



1960

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Recommended Citation

Thomas, David D. (1960) "A Hebrew portmanteau morph," *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session*: Vol. 4, Article 7.

DOI: 10.31356/silwp.vol04.07

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers/vol4/iss1/7>

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A Hebrew Portmanteau Morph

The Hebrew morph $\{?e\theta\}$ marks a verb-object construction, while at the same time carrying a meaning of 'specific identification' or 'the'. But the picture is complicated in that its semantic value is redundant with the prefix ha- 'specific identification' or 'the', which is often attached to the object. The allomorphs of $\{?e\theta\}$ are ?oθ-, which occurs before bound pronouns beginning with a vowel, and ?eθ, which occurs everywhere else.

Thus we find it in such constructions as qatal--- ?eθ--- yehošua' 'He killed Joshua' (vs. qatal yehošua' 'Joshua killed'), where it points out Joshua and marks the construction; qatal--- ?eθ--- ha?iš 'he killed the man', where it is primarily a construction marker, sharing with ha- its semantic value (Vs qatal ha?iš 'the man killed'): qatal--- ?eθ--- kal -(?ašer 'al hammaim) 'he killed all who were on the water (specifically identified)', where it has both its full semantic and construction marking value; or qatal - ---?oθ- -o 'he killed him (specifically identified)' (vs. qatalo 'he killed him'), where it has its full semantic value of identifying the person named more specifically but has very little construction marking value, as the o is its own construction marker. The construction marking value is generally most prominent in its use, but, as demonstrated above, there are two values present in the morph.

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