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Brian D. Joseph
Executive Editor

Sheila Embleton
Joseph C. Salmons
Associate Editor
Review Editor

E. F. Konrad Koerner
General Editor

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International Advisory Board

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JOSEPH’S JOTTINGS — TURNING A KO(E)RNER

With this issue, as the new editor, I have the opportunity to pen (to use what is now an anachronistic turn of phrase) my first successor to the “Koerner’s Korner” feature that Konrad Koerner wrote for the closing issue of each volume of Diachronica starting with Volume 8 (1991) and continuing to the present. In this place here and in issues to come, I intend to lay out for the readers some musings of my own about Diachronica (i.e., the journal) and about diachronica (i.e., matters diachronic).

Let me start then with my title and subtitle. In keeping with the alliterative tradition that Konrad began, but not inappropriately given the importance of alliteration to at least old Germanic style, I have named this part “Joseph’s Jottings” (will I regret this name tomorrow?).

As for the subtitle, we are indeed turning a corner here as I complete my first year in my new role with the journal. Moreover, we are turning a “Koerner” in a sense as Konrad eases himself out of the very active role he has played for years and into a more consultative role. At the same time, this particular number of the journal is the first of the new millennium — or the last of the old millennium, as the case may be. The issue here, as it happens, is not just whether the turn into the new century starts on the hundreds or not — we who practice linguistics know that meanings are often tied to particular contexts, and the context of popular usage can be different from the context of scientific usage. That particular question is thus rather like asking whether a tomato is a fruit or a dolphin is a fish, for there is a technical answer and a common use answer. Moreover, those of us who practice historical linguistics know that words can change their meaning and their frequency, and for a population that perhaps did not really care much about the word millennium several years ago, over the past several months the word has become highly salient, even if imbued with a meaning that makes some prescriptivists shudder.

Rather, though, the issue of whether this issue marks the turn of the millennium or not is also the very issue itself — it is the second one in Volume 16 of the journal, and for years, our schedule has had number 1 of a volume appearing in the Spring and number 2 appearing in the Fall. We unfortunately fell behind, due in large part to the steep learning curve I faced...
Speaking of quality, it would not be possible to maintain high standards for publication without the critical assistance of those who carry out the peer review process in the trenches, so to speak, whose expert opinions guide us in our decision-making process; with our thanks, I list these fine linguists who have assisted us in the past 18 months:

Werner Abraham (Groningen)  
Raimo Anttila (Los Angeles)  
Thomas Becker (Munich)  
Vit Bubenik (St. John’s, Nfld.)  
David Denison (Manchester)  
Eckhard Eggers (Göttingen)  
Olga Fischer (Amsterdam)  
Karin Golde (Pittsburgh)  
Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig)  
Hans Henrich Hock (Urbana, Ill.)  
Lois Huffines (Lewisburg, Pa.)  
Richard Janda (Columbus, Ohio)  
Scott Kiesling (Columbus, Ohio)  
Jürgen Klausenburger (Seattle)  
David Lightfoot (College Park, Md.)  
Mark Louden (Austin, Tex.)  
John McWhorter (Berkeley)  
D. Gary Miller (Gainesville, Fla.)  
Robert Murray (Calgary)  
Mary Niepokuj (Lafayette, Ind.)  
David Pentland (Winnipeg)  
Erich Poppe (Marburg)  
Tomas Riad (Stockholm)  
Joel Rini (Charlottesville, Va.)  
Jerroid Sadock (Chicago)  
Alexander Vovin (Honolulu)  
Rex Wallace (Amherst, Ma.)  
Walter Wulf (Raleigh, N.C.)  

and of course, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Konrad, Sheila, and Joe for their good counsel over the past year on all matters pertaining to the journal, and especially to Joe for cracking the whip and rounding up a passel of book reviews.

An interest in quality control requires me to note a serious omission from the previous issue — in Diachronica 16.1 we ran a Review Article by Robert Orr (“Evolutionary Biology and Historical Linguistics”) but failed (owing to an oversight and editorial misconception in the proofreading...
process) to include the standard asterisk footnote at the beginning announcing the basis for the review! Thus, the following is to be added to p.123 of 16.1:


Finally, let me mention an innovation — yet another turn — that this issue marks. We have included herein a new feature, within our Discussion/Diskussion section, specifically an item written, at our invitation, by a leading senior figure in historical linguistics (in this case, Henry Hoenigs- wald). We gave him carte blanche to write a brief opinion piece on whatever aspect of historical linguistics appealed to him, and we feel the success of this experiment is self-evident. We plan to have other such commentary pieces in future issues, and hope that these will spark discussion of interesting and important matters in our field. We welcome feedback on this new type of article!

To one and all, I wish you a good century and millennium, whether now or later.

Diachronically yours, on behalf of the editorial junta,
Columbus, Ohio, 1 December 1999

Brian D. Joseph

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED / OUVRAGES RÉCUS
EINGEGANGENE SCHRIFTEN

Note: This listing acknowledges the receipt of recent writings in the study of language, with particular attention to those concerned with language history and the mechanisms of language change, comparative-historical philology, and language typology. Only in exceptional instances will a separate acknowledgment of receipt be issued; no book can be returned to the publisher after it has been analyzed in this section. It should be pointed out, moreover, that by accepting a book, no promise is implied that it will be reviewed in detail in Diachronica. Reviews are printed as circumstances permit, and offprints will be sent to the publishers of the works reviewed, including those items briefly commented upon in the present section.

Abondolo, Daniel, ed. 1998. The Uralic Languages. London & New York: Routledge, xxix, 619 pp. [This compendious volume, parallel in concept to Routledge's The Slavonic Languages (1993) and The Germanic Languages (1994), contains 18 articles by the editor and 13 other scholars of Uralic. The Introduction sets the scene with a diachronic overview and brief review of scholarship on the development from Proto-Uralic. In it the editor traces the various splits leading to the attested languages, the development of the sound systems (consonants and vowels), historical morphology (case, number, and person of nouns and adjectives and endings on verbs), syncretism and suppletion, syntax, and vocabulary. Essays on 18 languages or language groupings follow, arrayed in a general west-to-east orientation with the following titles: Saamic; Fennic; Estonian; Finnish; Mordva; Mari; Permian; Udmurt; Komi; ObUgrian; Khanty; Mansi; Hungarian; Samoyedic; Ngunasan; Nenets; Selkup; and Kamassian. The primary focus is synchronic but with sufficient diachrony throughout for the reader interested in general orientation. Each article has its own bibliography. The volume is peppered through with maps, diagrams, and charts, and it closes with an extensive index of topics. — James E. Cathey.]

Babiniotis, Georgios D. 1998. Leksiko tis neas elinikis glossas, me sxolia ja ti sosti xrisi ton lekseon. Athens: Kendro Leksikolojias, 2064 pp. [This massive monolingual dictionary of Modern Greek, prepared under the aegis of B, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Athens, contains some 150,000 words and phrases as main lemmata. Entries include notes on “correct” usage as well as definitions (some 500,000 in all), and there are some with etymological information too. Controversial when it first appeared because of the inclusion of various pejorative usages,