Object-Fronting in Archaic Chinese

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Summary

The SOV order is very productive in Archaic Chinese. Most scholars believe that Archaic Chinese has SVO as basic word order and that SOV is derived by fronting the direct object from the postverbal position to a preverbal position. The most frequent cases involving object fronting in Archaic Chinese are those with pronominal objects. For instance, when the direct object is an interrogative pronoun, a demonstrative, or an ordinary personal pronoun appearing in a negative sentence, it is usually fronted to a preverbal position. Historically, object-fronting has already been observed in oracle bone script, and gradually disappeared in Han dynasty (202 B.C.–220 A.D.). After Wei and Jin dynasties (220A.D.–420A.D.), object-fronting was extremely rare, and it only occurred in fixed expressions, which even stay in modern Chinese nowadays. Object-fronting in Archaic Chinese can be roughly classified into two categories: unmarked object-fronting and marked object-fronting. The former category includes cases in which the object is positioned in a preverbal position or a pre-prepositional position without any morpho-syntactic marking devices, while the latter category includes cases in which the fronted object can be either preceded or followed by some morpho-syntactic markers. For instance, a fronted object can be followed by *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之), both of which are the most frequent markers co-occurring with fronted object in Archaic Chinese. Given that both *zhī* (之) and *shì* (是) were used as pronouns and demonstratives in Archaic Chinese, when they appear in sentences involving object-fronting, some scholars treat them as resumptive pronouns referring to the object NP. Due to the presence of the resumptive pronoun, object NP is allowed to be fronted in a preverbal position. In fact, there is no fixed position as landing site for fronted objects in archaic Chinese; instead, different preverbal positions exist. Fronted objects can be followed by functional elements of different categories: negative elements such as *bù* (不), *wèi* (未), *mò* (莫) and *wú* (无); ordinary adverbs such as *qián* (前) 'before', and *jūn* (均) 'all'; modal verbs such as, *néng* (能) 'be able to', *dé* (得) 'be able to', *gǎn* (敢) 'dare' and *kěn* (肯) 'be willing to'; control verbs such as, *rěn* (忍) 'bear' and *zhī* (知) 'know'; conjunctions such as *yì* (亦) 'and', *yòu* (又) 'and, as well as' and *shàng* (尚) 'yet'; and modal adverbs such as *qí* (其) indicating a rhetorical meaning, *jiāng* (将) 'will, would' and *qiě* (且) 'will, would'. Object-fronting in Archaic Chinese is closely linked to information structure. For instance, when the focalized element in a negative sentence is the direct object, then such an object will be fronted.

Keywords

Object-fronting, Archaic Chinese, focus, SOV, SVO

1. Introduction

the question whether Archaic Chinese is an SVO or an SOV language given that the SOV order is very productive in Archaic Chinese.[i] For instance, in (1), the pronominal direct object *yǔ* (予) '1SG' is located in a preverbal position, i.e., on the left side of the verb *yì* (翼) 'assist'.

(1) 民献有十夫予翼。

    Mínxiàn   yǒu   shí   fū   **yǔ**   yì.
    people   have   ten   person   1SG   assist
    'Among all the people, there will be ten persons
    coming to assist me.'
    (*Dagao* (大诰), in *Shangshu* (尚书)
    [Book of Documents], around 1046 B.C.)

    For scholars who believe that pre-Archaic Chinese is essentially an SOV language, they claim that the direct object is base-generated in a preverbal position. Min Yu (1981) shows that pre-Archaic Chinese shares many basic syntactic properties with other Sino-Tibetan languages, such as head-final property: object occurs before verb, and modifier occurs before head. Gradually, Chinese took SVO as basic word order, which occurred in Archaic Chinese, and SOV only occurred when the relevant object is focused. In particular, SOV order is very productive when the direct object is pronominal. Li Wang (1989/2007:198) also thinks that in pre-Archaic Chinese, the base-generated order is SOV when the object is a pronoun, comparable with clitic pronouns in Romance languages. Later, the old SOV order became a marked order, which can only exist in specific structures. Example (2) demonstrates an object clitic pronoun in French.

(2) a. Jean a   rencontré   Marie   hier.
    Jean have.3SG meet.PERF   Marie   yesterday
    'Jean has met Marie yesterday.'

  b. Jean l(a)'a   rencontrée   hier.
    Jean 3SG.F-have.3SG   meet.PERF.F   yesterday
    'Jean has met her yesterday.'

    Shengli Feng (2013:276-277) also proposes that SOV should be the basic order in pre-Archaic Chinese, and since Archaic Chinese, the normal word order changed into SVO.

    However, most scholars still believe that Archaic Chinese takes SVO as the basic word order and that SOV is derived by fronting the direct object from the postverbal position to a preverbal position. Gabelentz (1881/2015:140) has already pointed out that SVO has always been the basic order of Chinese. Jianzhong Ma (1898/2007:30) also confirms that in Archaic Chinese, objects must be positioned after verbs. Empirically, Pei Shen (1992:27) points out that in oracle bone script, there is no occurrence of pronominal object-fronting in declarative sentences without negation.[ii] Based on a very careful study, Duan Luo [R. Djamouri] (2014) confirms that among 5500 complete sentences with overt objects in the oracle bone script of Shang dynasty, 94% of them involve SVO order, while only 6% of them involve SOV order.[iii] Many other scholars, such as Bojun Yang & Leshi He (1992:780), Xiliang Guo (1994), Peyraube (1997), Xi Xiang (2010/2017), all agree that SVO is a very stable word order in Chinese since the period of oracle bone script. Danqing Liu (2004) adopts a compromised view in that he treats archaic Chinese as a non-rigid SVO language.

    With compelling evidence, we believe that Archaic Chinese is a very stable SVO language, and the observed SOV order is derived with object-fronting. Importantly, in section 2, we will show that object-fronting in Archaic Chinese is highly restricted, and that SOV is much less free than SVO order.

2. Major types of structures involving object-fronting in Archaic Chinese
The existing literature during the period of Archaic Chinese that we consult is listed as follows:
- *Shangshu* (尚书) [Book of Documents], around 1046 B.C.
- *Zhouyi/Yijing/Yi Ching* (周易/易经) [Book of Changes / Classic of Changes], Western Zhou period (1000-750B.C.)
- *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs], Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.)
- *Daodejing/ Tao Te Ching* (道德经), around 400B.C.
- *Zhuangzi* (庄子), Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.)
- *Lunyu* (论语) [The Analects of Confucius], Spring and Autumn Period-Warring State Period (770-221 B.C.)
- *Mengzi* (孟子), Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.)
- *Xunzi* (荀子), by Zi Xun, 313-238 B.C.
- *Mozi* (墨子), Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.)
- *Han Feizi* (韩非子), 281-233 B.C.
- *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.)
- *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States], Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.)
- *Zhanguoce* (战国策) [Strategies/intrigues of the warring states], Han dynasty (202 B.C.-8 A.C.)
- *Lüshi Chunqiu* (吕氏春秋) [Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals], around 239 B.C.
- *Shiji* (史记) [Records of the Grand Historian], Western Han Dynasty, around 94 B.C.
- *Guanzi* (管子), 26B.C.

   Previous studies on object-fronting in Archaic Chinese that we consult include but not limited to: Jianzhong Ma (1898/2007), Xiechu Guan (1962), Dekuan Huang (1988), Li Wang (1989/2010), Pei Shen (1992), Bojun Yang & Leshi He (1992), Yujin Zhang (1988), Xi Xiang (2010/2017).
   Object-fronting in Archaic Chinese can be roughly classified into two categories: (i) unmarked object-fronting and (ii) marked object-fronting. The former category includes cases in which the object is positioned in a preverbal position or a pre-prepositional position without any morpho-syntactic marking devices, while the latter category includes cases in which the fronted object can be either preceded or followed by certain morpho-syntactic markers.

2.1 Unmarked object-fronting
   The most frequent cases involving object fronting in Archaic Chinese are those with pronominal objects. For instance, when the direct object is an interrogative pronoun, an ordinary personal pronoun or a demonstrative, it is usually fronted to a preverbal position. Examples (3-9) illustrate cases with fronted interrogative pronouns. For instance, in (3-5), *wh*-words *hé* (何) 'what', *xī* (奚) 'where', *shéi* (谁) 'who' are the direct objects of the verbs *sì* (俟) 'wait', *shì* (适) 'go' and *qī* (欺) 'deceive' respectively. These *wh*-objects originate from the postverbal position and then are moved to preverbal positions, and their lower copies are deleted as indicated in the relevant examples. Note that these sentences are not necessarily interpreted as ordinary information seeking questions, some of which can have a rhetorical question reading.

(3) 人而无止, 不死何俟?!
    Rén   ér   wú   zhǐ,
    people ER   NEG   good.behavior
    bù   sǐ   **hé**   sì   ~~hé~~?!
    NEG   die   what   wait   what
    'Since people don't have good behavior,
    what are they waiting for if they do not go to hell?!'
    (*Xiangshu* (相鼠), *Yongfeng* (墉风), in *Shijing* (诗经)
    [The book of songs], Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

(4) 彼且奚适也？
    Bǐ   qiě   **xī**   shì   ~~xī~~   yě?
    3SG   FUT   where   go   where   SFP
    'Where is it going?'
    (*Xiaoyaoyou* (逍遥游) [Free and easy wandering],
    in *Zhuangzi* (庄子), Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(5) 吾谁欺? 欺天乎?!
    Wú   **shéi**   qī   ~~shéi~~?   Qī   tiān   hū?!
    1SG   who   deceive   who   deceive   God   SFP
    'Who do I deceive? Do I deceive God?!'
    (*Zihan* (子罕), in *Lunyu* (论语) [The Analects of Confucius],
    Spring and Autumn Period-Warring State Period (770-221 B.C.))

(6) 其子而食之, 且谁不食?
    Qí   zǐ   ér   shí   zhī   qiě   **shéi**   bù   shí   ~~shéi~~?!
    3SG.GEN   son   ER   eat   him,   and   who   NEG   eat   who
    'He has even eaten his son, and whom he will not eat?!'
    (*Shuolin* (说林) 1, in *Han Feizi* (韩非子), 281-233 B.C.)

(7) 知我者, 谓我心忧; 不知我者, 谓我何求。
    Zhī   wǒ   zhě,   wèi   wǒ   xīn   yōu;
    understand   1SG   people,   think   1SG   heart   concerned;
    bù   zhī   wǒ   zhě,   wèi   wǒ   **hé**   qiú   ~~hé~~.
    NEG   understand   1SG   people   think   1SG   what   seek   what
    'People who understand me think that I am concerned,
    while people who don't understand me think that I am seeking something
    (lit. people who don't understand me ask what I seek.)'
    (*Wangfeng* (王风), *Shuli* (黍离), in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],
    Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

    In (8-9), the *wh*-words *shéi* (谁) 'who' and *hú* (胡) 'where' are the objects of the prepositions *yǔ* (与) 'with' and *zì* (自) 'from', and they are moved from the post-prepositional position to the pre-prepositional positions.

(8) 吾谁与归?

    Wú **shéi** yǔ ~~shéi~~ guī?

    1PL who with who follow

    'Who will we follow?'

    (*Jinyu* (晋语) 8, [Discourses of the Jin state, volume 8],

     in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],

     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(9) 此胡自生? 此自恶人贼人生与?

    Cǐ **hú** zì ~~hú~~ shēng?

    this where from where come

    Cǐ zì wù rén zéi rén shēng yú?

    this from hating people mutilating people come SFP

    'Where does this come from?

     Does this come from hating people and mutilating people?'

    (*Jian'ai* (兼爱) [*Universal love*] 2, in *Mozi* (墨子),

     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

In declarative sentences, when the direct object is the demonstrative *shì* (是) 'this', it is fronted to a preverbal position, as shown in (10-12). In (10), *shì* (是) is translated as a third person plural pronoun referring to the leaves appearing in the first clause, and *shì* (是), originated from the object position of the verb *yì* (刈) 'cut' or of the verb *huò* (濩) 'boil', is moved to a preverbal position.

(10) 维叶莫莫, 是刈是濩。

    Wéi yè mò-mò, **shì** yì ~~shì~~ **shì** huò ~~shì~~.

    WEI leaves luxuriant, DEM cut DEM DEM boil DEM

    'The leaves are luxuriant, and people cut them and boil them.'

    (*Zhounan* (周南), *Getan* (葛覃),

     in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],

     Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

In (11), *shì* (是) is translated as "this", and it is used as the direct object of the verb *wèn* (问) 'ask'.

(11) 寡人是问。

    Guǎrén[iv] **shì** wèn ~~shì~~.

    1SG   DEM ask DEM

    'I am asking about this.'

    (*Xigong Si Nian* (僖公四年) [The 4th year of Xigong Period

    of the Lu state in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 656B.C.)],

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

In (12), *shì* (是) is the object of the preposition *yǐ* (以) 'because of' and refers to the first clause "(Kongwenzi) is smart and is fond of learning, and is not ashamed of consulting the inferiors".

(12) 敏而好学, 不耻下问, 是以谓之 "文" 也。

    Mǐn   ér   hào   xué,
    smart   and   be.fond.of   learn
    bù   chǐ   xià   wèn,
    NEG be.ashamed.of inferiors consult
    shì   yǐ   ~~shì~~   wèi zhī *wén* yě.
    DEM   because.of DEM   call 3SG *wen* SFP
    '(Kongwenzi) is smart and is fond of learning,
    and is not ashamed of consulting the inferiors,
    and because of this, we call him (with the honourable title) *Wen*.'
    (*Gongyechang* (公冶长),
    in *Lunyu* (论语) [The Analects of Confucius],
    Spring and Autumn Period-Warring State Period (770-221 B.C.))

Occasionally, the first and the second person pronouns can also be fronted, as *yǔ* (予) '1SG' and *ěr* (尔) '2SG' in (13-14).

(13) 民献有十夫予翼。

    Mínxiàn yǒu   shí fū   **yǔ**   yì   ~~yǔ~~.
    people   have ten person 1SG assist 1SG
    'Among all the people, there will be ten persons coming to assist me.'
    (*Dagao* (大诰), in *Shangshu* (尚书)
    [Book of Documents], around 1046 B.C.)

(14) 民具尔瞻。

    Mín   jù **ěr** zhān   ~~ěr~~.
    people all 2SG look.up.to 2SG
    'People all look up to you.'
    (*Jienanshan* (节南山) (782-771 B.C.), *Xiaoya* (小雅),
    in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],
    Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

Another typical context in which object-fronting occurs is negation. In negative contexts, an object pronoun is frequently fronted to a preverbal position and is preceded by a negative element, such as *bù* (不), as shown in (15-20). In (15-17), *bù* precedes the fronted first person and second person pronouns: *wǒ* (我) '1SG', *yú* (余) '1SG', *ruò* (若) '2SG', and in (18-20), *bù* (不) precedes the third person pronouns and demonstratives: *zhī* (之), *shì* (是) and *cǐ* (此).

(15) 此邦之人，不我肯谷。

    Cǐ   bāng   zhī   rén,

    this   state   ZHI   people

    bù   wǒ   kěn   gǔ   ~~wǒ~~.

    NEG   1SG   be.willing.to   feed   1SG

    'People in this state are not willing to feed me.'

    (*Huangniao* (黄鸟) (828-782 B.C.), *Xiaoya* (小雅),

    in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],

    Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

(16) 偻句不余欺也。

    Lǚjù   bù   yú   qī   ~~yú~~   yě.

    Lüju   NEG   1SG   deceive   1SG   SFP

    'Lüju did not deceive me.'

    (*Zhaogong Ershiwu Nian* (昭公二十五年)

    [The 25th year of Zhaogong period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 517 B.C.)],

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(17) 既使我与若辩矣, 若胜我,

    我不若胜, 若果是也? 我果非也邪?

    Jì   shǐ   wǒ   yǔ   ruò   biàn   yǐ,

    already   if   1SG   with   2SG   debate   SFP

    ruò   shèng   wǒ,   wǒ   bù   ruò   shèng   ~~ruò~~,

    2SG   beat   1SG   1SG   NEG   2SG   beat   2SG

    ruò   guǒ   shì   yě?

    2SG   really   right   SFP

    wǒ   guǒ   fēi   yě   yé?

    1SG   really   wrong   SFP   SFP

    'If I debated with you, and you beat me while I didn't,

    then would you really be right? Would I really be wrong?'

    (*Qiwulun* (齐物论) [Essay on the Uniformity of All Things],

    in *Zhuangzi* (庄子), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(18) 其视贵富也, 苟可得已, 则必不之赖。

    Qí   shì   guì   fù   yě,

    3PL   look   power   wealth   SFP

    gǒu   kě   dé   yǐ,

    if   can   obtain   SFP

    zé   bì   bù   zhī   lài   ~~zhī~~.

    then   FUT   NEG   3PL   consider.as.advantage   3PL

    'The way, in which they look at power and wealth, is that even if

    they can obtain them, they would never consider them

    as an advantage.'

    (*Lisu* (离俗), in *Lüshi Chunqiu* (吕氏春秋)

    [Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals], around 239 B.C.)

(19) 不是过也。

    Bú   shì   guò   ~~shì~~   yě.

    NEG   DEM   exceed   DEM   SFP

    '(They) do not exceed this (standard).'

    (*Chuyu* (楚语) 2 [Discourses of the Chu state, volume 2],

     in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],

     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(20) 不此听也。

    Bù   cǐ   tīng   ~~cǐ~~   yě.

    NEG   DEM   listen.to   DEM   SFP

    '(They) do not listen to this.'

    (*Yuelun* (乐论), in *Xunzi* (荀子), by Zi Xun, 313-238 B.C.)

In negative contexts, when the direct object is a NP (rather than a pronoun), it can also be fronted to a preverbal position, as demonstrated in (21-22), although such cases are very rare. In (21), the NP *chǔ* (楚) 'the state Chu' in the first clause is the direct object of the verb *bèi* (备) 'guard against', and *chǔ* is fronted to the preverbal position following the negative element *wú* (无), yielding the order [*jìn* (晋) *wú* (无) *chǔ* (楚) *bèi* (备)].

(21) 晋无楚备, 以败于邲。

    Jìn wú   chǔ bèi   ~~chǔ~~

    Jin NEG Chu guard.against Chu

    yǐ bài   yú bì.

    thus defeated at Bi

    'The state Jin did not guard against the state Chu so that Jin was defeated at Bi.'

    (*Zhaogong Wu Nian* (昭公五年)

    [The 5th year of Zhaogong period of the Lu state

     in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 537 B.C.)]

     in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(22) 不爪翦, 不穿耳。

    Bù   **zhǎo** jiǎn ~~zhǎo~~, bù   chuān ěr.

    NEG nails trim nails NEG pierce ears

    '(They) do not trim their nails and do not pierce their ears.'

    (*Dechongfu* (德充符), in *Zhuangzi* (庄子),

     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

Importantly, given that negation constitutes a typical context licensing object-fronting in Archaic Chinese, previous studies also focus on the interaction between the fronted object and the syntactic position of different types of negative elements. Guangwu Zhou (1959) extensively examines the syntactic position of object pronouns in negative sentences in sixteen classical literature.^v He examines the syntactic distribution of object pronouns in nine types of negative sentences with different negative elements, such as *bù* (不), *wèi* (未) and *mò* (莫), and concludes that in a negative sentence, when the negative element is *wèi* (未) or *mò* (莫), sentences with fronted pronominal objects are more productive than those with postverbal pronominal objects. However, in negative

sentences with negative elements other than *wèi* (未) or *mò* (莫), postverbal pronominal objects are much more productive than the fronted ones. In particular, when the negative element is *bù* (不), sentences with postverbal pronominal objects are nearly three times more than those with fronted pronominal objects. He also emphasises on the influence of the choice of negative elements on the position of pronominal objects. For instance, in sentences with the negative element *bù* (不), the number of occurrences of the fronted first person pronominal object *wǒ* (我) (cf. 23) and the number of occurrences of the postverbal *wǒ* (我) are equal (cf. 24).

(23) 今郑人贪赖其田, 而不我与。
    Jīn   zhèng rén   tān   lài   qí   tián,
    now Zheng people covet occupy 3SG.GEN land
    ér   bù   **wǒ** yǔ   ~~wǒ~~.
    and NEG 1PL give 1PL
    'Now the people of Zheng covet and occupy the land of (Xu),
    and do not give it to us.'
    (*Zhaogong Shi'er Nian* (昭公十二年)
    [The 12th year of Zhaogong period of the Lu state
    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 530 B.C.)]
    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(24) 有事而不告我, 必不捷矣。
    Yǒu shì ér   bù   gào wǒ,
    have thing but NEG tell 1SG
    bì   bù   jié   yǐ.
    FUT NEG succeed SFP
    'If you do not tell me what is going on, you will not succeed.'
    (*Xianggong Ershiba Nian* (襄公二十八年)
    [The 28th year of Xianggong period of the Lu state
    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 545 B.C.)]
    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

   By contrast, *wǒ* (我) is uniformly fronted in sentences with *wèi* (未) or *mò* (莫), as shown in (25-26) respectively.

(25) 谓他人父, 亦莫我顾。
    Wèi tā rén fù,   yì   mò **wǒ** gù ~~wǒ~~.
    call other people father also NEG 1SG care 1SG
    'Even if I call the other man father,
    he has never taken care of me.'
    (*Gelei* (葛藟), *Wangfeng* (王风),
    in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],
    Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

(26) 子未我应也。
    Zǐ   wèi   **wǒ**   yìng   ~~wǒ~~   yě.
    2SG   NEG.PERF   1SG   answer   1SG   SFP
    'You haven't answered me.'
    (*Gongmeng* (公孟), in *Mozi* (墨子),
      Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

   Furthermore, in negative sentences involving *bù* (不), when the direct object is a demonstrative or a third person pronoun, such as *shì* (是) and *zhī* (之), the object appears postverbally, as shown in (27-28); by contrast, when the direct object is a first or a second person pronoun, such as *wú* (吾) and *ěr* (尔), the object is fronted to a preverbal position, as shown in (29-30).

(27) 吾不为是也。
    Wú   bù   wèi   **shì**   yě.
    1SG   NEG   for   DEM   SFP
    'I am not for this.'
    (*Lianghuiwang* (梁惠王), in *Mengzi* (孟子),
      Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(28) 且臣之说齐, 曾不欺之也。
    Qiě   chén[vi]   zhī   shuì   qí,
    moreover   1SG   ZHI   lobby   Qi
    céng   bù   qī   **zhī**   yě.
    even   NEG   deceive   3SG   SFP
    'Moreover, when I was lobbying the king of Qi,
      I did not even deceive him.'
    (*Yance* (燕策) 1 (335-279 B.C.), in *Zhanguoce* (战国策)
      [Strategies/intrigues of the warring states],
      Han dynasty (202 B.C.-8 A.C.))

(29) 不吾知也！
    Bù   **wú**   zhī   ~~wú~~   yě!
    NEG   1SG   understand   1SG   SFP
    '(People) do not understand me!'
    (*Xianjin* (先进), in *Lunyu* (论语) [The Analects of Confucius],
      Spring and Autumn Period-Warring State Period (770-221 B.C.))

(30) 岂不尔思?! 我心忧伤。

    Qǐ   bù   **ěr**   sī   ~~ěr~~?!

    how   NEG   2SG   miss   2SG

    Wǒ   xīn   yōushāng.

    1SG   heart   sad

    'How can I not miss you?!

     I am sad (because of missing you).'

    (*Gaoqiu* (羔裘), *Kuaifeng* (桧风),

     in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],

     Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

2.2 Marked object-fronting

   In many cases, fronted objects can be preceded or followed by certain morpho-syntactic markers. We roughly put these markers into three main categories.

   The first category includes markers of *wéi*-type. A fronted object is preceded by *wéi*, which corresponds to several graphic forms ("唯", "隹", "惟", "维"), or by *huì* "叀 (惠)", such as in (31-32). *Wéi* and *huì* have been assumed to be from the same origin. In fact, *huì* "叀 (惠)" appears in oracle bone script (甲骨文) (see Pei Shen 1992, Dekuan Huang 1998, Yujin Zhang 1988).

(31) 王惟德用。

    Wáng   **wéi**   dé   yòng   ~~dé~~.

    king   only   virtuous.policy   adopt   virtuous.policy

    'The king only adopts virtuous policies (to govern the country).'

    (*Zicai* (梓材) (1043-1021 B.C.),

      in *Shangshu* (尚书) [Book of Documents], around 1046 B.C.)

(32) 宁王惟卜用。

    Níng-wáng   wéi   bǔ   yòng   ~~bǔ~~.

    Ning-King   only   divination   adopt   divination

    'King Ning only adopted divination.'

    (*Dagao* (大诰), in *Shangshu* (尚书) [Book of Documents],

     around 1046 B.C.)

   The second category includes markers of *shì*-type. A fronted object is followed by *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之), as in (33-36). Both of them are the most frequent markers occurring with fronted objects in Archaic Chinese. In addition, *shí* (实) and *shì* (寔), which occur in the same contexts, are considered as variants of *shì* (是). We also note that other markers such as *lái* (来), *sī* (斯), *yú* (于) and *yān* (焉) can occasionally precede fronted objects, as in (37-40). However, given their rare presence in contexts involving object-fronting, there is no firmed view concerning their origins.

(33) 老夫罪戾是惧。
   Lǎofū[vii]   zuìlì   **shì**   jù   ~~zuìlì~~.
   old.man   mistake   DEM afraid mistake
   'I am afraid of making mistakes.'
   (*Zhaogong Yuan Nian* (昭公元年)
   [The 1st year of Zhaogong period of the Lu state
   in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 542 B.C.)]
   in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(34) 岂不谷是为? 先君之好是继。
   Qǐ bùgǔ   **shì**   wèi ~~bùgǔ~~?
   QI 1SG   DEM for 1SG
   Xiān-jūn   zhī hǎo   **shì**
   late.emperor GEN good.relationship DEM
   jì   ~~xiān-jūn~~   ~~zhī~~ ~~hǎo~~.
   maintain late.emperor GEN good.relationship
   'Could it be (that they come here) for me?
   (They come here to) maintain the good relationship
    between us, which was established by our late emperor.'
   (*Xigong Si Nian* (僖公四年) [The 4th year of Xigong Period
   of the Lu state in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 656B.C.)],
   in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(35) 晋居深山, 戎狄之与邻。
   Jìn jū   shēn   shān,
   Jin locate remote mountain
   róng dí   **zhī** yǔ ~~róng dí~~ lín.
   Rong Di   3SG   with Rong Di adjacent
   '(The State of) Jin is located in remote mountains,
   and is adjacent to Rong and Di.'
   (*Zhaogong Shiwu Nian* (昭公十五年)
   [The 15th year of Zhaogong period of the Lu state
   in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 527 B.C.)]
   in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(36) 吾百姓之不图, 唯舟与车。
   Wú bǎixìng **zhī** bù tú ~~bǎixìng~~,
   1SG people ZHI NEG care people
   wéi zhōu   yǔ   chē
   only boat   and   carriage.
   'I did not care about my people, and it was only (taking)
   boat or carriage (to play around) that I cared about.'
   (*Yueyu* (越语) 8, [Discourses of the Yue state, volume 2],
   in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],
   Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(37) 征伐玁狁, 蛮荆来威。

Zhēng fá xiǎnyǔn,
go.on.a.punitive.expedition attack Xianyun
mánjīng **lái** wēi ~~mánjīng~~.
Manjing LAI cause.to.be.awed Manjing
'(Fangshu) conquered Xianyun, which caused
the people of Manjing to be awed.'
(*Caiqi* (采芑), *Xiaoya* (小雅),
in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],
Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

(38) 朋酒斯飨, 曰杀羔羊。

Péng jiǔ **sī** xiǎng ~~péng jiǔ~~,
two wine SI drink two wine
yuē shā gāoyáng.
say kill lamb
'(The fellow villagers gather together to) drink two
 bottles of wine and (they) say: "kill the lambs (to eat)."'
(*Qiyue* (七月), *Binfeng* (豳风),
in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],
Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

(39) 赫赫南仲, 玁狁于夷。

Hè-hè nánzhòng, xiǎnyǔn **yú** yí ~~xiǎnyǔn~~.
illustrious Nanzhong Xianyun YU eliminate Xianyun
'The illustrious Nanzhong has eliminated Xianyun.'
(*Chuche* (出车) (828-782 B.C.), *Xiaoya* (小雅),
in *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs],
Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.))

(40) 我周之东迁, 晋郑焉依。

Wǒ zhōu zhī dōng qiān,
1SG Zhou ZHI east move
jìn zhèng **yān** yī ~~jìn zhèng~~.
Jin Zheng YAN rely Jin Zheng
'The moving eastward of our Zhou's capital relied on
(The State of) Jin and (The State of) Zheng.'
(*Yingong Liu Nian* (隐公六年)
[The 6th year of Yingong Period of the Lu state
 in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 717 B.C.)]
 in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

Third, a fronted object is placed between *wéi* (唯, 惟) or *feī* (非) on the one hand, and, *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之) on the other hand, as shown in (41-48).[viii]

13

(41) 今商王受, 惟妇言是用。

    Jīn   shāng-wáng   shòu,

    now   Shang.king   Shou

    wéi   fù   yán   **shì**   yòng   ~~fù~~   ~~yán~~.

    only   woman word   DEM listen woman word

    'Now Shou, the king of Shang,

    follows only the words of his wife.'

    (*Mushi* (牧誓), in *Shangshu* (尚书) [Book of Documents],

    around 1046 B.C.)

(42) 余唯利是视。

    Yú   **wéi**   lì   **shì**   shì   ~~lì~~.

    1PL   only profit DEM look profit

    'It is the profits that we care about.'

    (*Chenggong Shisan Nian* (成公十三年)

    [The 13th year of Chenggong Period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 578 B.C.)]

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(43) 唯乱门之无过。

    Wéi   luàn   mén   **zhī**   wú

    only   rebel door ZHI   NEG.IMP

    guò   ~~luàn   mén~~.

    pass rebel door

    'It is the door of the rebel's family that

    you should not pass by.'

    (*Zhaogong Ershi'er Nian* (昭公二十二年)

    [The 22th year of Zhaogong Period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 520 B.C.)]

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(44) 不唯许国之为。

    Bù   **wéi**   xǔ-guó   **zhī**   wèi   ~~xǔ-guó~~.

    NEG only Xu.state ZHI   for Xu.state

    '(I do this) not only for The State of Xu.'

    (*Yingong Shiyi Nian* (隐公十一年)

    [The 11th year of Yingong Period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 712 B.C.)]

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(45) 鬼神非人实(=是)亲, 惟德是依。

    Guǐ   shén **fēi** rén   **shí (=shì)** qīn   ~~rén~~,

    ghost god   NEG someone DEM   close.to someone

    wéi dé **shì** yī ~~dé~~.

    only virtue DEM follow virtue

    'The spirits do not get close to some random person,

     and they would only follow the virtue.'

    (*Xigong Wu Nian* (僖公五年) [The 5th year of Xigong Period

     of the Lu state in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 655B.C.)],

     in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(46) 今王非越是图, 而齐、鲁以为忧。

    Jīn wáng **fēi** yuè **shì** tú   ~~yuè~~,

    now king NEG Yue DEM consider Yue

    ér qí lǔ yi   wei you.

    but Qi Lu consider as   concern

    'Now you do not consider dealing with (the state of) Yue,

     but worry about (the state of) Qi and (the state of) Lu.'

    (*Wuyu* (吴语) [Discourses of the Wu state],

     in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],

     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(47) 非子之求, 而蒲之爱。

    Fēi zǐ **zhī** qiú ~~zǐ~~,

    NEG son ZHI seek son

    ér pú **zhī** ài ~~pú~~.

    but willow ZHI cherish willow

    '(You) do not try to seek your son,

     but cherish the willow.'

    (*Xuangong Shi'er Nian* (宣公十二年)

    [The 12th year of Xuangong Period of the Lu state

     in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 597 B.C.)],

     in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(48) 非夫人之为恸而谁为？

    Fēi fú rén   **zhī** wèi ~~fú   rén~~

    NEG this person ZHI for this person

    tòng   ér shéi wèi?

    grieve then who for

    'If I do not grieve for this person,

     then whom should I grieve for?'

    (*Xianjin* (先进), in *Lunyu* (论语) [The Analects of Confucius],

    Spring and Autumn Period-Warring State Period (770-221 B.C.))

2.3 Analysis of functional words correlated with object fronting

As demonstrated above, in Archaic Chinese, function words corelative with object fronting, such as *wéi* (唯), *huì* (惠), *lái* (来), *sī* (斯), *yú* (于), *yān* (焉), *shì* (是), *zhī* (之), are treated as object-fronting markers, among which, the view regarding *wéi* (唯) and *huì* (惠) is uncontroversial. As for *lái* (来), *sī* (斯), *yú* (于), *yān* (焉), their grammatical roles remain unclear due to their rare occurrences in the texts. Most controversial views and debates are centered around the category and the function of *shì* (是) and *zhī* (之) in sentences involving object-fronting: different scholars do have different views. For instance, they are analyzed as a sort of variants of prepositions by Jianzhong Ma (1898), as pronouns by many scholars such as Li Wang (1989/2010), Xiliang Guo (1989) and Xi Xiang (2010/2017), as auxiliaries by Zhenqu Ding (1983) and Bojun Yang & Leshi He (1992), as pure grammatical markers indicating fronted objects by Jinghao Ao (1983), Guoguang Yin (1985) and Xuezhong Han (1996), a.o. Let us summarize their proposals below.

Jianzhong Ma (1898:246-251) insists that SVO is the basic word order in Archaic Chinese, and that SOV must be derived by object-fronting. Importantly, he points out that when the verb is preceded by a negative element or when the direct object is an interrogative pronoun, the relevant direct object must be fronted. In addition, he treats *zhī* (之) as a kind of variant of prepositions, which is used to connect the fronted object with the verb, as in [*Wú* (吾) *bǎixìng* (百姓) **zhī** (之) *bù* (不) *tú* (图)] 'I did not care about my people' (cf. example 36). Furthermore, *zhī* (之) can be replaced by *shì* (是) to reinforce the tone of certainty in some contexts, such as in [*Lǎofū* (老夫) *zuìlì* (罪戾) **shì** (是) *jù* (惧)] 'I am (indeed) afraid of making mistakes' (cf. example 33).

Li Wang (1989/2010:202-203) claims that given that both *zhī* (之) and *shì* (是) were used as demonstratives in Archaic Chinese, in sentences involving object-fronting, both of them are used as pronouns and have the same function: they are used as resumptive pronouns referring to the object NP. Due to the presence of resumptive pronoun, object NP is allowed to be fronted in a preverbal position. Therefore, different from Jianzhong Ma (1898), Li Wang proposes that *zhī* (之) occurring with object-fronting is not a preposition.

Xiliang Guo (1989) proposes that *shì* (是) and *zhī* (之) are neutral pronouns without bearing any meaning of "near" or "far". By contrast, Xi Xiang (2010/2017:88-92) thinks that both *zhī* (之) and *shì* (是) are demonstratives, which are the equivalent of "this/these", and that they are used as resumptive pronouns in object-fronting constructions.

Zhenqu Ding (1983), Bojun Yang & Leshi He (1992) only recognize the grammatical function of *shì* (是) and *zhī* (之) and propose that they are best analyzed as a sort of auxiliary.

Jinghao Ao (1983) thinks that *shì* (是) is clearly developed from a demonstrative, which is analyzed as a particle specifically indicating a marked word order, such as object-fronting.

Guoguang Yin (1985) treats *shì* (是) and *zhī* (之) on a par with other functional words such as *lái* (来), *sī* (斯), *yú* (于), *jué* (厥) because all of them can appear between the fronted object and the verb in a given sentence. Their function is to mark the relation between the object and the verb. So Yin proposes to call them "grammatical markers".

Along this line, although Xuezhong Han (1996) also treats *shì* (是) and *zhī* (之) as demonstratives, he points out that in the construction [NP + *shì* (是)/*zhī* (之) + verb], if *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之) does not appear, it will be very difficult to judge whether the NP is the subject or the object of the verb. Therefore, he thinks that *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之) here is not merely a resumptive pronoun referring to the fronted object, but a very important grammatical marker that indicates the NP preceding *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之) as the direct object of the verb. However, in negative contexts, such as [negation + pronoun

+ verb], due to the presence of the negative element, there is no ambiguity regarding whether the pronoun is the subject or is the object, and therefore, the presence of *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之) is not required.

3. Micro description on the precise landing sites of fronted object

In fact, it does not exist a single fixed position as the landing site for fronted objects in Archaic Chinese; instead, different preverbal positions exist. As mentioned above, Guoguang Yin (1985) examines sentences involving fronted objects followed by different types of functional words including negative elements, such as *shì* (是), *zhī* (之), *sī* (斯), *yú* (于), *lái* (来) and *jué* (厥). He observes that when the relevant functional words are *shì* (是) and *shí* (实), negative elements can only precede the fronted object. For instance, in (45-46) above, the fronted objects *rén* (人) and *yuè* (越) are followed by functional words *shí* (实) and *shì* (是) respectively, and the negative element *feī* (非) can only occur before *rén* (人) and *yuè* (越), yielding the order [*feī* (非) *rén* (人) *shí* (实) *qīn* (亲)] 'not get close to some random person' and [*feī* (非) *yuè* (越) *shì* (是) *tú* (图)] 'not consider dealing with (the state of) Yue'.

However, when the relevant functional word is *zhī* (之), negative elements can either precede the verb immediately or precede the fronted object. For instance, in (43), the fronted object *luànmén* (乱门) occurs between the functional words *wéi* (唯) and *zhī* (之), and in this case, the negative element *wú* (无) precedes the verb *guò* (过) but follows the fronted object *luànmén* (乱门), yielding the order [*wéi* (唯) *luànmén* (乱门) *zhī* (之) *wú* (无) *guò* (过)] 'it is the door of the rebel's family that you should not pass by.'

By contrast, in (47), when the functional word that follows the fronted object *zǐ* (子) is *zhī* (之), the negative element *feī* (非) precedes the fronted object *zǐ* (子), yielding the order [*feī* (非) *zǐ* (子) *zhī* (之) *qiú* (求)] 'do not try to seek your son'. It has also been noted that negative elements do not occur in sentences with the functional words other than *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之).

In addition, only when the functional word is *zhī* (之), are sentence-final particles allowed in the relevant sentences, such as *yě* (也) and *xī* (兮) in (49-50).

(49) 墨子真天下之好也。
Mòzǐ   zhēn   tiānxià   **zhī**   hào   ~~tiānxià~~   **yě**.
Mozi   really   world   ZHI   love   world   SFP
'Mozi really loves the whole world.'
(*Tianxia* (天下) [world], in *Zhuangzi* (庄子),
 Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(50) 若狄公子, 吾是之依兮。
Ruò   dí   gōng-zǐ,
that   Di   prince
wú   shì   **zhī**   yī   ~~shì~~   **xī**.
1PL   DEM   ZHI   rely   DEM   SFP
'That prince in Di, we rely on him.'
(*Jinyu* (晋语) 3, [Discourses of the Jin state, volume 3],
 in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],
 Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

Yin (1985) also notes that when the fronted object is an interrogative pronoun, such as *hú* (胡) 'what', *xī* (奚) 'what', *shéi* (谁) 'who' in (51-53) or a personal pronoun, such as *zhī* (之) in (54), the functional word following this fronted pronominal object can only be *zhī* (之) rather than *shì* (是) (or other ones). For instance,

(51) 胡美之为?
    Hú   měi   **zhī**   wéi   ~~hú~~   ~~měi~~?
    what   beauty   ZHI   be   what   beauty
    'What beauty is this?!'
     = 'This is not beauty!'
     (*Chuyu* (楚语) 1 [Discourses of the Chu state, volume 1],
      in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],
      Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(52) 子尚奚微之有哉？
    Zǐ   shàng   **xī**   wēi   **zhī**   yǒu   ~~xī~~   ~~wēi~~   zāi?
    2SG   still   what   piece   ZHI   exist   what   piece   SFP
    'What pieces of you would still exist?'
    (*Lieyukou* (列御寇), in *Zhuangzi* (庄子),
     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(53) 谁之不如, 可以求之。
    Shéi   **zhī**   bù   rú   ~~shéi~~,   kěyǐ   qiú   zhī.
    who   ZHI   NEG   compare   who   can   follow   3SG
    'Whoever you do not measure up to, you can follow him.'
    (*Jinyu* (晋语) 6, [Discourses of the Jin state, volume 6],
     in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],
     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(54) 子是之学。
    Zǐ   shì   **zhī**   xué   ~~shì~~.
    2SG   DEM   ZHI   learn   DEM
    'You learn from this (state).'
    (*Tengwengong* (滕文公) 1, in *Mengzi* (孟子),
     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

Pei-Chuan Wei (1999) thoroughly examines the distribution of fronted objects based on their interaction with functional elements from different categories: negative elements such as *bù* (不), *wèi* (未), *mò* (莫) and *wú* (无); ordinary adverbs such as *qián* (前) 'before', and *jūn* (均) 'all'; modal verbs such as, *néng* (能) 'be able to', *dé* (得) 'be able to', *gǎn* (敢) 'dare' and *kěn* (肯) 'be willing to'; control verbs such as, *rěn* (忍) 'bear' and *zhī* (知) 'know'; conjunctions such as *yì* (亦) 'and', *yòu* (又) 'and, as well as' and *shàng* (尚) 'yet'; and modal adverbs such as *qí* (其) indicating a rhetorical meaning, *jiāng* (将) 'will, would' and *qiě* (且) 'will, would'. This study reveals many distributional properties concerning the hierarchical order between fronted objects and other syntactic elements. For instance, a fronted object interrogative pronoun is usually located before

negative elements, such as in (6) repeated below as (55), and in (56). Concretely, the fronted object *wh*-pronouns *shéi* 'who' and *hé* 'what' are positioned before the negative word *bù* 'not'.

(55) 其子而食之, 且谁不食?

Qí   zǐ ér shí zhī   qiě **shéi** bù shí <s>shéi</s>?!

3SG.GEN son ER eat him, and who NEG eat who

'He has even eaten his son, and whom he will not eat?!'

(*Shuolin* (说林) 1, in *Han Feizi* (韩非子), 281-233 B.C.)

(56) 何不为乎?

Hé   bù   wéi   <s>hé</s>   hū?

what NEG do   what   SFP

'What shouldn't I do?'

(*Qiushui* (秋水), in *Zhuangzi* (庄子),

    Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

In addition, a fronted object interrogative pronoun is usually located after temporal adverbs which indicate a future interpretation. For instance, in (4) repeated below as (57), the object *wh*-word *xī* (奚) 'where' is fronted to the position before the verb *shì* (适) 'go' but after the adverb *qiě* (且) expressing the future tense. In (58), the fronted *wh*-word *hé* (何) 'where' is after the adverb *jiāng* (将). In (59), the fronted *shéi* (谁) 'who' follows the adverb *qí* (其) expressing a future meaning.

(57) 彼且奚适也?

Bǐ   qiě   **xī**   shì   <s>xī</s>   yě?

3SG FUT where go   where   SFP

'Where is it going?'

(*Xiaoyaoyou* (逍遥游) [Free and easy wandering],

in *Zhuangzi* (庄子), Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(58) 先生将何之?

Xiānshēng jiāng hé   zhī   <s>hé</s>?

sir   FUT where go   where

'Where are you going?'

(*Gaozixia* (告子下), in *Mengzi* (孟子),

    Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(59) 其谁怨?

Qí **shéi**   yuàn   <s>shéi</s>?

QI who   blame who

'Who's to blame?'

(*Jinyu* (晋语) 7, [Discourses of the Jin state, volume 7],

in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],

Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

In negative contexts, a non-interrogative object pronoun can be fronted to a position before ordinary adverbs. For instance, in (60), *zhī* (之) 'him' is fronted before the adverb *jūn* (均) 'all'.

(60) 其乡里未之均闻见也。

    Qí   xiānglǐ   wèi

    QI   fellow-villager   NEG.PERF

    zhī jūn   wén   jiàn   ~~zhī~~   yě.

    3SG all   hear   see   3SG   SFP

    'The fellow villagers haven't all heard about or seen him.'

    (*Shangtongxia* (尚同下), in *Mozi* (墨子),

      Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

With the presence of a modal verb in a given sentence, a fronted pronominal object is usually located before the modal verb. For instance, the object *wh*-words *hé* (何) 'what' in (61) and *shéi* (谁) 'who' in (62), and, the non-interrogative pronominal object *zhī* (之) 'it' in (63) are all fronted before the modal verbs *néng* 'can' and *gǎn* (敢) 'dare'.

(61) 郑何能为？

    Zhèng **hé**   néng wéi ~~hé~~?

    Zheng what can do what

    'What can (the State of) Zheng do?'

    (*Yingong Liu Nian* (隐公六年)

    [The 6th year of Yingong Period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 717 B.C.)]

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(62) 吾谁敢怨？

    Wú **shéi** gǎn yuàn ~~shéi~~?

    1SG who dare blame who

    'Who dare I blame?'

    (*Zhaogong Ershiqi Nian* (昭公二十七年)

    [The 27th year of Zhaogong Period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 515 B.C.)]

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(63) 未之敢忘。

    Wèi **zhī** gǎn wàng ~~zhī~~.

    NEG 3SG dare forget 3SG

    '(We) dare not forget it.'

    (*Xigong Ershiba Nian* (僖公二十八年)

    [The 28th year of Xigong Period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 632B.C.)],

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

Occasionally, a pronominal object can also be fronted to a position following modal verbs. For instance, *zhī* (之) 'it' is fronted to the position following the modal verb *dé* (得) 'can' in (64), and the *wh*-object *hé* (何) 'where' is fronted to the position following the modal *yù* (欲) 'want' in (65).

(64) 天下百姓未得之明知也。

    Tiānxià   bǎixìng   wèi   dé

    world   people   NEG.PERF   can

    zhī   míng   zhī   ~~zhī~~   yě.

    3SG   clearly   know   3SG   SFP

    'People of the whole world can't know it clearly yet.'

    (*Tianzhishang* (天志上) , in *Mozi* (墨子),

    Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

(65) 子欲何之？

    Zǐ   yù   **hé**   zhī   ~~hé~~?

    2SG   want   where   go   where

    'Where do you want to go?'

    (*Qince* (秦策) 1, in *Zhanguoce* (战国策)

    [Strategies/intrigues of the Warring States],

    Han dynasty (202 B.C.-8 A.C.))

In control constructions and in certain types of subordinate clauses, a pronominal object can be fronted to a position preceding the matrix verb. For instance, the sentence in (66) is analyzed as involving a control construction, and the *wh*-object *shéi* (谁) 'who' of the embedded verb *yǔ* (与) 'entrust' is fronted to the left side of the control verb *yù* (欲) 'want'.

(66) 公谁欲与？ ix

    Gōng   **shéi**   yù   yǔ   ~~shéi~~?

    emperor   who   want   entrust   who

    'To whom do you want to entrust (the country)?'

    (*Xuwugui* (徐无鬼), in *Zhuangzi* (庄子),

    Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

In (67), the pronominal object *rǔ* (女) 'you' of the embedded verb *shā* (杀) 'kill' is fronted to the left side of the control predicate *rěn* (忍) 'bear to/have the heart to'.

(67) 余不女忍杀。

    Yú   bù   **rǔ**   rěn   shā   ~~rǔ~~.

    1SG   NEG   2SG   bear   kill   2SG

    'I cannot bear to kill you.'

    (*Zhaogong Yuan Nian* (昭公元年)

    [The 1st year of Zhaogong period of the Lu state

    in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 542 B.C.)]

    in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

In (68), the pronominal object *zhī* (之) 'it' of the embedded verb *bì* (避)'avoid' is fronted to the left of the matrix verb *zhī* (知) 'know'.

(68) 莫之知避。

    Mò   **zhī**   zhī   bì   ~~zhī~~.

    NEG   3SG   know   avoid   3SG

    '(People) don't know (that they should) avoid it.'

    (*Renjianshi* (人间世), in *Zhuangzi* (庄子),

     Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

In addition, sometimes, *wh*-objects can also stay in-situ without undergoing fronting, especially when the verbs show low degree of transitivity, such as *shì* (事) 'do…as work' in (69) and *wéi* (为) 'be' in (70) (also see Bojun Yang & Leshi He 1992:789-790).

(69) 而事何也？

    Ér   shì   **hé**   yě?

    2SG   do   what   SFP

    'What do you do? = What position do you hold?'

    (*Aigong Shi'yi Nian* (哀公十一年)

    [The 11th year of Aigong Period of the Lu state

     in Spring and Autumn Period (i.e., 484 B.C.)]

     in *Zuozhuan* (左传), Warring State Period (476-221 B.C.))

(70) 子为谁？

    Zǐ   wéi   **shéi**?

    2SG   be   who

    'Who are you?'

    (*Weizi* (微子), in *Lunyu* (论语) [The Analects of Confucius],

     Spring and Autumn Period-Warring State Period (770-221 B.C.))

In this section, we presented several important generalizations concerning the exact positions as the landing sites of fronted objects in Archaic Chinese.

4. Motivation for object-fronting

Under the analysis that the SOV order is derived from SVO by fronting the direct object, then we need to explain the motivation for object-fronting. According to Dekuan Huang (1988), Yuming Tang (1990), and Pei Shen (1992), in oracle bone script, the fronted objects that are preceded by functional words such as *huì* (惠) and *wéi* (惟/唯) are very often interpreted as foci in the relevant sentences. Accordingly, most scholars agree that *huì* (惠) and *wéi* (惟/唯) are analyzed as typical focus markers in Archaic Chinese, such as in (31) repeated below as (71) and in (41) repeated below as (72). In these two examples, the fronted direct objects *dé* (德) 'virtuous policies' and *fùyán* (妇言) 'women's words' receive a focus reading when preceded by *wéi* (惟) 'only'.

(71) 王惟德用。

 Wáng **wéi** dé yòng ~~dé~~.
  king only virtuous.policy adopt virtuous.policy
  'The king only adopts virtuous policies (to govern the country).'
 (*Zicai* (梓材) (1043-1021 B.C.),
   in *Shangshu* (尚书) [Book of Documents], around 1046 B.C.)

(72) 今商王受, 惟妇言是用。

 Jīn shāng-wáng shòu,
 now Shang.king Shou
 wéi fù yán **shì** yòng ~~fù~~ ~~yán~~.
 only woman word DEM listen woman word
 'Now Shou, the king of Shang,
  follows only the words of his wife.'
  (*Mushi* (牧誓), in *Shangshu* (尚书) [Book of Documents],
   around 1046 B.C.)

    If it is relatively clear with cases involving overt focus markers, the cases involving fronted objects without any focus marker are much more controversial. In section 2, we demonstrated two types of fronted objects: (I) fronted objects are pronouns, and (II) fronted objects are full NPs. In type (I), there are two further sub-types: (i) *wh*-pronominal objects, and (ii) non-interrogative pronominal objects. Scholars have very different views on the motivation for the fronting of each type of these objects. Jie Xu & Yingzhe Li (1993) propose that object-fronting in Archaic Chinese is closely linked to focus. Concretely, when the focalized element in a negative sentence is the direct object, then such an object will be fronted. The general rule that they find out is that the prominent focus must be fronted to a preverbal position. However, as for the reason why only pronominal objects in negative sentences are fronted, they assume that there is a rule, which is unrelated to focus, interrogatives or negation, that regulates object fronting. Later Yuzhi Shi & Jie Xu (2001) point out that this rule is actually the Wackernagel law, which assumes that enclitics tend to appear in the second position in the sentence, i.e., before the verb and after the subject. For instance, in (73), *yuè* (越) is the direct object of the verb *tú* (图), and the negative marker *feī* (非) marks the direct object *yuè* (越) as the focus of the sentence, which is why *yuè* (越) is fronted to a preverbal position. After the object-fronting, a resumptive pronoun, such as *shì* (是), is inserted, and this resumptive pronoun functions as a clitic attached to the verb (see section 3 for detailed discussion).

(73) 今王非越是图, 而齐、鲁以为忧。

 Jīn wáng fēi yuè shì tú ~~yuè~~,
 now king NEG Yue DEM consider Yue
 ér qí lǔ yǐ wéi yōu.
 but Qi Lu consider as concern
 'Now you do not consider dealing with (the state of) Yue,
  but worry about (the state of) Qi and (the state of) Lu.'
 (*Wuyu* (吴语) [Discourses of the Wu state],
  in *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States],
  Warring States Period (476-221 B.C.))

Danqing Liu (2004) thinks that the fronting of a pronominal object in a negative sentence and the fronting of an interrogative object pronoun are purely syntactic operations, and that such a fronting reveals a universal tendency: pronominal object is easier to be fronted than full NP object. Importantly, only the fronting of full NP object marked by functional words such as *wéi* (唯), *shì* (是) or *zhī* (之) are related to focus, which is pragmatically driven.

Different from the above-mentioned scholars, Jingqi Fu & Dan Xu (2009) assume that fronted objects in ancient Chinese can either bear new information interpreted as foci or bear old information. Concretely, interrogative pronouns or emphasized NPs are interpreted as foci, but non-interrogative pronouns bear old information. They make a clear distinction between interrogative pronominal object and non-interrogative pronominal object. The former is obligatorily fronted preverbally due to their focus status. However, the latter is not necessarily adjacent to the verb, but follows and forms a prosodic unit with the negative element in the sentence. Under the influence of the interpretation of negation, a non-interrogative pronominal object conveys old information or background information.

Under the generative framework, Aldridge (2015) assumes that object fronting in Archaic Chinese is a way to value structure Case through movement. However, this claim is still challenged by the fact that not all of the direct objects undergo movement in Archaic Chinese; many of them still remain in their base-positions.

5. Historical development of object-fronting

Historically, object-fronting has already been observed in oracle bone script, and gradually disappeared in Han dynasty (202 B.C.–220 A.D.) (cf. Li Wang 1989/2010, Bojun Yang & Leshi He (1992), Shengli Feng (2013), Xi Xiang (2010/2017), a.o.). Liangming Sun (1994:120-123) points out that object-fronting in negative sentences, and marked object-fronting in other types of sentences nearly disappeared in Eastern Han (25-220 A.D.). During that period, interrogative pronominal objects just started appearing in the postverbal position, and preverbal interrogative pronominal objects still remained productive during a long period. Guang Lu (2004) divides the development of object-fronting into four periods.

(i) Before Western Zhou (1046B.C.-711B.C.). This is a very early period of object-fronting, during which, the fronting of interrogative pronominal object has not yet occurred, object-fronting in negative sentences was highly restricted, and only the co-occurrence of object-fronting with the functional word *wéi* (惟/唯) has been observed.

(ii) From Western Zhou (1046B.C.-711B.C.) to Han dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.). More varieties of object-fronting have been observed during this period. Interrogative pronouns appeared, and their fronting from the postverbal position to preverbal positions became systematic. More object-fronting cases have been observed in negative sentences, but there were equally many cases in which objects stay in the postverbal position in negative sentences. In addition, the structure [*wéi* (惟/唯) …*shì* (是)/*zhī* (之)] has occurred in affirmative sentences.

(iii) From Han dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.) to Wei and Jin dynasties (220A.D.-420A.D.). During this period, less and less cases involving the fronting of interrogative pronominal objects have been observed. Meanwhile, object-fronting in both negative sentences and affirmative sentences disappeared rapidly.

(iv) After Wei and Jin dynasties (220A.D.-420A.D.). During this period, interrogative pronominal objects were occasionally fronted, which can only be treated as the remainder of structures of old

style. Object-fronting in both negative and affirmative sentences was extremely rare, and it only occurred in fixed expressions, which even stay in modern Chinese nowadays, for instance in (74-75).

(74) 唯利是图
   wéi lì shì tú
   only profit DEM consider
   'seek nothing but profits'

(75) 唯命是听
   wéi mìng shì tīng
   only order DEM listen
   'to be slavishly obedient'

Table 1 and Table 2 summarize the discussion of this section.

Table 1 Unmarked object-fronting

Unmarked object-fronting		Basic construction	General features
Wh-pronominal object		S + O + V	This construction appeared rather late (after the West-Zhou dynasty), and it does not contain negation. Object-fronting is not a general phenomenon during that period.
Non-interrogative pronounal object	Personal pronominal object	S + Neg + O + V	This construction appeared early (since Oracle bones period). Negation is involved in most of the cases concerning object-fronting.
	Demonstratives as objects		
NP		S + Neg + O + V	This construction is rarely observed.

Table 2 Marked object-fronting

Marked object-fronting	Basic construction	General features
wéi (唯)-type	S + [*wéi* (唯) + O] + V	This is the earliest construction involving object-fronting that has been observed. It appeared in oracle bone scripts, and started disappearing from the West-Zhou dynasty.
shì (是)/*zhī* (之)-type	S + [O + *shì* (是)/*zhī* (之)] + V	This construction appeared since the West-Zhou dynasty and the Spring-Autumn period, and it became one of the most frequently observed object-fronting markers.
wéi (唯)... *shì* (是)/*zhī* (之)-type	S + [*wéi* (唯) + O + *shì* (是)/*zhī* (之)] + V	This construction still stays in certain fixed expressions in modern Chinese.

6. Conclusion

We presented research questions from various aspects concerning object-fronting in archaic Chinese. We reviewed major types of structures involving object-fronting, different functional elements correlated with fronted objects and the syntactic analyses of these functional elements, macro and micro descriptions on the precise landing sites of fronted objects, theoretical analyses of the motivation for object-fronting, and the historical development of object-fronting during different periods. Many controversial questions still remain unanswered, which certainly need future work. For instance, not all the fronted objects systematically receive a focus reading; if they are not interpreted as foci, why do they need to be fronted? What are the hierarchical landing sites for fronted objects? Why these are possible positions for object-fronting? Does object-fronting in modern Chinese behave like object-fronting in Archaic Chinese? If no, what are the crucial differences?

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i "Archaic Chinese" refers to the Chinese before the third century AD. (Li Wang, 1980/2005:43).

ii As will be shown in section 2, negation constitutes a typical context involving pronominal object fronting.

iii The major dynasties are listed here: Shang dynasty (1700B.C.–1046B.C.)); Zhou dynasty (1046B.C.–256B.C.) divided as Western Zhou (1045B.C.–771B.C), and, Eastern Zhou (770B.C. –256B.C)), which is further divided as Spring and Autumn period (770 B.C.–476 B.C.) and Warring States period (475/403B.C–221B.C)); Qin dynasty (221 B.C.–207 B.C.; Han dynasty (202 B.C.–220 A.D.) divided as Western Han (202BC–9AD) and Eastern Han (25–220AD)); Wei and Jin dynasties (220A.D.–420A.D.), Northern and Southern dynasties (420A.D.–589A.D.), Tang dynasty (618 A.D.–907 A.D.); Five dynasties and ten kingdoms period (907 A.D.–979 A.D.); Song dynasty (960 A.D.–1279 A.D.); Jin (1115 A.D.–1234 A.D.); Yuan dynasty (1271 A.D.–1368 A.D.); Ming dynasty (1368 A.D.–1644 A.D.); Qing dynasty (1636 A.D.–1912 A.D.).

iv Guǎrén (寡人) is the self-addressing term used by a king in pre-Qin period.

v *Shangshu* (尚书) [Book of Documents], *Shijing* (诗经) [The book of songs], *Zhuangzi* (庄子), *Lunyu* (论语) [The Analects of Confucius], *Mengzi* (孟子), *Xunzi* (荀子), *Mozi* (墨子), *Han Feizi* (韩非子), *Zuozhuan* (左传), *Guoyu* (国语) [Discourses of the States], *Zhanguoce* (战国策) [Strategies/intrigues of the warring states], *Lüshi Chunqiu* (吕氏春秋) [Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals], *Guanzi* (管子), *Gongyangzhuan* (公羊传) [Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals / the Commentary of Gongyang], *Quzi* (屈子) and *Yanzi Chunqiu* (晏子春秋) [*Annals of Master Yan*].

vi *Chén* (臣) is a self-addressing term used by an officer in front of the king.

vii *Lǎo-fū* (老夫) is a self-addressing term used by elder people.

viii In archaic Chinese, *feī* (非) is assumed to be the negative form of *wéi* (唯).

ix In archaic Chinese, *yù* (欲) 'want' can be analyzed either as a modal verb or as a control verb as there is no clearcut views on this.