

Some Sino-Tai Correspondences in Old Chinese *-a- (魚) Finals

Abstract

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Abstract. This paper examines a number of lexical items in Tai which have been or are going to be proposed to be related to Chinese. More specifically, it focuses on Sino-Tai correspondences in Old Chinese 魚 group of finals that are conventionally believed to contain a proto *-a-, namely the 魚 (*-ag), 歌 (*-ar), 元 (*-an), 祭/月(*-at), 陽 (*-aŋ), 鐸 (*-ak), 談 (*-am), and 盍 (*-ap) rhymes as reconstructed by Li (1971). Over two dozen correspondence sets can be established between Tai and Chinese where the corresponding Chinese forms are found to share the same graphemic/phonetic element, i.e. forms that are in the same phonetic series. The regularities and irregularities of the correspondences are noted. The findings shed light on the debate over the nature of Sino-Tai relationship, with implications for Old Chinese and Proto-Tai reconstruction.