ish outcome, Riemer calls linguists to avoid training students in merely how to abstract, reduce, and generalize language data in the classic manner that he associates with formalism/structuralism, so that linguistics may instead become ‘a site of pluralistic and reflexive exchange’ (260).

In brief, this volume brings together one paper on graphic formalism in linguistics (Kaplan); three on the notion of ‘form’ as a constituent of linguistic theory (McElvenny, Fortis, possibly Elffers); two that discuss the disciplinary status of formalism in linguistics and that variously bring structuralism into play (Karstens, Joseph); and three that presuppose the formal character of generative linguistics, then open it to criticism (Nefdt, Pullum, Riemer). McElvenny’s theme of ‘form(all(ism))’ is a fairly thin common denominator, but no matter, these are all provocative essays, invitingly presented and written by scholars at the tops of their respective games. They are well worth reading closely. They would also be rewarding grist for a graduate seminar, or a Zoom- or in-person-based collegial reading group.

An additional notable attribute of this text is that it is the first volume in a new series, ‘History and philosophy of the language sciences’, for which James McElvenny serves as series editor. It is produced by Berlin-based Language Science Press, a ‘born-digital scholar-led open access publisher in linguistics’ (https://langsci-press.org/about) founded in 2013. Language Science Press now sponsors twenty-nine diverse series across many subfields of linguistics, all publications in which are freely downloadable, thanks to the support of 115 funding institutions worldwide. Their books may also be purchased in hardback. The text under review has already been followed in the same series by three other volumes on the history and philosophy of linguistics, two edited collections and a monograph, with more in production. Language Science Press specifies that publication entails no fees for authors or readers. Miraculously, their workflow protocols aim to move manuscripts from submission to publication in around six months, including anonymous review. All of this is good news for linguists regardless of where they stand with respect to forms, formality, or formalism.

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In this book, Zhongwei Shen provides a complete account of the phonological history of Chinese, from Old Chinese in the first millennium BC to Modern Mandarin. Drawing on his own re-

1 This book can be downloaded as a whole or as individual chapter PDFs at http://langsci-press.org/catalog/book/214.

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search, and also findings by other scholars, S introduces the reader to the state of the art in the research of the historical phonology of Chinese, presenting a critical assessment of the field as well as laying the foundation for future research directions.

The ten chapters in this book are organized into six parts. Ch. 1, which explains traditional Chinese phonological terminology, can be used as a reference manual on its own. The remaining chapters are arranged chronologically, presenting research in Old Chinese, Middle Chinese, the origins of Mandarin, and developments from Old Mandarin to Modern Mandarin. For each period of the language, S discusses source materials, methods, various proposals, debates, and phonological systems, with the help of images of original texts, tables, and annotated examples. As the title of the book suggests, its main content is a detailed description of the phonological properties of each period in the development of Chinese. In this review, I choose to focus on some of the discussions that are theoretically or methodologically significant. Since the book contains a synthesis of research results from different scholars, including the author’s own, it should be noted that the author does not necessarily agree with viewpoints presented in this book, as stated in the preface (xxxiv).

On the methodological front, S calls for more research emphasis on language contact (6). The comparative method has been applied to Chinese, with alterations, to yield abundant research findings. There have also been attempts to provide a family tree for the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. S, however, argues that language contact is actually the driving force in the formation of Chinese dialects (384). With cultural expansions throughout history in what is geographically China today, various ethnic groups gradually adopted the Chinese language via language shift. For example, certain features of the Yue dialects, such as the existence of more than two entering tones and a contrast in vowel length, can be explained as influences from Tai languages on Chinese (384). Such methodological discussions are very much needed, although they are still quite brief here, with no further technical detail.

One important aspect of the book is its explicit discussions of the foundational issues concerning the nature and quality of written records of Chinese. S points out that the availability and reliability of source materials vary across the whole history of Chinese. This in turn affects the methods and conclusions. S proposes five criteria as measures of quality of written records, regarding the time and location, as well as the type and systematicity of information about phonological categories and phonetic values that can be retrieved (52). For example, Old Chinese can be studied via poetry rhyming and phonological information in Chinese characters. But poetry rhyming provides only phonological categories, not phonetic values. Such information is not systematic, and the base dialect is not clear either. In comparison, as sources for Old Chinese, Chinese characters are considered to be either poor or incomplete in terms of the five criteria (53). To further complicate the situation, information retrieved from different sources may be inconsistent. Old Chinese as a reconstructed system is therefore not a language in its strict sense because the source materials contain information on different times or spaces (59). Similar problems exist in Middle Chinese and Old Mandarin, albeit to lesser extents. A related issue is the hybrid nature of written standards of all major stages of Chinese. S argues that all of these standards may contain archaic and/or various dialectal features, thus being removed from any actual spoken dialect at different times, although I would like to suggest that some of these standards, such as Old Mandarin, may be closer to spoken dialects than the others. Due to such issues as mentioned above, S uses the notation A > B in this book to simply mean that form A precedes form B, unless otherwise indicated, because they ‘may or may not have a direct relationship in the development’ (56).

Now regarding Old Chinese, one major issue is whether one rhyme group could contain multiple main vowels. S seems to agree with the view that a rhyme group in Old Chinese can have different vowels (80). For example, while some scholars maintain that the tán-rhyme group contains only the main vowel /a/, in some newer systems this rhyme group can have three different vowels, /a, e, o/ (89). Although some evidence, such as rhyming in modern Beijing singing performance, shows that rhyming in songs may not be strictly based on the identity of vowels, to have such different vowels as /a/, /e/, /o/ in one rhyme group seems somewhat unintuitive. Note that the poems that are written records of Old Chinese were originally songs.

Another major issue in Old Chinese is the origin of Middle Chinese syllables with a palatal medial -j-. S cites evidence from Chinese dialects, languages that are either related to Chinese or
have had close contact with Chinese, and transcriptions of Sanskrit syllables using Chinese characters to show that syllables with a short vowel in Old Chinese resulted in the development of the medial -j-, while those with a long vowel did not. The reconstruction of Old Chinese used in this book is that by Zhéngzhāng (2013 [2003]), though a brief introduction of Baxter and Sagart’s (2014) reconstruction is also provided, in comparison with Zhéngzhāng’s system. Baxter and Sagart (2014) account for the development of the palatal medial -j- via syllables with plain initials, while the pharyngealized initials prevented palatalization. Note that in Table 2.60 on p. 100, the labels ‘Plain’ and ‘Pharyngealized’ seem to be reversed. On the top line, it should read ‘Pharyngealized (Type A)’, and on the second line, it should read ‘Plain (Type B)’.

In the discussion of Early Middle Chinese as recorded in the rhyme dictionary called Qièyùn, compiled in 601 AD, the phonological reconstruction used is mainly that of Pān (2000), which contains an innovative proposal on medials. Of the different types of syllables of Middle Chinese, referred to as Ranks I–IV, S provides evidence to show that syllables of Rank I and Rank IV do not have medials, and their main vowels are different. Rank II syllables have a -u- medial, while Rank III syllables have a -j- medial. Type B chóngniǔ syllables of Rank III have -uj- (139). S points out that this complex medial system can help reduce the number of main vowels of the Qièyùn from twelve to seven (134). The Qièyùn is known for its exceedingly fine distinctions among the rhymes. Some scholars assume that these different rhymes should contain different vowels, while more recently, scholars tend to favor the view that some rhymes may have the same main vowel but different medials. S provides an excellent discussion of the origins and distributions of rhymes in the Qièyùn, showing that the rhymes are not always contrastive (120–28) and thus may be phonemically reduced. There may, however, be a theoretical problem here if one tries to do a phonemic analysis of the Qièyùn, which is a mixed system not based on any one particular spoken language. S also describes gradual changes in the six centuries after Early Middle Chinese, using source materials such as revised and expanded versions of the Qièyùn, phonological works called rhyme tables, translations of Buddhist texts, and Chinese-Tibetan manuscripts.

The bulk of this book is actually its detailed delineation of the beginnings and development of Mandarin, drawing extensively on the author’s own original research. Old Mandarin is commonly based on the study of a rhyme book called the Zhōngyuán yǐnyùn (‘Rhymes of the Central Plain’), compiled in 1324. S uses source materials written in phonetic scripts from the tenth to thirteenth centuries to show that the main features of Mandarin can be traced to the tenth century (198, 262). Some of these materials include transcriptions of Chinese words in the Khitan Lesser script and the Jurchen script, and especially the phonological work called Měnggā zìyǔn (‘Rhymes in Mongol script’), in which Chinese characters are annotated with the hP’ags-pa script. S gives an abundance of written materials in the Khitan Lesser script to show the existence of mediants, as early as the tenth century, of the foundational features of Mandarin, for example: diphthongization of Middle Chinese syllables with the coda /-k/, such as /-ak/ > /-aw/, /-wak/ > /-uj/; devoicing of voiced obstruent initials; labiodentalization of bilabial initials; loss of stop codas /-p, -t, -k/ (206). Therefore, S argues convincingly that the Zhōngyuán yǐnyùn of 1324 ‘should not be regarded as the beginning of Mandarin phonology but rather as the establishment of a new phonological standard and the beginning of the recognition of the dominance of Mandarin’ (262). Since the Zhōngyuán yǐnyùn, written in Chinese, provides only phonological categories, the Měnggā zìyǔn, written in a phonetic script, is instrumental in providing the phonetic values. One of the most important findings of Old Mandarin as attested in the Měnggā zìyǔn is the centralization of high vowels, for example, /ɨ/ > /i/, and the associated chain shift of vowel raising, for example, /a/ > /e/, /e/ > /i/ among the front vowels and /o/ > /ɔ/, /o/ > /a/ among the back vowels (259–60).

Moreover, S also discusses two additional phonetic scripts that were used to transcribe Chinese during the early stages of Mandarin. The first is the Tangut script, such as in the Zhāng zhōng zhā (‘Pearl in the palm’), a Tangut-Chinese bilingual glossary compiled in 1190. It is shown that the dialect spoken in northwestern China at that time, as attested in the Zhāng zhōng zhā, was different from the dialect in the central and eastern part of northern China, as attested in the Khitan and Jurchen scripts, such as in their different patterns of obstruent devoicing, and in the loss of the
coda /-k/. Some of these northwestern dialectal features in the Tangut script can still be seen in modern dialects in those areas, although the original dialect in the northwest has been ‘gradually replaced by the more dominant Zhongyuan and Northern Mandarin dialects’ (225). In addition to the Tangut script, S also discusses two texts written in the Ancient Persian script from the fourteenth century to show that the phonological system is basically Mandarin, although there are individual variations, which points to the nature of Mandarin as a loosely defined standard.

The book also describes the developments of Mandarin from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries by citing written documents in different types of scripts, including Chinese, the Korean script Hangul, and the Latin alphabet used by missionaries in China during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The detailed discussion of the sequence of palatalization of velar and alveolar initial consonants, based on careful interpretations of written documents, is very nuanced and illuminating.

In summary, S’s *A phonological history of Chinese* is a definitive guide to this topic. It encompasses almost all known source materials and provides cogent analyses, as well as fair and balanced evaluations of different theories. Experts in relevant fields, as well as other linguists interested in Chinese, will find this book useful and a delight to read.

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