching'*   ari   táá   *kaa*
    NEAR PAST   enter   *inside*   GEN   home
    (lit.) "Entered *inside of* the house."

On the other hand, a language like Kunbarlang (Northern Australia) shows the incorporation of case-marking ADP into the verb (p. 19):

(3) *Ka-buddu-*   walkki-*baybum*   *nayi*   *nawalak*
    3Sg-3PREP.OBJ-   ASSOC-leave-PAST   NOUN.CLASS   child
    "S/he left the child *with* them."[1]

In (3), the associative/instrumental nominal preposition *walkki* is used as a verbal prefix. The basic question therefore is: «How do case-marking adpositions, whose functional-syntactic domain is typically nominal, wind up as verbal morphology», eventually cliticizing to verbs (see p. 8)? According to Givón, this is indeed the case in HomGk. As I am totally unfamiliar with the languages used in Chapter 1, I'll take for granted the observations and the examples in this chapter and concentrate my review on the five core parts that deal with HomGk, represented in Givón's sample by the first three books of the *Iliad*.

Let us first begin with some preliminary observations. The «traditional Classical scholarship» will have some difficulties in considering HomGk «just another natural language» (p. xi), and completely disregarding the fact that this language is a strongly biased poetic language, fully replete with formulaic expressions. The accent variation in the bi-syllabic ADPs, such as κάτα ~ κατά, πάρα ~ παρά etc.[2], which often depend on the metrical rules of the verse, are totally ignored. Contrary to Givón's often repeated affirmation, this language was never 'spoken', i.e., normally used in everyday linguistic exchanges.

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[1]   Curiously, the Author inserts the abbreviations at the end of each chapter. As the abbreviations are not always self-evident (for instance 'NPA' for 'Near Past'), I have preferred to solve the unusual ones. Moreover, there are mistakes among them, as '3sf' for 'third person singular masculine' and '3sm' for 'third person singular feminine' (p. 32 and 84, where we read also '3s' «thirst [*sic!*] person singular»).

[2]   On the 'retracted' PREPs see fn. 7 below. I prefer to adopt the Greek alphabet instead of the often unclear transliteration of Givón, where, for example, an /ë/ is used for /η/, «glossing over the rather obvious fact that it co-varies [...] with both /α/ and /ε/» (p. 37). On Givón's intriguing transliteration, see p. 37: *Phonological and grammatical transcription: Caveats and apologia*.

Some assumptions, also relevant to the proposed analysis, are not explained: why are *-ont / -ant / -ent* and *-me(i)n*, «two more-recently-grammaticalized imperfective suffixes, both transparently derived from 'be'-like verbs» (p. 38)? The aorist ἐγένοντο would thus contain two verbal forms meaning "be" (p. 136; on the augment ἐ-, see below):

(4) ἐ-γέν-οντ-ο
     in-be-be-NON.FIN
     "They were."

with the second "be" grammaticalized as the aspectual suffix of the first "be". However, nowhere in the book is it explained/discussed why *-ont / -ant / -ent* should be considered as etymologically derived from a verb "to be".

The method of Internal Reconstruction is certainly a reasonable and acceptable method: it is not new to «traditional Classical scholarship» (suffice it to mention the studies on the Germanic consonantal shift in conjunction with the so-called Verner's law, or the palatalization of velar consonants in Sanskrit when followed by anterior vowels: /k/+/e/> Sskr. *ca*, necessarily prior to the Indo-Iranian change /e/ > /a/). However, there is no doubt that the large cross-linguistic comparison used by typology has greatly enhanced the possibility of finding new ways of comparison, «with data ranging widely outside the narrow confines of a single family» (p. 36), and thus approaching what some – but not all – linguists incline to consider language universals. I shall not take up here the thorny question of language universals, which constitutes one relevant support in Givón's eyes. Rather, I will concentrate on the linguistic facts discussed by the author.

It is true that generations of «die-hard Classicists» (p. 37) did not arrive, in spite of «an inordinate amount of descriptive ink», at a convincing conclusion about the augment (AUGM)[3]. According to Watkin's (1963)

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[3]   However, the «die-hard Classicists» will not fail to note the many typos and errors already alluded to in fn. 1 (e.g., p. ix: *Instituto Pontifico*; p. 30: *cataphoricic*; p. 31: *Prot-* for *Proto-*; p. 140: example (150) is repeated immediately below as (151), without any glossing change, etc.). More serious than the typos are the numerous errors in the glosses and transliterations of the Greek text. At p. 51 (example 65) the Greek text (*Il.* I 533) has the Nom. Pl. θεοὶ, but the transliteration has a *theon* which makes the text totally incomprehensible. In the same page we find (example 64) the transliteration *hippou*; but the text (*Il.* II 762) has ἵππων(GEN.PL). According to Givón's transliteration rules, it should be *hippwn*. *Feretros* "better" is of course φέρτερος (p. 135, example 130), etc. Unfortunately, the transliterated texts are too often unreliable, and I often had to check Homer's original words.
     As for the glosses, one cannot hyphenate, in the transcription of the Greek text, *hekë-bolon* (*Il.* I 14; p. 42, it should properly be *hekë-bolou* = ἐκηβόλου) or *ek-Pulos* (*Il.* I 269; p. 43, it should properly be

seminal study, the AUGM is an old sentence particle *é- that can still be found
in Luwian as *a* with the meaning "and, then". The so-called 'augment area'
(Greek, Phrygian, and Indo-Iranian) would thus represent the continuation
of an innovating isogloss, particular to an Anatolian and South-Eastern
Indo-European area (see de Lamberterie, 1994: 146). Adrados (1975: 636)
considers the AUGM «sin duda una partícula tónica, junto a la cual el verbo
aparecía en su forma átona (enclítica)». Similarly, and with many references,
Szemerényi (1985: 342 ff.) suggests that the AUGM was probably a stressed
adverb to which the verb was cliticized. As for its meaning, Szemerényi
is rather uncertain: perhaps "truly" or "before, overthere". Others (e.g.
Lazzeroni, 1997 [1984]: 45) propose a deictic value of a particle we also find
in the demonstrative ἐκεῖνος in front of κεῖνος. It is not the aim of this review
to enumerate all the suggested functions or values of the AUGM, but rather
to follow Givón's reasoning[4].

A core point to demonstrate the validity of Internal Reconstruction is
precisely the discussion dedicated to the augment ἐ-. Based, as we have seen,
on parallel developments in languages belonging to very different families,
the author argues that ἔ- is what remains of older prepositions. The augment
represents the last phase of a cyclical process: it is what remains as preverb
of an earlier diachronic cycle in the verbs that were compounded with a
(stressed) preposition to which they cliticized. Three PREPs collapsed in the

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ek Pulou = ἐκ Πύλου) just because these forms are glossed with a hyphen: "far-striking" and "ex-Pylos",
respectively. There are also many inaccuracies in the morphological glosses: just to quote some exam-
ples: why *alos a-trugetoio* = ἁλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο "of the restless sea" (*Il.* I 327, p. 47) is glossed with 'sea
NEG-rest/GEN', without also noting that *alos* is a GEN? The reader unfamiliar with ancient Greek
will miss the agreement. In *okhthës-an de* ana-*dwma Dios theoi Ouraniwones*, i.e., ὤχθησαν δ᾽ἀνὰ δῶμα
Διὸς θεοὶ Οὐρανίωνες (*Il.* I 570) -*an* is glossed (here and in many other instances) as '3sg'. The gloss
(p. 41) for *ta* (= τὰ, in *Il.* I 384 – actually 383 – and elsewhere) as '3p' (i.e. 3rd plural) is insufficient,
since the same gloss is also used for the 3rd plural of verbal forms: it should be 'DEM.3p'. The same
holds for *toisi* in example (4), p. 31 (= τοῖσι). Forms such as *al-to* (= ἄλτο, unaugmented 3rd indic.
aor. of ἄλλομαι) are always glossed as 'NF' (Non-Finite). One wonders what 'finiteness' can mean in
morphological terms.

    Even the translations, based on Murray's English version, «a true monster of faux Classicism,
and a disgrace to the publisher» (p. 39), are often not felicitous: θεῖος Ὄνειρος (*Il.* I 56; p. 48) is not
"the god Dream" but the "divine Dream"; *ë men* (= ἦ μέν, *Il.* I 77; p. 48) is not a simple 'conjunction'
(which does not appear in the English translation), but a declarative "that" which depends on the pre-
ceding μοι ὄμοσσον "an oath to me, that [...]". The list of amendments to be introduced could easily be
continued.

    [4] According to Givón, WILLI (2018) is the «most admirable book in the recent classicist ca-
non» (p. 35). In support of his thesis, Givón (*ibid.*) notes that WILLI (2018: 361) remarks that verb
forms with a preverb, i.e., prepositions such as πρός, περί, etc., are much more often augmented in
HomGk than forms without a preverb.

initial ἐ- and were no longer understood as a PREP but just as a morphological element, when a second cycle of PREPs superseded the older one. A form as παρέβη₍₁SG.AOR₎ of παραβαίνω "accompany, go with" should be analysed as παρ(α)-ε-βη, which is what we find in every Greek grammar. However, the gist is that this -ε- was an ancient preverbal PREP and not a vague 'particle', as assumed by «Classical Scholarship».

According to Givón, three ancient PREPs collapsed into ἐ- via a «most-plausible phonological reduction» (p. 113): *en-* "in/at", *ex/ek-* "out/from", and *eis-* "to". «The second cycle, with prepositions cliticizing in front of already-'augmented' verbs [e.g. παρέβη: *P.R.*] may have been prompted by the need to either *recapitulate* or *augment* the semantic value of the three collapsed prepositions» (p. 145, emphasis in the original). Accordingly, ἀπεβήσετο "(she) went out" (*Il*. I 428)[5] is different from προσεβήσετο "(she) went up" (*Il*. II 48), exactly as in English *she went out* vs. *she went up* (on English PREPs, see below). A form ἐβήσετο, if used in both cases, would not clearly distinguish the different senses.

Strictly bound to the Internal Reconstruction method, Givón does not care that it is possible to (approximately) reconstruct the history of the augment, if one looks outside the strict Greek boundaries. We have already said that Luwian had an *a-* particle (< *é-*) and that it is possible to speak of an 'augment area'. In this 'augment area', Avestan uses AUGM rather scarcely, while Vedic has more examples of augmented forms. In Armenian, the AUGM is used with monosyllabic forms only. Mycenaean Greek has just one possible augmented form (see Lazzeroni, 1997 [1977]: 16 ff.). In HomGk, the AUGM is not regularly used in all the forms where it would be reasonable to expect it, and in Homer we find forms both with and without an augment, according to metrical need: ὣς φάτο ∼ ὣς ἔφατο "so (s)he said".

It is thus possible to conclude that a diachronic development of the augmented forms was an innovation of a particular IE subarea.

So far so good for Givón's hypothesis. The idea of a diachronic development of the AUGM does not contrast with the 'life cycle' supposed by Givón[6]. It remains to be explained in the framework of the 'life cycle' why

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[5]   Again, we must note mistakes, both in the transcription *ap(o)e-bese-to* (it should be *ap(o)-e-bēse-to*) and the glossing: why is the final *-to* considered an NF (non-finite) verbal form?

[6]   Even if Givón's viewpoint leads to conclusions which contrast with the diffused opinion that the AUGM represents an innovation rather than the remnant of an archaic phase. «L'introduzione dell'aumento in un gruppo di lingue è l'ultima fase del riassestamento del verbo indoeuropeo in un sistema fondato sull'espressione del tempo grammaticale» (Lazzeroni, 1997 [1985]: 99).

the AUGM is limited to the tenses of the past: imperfect, aorist, and pluper-
fect. Why should the anteposition of the PREPs *en-*, *ex/ek-* and *eis-* be limit-
ed to the past? What semantic reason(s) can have caused such a restriction?
Why is *κατελείπω$_{(PRES)}$ not permitted while κατέλειψα$_{(AOR)}$ is perfectly regu-
lar? I think that the onus of finding the reason rests entirely with the author.

Often one gets the impression that the interpretation of the Greek text
is somehow forced to match with the hypothesis: this is the case of ὅ σφιν
ἐϋφρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν (*Il*. I 253), which is translated as "then
he addressed their gathering with good intent and spoke *with/to* (them)",
and of Τὸν δ᾽ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (*Il*. I 84), trans-
lated as "(then) responding to him, swift-footed Achilles said *to* (him)". Both
verses are cited (p. 153) in the section *Intransitive verbs with more abstract
objects* of the last chapter dedicated to HomGk, i.e., *The pre-verbal 'Augment'
e- in Homeric Greek when preceded by prepositions*. However, the point is that
the verbs ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν and προσέφη have no direct objects (they
are, indeed, dubbed as 'intransitive'): the pronouns "them" and "him" are
added in the translation as indirect objects to complete the implicit argu-
ment of the verbs (indeed, one speaks to someone!). The glossing of pros-
e-f-ë (= προσέφη) is '*to*-to-say-3s' (N.B. the second *-to-* corresponds to the
augment *-e-*!). The same holds for the examples collected in the sub-section
Zeroed-out indirect object (p. 127 ff.): μηδὲ ξίφος ἕλκεο χειρί (*Il*. I 210) is
glossed and translated by the A. as follows:

(5) *më-de*   *xifos*   *e-lke-w* [it should be *e-lke-o*]   *kheiri*
     NEG-DE   sword   ex-draw-IMP   hand
     "(And) let not your hand draw the sword *out of* (the scabbard)."

But there is no need to add "the scabbard" since the verb ἕλκειν already
per se means "unsheathe"; the reference to the scabbard is made necessary in
Givón's translation by the presence of "out of" in the analysis of *e-lke-o*, with
the same *e-* that elsewhere is considered to be an 'augment'. Moreover, the
(uncertain) etymology of ἕλκειν, comparable to Alb. *helq* "to draw", Toch. B
sälk- "to extract", has no trace of a possible *e-* to be somehow separated from
a basis *-slk-*.

Examples such as (6), i.e. περὶ γὰρ ῥά ἑ χαλκὸς ἔλεψε (*Il*. I 236, see p. 94):

(6) peri   gar   hr(a)   *he*   *khalkos*   *e-leps-e*
     about   *FOR*   *HRA*   3s   bronze   ex-strip-3s
     "For the bronze had stripped it *off* all *over*."

lead to the question of the detached ('severed') prepositions in HomGk, strictly connected with the translation offered in (5).

Cuzzolin, Putzu and Ramat (2006, with references) maintain that in IE languages the ADPs can 'look at' verbs and/or complements in preverbal or postverbal (including final, so-called 'stranded') position. This is particularly evident with movement verbs:

(7) (Ὀδυσσεύς) κεφαλῆς ἄπο φᾶρος ἕλεσκε (*Od.* VIII 88)
"Ulyxes raised his veil from his head."

ἄπο (with 'retracted' stress)[7] refers both to κεφαλῆς ("from (his) head") in a Prepositional Phrase and to ἕλεσκε ("raised from") as PREP with so-called *tmesis*.

This construct is also found in other ancient IE languages, such as in Hittite (see Gamkrelidze and Ivanov, 1995: § 6.6.1):

(8) *I.NA*[URU]   *Kar-ga-miš*   *an-da-an*   *i-yah-ha-at* (KBO IV 4)
    DAT/LOC[city]   Karkemish   inside   went
    "He entered into the city of Karkemish."

The predicate verb "to enter" requires as an argument the place one enters in, so that, as ἄπο in (7), *andan* looks both at *Karkemish* and to the immediately following verb "to enter".

In sentence-final position, what is commonly called 'adposition' has actually an adverbial function[8] - as in modern English, so that we have the same lexeme (say, IE *upo in Sskr. *úpa* (preverb and preposition!), Old Pers. *upā*, etc. and Engl. *up*) with the double function of ADP (i.e., PREP or POSTP) and ADV (which often provides aspectual information: *drink your milk up!*, see Vincent, 1999: 1119). In other words, the «semantic arbitrariness» that Givón (p. 66 and 89) considers the last stage of the prepositions, where their original function in pre-nominal use is no longer present, could, on the contrary, be the original status of autonomous (relational) lexemes: lexemes as κατά, παρά meant simply "down" and "near, along", respectively, but their relational meaning bound them to nouns or verbs.

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[7]   On the 'retracted' stress of bisyllabic adverbial PREPs, see DEVOTO (1947: 47). According to Devoto, the 'retracted' stress was the normal one for the PREPs that had «valore pieno, avverbiale».

[8]   Actually, Givón alludes (p. 59) to «free-floating – detached – prepositions», i.e. «those so-called 'free adverbials' that were traditionally assumed to be the product of *Tmesis*» (pp. 59 and 90, respectively), but, following his hypothesis, he does not consider the possibility of a double nature of the adpositions.

Givón has done an accurate diachronic analysis of the development of English post-verbal clitics, which he considers the mirror image of what happened in HomGk. In Chaucer, we find no example of post-verbal-detached prepositions. They appear first in Mallory and are more consolidated in Shakespeare, both immediately after the verb as *for the remove* bring up *your army* and at the end of the sentence*: I receive the general food first, which do you* live upon. This latter construction is very common in twentieth-century English: *where is he* from? *She looked him* over (see p. 184). Note that there are pairs such as *uplift* "improve, comfort, encourage", with not-separable *up-*, and *lift up* "raise". According to Van der Auwera (1999: 122 ff.), who has studied the same phenomenon in Dutch[9], the separable forms are representative of a syntactic situation where the 'preverb' preserves more of its original value, whereas the not-separable forms represent a (close) class of lexemes.

In Greek, it is quite possible to have not only ἀνὰ ποταμὸν βαίνειν and βαίνειν ποταμὸν ἄνα (naturally along with ἀναβαίνειν ποταμόν) "go upstream a river", but also Noun Phrases with postposed PREPs (properly ADPs) at the end of a sentence:

(9)   Ἀχαιοὶ / τεῖχος ἐτειχίσσαντο νεῶν ὕπερ (*Il*. VII 448-449)
      "The Achaeans built a wall around the ships."

not τεῖχος ὑπερετειχίσσαντο: ὕπερ refers both to τεῖχος in a Prepositional Phrase and to ἐτειχίσσαντο as preverb (see above, ex. 7).

Postposition of the so-called PREPs is very common in ancient as well in modern IE languages (cp. Engl. *ago*, Fr. *avec*, Germ. *wegen*, etc.). Givón has shown in his first chapter that nominal case-markers (often ADPs) can become verbal affixes in many languages around the world. Comparing (9) with Givón's examples above, such as *She looked him over*, it does not seem that English represents the mirror image of HomGk – at least regarding the history of adpositions. We can instead conclude that both English and Homeric Greek follow a very diffused typological drift.

All in all, the book is really intriguing and thought-provoking, as are all the writings of Talmy Givón. Certainly, its courageous hypothesis will not convince 'traditional' typologists and 'traditional' Indo-Europeanists either. I shall finish my review with words from Karl Popper as quoted by Givón (p. 140), who is conscious of the risks of his hypothesis:

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[9]   E.g. *hij heft de hoge school doorlopen* "he has finished the high school" vs. *het water loopt door de kanalen* "the water flows through the channels".

Even if our hypothesis turns out to be ultimately wrong, [...] the explanatory imperative of the investigations remains. Or, to quote Karl Popper: «...The game of science is, in principle, without end. He who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further tests, and that they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game».

The book concludes with bibliography, general index, and language index.

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List of abbreviations

ADP(s)	Adposition(s)
AOR	Aorist
ASSOC	Associative
AUGM	Augment
CLASS	Classifier
DEM	Demonstrative
GEN	Genitive
HomGk	Homeric Greek
IMPF	Imperfective
LOC	Locative
OBJ	Object
POSTP(s)	Postposition(s)
PREP(s)	Preposition(s)

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