

## GUTTURAL FRICATIVES AND INITIAL \*w- IN COMMON MǐN

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### ABSTRACT

In his earlier Proto-Mǐn reconstructed phonological system the late Professor Jerry Norman posited three guttural fricative initials, i.e., \*x-, \*h-, and \*-h-. In early unpublished manuscripts dealing with this system, \*x- was classed as velar, while \*h- and \*-h- were described as laryngeals. Initial \*x- was characterized as voiceless and \*h- and \*-h- as voiced. In Norman (1974), however, \*h- was transcribed as phonetic [ɣ], a voiced velar (rather than laryngeal) fricative, while \*-h- was interpreted as [ɦ], a voiced laryngeal. In his much more recent Common Mǐn system, as represented in certain of his final dialectological publications and posthumous papers, Norman posited one voiceless velar fricative, \*x-, and two laryngeals, \*h-, and \*ɦ-, the former voiceless and the latter voiced. Additionally, he reconstructed a rounded semivowel, Common Mǐn \*w-, which had not been explicitly mentioned in his published presentations of Proto-Mǐn but was posited without comment in manuscript materials in a single word, i.e., *huáng* 黄 “yellow”. In the Common Mǐn system, on the other hand, this \*w- plays a more prominent role and is also associated with the guttural fricatives in certain ways. The purpose of the present paper is to exemplify and compare Norman’s new Common Mǐn \*x-, \*h-, \*ɦ-, and \*w-.

## KEYWORDS

Chinese dialectology Mǐn dialects Common Mǐn Historical phonology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present paper is to exemplify and compare the syllable initials \*x-, \*h-, \*fi-, and \*w- in Jerry Norman's new Common Mǐn (hereafter, CM) reconstructed system. Only a small number of reconstructed forms from that system appear in print. Fortunately, however, the system is preserved virtually in its entirety in his posthumous papers, which have now been deposited at Fudan University. Our access to all of Norman's Mǐn-related papers, including the "Initial Guide Sheet", the "White Tables", and the "Yellow Notes", was obtained via electronic scanned copies made by Professor Zev Handel in Seattle, with the permission of the Norman family, before the material was donated to Fudan University. All facsimiles of these materials in the present paper have been taken directly from Prof. Handel's scans. In these materials, as well as in the published sources, one finds a number of full CM reconstructed forms. Many more CM reconstructions can be retrieved on the basis of Norman's own data tables, discussion notes, and guide documents. The materials that can be used to accomplish this have been described at some length in three earlier papers, namely, Coblin (2018) and two unpublished manuscripts (Coblin n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Those sources which have been used in the present paper are briefly summarized below:

- (i) CM Initials. These initials are restored on the basis of a guide sheet for reconstructing the CM initials and a full set of CM cognate sets, recorded in hand-written tables on white foolscap paper and arranged by CM finals. These two sources will be conventionally referred to as the "Initial Guide Sheet" and the "White Tables", respectively. A facsimile of the Initial Guide Sheet is included as Appendix.
- (ii) CM Finals. Restored finals are based on the White Tables. Also used is another more detailed document, written on yellow paper and called here the "Yellow Notes". The Yellow Notes predate the White Tables. Where the two differ, reconstructed forms in the latter are followed here.