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Gassmann Robert : Antikchinesisch in fünf Element(ar)gängen. Eine propädeutische Einfiürung.

A propos de ...

GASSMANN Robert (1997). *Antikchinesisch in fünf Element(ar)gängen. Eine propädeutische Einführung.* Schweizer Asiatische Studien, Studienhefte, Bd. 15/1. *Antikchinesische Texte. Materialien für den Hochschulunterricht.* Schweizer Asiatische Studien, Studienhefte, Bd. 15/2. *Grundstrukturen der antik-chinesischen Syntax. Eine erklärende Grammatik.* Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft, Monographie, Bd. 26. Bern : Peter Lang.

Robert Gassmann's introductory course and his analysis of Ancient Chinese, "Antikchinesisch", abbreviated AC, consists of three closely related parts of increasing complexity: 1. *Antik-chinesisch in fünf Elementargängen. Eine propädeutische Einführung* (Ancient Chinese in five elementary courses. A propaedeutical introduction); 2. *Antikchinesische Texte. Materialien für den Hochschulunterricht* (Ancient Chinese texts. Materials for university teaching); and 3. *Grundstrukturen der antikchinesischen Syntax. Eine erklärende Grammatik* (Basic structures of the syntax of Ancient Chinese. An explanatory grammar). This threefold approach to Ancient Chinese is unique in its well-structuredness and it provides the student of Chinese with a basic knowledge of the language of the Classical period. It is the first introduction to Classical Chinese based consistently on a linguistic theory. The first part, the *elementary course*, consists of a system of correspondences comprising just 150 different characters and thus avoids the difficulty of a loss of motivation for the beginner by having to learn too many characters at once, which according to the author is a great disadvantage of most introductions to Classical

Chinese. Each elementary course is devoted to one grammatical subject starting with the nominal sentence, followed by the noun phrase, the verbal sentence, subordinate clauses and texts. Each element consists of examples, graphical representations, theoretical explanations and exercises to practise the characters learned and the grammatical features. With this approach the author wants to provide the students with an at least basic active command of the Classical Chinese language. In these elementary courses the basic linguistic terminology applied by the author is introduced, particularly his differentiation of the two different levels of *deep structure* and *surface structure*, the case system he assumes for Ancient Chinese and the term valency which is one of the central grammatical features in his description of the grammar of Ancient Chinese – the theoretical system he develops is explained in the *Grundstrukturen*, the theoretical part of his introduction material. The author establishes a threefold system of variables modifying the predicate consisting of adverbs and adverbial phrases, the arguments of the verb with their thematic roles and variables modifying the whole sentence. All verbs are classified according to the number of arguments they take in the quoted texts and consequently in the lexicon added to the part "Ancient Chinese text" the valency of the verb is always indicated and taken into account in the translation of the verb. In the fourth element, different kinds of subordinate clauses are described and in the fifth element, "texts", the author provides some basic rules for complex structures in Ancient Chinese such as conditional, consecutive, causal, and final sentences and as an example for a complex and coherent textual structure a short passage from the *Zuo zhuan*, a genuine Ancient Chinese text, is presented together with a transcription in Pinyin and a translation. The annex of the "Elementary courses" consists of a key to the exercises, two graphics with the system of corres-pondences, the stroke orders and an index of key words. This elementary course provides the student with a basic knowledge of the grammar of Ancient Chinese according to the grammatical system developed by the author and at

the same time the system of correspondences presents a basic knowledge of the cultural and philosophical background of the Ancient Chinese texts.

The second part of this introduction to Ancient Chinese consists of a selection of 30 texts of increasing length and complexity. Each text is supplied with a Pinyin transcription, concise grammatical notes, the so-called "Grammatikspiegel", a glossary and a comprehensive grammatical discussion, the "Grammatiknotizen", for each sentence of the text. Here, in the Pinyin transcription of each sentence those elements that - according to the author - are deleted in the surface structure but must be assumed at the deep structure level are added in square brackets. This kind of representation gives a clear account of the author's interpretation of the text and usually allows only one possible translation of the sentence thus avoiding ambiguities which are often a problem for a reader of Ancient Chinese texts. Since this approach reduces the difficulties of the interpretation of Ancient Chinese texts it is intended to enable the student to achieve a good competence in reading Chinese within a relatively short time and to leave more time for further studies. Most of the texts were chosen from the Ancient Canonical texts, e.g. the *Zuo zhuan*, the *Shi jing* and the *Li ji*, or from the most important philosophical texts of the Classical period. e.g. the *Lun yu*, the *Dao de jing*, the *Meng zi* etc. and since they provide important information about the mythology, history, and the social and philosophical systems of the time, they not only serve to introduce the student to the linguistic aspect of Chinese studies but at the same time also to the historical and cultural background of the period he studies. Accordingly the comprehensive notes to each text not only include grammatical commentaries but also occasional commentaries on the content of the text e.g. on the hierarchical system represented by titles etc. The grammatical notes are based on the system introduced in the elementary courses and further developed in the *Grundstrukturen* ... (Basic structures of Ancient Chinese ...).

The *Grundstrukturen*, the third part of Gassmann's introduction to Ancient Chinese, is intended to provide the student with explanations of the elementary constructions of Ancient Chinese to enable him to understand the grammatical structure of texts dating from about the 8th to the 2nd centuries B.C.

The grammar is based on structuralistic theory, namely the analysis of the hierarchical structures of the constituents of a sentence, and consequently the author distinguishes word classes according to their syntactical position. The syntactical relations are represented in tree diagrams and rules to generate sentences with syntactical features of increasing complexity are established but theoretical discussions are restricted to a minimum and unfortunately no bibliography for reference and for further study is added. Although transformational processes are included in the theoretical concept of the grammar, a detailed description of their precise procedures is avoided to minimize confusion for the student. Since I am not a specialist in generative grammar, comments on the theoretical system developed by the author will be left out.

The *Grundstrukturen* consist of 8 chapters: the basic introduction, simple sentences, noun phrases, subordinate clauses, the verb and the adverb, the sentence and sentences, proforms, and emphatic features. The appendix includes a list of the graphical representations, the tabulations, an index of the instances quoted, a general index and a list of characters.

Basic to Gassmann's analysis of the Ancient Chinese language is the distinction of different word classes according to their referential or predicative function. Words can be transformed from one word class to another by derivational processes. The predicative expressions, particularly verbal predicates, play a central role in the syntactical description and accordingly the definition of the valency of the verb is crucial for the interpretation of the predicate. This approach to the description of Ancient Chinese is new and valuable though sometimes difficult since the author's criteria for categorizing the complement as an argument or an adverbial are not always transparent as for example in the

analysis of the verb *si* 死 'to die' for which he assumes a valency different from that of the German word *sterben*, 'to die'. Since the verb *si* 死 'to die' is occasionally – as in one of the texts he quotes (texts:28, p. 379) – employed followed by a complement in argument position, particularly the object pronoun *zhi* 之, with the meaning 'to die for/on behalf of', Gassmann in the *Grundstrukturen* (p. 34, 35 and 65) proposes that *si* 死 has generally to be analysed as a verb with two arguments. In his translation, the complement, although classified as an indirect object, is translated as an adverbial which may be a problem of the language of the translation but which makes the analysis of the complement as an argument less likely. Additionally, *si* 死 is usually employed as an intransitive verb with only one argument, the subject, and semantically the meaning 'to die for' seems to be a derived meaning not present in most instances of the verb and apparently restricted to a rather small range of different objects. Although one cannot exclude the possibility that in Chinese a verb *si* 死 selecting two arguments indeed exists – based on the fact that there are a few instances in which a complement is found in argument position – in most of its occurrences it is certainly an intransitive verb with only one argument. The following example is a typical example from the *Shiji*, in which no deleted second argument can be assumed:

(1)   十二年，文信侯不韋死，竊葬   (*SJ*: 6; 231)
       shi er nian, wen xin hou   bu wei si qie zang
       ten two year, Wen xin marquis Bu wei die secret bury
       "In the twelfth year, the marquis Wen-xin, Bu-wei, died and was buried in secret."

In his chapter on noun phrases Gassmann establishes three different levels: the noun, the nominal and the noun phrase. According to his theory, complements expand a noun to form a nominal, adjuncts modify a nominal without changing its status and determinants are added to the nominal to form a noun phrase. As far as the nominals are concerned, Gassmann assumes that they are

formed by adding complements in post-nominal position, with the consequence that according to him in Classical Chinese there are elements that can be found to the right of the head in a noun phrase. This hypothesis challenges all analyses of the noun phrase in Chinese. According to the general hypothesis on the noun phrase in Chinese, elements to the right can only be analysed as appositive, but this can, to my knowledge, hardly account for the examples provided by the author. In fact, what Gassmann categorizes as nominals should rather be analysed as verb-object constructions sometimes found in argument position:

(2)   致知在格物   (example B108, p. 112: *Li Ji* 43.1)
        zhi   zhi   zai ge   wu
        attain knowledge lie in realize thing
        "To attain knowledge is based on exactly differentiating the things."
        Gassmann's translation: "Der Erwerb von Erkenntnissen beruht auf der eingehenden Erfassung der Wesenheiten." (The attainment of knowledge is based on / lies in the exact recognition of the things.)

and sometimes in predicative position:

(3)   是有父也   (p. 11, tree diagram 33)
        shi you fu   ye
        this have father YE
        "This means that one has a father / fathers."
        Gassmann's translation: "das das Haben von Vätern [ist]" (that the having of fathers' is.)

It is not a problem in Ancient Chinese for a VO-structure to occur in argument position without further marking and this analysis avoids the difficulty of forcing the rule that in a nominal phrase the head is always final and that modifying elements are always found left to the head except if they are appositive which I believe they are not in

the mentioned cases. Additionally, Gassmann's translation suggests an interpretation as a genitive construction based on a verb phrase with an underlying object which always has to appear as a modifier-head construction as in the following example:

(4)   宋之圍
        song zhi wei
        Song ZHI besiege
        "The siege of Song" (taken from Unger: 1987, vol. 1, p. 143)

In his description of adjunct-constructions the author distinguishes different categories, namely genitive adjunction and adjunction of verbs as attributes. In all cases, the modifying element precedes its head. The marker of the genitive adjunction is *zhi* 之, categorized as a *postposition* derived from the verb *zhi* 之 'to go' (p. 96). The term *postposition* is also applied to the subordinating connector *er* 而 (p. 217, 223) and the finals *ye* 也 (p. 91) and *yi* 矣 (p. 229). Even if one is inclined to accept this term for *zhi* 之 it does seem to be difficult to accept it for four morphemes as heterogeneous as those mentioned here. As far as *er* 而 is concerned, functionally there may be – according to Unger (1988, vol. 6, p. 63) – a certain relation to *zhi* 之, but there is certainly none to *ye* 也 and *yi* 矣. Additionally, the term *postposition* itself can give rise to some confusion since it usually is employed differently.

The chapter on subordinate clauses deals with relative and appositive sentences, with causative constructions and with causal and final nominal sentences. The relative sentences are divided into those referring to the subject and those referring to the object or an adverbial complement and into generic relative sentences. In this context the pronouns *zhe* 者, in relative sentences referring to the subject and *suo* 所, in relative sentences referring to the object or an adverbial complement respectively, are introduced. Gassmann accounts for the structural diversity of relative sentences by posing the interesting hypothesis that this diversity can serve to express different grades of definiteness.

In the next part, causative constructions, the author analyses the adverbial negative *fu* 弗 as a negative causative verb forming a contrastive pair with the causative verb 使 (p. 206 and p. 257f) comparable with the contrastive pair *you* 有 and *wu* 無. This analysis of *fu* 弗 as a causative verb is – as far as I know – quite unique in the linguistic literature, but there seems to be a close connection between the negative *fu* 弗 and a causative meaning of the negated verb as Wei Pei-quan (2001, p. 144) has shown. One of Gassmann's arguments is based on the fact that *fu* 弗 + Verb can be followed by the object pronoun *zhi* 之 while in a negative construction with *shi* 使 the object pronoun is deleted (p. 257). There are different linguistic analyses of the function of *fu* 弗 and its relation with the object pronoun *zhi* 之 (Unger, vol. 3, 1987; Pulleyblank 1995 and others)[1] – all of them interpreting it as a negative – but as Djamouri (1991, p. 27f) has shown, in the bronze inscriptions it served to negate a transitive verb[2] which could be followed by an object including the object pronoun *zhi* 之. Supposing this analysis is correct, it can account for all cases Gassmann provides in support of his analysis of *fu* 弗 as a causative verb.

In the chapter on the verb and the adverb, the author extends the threefold system of variables modifying the verb phrase already introduced in the elementary courses. As far as adverbial structures are concerned, the author assumes that they are - with or without a connector – connected with the verbal kernel. The connector is *er* 而 and – as already mentioned – is classified by him as a *postposition*. The rules according to which this *postposition* is applied or left out are as yet unknown. This analysis accounts well for the subordinating function of *er* 而 in subordinating adverbial VPs (or even NPs) but nevertheless, I would prefer a slightly different analysis to that shown in e.g. *Strukturbaum 78* (or *79)*:

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[1] See Djamouri (1991 : 9) who gives a list of authors who e.g. assume that *fu* has to be interpreted as a fusion of *bu* 不 and *zhi* 之. A recent contribution to this hypothesis is provided by Wei Pei-quan (2001).

[2] See also He Leshi (2001 : 95).

(5)　　衛君待子而爲政　　　　　　　(p. 220, 221; *Lun yu* 13.3)
　　　　wei jun dai　　zi　　er wei　zheng
　　　　Wei ruler wait for master ER make government
　　　　"The ruler depends on you to administer the government."
　　　　Gassmann's translation: "Der Fürst von Wei erwartet (von Ihnen), dass (Sie) *auf Ihre Weise* die Regierungsgeschäfte besorgen. (wörtlich: dass Sie *als Sie* ...)" (The ruler of Wei expects (you) that (you) *as yourself* administer the government.)

It is not *zi* 子 alone that modifies the following VP *wei zheng* 爲政, rather the whole VP, *dai zi* 待子, functions as an adverbial and the subject has to be analysed – as done by Gassmann – as the matrix subject of the sentence.[3]

As far as adverbs as a separate word class are concerned, the author assumes that only a few adverbs belong to this class and that they serve to determine the verb with regard to the grammatical category tense, functionally similar to the *Aktionsarten*, a very interesting point (p. 228). Regarding the grammatical category of aspect, it is expressed either implicitly by context or construction or explicitly by the marker of the perfective aspect *yi* 矣. The adverbs *ji* 既/ *yi* 已 and *wei* 未 which are according to Pulleyblank (1994) assumed to indicate the perfective aspect and the negation of the perfective aspect are not mentioned by him in this context. This, I think, is well justified since I assume that they – although they belong to the class of adverbs that can serve to modify the aspectual value of the verb phrase – cannot be considered as genuine aspectual markers of the verb in the first place.

A further category introduced in this chapter is the category of adverbial predicates, mostly those indicating the duration of an event. Regarding example B 272:

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[3] See also Legge, p. 263: "The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the government."

(6)   吾與回言終日   (p. 232; *Lun yu* 2.9)
wu yu hui yan zhong ri
I and Hui speak end   day
"I and Hui talked together the whole day long."
Gassmann's translation: "Ich und Hui (wir) haben *den ganzen Tag* miteinander *gesprochen.*",

the duration phrase is certainly analysable as the predicate of the sentence. But as far as example B 273 is concerned:

(7)   不食三日矣   (p. 232; *Zuo*, Xuan 2.4)
bu shi san ri yi
not eat three day YI
"I did not eat for three days."
Gassmann's translation: "Mein Nicht-essen dauert *schon* drei Tage."

since no additional marker such as an adverb modifying either *bu shi* 不食 or *san ri* 三日 is found, in my mind two different analyses are possible. If the verb is modified by an adverb – as in the following example from the *Shiji* – an interpretation of the duration phrase as the complement of the sentence is more likely, since the adverb has scope not only over the verb but also over the whole VP including the duration phrase and consequently the duration phrase is part of the VP.

(8)   周襄王既居外四年，乃使使告急于晉 (*SJ*:110; 2882)
Zhou Xiang wang ji ju wai   si nian nai shi shi
Zhou Xiang king JI live outside four year then send envoy
gao ji   yu   jin
tell difficulty PREP Jin
"After the king of Zhou, Xiang, had already lived abroad for four years, he sent an envoy to communicate his difficulties to Jin."

In contrast to this, in the following example in which the duration phrase itself is marked by adverbial *yi* 已, it clearly has to be interpreted as the predicate of the sentence:

(9)　　元年，漢興已六十餘歲矣，天下乂安，...(*SJ*: 12; 452)
　　　　yuan nian, han xing yi　liu　shi　yu　　sui　yi　tian
　　　　first　year, Han rise　YI　six　ten more year YI heaven
　　　　xia　　yi　　　an
　　　　below regulate in peace
　　　　"In the first year it was already more than sixty years past that Han had risen, the empire was governed and in peace, ..."

These few examples may suffice to show that the possibility of different analyses of this construction cannot be excluded.

The chapter on the sentence and sentences consists of two parts, in the first e.g. the subject, and the markers of different speech acts, and in the second, complex sentences are discussed. The author lists a few conjunctions that can serve to express, for example, conditionality or concessivity and, as far as the final sentences are concerned, he assumes that they are usually employed without any marker. He concedes that the morpheme *yi* 以 is frequently found in final sentences but he rejects the hypothesis that it functions as a conjunction indicating a final sentence (p. 267). He consistently analyses *yi* 以 as a case marker of the modal-instrumental case and he assumes that in those cases in which it is not followed by the object of the preposition, the object pronoun *zhi* 之 is always deleted. As far as this last assumption is concerned, his analysis is in agreement with for example Ma Jianzhong (1927, 7, 3), Unger (1989, vol.5, p. 196) and Pulleyblank (1995, e.g. p. 48) who assume that the object pronoun *zhi* 之 is regularly deleted when it follows the preposition *yi* 以. But under a general linguistic aspect, this analysis is quite tricky and we wonder if it would not be better to analyse *yi* 以 differently in most of its isolated occurrences as for instance in example B 286 as a conjunction introducing a final sentence:

(10)　度地以居民　　　　　　　　　　　　(p. 244; *Li Ji* 5.41)
　　　duo　　di　yi　ju　min
　　　measure land YI rest people
　　　"He measures the land to settle the people [there]."
　　　Gassmann's translation: "Der Fürst soll den Boden ausmessen und *aufgrund dessen* das Land ansiedeln."

An analysis of *yi* 以 as introducing a final sentence is quite plausible here and it avoids the linguistically difficult analysis of a preposition with a deleted object.

In his chapter on emphatic features the author assumes that the pronoun *qi* 其 can serve, just like the demonstrative pronoun *shi* 是 , to mark the topicalisation of the matrix subject. Both pronouns are supposed to fill the position left by the subject. Regarding the demonstrative pronoun *shi* 是, I completely agree with Gassmann's analysis but as far as *qi* 其 is concerned, I would rather analyse it e.g. in example B 411 as a modal adverb:

(11)　晉侯其無後乎　　　　　　　　　　(p. 305; *Zuo*, Xi 11)
　　　jin hou　　qi wu　　hou　　　hu
　　　Jin marquis QI not have descendant HU
　　　"The marquis of Jin will not have descendants."
　　　Gassmann's translation: "*Der Markgraf von Jin, der* wird keine Nachfahren haben."

Although, as Djamouri (2001, p. 155f) has shown, *qi* 其 historically, in the Shang bone inscriptions, can occasionally serve to focalize the subject of a sentence (or an object, a recipient and a locative), in these cases it is found preceding the subject and not following it. In preverbal position it functions as a modal auxiliary in these texts. In the Classical language in preverbal position it mostly has to be analysed as a modal adverb[4] very often, but not exclusively,

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[4] See e.g. Wei Pei-quan (1999 : 261).

employed in irreal or future contexts – an analysis which fits the quoted example well.

These few remarks are not in the least intended to diminish the value of Prof. Gassmann's introduction, description and explanation of the grammar of Ancient Chinese. Although terminologically in parts based on more traditional grammars of Classical Chinese, such as the grammar of U. Unger, Gassmann develops an independent and linguistically based system to explain the basic structures of more than four hundred examples in his *Grundstrukturen*. The texts of the introductory part are very well chosen to provide the student – besides the linguistic explanations – with valuable information on the historical and cultural background of the Ancient Chinese texts. Gassmann's structuralistic approach, which is quite new particularly in the field of Ancient Chinese, may hopefully serve to give rise to an animated linguistic discussion on the grammatical structure of Ancient Chinese and the best way to explain it.

Finally a few inaccuracies should be mentioned for those who do not have access to the corrigenda referred to in *Antik-chinesische Texte*, p.6:

p.109 Regarding the negative *bu* 不 : replace "Suffix" by "Affix" or "Prefix".

p.110/111: replace PS by PST.

p.191 "... ausschliesslich in den passiven Äusserungen ...", replace "passiven" by "aktiven".

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