

But the further trajectory of Paul Cohen's writing is also well worth considering. His 2009 study of how a king of the fifth century BCE came to live again in the imagination of twentieth-century China teaches us about another aspect of history there that we sometimes overlook, though Lawrence Schneider in his work on the image of Qu Yuan in history does afford some sort of parallel case. In the Anglophone world it is possible to conjure up imaginative sympathy for an Alexander Hamilton, or in England further back a Thomas More or Thomas Cromwell; elsewhere in the British Isles other figures may have been brought to life again, though I do not know if Shakespeare's Glendower should count. When, however, Shakespeare bids us interest ourselves in the personality of Coriolanus he is surely taking us to what was clearly another time and another place, even if it was a time and place more familiar to at least some of his audience than to us now. But in China the imaginative range of history is deeper, and broader, its discontinuities – though certainly there – less evident. There is plenty of further work to be done by those who would do it, and they might do well to start at the end of this book, where on pp. 249–55 as a bonus we find a complete bibliography up to 2018 of everything Paul Cohen has written for us to enjoy. The topics I find of personal interest in Chinese history are generally not those about which he has written, but I for one value this book, and the guidance it provides to his many thought-provoking publications.

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## **Richard Van Ness Simmons (ed.): *Studies in Colloquial Chinese and Its History: Dialect and Text***

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In 1995, Jerry Norman and W. South Coblin published an article that came to be known in certain circles as “the manifesto” (“A new approach to Chinese historical linguistics”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115/4, 576–84). The two North American linguists, experts in Chinese dialectology, argued convincingly against the prevailing twentieth-century model of Chinese language history and its associated methodology of historical dialectology. The model asserted that the numerous living varieties of speech in the Sinitic language family were, with trivial exception, descended directly from an attested medieval northern Chinese language known as “Middle Chinese”. The “rhyme books” (*yùnsū* 韻書) and “graded rhyme tables” (*děngyùntú* 等韻圖) of the period were presumed to encode phonological categories of that language, allowing its lexicon and sound system to be reconstructed with a high degree of accuracy. This meant that comparison of character pronunciations in modern dialects with their pronunciations in the reconstructed Middle Chinese framework could mechanically reveal the set of sound changes that had taken place in the evolution of each dialect. In combination with analysis



of the accumulated layers of influence of northern Chinese pronunciation standards on southern dialects, this method could fully describe and explicate the historical development of Chinese. Norman and Coblin pointed out the historical inaccuracies and methodological pitfalls of this model. They called for a new approach that would centre the living, spoken varieties of Chinese, past and present. Freed from the constraints of an oversimplified and inaccurate model and from reliance on artificially constructed, character-based textual sources, this new approach could eventually yield a fuller and more satisfying account of the complex history of spoken Chinese. In the three decades since its publication, their call for a new approach has gradually been heeded by more and more scholars, in China and the West.

The volume under review, edited by one of Jerry Norman's students and including a chapter by Coblin, is an important contribution to this burgeoning endeavour. Growing out of a 2016 workshop on "The history of colloquial Chinese – written and spoken", the 15 chapters gathered here are intended to "broaden perspectives on the history of colloquial Chinese" over the last 1,000 years (p. 1). Most of the chapters are brief and exploratory, rather than comprehensive in their conclusions. The issues addressed are "related to colloquial languages of China in their spoken forms, the relationship between those spoken form and written forms, colloquial literary languages, and the Chinese phonological tradition" (p. 2). The value of these studies lies as much in the ways they model methods and use of data as in the specific conclusions that they draw, and in this way they provide an inspirational roadmap for further research.

Particularly notable is the number of chapters that make use of written texts to gain a window into dialect history. Seven chapters are gathered together in the first part of the book under the heading "Chinese dialects in texts". In contrast to the medieval phonological reference works that have diverted attention from the rich linguistic tapestries of individual language varieties, the texts analysed here preserve and reflect features of spoken language. Properly curated and analysed, these historical documents – from written representations of Cantonese opera lyrics, to early modern vernacular novels like *Jīn Píng Méi* (金瓶梅, *The Plum in the Golden Vase*), to descriptions of Chinese language use written by Spanish colonialists in seventeenth-century Manila – provide essential clues to the complex interplay of linguistic and cultural forces that have shaped the spoken languages. The two chapters in the book on *Jīn Píng Méi* (one by Huáng Lín and one by Zhāng Huìyīn) further illustrate how essential it is for literary scholars to have a firm grasp of Chinese dialects to understand fully the ludic elements of language use in the novel.

A further eight chapters are grouped under "Chinese dialects and their history", and rely less (or not at all) on textual sources. In addition to the topics already mentioned, there are chapters that address traditional Taiwanese cantillation of Tang 唐 poetry, Wú 吳 folk songs in Féng Mènlóng's 馮夢龍 *Shāngē* 山歌, the history of Shanghai's 上海 "Old" and "New" dialects, the history of the dialect word *yá* 伢 "child", the emergence of Chéngdū 成都 as the representative Western Mandarin dialect, the composition of Míng 明-era Guānhuà 官話, the use of dialect islands in historical reconstruction, and *rù* 入 tone development and loss. A few key themes emerge from the collection. One is that of interaction: the complex interplay and influence of different forms of speech and writing in contact. This collection makes clear how much more there is to this than the simple idea of northern Chinese layers accreting as literary superstrates on southern Chinese varieties. Another recurring theme is the importance of understanding migration patterns in order to generate and support hypotheses about the time and location of linguistic influences and changes. A third theme is the complex and indispensable role of Guānhuà, the educated Ming–Qing Mandarin koiné. Itself malleable, varied, and changeable, its influence on all written and spoken varieties of Chinese was inescapable.

Simmons' lucid introduction to the volume summarizes some of the key conclusions that emerge from the chapters in a bulleted list (p. 10). This is especially helpful for the researcher who intends to read selectively rather than straight through the volume. He has also done a splendid job imposing uniformity of style and data presentation. Jerry Norman's Common Dialectal Chinese, rather than Middle Chinese, is used consistently as a point of comparison and Pīnyīn romanizations have tone marks throughout the book.

While the contributions in the volume vary somewhat in quality and significance, each one provides something of interest and value. In assessing the impact of this volume on future scholarship into the history of Chinese language and its cultural manifestations, the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

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## **Shi Xiangdong 施向東: *Hanzangyu bijiao yanjiu* 漢藏語比較研究 [Chinese-Tibetan Comparative Linguistics]**

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The comparative study of Chinese and Tibetan has been central to Sino-Tibetan linguistics, as these two languages have the longest history of documentation and the largest corpus of all other languages (e.g. Burmese, Newari, and Tangut). The results, however, were not quite satisfactory until recent decades, mainly thanks to rapid progress in Old Chinese phonology. The book under review offers a concise overview of Chinese-Tibetan comparative linguistics (here I use the term “Chinese-Tibetan” rather than “Sino-Tibetan” in order to avoid confusion with the Sino-Tibetan language family, since these are the only two languages compared in the book).

The work under review is based on the author's previous studies: Xiangdong Shi, *Hanyu he Zangyu tongyuan tixi de bijiao yanjiu* 漢語和藏語同源體系的比較研究 [A Comparative Study on the Cognate Systems of Chinese and Tibetan] (Beijing: Huayu jiaoxue chubanshe, 2000); *Yinshi xunyou; Shi Xiangdong zixuanji* 音史尋幽——施向東自選集 [Exploring the Historical Phonology: A Self-Selected Anthology] (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2009); and *Guyin yanjiu cunqao* 古音研究存稿 [Kleine Schriften on Chinese Historical Phonology] (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2013), and follows on from the pioneering works by Yu Min 俞敏 (*Yu Min yuyanxue lunwenji* 俞敏語言學論文集 [Kleine Schriften on Linguistics] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999)). Although it pays more attention to Chinese historical linguistics, there are also many inspiring proposals for Sino-Tibetan comparative linguists.

Methodological issues are discussed in the introduction (pp. 1–12) and the first chapter (pp. 13–32). The author strictly follows the neogrammarian paradigm, and always tries to establish clear sound correspondence sets (or *yungui* 韻軌 “rhyme tracks” in Yu Min's terminology) between Old Chinese and Tibetan, which is a great strength of the book. The