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The historical evidence for a tripartite division of Formal, Informal, and Elevated registers: the Airs, the Elegantiae, and the Eulogia of the *Odes*[1]

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1. The stylistic mechanism of binary opposition in contemporary language

In current research, style has come to denote two opposed communicative functions of language in direct social interaction: formal and informal; colloquial and elevated. To give an example of the former: there is a difference between treating a foreign guest and chatting with a classmate. To give an example of the latter: there is a difference in the way neighbors talk to each other and the way one prays to spirits and ancestors. The different functions of Formal and Informal styles have long been recognized but the independence of Elevated style (note that elevated style is not the same as formal style) has not yet gained wide acceptance. Several years ago, Feng (2010)[2] and Wang (2012)[3] suggested a basic outline of stylistic register grammar, proposing that formal and informal, popular and ceremonial, together form two opposed basic register dimensions.[4] Within this system, colloquial, standard, and elevated styles are considered three principal factors in differentiating stylistic registers. To give an illustration of this:

Elevated (ancient terms)

casual   colloquial   standard   (modern Chinese)
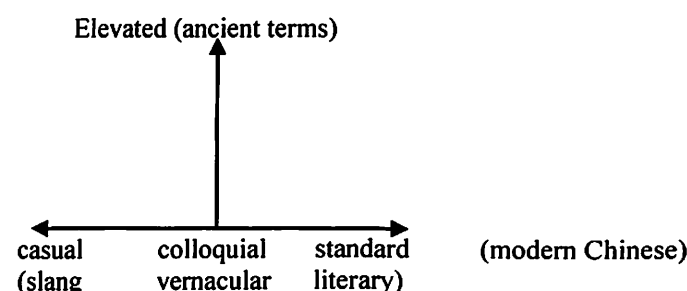(slang   vernacular   literary)

Fig. 1 The register composition in the binary stylistic system

Fig. 1 reflects the hypothetical system of three-way stylistic registers. Several notions within this system need to be elaborated. First, colloquial and standard form a pair of "contrasting concepts." That is to say, to employ the label "formal expression" in a theory is to realize a certain "degree of formality", which is weighed against an opposed notion of a "degree of informality", or, "degree of colloquialism." There are no absolute formal or informal styles in this system. Thus to determine "Formal" and "Informal" is always a matter of "degree." And for the same reason, "Elevated" and "Non-elevated" also constitute a contrastive pair whose members can illuminate one another and thus facilitate the differential classification of "highly elevated" and "very elevated."

The second important notion within this binary stylistic system is the following: while the opposition of Formal and Informal styles is realized in a synchronic linguistic system, the mechanism of Elevated and Non-elevated styles operates by introducing ancient expressions into the modern language through the process of amalgamation of two tongues (Feng, 2009, 2011, 2012)[5]. Therefore, the former represents a synchronic linguistic phenomenon, while the later constitutes the "synchronization of diachronic language." To give an example:

1. a. Formal: It is required to undertake an examination in culinary arts. 廚藝需進行考核
   ≠ Colloquial: Even in cooking one must be tested. 做菜也得考試.

b. Elevated: In due course the school principal will give him (其) the explanation of the matter. 屆時由本校領導予其解釋 ≠ Colloquial: Come the time the boss will tell him what happened. 到時候兒讓頭兒跟他說怎麼回事

In the above examples, the difference between formal and informal is extremely clear and there is no need to elaborate them further. But the distinction between Elevated and Non-elevated demands special attention: according to the rules of ancient syntax: in place of 其 in the example 1.b 之 should be used. 其 should not be used. As in:

2. a. He ordered him (令之) to turn the troops and oppose the Jin invaders. 令之還師而逆晉寇 (Gongyangzhuan, 12th year of Lord Xuan)

   b. The Duke of Guo asked for a vessel. The king gave him the jue wine vessel. 虢公請器,王予之爵 (Zuozhuan, 21st year of Lord Zhuang)

During the Zhou Qin period, "令之" could not be replaced by "令其"; and in standard ancient Chinese "予之爵" could not be replaced by "予其爵". Apparently, the modern Chinese sentence "In due course the school principal will give him (其) the explanation of the matter" does not opt for Ancient Chinese usage but instead for Middle and later Chinese usage of 其. (Sun 2012, 101-121). [6] This brings up two linguistic questions that merit further research:

1) Why does modern Chinese opt to use ancient Chinese?
2) Why does it still wish to make choices in the way it uses the ancient language?

Once we have the theory of the Elevated stylistic register, these questions can be readily solved. As has been stated above, Elevated style uses the distinction between ancient and modern language to increase the distance between the speaker and the listener. Its function is to demonstrate "the degree of linguistic elevation," and thereby to express the cultural position and educational background or the respect in the speaker's mind (as is the case of respecting spirits during the sacrifice). That is why one uses archaisms in place of modern language.[7] And as for wishing to change that archaic language, one uses ancient language not "to return to the past" but "to serve the present" (i.e., the stylistic demands of the day). Therefore, in order "to use the past to serve the present" one must also adjust to contemporary style and grammar, as the rule of amalgamation of synchronized diachronic languages postulates. In fact, based on the above theory, the notions of ancient and present are also contrastive. This is an essential notion in synchronic linguistic research.[8] For example:

5   Feng Shengli 馮勝利, "Lun hanyu yunlü de xingtai gongneng yu jufa yanbian de lishi fenqi 論漢語韻律的形態功能與句法演變的歷史分期 [On the morphological function of prosody and the chronology of syntactic change in Chinese]", Lishi Yuyangxue Yanjiu 歷史語言學研究 2, 2009, 11-31; "Yuti yufa jiqi wenxue gongneng 語體語法及其文學功能 [Yuti (Stylistic Register) grammar and literary function]", Dangdai Xiucixue 當代修辭學 4, 2011,1-13; "Yuti yuanli jiqi jiaoji jizhi 語體原理及其交際機制 [The theory of Yuti (Stylistic Register) and its mechanisms of communication]", Hanyu Jiaoxue Xuekan 漢語教學學刊 8, 2012, 24-49.

6   Sun Dejin 孫德金, Xiandai shumianyu zhong de wenyan yufa chengfen yanjiu 現代書面漢語中的文言語法成分研究 [Constituents of Classical grammatical elements in Modern Written Chinese], Beijing 北京: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 2012.
7   The question of how to use archaic language to express "elevation" springs from an even deeper cultural and spiritual source; in the future this may well develop into a new subject of research at the intersection of literature and linguistics.
8   See Feng Shengli 馮勝利, "Lun hanyu shumianyu yufa de xingcheng yu moshi 論漢語書面語語法的形成與模式 [On the formation and the formality of Written Chinese grammar]", Hanyu Jiaoxue Xuekan 漢語教學學刊 1, 2005, 17-49; Zhang Bojiang 張伯江, "Yuti chayi he yufa guilü 語體差異和語法規律 [The differences of Yuti (Stylistic Register) and the laws of grammar]", Xiuci Xuexi 修辭學習 2,2007.

3) Elevated: "Resplendent indeed were the schemes of King Wen." 丕顯哉，文王謨！
(*Book of Documents*, Zhou Documents, Junya Chapter 尚書·周書·君牙)

Non-elevated: "How generous the support he gave! What a glorious king!" 夥頤！涉
之王沉沉者！(*Shiji*, The Hereditary House of Chen She 《史記·陳涉世家》)

Both exclamations *Zai* and *Hoyi* praise the king. But while during the Han dynasty the proclamation "Resplendent indeed" would be considered archaic, "Elevated style" and "How generous the support he gave!" would be deemed contemporary colloquial.

To present readers both appear as thousand year old archaisms, both are thus considered Elevated style. The complex question of what period writer was using what kind of language to express what type of style to create what kind of linguistic effect constitutes the latest new area of linguistic research. Stylistic theory tells us that, in investigating language, let it be an even ancient language one cannot but differentiate between past and present. In distinguishing archaic from modern one has to be specific in regard to what constitutes each period's archaic and modern. Obviously, for scholars researching historical lexicon and syntax and their application, as well as for those investigating the aesthetics of the language feel in different periods, and their composite stylistic effect, the stylistic register theory adds a new dimension that can help them understand the stylistic register phenomenon used in ancient statements and their explanations.

For example, in the *Rites of Zhou, Offices of the Earth* chapter, *Minister of Instruction*, the *Suiren* (Chief Officer in Charge of the Wilds) section (《周礼·地官司徒·遂人》) : "In general, in managing the wilds, through forced labor one coerces the 'populace' (甿). 凡治野，以下劑致甿" Zheng Xuan glosses: "The text changes people (民) into populace (萌)(= 甿) to differentiate inner from outer. Populace is cognate with silly; silly is the appearance of being ignorant."[9] Stylistic register theory facilitates the following observation: the intention behind Zheng Xuan's gloss is to explain the conversion of the linguistic form 'people' into 'populace' in the *Suiren*: "inner" means near, "outer" means far, "to differentiate inner from outer" is to say "distinguish between near and far." To use the dissimilarity of expression to convey the relative distance and proximity of a relationship is precisely the communicative function of lexical stylistics in articulating the relational intimacy and detachment, or, distance and proximity. Why do people (民) and populace (萌) have the different effects of intimacy and distance? The *Xinshu* 新書, Great Government 大政, second part states: "People (*min* 民) is cognate with dark (*ming* 瞑), populace (*meng* 萌) is cognate with blind (*mang*盲)"[10] Zhao Qi's *Punctuating the Mengzi, Duke Wen of Teng*, first part states: "*mang* 氓 designates savage people." Sun Yirang in *Correcting the Meaning of the Zhou Rites*, scroll 29, says: "*Min* 民 refers to the people, it is the shared appellation for the people of the four quarters. The characters *meng* 甿 and 氓 *mang* intersect, both are special terms for the peasant people from the fields and countryside, thus the *Shuowen* glosses *meng* 甿 as 'field people.' Fields have to be in the open country, that is why Gao You glosses the *Intrigues of States, Intrigues of Qin* 戰國策·秦策, as: Country people are referred to as *meng* 甿. Zhao Qi glosses the *Mengzi, Duke Wen of Teng* chapter: Meng 甿

designates savage people. Fields and open country have to be outside the walled city; that is why this book calls the people outside the six gates as *meng* 甿. The *Searching out the Hidden Meaning of the Shiji, The Hereditary House of the Three Kings*, quotes the *Sancang* 三蒼: 'The border people are called *meng* 甿'. The *Mozi, Honoring the Worthy*, first part says: 'The multitudes within the city, the *ming* 萌 people of the four corners.'Four corners are the border villages beyond the suburban areas."[11]

From the above we can see that in the context of the ancient culture and political system, "*min* 民"and "*meng* 甿" are quite dissimilar: "*meng* 甿" specifically designates "border people"or "savage people." Now who are the "savage people"? Consider the following ancient glosses: "Savage people are coarse and rough, they contrast with the educated elite from the towns and the capital. Also, those outside the walled city are referred to as savage people."(Jia Gongyan quoting Zheng Xuan's gloss on the *Analects*.)

"Rustics is the designation for people without official rank and salary." (*Analects*, On advancement): "To first approach someone with rites and music would be the conduct of a rustic. To only later enter with rites and music is the manner of a man of refinement.") (Liu Baonan's commentary)

"[Guan Zhong] would be ranked as a person from the outskirts or countryside. He could never be steeped in benevolence and propriety; that is why he was of no use to the ruler." (*Xunzi*, Broad Outline): As a person, Guan Zhong employed achievement instead of propriety, exercised craftiness in place of benevolence, that is why he could not serve as the Son of Heaven's minister."(Yang Jing's commentary)

"Those warlike people of the western regions lack men of refinement." (*Lüshi Chunqiu, Relying on men of refinement*). Gao You's commentary: "The Di, the Qiang, the Hutang, those west of Li River, and the Bo are all savage people; the settlements at the Pianze River and Songlong are all rash people. All these lack in men of refinement."

It is not hard to see that "savage people"designates those "outside the walled town", "people from outskirts and rustic people" include even "those warlike people of the western regions without men of refinement." All these various explanations uniformly elucidate that the social position of the "*meng* people", or, "savage people", as well as the socio-cultural attitude of the time toward them, differed from the "people." It is precisely these differences that can produce the stylistic function of, in Zheng Xuan's words, "differentiating inner and outer."[12]

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9 The original text is as following: 鄭注云:"變‘民’言‘萌'（=甿）', 異外內也. 萌猶懵；懵, 無知貌也.
10 The original text is as following: 夫民之為言也, 瞑也; 萌之為言也, 盲也.

11 Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Zhou Ting Shu Lin* 籀廎述林, Beijing 北京: Zhonghua Shuju, 2010.
12 Nevertheless, Jia Gongyan's commentary states: "The Grand and Lesser Ministers of Instruction managing the six towns/provinces all have "min 民" and not "meng 甿". To substitute "meng 甿"for "min 民" is just to differentiate inner from outer, that is all, there is no difference in meaning. To explain 民 as dark and to explain 甿 as stupid is to in both cases highlight the appearance of being ignorant." We can see that Jia Gongyan by no means finds contrasting semantic aspects in the "difference" between "inner and outer," and instead explains both as "the appearance of being ignorant." Sun Yirang, on the other hand, maintains their dissimilarity, stating in his Zhouli Zhengyi, scroll 29: "The 'Lushi' states: 以質劑致民. By the means of [these grains] they help the people. This is the same as 以下質劑致民 of the

2. The Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia in the original *Book of Odes*

Although scholars in general acknowledge the existence of different linguistic registers in natural speech, the three-way division of stylistic registers (Informal, Formal, Elevated) needs still to be validated. This article will provide evidence that there actually exists a foundation for the "three stylistic registers hypothesis" whereas it is still a long term endeavor of the study of stylistic register grammar. Nevertheless, even if the principle of three stylistic registers has only recently been formulated (Feng 2010) and thus still awaits deeper investigation and verification, the Airs *feng*, the Elegentiae *ya*, and the Eulogia *song* of the *Odes* furnish it with a compelling historical testimony for the hypothesis presented here.

2.1 The social function of the *Odes*

What are the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia of the *Odes*? This question needs to be approached by first asking: what are the *Odes* and what is their function? Confucius states: "As for the Odes, there are three hundred of them. To sum them up in a phrase: 'In thinking, do not stray.'" Apparently, the Odes are about the correctness vis-à-vis the straying of "thinking." The *Analects*, *Taibo* Chapter, further adds: "Engender it through the Odes, establish it in Rites, complete it with Music." From this passage we can glean the relation of Odes to Rites and Music: the Odes are first followed by Rites, then Music. Now what is the function of the Odes? The *Analects*, *Yanghuo* Chapter says: "My darling young ones, why aren't you learning the Odes? The Odes can stimulate you, teach you a way of seeing things, how to associate with one another, as well as how to keep your distance. In private they instruct you on how to serve your parents, in public on how to assist the ruler; they teach you the names of birds and beasts, the terms for plants and trees." This is the social role of the Odes: to glue together, i.e., to approach; to keep at a distance, i.e., to move away; to serve the father, i.e., to respect the immediately present; to assist the ruler, i.e., to respect the far away. These are all either implicit or explicit, direct or indirect, functions of style. In other words, people use the Odes as a linguistic tool that regulates person to person relations and the degree of their distance and proximity. Mencius even went a step beyond Confucius by explicitly proposing that, in terms of social relations, different odes serve different functions: "The ode 'Kai Feng' discusses a slight mistake of one's family member, while in the ode 'Tiny Cap' the relative's error is grave. To disregard one's relative's grave error only increases separation, on the other hand, to resent a family member's slight

Classic, the Mao Commentary on the Wei Feng, Poem Meng as well as the *Shuowen* gloss on *meng* as *min* neither of them differentiates the two." If Sun Yirang points out that neither Mao Heng nor Xu Shen differentiates the two, there must logically be a difference between 民 and 氓. Sun Yirang apparently recognizes the difference between the two terms. What is that difference? He does not say. We can infer from this that the difference between Zheng Xuan's "inner" and "outer" is actually an age long controversy. Now to use textual evidence to show that the "inner" and the "outer" are a matter of stylistic "distance" and to demonstrate that words with different meaning and reference are used to complete the linguistic operation of "expressing distance and proximity" is to precisely carry out one type of stylistic grammar operation. In this way style finally overcomes a thousand year old obstruction.

mistake is to be incapable of gratefulness. To increase alienation is against filial piety, to be incapable of gratitude also goes against filial piety." (*Gaozi*, first part). Apparently, odes like *Kai Feng* or *Tiny Cap* reflect the intimacy and estrangement, distance and proximity in interpersonal relationships. As a matter of fact, the odes not only affected relationships within the family and between the neighbors, they also gave an expression to a higher purpose of human life. Mencius continues: "The Odes say: 'Heaven gave birth to the multitudes of people, endowing each entity with a norm. People hold onto what is normal in them; they are attracted to this resplendent virtue.' Confucius commented on this ode: 'Whoever composed this ode truly knew the Way. Because the moment entities come into existence there must be a norm underlying them; because people hold onto what is normal in them, they will be attracted to this resplendent virtue.'" The quotation further illustrates: one only "composes" an ode to elucidate "the Way, i.e., the norm, the resplendent virtue." This is because the odes have the further role to articulate the norm, or, pattern of things. The political role the *Analects* ascribes to the *Odes* is even more obvious. The *Analects*, the *Zilu* Chapter states: "The Master says: If you hand the government to a person who can recite all three hundred odes yet he does not succeed in his administration, or if you send him out on an embassy to distant lands yet he cannot as much as elicit a reply, even if you have scores of people like this, what is the use of them." This is the function of the formal style that the odes exhibit in regard to "accomplished administration" and "foreign affairs." Furthermore, in the *Discourses of the States*, *Discourses of the Zhou*: "Yang Shexi of Jin was getting married into the Zhou clan. ... The Duke of Jing was pleased about this ... and gave a speech saying: 'The bright Heaven has fulfilled its decree.'" Or, in the *Mencius*, *Gongsun Chou* chapter: "The ode says: 'Even before heaven was covered with clouds and send down the rain I had planted these mulberries in the ground, then linked their branches to make doors and windows, how do these lowly people dare to disgrace me?' Confucius said: 'Whoever composed this ode indeed knew the Way! Once you know how to govern the state, who would dare to disgrace you.'" No doubt this is an ode about governing the state. In the same vein, the *Mencius*, the *Lilou* Chapter, second part says: "As the traces of the kings vanished, the odes perished. Only after the odes perished did Confucius make the *Spring & Autumn* 《春秋》." The Odes perished alongside the "traces of the kings", that is why the *Spring & Autumn* were used to supplant them. Putting it this way, the Odes also possess the specific role of the *Spring & Autumn* to strike fear in "the disloyal minister and the treacherous son." This quotation in turn is about the relationship of the odes to the fate of the country, or, to the traces of the kings.

To summarize, the *Odes* not only have the ritual and musical functions, they can also deploy the modes of "stimulating, discerning, associating, drawing apart" to effect and to regulate daily interpersonal relationships. The *Odes* not only bring out the inherent pattern in things, but can also be employed in foreign affairs and in governing the state. Of course, another even more important role of the *Odes* is "to sacrifice and to report to the spirits and ancestors." The *Guoshu lüzhong* 《虢叔旅鐘》 in *Yin Zhou Jinwen Jicheng* 238 states: "The sovereigns and the ancestors are sternly watching from above, the rest of us are down below." Here "above" refers to the spirits and ancestors of the past generations, "below" designates the lords and kings of the present time. *Odes*, *Greater Elegentiae*, *The Great Brightness*: "Bright, bright down below; impressive, impressive high above" is essentially

an ode praising the ancestors. Therefore, the *Great Preface*大序 highlights another important role of the *Odes* as: "to report achievements to the numinous and bright."

Faced with the *Odes'* various roles in communication and with their manifold social functions, how did the editors of the *Classic of Odes* decide on their divisions to characterize these various effects? Of course, the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia are the result of their decision, but the question is what are the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia? Do these three genres bear any relationship to the roles discussed above? In this paper, we propose the following: the *Shijing* (*Odes*) system of the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia is identical with the fundamental role of style; one answer to the centuries old riddle of why the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia were split (or classified) into three and not into two, four, or five, is that it implicitly conforms to the tripartite division of the mechanism of stylistic registers.[13] In other words, *Shijing*'s Airs, Elegentiae, and Eulogia either intentionally or unintentionally complied with the intrinsic property of style, that is to say, according to informal, formal, and elevated stylistic registers and their functions (i.e., the social role of language), weighed and divided the more than three hundred odes into informal Airs, formal Elegentiae, and elevated Eulogia.

2.2 The stylistic properties of the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia[14]

What are the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia? In his *Shijizhuan*, Part One, Zhu Xi (1130−1200) of the Song Dynasty closely touches on style: "The Airs are poems based on folk songs and nursery rhymes." In the first part of his *Chuci jizhu* he again says: "Airs (*feng*) are lyrics from the lanes and villages concerning customs and the thoughts and feelings of boys and girls." Without doubts, Airs are popular, non-standard song poems. What are the Elegentiae (*ya*)? The Elegentiae in the *Odes* are divided into Lesser and Greater Elegentiae. Mao's Great Preface states: "*Ya* 雅 is to say correcting; they discuss the source

behind the rise and fall of royal government. When it comes to government, there is greater and lesser, that is why there are greater and lesser elegentiae." Zhang Taiyan in his *Explaining the greater and lesser odes, Part One* says: "When it comes to refinement in music, there are two types, one is called greater and lesser, the other is a music instrument." Zheng Xuan in his commentary on the "Shengshi笙師 Flute teacher" says: "The *ya* has the shape of a lacquer tube with a narrow mouth, it is two *wei* 圍 wide, a foot and six inches long, is shod in sheep leather, and two buttons draw it together." Based on this, *ya* is the name of a musical instrument. But Zhang Taiyan also states: "Greater and lesser *ya* were initially the sounds of Qin people imitating the *wuwu* 烏烏 sound of a crow." Based on *Explaining the greater and lesser odes*, "*ya*" was originally a dialect pronunciation. Just in line with this, Zhu Xi in his *Shijizhuan 9*, states: "*Ya* 雅 means correcting; it is an attuning song (official song)." In other words, the elegentiae of the *Classic of Odes* are song poems in a standard formal style. Moreover, from the point of view of exegesis, *Ya* refers to *Xia* 夏, the royal territory surrounding the Zhou capital. Therefore the poems, ballads, songs, and music from inside the Zhou capital territory are called *ya* (just like today the capital dialect is called Mandarin). This *ya* is called by virtue of its correcting property, therefore *ya* poems in the correcting style also get this name. To put it in another way, "the elegant words (雅言, standard/official language)" in "that which the master stated in elegant words" refer to "an utterance in the officially correcting pattern style," and the "*ya* poems" in the Greater and Lesser Elegentiae of the *Odes* are "poems in the official/formal style 1 of a correcting pattern." Although spoken words differ from poems, they share the distinction between the formal and the informal variety.

Now what are the Eulogia (*song* 頌)? "The Biographies of the scholars" of the *Hanshu* state: "When Masters Tang and Chu received the students and the instructors (when they paid a call on the academics), they all raised their clothes and scaled the main hall, their demeanor was very serious."[15] We can see that Eulogia can be a kind of etiquette or ceremony. The text further says: "Master Xu of Lu was skilled in Eulogia." Yan Shigu's commentary quotes from Weisu Lin 魏蘇林 of Sanguo: "The 'Ancient Ceremonies of the Han' designate two officials for the matters of decorous appearance and majestic presence." As for "decorous appearance," the *Shuowen* 《說文》 states: "*Song* is to say appearance." Mao's Great Preface to the *Odes* states: "*Song* is the quality and the appearance of the perfectly complete charismatic potency *de* 德, by its attainment one reports to the numinous and bright." Zhen Xuan's sub-commentary: "*Song* 頌 is cognate with 'recite' (*song* 誦)."[16] To summarize, *song* 頌 is the sacrificial etiquette in the ancestral temple and the *song* hymns used therein to eulogize the spirits. There is a direct connection between sacrificial poems in the temple and a solemn canonical style. At the end of the "Ruilang fubi shi芮良

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13 *Rites of Zhou*, Offices of the Spring Chapter, Grand Instructor Section: "[The grand instructor] teaches the six styles/principles of poetry, namely, Airs, direct description, comparison/juxtaposition, arousal/setting the tune, Eulogia, and Elegentiae. *Dadai Liji*, Investing Pots: There are twenty six odes in the Eulogia section, eight of them can be set to music, namely "Cry the deer," "The raccoon head," "Nest the magpies," "Pluck, pluck the duckweed," "Pluck, pluck the artemisia," "Chop, chop the sandal tree," "The white colt," "Yu." Eight pieces are incomplete and cannot be sung. Seven pieces in the Shang and Qi sections can be sung, three fall in between. This particular classification of the odes into Airs and Elegentiae does not conform with the classical version. Likewise, the *Rites and Ceremonies*, "The rites of Yan," lists the odes "Guan, guan cry the ospreys," "Getan," "Rolled up ears," and "Nest the Magpies"-- in the classical version all these odes appear in the Zhounan and Shaonan sections of the Airs -- in the Elegentiae section. Again the classifications differ. The differences here likely have to do with the respective tunes/music, and are better to be discussed in a separate paper. Nevertheless, even if the specific poems are classified differently, the division into Airs, Elegentiae, and Eulogia and the respective functions of each form do not differ. Elegentiae are the melodies of the courtly high music, Eulogia are songs used in the temples while praying and sacrificing to the numinous and bright, Airs are folk songs from the countryside. Thus, in its aim, the tripartite division of musical genres conforms to the division of linguistic stylistic registers.

14 The individual pieces within each of the Airs, Elegentiae, and Eulogia sections were composed at different times; this is another factor in their respective division. As a matter of fact, there are time, place, and degree of colloquialism dependent stylistic differences even among the odes classified as Airs. Without doubt, these are all important questions that can only be raised here but that deserve further research in the future.

15 The original text is as follows: "唐生, 褚生應博士弟子選, 詣博士, 撫衣登堂, 頌禮其嚴. "

16 Duan Yucai's *Shuowen Jiezi Zhu*, 頁 section, 頌 entry: "According to the Great Preface, *song* refers to the quality and appearance of one's charismatic potency. But by virtue of its explaining *song* as *xingrong* rather than *xingsong*, we know that *rong* had long been used as a loan for *song*. This *song* is the original character in the expression *rongmao*, appearance. Further in the Shuowen one reads: Smelting is a method of casting a utensil." Yan Shigu adds: *Rong* is the mold for an iron utensil." Duan Yucai adds: "Modern readers typically miss its sense." If 鎔 is the mold; 容 is the pattern, style; and 頌 is likely the loan for 容, then, accordingly, 頌 has the intention of ceremonial manner, just complementing *ya* being glossed as corrective.

夫毕詩" of the Qinghua bamboo slips released in 2013, there is a signature stating: "This is a song eulogizing the Duke of Zhou."[17] Applying evidential scholarship, the poem *Cither dance of Duke of Zhou* reads as follows: "As long as there is awe and might above, respect/vigilance will manifest below." This poem not only elucidates the location (temple), the counterpart (above), and the content (to report merit) of the Eulogia ode style, even more importantly, it illustrates the attitude involved in using this style, i.e., might and respect, the tone of the solemn style. One can observe the same in the "Cap Eulogy 冠頌" of the *Family Sayings of Confucius*:

> "The summer of the following year, in the sixth month, after the royal burial had been carried out, to give Cap-ceremony to the king Cheng. He approached the ancestors and summoned the feudal lords in order to present himself as the sovereign. The Duke of Zhou ordered Zhu Yong to compose an eulogy. Zhu Yong composed a poesy that went as: 'Help the king to be close to the people, to live long years, to use his time wisely, to be generous with his wealth, to keep company with the worthy, and to employ the capable.' His eulogia went as follows: 'On an auspicious day of a propitious month, the king first put on his mourning clothes. The deceased king had a youthful aspiration, his mind was invested in service, he was venerated like the bright heaven, the six directions all modeled themselves on him. He leads the ancestors, forever without end. '"

From the above dialogue we can make out the motivation behind the composing of an eulogy, we can also see that an eulogy may not only be a song poem (詩) but can also be a poesy (辭). [18]We can also see that ancient people were extremely thoroughgoing in their demands and procedures in regard to the Eulogia, elevated style.

We also need to point out that since Zhu Xi first put forth his musical aspect theory in the *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳, there has been no dearth of differentiating the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia on the basis of musical criteria. Zhu Xi states: "Eulogia are temple hymns." Ruan Yuan in his Explaining the Eulogia develops this point even further:

> "*Song* 頌 being glossed as splendidly complete charismatic potency has an additional meaning. The character 頌 (eulogy) is the same as 容 (appearance). 容、養、羕 are all cases of one sound alteration, ancient documents often substitute one for the other. The character 樣 (manner) that circulates in popular literature and first appears in the *Tang Rhymes* is also this 容 character. Thus there is nothing profound in recognizing that saying: 'Zhou Eulogia, Lu Eulogia, Shang Eulogia' is like

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17 The traditional title is "The Zither Dance of the Duke of Zhou" which is a case of "same composition with different titles." See *Tsing Hua da xue cang zhanguo zhujian(san)* 《清華大學藏戰國竹簡·三》.
18 See Wang C.H., *The Bell and the Drum: Shih-Ching as Formulaic Poetry in an Oral Tradition*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1974. And Chen Zhi 陳致, "Cong "Zhousong"yu jinwen zhong chengyu de yunyong lai kan gushige zhi yongyun ji siyanshiti de xingcheng 從《周頌》與金文重成語的運用來看古詩歌之用韻及四言詩體的形成 [On the application of idiom in Zhou eulogy and Chinese Bronze Inscriptions to explore the rhythm of Chinese ancient poetry and the formation of the four character verse]", *Kua xue ke shi ye xia de Shijing yanjiu* 跨學科視野下的詩經研究 [Cross-disciplinary research on the Classic of Poetry], Shanghai 上海: Shanghai Guji, 2010, 25-27.

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saying 'the manner of Zhou, the manner of Lu, the manner of Shang.' Each piece in these three Eulogia denotes a particular dance countenance (*rong*容); that is why it is called *song*. Just like the later operas of the Yuan Dynasty, they are sung and danced to the accompaniment of particular instruments."

Here Eulogia are explained as the musical dance tunes used during worship and sacrifice. Wang Guowei, however, disagrees with this explanation that Eulogia constitute dance tunes or movements. In his article "Explicating the Zhou Eulogia" Wang Guowei suggests: "In his article 'Explaining the Eulogia' Ruan Yuan is right on target in explaining the basic meaning of *song*, but we are afraid he is wrong when he claims that each stanza in the Three Eulogia represents a particular dance countenance/movement." Wang Guowei instead puts forth another extremely important fact: "The cadence/intonation of the Eulogia is slow in comparison to Airs and Elegentiae." He then reiterates:

> "The distinction between the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia should be sought in terms of rhythm. Although it is impossible to fully grasp the aspect by virtue of which the Eulogia precisely differs from the Airs and the Elegentiae, if we are, nevertheless, to push the point here, then we would say that the Eulogia are slower rhythmically than the Airs and the Elegentiae. How can we prove this? We would say: The Airs and the Elegentiae are rhymed, the Eulogia are often without rhyme. In general, the reason why song poems deploy meter, rhyme, or a combination of the two is to delight the listeners. ... The specific reason why the Airs and the Elegentiae deploy rhyme and meter is to speed up the cadence. On the other hand, the reason why the eulogia often lack rhyme is because their cadence is slow. The purpose of rhyme/meter is thus lost. Consequently, they do not use rhyme. This is one proof. The second, related proof is that the eulogia are not being divided into stanzas."

Speaking from the point of view of stylistic grammar, the Eulogia are a typical representative of solemn canonical style, they are "religious incantations." As a matter of fact, Wang Guowei's "slow cadence" explanation can stand as another clear proof for the solemn canonical style of the Eulogia: slow rhythm and solemn style possess an intrinsic form-and-function correspondence; more precisely the "slow rhythm form" corresponds to "solemn purifying function."[19] And for the same reason, the "Record of Music" in the *Records of Rites* states: "Listening to the tune of the Elegentiae and Eulogia, one's will and intention are broadened; clutching the shields and battle axes, the body moves to the tune, facing up, bending down, recoiling and stretching, one's countenance acquires solemnity; connecting individual postures, keeping the beat, the alignment is made correct, advance and retreat level out." Here the effects of following the tune and cadence of the Elegentiae and the Eulogia is said to be: "Solemn, correcting, and leveling;" apparently, the gravity of music and the solemnity of style come out of the same rule. To put it differently, the reason why

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19 In reality, many odes in the Lesser Elegentiae section are extremely close to the Airs of States section, and differ greatly from the Greater Elegentiae. Thus, in order to be ascertained, the ancient three-way division of the Odes still awaits more throroughgoing examination of Classic of Odes' individual compositions and their subdivisions. We would like to acknowledge Wang Weihui's suggestions here. Furthermore, Chen Shixiang's (1974) article first employs the English translations eulogia, elegentiae, and airs. He also uses various angles to discuss their stylistic differences.

music is divided into the Air, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia is to differentiate the "popular, the official, and the solemn" effects.[20]

3. The mechanism of stylistic registers and the criteria for their identification

As has been said above, the gist of the stylistic mechanism is distance.[21] There are two types of distance: synchronic and diachronic. Speaking from the synchronic context, these two different directions are relatively easy to identify and differentiate. For example, Harvard's motto "Veritas (truth)" embodies diachronic distance (Latin), while its expression as "Search for Truth" expresses synchronic distance. In contemporary English, the difference between "benevolence" and "kindness" can be understood as synchronic distance. The mottoes of Chinese universities are just like that: "Be the paragon of action" (the motto of

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20 One question regards the odes being divided into the three sections of popular, official, and solemn; another question considers how the odes included therein were used (where, or, toward whom). For example, as the *Zuozhuan*, 16th year of Duke Zhao records: "In the summer, in the fourth month, six ministers of Zheng organized a banquet for Xuanzi outside of the city walls. Xuanzi said: 'May all six of you please sing from the odes for me so that I can understand the aspirations of Zheng. Zicuo sang the 'In the wild grows the creeper grass.' Xuanzi said: "Excellent, young man! I can see what you mean!" Zichan sang the 'Sheep skin' from the Zheng [Airs]. Xuanzi replied: "I cannot measure up to this." Zida Shu sang "Lifting the skirt." Xuanzi replied: 'I go this far. Can I challenge anyone to go again?" At which point Zida Shu bowed to him. Xuanzi replied: 'Excellent! You said it just right. If it not were for this understanding, could the relations between our states continue?' Ziyou sang the "Wind and rain," Ziqi sang the "There is a woman in my carriage." Ziliu sang the "Leaves are dropping." Xuanzi liked this and said: "Zheng is truly prospering! The six of you, gentlemen, have been ordered by your ruler to bestow this honor on me, the odes you sang have not transgressed the aspirations of Zheng, all have been suitable to this festive atmosphere. All of you, progenitors of lines that will last for long generations, can rest without apprehension." Then he presented all of them with horses and sang the "I shall." Zichan bowed to him and ordered the other five to do the same: "You have pacified the chaos among states, do we dare not to bow to your charismatic potency?" 《野有蔓草》、《羔裘》、《褰裳》、《風雨》、《有女同車》、《蘀兮》 all appear in the Airs of Zheng, 《我將》 appears in the Zhou Eulogies. This passage undoubtedly touches upon questions such as what style one uses in a particular place or which ode one sings to a particular person, these surely constitute a new topic for future research (consider the history of "The East is red 東方紅"). We would like to thank Li Guo for suggesting the present material and raising these questions. To settle the matter, based on recent research, there are 68 instances in the *Zuozhuan* of singing the odes: of these 12 are in the Jin Airs section, 18 in Zheng, 27 in Lu. In the Discourses of the States the Odes are quoted six times: one time in Jin, two times in Lu, three times in Qin. Moreover, Yao Yanqu (from the Qing period) in his Encapsulation of (Dynastic Records) of the Spring and Autumn states: "During the rituals accompanying feasts and sacrifices, the odes are quoted twenty-three times to express intention."(See Peng Lin's "Examination of the 'At night the old man toasts with the ale and composes a song.'") The rules and principles governing the use of the odes to express intention are awaiting further research.
21 See Feng Shengli 馮勝利, "Lun yuti de jizhi jiqi yufa shuxing 論語體的機制及其語法屬性 [On the mechanisms of the Register System and its grammatical property]", *Zhongguo Yuwen* 中國語文 5, 2010:100-412; Wang Hongjun 王洪君, Li Rong 李榕, Yue Yao 樂耀"'le2'yu huazhu xianshen de zhuguang jinjuli jiaohu yuti "'了2 '與話主顯身的主觀近距離交互語體 ['le 2' in the speaker's appearance of the interactive *Yuti* (Stylistic Register) from a close distance]", *Yuyanxue Luncong* 語言學論叢 40, 2010.

Beijing Normal University); "Value fairness, value ability" (Nankai University) represent the sense of diachronic distance, while Beijing University's "Freedom of thought" is a representative of synchronic distance. These are all stylistic differences that can be assessed on the basis of modern people's linguistic intuition. Thus people from Beijing can directly tell us which of the expressions A *gen* B"、"A *he* B"、"A *yu* B"、"A *tong* B" is the more colloquial:

$$跟\ gen > 和\ he > 與\ yu > 同\ tong$$

Here $>$ indicates that the elements on the left side are more colloquial than those to the right. Similarly "*gei* 給人踩了一下 > *rang/jiao* 讓/叫人踩了一下 > *bei* 被人踩了一下" are different stylistic expressions in contemporary Beijing dialect (Beijing people do not use the passive marker 被 *bei* in their everyday speech). And, also pertaining to style (in a spoken form), the ways Beijing people use "*bie* 別 don't" and "*beng* 甭 don't" are also different:

a. Don't take the trouble, he won't listen to you anyway. 您甭費心了,他根本不聽.
b. No need to worry, we will come there by ourselves. 你就別費心了,我們可以自己來.

Both are ways of dissuading someone, but *beng* 甭 is far more colloquial than *bie* 別, its connotations of dissuasion is far stronger,[22] thereby expressing a closer and more casual relationship between the speaker and the listener. If it were in a formal situation, then neither of these expressions could occur, *bu-yao* 不要 or *wu* 勿 would be used instead (tending toward solemn style):

a. Please do not lean against the door. 請不要靠近車門.
b. No smoking please. 請勿吸煙！

Note that colloquial Cantonese uses 勿, 請勿靠近車門 is a common expression on Cantonese subways. This usage proves that standard and non-standard act as counterparts; they differ on the basis of spatiotemporal difference. Not just that, different times and places (societies and periods) also have different stylistic forms. Wang Weihui (2014) suggests that *ling-ting* 聆聽[23] and *chui-ting* 垂聽[24] both carry a tint of respect. In terms of usage the

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22 Whether this has to do with the origin of these two expressions (別 is the contraction of 不要 'no want', while 甭 is the contraction of 不用 no need) remains to be seen.
23 Wang Weihui 汪維輝 (2014) says: "The explanation of the word meaning in the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (現代漢語詞典) may easily mislead people into erroneously believing 聆聽 (to listen up) is the literary form of the colloquial 聽 (to listen). This would be quite inappropriate. In contrast, the Baidu encyclopedia's explanation of the meaning is both more accurate and preferable: "To conscientiously listen with concentrated effort. It denotes sincere and serious listening, moreover it carries a tint of respect, therefore it typically refers to a lower ranked person listening to a higher ranked person's suggestion, report, etc." (Taken from Wang Weihui, *Xiandai hanyu 'yuti cihui' chulun* 現代漢語"語體詞彙"芻論 [Discussion on the 'Stylistic Lexis' in Modern Chinese], Changjiang Xueshu 長江學術1, 2014: 91–102.)

two can be complementary; actually, they are disyllabic neutral equivalents of *ting* 聽. In contemporary Chinese there is in fact no place for either of them. That is to say, the form of stylistic expression in a natural language is never word by word, sentence by sentence, or style by style, it is always whole and complete. We, on the other hand, think that the system of stylistic registers is an ever shifting, always adjusting scheme in flux. Therefore, "register position deficiency" is not only inevitable, it is in fact the intrinsic property of the aforementioned system. Why? There is both a language internal and a language external reason for this. The language internal reason is the following: once the standard and elevated dictions are used excessively (degree of familiarity increases, distance decreases), transformation toward popular style commences; and once popular diction is laid aside (degree of familiarity decreases, distance is stretched), the reduction of its degree of colloquialism is initiated. These two kinds of multidirectional stylistic movements eventually lead to a "stylistic position shift." The immediate consequence of such stylistic position shift is a vacancy in the original position, thus "stylistically empty place" arises at an opportune time.

Language external reasons can also create the phenomenon of "stylistic deficiency". Today, as the number of academic workshops and conferences rises, students and younger scholars have far more opportunities to present publicly than at any other time in the past. This has produced an unprecedented kind of social setting: public forums in which older, middle, and younger generations present at the same time. Twenty years ago such scenario was extremely rare in China (in general, it was younger scholars attending older scholars' presentations), thus there was also no need for stylistic expressions that would fit the aforementioned setting. The sudden emergence of such exceptional setting caused that the colloquial monosyllabic verb 聽 (to listen) did not fit the needs of this kind of a novel situation, while the previously existing 聆聽 (to listen up), because it is a form that denotes respect of a lower toward higher ranked, also does not fit with this kind of situation where a senior instructor "listens" to a presentation by a person of a younger generation status (see Cui, Xiliang 2013 [25]), thereupon arises linguistic "register position deficiency." Wang Weihui (2014) says: "Motivated by stylistic demands, there might appear in the near future a disyllabic expression corresponding to 聽. Or, the Taiwanese usage of 聆聽 (to listen) may come to be accepted on the mainland, acquiring the legitimate position of a written equivalent of the [colloquial] 聽. Of course, we cannot know for sure, we just have to wait and see." [26]

As a matter of fact, provided position deficiency is occasioned by language internal and language external reasons, it is not difficult to imagine that it will arise not just in regard to neutral style expressions, other styles, such as formal and elevated, may also exhibit corresponding position deficiency. (See Feng, 2006, footnote 1)[27]. What Wang Weihui (2014) terms "non-culturally motivated" mono-/di-syllablic alternations 單雙對應詞 such as 眼: 眼睛 'eye', 學:學習 'study', 多:眾多 'many' are all in fact "arising in response to a place vacancy (register expression gap)." Thus the "register expression gap" can be considered a trigger that motivates the invention of new expressions! [28]And, furthermore, the inevitability of stylistic position deficiency helped us discover the two different shifting sources behind the production of novel expressions, namely linguistic and social evolution.

Based on the above analysis one must press the question: what will happen to the stylistic system of ancient Chinese as well as to the linguistic evolution sparked by stylistic development? One first has to acknowledge that in investigating the styles of Ancient Chinese one faces manifold challenges. The most significant challenge is that we lack the linguistic intuition of the ancients. Here we mean not only the general intuition toward Ancient Chinese, but also the feel in regard to its "linguistic periodization (like the linguistic intuition for the grammar of the Chinese of the Yin Shang, the two Zhou, the Qin-Han, the Wei-Jin, etc. periods)." The eight giants of the Tang and Song prose used ancient Chinese in their composition, so we cannot deny they possessed certain linguistic intuition in Ancient Chinese.[29] At the same time, we cannot use their compositions as evidence for Qin-Han linguistic evolution. Why? Because they were not native speakers of that particular age, their linguistic intuition for Ancient Chinese was learned through study, it was not a natural outcome of acquisition. The greatest difference between possessing and not possessing linguistic intuition is the ability, or the lack of, to determine grammatical validity (or, implausibility); only native speakers are equipped with a reliable grammaticality judgments.

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24 Here we follow Wang Weihui (2014)'s suggestion: *Hanyu Dacidian*'s (漢語大詞典) explanation of 垂聽 as "to listen down, to listen graciously." *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* does not list the term, but in the second sense of 垂 it states: "(Literary) Term of respect, used to denote another person's (typically one's senior in age or rank) action toward oneself: 垂念 to think magnanimously, 垂詢 to inquire magnanimously, 垂問 to ask magnanimously.

25 Cui Xiliang崔希亮, "Xiandai hanyu shumianyu sange jingjie 現代漢語書面語三個境界 [The three realms of the Modern Chinese Written Language]", in: Shengli Feng 馮勝利 (eds.) *Hanyu shumianyu de lishi yu xianzhuang* 漢語書面語的歷史與現狀 [Written Chinese: the present and the past], Beijing 北京: Peking University, 2013, 35-43.

26 Note that the change of setting may occasion a change of understanding and the corresponding shift in meaning. For example, while grandmother was alive, and particularly once she reached hundred, one listened up to anything she said, many sayings were coming as if from beyond her. She died seven weeks after my eldest son was born. As my sons acquired the ability to speak, one noticed that they too

have moments when they communicate knowledge that is beyond conventional, around three this ability is at its peak, then, as they age and become more like adults, they gradually lose this gift. So one could attempt to predict that 聆聽 may eventually come to describe a situation where one listens attentively to a person who has something wise or original to say, be it a hundred or three year old.

27 Feng Shengli馮勝利. "Lun hanyu shumian zhengshi yuti de tezheng yu jiaoxue 論漢語書面正式語體的特徵與教學 [On the properties and pedagogy of Written Chinese]", *Shijie Hanyu Jiaoxue* 世界漢語教學 4, 2006, 98-106.

28 A different account of the disyllabicity is given in Wang, Lijuan 王麗娟, *Cong minci, dongci kan xiandai hanyu Putonghua shuangyinjie de xingtai gongneng* 從名詞、動詞看現代漢語普通話雙音節的形態功能 [A study of the morphological function of disyllabicity in Mandarin nouns and verbs], 博士論文 Ph.D. Dissertation, Beijing 北京: Beijing Yuyan Wenhua Daxue, 2010.

29 Hence there are people who claim that the language of the literature of the Eight Giants of the Tang and Song is "pseudo-classical Chinese." This we would consider not understanding the mechanism and the potential of stylistic language practice. Of course, one may say that the Eight Giants lacked the linguistic intuition of the Qin and Han ancients, but to claim that the classical language they used in their composition merely "imitates the past" is untenable. This issue does not only concern literature studies, it also directly involves linguistic research; it is a very important matter that deserves to be treated in a separate paper (for relevant discussion on this issue, see Feng Shengli 馮勝利, "Bainian lai hanyu zhengshi yuti de miewang yu zaisheng 百年來漢語正式語體的滅亡與再生 [The death and rebirth of formal Chinese in the past one hundred years]", in: Li Xiangyu 李向玉 (eds.) *Aomen Yuyan Wenhua Yanjiu* 澳門語言文化研究 [A study of the language and culture in Macau], Macau 澳門: Polytechnic Institute, 2011, 23-46.

This is the principal difficulty in researching ancient styles to the extent of grammar: we cannot raise the ancients from the ground to tell us which sentence is grammatically valid and which not. Nevertheless, as has been stated previously, although the stylistic system and its mechanism are relatively stable (even if not employing the theory of universal grammar here), the stylistic diction (internal factors) as well as the old society that gave rise to various styles (external factors) were constantly changing. Thus the degree of standardization of 跟 > 和 > 與 > 同 was not necessarily the same during the Tang-Song, and the distinct usage of the forms 種 (to plant, informal) and 樹 (to plant, formal) in the *Mengzi* does not necessarily agree with the Yin-Shang period usage, to say nothing about the differences between the dialects of Ancient Chinese corresponding to the kind observable in modern injunctions "別" (Beijing dialect) and "勿" (Cantonese). The complex intersecting relationship between the different factors of stylistic system is illustrated in Figure 2 ("A" strands for Ancient time, "D" stands for Dialect):

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An
 ┊
 ┊
A2        b

A1        a    c
      └──────────────────
now = x   D1   D2 ...... Dn
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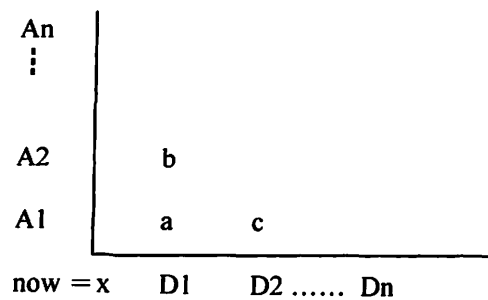
Figure 2. Graph of spatiotemporal aspects of style

The vertical coordinates in figure 2 denote time (points a, b denote language from different periods at the same place, or, within the same dialect), while horizontal coordinates denote location (points a, c denote different dialects at one given time); this then constitutes the spatiotemporal property of style.[30] Our question is: how to anticipate and evaluate the different forms of stylistic attributes at any given time and at any given place? How to differentiate and verify the precise type and transformation of the stylistic phenomenon at different times and places? The lack of language feel and of linguistic materials has, in regard to research on ancient Chinese stylistics, undoubtedly brought serious challenges and created enormous (if not insurmountable) difficulties.

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30 See among others, Hu Mingyang 胡明揚, "Yuti he yufa 語體和語法 [Register and grammar]", *Hanyu xuexi* 漢語學習2, 1993, 1-4; He Yang 賀陽, *Xiandai hanyu ouhua yufa xianxiang yanjiu* 現代漢語歐化 語法現象研究, 博士論文 [A study of the phenomena of Europeanization in Modern Chinese grammar] PhD. Dissertation, Renmin University of China, 2007; Feng Shengli, "On Modern Written Chinese", *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 37, 2009, 145-162; Suzuke, Keika, "Wenbai xiangjian de xushiti yu wenya yuti xingshi de pianzhang gongneng 文白相間的敘事體與文雅語體形式的篇章功能 [The discourse function of the Classic-style expressions in Modern Chinese grammar]", *Yuyan kexue* 3, 2010, 244-254.

Admitting such difficulties does not mean we cannot move a single step forward. In fact, once we have a theoretical system capable of both deduction and verification, we also possess research angle, direction, and method, and that is regardless of whether the specific materials and phenomena are still awaiting excavation, collection, classification, and general exposition. One needs to recognize: the system and results of any science (including theories, objects of inquiry, methods, rules, etc.) are gradually established step by step. Research on ancient Chinese styles is no exception. For example, we have come across the following finding:

> "Many of the quotations from the Elegantiae and Eulogia sections of the Classic of Odes that appear in excavated texts are in fact not quoting the Odes; instead these are idiomatic expressions that took shape in the context of religious observances, such as ancestral sacrifices and feasts, of the Zhou aristocrats during the two-Zhou, particularly Western Zhou, periods, these may be termed "set phrases, habitual sayings, formulaic expressions, etc." (Chen Zhi 陳致 2012: 38).[31]

In fact, in his "Letter to a friend discussing proverbs in the *Odes* and *Documents*," Wang Guowei had already considered this type of set phrases.[32] Are these formulaic expressions and set phrases (syntactically registered stylistic expressions) not employed in utterances directed to specific counterparts/listeners (spirits and ancestors), on concrete occasions (religious ceremony, banquet honoring a distinguished guest), with a definite content (to report merit, to pray for assistance), the historical proof for the use of "solemn style" by the Zhou, particularly Western Zhou, aristocracy?[33] To put it in another way, on the basis of the stylistic determinative factors present in the phenomena of linguistic utterances from that particular period, the styles of early antiquity can be differentiated and their stylistic classification and affiliation evaluated. To clearly illustrate this, we would preliminarily set out the evaluation procedure of the set phrase style appearing in the bronze inscriptions and the Eulogia section of the *Odes* as follows:

Register Identification Criteria

1. Audience   → ancestors, spirits
2. Occasion   → ancestral temple, sacrificial ceremony
3. Content   → praising achievement, praying for blessing
4. Attitude[34]   → respectfully solemn, respectfully fearful

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31 Chen Zhi 陳致, "rijuyuezhu" yu "rijiuyuejiang": zaoqi siyanshi yu jisi lici shili "日居月諸"與"日就月 將": 早期四言詩與祭祀禮辭實例 [Rijuyuezhu" and "Rijiuyuejiang": A case study of the early tetra-syllabic poem and sacrificial liturgy]", in: *Wenming de goujian: yuyan de goutong yu dianji de chuanbo lunwen zhaiyaoji* 文明的構建：語言的溝通與典籍的傳播論文摘要集 [Proceedings of the construction of civilizations: Communication of languages and dissemination], 2012.

32 See the Collected Works of Wang Guowei (觀堂集林), tome 1, 75-84.

33 Based on the theory proposed in the present article, the English term "formulaic languge" (see Wang Jingxian 王靖獻, 1974:41-3) can likewise be regarded as a manifestation of a specific style or register.

34 Note that the element of motivation may be behind attitude, but, at the same time, motivation is not the only constituent of attitude.

Zhou solemn style
(Bronze inscriptions, eulogia section of the *Odes*)

Although not every phenomenon of the ancient language neatly corresponds to each and single factor of the stylistic differentiation system, as is the case with the Elegantiae, Eulogia, and bronze inscriptions, the four components of the Register Identification Criteria provide us with a feasible strategy and direction, they also give us a functional procedure for differentiating styles. Of course, this does not mean they constitute the only standard or system for differentiating style, but taking them as a starting point, even more comprehensive as well as reliable factors/system may be developed in the future through their continual enhancement.

4. Searching out the source for the Ancient Chinese stylistic registers of Airs, Elegentiae, and Eulogia

According to the above theory of stylistic-register grammar, we shall now investigate the source and the content of the Airs, Elegentiae, and Eulogia stylistic registers. Here we mainly pay attention to the fourth criterion in differentiating style: "voice (speaker's attitude)" as it constitutes an important clue in our textual criticism of the stylistic registers. As we have seen above, the Eulogia odes epitomize the solemn ceremonial style. The archetypical voice or basic property of the solemn ceremonial style is "respect and awe." To put it in another way, unless the speaker's heart is filled with awe, his expression will lack the solemn ceremonial aspect. In oracle bones inscriptions the graph "awe 畏" is constituted as "held and pounced by ghosts;" "grasped and controlled by ghosts" can also be explained by combining the intentions as "being afraid of" → "fear 畏". From several examples of the oracle bones usage we can recognize the object of this fear:

1. He divined: Fear it/him. 貞畏其. (《甲骨文合集》14173) "Fear" originates in "it/him" – whether it is a "natural calamity" or an "unavoidable disaster," so long as there is trepidation in one's heart toward the spirit that wards off or brings about this misfortune, one's language (sound, words, and syntax) will manifest respect and vigilance.[35] Precisely because of this, we can discern the predominance of the "respect and awe" formulaic expressions in this type of solemn and ceremonial style encountered in excavated bronze inscriptions, further indicating that the culture of the day also discerned a specific style for the aforementioned occasion. Consider the following examples:

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35 For example: Informal: *買和讀了一本書 Formal: 購買和閱讀了一部法典.
The structure is the same but it is ungrammatical when it is used informally but grammatical when it is used in formal style.

Early Western Zhou period:

2. Now I command you to assist Rong and to **respectfully** abide by the principles of the charismatic potency *de*. 今余唯令女盂紹榮敬雍德經. (《大盂鼎》)
3. The king said: I order you to **respectfully** carry out your duties, and never to disobey my imperial command. 王曰盂若敬乃正勿廢朕命. (《大盂鼎》)
4. May you **respectfully** compose your self. 唯汝焂其敬乃身. (《叔趯父卣》)

Middle Western Zhou period:

5. Now may Xing be **humble and respectful** day and night, may he worry to always do his utmost. 今瘌夙夕虔敬卹厥死事- (《瘌鐘》)

Late Western Zhou period:

6. Be **respectful day and night**, use [these weapons I gave you] to protect my person. 敬厥夙夜用𠂤朕身. (《逆鐘》
7. Be **respectful day and night** and use these items to carry out your duty. Never disobey our imperial command. 敬夙夜用事.勿廢朕命。(《大克鼎》)
8. [The king says:] Be respectfully mindful of my authority and do not be fearful. 敬念王威不惕- (《毛公鼎》)[36]

It is not difficult to see that the expressions like "respectfully carry out your duties", "respectfully be in charge of your own person", "be humble and respectful day and night", "be respectful and day and night use these items to carry out your duties", "be respectfully mindful of my royal authority," etc., are not simply set formulaic phrases, they are a direct reflection of the culture and style of awe and reverence of the day. This is identical with the awe and reverence style of the *Classic of Odes* and of the *Book of Documents*. Compare

9. Be **reverent**, be **respectful**! Heaven is grand and conspicuous, its mandate is not easy. Do not say Heaven is far and high above. Its warriors ascend and descend, it watches us daily. I am just a young fellow! Not very sharp, is it respectful to say? With every day and month I advance, my studies seek to weave brightness with radiance. I carry a heavy load on my shoulders, please show me the way of the bright charismatic potency *de*! 敬之敬之！天惟顯思,命不易哉！毋曰高高在上,陟降厥士;日監在茲- 維予小子！不聰敬止？日就月將,學有緝熙于光明.佛時仔肩,示我顯德行！(《詩經·周頌·敬之》)
10. Bright, bright down below; brilliant, brilliant up above. 明明在下,赫赫在上. (《詩經·大雅·大明》)
    I respect the wrath of Heaven; I do not dare to be playful and carefree about them. Respect the pace of Heaven's alterations, I do not dare to impatiently hurry them. 敬天之怒,無敢戲豫.敬天之渝,無敢馳驅. (《詩經·大雅·板》)
    Commentary: The verse states that one should respect and fear Heaven's wrath and admonitions, and that one should not carelessly indulge in idleness, nor abandon restraint and change according to own whims.

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36 We would like to thank Ondřej Škrabal for an impromptu advice on translating these bronze inscriptions.

Brilliant, brilliant down below; bright, bright up above. 穆穆在上，明明在下．（《尚書·呂刑》）

11. Be respectful! With its might Heaven assists the sincerely faithful. 敬哉！天畏棐忱（《尚書·康誥》）

"Be reverent, be respectful, Heaven is grand and conspicuous" talks about the need to revere Heaven, to venerate the ancestors and fear Heaven, it is equivalent to the *Record of Rites'* claim that "In order to be respectful, a man of refinement uses sacrificial vessels ... By being respectful he serves his lord and elders." 君子敬則用祭器⋯⋯以敬事其君長"（《禮記·表記》）We can see that "being reverent" and "worship and sacrifice," "being respectful", and "lords and elders" are all directly connected. What then is "reverence 敬"? The *Shuowen* (in the 'to constrain' section 苟部) explains: "Reverent is related in meaning to solemn. The character is constituted as to stroke in order to constrain 攴and to admonish 苟." To be solemn and serene, strict and cautionary is to want to "restrain one's self." We venture to add that "reverence" springs from the same linguistic source as "admonition, vigilance." The *Shuowen* (in the context of the speech cognitive domain 言部) explains: "Admonition refers to verbal guarding." Duan Yucai observes: "In the 廾 section one reads: 'to guard is to admonish.' *Relentless Martial Prowess* reads: 'be respectful, be vigilant.' Zheng Xuan's sub commentary adds: 'Respectful is cognate with vigilant, alternatively the character is spelled with the 'human' cognitive domain radical. 敬之言警也，亦作儆" The *Shuowen*, in the context of the human cognitive domain 人部, explains this alternative character as: "'儆cautious' is related in meaning to 'guarded'." Duan Yucai comments: "Cautious is pronounced the same and has an identical meaning with vigilant. ... In his gloss on the *Rites of Zhou*, Zheng Xuan notes: 'Vigilant denotes observing the precepts." We can see that the core meaning of the cognates "reverent敬, vigilant警, and cautious儆" is "to restrain" and "to observe the precepts." With this kind of "solemn and guarded, respectful and vigilant" inner attitude, the manner of addressing the spirits, who are said to "have weaved rays into luminous brightness"[37] and to be "high, high up above" as well as the formulaic hymn language used in such addresses, is precisely the "solemn ceremonial style" we have already encountered in the bronze inscriptions and the Zhou Eulogia.

By using the aforementioned stylistic theory analysis, the question of why the bronze inscriptions as well as the Elegentiae and the Eulogia of the *Classic of Odes* use the same polite set phrases is easily solved. Chen Zhi 陳致 (2012:37）states: "First, on evidence of the bronze inscriptions from the Two Zhou period, the rhyming and the tetra-syllabication of the language of the inscriptions takes place in Middle Western Zhou period, particularly during the reigns of Kings Gong (922 – 900 B.C.) and Yi (899- 892 B.C.); Second, the reason why the bronze inscriptions from the Two Zhou period often match poems from the Elegantiae and Eulogia sections of the *Classic of Odes* is because the Zhou people were

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37 "Weave rays of radiance" is a typical case of a ceremonial praise formula, for example: (*Classic of Odes*, Zhou Eulogia, Braiding Clarity): "To braid clarity, to weave rays of radiance, such was the benchmark of King Wen," *Classic of Odes*, Zhou Eulogia, The bright Heaven completes its mission: "Weave radiance! Concentrate your heart." *Classic of Odes*, Zhou Eulogia, I see a record: "Weave ways of radiance, so that it is pure and reaches far." 《詩經·周頌·維清》"維清緝熙，文王之典"，《詩經·周頌·昊天有成命》"於緝熙！單厥心"，《詩經·周頌·載見》"俾緝熙於純嘏".

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accustomed to using sacrificial phrases, it is not that the inscriptions are quoting the *Odes*." This observation is right on target. Still, another important question lurks behind here: why does the language of inscriptions not contain stock phrases from the Airs section of the *Classic of Odes*? (See Wang Jingxian 王靖獻 1974) Why do the bronze inscriptions only display affinity for Elegentiae and Eulogia while being biased against the Airs? It is very hard to reach a definite conclusion on this matter unless one approaches the question from the angle of stylistic-register grammar. As has been stated above, being folk songs, the Airs are products of a popular style of language or music; they do not share the same characteristics with the solemn ceremonial style of the Eulogia (or spirit hymns) or the normative/standard style of the Elegentiae (national/official music). Precisely because of this, the written language appearing on bronze vessels that could only be used during such important state occasions as sacrificial ceremonies inevitably parts ways with folk refrains. The ancients used to say: "The grand matters of the state lie in war and sacrifice" (*Zuozhuan*, 23rd year of Duke Cheng); besides, in early antiquity bronze was mainly used for producing weapons (swords and halberds) and sacrificial vessels (bells and cauldrons); the sacred role played by the bronze is patently obvious. We may also mention that the characters appearing on bronze utensils were undoubtedly also considered sacred; therefore the language of bronze inscription documents belongs to solemn ceremonial style,[38] while the folk songs from the Airs of States of the *Classic of Odes* naturally never reached such sacred status of the solemn ceremonial bronze inscriptions.[39]

To sum up the discussion, the attitude of the ancients toward spirits was one of "awe," while their attitude toward their rulers and elders was one of "reverence." Thus the twelfth section of the *Five Conducts* 五行 silk manuscript states:

12. If there is no distance, there is no reverence; if there is no reverence there is no restraint; if there is no restraint, there is no respect; if there is no respect, there is no common good; if there is no common good, there is no ritual etiquette.
   "不袁（遠）不敬, 不敬不嚴, 不嚴不尊, 不尊不[共], [不共]不禮." 《五行·第十二章·經》

The passage raises an important stylistic rule: respect arises from distance! Contrasting this with *Xunzi*'s Discussion of Rites, we can further corroborate our "stylistic distance theory":

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38 Based on Meng Pengsheng's research, during the Shang Dynasty, the third person pronouns 其 and 有 were used as equivalents, 有 (written as 屮, 又) being more often used. In the bronze inscriptions of Early Western Zhou period, 有 comes to be written with the character 又 while 其 altogether disappears. After the Middle Western Zhou period 其 and 又 come to be used simultaneously. Meng Pengsheng consequently proposes that: "The question of why the Shang term 其 never appears in Early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions remains to be solved." We think that if 有 (又) is a pronoun that belongs into the solemn ceremonial style of Early Western Zhou, it is only natural that 其 does not appear in Early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. To put it in other words, this "question that remains to be solved" is likely connected to style.

39 Of course, the pieces appearing in the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia sections of the *Classic of Odes* were not composed at the same time, this is also one of the factors determining the division of the Classic. In fact, even within the Airs section, individual pieces exhibit stylistic differences depending on the time, place, and degree of colloquialism. These are without doubt all important issues this paper raises in its discussion that demand further investigation.

13. If you are too close then you will be careless, if you are careless then you will be fed up, if you are fed up then you will be absent minded, if you are absent minded then you will be disrespectful. 爾（邇）則翫, 翫則厭, 厭則忘. 忘則不敬.

The ultimate result of intimacy is "disrespect," meanwhile the precondition of being serious and respectful is distance. The contrasting quotations complement each other; both speak of the mental states determined by the relative degree of distance (near爾/far 袁) and of their mutual relationships. This kind of "far/near, respectful/intimate" contrastive relationship precisely matches with the "stylistic distance theory." Interestingly enough, the stylistic premise allows us to move a step further in understanding the deeper sense of Confucius's dictum "keep ghosts and spirits at bay":

14. To dedicate oneself to what's suitable for the people, to respect ghosts and spirits and to keep them at distance, this indeed can be called being knowledgeable. 子曰:"務民之義, 敬鬼神而遠之, 可謂知矣. "（《論語·雍也》）

It is generally assumed that to "keep them at distance" means "to stay away from ghosts and spirits." However, based on the stylistic theory as well as on the ancient historical documents explored here from this theory's vantage point, we learn that, for the ancients, "distance" was not just a precondition for "reverence," it was practically synonymous with "respect." Thus the real meaning of "revere the ghosts and spirits and keep them at distance" should be: "Respect and honor the ghosts and spirits, and keep them at a distance that will prevent you from being too intimate and careless so that not to blaspheme them." Obviously, our explanation differs from the common understanding of the passage as "keep away from ghosts and spirits," yet it closely coincides with the reverent attitude and conduct of "sacrifice to ancestors and spirits as if they were present" (*Analects*, Eight Rows of Sacrificial Dancers Section) consistently advocated by Confucius. We can conjecture that "distant" in the ancient times belonged to "etiquette, ceremonial" terminology. This happens to coincide with our stylistic theory. To put it differently, the "distance" in "revere ghosts and spirits and keep them at distance" and the "distance hypothesis" of our stylistic theory might actually create one another. At the back of style is attitude, thus only once there exists the aforementioned "stylistic voice/tone," can there be the distinction between "elegant" and "plain" proposed by Sun Yirang. Consider:

> "Words are of the formal and plain kind, and thus need to be differentiated accordingly. Formal language emphasizes elegance, it may not be equal to the colloquial; refined usage abides by the past, it may not be used to approximate the present. … The Airs of States are written in dialect, thus they are easy to understand; the Elegentiae and Eulogia are composed of refined expressions, thus they are hard to read. Thus the language used in pronouncements of orders or bestowals greatly resembles that of the Elegentiae and the Eulogia." [40]

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40 The characters read: "辭有雅質, 則區以別耳. …, 雅言主文, 不可以通於俗; 雅馴覿古, 不可以概於今.……國風, 方語也, 故易通; 雅頌, 雅辭也, 故難讀. 故命語之辭, 與雅頌多同. "（孫詒讓　《籀廎述林·尚書駢枝序》）
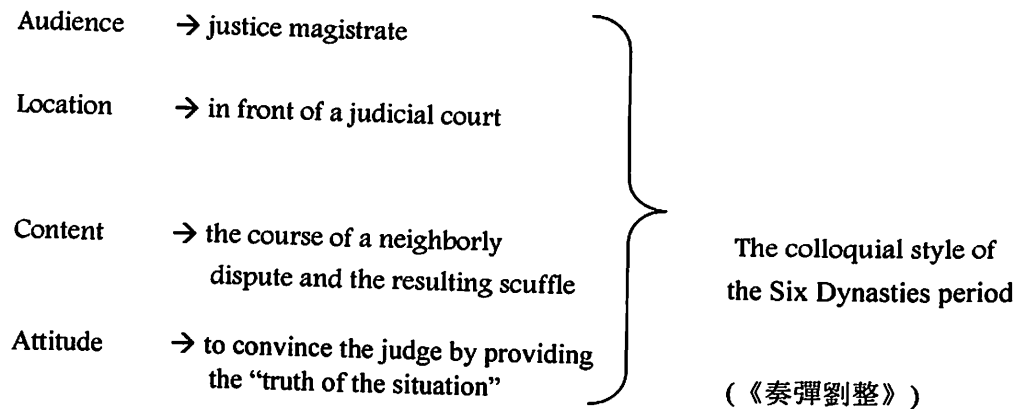
In fact, the Airs of States of the *Classic of Odes* are not the only source that reflects the kind of popular idiom present in ancient "dialects," essays are just like that too. The exemplary case of the vernacular in Middle Ancient Chinese is the Liu Zheng's Accusation File included in the *Wenxuan*《奏彈劉整》（節取于《文選》）:

> This year, during the night of the ninth day of the second lunar month, Fan lost the rail, the larrup, and the bridle from his carriage. Fan heard Qun say Caiyin stole them. When Zheng learnt about this he beat up Qun. Fan yelled at him asking: "Why are you beating my son?" Just at that time Zheng's mother walked into the courtyard. From behind a bamboo screen she and Fan cursed each other. The maid servant Caiyin as well as the male servants Jiaozi, Chuyu, and Fazhi happened to be around Zheng's mother. Zheng told Caiyin: "He is saying you stole his carriage driving gear, why don't you also step forward and curse him?" Caiyin jumped into the quarrel, lifted her hand, and accidentally grasped Fan's arm. 梁·任昉[41]

The dispute between Fan, Qun, Caiyin, Liu Zheng and others that arose after the carriage rail, larrup, and bridle had disappeared is described here in detail. The quoted narrative is extremely vivid, it is obviously recorded in the vernacular of the day because it uses a great number of action verbs like "lose, say, steal, hear, beat, yell, come out, curse, step forward, jump into, raise, dislocate," etc. This aspect determines the narrative character of this piece: "action verbs plus spatiotemporal description" are the principal features of colloquial style. Based on the previously raised criteria for evaluating style we can further conjecture: this section of the text is the plaintiff's assertion and the witness's testimony presented in front of the judge at a court trial. The written style of litigation may differ in thousand ways, but here the content of the accusation memorial determined its stylistic property: to present an account of the course of a scuffle demands colloquial style. To put it in another words, it is impossible to narrate the ins and outs of a sequence of events unless you deploy specific spatiotemporal expressions (like tense markers, adverbs of manner and location, i.e., collospatiotemporal grammar forms that couple form and function).[42] The concretization of spatiotemporal expressions is precisely the basic property of colloquial grammar. Thus the content and the form of the Memorial of Liu Zheng's accusations determined its essentially colloquial character. Not only that, from the author's "voice" we can also detect his genuinely colloquial intent and principle. In order to convince a judge, the words in an accusation of misconduct must provide the "truth of the situation" (whether the "truth of the situation" outlined here is actually true or not is another matter). The intent and the manner of convincing the judge by the means of the "truth of the situation" are sufficient to prevent the original author of the accusation file from misusing unnecessary rhetorical devices that would "ruin the veracity" of the account and make it unbelievable. Thus we can analyze Ren Fang's "Memorial of an accusation" in the following way:

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41 Of course, there are people who think that the piece 'Presenting the Accusation of Liu Zheng' that readers get to see today is not in the same shape as it was in Xiao Tong's original *Wenxuan*, and that it is also not the original work edited by Ren Fang. (See Wang Cuihong 王翠紅 "《文選集注·奏彈劉整》發微",《天中學刊》2011-01). Here we only base ourselves on the language as we currently have it, we do not concern ourselves with the question of its provenience.

42 See Feng Shengli 2012.

Audience   → justice magistrate

Location   → in front of a judicial court

Content   → the course of a neighborly
               dispute and the resulting scuffle   The colloquial style of
                                                          the Six Dynasties period
Attitude   → to convince the judge by providing
               the "truth of the situation"   (《奏彈劉整》)

Apparently, concrete linguistic analysis can identify stylistic categories. Of course, the "stylistic property" of a special literary form (like the Memorial of Liu Zheng's accusation) is relatively easy to grasp and determine, but is it likewise possible to identify register properties and the author's personal style in the case of more typical compositions, like pre-Qin essays? One should mention here that although many scholars have carried out ground-breaking multifaceted research on the phenomenon of colloquialism in Ancient Chinese (see Lü Shuxiang, 1944, Ren Xueliang, 1982; [43] Ōta Tatsuo, 1991;[44] Hu Chirui, 2013[45]; Wang Weihui, 2014), research on the stylistic system of Ancient Chinese and the stylistic identification of the linguistic phenomena of the Ancient dynasties still represent an unexplored territory. Nevertheless, we can still find many innovative and inspiring attempts in past scholarship. Apart from the aforementioned Chen Zhi's (2012) research, the distinctive attributes of colloquial language raised by Xue (1998) [46] particularly draw our attention:

43 Lü Shuxiang 呂叔湘, "Wenyan he baihua 文言和白話 [Classical Chinese and Vernacular Chinese]", *Guowen zazhi* 國文雜誌 1, 1944. Ren Xueliang 任學良, "Xianqin yan wen bing bu yizhilun – gushu zhong kouyu he wenyan tongshi bingcun 先秦言文並不 ·致論 – 古書中口語和文言同時並存 [The inconsistency between Written and Spoken Chinese in the pre-Qin period – The simultaneous coexistence of Spoken Chinese and Classical Chinese in ancient books]", *Hangzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexue)* 杭州師範學院學報 (社會科學) 1, 1982, 2-9.
44 Ota, Tatsuo, *Guanyu haner yanyu----shilun baihua fazhanshi* 關於漢兒言語 — 試論白話發展史 [The language of Chinese speakers – On vernacular history], 漢語史通考 [A historical study of the Chinese language], Translated by Jiang Lansheng & Bai Weiguo 江藍生 白維國翻譯, Chongqing 重慶: Chongqing Press, 1991, 181-211.
45 Hu Chirui 胡敕瑞, "Han Wei shiqi de wenyan yu baihua----jianlun hanyushi kouyu yuliao de jianding 漢魏時期的文言與白話 – 兼論漢語史口語語料的鑒定 [The Classical and the Vernacular of the Han Wei periods – On the identification of the history of the data of Spoken Chinese]", in: Shengli Feng 馮勝利, (eds.), *Hanyu shumianyu de lishi yu xianzhuang* 漢語書面語的歷史與現狀 [Written Chinese: the present and the past], Beijing 北京: Peking University, 2013.
46 Xue Fengsheng 薛鳳生, "Shilun hanyu jushi tese yu yufa fenxi 試論漢語句式特色與語法分析 [Discussions on the property of Chinese sentence patterns and their grammatical analysis]", *Gu hanyu yangjiu* 古漢語研究 4, 1998, 67-68.

The linguistic form employed in the essays of the pre-Qin masters is the high style vernacular:[47] there are many short sentences, clauses without an explicit subject (i.e., short predicate only clauses), the subject and the predicate in subject-predicate clauses are often loosened up by the mutually constituted topic and explanation, modal particles often appear at the start and at the end of sentences to indicate the tone of an utterance, all these attributes still survive in modern colloquial Chinese. (Quoted from Liu Chenghui, 2011[48])

What is the "distinctive attribute of spoken language"? Which are the "distinctive attributes of spoken language"? These are important questions that concern style. Xue (1998) may well set the general tone on this subject. Liu Chenghui (2012) even more succinctly sums up the distinctive features of ancient colloquialism. Aspects like short sentences (topic-explanation clauses), loosening of sentence structure (in long sentences), presence of modal particles, etc., "are all syntactic principles that animate the pre-Qin vernacular." (2012:213) If we place Liu and Xue's work in the framework of stylistic grammar, we may elicit a series of questions:

1. Apart from the distinctive attributes of vernacular raised by Liu and Xue, which other syntactic features may be considered distinctive attributes of vernacular style?[49]
2. Apart from informal style's syntactic structural features, which are the distinctive attributes of its vocabulary? Can we identify the properties of tone (voice) of the ancient vernacular?
3. A. Which are the distinctive syntactic and lexical attributes of the colloquial, standard, and elevated styles of the **two Zhou** periods? (See Lewis 1999).[50]
   B. Which are the distinctive syntactic and lexical attributes of the colloquial, standard, and elevated styles of the **two Han** period? (See Mair 1994, Erik 1977 and Zhu 2001)[51]
   C. Which are the distinctive syntactic and lexical attributes of the colloquial, standard, and elevated styles of the **Wei-Jin** period?
   D. Which are the distinctive syntactic and lexical attributes of the colloquial, standard, and elevated styles of the **Sui-Tang** period?

47 Obviously, as Wang Weihui (2014) observes: "The various masters of course differ in their styles: while the Xunzi is extremely refined, the Hanfeizi is quite plain, thus they cannot be discussed under the same rubric." This is a vast topic, one day it should be properly addressed.
48 Liu Chenghui 劉承慧, "Hanyu kouyu tezheng yu xianqin jushi fenxi 漢語口語特徵與先秦句式分析 [Characteristics of Spoken Chinese and the analysis of the pre-Qin sentence patterns]", in: *Jiyu benti tese de Hanyu yanjiu* 基於本體特色的漢語研究 [Studies of Chinese based on its intrinsic features], Beijing 北京: China Social Sciences Press, 2012.
49 In his article "The classical language and the vernacular of the Han Wei period: comprehensive discussion of the reflections on the colloquial materials of historical Chinese," Hu Chirui (2013) sums up fifteen differences of the vernacular of middle early Chinese.
50 Lewis, Mark. Edward （陸威儀）, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.
51 Mair, Victor H., "Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages", *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53.3 1994, 707-751. Zürcher, Erik, "Late Han Vernacular Elements in the Earliest Buddhist Translations", *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association* 3, 1977, 177-203. And Zhu Qingzhi 朱慶之, "Fojiao hunhe hanyu chulun 佛教混合漢語初論 [The initial exploration of Buddhist Hybrid Chinese]", *Yuyanxue luncong* 語言學論叢24, Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2001, 1-33.

4. Which are the distinctive timeless syntactic attributes of the colloquial, standard, and elevated styles (universality)? Do there exist also similar timeless lexical attributes?[52]

These are all crucial questions derived from the system and the structure of stylistic-register theory that await further research.

Of course, the concrete grammatical structure and the shape of lexicon are not the only aspect that can be investigated from the perspective of stylistic-register grammar, the history and the classification of ancient documents can be approached from this angle too. Take the language of the oracle bones as an example. Unless we find corresponding expressions "with the same intention but in different form" in these oracle bone inscriptions, we will be hard put to disprove their "elevated nature" (stylized language).[53] Bronze inscriptions, the Elegentiae and the Eulogia of the *Odes*, the Decrees and the Bestowals in the *Book of Documents* undoubtedly all are in the elevated style.[54] Airs of States are in popular style,[55] but the *Shiji* is more colloquial than the *Hanshu* (see Meisterernst, 2013)[56], while the "style of punctuations" in Zhao Qi's *Punctuating the Mengzi* falls between classical and colloquial (see Harbsmeier, 2013).[57] All these various observations have opened new perspectives of research on ancient style, register and related grammars.

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52 As Wang Weihui (2014) observes, basic monosyllabic expressions such as human, mountain, river, fish, hand may perhaps be considered commonly used timeless lexical terms.

53 Hong Cheng notes: "The linguistic form is simple, stereotyped and repetitive, there are no longer narrative or discursive sections; the vocabulary is limited. It lacks modifiers, there are few adjectives or connecting sentences, there are no exclamations or onomatopoeia. These are all necessary phenomena that are determined by and arise from the particular style and character of divination statements. ("On the question of utilizing materials on Chinese linguistic history," in *Collected Works of Hong Cheng*, p. 99) Indeed, the fact that the language of the oracle bones lacks "interrogative pronouns" is an extremely important stylistic limitation.

54 Sun Yirang in *Preface to the Parallel Pointers to the Book of Documents* says: "Decrees and bestowals share many identical expressions with the Elegentiae and the Eulogia 命詰之辭與雅頌多同."

55 Ibid.: "The Airs of States are written in dialect, thus they are easy to understand; the Elegentiae and the Eulogia are composed of refined expressions, thus they are hard to read."

56 See Meisterernst, Barbara,"Han chao Hanyu wenyan zhong de kouyu chengfen – *Shiji* yu *Hanshu* dui ying juan de yuyanxue bijiao yanjiu 漢朝漢語文言中的口語成分--《史記》與《漢書》對應卷的語言學比較研究 [Vernacular elements and Literary language in Han period Chinese: A linguistic comparison of corresponding chapters in the Shiji and the Hanshu]", in: Shengli Feng, (ed.), *Hanyu shumianyu de lishi yu xianzhuang* 漢語書面語的歷史與現狀 [Written Chinese: the present and the past], Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013; And He Zhihua 何志華, "Wang Chong "Lunheng" zi zhu xin ci kao: Jian lun Dong Han shumian yu duo yin jie cihui zhi yansheng wenti 王充《論衡》自鑄新詞考：兼論束漢書面語多音節詞彙之衍生問題 [An Examination of words coined by Wang Chong in 'Lun Heng': The development of disyllabicity in the Written Chinese of the Eastern Han Dynasty]", in: Shengli Feng (ed.) *Written Chinese: the Present and the Past* [漢語書面語的歷史與現狀]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013.

57 Note that in the case of articles or lectures, differences occasioned by rhetoric or the author's habits and personal style, even if they also concern linguistic style, belong to usage phenomena that lie outside the scope of stylistic rules and should be investigated separately. See Harbsmeier, Christoph, "Zhao Qi 'Mengzi zhangju' zhushuyu de yuti yanjiu 趙岐《孟子章句》注疏語的語體研究 [A Study of the commentary language in Zhao Qi's glossary of Mencius]", in: Shengli Feng (ed.), *Hanyu shumianyu de lishi yu xianzhuang* 漢語書面語的歷史與現狀 [Written Chinese: the present and the past], Beijing: Peking University Press. 2013.

5. Conclusion

The American born Chinese comedian David Moser 莫大偉 says: "In our language (English) there is no distinction between written and spoken language."[58] Never mind whether his words are or are not true (this may be only a matter of degree, not of substance), the tripartite division as well as the usage of Chinese stylistic registers is rather evident, moreover, it is same in the ancient past and in present. Style is one of the functions of language; it is also one of the indispensable windows, or, channels for researching and understanding language (including literature). In this article we searched the division of the *Classic of Odes* and other Early Ancient Chinese documents for the historical basis of the "tripartite division hypothesis" raised by stylistic theory as diagramed below:
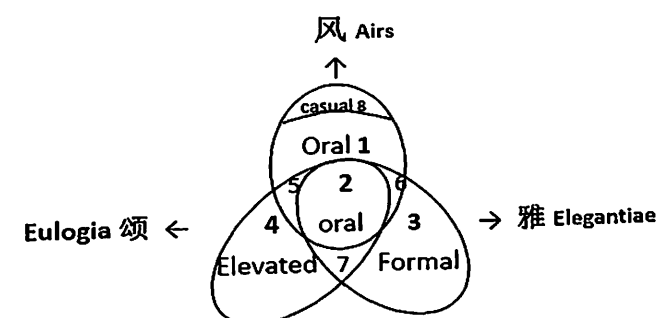

Figure 3. The tripartite division hypothesis

By doing so, we aimed to open a new path for exploring ancient stylistic register grammar. If the Airs, the Elegentiae, and the Eulogia of the *Classic of Odes* on the one hand, and the informal (popular), formal (standard), and elevated categories of our stylistic theory on the other hand are, in terms of linguistic communication and practice, indeed "different expressions of the same mechanism," then not only is stylistic theory corroborated, even more important, it also provides us with a comprehensive new theoretical tool for researching ancient language, literature, religion, and culture.

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58 Taken from the "Learning from letter writing" episode of the Cultural Travels series broadcasted on April 22, 2013 on the CCTV4 channel.