Grammatical Innovation and Linguistic Register:
Historical Writing from Late Archaic
to Early Medieval Chinese*

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Summary: In this paper the distinction of stylistic registers in Chinese historical writing from the Late Archaic to the Early Medieval periods is at issue on the basis of a statistical analysis of function words in four representative Late Archaic and Early Middle Chinese texts. Besides a statistical analysis of function words, the employment of poetic speech as a means of stylistic distinction is included in the discussion. The purpose of the paper is to establish a system of linguistic categories which can be employed to test the stylistic register of Chinese historical writing. Although all texts belong to the category of written texts, clear stylistic registers, different degrees of vernacularism, conversationalism etc. can be perceived on the basis of the employed statistical analysis. The statistical distribution of function words also reveals differences in the degrees of obligatoriness of function words in Late Archaic and in Middle Chinese; more mandatory function words, such as evidently the class of aspecto-temporal adverbs are less useful in the distinction of registers than, for instance, more discourse oriented temporal adverbials.

1 Introduction

In this paper the distinction of stylistic registers in Chinese historical writing from the Late Archaic to the Early Medieval period is at issue. The investigation is based on a previous proposal that the two Han period historiographies, the *Shǐjì* (around 100 bce) and the *Hànshū* (1st c. ce), display certain differences in their writing styles: the language of the *Shǐjì* is frequently characterized by a more informal, and thus more vernacular style, whereas the language of the *Hànshū* (1st c. ce) seems to be composed in a more formal style (Meisterernst 2013, 2014). The latter can be considered as marking the beginning of the official *wényán* style, which subsequently characterizes the language of the official documents of the empire. In the present paper, two Late Archaic historical texts, the *Zuǒzhuàn* and the *Guóyǔ* will be compared with the *Shǐjì* on the one hand, and the *Hòu Hànshū* as a representative

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of formal historical writing in the *wényán* style on the other. The *Zuǒzhuàn* is characterized by historical narrative, the *Guóyǔ* predominantly consists of conversations between rulers and their advisers; it is a rhetorically highly stylized text which contains elements of the spoken combined with elements of poetic language such as rhythmic speech, rhyming, and parallelism. In both of these texts frequent references are made to the *Book of Odes* in different social settings. As Feng Shengli (e. g. Feng/Vihan 2016) has shown, the different categories of the poems in the *Book of Odes* can function as representatives of different stylistic registers in Archaic Chinese; thus the linguistic context of their occurrence is of particular relevance in a distinction of linguistic registers in the texts at issue.

1.1 Stylistic registers and genres

According to Lee (2001, p. 46) linguistic *register* can be identified by linguistic patterns, i. e. by lexical-grammatical and discoursal-semantic patterns associated with situations. It has to be distinguished from *genre* which refers to memberships of culturally recognizable categories. Lee notes: "*Genres* are of course instantiations of *registers*; each genre may invoke more than one register …" (idem).

In Chinese the classification of different textual genres has a long history and dates back to the first imperial catalogue in the *Hànshū*, the *Hànshū yìwén zhī* 漢書藝文志. According to this catalogue, the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳, the *Guóyǔ* 國語, and the *Shǐjì* 史記 texts have been categorized by Ancient Chinese historiography as belonging to the same genre, the *chūnqiū* 春秋 category of exemplary historical writing. The fourth text, the *Hòu Hànshū* 後漢書 is too late to appear in the *Hànshū* catalogue. The category of *chūnqiū*, exemplary historical writing, appears as the sixth category in the first meta-section in the *yìwénzhī*, the *liùyì* 六藝, 'The Six Classical Arts'; this means that it constitutes a central part in the categorization of the Archaic Chinese literature. Another literary genre which has to be mentioned in a discussion on stylistic register in historical writing is the genre of poetic speech. References to poetry and poetic writing appear in all kinds of Chinese texts, and they can have some relevance in the determination of stylistic register. Different genres of poetry have been distinguished in the *Hànshū yìwén zhì*; the archaic genre which solely consists of the *Shījīng*, appearing in the third section of the *liùyì* 六藝, and the 'Music' genre, *yuè* 樂, in the fifth section of the *liùyì*. Additionally, the *shīfù* 賦 poetry genre constitutes a separate section with 106 writers; these forms became popular particularly during the Han period.[1] The *chūnqiū* category with 29 books and the *Shījīng* appear in the same meta-section.

However, a special feature of Archaic Chinese literature relevant in the present discussion is that poetic speech does not necessarily have to be qualified as a literary genre in Archaic Chinese. It can appear in different separate genres such as historical writing, philosophical writing etc., where it can be employed as a stylistic and linguistic means in order to express persuasion (Kern 2016, p. 4, Meisterernst 2018). Thus it rather belongs to *register* than to *genre*. According to Biber and Conrad's definition (2009) *register* refers to linguistic features which are functionally associated with the situation they appear in. Thus, the poetic speech e.g. in the *Yueyu* discussed below would belong to the category of register and not to the genre of poetry, because it is functionally associated with persuasion. Following criteria have been established by Biber and Conrad (2009) for the distinction of different linguistic registers:

– Participants
– Relation among participants
– Channel
– Production circumstances
– Setting
– Communicative purposes
– Topic

Communicative purposes consist among others of factuality, i.e. the question whether the speaker intends "to convey factual information, personal opinion, speculation, or fiction/fantasy?" (Biber/Conrad 2009) Expressions of stance, e.g. epistemic stance, and other modal expressions belong to the criteria to determine communicative purpose. Some of these criteria are included in the ensuing discussion.

1.2 Stylistic register in historical writing in Late Archaic and Early Medieval Chinese

Although all four texts chosen for the present discussion are categorized as belonging to the genre of historical writing, significant differences can be noted with regard to their style and register. This also involves distinctions between a more formal and more colloquial register. Meisterernst (2013, 2014) proposed that the Western Han historiography *Shǐjì* is characterized by a less formal style than the Eastern Han historiography *Hànshū*. The latter was proposed to constitute the starting point of the *wényán* style which became typical for later official Chinese writing, including historical

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[1]   As already mentioned reference to one of these poetic literary genres can also play a role in the distinction of stylistic registers in Chinese texts.

writing. Accordingly it can be expected that the *Hòu Hànshū* is representative for this style in Early Middle Chinese. Stylistic differences can also be observed between the two Late Archaic texts, the *Zuǒzhuàn* and the *Guóyǔ*. In traditional Chinese philology starting with the *Hànshū yìwén zhì*, both texts have been attributed to the same author, Zuǒ Qiūmíng 左丘明. This view has been challenged already by scholars during the Tang period, and there is some agreement in the still prevailing debate that both texts and even individual sections of the two texts have been composed by different authors at different times.[2] Karlgren (1926) points out that, although both texts show great similarities in grammar, they also display a few significant differences. According to Boltz (1990) around 30 % of the *Guóyǔ* are characterized by a close textual relation to the *Zuǒzhuàn*. He argues for the hypothesis that in those cases, both texts actually drew on a third textual source. Boltz also points to different historical intents of the authors/compilers of the *Zuǒzhuàn*, the *Guóyǔ* and the assumed third textual source (1990, p. 501 f.). This supports the hypothesis that they may exhibit different stylistic registers, and evident stylistic differences can indeed be observed in the excerpts of the two texts chosen for comparison. The texts selected for comparison are:

– *Zuǒzhuàn, Aigōng* 1–6 (probably 4th century),
– *Guóyǔ Yuèyǔ shàng, xià* (*shàng* composed after 384 bce, *xià* after 314 bce) (Wei Jixian 1928, Meisterernst 2002)
– *Shǐjì* 41, *Yuèyǔ Gǒujiàn shìjiā* 越王句踐世家第十一 (ca. 100 bce)
– *Hòu Hànshū, Liènǚ zhuàn* 列女傳第七十四/曹世叔妻 (5th century ce)

The content of the first three texts is related. Both the *Yuèyǔ* and the *Shǐjì* refer to the incidents surrounding the encounters between the two southern states Wu and Yue at the end of the Chunqiu period. These only find brief and concise mention in the *Zuǒzhuàn*. Since most of the references to these incidents appear in the section on Aigong, the last section of the *Zuǒzhuàn*, this section has been chosen for comparison. The *Shǐjì* chapter refers to a great extent directly to the events related in the *Yuèyǔ* by way of citation and paraphrasing. The three texts or text passages are more or less of the same length. The *Zuǒzhuàn* passage has been confined to the first six years of the Aigong section, due to the length of the chapter. The composition dates of the Aigong section and the *Yuèyǔ* may also be close. The passage

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[2]   There is a long standing debate on the authenticity of the two texts, their respective authorships, and the dating of their respective passages. Brief overviews of these debates including some references have been provided e. g. in Boltz (1990) and Loewe (1993). Boltz particularly refers to studies by Chang Yi-jen 張以仁 who did groundbreaking work on the *Guóyǔ* and the relation between the *Guóyǔ* and the *Zuǒzhuàn*.

from the *Liènǚ zhuàn* has been chosen, because it to a certain extent shares its persuasive intention with the *Yuèyǔ*. Thus register differences become particularly apparent.

Yuèyǔ (4578 words)	*Zuǒ, Ai* 1–6 (5298 words)	*Shǐjì* (4586 words)	*Nǚjiè* (2057 words)

In this paper, predominantly grammatical criteria will be employed in order to distinguish between different stylistic registers in the Chinese historical writing from Late Archaic to Early Middle Chinese. The employment of additional linguistic means such as rhyming, rhythmic speech, parallelism and quotations from the *Book of Odes* will be included as supportive evidence, assuming that the language in these contexts is more formal, and thus less marked by any redundancies e.g. in the occurrence of function words.

In a previous presentation, some typical features in register grammar have been discussed in order to establish their relevance for the texts and the time period at issue in the present analysis (there are many more) (Meisterernst 2016c).[3] With regard to the relevance of the mentioned criteria for a stylistic register grammar of LAC and MC texts it has been shown that fusion words, grammatical innovations, such as the employment of disyllabic words, passive constructions, aspectual marking, temporal adverbials, conjunctions, and word order are irrelevant for the distinction of different registers.

Relevant for the distinction of different registers, particularly of formal and informal registers are:

a) The actual occurrence and/or frequency of grammatical innovations: e.g. aspectual markers
b) Formal and less formal registers in passive marking
c) Frequency of adverbials, redundant expressions
d) Frequency of particles, e.g. expressing contrastive focus
e) Direct – indirect speech
f) Employment of 'Classical' constructions to produce an elevated style

In the following discussion, the employment of different kinds of function words including personal pronouns and terms of self-reference and address

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[3] The criteria employed were:
– Fusion words
– Temporal and aspectual adverbs
– Conjunctions, linking words, contrastive particles
– Indirect versus direct speech
– Word order
– Grammatical innovations versus 'Classicisms' in the VP in Early Middle Chinese: Passive, Disyllabification, Aspect

will be addressed, and their impact on the determination of *register* will be discussed. Additionally, a short paragraph will be devoted to the relevance and function of poetic speech in historical writing.

2 The employment of function words and their relevance for *register*

2.1 The communicative functions of the texts selected

Although all four texts belong to the meta-genre of historical writing, their communicative functions and their intentions are certainly different. Traditionally, it has been claimed that the *Zuǒzhuàn* text was composed as a commentary to the very concise entries of the *Chūnqiū*. Due to a number of discrepancies between the *Chūnqiū* and the *Zuǒzhuàn* this hypothesis has been challenged by a number of scholars.[4] The primary function of the *Zuǒzhuàn* is to provide the historical background of the events listed in the *Chūnqiū*. Although the text contains numerous dialogic passages, it can be adequately defined as mainly consisting of historical narrative. This is something it has in common with the *Shǐjì*. Contrastingly, the *Yuèyǔ* section of the *Guóyǔ* contains mostly dialogic speech, i.e. communications between rulers and their respective counselors. Particularly the counselors' speeches are rhetorically highly stylized containing poetic speech, numerous expressions of politeness and other markers of a very sophisticated conversational style. In this regard it differs greatly from the *Chūnqiū* and the *Zuǒzhuàn*. Particularly the second part of the *Yuèyǔ* serves as an excellent example for the argumentative and persuasive style of considerable parts of the *Guóyǔ*.[5] Although the historical events at issue in the dialogic parts are usually ordered chronologically, they are often only referred to in passing.

The chapter of the *Shǐjì* discussed here belongs to the *Shìjiā* 世家 section. This section is most closely related to the *Zuǒzhuàn* and the *Guóyǔ*. The two texts are explicitly mentioned as belonging to the sources Sima Tan and Sima Qian regularly drew on for their historical narratives. Although the *Shǐjì* copied directly from the *Guóyǔ*, there are evident differences in grammar and style between the two texts. Similar to the *Zuǒzhuàn*, the *Shǐjì* predominantly focuses on historical narrative. It provides relevant historical information in the chronological order of the topics at issue in the respective chapter.

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[4] For a brief overview of the state of the art see Cheng 1993, p. 69f.

[5] There are considerable differences among the different sections of the *Guóyǔ* which presumably have been composed by different authors at different times. In some sections, dialogic parts prevail, other sections are more balanced with regard to speech and narrative parts.

Large parts of the fourth text at issue, the *Hòu Hànshū*, the historiography of the Eastern Han period, consist of historical narratives similar to those of the *Shǐjì*. However, the *Nüjiè*, which is part of the *lièzhuàn* 'Biographies', chosen for comparison in the present discussion is different. It presents an essay in seven paragraphs on the proper behavior of women written by Ban Zhao, sister of Ban Gu, and compiler of parts of the *Hànshū*. Ban Zhao was a highly educated person, one of the most splendid female scholars of China, who composed numerous literary works herself (see Knechtges 2011, p. 121, Meisterernst 2018). Her text is composed like a monologue addressed towards her daughters. Similar to the *Guóyǔ* it is highly stylized and persuasive. But it contains a number of archaisms and references to the Classical literature and it differs considerably from the *Yuèyǔ* in its stylistic characteristics. Thus, although all four texts belong to the genre of historical writing, there are evident differences with regard to the participants in their narratives and speech parts, the relations between the participants, the settings, the communicative purposes, and to a certain extent the topics. Both the *Zuǒzhuàn* and the *Shǐjì* sections are narratives which have the communicative purpose of relating historical events in chronological order. Although they include dialogic parts, these appear as part of the historical narrative. They report conversations which are presented as part of the related historical events; independent of this narrative they usually do not have any further communicative purposes. They are devoid of the persuasive function the two other texts obviously possess.

A comparison of function words in these four texts does not only display differences in register and style, but also differences in grammar. Although the *shìjiā* 世家 chapters in the *Shǐjì* are grammatically more conservative than the chapters dealing with Han period events and personalities, because they drew extensively on Classical sources, grammatical innovations are clearly to be perceived.[6] The same holds true for the *Nǚjiè* text which is written in *wényán* style during the Eastern Han period, but still displays numerous grammatical innovations.

2.2 The employment of terms of address in the four texts selected

In this section the statistical employment of terms of address, including personal pronouns and nominal terms of polite reference, and their impact on the stylistic analysis of the respective texts will be discussed. The number of terms of address helps to distinguish between a more narrative text which

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[6]   That the *shìjiā* chapters are more conservative than e.g. the chapters concerned with Han period events can be evidenced the employment of passive constructions. Whereas the innovative WEI … SUO 為 … 所 passive is regularly attested in the Han period chapters, it only very infrequently occurs in the *shìjiā* chapters.

is not directly addressed to an audience or a partner in conversation, and a conversational text. In a dialogic text consisting of two or more participants directly communicating with each other a greater number of terms of address can be expected; they may also include a greater number of terms of self-reference. In Chinese the direct reference by personal pronouns is in general not very frequent; instead different deprecatory terms of self-reference and polite terms of address are employed in a conversation. The terms of address and self-reference selected can also serve as a defining criterion of linguistic registers, because they define the relationship between participants as closer or more distant; Feng and Shi (2018) point out that distance is a defining feature of register. As already mentioned, also the more narrative texts *Zuǒzhuàn* and *Shǐjì* contain conversational parts; accordingly a certain number of terms of address are to be expected. A more fine-tuned analysis requires a distinction of the narrative and the conversational passages in the respective texts. But even without this distinction it is evident that by far the highest frequency of terms of reference and self-reference is attested in the *Yueyu*, a text consisting mainly of dialogic speech parts.

The two tables below list the absolute number of personal pronouns and deprecatory terms of self-reference and polite terms of address. Additionally, the statistical average of the number of those terms is given.

a) Expressions of self-reference, including 1st person pronouns

Table 1: Expressions of self-reference

Marker	Self-reference	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo*	Number *Shiji*	Number *nüjie*
Pronoun	*wǒ* 我	8	*16*		2
	wú	27	10	*14*	3
	yú	**2**	**1**	0	0
Subtotal		**37**	**27**	**23**	**5**
Noun	*guǎ rén* 寡人	14	*0*	*5*	0
	bùgǔ	7	2	0	0
	chén 臣	5	0	12	0
	guǎ chén 寡臣	0	0	4	0
	gū 孤	0	0	1	0
Subtotal		**26**	**2**	**22**	**0**
Total		**63**	**29**	**44**	**5**
of 100		**1,36**	**0,54**	**0,95**	**0,23**

Not only the total number of terms of reference is relevant for any hypotheses with regard to the communicative function, the purpose and the register of the respective texts, but also the kind of terms employed. This can be demonstrated by the figures displayed in table 1. According to my count, in the *Yuèyǔ* 37 1st person pronouns are attested, in the *Zuǒzhuàn,* in the first 6 years of the *Aigōng,* there are 27 pronouns, in chapter 41 of the *Shǐjì*, there are 23, and in the *Nǚjiè* there are only 5 1st person pronouns in total. The *Nǚjiè* decidedly differs from the other texts with regard to the occurrence of markers of reference. The 1st person pronoun confined to singular reference *yú* 余 (together with its variants) is only attested in the two LAC text passages.[7] The two pronouns *wǒ* 我 and *wú* 吾 which are neutral with regard to number and politeness, but originally probably differed in grammatical case (Aldridge 2018), are attested in all four texts in varying relations. The statistical difference in the employment of personal pronouns between the first three texts is not striking. But they differ to a great extent in the employment of politeness terms. These are almost non-existent in the excerpt from the *Zuǒzhuàn*. The general statistical employment of terms of self-reference in the *Guóyǔ* and the *Shǐjì* is very similar, but there are still considerable differences in the employment of deprecatory terms of self-reference. In the *Yuèyǔ* terms of self-reference confined to the ruler are more frequent than those referring to the minister/counselor/subject. In the *Shǐjì* the situation is precisely the opposite. This is an interesting result considering the fact that at least in the second part of the *Yuèyǔ* the proportion of speech allotted to the counselor is considerably higher than that allotted to the king. Additionally, the range of deprecatory or polite terms of address increases in the *Shǐjì*. This indicates a tendency to employ more indirect nominal terms of self-reference and address than even in the *Guóyǔ*, which is characterized by a highly rhetorical conversational style.

b) expressions of reference, including 2nd person pronouns

Table 2: Expressions of address

Marker	Addressee	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo*	Number *Shiji*	Number *Nüjie*
Pronoun	*rǔ* 汝/女	2	3	1	2
	ěr 爾	0	1	0	0

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[7]   This does not imply that this pronoun does not as a rule appear in the *Shǐjì*. All statistics are confined to the selected text passages.

Marker	Addressee	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo*	Number *Shiji*	Number *Nüjie*
Pronoun	*ruò* 若			5	0
	ér 而			1	0
Subtotal		**2**	**4**	**7**	**2**
Noun	*jūn wáng* 君王	13	1	6	0
	jūn 君	2	4	1	0
	wáng 王	2	0	7	0
	dà wáng 大王			2	0
	guǎ jūn 寡君	1	2	0	0
	zǐ 子	24	4	5	0
Subtotal		**43**	**11**	**21**	**0**
Total		**45**	**15**	**28**	**2**
of 100		**0,98**	**0,28**	**0,61**	**0,09**

In general the stastical number of terms of reference, whether 2nd person pronouns or polite terms of address is distinctly lower than that for terms of self-reference. Apart from the *Nüjiè* in all texts polite terms of address outnumber pronominal terms of address by far.

    The following examples represent different instantiations of self-reference and reference. One example is provided from each text. Example (1) presents a speech by the king given in the *Yuèyǔ xià* section. It demonstrates the alternating employment of personal pronouns, deprecatory terms of self-reference, and the employment of the term of address *zǐ* 子 which is more regularly employed than a 2nd person pronoun.[8] In example (2) from *Zuǒzhuàn* a short speech part is inserted in the narrative. The duke refers to himself by the personal pronoun with singular reference *yú* 余 and to his addressee by the second person pronoun *rǔ* 汝 (女); the employment of personal pronouns in address is considered informal or even impolite and usually indicates a close relationship between speaker and addressee. In example (3) from the *Shǐjì* an envoy addresses the king of Yue on behalf of his own king, the king of Wu. In this example a combination of two terms of address can be observed '*gū chén* 孤臣': the first term *gū* 'alone, orphan' is a term of self-reference for a ruler, a feudal lord, etc., the second *chén* 'subject' is the general deprecatory term used by a minister, counselor, etc. to refer to

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8   Parts of this section are rhymed. This is one of the few passages where rhymes appear in the speech of the king; they are considerably more frequent in the speech parts of the king's counselor.

himself. This politeness term refers to the king of Wu who lends his voice to his envoy. This is an example of the innovative way, the *Shǐjì* employs terms of address and reference, the term is not attested in the entire *Guóyǔ*.[9] In example (4) from the introduction of the *Nǚjiè* written by the author in the 1st person only regular pronouns are employed similar to example (2).

(1)

「先人就世，<u>不穀</u>即位。<u>吾</u>年既少，未有恒常，出則禽荒，入則酒荒。<u>吾</u>百姓
之不圖，~~可乎？~~」 *Guoyu, Yueyu*

When my ancestor passed away and I *(bùgǔ)* ascended the throne, I *(wú)* was still young and had not obtained any regularity. Outdoors I was passionate in hunting and indoors I was passionate in drinking. I *(wú)* did not make plans for my people; I just cared about boats and chariots.

(2)

公曰，"<u>余</u>無子，將立<u>女</u>。

The duke said: "I *(yú)* do not have sons, I will enthrone you *(rǔ)*." *Zuozhuan, Ai* 2.2

(3)

吳王使公孫雄肉袒膝行而前，請成越王曰：「<u>孤臣</u>夫差敢布腹心，異日嘗得
罪於會稽，夫差不敢逆命，得與<u>君王</u>成以歸。今<u>君王</u>舉玉趾而誅<u>孤臣</u>，<u>孤臣</u>
惟命是聽，意者 亦 欲如會稽之赦<u>孤臣</u>之罪乎？」 *Shiji*: 41, 1745

The king of Wu sent Gongsun Xiong to proceed with bared arms and kneeling and ask the king of Yue for peace saying: "Your <u>lonely subject</u> Fuchai dares to expose his inner heart. The other day he burdened himself with guilt at Kuaiji; he didn't dare to oppose the order, managed to make peace with <u>Your Majesty</u> and returned. If <u>Your Majesty</u> now elevates his jaden foot and punishes your lonely subject, it will be only the order your <u>lonely subject</u> will listen to. But may I please be allowed to wish that you pardon my guilt as you did in Kuaiji?"

(4)

<u>吾</u>今疾在沈滯，性命無常，念<u>汝</u>曹如此，每用惆悵。閒作女誡七章，願<u>諸女</u>
各寫一通，庶有補益，裨助<u>汝</u>身。 *Hou Hanshu*: *Nüjie*

I *(wú)* am now very ill and life is without certainty. When I think of you *(rǔ)* like this, I am every time very sad and disappointed. In my spare time I made the seven paragraphs of the 'Instructions for Women', I wish that you *(rǔ)*, my daughters, each write a copy, it will help you in manifold ways and give support to your *(rǔ)* life.

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9   There is only one instance in the *Mèngzǐ* in the Ancient Chinese corpus of the Academia Sinica database.

These examples particularly emphasize the relevance of the employment of different terms of address in the respective texts. In the example from the *Zuǒzhuàn* and in the introductory remarks of Ban ~~Zhan~~, two test passages which are comparatively straightforward, personal pronouns are used. These personal pronouns evidently express the close relation between speaker and addressee, together with the hierarchical structure between the respective participants of speech. In the two speech parts from the *Yuèyǔ* (ex. 1) and the *Shǐjì* (ex. 3), terms of politeness indicate a particular conversational situation. In both contexts the employment of politeness terms is closely connected to a special diplomatic purpose. Example (3) also demonstrates that the *Shǐjì* chapter contains passages which are stylistically very similar to the *Yuèyǔ*.

2.3 Temporal markers in the four texts

Table 3: Temporal adverbials indicating a point of time

Marker	Function	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo Ai* 1–6	Number *Shiji*	Number *Nüjie*
Temporal noun / NP / VP	TA: Date / time of year / season	6	58	3	
yì 異/ *míng* 明/ *qián* 前/ *jīn* 今/ *tuō rì* 他日/time of day	TA	0	3	3	2
jīn 今	TA, discourse	20	7	14	0
yú jīn 于今	PP: TA				3
hòu 後	**TA**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**0**
hòu 後 XP	**TA**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**0**
gǔ 古	TA	3	0	0	1 古者
chū 初	TA, discourse	0	4	1	
xī (zhě) 昔(者)	TA	7	1	1	1
shàng 尚	TA	1	0	0	0
zhī shí 之時	TA	0	0	3	0
dāng 當	**PP: TA**	0	0	1	0
dāng 當 X zhī shí 之時	**PP: TA**	0	0	1	0
zhì yú 至 (於) X	PP: TA closed	0	0	1	0
jìng 竟	TA	0	0	1	0

Marker	Function	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo Ai* 1–6	Number *Shiji*	Number *Nüjie*
fāng 方	TA	0	0	0	1
zuó 昨	**TA**	0	0	1	0
rì/sù/yè 日/凤/夜	TA or iterative	0	0	1	1
gū 姑	modal/temporal	12	1	0	0
Total		**37 (49)**	**75 (76) (17)**	**37**	**9**
of 100		0,80 (1,07)	1,41, (1,43), (0,32)	0,80	0,42

Temporal markers have been chosen for comparison, because the frequency of their employment can also be expected to reflect differences in style and genre. Temporal markers include all adverbials expressing a specific temporal reference, in most cases this is a temporal adverbial referring to a point of time. These adverbials are adjuncts, i.e. they are not mandatory grammatical markers; they provide additional information and they serve to locate an event on a particular point of the time axis. A separate paragraph is devoted to aspecto-temporal adverbs, because they differ syntactically and semantically from the adverbials discussed in this section (MEISTERERNST 2015a). Temporal conjunctions are excluded from this study, although there frequency can also point to a particular register (MEISTERERNST 2013, 2014). A great variety of temporal adverbials occurs in all four texts. This can be expected from historical texts. However, the actual occurrence of different kinds of adverbials is revealing with regard to the textual register. As table 3 shows, without the great number of temporal noun phrases referring to a date, the time of the year, or a season,[10] the number of temporal adverbials in the *Zuǒzhuàn* section would be extremely low in comparison to the other unambiguously historical texts, a fraction of 0,32 words of hundred words. This figure would be lower even than that of the *Nǚjiè* (0,42), which differs considerably from the other texts and can hardly be qualified as an incidence of historical narrative. Only 9 instances of temporal adverbials occur in the latter text.

In the present context, particular mention can be made to the temporal adverbial *jīn* 今 'now' which frequently rather functions as a discourse marker than as a temporal adverbial. It is most frequent in the *Yuèyǔ*, followed by the *Shǐjì*. With regard to the *Yuèyǔ* this can be attributed to the

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[10] This includes the *Chūnqiū* passages of the section, which predominantly consist of short entries containing date-like temporal adverbials preceding the respective 'commentary'.

highly conversational character of this text. The *Shǐjì* is generally characterized by an abundant and often redundant employment of conjunctions, temporal adverbials etc. This has been interpreted as an indication for the more colloquial character of Sima Qian's writing style (Meisterernst 2013, 2014). The adverbial *xī (zhě)* 昔(者), although clearly referring to a time in the past, also functions to a certain extent as discourse marker connecting references to past and present in discourse, particularly in combination with *jīn* 今. This is one of the devices employed, for instance, for the introduction of advice related to exemplary (good or bad) events in the past in order to convey admonitions. In example (5) from the *Yuèyǔ* it serves to contrast an incident in the past relevant for the present situation. Reference to the past justifies intended actions in the present.

The table also lists a number of grammatical innovations only attested in the *Shǐjì* chapter.[11] One of these is the construction (*qí*) *hòu* + NP$_{num}$ as in example (6). This construction is not only typical for the *Shǐjì*, it is also one of the early Middle Chinese innovations attested in this text (Meisterernst 2014).[12] Although the *shìjiā* chapters are supposed to be more conservative in language than other parts of the *Shǐjì*, the figures demonstrate that constructions which first appear in this text also occur in the chapter at issue here.

Figures with regard to the adverb *gū* 姑 'temporary, for the time being' are put into parentheses, because this adverb functions rather as a weak deontic modal than as a temporal adverb. Without this adverb, the figures for the *Yuèyǔ* and the *Shǐjì* are again very similar.

> (5)
>
> 國之父兄請曰：「昔者夫差恥吾君於諸侯之國，今越國亦節矣，請報之。」
> *Guóyǔ, Yuèyǔ*
>
> The fathers and older brothers of the country asked: "Once Fuchai humiliated our ruler in front of the states of the feudal lords, now we, the state Yue, have been regulated; we ask to retaliate for it."

> (6)
>
> 其後四年，越復伐吳. *Shǐjì*: 41, 1745
>
> Four years after that, Yue attacked Wu again.

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[11]　These have been discussed in Meisterernst 2015 and in the context of register grammar in Meisterernst 2014.

[12]　Meisterernst 2014 compares the employment of this structure in the *Shǐjì* and the *Hànshū*. Both, the versions with and without *qí* 其 are attested in both text and in the *Yuèyǔ*, the version with *qí*, is more typical for the *Shǐjì*, though.

2.4 Aspecto-temporal markers (grammatical markers)

Table 4: Aspecto-temporal markers

Marker	Function	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo*	Number *Shiji*	Number *Nüjie*
jì 既	Perfective matrix / SFP	0	1	0	0
jì 既	Perfective sub	4	3	5	8
yǐ 已	Perfective matrix / SPF	4	0	1	0
yǐ 已	Perfective sub	0?	0	6	0
wèi 未	Aspectual negation	11	10	6	1
jiāng 將	Future	24	21	10	0
qiě 且	Future	0	0	6	0
cháng 嘗	Past	0	1	1	0
cháng 常	Habitual	0	2	1	2
fāng 方	Progressive	0	0	1	0
Total		**43**	**38**	**37**	**11**
of 100		**0,94**	**0,71**	**0,80**	**0,51**

The adverbs discussed in this section belong to the closed class of adverbs expressing meanings within the grammatical categories aspect and tense. They are confined to preverbal position and they are very closely connected to the semantics of the verb, particularly to its situation type. They follow modal adverbs; they precede negative markers, the YI-phrase and the YU-phrase and manner adverbs. For the purely aspectual perfective adverbs *jì* 既 and *yǐ* 已 an analysis as specifiers of the outer aspect phrase has been proposed in MEISTERERNST 2016. It has been claimed (MEISTERERNST 2016, ALDRIDGE/MEISTERERNST 2018) that their frequency and liberty of employment increases at the end of the Warring States period when morphological marking of aspectual distinctions most likely became opaque for the speaker. As the figures demonstrate, the number and the range of employment of the two aspectual adverbs increase continually from the *Zuǒzhuàn* to the *Shǐjì*.[13] The adverb *yǐ* 已, which is the younger of the two perfective adverbs, does not occur in the excerpt from the *Zuǒzhuàn*, it only appears in matrix sentences in the *Yuèyǔ*, but it occurs freely in the *Shǐjì* in subordinate and matrix clauses. In general, the range of aspectual adverbs employed is again widest in the *Shǐjì*. Interestingly, in the *Nǚjiè* only the classical adverb *jì* 既 is

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[13] Interestingly, this is not the case for the aspectual negative marker *wèi* 未, which is actually more frequent in the LAC texts than in the *Shǐjì*.

attested of the two perfective adverbs available at the time. The source structure of the perfective suffix of Modern Mandarin: V₁ (NP_Obj) YI 已, already attested in early Buddhist texts, does not appear in the *Nǚjiè*.

   The example below represents the proposed development of aspectual marking and the occurrence of a 'Classical' construction for the expression of the perfective aspect in an early Middle Chinese *wényán* text. Examples 7a and 7b display the employment of reflexes of verbal morphology in Late Archaic Chinese. Both verbs have two different readings, the verb *bài* 敗 is one of the examples of 'derivation by a voicing alternation' *qīng zhuó bié yì* 清濁別意, an alternation of a voiced and a voiceless initial with functions similar to the derivation by tone change.[14] 7b exemplifies the 'derivation by tone change' *sì shēng bié yì* 四聲別意 (e. g. Sagart 1999, p. 131).[15] Example 7c represents the employment of the perfective adverb *jì* 既 in a subordinate clause in *Zuǒzhuàn*, example 7d represents the perfective adverb *yǐ* 已 in a matrix clause followed by the sentence final particle *yǐ* 矣 indicating a change of state. Example 7e shows the reflection of the LAC employment of the aspectual adverb *jì* 既, the older of the two adverbs, in the early Middle Chinese *wényán* text *Hòu Hànshū*. With the employment of the aspectual adverb *jì* 既 and the sentence final particle *yǐ* 矣 in a Classical construction instead of the innovative medieval 'V (NP_Obj) *yǐ* 已' construction or even the employment of the younger aspectual adverb *yǐ* 已, the language in the example from the *Hòu Hànshū* can evidently be determined as belonging to the formal register characterized by the employment of classicisms.

   (7a)

   鄭師大敗，獲齊粟千車。 *Zuǒ, Aigōng*

   Zheng army great defeated *(bài: *blad-s)*, capture Qi cereals thousand wagon

   'After the army of Zheng was heavily defeated, they captured one thousand wagons with cereals from Qi.'

   (7b)

   天道盈而不 溢， 盛而不驕， *Guóy, Yuèyǔ*

   Heaven way full CON NEG overflow, full *(sheng:*g-diŋ-s)* CON NEG arrogant

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[14]   For an overview of the discussion on the reconstruction of the voicing alternation see Meisterernst 2017. The resultative/unaccusative variant is marked by a voiced initial *(*blad-s)*, and the causative variant is marked by a voiceless initial *(*plad-s)*.

[15]   This has extensively been discussed in the literature. For a brief overview and references see Meisterernst 2016, 2017. In this case the resultative/unaccusative variants is supposed to have been characterized by a suffix *-s* which has been compared with the Tibetan temporal/aspectual suffix *-s* (see e. g. Jin Lixin 2006). The reconstructions chosen here are from Jin Lixin 2006.

勞　而不　矜　其功。

strive CON NEG boast GEN success

'The way of heaven means: being full, but not overflowing, being satisfied, but not arrogant, strive without boasting with one's success.'

(7c)

夏，楚人 既克夷虎，乃謀北方。 *Zuǒ, Aigōng*

Summer, Chu man <u>already</u> (ASP) vanquish Yihu, then scheme north direction

'In the summer after people from Chu had vanquished Yihu, they thus started to scheme with regard to the northern regions.'

(7d)

今已服矣，又何求焉。」 *Guóyǔ, Yuèyǔ*

Now <u>already</u> (ASP) subjected SFP, furthermore what search PP

'Now it is already subjected, what else could one search for?'

(7e)

媒黷<u>既</u>生，語言過矣. *HHS*: 84, 2789

disrespect <u>already</u> (ASP) be.born, speech wrong <u>SFP</u> (ASP)

'After disrespect developed, speech will become wrong.'

Although the *Nǚjiè* contains a number of grammatical innovations, in the marking of the perfective aspect and in the employment of aspecto-temporal adverbs it is most conservative. Contrastingly, the employment of modal markers discussed in the next section clearly shows Han period innovation together with conservative structures. The relative similarity in frequency of aspecto-temporal adverbs in all four texts indicates that they indeed rather belong to the grammatical layer, i. e. their employment is (more) mandatory. Only in cases as in the *Nǚjiè*, which obviously resort to classical constructions in order to produce a particular stylistic effect, can they serve as indicator of a particular linguistic register.

2.5 Modal markers: modal verbs and adverbs in the four texts

Table 5: Modal verbs and modal adverbs

Marker	Function	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo*	Number *Shiji*	Number *Nüjie*
kě 可	Modal: root (possibility)	26	23	18	17
néng 能	Modal: root (ability)	7	10	9	9
dé 得	Modal: circumstantial	2	0	2	1 勿得

Marker	Function	Number *Yueyu*	Number *Zuo*	Number *Shiji*	Number *Nüjie*
zú 足	Circumstantial	3	1	3	1
yí 宜	Root / deontic	2	0	0	2
dāng 當	**Root/ deontic**	0	0	1	5
yù 欲	Volitional	7	4	18	2
yīng 願	Volitional	2	0	5	2
gǎn 敢	Volitional	5	13	3	0
wù 勿	Deontic negation	5	0	4	2
wú 毋	Deontic negation	0	0	4	0
wú 無	Deontic negation	5	4	1	7
wúsuǒ 無所	Root possibility	2	0	1	
wúyǐ 無以	Root possibility	0	1	0	2
bì 必	Necessity /deontic	5	3 (2 = anankastic)	3 (1 = anankastic)	5 (4 = anankastic)
gū 姑	**Weak deontic**	12	1		
qiě 且	Deontic	1	0	0	0
bì 必	Necessity / epistemic	6	10	11	1
gù 固	**Certainty(epistemic)**	0	1	7	6
其	Probability	13	7	2	3
無乃	Possibility (epistemic)	2	0	0	0
或者	Possibility (epistemic)	0	1	0	0
yì zhě 意者	Possibility (epistemic)	0	0	1	0
níng 寧	Possibility (epistemic)	1	0	0	0
gài 蓋	Possibility (epistemic)	0	1	1	1
qǐ 豈	Possibility (epistemic)	0	0	1	2
guǒ 果	Factivity	2	1	1	0
shí 實	Factivity	0	1	0	1
yì 亦	Speaker orientation	5	8	5	3
Total		**99 (111)**	**88 (89)**	**101**	**75**
of 100		**2,16 (2,42)**	**1,66 (1,67)**	**2,20**	**3,50**

As table (5) demonstrates, modal markers, i.e. modal verbs and modal adverbs are the most frequent grammatical markers by far in all four texts. The range is highest in the *Nǚjiè*, followed by the *Guóyǔ*. This certainly can be accounted for by the persuasive character both texts exhibit. The particularly high relative frequency of modal markers in the *Nǚjiè* supports the characterization of the text as advisory, consisting to a great extent of rules of proper behavior, and not as plain narrative. Although the *Yuèyǔ* also contains a considerable number of advisory speeches, it evidently employs less direct means of persuasion than the *Nǚjiè* text. This can be analyzed as a result of the different settings and communicative purposes. The *Nǚ-jiè* consists of strict rules of behavior conveyed by a mother towards her daughters in a written document; the written character of the admonitions is explicitly referred to. The *Yuèyǔ* on the other hand predominantly consists of dialogues between ruler and counselor and a considerable fraction of the speeches is delivered by the counselor towards his ruler, i.e. by a hierarchically lower to a hierarchically higher person. The communication is depicted as more direct than in the *Nǚjiè*. In addition to grammatical marking, the author of the *Yuèyǔ* employs other linguistic means of persuasion than direct modal marking; these are poetic speech, grammatical parallelism and rhymes, briefly discussed in section 3. Although the range of grammatical markers occurring in the respective texts is comparable, there are also some significant differences. However, a fine-tuned analysis of the different markers goes beyond the scope of this study. Accordingly, only a few particulars of the table will be discussed briefly here.

Both early Middle Chinese texts show evident innovations with regard to the employment of modal markers, despite the fact that the *shìjiā* draw directly on a Classical Chinese text and the *Nǚjiè* employs classicisms in order to emphasize the relevance of the purpose related. One of the innovations is the employment of the auxiliary verb *dāng* 當 expressing weak deontic modality (Meisterernst 2011). Syntactically it clearly functions as a deontic marker. As the table shows, this modal verb appears with one instance in the *Shǐjì* and with five instances in the *Nǚjiè*. In example (8) it occurs twice in an evidently deontic reading, followed by the dynamic modal of ability *néng* 能 another Middle Chinese innovation, the employment of analytic modal negation expressing the deontic value of prohibition,[16] is also attested with one instance in the *Nǚjiè* together with frequent instances of synthetic modal negation; the latter is typical for Archaic Chinese. In example 9a the modal verb *dé* 得 is negated by the negative modal marker *wù* 勿 expressing

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[16] For the development from synthetic to analytic modal negation see for instance Meisterernst 2015.

prohibition. This modal negative is the only one which is still frequently attested also in the Middle Chinese Buddhist literature, it appears twice in the *Nǚjiè*. Despite ~~this innovation~~, Ban Zhao most frequently employs synthetic modal negation; beside the two instances of *wù* 勿, the modal negative *wú* 無 is attested with 7 instances, five of them appear in example 9b.

(8)

說所不當道，觀所不當視，此謂不能專心正色矣。 *Hou Hanshu, Nüjie*

Say REL NEG <u>should</u> tell, observe REL NEG <u>should</u> see, this call NEG <u>able</u> concentrate mind correct appearance SFP

'To mention what one should not tell, to observe what one should not see, this means that one is not able to concentrate the mind and to keep the appearance correct.'

(9a)

勿得違戾是非，爭分曲直。 *Hou Hanshu, Nüjie*

NEG$_{mod}$ DE$_{mod}$ oppose rage right wrong, fight divide crooked straight

'She may not oppose and rage against [the distinction of] right and wrong, and she may not fight against [the distinction of] crooked and straight.'

(9b)

禮義居絜，耳無塗聽，目無邪視，出無冶容，入無廢飾，無聚會群輩，無看視門戶，

rites rightousness stay pure, ear NEG$_{mod}$ dirt, listen, eye NEG$_{mod}$ bad.see, go.out NEG$_{mod}$ seductive.dress, enter NEG$_{mod}$ neglect decorum, NEG$_{mod}$ gather meet mass, NEG$_{mod}$ look see gate

'In proper behavior and righteousness stay pure, your ears are not to listen to dirty talk, your eyes are not to see perversity, in going out, don't put on a seductive appearance, when you enter, don't neglect your decorum, don't gather with the crowds and look out of the gates.'

The three categories of grammatical marking by function words display different results with regard to the relevance for the determination of stylistic register. However, there is a substantial difference between the use of temporal and discourse markers particularly between the *Yuèyǔ* and the *Shǐjì* on the one hand and the *Zuǒzhuàn* and the *Nǚjiè* on the other. The high frequency of temporal adverbials particularly as discourse markers in the *Yuèyǔ* indicates a high level of colloquialism. The same accounts for the *Shǐjì*, although there are obvious differences with regard to the level of colloquialism, which – apart from some dialogic parts in the *Shǐjì* – is in general higher in the *Yuèyǔ*. The *Yuèyǔ* is also evidently grammatically more innovative than the excerpt from the *Zuǒzhuàn*. This can be evidenced by the

employment of aspectual adverbs in the former. The most frequent aspec-to-temporal adverb attested in the *Zuǒzhuàn* excerpt is the future adverb *jiāng* 將; purely aspectual adverbs are relatively infrequent. Although the frequency of modal markers is similar in all four texts, the actual employ-ment differs according to the purpose of the respective text. Grammatically, the two Middle Chinese texts show a number of innovations they do not share with the LAC texts, despite their supposed conservatism or resort to classicisms.

3 The linguistic function of poetic speech

Poetic speech, parallelisms and rhyming are integral parts of Chinese writ-ing in Pre-Modern times. The identification of the functions of poetic speech can be vital in determining the literary genre of a text. However, in Archaic Chinese frequently the employment of poetic speech does not imply the qualification of a text as belonging to a poetic genre. Poetic speech in non-poetic genres, such as the genre of historical writing discussed in this paper, can serve entirely different purposes from what is generally consid-ered to be the function of poetry. Quotations from the *Shījīng*, the ancient Chinese book of poetry, appear in the Chinese literature from earliest times on in order to fulfill social and political functions. The respective stylis-tic characteristics of these quotations and co-occurrences reflect their ex-tra-linguistic functions. According to Feng/Vihan 2016, different stylistic registers can be distinguished in the different sections of the *Shījīng*: the *Fēng* can be expected in less formal contexts, whereas the *Yǎ* and particu-larly the *Sòng* are expected to appear in formal and solemn contexts respec-tively (Feng/Vihan 2016). According to Feng and Vihan (idem), what the *Odes* teach are all functions of style "people use the Odes as a linguistic tool that regulates person to person relations and the degree of their distance and proximity." (idem)

In the *Zuǒzhuàn* and the *Guóyǔ*, *Odes* were cited from all parts of the *Shījīng* at diplomatic meetings of the several feudal states regardless of cul-tural differences within the realm of the Eastern Zhou (770–221 bce) (Kern 2010). They played an eminent role in marking "moments of crisis and ca-tharsis, violence and destruction" (Kern 2005, p. 68).[17]

Since the employment of poetic reference and poetic speech is an impor-tant stylistic feature in Archaic and Middle Chinese literature, two examples will be briefly discussed here. The first one is a reference to the *Shījīng* in the

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[17] See Meisterernst 2018.

Nǔjiè and the second one is the linguistic analysis of a short passage from the *Yuèyǔ*. Although poetic speech and citations from the *Shījīng* also appear in the *Zuǒzhuàn* and in the *Shǐjì*, they are not of great relevance in the text (excerpts) chosen for this discussion, which are more reporting and narrative in nature than the *Yuèyǔ* and the *Nǔjiè*. In the *Nǔjiè* Ban Zhao refers directly or indirectly to the *Shījīng* at several occasions; only one, the citation concluding her 'admonitions' will be quoted here. This consists of two stanzas from a 'Eulogia' from the *Sòng* of Zhou. This poem representing solemn speech has been chosen by Ban Zhao, because it particularly emphasizes the paramount relevance of proper behavior for women within a society molded by Confucian ethics. It provides evidence additional to the grammatical indications for the formal style in which Ban Zhao's text is composed.

(10)

詩云：「在彼無惡，在此無射．」 *Hou Hanshu* 74: 2791

'The *Odes* say: (There, there is no dislike, here, there is no satiation.'
A flock of egrets is flying,
About the marsh there in the west.
My visitors came,
With an [elegant] carriage like those birds.)
There, [in their States], not disliked;
Here, [in Zhou], never tired of[18];
(They are sure, day and night,
To perpetuate their fame.) *Shijing, Zhou Song, Zhen Lu* (translation Legge).

In general, in the literature the selection of an Ode from any of the respective sections depends on the purpose of the author, the relevance of the issue, and the social contexts of the situation the citation refers to, but their function is always highly normative.[19] As Kern (2015, p. 196) puts it "early Chinese poetic discourse … begins and ends with the unquestioned assumption that poetry serves moral purposes, and indeed only these." Nevertheless, the choice of an ode from the 'Airs', the 'Elegantiae', or the 'Eulogia', which represent different stylistic registers of speech, can reflect different grades of formality in the respective social setting.

  The next example contains a short passage from the *Yuèyǔ* in order to demonstrate the stylistic and persuasive functions the employment of poetic

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[18] The last word in the *Nǔjie* version of the *Odes* differs from the one in the textus receptus, which has *yì* 斁 'be tired of, detest'. According to Karlgren, GRS 807a, *shè* 射 appears as a loan for *yì* 斁.

[19] Some examples of the employment of the Odes in the *Guóyǔ* have been discussed in Meisterernst 2018.

speech has in political argumentation.[20] Poetic speech is integral part of the argumentation and serves to convey urgency and relevance in a debate. It is characterized by the frequent employment of rhymes, rhythmic speech and grammatical parallelism. These stylistic features occur throughout the text of the *Yuèyǔ*, but they are most prominent in the speech passages of the counselor Fan Li who advises or admonishes his king, Goujian, against an attack on Wu. He argues that Goujian has only to wait for the right time in order to prevail against Wu without harming his own people.[21]

(11)

(1) In regulating [one's] affairs one has to comply with earth	「節事者與地。			
(2) Only earth can embrace	唯地能包	*prû[22]	幽	
(3) The ten thousand things and make them one	萬物以為一,	*ʔit	質	
(4) In its affairs it is not negligent	其事不失。	*lhit	質	
(5) It brings about the ten thousand things	生萬物,			
(6) It gives birds and quatrupeds room and nourishes them	容畜禽獸,	*-uh	幽	上
(7) Only after this it receives its fame	然後受其名	*meŋ	耕	
(8) And gathers its benefits	而兼其利。	*rits	質	
(9) Good and bad are all complete	美惡皆成,	*geŋ	耕	
(10) And thus nourish its growth	以養其生。	*srêŋ	耕	
(11) When the right time is not there	時不至,	*tits	質	
(12) It cannot be forced to come into being	不可強生;	*srêŋ	耕	
(13) If the affairs are not finished	事不究,	*kuh	幽	
(14) They cannot be forced to be completed	不可強成。	*geŋ	耕	

In this passage, lines 2, 6, and 13 belong to the rime group *yōu* 幽, lines 3, 4, 8, and 11 belong to the group 質 *zhì*, and lines 7, 9, 10, 12, and 14 belong to the *gēng* group 耕. Of the 14 lines, only 2, line 1 and line 5 do not rhyme. These two lines separate the two chains of argumentation from each other,

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[20] Kern (2016) in his analysis of poetic speech in the *Xúnzǐ* points out that literary style in argumentation is "central to the quality not merely of its form of expression, but of its argument itself." This does not only account for the argumentation in the *Xúnzǐ*, but also e. g. for the highly rhetorically stylized second part of the *Yuèyǔ* section in the *Guóyǔ* (see Meisterernst 2002). In Meisterernst 2002 only a fraction of the actual rhyming of this passage has been noticed. The *Yuèyǔ* contains even more poetic speech than has been indicated in her (2002) translation of the *Yuèyǔ*.

[21] See also Meisterernst 2018 who discusses a different passage in this text which is even more characterized by grammatical parallelism.

[22] Reconstructions follow Schuessler's (2007) OCM (Minimal Old Chinese).

as rhymes they are orphans and their particular function in this speech part is reflected by the precise fact that they do not rhyme. Most lines consist of four words, but there are also three lines of five words' length, and three lines of three words' length. Beside the frequent rhymes, the passage also shows some grammatical parallelisms, particularly in lines 8 and 10, and in lines 11 and 13. Lines 12 and 14 are identical. This passage does not contain a great number of function words; the three modal verbs are simple possibility modals without any persuasive function. But the strictly stylized speech of the passage accomplishes the same persuasive function as the employment of deontic modal verbs and negative markers for instance in the *Nǚjiè* does. It also argues for an analysis of the conversational style of the *Yuèyǔ* as rather formal than informal.

4 Conclusion

In the present analysis different linguistic features relevant in the distinction of stylistic registers have been discussed. These can be distinguished into grammatical markers and the purely stylistic markers of poetic speech as a linguistic means. The grammatical markers include terms of address in order to distinguish between more narrative and more conversational texts and text passages, temporal adjuncts, aspecto-temporal adverbs, and modal markers. Personal pronouns are also a valid means to distinguish degrees of distance in a text. The terms of address support an analysis of a text as belonging to a more narrative or a more conversational register, the frequency and manner of politeness terms additionally points to a particular level of colloquialism and to the purpose of the reported speech. A similar function, i.e. the distinction between more narrative and more conversational and/or colloquial registers can be observed with temporal adjuncts. These frequently have more discourse-related than temporal-chronological functions. Contrastingly, aspecto-temporal adverbs in general do not seem to have functions related to stylistic register; they operate on the grammatical level. However, the deliberate employment of classical constructions in the expression of aspectual distinctions can indicate a high and very formal stylistic register. The frequency and kind of modal markers employed serve to identify the purpose of a text, for instance, as an advisory text such as the *Nǚjiè* discussed in this paper.

The data demonstrates that stylistically, the *Yuèyǔ* and the *Shǐjì* on the one hand and the *Zuǒzhuàn* and the *Nǚjiè* on the other are most closely related. But it also shows that the *Nǚjiè* is closely related to the *Yuèyǔ* with regard to the communicative purpose of the text; both are highly persuasive in nature if in different ways. The stylistic means employed, advisory essay

on the one hand and persuasive speech on the other account for the linguistic differences of both texts. In this case it would be even appropriate to define the texts as belonging to different genres. Both texts have in common that poetic speech is relevant for the conveyance of their purpose. Ban Zhao resorts to numerous references to the Confucian classics in order to convey authority from history, and the *Yuèyǔ* ~~authors~~ employs poetic speech, rhymes, and grammatical parallelism in order to convey urgency and relevance to the speeches and advices given by the counselor Fan Li to his ruler.

The discussion hopefully demonstrates that systematic and statistical analyses of the linguistic means discussed in this paper (and of many more) ~~yields~~ complex, but also revealing results with regard to the stylistic registers and communicative purposes of Ancient Chinese texts.

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By the way: die angegebene Adresse zu Meisterernst 2017 funktioniert nicht!