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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MIECZYSŁAW 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.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X20000294

The Sinitic Languages is a wide-rangeing overview of the history and structure of Chinese, produced by one of the most influential Eastern European sinologists of the twentieth century, Mieczysław Jerzy Künstler (Jīn Sīdé 金斯德, 1933–2007). Künstler, 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 Künstler's culminating publication, *Języki chińskie* (2000). The book contains 13 chapters, the first eight of which were translated and significantly revised by Künstler 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 Künstler 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 Künstler's overall research on Sinitic languages from the 1970s up to the year 2000, which

simultaneously serves as a document of the history of Polish Sinology within which this book marks the apogee of linguistic research" (pp. ix–x). The most substantial and interesting sections (chapters 4–6) reflect Künstler's interest in tracing historical grammar by means of philological investigation of textual data, with extensive example sentences drawn from the archaic through medieval periods.

There is much of interest here, not least of which is an approach to grammatical analysis, nomenclature, and investigation that is rather different in focus from late-twentieth-century scholarly approaches in Asia, North America, and Western Europe. However, the book is unfortunately flawed in many respects. Some of this can perhaps be charitably attributed to poor editing or translation. Examples are the erroneously reversed designation of upper-register tones as "*yang*" and lower-register tones as "*yin*" (p. 149); the mischaracterization of Cantonese *m* as the "existential negative" (p. 93); and the omission of crucially important diacritics on phonetic symbols so that, for example, Karlgren's Ancient Chinese palatal stops are repeatedly and confusingly rendered *t*-, *t'*-, *d'*- (p. 186). We must also recognize the relative intellectual isolation of Cold War Eastern Europe, which limited the availability of global sinological scholarship during much of Künstler's career. As a result, many of the issues and controversies discussed by the author are outdated, even from the vantage point of the late 1990s when the bulk of the book was written. Kurpaska's annotations are of help here, but only marginally so.

More problematic are frequent occurrences of basic errors of fact, logic, and judgement. For example, Künstler claims that early Chinese writing "rendered only ideas, not language" (p. 41); that the absence of inflectional categories like tense and number make many Chinese sentences so vague as to be "quite untranslatable" (p. 95); that Southern Min dialects preserve ancient voiced obstruent initials (p. 265); that Old Chinese was "doubtlessly tonal" (p. 79); that "Chinese writing is not a good tool for noting the language and it never was" (p. 46); that *jinqu* 進去 "equals, from our [Western] point of view, the meaning of the verb 'go out'" (in fact, it means "go in"; p. 197); that it is impossible to write in characters a Chinese word whose etymology is unknown (p. 41); that in the entire history of the Chinese language family "the only important syntactic change is the appearance of telescopic clauses" (p. 99); and that the following four sentences of Mandarin have the identical meaning "I bought a book", with the variation in word order conveying only "emotive differences" (p. 89):

> *Wo mai shule;*
> *Wo ba shu maile;*
> *Shu wo maile;*
> *Wo shu maile.*

I am sorry to say that the book bristles with mis-statements like these, of which the above are only a small sample; one can be found on nearly every page. Some betray a long-discredited prejudicial view of Chinese people and their language as essentially primitive: "We must always remember that the [ancient] Chinese way of thinking differs from ours [as reflected in a lack of words for abstract notions] ... the Chinese are much nearer to the concrete than we normally are" (p. 85).

Künstler made a deliberate decision not to include Chinese characters in the work, providing only various kinds of transcriptions for cited words, phrases, and sentences. The impetus for this decision is admirable – "to show that language and writing are really two different things" (p. 11) – but in practice it renders sections of the book difficult for the reader to follow. This is especially true of chapter 2 on the writing system, in which the structure of characters is described but not

illustrated. It also hampers the reading of example sentences, which are presented only in phonetic form with English translation, but lack interlinear glosses of individual morphemes and words. Fortunately, the editors have partly remedied this defect by providing an index-cum-glossary that includes Chinese characters.

This book will be of interest to specialists in the intellectual history of Chinese philological linguistics and to scholars investigating particular questions on which Künstler had research expertise and made important contributions (such as the problem of word classes in the early language), but the shortcomings outlined above make it impossible to recommend it favourably as a general introduction to, or overview of, "sinological linguistics".

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CONSTANCE A. COOK and ZHAO LU:
Stalk Divination: A Newly Discovered Alternative to the I Ching.
xiv, 195 pp. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. $78.
ISBN 978 0 190 64845 9.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X20000300

This book is the first English translation of the *Shifa* manuscript in the fourth volume of the Tsinghua Bamboo Slips published in 2013. The original manuscript has no title: the current Chinese title, which literally means "methods of divination", is given by the Tsinghua editors. As the subtitle of the book shows, the *Shifa* manuscript bears witness to a non-canonical tradition of stalk divination with an intricate pattern of stated and unstated rules. It also testifies once again to the ancient practice of representing hexagram or trigram lines with numbers rather than broken and unbroken symbols. Cook and Zhao's book will be the first stop for Western readers who have little or no knowledge of Chinese paleography but who are still interested in how archaeology has changed our understanding of divination in early China.

The translation is preceded by a long introduction that places the *Shifa* in the context of early Chinese occult practices: the canonical *I Ching*, other *I Ching*-related manuscripts, the Yin Yang Wuxing scheme, divination records in the *Zuozhuan* and the *Guoyu*, the Chu Silk Manuscript, excavated hemerological almanacs, divination records in Chu bamboo slips, and so on. The main difference between the *Shifa* and the canonical *I Ching* is that in the *Shifa*, we do not have 64 hexagrams with fixed names and line statements, but a more practical system of trigrams organized in 2 x 2 matrices whose meanings are determined in the very same context. The interpretation of these trigram matrices is governed sometimes by explicit rules stated in the reference information provided in the second half of the manuscript and other times by unstated rules that must be inferred from the trigram examples themselves. Although several rules can be recognized by keeping track of recurrent verbal patterns, the manuscript on the whole seems to lack any consistency in following these rules. They are not so much "rules" as hermeneutical guidelines that the diviner can consult when trying to figure out the meaning of a trigram set. In fact, we cannot be sure how many guidelines are actually employed in the manuscript and how the diviner may have chosen from them in a particular case.