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Volume 4

Shā–Z

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Unger, Ulrich (1930–1998)

Ulrich Unger (born December 12, 1930 in Leipzig, died December 16, 2006 in Münster, Germany), was notable for his outstanding expertise in all fields concerning Early China; he was a scholar with manifold cultural interests, including literature, art, music, and cinema. His linguistic work covers all major aspects of Old Chinese: its phonology, lexicon, and grammar.

In 1948, he enrolled at the University of Leipzig, first as a student of Classics and Oriental studies, and eventually focusing on Sinology. Academic teachers at the University of Leipzig who influenced him included the Egyptologist Siegfried Morenz (1914–1970), the Indologist Friedrich Weller (1889–1980), and in particular André Wedemeyer (1875–1958), a historian, equally interested in Chinese and Japanese studies. Among his Sinological influences are Erich Haenisch (1880–1966) and Eduard Erkes (1891–1951), two of the leading German Sinologists of their generation and core members of what would be called the "Leipzig school of Sinology" in hindsight (cf. Emmerich and Stumpfeldt 2002; Leibfried 2003). August Conrady (1864–1925), the predecessor of Haenisch in Leipzig and external examiner of → Bernhard Karlgren's (1889–1978) PhD defense, and his "Indo-Sinitic" (i.e., Sino-Tibetan/Sino-Tai) studies may have incited Unger's interest in historical phonology and language comparison. Leipzig, the home institution of Georg von der Gabelentz (1840–1893), was the appropriate place for the devoted philologist Unger who, already as a student contributed to Haenisch's famous *Lehrgang* (1957), for many decades the most important primer of Classical Chinese in the German speaking world. On July 10, 1957, Unger defended his PhD thesis on negatives in the *Shījīng* 詩經 [Book of songs] (Unger 1957), already characterized by its combination of phonological and syntactic types of evidence and its supreme mastery of the textual sources.

In 1958 Unger fled from East Germany and resettled in Freiburg i.Br., where he established the Institute for Sinology and completed his Habilitation degree in 1962 with a multi-volume epigraphic study on the bronze inscriptions of the Western Zhōu period, which remained unpublished. In 1966, he was appointed as Sinology chair of the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of Münster, where he taught until his death in December 2006. To emphasize his scientific objectives, Unger unofficially renamed the institute into Institute for Classical Chinese Philology and Paleontology. It is precisely in these two fields that he conducted most of his research, which—besides his work on the linguistics of Old Chinese—centered around history, literature, and art history, while at the same time continuing his work on Western Zhōu bronze vessels (e.g., Unger 1995) and bronze inscriptions. Proceeding from the work of his habilitation, he compiled a catalogue of bronze inscriptions in 18 volumes (around 3,600 partly digitized pages), including 'transcriptions', a.k.a. 'normalizations' (*shìweń* 釋文), translations, and

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philological-historical comments. Like many of his works, this massive compilation which could easily stand comparison with any major Chinese catalogue of bronze inscriptions available at the time, was to remain unpublished.

Already some of his earliest publications were devoted to linguistic issues. They include a discussion of the formula X *zé* 則 X *yǐ* 矣 (1956), an analysis of questions with *ān suǒ* 安所 'where' in Early Imperial Chinese (1959), and of the preverbal position of the object *wh*-pronoun *hé* 何 (1961)—one of the most important syntactic issues in the study of early Chinese grammar until today—as well as two articles on the Chinese script (Unger 1967, 1969). Much of his linguistic research also found its way into his text book of Classical Chinese (Unger 1985) and his *Glossar*, i.e., a lexical list of Classical Chinese words (Unger 1989), and, of course, into his teaching at the Univesity of Münster. In his classes, he always insisted on translations which combined grammatical precision with a good literary style, following his motto: "In Sinology one has to avoid guessing and has to know what can be known." His *Einführung* to Classical Chinese, consisting exclusively of attested original materials, was partly based on Haenisch's *Lehrgang* (1957), but strictly confined to the language of the "Classical" period (5th–3rd cents. BCE). The word list includes both the Modern and the Middle Chinese readings (c. 600 CE) based on a slightly modified version of Karlgren's "Ancient Chinese" reconstruction. For the modern reading(s), Unger developed his own transcription system—again based on Haenisch, but also on incorporating romanization elements from →Wade-Giles', and Matthews' and Rüdenberg/Stange's systems—which he termed "moderately historicizing". If possible, he only provided modern readings, which were derived from Middle Chinese according to the established sound laws. In his transcription, Unger wanted to account for the some particularities and distinctions of the Classical language, otherwise lost to the learner, as in the case of those initials which merged in Modern Chinese, but differed in Middle Chinese, for the entering tone, *rùshēng* 入聲, etc. During his entire life, he disparaged the →pīnyīn system as arbitrary and ambiguous, particularly with regard to vowels and to the distinction between aspirated and unaspirated stops. The first part of his *Einführung* includes an overview of the sound laws governing the phonological changes from Middle to Modern Chinese, an introduction to the →*fǎnqiè* 反切 spelling system, and to the Chinese script.

Already as a student, Unger regretted the lack of a comprehensive and reliable dictionary of Classical Chinese. Accordingly, the compilation of a dictionary was one of his great scientific objectives, resulting in the publication of his *Glossar* (1989), which complemented the *Einführung* (Unger 1985). It was intended as a classification of *words* (according to their Middle Chinese reading), and not of characters. Around 3,500 words of the basic lexicon of Classical Chinese were selected on the basis of the *Einführung*. The lemmata do not simply list existent dictionary entries as a lexicographic metacompilation; they are primarily based on the meaning of words in texts. Just as in the *Einführung*, in the *Glossar* the 'reading pronuncation' (*dúyīn* 讀音) is always preferred to the '(modern regular) pronunciation' (*yǔyīn* 語音) reading, to the effect that, e.g., the word 'white' 白 has the reading *pêh*² (~ *bó*), and not *pai*² (~ *bái*). Sound laws and their exceptions are discussed with a number of examples. However, the *Glossar* represents merely a fraction of the materials Unger collected and digitized over the years, some of them meanwhile incorporated into Christoph Harbsmeier's *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae* (http://mcst.uni-hd.de/). A much larger cardfile dictionary of Cassical Chinese, including copiously translated example sentences, unfortunately remains unpublished, despite various digitization efforts in the 1980s and 1990s.

The second of his important objectives was a comprehensive grammar of Classical Chinese. It was eventually "pre-published" in Münster in a limited number of xeroxed copies (Unger 1987–1997). Of the resulting ten volumes only the one on rhetoric was published (Unger 1994). The grammar consists of five parts, I: *Word and Phrase*; II: *Nominal Sentence*; III: *Verbal Sentence* (vols. 3–8)—in this part volume 4 (III, 2) is entirely devoted to auxiliary verbs, volume 5

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(III, 3) to prepositions, volume 7 (III, 5) to particles (i.e., temporal and modal adverbs, sentence-final particles, topicalizing, focalizing, and sentence-initial particles), and volume 8 (III, 6) to conjunctions—; IV: *Complex Sentences* (*Periode*); V: *Rhetoric* (1994). Each volume includes an index of examples quoted from Classical texts. The examples are presented with translations, but without transcription or glosses. The decision to write his own grammar was originally stimulated by a request to review Dobson's more linguistically oriented grammar (1959); however, the review itself was never written.

With its altogether almost 1,800 pages, the *Grammatik* is incredibly detailed and meticulous, and it invariably displays an exceptional intuition with regard to the Classical Chinese language. By way of an example, the content of volume 3.1, on the verbal sentence, is presented here: Following a definition of the subject, different types of verbs, differentiated into transitive and intransitive, are classified according to their semantics and syntax. The negation of transitive (and separately of intransitive) verbs is discussed comprehensively, followed by an analysis of the particular position of object pronouns in negated sentences, and a discussion of different kinds of objects and their syntactic positions, including the topicalized, i.e., sentence-initial (*Exponierung*), and the preverbal position (*Anteposition*). In the section on intransitive verbs, passive constructions are analyzed. Additionally, the subject of a sentence, the inversion of subject and predicate, and the substitution of the subject or the object by a pronoun, including demonstrative and interrogative pronouns and indefinite substitution, are discussed. Each grammatical structure is illustrated by a number of examples from the Classical literature, all translated into German.

Many of Unger's analyses evidently show the influence of Von der Gabelentz's 1881 grammar, for instance, the verbal origin of prepositions and their analysis as auxiliary verbs subordinated to a matrix verb (Gabelentz 1960:§692). However, Unger's presentation is purely descriptive, following, by and large, the terminology of the Classical European grammar tradition. He does not follow Von der Gabelentz's syntactic approach to the effect that, e.g., topicalization—an important feature of Chinese syntax, first outlined in Von der Gabelentz (1869) and discussed with Chinese examples in Gabelentz (1960, §260) under the heading of "Psychologisches Subject" (on the prehistory cf. Knobloch 1988:218–222)—is treated less systematically, i.e., in different sections—although in more detail and with more insight—than in von der Gabelentz's grammar (Meisterernst 2012). This is certainly due to the fact that Unger was typically not concerned with linguistic *concepts*, but with a meticulous *depiction* of the grammatical structures of Classical Chinese.

In his work on the historical phonology of Chinese, which initially had the objective to improve Karlgren's reconstructions of Ancient Chinese, Unger followed the Indo-Sinitic approach, as proposed by Conrady and the Leipzig school of Sinology, and argued for an inclusion of the Tai languages into the Sino-Tibetan language family (Unger 1984, 1992). He also entertained "long-range" ideas about remote lexical relationships between Sumerian and Chinese. Unger's phonological research was circulated mainly in the typescript *samizdat* journal *Hao Ku* 好古, which discusses different topics in Old Chinese language and culture. Most of the phonological work is based on comparisons with → Tibeto-Burman languages, particularly → Tibetan, Burmese and Lepcha, and with Thai (Siamese). Occasionally transcriptional evidence from Indian words is included; one article discusses a Sanskrit alphabet in Chinese characters found in Huìlín's 慧琳 (737–820) *Yīqiè jīng yīnyì* 一切經音義 [Sounds and meanings in the *Tripiṭaka*] (Unger 1992). The articles are mainly concerned with the reconstruction of individual consonants (e.g., *r* and *l* in different positions) and consonant clusters, and, by consequence, of different affixes in Old Chinese. Other contributions discuss the origins of the 'rising tone' (*shǎngshēng* 上聲), and outline the reconstruction of an Old Chinese verbal morphology involving an aspectual distinction between imperfective and perfective, comparable to the Tibetan morphology. The postulation of this distinction is based, amongst others, on the fact that around 150 verbs display a variation between the → Middle Chinese falling tone,

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qùshēng 去聲 (resulting from a previous *-s suffix) and any other tone without a clearly discernible change of meaning. Of the two the *qùshēng* variant is assumed to represent the perfective aspect. Unger also worked on the patterning of tonal contrasts in Middle Chinese prosody, their Old Chinese backgrounds and semantic effects in poetry (Unger 1986)—an approach further explored in the Habilitationsschrift of his student Volker Strätz (1989).

Many of the 75 issues of *Hao ku* 好古, which were irregularly circulated to a handful of colleagues between 1982 and 2002 (for a full list see Emmerich and Stumpfedt 2002:xxii–xxxiv) contained highly innovative ideas on Old Chinese phonology and morphology, often formulated decades before they were made by others. Due to the very restricted number of recipients of the "journal", however, they remain largely unknown within the wider Sinological and Sinolinguistic communities.

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Barbara Meisterernst

Utterance Final Particles

Chinese is known to have a large number of sentence-final particles (SFPs), many of which are said to express *yǔqì* 語氣 (roughly translatable as "modality") of various kinds. Each Chinese dialect has its own set of SFPs, though some individual ones may cross dialectal boundaries.

1. Mandarin

The most commonly used SFPs in Mandarin, for instance, include *le* 了, *ma* 嗎, *a/ya* 啊/呀, *ba* 吧, *ne* 呢, *me* 嚜/嘛, etc. Quite a few of them have close counterparts, phonetically or functionally or both, in Cantonese, Taiwanese Southern Mǐn 閩 and other dialects. Except for the "change of state" *le* and the interrogative *ma*, the other Mandarin SFPs are less tangible in their "meanings" or "functions" and are thus treated in different analyses with radically different results. The findings are summarized below along the line of the development of linguistic theory.

Traditionally, Chinese SFPs are plainly listed for their "meanings" and "functions". For example, the particle *a/ya* is listed as functioning to mark: (a) an initial question to start a conversation, (b) a confirmation question, (c) a vocative form, (d) an exclamation, (e) a command, (f) an impatient statement, (g) a reminder, (h) a warning, (i) a pause for the hearer, and (j) enumeration (Chao 1968:803–806). Those functions, however, are not always attributable to the properties of the particle itself. Rather, they are more easily recognizable as labels indicating the particle's compatibility with utterances performing such functions. For the particle *ne*, various analysts claim an even larger number of different "meanings" and "functions". Each of the following sets of its "meanings" and "functions" is cited from one of six independent researchers: (a) reminding, intense inquiry, topic marking, (b) forceful interrogation, (c) certainty, intense inquiry, marking topic change, (d) assumption, conjecture, consultation, (e) inconclusiveness, unchanged state, topic marking, and (f) interrogation, retort, exclamation, suspicion, pause, positive statement (Chu 2009:289–292). Putting aside the obvious overlaps and even contradictions, those labels are, again, just indications of compatibility with the contexts that the particle *ne* may occur in. To the particle *ba*, just as many "meanings" and "functions" can be (and have been!) assigned, such as (a) softened question, (b) suggestion, (c) hesitation, (d) willy-nilly agreement, (e) unheeded warning, (f) previous advice, (g) friendly sarcasm, and (h) politeness/modesty, to mention just a few (Chu 2009:285–287). In fact, an endless list of such labels can be added as long as contexts allow them.

In the past 30 years or so, the rise of functionalism in syntax has contributed greatly to

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