

APPENDIX: *A Note on Proto-Viet-Muong Tones\** by David D. Thomas

As the foregoing data that Barker has laid out shows, there are two sets of tone correspondences for words with final stops, and six sets of correspondences for words without final stops. These can be postulated, without further modification, as having constituted the tonal system of Proto-Viet-Muong (PVM). The proto tones and their reflexes may be summarized as follows:

- \*1 > Vn. *bang* (mid level), M. mid level
- \*2 > Vn. *sac* (high rising), M. low rising constricted
- \*3 > Vn. *huyen* (low falling), M. low falling
- \*4 > Vn. *hoi* (low rising), M. high rising
- \*5 > Vn. *nga* (high rising broken), M. high-mid level
- \*6 > Vn. *nang* (low constricted), M. high-mid level
- \*1s > Vn. *sac* (high rising), M. high rising
- \*2s > Vn. *nang* (low), M. high-mid level

From this we may hazard a guess at what the phonetic realization of these PVM tones may have been:

- \*1 : mid level
- \*2 : a rising tone, perhaps with constriction
- \*3 : low falling
- \*4 : a rising tone
- \*5 : a high-mid tone
- \*6 : ??
- \*1s : high rising
- \*2s : ??

Northern Vietnamese thus appears to have preserved the original tone system, though perhaps not the phonetic form, of Proto-Viet-Muong, with its six non-stopped and two stopped tones. Both the Vietnamese and the PVM systems differ from that of Muong only in that Muong has merged \*5 and \*6. (In southern Vietnamese \*4 and \*5 have merged). But despite the systemic similarities, there are considerable phonetic differences between Vietnamese and Muong tones.

The phonemic assignment of tones \*1s and \*2s is perhaps the most

\* Since the writing of this note and of the preceding article, an article entitled "Proto-Vietnamuong Initial Labial Consonants" by Milton E. Barker has appeared in *Văn Hóa Nguyệt-San*, Vol. 12, pp. 491-500 (1963).

obscure point in reconstructing PVM tones. In Vietnamese, the reflex of 1s is most easily combined phonologically with *sac* (< \*2) tone, though possibly with *nga* (< \*5); and the reflex of \*2s would most naturally be assigned to either *huyen* (< \*3) or *nang* (< \*6). In Muong, as Barker has shown, the reflex of \*1s is most similar phonetically to the high rising tone (< \*4) but on other grounds could equally well be assigned to the low rising constricted tone (< \*2); the reflex of \*2s is most naturally assigned to the high-mid level tone (< \*5, 6). By comparing these possibilities one could assign \*1s to \*2, and \*2s to \*6, but this is admittedly arbitrary. A second possibility would be to consider \*1s and \*2s to be neutralizations of the other six tones, with perhaps \*1s being considered a neutralized form of \*1, 2, 4, and \*2s a neutralized form of \*3, 5, 6 (or possibly \*2, 4, 5, and \*1, 3, 6); but these too would be arbitrary. (The third possibility would be to take a polysystemic point of view and make no attempt at reconciling or combining the two tone sets). Haudricourt's analysis of Vietnamese tonal history<sup>1</sup> would appear to point to \*1s as a neutral analogue of \*1, 2, 4, and \*2s as the neutral analogue of \*3, 5, 6; but since diachronic relationships and synchronic alignments do not necessarily coincide, this cannot be taken as decisive proof of the phonemic alignments within Proto-Viet-Muong, though it does tend to give additional weight to the second possible analysis above.

The splitting of Proto-Viet-Muong into Vietnamese and Muong may be considered to be a relatively late phenomenon after a long period of unity following the splitting off from Austroasiatic.

<sup>1</sup> André G. Haudricourt, "De l'origine des tons en vietnamien", *Journal Asiatique*, Vol. CCXLII (1954), fasc. 1, pp. 69-82.