

Object Preposing in Classical and Pre-Medieval Chinese

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Received: 17 December 2007 / Accepted: 15 December 2009
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1 Abstract In this paper, one of the three instances of object preposing in Classical
2 Chinese, the structure [NP₁ NP₂ *shi* / *zhi* V], is discussed in detail. According to
3 their distributional differences, two structures—A [NP₁ NP₂ *shi* V] and B [NP₁ NP₂
4 *zhi* V]—are distinguished, and it is shown that both constructions, although
5 sometimes identical in the surface structure, are subject to different syntactic and
6 semantic constraints. This analysis challenges the hypothesis proposed by Peyraube
7 (Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientales 26(1):3–20, 1997) that structure A [NP₁
8 NP₂ *shi* V] was gradually replaced by structure B [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V] during the
9 Warring States period. In accordance with the syntactic constraints, different
10 analyses are proposed for structures A and B in the course of the paper. Structure A,
11 [NP_S NP_O *shi* V], is analyzed as a copula construction, a focalization (cleft)
12 construction with the object not in preverbal position but to the right of the copula.
13 Structure B, which is more heterogeneous than structure A, will be subdivided into
14 different structures, only two of which will be retained as cases of a focalized and
15 preposed object. The analysis reveals that object preposing in Classical Chinese is
16 evidently a case of marked word order and cannot be assumed to be a vestige of an
17 earlier SOV word order in Chinese.

18 Keywords Object preposing · Focalization · Copula construction ·
19 Classical Chinese

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21 1 Introduction

22 1.1 Word order in Classical Chinese

23 It is generally agreed that in Classical Chinese the regular word order is SVO, but a
 24 few evident exceptions to this general rule have led to a controversial discussion on
 25 the basic word order of Chinese in Pre-Classical times. These exceptions have been
 26 regarded as vestiges of an older word order, SOV, which is the regular word order of
 27 almost all Tibeto-Burman languages. This been taken as evidence for a supposed
 28 word order change from SOV in Pre-Archaic to SVO in Archaic Chinese.¹ The
 29 exceptions are as follows:

30 (a) In contrast to Modern Mandarin, where *wh*-pronouns referring to an object
 31 appear in-situ, in Classical Chinese (third–sixth century BC) they regularly
 32 appear in preverbal position, as in the following examples:

34 (1) 吾誰使先? Guoyu: 8/10a/223
 35 *Wu shui shi xian?*
 36 I who make precede?
 37 ‘Who should I let precede?’

38 (2) 防風何守也? Guoyu: 5/11a/151
 39 *Fang Feng he shou ye?*
 40 Fang Feng what defend FIN
 41 ‘What (which land) did Fang Feng defend?’

42 (3) 何恃而不恐? Guoyu: 4/4a/113²
 43 *He shi er bu kong?*
 44 What rely-on CON not fear
 45 ‘What do you rely on that you are not afraid?’

46 (b) In negative sentences with a pronominal object, the object can appear
 47 immediately preceding the verb and following the negative:³

49 (4) 不吾敬也. Guoyu: 15/2b/350
 50 *Bu wu jing ye*
 51 NEG I respect FIN
 52 ‘One does not respect me.’

¹ The discussion on word order changes in Chinese is mainly based on an article by Li and Thompson (1974). They assumed that Pre-Archaic Chinese was an SOV language that had changed to SVO in Archaic Chinese before shifting back to SOV (1974, p. 209). An overview of this discussion is presented in Peyraube (1997).

² The same phrase is also attested in *Zuo zhuan*, *Xi*, 26. In both instances, the answer is provided in the following sentence.

³ As, for example, Peyraube (1997, p. 9) has shown, this rule is much less imperative than the first rule. In the classical text *Guoyu*, for instance, the figures of preverbal and postverbal pronouns referring to an object are almost identical, except for the negation marker *mo* 莫, which apparently more strictly confines object pronouns to preverbal position (Meisterernst 2000, pp. 424–427).

53 (5) 今日之事莫我若也。 *Guoyu*: 15/5a/355
 54 *Jin ri zhi shi mo wo ruo ye*
 55 Today day SUB affair no.one I be-like FIN
 56 'In the affairs of today no one equals me.'

57 (c) An NP-object appears in preverbal position:

59 (6) 我君是事非事土也。 *Guoyu*: 15/2a/349
 60 *Wo jun shi shi fei shi tu ye*
 61 I ruler SHI serve not serve land FIN
 62 'It is the ruler I serve and not the country.'

63 In all three of these constructions, the object evidently appears in preverbal position
 64 yielding a word order SOV, which has led some scholars to the previously
 65 mentioned assumption that they might be vestiges of an old word order SOV in
 66 Pre-Archaic Chinese. But this hypothesis—though occasionally still supported—has
 67 already been refuted convincingly in the linguistic literature.⁴ The two main
 68 arguments against this hypothesis are as follows:

- 69 1. As Djamouri (2001b, p. 146) has shown, the majority of simple transitive
 70 declarative sentences⁵ in the earliest stages of written Chinese has the order SVO
 71 (93.8%), and accordingly the data does not provide any evidence for a dominant
 72 SOV order in Pre-Archaic Chinese.
 73 2. All three exceptions from SVO order in Classical Chinese are not simple transitive
 74 declarative sentences, as would be required for general statements about
 75 word order; instead, they involve interrogation, negation, or contrastiveness.
 76 Consequently, they cannot be used as the foundation of any hypotheses concern-
 77 ing a change of word order in Chinese. All three syntactic structures cease to
 78 be productive during and after the Han period.⁶

79 1.2 Preposing an object-NP in Classical Chinese

80 In Classical Chinese, two different structures of object preposing exist, only one of
 81 which exhibits the word order SOV and belongs to the set of three exceptions to the
 82 canonical word order SVO. In the first structure the object appears in preverbal
 83 position, and in the second structure it appears in sentence-initial topic position:

⁴ As one of the anonymous reviewers pointed out in 1994, an entire conference in the Academia Sinica was devoted to the word order discussion, and the results of this were published in *Chinese Languages and Linguistics—IV* in 1997. The hypothesis of a word order change is a foundation underlying Feng's (1996) arguments for prosodically constrained syntactic changes in Early Archaic Chinese.

⁵ These are the sentences that have to be taken as the basis for general assumptions on word order, since they are the most unmarked sentences (Greenberg 1963).

⁶ The diachronic change of all three exceptions to the regular word order in Classical Chinese has been analyzed by Meisterernst (2000, 342ff), among others. A syntactic analysis of *wh*-pronouns in Classical Chinese has been presented in Aldridge (2006, manuscript).

84 1. NP_S NP_O *shi* 是/ *zhi* 之 V

86 A NP_S NP_O *shi* 是 V

88 (7) 余唯利是視

Zuo, Cheng 3

89 *Yu wei li shi shi*

90 I only advantage SHI look-at

91 But I considered only [our] advantages.

92 B NP_S NP_O *zhi* 之 V

94 (8) 吾唯子之見

Zuo, Ding 13

95 *Wu wei zi zhi jian*

96 I only you ZHI see

97 I only came to know you [as such a man].

98 2. NP_O [s NP_SV *zhi* 之]

99 (9) 夏禮吾能言之

Lunyu 3, 9

100 *Xia li, wu neng yan zhi*

101 Xia rites, I can talk OBJ

102 The rites of the Xia, I could talk about them.

103 In the second structure NP_O [s NP_S V *zhi*], the first NP, NP_O, referring to the
104 object, clearly has to be analyzed as an external topic, and accordingly this
105 structure differs syntactically and semantically from the three instances of a
106 preverbal object in Classical Chinese. The external topic position is not only
107 available for the object, but also for different kinds of adjuncts; however, in
108 contrast to an adjunct, the topicalized object requires an overt pronominal copy in
109 its canonical position.⁷

110 In this paper, only the first structure, [NP_S NP_O *shi* / *zhi* V], will be at issue, since
111 only this structure can be and has been analyzed as a case of SOV word order. While
112 this structure appears quite frequently in Classical Chinese texts, its frequency has
113 already decreased. It has ceased to be productive in pre-medieval Chinese and—as
114 with all three structures with an object in preverbal position productive during the
115 Classical period—it gradually disappears. As one of the very few exceptional
116 structures with an object preceding the verb, it has been extensively discussed in the
117 linguistic literature, for example, by Wang (1980), Yin (1985), Ao (1983), Peyraube
118 (1997), Unger (1987), and Meisterernst (2000) to mention only a few.

⁷ This agrees to a certain extent with Rizzi's statement relating to Italian (1997, p. 289) that "if the topicalized constituent is the direct object, the clitic is obligatory." In a focalized construction, a pronominal copy is not permitted (Paris, 1979, p. 54: "focalizers do not allow the presence of a pronominal copy of the element on which they put focus," quoting Hagège: 1975, p. 218: "Au contraire, il ne peut y avoir reprise dans le cas de la focalisation...").

119 2 Two different cases of SOV in Classical Chinese

120 The present paper intends to challenge previous hypotheses concerning the structure
 121 $[NP_1 NP_2 shi / zhi V]^8$ and will carefully consider various functional differences
 122 between *shi* 是 and *zhi* 之. In order to reveal these differences, the distributional
 123 differences between structure A $[NP_1 NP_2 shi V]$ and structure B $[NP_1 NP_2 zhi V]$
 124 will be analyzed, and it will be shown that both constructions—although sometimes
 125 identical in the surface structure—are subject to different syntactic and semantic
 126 constraints. This analysis challenges the hypothesis proposed by Peyraube (1997)
 127 that structure A $[NP_1 NP_2 shi V]$, which is the predominant structure during the
 128 Classical period, has gradually been replaced by structure B $[NP_1 NP_2 zhi V]$ during
 129 the Warring States period.

130 2.1 Structural differences between $[NP_1 NP_2 shi V]$ and $[NP_1 NP_2 zhi V]$

131 As the following examples will show, both structures clearly differ syntactically.
 132 First, structural differences between *shi* and *zhi* are evident in the employment of
 133 negation markers.

134 2.1.1 $[NP_1 NP_2 shi V]$ and $[NP_1 NP_2 zhi V]$ with negation markers135 a) *Shi* with negation markers

136 Only two negation markers are permitted in the structure with *shi*: (1) the negative
 137 *fei* 非, which serves as the regular negation marker of a nominal predicate in
 138 Classical and Han-period Chinese (e.g., Pulleyblank 1995, p. 16), and (2) the
 139 combination of the modally neutral negative *bu* 不 and the morpheme *wei* 維, one
 140 of whose functions is to serve as the affirmative copula of a nominal predicate in
 141 pre-Classical texts.⁹ Only the structure $[(NP_1) NEG (fei \text{ or } bu \text{ wei}) NP_2 shi V]$ with
 142 the negation marker preceding NP_2 is available for the construction with *shi*, as the
 143 negation marker may not directly precede the verb.

145 (10) 今王非越 是圖 Guoyu: 19/3a/427

146 *Jin wang fei Yue shi tu*
 147 Now king NEG Yue SHI plan

148 'Now, it is not about Yue that the king is concerned.'

149 (11) 臣也 不唯其宗室 是暴大亂宋國之政. Zuo, Xiang 17

150 *Chen ye bu wei qi zong shi shi bao, da*
 151 Chen FIN NEG COP his ancestor house SHI cruel, great

⁸ NP_1 and NP_2 are usually analyzed as representing the subject-NP and the object-NP, respectively.

⁹ Accordingly, an analytic and a synthetic variant of a negation marker with the same semantic and syntactic implications can serve to negate sentences with a preposed object marked by *shi*. *Wei* as a verbal copula and as a marker of focalization has been comprehensively discussed in Djamouri (2001b), who assumes the following semantic values for *wei* and *bu* in the Shang bone inscriptions: WEI 維 indicates "assertive modality, 'be (the one who)'" and BU 不 indicates "assertive negation, 'be not'" (2001b, p. 144). A different analysis for *bu* has been presented in Takashima (1996, 365f).

152 *luan Song guo zhi Zheng*
 153 disorder Song state ZHI government
 ‘The minister, it is not only that he tyrannizes his own clan and house, he
 also brings great chaos to the state of Song...’

154 b) *Zhi* 之 with negation markers

155 With *zhi*, two different positions are available for the negation marker: (1) [(NP₁)
 156 NEG NP₂ *zhi* V], which is identical to the construction permitted with *shi*, and (2)
 157 [(NP₁) NP₂ *zhi* Neg V] with the negation marker immediately preceding the verb.
 158 Regarding the negation markers in the structure with *zhi*, they are not confined to *fei*
 159 or *bu wei*, but according to Yin (1985, p. 163) other negation markers can occur in
 160 this construction as well.

161 1. (NP₁) NEG (*fei* or *bu wei*) NP₂ *zhi* V

163 (12) 非 此 之 謂 也 *Guoyu* 18/1a/401
 164 *Fei ci zhi wei ye*
 165 NEG this ZHI mean FIN
 166 ‘This is not the meaning of it.’

167 2. (NP₁) NP₂ Neg V

169 (13) 是 之 不 務 而 又 焉 從 事。 *Zuo, Zhao, 32*
 170 *Shi zhi bu wu, er you yan cong shi*
 171 This ZHI NEG strive-for CON further how follow affair
 172 ‘If we do not care about this, how would we follow another affair?’

173 In example (13), the verb is negated by the simple neutral negation marker *bu*.¹⁰ In
 174 addition to the differences in the licensing of negation markers between the struc-
 175 tures with *shi* and *zhi*, *zhi* is required when the NP_O is a pronoun, and, additionally,
 176 it appears in a few particular structures that are highly idiomatic.

177 2.1.2 NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V with a pronominal NP₂

178 When the NP_O is a pronoun, *zhi* regularly appears instead of *shi*. No instances of a
 179 pronoun resumed by *shi* seem to be attested in the literature.

181 (14) 吾 是 之 依 兮 *Guoyu* 9/1b/230
 182 *Wu shi zhi yi xi*
 183 I this.one ZHI rely on FIN
 184 ‘On this one will I rely.’

¹⁰ In example (13), the pronominal object appears in a contrastive focus construction and thus differs from examples (4) and (5), which exemplify the regular position of pronominal objects in negated sentences immediately following the negation marker. This construction will be discussed in more detail later.

2.1.3 The structure [NP₁ NP₂ zhi V] in rhetorical questions and/or in combination with particular verbs

185 (a) *Zhi* mainly appears in rhetorical questions, particularly with the verb *you* 有
186 'have' in the structure [*he* NP₂ *zhi* *you*].

188 (15) 王何異之有 Guoyu 2/4b/44
189 Wang he yi zhi you
190 King what difference ZHI have
191 'The king, how does he differ from this?'

192 (b) *Zhi* often appears in phrases with the verb *wei* 謂.

194 (16) 不失賞刑之謂也。 Zuo, Xi, 28
195 Bu shi shang xing zhi wei ye
196 NEG neglect reward punishment ZHI mean FIN
197 'Not to neglect rewards and punishments is what it means.'

198 In cases like these, it is always *zhi* that appears in the position following the object
199 NP and preceding the verb.

200 These examples clearly show the different syntactic and semantic constraints of
201 structure A [NP₁ NP₂ *shi* V] and structure B [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V]. Structure A is more
202 confined in its employment with negation markers than structure B. Structure B
203 appears mainly in different idiomatic phrases that are less likely to be replaced than the
204 construction with *shi*. In the following, both structures will be analyzed in more detail.

205 3 Analysis of structure A: NP₁ | NP₂ | *shi* 是 | V

206 Traditionally, researchers, for example, Ao (1983) and Unger (1987), have analyzed
207 the structure NP₁ | NP₂ | *shi* 是 | V as one of the rare but unambiguous cases of
208 object preposing in Classical Chinese. Historically, different morphemes are
209 attested in the position of *shi* 是; according to Yin Guoguang (1985), the following
210 morphemes can occur: *shi* 是, *zhi* 之, *si* 斯, *yu* 于, *lai* 來, and *jue* 厥, with *shi* 是
211 and *zhi* 之 being more frequent than the other morphemes. Some of these mor-
212 phemes, namely, *shi*, *zhi*, *si*, and *jue*, basically function as pronouns in different
213 distributions, but the others (e.g., *yu* and *lai*) do not.¹¹ The structure apparently has
214 its origin in the *Shijing*, where it is assumed to appear first in order to place the verb
215 into the rhyming position.

216 In Classical times, this construction—which, according to Yin (1985) and many
217 others, is characterized by the obligatory occurrence of *shi* (or one of the other previously

¹¹ Ding (1983) proposes an analysis of these morphemes as markers 助詞 of the preposed object indicating stress and not as pronouns. A similar analysis of *lai* 來 and *yu* 于, but also of *shi* and *zhi* has been presented in He et al. (1985, pp. 339, 731, 506, and 806). To support this analysis, other morphemes can be mentioned which are probably cognates of *shi* and which have precisely the function to stress the preceding syntactic element, one of these is *shi* 'really' which can serve to stress the preceding subject, including pronouns, but which also occasionally appears following an object and can accordingly be analyzed as a pronoun or an auxiliary word *zhuci* 助詞 (*Gudai hanyu xuci cidian* (2000, p. 509).

mentioned morphemes)—serves to license a contrastive interpretation of the object-NP (Pulleyblank 1960, 39ff, Unger 1987, p. 74). Accordingly, in this paper it will be hypothesized that it can be analyzed as a focus function with the object moved into focus phrase and with *shi* as a resumptive pronoun obligatorily marking the construction [NPs NP_O *shi* V].¹² The object is moved from its postverbal position into the Spec-position of the Focus phrase. The analysis of *shi* itself as a focus marker is problematic, since it can appear recurrently with one and the same preposed object (see example 29). It is generally assumed that the demonstrative pronoun *shi* 是 ‘this’ qualifies to occur as a marker of the object in this position, since it often appears in the preverbal position in Pre-Classical Chinese when it refers to the object on its own. *Shi* as a demonstrative pronoun, ‘this,’ ‘the one we are talking about,’ belongs to the short distance-anaphora, but it clearly differs from *ci* 此 ‘this,’ in its range of meaning. Djamouri (2001a, p. 170) defines *shi* as establishing a relation of adequacy between the subject of the discourse and the moment of utterance: “Toutes les fois que le locuteur veut exprimer une adéquation entre le JE de discours et l’instant d’énonciation, il emploiera *shi*.” This particular function can certainly be considered the basis of the later function of *shi* as a copula.¹³ In the Classical language, the preverbal position of *shi* is already obsolete, there are only very few instances with *shi* in this position.

237 (17) 小人 是 懼 Guoyu: 10/4a/251
 238 *Xiao ren shi ju*
 239 Small man this fear
 240 ‘This I fear.’

In general, the pronoun *shi* 是 occurs only infrequently as the object whether in pre- or in postverbal position, though there are a few instances of *shi* in postverbal position, as in the following example:

245 (18) 予 不 能 順 是。 Shiji: 2; 80
 246 *Yu bu neng shun shi*
 247 I NEG can follow this
 248 ‘I cannot follow this.’

In the following discussion, an analysis of *shi* 是 in the OV structure as a resumptive pronoun, as a head X⁰ that takes a very restricted VP as its complement, will be proposed. It will be assumed that *shi* 是—without being actually anaphoric itself in this construction—qualifies for this function due to the fact that, as an object pronoun, it is historically licensed in preverbal position and also on account of certain syntactic evidence.¹⁴ Another feasible analysis of *shi* 是 would be as a

¹² According to Rizzi, among others, an element bearing focal stress introduces new information, whereas the topic usually expresses old information. However, Paul (2005) points out that topics in Mandarin Chinese are not automatically associated with old information.

¹³ A detailed analysis of the development of the copula *shi* has been provided by Peyraube and Wiebusch (1994).

¹⁴ Ding’s (1983) analysis, and that of He et al. (1985) (which is re-presented in *Gudai Hanyu xuci cidian* (2000)) of *shi* as a stress marker provides some support to this hypothesis, since a stress marker can have its origin in an anaphor referring to the preceding NP.

255 morpheme indicating stress, maybe an adverb similar to the adverb *shi* 實, occurring
 256 in the regular position for adverbs, comparable to the analysis of *dou* 都 and *ye* 也
 257 presented in Shyu (1995, p. 8). Some counterevidence against this hypothesis may be
 258 provided by the fact that *shi* 是 as a potential stress marker in this position is confined
 259 to nonpronominal NP_{OS}, whereas *shi* 實, which basically appears in adverbial
 260 function, is apparently not subject to a similar constraint when focalizing the sub-
 261 ject.¹⁵ Another hypothesis is proposed in Feng (1996) in which the construction [NP_S
 262 NP_O *shi* V] is analyzed as a case of “clitic doubling” (Feng 1996, p. 350) due to
 263 prosodic constraints. In this construction, the verb and the pronoun (*shi* or *zhi*), after
 264 being cliticized to the verb, form “a clitic-verb complex at the end of the sentence. . .
 265 Therefore, [*zhi* you] and [*shi* cong] satisfy the stress realization with a single foot”
 266 (Feng 1996, p. 359).¹⁶ In the structure [NP_S NP_O *shi* V], NP_O is most frequently
 267 instantiated by a lexical noun, which can be either animate or inanimate.¹⁷ Pre-
 268 dominantly NP_S—including quite complex NP_S (e.g., nominalized VPs)—appear in
 269 this construction, but clausal objects can also be focalized by being preposed.¹⁸

270 A pronoun cannot appear as NP_O in the structure with *shi*, which—along with
 271 other syntactic evidence—distinguishes it from the *lian* . . . *dou/ye* focalization

¹⁵ Unger (1992, p. 187) provides the following example for *shi* 實 in this function:

- (i) 我實不德，齊師何罪？ Zuo, Zhuang 8
Wo shi bu de, Qi shi he zui?
 I really NEG virtue, Qi army what guilt
 ‘It was really us who were without virtue—what guilt did the army of Qi have?’

¹⁶ Although this paper does not agree with Feng’s hypothesis that the cases of object preposing are “remnants of SOV forms” (Feng 1996, p. 349), the author concedes that prosodic constraints cannot be excluded in the obligatory employment of *shi* in the discussed construction [NP_S NP_O *shi* V]. Prosody and the tendency to have a fixed number of syllables in a clause certainly play an important role in Classical Chinese.

¹⁷ According to Paul, (2005, p. 13, quoting Hou (1979)), [+human] DPs including proper names (of persons) and pronouns cannot be preposed, a restriction which is not applicable to the *lian* . . . *dou/ye* construction and which argues for their analysis as internal topics instead of focus.

¹⁸ In this regard this Classical Chinese structure behaves quite similarly to the focalization construction with *lian* . . . *dou* in Modern Mandarin. The following example presents some evidence for a preposed clausal object, a VP including a PP preceding the verb and resumed by *shi*:

- (i) 唯與讒人鈞是惡也。 Guoyu: 8/3a/209
Wei yu chan ren jun shi wu ye
 Only with slander person together SHI hate FIN
 ‘To make a common course with a slanderous person is what I hate.’

The focalization construction with *lian* . . . *dou* in Modern Mandarin can, according to Shyu (1995, p. 12), consist of the following constituents: “Constituents immediately following *lian* have to be maximal projections, and they can be NPs, VPs or CPs, including duration, frequency, temporal phrases, and complement clauses of factive verbs, modal verbs, etc., . . .” Among others, she provides the following example (example 11 in her thesis):

- (ii) (Zhangsan) *lian* [_N shangke de shihou] *dou/ye* chi tang
 Zhangsan LIAN at class’s time DOU/YE eat candy
 ‘Zhangsan eats candy even during class.’ This is not the only difference from the *lian* . . . *dou/ye* focalization constructions.

272 construction of Modern Mandarin in which pronominal objects are permitted.¹⁹ The
 273 NP_O can be additionally marked by the morpheme *wei* 唯 preceding it,²⁰ but in
 274 contrast to *shi*, which appears obligatorily with a preverbal NP_O, *wei* alone cannot
 275 mark a preposed object in Classical Chinese.²¹ This rule is quite strictly applied in
 276 Classical texts but—as already mentioned—does not hold for Pre-Classical texts,
 277 where instances of a preposed object only marked by *wei* are attested (see, e.g.,
 278 Djamouri 2001b, 156f for examples from the Shang bone inscriptions, but there are
 279 also a few instances in the *Shang shu*). Djamouri demonstrates (ibidem) that *wei*
 280 retains its syntactic and semantic features as a marker of focalization of different
 281 syntactic constituents. This analysis provides some arguments for the analysis
 282 proposed in this paper of the construction [NP_S NP_O *shi* V] as a copula construction
 283 in which the copula *wei* has ceased to be the obligatory marker, and instead the later
 284 introduced marker *shi* becomes obligatory.²² A possible explanation for the intro-
 285 duction of *shi* into the construction may be the fact that *wei* in general lost its
 286 function as a copula, retaining it only in constructions such as the one discussed
 287 here, and that accordingly a different marker, which in the end became the only
 288 obligatory one, had to be added to make the construction unambiguous.²³ This
 289 adheres well with Wang's hypothesis that the combination of *wei* and *shi* has to be

¹⁹ See footnote 17.

²⁰ A comprehensive discussion on *wei* 唯 in Shang period texts is presented in Djamouri (2001b) (see footnote 10). Historically, besides *wei*, the focalizing morphemes *hui* 惠 and *qi* 其 can appear in these texts. These morphemes can serve to focalize different noun phrases—they are not confined to the object. In these texts, the marker *shi* 是 following the object-NP is not yet attested. According to Wang (1980, p. 362) the combination of both markers *wei* 唯 and *shi* 是 is a mixture of old and new structures.

²¹ As one of the anonymous reviewers pointed out, there are actually examples of object-NPs in Classical Chinese that are not marked by *shi* 是, such as:

- (i) 何城不克? Zuozhuan, Xi, 4
He cheng bu ke
 What city NEG conquer
 'Which city would they not conquer? / or: Which city would not be conquered?'

In this example, the NP_{patient} is modified by a *wh*-pronoun and constitutes the only NP preceding the verb. Two different analyses seem to be possible: (1) The verb is transitive and the object is preposed, which is as a rule the case with object NPs modified by a *wh*-pronoun. However, it has to be conceded that, according to Yin (1985, p. 164) and others, the preposed object is usually marked by the resumptive pronoun *zhi* (instead of *shi*) and does not appear on its own. (2) The verb has to be analyzed as appearing in a middle (ergative) construction and the NP_{patient} occupies the subject position. In any case, an NP modified by a *wh*-pronoun has to be distinguished from those NPs discussed in this section and is on a regular basis never resumed by *shi* 是. These NPs will be shortly discussed in Sect. 4.3.

²² As Paul and Whitman (2008, 420f) point out, a similar analysis seems to be possible for *shi* 是 as a matrix verb which under certain conditions can be left out in the *shi* ... *de* construction in Modern Mandarin.

²³ In this regard, once again, it can be compared with the *lian* ... *dou* construction in which according to Shyu (1995, p. 32) "... *lian* itself cannot serve as focus function, since it can be physically null. It is the co-occurrence of *lian* and *dou* that constitutes focus interpretation," and "*lian* is optional while *dou/ye* is obligatory" (ibidem).

290 considered a mixture of old and new structures. As already mentioned, a negation
 291 marker can precede only NP_O, but not the verb.²⁴ There are only two negation
 292 markers available for this construction: *fei* 非 and *bu wei* 唯, both of which serve
 293 the same function as *wei* in the affirmative, namely, the additional focaliza-
 294 tion—here in a negative sense—of the inverted object. The fact that one of the two
 295 negation markers available is the negative copula of a nominal sentence *fei* and that
 296 the second consists of the ancient copula *wei* and the negation marker *bu* argues for
 297 the analysis of *wei* in this construction as a copula that attracts the object and
 298 licenses its preposed position. In most of the instances, the subject is not present in
 299 the surface structure of the sentence. Temporal adverbs such as *jiang* 將 marking
 300 future tense and modal adverbs such as *gu* 固 “certainly”²⁵ always precede the
 301 NP_O.²⁶ PPs either preceding or following the focalized phrase, the preposed object,
 302 are apparently not attested in the literature.

303 In the following, a few representative examples for structure A [NP_S NP_O *shi* V]
 304 are presented.

305 3.1 Examples without *wei* 唯

307 (19) 將災是備禦而召之 *Guoyu*: 3/11a/87
 308 *Jiang zai shi bei yu er zhao zhi*
 309 FUT catastrophe SHI provide-for oppose CON invite OBJ
 310 ‘... and if he was supposed to take precautions against the catastrophe,
 but invites it ...’

311 (20) 將虢是滅. 何愛於虞. *Zuo, Xi, 5*
 312 *Jiang guo shi mie, he ai yu Yu*
 313 FUT Guo SHI destroy, what feel at Yu
 314 ‘And if it really destroys Guo, what kind of feelings will it have
 about Yu?’²⁷

²⁴ This distribution has already been shown in Yin (1985, p. 163). In this regard, too, the construction evidently differs from the *lian ... dou/ye* construction, in which the FP (focusphrase) has to precede the negation marker.

²⁵ Examples for the modal adverb *gu* 固 are attested (e.g., in *Guoyu* 4/3a/111).

²⁶ Contrastively, with the *lian ... dou/ye* FP, obligatory post-subject adverbs are able to either precede or to follow the FP. Additionally *lian ... dou/ye* cannot occur after deontic modals, but can follow epistemic modals: the maximal projection FP precedes negation, deontic modals, PPs, and manner adverbs (Shyu 1995, pp. 57, 62). The fact that modal and aspectotemporal adverbs in Classical and Han period Chinese always precede the FP argues for their being licensed by I and not VP—in Modern Mandarin they can, according to Shyu (1995, p. 61, referring to Tang 1990), be licensed by both I and in VP—whereas manner adverbs if they are attested at all should evidently be licensed by VP, as they are in Modern Mandarin.

²⁷ A quotation of this instance is found in *Shiji*: 39, p. 1647.

- 315 (21) 子為司寇·將盜是務去·若之何不能· Zuo, Xiang, 21
 316 Zi wei si-kou, jiang dao shi wu
 317 You be minister-of-justice, FUT robber SHI work.at
 318 qu, ruo-zhi-he bu neng
 319 remove, what.about NEG can
 320 ‘You are the minister of justice and you have to endeavor to keep
 321 robbers away, why are you not able to do so?’
 322

323 In all three examples, the temporal and modal adverb *jiang* usually indicating future
 324 values precedes the NP_O. In example (19), the preposed object has the feature
 325 [–human]; in example (20), it has the feature [+/–human] since the name of a state
 326 can always be regarded as also metonymically referring to the ruler of the state; and
 327 in example (21) it has the feature [+human].

328 3.2 Examples with *wei* 唯

- 330 (22) 是時也王事唯農是務 Guoyu: 1/7a/19
 331 Shi shi ye wang shi wei nong shi wu
 332 This time FIN king affair COP agriculture SHI work.at
 333 ‘At this time, it was [just] agriculture that the royal services
 were interested in, ...’

- 334 (23) ... 而唯女是崇 Guoyu: 6/2a/159
 335 Er wei nü shi chong
 336 CON COP woman SHI esteem
 337 ‘... but it was [only] women he loved.’

- 338 (24) ... 唯命是聽 Guoyu: 10/7b/258
 339 Wei ming shi ting
 340 COP order SHI listen
 341 ‘It was [only] the order that he listened to.’

342 Example (24) represents one of the most frequently occurring phrases in this
 343 structure. It is one of the phrases that are preserved—mainly in quotations—in, for
 344 instance, the Pre-Medieval text *Shiji*, represented by the following example:

- 346 (25) ... 亦唯命是聽 Shiji: 40;1702
 347 Yi wei ming shi ting
 348 Also COP order SHI listen
 349 ‘... even then it is [only] the order I would listen to.’

350 In example (25) and in the following example (26), an adverb precedes the copula
 351 *wei* and the preposed object—in example (25), it is the adverb *yi* 亦 ‘also,’ and
 352 in example (26) it is the temporal and modal adverb *jiang* 將 as in examples
 353 (19–21); this is the regular position for aspecto-temporal and modal adverbs in
 354 this structure.

- 356 (26) 將唯子是聽. Zuo, Ding, 1
 357 Jiang wei zi shi ting
 358 FUT COP You SHI listen
 359 ‘... and it is [only] you, sir, will we listen to.’

360 In example (26), the character *zi* 子 ‘son, child,’ which can also serve as a respectful
 361 form of address corresponding to a second person pronoun, is resumed by *shi*,
 362 whereas in examples (8) and (35), it appears in structure B [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V] with
 363 *zhi*.²⁸

- 365 (27) 唯力是視. Zuo, Xi, 24
 366 COP li shi shi
 367 Only strength SHI look.at
 368 ‘It was strength (success) what I had in mind.’

369 The following example (28) is quite similar to example (27), except for the fact that
 370 it is one of the rare cases where an overt subject NP precedes NP_O.

- 372 (28) 余唯利是視 Zuo, Cheng 2
 373 Yu wei li shi shi
 374 I COP advantage SHI look-at
 375 ‘It was advantage [alone] what I have in mind.’

- 376 (29) 乃維四方之多罪逋逃是崇是長. 是信是使. 俾暴虐于百
 377 Nai wei si fang zhi duo zui bu
 378 Then COP four direction SUB many guilt flee
 379 姓. 以姦軌商國. Shiji: 4;122²⁹
 380 tao shi chong shi zhang, shi xin, shi
 381 flee SHI honour, SHI promote, SHI trust, SHI
 382 shi bei bao nüe yu bai xing, yi
 383 employ, cause cruel brutal at hundred clan, thus
 384 jian-gui Shang guo
 385 cause-rebellion Shang state.
 386 ‘Then it was [only] those from all over the world who had to flee because
they had committed a great crime that he honored and promoted, that he
 trusted and employed, and he caused cruelty for the people and chaos and
 rebellion for the state of Shang.’

387 In example (29), the object shared by four different successive verbs—a very
 388 complex nominalized VP object—is preposed and marked by *wei* 維 and *shi* 是.
 389 Whereas the object NP introduced by the copula *wei* occurs only once, *shi* is

²⁸ Another instance with *shi* appears in Zuo, Ai 6. This does not contradict the constraint that personal pronouns are not permitted in the construction with *shi*, since *zi* 子, although regularly employed as a polite quasi-pronoun, does not genuinely belong to the class of personal pronouns.

²⁹ This instance is an almost literal quotation from the *Shang shu, Zhou shu (Shisanjing 183)* ch.

390 resumed in front of each of the successive verbs. The slot for the preposed object
 391 remains empty, but each VP is preceded by the resumptive pronoun *shi* 是. A con-
 392 siderable number of examples of this structure—including instances with a clausal
 393 object—appears particularly in the *Shijing*, but also in the *Zuo zhuan*. Both
 394 [+human] and [-human] objects are attested in the structure additionally marked by
 395 *wei*.

396 3.3 Examples with a negation marker in the structure [NP_S NEG NP_O *shi* V]

397 3.3.1 Examples with *bu wei* 不唯

398 Examples for *bu wei* preceding a preposed object resumed by *shi* are not very
 399 frequent, but they are more common than those with *fei* preceding a preposed
 400 object.³⁰

401 Examples (30) and (31) represent unambiguous cases of the copula structure with
 402 the negation marker relating to *wei* alone and not to the embedded verb.

404 (30=11) 臣也不唯其宗室是暴. 大亂宋國之政. Zuo, Xiang, 17
 405 *Chen ye bu wei qi zong shi shi bao, da*
 406 Minister FIN NEG COP his clan house SHI cruel, great
 407 *luan Song guo zhi zheng*
 408 chaos Song state SUB government
 409 ‘The minister, it is not only that he tyrannizes his own clan and house,
 he also brings great chaos to the state of Song, ...’

³⁰ In the *Shisanjing*, ten instances of *bu wei* are attested, all of which appear in the *Zuo zhuan*, and in most of them (six in total) *bu wei* follows the modal verb *gan* 敢.

- (i) 敢不唯命是聽. Zuo, Xuan, 2³⁰
Gan bu wei ming shi ting
 Dare NEG COP order SHI listen
 ‘Can we dare that it is not the order to which we listen!?’

According to Unger (1987, p. 76), the analysis of these phrases has to be [*gan bu* 敢不] VP, an analysis that also has been conceived as possible by one of the anonymous reviewers. Against this analysis argues the fact that in the very common sequence *gan bu* VP, *bu* almost exclusively immediately precedes the embedded verb (the only exception being the intervention of the reflexive pronoun *zi* 自 and very occasionally a manner adverb); if the embedded verb has an inner argument, this always follows the verb. Accordingly, it can be assumed that in the example presented earlier *gan* takes a VP as its complement, the matrix verb of which is *wei*; the object of the embedded verb is focalized, and the structure does not differ from the independent examples discussed in this section. An additional argument can be provided by the fact that in the *Wu xing pian*, a late Warring States text (TSL) *gan* takes an intransitive VP *bu wei* without any addition as its argument:

- (ii) 莫敢不唯 Wu xing pian 五行篇, 22 (cf. TLS)
Mo gan bu wei
 no one dare NEG be.so
 ‘No one dares not to say yes.’

The phrase presented in example (i) is also literally attested in the *Shiji* 42, p. 1768. No instance is attested in the *Guoyu*.

- 410 (31) 鄭國而不唯晉命是聽·而或有異志者。 Zuo, Xiang, 9
 411 *Zheng guo er bu wei jin ming shi ting, er*
 412 Zheng state CON NEG COP Jin order SHI listen, CON
 413 *huo you yi zhi zhe*
 414 perhaps have different intention NOM
 415 ‘and regarding the state of Zheng, if it is not [only] the order of Jin he
 listens to, but it perhaps has other intentions, ...’

416 In both examples, the negated copula *wei* is preceded by a topicalized subject.

417 3.3.2 Examples with *fei* 非

418 Examples with *fei* in the construction with *shi* are extremely infrequent; the fol-
 419 lowing instance is one of two from the complete *Shisanjing*:³¹

- 421 (32) 非宅是卜·唯鄰是卜。 Zuo, Zhao 3
 422 *Fei zhai shi bu, wei lin shi bu*
 423 NEG residence SHI divine, only neighbour SHI divine
 424 ‘It is not with regard to the residence that one makes prognostications,
 but it is with regard to the neighbourhood.’

425 This example nicely exhibits the contrastive focus expressed by this construction. In
 426 general, the low frequency of occurrence of a preposed object marked by one of the
 427 two possible negation markers clearly indicates that this structure is quite marginal
 428 in Classical texts and apparently highly confined in its employment.

429 As the preceding description has demonstrated, in structure A [NP_S NP_O *shi* V] the
 430 word order is SUB (MOD/TEMP) (NEG) (COP) OBJ *shi* V. This structure is char-
 431 acterized by the copula *wei* that can, but does not have to, appear overtly to attract the
 432 NP_O, which supports an analysis of the NP_O in this structure as a focus. Additionally,
 433 the fact that the negation preceding the copula negates not the embedded verb, but the
 434 copula *wei* alone, which is the matrix verb in this construction, provides further
 435 evidence for an analysis of structure A as a focus (cleft) construction, where the
 436 presupposition remains unaffected by the negation. As a focalizing structure, the
 437 construction [NP_S NP_O *shi* V] expresses exclusiveness, which leads to the frequent
 438 translation of *wei* as “only” and its reanalysis as an adverb. Modal and aspectual
 439 adverbs precede the copula *wei* and accordingly the FP, which argues for a location
 440 of FP under TP or AspP.³² NP_O, which traditionally has been analyzed as preverbal,

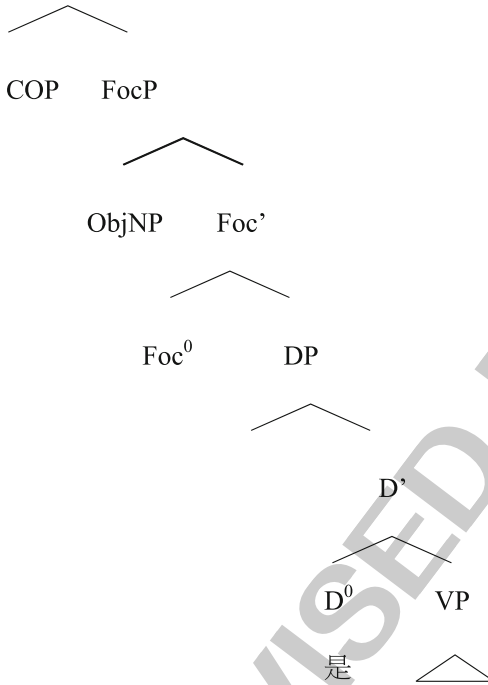
³¹ In the *Shisanjing* only two examples appear in this construction from more than 600 examples with the negation marker *fei* 非. Another example is attested in the *Guoyu*:

- (i) 今王非越 是圖 Guoyu: 19/3a/427
Jin wang fei Yue shi tu
 Now king NEG Yue this plan
 ‘Now the king does not make plans regarding Yue.’

³² Since the exact architecture of the VP in Classical Chinese has not been established with any fully agreed precision yet, the author does not want to go into a detailed discussion on the question of whether or not there is actually a TP in Classical Chinese.

441 is in fact more appropriately analyzed as to the right of the copula, which constitutes
 442 the matrix verb in this construction. As the internal argument of the embedded verb,
 443 it is moved from its default position, which is postverbal, to the spec position in FP
 444 and thus precedes the embedded verb.³³ This structure will henceforth be labeled the
 445 “Copula Structure.” The VP constitutes the presupposed part, which cannot be
 446 questioned. The resumptive pronoun *shi* is analyzed as the head of a DP, which
 447 selects a very restricted VP, confined to the verb alone as its complement.

448 Structure A:



450

451 4 Analysis of structure B: NP₁ | NP₂ | zhi 之 | V

452 At first sight, this structure seems to be identical to structure A, the copula structure
 453 [NP_S NP_O *shi* V], except for the morpheme *zhi* following NP_O and preceding the
 454 verb. *Zhi* in this construction belongs to the morphemes listed by Yin (1985,
 455 p. 162). Just like *shi*, *zhi* predominantly functions as a pronoun, but in contrast to
 456 *shi* it is confined to the object in its reference. In addition to this function, it serves
 457 as a subordinating morpheme in all kinds of NPs, and it can serve to nominalize a
 458 VP when inserted between subject and verb. A third function of *zhi* is its function as

³³ Accordingly, structure A—though a focalization construction—differs syntactically from the focalization construction with *lian* ... *dou/ye* in Modern Mandarin.

459 a demonstrative pronoun.³⁴ But there are a few evident differences to structure A
 460 [NP_S NP_O *shi* V], which will be discussed in detail later (e.g., in construction B
 461 [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V], not only are negation markers permitted immediately preceding
 462 the verb, but also modals, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.)³⁵ As the following
 463 discussion will show, not only do structure A and structure B differ considerably in
 464 a number of details, but the various structures that have traditionally been regarded
 465 as substructures of B actually require different syntactic analyses and accordingly
 466 cannot be considered to make up one homogeneous structure.

467 4.1 *Zhi* always appears when NP₂ is a pronoun.

469 (33) 吾是之依兮 Guoyu 9/1b/230
 470 *Wu shi zhi yi xi*
 471 I this.one ZHI rely on FIN
 472 ‘On this one will I rely.’

473 In example (33) the subject is present, and no syntactic element precedes the object
 474 NP. But as the following examples (34) and (35) show, in this structure, too, the
 475 NP_O can be preceded by the copula *wei* just as in structure A.

477 (34) 唯此之懷 Guoyu: 3/5a/75
 478 *Wei ci zhi shen*
 479 COP this ZHI care.about
 480 ‘It is this they cared about.’

481 (35) 不才·吾唯子之怨· Zuo, Wen, 7
 482 *Bu cai, wu wei zi zhi yuan*
 483 NEG talent, I COP you ZHI be-angry
 484 ‘If you are not trained, then it is you I will be angry with.’³⁶

485 4.2 *Zhi* always appears when the verb is negated

485 In contrast to structure A, and similar to the *lian ... dou/ye* focalization con-
 486 struction of Modern Mandarin, the verb in structure B can be negated. This pat-
 487 terning is not confined to a sentence with a pronominal object.

489 (36) 是之不務而又焉從事· Zuo, Zhao, 32
 490 *Shi zhi bu wu, er you yan cong shi*
 491 This ZHI NEG strive-for, CON further how follow affair
 492 ‘If we do not care about this, how would we follow another affair?’

³⁴ The different functions of *zhi* 之 and their historical development have been discussed in Djamouri (1999).

³⁵ This has already been noted in Yin (1985, p. 170) who, among others, gives examples of the combination [NP_O *zhi* Prep V‘賓之介動’].

³⁶ In example (26), *zi* is resumed by *shi*.

- 493 (37) 吾斯之未能信. Lunyu, V, 5
 494 Wu si zhi wei neng xin
 495 I this ZHI NEG can trust
 496 'I cannot trust this yet.'

497 In examples (36) and (37), a pronominal object followed by *zhi* precedes both the
 498 negation marker and the verb.³⁷ In example (37), the verb is modified by an aux-
 499 iliary verb and additionally by the aspectual and modal negation marker *wei* 未,
 500 which primarily selects an event as its complement; this negation marker is not
 501 available for use in structure A.

502 The occurrence of a negation marker preceding V is also frequently attested with
 503 a lexical noun as the preposed object, as in the following examples (38) and (39):

- 505 (38) 其身之不能定 Guoyu: 4/11b/128
 506 Qi shen zhi bu neng ding
 507 His body ZHI NEG can consolidate ...
 508 'If one cannot consolidate oneself ...'³⁸

- 509 (39) 其父母之不親也 Han Fei, 10
 510 Qi fu mu zhi bu qin ye
 511 His father mother ZHI NEG love FIN
 512 'If someone does not love his parents ...'³⁹

513 As has been shown previously, in structure A with *shi*, negation markers and modal
 514 auxiliary verbs are confined to the position preceding the preposed object NP, and,
 515 accordingly, this distinguishes the two structures A and B. As the examples dem-
 516 onstrate, the VP following *zhi* is clearly subject to syntactic constraints that are
 517 different from those present in structure A.

518 It can be suggested that two different structures with *zhi* need to be assumed. The
 519 first structure is characterized by the copula *wei*: [NP_S *wei* NP_{O(pro)} *zhi* V], and this
 520 structure can be considered quite similar to structure A.⁴⁰ Accordingly, it will be
 521 referred to as structure A', a subtype of the copula structure. The second structure
 522 allows for a negation marker or a modal auxiliary preceding the verb: [NP_S NP_{O(pro)}

³⁷ Usually, in a negated sentence, the object pronoun can be expected to appear immediately preceding the verb and following the negation marker. If one assumes that this is the regular position for object pronouns, cases such as examples (36) and (37) have to be considered marked. An exact analysis of the preposed object pronoun in negated sentences is still a desideratum and has to be postponed to a separate study.

³⁸ As one of the anonymous reviewers pointed out, in this example *zhi* does not necessarily constitute the object marker, but can also be analyzed as the subordinating particle *zhi*, which, between the subject and the object, serves to nominalize the sentence. In this case, the NP *qi shen* 其身 would not be the object but the subject, and the transitive verb *ding* 定 would appear in a middle construction. This analysis cannot be excluded either syntactically or semantically.

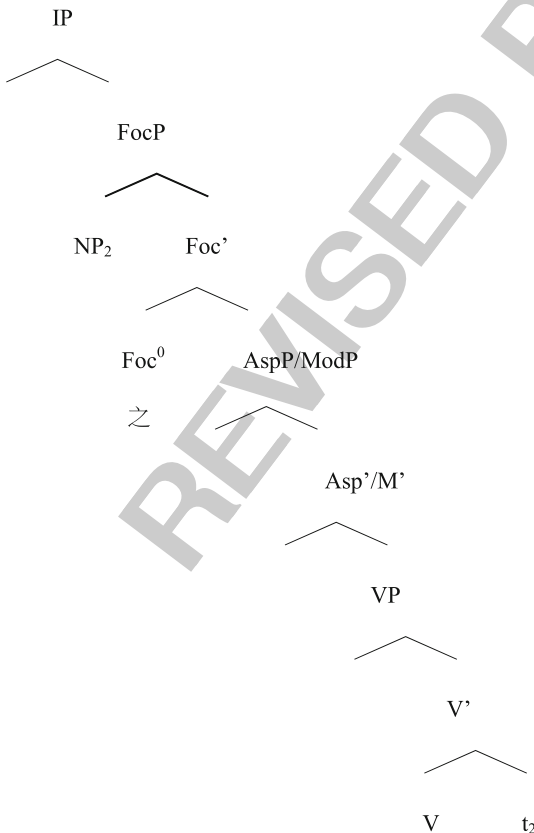
³⁹ Both examples are taken from Unger (1987, p. 81).

⁴⁰ This structure is not exclusively confined to pronominal objects, but can also occasionally appear with a lexical NP referring to the object:

- (i) 「父母於子，東西南北，唯命之從。」 Zhuang 2,6 (Zhuzi jicheng 3,43)
 Fu mu yu zi, dong xi nan bei, wei ming zhi cong
 Father mother Prep son, east west south north, FOC decree ZHI follow
 'Regarding parents treating their children, whether in the east or west, south or north, it is the decree they follow.'

523 *zhi* NEG/MOD V], which distinguishes this structure from structure A. Only this
 524 second structure will be referred as structure B. The occurrence of *wei* apparently bars
 525 the occurrence of a negation marker or a modal auxiliary verb directly modifying the
 526 verb. Generally speaking and independent of whether the NP_O is a pronoun or a
 527 lexical noun, it can be stated that if the verb is modified by a negation marker and/or a
 528 modal auxiliary verb, only structure B (henceforth the “focalization structure”) [NP_S
 529 NP_O *zhi* (NEG/MOD) V] is available. It is consequently necessary to differentiate two
 530 syntactic constructions, structure A, the “copula structure” [NPs (*bu*) *wei* NP_O *shi*
 531 V], which selects a very restricted VP and which has a variant with *zhi*: A': [NP_S
 532 (*bu*) *wei* NP_{O(proto)} *zhi* V] required when the object is pronominal (but not confined to
 533 it), and structure B, the focalization structure with *zhi* [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* NEG/MOD V],
 534 which is obligatory if the VP includes, for instance, a negation marker or a modal
 535 auxiliary verb, and in which the copula *wei* is not permitted. A different analysis can
 536 be proposed for this structure. I suggest that *zhi* is the head of a focus projection, and
 537 this head selects an aspectual or modal or negation phrase. The following repre-
 538 sentation of the structure is inspired by the representation for the *lian ...dou* con-
 539 struction by Shyu (1995, p. 66):

540 Structure B:



541 4.3 *Zhi* 之 in rhetorical questions, particularly with the verb *you* 有 ‘have’

542 *Zhi* mainly appears in highly idiomatic rhetorical questions, particularly with the
543 verb *you* ‘have’ in the structure 何 NP_O *zhi* V (*you*), but occasionally it also occurs
544 with a verb other than *you*, as in examples (40) and (41). Traditionally, these
545 phrases have been described as SOV constructions with a preposed object.⁴¹

547 (40) ... 何 德 之 報 Shiji: 39;1670
548 *He de zhi bao*
549 What/how virtue ZHI pay.back
550 ‘... how could one pay back virtue, then?!’

551 (41) 何 古 之 法 Shiji: 43;1810⁴²
552 *He gu zhi fa*
553 How former-times ZHI model
554 ‘How could one then take former times as a model?!’

555 Typical examples for the structure are the following:

557 (42) 王 何 異 之 有 Guoyu: 2/4b/44
558 *Wang he yi zhi you*
559 King what-about difference ZHI have
560 ‘The king, how does he differ from this?’

561 In example (42) an NP preceding *he* 何 is visible in the surface structure, which is
562 actually not a very frequent patterning. In traditional analyses, this NP is taken to be
563 the subject of the sentence, but it is more appropriate to consider it the topic of the
564 sentence, hence literally: ‘Regarding the king, what about the existence of any
565 differences.’

567 (43) 何 咎 之 有 · 慎 之 至 也 · Zhouyi, Xi shang
568 *He jiu zhi you, shen zhi shi ye*
569 What-about guilt ZHI have. Care ZHI culmination FIN
570 ‘How can there be guilt?! It is the culmination of carefulness.’

571 (44) 民 不 見 德 · 而 唯 戮 是 聞 · 其 何 後 之 有 · Zuo, Xi, 23
572 *Min bu jian de, er wei lu shi wen,*
573 people NEG see virtue, CON COP punishment SHI hear,
574 *qi he hou zhi you*
575 MOD what-about successor ZHI have

⁴¹ These phrases have also been discussed as idiomatic cases of a preposed object by Yin (1985, p. 166). Additionally, they have been discussed in Feng (1996, p. 353), where *zhi* is analyzed as a clitic which ‘is used to fill the prosodic weak position ...’ (Feng, *ibidem*).

⁴² The same instance is attested in ZGC: 221/11821.

576 'The people do not see any virtue and it is only punishment they hear about,
577 how can they then have successors?!'
578

579 Example (44) represents one of the most typical phrases in this construction (three
580 instances in *Zuo zhuan*). The second clause of the sentence exhibits structure A
581 with the copula *wei* visible in the surface structure.

583 (45) 夫晉何厭之有。 *Zuo, Xi, 30*
584 *Fu Jin he yan zhi you*
585 Well Jin what-about satisfaction ZHI have
586 'Well, how can Jin be satisfied with that?!

587 (46) 其奚哀悲之有 *Shiji: 10;434*
588 *Qi xi ai bei zhi you*
589 MOD what-about grief sad ZHI have
590 'How can there be grief and sadness?!

591 In example (46), the *wh*-operator *xi* 奚 'what, how' appears instead of *he* 何. In
592 addition to the instances with the verb *you*, a few examples with verbs different
593 from *you* are attested in the same construction. Whereas in the examples with *you*,
594 no modal auxiliaries occur preceding the verb—as the examples demonstrate, no
595 syntactic element can intervene between *zhi* and *you*—such elements are attested
596 with verbs different from *you*, as in examples (47) and (48).

598 (47) 何謀之敢慮 *Shiji: 67;2199*
599 *He mou zhi gan lu*
600 What-about plan ZHI dare consider
601 '... how could I dare to consider the plan?!

602 (48) 其何土之能得 *Zuo, Zhuang, 32*
603 *Qi he tu zhi neng de*
604 MOD what-about land ZHI can get
605 'How can they get land, then?!

606 Examples (47) and (48) both contain a modal auxiliary verb. In (47), it is the same
607 auxiliary verb *gan* 敢 'dare' that also appears in some of the examples in structure A
608 (see footnote 31); in example (48), it is the modal auxiliary verb *neng* 能. But, in
609 contrast to structure A, the copula structure, where the auxiliary verb precedes the
610 focalized NP_O (and the copula *wei*), in both examples presented here the auxiliary
611 verb precedes the verb that is not permitted in structure A; additionally, the copula
612 *wei* never appears in this structure. These observed syntactic restrictions rule out
613 structure A, but not structure B, the focalization structure, as a possible analysis of
614 *wh*-NP_{Obj} preceding a verb.

615 As a structure competing with the focalization structure B, a third structure C will
616 now be posited: [NP₁ *he* NP₂ *zhi* NP₃ = V], which differs from both focalizing

617 structures, the copula structure A and the focalization structure B. Structure C
 618 occurs particularly in those instances with the existential verb *you* ‘have’. In these
 619 instances, the *wh*-operator will be analyzed as an inverted predicate and the
 620 sequence [NP₂ *zhi* NP₃ = V] as the subject NP. As an argument for the analysis of
 621 the structure [*he* NP *zhi* V] as a variant of the focalization structure B, it can be
 622 noted that the linguistic literature has indeed sometimes analyzed the *wh*-pronoun
 623 *he* [何] preceding NP₂ as a quantifying modifier ‘which’ in a preposed object NP.⁴³
 624 In such an analysis, the *wh*-NP_{Obj} appears in preverbal position in analogy to
 625 *wh*-pronouns referring to an object that regularly appears in preverbal position in
 626 Classical Chinese.

627 However, in contrast to *wh*-object pronouns, *wh*-NPs are regularly accompanied
 628 by a resumptive pronoun, although there are a few exceptions to this rule (Unger,
 629 pp. 187, 186).⁴⁴ The interpretation of a *wh*-NP as focus is not problematic, since
 630 only the presupposed part, the predicate, cannot be questioned. However, an
 631 alternative analysis for these constructions—referred to as structure C—will be
 632 presented here. I suggest that the *wh*-operator *he* can be analyzed as an inverted
 633 predicate ‘what about’ in an exclamative question. This induces an analysis of the
 634 structure [NP₂ *zhi* V] following the *wh*-operator as the subject NP (i.e., the verb is
 635 analyzed as nominalized and as a nominal head with its inner argument as its
 636 modifier resulting in the translation: ‘what about the Ving of NP,’ ‘what about the
 637 existing = existence of successors,’ ‘what about the being possible = possibility to
 638 obtain land,’ ‘what about the paying back of virtue’.⁴⁵)

639 According to this analysis, the predicate, the *wh*-operator *he* is inverted by being
 640 moved to the left of the subject NP. In most of the instances, such an analysis is
 641 semantically more plausible than the analysis of the *wh*-pronoun as an adjective
 642 ‘what kind of successor can one have,’ ‘what kind of virtue can one pay back’. In
 643 case a NP₁ precedes *he* in the surface structure, this NP can be analyzed as an
 644 external topic, preceding the topicalized predicate, as in example (42): ‘Regarding
 645 the king, what about the existence of any differences/how can there be any
 646 differences?’ and so on. In such an analysis, this structure is completely different
 647 from the unambiguous cases of a focalized object attested in structure A and in

⁴³ This analysis has, for example, been proposed by Unger but also by Yin (1985, p. 166).

⁴⁴ See also footnote 22. Other examples are attested (e.g., in *Guoyu* 2/11b/58).

⁴⁵ A similar analysis of *he* in a comparable construction has been presented in Unger (1987, p. 39) and also the *Gudai hanyu xuci cidian* (2000, p. 200). According to Unger, *he* in this position can be analyzed as an inverted nominal predicate with the following NP as subject: NP_{pred} NP_{Subj} (*ye* 也), as in the following example quoted from Unger:

(i) 何憂之遠也

He you zhi yuan ye

How anxiety SUB farnom FIN

‘How far-reaching the anxiety is!’

Zuo, Xiang 29

Examples like these show exactly the same structure as those with *you* discussed earlier, but the structure with *you*—according to Unger—has to be analyzed as a case of object preposing. However, there is no syntactic evidence to distinguish the two structures and to support Unger’s different analyses for them. Additionally, Unger concedes (1987, p. 186) that most instances of *he*/NP/*zhi*/V do not represent cases of preposed *wh*-NPs and that an alternative, namely, an adverbial analysis of *he* in comparable constructions, often has to be preferred.

648 structure B. In structure C, the second NP, which is the object NP in A and B, is not
 649 analyzed as a preposed object, but as the inner argument of the verb (which is
 650 nominalized) appearing in the canonical position of the modifier of a nominal head:
 651 [_{NP} [_{NP₂} *zhi* NP_{3 = vnom}]].

652 Although in the data there may not be obvious syntactic evidence distinguishing
 653 structure B, the focalization structure with a preposed *wh*-NP_{Obj}, and structure C
 654 with a predicative *wh*-operator, for semantic reasons, structure C will be assumed to
 655 occur at least in those instances with the verb *you* 'have'. All these instances do not
 656 express real questions but are highly rhetorical and instead express exclamations. In
 657 analogy to these cases, in highly rhetorical questions where a nominalized verb
 658 different from *you* occurs, the same analysis as structure C will be assumed.
 659 However, in non-rhetorical questions, if verbs different from the nominalized verb
 660 *you* 有 appear, such sequences can best be analyzed as instantiations of the
 661 focalization structure B: [_{NPs} NP_O *zhi* NEG/MOD V], and it can be assumed that
 662 *zhi* as a marker of the focalized *wh*-object NP is added in analogy to the syntactic
 663 constraints on the focalization structure B with a non-*wh* NP_{Obj}.

664 4.4 *Zhi* in phrases with the verb *wei* 謂⁴⁶

665 Besides the idiomatic rhetorical questions with *you* 'have' and a few other verbs,
 666 structure B often appears in phrases with the verb *wei* 謂, which many linguistic
 667 authors have similarly analyzed as a case of object preposing (see, for example,
 668 Pulleyblank 1960, p. 40). However, as is the case with the construction with *you*,
 669 the construction with *wei* differs considerably from the copula structure A with
 670 *shi* and also from the focalization structure B. As in the construction with *you*, no
 671 syntactic element (i.e., no auxiliary verb as in structure B) can intervene between
 672 *zhi* and *wei*.⁴⁷ But different to the construction with *you*—though to a certain
 673 extent parallel with the copula structure A with *shi*—both NPs and VPs can
 674 appear in the position preceding *zhi*.⁴⁸ A VP preceding *zhi* can be regularly
 675 negated by the neutral negation marker *bu*, unlike in structure A, where only the
 676 negation markers *fei* and *bu wei* can occur in the position preceding the preposed
 677 object. This results in a sequence [_{NPs} *bu* VP *zhi* V] that is consequently different
 678 from structure A.

679 In virtue of the syntactic constraints affecting clauses with the verb *wei*, an
 680 analysis comparable to that proposed for idiomatic phrases with *you* seems to be
 681 more appropriate: this structure will be referred to as structure D. In structure D,
 682 I propose that *wei* should be analyzed as the head noun of a complex NP in a
 683 structure [_{NP} [_{NP₂/VP} *zhi* N_{3 = wei}]], and *zhi* appears in the function of a

⁴⁶ A comprehensive discussion of the different structures with *zhi wei* 之謂 has been presented in He (1982).

⁴⁷ This has already been stated by Yin (1985, p. 167).

⁴⁸ As stated earlier in the copula structure A, mainly NPs, including nominalized VPs, can appear, but it is not confined to them: clausal object VPs that have not been formally nominalized are also attested in this construction.

684 subordinator linking the modifying NP or VP to the head noun *wei*.⁴⁹ In this
 685 analysis, the modifying VP is not subject to any constraints regarding the
 686 employment of negation markers. Pragmatically, this structure very often appears at
 687 the end of a paragraph as a resumé of the preceding argumentation, exactly in the
 688 same position as the rhetorical and exclamative questions with *you* analyzed earlier.
 689 Both structures function as declarative statements (or exclamations), and this can be
 690 suggested to correspond semantically with their analysis as nominal phrases, an
 691 analysis that is further supported by the fact that they are regularly followed by a
 692 final particle typically used with nominal predication structures.⁵⁰

694 (49) 脣亡齒寒者·其虞統之謂也。 Zuo, Xi, 5
 695 *Chun wang chi han zhe, qi Yu Guo zhi*
 696 Lips disappear tooth cold NOM, MOD Yu Guo ZHI
 697 *wei ye*
 698 mean FIN
 699 ‘When the lips are gone, the teeth become cold, this certainly means Yu
 and Guo.’

700 (50) 其苟息之謂乎 Shiji: 39;1649
 701 *Qi Xun Xi zhi wei hu*
 702 MOD Xun Xi zhi wei FIN
 703 ‘This certainly means Xun Xi.’

704 (51) 是之謂不知務。 Meng, 7A, 46⁵¹
 705 *Shi zhi wei bu zhi wu*
 706 This ZHI mean NEG know duty
 707 ‘The meaning of this is, not to know the priorities.’

708 In example (51), the *wei* phrase serves as the subject of the sentence, literally
 709 translated: ‘The meaning of this would be to not know the priorities.’

711 (52) 不失賞刑之謂也。 Zuo, Xi, 28
 712 *Bu shi shang xing zhi wei ye*
 713 NEG neglect reward punishment ZHI mean FIN
 714 ‘Not to neglect rewards and punishments is what it means.’

715 (53) 不忌不克之謂也。 Zuo, Xi, 9
 716 *Bu ji bu ke zhi wei ye*
 717 NEG envy NEG conquer ZHI mean FIN
 718 ‘Neither to be envious nor to conquer is what it means.’

⁴⁹ This analysis would agree well with the one proposed in Gassmann (1997, p. 288), who assumes a nominal function ‘meaning, the said, the meant’ for *wei* 謂 and analyses the phrase *shi zhi wei* 是之謂 as NP with the meaning ‘the meaning of that,’ an analysis that can be traced back to Mullie (1947–1948).

⁵⁰ For this see also Yin (1985, p. 167).

⁵¹ Lau (1979, 2003, p. 308).

- 719 (54) 是詩也·非是之謂也。 Meng, 5A, 4⁵²
 720 *Shi shi ye, fei shi zhi wei ye*
 721 This ode FIN, NEG this ZHI mean FIN
 722 ‘This ode, it is not the meaning of this.’

723 Most of the instances of *fei* in both of the original structures A and B occur in
 724 phrases with *wei*, as in example (54) and in example (12). In these cases *fei* clearly
 725 has to be analyzed as the regular negation marker of a nominal predicate (‘is not NP
 726 *zhi* meaning’) and not as a focalizing negation marker as in the copula structure
 727 A.⁵³ According to the nominal analyses of structures C and D, both the rhetorical
 728 questions with *you* and the phrases with *wei* should be distinguished from the
 729 unambiguous cases of a focalized object.

730 5 Conclusion

731 This final section now summarizes conclusions reached in earlier parts of the paper
 732 with regard to the various structures for which the paper has argued. Before doing
 733 this, an additional brief remark is necessary about the general issue of word order in
 734 early forms of Chinese. It needs to be emphasized that if one were to assume that
 735 structures A and B might simply be two variants of one kind of object preposing,
 736 such sequences cannot be considered to be vestiges of an earlier SOV word order, as
 737 some linguists have assumed, but should be seen as instances of marked and clearly
 738 nonneutral word order, hence not the kind of data that can be used to motivate
 739 hypotheses of the basic word order present in a language. Furthermore, as the
 740 preceding discussion has clearly revealed, the syntactic differences between both
 741 structures are considerable, and in fact do not allow them to be identified as two
 742 variants of one and the same structure. Accordingly, different analyses have been
 743 proposed for structures A and B in the course of the paper. Structure A: [NP_S NP_O
 744 *shi* V], the copula construction, was analyzed as a focalization (cleft) construction
 745 with the object not in preverbal position, but to the right of the copula *wei* or one of

⁵² Lau (1979, 2003, p. 201).

⁵³ Nominal phrases with a head noun different from *wei* are attested in an identical structure negated by *fei*, as in the following example:

- (i) 非教之道也 Liji, Tong (Shisanjing 1604 下)
Fei jiao zhi dao ye
 NEG instruct ZHI principle FIN
 ‘This is not the correct principle for instruction.’

Additionally, in the *Guoyu* one instance of the negation marker *fei* preceding a personal pronoun followed by *zhi* and a verb is attested, which has been analyzed as a case of object preposing in Meisterernst (2000, p. 410):

- (i) 且罪非我之由 Guoyu: 5/5b/140
Qie zui fei wo zhi you
 Furthermore guilt NEG I ZHI proceed-from
 ‘And furthermore guilt is not something that comes from us.’

In this example, an analysis of the phrase *wo zhi you* as a predicative nominal phrase with a nominalized V, analogous to the cases with *wei*, cannot be excluded.

746 its negative variants *fei* and *bu wei* in the same position. Temporal and modal
 747 adverbs and modal auxiliary verbs always precede the FP. No negation markers
 748 directly preceding the verb are attested. In this focalization construction, negation
 749 only applies its semantic force to the copula introducing the preposed object and
 750 does not affect the presupposed verb: [NP_S (*bu*) *wei* NP_O *zhi* V].

751 What was initially labeled structure B [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V] is far more heterogeneous
 752 than structure A, and accordingly different analyses have been proposed in the
 753 preceding discussion for what has previously been regarded as one more or less
 754 homogeneous structure. The following constructions, which originally were all
 755 subsumed under structure B, have been distinguished as follows:

756 (1) Structure A', which is identical with structure A [NP_S NP_O *shi* V], except for the
 757 fact that the object is resumed by *zhi* instead of *shi*. This structure is required
 758 when the object is pronominal, but in later texts of the Warring States and Han
 759 periods it is not confined to such cases. As in structure A, the copula *wei* licenses
 760 the object NP [NP_S *wei* NP_{O(pro)} *zhi* V], which apparently bars the employment
 761 of a negation marker preceding the verb.

762 (2) The focalization structure B [NP_S NP_{O(pro)} *zhi* NEG/MOD V], which is required
 763 when V is additionally modified by a negation marker and/or a modal auxiliary
 764 verb. Instances of this construction are not infrequent, and they are not confined
 765 to pronominal objects. As a focalization construction they show the same
 766 constraints with regard to negation markers and such as the *lian ... dou/ye*
 767 construction of Modern Mandarin, but they differ considerably from structure A
 768 with the copula *wei*. Accordingly, they are not likely to replace structure A,
 769 although a very occasional replacement of *shi* by *zhi* within structure A in later
 770 texts cannot be excluded (see the example from the *Zhuang zi* in footnote 43).
 771 The structures A and B are the only ones that have been retained as genuine
 772 cases of an object preposed into focus position. Structure B is similar to the *lian*
 773 *... dou* construction in Modern Mandarin in that the FP always precedes
 774 negation (Shyu 1995, p. 55). An analysis of an the NP_O as an internal topic can
 775 be excluded, since the NP_O in this structure clearly differs syntactically from the
 776 bare preposed object in Modern Mandarin which, as Paul (2002, 2005) has
 777 shown, has to be analyzed as an internal topic.⁵⁴ NP_O clearly occupies a position
 778 below the one assumed for an internal topic by Paul.

779 For the idiomatic phrases with a *wh*-operator preceding NP₂, two different
 780 analyses have been assumed: in the first analysis, the *wh*-operator (NP_{Obj}) appears
 781 in preverbal (focus) position, and this construction is analyzed like the focalization
 782 structure B. This analysis can only be applied in the extremely infrequent cases in
 783 which the *wh*-phrase expresses a real question. In most of the cases, particularly
 784 with the nominalized verb *you*, the question is rhetorical in nature, and a different
 785 analysis has to be assumed—structure C. These instances, together with the idio-
 786 matic phrases with *wei*, represented by structure D, constitute together the greatest
 787 number of instances of the original structure B: [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V], and according to

⁵⁴ A different analysis, namely as a focus on a par with the *lian ... dou* construction has been presented in Shyu (2001).

788 my analysis they are no longer regarded as belonging to the set of constructions
 789 focalizing the object (i.e., as cases of SOV). They are analyzed as nominal sentences
 790 consisting of a (not formally) nominalized verb modified by its theme argument in
 791 the canonical position for nominal modifiers. The NP₁, if present, is analyzed as an
 792 external topic: regarding NP₁, it is the NP₃ of NP₂: [NP₁ [NP₂ *zhi* NP_{3(nomverb)}]]. In
 793 Structure C, the *wh*-operator *he* functions as an inverted predicate, and the NP [NP
 794 [NP₂ *zhi* NP_{3=you}]] is analyzed as the subject NP, a nominalized VP. In structure D,
 795 the sequence [NP [NP₂/VP *zhi* NP_{3=wei}]] is analyzed as the nominal predicate of the
 796 sentence. Both structures represent sentences with nominal predicates and not verbal
 797 predicates with an inverted object, and they differ structurally completely from the
 798 copula structure and the focalization structure represented by structures A and B,
 799 though this structural difference is not necessarily visible in the surface structure of
 800 the phrase.

801 It cannot be excluded that occasionally in Warring States texts, the resumptive
 802 pronouns *shi* and *zhi* marking focalization have been interchanged, but as the
 803 different analyses proposed for structure B: [NP₁ NP₂ *zhi* V] have demonstrated,
 804 their syntactic constraints differ considerably, and accordingly structure B cannot in
 805 general have served to replace structure A. Its higher frequency than structure A in
 806 Warring States texts is certainly due to the high amount of idiomatic phrases that
 807 continue to appear when structure A had already lost its productivity and only
 808 appears—though not infrequently—in quotations from Classical texts (e.g., in the
 809 *Shiji*). Additionally, according to my analysis, most of these instances are excluded
 810 from the focalization construction and can in fact no longer be considered to belong
 811 to the exceptional cases of SOV word order attested in Classical texts.

812 **Acknowledgments** An earlier version of this paper has been presented at the 4th Conference of the
 813 European Association of Chinese Linguistics in Budapest, January 20–22, 2006. I would like to thank the
 814 audience for their questions and comments. I am particularly indebted to Waltraud Paul for discussing this
 815 paper with me and also to two anonymous reviewers who helped to improve this paper by their valuable
 816 comments. All remaining errors are mine.

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