

An Analysis of ‘Full’ Words in Classical Chinese Based on the Book *Laozi*

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Analýza plnovýznamových slov v klasickej čínštine založená na knihe Laozi

Resumé Článok pojednáva o metodike skúmania plnovýznamových slov v klasickej čínštine, vzťahmi medzi slovnými druhmi a syntaktickými funkciami. Na príklade textu *Laozi* podáva výpočet zaznamenaných syntaktických funkcií pre každý slovný druh. ‘Syntaktická paradigma’ umožňuje slová s podobnými syntaktickými paradigmami vzťahovať k rovnakému slovnému druhu.

Abstract This article examines the methodology of the research on meaningful words of Classical Chinese and the relationship between word classes and syntactic functions. Based on the text of *Laozi*, a list of attested syntactic functions for every word class is given. The ‘syntactic paradigm’ enables to count words of similar syntactic paradigms as belonging to the same word class.

Key words Chinese, Language · Classical Chinese, Old Chinese, World Classes and Syntactic Functions, Syntactic Paradigm

Introduction

The book *Laozi* does not serve too often as a starting point for philological studies in Classical Chinese. Despite this fact, I have tried to show that even this text, which is often regarded as esoteric and mysterious, can be approached with standard tools and methods within the framework of a language analysis of other Classical texts or those of the Warring States period.

The present contribution is based on my work *The Book Laozi: A Translation with Philological Commentary* which was published in 2013 in Prague.¹ Its aim was to test the current philological procedures in terms of their applicability to *Laozi*, present the results in a transparent way, and let them manifest their overall validity for Classical Chinese studies. Therefore, it contains a number of general and methodological considerations.

The whole book consists of three main parts: the Introduction, the Commentary, and the Dictionary. In the Commentary, in addition to the translation of the text of *Laozi* into the Czech language, I provided an explanation for practically every word in the text, which involves ca. 5000 entries of a lexical and grammatical commentary. These entries are also arranged under head characters and individual lexemes.

The present contribution is a summary of the key passages from the Introduction to the book, where I explain my approaches and methods in analysing the lexicon of ‘full’ words (*shí cí* 實詞) of Classical Chinese. These principles were brought to me by my great teachers: S. E. Yakhontov, T. N. Nikitina, Guo Xiliang, and Ch. Harbsmeier. I hereby express my honest gratitude to them.

1 *Classical Chinese and Its Analysis in the Present Work*

Here we understand Classical Chinese as the language of the Old Chinese written texts written from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century AD. Classical Chinese in this understanding is thus a time-restricted written variant of the historically attested Old Chinese, which was spoken in the Central States belonging to

1 David Sehnal, *Kniba Laozi: překlad s filologickým komentářem* [*The Book Laozi: A Translation with Philological Commentary*] (Praha: Univerzita Karlova, Filozofická fakulta, 2013). The most useful editions I have consulted are the following: *Laozi jin zhu jin yi* 老子今注今譯 [Modern Explanation and Annotation of *Laozi*], ed. and trans. by Chen Guying 陳鼓應 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2009); *Laozi jiao shi* 老子校釋 [*Laozi* Revised and Explained], ed. by Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983).

Chinese civilisation from around ca. the 13th century BCE to the 8th century AD. Old Chinese is therefore a substantially broader concept than Classical Chinese. One has to distinguish the so-called *wényán* 文言, which is the exclusively written style emerging during the Tang Dynasty and imitating Classical Chinese, from Classical Chinese itself. For the purpose of this work, it is necessary to bear in mind that Classical Chinese, unlike *wényán*, was based on the living language of its time—Old Chinese (hereafter OC). In his book *Aspects of Classical Chinese Syntax*, Harbsmeier writes:

But I am suggesting that it is not much of an exaggeration to say that our knowledge of Ancient Chinese is in many respects still at the stage that corresponds to that of the student of Latin who reads *De bello gallico* with a crib hidden under his desk. It is not just that we have not got an adequate *theory* of AC grammar. (*That* we could live with.) No, half the time we do not really know for sure what exactly AC sentences mean. And even when we feel sure what an AC sentence means we still are often uncertain how it comes to mean what apparently it does mean.²

During the 30 years that have passed since Professor Harbsmeier’s words, little has qualitatively changed in this Sinological field. The reasons for such a state of being are surely manifold; here I want to mention at least one of them. The understanding of any text is given by three basic factors: grammar, lexicon, and context. As far as the first two aspects are concerned, they are mostly studied as two independent disciplines and are very rarely combined together into one organic system. At the same time, the character of Classical Chinese as an almost ideal isolating language needs a detailed investigation into its *grammatical features*, not only of the auxiliary but particularly of the ‘full’ words. Furthermore, the *lexical meanings* of the ‘full’ words of Old Chinese must still be the subject of corrections and greater precision in different contexts with the use of still subtler instruments. A grammar and dictionary that would be mutually interlinked and fully compatible is something that we are still missing in Old Chinese studies.

In current grammars of Classical Chinese, syntactic relations are often described in very general terms: subject—predicate, predicative verb—object, attribute—head, etc. In such a general analysis, it seems that any ‘full’ word in the text can carry out almost any function; the differences between word classes

2 Christoph Harbsmeier, *Aspects of Classical Chinese Syntax* (London; Malmö: Curson Press Ltd. Asia Center, 1981), 6.

are completely erased (and obscured). Classical Chinese thus appears to be a more or less amorphous language, where almost everything is allowed: nothing can be convincingly attested or disputed. With such a method, the most reliable way seems to be relying on old commentaries and believing that the commentators, thanks to their erudition and more or less their living tradition, have understood the difficult spots in the text correctly. This is what Harbsmeier calls the »crib hidden under one's desk«. ³ It is evident that in doing so one just recycles what has been said or written many times before. Except for some archaeological findings of Old Chinese texts, developments in the field of Old Chinese philology are only relatively modest. No wonder that some people tend to look upon Old Chinese studies as a rigid or even dead discipline. A very substantial breakthrough in this situation is the project of the *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae* (TLS) database. ⁴

In the TLS database, there are 1386 different registered syntactic categories. This number itself documents the huge structural diversity of Old Chinese, which the traditional methods of description are unable to notice. Such a detailed apparatus enables the generating of new grammatical rules and develops in the reader the necessary sensitivity towards various syntactic phenomena as well as towards the concrete semantic contents of different syntactic categories. It is thus a great indicator of progress in comparison to the prevailing 'intuitive' reading, when we »are often uncertain how it comes to mean what apparently it does mean«. The TLS enables us to treat the current readings based on commentaries critically with a solid foundation of registered linguistic facts. Moreover, thanks to its universal method of analysis, it enables us to compare directly the modern Pekinese idiolect with the Shang Oracle Bones Inscriptions and find continuity over the whole history of the Chinese language. (For the sake of greater pedagogical compatibility, in my book I use my own system of description of the

3 Harbsmeier, *Aspects of Classical Chinese Syntax*, 6.

4 »Thesaurus Linguae Sericae. An Historical and Comparative Encyclopaedia of Chinese Conceptual Schemes« (ed. by Christoph Harbsmeier), <<http://tls.uni-hd.de>> (last retrieval May 13, 2017). For TLS see e.g., Françoise Bottéro and Christoph Harbsmeier, »The *Shuowen Jiezi* Dictionary and the Human Sciences in China«, in *Festschrift Nathan Sivin* (Taipei: Academica Sinica, 2009), 249–271.

grammar of *Laozi* which is based on, but is more simple than, the TLS system of 2013).

In this work, a great importance is put on the semantics of OC ‘full’ words. It is worrying that at the beginning of the 21st century one sometimes still has to stress the fact that it is not the *character* but the *word* which is the basic syntactic unit of Old Chinese. A Chinese character as an artefact of the Chinese script itself is free of any pronunciation or meaning. In other words, one does not have to ask what this or that character means but how this or that *word* was written. The fascination with traditional Chinese philology as well as with Chinese characters by a number of Western Sinologists is one of the reasons why we still know so little about the identity of OC words. A share of responsibility for this state of affairs is also borne by a long-lasting misunderstanding of the nature of the *Shuō wén jiě zì* 說文解字 dictionary as a purely grammatological and not a lexicographic work.

As an example, let us take the simplest Chinese character *yī* 一: by looking in the TLS we discover that this single character may represent at least fifteen lexemes in the following synonym groups: ALL, AS SOON AS, CONCENTRATE, ENDURING, IF, INDEFINITE ARTICLE, ONCE, ONE, OTHER, PRECEDE, SAME, THIS, UNITE, WHEN, and WHOLE. These homophonous (and homographic) lexemes are registered in thirty different syntactic functions and corresponding categorial meanings. The problem of the identity of OC words is one of the current challenges for Sinologists, and the analytic material recorded in the TLS can serve as an important source for further research. In my Dictionary, I attempt to go further than the TLS in that I am trying to organize the discovered meanings and functions of OC words hierarchically to show how they—often in a predictable way—derive from each other. In addition to the analytic apparatus of the TLS, I was inspired by the views of the German Sinologist and general linguist Georg von der Gabelentz (1840–1893) and the Russian Sinologist Tamara N. Nikitina.

In his famous *Chinesische Grammatik*, Gabelentz looks at OC words from two perspectives: from the perspective of their belonging to a certain word class (*Wortkategorie*) and from the perspective of their syntactic function in the

sentence (*Redetheil*).⁵ Unfortunately, he does not deal with the relationship between these two aspects in detail, and he leaves the question of how *Wortkategorien* and *Redetheile* relate to each other mostly unanswered.

In the TLS system, Harbsmeier does not explicitly use *Wortkategorien*. The fixed word-class membership of a given lexeme could be judged according to its classification under this or that general meaning (SYNONYM GROUP in the TLS system). Otherwise his syntactic apparatus is analogical to Gabelentz's *Redetheile*.

Nikitina goes the furthest in investigating the relationship between the function carried out (or potentially carried out) by the given word in a sentence and its word class, which can be recorded in a dictionary. According to Nikitina, as it is *de facto* with Harbsmeier, the semantic classification of words should testify to their syntactic classification. But Nikitina also has inspiring insights as to the tracing of the word's identity, its basic categorial meaning, and derived categorial meanings.

For example, according to Nikitina,⁶ the character *kǔ* 苦 represents two lexemes: 1. the adjective »be bitter«, »be hard«; and 2. the verb »suffer from something«. We are dealing here with two different lexemes, because each of them appears in its own set of constructions. The adjective »be bitter«, »be hard« has the following typical constructions:

夫良藥苦於口 »In fact, an excellent medicine is bitter for the mouth« (*Hanfeizi*, 32).⁷

5 Georg von der Gabelentz, *Chinesische Grammatik mit Ausschluss des niederen Stiles und der heutigen Umgangssprache* [Chinese Grammar with the Exclusion of the Lower Style and Today's Language of Communication] (Peking: Deutschland-Institut, 1881/1944).

6 Tamara N. Nikitina, *Sintakticheskii stroj drevnekitaiskogo yazyka* [Syntactic Structure of the Ancient Chinese Language] (doctoral dissertation) (Leningrad: Leningradskij gosudarstvennyj universitet, 1985).

7 *Hanfeizi jijie* 韓非子集解 [Collected Commentaries on *Hanfeizi*], ed. by Xu Weiyu 許維遇 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 267. English translation by the author.

苦其生 »[He himself] makes his life hard« (*Zhuangzi*, 4).⁸

雖臣虜之勞不苦於此矣 »Even the labour of slaves or captives is not harder than this« (*Hanfeizi*, 49).⁹

If the adjective »be bitter«, »be hard« carries out the function of a nominal element of a sentence, it obtains the meaning »something bitter«, »something hard«, »bitterness«: 少嘗苦曰苦。多嘗苦曰甘 »If one tastes a little of bitterness, he calls it 'bitter'. If one tastes a lot of bitterness, he calls it 'sweet'.« (*Mozi*, 17)¹⁰ For the verb »suffer from something« the following constructions are typical: 國民苦 [於]盜 (法、兵) »[...] the people suffered from robbery [law, war].«¹¹ The causative transformation of this construction generates the meaning 'make somebody suffer' but not 'make something become bitter or hard'. (!) 獨秦能苦趙 »Only *Qín* can make *Zhào* suffer« (*Shiji*, 70).¹² The verb »suffer from« can be used in the passive construction: 蓬萊之藥可得。然常為大鯨所苦 »The medicine of the *Pénglái* island is possible to obtain, but we are still suffering from big sharks.« (*Shiji*, 6)¹³ The nominal meaning, which corresponds to the verb »suffer from something« will be »suffering«, but not »bitterness«: 人胥知生之樂。未知生之苦。 »Everybody understands the joys of life, but no one understands the sufferings of life« (*Liezi*, 1).¹⁴

Different nominal meanings have different antonyms. The antonym of *kǔ* 苦 »something bitter« is *gān* 甘 »something sweet«, while the antonym of *kǔ* 苦 »suffering« is *lè* 樂 'joy'. In a construction with the relative pronoun *suǒ* 所, both meanings are possible: *suǒ kǔ* 所苦 can mean either »what one regards as bitter«

8 *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解 [Collected Commentaries on *Zhuangzi*], ed. by Wang Xianqian 王先謙, Liu Wu 劉武 and Shen Xiaohuan 沈嘯寰 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 42. English translation by the author.

9 *Hanfeizi jijie*, 340.

10 *Mozi jiao zhu* 墨子校注 [*Mozi* Revised and Annotated], ed. by Wu Yujiang 吳毓江, Sun Qizhu 孫啟治 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 199. English translation by the author.

11 Example probably coined by Nikitina herself.

12 *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the Historian], ed. by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 2280. English translation by the author.

13 *Shiji*, 263.

14 *Liezi ji shi* 列子集釋 [Collected Commentaries on *Liezi*], ed. by Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 26. English translation by the author.

or »what one suffers from«. Without a context, the phrase *suǒ kǔ* 所苦 is ambivalent.

The above exposé is a good example of Nikitina's method: two different words, albeit written with the same character and etymologically related, have different sets of constructions in which they occur, i.e., different *syntactic paradigms*. Words belonging to the same word class share similar syntactic paradigms. When the meanings do not split along syntactic paradigms (as in the case of »bitter« and »hard«), we are dealing with two different meanings of a single lexeme; in the given case, it is the basic and figurative meaning. I also use the method of syntactic paradigms in the Dictionary while making decisions as far as the identity of lexemes is concerned.

Nikitina further distinguishes the so-called 'common' and 'special' functions of the 'full' word classes. The matter is that if a word is used in its common function, its categorial meaning does not change, while in a special function such a change is taking place. In the example mentioned above, the common function for both the adjective »be bitter« and the verb »suffer« is the function of the predicative verb, their special functions being nominal functions. In unclear cases, Nikitina uses the statistical method for finding out which set of functions of a concrete word is to be taken as basic, i.e., common, and which as special. The crucial thing is, that the change of categorial meaning itself does not involve the formation of a new word.

In the present work, as far as Old Chinese words are concerned, I distinguish equally between Gabelentz's *Wortkategorien*, i.e., the fixed word class membership which one can record with the given lexeme in a dictionary, and *Redetheile*, i.e., the syntactic function of the given word in the given construction. I call the former simply a 'word class' and refer to the latter as a 'function'. For the sake of terminological transparency, Gabelentz used German terms for *Wortkategorien* and Latin terms for *Redetheile*. Due to a lack of other means, I mark word classes with capital letters, and functions with small letters. For example: *xuán* 玄 ADJ »be reddish-black«, figuratively »be mysterious« > n »mystery«. We read this formula as follows: the word *xuán* 玄, which is lexically an adjective, performs the function of a noun in the given construction.

Nevertheless, the situation is more complex in my view. It seems that in certain cases the derivation of a new lexeme can take place as a result of the lexicalization of the changed categorial meaning. Subsequently such a derived lexeme can be used in a new special function. Neither Gabelentz nor Nikitina mention this phenomenon, but, according to the analysed material, it is not uncommon.

For example: *pǔ* 樸 N »piece of uncarved wood« > ADJ »be uncarved and unspecialized like a piece of raw wood« > n »primitivity«, »lack of specialization«. We can read this formula in the following way: from the word *pǔ* 樸, which was originally a noun, an adjective was derived, which in turn is used as a noun in the given construction. Thus, in my work I admit that a function (*Redetheil*) can be lexicalized. Why do I think that *pǔ* 樸 in the meaning of »primitivity«, »lack of specialization« is derived from the adjective *pǔ* 樸, but not directly from the noun *pǔ* 樸 »piece of uncarved wood«?

1. We have an actual attested instance of the adjectival usage of *pǔ* 樸: 道常無名，樸 »For the proper way there was common the absence of denominations, [everything] was primitive (like a piece of uncarved wood)« (XXXII).¹⁵ When functioning syntactically as adjectives, a great number of nouns obtain the categorial meaning 'to possess the quality typical for the given noun'.
2. The formation of de-adjectival abstract nouns is a prominent feature of OC adjectives. Yakhontov even thinks that the majority of OC monosyllabic abstract nouns have an adjectival origin.¹⁶
3. Through the adjectival stage one can much easier explain the shift in meaning from *pǔ* 樸 »piece of uncarved wood« to *pǔ* »primitivity«. The derivation along the line 'thing' > 'possess the quality typical for the given thing' > 'abstract denomination of the given quality' is very regular and is in accordance with general derivational processes.

15 The text of *Laozi* I refer to in the whole article is based on Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Laozi jinzhu jinyi* 老子今注今譯 [Laozi with Modern Commentary and Modern Translation] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2009). The number of chapter of given citation is in Latin numerals. All translation of citations from *Laozi* into English by the author.

16 For details see Sergei E. Yakhontov, *Drevnekitaiskii yazyk* [Ancient Chinese Language] (Moskva: Nauka, 1965).

4. It appears that large groups of OC 'full' words behave according to the scheme 'thing' > 'possess the quality typical for the given thing' > 'abstract denomination of the given quality'. Such a scheme enables us to predict analogical cases, and it enables us to apply the model in cases which are not evident at first sight. For example: let us assume that the abstractum *rén* 仁 »humanity« is derived from the adjective *rén* 仁 »be human«. However, if we apply our model, we can find the following association: 人 *rén* »human« > 仁 *rén* »possess the qualities typical for a human, i.e., be human« > 仁 *rén* »humanity«. The change of the grapheme may mark the lexicalization of the adjective derived from the noun *rén* 人 according to the abovementioned model. In my view, such a specification of the concept *rén* 仁 is much more solid than considerations of the kind that the character 仁 consists of the parts meaning »human« and »two«, and what this implies as far as its meaning is concerned.

In this work, I use several similar derivational schemes. I am trying to solve the question of what is basic and what is derived namely from the point of view of the organicity of the whole system of word classes and their functions. I am deliberately leaving out the reconstructions of OC pronunciation and the attempts at the reconstruction of the inner morphology of OC words, since these are usually not based on detailed textual (contextual) analysis and they are still not very suitable for our purposes.

2 *The General Features of 'Full' Words in Old Chinese*

Words are minimal units which enter into syntactic relationships. Words in Old Chinese could have been monosyllabic and often di- or polysyllabic. A wide-spread myth about Old Chinese is that it just had a monosyllabic vocabulary. However, even in such a short text as *Laozi*, we can detect a number of di- and polysyllabic lexemes. The criterion for distinguishing between two independent words and a binome (polynome) is mainly a syntactic analysis of immediate constituents: when the meaning of an immediate constituent consisting of two units in relation to the meaning of the whole construction cannot be explained by a simple conjunction of the two meanings, we are probably dealing with a disyllabic word. Between both

units there is thus a morphological interaction instead of a syntactic one. I will give an example: The expression *bù sǐ* 不死 constitutes two words if the meaning of the whole is »not die«, like in the sentence 敗而不死 »I was defeated but did not die« (*Zuozhuan*, 5, 15).¹⁷ Whereas in 不死之藥 »medicine of immortality«, the expression *bùsǐ* 不死 does not mean »not die«, because it is not a »medicine which did not die«, nor is it a »medicine causing somebody not to die«. In my opinion, it is better to treat *bùsǐ* 不死 as one word, namely a disyllabic adjective »be immortal«, since it is a »medicine which causes somebody to become immortal«. The negation *bù* 不 is no longer an independent adverb here but a prefix by which other analogical adjectives can be formed, such as *bùdào* 不道 »be prematurely withered«. By the way, the same prefix of some adjectives has been retained in Modern Chinese, e.g., in words like *bùlì* 不利 »be«, *bùcuò* 不錯 »be OK« and others.

A disyllabic expression is often lexicalized as a result of its unmarked nominalization, e.g., *kěyù* 可欲 in the expression 不見 (*xiàn*) 可欲 »Let us not show desirable things« (III). The immediate constituent *kěyù* 可欲 consists of two predicative units, but as a whole it is a nominal object of the predicative verb *xiàn* 見. I regard it as a disyllabic noun, because further IC analysis would be in contradiction to the meaning of the whole construction. Moreover, the morpheme 可 *kě* is also a prefix of some adjectives in Modern Chinese, and it is possible that we are dealing here with its precursor, which is useful to bear in mind.

As auxiliary criteria, one can make use of the frequency of the given expression or analogy with other observed phenomena. It is generally possible to state where a disyllabic (polysyllabic) expression can be interpreted on both syntactic or morphological levels; in this work, I am in favour of the morphological one. Any 'full' word may be the subject of various regular shifts of meaning:

1. The most common shift: *the transposition of the basic meaning into a denomination of a different reality according to metaphorical rules:*

An example of such a shift is the word *dào* 道 »way«, used often in the meaning of »method« and »way of doing things«. The English word »way« and the German »der Weg« are used similarly. It is true that the Old Chinese metaphors were far from transparent and here lies one of the crucial difficulties in understanding the text.

2. *The narrowing of the meaning:*

17 *Zuozhuan* 左傳, in *Shisanjingzhusu* 十三經注疏 [Commentaries to the Thirteen Classical Books] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 1808. English translation by the author.

OC nouns and verbs sometimes tend to narrow their meaning with the addition of the semantic feature ‘the proper’, ‘the right one’, and ‘the relevant’, or ‘to do something properly’, ‘to master something perfectly’, and so on. With the nouns, the same effect can be reached with the addition of the deictic pronoun *qí* 其 »the relevant«. For example:

dào 道 »way« figuratively »method«, in a narrowed sense »the proper method«;

shí 時 »time«, in a narrowed sense »the proper time«;

rén 人 »human«, in a narrowed sense »the right person«;

zhī 知 »understand something«, in a narrowed sense »understand something properly«;

yòng rén 用人 »employ the others«, in a narrowed sense »employ the others in the right«.

This kind of emphasis (特指化 *tèzhǐhuà*) can also be reached in other languages by prosodical means without any formal markers.

3. Usage of the word in a specific sense:

This is a meaning of a word which is related to the basic or figurative one, but which is uneasy to be derived according to the general rules, and it does not constitute an independent syntactic paradigm. We are often led to such a meaning solely by the logic of the utterance. It is not said that it has to be necessarily an obscure meaning or a meaning which cannot be found anywhere else: only our limited knowledge of OC vocabulary does not allow us to draw more general conclusions on these specific meanings. In any case, such a specific meaning must not be in any diametral contradiction to the general lexicological rules. It seems that a frequently added semantic feature in these cases is ‘state’, ‘manner’, ‘aspect’, ‘factor’, ‘principle’, and so on. For example: 以正治國。以奇用兵。 »With correct means one governs the state, with deviant means one employs the arms« (LVII). The words *zhèng* 正 and *qí* 奇 are antonyms here. They are the adjectives »becorrect« and »be deviant«. According to the rules, in a nominal function these adjectives would obtain the respective meanings of »something correct« or »correctness«, or »something deviant« or »deviation«. But here it is very clear from the context that we are dealing with a specific meaning of »correct manner« or »deviant«. These meanings do not contradict the regular »something correct« or »something deviant«, they just further specify the exact sense.

4. *A positive vs. negative connotation of the word:*

The same word can be used in different contexts for a neutral as well as a positive or negative evaluation of the described reality. For example, the abovementioned word *zhèng* 正 is positive in every context: »be correct«, »be right«, »be regular«, etc. Its antonym *qí* 奇, on the other hand, may be used in a positive meaning »be«, »be elite«, and »be unusual«, but also pejoratively »be deviant«, »be strange«, etc. In the case above, the discourse is about warfare, which for *Laozi* is always negative. This is why I understand and translate the word *qí* 奇 in this context explicitly with the pejorative equivalent of »be deviant«.

The adjective *zhì* 智 »be intelligent« may have a neutral connotation »possess intelligence as a biological feature«, but it can be used positively as »possess intelligence of a higher type« and negatively as »possess too much undesirable intelligence«, i.e., »be shrewd«. It is evident that if we define the basic meaning correctly as the neutral »be intelligent«, we can easily derive both connotations. But if we define the basic meaning as »be wise«, we can hardly explain the meaning »be shrewd«, if we are able to detect it in the text at all.

How is meaning in a Classical Chinese text generated? What do we have at hand in reality when trying to understand a dead isolated language like Classical Chinese?

a) *The continuity of the Chinese language.*

Probably the most important factor is the continuity of the Chinese language. Modern Chinese is the direct descendant of Old Chinese, and apparently only due to this fact do we know what many OC words used to mean. We know that the word 道 *dào* meant »way« in OC, because in Modern Chinese there exists the morpheme 道 *dào* with the same meaning, like in 道路 · 人行道, etc. It would be odd to try to find for the OC *dào* 道 any completely different meaning which is unrelated to the meaning »way«.

Naturally, language develops, and in this process shifts in the meanings of lexemes occur. Many of these shifts are well documented and recorded in dictionaries, e.g., the OC word *zǒu* 走 used to mean »to run«, whereas in Modern Chinese it means »to go«. Harbsmeier in his work convincingly shows that the OC *kū* 哭 never meant simply »to weep« but always »lament loudly and publicly« (see definitions of these words in TLS). Another example is that *yán* 言 used to mean »to express oneself publicly« and not just »to speak«. Nevertheless, many OC words

are still waiting for their exact semantic differentiation from their modern relatives.

b) *The network of OC synonymic and antonymic expressions.*

The correct meaning of a given lexeme is often defined by its opposition against other lexemes in the text or by its minimal context. For example, the word *rén* 人 in opposition to *shòu* 獸 »animal« evidently means »human«, whereas *rén* 人 in opposition to *wǒ* 我 would mean »the others«. The question whether we are dealing with two different meanings of the same lexeme or two different lexemes has to solve within the whole system of OC vocabulary. The network of well-defined OC synonyms and antonyms is also gradually built within the scope of the TLS.

c) *Lexicographic works and references as well as traditional commentaries.*

Here it applies fully that every seemingly trivial and obvious piece of information must be subjected to critical inspection. Tradition is to be respected, but not followed blindly, because in many cases the old commentators were not much better equipped than our contemporaries. After all, the reading of commentaries to classical books is also loaded with traditional views, and often an old commentary must be read with a new insight. Furthermore, the commentators in their efforts were rarely led by a motivation to reach an understanding which would be minimally conforming to the commentator's own philosophy. On the contrary, the text often served as a launching pad for his own philosophical considerations. On the other hand, the results of lexicographic work by the commentators are treasures of traditional Chinese philology, and one has to pay due attention to them.

d) *Concordances and the electronic databases of OC texts.*

We assume that Classical Chinese was the commonly written communication tool of educated people of that time and that all classical texts were written in a language intelligible to the literate public of that time. Furthermore, we presume that the author of these texts were competent speakers and stylists and that they wrote in a way conforming to the conventions of the period. This does not exclude the specific language expressions of every author, but these must be defined against the background of Classical Chinese as such. No text is an absolute solitary piece which would be linguistically incompatible with other texts. Moreover, for

the classical period the intellectual compatibility of the authors was significant to a great extent. The authors of the *Analects* and Warring States period discussed similar problems and they based themselves on common sources and commonly shared principles. It is very unlikely that they would wish to write about something which would entirely exceed the intellectual and social discourse of the time, or even natural human common sense. Therefore, if we find the same or similar formulations in the corpus of OC texts, or the same word in different contexts, this enables us to master its usage and to notice its semantic nuances. In fact, this is how we learn Old Chinese. Concordances and databases also compensate for our handicap in erudition across OC texts in comparison to the old commentators. I will provide an example of such intertextual philology: In *Laozi* there is the following verse: 慎終如始，則無敗事 »If one is careful at the end as much as at the beginning, one will never spoil the task« (LXIV). The expression *shèn zhōng* 慎終 »be careful at the end [of one’s undertaking]« is put here into a very good context which possibly excludes another reading of this verse. By checking through the database, we find that the same expression also occurs in *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), where it is understood by the commentators in a very different way: 曾子曰：慎終，追遠，民德歸厚矣 »Zengzi said: ‘If one is careful as far as the death of one’s parents is concerned and if one remembers distant ancestors, the virtue of the people will tend to abundance.’« (*Lunyu*, 1. 9).¹⁸ The word *zhōng* 終 is interpreted here in a specific meaning of »death of the parents«; similarly, the word *yuan* 遠 is specifically meant as »distant ancestors«. But if we relate both texts to each other, and, according to the rule of Occam’s razor, we use the simplest solution, then we should read the given passage from *Lunyu* in the following way: »Zengzi said: ‘If [the ruler] is careful at the end [as much as at the beginning of his enterprise], and pursues in thought the remote matters, then the people, as for their qualities, will be inclined to tolerance’.«

The question is whether we can assume that the expression *shèn zhōng* 慎終 means in both cases the same thing, or whether these are two completely different expressions from completely different texts. In my opinion, we should ask the question in another way: What reason do we have to think that *shèn zhōng* 慎終 means something different every time? Except for the Commentary, which was

18 *Lunyu yi zhu* 論語譯注 [Annotated Translation of the *Analects*], ed. and trans. by Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 6. English translation by the author.

written along the lines of Confucianist ideology, there is none. (Let us note that Confucius was no more of a Confucian than Jesus was a Christian; the same applies to the *Book of Laozi* and the later Taoists.) The verse in *Laozi* resembles a proverb of its time, and it is plausible to think that Zengzi could have used it only elliptically and it was immediately understood. Our new reading of this passage from *Lunyu*, moreover, does not involve any commentary, while the intellectual parameters of its interpretation are not inferior to the traditional reading. Of course, it shifts Confucius's pupil Zengzi from the position of an orthodox ritualist into more of the position of a political thinker.

e) *One's own critical judgement.*

We are often led to the correct meaning by the logic of the passage and the context. Except for specific cases when the author deliberately uses word-play, we must always take into account only a single meaning which exactly fits into all considered circumstances. This is enforced by the logic or context; we can generate this meaning by ourselves according to the common rules from meanings which are already recorded but which do not exactly fit into the given context. The most important principle is that Classical Chinese, despite its stylistic laconicism, was not 'vague' in the sense that one single word could have meant several things *at the same time*, even with all its possible connotations. Of course, we can think of several equally plausible readings of a passage, but we finally have to decide in favour of only one of them. It is necessary to develop a sense for filtering out the wrong hypotheses and to learn, as Harbsmeier says often during his classes, to »listen to the music of the text.« I will present another example; in Chapter XXXIV there is the verse:

大道汎兮，其可左右。 Practically all translators interpret the given verse in the following sense: »When the Great *Dao* prevails like a flood, alas, it can [flow] to the left and [also] to the right.« Let us give a brief thought to this seemingly unproblematic interpretation: If *Dao* refers to the general natural law, then this natural law is omnipresent and this sentence does not make much sense at all (in Chinese we would put it as *fěihuà* 廢話). It is also hard to explain the presence of the modal *kě* 可, whose subject is the natural law, which would be prone to choose from some alternatives. If *Dao* refers to the proper way of government, we also do not know what to imagine under this sentence. The left and right side in Old

China had a ritual meaning, they had no relationship to the government. Of course, one can say that it is *Laozi's* poetic image, a personification of the natural law, and so on, and sweep the thing under the carpet. But even if it were a poetic image, we would expect these images to also convey a material message (at least in pre-Buddhist Chinese).

This interpretation is also grammatically problematic: the modal adjective *kě* 可 is used in most cases in passive constructions (although an active usage is not excluded). The third person pronoun *qí* 其 in Classical Chinese was rarely used as an active subject of the main sentence. We thus have to try to read the given verse in a way which would make sense and at the same time would be grammatically plausible.

There is a very common word in OC, *zuǒyòu* 左右, with the meaning »assistant«, i.e., »people standing on the ruler's left- and right-hand«. The question is whether the word *zuǒyòu* 左右 could have been used as a transitive verb and as such form a passive construction. (We remind the reader that *kě* 可 is a relatively reliable marker of the passive.) In the *Book of Changes* under the hexagram *Tài* 泰, there is the expression *zuǒyòu mín* 左右民 which unambiguously means »to provide the people with assistance«. The condition is thus fulfilled, and we can read the second part of the verse: »such can be given assistance«. By connecting both parts together, we will read the whole verse in the following way: »When the Great *Dao* (as the proper way of government) prevailed [like a flood], alas, such [rulers] could have been given assistance«.

Let us notice that in this reading the pronoun *qí* 其 does not refer anaphorically to the word *dào* 道, but deictically to the ruler who has spread the proper way of government over the whole country. The question under what circumstances one should enter the ruler's service was an often-debated dilemma of Old Chinese thinkers, and in the *Book of Laozi* one reads about officials serving the ruler according to the principles of proper government (XXX). One can not find such an interpretation in any traditional commentary or translation. However, it seems fairly plausible and makes more sense than the current interpretations.

3 *The Word Classes of 'Full' Words and Their Syntactic Functions*

In this work, I am basically using the system of word classes introduced by T. N. Nikitina with some modifications. Similarly to Nikitina, I consider the classification of the vocabulary into word classes as a pragmatic tool which should enable us to make a reasonable categorization of the language material and serve as an explanation of the many possible linguistic phenomena with a minimum of means. At the same time, such a classification should reflect the general cognitive schemes of the given language. Semantic as well as syntactic criteria are taken into account, whereas words belonging to the same class show identical or similar features. The organicity of the whole system and analogy are important auxiliary factors which enable us to also classify words for which we currently lack enough information.

Nikitina divides the 'full' words of Old Chinese into the following word classes: 1. nouns; 2. adjectives; 3. verbs; 4. numerals; 5. locatives. My classification of the 'full' words is as follows: 1. nouns N; 2. Adjectives ADJ; 3. intransitive verbs Vi; 4. transitive verbs Vt; 5. numerals NUM; 6. stative words STAT; 7. locatives LOK.

The division of verbs into two hierarchically equal groups is motivated by different derivational models which are constituted by these two word classes. We can have the transitive verb Vt in the function of an intransitive verb vi (**Vt** > **vi**) and vice versa (**Vi** > **vt**). In each of these cases, the verbs behave differently, as will be shown below. By the way, Yakhontov writes: »It is possible that it is more convenient to divide predicatives of Old Chinese not into two but directly into three main groups: transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, and adjectives.«¹⁹ My analysis supports this view by Yakhontov, which remained unexplained in his book.

Stative words are often classified under adjectives, but unlike adjectives they cannot be negated by the negation *bù* 不 nor by any other negation. They cannot be used in comparative constructions either. Below we analyse the basic features of the individual word classes and their syntactic functions in which they are used

19 Yakhontov, *Drevnekitaiskii yazyk*, 41.

in the text of *Laozi*. One has to bear in mind that the same syntactic function can have a different semantic content depending on which word class it was derived from. For example, **vi** < **N** often means 'behave like N', whereas **vi** < **Vt** means 'be engaged in V-ing', etc. See below, where words in the relevant function are highlighted in grey.

3.1 Nouns (N, NP)

Nouns are words expressing denominations of objects ('object words') in the broadest sense, including things, people, persons, substances, natural phenomena, geographical localities, weights and measures, denomination of place and time, and some abstract concepts. In common functions, nouns are negated with the negation *fēi* 非.

The common functions of nouns are all functions which can be referred to as nominal ones: subject, thematic subject, object, nominal predicate, designation of place or time, specification, and common element in a pivotal construction. Special functions are the function of the attribute to another noun, the function of a predicative verb, and the function of an adverbial modifier. The attributive function of the noun cannot be transformed into the function of a predicative verb, nor can this be done the other way.

The syntactic functions of nouns are attested to in the text of *Laozi*:

1. **n** (a noun in a nominal function) 故道大，天大，地大，人亦大 »Therefore *Dao* is great, Heaven is great, Earth is great, and Man is also great« (XXV).
2. **n in function of designation of time** (a noun in the function of the designation of time) 豫兮若冬涉川 »Hesitant they were, alas, as if they were crossing the river in winter« (XV).
3. **n in function of attribute** (a noun in the function of an attribute to another nominal element) 五色令人目盲 »All kinds of colours cause human eyes to become blind« (XII).
4. **vi** (a noun in the function of an objectless predicative verb) 侯王若能守之，萬物將自賓 »If the rulers would be able to maintain it, all things would by themselves behave like guests« (XXXII).
5. **vi in inchoative aspect** (a noun in the function of an objectless predicative verb referring to the beginning of a process or state) 其未兆，如嬰兒之未孩 »Those symptoms have still not become manifest, like a newly born baby which has not become an infant yet« (XX).

6. **vt** (a noun in the function of a predicative verb with one object) 服文綵 »They are wearing embroidered and colourful [clothes]« (LIII).
7. **causative vt.om** (a noun in the function of a causative transitive verb with one omitted object) 雖小，天下莫能臣也 »One might have been unimportant, but in the world nobody could turn him into one's own subject« (XXXII).
8. **causative passive vt** (a noun in the function of a causative transitive verb whose object was transformed into a passive subject) 名可名，非常名 »If a word could have been made into a term, it is not an ordinary word« (I).
9. **causative vtprep.om** (a noun in the function of a causative transitive verb whose omitted object is introduced by a preposition) 萬物作而不為始 »All things were arising, but they did not give any initial impulse for that« (II).
10. **putative vt** (a noun in the function of a putative transitive verb with one object) 味無味 »Regard as tasty what is tasteless« (LXIII).
11. **putative vt.om** (a noun in the function of a putative transitive verb with one omitted object) 往而不害 »[The people] will rally [to him] and will not consider it as harmful« (XXXV).
12. **attitudinal vt** (a noun in the function of an attitudinal transitive verb with one object) 聖人皆孩之 »The sages treated all of them like children« (XLIX).
13. **vttV** (a noun in the function of a transitive verb with two objects, one of them being predicative) 強字之曰道 »I was compelled to give it the adult name *Dao*« (XXV).
14. **adv** (a noun in the function of an adverbial modifier of a predicative verb) 周行而不殆 »It moves in circles without any indolence« (XXV).

Disyllabic nouns can have a diverse inner structure. An important group among them are nouns compounded of two synonymic morphemes expressing generic concepts:

jiǎbīng 甲兵 NP »armour and weapons of any kind« < **n** »armour« + **n** »weapon«;

zhōuyú 舟輿 NP »traffic means« < **n** »boat« + **n** »chariot«;

sīhǔ 兕虎 NP »wild and dangerous animals« < **n** »rhinoceros« + **n** »tiger«.

I will also provide some examples of other types of disyllabic nouns:

bǎixìng 百姓 NP < **num** + **n** »population«, also »influential people«, »gentry«;

tiānxià 天下 NP < **n** + **lok** »world«;

shèngrén 聖人 NP < **adj** + **n** »sages«;

duōyán 多言 NP < **adv** + **vi** »chatterer«;

wúwù 無物 NP < **prefix** + **n** »the state of the non-existence of things«.

Disyllabic nouns in *Laozi* only occur in nominal functions and in the function of attribute. The only registered instance of predicative usage is the **passive vpt** (a polysyllabic noun in the function of a passive transitive verb whose object was transformed into the passive subject): 其可左右 »Such [a ruler] could have been given assistance« (XXXIV).

3.2 *Adjectives (ADJ, ADJP)*

Adjectives are words expressing a quality (and sometimes a quantity) in one of three degrees: positive, comparative, and superlative. Their most common syntactic function is the function of a predicative verb (**adj**), attribute (**adj in an attributive function**), and adverbial modifier (**adv**). The function of the predicative verb can be transformed into the attributive function and vice versa, for example, *dà guó* 大國 »big state« ↔ *guó dà* 國大 »the state is big«. Quality expressed by adjectives is mostly relative. Therefore, they can express a comparative degree without any markers. If the object of comparison has to be mentioned, it is introduced by the preposition *yú* 於 after the given adjective (**adjprep in comparative**).

As for their general features, adjectives are close to intransitive verbs, which is why many authors do not treat them as an independent word class. Intransitive verbal meanings are easily derived from adjectives if they express something other than a general aspect, mostly the inchoative, conative, and continuative aspect. On the contrary, an adjective in the function of an intransitive verb in the general aspect does not seem to be productive for them. Some of the adjectives can take a predicative object (**adjV**). The most important of these are the words *kě* 可 »be acceptable«, *zú* 足 »be sufficient«, *nán* 難 »be hard«, and *yì* 易 »be easy«. If these are followed by a predicative object, they act at the same time as passive markers, which means that the following verb must be understood as a passive transitive verb. For example, 魚不可脫於淵 »Fish cannot be removed from the deep pool« (XXXVI). Alongside Nikitina, I call these and some other adjectives collectively ‘modal adjectives’.

Adjectives can also take a nominal object. In this case their categorial meaning changes to a causative, putative, or attitudinal transitive verb (**vt**). In nominal functions, they obtain either the meaning of the ‘carrier of the given feature’ or

the ‘abstract denomination of the given feature’. This is a very productive means of the formation of abstract nouns in Old Chinese. Abstract nouns can also be understood to different degrees, depending on the degree of the underlying adjective.

The syntactic functions of adjectives are attested to in the text of *Laozi*:

1. **adj** (an adjective in the function of a predicative verb to a positive degree) 天長地久 »Heaven is long-lasting and Earth is enduring« (VII).
2. **adjo** (an adjective in the function of a predicative verb to a positive degree without any substitutable subject) 道常無名，樸 »For the proper way the absence of denominations was common, [everything] was primitive (like a piece of wood)« (XXXII).
3. **adj in comparative** (an adjective in the function of a predicative verb to a comparative degree) 名與身孰親 »What is closer: reputation or personality?« (XLIV).
4. **adjprep in comparative** (an adjective in the function of a predicative verb to a comparative degree followed by a preposition introducing the object of comparison) 咎莫大於欲得 »No disaster is bigger than greed for gain« (XLVI).
5. **adjprepV in comparative** (an adjective in the function of a predicative verb to a comparative degree followed by a preposition introducing a predicative object of comparison) 是賢於貴生 »This is wiser than to regard life as valuable« (LXXV).
6. **adjV** (an adjective in the function of a predicative verb followed by another predicative expression) 吾言甚易知，甚易行 »My proposals are very easy to understand, very easy to carry out« (LXX).
7. **adj in function of attribute** (an adjective in the function of an attribute to the nominal head) 天下難事，必作於易 »Difficult things in the world inevitably arise from the easy ones« (LXIII).
8. **vi** (an adjective in the function of an intransitive verb. This syntactic function of adjectives is problematic; examples are not very illustrative. Possibly, there is rather a derivation of ADJ > Vi taking place.) 容乃公，公乃全 »Only [he] who is tolerant acts in public interest. Only [he] who acts in the public interest is perfect« (XVI).

9. **vi in inchoative aspect** (an adjective in the function of an intransitive verb referring to the beginning of a process, state, or obtaining the given quality) 五色令人目盲 »All kinds of colours cause human eyes to become blind« (XII).
10. **vi in conative aspect** (an adjective in the function of an intransitive verb referring to a state or quality of which the achievement is the subject's aim) 是以聖人之治，虛其心，實其腹，弱其志，強其骨 »And so, when the sages tried to make perfect order, they emptied its [people's] minds and filled its stomach, weakened its ambitions and strengthened its bones« (III).
11. **vi in continuative aspect** (an adjective in the function of an intransitive verb referring to 'maintaining the given state' or 'keeping the given quality') 我無事而民自富 »We are making no effort and the people keep being rich by themselves« (LVII).
12. **causative vt in inchoative aspect** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb meaning 'cause something to obtain the given quality') 將以愚之 »They intended to use it [the way] in order to turn it [the people] into naïve dullards« (LXV).
13. **causative vt in conative aspect** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb meaning 'try to cause something to obtain the given quality') 揣而銳之，不可長保 »Hammer [the blade] and try to make it as sharp as possible – it will not be able to be preserved for a long time« (IX).
14. **causative vt.om in inchoative aspect** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb with an omitted object meaning 'to cause the contextually determinate object to obtain the given quality') 保此道者，不欲盈 »Those who maintained this way did not desire it to be implemented to the full extent« (XV).
15. **causative vt in medium** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb in a medium voice referring to the fact that due to some circumstances the object was caused to have the given quality) 大盈若沖，其用不窮 »The great filling up is as if it were flushed out, [but] its functionality will not be exhausted« (XLV).
16. **putative vt** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb referring to the fact that the subject regards the object as having the given quality) 是以聖人猶難之，故終無難矣 »And so the sages considered things being difficult anyway. Therefore, they never had difficulties« (LXIII).
17. **putative vt.om** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb referring to the fact that the subject regards the contextually determinate object as having the

given quality) 是以聖人處上而民不重 »And so the sages had their position above, but the people did not regard it as a heavy encumbrance« (LXVI).

18. **passive putative vt** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb referring to the fact that the object is regarded as having the given quality) 道之尊，德之貴，夫莫之命而常自然 »That *Dao* is respected and *De* is regarded as valuable, nobody has commanded this; it is normally so by itself« (LI).

19. **putative vto** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb without any substitutable subject referring to the fact that one generally regards the object as having the given quality) 居善地，心善淵 »In dwelling one appreciates the place, in thought one appreciates the depth« (VIII).

20. **putative vtVo** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb without any substitutable subject referring to the fact that one generally regards the verbal object as having the given quality) 上善若水 »In the ruler one appreciates that he is like water« (VIII).

21. **attitudinal vt** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb referring to the fact that the subject treats the object as if it had the given quality) 民之輕死，以其上求生之厚 »That the people treat death as unimportant is because those above are seeking abundance in their lives« (LXXV).

22. **vt in inchoative aspect** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb referring to the beginning of an action or state. The function **vt** without the added feature of causativity, putativity, or attitude is not typical for adjectives. Here we find the adjective *tóng* 同, which is treated by Nikitina separately as a special adjective with many different syntactic functions. We possibly have a derivation ADJ > Vt here.) 同其塵 »Let us merge with that dust« (LVI).

23. **vtprep** (an adjective in the function of a transitive verb with the object introduced by a preposition. The function **vt** without the added feature of causativity, putativity, or attitude is not typical for adjectives. Here we also find the adjective *tóng* 同, which is treated by Nikitina separately as a special adjective with many different syntactic functions. We possibly have a derivation ADJ > Vt here.) 故從事於道者，同於道 »Therefore, who works hard at *Dao*, is in agreement with *Dao*« (XXIII).

24. **n—carrier of the given quality** (an adjective in a nominal function referring to the carrier of the given quality) 弱之勝強 »That the weak defeat the strong ...« (LXXVIII)

25. **n—abstract denomination of the given quality** (an adjective in a nominal function referring to the abstract denomination of the given quality) 守柔曰強 »To maintain submissiveness means to be strong« (LII).

26. **adv** (an adjective in the function of the adverbial modifier of a predicative verb) 善建者不拔，善抱者不脫 »What is well established will not be pulled out; what is well embraced will not escape« (LIV).

Disyllabic adjectives in *Laozi* are either formed by two root morphemes or by one root morpheme and one affix. Disyllabic adjectives are often used in nominal functions. I have found no disyllabic adjectives in the text of *Laozi* in the function of **vt**.

The syntactic functions of disyllabic adjectives are attested to in the text of *Laozi*:

1. **adjp** (a disyllabic adjective in the function of a predicative verb) 穀神不死，是謂玄牝 »The magical force of the valley is immortal; this is called the 'mysterious vagina'« (VI).

2. **adjpprep in comparative** (a disyllabic adjective in the function of a predicative verb in a comparative degree followed by a preposition introducing the object of comparison) 天下莫柔弱於水 »In the world there is nothing softer and weaker than water« (LXXVIII).

3. **np—abstract denomination of the given quality** (a disyllabic adjective in a nominal function referring to the abstract denomination of the given quality) 信不足焉，有不信焉 »Where there is a lack of credibility, there is distrust« (XVII).

4. **vpi in inchoative aspect** (a disyllabic adjective in the function of a predicative verb referring to the beginning of a process or state, or to obtaining the given quality) 六親不和；有孝慈 »When six kinds of family relationship became disharmonious, there appeared [concepts] of 'filial piety' and 'parental love'« (XVIII).

5. **advp** (a disyllabic adjective in the function of an adverbial modifier of a predicative verb) 古之善為士者，微妙玄通 »Those who in ancient times excelled as officials did in a subtle and refined way mysteriously understand things thoroughly« (XV).

3.3 *Intransitive verbs (Vi, VPi)*

Nikitina does not divide OC verbs into transitive and intransitive ones, whereas Yakhontov suggests they be divided into two independent word classes (see above). Due to their semantic nature, intransitive verbs demand one actant (subject); they do not have to necessarily take any object. Yakhontov writes: »Intransitive verbs [...] have two meanings: basic and causative. In their basic meaning, they can be used under any conditions without any limitations; they can even take an object, while the object with and without the preposition *yū* 於 has the same meaning with them. Compare: *rù* 入 'he entered', *rù sbì* 入室, 'he entered the room', *rù yū sbì* 入於室 'he entered into the room'.«²⁰

If intransitive verbs control an object in the sense of a logical (direct) object, they change their categorial meaning into a causative transitive verb. Compare, for example, *qù zhī* 去之 »he left him« vs. »he expelled him« < »he caused him to leave«. The first usage of the verb *qù* 去 »leave« is basic, whereas the second is causative.

Thus, intransitive verbs have as their common function the function of a predicative verb which does not take the direct object. All other functions are special, including the function of the causative transitive verb. In nominal functions, they mostly receive the meaning of an abstract denomination of the given process (»a walk«, »joy«). Verbs relatively rarely carry out attributive and adverbial functions.

Most of the verbs (both transitive and intransitive, except for modal verbs) can be used in one of the five verbal aspects: general, inchoative (beginning an action or getting into a state), continuative (continuing to perform an action or to be in a state), conative (trying to perform an action) and resultative (finishing an action with the desired result). The theory of OC aspects is still not elaborated in detail, but it seems that certain verbs do prefer the conative–resultative pair of aspects, while others are inchoative–continuative.

As Yakhontov further mentions, some of the verbs take a transitional position between transitive and intransitive verbs. Similarly, there exist verbs which occupy a transitional position between verbs and adjectives, but both are

20 Yakhontov, *Drevnekitaiskii yazyk*, 48.

relatively small in number. For this reason, it is sometimes uneasy to judge whether the given word is an adjective or an intransitive verb, or a transitive or an intransitive verb. Despite the existence of such marginal cases, I find it useful to distinguish between these three word classes.

The syntactic functions of intransitive verbs are attested to in the text of *Laozi*:

1. **vi** (an intransitive verb in the function of an objectless predicative verb) 死而不亡者壽 »[He] who has died but not vanished has reached longevity« (XXXIII).
2. **vi in inchoative aspect** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb referring to the beginning of a process or state) 虛而不屈，動而愈出 »If it is empty, it does not bend; if it is set into motion, it creates more and more« (V).
3. **vi in continuative aspect** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb without an object referring to the continuation of a process or state) 萬物作而不為始 »All things were arising, but they did not give any initial impulse for that« (II).
4. **vi in attributive function** (an intransitive verb in the function of an attribute of a nominal expression) 天下有道，卻走馬以糞 »If the proper way prevails in the world, it returns the running horses to producing manure« (XLVI).
5. **vtprep** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb taking an object with a preposition) 天下難事，必作於易 »Difficult things in the world inevitably arise from easy ones« (LXIII).
6. **vt** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb taking an object which is not the logical object of an action) 殺人之眾，以悲哀泣之 »When killed people are numerous, we weep for them with deep grief« (XXXI).
7. **causative vt** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb taking an object which is the logical object of the action) 不知常，妄作凶 »[He] who does not understand normal things causes in his disorientation a disaster to arise« (XVI).
8. **causative vt in medium** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb in the causative meaning taking a logical object. The subject of the verbal process is indifferent or irrelevant.) 其脆易泮，其微易散 »What is fragile is easily broken; what is tiny is easily scattered« (LXIV).
9. **causative passive vtprep** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb in a passive causative meaning which governs a subject with the meaning of a logical object and another object with a preposition) 魚不可脫於淵 »Fish cannot be removed from the deep pool« (XXXVI).

10. **vtV** (an intransitive verb in the function of a predicative verb taking a predicative object) 是樂殺人 »That would mean that he finds delight in killing others« (XXXI).

11. **adv** (an intransitive verb in the function of an adverbial modifier of a predicative verb) 不如坐進此道 »The best thing is sitting promoting this proper way« (LXII).

12. **n** (an intransitive verb in the function of a nominal element of a sentence) 千里之行，始於足下 »A one-thousand-mile journey begins under one's feet« (LXIV).

Disyllabic intransitive verbs in the text of *Laozi* are detected only in the function of the objectless predicative verb and in the nominal function. If they are composed of two synonymic expressions, they have either a generic or an intensifying meaning. For example:

jisi 祭祀 **np** »sacrifices of any kind«, »sacrificing« < **VPI** 'perform sacrifices of any kind' < **vi** »perform a sacrifice of the *jì*-type« + **vi** »perform a sacrifice of the *sì*-type«; 子孫以祭祀不輟 »Thanks to sacrifices, descendants will not interrupt.« (LIV); *bēi'āi* 悲哀 **np** 'deep grief' < **VPI** 'feel deep grief' < **vi** 'feel grief' + **vi** 'be sad'; 殺人之眾，以悲哀泣之 »When killed people are numerous, we weep for them with deep grief.« (XXXI)

3.4 *Transitive verbs (Vt, Vtt, VtV, VtS, Vto, Vtpivot)*

The category of transitive verbs in Old Chinese was very diverse. Here there are verbs which, due to their semantic nature, govern at least two actants: the subject and another actant which is semantically dependent on the verb; in other words, its presence can be predicted because of the semantic nature of the verb. This second actant mostly appears with the verb as its object. Typical transitive verbs are those with an active influence on an object, the second actant thus being the logical (direct) object of the verbal action. But here there are also verbs of sensual and mental activity which can govern a nominal object as well as an object expressed by a predicative construction. Verbs of giving, taking, relocating, reporting, and some others, can govern two objects: the object referring to the thing which is given, taken, relocated, reported etc., and that of the addressee, source, place, etc.

Modal verbs demand a verbal object. Other subcategories of transitive verbs are verbs of existence, verbs of identification, and so-called causative verbs forming the pivotal construction. With some transitive verbs (specifically with verbs of existence) only one actant can be identified in reality: the 'element of existence' which relates to the verb as its syntactic object. Such verbs are marked with the index *o*, e.g., *Vto*. The prepositional verb (coverb) is the syntactic function of some transitive verbs when this verb, together with its object, forms a prepositional construction which is in turn governed by another verb.

Transitive verbs with an active influence on an object can appear in the active and passive voice. However, for Old Chinese it is useful to also distinguish the so-called 'medium voice', where the meaning is not active but the subject of such a verb is indifferent or irrelevant (cf. English: »it has broken«, etc.). The medium of OC verbs deserves further investigation.

The object of transitive verbs can be omitted under certain circumstances. In most cases, such an object can be retrieved from the context. The syntactic condition for the omission of the object may be the presence of a negation. In some other cases, the object can be retrieved from the semantics of the verb, cf. »shoot [a shot]«. The omitted object is marked with the sign **.om**, e.g., **vt.om**. In the translation in most cases of **vt.om**, we must substitute the omitted object with the corresponding third-person pronoun.

But transitive verbs can also carry out the function of intransitive verbs (**Vt > vi**). In such cases, they express a general verbal action which is not aimed at a certain object. For example, *bù shí* 不食 can mean both 'he did not eat it' and 'he did not eat'. The first meaning corresponds to **vt.om**, the second one to **Vt > vi**. In the corresponding entry in the Dictionary, I write in such cases: »be engaged in eating«, »eat everything possible«, etc. The syntactic functions of transitive verbs are attested to in the text of *Laozi*:

1. **vt** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one object) 是樂殺人 »That would mean that he finds delight in killing others« (XXXI).
2. **vt in conative aspect** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one object referring to the attempt of performing the given action) 無為而無不為 »We will do nothing [= we will practise the absence of the effort of doing anything positive] and there will be nothing undone« (XLVIII).

3. **vt in inchoative aspect** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one object referring to the beginning of the verbal action) 吾得執而殺之 »We will get the opportunity to detain and execute them« (LXXIV).
4. **vt.om** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one omitted object) 聽之不聞，名曰‘希’ »We listen to it but do not hear it: this is called ‘diluted’« (XIV).
5. **vt.om in conative aspect** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one omitted object referring to the attempt of performing the given action) 執者失之 »[He] who persists on something [= who tries to hold onto something firmly] will lose it« (XXIX).
6. **vtprep** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one object introduced by a preposition) 善用人者，為 (wèi) 之下 »[He] who excels in employing others is lowering himself on behalf of them« (LXVIII).
7. **passive vt** (a transitive verb in the function of a passive predicative verb whose logical object was transformed into the syntactic subject of the construction) 善建者不拔 »What is well established will not be pulled out« (LIV).
8. **medium vt** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb in the medium voice whose logical object was transformed into the syntactic subject of the construction) 功成而弗居 »Results were achieved, but they really did not stick to them« (II).
9. **vt in function of attribute** (a transitive verb in the function of an attribute to a nominal head) 殺人之眾，以悲哀泣之 »When killed people are numerous, we weep for them with deep grief« (XXXI).
10. **medium vt in function of attribute** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb in the medium voice used as an attribute to a nominal head) 建德若偷 »Solid [= well established] *De* is as if it were fraudulent« (XLI).
11. **vt {prep} + n.adV** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb forming a prepositional construction together with its object) 以道佐人主者 »[He] who is using the proper way assists the ruler [...]« (XXX).
12. **vt.postvt** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with an object following another transitive verb with its object) 強字之曰道 »In a forced manner, I gave it the adult name *Dao*« (XXV).

13. **vt.postvtt** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with an object following another transitive verb with two objects) 強為之名曰大 »In a forced manner, I invented for it the personal name Great« (XXV).
14. **vtpivot** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with the common element forming a pivotal construction) 五色令人目盲 »All kinds of colours cause human eyes to become blind« (XII).
15. **vtpivot.om** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with the omitted common element forming a pivotal construction) 故令有所屬 »Therefore, let us arrange it so that [the people have] somebody to attach to (with confidence)« (XIX).
16. **vtt** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with two objects) 故強為之容 »Therefore, I will make a description for it by force« (XV).
17. **vttprep** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with two objects, one of which is being introduced by a preposition) 修之於鄉，其德乃長 »[He] who cultivates it [*Dao*] in the community, his *De* is thus enduring« (LIV).
18. **causative vtt** (a transitive verb in the function of a causative transitive verb with two objects) 兵無所容其刃 »The weapon has no way of finding enough space for its blade (= has no means of causing its blade to find enough space)« (L).
19. **causative vttprep** (a transitive verb in the function of a causative predicative verb with two objects, one of which is being introduced by a preposition) 動之於死地 »Somebody drives them into a situation (< place) of death« (L).
20. **vtt.om** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with two objects, one of which is being omitted) 將欲取之，必固與之 »If you want to take something from somebody, you must inevitably give him something« (XXXVI).
21. **vttprep.om** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with two objects, one of which is omitted and the second one introduced by a preposition) 而不責於人 »But they did not enforce anything from the others« (LXXIX).
22. **vtV** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with a predicative object) 故能長生 »Therefore, they are able to live for a long time« (VII).
23. **passive vtV.om** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb in the passive voice whose omitted predicative logical object has been transformed into the syntactic subject of the construction) 用之不足既 »If one uses it, [doing so] cannot be stopped« (XXXV).
24. **vtV.om** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with the omitted predicative object) 孰敢 »Who would dare [to act so]?« (LXXIV).

25. **vtADJ** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with an adjectival object—it involves only the verb 為 *wéi*, which participates in the formation of adjectival predicates) 皆知善之為善，斯不善已 »When everybody understood that good was good, then they [understood] the bad« (II).

26. **vtS** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb which governs the sentence) 不曰：“求以得，有罪以免”邪？ »Is it not said: ‘By using it you will find what you are looking for; if you committed a crime, by using it you will avoid punishment?’« (LXII).

27. **vttV** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with two objects, one of which is predicative) 夫代司殺者殺，是謂代大匠斲 »Indeed, as for executing without the executioner, this means cutting without the senior carpenter« (LXXIV).

28. **vttVprep** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with two objects, one of which is predicative and is introduced by a preposition) 為之於未有，治之於未亂 »Work on it before it comes to existence, put it in order before it turns into chaos« (LXIV).

29. **vttS** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with two objects, one of which is expressed by the sentence) 天下皆謂我：“道大，似不肖” »The whole world addresses me [saying]: »The proper way is important, but it seems to be worth nothing« (LXVII).

30. **vto** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one object without a substitutable subject) 天下有道 »If there is the proper way in the world [...]« (XLVI).

31. **vto in inchoative aspect** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb with one object without a substitutable subject referring to the beginning of the given action or of the given state) 大道廢，有仁義 »When the great proper way was abandoned, there emerged [concepts] of ‘humanity’ and ‘rectitude’« (XVIII).

32. **vtopivot** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb without a substitutable subject governing a common element forming a pivotal construction) 常有司殺者殺 »Normally it was executioners who performed executions« (LXXIV).

33. **vtVo** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb without a substitutable subject with one predicative object) 稀有不傷其手 »It rarely happens that one would not wound his hand« (LXXIV).
34. **vtSo** (a transitive verb in the function of a predicative verb without a substitutable subject with one object expressed by a sentence) 言以喪禮處之 »[By this] it is meant that it (warfare) is treated according to mourning rituals« (XXXI).
35. **vi** (a transitive verb in the function of an intransitive predicative verb) 生而不有 »They (the sages) produced [everything possible] but did not claim any possession« (LI).
36. **n** (transitive verbs in the function of a nominal element of a sentence – nouns derived from transitive verbs are often also transitive) 國之賊 »[...] crippling of the state« (LXV).
37. **adv** (a transitive verb in the function of an adverbial modifier of a predicative verb) 萬物並作 »All things arise side by side« (XVI).

In the text of *Laozi*, disyllabic transitive verbs only perform common functions; we have only detected the nominal disyllabic *chíchěng* 馳騁 **np** »wild race« < **VPt** »race along for something«.

3.5 Numerals (NUM, NUMP)

Numerals in Old Chinese are predicatives, i.e., they can be negated by the negation *bù* 不, and they can function as a predicative verb. They have similar functions to adjectives, but they cannot be used in comparative constructions. A numeral can be used in its basic meaning but also as an ordinal or generic numeral. Some of the numerals are sometimes regarded as 'round', i.e., they can be used figuratively in the meaning of 'all', 'every', etc.

The special functions of numerals are nominal functions as well as the function of the adverbial modifier; they also have the functions of causative and putative transitive verbs.

These are the syntactic functions of the numerals attested to in the text of *Laozi*: I. **num** (a numeral in the function of a predicative verb) 此兩者，同出而異名 »As for these two [= these being two in number], they have a common origin but are named differently« (I).

2. **num in function of attribute** (a numeral in the function of an attribute to the nominal head) 三十輻，共一轂 »Thirty spokes share one hub« (XI).

3. **n** (a numeral in the function of a nominal element of a sentence) 道生一，一生二 »The proper way generates the first thing; the first thing generates the second thing« (XLII).

4. **adv** (a numeral in the function of an adverbial modifier) 民利百倍 »The benefit for the people will be multiplied a hundred times« (XIX).

Basic numerals are combined into complex numerals according to generally known rules.

3.6 *Stative words (STAT, STATP)*

Stative words are traditionally classified under adjectives, but they have some important specifics. They cannot be negated by any negations, they do not distinguish degrees, and they cannot be used in the function of a causative or putative transitive verb.

As for their meaning, stative words do not express any concrete feature or state; instead they evoke an association with such a feature or state (cf. English »hey ho«, »okey-dokey«, etc.). Therefore, they are often hard to translate, and when judging their meaning we often have to rely on commentary.

Formally, stative words are typically di- or polysyllabic. They are mostly formed by a complete or partial reduplication of the syllable (*shuāngshēng* 雙聲-type—reduplication of the initial, or *diéyùn* 疊韻-type—reduplication of the rhyme). Individual syllables do not carry any individual meaning; the meaning is carried only by the combination of both syllables. These syllables can be separated only exceptionally, probably for rhythmic reasons, e.g., *huǎnghū* 恍惚 > *wéihuǎngwéihū* 惟恍惟惚 »be blurred«, »be unclear«, »be shaky«.

Another way of forming stative words is with the affixation of the suffixes *rán* 然, *ruò* 若, *yān* 焉, and some others. These suffixes can be added to the reduplicated form, e.g., *miánmiánruò* 綿綿若 **statp** »be continuous«, »be uninterrupted«, but also to an adjectival morpheme. In the second case, they retain the lexical meaning of the adjective they are derived from: e.g., *chāorán* 超然 **statp** »tower above everything«, »occupy the highest place«. Stative words are used in the function of a predicative verb, of an adverbial modifier, and very occasionally of an attribute. In nominal functions, they refer to the abstract denomination of the given state or feeling.

These are the syntactic functions of stative words attested in the text of *Laozi*:

1. **statp** (a stative word in the function of a predicative verb) 眾人熙熙 »The masses are delighted« (XX).
2. **statp in function of adverbial modifier** (a stative word in the function of an adverbial modifier of a predicative verb) 綿綿若存 »It continuously remains intact« (VI).
3. **statp.postV** (a stative word in the function of a post-verbal adverbial modifier) 燕處超然 »He might dwell quietly at the highest position [...]« (XXVI).
4. **np** (a stative word in the function of a nominal element of a sentence) 是謂惚恍 »This is what I call 'unclarity'« (XIV).

3.7 Locatives (LOK)

Locatives are words which serve the purpose of expressing the spatial and temporal relationships between things or actions. Locatives are a closed word class; both Yakhontov and Nikitina agree on the amount of fifteen members. Locatives can seemingly carry out a great number of nominal and predicative syntactic functions; in my understanding, nevertheless, locatives are the source of words of other word classes, such as adjectives, which in turn are used in accordance to adjectival functional characteristics. Cf.:

xià 下 LOK »below« > **n** »the lower part«;

xià 下 ADJ 'be low' > **n** »something low« or »the low«, figuratively »the inferior one«;

shàng 上 LOK »above« > **vt** »place himself above somebody«;

shàng 上 ADJ »be located at a high position« or »be located at the highest position« > **putative vt** »regard somebody as being located at the highest position«, figuratively, »give the highest priority to something«. The idea of the lexicalization of 上 *shàng* as an adjective may be supported by its occasional writing with the character 尚. In my view, such a lexicalization explains why the form *shàng* 上, in the function of a transitive verb, could have been used in two completely different meanings.

The syntactic function which is typical for locatives, while not necessarily being the most frequent one, is the function of so-called 'postposition'. Postposition is an element which is formally determined by the preceding nominal expression, but semantically it specifies the position of the given noun in space or time. Nikitina writes:

We analyse the function of the locative as a postposition separately from other nominal functions of the locatives, because the construction of a locative with a noun behaves in the sentence in a different way from the locative undetermined by a noun. Such a construction cannot function as a subject or predicative verb, or as the adverbial modifier of a predicative verb, but it can function as the attribute of a nominal head or as a determination of place or time.²¹

These are the syntactic functions of locatives attested to in the text of *Laozi*:

1. **lok** (the locative in a nominal function without a change of its categorial meaning) 是以聖人處上而民不重 »And so the sages had their position above, but the people did not regard it as a heavy encumbrance« (LXVI).
2. **lok in function of postposition** (a locative in the function of a postposition following the noun) 千里之行，始於足下 »A one-thousand-mile journey begins under one's feet« (LXIV).
3. **lok in function of attribute** (a locative in the function of an attribute of a nominal element of a sentence) 大邦者下流 »Those big states are [like] the lower stream [of a river]« (LXI).
4. **n** (a locative in the nominal function with a nominal categorial meaning) 其上不皦，其下不昧 »Its upper part does not shine, its lower part is not obscure« (XIV).
5. **vt** (a locative in the function of a transitive predicative verb) 是以聖人欲上民，必以言下之 »And so, when the sages wanted to surpass the people, they inevitably placed themselves lower than them in verbal statements« (LXVI).
6. **prepositional vt** (a locative in the function of a prepositional verb) 有物混成，先天地生 »There is a thing which was created from chaos, it was born earlier than Heaven and Earth« (XXV).
7. **adv** (a locative in the function of an adverbial modifier) 前識者，道之華，而愚之始 »To have knowledge [of things] in advance is a [mere] flower of the proper way; it is the beginning of stupidity« (XXXVIII).

21 Nikitina, *Sintaktičeskii stroj*, 266.

4 *The Dictionary*

The last part of the present study is the Dictionary of all attested words in the text of *Laozi* in their concrete syntactic functions. Although the Dictionary is arranged traditionally, according to the number of strokes of the head character, it nonetheless is a dictionary of *cídiǎn* 詞典—and not of the *zìdiǎn* 字典-type. My intention here was to put together the material scattered in the individual glossaries of the commentary with a stress on the tracing of the identity of Old Chinese lexemes.

The identity of the 'full' OC lexeme, in my understanding, is given by its pronunciation and a lexical meaning which corresponds exactly to one basic categorial meaning (word class). Other categorial meanings can be derived from this depending on which special function the given lexeme is used in. As was described above, the secondary categorial meaning could be lexicalized, which is recognized by the fact that at least one other secondary categorial meaning could have been derived.

In the Dictionary, the written character representing the given lexeme alongside its pronunciation is written in bold letters: in the TLS, the combination of graphic and phonetic representation corresponds to the unit called 'lexeme representation'. If the lexeme representation is also combined with the corresponding lexical meaning (also in bold letters), a unit is formed, which in the TLS is called a 'lexeme'. If from one lexeme another lexeme is derived by the lexicalization of one of its secondary categorial meanings, I use an arrow (>) pointing to the next lexeme written in bold letters. I also use this sign in cases when the figurative meaning can be regarded as the basic meaning of a new lexeme (the lexicalization of the semantic transposition): for example, *zhèng* 正 ADJ »be exactly straight« > ADJ »be correct«.

Under every lexeme there are listed the individual syntactic functions forming a syntactic paradigm of the given lexeme. This paradigm is theoretically unique for each of the lexemes, but the sets of the syntactic functions of these lexemes belonging to the same word class should show significant overlaps. For such lexemes, which in terms of their sets of syntactic functions are described only partially, this should enable the completion of their paradigms and foresee the existence of still undetected functions. Or, what is even more important, it should describe the syntactic paradigms in the grammar and the dictionary just to provide

the lexemes identified by these paradigms. In this way, we could create a fully compatible system of the description of grammar and the lexicon of Classical Chinese and overcome the gap between the standard lexicographic and grammatical approaches.

Below I will present some of the entries of the Dictionary:

***Sheng* 生**

1. Vi »come to birth«, »come into existence« >

vi »come to birth«, »come into existence« 有物混成，先天地生 (XXV),

vi in the continuative aspect »be born continuously« 萬物恃之以生而不辭 (XXXIV),

vtprep in the continuative aspect, object = source: »be born continuously from something«, »be coming into existence from something« 天下萬物生於有，有生於無 (XL),

vtprep in the continuative aspect, object = place: »be born continuously somewhere« 天下無道，戎馬生於郊 (XLVI),

chūsbēng 出生 vpi »come to birth« 出生入死 (L).

2. causative Vt »give birth to something«, »produce something«, »generate something«

vt »bear something«, »give birth to something«, »produce something« 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物 (XLII),

vi »be engaged in production« 生而不有 (LI).

3. Vi »live«

vi »live« 萬物得一以生 (XXXIX),

vi in the inchoative aspect: »begin to live«, »come alive« 孰能安以動之徐生 (XV),

n »life« 蓋聞善攝生者，陸行不遇兕虎，入軍不被甲兵 (L),

n specif. »living conditions« 夫唯無以生為者，是賢於貴生 (LXXV),

vt »live something up«, »live for something« 以其生生之厚 (L),

suǒsbēng 所生 np »living conditions« 無厭其所生 (LXXII).

4. Vi »grow«

vi »grow« 師之所處，荊棘生焉 (XXX),

vi in inchoative aspect »start growing« 草木之生也柔脆，其死也枯槁 (LXXVI),

vtprep »grow from a certain stage« 合抱之木，生於毫末 (LXIV).

From the material gained from *Laozi*, it seems that the character 生 in the pronunciation of *shēng* can represent at least four different lexemes: 1. »come to birth«, »come into existence«; 2. a causative Vt »give birth to something or somebody«, »produce something«, »generate something«; 3. Vi »live«; and 4. Vi »grow«.

Lexeme (2) is derived from lexeme (1) as a causative Vt from Vi because there is another secondary categorial meaning derived: Vt > vi. The meanings of lexemes (1), (3), and (4) cannot be derived from each other according to some common rules. Therefore, they are arranged under the representation of *sheng* 生 separately. A mere etymological relationship between them will therefore be postulated for the time being, without unveiling the derivational processes behind this.

If there are disyllabic lexemes derived from the monosyllabic ones, I give at the end of each entry their representation and syntactic function with a corresponding meaning, exemplification, and also often an etymological structure. In the example given above there are the disyllabic words *chūshēng* 出生 vpi »come to birth«, which I regard as being derived from the lexeme *sheng* 生 Vi »come to birth«, »come into existence«, and *suǒshēng* 所生 np »living conditions«, which is derived from the lexeme *sheng* 生 Vi »live«.

I will now show an example by using an analogy in the Dictionary: In chapter XXII there is the following expression: 聖人執一. How can one interpret the word 一 *yī* in this sentence? After having considered all possible variants, I think that it must be a kind of »universal principle« or »single factor«.

As was said already, abstract nouns are often derived from adjectives. We have detected, e.g., the typical adjective *bái* 白 »be white« in its specific nominal meaning of »bright side«. Therefore, I suggest that the noun *yī* »universal principle« was also derived from an adjective, *yī* »be universal«, although in the text we did not find such a case. Similarly, in the text we do not find the adjective *wén* 文 »be civilized«, but considering the existence of the abstract noun »civilizing«, we expect its presence in the system. Numerous OC lexemes can be treated analogically.

The material provided by the text of *Laozi* is not rich enough to perform detailed lexicological research on Classical Chinese, but some of the entries are relatively complete and they show illustratively that the method of syntactic paradigms combined with the dichotomy of *Wortkategorien* vs. *Redetheile* could be one of the productive tools for the determination of the identity of lexemes.

In the course of postulating which categorial meanings are basic and which ones are secondary, we proceed, as I have already stressed, in consideration of the organicity of the whole system and using various analogies. We follow some easy principles: concrete > abstract, general > specific, primitive > complex, frequent > rare, and regular > irregular. Based on these principles, we can list some frequent cases of the secondary meanings of the individual word classes.

N > **vi** 'behave like N'

N > **vi** 'carry out the function N' or 'obtain the function N'

N > **vi** 'use N in a way typical for N'

N > **vi** 'produce N'

N > **vi** 'have N'

N > **vt** 'use N for an action affecting the noun in the object position'

N > **vt** 'use the noun in the object position as N'

N > **vt** 'affect the noun in the object position by producing or creating N'

N > **vt** 'carry out the function N with respect to the noun in the object position'

N > **causative vt** 'cause that the noun in the object position becomes N'

N > **putative vt** 'regard the noun in the object position as N'

N > **attitudinal vt** 'treat the noun in the object position as N'

N > **adj** 'possess the quality typical for N'

N > **adv** 'like N'

N > **adv** 'with the help of N'

N > **adv** 'in the place (time) of N'

ADJ > **n** 'abstract denomination of the quality ADJ'

ADJ > **n** 'carrier of the quality ADJ'

ADJ > **vi** (only in other than a general aspect) 'behave correspondingly to the quality ADJ'

ADJ > **causative vt** 'cause that the noun in the object position has the quality ADJ'

ADJ > **putative vt** 'regard the noun in the object position as having the quality ADJ'

ADJ > **attitudinal vt** 'treat the noun in the object position as having the quality ADJ'

ADJ > **adv** 'in the way corresponding to the quality ADJ'

- Vi > **n** 'abstract denomination of the process Vi'
- Vi > **n** 'subject of the process Vi'
- Vi > **causative vt** 'cause that the noun in the object position be engaged in the process Vi'
- Vi > **putative vt** 'regard the noun in the subject position as somebody who is engaged in the process Vi'
- Vi > **attitudinal vt** 'treat the noun in the object position as being engaged in the process Vi'
- Vi > **adv** 'in the way corresponding to the process Vi'
- Vt > **n** 'object of the action Vt'
- Vt > **vi** 'be engaged in the action Vt with respect to all possible objects'
- Vt > **vt.om** 'affect the concrete omitted object with the action Vt'
- NUM > **n** 'things in the amount NUM'
- NUM > **n** 'things in the sequence NUM'
- NUM > **vi** 'become the amount NUM'
- NUM > **causative vt** 'turn the noun in the object position into NUM things'
- NUM > **putative vt** 'regard the noun in the object position as things of the amount NUM'
- NUM > **attitudinal vt** 'treat the noun in the object position as things of the amount NUM'
- NUM > **adv** 'NUM times'
- STAT > **n** 'an abstract denomination of the state or feeling STAT'
- STAT > **n** 'a carrier of the state or feeling STAT'
- STAT > **adv** 'in the way corresponding to the state or feeling STAT'
- LOK > **n** 'a thing in the LOK position'
- LOK > **vi** 'move in the direction LOK'
- LOK > **vi** 'be at the position LOK'
- LOK > **causative vt** 'cause that the noun in the object position moves in the direction LOK or is at the position LOK'
- LOK > **adj** 'possess the quality corresponding to the position LOK'
- LOK > **adv** 'in the way corresponding to the position LOK' or 'in the direction LOK'.

The Dictionary must be seen as a sort of experiment which was created by the detailed comparison of the individual instances of word usage, seeking analogical phenomena across the whole system of the Old Chinese lexicon,

attempting to distinguish a derivation from the mere etymological relationship, and taking into account a number of other factors, including a certain amount of experience with Old Chinese. I understand it as a kind of conclusion to the presented work, but, what is more important, also as a first step towards further research, which I would like to devote myself to in the future, namely on the identity of Old Chinese lexemes.

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