

two works under review here, this publication will no doubt also be seen in future as something of a milestone.

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SHEN ZHONGWEI:

Phonological History of Chinese.

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This contribution is a perceptive and informative assessment of the field of Chinese historical phonology that also investigates the linguistic tradition of China going back as far as the Nánběicháo period (386–589) and developed independently of Western linguistic traditions. Within a relatively brief space of 384 pages, Shen Zhongwei (University of Massachusetts) has accomplished the feat of illustrating the phonological history of Chinese from the second millennium BCE to the modern era. This long treatment is a genuine phonological and sinological tour de force, which reveals mastery both of the traditional field of Chinese historical phonology and of the various Western and Chinese applications and trends that have evolved from it over the past century. This book can also be described as a compendium of modern research in Chinese historical phonology, especially from the Chinese side. Indeed, as the author himself reveals in the foreword, he has made use mainly of Chinese scholarship, albeit references to the works of Karlgren, Pulleyblank, Norman, Sagart, Baxter, etc. are also present.

The book consists of an introductory chapter on traditional Chinese phonology (pp. 1–56), followed by sections dedicated to Old Chinese (pp. 57–103), Middle Chinese (pp. 105–94), the formative stages of Mandarin (pp. 195–227), the Old Mandarin of the Yuan epoch (pp. 229–315), and a sixth and final part dedicated to the Modern Mandarin of the Ming–Qing period (pp. 317–84). Whilst many publications on the same subject were concerned primarily with interactions with “minority languages” or non-Trans-Himalayan tongues in southern China (e.g. Hmong-Mien), this book focuses mostly on linguistic interactions with “northern languages”. This is not only original but also extremely useful, because the material written in Khitan, Jurchen and hP’ags-pa scripts may pave the way for our understanding of the early history of Mandarin. The present reviewer was also delighted to see an analysis of the poorly explored area of Persian transcriptions (pp. 294–315). That said, this book also contains some parts that require clarification, and I shall try to provide some more detailed information in the remainder of this review.

The first general objection is that the author never discusses the concepts of “reconstruction” and “sound change”, and seems to accept the methods of reconstruction formalized within a structuralist framework (pp. 55, 87, esp. 120). This approach, although it allows for a sober reassessment of Karlgren’s unbalanced system, is perhaps what led post-Karlgrenian scholars to neglect the role that articulatory details and other perceptual processes may play in determining the course and pathways of sound change. It is true that Karlgren had lost himself into the triviality of reconstructing as many phonetic contrasts as the number of the sound classes of traditional rime tables required but, in retrospect, the segmental approach has led to an equally unsatisfactory result. For instance, scholars have been very active in reconstructing various medials according to different grades, but have paid little attention to the work of important

phoneticians such as Ohala and Maddieson. It is perhaps for this reason that the author accepts the existence of [ji]-type sequences (p. 56), in spite of the fact that they are typologically disfavoured in phonological systems due to lack of perceptual difference, or the existence of tautosyllabic clusters such as [tʃj], which are not observed cross-linguistically due to phonetically motivated restrictions against the co-occurrence of conflicting phonetic features. Furthermore, this segmental approach also leads the author to think that “in comparison with the relationship between -ʔ and *shǎng* tone, evidence for the relationship between -s and *qù* tone is stronger and more convincing” (p. 93). In fact, while some varieties of Sinitic spoken in Fújiàn and Zhèjiāng still have a final glottal stop for words in the rising tone, the alleged *-s coda has left no trace in living Sinitic languages, and ignores a whole body of literature which argues that certain register effects (creakiness, breathiness) played an equally important role as immediate triggers of the transphonologization to tone. Yán Xuéqún (1910–92) had long ago observed a relationship between tenseness/laxness and pitch, and the importance of laryngeal configurations was also acknowledged by Yuán Jiāhuá (1903–80) and Jiāng Dí, all absent from the bibliography.

More specific comments are also possible. On p. 71, Shen ascribes the discovery of consonant clusters to Rev. Joseph Edkins (1823–1905), but in fact Edkins rejected the postulation of consonant clusters for Old Chinese because they were at odds with his idea of “language evolution”, which regarded sound change as an inevitable ascent through a preordained hierarchy of developmental stages: nasals > labials > dentals > gutturals, and so on. Also, it would have been useful to remark that in Chinese scholarship initial consonant clusters do not enjoy the same popularity as in the West. Wáng Lì was mostly against them, and several other scholars such as Guō Xīliáng and Páng Guānghuá still contend that Old Chinese lacked consonant clusters.

On p. 78, the author writes that the division of *wēi* 微 from *zhī* 脂 rime was something accomplished by Wáng Lì, but it was first proposed by Ōya Tōru (1851–1928). The contribution of Japanese scholars to the study of Chinese historical phonology is not fully acknowledged in this contribution. It is also regrettable that the work of Taiwanese scholars such as Chu Chia-ning, Tung Chung-szu, Lee Chun-eh, Ang Uijin, etc. is never mentioned. When the author discusses the identification of rime categories (*yǐnbù*), the failure to acknowledge the work of Ch’én Hsin-hsiung (1935–2012) constitutes a serious omission.

Nevertheless, these are minor remarks and should not detract from the great contribution that this publication makes to the field of Chinese historical phonology. This is a contribution of high quality and as such well worth recommending.

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KAZUE IWASA:

Remarks on Maps of the Yi Script based on the Swadesh 100 Wordlist. (Studies in Asian Geolinguistics, Monograph Series No. 5.) 68 pp.

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Remarks on Maps of the Yi Script Based on the Swadesh 100 Wordlist uses the method of geographical linguistics to select 100 basic words with nine points