



GENE GRAGG is continuing the second year of the National Science Foundation grant for the Cushitic/Omotiic Etymological Database project. At this point almost all Cushitic cognates which have been identified in the literature have been entered into the database (including related words in Egyptian, Semitic, Berber, and Chadic, where these have been recognized). At this point we will begin searching lexical sources for new cognates. More important however is the task of writing programs which will enable users to explore the database from various possible points of view — that is, programs which will deliver answers to questions such as : “What Semitic words are related to the Eastern Cushitic word for ‘grind?’;” “What evidence is there for a phoneme /f/ in initial position in Proto-Cushitic, and what does this evidence suggest for proto-Afroasiatic?” In March, 1988, Professor I. M. Diakonoff of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad (and, in

1963, visiting professor at our own Oriental Institute in Chicago) came to Chicago to receive an honorary degree. One outcome of his visit here is that the Cushitic/Omotiic project will be contributing data to, and be otherwise coordinated with, the important, long-standing Afroasiatic dictionary project in Leningrad. Gragg gave a paper on linguistic reconstruction in Cushitic to the Conference on Afroasiatic linguistics held in conjunction with the American Oriental Society meeting in Chicago and gave an Oriental Institute members’ talk on the Afroasiatic language family as a whole.