Answer key to exercise on xiéshēngzì 3

Study the following sets of xiéshēngzì, and answer the questions below

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| --- | --- |
| 桃táo跳tiào | 兆zhào晁cháo |
| 登dēng燈dēng | 澄chéng橙chéng |
| 帶dài | 滞zhì |
| 奠diàn | 鄭zhèng |

（Source of data: see <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/古無舌上音>）

1. Identify the common component for each set

兆登帶奠

1. In terms of the place of articulation of the initials in each group, what places of articulation are there in each set?

The characters in the left column all have alveolar initials, while their related characters in the right column all have retroflex initials.

1. What is the principle of using xiéshēngzì for studying Old Chinese initials?

The characters that belong to the same xiéshēngzì series should have the same place of articulation for their initials.

1. If you put your answers to question 2 and question 3 together, what conclusion can you draw?

Since each row of characters represents a xiéshēngzì series, the initials of all the characters in each row should have had the same place of articulation in Old Chinese.

1. Qian Daxian discovered this fact first. What was his original claim?

He claimed that in old times there were no retroflex sounds such as those in the right column (古無舌上音). Therefore in Old Chinese the retroflex sounds should have been alveolar, i.e. more similar to those in the left column.