

SOME REMARKS ON THE SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF THE SO-CALLED ASPECTUAL MARKERS *Ji* 既 AND *Yi* 已 IN HAN PERIOD CHINESE

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the question whether the so-called aspectual markers *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 in Classical and Han period Chinese are genuine markers of the perfective aspect. The discussion is not based on the historical evolution of both markers but on their syntactic distribution in the sentence and on their semantic interplay with the verb they modify. We hypothesize that syntactically *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 are genuine adverbs serving to modify the aspectual value of the whole VP and not aspect markers serving to indicate the aspect of the verb comparable to the aspectual suffix *-le* 了 in Modern Mandarin. A comparison of unmarked and marked VPs clearly demonstrates that in Han period Chinese a verb phrase does not have to be modified by one of the two morphemes to express perfectivity or related notions. Depending on the situation type (Aktionsart) of the verb or the verb phrase, different aspectual values can be expressed without any obvious marking. Adverbs generally serve to emphasise particular nuances of the VP and the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 serve to highlight nuances such as the factual occurrence of an event or a state, frequently a state that results from a preceding event. They are rather comparable to aspectual adverbs such as *yijing* 已经 'already' in Modern Mandarin or 'already' in English.

Key words: Classical and Han period Chinese, perfective aspect, situation type, adverb

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper the syntax and the semantics of the two adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 which are regarded expressing perfectivity will be at issue. The period under investigation is the Han period which linguistically can be considered as a transition period with many Classical elements still alive in the language but with new elements developing at the same time. It will not focus on the grammatical development of the two adverbs but rather – from a synchronic point of view – on their syntactic and semantic interplay with the verb and its participants, assuming that their different functions are at least partly dependent on the semantics of the verb they modify. Verbs can be distinguished by the situation type they refer to, which can according to Vendler (1967) be divided into four different categories: states, activities, accomplishments<sup>1</sup> and achievements. More recent analyses distinguish only three different categories: states, processes and events<sup>2</sup>, with states and processes being atelic (unbounded) and cumulative and events being telic (bounded) and quantified respectively. Accomplishments and Achievements are both subsumed under events.<sup>3</sup> The structure of situation types (Aktionsarten) is compositional (Verkuyl 1972, 1993), with individual predicates as well as various kinds of prepositional phrases and noun phrases contributing to the overall aspectual structure of a particular sentence. The interplay of the verb and its arguments plays an important role in situation type shifts, for example, from telic to atelic and vice versa.<sup>4</sup> Situation types are also referred to as lexical aspect, distinguishable from grammatical aspect, which is traditionally divided into perfective and imperfective and which is often realized in the verbal morphology: The perfective views the event as an integrated whole with initial and final point, while the imperfective leaves out the initial and the final point, and accordingly views only parts of the event. Although both categories, situation type and grammatical aspect of the verb, have to be distinguished there is a close interrelation between them. The perfective is compatible with telic verbs that focus on the final point while the imperfective is not always compatible with telic verbs<sup>5</sup> – namely it is not compatible with achievement verbs, but with accomplishment verbs.

General schema for the perfective: I F<sup>6</sup>  
 ////////////////

General schema for imperfective: ..... or: I .. /// .. F<sup>7</sup>  
 (no initial and no final point)

Classical and Han period Chinese – in contrast to Modern Mandarin – does not have any obvious bounded grammatical morphemes such as aspectual suffixes expressing the aspect of the verb. During these periods a verb can, depending on its situation type and the complex structure of the verb phrase, present a situation as either perfective or imperfective without any obvious morphological changes. Telic verbs are very often perfective while atelic ones are not. As far as the lexical aspect is concerned, due to this lack of inflectional morphology, many verbs cannot be exhaustively defined by one single category of situation type, but can easily shift from one category to another.<sup>8</sup> There may have been a morphological distinction of different verbal categories, but due to the writing system it is still difficult to provide enough evidence for a coherent system of verbal morphology.<sup>9</sup>

The following discussion will show that the employment of the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 is confined by the semantics, i.e. the situation type of the verb, namely that their employment is generally confined to verbs of particular situation types. If the semantics of the verb do not obey these constraints, the employment of the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 serves to change the situation type of this verb.

## 2. A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATIONS OF *Ji* 既 AND *Yi* 已

Due to the fact that Classical and Han period Chinese lack an overt morphological distinction of the grammatical aspects of the verb, in the linguistic literature a few preverbal morphemes are assumed to take over this function. These are the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 and the negative *wei* 未, which are considered to be a contrastive pair, with *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 expressing perfectivity or a completed action and the negative *wei* 未, expressing an incomplete action. This hypothesis was mainly established by Pulleyblank (1994: 323; 1995: 112). According to Pulleyblank and others, the aspectual function of the two

morphemes *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 is derived from their function as full verbs with the meaning 'use up, finish, complete' and 'stop, cease'<sup>10</sup>. This function of *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 as full verbs is illustrated in the following examples:

(1) 日有食之，既 Chunqiu, Huan 3  
*ri you shi zhi ji*  
 sun have eclipse OBJ complete  
 "There was an eclipse of the sun, it was complete."

(2) 不道早已 Lao zi 30;55  
*bu dao zao yi*  
 not way early end  
 "If you do not behave according to the way you come to an early end."<sup>11</sup>

A possible source of derivation for the adverbial use of *ji* 既 may be the fact that in the oracle bone inscriptions it is employed as a causative verb 'cause to finish'. Since – in this instance – it is found in preverbal position (preceding a  $V_2$ ), this may have allowed it to develop the function of an adverb:

(3) 既雨 Heji 1784  
*ji yu*  
 cause-to-stop rain  
 "Can we cause the rain to stop?"<sup>12</sup>

The same path of grammaticalization may be possible for *yi* 已 as well.<sup>13</sup> The adverbial function of *ji* 既 is older<sup>14</sup> than that of *yi* 已.<sup>15</sup> In earlier texts *ji* 既 appears in both matrix and subordinate clauses, while in later Classical and in Han period texts it is mainly confined to subordinate clauses, indicating that a situation is completed before the next one, indicated in the matrix clause, starts. In its function in matrix sentences it is frequently, but not entirely, replaced by *yi* 已. *Yi* 已 can, besides its adverbial function – from the Han period on and particularly during the Nanbei chao and Tang periods – be found as an intransitive  $V_2$  in the meaning 'stop, finish, complete' in the structure  $V_1$  (NP<sub>obj</sub>)  $V_2$ . Accordingly, it is employed similarly to the Verb *liao* 了, which during its

history developed into a suffix marking the perfective aspect in Chinese.<sup>16</sup> As  $V_2$ ,  $yi$  已 is usually found in subordinate clauses as in the following example from the Lotus-Sutra (translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva after 401 AD):

- (4) 佛见此已便作是念 *Lianhua miaofa jing* T09:0262:0013  
*fo jian ci yi bian zuo shi nian*  
 Buddha see this finish then make this thought  
 "... after the Buddha has seen this, he thinks to himself ..."

Both, the adverbs  $yi$  已 or  $ji$  既 and the verb  $yi$  已 can occasionally occur in one and the same clause:

- (5) 既得此已心大欢喜自以为足  
*Lianhua miaofa jing* T09: 0262:0017  
*ji de ci yi xin da huan xi zi yi wei zu*  
 already get this finish heart great enjoy happy self regard as enough  
 "And when we got this we were very happy in our hearts and regarded it as enough."<sup>17</sup>

Examples of this kind illustrate that the two functions of preverbal  $ji$  既 and  $yi$  已 and of verbal  $yi$  已 as  $V_2$  in the structure  $V_1$  ( $NP_{obj}$ )  $V_2$  (and the other predecessors of *liao* 了 found in this position, i.e. *qi* 讫, *jing* 竟 and *bi* 毕) cannot be regarded as completely identical. Nevertheless, in the linguistic literature, predicates modified by preverbal  $ji$  既 and  $yi$  已 are, despite their syntactic differences, regarded as functionally comparable to those marked by the verbal suffix *-le* 了 indicating perfective aspect in Modern Mandarin. This comparison is based mainly on the similar etymological sources of  $ji$  既,  $yi$  已 and *-le* 了 and on the semantic similarities of the predicates modified by one of the Classical morphemes  $ji$  既 and  $yi$  已 and by Modern *-le* 了 respectively.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, it is based on the fact that in particular predicates modified by adverbial  $ji$  既 predominantly occur in subordinate clauses to indicate a situation that is completed before the next situation starts, a function which is identical with one of the most important functions of predicates marked by the suffix *-le* 了 in Modern Mandarin. This function is illustrated in the following example (6):

(6) 既见其著书，欲观其行事，故次其传。 *Shiji: 62;2136*  
*ji jian qi zhu shu yu guan qi xing shi gu ci*  
 already see his write book wish look-at his carry-out affair therefore compose  
*qi zhuan*  
 his memoir

"After I had seen their writings I wished to watch how they conducted their affairs and therefore I composed memoirs of them."<sup>19</sup>

In the Chinese linguistic literature, the morphemes *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 are generally classified as temporal adverbs, which according to the semantics of the verb, namely the different situation types, serve to indicate that an event is completed, that a process has terminated or that a state has come into being.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the traditional analyses of *ji* 既 and *yi* 已, summarised above, Lin Ziyu (1999) in an extensive study attempts to analyse the different functions of the aspectual markers within the framework of a grammaticalization theory based on the terminology of Bybee et al. (Bybee et al. 1988).<sup>21</sup> He concludes that their main function is to indicate the resultative and the anterior and that they - due to their syntactic position preceding the verb - never develop into genuine grammatical markers of the perfective aspect.<sup>22</sup> He supports this hypothesis by the fact that they are only very rarely employed independently and that in most of the cases they serve to mark a situation which is relevant for the following situation. This is particularly true for *ji* 既 but to a certain extent for *yi* 已 as well. He rejects the invariable analysis as adverbs assumed in many Chinese studies.

In Classical texts and to a certain extent in Han period texts as well, in main clauses and sentences marked by *ji* 既 or *yi* 已 very often the final particle *yi* 矣 is employed - which according to Pulleyblank (1994; 1995) is comparable with the sentence final particle *le* 了 in Modern Mandarin. This sentence particle has been discussed thoroughly in the linguistic literature. According to Chao (1968:691), *le* 了 serves to indicate a change of state, namely that something new arises<sup>23</sup>, a classification which can also be assigned to the Classical *yi* 矣. Li and Thompson (Li and Thompson 1981) assign the general meaning 'currently relevant state' to it, but they also recognize (Li, Thompson, and Thompson 1982)

that it can serve to indicate 'perfect', i.e. the relation of the completion of a situation to the following, as well.

As far as the negative *wei* 未 is concerned, according to Pulleyblank it corresponds to *ji* 既 and consequently it is assumed to express a situation that is not complete but rather ongoing.<sup>24</sup> Harbsmeier notices a similar semantic dichotomy for *yi* 已 and *wei* 未 as marking an either temporal – 'already' versus 'not yet' (1989:474) – or a logical – 'quite' versus 'not quite' (1989:484) – opposition. In contrast to sentences with *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 in Classical texts those with *wei* 未 are very often concluded by the final *ye* 也. Similar to *ji* 既, which appears in subordinate clauses expressing the same temporal relation as those with the suffix *-le* 了, *wei* 未 can also appear in subordinate clauses, expressing the same temporal relation as those with *mei you* 没有 in Modern Mandarin. The co-occurrence constraints of the preverbal adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 and the negative *wei* 未 are the same as those of the perfective suffix *-le* 了 and *mei (you)* 没(有) in Modern Mandarin. But, in Classical and Han period Chinese, a predicate modified by *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 can occasionally be negated by *bu* 不.<sup>25</sup> This structure can occur particularly in causal clauses, while it is extremely rare with *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 in their function as purely aspectual adverbs. Apparently these cases are confined to negative stative predicates either with modal auxiliaries<sup>26</sup> or negative predicates that are similar to adjectives as in the following example:

(7) 赵军已不胜，不能得信等，欲还归壁，...      *Shiji*: 95;2616  
*zhao jun yi bu sheng bu neng de xin deng yu huan gui*  
 Zhao army already NEG be-victorious NEG can get Xin party with return return  
*bi*

fortification

"After the army of Zhao was not victorious and could not catch Xin and the others, they wished to return to their fortifications, ..."

The traditionally assumed schema of aspect in Classical and Han period Chinese and the schema of the perfective aspect in Modern Mandarin can – in a very general way – be presented as follows:

Classical and Han period Chinese	Modern Mandarin
a) <i>ji</i> 既 / <i>yi</i> 已 VP <sub>1</sub> ( <i>yi</i> 矣) <sup>27</sup> , VP <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> - <i>le</i> 了, VP <sub>2</sub>
a') ( <i>ji</i> 既 /) <i>yi</i> 已 VP ( <i>yi</i> 矣)	V <sub>1</sub> - <i>le</i> NP <sub>quantified object</sub>
b) <i>wei</i> 未 VP <sub>1</sub> ( <i>ye</i> 也), VP <sub>2</sub>	<i>mei</i> (you) 没(有) VP <sub>1</sub> , VP <sub>2</sub>
b') <i>wei</i> 未 VP <sub>1</sub> ( <i>ye</i> 也)	<i>mei</i> (you) 没(有) VP <sub>1</sub>

As this short summary of the most important traditional linguistic analyses has shown, *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 differ to a certain extent as far as their distribution in subordinate or matrix clauses is concerned. But as the following analysis will show, in purely temporal sentences, they do not differ as far as their semantic constraints regarding different situation types of the verb is concerned. Since this interplay between the semantics of the verb and the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 is the main issue in this study, they will be treated together and the following discussion will demonstrate that these semantic constraints account for all instances of *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 independently of their distribution in subordinate or matrix clauses.

### 3. THE SYNTAX AND THE SEMANTICS OF *Ji* 既 AND *Yi* 已

Syntactically, both morphemes, when occurring in preverbal position, which is the one relevant here<sup>28</sup>, will – according to their syntax – be classified as proper adverbs<sup>29</sup> as opposed to the classifications as particles, markers, and – as far as *ji* 既 is concerned – conjunctions, etc. found in the linguistic literature. They belong to a closed class of adverbs indicating tense, aspect or situation type (Aktionsart) of the verb, which all exhibit the same syntactic characteristics. They are almost exclusively found in preverbal position and separable from the verb only by a confined class of other syntactic elements, such as PPs and / or manner adverbs, which are closely related to the modified verb. They command the whole verb phrase following them and are themselves commanded by those adverbs preceding them. Although all adverbs of this category share more or less the same syntactic characteristics, they show different constraints regarding their employment with different categories of verbs. Generally, their employment is not obligatory. As the following examples will show, whether the verb phrase is modified by one of the adverbs or not, the

same grammatical meanings of e.g. perfectivity, resultative, perfect and others can be expressed by one and the same verb phrase. Therefore, the adverbs obviously do not serve to distinguish the perfective from the imperfective aspect of a verb in the first place but rather to support or emphasise a particular aspectual reading of the whole VP.

In the following, the employment of a few representative verbs typically modified by *ji* 既 or *yi* 已 will be analysed with respect to their different syntactic distributions and to the semantic differences resulting from these different syntactic characteristics. Additionally, the employment of these representative verbs modified by different negatives, particularly by the so-called negative of the perfective aspect, *wei* 未, will be analysed, to provide some further evidence for a discussion about the existence of a dichotomy of the perfective and imperfective aspect in Ancient Chinese.

As far as the employment of the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 is concerned, both are typically employed to modify telic verbs, namely verbs that express an event, focussing on the final point of the event. These can be either accomplishment or achievement verbs.<sup>30</sup>

The general structure of these situation types is as follows:

(a) Achievement: (I // // // //) F;      Accomplishment: (I) // // // // F

Most of the verbs modified by *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 are achievement verbs such as *ding* 定 'establish', *mie* 灭 'destroy', *si* 死 'die' (and its synonyms), *zhi* 至 'reach', *de* 得 'attain, get', *sha* 杀 'kill', and many others.

(8) 「盗已至，众彊，今发近县不及矣。」      *Shiji*: 6;270  
*dao yi zhi zhong qiang jin fa jin xian bu ji yi*  
 bandit already arrive army strong now send near district NEG arrive FIN  
 "The bandits have already arrived and their army is strong, and if you now mobilise the nearby districts, they will not arrive."

*Ji* 既 and *yi* 已 can also be found with atelic stative verbs, which – in this construction – frequently but not exclusively attain a dynamic meaning, mostly an inchoative meaning indicating the initial point of a state.

The general structure of this situation type is as follows:

(b) State: (I) \_\_\_\_\_ (F)<sup>31</sup>

Stative verbs are those that express a property such as *fu* 富 'rich', or verbs such as *zhi* 知 'know', *you* 有 'have', *zai* 在 'be in', as in example (9), etc.

(9) 乐闲既在赵，乃遗乐闲书曰： Shiji: 80;2435  
*yue jian ji zai zhao nai wei yue jian shu yue*  
 Yue Jian already be-in Zhao then send Yue Jian letter say  
 “After Yue Jian was already / had taken up his position in Zhao, he sent a letter to Yue Jian saying: ...”

Very occasionally, *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 modify atelic process verbs (activity verbs) that express an ongoing activity without focussing on either the initial or the final point, such as *shi* 食 'eat', *zhan* 战 'fight', or verbs that can be either atelic or telic such as *jian* 'see' (atelic), 'meet' (telic), *xing* 行 'go' (atelic), 'put in motion' (telic).

The general structure of those activities is:

(c) Activities: (I) // // // // (F)

All these verbs attain a telic meaning when they are modified by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 as in the following example:

(10) 天子已食，乃退而听朝也。 Shiji: 83;2463  
*tian zi yi shi nai tui er ting chao ye*  
 heaven son already eat then retire and listen court FIN  
 “When the son of heaven has finished his meal, they retire and await court.”

Since predicates modified by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 always refer to a concrete quantified situation, the participants of the verb are usually count nouns. Many of the telic verbs modified by the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 are verbs that can be employed in either a transitive or an intransitive or a passive construction respectively. In transitive constructions the object – representing the thematic role of the undergoer or patient – is a count noun as is also the subject of the corresponding intransitive construction. In the linguistic literature these verbs are often regarded as ergative verbs<sup>32</sup>: the subject of the intransitive construction which assumes the thematic role of the patient and is identical with the object of the corresponding transitive construction, is contrasted with the subject of a genuine intransitive verb phrase, which is agentive.<sup>33</sup> There is a close semantic interrelation between the ergative and the passive interpretation and since both forms are not distinguished syntactically, they are difficult to differentiate.<sup>34</sup> Sometimes the transitive and the intransitive form of a verb are distinguished morphologically, but for many of these verbs as yet no such morphological distinction has been determined. Generally, all the thematic roles which can be represented by the subject of a transitive or intransitive verb are present in constructions modified by the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已: the agent, the experiencer, the patient or undergoer, and the theme.

The following analysis of a few representative verbs of different situation types either unmarked or modified by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 or by a negative is intended to provide some evidence for the hypothesis that these adverbs have two main functions:

- i. they serve to emphasise a change of state: (a) Modifying a telic verb which expresses an event, they usually highlight the completion of the event and / or the final point; they can also highlight the state resulting from the previous event; (b) modifying a stative verb, they frequently but not exclusively highlight the initial point of the state and the verb is employed inchoatively; modifying an atelic activity verb, they change the situation type of the verb to a telic one.
- ii. They serve to emphasise the factual occurrence of an event or a state – frequently with some relevance for the following event. Since they are

mainly employed to emphasise a resultant state it is not surprising that they can serve to emphasise the factual relevance of a state as well, without focussing on its initial point.

4. SOME REPRESENTATIVE VERBS TYPICALLY EMPLOYED WITH THE ADVERBS *Ji* 既 AND *Yi* 已

The following verbs are distinguished into genuinely transitive verbs with their intransitive / passive correspondences and genuinely intransitive verbs and they are further distinguished according to their situation type. Depending on their status as transitive or intransitive / passive constructions and on the situation type, the subject of the predicate exhibits different characteristics concerning its thematic role.

4.1. Transitive Verbs

4.1.1 The Verb *Ding* 定

The verb *ding* 定 'establish, settle; settled' may serve as a typical example for a transitive telic verb.<sup>35</sup> It belongs to the class of verbs sometimes labelled as ergative verbs<sup>36</sup> and accordingly can be employed in transitive and intransitive constructions. If it is employed in a transitive construction, the object is usually a count noun, which fits the situation type characteristic of telicity and the aspectual characteristic of perfectivity: The subject represents the thematic role of the agent (or causer) and the object the role of the patient (or undergoer). In a construction without an object argument, the verb has to be interpreted either as intransitive or as passive and the thematic role of the patient of the action expressed by the verb is represented by the subject. The verb, whether adverbially marked or not, invariably expresses a resultant state.<sup>37</sup>

(a) as a transitive verb

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(11) 昔成王定鼎于郊廓，卜世三十，卜年七百，天所命也。

*xi cheng wang ding ding yu Jia ru bu shi san shi bu* Shiji: 40;1700

once Cheng king establish tripod PREP Jia ru divine generation three ten divine  
*nian qi bo tian suo ming ye*  
 year seven hundred heaven SUO decree FIN

“Once, when Chengwang established the tripods in Jiaru, the oracle told him that they would last thirty generations and seven hundred years, this was what heaven decreed.”

In this example the object is not explicitly marked as a count noun but the cultural and contextual background infers its interpretation as a count noun. The situation in the first clause is viewed as completed but neither the final point nor the factual occurrence of the situation are emphasised. The sentence can be interpreted as a temporal sentence in which the temporal sequence of the narrated events is reflected by their linear order with the implication that the first event is completed before the next event starts.

(12) 王翦遂定荆江南地；降越君，置会稽郡。 *Shiji: 6;234*  
*wang jian sui ding jing jiang nan di jiang yue jun zhi kuai*  
 Wang Jian then establish Jing Jiang south region subject Yue ruler establish Kuai  
*ji jun*  
 ji prefecture

“Wang Jian thereupon secured the region of Jiangnan in Jing, he subjected the ruler of Yue and established the prefecture of Kuaiji.”

In this example, the object is definitely a count noun, several consecutive telic events are listed without giving preference to any one of them, although their temporal sequence is again reflected by their order in the sentence.

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(13) 勃既定燕而归，高祖已崩矣，... *Shiji: 57;2071*  
*bo ji ding yan er gui gao zu yi beng yi*

Bo already establish Yan CON return Gao zu already pass-away FIN

“When Bo had pacified Yan and returned, Gao zu had already passed away, ...”

In this examples, *ji* 既 which is quite high in the hierarchy of the sentence, also has scope over the second VP following the subordinating connector *er* 而. In a subordinate temporal clause it refers to the factual occurrence of a situation that is completed before the next one starts. In the second clause a different verb is marked by adverbial *yi* 已, which here indicates the resultant state of the factual occurrence of the possibly unexpected event 'to die'. The following example with *yi* 已 is quite similar to example (13):

(14) 李良已定常山，还报，赵王复使良略太原。 *Shiji: 89;2577*  
*li liang yi ding chang shan huan bao zhao wang fu shi liang*  
 Li Liang already establish Chang shan return report Zhao king again send Liang  
*lüe tai yuan*  
 ransack Tai yuan

"After Li Liang had secured Changshan, he came back and reported, and the king of Zhao sent him again to ransack Taiyuan."

3. marked by the negative *wei* 未

(15) 我未定天保，何暇寐！ *Shiji: 4;129*  
*wo wei ding tian bao he xia mei*  
 I NEG establish heaven shelter how leisure sleep

"I have not yet set up the heavenly shelter, and how could I then have leisure and sleep?"

In this example the non-attainment of the result as a state is emphasised, not an incomplete action. A telic verb such as *ding* 定 can only express an incomplete action in a particular explicitly marked syntactic environment which serves to shift the situation type of the verb.

(b) *ding* 定 as an intransitive / passive verb

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 / *yi* 已

(16) 宁淮夷东土，二年而毕定。 *Shiji: 33;1518*  
*ning huai yi dong tu er nian er bi ding*

pacify Huai barbarian east soil two year CON QUANT establish

"He pacified the Huai-barbarians and the eastern regions, and after two years everything was settled."

The additional marking by the time-span adverbial 'after two years' gives precedence to an interpretation of the event as a telic event viewed as a passive; it refers to a resultant state but it does not emphasise the factual occurrence of the event.

(17) 晋初定，欲发兵，恐他乱起，是以赏从亡未至隐者介子推。

*Shiji*: 39;1662

*jin chu ding yu fa bing kong tuo luan qi shi yi*

Jin just establish wish send-out soldier fear another disorder arise therefore

*shang cong wang wei zhi yin zhe jie zi tui*

reward follow exile NEG arrive hide ZHE Jie zi tui

"When Jin had just been pacified, they wanted to send out their soldiers but were afraid that another revolt might occur, and therefore in rewarding those who had followed him into exile he had not yet come to Jie Zitui."

In contrast to example (16) where the verb *ding* 定 is found in the matrix clause, in this example it is found in a subordinate clause in a complex temporal sentence. The temporal sequence of events is reflected by their linear order. The verb is additionally marked by adverbial *chu* 初 'originally' indicating that the resultant state was achieved only quite recently.<sup>38</sup>

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已<sup>39</sup>

(18) 汉既初定，文理未明，苍为主计，整齐度量，序律曆。

Shiji: 130;3315

*han ji chu ding wen li wei ming cang wei zhu ji zheng*  
Han already just establish literature principle NEG clear Cang be zhu ji regulate  
*qi du liang xu lu li*  
even measure measure order norm calendar

"When Han had just been established, the civil affairs were not yet completely clear, Cang was master of calculations and he regulated the different measure systems and arranged the pitch pipes and the calendar."

As in example (17), the verb is modified additionally by the temporal adverb *chu* 初. Though the differences seem to be quite subtle, it is apparently the factual occurrence of the event as a frame for the following which is being emphasised.

(19) 今天下已定，法令出一，百姓当家则力农工，士则学习法令辟禁。

Shiji: 6;255

*jin tian xia yi ding fa ling chu yi bo xing dang*  
now empire already establish law order go-out one hundred clan deal-with  
*jia ze li nong gong shi ze xue xi fa ling*  
household then put-effort agriculture labour noble then learn practise law order  
*bi jin*

rule prohibition

"Now, the empire has been / is pacified and all the laws and orders are issued from one point; the common people, when they concern themselves with their households, have to put their effort into agriculture and labour and the nobles have to learn and practise the laws and orders and the prohibitions."

The factual occurrence of the event is additionally marked by the sentence-initial adverb *jin* 今 'now'. In this example the predicate modified by *yi* 已 seems to refer to a relatively independent event the current relevance of which within the narrative does not seem to be too obvious. Additionally, here, the verb very likely refers to a state without emphasising the final point of the preceding event.

3. marked by the negative *wei* 未

(20) 萧何曰：「天下方未定，故可因遂就宫室。」 *Shiji*: 8;385

*xiao he yue tian xia fang wei ding gu ke yin sui*

Xiao He say empire at-the-moment NEG establish therefore can depend then

*jiu gong shi*

complete palace house

“Xiao He said: “At the moment the empire is not yet settled, and therefore we can depend on that to complete the palaces and houses.””

This example can be regarded as being contrastive to example (19). Here, the reference time is explicitly indicated by the adverb *fang* 方 ‘at the moment’. The state expressed by the verb has not yet been attained at reference time but might be attained in the future. As in example (15) the non-attainment of the result as a state is emphasised and not an incomplete action.

4. marked by the negative *bu* 不

(21) 「齐伪许多变，反覆之国也，南边楚，不为假王以镇之，其势不定。」 *Shiji*: 38;2621

*qi wei zha duo bian fan fu zhi guo ye nan bian chu*

Qi false deceive many change revolt overturn ZHI state FIN south border Chu

*bu wei jia wang yi zhen zhi qi shi bu ding*

NEG make temporary king CON control OBJ its power NEG settle

“Qi is deceitful and very fickle and a state which likes to revolt, in the south there is Chu, and unless you make me the temporary king to control it, the situation will not be settled.”

In this example the verb which refers to a future situation is negated by *bu* 不. It indicates that the state expressed by the intransitive / passive verb will – under the condition mentioned – never be attained.

4.1.2 The Verb *Mie* 灭

Structurally comparable with *ding* 定 is the transitive telic verb *mie* 灭 'extinguish, destroy'.

(a) as a transitive verb

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(22) 秦二世之时，王翦及其子贲皆已死，而又灭蒙氏。

*Shiji*: 73;2341

*qin er shi zhi shi wang jian ji qi zi ben jie yi si er you*  
Qin Er shi ZHI time Wang Jian and his son Ben all already die CON again  
*mie meng shi*  
destroy Meng shi

"By the time of Ershi of Qin, Wang Jian and his son Ben were both already dead and furthermore one had destroyed the Meng family."

As the examples with *ding* 定 have shown, telic verbs can quite frequently refer to an event viewed in the perfective aspect without any further marking. In this example the verb *mie* 灭 refers to a completed event. In the preceding clause the verb *si* 死 is modified by adverbial *yi* 已 indicating the factual occurrence of a (resultant) state connected with the following clause by conjunctive *er you* 而又 'and additionally'. It can be excluded that the adverb *yi* 已 also has scope over this clause. In contrast to example (13), where it serves to connect an adverbial phrase with the main verb, in this example *er* 而 connects two clauses with two different subjects.

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(23) 是时越已灭吴而不能正江，淮北；...

*Shiji*: 40;1719

*shi shi yue yi mie wu er bu neng zheng jiang huai bo*  
this time Yue already destroy Wu CON NEG be-able expand Jiang Huai north

"By this time, Yue had already destroyed Wu but it was not able to expand to the Jiang and to the north of the Huai, ..."

In this example the adverb *yi* 已 modifies a perfective predicate; the factual occurrence of the completed event is emphasised. Both examples, (22) and (23), are additionally marked by a temporal adverbial indicating a point of time. The clause modified by *yi* 已 is connected to the following adversative clause by the subordinating connector *er* 而. The current relevance of the modified predicate for the following narrative is not immediately obvious.

(b) as an intransitive / passive predicate

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(24) 家世相韩，及韩灭，不爱万金之资，为韩报讎彊秦，天下震动。  
*Shiji: 55; 2048*

*jia shi xiang han ji han mie bu ai wan*  
 family generation be-minister Han when Han destroy NEG spare ten-thousand  
*jin zhi zi wei han bao chou qiang qin tian xia zhen*  
 money ZHI expense on-behalf Han revenge enmity strong Qin empire shake  
*dong*  
 move

"My family served Han as ministers for generations and after Han was destroyed, they did not spare any expense to take their revenge for Han on brutal Qin and to bring the empire to a revolt."

In this example a completed event is presented in a temporal subordinate clause without any marking as far as the verb phrase is concerned. The subordinate clause is marked by the temporal conjunction *ji* 及 as in the following example (25) modified by *yi* 已.

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(25) 及信已灭，而列侯成功，唯独参擅其名。  
*Shiji: 54; 2031*

*ji xin yi mie er lie hou cheng gong wei*  
 as-soon-as Xin already destroy CON meritorious lord complete success only  
*du can shan qi ming*  
 alone Can claim its name

"But when Xin was extinguished and the meritorious lords had completed their success, it was Can alone who could claim such a name."

The additional marking of an already adverbially marked predicate by the temporal conjunction *ji* 及 is quite rare. As seen in (24), this conjunction alone can serve to express a perfective event, which is presented from an external point of view.

(26) 卫本国既为狄所灭，文公徙封楚丘，三十餘年，子成公徙於楚丘。  
*Hanshu: 28;166*

*wei ben guo ji wei di suo mie wen gong xi feng chu*  
 Wei former state already PASS Di PASS destroy Wen gong move enfeoff Chu  
*qiu san shi yu nian zi cheng gong xi yu di qiu*  
 qiu three ten rest year son Cheng gong move PREP Di qiu

"When the former state of Wei had already been destroyed by the barbarians, Wengong moved to Chuqiu as his fief, and after more than thirty years his son Chenggong moved to Diqiu."

In this example a predicate explicitly marked as passive is modified by adverbial *ji* 既. In both examples (25), (26), the factual occurrence of the event and its resultant state is relevant for the following narrative.

#### 4.1.3 The Verb *Zhi* 知

The verb *zhi* 知 may serve as an example for a verb which can be employed as a stative transitive verb with the meaning 'know, understand' and as a telic achievement verb with the meaning 'recognize', 'experience', 'get to know', 'understand'. The character has two different readings, a *pingsheng*-reading in the first tone with the meaning 'know', and a *qusheng* reading, also written *zhi* 智, with the meaning 'knowledge, wisdom'.<sup>40</sup> The *pingsheng*-reading is the verbal reading and the *qusheng*-reading is the nominal reading.<sup>41</sup> If it has to be assumed that the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已 are usually employed to indicate a resultant state, namely a state attained by a preceding action, the verb 'know' is most likely employed in its telic meaning 'to recognize'. The result of the

process 'recognize', 'get to know' leads to the state 'know'. Since both readings are represented by the same character, the differences between them are sometimes difficult to determine. The subject of the verb *zhi* 知 assumes the thematic role of the experiencer of the situation.

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

In the first example the verb has very likely to be interpreted as a stative verb 'to know':

- (27) 荆轲知太子不忍，乃遂私见樊於期曰：... *Shiji*: 86,2532  
*jin ke zhi tai zi bu ren nai sui si jian fan yu qi yue*  
 Jing Ke know crown prince not bear then thereupon in-person see Fan Yu qi say  
 "Jing Ke knew that the crown prince would not bear it, and thereupon he visited Fan Yuqi and said: ..."

while in the next one it very likely has to be interpreted in its telic sense of 'to understand', 'to grasp':

- (28) 举退矣，吾知之矣。J *Shiji*: 40;1700  
*ju tui yi wu zhi zhi yi*  
 Ju withdraw YI I know OBJ FIN  
 "Withdraw, Ju, I have understood it."

The final *yi* 矣 indicates that a change of state from 'not-knowing' to 'understanding' has taken place. Examples (27) and (28) demonstrate that both the atelic and imperfective and the telic and perfective sense can be attained by *zhi* 知 independently of whether it is adverbially modified or not.

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

- (29) 太子之立，诸侯皆已知之，而数将兵，... *Shiji*: 39;1645  
*tai zi zhi li zhu-hou jie yi zhi zhi er shuo*  
 crown prince ZHI establish feudal-lord all already know OBJ CON several-times  
*jiang bing*

lead soldier

“That the crown prince is installed all the feudal lords already know, several times he lead the soldiers, ...”

In this example, the verb *zhi* 知, modified by adverbial *yi* 已, is employed in a matrix clause indicating the factual occurrence of a resultant state. As frequently in matrix clauses, a current relevance for the following narrative is not necessarily implied.

(30) 趣使使下令曰：「寡人已知将军能用兵矣。」 *Shiji*: 65;2161  
*cu shi shi xia ling yue gua ren yi zhi jiang jun neng*  
 rapid send envoy deliver order say lonely man already know general be-able  
*yong bing yi*  
 make-use-of soldier FIN

“Rapidly, he sent an envoy to deliver an order saying: ‘I already know that the general is able to make use of the soldiers.’”

As in example (29), the modified verb is found in a matrix clause, concluded by the final particle *yi* 矣 which additionally supports a change of state reading of the predicate.

(31) 应侯闻，曰：「五帝三代之事，百家之说，吾既知之，众口之辩，吾皆摧之，是恶能困我而夺我位乎？」 *Shiji*: 79;2419  
*ying hou wen yue wu di san dai zhi shi bo jia*  
 Ying marquis hear say Five hegemon three dynasty ZHI affair hundred house  
*zhi shuo wu ji zhi zhi zhong kou zhi bian wu jie cui zhi*  
 ZHI doctrine I already know OBJ all mouth ZHI dispute I all break OBJ  
*shi wu neng kun wo er duo wo wei hu*  
 this how can distress I CON steal I position FIN

“When the marquis Ying heard it, he said: ‘The affairs of the Five hegemonies and the Three dynasties and the doctrines of the Hundred schools, I already know them [well], the arguments of all the people, I have completely destroyed them, so, how could someone distress me and steal my position?’”

In this example, the verb is marked by adverbial *ji* 既 and can be analysed either as a stative or as indicating a resultant state. In the following VP a completed action is expressed without any additional marking. Both events may be interpreted as referring to the cause of the event expressed in the clause introduced by *shi* 是.

3. marked by the negative *wei* 未

(32) 乌孙国分，王老，而远汉，未知其大小，素服属匈奴日久矣。

*Shiji*: 123;3169

*wu sun guo fen wang lao er yuan Han wei zhi qi da xiao*

Wu sun state divide king old CON far-away Han NEG know his big small

*su fu shu xiong nu ri jiu yi*

originally attach Xiong nu day long FIN

"The state of Wusun is divided, the king is old and far away from Han, he does not know anything about its size, and for a long time now he has been attached to the Xiongnu."

(33) 武王曰：女未知天命，未可也。』

*Shiji*: 4;120

*wu wang yue ru wei zhi tian ming wei ke ye*

Wu wang say you NEG know heaven decree NEG can FIN

"Wu wang said: 'You do not know the heavenly decree yet, it is not possible.'"

In both examples (32) and (33), an interpretation of the verb as a genuinely stative verb or as indicating a resultant state is possible, but in (33) contextually an interpretation of a state that has not yet been attained but will be attained in the future may be more likely than in (32). Depending on the interpretation, the negative *wei* 未 either negates a state in general or a state that is not (yet) attained. The semantics of the verb do not permit an interpretation as an incomplete action.

4. marked by the negative *bu* 不

(34) 云梦不知其王也，射伤王。

Shiji: 40;1715

*yun meng bu zhi qi wang ye she shang wang*

Yun meng NEG know his king FIN shoot injure king

"Yunmeng did not know that he was the king and shot and injured the king."

In this example a general negative of the state is implied, an interpretation of the verb in its dynamic reading is less likely than in the examples negated by *wei* 未, although, contextually, it cannot be completely excluded.

## 4.2. Intransitive Verbs

4.2.1 The Verb *Shuai* 衰

The following verb may serve as an example for a mainly intransitively employed atelic process verb, it has two readings: *shuai*' 衰 'decline, wane'; *cui*' 衰 'graduate, diminish, decrease'<sup>42</sup> of which the first, the intransitive reading is at issue here. In this reading, the subject assumes the thematic role of a theme; it is not agentive. Without any additional marking by the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 it is predominantly employed as an intransitive atelic process verb which views the situation as imperfective. But as example (37) demonstrates, it can – depending on its syntactic environment – occasionally be interpreted as referring to a completed situation as well. In all cases marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已 the same reading of a completed situation as in example (37) can be assumed.

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(35) 周德虽衰，天命未改。

Shiji: 40;1700

*zhou de sui shuai tian ming wei gai*

zhou virtue although decline heaven decree NEG change

"Though Zhou's virtue may decline, the heavenly decree has not yet changed."

In contrast to the transitive telic verbs listed above, the verb *shuai* 衰 here definitely indicates an atelic process. The verb refers only to the inherent stages

of the process 'decline' without focussing either the initial or the final point of this process.

(36) 吾闻之，以色事人者，色衰而爱弛。 Shiji: 85;2507

wu wen zhi yi se shi ren zhe se shuai er ai shi

I hear OBJ PREP beauty serve man ZHE beauty decline CON love weaken

"I heard the following: As far as delighting a man with beauty is concerned, when the beauty declines, love will weaken."

The verb in (36) is aspectually neutral according to Smith's categorization<sup>43</sup>. In the following example the verb has to be interpreted contrastively to example (36), since it is employed in a construction that refers to a completed event, which is indicated by the temporal conjunction *ji* 即 and by *hou* 后 following both VPs:

(37) 不以繁华时树本，即色衰爱弛后，虽欲开一语，尚可得乎？

Shiji: 85;2508

bu yi fan hua shi shu ben ji se shuai ai shi

NEG PREP abundant flourishing time plant root then beauty decline love weak

hou sui yu kai yi yu shang ke de hu

after although wish open one speech still can achieve FIN

"And if you don't build up your base at the time of your abundant blossoming, will you then, after your beauty has declined and the love has weakened, even if you only want to utter a single word, be able to achieve it?"

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已<sup>44</sup>

(38) 吾身已衰，无所复事之。

Shiji: 105;2815

wu shen yi shuai wu suo fu shi zhi

I body already decline NEG SUO again deal-with OBJ

"My strength has already declined, and I don't have the opportunity of dealing with it again."

In this example, since the final point and the state resulting from the completion of a situation is emphasised, an otherwise atelic situation is viewed as telic.

(39) 昔唐虞既衰，而三代迭兴，圣帝明王，累起相袭，...

*Hanshu: 36;1968*

*xi tang yu ji shuai er san dai die xing sheng di*  
 once Tang Yu already decline CON three dynasty alternate rise sage emperor  
*ming wang lei qi xiang xi*

bright king regularly arise one-another cover-up

"Once, after Tang and Yu had perished, the Three Dynasties rose one after the other, and the sage emperors and bright kings regularly followed one another."

As in example (38), the final point of an otherwise atelic situation and the state resulting from the completed action are emphasised. In both examples, but particularly in (39), the first situation modified by adverbial *ji* 既 in a subordinate temporal clause has current relevance for the following situations.

3. marked by the negative *wei* 未

(40) 诸侯尚众，周德未衰，故五伯迭兴，更尊周室。

*Shiji: 87;2540*

*zhu-hou shang zhong zhou de wei shuai gu wu bo*  
 feudal-lord still numerous Zhou virtue NEG decline therefore five hegemon  
*die xing geng zun zhou shi*

by-turn arise change honour Zhou house

"The feudal lords were still numerous, and the virtue of Zhou had not yet disappeared, therefore the Five hegemons arose by turns and, replacing one another, they honoured the house of Zhou."

In this example – as in the preceding ones – the verb refers to the state resulting from a telic action which is negated as not having yet been achieved.

4.2.2 The Verb *Si* 死

The verb *si* 死 may serve as an example for a very typical intransitive telic (achievement) verb; it can be employed as a telic intransitive verb 'die' and as a stative verb '(be) dead'. The subject again represents the thematic role of the theme. Syntactically similar to the general verb *si* 死 'die' are those verbs that refer to the death of persons of high rank such as *zu* 卒 'die, pass away'<sup>45</sup> or *beng* 崩 'pass away' (for a king or emperor).

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已

(41) 出奔，父死不得脩人子之礼侍丧，重耳何敢入！

*Shiji*: 39;1650

*chu ben fu si bu de xiu ren zi zhi li shi sang chong*  
 go-out flee father die NEG can improve man son ZHI rites serve funeral Chong  
*er he gan ru*  
 er how dare come-in

"... I fled, and when my father died, I could not perform the proper rites of a son and serve at the funeral ceremonies, and how could I, Chong'er, then dare to enter!"

In this example, in a temporal sentence, neither the final point nor the factual occurrence of the situation are emphasised.

(42) 我死耳！

*Shiji*: 39;1680

*wo si er*

I die FIN

"We would simply die!"

In this sentence, concluded by the restrictive final particle *er* 耳, a hypothetical result of a condition expressed in the preceding narrative is depicted in an aspectually neutral way.

- (43) 襄王母蚤死，后母曰惠后。 *Shiji: 4;151*  
*xiang wang mu zao si hou mu yue hui hou*  
 Xiang wang mother early die later mu say Hui hou  
 "Xiang wang's mother died early and the later mother's name was Hui hou."

In this example the verb is additionally marked by the temporal adverb *zao* 蚤, the sequence of events is reflected by their linear order in the narrative, but neither the final point of the situation nor the resultant state are emphasised. In the next example *si* 死 is found in a temporal sentence, explicitly marked by a temporal conjunction in the first clause:

- (44) 及申生死，二子亦归保其城。 *Shiji: 39;1646*  
*ji shen sheng si er zi yi gui bao qi cheng*  
 as-soon-as Shen Sheng die two son also return protect its city  
 "As soon as Shen Sheng was dead, both sons also returned and sought shelter in their cities."

In this case, the event the verb refers to is completed yielding a resultant state, the aspect is perfective. But the final point and the factual occurrence are not focused on. Usually a temporal sentence with *ji* 及 is one of the other possible structures which express perfectivity and most of the time the conjunction is not employed in combination with one of the adverbs, but as seen in example (25) there is one instance of the verb *mie* 灭 modified by *yi* 已 in a temporal sentence marked by conjunctive *ji* 及. In the following instance *si* 死 is employed in a temporal sentence marked by postpositional *hou* 后:

- (45) 父死后，汤为长安吏，... *Shiji: 122;3137*  
*fu si hou tang wei chang an li*  
 father die after Tang be Chang an official  
 "After his father had died, Tang became an official in Chang'an."

In both examples (44) and (45), the event is definitely viewed as perfective. The final point and the current relevance but not the factual occurrence and the resultant state of the event are emphasised by this construction. In the next

example, the verb *si* 死 is found in a complement clause of the verb *wen* 闻 'to hear':

(46) 灵王闻太子禄之死也，自投车下，而曰： *Shiji*: 40;1707  
*ling wang wen tai zi lu zhi si ye zi tou che xia er yue*  
 Ling king hear crown prince Lu ZHI die FIN self throw carriage down CON say  
 "When Lingwang heard that the crown prince Lu was dead, he threw himself off  
 the carriage and said: ..."

In this instance as in example (44) the event referred to is viewed as stative, namely as the resultant state of the preceding telic event. The event definitely has some current relevance for the following narrative, but it does not seem to be particularly emphasised.

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(47) 武庚既死，周封微子。 *Shiji*: 130;3308  
*wu geng ji si zhou feng wei zi*  
 Wu geng already die Zhou enfeoff Wei zi  
 "After Wu geng had died, Zhou enfeoffed Wei zi."

(48) 项羽既已死，汉王为帝。 *Shiji*: 95;2661  
*xiang yu ji yi si han wang wei di*  
 Xiang Yu JI already die Han king be emperor  
 "After Xiang Yu had died, the king of Han became emperor."

In these two examples the final point and the resultant state with their current relevance for the following event are emphasised in a subordinate clause. A semantic difference to example (45) is difficult to determine. Examples like these clearly show that in Classical and Han period Chinese different means exist to express perfectivity, the resultative and the perfect, and that these aspectual characteristics are not confined to verbs modified by one of the adverbs discussed here. In the following examples the modified verb is found in a matrix clause:

(49) 对曰：「受此书申功，申功已死。」 *Shiji: 12;467*  
*dui yue shou ci shu shen gong shen gong yi si*  
 answer say get this letter Shen Gong Shen Gong already die.  
 "I received this letter from Shen Gong, but Shen Gong is already dead."

(50) 秦王后悔之，使人赦之，非已死矣。 *Shiji: 63;2155*  
*qin wang hou hui zhi shi ren she zhi fei yi si yi*  
 Qin king after regret OBJ send man pardon OBJ Fei already die FIN  
 "Afterwards the king of Qin regretted it and sent someone to pardon him, but Fei had already died / was already dead."

In examples (49) and (50) the factual occurrence and the resultant state of the event are emphasised in a main clause, no current relevance for the following narrative is implied but the event is viewed independently from the perfective viewpoint. In example (49) the reference time is the present and in example (50), which is additionally marked by the final particle *yi 矣*, it is the past. In the following sentence the modified verb is employed in a complement clause with the verb *wen 闻* 'to hear'<sup>46</sup>:

(51) 康后闻文成已死，而欲自媚於上，乃遣栾大... *Shiji: 12;462*  
*kang hou wen wen cheng yi si er yu zi mei yu shang nai*  
 Kang hou hear wen cheng already die CON wish self flatter PREP above then  
*qian luan da*  
 send Luan Da  
 "Kang hou heard that Wencheng had already died and she wanted to fawn upon the emperor, and then she sent Luan Da ..."

In this example as well, the modified verb refers to the factual occurrence of the resultant state of the event. The situation is placed under more emphasise than is the case when the adverbial modification is missing as in example (46). In the following example the clause containing the adverbially modified verb phrase is additionally marked by *hou 后*:

(52) 茂既死后，甘罗年十二，事秦相文信侯吕不韦。

Shiji: 71;2319

*mou ji si hou gan luo nian shi er shi qin xiang wen xin*  
Mou already die after Gan Luo year ten two serve Qin chancellor Wen xin  
*hou lu bu wei*  
marquis Lü Bu wei

“After Mou had died, Gan Luo was twelve years old and served the chancellor of Qin Wenxin hou Lü Buwei.”

In this example the adverb *ji* 既 is found in a temporal clause marked by postpositional *hou* 后. Again the semantic differences to the corresponding cases with *hou* 后 but without an adverbial marker as in example (45) and to those with an adverbial marker in a subordinate temporal clause as in examples (47) and (48) are difficult to determine.

3. marked with the negative *wei* 未

(53) 此未死也。

Hanshu: 74;3144

*ci wei si ye*  
this NEG die FIN

“This one has not yet died / is not yet dead.”

In this example the negative *wei* 未 does not refer to the incomplete action of dying but to the fact that the state resulting from this telic action is not yet attained.

4.2.3 The Verb *Duo* 多

The verb *duo* 多 may serve as an example of a verb that can be employed as a stative intransitive verb ‘many’ and an inchoative intransitive verb ‘become many’, and as either a telic or an atelic transitive verb ‘multiply’, ‘think highly of’, ‘overrate’. It is a very typical stative verb which can be employed in many different syntactic functions. It is comparable to stative verbs such as *shen* 甚<sup>47</sup> ‘extreme’ and can be employed in combination with the final particle *yi* 矣 which

generally indicates a change of state. According to Pulleyblank (1995), He Leshi et al. (1985)<sup>48</sup> and others, in combination with the so called *adjectives* (*xingrongci* 形容词), the adverb *yi* 已 frequently serves to express an excessive degree of the quality or property expressed. The subject assumes the thematic role of the theme.

1. not marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 / *yi* 已

(54) 「平阳侯曹参身被七十创，攻城略地，功最多，宜第一。」

Shiji: 53;2016

*ping yang hou cao can shen bei qi shi chuang gong cheng lue di*  
 Ping yang hou Cao Can body cover seven ten wound attack city seize territory  
*gong zui duo yi di yi*  
 merit most numerous proper rank one

“Ping yang hou Cao Can’s body is covered with seventy wounds, he has attacked cities and seized territory and his merits are / have become most numerous, it is proper to give him the first place.”

In this example both interpretations, a stative and an inchoative interpretation, are possible. The excessive degree of the quality referred to by the verb is expressed by the adverb *zui* 最.

(55) 王曰：「余杀人之子多矣，能无及此乎？」

Shiji: 40;1707

*wang yue yu sha ren zhi zi duo yi neng wu ji ci hu*  
 king say I kill man ZHI son many FIN can NEG reach this FIN  
 “The king said: ‘The sons of others that I killed have become numerous, how could I have avoided this situation?’”

In this example the final particle 矣 suggests a change of state, i.e. an inchoative interpretation of *duo* 多.

2. marked by one of the adverbs *ji* 既 or *yi* 已

(56) 钱既多，而令天下非三官钱不得行，... *Shiji*: 30;1435  
*qian ji duo er ling tian xia fei san guan qian bu de*  
 money already numerous CON order empire NEG three office money NEG can  
*xing*

*go*

"But the money had already become plentiful / was already plentiful and an order was issued that only the money from the three offices was allowed to be put in circulation, ..."<sup>49</sup>

In this example the verb *duo* 多 certainly has to be interpreted as a telic verb, the factual occurrence and the state resulting from the process 'to become many' is emphasised. The following clause is connected by the conjunction *er* 而. Although this combination is assumed to express simultaneity, only the resultant state can be considered as simultaneous with the situation expressed in the following clause and not the process which resulted in this state. In the following example, the modified verb is found in a matrix clause:

(57) 韩相国大怒曰：「吾毋徵甲与粟於周亦已多矣，何故与周高都也？」 *Shiji*: 4;164

*han xiang guo da nu yue wu wu zheng jia yu su yu*  
 Han chancellor state great angry say I NEG demand armour and grain PREP  
*zhou yi yi duo yi he gu yu zhou gao du ye*  
 Zhou also already many FIN what reason give Zhou Gao du FIN

"The chancellor of Han became very angry and said: 'That I did not demand armour and grain from Zhou is already a lot, why should I give Zhou Gaodu?'"

Here, in a main clause, no current relevance of the factual occurrence of the resultant state is implied.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The verbs discussed may serve as a few representative examples of verbs typically modified by *ji* 既 and *yi* 已. They clearly show that in Classical and Han

period Chinese the perfective viewpoint is not marked obligatorily. Verbs of all situation types can attain a perfective reading without being marked, though event verbs, i.e. verbs that focus on the final point of a situation, are more likely to attain a perfective reading without being marked than process and state verbs which tend to present an imperfective viewpoint if unmarked. But all verbs can easily – without any adverbial modification – shift their situation type from atelic to telic, namely from verbs that do not entail the initial or final point of a situation to verbs that do. Shifted stative verbs usually focus on the initial point while shifted activity verbs mainly focus on the final point but can focus on the initial point as well.

The internal structure can be represented as follows:

- a) (I // // // //) F (shifted activities, structural identical with events)  
 b) I // // // // (F) (shifted activities); I \_\_\_\_\_ (F) (shifted states)

Syntactically, the employment of unmodified verbs is less restricted than that of verbs modified by adverbial *ji* 既 and *yi* 已. These adverbs are usually not found modifying  $V_2$  in causative constructions, very rarely are they found in clauses explicitly marked as conditional clauses<sup>50</sup>, and usually they are not found in consecutive sentences. They are confined to those cases that refer to the factual occurrence of a situation, mainly in the past (but they can refer to the presumed factual occurrence of an event in the future as well). They can be employed in combination with temporal adverbials indicating a point of time, with time-span adverbials and with duration phrases. The employment of a duration phrase suggests a stative interpretation of the event but does not necessarily contradict a perfective interpretation<sup>51</sup>.

Semantically, the difference between an unmarked and a marked telic predicate may best be described as a difference of focus or emphasis: while the unmarked predicate may depict the event as an integrated whole without any particular focus, in the adverbially marked predicate the completion of the event is focused on when the verb is employed transitively and the final point of the event and particularly the resultant state are focused on when the verb is intransitive or passive. With genuinely stative or activity verbs, the focus usually shifts from the internal stages of the situation to either its initial or final point: A

change of state and a shift of situation type from atelic to telic is explicitly marked. But, since the adverbs often serve to emphasise a state resulting from a previous action, they apparently can also serve to emphasise a genuinely stative situation expressed by an atelic stative verb without focussing on its initial point. With stative verbs modified by *ji* 既 or *yi* 已 it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a situation is viewed as telic, i.e. whether the stative verb is employed inchoatively, or as a genuinely stative situation which is atelic. With activity verbs, the situation type always shifts from atelic to telic.

As far as the negative *wei* 未 is concerned, it obeys the same semantic constraints regarding the situation type of the verb as the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已, namely it is restricted to telic and to stative predicates which show the same semantic characteristics as those modified by *ji* 既 and *yi* 已. The examples clearly show that it serves to deny that a telic situation or a presumed change of state has taken place or that a state resulting from a preceding action has been achieved. Therefore, it is closely related to the adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 analysed above, but not in the sense of a dichotomy of a completed action versus an incomplete action, but rather in the sense of the occurrence or non-occurrence of an event or a (resultant) state.

Regarding the hypothesis that *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 are genuine aspectual markers comparable to the suffix *-le* 了 of Modern Mandarin, as far as their syntactic distribution is concerned they do not belong to the same paradigm and consequently they are not immediately comparable. Their syntactic behaviour clearly qualifies them as genuine adverbs comparable to adverbs such as e.g. *yijing* 已经 'already' in Modern Mandarin or 'quite', 'already' in English and not as morphemes immediately connected with the verb stem.<sup>52</sup> Even if one agrees with the traditional assumption that subordinate clauses marked by *ji* 既 are the predecessor of subordinate clauses marked by the perfective suffix *-le* 了,<sup>53</sup> the syntactic differences still have to be accounted for. Although the diachronic development of perfective constructions is not at issue in this paper, I assume that the development of a construction with a resultative  $V_2$  indicating completion may be regarded as part of a general tendency to develop resultative constructions from the Han period on. Accordingly, this new structure does not necessarily replace an older one, but instead it may add something new to it, i.e. a resultative construction which develops into a genuine morphological marking

of the perfective aspect additionally to its being emphasised by aspectual adverbs. This hypothesis may be supported by examples such as (5), where both, adverbial *ji* 既 and a resultative  $V_2$  *yi* 已, appear in the same clause and furthermore by the fact that the aspectual adverb *yijing* 已经 'already' apparently developed from particular uses of the adverb *yi* 已 of Classical and Han period Chinese.<sup>54</sup> As all temporal adverbs, *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 serve to modify the whole VP aspectually or to emphasise a certain aspect already inherent in the VP, but they do not serve to mark the verbal aspect morphologically. They are in no way obligatory, but always add some emphasis to a particular nuance of the VP. Under certain syntactic and semantic conditions, they can change the situation type of the verb from e.g. atelic to telic, but they are not the only grammatical means to achieve this effect.<sup>55</sup>

## NOTES

1. According to Tai (1984) and Ross (1990, 2002), in Modern Mandarin the category accomplishment does not exist.
2. According to Lyons (1977:707). See also, Filip (1999:15). The three categories that are assumed to be universal are: states, changes and processes (McClure, William Tsuyoshi (1995:32).
3. McClure (1995:29f) "(30) Aspectual types (Dowty (1979), and many others):  
a. Achievements: die, break, sneeze, recognize; b. Activities: swim, push a cart, run, write papers; c. Accomplishments: build a house, write a letter, read a book, perform a symphony; d. Statives: stink, belong, seem, love school."
4. See Ross (2002).
5. Smith (1997:66) "The imperfective viewpoint and adverbials with *in* (English) (in five minutes) are incompatible with the (achievement) situation type."
6. Taken from Smith (1997:66).
7. Taken from Smith (1997:73). 'I' refers to the initial point and 'F' refers to the final point of a situation. The dots refer to different stages of the situation and the slashes to the stages actually represented in the sentence.
8. As Ross (2002) has shown for Modern Mandarin. This observation certainly holds true for Classical and Han period Chinese as well.

9. For example, for the verb *bai* 败 – one of the typical verbs which can be modified by *ji* 既 or *yi* 已 – two different readings with two different initials are assumed for the transitive and the intransitive meanings *pwai* ‘beat’, *b’wai* ‘be beaten’. See Unger (1989:75). Pulleyblank (1991), as well, assumes two different readings associated with two different meanings: *pe:j<sup>h</sup>* ‘defeat’ and *be:j<sup>h</sup>* ‘go down to defeat’.

10. Pulleyblank (1994:323). This assumption is also supported by Lin Ziyu (1999:21f; 94f) who provides an extensive analysis of the historical development of *ji* 既 and *yi* 已. See also Harbsmeier (1989), who lists the different functions of *yi* 已 as an intransitive verb, transitive verb, in adverbial uses and as a sentence final particle.

11. Cf. Harbsmeier (1989:472)

12. Quoted after Zhang (2001:5)

13. According to the anonymous reviewer of this article. As far as *yi* 已 is concerned, a different path of derivation and grammaticalization is proposed by Harbsmeier (1989:474): “*yi* 已 ‘having finished (the process) > by then, by now, already’” and for *ji* 既 by Unger (1992:15) who assumes that the character *ji* 既 serves to represent the perfective form of the verb *qi* 讫 ‘finish, cease’ and that its function as a general marker of the perfective ‘Perfektivpartikel’ is derived from the perfective form of this verb.

14. It is already frequent in the *Shijing* and the *Shujing*.

15. The earliest adverbial function of *yi* 已 already occurring in preclassical texts is to precede stative ‘adjectival’ verbs in the sense of ‘very, excessively, too’. See Pulleyblank (1995:115)

16. An extensive study of the development of perfective markers is found, among many others, in Mei Tsu-lin (1999) and Cao (1986:196), who shows that *liao* 了 is regularly found in the same construction during the Tang period.

17. For more examples also with *yi* 已 see Mei (1999:288f).

18. See Pulleyblank (1995:112) “In Modern Mandarin the verbal suffix *-le* is used to indicate perfectivity, that is, that an event is looked upon as complete or a bounded whole. In the Classical language an equivalent role is played by the preverbal particles *ji* 既 and *yi* 已. Modern *-le* is derived from the verb *liao* 了 ‘to finish, dispose of’ and classical perfective adverbs have a similar etymology.”

19. In this example as in many others, a causal analysis besides the temporal-aspectual analysis of the subordinate clause is possible. This interpretation is often immediately derivable from the aspectual interpretation. But *ji* 既 can also be employed in combination with other adverbs such as *you* 又, *fu* 复, *yi* 亦. In these constructions two different analyses are possible: 1. the temporal-aspectual interpretation of a before-after-relation as in ex. (6) and 2. the interpretation of simultaneity of two situations more in the sense of a coordination than a subordination. Although in the second case the aspectual interpretation of *ji* 既 as indicating a complete situation is not straightforward, the first of the two situations modified by *ji* 既 can – according to Pulleyblank (1995:113) – still be looked upon as a bounded whole. Maybe because adverbial *yi* 已 is historically younger than *ji* 既, these structures are rarely found with *yi* 已. Generally, subordinate clauses with *ji* 既 show a greater variety than those with *yi* 已, for instance in causal clauses *ji* 既 can precede a negative predicate, as in the following examples:

(i) 孔子既不得用於卫，将西见赵简子。  
*kong zi ji bu de yong yu wei jiang xi jian zhao jian zi* Shiji: 47:1926  
 Kong zi JI NEG can employ in Wei FUT west meet Zhao Jian zi  
 “Since Kong zi could not be employed in Wei, he wanted to go west to meet Zhao Jian zi.”

(ii) 既不能令，又不受命  
*ji bu neng ling you bu shou ming* Meng 4A8  
 JI NEG can order furthermore NEG accept order  
 “Neither to be able to give orders nor to accept orders ...”

These two examples, the first taken from a Han period text and the second from a Classical text, clearly show that in these cases different constraints have to be applied from those in genuine temporal clauses. Cases with a negative following *ji* 既 are not very frequent but they demonstrate that these sentences have – at least to a certain extent – to be distinguished from purely temporal sentences. They certainly deserve a separate analysis which is not at issue in this paper.

20. See particularly *Gudai Hanyu xuci cidian* (2000) and He Leshi et al. (1985).

21. This analysis is based on the following hypothetical universal path of grammaticalization proposed by Bybee and Dahl (1989): Resultative /

Completive > anterior (perfect) > perfective > past. The result of Lin's study is that *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 are definitely aspectual markers that do not serve to locate a situation in time.

22. For a different assumption, namely that preverbal morphemes can also serve to indicate aspect, see Chappell (1990:32): "In general, Southern Min uses the strategy of preverbal adverbs and auxiliary verbs to encode aspect rather than the use of suffixes or particles following the verb. ... Hence, from a diachronic point of view, the analysis of the Xiamen dialect of Southern Min – ... – may provide an indication of the form of aspectual constructions at an earlier stage."

23. See also Pulleyblank (1995:116f) for a discussion of the relation of the suffix *-le* 了 and sentence final *le* 了 and of *yi* 已 and *yi* 矣.

24. See Pulleyblank (1995:114). To support his hypothesis, Pulleyblank proposes the following etymology: *wei* 未 seems to be a fusion of the negative root \**m-* in *wu* 毋 and the adverb *ji* 既 meaning 'not already' > 'not yet' or 'never'. Another reconstruction is the one by Serruys (1969) as a fusion of *bu* 不 and *ji* 既, quoted by Djamouri (1991:9).

25. See note 19.

26. See the two examples in note 19.

27. The final *yi* 矣 can also appear in subordinate clauses but less frequently than in matrix clauses.

28. There are instances of *ji* 既 employed – either on its own or in combination with other morphemes – in sentence-initial position and instances of *yi* 已 in sentence-final position, which require a separate study and are therefore not discussed here.

29. This categorization is based on Viviane Alleton's (1972) analysis of adverbs in Modern Chinese. Already Pulleyblank categorises them as adverbs or adverbial particles but without giving a comprehensive analysis of their syntactic and semantic constraints. A more comprehensive study of the syntax of a few adverbs including temporal and modal adverbs in Classical Chinese is given by Wei (1999).

30. A similar constraint on these situation types as in Modern Mandarin does not seem to exist in Classical and Han period Chinese.

31. \_\_\_\_ signifies that states do not show internal stages in contrast to the verbs expressing a telic or atelic action.
32. They can also be termed 'unaccusative' verbs: verbs which have an undergoer subject and have their transitive counterparts, like *break*. See Kiryu (1999:61). They are contrasted with unergative verbs which have an agentive subject.
33. See e.g. Cikoski (1978). Wei (2001:143) categorises the subject of the intransitive construction and the object of the transitive construction as the *theme*, and the subject of the transitive construction as the *causer* and analyses the transitive construction as a causative construction. This analysis may give some support to the hypothesis that the adverbial use of *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 may have developed from a causative employment of the respective verbs.
34. The passive construction has been frequently discussed in the linguistic literature. All in all this discussion has yielded two different assumptions concerning the passive in Chinese and two different analyses of the construction  $S_{\text{patient}} V_{\text{it}}$ : 1. Only the explicitly marked forms can be regarded as genuine passive constructions (assumed by e.g. Wang Li (e.g. 1980), Chao Yuenren (1968), and others); 2. syntactically unmarked constructions only marked by a change of position of the patient from the object to the subject position are also considered to be passive constructions (assumed e.g. by v.d. Gabelentz (1881), Zhou Fagao (1959), Pulleyblank (1995), and others, to mention only a few). Cikoski (1978), who also rejects the hypothesis of an unmarked passive in Ancient Chinese, accounts for the structural diversity of particular verbs by introducing the term ergativity for these verbs.
35. According to the *Kangxi zidian*, the *qusheng* reading *ding* accounts for all transitive and intransitive readings. Another reading with a different initial is listed, but it does not seem to be relevant here.
36. See Wei (2001:145).
37. Depending on the interpretation of the verb as passive or intransitive the viewpoint of the event can differ remarkably. In the passive interpretation the whole telic event including its endpoint is – if not otherwise marked – viewed as completed and in the intransitive interpretation the verb usually has to be

analysed as stative which – if not otherwise marked – includes an imperfective viewpoint.

38. Phasal verbs such as *chu* 初 ‘begin’ are usually not compatible with the perfective aspect. If *chu* 初 was verbal, an imperfective interpretation of the VP would be more likely. See also example (18).

39. This construction is labelled as an ‘objective resultative’ by Lin Ziyu. According to him it is – with slight semantic differences – almost identical with the unmarked case, which is a very common passive construction in Archaic and Ancient Chinese (Lin 1999:33f). While passive focuses more on the state itself, according to him the ‘objective resultative’ focuses more on the current relevance of the state. In fact *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 respectively can serve to modify explicitly marked passive constructions as well, as seen in the following example, in which the resultant state expressed by the passive construction has been factually achieved and is relevant for the following event:

(i) 大月氏王已为胡所杀，立其太子为王。 *Shiji*: 123;3158  
*da rou zhi wang yi wei hu suo sha li qi tai zi wei*  
 great Rou zhi king already PASS Hu PASS kill establish his crown prince be  
*wang*  
 king

“After the king of the Great Rouzhi was killed by the Hu-barbarians, they enthroned his crown prince as king.”

40. According to Pulleyblank (1991).

41. According to Wang Li (1992:137) the *pingsheng*-reading represents the verbal meaning and the *qusheng*-reading the adjectival meaning.

42. This distinction is found in Karlgren, GSR 355a and Unger (1989), and it seems to distinguish an intransitive and a transitive meaning of the verb. But according to Pulleyblank (1991) the reading *cui* represents a word “mourning dress”. See also *Kangxi zidian*, which has *shuai* for the verbal meanings.

43. Smith (1997:65) “...the test allows us to discriminate between imperfective and neutral viewpoints: the former does not allow a sequential interpretation whereas the latter does.”

44. Although both adverbs are found in combination with *shuai* 衰, in most cases it is modified by *ji* 既.

45. As in the following example:

(i) 伯邑考既已前卒矣 ·

*Shiji*: 35;1563

*bo yi kao ji yi qian zu yi*

Bo Yi kao already already before die FIN

“Bo Yikao had already died before then.”

In this example, both adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 are found in combination. This is quite rare in matrix clauses, but a bit more frequent in subordinate clauses where *ji* 既 often is assumed to function as a temporal conjunction indicating a preceding situation and *yi* 已 as an adverb indicating that this situation is completed. The same semantic constraints assumed for the verbs modified by one of the adverbs alone can also be assumed for the combination of both.

46. Lin Ziyu (1999:237f) classifies *yi* 已 in these cases as expressing ‘hot news’.

47. Lin Ziyu (1999:114). He takes this verb as an example for his argument that these verbs have to be interpreted as process verbs since they can be modified by an aspectual marker.

48. Pulleyblank (1995:115), He Leshi et. al. (1985:688) and also *Gudai hanyu xuci cidian* (1999:711).

49. In the construction *ji* 既 ... *er* 而 ... *ji* 既 is according to Li and Li (1994) categorized as *lianci* 连词: two events take place simultaneously, similar to 既 ... 又. See also note 19.

50. Although a clause marked by one of the adverbs can occasionally present a pre-condition for the following.

51. Smith (1997: 72) “Not all perfectives are punctual in presentation. Duration can be explicitly asserted in sentences with the perfective viewpoint.” See also Meisterernst (2003).

52. They do not need to be immediately connected with the verb but can be separated from it by e.g. prepositional phrases. Additionally they can – under certain conditions – serve to modify two different VPs in a row.

53. The presumed path of development is: *ji* 既 VP<sub>1</sub>, VP<sub>2</sub> > VP<sub>1</sub> *yi* 已, VP<sub>2</sub> > VP<sub>1</sub> *liao* 了, VP<sub>2</sub>, V<sub>1</sub> -*le* 了 NP<sub>obj</sub>, VP<sub>2</sub>. It can certainly be assumed that semantically and functionally both structures express more or less the same, i.e. the completion of an event before the next starts, but since they differ syntactically –

*ji* 既 functions as an adverb and *yi* 已 and *liao* 了 in its early stages as resultative verbs – different semantics have at least to a certain extent to be assumed.

54. See Yang (2002). The precise relationship between the development of adverbial *ji* 既, *yi* 已 and *yijing* 已经 and other temporal-aspectual adverbs and the development of resultative constructions and their respective syntactic and semantic constraints from the 3. c. AD on certainly deserves further study.

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试论所谓的标誌动态的词素“既”，“已”的句法和语义  
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本文想讨论“既”，“已”在汉代汉语裏是否为标誌动态词素的问题。这研究不建立在“既”，“已”的历史发展上。而以它们在句法和语义中的用作为研究基础。作者假定“既”，“已”在语句构成上是真正的有修饰VP的功能的副词，不是标誌动态的助词。不可以和现代汉语指示完成的动态词尾“-了”比较。作者想说明在汉代汉语中动词的动态无必要有标誌。根据动词的语义在汉代汉语中没有标誌的动词可以表达或动作完成，或动作进行，或事情的状态。因为修饰VP的副词一般有强调VP意义的功能，所以作者认为副词“既”，“已”的主要功能首先是著重指示动作的完成或成果或结果的状态(resultant state)；其次是著重指示动作或事实状态的发生。我们认为“既”，“已”可以和现代汉语中的副词“已经”，英语的副词“already”相比。不同於动态词尾“-了”。

关键词：古代汉语，汉代，完成式，动态，动态式，副词。