

The documentation of former donors or owners of manuscripts is partial. For example, a rather large quantity of the manuscripts belonged to a British Imperial subject, Moñ Bha Tū, variously identified in the manuscripts as, e.g., a subdivisional officer (*nay puñ van thok*) or the township officer of Kyangin (left untranslated in entry 146). On a few occasions paratextual labels noting that a manuscript was owned by him are misread to imply that he was the “sponsor” of the copy (e.g. entries 1–5). In other cases (entries 33–34, 43, 74, 78, 88–90, 135, 146, 219, etc.), manuscripts bear labels attributing ownership to him, but these are not noted in the respective entries or in the list of “owners” (p. 389). Similarly, while Ūḥ Bhuiḥ Sīḥ and his family sponsored many copies, they are not mentioned in the respective entries as sponsors or in the list of donors.

Entries tend to remain silent about how cataloguers arrived at textual metadata, including authorial attributions and dates of composition. This diminishes the utility of the catalogue as a work of scholarly reference, since authors and dates are presented as authoritative when they are not critically and securely established. In some instances, the authors state that an attribution is reproduced from information written on slips of paper inserted into bundles by prior cataloguers (e.g. entry 464). Other cases are more opaque. For example, entry 163 gives the author “Rhañ Sāriputta (Da-la)” for a legal treatise that was not composed by any such person, and who is nowhere mentioned in the text itself. Dates are sometimes erroneously assigned. Thus, entry 139 was “[c]opied in Sakkarāj 1125 (A.D. 1763)”, but in fact this date refers to the year in which the text itself was created. In converting dates, the cataloguers appear to have simply added 638 to the Burmese year, without accounting for calendrical discrepancies. For example, in entry 37 the Burmese year 1232 is calculated as “A.D. 1870”, whereas the weekday and month furnished by the colophon (f. ghau.r) establish the copy date as Monday 30 January 1871. Moreover, the compilation of this collection of monastic *vinicchayas* is dated to 1145 (“A.D. 1783”), but this is merely the date of the first legal opinion recorded in the bundle (f. ka.v). There are many other decisions dated subsequently (e.g. 1785 (f. kha.r); 1806 (f. gū.r); 1826 (f. gho.v)). And authorship of this text has been attributed not to the author or compiler but rather to the last-mentioned monk responsible for the final ruling in the collection.

Despite such criticisms, this publication will help bring the Ūḥ Bhuiḥ Sīḥ collection to wider international attention. It is a welcome addition to the growing documentation on vernacular and Pali manuscripts and manuscript libraries in Burma.

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EAST ASIA

NATHAN W. HILL:

The Historical Phonology of Tibetan, Burmese, and Chinese.

xiv, 373 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. ISBN 978 1 107 14648 8.

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This book by Nathan W. Hill is by any measure a valuable contribution to the historical phonology of the vast range of languages typically called Sino-Tibetan. The

research involves not only the three languages mentioned in the title, but also quite a number of related languages, some of which are without a written tradition.

The author is aware of the sophisticated nature of the field he dares to explore, and certainly knows Paul Benedict's "Here anything can happen to anything – and often does", and James Matisoff's "In this field you have to be a little crazy", which are relevant to the problems the book under review scrutinizes. It is clear that such research will inevitably provoke different sorts of reaction from "narrow" specialists.

In addition to the three main chapters announced in the title, the book contains an almost exhaustive list of References; an Appendix: Complete list of correspondences; and three indexes: *Verborum*, *Rerum et Nomum*, and *Legum*. The first contains words from all languages which were used as cognates. The *Rerum et Norum* seeks to show the stages of how the conclusion of the value of this or that unit was achieved. The *Legum* reminds the reader of the essential laws of phonological correspondences, named after their discoverers. This organization of the book will definitely help readers find their way through the numerous examples of reconstructions.

The author really should have mentioned the problem of the reliability of the data of the languages involved in his analysis. He rejects out of hand many preceding reconstructions, calling them outdated, and relies mostly on Gong's work (1995). He also follows the Library of Congress system of transliteration which, to my mind, is sometimes of little help in presenting reconstructions, because it does not differentiate between indigenous languages with their own script, and those whose script is borrowed. Thus some cognates from the languages with borrowed script might be misleading, because too often the transliteration has very little in common with pronunciation. This is exactly the case with some of the Burmese cognates.

In all of the three stages of evolution of Burmese mentioned by the author (Old Burmese, Written Burmese, and Standard Burmese) there existed the spelling *-ac*, which in Old Burmese was inconsistently written *-ac~ec~jat*. All such spellings reflected the rime *-iet* or *-iət* (Yoshio Nishi, "The Proto-Lolo Burmese and Old Burmese sources of written Burmese *-AC*", *Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society* 9, 2016; and Rudolf Yanson, "Sources of Written Burmese *-ac* and related questions in Burmese historical phonology", *Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*, 10/2, 2017). It appears that the author is using different spellings of the same rime as different cognates. Thus, demonstrating that *-a-* in Burmese corresponds to Chinese *-*e-* before dentals, the Burmese cognate (*rhyat* "eight") is used (p. 73). In fact, the Burmese vowel in this case has the value *-ie-*. In another case the author demonstrates the change *-*e-* to *-a-* before dentals by presenting Burmese *tac* "one" (p. 236). But, again, this word should have been presented as *tiet*. Obviously, the spelling *-ac* cannot be used to demonstrate that the initial of the cognate is not palatalized, as stated by the author (p. 16) because the meaning of, suppose, *-cac* is [ciet], therefore it is only natural to predict that initials before front high vowels are palatalized.

Such mixing of different spellings of the same rime, which is met not once in the book, fortunately does not cast doubt on the final reconstructions since they are substantiated by numerous cognates from other languages.

One additional point worth mentioning is the consistent spelling of Burmese pre-aspirated sonorants as postaspirated. It is a well-known fact that Burmese sonorants are pre-aspirated. I cannot imagine what could be behind such odd spelling, how is it motivated. For those who do not know Burmese such spelling might be misleading. Even the form of the symbol for pre-aspiration, which is a Burmese innovation, shows that aspiration should precede initial.

I do not agree with the treatment of the Old Burmese spelling *iuw*, which the author reconstructs as **uw* (pp. 76–7). The digraph *ui* (the correct transliteration should be *iu*, otherwise it might be mixed with the final *-uy*) was introduced by the Burmese to reflect the new vowel as a correlate of the just appearing *-e* from *-iy*, i.e. *-o*. Since the new digraph consists of symbols for high front and back vowels it could have been understood by readers as denoting some middle vowel. Thus, adding the symbol *-w* as a final was intended to show the rounding of the new rime, so it was just a symbolic component of the rime without individual phonetic value. Therefore, the correct reconstruction of the spelling *-iuw* is *-o*, cognate to Tibetan *-u*. (See also E.G. Pulleyblank, “An interpretation of the vowel systems of Old Chinese and of Written Burmese”, *Asia Major* 10/2, 1963, p. 23.)

Overall, this is a very useful book. It offers detailed analysis of representative data from a variety of languages, followed by the author’s insights, which to my mind testify to the academic maturity of the author, as well as his industriousness.

Those who read the book will certainly approve of its dedication to John Okell – unquestionably a distinguished person in the field of Burmese studies.

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MIECZYŚLAW JERZY KÜNSTLER:

The Sinitic Languages: A Contribution to Sinological Linguistics.

(Collectanea Serica. New Series.) xiii, 322 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2019. ISBN 978 0 367 18620 3.

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The Sinitic Languages is a wide-ranging overview of the history and structure of Chinese, produced by one of the most influential Eastern European sinologists of the twentieth century, Mieczysław Jerzy Küntler (Jīn Sīdé 金斯德, 1933–2007). Küntler, who studied and taught at the University of Warsaw for nearly half a century, was influenced primarily by the French and Polish strands of sinology. Reflecting this pedigree, his broad research output encompassed linguistics, philology, and culture, but his primary interest lay in linguistic history. The present work is an English-language translation and revision of Küntler’s culminating publication, *Języki chińskie* (2000). The book contains 13 chapters, the first eight of which were translated and significantly revised by Küntler himself before his death in 2007; the remaining chapters were translated by Alfred Franciszek Majewicz. In order to render the text current for publication in 2019, it has been annotated with scholarly citations from the last two decades by Maria Kurpaska.

Flanked by introductory chapters on the affiliation of Chinese and its writing system, and concluding chapters on modern dialects, the core of the book (chapters 3–10) is a detailed study of the evolution of Chinese, describing changes in syntax, morphology, lexicon, and phonology.

Based on a series of lectures on “Selected problems of sinological linguistics” that Küntler delivered in the early 1990s, the book is marked by a colloquial style and somewhat uneven coverage of material. The chief editor describes it as “a contemporary document, i.e., the quintessence of Professor Küntler’s overall research on Sinitic languages from the 1970s up to the year 2000, which