

THE ANCESTRY OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE BASED ON LANGUAGE AND GENES

George van Driem

Institut für Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Bern

ABSTRACT

Mandarin Chinese and the other Sinitic languages together comprise one out of many branches of the Trans-Himalayan language family. China is also home to languages of the Austroasiatic, Austro-Tai, Altaic and Hmong-Mien families. Twenty years ago, the father tongue correlation was recognised as a principle in the founding dispersals of linguistic phyla based on the ubiquity of the correlation of Y chromosomal markers with the geographical distribution of language families. The geographical distribution and the relative chronology of branching and spread of the Austroasiatic, Austro-Tai, Trans-Himalayan and Hmong-Mien language families correlate with four distinct paternal lineages that are subclades of the Y chromosomal haplogroup O.

KEYWORDS

Trans-Himalayan language family Population genetics Prehistory Historical linguistics Source of language

1. SINITIC AND TRANS-HIMALAYAN

Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Xiāng, Hokkien, Teochew, Pínghuà, Gà, Jin, Wú and a number of other languages and dialects together comprise the Sinitic branch of the Trans-Himalayan language family. These