

# Root, shmoot

Mark Aronoff  
Stony Brook University

“Syntactic” theories of morphology employ the notion of meaningful roots that have no lexical category, and perhaps no form. Let us call them acategorial roots. I will first review the history of linguistic analysis of morphological roots within the Arabic and Hebrew traditions, followed by a brief review of early generative work. I will show that there is no empirical need for meaningful acategorial roots in natural languages. Roots do exist but all evidence points to the conclusion that they are morphological, meaningless, and categorial.