

**The Possibility of Proto-Nôm in Medical Texts from the Warring States Era
through the Early Independent Việt States c. 300 BCE-1000 CE.**

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ABSTRACT

This essay will present an over view of medically related texts and inscriptions attributed to the Yüeh/Việt from the time of the creation of the medical manuscripts found at Ma Wang Tui through the early period of independence from China for the Việt. These texts and inscriptions show considerable orthographic variability and may indeed be considered to be proto-Nôm. The essay will move on to examine the evidence linking more recent medical manuscripts to the very early texts and will discuss the orthographic variability of terms used in botanical nomenclature and in the terms used to describe certain medicinal properties of the plants in question within medical texts written in Nôm. The essay will conclude with a discussion of one a Nôm charter which links the character forms found in archaic Chinese to not only Việt medical manuscripts but also to the broader world of Vietnamese literature written in Nôm.