Preface

In the second volume to appear in this new series on *Sinitic languages of China*, Weirong Chen brings to our attention, for the first time, an exceptionally detailed grammar of one of the main varieties of Southern Min, the Hui'an dialect.

The heartland of the Min dialect group, to which Hui'an belongs, is the coastal province of Fujian in southeastern China. A branch of Sinitic which counts over 50 million speakers yet represents just 4% of the Han Chinese population, it is well-known for its heterogeneous nature, not to mention for its retention of various Archaic Chinese features. Southern Min, is in fact, the largest and most widely distributed subgroup of dialects within Min. It extends south into Guangdong and Hainan, and also over the straits to Taiwan. Furthermore, due to a centuries-long diaspora, large concentrations of Southern Min speakers are to be found in Southeast Asia, for example, in Singapore where more than half of the Chinese population has a Min dialect such as Hokkien 福建话, Teochew 潮州话, or Hainanese 海南话, as their heritage language. Communities are also to be found in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. Therefore, a comprehensive grammar of Southern Min is more than timely.

After obtaining her PhD at the University of Hong Kong, Weirong Chen was invited to take up a position as a postdoctoral researcher on the ERC SINOTYPE team in Paris from 2011 to 2013. During this period, she began work on the present volume on Hui'an Southern Min, impressive in its novel and original approach to a large array of topics that cover all the major aspects of its grammar.

Sinitic languages of China: Typological descriptions is a new series specializing in the description of the grammar of Sinitic languages, 'Sinitic' being the technical term for the Chinese branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. As such, it includes well-known examples such as Cantonese 广东话, Hokkien 闽南话, Shanghainese 上海话 and Hakka 客家话, lesser-known ones such as Hunanese Xiang 湘语 or the Jin languages of Shanxi 晋语, and, importantly, the national language of China, *Pǔtōnghuà* 普通话, known as Standard Chinese or Mandarin in English. Even Mandarin comes in many non-standard forms including Sichuanese in the southwest, or the unusual varieties spoken in Gansu and Qinghai in northwestern China and the Central Plains region, to name but a few.

The primary goal of this series is to promote scientific knowledge of Chinese languages and their typological characteristics through the publication of high calibre linguistic research, based on empirical fieldwork, close analysis of the data and solid theoretical interpretations. The grammatical descriptions, written

in a functionalist framework, are illustrated by linguistic examples presented in a ‘value-added’ four-line format that includes romanization, glossing, the idiomatic English translation, and also the Chinese characters to cater to historical and comparative interests, as well as our sinophone readers.

The specific objective is to reveal the great structural diversity found in Sinitic languages and to dispel many recurrent linguistic myths about Chinese. The authors involved in this series are all highly trained fieldwork linguists with a background in both typology and Chinese linguistics.

The series thus aims to reach an international readership for the first time, given that most literature available on Chinese languages other than Mandarin, up until now, has been mainly written in the medium of (Standard Written) Chinese.

The large-scale research project, *The hybrid syntactic typology of Sinitic languages* (SINOTYPE), provided the initial impetus behind this series. SINOTYPE benefitted from funding in the form of an Advanced Grant (No. 230388) awarded by the European Research Council (ERC) for the period 2009 – 2013 which included a generous publication subsidy for this series. The host institute, the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), graciously provided managerial support and accounting resources, not to mention the spacious premises for the SINOTYPE research centre in inner-city Paris for the entire period of the project. We take this opportunity to express our many thanks to both the ERC and the EHESS.

The other volumes planned for this series are:

Volume 2: *A Grammar of Nanning Pinghua*, by Hilário de Sousa

Volume 4: *A Grammar of Central Plains Mandarin*, by Yujie Chen

Volume 5: *A Grammar of Shaowu*, by Sing Sing Ngai

Volume 6: *A Reference Grammar of Jixi Hui*, by Wang Jian

Volume 7: *A Grammar of Waxiang*, by Hilary Chappell

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