

Narrating Order: Allegories and Exempla of Governance in Ancient Chinese Literature

B06 (Strand “Narrating Ideas”)

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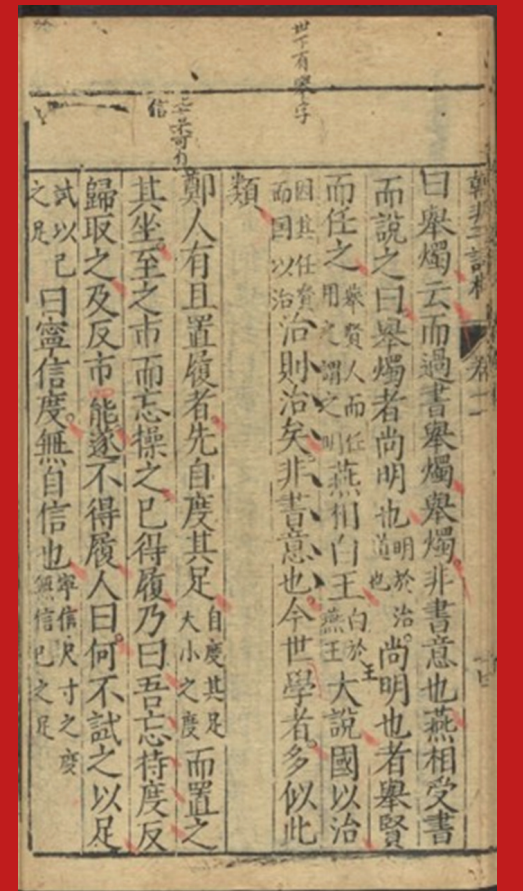
C02 von Contzen
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Summary

This subproject examines how allegories and exempla are used as arguments in *Han Fei zi* and *Lüshi chungiu*, two classical Chinese treatises on questions of monarchical order composed shortly before the founding of the empire in 221 BC. Based on the first systematic digital analysis of the production of narrative evidence in ancient Chinese literature, the aim is to show the consequences that the conceptualization and use of narratives as arguments had for narrative art and narrative techniques in China and how these can be evaluated in transcultural perspective.

Project Plan

- Analysis and annotation of narratives of monarchical order in the XML-based eXist database of the *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae* (TLS 2019-).
- Integration with the TLS's existing concept database and digital dictionary of Classical Chinese.
- Doctoral researchers conduct digital analysis and annotation of the narratives in the TLS database and write a dissertation on the narrativisation of key concepts of governance, each devoted to one of the two texts and its specific narrative techniques.
- PI examines procedures of narrative production of evidence on issues of governance and the narrativisation of its key concepts in the entire corpus of ancient Chinese literature, situating the findings of the dissertations within the framework of pre-modern Chinese narrative art on the basis of case studies.



Woodblock Print of *Han Fei zi* from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), between 1465 and 1620



Stone tile with relief depicting a market scene from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE), Sichuan Province, 28x48 cm, between 25 and 220 CE

Objectives

- What are the effects of the use of *metaphorae continuatae* and procedures of narrative exponentiation in exemplary narrative for the structure of primarily argumentative texts?
- How are ideas from the field of governance translated into action and embodied by characters?
- How are corresponding concepts narrativized?
- What are the consequences for narrative art when narratives are conceived of as argumentative texts?
- What happens when narrative elements are incorporated into literary dialogue?