

GENE GRAGG's current research concerns language contact and areal linguistics. He had vivid first-hand experience of the effects of language contact in the context of the Ethiopian language area, and is continuing to work in this field, focusing on the effects of contact between Amharic (Semitic) and Oromo (Cushitic). By way of return to the ancient Near East, he has become interested in the question of the degree of divergence and convergence among the non-Indo-European and non-Semitic languages of ancient Western Asia—some of which formed sub- and adstrata for subsequent Semitic- and Indo-European-speaking populations (such as, but not exclusively, Akkadian and Hittite). Mr. Gragg organized a seminar on the topic in the Winter Quarter 1979, which was participated in by a large number of Institute staff and students. Languages covered were: Hattic, Hurrian, Urartian, Kassite, Elamite, Sumerian, Proto-Dravidian, Kartvelian, and Proto-Indo-European. As an offshoot of the seminar a collective volume is planned, tentatively entitled *The Non-affiliated Languages of Ancient Western Asia*. A less ambitious offshoot were some discoveries about Urartian word order, which re-

sulted in a talk at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society in St. Louis.