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The Syntax of *hou* 後 in Temporal Phrases

in Han Period Chinese

BARBARA MEISTERERNST

Abstract

*In this paper a unified account of the syntax of temporal phrases with the locative morpheme *hou* 後 followed by a NP_{temp} , a measure NP, is presented. Identical to bare noun phrase temporal adverbials, *hou*-phrases predominantly occur in sentence-initial/topic position and establish the temporal frame for the situation the predicate refers to; by default they refer to a point of time. According to the analysis presented, *hou* explicitly serves to relate one situation to a previous situation in the narrative; the NP_{temp} measures the interval, the period of time, elapsed since the previous situation took place, and accordingly the NP_{temp} is analysed as an appositional measure phrase. This analysis of the NP_{temp} yields an analysis of *hou* 後 as an adverbially employed noun which syntactically retains its nominal characteristics and thus permits the addition of an apposition. Additionally, the nominal analysis of *hou* is the only one which accounts for all syntactic variants of the *hou*-phrase in Han period Chinese.*

I. Introduction

1.1. Temporal Adverbials (TA)

In this paper the syntactic analysis of temporal phrases with the locative morpheme *hou* 後 is at issue. Semantically, temporal phrases which include the locative morpheme *hou* 後 usually refer to a point of time and accordingly they belong to the category of temporal adverbials TA.¹ In general, temporal adverbials (TA) are deictic; they can be distinguished into independent adverbials, i.e. calendar adverbials which refer to a particular time of fixed identity on the time axis, and dependent adverbials which relate the time expressed by the adverbial to a previously established point in time. According to Reichenbach (1947: § 51), three different temporal categories – namely, *speech time*, *event (situation) time*, and *reference time* – are relevant for the temporal analysis of an utterance.² Although Reichenbach's system has been developed to account for the different tenses expressed in the English verb, it can equally be employed to account for the semantic analysis of temporal adverbials. The category of temporal adverbials is of particular relevance in languages lacking the verbal category tense

¹The term TA has been introduced in Harkness (1987: p. 80).

²In my framework the term *event time* is replaced by *situation time*, since in many linguistic studies on the lexical aspect of the verb, the term *event* is confined to telic situations, namely, to accomplishments and achievements (Lyons, 1977), whereas the term *situation* can be employed as a more general term, referring to all possible lexical aspects.

such as Chinese, since in these languages it is the only means to express temporal relations in a sentence.³ Temporal adverbials indicating a point of time can be realised in different ways: a. by genuine adverbs as in example (1); b. by noun phrases as in example (2); and c. by prepositional phrases as in example (3).

- (1) 昔文王一動而功顯于千世, Shiji: 118;3085
Xi wen wang yi dong er gong xian yu qian shi
 Once Wen king one move CON success obvious PREP thousand generation
 “Once, king Wen moved just once and his success became obvious for a thousand generations
 ...”
- (2) 七年, 與魏王會平阿南. Shiji: 46;1894
qi nian, yu wei wang hui ping'e nan.
 seven year, with Wei king meet Ping'e south.
 “In the seventh year he met with the king of Wei at the south of Ping’e.”
- (3) 惠公以九月卒, 子圉立。 Shiji: 39; 1660
hui gong yi jiu yue zu, Ziyu li
 Hui duke PREP nine month die, Ziyu enthrone
 “Duke Hui died in the ninth month and Ziyu was enthroned.”

Regarding the syntax of temporal adverbials, two different positions are available for them: 1. the sentence-initial/topic position, being the more dominant position and 2. the preverbal position.⁴ They are excluded from the postverbal position. Genuine temporal adverbs can occur in both, sentence-initial and preverbal position, whereas bare noun phrase temporal adverbials, namely, calendar adverbials indicating a date, usually appear in sentence-initial/topic position, establishing the temporal frame of the situation referred to by the predicate. In the quite infrequent cases where they appear in preverbal position, they usually do not refer to a date, but rather indicate a span of time ‘within X time’ (Meisterernst 2004: pp. 211, 246). TAs with the preposition *yi* 以 referring to a date are confined to the preverbal position. Semantically, examples (2) and (3) represent the category of independent temporal adverbials, since they refer to “times of fixed identity on the time axis” (Meisterernst 2004: p. 217), whereas the majority of temporal adverbials are dependent, meaning that they depend on a previously established point on the time axis to be interpreted satisfactorily. In the following article, only one category of dependent adverbials will be discussed: these

³A comprehensive analysis of the structure of temporal adverbials in Classical and Han period Chinese has been presented in Meisterernst (2004), where the relevance of Reichenbach’s categorisation for the analysis of temporal adverbials in Chinese has been shown: “As far as Chinese is concerned, tenses are not marked morphologically and an unmarked predicate can only refer to either *situation time* or *speech time* – which of course do not need to be identical – without any *reference time* being involved. Nevertheless, the introduction of the category *reference time* seems to be justifiable by the fact that by means of temporal adverbials a point of time different from either *speech* or *situation time* can be referred to. Additionally, the introduction of this category for the analysis of point of time adverbials may be supported by Reichenbach’s assumption that in the presence of positional adverbs like *now* or *yesterday*, which are clearly point of time adverbials, only the modification of *reference time* is possible”. (Meisterernst 2004: 212f).

⁴See Meisterernst (2004: p. 210): “These adverbials are what Cinque (1999) calls ‘Circumstantial Adverbials’, which are typically realised in prepositional form or in bare NP form and which he assumes to be less rigidly ordered with respect to one another than genuine or – as Cinque categorises them – proper adverbs. According to Cinque these circumstantial adverbials cannot appear in any preverbal position except for the so-called absolute initial position of the sentence. Tang (2001) shows that this assumption does not apply to Chinese and that temporal adverbials can appear in both the sentence-initial and the preverbal position. Additionally, they can appear between a modal and the matrix verb. What Tang shows for modern Mandarin in general also holds true for Han period Chinese. But in contrast to what Tang assumes for modern Chinese, in Han period Chinese, temporal adverbials in the position between a modal and the matrix verb as in the following example are only very rarely found”.

are the temporal adverbials with *hou* 後 followed by a NP_{temp}, namely, a noun phrase which consists of a numeral and a temporal noun. Adverbials of this structure have the function to relate the situation time to a reference time preceding both situation time and speech time; consequently these temporal adverbials indicate posteriority. Within the temporal adverbial the semantic feature of posteriority is expressed by *hou* 後, whereas the NP_{temp} serves to measure explicitly the temporal distance between reference time and situation time. In this article, the exact syntactic determination of *hou* 後 within the syntactic and semantic framework for temporal adverbials presented in Meisterernst (2004) is at issue and a unified account for the different variants this structure can show will be presented.

1.2. Temporal adverbials with *hou* 後

As far as the syntactic determination of *hou* 後 ‘behind, rear; after, afterwards’ (Pulleyblank 1991: p.125) as part of a temporal adverbial is concerned, different analyses have been proposed in the linguistic literature, i.e. in Ancient Chinese it has been analysed as an adverb, a preposition, and besides this, as a temporal or locative noun (e.g. He Leshi *et al.*, 1985), and in Modern Chinese it has been analysed as a noun or a postposition (e.g. Peyraube, 1980). In general, analyses of the syntax of *hou* 後 are extremely rare in the linguistic literature.⁵

As an adverb, *hou* 後 regularly occurs in Classical and Han period texts, occasionally on its own, but often in combination with *ran*: *ran hou* 然後 ‘thereafter, afterwards, later’ or with *er* 而: *er hou* 而後 ‘later, thereafter, afterwards’:

- (4) 太子前頓首，固請毋讓，然後許諾。 Shiji: 86;2531
Tai-zi qian dun shou, gu qing wu rang, ran-hou xu nuo
 Heir forward knock-on-the-ground head, firm ask NEG decline, afterwards agree
 agree.
 “The heir moved forward, knocked his head on the ground imploring him not to decline, and then he agreed.”

When it is employed on its own, both, the sentence-initial and the preverbal position, are available for the adverb *hou* 後, whereas in combination with *ran* 然 (and with *er* 而) it mostly appears as a sentential adverb in sentence-initial position. This structure will be left out in the following discussion which rather deals with those cases where *hou* 後 is followed by a NP_{temp}, counting the interval of time elapsed between reference time and situation time.

The following syntactic structures with *hou* 後 can be employed to count the interval of time between reference time and situation time:

1. *Hou* 後 + NP_{temp}

- (5) 後一歲張湯亦死。 Shiji: 122;3147
hou yi sui zhang tang yi si
 Hou one year Zhang Tang also die
 “A year later Zhang Tang died as well.”

⁵In a recent article on the grammaticalisation of *hou* 後 Wu (2007: p. 495) assumes that *hou* 後 originally must have been a verb referring to a motional situation which developed into a locative noun appearing in the structure NP (之) 後 with *hou* 後 as its head, and frequently referring to a time interval. He assumes further that already during the Warring States period the sequence *zhi hou* 之後 had been fused to a disyllabic postposition (后詞).

In this construction *hou* 後 is analysed as a preposition by He Leshi *et al.* taking a NP_{temp} as its complement.

The second structure is distinguished from the first structure by the employment of the pronoun *qi* 其, preceding and modifying *hou* 後.

2. *Qi* 其 + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}

- (6) 其後二年, 漢擊走單于於幕北。 Shiji: 123;3167
qi hou er nian han ji zou chan yu yu mu bei
 its Hou two year Han attack flee Chan yu at desert north
 “Two years after that, Han attacked the Chanyu and made him flee to the north of the desert”.

In the structures three and four, *hou* 後 + NP_{temp} follow either a noun phrase or a verb phrase. In the third structure the NP/VP is formally marked as the modifier of a head *hou* 後 by the subordinating morpheme *zhi* 之, whereas in structure four this subordinating morpheme is absent, with the result that the modifier-head relation is not formally marked.

3. NP/VP + *zhi* 之 + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}

- (7) 穆王之後二百有餘年 Shiji: 110;2881
mu wang zhi hou er bai you yu nian
 Mu king ZHI Hou two hundred and rest year
 “More than two hundred years after King Mu”

4. NP/VP + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}

- (8) 張湯死後六年, 兒寬位至御史大夫。 Shiji: 121;3125
Zhang Tang si hou liu nian, Ni Kuan wei zhi yushi-dafu
 Zhang Tang die Hou six year, Ni Kuan position reach imperial-secretary
 Six years after Zhang Tang had died, Ni Kuan reached the position of an imperial secretary.

These examples represent the most frequent structures of TAs with *hou* 後 and – while all four structures seem to be interrelated syntactically – they clearly demonstrate that the syntactic analysis of temporal adverbials with *hou* 後 is less straightforward than their semantic analysis. In example (5) *hou* 後 apparently can be – and traditionally has been – analysed as a preposition, while in (7), it rather has to be analysed as a noun.⁶ In example (6), which differs from (5) only in the occurrence of the pronoun *qi* 其 preceding *hou* 後, again an analysis as a noun seems to be more adequate since *qi* 其 usually precedes noun phrases (including nominalised VPs). The syntactic status assigned to *hou* 後 entails different analyses for the preceding or following temporal phrase. Besides the structure in example (7) above *hou* 後 in this position can also occur in combination with prepositions, mostly with *zi* 自, in the structure *zi* 自 ... (*zhi* 之) *hou* 後, a structure which resembles the modern construction with postpositional *hou* 後 and gives rise to the question whether in Han period Chinese – in particular syntactic environments – *hou* 後 can already be analysed as a postposition as well.

⁶As a temporal noun it can assume different meanings, such as ‘the offspring’, ‘the latter part’, ‘a later time’ etc. (as some of these occurrences will be discussed below in the article, I will not give an example here).

2. The syntactic analysis of temporal adverbials with *hou* 後

2.1. Analysis of the first structure: *Hou* 後 + *NP_{temp}*

With only a few instances in the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 and in the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, this structure is extremely rare in Classical texts.⁷ Apparently it only becomes more frequent in the Han period texts *Shiji* 史記 and *Hanshu* 漢書 (Herein referred to as its). The regular occurrence of these temporal adverbials may seem to be due to the literary genre of these texts, which as historical narratives often relate situations temporally, but contrary to these texts, in Classical historical texts such as the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 and in the *Guoyu* 國語 no instances of this construction are attested.

In Classical Chinese texts, different structures with *hou* 後 can occur to measure the interval of time between reference time and situation time:

(a) Very occasionally a structure *NP_{temp}* + *zhi* 之 + *hou* 後: *X*年/歲/日/月之後 expresses the temporal relation of posteriority and measures the elapsed time between reference and situation time in Classical texts:

- (9) 十年之後, 年穀復熟, Xun zi: 10
Shi nian zhi hou, nian gu fu shu
 Ten year SUB Hou, year grain again ripe
 After ten years, the harvest ripened again.

But this structure as well only gains more relevance in Han period texts, as will be shown below.

(b) More frequently the above mentioned structures with a conjunctive *erhou* 而後, or – very infrequently – with *ranhou* 然後 appear in Classical texts to measure an interval of time:

- (10) 三日而後國人知之. Zuozhuan: Ai, 26 (SSJZS: 2182下)
San ri er hou guo ren zhi zhi
 Three day CON Hou later country people know OBJ
 “... and after three days the people of the country knew it”.

In these examples the numeral NP has to be analysed as a subordinate predicate measuring the elapsed time and being related to the matrix predicate by *er* 而 which frequently occurs as the subordinator of a secondary predicate or an adjunct in Classical and post-Classical Chinese, and *hou* 後 has to be analysed as an adverb indicating posteriority. Accordingly, syntactically, these temporal expressions differ considerably from those discussed in this paper. They still occur occasionally in Han period texts such as the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*, but they seem to have been replaced almost completely by the temporal expressions at issue here.

In the structure *hou* 後 + *NP_{temp}* + (*NP_{subj}*) + *VP*, *hou* 後 has been analysed as a preposition⁸ which – at first sight – seems to be self-evident. But it has to be conceded that *hou* 後 clearly differs from what are usually labelled prepositions in Classical Chinese. Although *hou* 後 can appear as a verb as well, it basically functions as either a noun or an adverb. Regarding temporal or spatial adverbs, very often they are adverbially employed nouns and this is certainly also the case for *hou* 後. Based on this generalisation concerning the Chinese language, an analysis of *hou* 後 as a preposition does not seem to be very conclusive. According

⁷The data checked includes the *Shisanjing* 十三經 and the texts in the *Shanggu hanyu yuliao ku* 上古漢語語料庫 of the Academia Sinica database.

⁸According to He Leshi *et al.* (1985: p. 224). This is one of the very few analysis of *hou* 後 found in the linguistic literature. (E.g. it is not discussed in Pulleyblank, 1995). See also Wu (2007: 495f).

to the general assumption for prepositions in Classical Chinese, *hou* 後 as a preposition should either have been derived from a verb (derivational hypothesis),⁹ or it should be a genuine preposition similar to e.g. the preposition *yu* 於,¹⁰ for which according to Djamouri and Paul (1997: 222f) no verbal source can be assumed in the early Chinese texts. Regarding the first hypothesis the data clearly demonstrates that no genuine prepositional function of *hou* 後 can be evidenced in the early Chinese texts. As far as the second, the derivational, hypothesis is concerned, it has to be conceded that the verbal function of *hou* 後 evidently is only due to the versatility of nouns in the Classical Chinese language which can – without any further marking – appear in the syntactic slot usually confined to a verb and thus attain a verbal meaning. Also the adjectival function of *hou* 後 ‘last’ can hardly serve as a basis for derivation, since it has never been assumed that prepositions can be derived from adjectives. Accordingly, an analysis of *hou* 後 as a preposition cannot conclusively be based on the general assumptions about the Chinese language. In the structure *hou* 後 + NP_{temp} + (NP_{subj}) + VP, *hou* 後 always precedes a temporal NP such as *san ri* 三日 ‘three days’. Without any further marking, a temporal NP like the one in question can refer to a duration of time – ‘three days (long)’ – or to a point in time – ‘the third day’.¹¹ With a prepositional analysis of *hou* 後 comparable to English ‘after’, only the first interpretation: ‘after X time’, ‘X time’ referring to a period of time seems to be possible. An analysis of the NP_{temp} as referring to a period of time can be supported by examples (12) and (13) with the NPs *shu nian* 數年 ‘several years’ and *shu ri* 數日 ‘several days’ respectively, which explicitly and exclusively refer to a duration and not to a point of time. But the analysis of the NP_{temp} as referring to a duration does not necessarily require the prepositional analysis of *hou* 後 as will be shown below. As all following examples demonstrate, the temporal adverbial (TA) itself always refers to a point of time.

- (11) 後一歲張湯亦死。
hou yi sui zhang tang yi si Shiji: 122;3147
 Hou one year Zhang Tang also die
 “A year later Zhang Tang died as well”.
- (12) 後數歲，叔坐法失官。
Hou shu sui, Shu zuo-fa shi guan Shiji: 104;2777
 Hou several year, Shu break-law loose office
 “Several years later Shu broke the law and lost his office”.¹²
- (13) 後數日，羽乃屠咸陽，殺秦降王子嬰，燒其宮室，火三月不滅；
Hou shu ri, Yu nai tu Xianyang, sha Qin xiang wang Ziying, shao qi gong HS: 31;1808
 Hou several day, Yu then slaughter Xianyang, kill Qin surrender king Ziying, burn its palace
shi, huo san yue bu mie
 house, fire three month NEG extinguish.
 “After several days, Yu slaughtered Xianyang, he killed the king of Qin, Ziying, who had already surrendered, he burnt its palaces and houses and the fire did not go out for three months”.¹³

⁹The hypothesis that in Chinese all prepositions have been derived from verbs has e.g. been presented in Pulleyblank and many others (1995: 47ff.).

¹⁰As has been shown in Djamouri and Paul (1997: p. 232), the evidence for a verbal source of *yu* 於 presented in the linguistic literature is not convincing.

¹¹The distinction between point of time adverbials and duration phrases and an analysis of duration phrases in Han period Chinese has been presented in Meisterernst (2003: 118ff.).

¹²The temporal adverbial *hou shu nian* 後數年 does also appear in the ZGC. This example is also attested in HS:37; 1983.

¹³A similar example occurs in Shiji: 7; 315 with the temporal adverbial *ju shu ri* 居數日 ‘several days long’ which in sentence initial position functions as a TA referring to a point of time ‘after several days’.

- (14) 後五日,扁鵲復見,曰: Shiji: 105; 2793
Hou wu ri, Bian Que fu xian, yue
 Hou five day, Bian Que again appear, say
 “Five days later, Bian Que appeared again and said:”
- (15) 法曰「後三日而當狂,妄起行,欲走;後五日死」 Shiji: 105;2801
Fa yue hou san ri er dang kuang, wang qi xing, yu zou, hou wu ri
 Rule say Hou three day CON correspond insanity, foolish raise go, want run; after five day
si
 die
 “The rule says: After three days it (the illness) will be like insanity, foolishly one gets up and walks and wants to run; and after five days one dies”.

In example (15) the temporal adverbial is formally subordinated by *er* 而 which often explicitly serves to subordinate an adverbial to the following matrix verb which it modifies.

- (16) 後十日乃死,所以過遲者,其人嗜粥, Shiji: 105;2803
Hou shi ri nai si, suoyi guo qi zhe, qi ren
 Hou ten day then die, why overstep time NOM, that man
shi zhou
 like-to-eat rice-pudding
 “Regarding that he only died after ten days, the reason why he overstepped the usual time was that that man loved rice-pudding, . . .”

In this example *nai* 乃 assumes the same function as *er* 而 in example (15). Additionally to the subordinating function it also serves to express posteriority.^{13a}

- (17) 後六十餘載之間,遭王莽篡位, Hanshu: 94B;3833
Hou liu shi yu zai zhi jian, zao wang mang
 Hou six ten more year SUB period, happen Wang Mang
cuan wei
 usurp position
 “After a period of more than sixty years it happened that Wang Mang usurped his position, . . .”

In this example *hou* 後 precedes a complex NP with the time-noun *jian* 間 ‘period’ as its head.

- (18) 後頃之,冒頓死,子稽粥立,號曰老上單于. Shiji: 110;2898
Hou qing zhi, Maodun si, zi Jiyu li, hao yue lao
 Hou short-while OBJ, Maodun die, son Jiyu¹⁴ establish, call say old
shang Chanyu
 high Chanyu
 “A short while afterwards, Maodun died and his son Jiyu was established and got the title ‘Old Chanyu’”.¹⁵

Example (18) differs from the preceding examples in so far as *hou* 後 is not followed by a NP_{temp} but by the phrase *qing zhi* 頃之 which is usually found in sentence-initial position referring to a point in time after an unspecified duration ‘after a while’. Although the phrase *qing zhi* 頃之 itself refers to a duration ‘taking a while’, the temporal adverbial on a whole

^{13a}In traditional grammars of English or German the conjunction ‘after’ is generally categorised as expressing anteriority within a complex temporal sentence, but according to the relation between situation time and reference time it expresses posteriority.

¹⁴Watson, II, p. 142 reads the name ‘Jizhu’.

¹⁵The same example is attested in *HS*:94; 3758.

has to refer to a point in time, an interpretation which is entailed by the sentence-initial position, since genuine duration phrases are confined to preverbal and to postverbal position. This construction is extremely rare and is structurally different from *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}.¹⁶

Additionally to the listed examples, there are a few instances with an ordinal number modifying the temporal noun. Since in these examples *hou* 後 as a temporal noun always refers to the latter part of an era, they are not at issue here.¹⁷

In all examples presented, *hou* 後 explicitly serves to relate one situation to a preceding one in the narrative. The temporal NP measures the interval, the period of time elapsed since the preceding situation took place and accordingly it can be analysed as a measure phrase which in Classical Chinese can – as an apposition – follow a noun.¹⁸ The analysis of the temporal NP following *hou* 後 as an apposition yields an interpretation of *hou* 後 as an adverbially employed noun which syntactically retains its nominal characteristics and thus permits the addition of an apposition. More evidence for this hypothesis will be presented in the following discussion.

2.2. Analysis of the second structure: Qi 其 + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}

The structure *qi* 其 + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp} is characterised by the employment of the anaphoric pronouns *qi* 其 or *shi* 是 preceding *hou* 後 that distinguishes it from the first structure. With a temporal noun following the phrase ‘Pro + *hou* 後’ the pronoun *qi* 其 is much more frequently employed than *shi* 是. The *Gudai Hanyu xuci cidian* (1999: p. 406), lists, among others, two different functions of the pronoun *qi* 其 which are relevant here: (1) Its function as a possessive pronoun ‘its’ which is the Classical function of *qi* 其, (in He Leshi *et al.*) analysed as indicating a subordinate relation 表示領屬關係,¹⁹ and (4) Its function as an demonstrative pronoun which becomes only relevant from the Han period on. Both analyses of *qi* 其 appear to be

¹⁶This example in the *Shiji* 史記 and the *Hanshu* 漢書 is the only one in the whole *Ershiwu shi* 二十五史. None occurs in the *Shisanjing* 十三經, one instance of the comparable *hou you qing* 後有頃 is found in the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策.

¹⁷The following example differs from the preceding ones insofar as *hou* 後 does not refer to a point of time following reference time but to the latter part of an era. In those cases in which *hou* 後 is followed by a temporal NP with an ordinal number, the interpretation of *hou* 後 referring to the latter period of an era is quite evident, but if it is followed by a temporal NP with a cardinal number, only the context can determine its interpretation. The distinction of different parts of an era, namely, the beginning, the middle and the latter part, only starts with the Han period and accordingly – in the texts under consideration – these temporal adverbials are only to be expected with reference to Han period events. Adverbials with *hou* 後 in this meaning also appear in the fourth structure NP *hou* 後 NP_{temp}.

(i) 後元年冬, 更命中大夫令為衛尉. Shiji: 11; 447
Hou yuan nian dong, geng ming zhong daifu ling wei weiwei
 Latter first year winter, change mandat middle diginary order be colonel-of-the-guard
 “In the winter of the first year of the latter part [of the era] he changed the names of the palace counsellors to colonels of the guard”.

¹⁸Two different positions are available for measure phrases in Classical Chinese: 1. as an attribute, preceding the measured noun, and as an apposition, following the measured noun as in the following example:

(i) 車二百乘 Zuo, Yin 1
Che er bai sheng
 Carriage two hundred vehicle (cf. Unger: 1987: p. 107)

¹⁹In combination with positional words (方位詞) it indicates a positional relation.

possible in this structure; but since temporal adverbials with *qi* 其 including those with *hou* 後 are almost non-existent in Classical texts and only become more frequent in the Han period texts *Shiji* 史記 and *Hanshu* 漢書²⁰ and, since they are closely correlated to those with *shi* 是, the analysis as an demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ in analogy to the demonstrative pronoun *shi* 是 ‘this’ seems to be more conclusive than the one as a possessive pronoun ‘its/of that’. The temporal adverbials with *qi* 其 apparently imply a greater distance to *situation time* and *reference time* than those e.g. with *shi* 是 ‘this’; they are usually confined to past contexts similar to *na* 那 ‘that’ which, as Chao (1968: p. 544) states, “usually, though not necessarily, refers to the past”.²¹ The syntactic status of the head of the phrase modified by *qi* 其 has not been determined in He Leshi *et al.* and in the *Gudai Hanyu xuci Cidian*, but it is usually represented by a noun including a temporal noun such as *shi* 時.

Since in a narrative text both temporal adverbials – those modified by *shi* 是 and those modified by *qi* 其 – refer to past contexts most of the time, possibly the pronoun employed serves to elucidate the viewpoint of the author of the narrative and accordingly *speech time*.

- (19) 其後二年，漢擊走單于於幕北。 Shiji: 123; 3167
qi hou er nian Han ji zou Chanyu yu mu bei
 That Hou two year Han attack flee Chanyu at desert north
 “Two years after that, the Han attacked Chanyu and made him flee to the north of the desert”.
- (20) 其後四歲，廣以衛尉為將軍，出鴈門擊匈奴。 Shiji: 109; 2870
Qi hou si sui, Guang yi weiwei wei jiangjun, chu
 That after four year, Guang with colonel-of-the-guard make general, go-out
Yanmen ji Xiongnu
 Yanmen attack Xiongnu
 “Four years later, Guang made the colonel of the guard a general, and he left Yanmen to attack the Xiongnu.”

In examples (19) and (20), the TA (temporal adverbial) evidently appears in sentence-initial/topic position (with the subject following); and it again explicitly refers to the time elapsed since the preceding situation took place.

- (21) 其後百二十歲而秦滅周，周之九鼎入于秦。 Shiji: 28;1365
Qi hou bai er shi sui er Qin mie Zhou, Zhou zhi jiu ding
 That Hou hundred two ten year CON Qin destroy Zhou, Zhou SUB nine tripod
ru yu Qin
 enter in Qin
 “A hundred and twelve years later Qin destroyed Zhou and the Nine tripods of Zhou were brought to Qin”.
- (22) 其後九歲而君餓死。 Shiji: 57;2074
Qi hou jiu sui er jun e si
 That Hou nine year CON prince hungry die
 “Nine years after that you will die of starvation”.

In examples (21) and (22), the temporal phrase is connected to the following clause by the conjunction *er* 而. Since the second clause contains a subject following the conjunction

²⁰A few instances of *qi hou* 其後 appear in the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策, but regarding other temporal adverbials with *qi* 其, such as e.g. *qi shi* 其時 it does not occur either in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 where only one instance of *qi ming yue* 其明月 ‘the next month of that’ is attested *Zuo*: B10.7.9./339/16 or e.g. in the *Xun zi* 荀子 or the *Lunyu* 論語.

²¹See also Meisterernst (2004, p. 230).

er 而, the clause preceding *er* 而 cannot be regarded as an adjunct directly modifying the matrix verb, but has to be analysed as a separate adverbial clause modifying the matrix clause. Evidently, in these cases, the temporal clause has to be interpreted as a complete (subordinate) sentence “after that it will be nine years . . .”, with a TA *qi hou* 其後 ‘after that’ and a nominal predicate *jiu sui* 九歲 ‘nine years’, the subject is not expressed.²²

The following example (23) can be compared with example (18) where *hou* 後 precedes the phrase *qing zhi* 頃之 which is usually found in sentence-initial position referring to a point of time after an unspecified duration of time ‘after a while’. In both examples certainly an analysis according to the predicate structure is also possible and maybe even more likely: [S [TA *qi hou* 其後] [VP *qing zhi* 頃之]] than the appositional analysis.

- (23) 其後頃之, 魯亂. Shiji: 47:1910
Qi hou qing zhi, Lu luan
 That Hou short-while OBJ, Lu disorder
 “A short while afterwards Lu fell into Chaos”.

In example (24), the temporal NP apparently refers to a point of time: *dong* 冬 ‘winter’, which is also added appositionally to the *hou* 後 phrase – specifying the range of meaning. In cases like this, an alternative analysis of *qi hou* 其後 and *dong* 冬 as two separate adverbials theoretically also seems to be possible, but although several independent adverbials can be combined in preverbal position, the occurrence of more than one adverbial in sentence-initial/topic position is – though possible – extremely infrequent.

- (24) 其後冬, 軍臣單于死。 Hanshu: 94A:3767
Qi hou dong, Junchen Chanyu si
 That Hou winter, Junchen Chanyu die
 “After that, in the winter, the Chanyu Junchen died.”²³

In the following examples *hou* 後 is modified by the demonstrative pronoun *shi* 是 ‘this’.²⁴ The phrase *shi hou* 是後 is not infrequently attested in the *Shiji* 史記 and the *Hanshu* 漢書,

²²The temporal adverbial (TA) *qi hou* 其後 can also appear independently without any NP_{temp} following, as in example (i):

- (i) 其後則又作柏梁、銅柱、承露仙人掌之屬矣。 Shiji: 28:1388
Qi hou ze you zuo bo liang, tong zhu, cheng lu xian
 That Hou then again make cypress beam, bronze pillar, receive dew immortal
ren zhang zhi shu yi
 man control SUB category FIN
 “Thereafter he furthermore built the Cypress Beams, the Bronze Pillars, the Dew Receiving pan and the other things the Immortals hold in their hands”.

²³The same example also appears in *Shiji*: 2907.

²⁴Djamouri (2001: p. 170) defines *shi* 是 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*”. Regarding the employment of *shi* 是 in temporal adverbials, it apparently serves to emphasise a relation of simultaneity between the *situation time* and some other *reference time* indicated before in the narrative. See Meisterernst (2004: 229f).

but in contrast to *qi hou* 其後 it is only rarely followed by a temporal NP.²⁵ The pronoun *shi* 是 usually implies a shorter distance than the pronoun *qi* 其. The phrase *shi hou* 是後 again seems to be typical for the historical texts of the Han period.²⁶ The following example shows the phrase not followed by a temporal NP:

- (25) 是後魏王畏公子之賢能, 不敢任公子以國政. Shiji: 77;2377
Shi hou Wei wang wei gong zi zhi xian neng, bu gan
 This Hou Wei king fear noble scion SUB worth able, NEG dare
ren gong zi yi guo zheng
 employ noble scion with state government
 “After this, the king of Wei feared the noble scion’s worth and ability and he did not dare to employ him with the government of the state”.

Whereas the following example (26) contains a NP_{temp} and exhibits the same structure as (21) and (22): the first clause evidently has to be analysed as temporal clause with the NP_{temp} as its predicate. The TA consists of the demonstrative pronoun *shi* 是 ‘this’ and the head noun *hou* 後 ‘after’ comparable to TAs such as *shi shi* 是時 ‘at this time’.

- (26) 是後六十有五年, 而山戎越燕而伐齊, 齊釐公與戰于齊郊. 其後四十四年, 而山戎伐燕. Shiji: 110;2881
Shi hou liu shi you wu nian, er shan rong yue Yan er
 This Hou six ten and five year, CON mountain tribe cross-over Yan CON
fa Qi,
 attack Qi,
Qi Li gong yu zhan yu Qi jiao. Qi hou si shi si nian,
Qi Li duke with fight at Qi outskirts. That Hou four ten four year,
er shan rong fa Yan
 CON mountain tribe attack Yan.
 “Sixty-five years after this, the Mountain Barbarians crossed Yan and attacked Qi, and the duke of Qi fought with them in the outskirts of Qi. After that forty-four years, the Mountain barbarians attacked Yan”.

In example (26), it is the pronoun *shi* 是 which modifies *hou* 後 in the first sentence, whereas in the second sentence it is the pronoun *qi* 其. Here, the two different temporal adverbials are directly correlated, and indeed a difference in distance expressed by the choice of the pronoun can be assumed.

Both examples elucidate the close temporal and logical relation to the preceding narrative which is expressed by the pronoun *shi* 是.

The structure ‘*qi* 其+ *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}’ can evidently be analysed as an extension of the first structure ‘*hou* 後 + NP_{temp}’. Different to the first structure ‘*hou* 後 + NP_{temp}’, with the second structure ‘*qi* 其+ *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}’, the preceding narrative is explicitly related to the adverbial *hou* 後 by the anaphoric pronouns *qi* 其 or *shi* 是. Since the *hou*P can be regarded

²⁵The following may serve as an example for the independent adverbial employment of *shi hou* 是後:

- (1) 是後乃退. Hanshu: 82;2380
Shi hou nai tui
 This after then withdraw
 “After this he withdrew.”
 The same instance is attested in *Shiji*: 107;2844.

²⁶It occurs neither in the *Shisanjing* 十三經 (in the text, there is a considerable number of instances in the commentaries), nor in the *Zhanquo ce* 戰國策.

as nominal, again the apposition of a measure phrase is possible. But occasionally, when the phrase ‘(qi 其) *hou* 後 NP_{temp}’ is connected by the subordinator *er* 而 to a complete sentence with an explicit subject as in the examples (21), (22) and (26), the predicate analysis of the NP_{temp} certainly has to be preferred.²⁷

2.3. Analysis of the third structure: NP/VP + zhi 之 + hou 後 + NP_{temp}

Comparable to the second structure, the third structure also contains a modifier preceding the head *hou* 後. While in the second structure the modifier is represented by an anaphoric pronoun, in the third structure it is represented either by a NP or a VP. The modifier is explicitly marked as subordinated by the subordinating morpheme *zhi* 之 which has the same function as *de* 的 in Modern Mandarin. This structure is not very frequent, and in Classical texts (including the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策) apparently only the NP/VP + *zhi* 之 + *hou* 後 phrase alone occurs as an adverbial without any additional temporal NP, usually also in sentence-initial position.

In example (27) *hou* 後 is modified by a NP:

- (27) 穆王之後二百有餘年 Shiji: 110;2881
mu wang zhi hou er bai you yu nian
 Mu king ZHI Hou two hundred and rest year
 “More than two hundred years after King Mu”

Whereas in (28) and in (29) it is modified by a VP:

- (28) 意告之後百餘日,果為疽發乳上,入缺盆,死. Shiji: 15;2811
Yi gao zhi hou bai yu ri, guo wei ju fa
 Yi report SUB Hou hundred more day, really make ulcer develop
ru shang, ru quepen, si
 breast above, enter bone, die
 “More than a hundred days after Yi’s declaration, an ulcer actually developed on his breast, it penetrated a bone above his breast and he died”.
- (29) 始皇封禪之後十二歲,秦亡. Shiji: 28;1371
Shi huang Feng Shan zhi hou shi er sui, Qin wang
 First Emperor Feng-sacrifice Shan-sacrifice SUB Hou ten two year, Qin perish
 “Twelve years after the First Emperor had performed the Feng- and Shan-sacrifices, Qin perished”.²⁸

These examples are clearly comparable to those of the second structure ‘*qi* 其+ *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}’. While in the second structure an anaphoric pronoun refers to the relevant situation in the preceding narrative, in the third structure the modifier of *hou* 後 directly and explicitly quotes this situation. Again, the temporal NP measures the amount of time elapsed since the occurrence of the preceding situation.

While the following examples also consist of a determining NP and the head *hou* 後, they clearly differ from those quoted above. In these examples, the NP_{temp} referring to the elapsed time, precedes and modifies *hou* 後. This structure again only gains some prominence from the Han period on, though very few examples appear already in earlier texts as e.g. the

²⁷This fact may lead to the assumption that sentence-initial adverbials in general – whether marked or unmarked – can be considered subordinate clauses with a separate predicate preceding the matrix sentence.

²⁸A similar instance is attested in *Hanshu*:25; 1205.

following example (30) with the temporal noun *sui* 歲 from the *Shijing* 詩經, quoted in the *Hanshu* 漢書:

- (30) 「百歲之後，歸于其居」。*Hanshu*: 28B;1649
Bai sui zhi hou, gui yu qi ju
 Hundred year SUB Hou, return at its abode
 “A hundred years later, they returned to their abode”.²⁹

Besides this example, the structure also occasionally appears independently in the *Shiji* 史記 and the *Hanshu* 漢書:

- (31) 數年之後，諸侯之王大抵皆冠，*Hanshu*: 48;2233
Shu nian zhi hou, zhu-hou zhi wang da-di jie guan
 Several year SUB Hou, feudal-lords SUB king mostly all cap
 “Several years later, the kings of the feudal lords in general had all got their caps”.

Though it is still an exception in these texts and apparently only becomes more frequent in the later historiographies.³⁰

2.4. Analysis of the fourth structure: NP/VP + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}

The fourth structure can be distinguished from the third structure only by the absence of the subordinating morpheme *zhi* 之 connecting NP/VP and *hou* 後. This structure, as well as the preceding structures, does not appear in Classical texts (not in the *Shisan jing* 十三經 nor in the *Guoyu* 國語 or the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策). Apparently, in this structure it is mostly a VP that precedes *hou* 後 although there are also some instances of a NP in this position. For this structure, the analysis seems to be less unequivocal, as the two following examples (32) and (33) on the one hand and (40) and (41) on the other hand show.

- (32) 張湯死後六年，兒寬位至御史大夫。*Shiji*: 121;3125
Zhang Tang si hou liu nian, Ni Kuan wei zhi yushi-daifu
 Zhang Tang die Hou six year, Ni Kuan position reach imperial-secretary
 “Six years after Zhang Tang had died, Ni Kuan reached the position of an imperial secretary”.
- (33) 孫武既死，後百餘歲有孫臏。*Shiji*: 65;2162
Sun Wu ji si, hou bai yu sui you Sun Bin
 Sun Wu already die, Hou hundred more year have Sun Bin
 “More than a hundred years after Sun Wu was already dead there was Sun Bin.”

The examples (32) and (33) are syntactically almost identical, in both cases a VP precedes and a NP_{temp} follows *hou* 後; they only differ in the occurrence of the adverb *ji* 既 ‘already’ preceding the verb and in the punctuation of the sentence. Evidently, the difference in punctuation reflects a difference in the analysis of the phrase preceding *hou* 後, and it is precisely the presence of the adverb *ji* 既 which causes these differences in analysis. In example (33), the phrase preceding *hou* 後 has to be considered a complete clause, marked

²⁹This example is a quotation from the *Guofeng* 國風 of the *Shijing* 詩經. This construction is quite unique in early Chinese texts.

³⁰The structure NP_{temp} *yi* 以 *hou* 後 first appears in the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 and is from this time on regularly attested the historiographies to measure the time elapsed between situation time and reference time. But apparently this structure usually does not appear in combination with a temporal NP in neither position.

as a subordinate temporal clause by the aspecto-temporal adverb *ji* 既,³¹ whereas *hou* 後 + NP_{temp} – in correspondence to *ji* 既 in the antecedent clause – marks the following clause as the matrix clause. The combination of *ji* 既 and *hou* 後 is one of the regular combinations in the Chinese language of the Classical periods to mark both parts of a complex temporal sentence, but in contrast to a Classical text, in a Han period text the adverbially employed *hou* 後 can be supplemented by a NP_{temp}. This example cannot be regarded as representative for the fourth structure, but has to be analysed according to the first structure *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}. The following examples (34) to (36) all correspond to example (32) which can be analysed according to the fourth structure NP/VP *hou* 後 NP_{temp}.

- (34) 作那時後七十八年,秦德公既立,卜居雍, Shiji: 28;1360
Zuo Fu zhi hou qi shi ba nian, Qin De gong ji
 Create Fu altar Hou seven ten eight year, Qin De duke already
li, bu ju Yong
 establish, divine dwell Yong
 “Seventy-eight years after he had built the Fu Altar, the duke of Qin, De, was already enthroned and asked the oracle whether to live in Yong, . . .”
- (35) 廢後四年薨,葬長安城東平望亭南. Hanshu: 97;3945
Fei hou si nian hong, zang Chang'an cheng dong
 Discard Hou four year pass-away, bury Chang'an city east
Pingwang ting nan
 Pingwang station south
 “Four years after she had been discarded, she died and was buried east of the city of Chang'an and west of the Pingwang station”.
- (36) 王溫舒敗後數年,病死,家直不滿五十金. Hanshu: 90;3659
Wang Wenshu bai hou shu nian, bing si, jia zhi bu man wu
 Wang Wenshu defeat Hou several year, ill die, family value NEG fill five
shi jin
 ten guilder
 “Several years after Wang Wenshu had been defeated, he became ill and died and the value of his family did not even amount to fifty guilders”.

In the following example (37) a NP precedes *hou* 後.

- (37) 六國春秋哀公後十三年遜于邾,子悼公曼立,寧. Hanshu: 21B;1022
Liu guo Chunqiu Ai gong hou shi san nian xun yu Zhu, zi
 Six state Chunqiu Ai duke Hou ten three year retreat at Zhu, son
Dao gong Man li, Ning
 Dao gong Man establish, Ning
 “Regarding the six states, thirteen years after Duke Ai [of Lu] of the Chunqiu era, they had retreated to Zhu, and his son duke Dao, Man, was enthroned, this was Ning”.

Contrary to the examples (32) and (34–37) presented, which clearly represent the fourth structure, there exist a few examples that, although apparently having the same surface structure as the regular instances of the fourth structure, have to be analysed differently. In these instances the first NP has to be analysed as the subject of the matrix predicate, and accordingly a different analysis for *hou* 後 and the following NP_{temp} has to be assumed.

³¹A precise analysis of the function of the adverb *ji* 既 in Chinese is presented in Pulleyblank (1994) and in Meisterernst (2005).

- (38) 「漢後五十年東南有亂者，豈若邪？」 *Shiji*: 106;2821
Han hou wu shi nian dong nan you luan zhe, qi ruo ye
 Han Hou five ten year east south have uprising NOM, QUEST you FIN
 “If later, within fifty years, Han will produce an uprising in the south-east, it will doubtlessly be you?!”
- (39) 曰：「君後三歲而侯。」 *Shiji*: 57;2073
Jun hou san sui er hou
 Prince Hou three year CON marquis
 “Afterwards you will become marquis within three years”.

In both examples (38) and (39), the first NP clearly refers to the subject of the matrix predicate. This leads to two different analyses possible for the following *hou* 後 + NP_{temp} of which the first would be: 1. *hou* 後 + NP_{temp} are analysed according to the first structure, this time occurring in the exceptional preverbal instead of the sentence-initial position. This analysis contradicts the syntactic constraints of bare temporal NPs referring to a point of time which usually appear in sentence-initial position.³² According to the syntactic constraints of preverbal temporal adverbials, *hou* 後 would rather be analysed as a first temporal adverbial and the NP_{temp} as a second temporal adverbial, in preverbal position referring to a span of time: NP_{Sub} + Adv_{temp} *hou* 後 + Adv_{temp} (time span) + (*er* 而) + V, an analysis which is reflected by the translation of the two examples. This structure without adverbial *hou* 後 is the structure typical for time span adverbials and it clearly differs syntactically from the structure at issue here.

In the following, a few more examples with *hou* 後 are presented, some of which, at first glance, seem to be variants of the fourth structure. If example (40) were analysed according to the fourth structure (without a NP_{temp} following *hou* 後), the VP modifying *hou* 後 would be quite complex consisting of a verb and a postverbal duration phrase, measuring the time elapsed between reference time and situation time. Alternatively, in this example, – disregarding the punctuation – an analysis of *hou* 後 as an adverb combined with *nai* 乃 also seems to be conceivable.

- (40) 秦王齋五日後，乃設九賓禮於廷，引趙使者藺相如。 *Shiji*: 81;2441
Qin wang zhai wu ri hou, nai she jiu bin li yu ting, yin Zhao
 Qin king fast five day Hou, then set-up Jiu-bin ceremony at court, lead Zhao
shi zhe Lin Xiangru
 envoy NOM Lin Xiangru
 “After the king of Qin had fasted for five days, he arranged the Nine-guest ceremony at court and he lead in the envoy of Zhao, Lin Xiangru”.

In example (41), the temporal NP serves as the predicate of a nominal sentence:

- (41) 元年，楚考烈王滅魯頃公為家人，周滅後六年也。 *Hanshu*: 21;1022
Yuan nian, Chu Kaolie wang mie Lu Qing gong wei jia-ren, Zhou
 First year, Chu Kaolie king destroy Lu Qing duke become common-man, Zhou
mie hou liu nian ye
 destroy Hou six year FIN
 “In the first year, the king Kaolie of Chu destroyed Lu and Duke Qing became a simple peasant, this was six years after Zhou was destroyed”.

This nominal sentence consists of the nominal predicate *liu nian ye* 六年也 ‘was six years’ and the TA *zhou mie hou* 周滅後 ‘after Zhou had been destroyed’, the subject

³²In Meisterernst (2004: pp. 211, 246) it has been demonstrated that bare temporal NPs in preverbal position usually refer to a span of time ‘within X time’.

is absent.³³ Examples like these which are not uncommon can serve as an argument for the predicate analysis of the NP_{temp} as presented above for the examples (21), (22) and (26).

In the following example (42) the NP_{temp} precedes and modifies *hou* 後, but in contrast to example (30), which exhibits a similar structure, the marker of subordination *zhi* 之 is absent. The precise constraints of the employment or non-employment of this marker have not yet been analysed satisfactorily in the linguistic literature and usually the analysis of modifier-head phrases is consistent irrespective of their being explicitly marked by *zhi* 之 or not. Accordingly the structural difference between (42) and (30) does not necessarily yield a difference in the analysis of the phrase. This example is unique in the texts under consideration.

- (42) 二年後伐越，敗越於夫湫。 Shiji: 66;2178
Er nian hou fa Yue, bai Yue yu Fujiao
 Two year Hou attack Yue, defeat Yue at Fujiao
 “Two years later, he attacked Yue and defeated it at Fujiao”.

2.5. Hou 後 modified by a prepositional phrase

Additionally *hou* 後 can appear following a prepositional phrase. Without an additional temporal NP, prepositional phrases like the following already occur in Classical texts:

- (43) 自是之後，荒服不至。 Shiji: 110;2881
Zi shi zhi hou, huang fu bu zhi
 From this SUB Hou, most-distant-tribute NEG arrive
 “From this time on, the most distant vassals did not pay their tributes to the court”.

Followed by a temporal NP as in the following examples, this construction only becomes prominent in Han period texts.

- (44) 自是之後百有餘年，晉悼公使魏絳和戎翟，戎翟朝晉。 Shiji: 110;2885
Zi shi zhi hou bai you yu nian, Jin Dao gong shi Wei Jiang
 From this SUB Hou hundred and more year, Jin Dao duke send Wei Jiang
he Rong
 harmonise Rong
di, Rong di chao Jin
 barbarian, Rong barbarian come-to-court Jin
 “More than a hundred years later from this time on, Jin sent Wei Jiang to make peace with the Rong barbarians and the Rong barbarians went to court in Jin”.³⁴
- (45) 自馬邑軍後五年之秋，漢使四將軍各萬騎擊胡關市下。 Shiji: 110;2906
Zi Mayi jun hou wu nian zhi qiu, Han shi si jiangjun ge
 From Mayi campaign Hou five year SUB autumn, Han send four general each

³³Although in most of the predicates consisting of a NP_{temp} and all of the predicates presented here the subject is not present, it can be mentioned explicitly as in the following example:

- (i) 是歲元朔六年也。 Shiji: 123;3167
Shi sui yuan shuo liu nian ye
 This year yuanshuo six year FIN
 “This year was the sixth year of the era *Yuanshuo*.” (Meisterernst 2004: p. 231).

³⁴This example is also found in *Hanshu*: 94A:3747.

wan ji ji Hu guan shi xia
 ten-thousand horseman attack Hu pass marketplace subdue
 “In the autumn of the fifth year after the Mayi campaign, Han sent four generals each with a
 cavalry of 10,000 horsemen to attack and subdue the marketplaces at the border of the Hu
 barbarians”.³⁵

In example (44), the prepositional phrase evidently serves as a modifier of the head *hou* 後; the relation of subordination is explicitly marked by the employment of the marker of subordination *zhi* 之, whereas in example (45), this relation is not marked and an analysis of the complex temporal adverbial (TA) as the additive coordination of several temporal adverbials also seems to be conceivable: [TA [TA₁ (PP)] [TA₂ *hou* 後] [TA₃ NP_{temp}]] which leads to the translation: “ From the Mayi campaign on, afterwards, in the autumn of the fifth year, . . . For each of the separate temporal adverbials the sentence-initial position is either possible or required, but as already mentioned above, the accumulation of several adverbial phrases in sentence-initial/topic position is quite infrequent. In this example, the NP_{temp} *wu nian zhi qiu* 五年之秋 clearly refers to a point of time, similar to *dong* 冬 ‘winter’ in example (24) involving an analysis identical to the one presented there. If examples like these had to be analysed according to the structures at issue here and not as several additively coordinated temporal adverbials, this would lead to the assumption that – if not otherwise marked – a clear distinction between a length of time, a duration and a point in time interpretation of the NP_{temp} is not always possible. Only if the NP_{temp} as such can unambiguously be determined with respect to its reference, it can be analysed unambiguously.

3. Conclusion

1. All temporal adverbials with *hou* 後 refer to a point of time. Identical to bare noun phrase temporal adverbials, they predominantly occur in sentence-initial/topic position and they serve to establish the temporal frame for the situation the predicate refers to.
2. In the second structure *qi* 其 + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}, with an anaphoric pronoun modifying *hou* 後, and in the third structure NP/VP *zhi* 之 + *hou* 後 + NP_{temp}, with *hou* 後 as the head of a NP, *hou* 後 unambiguously can be analysed as an adverbially employed nominal and analogically to these cases it will be analysed as syntactically nominal in the first structure and in the unambiguous cases of structure four as well: *hou*P = NP.
3. The NP_{temp} following the *hou*P can in most cases be analysed as an apposition, which specifies the *hou*P by providing additional information regarding its range of meaning. Although the NP_{temp} usually refers to a duration of time, namely to the time elapsed since the situation the *hou*P refers to took place, it can also occasionally refer to a point of time, e.g. the time of a year as in (24) and (45). Unless unambiguously determined as a duration phrase (as e.g. in (12) (13), (18) and (23) with *shu* 數 modifying the NP_{temp} (or with the expression *qing zhi* 頃之) an analysis of the NP_{temp} as referring to a point of time cannot be excluded by syntactic evidence. In those instances where the *hou*P + NP_{temp} is connected to a complete sentence following it, the predicate analysis has to be assumed for the NP_{temp}: [S [TA *hou*P] [VP NP_{temp}]] 而 [S NP VP]. These cases entail

³⁵The same example is found in *Hanshu*: HS: 94A:3766.

the assumption that the underlying structure of the sentence-initial temporal adverbials at issue here is predicative.

As far as the analysis of the NP_{temp} is concerned, it is valid for all four structures.

4. Although some of the examples presented cannot be subsumed under a unified account of the structures with *hou* 後, most of the examples show basically the same syntactic structure. Accordingly, I would propose to consider the first structure as the basic structure and the second to fourth structures – and even to a certain extent the structure with prepositional *zi* 自 – as extensions of it with different modifiers preceding the head *hou* 後. *Hou* 後 in this structure will be analysed uniquely as an adverbially employed noun which has retained its nominal characteristic to allow an apposition – which is typically a measure phrase – to follow and to specify its range of meaning. According to the data presented and also to the assumed generalisations regarding the syntax of Chinese, the prepositional analysis of *hou* 後 does not seem conclusive to me: The temporal NP following *hou* 後 cannot be analysed as the complement of a preposition, but has to be analysed as an apposition or an independent predicate. If the *hou*P + NP_{temp} is marked as subordinated to a following matrix clause by the subordinating connector *er* 而, the predicate analysis definitely has to be preferred and it cannot be excluded completely that the predicate structure also has to be assumed as underlying structure for the temporal adverbials in sentence initial position discussed in this paper.

The following analysis accounts for a unified structure of the *hou*P

- (46) [AppP [*hou*P [NP_{pro}/NP/VP (之) [NP *hou* 後] [appP NP_{temp}]]]]

The alternative analysis can be represented as follows:

- (47) [CP [TopP(TA=*hou*P) [S NP (= *hou* 後) [VP NP_{temp}]]]] ([CP (*er* 而) [S NP VP]])

In the first structure, the specifier position is empty while in the remaining structures it can be filled by an anaphoric pronoun, a NP or a VP.

The most problematic structure apparently is structure 4, since in this structure the subordinate relation is not explicitly marked and accordingly, as examples (32) and (33) show, two different segmentations of the phrase are possible. According to the segmentation in (33), the temporal adverbial has to be analysed according to the first structure.

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